FLOORS, TABLES AND COASTERS:
SHIFTING THE EDUCATION FURNITURE IN ENGLAND'S SECONDARY SCHOOLS

FFTaspire

education datalab
research • analysis • evidence

INTRODUCTION

FFT has been providing schools with analyses of school performance data for 14 years. Our aim is to help schools make the best possible use of education data to improve education outcomes for all pupils. Over 90% of secondary schools use the data and analyses in FFT Aspire to help set challenging and aspirational pupil targets, measure pupil progress and support self evaluation.

Education Datalab was launched by FFT in March this year to produce independent, cutting-edge research that can be used by policy makers to inform education policy, and by schools to improve practice.

Secondary schools are managing enormous change with the new accountability measures, reformed GCSE and A level qualifications, a new national curriculum and assessment without levels. During this change, FFT will continue to provide research and analyses through FFT Aspire and Education Datalab which will help school leaders and teachers to improve outcomes for all pupils.

In FFT Aspire, schools have access to benchmark estimates for all current pupils using the reformed 9-1 GCSEs and A*-G grades, which can be used to measure progress for current pupils and support aspirational target setting. For self evaluation, there are analyses of Attainment 8 and pupil progress which can help school leaders analyse and improve pupil progress in every subject area.

This new Education Datalab research for secondary schools focuses on the changes to accountability and assessment. For the first time, alongside this research, we have provided supporting analyses which schools can access in FFT Aspire to explore their own data.

I hope that you find this research and the supporting analyses for schools interesting and useful. We hope that it will continue raise questions and encourage debate amongst all those working in education.

Paul Charman
Managing Director, FFT
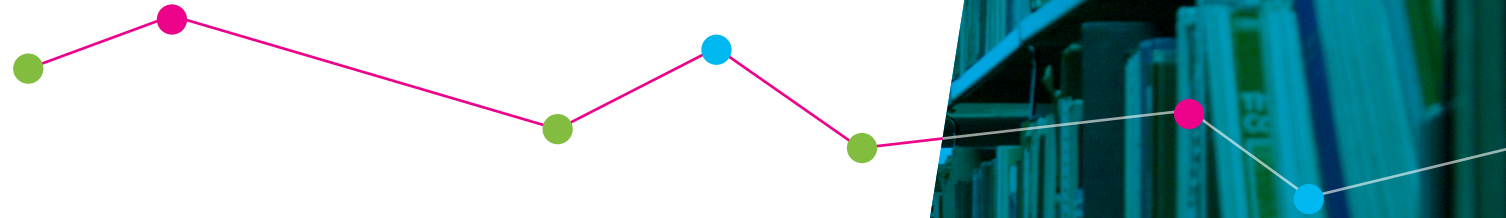
Since our launch eight months ago, Education Datalab has completed research on school admissions and selection, teacher careers, pupil premium gaps and individual pupil attainment trajectories. You can find this research on our website at educationdatalab.org.uk. But we have written more about secondary school accountability than any other topic. This is, perhaps, not surprising, given the enormous changes in the qualification and accountability regimes currently taking place.

We have already looked at the winners and losers under Progress 8 and GCSE re-scaling, the proposed definition of coasting schools and more fundamental questions of whether it is ever possible to compare schools with very different intakes. And in this report we show how schools are re-aligning their Key Stage 4 to accommodate the EBacc and imminent introduction of Progress 8.

In our analysis, we regularly reflect on the unintended consequences of the accountability system on the children it is supposed to serve. During visits to schools and local authorities over the past six months we became increasingly concerned about disadvantaged and vulnerable children who need to make secondary school moves at non-standard times. In this report we propose a modification to the way that pupils are counted in performance tables to encourage schools to take these children on, even if they are close to reaching GCSE examinations.

In our final piece, we explore whether the rise of ever more sophisticated data-led performance monitoring allows us to re-imagine the role of Ofsted in school improvement.

Given that we are part of FFT, it is perhaps no surprise that the analysis we conduct is high-level and data-driven. And yet we generate most of our ideas for research by talking to teachers, local authorities, academy trusts and others involved in running schools. So, if you have ideas for research or questions about our analysis then please do get in touch. We would love to join your conversation about creating the education system our children deserve.

Dr Rebecca Allen
Director, Education Datalab

SCHOOLS SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR *ALL* THE PUPILS THEY TEACH

Secondary school performance tables report the attainment of the pupils who are present at the end of Key Stage 4 (KS4), some of whom have completed their entire secondary education at the school and others who have joined subsequently.

But should the school be judged as equally responsible for the attainment of the child who arrives in year 10 as it is for the child who arrives in year 7?

And what about pupils who leave the school? Apocryphal tales of parents being 'encouraged' to take their children off-roll and educate them at home are widespread. But only rarely are accusations of malpractice designed to boost school performance proven. (And since 2006, 'penalty add-backs' remove the capacity of schools to do this in the last 12 months of a pupil's school career.)

Given that pupil mobility is relatively high in England, we believe it would be fairer to publish performance table metrics based on all pupils who received any of their secondary education at a school. It would allow our judgements of schools to reflect the time investments they have made in every child's learning. Schools would need to ensure that any transfers of their pupils elsewhere, including to special schools and pupil referral units, are indeed in the pupils' best interests. And it would encourage schools to accept new pupils in years 10 and 11, knowing it would not excessively threaten their performance table results.

RE-WEIGHTING PUPIL CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IS STRAIGHTFORWARD

We know where each pupil completing KS4 in 2013/14 spent their secondary education through the 15 Census returns from autumn 2009 to summer 2014. For our analysis we collate this information for 2,864 state-funded mainstream schools that admitted a year 7 intake in September 2009, ensuring we correctly account for mergers, amalgamations and academisation. (We exclude some brand new schools, those with a tiny intake, and those with year 8 or 9 intakes.)

The autumn 2009 Census contained 518,000 pupils on-roll at the schools in our analysis. The size of this cohort increases during KS3 through migration into England. It then begins to decline, as pupils move into other types of schools – new schools such as university technical colleges and studio schools, or other types of establishment like special schools and pupil referral units.

Termly change in cohort size in mainstream schools
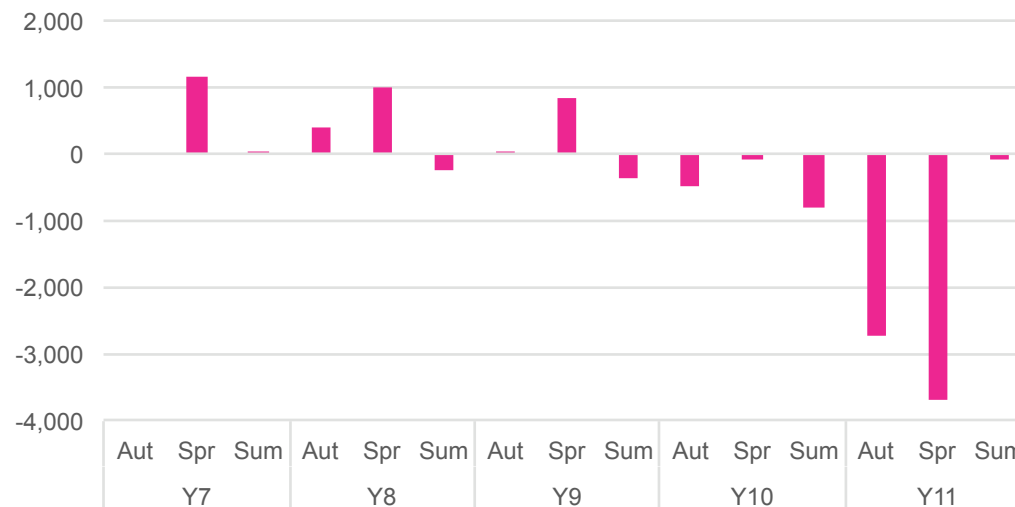
We match each pupil in our cohort to their end of KS4 attainment and count the number of terms each pupil was on-roll at each school, re-weighting school performance measures accordingly. So a pupil on-roll for the full 15 terms receives a weight of one, while a pupil on-roll for nine terms receives a weight of 0.6 (nine divided by 15).

Suppose five pupils attend a particular school at some point in their secondary school careers:

Example pupil data for a school

Pupil	Date Joined	Date Left	Terms on Roll	5 A*-C
A	Sep-09	May-14	15	Yes
B	Sep-09	May-14	15	Yes
C	Sep-09	Jun-12	9	No
D	Sep-09	Jun-10	6	Yes
E	Dec-11	May-14	8	Yes

Traditional performance tables would count pupils A, B and E equally, translating to a 100% pass rate. Our methodology would reduce E's weighting to 0.53 and add part of C and D's results even though they finished their education elsewhere. Thus, we judge this school has having an 83% pass rate on 3.53 pupils.

WITH THIS CHANGE, MOST SCHOOLS WOULD SEE RESULTS STAY LARGELY THE SAME, BUT SOME WOULD SEE DECLINES OF MORE THAN FIVE PERCENTAGE POINTS

We chart the difference between the actual and weighted percentages of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades at mainstream secondary schools in 2014. Overall, our weighted national average is 1.5 percentage points lower than the national average, reflecting net loss to alternative provision, special schools or home education.

Difference between weighted and published percentages
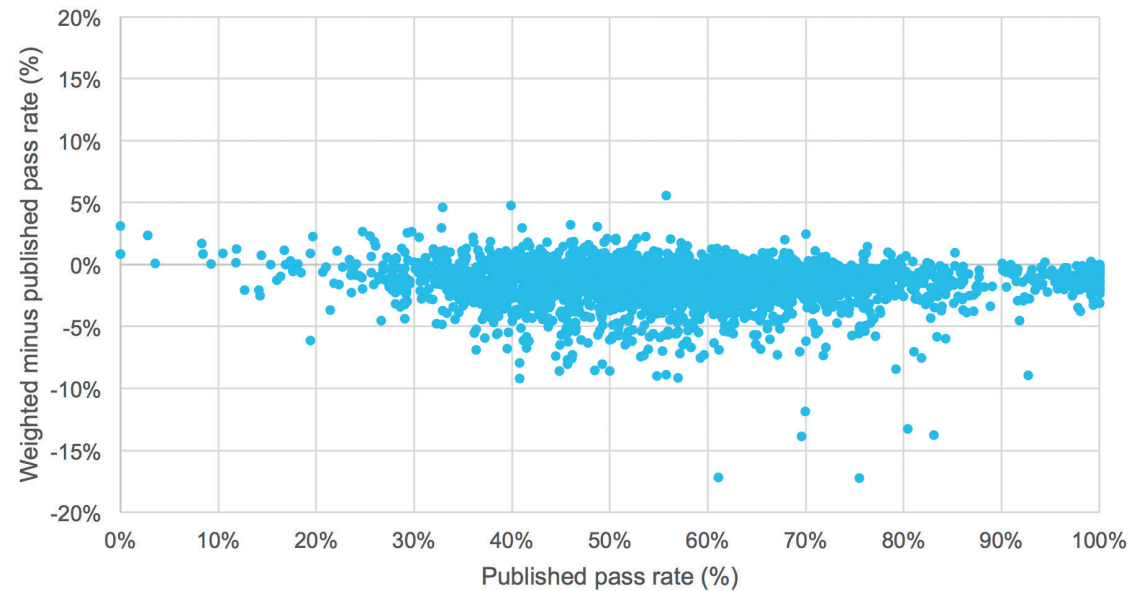
There are few mainstream secondary schools who gain from our approach – those that do tend to have admitted lower attaining pupils since year 7 that we reweight as less than 1.0. There are, however, many schools whose weighted results are markedly lower than the current performance table results.
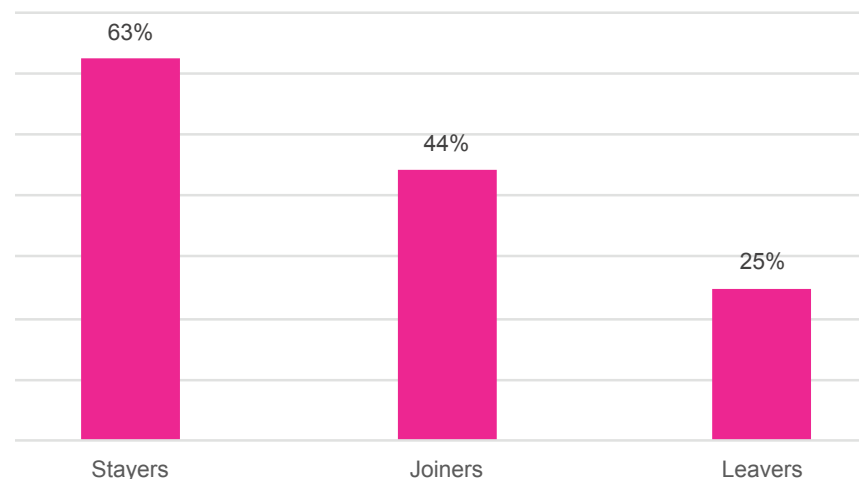
There are six schools whose weighted average is more than 10 percentage points lower than the average that the current performance table methodology gives. For example, one of these has a published pass rate of 61% 5+ A*-C, incl. EM that would be lowered to 44% if pupils were reweighted to take account of time in school. All of these six schools are academies; five of the six are in London.

Published and re-weighted pass rates differ substantially for a number of reasons. In some cases, the school could have recruited high attaining pupils after year 7, thus boosting published results but counting for less under our weighted system. Playing a far larger part, though, are those pupils who leave schools who therefore warrant close examination.

LEAVERS UNDERPERFORM DRAMATICALLY WHEN COMPARED WITH THOSE WHO DON'T MOVE SCHOOL

In our analysis there are more than 85,000 instances of pupils leaving a school, relating to 74,000 individuals (some pupils leave schools more than once) or 6% of our total cohort. These leavers are markedly different children to those who stay in the same school for KS3 and KS4. 57% of transfers involved pupils known to be eligible for free school meals at some point during their compulsory education, compared to 31% of those who remained at one school from the autumn of year 7 (the joiners group) and 63% for those who stayed at the same school throughout (the stayers).

Note: We also identify a number of other groups which we do not consider here due to their small size. There is overlap between joiners and leavers but they differ due to movements in and out of the mainstream schooling system.

In more than half of those cases – 48,500 times – the pupil's final destination remains a state-funded mainstream school. Around 8,000 transfers ultimately result in a pupil attending alternative provision. No destination is found in around 18,000 cases. Some, if not most, of these will be due to data limitations. We do not know about pupils who emigrate or, sadly, die. We erroneously include them in our calculations along with other pupils who, for whatever reason, drop out of the school system. (And in these cases schools must be able to apply to have these children dis-applied from performance table calculations.)

Final destinations of leavers

Final Destination	% of transfers	% AC5EM	% FSM Ever
State-funded mainstream schools	57%	40%	58%
Independent schools	4%	38%	23%
State-funded and independent special schools	4%	1%	73%
Alternative provision	10%	2%	78%
Local authority	2%	1%	78%
Other types of institution	1%	3%	65%
No institution found	22%	1%	45%
All leavers		**25%**	**57%**

LONDON SCHOOLS WOULD LOSE THE MOST IF WE MOVED TO A SYSTEM WHERE ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLING OF A CHILD WERE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR PERFORMANCE
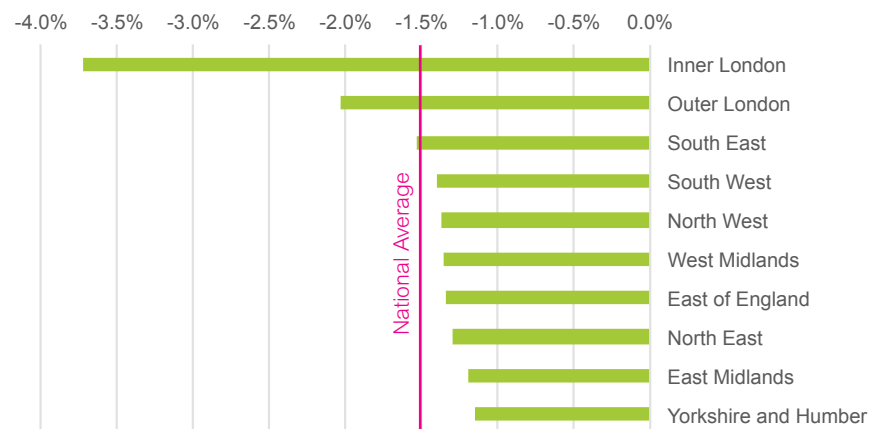
There are large regional differences in pupil mobility and so it is not surprising that schools across the country are differently affected by re-weighting performance table metrics.

The difference in attainment for Inner London is largely driven by its relatively high leaver rate of 9% compared to a national average of 6%. The final destination for 17% of pupils leaving Inner London schools was alternative provision compared with 10% of all leavers nationally. Urban settings makes transfer to alternative provision more straightforward, but other cities in England do not match London in their prevalence. 27% of Inner London leavers had no final destination (22% nationally) which may be indicative of a higher level of emigration.

Mainstream schools in Inner London would see the greatest impact of our re-weighting, with an overall decline of almost 4 percentage points in pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades including English and maths.
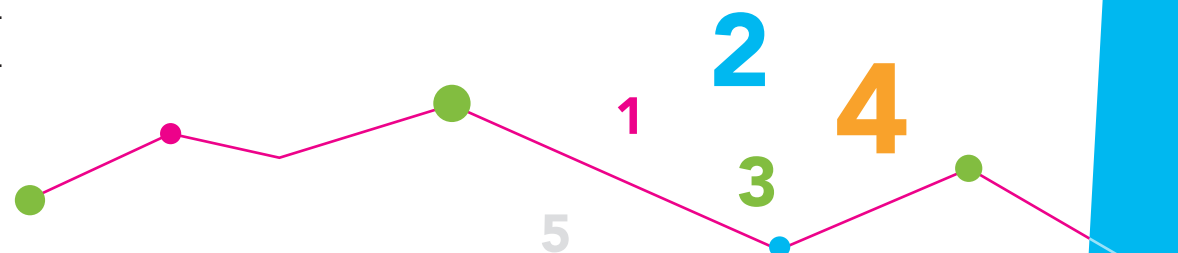
Difference between weighted and published percentages of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades (or equivalent) including GCSE English and maths

-4.0%	-3.5%	-3.0%	-2.5%	-2.0%	-1.5%	-1.0%	-0.5%	0.0%	

Inner London

Outer London

South East

South West

North West

West Midlands

East of England

North East

East Midlands

Yorkshire and Humber

National Average

ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS MUST SERVE THE INTERESTS OF CHILDREN FIRST

Asking schools to retain some accountability for students they no longer teach is tough. They may not have chosen to lose the student and they cannot influence subsequent curriculum and teaching decisions that will affect the child's GCSE performance. But all of these issues equally apply to those who transfer late to schools and yet count as much as any other pupil in performance tables. Schools equally may not have chosen to receive these pupils and they certainly have no influence on the quality of teaching prior to their arrival.

We think performance metrics should be weighted to reflect the time investment schools make in different children. Where a pupil is educated in multiple institutions, there should be shared accountability between all those involved.

We do great damage to the educational opportunities of those who, for whatever reason, need to transfer in year 10 because schools are understandably reluctant to become wholly accountable for their GCSE performance. And all transfers out of a school must be done in the best interest of pupils. Whether other mainstream schools, alternative provision or special schools are being considered, our re-weighted performance metrics will better ensure that all parties are motivated to support a school transfer only when they believe it will improve a child's educational success.

FFT ASPIRE STUDENT EXPLORER DASHBOARD…
THERE'S A STORY BEHIND EVERY PUPIL

In a nutshell

A full 'term by term' history for each of your pupils in a single dashboard. Incorporating both background data and a series of 'Opportunities & Alerts' indicators for each pupil, Student Explorer helps your school to provide better support, intervention and early identification of pupil needs.

### The dashboard includes three key reports

- **Pupil list**
  A list of your pupils including Opportunities (Opps) & Alerts flags to indicate where additional support may be required, background context data (FSM, EAL, SEN), latest prior attainment, attendance and number of school moves.

- **Pupil Summary**
  Individual pupil report with full breakdown of Opportunities & Alerts; context summary; turbulence factors; historical attainment & progress; and a year on year attendance tracker.

- **Term Tracker**
  Data from each termly census including previous schools; attendance; SEN & FSM status; ethnicity and first language.
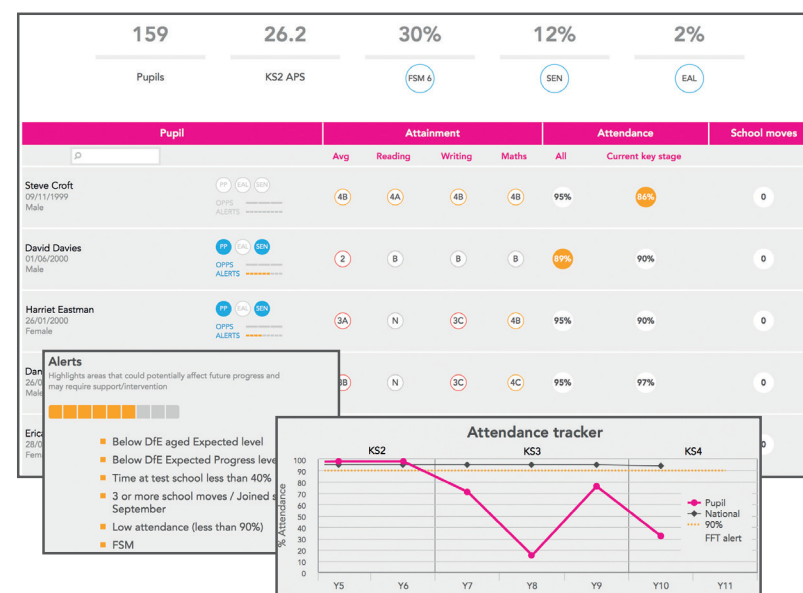
The basics

- Get to know the system. Select a pupil you know well and see what Student Explorer reveals

- Select a year group and filter those pupils with 5 or more alerts. This will highlight pupils who may require further intervention.

- Use the filter to select your pupil premium pupils. Now check out the different number of alerts flags indicated. This will help you to differentiate needs and personalise support.

Next steps

- Import your new pupils into Aspire (including Y7). You'll now have instant access to critical student information from the day they arrive at your school.

- Use the attendance filter to find pupils with poor attendance. Then use the attendance tracker for a more detailed view over time.

- Think about who else in school needs to know about Student Explorer – Department Heads, Pastoral lead, teachers - and ensure that they can access Aspire.

Link to the research: Monitor the number of terms a pupil has been with you. Highlight those with more than one school move.

HEADTEACHERS ARE GETTING GOOD AT FILLING SUBJECT SLOTS

Schools prepare students for the qualifications that they believe will help them get on in life, within the constraints of a National Curriculum set by politicians. But they do so with one eye on the accountability measures by which the school itself will be judged. No government has ever been as active as the Coalition Government in using the accountability lever to manipulate the secondary curriculum. They did so, first, through the reporting of a new 'English Baccalaureate' performance table metrics; next through the systematic removal of many vocational qualifications from performance metrics; and finally through change the headline performance measure to Progress 8 in 2016.

Nearly five years since the first of these was introduced,
what impact are we seeing?

SCHOOLS STARTED CHANGING THE SUBJECTS WHICH THEY ENTER PUPILS FOR IN 2012, AND ARE MAKING MORE CHANGES AS PROGRESS 8 DRAWS CLOSER

The introduction of the EBacc can be seen to have already had an impact on the subjects which students are studying at Key Stage 4 (KS4). The percentage of pupils studying for full GCSEs in geography, history, and languages, and two GCSEs in science, has risen by several percentage points in recent years – mostly since 2012, the year in which the first cohort to begin KS4 under the Coalition government finished secondary school – though there has been some stagnation more recently.

THE THREE POLICY LEVERS

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) was introduced by the Coalition in January 2011, as a means of encouraging a more traditional curriculum in schools. To achieve the EBacc, GCSEs have to be taken in English, maths, two sciences, a humanity subject, and a modern or ancient foreign language. This Key Stage 4 curriculum (though not qualification entry) is expected to become compulsory.

Arriving shortly after the introduction of the EBacc, the Wolf Review of Vocational Education argued that reforms were needed to stop schools entering students for too many non-GCSE qualifications. The equivalence of these qualifications with academic qualifications in school performance tables had led to a major increase in the number of vocational qualifications awarded between 2004 and 2009. Seen as too easy to pass, and of limited value to most pupils, the Coalition decided that thousands of 'equivalent' qualifications would no longer count towards school league tables.

Attainment 8 and Progress 8 have formed the third strand of the accountability reforms. Announced in October 2013, these are the new headline measures against which schools will be judged from 2016. Pupil performance in eight key subject 'slots' – English; maths; three other EBacc subjects; and three other GCSEs or 'high value' vocational qualifications – will be counted. As well as influencing the options which schools give to their pupils, the new measures are seen as putting greater emphasis on subjects besides just English and maths.

Entry rates for EBacc subjects, 2005-2015

Legend: Geography, History, 2 Sciences, Languages
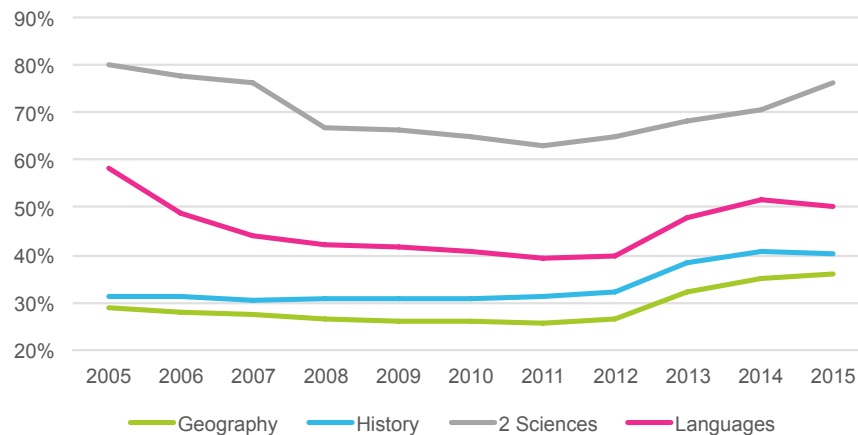
State-funded mainstream schools only

As a result of more pupils taking humanity and language subjects, and two science subjects, there has been an increase in the share of pupils filling the three Progress 8 slots reserved for EBacc subjects, even before Progress 8 and Attainment 8 become the measures which will determine performance table results. Had Progress 8 scores been measured, there would have been a 13 percentage point increase in the number of pupils filling the three EBacc subject slots between 2012 and 2015, to almost 70%.

In 2015, 95% of pupils also had results that would have counted in the 'open' Progress 8 slots, up on 84% three years ago. Much of this improvement is the result of schools switching away from qualifications that are no longer counted in Performance Tables following the Wolf Review.

Although not a subject that might be expected to have been affected by the EBacc, other accountability measures have had an impact on English literature entries, where 2015 entries surpassed 2005 levels. Under Progress 8 and Attainment 8, the subject gains extra desirability for schools, as a pupil's best result in either English language or English literature counts towards the performance measures. Not only that, but the best result is also doubled if both subjects have been entered. In 2016 a single combined GCSE in English will still be available, which can be doubled for Progress 8 purposes. However, schools already appear to be switching to separate GCSEs in language and literature pending the introduction of reformed GCSEs in 2017.
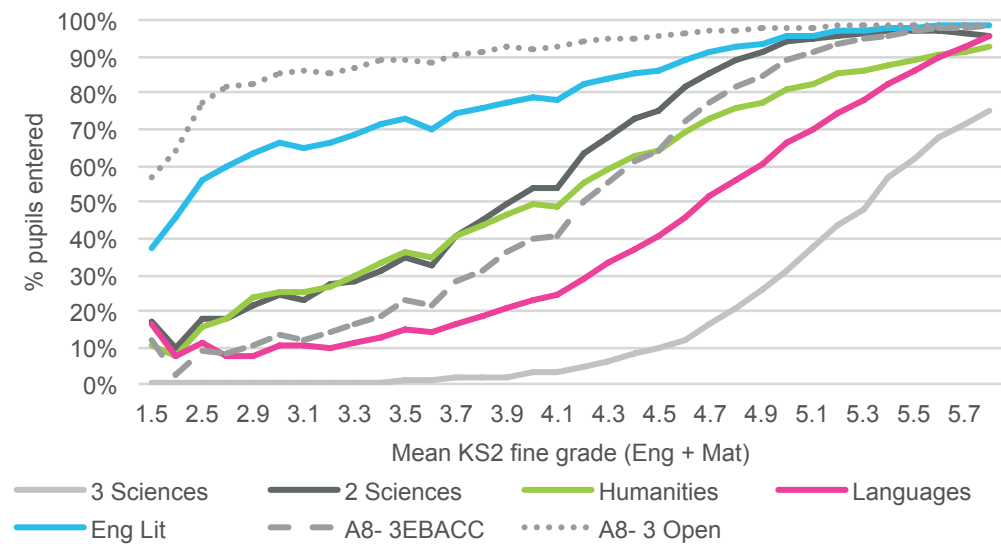
Entry Rates 2012-2015

Legend: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015
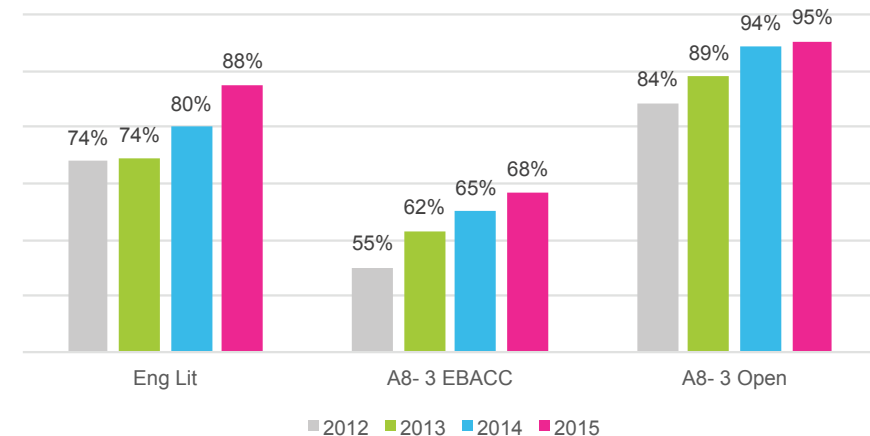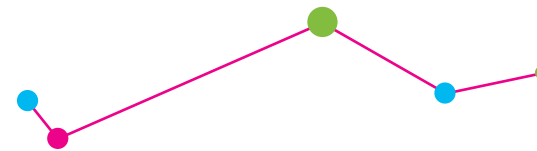
State-funded mainstream schools only

ENTRY PATTERNS DIFFER ENORMOUSLY BY PUPIL BACKGROUND

This changing KS4 curriculum is affecting some pupils much more than others. We divide pupils into 20 evenly-sized bands, or vintiles, based on average prior attainment. Every subject grouping eligible for inclusion in EBacc is taken in larger numbers by higher prior attainment children. For those below a mean KS2 fine grade of 3.9 (i.e. working below expected standard), the majority do now take English literature, but very few are entered for a language GCSE.

2015 subject entry rates by pupil prior attainment

Legend: 3 Sciences, 2 Sciences, Humanities, Languages, Eng Lit, A8- 3EBACC, A8- 3 Open

X-axis: Mean KS2 fine grade (Eng + Mat)
Y-axis: % pupils entered

By looking at the difference in 2012 entry rates and 2015 entry rates across the 20 vintiles it is possible to see where the increased entry rates that have occurred stem from – and how they differ between subjects.

1. The increase in the numbers taking English literature, and subjects that fill the three open Progress 8 slots, has come mostly from lower-attaining pupils.

The period covered captures the effect of the post-Wolf Review crackdown on 'equivalent' subjects, so much of the increase in Progress 8 open slots will have arisen from the switch back to GCSEs and vocational qualifications deemed high value enough to count under Progress 8.

For English literature, lower achieving groups that were less likely to take a standalone literature GCSE have started to return to it – with entries up a third in some vintiles. With the better of a student's English language and literature counting towards their Progress 8 performance, this increases the chances of securing a high English grade for Progress 8 purposes.
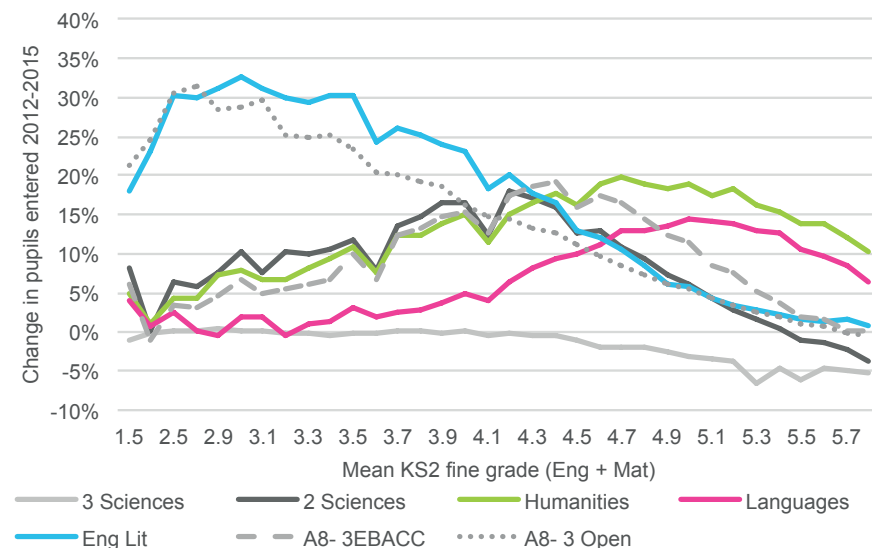
2. The increase in those taking two sciences, and subjects that fill the three Progress 8 slots reserved for EBacc subjects, has come mostly from middle ability students.

The number of students with high prior achievement who take two science GCSEs is close to 100%. The same is true also for three GCSEs that would count towards these students' 'other EBacc subjects' Progress 8 slots. This has broadly been the case since before 2012, so at the top end there has been relatively little room for any increase in the number of students taking these subjects. It has been among middle achievers, where coverage of these EBacc/Progress 8 slots was, and to a certain extent still is, much patchier, that schools have identified more scope to boost entry numbers.

3. The increase in those taking languages and humanity subjects, meanwhile, has come predominantly from those with above-average prior attainment.

For languages, all prior attainment vintiles below an average point score of 4.1 saw entries increase by 5% or less; above this level, entries in every vintile increased by more than this amount, and some by up to 15%. The picture with humanity subjects was less marked, but still skewed towards high achievers.

Change in subject entry rates between 2012 and 2015

Y-axis: Change in pupils entered 2012-2015 (40%, 35%, 30%, 25%, 20%, 15%, 10%, 5%, 0%, -5%, -10%)

X-axis: Mean KS2 fine grade (Eng + Mat) (1.5, 2.5, 2.9, 3.1, 3.3, 3.5, 3.7, 3.9, 4.1, 4.3, 4.5, 4.7, 4.9, 5.1, 5.3, 5.5, 5.7)

Legend: 3 Sciences · 2 Sciences · Humanities · Languages · Eng Lit · A8- 3EBACC · A8- 3 Open

PROGRESS 8 IS ON THE HORIZON: WE EXPECT SCHOOLS TO CONTINUE TO BECOME MORE SIMILAR IN THEIR KS4 CURRICULUM OFFER

There is still significant variation in proportion of pupils entered for 3 EBacc subjects across schools with similar intakes. We think schools are likely to continue to converge in their entry patterns. If those schools with low entry rates compared to similar schools rise towards the median then the overall 3 EBacc entry rate will rise from 68% in 2015 to 74%.

Distribution of % entry to 3 EBacc subjects by school prior attainment
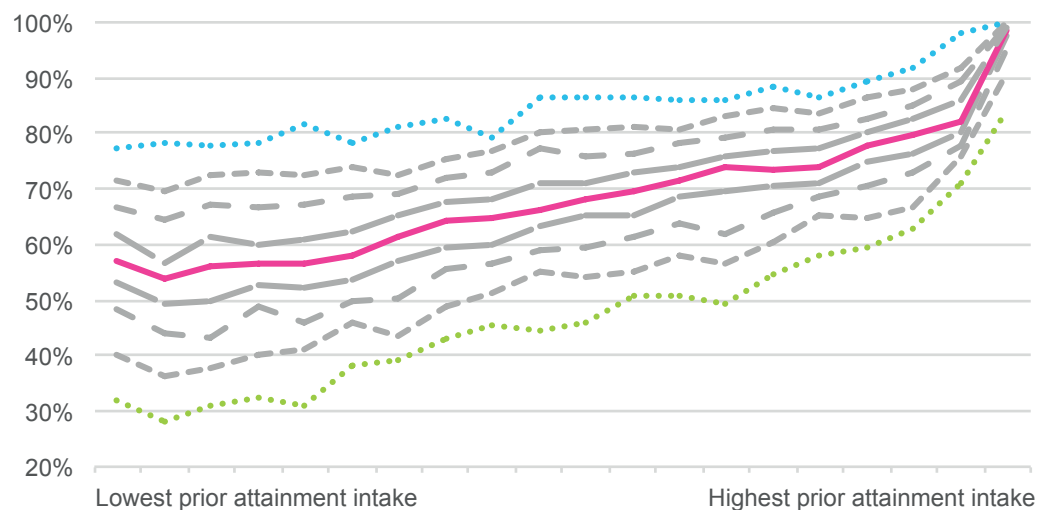
Note: Lines show distribution of school entry rates: 10th (green), 20th, 30th, 40th, 50th (pink), 60th, 70th, 80th, 90th (blue) percentiles.

The issue now is whether shortages of teachers in EBacc subjects will present a serious threat to further rises in entries. It would take 2,000 extra teachers to deliver KS4 languages to all, for example. There was a noticeable stalling in the rise of humanities EBacc entries in 2015. It is possible lack of specialist teachers is responsible for this.

Any reduction in the variation in entry rates across schools will in turn reduce variation in Progress 8. For those schools with already high EBacc entry rates, Progress 8 will start to fall unless the school can achieve increasing average point scores.

FFT ASPIRE TARGET SETTING AND BENCHMARKS …
UNDERSTANDING THE 'NOW', SHAPING THE FUTURE

In a nutshell

Set challenging targets for all your pupils using FFT's 'Average', 'High' or 'Very high' benchmark estimates of future performance. With both A*-G and 9-1 options available, FFT's Target setting dashboard provides a full subject by subject summary of future performance in your school.

The dashboard includes four key reports

- **Overview**
  Intelligent estimates of future performance for all key subjects using FFT's 'Average', 'High' and 'Very high' benchmarks. Compare FFT's benchmarks to your own school's predicted performance.

- **Pupil Groups**
  A more detailed view of future performance for individual pupil groups. Identify variations across key groups including gender, prior attainment, pupil premium, SEN and ethnicity.

- **Pupil list by subject**
  For each pupil (A*-G & 9-1) - their percentage chance of obtaining each GCSE grade; their most likely grade; and their target grade.

- **Subject view**
  A page per pupil showing FFT benchmark estimates and any targets.
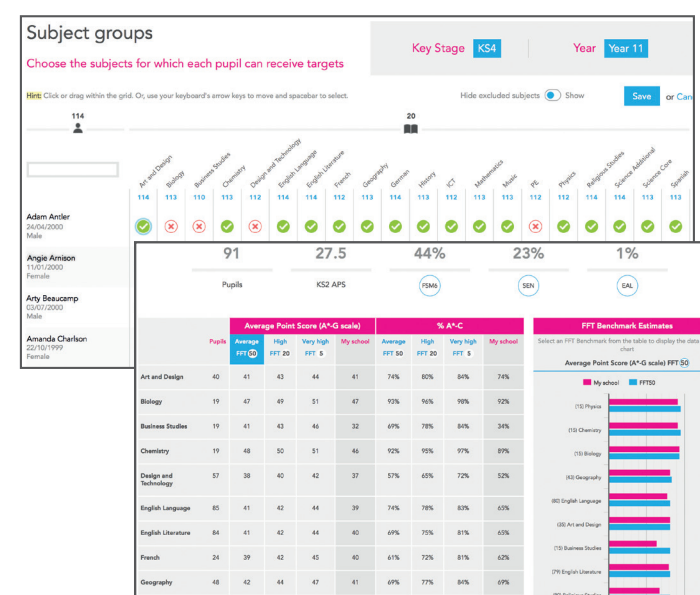
The basics

- Decide which level of challenge is most appropriate for each subject

- Review each pupil's estimates.

- Use the FFT benchmark estimates and your own knowledge of the pupil to set appropriate and challenging targets.

- Think about who else in school needs have access to Target Setting - middle/subject leaders, teachers, form tutors.

Next steps

- Make sure you import all your new pupils into Aspire.

- Link all pupils to their individual subjects for a more tailored view of future performance.

- Review the aggregated subject reports to see how challenging and realistic each subject level target looks at 9-1 or A*-G.

Link to the research: Use this report in conjunction with FFT's slot filling research to review subject take-up and potential future performance.

# IS AN OFSTED JUDGEMENT A LAGGING OR LEADING INDICATOR OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE?

The school inspectorate, Ofsted, was created in an era where detailed pupil background and attainment data was not collected. The only way to judge whether a school was doing a good job was to visit it.

Of course, Ofsted aims to do more than replicate exam performance monitoring. It can report on other dimensions of schools life – the safety and welfare of pupils, their extra-curricular provision, and so on (Iftikhar Hussain has conducted research on this). But can inspectors help us overcome the greatest problem with exam performance monitoring, which is that it necessarily tells you what the school was like, rather than the current quality of teaching and learning.

Here we look at 804 secondary schools who were visited by Ofsted in 2011/12 and for whom we have sufficient performance data.
We explore whether there is any evidence that Ofsted inspectors are leading indicators of future changes in exam performance. In other words, through observing leadership and teaching of year groups still in the school during their visit, can they correctly identify schools on the cusp of a change in fortunes, for better or worse?

It would be unrealistic to expect Ofsted inspectors to identify all future changes in exam performance, not least because many occur by chance. So, we pit Ofsted against our own exam-inspector who makes judgements solely using the past two years of GCSE performance data.
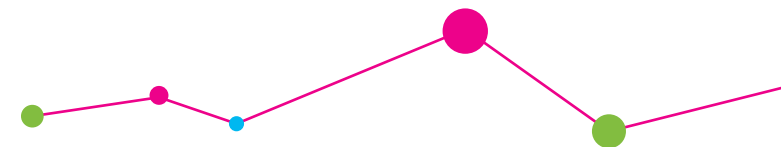
Our exam-inspector rates the effectiveness of schools using a bundle of contextual value added (CVA) measures from 2010 and 2011. A CVA measure reports how well a school performs, given its pupil intake attainment and demographics. We use CVA measures in maths, English, 5 A*-C rate, best 8 GCSEs or equivalents and overall GCSE score.

Having extracted a single (principal components) factor to describe the past school performance overall, we assign the inspected schools a 1-4 rating using the same proportions as Ofsted assigned that year. The exam-inspector doesn't aim to mirror what the Ofsted rating was in that year. Instead it makes a judgement solely based on past GCSE outcomes. This means their correlation is not particularly close.

Ofsted inspector

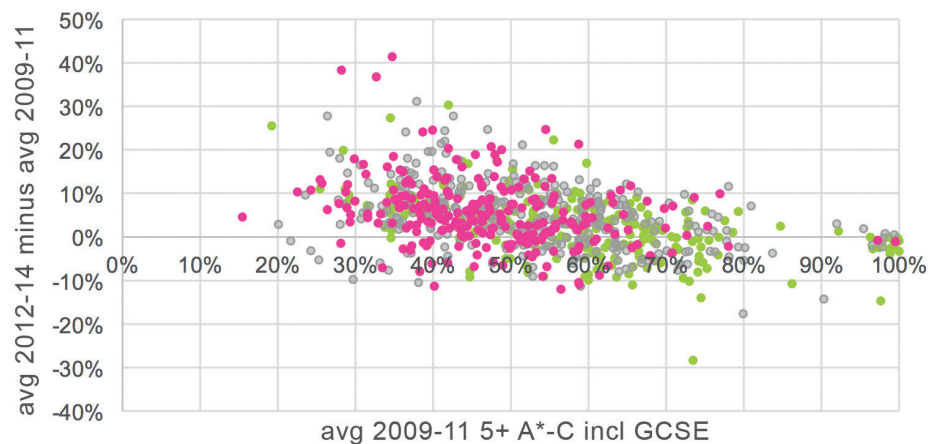| Exam Inspector	1	2	3	4	
1	28	58	21	3	110
2	56	152	105	23	336
3	23	104	110	34	271
4	3	22	35	27	87
	110	336	271	87	804

The question for us is, when Ofsted makes a judgement that is more optimistic than our exam-inspector (green on the table) are these schools more likely to be on a positive future trajectory? And when Ofsted is more pessimistic than our exam-inspector (in pink), does the exam performance of the school indeed fall in following years?

OFSTED JUDGEMENTS ARE NOT LEADING INDICATORS FOR FUTURE EXAM PERFORMANCE

We plot our inspected schools with the 3-year average exam performance that inspectors would have to hand at their visit against their future exam improvements (average 2012-14 minus average 2009-11 pass rates).

The green markers show schools where Ofsted was more positive in its judgement than our exam-inspector is. Many of these schools saw very large deteriorations in their pass rate after Ofsted visits. The pink markers show schools where Ofsted was more negative in its judgement than our exam-inspector is. Yet, many of these schools were on the cusp of huge improvements in their pass rate, suggesting the quality of teaching of existing pupils in the school was relatively high.

Overall, there is certainly no evidence here that Ofsted judgements reflect schools on the cusp of change.

Of course, Ofsted might argue that it is the inspection judgement itself that caused schools receiving relatively negative judgements to improve so much over the next few years. But we see the same pattern if we restrict our post-inspection analysis to the year 2011/12 when it is highly unlikely that Ofsted would influence exam results since they would have been sat within months of the visit.

The chart below groups schools into the difference between 2012 and average 2009-11 pass rates, from those with deteriorating exam performance on the left to the greatest improvers on the right. It shows that Ofsted is not more positive than the exam inspector in circumstances where a school is about produce significantly improved results shortly after they leave.

2009-2011 versus 2012-14 average 5+ A*-C, by Ofsted optimism

Ofsted optimism by school 2012 improvement over 2009-11
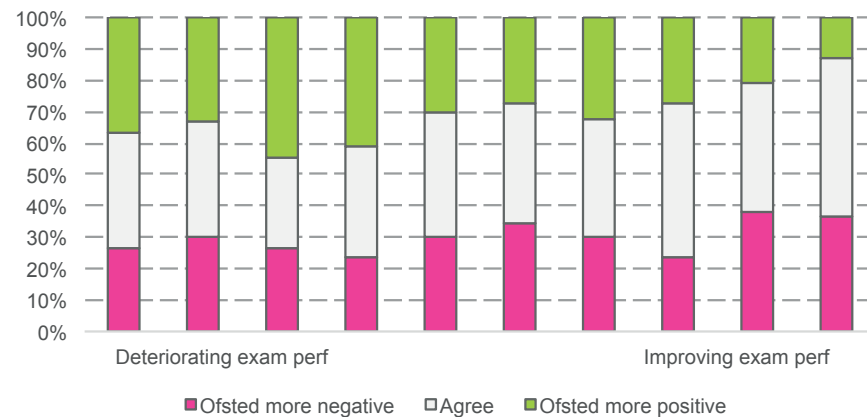
LOOKING AT SCHOOLS ON THE CUSP OF CHANGE

We look further for evidence that Ofsted is a leading indicator by isolating schools who are experiencing significant changes in performance that are not likely to be due to cohort effects or chance events via a contextual value added measure of best 8 GCSE results.

57 of our 804 inspected schools appear to be on the cusp of a deterioration in performance: they have at least one positive, statistically significant CVA in years 2009-2011 and at least one negative, statistically significant CVA in years 2012-14. In the table below we see that, although exam-inspector and Ofsted inspectors do make quite different judgements on these 57 schools, neither seems more optimistic or pessimistic about the prospects of these schools.

Ofsted inspector

Exam Inspector	1	2	3	4	
1	0	5	1	0	6
2	4	9	9	1	23
3	2	11	7	2	22
4	0	0	4	2	6
	6	25	21	5	57

Similarly, there are 80 inspected schools on the cusp of an improvement in their performance, with at least one negative, statistically significant CVA in the years 2009-2011 and at least one positive, statistically significant CVA in years 2012-14. Once again, the exam inspector and Ofsted make different judgements on these schools; and neither is a better leading indicator of these improvements.

Ofsted inspector

Exam Inspector	1	2	3	4	
1	4	10	5	0	19
2	4	9	11	4	28
3	0	11	18	2	31
4	1	0	1	0	2
	9	30	35	6	80

WHAT DOES AN OFSTED JUDGEMENT REFLECT?

We choose to operate an expensive, high-stakes inspection system in England. Given we now have other clear accountability mechanisms that use pupil test data, it is only right that we reflect on whether we know enough about the reliability, validity and efficacy of Ofsted to justify its cost.

Ofsted inspectors do, of course, observe many interesting activities taking place in schools. But where the quality of teaching and learning would appear to be better in the school than it was in the recent past (and so exam results are about to rise), Ofsted does not appear to spot this. Equally, where schools produce worse exam results shortly after inspectors leave, the Ofsted judgement is not likely to reflect this imminent deterioration in performance.

If Ofsted judgements cannot be shown to be a consistent indicator of past exam performance or a good leading indicator of changes in performance, then this does not necessarily mean that inspection judgements are highly subjective. However, it is important that Ofsted are clear exactly what it is that they intend to measure so that external researchers can evaluate whether they actually meet their remit.

FFT ASPIRE SELF EVALUATION DASHBOARDS…
## TELLING THE STORY OF YOUR SCHOOL

In a nutshell

Understanding your school is essential for planning: its key strengths & weaknesses, subject & group variation, the context & the effectiveness of interventions and teaching approaches. Over 5 pages FFT Aspire provides high quality self-evaluation reports that can support your work at both school and subject level.

The dashboard includes five key reports

Reports include a school/subject summary, attainment and pupil progress, pupil groups, pupil lists, overview of subjects and school context. They are ideal for senior leaders and are a vital tool for:

- analysing performance for your whole school (Summary Dashboard) and individual subjects (Subject Dashboard).
- assessing intervention.
- identifying key strengths and weaknesses (both attainment and progress).
- planning future strategies.
- completing a self-evaluation.
- having positive conversations with inspectors.
- A wide range of indicators are available including the latest accountability measures (Attainment 8 and Ebacc) and subject specific indicators.
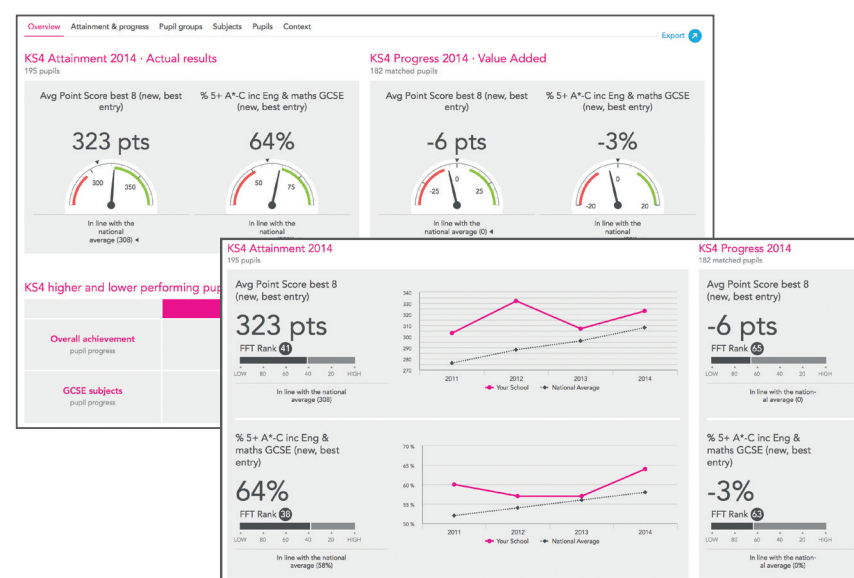
The basics

- Use the Overview report to quickly identify key subjects and groups.
- Use the filters to examine how these groups performed in different indicators for both Attainment and Progress.
- Compare the VA (and CVA) of these groups and subjects.
- Give each department or subject lead their own subject dashboard for a full national comparative analysis.

Next steps

- Use Attainment 8 and Ebacc indicators to start to look ahead to future performance in your school.
- Use subject dashboards to identify stronger and weaker subjects which may impact on Attainment 8 and Progress 8 in the future.
- Use the Collaborate dashboard to analyse performance in other schools. Share support and best practice.

Link to research: Quicker access to national comparative data. Better informed conversations with inspectors

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