

Chapter 3 – Local Authority Indicators: How do Local Authorities compare in providing for their children with special educational needs?

Introduction

In April 2008 a set of Local Authority Indicators was introduced. These indicators formed part of the previous government's set of National Indicators. Further information on these is available on the Communities and Local Government website via the following link: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/nationalindicator>

This chapter looks at the three Local Authority Indicators which directly relate to children with special educational needs. One of the indicators concentrates on how timely Local Authorities are on issuing statements of special educational needs to their children requiring them. The remaining two indicators focus on the difference in educational attainment between pupils with special educational needs (pupils at School Action, School Action Plus or with statements of special educational needs) and those without. These two indicators help monitor the gap in attainment between the two groups of pupils.

See Data Annex 3 for further detail on the material covered in this chapter. All referenced tables can be found in the accompanying downloadable spreadsheets at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STA/t000965/index.shtml>.

All numbers referring to the timeliness of statements being issued were submitted by Local Authorities to Communities and Local Government (CLG) and refer to the financial year.

All numbers referring to attainment which appear in this chapter were taken from the National Pupil Database (see Data Annex 3 for further details). Data were based on the academic year and special educational need provision was recorded at the start of the Key Stage. **Chapters 2, 4 and 5** contain further information on the attainment of pupils with special educational needs.

Local Authority Indicator: Statements issued within 26 weeks

Key findings

This Local Authority Indicator is composed of two components:

- On indicator A, 91% (16,000) of the 17,600 final statements of special educational needs in England in 2008-09 were issued within 26 weeks (excluding exception cases).
- On indicator B, 82% (21,400) of the 26,200 final statements in England in 2008-09 were issued within 26 weeks.

Local Authority level analysis

On indicator A, Local Authority performance varied from 54% to 100%.

On indicator B, Local Authority performance varied from 30% to 100%.

There are some regional patterns evident with indicator B. London Local Authorities performed below average and this finding is replicated in some other urban areas (such as in the North East). In general, Local Authorities in the north of England tended to perform above average, especially Cumbria, Durham and Hartlepool. In general, large, more rural Local Authorities, tended to perform above average, especially in the South West and parts of the Midlands.

Introduction to Local Authority Indicator on timeliness of statements

This Local Authority Indicator focuses on statements of special educational needs issued within 26 weeks. The indicator has two separate elements;

- **A** – The number of final statements of special educational needs issued within 26 weeks excluding exception cases as a proportion of all such statements issued in the year,
- **B** – The number of final statements of special educational needs issued within 26 weeks as a proportion of all such statements issued in the year.

The rationale behind this indicator is to allow policy to monitor the length of time taken to issue statements of special educational needs. This will allow the Department, through the National Strategies, to work directly with Local Authorities which are taking longer to issue statements than the England averages. Information on this indicator was first collected and published in financial year 2008-09, therefore the following results refer to the year ending 31 March 2009.

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The commitment to develop an indicator on the production of statements within 26 weeks was given in the Government's response to the Education and Skills Committee's 2006 report on special educational needs.

See <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/> for more details.

The 26 week limit is made up of;

- 6 weeks from when the local authority receives the parental request for an assessment, or informs the parent that it is thinking of carrying out an assessment, until the decision whether to assess or not;
- 10 weeks in which to carry out the assessment and decide whether to draw up a statement, including 6 weeks for the local authority to seek and receive advice;
- 2 weeks in which to draw up a proposed statement; and
- 8 weeks to finalise the statement.

The Education (Special Educational Needs) (England) (Consolidation) Regulations 2001 allow for exceptions to these internal time limits, for example where the local authority has not received advice from those from whom it has been requested for the assessment within time. Data Annex 3 contains more in depth information on this indicator. Indicator A excludes cases where exceptions have occurred, while indicator B includes all statements.

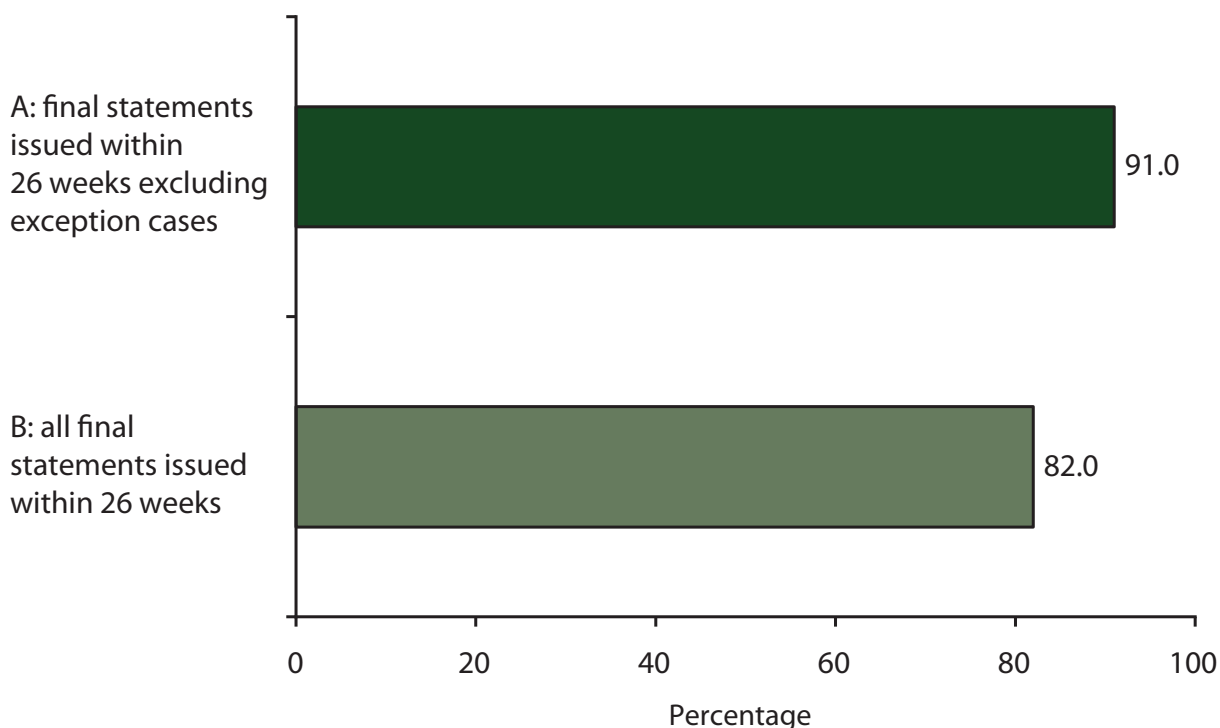
Local Authority Indicator results

Figure 3.1 shows Local Authority Indicator A and B figures for 2008-09. Web based Tables 3.1 and 3.2 contain the data which was used to produce Figure 3.1. These tables also show Local Authority results.

On indicator A, 91% (16,000) of the 17,600 final statements of special educational needs in England in 2008-09 were issued within 26 weeks (excluding exception cases).

On indicator B, 82% (21,400) of the 26,200 final statements in England in 2008-09 were issued within 26 weeks.

Figure 3.1: Local Authority Indicator – percentage of final statements in 2008-09 which were issued within 26 weeks, excluding (A) and including (B) exception cases



Local Authority level results

Figure 3.2 shows Local Authority Indicator B percentages for Local Authorities within England in 2008-09. Local Authority Indicator B measured the percentage of all final statements in 2008-09 which were issued within 26 weeks. Local Authority performance varied from 30 per cent to 100 per cent.

There are some regional patterns evident in Figure 3.2. London Local Authorities performed below average and this finding is replicated in some other urban areas (such as in the North East). In general, Local Authorities in the north of England tended to perform above average, especially Cumbria, Durham and Hartlepool. In general, large, more rural Local Authorities, tended to perform above average, especially in the South West and parts of the Midlands.

Local Authority Indicator: SEN attainment gap at Key Stage 2

Key findings at age 11 (Key Stage 2)

The percentage of pupils with special educational needs achieving the expected national threshold of level 4 or above in English and maths increased from 28.3 per cent in 2006 to 33.5 per cent in 2009. This was an increase of 5.2 percentage points. Over the same period, the figure for pupils with no special educational needs increased by 2.8 percentage points from 81.6 per cent in 2006 to 84.4 per cent in 2009.

This Local Authority Indicator is the percentage point difference in performance at Key Stage 2 between 11 year old pupils with and pupils without special education needs. We measure this through those who achieved level 4 or above in both English and maths at Key Stage 2 aged 11 years. The statistics above show that the attainment gap narrowed slightly between 2006 and 2009, from 53.3 percentage points to 50.9 percentage points.

Local Authority level analysis

London Local Authorities had some of the smallest attainment gaps in 2009, while Local Authorities in Yorkshire and the Humber and the East of England had some of the highest attainment gaps.

Introduction to Local Authority Indicator on SEN attainment gap at Key Stage 2

Key Stage 2 (KS2) refers to pupils aged between 8 and 11 years. For the purposes of this indicator, pupils with special educational needs at KS2 includes those who were identified with special educational needs **at the start of KS2** (aged 8 years). Pupils with special educational needs include those at School Action, School Action Plus or with statements. All references to years (e.g. 2009) refer to academic years (e.g. 2008/09).

This Local Authority Indicator focuses on the attainment gap at the end of KS2 between pupils with and without special educational needs and relates to tests taken in maintained schools (primary and secondary schools, including academies and city technology colleges (CTCs)) in England. It excludes children at independent schools, independent special schools and non maintained special schools.

This Local Authority Indicator is the percentage point difference in performance at KS2 between pupils with and pupils without special education needs. We measure this through those who achieved level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 aged 11 years. This level of qualification is considered the threshold that the Department wants 90 per cent of pupils to achieve by the year 2020.

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There are four different numbered levels of attainment for pupils at KS2. This includes four numbered levels ranging from 2 to 5, with 5 being the highest and 2 being the lowest. Therefore the expected threshold of 4 or above means levels 4 and 5. Four other outcomes are possible at KS2 and include:

- A – pupils who were absent from the test.
- B – pupils working below the level of the test and not entered for it.
- N – pupils who failed to register a level in the test.
- T – pupils whose test level was not assessable.

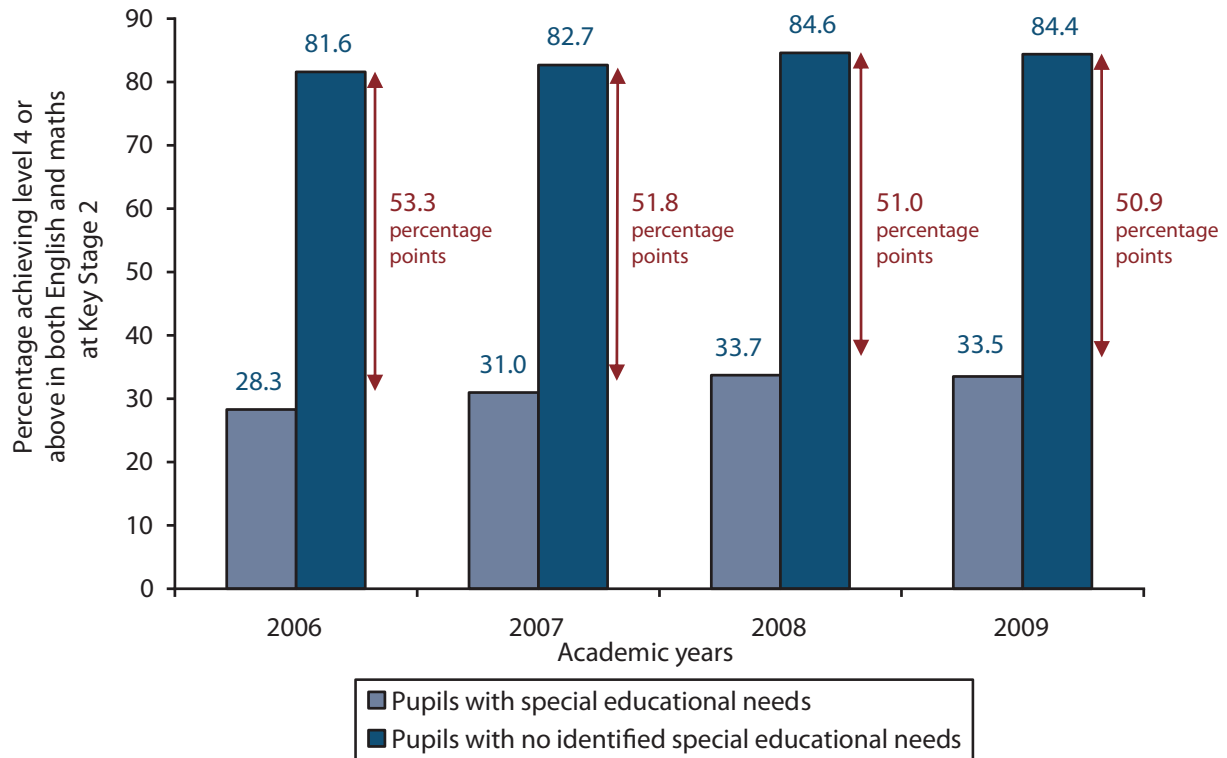
Local Authority Indicator results

Figure 3.3 shows the Local Authority Indicator figures for pupils who achieved level 4 or above in English and maths between 2006 and 2009. Web based Table 3.3 contains the data which was used to produce Figure 3.3.

The percentage of pupils with special educational needs achieving this level increased from 28.3 per cent in 2006 to 33.5 per cent in 2009 (an increase of 5.2 percentage points). Over the same period, the figure for pupils with no special educational needs increased by 2.8 percentage points from 81.6 per cent in 2006 to 84.4 per cent in 2009.

This Local Authority Indicator decreased from 53.3 percentage points in 2006 to 50.9 percentage points in 2009. In other words, the attainment gap decreased slightly, meaning those with special educational needs partly closed the gap with their peers in recent years. The percentage of pupils with special education needs achieving the expected threshold improved more than those without special education needs.

Figure 3.3: Local Authority Indicator – SEN attainment gap for pupils aged 11 years, 2006 to 2009



Local Authority level results

Figure 3.4 shows Local Authority Indicator percentages for Local Authorities within England in 2009. This is the percentage point difference between pupils with and without special educational needs who achieved level 4 or above in English and maths at KS2. The Local Authorities highlighted in light green had the smallest attainment gaps, while those highlighted in dark blue had the widest attainment gaps. London Local Authorities had some of the smallest attainment gaps, while Local Authorities in Yorkshire and the Humber and the East of England had some of the highest attainment gaps. Also see web based Table 3.4.

Local Authority Indicator: SEN attainment gap at Key Stage 4

Key findings at age 16 (Key Stage 4)

The percentage of pupils with special educational needs achieving at least five GCSEs or equivalent including English and maths increased from 8.0 per cent in 2005 to 14.5 per cent in 2009. This was an increase of 6.5 percentage points. Over the same period, the figure for pupils with no special educational needs increased by 9.5 percentage points from 51.3 per cent in 2005 to 60.8 per cent in 2009.

This Local Authority Indicator is the percentage point difference in performance at Key Stage 4 between 16 year old pupils with and without special education needs. We measure this through those who achieved at least five GCSEs or equivalent including English and maths at Key Stage 4 aged 16 years. The statistics above show that the attainment gap widened between 2005 and 2009, from 43.3 percentage points to 46.3 percentage points.

Local Authority level analysis

Yorkshire and the Humber and London Local Authorities had some of the smallest attainment gaps in 2009, while Local Authorities in South East and the North East had some of the highest attainment gaps.

Introduction to Local Authority Indicator on SEN attainment gap at Key Stage 4

Key Stage 4 (KS4) refers to pupils aged between 14 and 16 years. For the purposes of this indicator, pupils with special educational needs at KS4 includes those who were identified with special educational needs **at the start of KS4** (aged 14 years). Pupils with special educational needs include those at School Action, School Action Plus or with statements. All references to years (e.g. 2009) refer to academic years (e.g. 2008/09).

This Local Authority Indicator focuses on the attainment gap at the end of KS4 between pupils with and without special educational needs and relates to GCSE and equivalent qualifications obtained in maintained schools (secondary schools, including academies and city technology colleges (CTCs)) in England. It excludes children at independent schools, independent special schools and non maintained special schools.

This Local Authority Indicator looks at the percentage point difference in performance between pupils with and without special educational needs. We measure this through those who achieved at least five A* to C GCSE grades or equivalent including English and maths at the age of 16.

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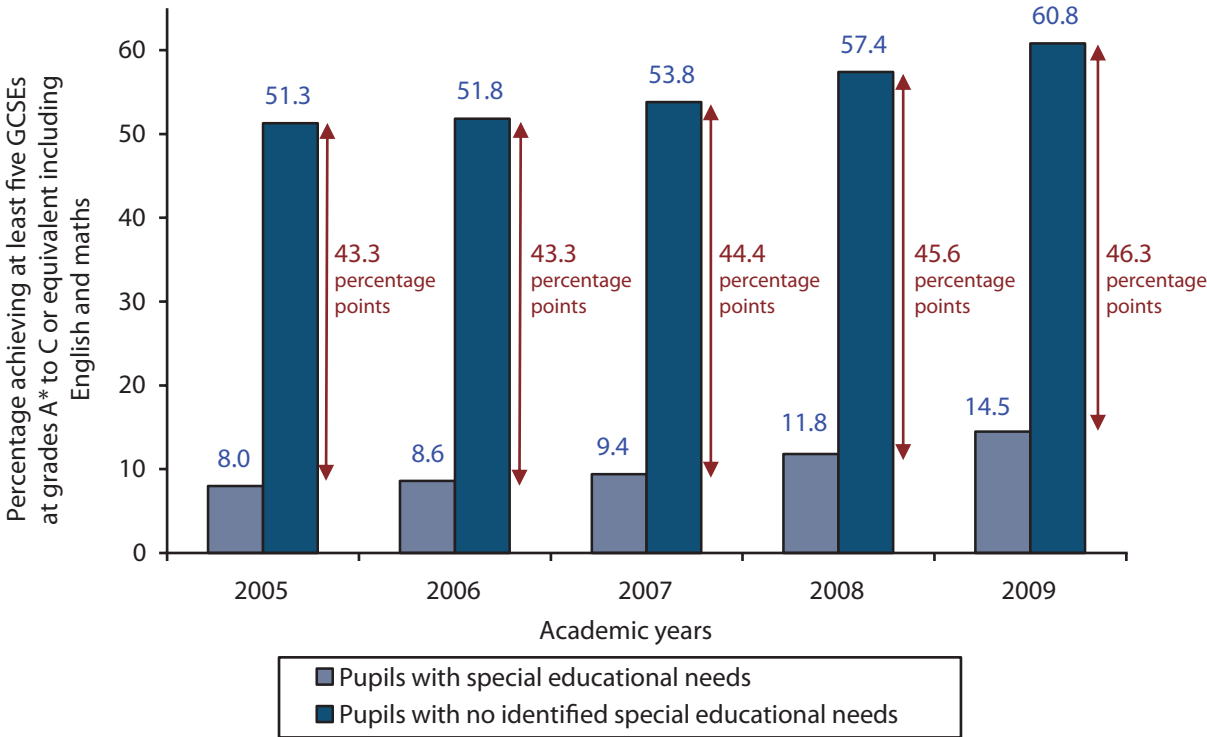
Local Authority Indicator results

Figure 3.5 shows the Local Authority Indicator figures for pupils who achieved at least five GCSEs or equivalent including English and maths between 2005 and 2009. Also see web based Table 3.5.

The percentage of pupils with special educational needs who achieved five GCSEs or equivalent including English and maths increased from 8.0 per cent in 2005 to 14.5 per cent in 2009 (an increase of 6.5 percentage points). The figure for pupils with no special educational needs increased by 9.5 percentage points from 51.3 per cent in 2005 to 60.8 per cent in 2009.

The percentage point gap between the two groups increased from 43.3 in 2005 to 46.3 in 2009, showing that those with special educational needs have fallen further behind their peers in recent years.

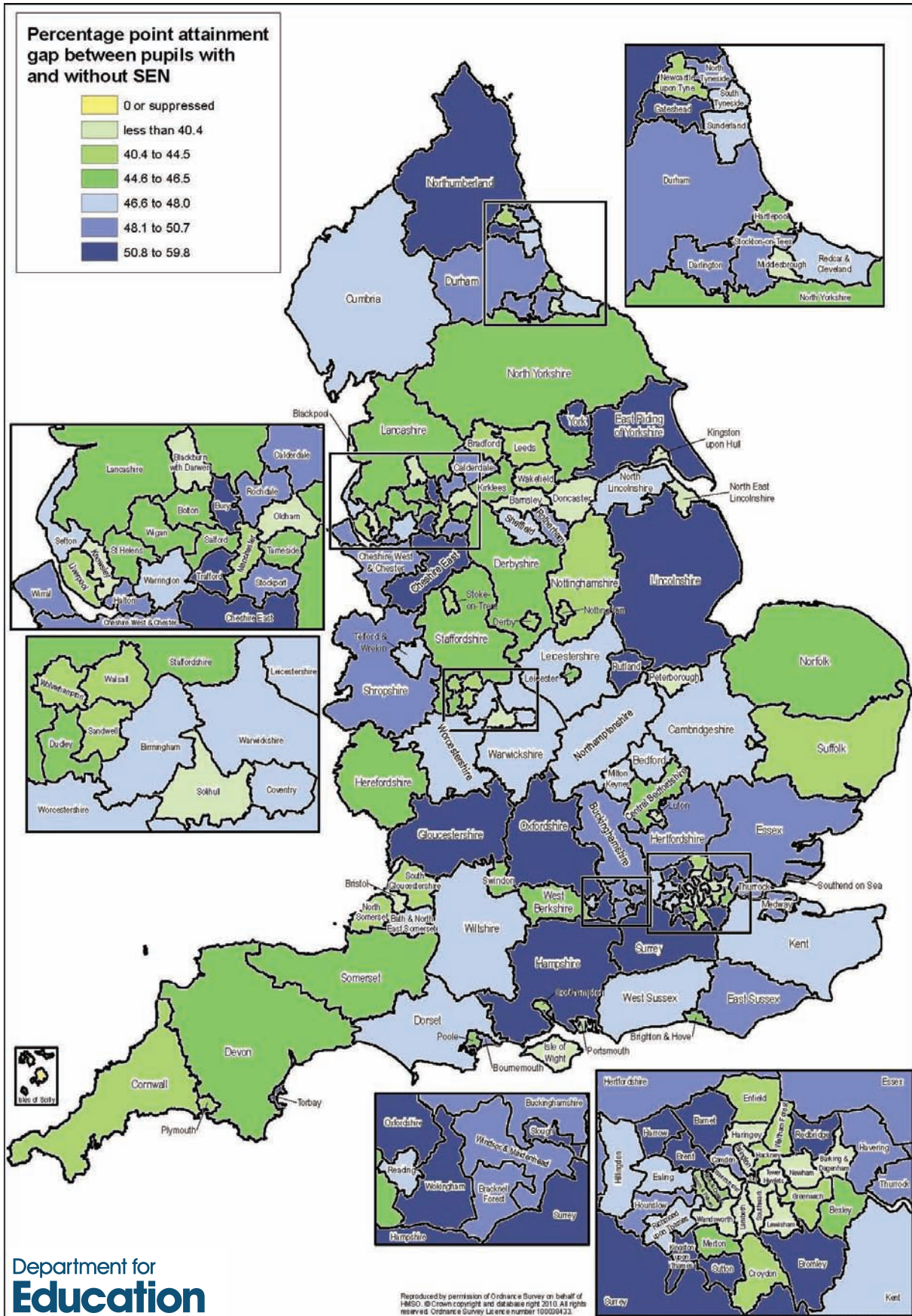
Figure 3.5: Local Authority Indicator – SEN attainment gap for pupils aged 16 years, 2005 to 2009



Local Authority level results

Figure 3.6 shows Local Authority Indicator percentages for Local Authorities within England in 2009. This is the percentage point difference between pupils with and without special educational needs who achieved at least five A* to C GCSE grades or equivalent including English and maths at KS4. The Local Authorities highlighted in light green had the smallest attainment gaps, while those highlighted in dark blue had the widest attainment gaps. Yorkshire and the Humber and London Local Authorities had some of the smallest attainment gaps, while Local Authorities in South East and the North East had some of the highest attainment gaps. Also see web based Table 3.6.

Figure 3.6: Local Authority Indicator – SEN attainment gap for pupils aged 11 years by Local Authority in 2009



Data Annex 3: Local Authority Indicators on Special Educational Needs

The Local Authority Indicator on the timeliness of statements (see tables 3.1 and 3.2 for data) is based on the **financial year** and was collected and published for the first time in 2008-09. England numbers have been rounded to the nearest 100. Regional numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10 and Local Authority numbers have been rounded to the nearest 5. Numbers from 1 to 5 inclusive have been replaced by a hyphen (-). Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

The Local Authority Indicators on the SEN attainment gap at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 (see tables 3.3 to 3.6 for data) are based on the **academic year** and include pupils within maintained schools (primary and secondary schools, including academies and city technology colleges (CTCs)) in England. It excludes children at independent schools, independent special schools and non-maintained special schools. Special educational need provision was taken from the start of the Key Stage for the purposes of these indicators. The data source used to produce the figures was the National Pupil Database (see Data Annex 2 for further details) and numbers are based on revised data. Percentages within the tables were rounded to one decimal place. 'x' represents a suppressed value due to low numbers of pupils.

The six tables referenced within Chapter 3 are listed below. The tables can be found in the accompanying web based spreadsheets on the publication webpage. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 were taken from the following DfE statistical release:

- Special Educational Needs: statements issued within 26 weeks in 2008-09. Available at <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STR/d000901/index.shtml>

Further information and additional guidance on the Local Authority Indicator on the timeliness of statements can be found at <https://www.hub.info4local.gov.uk/DIHWEB/HubCommunications.aspx>

The figures in Tables 3.3 to 3.6 were taken from the following DfE Statistical First Releases:

- Key Stage 2 Attainment by Pupil Characteristics, in England 2008/09. Available at <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000889/index.shtml>
- GCSE Attainment by Pupil Characteristics, in England 2008/09. Available at <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000900/index.shtml>.
- Attainment by Pupil Characteristics, in England 2007/08. Available at <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000822/index.shtml>.

Further information and full definitions on these Local Authority Indicators can be found at <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/localgov/audit/nis/Pages/niguidancesearch.aspx>

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Table 3.2: Local Authority Indicator (B): Number of final statements of special educational need issued within 26 weeks as a proportion of all such statements issued in 2008-09.

Table 3.3: Local Authority Indicator: Achievement gap between pupils with special educational needs and their peers, based on pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and mathematics at Key Stage 2, years 2006 to 2009.

Table 3.4: Local Authority Indicator: Achievement gap between pupils with special educational needs and their peers, based on pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and mathematics at Key Stage 2, by local authority and Region, years 2008 and 2009.

Table 3.5: Local Authority Indicator: Achievement gap between pupils with special educational needs and their peers, based on pupils achieving 5 or more A* to C grade GCSEs including English and mathematics at Key Stage 4, years 2005 to 2009.

Table 3.6: Local Authority Indicator: Achievement gap between pupils with special educational needs and their peers, based on pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C GCSEs including English and mathematics at Key Stage 4, by local authority and Region, years 2008 and 2009.