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## Lessons from overseas Stability, buy-in and long-term planning

PISA scores, top performing countries

Reading							
Rank	Country	Score	Rank	Country	Score	Rank	
1	Finland	551	1	China	550	1	China
2	China	548	2	China	548	2	China
3	Hong Kong, China	547	3	Hong Kong, China	547	3	Hong Kong, China
4	China	545	4	China	545	4	China
5	Hong Kong, China	544	5	Hong Kong, China	544	5	Hong Kong, China
6	China	543	6	China	543	6	China
7	China	542	7	China	542	7	China
8	China	541	8	China	541	8	China
9	China	540	9	China	540	9	China
10	China	539	10	China	539	10	China
11	China	538	11	China	538	11	China
12	China	537	12	China	537	12	China
13	China	536	13	China	536	13	China
14	China	535	14	China	535	14	China
15	China	534	15	China	534	15	China
16	China	533	16	China	533	16	China
17	China	532	17	China	532	17	China
18	China	531	18	China	531	18	China
19	China	530	19	China	530	19	China
20	China	529	20	China	529	20	China
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22	China	527	22	China	527	22	China
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25	China	524	25	China	524	25	China
26	China	523	26	China	523	26	China
27	China	522	27	China	522	27	China
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29	China	520	29	China	520	29	China
30	China	519	30	China	519	30	China
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32	China	517	32	China	517	32	China
33	China	516	33	China	516	33	China
34	China	515	34	China	515	34	China
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36	China	513	36	China	513	36	China
37	China	512	37	China	512	37	China
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44	China	505	44	China	505	44	China
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47	China	502	47	China	502	47	China
48	China	501	48	China	501	48	China
49	China	500	49	China	500	49	China
50	China	499	50	China	499	50	China
51	China	498	51	China	498	51	China
52	China	497	52	China	497	52	China
53	China	496	53	China	496	53	China
54	China	495	54	China	495	54	China
55	China	494	55	China	494	55	China
56	China	493	56	China	493	56	China
57	China	492	57	China	492	57	China
58	China	491	58	China	491	58	China
59	China	490	59	China	490	59	China
60	China	489	60	China	489	60	China
61	China	488	61	China	488	61	China
62	China	487	62	China	487	62	China
63	China	486	63	China	486	63	China
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65	China	484	65	China	484	65	China
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71	China	478	71	China	478	71	China
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75	China	474	75	China	474	75	China
76	China	473	76	China	473	76	China
77	China	472	77	China	472	77	China
78	China	471	78	China	471	78	China
79	China	470	79	China	470	79	China
80	China	469	80	China	469	80	China
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95	China	454	95	China	454	95	China
96	China	453	96	China	453	96	China
97	China	452	97	China	452	97	China
98	China	451	98	China	451	98	China
99	China	450	99	China	450	99	China
100	China	449	100	China	449	100	China

Mathematics							
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3	China	567	3	China	567	3	China
4	China	565	4	China	565	4	China
5	China	563	5	China	563	5	China
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89	China	395	89	China	395	89	China
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97	China	379	97	China	379	97	China
98	China	377	98	China	377	98	China
99	China	375	99	China	375	99	China
100	China	373	100				

# The need for policy stability in education: Extract-Lessons from overseas

**1** | Extent of policy change in education

**5** | Factors driving so much change and churn

**2** | Examples of policy change and churn

**6** | Lessons from overseas

**3** | Problems created by constant change

**7** | Conclusions and recommendations

**4** | Institutional enablers of change

## 6 Lessons from overseas

- a. PISA is selectively quoted but offers no prescriptive answer
- b. Country experience indicates there is no “left” or “right” policy answer
- c. Available data indicates “government effectiveness” is critical
- d. Effectiveness is built on:
  - Stability and consensus
  - Long-term planning
  - Societal buy-in
- e. Teacher quality, development, autonomy and co-operation
- f. UK needs to move from a rapid, vicious policy circle to a slower, virtuous circle

# 6a PISA is selectively quoted but offers no “silver bullet”

- While aspects of PISA are understandably criticised, it nevertheless offers a comprehensive data set that successive governments have turned to
- However, even a cursory look at the top performers reveals that they are very diverse in terms of geography, demographics and sampling approach, government type, culture, cohesion and economic status. The clear message is approach the data with care
- In this study we analysed 68 different trans-national economic, social, education and governance-related variables for correlation with PISA scores. The majority showed an absolute correlation coefficient of less than 0.5, that is, the correlation was poor
- These insignificant variables included ‘Percentage urban population’ ( $r = 0.159$ ), Compulsory Education Starting Age (2005) with ( $r = 0.139$ ); Percentage of enrolment in private institutions (%) 0.004; Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) 0.33; Official entrance age to lower secondary education (years) 0.19  
Population growth (annual %) 0.18
- There was no evidence of a “silver bullet” i.e. success is built on a number of factors, most likely interrelated

## PISA scores, top performing countries

Rank	Country	Score	Region	Score	Region	Score	Region
1	Finland	551	Europe	549	Asia	548	Europe
2	Denmark	549	Europe	548	Asia	548	Europe
3	Canada	548	North America	548	Asia	548	Europe
4	Switzerland	547	Europe	547	Asia	547	Europe
5	Japan	546	Asia	546	Asia	546	Europe
6	South Korea	545	Asia	545	Asia	545	Europe
7	Belgium	544	Europe	544	Asia	544	Europe
8	France	543	Europe	543	Asia	543	Europe
9	Germany	542	Europe	542	Asia	542	Europe
10	United States	541	North America	541	Asia	541	Europe
11	Sweden	540	Europe	540	Asia	540	Europe
12	United Kingdom	539	Europe	539	Asia	539	Europe
13	Spain	538	Europe	538	Asia	538	Europe
14	Italy	537	Europe	537	Asia	537	Europe
15	Portugal	536	Europe	536	Asia	536	Europe
16	Poland	535	Europe	535	Asia	535	Europe
17	United States	534	North America	534	Asia	534	Europe
18	United States	533	North America	533	Asia	533	Europe
19	United States	532	North America	532	Asia	532	Europe
20	United States	531	North America	531	Asia	531	Europe

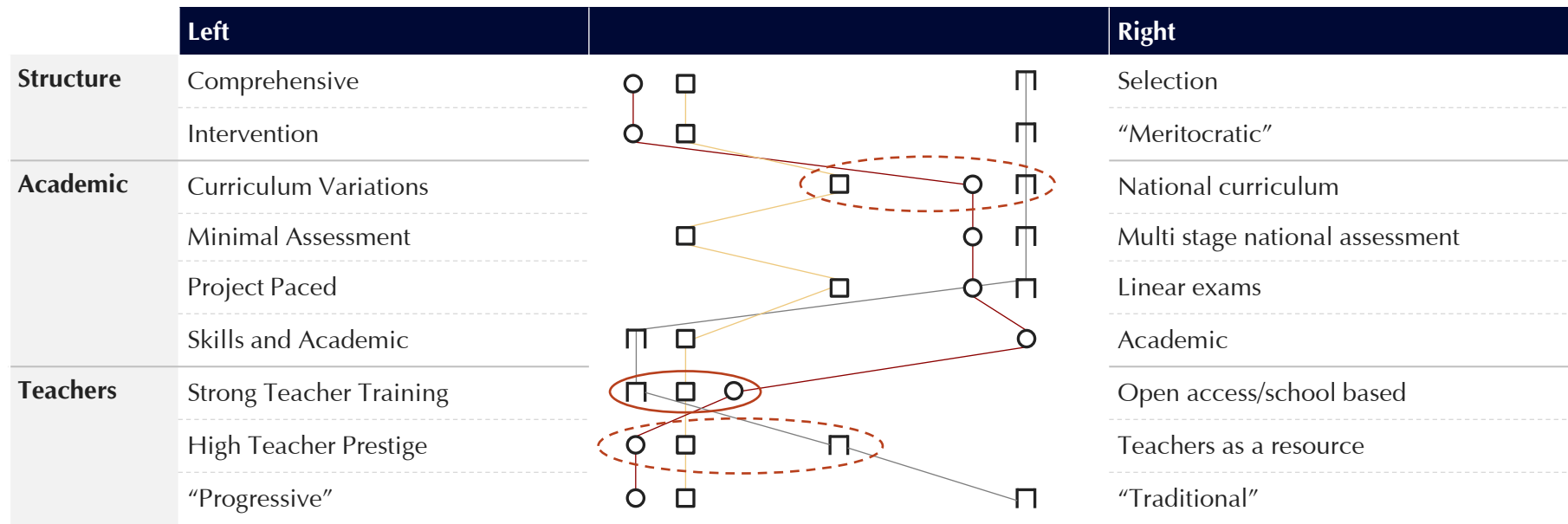
Rank	Country	Score	Region	Score	Region	Score	Region
21	United States	530	North America	530	Asia	530	Europe
22	United States	529	North America	529	Asia	529	Europe
23	United States	528	North America	528	Asia	528	Europe
24	United States	527	North America	527	Asia	527	Europe
25	United States	526	North America	526	Asia	526	Europe
26	United States	525	North America	525	Asia	525	Europe
27	United States	524	North America	524	Asia	524	Europe
28	United States	523	North America	523	Asia	523	Europe
29	United States	522	North America	522	Asia	522	Europe
30	United States	521	North America	521	Asia	521	Europe
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32	United States	519	North America	519	Asia	519	Europe
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36	United States	515	North America	515	Asia	515	Europe
37	United States	514	North America	514	Asia	514	Europe
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58	United States	493	North America	493	Asia	493	Europe
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# 6b Country experience indicates there is no “left” or “right” policy answer

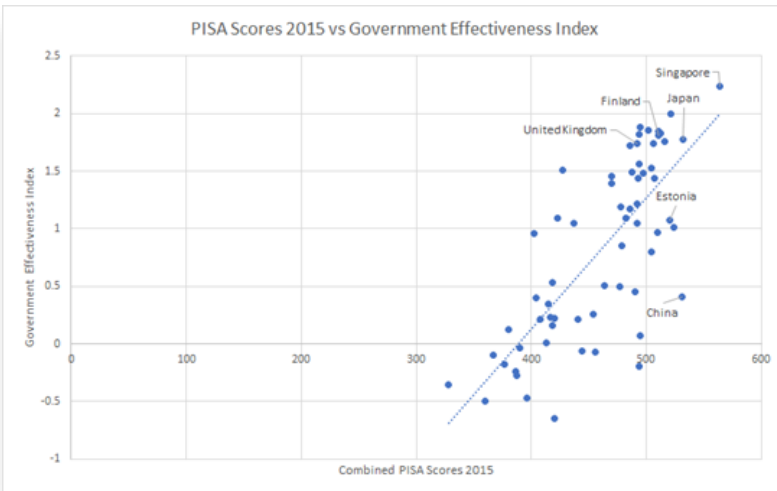
Drawing on the work of Lucy Crehan, Amanda Ripley, Alex Beard (1), PISA and OECD studies, the diagram below plots the policy orientation of leading PISA countries in education (Finland, Japan and Singapore) - against the typical “left v right” paradigms. There is no consistent approach and policies are borrowed from both sides of the debate. Indicators of success are Teacher training and prestige and a national curriculum

Key: □ Finland ○ Japan ▢ Singapore



1. Respectively Cleverlands, the smartest kids in the world and Natural Born Leaders; Analysis by Luck, Warriner, Wall

## 6c Available data indicates “government effectiveness” is critical



The highest correlation we found overall was between PISA scores and the Government Effectiveness Index (World Bank 2015)

This had a correlation coefficient of 0.85 i.e. there was an 85% match. Nearly all high performing countries for education are high on “Government effectiveness”

The GEI ‘captures perceptions of the quality of public services, the **quality of the civil service** and the degree of its **independence from political pressures**, the **quality of policy formulation and implementation**, and the credibility of the government's **commitment to such policies**’.

The UK scores better on its effectiveness index than its PISA score. All things equal, our PISA score should be better. This points to relatively good government but failings in the area of education policy.

Looking at the data and qualitative reporting for education, it seems that ‘government effectiveness’ cannot be created overnight: it is built on stability and consensus, long term planning and is certainly helped by aspects of societal buy-in

The prize is the ability to select and grow teacher talent and ultimately to trust teachers to succeed



## 6d Effectiveness is built on stability and consensus



### Finland: Consensus-oriented political culture

- Finland's parliament comprises, for the most part, five equipotent parties. MPs are elected by proportional representation
- Coalition government acts as a 'built in stabilizer preventing sudden swings between right and left' (Chislett 1996, 63)
- Qualified majority rules require even large coalitions to consult with the opposition on policy
- Disputes are settled between opponents before legislating. By the time of parliamentary votes on major educational changes, representatives have been willing to support bills near-unanimously (e.g. 1978 Education Act passed 152-2)
- New policy captured in legislation therefore has a strong and lasting mandate



### Japan: ancient traditions

Despite USA intervention in 1945, the Japanese education system is still based on long-standing cultural norms. "The meritocratic legacy of the Meiji period has endured, as has the centralized education structure". While new approaches are incorporated into the education system it is marked out overall by stability.



### China: Entrenched government guards against over-rapid reform

- China is a highly-centralised state with small, hierarchical governing elite
- Confucian values are entrenched: 'pragmatism ... collective rationality ... ethical commitment for personal and societal development' (Jun 2017, 135)
- The conservative character of all policymaking is backed by longstanding cultural attitudes: 'Reform has little threat [sic] on the existing interest pattern and its impact is controllable' (Zhou and Zhou 2019, 6)



### Singapore: Coherence around developmental goals

- The Parliamentary People's Republic has been captured by the powerful People's Action Party since 1959
- There is high societal buy-in for the creation of a strong international business environment (the PAP's stated priority)
- Responding to crises with more stability: the sense of 'national threat' from 'neighbouring countries, race riots, and cultural changes' has strengthen state cohesion (SARS crisis of 2003, water disputes with Malaysia etc.) (Ortmann 2010, 17)

## 6d Effectiveness is built on long-term planning



### Small government delegates to external agencies

- ‘State Committees’ investigate matters of public importance. They have been involved in all major public policy legislation for much of Finland’s modern history
- New programmes are carefully piloted. The 1968 Basic Education Act was introduced gradually, with a pilot stage in Northern Finland only (1972) before a nationwide rollout (1977)



### Ten year plans for education

- The importance of education for economic development is consistently stated: (qtd. In Yang 2017, 143) e.g. National Education Plan 2010-2020 places “prioritizing development” at the head of the 20 working principles for China’s educational reform and development
- ‘Five-Year Plans for National Education Development’ part of broader ‘Five-Year Plans for Economic and Social Development.’
- China’s National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020) is
  - Initiated and coordinated by Ministry of Education
  - Incorporates multiple phases of research and consultation over two years
  - Has two public consultation periods, during which approx. 2.49 million social media comments and suggestions assessed



### Robust system design

- The post-war Education Renewal Committee established a single, nine-year elementary and high school trajectory that remains today



### ‘Big picture’ thinking

- Ed. Minister Heng: ‘We have to be very thoughtful ... think long term ... You must have the big picture and ... all the pieces in place’ (Qtd. In Crehan 2016, n.119)



## 6d Effectiveness is built on societal buy-in



### Going their own way

- Education is seen as broader national vision (Chislett 1996, 30)
- There is a strong tradition of literacy: Finns borrow more books from libraries per person (18 per year) than any other country (Crehan 2016)
- Arvos Jappinen, Director of the Finnish Ministry of Education: '[Reform] is not so costly as if the pupil would be excluded from active life ... he will cost at least 1,000,000 euros' (qtd. in Crehan 2016, 29)
- 90% of Finns believe the quality of education available in Finland to be 'good' or 'very good' compared to other Western European countries (National Board of Education 1997; Kyro and Nyssola 2006)



### South Korea: national dedication to education

- Education is regarded as a "National Treasure" because of its ability to transform the economic prospects of the country. People refer to "education fever" and three out of four children supplement school learning with private "hagwons" after school. Such is the South Korean commitment to the academic side, there is a more recent concern about lack of vocational skills.



### Japan: ancient tradition

- Japan's respect for learning stretches back to the age of the Samurai, "hanko" schools and Confucianism. After WWII allies used a modified curriculum with the traditions of education to reduce nationalism and militaristic traditions. Japanese economic advancement also went hand-in-hand with wider education and success is recognised as the gateway to the best technical jobs

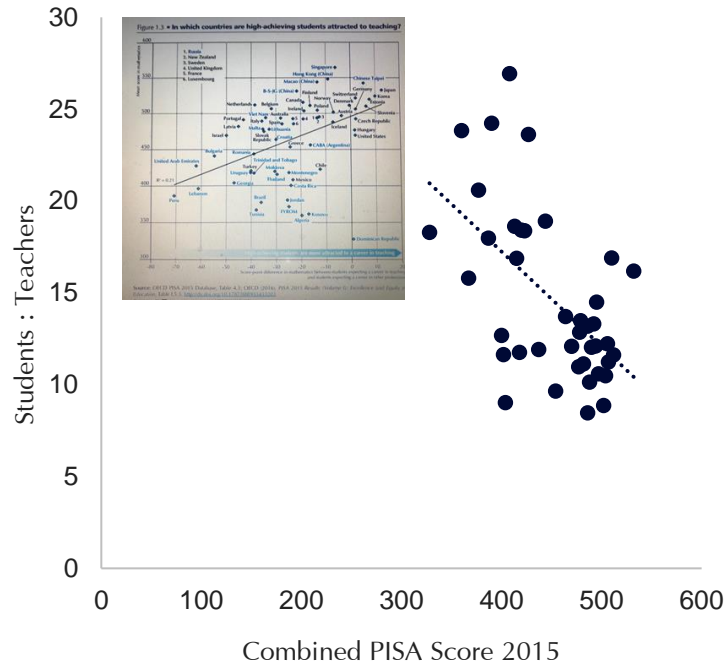


### Commitment to priority development of education

- The examinations system has ancient roots in the *keju*, the imperial exam used to distinguish between candidates for roles at court (Zhao 2014, Fukuyama 2011).
- Failure to perform carries social stigma and students are extraordinarily motivated to succeed
- Parents contribute on average 50% of the costs of education (Zhao 2014).

# 6e Effective policy selects and grows the best teacher talent

## PISA vs Student Teacher Ratio, Primary School



The OECD's analysis (inset) finds that countries in which high-achieving students are attracted to teaching do better in PISA. This informs the OECD's emphasis, in its recommendations, on better 'Teacher Policies'1: 'high-performing systems do not enjoy a natural privilege simply due to a traditional respect for teachers; they have also built a high-quality teaching force as a result of deliberate policies' (OECD 2018)

An example of a leading state here is Finland. In 1979, Finland was the first nation to insist that teachers be educated to Master's-level. Five-year courses are available at only eight highly-respected universities, and only 10% of applications are accepted. This is an extraordinarily-rigorous process of teacher recruitment

The strongest correlation in our analysis between PISA scores and a point of educational policy was related to pupil-teacher ratios. More teachers per student, to some degree, makes for better PISA scores (a correlation coefficient of 0.56). Another driver is the proportion of trained teachers in Primary (0.54)

1. See Effective teacher policies OECD PISA 2018 teacher policy is: attracting talented men and women to teaching, and retaining them; developing effective teachers; and matching teachers with students in the most favourable way; Analysis by Luck, Warriner, Wall

## 6f Teacher quality, development, autonomy and co-operation



### **Japan: teachers allowed to aspire to 'mastery'**

Policy sabbaticals are offered into the Ministry of Education.

- Larger class sizes allow teachers to take the time they need to plan lessons (average of 17.7 hours in the classroom per week).
- There is an emphasis on collaborative teaching, as teachers work together to achieve mastery of teaching methods.



### **Finland: world-leading treatment of 'professional' pedagogues**

Highly selective process for teacher selection and training: acceptance into one of eight prestigious teacher-training universities; 20% of applicants accepted (see Ripley 2013 vis teaching Finish); teacher training begins in fourth year of six year masters course; student spends one year teaching in top school with three teacher mentors.

- Since the 1990s teachers have enjoyed a high degree of autonomy. "Highly educated teachers chose material that was more rigorous, and they had the fluency to teach it. Because they were serious people doing hard jobs, they got a lot of autonomy to do their work." (Ripley)
- There are free courses in professional development, with job cover.



### **Singapore: incentives to attract and retain the best**

"In order to attract high flyers into the profession, the government offers top-scoring 18 year olds the opportunity to have their degrees paid for (in Singapore or overseas) in return for a four to six year return to service in state schools" (Crehan 2016)

- After initial training and three years the only way for a teacher to advance (and be paid more) is to work up one of three ladders: Teaching Track; Leadership Track or Specialist Track. The teaching track moves through statuses of Senior, Lead, Master and Principal Master status for Teachers.



### **China: amongst highest-status jobs in a hierarchical society**

Teachers enjoy the prestige of government employees.

- Autonomy: 'Communist government has dramatically loosened its control ... retreating from overregulation' (Zhao 2014, 54).



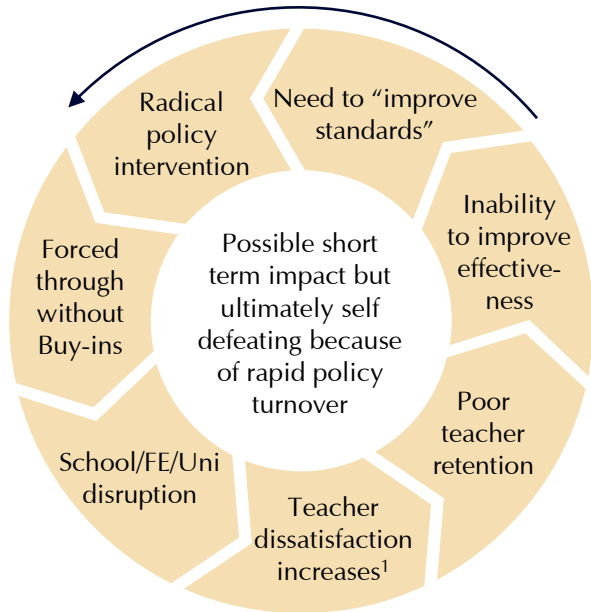
### **Estonia: personal contact between government and practitioners**

There are small networks of teachers/school management/regulators/policymakers: effective conversation

- There is no independent inspectorate.

# 7c UK needs to move from a rapid, vicious policy cycle to a slower, virtuous cycle

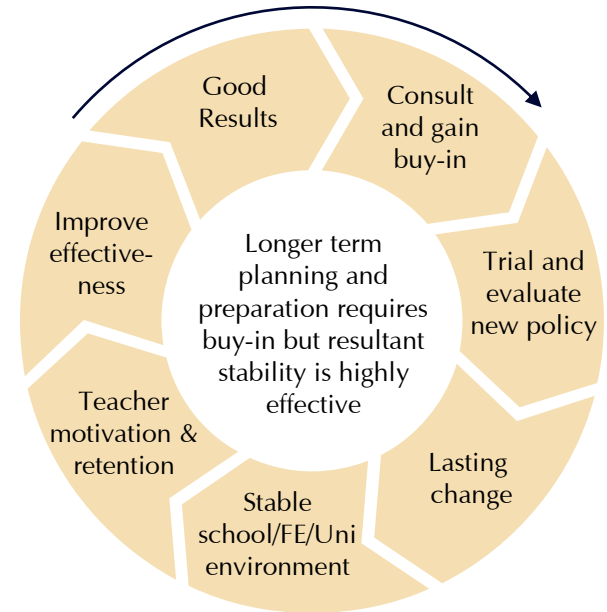
## Vicious Circle: Policy Churn



**Government view:** "It was wrong before, but it will be right now"

1. Reduced autonomy, lower intrinsic motivation, re-setting practices, no opportunity to "master" subject

## Virtuous Circle: Policy Stability



**Practitioner view:** "Minimise change and disruption so teachers can perfect classroom delivery and build outstanding organisations"

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# Examples: education questions needing rigorous evaluation

## System

## Curriculum

## Disadvantaged

## Assessment

## Accountability

### National

- What do we want education to deliver in the next 5/10/20 years?
- What is the correct resource balance between sectors<sup>1</sup>?
- What is the strategy for adult education ?
- How should the primary sector be managed?
- How is parental choice managed v balanced intake? (Choice v equity v effectiveness)
- How far will policy stability improve teacher retention?

### Local

- How far can underperformance be rectified by local/area intervention? - Should Opportunity areas be continued?
- Are there benefits in local school cooperation
- What is the most effective model of cooperation between schools, FEs and local employers?
- What are the future skills needs by area?
- How do we identify, evaluate and scale successful initiatives?

- Does the KS4 curriculum meet present and future needs?
- How are minimum standards best achieved?
- Should the single curriculum run to year 9, 10, or 11?
- What is the importance of problem solving and team work?
- Does tertiary education determine secondary school goals and is this a problem?
- What is the role of technology

- To what extent should the vocational curriculum be defined locally?
- Is there a trade off between equality and excellence?

- What is the cost/benefit of early intervention?
- How far can the best schools overcome pupil disadvantage?
- How do we improve the health welfare and life satisfaction of children in school?

- How are care services coordinated where LAs no longer fulfil the role?
- At what level should care services be coordinated e.g. neighborhood; community; council level; mayoral or regional?
- How is the best teaching talent attracted to the most disadvantaged areas?

- Should we have comparable or criteria based attainment levels?
- What are the costs and benefits of the exam centered system?
- Should curriculum and assessment change be recommended to government?
- Should the timings and form of assessment/examination change?

- How is school accountability and responsibility best balanced?
- Should inspection really be “improvement”?
- How should secondary school success be measured?

- How to better engage parents and the community?

1. Including but not limited to EYS, Primary, Secondary, FE, vocational and skills, apprenticeships, University, adult education \* Assumed categorization – trade-off between education beneficiaries or stakeholders

# Version control

Version	Date	Category	Development	Input
4.1	27th April 2021	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extracts from 3.4 for website sections</li> </ul>	
3.4	28 <sup>th</sup> July 2020	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addition of key questions</li> </ul>	
3.3	28 <sup>th</sup> May	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New recommendation (2) re ministerial accountability</li> </ul>	12.5.20 meeting
3.2	7 <sup>th</sup> May	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formatting</li> </ul>	
3.0	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2020	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant review of recommendations; inclusion of policy framework schema; new overview;</li> </ul>	Various: Think Tanks, Sector bodies; head teachers
2.2	3 <sup>rd</sup> Feb 2020	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-organising recommendations</li> <li>2 year moratorium changed to “policy stability”</li> </ul>	29.1.20 meeting
2.1	27 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2020	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spell edits; change in headings and content pages; conclusion and recommendations to front; distributed as draft</li> </ul>	
2.0	17 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Format change to ppt</li> <li>Further analysis; addition of international comparisons; PISA; conclusions and recommendations</li> </ul>	
1.0	July 2019	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start March 2019 - UK/England analysis</li> </ul>	