



Why are the Kingsmead 2022 GCSE Results a Statistical Quirk?

Our usual P8 score is around 0.3-0.35 and we think it would have been much better than this and we were frustrated but there are several reasons why this was much harder to achieve this year that do not even relate to lost learning or the effects of COVID on the children. Most of these were statistical quirks.

- 1) The DFE did not include the Y10 early entry GCSEs, which means every child is missing their two 'first' options from the GCSE score (the ones they really wanted, loved and normally do best in). Many are also missing their early entry MFL GCSE, which influences their languages score. This puts us at a massive statistical disadvantage by comparison to previous years. We decided to do this because it was the right thing by the children rather than by the school. We did not want to narrow their curriculum having offered it to them back in Year 8 as it goes against the mission of the school.
- 2) The children were only taking their Ebacc subjects plus one Option. Nationally only 38.7% of children took the Ebacc last year. That is a hugely challenging curriculum by comparison to some other schools where a language or History/Geography may have been replaced by a non-Ebacc course. Languages entries are dropping because of this and the effect it has on P8 (plus the challenge in finding effective MFL teachers).

<https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/secondary/gcse-2022-ebacc-done-mfl-take-stalls-says-exams-expert>

The difference in ambition and challenge is hidden when making a like for like comparison of mean average outcomes.

- 3) For almost every child, the RE GCSE is one of the eight in Progress 8. This is problematic because RE is taught in one third of the time our normal GCSEs are taught in. This is not because RE is not taken seriously, but precisely because it is. We expect the children to view it as something that needs to be prioritised and learned during Y10 and Y11, otherwise, as in a lot of schools, the statutory RE lessons can become taken far less seriously by the children and become an behaviour and engagement issue. Most importantly, they should learn this knowledge as part of our wider commitment to making sure a child is equipped in society, and if they do, they should have the opportunity to take credit for it. However, this cohort being judged on that normally 'eleventh' GCSE being their 'eighth' GCSE for the purposes of judging school performance is rather brutal on them and the school and again, makes it invalid to directly compare the 2022 and 2019 results.
- 4) The changes to the exams were potentially counter-productive. While it was intended to help, the boards signalling changed content was much more helpful for some schools than others. One example might have been History, where for us a unit learned in Y10 was dropped from the exam, but none of the Y11 content. Schools who had that unit in Y11 then had a situation where they merely had to revise and consolidate after Christmas.
- 5) We serve a community where when things go wrong, they can go badly wrong and we need to work with some children highly effectively for the full five years or more. There are some specific and extreme experiences of the pandemic that are included in our figures when they probably would not have been in the past because we are so effective at providing support and challenge to children over time. We had five children who simply did not turn up for any exams, one who only came in for five GCSEs and another who took plenty, but at a different provision. That is something that simply does not usually happen at Kingsmead. Just the results of those children alone bring the score down by 0.15. By way of illustration, if one the percentage of children who were big negative outliers has jumped through the roof, from 2% to 9%. We will do our best, but we will never give up on a child to suit the statistics.