Guide to the Closing the Gaps section – 2014 onwards

The **SCHOOL INSPECTION HANDBOOK** (September 2015) conveys Ofsted's continued focus on the provision for, and outcomes of, disadvantaged pupils[1], those for whom the pupil premium provides support. It clarifies the importance of closing gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in a school and all other pupils nationally. In paragraph 177, it states,

'Inspectors will take particular account of the progress made by disadvantaged pupils by the end of the key stage compared with that made nationally by other pupils with similar starting points and the extent to which any gaps in this progress, and consequently in attainment, are closing.'

To reflect this continued focus on disadvantaged pupils and the importance of closing gaps between their achievement and that of other pupils nationally, the Closing the Gaps section of RAISEonline was overhauled in 2014. Changes included:

1. Renaming of FSM/CLA as disadvantaged

From 2014, the pupil group previously known as FSM/CLA are referred to as disadvantaged. The group of pupils who are not disadvantaged are described as other pupils. This change ensures consistency with Department for Education and Ofsted publications.

2. All reports are now three year trends

There are no longer single year tables in the Closing the Gaps section. Three year trends are provided for expected progress, value added, average point score (APS) and threshold measures so the extent to which gaps are closing can be seen easily.

3. Greater detail in progress tables

From 2014 onwards, the percentage of pupils making expected progress from separate prior-attainment levels are displayed in the Closing the Gaps section. Aggregate proportions that combine all starting points is no longer shown. The percentage of pupils making more than expected progress from separate prior-attainment levels are also displayed. To reflect its importance, this table is placed first in the Closing the Gaps report and is the only one for which shading is used at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.

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[1] Up to and including 2014 data, disadvantaged pupils were defined as those pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals at any point in the past six years and / or those pupils who have been looked after continuously for six months and were aged 4-15 on 31 August of the academic year in question. From 2015, disadvantaged pupils were defined as those pupils recorded as eligible for and claiming free school meals at any point in the past six years; or those pupils who have been looked after continuously for 1 day or more; or adopted from care, and were aged 4-15 on 31 August of the academic year in question.

4. New approach to shading

A new approach to shading noteworthy numbers was piloted in the 2014 Closing the Gaps reports. This new approach highlights educationally important gaps in progress at Key Stages 2 and 4. Shading is used to indicate educationally important differences and is applied only to the current year's gap between the progress of the school's disadvantaged group and the progress of other pupils nationally from the same starting point.

As there are no progress measures available at **Key Stage 1**, but users require some method to highlight gaps, attainment, as measured by average point score (APS), is used. For **Key Stages 2 and 4**, only the expected progress and more than expected progress measures from different starting points have shading applied.

In summary, shading is applied **only** to:

- figures for disadvantaged pupils in the school
- gaps with national figures for other pupils
- the most recent year's results
- at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4, expected progress and more than expected progress from different starting points
- at Key Stage 1, APS.

How shading is applied

Key Stage 1 APS

For schools with no disadvantaged pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, no figures are shaded.

For any school with a disadvantaged pupil group's APS equal to or greater than the national average for other pupils, the difference is shaded yellow.

Red shading is applied where the APS of a school's disadvantaged group is **below** the national average **and** the gap between APS of the school's disadvantaged group and the national average for other pupils is equal to or greater than two-thirds of a level (4 APS points). No shading is applied where the gap is less than two-thirds of a level (4 APS points).

A worked example of shading at Key Stage 1 (note: data are fictional)

	Key Stage 1 Average Point Score			
	Disadvantaged pupils	National other pupils	Difference	Shading
Overall	15.5	16.0	-0.5	None
Reading	16.7	16.5	0.2	Yellow

Writing	13.2	17.0	-3.8	None
Mathematics	13.0	17.5	-4.5	Red

Progress at Key Stages 2 and Key Stage 4

For schools with no disadvantaged pupils at the end of the key stage, no figures are shaded.

For any school with a percentage of disadvantaged pupils making progress (either expected progress or more than expected progress) equal to or greater than the respective national percentage for other pupils from the same starting point, the difference is shaded yellow.

Red shading is applied where a school's percentage of disadvantaged pupils making progress (either expected progress or more than expected progress) is **below** the respective national percentage for other pupils with the same starting point **and** the gap represents a margin of one or more pupils at Key Stage 2 or three or more pupils at Key Stage 4. The application of these margins is explained in the allowance section below.

Allowance

To calculate whether red shading is applied, the margin is converted into the percentage of pupils in the group that it represents. This difference is called the allowance and is calculated as below. Using the allowance, the steps in the flowchart in figure 1 are followed.

At Key Stage 2, the margin is one pupil. The allowance is the percentage represented by one pupil. To work out the percentage represented by one pupil in a group of disadvantaged pupils (n), calculate 1/n then multiply by 100 or calculate 100 ÷ n.

Key Stage 2 example

For a group of 4 disadvantaged pupils, n=4, the allowance is ¼ x 100 or 100 ÷ 4. This means the allowance is 25 percentage points.

A percentage point (pp) is the unit for the arithmetic difference of two percentages.

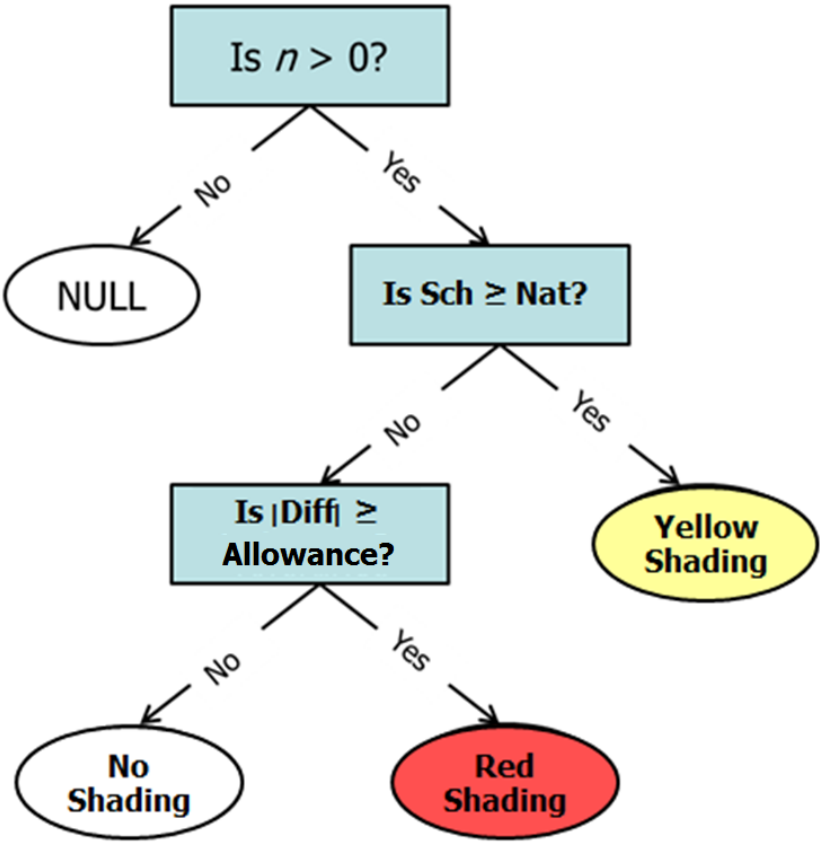
If the difference between the percentage of disadvantaged pupils and the percentage of other pupils nationally making expected progress, or more than expected progress, from the same starting point is greater than or equal to 25pp, the difference are shaded red.

At Key Stage 4, the margin is three pupils. The allowance is the percentage represented by three pupils. To work out the percentage represented by three pupils in a group of n disadvantaged pupils, calculate 3/n then multiply by 100, or calculate 1/n x 3 x 100 or calculate 300 ÷ n.

Key Stage 4 example

For a group of 60 disadvantaged pupils, n=60. The allowance as a percentage of the group is 3/60 x 100 or 1/60 x 3 x 100 or 300 ÷ 60. The allowance is 5pp. If the difference between the percentage of disadvantaged pupils and the percentage of other pupils nationally making expected progress, or more than expected progress, from the same starting point is greater than or equal to 5pp, the difference are shaded red.

Figure 1. A flow chart showing how shading is applied



Key

n	Number of disadvantages pupils in cohort
Sch	School level value for disadvantaged pupils
Nat	National level for non-disadvantaged (other) pupils
Diff	Difference between school and national level

Figure 2: A worked example of shading at Key Stage 2 (not based on actual data)