

Evidence, innovation and people in schools – the issues and challenges

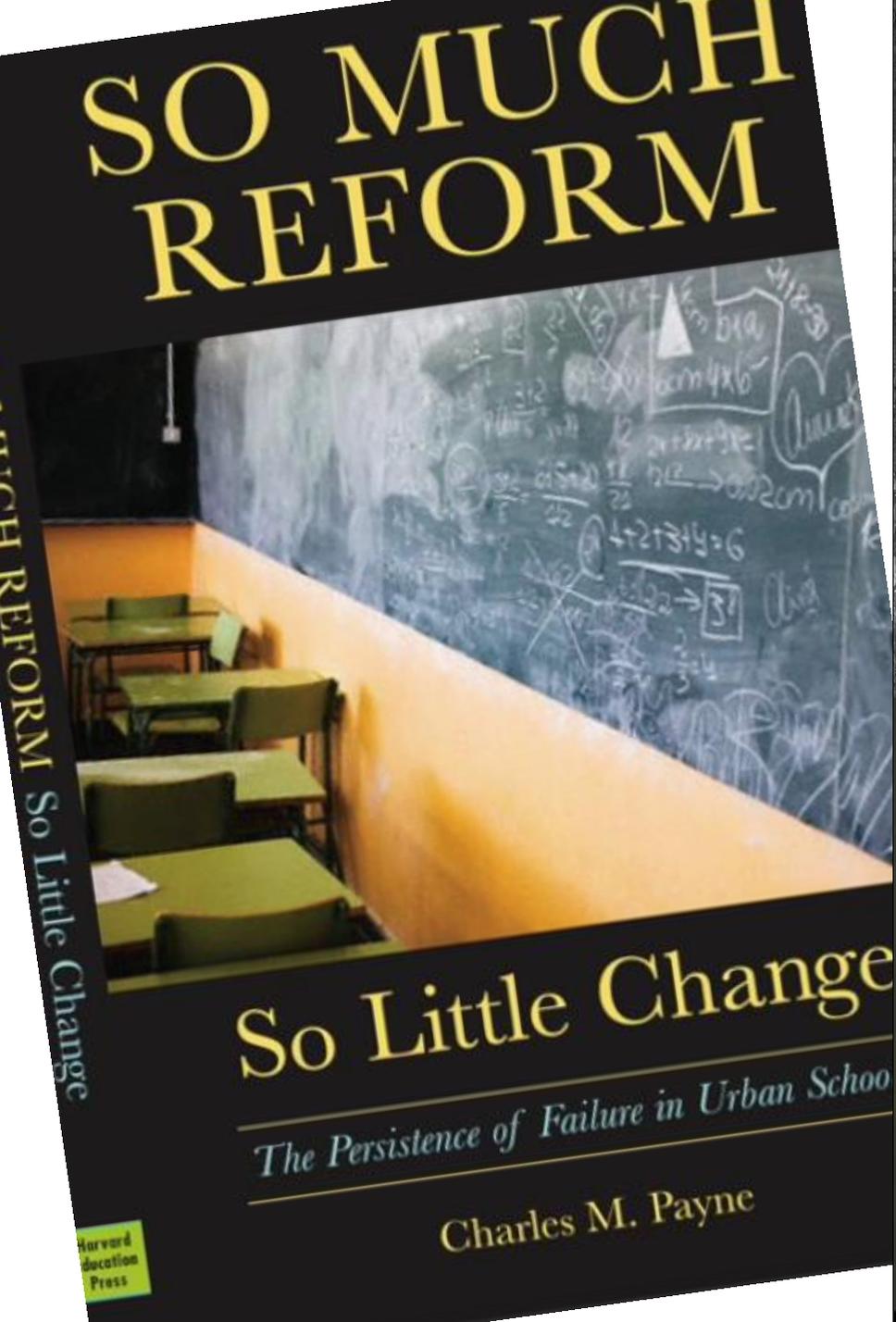
SCoTENS October 13, 2017

Professor Colleen McLaughlin

University of Cambridge Faculty of Education

UK

E-mail: cm10009@cam.ac.uk



**Education is the most powerful
weapon which you can use to
change the world.**

Nelson Mandela

Key themes

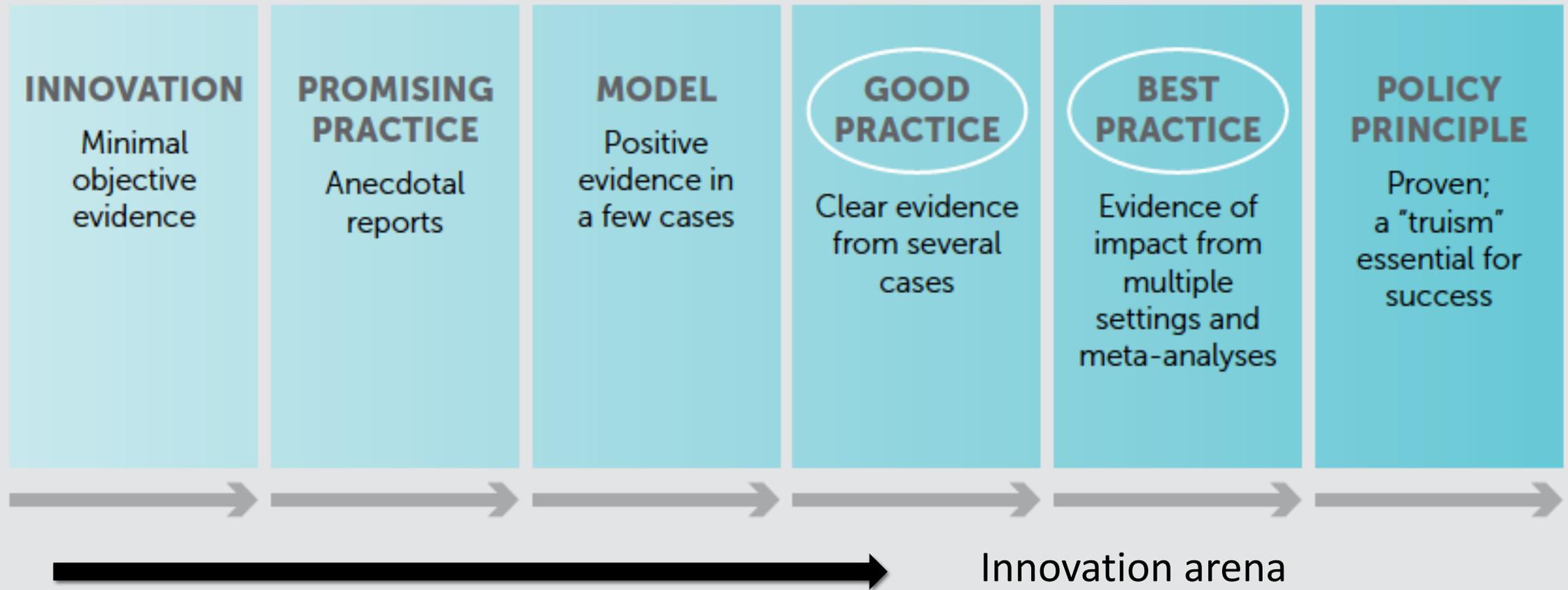
- What sort of conditions stimulate innovation and change?
- What beliefs are at the base of current policy climate?
- What innovations have we actually seen?
- The unintended consequences
- The evidence base and how it is created?
- Where and how are the people?
- The need for innovation and some suggestions of the way forward

What sort of conditions stimulate innovation and change?

- A willingness to see things differently + talk about it
- Building on the shoulders of giants – evidence collection
- Leadership that values difference and challenge
- Collaboration and discussion
- Spaces
- Knowledge of people, systems + change + the content of what is being worked on
- Experimentation + risk taking

Innovation, practice, evidence and policy

Figure 8: Evidence Continuum



The current policy climate – assumptions it is based upon

- Market based approach – Neo-Liberal framework
 - Marketisation
 - Accountability
 - Deregulation
 - Autonomy
 - Evidence and measurement
 - View of people and processes?
 - Striving and competition
 - Rewards shape behaviour
 - Change has to be driven and is not a natural process
- Competition
Comparison
Choice
Standards + standardisation

What recent systemic innovations have occurred?

- Academies – choice
- Competition between schools
- Inspection
- Testing
- Closing the gap
- Raising standards
- London Challenge
- Curriculum changes

Some of the impacts

- Continuing increase in inequalities in outcome and access
- Doubtful gains for vulnerable schools or pupils
- Some good models of school improvement with strong results – London Challenge
- Much greater evidence about certain key issues e.g. bullying
- Some real problems with **the people** in the system
 - Teachers
 - Students
 - The discourse about education

Impact of the current model on people

- Overload of a certain sort- bureaucracy + measurement
- Drive for survival
 - Risk aversion
- Little evidence, much ideology for the changes
- Tension between aims e.g. autonomy and control
 - Leads to '1984ism'
- Issues re retention – low satisfaction
 - Staff and students
- Constant shifts in policy – see hype cycle

Number of children expelled from English schools hits 35 a day

There were 6,685 permanent exclusions in 2015-16, up from 5,785 the previous year



i Eight in 10 exclusions were from secondary schools. Photograph: Vesa Moilanen/Rex Features

The number of permanent exclusions from schools in England has gone up, with the equivalent of 35 children being expelled every school day, according to government figures.

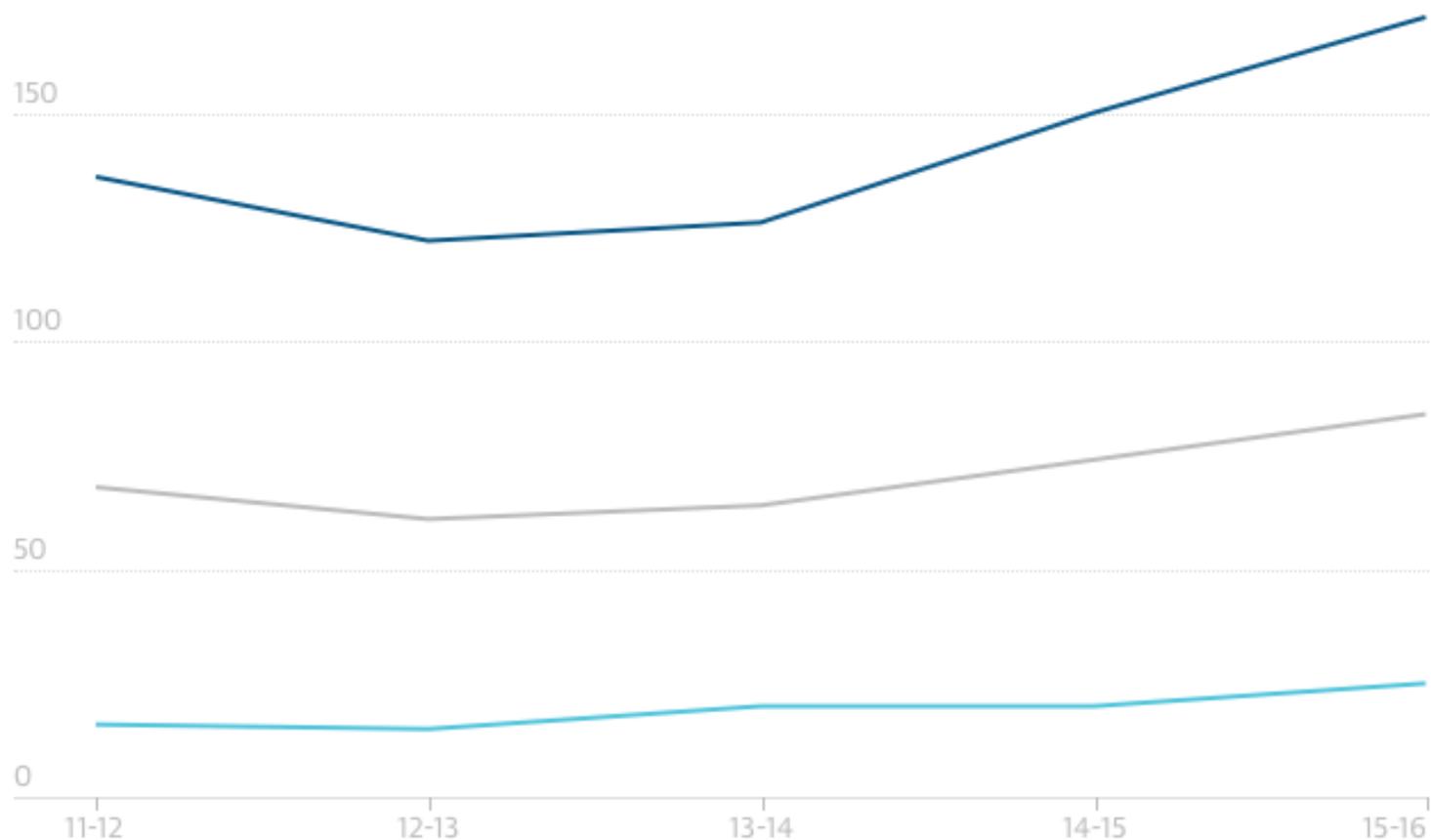
Almost, 6,700 children were permanently excluded from all primary, secondary and special schools in 2015/16, meaning the rate of expulsions has risen every year since 2012/13.

20 July
2017

The rate of expulsions at primary and secondary level has risen for the third year running

Permanent exclusions per 100,000 pupils

■ All pupils ■ Primary ■ Secondary



Guardian graphic | Source: Department for Education exclusion statistics

Of those, 1,185 were primary age children, including 475 children who were seven or under, and 50 four-year-olds.

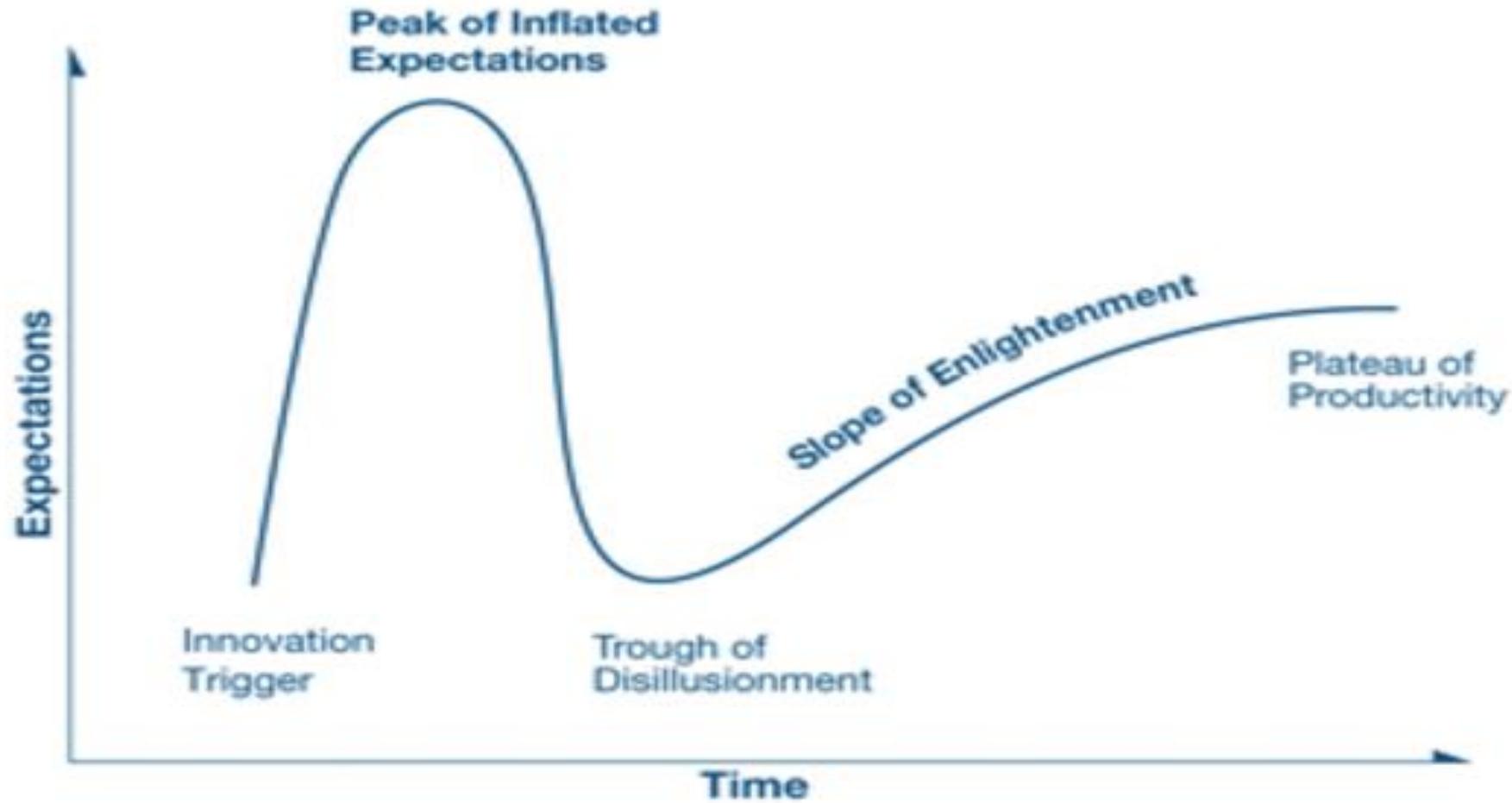
Almost a third of primary exclusions for assault against an adult - most common reason was persistently disruptive behaviour.

Total number went up by just under 1,000 in 2015-16 compared with the previous year

From 5,795 in 2014/15 to 6,685

Equivalent of **35.2 exclusions a day**, up from an average of 30.5. (DfE)

Hype cycle



We need innovation but we have a 'Shallow educational response to social change'

- Problem framed and driven e.g. VUCA
- Programmatic and fragmented
- Medical model
- Not educational



HOW WELL CAN YOU PREDICT THE RESULTS OF YOUR ACTIONS?

complexity

Characteristics: The situation has many interconnected parts and variables. Some information is available or can be predicted, but the volume or nature of it can be overwhelming to process.

Example: You are doing business in many countries, all with unique regulatory environments, tariffs, and cultural values.

Approach: Restructure, bring on or develop specialists, and build up resources adequate to address the complexity.

volatility

Characteristics: The challenge is unexpected or unstable and may be of unknown duration, but it's not necessarily hard to understand; knowledge about it is often available.

Example: Prices fluctuate after a natural disaster takes a supplier off-line.

Approach: Build in slack and devote resources to preparedness—for instance, stockpile inventory or overbuy talent. These steps are typically expensive; your investment should match the risk.

VUCA WORLD

AMERICAN
MILITARY

ambiguity

Characteristics: Causal relationships are completely unclear. No precedents exist; you face “unknown unknowns.”

Example: You decide to move into immature or emerging markets or to launch products outside your core competencies.

Approach: Experiment. Understanding cause and effect requires generating hypotheses and testing them. Design your experiments so that lessons learned can be broadly applied.

uncertainty

Characteristics: Despite a lack of other information, the event's basic cause and effect are known. Change is possible but not a given.

Example: A competitor's pending product launch muddies the future of the business and the market.

Approach: Invest in information—collect, interpret, and share it. This works best in conjunction with structural changes, such as adding information analysis networks, that can reduce ongoing uncertainty.

IN THE OECD
FRAMEWORK FOR
CURRICULUM FOR
THE 21ST
CENTURY



HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE SITUATION?



Another model of innovation and change - London Challenge

- Based on a theory of change (Hargreaves 2012)
 - a partnership dimension
 - a professional development dimension and
 - a collaborative capital dimension.
- Based on a theory of transfer of practice (Fielding et al, 2005)
 - social process that is sustained by relationships and trust;
 - a personal and inter-personal process that has to engage with our sense of teacher + institutional identity
 - provide support for learner engagement in experimenting
 - sustained over time – takes longer than expected



PURPOSE, PASSION, PROGRESS AT A PACE

The DNA of the London Challenge

- System leadership which involved the best school leaders directly supporting other schools in strengthening leadership and teaching.
- Collaboration, partnership working and practitioner networks managing knowledge and sharing best practice through a range of activities and programmes.
- Well mobilised intellectual, social and organisational capital maintaining vision, energy, depth and staying power to produce excellent educational outcomes



What have we learned about innovation?

‘Perhaps the most effective aspect of City Challenge was that it recognised that people, and schools, tend to thrive when they feel trusted, supported and encouraged. The ethos of the programme, in which successes were celebrated and it was recognised that if teachers are to inspire pupils they themselves need to be motivated and inspired, was a key factor in its success’ (p.xi).

The City Challenge used a different set of strategies: school-to-school collaboration, a belief that the educational problems facing urban areas should be addressed at area level, for all schools in that area, with an emphasis on leadership and with support from external informed professionals either local or national (Hutchings et al, 2012).

The evidence base and how it is created?

- Need a range of evidence sources and questions
 - Mixed methods
 - Fitness for purpose
- Accountability and ‘What difference did it make?’ questions are important
- Impact questions, including on people, important
- Timescale also key
- No holy grail

'London effect' in schools due to gradual improvements not policies, says report

LSE report says primaries improving since 90s and abolition of Inner London Education Authority led to pupils' success



i Disadvantaged pupils in London outperform those in the rest of the country after years where they lagged behind. Photograph: Jeff J Mitchell/Getty

The extraordinary success of London's schools, typically credited to policies such as the [London Challenge](#) and introduction of academies, is more likely due to improvements in primary schools and local leadership, according to new

Conclusions

- Innovation needs to focus on authentic educational work and needs, not just efficiency gains
 - Care for people
 - Work together
 - Create innovation spaces and conditions
 - Need local practices
 - Need consistent and varying **evidence**
 - Measurement not the only justification for innovation



The Cambridge cluster

4,700+

knowledge
intensive
firms



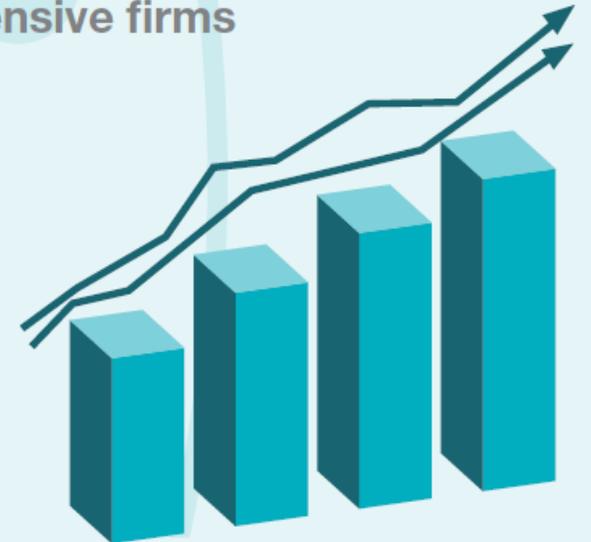
60,000+

people employed by knowledge
intensive firms



£12bn+

in total turnover of knowledge
intensive firms



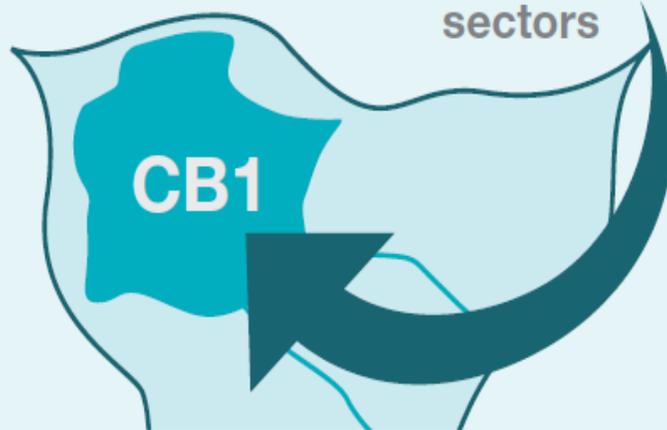
The Cambridge cluster

3rd most successful

University innovation ecosystem in the world (MIT Skoltech Initiative Report, 2014)



30% of people work in the knowledge intensive sectors



341.1  patent applications published per **100,000** residents

Highest in the UK and more than the next four cities combined