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Coverage: England

Theme: Children,  
Education and Skills

## Outcomes for Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England, as at 31 March 2013

*In this statistical release, a 'looked after child', is defined as a child who has been continuously looked after for at least 12 months*

### HEADLINES

**Poorer outcomes but improving over time** Looked after children have poorer educational outcomes than non-looked after children. A high proportion (67.8 per cent) have special educational needs and their emotional and behavioural health is often a cause for concern. However, despite poor outcomes, there have been improvements for nearly all of the measures in this statistical release.

**GCSE results are improving for looked after children** The percentage of looked after children achieving 5 or more A\*-C GCSEs or equivalent including English and maths has increased from 11.0 per cent in 2009 to 15.3 per cent in 2013.

**The attainment gap between looked after children and others has generally reduced** The attainment gaps between looked after and non-looked after children for the main key stage 1, 2 and 4 measures have decreased or remained the same from 2012 to 2013. However the gaps are still large, especially for key stage 4, where 15.3 per cent of looked after children achieved 5 or more A\*-C GCSEs or equivalent including English and maths compared with 58.0 per cent of non-looked after children. Although this gap has narrowed in recent years to 42.7 percentage points, it is still higher than it was in 2009.

**Looked after children still face significant challenges** During the year ending 31 March 2013, 6.2 per cent of looked after children aged 10-17 had been convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand and 3.5 per cent of all looked after children had a substance misuse problem. Looked after children are twice as likely to be permanently excluded from school and nearly three times more likely to have a fixed term exclusion than all children. Around half of all looked after children aged 5-16 were considered to be 'borderline' or 'cause for concern' in relation to their emotional and behavioural health.

#### Issued by

Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

#### Telephone:

**Press Office**

020 7925 6789

**Public Enquiries**

0870 000 2288

#### Statistician

Lucy Blyth

#### Email

[cla.stats@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cla.stats@education.gsi.gov.uk)

#### Internet

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/series/statistics-looked-after-children>

## What does this statistical release cover?

This Statistical First Release (SFR) provides national and local authority (LA) level information on the outcomes for children who have been looked after continuously for **at least 12 months at 31 March 2013**. Outcomes reported include educational attainment, special educational needs (SEN), health and wellbeing, offending, substance misuse and exclusions from school.

## What is a looked after child?

Under the [Children Act 1989](#), a child is legally defined as 'looked after' by a local authority if he or she:

- Is provided with accommodation for a continuous period for more than 24 hours;
- Is subject to a care order; or
- Is subject to a placement order.

Further information on which children are included in the data collection can be found in the children looked after return 2012-13 guidance available [here](#). Data on these children is collected annually through the Children Looked After return (also known as SSSA903). This is a longitudinal data collection.

For this publication, the definition of a 'looked after child' is a ***child who has been continuously looked after for at least 12 months*** up to and including 31 March 2013. This definition has been used because 12 months is considered an appropriate length of time to gauge the possible association of being looked after on educational attainment. It is also the cohort of children for whom information on outcomes such as health, wellbeing and offending are collected through the SSSA903. Where reference throughout this publication is made to a 'non-looked after child', this is defined as a child who has not been looked after continuously for 12 months as at 31 March. This will include children who have never been looked after and also those who have been looked after but who have not met the 12 months criteria.

The Department for Education publishes annual statistics on looked after children in England. These statistics are taken from the SSSA903 return that local authorities submit for the children they are responsible for. The latest publication was published in September 2013 and reports on looked after children for the year ending 31 March 2013. This publication can be found [here](#).

The main points from this publication are:

- At 31 March 2013, there were 68,110 looked after children in England. This is an increase of 2 per cent compared to 31 March 2012 and an increase of 12 per cent compared to 31 March 2009.
- 28,830 children started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2013. This is an increase of 2 per cent from the previous year and an increase of 12 per cent from 2009.
- 28,460 children ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2013, an increase of 3 per cent from 2012 and an increase of 14 per cent from 2009.
- 3,980 looked after children were adopted during the year ending 31 March 2013, an increase of 15 per cent from 2012 and an increase of 20 per cent from 2009. This is the highest figure since the start of the current data collection in 1992.

## Why monitor outcomes for looked after children and what is being done to improve these outcomes?

This statistical release is the main source of information on outcomes for looked after children in England. It is used to inform policy decisions which aim to improve the outcomes for this vulnerable

group of children, as well as other government departments, external agencies and social and educational researchers. Without this information it would be very difficult for ministers, Parliament, central and local government, pressure groups and the public to monitor government policies and their effectiveness. It is also used by local authorities to understand the educational and other outcomes for children for whom they are responsible.

Narrowing the gap between the attainment of looked after children and all young people remains a high priority of the department. To support this priority the government is putting the virtual school head role on a statutory footing to signal how important it is for everyone to champion the education of looked after children, wherever they are placed. The virtual school head will ensure the educational attainment of the children they look after is tracked and monitored as if the children attended a single school.

The government have also announced that from April 2014 there will be a Pupil Premium Plus for looked after children. Local authorities will be allocated Pupil Premium Plus funding of £1900 based on the number of eligible looked after children from the first day of care rather than, as now, six months. Virtual school heads and their virtual schools should work in close and constructive partnership with the education setting where there is a child on roll to ensure that the benefits of pupil premium funding are maximised to narrow the attainment gap through the child's personal education plan.

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## 1. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

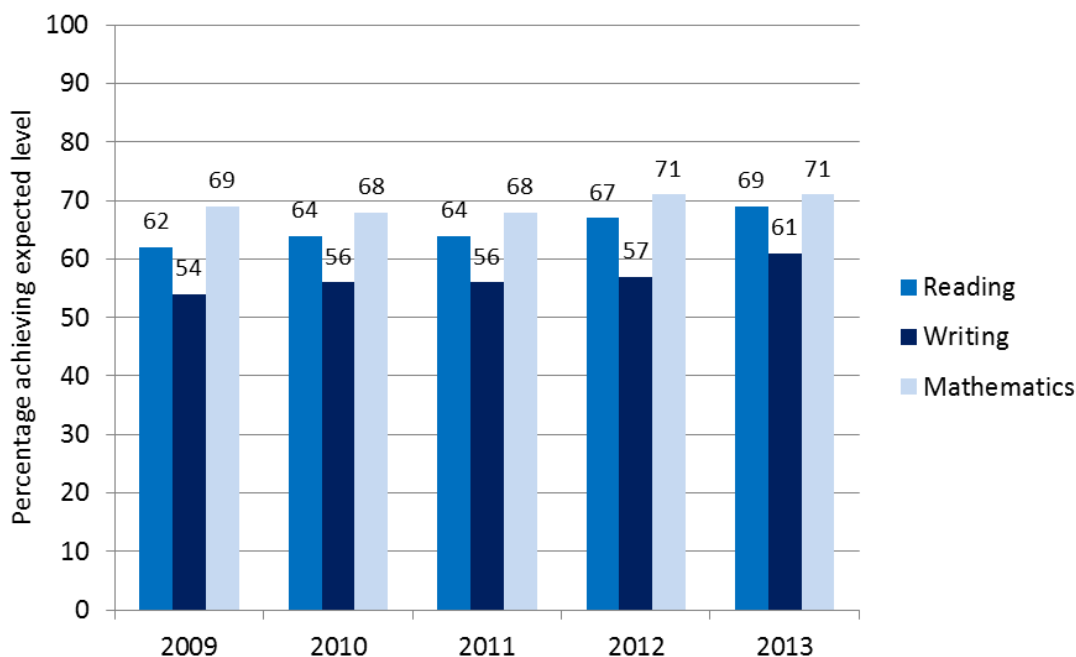
- Achievement of looked after children at key stage 1, 2 and 4 has continued to improve for most measures
- For the main attainment measures, the attainment gap between looked after and non-looked after children has either decreased or remained the same. However, at all key stages, non-looked after children continue to achieve much higher than looked after children
- Looked after girls consistently achieve better than looked after boys mirroring trends for non-looked after children

### 1.1 Attainment of Looked After Children in Key Stage 1

There were 1,720 children looked after during the year ending 31 March 2013 who were eligible for key stage 1 teacher assessments (assessments that the child usually takes at 6 years old)

- The percentage of looked after children achieving the expected level (level 2 or above) in reading, writing and mathematics in 2013 was 69 per cent, 61 per cent and 71 per cent respectively. For reading and writing, this represents an increase on the figures for 2012. For mathematics, the figure remained the same in 2012 and 2013. Chart 1 shows attainment of looked after children at key stage 1 over the last five years.

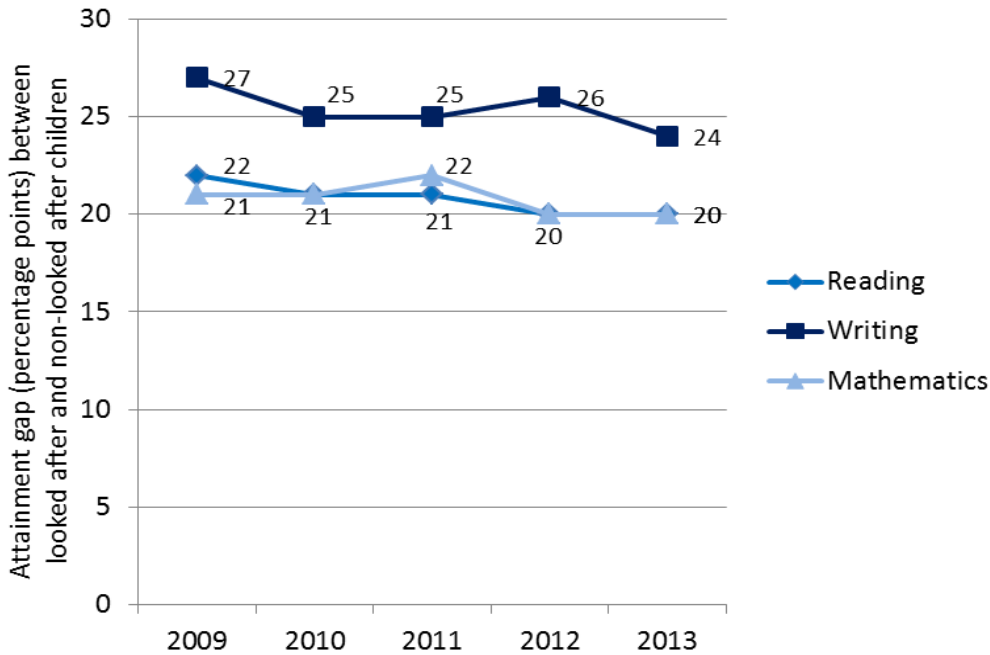
**Chart 1: Percentage of looked after children achieving the expected level at key stage 1**



- From 2012 to 2013 the attainment gap between looked after and non-looked after children has only narrowed for writing (from a difference of 26 percentage points to 24 percentage points). For reading and mathematics the attainment gaps have remained the same, at 20 percentage points for

both measures (see chart 2).

**Chart 2: Attainment gap between looked after and non-looked after children achieving the expected level at key stage 1**



Additional information on the achievement of looked after children at key stage 1 can be found in table 1 of this statistical release. This includes comparisons to non-looked after children and the split between boys and girls.

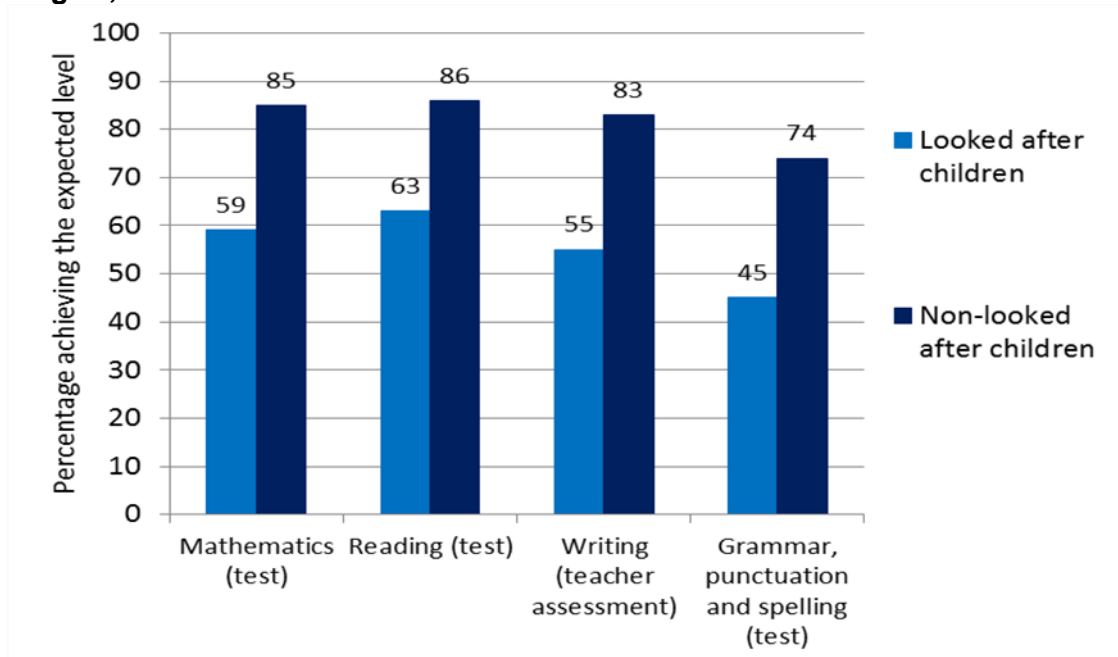
## 1.2 Attainment of Looked After Children in Key Stage 2 – (provisional data<sup>1</sup>)

There were 2,290 children looked after during the year ending 31 March 2013 who were eligible to sit key stage 2 tests (children usually aged 10). In this statistical release there are four headline measures for key stage 2.

- For each reported measure, the percentage of children looked after who achieved the expected level (level 4 or above) is much lower than achieved by non-looked after children (see chart 3).

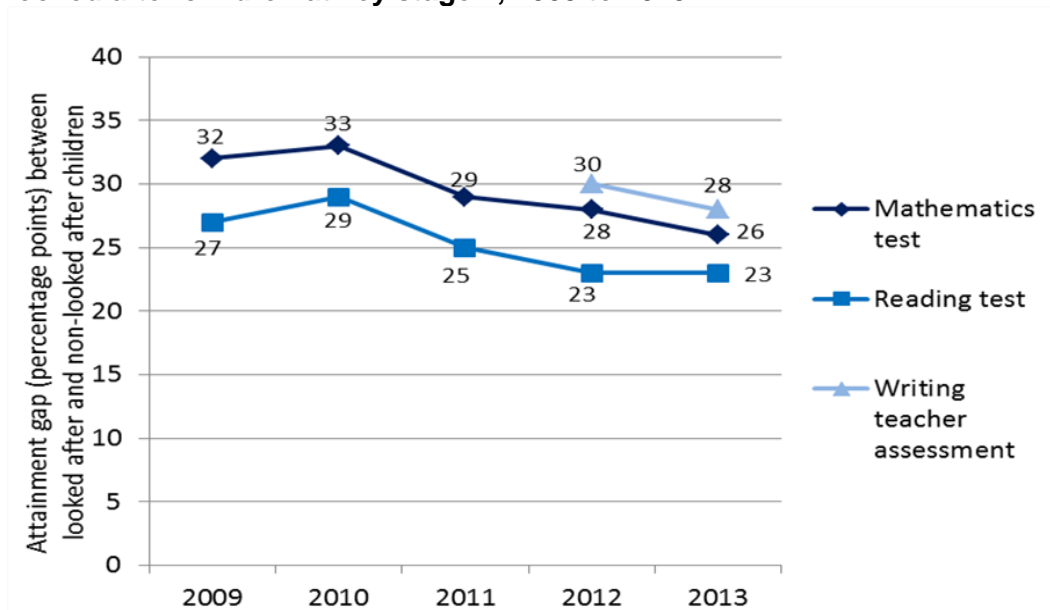
<sup>1</sup> This is based on provisional key stage 2 data, published on 19 September 2013. This is the earliest information available on the overall achievements at key stage 2, prior to being checked by schools.

**Chart 3: Achievement of looked after children compared to non-looked after children at key stage 2, 2013**



- In the mathematics test and writing teacher assessment, the attainment gaps between looked after and non-looked after children have decreased from 2012 to 2013 (see chart 4).
- For the reading test, the attainment gap has remained at 23 percentage points, although in previous years there has been a decrease. Grammar, punctuation and spelling is a new test introduced for all pupils in 2013. Therefore there are no comparisons for this test to earlier years.

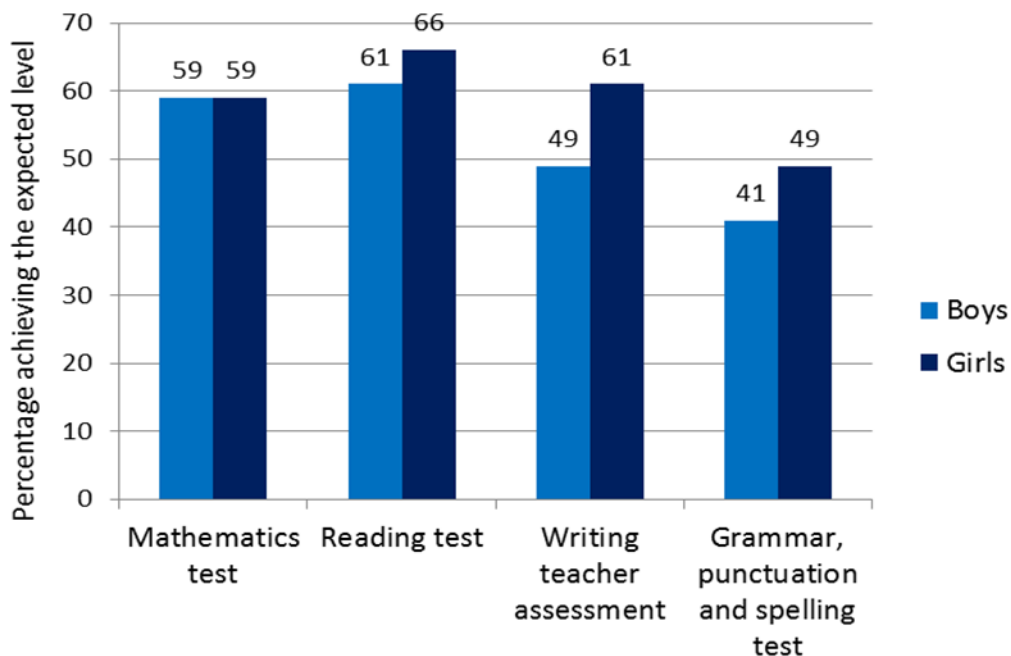
**Chart 4: Attainment gap between the achievements of looked after children compared to non-looked after children at key stage 2, 2009 to 2013**



Note: Writing teacher assessment is not available for earlier years due a change in the methodology

- Apart from mathematics, looked after girls outperform looked after boys in the other measures (see chart 5). This follows the same trend from earlier years where girls consistently perform better with the exception of mathematics, in which boys performed better in two of the last five years. This mirrors trends in the gender attainment gap seen for non-looked after children (see table 2 of this statistical release).

**Chart 5: Percentage of looked after children achieving the expected level at key stage 2 by gender, 2013**



Additional information on the achievement of looked after children at key stage 2 can be found in table 2 of this statistical release. This includes comparisons to non-looked after children and the split between boys and girls.

### 1.3 Attainment of Looked After Children in Key Stage 4 – (provisional data<sup>2</sup>)

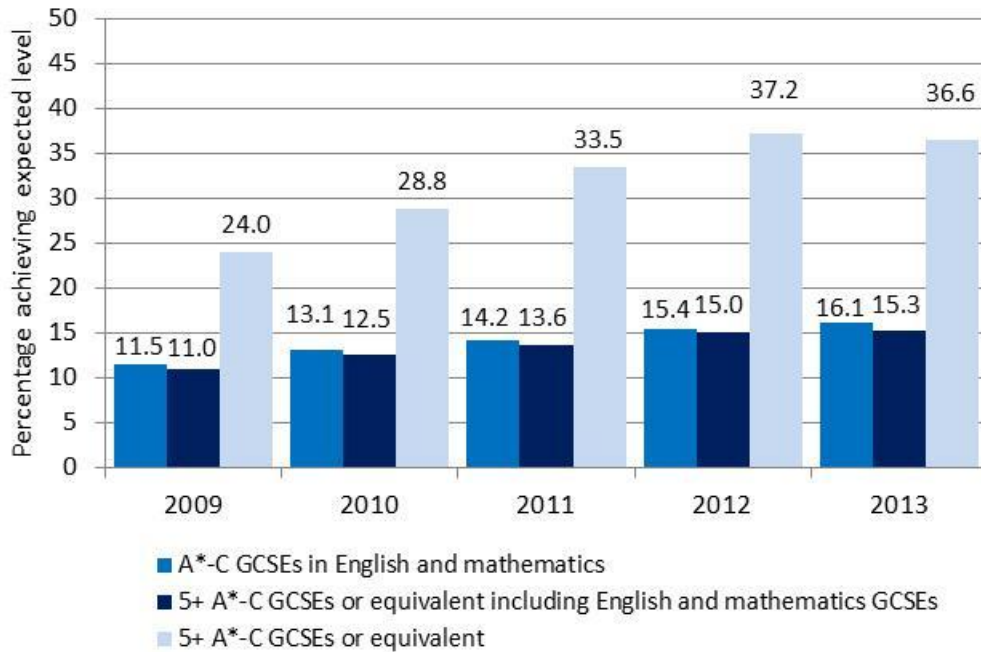
In 2013, there were 4,870 children looked after during the year who were at the end of key stage 4 (GCSEs and equivalents).

- There has been continued improvement in two out of the three key stage 4 performance measures: A\*-C GCSEs in English and mathematics and 5+ A\*-C GCSEs or equivalent including English and mathematics (see chart 6).
- For the third measure, the percentage of looked after children achieving 5+ A\*-C GCSEs or equivalent, there has been a small decrease of 0.6 percentage points from 2012 to 2013. However, this decrease mirrors the results of the same measure for non-looked after children.

<sup>2</sup> This is based on provisional key stage 4 data, published on 17 October 2013. This is the earliest information on the overall achievement at key stage 4, prior to being checked by schools.

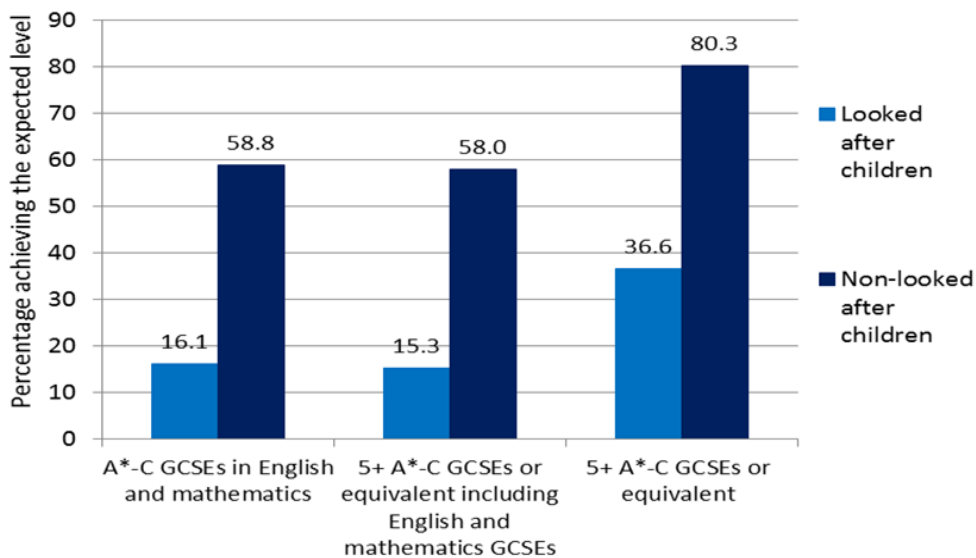


**Chart 6: Percentage of looked after children achieving level 2 measures at key stage 4, 2013**



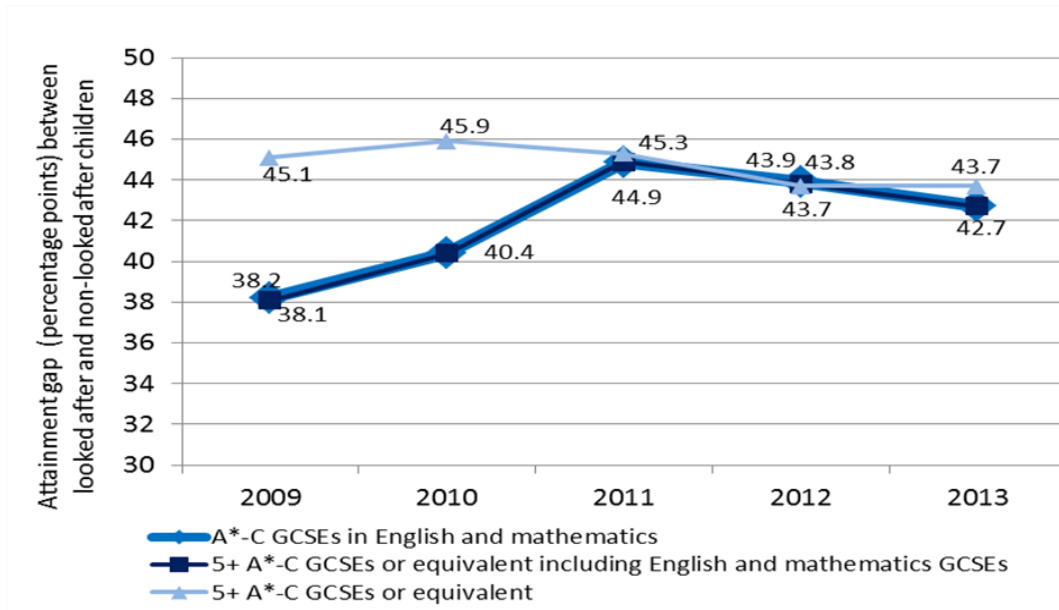
- Despite the continued improvement in the attainment of looked after children for key stage 4 measures including English and mathematics, there still remains a large attainment gap when comparing achievement to non-looked after children (see chart 7).

**Chart 7: Achievement of looked after children compared to non-looked after children at key stage 4, 2013**



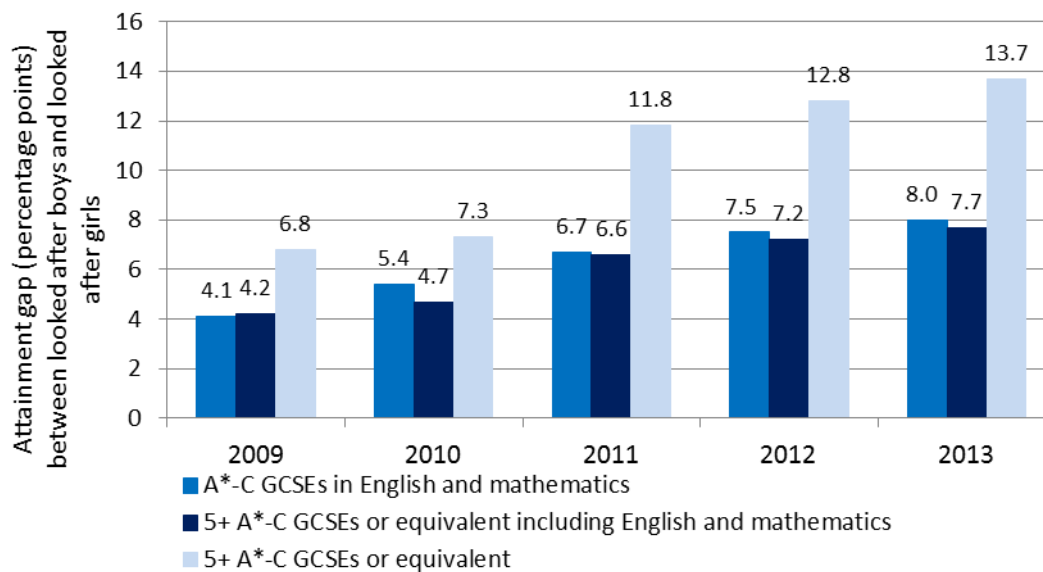
- Up until 2011, the attainment gap between looked after and non-looked after children generally increased. However, for the last two years, this attainment gap has started to narrow. There is now a difference of 42.7 percentage points between the rates of looked after and non-looked after children achieving A\*-C GCSEs in English and mathematics and also the same size gap for 5+ A\*-C GCSEs and equivalents including English and mathematics. These attainment gaps are smaller than they were in 2011 and 2012, although they are still larger than in earlier years.
- For 5+ A\*-C GCSEs or equivalent, the attainment gap has remained the same as it was in 2012 at 43.7 percentage points (see chart 8).

**Chart 8: Attainment gaps between the achievements of looked after children compared to non-looked after children at key stage 4, 2009 to 2013**



- At key stage 4, looked after girls consistently achieve higher than looked after boys. Chart 9 shows that since 2009 there has been an increase in the attainment gap between looked after girls and looked after boys in all three performance measures. For 5+ A\*-C GCSEs or equivalent, the attainment gap between looked after girls and looked after boys has increased by more than double from 2009 to 2013. For non-looked after children the opposite trend occurs for the same measure, whereby the attainment gap has generally decreased between boys and girls (see table 3 on the national tables).

**Chart 9: Attainment gaps between the achievements of looked after girls and looked after boys at key stage 4, 2009 to 2013**



Additional information on the achievement of looked after children at key stage 4 can be found in table 3 of this statistical release. This includes comparisons to non-looked after children and the split between boys and girls.

## 2. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

- 67.8 per cent of looked after children had a special educational need (SEN)
- The most common type of SEN for looked after children, was 'behavioural, emotional and social difficulties'.
- There has been a general improvement in the percentage of looked after children with a SEN attaining most key stage 2 and key stage 4 measures
- The percentage of looked after children with a SEN achieving key stage 2 and key stage 4 measures is much lower than looked after children without a SEN. For some measures the difference is greater than double.

67.8 per cent of looked after children for whom data were available had a special educational need (SEN), which consists of 28.5 per cent with a statement of SEN and 39.3 per cent without a statement<sup>3</sup>. These figures are much higher than the total population with SEN (looked after and non-looked after children). In 2013, 18.8 per cent of all children had a SEN which consisted of 2.8 per cent with a statement and 16.0 per cent without a statement<sup>4</sup>.

In 2013 the most common type of SEN for looked after children was 'behavioural, emotional and social difficulties', which accounted for 51.0 per cent of looked after children at School Action Plus as their primary special need and 40.1 per cent of pupils with a statement of SEN. The second most common was Moderate Learning Difficulty, which accounted for 20.6 per cent of children at School Action Plus and 17.7 per cent of children with a statement.

### 2.1 Attainment of Looked After Children with a Special Educational Need at Key Stage 2 (provisional data)

In 2013, there were 2,280 looked after children who were eligible to sit key stage 2 tests and had SEN information available. Of these, 1,510 (66 per cent) had a SEN.

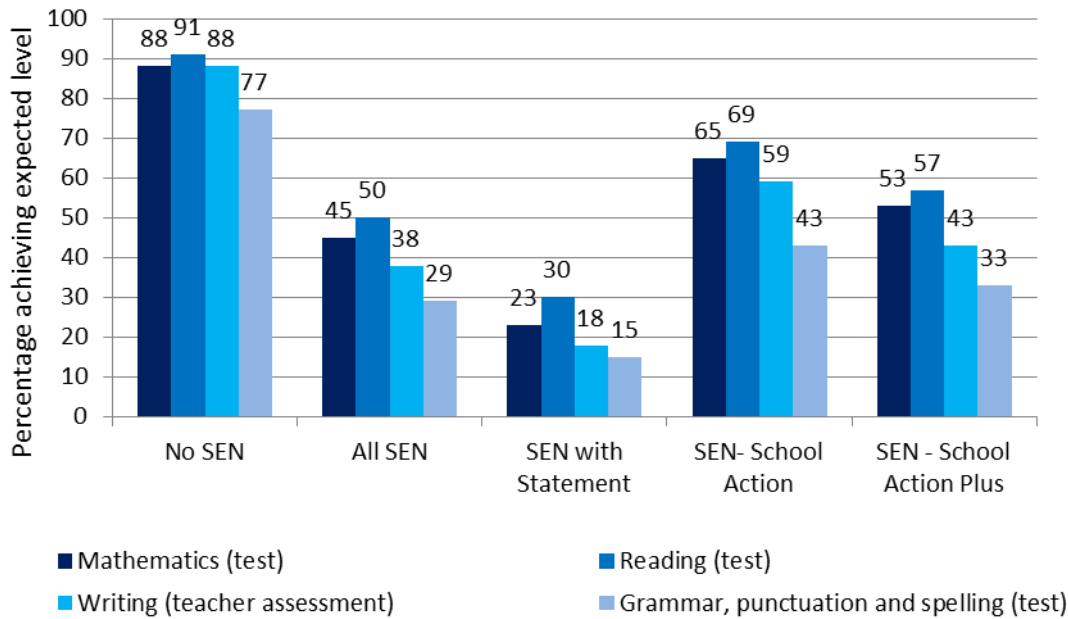
- The percentage of looked after children with a SEN achieving level 4 at key stage 2 is much lower than the rates for looked after children without a SEN (see chart 10). This follows the same trends seen nationally when looking at all children.
- Chart 11 shows attainment in key stage 2 mathematics and writing has improved for looked after children with a SEN from 2012 to 2013. Reading has seen a slight decrease.

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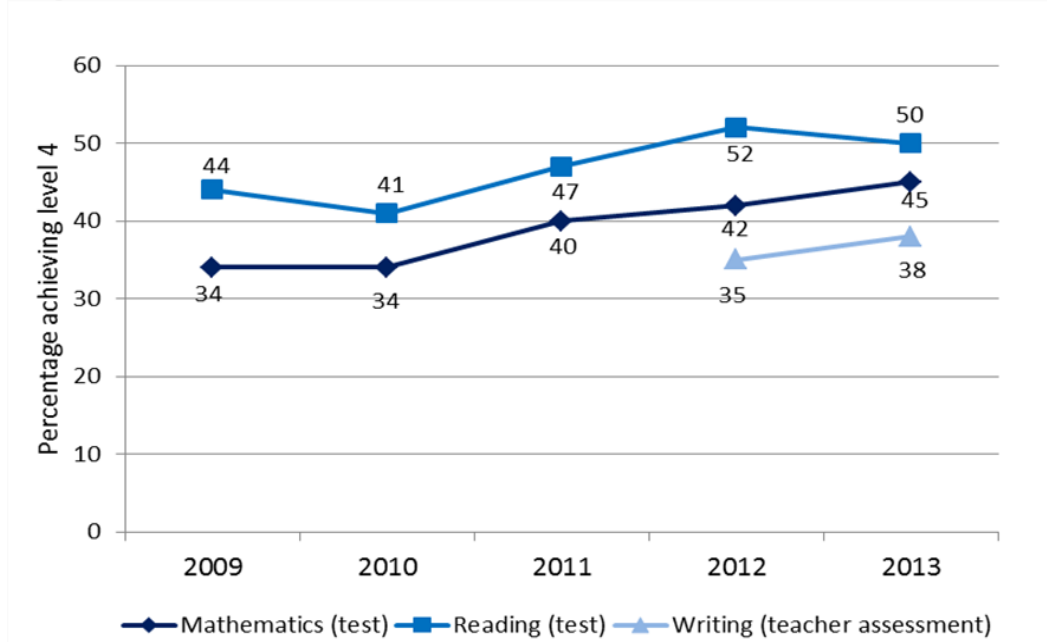
<sup>3</sup> Pupils with special educational needs are classified into three distinct levels of provision of need: School Action – where extra or different help is given, from that provided as part of the school's usual curriculum; School Action Plus – where the class teacher or special educational needs coordinator receive support from outside specialists; Statement – a pupil has a statement of special educational needs following a formal assessment. This sets out the child's needs and the extra help they should receive.

<sup>4</sup> Taken from the Statistical Release: [Special Education Needs in England](#)

**Chart 10: Percentage of looked after children who achieved the expected level at key stage 2 by provision of SEN, 2013**



**Chart 11: Percentage of looked after children with a SEN achieving the expected level at key stage 2, 2009 to 2013**



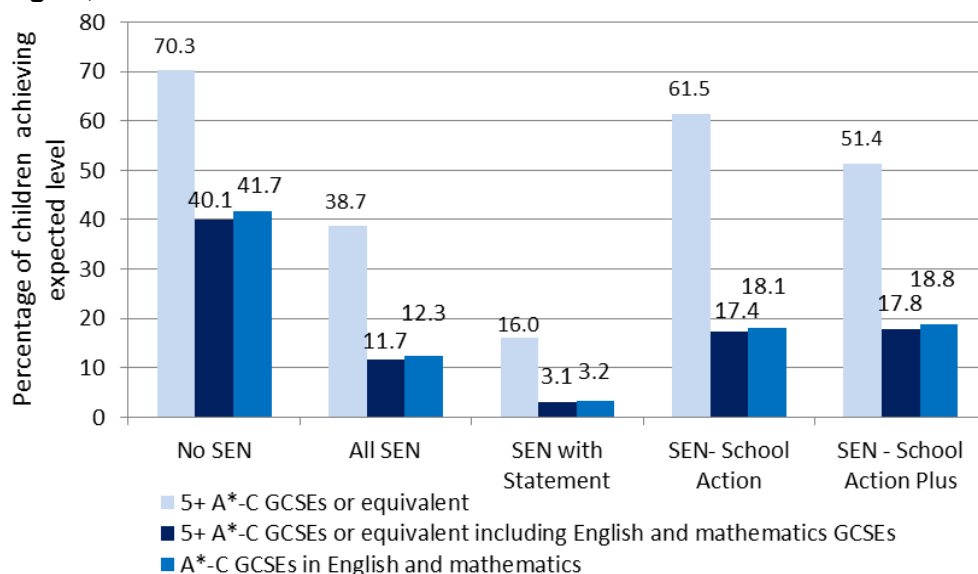
Note: Writing teacher assessment is not available for earlier years due to a change in the methodology

## 2.2 Attainment of Looked After Children with a Special Educational Need at Key Stage 4 (provisional data)

In 2013, 70 per cent (2,540 out of 3,630) of looked after children at the end of key stage 4 with SEN information available had a Special Educational Need.

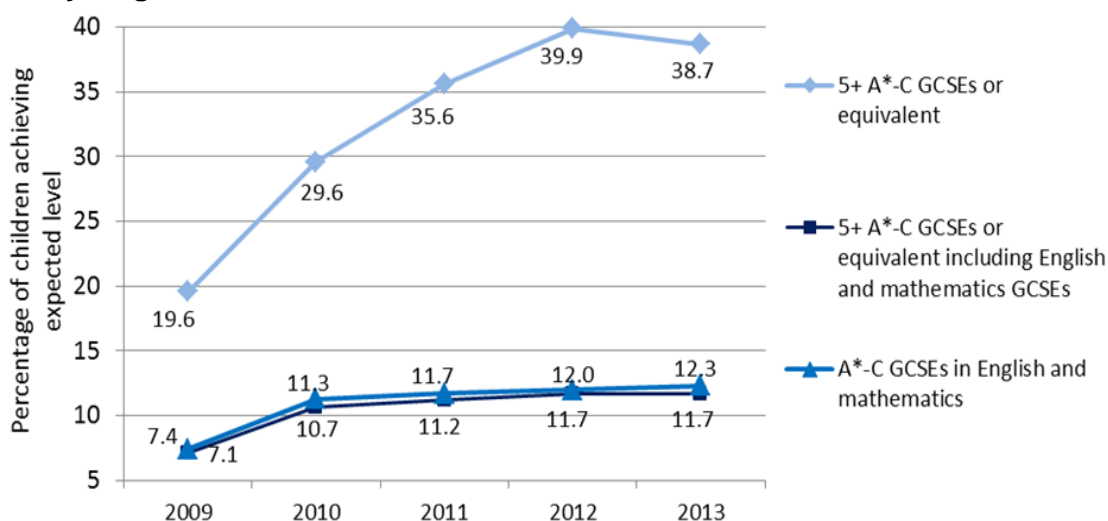
- As with key stage 2, looked after children without a SEN have higher attainment at key stage 4 than looked after children with a SEN (chart 12).

**Chart 12: Percentage of looked after children with a SEN who achieved the expected level at key stage 4, 2013**



- There has been a slight decline in the percentage of looked after children with SEN achieving 5+ A\*-C GCSEs including equivalents from 2012 to 2013, the first decrease in this measure in the last five years (see chart 13). This is consistent with the trends seen in this same measure for all looked after children, as well as for non-looked after children.

**Chart 13: Percentage of looked after children with a SEN achieving key performance measures at key stage 4, 2009 to 2013**



Additional information on looked after children with SEN can be found in tables 9, 10 and 11 of this statistical release.

### 3. OUTCOMES DATA COLLECTED THROUGH THE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN RETURN

The information in this section covers outcomes such as offending, health and substance misuse which is collected directly from local authorities via the looked after children (SSDA903) return. As in previous years, this information continues to be collected for the cohort of children who have been **looked after continuously for 12 months at 31 March**.

#### 3.1 Emotional and behavioural health of looked after children

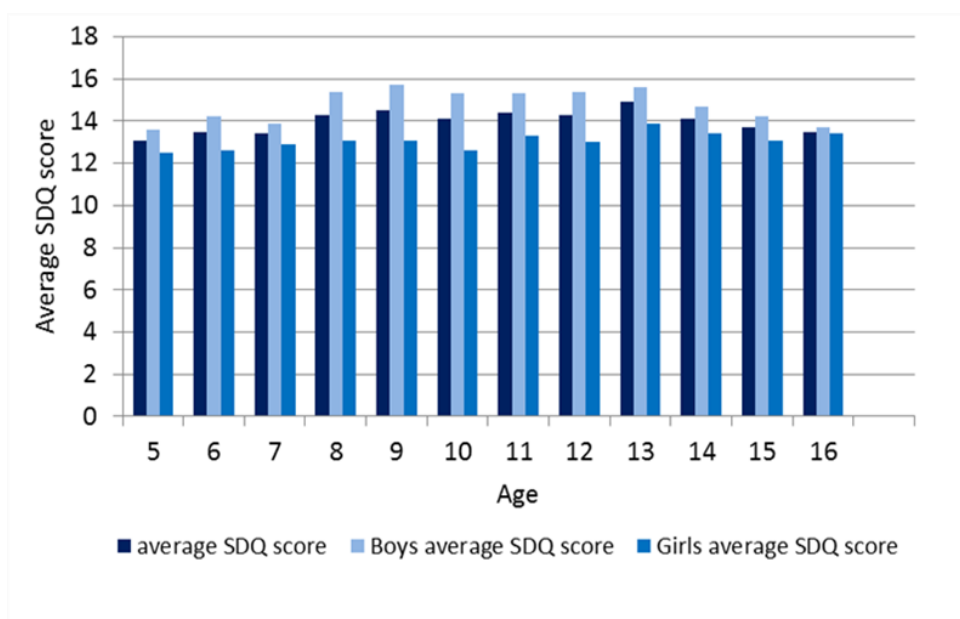
- More looked after boys than girls have concerning emotional and behavioural health
- Just half of all looked after children have emotional and behavioural health that is considered normal
- There has been very little change over the last three years when looking at SDQ scores

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) should be completed for every child looked after for at least 12 months and aged 5 to 16 as at the end of March<sup>5</sup>. In 2013, there were 33,880 children in this cohort, however just 71.1 per cent of these returned an SDQ score.

A higher score on the SDQ indicates more emotional difficulties, with a score of 0 to 13 being considered normal, a score of 14 to 16 considered borderline cause for concern, and 17 or more a cause for concern.

- In 2013, a higher proportion of boys than girls scored 17 or above, indicating cause for concern with their emotional health, 40.9 per cent compared with 33.2 per cent respectively.
- Chart 14 shows that at all ages, looked after boys score higher (more considered a cause for concern) than looked after girls.

**Chart 14: Average (mean) score for looked after children on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, 2013**



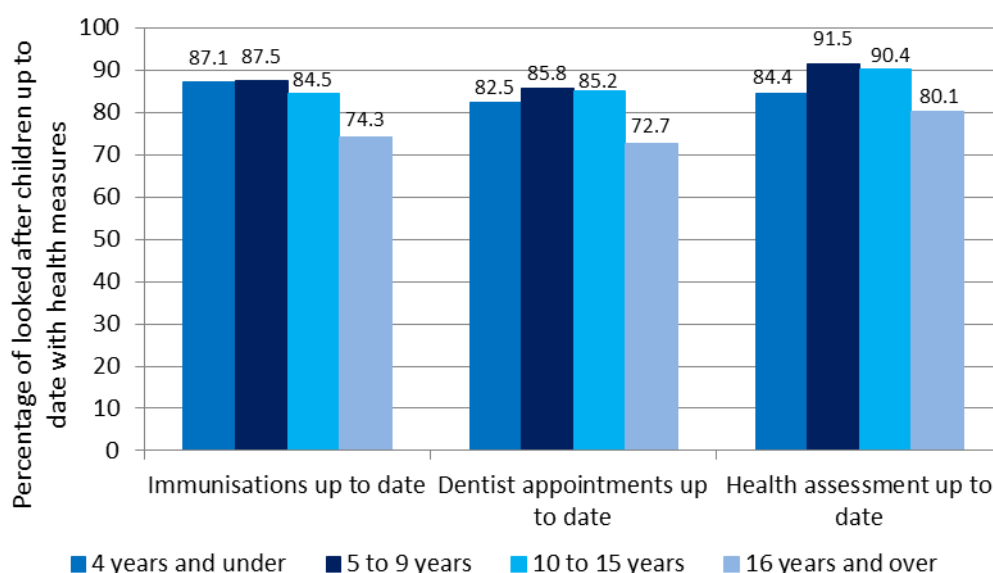
<sup>5</sup> An SDQ score is required of all children aged 4-16 on the date of the last assessment. The date of assessment is not collected on the looked after children return (SSDA903) and therefore this cohort has been restricted to age 5-16.

### 3.2 Health care of looked after children

- The majority of looked after children are up to date with immunisations, and their annual health check, as well as having their teeth checked by a dentist
- The percentage of looked after children aged 5 and under who are up to date with their development assessments has increased in each of the last 2 years
- Older looked after children are less likely to be up to date with health measures

- Looked after children aged 16 and above are less likely to be up to date with health measures (see chart 15).

**Chart 15: Percentage of looked after children up to date with health measures by age, 2013**



- In 2013, there were 9,420 children looked after who were aged 5 or under. Of these, 84.3 per cent were up to date with their development assessments (health surveillance/ promotion checks), compared with 81.7 per cent in 2012 and 76.8 per cent in 2011

### 3.3 Offending by looked after children

- 6.2 per cent of looked after children aged 10 to 17 had been convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand during the year ending 31 March 2013. This is higher than the 2012 national figure for *all* children at 1.5 per cent, as provided by Ministry of Justice figures.
- Offending rates amongst looked after children have continued to fall when comparing to earlier years.
- Offending was higher among older children and more frequent amongst boys, mirroring national trends for all children.

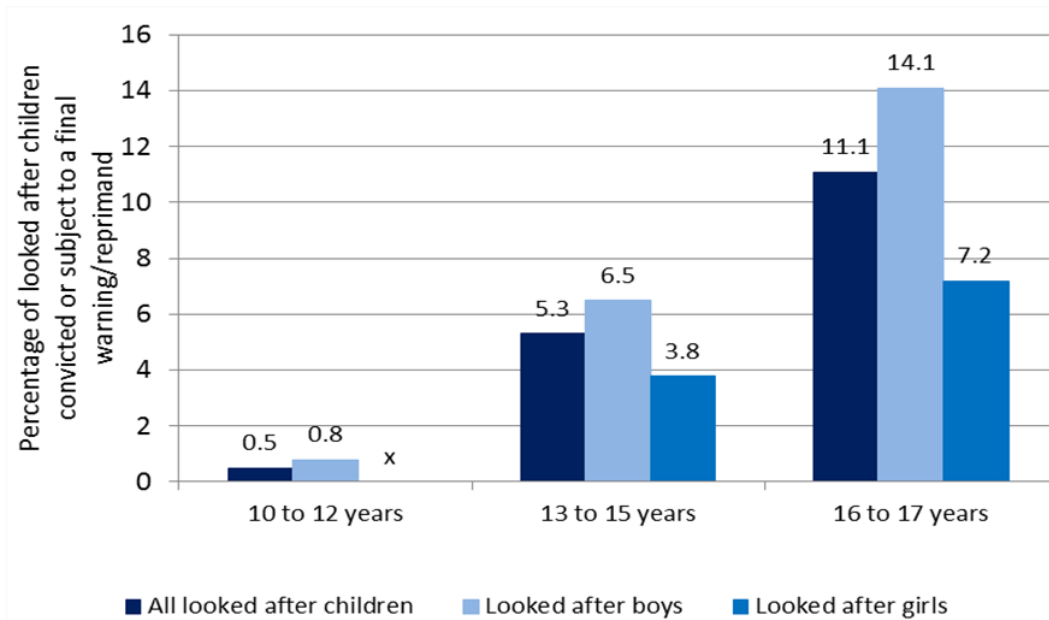
Offending data is collected for all children looked after continuously for at least 12 months aged 10 or above.

- Of the 29,880 children looked after aged between 10 and 17 years, 1,840 (6.2 per cent) had been

convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand during the year, compared with 6.9 per cent in 2012 and 7.2 per cent in 2011.

- Offending was higher amongst older children and more frequent amongst boys (see chart 16).

**Chart 16: Percentage of looked after children convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand during the year by gender, 2013**



Note: There were 5 or fewer looked after girls aged 10 to 12 years old with a conviction. Therefore the percentage has been suppressed

### 3.4 Substance misuse by looked after children

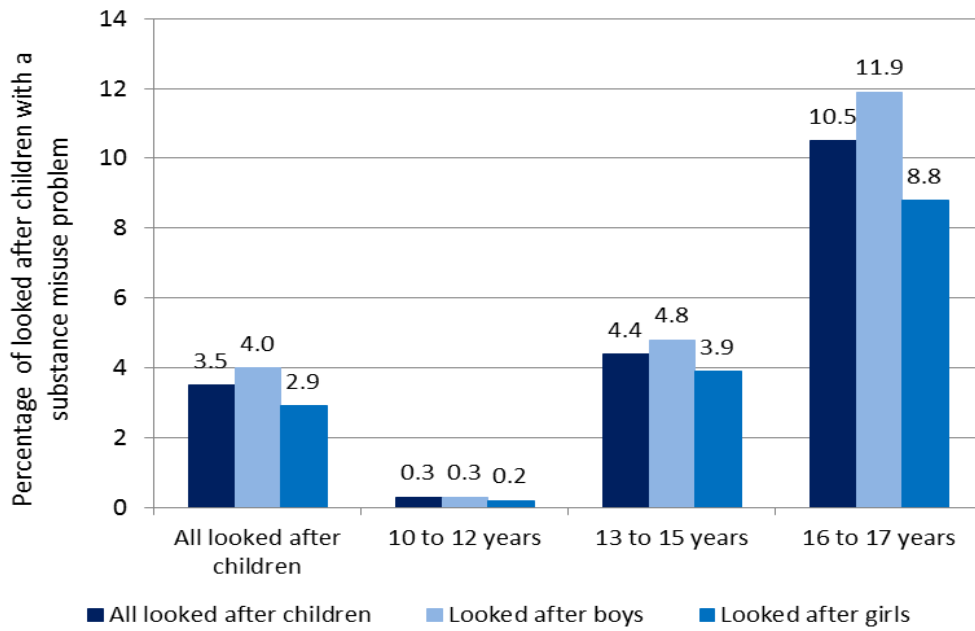
- 3.5 per cent of looked after children were identified as having a substance misuse problem in 2013
- Looked after boys are more likely to have a substance misuse problem than girls
- Rate of substance misuse amongst looked after children has fallen

- Of the total 47,200 children looked after continuously for 12 months at 31 March 2013, 1,660 children (3.5 per cent) were identified as having a substance misuse problem during the year, compared with 4.1 per cent in 2012 and 4.2 per cent in 2011.
- Of these in 2013, 57.6 per cent (950 children) received an intervention for the problem with a further 34.3 per cent (570 children) refusing the intervention which was offered (compared with 54.6 per cent and 31.1 per cent respectively in 2012).

Substance misuse is more common among older looked after children. 1,130 children identified as having a substance misuse problem were in the 16 to 17 year old age group. This represents 10.5 per cent of all children looked after who are in this age group. Boys in this age group were more likely to have a substance misuse problem than girls (see chart 17).



**Chart 17: Percentage of looked after children identified as having a substance misuse problem by age and gender, 2013**



Additional information on the outcomes of looked after children collected from the SSDA903 return can be seen in tables 4,5,6,7, 8a and 8b of this statistical release.

#### 4. EXCLUSIONS FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

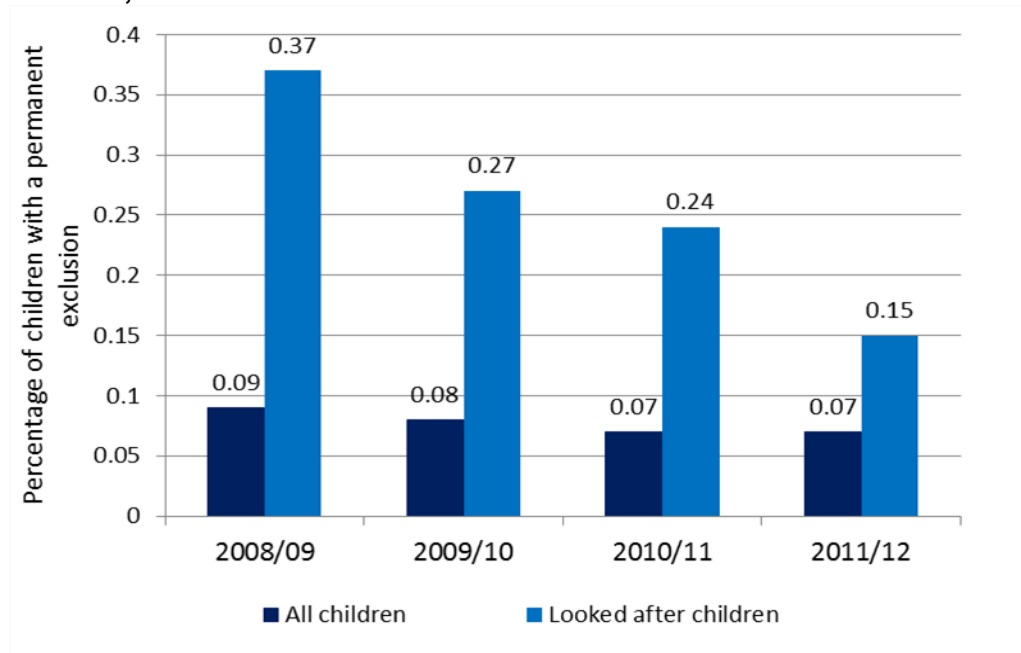
The latest exclusions data available is from the academic year 2011/12. This is matched to looked after children data from the corresponding year – year ending 31 March 2012. *Please note that this is an earlier year than the other latest information on looked after children in this statistical release.*

- 0.15 per cent of looked after children were permanently excluded from school in 2011/12. This is over two times higher than the rate for all children<sup>6</sup> at 0.07 per cent
- 11.36 per cent of looked after children had a fixed term exclusion from school in 2011/12. This is nearly three times as high as the rate for all children at 4.05 per cent.
- Both permanent exclusions and fixed term exclusions for looked after children have been falling in recent years, mirroring national trends for all children

In 2012, 28,010 looked after children aged 5 to 15 were matched to the school census.

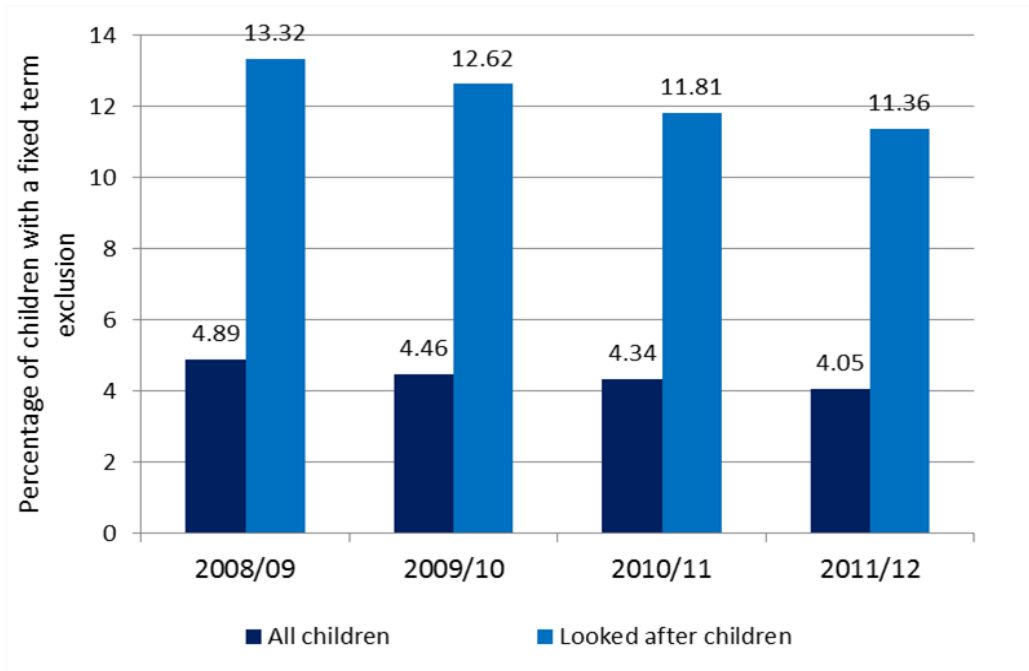
Charts 18 and 19 show the change over time in the rates of permanent and fixed term exclusions for looked after children compared to the rates for all children<sup>6</sup>. Over the last 4 years the percentage of looked after children with a permanent exclusion has fallen. It is now just 0.15 per cent which equates to around 40 children. This follows a general decrease in permanent exclusions in the whole population where national rates have fallen from 0.09 to 0.07. The year on year decrease that can also be seen for looked after children with a fixed term exclusion has also followed the national trend for all children. Rates for looked after children fell from 13.32 per cent in 2008/09 to 11.36 per cent in 2011/12. For the latest year this amounts to around 3,180 looked after children with a fixed term exclusion.

**Chart 18: Percentage of looked after children with a permanent exclusion compared to all children, 2008/09 to 2011/12**



<sup>6</sup> Figures taken from the statistical release: [Permanent and Fixed period exclusions from schools in England](#)

**Chart 19: Percentage of looked after children with a fixed term exclusion compared to all children, 2008/09 to 2011/12**



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## TECHNICAL NOTES

### Data source

1. The 2012-13 figures for looked after children are the latest in a regular series. Data are collected on the SSDA903 return, which provides the Department for Education with data on looked after children in England. This is a longitudinal collection and, therefore, previous years' figures may change where a local authority has updated records.

### SSDA903

2. Information collected on SSDA903 includes details about the child (for example gender, date of birth, unique pupil number) and details about the child's episodes of care (for example, category of need, legal status under which the child is looked after and type of placement). It also collects various outcome indicators (OC2) for children who have been looked after continuously for at least 12 months at 31 March. The information collected includes data on offending, health promotion checks, immunisations, dental checks, health assessments and substance misuse.
3. The SSDA903 collects data on the basis on a financial year (so from the 1 April to the 31 March). A child who is identified as 'continuously looked after for at least 12 months' is a child who has been looked after for the entire financial year.

### Key stage 1, 2 and 4

4. Attainment data has been taken from the National Pupil Database (NPD). The data contained within the NPD is collected directly from awarding bodies. Key stage 2 and key stage 4 data for 2013 is provisional, prior to being checked by schools. Once final data becomes available, the differences will be assessed and data will be amended in spring 2014 if differences are deemed significant.
5. School type filters are not applied to key stage data for looked after children analysis. Looked after children attend a range of different setting types and therefore if valid attainment data is reported in the NPD from any setting type, then it be reported in these tables.
6. In 2013, a new test on English grammar, punctuation and spelling was introduced for all pupils following a pilot in 2012. It was also decided that there would no longer be an overall English level from the reading test and writing teacher assessment as in 2012, but instead results on reading and writing would be published separately. As a result of this, the measures of English and English and mathematics are no longer reported and instead the focus has switched to reading test, mathematics test and writing teacher assessment.
7. Progress measures for key stage 2 and key stage 4 were introduced in 2011. National figures are included for the percentage of children at key stage 2 making 2 levels of progress in mathematics, reading and writing, and for key stage 4, the percentage of children achieving the expected level of progress. Definitions of these can be found in the latest statistical releases for key stage 2 and key stage 4. Please note, as with the other attainment measures for key stage 2 and key stage 4, this is based on provisional data.

['National Curriculum Assessments at Key Stage 2 in England, 2013 \(Provisional\)'](#)

['GCSE and equivalent results including key stage 3 in England, 2013 \(Provisional\)'](#)

## Census data

8. Exclusions data, absence and data on special educational needs (SEN) are taken from spring school census data, also held within the NPD. The spring census is a snapshot of the situation in schools as at the third Thursday in January. Pupil level information has been returned via the school census for nursery, primary, secondary and special schools since 2006. The alternative provision (AP) census was introduced in January 2008 and the pupil referral unit census was introduced in 2010. Both the AP and the PRU censuses also return a snapshot of the situation as at the third Thursday in January.
9. Arrangements for identifying and providing for children with SEN are set out in Part IV of the 1996 Act (and, prior to this, the 1981 and 1993 Education Acts). New rights and duties were introduced by the SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). A Code of Practice, issued in 1994, supported the rights and duties in the 1996 Act. A new SEN Code of Practice was introduced in January 2002. All LAs, maintained schools and early years settings in receipt of government funding must have regard to it. The Code of Practice specified three stages of provision: School/Early Years Action, School/Early Years Action Plus and Statements of SEN.
10. Information on exclusions is collected two terms in arrears. This publication includes information for children looked after matched to latest exclusions data for 2011/12. Data for 2012/13 will be available at the end of 2014.
11. Absence from schools data is taken from the School Census which collects information for children in state-funded primary and secondary schools and maintained and non-maintained special schools. Absence data is collected in arrears and therefore the latest information is for the academic year 2011/12. This was published in April 2013 and can be found in the following link: [Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities in England, as at 31 March 2013](#). Absence data for 2012/13 will be available in spring 2014.

## **UPN return rates and data matching**

12. The matching of NPD data to looked after children data (SSDA903) is reliant on the quality and return of the unique pupil number (UPN) by local authorities. It is the responsibility of local authorities to ensure that the UPN and other child identifiers provided on the SSDA903 are accurate, as incorrect data could lead to a mismatch of data with the NPD.
13. For the latest SSDA903 collection for year ending 31 March 2013, a valid UPN should be returned for all pupils aged 4 or over at the start of the school year (at 31 August 2012). This is a change from previous years when UPNs were expected only for children aged 6 and over. There are several reasons why a child may have no UPN. These are:
  - Child looked after is not of school age and has not yet been assigned a UPN
  - Child looked after has never attended a maintained school in England (e.g. some Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children).
  - Child looked after is educated outside England.
  - Child is newly looked after (from one week before end of collection period) and the UPN was not yet known at the time of the SSDA903 annual statistical return.
  - Sources collating UPNs reflect discrepancies for the child's name and/or surname and/or date of birth therefore preventing reliable matching (e.g. duplicated UPN)
14. For data collected through the SSAD903 in year ending 31 March 2013, 98.5% of children aged 4 to 15 had a UPN submitted (see methodology document for further information).

15. The denominators for the educational attainment, SEN and exclusions tables are the total number of looked after children who were matched to the NPD (using the UPN). In order to measure quality of this data and the percentage of children for whom UPN's were returned, an indicator has been given on the relevant LA tables showing the percentage of children with a UPN returned. Generally the UPN return rate is high but there are some local authorities for whom they are lower.
16. Using primarily the UPN, data from the SSDA903 are matched to NPD attainment data and census data. If a child is not on the roll of a school on the date of the census they will not appear in the census and hence their details are not returned to the department. For those children in the CLA database who do not match to the census, it is possible that they do not appear on the roll of a school at the key date in January.

### **Impact indicators and attainment gaps**

17. The impact indicator for key stage 2 is the attainment gap between looked after children and non-looked after children achieving level 4 in both English and mathematics. The impact indicator for key stage 4 is the attainment gap between looked after children and non-looked after children achieving grade A\* to C in GCSE English and mathematics. The definition of a looked after children for these impact indicators is a child looked after for 6 months continuously (the current looked after children pupil premium definition). Latest data can be found [here](#).

### **Rounding conventions**

18. The National Statistics Code of Practice requires that reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that all published or disseminated statistics produced by the Department for Education protect confidentiality. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10, apart from the numbers of children relating to each local authority which have been rounded to the nearest 5. For confidentiality purposes, numbers from one to five inclusive have been replaced in the published tables by a cross (x). Where any number is shown as zero (0), the original figure submitted was zero (0). The following convention has been used:

‘.’ means not applicable

‘-’ means negligible – used to represent a percentage below 0.5%

19. Where the numerator was five or less, or the denominator was 10 or less, percentages have been suppressed and replaced by a cross (x). Note that percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

## **A National Statistics publication**

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. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that The Code of Practice shall continue to be observed. This publication has been designated as National Statistics following assessment by the United Kingdom Statistics Authority.

## **Revisions**

This publication is produced using a final version of the 2013 Children Looked After looked dataset. Key stage 2 and key stage 4 data for 2013 is provisional but in previous years final data has not made notable differences to the outcomes and therefore revisions have not been necessary. When final key stage 2 and 4 data is available, we will assess if any revisions are required and if so these will be published in spring 2014.

## **Confidentiality**

The National Statistics Code of Practice requires that reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that all published or disseminated statistics produced by the Department for Education protect confidentiality. An 'x' indicates that a figure has been suppressed due to small numbers. Values of one to five inclusive are suppressed. Also suppressed are rates based on fewer than five pupils who achieved (or did not achieve) a particular level, or based on a denominator of 10 or less. Some additional figures have also been suppressed to prevent the possibility of a suppressed figure being revealed.

## **Underlying data**

As part of a Government drive for data transparency in official publications, supporting data for this SFR will also be published in an open standardised format, alongside the Statistical First Release. This will be published in spring 2014.

## **Looked after children data user group:**

This is a group which aims to seek feedback on whether these statistics are meeting users' requirements and to consult on any future changes to this data collection and the timing and format of our outputs. If you would like to participate in this group then please register your interest via email.



## **Related publications**

General information on looked after children can be found in the Statistical First Release: [Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England \(including adoption and care leavers\) - year ending 31 March 2013](#).

## **Enquiries**

Enquiries about the figures contained in this press release should be addressed to:

Data Services Group  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
LONDON  
SW1P 3BT

Email: [cla.stats@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cla.stats@education.gsi.gov.uk)

Press enquiries should be made to the Department's Press Office at:

Press Office  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
LONDON  
SW1P 3BT

Telephone Number: 020 7783 8300