

**Curriculum and
Assessment
Review**

Curriculum and Assessment Review

**Analytical annex to the Curriculum and
Assessment Review interim report**

March 2025

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Introduction

This analytical annex is published to provide transparency on the data and analysis used to support the Curriculum and Assessment Review interim report. It includes a range of analysis to help readers understand pupil uptake in qualifications at key stage 4 (KS4); teachers' views on the volume of content in the national curriculum; and statistics on the characteristics of young people in upper secondary education, including their prior attainment in English and maths.

The related methodology for each section of the analysis is outlined at the end of the document.

Main findings

Pupil entries into performance table qualifications during key stage 4, 2022 to 2023

This section is included to help readers of the interim report understand the number and types of performance table qualifications that pupils enter during key stage 4.

Performance table qualifications are those approved for inclusion in school and college performance tables.

Schools and colleges may also offer qualifications that are not included in the performance tables where this is in the best interests of individual pupils. However, for funded institutions such as maintained schools and academies, these can only be qualifications on the [List of qualifications available for 14 to 16 funding](#).

Table 1 and table 2 cover performance table qualifications entered by pupils in state-funded schools who were at the end of key stage 4 during the 2022 to 2023 academic year.

- A majority (84.4%) of pupils were entered for between 8 and 10 performance table qualifications, with the most common number being 9 (47.8%).
- Very few pupils (0.7%) were entered for more than 12 performance table qualifications.
- Entry into multiple Technical Awards was relatively uncommon, with only 16.3% of pupils entered for more than one.
- Pupils entering at least one Technical Award most commonly took this alongside 8.0 GCSE entries

Table 1: Distribution of pupil entries into performance table qualifications during key stage 4, 2022 to 2023

Number of entries	GCSEs	Technical Awards	GCSEs and Technical Awards	All performance table qualifications
0	2.9%	53.0%	2.8%	2.8%
1	0.5%	30.7%	0.5%	0.5%
2	0.7%	13.3%	0.7%	0.7%
3	0.6%	2.8%	0.6%	0.6%
4	0.7%	0.2%	0.6%	0.6%
5	1.8%	0.0%	1.2%	1.1%
6	6.0%	0.0%	1.4%	1.4%
7	15.8%	0.0%	2.7%	2.7%
8	24.9%	0.0%	14.2%	14.2%
9	28.5%	0.0%	47.9%	47.8%
10	14.4%	0.0%	22.7%	22.4%
11	2.9%	0.0%	4.3%	4.6%
12+	0.3%	0.0%	0.4%	0.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Key stage 4 results data

Table 2: Average number of GCSE entries by pupils at the end of key stage 4 by Technical Award entry status, 2022 to 2023

	Mean	Median	Mode
All pupils	8.0	8.0	9.0
Pupils entering at least one Technical Award	7.6	8.0	8.0

Source: Key stage 4 results data

Pupil entries into selected English Baccalaureate subjects during key stage 4, 2005 to 2024

This section is included to aid readers of the interim report to understand the number and proportion of students at key stage 4, who entered history, geography and modern foreign languages, and how this proportion has changed over time.

- The proportion of students entering history reached their maximum percentage in 2024 at 44% and a minimum in 2010 at 31%.
- The proportion of students entering geography reached their maximum percentage in 2022 at 43% and a minimum in 2010 and 2011 at 26%.
- The proportion of students entering modern foreign languages reached their maximum percentage in 2005 at 59% and a minimum in 2011 and 2012 at 40%.

Table 3: EBacc subject GCSE uptake as a proportion of all pupils at the end of key stage 4 by year (2005 to 2024)

	History	Geography	French	German	Spanish	Any modern foreign language
2005	32%	30%	38%	16%	8%	59%
2006	32%	29%	32%	13%	8%	50%
2007	31%	28%	29%	12%	8%	46%
2008	31%	27%	27%	11%	9%	44%
2009	31%	27%	26%	11%	9%	44%
2010	31%	26%	25%	10%	9%	43%
2011	31%	26%	23%	9%	9%	40%
2012	32%	27%	22%	9%	10%	40%
2013	37%	32%	26%	10%	13%	48%
2014	38%	34%	26%	9%	14%	49%
2015	37%	35%	25%	9%	14%	48%
2016	42%	39%	24%	9%	15%	48%
2017	43%	40%	22%	8%	15%	46%
2018	42%	41%	20%	7%	15%	44%
2019	43%	42%	20%	7%	16%	45%
2020	44%	41%	20%	7%	17%	44%
2021	44%	42%	20%	6%	17%	44%
2022	43%	43%	19%	6%	18%	44%
2023	44%	42%	19%	5%	18%	44%
2024	44%	41%	19%	5%	18%	44%

Source: [Key stage 4 performance data \(2010-2024\)](#) and National Archives records (2005-2009)

Results from the Department for Education’s survey on national curriculum content, November 2024

This section has been included to help readers of the interim report understand teachers views on the volume of curriculum content in state-funded schools in England.

The data provided in Table 5 was collected as part of the November 2024 wave of the School and College Voice survey.

In reference to their most recent lesson, participants were asked ‘Thinking about that lesson, do you think the current volume of content in the national curriculum is too much, too little, or about right for you to teach effectively?’.

A total of 780 teachers (whose most recent lesson taught was for key stages 1, 2, 3, or 4, but not key stage 5) responded to this question, of which, 404 were primary teachers and 376 were secondary teachers.

- 53% of teachers believed the current volume of content in the national curriculum is too much
- 41% of teachers indicated that the national curriculum contains about the right level of content
- Only 3% of teachers indicated that the national curriculum contains too little content

Table 4: Teacher perspectives on the current volume of content in the national curriculum

	Percentage of primary school teachers (%)	Percentage of secondary school teachers (%)	Percentage of primary and secondary teachers (%)
Too much content	59%	46%	53%
About the right level of content	36%	47%	41%
Too little content	3%	2%	3%
Don’t know	2%	5%	3%

Source: School and College Voice survey (November 2024 wave)

Characteristics and key stage 4 English and maths attainment of young people aged 19, by highest study aim

This section has been included to help readers of the interim report understand the highest study aims of young people, their characteristics and level of prior attainment in English and maths.

Tables 6 and 7 show the percentage of young people aged 19 at the end of the 2022 to 2023 academic year by level of their highest study aim, special educational needs (SEN) status and free school meals (FSM) eligibility.

- For those whose highest study aim is level 3 (excluding apprenticeships): 93% have no identified SEN, 7% have SEN support and 1% have an education health and care plan (EHCP)
- For level 2 (excluding apprenticeships): 71% have no identified SEN, 22% have SEN support and 6% have an EHCP
- For below level 2: 44% have no identified SEN, 18% have SEN support and 38% have an EHCP
- For those whose highest study aim is level 3 (excluding apprenticeships): 89% have no FSM, 11% have FSM
- For level 2 (excluding apprenticeships): 74% have no FSM, 26% have FSM
- For below level 2: 66% have no FSM, 34% have FSM

Tables 8 and 9 show the percentage of young people aged 19 at the end of the 2018/19 and the 2022/23 academic year by highest study aim and their English and maths attainment at the end of KS4. 2018/19 is used as this is the latest cohort of learners whose KS4 and 16-19 qualification grading were not affected by COVID-19 adjustments.

- For those whose highest study aim is level 3 (excluding apprenticeships): 83% achieved English and maths, 7% achieved English but not maths, 7% achieved maths but not English and 3% did not achieve English or maths
- For level 2 (excluding apprenticeships): 10% achieved English and maths, 17% achieved English but not maths, 15% achieved maths but not English and 53% did not achieve English or maths
- For below level 2: 9% achieved English and maths, 5% achieved English but not maths, 4% achieved maths but not English and 53% did not achieve English or maths

Table 9 provides data for the latest cohort but note that centre-assessed grades and teacher assessed grades were used in the 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021 academic years.

Table 5: The proportion of young people by their highest study aim and SEN status

Highest study aim	No identified SEN	SEN support	Education, health and care plan	Total
Level 3 (excl. apprenticeships)	93%	7%	1%	100%
Advanced Apprenticeship	91%	9%	1%	100%
Level 2 (excl. apprenticeships)	71%	22%	6%	100%
Level 2 Apprenticeship	84%	15%	2%	100%
Below level 2	44%	18%	38%	100%
None	75%	18%	7%	100%
Total	85%	11%	4%	100%

Source: Young Person's Matched Administrative Dataset, 2022/23

SEN status is as of academic age 15

Highest study aim is as of academic age 16

An education, health and care plan is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through SEN support

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Table 6: The proportion of young people by their highest study aim and FSM status

Highest study aim	No FSM	FSM	Total
Level 3 (excl. apprenticeships)	89%	11%	100%
Advanced Apprenticeship	91%	9%	100%
Level 2 (excl. apprenticeships)	74%	26%	100%
Level 2 Apprenticeship	87%	13%	100%
Below level 2	66%	34%	100%
None	72%	28%	100%
Total	84%	16%	100%

Source: Young Person's Matched Administrative Dataset, 2022/23

FSM status is as of academic age 15

Highest study aim is as of academic age 16

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Table 7: The proportion of young people by their highest study aim and KS4 GCSE English and maths attainment, 2018/19

Highest study aim	Achieved English and maths	Achieved English but not maths	Achieved maths but not English	Not achieved English or maths	No recorded grade	Total
Level 3 (excl. apprenticeships)	83%	7%	7%	3%	0%	100%
Advanced apprenticeship	67%	10%	13%	10%	0%	100%
Level 2 (excl. apprenticeships)	10%	17%	15%	53%	5%	100%
Level 2 Apprenticeship	31%	17%	15%	36%	1%	100%
Below level 2	9%	5%	4%	53%	29%	100%
None	24%	9%	8%	45%	14%	100%
Total	60%	10%	9%	19%	3%	100%

Source: Young Person's Matched Administrative Dataset, 2018/19

Highest study aim is as of academic age 16

To have achieved, the young person will have attained GCSE grade 4/C or above at academic age 15

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Table 8: The proportion of young people by their highest study aim and KS4 GCSE English and maths attainment, 2022/23

Highest study aim	Achieved English and maths	Achieved English but not maths	Achieved maths but not English	Not achieved English or maths	No recorded grade	Total
Level 3 (excl. apprenticeships)	89%	6%	3%	1%	0%	100%
Advanced Apprenticeship	75%	8%	8%	8%	0%	100%
Level 2 (excl. apprenticeships)	18%	18%	13%	46%	5%	100%
Level 2 Apprenticeship	45%	17%	10%	27%	1%	100%
Below level 2	23%	4%	4%	33%	36%	100%
None	33%	9%	8%	39%	11%	100%
Total	69%	8%	6%	13%	3%	100%

Source: Young Person's Matched Administrative Dataset, 2022/23

Highest study aim is as of academic age 16

To have achieved, the young person will have attained GCSE grade 4/C or above at academic age 15

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

Entries and attainment of young people aged 17 who achieved grade 2 in summer 2024 and entered into maths and English language GCSEs in the November 2024 exam series

This section has been included to help readers of the interim report understand the number of 17-year-old learners who sat GCSEs in maths and English language in November 2024, having achieved a grade 2 in these subjects in summer 2024. Note that for this section, the age of the learner is defined as the age they reach by the end of the 2024/25 academic year and that these learners would have been age 16 in the 2023/24 academic year, when they sat exams in summer 2024.

Table 10 shows that for maths, around 3,400 17-year-old learners who achieved grade 2 in maths GCSEs in summer 2024 entered maths GCSEs in November 2024, of which around 50 learners achieved grade 4 or above. It is worth noting that the 3,400 learners represented a small proportion of around 18,000 16-year-old learners¹ who achieved grade 2 in English language in summer 2024.

For English language, around 2,400 learners who achieved a grade 2 in English language GCSE in summer 2024 entered English language GCSEs in November 2024, of which around 300 achieved a grade 4 or above. It is worth noting that the 2,400 learners represented a small proportion of around 34,000 16-year-old learners who achieved grade 2 in maths in summer 2024.

Table 9: November 2024 entries and attainment in maths and English language GCSEs, for young people age 17 who achieved grade 2 in these subjects in summer 2024

	Number of learners achieving below grade 4 in November 2024	Number of learners achieving grade 4 or above in November 2024	Total entries
Maths	3,350	50	3,400
English language	2,100	300	2,400

Source: Ofqual analysis of data provided by awarding organisations²

¹ [Examination Results Archive - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#) - See results for 16-year-olds in England

² Figures are rounded to the nearest 50 candidates and should be seen as indicative only

Methodology

Pupil entries into performance table qualifications during key stage 4, 2022/23

In line with [key stage 4 performance data](#), the main source of data used for this analysis is key stage 4 qualification entries and results data collected from awarding organisations. This is linked with data on pupil characteristics taken from the [school census](#) and information on pupils' prior attainment. A small number of shielded pupils have been excluded from the data used for these calculations.

After removing entries where no grade had been awarded due to absence (grade 'X'), we include all undiscounted performance table qualifications (GCSEs, Technical Awards, AS levels and graded music exams) entered by pupils in state-funded schools who were at the end of key stage 4 in the 2022/23 academic year and were eligible to be included in national aggregated results. Discounting has been applied such that AS level entries do not discount GCSE entries in the same subject.

Where a pupil has multiple undiscounted entries for the same qualification, a best entry rule (highest [Gsizeall](#) value) has been applied such that the list of qualification entries associated with each pupil is unique. Total entries for each pupil are then calculated as the sum of the [Gsizeall](#) field for all remaining qualification entries associated with that pupil. To account for pupils who have entered performance table qualifications with non-integer [Gsizeall](#) values, total entries for each pupil have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Some entries, such as those in GCSE combined science, are counted as two qualification entries to account for their larger GCSE equivalence value. This methodology is not equivalent to how entries are counted in [key stage 4 subject pupil level](#) data publications.

Information on [qualifications approved for inclusion in key stage 4 school and college performance tables](#) is published by the Department for Education (DfE).

Pupil entries into selected EBacc and selected non-EBacc GCSE subjects during key stage 4, 2005-2024

For academic years 2009/10 to 2023/24, this analysis uses data available from the Department for Education's [key stage 4 performance](#) publications.

This includes pupils from all schools, and further information about the methodology can be found here: [key stage 4 performance, methodology](#). The percentages were produced by taking the number of students taking a given subject in subject pupil level data and dividing by the total number of students at the end of key stage 4 as given in national data.

Data for the period 2004/05 to 2008/09 has been taken from [National Archives](#) records.

Results from the Department for Education's survey on national curriculum content, November 2024

This analysis uses data from the November 2024 wave of the Department for Education's School and College Voice survey (conducted between 7 November and 17 November).

School and College Voice is the current survey panel used by DfE to better understand the perspectives of teachers and leaders in state-funded primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, and special schools. Alternative provision providers were excluded from the survey.

Responses to this survey have been statistically weighted to be representative of the population of teachers in England.

At the time of publishing, the accompanying technical report for the 2024/25 School and College Voice survey is yet to be released. Further information on the methodology for 2023/24 School and College Voice survey is available³.

³ [School and College Voice Technical Report](#)

Characteristics and key stage 4 English and maths attainment of young people aged 19, by highest study aim

The analysis on the characteristics and key stage 4 English and maths attainment of young people aged 19 is based on analysis of the DfE Young Person's Matched Administrative Dataset (YPMAD).

Several data sources are matched together at an individual level, using personal identifiers such as name, date of birth, gender and home postcode where available:

- Pupil level [school census](#) data containing information on the participation and personal characteristics of pupils in state schools, collected by DfE.
- Awarding organisation data including that collected as part of the [schools and colleges performance tables](#) exercise, and separately from awarding organisations as part of the Vocational Qualifications Database up until 2010/11.
- [Individualised Learner Record](#) (ILR) database covering participation and qualifications obtained in further education (FE) and work-based learning (WBL), collected from learning providers.

The YPMAD records information on the highest level of qualification studied each academic year matched to individual personal characteristics, as recorded in the school census at age 15. This analysis covers learners who were in the state sector at academic age 15 and their highest study aim at academic age 16. Academic age refers to the age of the young person at the start of the academic year.

For further information, see the YPMAD methodology page [Level 2 and 3 attainment age 16 to 25, Methodology - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

Entries and attainment of young people aged 17 who achieved grade 2 in summer 2024 and entered into maths and English language GCSEs in the November 2024 exam series

Ofqual has provided an analysis of the entries and attainment of young people aged 17⁴ who achieved grade 2 in summer 2024 (at age 16) and sat maths and English language GCSEs in November 2024, to the Curriculum and Assessment Review. Candidates can sit exams in these subjects in the November or in the summer exam series and in general for young people aged 17, there are more exam entries in these subjects in the summer exam series compared to the November series⁵.

This analysis only included young people aged 17 in November 2024 who achieved grade 2 in English language or maths in summer 2024. Details of all 17-year-old entries can be found in the [Joint Council for Qualifications English language and maths outcomes for post-16 for England \(November 2024 results\)](#) publication.

This analysis was based on provisional examination data provided to Ofqual by awarding organisations.

Note that the analysis required matching candidates between the summer 2024 and November 2024 series as some candidates may have changed candidate numbers between each exam series if, for example, they moved to another school or college.

Readers should note that there may be instances where it was not possible to identify and match candidates between the two series. Therefore, the analysis presented here should be treated as indicative only. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 50 candidates.

⁴ Note that for this section, the age of the learner is defined as the age they reach by the end of the 2024/25 academic year

⁵ [Statistics: entries for GCSE, AS and A level - GOV.UK](#) – see year 12 entries

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