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## *LA Maintained Schools* & *Academies*

In June 2015, Ofsted published statistics outlining the performance of **local authority (LA) maintained schools** and of **academies**.<sup>i</sup>

This short report considers alternative ways of presenting the performance of LA maintained schools and academies, and suggests that published statistics comparing the performance of these two groups needs to be clearer about exactly what is being compared.

## Most recent inspections of Academies and LA Maintained Schools

The statistics Ofsted published in June 2015 can be aggregated to show the **overall grade distributions** of LA maintained schools and academies. As shown below, there is a slightly higher number of *Good* and *Outstanding* LA maintained schools than there are academies when one considers the data from this perspective.

However, this may be partly due to a greater proportion of secondary schools becoming academies, which on average attain lower Ofsted grades than primary schools and the types of schools chosen for each category. So this difference should not be overstated.

	LA Maintained Schools *	Academies **	Sponsored Academies	Converter Academies ***	Free Schools ****
<i>Outstanding</i>	2757	1055	66	989	34
<i>Good</i>	10554	2093	316	1777	72
<i>Requires Improvement</i>	2654	612	259	353	24
<i>Inadequate</i>	295	141	86	55	6
<i>Total</i>	16260	3901	727	3174	136
<i>Good and Outstanding %</i>	82%	81%	53%	87%	78%

\* Limited to community, foundation, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools.

\*\* Includes converter, special converter, special sponsor and sponsor. Excludes alternative provision, free schools, studio schools and UTC. 146 inadequate academies if all types considered.

\*\*\* Includes converter and special converter. Excludes alternative provision.

\*\*\*\* The figures in the table include inspections carried out before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015, except free schools which includes inspections published until the 4<sup>th</sup> August 2015.

## Excluding Converter Predecessor Grades and the Latest Framework

It is possible to consider the inspection data from an alternative perspective by considering the effect of two factors:

Firstly, the Ofsted inspection framework for schools changed substantially in September 2012. This means that **from September 2012 onwards a different set of rules were used to assess schools**. Therefore, comparing inspections carried out either side of that framework change may not provide the best comparison.

Secondly, **when schools move from LA maintained to academy status, the appearance of both cohorts is affected**. For example, when a 'strong' school leaves 'Local Authority control' in order to convert to an academy the LA maintained statistics will appear weaker. The academy statistics will appear stronger as a result because Ofsted retain the **predecessor grade** of Converter Academies. In fact, there are a very large number of *outstanding* converter academies that attained their grade while classed as a LA maintained school. Equally, when a weaker school leaves 'Local Authority control' to become a sponsored academy, the LA maintained picture will look stronger. However, the academy picture does not appear weaker, because predecessor grades of sponsored academies are excluded.

It is possible to adjust the statistics to take into consideration those two factors.

**Below we have only considered inspections under the new framework, and the predecessor grades of converter academies have been excluded:**

	LA Maintained Schools *	Academies **	Sponsored Academies	Converter Academies ***	Free Schools ****
<i>Outstanding</i>	1121	328	46	281	34
<i>Good</i>	7654	1107	290	817	72
<i>Requires Improvement</i>	2653	510	259	251	24
<i>Inadequate</i>	295	140	86	54	6
<i>Total</i>	11723	2085	681	1404	136
<i>Good and Outstanding %</i>	75%	69%	49%	78%	78%

\* Limited to community, foundation, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools.

\*\* Includes converter, special converter, special sponsor and sponsor. Excludes alternative provision, free schools, studio schools and UTC. 146 Inadequate academies if all types considered.

\*\*\* Includes converter and special converter. Excludes alternative provision.

\*\*\*\* The figures in the table included inspections carried out by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 except free schools which includes inspections published by the 4<sup>th</sup> August 2015.

From this perspective, the data shows that there is a **higher** proportion of *Good and Outstanding* LA maintained schools than academies.

**We would welcome comments about the merits of taking these two factors into account, since they result in a very large gap when comparing academies to LA maintained schools.**

Publications that compare LA maintained schools to academies should be very clear whether or not they include grades obtained prior to academisation, and should be clear whether or not they encompass grades obtained under multiple frameworks. In addition publications comparing LA maintained schools to academies should explain what the effect of ignoring these two factors is.

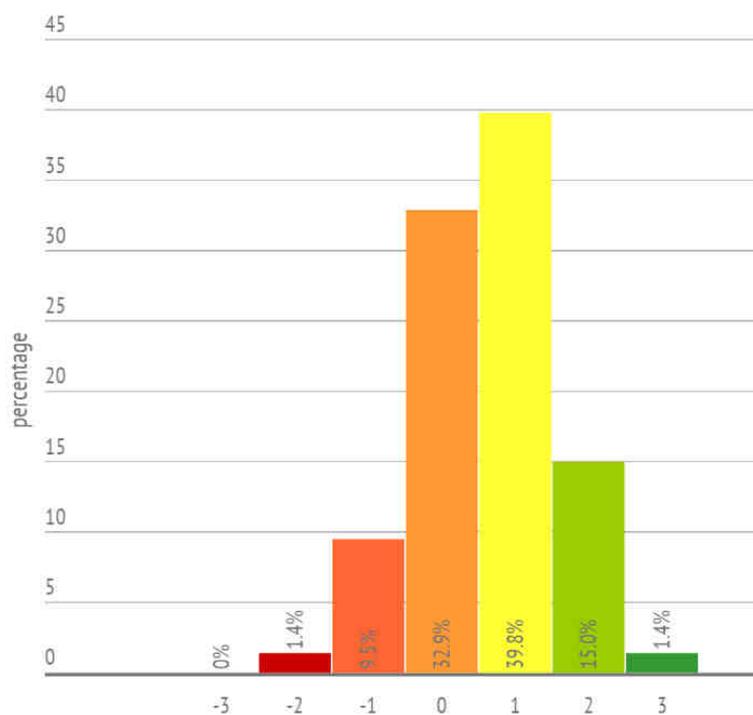
## Sponsored Academies

Recent research by Henry Stewart<sup>ii</sup> of the Local Schools Network<sup>iii</sup> suggested that becoming a sponsored academy may, on average, slow improvement within a school. Stewart's research considers those academies that have been inspected twice since opening as an academy, and compares the sample with LA maintained schools that have been inspected at least twice. This method may have been chosen because it provides a comparison between LA maintained schools and academies, and because the method can be applied to Ofsted's monthly statistics, which contain a previous grade.

However, it is possible to consider the effect of sponsored academies from a different perspective by considering the predecessor grades of sponsored academies, alongside the grades attained after opening as a sponsored academy (rather than considering sponsored academies that have been inspected twice)<sup>iv</sup>.

Of the 1404 open sponsored academies, [Watchsted](#) was able to identify the predecessor grades of approximately 1000 that opened on or after the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012<sup>v</sup>. Over one third of those academies have been inspected since opening as an academy<sup>vi</sup>. **This provides us with a sample of 420 sponsored academies where the latest inspection grade of the academy and the predecessor's latest inspection grade is known.**

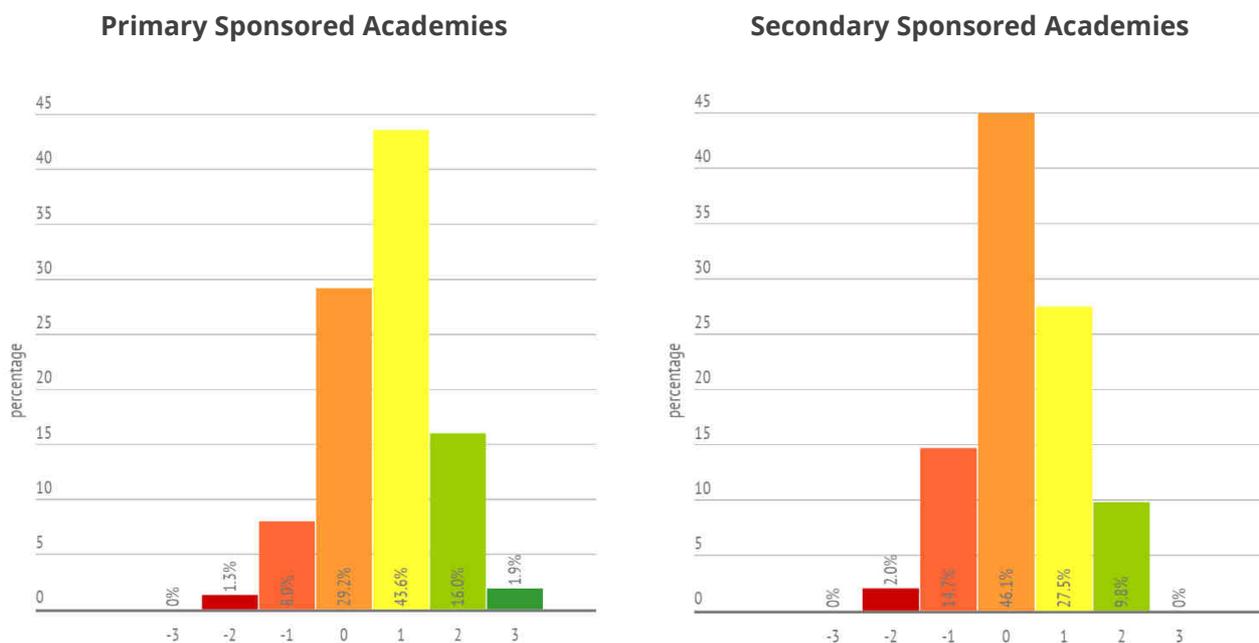
From that sample we can see how many schools have improved, declined or stayed the same since becoming a sponsored academy.



*(Proportional grade shift in schools which have become sponsored academies)*

From this sample, **56% of sponsored academies improved their grade**. However this data does not reveal if the sponsored route is *more or less* effective than other strategies in improving weaker schools as no comparison is provided.

We can compare primary and secondary schools with the sample. **62%** of primary sponsored academies improved whilst **37%** of secondary sponsored academies improved their grade.



We can also consider the starting points of the predecessor schools.

### Inadequate Schools

135 academies in the sample had a predecessor grade of inadequate. Of these 15 remained the same, 58 improved 1 grade, 56 improved by two grades and 6 improved to Outstanding. Thus 89% of inadequate schools in the sample improved their grade through sponsorship.

### Requires improvement and Satisfactory School

225 academies in the sample had a predecessor grade of requires improvement or satisfactory. Of these 23 declined 1 grade, 94 retained the same grade, 101 improved 1 grade and 7 improved by 2 grades. Thus 10% declined, 42% stayed the same and 48% improved.

### **Good Schools**

60 academies in the sample had a predecessor grade of good. Of these 6 declined 2 grades, 17 declined 1 grade, 29 retained their grade and 8 improved their grade. Thus 38% declined, 48% stayed the same and 13% improved (numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding).

### **Overall**

It appears that sponsorship did benefit the majority of the weakest schools in this sample but did not benefit the majority of schools previously found to be good. However the sample only covers sponsored academies that opened in the last three years. A sample covering sponsored academies that opened earlier would add value to the discussion as would a comparison to LA Maintained schools and an understanding of the amount of time taken for improvement to occur.

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- i. [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/maintained-schools-and-academies-inspections-and-outcomes-january-2015-to-march-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/maintained-schools-and-academies-inspections-and-outcomes-january-2015-to-march-2015)
  - ii. [www.localschoolsnetwork.org.uk/2015/06/the-education-bill-a-solution-that-will-harm-schools](http://www.localschoolsnetwork.org.uk/2015/06/the-education-bill-a-solution-that-will-harm-schools)
  - iii. [www.localschoolsnetwork.org.uk/about-us](http://www.localschoolsnetwork.org.uk/about-us)
  - iv. Stewart considers schools that have a predecessor grade of inadequate in this article <http://www.localschoolsnetwork.org.uk/2015/07/dfc-data-sponsored-academies-lead-to-slower-school-improvement/>. The sample in this report includes sponsored academies with any predecessor grade.
  - v. The [reports.ofsted.gov.uk](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk) search functionality does not appear to reveal inspection information about schools closed *prior* to June 2012. Except for 3 schools that are also included in the sample.
  - vi. Includes inspections published by 29<sup>th</sup> June 2015