



Department
for Education

Consultation on implementing the English Baccalaureate

Launch date 3 November 2015

Respond by 29 January 2016

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Foreword by the Secretary of State for Education

Every child, no matter what their background, should receive an education that opens doors to their future and prepares them to realise their potential in adult life. Central to achieving that is ensuring that young people develop the body of knowledge and skills that allows them to succeed not just in modern Britain but in the modern world.

At its most basic that means young people leaving school fully literate and numerate, with an understanding of the history and geography of the world they inhabit, its workings as revealed by the findings of science, and a grasp of languages other than their own. This academic core shouldn't be the preserve of an academic elite, it should be the basic right of every single child.

Yet, prior to 2010, the direction of travel in education was working in precisely the opposite direction - only 31% of pupils were taking a GCSE in history, and only 26% of pupils were taking a GCSE in geography, down from 32% and 36% respectively in 2000. Worse still, fewer than half – 43% – of pupils were studying a GCSE in a foreign language, down from 76% in 2000.

Instead of taking these core academic subjects thousands of pupils were pushed to take so called “equivalents” - poor quality vocational qualifications, many of which counted for nothing when it came to progressing to post-16 education or training. The number of these qualifications taken in schools up to age 16 exploded from 15,000 in 2004 to 575,000 in 2010 - a testament to the soft bigotry of low expectations that dominated educational thinking at the start of the millennium.

The consequences of this lack of educational ambition were clear for all to see. In the 2012 PISA tables, which ranked 65 OECD and partner countries by educational outcomes, the United Kingdom was listed 21st for science, 23rd for reading and 26th for mathematics. More worrying still, in the 2013 OECD Adult Skills survey, the UK was the only country surveyed where the literacy and numeracy level of recent school leavers was no better than that amongst those about to enter retirement.

Things were even worse when it came to foreign languages. The 2012 European Survey on Language Competencies surveyed the second language reading, listening and writing skills of Year 11 pupils across 16 language groups within 14 EU nations. England came last in every category.

Our education reforms since 2010 have set about reversing this decline. Following a report by Baroness Alison Wolf we have removed over 3,000 low-value qualifications from performance tables and introduced rigorous new standards for vocational qualifications.

What's more, we have been clear that schools should be ambitious for the young people in their charge. Nowhere has this drive been more apparent than with the

introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) in 2010. This measure shows the proportion of pupils in a school entering and achieving a good GCSE in English, mathematics, science, history or geography, and a foreign language. Though not compelled to do so, schools have risen to the challenge: the proportion of pupils entering the EBacc nationwide has risen from 23% in 2012 to 39% in 2015, and the proportion of pupils achieving the EBacc over the same period has risen from 16% to 24%.

This increase is incredibly welcome, but there is still a huge distance to go to ensure all young people are studying the core academic subjects. Research by the Sutton Trust in 2014 showed that pupils eligible for free school meals who scored in the top 10% nationally at the end of primary school were significantly less likely to be entered for the EBacc than their wealthier peers who achieved the same level aged 11. Overall, pupils who are eligible for free school meals are almost half as likely to be entered for the EBacc as those who are not. What's more there is stark regional variation. In 2015, 19% of pupils in Knowsley were entered for the EBacc, compared with 58.9% of pupils in Barnet.

It cannot be right that where a child is born, or the wealth of their parents, should determine whether or not they study these crucial subjects that will open doors to their future. Our commitment to governing as One Nation demands that we tackle this inequity.

That is why in our manifesto we committed to introducing an expectation that every child should study the EBacc subjects by 2020. This consultation sets out how we intend to achieve that and makes plain that the vast majority of pupils currently in year 7 should, in five years' time, be entered for the EBacc at GCSE.

Though there are many inequalities which schools cannot address, the unequal distribution of intellectual capital is one that they can. In 1994, the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future interviewed Evelyn Jenkins Gunn, an African-American English teacher from Pelham, New York. She explained how her own inspiring teacher compelled her to pursue her career in education:

It is because of a teacher that I sit at this table. I remember her telling us one cold, miserable day that she could not make our clothing better; she could not provide us with food; she could not change the terrible segregated conditions under which we lived. She could introduce us to the world of reading, the world of books, and that is what she did.

What a world! I visited Asia and Africa. I saw magnificent sunsets; I tasted exotic foods; I fell in love and danced in wonderful halls. I ran away with escaped slaves and stood beside a teenage martyred saint. I visited lakes and streams and composed lines of verse.

Literature, geography, history and poetry: that is the power of an academic curriculum to open minds, shape futures and deliver real social justice and why studying it should be the right of every child.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicky Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rt. Hon Nicky Morgan MP

Secretary of State for Education

Introduction

The proposals set out in this consultation form part of the government's plan to give children the best possible start in life. All young people, regardless of their background, are entitled to an education which prepares them for adult life and success in our modern economy.

A rich academic curriculum should be the foundation of such an education. The core academic subjects at school are the primary colours of an educated person's palette. They provide the basis for more specialised later study, and they keep options open so that young people are not prematurely committed to a narrow range of careers.

Many countries with education systems that perform more highly than England make an academic core of subjects compulsory to 16. Countries such as Finland, Germany and Poland, and education jurisdictions such as Shanghai, the provinces of Victoria in Australia and Ontario in Canada all provide education in core academic subjects until at least 16.

In England, however, the number of pupils taking academic subjects at GCSE had steeply declined prior to 2010. In 2000, 32% of pupils took history, 36% of pupils took geography and 76% of pupils took a modern foreign language. By 2010 this had fallen to 31% of pupils taking history, 26% taking geography and 43% taking a modern foreign language. This has left a legacy within the education system. A report by the Sutton Trust found that pupils eligible for free school meals in 2014 were disproportionately less likely to take the EBacc subjects; pupils that were eligible for free school meals and scored in the top 10% nationally at the end of primary school were significantly less likely to enter GCSEs in history, geography or languages, when compared with pupils who were not eligible for free school meals also scoring in the top 10%.¹

The government finds this inequality of opportunity in education deeply concerning. Since 2010, the government has taken decisive action to address this decline, and ensure that more young people benefit from the opportunities which an academic curriculum provides.

We introduced a new **National Curriculum**, which began to be taught in schools in September 2014. It provides a knowledge-based, structured progression from the basics – including reading and arithmetic in Year 1 – to more advanced content in key stages 3 and 4. In geography, the new programme of study contains a greater focus on locational knowledge and on fieldwork. In history, the new programme of study sets out within a clear chronological framework the core knowledge that enables pupils to know and understand the history of Britain from its first settlers to the development of the

¹ [The Sutton Trust Research Brief, Missing Talent, 5 June 2015](#)

institutions that help to define our national life today.

New assessments are helping teachers and schools to identify where pupils need additional support. The results of the Phonics Screening Check in 2015 show that over 120,000 more pupils are on track to be successful readers by the end of year 1 than when the check was first introduced in 2012. We will introduce tests of the new national curriculum from 2016, raising the standard that pupils have to achieve in order to demonstrate our higher expectations.

We are **reforming GCSEs and A Levels** to restore rigour, and bring standards up to match the best around the world. The year 10 cohort that started school this September will be the first group of young people to benefit from the new English and mathematics GCSEs. The new mathematics GCSE places greater emphasis on mathematical reasoning, and includes new content to improve progression to A level - on, for example, rates of change and quadratic functions. For GCSE English Literature, pupils will now be required to study a broader range of texts, including at least one Shakespeare play and a nineteenth-century novel. Other reformed GCSEs and A Levels will be introduced in 2016 and 2017.

Following Baroness Alison Wolf's Review of Vocational Education, the government has removed over 3,000 low-value qualifications from performance tables, to ensure that only **vocational qualifications of real value** to pupils and employers are taught in our schools and colleges.

And for the first time, the government has introduced a performance measure which shows the proportion of pupils in each school benefitting from a core academic curriculum up to GCSE. The **English Baccalaureate (EBacc)** attainment measure was first published in 2011. Pupils achieve the EBacc if they secure a good pass in GCSEs in English, mathematics, sciences, history or geography, and a language. In 2010, fewer than a quarter of pupils (22%) entered the EBacc combination of subjects; it is now 39%. In 2010, 31% of pupils studied history at GCSE, it is now 37%; 26% of pupils studied geography at GCSE, it is now 34%; and 43% of pupils studied a modern foreign language at GCSE, it is now 47%.

But the scale of the decline prior to 2010, and the importance of these academic subjects to the future strength of our culture and economy, has led the government to conclude that it needs to do even more to ensure that more pupils study these subjects.

Leading schools show that it is perfectly possible for a much greater proportion of pupils to achieve the EBacc. King Solomon Academy is situated in a disadvantaged community in Paddington. 67% of its year 11 pupils are eligible for the pupil premium and yet 93% of all its pupils entered the EBacc in 2014. In Whitmore High School in Harrow 31% of the school's intake is eligible for the pupil premium and yet 91% of all its pupils entered the EBacc in 2014.

These schools provide a rigorous academic core at key stage 4. They do so without compromising on providing a rich, broad and balanced curriculum for their pupils. The EBacc is a specific, limited measure consisting of only five subject areas and up to eight GCSEs. This means that there is time for most pupils to study other valuable subjects in addition to the EBacc, including religious studies, arts subjects, or vocational and technical disciplines.

This document invites views on the government's goal that the vast majority of pupils should be entering the EBacc. Pupils currently in year 7 will be the first to benefit from this new expectation, with the first cohort being entered for EBacc GCSEs in 2020.

For some schools, including King Solomon Academy and Whitmore High School, this new expectation simply reflects their existing approach. For others, though, in which a smaller proportion of pupils currently enter the EBacc, it represents a more significant change. The scale of the government's ambition will certainly require greater teacher recruitment in some subjects and may require schools to rethink how they plan their curriculum. The government does not underestimate this change and will work with schools and others to ensure that these challenges are met, so that more young people have the opportunity to benefit from a rich and broad academic curriculum.

Who this is for

This document gives parents, young people, the teaching profession, employers and others with an interest in education the opportunity to help shape the policy.

Issue date

The consultation was issued on 3 November 2015.

Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the team on:

- 0370 000 2288 for the English Baccalaureate team and ask for Maleck Boodoo; or email:
English.BACCALAUREATE@education.gsi.gov.uk

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the [DfE Contact us page](#).

Additional copies

Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from [GOV.UK DfE consultations](#).

The response

The results of the consultation and the Department's response will be [published on GOV.UK](#) in spring 2016.

About this consultation

The government's goal is that, in time, at least 90% of pupils in mainstream secondary schools will enter the EBacc. This consultation document makes six proposals:

- We propose that the EBacc becomes the default option for all pupils, but that schools should be able to determine the small minority of pupils for whom taking the whole EBacc is not appropriate.
- To help hold mainstream secondary schools to account for meeting this ambition, we propose that the proportion of pupils entering the EBacc will become a headline measure of secondary school performance.
- We propose that EBacc entry and attainment will be given a more prominent role in the Ofsted inspection framework, although, as now, no single measure will determine the outcome of an inspection.
- We propose that EBacc entry and attainment data for mainstream secondary schools with similar characteristics and intakes will also be published by the government to allow schools, parents, and Ofsted, to understand how similar schools compare to each other.
- We propose to add a measure to the additional information we publish showing the EBacc Average Point Score. Pupils' achievements in individual qualifications are allocated performance table points, and this measure would give the average point score across the 5 pillars of the EBacc, with zero for a missing pillar.
- A number of education settings provide a specialist education: University Technical Colleges (UTCs), studio schools, further education colleges, special schools and alternative provision. For special schools and alternative provision, we propose to publish data on the numbers of pupils entering and achieving the EBacc but will not expect them to meet the 90% ambition. For UTCs, studio schools and further education colleges we are consulting on how the policy should apply.

We would like to hear your views on our proposals.

Respond online

To help us analyse the responses please use the online system wherever possible. Visit www.education.gov.uk/consultations to submit your response.

Other ways to respond

If for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may download a word document version of the form and email it or post it.

By email

English.BACCALAUREATE@education.gsi.gov.uk

By post

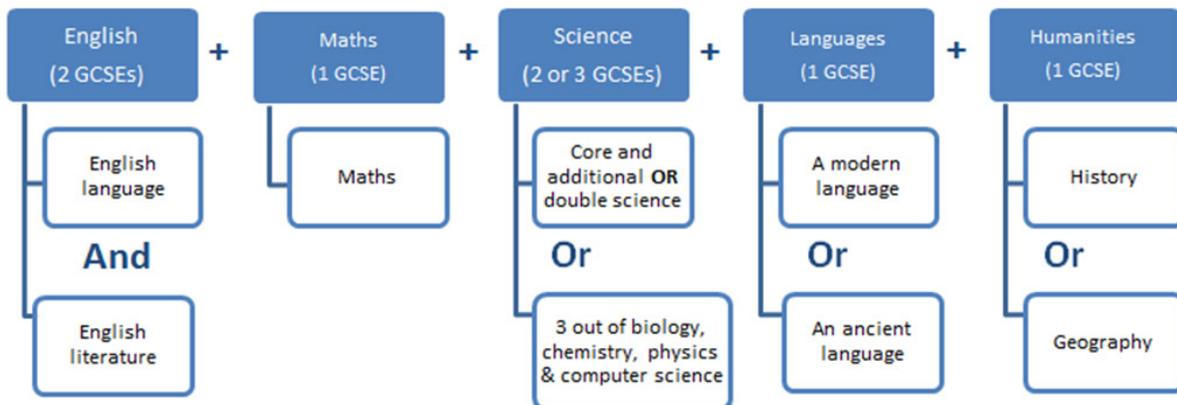
Maleck Boodoo
Floor 2
Department for Education
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

Deadline

The consultation closes on 29 January 2016.

What is the EBacc?

The EBacc brings together the core academic subjects that the vast majority of young people should study to age 16. To enter the EBacc, pupils must take up to eight GCSE qualifications across five subject 'pillars':



Currently, to achieve the EBacc pupils need to attain:

- grade A*-C in English language GCSE and any grade in English literature GCSE;
- grade A*-C in mathematics GCSE;
- grade A*-C in either history or geography GCSE;
- grade A*-C in a language GCSE; and
- grade A*-C in core and additional science GCSEs; or grade A*-C in GCSE double science award; or pupils need to enter three single sciences and achieve grade A*-C in at least two of them (the single sciences are biology, chemistry, computer science and physics).

A full list of the qualifications that count towards the EBacc is available at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) .

The rationale for increasing EBacc participation

This section of the consultation document sets out information we hold about current participation in the EBacc and our rationale for extending it to the vast majority of young people. This change, coupled with our wider educational reforms, will extend opportunity within our education system, particularly to pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

High aspirations for every pupil

The government wants all young people to benefit from a rigorous academic education. Every parent should be able to expect an excellent education that provides their child with the knowledge and attributes that will help them to succeed in life. As a nation we should expect our education system to improve equality of opportunity so that no matter their background or starting point, every child is equipped to succeed in life. A good foundation in the EBacc subjects helps to keep options open for work and further study, improving the life chances of young people.

The knowledge and skills acquired through English and mathematics are crucial for work. Baroness Alison Wolf, who conducted a 2011 review into vocational education, has said that English and mathematics are the most fundamental skills of all, and the entrance ticket to A-levels, top apprenticeships, university and the labour market.²

Young people with good literacy and numeracy are much more likely to secure a well paid job. A 2007 study by Gutierrez found that in 2004 people in their early 30s with even just a basic level of numeracy (Level 1) earned 9% more than those with below this level³. Mathematics, science and computer science are increasingly in demand from employers providing jobs that require analytical and technical capabilities. The Science Council has forecast that an additional 1.3 million people will be employed in science-based roles by 2030.⁴ In a competitive, global economy, more businesses are planning to establish themselves in overseas markets and are seeking employees with foreign languages. The 2014 CBI and Pearson Education Skills Survey found that 65% of companies had a need for foreign language skills.⁵

Many students studying the EBacc subjects at GCSE progress to further study in these subjects at A level. These A levels are part of the Russell Group's list of 'facilitating

² [Alison Wolf writes for 'The Times' about her review of Vocational Education](#) 8 March 2011

³ Gutierrez, O.M, Vignoles, A., and De Coulon, A., (2007) The Value of Basic Skills in the British Labour Market. Centre for the Economics of Education, DP 77.

⁴ Science Council, [20% of UK workforce depends on science skills to do their jobs](#)

⁵ CBI, [More firms demanding language skills to break into new markets](#), 23 June 2014

subjects' which are those most often required by top universities for a broad range of courses such as engineering, law, or physiotherapy.

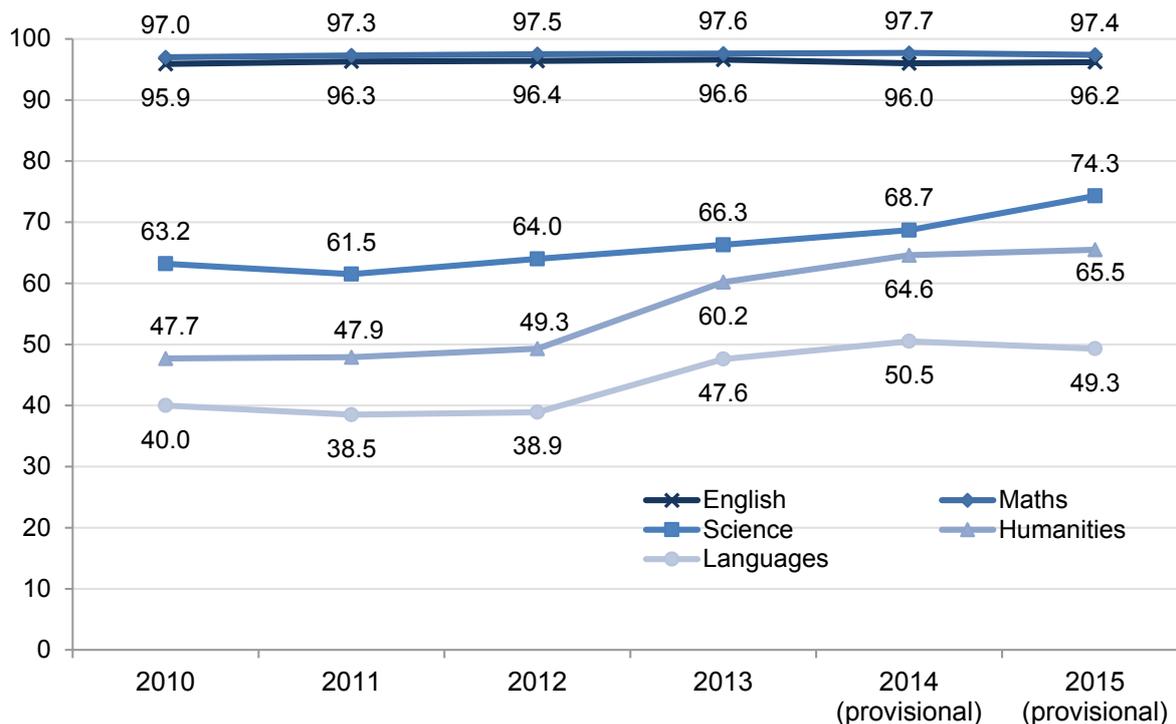
Some of the highest performing countries and regions in the world recognise the importance of this academic core to age 16. Finland, China, the State of Ontario in Canada and the State of Victoria in Australia all provide education in EBacc subjects until at least this age. Compared to these high performing countries, England currently has a narrow core of compulsory academic subjects studied to age 16 (English, mathematics and science). Broadening this academic core will bring our education system more in line with our high performing neighbours and help pupils from England to compete in international job markets, increasing the productivity of the British economy. A chart showing the subjects compulsory in the curricula of high-performing countries can be found at Annex A.

The current situation

Prior to 2010, there was a decline in pupils studying academic subjects at key stage 4. By 2010, only 43% of pupils entered a GCSE in languages, compared with 76% in 2000; only 26% entered geography, compared with 36% in 2000; and only 31% entered history. A graph showing the percentage of pupils taking GCSEs in history, geography and MFL from 2000 to 2015 can be found at Annex A. This was accompanied by significant growth in "equivalent" vocational qualifications. Baroness Alison Wolf's review in 2011 demonstrated that many of these qualifications were of little value to the students who took them. Now only high value technical and vocational qualifications count in school and college performance tables, incentivising their take up.

The EBacc performance measure was introduced in 2010. This had an immediate impact and started to address the fall in participation in these subjects. Between 2010 and 2015, the proportion of pupils studying humanities at GCSE rose by 18 percentage points and languages rose by 9 percentage points.

Figure 1: Percentage of pupils entered for components of the EBacc (state-funded schools)⁶



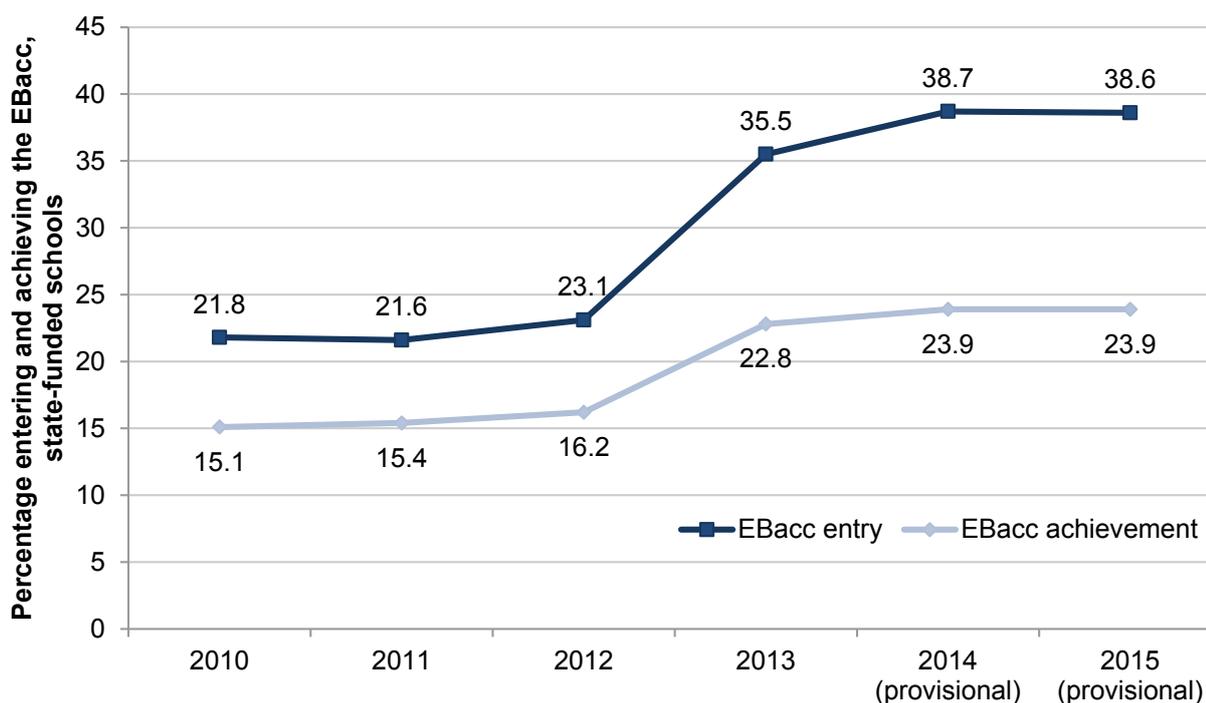
The increase in students taking these subjects at GCSE has started to influence subject choices at A level. The most recent A level results show significant increases in Geography (up 14% since 2014), History (8%), and Spanish (15%).

In 2013 the government announced that Progress 8 would become a headline measure in the key stage 4 performance tables from 2016 onwards. Progress 8 measures the progress pupils make across 8 qualifications, including English and mathematics; any three other EBacc qualifications; and three other subjects. Progress 8 reflects the government’s commitment to pupils studying a core of academic subjects as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

⁶ 2014 and 2015 data is provisional. On 8 October 2015 the Head of Profession for Statistics set out that comparisons in Statistical First Releases should be made on the basis of comparing the current year’s provisional data with the previous year’s provisional data to give the most accurate picture of change possible.

The need to go further

Figure 2: Percentage of pupils entering and achieving the EBacc (state-funded schools)⁷⁸



The EBacc performance measure has significantly increased the numbers of pupils taking the EBacc, but the rate of progress has slowed. Between 2010 and 2014, the proportion of pupils taking GCSEs in English, mathematics, science, humanities and languages increased from 22% to 39%. This was a great improvement but nonetheless suggests that too many pupils who could benefit from the EBacc are still missing out. In order to deliver social justice in this country we must act together to address this inequality.

The proportion of pupils entering the EBacc is even lower for some groups of pupils such as those eligible for free school meals. In 2014, only 21% of pupils receiving free school meals were entered for the EBacc, compared with 42% of all other pupils; a gap of 20.7 percentage points. The Sutton Trust research shows that this disparity is also true for the most able pupils eligible for free school meals.⁹ Amongst those pupils receiving free school meals even those scoring in the top 10% nationally at the end of primary school were significantly less likely to enter GCSEs in history, geography or

⁷ 2014 and 2015 data is provisional. On 8 October 2015 the Head of Profession for Statistics set out that comparisons in Statistical First Releases should be made on the basis of comparing the current year's provisional data with the previous year's provisional data to give the most accurate picture of change possible.

⁸ [Statistics on key stage 4 results, including GCSEs](#)

⁹ [The Sutton Trust Research Brief, Missing Talent](#) 5 June 2015

languages. All pupils should benefit from a rigorous academic education, and the opportunities that come with this, regardless of their background.

For many pupils, the language pillar is the principal barrier to entry and achievement. In 2015, 27% of pupils entered four EBacc pillars, meaning they were only one pillar away from entering the full EBacc. Of these, 67% did not enter the full EBacc because they did not take a language GCSE. A further 22% took English, mathematics, science and a language but did not take a GCSE in history or geography.¹⁰

The EBacc as part of a broad and balanced education

EBacc subjects are only part of a broad and balanced curriculum. The government believes that every child should experience a high-quality arts and cultural education throughout their time at school. This is why the arts subjects are statutory for maintained schools from key stages 1 to 3. PE also remains a compulsory subject at all four key stages in the national curriculum, ensuring that pupils remain active throughout school.

Some students may wish to start an element of vocational study alongside the EBacc pre-16. Baroness Alison Wolf's 2011 review of vocational education recommended that where a student wishes to take vocational subjects at key stage 4, these should complement – not replace – a common academic core of study. We have reformed vocational education to help schools choose high quality qualifications that will give breadth to student choice at key stage 4. From this September, we have introduced a new category of key stage 4 qualifications, known as Technical Awards, which focus on the development of practical skills and knowledge.

As the EBacc is a specific, limited measure consisting of only five subject pillars and up to eight GCSEs, there is time in the curriculum for most pupils to study other valuable subjects in addition to the EBacc. The proportion of pupils in state-funded schools taking at least one GCSE in an arts subject has increased since the EBacc was first introduced, rising from 46% in 2011 to 50% in 2015.¹¹

¹⁰ [Statistical release: EBacc and non-EBacc subject entries and achievement: 2010/11 to 2014/15](#)

¹¹ [Statistical release: EBacc and non-EBacc subject entries and achievement: 2010/11 to 2014/15](#)

Pupils in scope of the EBacc commitment

We propose to extend opportunity by ensuring that the EBacc becomes the default option at GCSE for all pupils. However, we have acknowledged that there will be a small minority of pupils for whom the EBacc may not be appropriate. We have therefore set our clear ambition that **in time, at least 90% of pupils in mainstream secondary schools should be entered for the EBacc**. This section sets out our proposal for how schools should determine the small minority for whom taking the entire EBacc is not appropriate and identifies factors schools should consider when making that decision.

Which pupils currently take the EBacc?

As described in the previous section, the likelihood of a pupil entering and achieving the EBacc is unequal depending upon their background and the school they attend.

- Only 21% of pupils eligible for free school meals in 2014 were entered for the EBacc, compared with 42% of all other pupils.
- Only 12% of students with any kind of special educational need (SEN) were entered for the EBacc in 2014 compared with 45% of those without any kind of SEN. However, there is significant variation between students with different kinds of need; 13.5% of SEN pupils without a statement were entered for the EBacc in 2014 compared with only 3.9% of pupils with a statement.¹²
- Only 4% of pupils who had achieved below the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in their key stage 2 tests at primary school were entered for the EBacc in 2014, with 0.6% achieving it. Even amongst pupils with high prior attainment, however, significant numbers are not benefitting from taking the EBacc. In 2014 31.2% of pupils who had achieved above the expected standard at key stage 2 did not take the EBacc¹³.

These entry rates and gaps between pupil groups are not inevitable. A number of schools have demonstrated that they can provide greater equality of opportunity for their pupils.

- Denbigh High School in Luton entered 75% of its disadvantaged pupils for the EBacc in 2014.

¹² A student has SEN if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A student has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.

¹³ The expected standard at key stage 2 in 2009 when these pupils took their key stage 2 tests was a level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics. From summer 2016 more rigorous key stage 2 tests will be introduced.

- St Albans Academy in Birmingham is a school with double the national average of pupils who were low attainers at key stage 2 but entered 89% of all pupils for the EBacc in 2014, including 71% of pupils with low prior attainment. 18% of low prior attainers achieved the EBacc, 30 times the national average.
- 39% of pupils attending Platanos College in Lambeth have some form of SEN and 84% of all pupils were entered for the EBacc in 2014.

The wide variation in entry between schools, including those with similar pupil characteristics, suggests that EBacc entry depends on a range of factors including, but not exclusive to, pupil performance. Schools that have been the most successful at raising EBacc entry and attainment have done so because they have decided to make the EBacc the foundation of their GCSE curriculum and have cultures of high expectations for all pupils.

Making the best decisions for pupils

The EBacc provides the right foundation for the vast majority of pupils. In time, the government wants to see at least 90% of pupils in mainstream secondary schools entered for the EBacc subjects at GCSE, but taking the full EBacc will remain inappropriate for a small minority of pupils. Pupils who are not entered for the EBacc in the future might include those with complex special educational needs, pupils who have spent significant amounts of time out of education, recent arrivals to the country and pupils who are only able to take a limited number of key stage 4 qualifications as they need significant additional time in the curriculum for English and mathematics. This is not an exhaustive list of factors; decisions about entry should not become automatic and non-entry will need to be considered on a case by case basis.

Given the need to take highly variable circumstances into account, we propose that schools should be able to determine which pupils make up the small minority for whom taking the whole EBacc is not appropriate. In making decisions about EBacc entry, schools should consider the overall impact that EBacc entry might have on pupil performance and progression to post-16 education. As well as the school academic co-ordinator, decisions could involve the views of the pupil, parents and other relevant members of staff such as the special educational needs co-ordinator. The decision not to enter a pupil for the EBacc should be a positive decision; the alternative options chosen should be significantly more likely to lead to better life chances and maintain broad options for post-16 study.

In order to achieve the national expectation that at least 90% of pupils are entered for the EBacc, many schools will need to enter significantly more than 90% of their pupils.

Though the EBacc is a measure that combines subjects to offer a broad academic education, each component also has individual merit and there should be an

expectation that all pupils take as many EBacc subjects as possible, even where a school has determined that the full EBacc is not appropriate.

The government will continue to review this approach to ensure that social justice is being delivered and that all pupils, for whom it is appropriate, take the EBacc.

Questions

We propose that the EBacc becomes the default option for all pupils, but that schools should be able to determine the small minority of pupils for whom taking the whole EBacc is not appropriate.

What factors do you consider should be taken into account in making decisions about which pupils should not be entered for the EBacc?

Accountability for meeting the EBacc commitment

This section sets out our proposals for changes to the accountability system to reflect the importance of the EBacc as a core part of the government's reforms to improve standards and tackle inequality. The government's goal is that, in time, at least 90% of pupils in mainstream secondary schools will enter the EBacc. To help hold mainstream secondary schools to account for meeting this ambition we propose that the proportion of pupils entering the EBacc will become a headline measure of secondary school performance. This would mean that from 2016 the headline performance measures set out in the key stage 4 performance tables would be:

- Progress 8;
- Attainment 8;
- EBacc entry;
- EBacc achievement; and
- % of pupils achieving a good pass in English and mathematics

New data would also be published on the average EBacc point score for each school. In addition we propose that EBacc entry and attainment will be given a more prominent role in the Ofsted inspection framework, although, as now, no single measure will determine the outcome of an inspection. We also propose that EBacc entry and attainment data for mainstream secondary schools with similar characteristics and intakes will also be published by the government to allow schools, parents, and Ofsted, to understand how similar schools compare to each other.

A number of education settings provide a specialist education: UTCs, studio schools, further education colleges, special schools and alternative provision. For special schools and alternative provision we propose to publish data on the numbers of pupils entering and achieving the EBacc but will not expect them to meet the 90% ambition. For UTCs, studio schools and further education colleges we would like to hear views on how the policy should apply.

Headline performance table measures

The government publishes data about every state-funded school on the performance tables website.¹⁴ This data is used to hold schools to account for the quality of education they provide and to help parents understand how well their children's school is doing. This information is split between the headline measures, the most critical

¹⁴ [School and college performance tables](#)

indicators of a school's performance, and additional measures which set out other important information that should be known about a school.

In October 2013 the government announced that a new secondary accountability system would be implemented from 2016. This includes two new measures of school performance, Progress 8 showing progress from the end of primary school to the end of secondary school in eight qualifications; and Attainment 8 showing attainment in the same 8 subjects.

The government has announced that Progress 8 will replace 5A*-C including English and mathematics as the basis of the floor standard, the minimum standard that we expect schools to meet. This is a fair way of holding schools to account and we do not propose to change this. Progress 8 rewards schools for the good teaching of all their pupils. Incentives to focus on particular groups of pupils are reduced, particularly those around the C/D grade boundary. By focusing on progress, we will be able to identify high and low performing schools more accurately; secondary schools making poor progress with a high performing intake will be identified, and those secondary schools making good progress with pupils with low prior attainment at primary school will be recognised.

Progress 8 is based on a pupil's performance in English and mathematics, their best grades in three other EBacc qualifications and three more GCSEs or other approved qualifications. This gives schools a better incentive to provide a broad and balanced curriculum with a focus on an academic core, and emphasises the importance of EBacc subjects. It does not, however, require pupils to take the full EBacc.

We propose that the best way to ensure that the benefits of a rigorous academic education are extended to all pupils, regardless of background, is to include EBacc entry as a headline measure in the performance tables. Currently this measure is reported in performance tables as additional information about secondary schools. By publishing EBacc entry information as a headline measure in the future we will provide clear information for parents, governors and others on the proportion of pupils being taught these important subjects. By raising expectations and aspirations, and as schools rise to the challenge of teaching EBacc subjects to more pupils, we should also expect to see attainment in these important subjects increase.

In order to encourage and reward those schools that teach EBacc subjects well, the current EBacc achievement measure will be retained as a headline in the new accountability system. This recognises the proportion of pupils achieving a good pass in a combination of all of these core subjects.

In 2013 the government announced that pupil destination measures would be included as a headline measure for secondary schools and colleges in the key stage 4 and 5 performance tables. It is still our intention to introduce this measure in time.

Additional performance table measures

In addition to the headline measures, the performance tables currently include a wide range of further information to provide further context and facilitate more detailed analysis.

We propose to include additional data in the performance tables that will show how school EBacc entry rates compare to other schools with similar characteristics.

We also propose to add a measure to the additional information we publish showing the EBacc Average Point Score. Pupils' achievements in individual qualifications are allocated performance table points, and this measure would give the average point score across the 5 pillars of the EBacc, with zero for a missing pillar. This would ensure that the achievements of all pupils in EBacc subjects are recognised, not just those working at the level of a good pass and above.

Parents, governors, school inspectors, academy chains, dioceses, Regional Schools Commissioners¹⁵ and local authorities are better placed to consider a school's success if they have easy access to a wide range of information. This proposed additional information will enable more detailed analysis about a school's performance in the EBacc and any patterns in entry and attainment.

Inspection

The increased importance of the EBacc will also be taken into consideration when schools are inspected. Ofsted inspectors already examine whether schools are providing a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets statutory requirements and the needs and interests of pupils. They also expect pupils to attain relevant qualifications that prepare them for progression into further or higher education, apprenticeships or employment. In future, EBacc entry and achievement will be given a more prominent role in determining whether schools are meeting these requirements although, as now, no single measure will determine the outcome of an inspection. Inspectors will take account of schools' provision and support for the relevant cohorts in preparing them for the EBacc, and the extent to which pupils attain the EBacc. Inspectors will compare this information with the EBacc entry and achievement rates of schools with similar intakes and similar characteristics.

¹⁵ Regional Schools Commissioners are responsible for taking decisions about academies and free schools in their region.

Accountability arrangements for alternative education settings

There are some education settings where it might not be appropriate to expect high rates of EBacc entry, such as special schools and alternative provision.

Special schools

Special schools provide education and support to pupils with complex special educational needs. Some pupils in special schools enter the EBacc, and some special schools work effectively in partnership with local mainstream schools to support this. The EBacc will, however, be inappropriate for many pupils in special schools who enter fewer qualifications at key stage 4.

Alternative provision

The local authority is required to arrange alternative provision for pupils who are not able to attend mainstream or special schooling. This is often due to complex medical needs, exclusion from school, or the need to address behavioural issues. Some pupils are dual registered in a school and alternative provision setting. These pupils are recorded in the school's performance data, but not as a separate group. The department publishes information on the performance of pupils solely registered in alternative provision at a local authority and national level.

Given the varying circumstances and needs of pupils in alternative provision, the EBacc will be appropriate for some of these pupils, but not all. Many pupils in alternative provision take fewer qualifications and may, due to their complex educational history, take longer than other pupils to achieve good qualifications.

University Technical Colleges and studio schools

UTCs and studio schools provide a specialist technical and professional education. Pupils attending UTCs and studio schools choose to specialise in a technical or professional area at age 14. Although many pupils in UTCs and studio schools already enter the EBacc, some will study a smaller academic curriculum to make time for specialisms and enter fewer EBacc GCSEs as a consequence.

Further education colleges

A small minority of pupils aged 14-16 attend further education colleges full time for key stage 4, following a recommendation from the 2011 Wolf Review of Vocational Education which suggested that some pupils may be better served by the vocational courses and environment available in these colleges. Like pupils attending UTCs and studio schools, these pupils have chosen to specialise in a technical or professional

area from key stage 4. Some pupils attending further education colleges will study a smaller academic curriculum to make time for these specialisms and enter fewer EBacc GCSEs as a consequence.

Questions

Is there any other information that should be made available about schools' performance in the EBacc?

How should this policy apply to UTCs, studio schools and further education colleges teaching key stage 4 pupils?

Implementation

This section outlines what schools may need to consider in extending opportunity through implementing this policy. The EBacc will result in changes for schools in how they plan and deliver their curriculum. Both schools and the government will need to act to ensure there are sufficient high quality teachers in EBacc subjects.

The government has published [timelines](#) for schools to help headteachers, principals and governors plan for the forthcoming academic year and beyond.

Curriculum planning

The government has announced that this policy will start with pupils currently in year 7. These pupils should receive a good foundation in EBacc subjects before they study for their GCSEs. Maintained schools are required to teach EBacc subjects at key stage 3 as they are in the National Curriculum. The vast majority of academies choose to.¹⁶ Languages are now part of the National Curriculum at key stage 2, so pupils arriving at secondary school should be increasingly well prepared for further study in languages.

Schools that teach GCSEs over three years are likely to start curriculum planning and timetabling for this cohort during autumn 2016. Schools teaching GCSEs over two years are likely to start this process in autumn 2017. For schools that do not currently have high numbers of pupils entering the EBacc this may involve a redesign of the curriculum to accommodate increased numbers taking humanities and languages.

Schools will therefore want to consider how best to provide a broad and balanced curriculum to their pupils enabling pupils to benefit from study and involvement in a wide range of subjects at key stages 3 and 4 while meeting the EBacc. As highlighted earlier in this consultation document, some schools have demonstrated a clear ability to find this balance.

Teacher recruitment and training

We recognise that in some parts of the country, teacher recruitment in some subjects is becoming more challenging, particularly as the economy improves. The proposals in this consultation imply an increase in numbers of teachers of EBacc subjects as schools

¹⁶ Survey evidence shows that most academies choose to follow the National Curriculum at key stage 3. 99% of academies follow the national curriculum, at least in part, for English and mathematics, 98% in science, 95% in history, 97% in geography and 92% in languages. Where they are teaching a different curriculum, academies are still required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and aim to ensure their pupils are well prepared for GCSEs. [Do academies make use of their autonomy? Department for Education Research Report, July 2014](#)

expand the numbers and proportions of pupils entered. This applies particularly to numbers of teachers of languages. The EBacc-related increase is over and above the additional teachers needed to keep up with the rise in the secondary school pupil population.

In order to increase the numbers of teachers of EBacc subjects, including more foreign language teachers, the government is:

- continuing to offer generous incentives for graduates and career changers to train to teach;
- supporting the recruitment of teachers and trainees from overseas where they have skills that cannot be met from the domestic labour market;
- supporting the retraining or upskilling of existing teachers in the workforce who wish to go back or transfer to teaching priority subjects;
- supporting schools to attract quality teachers currently out of the workforce back into the classroom;
- providing subject knowledge training in EBacc subjects for teacher trainees who need to boost their knowledge before they begin training; and
- attracting researchers and post-doctoral students to teach in schools, where they can inspire pupils and spread their subject expertise amongst fellow teachers.

We also know that schools have been responding in recent years to reforms to curriculum and qualification through reshaping their curriculum model and subject choices. These have involved schools thinking differently about how they attract, retain and deploy teachers. We would like to hear from schools about the barriers they have faced and the new approaches they have found to be successful.

The Department for Education will work with schools and school system leaders to explore the challenges and potential solutions. This will help us to quantify the expected number of teachers required as the take up of the EBacc increases. We will then factor the new EBacc commitment into our teacher requirement modelling, to ensure that it informs the number of new teachers we train from the academic year starting in 2017.

Questions

What challenges have schools experienced in teacher recruitment to EBacc subjects?

What strategies have schools found useful in attracting and retaining staff in these subjects?

What approaches do schools intend to take to manage challenges relating to the teaching of EBacc subjects?

Other than teacher recruitment, what other issues will schools need to consider when planning for increasing the number of pupils taking the EBacc?

What additional central strategies would schools like to see in place for recruiting and training teachers in EBacc subjects?

Impact on pupils with protected characteristics

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, public bodies must have “due regard”, when making decisions, to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations, in relation to relevant protected characteristics. It would therefore be very helpful to understand if, in your view, there is any potential for this policy to have a disproportionate impact upon any student with relevant protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. It would be particularly helpful to understand if any respondents have evidence to support concerns they may have about such impacts.

Questions

Do you think that any of the proposals have the potential to have an impact, positive or negative, on specific pupils, in particular those with 'relevant protected characteristics'? (The relevant protected characteristics are disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.) Please provide evidence to support your response.

How could any adverse impact be reduced to better advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it? Please provide evidence to support your response.

Timeline

This consultation opened on 3 November 2015. It closes at 17.00 on 29 January 2016.

Conclusion

All pupils should have a fair and equal opportunity to benefit from a rigorous education in a core set of academic subjects to age 16 that will help to keep options open for further study and work. Schools have made progress since the EBacc performance measure was first introduced. In 2010, fewer than quarter of pupils (22%) entered this combination of subjects; it is now 39%. The government wants to continue making progress to deliver social justice and achieve its vision of high standards and educational excellence for all.

The government wants the EBacc to become the default for pupils, with the exception of a small minority of pupils for whom it is not appropriate. All pupils should leave school with a world class education, well prepared for further study, work and adult life. We recognise that some schools may face challenges in implementing the EBacc commitment, particularly in recruiting specialist subject teachers. Leading schools have shown that through a rigorous academic curriculum and high expectations for all pupils, high EBacc entry rates are achievable. The government will work with schools to ensure that they are prepared to provide high quality teaching in all of the EBacc subjects, giving all of their pupils the best start in life.

Summary of questions for consultation

Pupils in scope

1. What factors do you consider should be taken into account in making decisions about which pupils should not be entered for the EBacc?

Accountability for meeting the EBacc commitment

2. Is there any other information that should be made available about schools' performance in the EBacc?
3. How should this policy apply to UTCs, studio schools and further education colleges teaching key stage 4 pupils?

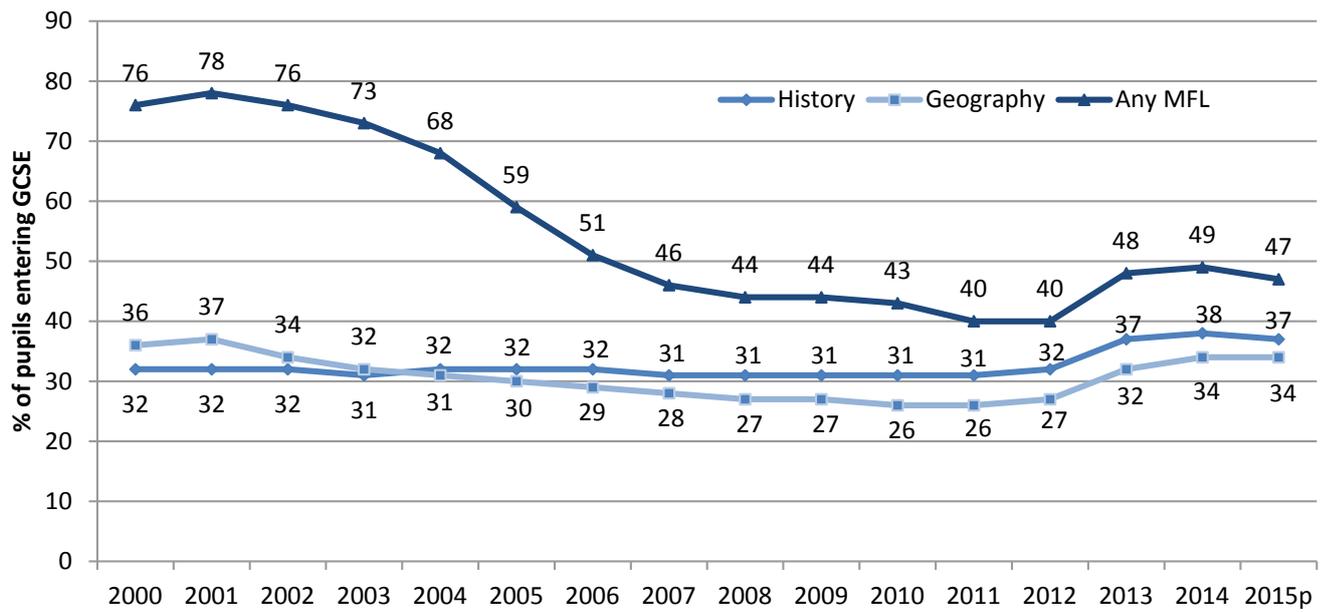
Implementation

4. What challenges have schools experienced in teacher recruitment to EBacc subjects?
5. What strategies have schools found useful in attracting and retaining staff in these subjects?
6. What approaches do schools intend to take to manage challenges relating to the teaching of EBacc subjects?
7. Other than teacher recruitment, what other issues will schools need to consider when planning for increasing the number of pupils taking the EBacc?
8. What additional central strategies would schools like to see in place for recruiting and training teachers in EBacc subjects?

Impact on pupils with protected characteristics

9. Do you think that any of the proposals have the potential to have an impact, positive or negative, on specific pupils, in particular those with 'relevant protected characteristics'? (The relevant protected characteristics are disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.) Please provide evidence to support your response.
10. How could any adverse impact be reduced to better advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it? Please provide evidence to support your response.

Figure 4: Percentage of pupils in all schools entering full course GCSEs only, 2000 to 2015¹⁸



¹⁸ [Statistics on key stage 4 results, including GCSEs](#) 2015 data is provisional and subject to change.



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for Education

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