

October 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

The government has recently published performance data from the summer 2022 exams for all secondary schools, sixth forms and colleges. This is the first time that data has been published since the start of the pandemic. The Department for Education has been clear that, given the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on different students, schools and colleges, this data should be treated with caution. We are writing to explain the data which has been produced, the changes in how it has been presented, and to provide some context about how the exams this summer were affected.

What data has been published?

The data published today includes the following:

Key Stage 4:

- Our school/college's Progress 8 figure (the relative progress of our students in eight subjects, compared to students with similar levels of attainment at the end of primary school).
- Our school/college's Attainment 8 figure (the raw score achieved by our students in the same eight subjects).
- The percentage of our students who entered the Ebacc (a government measure which means students took all of English, maths, sciences, a language, and history or geography GCSE).
- Our school/college's Ebacc average point score (our students' average score in the same Ebacc subjects).
- The overall figure for how many of our students entered GCSEs.
- How many of our students stay in education or employment after Year 11.
- The percentage of our students achieving a grade 5 or higher in both English and maths GCSEs.

Post-16:

- Our school's average result in A levels, applied general qualifications (AGQs) and vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs).
- How many of our students stay in education or employment after Year 13.

What's different this year?

The government has made a number of changes to the website where they display school and college results (www.find-school-performance-data.service.gov.uk). These include:

- changing the name of the website from 'Compare school and college performance' to 'Find and check the performance of schools and colleges in England'
- removing the table of all schools' national performance
- removing the ability for users to create their own tables of selected schools and colleges
- removing the red / amber / green ratings on school performance measures

All of this is designed to discourage users from making direct comparisons between schools and colleges this year or comparing this year's data to previous years'.

Why can't data be compared this year?

The government, and the schools' inspectorate Ofsted, acknowledge that the impact of the pandemic was not the

same across all schools and colleges. Even within a local area or town, the impact of the pandemic was very different.

Therefore, they are clear that data can only tell us so much and should be used as the basis for a conversation rather than being used to directly compare one school or college with another.

How were results arrived at last year?

In 2020 and 2021, exams were cancelled due to the pandemic, and grades were based on teacher assessments (with exam boards ensuring consistency). This different form of assessment led to grades, overall, being higher in 2020 and 2021 than they were in pre-pandemic years, when students sat exams.

Last summer saw the first return of exams since 2019, albeit with significant adaptations to recognise that students' learning had been significantly affected by the pandemic. Nationally, it was determined that grades would, overall, fall roughly halfway between 2019 and 2021. This would enable grades to gradually move back to pre-pandemic levels, while still being as fair as possible to students taking exams in 2022.

The national data that we are compared to reflects this and is higher than in pre-pandemic years.

Why are there no progress figures for post-16?

Normally, the Department for Education publishes progress figures for A levels and for post-16 students retaking English and maths GCSE. However, because the 2022 cohort received centre-assessed grades in 2020, and the government committed to not using these for accountability purposes, no progress data has been produced for last summer.

As a comprehensive school parents and carers will recognise that we have a large and inclusive Sixth Form with a wide range of courses. We run highly academic pathways alongside vocational ones and everything in between. Given this philosophy, we have students that start our Sixth Form with lower grades than other schools. We are incredibly proud of the progress that these students make, as well as the rest of our post-16 cohort, make at Furze Platt Senior School. Unfortunately, this progress is not captured with the average grades recently published.

How will our results be used?

The publication of results does not directly impact students at all. Students already received their own GCSE, A level and VTQ results in August. These results will be used by the government and by Ofsted if we have an inspection, with the context in which they were achieved taken into account.

How do our results compare to local schools?

As explained above, the ability to rank schools is no longer available, as the government is clear that schools cannot be compared this year. One of the measures included in the government website mentioned above is our Progress 8 figure, which is a relative measure based on students' progress from primary school in eight subjects. A score of 0 means the school adds an average amount of progress to students. A score between 0 and 1 means the school adds an above average amount of progress to students. A score between 0 and -1 means the school adds a below average amount of progress to students. You will also be able to look at the local authority average for all the key measures, but not be able to directly compare schools.

I hope this explanation is helpful in enabling you to understand this year's performance data for our school.

Yours sincerely

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