

## The Effect of School Social Mix on Academic Outcomes

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# Introduction

- Does social context or the concentration of disadvantage have an impact on children's school performance?
- If it does, why does this occur?
- What are the implications for policy?



# International Research

- Difficult to compare studies
  - Different measures of composition, different outcomes, different methods
  - Unclear whether context matters
- Where context does matter – why?
  - Expectations
  - Academic orientation, curriculum
  - Behavioural climate
  - Peer effects



# The DEIS Programme

- Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS)
  - Introduced 2005, integrating existing measures
  - Targeting resources towards schools with higher concentrations of disadvantage
  - Schools identified from range of Poverty Indicators (ERIC): including unemployment, local authority housing, free book grant eligibility
  - 674 Primary schools
    - 340 Urban
    - 334 Rural



# The DEIS Programme

- Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS)
  - Main focus:
    - Enhancing literacy and numeracy
    - Increased teacher allocation (particularly Urban Band 1)
    - School planning
    - Access to additional supports – Home-School-Community Liaison Officers, Library resources, ICT

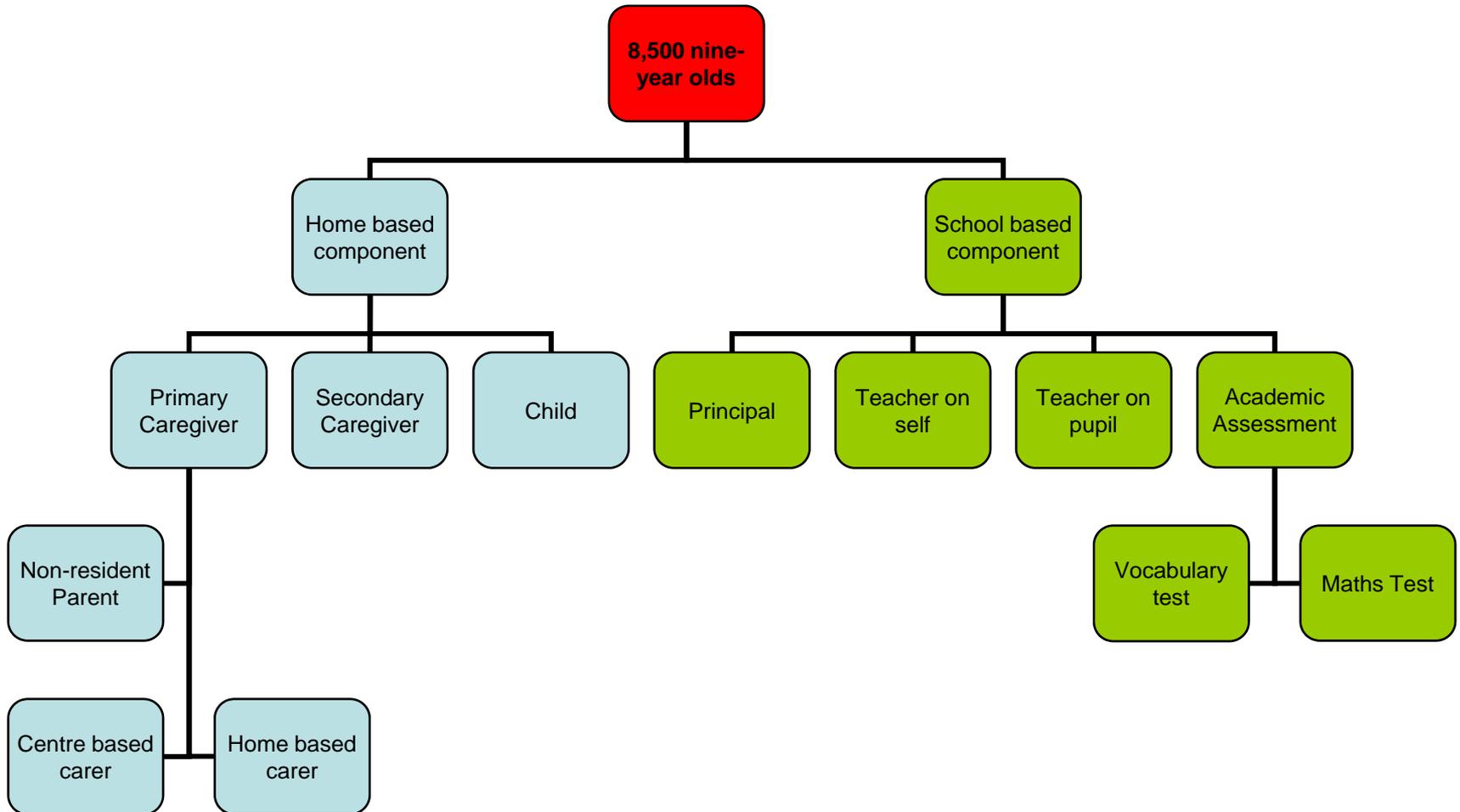


# Advantages of GUI data

- Large sample size – one-in-seven of all 9 year olds; allows us to examine the experiences of children from different social backgrounds
- Sampling of children within schools: link school-level, teacher-level and individual-level factors
- Information from multiple perspectives



# 9 year Quantitative Component



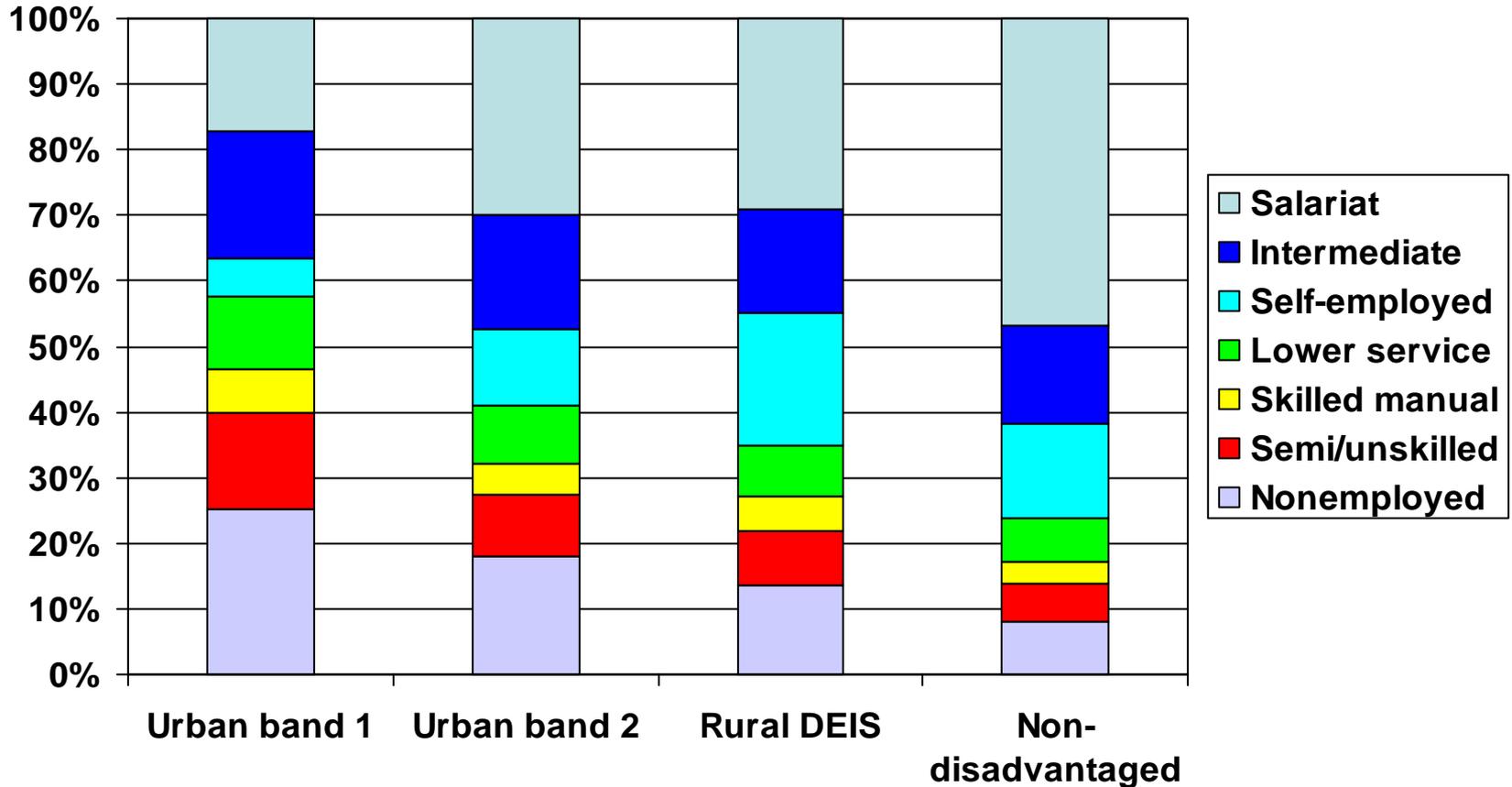


# How do DEIS and non-DEIS schools differ?

- Social background of pupils
- School resources
- Teacher characteristics
- School climate
- Student engagement
- Academic outcomes

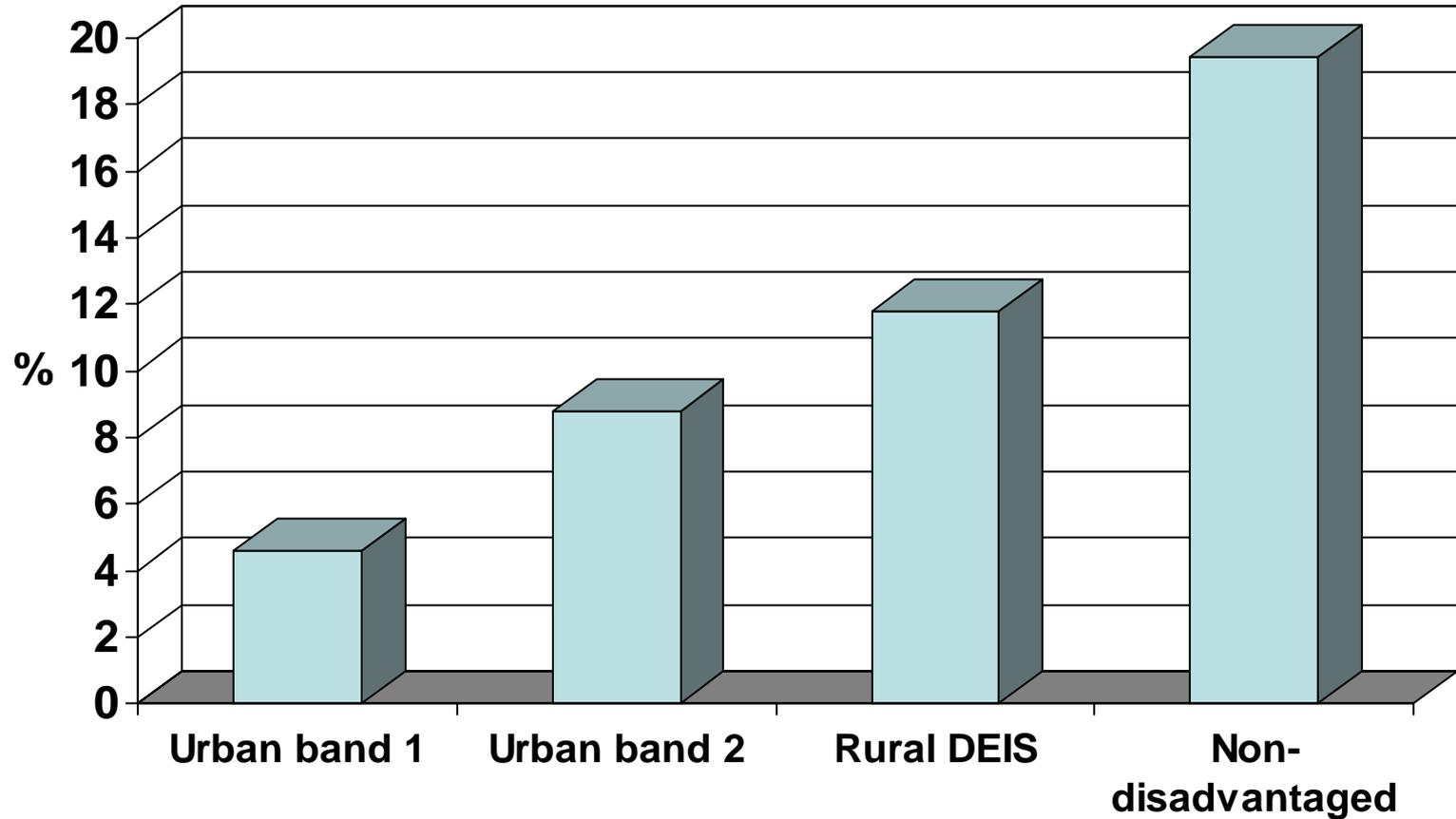


# Social class background of pupils



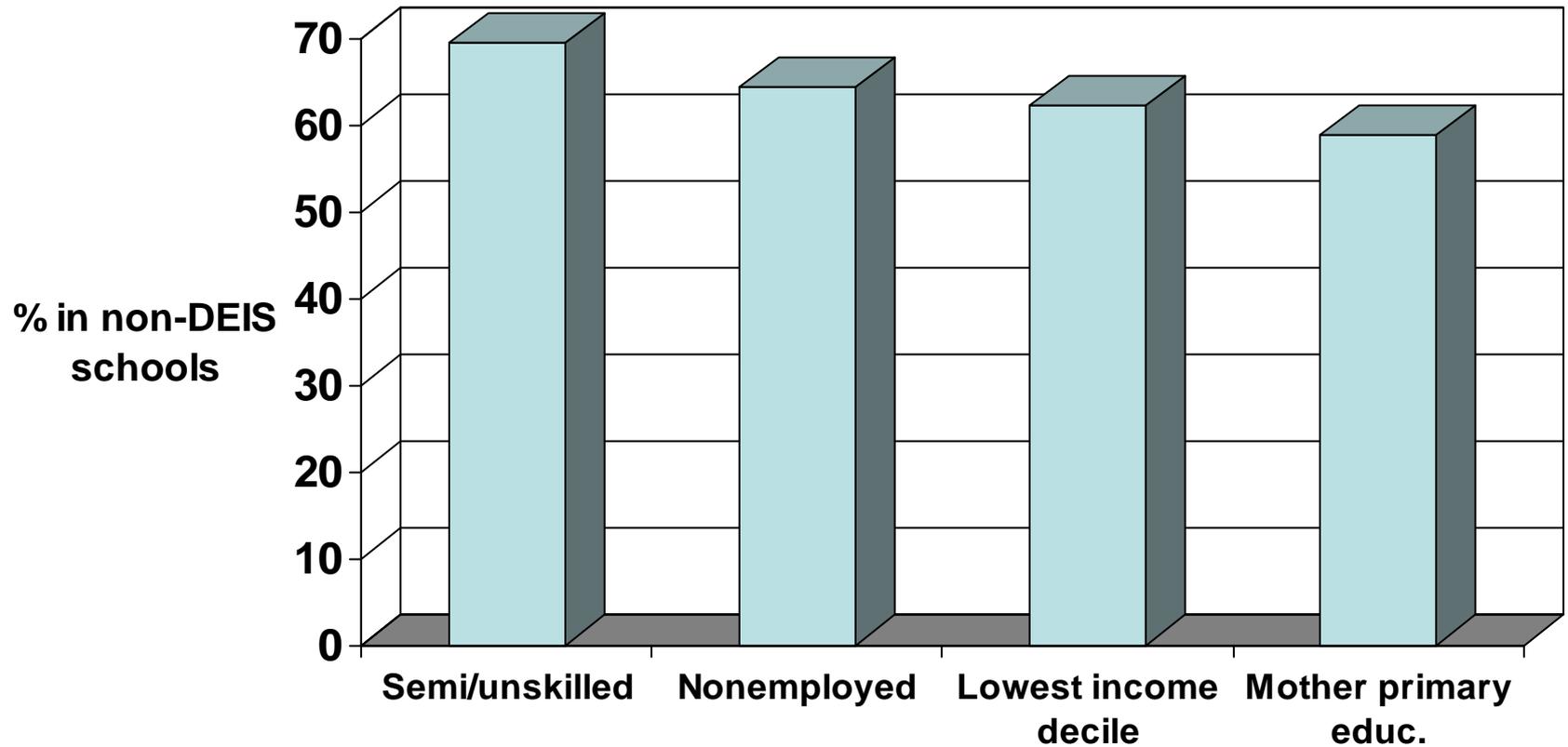


# Degree-level qualifications (mother)



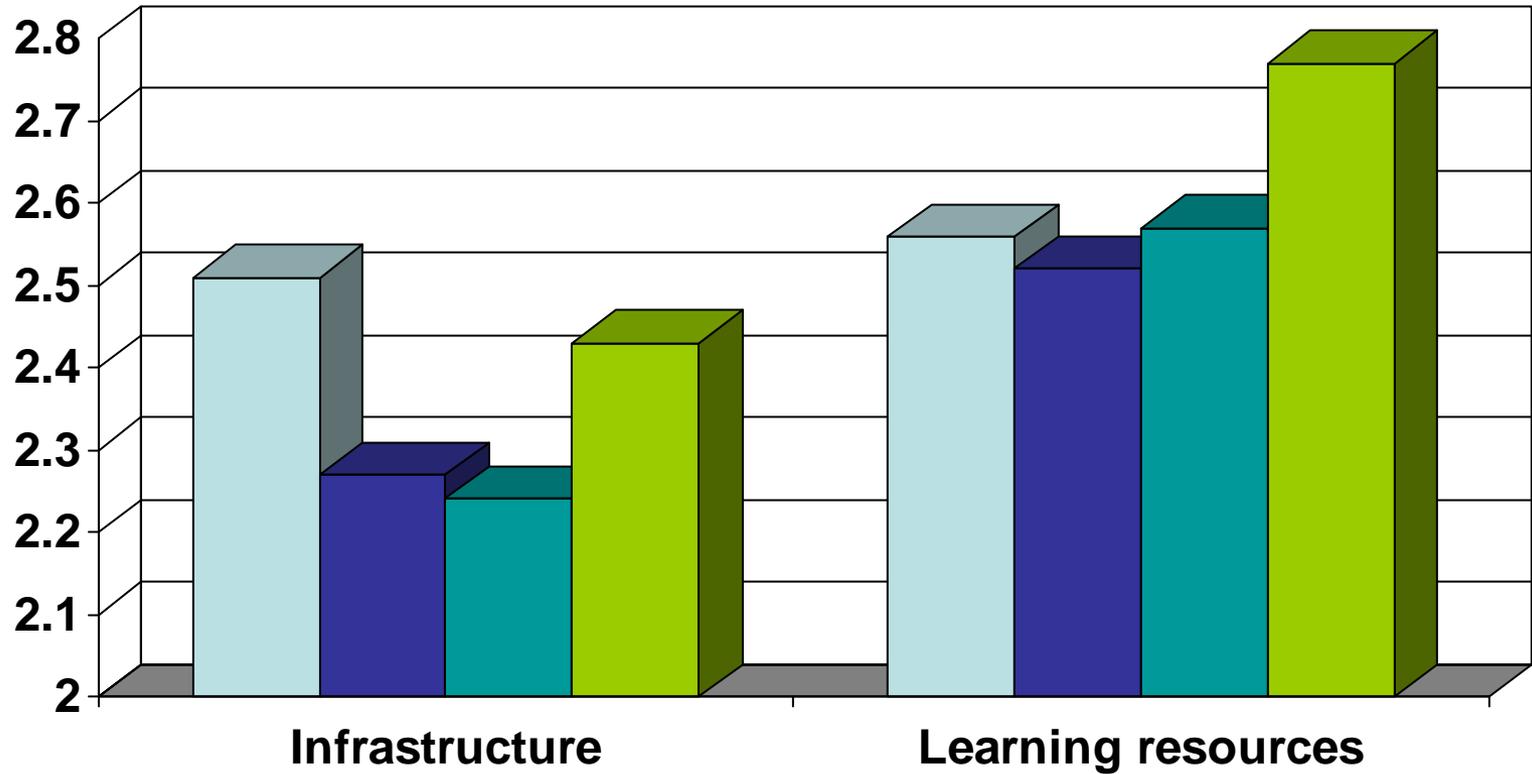


# But not all disadvantaged children attend DEIS schools





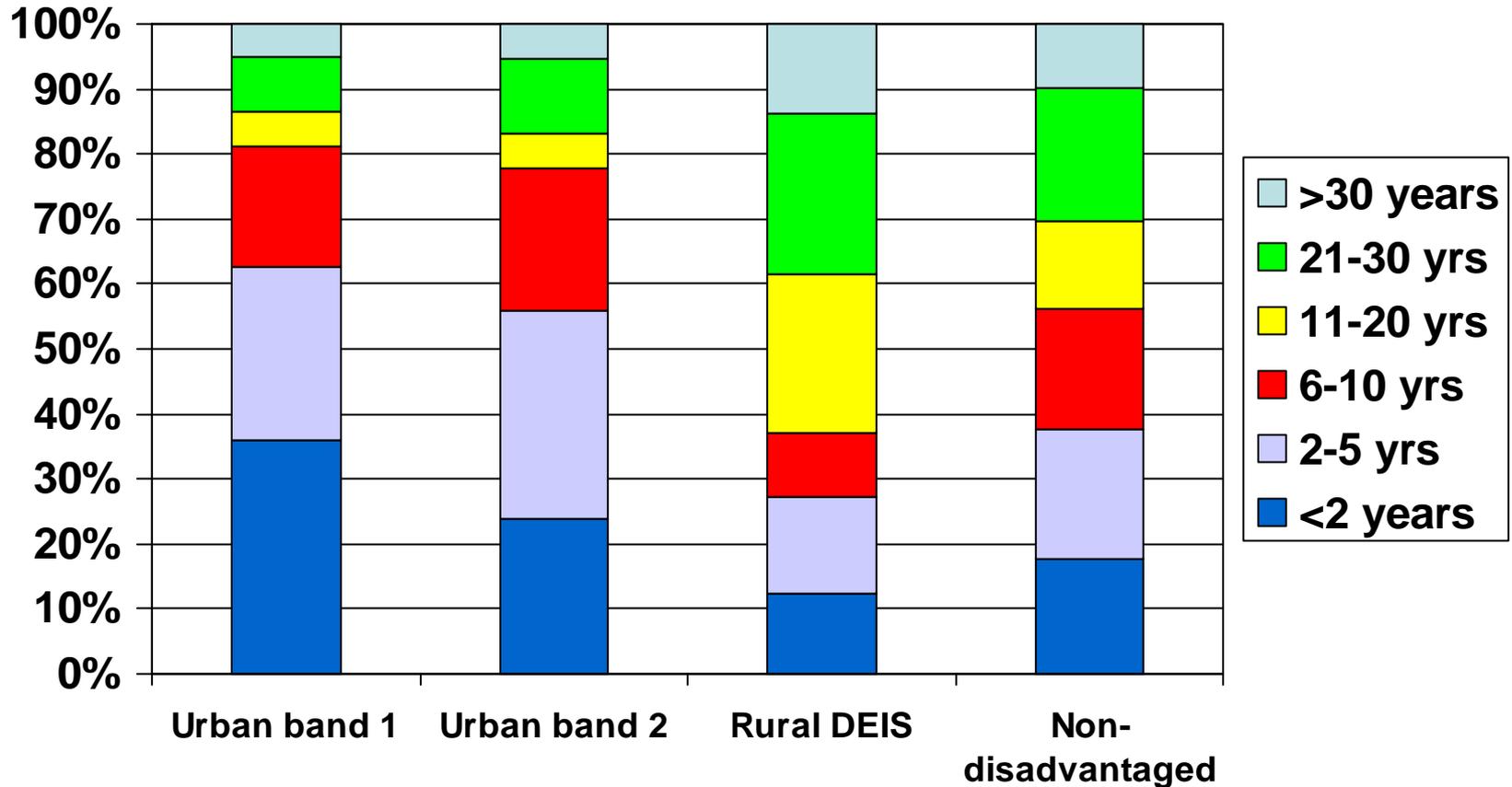
# School resources (perceived adequacy)



Urban band 1 Urban band 2 Rural DEIS Non-disadvantaged

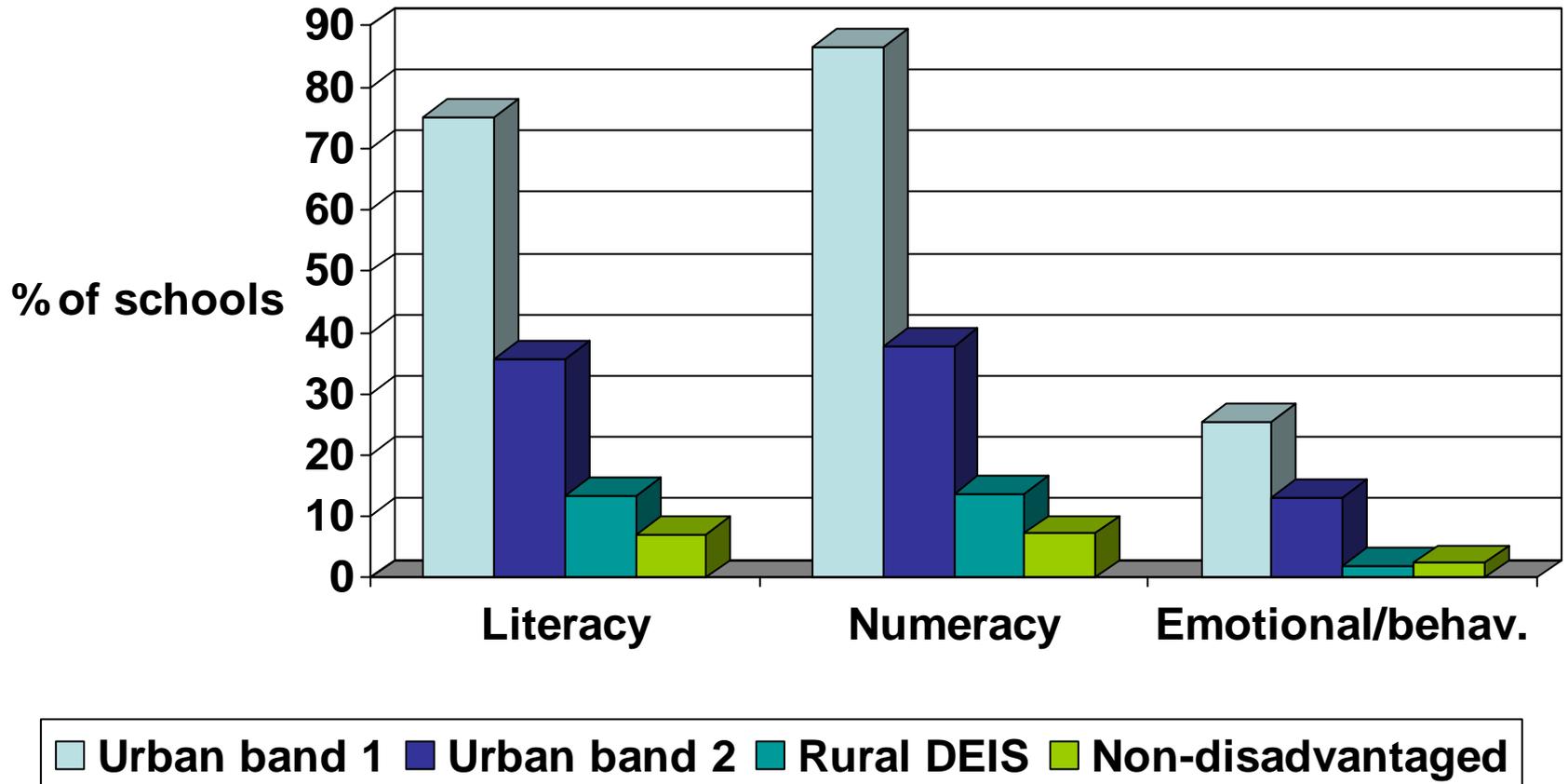


# Teacher characteristics: years teaching

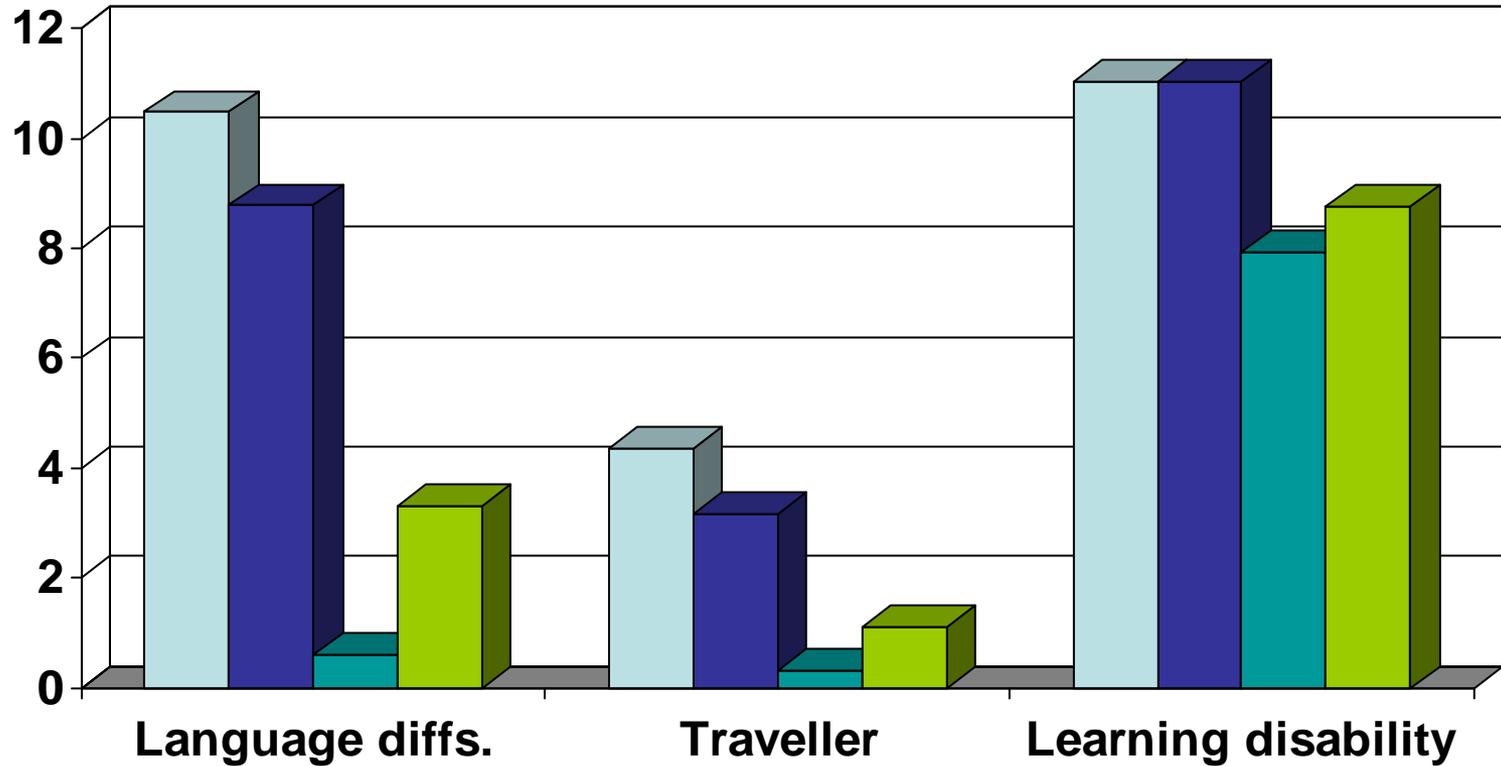




# School climate: Problems among >25% of intake



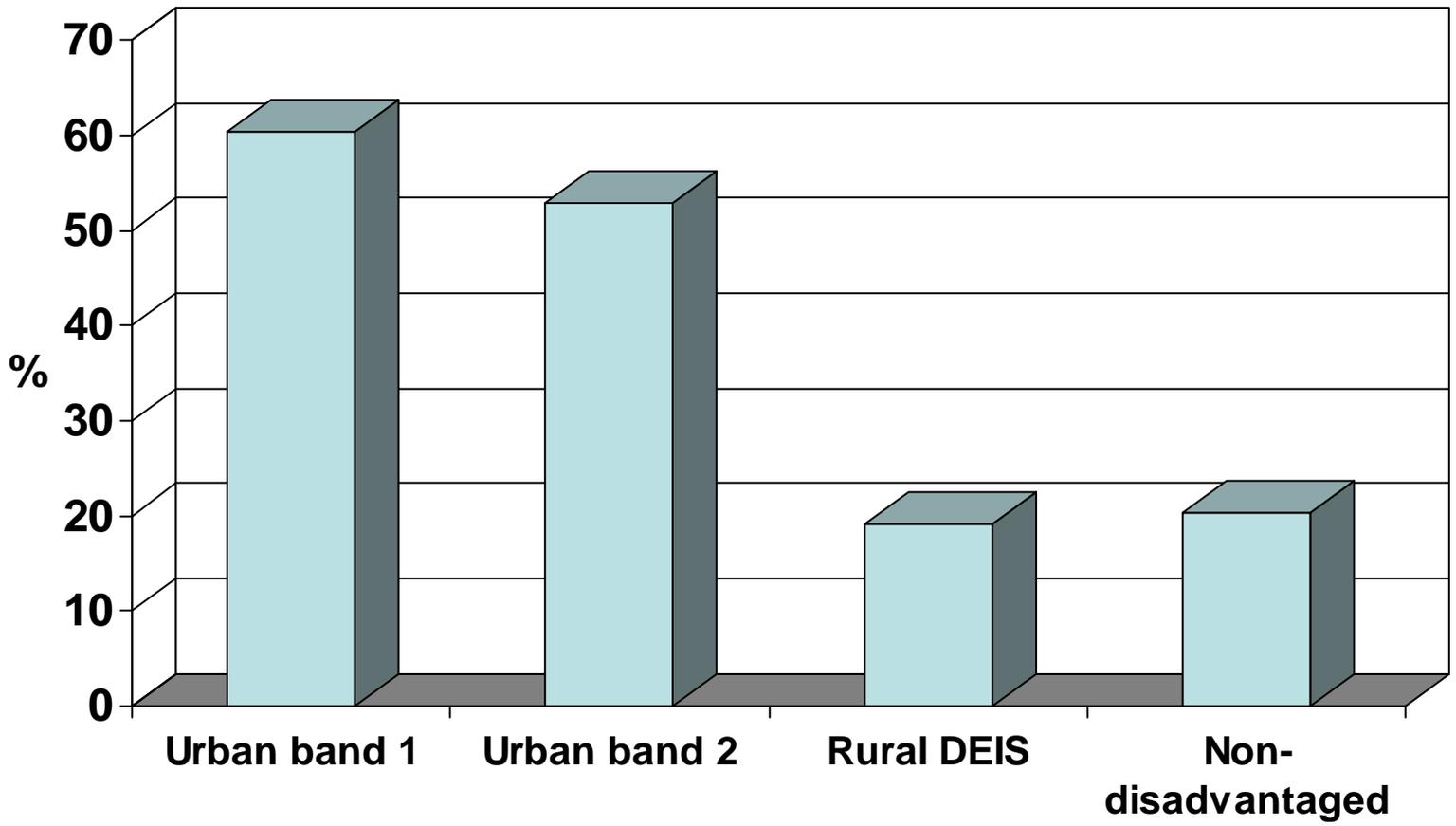
# Student needs



■ Urban band 1 
 ■ Urban band 2 
 ■ Rural DEIS 
 ■ Non-disadvantaged

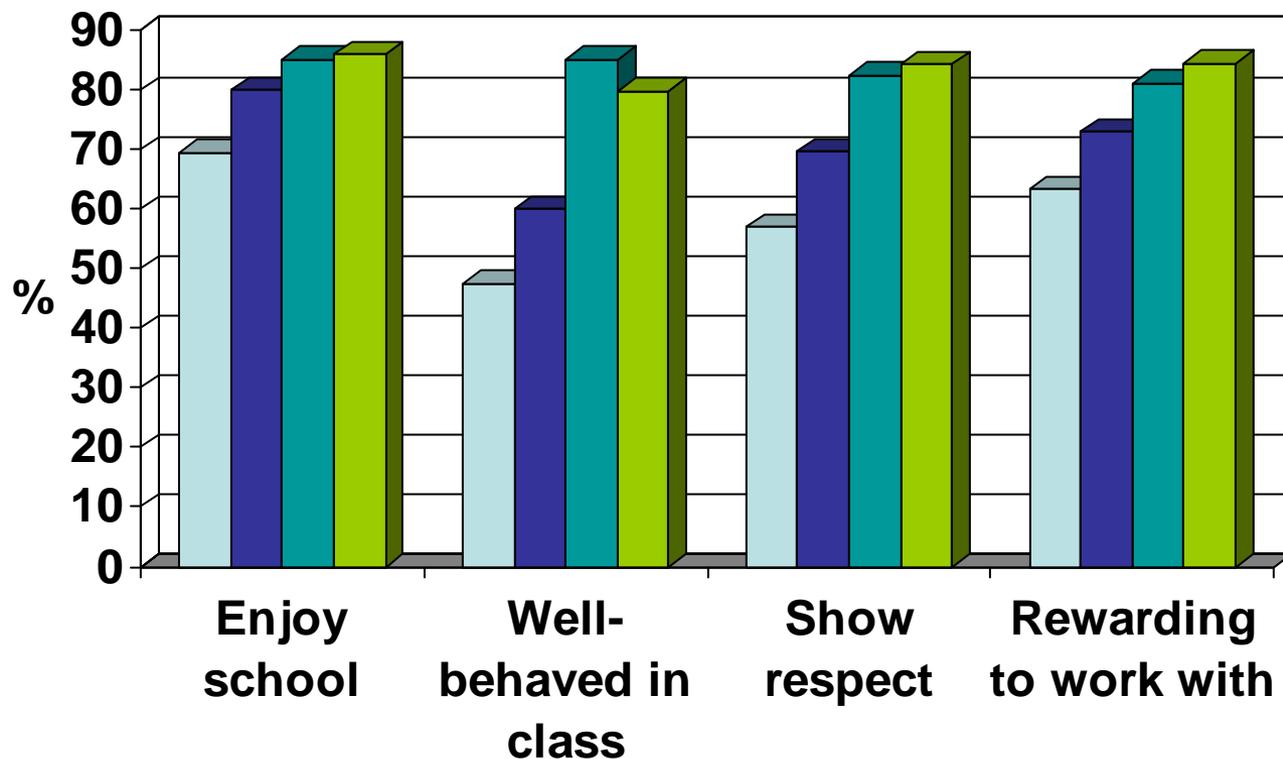


# Daily attendance <90%





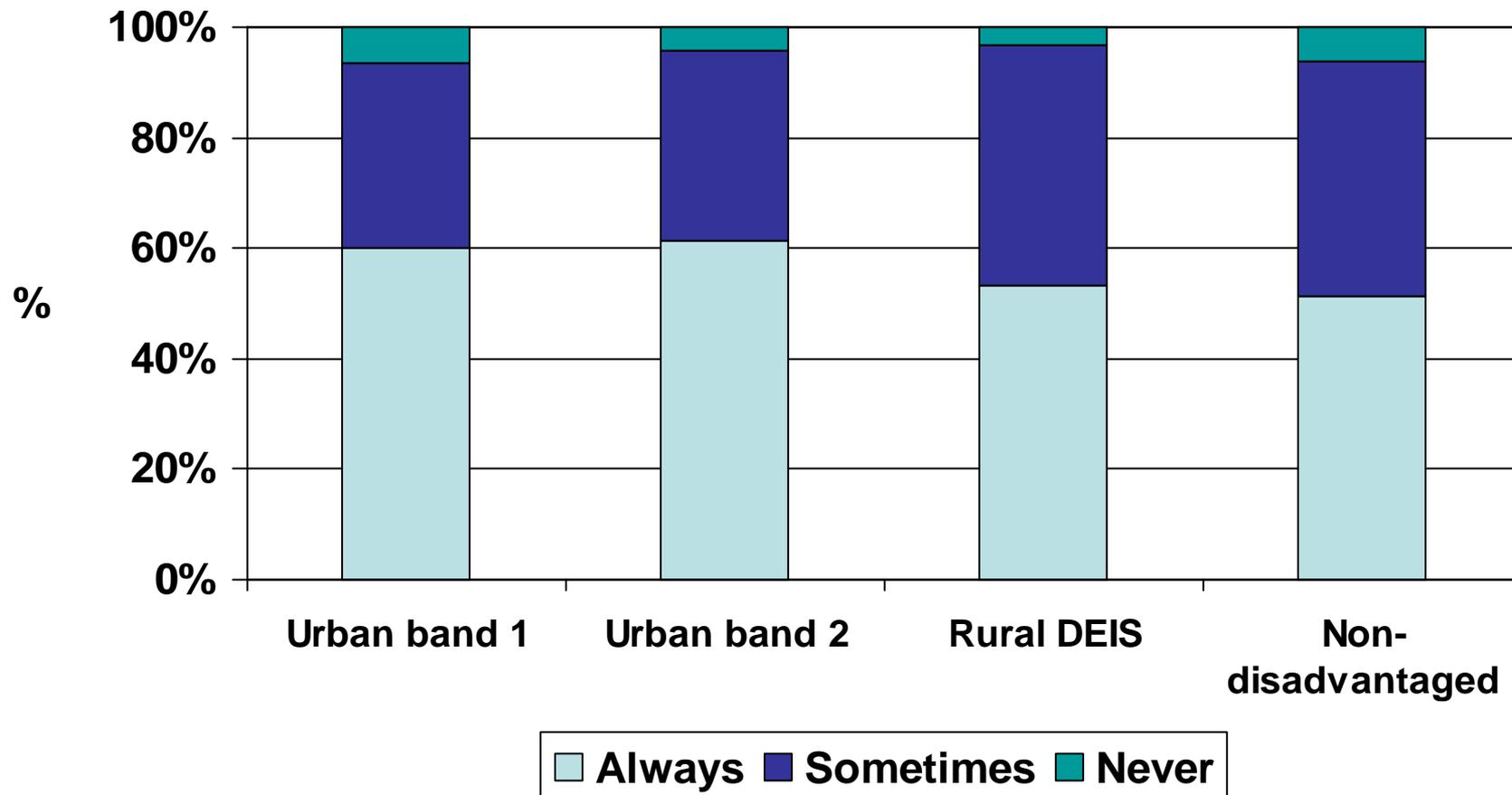
# 'Nearly all' pupils (teacher reports):



Urban band 1 Urban band 2 Rural DEIS Non-disadvantaged

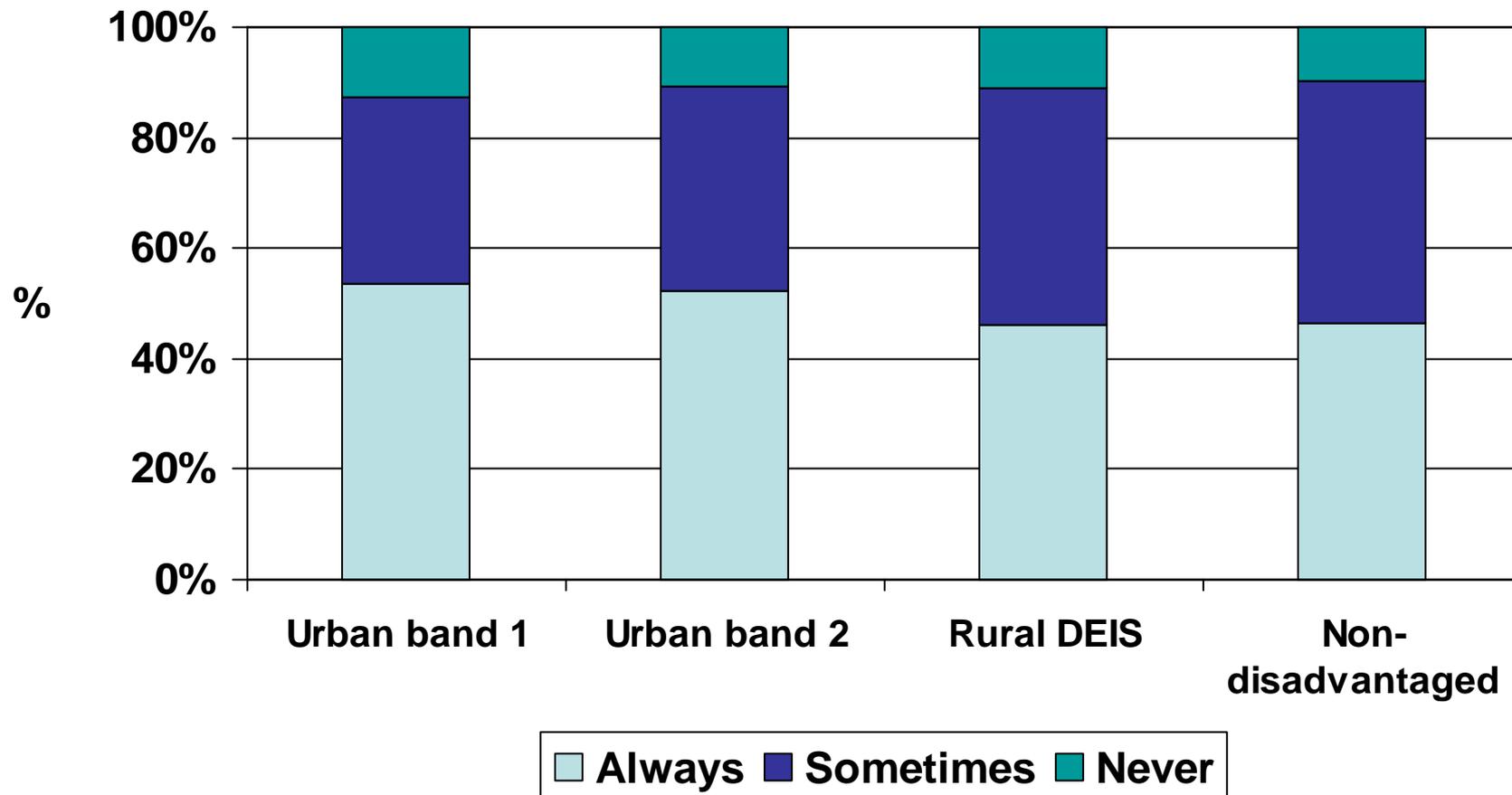


# Student engagement: liking teachers

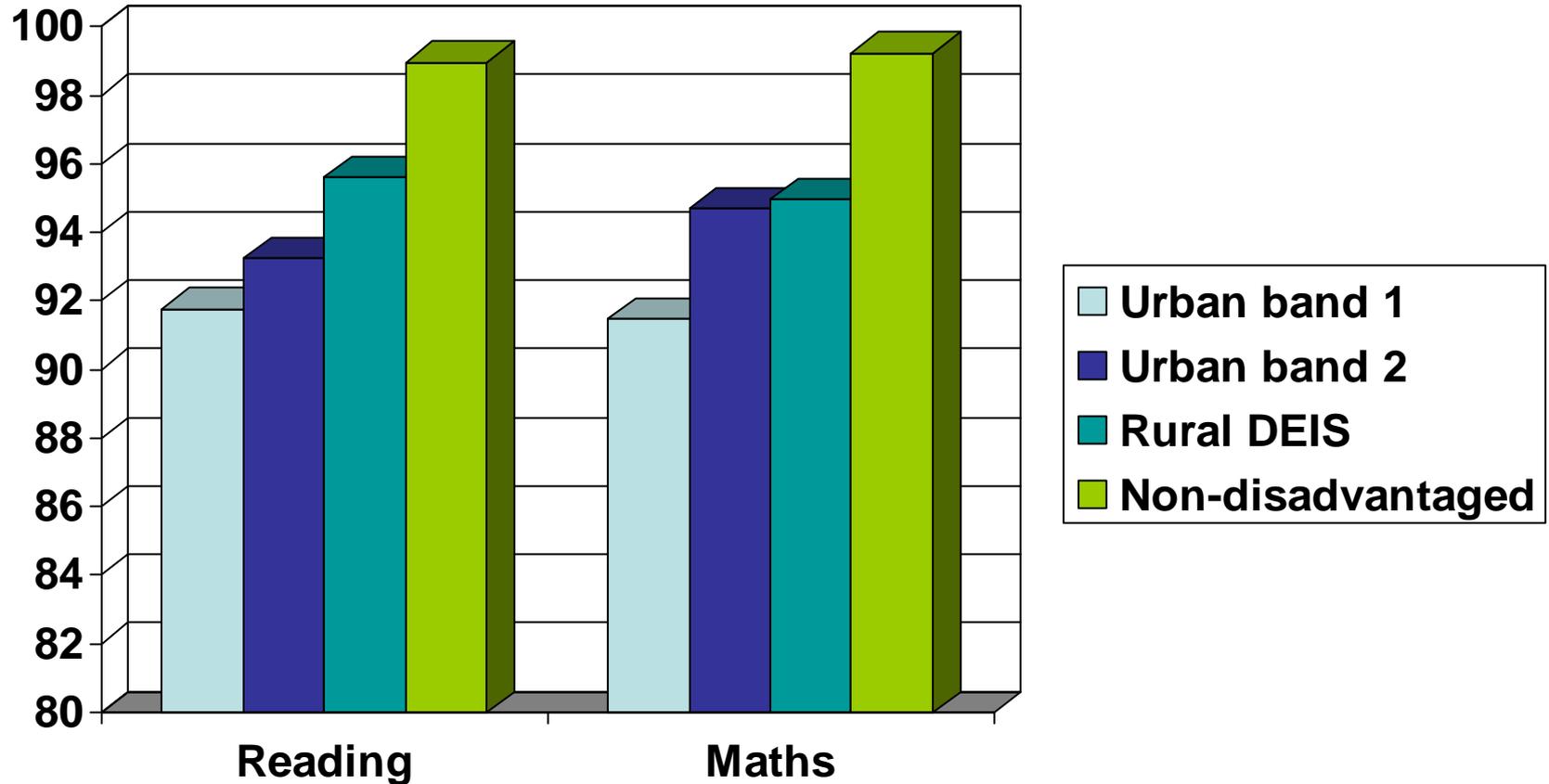




# Student engagement: liking Maths



# Academic outcomes



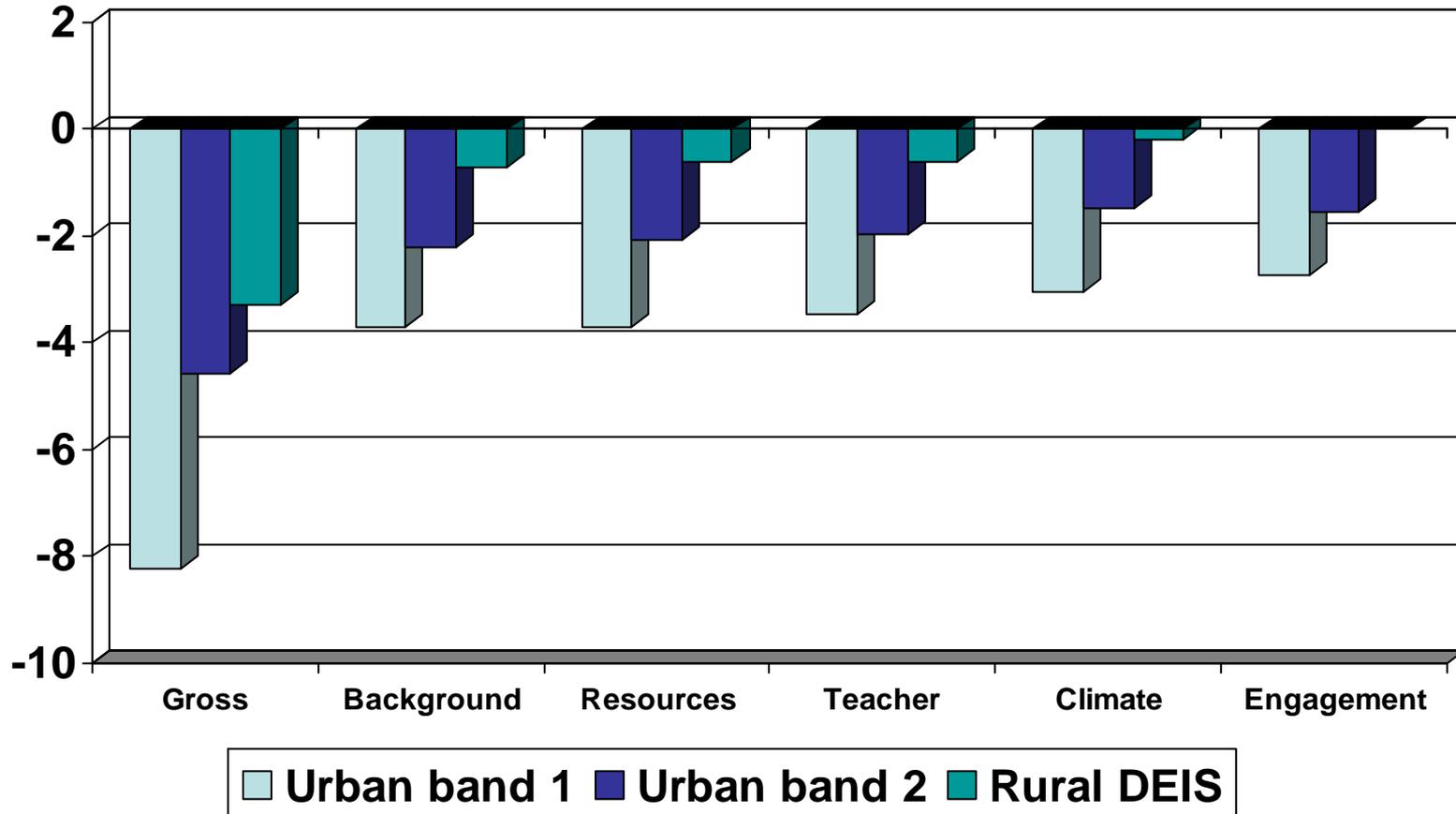


# Influences on reading and maths scores

- What factors influence reading and maths scores?
- Do these factors account for the achievement gap between DEIS and non-DEIS schools?
  - Social background: class, income, education
  - School resources
  - Teacher factors
  - School climate and student needs
  - Student engagement

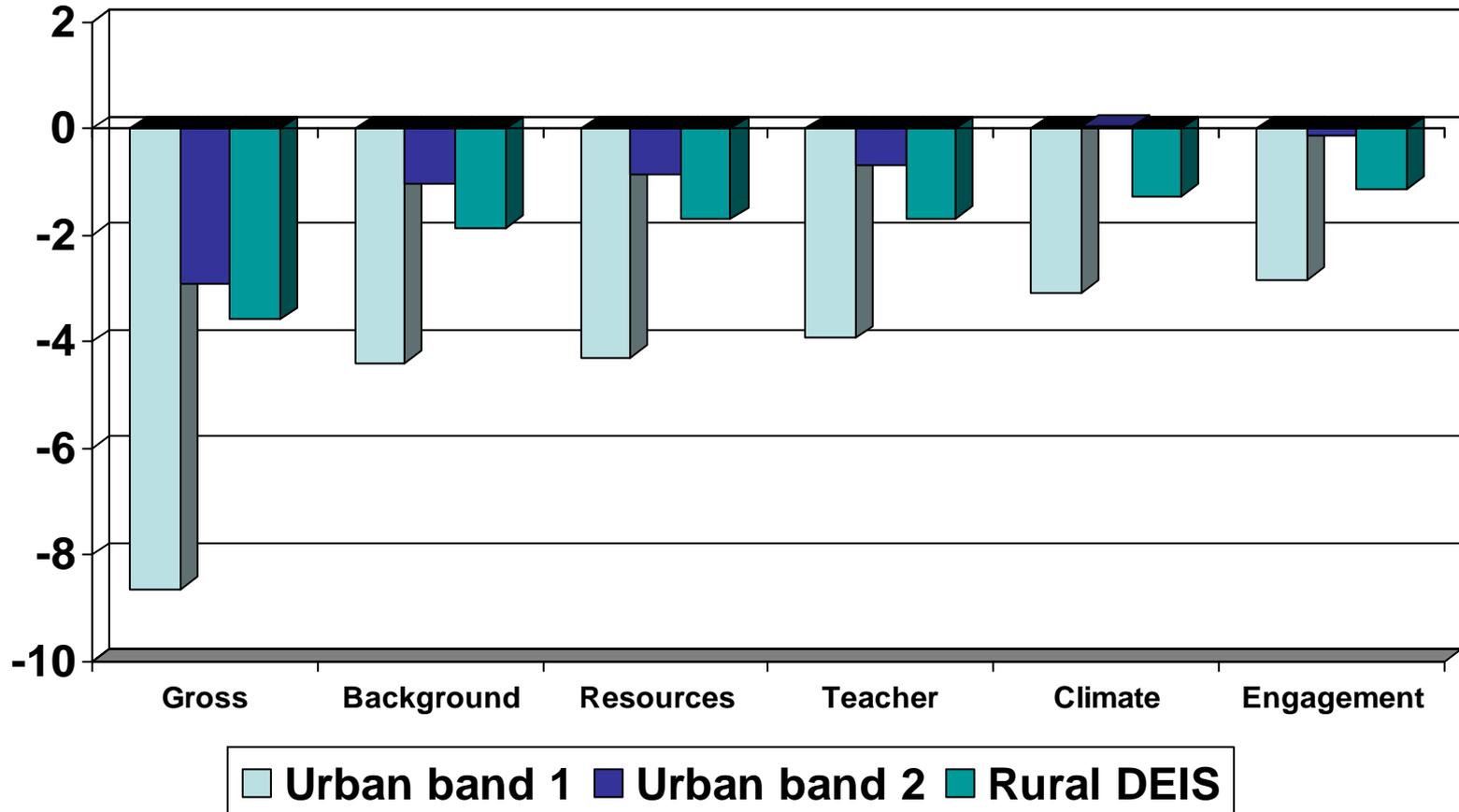


# Social mix effect: reading (difference from non-disadvantaged schools)





# Social mix effect: maths (difference from non-disadvantaged schools)





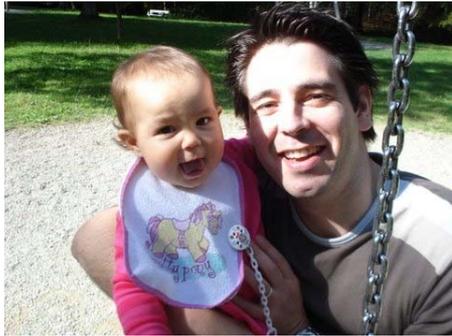
# Conclusions

- Concentration of disadvantaged children in particular schools has an impact on their outcomes above and beyond that of their own background
- Achievement gap for children in the most disadvantaged schools (esp. urban band 1)
- These schools have children with more complex needs (e.g. literacy, numeracy and behavioural difficulties, lower attendance levels) but they have less experienced teachers



# Conclusions (2)

- Need to support schools in developing positive behaviour and attendance policies and practices
- Huge potential shown by positive attitudes of children to school but emerging differences even at the age of 9 and need to know how their engagement develops over time
- Greater scale and complexity of difficulties supports the need for targeted funding
- But only a minority of disadvantaged children attend DEIS schools so targeted funding is not enough – a particular issue in the context of expenditure cuts



# Growing Up in Ireland Research Conference 2010