Curriculum and Assessment Review

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Analytical annex to the final report

November 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 (CAR) final report. It includes a range of analysis to help readers understand patterns in qualification entries at Key Stage 4, learner characteristics and prior attainment at level 3, progression from level 2 to level 3 by sector subject area, and subject uptake by pupils (including different characteristics) and by schools. It also explores school-level entry patterns and progression in English and Maths GCSE during post-16 education, as well as enrolments and starts on medium and large level 3 qualifications. All figures are rounded to the nearest whole percent for clarity.

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, 2023 to 2024

This section is included to help readers of the final 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 <u>List of qualifications available for 14 to 16 funding</u>.

Table 1 and Table 2 cover performance table qualifications entered by pupils in statefunded schools who were at the end of Key Stage 4 during the 2023 to 2024 academic year.

- A majority (84%) of pupils were entered for between 8 and 10 performance table qualifications, with the most common number being 9 (48%).
- Very few pupils (1%) were entered for more than 12 performance table qualifications.
- Entry into multiple Technical Awards was relatively uncommon, with only 14% of pupils entered for more than one.
- Pupils entering at least one Technical Award most commonly took this alongside 8 GCSE entries.
- Due to rounding, summing number of entries across a window can introduce an error, here we provide some notable percentages:
 - o 3% of students take 3 or more Technical Awards.
 - o 89% of students take 8 or more performance table qualifications.
 - o 26% of students take 10 or more performance table qualifications.

Table 1: Distribution of pupil entries into performance table qualifications during

Key Stage 4, 2023 to 2024

Number of entries	GCSEs	Technical Awards	GCSEs and Technical Awards	All performance table qualifications
0	3%	56%	3%	3%
1	0%*	30%	1%	1%
2	1%	12%	1%	1%
3	1%	2%	1%	1%
4	1%	0%*	1%	1%
5	2%	0%	1%	1%
6	6%	0%	1%	1%
7	15%	0%	3%	3%
8	25%	0%	15%	15%
9	30%	0%	48%	48%
10	14%	0%	22%	22%
11	3%	0%	4%	4%
12+	0%*	0%	0%*	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Key Stage 4 results data

Note: * means there were some entries, but percentage rounded down to 0%

Table 2: Average number of GCSE entries by pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 by Technical Award entry status, 2023 to 2024

Pupils	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

Characteristics and prior attainment of 16-year-old learners studying level 3 qualifications by qualification pathway, 2022/23

This section is included to help readers of the final report understand the characteristics and prior attainment of 16-year-old learners studying in different level 3 qualification pathways. All data in this section relates to learners who were academic age 16 in the 2022/23 academic year.

When comparing the characteristics of learners on level 3 technical, vocational or mixed pathways with those on academic pathways:

- A higher proportion had an identified special educational need.
- A higher proportion were disadvantaged.
- A lower proportion achieved full level 2 (5 GCSEs at grade 4 or above and equivalents) including GCSE English and maths by the end of Key Stage 4.

Table 3: Special education needs (SEN) status by level 3 qualification pathway, 2022 to 2023

Pathway	Qualifications in pathway	No identified SEN	SEN support	Education, health and care plan	Total
Level 3 Academic	A/AS level	94%	5%	1%	100%
Level 3 Technical	T level	91%	8%	1%	100%
Level 3 Vocational or mixed	Applied General Qualification (AGQ), Tech level, mixed programmes and other level 3	90%	9%	1%	100%
Total level 3		92%	7%	1%	100%

Source: Young Person's Matched Administrative Dataset (YPMAD)

Table 4: Disadvantaged status by level 3 qualification pathway, 2022 to 2023

Pathway	Qualifications in pathway	Disadvantaged	Non-disadvantaged	Total
Level 3 Academic	A/AS level	14%	86%	100%
Level 3 Technical	T level	23%	77%	100%
Level 3 Vocational or mixed	AGQ, Tech level, mixed programmes and other level 3	24%	76%	100%
Total level 3		19%	81%	100%

Source: Young Person's Matched Administrative Dataset

Table 5: Key Stage 4 prior attainment by level 3 qualification pathway, 2022 to 2023

Pathway	Qualifications in pathway	Achieved level 2 including GCSE English and maths
Level 3 Academic	A/AS level	97%
Level 3 Technical	T level	92%
Level 3 Vocational or mixed	AGQ, Tech level, mixed programmes and other level 3	79%
Total level 3		88%

Source: Young Person's Matched Administrative Dataset and Key Stage 4 pupil records

Enrolments and starts on medium and large level 3 qualifications

This section is included to help readers of the final report understand the number of 16-year-old starts in level 3 medium and large qualifications (Table 6) and the characteristics of 16 to 19 learners enrolled onto these qualifications (Table 7). Please note that the statistics included here refers to the number of qualification starts and qualification enrolment rather than individual learners, therefore, if a learner enrolled onto multiple qualifications, the learner would be included multiple times within these statistics. For these statistics:

- Medium level 3 qualifications are defined as qualifications with guided learning hours of above 360 hours and up to and including 720 hours.
- Large level 3 qualifications are defined as qualifications with guided learning hours of above 720 hours. Figures for large qualifications include enrolment on T levels.

Table 7 shows that:

- The proportion of enrolments where the learners were with SEN at age 15 was similar between large and medium qualifications (14% of enrolments in both).
- 19% of enrolments in medium qualifications were from learners eligible for free school meals when they were age 15, compared with 18% of enrolments in large qualifications.
- A higher proportion of enrolments in medium qualifications were from learners who
 have yet to achieve level 2 in both English and Maths, compared to enrolments in
 large qualifications. There was also a higher proportion of enrolments in medium
 qualifications that were from learners that have not achieved full level 2 (5 GCSEs
 at grade 4 or above and equivalents), compared with enrolments in large
 qualifications.

Table 6: Number of 16-year-old starts in level 3 medium and large qualifications, 2023/24

Qualification starts	Large level 3 qualifications	Medium level 3 qualifications
Number of qualification starts from 16-year-olds	83,000	61,000

Source: DfE analysis of Individualised Learner Record, figures rounded to the nearest 500 Large level 3 qualifications include T levels

Table 7: Characteristics of 16 to 19 enrolments onto level 3 medium and large qualifications, 2022/23

% of 16-19 enrolment	Large level 3 qualifications	Medium level 3 qualifications
Any SEN	14%	14%
of which:		
SEN Support at age 15	12%	12%
SEN Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) at age 15	3%	3%
Eligible for free school meals at age 15	18%	19%
Have not achieved level 2 in English and Maths by end of 2021/22 academic year	21%	26%
Have not achieved full level 2 (5 GCSE at grade 4 or above and equivalents) by end of 2021/22 academic year	14%	17%

Source: Individualised Learner Record; School Census data Large level 3 qualifications include T levels

16-year-old level 2 (core aim) learners progressing to level 3 study by age 18, by sector subject area, 2022/23

This section is included to help readers of the final report understand the rate at which 16-year-old learners on level 2 core aims progress to Level 3 study by academic age 18 and how this differs according to subject of study.

Across all learners who started a level 2 core aim at academic age 16 in 2020/21, 63% were recorded as having studied a level 3 qualification as their main qualification in YPMAD by academic age 18 (2022/23), with progression varying by subject area. Table 8 presents these figures, broken down by sector subject area, and highlights variation in progression rates across different subjects. Subjects such as History, Philosophy and Theology showed particularly high progression rates, Preparation for Life and Work had significantly lower rates.

- Social Sciences, and History, Philosophy and Theology have high progression rates, with over 80% of learners continuing to level 3 study.
- Science and Mathematics, and Arts, Media and Publishing showed similar progression rates, at around 72%.
- Preparation for Life and Work was the only subject area with a progression rate below 50%, at just 30%.

Table 8: 16-year-old level 2 (core aim) learners progressing to level 3 study by age 18, by sector subject area, 2022/23

Sector subject area	Percentage (%)
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	58%
Arts, Media and Publishing	72%
Business, Administration and Law	66%
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	61%
Education and Training	53%
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	67%
Health, Public Services and Care	60%
History, Philosophy and Theology	88%
Information and Communication Technology	69%
Languages, Literature and Culture	51%
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	64%
Preparation for Life and Work	30%
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	62%
Science and Mathematics	72%
Social Sciences	81%
Total (all sector subject areas)	63%

Source: Young Person's Matched Administrative Dataset, 2022/23 Individualised Learner Record School Census data

Pupils entering subjects at Key Stage 4 by pupil characteristics and qualification type, 2024/25

This section is included to help readers of the final report understand how the uptake of subjects at Key Stage 4 differs across pupil characteristics and qualification type.

Subjects such as Modern Foreign Languages, Computer Science and Religious Studies all have low relative uptake amongst disadvantaged pupils (Table 9) and pupils with an identified SEN (Table 10).

Sex disparities in uptake are common and particularly large in Art and Design and Social Studies (includes Citizenship), which are more likely to be taken by girls, and Physical Education and Computer Science, which are more likely to be taken by boys.

Examples of disparities in subject uptake by ethnic group include:

- Asian pupils are more likely to take Computer Science, Modern Foreign Languages and Religious Studies but less likely to take Art and Design, History and Physical Education compared to White pupils.
- Black pupils are more likely to take Computer Science, Modern Foreign
 Languages and Religious Studies but are less likely to take Art and Design or Any
 Design and Technology, compared to White pupils.
- White pupils are more likely to take Art and Design and History but less likely to take Computer Science or Social Studies (includes Citizenship) compared to other ethnic groups.

Table 9: Pupils entering subjects (GCSE and Technical Award) at Key Stage 4 by disadvantaged status, 2024/25

Subject	Qualification	Disadvantaged	Not known to be disadvantaged
Any Science	GCSE	91%	97%
Any Design and Technology	GCSE	15%	20%
Any Modern Foreign Language	GCSE	34%	50%
Art and Design	GCSE	27%	27%
Computer Science	GCSE	10%	14%
English Language	GCSE	94%	98%
English Literature	GCSE	89%	97%
Geography	GCSE	37%	47%
History	GCSE	41%	47%
Mathematics	GCSE	94%	98%
Music	GCSE	3%	5%
Physical Education	GCSE	6%	13%
Religious Studies	GCSE	30%	34%
Social Studies (includes Citizenship)	GCSE	10%	10%
Art and Design	Vocational	1%	1%
Information and Communication Technology	Vocational	4%	4%
Music	Vocational	2%	2%
Physical Education	Vocational	14%	12%

Table 10: Pupils entering subjects (GCSE and Technical Award) at Key Stage 4 by SEN status, 2024/25

Subject	Qualification	Any special educational need	No identified special educational need
Any Science	GCSE	82%	99%
Any Design and Technology	GCSE	17%	19%
Any Modern Foreign Language	GCSE	20%	52%
Art and Design	GCSE	27%	27%
Computer Science	GCSE	8%	14%
English Language	GCSE	86%	99%
English Literature	GCSE	79%	98%
Geography	GCSE	31%	47%
History	GCSE	33%	48%
Mathematics	GCSE	86%	99%
Music	GCSE	4%	5%
Physical Education	GCSE	6%	12%
Religious Studies	GCSE	24%	35%
Social Studies (includes Citizenship)	GCSE	7%	11%
Art and Design	Vocational	1%	1%
Information and Communication Technology	Vocational	4%	4%
Music	Vocational	2%	2%
Physical Education	Vocational	12%	13%

Table 11: Pupils entering subjects (GCSE and Technical Award) at Key Stage 4 by sex, 2024/25

Subject	Qualification	Boys	Girls
Any Science	GCSE	95%	96%
Any Design and Technology	GCSE	21%	16%
Any Modern Foreign Language	GCSE	41%	51%
Art and Design	GCSE	18%	36%
Computer Science	GCSE	20%	6%
English Language	GCSE	96%	98%
English Literature	GCSE	93%	96%
Geography	GCSE	46%	41%
History	GCSE	43%	47%
Mathematics	GCSE	96%	98%
Music	GCSE	5%	5%
Physical Education	GCSE	14%	7%
Religious Studies	GCSE	29%	36%
Social Studies (includes Citizenship)	GCSE	6%	14%
Art and Design	Vocational	1%	1%
Information and Communication Technology	Vocational	5%	2%
Music	Vocational	2%	2%
Physical Education	Vocational	18%	7%

Table 12: Pupils entering subjects (GCSE and Technical Award) at Key Stage 4 by major ethnic group, 2024/25

Subject	Qualification	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other	Unclassified	White
Any Science	GCSE	98%	97%	96%	96%	90%	95%
Any Design and Technology	GCSE	16%	14%	18%	15%	16%	20%
Any Modern Foreign Language	GCSE	59%	51%	50%	63%	41%	42%
Art and Design	GCSE	22%	19%	25%	25%	25%	29%
Computer Science	GCSE	23%	16%	14%	17%	12%	11%
English Language	GCSE	98%	97%	97%	96%	94%	97%
English Literature	GCSE	97%	96%	95%	93%	86%	94%
Geography	GCSE	50%	43%	43%	43%	40%	43%
History	GCSE	40%	44%	44%	39%	38%	47%
Mathematics	GCSE	98%	97%	97%	97%	93%	97%
Music	GCSE	3%	4%	6%	3%	4%	5%
Physical Education	GCSE	5%	11%	12%	7%	8%	12%
Religious Studies	GCSE	50%	48%	35%	43%	29%	27%
Social Studies (includes Citizenship)	GCSE	13%	15%	12%	13%	11%	9%
Art and Design	Vocational	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Information and Communication Technology	Vocational	6%	5%	3%	5%	3%	3%
Music	Vocational	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Physical Education	Vocational	9%	14%	12%	9%	10%	13%

Note: * means there were some entries, but percentage rounded down to 0%

Key Stage 4 – Proportion of state-funded institutions with at least one entry in different subjects in GCSE or Technical Awards, 2024/25

This section is included to help readers of the final report understand the proportion of state-funded schools and colleges with exam entries in different GCSE and Technical Award subjects, as an illustration of the level of access pupils have to different subjects at Key Stage 4. Please note that whilst exam entries can be a good proxy for schools teaching the subject at Key Stage 4, it may not be the case for all subjects, for example, some pupils may take exams in their home language without necessarily been taught the subject at school. Conversely, there are also some subjects, for example, Citizenship and Religious Education, which must be provided by schools at Key Stage 4, but pupils may not take qualifications and exams in these subjects that count towards Key Stage 4 performance tables.

Table 13 shows that for state-funded schools that had at least one entry in GCSE or Technical Awards in 2024/25, 84% had at least one entry in Technical Awards. This figure was 91% if we include state-funded mainstream schools only.

Table 14 shows the proportion of state-funded schools with exam entries in different GCSEs and Technical Award subjects.

- As expected, nearly all state-funded schools have at least one entry in different core subjects, with 98% with at least one entry in English language, 93% in English literature, 99% in maths, 91% in Double Science, 87% in Biology, 82% in Chemistry, and 82% in Physics.
- For other English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects, a high proportion of state-funded schools had entries in humanities subjects (90% for History and 89% for Geography) and 75% of state-funded schools had pupils entering Computer Science. For languages, the most popular languages were French (75% of state-funded schools), Spanish (74%) and Polish (53%).
- For Arts subjects, most state-funded schools had exam entries in Art and Design (94% of schools offering either GCSEs or Technical Awards in the subject); followed by Speech and Drama (74%) and Music Studies (73%), with fewer state-funded schools offering other arts subjects including Multimedia (34%), Dance (26%), Media Studies (28%) and Music Technology (3%).
- It is worth noting that some subjects have qualifications in both GCSE and Technical Awards, for example in Business Studies, Dance, Engineering studies.

Table 14 below also shows the proportion of state-funded schools that offer these subjects in different qualification types, for example, 55% of state-funded schools had entries in GCSE Business Studies and 26% had entries in Technical Award in the subject. Looking across both GCSE and Technical Award, 69% of state-

funded school had entries in Business Studies, suggesting that some schools offered both types of qualification in the subject.

Table 13: Key Stage 4 – Proportion of state-funded schools with entries in Technical Award, 2024/25

School types	All state-funded schools	State-funded mainstream only
All state-funded schools	84%	91%

Source: Search for schools, colleges and multi-academy trusts - Compare school and college performance data in England - GOV.UK

Table 14: Key Stage 4 – Proportion of state-funded schools with at least one entry in different subjects, by qualification type, 2024/25

Subject discount group	GCSE or Technical Award	GCSE	Technical Award
Ancient History	1%	1%	-
Animal Care	3%	-	3%
Arabic	28%	28%	-
Art and Design	94%	93%	5%
Astronomy	4%	4%	-
Beauty Care / Services	4%	-	4%
Bengali	3%	3%	-
Biology	87%	87%	-
Business Studies	69%	55%	26%
Business / Finance	1%	-	1%
Chemistry (General)	82%	82%	-
Childcare Skills	21%	-	21%
Chinese	31%	31%	-
Classical Civilisation	3%	3%	1
Community Development**	18%	18%	1
Any Computing:	81%	75%	25%
of which:	-	-	-
Computer Appreciation / Introduction	25%	-	25%
Computer Science	75%	75%	1
Construction and the Built Environment	0%*	-	0%*
Construction and the Built Environment (Construction)	10%	-	10%
Design and Technology	57%	57%	-
Dance: General	26%	15%	12%
Economics	5%	5%	1
Electronic / Electrical Engineering	1%	-	1%
Electronics (Physics)	1%	1%	1
Engineering Studies	18%	2%	17%
English Language	98%	98%	1
English Literature	93%	93%	-
Food Science / Technology	4%	-	4%
Food Technology	46%	46%	-
French	75%	75%	-
Geography	89%	89%	-
Geology	0%*	0%*	-
German	32%	32%	-
Greek	9%	9%	-
Greek (Classic)	1%	1%	-
Gujarati	3%	3%	-
Health Studies	47%	-	47%

Subject discount group	GCSE or Technical Award	GCSE	Technical Award
Hebrew	1%	1%	-
History	90%	90%	-
Hospitality / Catering Studies	35%	-	35%
Italian	29%	29%	-
Japanese	6%	6%	-
Land-based Studies	0%*	-	0%*
Latin	7%	7%	-
Manufacturing Engineering	3%	-	3%
Maths (General)	99%	99%	-
Media Studies	28%	28%	-
Multimedia	34%	-	34%
Music Studies (General)	73%	57%	19%
Music Technology (Electronic)	3%	-	3%
Other Classical Languages	0%*	0%*	-
Persian	10%	10%	-
Photography	39%	39%	-
Physics (General)	82%	82%	-
Polish	53%	53%	-
Portuguese	26%	26%	-
Psychology (General)	15%	15%	-
Punjabi	7%	7%	-
Religious Studies	70%	70%	-
Retailing	1%	-	1%
Russian	32%	32%	-
Science Double Award	91%	91%	-
Sociology	20%	20%	-
Spanish	74%	74%	-
Speech and Drama	74%	57%	21%
Sports / Movement Science	10%	-	10%
Sports Studies	84%	55%	55%
Statistics	26%	26%	-
Tourism	10%	-	10%
Turkish	20%	20%	-
Urdu	14%	14%	-

^{*} Denotes where there are small number of schools with entries but rounds to 0%; ** The only subject description within the 'Community Development' subject discount group was: Social Science: Citizenship Source: Search for schools, colleges and multi-academy trusts - Compare school and college performance data in England - GOV.UK

Table 15 shows the number of different Arts subjects, namely Art and Design, Dance, Media Studies, Music Studies, Music Technology, Multimedia, and Speech and Drama. It shows that the vast majority of state-funded schools (95%) had entries in at least one Arts subject and that a large proportion (87%) had entries in more than one Arts subject.

Table 15: Key Stage 4 – Distribution of state-funded schools by number of Arts subjects with entries in GCSE or Technical Award, 2024/25

Number of Arts subjects	All state-funded school	State-funded mainstream
0	5%	1%
1	9%	4%
2	11%	11%
3	26%	29%
4	29%	33%
5	17%	19%
6	4%	4%
7	0%*	0%*
% offering more than 1 Arts subject	87%	95%

^{*} Denotes where there are small number of schools with entries but rounds to 0% Source: Compare school and college performance data in England

Table 16 shows the proportion of state-funded schools with entries in different science subjects, where 81% of state-funded schools had entries in Triple Science, defined as having at least one exam entry in each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Schools that had entries in Triple Science also generally had entries in Science Double Award, with only 2% of state-funded schools that had entries in Triple Science only.

Table 16: Key Stage 4 – Proportion of state-funded schools with entries in different Science offers, 2024/25

Entries	All state-funded schools	State-funded mainstream
Entries in Triple Science and Science: Double Award	79%	88%
Entries in Triple Science only	2%	2%
Entries in Science: Double Award and some Individual Sciences (not triple)	4%	3%
Entries in Individual Sciences (not triple) only	3%	0%*
Entries in Science: Double Award only	9%	6%
No entries in GCSE Science	4%	0%*
% with entries in Triple Science	81%	90%

^{*} Denotes where there are small number of schools with entries but rounds to 0%; Source: Compare school and college performance data in England

Table 17 shows the proportion of state-funded schools with entries in Design and Technology by school type. It shows that:

- Special schools were generally less likely to have pupils entering Design and Technology, ranging from 0% in Foundation special school to 7% in Academy – Sponsor led special schools.
- For state-funded mainstream schools, Community school (78%), Voluntary controlled school (74%), Foundation school (65%) and Academy Converter mainstream (72%) were more likely than Academy Sponsored led mainstream (48%), Free school mainstream (43%), Free school UTC (40%) and Free school Studio school (21%) to have pupils entering GCSE Design and Technology.

Table 17: Key Stage 4 – Proportion of state-funded schools with entries in GCSE Design and Technology, by institution type, 2024/25

School types	Number of institutions	Number with at least one entry in GCSE Design and Technology	% with at least one entry in GCSE Design and Technology
Academy - Converter Mainstream	1,648	1,181	72%
Academy - Converter Special School	103	5	5%
Academy - Sponsor Led Mainstream	803	382	48%
Academy - Sponsor Led Special School	57	4	7%
Community School	244	191	78%
Community Special School	144	7	5%
Foundation School	133	86	65%
Foundation Special School	31	0	0%
Free School - Mainstream	197	85	43%
Free School - Special	57	1	2%
Free School - Studio School	19	4	21%
Free School - UTC	43	17	40%
Further Education Sector Institution	14	0	0%
Voluntary Aided School	172	119	69%
Voluntary Controlled School	19	14	74%
All state-funded mainstream schools	3,292	2,079	63%
All state-funded schools	3,684	2,096	57%

Source: Compare school and college performance data in England

Key Stage 4 – Proportion of state-funded schools, excluding special schools, with at least one entry in different subjects in GCSE or Technical Awards, by disadvantage quintiles, 2024/25

This section is included to help readers of the final report understand how the proportion of state-funded mainstream schools with exam entries in different GCSE and Technical Award subjects differs by disadvantage quintiles, as an illustration of how the level of disadvantage in a school may affect pupil access to different subjects at Key Stage 4. For this analysis, only state-funded mainstream schools are included, so the schools included are different from the previous section, as special schools are not included in the tables below.

Table 18 shows that:

• For core subjects:

- There is no difference in the proportion of schools with entries in English Language, English Literature and Maths between schools in the least and most disadvantaged quintiles, with all schools in each quintile having pupils entering exams in these subjects.
- For sciences, schools in the least disadvantaged quintiles are more likely to have entries in individual sciences than schools in the most disadvantaged quintile, with 97% of the least disadvantaged schools having pupils entering Biology, 96% in Chemistry and Physics, compared with 87% in Biology, 80% in Chemistry and 81% in Physics. The least disadvantaged schools are less likely to have entries in Science Double Award than schools in disadvantaged quintile 2 to 5.
- For other English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects:
 - A high proportion of state-funded schools across all quintiles had entries in humanities subjects (History and Geography), with 98%-99% of mainstream schools with pupils entered into exams in these subjects across all quintiles.
 - For Computer Science, whilst a large proportion of mainstream schools in quintiles 1 (94%) and 2 (90%) (the least disadvantaged quintiles) had entries in the subject, this then falls for schools in more disadvantaged quintiles, with 67% of mainstream schools in the most disadvantaged quintiles with entries in the subject.
 - For languages, there are differences for different language subjects. Looking at the three languages with highest proportion of schools with pupils entering exams in, namely French, Spanish and Polish – for French, there is a clear trend that less disadvantaged schools are more likely to have entries in the subject than more disadvantaged schools; for Spanish, schools in the quintile 1 and 2 are more likely to have entries in the subject; and for Polish, schools in

the least disadvantaged quintile are less likely to have pupils entering exams in the subject compared to other quintiles.

- For Arts subjects (more details in Table 19):
 - Almost all schools (ranging between 98%-99%) across all five quintiles had pupils entering Art and Design, with the vast majority of schools having pupils entering GCSE Art and Design, and fewer schools with entries in Technical Awards.
 - For Music, and Speech and Drama, less disadvantaged schools were more likely to have pupils entering Music in either GCSE or Technical Award.
 - For Dance, the most disadvantaged schools (quintile 5) were less likely than other schools to have pupils entering Dance in either GCSE or Technical Awards.
 - For Media Studies, the most disadvantaged schools (18%) are less likely to have entries in the subject, compared with 26%-42% of schools in quintiles 1 to 4. The opposite was observed for Multimedia, where the least disadvantaged schools (30%) were less likely to have pupils entering exams in the subject, compared with 36%-42% in quintiles 2 to 5.
 - For Music, Speech and Drama, and Dance, more disadvantaged schools are more likely to have pupils entering Technical Award qualifications and less likely to have pupils entering GCSE in these subjects, compared to less disadvantaged schools.

Table 18: Key Stage 4 – Proportion of state-funded institutions, excluding special schools, with entries in different subjects (in GCSE or Technical Award), by disadvantage quintiles, 2024/25

Subject discount group	Quintile 1 (least disadvantaged)	2	3	4	Quintile 5 (most disadvantaged)
Ancient History	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%*
Animal Care	1%	4%	4%	3%	3%
Arabic	20%	20%	30%	33%	53%
Art and Design	99%	99%	99%	98%	98%
Astronomy	7%	7%	3%	3%	1%
Beauty Care / Services	2%	3%	5%	6%	4%
Bengali	1%	2%	2%	4%	9%
Biology	97%	97%	95%	92%	87%
Business Studies	77%	80%	75%	77%	76%
Business / Finance	0%*	1%	2%	2%	2%
Chemistry (General)	96%	96%	93%	88%	80%
Childcare Skills	17%	26%	25%	24%	24%
Chinese	48%	36%	33%	29%	30%
Classical Civilisation	6%	5%	3%	2%	2%
Community Development**	13%	16%	17%	21%	29%
Any Computing	96%	93%	92%	85%	82%
of which:					
Computer Appreciation / Introduction	19%	27%	28%	32%	35%
Computer Science	94%	90%	86%	77%	67%
Construction and the Built Environment	0%*	0%*	1%	0%	0%*
Construction and the Built Environment (Construction)	5%	11%	14%	15%	10%
Design and Technology	83%	77%	64%	53%	40%
Dance: General	31%	34%	33%	29%	20%
Economics	12%	6%	4%	3%	4%
Electronic / Electrical Engineering	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%*
Electronics (Physics)	2%	1%	1%	0%*	0%*
Engineering Studies	15%	21%	22%	25%	22%
English Language	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
English Literature	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Food Science/Technology	2%	2%	4%	6%	7%
Food Technology	71%	66%	48%	40%	31%
French	93%	91%	83%	79%	76%
Geography	99%	99%	98%	99%	98%
Geology	1%	1%	0%*	0%*	0%
German	59%	43%	35%	25%	19%

Subject discount group	Quintile 1 (least disadvantaged)	2	3	4	Quintile 5 (most disadvantaged)
Greek	13%	11%	9%	7%	9%
Greek (Classic)	2%	1%	1%	1%	0%*
Gujarati	4%	3%	2%	4%	3%
Health Studies	32%	49%	58%	62%	62%
Hebrew	4%	1%	0%*	1%	1%
History	99%	99%	98%	98%	98%
Hospitality/Catering Studies	19%	34%	43%	45%	50%
Italian	26%	22%	28%	35%	49%
Japanese	14%	7%	7%	4%	3%
Land-based Studies	0%*	0%*	1%	0%*	0%
Latin	19%	9%	5%	4%	3%
Manufacturing Engineering	3%	4%	6%	3%	2%
Maths (General)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Media Studies	35%	42%	33%	26%	18%
Multimedia	30%	38%	42%	40%	36%
Music Studies (General)	93%	88%	83%	74%	68%
Music Technology (Electronic)	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%
Other Classical Languages	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Persian	5%	7%	10%	15%	21%
Photography	32%	43%	49%	45%	43%
Physics (General)	96%	96%	93%	88%	81%
Polish	54%	57%	64%	63%	58%
Portuguese	19%	19%	29%	35%	45%
Psychology (General)	17%	17%	17%	15%	15%
Punjabi	6%	5%	5%	9%	12%
Religious Studies	87%	78%	78%	72%	76%
Retailing	0%*	1%	2%	2%	2%
Russian	39%	37%	37%	36%	33%
Science Double Award	93%	99%	99%	99%	100%
Sociology	17%	23%	26%	22%	26%
Spanish	86%	85%	81%	77%	82%
Speech and Drama	88%	89%	85%	77%	72%
Sports / Movement Science	6%	12%	12%	15%	10%
Sports Studies	95%	95%	92%	88%	88%
Statistics	22%	29%	30%	28%	30%
Tourism	6%	11%	13%	10%	14%
Turkish	18%	18%	21%	26%	30%
Urdu	5%	6%	15%	21%	32%

^{*} Denotes where there are small number of schools with entries but rounds to 0%; ** The only subject description within the 'Community Development' subject discount group was: Social Science: Citizenship Source: Compare school and college performance data in England

Table 19: Key Stage 4 – Proportion of state-funded institutions, excluding special schools, with entries in Arts subjects, by disadvantage quintiles and qualification type, 2024/25

Subject	Qualification type	Quintile 1 (least disadvantaged)	2	3	4	Quintile 5 (most disadvantaged)
Art and Design	GCSE	99%	99%	98%	96%	97%
Art and Design	Technical Award	2%	5%	6%	8%	6%
Art and Design	GCSE or Technical Award	99%	99%	99%	98%	98%
Dance	GCSE	27%	22%	18%	12%	6%
Dance	Technical Award	5%	12%	16%	17%	15%
Dance	GCSE or Technical Award	31%	34%	33%	29%	20%
Media Studies	GCSE	35%	42%	33%	26%	18%
Multimedia	Technical Award	30%	38%	42%	40%	36%
Any Music*	GCSE	90%	78%	63%	50%	39%
Any Music*	Technical Award	10%	19%	27%	30%	34%
Any Music*	GCSE or Technical Award	93%	89%	84%	76%	70%
Speech and Drama	GCSE	83%	78%	65%	50%	42%
Speech and Drama	Technical Award	9%	17%	26%	31%	33%
Speech and Drama	GCSE or Technical Award	88%	89%	85%	77%	72%

^{*} Any Music includes Music Studies (General) and Music Technology (Electronic)

Source: Compare school and college performance data in England

Pupil entries into GCSE Design and Technology: Food Technology, and Food Preparation and Nutrition during Key Stage 4, 2009/10-2024/25

This section is included to aid readers of the report to understand the proportion of students at Key Stage 4, who entered GCSE Design and Technology: Food Technology, and Food Preparation and Nutrition, and how this proportion has changed over time. From 2009/10 to 2017/18, GCSE Design and Technology had several different optional strands: Electronic Products, Food Technology, Graphic Products, Industrial Technology, Product Design, Resistant Materials Technology, Systems and Control, and Textiles Technology. One GCSE Design and Technology in all material areas was introduced in 2017/18, with the exception of Food Preparation and Nutrition, which became a standalone GCSE in 2016/17.

- The proportion of students entering GCSE Design and Technology: Food Technology decreased from 10% in 2009/10 to 5% in 2016/17.
- The proportion of students entering GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition has remained at 8% since 2017/18.

Table 20: GCSE Design and Technology: Food Technology, and Food Preparation and Nutrition entries, as proportion of all pupils at the end of KS4, 2009/10 to 2024/25

Academic year	Design and Technology: Food Technology	Food Preparation and Nutrition
2009/10	10%	-
2010/11	9%	-
2011/12	8%	-
2012/13	7%	-
2013/14	7%	-
2014/15	6%	-
2015/16	6%	-
2016/17	5%	-
2017/18	-	8%
2018/19	-	8%
2019/20	-	8%
2020/21	-	8%
2021/22	-	8%
2022/23	-	8%
2023/24	-	8%
2024/25	-	8%

Source: Key Stage 4 performance data (2010-2025)

Methodology

Pupil entries into performance table qualifications during Key Stage 4, 2023/24

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 2023/24 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 <u>GSIZEALL</u> 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 <u>Key Stage 4 subject pupil level</u> data publications, where entries in GCSE Combined Science is counted as entries into one qualification.

Information on <u>qualifications approved for inclusion in Key Stage 4 school and college</u> <u>performance tables</u> is published by the Department for Education (DfE).

Characteristics and prior attainment of 16-year-old learners studying level 3 qualifications by qualification pathway, 2022/23

Data on the characteristics and prior attainment of 16-year-old learners studying level 3 qualifications is based on an analysis of Young Person's Matched Administrative Dataset (YPMAD) records and pupil records collected during Key Stage 4.

YPMAD is an administrative data source derived by linking together several existing data sources, including school census records, awarding organisation data and the Individualised Learner Record (ILR). YPMAD records information on each learner's main qualification studied in each academic year, matched to individual personal characteristics – including SEN status and disadvantaged status¹ – as recorded in the school census at age 15.

Data on prior attainment such as Attainment 8 scores, Progress 8 scores, and indicators for achieving level 2 (including GCSE English and maths), are taken from Key Stage 4 pupil records.

To be included in the analysis, pupils needed to meet the following criteria:

- Are academic age 16 in 2022/23.
- Have attended a state-funded secondary school at the end of Key Stage 4.
- Have been eligible to be included in national results data at the end of Key Stage 4.

Learners have been categorised into learning pathways using a combination of their main qualification type, and indicators for the study of applied general qualifications and Tech level qualifications, as recorded in YPMAD at academic age 16. In YPMAD, a learner's main qualification type is assigned based on the first matching category from a predetermined order of priority, with higher level education or training considered first.

Learners studying for advanced apprenticeships are not included.

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¹ Pupils are defined as disadvantaged if they are known to have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the past six years (for pupils academic age 15 this would be from year 6 to year 11), if they are recorded as having been looked after for at least one day or if they are recorded as having been adopted from care.

Enrolments and starts on medium and large level 3 qualifications

Data on the enrolments on medium and large level 3 qualifications is based on an analysis of Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and school census (SC).

The Individualised Learner Record is an administrative dataset completed by education providers on students aged 16 and over at further education providers.

The school census is pupil level data containing information on the participation and personal characteristics of pupils in state schools, collected by the DfE.

For 16-year-old qualification starts (Table 6), the statistics include only those in the Individualised Learner Record which includes only learners at further education providers and only learners age 16 at the start of the 2023/24 academic year.

For the statistics on learner characteristics of 16 to 19 enrolments (Table 7), learners included in the analysis meet the following conditions:

- They were academic age 16, 17 or 18 in the academic year 2022/23.
- They were enrolled onto a medium or large level 3 qualification in 2022/23.
- Their records were within the Individualised Learner Record and in the school census, and could be matched based on a valid Unique Learner Number.

16-year-old level 2 (core aim) learners progressing to level 3 study by age 18, by sector subject area, 2022/23

Data on the progression rates of 16-year-old level 2 (core aim) learners to level 3 study by academic age 18 is based on an analysis of Individualised Learner Record (ILR), school census (SC) and Young Person's Matched Administrative Dataset (YPMAD) records.

The Individualised Learner Record is an administrative dataset completed by education providers on students aged 16 and over at further education providers.

The school census is pupil level data containing information on the participation and personal characteristics of pupils in state schools, collected by the DfE.

YPMAD is an administrative data source derived by linking together several existing data sources, including school census records, awarding organisation data and the Individualised Learner Record. YPMAD records information on each learner's main qualification studied in each academic year, matched to individual personal characteristics

Learners included in this analysis meet the following conditions:

- Are recorded in the final end-of-year return of either the ILR or SC with a level 2 core aim with a start date between 1st August and 31st July of the academic year of interest (2020/21).
- Are aged 18 in 2022/23 and were recorded as starting their Level 2 core aim at academic age 16.
- Were enrolled on the level 2 core aim for at least the threshold number of days to be eligible for funding (42 days).
- Were funded as a 16-19 student, or a 19-24 student with an education, health and care plan (EHCP).
- Had a valid Unique Learner Number (ULN).

Learners are recorded as having progressed to level 3 study by academic age 18 if YPMAD records indicate that the learner's main qualification type was a level 3 qualification type, or where the learner studied an Applied General or Tech level qualification, in either the academic year they were academic age 17, or academic age 18.

Pupils entering subjects at Key Stage 4 by pupil characteristics and qualification type, 2024/25

All figures derived in this analysis use data published on Explore Education Statistics under Key Stage 4 performance. The main source of data for this publication is Key Stage 4 qualification entries and results data collected from awarding organisations which is linked with data on pupil characteristics taken from the school census and information on pupils' prior attainment.

To calculate the percentage of pupils in each characteristic group (e.g. disadvantaged pupils) who entered a given subject, the numerator is taken from <u>subject pupil level</u> <u>characteristic data</u>, representing the number of pupils in that group who entered at least one qualification in the subject. The denominator is taken from <u>national characteristics</u> <u>data</u> and represents the total number of pupils in that group.

Figures included in this section cover all pupils in state-funded secondary schools at the end of Key Stage 4.

Key Stage 4 – Proportion of state-funded institutions with at least one entry in different subjects in GCSE or Technical Awards, 2024/25

This analysis uses data from <u>Compare schools and college performance in England</u>. We used 'Key Stage 4 qualification and subject data (final)' within the statistical publication to derive the proportion of state-funded institutions with entries in different subjects (as defined by 'subject discount group' in the publication) and qualifications (as defined by 'qualification description' within the publication) included in the Key Stage 4 performance tables.

For this analysis, we included all state-funded schools and colleges with at least one entry in GCSE or Technical Awards, the main qualifications taken at Key Stage 4, included in performance table in any subject. The school types (as defined by 'Institution type' within the publication) included in this analysis were: Academy – Converter (mainstream and special), Academy – Sponsor led (mainstream and special), Community school, Community special school, Foundation school, Foundation special school, Free School (mainstream, special, studio school and University Technical Colleges (UTC)), Further education sector institution, Voluntary aided school and voluntary controlled school.

Only entries in GCSE or Technical Awards were included in this analysis, therefore, whilst there were schools with entries in AS level, other level 3 qualifications or graded music exams, entries in these qualifications were not included in this analysis. For example, if a school only had entries in AS Music but no entries in Music in GCSEs or

Technical Awards, the school would not be considered as having entries in Music within this analysis.

It is worth noting that some subject discount groups have multiple 'subject descriptions' and qualifications within them, for example, the 'Art and Design' subject discount group includes the following subject descriptions: Art and Design, Art and Design (3D Studies), Art and Design (Fine Art), Art and Design (Graphics), Art and Design (Textiles), and Graphic Design. For this analysis, we use subject discount group as our main subject variable, which we consider as an accurate reflection of the type of subjects that institutions have exam entries in. Therefore, institutions with exam entries in multiple 'subject description' within the same 'subject discount code' would only be considered as having exam entries in one subject rather than multiple subjects. This mainly applies to Table 15, which counts the number of Arts subjects institutions have exam entries in.

Within this section, Table 16 sets out the proportion of institutions with exam entries in Triple Science and/or Science: Double Award. An institution is considered to have Triple Science entries if it has exam entries in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Please note that as this is an institution-level analysis rather than pupil-level analysis, in some cases, this analysis shows whether an institution has entries in all three of Biology, Chemistry and Physics, rather than whether there is a pupil who entered all three.

Key Stage 4 – Proportion of state-funded institutions, excluding special schools, with at least one entry in different subjects in GCSE or Technical Awards, by disadvantage quintiles, 2024/25

Similar to the 'Key Stage 4 – Proportion of all state-funded institutions with at least one entry in different subjects in GCSE or Technical Awards, 2024/25' section above, this analysis uses data from Compare schools and college performance in England, again using data from 'Key Stage 4 qualification and subject data (final)' within the publication to derive the proportion of state-funded institutions with entries in different subjects included in the Key Stage 4 performance tables. In addition, we used data from 'Key Stage 4 results (final)' to group institutions into five equal groups based on the proportion of disadvantaged pupils (disadvantage quintiles).

To calculate the disadvantage quintiles, we first divided the total number of disadvantaged pupils (the 'TFSM6CLA1A' variable within the Key Stage 4 results (final)' data) by the number of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 ('TPUP'), which calculated the proportion of disadvantaged pupils in each institution. We then grouped institutions included in the analysis into broadly five equal sized groups² based on the proportion of pupils at end of Key Stage 4 in each institution.

For this analysis, in addition to excluding independent schools (similar to the methodology in the section above), we also excluded state-funded special schools, namely Academy - Converter special school, Academy - Sponsor led special school, Community Special school, Foundation special school and Free school - Special, as we have found that special schools have substantially lower number of exam entries per pupil in GCSEs and Technical Awards compared to other state-funded school and are also disproportionately more likely to be in the bottom (most disadvantaged) quintile. Given the aim of this section was to highlight how the level of disadvantage in an institution may affect take-up of different subjects at Key Stage 4, the inclusion of special schools would risk creating biases in the results due to factors not solely related to the level of disadvantage.

² There may be small differences in size of quintiles groups as some schools will have exactly the same proportion of disadvantaged pupils

Pupil entries into GCSE Design and Technology: Food Technology, and Food Preparation and Nutrition during Key Stage 4, 2009/10-2024/25

This analysis uses data available from the DfE'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.

Curriculum and Assessment Review

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