



Department
for Education

Identifying Priority Areas for Raising School Standards

Identifying Local Authority Districts with the lowest proportions of pupils attending OfSTED Good and Outstanding schools

June 2021

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Introduction

This government has focused on raising standards for all pupils over the last decade. We know there are still some parts of the country where standards are too low. DfE is committed to raising school standards in these areas to improve the opportunities available to children and young people across the entire country.

Recently the department published a list of areas where standards are weakest as judged by Ofsted, namely the areas in England with the lowest proportion of pupils attending Good and Outstanding schools, as judged by Ofsted as of 31 August 2020. In addition to these areas, the list of priority areas also includes Opportunity Areas (OAs) and Opportunity North East (ONE) given DfE's existing focus on improving outcomes in these areas.

This paper outlines the methodology and data sources used to define the areas.

Methodology

The analysis focuses simply on the proportion of pupils in each Local Authority District (LAD) attending schools rated Good or Outstanding at their most recent Ofsted inspection. The government's Opportunity Areas and Opportunity North East areas are also included.

The measure covers all state funded schools in England, excluding post-16 (see Annex B).

We have selected LADs as the unit of place as they provide a familiar set of locations. The approach provides a balance between not omitting areas that would benefit from support (that at top tier Local Authority (LA) level might be disguised by nearby higher performing areas) and focusing on areas so small that we would be looking at individual schools or very small clusters of schools. This is in line with the approach used for [Opportunity Areas](#).

Data Sources

All data used to identify Local Area Districts with the lowest proportion of pupils in schools with current Good and Outstanding inspection ratings are publicly available. The sources are detailed below.

Establishment Information

We use the **establishment fields** data set from DfE's **Get Information About Schools** service to identify schools in scope. This includes all state funded primary and secondary schools open on September 15th 2020. We use September 15th 2020 as the cut off to avoid including schools that closed at the end of August in the analysis.

[Get Information About Schools: Establishment Fields \(sourced 29th October, 2020\)](#)

OfSTED Inspection Results

We use data published alongside the OfSTED Official Statistics publication **State-funded schools inspections and outcomes as at 31 August 2020**. This shows the rating at that time for all state-funded schools in England:

[OfSTED: State-funded schools most recent inspection data at 31 August 2020](#)

Some schools have changed URN due to academisation, merges, splits, or amalgamations since the publication of the inspection data. In these cases we use **establishment links** data from Get Information About Schools service to identify the current inspection rating for those schools, following OfSTED rules for how inspection histories carry to new establishments¹.

[Get Information About Schools: Establishment Fields \(sourced 29th October, 2020\)](#)

Pupil Headcount

For pupil headcount we use data collected via the school 2019/20 census published as part of the DfE Schools, pupils and their characteristics report.

[Academic Year 2019/20: Schools, pupils and their characteristics](#)

Some schools have changed URN due to academisation, merges, splits, and amalgamations since the data were collected. In these cases we use establishment links data from Get Information About Schools service to identify the predecessors and carry headcount data over to the new URN.

[Get Information About Schools: Establishment Fields \(sourced 29th October, 2020\)](#)

¹ [Changes to Ofsted's statistical reporting of inspection outcomes for state-funded schools: main findings](#)

Identifying LADs in Scope

Local Authority Districts (LADs) in scope include those ranked lowest by proportion of pupils attending OfSTED Good and Outstanding schools. We also include Opportunity Areas (OAs) and Opportunity North East (ONE) LADs. The LADs in scope can be found in Annex A.

Proportion of Pupils attending Good and Outstanding Schools

We only include pupil headcounts from schools with current OfSTED ratings. The total number of pupils and those attending OfSTED Good and Outstanding schools are summed by Local Authority District and used to calculate the proportion. LADs were then ranked. Analysis of the ranking showed no clear break point. We therefore set the cut-off at 35%, with those in the lowest 35% of LADs designated as priority areas. This captured a reasonable number of LADs for prioritisation, while setting the cut-off of pupils in Good and Outstanding schools below the national average. The Isles of Scilly and City of London LADs are deemed out of scope due to the very low number of schools in those areas.

Existing Place-Based Initiatives

We also designate Opportunity Areas (OAs) and Opportunity North East (ONE) LADs as being in scope for programme prioritisation due to DfE's existing focus on improving outcomes in these areas.

Opportunity Areas

The Opportunity Areas (OA) programme was [announced](#) in October 2016. This is a place-based initiative originally focused on improving social mobility in six areas (known as OAs). This was expanded to include six more areas in January 2017.

More detail on Opportunity areas, including the delivery plan and selection methodology can be found [here](#).

Opportunity North East

Opportunity North East (ONE) was [announced](#) in October 2018. This place-based programme aims to improve outcomes for young people as they leave secondary education. The Delivery Plan can be found [here](#).

Annex A: Priority Areas

Table 1. LADs in England with the lowest proportion of pupils attending Good and Outstanding schools, Opportunity Areas* and Opportunity North East areas**

Adur	Amber Valley	Arun
Ashfield	Barnsley	Bexley
Birmingham	Blaby	Blackpool*
Bolsover	Boston	Bradford*
Breckland	Bristol, City of	Broxbourne
Burnley	Bury	Cannock Chase
Castle Point	Chesterfield	Corby
Cornwall	County Durham**	Darlington**
Derby*	Doncaster*	Dorset
Dover	Dudley	East Cambridgeshire*
East Devon	East Lindsey	East Northamptonshire
East Suffolk	Eden	Erewash
Exeter	Fenland*	Forest of Dean
Gateshead**	Gedling	Gloucester
Gosport	Halton	Hambleton
Hartlepool**	Hastings*	Hertsmere
High Peak	Hyndburn	Ipswich*
Isle of Wight	Kettering	King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Kingston upon Hull, City of	Knowsley	Leicester
Liverpool	Luton	Mansfield
Mid Suffolk	Middlesbrough**	Newcastle upon Tyne**
North Devon	North East Derbyshire	North Tyneside**
North Somerset	Northampton	Northumberland**
Norwich*	Nottingham	Nuneaton & Bedworth
Oadby & Wigston	Oldham*	Oxford
Plymouth	Redcar & Cleveland**	Rochford
Rotherham	Rugby	Ryedale
Salford	Sandwell	Scarborough*
Sedgemoor	Sefton	Sheffield
Solihull	Somerset West & Taunton* ²	South Derbyshire
South Gloucestershire	South Holland	South Northamptonshire

² OA covers only the West Somerset area of the Somerset West and Taunton LAD.

South Staffordshire	South Tyneside**	Southampton
St. Helens	Stevenage	Stockport
Stockton-on-Tees**	Stoke-on-Trent*	Sunderland**
Swindon	Tameside	Tamworth
Teignbridge	Telford & Wrekin	Tendring
Thurrock	Torridge	Uttlesford
Walsall	Wellingborough	Welwyn Hatfield
West Lancashire	West Suffolk	Wyre
Wyre Forest		

Annex B: School types included in this analysis

- Academy alternative provision converter
- Academy alternative provision sponsor led
- Academy converter
- Academy special converter
- Academy special sponsor led
- Academy sponsor led
- City technology college
- Community school
- Community special school
- Foundation school
- Foundation special school
- Free schools
- Free schools alternative provision
- Free schools special
- Pupil referral unit
- Studio schools
- University technical college
- Voluntary aided school
- Voluntary controlled school



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