



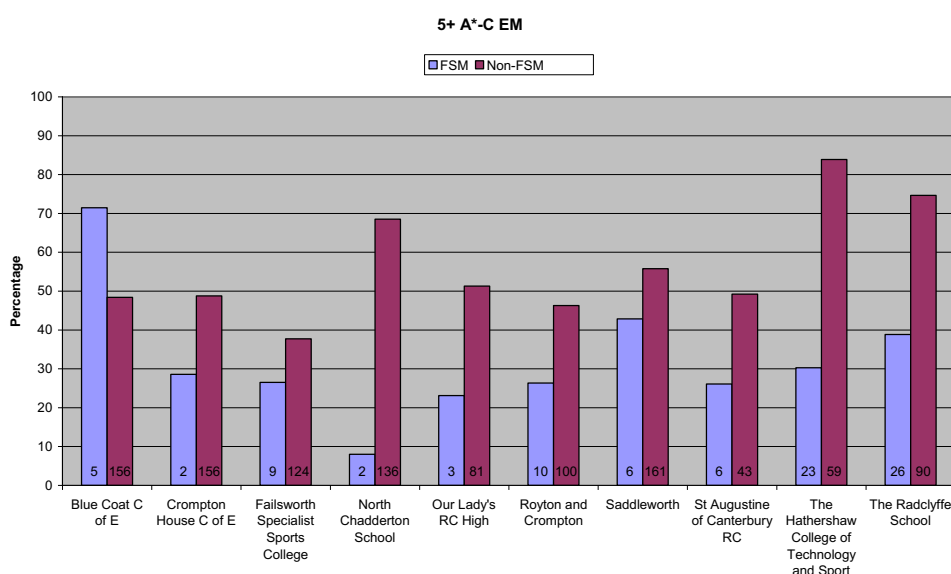
OLDHAM SECONDARY
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
SERVICE
- MENTAL TOUGHNESS AND
ACCELERATE

The attainment and progress gaps between students in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) and those not, is significant and stubborn. Addressing this issue is a priority for Oldham LA, as it is for many others.

5+ A*-C inc Eng and Ma	
Year	Gap between FSM/non-FSM (%)
2006	19.2
2007	28.2
2008	22.7
2009	27.3
2010	25.2

These LA average figures could be said to conceal as much as they reveal.

The chart below shows the 'gap' information for each of the LAs 10 secondary schools in 2009.



Oldham LA is working in partnership with both its secondary schools and colleagues from National Strategies to implement a programme, entitled Accelerate, designed to close the attainment and progress FSM gaps as measured in GCSE results and KS2-4 progress data. Five of Oldham's 10 secondary schools are participating in the programme, with a focus on FSM students in Year 10.

In offering the programme to schools, it was made clear that using Mental Toughness to assess and then address individual student needs was a core part of the Accelerate programme. Further, participating schools agreed that each student in the Accelerate cohort would have an identified performance coach who would be charged with supporting each student as s/he steered a course through KS4.

	% FSM in Year Group (LA average 19%)	No of FSM students in Year Group
Accelerate School 1	15	45
Accelerate School 2	8	23
Accelerate School 3	16	33
Accelerate School 4	17	44
Accelerate School 5	17	24

The *Accelerate* cohort, therefore, comprises 205 Year 10 students:

Gender	
Boys	99
Girls	106
Ethnicity	
White British	155
Bangladeshi	22
Pakistani Heritage	12
Black Caribbean	4
Others	12
SEN:	
none	156
School Action	35
School Action Plus	11
Statemented	3
Persistent Absentee students	20
Fixed Term exclusions	30 (2 students with 5 FT exclusions each and 3 students with 4 FT exclusions each)
Permanent Exclusions.	2

In terms of attainment and progress, the *Accelerate* cohort did not present a normal distribution pattern but was skewed to the middle and lower groupings. There were individual exceptions, but the overall picture was of a cohort of students who would gain lower grades at GCSE and would be less likely than average to make 3 levels of progress between KS2 and 4.

In compiling a spread sheet which created a Virtual School of the *Accelerate* cohort, information was added concerning the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) tag for each student. As the IMD is calculated from post code information it needs to be treated with caution, but it was felt that use of IMD data would add some refinement to the measure of Free School Meals and would also allow some mapping of the location of the *Accelerate* cohort within the Oldham context. For example, IMD information showed that within the *Accelerate* cohort were students with an IMD of 80 and students with an IMD of 1 (where 100 = most affluent and 1 =

most deprived). At the very least this raised interesting questions about the significant range of socio-economic circumstances that could be experienced by students who all were linked by the FSM tag.

Mental Toughness and Accelerate

Having begun to form a view that, without effective action, the *Accelerate* cohort was destined to become a largely low-attaining and slow-progress grouping, it was interesting to see how the Mental Toughness scores of this population showed a normal distribution or were skewed towards middling and lower scores.

(Student and school profiles from October 2010 showed this to be the case.) Most importantly, it was crucial to use information gained to shape an effective response which would support students in changing attitudes and behaviours in ways which would support raised levels of performance in KS4, and support students as successful life-long learners and achievers.

Whilst noting that the FSM tag established this cohort as an identifiable group in assessment terms, it was also recognised that the 205 students were a highly diverse grouping where each student required a personalised programme of intervention and coaching to raise levels of Mental Toughness which would have a beneficial impact on student attainment and progress at GCSE.

School leads for *Accelerate* have been fully briefed on developing personalised coaching strategies using insights gained from Mental Toughness. School leads are supported by LA links, who in turn have the support of National Strategy staff in ensuring that work is undertaken with an appropriate sense of

urgency and effectiveness. Progress is reviewed by the whole team – school leads, LA leads, and National Strategy partners - every half-term with a half-day review meeting.