
Director General for Regulation

Janet Downs
(By email)

13 November 2018

Dear Janet,

Many thanks for your email about the claims made by Damian Hinds on closing the attainment gap in the letter to Angela Rayner.

We have investigated these claims. The statistics on which the claims are based are from statistical releases published by the Department for Education, DfE.

At primary school level, the [National curriculum assessments at key stage 2 in England, 2017 \(revised\)](#) release states that 'The gap between disadvantaged pupils and others, measured using the disadvantage gap index, has decreased in each of the last six years, narrowing by 1.3% in the latest year and 10.5% since 2011.'

At secondary school level, the [Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England, 2016 to 2017](#) release states 'The gap between disadvantaged pupils and others, measured using the gap index, decreased in five of the last six years, narrowing by 10.0% overall since 2011.'

We note your concerns about impact of changes to the way outcomes has been measured between 2011 and 2018 for both primary (changes in Key Stage 2 SATs) and secondary (Progress 8, Attainment 8 and reformed GCSEs) on the comparability over time of these measures. In 2014 DfE published a methodology note and consultation on '[Measuring disadvantaged pupils' attainment gaps over time](#)'. This acknowledged the issues with comparing both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 attainment over time and presented a method specifically designed to measure the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils over time. This method is the disadvantage gap index presented in the statistical releases and quoted by the minister. DfE are clear that due to the new headline measures introduced in 2016, and changes to comparability as a result of reformed GCSEs and point scales in 2017, it is recommended that the gap index is used to look at the difference in attainment between disadvantaged and other pupils over time.

Your sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation