

Collaboration for equitable educational improvement:

Towards self-improving school systems

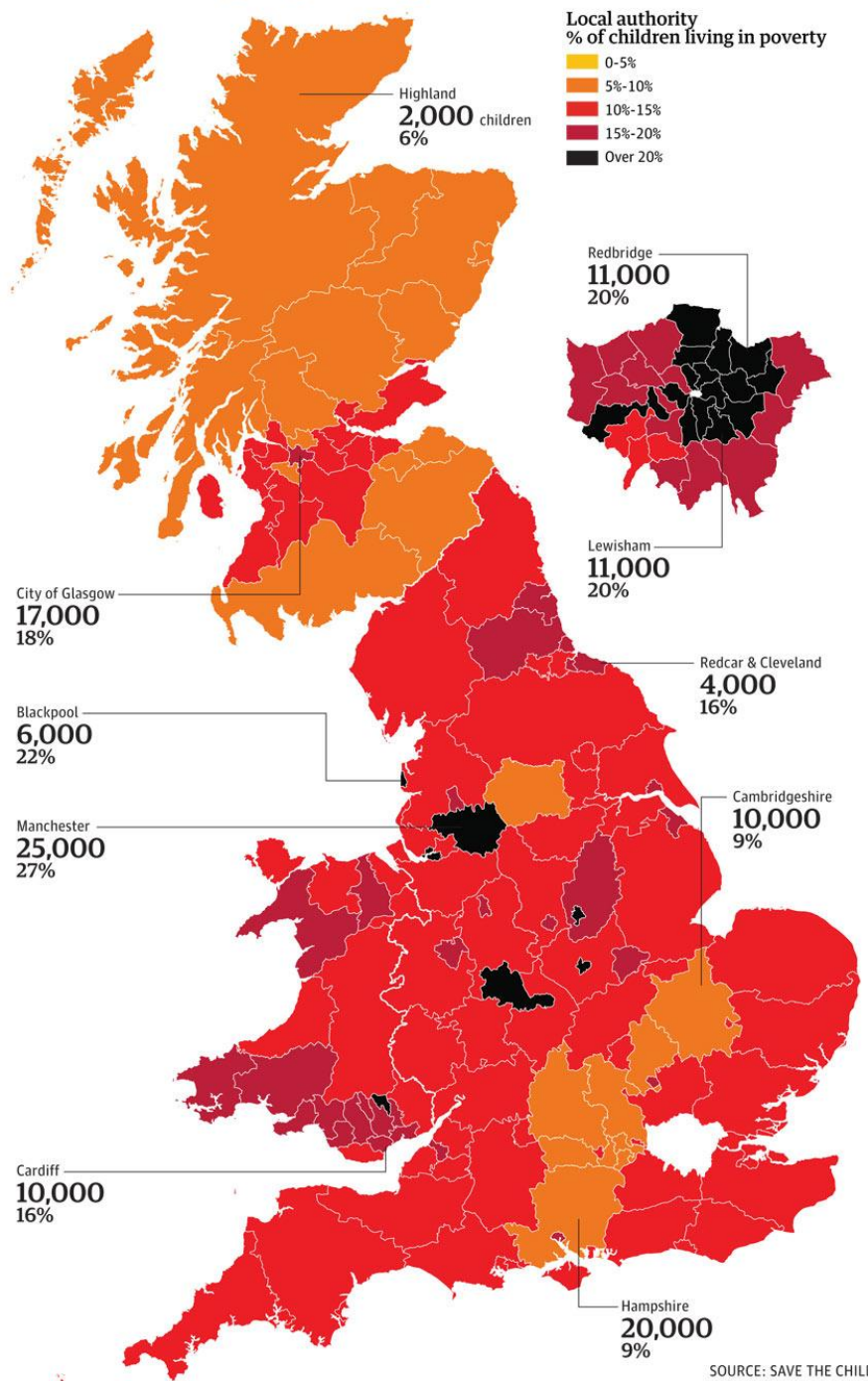
Mel Ainscow

‘We already know enough to educate all our children effectively. The big question is, do we have the will to make it happen?’

Edmonds, 1979

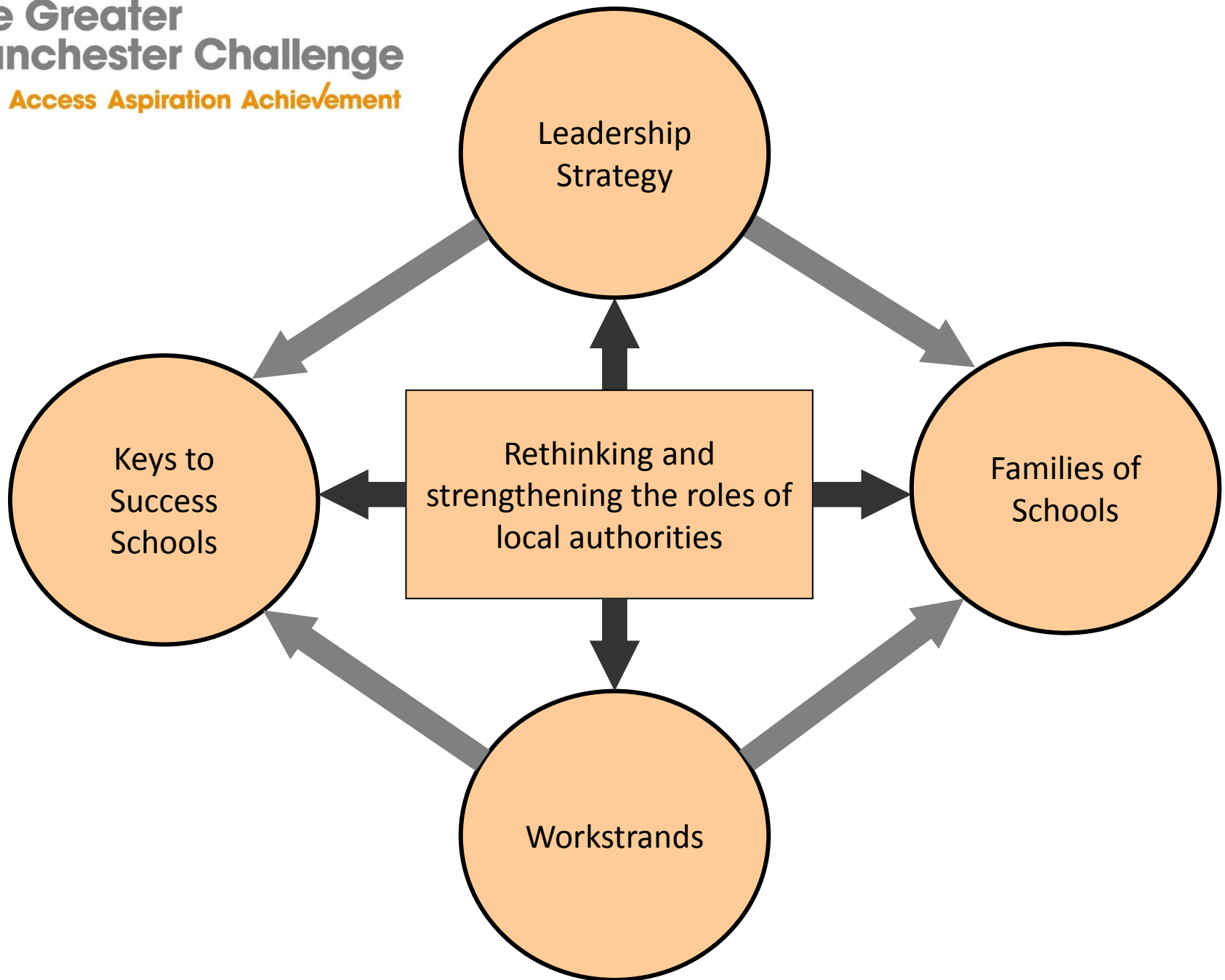
A three-year improvement programme to raise educational outcomes for all children and young people, and narrow the gap in achievement between learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers.

Children living in poverty



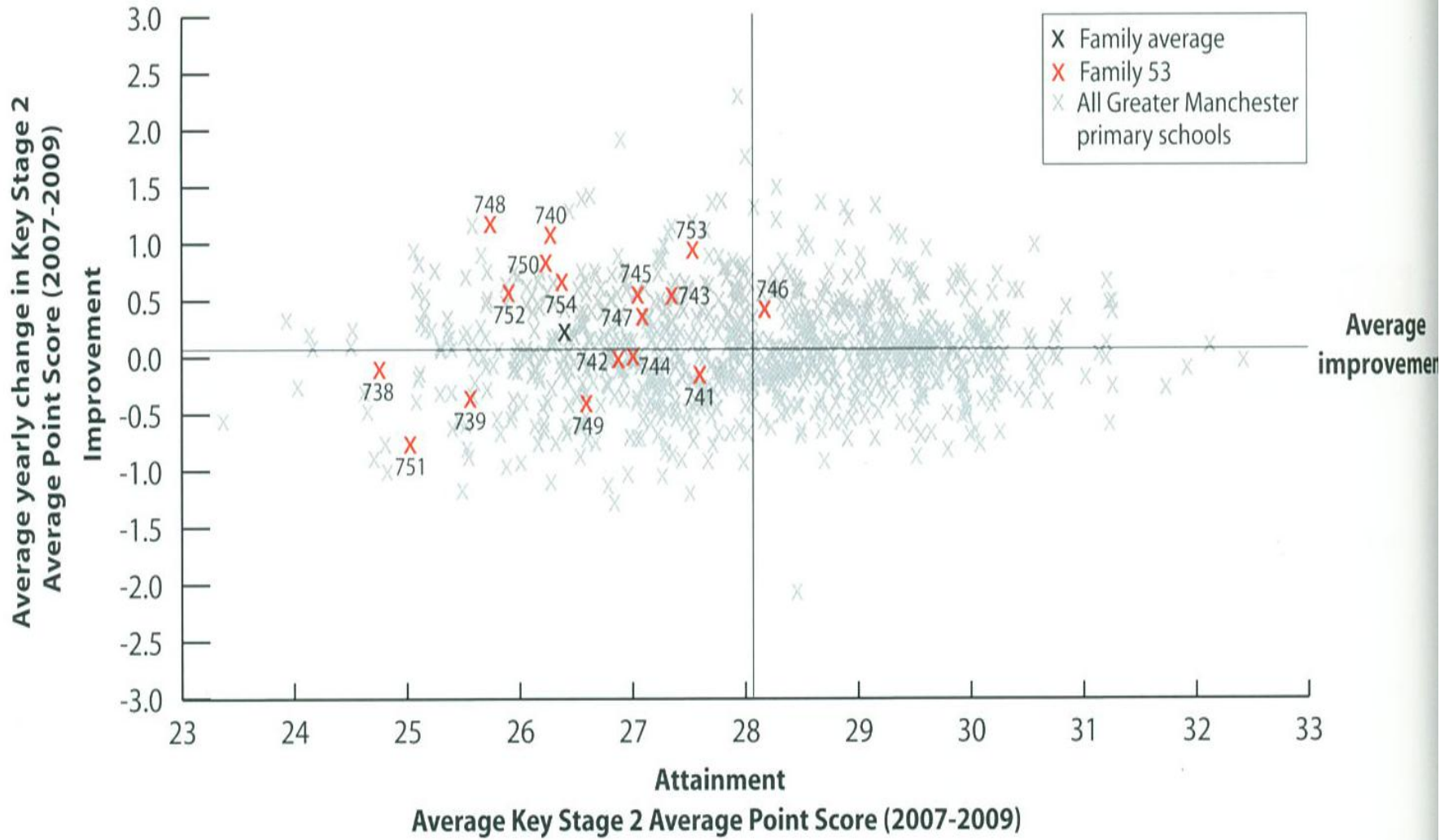
The Greater Manchester Challenge

Access Aspiration Achievement



PERFORMANCE MAP

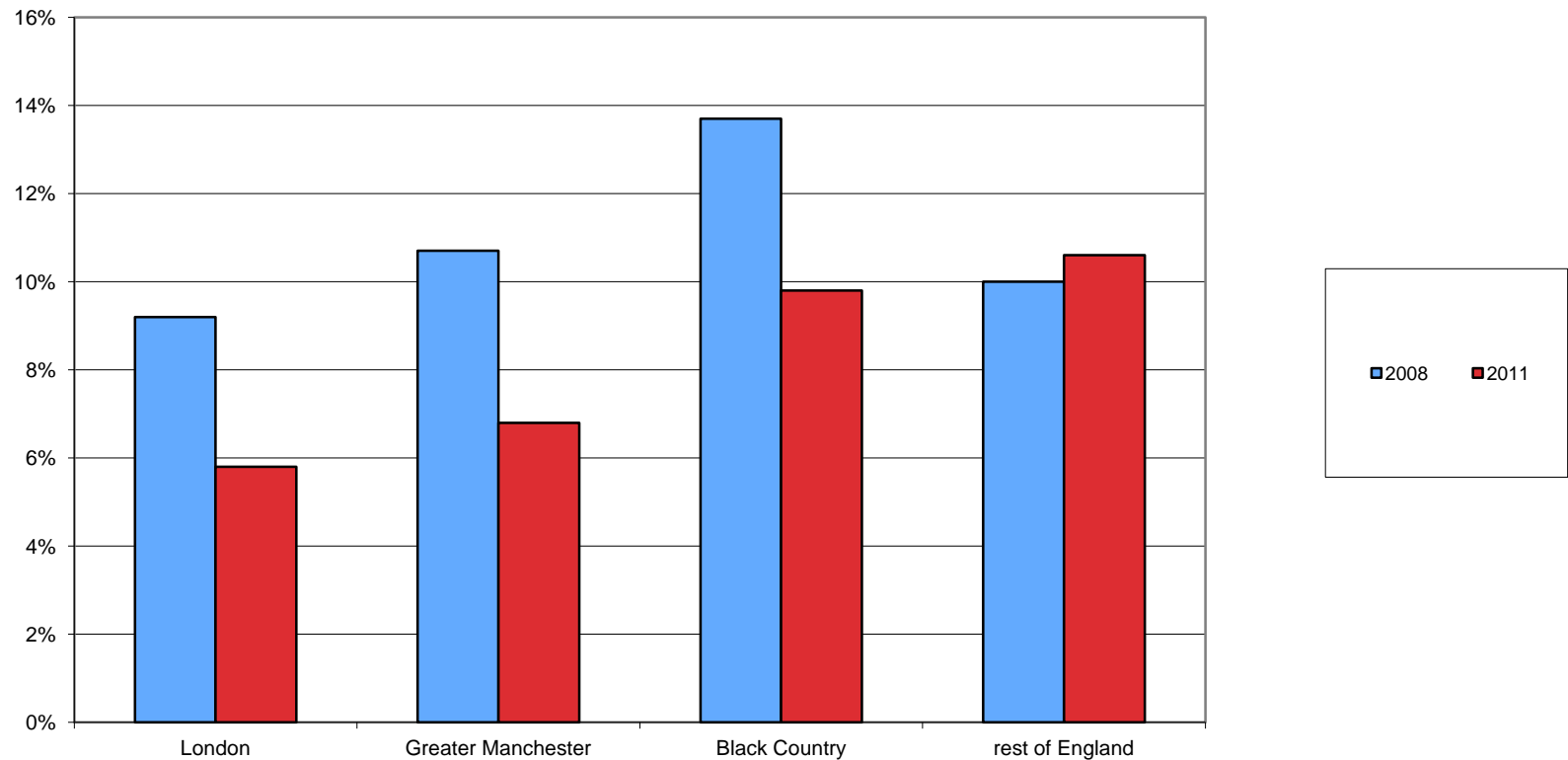
Average attainment



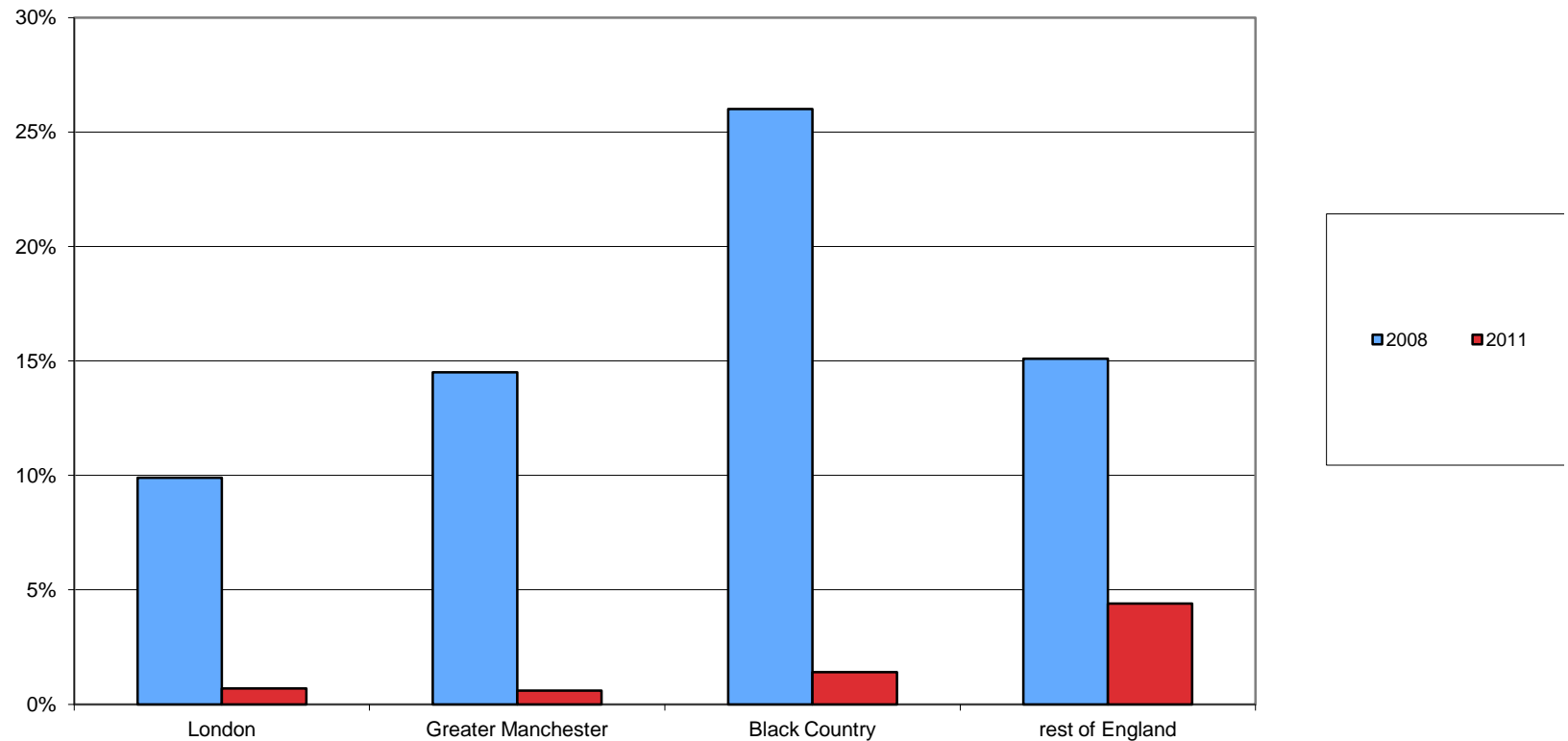
The Greater Manchester Challenge
Access Aspiration Achievement



Percentage of primary schools below the floor target in 2008 and 2011



Percentage of secondary schools below the floor target in 2008 and 2011



What are the lessons?

- **Education systems have untapped potential to improve themselves**
- **Networking is a means of sharing expertise and stimulating experimentation with new ways of working**
- **School partnerships are the most powerful means of fostering improvements, particularly in challenging circumstances**
- **School focused strategies have to be complemented with efforts to engage the wider community**
- **Leadership has to come from within schools**
- **National governments have to create the conditions within which local action can be taken and local authorities have to be responsible for making sure this happens**

What are the challenges?

- **It can lead to lots of nonproductive time**
- **It might be a fad that goes well when led by skilled and enthusiastic advocates but then fades when spread more widely**
- **Schools involved in working collaboratively may collude with one another to reinforce mediocrity and low expectations**
- **Those schools that most need help may choose not to get involved**
- **Some head teachers may become 'empire builders', who deter others from getting involved**
- **The policy context may create barriers to progress**

Developing self-improving systems in Wales

Strengths of the Welsh education system

- **A comprehensive education system which emphasises equity and inclusion**
- **Schools provide positive learning environments with good student–teacher relations**
- **A wealth of assessment and evaluation data to help improve policy and practice**
- **Strong support for change and a commitment to improvement right across the system**

Challenges facing Wales

Schools are not always able to address all students' learning needs

The arrangements for nurturing teaching staff, support staff and school leadership need development

There is a need to create greater coherence between evaluation and assessment arrangements for learners

The quick pace of reform is a concern for some and there is a need for a longer-term vision

Schools Challenge Cymru

- **Pathways to Success schools - aiming for excellence and equity**
- **Schools working together to move knowledge around**
- **An emphasis on innovation to improve teaching and leadership**
- **Involving the wider community**
- **Rethinking the roles of local authorities and the consortia**

**The most important factor:
the collective will to make it happen**

