

Indicator 2: Realising Potential in the Education System

Rationale

Schools and the education system have a crucial role to play in providing disadvantaged children with the structure and support they lack at home, where family life is less stable, ensuring all children – irrespective of their background – have the foundations they need to realise their potential. This indicator intends to capture the extent to which disadvantaged children are able to realise their potential by comparing their attainment level, at key school ages, with their more advantaged peers.

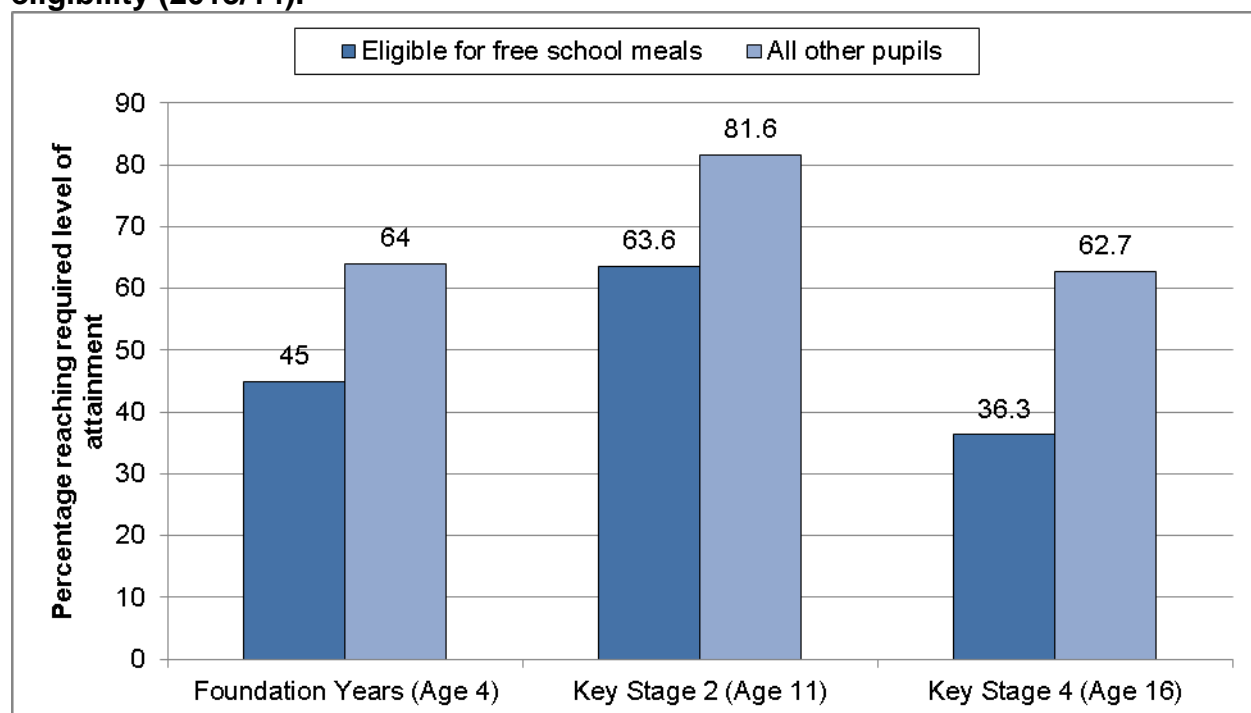
Definition

Proportion of free school meal (FSM) pupils achieving level four, or above, at the end of Key Stage Two in both English and mathematics – between 2007 and 2011 – and in reading, writing and mathematics from 2012 onwards.

Proportion of children achieving grades A*-C in English and mathematics GCSEs at Key Stage Four by free school meal (FSM) eligibility.

Latest results

Figure 1: The proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development at age 4, and attainment at age 11 and 16 by free school meal (FSM) eligibility (2013/14).¹



Source: National Pupil Database, 2013/14 ²

¹ For the purposes of the *Social Justice: Transforming Lives - One Year On*, we also look at attainment for four-year-olds to provide a more complete picture of educational attainment throughout the school years - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-justice-transforming-lives-one-year-on>. This indicator measures the proportion of children achieving a 'good level of development' in the Early Years Foundation Stage profile by free school meal eligibility.

² Foundation years: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eyfsp-attainment-by-pupil-characteristics-2013-to-2014>. Data from National, local authority and pupil residency tables: SFR 46/2014

Attainment gap at age 11:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-curriculum-assessments-at-key-stage-2-2014-revised>. Data from National tables: SFR 50/2014. Note figures for attainment at age 11 are for 2014.

Attainment gap at age 16: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-attainment-by-pupil-characteristics-2014>. Data from National and local authority tables: SFR06/2015

Table 1: Attainment Gap at age 11 by free school meal (FSM) eligibility (2007 to 2014). Percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in English and mathematics (2008 to 2012) and reading, writing and mathematics (2012 onwards) at Key Stage Two.

Coverage: England, state-funded schools (including academies and CTCs)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012	2013	2014
Free school meals	54.10%	53.60%	55.90%	57.90%	65.60%	58.80%	59.90%	63.60%
All Other Pupils	76.30%	75.60%	77.10%	77.90%	82.40%	77.90%	78.70%	81.60%
Gap	22.20%	22.00%	21.20%	20.00%	16.80%	19.10%	18.80%	18.10%

Source: National Pupil Database

■ = 2012 figures under new progress measures; these figures are not comparable with figures pre-2012

Table 2: Attainment gap at age 16 by free school meal (FSM) eligibility (2007/08 to 2013/14). Percentage of pupils achieving an A*-C grade in English and mathematics GCSEs at Key Stage Four.

Coverage: England, state-funded schools (including academies and CTCs)

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Free school meals	24.40%	27.10%	31.80%	35.10%	36.80%	38.70%	36.30%
All Other Pupils	52.40%	54.80%	59.30%	62.50%	63.00%	65.30%	62.70%
Gap	28.00%	27.60%	27.60%	27.40%	26.20%	26.60%	26.40%

Source: National Pupil Database

■ = 2013/14 figures are subject to a new methodology which includes qualifications identified as part of the Wolf review and applying rules around changes to GCSE early entry policy; these figures are not directly comparable with figures pre-2013/14.

The indicators show children from disadvantaged backgrounds have consistently performed less well than their more advantaged peers at age 11 and age 16. The gap in attainment for 11-year-olds has been decreasing over time, from 22.2 per cent in 2008 to 16.8 per cent in 2012. The gap has also reduced when using the new measures – from 19.1 per cent in 2012 to 18.1 per cent in 2014.

Also, the attainment gap for 16-year-olds has decreased, from 28.0 per cent in 2007/08 to 26.6 per cent in 2012/13.

Status

Last updated: February 2015

Next update: June 2015