



Addressing Gender Underperformance

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What we will cover today

- The issue
- Misconceptions
- What to do

The National Picture

Gap in academic skills of girls and boys widens, show Sats

KS2

English primary results also show disadvantaged pupils continue to lag behind



▲ The only bright spot for boys was in the proportion achieving the government's higher standard in maths, with 29% hitting the mark compared to 25% of girls. Photograph: Mikhail Aleksandrov/Tass

Girls continue to outperform boys in all subjects by the end of primary school in England, according to the latest key stage 2 test results published by the [Department for Education \(DfE\)](#).

The results, from the [national curriculum tests and assessments](#) taken by pupils in year six, known as Sats, showed 70% of girls reached the expected standards in maths, reading and writing, compared with just 60% for boys, widening the gap from 8% last year to 10% this year.

GCSE results 2019: Girls still lead the way over boys

Pippa Allen-Kinross



Thu 22nd Aug 2019, 14.57



Girls are continuing to outperform boys at GCSE, but the gap is closing in some unexpected places.

Looking just at data for 16-year-olds in England, this year 5.4 per cent of all grades handed out to girls were the coveted grade 9, compared to 3.9 per cent for boys.

And while nearly three quarters of grades for girls were a pass at level 4 or above (74.3 per cent), only two thirds of grades for boys were the same.

Schools Week has taken a deeper dive to see where the gap is narrowing – and where it is growing.

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KS4

KS5

Figure 9: A level attainment by gender, 2018 (table 1a)
England, 2018

	All A level students		Students ¹ entered for one or more A levels or applied A levels					Students ¹ entered for one or more A levels		
	Number of students	APS per entry	Number of students	% A level cohort	APS per entry in best 3 A levels (grade)	% achieving 3 A*-A grades or better	% achieving grades AAB or better	Number of students	% A level cohort	% achieving grades AAB or better, of which at least two are in facilitating subjects
Female	167,081	33.69 (C+)	130,220	77.9	33.75 (C+)	11.5	20.1	129,628	77.6	14.4
Male	140,068	32.28 (C+)	103,134	73.6	32.70 (C+)	13.8	21.2	102,990	73.5	17.8

Source: 16-18 attainment data

What “boy friendly” approaches have you used or been encouraged to use during your career?



Do we amplify societies stereotypes?



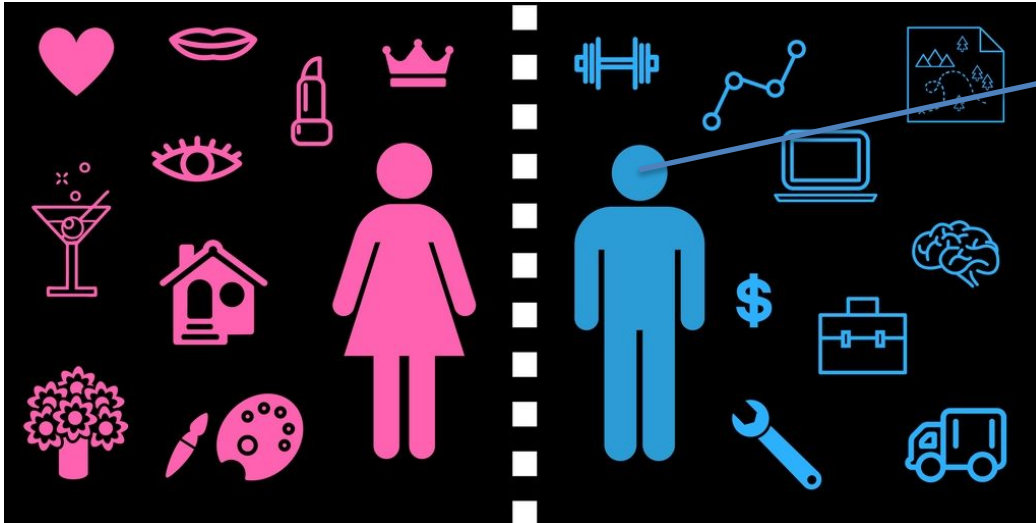
Myhill & Jones (2004)

- ‘Tendency to associate boys with underachievement and girls with high achievement’
- ‘80% of the teachers expected that boys and girls should get same results. This commitment to equal achievement, however, was not reflected in teachers’ perceptions...about classroom attitude and behaviour and ability within different areas of the curriculum.’

Myhill, D. & Jones, S. (2004) ‘Troublesome boys’ and ‘compliant girls’: gender identity and perceptions of achievement and underachievement, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 25, No. 5, pp. 547-561

Myhill & Jones (2006)

62%

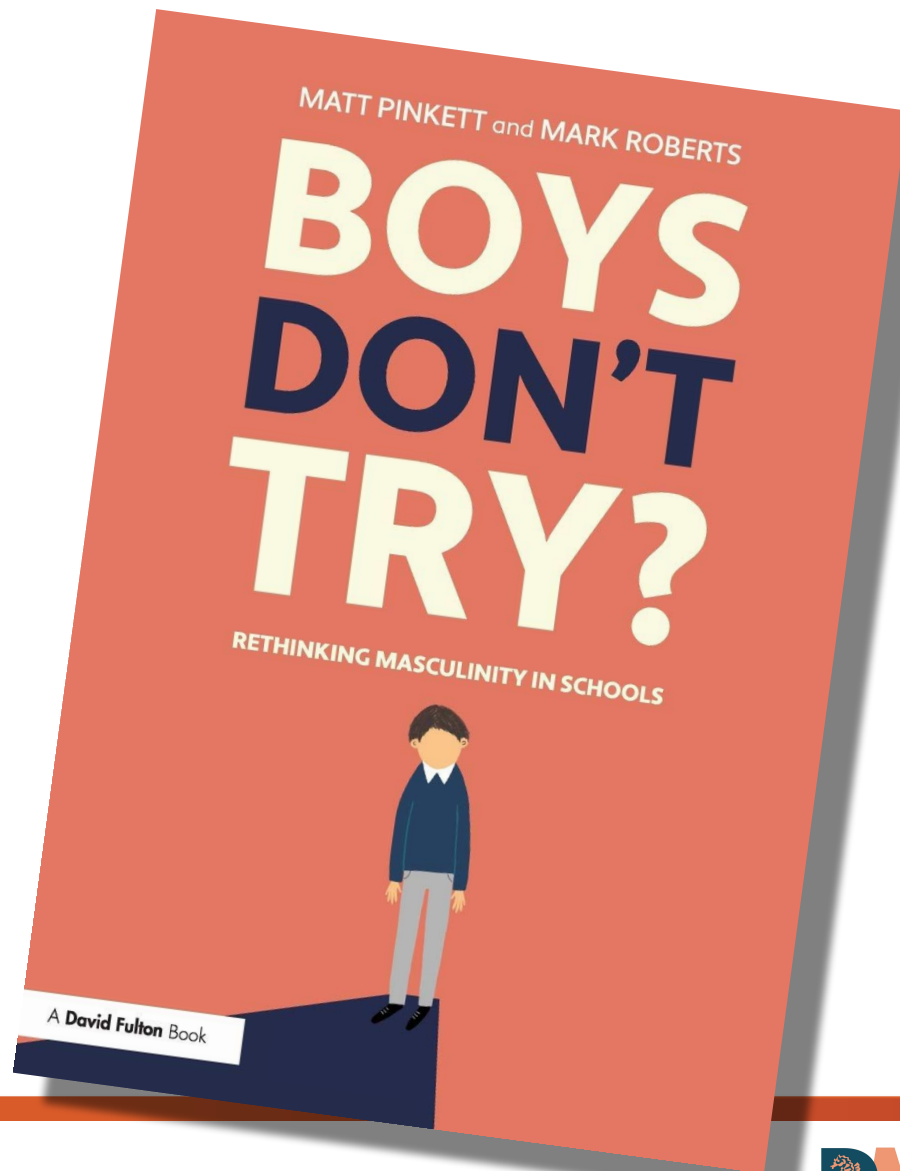


Myhill, D. & Jones, S. (2006) 'She doesn't shout at no girls': pupils' perceptions of gender equity in the classroom, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 99-113

Issued raised:

- Girls get away with poor behaviour - teachers don't expect them to be naughty
- Teachers – especially male ones - are gentler with girls
- Girls are treated more like adults because teachers think they are more mature than boys
- Boys are told off more and punished more for similar behaviour
- Male teachers can be manipulated by girls

Matt Pinkett & Mark Roberts



Boy engagement myths: Mark Roberts

1. Boys like competition

- Demotivates boys who don't immediately succeed
- Boys who don't succeed are the ones who need most motivation

Jackson (2002; 2006) Elkjaer (1992)

Boy engagement myths: Mark Roberts

2. Boys and girls are ‘naturally different’ and need to be taught differently

- Differences between the ‘male brain’ and ‘female brain’ are slight and contentious
- More *within* gender differences than *between* gender differences

Baron-Cohen (2004), Slavin (1994)

Extrovert

Introvert



Boy engagement myths: Mark Roberts

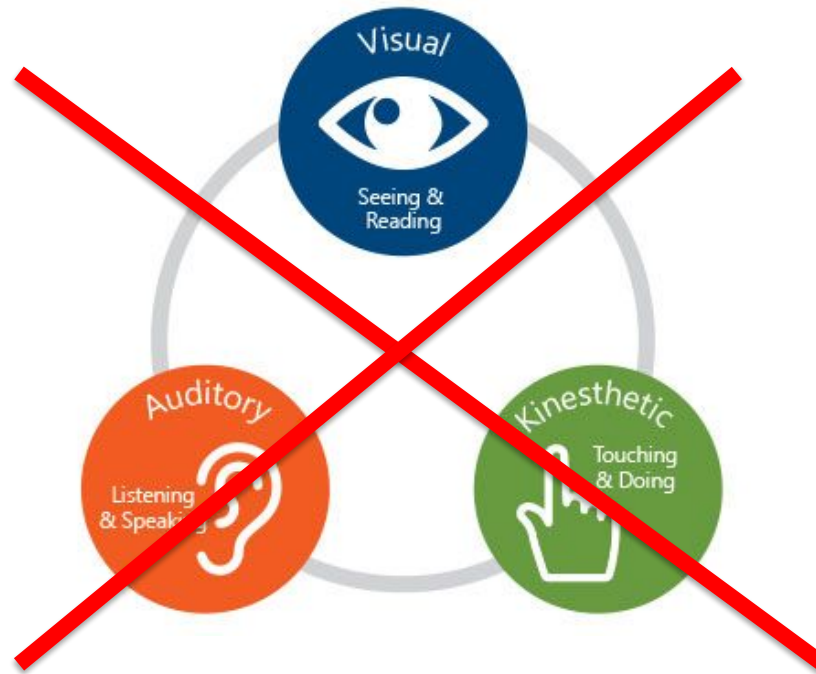
3. Boys need topics that are relevant to them

- ‘Boy-friendly’ curricula do not improve boys’ achievement
- Gender-stereotyping ignores pupils’ genuine interests and limit aspirations of boys (and girls)

Pickering (1997), Lingard et al (2002; 2003), Keddie and Mills (2008), Younger and Warrington et al (2005)

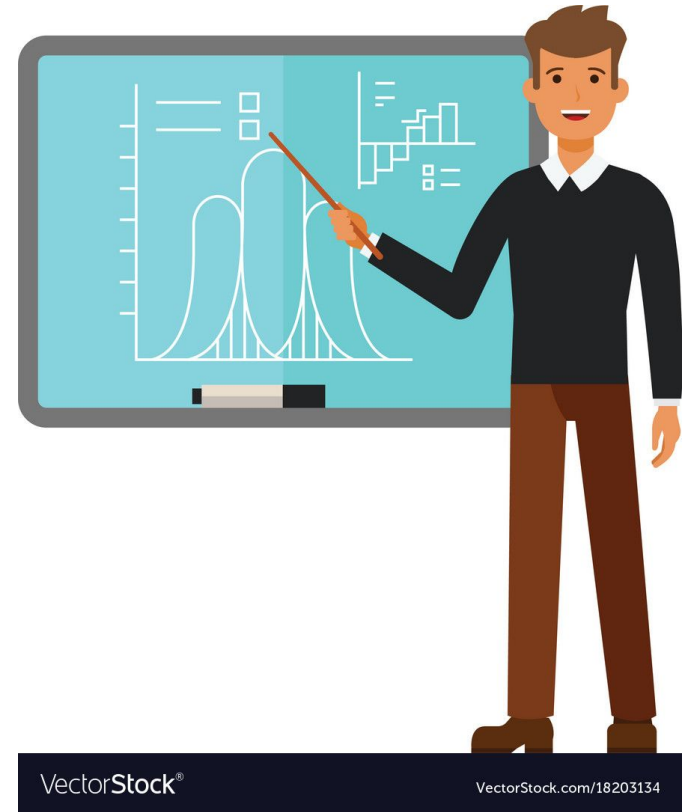
Boy engagement myths: Mark Roberts

4. Boys have different learning styles



Boy engagement myths: Mark Roberts

5. Boys prefer male teachers



Boy engagement myths: Mark Roberts

5. All boys are struggling



Recommendations

1. Accept there is no silver bullet

Boy-friendly teaching will not tackle gender divide



Tackling boys' underachievement by teaching them differently to girls is “absolutely wrong”, according to the chairman of the review of the National Curriculum in England. Tim Oates CBE argued that attending to different styles of learning was misguided because the kind of “learning strategies” that girls had used to get ahead had been proven to work with boys as well.

In a keynote speech at a conference on gender differences staged by exams group Cambridge Assessment, Mr Oates said that only by studying what worked and making it available to both sexes could gender differences be reduced. Mr Oates pointed out that a number of people had said because there was such a large problem with under-attaining boys, to have boy-friendly pedagogy in schools would be needed. He said that because the strategies that girls used had also been shown to benefit boys, the focus should be on examining what would optimise attainment and making it available to all groups.

2. Audit your language and behaviours



Trends from observations:

Questioning:

- Boys more willing to put their hands-up and answer questions.
- Girls were more likely to be targeted with questions.
- Boys more commonly asked to share answers.

Feedback:

- Girls were more likely to ask for help and check for understanding.
- Girls were more likely to check with each other as to the correct answer.
- Boys were happier to clarify their thinking in front of the class while girls did so between classmates.

Practice:

- Boys were more willing to discuss with their partner than girls (only 2 mixed pairs in one class).
- Boys were quicker to stop working once stuck and to fail to restart. This was not always noticed/challenged.
- In general boys appeared to have less pride in their work but there were several exceptions to this.
- Girls more likely to plan longer written answers.
- Boys less likely to use all available materials to help (e.g. ignoring a sheet on the desk).
- Boys were less likely to set out the work in the prescribed manner, taking what they saw as shortcuts.

Questioning

- Who am I asking questions?
- Who am I accepting answers from?
- What language am I using when asking questions?
- Who am I asking lower and higher cognitive questions to?

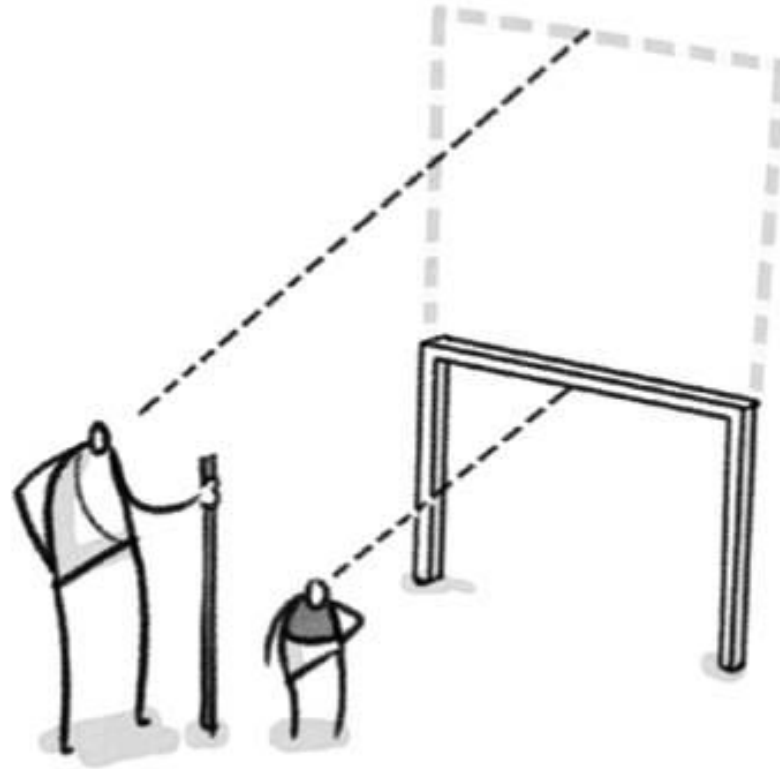
Feedback

- Who am I giving feedback to during the lesson?
- How is the feedback being delivered?
- Are girls and boys acting on the feedback in the same way?

Practice

- Are boys and girls engaging in purposeful practice in the same way?
- Do boys reflect my expectations during purposeful practice?

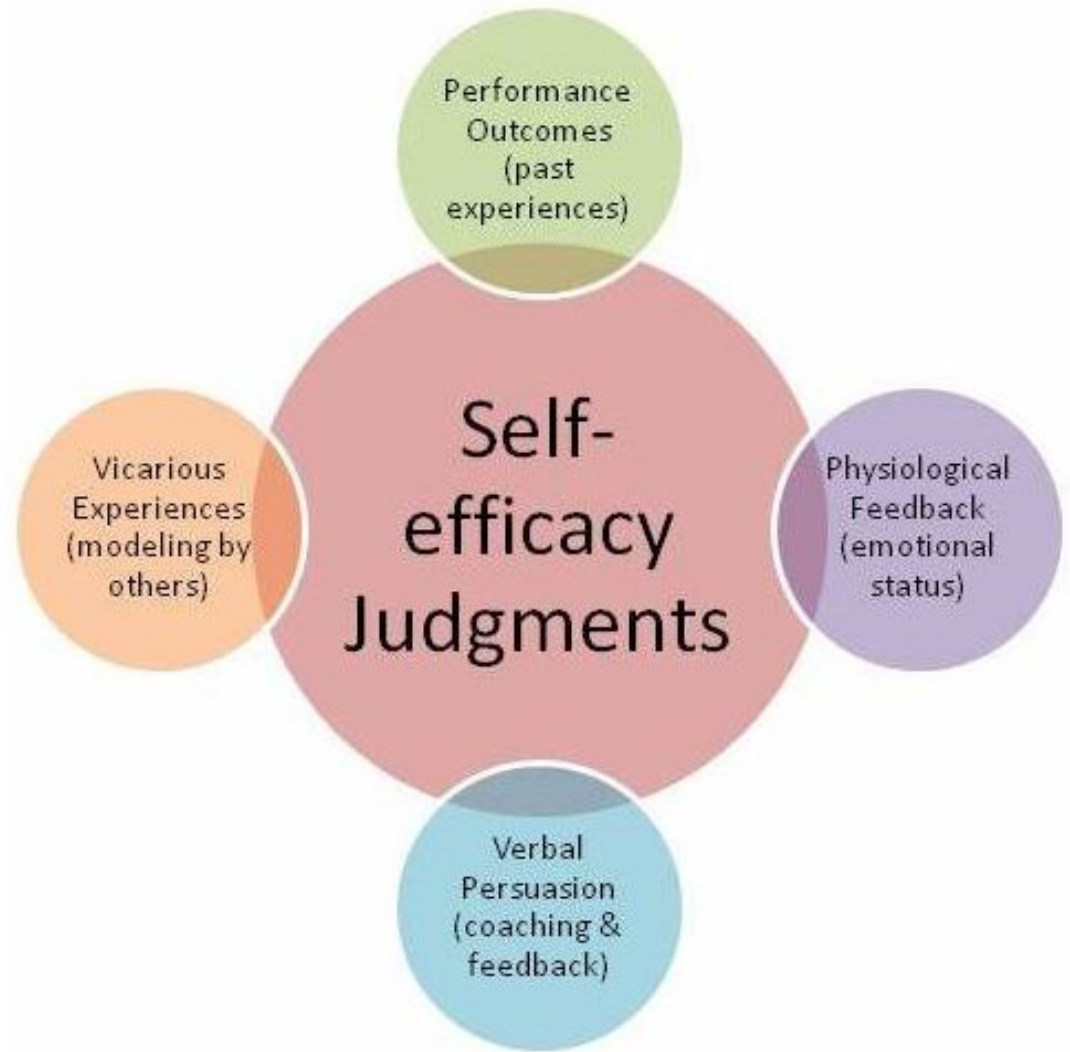
3. Set your expectations high



4. Build positive relationships based on effective behaviour management

- Depersonalise behaviour
- Don't hold grudges
- Very clear expectations
- Positive reinforcement
- Let them know that you care (but not too much)
- 80% pep talks/instilling a sense of belief
- 20% letting them know when you're disappointed
- Stay calm at all times (apart from when you're pretending to be really quite cross)

5. Build self-efficacy in male students



6. Focus on our best bets

17 Principles of Effective Instruction

The following list of 17 principles emerges from the research discussed in the main article. It overlaps with, and offers slightly more detail than, the 10 principles used to organize that article.

- Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning.
- Present new material in small steps with student practice after each step.
- Limit the amount of material students receive at one time.
- Give clear and detailed instructions and explanations.
- Ask a large number of questions and check for understanding.
- Provide a high level of active practice for all students.
- Guide students as they begin to practice.
- Think aloud and model steps.
- Provide models of worked-out problems.
- Ask students to explain what they have learned.
- Check the responses of all students.
- Provide systematic feedback and corrections.
- Use more time to provide explanations.
- Provide many examples.
- Reteach material when necessary.
- Prepare students for independent practice.
- Monitor students when they begin independent practice.

Final task

Choose two things you can start doing from tomorrow

Choose one thing you want to be different by September