

Why has our headline pass measure for English and Maths GCSE dropped?

Earlier this month, the Department for Education (DfE) published provisional data for this summer's (2017's) GCSE results.

Since last year, the main performance measure that schools are held to account on is Progress 8; showing the average progress of students in our school in eight subjects, including English and Maths, based on their primary starting-points (their Key Stage 2 SATs results), compared to similar students nationally. A Progress 8 score of '0' is average.

This has replaced the old measure of the percentage of students achieving a C+ in five subjects, including English and Maths.

This year, the English and Maths GCSEs were changed. Part of this change was a change to the grading system from A*-G, to 9-1. A new grade 4 is roughly the same as an old grade C.

As well as Progress 8, the DfE also publish the percentage of students who achieved a 'strong pass' in both English and Maths. This year, with the new GCSEs, the definition of a 'strong pass' changed from an old C+, to a new 5+ (not a 4+).

Far fewer students nationally achieve a 5+ in English and Maths, than achieve a 4+. Based on the provisional data, 63.3% of students nationally achieved a 4+ in both subjects, compared to only 39.1% achieving a 5+.

The % of students achieving a 4+ in our school was 53%, and the % of students achieving a 5+ was 33%, based on the provisional data.

As you can see, this does not reflect a decline in our results, but a national trend based on how schools are measured. This change, along with the reformed new GCSEs which have more challenging content and assessment, means it's difficult to compare performance between this year and last year.

These results remain provisional, and are likely to change for both our school and nationally. The validated results will be published in January.