

Background

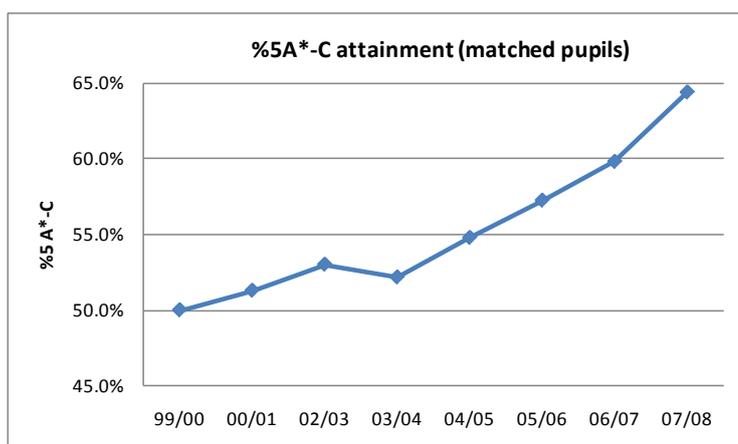
In July 2009 we released a new version of the FFT database (V12.16) along with an update to FFT Live. The updates included a number of significant changes, most notably:

- Changes to underlying estimate models
- All estimates now based on 2007/08 national progress (previously based on 2005/06)

The affect of these changes (particularly the change in national progress) has been a general increase in pupil, school and LA estimates at all Key Stages but particularly at Key Stage 4. The following paper provides a short summary of the key issues at KS4 (where the biggest changes occur) as well as other key stages. It will be followed by a full statistical briefing paper outlining the changes in progress patterns nationally.

Changes to national progress

Previous FFT estimates were based on the progress made by pupils nationally in 2005/06. Over the last 2 years overall KS4 attainment and KS2-4 progress have improved significantly, particularly for threshold indicators such as %5 A*-C (see graph below). Because of the improvement in national progress, %5A*-C estimates have increased by around 6%.



Why have estimates for some schools and LAs increased by more than 6%?

For threshold indicators, estimates generally increase more for 'borderline' pupils (those with mid-range estimates). Schools in more deprived areas will tend to have a greater proportion of these pupils which in turn will lead to a larger increase in %5A*-C estimates.

Are all estimate types affected (i.e. Types A, B and D)?

Nationally, the biggest improvements have been in schools with intakes from areas of high socio-economic deprivation. Consequently, schools with higher FSM and higher deprivation (measured through geodemographic factors) are likely to see the greatest increases in their Type B and D estimates.

What percentage of schools are affected at Key Stage 4?

The table below shows the level of increase in estimates and the percentage of schools affected:

KS2-4 (5 A-C) change in estimates from database v12.15 to v12.16**

Estimate Type	0-5% increase	5-10% increase	10-15% increase	15-20% increase
A	12% of schools	88%	0%	0%
B	33%	54%	10%	3%
D	36%	52%	9%	3%

* v12.15 based on autumn 2008 census; v12.16 based on spring 2009 census

What about other key stages?

The largest increases occur at KS4 for threshold indicators, particularly %5A*-C estimates (Type B and D). Smaller increases will also be seen at other key stages as outlined below:

Key Stage	Impact on estimates
KS 1-2	Small increases
KS 2-3	Small increases
KS 2-4	Larger increases (particularly %5 A*-C)
KS 3-4	Moderate increases

Further information

A detailed statistical briefing paper focussing on the issues summarised above will be produced shortly.