



Department  
for Education

# **Key stage 4 performance measures and targeted RISE extension**

**Government consultation**

**Launch date 23 February 2026**

**Respond by 4 May 2026**

# Contents

Table of figures	4
About this consultation	5
Why we are consulting	5
Who this consultation is for	7
Issue date	7
Enquiries	7
Additional copies	8
Deadline	8
Respond online	8
Results and next steps	8
Chapter 1: Improving Progress 8 and Attainment 8 measures	9
Purpose and rationale	9
Outline of proposals	9
Minor methodological adjustment	12
Chapter 2: Wider academic performance measures	15
Purpose and rationale	15
Best-fit progress measure for pupils with low prior attainment	16
Additional measures	18
Chapter 3: Extending Targeted RISE to low-attaining schools	20
Purpose and rationale	20
Impact	24
Equalities	24
Workload and wellbeing	25
List of consultation questions	26
About You	26
Chapter 1	28
Chapter 2	29
Chapter 3	30
Impact	31
Annex A: Key stage 4 academic performance measures	33

Headline Measures	33
Additional Measures	33
Annex B - Qualifications included in improved Progress 8 and Attainment 8	35

# Table of figures

Figure 1: Proposed curriculum model for Progress 8 and Attainment 8	10
Table 1: Worked example of best-fit progress measure	18
Table 2: Qualifications included in improved Progress 8 and Attainment 8	35

# About this consultation

## Why we are consulting

High and rising standards for all children must be underpinned by a **strong and fair accountability system**. Trusts and schools need clarity about expectations, incentives that reward high expectations and progress for all pupils, and information that supports improvement. Parents need a rounded picture of their child's school.

Measures like Progress 8 have helped raise standards and maintain a strong academic core. But we know the system must keep pace with the needs of today's children. Schools tell us they want accountability that encourages ambition without narrowing choice, and parents want clarity about how schools are helping every child—not just those already on track. This consultation responds to that call. We are proposing changes that will ensure a broad curriculum, recognise excellence, and shine a light on progress for pupils who start furthest behind.

This consultation fulfils the government's commitments, made in our response to the **Curriculum and Assessment Review (CAR)** and the School Accountability Reform consultation, to seek views on improvements to Progress 8 and Attainment 8 and on extending targeted Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) to low-attaining schools.

These proposals complement the ambitions of the **schools white paper: Every Child Achieving and Thriving**, which sets out our vision for childhood and schools: to set higher standards for all and reduce the disadvantage gap. They also reflect the findings of the Curriculum and Assessment Review and the government's response, which emphasised the importance of a broad, balanced curriculum and robust assessment practices that drive improvement without narrowing learning.

We intend for this consultation to form part of a wider programme of engagement taking place later this year. We will consult on post-16 English and mathematics performance measures and on a consistent way of measuring performance across all 16 to 18 learners. We will also consult on how enrichment activities should be reflected within School Profiles as part of a wider range of information that could be made available to parents. Taken together, these consultations will support the development of a more coherent and balanced approach to accountability and transparency—one that encourages schools and colleges to provide a rich and broad education, where high standards and inclusion go hand in hand for every child.

Guided by the principles we agreed with the sector in our response to the **School Accountability Reform consultation**, we are committed to implementing an accountability system which improves outcomes for all children, provides transparent and reliable information that informs parental choice and supports schools to improve.

## What is changing and why

It is essential that performance measures capture the right things and incentivise the behaviours we want to see across our education system – high standards and aspirations for every child, whatever their starting point. Our consultation proposals include:

- **introduction of an improved Progress 8 model that maintains a strong academic core alongside ensuring breadth and choice for every child.** This refreshed approach reflects the importance of a curriculum that supports high standards and recognises the value of a wide range of subjects, including the arts, which contribute to our economy and society. Alongside these changes, we will make a minor technical adjustment by simplifying the method for assigning progress bandings.
- **a new performance measure recognising the progress of children with low prior attainment.** We are seeking views on whether there could be a better way to reflect the achievements of children who start secondary school significantly behind their peers and make good progress. This possible new measure would sit alongside existing measures such as Progress 8 which will continue to include all pupils, rather than replace them. Its purpose is to provide additional insight into the progress of this subset of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Alongside the proposals outlined above, we are making a small number of adjustments to the wider set of additional academic performance measures to ensure the system continues to provide clear, balanced and useful information about school performance, including stretch for the most able. These are not subject to formal consultation.

A full breakdown of proposed measures is set out in [Annex A](#) as well as in the [technical guide](#) to the proposals.

We also propose extending **Targeted RISE support** to schools with the very lowest achievement outcomes, to ensure schools receive support to make improvements quickly. We are proposing that from January 2027 rapid, bespoke support will be available based on clear data points. Together these reforms will ensure schools facing the greatest challenges get timely help, not just scrutiny.

## Your voice matters

We welcome feedback from schools, parents, local authorities, and sector experts. Your views will help us design measures that raise standards, support inclusion, and reflect the diverse needs of our education system.

## Scope of consultation

This consultation document makes proposals in relation to headline and additional academic performance measures at key stage 4 (KS4), and an extension to Targeted RISE support.

- **Chapter 1** sets out proposals to refresh the Progress 8 curriculum model.
- **Chapter 2** explores whether there could be a better way to recognise progress for pupils with low prior attainment, through a best-fit progress measure for low prior attainers (LPA), and sets out how we will refresh the wider suite of additional academic measures.
- **Chapter 3** proposes extending Targeted RISE support to schools with the very lowest achievement outcomes, using data on attainment (initially Attainment 8, later Progress 8) and primary standards to identify schools for support.

## Who this consultation is for

- Parents and carers;
- Pupils;
- Those involved in leading, governing, teaching or supporting in state-funded schools (including local authorities, academy trusts and further education colleges with 14 to 16 students directly enrolled);
- Groups representing education leaders, teachers, support staff, trustees and governors; and
- Third sector organisations and others that provide improvement support to state funded schools.

## Issue date

The consultation was issued on 23 February 2026.

## Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation, please email:

[SchoolPerformanceMeasures.Consultation@Education.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolPerformanceMeasures.Consultation@Education.gov.uk)

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

## Additional copies

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

## Deadline

The consultation closes on 4 May 2026.

## Respond online

To help us analyse the responses please use the online system wherever possible. Visit [DfE consultations on GOV.UK](#) to submit your response.

## Other ways to respond

If for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may request an alternative format of the form.

### By email

[SchoolPerformanceMeasures.Consultation@Education.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolPerformanceMeasures.Consultation@Education.gov.uk)

### By post

School Performance Measures Reform Consultation Team  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

## Results and next steps

We will undertake further engagement and testing during the consultation period. Once the consultation closes, we will carefully review all responses and publish a summary alongside our decisions. Your feedback will help shape the final design of these measures, ensuring they are fair, transparent, and focused on raising standards for every pupil.

Where proposals require further development, we will work with schools and sector experts to test feasibility and impact before implementation. The results of our consultation will be published on [GOV.UK](#) in the Summer 2026 term.

# Chapter 1: Improving Progress 8 and Attainment 8 measures

## Purpose and rationale

Headline performance measures provide a clear and transparent way of holding schools accountable for pupil outcomes, enabling parents, policymakers, and the public to understand performance at a glance. These measures help identify strengths and weaknesses across the system and inform where additional support or intervention is needed to raise standards.

We want to encourage schools to offer a curriculum at KS4 that is rich and broad, inclusive and innovative, ensuring coverage of subjects most likely to support young people's life chances and the needs of society and the economy, while enabling them to pursue their interests.

Progress 8 is central to this. It is essential that all students have a strong academic core, but we believe the current structure has hampered progress in subjects that strengthen our economy and society, including the arts.

We are also removing the EBacc entry and attainment measures. The independent Curriculum and Assessment Review found that uptake of EBacc subjects has not translated into increased study of them at 16-19 and EBacc measures have unnecessarily constrained student choice, affecting students' engagement and achievement. Removing EBacc from headline accountability measures reflects our aim to encourage a broader, more balanced curriculum while maintaining ambition for all pupils.

This means there will be three headline school performance measures – Progress 8, Attainment 8, and the percentage of pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths – which together offer a clear picture of core outcomes and support progression beyond key stage 4. They are widely understood, valued by stakeholders, and align with our commitment to transparency and high standards.

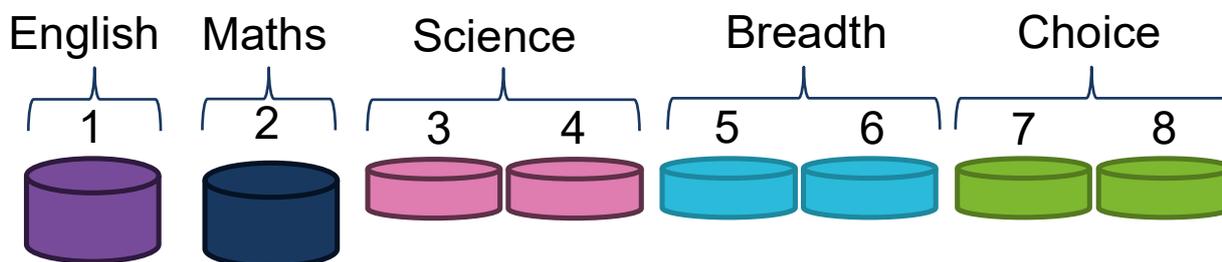
We will publish our consultation response in the summer term 2026, so that schools can take the revised Progress 8 (P8) measure into account when determining subject choices for pupils who will start their GCSEs in September 2027, and considering their curriculum and workforce planning going forwards.

## Outline of proposals

Progress 8 and Attainment 8 will continue to be based on a calculation of pupils' performance across eight qualifications. The following diagram and explanatory text

below show our proposed model, including the qualifications that would be eligible to fill each of the eight slots.

**Figure 1: Proposed curriculum model for Progress 8 and Attainment 8**



A list of qualifications included in the model is provided in [Annex B](#).

### Slot 1 – English

This slot will continue to follow the same rules as the current Progress 8 and Attainment 8 English slot. That means it will be based on the higher point score of a pupil’s GCSE English language or GCSE English literature (or relevant AS level). It will be double weighted provided a pupil has taken both qualifications.

The lower grade of English language or English literature can count in slots 7 or 8 (‘choice’ slots). The vast majority of pupils take both GCSE English literature and English language (in 2024/25, approximately 96% of pupils in state-funded mainstream schools entered GCSEs in both English language and English literature).<sup>1</sup> Therefore, one of the English GCSEs will likely fill a choice slot for many pupils.<sup>2</sup>

If only one of GCSE English literature or English language is taken, this qualification will count in the English slot but will not be double-weighted.

### Slot 2 – maths

This slot will continue to follow the same rules as the current Progress 8 and Attainment 8 maths slot. That means it will contain the point score of a pupil’s GCSE maths (or relevant AS level). It will be double-weighted.

---

<sup>1</sup> Key stage 4 performance, National characteristics by school types data: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/77074020-abb8-4b5f-cb18-08de6eccf22d>

<sup>2</sup> The second English GCSE will fill slots 7 or 8 if a pupil has taken 8 or fewer approved qualifications. If they have taken more than 8 approved qualifications, then it will depend on which qualifications they have achieved their highest grades in, but for many pupils this will likely be the second English GCSE.

## Slots 3 and 4 – science

These two slots are new. They will take the two highest point scores from GCSE (or relevant AS level) science qualifications. This includes combined science GCSE (double award), the single science GCSEs (biology, chemistry, and physics), and computer science or computing.

As combined science is a double award, not two separate GCSEs, the points for it are averaged, which means that, for example, a combined science grade of a grade 6 and a grade 5 would be averaged to two 5.5 points to fill either one or two of the science slots as appropriate (computer science could fill one of the slots if it was the higher grade). This averaging of points only applies to combined science as it is equivalent to two GCSEs – averaging is not applied to single sciences or computer science.

## Slots 5 and 6 – breadth

These two slots must be filled by GCSEs (or relevant AS level qualifications) from two of the three categories below (the two slots cannot be filled by subjects from the same category). These slots will take the two highest point scores from qualifications that satisfy this requirement. Technical awards in creative subjects may also count towards category B.

- Category A – humanities – geography, history, religious studies
- Category B – creative – art and design, music, drama, dance, design and technology
- Category C – languages – modern foreign languages and ancient languages

We are interested in views on whether these slots should include an additional category for science subjects.

We recognise that a fourth category would allow more pupil choice and specialisation in science but are also mindful that it may weaken the incentives to study a broad curriculum and subjects from the other three categories. We know that most pupils in state-funded schools studying three separate sciences already study more than eight GCSEs.

An additional category for science subjects would include GCSE (or relevant AS level) qualifications in biology, chemistry, physics, combined science and computer science.<sup>3</sup> The inclusion of a science category would not affect the rules relating to slots 3 and 4 – the dedicated science slots.

---

<sup>3</sup> If we have category D for science, it is proposed design and technology will move from category B to category D.

We are proposing that technical awards are allowable within the creative category. This is a small change to the model that was published alongside the Curriculum and Assessment Review government response in the autumn. Technical awards offer a valuable vocational alternative to GCSEs and are an important feature of a broad and balanced curriculum. They must, however, be a complement to a strong academic core offer. We are therefore proposing a cap of two technical awards across all of slots 5 – 8.

## Slots 7 and 8 – choice

These two slots will take the two highest point scores in any two other subjects, including English language or literature (where not already counted in the English slot), other GCSE qualifications (including those eligible for slots 3, 4, 5 and 6), or any qualifications from the Department for Education (DfE) approved list. For more information, refer to the list of qualifications included in the key stage 4 performance measures.<sup>4</sup> A cap of two technical awards applies across all slots.

If a pupil has not taken the necessary qualification to fill each slot, then they will receive a point score of zero where a slot is empty. Discounting rules will remain the same so that where a pupil has taken two or more qualifications with a significant overlap in content, performance measures only give credit once for teaching a single course of study. For more information, refer to the key stage 4 discounting and early entry guidance.<sup>5</sup>

The proposals are based on qualifications currently approved to count in KS4 performance measures. We want the proposed model to be responsive to future qualification changes.

## Minor methodological adjustment

We publish detailed guidance on the methodology each year explaining how key stage 4 performance measures have been calculated and will continue to do so.<sup>6</sup> As part of this consultation, we have taken the opportunity to review the Progress 8 methodology, and for completeness we are outlining a minor adjustment that will help to improve the way we report it.

---

<sup>4</sup> [Key stage 4 qualifications, discount codes and point scores - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Key stage 4 discounting and early entry guidance \(2025\) - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Secondary accountability measures \(including Progress 8 and Attainment 8\) - GOV.UK](#)

## Confidence intervals

There is uncertainty in the way we calculate progress scores for schools and colleges. To reflect this uncertainty, we currently use confidence intervals as a statistical technique. We assign bandings based on these confidence intervals to communicate how progress in a school or college compares to the national average. The bandings are: “well below average”, “below average”, “average”, “above average” and “well above average”.

We have reviewed this approach for several reasons:

- This methodology is complex and we know it is poorly understood. However, to accurately reflect the full source of uncertainty inherent in progress measures would require making the methodology more complex.
- It can lead to labelling a large proportion of schools as “average” and therefore limits users’ ability to differentiate between performance. Currently, if a confidence interval includes zero (the national average for progress), then a school or college is labelled “average”.
- As a result, two thirds of schools at key stage 2 (KS2) and 43% at 16 to 18 are “average” (although one third for key stage 4).
- Bandings can be impacted by school size. The smaller a school, the larger the confidence interval, meaning smaller schools need to achieve higher progress scores to be labelled “above average”. Therefore, a school can achieve a higher progress score than another but be assigned a lower banding.

So instead, we are proposing to use a simpler method for calculating bandings, by ranking schools in order of progress score and assigning bandings based on percentiles. For example, if using quintiles, this would mean assigning the top banding to the 20% of schools with the highest progress scores in a year. This simpler approach will also ensure we have a more useful spread of bandings to differentiate between performance.

It is still important to reflect the uncertainty in progress scores and so instead of confidence intervals we are proposing to:

- Present three years of progress scores and bandings.
- Display the cohort size (including by characteristics) next to the progress score with a short pop-out box explaining the uncertainty due to cohort size.
- Link to a technical document outlining the uncertainty inherent in all performance measures.

We welcome feedback on this proposal. We think that presenting uncertainty as outlined above will add more value to the progress measures. We are planning to implement this across all key stages, with the first being the return of progress measures at key stage 2 in December 2026.

**Question 11: How far do you agree that these changes to the Progress 8 model strike a better balance between breadth and flexibility compared with the current P8? Please explain your views.** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

**Question 12: What are your views on the inclusion of a fourth category (science) for breadth slots 5 and 6?** [Support inclusion of a fourth category / Do not support inclusion of a fourth category / Unsure]. Please explain your views [Free text– limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 13: Do you agree that Progress 8 should allow technical awards in the breadth and choice slots, with a maximum of two across all slots?** [Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree]. Please explain your views [Free text– limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 14: Do you have any comments on the minor methodological adjustment?** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

**Question 15: Do you have any other comments on the proposed changes?** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

Note that questions start with number 11 in this document as the first 10 questions cover personal respondent information (see '[List of consultation questions](#)' section at end of document).

## Chapter 2: Wider academic performance measures

### Purpose and rationale

Our ambition is that all pupils, whatever their starting point, needs or ability, should benefit from a broad, ambitious and well-rounded education, and they should make good progress and attain well. Progress 8 is central to this ambition: it remains the headline measure through which the progress of all pupils is captured. We know, however, that the current system has not always provided the right incentives to ensure that children with low starting points, including those with SEND, are enabled and supported to achieve all they can. We need to ensure the accountability system promotes high standards and good progress for those currently with the lowest levels of attainment and progress.

Progress and attainment measures set an expectation that most pupils should enter at least 8 GCSEs or equivalent qualifications. For most pupils this is the right approach, but at present around 15% of pupils in the system do not fill all 8 slots within A8/P8, and this rises to 33% for low prior attaining pupils. 49% of low prior attaining SEN pupils in the system do not fill 8 slots (66% of those with an EHCP, 44% of those receiving SEN support). Those pupils with fewer than 8 qualifications score a zero for the slots they do not fill, making them much more likely to have a negative P8 score. It is right that we are stretching and ambitious for every pupil, but this can result in not enough attention being given to whether the minority of children entered for fewer than 8 qualifications are making the progress that they could.

To address this issue – while maintaining Progress 8's role as the headline measure for all pupils – we are exploring ways to better recognise the progress of this cohort. We have developed a potential new “best-fit” progress methodology specifically for pupils with low prior attainment (defined as those who do not meet the expected standard in English reading and maths at the end of KS2). Importantly, these pupils will continue to be included within Progress 8, incentivising schools to be ambitious for their attainment across a broad curriculum. This new supplementary measure will provide additional insight where Progress 8 alone may not fully reflect a pupil's achievements.

We are interested in views on the methodology but also whether such a measure is best used publicly, to hold schools more explicitly to account for the progress these pupils are making, or whether it is best used as data we would share with schools to inform their decision making and support school improvement. If it were used publicly, we would provide the data just to schools in the first year it is available (“shadow data”), allowing them to familiarise themselves with and benchmark their performance, before publishing in full the following year.

At the same time, we are making some small changes to wider KS4 academic measures and to the presentation of the performance of disadvantaged pupils. These measures help explain headline results, provide deeper insight into school performance, and shine a spotlight on the performance of different groups of pupils. We are introducing a new measure for high attainment (grade 7+) in English and maths to recognise stretch and excellence — showing how schools support their highest-attaining pupils while maintaining ambition for all. We are also refreshing disadvantage breakdowns and removing lower-impact measures to keep the system focused and clear. This will make it easier to understand gaps between pupil groups, strengthen transparency, and ensure accountability reflects our commitment to fairness and a relentless focus on driving high standards for all.

## **Best-fit progress measure for pupils with low prior attainment**

Every child deserves the same high standards and expectations. We know that some pupils with low prior attainment, particularly those with SEND or disadvantaged pupils, take fewer than 8 qualifications. We are considering whether we could spotlight the performance of the low prior attainers (LPA) cohort via a bespoke “best-fit” progress measure.

This would be designed to encourage schools to enter pupils for up to 8 qualifications as appropriate without penalty for attempting an ambitious curriculum. It would aim to recognise achievement across a tailored curriculum, including, where appropriate, fewer subjects. It would support schools to make decisions in the best interest of each pupil.

**The measure would apply only to pupils in the KS4 low prior attainment cohort.**

All pupils would still contribute to Progress 8 and Attainment 8 on the current basis. This means there would still be an incentive in Progress 8 and Attainment 8 to enter any pupil who can succeed in eight qualifications for them – but this additional measure would make progress for pupils with the lowest starting points more visible and recognise their achievements, including for those who are unlikely to succeed in eight qualifications.

## **How would the measure work**

We calculate this measure by using pupils’ outcomes in English reading and maths at the end of KS2 to allocate pupils to prior attainment groups (as currently). Then we would calculate a new, additional measure for pupils in low prior attainment groups. We would then use the established method of calculating progress scores for each pupil starting with a score for maths, at least one English GCSE, and their best subject (‘P3’) and then calculate an additional progress score for every additional subject they have

done (so a student who had done 7 subjects would have a P3, P4, P5, P6 and P7 score, for example).

We would then take the pupil's best progress score from each of these (in this case, looking at P3, P4, P5, P6 and P7 and selecting the highest of them) to use when calculating the new measure for their school. This means that one pupil may contribute a P4 score, while another may contribute a P7. Using pupils' best progress scores will encourage schools to enter them for as many qualifications as they feel appropriate for each pupil, without a penalty for empty slots, but also without an artificial cap or limit on what a pupil can attempt.

To improve the accuracy, fairness and usefulness of the bespoke progress measure for lower prior attainers, we could make an adjustment to the baseline used for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL), taking the higher of their average score in reading and maths at the end of KS2, or just maths. For some EAL pupils, particularly those in the LPA groups, their performance at the end of KS2 is depressed due to lack of English.

The adjustment would ensure that EAL pupils are assigned to prior attainment groups that are more reflective of their academic starting points. It would mean approximately 31% of EAL LPA pupils would move out of the low prior attainment cohort and would lead to fairer comparisons and progress calculations for pupils remaining in the LPA cohort (including those with EAL).

### **Worked example**

Pupil A achieves the following grades: English language – grade 3 (3 points), maths – grade 4 (4 points), sport technical award – Level 2 Merit (5.5 points), combined science – grade 3 / grade 3 (3 / 3 points), history – grade 1 (1 point), design and technology – grade 1 (1 point).

They have an Attainment 8 score of 24.5 and a Progress 8 score of -0.05.

This pupil's best progress score comes in the 5-subject group. Their P5 score would be +4.64, which would contribute to the school's average for this measure.

This pupil has only filled 7 slots, so does less well in Progress 8 by having an empty slot. They have the best difference from the PAG average when using 5 slots and are not penalised from having attempted history or design and technology but not doing as well in them. They would have needed at least a grade 3 instead of a grade 1 in either of these for the 6-subject score to be their best.

**Table 1: Worked example of best-fit progress measure**

Number of subjects (N)	Attainment score for each number of subjects (Attainment N score)	Average Attainment N score for PAG	Attainment N minus PAG average
3	English language, maths, sport technical award = 12.5	8.61	3.89
4	As above plus combined science (1) = 15.5	11.42	4.08
5	As above plus combined science (2) = 18.5	13.86	<b>4.64</b>
6	As above plus history = 19.5	15.99	3.51
7	As above plus design and technology = 20.5	17.83	2.67
8	As above = 20.5	19.31	1.19

Further detail on the methodology for this measure is provided in the accompanying [technical guide](#).

## Additional measures

To ensure the information about school performance provided by the department remains relevant and impactful, we are making some small adjustments to the suite of additional academic measures that the department publishes to align with priorities on high and rising standards, inclusion, and curriculum breadth. Taken together they will help schools be held to account in a way that reflects ambition and fairness, while providing parents with meaningful information.

A detailed breakdown of all the proposed academic performance measures is provided in [Annex A](#).

Building on sector feedback and our commitment to transparency, we will introduce:

### New attainment measure

Grade 7+ in English and maths GCSEs to recognise the achievement of higher-attaining children in a school, reinforcing the incentives for schools to provide a rich and stretching education for all children.

### Additional breakdowns for key pupil groups

- % of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 4+/5+/7+ in English and maths (combined) compared to disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in LA/England.

- Attainment 8 compared to disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in LA/England.

The number of academic performance measures will reduce overall. We will retain many of the existing measures, including selected curriculum entry information that help parents understand the nature of subjects on offer, such as science entry rates and % entries into one or two foreign languages, and we will maintain lists of subjects entered.

**Question 16: What are your views on introducing a 'best-fit' progress measure for pupils with low prior attainment?** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

**Question 17: What (if any) impact do you think an additional best-fit progress measure (alongside Progress 8) would have on the qualifications for which schools enter low prior attainers?** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

**Question 18: The government's ambition is that the vast majority of pupils will take at least 8 qualifications at KS4, but what considerations would be important in deciding which pupils would be likely to study fewer than 8 qualifications?** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

**Question 19: Should this measure be visible to schools only, or also visible to parents and the wider public?** [Schools only / School and parents / Unsure]. Please provide further comments [Free text– limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 20: Do you think there is merit in an adaptation to this proposal that includes science as a required subject for pupils entered for 5 or more GCSEs/other approved qualifications?** [Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree]. Please provide further comments [Free text– limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 21: Do you have any other comments on the proposed changes in this chapter?** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

## Chapter 3: Extending Targeted RISE to low-attaining schools

### Purpose and rationale

This chapter proposes that we extend eligibility for Targeted RISE support to schools that have the very lowest levels of pupil achievement. In line with the government's commitment to high and rising standards, it is crucial these schools receive timely access to support that can help them improve outcomes.

In the recent school accountability reform consultation, we said that schools with the very lowest levels of performance would benefit from rapid access to the kind of intensive support provided through the Targeted RISE service and committed to consult further on how else RISE teams could engage with schools that had very low achievement.

The Targeted RISE service provides schools with bespoke, targeted support for up to two years. Where appropriate, RISE teams will arrange via a school's responsible body for a high-quality organisation to work with the school to develop a fully funded improvement plan. We have already seen positive feedback across the country from schools receiving support through RISE. We want to ensure that schools with very low achievement can also benefit from this new approach to school improvement.

In the small number of schools with the very lowest levels of performance, children are not achieving the outcomes they should. To enable rapid support to improve outcomes in these schools, we propose that they become eligible for Targeted RISE. This will not apply to schools already eligible on the basis of their Ofsted grade or Report Card or to those that are already subject to structural intervention. As set out below, we will set a low data threshold that captures only a small number of schools where action is clearly needed. Because of our sharp focus on those with the weakest performance, we can be confident that the support is necessary and proportionate.

This will not apply if the school has moved to a new responsible body since its last inspection and it has not been in the new structure for 3 years, in order to allow time for the new body to improve pupil performance.

As is already the case with stuck schools (schools that were graded 'requires improvement' under the previous Ofsted inspection framework – or equivalent – at their most recent Ofsted inspection and also graded below 'good' at their previous inspection), Targeted RISE support will be mandatory for schools which need to rapidly improve levels of pupil achievement. Working with the school's responsible body, RISE teams will regularly review implementation, progress and engagement, and the

department in its role as regulator may use its intervention powers to ensure engagement with RISE teams and the interventions they have arranged.<sup>7</sup>

It is, however, an important principle of the system that Ofsted forms the primary basis for assessing school performance, by virtue of inspection considering the entirety of a school's performance and the experience it provides children. We do not, therefore, propose to have any automatic escalation to structural intervention for schools with low pupil achievement.

We propose to expand eligibility for Targeted RISE from January 2027, with the initial cohort selected on the basis of school performance data from summer 2026.

**Question 22: Do you agree that from January 2027 Targeted RISE should be deployed to low achieving schools so that they can get the support they need to improve?** [Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree].

Please provide any additional comments – if you disagree, please explain why briefly [Free text – limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 23: Do you agree that we should mandate engagement with RISE but that a failure to improve will not automatically lead to structural intervention?** [Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree].

Please provide any additional comments – if you disagree, please explain why briefly [Free text – limit of 3000 characters].

At key stage 2, we propose to use the percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths to identify eligible schools. We plan to operate a data switch where schools become eligible for support if the percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard falls below a specified threshold. Our proposed starting point for the threshold is that schools should be eligible if fewer than a quarter of children are meeting the expected standard. We propose, however, that schools that have made sufficiently strong progress across all core subjects will not be eligible.

At key stage 4, we recognise that it is important to sufficiently contextualise pupil achievement in order to fairly judge which schools can benefit from support. Ultimately, therefore, we propose using the improved P8 measure set out in chapter 1 (which we propose will come into effect for pupils taking exams in 2028 / 2029) in the eligibility criteria. However, in the absence of progress data – due to the lack of prior attainment from the pandemic period – we propose to initially use Attainment 8 (A8) data. We think

---

<sup>7</sup> In relation to maintained schools these are powers set out in sections 66A-69 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. In relation to academies, the Secretary of State may issue a termination warning notice specifying the actions which a trust must take.

this is justifiable because we propose to focus only on schools with the very lowest levels of achievement. We propose to set a data switch which captures schools where on average pupils are achieving significantly below a Grade 4 pass. This would mean making schools with an average A8 score below 35 eligible. From January 2028, we expect to begin using progress data to determine eligibility.

While exact thresholds are under refinement, because we are focusing only on the lowest levels of achievement, we expect that the total number of schools (primary and secondary) that will become eligible because of these proposals will be in the low hundreds.

**Question 24: Do you agree that primary schools should be selected based on the percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths but schools that have made sufficient progress in each subject will not be included?** [Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree].

Please provide any additional comments – if you disagree, please explain why briefly [Free text – limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 25: Do you agree that a good starting point for primary school eligibility is where fewer than a quarter of a school's pupils have met the expected standard?** [Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree]. Please provide any additional comments – if you disagree, please explain why briefly [Free text – limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 26: Do you agree that secondary schools should, from January 2027, become eligible for Targeted RISE based on their Attainment 8 data before reverting to a progress measure from January 2028?** [Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree]. Please provide any additional comments – if you disagree, please explain why briefly [Free text – limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 27: Do you agree that for secondary school eligibility a good starting point is an Attainment 8 score of below 35.0?** [Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree]. Please provide any additional comments – if you disagree, please explain why briefly [Free text – limit of 3000 characters].

In the school accountability reform consultation, respondents highlighted that schools can have annual fluctuations in data, especially in very small schools, and that schools with a high proportion of pupils with additional needs may be more likely to be captured. Our overall approach to mitigating this risk is to set the thresholds for eligibility at a level that means only schools with the very lowest attainment are captured. The Targeted RISE programme has flexibility such that if a RISE Advisor assesses that the school is already performing well – for example, taking into account the proportion of children with additional needs – or is already on an improvement trajectory, we will not mandate

support. We do not, however, want any data switch to capture small schools where this would be inappropriate and we therefore propose to exempt small primary schools with fewer than 11 children in a year 6 cohort if levels of pupil achievement were significantly higher in previous years.

**Question 28: Do you agree that primary schools with cohorts of fewer than 11 children should not become eligible for Targeted RISE on the basis of their pupil achievement if their performance was much higher in previous years?**

[Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree]. Please provide any additional comments – if you disagree, please explain why briefly [Free text – limit of 3000 characters].

While we expect that most types of primary and secondary schools will be eligible if their achievement outcomes fall below the levels set out above, there may be some types of schools where it is not appropriate to treat them in the same way. For instance, we would expect that most special schools would be exempt although there may be some special secondary schools where it is more appropriate for them to be included if most or all of their pupils are expected to take GCSEs. Similarly, it may also be unfair to include some types of schools that follow a narrower curriculum, for example studio schools who would otherwise make up a disproportionate number of the schools receiving support.

**Question 29: Do you think there are any types of school that should not be eligible for Targeted RISE support on the basis of their levels of pupil achievement?** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

# Impact

## Equalities

Under the Equality Act 2010, public organisations like ours have a legal duty to consider how our work affects people with different backgrounds and characteristics. This duty has three main aims:

- To prevent unfair treatment – including discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.
- To promote fairness – by helping ensure that people with certain characteristics have equal access to opportunities.
- To encourage mutual respect – by fostering good relationships between people from different groups.

These responsibilities apply to individuals with what the law calls “protected characteristics.” These include:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership (for the first aim only)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We are required to take these aims into account in all aspects of our work, ensuring that our policies and decisions support fairness and inclusion. We would welcome your responses on the following questions.

**Question 30: Do you believe the proposed changes (any or all) will have a specific impact on particular groups of learners or staff because of their protected characteristics? Please explain the impact, specifying which proposal your response relates to. [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]**

**Question 31: Are there any risks that the proposed changes could unfairly impact on certain types of schools or on certain groups of pupils (e.g. those from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with SEND)? Please explain the impact, specifying which proposal your response relates to. [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]**

**Question 32: Do you have any suggestions for how any potential negative impacts on particular groups of learners or staff could be mitigated, or positive effects enhanced? [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]**

## **Workload and wellbeing**

**We are committed to considering and embedding staff workload and wellbeing in everything that we do.** This means we aim to ensure that any changes to school accountability measures – such as those proposed in this consultation – do not place unnecessary pressure on teachers, school leaders, or support staff. We recognise that excessive workload and stress can negatively affect staff morale, retention, and the overall quality of education. As such, we are seeking views on how these proposals may impact staff workload and wellbeing, and how any potential burdens could be reduced or managed effectively. With that in mind, we would like to know:

**Question 33: What impact do you think the proposed changes will have on staff workload or wellbeing? Please explain the impact, specifying which proposal your response relates to. [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]**

**Question 34: Are there particular types of schools or particular staff roles (e.g. subject leads, SEN coordinators) that may be disproportionately impacted by these changes? Please explain the impact, specifying which proposal your response relates to. [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]**

**Question 35: Do you have any suggestions for how we can minimise any negative impacts on wellbeing? [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]**

# List of consultation questions

## About You

**Question 1: What is your name?**

**Question 2: What is your email address?**

Please note: It is helpful to have your email address if we want to contact you about your answers to the questions in this consultation. You do not have to give your email address, and your views will be considered whether or not you give your email address.

**Question 3: Are you happy to be contacted directly about your response?**

[Options: Yes / No]

Please note: The Department may wish to contact you directly about your responses to help our understanding of the issues. If we do, we will use the email address you have given above.

**Question 4: Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?**

[Options: Individual / Organisation]

If you are responding as an individual, we will consider the views within your response to this consultation to be your personal views. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, we will consider the views within your response to this consultation to be those of your organisation and not necessarily your personal views.

**Question 5: If you are responding as an individual, how would you describe yourself?**

[Options:

- Student, pupil or learner
- Parent or carer
- Headteacher or senior leader
- Teacher
- Tutor or lecturer
- Researcher
- Academic or education expert
- Governor
- Other (please specify below).

If more than one applies, please select the one that you think is most important to understanding your consultation response. If 'other' was selected, please specify.]

**Question 6: If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, which of the following best describes who/which part of the sector your organisation represents?**

[Options:

- State-funded primary school
- State-funded secondary school or sixth form
- State-funded selective secondary school
- State-funded special school or alternative provision
- Other state-funded school – e.g. middle school or boarding school
- Independent school
- Academy trust
- 16-19 academies
- Sixth Form Colleges
- General Further Education Colleges (including Designated Institutions)
- Special Post-16 Institutions (SPIs)
- Local Authority Providers
- Independent Training Providers (ITPs)
- A representative organisation or trade association
- Local authority
- Research organisation
- Faith body
- Government organisation or agency
- Other (please specify).

If more than one applies, please select the one that you think is most important to understanding your consultation response. If 'other' was selected, please specify.]

**Question 7: What is the name of the organisation you are responding as part of?**

[Free text]

**Question 8: What is your role within the organisation?** [Free text]

**Question 9: Would you like us to keep your name and/or organisation confidential?**

a. **Name:** [Options: Yes / No / N/A]

b. **Organisation:** [Options: Yes / No / N/A]

**Question 10: Would you like us to keep your responses confidential? If yes, please explain why you consider it to be confidential below.** [Options: Yes / No]; Reason for confidentiality [Free text]

## **Confidentiality**

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal data, may be subject to publication or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. If you want all, or any part, of a response to be treated as confidential please explain why you consider it to be confidential. If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department for Education.

## **Privacy Notice**

The personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) that you provide in response to this consultation is processed by the Department for Education as a data controller in accordance with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Your personal information will only be used for the purposes of this consultation. The Department for Education relies upon the lawful basis of article 6 (1) (e) of the UK GDPR which process this personal data as part of its public task, which allows us to process personal data when this is necessary for conducting consultations as part of our function. Your information will not be shared with third parties unless the law allows or requires it. Your responses, including any personal data, may be shared with a third-party provider or other government department or organisation acting on behalf of the Department for Education under contract or an equivalent agreement for the purpose of analysis or summarising responses for us. Processing may use technology such as artificial intelligence to exclusively assist with analysis, summarisation or categorisation of responses, with appropriate safeguards set in place to ensure fairness, accuracy and security. Technology is not used for automatic decision-making that might affect individuals. An anonymised version or summary of responses may be published.

The personal information will be retained for a period of 10 years following the closure of the consultation period, after which it will be securely destroyed. You can read more about what the Department for Education does when we ask for and hold your personal information in our personal information charter, which can be found here: [Personal information charter - Department for Education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672222/Personal-information-charter-Department-for-Education-2022.pdf)

## **Chapter 1**

**Question 11: How far do you agree that these changes to the Progress 8 model strike a better balance between breadth and flexibility compared with the current P8? Please explain your views.** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

**Question 12: What are your views on the inclusion of a fourth category (science) for breadth slots 5 and 6?**

[Options: Support inclusion of a fourth category / Do not support inclusion of a fourth category / Unsure]. Please explain your views [Free text– limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 13: Do you agree that Progress 8 should allow technical awards in the breadth and choice slots, with a maximum of two across all slots?**

[Options: Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree]. Please explain your views [Free text– limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 14: Do you have any comments on the minor methodological adjustment?** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

**Question 15: Do you have any other comments on the proposed changes?** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

## Chapter 2

**Question 16: What are your views on introducing a ‘best-fit’ progress measure for pupils with low prior attainment?** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

**Question 17: What (if any) impact do you think an additional best-fit progress measure (alongside Progress 8) would have on the qualifications for which schools enter low prior attainers?** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

**Question 18: The government's ambition is that the vast majority of pupils will take at least 8 qualifications at KS4, but what considerations would be important in deciding which pupils would be likely to study fewer than 8 qualifications?** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

**Question 19: Should this measure be visible to schools only, or also visible to parents and the wider public?**

[Options: Schools only / Schools and parents / Unsure]. Please provide further comments [Free text – limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 20: Do you think there is merit in an adaptation to this proposal that includes science as a required subject for pupils entered for 5 or more GCSEs/other approved qualifications?**

[Options: Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree]. Please provide further comments [Free text – limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 21: Do you have any other comments on the proposed changes in this chapter?** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

## Chapter 3

**Question 22: Do you agree that from January 2027 Targeted RISE should be deployed to low achieving schools so that they can get the support they need to improve?**

[Options: Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree]. Please provide any additional comments – if you disagree, please explain why briefly [Free text – limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 23: Do you agree that we should mandate engagement with RISE but that a failure to improve will not automatically lead to structural intervention?**

[Options: Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree]. Please provide any additional comments – if you disagree, please explain why briefly [Free text – limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 24: Do you agree that primary schools should be selected based on the percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths but schools that have made sufficient progress in each subject will not be included?**

[Options: Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree]. Please provide any additional comments – if you disagree, please explain why briefly [Free text – limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 25: Do you agree that a good starting point for primary school eligibility is where fewer than a quarter of a school's pupils have met the expected standard?**

[Options: Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree]. Please provide any additional comments – if you disagree, please explain why briefly [Free text – limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 26: Do you agree that secondary schools should, from January 2027, become eligible for Targeted RISE based on their Attainment 8 data before reverting to a progress measure from January 2028?**

[Options: Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree]. Please provide any additional comments – if you disagree, please explain why briefly [Free text – limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 27: Do you agree that for secondary school eligibility a good starting point is an Attainment 8 score of below 35.0?**

[Options: Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree]. Please provide any additional comments – if you disagree, please explain why briefly [Free text – limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 28: Do you agree that primary schools with cohorts of fewer than 11 children should not become eligible for Targeted RISE on the basis of their pupil achievement if their performance was much higher in previous years?**

[Options: Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree]. Please provide any additional comments – if you disagree, please explain why briefly [Free text – limit of 3000 characters].

**Question 29: Do you think there are any types of school that should not be eligible for Targeted RISE support on the basis of their levels of pupil achievement?** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

## Impact

**Question 30: Do you believe the proposed changes (any or all) will have a specific impact on particular groups of learners or staff because of their protected characteristics? Please explain the impact, specifying which proposal your response relates to.** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

**Question 31: Are there any risks that the proposed changes could unfairly impact on certain types of schools or on certain groups of pupils (e.g. those from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with SEND)? Please explain the impact, specifying which proposal your response relates to.** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

**Question 32: Do you have any suggestions for how any potential negative impacts on particular groups of learners or staff could be mitigated, or positive effects enhanced?** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

**Question 33: What impact do you think the proposed changes will have on staff workload or wellbeing? Please explain the impact, specifying which proposal your response relates to.** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

**Question 34: Are there particular types of schools or particular staff roles (e.g. subject leads, SEN coordinators) that may be disproportionately impacted by these changes? Please explain the impact, specifying which proposal your response relates to.** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

**Question 35: Do you have any suggestions for how we can minimise any negative impacts on wellbeing?** [Free text – limit of 3000 characters]

# Annex A: Key stage 4 academic performance measures

## Headline Measures

- **Progress 8**
- **Attainment 8**
- **% of pupils achieving Grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSEs**

## Additional Measures

Below is a breakdown of the additional measures. These help explain headline results and give deeper insight, especially into the performance of different groups of pupils.

- **Best-fit progress measure** for pupils with low prior attainment (**NEW**). We are seeking views on how this measure might work and whether it is best used publicly.

The measures below are not subject to formal consultation.

- **Additional entry and achievement measures:**
  - % of pupils achieving Grade 7 or above in English and maths GCSEs (**NEW**)
  - % of pupils achieving Grade 4 or above in English and maths GCSEs
  - % of pupils entering for one or two foreign languages
  - % of pupils entering for biology, chemistry and physics
  - % of pupils achieving at least 1 qualification

The school's performance measures will be presented alongside the Local Authority (LA) and England average. We will also show the number of pupils at the end of KS4.

- **Results by pupil characteristics:**
  - Pupil characteristic breakdowns will be shown for the school's Attainment 8 and Progress 8 score, % achieving grade 4+/5+/7+ in English and maths GCSEs.
  - Pupil characteristics include disadvantaged pupils, prior attainment, English as an additional language (EAL), girls and boys, and non-mobile pupils.
  - For disadvantaged pupils, the Attainment 8 and Progress 8 score and % achieving grade 4+/5+/7+ in English and maths GCSEs will be compared to disadvantaged (**NEW**) and non-disadvantaged pupils in LA/England.

The school's performance measures will be presented alongside the LA and England average.

- **Results over Time:**

- The school's results as set out above will be presented from the past three years.

- **Progress 8 and Attainment 8 score by subject areas:**

- Subject areas will cover English, maths, science, breadth and choice slots.
- School scores will be presented alongside the LA and England average.

## Annex B - Qualifications included in improved Progress 8 and Attainment 8<sup>8</sup>

**Table 2: Qualifications included in improved Progress 8 and Attainment 8**

	Slot name	Qualifications included
<b>Slot 1</b>	English	GCSE and equivalent AS levels: English language, English literature. <sup>9</sup>
<b>Slot 2</b>	Maths	GCSE and equivalent AS level maths. <sup>10</sup>
<b>Slot 3 and slot 4</b>	Science	GCSE: combined science. GCSE and equivalent AS levels: biology, chemistry, physics, computer science.
<b>Slot 5 and slot 6</b>	Breadth	<p>Category A (humanities): GCSE and equivalent AS levels: history, geography, religious studies, ancient history.</p> <p>Category B (creative): GCSE and equivalent AS levels: art and design (all variants), music, dance, drama, drama and theatre, design and technology.<sup>11</sup></p> <p>[If we allow technical awards within breadth slots, the following qualifications would be allowed:</p> <p>Category B (creative): Technical awards in performing arts (all variants), music practice, creative design and production, graphic design, art and design practice.]</p> <p>Category C (languages): GCSE and equivalent AS levels: French, Spanish, German, Italian, Chinese (spoken Mandarin and spoken Cantonese), Panjabi, Japanese, Urdu, Bengali, Arabic, Modern Hebrew, Modern Greek,</p>

<sup>8</sup> Many (although not all) GCSEs have an equivalent AS level which could be taken. AS levels can count in the appropriate slot of Progress 8 for their subject (e.g. maths AS levels count in the maths slot, or a French AS level in the breadth slot). If a GCSE in the same subject has been taken the AS level will count in Progress 8 and the GCSE will not count. Please see the [full list of qualifications included in key stage 4 performance measures for more information](#).

<sup>9</sup> AS level English language and literature is also included, this does not have an equivalent GCSE.

<sup>10</sup> AS level further maths is also included, this does not have an equivalent GCSE.

<sup>11</sup> If we have category D for science, it is proposed that design and technology will move from category B to category D.

	Slot name	Qualifications included
		<p>Russian, Gujarati, Persian, Turkish, Biblical Hebrew, Polish, Portuguese, Latin, Classical Greek.</p> <p>[Category D (science) GCSE combined science. GCSE and equivalent AS levels: biology, chemistry, physics, computer science.]<sup>12</sup></p>
<b>Slot 7 and slot 8</b>	Choice	<p>GCSE and equivalent AS levels: physical education, sociology, economics, business, psychology, geology, engineering, film studies, statistics, media studies, electronics, classical civilisation.</p> <p>AS level: law, music technology, politics.<sup>13</sup></p> <p>GCSE: citizenship studies, food preparation and nutrition, astronomy.<sup>14</sup></p> <p>Level 3 free standing maths qualifications (FSMQ): additional mathematics.</p> <p>Vocational<sup>15</sup>: music technology, finance, enterprise, enterprise and marketing, business and enterprise, retail business, digital information technology, information technology (IT), information communication technology (ICT), study of hair and beauty, hair and beauty studies, interactive media, creative media production, creative iMedia, health and fitness, sport, sports studies (all variants), sports science, sport and coaching principles, hospitality and catering, food and cookery, travel and tourism, health and social care (all variants), child development and care in the early years, child development (all variants), animal care, land based studies, constructing and maintaining the built environment, construction and the built environment (all</p>

<sup>12</sup> We will seek views on the need for a fourth category of science subjects, including computer science.

<sup>13</sup> Law, music technology and politics are available as AS levels and do not have an equivalent GCSE.

<sup>14</sup> Citizenship, food preparation and nutrition, and astronomy are available as GCSEs and do not have an equivalent AS level.

<sup>15</sup> There are 46 technical awards currently approved to count towards key stage 4 performance measures across these subject areas. There are variations of performing arts technical awards with the same qualification number which have been counted as one qualification in the total.

	Slot name	Qualifications included
		<p>variants), engineering manufacture, engineering, engineering design, engineering programmable systems.</p> <p>Any graded music: music performance, practical music, theory of music, popular music theory, rock and pop.</p> <p>GCSE and equivalent AS levels: English language, English literature</p> <p><b>All subjects approved to count in slots 3, 4, 5 and 6 also count in slots 7 and 8.</b></p> <p>[If we allow technical awards within breadth slots, a maximum of two technical awards would be allowed across the two breadth and two choice slots. If one technical award is within a breadth slot, only one of the choice slots can contain a technical award.]</p>



Department  
for Education

© Crown copyright 2026

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3).

Where we have identified any third-party copyright information, you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

About this publication:

enquiries [www.gov.uk/contact-dfe](https://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe)

download [www.gov.uk/government/publications](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications)

Follow us on X: [@educationgovuk](https://twitter.com/educationgovuk)

Connect with us on Facebook: [facebook.com/educationgovuk](https://facebook.com/educationgovuk)