

Appendix 1 – Narrative Explanation of the Secondary Low Prior Attainment Factor

The prior attainment factor acts as a proxy indicator for low level, high incidence and special educational needs.

National curriculum tests are developed to be as similar as possible year on year but the difficulty of tests may vary between years. The raw scores attained by pupils (total number of marks scored in a test) are scaled help test results to be reported consistently from one year to the next and maintain their meaning over time. The 'expected standard' is always a scaled score of 100. Pupils who do not reach the expected standard in any one or more of reading or writing or maths are classified as having 'Low Prior Attainment' (LPA).

Key Stage 2 (KS2) tests are externally marked and returned to schools in the 'Pupil results' section of [NCA tools](#). For each registered pupil, schools will receive¹:

- a raw score
- a scaled score (except where a pupil has too few marks to be awarded the minimum scaled score)
- either 'NS' (expected standard not achieved) or 'AS' (expected standard achieved)

For 2017-18, the year 7 cohort was the first to take the new, more challenging KS2 tests (at the end of the academic year 2015-16). This cohort will include a much higher proportion of year 7 pupils identified as LPA. To ensure this does not have a disproportionate influence within the funding formula, a national weighting to scale back this proportion has been used. This weighting scales back the proportion of LPA pupils to a level commensurate with levels under the previous KS2 tests. The weighting for the 2018/19 year 7 cohort is calculated by scaling back to levels of LPA pupils in October 2015².

The weightings for the financial year 2018/2019 are:

- For pupils in year 7 in October 2017: 58%
- For pupils in year 8 in October 2017: 48%

The number of pupils identified as low prior attainment (LPA) will be multiplied by the relevant weighting to identify the number of pupils eligible for the factor for funding purposes. Local authorities will not be able to change the weighting, but will be able to adjust the secondary LPA unit value. This allows local authorities to maintain their LPA factor at previous levels without any turbulence.

LPA funding will be allocated to all pupils identified as not reaching the standard at the previous stage, regardless of their year group. Except this does not apply to those in their first year of schooling. Pupils who have not undertaken the assessment are given the overall average attainment score of their year group, so that they are taken into account when calculating a school's LPA rate.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/scaled-scores-at-key-stage-2>

² Calculation:

A. The number of LPA pupils as a proportion of all secondary pupils nationally will be calculated using the number of pupils from autumn 2015 School census. These pupils are expected to be in Year 8 and above in the academic year 2017-2018.

B. The number of pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in any one or more of reading or writing or maths 2016 KS2 tests will be calculated as a national proportion of all pupils who have a valid KS2 test result. These pupils are assumed to represent the LPA population in year 7 in the academic year.

C. The national year 7 weighting will be calculated as A divided by B.