



## Regional Directors decision making: 2022

### Background

Regional Directors (RDs) work with schools and Trusts to ensure they are supported to improve and address underperformance. This document sets out how RDs will make decisions during the academic year (AY) 22/23, including how they will use assessment, test, and exam results data from the AY 21/22 in their decision making.

These decisions include, but are not limited to, decisions on transfers and Trust consolidation, matching inadequate schools and those not making necessary improvements eligible for intervention to sponsors, proposals for new free schools, sponsor applications, applications for voluntary conversions and so on.

In July 2021, it was announced that with assessment, tests and exams going ahead, Key Stages 1, 2, 4 and 16-18 performance measures would be produced for AY 2021/22. At Key Stage 4 and 16-18, we will publish school and college level data on the performance measures website. At Key Stage 1 and 2, we will not publish performance measures at school level, but will share these securely with primary schools, academy trusts, local authorities and Ofsted. We will return to publishing KS2 measures from AY 2022/23.

This statement represents an interim position to reflect changes in exam data resulting from the impact of Covid. This statement will be further informed by the outcome of the Academies Regulation and Commissioning review.

### Strong Trust Definition

In the [Schools White Paper 'Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child'](#), we set out for the first time a definition of trust strength. The success of multi academy trusts in delivering against this definition will be the basis for assessments of trust strength and will inform decisions taken by RDs. The definition of a Strong Trust is one that:

- High Quality and Inclusive Education – delivers high quality education across their academies, including for disadvantaged children and children with SEND, and operates fair access. Has an effective central leadership team, strong school leadership and teaching, and uses evidence-based curriculum design and implementation.
- School Improvement – works quickly to improve standards within all their schools, particularly transforming previously under performing schools, and maintaining appropriately performing schools.
- Strategic Governance – operates an effective

and robust governance structure that involves schools and exemplifies ethical standards. Utilises the expertise and skills

- Strategic Governance – operates an effective and robust governance structure that involves schools and exemplifies ethical standards. Utilises the expertise and skills 2 on its boards to oversee the strategic direction of the trusts effectively and hold leaders to account. Has a strong local identity, engaging effectively with parents and the wider community.
- Financial Management – is underpinned by strong and effective financial management, prioritising the use of resources, including the estate, to deliver the best educational experience for children
- Workforce – trains, recruits, develops, deploys and retains great teachers and leaders throughout their careers, proactively engaging in Initial Teacher Training and the Early Career Framework, supporting staff development by using National Professional Qualifications and other evidence-based professional development and providing them with opportunities to progress. Deploys the best staff in the schools where they are needed most and prioritises staff wellbeing.

As part of the regulatory review, work is ongoing to further develop and iterate the strong trust definition, and underlying metrics, and a further update to reflect that work will be made once the Review is concluded.

### **What this means for DfE regional decision making in AY22/23**

During AY 22/23, RDs will have AY 21/22 assessment, test, and exam results data to refer to. However, due to the uneven impact of the Covid19 pandemic on schools in 2021/22, this data will be treated with caution. This means that while the data will inform discussions with schools, trusts and LAs, it will not be used to compare directly between two or more providers. For example, it will not be used to choose one school or trust over another simply because one has higher or lower performance data. The 2021/22 data will also not be compared directly to 2018/19 data or earlier. However, the current and historic data may, with caution, be compared to national or LA averages from the same year.

RD decisions, such as those set out above, will continue to be informed by a range of factors, not simply a single year's Key Stage 2 test, or GCSE/A level results. RDs will also continue to consult with ESFA to ensure decisions are informed by the latest financial data relating to a Trust, and that the Trust itself has access to relevant financial expertise. Where the decision requires ESFA financial support, a joint decision will be made which takes account of all relevant factors.

In making decisions in AY2022/23, RDs will therefore consider factors including, but not limited to:

- Measures based on test, assessment and exam results data for AY 2021/22 – such as the percentage meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, phonics results or Progress/Attainment 8 (with the caveats set out above), as well as measures based on entries data including EBacc entry;

- Historic data and trends over time in educational performance data, for example from 2017 to 2019 (with the caveats set out above);
- The most recent Ofsted school inspection reports of academies within a Trust. RDs will not take action on the back of letters from Ofsted following assurance visits in 2020 and 2021, but may discuss these letters with Trusts;
- Data on how well schools and colleges support their key stage 4 and 16 to 18 pupils or students to their next destination;
- Pupil attendance data, in particular persistent absence (except academic year 2019/20 and 2020/21) using published census data;
- School exclusion data based on the proportion of absence sessions lost due to exclusions, focussing on outlier schools;
- Any significant issues, as identified by the Trust or the RD, in relation to recruitment, attendance and retention of staff, including the executive leadership team;
- School improvement strategy - capacity and capability in managing the range of issues impacting the trust and the prioritisation of its strategies, as appropriate, to its schools, including the recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 and plans to ensure all pupils are catching up, in particular the support for vulnerable or disadvantaged pupils;
- Financial expertise within the Trust including financial experience on the board;
- Leadership, governance, skills, capacity and capability of a school's and the Trust's leadership/board; and
- Parental perspective as defined by pupil allocations compared to the Published Admission Number (PAN), where appropriate.

RDs will not, however, consider factors such as:

- A Trust's own data on their 2020 or 2021 results, or pseudo Progress 8 from third parties. The 2020 and 2021 qualifications results will not be used to judge schools in any way and we will not ask Trusts to provide us with this data (or take it into account if Trusts supply it); or
- A Trust's own internal data, except in respect of asking strategic questions about why data are collected and what purpose they serve.