

Examination results in Wales, 2014/15

This Statistical Release gives results of external examinations taken by pupils aged 15 or 17 at the beginning of the academic year, in schools in Wales in 2014/15. It updates the provisional figures published on 24 September in SDR 151/2015, with the changes shown in the notes at the end of this release.

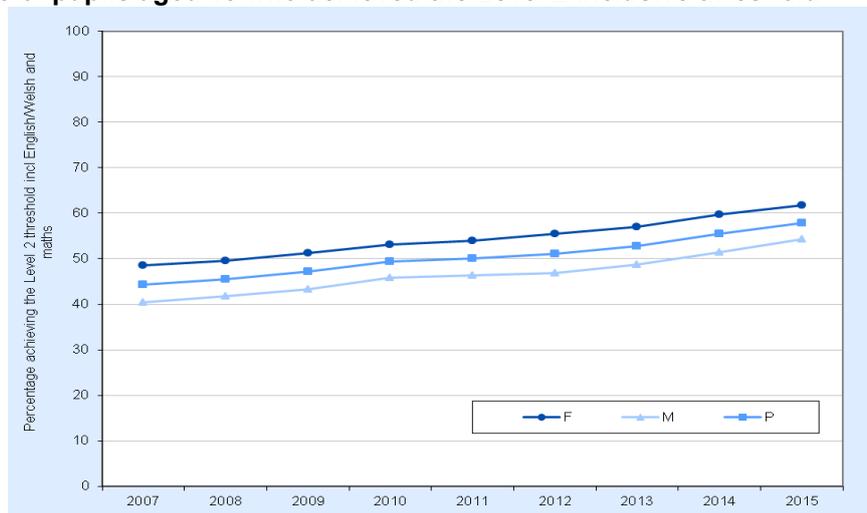
Key results for 2014/15:

Examination results for 15 year olds continue to rise. Level 2 performance including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and Mathematics (the L2 inclusive measure) has increased each year since records began in 2006/07.

15 year olds

- 57.9 per cent achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and mathematics, higher (by 2.5 percentage points) than in 2013/14 (Table 1 and Chart 1). Performance is now 13.6 percentage points higher than when records began in 2006/07.
- The average capped wider points score was 343.5, 2.7 points higher than in 2013/14 (Table 1);
- 64.4 per cent of pupils achieved A*-C in maths, 2.7 percentage points higher than in 2013/14. 69.7 per cent of pupils achieved A*-C in either English or Welsh first language, 2.5 percentage points higher than in 2013/14 (Table 2).
- 31.6 per cent of pupils eligible for FSM achieved the L2 inclusive threshold, 3.9 percentage points higher than 2013/14 (Table 8)
- 64.1 per cent of those not eligible for FSM achieved the L2 inclusive threshold, a gap of 32.4 percentage points compared to pupils eligible for FSM. The gap has narrowed slightly since 2013/14, when it was 33.8 percentage points.

Chart 1: Percentage of pupils aged 15 who achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold



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Table 1: Headline indicators for pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year (a) (b)

	Number of pupils aged 15	Percentage of pupils aged 15 who...				achieved the Core Subject Indicator (d)	Average wider points score per pupil	Average capped (e) wider points score per pupil
		achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the A*-C in English or Welsh first language and mathematics (c)	achieved the Level 2 threshold			
2001/02	37,116	84.8	50.5	..	36.9	
2002/03	37,993	85.1	51.1	..	37.5	
2003/04	39,212	85.3	51.4	..	37.7	324.7	..	
2004/05	38,495	85.2	52.2	..	38.4	327.7	..	
2005/06	38,859	86.0	53.8	..	39.7	335.4	..	
2006/07	39,576	86.0	55.0	44.4	40.0	343.9	..	
2007/08	39,027	86.8	58.0	45.6	44.4	356.0	..	
2008/09	37,607	88.2	60.7	47.2	46.0	378.9	..	
2009/10	37,072	89.7	63.8	49.4	48.0	394.3	305.1	
2010/11	36,088	90.3	67.3	50.1	48.7	422.9	311.6	
2011/12	35,404	91.8	72.6	51.1	48.9	465.0	323.5	
2012/13	36,617	93.2	77.8	52.7	49.2	501.2	333.1	
2013/14	35,168	94.0	82.3	55.4	52.6	524.5	340.8	
2014/15	34,004	94.4	84.1	57.9	54.8	530.7	343.5	
2014/15								
Males	17,405	93.2	80.9	54.3	51.7	506.9	332.3	
Females	16,599	95.7	87.5	61.8	58.0	555.6	355.2	

(a) Up to 2005/06, includes GCSEs, GCSE Short Course, GNVQs and NVQs. From 2006/07, includes all qualifications approved for pre-16 use in Wales.

(b) Ages at the start of the academic year. Includes results for 15 year old pupils, in maintained schools and independent schools, achieved during the academic year and any examinations taken at earlier age.

(c) Please see section 3 of the notes for more details

(d) Core Subject Indicator: achieved GCSE grade A*-C in each of English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science.

(e) Average capped wider point scores are calculated using the best 8 results.

Table 2: Performance by individual subject for pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year (a) (b)

	Number of pupils aged 15	Percentage of pupils aged 15 who...				Of those who entered Welsh First Language:	
		achieved A*-C in English/Welsh (c)	achieved A*-C in English (d)	achieved A*-C in Maths	achieved A*-C in Science (e)	entered Welsh First Language	achieved A*-C in Welsh (f)
2010/11	36,088	63.7	62.8	56.5	65.9	5,242	74.6
2011/12	35,404	63.5	62.2	58.4	70.6	5,207	73.8
2012/13	36,617	64.0	62.9	60.3	74.8	5,591	73.5
2013/14	35,168	67.2	66.2	61.7	82.3	5,548	73.7
2014/15	34,004	69.7	68.6	64.4	84.0	5,452	75.2

(a) Includes all core qualifications approved for pre-16 use in Wales.

(b) Ages at the start of the academic year. Includes results for 15 year old pupils, in maintained schools and independent schools, achieved during the academic year and any examinations taken at earlier age.

(c) For each pupil the best grade of English language, English literature, Welsh first language and Welsh literature is taken.

(d) For each pupil the best grade of English language and English literature is taken.

(e) Includes single and double award core science.

(f) For each pupil the best grade of Welsh language and Welsh literature is taken. The

Table 3: Headline indicators for pupils aged 17 at the start of the academic year (a) (b)

	Number of pupils aged 17 entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Number of pupils aged 17	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17
2001/02	9,486	94.4	11,201	..
2002/03	9,848	93.9	11,568	..
2003/04	10,041	94.9	11,822	..
2004/05	10,373	94.4	12,072	..
2005/06	10,731	93.9	12,507	..
2006/07	10,592	93.9	12,418	618.5
2007/08	10,943	94.2	12,653	630.9
2008/09 (r)	11,544	95.9	13,241	687.7
2009/10 (r)	11,662	94.8	13,586	747.9
2010/11 (r)	11,489	96.5	13,615	798.9
2011/12	11,538	96.9	13,632	772.9
2012/13	11,706	96.5	13,365	806.6
2013/14	11,447	97.1	13,102	804.1
2014/15	11,838	97.0	13,473	799.7
2014/15				
Males	5,308	95.9	6,267	746.5
Females	6,530	97.8	7,206	845.9

(a) Up to 2005/06, includes A levels, AS levels and Advanced Vocational Certificates of Education (AVCE).

From 2006/07, includes all qualifications approved for use in Wales.

(b) Includes independent schools, but excludes further education institutions.

(r) Figures for 2009 to 2011 have been revised after an error was found in the number of pupils aged 17 entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels. This has had a minor effect on the L3 threshold figures for these years.

Further detail on the revisions is provided in the notes section of the release.

- 97.0 per cent of those entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels achieved the Level 3 threshold, compared to 97.1 per cent in 2013/14;
- The average wider points score was 799.7, 4.4 points lower than in 2013/14.

Table 4: Pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year, 2014/15, by LA (a) (b)

	Percentage of pupils aged 15 who...						
	Number of pupils aged 15	achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and mathematics (c)	achieved the Core Subject Indicator (d)	Average wider points score per pupil	Average capped (e) wider points score per pupil
Isle of Anglesey	682	96.3	83.1	56.9	54.4	571.7	351.1
Gwynedd	1,310	97.9	88.9	63.3	62.4	617.2	362.0
Conwy	1,148	95.6	83.6	54.2	50.8	502.1	339.4
Denbighshire	1,243	94.9	86.0	56.1	51.9	543.7	345.4
Flintshire	1,678	94.5	83.2	60.6	58.7	541.9	342.1
Wrexham	1,302	92.8	71.9	52.1	48.7	509.2	326.0
Powys	1,455	97.1	88.7	63.9	60.2	541.0	356.2
Ceredigion	740	96.8	89.9	62.7	61.4	521.5	358.9
Pembrokeshire	1,286	95.4	83.0	54.2	51.9	544.8	343.2
Carmarthenshire	1,972	95.8	87.0	61.1	58.2	580.3	353.9
Swansea	2,384	96.7	88.9	64.0	60.6	578.9	358.4
Neath Port Talbot	1,542	96.0	92.0	58.4	54.3	586.4	358.7
Bridgend	1,617	95.2	83.7	59.7	58.6	527.6	343.5
The Vale of Glamorgan	1,560	95.8	89.4	64.9	63.9	585.0	357.9
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	2,738	95.7	87.1	54.6	53.3	546.7	345.6
Merthyr Tydfil	616	96.8	85.4	51.9	48.9	560.2	343.8
Caerphilly	1,977	96.7	80.1	52.6	50.6	500.7	340.7
Blaenau Gwent	673	91.8	74.3	47.7	40.6	449.4	317.7
Torfaen	1,223	96.0	83.1	56.7	54.5	482.0	338.6
Monmouthshire	809	97.0	91.2	66.9	63.3	516.4	355.9
Newport	1,634	94.3	83.7	54.2	49.6	514.4	338.9
Cardiff	3,324	92.1	81.6	59.3	56.5	497.2	336.9
Wales (f)	34,004	94.4	84.1	57.9	54.8	530.7	343.5

(a) Includes all qualifications approved for pre-16 use in Wales.

(b) Ages at the start of the academic year. Includes results for 15 year old pupils, in maintained schools, achieved during the academic year and any examinations taken at earlier age.

(c) Please see section 3 of the notes for more details

(d) Core Subject Indicator: achieved the Level 2 threshold in each of English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science.

(e) Average capped wider point scores are calculated using the best 8 results.

(f) Includes independent schools and pupils from a non-English or Welsh background education.



- In 2014/15, Monmouthshire had the highest percentage of 15 year olds achieving the Level 2 inclusive threshold (91.2 per cent), while Blaenau Gwent had the lowest percentage (47.7 per cent).
- Gwynedd had the highest average capped points score (362.0), while Blaenau Gwent had the lowest (317.7)

Table 5: Pupils aged 17 at the start of the academic year, 2014/15, by LA (a) (b)

	Number of pupils aged 17 entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Number of pupils aged 17	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17
Isle of Anglesey	287	96.5	306	843.6
Gwynedd	364	98.4	376	893.9
Conwy	552	95.8	601	846.1
Denbighshire	408	97.1	479	687.2
Flintshire	627	97.1	704	755.4
Wrexham	115	96.5	161	687.0
Powys	574	97.6	621	862.7
Ceredigion	404	98.8	438	914.3
Pembrokeshire	535	95.9	591	870.0
Carmarthenshire	679	98.1	735	862.7
Swansea	555	96.8	661	692.7
Neath Port Talbot	157	94.3	189	779.0
Bridgend	759	97.6	848	776.5
The Vale of Glamorgan	708	98.4	815	891.7
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	1,180	97.0	1,398	730.2
Merthyr Tydfil (c)	0	.	10	50.5
Caerphilly	560	97.7	613	777.1
Blaenau Gwent (c)	0	.	11	11.7
Torfaen	415	96.6	491	752.3
Monmouthshire	373	97.9	400	740.0
Newport	750	92.3	843	825.1
Cardiff	1,166	96.9	1,345	866.0
Wales (d)	11,838	97.0	13,473	799.7

(a) Includes all qualifications approved for use in Wales.

(b) Ages at the start of the academic year. Includes results for 17 year old pupils, in maintained schools, achieved during the academic year and any examinations taken at earlier age.

(c) There are no longer any sixth forms in Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil.

(d) Includes independent schools, but excludes further education institutions.



- In 2014/15 Ceredigion had the highest percentage of 17 year olds who entered a volume equivalent to 2 A levels achieving the Level 3 threshold (98.8 per cent), while Newport had the lowest percentage (92.3 per cent);

Table 6: GCSE entries and results (pupils aged 15) by subject group, 2014/15 (a) (b) (c)

Subject Group	Number of entries	Percentage of entries achieved at grade:										No graded result
		A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A*-C	A*-G	
Sciences												
Biological Sciences	5,555	16	27	28	21	6	1	-	-	92	100	-
Chemistry	5,442	19	26	27	22	6	1	-	-	93	100	-
Physics	5,483	19	24	28	22	6	1	-	-	92	100	-
Single Science	5,155	1	3	9	38	28	10	5	3	51	97	3
Additional Science	11,865	3	11	23	35	17	6	3	1	72	99	1
Other Science	614	9	22	27	22	8	6	3	1	81	99	1
Design and Technology	7,516	3	12	21	26	19	10	5	2	63	99	1
ICT	5,716	4	21	28	21	11	7	4	2	75	99	1
Home Economics	2,698	1	9	20	26	21	12	7	3	56	99	1
Mathematics	32,968	7	10	14	35	12	8	7	5	66	98	2
Social Sciences												
Business Studies	2,039	3	14	23	24	18	10	5	2	64	98	2
Economics	129	12	19	29	19	15	2	0	2	79	98	2
Geography	9,674	7	16	20	25	17	8	4	2	68	99	1
History	11,340	10	19	22	18	13	8	6	3	69	99	1
Humanities	83	0	10	23	19	16	8	11	8	52	95	5
Social Studies	1,701	3	14	25	24	14	10	5	3	66	97	3
Vocational Studies	2,049	1	11	23	26	21	10	5	2	61	99	1
Arts												
Art and Design	8,589	9	15	23	30	14	5	2	1	78	99	1
Classical Studies	157	21	22	15	14	12	5	6	4	71	99	1
Communication Studies	2,033	3	13	25	25	16	8	5	3	65	98	2
Drama	2,844	6	18	26	27	13	6	3	1	77	99	1
English Language	31,152	3	11	20	31	19	9	4	1	66	99	1
English Literature	23,539	4	15	28	32	13	5	2	1	79	100	-
French	4,665	13	21	21	22	15	6	2	1	76	100	-
German	976	15	21	21	22	15	4	1	1	79	100	-
Spanish	1,706	16	16	19	22	15	7	3	1	73	100	-
Other Modern Foreign Language	169	33	28	16	15	2	4	1	1	92	100	0
Music	2,725	11	23	28	19	11	5	1	1	82	99	1
Physical Education	6,239	8	19	25	25	15	6	2	-	77	100	-
Religious Studies	11,167	11	19	24	20	9	7	4	3	75	98	2
Welsh Language	5,449	4	11	23	37	17	7	2	-	74	100	-
Welsh Literature	3,601	8	14	21	32	14	8	3	-	75	100	-
Welsh Second language	10,590	11	19	23	27	10	5	3	1	80	100	-
Vocational Subjects (c)												
Additional Applied Science	800	-	3	10	36	28	13	6	3	49	99	1
Applied Art & Design	40	5	18	33	40	5	0	0	0	95	100	0
Applied Business	1,293	6	18	24	20	14	8	5	3	68	98	2
Applied Engineering	436	-	5	14	27	25	15	6	3	47	96	4
Health & Social Care	1,197	2	10	24	28	21	9	4	2	64	99	1
Hospitality & Catering	291	2	7	21	25	26	15	4	0	54	99	1
Leisure & Tourism	313	8	19	24	24	12	9	4	1	74	100	-
Performing Arts	245	10	26	27	24	9	3	-	0	87	100	-
All subjects	230,243	7	15	22	28	14	7	4	2	72	99	1

(a) Note that this year, the definition of this table has changed. This table now includes entries taken in previous years, and discounted exams are excluded. This is so that the table is consistent with the rest of the release, and the key performance indicators.

(b) Figures should be treated with caution - it is possible for pupils to have entered more than one GCSE within a small number of subject groups. Double awards are counted as two entries.

(c) GCSE Vocational awards were awarded for the first time in 2003/04.

- 66 per cent of entries in GCSE Mathematics achieved grade A*-C. For English Language the percentage was also 66 per cent and for Welsh (First Language) it was 74 per cent;

Table 7: A level entries and results (pupils aged 17) by subject group, 2014/15 (a) (b) (c)

Subject Group	Number of entries	Percentage of entries achieved at grade:								No graded result
		A*	A	B	C	D	E	A*-C	A*-E	
Sciences										
Biological Sciences	1,820	8	16	24	22	15	13	71	99	1
Chemistry	1,486	9	27	25	18	13	8	79	100	-
Physics	1,024	7	21	26	20	18	7	74	99	1
Other Science	183	5	18	21	27	20	7	71	98	2
Design and Technology	640	2	10	21	32	24	10	65	99	1
ICT	816	1	6	15	26	28	19	48	96	4
Home Economics	12	0	0	25	17	17	42	42	100	0
Mathematics	2,649	21	26	22	15	10	5	84	99	1
Social Sciences										
Business Studies	496	3	9	25	27	25	10	64	98	2
Economics	308	9	21	25	23	13	7	79	99	1
Geography	1,407	6	15	29	27	16	6	78	99	1
History	2,526	4	19	38	29	9	2	89	100	-
Social Studies	2,130	5	12	23	27	20	12	66	98	2
Vocational Studies	7	14	14	14	14	14	29	57	100	0
Arts										
Art and Design	1,461	11	15	26	27	15	5	79	100	-
Classical Studies	65	5	14	18	32	18	12	69	100	0
Communication Studies	708	2	10	29	36	19	4	76	100	-
Drama	564	3	14	31	32	14	5	81	100	0
English Language	772	4	11	31	32	18	4	78	100	0
English Literature	1,802	7	13	29	29	18	4	78	100	-
French	345	5	21	31	25	12	6	82	100	-
German	101	3	17	32	19	27	3	70	100	0
Spanish	149	4	22	31	24	13	5	81	99	1
Other Modern Foreign Language	79	15	41	22	14	4	3	91	97	3
Music	357	3	16	30	29	16	6	78	100	-
Physical Education	544	4	8	19	28	24	14	60	98	2
Religious Studies	1,441	4	19	31	27	14	5	81	100	-
Welsh Language	280	3	18	26	33	18	2	80	100	0
Welsh Second language	269	3	12	26	32	21	6	73	100	0
Vocational Subjects (c)										
Applied Art & Design	17	47	53	0	0	0	0	100	100	0
Applied Business	457	3	14	23	33	19	7	73	100	-
Applied Engineering	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Applied ICT	309	-	4	20	36	25	12	61	98	2
Applied Science	232	1	6	25	40	22	5	71	99	1
Health & Social Care	668	1	8	29	33	19	9	71	99	1
Leisure & Recreation	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Performing Arts	39	5	8	28	23	23	13	64	100	0
Travel & Tourism	84	1	8	18	37	29	7	64	100	0
All subjects	26,259	7	16	27	26	16	7	76	99	1

- (a) Note that this year, the definition of this table has changed. This table now includes entries taken in previous years, and discounted exams are excluded. This is so that the table is consistent with the rest of the release, and the key performance indicators.
- (b) Figures should be treated with caution - it is possible for pupils to have entered more than one A-level within a small number of subject groups. Double awards are counted as two entries.
- (c) A-level Vocational awards were awarded for the first time in 2003/04.

- The most popular subject for 17 year olds at A level in 2014/15 was Mathematics, with 2,649 entries.

Table 8: Key Stage 4 indicators by free school meal entitlement (a) (b)

Pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year

FSM Eligibility	Year	Cohort	Percentage of pupils achieving:				
			Level 1 threshold	Level 2 threshold	Level 2 including English/ Welsh and Mathematics	Core Subject Indicator	Average capped wider points score
Eligible for FSM	2006/07	4,944	73.8	26.7	18.0	16.0	..
	2007/08	4,831	72.1	28.0	18.7	18.9	..
	2008/09	4,966	75.8	32.5	20.1	19.5	..
	2009/10	5,148	78.3	35.3	20.7	19.8	237.5
	2010/11	5,366	79.8	40.9	22.0	21.1	247.8
	2011/12	5,186	83.3	50.9	23.4	21.9	268.5
	2012/13	5,705	85.8	57.8	25.8	23.2	281.8
	2013/14	5,338	87.7	65.3	27.8	26.6	295.2
	2014/15	5,154	89.4	69.4	31.6	29.3	303.7
Not eligible for FSM	2006/07	31,854	92.0	60.4	47.7	44.8	..
	2007/08	31,908	91.6	61.9	48.7	49.2	..
	2008/09	30,729	92.9	66.4	52.1	50.8	..
	2009/10	30,106	93.9	69.6	54.6	53.2	321.9
	2010/11	28,979	94.7	73.5	55.7	54.2	329.6
	2011/12	28,584	95.5	78.0	56.6	54.7	339.4
	2012/13	29,449	96.4	83.0	58.5	55.3	347.7
	2013/14	28,370	97.3	87.4	61.6	59.0	356.0
	2014/15	27,426	97.6	88.9	64.1	61.2	358.1

(a) Up to 2005/06, includes GCSEs, GCSE Short Course, GNVQs and NVQs. From 2006/07, includes all qualifications approved for pre-16 use in Wales

(b) The sum of pupils eligible and not eligible for free school meals does not equal the total number of pupils aged 15 shown in table 1. This is because the data in this table only includes pupils who we are able to match between the Welsh Examinations Database and the School Census. Independent schools and PRUs do not complete the school census and results for pupils in these schools are not included.

Accessing the data electronically

The data behind the chart and tables in this release can be found on StatsWales (a free-to-use internet service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download tables). Please select “Education and Skills” and then “Schools and Teachers” at the navigation screen of the following site:

<https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue>



School level data for 2014/15 and earlier will be published on My Local School later in December 2015:

<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/>

School level data is also available on request.

Notes

1 Context

1.1 Related Publications

Data for England and Northern Ireland can be found at the links below. Note that the data produced by these administrations are based on pupils at the end of Key Stage 4, whereas we publish on the basis of pupils aged 15. Following the changes to qualifications levels, equivalencies, discounting and rules around re-entry in England in 2014, data for England are no longer on a comparable basis – see also section 5.5. Comparisons cannot be made with Scotland because their examination system and qualifications are different.

Developments are underway in Wales in moving towards producing indicators based on pupils at the end of Key Stage 4.

For further information or advice on the constraints of international comparisons please e-mail school.stats@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

For reference, examination results for the other UK countries can be found by following the links below:

England

[Provisional GCSE and Equivalent Results in England 2014/15](#)

[Provisional A-Level and other Level 3 Results in England 2014/15](#)

Northern Ireland

[Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2013/14](#)

Scotland

[Summary statistics for attainment, leaver destinations and healthy living, No.5: 2015 Edition](#)

The Department for Education summarise the data from each UK country in the annual volume [Education and Training Statistics for the United Kingdom](#)

For more information on comparability, see section 5.5.

We also publish information on teacher assessments in core and non core subjects at foundation phase and key stages 2 and 3, which can be found here:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/?topic=Education+and+skills&lang=en>

The figures differ from those published by Awarding Organisations in August. The Awarding Organisations' figures related to the outcome of the individual subject areas for all candidates in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, regardless of their age. The figures published in this Statistical First Release focus on the overall performance of candidates aged 15 and 17 taking these examinations in Wales only. These figures are here:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results>

2 Data Source

The statistics are collated from a number of awarding organisations over the summer. The following awarding organisations provided data for this release: ABC Awards, Agored, AQA, ASDAN, Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), British Computer Society (BCS), British Safety Council (BSC), CACHE, City and Guilds, CCEA, Cambridge International Examinations (CIE), Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), C Skills, EMTA Awards Ltd (EAL), Edexcel, EDI, IFS School of Finance, ILM, IMI Awards Ltd (IMIAL), NCFE, National Open College Network (NOCN), OCR, Rock School Ltd (RSL), The Prince's Trust (PT), VTCT, WJEC.

3 Definitions

3.1 Coverage

The statistics in this release cover all maintained and independent schools in Wales. Only results for pupils aged 15 and 17 received from the awarding organisations listed above are included. Examinations taken at an earlier age are also included. Any examinations achieved before the age of 15 will be held back and included in the school year in which the pupil turns 15.

The information in this release relates to all schools for Wales figures and to maintained secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units for LA figures.

Only qualifications taken up to the 31 August 2015 are included. In some cases, awards taken in the academic year 2014/15 were awarded late due to administration delays of awarding organisations. As this was not the fault of the school, these have been included. The figures now include any exam re-grades, resits and missing qualifications where evidence was provided from schools within the allotted time period or was provided automatically by the awarding organisations.

Up to 2005/06, the statistics include GCSEs, GCSE short course, GNVQs and NVQs only. From 2006/07, the statistics include all qualifications approved for pre-16 or 16-18 use in Wales. The introduction of the wider definition has meant the inclusion of a larger range of qualifications and thus an increase in the headline indicators of performance. An explanation of the different types of qualifications can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean>

3.2 Threshold indicators and points

Indicators showing threshold equivalencies were published (as provisional indicators) for the first time in 2007 and are now the headline indicators of performance in secondary schools. Thresholds represent a volume, or 'size', of qualifications at a specific level on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Three thresholds have been established: Level 1 - a volume of qualifications at Level 1 equivalent to the volume of 5 GCSEs at grade A*-G; Level 2 - a volume of qualifications at Level 2 equivalent to the volume of 5 GCSEs at grade A*-C; Level 3 - a volume of qualifications at Level 3 equivalent to the volume of 2 A levels at grade A*-E.

The average capped wider points score is calculated using the best 8 results for each pupil. Further information on how the capped points score is produced can be found in the technical document at the link below:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/examination-results/?lang=en#/statistics-and-research/examination-results/?lang=en>

The average wider points score includes all approved qualifications.

English Literature and Welsh literature can count towards the L2 threshold including A*-C in English/Welsh First language and maths.

3.3 Discounting

An examination is discounted when a pupil achieves a higher grade or higher level qualification in the **same subject group**. If a qualification is discounted then **it does not** count towards the key indicators published in this release, or in any other official statistics published by the Welsh Government. We discount similar qualifications within the following subject groups:

Group 1: Entry level qualifications, GCSE short course, full GCSE, vocational double award GCSEs

Group 2: AS level, vocational double AS level, A levels, vocational double A level, AS Vocational Certificate of Education, Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education, Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education double award

Group 3: free standing maths qualifications

Group 4: key skills

Group 5: the Award in Digital Applications (AiDA), the Certificate in Digital Applications (CiDA), the Extended Certificate in Digital Applications (CiDA+) and the Diploma in Digital Applications (DiDA).

Group 6: NVQs

Group 7: BTECs and other qualifications

Group 8: the Welsh Baccalaureate

3.4 Performance of pupils eligible for FSM

For the first time we have included a new table in the release (Table 8), which shows the key indicators for 15 year olds at Key Stage 4 by FSM eligibility. Improved data matching processes have enabled us to publish this data earlier. In previous years this data has been published in January or March as part of the following release:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/academic-achievement-free-school-meals/?lang=en>

The Rewriting the Future Report, issued in June 2014, uses the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals achieving various measures at the end of Key Stage 4 as one of the key performance indicators. These data can be found in table 8 of this bulletin.

The Tackling Poverty Action Plan, issued in July 2013, uses the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals who achieve the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh and mathematics at Key Stage 4 as a key performance indicators to measure progress against the objectives of this plan. This data can be found in Table 8.

4 Rounding and symbols

In tables where figures have been rounded to the nearest final digit, there may be an apparent discrepancy between the sum of the constituent items and the total shown.

The following symbols have been used throughout the publication:

(p) provisional

- percentages less than 0.5 but higher than zero

. not applicable

.. not available

~ not yet available

* figure is less than 5, or is based on a figure less than 5.

5 Key Quality Information

This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability. It also covers specific issues relating to quality of the 2014/15 data, and describes the quality management tool applied to this area of work.

5.1 Relevance

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor educational trends and as a baseline for further analysis of the underlying data. Some of the key users are:

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales;
- The Department for Education and Skills in the Welsh Government;
- Estyn;
- Other government departments;
- The research community;
- Regional education consortia, Local Authorities and schools;
- Students, academics and universities;
- Individual citizens, private companies and the media.

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- Monitoring education strategies such as *Rewriting the Future* and wider policy strategies such as the *Tackling Poverty action plan*;
- General background and research;
- Inclusions in reports and briefings;
- Advice to Ministers;
- The all-Wales education core data packs;
- LA and school comparisons and benchmarks;
- To inform the education policy decision-making process in Wales including school reorganisation;
- School Categorisation for Wales;
- To inform ESTYN during school inspections;
- The education domain of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation;
- Publication of school-level data on My Local School;
- To assist in research in educational attainment.

5.2 Accuracy

Schools and local authorities have now had an opportunity to assess the provisional results for accuracy, and have supplied amended information where applicable. In keeping with previous years, the change between provisional and final data for most indicators is less than 1 percentage point. The following revisions have been made to the provisional Wales level data published on September 24th:

Pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year

	Percentage of pupils aged 15 who...						Average capped wider points score per pupil
	Number of pupils aged 15	achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	achieved the Core Subject Indicator	Average wider points score per pupil	
2014/15	34,004	94.4	84.1	57.9	54.8	530.7	343.5
Difference from provisional data	-1 (people)	0.1 (% points)	0.7 (% points)	0.4 (% points)	0.5 (% points)	5.9 (points)	1.2 (points)

Pupils aged 17 at the start of the academic year

	Number of pupils aged 17 entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Number of pupils aged 17	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17
	2014/15	11,838	97.0	13,473
Difference from provisional data	21 (people)	0.1 (% points)	-142 (people)	12.5 (points)

The revisions are mainly due to two factors:

- schools have informed us of additional qualifications gained by their students from awarding organisations we have not approached;
- we refresh the data from the awarding organisations approached, to include any remarks or late awards.

Revisions to Table 3

Data for the years 2009 to 2011 in Table 3 have been revised after an error was found in the number of pupils aged 17 entering a volume equivalent to 2 A-levels. This has had a minor effect on the L3 threshold figures for these years, and the table below shows the effect of these revisions.

Level 3 Indicators for pupils aged 17 at the start of the academic year

	Number of pupils aged 17 entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold
2008/09 (r)	11,544	95.9
2008/09 (previous data)	11,367	96.0
Difference	177	-0.1
2009/10 (r)	11,662	94.8
2009/10 (previous data)	11,653	94.9
Difference	9	-0.1
2010/11 (r)	11,489	96.5
2010/11 (previous data)	11,512	96.3
Difference	-23	0.2

5.3 Timeliness and Punctuality

The data relate to all qualifications achieved between 1 September 2014 and 31 August 2015. In some cases, awards taken in the academic year 2014/15 were awarded late due to administration delays of awarding organisations. As this was not the fault of the school, these have been included. The figures now include any exam re-grades, resits and missing qualifications where evidence was provided from schools within the allotted time period or was provided automatically by the awarding organisations.

5.4 Accessibility and Clarity

This Statistical First Release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics section of the Welsh Government website. It is accompanied by more detailed tables on [StatsWales](#), a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data.

School-level data is available through the My Local School website. The final data will be added to My Local School in December 2015.

5.5 Comparability

See also section 1.1.

Following the Wolf Review of Vocational Education in England, GCSE reform in England and other changes introduced by the Department for Education in England, data on Key Stage 4 attainment in England and Wales are no longer on a comparable basis. The main differences are:

- Data for England limits the size of vocational qualifications to a maximum of 1 GCSE. Currently in Wales there is no limit on the size of vocational qualifications, with many of the popular ones being equivalent in size to 4 GCSEs. From 2016, data for Wales will limit the size of vocational qualifications to a maximum of 2 GCSEs, following the recommendation in the Review of Qualifications.
- Data for England only allow the first entry in any examination to count regardless of grade. The best grade is taken in Wales.
- England have changed the way they discount qualifications so that similar general and vocational qualifications cannot both count in their statistics. This restriction does not currently apply in Wales.

Information about GCSE reform in England can be found here:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/qualifications/gcses/a00221366/gcse-reform>

and the Wolf Review of Vocational Education can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-vocational-education-the-wolf-report>

and there is also information in the this statistical release:

[Provisional GCSE and Equivalent Results in England 2014/15](#)

In Wales, the review of qualifications will be in effect from the academic year 2015/16. This means that the way we will calculate our performance measures will change. This will also have an impact on comparability over time and will further limit our ability to compare educational attainment in Wales with the rest of the UK. Information about the review of qualifications in Wales can be found here:

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/qualificationsinwales/revofqualen/implementing-the-review-of-qualifications/?lang=en>

