



Examination results in Wales, 2015/16 (Provisional)

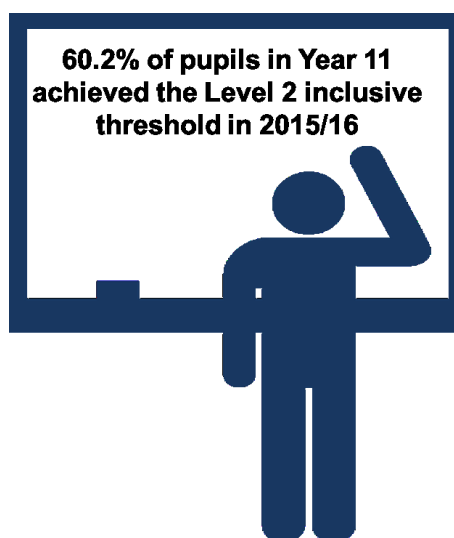
6 October 2016
SFR 136/2016

Changes to the production of these statistics

Four key changes have been implemented to the Key Stage 4 (KS4) performance measures data in this 2015/16 release. These have previously been outlined in a [Statistical Article](#).

1. Reporting school performance is now based on the pupils who were in Year 11 rather than for pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year. The Year 11 cohort is based on the number of pupils who were registered as being on roll in Year 11 in the school on 12 January 2016, the day of the school census. This is a recommended change arising from the Review of Qualifications for 14-19 year olds in Wales. More information can be found in the [Notes](#) section.
2. A limit to the contribution value of non-GCSE qualifications to performance measures has also been introduced this year. This means that any single level 1 or level 2 qualification will have a maximum equivalence value, in performance terms, of 2 GCSEs, applying to all measures.
3. In previous years, data was based on mainstream schools, special schools, independent schools and PRU's (Pupil Referral Units) and did not include those pupils who were educated other than at school (EOTAS) who did not attend a PRU. This year, following a consultation, this additional EOTAS data will be included in our results.
4. Results for independent schools will no longer be included in the Wales figures. Feedback was sought on this change earlier in the year. More information can be found in the [Notes](#) section.

Examination results continue to rise. The Level 2 inclusive measure has increased each year since records began in 2006/07



About this release

This Statistical Release provides the earliest results of external examinations taken by pupils in Year 11 ("Key Stage 4") or pupils aged 17 at the start of the academic year in schools in Wales in 2015/16, as well as final information for previous years.

Schools are currently checking this latest information and therefore the figures are subject to change.

Note that this release contains one of the 46 National Indicators - 'Percentage of pupils who have achieved the "Level 2 threshold" including English or Welsh first language and Mathematics, including the gap between those who are eligible or are not eligible for free school meals' (Indicator 7).

In this release

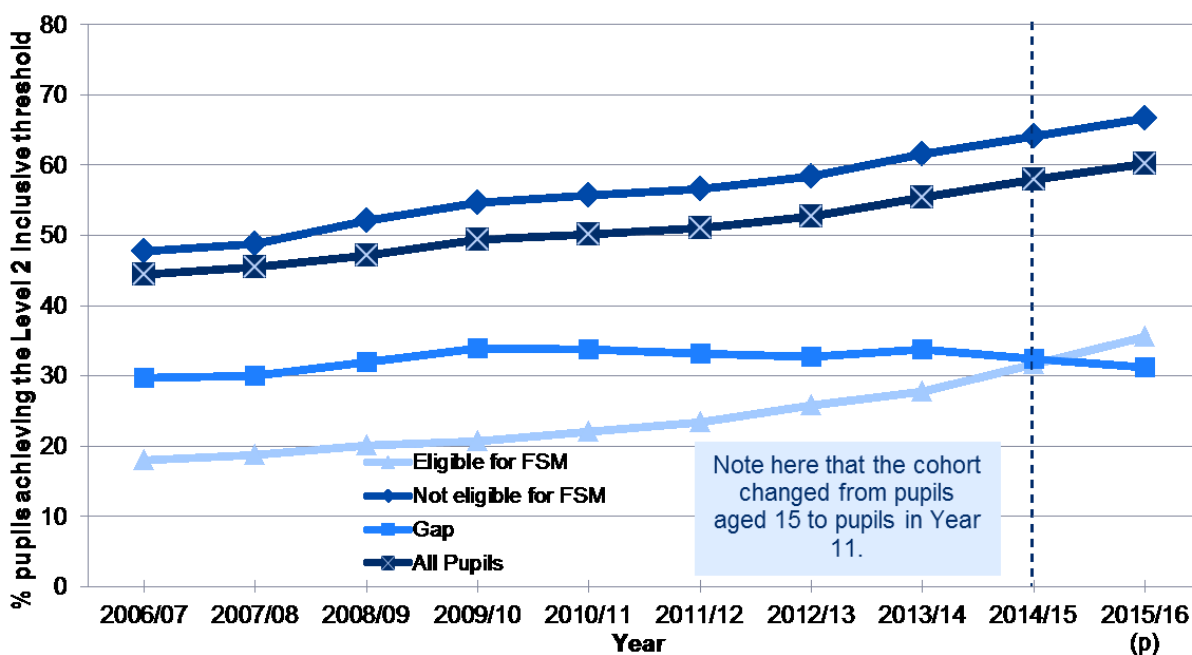
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Key results for 2015/16:

Pupils in Year 11

- 60.2 per cent of pupils in Year 11 achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold (Level 2 including a grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and Mathematics).
- The average capped wider points score was 345.7.
- 35.5 per cent of pupils eligible for FSM achieved the L2 inclusive threshold. As stated elsewhere there are year on year comparability issues. But comparing using the figures that are most like for like suggest that this gap has reduced from the previous year.
- 66.9 per cent of pupils achieved A*-C in maths. 70.3 per cent of pupils achieved A*-C in either English or Welsh first language.

Chart 1 - Percentage of pupils in Year 11/aged 15 achieving the Level 2 inclusive, by FSM status (a) (b)



(a) From 2015/16, cohort based on pupils in Year 11. Up to 2014/15, cohort based on pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year.

(b) L2 inclusive threshold: 5 A*-C GCSEs or equivalents including English or Welsh First Language and Mathematics.

Pupils aged 17

- 98.0 per cent of those entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels achieved the Level 3 threshold, compared to 97.0 per cent in 2014/15;
- The average wider points score was 824.9, 25.2 points higher than in 2014/15.

Pupils in Year 11

Table 1 presents the latest headline indicators for pupils in Year 11 at the start of this academic year 2015/16. For previous years, this data relates to pupils aged 15. These measures include the Level 1 threshold, a volume of qualifications at Level 1 equivalent to the volume of 5 GCSE's at grade A*-G, the Level 2 threshold, a volume of qualifications at Level 2 equivalent to the volume of 5 GCSE's at grade A*-C and the Level 2 inclusive threshold, achieving Level 2 including a grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and Mathematics.

A number of changes have been made to the methodology as outlined on page 1 and in our Statistical Article which impacts on the comparability of data for 2015/16 with earlier years.

Table 1: Headline indicators for pupils in Year 11/ aged 15 at the start of the academic year (a) (b) (c)

Percentage of pupils who...							
	Number of Pupils	achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	achieved the Core Subject Indicator (d)	Average wider points score	Average capped (e) wider points score
Pupils aged 15							
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
Pupils aged 15 version - most like for like methodology as 14/15 (f)							
2015/16 (p)	32,848	94.6	83.4	59.8	57.1	540.6	343.5
Pupils in Year 11							
2015/16 (p)	32,249	95.3	83.7	60.2	57.5	544.1	345.7
Males	16,615	93.9	80.2	56.0	53.6	517.6	334.4
Females	15,634	96.7	87.4	64.7	61.7	572.2	357.7

- (a) From 2015/16, cohort based on pupils in Year 11. Up to 2014/15, cohort based on pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year.
- (b) Up to 2014/15, includes results for maintained schools (including special schools and PRUs) and independent schools, achieved during the academic year and any examinations taken at earlier age. From 2015/16, the table also includes pupils receiving education other than at school that are not in PRUs.
- (c) 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.
- (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.
- (f) Calculated to be as close as possible to the definition used in previous years. Includes results for independent schools, excludes results for pupils in EOTAS. It is not possible to take into account the impact of the change to the maximum equivalence of non-GCSEs.

In 2015/16, 60.2 per cent of pupils in Year 11 achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold.

As noted above, changes in methodology have impacted on comparability. We have attempted to quantify as much as possible of these changes within the

quality information. Broadly the changes around Year 11 would be expected to **increase** the overall figures, whilst the changes around equivalence, EOTAS and independent schools would be expected to have a **downward** impact on the figures. Since we are unable to measure the impact of the change in qualification equivalence (along with any impact this policy change has had on the entry patterns amongst schools and pupils), it is not possible to entirely measure the various influences of these changes as opposed to real change.

Overall the Level 2 inclusive threshold and other indicators are higher than in previous years.

Table 1 includes data for 2015/16 calculated based on pupils aged 15 and includes pupils in independent schools but excludes those in EOTAS, **This is the figure that is closest in terms of a like for like comparison**, which only fails to take into account the impact of the change in qualifications equivalence and any associated behavioural change.

On this basis, performance at Key Stage 4 is higher than in any previous year. The L2 inclusive is 59.8 per cent, 1.8 percentage points higher than the previous year

Under the new measures performance continues to be higher for females than for males, with an 8.7 percentage point gap in their respective Level 2 inclusive scores.

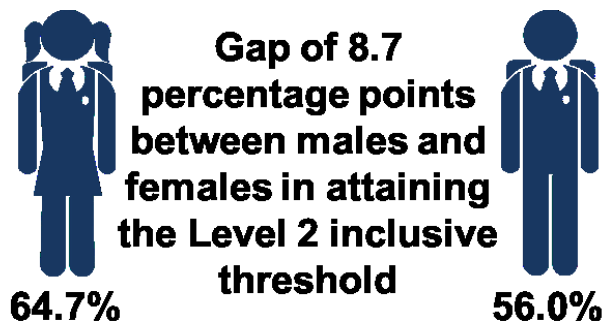


Table 2 presents the performance by individual subject for pupils in Year 11 in core subjects, namely English/Welsh, English, Maths, Science and Welsh First Language. Apart from in Science, where non-GCSEs were increasingly popular, these figures are more consistent on a year by year basis since issues around the equivalence of non-GCSE qualifications do not have an impact.

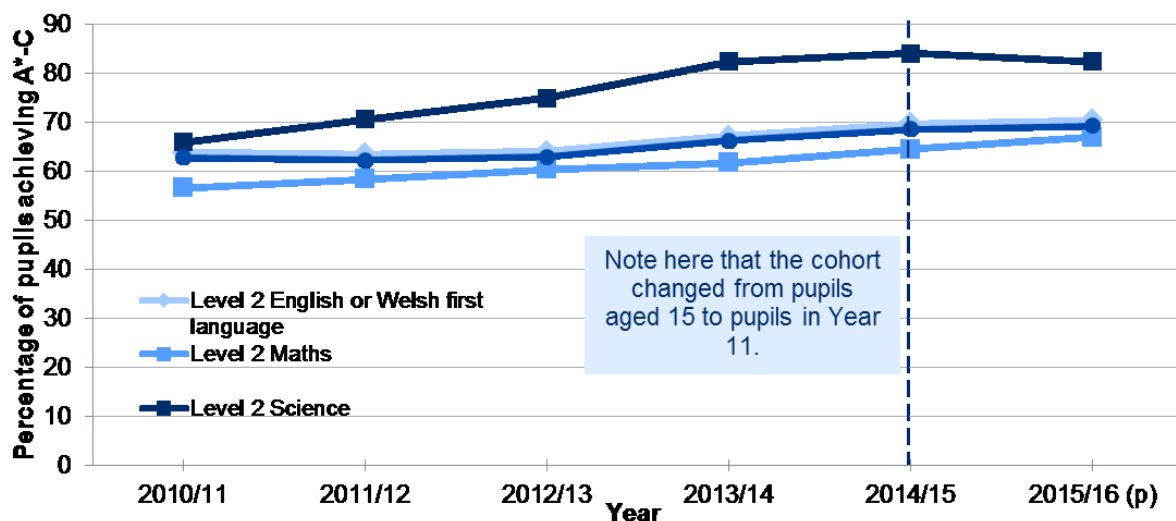
Table 2: Performance by individual subject for pupils in Year 11/ aged 15 at the start of the academic year (a) (b) (c)

	Number of pupils	Percentage of pupils who...				entered Welsh First Language	Of those who entered Welsh First Language:
		achieved A*-C in English/Welsh (d)	achieved A*-C in English (e)	achieved A*-C in Maths	achieved A*-C in Science (f)		achieved A*-C in Welsh (g)
Pupils aged 15							
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
Pupils aged 15 version - most like for like methodology as 14/15 (h)							
2015/16 (p)	32,848	69.7	68.7	67.2	81.7	5,251	75.5
Pupils in Year 11							
2015/16 (p)	32,249	70.3	69.3	66.9	82.3	5,285	75.1

- (a) From 2015/16, cohort based on pupils in Year 11. Up to 2014/15, cohort based on pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year.
- (b) Includes all core qualifications approved for pre-16 use in Wales.
- (c) Up to 2014/15, includes results for maintained schools (including special schools and PRUs) and independent schools, achieved during the academic year and any examinations taken at earlier age. From 2015/16, the table also includes pupils receiving education other than at school that are not in PRUs.
- (d) For each pupil the best grade of English language, English literature, Welsh first language and Welsh literature is taken.
- (e) For each pupil the best grade of English language and English literature is taken.
- (f) Includes single and double award core science.
- (g) For each pupil the best grade of Welsh language and Welsh literature is taken. The denominator for this indicator is the number of 15 year olds who entered Welsh First Language, rather than the total number of 15 year olds.
- (h) Calculated to be as close as possible to the definition used in previous years. Includes results for independent schools, excludes results for pupils in EOTAS. It is not possible to take into account the impact of the change to the maximum equivalence of non-GCSEs.

All attainment figures have increased since last academic year in English and Maths but have fallen slightly in Welsh first language. The figures have also increased year on year when comparing like for like between the aged 15 cohort in 14/15 and 15/16, this increase is also seen in Welsh first language. Data on Science is not comparable as described in the text above the table.

Chart 2 - Percentage of pupils in Year 11/ aged 15 achieving A*-C by individual subjects



(a) From 2015/16, cohort based on pupils in Year 11. Up to 2014/15, cohort based on pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year.

Table 3 presents the headline indicators for Year 11 pupils by free school meals entitlement (FSM). Pupils are eligible for [free school meals](#) if their families are in receipt of certain benefits/support payments.

Table 3: Key Stage 4 indicators by free school meal entitlement (a) (b) (c)

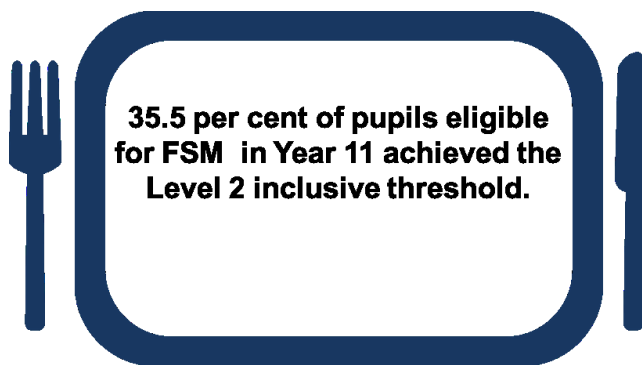
Please note that in this table, unlike table 1, EOTAS pupils have not been included at present.

Results for these pupils will be included in this table in the final release in December.

Pupils in Year 11/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
	<i>Age 15 version (d)</i>	2015/16 (p)	4,867	91.2	70.4	35.1	32.4
<i>Pupils in Year 11</i>	2015/16 (p)	4,835	92.1	71.1	35.5	32.7	312.1
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
	<i>Age 15 version (d)</i>	2015/16 (p)	26,513	97.7	88.3	66.5	63.8
<i>Pupils in Year 11</i>	2015/16 (p)	26,478	98.2	88.7	66.7	64.0	359.9

- (a) From 2015/16, cohort based on pupils in Year 11. Up to 2014/15, cohort based on pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year.
- (b) 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
- (c) The sum of pupils eligible and not eligible for free school meals does not equal the total number of pupils in Year 11/ 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, PRUs and EOTAS do not complete the school census and results for pupils in these schools are not included.
- (d) Calculated to be as close as possible to the definition used in previous years. Includes results for independent schools. It is not possible to take into account the impact of the change to the maximum equivalence of non-GCSEs.



35.5 per cent of pupils eligible for FSM achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold. The gap between these pupils and those not eligible for FSM is now 31.2 percentage points.

Pupils aged 17

Table 4 presents the latest headline indicators for pupils aged 17 at the start of the academic year. These measures include the percentage of pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold, which consists of a volume of qualifications at Level 3 equivalent to the volume of 2 A levels at grade A*-E. It also contains the average wider points score for pupils aged 17. More information can be found in the Notes. None of the data in this section is affected by the changes as a result of the Review of Qualifications and valid comparisons can be made over time.

Table 4: 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	11,544	95.9	13,241	687.7
2009/10	11,662	94.8	13,586	747.9
2010/11	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
2015/16 (p)	10,817	98.0	12,066	824.9
2015/16 (p)				
Males	4,820	97.2	5,532	770.4
Females	5,997	98.6	6,534	871.1

(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.



In 2015/16, 98.0 per cent of 17 year old pupils that entered a volume equivalent to 2 A levels achieved the Level 3 threshold, an increase of 1.0 per cent from the previous year.

The average wider points score for pupils aged 17 this year is 824.9. This includes all qualifications approved for 16-18 year olds in Wales. The average wider points score is higher for females than for males, with a difference of 100.7 points between them.

Notes

1. Context

1.1 Related Publications

Data for England, Northern Ireland and Scotland can be found in 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 in Year 11. 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.

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

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

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

Northern Ireland

[Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2014/15](#)

Scotland

[Summary statistics for attainment, leaver destinations and healthy living, No.6: 2016 Edition](#)

We also publish information on [teacher assessments in core and non core subjects at foundation phase and key stages 2 and 3](#).

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 in Year 11/ aged 15 and those aged 17 taking these examinations in Wales only.

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 Cymru, 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), IFS School of Finance, ILM, IMI Awards Ltd (IMIAL), NCFE, National Open College Network (NOCN), OCR, Pearson (Edexcel/EDI), Prince's Trust, Rock School Ltd (RSL), Sports Leaders UK, VTCT, WJEC.

3. Definitions

3.1 Coverage

The statistics in this release cover all maintained and independent schools in Wales. Only results for pupils who are in Year 11 and pupils aged 17 received from the awarding organisations listed above are included. Examinations taken at an earlier age are also included. Any examinations achieved before the pupil is in Year 11 will be held back and included in the school year in which the pupil enters Year 11. Note that the information in this release relates to all schools for Wales figures.

Only qualifications awarded up to the 31 August are included. New awards after that date, as well as any re-sits or re-marks after that date, are not included.

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 the [GOV.UK website](#).

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](#).

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 statistics 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

Since 2014/15, this release has included a table (Table 4) which shows the key indicators for pupils at Key Stage 4 by FSM eligibility. In previous years this data has been published in January or March as part of the following [release](#):

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 4 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 4.

3.5 Changes in this release

Change in cohort from pupils aged 15 to pupils in Year 11:

For the 2015/16 results, we have moved to reporting school performance on a Year 11 cohort basis rather than for pupils aged 15 at the start of the year. The Year 11 cohort will be based on the number of pupils who were registered as being on roll in Year 11 in the school on 12 January 2016, the day of the school census.

This is a recommended change arising from the [Review of Qualifications for 14-19 year olds in Wales](#).

The table below shows the effect of changing from reporting school performance for pupils aged 15 to a Year 11 cohort basis for Level 2 inclusive rates.

Percentage of pupils in Year 11/aged 15 who achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold, 2014/15 onwards

Year	Percentage of pupils who achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold (pupils aged 15)	Percentage of pupils who achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold (pupils in Year 11)	Difference (percentage points)
2014/15	57.9	58.1	0.2
2015/16	59.8	60.2	0.4

In 2015/16, there is a gap of 0.4 percentage points between Level 2 inclusive threshold rates when comparing pupils aged 15 to pupils in Year 11.

Inclusion of EOTAS Pupils:

In previous years, data was based on mainstream schools, special schools, independent schools and PRU's (Pupil Referral Units). We did not include those pupils who were educated other than at school (EOTAS) who did not attend a PRU. As a result of a consultation, this additional EOTAS data has been included in the matching process and is therefore included in our results. The table below shows the effect of changing headline indicators to include these additional EOTAS pupils.

Percentage of pupils in year 11 who achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold, 2014/15 onwards

Year	Percentage of pupils who achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold (excluding additional EOTAS pupils)	Percentage of pupils who achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold (including additional EOTAS pupils)	Difference (percentage points)
2014/15	58.1	57.5	-0.6
2015/16	60.2	59.5	-0.6

The effect of both of these changes can be seen in the table below.

Percentage of pupils in Year 11 / age 15 who achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold, 2014/15 onwards

Year	Percentage of pupils who achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold (pupils aged 15, excluding additional EOTAS pupils)	Percentage of pupils who achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold (pupils in year 11, including additional EOTAS pupils)	Difference (percentage points)
2014/15	57.9	57.5	-0.4
2015/16	59.8	59.5	-0.2

Non-GCSE qualifications

In 2015/16, a limit to the contribution value of non-GCSE qualifications to performance measures has been introduced. This means that any single level 1 or level 2 qualification will have a maximum equivalence value, in performance terms, of 2 GCSEs, applying to all measures.

Independent Schools

The statistics in this release previously covered all maintained and independent schools in Wales. This year, independent schools have been removed from the Wales figures. This is due to fact that data are only collected on qualifications approved by the Welsh Government for use in schools. Independent schools can choose other qualifications which are not approved, such as iGCSEs, and these are not included in our figures. In addition, participation from independent schools in the school data checking exercises held during October to November tends to be low.

The table below shows the effect of removing independent schools from the Level 2 inclusive threshold for pupils in Year 11/aged 15.

Percentage of pupils aged 15 who achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold, 2013/14 -2015/16

Year	Percentage of pupils who achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold (including independent schools)	Percentage of pupils who achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold (excluding independent schools)	Difference (percentage points)
2013/14	55.4	55.3	-0.1
2014/15	57.9	58.1	0.2
2015/16	59.8	60.4	0.7

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 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 2016 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 in Wales;
- To inform ESTYN during school inspections;
- The education domain of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation;
- To assist in research in educational attainment.

5.2 Accuracy

The data are labelled as provisional because during October they will be sent to schools for checking. The data may be revised if schools provide factual evidence of errors in the data or of additional qualifications obtained with awarding organisations that we have not approached.

In a typical year we would expect the final indicators, to be published in December, to differ from these provisional statistics by up to half a percentage point for all indicators apart from the one that measures no recognised qualifications (which is based on small numbers and is more sensitive to changes).

5.3 Timeliness and Punctuality

The data relate to all qualifications achieved between 1 September 2015 and 31 August 2016.

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](#) (updated in December), 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. This provisional data will not be added to My Local School but final data for 2015/16 will be added later in the year.

5.5 Comparability and coherence

See 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. Starting this year, data for Wales now limits the size of vocational qualifications to a maximum of 2 GCSEs, following the recommendation in the Review of Qualifications. Prior to this, there was no limit on the size of vocational qualifications, with many choices being equivalent in size to 4 GCSE's.
- Data for England only allow the first entry in any examination to count regardless of grade. The best grade is taken in Wales.
- England has changed the way they discount qualifications so that similar general and vocational qualifications cannot both count in their statistics. This restriction does not apply in Wales.

[More information on the changes to Key Stage 4 performance measures in Wales and their comparability.](#)

[Information about GCSE reform in England.](#)

[The Wolf Review of Vocational Education.](#)

There is also more information about the Wolf Review of Vocational Education in this statistical release: [GCSE and Equivalent Results in England 2013/14 \(Revised\)](#)

In Wales, the review of qualifications is now in effect, starting from the academic year 2015/16. This means that the way we calculate our performance measures will change. This will 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.](#)

National Statistics status

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly.

The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016 and this release includes 1 of the national indicators namely 'Percentage of pupils who have achieved the "Level 2 threshold" including English or Welsh first language and Mathematics, including the gap between those who are eligible or are not eligible for free school meals.

Information on indicators and associated technical information - [How do you measure a nation's progress? - National Indicators](#)

As a national indicator under the Act they must be referred to in the analyses of local well-being produced by public services boards when they are analysing the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in their areas.

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

Further details

The document is available at:

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

Next update

07 December 2016

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to school.stats@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

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