

## **Explanatory note – experimental statistics on the attainment of pupils in alternative provision.**

1. This note refers to the additional tables of experimental statistics relating to the attainment of pupils in alternative provision (AP), published on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2011.
2. It is intended to provide background to these tables and to explain the decisions made regarding what is included. This note has been provided because this is the first time statistics relating to the attainment of pupils in alternative provision have been published.
3. For the tables themselves, please see the accompanying Excel workbook, 'Tables P1 – P6: Additional tables of experimental statistics relating to the KS4 achievements of pupils in alternative provision in 2009/10'. For definitions of key terms and technical notes on qualification equivalencies, please see Annex A.

### **Background**

4. This publication reports, for the first time, on the performance of pupils in alternative provision. Alternative provision takes place when the local authority takes direct responsibility for the education of a young person who is unable to attend a maintained school. This provision comes in a wide range of forms including pupil referral units, which are a type of school that are set up and run by local authorities specifically for pupils who fall under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 (effectively, schools established for pupils in need of alternative provision). Common reasons for a young person receiving alternative provision include exclusion from mainstream schools, medical needs or school refusal.
5. Each local authority is responsible for its own provision, and the provision available varies greatly between authorities: for example, some LAs have one pupil referral unit responsible for all such pupils, while others have multiple providers which specialise in the needs of different types of pupil.
6. The proportions of pupils in alternative provision achieving level 1 (GCSEs at A\*-G, or equivalent) and level 2 (GCSEs at A\*-C, or equivalent) in English and maths skills are included in the [2011 DfE Business Plan](#) as impact indicators. (See Annex A for definitions of these indicators.)

## **Who is included**

7. These tables contain data on the performance of pupils in alternative provision, including pupil referral units, in 2009/10.
8. Pupils are counted as being in alternative provision if they were present on the 2009/10 alternative provision (AP) or pupil referral unit (PRU) censuses. Pupils who were also registered to an institution included within the Secondary School Performance Tables have been excluded.
9. These tables contain data on pupils who are deemed to have reached the end of Key Stage 4 (KS4). Pupil age and year group (from the PRU census) were used to identify whether pupils in PRUs form part of this cohort. For pupils in other alternative provision those aged 15 at the start of the 2009/10 academic year were deemed to have reached the end of KS4. This proxy has been used because year group data is not available through the AP census.
10. In table P1, pupils are counted towards the local authority that funds either the PRU at which the pupil is registered or the pupil's other alternative provision.
11. *DfE: GCSE and Equivalent Results in England, 2009/10 (Revised)* contains data relating to pupils in 'Hospital Schools, PRUs & AP'. This line covers a similar group of pupils to those in these additional tables. The main differences relate to the inclusion in the original line of pupils in hospital schools and pupils who sat KS4 exams in pupil referral units but were not present in any pupil-level census data.

## **Additional Tables**

The additional tables published are:

- Table P1** GCSE and equivalent results of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in AP for each Local Authority and Region, 2009/10, England
- Table P2** GCSE results of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in AP, by subject and grade, 2009/10, England
- Table P3** Results of GCSEs in vocational subjects of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in AP, by subject and grade, 2009/10, England
- Table P4** GCSE (Short Course) results of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in AP, by subject and grade, 2009/10, England
- Table P5** Other Qualifications results of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in AP, by type of qualification, 2009/10, England
- Table P6** Entry Level Qualifications results of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in AP, by subject and grade, 2009/10, England

They are available on the DfE statistics website, at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000985/index.shtml>

### **Table P1**

12. We have sought, in Table P1, to publish indicators of alternative provision pupils' performance in as much detail as possible at national and local authority level. We have not provided data for individual PRUs or types of other alternative provision because the small numbers involved would mean that we had to suppress many figures, so as not to reveal the results of individual pupils. Such a breakdown would not enable users to compare like with like.
13. Our evaluation showed that indicators targeting higher level attainment were achieved by few alternative provision pupils. This makes such indicators particularly susceptible to errors in the matching of single pupils, and for many LAs the results would need to be suppressed to protect pupil confidentiality. In the light of these findings, this publication focuses on indicators that include attainment at level 1 (see Annex A) and below.
14. The exceptions to this are the publication of the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 in English and maths skills and the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A\*-C, or equivalent, including English and maths GCSEs. The former is an impact indicator in the 2011 DfE Business Plan. The latter is a headline indicator in the 2009/10 Secondary School Performance Tables and has been included for comparability purposes.

15. We have followed Performance Tables precedent and suppressed all results for local authorities where there are ten or fewer pupils eligible for inclusion in the measures.
16. For each local authority, and at national level, we have only published measures where three or more pupils achieve the relevant threshold, so as not to reveal the results of individual pupils.

#### Tables P2 - P6

17. We have also been able to provide tables examining the entry patterns and outcomes of pupils in alternative provision, at national level. Tables P2 - P5 have been based on tables 11, 13, 14 and 15 in *DfE: GCSE and Equivalent Results in England, 2009/10 (Revised)*. We have published results under the same subject and qualification headings, for comparability. Table P6 provides an additional breakdown of entry level qualifications, as these are relatively common for AP pupils.
18. As this is the first year that this data has been available, we are not able to produce a time series. We will publish this as it develops.
19. We have only published results where three or more pupils achieve the relevant threshold, so as not to reveal the results of individual pupils.

## **Data Quality**

20. These measures were produced through the matching of pupil-level census data to attainment data from awarding bodies. This matching has taken place as part of the Performance Tables processing.
21. Local authorities were given an opportunity to check their pupil and examination level data in September 2010. Only 19 authorities made amendments during this period, and the amendments made were generally minor. No local authority indicated that there were substantial issues with the quality of this data.
22. We have performed a range of checks on the data produced by our contractors, including that the pupil results add up to the local authority averages and that there are no implausible results. The data appears credible and internally consistent.
23. Nevertheless, this is the first occasion this matched data has been available and the first occasion on which such statistics have been produced. This is one of the reasons for their designation as 'Experimental Official Statistics'.
24. One possible means to improve their quality for the future is through feedback from users. We would be grateful for any comments you have about the quality of these statistics, particularly if you would be prepared to allow us to contact you to discuss them. If you wish to get in contact, please write to

[attainment.statistics@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:attainment.statistics@education.gsi.gov.uk)

providing contact details if you are willing for us to follow up with you.

## **ANNEX A**

### **Definitions**

**Key Stage 4** – This is a national curriculum stage. The end of Key Stage 4 signals the end of compulsory education.

**Level** – In order to incorporate other accredited qualifications into measures such as the proportion of pupils achieving the equivalent of 5 grades A\*-C the contribution that a qualification makes towards the end of each level is used. The levels can be defined as follows:

**Level 1** – The pupil has achieved the equivalent of 5 GCSEs at grades A\*-G.

**Level 2** – The pupil has achieved the equivalent of 5 GCSEs at grades A\*-C.

The results reported incorporate entry level, level 1 and level 2 qualifications with the addition of GCE/VCE AS levels, which are level 3 qualifications.

**Qualification Abbreviation/Descriptions** – The following qualifications are reported within this SFR and the abbreviations used throughout stand for the following:

**Entry Level** – Qualifications with an academic standard below that of a G-grade GCSE.

**GCSE** – General Certificate of Secondary Education.

**iGCSE** – international General Certificate of Secondary Education (iGCSEs). See technical note below.

**NVQ** – National Vocational Qualification.

**VGCSE** – A GCSE in a vocational subject (first reported in 2004).

**VRQ** – Vocationally Related Qualifications.

**BTEC** – A qualification originally developed by the Business and Technology Education Council.

**English and mathematics skills at level 2** – A pupil will fulfil this by achieving the equivalent of GCSE grades A\*-C (level 2) in both English and mathematics. Valid equivalents, along with GCSEs, are Functional Skills, Key Skills and Basic Skills at level 2.

**English and mathematics skills at level 1** – A pupil will fulfil this by achieving the equivalent of GCSE grades A\*-G (level 1) in both English and mathematics. Valid equivalents, along with GCSEs, are Functional Skills, Key Skills and Basic Skills at level 1.

## Technical Notes

### Range of Qualifications

The general range of qualifications, together with the qualification families into which they fall, is set out below

General	GCE AS	GCSE (Full course)	Accredited iGCSE	GCSE Short Course	Entry Level 1-3
General Vocational	Applied GCE AS Double award	Applied GCE AS/ VCE AS	Vocational GCSE Single	Vocational GCSE Double	
Occupational	NVQ Level 1-2				
Vocationally related	VRQ Level 2 or BTEC First	VRQ Level 1			
Key Skills	Key Skills Level 1-2				
Basic Skills	Basic Skills Level 1-2				
Vocational Languages	NVQ Language Unit at Level 1-2				
Graded Exams	Graded Exam (Grade 1-8)				
Free Standing Maths	Level 1-3				
Other General	Other General qualifications Level 1-2				

GCSE (Short Courses) are of the same academic standard as a full GCSE but have half the content. GCSEs in vocational subjects are of the same academic standard as a full GCSE and are available as single or double course.

### Average Point Score

Another measure of institution performance is an average point score. In order to incorporate a wider range of qualifications within average point scores, OfQual attribute a number of points to all accredited qualifications – on a scale equivalent to GCSEs. These are based on the relative challenge of a qualification together with the guided learning hours that a qualification requires. Finally, a pupil at the end of Key Stage 4 that has accumulated a non-zero number of points is considered to have passed at least one qualification.

**It is important to note that the point scoring system managed by OfQual is designed as a means of institutional performance measurement. It is not intended that the figures replace national systems used for other purposes, for example UCAS tariffs of individual pupils.**

### **International GCSEs**

In addition to counting iGCSEs that were accredited at the start of the period of study, "Legacy" iGCSEs – i.e. those that were accredited by the time the provisional dataset was produced – will be included.

Ofqual's subject matter expert advice has been followed on which iGCSEs are suitable for the all subject-specific indicators, including achievement of 5 or more A\*- C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and maths GCSEs or iGCSEs. In particular, iGCSEs in English, First Language English and English Language are counted in the English components, but iGCSE English Literature (like the GCSE in this subject) is not counted.

Further information on accreditation, contributions to pupil level and point scores of qualifications can be found through OfQual's Register of Regulated Qualifications:

<http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>.