

SDR 151/2015

24 September 2015

## Examination results in Wales, 2014/15 (Provisional)

This Statistical Release provides the earliest results of external examinations taken by pupils aged 15 or 17 in schools in Wales in 2014/15, as well as final information for previous years. Following improvements in data processing and matching, we are also able for the first time to include provisional data on the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM). Schools are currently checking this latest information and therefore the figures are subject to change.

### Key results for 2014/15:

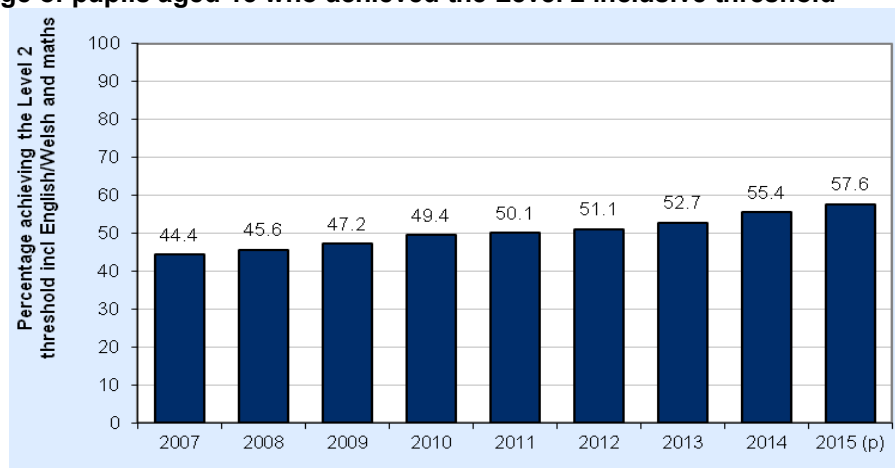
#### 15 year olds

- 57.6 per cent achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE grade A\*-C in English or Welsh first language and mathematics, higher (by 2.1 percentage points) than in 2013/14 (Table 1 and Chart 1). Performance is now 13.2 percentage points higher than when records began in 2006/07.
- The average capped wider points score was 342.3, 1.5 points higher than in 2013/14 (Table 1);
- 64.2 per cent of pupils achieved A\*-C in maths, 2.5 percentage points higher than in 2013/14. 69.4 per cent of pupils achieved A\*-C in either English or Welsh first language, 2.3 percentage points higher than in 2013/14 (Table 2).
- 31.3 per cent of pupils eligible for FSM achieved the L2 inclusive threshold, 3.5 percentage points higher than 2013/14 (Table 4)
- 63.7 per cent of those not eligible for FSM achieved the L2 inclusive threshold, a gap of 32.4 percentage points compared to pupils eligible for FSM. The gap has narrowed slightly since 2013/14, when it was 33.8 percentage points.

#### 17 year olds

- 96.9 per cent of those entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels achieved the Level 3 threshold, 0.2 percentage points lower than in 2013/14 (Table 3);
- The average wider points score was 787.2, 16.9 points lower than in 2013/14 (Table 3).

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



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

	Percentage of pupils aged 15 who...							
	Number of pupils aged 15	achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	achieved the Core Subject Indicator (c)	Average wider points score	Average capped (d) wider points score	achieved no recognised qualification (e)
2001/02	37,116	84.8	50.5	..	36.9	..	..	4.7
2002/03	37,993	85.1	51.1	..	37.5	..	..	4.6
2003/04	39,212	85.3	51.4	..	37.7	324.7	..	4.4
2004/05	38,495	85.2	52.2	..	38.4	327.7	..	4.3
2005/06	38,859	86.0	53.8	..	39.7	335.4	..	3.9
2006/07	39,576	86.0	55.0	44.4	40.0	343.9	..	3.9
2007/08	39,027	86.8	58.0	45.6	44.4	356.0	..	2.5
2008/09	37,607	88.2	60.7	47.2	46.0	378.9	..	1.9
2009/10	37,072	89.7	63.8	49.4	48.0	394.3	305.1	1.4
2010/11	36,088	90.3	67.3	50.1	48.7	422.9	311.6	1.8
2011/12	35,404	91.8	72.6	51.1	48.9	465.0	323.5	1.1
2012/13	36,617	93.2	77.8	52.7	49.2	501.2	333.1	0.1
2013/14	35,168	94.0	82.3	55.4	52.6	524.5	340.8	1.1
2014/15 (p)	34,005	94.3	83.4	57.6	54.3	524.8	342.3	1.3

- (a) Up to 2005/06, includes GCSEs, GCSE Short Course, GNVQs and NVQs. From 2006/07, includes all qualifications approved for pre-16 use in Wales.
- (b) Ages at the start of the academic year. Includes results for 15 year old pupils, in maintained schools and independent schools, achieved during the academic year and any examinations taken at earlier age.
- (c) Core Subject Indicator: achieved GCSE grade A\*-C in each of English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science.
- (d) Average capped wider point scores are calculated using the best 8 results.
- (e) Up to 2005/06, based on pupils who achieved no Entry Level Qualification, GCSE short course, GCSE or equivalent. 2006/07 onwards is based on the wider definition. This indicator is based on small numbers and is more sensitive to changes.

**Table 2: Performance in individual subjects by pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year (a) (b)**

	Percentage of pupils aged 15 who...					Of those who entered Welsh First Language:	
	Number of pupils aged 15	achieved A*-C in English/Welsh (c)	achieved A*-C in English (d)	achieved A*-C in Maths	achieved A*-C in Science (e)	entered Welsh First Language	achieved A*-C in Welsh (f)
2010/11	36,088	63.7	62.8	56.5	65.9	5,242	74.6
2011/12	35,404	63.5	62.2	58.4	70.6	5,207	73.8
2012/13	36,617	64.0	62.9	60.3	74.8	5,591	73.5
2013/14	35,168	67.2	66.2	61.7	82.3	5,548	73.7
2014/15 (p)	34,005	69.4	68.3	64.2	83.3	5,452	75.1

- (a) Includes all core qualifications approved for pre-16 use in Wales.
- (b) Ages at the start of the academic year. Includes results for 15 year old pupils, in maintained schools and independent schools, achieved during the academic year and any examinations taken at earlier age.
- (c) For each pupil the best grade of English language, English literature, Welsh first language and Welsh literature is taken.
- (d) For each pupil the best grade of English language and English literature is taken.
- (e) Includes single and double award core science.
- (f) For each pupil the best grade of Welsh language and Welsh literature is taken. The denominator for this indicator is the number of 15 year olds who entered Welsh First Language, rather than the total number of 15 year olds.

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

	Number of pupils aged 17 entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Number of pupils aged 17	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17
2001/02	9,486	94.4	11,201	..
2002/03	9,848	93.9	11,568	..
2003/04	10,041	94.9	11,822	..
2004/05	10,373	94.4	12,072	..
2005/06	10,731	93.9	12,507	..
2006/07	10,592	93.9	12,418	618.5
2007/08	10,943	94.2	12,653	630.9
2008/09	11,367	96.0	13,241	687.7
2009/10	11,653	94.9	13,586	747.9
2010/11	11,512	96.3	13,615	798.9
2011/12	11,538	96.9	13,632	772.9
2012/13	11,706	96.5	13,365	806.6
2013/14	11,447	97.1	13,102	804.1
2014/15 (p)	11,817	96.9	13,615	787.2

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

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

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

**Table 4: Key Stage 4 indicators by free school meal entitlement (a)**  
Pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year

Year	Free school meal entitlement	Cohort	Percentage of pupils achieving:				
			Level 1 threshold	Level 2 threshold	Level 2 including English/ Welsh and Mathematics	Core Subject Indicator	Average capped wider points score
2006/07	Eligible for FSM	4,944	73.8	26.7	18.0	16.0	..
	Not eligible for FSM	31,854	92.0	60.4	47.7	44.8	..
2007/08	Eligible for FSM	4,831	72.1	28.0	18.7	18.9	..
	Not eligible for FSM	31,908	91.6	61.9	48.7	49.2	..
2008/09	Eligible for FSM	4,966	75.8	32.5	20.1	19.5	..
	Not eligible for FSM	30,729	92.9	66.4	52.1	50.8	..
2009/10	Eligible for FSM	5,148	78.3	35.3	20.7	19.8	237.5
	Not eligible for FSM	30,106	93.9	69.6	54.6	53.2	321.9
2010/11	Eligible for FSM	5,366	79.8	40.9	22.0	21.1	247.8
	Not eligible for FSM	28,979	94.7	73.5	55.7	54.2	329.6
2011/12	Eligible for FSM	5,186	83.3	50.9	23.4	21.9	268.5
	Not eligible for FSM	28,584	95.5	78.0	56.6	54.7	339.4
2012/13	Eligible for FSM	5,705	85.8	57.8	25.8	23.2	281.8
	Not eligible for FSM	29,449	96.4	83.0	58.5	55.3	347.7
2013/14	Eligible for FSM	5,338	87.7	65.3	27.8	26.6	295.2
	Not eligible for FSM	28,370	97.3	87.4	61.6	59.0	356.0
2014/15 (p)	Eligible for FSM	5,153	89.2	68.2	31.3	28.8	302.1
	Not eligible for FSM	27,424	97.5	88.3	63.7	60.7	357.2

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

## Notes

### 1. Context

#### 1.1 Related Publications

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

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

For further information or advice on the constraints of international comparisons please e-mail [school.stats@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:school.stats@wales.gsi.gov.uk).

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

#### England

[GCSE and Equivalent Results in England 2013/14 \(Revised\)](#)

[A-Level and other Level 3 Results in England 2013/14 \(Revised\)](#)

#### Northern Ireland

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

#### Scotland

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

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

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

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

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

### 2. Data source

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

### 3. Definitions

#### 3.1 Coverage

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

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

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

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

#### 3.2 Threshold indicators and points

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

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

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

The average wider points score includes all approved qualifications.

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

#### 3.3 Discounting

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

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

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

**Group 3:** free standing maths qualifications

**Group 4:** key skills

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

**Group 6:** NVQs

**Group 7:** BTECs and other qualifications

**Group 8:** the Welsh Baccalaureate

### **3.4 Performance of pupils eligible for FSM**

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

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

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

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

## **4. Rounding and symbols**

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

The following symbols have been used throughout the publication:

- (p) provisional
- percentages less than 0.5 but higher than zero
- . not applicable
- .. not available
- ~ not yet available
- \* figure is less than 5, or is based on a figure less than 5.

## **5. Key Quality Information**

This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability. It also covers specific issues relating to quality of 2015 data, and describes the quality management tool applied to this area of work.

### **5.1 Relevance**

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

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales;
- The Department for Education and Skills in the Welsh Government;

- Estyn;
- Other government departments;
- The research community;
- Regional education consortia, Local Authorities and schools;
- Students, academics and universities;
- Individual citizens, private companies and the media.

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

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

## 5.2 Accuracy

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

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

## 5.3 Timeliness and Punctuality

The data relate to all qualifications achieved between 1 September 2014 and 31 August 2015.

## 5.4 Accessibility and Clarity

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

School-level data is available through the My Local School website. This provisional data will not be added to My Local School but final data for 2014/15 will be added later in the year.

## 5.5 Comparability

See section 1.1.

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

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

Information about GCSE reform in England can be found here:

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

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

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

and there is also information in the this statistical release:

[GCSE and Equivalent Results in England 2013/14 \(Revised\)](#)

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

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



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