



A Primary school guide to FFT Aspire in 2015/16

Summary

This guide will help you to get the most out of FFT Aspire in 2015/16. It contains details of the following important changes in your school's FFT Aspire system:

- Roll forward of Year Groups
- Removal of levels for target setting at KS1 and KS2
- Introduction of new target setting bandings at KS1 and KS2

Roll forward of Year Groups

As part of the September 2015 release, year groups in your FFT Aspire system have been rolled forward for the new 2015/16 academic year. This means that pupils are now in their correct year groups (e.g. Year 2 pupils in 2014/15 have been rolled forward to Year 3). Please be aware that new year groups, such as Year 1 for infant and primary schools, and Year 3 for Junior schools, will initially be empty until pupil data is either imported manually by schools or updated by FFT in January 2016 using the 2015 autumn census data. For further details on how to import new pupil groups, please refer to the 'Importing Pupils' guidance notes in the [FFT Aspire Help Centre](#).

Manually importing year groups and individual pupils

Manually importing new pupils allows FFT Aspire to cross-reference these pupils with the National Pupil Database. This provides schools with a full term by term history for each pupil including prior attainment, attendance, previous schools and other context data. This data is available in the Student Explorer area of Aspire.

Further help preparing and using FFT Aspire in your school

To support schools with using FFT Aspire for target setting in the autumn term, we have released a simple flow chart which summarises the main points above. This can be found on the following page. Detailed guidance on both the administration and use of FFT Aspire can also be accessed directly from the [Help Centre in our Aspire administration site](#) as well as our main [Help Centre in Aspire](#).

FFT's new Primary School Benchmark Estimates

Summary

- FFT have introduced a new set of KS1 and KS2 estimates based on 'bands' rather than levels
- There are three bands at KS1 – (W) Working towards the national standard, (N) National Standard, (A) Above national standard
- There are five bands at KS2 – (B) Below national standard, (W) Working towards national standard, (N) National Standard, (A) Above national standard and (M) Mastery
- The bands will be available for KS1 Reading, Writing, Maths, Science, Speaking and Listening
- The bands will be available for KS2 Reading, Writing, Maths and Science with Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling likely to follow later in the autumn term.
- The bands will be used at pupil level – each pupil will have a most likely band as well as probabilities for achieving other bands
- The bands will be used at school level to show the % of pupils estimated to achieve N or above and A or above. KS2 will also include % of pupils estimated to achieve M
- FFT Aspire will continue to provide schools with differentiated levels of challenge for progress between key stages – Average progress, High progress and Very High progress.

Background

Attainment targets and national curriculum levels were first introduced in 1988. With the introduction of the new national curriculum in September 2015, statutory assessment will change significantly with levels no longer used for assessment purposes. From summer 2016 onwards, national tests at both Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2) will be reported in the form of 'scaled scores' with pupils expected to achieve a new 'national standard'. New performance descriptors will also be introduced for Teacher Assessment at KS1 and KS2.

These changes will have a significant impact on schools in terms of assessment, monitoring and target setting. Whilst the Government has given schools the freedom to develop their own approaches to in-school assessments, this has also led to problems as schools seek to align in-year pupil progress monitoring with end of key stage assessment.

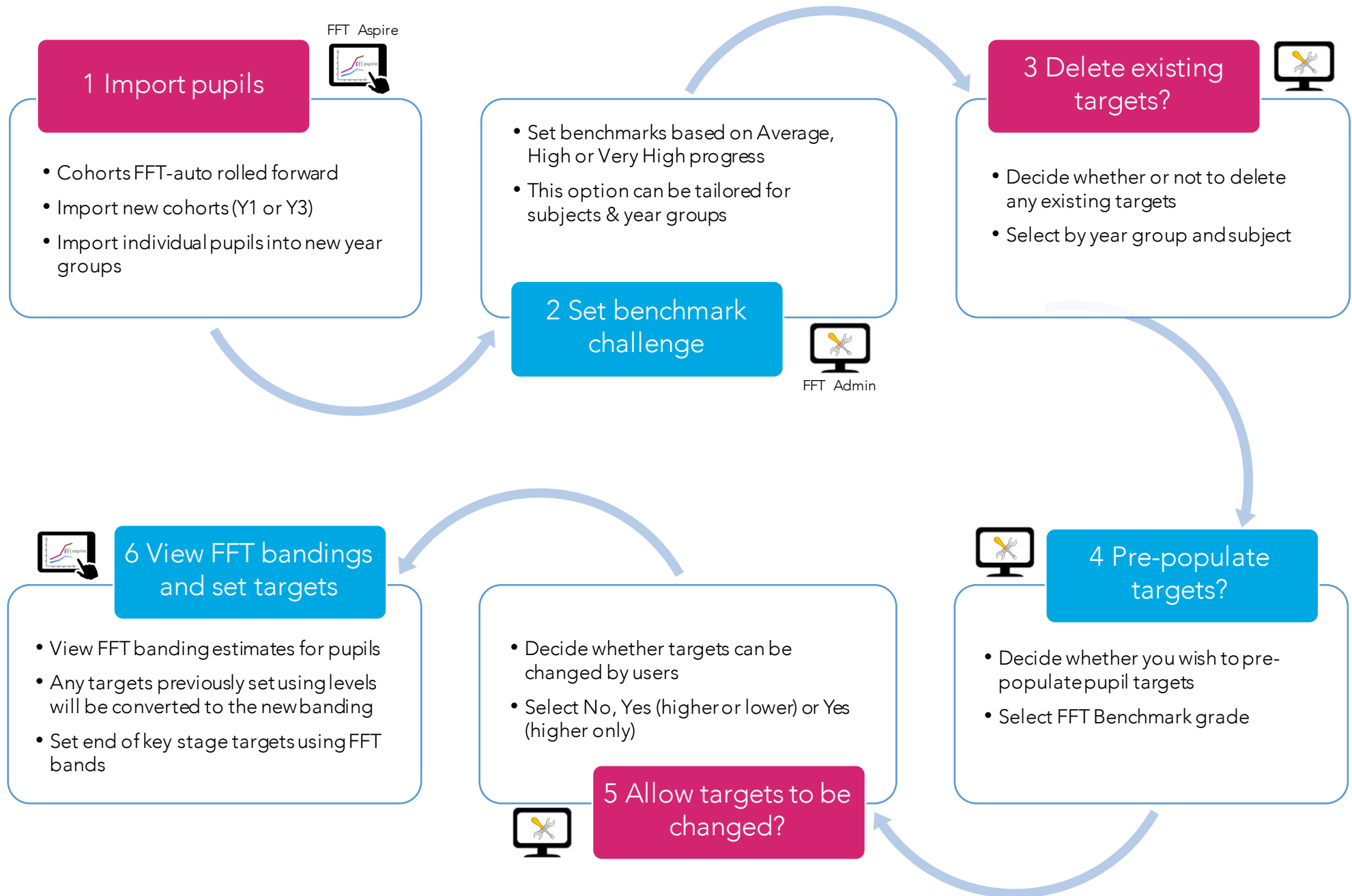
This document outlines FFT's plans for supporting target setting in schools at both KS1 and KS2.

Consultation with schools and LAs

Last year, FFT consulted with schools and LAs on plans for benchmarking and target setting from 2015/16 onwards. What became increasingly clear was that 2015/16 would be a transition year in terms of data, assessment and teaching. However, there was a general consensus around a number of issues:

- It was recognised that it would be difficult to achieve a 'one size fits all' solution in terms of target setting at the end of KS2 or KS1
- Generally, it was felt that benchmark estimates using traditional levels should be removed as this would potentially lead to confusion and could prolong a reliance on their use for end of key stage target setting.
- Whilst some schools saw the use in having a scaled score estimate (a number based on a score around 100), the majority did not think it would be useful as a 'target' at this stage.
- Many schools had started to use a system of 'bandings' for target setting and monitoring progress. Whilst a number of different systems were being employed, these tended to centre around 3-5 bands based around expected national standards (e.g. below national standard, at national standard, above national standard)

fftaspire Preparing KS1 & 2 Aspire Target Setting in Autumn 2015

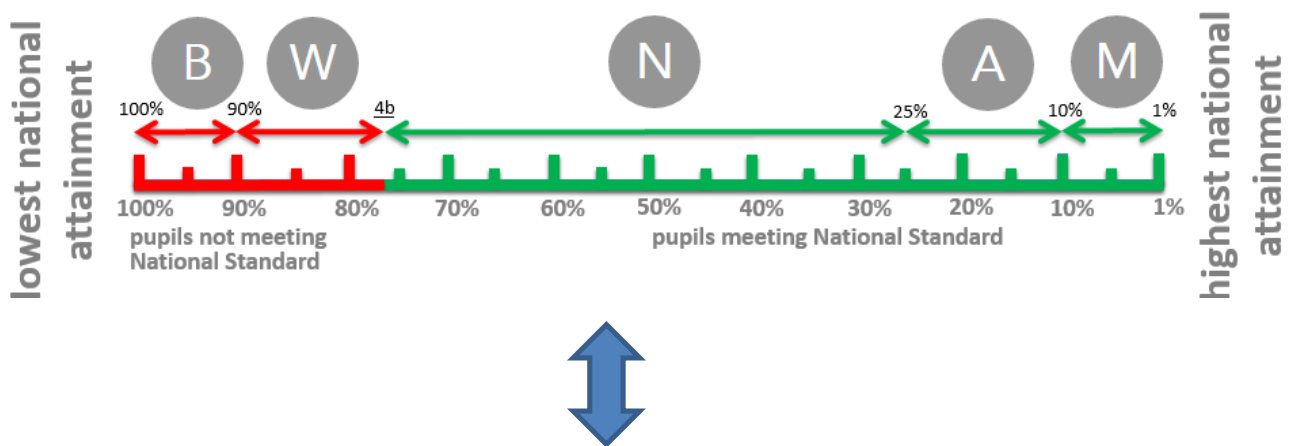


- Schools saw a logic to using the existing draft DfE performance descriptors rather than FFT introducing a new set of bands and names.
- As well as including probabilities, schools welcomed the idea of using a '+' or '-' against a 'most likely band' to indicate the likelihood of a pupil achieving a particular band.

New FFT Benchmark bands at KS2

As a result of the consultation and following further work to develop new models, FFT have now introduced a new set of benchmarks for the autumn term.

As full details on scaled scores will not be published until after the 2016 tests have been taken and marked, the benchmarks will initially be based on a set of 'bands' using the draft DfE performance descriptor names based around the expected 'national standard'. The DfE have indicated that the proportion of pupils attaining the new 'national standard' will be similar to the percentage of pupils currently attaining a 4B or above at Key Stage 2 (2B+ at Key Stage 1). The new FFT bands are outlined below:



FFT Benchmark	Code used on benchmark reports	Meet National Standard?	Proportion of pupils within each FFT benchmark (approx.)
Below national standard	B	Does not meet the national standard	Bottom 10% of pupils nationally
Working towards national standard	W	Does not meet the national standard	Between bottom 10% of pupils and national standard (approx. equivalent to 4B)
National standard	N	Meets the national standard	Between national standard (4B) and top 25%
Above national standard	A	Meets the national standard	Between top 25% and top 10%
Mastery	M	Meets the national standard	Top 10% of pupils nationally

IMPORTANT: Please note that the bands are NOT meant to align perfectly with the draft DfE performance descriptors used for Teacher Assessment. Following consultation with schools last year, there was a general consensus that it would be helpful to use a similar naming convention to the DfE rather than developing a completely new 'FFT' naming convention. The FFT bands do however act as a useful guide to target setting and focused support, particularly around the National Standard boundary.

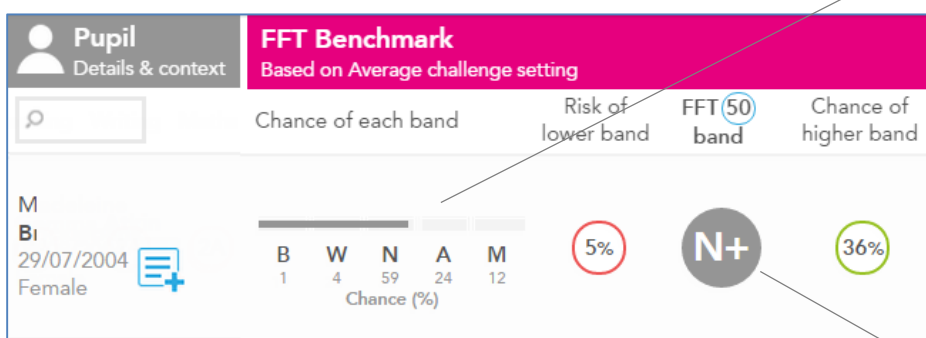
The new benchmark estimates bands are based on pupils' prior attainment, gender and month of birth but use an updated model to place pupils on national ranking from the bottom 1% to the top 1%. The new model will also allow FFT to adapt the system for new baseline and KS1 TAs/tests in the future. The new bands will initially be available for the following subjects:

- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics
- Science
- *Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling is likely to follow later in the autumn term*

What will the new Target Setting reports look like?

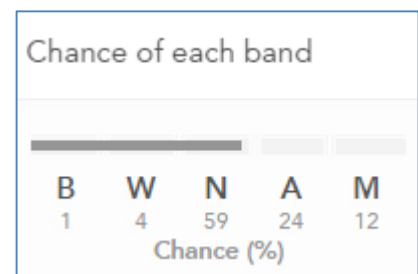
Pupil Reports

Within FFT Aspire, schools can continue to use the familiar FFT challenge levels introduced last year (average, high & very high). Chances are now provided for each of the new FFT bands – B, W, N, A and M as indicated below.



For the level of challenge selected, an FFT benchmark band is also included. At least 50% of pupils are estimated to achieve this band or a higher band. It is important to note that whilst this single band is a good starting point for target setting discussions, the full range of benchmarks across each level of challenge must be explored too. Note that the benchmark band in this case is N+. All benchmark bands are shown in 1 of 3 states (e.g. N-, N or N+). The '+' or '-' symbols are used to indicate where the pupil has a greater or lesser chance of achieving the benchmark band. An N+ benchmark estimate, for example, shows that the pupil may have a good chance of achieving the next band up or higher. Likewise, an N- would indicate a higher risk of achieving a lower band.

In the example above, the pupil has a 95% chance of achieving the national standard – 59% (N) + 24% (A) + 12% (M). Her FFT benchmark band is an N+ indicating that she has a reasonable chance (36% or nearly 4 in 10) of achieving an A or high

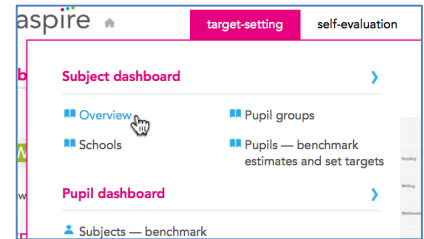


Setting targets using the new benchmarks

For each subject, FFT Aspire allows the input of an individual band as a target. FFT will calculate the chance of achieving this target based on the level of challenge selected AND the progress of similar pupils in YOUR OWN SCHOOL over the past 3 years. Please note that targets can only be set using full bands e.g. 'N' or 'A'. Aspire does not allow you to use '+' or '-' for targets.

Aggregated benchmark reports

The Aspire target setting dashboard includes aggregated reports at subject level giving you an idea of future KS2 performance over the next 4 years. You can view all subjects on a single page (Overview report) or a single subject broken down into pupil groups (Pupil Groups report).

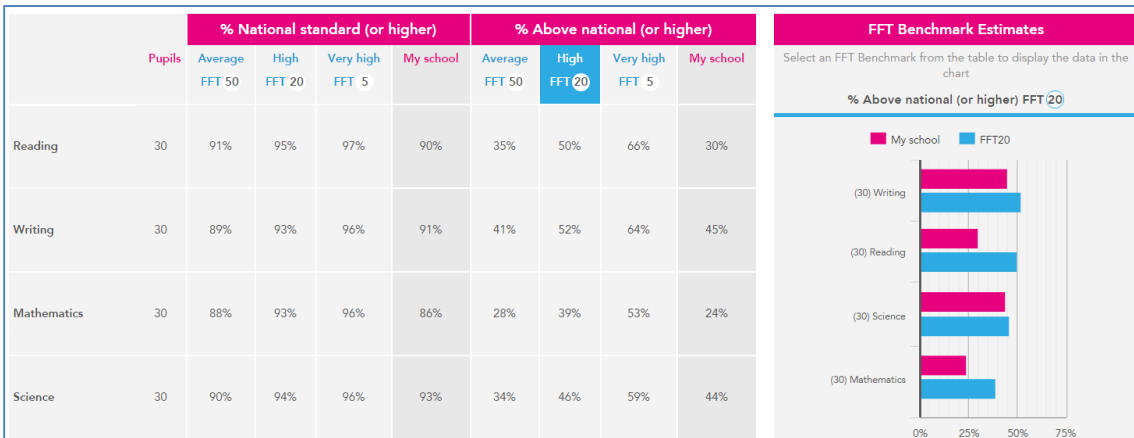


Both reports allow you to view 3 indicators at a subject level:

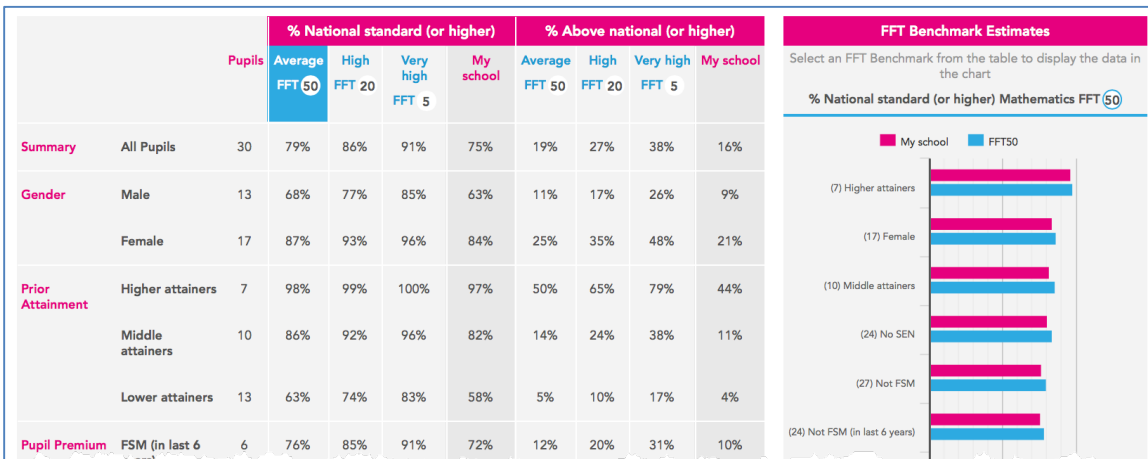
- % at National standard (or higher)
- % at Above national standard (or higher)
- % at Mastery

Examples of both the Overview and Pupil Groups report are shown below:

An example KS2 Target Setting Overview report



An example KS2 Target Setting Pupil Groups report



New FFT Benchmark bands at KS1

KS1 bands in FFT Aspire Target Setting are broadly similar to KS2. However, unlike KS2 which has five bands, KS1 has only three:

FFT Benchmark	Code used on benchmark reports	Meet National Standard?	Equivalence/proportion of pupils within each FFT benchmark (approx.)
Working towards national standard	W	Does not meet the national standard	Broadly equivalent to L2C or below
National standard	N	Meets the national standard	Broadly equivalent to L2B/2A
Above national standard	A	Meets the national standard	Broadly equivalent to L3

IMPORTANT: Please note that the bands are NOT meant to align perfectly with the draft DfE performance descriptors used for Teacher Assessment. Following consultation with schools last year, there was a general consensus that it would be helpful to use a similar naming convention to the DfE rather than developing a completely new 'FFT' naming convention. The FFT bands do however act as a useful guide to target setting and focused support, particularly around the National Standard boundary.

The new benchmark estimates bands are based on pupils' prior attainment, gender and month of birth but use an updated model to place pupils on national ranking from the bottom 1% to the top 1%. The new KS1 bands will initially be available for the following subjects:

- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics
- Science
- Speaking and Listening



Frequently Asked Questions

What is a scaled score and how is it calculated?

Scaled scores are commonly used in education and allow results to be reported consistently from one year to the next. Whilst national curriculum tests are designed to be as similar as possible year on year, slight differences in difficulty will occur between years. Scaled scores maintain their meaning over time so that two pupils achieving the same scaled score on two different tests will have demonstrated the same attainment.

Scaled scores are usually calculated around an average score of 100 with some lower attaining pupils scoring less than 100 and higher attaining pupils more than 100. A pupil's scaled score will be based on their raw test score – i.e. the marks they receive. All pupils' raw scores can be mapped on a scale from the lowest score to the highest allowing a scaled score (around 100) to be produced for each pupil.

The DfE has indicated that 100 will always represent the 'national standard'. However, due to the small differences in difficulty between tests, the 'raw score' (i.e. the total number of correct responses) that equates to 100 might be different (though similar) each year. The DfE have also indicated that the national standard will broadly equate to a Level 4b at Key Stage 2 and Level 2b at Key Stage 1. The DfE will not calculate the scaled scores until they have received and analysed the 2016 raw scores from the tests themselves.

How do the KS2 bands relate to DfE scaled scores?

When pupils sit their KS2 tests in 2016, they will receive a mark, a scaled score and indication of whether they meet the national standard. The scaled score will be a 'standardised score' based around 100 – the national standard. The DfE has indicated that a score of 100 will be roughly equivalent to a current level 4B.

The new FFT estimate model uses scaled scores both for inputs (prior attainment) and outputs (in the form of bands) with the bottom of the N band (National Standard) roughly equivalent to the bottom of a level 4B. However, because the DfE will not finalise actual scaled scores until next year (2016), we have decided not to include a specific scaled score estimate this year. Once scaled scores are available, we will consult with schools on whether to include scaled scores in next year's Target Setting reports.

FFT use the same bandings as those used by the DfE for their draft performance descriptor headings. Are they the same thing?

No. Whilst the FFT bands use the same headings as the draft DfE performance descriptors – Below national standard (KS2 only), Working towards national standard, National standard, Above national standard, Mastery (KS2 only) - they will not necessarily align precisely with the draft DfE performance descriptors used for teacher assessment. The FFT bands are based on statistical modelling of current national attainment and progress distributions. Using these models, we can align all pupils based on their prior attainment and use this data to band pupils from top to bottom. The Mastery band for example, is based on the likelihood of a pupil being in the top 10% of pupils nationally whilst the Above National Standard band is based on the likelihood of being in the top 25% of pupils nationally.

During consultation, schools generally felt that it was better to use existing draft descriptor headings rather than creating a new set of FFT banding headings.



Benchmark bands include '+' and '-' symbols (e.g. N-, A+) but targets don't. Why is this?

We have included '+' and '-' benchmark bands to give a more detailed indication of whether a pupil is likely to achieve a particular band. An N- for example may indicate that a pupil is likely to be on the borderline of the national standard and may require further support to ensure they do reach this level. Likewise, an N+ may indicate that a pupil has a reasonable chance of achieving a higher band and ultimately a higher scaled score.

When inputting a target in Aspire we believe that at the present time, five bands (B, W, N, A and M) provides schools with enough variation to allow sensible target setting, intervention and focused support for pupils. This was also the general view of schools during consultation. We will of course review this approach again next summer following the release of 2016 test data.