



21st October 2022

Dear Family

Today the government has published performance data from the summer 2022 exams for all secondary schools. 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 learners and schools this data should be treated with caution. I am 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 yesterday includes the following:

For secondary schools:

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

What's different this year?

The government has made a few changes to the website where they display school 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 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. Even within a local area or town, the impact of the pandemic was very different.

Headteacher: James Saunders MBA

Honywood School Westfield Drive Coggeshall Essex CO6 1PZ. Tel: 01376 561231 email: admin@honywoodschool.com

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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 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 learners sat exams.

Last summer saw the first return of exams since 2019, albeit with significant adaptations to recognise that learners' 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 learners taking exams in 2022.

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

What is the context of our results?

As we have communicated throughout the past three years, the pandemic context of our school has changed over time and has, at times, affected our community. Having said that, we are pleased that as a school we have continued to improve across all measures despite the disruption we have endured. Whilst it is not right to compare schools I am pleased that we are one of only a handful of local schools to improve progress compared to the 2019 data. I feel this is testament to our community working so well together over the pandemic to ensure that lost learning was kept to a minimum. The data set for our school also includes a handful of learners that, for a range of reasons, have been unable to attend school over the last two years. However, they are still Honywood learners so it is important to have their accomplishments recognised within our data set.

How will our results be used?

The publication of results does not directly impact learners at all. Learners already received their own GCSE results in August. These results will be used by the government and by Ofsted when we have our inspection, with the context in which they were achieved considered.

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 learners' 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. We are in line with the Essex national average for Progress and have improved consistently year on year over the last 5 years.

It is also worth noting that we have a very academically challenging and rigorous GCSE curriculum that is open to all learners. Other than for a small handful of learners we only offer GCSE courses

and allow all learners, regardless of their starting point, to access these qualifications. You may view the academic rigour of our school or any other school's by using the '*subjects studies at key stage 4*' tab on the performance tables website.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'James Saunders', written in a cursive style.

James Saunders
Headteacher