

Coasting schools definition

The Education and Adoption Act 2016 allows the Department to identify, support and take action in coasting schools for the first time. These are schools where, over time, pupils do not fulfil their potential.

In January 2017 the Department published regulations setting out a three year definition of coasting⁵ based on the same performance measures that underpin the floor standards. This year a primary school will fall within the coasting definition if:

- In 2014 fewer than 85% of pupils achieved level 4 in English reading, English Writing and mathematics and below the national median percentage of pupils achieved expected progress in all of English reading, English writing and mathematics;
- In 2015 fewer than 85% of pupils achieved level 4 in English reading, English Writing and mathematics and below the national median percentage of pupils achieved expected progress in all of English reading, English writing and mathematics,
- In 2016 fewer than 85% of pupils achieve the expected standard at the end of primary schools and average progress made by pupils is less than -2.5 in English reading, -2.5 in mathematics or -3.5 in English writing

A school will have to be below the relevant coasting threshold in all three years to fall within the overall coasting definition. Schools will be excluded from the coasting measure in 2016 if:

- they have fewer than 11 pupils at the end of key stage 2; or
 - fewer than 50% of pupils have key stage 1 assessments that can be used to establish which prior attainment grouping the pupil should be allocated to; or
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- there is not sufficient key stage 2 attainment information to produce progress scores because there are fewer than 6 pupils with key stage 2 results for a particular subject; or
- the school closes within the academic year⁶.

Any school that is excluded from the coasting measure in a particular year cannot be defined as coasting until it has three consecutive years of data that meets the coasting definition.

The coasting definition will apply to all mainstream maintained schools and academies with the relevant key stage 2 data. It will not apply to PRUs, special schools, alternative provision academies or maintained nursery schools.

Once a school has fallen within the coasting definition, Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs) will engage the school to consider its wider context, and decide whether additional support is needed. Action will not be automatic and the focus will be on helping schools to improve in order to drive up standards.

More detail about the processes that RSCs will follow and the factors they may consider in determining the appropriate support for schools identified as coasting is set out in the Schools Causing Concern guidance⁷.

