



Department
for Education



About this release

This statistical first release (SFR) provides provisional GCSE and equivalent results of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in England. Figures are provided at national, regional and local authority level for the 2014/2015 academic year, for all schools and state funded schools. For the first time, national Attainment 8 scores will also be published, for pupils in all schools and state-funded schools.

The data in this SFR are provisional and a revised SFR will be produced in January 2016 alongside the revised secondary school performance tables.

The [2013/14 GCSE and equivalent results SFR](#) contained information on a number of major reforms to how these statistics are calculated, including the adoption of the early entry policy for English Baccalaureate subjects. This year sees this early entry policy rolled out to cover all subjects.

Provisional GCSE and equivalent results in England, 2014 to 2015

Attainment in the headline 5+ A*-C including English and maths measure is stable between 2014 and 2015

Attainment of the headline measure increased by 0.2 percentage points, with 52.8 per cent of pupils in all schools, and 56.1 per cent of pupils in state-funded schools achieving the measure in 2015. A time series showing performance in this measure with explanations of policy changes is shown on page 4.

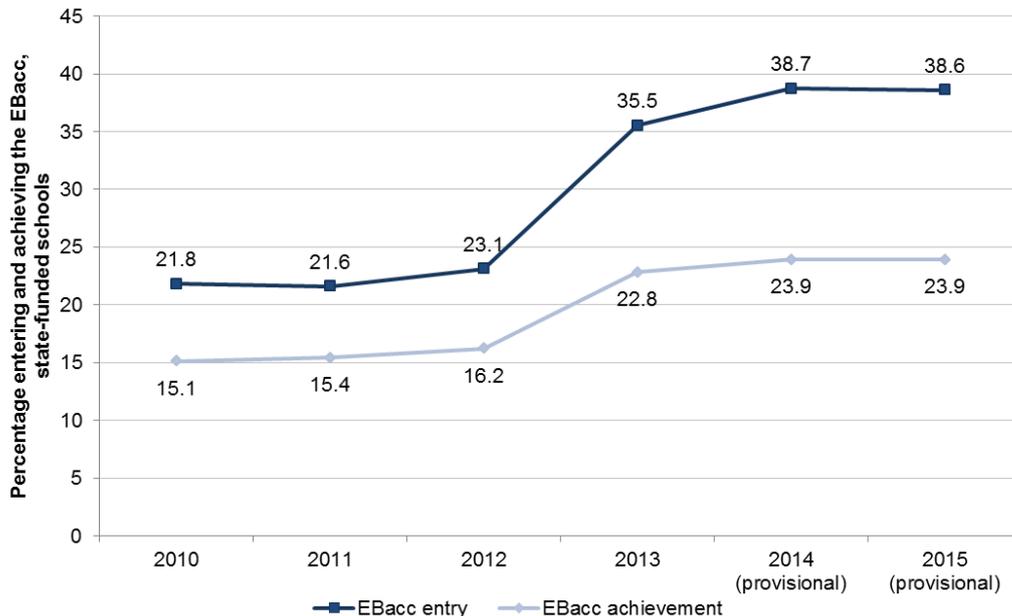
Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and maths, England

	All schools	State-funded schools
2015 provisional	52.8	56.1
2014 final	53.4	56.6
2014 provisional	52.6	55.9
2015 provisional vs. 2014 provisional	0.2	0.2

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

This publication will compare results for 2015 to provisional results from 2014 to take account of the normal change in results between provisional and revised data. More information can be found in the [Statement from the DfE's Head of Profession for Statistics](#).

English Baccalaureate entry and achievement is stable between 2014 and 2015



In state-funded schools, 38.6 per cent of pupils entered, and 23.9 per cent achieved, the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). The EBacc measure is less affected by methodological and examination changes than other measures in this SFR.

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Note on provisional results

The provisional statistics in this release are based on the results data that awarding organisations supply to the department by August 2015. This includes the vast majority of all pupils' results; however it will not take account of accepted amendment requests made by schools to remove pupils and the addition of late results and remarks. These amendments will be incorporated into the revised Statistical First Release (SFR), due to be published in January 2016.

Between provisional and revised SFRs there is usually a slight increase in the key national statistics as a result of these amendments. As such, users should be aware that the statistics in this release may be revised in a similar pattern in January 2016.

As context, in 2014 there were increases of 0.8 percentage points in the proportion of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and maths between provisional and revised data in all schools, and 0.7 percentage points in state-funded schools.

In this publication

The following Excel tables are included in this SFR:

- National tables
- Attainment 8 table
- Subject and LA tables
- Subject time series table

The accompanying quality and methodology information document provides information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data.

Feedback

We are changing how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at Attainment.STATISTICS@education.gsi.gov.uk.

1. Introduction

The Department for Education receives examination results data from awarding body organisations, which are collected for the 2015 secondary performance tables. The data in this SFR is provisional as, whilst it has been quality assured by the department, the underlying data has yet to be checked by schools.

This publication will compare provisional results for 2015 to provisional results from 2014 to take account of the normal change in results between provisional and revised data. More information can be found in the [Statement from the DfE's Head of Profession for Statistics](#). The revised data will take account of accepted amendment requests made by schools to remove pupils and the addition of late results and re-marks. A revised SFR with updated data will be published in January 2016.

The performance measures contained within this publication are based on the same rules used to produce the measures shown in the secondary school performance tables. The [2013/14 GCSE and equivalent results SFR](#) contained information on a number of major reforms to how these statistics are calculated, including the adoption of the early entry policy for English Baccalaureate subjects. This year sees this early entry policy rolled out to cover all subjects. Analysis of entry patterns in 2014 showed that only 3 per cent of qualifications which do not count towards the English Baccalaureate were attempted more than once. The expansion of early entry policy to all subjects in 2015 is therefore not expected to have any significant impact on national figures.

The number of pupils in the cohort has decreased by 7,818 pupils in all schools and 4,718 in state-funded schools, a one per cent decrease in both groups compared to 2014 provisional figures. This should be taken into account when comparing figures based on numbers of entries.

2. Pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and maths

The headline attainment measure in 2015 is the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths GCSEs. This is stable in the provisional 2015 results, when compared to 2014 provisional figures.

There was a 0.2 percentage point increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the measure in both all schools and state-funded schools, compared to 2014 provisional data. We expect the 2015 provisional figures to rise when revised data is calculated. The revised data will take account of accepted amendment requests made by schools to remove pupils and the addition of late results and re-marks.

Table 1: Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and maths

England, 2010-2015

	All schools	State-funded schools
2015 provisional	52.8	56.1
2014 final	53.4	56.6
2014 provisional	52.6	55.9
2013 final	59.2	60.6
2012 final	59.4	58.8
2011 final	59.0	58.2
2010 final	53.5	55.1
2015 provisional vs. 2014 provisional	0.2	0.2

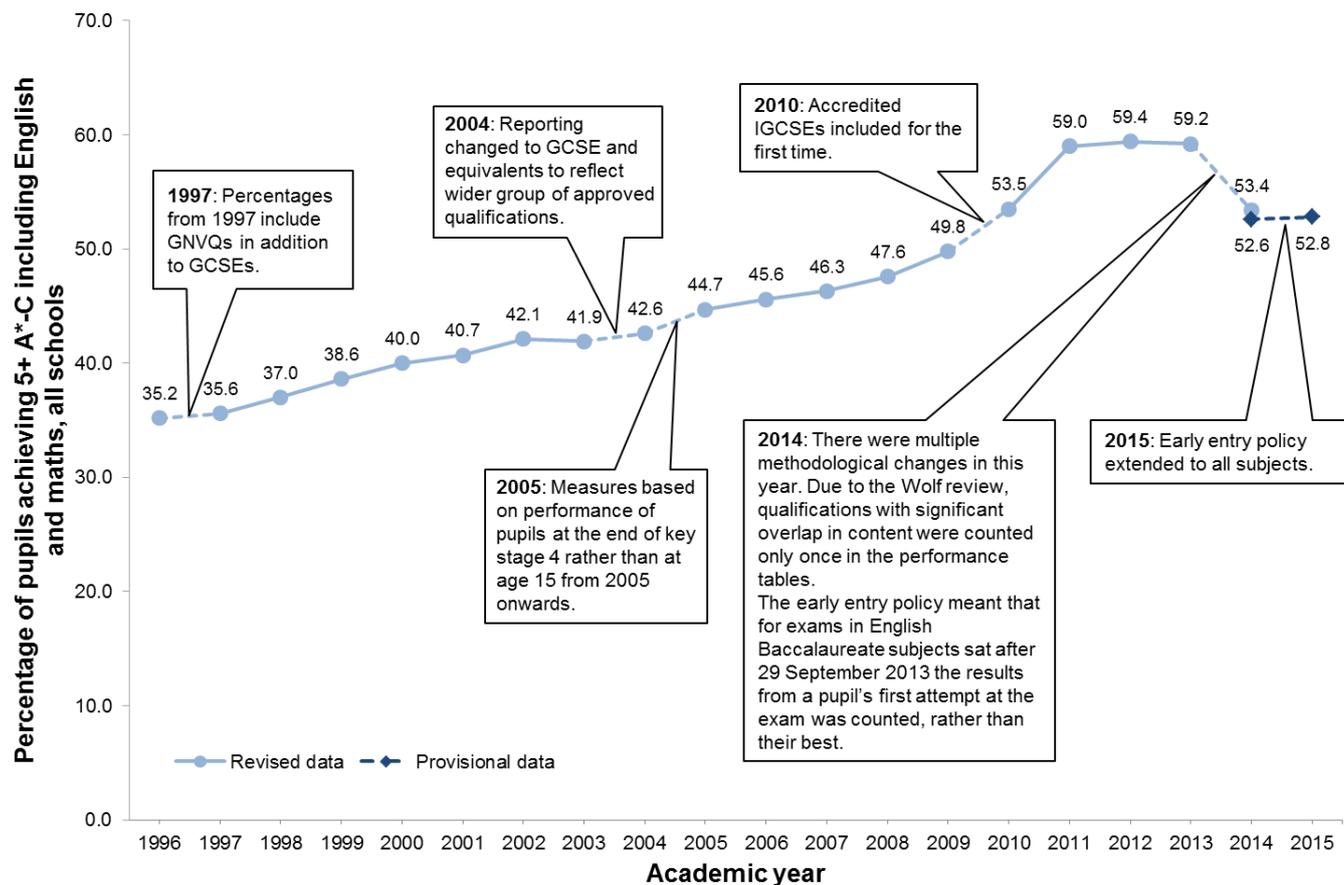
Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Comparisons between 2013 and 2014 were affected by major reforms. In 2014 two major reforms were introduced; Professor Alison Wolf's Review of Vocational Education recommendations¹ and an early entry policy to only count a pupil's first attempt at a qualification in the performance tables in English Baccalaureate subjects. More information on the reforms in 2013/14 can be found in the [Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2013 to 2014 SFR](#). Early entry policy was extended to non-EBacc subjects in 2015.

¹ This restricted the qualifications counted, prevented any qualification from counting as larger than one GCSE, and capped the number of non-GCSEs included in performance measures at two per pupil

Figure 1 shows a time series of the headline measure between 1996 to 2015, with the main policy changes which affect the comparability of the measure.

Figure 1: Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and maths
England, all schools, 1996-2015



Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Table 2 shows a full breakdown of the effect of the methodology changes in 2014 and 2015 on the headline measure.

Table 2: Effect of methodology changes in 2014 and 2015 on 5+ A*-C including English and maths
England, all schools, 2014-2015

Year	Data set	%	Comment
2013	2013 final result	59.2	
2014	'2013 methodology', provisional data (best entry with no Wolf rules applied)	56.0	The difference of 3.2 percentage points covers the combined impact of the cohort effect, changes in exam structure, behaviour change, and unregulated IGCSE entries
2014	'2014 best entry, provisional data methodology' (Wolf rules and best entry results)	54.3	The difference of 1.7 percentage points between this indicative figure and the above figure is the result of applying the Wolf recommendation rules to the calculation of performance measures
2014	'2014 methodology', provisional data (both Wolf and early entry rules applied)	52.6	The difference of 1.7 percentage points between this and the above figure is the result of applying the early entry policy rules to the calculation of performance measures.
2015	'2015 methodology', provisional data (early entry rules extended to all subjects)	52.8	The difference of 0.2 percentage points between 2014 and 2015 shows the stabilisation of results after reforms. This is in line with analysis of entry patterns in 2014 which showed that only 3 per cent of qualifications, which do not count towards the English Baccalaureate, were attempted more than once. We would therefore not expect the policy extension to have an impact on national results.

3. The English Baccalaureate

The English Baccalaureate

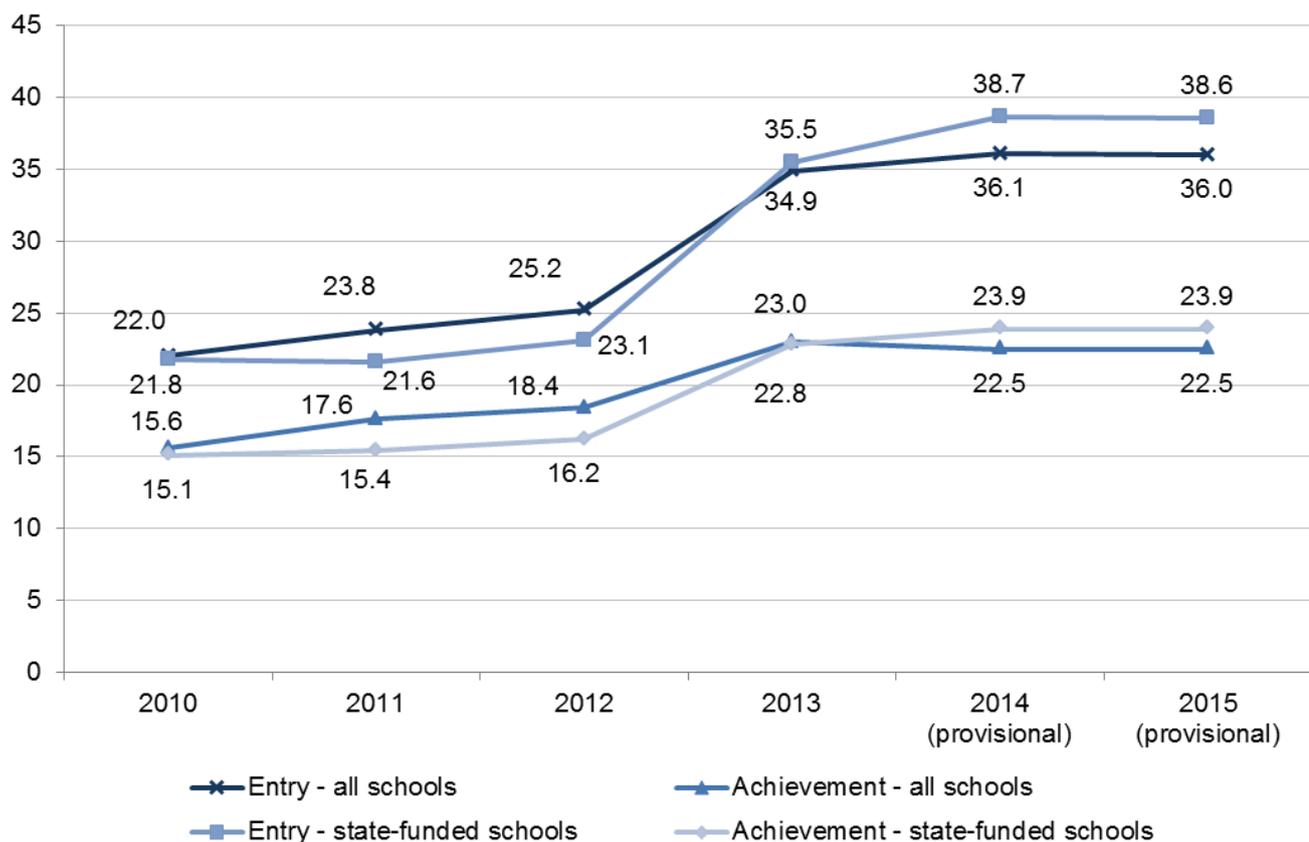
The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) was first introduced into the performance tables in 2009/10. It allows people to see how many pupils get a grade C or above in the core academic subjects at key stage 4. The EBacc is made up of English, maths, science, a language, and history or geography.

In 2015, 22.5 per cent of pupils in all schools and 23.9 per cent of pupils in state-funded schools achieved the EBacc. These figures are stable when compared to the equivalent 2014 provisional data, with no change, and an increase from 15.6 per cent and 15.1 per cent respectively in 2010 when the EBacc was introduced. We would expect provisional 2015 figures to rise slightly when final 2015 data is calculated, as seen in 2014.

Entries and achievement for EBacc subjects are less affected by methodological and examination changes than other measures in this SFR. As such, comparisons between EBacc entries and achievements between years are more suitable here than for other measures.

The difference between the all schools and state-funded schools figure is related to the impact of unregulated IGCSEs taken in independent schools. This lowers the 2015 result for all schools, as it did in 2014. More information on the use of unregulated IGCSEs is given in the section on independent schools in Section 6.

Figure 2: Percentage of pupils entering and achieving the EBacc
England, 2010-2015



Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

The percentages of pupils entering and achieving the EBacc were stable for all schools and state-funded schools in 2015, when compared to the equivalent provisional data from 2014, as shown in Figure 2 and Tables 3 and 4. Entry to the EBacc decreased by 0.1 percentage points in all schools and in state-funded schools in 2015.

Table 3: Percentage of pupils entering the EBacc
England, 2014-2015

	All schools	State-funded schools
2015 provisional	36.0	38.6
2014 final	36.3	38.7
2014 provisional	36.1	38.7
2015 provisional vs. 2014 provisional	-0.1	-0.1

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Table 4: Percentage of pupils achieving the EBacc
England, 2014-2015

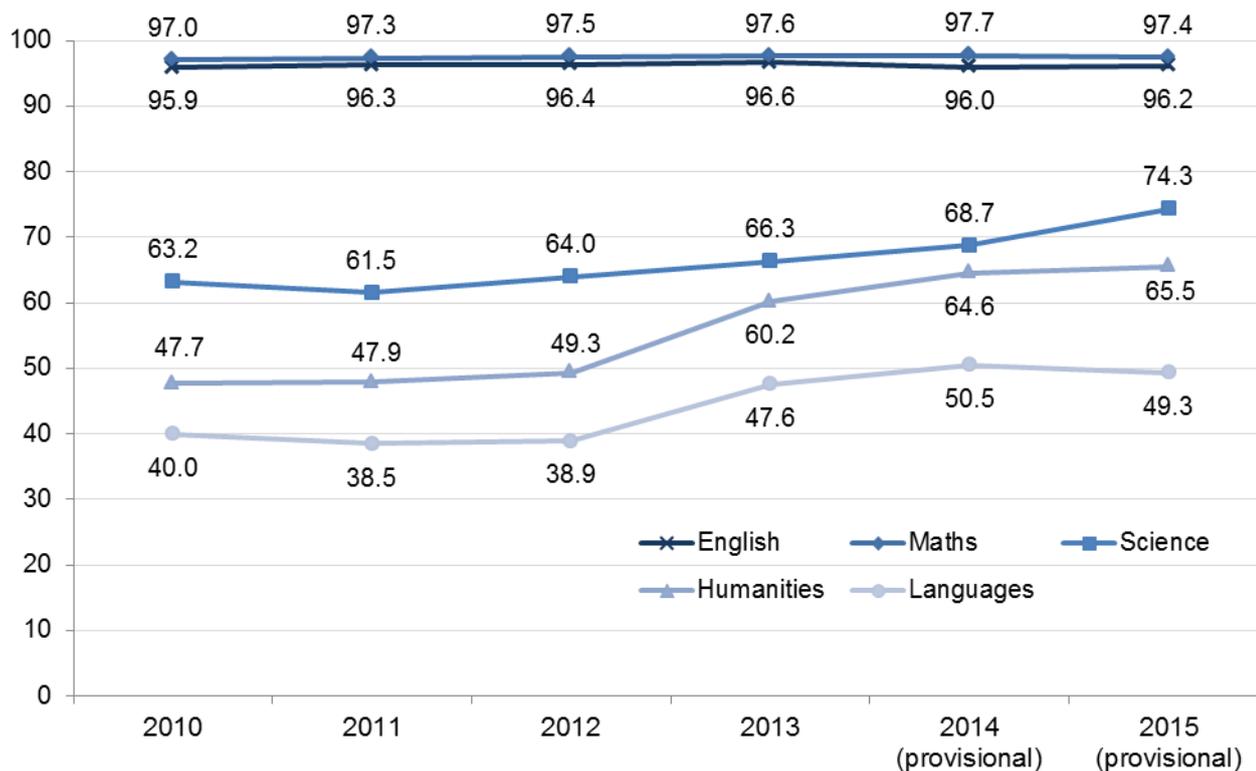
	All schools	State-funded schools
2015 provisional	22.5	23.9
2014 final	22.9	24.2
2014 provisional	22.5	23.9
2015 provisional vs. 2014 provisional	0.0	0.0

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

4. The English Baccalaureate subjects

It is compulsory for pupils to study English and maths, and the proportions of pupils entering these have remained stable. Since 2014, entries have increased by 5.6 percentage points in EBacc science, and 0.9 percentage points in EBacc humanities, and decreased by 1.2 percentage points in EBacc languages, in state-funded schools. Entries to all three of these EBacc subject areas have increased significantly since 2010 when the EBacc was introduced, as shown in Figure 3. More information on each subject area is given in the following sections.

Figure 3: Percentage of pupils entered for components of the EBacc
England, state-funded schools, 2010-2015



Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

English

To pass the English element of the EBacc, pupils must achieve either:

- A*-C in combined English² GCSE; or
- A*-C in English language GCSE and any grade in English literature GCSE

The percentage of pupils with entries to EBacc English has remained stable in 2015, as shown in Table 5. The stability of the EBacc English measure since 2010 is likely to be due to the fact that it is compulsory for pupils to study English at key stage 4 in state-funded schools.

Achievement of EBacc English is also stable, with an increase of 0.1 percentage points for pupils in all schools, and no change in state-funded schools compared to 2014 provisional data.

Table 5: Pupils entering EBacc English
England, 2014-2015

	All schools	State-funded schools
2015 provisional	91.0	96.2
2014 final	91.1	96.1
2014 provisional	90.8	96.0
2015 provisional vs. 2014 provisional	0.2	0.2

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Table 6: Pupils achieving EBacc English
England, 2014-2015

	All schools	State-funded schools
2015 provisional	64.7	68.1
2014 final	65.5	68.8
2014 provisional	64.6	68.1
2015 provisional vs. 2014 provisional	0.1	0.0

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

The total number of English entries is lower in 2015 compared to 2014. In 2014, there was a shift from combined English towards the separate language and literature qualifications³. In 2015, compared to equivalent 2014 provisional data, there were drops in both combined English (72,369 fewer entries) and English language (49,156 fewer), and an increase in entries for English literature (44,849 entries). This may suggest that pupils are continuing to shift from combined English to separate language and literature qualifications, but also that pupils are only entering one of the two sets of qualifications whereas before they entered both.

There has also been a change in qualification types taken. As shown in Table 7, the number of pupils with entries to English GCSE (English language or the combined English qualification) fell between 2014 and 2015, continuing the decrease seen between 2013 and 2014.

Table 7: English entries by qualification type
England, all schools, 2013-2015

	2013 final	2014 provisional	2014 final	2015 provisional
GCSE	550,801	461,860	464,077	363,098
Regulated IGCSEs	41,084	105,382	105,416	190,199

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

However, in parallel, there was an increase in the number of entries to Cambridge International Certificate and Edexcel Level1/2 Certificate (regulated IGCSEs) in English language, continuing the increase since 2013. As shown by the stability of EBacc English entry, this change in pattern does not mean that fewer pupils are entering English, just that they are being entered for different types of qualifications.

² Combined English covers both a literature and language element within a single course of study

³ See section 7 of the [Revised GCSE and equivalents results in England, 2013 to 2014 SFR](#).

Maths

Entries to EBacc maths have remained stable in the provisional 2015 data, as shown in Tables 8 and 9. The stability of the EBacc maths measure since 2010 is likely to be due to the fact that it is compulsory for pupils to study maths at key stage 4 in state-funded schools.

Table 8: Pupils entering EBacc maths

England, 2014-2015

	All schools	State-funded schools
2015 provisional	93.2	97.4
2014 final	93.5	97.7
2014 provisional	93.3	97.7
2015 provisional vs. 2014 provisional	-0.1	-0.3

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Table 9: Pupils achieving EBacc maths

England, 2014-2015

	All schools	State-funded schools
2015 provisional	65.1	68.0
2014 final	65.0	67.7
2014 provisional	64.7	67.6
2015 provisional vs. 2014 provisional	0.4	0.4

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Achievement of EBacc maths is also stable, with an increase of 0.4 percentage points for pupils in all schools and in state-funded schools.

However, the total number of entries to maths qualifications from 2014 to 2015 has fallen by 240,693 – a decrease of 27.1 per cent compared to the equivalent 2014 provisional data. This is linked to behaviour changes relating to early entry, meaning pupils are less likely to sit their maths exam in year 10 and instead wait until year 11. This is evidenced by the large fall in maths entries by this cohort when they were in year 10. Only 4.4 per cent of the maths entries made by this year's cohort were undertaken in year 10, compared to 20.9 per cent of the entries made by the previous cohort. As shown by the stability of entries to EBacc maths, this does not mean that fewer pupils are taking maths, just that the total number of exam entries per pupil is lower.

Science

It is compulsory for state-funded schools to teach science at key stage 4. For EBacc science, a pupil must enter:

- three individual sciences (three out of biology, chemistry, physics, and computer science); or
- core and additional science⁴; or
- double science.

The proportion of pupils entering EBacc science increased in 2015, to 70.1 per cent for pupils in all schools, and 74.3 per cent for pupils in state-funded schools, as shown in Table 10. This compares to 65.0 per cent and 68.7 per cent respectively in the equivalent 2014 provisional data. This is an increase since 2010, when 62.2 per cent of pupils in all schools, and 63.2 per cent of pupils in state-funded schools entered EBacc science.

Table 10: Pupils entering EBacc science

England, 2014-2015

	All schools	State-funded schools
2015 provisional	70.1	74.3
2014 final	65.2	68.7
2014 provisional	65.0	68.7
2015 provisional vs. 2014 provisional	5.1	5.6

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Analysis of the underlying exam level data shows that the increase in EBacc science entries is due to an increase in pupils studying the core and additional pathway, with a 6.1 percentage point increase in the entry rate between 2014 and 2015, as shown in Table 11. The proportion of pupils entering the three individual sciences pathway has remained relatively stable between 2014 and 2015, while the proportion of pupils with no EBacc science entries has fallen from 38.6 per cent in 2011 to 25.7 per cent in 2015.

⁴ Core and additional science, together with further additional science, cover the same breadth of curriculum as biology, chemistry and physics GCSEs

Table 11: EBacc science pathway entries
England, state-funded schools, 2011-2015

	2011 final	2012 final	2013 final	2014 provisional	2014 final	2015 provisional
Three sciences^(a)	20.1	23.2	24.7	22.2	22.2	21.7
Core and additional science	41.4	40.7	41.2	46.2	46.2	52.3
Double science	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
No EBacc science entries	38.6	36.0	33.7	31.3	31.3	25.7

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

a. Entering three sciences is defined here as entering three out of biology, chemistry, physics, and computer science.

Achievement of EBacc science is reported as a percentage of pupils who entered the subject. A pupil achieves EBacc science if they get:

- A*-C in at least two of biology, chemistry, physics and computer science, having entered at least three; or
- A*-C in both core and additional science GCSEs
- A*A*-CC in double science

Achievement of the EBacc science measure has decreased in all schools (from 72.7 per cent, to 69.6 per cent), and in state-funded schools (from 71.9 per cent in 68.8 per cent), as shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Pupils achieving EBacc science (as a percentage of those attempting)

England, 2014-2015

	All schools	State-funded schools
2015 provisional	69.6	68.8
2014 final	73.0	72.3
2014 provisional	72.7	71.9
2015 provisional vs. 2014 provisional	-3.1	-3.1

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Analysis of pass rates on different pathways in Table 13 suggest this is due to a decrease in the percentage of pupils achieving A*-C in the core and additional pathway, which decreased from 62.3 per cent in 2014 provisional data to 59.1 per cent in 2015, as shown in Table 13. There was a decrease in the pass rate for double science as well, but given this was only taken by 0.3 per cent of the cohort, this has a negligible effect on the overall achievement rate. The pass rate for pupils entering three sciences remains high, with 92.7 per cent of those entering three sciences achieving A*-C grades in at least two of the three subjects in 2015.

Table 13: Pupils achieving EBacc science on each pathway, as a percentage of those entering

England, state-funded schools, 2011-2015

	2011 final	2012 final	2013 final	2014 provisional	2014 final	2015 provisional
Three sciences^(a)	94.7	94.6	92.2	92.4	92.5	92.7
Core and additional science	65.7	64.2	61.0	62.3	62.7	59.1
Double science	27.3	56.8	44.4	48.3	48.7	43.5

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

a. Entering three sciences is defined here as entering three out of biology, chemistry, physics, and computer science.

Humanities

The EBacc humanities subjects are geography and history: pupils must achieve A*-C in one of these qualifications from the EBacc approved list in order to achieve the EBacc humanities pillars.

In 2015 64.5 per cent of pupils in all schools entered an EBacc humanities subject, and 65.5 per cent of pupils in state-funded schools, an increase of 0.9 percentage points compared to 2014 provisional data, as shown in Table 14. The percentage of pupils entering EBacc humanities has increased year on year since 2010, when 48.9 per cent of pupils in all schools, and 47.7 per cent of pupils in state-funded schools entered humanities.

Table 14: Pupils entering EBacc humanities

England, 2014-2015		
	All schools	State-funded schools
2015 provisional	64.5	65.5
2014 final	63.9	64.6
2014 provisional	63.6	64.6
2015 provisional vs. 2014 provisional	0.9	0.9

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Table 15: Pupils achieving EBacc humanities (as a percentage of those attempting)

England, 2014-2015		
	All schools	State-funded schools
2015 provisional	68.8	66.9
2014 final	68.6	66.5
2014 provisional	68.2	66.2
2015 provisional vs. 2014 provisional	0.6	0.7

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Achievement of EBacc humanities, of those who entered, also increased between 2014 and 2015, to 68.8 per cent in all schools, and 66.9 per cent in state-funded schools.

The small increase in entries in EBacc humanities between 2014 and 2015 is driven primarily by an increase in the proportion of pupils entering geography, as shown in Table 16. The percentage of pupils with entries into both history and geography increased slightly year on year between 2010 and 2014, from 7.8 per cent to 9.5 per cent, with a small decrease of 0.1 percentage points in 2015.

Table 16: Percentage of pupils with entries into each EBacc humanities subject

England, state-funded schools, 2010-2015

	2010 final	2011 final	2012 final	2013 final	2014 provisional	2014 final	2015 provisional
History only	22.3	22.7	23.2	28.5	30.3	30.3	30.2
Geography only	17.6	17.0	17.5	22.5	24.8	24.8	25.9
History and geography	7.8	8.1	8.6	9.2	9.5	9.5	9.4
Any EBacc humanity subject	47.7	47.9	49.3	60.2	64.6	64.6	65.5

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Languages

To achieve the languages component of the EBacc, pupils must achieve A*-C in any language qualification on the [list of qualifications that count in the EBacc](#).

As in previous years, the languages with the largest number of entries in 2015 were:

- French (158,605 entries in 2015, down by 7,505 from 2014)
- Spanish (89,857 entries in 2015, down by 92 from 2014)
- German (55,820 entries in 2015, down by 4,552 from 2014)

The fourth most popular subject was Latin with 10,532 entries, and the fastest growing languages were Portuguese, with a 12.4 per cent increase, to 2,318 entries in 2015, and Chinese, with an 11.2 per cent increase, to 3,877 entries in 2015.

In the provisional 2015 data, 49.9 per cent of pupils in all schools, and 49.3 per cent in state-funded schools, entered at least one EBacc language qualification, a decrease of 0.8 percentage points compared

to the 2014 provisional data for all schools, and 1.2 percentage points for state-funded schools. The percentage of pupils entering EBacc languages has increased since 2010, when 42.6 per cent of pupils in all schools, and 40.0 per cent of pupils in state-funded schools entered at least one EBacc language.

Table 17: Pupils entering EBacc languages

England, 2014-2015

	All schools	State-funded schools
2015 provisional	49.9	49.3
2014 final	50.8	50.5
2014 provisional	50.7	50.5
2015 provisional vs. 2014 provisional	-0.8	-1.2

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Table 18: Pupils achieving EBacc languages (as a percentage of those attempting)

England, 2014-2015

	All schools	State-funded schools
2015 provisional	72.3	70.0
2014 final	71.1	68.9
2014 provisional	70.7	68.5
2015 provisional vs. 2014 provisional	1.6	1.5

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

The percentage of pupils entering more than one EBacc language has been relatively stable between 2011 and 2015, with 4.5 per cent of the cohort entering more than one EBacc language in 2015.

Table 19: Percentage of pupils with entries into one and more than one EBacc language

England, state-funded schools, 2010-2015

	2010 final	2011 final	2012 final	2013 final	2014 provisional	2014 final	2015 provisional
One EBacc language	35.3	34.1	34.6	43.2	45.8	45.9	44.8
More than one EBacc language	4.7	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.6	4.6	4.5
EBacc languages	40.0	38.5	38.9	47.6	50.5	50.5	49.3

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Achievement of EBacc languages, of those who entered, also increased between 2014 and 2015 as shown in Table 18, to 72.3 per cent in all schools, and 70.0 per cent in state-funded schools.

5. Other subjects

Arts

The number of pupils with GCSE entries into art and design, drama, music and performing arts, increased in 2015 compared to the equivalent 2014 provisional data, despite the slight fall in the number of pupils in the cohort. The number of pupils with entries into art and design and has increased year on year since 2012, up to 175,982 in 2015, following a small fall between 2011 and 2012.

Table 20: Number of pupils with entries into GCSE arts subjects

England, all schools, 2011-2015⁵

	2011 final	2012 final	2013 final	2014 provisional	2014 final	2015 provisional
Art and design	162,342	159,012	164,510	169,512	170,872	175,982
Drama	74,755	70,371	69,754	69,845	70,909	70,689
Music	43,157	40,761	41,256	41,890	42,404	43,604
Performing arts	2,648	2,270	3,079	4,397	4,502	6,003

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

⁵ Discounting has been applied where pupils have taken the same subject more than once and only one entry is counted in these circumstances. Prior to 2011 no discounting was applied and all entries and achievements were included, therefore figures here are shown only for 2011 onwards.

Religious studies

Entries to full course GCSE religious studies increased year on year between 2011 and 2015, with 269,161 pupils entering in 2015.

Table 21: Number of pupils with entries into religious studies

England, all schools, 2011-2015

	2011 final	2012 final	2013 final	2014 provisional	2014 final	2015 provisional
Religious studies	195,109	210,602	229,009	258,748	258,745	269,161

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

6. Attainment by school type

Schools in England can be divided into state-funded and independent schools. Independent schools are funded by fees paid by attendees. State-funded and independent schools are considered separately in this section, because the department holds state-funded schools accountable for their performance.

Independent schools also follow different qualification entry patterns and are not held to account by the department.

State-funded mainstream schools

Schools can be split into groups according to their governance. Further information on the different school types can be found in the quality and methodology document accompanying this SFR.

The proportion of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C grades including English and maths GCSEs by school type is shown in Table 22.

Table 22: Proportion of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C grades including English and maths in 2015 by school type

England, state-funded schools, 2015

	Number of schools	Number of pupils at end of key stage 4	Proportion of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and maths
Local authority maintained mainstream schools	1,227	216,182	55.1
Academies and free schools	1,837	326,691	58.5
Sponsored academies	503	79,507	44.7
Converter academies	1,272	243,861	63.3
Free schools	20	1,122	50.5
University technical colleges	19	1,332	36.3
Studio schools	23	869	17.6
Further education colleges	4	264	4.5

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Looking at the attainment of academies and free schools as a single group masks important variation between the different types of schools within this group.

Academies

Converter academies have a higher proportion of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C grades including English and maths than the average for state-funded schools. This may be explained by the fact that these were already high performing schools that chose to convert to academies.

The converse may be true of sponsored academies, which perform below the average for state-funded schools, as these are schools that were already low performing before their conversion to academy status.

Free schools, UTCs and studio schools

The number of free schools, UTCs and studio schools with year 11 pupils are too small to allow robust conclusions to be drawn about their performance at the end of key stage 4⁶, or comparison between years. Many of the free schools which currently have results are former independent schools rather than new provision, since the latter have only been open for a relatively short time and many do not yet have a year 11 cohort.

Further Education colleges

Since September 2013, general further education colleges and sixth-form colleges have been able to directly enrol 14- to 16-year-olds. 2015 is the first year in which colleges have pupils at the end of key stage 4. The number of FE colleges offering 14-16 provision with year 11 pupils is too small to allow robust conclusions to be drawn about their performance⁷, and interpretation of the figures is also limited by the fact that FE colleges do not complete the pupil level school census, meaning the department does not have as accurate a record of pupils at the end of key stage 4, as it does for other state-funded schools. Colleges will have the chance to remove pupils, as all schools do, in the September checking exercise, and these revisions are likely to make a bigger difference for college's results.

Change in performance by school type over time

Care should be taken when comparing results between years. This is because the group of schools included in each category changes from one year to the next – for example local authority maintained schools changing to converter academies or new provision schools having results published for the first time. This is demonstrated in Table 23 which shows the number of schools included in attainment measures in each year.

Table 23: Number of LA maintained schools and academies with results, by school type
England, 2014-2015

School type	Number of schools with results in 2014	Number of schools with results in 2015
Local authority maintained mainstream schools	1,362	1,227
Sponsored academies	441	503
Converter academies	1,201	1,272
Total number of academies and LA maintained schools	3,004	3,002

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

This means that comparing the headline figures for any of these groups captures not only the change in performance and the effect of reforms, but also the change in school composition. For example, if the additional schools to a group all had attainment that was below the average for the group, the effect would be to lower the average for the group even if each individual school saw no change in its own results.

The data in this SFR is provisional and subject to change, with revised data due to be published in January 2016. The revised data will take account of accepted amendment requests made by schools to remove pupils and the addition of late results and re-marks, and as such we would expect the 2015 provisional figures to rise when revised data is calculated, as seen between 2014 provisional and final data.

To better understand the performance of academies, performance data can be used to calculate a five year time series to show how results have changed since opening. Table 24 shows results in each year by length of time open and is read from left to right, row by row, for comparison. The shaded cell in a series represents the performance of the predecessor school in that year. The local authority maintained mainstream line only includes schools who had maintained status in all years shown on Table 24. Due to the reforms introduced in September 2013, results from that year cannot be directly compared with the earlier parts of the time series.

⁶ There are 20 free schools, 19 university technical colleges (UTCs) and 23 studio schools with results in 2015

⁷ There are four FE colleges providing 14-16 provision with results in 2015

Table 24: Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and maths in academies and LA maintained schools by length of time open
England, 2011-2015

	Number of schools with results	Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C grades including English and maths					
		2011 final	2012 final	2013 final	2014 provisional	2014 final	2015 provisional
Sponsored academies							
Open for 1 academic year	59				44.3	45.0	44.6
Open for 2 academic years	77			46.2	40.7	41.5	42.4
Open for 3 academic years	59		46.0	48.1	41.1	41.7	41.8
Open for 4 academic years	47	44.0	45.8	48.7	43.6	44.7	43.6
Open for 5 or more academic years	261	46.9	50.1	52.5	47.0	47.6	46.1
All sponsored academies	503	44.6	46.8	49.8	44.7	45.4	44.7
Converter academies							
Open for 1 academic year	67				61.1	61.6	59.1
Open for 2 academic years	160			63.0	56.3	56.9	57.0
Open for 3 academic years	366		63.3	65.2	60.7	61.3	60.5
Open for 4 academic years	654	68.5	68.2	69.8	65.6	66.3	66.5
Open for 5 or more academic years	25	76.3	75.3	73.5	71.0	71.6	71.1
All converter academies	1,272	65.9	66.0	67.5	62.9	63.6	63.3
All local authority maintained schools	1,227	57.6	58.1	59.9	54.9	55.6	55.1

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

1. Includes academies and LA maintained schools that were open before 12 September 2014 (which is the cut-off date for inclusion in performance tables).
2. For this table one academic year is between 12 September 2013 and 11 September 2014.
3. The 'All sponsored academies' and 'All converter academies' figures include data for all schools which were academies on 12 September 2014 irrespective of their type in previous years.
4. The figures for 'Number of schools with results' are based on those with results in 2015.
5. Shaded cells contain information for the predecessor school for sponsored academies and for the school prior conversion for converter academies.
6. In 2015, early entry policy, under which only a pupil's first attempt at a qualification is counted in performance measures, is extended to all subjects.
7. It is not possible to make direct comparisons between 2014 and earlier years due to changes in methodology, examinations and behaviour.

Table 24 shows that attainment in both sponsored academies and LA maintained schools remained relatively stable when comparing 2015 provisional data to the equivalent 2014 provisional data - sponsored academies remained stable at 44.7 per cent and LA maintained schools increased by 0.2 percentage points. Over the same period, converter academies increased from 62.9 to 63.3 per cent (an increase of 0.4 percentage points).

Measuring improvement over time is important. It can show whether underperforming schools or groups of schools (for example, schools that have become sponsored academies) are catching up with higher performing schools. However, when interpreting such measures it should be noted that the extent to which a school improves is related to a range of factors, which makes it difficult to fully reflect the effect of any individual factor. Schools with the lowest previous outcomes tend to see the largest improvements but simply controlling for starting points does nothing to account for the very different circumstances which may

exist in two schools. For example, in two schools with the same outcomes, pupils might be far exceeding expectations given prior attainment in one while, in the other, pupils might be making less progress than expected. This will affect the relative ability to demonstrate improvement. For further discussion and analysis of these issues, see [Attainment by pupils in academies 2012](#) and [Measuring the performance of schools within academy chains and local authorities](#).

Independent schools

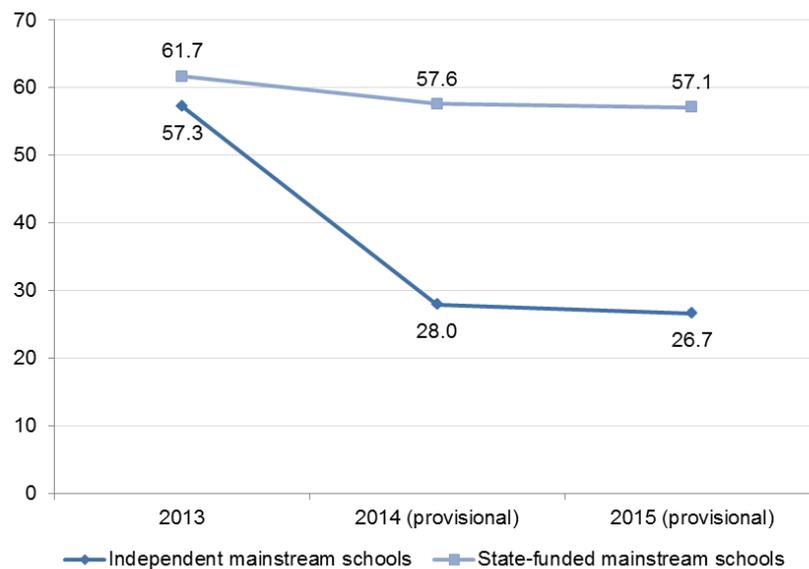
The proportion of pupils in independent schools achieving 5+ A*-C grades (including English and maths) has changed significantly over the last three years due primarily to changes related to IGCSEs.

In 2013, 57.3 per cent of pupils in independent schools achieved the measure, but this fell to 28.0 per cent in 2014 provisional data, and to 26.7 per cent in 2015 provisional data, as illustrated by Figure 4. This large change in attainment of 5+ A*-C grades (including English and maths) is predominantly due to independent schools' use of unregulated IGCSEs.

In 2010, new regulated versions of IGCSEs were approved. This allowed them to be taken in state-funded schools and included in the performance measures for the first time. At the same time, any results achieved by pupils in the legacy unregulated IGCSEs in these subjects were also valid for inclusion in performance indicators.

The period for inclusion of the unregulated legacy IGCSEs in measures was set for two years, commencing from the point at which the replacement regulated certificates became available for teaching, with the expectation being that pupils should be moved to the regulated certificates after this period. In independent schools, pupils have continued to be entered for unregulated IGCSEs that do not count in performance measures and they have not been moved across to the regulated certificate versions.

Figure 4: Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and maths
England, mainstream schools, 2013-2015



Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

7. Entry patterns

In September 2013, the department announced that only the first result a pupil achieved would count in performance measures from 2013/14 onwards. The new rule only applied to EBacc subjects in 2013/14 and has been expanded to apply to all subjects in 2014/15.

EBacc subjects

Provisional figures for 2015 show that there has been a large decrease in the proportion of EBacc qualifications attempted more than once in comparison to 2014: in 2015 3.1 per cent of EBacc qualifications were attempted more than once, compared to 12.1 per cent in 2014. Furthermore, the proportion of EBacc subjects attempted three or more times is now negligible.

Table 25: Multiple entry into EBacc subjects
England, 2014-2015

	2014 provisional	2014 final	2015 provisional
Number of qualifications attempted	3,554,270	3,554,820	3,593,816
<i>Percentage attempted:</i>			
Once	87.9	87.9	96.9
Twice	10.5	10.5	2.8
Three or more times	1.6	1.6	0.3

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

This suggests that early entry policy has changed school behaviour and discourages schools from entering pupils into EBacc subjects multiple times.

Non-EBacc subjects

Table 26: Multiple entry into non-EBacc subjects
England, 2014-2015

	2014 provisional	2014 final	2015 provisional
Number of qualifications attempted	1,886,846	1,892,052	1,848,406
<i>Percentage attempted:</i>			
Once	97.0	96.9	96.9
Twice	2.9	3.0	3.0
Three or more times	0.1	0.1	0.1

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

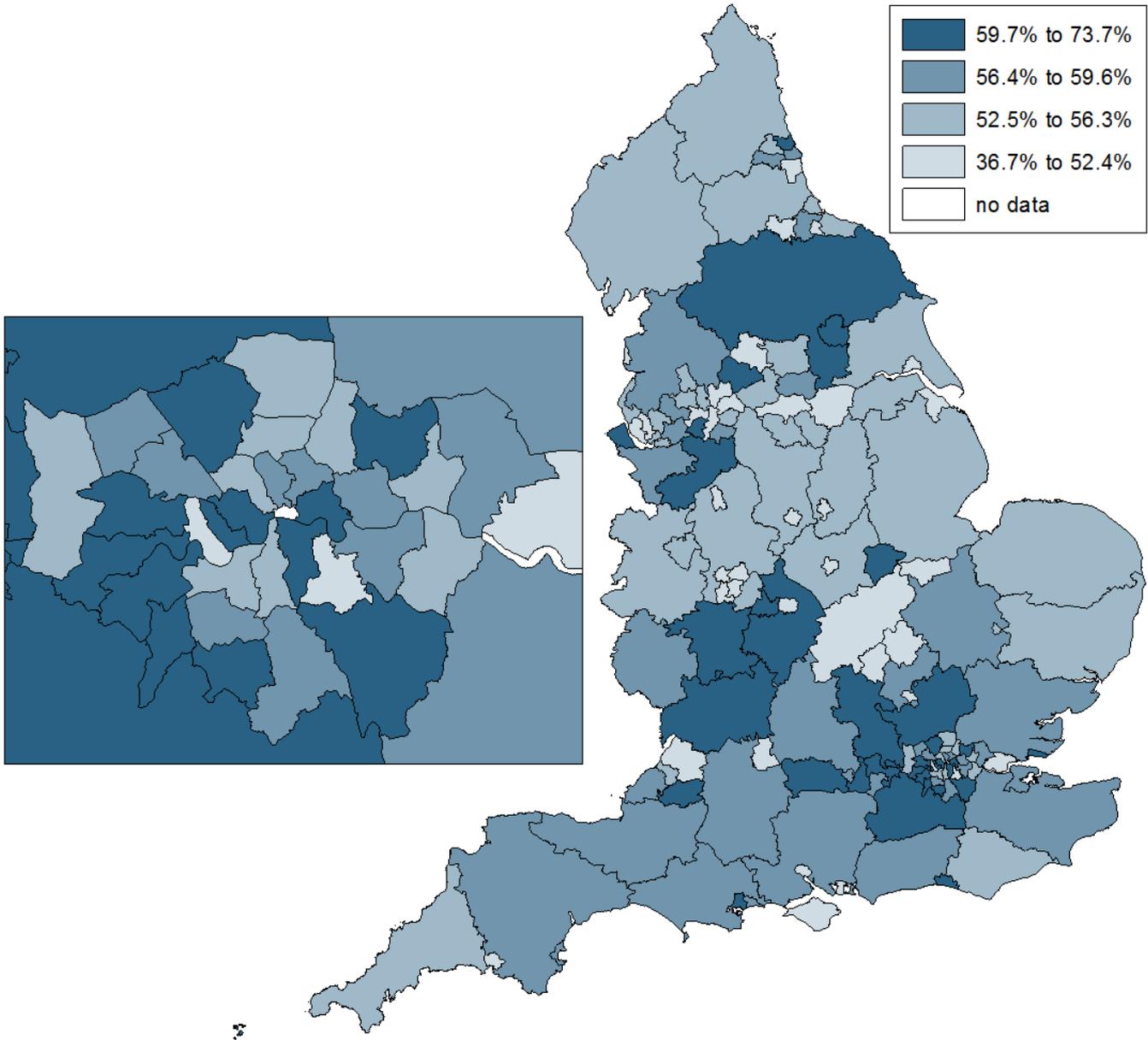
Provisional 2015 figures show that multiple entries in non-EBacc subjects remain very low: almost 97 per cent of non-EBacc subjects were attempted once, and only 0.1 per cent attempted three times or more. These figures have not changed since 2014 and suggest that entry patterns for non-EBacc subjects have not been affected by the expansion of early entry policy to all subjects. This is expected because early and multiple entry had been shown to have a greater impact in EBacc subjects than non-EBacc subjects⁸. This supports the decision not to publish an additional methodology where the effects of the expansion of early entry policy have been removed.

⁸ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-entry-to-gcse-examinations>

8. Local authority achievement

There is considerable variation between local authorities in attainment levels, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and maths by local authority
England, 2015



Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

9. Attainment 8

In October 2013, the department announced that a new secondary school accountability system would be implemented from 2016. It will include two new headline measures, Attainment 8 and Progress 8.

Attainment 8

Attainment 8 will measure the achievement of a pupil across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if the combined English qualification, or both language and literature are taken), three further qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate and three further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or any other non-GCSE qualifications on the [DfE approved list](#).

Progress 8

Progress 8 aims to capture the progress a pupil makes from the end of key stage 2 to the end of key stage 4. As Progress 8 is a relative measure, the average Progress 8 score for all pupils nationally is zero, and it is therefore not published at national level in this SFR.

More information on Attainment 8 and Progress 8 can be found [here](#).

Schools had the option to adopt the new performance measures a year early in 2015. There are [327 schools](#) that have opted-in to the new measures. As such, and to provide a point of comparison, 2015 is the first year in which national Attainment 8 scores are published and cover all schools, not just those that have opted-in. There are limitations in using this data as schools which have not opted-in may still be changing their behaviours and curriculum in preparation for the introduction of the measures in 2016. Table 27 shows the national average Attainment 8 scores per pupil for each element.

Table 27: Attainment 8 scores per pupil in each element
England, 2015

	All schools	State-funded schools
Attainment 8 score per pupil in each element	47.0	48.2
English	10.1	10.4
Maths	9.3	9.7
English Baccalaureate	12.6	12.6
Open	15.1	15.4
Of which;		
GCSE qualifications	12.7	12.8
Non-GCSE qualifications	2.4	2.6

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

The average Attainment 8 score per pupil for all schools is 47.0 compared to 48.2 for state-funded schools. Tables 28 and 29 show the Attainment 8 point scores for GCSE and AS levels. These mean that the maximum Attainment 8 score for a pupil taking only GCSE qualifications is 80, for a pupil who achieves eight A* grades at GCSE in qualifying subjects. The highest grades in AS levels attract higher points, meaning a pupil who took a combination of AS levels and GCSEs could achieve a higher score than 80. A full explanation of point structures in Attainment 8, including point scores for other approved qualifications, can be found [here](#).

Table 28: Attainment 8 point scores for GCSEs

Grade	Points	Grade	Points
A*	8	D	4
A	7	E	3
B	6	F	2
C	5	G	1

Table 29: Attainment 8 point scores for AS levels

Grade	Points
A	9.5
B	8.25
C	7
D	5.75
E	4.5

The difference between the all schools and state-funded schools figures is related to the impact of unregulated IGCSEs taken in independent schools. More information on the use of unregulated IGCSEs is given in the section on independent schools in Section 6.

The open element shows the highest Attainment 8 score at 15.1 for all schools and 15.4 for state-funded schools. Up to three GCSE or non-GCSE qualifications can count in the open element. This score will therefore reflect a wide range of subjects and qualifications.

Pupils in state-funded schools have an average score of 12.8 from the GCSE qualifications, compared to 2.6 from non-GCSE qualifications. However it should be noted that this is an average, and for some pupils the points contributed by non-GCSE qualifications will be higher. When there is a tie on points between a GCSE and non-GCSE qualification, the methodology prioritises the GCSE qualification.

10. Accompanying tables

The following tables are available in Excel format on the department's statistics website:

National tables

- 1a Time series of GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements (1995/96 to 2014/15)
- 1b The English Baccalaureate (2009/10 to 2014/15)
- 1c Percentage of pupils making expected progress in English and in mathematics between key stage 2 and key stage 4 by gender (2009/10 to 2014/15)
- 1d Percentage of pupils making expected progress in English and mathematics between key stage 2 and key stage 4 by key stage 2 attainment level and key stage 4 outcome
- 2 Performance of pupils attaining levels 1 and 2 (including English and mathematics) for pupils at the end of key stage 4 (2005/06 to 2014/15)
- 3a GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by type of school and gender
- 3b GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by admission basis and gender
- 3c GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in sponsored academies by length of time open
- 3d GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in converter academies by length of time open
- 4a Average point scores and achievement of GCSE English and mathematics at grades A* to C by pupils at the end of key stage 4 by type of school and gender
- 4b Average point scores and achievement of GCSE English and mathematics at grades A* to C by pupils at the end of key stage 4 by admission basis and gender
- 5a Percentage of pupils achieving level 2 at the end of key stage 4 by qualification families and type of school and gender
- 5b Percentage of pupils achieving level 2 at the end of key stage 4 by qualification families and admission basis and gender
- 6a Attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by prior attainment band and type of school and gender
- 6b Attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by prior attainment band and admission basis and gender

National Attainment 8 table

- A1 Attainment 8 by pupils at the end of key stage 4

Subject tables

- 7 GCSE attempts and achievements in selected subjects of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in schools (number)
- 8 GCSE attempts and achievements in selected subjects of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in schools (percentage of pupils attempting the subject)
- 9 GCSE attempts and achievements in selected subjects of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in schools (percentage of all pupils)
- 10a GCSE attempts in selected subjects by pupils at the end of key stage 4 by school type (percentage)
- 10b GCSE attempts in selected subjects by pupils at the end of key stage 4 by admissions basis (percentage)
- 11 GCSE Full Course results of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in schools, by subject and grade
- 12 Cambridge International Certificate and Edexcel Level1/2 Certificate results of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in schools, by subject and grade
- 13 Results of GCSEs in Applied subjects of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in schools, by subject and grade
- 14 Other Qualification results of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in all schools by type of qualification

Local authority tables

- 15 GCSE and equivalent results of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by gender for each local authority and region
- 16 GCSE and equivalent results of pupils at the end of key stage 4 for each local authority and region (2005/06 - 2014/15)
- 17 The English Baccalaureate by local authority and region
- 18 Percentage of pupils in state-funded mainstream schools making expected progress in English and in mathematics between key stage 2 and key stage 4, by local authority and region (2009/10 - 2014/15)
- 19 Percentage of pupils in state-funded schools making expected progress in English and in mathematics between key stage 2 and key stage 4, by local authority and region (2009/10 - 2014/15)

Multiple entries table

- 20 Non-discounted examination entries in EBacc and non-EBacc subjects for pupils at the end of key stage 4

Subject time series table

- 21 Time series of GCSE results by subject, grade and gender, 2009/10 to 2014/15

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

This is provisional data	<p>2014/15 figures in this publication are provisional. We will publish updated figures in the revised 'GCSE and equivalent results in England 2014/15' SFR in January 2016.</p> <p>Figures from 2013/14 have been updated to reflect the changes made to the data by the end of March 2015.</p> <p>Any unplanned revisions will be made in accordance with our Statistical policy statement on revisions.</p>
We preserve confidentiality	<p>The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires us to take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality.</p>
We suppress some figures	<p>Values of 1 or 2, or a percentage based on 1 or 2 pupils who achieved; or 0, 1 or 2 pupils who did not achieve a particular level are suppressed in circumstances where non-suppression would lead to disclosure of pupils. Some additional figures have been suppressed to prevent the possibility of a suppressed figure being revealed.</p> <p>This suppression is consistent with our Statistical policy statement on confidentiality.</p>
We adopt symbols to help identify suppression	<p>Symbols are used in the tables as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">0 zero. Not availablex Publication of that figure would be disclosive
We round figures	<p>Percentages in this SFR are given to one decimal place.</p>
Coverage of the data	<p>The statistics in this first release cover the data collated for the 2015 secondary school performance tables. From 2005 the performance tables reported results based on pupils at the end of key stage 4, rather than those aged 15.</p> <p>The coverage of the local authority (LA) and regional statistics is state-funded schools only in England. This includes city technology colleges and academies but excludes hospital schools, pupil referral units and alternative provision.</p>

11. Further information

School level figures	<p>Provisional headline school level data for maintained schools were published on the secondary school performance tables on the same day as this release. Full school level data will be published in January 2016.</p>
Characteristics breakdowns	<p>Characteristics breakdowns will be published in the revised SFR in January 2016, updating SFR06/2015: GCSE and equivalent attainment by pupil characteristics: 2014</p>

Previously published figures	SFR02/2015: Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2013 to 2014 SFR41:2015: Provisional GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2013 to 2014
Attainment for other key stages	Early years foundation stage profile Key stage 1 Key stage 2 16-19 Attainment School Performance Tables
Pupil numbers	SFR15/2015: Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2015
Attainment in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland	Information on educational attainment for secondary schools in Wales is available from the Welsh Government website . Information on educational attainment for secondary schools in Scotland is available from the Scottish Government website . Information on educational attainment for secondary schools in Northern Ireland is available from the Department for Education Northern Ireland (DENI) website .

12. National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The Department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

13. Technical Information

A quality and methodology information document accompanies this SFR. This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed.

14. Got a query? Like to give feedback?

If from the media

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Department
for Education



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