

Disentangling Poverty and Educational Achievement: Let's go all-inclusive!

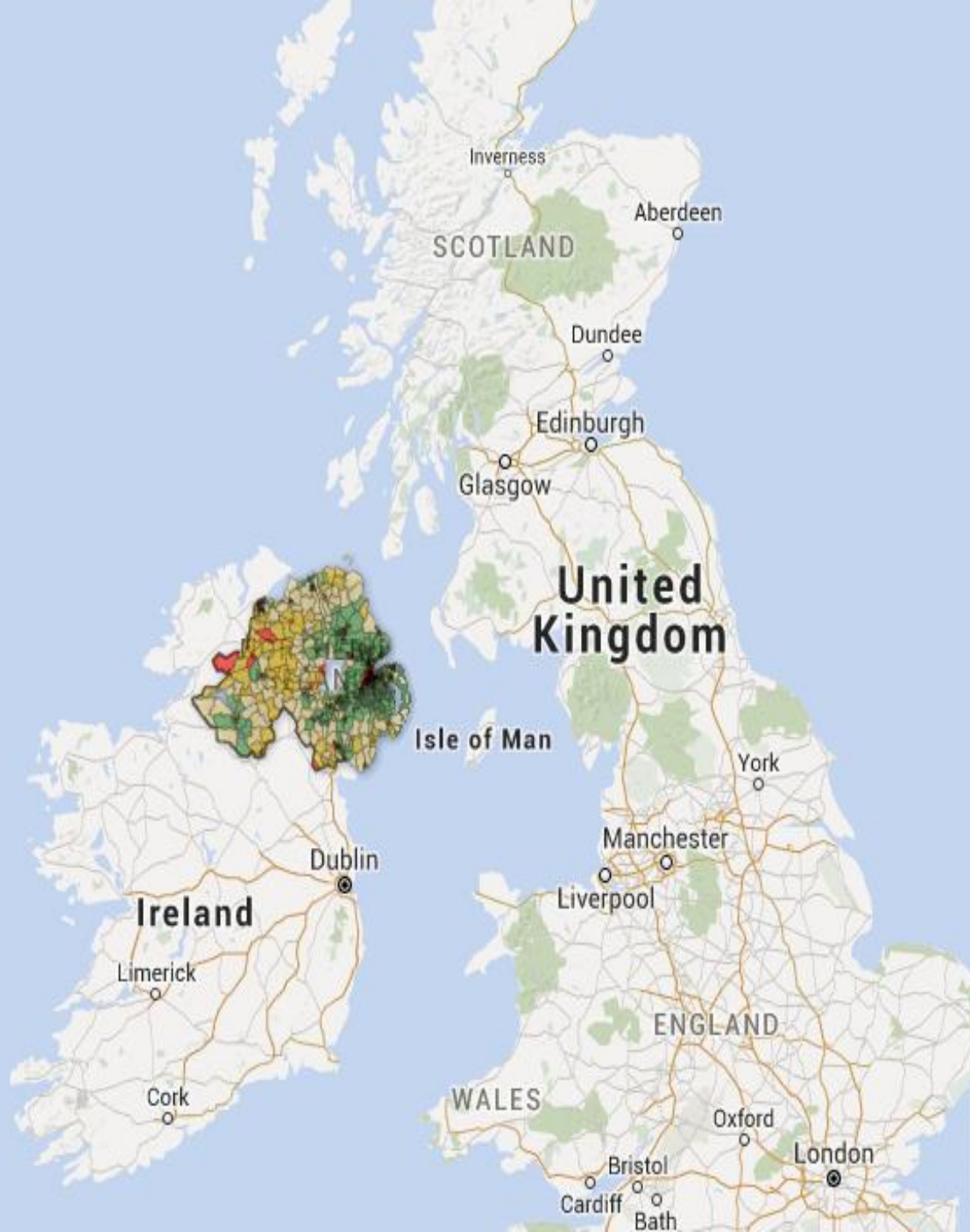
Findings from the Investigating Links in
Achievement and Deprivation (ILiAD) study
based in Northern Ireland , UK

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Summary

- This paper challenges the simple relationship identified between educational achievement as measured by exam results and indicators of poverty in quantitative studies.
- The arguments are based on a three year qualitative ethnographic study of seven multiply deprived communities in one area of the UK, notably Northern Ireland.
- The findings highlight that interventions to promote educational achievement for children from such disadvantaged communities cannot be based simply on the roll out of generic policy and its implementation in practice.
- Rather, any initiatives need to address the multiple factors and dynamics identified at individual, familial, local community and structural levels, all of which interact to affect young people's lives and influence their educational outcomes.



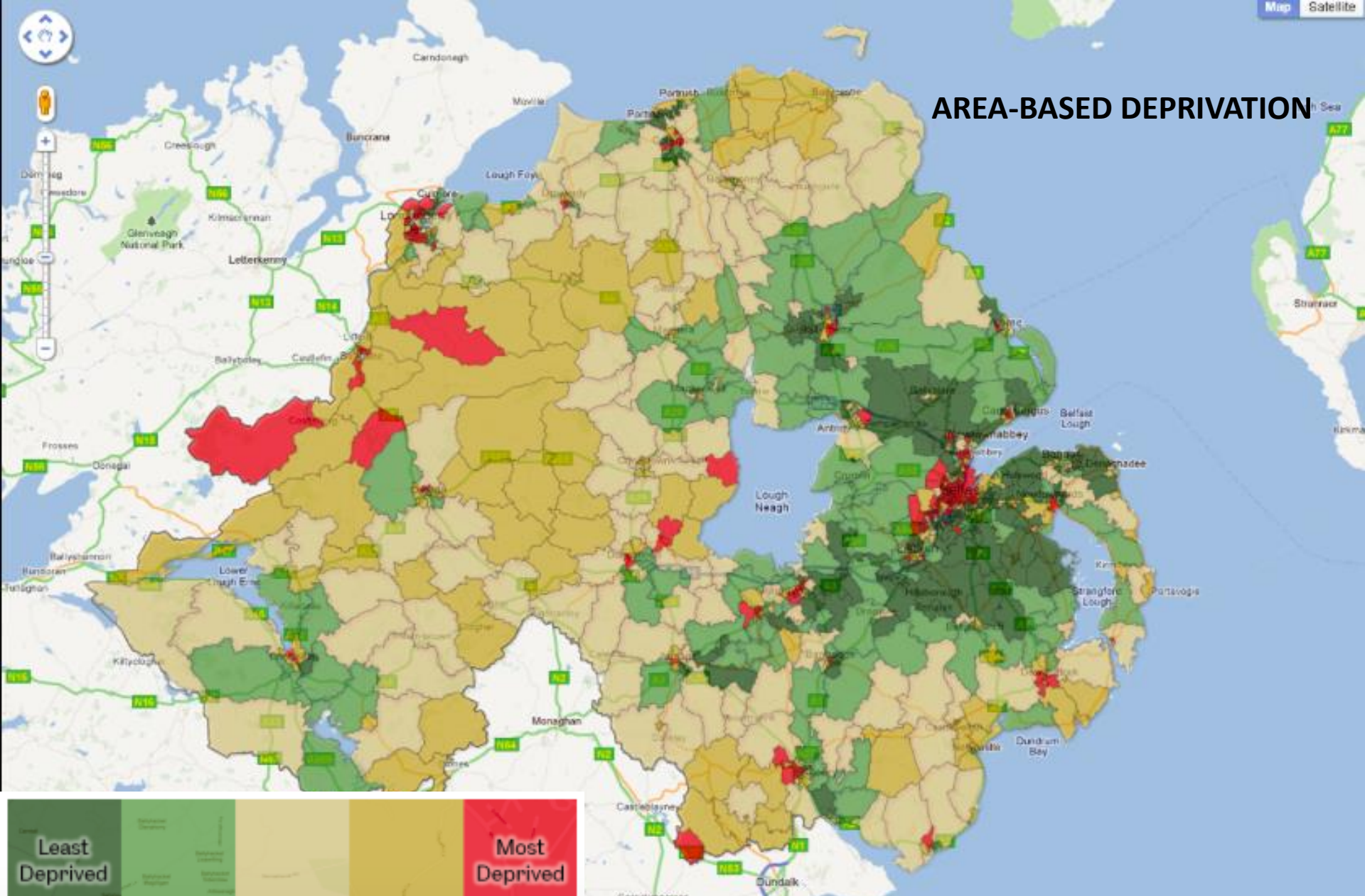
- Northern Ireland (NI) is the smallest of the four UK nations
- Devolved government
- Population c 1.8m
- School-age numbers (0-15yrs) are 379,300 and falling.

Investigating Links in Achievement and Deprivation (ILiAD) study

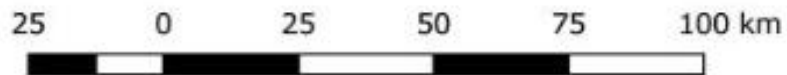
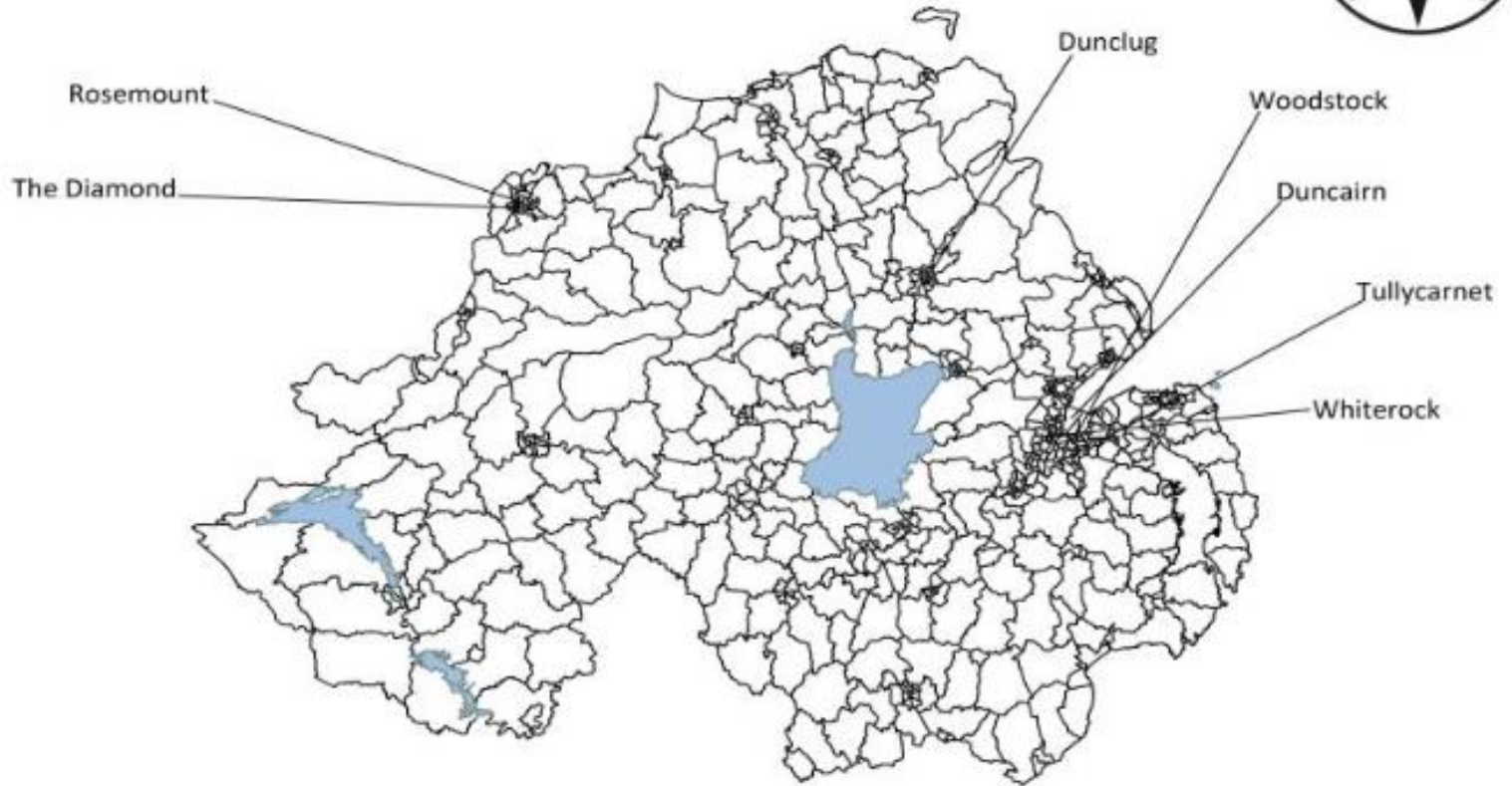
- The ILiAD study aimed to understand anomalies in educational performance among the most deprived Ward areas in NI
- Used a case study approach of 7 NI electoral wards – secondary data and in depth interviews and observations at community, school and individual levels.
- The ILiAD case sample of wards ranges from rank 1 (Whiterock) to rank 109 (Tullycarnet) on multiple deprivation (NIMDM).
- All seven fall within the top 20% of deprived wards in Northern Ireland.
- Reference: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/iliad-report-sept-17.pdf>

Measure of poverty: Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM)

Seven domains of deprivation- income, employment, health, education, proximity to services, living environment and crime



Distribution of ILiAD Wards across N. Ireland



ILiAD research project explores a range of factors that may contribute to differential educational achievement (2012-2015)

INVESTIGATING LINKS IN ACHIEVEMENT AND DEPRIVATION - THE ILIAD STUDY



DUNCLUG



TULLYCARNET



ROSEMOUNT



THE DIAMOND



WHITEROCK



WOODSTOCK

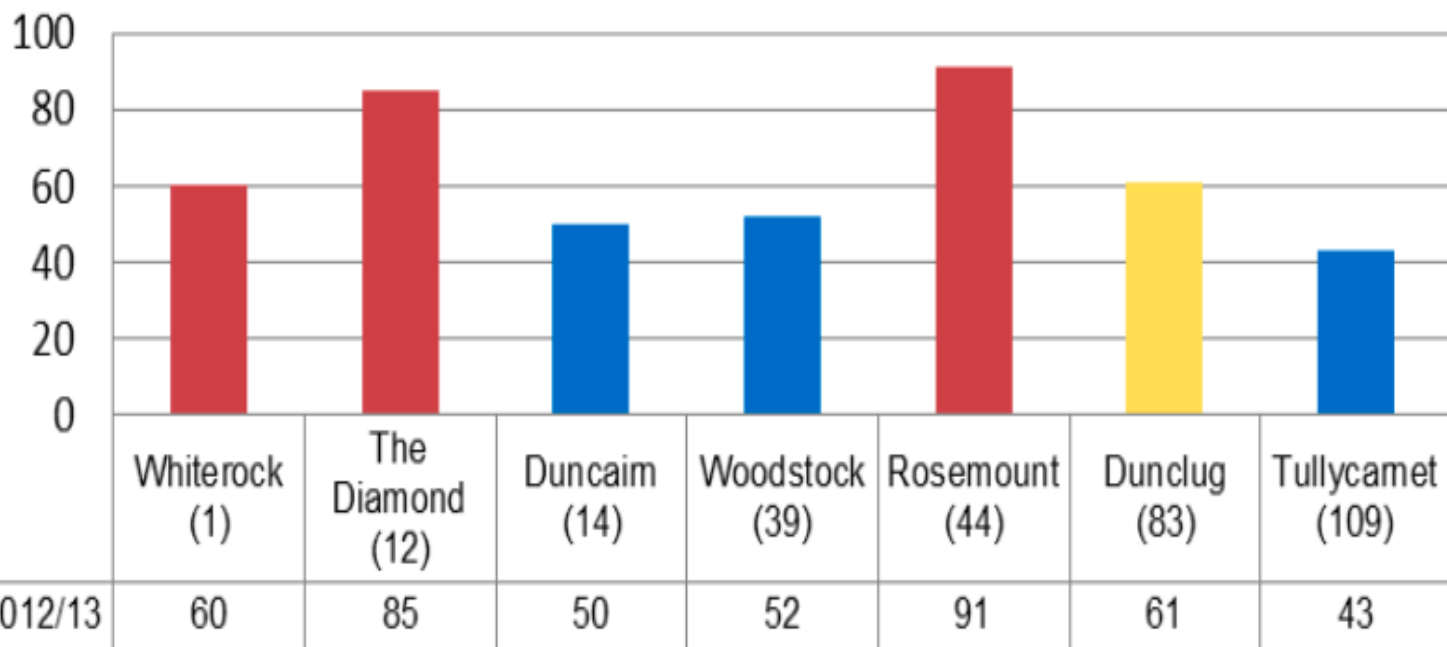


DUNCAIRN

<https://www.facebook.com/ILiadEdu>

IN-DEPTH CASE STUDY APPROACH TO 7 OF TOP 20% DEPRIVED NI WARDS

The seven Wards: % rates of 5GCSEs and deprivation rank



■ Five GCSEs A*-C 2012/13

■ Predominantly Catholic

■ Predominantly Protestant

■ Mix of Catholic and Protestant

DISSEMINATING LITERACY IN ACHIEVEMENT AND DEPRIVED AREAS



DUNCLUG

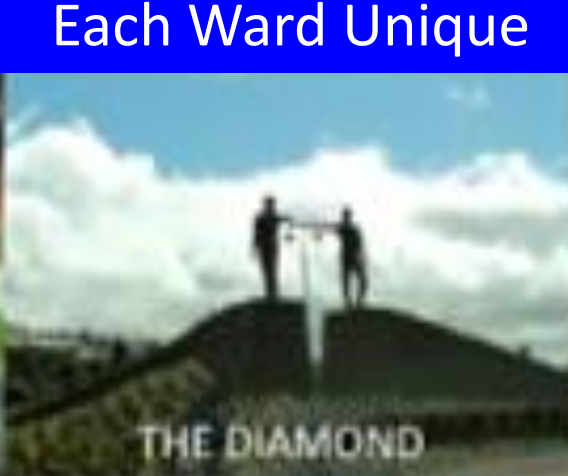


TULLYCARNET

Each Ward Unique



ROSEMOUNT



THE DIAMOND



WHITEROCK



WOODSTOCK



DUNCAIRN

Common factors that were identified as *enhancing* educational achievement across the seven Wards

At Immediate (individual-home-community) level

- Individual resilience
- Parental support and encouragement
- Sense of connectedness to local community
- Local youth and community input

At School level

- Visionary and collaborative leadership
- Effective school-community linkages and parental accessibility
- Provision of diverse curricula
- Positive teacher-pupil relationships
- Effective pastoral care and support for SEN pupils

At Structural/policy level

- Collaborative and proactive community services
- New and Improved school buildings and facilities
- High attainment performance of those that attend grammar school

Common factors that were identified as *inhibiting* educational achievement

At Immediate (individual-home-community) level

- Young people's mental health issues
- Adverse home conditions and inadequate levels of parental support
- Inter-generational transmission of educational failure
- Low self-esteem and aspirations of some young people

At School level

- Low expectations on the part of some schools/ teachers
- Weak school-community linkages
- Perceptions of some schools as 'middle-class' and 'detached'
- High rates of absenteeism and exclusion in some schools
- Insufficient support for SEN and behavioural problems

At Structural/policy level

- Current economic climate
- Legacies of the recent conflict
- Spatial detachment of schools and the communities they serve
- Variability in availability of quality pre-school provision
- Academic selection - negative effects

What about boys in the ILiAD
study?

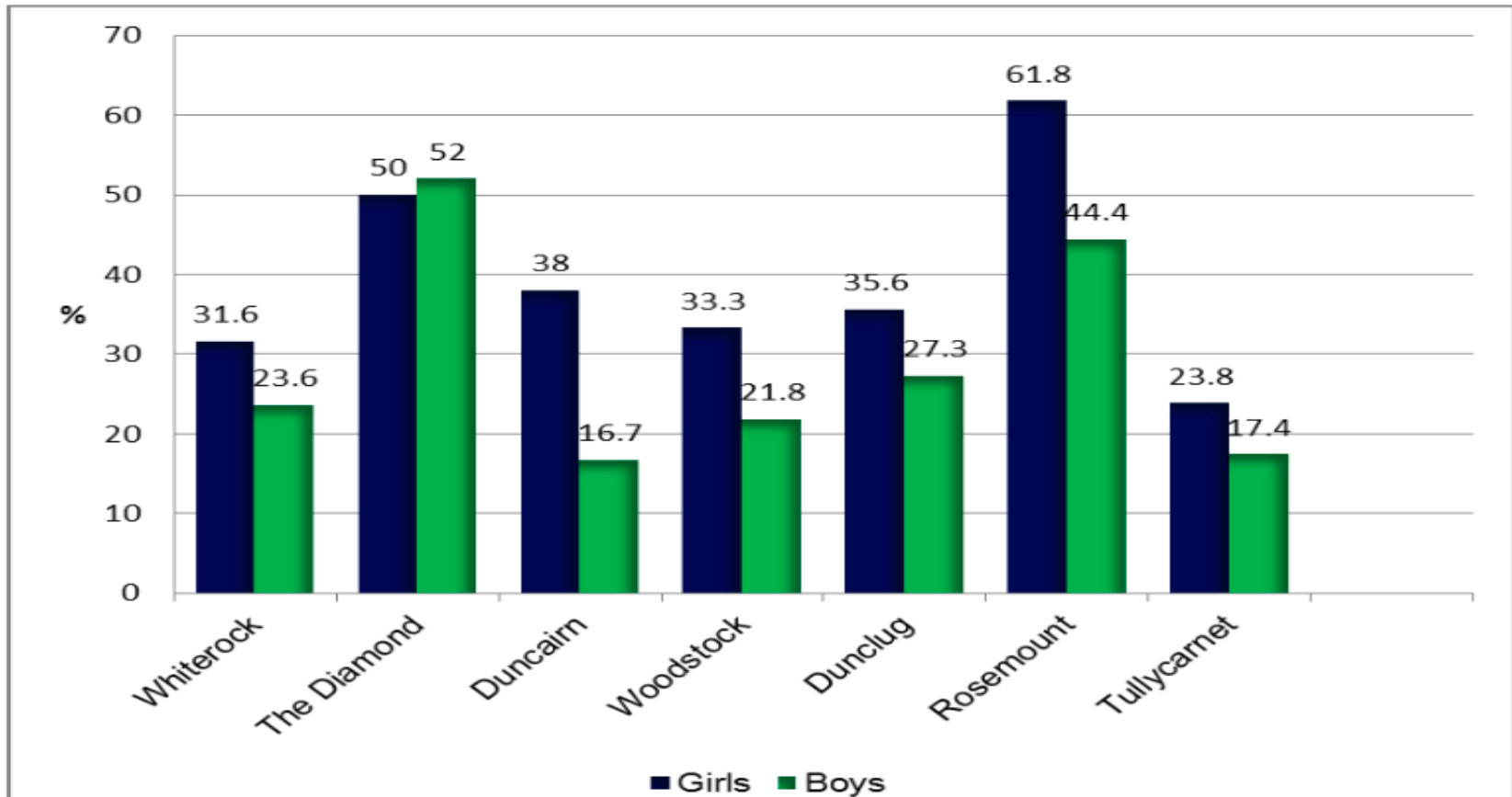
The underperformance of males - Debate of Girls vs. Boys

- Such a focus pays more attention to some things and forgets about other things
 - It ignores other differences between young people including:
 - social class (poverty)
 - religion and ethnicity
 - special educational needs etc
- which actually have far greater effects on outcomes /results
- And can drag attention away from the problems that girls also have in education.

If we focus on gender alone...then..

Boys do worse than girls


Out of the seven case study Wards girls *almost* consistently outperformed boys at GCSE Grade A*-C



Percentage of GCSE Grade A-C, including English and Maths by gender and Ward*

- With one exception: The Diamond where boys outperformed girls

So need to ask...



Which
boys?

For example, when we compare boys
and girls on socio-economic status?
(FSM as proxy for disadvantage)

Boys still do worse than girls

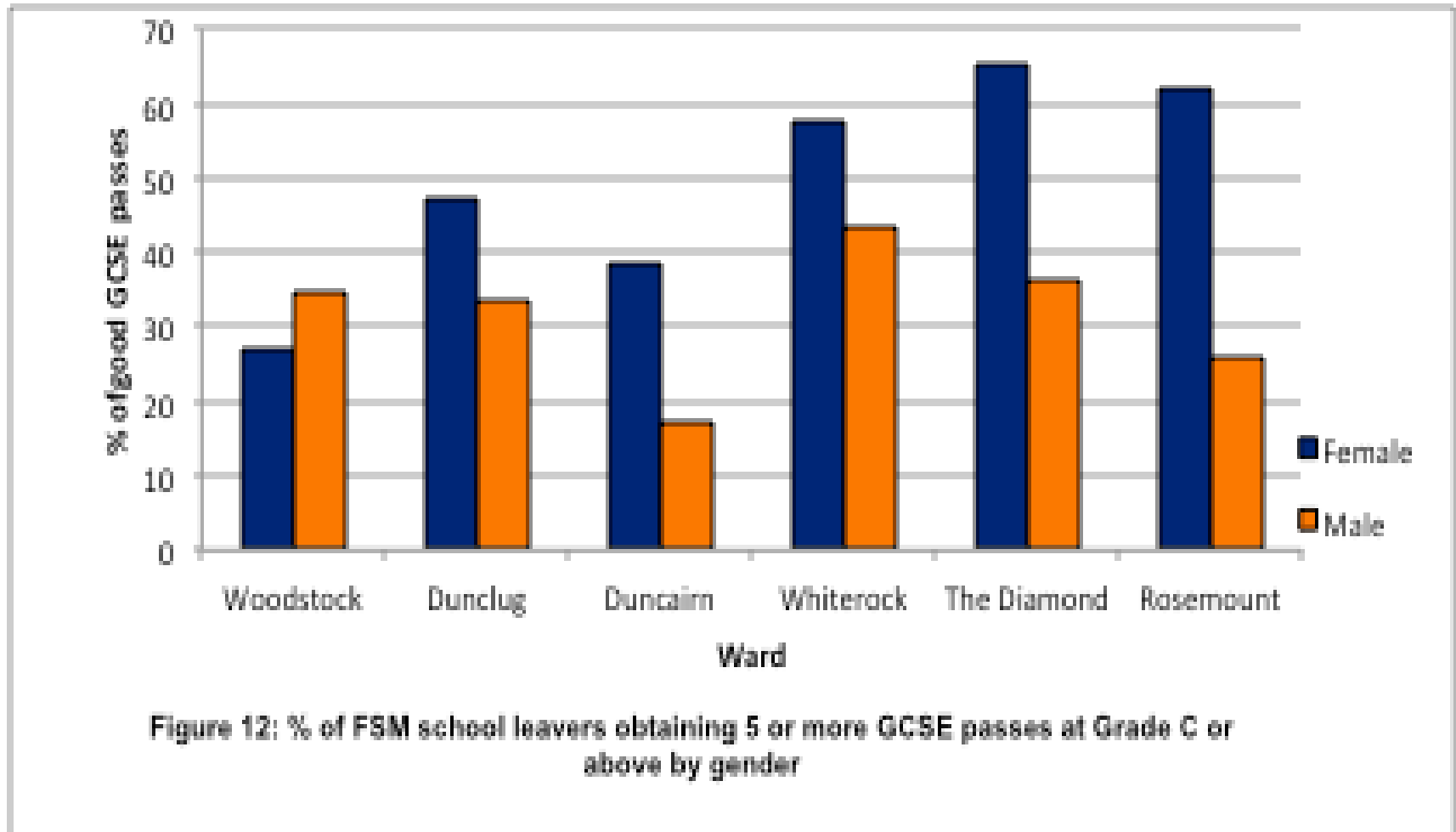


Figure 12: % of FSM school leavers obtaining 5 or more GCSE passes at Grade C or above by gender

With one exception: Woodstock where boys achieve better than girls.

For social disadvantage?

If we compare boys on FSM and non-
FSM?

More disadvantaged boys do worse* than other relatively disadvantaged boys

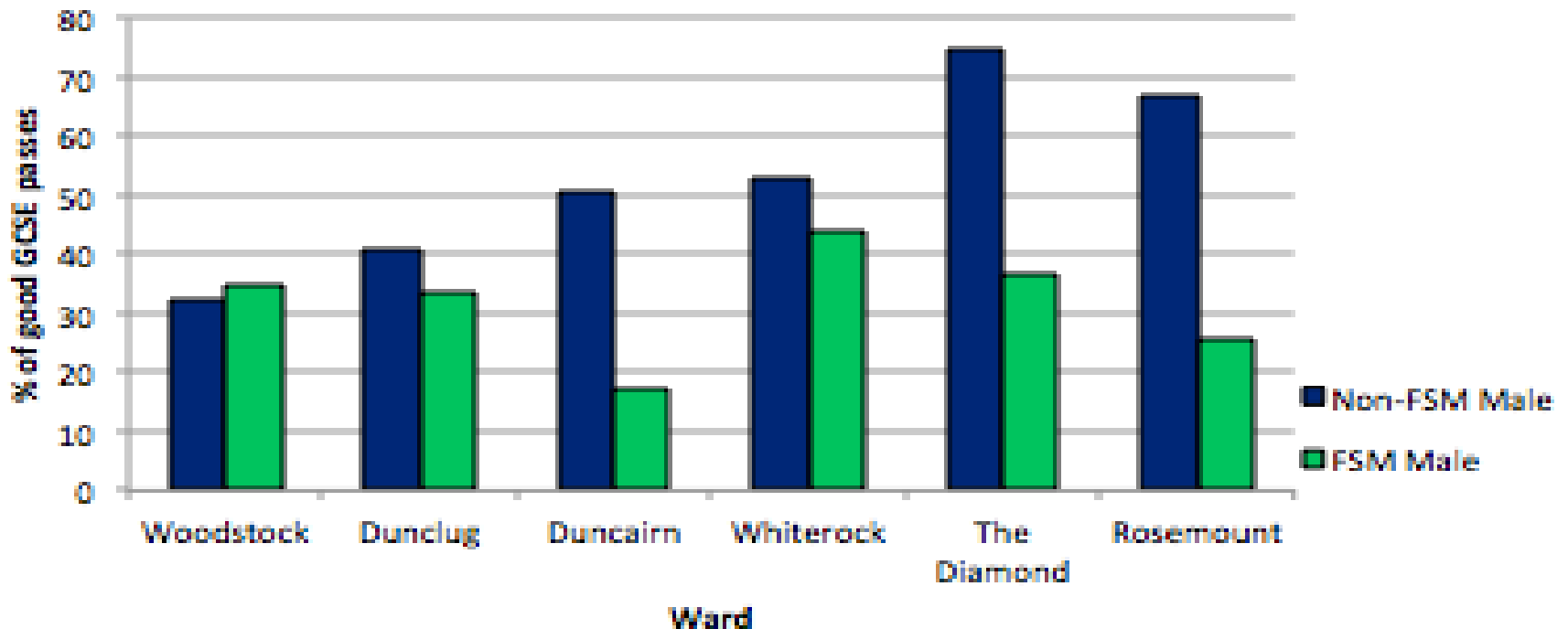


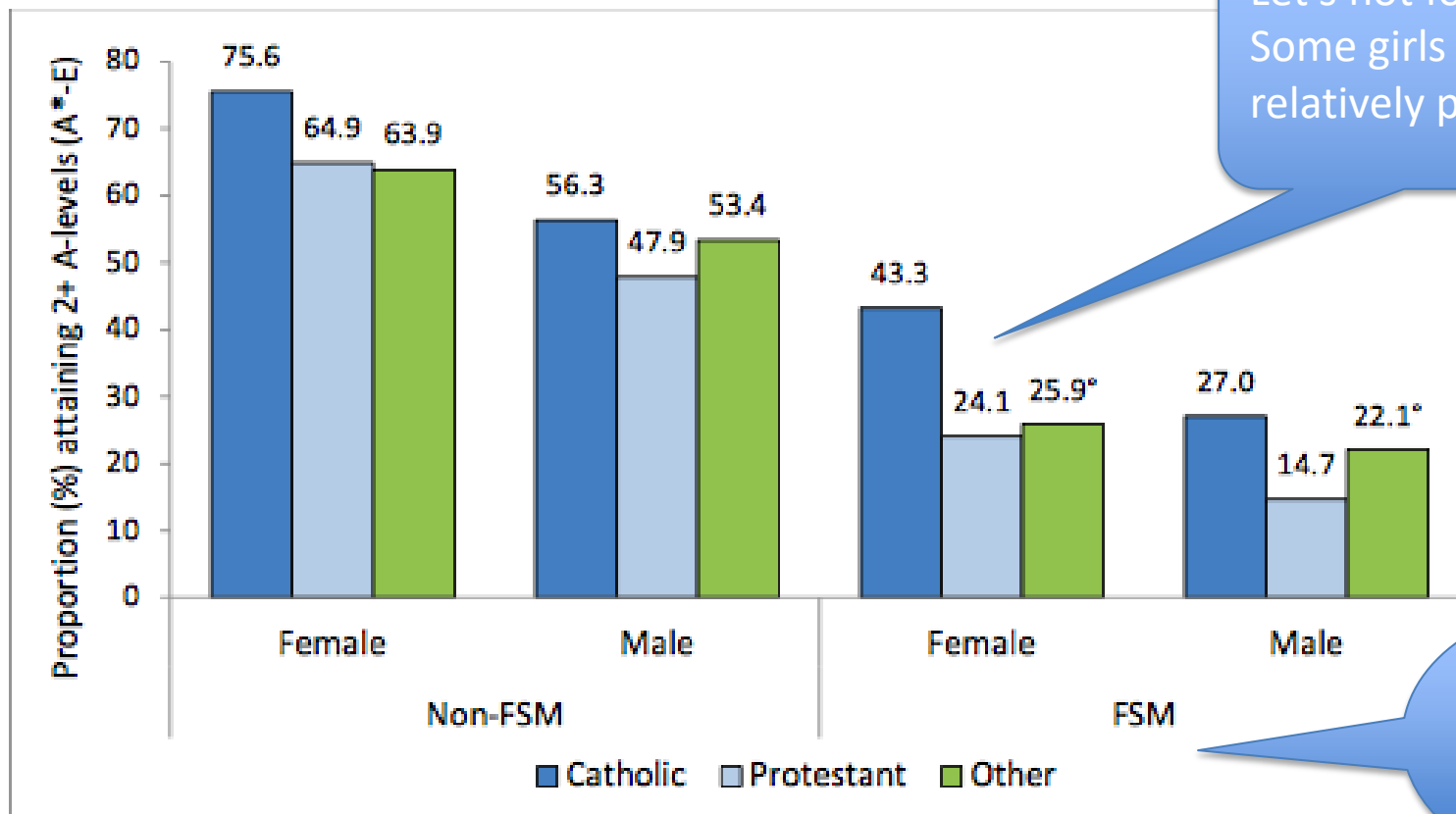
Figure 13: GCSE performance (5 or more at Grade C or above) among non-FSM and FSM males

*In all but one Ward Woodstock again where FSM males outperform non-FSM males

Now let's add in the factor of
religion in NI

Yes boys continue to compare poorly to girls in terms of progress at A level

Figure 3: Proportion of school leavers attaining 2+ A Levels (A*-C) by gender, religion and FSM status, 2011/12



Let's not forget
Some girls also do
relatively poorly

Not just
religion also
poverty

* Note that the number is less than 40

Then there is the factor of school
suspensions

Suspensions (& Expulsions)

Ratio: 3 male: 1 Female

Number of pupils ¹ suspended in the 2016_17 school year disaggregated by gender

| | Male | Female | Total |
|-----------------------------|------|--------|-------|
| Number of pupils | 3132 | 916 | 4048 |
| % of total pupil population | 1.09 | 0.32 | 1.41 |

1. These figures relate to all pupils undertaking Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1-4 in primary, post-primary and special schools

Number of pupils ¹ suspended in the 2015_16 school year disaggregated by gender

| | Male | Female | Total |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| Number of pupils | 3254 | 902 | 4156 |
| % of total pupil population | 1.14% | 0.34% | 1.47% |

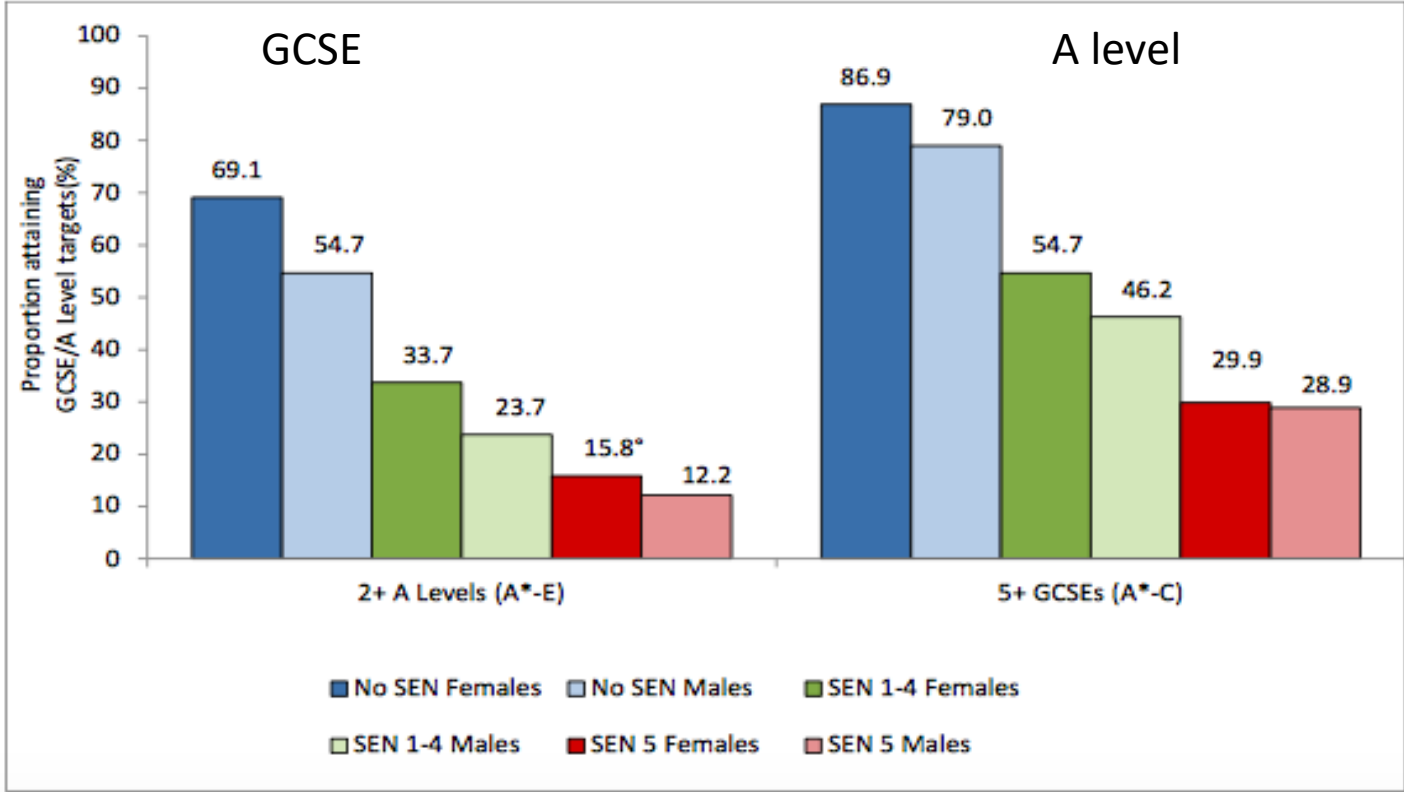
1. These figures relate to all pupils undertaking Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1-4 in primary, post-primary and special schools

2. Figures do not sum due to rounding

And then the issue of special
educational needs?

Special educational needs and gender

Figure 6: Proportion attaining GCSE and A Level attainment targets by SEN status and gender, 2011/12



* Note that the number is less than 40

That leaves us with the exceptions...What did we observe?

What can these tells us?

The Diamond (12th) - where boys do better than girls?

The Diamond: Drivers of Achievement

- Transition support
- Good pastoral care
- High discipline standards and academic expectations Rewarding effort and success
- Cooperation and links between schools
- Monitoring individual needs
- Intergenerational engagement
- **Low rates of high-absenteeism**



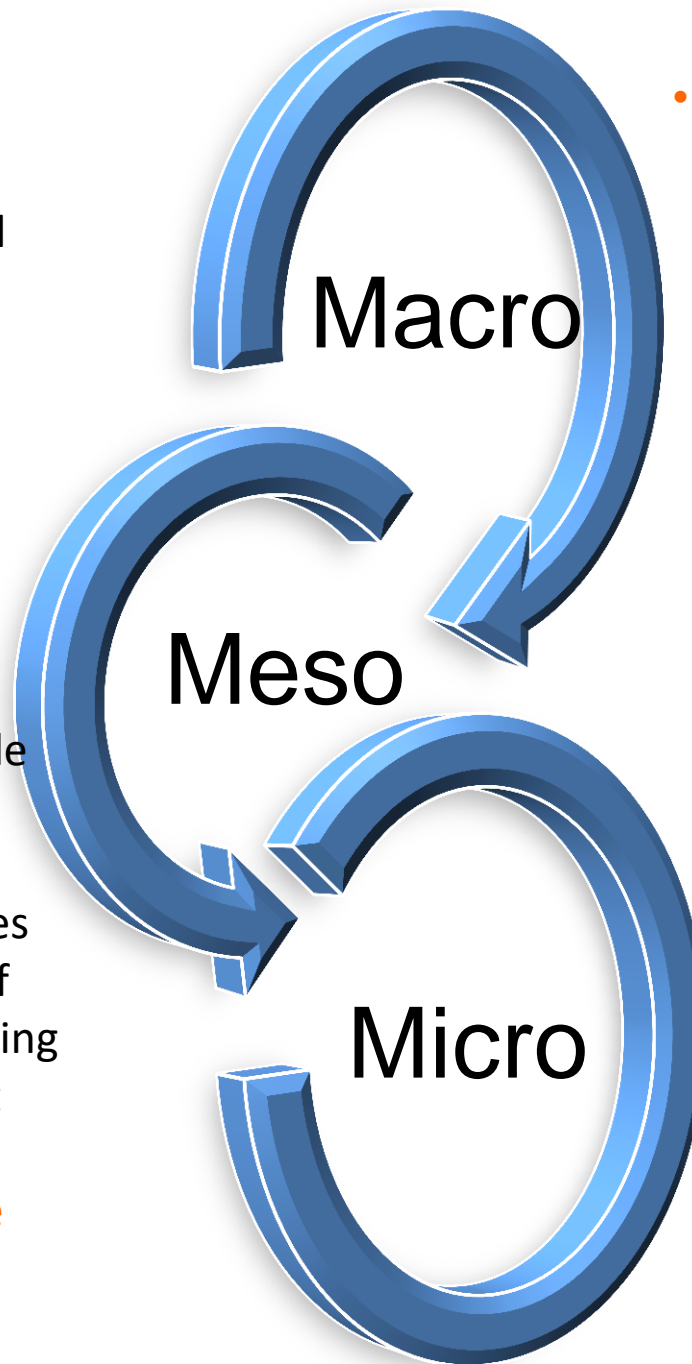
- Historical legacy of the Education Act 1947 (for Catholics)
- Inward investment and resources
- Social mixing in primary /post-primary schools
- **Equal number of grammar avenues for males and females**
- Recession as a driver
- High levels of youth club involvement
- Individual resilience and motivation
- **Family support and high expectations of parents**
- **Strong feeling connection to community**

Woodstock (39th) - where boys on FSM
do better than girls on FSM?

Woodstock:

Drivers of Achievement

- Strong, visionary school leadership
- Effective triangular relationship between school, home and community
- Younger and more empathetic teachers
- Provision of vocation opportunities and visible progression routes
- The adoption of interactive learning strategies
- Alternative measures of success and the rewarding effort and achievement
- Effective pastoral care systems and responsive SEN support in schools



- New and improved school buildings and facilities

Parental support and encouragement

-

In general, qualitatively...LiAD differences between boys' and girls' achievement related to:

- **value attached to schooling**

“There seems to be a real apathy sometimes with some of our parents ... maybe they themselves didn't have a good experience of school. School and education maybe aren't viewed as important in the Protestant community.” (Principal)

- **cultural expectations around educational achievement**

“The working class boys here, increasingly, are so disengaged they are just lacking such motivation.” (Senior teacher)

“The Protestant youngsters in this city don't see anything for them.....The boys don't seem to understand that when they do go for a job the Catholics are going to get the job because they are better educated.” (Principal)

- **pedagogical approaches and learning styles**

“If a boy doesn't see why it's relevant he doesn't see why he should work at it.” (Vice principal)

- **self-esteem and lack of positive role models**

“One of the problems, I think, is that they (boys from disadvantaged communities) have no one to look up to ... no one who they can aspire to be.” (Youth worker)

- **absenteeism/exclusion**

“There are certain schools ... that are very quick to expel, in my opinion ... their attitude towards it is, we can't deal with them so let's get rid of them ... that is an impact upon their educational outcome ..” (EWO)

Boys' Achievement in Context

- Boys' underachievement tends to be framed in terms of what education systems, schools and teachers can do as a means of redressing inequalities in society ...rather than how redressing inequalities in society can lead to more equitable educational outcomes.
- It is not helpful to examine schooling or the curriculum in isolation of wider societal issues.
- It needs to be addressed **holistically** and that is fundamentally what the ILiAD report reinforced .

Let's never turn the matter of boy's
underachievement into a simple
debate
between boys and girls.

Thank- you