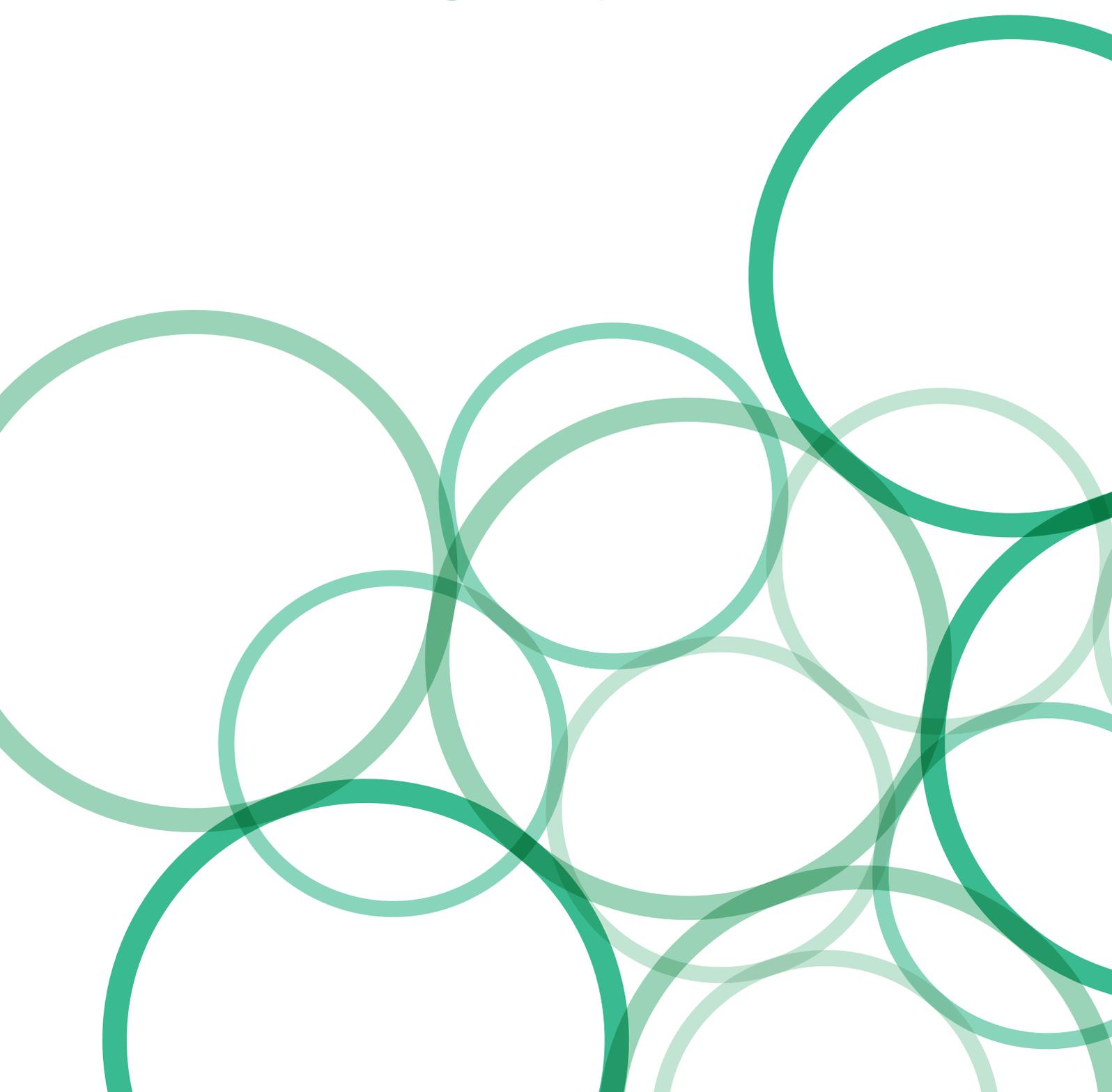


The report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of
Education, Children's Services and Skills 2013/14

South East regional report





Summary

There is little doubt that the South East offers plenty of opportunity to those who live there. It is an area that is economically vibrant and prosperous. Many young people do well in the schools and colleges so they are suitably prepared to thrive as adults in this affluent part of our country, but we cannot be complacent. While the overall picture is a positive one, pupils from poorer backgrounds continue to do less well than their peers nationally from Key Stage 1 onwards.¹ In most local authorities, the attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their more affluent peers remains unacceptably wide.

From Key Stage 2 onwards, poor pupils in the South East continue to do less well than poor pupils in most other parts of England. In 2012/13, attainment at 16 for pupils eligible for free school meals remained below the national level in 15 out of the 19 local authorities in the South East. The attainment gap at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 between pupils eligible for free schools meals and their more affluent peers is wider in the South East than any other region in the country. There is cause for optimism though: since 2011/12, attainment of poorer students in the South East has improved at a faster rate than the improvements seen nationally at both Key Stages 2 and 4. Pupil premium funding and the efforts of teachers and leaders are making a difference to the progress poorer pupils make in many schools. However, the improvements seen so far only mark the very start of what is necessary and vary considerably between local authorities.

Academic outcomes overall are above the national level in each key stage.² These positive figures hide substantial variation across the region and for different groups. In some of the larger local authorities, such as Kent, broadly positive outcomes overall cover pockets of weaker performance, often found in isolated coastal communities. While the South East has some of the highest-attaining local authorities in the country, such as Wokingham, and Windsor and Maidenhead, the data from these masks weak examination results in areas like the Isle of Wight.

1. *Local authority interactive tool*, Department for Education; www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait. Attainment data for free school meals pupils relates to 2012/13, the latest available at the time of writing.

2. *Local authority interactive tool*, Department for Education; www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait. All attainment and progress data is provisional data for 2013/14 unless otherwise specified.



While outcomes are improving across the region, too many children continue to attend schools that are not yet good. In the South East, 266,000 children (23%) attend schools that require improvement or are inadequate. This compares with 903,000 children (77%) who attend a good or outstanding school.

The proportion of further education and skills providers graded good or outstanding at their most recent inspection has continued to rise and the South East performs well when compared with other regions and with England as a whole. Also contributing to this positive picture is the high proportion of learners in the South East who successfully complete and achieve the qualifications on which they enrol. However, while this is an improving picture overall, headline data hide some underperformance in individual providers.

Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are not strong enough in the South East. The region has only four local authorities judged good. Four are inadequate and the remaining 11 are adequate or require improvement. One effective local authority, Hampshire, has taken responsibility for improving educational and social care arrangements on the Isle of Wight. Evidence from recent inspection activity shows that this is having a positive impact.

Looking forward, we see a continuing need to shine a spotlight on the plight of poorer children in the South East. We need to do this by focusing on the needs of vulnerable young people:

- in relatively affluent areas, hidden by overall high attainment
- in areas of higher deprivation, often around the coast and also in some larger local authorities.

The final section of this report shows how we intend to do this.

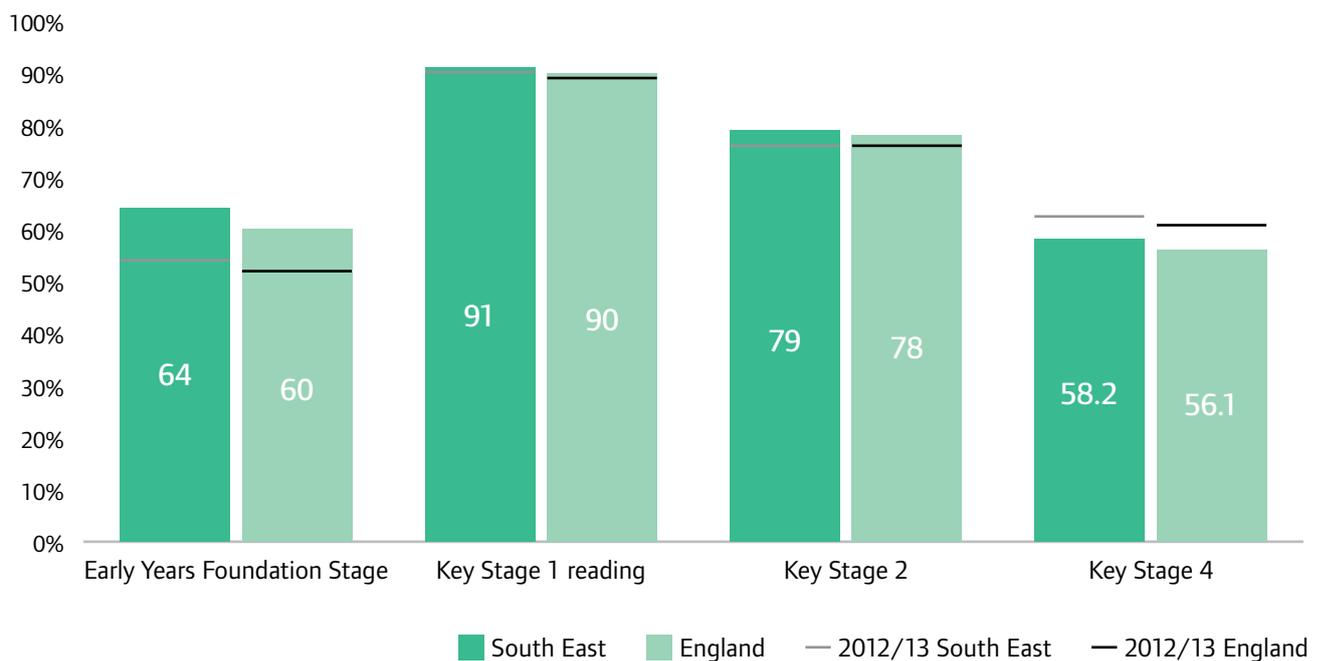
State of the region

Early years

1. In 2013/14, 64% of children in the South East achieved a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage compared with 60% nationally (see Figure 1). The lowest-performing local authorities for this indicator are Slough (58%) and West Sussex (59%). The highest-achieving local authorities are Kent (69%) and Hampshire (67%).
2. By the end of their Reception Year at school, the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals is

already falling behind that of other children. Of the 13,200 pupils eligible for free school meals in the South East, only 37% (4,900) achieved a good level of development in 2012/13. This is 20 percentage points lower than their better-off peers across the region. In 11 of the 19 local authorities in the region, the achievement of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national level (36%). In Wokingham, Oxfordshire, East Sussex and Brighton and Hove, only around a quarter of the poorest children achieve well. Kent (48%) and Portsmouth (46%) were the highest-performing local authorities.

Figure 1: Pupil attainment at ages five, seven, 11 and 16 for 2013/14



Data for 2014 is provisional

Benchmark levels: Early Years Foundation Stage – achieving a good level of development (%)

Key Stage 1 – achieving at least Level 2 in reading (%)

Key Stage 2 – achieving at least Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics (%)

Key Stage 4 – achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A* to C or equivalent, including English and mathematics (%)

All attainment and progress data is provisional data for 2013/14 unless otherwise specified.

Source: *Local authority interactive tool*, Department for Education; www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait.

Explore how children and young people performed in assessments and tests at different ages and in different regions through our online regional performance tool. <http://dataview.ofsted.gov.uk/regional-performance>

Private, voluntary and independent providers of childcare and early education

3. At 82%, the proportion of good or outstanding childminders is above the national proportion of 78%. Slough is the weakest-performing local authority, with no improvement since 2012/13. Southampton, Portsmouth, Medway and Isle of Wight all have lower than national rates of good or outstanding providers.
4. Childcare on non-domestic premises compares favourably with the rest of England, with 86% being judged good or better. Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough, Reading, Milton Keynes, Medway and Portsmouth all have lower than national proportions of good and outstanding providers.

Children's centres

5. The quality of children's centre provision within the region is variable.³ In Brighton and Hove, out of the 13 centres, six were judged to be outstanding and the other seven were judged to be good. Similarly, in the Isle of Wight, all eight centres have been inspected and judged to be good or outstanding.
6. Slough has a total of 10 children's centres, which operate as a single group. We inspected these in March 2014 and judged all of them to be inadequate. Coupled with the poor early years provision and concerns about the local authority's arrangements for safeguarding children, Slough remains a priority area for improvement work within the region.

Schools

Primary schools

7. At 78%, the proportion of primary schools judged good and outstanding in the South East is below the national level of 82%. Out of over 655,000 primary aged pupils living in the South East, 162,000 of them attend a school that is not at least good. In Slough, East Sussex, Bracknell Forest and Medway, less than 70% of primary schools were judged to be good or outstanding. The rate of improvement for inspection outcomes is slower in the South East than in all other regions. Too many primary schools do not provide good enough support for pupils eligible for pupil premium funding. Ofsted has taken an increasingly tough stance when inspecting those schools where disadvantaged pupils do not do as well as they should. It is right that inspection outcomes should reflect their weak outcomes and not allow them to be hidden among the strong outcomes of others.
8. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with the national level overall but this hides substantial variation across the region. There are five local authorities where attainment in 2013/14 is in the top 25% of local authorities nationally: Wokingham, Windsor and Maidenhead, West Berkshire, Surrey and Hampshire. However, two local authorities (Medway and Reading) are among the lowest-attaining 25% nationally.
9. By the time pupils reach the age of 11, almost half of those eligible for free school meals fail to reach the expected level for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2012/13, poor pupils in the South East performed less well than poor pupils nationally in 15 of the 19 local authorities.

3. Children's centre inspection outcomes data used in this report refers to the latest inspection of open children's centres as at 30 June 2014.

Table 1: Percentage of primary and secondary pupils attending good or outstanding schools by local authority in the South East

| Primary schools | | | | Secondary schools | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|--------|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------|----------------------------|
| Rank* | Local authority (education) | 2014 % | Change from 2013 (%points) | Rank* | Local authority (education) | 2014 % | Change from 2013 (%points) |
| 60= | Buckinghamshire | 84 | ▲ 3 | 7 | Wokingham | 99 | ▲ 8 |
| 60= | Southampton | 84 | ▲ 3 | 14= | Surrey | 93 | ▲ 3 |
| 74= | Hampshire | 82 | ▼ -2 | 34= | Oxfordshire | 86 | ▼ -2 |
| 74= | Milton Keynes | 82 | ▲ 2 | 37= | Slough | 85 | ▲ 1 |
| 79= | Oxfordshire | 81 | ▲ 8 | 37= | Kent | 85 | ▲ 4 |
| 99= | Brighton and Hove | 79 | ▼ -1 | 41= | Medway | 84 | ▼ -5 |
| 103= | Windsor and Maidenhead | 78 | ▼ -17 | 41= | East Sussex | 84 | — 0 |
| 110= | West Sussex | 76 | — 0 | 59= | Brighton and Hove | 80 | ▼ -8 |
| 110= | Surrey | 76 | ▲ 1 | 62= | West Berkshire | 79 | ▲ 24 |
| 116= | Wokingham | 75 | ▼ -2 | 77= | Southampton | 75 | ▲ 10 |
| 119= | Reading | 74 | ▲ 2 | 77= | Milton Keynes | 75 | ▲ 3 |
| 131= | Kent | 71 | ▲ 4 | 77= | Hampshire | 75 | ▼ -4 |
| 131= | Isle of Wight | 71 | — 0 | 88= | Bracknell Forest | 73 | ▲ 16 |
| 136= | Portsmouth | 70 | ▲ 3 | 92= | Buckinghamshire | 72 | ▼ -5 |
| 139= | West Berkshire | 69 | ▼ -8 | 102= | West Sussex | 69 | ▼ -2 |
| 141= | Slough | 68 | ▼ -1 | 111= | Reading | 66 | ▲ 1 |
| 147 | East Sussex | 62 | ▼ -6 | 120 | Windsor and Maidenhead | 60 | ▼ -1 |
| 148 | Bracknell Forest | 59 | ▼ -7 | 132= | Portsmouth | 53 | — 0 |
| 150 | Medway | 53 | ▼ -6 | 150 | Isle of Wight | 17 | ▲ 3 |

* Rank refers to the 2014 placing in relation to all 150 local authorities in England (excluding Isles of Scilly and City of London which each contain only one school).

Secondary schools

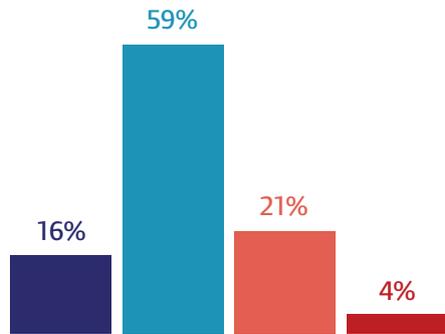
10. Secondary schools in the South East fare much better than primary schools in the region, with a higher proportion of good and outstanding schools than every other region but London. Ninety three per cent of secondary pupils in Surrey attend a school that is good or outstanding and in Wokingham this is 99% (see Table 1).
11. This fact would be a cause for celebration if it was not for a stark inequality: the South East remains one of the worst places in England to be a child if you are from a low-income family. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals in the South East do less well at seven, 11, 16 and 19 than equally disadvantaged pupils nationally. In 2012/13, two thirds of the more affluent students attained at least five good GCSEs with English and

mathematics at 16. This is the benchmark that gives students a real choice when deciding their next steps in education or employment. For students eligible for free school meals, this figure was one in three. There is, however, cause for optimism. With many schools beginning to serve these young people better, since 2011/12, the proportion of disadvantaged students reaching the five good GCSEs benchmark has improved more in the South East than in any other region.

12. Inspection outcomes show that gaining a place at a good secondary school can be a lottery in the South East. In the Isle of Wight, four out of five secondary aged children go to a school that is not good enough. In Surrey, only seven children in every hundred attend a secondary school that is not yet good.

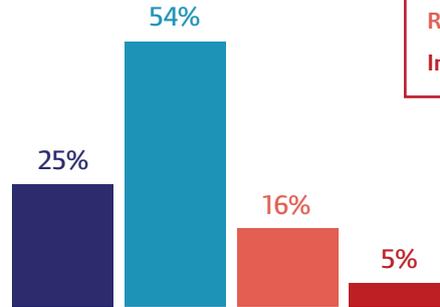
Figure 2: Inspection outcomes by proportion of pupils, children or learners at 31 August 2014

Primary schools



Overall effectiveness of primary schools in the South East, latest inspection outcome at 31 August 2014 (% of pupils).

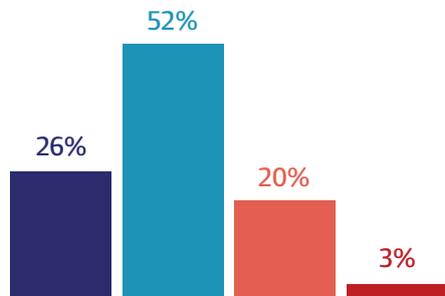
Secondary schools



Overall effectiveness of secondary schools in the South East, latest inspection outcome at 31 August 2014 (% of pupils).

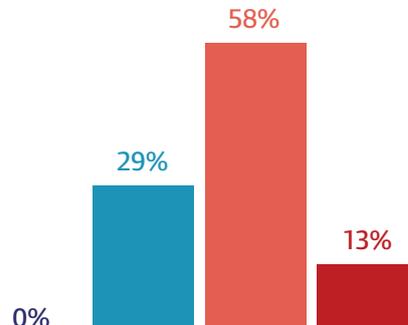


Colleges



Overall effectiveness of colleges in the South East, latest inspection outcome at 31 August 2014 (% of learners).

Safeguarding



Effectiveness of local authority safeguarding arrangements in the South East, latest inspection outcome at 31 August 2014 (% of children).



Academies

Table 2: Number of primary and secondary schools that are academies in the South East

| Year | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number of primary academies | 0 | 23 | 111 | 207 | 327 |
| Number of secondary academies | 24 | 138 | 225 | 261 | 295 |

13. The number of academies in the South East has grown rapidly in recent years, accounting for 19% of schools by the end of 2013/14 (see Table 2). The rate and impact of academisation has been very varied across the region. While 55% of the 51 schools in Slough are academies, just 3% of the 39 schools in Bracknell Forest and 7% of the 76 schools in Brighton are academies.
14. There is little evidence to say that academies perform more or less well than maintained schools. Inspection continues to show that it is the effectiveness of leadership and governance that has the biggest impact on the effectiveness of schools and academies. The support provided by multi-academy trusts also varies and this has a significant impact on the pace of improvement seen in their schools that are not yet good. Where we have had concerns about the effectiveness of support in multi-academy trusts, we have conducted a series of inspections in their individual academies and provided feedback about the effectiveness of their actions in supporting schools to improve.

Initial teacher education

15. Teacher training in the South East is of good quality, with all providers judged good or outstanding at inspection. However, despite this positive picture, retaining experienced staff and recruiting new teachers is a real problem in many poorer communities.⁴
16. University-based teacher training providers are waking up to these issues and involving schools in more challenging circumstances in their work. Schools themselves are doing more to set up school-based teacher training to meet their own needs. These factors are starting to help, but headteachers tell us that too little is done to improve the supply of good new staff where they are most needed.
- ### Further education and skills
17. In 2013/14 further education and skills was provided by 165 providers.⁵ These consist of 67 colleges, 51 independent learning providers, 15 employer providers and 32 community learning and skills providers. Together, these organisations offer a wide range of courses to over 530,000 learners annually.
18. During this reporting year we inspected a total of 49 providers, of which three were outstanding, 32 were good, 11 were requires improvement and three were inadequate. Of the providers inspected, 25 improved their overall effectiveness grade, eight received a lower rating and 12 remained the same.⁶
19. While the number of learners in good or better provision continues to increase, too many learners remain in provision that is still less than good. In 2013/14, 11 providers were judged to require improvement. Nine of these did not improve their overall effectiveness grade from their last inspection and two providers, Milton Keynes College and Canterbury College, have not been found to provide a good overall standard of education over several successive inspections.⁷

4. Headteachers and local authority staff have identified these issues during our meetings with them.

5. This figure includes some providers that may have closed during the year. Providers that were funded in the 2013/14 year but had not been inspected by 31 August 2014 are not included. There are 530,000 learners served by providers in the South East. These learners may be based in other parts of England.

6. Four providers were inspected for the first time.

7. Six providers were satisfactory at their previous inspection and three declined from good.



20. Our focused action to improve the quality of college provision in the region continued during this reporting year with Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) carrying out a range of tailored intervention and improvement work to help colleges improve. The number of colleges in the region judged to be good or better is now at the highest level in recent years, with thousands more learners in good or outstanding colleges compared with previous years. However, we must not be complacent. Further improvements are still required: all learners have the right to experience provision that is at least good; all learners should have opportunities to achieve English and mathematics qualifications; and they should be as well prepared for the next steps as possible.
21. While colleges and other providers have improved the quality of their teaching and learning and most learners achieve the qualifications on which they enrol, we need to look at how well learners' study programmes prepare them for their next steps. Providers need to ensure that the courses offered are sufficiently well tailored to meet local and regional needs and priorities.
22. Some providers, such as those in the case studies below, have already stepped up to the challenge and have made a real difference to the life chances of young people. We remain determined that all young people have access to provision that will enable them to fulfil their potential so that we can deliver the professional and skilled workforce, required for the future by this economically vibrant region.

Chichester College – general further education college

The highly effective, responsive and wide-ranging curriculum fully meets the needs of learners, employers and the communities across the region. Partnership working is outstanding, with key stakeholders, including the local enterprise partnership, working well together to ensure that the social and economic needs of communities are served effectively. Teachers ensure that all students achieve to their full potential; they use their extensive subject knowledge and vocational expertise to prepare learners very effectively for employment. Students make excellent progress relative to their starting points and gain very good technical skills and knowledge. The standard of work they produce is outstanding. The large majority of learners progress to higher-level study or to employment.

Military Preparation College – independent learning provider

Leaders, managers and staff have the highest expectations of learners, many of whom have low levels of prior attainment. Managers have carefully designed study programmes to meet employers' and individual learners' needs. Learners quickly develop outstanding work-related skills and significantly improve their levels of physical fitness. The large majority of learners are successful in their application to join the Armed Forces, in finding employment with local employers or in continuing to further study at a higher level.

Social care

23. By 31 August 2014, we had inspected seven local authorities in the region under the new inspection framework introduced in November 2013. East Sussex, Hampshire and Oxfordshire have all maintained their previous ratings of good under the tougher test presented by the framework. In these local authorities, vulnerable children benefit from good-quality services. Hampshire's outstanding leadership team is also in charge of children's social care services on the Isle of Wight, where services were judged under a previous framework to be inadequate. As a result of improvements, the Isle of Wight was recently judged to require improvement for children's social care services.
24. We have exposed failings in Slough and Buckinghamshire, both of which received judgements of inadequate, Slough for the second time. The Department for Education (DfE) has formally appointed an adviser to support improvement in Buckinghamshire. In Slough, the DfE has appointed a Commissioner and is in the process of appointing a trust to deliver children's social care functions on behalf of the local authority.
25. In these authorities, vulnerable children have not always received the help and protection they need. Improvement plans are in place and we will continue to support and challenge the authorities through 'Getting to good' seminars and early reinspection.
26. All children's homes in the region were inspected twice in 2013/14. At 68%, the proportion of services judged good or outstanding is higher than the national proportion of 65%. There were 10 homes found to be inadequate during the year. Improving the homes in which some of the country's most vulnerable children live is a key objective for the region. We will continue to expect high standards and take decisive action where necessary. For example, a more assertive stance has significantly reduced the number of children's homes without a Registered Manager. The number in this category is in single figures and in each of these cases there is clear progress.
27. Ofsted will be publishing its Social Care Annual Report in spring 2015. This will set out the challenges for the sector and the priorities for improvement. For this reason we have not addressed the social care issues for the region in any detail in this report.





How well are we tackling poor performance and inequality in the South East?

28. We have focused our improvement work in the following areas:

- raising the profile of underperforming pupils and learners eligible for free school meals
- promoting improvements in the weakest-performing local authorities
- working with colleges and workplace providers that are less than good
- working with schools that are judged to be less than good.

Raising the profile of underperforming pupils eligible for free school meals

29. HMI have worked closely with local authorities, teaching schools and other system leaders to raise the profile of these disadvantaged pupils and to support schools in raising standards of attainment. We are seeing attainment rise for pupils eligible for free school meals more quickly in the South East than anywhere else in the country. However, there remains a long way to go for their attainment to compare with that of their more affluent peers.

Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance (OTSA)

OTSA coordinated a group of 27 Oxfordshire primary and secondary schools. The group met three times in an eight-month period with the aim of raising the attainment of pupil premium pupils. The sessions included input from HMI concerning the national and regional context, case studies from school leaders and discussions to reflect on current provision. Whole-school leadership and prioritisation, robust tracking and knowledge of individual pupils' needs were common themes in discussions.

The advantages of meeting together have been to challenge each other's thinking in a safe environment and to share learning. The majority of schools were able to share successes, yet it is also recognised that this is 'work in progress' for all schools. The case studies and learning from discussion groups will be prepared as a resource to share with other schools and OTSA will look to repeat this programme with new schools in the year ahead.

Promoting improvements in the weakest-performing local authorities

30. HMI have provided additional support and challenge to the three weakest-performing local authorities in the South East: Medway, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. These local authorities are making important improvements, although the outcomes for young people are still not strong enough.
31. The Department for Education handed over responsibility for school improvement on the Isle of Wight to Hampshire local authority – a consistently strong local authority with a track record for improving schools. A recent inspection of school improvement services on the Isle of Wight shows that effective action is being taken there to improve the quality of education for pupils on the island. This is illustrated by the following extract from a letter to the Director of Children’s Services following the local authority school improvement inspection in August 2014:
- ‘The impact of the strengthened arrangements for supporting school improvement is evident in the dramatic rise in attendance, the increase in the proportion of primary schools that are now good, the progress being made by schools that require improvement, and the solution to the financial problems that have been a barrier to improvement in a number of cases. The decline in secondary schools has been arrested and all those that are in an Ofsted category of concern are making reasonable progress in tackling the weaknesses identified in their most recent inspection reports. In the case of one academy, progress has increased considerably as a result of the close working relationships between officers, the sponsor and the newly appointed headteacher. The predicted results for 11- and 16-year-olds in 2014 are moving closer to the national averages for 2013 and show a clear improvement since the previous inspection. The exclusion rates are higher than average but reducing.’
32. Where we have identified particular weaknesses, HMI have provided bespoke training, support and challenge. In Medway, one such project focused on ensuring that pupils start primary school with the skills they need.

Early years improvement seminars in Medway

Early years HMI delivered improvement seminars to almost all private, voluntary and independent early years settings in Medway. The area had been identified as a priority for the South East as children were poorly prepared for primary school and did not catch up. As a result, Key Stage 2 results (as a proportion of pupils achieving at least Level 4 in English and mathematics) were the lowest in the region in 2011/12. The quality of registered early years provision was the lowest in the region, with only 67% of settings judged to be good or outstanding at 31 August 2013. Two key members of staff from 40 settings attended. This usually consisted of the setting’s manager and either a senior member of staff, a committee member or the setting’s owner. The focus of the seminar was to help leaders and managers understand their role in driving improvement and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.

33. In Portsmouth, HMI have repeatedly visited a number of school clusters over a period of time to feed back on the strengths and weaknesses in the school improvement work being delivered. While the picture remains a mixed one, schools in the most effective clusters are beginning to support and challenge each other over the impact of their work and to share good practice. Above all, HMI are using inspection to drive improvement by asking headteachers and system leaders to be clear about what they want to do, how they will achieve it and how they will check the impact. Schools are left in no doubt that HMI will return to check the progress being made and this is proving to be a powerful motivator.
34. We are starting to see some improvements in all three of these local authorities, although there is still a long way to go before they are providing a good enough education for all children and learners. Unvalidated attainment data from Key Stage 2 shows that, in each of these local authorities, the proportion of pupils reaching expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics has increased in 2013/14. Between 2012/13 and 2013/14, all three have made better gains in the proportion of children reaching the expected standard in their phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 than in England as a whole. We were particularly worried about attainment levels at the end of Key Stage 4 in Portsmouth. However, this year, unvalidated data shows that students in Portsmouth have made impressive gains in their examination results compared with the performance of students in the previous year.

Working with colleges and workplace providers that are less than good

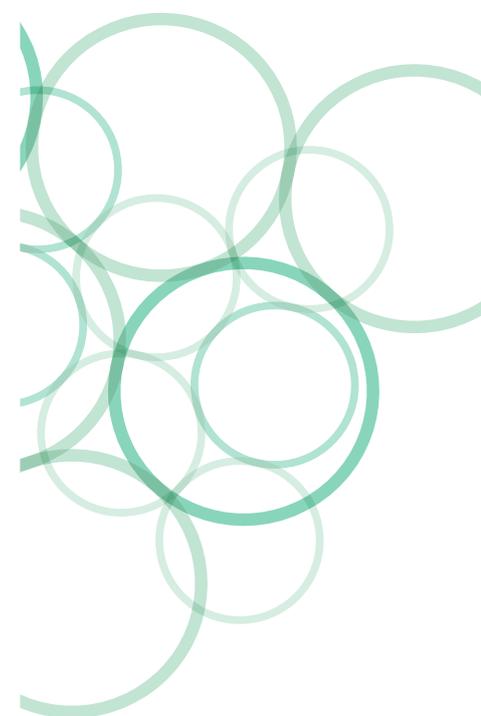
35. Support for every provider judged as requires improvement has been a high priority and HMI continue to work with all such providers between inspections. During this reporting year, 13 providers that received support and challenge visits following an inspection judgement of requires improvement were re-inspected. Of these, 11 improved to become good. The remaining two providers, along with all other providers judged to require improvement, are continuing to receive support and challenge visits by HMI.

Working with schools that are judged to be less than good

36. HMI have continued to monitor, support and challenge schools judged to require improvement, in line with Ofsted's national policy. Headteachers have been very positive about this work and inspection outcomes show that this level of support is making a difference. Of those schools re-inspected after being judged to require improvement at their previous inspection, 45 have improved to be good, 14 have remained the same and one declined.
37. Typically, HMI will visit a school shortly after it has been judged to require improvement. During this visit, HMI will make a judgement about actions taken and the plans in place to move the school towards being good. In some cases, this might be the only visit an HMI makes. However, if the HMI determines that there are further actions that the school needs to take, then they will return to the school and conduct bespoke inspection and improvement work. As well as the bespoke work with schools, headteachers and chairs of governing bodies are invited to a 'Getting to good' seminar. This provides an opportunity for school leaders to hear about the best practice identified in Ofsted's survey work and an opportunity to talk candidly with inspectors about the challenges they face. These sessions help headteachers plan effectively and better understand how they can improve their schools.

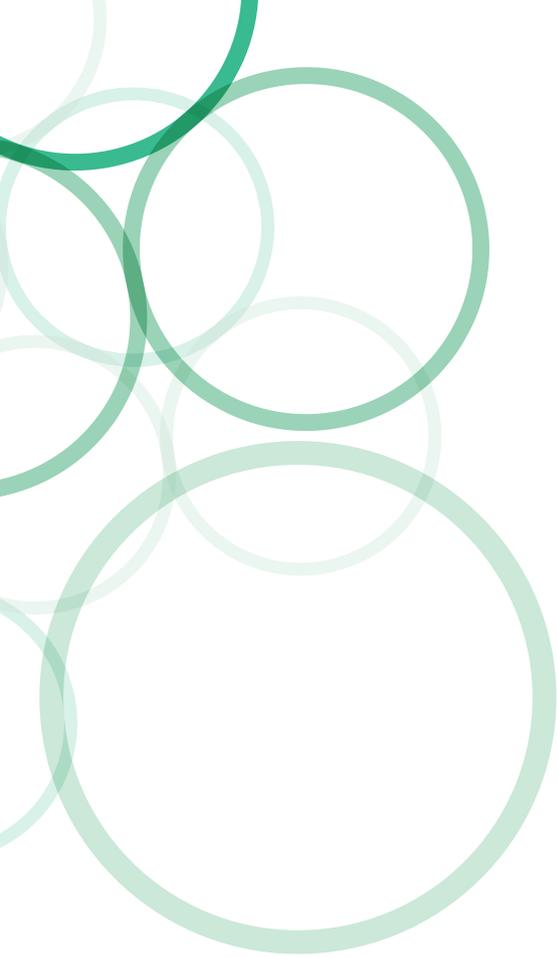
Regional priorities for 2014 to 2016

38. We know that the quality of education in the South East is improving. We know because examination results in schools are rising and inspection outcomes for schools and colleges previously judged satisfactory or requires improvement show that many are now good.^{8,9} We know that headteachers, principals, local authority managers and politicians are more aware than ever of inequality and we are seeing the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals increase more rapidly than anywhere else in the country.
39. However, we know there is still much to do. We know that inequality continues to be found in some of our highest-performing local authorities, where it would be easy to allow complacency to creep back in.
40. As a region, we are focusing on the attainment of disadvantaged children more than ever before and challenging local authorities, providers, schools and colleges to improve rapidly. Through all our inspection work we are challenging those schools, colleges and early years providers that are less than good to improve quickly. In addition to our core inspection and improvement work we will:
- identify pockets of underperformance in areas of coastal deprivation, so we can provide extra challenge and support to improve these schools
 - support and challenge local authorities to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and learners
 - prevent vulnerable pupils falling through the gap as they move from one phase of education to another
 - ensure that the improving further education sector provides courses that adequately prepare students for the next stages of their development.



8. GCSE results declined between 2012/13 and 2013/14 in every region. The Department for Education's initial analysis indicates that the decreases are largely due to a change in the method for producing the figures. The decline in the South East was smaller than that seen in most other regions.

9. In September 2012, the 'satisfactory' judgement was replaced with 'requires improvement'.



Identify pockets of underperformance in areas of coastal deprivation

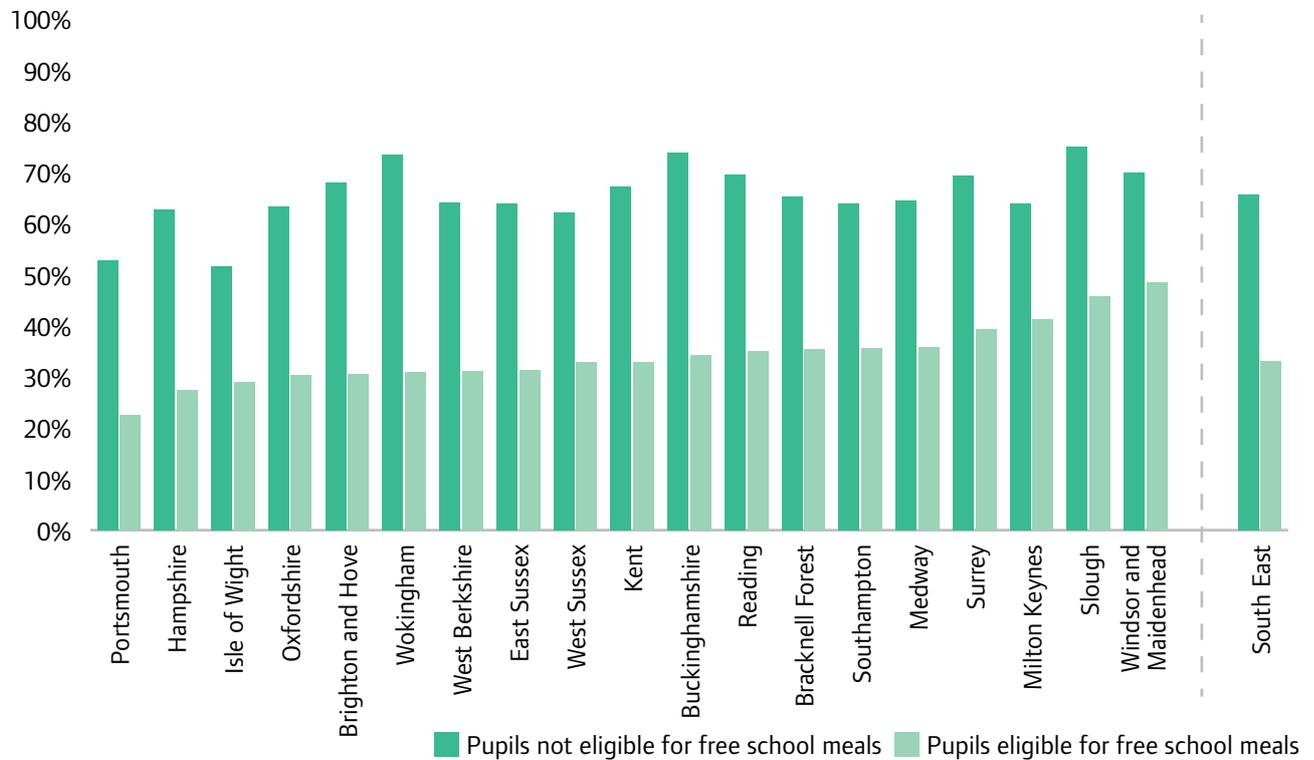
41. We know that underachievement exists in some deprived communities around the South East coast. In 2013, 74% of pupils left primary school in Kent ready for Key Stage 3 with the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics. However, pupils living on the Isle of Sheppey, a coastal community, have a much lower chance of reaching the same grade. About 65% of pupils leave Sheppey's primaries having achieved Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics: almost 10 percentage points lower than the rest of Kent.¹⁰
42. HMI will work closely with schools and early years providers in the areas that are not yet good. We will seek to better understand the barriers that these schools face in overcoming underachievement and work with system leaders, local authorities and education charities to remove these barriers. Our work in this area will primarily focus on making sure children are ready to start secondary school.

Improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and learners

43. We have been successful in supporting and challenging weaker local authorities in the South East and we intend to continue this work. Individual HMI will be linked to local authorities. We will allocate additional time to challenging those local authorities that are performing less well and providing bespoke support to help schools and early years providers to improve.
44. Our work in this area will not be limited to those local authorities where overall attainment is weaker than we would expect. As stated before, we know that children from poorer backgrounds do less well than they should in the South East. We will continue to challenge those local authorities where overall attainment is high but attainment for pupils eligible for free school meals remains low.
45. In 2013, 71% of pupils left school at age 16 with at least five good GCSEs including English and mathematics in both Wokingham and Buckinghamshire. These figures are the envy of many local authorities. Nationally, they stand out as strong performers. However, in the same year, in Wokingham, only 31% of children from a poor background left school with five good GCSEs with English and mathematics. In Buckinghamshire, 34% of poor children left school having reached this benchmark.
46. While we have seen some substantial improvements in the outcomes for poorer pupils at Key Stages 2 and 4 in 2012/13, in local authorities like Windsor and Maidenhead there remain too many where an unacceptable attainment gap exists (see Figure 3).

10. Ofsted analysis of RAISEonline data.

Figure 3: Pupil attainment at Key Stage 4 in the South East (proportion attaining at least five good GCSEs in English and mathematics) by free school meals eligibility (2012/13)



Prevent vulnerable pupils falling through the gap

47. Vulnerable children often run into difficulties as they pass from one part of the education system to another, for example from primary school to secondary school. During these transitions some go missing from education. Once outside of the system, these vulnerable children are at greater risk of dangers such as child exploitation or radicalisation. This year, HMI intend to produce a set of case studies, and share good practice, to show how well-managed transition helps such children and learners stay in education so they thrive and stay safe.
48. We will use these case studies to influence the work we do with local authorities and individual schools and providers. We want to be able to show the difference well-planned transition makes to learners who might otherwise become missing from education, employment or training, be in danger of exclusion or make a slow start as they enter secondary school.



Provide courses that adequately prepare students for the next stages of their development

49. We know that across England too many students who enter further education or training without good grades in GCSE English and mathematics do not go on to gain these important qualifications by the time they are 19. We also know that too many students are not adequately prepared for their next steps by simply achieving the qualifications on which they enrol.
50. This year the government has made changes to the funding arrangements for further education providers so that they must provide learners aged 16 to 18 with the opportunity to study English and mathematics if they have not already achieved a GCSE at grade C or above. In addition, the 16 to 19 study programmes now require providers to ensure learners are better prepared for their next steps, be that to higher-level study, to employment or to employment with training.
51. HMI will closely monitor the impact of these initiatives during the inspection and improvement work completed over the coming year. When inspecting providers, we will look much more closely at the destination of learners following each course, making sure their courses are leading to jobs or access to higher education. We will challenge providers to do more for learners who do not have English and mathematics GCSE by expecting more to attain the equivalent of this qualification by the time they are 19 years old. HMI will produce case studies showing where colleges and workplace providers get this right so that others might learn the lessons from their success.

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