

Council Maintained Schools & Academies

Government policy no longer seeks to force academisation of all schools. However there are already 5,905 academies, 61% of secondary schools are academies, 21% of primary schools are academies and over 1000 schools are in the pipeline to become academies¹. Of the 5,905 academies, there are 4,166 converter academies and 1,739 sponsored academies, which means that the majority of academies were typically stronger council maintained schools.

This report considers alternative methods of data presentation and analysis to assess the performance of council maintained schools, and of academies. In addition, the report particularly focuses on analysing the performance of over 800 **sponsored academies**, 30 **academy sponsors** and **converter academies**.

*The first version of this report was published in August 2015 an updated version was submitted in evidence to [parliaments education committee](#) by the [LGA](#). However, this **updated and expanded** report includes the additions of:*

- Further historical data from [Ofsted](#)
- New performance data from [Watchsted](#)
- Analysis of academy sponsors (using this wider dataset)
- Analysis of converter academies since academisation
- Analysis of converter academies vs. council Maintained schools

1. Analysis of Inspections by School Type

Using Ofsted's methodology and published data, the **overall grade distributions** of council maintained schools and academies are shown below. There is a higher percentage of *Good* and *Outstanding* council maintained schools than there are academies when one considers the data from this perspective.

	Council Maintained Schools *	Academies **	Sponsored Academies	Converter Academies ***	Free Schools ****
<i>Outstanding</i>	2725	1309	97	1212	44
<i>Good</i>	10801	2967	525	2442	81
<i>Requires Improvement</i>	1185	661	268	393	16
<i>Inadequate</i>	179	121	65	56	7
<i>Total</i>	14890	5058	955	4103	148
% Good and Outstanding	91%	85%	65%	89%	84%
<i>Not Inspected</i>	39	783	769	14	144

FIG 1 NOTES:

The figures in the table include Ofsted inspections carried out up until 31st December 2016 (as published in Ofsted monthly statistics).

- * Limited to community schools, community special schools, foundation schools, foundation special schools, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools.
- ** Includes converter, special converter, special sponsor led and sponsor led. Excludes alternative provision, free schools, studio schools and UTC.
- *** Includes converter and special converter. Excludes alternative provision.
- **** Excludes alternative provision.

Comparing the performance of council maintained schools and academies from this perspective is affected by a number of factors.

Firstly, the Ofsted inspection framework **changes over time** and it changed substantially in September 2012ⁱⁱ. This means that, **from September 2012 onwards, a different set of rules were used to assess schools**. Therefore, including inspections carried out prior to that framework may not provide the best comparison. We provide an analysis from this perspective below.

Secondly, **when schools move from *council maintained* to *academy* status, the appearance of both cohorts is affected.**

For example, when a Good or Outstanding council maintained school converts to an academy, **the council maintained statistics will appear weaker** from then on. **The academy statistics will appear stronger**, because **Ofsted retain the predecessor grades of converter academies**. In fact, 65% of *Outstanding* converter academies attained their grade while classed as *council maintained* as did 52% of *Good* converter academiesⁱⁱⁱ.

When a council maintained school that is Inadequate or Requires Improvement becomes a sponsored academy, **the council maintained picture will look stronger**. However, **the academy picture does *not* appear weaker**, because **Ofsted excludes the predecessor grades of sponsored academies**.

Thirdly, Ofsted has reduced the inspection frequency of Good and Outstanding schools relative to lower-performing schools. This may have resulted in the inflation of the proportion of Good and Outstanding schools in aggregated figures as explained by Sean Coughlan of the BBC^{iv} and explored by Warwick Mansell, writing for NAHT^v.

This is most likely to affect the statistics of converter academies and council maintained schools, as these have a higher proportion of Good and Outstanding schools (i.e. are inspected less frequently and thus less likely to be relegated to a lower grade).

2. Excluding Converter Predecessor Grades & the Pre-2012 Inspection Framework

The inspection data can be viewed from an alternative perspective by considering the factors explained in section 1.

Fig 2 only includes inspections under the September 2012 framework, and excludes the predecessor grades of converter academies:

	Council Maintained Schools *	Academies **	Sponsored Academies	Converter Academies ***	Free Schools ****
Outstanding	1263	438	78	360	44
Good	8976	1594	511	1083	81
Requires Improvement	1184	503	268	235	16
Inadequate	179	121	65	56	7
Total	11602	2659	922	1734	148
% Good and Outstanding	88%	77%	64%	83%	87%
Not Inspected	3327	3182	802	2383	144

FIG 2 NOTES: The figures in the table include inspections carried out and published on or before 31st December 2016 (as published in Ofsted monthly statistics).

- * Limited to community schools, community special schools, foundation schools, foundation special schools, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools.
- ** Includes converter, special converter, special sponsor led and sponsor led. Excludes alternative provision, free schools, studio schools and UTC.
- *** Includes converter and special converter. Excludes alternative provision.
- **** Excludes alternative provision.

From this perspective, the data shows that there is a **higher proportion of Good and Outstanding council maintained schools than academies**. However this should not be overstated since Ofsted operate a risk based approach to inspections, which means that there will be a slant toward weaker academies and schools having been inspected. In addition the analysis does not include short inspections.

We would welcome further comments about the merits of taking these factors into account, as they result in a large gap when comparing academies to council maintained schools in the second table.

Publications that compare council maintained schools to academies should be clear on whether or not they include grades obtained prior to academisation and should be clear whether or not they encompass grades obtained under multiple frameworks. In addition, publications comparing council maintained schools to academies should explain what the effect of ignoring these factors is.

3. Impact of moving to *Sponsored Academy* status

The analysis below compares the predecessor grades of sponsored academies, alongside the grades attained after sponsorship.

Of the 1739 open sponsored academies, [Watchsted](#) was able to identify the predecessor grades of 86%^{vi}. Over half of those academies have also received an S5 inspection since opening as an academy.

This provides us with a sample of over 800 sponsored academies where the latest inspection grade of the academy and the predecessor’s latest inspection grade is known.

From that sample we can see how many schools have improved, declined or stayed the same since becoming a sponsored academy.

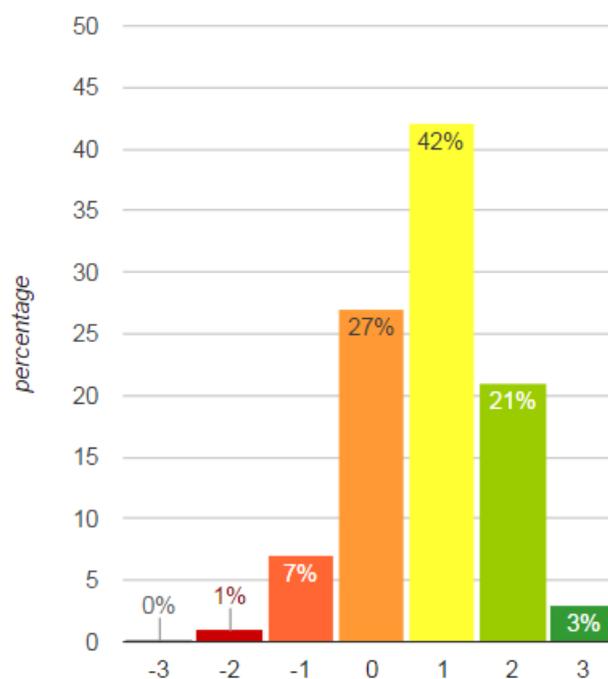


FIG 3 NOTES: Chart shows proportional grade shift in schools that have become sponsored academies (i.e. percentage that have gone up / down by 1, 2 or 3 grades). Percentages may not sum up to 100 due to rounding.

From this sample, **65% of sponsored academies improved their grade**. However, this data does not reveal if the sponsored route is *more or less* effective than other strategies in improving weaker schools as no comparison is provided.

3.2. Primary vs. Secondary

We can compare primary and secondary schools within the sample. **74%** of primary sponsored academies improved, while only **52%** of secondary sponsored academies improved their grade.

Primary Sponsored Academies

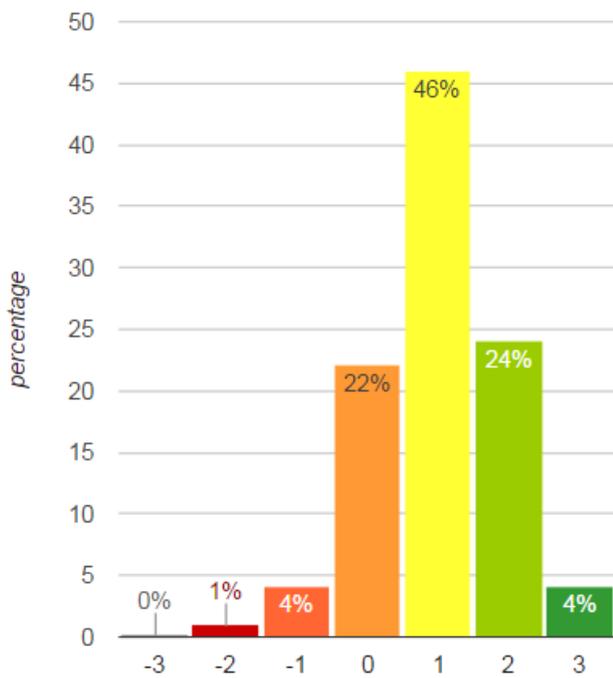


FIG 4

Secondary Sponsored Academies

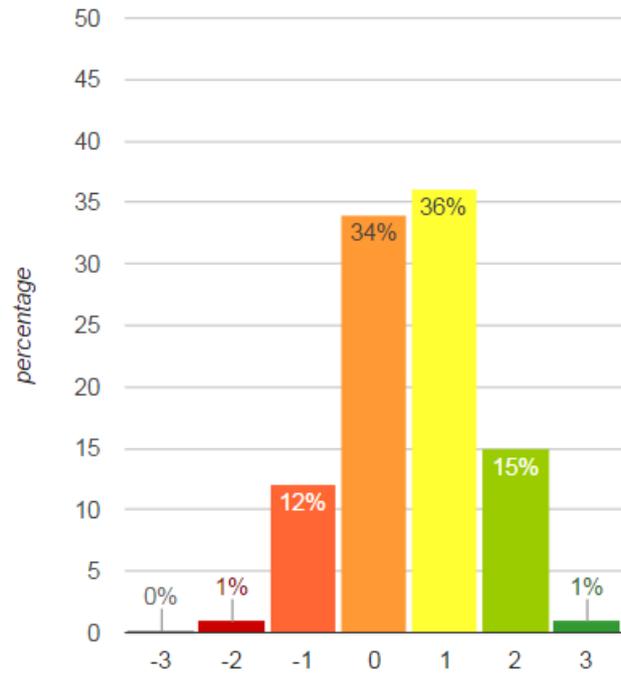


FIG 5

3.3. Predecessor grade starting points *

Inadequate > Sponsored academy

261 academies in the sample had a predecessor grade of Inadequate. Of these, 16 remained the same, 85 improved 1 grade, 139 improved by two grades and 21 improved 3 grades (to Outstanding).

Thus, 94% of Inadequate schools in the sample improved their grade.

Note that the sample considers the most recent Ofsted inspection after academisation rather than the first inspection immediately after academisation. This means that sponsors have had more time to work with academies and academies may have been inspected more than once since academisation. Therefore 94% of academies improving is higher than analysis published by Ofsted in [response to PQ HL4539](#) by Lord Nash. When considering the first inspection after academisation Ofsted found that that 88% of Inadequate academies improved. However in any case they found that 98% of Inadequate council maintained schools improved.

Requires Improvement or Satisfactory > Sponsored academy

424 academies in the sample had a predecessor grade of Requires Improvement or Satisfactory. Of these, 30 dropped 1 grade, 128 retained the same grade, 239 improved 1 grade and 27 improved by 2 grades. **Thus, 7% declined, 30% stayed the same and 63% improved.**

Good > Sponsored academy

109 academies in the sample had a predecessor grade of good. Of these, 5 dropped 2 grades, 25 dropped 1 grade, 65 retained their grade and 14 improved their grade. **Thus, 28% declined, 60% stayed the same and 13% improved.**

Outstanding > Sponsored academy

12 academies in the sample had a predecessor grade of Outstanding. Of these, 3 dropped 2 grades, 3 dropped 1 grade and 6 retained their grade. **Thus, 50% declined and 50% stayed the same.**

* **Please note**, percentages may not sum up to 100 due to rounding.

4. Academy Sponsors

The following table shows 30 academy sponsors^{vii}. We have only included sponsors who look after at least 5 sponsored academies that (a) have received an S5 inspection during their academy status and (b) have a predecessor grade available.

By looking at the grades before and after academisation, an actual and potential grade shift can be determined for each sponsored academy and then aggregated for each sponsor. We can thus **rank each sponsor by how its academies have improved** (in terms of Ofsted grade). The **average number of days each academy has been open** is also shown to give a sense of how long the sponsor has had to work with their academies. *(Please note that our analysis has excluded academies that have closed, switched sponsor and those that have only received a short inspection as an academy.)*

Academy Sponsor	Sample Size *	Avg. Start Grade **	Avg. Days Open	Actual Grade Shift ***	Max Potential Shift ****	Watchsted Score ±
<i>Harris Federation</i>	15	3.5	1,910	31	37	84%
<i>Outwood Grange Academies Trust</i>	8	3.1	1,746	12	17	71%
<i>The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust</i>	11	3.2	1,370	16	24	67%
<i>The Griffin Schools Trust</i>	9	3.7	1,301	13	24	54%
<i>Diocese of Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust</i>	5	4.0	1,362	8	15	53%
<i>ARK Schools</i>	14	3.2	1,734	16	31	52%
<i>CfBT Education Trust</i>	6	3.5	1,996	7	15	47%
<i>Delta Academies Trust (Delta)</i>	19	3.5	1,665	21	47	45%
<i>Academy Transformation Trust (ATT)</i>	13	3.3	1,430	13	30	43%
<i>REAch2 Academy Trust</i>	20	3.5	1,316	21	50	42%
<i>Northern Education Trust</i>	10	3.2	1,484	9	22	41%
<i>Diocese of Birmingham Education Trust</i>	7	3.1	1,449	6	15	40%
<i>Greenwood Academies Trust</i>	18	3.4	1,538	17	43	40%
<i>David Ross Education Trust (DRET)</i>	15	3.3	1,555	13	34	38%
<i>Academies Enterprise Trust (AET)</i>	51	3.2	1,745	41	113	36%
<i>Oasis Community Learning</i>	26	3.2	1,898	20	56	36%
<i>United Learning</i>	13	3.0	1,634	9	26	35%
<i>Kemnal Academy Trust, The (TKAT)</i>	17	2.9	1,591	11	33	33%
<i>Wakefield City Academies Trust</i>	5	4.0	1,204	5	15	33%
<i>Cabot Learning Federation</i>	8	3.0	2,306	5	16	31%
<i>Diverse Academies Trust</i>	5	3.6	1,581	4	13	31%
<i>The Co-operative Group</i>	6	2.7	1,758	3	10	30%

<i>The Collaborative Academies Trust</i>	6	3.3	1,398	4	14	29%
<i>Ormiston Academies Trust</i>	20	3.0	2,010	11	40	28%
<i>Enhance Academy Trust</i>	5	3.2	1,411	3	11	27%
<i>E-ACT</i>	18	2.8	1,877	6	33	18%
<i>Creative Education Trust</i>	6	2.7	1,438	1	10	10%
<i>UCAT</i>	5	3.2	1,678	1	11	9%
<i>The Education Fellowship Trust</i>	10	3.2	1,438	1	22	5%

FIG 6 NOTES: Academy Sponsors ranks (from most improvement to least improvement)

- * **Sample Size** shows the number of sponsored academies associated to the trust, which have been inspected by Ofsted since becoming sponsored, and which have a predecessor grade from when they were council maintained. Academies that have switched sponsor are excluded^{viii}.
- ** **Average Start Grade** The average predecessor grade; Outstanding (1) – Inadequate (4).
- *** **Actual Grades Shift** shows the total number of grades by which the sample has improved.
- **** **Max Potential Shift** shows the maximum possible number of grades that the sample could have risen (i.e. if every sponsored academy in the sample had moved up to a grade of *Outstanding*).
- ± **Watchsted Score** shows the percentage gap between the actual and potential grade shift. This has been used as a performance indicator to rank each academy sponsor.

Harris Federation has improved its sample of 15 schools by a total of 31 grades. This gives an average improvement of over two grades per school, indicating that Harris is effectively adding value to (i.e. improving) its academies.

At the other end of the table, E-ACT has only improved its sample of 18 schools by six grades in total (out of a potential 33).

This analysis is broadly consistent with the Multi-academy trust league tables that the DfE produces using attainment data in January 2017^{ix}.

As with any analysis, there are multiple factors to consider in these rankings. Average start grades, location and funding levels could all be playing a part.

It is not possible to rank local authorities in exactly the same way. However, we do know that different local authorities appear to carry out their school improvement services with different levels of success, and again there are multiple factors to consider when attempting to compare their effectiveness.

Sponsorship Summary

Returning to our sample of 800 sponsored academies, it appears that **sponsorship may have contributed toward improvement in the majority of the weakest schools** in this sample, but **did not benefit the majority of schools previously found to be Good**. However, **it is not clear whether sponsorship provides a more effective path to improvement than remaining council maintained**.

Our analysis of academy sponsors shows that there are some high performing academy sponsors such as Harris and Outwood Grange that have proven they can improve the Ofsted grade of the majority of their schools through sponsorship. However, there are **only a small number of high performing sponsors** and they do not cover every region of the country. In addition, there are academy sponsors such as E-ACT that appear to be much less effective in helping establishments to improve their Ofsted grade.

5. Converter Academies

5.1 Grades before vs. After Academisation

The analysis below compares the predecessor grades of converter academies, alongside the grades attained after academisation.

Of the 4166 open converter academies, [Watchsted](#) was able to identify the predecessor grades of 99%*. Just under half of those academies have also received a full inspection since opening as an academy. **This provides us with a sample of over 1880 converter academies where the latest inspection grade of the academy and the predecessor's latest inspection grade is known.**

From that sample we can see how many schools have improved, declined or stayed the same since becoming a converter academy.

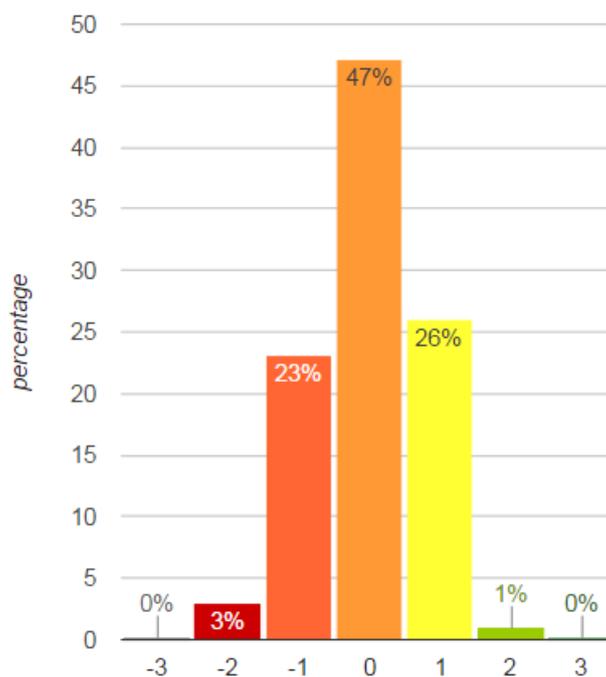


FIG 7 NOTES: Chart shows proportional grade shift in schools that have become converter academies (i.e. percentage that have gone up / down by 1, 2 or 3 grades). Percentages may not sum up to 100 due to rounding. Short inspections are not included.

From this sample, **27% of converter academies improved their grade whilst 26% of converter academies declined.** It is worth pointing out that this analysis excludes short inspections.

Converter academies were typically stronger performing council Maintained schools before acadmisation and thus many of them may have received a short inspection instead. 213 converter academies that have not received a full inspection have received a short inspection, taking these into account we get the following.

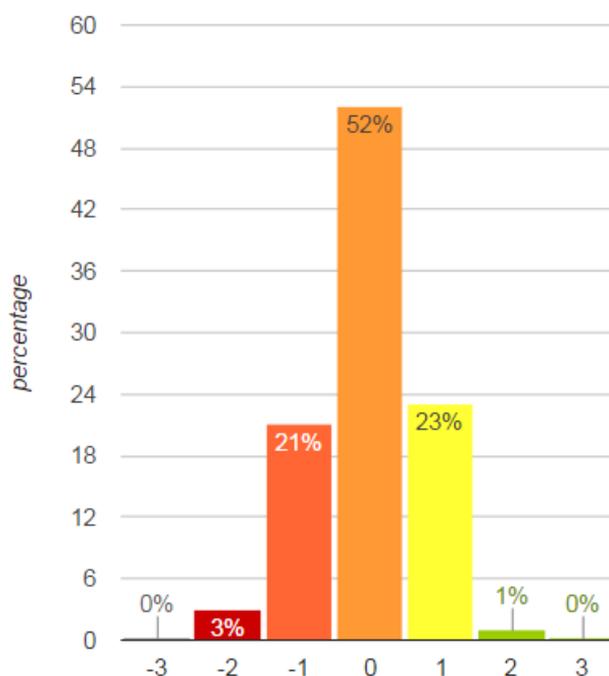


FIG 8 NOTES: Chart shows proportional grade shift in schools that have become converter academies (i.e. percentage that have gone up / down by 1, 2 or 3 grades). Percentages may not sum up to 100 due to rounding. Short Inspections are included.

When short inspections are included we find that than 21% of converter academies dropped grade (or 1 in 5) and a similar number 24% improved grade.

4.2. Council Maintained vs. Converter

In the previous section it is not possible to directly compare the performance of council maintained schools to converter academies since there is no similar sample of council Maintained schools. However it is possible to compare council maintained schools and converter academies by considering the most recent inspection against the previous inspection by looking at Good and Outstanding schools separately.

<i>Previous Grade</i>	<i>School Type</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Declined</i>	<i>Same</i>	<i>Improved</i>
<i>Good</i>	<i>Converters</i>	1823	209 (11%)	1,102 (60%)	512 (28%)
	<i>Council Maintained</i>	6,559	557 (8%)	4,689 (71%)	1,746 (20%)
<i>Outstanding</i>	<i>Converters</i>	683	346 (51%)	337 (49%)	N/A
	<i>Council Maintained</i>	1,475	797 (54%)	678 (46%)	N/A
<i>Good and Outstanding</i>	<i>Converters</i>	2,506	504 (22%)	1,439 (57%)	512 (20%)
	<i>Council Maintained</i>	8,034	1,354 (17%)	5,367 (67%)	1,313 (16%)

There is little difference between academies and council maintained schools based on these statistics. Marginally more converter academies decline grade and marginally more converter academies improve grade.

Converter Summary

The form of the school does not seem to be particularly relevant, schools improve and decline at roughly the same rate whether they are council Maintained or converter academies. One in five converter academies declined grade after academisation (even when short inspections are taken into account). Marginally more Good converter academies declined than Good council Maintained schools, however marginally more improved.

Further analysis

In addition to this short report interested parties can contact watchsted@angelsolutions.co.uk for more information.

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- i. See the spreadsheet "Open_academies_and_academy_projects_December_2016.xlsx"
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-academies-and-academy-projects-in-development> (Last updated in December 2016)
 - ii. The Ofsted framework also changed in September 2015, however there is insufficient data to concentrate on only the common inspection framework.
 - iii. Considering inspections published up to the 31st December 2016 (as published in Ofsted monthly statistics) there are 1212 Outstanding converter academies. 789 of those Outstanding converter academies attained their grade as a council maintained school. There were 2442 Good converter academies, 1274 of those were attained as a council maintained school.
 - iv. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-30319949>
 - v. <http://www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/blogs/warwick-mansell/digging-beneath-the-surface-of-ofsted-record-rise-claim/>
 - vi. We identified 1494 or 86%. This includes inspections published by 31st December 2016. The academies that do not have a predecessor grade include those with multiple predecessors, with conflicting grades. In addition, note that prior to 2005 Ofsted did not carry out section 5 inspections so there are no predecessor grades for those academies either.
 - vii. Includes inspections published by 31st December 2016 and is based on the DfE academies spreadsheet published on the 16th January 2017 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-academies-and-academy-projects-in-development>.
 - viii. Academies with more than one predecessor are only included if all the predecessor grades are the same. Academies that have switched sponsor are excluded based on FOIs
https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/names_of_academies_changing_hand_3 and
https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/list_of_all_switches_between_aca.
 - ix. The MAT league tables are discussed here by Schools Week <http://schoolsweek.co.uk/mat-league-table-2016-over-half-of-trusts-significantly-below-average-and-5-other-findings/> and available to download here
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584075/SFR02_2017.pdf
 - x. We identified 4144 or 99%. This includes inspections published by 31st December 2016. The 21 converter academies that do not have a predecessor grade include those with multiple predecessors, with conflicting grades. Note that the predecessor grade, **attained prior to academisation** is not usually the same as the previous inspection in Ofsted monthly statistics.