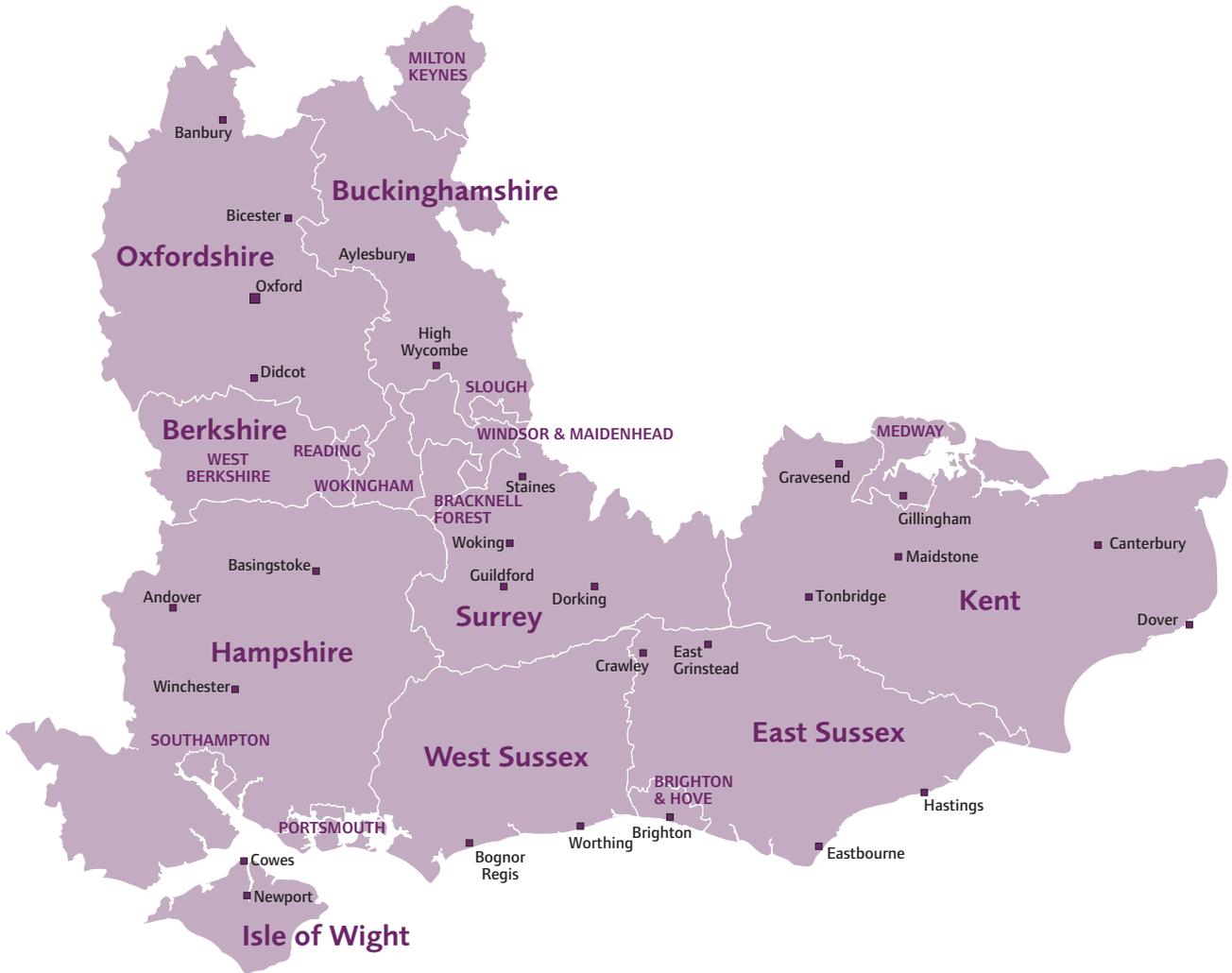




Annual Report 2012/13

# South East regional report

The South East is a large, economically vibrant and diverse region stretching from Oxford to Margate. Around nine million people live in the region, of which 1.8 million are children and young people of school age. Unemployment is below the national average and full-time workers earn above the average national wage. The South East contains many of the wealthiest areas in England, but in contrast has some areas with more serious deprivation, especially around coastal communities. Many of the affluent areas also contain low but significant numbers of disadvantaged children.



## Director’s summary



**Matthew Coffey,**  
Regional Director,  
South East

The proportion of schools and colleges that are good or better in the South East has risen, in some cases dramatically, in 2012/13. Over 110,000 more pupils are being educated in good and outstanding primary and secondary schools compared with just one year ago.

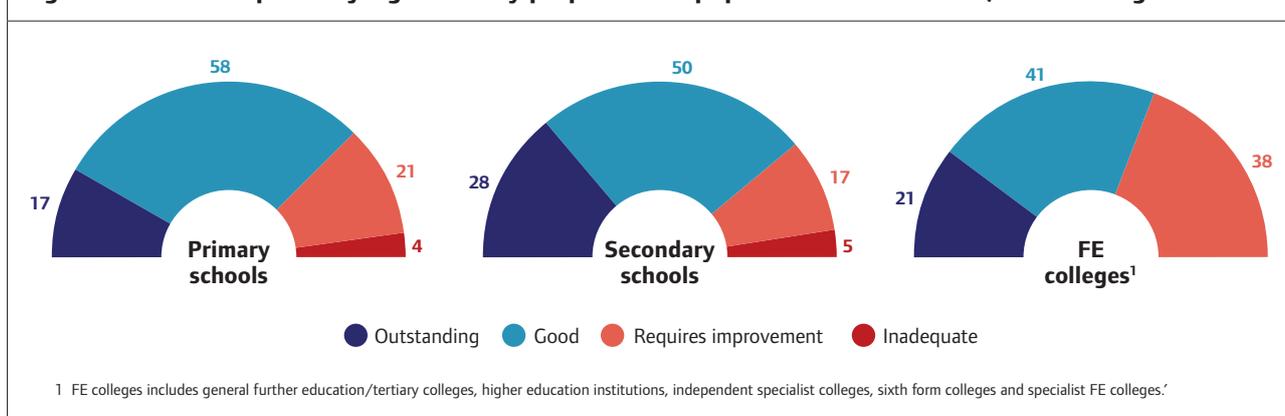
Secondary schools in the South East are performing well overall, maintaining and building on the strong attainment and inspection outcomes of previous years. Further education (FE) colleges have also improved, from a poor position to just 1% below the national figure for good and outstanding colleges. However, the proportion of good and outstanding primary schools remains below the proportion in England as a whole. The standard of education provided to children from poorer backgrounds in primary and secondary schools is of grave concern. To put it bluntly, too many poor children are being let down in the South East.

The proportion of pupils attending good or better primary schools is increasing, but not as quickly as their secondary counterparts. While they have improved substantially in the last year, their improvement rate is slower than in most other parts of the country and, overall, a lower proportion of pupils attend good and outstanding primary schools than in England as a whole. Seven of the 19 local authorities in the South East are ranked in the bottom 30 local authorities nationally<sup>1</sup> for the proportion of children attending good or better primary schools. At least one in four primary pupils in these areas attend a school that is less than good. In **Medway, Portsmouth** and **Bracknell Forest**, this rises to around one in three pupils.

The proportion of good or better colleges in the South East has increased, from 62% good or outstanding at the start of the year to 71% at the end of August. This is just one percentage point behind the national level of 72%. Her Majesty’s Inspectors (HMI) have been supporting all colleges previously judged to be satisfactory. Things are getting better, but there is more work to do to ensure that improvements are sustained. Over 22,000 more learners in the South East are now in good or better provision compared with at the start of the year.

At age 16, pupils eligible for free school meals in the South East attain at levels below the national figure for similar pupils in every single local authority in the region.<sup>2</sup> Poor children fall behind early, demonstrated in low early years outcomes in deprived areas such as Medway and other coastal towns. The gap continues to get wider as children get older, not least because of relatively poorer performing primary schools, to the point where only the most effective secondary schools are able to boost the progress of this group of vulnerable pupils.

**Figure 1: Overall inspection judgements by proportion of pupils for the South East, as at 31 August 2013**



<sup>1</sup> Excludes Isles of Scilly and City of London, which each have only one school.

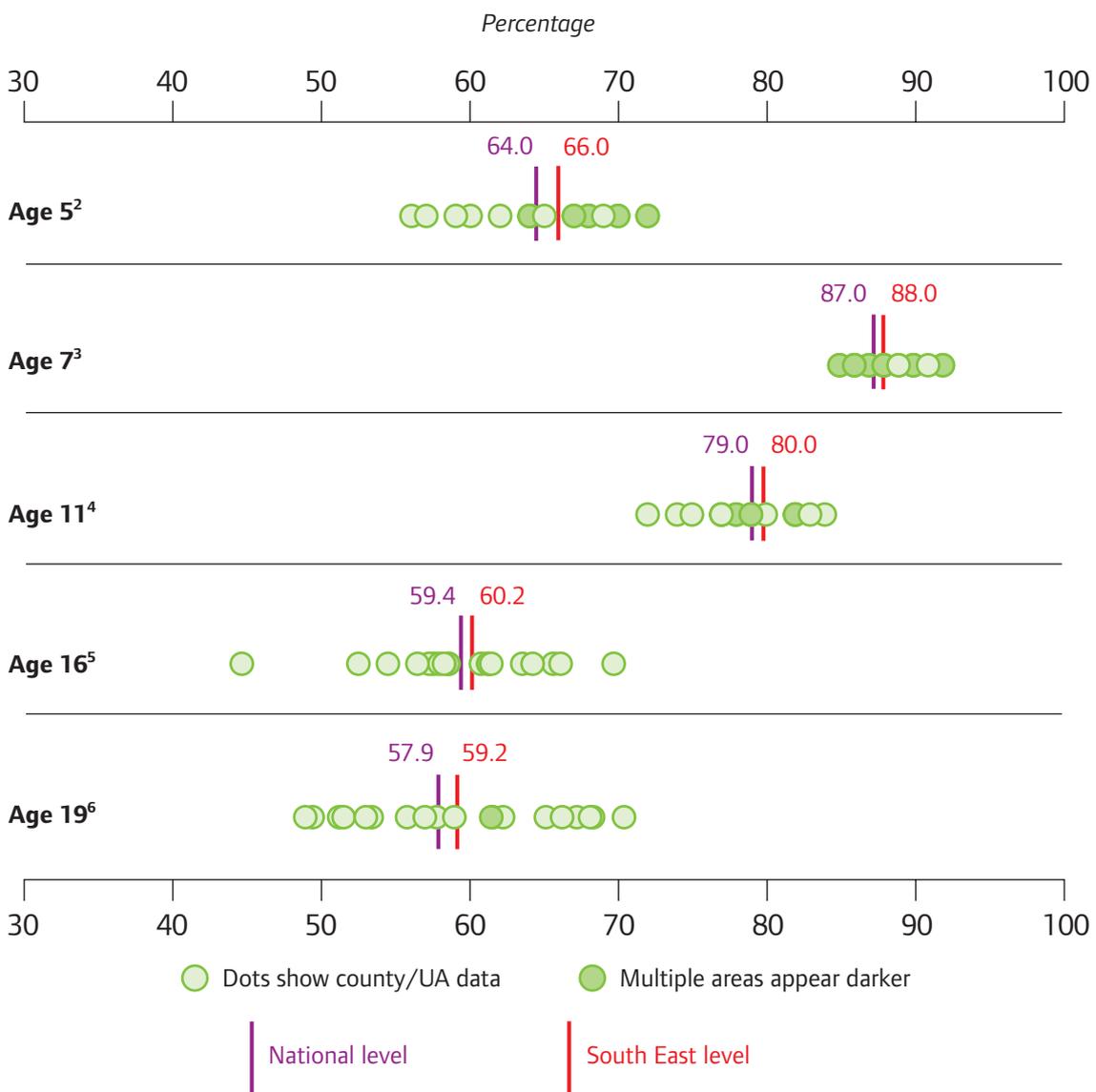
<sup>2</sup> Local Area Interactive Tool, Department for Education; [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk). All attainment data in this chapter is for 2012.

## Pupil attainment in the South East

Taken as a whole, pupils and students in the South East do well. The proportions that reach the expected benchmark for assessments, tests or examinations at the ages of five, seven, 11 and 16 exceed the national proportion. But these figures mask a significant variation within the region.

In 2012, 14 of the region's 19 local authorities equalled or exceeded the national percentage of five-year-olds who attained a good level of development. At the end of primary school, the percentage of pupils in the region as a whole attaining Level 4 or above in both English and

**Figure 2: Pupil attainment in the South East at ages 5, 7, 11, 16 and 19 in 2012<sup>1</sup>**



1 Visit the regional performance interactive tool on our website to explore these data further and to look at regional comparisons, at: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/annualreport1213/regional-performance-2012](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/annualreport1213/regional-performance-2012)  
 2 % of children achieving a good Level of development at Early Years Foundation Stage  
 3 % of pupils attaining at least Level 2 in reading at Key Stage 1 assessments  
 4 % of pupils attaining at least Level 4 in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 assessments  
 5 % of pupils attaining at least five GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A\*-C, including English and mathematics  
 6 % of pupils attaining a level 3 qualification at age 19

mathematics was slightly above the English average but, within this, **Medway** had the lowest results in the country.

At GCSE, in 10 of the South East's local authorities, a lower proportion of students achieved five good GCSEs including English and mathematics than nationally. The **Isle of Wight** was the region's lowest performer and the second worst nationally. **Portsmouth** was the second to bottom regionally. However, local authorities with a low proportion of students reaching the Key Stage 4 benchmark were masked in the regional figure of 60.2% by authorities such as **Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham, Surrey** and **Buckinghamshire**, where a far higher proportion of students achieved five or more GCSEs grades A\* to C including English and mathematics than did nationally.

## Performance of schools is mixed, with some real areas of success

Table 1 shows the proportion of pupils attending good or outstanding schools in the South East. The difference between the relative performance of primary and secondary schools in each local authority area is striking. Only **Brighton and Hove, Wokingham** and **Hampshire** are in the top half of both lists. This table shows that there is no room for complacency: there are still schools within every local authority that are not yet good.

**Table 1: Percentage of primary and secondary pupils attending good or outstanding schools by local authority in South East**

| Primary schools |                             |          | Secondary schools |                             |          |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| 2013 – Rank     | Local authority (education) | 2013 – % | 2013 – Rank       | Local authority (education) | 2013 – % |
| 2=              | Windsor and Maidenhead      | 95       | 21=               | Wokingham                   | 90       |
| 40=             | Hampshire                   | 84       | 21=               | Surrey                      | 90       |
| 60=             | Brighton and Hove           | 81       | 26=               | Medway                      | 89       |
| 60=             | Buckinghamshire             | 81       | 26=               | Brighton and Hove           | 89       |
| 60=             | Southampton                 | 81       | 34=               | Oxfordshire                 | 87       |
| 68=             | Milton Keynes               | 80       | 43                | Slough                      | 85       |
| 84=             | Wokingham                   | 78       | 44=               | East Sussex                 | 84       |
| 87=             | West Berkshire              | 77       | 51=               | Kent                        | 81       |
| 91=             | West Sussex                 | 76       | 60=               | Hampshire                   | 79       |
| 97=             | Surrey                      | 75       | 72=               | Buckinghamshire             | 76       |
| 108=            | Oxfordshire                 | 73       | 95=               | Milton Keynes               | 71       |
| 114=            | Reading                     | 72       | 95=               | West Sussex                 | 71       |
| 121=            | Isle of Wight               | 71       | 109=              | Southampton                 | 66       |
| 128=            | Slough                      | 69       | 111=              | Reading                     | 65       |
| 128=            | East Sussex                 | 69       | 120=              | Windsor and Maidenhead      | 61       |
| 133=            | Kent                        | 68       | 124=              | Bracknell Forest            | 57       |
| 135=            | Bracknell Forest            | 67       | 129=              | West Berkshire              | 55       |
| 135=            | Portsmouth                  | 67       | 134=              | Portsmouth                  | 53       |
| 148=            | Medway                      | 59       | 150               | Isle of Wight               | 14       |

This year HMI have challenged local authorities in the South East to focus more sharply on actions that will make a difference for these pupils. In two local authorities, **Portsmouth** and **Medway**, we have staged focused inspection events (simultaneous inspections and a telephone survey of a selection of schools within the authorities) to get underneath the skin of the support and challenge offered by the local authority.

In both **Medway** and **Portsmouth**, we found that a number of schools did not have a clear understanding of the local vision or strategy for school improvement. HMI have worked with local authority staff to tailor improvement activities to target particular areas of weakness. In **Portsmouth**, for example, a Senior HMI has met with a local authority senior school improvement officer to agree and set priorities for improvement. As a result, HMI have made a series of visits to clusters of schools. The impact of this improvement work has been seen in sharper development planning within clusters and a greater clarity of focus about next steps. In **Medway**, HMI and local authority officers recognised the necessity to improve early reading and writing and invited schools to a seminar to discuss the key features of good teaching in these areas. Regional HMI followed this up with a small scale survey of early reading and writing and found early signs of improvement.

The **Isle of Wight** presents the region with its greatest challenge. Here, 86% of pupils of secondary age find themselves in schools that are less than good. Worse is that 68% are in schools that have been graded inadequate. In response to this, we decided to prioritise the **Isle of Wight's** school inspection services for inspection. This was one of the first such inspections nationwide.

Our findings demonstrated clearly that the **Isle of Wight's** local authority arrangements for supporting school improvement were ineffective. HMI noted that the approach to school improvement lacked coordination and did not have the confidence of schools. Key decisions about resource deployment, school organisation and place planning had been characterised by poor analysis, limited consultation and weak implementation, resulting in a large proportion of schools that require improvement or are inadequate. The result is that too many children and young people on the **Isle of Wight** still lack access to a good education.

Matters have moved quickly since that time. **Hampshire** County Council has taken over responsibility for education on the island and a Senior HMI and a number of HMI are working with officers from **Hampshire** to advise and contribute to a programme of intervention and support.

## Poor outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

Tackling the gap between the achievement of pupils entitled to free school meals and their more affluent peers is the moral imperative of our time. Nowhere is this more the case than in the South East, where the poor performance of small numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals is lost in the midst of otherwise strong performance by 16-year-olds. The problem is at its worst in some of the South East's wealthiest areas. Indeed, five constituencies, **Wokingham, Mole Valley, Wealden, Brighton Pavilion** and **New Forest West**, could not, in 2012, boast a single secondary school where the gap between the attainment of 16-year-olds entitled to free school meals and their more affluent peers was smaller than the gap nationally.<sup>3</sup>



Our regional response to this issue has been swift and direct. The Regional Director has written to every Director of Children's Services and Member of Parliament in the region, highlighting the scale of the challenge for individual local authorities. The issue has been raised with schools judged as requires improvement when they attend the 'Getting to good' seminars led by HMI. A tailored seminar that highlights good practice in boosting the achievement of pupils entitled to the pupil premium has been devised by HMI and has been rolled out to senior leaders in **Surrey, Wokingham, Bracknell Forest, Kent, Southampton, Portsmouth** and **West Berkshire**. It is now being taken forward by a number of teaching school alliances in **Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire** and **Buckinghamshire**.

Inspectors have observed that an unremitting focus on the impact of teaching on pupils entitled to free school meals, targeted interventions, academic mentoring and close tracking of these students’ performance make a real difference to their progress, qualifications and life chances. There are good examples across the region of schools that are doing exactly that:

**Didcot Girls’ School, Oxfordshire (17% of students are entitled to free school meals)**

Pupil premium funding has been used at Didcot to provide small group tuition in English and mathematics, as well as an additional mathematics lesson throughout the year for targeted students. Raising Achievement Panels track the achievement of pupil premium students closely and targeted pastoral support is provided by a student manager. As a result, the academic performance of the targeted students has improved substantially.

**Bohunt School, Hampshire (9.6% of students are entitled to free school meals)**

The achievement of students eligible for free school meals at Bohunt exceeds the national level for non-eligible students. In addition to the challenging targets set and monitored for all students, pupil premium students receive a bespoke menu of interventions and support, discussed and agreed with them and their parents and reflecting close analysis of Sutton Trust research. The aim is to develop ambition, self-esteem and progress-focused intervention.

**Focused action to improve colleges**

Over 240,000 learners in the region attend general further education (GFE) colleges. In the South East, too many colleges have been stuck at satisfactory for too long. In 2013, Her Majesty’s Inspectors have targeted individual colleges to attend ‘Getting to good’ seminars on how to secure improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. Every college judged as requires improvement/satisfactory

at its most recent inspection has been allocated a regional HMI who is carrying out a range of tailored intervention and improvement work to help get the college to good, including:

- working with senior leaders on improvement strategies
- carrying out joint observations of teaching and helping senior leaders to interpret findings
- training governors so that they are better able to hold senior leaders to account by asking the difficult question.

Some colleges, such as the case studies below, have already stepped up to the challenge and demonstrated that change for the better is possible. Ofsted’s South East regional team has set itself a priority to support the proportion of colleges getting to good. There are clear signs of improvement. Of the 10 colleges previously graded satisfactory in the South East inspected this year, seven improved to good. This is double the national rate of improvement. We are determined that all young people have access to provision that will enable them to fulfil their potential so that we can deliver the professional and skilled workers required for the future by this economically vibrant region.



3 Ofsted analysis of RAISE online data.

### Aylesbury College

For the first time in over 10 years, Aylesbury College was judged to be good at inspection in May 2013. Improvements in governance and leadership, together with the implementation of a wide range of quality improvement activities and significantly improved accommodation and resources, have seen a rise in standards and much improved teaching, learning and assessment.



### Portsmouth College

At inspection in May 2010, success rates, especially on AS-level courses, were below average. Strong leadership and management have ensured sustained improvements in students' outcomes over time. Students' progress is now monitored very closely, with prompt and effective interventions keeping students on track to succeed. In May 2013 the college was judged to be good.

### Fareham College

Fareham College improved from being satisfactory in May 2011 to become good in April 2013. Outcomes for learners and the quality of teaching and learning were highlighted as areas for improvement. In April 2013, and, following the piloting of improvement visits by HMI, the college was judged to be good, as the proportion of students achieving their qualifications and the quality of teaching and learning had significantly improved.

