



Department
for Education

Academies annual report

Academic year: 2012 to 2013

July 2014

Academies annual report 2012 to 2013

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1 Foreword by Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

It is now almost four years since the Academies Act 2010 gave all schools the freedom and power to shape their own future. In September 2010, 34 pioneering schools were the first to take the opportunity to convert to academy status. Since then, they have been joined by over 2,800 others, eager to take full control of their pupils' education based on their own expert knowledge of what works best.

At the same time, we have redoubled the previous administration's work to transform underperforming schools into sponsored academies, and there are now almost 1,100 open. Academy freedoms, alongside the support and expertise of a sponsor able to help in a wide variety of ways, have made a huge difference to many of these schools. We have continued to recruit new high quality sponsors, particularly high performing schools, as well as working with existing sponsors to ensure that they are providing the right level of support.

Almost 4,000 academies are open in total, as of July 2014, and the number continues to grow. Academies have a track record of improving standards. Sponsored academies that have been open for three years have improved by 12% since opening, compared to a 6% increase in local authority maintained schools over the same period. This is particularly encouraging given that many sponsored academies have replaced schools where results have, for years, stubbornly refused to improve. We know that converter academies also do better than local authority maintained schools against the new tougher Ofsted framework.

Although the majority of the first converters were secondary schools, more recently primary schools have been flocking to academy status. There are now more primary academies open than secondaries. Over half a million pupils now go to a primary academy and nearly 30,000 teachers teach at one. These schools have been in the vanguard of the school led innovation and improvement that we are increasingly seeing across the country. Primary schools, smaller in size and with fewer staff than most secondaries have in many cases joined together in chains of schools to convert, allowing them to pool resources, share expertise and experience and provide better development opportunities for their staff. Hearing from primary heads about what academy status means to them and what they are doing with their freedoms has been immensely inspiring. We are now increasing the funding available to primaries to help new clusters to build strong partnerships and raise standards.

The number of free schools continues to increase rapidly, with 93 new free schools opening their doors in September 2013, bringing the total number open in England to 174. Free schools are now an integral part of the growing success story of state education in England. They are hugely popular, giving parents greater choice in communities poorly served for generations. The number of university technical colleges and studio schools also continues to increase to 17 and 28 respectively.

We continue to take swift action where local authority maintained schools are not providing a good enough standard of education to their pupils. When a school is put into an Ofsted category of concern, we will contact them within five days to begin the process of finding them a high quality sponsor. In many schools that have been underperforming for years, becoming an academy has had a transformative effect, with the standard of education and results improving rapidly.

As the academies movement grows, and as academies and free schools make more use of their freedoms, we have ensured that they are subject to an accountability system that is more rigorous than that for local authority maintained schools. We have shown that we will not hesitate to take swift and decisive action in those cases where academies and free schools are not providing a good enough standard of education to their pupils, or where sponsors are not giving schools the right levels of support.

This is the third annual report on academies. It covers the performance of academies during the 2012/13 academic year and honours a commitment made to Parliament in the Academies Act 2010. The report sets out:

- background information on the academies programme;
- data showing the number, type and location of academies across the country;
- information on how academies are using their freedoms to raise standards;
- information about academies that are converting in their own right, sponsored academies and academy sponsors;
- details and examples of how academies are working together to share resources and expertise and achieve economies of scale;
- details about the department's policy of robust intervention when a school, academy or free school is not performing well enough;
- data on how academies cater for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils;
- details on academy finance and value for money; and
- information on free schools, university technical colleges and studio schools.

Michael Gove MP

Secretary of State for Education

2 Purpose of this report

This report has been published to inform Parliament about developments in the academies programme. Section 11 of the Academies Act 2010 places a duty on the Secretary of State for Education to prepare, publish and lay before Parliament an annual report on academies, starting with the year beginning on 1 August 2010. The legislation requires the annual report to contain information on the academy arrangements entered into and the performance of academies during the year. In relation to performance, the annual report must contain information collected under regulations made under section 537 of the Education Act 1996 (under which academies must provide certain information to the Secretary of State) and under the contractual arrangements which academies enter into with the Secretary of State for Education.

This report gives information on the number of academies opened during the 2012/13 academic year, and reports on the educational performance of the sector during this period.

3 Background to the academies programme

Academies are independent state schools that are directly funded by the government. They provide greater freedom and flexibility to heads and teachers, promote innovation and diversity in the school system, and so help to raise educational standards across the board. Every academy is required to be part of an academy trust which is an exempt charity and company limited by guarantee. Every academy trust enters into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education that sets out the requirements that apply to individual academies and the conditions to which the payment of grant is subject.

There are a number of different types of academies. Some academies have sponsors, while other schools convert to become academies without a sponsor. Many academies operate in chain arrangements while others operate autonomously. The first academies were mainly underperforming secondary schools, but under this government the programme was opened to all secondary, primary, special schools, pupil referral units and post-16 institutions. Free schools, university technical colleges (UTCs) and studio schools are new academies that open in direct response to parental and employer demand and aim to drive up standards in the communities they serve.

The earliest academies opened in September 2002. Almost all had sponsors and were set up to eradicate underperformance in those secondary schools with a history of educational failure.

This government introduced legislation in 2010 to make it easier for all schools (including primary and special schools) to convert to become an academy. As a result:

- in May 2010 the government invited schools to consider converting to academy status and in June the government launched the free schools programme;
- in July 2010 all primary, secondary and special schools became eligible to apply to become academies;
- in September 2010 the first outstanding schools converted to academy status;
- in November 2010 the government announced it was inviting all good schools with outstanding features to convert. It also provided an opportunity for any school to convert, irrespective of Ofsted grade, if it joined an academy trust with an excellent school (outstanding or good with outstanding features), or an education partner with a strong record of improvement;
- in January 2011 the government announced it was inviting applications from outstanding special schools to become academies with the first ones opening in September 2011;
- in September 2011 the first 24 free schools opened alongside one university technical college (UTC) and three studio schools;

- in February 2012 the government announced it was inviting pupil referral units to register an interest in opening as alternative provision academies from September 2012;
- in April 2012 provisions within the Education Act 2011 that allowed for the establishment of 16-19 academies commenced. In September 2012 the first 16-19 free school was opened; and
- in November 2012, the first alternative provision academy opened.

4 Data relating to the number, type and location of academies

The academies programme has expanded significantly under this government. Much of this expansion comes from schools converting to academy status through their own choice.

The table at Figure 1 below sets out the number of academies which opened after the inception of the programme in 2002/03, up to and including the 2012/13 reporting year.

Figure 1 - The number of academies opened by year, up to and including the 2012/13 reporting year

	Number opened (sponsored)	Total open (sponsored)	Number opened (converter)	Total open (converter)	Total open (all)
2002/03	3	3	-	-	3
2003/04	9	12	-	-	12
2004/05	5	17	-	-	17
2005/06	10	27	-	-	27
2006/07	20	47	-	-	47
2007/08	36	83	-	-	83
2008/09	50	133	-	-	133
2009/10	70	203	-	-	203
2010/11	69	272	529	529	801
2011/12	93	365	1,058	1,587	1,952
2012/13	366	731	731	2,318	3,049

Source: All Open Academies July 2013, Gov.uk Website

Note: The first schools opening as converter academies did so in September 2010. A reporting year is 1 August to 31 July.

There were 1,097 academy Funding Agreements signed in the period from 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013. During this reporting period the milestone of 3,000 open academies was exceeded, including more than 2,000 converter academies. These figures also include the first 14 alternative provision academies.

Figure 2 shows the breakdown of these figures for different types of academy. There were 3,049 open academies at 31 July 2013, of which 731 were sponsored and 2,318 were converters.

Figure 2 - The number of academies by type and age range during, and by the end of, the 2012/13 reporting year

	Number opened during 2012/13			Total open by end 2012/13		
	Sponsored	Converter	All	Sponsored	Converter	All
Primary	276	446	722	303	978	1,281
Secondary	85	238	323	422	1,257	1,679
Special	5	33	38	6	69	75
Alternative Provision	0	14	14	0	14	14
Total	366	731	1,097	731	2,318	3,049

Source: All Open Academies July 2013, Gov.uk Website

Note: The 2012/13 reporting year is taken as 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013.

Academies are located across all regions of England and at 31 July 2013, 51% of state-funded mainstream secondary schools and 8% of state-funded mainstream primary schools were operating as academies.

The map at Figure 3 (see page 14) shows the percentage of state-funded mainstream secondary schools that were open as academies at 31 July 2013 by local authority area. In three local authority areas, Bexley, Darlington and Rutland, all state-funded secondary schools were operating as academies.

The map at Figure 4 (see page 15) shows the percentage of state-funded mainstream primary schools that were open as academies at 31 July 2013 by local authority area. It shows Darlington had the highest concentration of primary schools operating as academies (69%). There were 23 local authorities with no primary academies, down from 54 at the same point in the previous year.

Case study: Darlington local authority

At the point at which the coalition government expanded the academies programme, there was one sponsored academy open in Darlington local authority (LA). The first schools (four secondary and six primary) converted to academy status in 2011, and since then, all secondary schools and over two thirds of primary schools have become academies.

A key feature in Darlington has been the extent to which schools have been keen to work together to take on responsibility for running the services they value that were previously

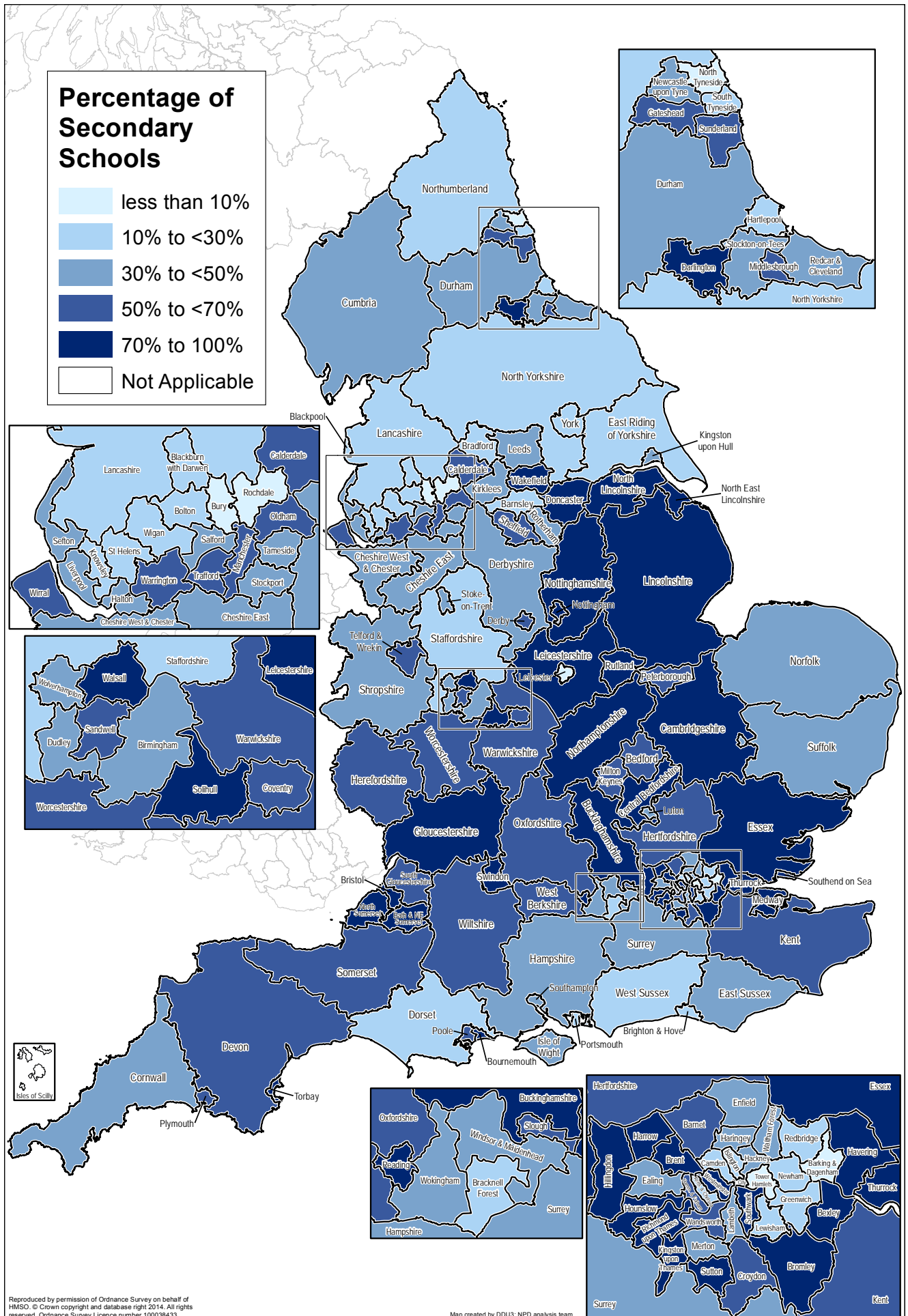
provided by the local authority. The level of partnership and cooperation that exists between Darlington schools has increased as they gained the freedom that comes with academy status.

As Maura Regan, Principal of Carmel College, lead school in the Carmel Education Trust, says: "It is about working together for the common good. We are seeing an improvement in the competitive supply and sourcing of services, and continued and developed collaboration with schools within and outside the authority."

Pat Howarth, headteacher of Hummersknott, one of the first converters and lead school in the Hummersknott Academies Trust says: "We decided to convert because we had already taken a number of the services previously provided by our local authority in-house, and it felt like a natural step to take complete control of our own destiny. We have not looked back since becoming an academy. It is fantastic to feel that providing the best possible education for our pupils is now solely in our hands."

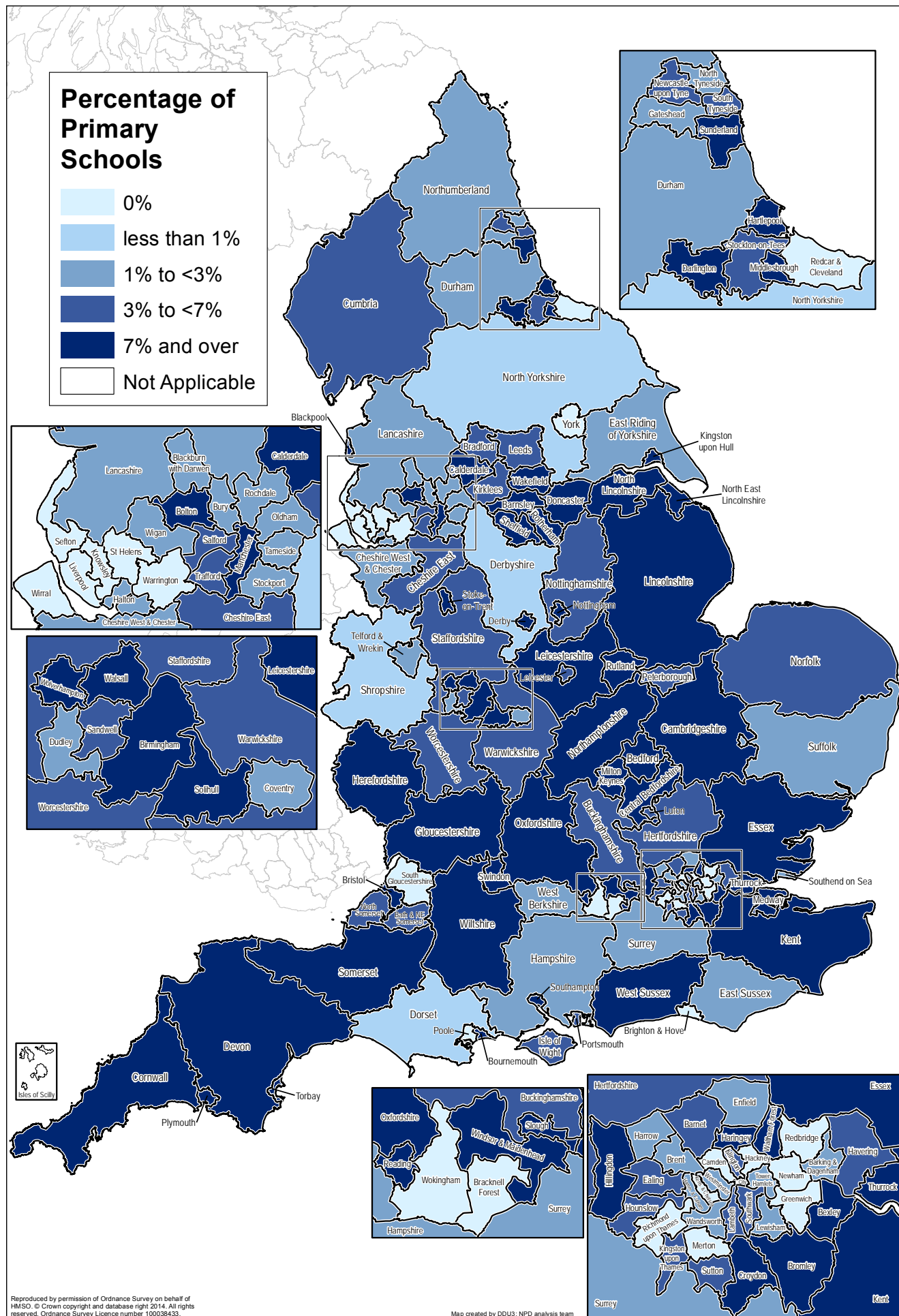
Between 2010 and 2013, the percentage of pupils achieving 5 good GCSEs including English and maths increased by 10.1% in the local authority, compared to 5.5% at all state funded schools in England. At key stage 2, 86% of pupils at converter primary academies in the LA achieved level 4+ in reading, writing and mathematics, compared to 73% of pupils at LA maintained schools.

Figure 3 - The percentage of state-funded mainstream secondary schools that were open as academies as at 31 July 2013 by local authority.



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Figure 4 - The percentage of state-funded mainstream primary schools that were open as academies as at 31 July 2013 by local authority.



5 Giving schools the freedom to innovate

Academies are at the cutting edge of the education system, using their freedoms to innovate and improve standards. Academies have the freedom and flexibility to run their school, teach and spend money in ways that specifically suit their local community of pupils, parents, staff and those working in partnership with the school.

Freedom from local authority (LA) control and greater control of budgets

Although many academies continue to work closely with their LAs, greater freedom from their local authority has been a key reason why many academies have chosen to convert. Highly successful schools have been eager to become more autonomous.

Academies receive their funding direct, rather than through their LA. The academy can therefore decide how to spend all of its budget in the best interests of its pupils, rather than having the local authority retain funding to provide a service that may not specifically suit their needs.

Case study: Dulwich Hamlet Junior School

Dulwich Hamlet Junior School in London converted to academy status in April 2011 as a high performing Outstanding school. **Before becoming an academy the local authority retained 13.5% of Dulwich Hamlet's funding. Now they receive this funding direct and they have been able to use the money to procure more tailored, high quality services for the school.** For example they now buy in their own educational psychology services, speech and language therapy and specialist dyslexia support. The school only pays for the services its children need, rather than for an unwieldy package. Headteacher Mrs Sonia Case says: "Academy status means we can chart our own course and it was definitely the right decision for us". Dulwich Hamlet saw the percentage of its pupils achieving Level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths continue to improve in 2013, up to 91% from 89% in 2012.

Freedoms around the delivery of the curriculum

A key feature of the academies and free schools programmes is the freedom and autonomy of headteachers and teachers to develop creative, innovative and rigorous curricula tailored to the needs of their pupils. They are, however, required to teach a broad and balanced curriculum that includes English, mathematics and science.

Case study: Haywood Academy

Haywood Academy in Stoke-on-Trent has used its academy freedoms to extend and personalise its curriculum offer. Headteacher Carl Ward says: "Instead of the

traditional daily tutor time that most schools have, we have introduced literacy time where we operate silent reading throughout the school. Every child gets a dedicated 30 minutes reading per day, using an accelerated reader programme that challenges them to move onto their next reading age. We have also introduced a millionaire award, which pupils win when they reach the point in the school year when they have read a million words". In the year since becoming an academy in August 2012, the percentage of pupils at Haywood achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths has increased almost 20 percentage points. In January 2014, Ofsted said: "The excellent work being done to increase students' literacy skills is paying dividends in helping students to read well".

The ability to set school term dates

Academies are able to set their own term dates in the best interests of their pupils. They can, for instance have a greater number of shorter terms or a shorter summer break – a period where pupils often regress after six weeks of holiday.

Case study: David Young Community Academy

David Young Community Academy (DYCA) serves the Seacroft area of East Leeds. It opened in September 2006 following the closure of Braim Wood Boys School and Agnes Stewart Church of England High School. The proportion of students who are entitled to free school meals is well above the national average at 44% and reflects the social and economic circumstances of its catchment area.

DYCA use their freedom to operate a seven-term year starting in June, with a maximum of six weeks at school followed by a maximum of four weeks holiday. This means that first year students start at the Academy while still on roll at their primary schools – by the time other year 7 students have started, students at DYCA have had 10 weeks of secondary education. DYCA's most recent Ofsted report states the academy "provides its students with a good and improving education. It benefits from outstanding leadership and offers an excellent level of pastoral care".

The freedom to set teacher pay and conditions

Case study: Parbold Douglas Church of England Academy

Parbold Douglas Church of England Academy, a primary academy in Lancashire, has a pay policy that allows for pay progression to be linked to targets related to the impact on children in the school. It is also linked to the progress of children in their class as agreed with staff as part of the appraisal system. The school saw the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths rise from 91% in 2012 to 94% in 2013.

6. Performance of converter academies

During the 2012/13 academic year the number of converter academies continued to grow rapidly, with 731 schools converting during the year. The appetite for academy status continued to be apparent across the whole country. At the end of this period, in three local authorities (Darlington, Bexley and Rutland) all secondary schools had converted to academy status. Another 66 had more secondary academies than local authority maintained secondary schools. In Darlington over half of the state funded primary schools were also academies. There were another 15 local authorities where 20% or more of state-funded primary schools were open as academies.

Converter performance continues to outstrip that of local authority (LA) maintained schools

Converter academies continue to outperform LA maintained schools, and their pupils have a better chance of doing well. In 2013:

- 81% of pupils in primary converter academies achieved level 4 or above in reading, writing and mathematics, compared to 76% in LA maintained mainstream schools;¹
- 25% of pupils in primary converter academies were above the expected standard at age 11 compared to 21% across all LA maintained mainstream schools;¹
- In secondary converter academies, 68% of pupils achieved five or more A*-C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics, compared to 59% in LA maintained mainstream schools.²

Converter academies also perform well in Ofsted inspections. Data from Ofsted shows that converter academies are more likely to retain or improve their Ofsted ratings than local authority run schools

- 33% of primary converter academies previously rated as outstanding retained that rating when inspected in 2012/13, compared to 25% of primary local authority maintained mainstream schools.
- 35% of secondary converter academies previously rated as outstanding retained that rating, compared to 33% of secondary local authority maintained mainstream schools.

¹ DfE (2013) "National Curriculum assessments at key stage 2 in England 2013 (revised)"

² DfE (2014) "GCSE and equivalent results in England 2012/2013 (revised)"

- 27% of primary converter academies that had previously been rated as good were then rated as outstanding, compared to 12% of primary local authority maintained mainstream schools.
- 16% of secondary converter academies that had previously been rated as good were then rated as outstanding, compared to 10% of secondary local authority maintained mainstream schools.
- 71% of primary converter academies previously rated as satisfactory were then rated as good or outstanding, compared to 58% of primary local authority maintained mainstream schools.
- 52% of secondary converter academies previously rated as satisfactory were then rated as good or outstanding, compared to 44% of secondary local authority maintained mainstream schools.³

Case study: St Thomas More Catholic School

St Thomas More Catholic School in London converted to academy status in March 2013. Two thirds of pupils do not have English as a first language, and over a third are eligible for free school meals – twice the national average. **Ofsted found St Thomas to be Outstanding in June 2013 and at key stage 4, the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths GCSEs rose to 91% in 2013, up from 77% in 2012.**

Head teacher Martin Tissot says “the funding freedoms we have as an academy have allowed us to identify for ourselves where the priorities are for the school and deploy the funding appropriately”. Since becoming an academy, the school has set up a breakfast club in the morning starting at 8am, with a free breakfast for anybody who arrives before 8.20am. Extra lessons are timetabled for pupils in exam groups after the normal school day and on Saturday mornings, and the school uses its funding freedoms to pay teachers and staff extra so that they can facilitate this.

Primary schools are converting in increasing numbers

There are now more primaries converting or applying to convert each month than secondaries, and more primary than secondary academies are now open. Good standards in primary schools are vitally important. One in four pupils (c.130,000 children each year) leave primary school not being able to read, write or do sums properly. Primary performance is also the strongest indicator of future academic performance. The growing number of primary academies choosing to convert are driving up standards not

³ DfE (2014) “Performance of converter academies: an analysis of inspection outcomes 2012 to 2013”

only in their own schools, but are also taking a leading role in helping other schools to improve.

Primary schools were among the first academy converters in September 2010, and since then the benefits of academy status for primary schools have become increasingly evident. 14% of all primary schools are now academies or on the way to opening as academies. As set out in Section 8 of this report, they are often doing so as chains or partnerships of schools and deriving great benefit from these arrangements.

Case study: Bolton Brow Primary Academy

Mr Daniel Burns, headteacher of Bolton Brow Primary Academy in West Yorkshire, which converted in September 2011, says: “Becoming an academy has opened a lot of doors for our school and created the energy amongst the staff and governors to start to drive through some really exciting developments. As an academy, we are able to be selective in how we adapt the curriculum, to ensure that it continues to excite and engage our children and staff whilst ensuring every child makes good progress”. **At key stage 2, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths rose from 70% in 2012 to 80% in 2013.**

Case study: Southwark Primary School

Southwark Primary School in central Nottingham also converted to academy status in September 2011. The academy is situated in a highly disadvantaged area of the city with a very high pupil turnover. **At key stage 2, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths rose from 62% in 2012 to 73% in 2013.**

Since becoming an academy, the school has used its academy freedoms to change the length of the school day. It now offers wrap around child care from 7:30am until 6pm. In an area of high unemployment, this is a huge help to those parents that do have work. Southwark Primary have been able to source services more efficiently and obtain considerably better value for money in HR, legal, and finance due to the freedom academy status has given them. By running the school more efficiently they are now able to look at building a specialist block for teaching science, art and music. The school is now also an approved academy sponsor, and its first sponsored academy, another primary school in Nottingham, opened in April 2014.

The first alternative provision academies are now open and the number of special academies continues to grow

The academy landscape continues to become more varied. The first 14 alternative provision (AP) academies opened during the 2012/13 academic year. A further 38 special academies opened, bringing the total number of special academies at the end of the academic year to 75.

To date, 40 pupil referral units have applied to convert to become alternative provision (AP) academies and 24 have now opened. In addition, there are now 109 special academies open, and in total more than 11,000 pupils are benefiting from being taught in special academies. The first six alternative provision free schools and the first three special free schools also opened in 2012. In total, there are now 18 alternative provision free schools and eight special free schools open.

Case study: The Bridge Alternative Provision Academy

The Bridge Alternative Provision Academy in London opened in April 2013 and is part of the Triborough Alternative Provision (TBAP) multi-academy trust. The school was judged to be Outstanding by Ofsted in May 2013. Executive headteacher Seamus Oates says: “Whilst we were given a lot of freedom by our local authority, we were always going to be a local authority service. The opportunity to convert to an academy gave us the opportunity to become a school – an academy that has all the associated freedoms that go with it. Having academy status means that we can do things a lot faster than we could previously, and if we are not able to access services, we can create our own”.

Case study: Fosse Way School

Fosse Way School is a special academy in Bath & North East Somerset catering for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) as their prime and most significant learning difficulty. It was one of the first special schools to convert to academy status in September 2011. Since becoming an academy, Fosse Way has been able to create a range of professional development opportunities and experiences for individual members of staff, resulting in higher quality teaching in the classroom and raised aspirations for pupil outcomes. The school has also introduced an SEN allowance for classroom support staff, in acknowledgement of their high level skills, which mirrors that for teaching staff.

7 Performance of sponsored academies

During the 2012/2013 academic year, 366 sponsored academies opened, a significant increase from 93 opening in 2011/12 and 69 in 2010/11. The growth in sponsored academies has transformed the life chances of thousands of pupils by turning around some of the most disadvantaged and worst performing schools in the country. Increasingly, high performing schools are taking the lead in this area, sharing their expertise and experience to benefit others.

Increased focus on transforming underperforming primary schools into sponsored academies

- At the end of the 2011/12 academic year there were just 27 sponsored primary academies open. During the 2012/13 academic year, another 276 sponsored primary academies opened, bringing the total number open to 303.
- We have continued this relentless drive for improvement, and as at July 2014, there are now 617 sponsored primary academies open.
- Primary sponsored academies improve faster than LA schools. In 2013, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level at age 11 in reading, writing and mathematics increased by 3 per cent in sponsored academies compared to 1 per cent in LA schools.

Case study: Harris Primary Academy Philip Lane

Harris Primary Academy Philip Lane opened in September 2012 replacing Downhills Primary School. Over 40% of the pupils at the school are eligible for free school meals, more than double the national average. **Ofsted found the school to be Good in June 2014, with Outstanding leadership and management, saying: “Pupils’ progress has improved rapidly since the academy opened in 2012”.** The academy has used its curriculum autonomy to prioritise early years learning and introduce new subjects, such as Spanish. They have been particularly successful at engaging parents in their children’s learning, offering workshops on supporting literacy at home and arranging visits to the local library. The academy has established partnerships with other schools and settings, including a local secondary school, a children’s centre and an outstanding teaching school in Newham. As the parent of a pupil at the school says: “I was worried about Downhills becoming an academy. Now though at Harris Primary Academy Philip Lane there is more direction. I know what my children are learning and how to help them at home. I’m welcomed as a parent and feel I am being listened to and supported”.

Case study: Ryecroft Primary Academy

Ryecroft Primary Academy opened in September 2012, replacing Ryecroft Primary School. Over 70% of its pupils are eligible for free school meals. **In 2013, 74% of pupils**

achieved Level 4+ reading, writing and mathematics at KS2, compared to 26% at the predecessor school in 2012. As a school sponsored by the Northern Education Trust (NET), Ryecroft gets the support of a dedicated and experienced partner who acts as a critical professional friend, helping leadership to evaluate its performance, identify priorities for improvement and plan effective change. As headteacher Jayne Clarke says: “NET shared our absolute determination that our children can and must make the best possible progress and that the route to achieve this must be imaginative and innovative”.

Sponsored academy performance improves the longer they are open

- **Between 2012 and 2013, the proportion of pupils in mainstream sponsored secondary academies that achieved five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, went up by 2.3 percentage points, compared with a rise of 1.8 percentage points in local authority maintained mainstream schools.**
- **As sponsored academies mature, they continue to improve. In sponsored academies open for three years, the proportion of pupils that achieved five good GCSEs including English and mathematics has increased by an average of 12 percentage points since opening. Over the same time period, results in local authority maintained schools have gone up by 6 percentage points.⁴**

Case study: Nene Park Academy

Nene Park Academy in Peterborough opened in September 2011, sponsored by the Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust, a MAT set up by Swavesey Village College. **In 2013, 58% of pupils achieved 5 good GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths, up from 37% at the predecessor school in 2011.** Staff within the Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust are employed centrally, so Nene Park Academy is able to benefit from the expertise and experience of teachers from the other schools in the Trust, including the outstanding Swavesey Village College.

Case study: Wilmington Academy

Wilmington Academy opened in September 2010, sponsored by The Leigh Academies Trust, a trust set up by Leigh Technology Academy. **In 2013, 71% pupils achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths in 2013, up from just 35% at the predecessor school in 2010.** The school achieved a Good rating from Ofsted in May 2013. The report said: ‘The outstanding leadership of the two principals and senior leaders, including governors, has been instrumental in significantly raising students’ achievement from very low to good.’

⁴ DfE analysis of 2013 Performance Tables

Case study: King Solomon Academy

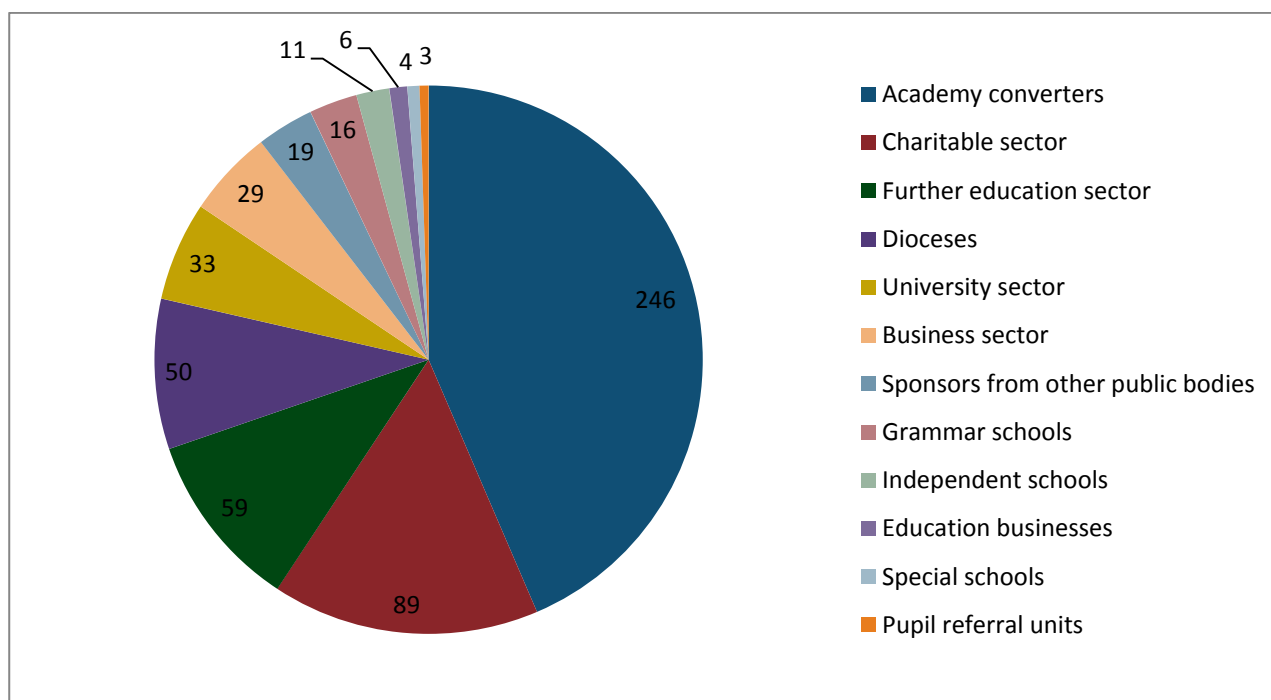
King Solomon Academy opened in 2007, as an all-through school sponsored by ARK schools. Over half of pupils are eligible for free school meals and 65% do not have English as a first language. Ofsted has inspected the school twice and found it to be Outstanding on both occasions. King Solomon Academy has extensive before and after school arrangements in place both on and off the school site. This means that pupils and parents can benefit from activities between 7.50am and 6pm. **The longer school day gives more time for an intense focus on English and mathematics as well as providing a broad curriculum offer.**

The number of high quality academy sponsors continues to grow

The department is committed to ensuring that we have a diverse supply of high quality academy sponsors that are able to continue to drive up standards in underperforming schools. A diverse sponsor market brings a range of skills and experience into the academies programme.

At the end of the 2012/13 academic year there were 565 approved academy sponsors (including lead sponsors and co-sponsors) compared to 471 at the end of the 2011/12 academic year.

Figure 5 - Total number of academy sponsors July 2013



The 2013 secondary school performance tables showed that some academy sponsors saw large improvements across their schools. Schools sponsored by the Outwood Grange Academies Trust saw an average improvement of 9.3 percentage points in the

number of pupils achieving 5+ GCSEs or equivalent, including English and maths. Schools sponsored by the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust saw an average improvement of 4.8 percentage points and schools sponsored by the Aldridge Foundation 12.9 percentage points. Portslade Aldridge Community Academy in particular saw results rise by 22 percentage points in 2013. Across all state-funded schools, the rate of improvement was 1.8 percentage points.

Sponsors work within a tight accountability framework, and aspiring new sponsors must demonstrate that they have a track record of educational improvement and financial management. They need to show that they have high quality leadership and appropriate governance structures in place.

- Despite this high bar, recruitment of new sponsors has increased significantly. The number of approved lead sponsors has grown by 37% between January 2013 and January 2014. We want to maintain this pace and encourage more sponsors to get involved in the academies programme, especially in areas where we need them most.
- In addition to recruiting new sponsors, we support existing strong sponsors to build their capacity so that they can take on more schools. The Sponsor Capacity Fund (SCF), a £9million pot to help new sponsors start operations and encourage high quality existing sponsors to work in the areas where we need them most, has been awarded to 157 sponsors in the current financial year, with an average award of £57,000. We also grant fund the Academies Ambassadors programme. This programme, run by the New Schools Network, recruits commercial sector individuals to work with academy chains, and become sponsors in their own right.
- We want to encourage academy sponsors to become more self-sufficient, learning from and supporting other sponsors. For new sponsors, we facilitate knowledge sharing events, providing a forum for them to meet and learn from experienced sponsors. For established sponsors we have launched a quarterly Sponsor Forum enabling peer learning on specific issues. Some sponsors may benefit from the tailored advice of expert educationalists, experienced sponsors or business people; to support this we have launched a service to match sponsors to accomplished experts. We are confident that this package of support will enable and encourage those sponsors that can, and should, grow to do so.
- Case study: The Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust

The Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust was formed by the Governing Body of the outstanding Greenwood Dale School in Nottingham in 2009. The Trust is the sponsor organisation for 21 academies, both primary and secondary, operating across the Midlands. The Trust runs trust-wide events including staff development and inter-academy sporting and music events. The trust also employs consultant classroom teachers, runs school based teacher-to-teacher training and provides health care packages as standard to all staff. The trust's central team offer a wide range of additional

support to all their academies, including human resources, finance, health and safety, procurement, catering, IT and buildings.

Case study: Outwood Grange Academies Trust

Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT), set up by the Outstanding Outwood Grange Academy, is a multi-academy sponsor with 8 secondary and 3 primary academies. The trust has a dedicated team of subject specialists, who offer coaching and mentoring to heads of departments and teaching staff at schools across the trust. Outwood's Praising Stars system also allows teaching staff to quickly intervene with those students who are not making sufficient progress to hit their target grade by the end of the key stage.

Case study: George Spencer Academy

George Spencer Academy decided to become an academy sponsor because it felt that it had a moral purpose, as a successful school, to help others to improve. Wyndham Primary was an underperforming school that wasn't providing a good enough standard of education for its pupils. It is situated in a relatively deprived area and over half of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Wyndham became an academy, sponsored by George Spencer in September 2012. George Spencer has worked with Wyndham to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher is closely supported by the Executive Principal of George Spencer. Almost all the staff at the predecessor school were retained, but they have been sent on improving teacher and outstanding teacher programmes to further develop their teaching skills. At the end of its first year as a sponsored academy, key stage 2 results at Wyndham increased from 56% of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths to 83%.

8 School-to-school support: Academies working together

Partnership and collaborative working in the education sector is one of the key principles of the government's vision of a school-led system, and a defining feature of the academies programme. As academies have been freed from local authority control, they are leading a developing system of school-to-school support. More than half of all academies are in a chain and the figure is higher for primary academies, with over 60% of primary academies part of a chain of schools.⁵

Benefits of being part of a chain of schools

There is strong evidence to show that being part of a formal chain can have a significant impact on a school's performance. Robert Hill's research into academy chains, published in January 2012⁶, found that academies in chains comprising of three or more academies are improving faster than other academies.

In addition to improved performance outcomes, there are further benefits for schools in terms of staff development, continuous professional development and, crucially as we move towards creating a self-improving system, developing leadership. Academies in chain arrangements can offer their staff and leadership team rich and varied opportunities to lead, innovate and take responsibility, providing a broader base for developing leaders and greater opportunity for leaders to learn from one another.

Case study: The Harris Federation

As part of the Harris Federation, Harris academies benefit from central support. They are also able to provide a better extra-curricular offer, including after-hours study, catch-up and trips. Staff across the Federation can share expertise, best teaching materials and work schemes and Harris have professional learning communities for subject leaders. Harris schools get an extra payment for 5 extra paid school activity days. Staff have extra directed time sessions, meaning more capacity for staff development. The Harris Federation reports that in 2013, 72% of pupils at Harris academies achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths GCSEs, compared to 59% for all schools in England.

⁵ The department defines an academy chain as two or more academies linked to a sponsor approved by the department; or a multi-academy trust or an umbrella trust with two or more academies

⁶ Hill, R (2012) "The growth of academy chains: trends and implications for leaders and leadership"

Converting in partnership – strong schools

Because of the benefits set out above, the department continues to advise strong schools that wish to become an academy to convert as part of a chain. Such an approach is particularly valuable to small primary schools where working together allows economies of scale to be achieved and specialist staff such as business managers to work across a number of schools.

Case study: The Primary Academies Trust

The Primary Academies Trust is a multi-academy trust of primary schools in Devon. The schools are situated in a mixture of affluent, mixed and deprived areas and range in size from 64 to 357 pupils. Schools within the trust are able to work together to share expertise, time and resources. Staff are also deployed where the schools jointly agree they'll have the biggest impact on outcomes for children. The schools are able to share collective best practice in all areas of school life, leading to improved teaching and learning. Systems for professional and leadership development have been put in place that operate across the Trust.

Converting in partnership – weaker schools

Weaker schools can gain considerable levels of support through joining an academy chain. The support of one or more strong schools can transform the quality of education that these schools are able to provide.

Case study: The Williamson Trust

The Williamson Trust in Medway is led by Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School, which is a National Support School and a National Teaching School. The approach to school improvement taken by the Trust is to combine coaching, continuing professional development for staff and capacity building, with rigorous human resources and appraisal processes and a relentless focus on teaching and pupil progress. High Halstow Primary School joined the trust as a converter academy in April 2012. In 2013, at the end of its first full year as an academy within the Trust, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths increased from 58% to 81%. Following a monitoring visit to the school in December 2012, Ofsted said: "The range of high quality and individualised nature of support provided to senior and middle leaders, class teachers and governors from partners within the Williamson Trust has been central in securing rapid improvement".

Multi-academy trusts

The strongest type of collaborative structure is the multi-academy trust model, in which a single trust is responsible for a number of academies. This structure allows a strongly

performing trust to create a formal network of academies to share its expertise beyond just a single academy. It also allows weaker academies to benefit from the support of high performing academies. This arrangement allows the trust to pool the resources of each academy for the benefit of all those that are part of the chain, for example moving staff between academies or centralising back office functions to achieve economies of scale.

The multi-academy trust is responsible and accountable for the educational and financial performance of each academy in the trust. The trust may choose to establish a further layer of governance in the form of local governing bodies to which the trust may delegate responsibility. Many multi-academy trusts operate a system of 'earned autonomy' where the local governing bodies responsible for stronger performing academies are delegated greater responsibilities than the local governing bodies managing weaker performing academies. The multi-academy trust therefore has great flexibility in arranging its governance arrangements to meet the specific needs of each of the academies in the chain. Where the multi-academy trust delegates responsibilities to a local governing body, the trust remains accountable overall.

Funding for primary schools joining a chain

In response to feedback from primary schools, the department introduced the primary chain grant (PCG) in 2012, to offer financial support to assist primary schools in the initial stages of chain formation. The PCG has since been issued to 230 schools in 52 chains. As a result of the success of this grant, a new primary academy chain development grant was rolled out in February 2014.

Case study: Northampton Primary Academy Trust

The Northampton Primary Academy Trust partnership (NPAT) formed in November 2012 when five Northampton primary schools: Abington Vale, Ecton Brook, Headlands, Lings and Weston Favell joined together to form a multi-academy trust. NPAT successfully applied for the Primary Chains Grant, and used some of the grant to do a detailed audit of the needs of the five schools and how they could develop common responses to a range of issues, such as attendance and standards. The headteachers also committed to raise standards through mini Ofsted-style inspections across the five schools, run by the schools themselves. These inspections consist of a half-day desk review, followed by a day in the school to observe lessons, extra-curricular activities and interview the head teacher. They provide a formal opportunity for the headteachers to challenge each other to improve.

Mixed multi-academy trusts

In response to demand from schools and dioceses, in July 2013 the department announced that it had developed clauses for use in funding agreements to enable former

voluntary aided (VA), voluntary controlled (VC) and community schools to be within the same MAT. MATs had previously only been permitted to comprise one type of school, meaning that Church of England schools in particular could not set up local MATs with mixtures of former VA, VC or community schools.

Case study: Parish Church of England Primary School

Headteacher Hilary Richardson recently led the conversion of the voluntary controlled Parish Church of England Primary in Bromley, as part of a mixed multi-academy trust with Bishop Justus, a local voluntary aided secondary school. Mr Richardson says: “We wanted to convert with Bishop Justus as we share a Church of England ethos. We are now looking forward to sharing teaching expertise and training in both directions. A Bishop Justus science teacher is coming to give additional stretch and challenge to our year 6 children, and we’re going to share our phonics expertise to help any of their children who may be struggling with their reading”.

Teaching school alliances

Academies also sit at the heart of teaching school alliances. 185 of the 357 teaching schools are academies (52 primaries, 124 secondary and 9 special academies). Teaching schools provide outstanding initial training, robust teacher development and strong leadership – all based around a sound understanding of ‘what works’. They establish a network of alliances that drive significant improvement in the quality of professional practice, improving the attainment of every child. 1,100 academies are part of these teaching school alliances. Academies also play a key role in school-centred initial teacher training centres (SCITTs). 55 academies are now SCITTs, and are fast becoming beacons of excellence.

Case study: Tudor Grange Academy

Tudor Grange Academy, lead school in the Tudor Grange Academies Trust was designated as a Teaching School in September 2011, building on its success as a Training School and as a National Support School. As a provider of SCITT, Tudor Grange has created a learning partnership with the University of Cumbria. Trainee teachers work towards qualified teacher status (QTS) accredited by Tudor Grange Academy, as well as embarking on the first 60 credits of a Masters degree accredited by the University of Cumbria.

9 How academies cater for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils

The department believes that academy status is one of the most effective means of helping vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils achieve their full potential.

Pupils eligible for free school meals

The proportion of pupils in sponsored academies who are known to be eligible for free school meals (FSM) is considerably higher than the average across all state-funded schools. In January 2013, 26.3% of pupils in secondary sponsored academies were known to be eligible for FSM compared to 15.1% across all state-funded secondary schools. In primary sponsored academies, 36.6% were known to be eligible for free school meals compared to 18.1% across all state-funded primary schools.⁷

Figure 6 - Proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals by academy status ⁽¹⁾, January 2013

	Number on roll	Number of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals	Percentage known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals
Primary converter academy	241,590	35,055	14.5
Sponsor-led primary academy	63,400	23,230	36.6
Total primary academies(2)(3)	308,235	58,765	19.1
Secondary converter academy	1,306,650	131,810	10.1
Sponsor-led secondary academy	370,725	97,360	26.3
Total secondary academies(2)(4)	1,686,195	230,560	13.7
Special converter academies	6,755	2,325	34.4
Special sponsored academies	255	100	39.3
Alternative provision academies	150	90	61.7

Source: School Census

1. Includes full time and part time pupils who are sole or dual main registrations. Includes boarders.
2. Includes middle schools as deemed.
3. Includes primary free schools
4. Includes secondary free schools, UTCs and Studio Schools.

⁷ DfE (2013): "Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2013"

Special educational needs

Academies have continued to play their part in providing for children with special educational needs (SEN). Sponsored academies have a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than the average across all state-funded schools.

In January 2013, 24.3% of pupils in sponsored secondary academies were identified as having some kind of SEN compared to 19.0% of pupils in all state-funded secondary schools. In primary sponsored academies, 23.2% of pupils were identified as having some kind of SEN compared to 17.4% of pupils in all state-funded primary schools.⁸

Over 300 converter and sponsored mainstream academies have reserved provision for pupils with SEN, i.e. provision reserved specifically for pupils with a particular type of SEN, such as a SEN unit. Reserved provision is an important element of the overall SEN provision within a local authority area.

⁸ DfE (2013): "Special educational needs in England: January 2013"

Figure 7 - Proportion of pupils with special educational needs by academy status ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾, January 2013

	Number on roll	Pupils with statements of SEN	Pupils with SEN - School Action	Pupils with SEN - School Action Plus	Total pupils with SEN
		Incidence Number	Incidence (%)	Incidence Number	Incidence (%)
Primary converter academy	241,590	3,085	1.3	22,635	9.4
Sponsor-led primary academy	63,400	1,035	1.6	8,260	13.0
Total primary academies(4)(5)	308,235	4,140	1.3	31,195	10.1
Secondary converter academy	1,306,650	23,315	1.8	129,175	9.9
Sponsor-led secondary academy	370,725	7,575	2.0	53,975	14.6
Total secondary academies(4)(6)	1,684,305	30,970	1.8	183,935	10.9
Special converter academy	6,755	6,620	98.0	5	0.1
Sponsor-led special academy	255	250	98.1	x	x
Total special academies	7,100	6,955	98.0	10	0.1
Alternative-provision academy	150	25	15.4	x	x

Source: School Census

1. Includes pupils with a statement of special educational needs, at School Action and School Action Plus.
2. Incidence of pupils - the number of pupils with SEN expressed as a proportion of the number of pupils on roll.
3. Includes full time and part time pupils who are sole or dual main registrations. Includes boarders.
4. Includes middle schools as deemed.
5. Includes primary free schools
6. Includes secondary free schools, UTCs and Studio Schools.

Outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils

Section seven of this report shows that, in 2013, sponsored academies improved at a faster rate than local authority maintained schools, Section six shows that converter academies continued to outperform other state-funded schools.

Data from the National Pupil Database enables this to be broken down by pupil characteristics. It shows that at key stage 4:⁹

- **results for FSM pupils in converter academies were above the average for FSM pupils nationally. In converter academies, 43.7% of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and mathematics compared to 39.1% in local authority schools;**
- **results for SEN pupils in converter academies were above the average for SEN pupils in local authority schools. In converter academies, 30.4% of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and mathematics compared to 23.4% in local authority schools;**
- results for FSM pupils improved at a similar rate in sponsored academies, converter academies and local authority schools. The proportion of FSM pupils that achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and mathematics improved by 1.6 percentage points in sponsored academies and 1.8 percentage points in converter academies and 1.7 percentage points in local authority schools; and
- results for SEN pupils in sponsored academies improved at a similar rate to SEN pupils in local authority schools (an improvement of 1.4 percentage points in both cases). Results for SEN pupils in converter academies improved, but at a slower rate than in local authority schools.

In many cases, however, sponsored academies, often in deprived areas, have made a real difference in improving outcomes for their pupils.

Case study: Harris Academy Greenwich

At Harris Academy Greenwich, where over a third of pupils are eligible for free school meals, Executive Principal Dr Chris Tomlinson is extremely proud of the work that the school is doing to transform results for white boys from lower socio-economic groups. With 63% of boys on roll, many of whom fit into this category, Dr Tomlinson was aware that it has historically been one of the lowest performing and toughest groups to crack. **Harris Academy Greenwich has, however achieved 85% of pupils gaining 5+ A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths in 2013, 26% higher than the average for all schools in England.** The school has focused on attendance – with attendance officers from the school making 6-8 visits every day to parents whose pupils are not in school. It also does very careful analysis of how it spends its pupil premium to ensure that children get the right intervention with maximum impact. This can include one-to-one tuition for pupils and intensive maths and English sessions at half terms.

⁹ DfE analysis of the National Pupil Database. A full breakdown is provided for key stage 2 in Annex A, and key stage 4 in Annex B

Case study: Westminster Academy

At Westminster Academy in London, 40% of pupils have an SEN statement or are on School Action Plus. Over 80% do not have English as a first language, and over 54% are eligible for free school meals. **During the 2012/2013 academic year, the school was found to be Outstanding by Ofsted. It was also selected as Secondary School of the Year by the Times Educational Supplement.** When children arrive at the school, often part way through the year, their skills in reading, writing and maths are well below average. Staff at the school will look at their reading, spelling and numeracy levels and then adjust their timetable accordingly to provide extra support and plug any gaps in their literacy and numeracy skills. As an academy they are able to personalise learning to every single child – so they get an education tailored to their particular needs and a curriculum that suits them.

Case study: Archbishop Sentamu Academy

Archbishop Sentamu Academy in Hull opened as an academy sponsored by the Diocese of York Educational Trust in September 2008. The academy is based in an area of extremely high social disadvantage, with over 40% of pupils eligible for free school meals. **26% of students at the predecessor school achieved 5 good GCSEs including English and maths in 2008. This has increased every year since and the figure now stands at 63%, 13% above the local authority average.** The vast majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds. Principal Andrew Chubb says “Academy status has made a material impact on the lives of many of the most disadvantaged in our local community. Through the innovative approaches that we take at our academy we have made great strides in turning around the long-term life chances and fortunes of many students”.

10 Robust intervention on underperformance and safe management of the system

The autonomy available to academies and free schools is only granted within a robust system of accountability. The department has toughened accountability for all schools, but academies and free schools are subject to a higher level of scrutiny through the rigour and transparency of their governance arrangements. Indeed, the latest version of the model academy funding agreement contains our most robust intervention clauses to date.

Academy trusts must adhere to their funding agreement and to the Academies Financial Handbook, and produce annual accounts for scrutiny by an independent external auditor. There are no equivalent requirements on local authority schools. Audited accounts and funding agreements are published; as are details of budget allocations to academies.

If the department has concerns about an academy, we will investigate immediately, diagnose the problem, and insist the academy brings in support to make improvements.

Acting quickly to tackle underperformance

Where an academy is underperforming, the Secretary of State can call on a framework of formal and informal intervention measures to rapidly bring about improvement. These include actions to build capacity and drive improvements through support, for example by brokering access to additional expertise, or arranging visits from education advisers. More robust measures include recommending changes to strengthen the leadership or governance, or bringing in a sponsor. The Secretary of State's formal powers to intervene are set out in each academy's funding agreement and articles of association. For example, in the small number of academies where standards are unacceptably low or where there has been a breakdown in governance, the Secretary of State may issue a pre-warning notice (PWN). During the 2012/13 academic year the department issued nine PWNs and the academies responded positively with notable improvements in results. Details of all PWNs are on the Gov.uk website.

A PWN is an initial step in the intervention process. The PWN is issued to the relevant academy trust, demanding urgent action to bring about substantial improvements. If this action is not taken, the trust will receive a warning notice. No warning notices were issued in the 2012/13 academic year, although a total of three have been issued to academy trusts – two in June 2012 and one in December 2013. Further action – which could ultimately lead to a change of sponsor – can be taken if improvement does not follow. In cases where there are concerns about the performance of a number of a trust's schools, the trust will be stopped from taking on new projects and action could be taken to bring in new sponsors for the underperforming academies in that chain.

Case study: Etone College

At Etone College, an academy in Warwickshire that opened in January 2012, the proportion of students gaining 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths dropped to 49% in the summer of 2012 and the school went into special measures in April 2013. Officials from the department moved quickly to discuss with the school how sponsorship could be beneficial in helping to turn its performance around. In July 2013, Etone's governing body agreed to become sponsored by The Matrix Academy Trust, led by Barr Beacon School, a high performing local academy.

The Matrix Academy Trust has put a range of measures in place to bring about rapid improvement at Etone, and a number of senior staff from Barr Beacon are providing support to the school. **61% of pupils achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths in 2013, a rise of 12% on 2012 results.** Ofsted's monitoring visit in September 2013 confirmed that the school is making better-targeted interventions, that information on pupil progress is much improved and that all leaders, including the governing body, are now much better placed to hold teachers to account.

Underperforming sponsors

Where improvements are not quickly achieved at a sponsored academy, or a sponsor is not providing a high enough level of support, the department will take swift action to challenge and if necessary change the sponsor. We will also take action to find new sponsors for schools if a chain is not providing the input and support that is required.

The department reviews the performance of sponsors using a range of data and evidence, including performance data from the schools within the chain. Although Ofsted do not inspect the head offices of chains, they can inspect groups of schools in the same chain over a short time period.

Case study: North Shore Academy

North Shore Academy opened in September 2010, sponsored by Stockton Primary Care Trust. The academy was placed in special measures in January 2012 and results dropped to 22% of pupils achieving 5 good GCSEs including English and maths in that year. Northern Education was brought in to provide support in February 2012, and took over sponsorship of the school at the beginning of the 2012/13 academic year. **In 2013 the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ GCSEs including English and maths had risen to 53% and the academy came out of special measures in December 2013.** The department visited the academy in May 2013 and found the academy to be improving at pace.

Financial Accountability

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) gathers information from academy trusts about how they use public funds in a variety of ways, including making use of the financial statements that the trusts must provide as charities and companies.

Trusts must follow a consistent national system for financial management and reporting and the EFA will monitor them closely where there are financial management or governance concerns. Trusts must also comply with the Academies Financial Handbook, which was updated in 2013 to reflect new freedoms and responsibilities. The handbook also sets out the requirement that the EFA will publish reports of all investigations it carries out.

Clearer controls have been introduced which enable the EFA, when they have significant concerns over an academy, to intervene and where necessary issue a Financial Notice to Improve (FNtI). A FNtI sets out the actions the EFA requires the trust to take in order to address the underlying cause(s) of the EFA's concerns about the financial management and/or governance of the trust. Three FNtIs were issued in the 2012/13 academic year.

The EFA supports academies with financial or governance difficulties including those issued with an FNtI. This support includes:

- recommending short term financial advances of funding;
- undertaking assessments of financial management arrangements;
- reviewing recovery plans for robustness and deliverability; and
- challenging and making recommendations for deficit funding and monitoring progress against recovery plans.

11 Finance and value for money

In January 2014 the Education Funding Agency (EFA) published and laid before Parliament its accounts for the 2012-2013 financial year. This is the first set of accounts to include the consolidated accounts of academy trusts.

Academies and the EFA have met the challenge to consolidate accounts on a scale that is unique in the UK public sector and, together with the trusts' regularity statements, support the assessment that income and expenditure has been used for the purposes intended by Parliament.

The EFA acknowledged the qualifying comments that the National Audit Office (NAO) made in signing off the accounts and is committed to improving the process further for the 2013-2014 financial year.

The EFA introduced a new value for money (VFM) statement for the 2012/2013 academic year. The VFM statement enables accounting officers to reflect on, and provide evidence of, their responsibility for achieving the best possible value for money in their organisation. This includes:

- the economic, efficient and effective use of all the resources in their charge – for example to produce better educational results;
- the avoidance of waste and extravagance;
- the prudent and economical administration of the organisation;
- the establishment and maintenance of a system of financial governance, including sound internal spending controls, keeping up to date financial records, continuous financial monitoring and timely reporting; and
- ensuring all financial transactions represent value for money.

Trusts are required to publish their VFM statement on their website to enable wider public scrutiny and to share good practice.

The EFA will review the content of a sample of returns. It will use this to establish the extent to which accounting officers have reflected upon the factors suggested in its guide to value for money statements, and whether they have provided examples to support their statements. The review will also aim to identify good practice and key weaknesses of the written statements that can be fed back to the sector to improve the process in future years.

12 Free schools

The free schools programme has made rapid progress from its inception in 2010. Following the opening of the first 24 free schools in September 2011, a further 57 opened in the academic year 2012/13. 93 free schools opened in September 2013, more than doubling the total number open to 174, with over 150 in the pipeline.

The department now has three application rounds per year and is continuing to accept applications for new schools to meet the strong demand throughout the country from parents, teachers and others. The majority of the 174 free schools that have opened to date are mainstream schools (142 schools) with the remaining schools being alternative provision (18), special free schools (8) and 16-19 (6). All are expected to maintain the highest possible standards.

It is clear that there is strong demand for new schools in some of the most deprived areas of the country. In fact, 44% of open free schools are located in the 30% most deprived local areas. In addition, 70% of mainstream free school places are in basic need areas. 95% of primary free school places are in basic need areas.

As a type of academy, free schools are non-profit making, independent, state-funded schools set up in response to demand within a local area for a greater variety of schools. Introduced by the Academies Act 2010, free schools have become an integral part of the department's agenda to reform the school system by creating more choice and diversity.

Free schools are not defined by size, location or phase. They are the result of the unique visions of a wide range of proposers, including charities, universities, businesses, educational groups, teachers and parents, to make a difference to the educational landscape. Their specialisms include areas as diverse as leadership, languages, sports and the arts.

Free schools might be created because there simply are not enough school places in a local area and children have to travel too far to the nearest school, or because parents are not satisfied with the quality of provision in their local schools. Like academies, free schools are funded on a comparable basis to other state-funded schools and benefit from a similar degree of autonomy from local authority control. Subject to the same Ofsted inspections as all state schools and with the expectation that they will maintain the same rigorous standards as other schools, all free schools are committed to providing young people with the best possible chance to succeed.

The admissions arrangements of free schools are fair and transparent. Free schools are open to pupils of all abilities from the local area and cannot be academically selective – unless they are 16-19 free schools, when they can do so just like other 16-19 institutions.

The department started working towards opening the first of these new schools in the summer of 2010. There has been a rigorous and competitive assessment of over 1,300 applications to date.

Performance and attainment

Of the first 24 free schools, all inspected in the 2012/13 academic year, three quarters were judged by Ofsted as outstanding or good. This is a significant achievement, given that these schools had been open for such a short amount of time. It is too early to judge free schools on the basis of any exam results. If a school is found to be inadequate, the department will take swift action. We are not prepared to allow a school to fail its parents, its children and its community.

The department moved to close Discovery New School swiftly after its inadequate Ofsted rating, while Al-Madinah School is already seeing improvements following our rapid intervention.

Costs

Overall the capital costs of free schools, including site purchases, are well below the costs of previous programmes. Construction costs are 45% lower than other school building programmes. Revenue funding for free schools is broadly equivalent with other schools.

A full value for money study, *Establishing Free Schools*, was conducted by the National Audit Office in 2013. This report recognised the progress we have made in opening 174 schools and with much lower construction costs than previous programmes.

Case study: Canary Wharf College

Canary Wharf College is a co-educational primary school with a non-denominational Christian ethos. The school was proposed by a parent-led partnership which included an ex-head teacher of independent primary and junior prep schools. The school opened in September 2011 with reception, year 1 and year 2 classes.

Using its financial freedoms, the school is able to pay for an extended day activities co-ordinator who organises vibrant programmes with over 300 spaces and 26 different activities each week, from taekwondo to scrabble. Some programmes are run by outside contractors while others are operated by internal staff who are paid extra. There is a very high quality education offer at the school. Ofsted rated the provision as outstanding.

Case study: Perry Beeches III The Free School

Perry Beeches III The Free School is a 11-19 secondary school in Birmingham city centre. The school has been set up by the Perry Beeches Academy Trust, the sponsor behind Perry Beeches The Academy and Perry Beeches II Free School – both of which are rated by Ofsted as outstanding. It will be a 620 place secondary school for 11 to 19 year olds, and opened in September 2013 with 100 pupils in Year 7 and 60 sixth formers. The school received 990 applications for these 160 places. The school's curriculum and

ethos operates along the same lines as the Trust's two existing schools, providing a curriculum tailored to the needs of individual students. There is a heavy focus on literacy and numeracy, particularly in Year 7. This approach has a proven success record. It was used at Perry Beeches The Academy, resulting in its transformation from a failing school where only 20% of pupils achieved 5 A*-C at GCSE (including English and maths) to 81% in 2013 and an outstanding judgement from Ofsted.

13 University technical colleges and studio schools

University technical colleges (UTCs)

Three UTCs opened in the academic year 2012/13. 17 UTCs are now open, and a further 33 are in development. There are two application rounds a year for new UTCs to meet the strong demand throughout the country from employers, universities, other educational providers and young people.

The 50 UTCs open and in development will create over 30,000 places for young people to train as the engineers and scientists of the future – playing a crucial role in the UK's long-term economic growth. Over 320 employers are involved in UTCs, including household names such as National Grid, Toyota and Siemens, and a large number of small and medium size enterprises. They also get significant input from world-class universities, such as Cambridge and Warwick; over 40 different universities are involved in UTCs.

UTCs are academies for 14-19 year olds which focus on providing technical education that meets the needs of modern businesses. UTCs follow a model established by the Baker Dearing Educational Trust. Each UTC has one or two specialisms which range from engineering and manufacturing to construction and biomedical sciences. As a result of their specialisms and unique approach, UTCs typically draw pupils from a number of local authority areas.

They typically cater for between 500-800 students who split their time between core academic subjects and learning specific technical skills and qualifications. All UTCs are sponsored by a local university and employers and are established to meet demand for particular skills identified by employers locally and nationally. Employers are put in the driving seat meaning that students benefit from a curriculum designed by experts in the field and are then supported to learn through work placements and access to industry standard facilities and equipment. Many UTCs also run longer term times and operate business hours to help prepare students for the world of work.

Admission arrangements of UTCs and studio schools are fair, transparent and in line with the School Admissions Code.

It is too soon to draw conclusions from the limited performance and attainment data and very small number of Ofsted inspection results available to date for open UTCs and studio schools.

Case study: Liverpool Life Sciences UTC

Liverpool Life Sciences UTC opened in September 2013. The main sponsor is the North Liverpool Academy, an established and successful school, and the university sponsor is the University of Liverpool. Specialising in life sciences, the employer sponsors are the

Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospital NHS Trust, and leading life sciences firms such as 2Bio. Students benefit from access to the very latest research and development, and countless opportunities to work alongside international companies. The specialism covers a number of areas including healthcare diagnostics and medical equipment supply, as well as vaccine and drug manufacture. Students have access to industry standard laboratories and are taught by a visiting professor from Sheffield University. Following completion of their studies at the UTC, the options for young people will vary between further and higher education, employment or a higher level apprenticeship.

Studio schools

Ten studio schools opened in the academic year 2012/13. The total number of studio schools open across the country is now 28, with a further 17 in development. There are two application rounds a year for proposers wishing to establish new studio schools to meet the strong demand throughout the country from parents, teachers and others.

The 45 studio schools open and in development will create over 15,000 places for young people. More than 400 national and local employers are involved in studio schools helping to shape the curriculum and providing work experience and mentoring opportunities. These include household names such as the BBC, ASDA, Nokia and the NHS.

Studio schools are innovative schools catering for students aged 14-19 (some are 13-19), usually with specialisms linked to local skills shortages, and an emphasis on the skills needed for employment. They combine academic study (with a core of English, maths and science plus other subjects) with cross-curricular learning, tackling real-life problems and projects. Study also involves work placements delivered in partnership with local and national employers.

Studio schools are small institutions backed by a range of groups including further education colleges and businesses. They typically cater for around 300 students and deliver a personalised curriculum, with all students being assigned a personal coach to help tailor the curriculum to their individual needs. Many studio schools choose to specialise in particular areas including construction, catering, engineering, maths, business, finance, sport media, science, technology and hair and beauty. All of these areas have a common focus on practical work and enterprise. They prepare young people for the world of work by developing transferrable employability skills such as punctuality, good communication, reliability and team working, whilst enabling students to gain a strong grounding in English, maths and science.

Employers play a major part in studio schools, helping to shape the curriculum and ensuring that the qualifications gained are what employers require. Students spend a

significant portion of their week as employees in local businesses, with those over 16 years old usually being paid a real wage for their work.

All studio schools opening from 2012 are legally academies and benefit from the freedoms and flexibilities that all academies enjoy in relation to the curriculum and employment of staff.

Case study: Devon Studio School

Devon Studio School opened in September 2013. It is sponsored by South Devon College and is working in partnership with the South Devon Healthcare NHS Trust, the Torbay Care Trust, and Astra Zeneca. The studio school specialises in health, early years and social care and is based on the campus of Torbay Hospital, offering a unique learning environment, with students gaining first-hand experience of the healthcare industry through working and studying alongside NHS staff. The curriculum has been designed to meet the needs of students who want to learn in a practical skills-based environment. All students follow a pathway that prepares them for work in the health and care sector. This includes studying qualifications that are recognised and valued by universities and employers, including core GCSEs, A-Levels and vocational qualifications, with the option of completing the English Baccalaureate. Every student enrolled at the school completes a qualification in health, health and social care or early years as part of their personalised programme of study.

14 Further analysis for academies sector and equalities analysis

Ethnic group

Sponsored academies have higher proportions of minority ethnic pupils than the national average. Conversely, converter academies have lower proportions of minority ethnic pupils than the national average.

In 2013, across all state-funded primary schools, 28.5% of pupils were from a minority ethnic group. In primary sponsored academies the proportion was 39.8% and in primary converter academies it was 25.5%. In 2013, across all state-funded secondary schools, 24.2% of pupils were from a minority ethnic group. In secondary sponsored academies the proportion was 30.0% and in secondary converter academies it was 20.7% (see figure 8).

With the exception of Chinese pupils¹⁰, results at key stage 4 for each ethnic group in sponsored academies went up at a similar rate to, or slightly faster than, results for pupils in local authority maintained schools.¹¹ Each ethnic group in converter academies saw improvements at key stage 4. Whilst the rate of improvement was generally slower than that seen in local authority schools, overall attainment for each ethnic group was higher in converter academies than local authority maintained schools (see Annex B).

Gender

The gender split in sponsored academies is broadly in line with the national average, although they show a marginally higher proportion of boys than the national average for state-funded secondary schools (51.8% for sponsored academies compared to 50.4% nationally). Boys are slightly underrepresented in secondary converter academies (49.8% for converter academies compared to 50.4% nationally) (see figure 8).

As across all state-funded secondary schools, girls outperformed boys in both sponsored and converter academies at key stage 4. Results for girls and boys in sponsored academies improved at a similar rate (an improvement of 2.4 percentage points for girls and 2.3 percentage points for boys), in both cases this was faster than the improvement seen in local authority schools (which saw an improvement of 1.8 percentage points for both boys and girls in 2013). In converter academies results went up faster for girls than

¹⁰ Results for this group are particularly volatile due to small numbers.

¹¹ Throughout this section, results at key stage 4 refers to the proportion of pupils that achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs (including equivalents) including English and mathematics.

they did for boys (up 2.4 percentage points for girls compared to 0.9 percentage points for girls) (see Annex B).

At key stage 2, results for boys in sponsored academies improved by 6 percentage points, much faster than the rate of improvement seen in local authority schools (see Annex A).¹²

Special educational needs

Sponsored academies have higher proportions of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) than the national average for state-funded secondary schools whilst converter academies have rates that are below.

In 2013, across all state-funded primary schools, 17.4% of pupils were identified as having a special educational need. In primary sponsored academies the proportion was 23.2% and in primary converter academies it was 16.1%. In 2013, across all state-funded secondary schools, 19.0% of pupils were identified as having a special educational need. In secondary sponsored academies the proportion was 24.3% and in secondary converter academies it was 16.5% (see figure 8).

At key stage 4, results for SEN and non-SEN pupils in sponsored academies went up at broadly the same rate (+1.6 for non-SEN pupils and +1.4 for SEN pupils). Results for SEN pupils went up at the same rate as SEN pupils in local authority schools. Results for SEN pupils in converter academies went up at a slightly slower rate than in local authority schools but overall their attainment remained much higher (see Annex B).

¹² Throughout this section, results at key stage 2 refers to the proportion of pupils that achieved level 4+ in reading, writing and mathematics.

Figure 8 - Breakdown by gender, ethnicity and special educational needs of pupils in academies and all state funded schools (as proportion of all pupils), January 2013(1)

	Primary(2)			Secondary(2)		
	Converter academies	Sponsored academies	All state-funded	Converter academies	Sponsored academies	All state-funded
Gender						
Boys	50.9	51.3	51.0	49.8	51.8	50.4
Girls	49.1	48.7	49.0	50.2	48.2	49.6
Ethnicity						
White	78.7	68.6	76.3	82.0	74.5	79.0
Mixed	5.1	5.7	5.1	4.0	4.8	4.0
Asian	9.0	14.0	10.4	7.6	8.8	9.1
Black	5.0	8.1	5.6	3.6	8.2	4.9
Chinese	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.4
Any other ethnic group	1.1	2.5	1.6	1.2	2.2	1.4
Unclassified	0.8	0.7	0.7	1.1	1.2	1.1
Minority Ethnic Pupils (3)	25.5	39.8	28.5	20.7	30.0	24.2
Special Educational needs						
All pupils with SEN	16.1	23.2	17.4	16.5	24.3	19.0
School Action	9.4	13.0	9.7	9.9	14.6	11.2
School Action Plus	5.5	8.6	6.4	4.9	7.7	5.8
Pupils with statements of SEN	1.3	1.6	1.4	1.8	2.0	1.9

Source: School Census, January 2013

(1) Includes pupils who are sole or dual main registrations.

(2) Includes middle schools as deemed

(3) Includes all pupils classified as belonging to an ethnic group other than White British.

15 Secretary of State as Principal Regulator

On 1 August 2011 the Secretary of State for Education became the Principal Regulator for academies, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled, foundation schools and sixth form colleges. These exempt charities are now regulated by the Secretary of State for Education instead of the Charities Commission (the 'Commission').

One of the Secretary of State's main duties as principal regulator for academies is to do all that he reasonably can to promote the compliance of academy trustees with their legal obligations in exercising control and management of their trusts. Departmental guidance on academy compliance is published on the Gov.uk website.

The Secretary of State promotes charity compliance by setting out charity and company law requirements within the model governing documents for academy trusts (the memorandum and articles), and within the contracts that he enters into with academy trusts (the funding agreement). Academy trusts must prepare audited annual accounts and an annual report and file them with the department. They must also publish these documents, their governing documents, their funding agreement and the names of their governors on their website. Academy trusts must make available copies of their governing body meeting agendas, minutes, reports or documents submitted to these meetings, to anybody that wishes to see them. The Education Funding Agency (EFA) monitors the compliance of academy trusts by examining their audited financial statements, financial plans and budget returns and carrying out sample audit visits. EFA officers investigate complaints about academy trusts on behalf of the Secretary of State.

The department and the Commission have entered into a memorandum of understanding setting out how both parties will work together. It includes details about the regulatory powers of both parties. Where either the department or the Commission have identified concerns about the control and management of the administration of an exempt charity, it will notify the other party and include information about any charity law issues it has identified, before it advises the relevant body of any action it proposes to take. The department may ask the Commission to use any of its regulatory powers or indicate that those powers may be required at some stage during the conduct of the case.

The department and EFA continue to work with the Commission to implement and strengthen more effective reporting procedures between the organisations and share good practice. Regular information sharing meetings, and staff training events have taken place throughout this period to ensure that departmental and EFA policy and operational staff are fully aware of their responsibilities to promote and monitor the compliance of academy trusts with charitable and company law, and have a better understanding of the Commission's powers to intervene in the management of charitable trusts and investigate trustee misconduct.

Within government and the education sector there is a growing consensus that decision making should lie closer to academies. Outstanding education leaders should have a

stronger role in shaping a system that balances robust intervention for struggling schools with genuine freedom and autonomy for those performing well. We have therefore appointed eight full-time Regional School Commissioners (RSCs), who will be advised by a board of around six headteachers of outstanding academies or experienced educational leaders, elected to the position by their peers.

The RSCs, supported by their headteacher boards, will perform functions of the Secretary of State on his behalf, within a national framework. Accountability will remain with the Secretary of State, with decisions better informed by sector expertise.

The RSCs were appointed after the period which this report covers – the academic year 2012/13 – and so they will be considered in more detail in next year’s annual report.

16 Conclusion

With almost 4,000 academies now open, the academies programme continues to grow in both numbers and significance. The provision available to parents and pupils also becomes ever more diverse, as more UTCs, studio schools and free schools open each year. Academies of all types empower teachers and governors to take better and more immediate decisions for their pupils. They are helping to drive up standards across the board including for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people.

This coming year there will be a continued drive to work with schools that would like to become an academy and take advantage of the freedoms and flexibilities the status allows them, either in their own right or with the support of a sponsor.

The department will continue to tackle underperformance around the country by turning the weakest schools into academies with the support of a strong sponsor. We will intervene swiftly and robustly if an academy, free school, studio school or UTC is not providing a high enough standard of education for its pupils, or if a sponsor is underperforming.

We will also work to expand the sponsor pool, including encouraging more existing academies to become sponsors themselves. We have agreed to the provision of Sponsor Capacity Funding for the 2014-2015 financial year. New sponsors currently without open academies, or those with a single open academy, will be able to apply for funding to help build their capacity to take on underperforming schools.

Next year's annual report will provide a full report on progress.

Annex A: proportion of pupils that achieved level 4 or above in reading, writing and mathematics, by pupil characteristics

Figure 9 –The proportion of pupils that achieved level 4 or above in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2 in 2012 and 2013 in sponsored academies, converter academies, local authority maintained mainstream schools and all state-funded schools by pupil characteristics

	Sponsored academies with results in 2012 and 2013			Converter academies with results in 2012 and 2013			Local authority schools with results in 2012 and 2013			All state-funded schools		
	2012	2013	Change	2012	2013	Change	2012	2013	Change	2012	2013	Change
All pupils	60	63	+3	80	81	+1	75	76	+1	74	75	+1
Girls	65	65	+1	84	84	0	79	80	+1	78	79	+1
Boys	55	61	+6	77	78	+1	72	73	+2	71	72	+1
Free school meals	53	54	+2	66	65	-1	60	62	+2	59	60	+1
All other pupils	64	67	+4	82	83	+1	79	80	+1	78	79	+1
Asian	65	65	0	82	84	+1	76	77	+1	75	76	+1
Black	68	68	0	78	78	+1	72	74	+2	72	73	+1
Chinese	63	86	+24	90	88	-2	84	86	+2	84	85	+1
Mixed	66	66	0	80	82	+2	76	78	+1	76	77	+1
White	58	62	+4	80	81	+1	75	77	+1	75	76	+1
Any other ethnic group	54	58	+5	82	81	-1	69	71	+2	69	70	+1
Unclassified	68	54	-14	77	83	+6	73	75	+1	63	62	-1
No identified SEN	76	77	+1	91	91	0	88	88	0	88	88	0
All SEN pupils	26	30	+3	42	42	0	34	36	+2	33	34	+1
SEN without a statement	28	32	+4	43	44	0	36	38	+2	36	38	+2
SEN with a statement	12	12	0	24	26	+1	18	20	+2	13	14	+1

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding

Source: DfE analysis of National Pupil Database; and DfE (2013) "National curriculum assessments at key stage 2, 2012 to 2013"

Annex B: proportion of pupils that achieved 5+ A*-C including English and mathematics GCSEs (including equivalents), by pupil characteristics

Figure 10 – The proportion of pupils that achieved 5+ A*-C at GCSE (including equivalents) including English and mathematics GCSE in 2012 and 2013 in sponsored academies, converter academies, local authority maintained mainstream schools and all state-funded schools by pupil characteristics

	Sponsored academies with results in 2012 and 2013			Converter academies with results in 2012 and 2013			Local authority schools with results in 2012 and 2013			All state-funded schools		
	2012	2013	Change	2012	2013	Change	2012	2013	Change	2012	2013	Change
All pupils	48.8	51.1	+2.3	66.6	68.3	+1.6	57.4	59.2	+1.8	58.8	60.6	+1.8
Girls	52.9	55.3	+2.4	70.7	73.1	+2.4	62.0	63.8	+1.8	63.7	65.7	+2.0
Boys	44.9	47.2	+2.3	62.5	63.4	+0.9	53.0	54.8	+1.8	54.2	55.6	+1.4
Free school meals	35.0	36.7	+1.6	42.0	43.7	+1.8	37.4	39.1	+1.7	36.3	37.9	+1.6
All other pupils	53.1	55.8	+2.7	69.1	70.9	+1.8	61.0	63.0	+2.0	62.6	64.6	+2.0
Asian	55.4	56.7	+1.3	72.2	73.9	+1.7	60.7	62.1	+1.4	62.7	64.2	+1.5
Black	53.1	56.8	+3.6	61.2	64.1	+2.9	53.8	57.5	+3.6	54.7	58.1	+3.4
Chinese	67.8	66.3	-1.5	82.2	84.1	+1.9	73.4	76.2	+2.8	76.5	78.1	+1.6
Mixed	51.6	54.6	+3.0	68.5	71.2	+2.7	57.7	60.6	+2.9	59.8	62.5	+2.7
White	47.3	49.6	+2.3	66.3	67.8	+1.5	57.2	58.9	+1.7	58.6	60.2	+1.6
Any other ethnic group	51.3	55.1	+3.8	63.3	67.3	+3.9	54.6	57.3	+2.7	55.9	59.2	+3.3
Unclassified	49.3	46.9	-2.4	65.6	67.5	+1.9	58.9	59.3	+0.4	59.4	59.5	+0.1
No identified SEN	59.5	61.1	+1.6	75.1	76.2	+1.2	66.9	68.0	+1.0	69.3	70.4	+1.1
All SEN pupils	19.7	21.1	+1.4	30.0	30.4	+0.4	22.1	23.4	+1.4	22.5	23.4	+0.9
SEN without a statement	20.3	22.1	+1.8	31.3	31.6	+0.3	22.9	24.3	+1.4	25.3	26.5	+1.2
SEN with a statement	12.5	11.0	-1.5	17.9	20.8	+2.9	14.6	16.4	+1.9	8.4	9.5	+1.1

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding

Source: DfE analysis of National Pupil Database; and DfE (2014) "GCSE and equivalent attainment by pupil characteristics, 2012 to 2013"