



Department  
for Education

# **Outcomes by ethnicity in schools in England**

**Topic Note**

**2022**

**Central Analysis Division, Department for  
Education**



Government  
Social Research

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## About this document

Ensuring that the education system works for pupils from all backgrounds is key to the Department of Education's aims. This document collates and contextualises available evidence on outcomes by ethnicity across the school system. Doing so allows for a rounded view of the data in proper context, and overall trends to emerge.

Attainment figures used in the headline section below are taken from 2019, as this is the latest available attainment publication<sup>1</sup> across all age groups following the 2020 COVID cancelation of many regular examinations and statistics publications. Census data from 2021 is used to get the latest available breakdown of pupil characteristics.

From 2019 to 2021, the rate of FSM eligibility has risen from 1 in 7 to 1 in 5 pupils, and the rise is broadly consistent across ethnic groups. The shifts do not affect the overall trends described in this note.

This document does not consider the impact of COVID-19 on different ethnic groups. Ethnicity will continue to be examined as a factor in relevant COVID-19 research by the Department.

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<sup>1</sup> All attainment publications available at: [Education, skills and training - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures \(ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ethnicity-facts-and-figures) GCSE results for 2020 have also been published and are discussed in the detailed KS4 section

## Executive Summary: 8 Key facts about Ethnicity in Schools

### Two in three school pupils in England describe their ethnicity as White British. No other ethnic group includes more than 1 in 25 pupils.

1. In 2021, there were over 8 million pupils recorded in the school census<sup>2</sup>. Ethnicity responses are grouped into 17 options or “Any other”. It is important to consider variation within groups, especially when aggregated into larger groups such as “White” or “Asian”.
2. When aggregated 72% of pupils (5.9 million) described their ethnicity as White, 11% (900,000) Asian excluding Chinese, and around 6% each as Mixed (520,000) or Black (460,000). 2% of pupils described themselves as belonging to ethnic groups not captured in the census (170,000), and 0.5% of pupils identify as Chinese (37,000).
3. White British pupils are the majority, representing around **2 in 3** pupils (5.3 million). The relative size of these cohorts can be seen in Table 1.

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<sup>2</sup> [Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2021)



**Table 1. Size of Ethnic Groups in English Schools**

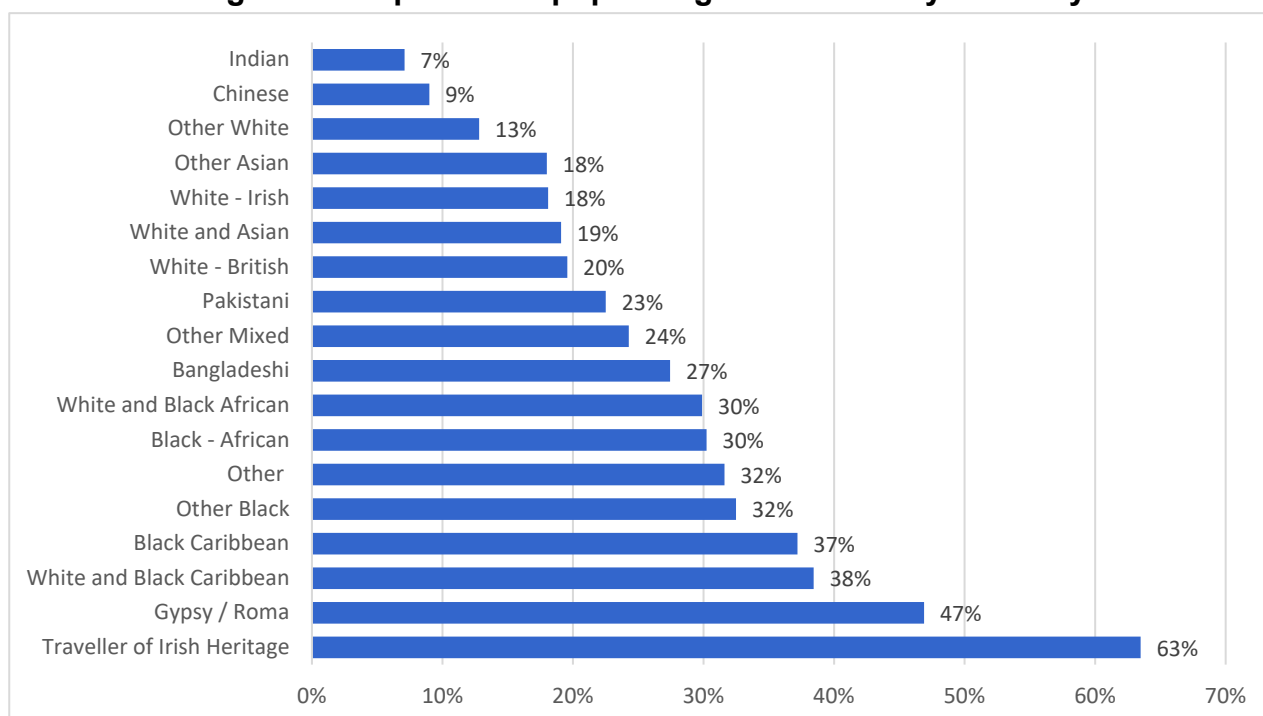
<b>Aggregated Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Detailed Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Number of pupils (rounded)</b>	<b>Proportion of all pupils</b>
White	Irish	21,000	0.26%
White	Traveller of Irish Heritage	6,000	0.07%
White	Any other White background	556,000	6.82%
White	White British	5,289,000	66.44%
White	Gypsy/Roma	25,000	0.31%
Mixed	White and Black Caribbean	127,000	1.55%
Mixed	White and African	71,000	0.88%
Mixed	White and Asian	126,000	1.55%
Mixed	Any other Mixed background	196,000	2.40%
Asian	Indian	271,000	3.33%
Asian	Pakistani	364,000	4.47%
Asian	Bangladeshi	145,000	1.78%
Asian	Any other Asian background	158,000	1.94%
Black	Caribbean	81,000	0.99%
Black	African	318,000	3.89%
Black	Any other black background	63,000	0.77%
Chinese	Chinese	37,000	0.46%
Other	Any other ethnic group	170,000	2.08%

Source: School Census 2021

## Socio-economic disadvantage varies by ethnicity.

4. Around 1 in 5 pupils (20.5%) are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). FSM eligibility is used as a proxy measure for deprivation.
5. Some ethnic groups are disproportionately eligible for FSM, indicating a higher level of deprivation in these groups. This is shown in figure 1.
6. Black Caribbean (37%), Mixed White/Black Caribbean (38%) and Gypsy/Roma (47%) pupils are FSM eligible at around twice the national average rate. A majority (63%) of pupils of Irish Traveller Heritage are FSM Eligible.
7. Indian (7%), Chinese (9%) and Other White (13%) and Other Asian (18%) have significantly lower FSM eligibility than White British (20%) pupils.

**Figure 1. Proportion of pupils Eligible for FSM by Ethnicity**



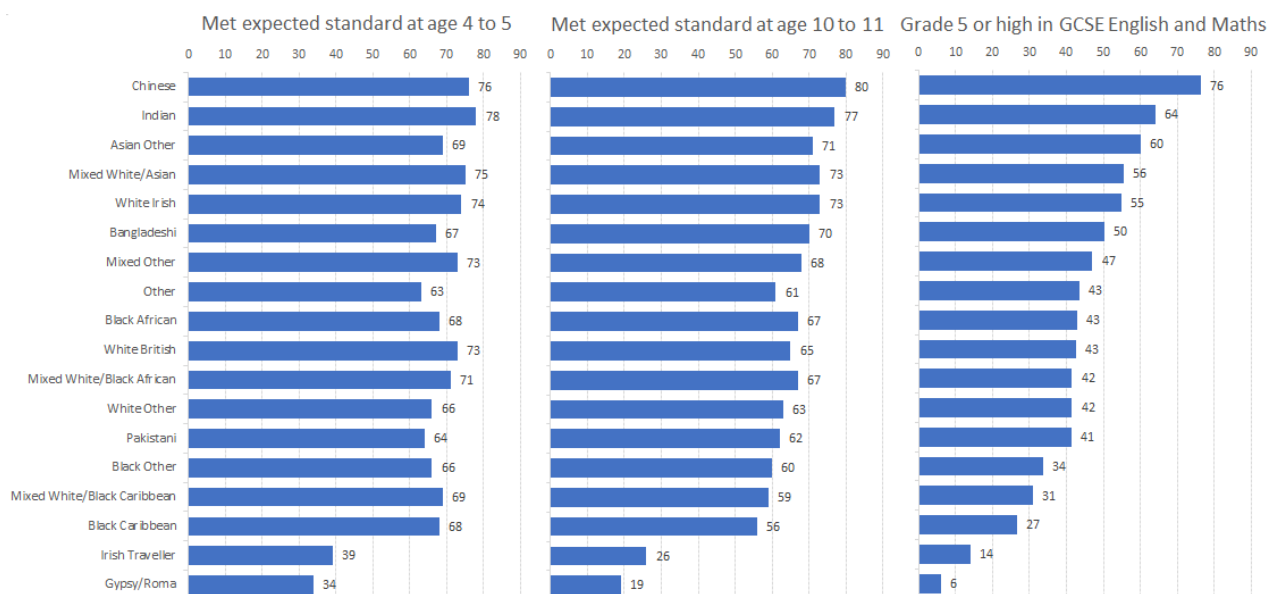
Source: School Census 2021

## White British pupils, on average, make less progress than their non-white peers during their time in school.

8. The proportion of White British pupils meeting the expected standard falls at each stage in their education. Other groups also see fluctuations across stages, but the effect is most pronounced in the White British Group. As seen in figure 2, White British pupils fall from 5<sup>th</sup> of 18 groups in younger groups to 10<sup>th</sup> later in school.

9. This is reflected in the average Progress 8 score of a White British GCSE entrant being negative (-0.14) where 0 represents average progress through secondary school. Since Progress 8 is a relative metric, we cannot say whether this trajectory represents “catch-up” of some non-White British groups or a “falling behind” effect.

**Figure 2. Proportion of Pupils meeting expected standards by Ethnicity, 2019**



Source: [Ethnicity Facts and Figures](#)

**Pupils with Black Caribbean heritage and pupils with Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller backgrounds are more likely to have poor attainment than White British pupils.**

10. Black Caribbean, Mixed White and Black Caribbean and Other Black pupils are all less likely to meet the expected standard at all stages than White British pupils, and the size of this gap doubles between 4- to 5-year-olds and GCSE pupils. Comparing between a class of 30 White British pupils and a class of 30 pupils from these 3 groups, on average 1 or 2 more pupils in the Black and Mixed class would be below the expected standard at 4 to 5 years-old, whereas 3 to 5 fewer pupils would receive a strong pass in English and Maths GCSE.

11. The average progress 8 scores of Black Caribbean (-0.30) and Mixed White/Black Caribbean (-0.37) pupils are more negative than the White British group. Pupils selecting Black Other (+0.08) have slightly positive average progress 8 score.

12. Gypsy/Roma, and Irish Traveller pupils have the consistently lowest levels of attainment of any ethnic group, and the most negative progress 8 scores.

13. Pupils from a number of groups, such as Pakistani or Bangladeshi pupils, have lower average attainment than White British pupils at some points in the school system, but these positions are either not maintained at GCSE as in the Bangladeshi case, or the difference is reduced to small margins by that stage as in the Pakistani group. These groups have positive average Progress 8 scores.

**Economically disadvantaged pupils are more likely to have lower attainment and make less progress than pupils who aren't economically disadvantaged.**

14. FSM eligible pupils perform worse on average than their non-FSM eligible peers in all ethnic groups<sup>3</sup>. Among the six aggregated ethnic groups only Chinese FSM eligible pupils outperform any non-FSM eligible cohort, showing that FSM eligibility is more indicative of academic success than ethnicity. This is seen in Figure 3.

15. Those ethnic groups with the poorest average attainment outcomes are also those with the highest rates of FSM eligibility – pupils with Gypsy/Roma, Irish Traveller, Black Caribbean, Mixed White/Black Caribbean, and Other Black backgrounds have the highest FSM eligibility and are the most likely to not meet expected standards in education.

16. Pupils of Indian and Chinese heritage are the most likely to meet expected standards and the least likely to be eligible for FSM.

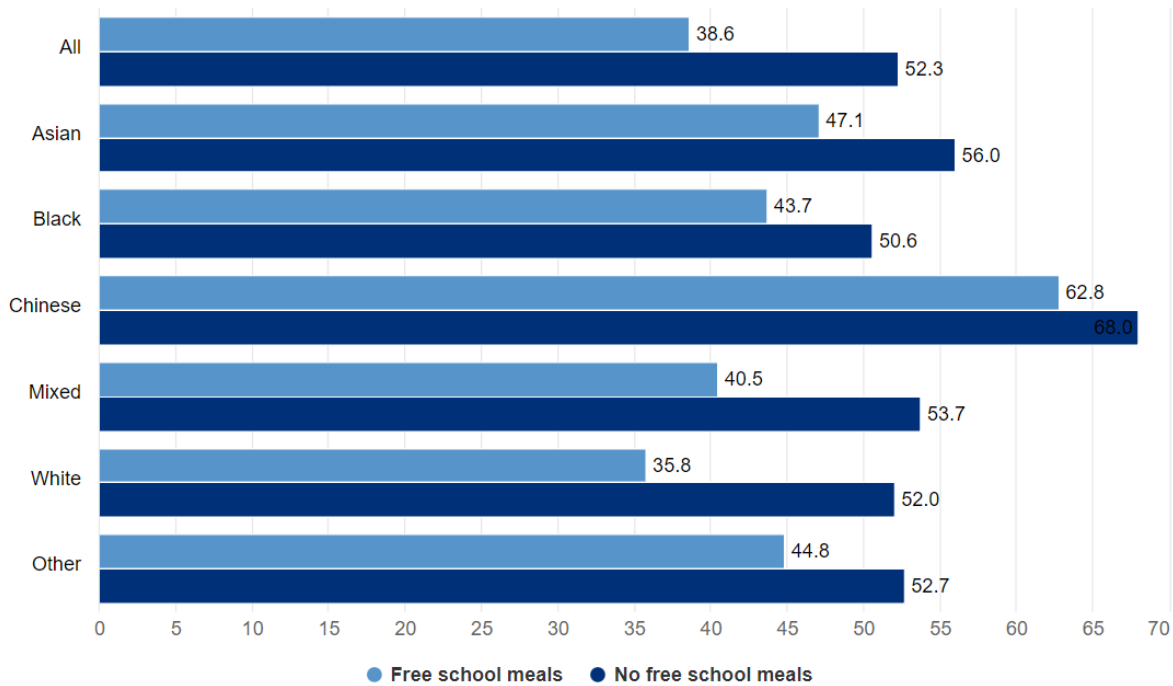
17. White British and Other White pupils have below average attainment outcomes despite being less likely than average to be FSM eligible. This runs against the trend seen across other groups and suggests FSM eligibility is not fully capturing important trends.

18. Pupils in the Indian and Chinese groups have the best attainment outcomes and the highest progress 8 scores of any group.

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<sup>3</sup> All attainment information available at: [Education, skills and training - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures \(ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/ethnicity-facts-figures)

Figure 3. Attainment 8 (out of 90) by FSM and Ethnicity, 2019



Source: [Ethnicity Facts and Figures](#)

**When economic disadvantage is partially accounted for by controlling for FSM eligibility, disadvantaged White and Mixed White/Black Caribbean pupils on average have worse outcomes than other disadvantaged pupils.**

19. FSM eligibility is most indicative of attainment in the White and Mixed groups, with the largest gaps between FSM eligible and non-eligible pupils found in these groups. The White FSM eligible cohort have the lowest average attainment across the six major groups, and the largest gap to their non-FSM eligible peers.

20. White FSM eligible pupils make the least progress, and their non-FSM eligible counterparts are the only aggregated non-FSM group to have a negative progress 8 score.

21. Mixed and Black Caribbean or Black Other pupils also make less than average progress across their time in school if they are FSM eligible.

**Table 2. Average Progress 8 score by Ethnicity and FSM, 2019**

<b>Ethnic group</b>	<b>FSM eligible pupils</b>	<b>Non-FSM eligible pupils</b>	<b>All pupils</b>
<b>All pupils</b>	<b>-0.53</b>	<b>0.06</b>	<b>-0.03</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>-0.75</b>	<b>-0.02</b>	<b>-0.11</b>
White British	-0.78	-0.05	<b>-0.14</b>
Irish	-0.51	0.23	<b>0.13</b>
Traveller of Irish heritage	-1.16	-0.91	<b>-1.05</b>
Gypsy / Roma	-0.99	-0.70	<b>-0.81</b>
Any other white background	-0.03	0.51	<b>0.45</b>
<b>Mixed</b>	<b>-0.47</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.00</b>
White and Black Caribbean	-0.77	-0.24	<b>-0.38</b>
White and Black African	-0.26	0.13	<b>0.04</b>
White and Asian	-0.29	0.30	<b>0.22</b>
Any other mixed background	-0.31	0.24	<b>0.14</b>
<b>Asian</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>0.47</b>
Indian	0.34	0.74	<b>0.71</b>
Pakistani	0.03	0.30	<b>0.24</b>
Bangladeshi	0.30	0.54	<b>0.47</b>
Any other Asian background	0.36	0.70	<b>0.66</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>-0.08</b>	<b>0.19</b>	<b>0.13</b>
Black Caribbean	-0.54	-0.23	<b>-0.31</b>
Black African	0.17	0.37	<b>0.33</b>
Any other Black background	-0.23	0.17	<b>0.08</b>
<b>Chinese</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>0.86</b>
Any other ethnic group	0.34	0.56	<b>0.50</b>

Source: [Ethnicity Facts and Figures](#)

**Among pupils who are not FSM eligible, pupils of Black Caribbean heritage and Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller pupils have worse average attainment outcomes than other pupils.**

22. Average attainment rates among non-FSM cohorts are mostly similar across ethnic groups, with the Black grouping having slightly lower average rates at some stages of academic progression.

23. Black Caribbean and Mixed White/Black Caribbean children, particularly boys, have consistently lower attainment at all socio-economic statuses.<sup>4</sup>

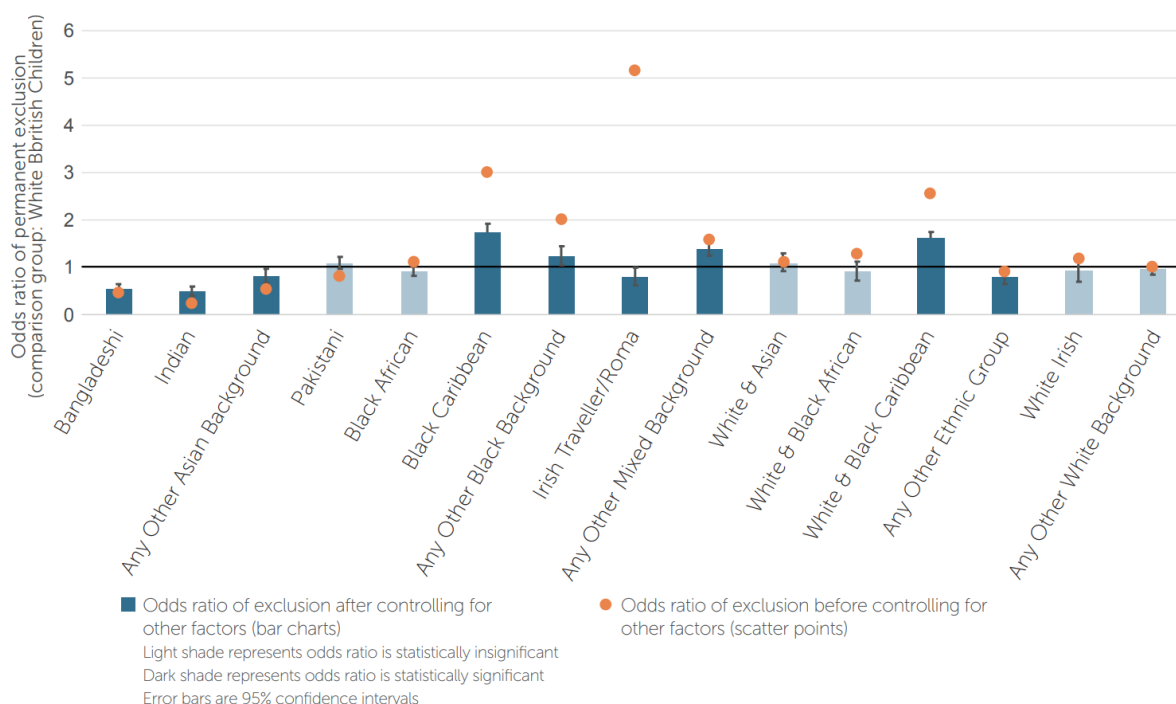
<sup>4</sup> [Steve Strand Report to Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities - 2021](#)

## Pupils with Black Caribbean heritage are more likely to be excluded than their peers, even once disadvantage been controlled for.

24. In recent years the use of permanent and temporary exclusions has been discussed as a potential area where discriminatory and biased practices may result in disproportionate impact upon minority ethnic groups.

25. The [Timpson Review \(2019\)](#) investigated this issue in depth, and found that when controlling for socio-economic factors a smaller but persistent ethnicity effect emerges, particularly affecting pupils of Black Caribbean backgrounds.

**Figure 4. Relative likelihood of permanent exclusion by Ethnicity, 2016/17**



Source: [Timpson Review \(2019\)](#)

## Section 2 – In depth reporting

26. This section describes the above overarching trends in greater detail, exploring how differences between ethnic groups are seen at different stages of pupils' time in education. It should be noted throughout this section that one age cohort is not directly comparable to another as they are demographically different and may have different experiences of prior education – it should not be assumed that younger cohorts will necessarily mirror the trends of older cohorts .

27. These cohort effects are partially mitigated through the use of Progress 8 scores to track the experiences of pupils throughout education, but this only allows suitable comparison for one age group in one stage of their schooling.

### Primary School

#### Primary pupil distribution

28. There are 4.7 million state primary school pupils in England<sup>5</sup>, and around 2 in 3 (65.5%) identify as White British. The next largest ethnic groups include Pakistani (4.4%), Black African (3.8%), and Indian (3.2%). 1 in 14 pupils are identified as having White backgrounds other than British, Irish, Irish Traveller or Gypsy/Roma. The group of “other white background” represents 7.3% of primary school pupils. This includes any White background other than British, Irish or Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller.

29. When pupils' ethnic backgrounds are grouped, around 3 in 4 (73.5%) identify as White, while 1 in 9 (11.2%) pupils describe their ethnicity as Asian, excluding Chinese. Pupils who describe their ethnicity as Mixed (6.3%) and Black (5.5%) are the other major groups with around 1 in 200 (0.5%) of pupils identifying their ethnicity as Chinese. 1 in 50 (2.0%) of pupils selected any other ethnicity.

30. In total, 15.8% of pupils are FSM eligible. Eligibility for FSM is used as an indicator for deprivation. FSM eligibility is more common in Black pupils (24.5%) and pupils of a Mixed background (21.8%) than White British pupils (15.6%)

31. In particular, over 30% of pupils are FSM eligible in the Black Caribbean (30.6%), Mixed White and Black Caribbean (31.7%), Gypsy/Roma (33%) and Irish Traveller (58.2%) ethnic groups. FSM eligibility is more uncommon among Indian (4.8%), Chinese (6.9%) and Other White (7.5%) pupils

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<sup>5</sup> [Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2021)



**Table 3. Primary School FSM Eligibility by Ethnicity**

Ethnic group	FSM eligible	not FSM eligible	FSM eligible (%)	not FSM eligible (%)
<b>White</b>	<b>520,186</b>	<b>2,955,193</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>85.0</b>
Irish	1,922	9,917	16.2	83.8
Traveller of Irish heritage	2,886	2,073	58.2	41.8
Any other white background	25,725	319,544	7.5	92.5
Gypsy/Roma	6,131	12,425	33.0	67.0
White British	483,522	2,611,234	15.6	84.4
<b>Mixed</b>	<b>65,032</b>	<b>233,834</b>	<b>21.8</b>	<b>78.2</b>
White and Black Caribbean	23,584	50,761	31.7	68.3
White and African	9,495	32,156	22.8	77.2
White and Asian	10,840	60,592	15.2	84.8
Any other mixed background	21,113	90,325	18.9	81.1
<b>Asian</b>	<b>65,988</b>	<b>461,403</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>87.5</b>
Indian	7,148	142,788	4.8	95.2
Pakistani	32,744	176,125	15.7	84.3
Bangladeshi	14,897	65,553	18.5	81.5
Any other Asian background	11,199	76,937	12.7	87.3
<b>Black</b>	<b>63,351</b>	<b>195,423</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>75.5</b>
Caribbean	13,624	30,958	30.6	69.4
African	40,617	137,039	22.9	77.1
Any other black background	9,110	27,426	24.9	75.1
Chinese	1,582	21,262	6.9	93.1
Any other ethnic group	21,646	73,418	22.8	77.2
Refused	3,389	19,768	14.6	85.4
Not obtained	4,279	21,335	16.7	83.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>745,453</b>	<b>3,981,636</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>84.2</b>

Source: School Census 2019

## KS1 attainment outcomes

32. Attainment<sup>6</sup> outcomes are collated and reported by ethnicity among 6- to 7-year-olds, making up the Year 2 cohort. An expected standard is defined in Reading, Writing, Maths, Science and Phonics.

33. Pupils of Chinese, Indian and Mixed White/Asian backgrounds generally have significantly higher average attainment scores than average, while Gypsy/Roma, Irish Traveller and pupils of unknown ethnicity have, on average, much lower scores. These trends are consistent across each individual subject.

<sup>6</sup> All attainment information available at: [Education, skills and training - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures \(ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/ethnicity-facts-figures)

34. The Black grouping is the only collated group to score lower than the population on average. This, however, is only true in Science and Maths, while the White grouping is below average in Reading and Writing. Both groups perform at the average level in phonics.

35. Notably, we can see here the issues with grouping where characteristics may not be consistent. The discrepancy between the averages for the Indian and Pakistani groups or the Mixed White/Asian and Mixed/Black Caribbean mean that headline figures for the Asian and Mixed groupings respectively may mask deeper trends. We can also see that these discrepancies largely, but not wholly, mirror the patterns in FSM eligibility described above.

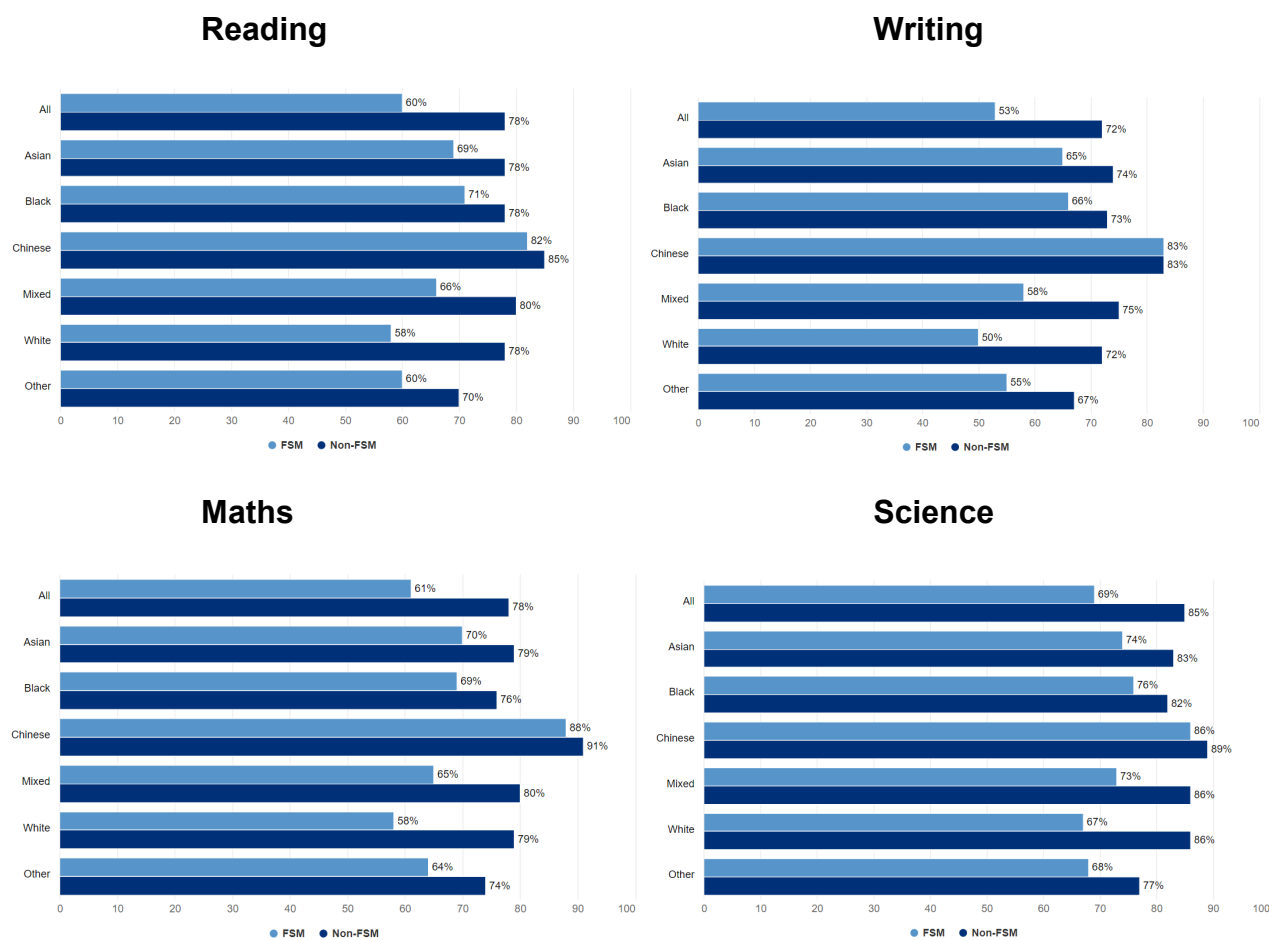
### **KS1 outcomes for FSM eligible pupils**

36. In Figure 5 outcomes are disaggregated across Reading, Writing, Maths and Science as well as by FSM eligibility. Among pupils eligible for FSM, White pupils perform the worst in all 4 subject areas. White pupils also see the largest difference between those who are FSM eligible and those who are not.

37. Among pupils not eligible for FSM, the picture is more varied with no identified group performing above or below average across all 4 subjects, mirroring the above overall trends for the White and Black groupings. The grouping for Other ethnic backgrounds, however, does perform below average in this cohort across all subjects.

38. With the exception of the Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller groups, the effects of FSM eligibility are significantly larger than the effects of ethnicity, although the two do appear to interact.

**Figure 5. Proportion meeting expected standard for KS1 by Ethnic Group and FSM Eligibility, 2019**



Source: [Ethnicity Facts and Figures](#)

## KS2 attainment outcomes

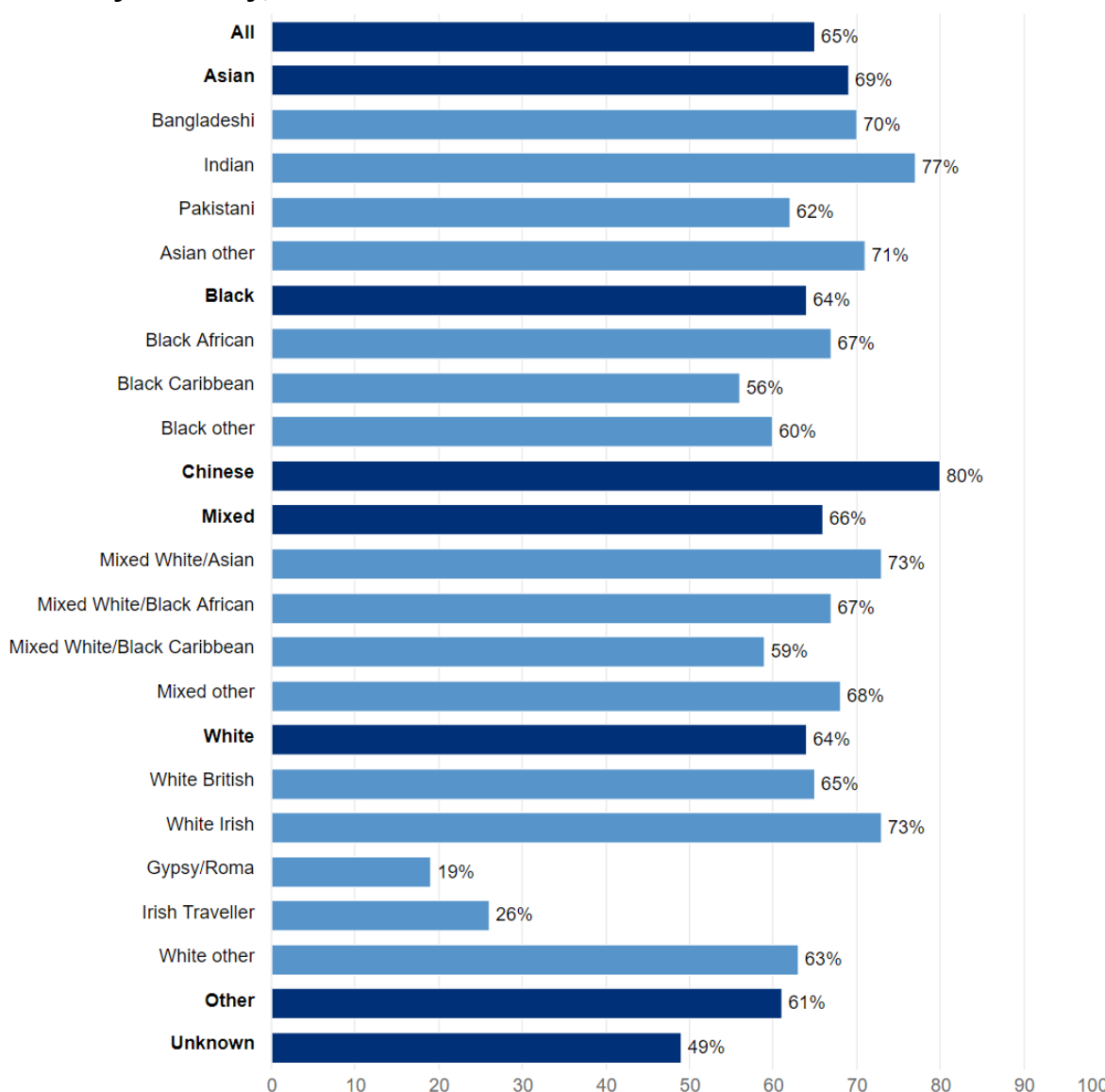
39. Attainment outcomes are collated and reported by ethnicity among 10- to 11-year-olds, making up the Year 6 cohort. An expected standard is defined in Reading, Writing and Maths. In Figure 6 are the percentages of pupils meeting the expected standard across these three subjects by ethnicity.

40. Continuing the trends identified at KS1, pupils of Chinese and Indian backgrounds have performed significantly better than average at this stage. Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller pupils have far lower scores, and the gap between score for this group and the national average is wider than seen at KS1. These trends are consistent across each individual subject.

41. The Black and White groupings both score lower than the population on average, but the difference remains very small. At an individual subject level, Black pupils perform slightly below average in Reading and both White and Black pupils perform slightly below average in Maths.

42. Aggregating by generic groups like Black or Asian continues to be misleading. The trends described in point 35 persist at KS2

**Figure 6. KS2 Pupils reaching the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths by ethnicity, 2019**



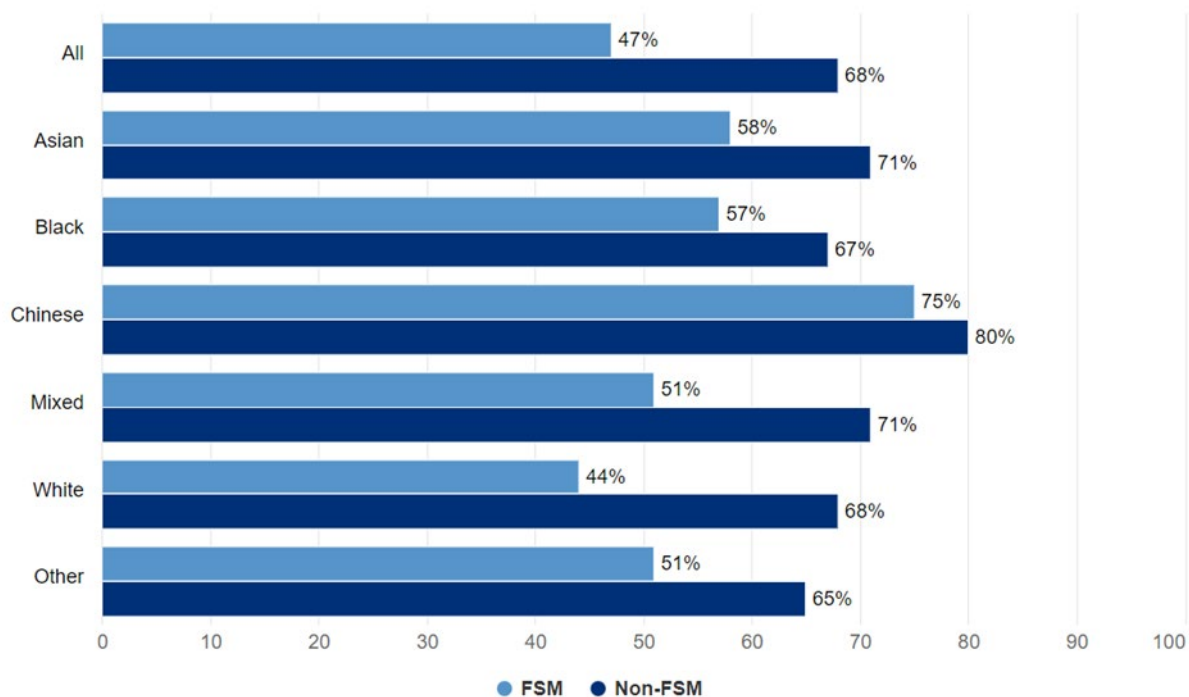
Source: [Ethnicity Facts and Figures](#)

## KS2 outcomes for FSM pupils

43. Among pupils eligible for FSM, White pupils are the least likely aggregated group to meet the expected standard in reading, writing and maths. Among pupils not eligible for FSM, Black pupils and those from Other ethnic backgrounds were least likely to meet the expected standard.

44. Figure 7 shows the overall picture in primary schools. Chinese and Indian ethnic groups are significant and consistently perform relatively strongly. Among large ethnic groups, White and Black pupils tend to have the worst outcomes. Pupils who are eligible for FSM have much lower average performance, and this trend is most pronounced among White pupils. Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller pupils have consistently far lower outcomes than all over pupils.

**Figure 7. Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at KS2 by ethnicity and FSM, 2019**



Source: [Ethnicity Facts and Figures](#)

## Secondary School

### Secondary pupil distribution

45. There are 3.3 million state secondary school pupils in England<sup>7</sup>, and around 2 in 3 (67%) identify as White British. The next largest ethnic groups include Pakistani (4.4%), Black African (4%), and Indian (3.1%). The group of “other white background” represents 5.6% of secondary school pupils. This includes any White background other than British, Irish or Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller.

46. When pupils’ ethnic backgrounds are grouped, around 3 in 4 (73.2%) identify as White, while 1 in 9 (11.3%) pupils describe their ethnicity as Asian, excluding Chinese. Pupils who describe their ethnicity as Mixed (5.5%) and Black (6.3%) are the other major groups with around 1 in 250 (0.4%) of pupils identifying their ethnicity as Chinese. 1 in 50 (1.9%) of pupils selected any other ethnicity.

47. In total, 14.1% of pupils are FSM eligible. Eligibility for FSM is used as an indicator for deprivation. FSM eligibility is more common in Black pupils (22.2%) and pupils of a Mixed background (19.8%) than White British pupils (12.6%)

48. In particular, over 25% of pupils are FSM eligible in the Black Caribbean (25.4%), Mixed White and Black Caribbean (26.5%), Gypsy/Roma (33.3%) and Irish Traveller (54.1%) ethnic groups. FSM eligibility is particularly less common among Indian (6.0%), Chinese (6.3%) and Other White (8.7%) pupils.

**Table 4. Secondary School FSM Eligibility by Ethnicity, 2019**

Ethnic group	FSM eligible	not FSM eligible	FSM eligible (%)	not FSM eligible (%)
<b>WHITE</b>	<b>306,854</b>	<b>2,129,511</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>87.4</b>
Irish	1,273	9,203	12.2	87.8
Traveller of Irish heritage	655	555	54.1	45.9
Any other white background	16,405	171,270	8.7	91.3
Gypsy/Roma	2,768	5,555	33.3	66.7
White British	285,753	1,942,928	12.8	87.2
<b>MIXED</b>	<b>36,169</b>	<b>146,552</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>80.2</b>
White and Black Caribbean	12,753	35,396	26.5	73.5
White and African	5,100	18,531	21.6	78.4
White and Asian	6,314	37,437	14.4	85.6
Any other mixed background	12,002	55,188	17.9	82.1
<b>ASIAN</b>	<b>56,107</b>	<b>321,061</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>85.1</b>

<sup>7</sup> [Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2021)

Indian	6,268	97,785	6.0	94.0
Pakistani	27,680	120,273	18.7	81.3
Bangladeshi	14,398	47,605	23.2	76.8
Any other Asian background	7,761	55,398	12.3	87.7
<b>BLACK</b>	<b>43,960</b>	<b>154,120</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>77.8</b>
Caribbean	10,555	30,978	25.4	74.6
African	27,945	104,385	21.1	78.9
Any other black background	5,460	18,757	22.5	77.5
Chinese	834	12,483	6.3	93.7
Any other ethnic group	15,360	47,302	24.5	75.5
Refused	3,728	21,148	15.0	85.0
Not obtained	5,767	27,014	17.6	82.4
TOTAL	468,779	2,859,191	14.1	85.9

Source: School Census 2019

## Secondary attainment

49. The following section considers attainment and progress data for secondary school pupils in the academic year 2018/19<sup>8</sup>. This is not the latest available data as exam results were awarded at the end of the following academic year, 2019/20, and corresponding publications have been released.

50. 2018/19 data has been used for two reasons; to ensure time consistency with the snapshot taken by other available publications discussed, and in recognition that the 2019/20 and 2020/21 exam seasons and corresponding results are substantially different from historic trends and are possibly not reflective of the experience of children of differing ethnic groups in education.

51. Trends observed in primary school persist in secondary school. Among grouped ethnicities, Black and White groups continue to be below and marginally below average respectively. Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller groups continue to see the worst outcomes by specific ethnicity, followed by Black Caribbean and Mixed White/Black Caribbean groups. The Indian and Chinese ethnic groups continue to be significant positive outliers.

52. Considering FSM eligibility, the headline trends remain in place among those not eligible for FSM with Black groups having the worst outcomes, with the observed gap being larger than that seen in primary school. Among those eligible for FSM, White pupils are significantly behind other groups, with those from Mixed backgrounds also having poorer outcomes than other groups.

<sup>8</sup> [GCSE results \('Attainment 8'\) - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures \(ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/ethnicity-facts-figures)

53. Considering disaggregated groups of FSM eligible pupils, Black Caribbean (34.1) and Mixed White/Black Caribbean (32.4) also have attainment 8 scores below the national average but remain above the average score for White British pupils (31.8). Gypsy/Roma (16.9) and Irish Traveller (22.2) pupils are the only FSM eligible groups to have lower average scores than FSM eligible White British pupils.

## Progress throughout schooling

54. Five groups made below average progress<sup>9</sup> throughout secondary school – White British, Black Caribbean, Mixed White/Black Caribbean, and Gypsy/Roma, Irish Traveller. These groups start with lower attainment scores following primary school, so low progress scores represent a confounding effect where these groups are falling further behind their peers.

55. Controlling for FSM, only White and Black Caribbean groups have below average progress among non-FSM recipients. White FSM recipients have the lowest progress among all aggregated groups, and Mixed and Black groups have below average progress.

## Wider evidence

There is a very wide and varied literature on the experiences of pupils by ethnic background in the English education system, which this document does not seek to cover exhaustively. The findings presented above are in line with the most common findings of this literature. Below is a brief summary of some key additional insights found in the literature, not covered by current Department for Education regular publications.

56. [Strand and Lindorff \(2018\)](#) detail how the identification of Special Educational Needs (SEN) varies by ethnicity in England, with a range of minority ethnic groups being under and over identified. The Department has recently committed to improving standards around the identification of SEN<sup>10</sup>.

57. [Warren et al \(2019\)](#) shows no relationship between ethnicity and attainment, but strong relationships for FSM and SEN status. The study investigated the impact of mindset on attainment and found that the right mindset had a strong effect in the general population, but this effect is not seen in pupils with FSM or SEN status. Theories around mindset are often put forward to explain the differences in attainment between ethnic or cultural groups with similar levels of wealth.

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<sup>9</sup> [How Progress 8 and Attainment 8 measures are calculated \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> [SEND Review - right support, right place, right time \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)



58. [Strand \(2014\)](#) finds that in one London Borough the trends seen above hold for lower SES individuals but there are stronger ethnicity effects among higher SES cohorts, with White British pupils seeing better progress than pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. While this trend is not reflected in the nation data, as seen above, it could imply important space-specific impacts to be discussed and so geography should be considered a key area of analysis going forward

59. Another factor is the effect of those for whom English is an additional language on figures by ethnic group. [Demie \(2017\)](#) finds evidence that children with English as an additional language initially underperform at school but catch up rapidly as their language skills develop alongside their other knowledge, although this varies depending on prior levels of English. The Department reports on pupils with English as an additional language<sup>11</sup>, but more work is required here to understand and control for the heterogeneity in this group when interpreting outcomes by ethnicity.

60. [Peterson et al \(2016\)](#) and [Campbell \(2015\)](#) find evidence of implicit bias and prejudice in teachers' views of pupils dependent on race in the UK context, including in ethnic groups who are consistently out-performing White British pupils. This is an important reminder that groups performing well in school does not mean they are not facing prejudice.

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<sup>11</sup> For example [Attainment of pupils with English as an additional language - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) (2019)



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For any enquiries regarding this publication, contact us at:

[amy.richards@education.gov.uk](mailto:amy.richards@education.gov.uk) or [www.education.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus)

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