
Director General for Regulation

Stephen Criddle
Principle & CEO of South Devon College
(By e-mail)

09 March 2018

Dear Stephen

Thank you for your recent email regarding the Progress 8 accountability measure.

The Department for Education (DfE) publishes educational performance data for schools and colleges in England based on the performance of students at the end of key stage 4, regardless of the institution they attend.

DfE acknowledges the limitations of this measure for Further Education (FE) colleges within its statistical releases. Within its main statistical publication DfE does provide users with some contextual information on 14-16 provision and the limitations of the measure in these circumstances. It also includes a note on limitations for schools and colleges not covering the full Progress 8 period in the schools performance tables.

I do consider however that this information could be more prominent with, for example, footnotes used in statistical tables or notes added to the pages of the performance tables for institutions affected by the limitations of this measure. The pages of the school performance tables are standardised for each institution, with Progress 8 used as the headline measure. DfE also present a variety of other information for the institutions which it sets out in its Statement of Intent¹. DfE should review the presentation of the measures for FE colleges (and other institutions affected) and consider giving greater prominence to other measures such as pupil destinations.

We would also expect the views of users of the statistics to be heard. Since the introduction of Progress 8, DfE told us it keeps the accountability measures under review and engages with a wide range of stakeholders including FE representatives. We have recommended to DfE that, before the next Statement of Intent is finalised, it reviews the presentation of information for FE colleges - both in individual institution pages and in any presentation of ordered institution tables - seeking the views of a range of relevant stakeholders.

I am copying this letter to Neil McIvor, Head of Profession for Statistics at DfE.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-and-college-performance-tables-statements-of-intent>