

STORRINGTON AREA RURAL SCHOOL (STARS)

Amberley First School, Ashington C E First School, Rydon Community College, St Marys First School, Washington, Storrington First School, Thakeham First School and West Chiltington First School

What is the purpose of changing the structure of primary and secondary education away from the first/middle school model?

The background

Thirty years ago there were 2,000 middle schools in the UK. Their demise began in the late 1980s with the arrival of the *national curriculum* which divided children's learning into *key stages* which finished at the ages of 7, 11 and 14. By the end of 2014 there were fewer than 200 middle schools and WSCC is gradually phasing out its middle schools to ensure that all children have the best educational opportunities by completing the first two key stages in full primary schools. (See the research paper included in the press release.)

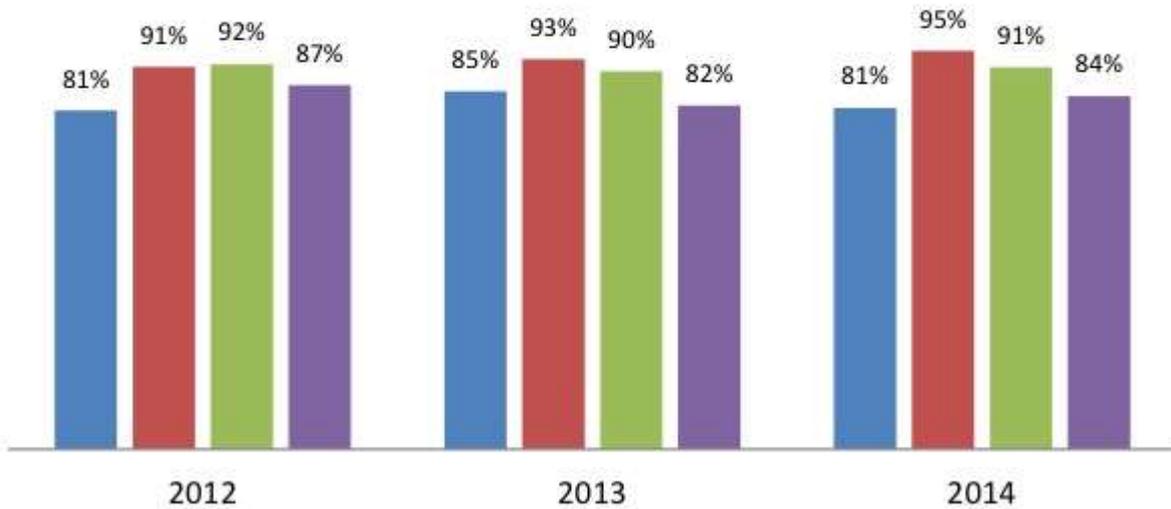
Some reasons for the demise of middle schools

The national curriculum with its clearly devised framework and attainment levels was suited to a structure where children could complete Key Stage 2 (from Years 3-6) in a primary school. This is not to say that the middle schools were poor schools but they were dealing with a less than ideal structure. Attainment data illustrate the trend that children achieve better results in KS2 tests if they do not have to adjust to a new school for the last year (Y6). Stronger attainment at KS2 inevitably provides a better basis for the start of the secondary stages and results at GCSE bear out the long term effect of the disrupted primary years.

The following graphs have been taken directly from the West Sussex Consultation papers.

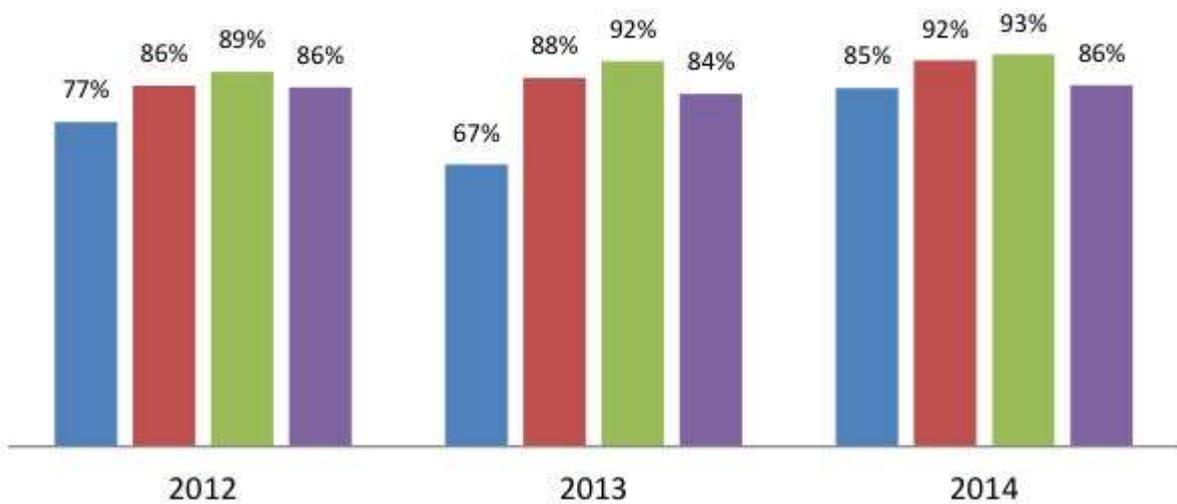
Reading - % Pupils achieving expected progress between KS1 and KS2

■ STARS area ■ Chanctonbury Primaries ■ Primary avg. ■ Junior Avg.



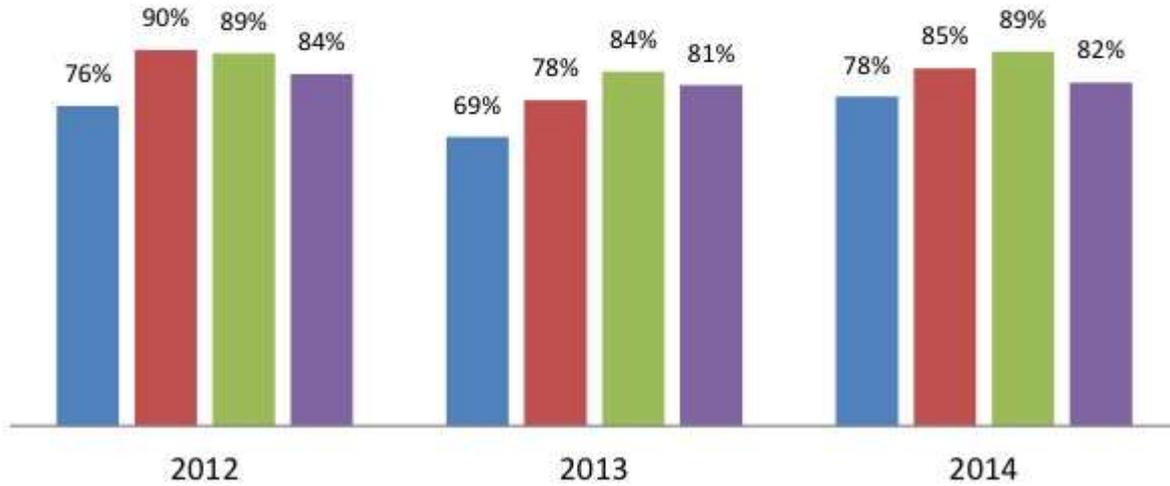
Writing - % Pupils achieving expected progress between KS1 and KS2

■ STARS area ■ Chanctonbury Primaries ■ Primary avg. ■ Junior Avg.

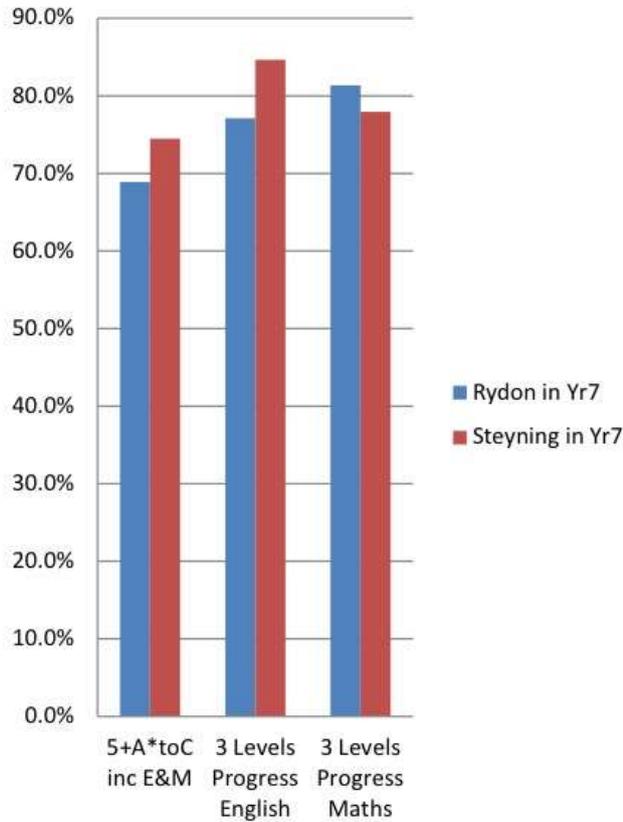


Maths - % Pupils achieving expected progress between KS1 and KS2

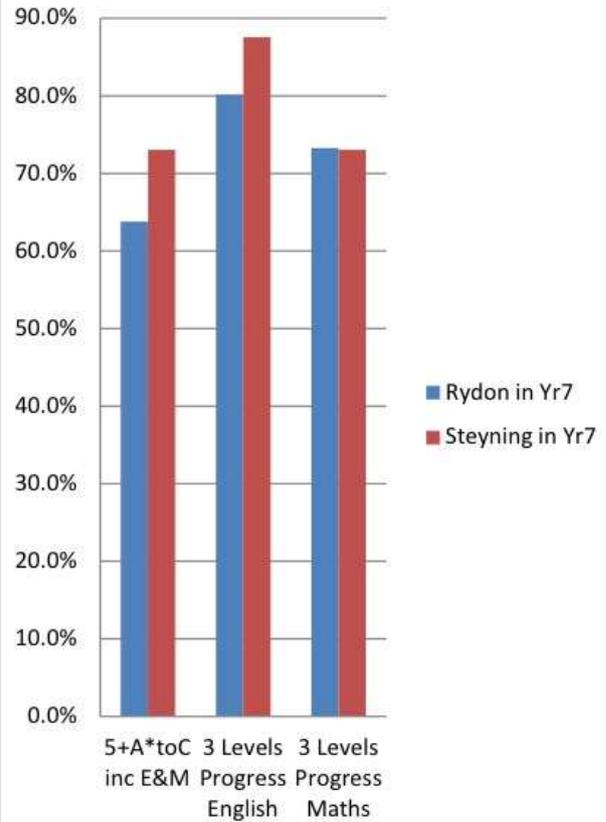
■ STARS area
 ■ Chanctonbury Primaries
 ■ Primary avg.
 ■ Junior Avg.



2013 KS4 Outcomes



2014 KS4 outcomes



Delivery of the new (2014) curriculum The Key Stage Two curriculum is delivered in two two-year blocks: Years 3 and 4 form one programme of work and Years 5 and 6 another. It makes little sense to divide the teaching of the second block between two schools.

Child development and maturity

The maturity of children is also a factor in their ability to make progress. Year 6 children tend to achieve remarkable levels of maturity and leadership before adolescence and puberty take hold. In the current structure just as they reach this level at the end of Year 5 they move on to the middle school where they become the youngest pupils again and lose the opportunity to exercise their leadership skills. The beneficial influence of Year 6 children in a primary school cannot be ignored: not only do the Year 6 children themselves have significant opportunities to lead and make decisions, they also act as excellent role models for the younger children.

Why make this change in the STARS area now?

In September 2015 schools in Worthing will move to the new full primary/secondary model leaving our six schools the only first schools in the county. The governors and heads of the STARS group and of Steyning Grammar School are united in their belief that our children deserve the best opportunities offered to all children in the county. No further time should be lost in ensuring that they are not at a disadvantage.

What are the plans for secondary provision for our children?

The governors of all the first schools acknowledge that this change is not just about creating the best opportunities for the children at primary level but also about the success of their secondary education. We are committed to supporting the retention and development of secondary school provision in the locality.