



SFR 01/2016, 21 January 2016

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

### Percentage of pupils achieving the headline measure

	All schools	State-funded schools
<b>2015</b>	<b>53.8</b>	<b>57.1</b>
2014	53.4	56.6
<b>2015 vs. 2014</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.5</b>

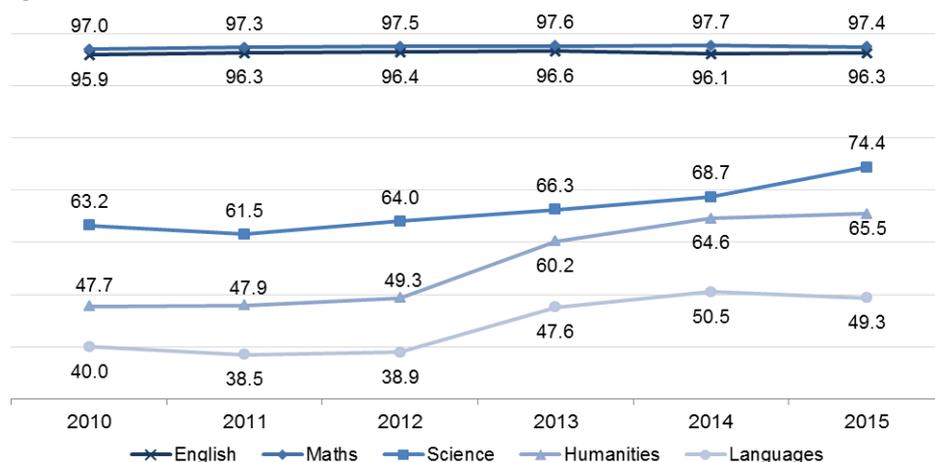
Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Attainment of the headline measure increased by 0.4 percentage points to 53.8% in all schools compared to 2014, and 0.5 percentage points to 57.1% in state-funded schools. A time series showing performance in this measure since 1996, with explanations of policy changes, is shown on page 4.

## Entry to EBacc science and humanities has increased, and entry to EBacc languages has decreased slightly

### Percentage of pupils entered for components of the EBacc

England, state-funded schools, 2010-2015



Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

The percentage of pupils entering English and maths has remained stable in state-funded schools since 2010. It is compulsory for pupils to study these subjects at key stage 4 in state-funded schools.

The percentage entering EBacc science rose significantly between 2014 and 2015, with a small increase in EBacc humanities and a small decrease in EBacc languages. Overall, EBacc entry and achievement remain stable.

## The number of schools below the secondary floor standard is stable compared to 2014

### Percentage of schools below the floor standards by region



Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

329 schools are below the secondary school floor standard in 2015. This represents 11.0% of state-funded mainstream schools included in the floor calculations, and is stable compared to the number of schools below the floor in 2014.

London has the lowest proportion of schools below the floor, with 3.8%, and East Midlands the highest, with 18.3%.

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## About this release

This statistical first release provides the revised GCSE and equivalent results of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in England, including attainment by pupil characteristics. Figures are provided at national, regional and local authority level for the 2014/15 academic year. The data covers pupils at the end of KS4, typically those starting the academic year aged 15.

This release provides an update to the provisional figures released in October 2015 in [SFR 37/2015](#).

## In this publication

The following tables are included in the SFR:

- National tables
- Attainment 8 tables
- Subject tables
- AP/PRU tables
- Other breakdowns tables
- Characteristics national tables
- Local authority tables
- Subject time series table
- Pupil residency and school location tables

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](mailto:Attainment.STATISTICS@education.gsi.gov.uk).

# 1. Introduction

The Department for Education receives examination results data from awarding organisations, which are collected for the 2015 secondary school performance tables. This release provides an update to the provisional figures released in October 2015 in SFR 37/2015. A number of figures have changed between the two releases; this is expected and occurs every year, because the revised data take account of accepted amendment requests made by schools to remove pupils and the addition of late results and re-marks<sup>1</sup>. These changes have been highlighted where relevant. To improve the presentation of these statistics, our October release compared provisional data to the equivalent provisional data from the previous year, to give a fair reflection of the change between years; this publication compares revised 2015 figures to final 2014 data.

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 number of pupils in the cohort has decreased by 7,356 pupils in all schools and 4,963 in state-funded schools, a 1% decrease in both groups compared to 2014. This should be taken into account when comparing figures based on numbers of entries.

## Comparisons to earlier years

Comparisons between 2014 and earlier years were affected by major reforms. In 2014 two major reforms were introduced; Professor Alison Wolf’s Review of Vocational Education recommendations<sup>2</sup> 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 to how these statistics are calculated can be found in the [2013/14 GCSE and equivalent results SFR](#).

The early entry policy was extended to non-EBacc subjects in 2015. Analysis of entry patterns in 2014 showed that only 3% 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 a significant impact on national figures.

## 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<sup>3</sup>. In 2015, 53.8% of pupils achieved this measure in all schools, and 57.1% in state-funded schools. These figures are increases of 0.4 and 0.5 percentage points respectively compared to 2014.

Compared to the 2015 provisional data, the revised results are an increase of 1.0 percentage point for both all schools and state-funded schools. An increase in this measure between provisional and revised figures is expected and occurs every year.

**Table 1: Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A\*-C including English and maths**  
England, 2010-2015

	All schools	State-funded schools
<b>2015</b>	<b>53.8</b>	<b>57.1</b>
2014	53.4	56.6
2013	59.2	60.6
2012	59.4	58.8
2011	59.0	58.2
2010	53.5	55.1

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

## Gender

Girls continue to outperform boys in this measure, although the gap has narrowed by 0.8 percentage points in all schools since 2014, as shown in Table 2. This is because boys’ attainment in this indicator has increased to a greater extent than it has for girls since 2014, for whom attainment has remained broadly stable. The 0.4 percentage point rise in the proportion of pupils achieving 5+ A\*-C including English and maths in 2015 has been driven by a 0.8 percentage point increase in boys’ attainment compared to no change in girls. The gap between girls

**Table 2: Percentage achieving 5+ A\*-C including English and maths by gender**  
England, all schools, 2014-2015

	Girls	Boys	Gap
<b>2015</b>	58.9	49.0	9.9
<b>2014</b>	58.9	48.2	10.7

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

<sup>1</sup> Information on [Enquiries about results for GCSE and A Level: summer 2015 exam series](#) is published by Ofqual

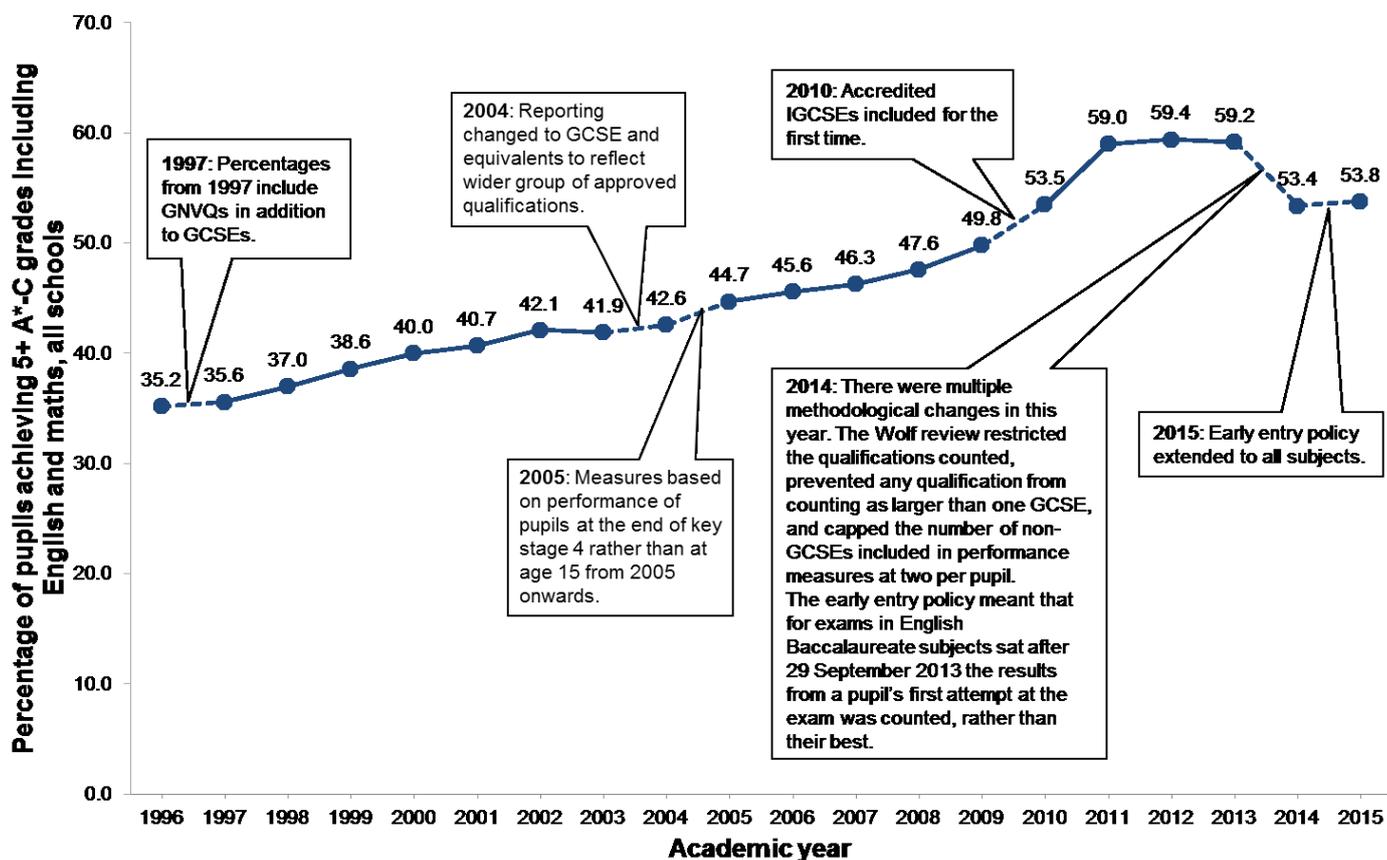
<sup>2</sup> This restricted the qualifications counted, prevented any qualification from counting as larger than one GCSE, and capped the number of non-GCSEs included in performance measures at two per pupil

<sup>3</sup> In October 2013, the department announced that a new secondary school accountability system would be implemented from 2016. Schools had the option to adopt the new performance measures a year early. 327 schools chose to opt-in; for these schools the headline attainment measure is Attainment 8. More information can be found in Section 9.

and boys is smaller in state-funded schools, at 9.4 percentage points, and decreased from 10.1 percentage points in 2014.

Figure 1 shows a time series of the headline measure for 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 3 shows a full breakdown of the effect of the methodology changes in 2014 and 2015 on the headline measure.

**Table 3: 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' (best entry with no Wolf rules applied)	56.8	The difference of <b>2.4 percentage points</b> compared to 2013 covers the combined impact of the cohort effect, changes in exam structure, behaviour change, and unregulated IGCSE entries
2014	'2014 best entry methodology' (Wolf rules and best entry results)	55.5	The difference of <b>1.3 percentage points</b> between this figure and the above figure is the result of applying the Wolf recommendation rules to the calculation of performance measures
2014	'2014 methodology' (both Wolf and early entry rules applied)	53.4	The difference of <b>2.1 percentage points</b> 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' (early entry rules extended to all subjects)	53.8	The difference of <b>0.4 percentage points</b> between 2014 and 2015 shows the stabilisation of results after reforms. This is in line with analysis of entry patterns which showed that in 2014 only 3% 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. To count in the EBacc, qualifications must be on the [English Baccalaureate list of qualifications 2015](#).

#### Entry

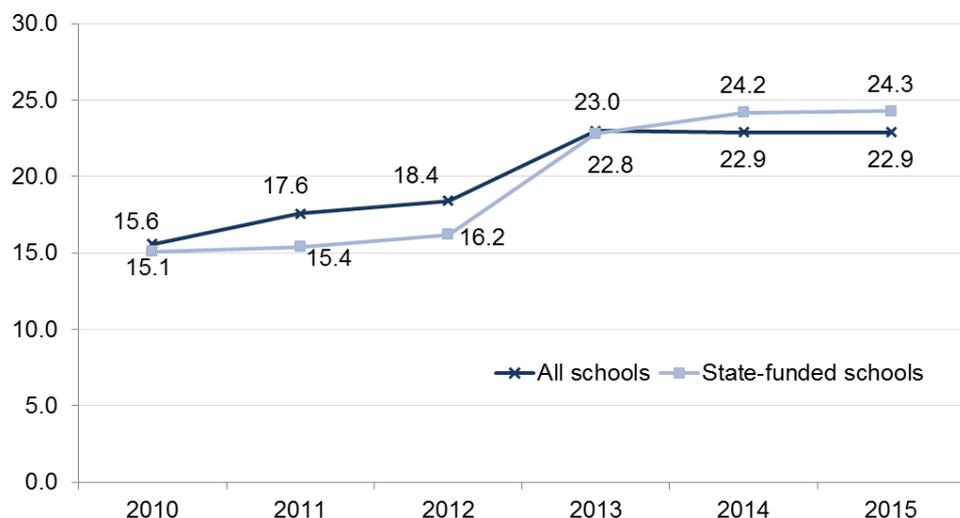
In 2015, 36.2% of pupils in all schools and 38.7% of pupils in state-funded schools entered the EBacc. Entry is stable when compared to 2014 (with a 0.1 percentage point decrease for all schools, and no change for state-funded schools). Entry increased from 22.0% (all schools) and 21.8% (state-funded schools) in 2010 when the EBacc was introduced.

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

The difference between the all schools and state-funded schools figures 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.

#### Achievement

**Figure 3: Percentage of pupils achieving the EBacc**  
England, 2010-2015

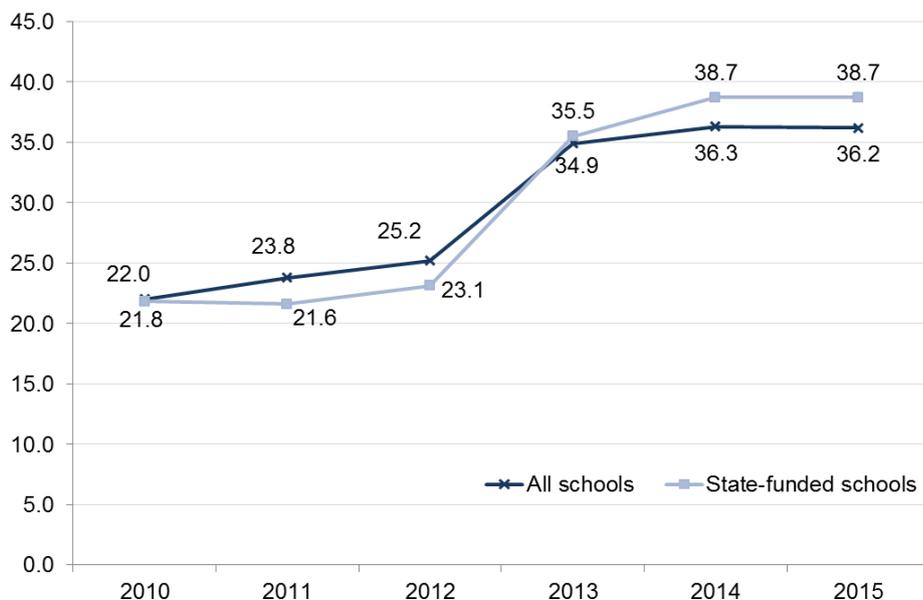


Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

In 2015, 22.9% of pupils in all schools and 24.3% of pupils in state-funded schools achieved the EBacc. These figures are stable when compared to 2014, and increased from 15.6% and 15.1% respectively in 2010 when the EBacc was introduced.

EBacc achievement figures were revised upwards by 0.4 percentage points for all schools and 0.3 percentage points for state-funded schools compared to the 2015 provisional data.

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



Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

## Gender

The proportion of boys entering the EBacc has fallen slightly to 31.6% in all schools since 2014, (a drop of 0.3 percentage points<sup>4</sup>) and boys' achievement of the EBacc has remained stable at 18.2%. For girls, entry and achievement of the EBacc has remained the same. This means that the gender gap has increased for entry into the EBacc, but decreased slightly for achievement of the EBacc<sup>4</sup>.

In state-funded schools, the gender gap in both EBacc entry and achievement increased slightly, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Percentage of pupils entering and achieving the EBacc by gender**  
England, 2014-2015

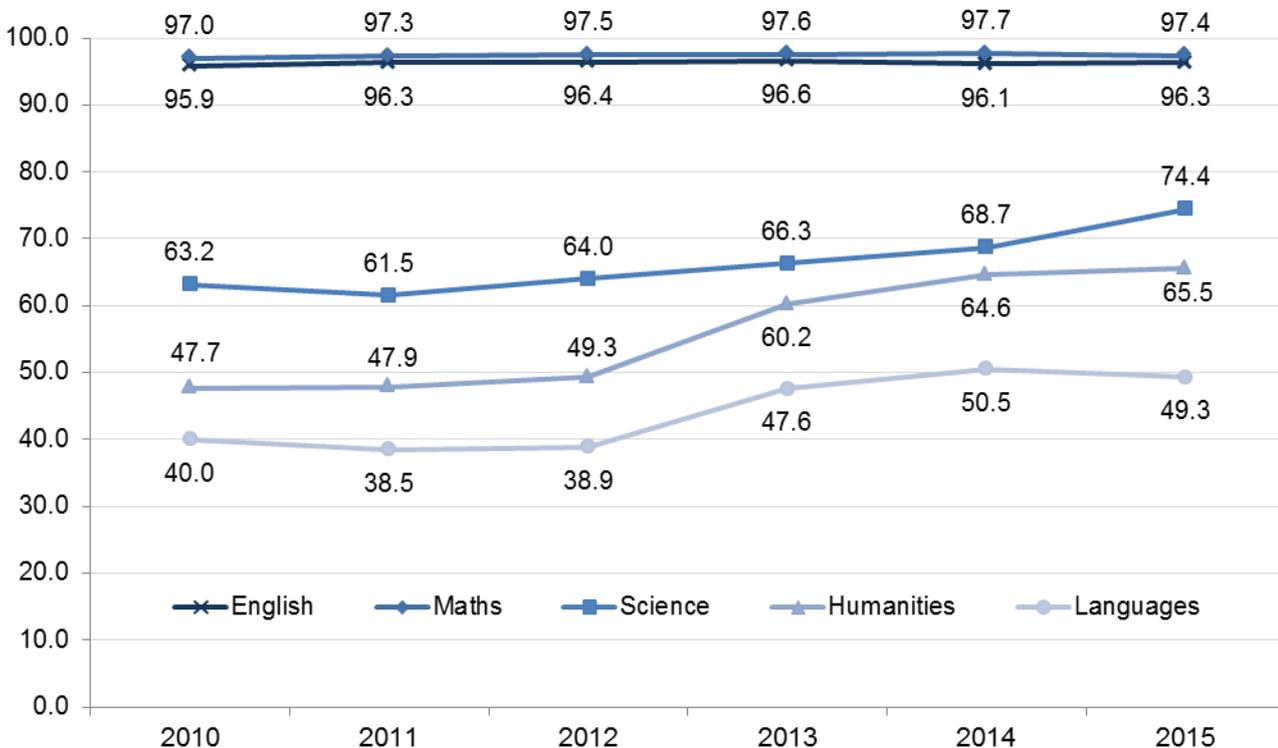
All schools	Entering the EBacc			Achieving the EBacc		
	Girls	Boys	Gap	Girls	Boys	Gap
<b>2015</b>	41.0	31.6	9.4	27.8	18.2	9.6
<b>2014</b>	41.0	31.8	9.1	27.8	18.2	9.7
State-funded schools	Girls	Boys	Gap	Girls	Boys	Gap
<b>2015</b>	43.4	34.1	9.3	29.3	19.5	9.8
<b>2014</b>	43.2	34.4	8.9	29.1	19.5	9.6

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, in state-funded schools, entries have increased by 5.7 percentage points in EBacc science, and 0.9 percentage points in EBacc humanities, and decreased by 1.2 percentage points in EBacc languages. Entries to all three of these EBacc subject areas have increased significantly since 2010 when the EBacc was introduced, as shown in Figure 4. More information on each subject area is given in the following sections.

**Figure 4: Percentage of pupils entered for components of the EBacc**  
England, state-funded schools, 2010-2015



Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

<sup>4</sup> All gaps and changes are calculated from unrounded figures.

## English

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

- A\*-C in combined English<sup>5</sup> GCSE or approved equivalents; or
- A\*-C in English language and any grade in English literature

The percentage of pupils with entries to EBacc English has remained stable in 2015, as shown in Figure 4. The stability of the EBacc English measure since 2010 is 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 0.3 percentage points for pupils in all schools, and state-funded schools compared to 2014.

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 qualifications<sup>6</sup>. Compared to 2014, there were drops in both combined English (72,279 fewer entries, to 70,360 entries in total) and English language (49,343 fewer entries, to 530,385), and an increase in entries for English literature (44,303 additional entries, to 518,999). This may suggest that pupils are continuing to shift from combined English to separate language and literature qualifications, but also that pupils may only be 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 5, 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 5: English entries by qualification type**  
England, all schools, 2013-2015

	2013	2014	2015
<b>GCSE</b>	550,801	464,077	<b>363,238</b>
<b>Regulated IGCSEs</b>	41,084	105,416	<b>190,039</b>

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.

## Maths

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

- A\*-C in maths GCSE or approved equivalents; or
- A\*-C in at least one element of GCSE maths linked pairs ('applications of mathematics' and 'methods in mathematics'). Where this option is chosen, both elements of linked pairs must be taken for a pupil to have entered EBacc maths.

Entries to EBacc maths have remained stable in 2015, as shown in Figure 4. The stability of the EBacc maths measure since 2010 is due to the fact that it is compulsory for pupils to study maths at key stage 4 in state-funded schools. Achievement of EBacc maths is also stable, with an increase of 0.5 percentage points for pupils in all schools and 0.6 percentage points in state-funded schools since 2014.

However, the total number of entries to maths qualifications (all entries by pupils at the end of key stage 4 in 2015, including multiple entries) has fallen by 240,813 – a decrease of 27.1% compared to 2014. This is linked to behaviour changes relating to early entry, meaning pupils are less likely to be entered for their maths exam in year 10 and instead wait until year 11. This is evidenced by the large fall in maths entries by this year's cohort when they were in year 10. Only 4.4% of the maths entries made by this year's cohort were undertaken in year 10, compared to 20.9% 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.

<sup>5</sup> Combined English covers both a literature and language element within a single course of study

<sup>6</sup> See section 7 of the [Revised GCSE and equivalents results in England, 2013 to 2014 SFR](#).

## 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 science<sup>7</sup>; or
- double science

The proportion of pupils entering EBacc science increased in 2015, to 70.2% for pupils in all schools, and 74.4% for pupils in state-funded schools, compared to 65.2% and 68.7% respectively in 2014.

Analysis of the underlying exam-level data in state-funded schools shows that the increase in EBacc science entries is due to an increase in pupils studying the core and additional pathway, with a 6.2 percentage point increase in the entry rate between 2014 and 2015, as shown in Table 6. 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% in 2010 to 25.6% in 2015.

**Table 6: Percentage of pupils with EBacc science entries on each pathway or none**  
England, state-funded schools, 2011-2015

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Three sciences<sup>(a)</sup></b>	16.5	20.1	23.2	24.7	22.2	<b>21.7</b>
<b>Core and additional science</b>	46.8	41.4	40.7	41.2	46.2	<b>52.4</b>
<b>Double science</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3	<b>0.3</b>
<b>No EBacc science entries</b>	36.8	38.6	36.0	33.7	31.3	<b>25.6</b>

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; or
- A\*A\*-CC in double science

Achievement of the EBacc science measure decreased in all schools (from 73.0% in 2014, to 69.9%), and in state-funded schools (from 72.3% to 69.1%). Analysis of pass rates on different pathways, as shown in Table 7, suggests this is due to a decrease in the percentage of pupils achieving A\*-C in the core and additional pathway, which decreased from 62.7% in 2014 to 59.4% in 2015. There was a decrease in the pass rate for double science as well, but given this was only taken by 0.3% of the cohort, this has a negligible effect on the overall achievement rate. The pass rate for pupils entering three sciences remains high, with 92.8% of those entering three sciences achieving A\*-C grades in at least two of the three subjects in 2015.

**Table 7: Percentage of pupils achieving EBacc science on each pathway, as a percentage of those entering**  
England, state-funded schools, 2010-2015

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Three sciences<sup>(a)</sup></b>	94.9	94.7	94.6	92.2	92.5	<b>92.8</b>
<b>Core and additional science</b>	64.0	65.7	64.2	61.0	62.7	<b>59.4</b>
<b>Double science</b>	x <sup>(b)</sup>	27.3	56.8	44.4	48.7	<b>43.5</b>

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

a. To achieve the three sciences EBacc science pathway, pupils must achieve A\*-C in at least two of biology, chemistry, physics and computer science, having entered at least three.

b. Suppressed due to small number of entries.

<sup>7</sup> Core and additional science, together with further additional science, cover the same breadth of curriculum as biology, chemistry and physics GCSEs

## Humanities

The EBacc humanities subjects are geography and history: pupils must achieve A\*-C in one of these qualifications to achieve the EBacc humanities pillar.

In 2015 64.7% of pupils in all schools, and 65.5% of pupils in state-funded schools, entered an EBacc humanities subject. This is an increase of 0.8 and 0.9 percentage points respectively compared to 2014. The percentage of pupils entering EBacc humanities has increased year on year since 2010, when 48.9% of pupils in all schools, and 47.7% of pupils in state-funded schools, entered humanities.

Achievement of EBacc humanities, of those who entered, also increased between 2014 and 2015, to 68.8% in all schools, and 66.9% 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 8. The percentage of pupils with entries into both history and geography increased slightly year on year between 2010 and 2014, from 7.8% to 9.5%, with a small decrease of 0.1 percentage points in 2015.

**Table 8: Percentage of pupils with entries into each EBacc humanities subject**  
England, state-funded schools, 2010-2015

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>History</b>	30.1	30.9	31.8	37.7	39.8	<b>39.6</b>
<b>Geography</b>	25.4	25.2	26.1	31.7	34.3	<b>35.3</b>
<b>Both history and geography</b>	7.8	8.1	8.6	9.2	9.5	<b>9.4</b>
<b>Any EBacc humanity subject</b>	47.7	47.9	49.3	60.2	64.6	<b>65.5</b>

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 EBacc approved list.

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

- French (158,723 entries in 2015, down by 7,444 from 2014)
- Spanish (89,918 entries in 2015, down by 31 from 2014)
- German (55,837 entries in 2015, down by 4,525 from 2014)

The fourth most popular subject was Latin with 10,599 entries, and the fastest growing languages were Chinese, with a 12.5% increase to 3,789 entries in 2015, and Portuguese, with a 12.0% increase to 2,311 entries in 2015.

In 2015, 50.0% of pupils in all schools, and 49.3% in state-funded schools, entered at least one EBacc language qualification, a decrease of 0.8 percentage points compared to 2014 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% of pupils in all schools, and 40.0% of pupils in state-funded schools entered at least one EBacc language.

The percentage of pupils entering more than one EBacc language has been relatively stable between 2010 and 2015, with 4.5% of the cohort entering more than one EBacc language in 2015.

**Table 9: Percentage of pupils with entries into one and more than one EBacc language**  
England, state-funded schools, 2010-2015

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>One EBacc language</b>	35.3	34.1	34.6	43.2	45.9	<b>44.9</b>
<b>More than one EBacc language</b>	4.7	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.6	<b>4.5</b>
<b>EBacc languages</b>	40.0	38.5	38.9	47.6	50.5	<b>49.3</b>

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Achievement of EBacc languages, of those who entered, increased between 2014 and 2015, from 71.1% to 72.7% in all schools, and 68.9% to 70.5% in state-funded schools.

## 5. Other subjects

### Arts

The number of pupils with GCSE entries into art and design, music, media/film/TV, dance, and performing arts increased in 2015 compared to 2014, despite the slight fall in the number of pupils in the cohort. The number of pupils with entries into drama and applied art and design fell slightly.

The number of pupils with entries into art and design has increased year on year since 2012, up to 176,064 in 2015, following a small fall between 2011 and 2012.

**Table 10: Number of pupils with entries into GCSE arts subjects**  
England, all schools, 2011-2015<sup>8</sup>

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Applied Art &amp; Design</b>	1,476	1,171	1,051	855	<b>823</b>
<b>Art &amp; Design</b>	162,342	159,012	164,510	170,872	<b>176,064</b>
<b>Drama</b>	74,755	70,371	69,754	70,909	<b>70,803</b>
<b>Media/Film/TV</b>	51,783	49,478	48,698	51,295	<b>51,570</b>
<b>Music</b>	43,157	40,761	41,256	42,404	<b>43,654</b>
<b>Dance</b>	13,177	11,942	11,540	11,916	<b>11,981</b>
<b>Performing Arts</b>	2,648	2,270	3,079	4,502	<b>5,997</b>

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

### Religious studies

Entries to full course GCSE religious studies increased year on year between 2011 and 2015, with 269,107 pupils entering in 2015.

**Table 11: Number of pupils with entries into religious studies**  
England, all schools, 2011-2015<sup>8</sup>

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Religious studies</b>	195,109	210,602	229,009	258,745	<b>269,107</b>

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

### 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 12.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

**Table 12: 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
<b>Local authority maintained mainstream schools</b>	1,227	216,106	56.0
<b>Academies and free schools</b>	1,834	326,412	59.5
<i>Sponsored academies</i>	503	79,446	45.8
<i>Converter academies</i>	1,272	243,719	64.3
<i>Free schools</i>	20	1,121	51.6
<i>University technical colleges</i>	17	1,276	37.7
<i>Studio schools</i>	22	850	16.9
<b>Further education colleges</b>	5	250	6.0

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 4<sup>9</sup>, or comparison between years. Many of the free schools which currently have results are former independent schools rather than new provision, since most new free schools 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 performance<sup>10</sup>.

### 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 13 which shows the number of schools included in attainment measures in each year.

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.

<sup>9</sup> There are 20 free schools, 17 university technical colleges (UTCs) and 22 studio schools with results in 2015

<sup>10</sup> There are five FE colleges providing 14-16 provision with results in 2015

**Table 13: 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
<b>Total number of academies and LA maintained schools</b>	<b>3,004</b>	<b>3,002</b>

Source: Key stage 4 attainment 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 14 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 schools in that year. The local authority maintained mainstream line only includes schools who had maintained status in all years shown. Due to the reforms introduced in September 2013, results from 2014 and 2015 cannot be directly compared with the earlier parts of the time series.

**Table 14: 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	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Sponsored academies</b>						
Open for 1 academic year	59				45.0	45.8
Open for 2 academic years	77			46.2	41.5	43.8
Open for 3 academic years	59		46.0	48.1	41.7	43.0
Open for 4 academic years	47	44.0	45.8	48.7	44.7	45.0
Open for 5 or more academic years	261	46.9	50.1	52.5	47.6	47.1
<b>All sponsored academies</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>46.8</b>	<b>49.8</b>	<b>45.4</b>	<b>45.8</b>
<b>Converter academies</b>						
Open for 1 academic year	67				61.6	60.2
Open for 2 academic years	160			63.0	56.9	58.0
Open for 3 academic years	366		63.3	65.2	61.3	61.5
Open for 4 academic years	654	68.5	68.2	69.8	66.3	67.4
Open for 5 or more academic years	25	76.3	75.3	73.5	71.6	72.2
<b>All converter academies</b>	<b>1,272</b>	<b>65.9</b>	<b>66.0</b>	<b>67.5</b>	<b>63.6</b>	<b>64.3</b>
<b>All local authority maintained schools</b>	<b>1,227</b>	<b>57.6</b>	<b>58.1</b>	<b>59.9</b>	<b>55.6</b>	<b>56.0</b>

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 14 shows increases in attainment in both sponsored academies and LA maintained schools between 2014 and 2015, with a rise in attainment of 0.4 percentage points for both, to 45.8% and 56.0% respectively. Over the same period, attainment in converter academies increased from 63.6 to 64.3% (an increase of 0.7 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

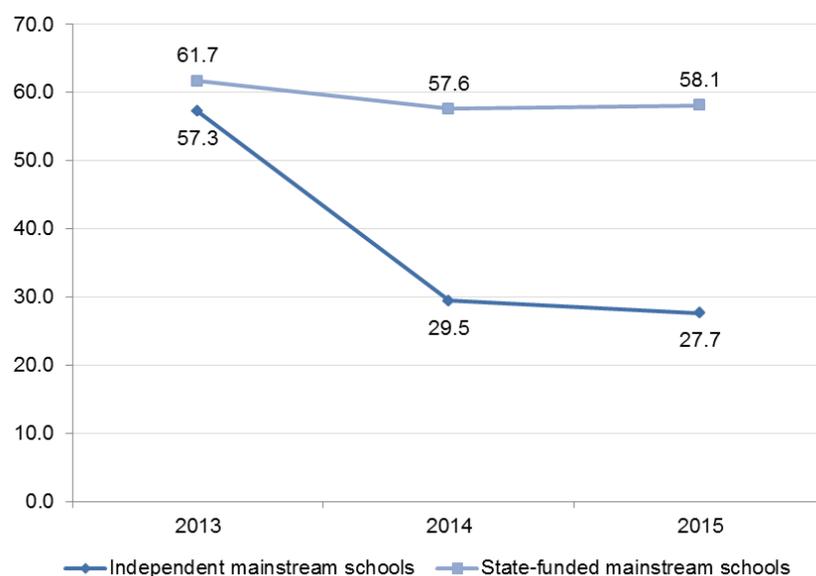
The proportion of pupils in independent schools achieving 5+ A\*-C grades (including English and maths) has changed significantly over the last three years due primarily to changes related to IGCSEs.

In 2013, 57.3% of pupils in independent schools achieved the measure, but this fell to 29.5% in 2014, and to 27.7% in 2015, as illustrated by Figure 5.

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 5: 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

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% of EBacc qualifications were attempted more than once, compared to 12.1% in 2014. Furthermore, the proportion of EBacc subjects attempted three or more times is now negligible.

**Table 15: Multiple entry into EBacc subjects**  
England, all schools, 2014-2015

	2014	2015
Number of qualifications attempted	3,554,820	<b>3,593,975</b>
<i>Percentage attempted:</i>		
Once	87.9	<b>96.9</b>
Twice	10.5	<b>2.8</b>
Three or more times	1.6	<b>0.3</b>

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 16: Multiple entry into non-EBacc subjects**  
England, all schools, 2014-2015

	2014	2015
Number of qualifications attempted	1,892,052	<b>1,855,697</b>
<i>Percentage attempted:</i>		
Once	96.9	<b>96.9</b>
Twice	3.0	<b>3.0</b>
Three or more times	0.1	<b>0.1</b>

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

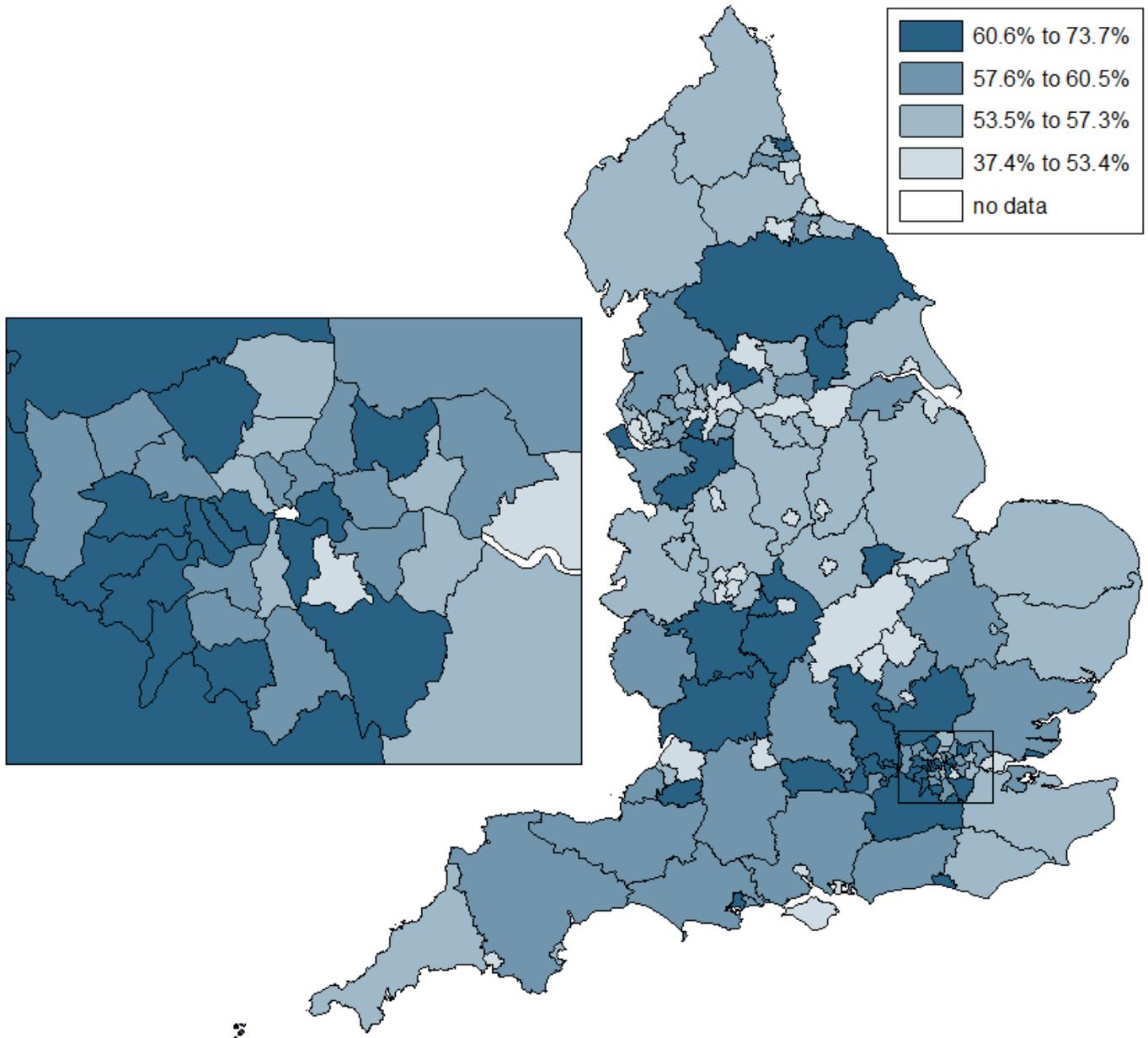
Multiple entries in non-EBacc subjects remain very low in 2015: almost 97% of non-EBacc subjects were attempted once, and only 0.1% attempted three times or more. These figures have not changed since 2014 and suggest that entry patterns for non-EBacc subjects have not been affected by the expansion of 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 subjects<sup>11</sup>. This supports the decision not to publish an additional methodology where the effects of the expansion of early entry policy have been removed.

<sup>11</sup> 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 6.

**Figure 6: 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 and Progress 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 average achievement of pupils across 8 qualifications including English (double weighted if the combined English qualification, or both language and literature are taken), maths (double weighted), 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. It compares pupils' achievement – their Attainment 8 score – with the average Attainment 8 score of all pupils nationally who had a similar starting point (or 'prior attainment'), calculated using assessment results from the end of primary school. Progress 8 is a relative measure, therefore for all mainstream pupils nationally, the average Progress 8 score is zero. When including pupils at special schools the national average is not zero as Progress 8 scores for special schools are calculated using Attainment 8 estimates based upon mainstream pupils.

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. To provide a point of comparison, 2015 is the first year in which national Attainment 8 and Progress 8 scores have been 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 17 shows the national average Attainment 8 scores per pupil for each element.

**Table 17: Attainment 8 scores per pupil in each element**

England, 2015

	All schools	State-funded schools
<b>Attainment 8 score per pupil</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>48.4</b>
English	10.1	10.4
Maths	9.4	9.7
English Baccalaureate	12.6	12.6
Open	15.3	15.6
Of which;		
GCSE qualifications	12.9	13.1
Non-GCSE qualifications	2.4	2.5

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

The average Attainment 8 score per pupil for all schools is 47.4 compared to 48.4 for state-funded schools, an upwards revision of 0.4 and 0.2 compared to provisional figures. Tables 18 and 19 show the Attainment 8 point scores for GCSE and AS levels at each grade. 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 18: 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 19: 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 15.3 for all schools and 15.6 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 13.1 from the GCSE qualifications, compared to 2.5 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.

### Attainment 8 and Progress 8 by disadvantage

Attainment 8 and Progress 8 figures are also published for state-funded schools for disadvantaged pupils and all other pupils. The average Attainment 8 score per disadvantaged pupil is 39.0 compared to 52.0 for other pupils, a gap of 13.0 points. On Progress 8, disadvantaged pupils have a score of -0.40, compared to other pupils' score of 0.12.

Other pupils outperform disadvantaged pupils across all elements of Attainment 8. The smallest difference is for the English element, with disadvantaged pupils achieving 8.9 points and other pupils achieving 11.0, a gap of 2.1 points. The difference is greatest in the EBacc element of Attainment 8, with disadvantaged pupils achieving 9.0 points compared to 14.0 for other pupils, a gap of 5.0 points. This may be due to subject choices by disadvantaged pupils, who are less likely to enter the EBacc. More information on attainment of disadvantaged pupils is given in Section 11 on pupil characteristics.

## 10. Floor standards

In 2015 schools were assessed against one of two floor standards. All schools had the [opportunity](#) to opt in to the Progress 8 measure this year and 327 chose to do so, with two of these schools closing after opting in. These schools were assessed against the Progress 8 floor standard. The remainder of schools were assessed against the 5+ A\*-C and expected progress floor standard (see below), which is the same floor standard as in 2013 and 2014. Floor standards only apply to state-funded mainstream schools and not to special schools, independent schools, pupil referral units, alternative provision or hospital schools. More information on Progress 8 is given in Section 9.

### Floor standards

#### • 5+ A\*-C and expected progress floor standard

A school is below this floor standard if:

1. less than 40% of pupils achieve 5 or more A\*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths; and
2. the percentage of pupils making expected progress between key stage 2 and key stage 4 in English and maths is less than the national median for all state-funded mainstream schools<sup>12</sup>

Schools are only included in the 5+ A\*-C and expected progress floor standard calculation if they have more than 10 pupils at the end of key stage 4, they have published results in all of the measures above, and have not opted in to Progress 8.

#### • Progress 8 floor standard

A school below the Progress 8 floor standard if:

1. its Progress 8 score is below -0.5; and
2. the upper band of the 95% confidence interval is below zero

Schools are only included in the Progress 8 floor standard calculation if they have opted in to Progress 8, have more than 5 pupils at the end of key stage 4 and more than 50% of pupils have key stage 2 assessments that can be used as prior attainment in the calculations of Progress 8.

In 2015 the median percentage of pupils making expected progress between key stage 2 and key stage 4 was 73% in English and 68% maths.

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<sup>12</sup> Schools are ranked in terms of their expected progress from lowest to highest and the median is the resulting middle number

In total 329, or 11.0%, of all state-funded mainstream schools eligible for the floor standards were below the floor. This compares to 11.1% in 2014. The 329 schools which are below the floor standard are made up of:

- 312 schools below the 5+ A\*-C and expected progress floor standard, 11.7% of the 2,663 state-funded mainstream schools that had not opted in to Progress 8
- 17 schools out of the 325 open schools that opted in to Progress 8, 5.2% of schools opting in to Progress 8 this year

There is considerable variation in the percentage of schools below the floor standard in different regions, as shown in Figure 7.

London has the lowest proportion of schools below the floor, with 3.8%, and East Midlands the highest, with 18.3%.

**Figure 7: Percentage of schools below the floor by region England, 2015**



Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

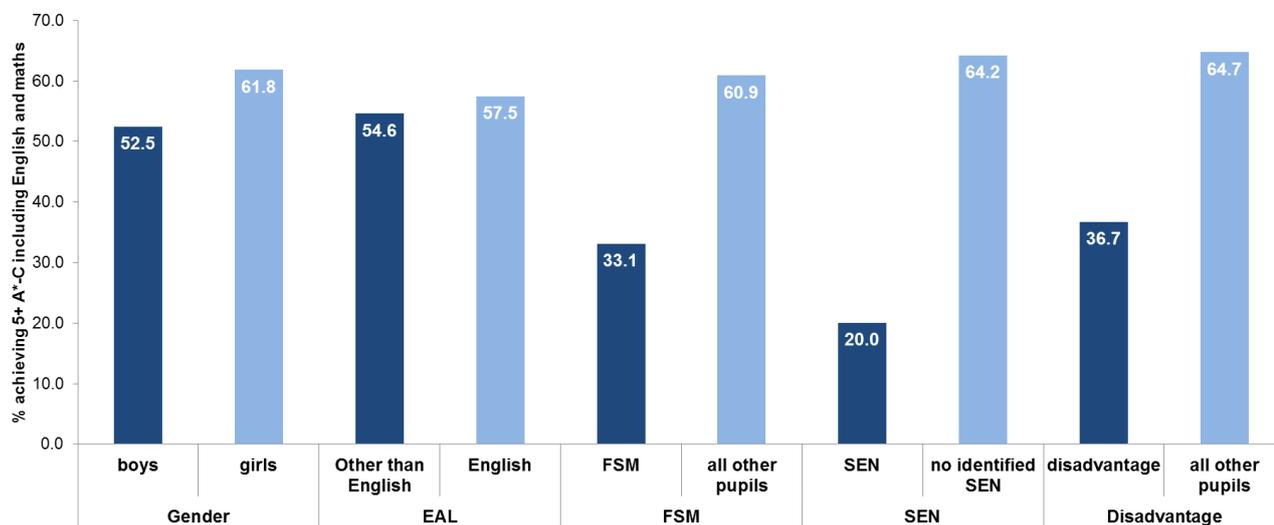
## 11. Pupil characteristics

### Characteristics definitions

Some definitions of characteristics groupings have changed for 2015. Please see the pupil characteristics section of the quality and methodology document for more details.

Information on attainment has been broken down by the following pupil characteristics: ethnicity, English as an additional language (EAL), free school meal eligibility (FSM), disadvantage, and special educational needs. These characteristics are broken down further by local authority in the tables accompanying this SFR. Figure 8 shows the pattern in attainment by different pupil characteristics. Further information on attainment broken down by Indices of Deprivation Affecting Children (IDACI), degree of rurality, local authority district, and parliamentary constituency, based on the postcode of pupil residence or school location, can be found in the tables published alongside this release.

**Figure 8: Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A\*-C including English and maths by pupil characteristics England, state-funded schools, 2015**



Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

## Disadvantage: Gap Index

### Experimental Statistics

Last year we consulted on a new measure of the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others which provides greater comparability between years. 'Calculating the index' summarises how the measure is applied; and more details of the methodology and consultation were published in [SFR 40/2014](#).

### Disadvantage

Pupils are defined as disadvantaged if they are known to have been eligible for free school meals in the past six years (from year 6 to year 11), if they are recorded as having been looked after for at least one day or if they are recorded as having been adopted from care.

In 2015, 27.3% of pupils at the end of key stage 4 were disadvantaged.

Attainment is lower for disadvantaged pupils compared to all other pupils across all headline measures in 2015, as seen in previous years. We recommend that the new gap index is used to look at the difference in attainment between disadvantaged and other pupils.

### Calculating the Index

Pupils are ordered by average grade in English and maths GCSEs.

The average rank of disadvantaged pupils was 0.36, meaning the average pupil was just over a third of the way up the distribution, while that of other pupils was 0.55, more than halfway up the distribution (see Figure 9).

The disadvantaged pupils' attainment gap index multiplies the difference between these by 20:

$$(0.552 - 0.362) \times 20 = 3.80$$

The gap is measured on a scale of 0 to 10 (or minus 10 if disadvantaged pupils achieved higher)

The gap between disadvantaged pupils and others, measured using the new index, decreased in three of the last four years, narrowing by 6.6% overall since 2011. In the latest year it showed a small increase of 1.6%, as shown in Table 20. This shows that the average position of disadvantaged pupils in the distribution compared to others remains similar to that in 2013.

**Table 20: Trend in the disadvantaged pupils' attainment gap index**

England, state-funded schools, 2011-2015

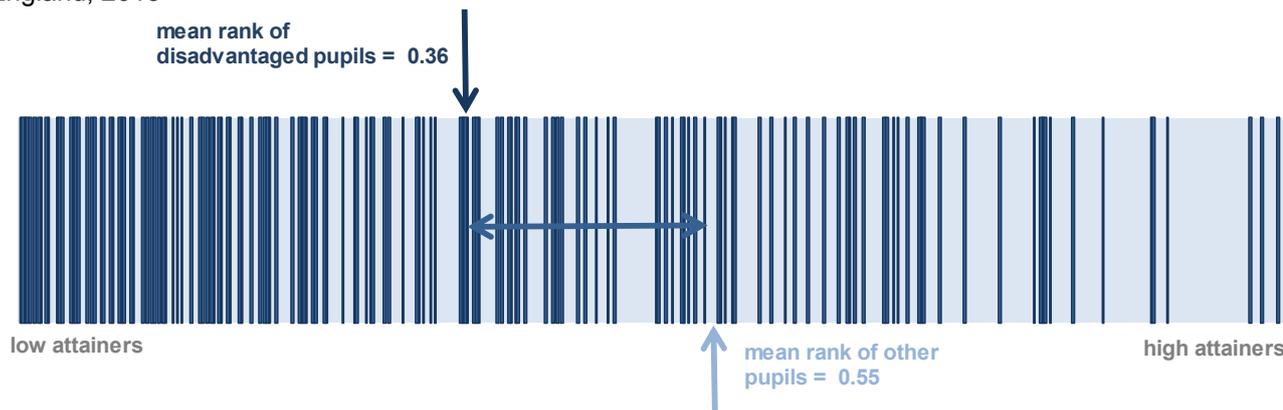
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Gap index</b>	4.07	3.89	3.81	3.74	3.80

Source: National pupil database and key stage 4 attainment data

The definition of "disadvantaged pupils" changed this year, to include pupils looked after for one day or more (instead of those looked after for at least six months), and pupils who have left care through adoption, special guardianship, child arrangement or residence orders, who were not previously included. The expansion of the definition has had a small impact on overall numbers, adding around 1,000 pupils at end of year 11 or less than 1% of the disadvantaged group. However, the impact on attainment is larger due to the presence of some of the lowest performing pupil groups. On the old definition, the gap index would be slightly smaller, at 3.77.

Figure 9 shows the distribution of pupils' results in English and maths GCSEs in 2015, from lowest attainment on the left to the highest attainment on the right. Dark blue lines represent disadvantaged pupils, while light blue lines represent others. Although there were some disadvantaged pupils among the highest attainers, they were more likely to be clustered at the lower attaining end. The gap index measures the distance between the average position of disadvantaged and other pupils in the distribution (shown by arrows); if disadvantage were not associated with differences in attainment, pupils would be evenly spaced and the gap would be zero, but currently the average position of disadvantaged pupils is lower than others. The average positions have become closer together since 2011 but moved apart in the latest year.

**Figure 9: The distribution of pupil attainment, disadvantaged pupils and others**  
England, 2015<sup>13</sup>



Dark blue lines represent disadvantaged pupils, while light blue lines represent others.

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

To understand more about differences between the two groups we can look at illustrative points in the distribution and compare how likely pupils are to be particularly high or low achievers.

For example, 93% who were not disadvantaged achieved an average grade of E or above in English and maths. Disadvantaged pupils are more likely to be low achieving, and 77% of disadvantaged pupils achieved E or above.

Disadvantaged pupils are also under-represented at the high achieving end. The top 15% of non-disadvantaged pupils achieved an A or above (achieving either A/A\*s in both assessments, or one B and one A\*); however, only 4% of disadvantaged pupils reached this standard.

**Table 21: Attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others across the distribution**  
England, 2015

English and maths average grade at or above:	Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving	Percentage of other pupils achieving	Percentage of all pupils achieving	Percentage point gap	Odds ratio: disadvantaged compared to others
G	91.8	98.0	96.3	6.1	4.3
F	86.0	96.3	93.4	10.2	4.2
E	77.4	92.8	88.6	15.4	3.8
D	65.7	86.9	81.1	21.1	3.4
C	42.6	70.1	62.6	27.5	3.2
B	15.8	38.3	32.2	22.5	3.3
A	3.9	14.7	11.7	10.8	4.2
A*	0.3	2.1	1.6	1.8	6.3

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Odds ratios are used to compare pupils' chances of achieving different outcomes<sup>14</sup>. When an outcome is achieved by almost all, or very few, pupils there might be a small difference in the proportions achieving it, but a large difference in the likelihood of achieving (or the risk of not achieving) that outcome.

<sup>13</sup> The diagram shows the position of every 1000<sup>th</sup> disadvantaged pupil and every 1000<sup>th</sup> other pupil at the end of key stage 4 in 2015, in order of their average grade across English and mathematics. The average position for each group is indicated.

<sup>14</sup> Odds ratios compare different pupils' chances of achieving or missing out on a measure. The odds against pupils in each group achieving a standard are calculated: for example, if 25% of disadvantaged pupils achieved B or above, the odds against them achieving would be 3 to 1 (i.e. 75% vs. 25%). For each disadvantaged pupil who achieves, 3 others do not. The odds ratio compares the odds for disadvantaged pupils with the odds for the other group. If the odds against disadvantaged pupils achieving are higher the ratio will be greater than 1, suggesting that disadvantaged pupils are less likely to achieve. A higher ratio indicates a greater disparity in pupils' chances. Odds ratios have been calculated on unrounded data.

The odds against disadvantaged pupils achieving at least a C average in English and maths are around three times as high as for other pupils. The odds ratios for English and maths attainment at GCSE increases at both higher and lower attainment thresholds, with the odds against achieving at least an A average being over four times as high for disadvantaged pupils as others, and over six times as high for achieving A\* in both English and maths. These higher odds ratios indicate the difficulty of achieving top marks at key stage 4 for disadvantaged pupils. Odds ratios also rise above 4 for the achievement of basic passes at F and G grades. Disadvantaged pupils are many times more likely to miss out on achieving these benchmarks, as shown in Table 21.

## Disadvantage: threshold measures

This section is included for transparency, however we recommend that the new gap index (see page 19) is used in preference to threshold measures for analysing the difference in attainment between disadvantaged and other pupils.

Attainment is lower for both disadvantaged and FSM eligible pupils compared to all other pupils across all headline measures in 2015.

Attainment for disadvantaged pupils increased across 5+ A\*-C including English and maths, and the percentage entering and achieving the EBacc, as shown in Table 22.

**Table 22: Percentage of disadvantaged and all other pupils achieving the main attainment indicators**  
England, state-funded schools, 2014-2015

	5+ A*-C inc. English and maths		Entering the EBacc		Achieving the EBacc	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
<b>Disadvantaged</b>	36.5	36.7	22.9	23.3	10.9	11.2
<b>All other pupils</b>	64.0	64.7	44.5	44.5	29.1	29.2
<b>Gap</b>	<b>27.4</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>18.1</b>	<b>18.1</b>

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

The disadvantaged gap for 5+ A\*-C including English and maths in 2015 has increased by 0.6 percentage points since 2014. This is because, although the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving 5+ A\*-C including English and maths increased slightly, by 0.2 percentage points to 36.7%, the proportion of all other pupils achieving this measure increased by 0.8 percentage points to 64.7%<sup>15</sup>. Conversely, the gap for entry to the EBacc has narrowed by 0.5 percentage points<sup>15</sup>. This is because the proportion of disadvantaged pupils entering the EBacc in 2015 has increased slightly since last year, while the proportion of all other pupils entering has either decreased or remained the same. The EBacc achievement gap has remained the same.

## Free school meals

### Free school meals

Free school meal (FSM) eligibility states whether a pupil's family have claimed eligibility for free school meals in the School Census.

In 2015, 13.8% of pupils at the end of key stage 4 were eligible for free school meals.

The pattern in performance of FSM eligible pupils in 2015 is broadly similar to that of disadvantaged pupils. FSM eligible pupils have lower attainment than that of other pupils for all of the main indicators at key stage 4.

Attainment for FSM eligible pupils also increased for entry and achievement of the EBacc, and decreased slightly for 5+ A\*-C including English and maths.

**Table 23: Percentage of FSM eligible and all other pupils achieving the main attainment indicators**  
England, state-funded schools, 2014-2015

	5+ A*-C inc. English and maths		Entering the EBacc		Achieving the EBacc	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
<b>FSM</b>	33.5	33.1	21.0	21.2	9.7	9.9
<b>All other pupils</b>	60.5	60.9	41.7	41.5	26.6	26.6
<b>Gap</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>16.6</b>

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

<sup>15</sup> All gaps and changes are calculated on unrounded data.

## English as an additional language (EAL)

“First Language” is the language to which a child was initially exposed during early development and continues to be exposed to in the home or in the community. It does not mean that pupils are necessarily fluent in a language other than English or cannot speak English.

Achievement of pupils with English as an additional language is lower than pupils with English as a first language for 5+ A\*-C including English and maths in 2015, but is higher for entry and achievement of the EBacc, as shown in Table 24.

**Table 24: Percentage of pupils achieving the main attainment indicators by first language**

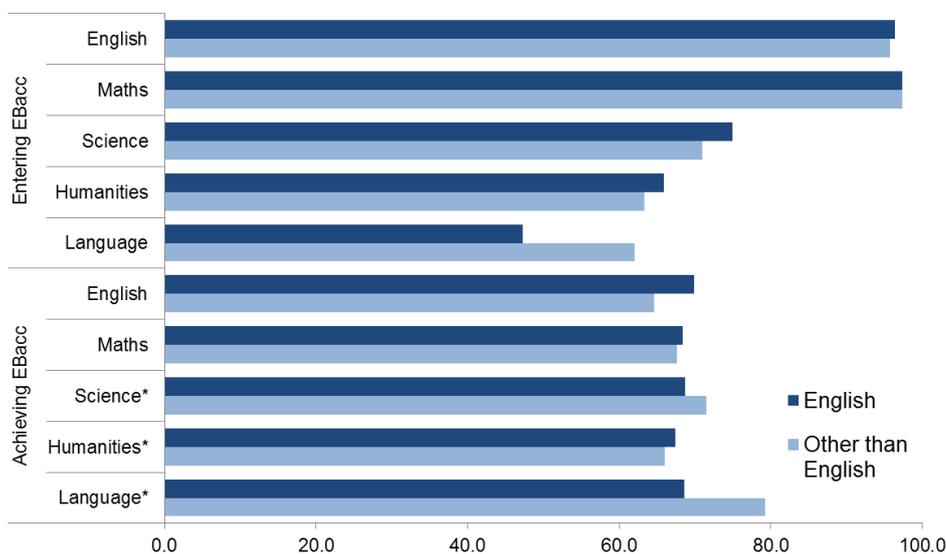
England, state-funded schools, 2015

	5+ A*-C inc. English and maths	Entering the EBacc	Achieving the EBacc
<b>First language English</b>	57.5	38.1	23.9
<b>Other than English</b>	54.6	42.1	26.4
<b>Gap</b>	2.9	-4.0	-2.5

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

**Figure 10: Percentage of pupils entering and achieving the EBacc pillars by first language**

England, state-funded schools, 2015



\*as a percentage of those entering

Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Analysis shows that for pupils who entered four out of five of the EBacc pillars, the language pillar was the most likely not to be entered<sup>16</sup>.

Figure 10 shows that pupils with English as an additional language have much higher rates of entry and achievement of the language component of the EBacc, compared to pupils whose first language is English. They have a slightly lower entry rate to the science and humanities pillars. Higher entry and achievement rates in the language pillar for pupils with English as an additional language contributes to their higher overall rates of EBacc entry and achievement.

## Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The SEN variable indicates whether a pupil has learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most children of the same age. Pupils with special educational needs include those with SEN support, with statements of SEN or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. SEN support and EHC plans are new categories this year: more information is given in the quality and methodology document.

Due to these changes in SEN categories this year, it is not possible to compare results from 2015 to results from previous years.

The attainment gap between pupils with SEN compared to pupils with no identified SEN remains the largest gap of all characteristics groups: pupils with SEN perform significantly worse than pupils with no identified SEN across all headline measures of attainment, as shown in Table 25.

<sup>16</sup> See Table 1b, EBacc and non-EBacc subject entries and achievement: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ebacc-and-non-ebacc-subject-entries-and-achievement>

**Table 25: Percentage of pupils achieving the main attainment indicators by special educational need (SEN)**  
 England, state-funded schools, 2015

	5+ A*-C GCSEs inc. English and maths	Entering the EBacc	Achieving the EBacc
<b>No identified SEN</b>	<b>64.2</b>	<b>44.0</b>	<b>28.0</b>
<b>All SEN pupils</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>4.8</b>
<b>Gap</b>	44.2	33.0	23.2

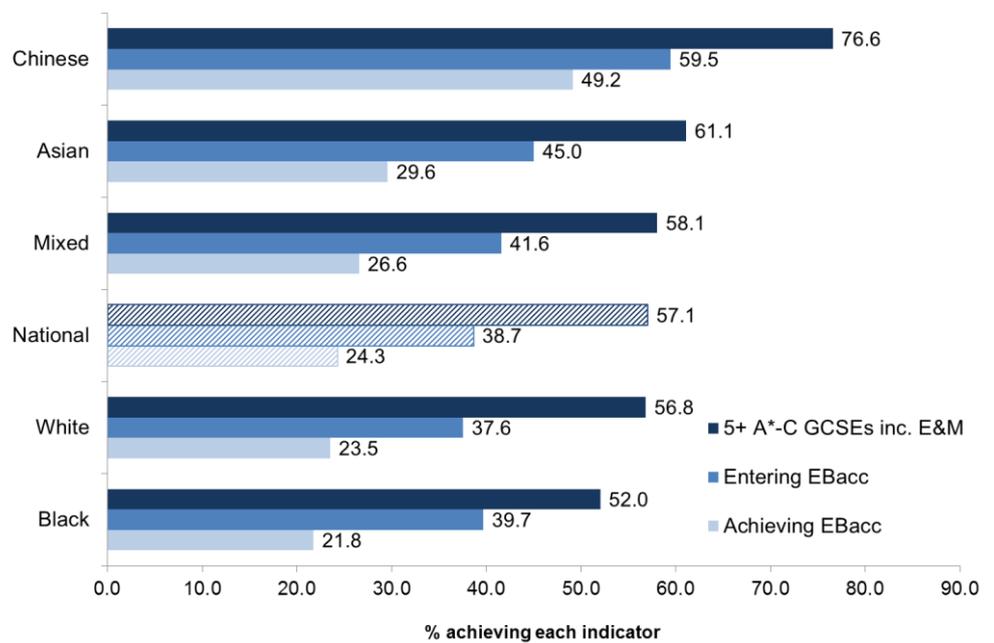
Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

## Ethnicity

Ethnicity is broken down into two main variables: a minor grouping variable and a major groupings variable. Those pupils who have been classified according to their ethnic group and are other than white British are defined as minority ethnic.

The pattern in attainment when split by ethnic group remains broadly similar to 2014: attainment of Asian, mixed and Chinese pupils continues to be above the national average for 5+ A\*-C including English and maths and for entry and achievement of the EBacc, while attainment of white and black pupils remains below the national average for 5+ A\*-C including English and maths, and EBacc achievement, as shown in Figure 11. White pupils are also below the average for EBacc entry, but black pupils are slightly above.

**Figure 11: Percentage of pupils achieving the main attainment indicators by major ethnic group**  
 England, state-funded schools, 2015

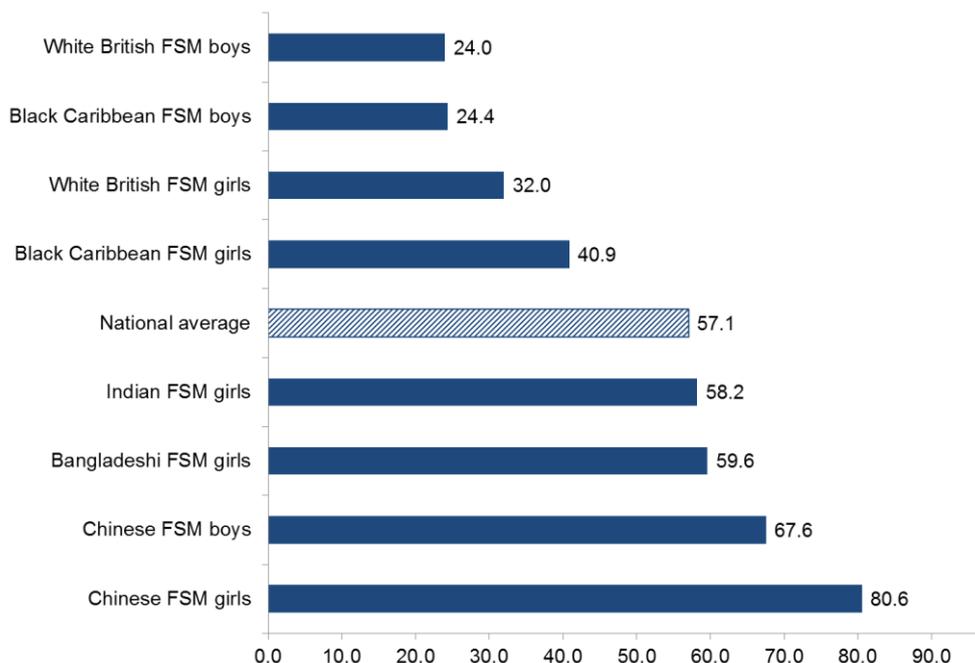


Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Pupil attainment by ethnicity is more varied when figures are broken down further by minor ethnic group and FSM eligibility, as shown in Figure 12. For example, within the Asian major group, Indian and Bangladeshi pupils have above-average levels of achievement in 5+ A\*-C including English and maths and in the EBacc, whereas Pakistani pupils have below-average levels of achievement in both of these indicators. Pakistani pupils who are eligible for FSM fall even further behind the national average. The performance of Indian and Bangladeshi FSM pupils, however, is only slightly behind the national average for achievement of 5+ A\*-C including English and maths and achievement of the EBacc.

Similar patterns can be seen in minor breakdowns of other major ethnic groups. Achievement of black African pupils in 5+ A\*-C including English and maths is 1.3 percentage points below the national average and is 0.4 percentage points above the average for achievement of the EBacc. Black Caribbean pupils are 11.1 and 8.1 percentage points below the average in these indicators respectively.

**Figure 12: Percentage of FSM eligible pupils achieving 5+ A\*-C including English and maths for selected minor ethnic groups, by gender**  
 England, state-funded schools, 2015



Source: Key stage 4 attainment data

Black Caribbean pupils fall further behind when they are eligible for FSM: there is a 24.6 percentage point difference between these pupils and the national average in attainment of 5+ A\*-C including English and maths (an increase in the gap of 5 percentage points since 2014). The gap rises to 32.7 percentage points when only black Caribbean FSM boys are considered and has widened by 7 percentage points since 2014. There are fewer than a thousand pupils in this group, so large changes in the percentage achieving a measure may be caused by a small number of pupils.

Attainment in the white major ethnic group is the most varied of all the major ethnic groups: white Irish pupils have the third-highest proportion of pupils achieving 5+ A\*-C including English and maths whereas Travellers of Irish heritage and Gypsy/Roma pupils are the lowest performing groups out of all minor ethnic groupings.

White pupils eligible for FSM are the lowest-attaining major ethnic group in all main indicators of attainment at the end of key stage 4 in 2015. Furthermore, white British FSM boys are the lowest performing minor group overall. There is a 33.1 percentage point gap between white British FSM boys and the national average for attainment of 5+ A\*-C including English and maths (with 24.0% white British FSM boys achieving, compared to 57.1% nationally), and only 4.5% of these pupils achieved the EBacc. Achievement of these indicators has remained stable since 2014.

Chinese FSM pupils perform above the national average in all main indicators of attainment. Chinese girls eligible for FSM achieve 23.5 percentage points above the national average for 5 or more A\*-C including English and maths, 26.6 percentage points for entering the EBacc and 27.1 percentage points for achievement of the EBacc. However, it must be noted that there were fewer than one hundred Chinese FSM eligible girls at the end of key stage 4 in 2015.

## 12. 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

1b The English Baccalaureate

1c Percentage of pupils making expected progress in English and in mathematics between key stage 2 and key stage 4 by gender

1d Percentage of pupils making expected progress in English and in 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 in all schools at the end of key stage 4

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 school 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

3e GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in academies and LA maintained schools 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 school admission basis and gender

5a Percentage of pupils achieving level 2 at the end of key stage 4 by qualification families, by type of school and gender

5b Percentage of pupils achieving level 2 at the end of key stage 4 by qualification families, school admission basis and gender

6a Attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by prior attainment band, type of school and gender

6b Attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by prior attainment band, school admission basis and gender

7a Number of schools showing the percentage of pupils at the end of key stage 4 achieving the English Baccalaureate by type of school

7b Number of schools showing the percentage of pupils at the end of key stage 4 achieving the English Baccalaureate by school admission basis

8a Number of schools achieving the floor standard

8b Progress 8 opt in schools achieving the floor standard

### Characteristics national tables

Summary GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by pupil characteristics

CH1 GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by pupil characteristics

CH 2a GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by ethnicity, free school meal eligibility and gender

CH 2b GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by SEN provision, free school meal eligibility and gender

CH 2c GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by SEN provision, ethnicity and gender

CH 3a Time series of the disadvantaged pupils attainment gap index at key stage 4 (Experimental statistics)

CH 3b Average English and maths GCSE grade breakdown of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and others (Experimental statistics)

Impact indicator 3.8: Attainment gap at age 16 between free school meal pupils and the rest

Impact indicator 5.18: Attainment gap between schools with the greatest and the least proportions of disadvantaged pupils

### Attainment 8 and Progress 8 tables

A1 Attainment 8 scores of pupils at the end of key stage 4

A2 Attainment 8 scores of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by disadvantage

A3 Progress 8 achievement of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by disadvantage

### LA tables

LA1 GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by gender for each local authority and region

LA2 GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 for each local authority and region

LA3 The English Baccalaureate by local authority and region

LA4 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

LA5 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

LA6 GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by ethnicity for each local authority and region

LA7 GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by English as a first language for each local authority and region

LA8 GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by free school meal eligibility for each local authority and region

LA9 GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by disadvantage for each local authority and region

LA10 GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by SEN provision for each local authority and region

LA11 Number of schools below the floor standard for each local authority and region

### **Subject tables**

S1 GCSE entries and achievements in selected subjects of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in all schools (number)

S2 GCSE entries and achievements in selected subjects of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in all schools (percentage of pupils attempting the subject)

S3 GCSE entries and achievements in selected subjects of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in all schools (percentage of all pupils)

S4a GCSE entries in selected subjects of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by school type (percentage)

S4b GCSE entries in selected subjects of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by school admission basis (percentage)

S5 GCSE Full Course results of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in all schools, by subject and grade

S6 Cambridge International Certificate and Edexcel Level1/2 Certificate results of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in all schools, by subject and grade

S7 Results of GCSEs in applied subjects of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in all schools, by subject and grade

S8 Other qualification results of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in all schools, by type of qualification

S9 Non-discounted examination entries in English Baccalaureate and non-English-Baccalaureate subjects of pupils at the end of key stage 4

### **Subject time series**

Time series of GCSE and equivalent entries of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in schools, by subject, grade and gender

### **AP PRU tables**

P1 GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in alternative provision including pupil referral units for each local authority and region

P2 GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in alternative provision including pupil referral units, by subject and grade

P3 Other Qualifications entries of pupils at the end of key stage 4 in alternative provision including pupil referral units, by type of qualification

### **Pupil residency and school location tables**

PR1 GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by IDACI decile of pupil residence

PR 2 GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by degree of rurality of pupil residence

PR 3 GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by local authority district and region of pupil residence

PR 4 GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by IDACI decile and degree of rurality of pupil residence

SL1 GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by degree of rurality of school location

SL 2 GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by local authority district and region of school location

PC1 GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by parliamentary constituency of school location

### **Other breakdowns**

O1 Time series of entries in GCSE art subjects

O2 Pupils with one or more entries in GCSE art subjects

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

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We preserve confidentiality	The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires us to take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality.
We suppress some figures	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. This suppression is consistent with our <a href="#">Statistical policy statement on confidentiality</a> .
We adopt symbols to help identify suppression	Symbols are used in the tables as follows: 0 zero . Not available x Publication of that figure would be disclosive
We round figures	Percentages in this SFR are given to one decimal place.
Coverage of the data	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. 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.

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## 13. Further information

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School level figures	School level data are published in the <a href="#">performance tables</a> .
Characteristics breakdowns	Characteristics breakdowns are included in this SFR.
Provisional data	Provisional figures for 2015 were published on 15 October 2015 in <a href="#">SFR37/2015</a>
Previously published figures	SFR02/2015: <a href="#">Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2013 to 2014</a>
Attainment for other key stages	Data on other key stages can be found at the following links: <a href="#">Early years foundation stage profile</a> <a href="#">Key stage 1</a> <a href="#">Key stage 2</a> <a href="#">16-19 Attainment</a> <a href="#">School Performance Tables</a>
Pupil numbers	SFR15/2015: <a href="#">Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2015</a>
Attainment in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland	Information on educational attainment for secondary schools in Wales is available from the <a href="#">Welsh Government website</a> . Information on educational attainment for secondary schools in Scotland is available from the <a href="#">Scottish Government website</a> . Information on educational attainment for secondary schools in Northern Ireland is available from the <a href="#">Department for Education Northern Ireland (DENI) website</a> .

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## 14. 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.

## 15. 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.

## 16. Get in touch

### Media enquiries

Press Office News Desk, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT

Tel: 020 7783 8300

### Other enquiries/feedback

Ali Pareas, Education Data Division, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT

Tel: 020 7340 7490 Email: [Attainment.STATISTICS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Attainment.STATISTICS@education.gsi.gov.uk)



Department  
for Education



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email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)  
write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

About this publication:

enquiries Ali Pareas, Education Data Division, Department for Education,  
Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT  
Tel: 020 7340 7490 Email: [Attainment.STATISTICS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Attainment.STATISTICS@education.gsi.gov.uk)  
download [Statistics: GCSEs \(key stage 4\)](#)

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