

News

A different name but heads happy with progress being made by GCSE students

BY ZENA HAWLEY

P: 07879 488123
E: zhawley@derbytelegraph.co.uk
T: @ZenaHawleyDT



A NEW measure appearing in the latest performance tables for last year's GCSE exams published by the Department for Education has been welcomed by one of Derby's leading head teachers.

Progress 8 is the new preferred Government method for judging whether schools are falling or coasting and, consequently, will need a visit from Ofsted inspectors.

Brian Walker, head of West Park School in Spondon, which achieved a Progress 8 score of 0.6 – the highest in the county – said “the new accountability measures are a much fairer way of assessing the progress of children. Progress 8 relates to every child of secondary age nationally”.

Progress 8 has replaced the former measure of five or more A* to C grades, including English and maths. It is made up a pupil's attainment score – their achievement across eight GCSEs including maths, English, three English Baccalaureate subjects such as sciences or languages and three others from an approved list and then converted to points.

It also takes into account an estimated Attainment 8 score and a formula to work out the final grade, represented by a number. An A* is worth eight points down to a G being worth one point.



Brian Walker, head of West Park School, which achieved the highest progress score in the county.

Finally, the individual score of every pupil in the year group is added together and then divided by the total number of pupils to give the Progress 8 score for the school, which is centred around 0, with most schools within the range of -1 to +1. In fact only seven schools in the whole country were above +1.

A positive score means pupils on average do better at GCSE and a negative score means on average they do worse than pupils with similar prior attainment nationally.

A negative score does not mean pupils did not make any progress but rather they made less than others nationally.

In Derby, schools with positive Progress 8 scores, besides West Park, were Littlelover Community School, 0.17, and Chellaston Academy, 0.23.

Mr Walker said: “Our exceptional figure of +0.6 is right up there with the best schools in the country. What is really pleasing is the figure of +0.36 Progress 8 score for our disadvantaged children.

“What all of this means is that whatever their starting point, all children who attend West Park sig-



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DERBY: PROGRESS 8 MEASURE FOR EACH SCHOOL

1	West Park School, Spondon	0.60
2	Chellaston Academy	0.23
3	Littlelover Community School	0.17
4	Landau Forte College, Derby	-0.06
5	St Benedict Cath Academy, Darley Abbey	-0.07
6	Lees Brook Comm School, Chaddesden	-0.11
7	Woodlands School, Allestree	-0.13
8	Merrill Academy, Alvaston	-0.23
9	Murray Park Comm School, Mickleover	-0.31
10	Derby Moor Comm Sports Coll, Littleover	-0.36
11	Noel-Baker School, Alvaston	-0.43
12	Da Vinci Comm School, Breadsall Hilltop	-0.49
13	City of Derby Academy, Sinfen	-0.79
14	Bemrose School, Derby	-0.84

DERBY: % OF PUPILS ACHIEVING THE ENGLISH BACCALAUREATE

1	Littlelover Community School	52%
2	West Park School, Spondon	42%
3	Chellaston Academy	34%
4	Woodlands School, Allestree	22%
5	Derby Moor Comm Sports Coll, Littleover	21%
6	Landau Forte College, Derby	18%
7	Murray Park Comm School, Mickleover	15%
8	St Benedict Cath Academy, Darley Abbey	10%
9	Lees Brook Comm School, Chaddesden	8%
10	City of Derby Academy, Sinfen	7%
11	Merrill Academy, Alvaston	5%
12	Da Vinci Comm School, Breadsall Hilltop	4%
13	Noel-Baker School, Alvaston	4%
14	Bemrose School, Derby	3%

DERBYSHIRE: PROGRESS 8 MEASURE FOR EACH SCHOOL

1	Ecclesbourne School, Duffield	0.17
2	Anthony Gell School, Wirksworth	0.05
3	Lady Manners School, Bakewell	0.02
4	Highfields School, Matlock	-0.01
5	John Flamsteed Comm School, Denby	-0.05
6	Wilsthorpe Comm School, Long Eaton	-0.07
7	Friesland School, Sandiacre	-0.11
8	Belper School	-0.19
8	Queen Elizabeth's GS, Ashbourne	-0.19
10	Heanor Gate Science College	-0.22
11	Alfreton Grange Arts College	-0.26
12	St John Houghton Cath Acad, K Hallam	-0.29
13	Tupton Hall School	-0.38
14	Aldercar High School, Langley Mill	-0.41
15	Long Eaton School	-0.48
16	Granville Sports College, Woodville	-0.49
17	Swanwick Hall School	-0.52
18	Ripley Academy	-0.54
19	Ormiston Ilkerton Enterprise Academy	-0.55
19	Tibshelf Comm School	-0.55
21	John Port School, Etwall	-0.58
21	Kirk Hallam Comm Academy	-0.58
23	Frederick Gent School, South Normanton	-0.68
24	Pingle School, Swadlincote	-0.73
25	William Allitt School, Newhall	-0.78

DERBYSHIRE: % OF PUPILS ACHIEVING THE ENGLISH BACCALAUREATE

1	Focus School, Long Eaton Campus	83%
2	Ecclesbourne School, Duffield	38%
3	Queen Elizabeth's GS, Ashbourne	36%
4	Anthony Gell School, Wirksworth	33%
5	Highfields School, Matlock	31%
6	Lady Manners School, Bakewell	25%
6	Tibshelf Comm School	25%
8	Friesland School, Sandiacre	23%
9	Belper School	20%
10	St John Houghton Cath Acad, K Hallam	19%
11	Granville Sports College, Woodville	17%
11	Heanor Gate Science College	17%
11	John Port School, Etwall	17%
14	Long Eaton School	16%
15	Kirk Hallam Comm Academy	14%
16	Wilsthorpe Comm School, Long Eaton	13%
17	Aldercar High School, Langley Mill	11%
17	Frederick Gent School, South Normanton	11%
19	Ormiston Ilkerton Enterprise Academy	10%
19	Ripley Academy	10%
21	Pingle School, Swadlincote	7%
21	Swanwick Hall School	7%
21	Tupton Hall School	7%
21	William Allitt School, Newhall	7%
25	Alfreton Grange Arts College	6%
26	John Flamsteed Comm School, Denby	5%

nificantly outperform their peers right across the country.”

The only odd thing about these measures is the seemingly narrow range of +1 to -1, which will contain most schools in the country. This means that even the smallest difference in figures can represent a huge difference in reality.

Some good performances aside, secondary education in Derby has been under the spotlight for some time. Provisional GCSE figures for Derby last autumn showed the city was performing poorly against other authorities using the Government-favoured measure of A* to C grades in both English and maths, with 53.7% of achieving this. This has now been revised upwards to 54.2% and, at the same time, the national average, which was 58.7% provisionally, is now 59.3%.

Derby's secondary school results led the former Ofsted chief, Sir Mi-

chael Wilshaw, to comment that the city's secondary education standards were “pitifully low”.

In fact, the overall city average figure is dragged down by the GCSE performance of a handful of schools, including Noel-Baker School, City of Derby Academy and Merrill Academy – all of which were recently placed in special measures.

Kevin Gritton, head teacher at St Benedict Catholic Academy which had a Progress 8 score of -0.07, putting it fifth in the city, said: “Our exam results represented good progress from 2015 and, in terms of the new performance measure, Progress 8, we were pleased that this placed us as one of the highest achieving schools in Derby.”

“Along with the improvement in our Attainment 8 figure, this means that children attending our school are making better progress and achieving better results.”

Top performing schools with the Progress 8 measure in Derbyshire were Ecclesbourne School, in Duffield, with 0.17; Lady Manners, Bakewell, 0.02 and Anthony Gell, Wirksworth, 0.05.

James McNamara, head of Ecclesbourne School, said: “Our Progress 8 score means our pupils made significant progress and strongly outperformed expectations based on their starting points.”

“Attainment of good passes at GCSE matters a great deal to children and their life chances and so we are pleased that 90% of students achieved grades A*-C in English and maths. The results mean that our pupils have made excellent progress and now have the qualifications and skills to move on to the next stage of their education or career.”

At Wilsthorpe Community School in Long Eaton, where the Progress 8 score was -0.07, 78% of pupils

achieved A*-C grades in English and 74% in maths. Head teacher Jonathan Crofts said: “Everyone at Wilsthorpe is proud of our journey. We have made gains every year but we are now pushing at national thresholds to become an outstanding school.”

Using the measure of A* to C grades in both English and maths, Derbyshire schools exceeded the national average of 59.3%, with 62.4%.

Teaching unions have been watching the outcome of the education reforms that have been taking place. Chris Keates, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT), said: “Progress 8 provides just one perspective on the quality of work that schools undertake with their pupils and there are many other indicators that have to be taken into account to get a rounded and accurate picture.”

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