

Choosing the right school for your child.

In your daughter's P7 year, you will no doubt spend time researching and visiting schools as you try to decide which one will be best for your daughter, you will have been provided with data lots of data!

Data is important as it allows you to make comparisons between the schools that you and your daughter are considering. However, it can be difficult to know which comparisons are helpful and which can be misleading.

To illustrate this, consider the following two fictitious schools (School X and School Y).

Two measures are presented below.

How can I tell which school performed best?

In order to simplify things, imagine two schools with 10 pupils each.

The schools are in the same town and prospective parents want to know which one is 'the best'.

This is currently done by calculating, for example, the actual % of A grades obtained at the end of the year for each school and comparing them with each other (or with the average for both schools) – this is called an 'outcome' measure.

When we do this we get the following:

	School X	School Y
% Grade As obtained	80%	70%

Alternatively we could ask what % of pupils achieved or exceeded their expected grade – this is called a 'progress' based measure and is a better indicator of what proportion of pupils achieve or exceed their potential.

When we do this we get the following:

	School X	School Y
% Pupils achieving or exceeding their expected grade	80%	100%

School X		School Y	
Expected Grade at beginning of year	Actual Grade obtained at end of year	Expected Grade at beginning of year	Actual Grade obtained at end of year
A	A	A	A
A	A	A	A
A	A	A	A
A	A	A	A
A	A	A	A
A	A	B	A
A	A	B	A
A	A	B	B
A	B	B	B
A	B	C	B

- Which school has 'performed' best?
- In which school is a pupil most likely to achieve their best examination results?

The 'outcome' measure takes no account of pupil ability and the progress that they make in their school. This is the type of comparative data that the Department of education publishes. Comparison of 'outcome' data suggests that School X is the best school.

The 'progress' measure takes account of the ability of each pupil when they joined the school and measures their final attainment relative to that by comparing their final grade with those of pupils of the same ability across the UK. It shows how pupils in the school achieve compared to pupils of the same ability in other schools and this is the type of data that is used to compare school performance in England. Comparison of 'progress' data between schools shows which school your daughter is likely to progress and excel in. Here is some typical 'progress' data for Glenlola Collegiate.

How did pupils in Glenlola Collegiate perform at GCSE in summer 2022 compared to pupils of the same ability in other schools?



GCS pupils performed better than pupils of the same ability in other schools in the June 2022 GCSEs. This pattern occurs every year and is mirrored at A-level.