

Written Evidence submitted by Elroy Cahill, Headteacher at Kingsley Academy

Impact of COVID 19 - Concern regarding the predicted grades process and the impact of this on students in schools in 'turnaround' circumstances

Evidence – Submitted on 29/04/2020 by Elroy Cahill, Headteacher at Kingsley Academy, Cecil Road, Hounslow, TW3 1AX

Introduction and reason for submission:

With the support of my Chair of Governors, Mr John King OBE and with my Regional Director, Dr David Moody, I write to the committee, regarding my significant concern regarding Ofqual's proposed method of moderating predicted grades based on three years of historical outcomes for a school. This method will unfairly impact a school like ours, Kingsley Academy, which has undergone significant change within the last 12 months, and more importantly will significantly disadvantage the life chances of our students, who have worked tirelessly over the past 12 months. To put this into context, below I outline some of these concerns, share some historical data both nationally and specific to our school and outline how potentially this could be addressed. Schools in 'turnaround' such as Kingsley achieve great things in a short period of time. Staff and leaders who work in these schools, which are undoubtedly some of the most challenging in the UK, do so as they wish to transform the education for the students who attend them. I urge the committee to review the evidence presented below and to call on Ofqual and the DfE to not disadvantage these school communities.

Overview and context:

Each year, there are a small number of 'turnaround' schools that report exceptional increases in attainment. For the purpose of this paper, a 'turnaround school' can be defined as a school which has undergone substantial change within a short timeframe, often within 12-18 months. These schools invariably will be characterised by a change in Headteacher, a high degree of change in staffing, a high degree of change in policies and procedures, namely in curriculum and teaching and learning. Often these schools are schools which have had a legacy of poor results and often will also have had a legacy of 'Inadequate' or 'Requires Improvement' judgements by Ofsted, the school's inspectorate.

Due to the COVID 19 outbreak, summer examinations have been cancelled. This is a challenging scenario to work around and a challenge for Ofqual to establish a fair and transparent process that will not disadvantage students. In the absence of external data, there are no quantitative national comparisons to evidence these rapid rates of change under and consequently, under Ofqual's proposed predicted grades process and it's 'moderation by historical three year trends', the students who attend these 'turnaround schools', are at risk of being severely disadvantaged.

Under the proposed method of awarding predicted grades, Ofqual have shared that they do not expect to see any school, including 'turnaround schools' have a notable increase in outcomes through the predicted grades process. They stipulate that school's predicted grades will be moderated based on three years of historical data. This unquestionably negatively impacts on 'turnaround schools' and the students who attend them, which typically tend to have a disproportionately high percentage of disadvantaged students or those eligible for free school meals.

Supporting Data:

The information below relates to those schools reporting data in Summer 2019.

- Excluding independent schools and those schools that reported no EM4+ percentage, there were **approximately 3300 schools that reported data in both Summer 2018 and Summer 2019.**
- These schools accounted for **approximately 510,000 Year 11 students**
- Of these schools:
 - 52 schools recorded an EM4+ percentage increase of greater than 15%
 - 14 schools recorded an EM4+ percentage increase of greater than 20%
 - 5 schools recorded an EM4+ percentage increase of greater than 25%
 - 3 schools recorded an EM4+ percentage increase of greater than 30%
- There were **a total of 1390 additional students obtaining EM4+ in the 74 schools** with EM4+ increases greater than 15%
- This represents **approximately 0.3% of the 510,000 students** included in this analysis

Percentage Change (2018 19 vs 2017 18)	Number of Schools (n)	Additional Students Achieving EM4+
0% < n < 5%	1072	3552
5% < n < 10%	461	5087
10% < n < 15%	202	3280
15% < n < 20%	52	985
20% < n < 25%	14	278
25% < n < 30%	5	68
30% < n < 35%	3	60

Mitigation of Risk

In the absence of year-on-year national quantitative data, it is inevitable that if any whole school increase is to be applied to 'turnaround schools', it would require some aspect of a qualitative judgement. Schools reporting for the first time would also require a process for moderation. As a starting point for discussion, a potential mechanism is proposed below:

- Schools are able to apply to a qualitative moderation board consisting of retired school leaders with a track record of school improvement as well as representatives from both Ofqual and the DfE.
- In order to limit the number of schools requiring qualitative moderation, schools should only apply if they were confident of increases greater than 15% for 2019/20 academic year.
- Supporting data could include, but would not be limited to:
 - Details of change in school leadership where appropriate
 - Details of staffing changes
 - OfSTED reports within an appropriate time frame
 - Performance of students against national examinations including in-year 'gradient of change' analysis across a number of reporting points

Context of the Kingsley Academy:

Kingsley Academy is an 11-18 school in Hounslow, East London, sponsored by Academies Enterprise Trust. The school opened in April 2013. The school has a significantly higher than national number of disadvantaged students and has over 70% EAL speakers. The predecessor school, Hounslow Manor School had had a legacy of weak results, and Kingsley Academy has also struggled since opening. In the 7 years since opening, the academy has had 7 Headteachers or Interim Headteachers, and has been judged as Requires Improvement in two successive inspections, in 2015 and 2017. The academy has had issues with recruitment traditionally and has been reliant on supply teachers.

The academy does not have a high percentage of students with Key Stage 2 data and thus does not have an published progress 8 figure. However the academy baselines all students using MIDIS and YELLIS tests and uses this to model forward a student's target grade. For example if a students with KS2 data achieves the same score in MIDIS or YELLIS testing as a student without KS2 data, then we use this to project forward and thus both children will be given the same target grade. This is not an exact science, but does allow to ensure that students are not allowed to under perform, and does allow teachers to have a minimum target grade. For the purpose of comparison below, please see the academy's three year trend at GCSE is presented below.

	2016/17 Validated outcomes	2017/18 Validated outcomes	2018/19 Validated outcomes	2019/20 Predicted Grades
4+ in English & Maths	49%	43%	43%	64%
5+ in English & Maths	31%	24%	21%	34%
Progress 8 score (modelled using MIDIS/YELLIS)	-0.38	-0.58	-0.68	+0.68
Progress 8 score for students with KS2 data	0.06	-0.06	0.19	+0.34

Our predicted grades are based on four sets of mock examinations, including a 2% buffer on grade boundaries. Our mock exams are also externally moderated by high performing local schools and by our academy sponsor AET. This significant increase in predicted grades which our school will be submitting is down to the sizeable improvements, in both staffing, leadership and culture which has occurred at Kingsley Academy since February 2019, but most notably since September 2019.

In February 2019, I was appointed to post as Headteacher at Kingsley Academy. I had previously been a Headteacher in South London and had experienced in two other 'turnaround schools' which moved from Ofsted 'Inadequate' to Ofsted 'Good' within a 18-24 month time frame, moving outcomes from the bottom 10% in the country to the top 20% in the country over a two year period. Prior to this there had been 6 Headteachers or Interim Headteachers over a 6 year period. In April 2019, I was joined by the Executive Director for London for AET, Dr David Moody, who had previously been Headteacher at the successful Harris Academy Battersea, moving the school from Ofsted 'Inadequate' to 'Outstanding' in a short time frame, and one of only a handful of schools nationally to post Progress 8 score of +1.00 for three consecutive years in a row placing it in the top 3% of schools in the country.

In addition the academy, has benefited from an experienced Chair of Governors, appointed by the trust, Mr John King, OBE who is an experienced Headteacher of an Outstanding school and from our School Improvement Partner, Dame Joan McVittie, a retired Headteacher from an Outstanding school and former chair of ASCL.

Kingsley Academy had been judged as 'Requires Improvement' twice, and was the Ofsted definition of a 'stuck school'. Student numbers were falling, and grades achieved at GCSE in particular were in a steady decline. 34% of teachers were supply teachers on short or long term contracts, with 41% of Year 11 lessons taken by supply teachers. Geography, History, ICT and Design Technology were all staffed by supply teachers with a large volume of weak teaching evident in English, Science and Business, which was evident also by the poor outcomes in these subject areas over time.

Since my arrival in February, we have had a sizeable change in culture at the academy. We have extended the school day by 30 minutes, we have implemented a clear, strict yet inclusive behaviour policy which allows students to learn in disruption free classrooms, every lesson, every day and we have worked hard to ensure that the curriculum is now broad, balanced and rigorous, preparing students for the next stages of their learning. The academy has fully eradicated supply teachers and for the first time since opening in 2013, is fully staffed with talented, permanent, subject specialist teachers in all areas. 65% of our staff are new since September 2019, with 88% of Year 11 lessons this year taught by teacher who have joined the academy since September 2019.

90% of teachers who joined the academy since September 2019, joined from high performing Good or Outstanding schools, and all had a track record of significant impact themselves. Since September 2019, we have also had a 100% new Senior Leadership Team, again all with track records of success in high performing schools, and many in 'turnaround schools' and 90% new Middle Leaders (Leaders of Subject Areas).

The quality of teaching and the quality of the curriculum was commended in our Ofsted report in October 2019, where the school was graded as 'Good' for the first time since opening. Ofsted praised the school for its transformation and commented that the school was improving rapidly and that students were receiving strong provision in all subject areas. This directly correlates with our mock exam results, and our predicted grades. The academy has also run an extensive programme with our Year 11 students to fill in gaps in their learning from last year, and this is detailed in the appendix of this document.

In summary, our school was anticipating as a minimum, a 21% uplift in grade 4+ in English and Maths and a 13% uplift in grade 5+ in English and Maths this year. This is based on a secure and substantial evidence base and is testament to the hard work, determination, and endeavour of our fantastic Year 11 students. Our staff have worked night and day, have run holiday school sessions, after school revision sessions, intervention sessions on Saturdays and we have run weekly 5pm to 7pm small group tuition sessions to remedy gaps in students learning from previous years. The current method of moderation proposed by Ofqual, where schools predicated grades are moderated based on historical data will undoubtedly disadvantage a school like Kingsley. Whilst the school can bounce back from this, the students effected cannot. These are students, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds who will not receive the grades that they deserve, that they have worked hard for and that they would have achieved had the summer examinations not been cancelled. These grades will make a huge difference to the life chances of these students and thus, it is unfair and unjust that the current proposal by Ofqual does not allow a) for an uplift in results in 'turnaround' schools and b) a process of appeal, as it is intended

by Ofqual that any appeal process can only challenge procedure but not outcomes or grades.

I urge the committee to give this matter their full attention and would be more than happy to provide further detail if required.

Elroy Cahill - Headteacher

Kingsley Academy

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