



Department  
for Education

# **Reforming the accountability system for secondary schools**

**Government response to the February to  
May 2013 consultation on secondary school  
accountability**

**October 2013**

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## Introduction

The most effective education systems around the world are those that have high levels of autonomy along with clear and robust accountability. OECD evidence shows that a robust accountability framework is essential to improving pupils' achievement.<sup>1</sup>

On 7 February we published proposals to reform secondary school accountability. The consultation closed on 1 May. Before the consultation, we had received an increasing amount of evidence that the current headline measure – the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more A\*-C grades at GCSE (or equivalents) including English and maths - was distorting teaching and qualifications. Our new proposals were designed to hold schools to account for all their pupils' progress across a broader range of subjects. Our approach to qualifications and accountability reform are closely linked, so our consultation in February was published alongside information about our plans to reform GCSEs.<sup>2</sup>

We received 412 written responses to the accountability consultation, and held discussions at a series of events and conferences. Analysis of the consultation responses, including the percentage of respondents who raised particular themes in their discussion of the issues, is included at **Annex A**.

The proposals were broadly welcomed as an improvement on the current accountability measures. We therefore intend to proceed with the policy direction set out in the consultation document, adapting some of the proposals in light of evidence gathered through the consultation.

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<sup>1</sup> OECD (2009) PISA 2009 Results: What makes a school successful? Resources, Policies and Practices (Volume IV)

<sup>2</sup> Following advice from Ofqual, the qualification regulator, we have now agreed that the development of GCSEs should be re-phased, with English (Literature and Language) and mathematics GCSEs brought in for first teaching from September 2015, and other subjects introduced in 2016. See the exchange of correspondence between the Secretary of State for Education and Chief Regulator at: <http://ofqual.gov.uk/news/publication-notice/>.

## Performance Measures

We will show information about schools in three ways to cater for all audiences.

- On each school's website, we will make sure there is a 'snapshot' of their performance in a standard format, so parents can quickly understand a school's effectiveness.
- School performance tables will continue to provide more detailed information, including breakdowns of the performance of different pupil groups, such as disadvantaged pupils. We expect this information to be used by education professionals, and parents who want more detailed information about a school.
- The Data Portal will provide a single point of access to include almost all of the information we hold on schools and pupils. This information will be of interest to Ofsted, schools, governors, academic researchers, and to parents, who will be able to understand particular aspects of a school's teaching in more detail.

## Information for parents

Parents should receive regular information about their own child's progress. They should also have access to clear information that gives a fair and balanced picture of each school's performance. This will help parents to hold schools to account for the teaching of their children, and help them choose the right school for their child.

We will show information about both progress and attainment in school. Progress measures show how much pupils improve in a school. Attainment measures show whether pupils are leaving school with good qualifications that will help them move on to future study and employment.

We will require schools to publish a range of important information on their website so that parents can easily see how well each school is performing. The indicators are:

- **Progress across a suite of 8 subjects.** This will show whether pupils have performed better than expected at the end of Key stage 4 considering their starting point. Key stage 2 results will be used to predict each pupil's likely grades across 8 subjects at the end of Key stage 4.<sup>3</sup> The predicted results are calculated using the actual performance of other pupils with the same prior attainment. For example, pupils with a point score of 29 on their Key stage 2 tests achieve, on average, 8 C grades at GCSE. If a pupil with this level of prior attainment achieves 8 B grades in a GCSE then she has made an average of one grade more progress than

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<sup>3</sup> Ofqual is currently considering the grading scale of the GCSE in future. See the exchange of letters between the Secretary of State for Education and Chief Regulator, Glenys Stacey, at: <http://ofqual.gov.uk/news/gcse-reform-6th-february-2013/>.

expected. The average of all pupils' progress scores across 8 subjects will create a school's result. This measure, which we are calling Progress 8, is described in full at **Annex B**.

- **Attainment across 8 subjects.** This will show the school's average grade across the same suite of 8 subjects as the progress measure. This will show achievement across a broad curriculum in a clear way. This will show, for example, that pupils in a particular school typically average a high B grade or a low D grade in their GCSEs. We are calling this measure 'Attainment 8'.
- **The percentage of pupils achieving a C grade or better in English and maths.** This shows whether pupils achieve a good level in the most important subjects.
- **The EBacc.** This will continue to show the percentage of pupils who achieve good grades in a range of academic subjects.

We would also like to include a destination measure as a fifth headline indicator. This will show the percentage of pupils who went on to sustained education, employment or training during the year after they finished their Key stage 4 qualifications. We currently publish experimental statistics to show this information. We want to be sure the statistics are robust before committing to using this destination measure as a headline indicator.

We will require schools to make these headline indicators available in a standard format so they are easy to interpret. So that parents can make comparisons between schools, we would like to show each school's position in the country on these measures and present these results in a manner that is clear for all audiences to understand. We will discuss how best to do so with stakeholders, to ensure the presentation of the data is clear, fair and statistically robust.

Two of these indicators of school performance – Progress 8 and Attainment 8 – are based on pupils' performance across 8 subjects. These subjects are:

- a double weighted English element (the English Language qualification will count for this element, but will only be double weighted if the pupil has also taken English Literature);
- a double weighted maths element;
- three slots reserved for other EBacc subjects (sciences, computer science, geography, history and languages).
- three slots that can be taken up by further qualifications from the range of EBacc subjects, or any other high value arts, academic, or vocational qualification. The department will produce a list of approved, high value vocational qualifications every year. English Literature will count in this group of subjects.

## Performance Tables

Performance tables will continue to show more detailed information about all schools. Many parents will want to investigate the performance of a school in more detail through these tables. In addition, Ofsted inspectors, school governors and other education professionals often use this information to consider a school's effectiveness.

The performance tables will eventually show all five indicators mentioned above. In addition they will continue to show pupils' progress in English and maths as a further headline measure. This will be a value-added measure, showing whether pupils have performed better or worse than expected in these subjects at the end of Key stage 4, taking into account their prior attainment.

Performance measures currently reflect pupils' achievements in GCSEs, Level 1/Level 2 certificates (often referred to as iGCSEs) and other qualifications that meet specific criteria for inclusion in tables. As GCSEs are reformed, measures will be based on pupils' achievements in reformed qualifications. We are considering the implications of our reforms for the recognition of Level 1/Level 2 certificates and will set out our decision in due course.

This year we published a 'similar schools' measure in the performance tables for the first time. This compares each school's performance with 55 other schools where pupils have similar prior attainment, and shows the school's relative performance. We will continue to publish this information as a headline indicator, and we will develop the measure to give an indication of disadvantage in each of the 'similar schools' groups.

Performance tables give a breakdown of the performance of different pupil groups on the headline indicators. They show how well pupils with low, middle and high prior attainment perform on each measure, and the performance of disadvantaged pupils (those for whom the school receives the Pupil Premium). For each indicator, local and national benchmarks are provided to make it easier to judge each school's performance. Using this information, parents can search for the information which is most relevant to them. For example, they can see how many pupils with high prior attainment go on to achieve the EBacc at different schools in their area, or they can find out which schools enable pupils with SEN to make fast progress across a broad curriculum. Ofsted challenge schools to make sure they support all their groups of pupils to make high levels of progress and achieve good results.

We intend to sharpen the way in which schools are held to account for the achievement of their disadvantaged pupils. We are doing this by ensuring a clear and consistent set of measures are used throughout the accountability system. Schools will now be held to account for (a) the attainment of their disadvantaged pupils, (b) the progress made by their disadvantaged pupils, and (c) the in-school gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. In addition to the one year performance data, we will show the performance of disadvantaged pupils in each school using three year rolling



averages. This will enable us to publish figures for schools with small cohorts of disadvantaged pupils whose results have previously been suppressed in performance tables.

## **The Data Portal**

Education professionals, parents and other interested organisations may want to interrogate information about school performance in even more detail. A wealth of other information about schools will be easily available through the Data Portal, which will be introduced by March 2015. It will be an easily accessible website that allows the public to search all the information we hold about schools, subject to protecting individuals' anonymity. Respondents to the consultation argued that it would be useful to see measures showing school by school performance in vocational qualifications, the percentage of pupils achieving the top grades in GCSEs, and average grades by subject. We agree that all these measures will be of interest to many people, and the Data Portal is being designed so that parents can search for this type of information. In addition Ofsted may choose to specify some of these measures, for example the percentage of pupils achieving the best GCSE grades, in their inspection guidance.

## Floor Standards

We will continue to set minimum requirements for schools. If a school's performance falls below this minimum standard, then the school will come under scrutiny through inspection. In some cases intervention may be required, and could result in the school becoming a sponsored academy.

The minimum requirement will be set on the Progress 8 measure. This measure will be used because it takes into account each school's intake, and so is the fairest way to identify an underperforming school. It rightly focuses attention on schools which are contributing least to the development of their pupils.

In the consultation, we proposed that a threshold attainment measure showing the percentage of pupils achieving a C grade in English and maths should also be used for the floor standard. A significant number of respondents to the consultation were concerned about the implications of using this type of measure for this purpose. The first concern was that there would be a continued incentive for schools to target teaching resources towards a small number of pupils close to a 'borderline' in English and mathematics. Mathematics subject experts responding to the consultation made this point particularly strongly. In addition, a threshold attainment measure may place pressure on qualifications. Ofqual, and some other assessment experts, highlighted this concern in their response to the consultation. Schools may pay particular attention to developing the exam technique of pupils near the borderline, rather than teaching the pupils a broader understanding of the subject, and may challenge markers' interpretation of their responses. Therefore, we have concluded that this measure is best used as a performance indicator to be published on school websites and in performance tables, rather than as part of the floor standard.

Our intention is that schools will fall below the floor standard if pupils make an average of half a grade less progress than expected across their 8 subjects. So, for example, a school is underperforming if its pupils were expected to gain 8 Cs (because that's what their peers, with similar prior attainment, secure elsewhere in the country) but they actually achieve less than 4Cs and 4Ds.

We also want to reward schools where pupils make excellent progress. Schools in which pupils make an average of one grade more progress than expected across their 8 subjects will not be inspected by Ofsted during the next academic year (unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example where there are safeguarding concerns). This recognises their excellent results. Schools which are seeking an improved Ofsted grade, and want to showcase their results to inspectors, can elect to opt-in for inclusion in the normal Ofsted inspection cycle.

## Implementation Timetable

We intend to move to this new system from the 2015/16 academic year, so that the performance tables based on 2016 exam results will reflect the new measures. Many respondents to the consultation argued that reforming the system sooner would create distorted results. Most Year 9 pupils had already made their curriculum choices leading up to 2015 exams before the new accountability measures were proposed. Further changes would mean that schools would be judged based on a curriculum offer they had made under the previous accountability framework. This leaves 2016 as the fastest reasonable timetable for introducing the improved measures.

New GCSEs in English and mathematics will be taught from 2015 with the first examinations in 2017 (after new performance measures are introduced). GCSEs in other subjects will be taught from 2016, with examinations in 2018.

Results in many different qualifications, including GCSEs and VQs, are currently given a score on the same scale to create performance measures. We will put in place a system for the current and reformed GCSEs which recognises the differences between the two sets of exams and does not disadvantage individual schools. We will finalise this system taking into account Ofqual's forthcoming decisions on the grading structure for reformed GCSEs.

We want to help schools to consider their current offer, and whether they need to make changes to succeed under the revised accountability framework. We will therefore provide schools with information based on 2014 exam results to show how they would have performed on the new measures.

We believe the new floor standards are a significant improvement on the current system, and will promote better teaching across a broad curriculum. Therefore, we would like to give schools the opportunity to opt-in to the new system one year early in 2015. This would be optional for schools. We will discuss this proposal further with schools before finalising the policy later in this academic year.

## Low attaining pupils

Our modelling suggests that around 1.2% of pupils will not be recognised in the Progress 8 measure because their particular needs mean that they cannot enter any GCSEs or high value vocational qualifications.

In the consultation, we asked how the achievements of these pupils should be recognised in the accountability framework. We have asked for further responses about this issue in the primary assessment and accountability consultation, which closed on 11 October. A consistent approach across both primary and secondary is particularly important in this area. For example, the use of P-scales is common to both phases.

Therefore, we have not finalised our policy on this issue at this stage. During the consultation, respondents suggested a range of approaches to recognise the achievement of these pupils in the accountability framework. Many respondents argued that this group of pupils tend to have individual needs, and so schools should be held to account based on discussions during inspection visits, and with parents. Others argued that publishing better information would ensure schools are clearly accountable for the results achieved by these pupils.

## Key stage 3 results and schools' approach to on-going assessment

The majority of respondents to the consultation agreed that the Department should stop collecting Key stage 3 teacher assessment results, and this is the approach we will adopt from 2013/14 academic year. Ending this requirement will reduce the burden on schools, although schools will continue to focus on making accurate assessments to support learning and to report to parents.

We have announced that the current system of national curriculum levels will be removed and not replaced. Our new National curriculum is designed to give schools genuine opportunities to take ownership of the curriculum. The new programmes of study set out what pupils should know and be able to do at the end of each key stage. Teachers will be able to develop a school curriculum that includes this core content in a way that is challenging and relevant for their pupils.

Schools must therefore have the freedom to adapt their teaching, assessment and reporting system to suit their needs. We will not prescribe a national system for schools' on-going assessment. Instead, schools should decide how they assess each subject as they develop their curriculum. Groups of schools may wish to use a common approach, for example across a local area, academy chain or federation. These common approaches will allow schools to report on each pupil's progress set against wider benchmarks. Ofsted will expect to see evidence of good quality pupil tracking data, but will not expect schools to keep records of pupil attainment in a specific format.

The consultation also asked if we should give schools the option to submit results from internal assessments to the Data Portal, so they could compare their results more easily against wider benchmarks. Most respondents to the consultation thought this data would not be comparable, and so may be misleading. We will take this feedback into account when developing the Data Portal, and are therefore unlikely to develop this functionality.

## Recognising achievements beyond qualifications

Schools offer a range of opportunities for their pupils to receive a rounded education. Respondents tended to argue that this information would be difficult to capture through schools providing data to the government, with only 5% of respondents arguing in favour of this type of approach. Instead, schools should continue to be encouraged to make this information available on their websites for parents to scrutinise. In September 2012 it became a statutory requirement for schools to publish their curriculum online, and we expect this will cover all aspects of a school's curriculum.

In addition, around a third of respondents argued that Ofsted should emphasise each school's whole curriculum offer through their inspection reports. Ofsted's current inspection framework encourages a focus on broader achievements. Inspectors consider, for example, the extent to which pupils take part in a range of activities requiring social skills, and respond positively to a range of artistic, sporting and other cultural opportunities provided by the school. This is covered in the leadership and management section of inspection reports, and will continue to be emphasised, as well as forming part of the overall effectiveness assessment (which considers overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development).

## Sample tests

The consultation asked for views about how to use and develop sample tests to track national standards at Key stage 4. We sought views in particular from assessment experts on this proposal. They agreed that a sample test should be introduced at Key stage 4. They also said that the most useful purpose of such a test would be to provide independent evidence of each cohort's English and mathematics capabilities during year 11, to support the process of setting standards in external examinations, such as GCSEs. We have decided that this should be the primary purpose of the new sample tests. Ofqual are leading the development of sample tests for this purpose.

## Annex A

### A. Respondent Information Questions

Please mark an 'x' in the box that best describes you as a respondent.

There were 421 answers to this question.

Options	Responses		Across Consultation
Other:	182	43%	43%
Teacher:	89	21%	21%
Head teacher:	47	11%	11%
Parent-Carer:	27	6%	6%
Local Authority:	25	6%	6%
Subject Association:	14	3%	3%
School:	13	3%	3%
Governor/Governing Body:	12	3%	3%
Awarding Body:	7	2%	2%
Union:	5	1%	1%

### B. Consultation Questions

**Question 1: Do you agree with the proposals for the headline accountability measures?**

There were 401 responses to this question.

Options	Responses		Across Consultation
No:	277	69%	66%
Yes:	67	17%	16%
Not Sure:	57	14%	14%
<b>Key Indicators</b>			
Against EBacc slots in Progress 8	148	36.9 %	35.2 %
Greater prominence for science in Progress 8	13	3.2 %	3.1 %
Greater prominence for humanities in Progress 8	33	8.2 %	7.8 %



Against threshold measure	26	6.5 %	6.2 %
In favour of threshold measure	24	6.0 %	5.7 %
Too many qualifications in Progress measure	9	2.2 %	2.1 %
Concern about KS2 baseline for Progress 8	30	7.5 %	7.1 %
Dep't should review discounting	57	14.2 %	13.5 %

**Question 2: Is there any further information we should provide about the performance of disadvantaged students?**

There were 253 responses to this question.

Options	Responses		Across Consultation
Yes:	111	44%	26%
No:	99	39%	24%
Not Sure:	43	17%	10%
<b>Key Indicators</b>			
Re-introduce Contextual Value Added	17	6.7 %	4.0 %
Do not just use FSM as proxy for disadvantage	10	4.0 %	2.4 %

**Question 3: Should we look to use a relative measure as the floor standard in the first year of the new exams?**

There were 241 responses to this question.

Options	Responses		Across Consultation
No:	125	52%	30%
Yes:	70	29%	17%
Not Sure:	46	19%	11%
<b>Key Indicators</b>			
Relative measures cannot recognise an improving system	16	6.6 %	3.8 %
Suspend floor standards for one year	24	10.0 %	5.7 %

**Question 4: Are there any other measures we should consider publishing?**

There were 258 responses to this question.

Options	Responses		Across Consultation
Yes:	153	59%	36%
No:	72	28%	17%
Not Sure:	33	13%	8%
<b>Key Indicators</b>			
Destination measures	16	6.2 %	3.8 %
Low/middle/high	5	1.9 %	1.2 %
Exclusions	4	1.6 %	1.0 %
Absences	4	1.6 %	1.0 %
CVA	9	3.5 %	2.1 %
Entries/grades by subject	17	6.6 %	4.0 %
Against EBacc with new progress measure	24	9.3 %	5.7 %
Introduce a VQ measure	20	7.8 %	4.8 %

**Question 5: Do you think we should collect and publish test data from internal assessments through the Data Warehouse?**

There were 246 responses to this question.

Options	Responses		Across Consultation
No:	176	72%	42%
Not Sure:	36	15%	9%
Yes:	34	14%	8%
<b>Key Indicators</b>			
Data would not be comparable	56	22.8 %	13.3 %
Too bureaucratic	22	8.9 %	5.2 %

**Question 6: What other data could be published to create the right incentives for schools, including special schools, to ensure the best progress and attainment for all of their students?**

There were 88 responses to this question.

Options	Responses		Across Consultation
<b>Key Indicators</b>			
Leave to Ofsted	4	4.5 %	1.0 %
Include lower qualifications in new progress measure	15	17.0 %	3.6 %
Revise P-scales	10	11.4 %	2.4 %
Publish results data from lower-level qualifications	18	20.5 %	4.3 %
Prioritise destination measures	16	18.2 %	3.8 %
Leave to schools	22	25.0 %	5.2 %
Collect qualitative description of achievement	9	10.2 %	2.1 %
Publish data based on progress towards independent living and inclusion	4	4.5 %	1.0 %

**Question 7: Do you agree that the department should stop the collection of key stage 3 teacher assessment results?**

There were 248 responses to this question.

Options	Responses		Across Consultation
Yes:	167	67%	40%
No:	47	19%	11%
Not Sure:	34	14%	8%
<b>Key Indicators</b>			
Dep't should replace levels to keep KS3 TA	11	4.4 %	2.6 %

**Question 8: How should we ensure that achievement beyond formal qualifications is recognised?**

There were 104 responses to this question.

Options	Responses		Across Consultation
<b>Key Indicators</b>			
Leave to Ofsted	4	4.5 %	1.0 %
Include lower qualifications in new progress measure	15	17.0 %	3.6 %
Revise P-scales	10	11.4 %	2.4 %
Publish results data from lower-level qualifications	18	20.5 %	4.3 %
Prioritise destination measures	16	18.2 %	3.8 %
Leave to schools	22	25.0 %	5.2 %
Collect qualitative description of achievement	9	10.2 %	2.1 %
Publish data based on progress towards independent living and inclusion	4	4.5 %	1.0 %

**Question 9: How can national sample tests best be introduced?**

There were 106 responses to this question.

Options	Responses		Across Consultation
<b>Key Indicators</b>			
Against principle of sample tests	51	48.1 %	12.1 %
In favour of principle	21	19.8 %	5.0 %
Be careful of over-testing	9	8.5 %	2.1 %
A robust sample is required	30	28.3 %	7.1 %
Independent development of tests required	5	4.7 %	1.2 %

# Annex B

## Details of the Progress 8 measure

### Explanation of Value Added measure

Progress 8 aims to capture the progress a pupil makes from the end of primary school to the end of secondary school. Progress 8 is a type of value added (VA) measure, which means that pupils' results are compared to the actual achievements of other pupils with the same prior attainment.

Individual pupil VA scores need to be calculated before a school VA score can be produced. The first step is to use a statistical model to calculate an Attainment 8 "estimated outcome". Each pupil's estimate is calculated based on the actual Key stage 4 Attainment 8 outcomes of all pupils nationally with the same level of achievement at Key stage 2. For example, the estimated outcome for a pupil who scored an average of a level 4B at Key stage 2 will be based on the average Key stage 4 outcome of all pupils nationally who also scored an average of a 4B at Key stage 2.

A pupil's VA score is then calculated by subtracting their estimated Attainment 8 outcome from their actual Attainment 8 outcome. For example if a pupil achieves a 4Bs and 4Cs but they are estimated to achieve 8Bs, then the pupil has a VA score of -0.5 grades (4 grades over 8 subjects). The average VA score for all pupils in a school can then be calculated to find a school's Progress 8 VA score. The Progress 8 score identifies schools in which pupils make more progress or less progress than average.

A school Progress 8 score can then be shown in an identical format to the pupil score.

### Subjects in the Progress 8 measure

Progress 8 will be based on results in a suite of eight subjects.

Within these eight subjects will be:

- a double weighted English element (the English Language qualification will count for this element, but will only be double weighted if the pupil has also taken English Literature);
- a double weighted maths element;
- three slots reserved for other EBacc subjects (sciences, computer science, geography, history and languages);
- three slots that can be taken up by further qualifications from the range of EBacc subjects (including the English literature grade where appropriate), or any other

high value arts, academic, or vocational qualification. The department will produce a list of approved, high value vocational qualifications every year.

Respondents to the consultation tended to welcome this proposal as a significant improvement to the current 5 A\*-C including English and mathematics measure. Many respondents approved of the greater emphasis on progress, and the focus on eight subjects rather than five, which will reward schools offering a broader curriculum.

Pupils may not always perform to their best on a particular exam on a given day. Measuring progress across 8 qualifications rather than 5 minimises the impact this will have on the progress results achieved by schools.

The suite of 8 subjects making up the new progress measure divided opinion. Around a third of respondents (35%) argued that the measure placed too much emphasis on EBacc subjects, and instead we should follow the current value added model of allowing English, mathematics and any other six qualifications to count. By contrast, one in ten respondents thought the suite of subjects should be more closely defined, with specific slots reserved for each of the EBacc pillars – science, history or geography, and languages.

We have concluded that the original proposals strike a reasonable balance. They encourage schools to offer an academic curriculum to more pupils at Key stage 4, without dictating schools' curriculum design.

The progress measure gives space for more subjects to count towards headline performance indicators. Vocational qualifications, arts qualifications and EBacc qualifications will all count more often in the key school accountability measures because a total of six subjects will count alongside English and maths, compared to three subjects in the current system. This will reward schools for good teaching across a broader range of subjects.

## **Double weighting English and maths**

We have adapted the Progress 8 measure from the consultation proposal so that English and maths will both be double weighted in the calculation.

The Progress 8 measure will be the only measure used for floor standards (a change from our consultation proposal, which also suggested a threshold attainment measure in English and maths should be part of the floor standards). It is still important that English and maths are given a particular emphasis when identifying which schools are underperforming. Double weighting English and maths means that 40% of each school's Progress 8 score is determined by their results in these core subjects.

## English Language and English Literature

At present, pupils must study some English Literature for any English grades to count in performance tables, and we want to retain a similar incentive for schools to offer English Literature courses in future. Requiring pupils to enter English Literature for the Language score to be double weighted retains the incentive to enter English Literature, without making this subject a requirement of the Progress 8 measure. The study of literature will also remain a compulsory part of the national curriculum at Key stage 4.

In 2016, there will still be a combined English Language and Literature qualification (which will no longer be the case from 2017, once reformed GCSEs are in place). This combined English qualification will count double in the Progress 8 measure because pupils have studied some English Literature to achieve their grade.

### Further Details

Respondents also asked for clarification about the status of some qualifications in the new progress measure:

- Combined science (double award) will count for two slots within the 'EBacc tier' of qualifications.
- More than one qualification from each EBacc area – science, languages and humanities - can count towards in the 'EBacc tier'. For example two languages qualifications could both count in this tier.
- English Literature will count in the open group of subjects (rather than the Ebacc group) provided the pupil does not have a higher score in another eligible open group subject.

### Entering 8 qualifications

We do recognise that it may not be appropriate for every pupil to take the full suite of subjects in the Progress 8 measure. Our data analysis shows that it is likely to be possible for pupils to perform well on this measure without taking the whole suite of 8 subjects. For example, pupils taking 7 qualifications counting towards the measure are able to achieve an above average score, although this might become harder over time as more pupils across the country take the full suite of 8 subjects, which will raise the

average score.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, although we are encouraging schools to teach the large majority of their pupils 8 subjects, schools can still offer pupils the right curriculum for each individual and be confident that pupils' progress will be appropriately recognised.

## **Presenting the Progress 8 measure**

It is important that parents and the public can use Progress 8 results to inform their understanding of the performance of a school. If parents concentrate only on attainment measures then they will receive a partial picture of the effectiveness of a school, without taking into account how well a school helps its pupils to improve.

Several respondents to the consultation highlighted that value added measures are difficult to interpret. We agree that the current method of presenting value added scores, in which scores are scaled around an average of 1000, is potentially confusing; for example, it is not automatically clear whether a score of 1010 or 1020 shows a school is around average or significantly better.

We are currently reforming the performance tables website, including how data is presented. For example, we intend to present the Progress 8 scores to show, on average, how many grades higher or lower than anticipated pupils achieved. Schools may therefore get a value added score of minus 0.5 grades per subject, or plus 1.5 grades per subject.

Respondents to the consultation also pointed out that final value added scores are not made available to schools for several months, when performance tables are published. By contrast, attainment measures often appear quickly in tables created by the media.

As part of our reform of performance tables we intend to speed up the publication of data to help inform parents' admissions choices. In addition, we will provide schools and others with a tool so they can easily calculate their own provisional Progress 8 score as soon as GCSE results are released.

## **Confidence intervals**

Confidence intervals are currently published for value added measures in performance tables and RAISEonline (the tool currently used by Ofsted to analyse details of a school's

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<sup>4</sup> All analysis in this paper is based on the current value added method applied to suite of qualifications described in the consultation document, and using the 2014 list of approved vocational qualifications. The Department is currently reviewing the value added method, and the analysis can only be indicative until we have completed this work. The results also reflect entry patterns influenced by the current accountability framework, and the results may change as schools adapt their offer in response to new accountability measures. Our modelling at this stage applies no discounting.



performance). Confidence intervals show the range of scores within which each school's true performance can be confidently said to lie. The results of schools with a small cohort tend to have wider confidence intervals; this reflects the fact that the performance of a small number of pupils taking their Key stage 4 exams can have a disproportionate effect on the school's overall results. We will publish confidence intervals for the Progress 8 measure and use them in the floor standards. A school will be below the floor if progress is 0.5 grades less than expected across 8 subjects, unless the confidence interval suggests that the school's true performance may be above average.

Confidence intervals will also be important when we present each school's percentile ranking on the range of headline measures. For example, a school could have performed well on the Attainment 8 measure and be in the 10th percentile, with a confidence interval that indicates that the school's true ranking is likely to lie between the 5th and 15th percentiles.

## Calculating the Progress 8 measure

Given the importance of the Progress 8 measure in this accountability framework, we are reviewing how it is calculated to ensure it is robust and fair to all schools regardless of their intake. In particular, we are looking at the following areas:

- **Setting expectations in advance.** At present, the value added method compares pupils with the same prior attainment within the same cohort. This means the grades required for each pupil to achieve a positive progress score are worked out after exams have been taken. Instead, the expectations could be set using the results of pupils who completed Key stage 4 three years previously. Pupils and schools would then know in advance what grades they need to achieve a positive progress score, helping them to set suitably challenging targets. In addition, this approach would recognise an improving system; more than half of pupils could achieve positive progress scores if GCSE results had improved over the previous three years. Schools' Progress 8 scores could also be made available to sooner after GCSE results are published.

We plan to adopt this approach. However, we need to consider further the best timing for this change. We expect some schools to offer EBacc subjects to many more pupils as a result of these changes. This change in the curriculum offer means results could fluctuate in the first few years of the new system - expectations set three years in advance could be misleading during this period of change. We also need to consider how expectations might change once new GCSEs are in place. We intend to discuss this with experts before finalising whether to adopt this approach in 2016, or wait until 2019. By 2019, expectations will be based on 2016 results, when school's curriculum offer will have adapted to this set of accountability measures.

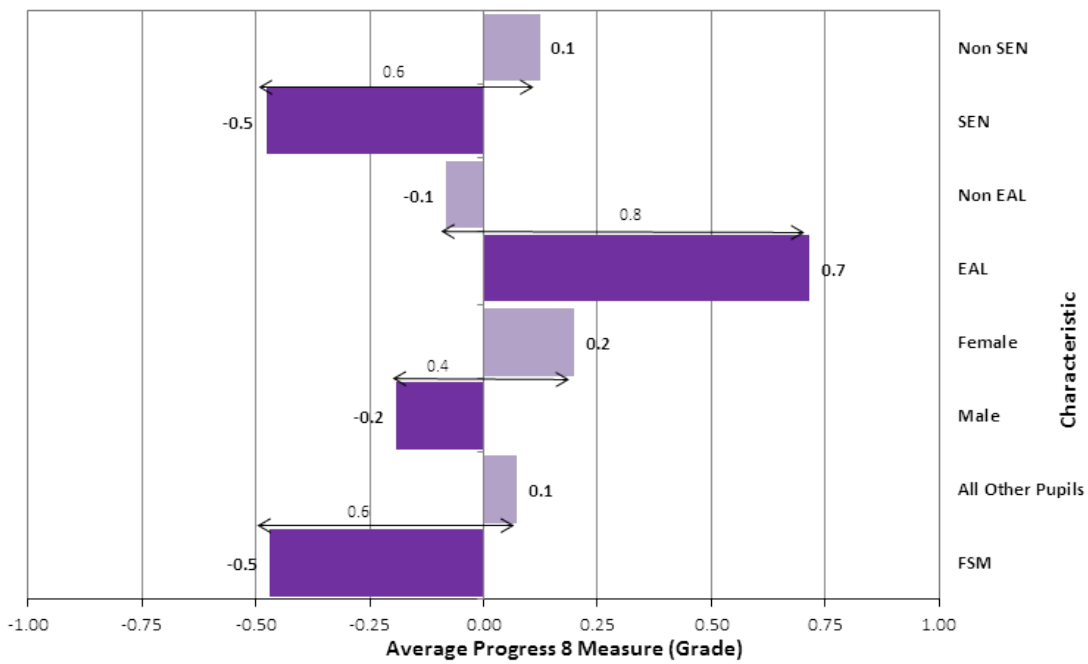
- **Subject-level value added calculations.** It is important that there are not perverse incentives in the system to enter pupils for qualifications in which it is easier to score points towards the progress measure, rather than entering each pupil for the subject that is right for them. This perverse incentive could be reduced by working out the Progress 8 score at subject-level. Under this model, the Progress 8 measure would be created by comparing pupils' performance in each subject to the performance of other pupils with the same prior attainment taking the same subject. This will create a value added score for each pupil in each subject. The total Progress 8 score for a pupil would be the average of the 8 subject scores. Further work is required to make sure this approach works well for all subjects, including subjects with small numbers of entries. We would also like to discuss the benefits of this approach with head teachers before committing to this approach.
- **Point score system.** As the basis for the current value added progress measures, a G grade at GCSE is awarded 16 points and an A\* grade 58 points. We are exploring whether a simpler, linear points score system, such as 1 point for a G grade up to 8 for an A\*, would be clearer, and give more credit to schools when pupils achieve high results. We are also exploring how the point score system can be suitably flexible to accommodate reformed GCSEs from 2017.

Following further discussion with experts, we expect to finalise the method for calculating Progress 8 in the Spring term of 2014.

## Performance of different pupils groups

Analysis (included below) shows the likely performance of different pupil groups by eligibility for FSM, SEN, EAL and gender on the Progress 8 measure. The trends in this data are broadly comparable to existing progress measures. We will update this analysis during the forthcoming academic year, once the method for calculating the new progress measure has been finalised.

**Figure 1: Performance of different pupil groups on Progress 8 measure**



**Figure 1: Analysis showing the likely performance of different pupil groups by eligibility for FSM, SEN, EAL and gender on the Progress 8 measure**

Source: Source of data



Department  
for Education

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