

Target Setting: A Guide for Parents & Carers

September 2025



How do we set targets?

Like many schools, we use The Fischer Family Trust (FFT) to set targets for our students. Targets are based on each student's Key Stage 2 SATs results and are based on evidence from their large database of previous students' attainment. They give an indication of what current students' should be aiming for, based on what students with similar Key Stage 2 scores went on to get at Key Stage 4 in the past. They are not an individual prediction, but an indication of where a student should be aiming, as explained in this guide for parents and carers.

Who is The Fischer Family Trust?

The Fischer Family Trust (FFT) is a not-for-profit organisation. It processes the National Pupil Database for the Department of Education and provides data and analysis to all schools in England and Wales. Based on this database, they are able to tell us the chances of our current students getting particular grades at Key Stage 4, based on the attainment of previous students with similar starting points. (By 'similar', FFT refers to previous students with the same Key Stage 2 scores, the same gender and the same month of birth.)



<https://fft.org.uk/>

What do The Fischer Family Trust do?

They take the GCSE scores of all students each year and analyse them according to those students' Key Stage 2 SATs scores. They then use this to work out the probability of our current students getting particular grades at Key Stage 4, based on their Key Stage 2 scores.

They then suggest the most likely grades for the end of Key Stage 4, and we use these to inform the setting of ambitious and aspirational targets for students.

What if my child didn't do the Key Stage 2 SATs?

Because of the pandemic, there were no Key Stage 2 SATs in 2020 and 2021. This means that our current Year 10s and 11s do not have SATs scores. Instead, they did CATs (Cognitive Aptitude Tests) with us during Key Stage 3 and FFT used these to carry out similar analysis and provide grades. We then reviewed these for September 2024 and compared them to students' grades in subjects. We increased a number of students' targets in light of their progress.

If your child didn't sit the Key Stage 2 SATs for any other reason e.g. your child has moved to Caldew from a school outside England, we will ask their teachers to suggest an appropriate target grade, based on their early assessments. Again, these will be reviewed.

Why are my child's targets different in different subjects?

FFT's analysis is based on subject-specific data at Key Stage 4, and takes into account the different components of the Key Stage 2 SATs. This means that they can provide individual probabilities for all subjects. The example below shows this: this example student's Key Stage 2 results have been compared to similar students from the past. Based on this historical data, the likelihood of the example student achieving each grade is shown below, for a sample of subjects. For example, whilst 25% of students with similar starting points went on to get a grade 5 in Chemistry, 38% attained a lower grade and 37% attained higher. The target grade would be a 5, but in reality, some will do better than this, whilst others will do worse.

Subject	FFT Benchmark Based on subjects challenge setting	Pupil target data Combine data, knowledge & aspiration					
	Chance of each grade or higher	Risk of lower grade	Benchmark grade	Chance of higher grade	Target grade	How likely?	Target reviewed?
Art and Design		35%	4 FFT20 High	42%	4	65%	×
Biology		39%	5 FFT20 High	35%	5	61%	×
Chemistry		38%	5 FFT20 High	37%	5	62%	×
Computing		48%	4- FFT20 High	33%	4	52%	×
D and T Food Technology		48%	4- FFT20 High	31%	4	52%	×
Dance		50%	5- FFT20 High	28%	5	50%	×

How can you use Key Stage 2 scores in Maths and English to predict performance in creative subjects like Art, Drama and Music?

The National Pupil Database shows that there is a correlation where students with higher Key Stage 2 scores go on to achieve the highest grades at Key Stage 4, even in subjects where those Maths and English skills seem less relevant. However, there is a weaker correlation in these subjects i.e. more students with very low Key Stage 2 results may go on to get the highest GCSE grades in Art than in subjects more closely linked to the Key Stage 2 results, like Maths.

How can FFT predict the future?

They can't. Their work is based on evidence from previous students' attainment, so they are saying what has happened in the past, not what will definitely happen in the future. It is then applied to current students' Key Stage 2 scores to say what the probability of getting each grade is. In reality, nine students with the same SATs scores could each get a different grade at GCSE. There are other factors which affect students' achievement.

What else makes a difference to my child's achievement?

One of the biggest factors is attendance: students who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve well, as are students who engage positively in school, are motivated to work hard in lessons and complete homework as well as they can. Your support at home can make a difference too- reading and numeracy practice, revision support, ensuring organisation and general encouragement all helps.