



Department  
for Education

# **Update on Progress 8 measure and reforms to secondary school accountability framework**

**January 2014**

## Update on secondary school accountability reforms

In the government response to the secondary school accountability consultation, the DfE committed to looking at further aspects of the Progress 8 measure in more detail before finalising the method of calculating this measure.

We plan to finalise and publish the method we will use in February. However, we would like to provide an update on three topics at this stage:

### Setting predictions for the Progress 8 Value Added measure using data from an earlier cohort

In the response to the consultation the Department said: '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... We intend to discuss this with experts before finalising whether to adopt this approach in 2016, or wait until 2019.'

The examples below explain the difference between the two systems:

Under the current model: Pupil A achieved a KS2 average point score of 29 in 2011. We then wait until the 2016 KS4 results are available. We see what results across the suite of 8 subjects are achieved by pupils with 29 in their 2011 KS2 tests. A positive score is achieved if Pupil A performs better than average.

Under the proposed model: Pupil A achieved a KS2 average point score of 29 in 2011. We then look at the KS4 results in 2013 of all pupils who scored 29 in their end of KS2 tests (taken in 2008). 2013 data might show that, on average, pupils who previously score 29 in their KS2 tests went on to achieve 8Cs in this suite of 8 subjects. Schools will then know that Pupil A will receive a positive score with any results over 8Cs when she reaches the end of KS4 in 2016.

Having consulted further with experts, we now do not plan to adopt the new model for performance tables based on 2016 exams. We expect some schools to offer EBacc subjects to many more pupils as a result of these accountability reforms. This change in the curriculum offer means results could fluctuate considerably between 2013 and 2016 - expectations set three years in advance could be misleading during this period.

We do, however, think the proposed model is better in the long-term, so we plan to move to this new system for the performance tables based on 2019 exams. The predicted results for the cohort finishing KS4 in 2019 will be based on 2016 results. The 2016 results should be a good predictor because they will have been influenced by the new accountability framework.

We will need to take account of the reformed GCSEs when setting predicted results. For performance tables purposes, we will award points on the same scale for A\*-G grades in current GCSEs and 9-1 grades in reformed GCSEs. When making predictions in 2016 about future performance we will show exactly how many points each pupils requires on this scale for a positive score, as well as an indication of what grades this point score translates to in reformed GCSEs.

In 2017 and 2018, we could use 2016 data to set predictions in advance by one and two years respectively. This allows us to gain some of the benefits of the new approach before 2019. However, it does create some extra complexity for schools because the method for calculating Progress 8 will be slightly different in each of the years up until 2019, when the new approach can be adopted wholesale. We would welcome views about whether to set expectations in advance in 2017 and 2018.

Please contact: [phil.elks@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:phil.elks@education.gsi.gov.uk).

## **Point score system**

In the government response to the consultation, the Department said: '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.'

Following further modelling, we can confirm that we plan to move to the 1 to 8 point scale for the Attainment 8 and the Progress 8 measures in 2016. We will then adapt the point system for the 2017 performance tables once further information is available about reformed GCSEs. This will allow us to plot grades on current and reformed GCSEs and vocational qualifications on the same scale.

## **English Literature in reformed performance tables measures**

We want to ensure that schools with good teaching in English Literature receive sufficient credit in the new accountability framework.

We have therefore decided to adapt the position of English Literature in the Progress 8 measure.

The original position was:

- English Language would be double-weighted if a pupil also took English Literature.
- English Literature can be counted in the 'open group' of subjects.

The new position is:

- The best of English Language and English Literature will be double-weighted, provided a pupil has taken both qualifications.
- The second best score of English Literature and English Language can be counted in the 'open group' of subjects, if it is one of the pupil's highest scores in this group.

In 2016 exams, there is still a Combined English qualification (once GCSEs have been reformed, there will be an English Language and an English Literature GCSE qualification, but no Combined English). The Combined English qualification can be double-weighted in 2016 because pupils will have studied both English Language and English Literature to achieve this qualification.

We will also give English Literature parity with English Language in other headline performance tables measures in 2016 tables. Therefore:

- In the measure showing the percentage of pupils achieving a C grade or better in English and maths, a pupil would have to achieve a C in either English Literature or English Language to satisfy the English requirement (in 2016, a C in Combined English would be sufficient).
- In the EBacc measure, a pupil must study both English Language and English Literature, and achieve a C grade or better in at least one of these qualifications, to satisfy the English requirement (in 2016, a C in Combined English would be sufficient).



Department  
for Education

© Crown copyright 2013

You may re-use this document/publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v2.0. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/2](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/2) or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus).

Reference: DFE-00220-2013