



Department
for Education

Statistical First Release



SFR 10/2014

27 March 2014

Coverage: England

Theme: Children,
Education and Skills

Issued by

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LEVEL 2 AND 3 ATTAINMENT BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN ENGLAND MEASURED USING MATCHED ADMINISTRATIVE DATA: ATTAINMENT BY AGE 19 IN 2013

HEADLINES

Attainment of Level 2 or higher and Level 3 by age 19 continues to rise

In 2013, 86.2 per cent of 19 year olds were qualified to Level 2 or higher (up 1.1 percentage points (ppts) compared to 2012), and 59.1 per cent were qualified to Level 3 (also up 1.1 ppts compared to 2012).

Increase in attainment at Level 3 in both academic and vocational routes

The proportion attaining 2+ A Levels rose by 0.4 ppts to 38.0 per cent. Proportion of 19 year olds achieving Level 3 vocational qualifications rose by 0.9 ppts to 17.0 per cent.

Free School Meal (FSM) attainment gaps narrowed at Level 2, but not at level 3

The FSM gap at Level 2 closed by 0.8 ppts between 2012 and 2013, to 16.3 ppts. However the gap at Level 2 with English and maths and Level 3 both rose slightly by 0.1ppts.

Attainment in Level 2 English and Maths by 19 rose...

Attainment of Level 2 (GCSE A*-C or equivalent) in English and maths by age 19 rose from 63.4 per cent in 2012 to 65.8 per cent in 2013.

...but progression between 16 and 19 slowed

The progression rate between 16 and 19 – the proportion of young people who failed to achieve GCSE A*-C or equivalent in English and maths at age 16 who had achieved both by age 19 - fell from 18.4 per cent to 16.3 per cent between 2012 and 2013.

This Statistical First Release (SFR) provides information on the proportion of young people in England who attain Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications by the age of 19. It updates and replaces figures published in SFR 13/2013 (released in March 2013).

What does this statistical release cover?

Attainment of Level 2 equates to achievement of 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C or equivalent qualifications. Attainment at Level 3 equates to achievement of 2 or more A-levels or equivalent qualifications¹.

The SFR leads with national figures, which are then analysed by institution type and qualification type. The focus of the SFR switches to young people who were in state schools at academic age 15, presenting analysis on attainment by age 19 by characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM), and Special Educational Needs (SEN). It also includes tables on attainment by local authority.

The SFR reports on progress against the following indicators in the Department for Education (DfE) Business Plan²:

- *Indicator 1(3): Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by age 19*
- *Indicator 1(4): Attainment of Level 2 in English and Maths at age 19 for those who had not achieved this level by 16*
- *Indicator 3 (9): Attainment gap at age 19 between FSM pupils and the rest in achieving Level 3 qualifications*

It also reports on progress against Indicator 5 in the Government Social Mobility Strategy³, broken down as follows:

- *(a) Proportion achieving a Level 3 qualification by age 19 (by FSM)*
- *(b) Proportion achieving 2+ A-levels by age 19 (by FSM)*
- *(c) Proportion achieving non A-level level 3 qualifications (by FSM)*

Note to users

The attainment statistics published in this SFR are used to monitor trends in attainment over time, both nationally and at local authority level, and changes in attainment within different groups. However, the measures of “full” level 2 and level 3 qualifications are now somewhat dated, and do not reflect recent changes to policies governing the vocational qualifications that will count in the school and college performance tables (see [Technical Notes section 5](#) for more details).

We will be reviewing the content of this SFR with a view to making the measures align more closely to current policy on 16-19 qualifications. Changes may include no longer publishing the Level 2 and Level 3 measures in their current form, a stronger focus on English and maths, and new measures of attainment in qualifications at Level 2 and Level 3 that are approved for inclusion in the school performance tables. We would welcome feedback from users on how they currently use these statistics and comments on the potential impact of such changes so that we can consider user needs when reviewing the SFR content. Please send any comments to post16.statistics@education.gsi.gov.uk.

¹ Note that the methodology for calculating whether the Level 2 and Level 3 thresholds have been met differs from the measures of 5+ GCSEs at A*-C, and 2+ A-levels, reported in the school and college performance tables. See Technical Notes for more information.

² www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/221754/department_20for_20education_20business_20plan_202012_202015.pdf

³ www.dpm.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/social-mobility-strategy-launched

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Commentary

Overall attainment between 16 and 19

Level 2 or higher

In 2013, 86.2 per cent of young people aged 19 were qualified to at least Level 2, an increase of 1.1 pts since 2012. The proportion of young people aged 19 qualified to Level 2 or higher has been on a steadily rising trend in recent years, and by 2013 was 19.5 pts higher than in 2004 (Table 1 below).

Table 1: Percentage of young people qualified to Level 2 or higher, and Level 3, by age and cohort

Coverage: England

	Cohort (19 in...)	Number in cohort	Percentage attaining by age			
			16	17	18	19
Level 2 or higher	2004	614,564	49.6	56.6	62.4	66.7
	2005	618,397	50.4	58.5	64.9	69.2
	2006	633,117	52.2	59.9	66.9	71.1
	2007	653,657	53.0	61.6	69.3	73.6
	2008	647,457	55.3	64.2	72.0	76.3
	2009	658,408	57.5	66.5	74.5	78.6
	2010	665,139	58.9	68.3	76.9	81.0
	2011	661,689	61.0	70.7	79.6	83.4
	2012	640,619	64.0	73.6	82.0	85.1
	2013	640,930	67.2	76.0	83.5	86.2
	2014	626,238	69.3	77.3	84.3	
	2015	619,372	69.5	77.4		
	2016	631,710	67.5			
Level 3	2004	614,564	0.1	11.8	36.4	42.2
	2005	618,397	0.1	15.0	39.1	45.6
	2006	633,117	0.1	15.2	40.2	46.9
	2007	653,657	0.1	15.8	41.3	48.2
	2008	647,457	0.1	16.0	42.0	49.8
	2009	658,408	0.1	17.1	43.3	51.4
	2010	665,139	0.1	17.0	44.8	53.9
	2011	661,689	0.1	17.4	47.5	56.6
	2012	640,619	0.1	18.2	49.0	58.0
	2013	640,930	0.1	23.1	50.5	59.1
	2014	626,238	0.1	23.4	51.3	
	2015	619,372	0.1	23.1		
	2016	631,710	0.1			

The rise in the proportion of young people attaining Level 2 or higher by age 19 was driven by the rise in attainment by age 16, up 3.2 pts between 2012 and 2013. The proportion of young people attaining Level 2 between ages 16 and 19 fell between 2012 and 2013, from 21.1 per cent to 19.0 per cent – this is the second successive fall in a series that had otherwise increased each year since 2004. However, the progression rate to Level 2 between 16 and 19, that is the proportion of

those without Level 2 at 16 who attained by age 19, was roughly unchanged (58% compared to 59% in 2012).

The proportion of 16 year olds attaining Level 2 or higher by 16 fell by 2 ppts for the 19 in 2016 cohort (16 in 2013) which was the first fall in the time series. The proportion achieving Level 2 through GCSEs rose by 0.6 ppts but Level 2 attainment through other routes fell by 2.6 ppts. This reflects the fact that the measure of Level 2 in this SFR only includes full qualifications rather than aggregating smaller vocational qualifications together. Since larger qualifications will no longer be counted in the School Performance Tables from 2014, participation in these courses is likely to have fallen. More information is available in the [Technical Notes \(section 5\)](#)

Level 3

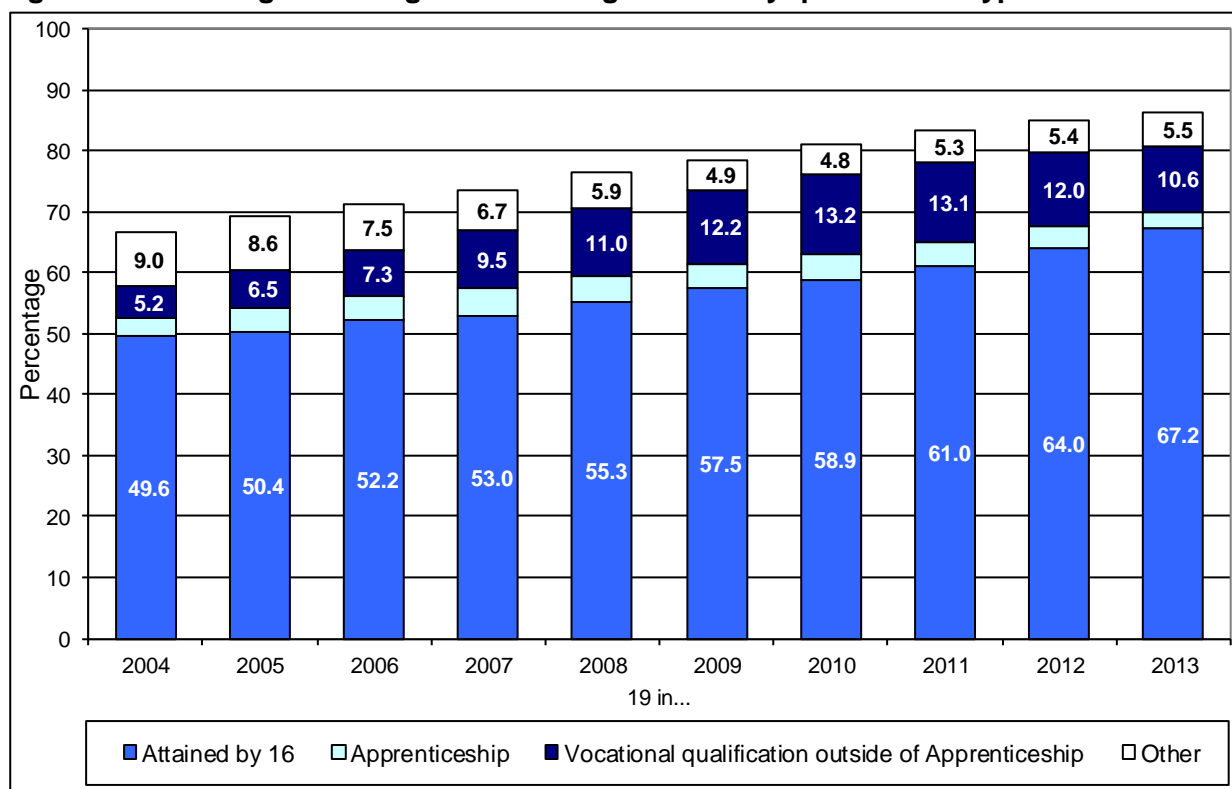
In 2013, 59.1 per cent of young people aged 19 were qualified to Level 3, an increase of 1.1 ppts since 2012, and 16.9 ppts since 2004. The increase in 2013 was smaller than in recent years – in 2011 and 2012 Level 3 at 19 rose by 2.7 ppts and 1.4 ppts respectively.

Qualification Type

Level 2 or higher

The proportion of young people attaining Level 2 or higher between 16 and 19 through vocational qualifications (other than Apprenticeships) fell by 1.4 ppts between 2012 and 2013, from 12.0 per cent to 10.6 per cent (Figure 1), the third successive fall. Prior to 2011, the long term trend had been for rising attainment through post-16 Level 2 vocational qualifications – from 5.2 per cent in 2004 to 13.2 per cent in 2010.

Figure 1: Percentage attaining Level 2 or higher at 19 by qualification type and cohort



The proportion of young people attaining Level 2 between 16 and 19 through Apprenticeships also fell between 2012 and 2013, from 3.7 per cent to 2.9 per cent.

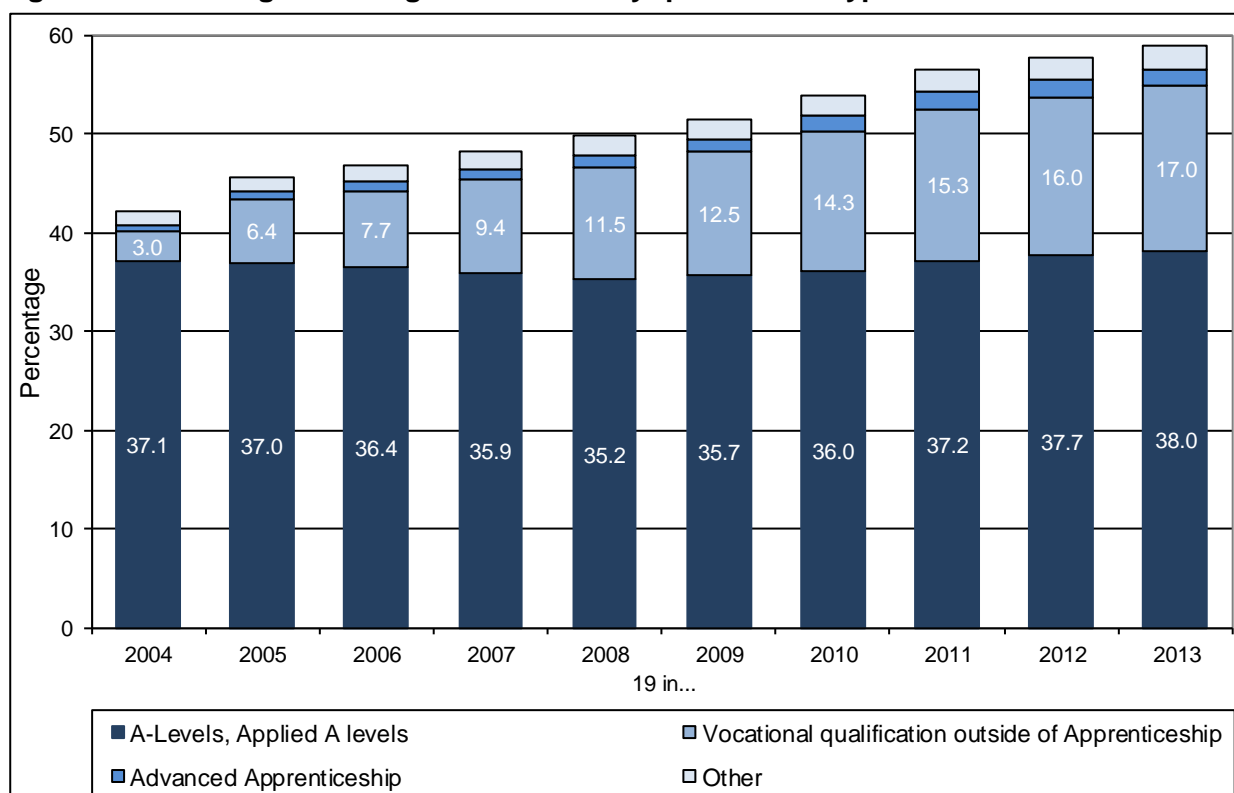
It should be noted that the falls observed in the proportion of young people gaining Level 2 through these qualification types may not necessarily reflect fewer achievements, but can also be driven by higher attainment at age 16 – i.e. young people already having achieved Level 2. In addition,

qualifications in the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework (QCF) are only treated as full if they meet the minimum threshold criteria for all Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs), see [Technical Notes \(section 4\)](#) for more information.

Level 3

The proportion of young people attaining Level 3 at 19 through A-levels rose for the fifth successive year, having previously been falling between 2004 and 2008 (see Figure 2). The proportion achieving through A-levels rose by 0.4 ppts, from 37.7 per cent in 2012 to 38.0 per cent in 2013.

Figure 2: Percentage attaining Level 3 at 19 by qualification type and cohort



Apart from A-levels, the main other driver of increased Level 3 attainment at 19 was attainment through vocational qualifications (other than Level 3 Apprenticeships), which rose by 0.9 ppts between 2012 and 2013. This is a continuation of a long running trend – the proportion of young people attaining Level 3 at 19 through vocational qualifications (other than Apprenticeships) has risen from 3.0 per cent in 2004 to 17.0 per cent in 2013.

Between 2012 and 2013 there was a fall in the proportion of 19 year olds attaining Level 3 via Advanced Apprenticeships, from 1.9 per cent to 1.6 per cent.

Institution Type

The proportion of young people attaining Level 2 post-16 fell between 2012 and 2013 across most institution types, reflecting the overall fall in the proportion of young people attaining Level 2 between 16 and 19. The largest falls were in attainment of Level 2 through Further Education (FE) colleges (-1.0 ppts), and through Maintained Schools (-0.6 ppts). There was a small rise of 0.2 ppts in the proportion of young people attaining a Level 2 post-16 via an Academy.

At Level 3, 25.5 per cent of young people attaining by age 19 did so through a state-funded schools, up 0.7 ppts since 2012. Within this, the proportion attaining through academies rose by 3.5 ppts, and there was a 2.8 ppts decrease in attainment through local authority maintained schools. This reflects the increase in the number of local authority maintained schools becoming academies.

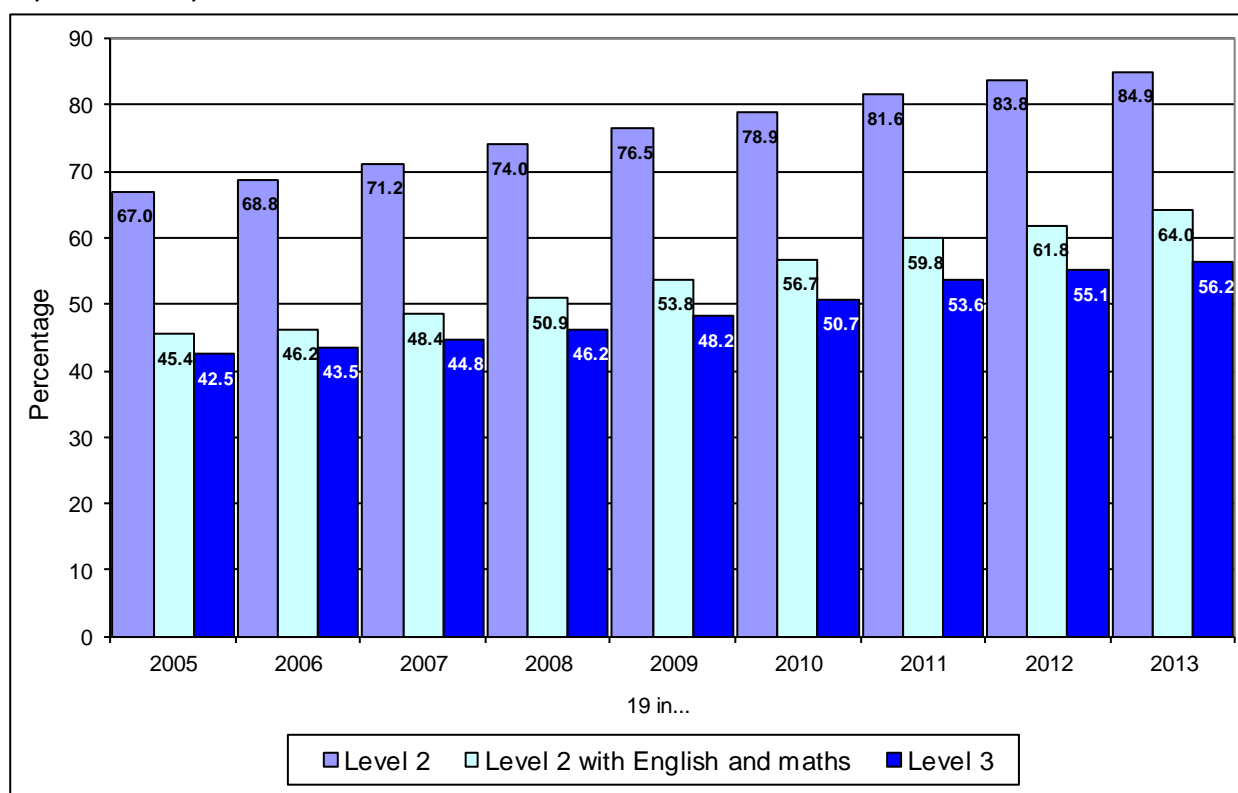
Attainment of those in the state sector at academic age 15

The remaining sections of the SFR report on attainment for young people who were in the state sector (maintained schools and academies) at academic age 15. As well as overall attainment for this group, we report on attainment by characteristics, as recorded in the school census at academic age 15.

Note that there are some differences in the methodology between the measures of attainment for young people who were in the state sector at academic age 15 and those relating to all young people nationally, so they should not be directly compared – see [Technical Notes \(section 3\)](#) for further details.

Figure 3 shows attainment for young people aged 19 in 2005 to 2013, based on those who were in the state sector at academic age 15. It shows attainment by age 19 at Level 2 or higher, Level 2 including English and maths (at GCSE A*-C or equivalent), and Level 3.

Figure 3: Percentage attaining Level 2, Level 2 with English and maths, and Level 3 by age 19, 2005-2013, state sector



The proportion of young people in the state sector at academic age 15 who attain Level 2 or higher by age 19 rose by 1.2 ppts between 2012 and 2013, to 84.9 per cent. This was driven by an increase in attainment at age 16 – between the 19 in 2012 and 19 in 2013 cohorts, attainment of Level 2 post-16 actually fell by 2.1 ppts. However, attainment of Level 2 between 16 and 19 as a proportion of those below Level 2 at 16 was roughly unchanged – 54% in 2013 compared to 55% in 2012.

The proportion of young people aged 19 in 2013 that attained Level 2 with English and maths was 64.0 per cent, an increase of 2.2 ppts from 2012. The attainment of Level 2 with English and maths has increased by 18.6 ppts since 2005 compared to the overall Level 2 attainment increase of 17.9 ppts (see '[English and maths at Level 2 \(GCSE A*-C or equivalent\)](#)' commentary for information on English and maths progression between ages 16 and 19).

At Level 3, attainment by age 19 for those formerly in the state sector stood at 56.2 per cent in 2013, up from 55.1 per cent in 2012. The rate at which Level 3 by age 19 has been increasing has been slowing in recent years. In 2013, it increased by 1.1 ppts, compared to 1.6 ppts in 2012 and

2.8 ppts in 2011.

Gender

Attainment by age 19 continues to be higher amongst females than males. In 2013, 87.8 per cent of females attained Level 2 or higher by age 19, compared to 82.2 per cent of males, a gap of 5.6 ppts. The 'attainment gap' between males and females was roughly unchanged between 2012 and 2013 (-0.1ppts) having been reducing relatively quickly in previous years (from 10.2 ppts in 2005 to 5.7 ppts in 2012).

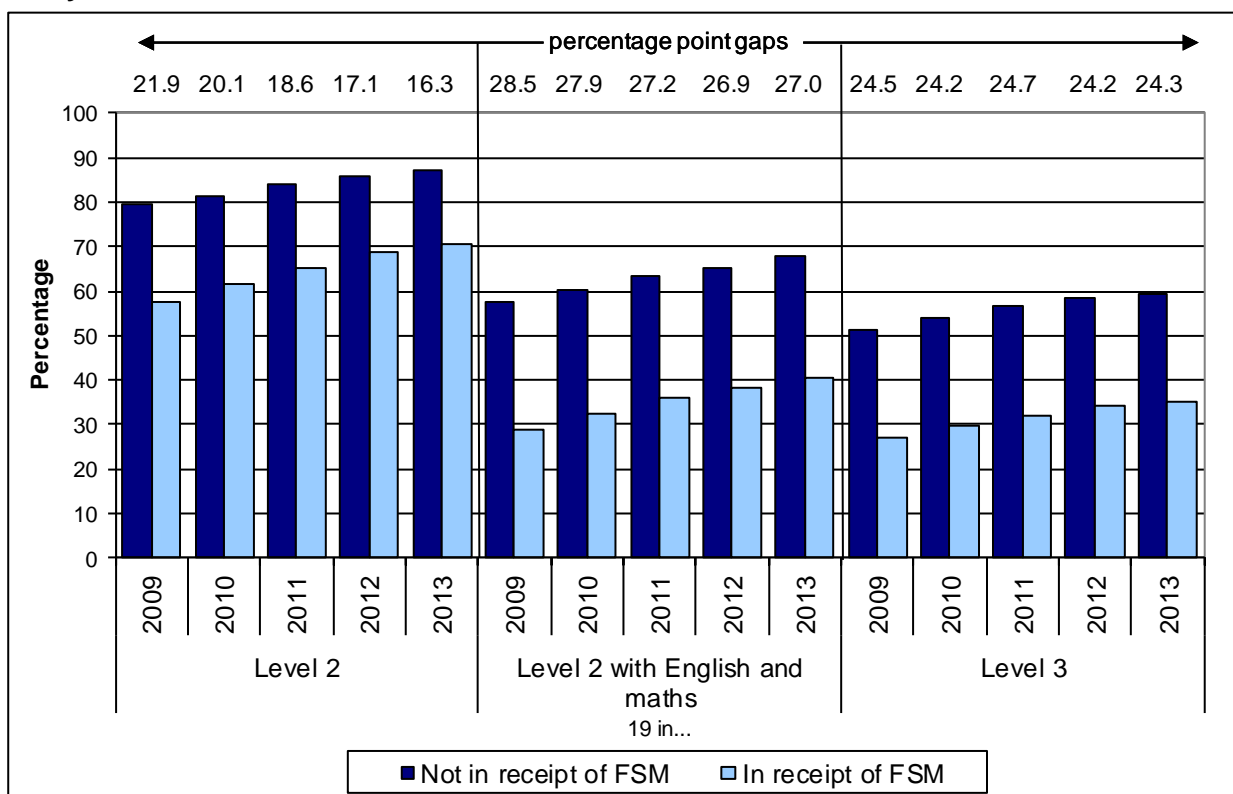
In 2013 66.9 per cent of females attained Level 2 or higher with English and maths by age 19, compared to 61.3 per cent of males. The gap in attainment of Level 2 with English and maths had been narrowing slowly until 2011 but increased by 0.2 ppts between 2011 and 2012 and by 0.7 ppts between 2012 and 2013, to 5.7 ppts.

At Level 3, the attainment gap at age 19 is larger - 60.7 per cent of females attained Level 3 by age 19 in 2013, compared to 51.9 per cent of males, a gap of 8.8 ppts. Up until 2009, the gap was growing, but between 2009 and 2012 it reduced by 3.0 ppts, this year it has widened by 0.5 ppts.

Free School Meals (FSM)

Young people known to be eligible for FSM at academic age 15 have lower attainment at 19 than their peers who were not known to be eligible, for each of the measures. Figure 4 shows attainment by FSM, and the attainment gap between the FSM group and their peers, for each of the main measures since 2009.

Figure 4: Percentage attaining Level 2, Level 2 with English and maths, and Level 3 by age 19, by FSM and cohort



In 2013, 70.8 per cent of young people who were eligible for FSM at academic age 15 had achieved Level 2 or higher by age 19, compared to 87.1 per cent of those who were not – an attainment gap of 16.3 ppts. The attainment gap has been narrowing relatively quickly over time – since 2009 it has closed by 5.5 ppts. Between 2012 and 2013 it reduced by 0.8 ppts.

The gap between those eligible for FSM at academic age 15 and those not eligible in attainment of Level 2 or higher with English and maths by age 19 was 27.0 ppts in 2013 – 40.7 per cent of the FSM group achieved this compared to 67.7 per cent of their peers. The gap in attainment by FSM was roughly unchanged between 2012 and 2013 (+0.1 ppts). This is the first time in the series that the gap has failed to narrow although it had been narrowing slower than the overall Level 2 or higher measure.

At Level 3, the gap in attainment at age 19 between those eligible for FSM at academic age 15 and their peers was also roughly unchanged (+0.1 ppts between 2012 and 2013). In 2013, 35.2 per cent of young people eligible for FSM at academic age 15 attained Level 3 by age 19, compared to 59.5 per cent of their peers, a gap of 24.3 ppts.

Ethnicity

The proportion of young people achieving the three main measures of attainment by age 19 varies considerably across different ethnic groups.

Young people in the White summary group have the lowest attainment of all the summary groups in Level 2 at 19, at 84.4 per cent, compared to 85.5 per cent of the Mixed group, 87.5 per cent of the Black group and 89.3 per cent of the Asian group. Between 2012 and 2013, the gap between the White group and the Asian and Black groups both narrowed by 0.5 ppts. The Mixed group saw the largest increase between 2012 and 2013, of 1.4 ppts, leading to the gap between it and the White group widening by 0.2 ppts.

All ethnic groups experienced a rise in attainment at Level 2 or higher with English and maths. The White summary group attainment at 19 rose by 2.3 ppts to 63.8 per cent and the Black group increased by 1.8 ppts to 60.2 per cent, the lowest of the four groups. The Asian group rose by 1.7 ppts and had the highest attainment in 2013 with 69.5 per cent achieving Level 2 or higher with English and maths. The Mixed group increased by 1.4 ppts to 63.7 per cent.

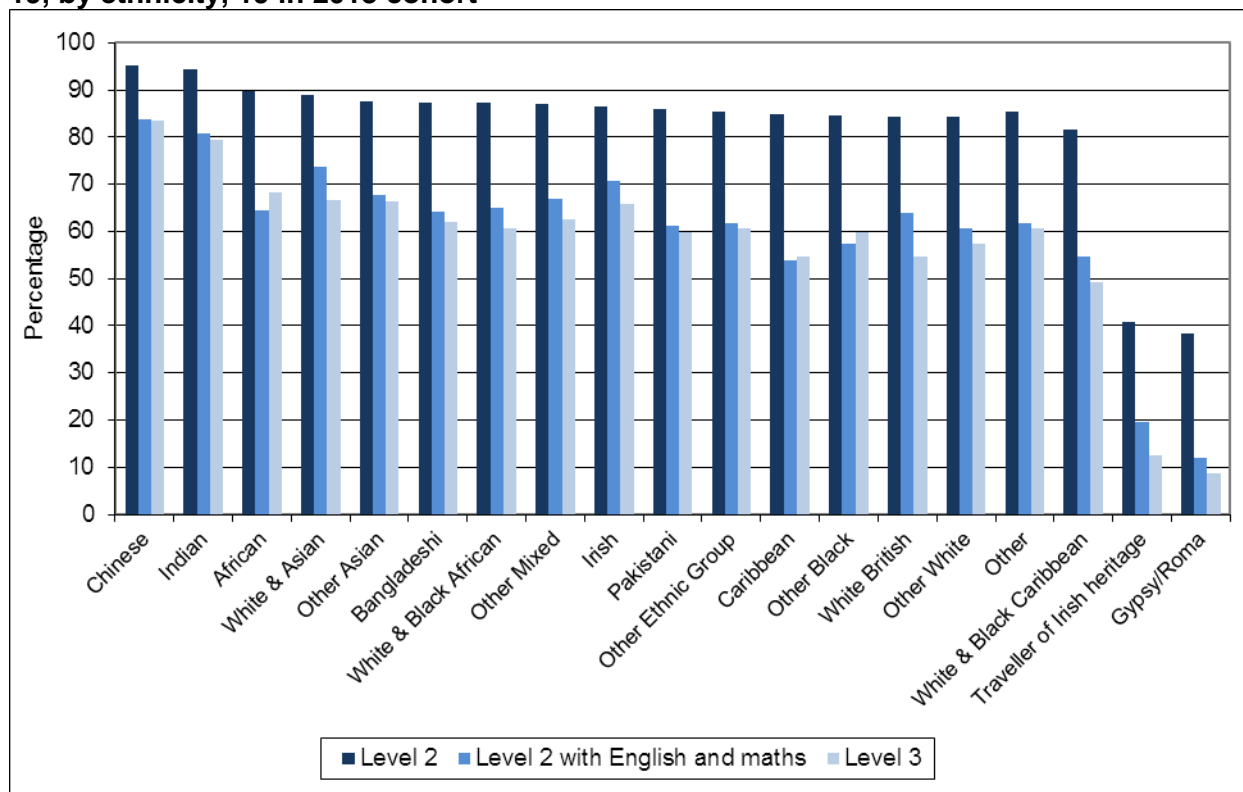
At Level 3, the White summary group has the lowest attainment by age 19, at 54.7 per cent, compared to 58.5 per cent for the Mixed group, 62.8 for the Black group, and 68.1 per cent for the Asian group.

For each measure, the Black summary group's attainment by 19 has increased the most since the start of the time series in 2007. The Level 2 or higher attainment increased by 19.0 ppts, Level 2 or higher with English and maths has increased by 22.9 ppts and Level 3 attainment by 19 by 20.0 ppts.

Within each of the summary ethnic groups, there can be significant variation in attainment by individual ethnic group. Figure 5 shows attainment at age 19 in 2013 by individual ethnic group for the main three measures.

Chinese and Indian young people stand apart as having notably higher attainment at age 19 based on each of the three measures, whilst young people in the Travellers of Irish Heritage and Gypsy / Roma ethnic groups have notably lower attainment (but based on very small cohort sizes).

Figure 5: Percentage attaining Level 2, Level 2 with English and maths, and Level 3 by age 19, by ethnicity, 19 in 2013 cohort



Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Attainment by age 19 by young people who were identified as having some form of special educational need (SEN) at academic age 15 is considerably lower across the three measures compared to young people without any identified SEN. Figure 6 shows attainment at age 19 in 2009 and 2013 for each of the SEN categories.

The SEN categories reflect the level of support required by the young person to assist them with their learning, with the School Action group requiring the least additional support, the School Action Plus group a higher level of support, and the Statement group requiring the most support, [see Technical Notes \(section 8\) for more detail](#).

At Level 2, the attainment gaps at 19 between the School Action and School Action Plus groups and the no SEN groups were 17.0 ppts and 32.6 ppts respectively in 2013. These gaps have narrowed considerably since 2009, when they stood at 29.6 ppts and 42.9 ppts respectively. However, over the same period the gap between the Statement of SEN group and the no SEN group has widened from 54.7 ppts to 55.9 ppts. Between 2012 and 2013 the gap widened by 0.3 ppts.

The recent trends in attainment of Level 2 with English and maths at 19 by SEN group are slightly different. Since 2009, the gap between the no SEN group and the School Action group has narrowed by 4.4 ppts, but the gap between the no SEN and School Action plus group has widened by 1.9 ppts, and there has been an even bigger increase in the gap between the no SEN and Statement of SEN group, which widened by 9.5 ppts. A similar pattern was observed at Level 3. Table 2 shows how the gap between the no SEN group and the Statement of SEN group has changed in recent years, for each of the three main measures.

Figure 6: Percentage attaining Level 2, Level 2 with English and maths, and Level 3 by age 19, by SEN, including gap between SEN group and no SEN, 19 in 2009 and 2013 cohorts

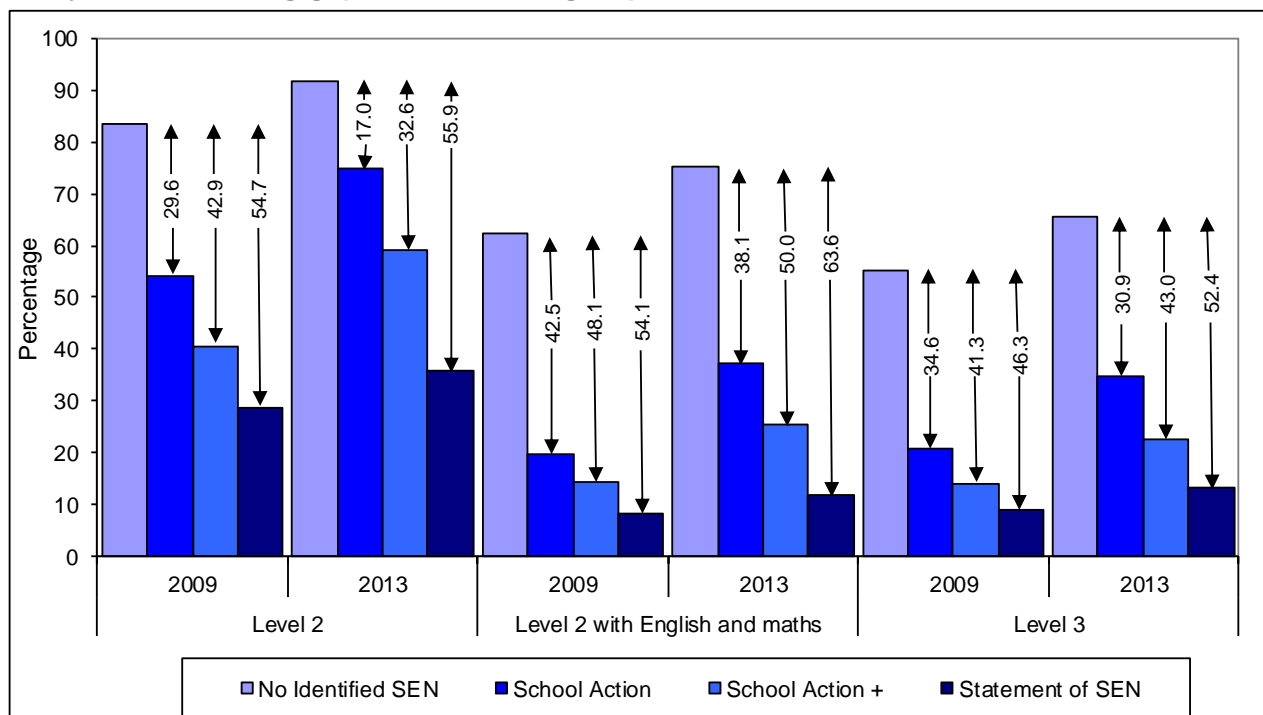


Table 2: Gap in attainment at 19 between No SEN and SEN with Statement group, 2009 to 2013 (ppts)

	Cohort (19 in...)				
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Level 2	54.7	55.1	55.3	55.6	55.9
Level 2 with English and maths	54.1	56.9	59.5	61.5	63.6
Level 3	46.3	47.9	50.8	51.8	52.4

English and maths at Level 2 (GCSE A*-C or equivalent)

Figure 7 shows the recent trends in attainment of GCSE A*-C or equivalent qualifications in English and maths at age 16 and 19.

In 2013, 69.0 per cent of young people had achieved a GCSE A*-C in English by age 19, and a further 5.6 per cent had achieved a GCSE equivalent English qualification, so that 74.6 per cent had achieved Level 2 English in total. In maths, 70.5 per cent of young people achieved Level 2 by age 19, with 65.2 per cent doing so through a GCSE A*-C and 5.3 per cent through a GCSE equivalent.

Figure 7: Attainment at GCSE A*-C or equivalent in English and maths at age 16 and 16-19, 2009 to 2013

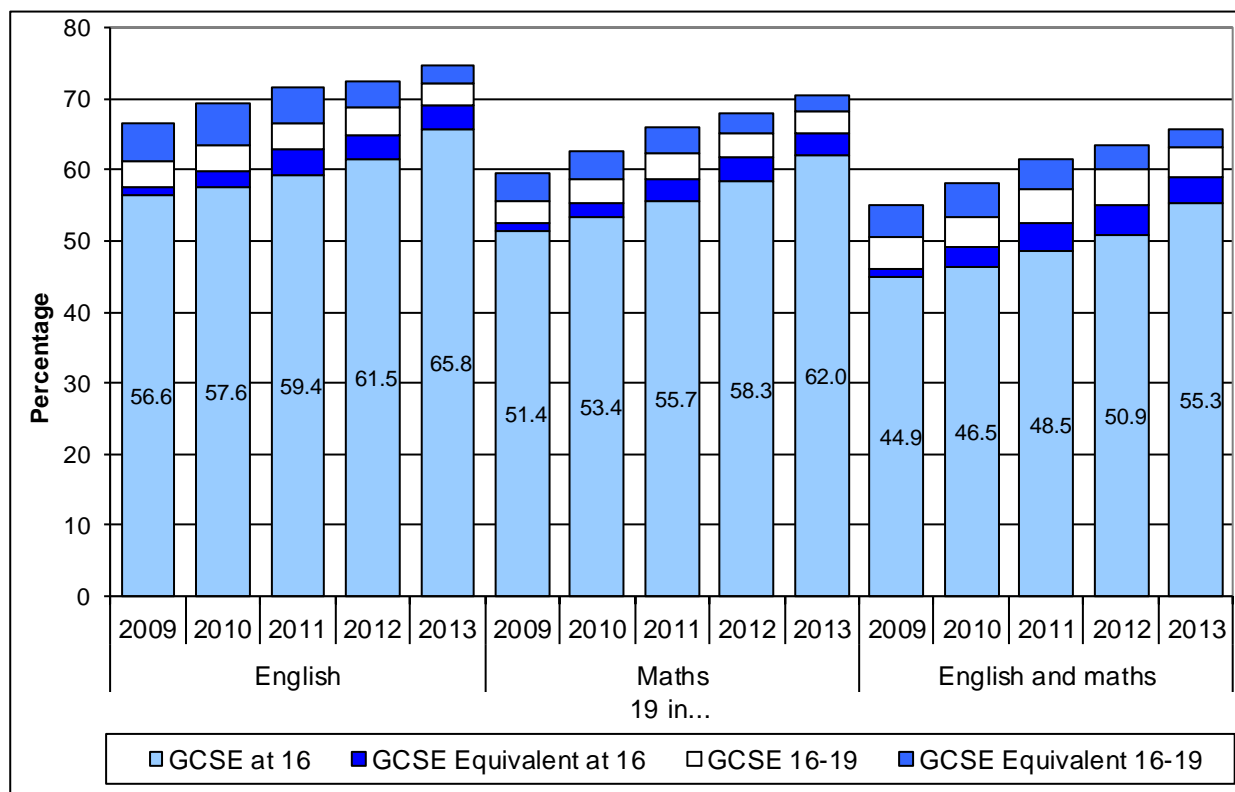


Table 3 looks at the progression rates in English and maths between 16 and 19, that is, the proportion of those below Level 2 at 16 who gain Level 2 between 16 and 19.

In English 9.3 per cent of young people in the 19 in 2013 cohort who had not achieved GCSE A*-C at age 16 achieved that level by age 19, down from 10.1 per cent in 2012, which was the first fall in the time series. A similar pattern can be observed in the progression rates for those who failed to achieve GCSE A*-C maths at 16, 8.3 per cent of whom achieved that level by age 19 in 2013, down from 8.6 per cent in 2012. Overall, in 2013 9.5 per cent of young people who had not achieved GCSE A*-C in English, maths or both at age 16 had achieved both by age 19, compared to 10.1 per cent in 2012.

Table 3: Percentage of young people gaining English and maths at GCSE A*-C or equivalent between ages 16 and 19, of those below that level at age 16

Cohort (19 in...)	English		Maths		English and maths*	
	GCSE A*-C	GCSE A*-C and equivalent	GCSE A*-C	GCSE A*-C and equivalent	GCSE A*-C	GCSE A*-C and equivalent
2005	6.1	14.1	5.3	9.2	5.9	10.2
2006	6.3	15.5	5.7	10.9	6.2	11.5
2007	7.2	18.1	6.3	12.6	7.0	13.8
2008	7.6	19.6	6.2	13.5	7.2	14.9
2009	8.1	21.3	6.6	14.9	7.8	16.4
2010	8.5	23.5	6.8	16.5	8.1	18.1
2011	9.4	23.6	7.9	17.4	9.2	18.9
2012	10.1	21.7	8.6	16.7	10.1	18.4
2013	9.3	17.9	8.3	15.6	9.5	16.3

* The proportion of young people who lack either/both L2 English or maths at 16 who have both by 19

Looking at the wider measures, which include other Level 2 English and maths, the trend is similar between 2012 and 2013. Across both English and maths there were falls in the progression rates

between age 16 and 19 for the second year running. In English the proportion of young people failing to achieve Level 2 at 16 who attained that level by age 19 fell from 21.7 per cent to 17.9 per cent, and in maths it fell from 16.7 per cent to 15.6 per cent. For English and maths the progression rate fell from 18.4 per cent to 16.3 per cent.

For the first time, the publication includes tables on English and maths attainment at 16 and 19 by characteristics. These are shown in additional tables 12a to 12g and show the data split by gender, FSM eligibility, SEN status, deprivation (IDACI) and ethnicity. Headlines from these tables are:

Attainment of English at age 19 is much higher amongst females than males, but attainment of maths is at a similar level. In English, 76.0 per cent of females attained GCSE A*-C at age 19, compared to 62.3 per cent of males, and when including other Level 2 qualifications 80.1 per cent of females attained by age 19 compared to 69.3 per cent of males. In maths, 65.8 per cent of females and 64.6 per cent of males attained GCSE A*-C at age 19, whilst 70.6 per cent of females attained any Level 2, compared to 70.4 per cent of males.

43.1 per cent of young people who were in receipt of FSM at age 15 attained English and maths (GCSE A*-C or equivalent) by age 19, compared to 69.3 per cent of the non-FSM group.

Only 12.8 per cent of young people who had a Statement of SEN at age 15 attained GCSE A*-C or equivalent in English and maths by age 19, compared to 28.5 per cent of the School Action Plus group, 39.5 per cent of the School Action group, and 76.8 per cent of those with no identified SEN.

Impact Indicators

In May 2011 the Department published its Business Plan⁴, which included a commitment to publish information on attainment at 19 and between 16 and 19 as part of a set of impact indicators. The most recent figures and historical trends for these indicators are set out below.

Indicator 1(3): Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by age 19

	Cohort, 19 in...									
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Percentage	42.2	45.6	46.9	48.2	49.8	51.4	53.9	56.6	58.0	59.1

Indicator 1(4): Attainment of Level 2 in English and Maths at age 19 for those who had not achieved this level by 16

	Cohort, 19 in...									
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
Percentage	10.2	11.5	13.8	14.9	16.4	18.1	18.9	18.4	16.3	

Indicator 3(9): Attainment gap at age 19 between FSM pupils and the rest in achieving Level 3 qualifications

	Cohort, 19 in...									
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
% Level 3 at 19, not eligible for FSM	46.3	47.2	48.4	49.7	51.4	53.9	56.7	58.2	59.5	
% Level 3 at 19, eligible for FSM	19.9	20.9	22.7	24.5	26.9	29.7	31.9	34.1	35.2	
FSM gap (percentage points)	26.4	26.3	25.6	25.2	24.5	24.2	24.7	24.2	24.3	

Social Mobility Indicators

The Government's Social Mobility Strategy "Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers" was published in April 2011, and included a set of indicators against which success in improving social mobility could be assessed, including indicators for attainment of Level 3 at 19 by FSM. The most recent figures and historical trends for these indicators are set out below.

(a) Proportion achieving a Level 3 qualification by age 19 (by FSM)

See impact indicator 3(9) table above

(b) Proportion achieving 2+ A-levels⁵ by age 19 (by FSM)

	Cohort, 19 in...									
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
Not eligible for FSM	37.0	36.3	35.8	34.9	35.3	35.5	36.9	37.5	37.9	
Eligible for FSM	14.3	14.4	14.0	13.7	14.4	14.7	15.2	15.6	15.9	
FSM gap (percentage points)	22.7	21.9	21.8	21.3	20.9	20.8	21.7	21.9	21.9	

(c) Proportion achieving non A-level Level 3 qualifications by age 19 (by FSM)

	Cohort, 19 in...									
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
Not eligible for FSM	9.3	10.9	12.6	14.7	16.1	18.3	19.8	20.7	21.6	
Eligible for FSM	5.5	6.5	8.7	10.8	12.5	14.9	16.7	18.4	19.3	
FSM gap (percentage points)	3.8	4.3	3.9	3.9	3.6	3.4	3.1	2.3	2.3	

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/221754/department_20for_20education_20business_20plan_202012_202015.pdf

⁵ International Baccalaureates are reported with A-levels in indicator 3(9)

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.

The Department has a set of statistical policies in line with the *Code of Practice for Official*

Statistics, these are published at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-official-statistics-published-by-the-department-for-education>.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires that reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that all published or disseminated statistics produced by the DfE protect confidentiality.

A cross (x) is used in the tables published in this release to signify a suppressed value where publication of that figure would be disclosive. Values of 1 or 2, or a percentage based on 1 or 2 young people who achieved a particular level are suppressed. This suppression is consistent with the Departmental statistical policy which can be found at www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190768/Confidentiality_Policy_v4.pdf

REVISIONS

Figures in this publication revise and update those published in SFR 13/2013 (released in March 2013). Details of revisions to previous figures can be found in the Technical Notes. There are no planned revisions to these statistics prior to next year's publication.

Any unplanned revisions will be made in accordance with the Departmental statistical policy on revisions which can be found at www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190767/Revisions_Policy_v3.pdf

YOUR FEEDBACK

Please email post16.statistics@education.gsi.gov.uk if you have comments on the content or presentation of this release so that we can take account of your needs in future editions.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Level 2 and 3 Attainment by Young People in England Measured Using Matched Administrative Data: Attainment by Age 19 in 2012
www.gov.uk/government/publications/attainment-by-young-people-in-england-measured-using-matched-administrative-data-by-age-19-in-2012

Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: academic year 2012 to 2013

www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2012-to-2013-revised

GCSE and Equivalent Attainment by Pupil Characteristics in England

www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-and-equivalent-attainment-by-pupil-characteristics-2012-to-2013

A level and other level 3 results, England 2012 to 2013 (revised)

www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-level-and-other-level-3-results-england-2012-to-2013-revised

Schools in Wales: Examination Performance, 2012

This publication is produced by the Welsh Assembly Government and includes an analysis of GCSE and A level results. It was published on 29 May 2013 and is available at:

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

Summary statistics for attainment, destinations and healthy living

This publication was produced by the *Scottish Executive* and presents information on attainment of school leavers in Scotland in 2011/12:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/06/7503

Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers

This contains information on the qualifications and destinations of Northern Ireland school leavers. The tables relate to the destination (e.g. higher education/further education/employment) and highest level of qualification obtained for grammar and non-grammar school leavers, by sex of pupil and management type.

www.deni.gov.uk/32_national_statistics_school_leavers_pg

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TECHNICAL NOTE

1. Background

Estimates reported in this SFR are derived from matched administrative data. The first publication of figures from this methodology was in February 2005. The matched data methodology was introduced on the recommendation of a National Statistics Quality Review. The report “National Statistics Quality Review Series, Report No.38, Review of the Measurement of Attainment of Young People” is available at:

www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/quality/quality-reviews/theme/children--education-and-skills/nsqr-38/index.html

2. Methodology

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

- Pupil level Schools Census database containing information on the participation and personal characteristics of pupils in state schools, collected by DfE.
- Awarding Body data including that collected as part of the School and Colleges Performance Tables exercise.
- National Information System for Vocational Qualifications (NISVQ) database containing information on people’s vocational achievements at all institutions, collected from awarding bodies.
- Individualised Learner Record (ILR) database covering participation and qualifications obtained in Further Education (FE) and Work-based Learning (WBL), collected by the FE Data Service from learning providers.

Further information on these datasets is available in DfE’s Statement of Administrative Sources which can be reached via the link below:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-official-statistics-published-by-the-department-for-education

The number of eligible qualifications not recorded in the datasets is considered to be minimal. The level of matching between data sources is very high.

Achievement records from Awarding Body data, NISVQ and ILR are used to calculate the numerators. Results are only published at an aggregate level to protect the confidentiality of individuals.

The 19 in 2013 cohort is the group of pupils aged 19 by the end of the 2012/13 academic year (ie aged 19 on 31/08/2013) as outlined in the table below.

Relationship between academic year, academic age and year group, for the 19 in 2013 cohort.

Academic year	Academic age (years)	Year group	Age by end of academic year
2008/09	14	10	15
2009/10	15	11	16
2010/11	16	12	17
2011/12	17	13	18
2012/13	18	14	19

3. Coverage and comparability

Tables 1 to 5 - the main national, institution type, and qualification type tables - include students in England of the relevant age who are recorded as achieving Level 2 or Level 3. Some Level 2s achieved through Level 3 qualifications are discounted to mitigate double counting caused by inward migration (for further information see section on **numerator adjustments** below). The denominators for these tables are the total school population (including independent schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)) for the cohort concerned in the academic year it turned 15 (i.e. generally year 10). These tables are not comparable with Tables 6 onwards.

Tables 6 to 14b, referring to young people in the state sector, are based on young people who were included in the spring pupil level census in the year in which they turned 16 (academic age 15). As well as pupils in maintained mainstream schools, academies and maintained special schools, this will also include the small number of pupils attending non-maintained special schools as these are covered by the pupil level census.

The coverage of the local authority (LA) analyses by Free School Meals status and Special Educational Need status at 15 (Table 15a to 23) is also young people formerly in the state sector. Assignment to local authority is based on the school attended in the academic year the young person turned 16. As with the school performance tables the LA of the school is based on the administrative LA rather than its postcode (this only differs in a very small number of cases). The estimates in these tables are directly comparable with national estimates for the state sector (Tables 6 to 14b), but are not comparable with either the main national tables (Tables 1 to 5) or the LA tables covering all school types (Tables 24 to 26).

Tables 24 to 26 showing estimates for local authorities including all school types are not directly comparable with the national estimates (Tables 1 to 5). While the source for their denominators is the same (School Census in year turned 15 (generally year 10)) the numerators exclude anyone entering the matched data for the first time post-16. As with the state sector, assignment to local authority for the numerators is based on where the young person was studying in the year then turned 16 (regardless of where they attain Level 2 or 3). These LA tables are also not comparable with those covering the state sector nationally and at LA level (Tables 6 to 23).

4. Qualifications counted

Achievements in the following qualifications are counted at Level 2+:

- 1 short GCSE at grade A* to C equals 10%
- 1 full GCSE at grade A* to C equals 20%
- 1 Double Award GCSE (including VGCSEs) at grade A* to C equals 40%
- 1 “part” intermediate GNVQ equals 40%
- 1 “full” intermediate GNVQ equals 80%
- 1 AS level (including VCE) at grade A to E equals 50%
- 1 A/A2 level (including VCE) at grade A to E equals 100%
- 1 NVQ pass at Level 2 or 3 equals 100% (this does not include qualifications accredited into the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework (QCF) using the term “NVQ” in the title)
- 1 pass with at least 325 guided learning hours (GLH) in a vocationally related qualification (VRQ) including QCF qualifications ⁶ pass at Level 2 or Level 3 (with minimum 595 GLH) equals 100%
- 1 International Baccalaureate pass equals 100%
- 1 Apprenticeship pass equals 100%
- 1 Advanced Extension Award equals 5%
- 1 “Approved” iGCSE from 2008/9 onwards counts 20%
- 1 Pre-U Principal Subject counts 80%

⁶ A complete list of VRQ qualification codes used in the measure is available on request.

- 1 Pre-U Short Course Subject counts 40%

Achievements in the following qualifications are counted at Level 3:

- 1 AS level (including Applied and VCE equivalents) at grade A to E equals 25%
- 1 A/A2 level (including Applied and VCE equivalents) at grade A to E equals 50%
- 1 NVQ pass at Level 3 100% (this does not include for qualifications accredited into the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework (QCF) using the term "NVQ" in the title)
- 1 pass with at least 595 guided learning hours in a vocationally related qualification (VRQ) including QCF qualifications at Level 3 equals 100%
- 1 International Baccalaureate pass equals 100%
- 1 Advanced Apprenticeship pass equals 100%
- 1 Pre-U Principal Subject counts 50% (counted as A levels in L3 qualification type table)
- 1 Pre-U Short Course Subject counts 25% (counted as AS levels in L3 qualification type table)
- 1 Advanced Extension Award equals 5%

Achievements in the following qualifications are counted as Level 2 English:

- For GCSE A*-C: Full GCSE or approved iGCSE in English at grades A*-C or AS/A level passes
- For Level 2 equivalents: passes in Level 2 or 3 Key Skills in Communication; Level 2 Basic Skills in Adult Literacy; Level 2 Functional Skills in English

Achievements in the following qualifications are counted as Level 2 maths:

- For GCSE A*-C: Full GCSE or approved iGCSE in Maths at grades A*-C or AS/A level and IB passes.
- For Level 2 equivalents: passes in Level 2 or 3 Key Skills in Application of number; Level 2 Basic Skills in Adult Numeracy; Level 2 Functional Skills in Maths; Free Standing Maths at level 2 or 3.

Achievements in the following qualifications are counted as Level 1 English:

- GCSE D-G: Full GCSE or approved iGCSE in English at grades D-G and passes in Level 1 Key Skills in Communication; Level 1 Basic Skills in Adult Literacy; Level 1 Functional Skills in English

Achievements in the following qualifications are counted as Level 1 maths:

- GCSE D-G: Full GCSE or approved iGCSE in Maths at grades D-G and passes in Level 1 Key Skills in Application of number; Level 1 Basic Skills in Adult Numeracy; Level 1 Functional Skills in Maths; Free Standing Maths at level 1.

Although the relevant Key Skills at Level 3 are counted as English/maths and Free Standing Maths at Level 3 is counted as maths, these qualifications are no longer counted towards the overall Level 2/3 measures. Previously a Key Skills Pass at L3 counted 20% towards the Level 2 measure and 15% towards the Level 3 measure. Free Standing Maths at Level 3 previously counted as 10% at both Level 2 and 3. This change has had a negligible affect overall.

Combinations of academic qualifications at different levels are allowed where their parts add up to 100 per cent for that level. For example a candidate with 3 full GCSEs at grades A* to C (20% each) and 1 AS level (50%) would be deemed to have attained a Level 2 (60% + 50% = 110%).

GCSEs and GNVQs are subject to discounting, as are AS and A/A2 levels. For example, say a learner gains an AS level (25% L3) in 2009 and then an A level (50% L3) in the same subject in

2010. Discounting means the person has 25% of a full Level 3 in 2009 and then 50% in 2010 as the AS level is replaced by the full A level.

In tables 3 and 4 people are assigned to qualification types in the following order:

Level 2: 5 GCSEs; Apprenticeships; NVQs and VRQs; GNVQs or a combination of GNVQs and GCSEs; Level 3 Qualifications; Combination of qualifications.

Level 3: A-Levels (including Applied A levels/AVCEs/Pre-U Principal Subject); International Baccalaureate; AS Levels; Advanced Apprenticeship; NVQs and VRQs; Other (including Level 3 Diploma)

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) are counted as full Level 2 or 3 qualifications. However, any qualifications now coming under the Qualifications Curriculum Framework (QCF), including those with NVQ in the title, must meet the minimum GLH criteria set out above (325 for Level 2 and 595 for Level 3). This has led to a reduction in the number of vocational qualifications being counted as full. All QCF qualifications are categorised within the awarding body data as Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs) and are not separately identified within the data as NVQs or otherwise. Since the 2012 SFR we have combined the previously published separate columns for NVQs and VRQs in the qualification type tables. However, we are showing them below to illustrate the issue.

We can see that the proportion reaching Level 2 post-16 through an NVQ has fallen for three most recent cohorts. There has also been a fall in attainment through VRQs for the most recent cohort following annual increases in the series. We cannot easily determine the extent to which this is due to young people studying NVQs that under their previous accreditation were counted as full but that under the QCF do not meet the minimum GLH criteria, as opposed to a genuine change in behaviour. There has also been an impact on the Level 3 series.

Proportion of total cohort achieving Level 2 post-16/ Level 3 through vocational qualifications outside an Apprenticeship framework

Cohort (19 in...)	Level 2 of which:			Level 3 of which:		
	All	NVQ Level 2	VRQ Level 2	All	NVQ Level 3	VRQ Level 3
2004	5.2%	4.2%	1.0%	3.0%	0.9%	2.2%
2005	6.5%	3.5%	3.0%	6.4%	0.9%	5.6%
2006	7.3%	3.0%	4.3%	7.7%	1.0%	6.8%
2007	9.5%	3.2%	6.2%	9.4%	1.1%	8.3%
2008	11.0%	3.3%	7.7%	11.5%	1.3%	10.2%
2009	12.2%	3.4%	8.8%	12.5%	1.4%	11.1%
2010	13.2%	3.5%	9.8%	14.3%	1.5%	12.8%
2011	13.1%	2.8%	10.2%	15.3%	0.9%	14.4%
2012	12.0%	1.3%	10.7%	16.0%	0.2%	15.9%
2013	10.6%	0.3%	10.3%	17.0%	0.0%	16.9%

Operating rules for using the term “NVQ” in a QCF qualification title are available via the link below:

www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2008-08-28-operating-rules-for-using-nvq-in-qcf-qualification-title.pdf

5. Comparison with measures published in the School and College Performance Tables

The definitions of Level 2 and Level 3 (and denominators) do not equate with those used in the School and College Performance Tables to measure attainment at the end of Key Stages 4 and 5.

The main difference being that in the school performance tables “thin” vocational qualifications count and can currently be combined with each other and academic qualifications in order to reach the Level 2 or 3 threshold. For this SFR vocational qualifications are not combined with each other or academic qualifications and are only counted as full if they have Guided Learning Hours (GLH) of at least 325 hours for Level 2 and 595 hours for Level 3.

A comparison between the results for attainment at Key Stage 4, and the measures of Level 2 at 16 used in this SFR, for young people in state schools, are shown in the table below.

Comparison of published measures of attainment, Key Stage 4; Level 2 at 16

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Key Stage 4, 5+ A*-C or equivalent (GCSE attainment SFR measure)	54.9%	57.3%	59.9%	64.4%	69.8%	76.1%	80.5%	83.0%	82.9%
Level 2 at 16 (Attainment at 19 SFR measure)	54.4%	56.6%	57.9%	60.4%	63.7%	67.0%	69.0%	69.2%	67.1%
Key Stage 4, 5+ A*-C with English and maths GCSE (GCSE attainment SFR measure)	42.5%	44.0%	45.8%	48.2%	50.7%	55.1%	58.2%	58.8%	60.6%
Level 2 at 16 with English and maths (Attainment at 19 SFR measure)	42.2%	44.2%	46.1%	48.9%	51.2%	54.7%	56.5%	56.3%	56.3%

In July 2011, the Department for Education announced that from 2014 only GCSEs and vocational qualifications meeting strict new criteria would be counted in school performance tables. This followed the Wolf Review of vocational education in March 2011. It also announced that regardless of size, no qualifications would count for more than one GCSE in the performance tables measures. Institutions were expected to teach the higher quality qualifications from September 2012, which will have significantly reduced the number of level 2 qualifications being taught to 14-16 year olds that meet the minimum of 325 guided learning hours to be counted in this SFR. The 19 in 2016 cohort is the first cohort whose Level 2 at 16 results are affected by this change, leading to a fall in attainment of Level 2 at 16 from 69.2 per cent in 2012 to 67.1 per cent in 2013.

More information on the changes to performance tables and vocational qualifications can be found at the following links:

Changes to the 2014 performance tables: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-4-performance-tables-eligible-qualifications>

Reforming 16-18 further education and vocational qualifications: <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving-the-quality-of-further-education-and-skills-training>

6. Revisions to previously published figures

Each year the data is re-matched and this can alter the attainment figures slightly (either increasing or decreasing them). Previously there may have been cases where there was double-counting for the same person (i.e. two records for the same person when there should have been one), or

The net impact of these revisions on the overall measures for the whole population reported in table 1 is shown in the table below.

Net change in percentage attaining by age, overall measures

Level 2 or higher Cohort (19 in...)	16	17	18	19
2004	0.0	0.0	-0.1	-0.1
2005	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2006	0.0	-0.1	0.0	-0.1
2007	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2008	0.0	0.0	-0.1	-0.1
2009	0.0	0.0	-0.1	-0.2
2010	0.0	0.0	-0.1	-0.2
2011	0.0	0.0	-0.1	-0.2
2012	0.0	-0.1	0.0	0.0
2013	0.0	-0.1	0.0	
2014	0.0	0.0		
2015	0.0			

Level 3 Cohort (19 in...)	16	17	18	19
2004	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2005	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2006	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2007	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2008	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
2009	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1
2010	0.0	0.1	0.0	-0.1
2011	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1
2012	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
2013	0.0	0.0	0.1	
2014	0.0	0.0		
2015	0.0			

When we look at this analysis for those who were in the state sector at 15 the net changes are negligible and actually slightly positive in some cases as shown on the next page.

Net change in percentage attaining by age, maintained sector at 15

Level 2 or higher Cohort (19 in...)	16	17	18	19
2005	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2006	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2007	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0
2008	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
2009	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
2010	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2011	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
2012	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
2013	0.0	0.0	0.1	
2014	0.0	0.1		
2015	0.0			

Level 3 Cohort (19 in...)	16	17	18	19
2005	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
2006	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2007	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
2008	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2009	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
2010	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2011	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
2012	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
2013	0.0	0.1	0.1	
2014	0.0	0.0		
2015	0.0			

7. Numerator adjustments

The [National Statistics Quality Review](#) recommended that an adjustment is applied to the Level 2+ numerator to avoid double counting caused by migration (see section 3 of the Quality Review report for more information). Throughout the historical series people that have been recorded as having reached Level 3 but without having any Level 2 achievements were excluded from the Level 2+ numerator as they were assumed to be inward migrants i.e. people who were not in school at age 14. They are included in the Level 3 numerator. This methodology was refined slightly as from the SFR published in March 2010, and the historical series updated as a result. The adjustment is now only applied to those who enter the data post-16 (ie after year 11), and it is now applied to those reaching Level 2 through any Level 3 qualifications (not just a full Level 3) in the first year that they enter the data. So for example someone appearing in the data for the first time after year 11 who reaches Level 2 through the achievement of two AS levels has their Level 2 discounted.

8. Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Pupils with special educational needs have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most pupils of the same age.

Pupils with special educational needs comprise those at School Action, School Action Plus or with statements of SEN:

- 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 and the SENCO receive advice or support from outside specialists (the specialist teacher, an educational psychologist, a speech and language therapist or other health professionals).
- Statement – a pupil has a statement of SEN when a formal assessment has been made. A document setting out the child's needs and the extra help they should receive is in place.

9. Free School Meals

Free school meal eligibility is used as a proxy for deprivation, and relates to those who meet the eligibility criteria and make a claim.

Prior to 2001, the numbers eligible for a free school meal were those pupils who had, or whose parents had, satisfied the relevant authority that they were receiving Income Support (IS) or income based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA) or support provided under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. From 2001 onwards this definition was modified to include only pupils where parents had indicated that they wished their child to have a free meal and had confirmed benefit receipt with the LA or school.

Under changes to the tax credit system introduced in April 2003, children in families receiving the Child Tax Credit (CTC) rather than IS or IBJSA would not have been entitled to receive a free school meal. As a result, for 2004 School Census, the entitlement for free school meals was extended to 'non-working' families who have an amount of income that extinguishes their IS or IBJSA benefit, who are receiving support via CTC, but are working fewer than 16 hours per week and thus not in receipt of Working Tax Credit (WTC). The majority of these families would have received IS or IBJSA prior to 6 April (and accordingly their children a free school meal). As a result of this change to entitlement, these children continue to be eligible for free school meals.

10. Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)

IDACI is provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). The index is based on Super Output Areas (SOAs) in England. Each SOA is given a rank between 1 and 32,482 where 1 is the most deprived SOA. IDACI is a subset of the Income Deprivation Domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Each SOA is given a score showing the percentage of pupils aged under 16 that live in families that are income deprived, i.e. they are in receipt of certain benefits and their equivalised income is below 60 per cent of median before housing costs. Further information about IDACI can be found on the CLG website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-indices-of-deprivation-2010>.