

Entries to arts subjects at Key Stage 4

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Foreword

The Education Policy Institute is an independent, impartial, and evidence-based research institute that aims to promote high quality education outcomes for all, through analysis that both informs and influences the policy debate in England and internationally.

Over recent years, the government has sought to incentivise the take-up of certain ‘traditional’ academic subjects at Key Stage 4 – through both incentives in the school accountability system and by restricting the range of qualifications which are counted in this system.

These changes have led to some concerns that certain subjects are ‘losing out’ in terms of student take-up. In this report, EPI looks at the recent trends in relation to take-up of arts subjects by Key Stage 4 cohorts. We also consider how arts take-up varies by region, and by pupil characteristics – such as prior attainment, socio-economic status, and gender.

The detailed picture which emerges from this report will help policy makers and others to understand the recent trends, and consider whether any actions need to be taken to address the issues highlighted in our report.

As ever, we welcome comment on the analysis and conclusions of this report, which will help inform future work in this area.

Rt. Hon. David Laws

Executive Chairman, Education Policy Institute.

Executive summary

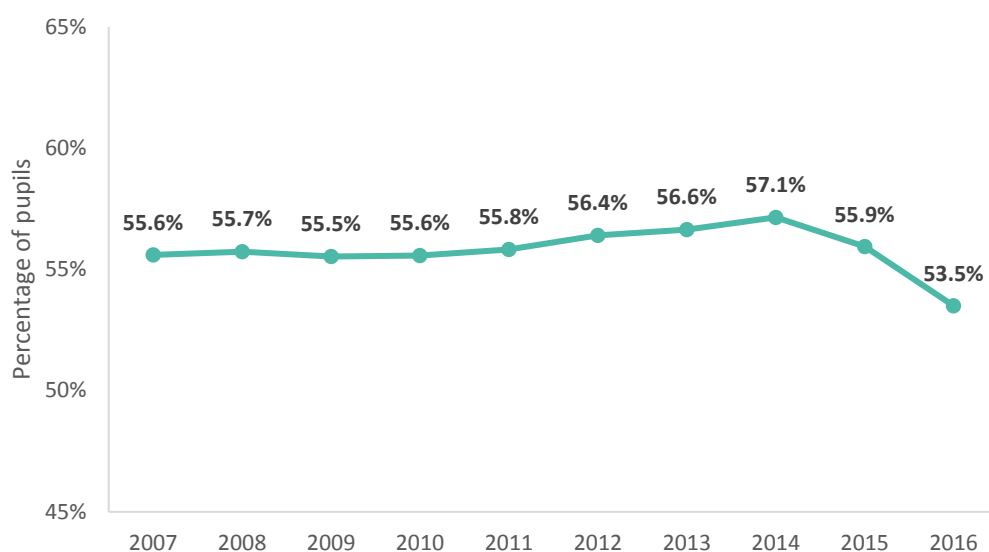
Changes to school accountability measures in recent years have focused on increasing the take-up of a group of core academic subjects. The introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and of Progress 8 has prompted concerns that arts subjects may be at risk, as they are not included in the EBacc. This report offers new insights into this issue by analysing trends in entries to arts subjects by Key Stage 4 cohorts between 2007 and 2016. It includes comparisons between different regions, and variations by pupil characteristics, such as gender, socio-economic status, and prior attainment.

Overall entries to arts subjects

- Accounting for variation in cohort size, **entries to arts subjects by Key Stage 4 cohorts have declined over the past couple of years, following several years of gradual increases.¹ The 2016 entry rates are the lowest of the decade.**
- **The average number of arts entries per pupil has fallen since 2013, standing at 0.70 in 2016; this is lower than at any other time in the period under review and comes after an increase between 2010 and 2013 from 0.75 to 0.80.**
- Similarly, the **proportion of pupils taking at least one arts subject fell in both 2015 and 2016, reaching 53.5 per cent in the latter year. Again, this is the lowest figure for the decade and follows an increase between 2010 and 2014, from 55.6 per cent to 57.1 per cent.**
- **If in 2016 the same proportion of pupils had taken at least one arts entry as in 2014, then this would have resulted in around 19,000 more pupils accessing an arts subject; if the same proportion had been evident as in 2007 then this would have meant just over 11,000 more pupils doing so.**

¹ In this report, arts qualifications are defined as those which relate to the following subject areas: art and design; drama and theatre; media, film, and TV studies; music; dance; and performing arts. Any qualification recorded in the Department for Education's exam entry files as having been taken by a pupil by the end of Key Stage 4 was included in the analysis, with the exception of those which are discounted from school performance tables.

Figure 1.1: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, 2007-16



- Provisional data relating to 2017 exam entries indicate that the **decline observed in the most recent years is continuing.**
- The **nature of arts entries has changed substantially over the past decade.** Between 2007 and 2012, entries to arts GCSEs fell, whilst entries to non-GCSE level 1/2 qualifications rose. These trends have since reversed, with a **more recent shift away from non-GCSE level 1/2 qualifications and back towards GCSEs.** This is likely to be due to the **reduction of the number of non-GCSE qualifications included in school performance tables in 2014.**

Factors influencing arts entries

- Evidence from teachers and school leaders indicates that various factors are placing **pressure on arts subjects**, including the EBacc, Progress 8, and financial issues. However, the extent to which this pressure impacts on a school's arts provision **depends on the precise combination of these factors within the school's specific context**, and the extent to which school leaders are able or willing to prioritise arts subjects under these circumstances.
- The **EBacc** was introduced and expanded with the **intention of raising the quality of academic education available to all pupils.** Existing research suggests that **it may be achieving these aims**, with pupils at schools that substantially increased their EBacc rates showing **higher average attainment in GCSE English and maths and lower probabilities of leaving education after the age of 16.** In addition, **pupils eligible for pupil premium funding**

benefited most from the change in curriculum at these schools.² Yet at the same time, the **EBacc is often cited as a key threat to arts subjects**.³

- It is likely that it is the **EBacc element of Progress 8 which is currently particularly putting pressure on arts subjects**, by limiting the number of option subject slots that can be filled by non-EBacc subjects. Progress 8 reserves a total of five slots for EBacc *subjects*, although it does not require pupils to be entered for all *components* of the EBacc.⁴ It is therefore likely to be considered accessible for a greater number of pupils. In addition, unlike the EBacc, Progress 8 is used to assess whether a school has met the minimum floor standard. This means that the incentives are stronger for schools to ensure that pupils fulfil its requirements. In **2016**, the year that Progress 8 was first used across all schools, the **proportion of pupils entered for four EBacc components rose by 10.8 percentage points**, compared to a 1 percentage point increase in the proportion of pupils entered for the full EBacc. Schools currently appear to be entering pupils for a greater number of EBacc subjects, but not in a way that is increasing the proportion that are entered for the full EBacc – in other words, the behaviour seems to be in **response to improving Progress 8 outcomes rather than improving the EBacc measure itself**.
- However, **Progress 8 also provides an element of protection for arts subjects**, as it includes three slots which can be filled by a variety of subjects including the arts. This means that the measure **incentivises schools to limit the number of option slots available to pupils at Key Stage 4 whilst continuing to offer a variety of arts subjects if high grades are achieved by pupils who do choose to take them**.

Arts entries by region

- There is a **clear and consistent North-South divide in entries to arts subjects**, with Southern regions showing higher entry rates than Northern regions.
- **In 2016, the North East experienced a particularly sharp drop in arts entries**. The proportion of pupils entering at least one arts subject now ranges from 57.3 per cent in the South West to 47.8 per cent in the North East, a **gap of 9.5 percentage points**.

² R. Allen and D. Thomson, *Changing the subject: How are the EBacc and Attainment 8 reforms changing results?*, The Sutton Trust, July 2016: https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Changing-the-subject_V4.pdf.

³ The Bacc for the Future campaign, led and supported by over 200 arts and education organisations, has been particularly prominent in criticism of the impact of the EBacc on arts subjects: <http://www.baccforthefuture.com/>. In addition, the EBacc was commonly cited as causing a decline in the take-up of arts subjects by the small sample of teachers surveyed and interviewed for this report.

⁴ For example, a pupil with entries in English, mathematics, geography, and double award science would have entries in five EBacc subjects but would not be considered as having entered all components of the EBacc because they do not have an entry in a language.

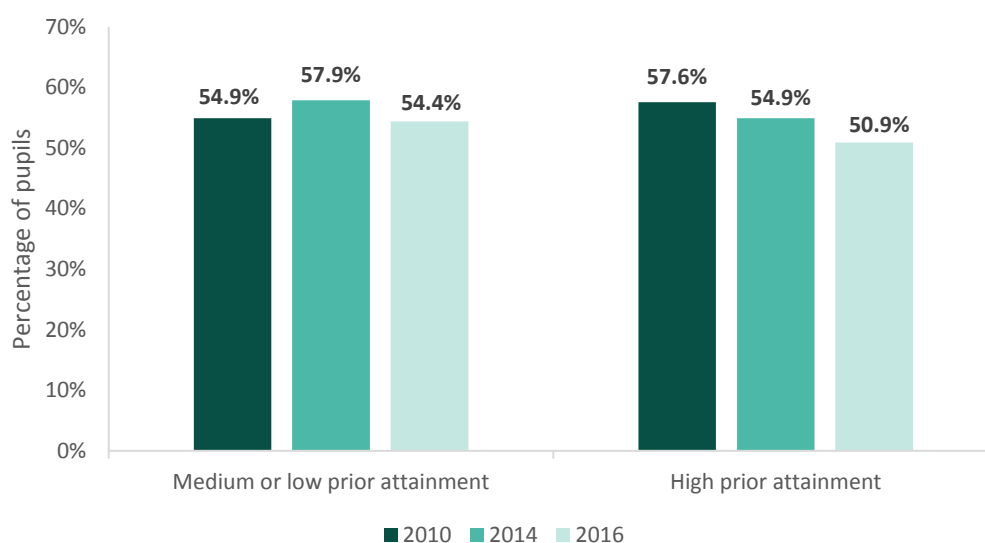
Figure 1.2: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by region, 2016



Arts entries by pupil attainment

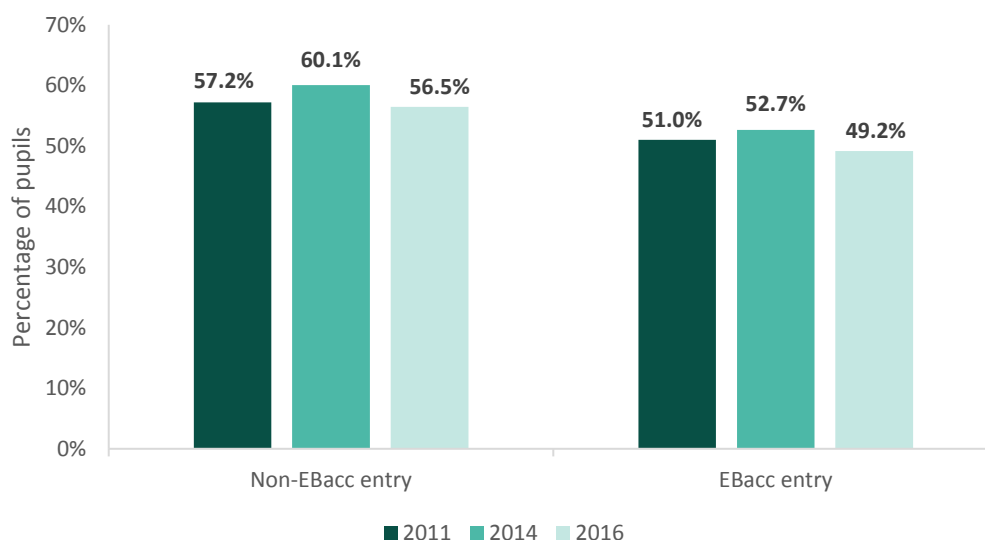
- Before 2013, pupils with high prior attainment were more likely than those with medium or low prior attainment to enter at least one arts subject. This pattern has since been reversed, and **those with medium or low prior attainment are now more likely to have at least one arts entry**. In 2016, the gap was 3.5 percentage points (54.4 per cent for pupils with medium and low prior attainment, compared with 50.9 per cent for those with high prior attainment).
- The proportion of pupils with at least one arts entry has been falling since 2011 for those with high prior attainment, and since 2014 for those with medium or low prior attainment.
- This could be because **high attaining pupils were the first to be encouraged by their schools to enter the EBacc**. In contrast, **those with medium or low prior attainment may have initially been guided towards arts subjects, away from vocational qualifications**, which the Coalition Government committed to reform soon after taking office. More recently, these pupils may have **shifted away from arts subjects as schools focus on ensuring that they fulfil the EBacc element of Progress 8**, even if they do not take the full set of EBacc subjects.

Figure 1.3: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by prior attainment, 2010-16



- Pupils who do not enter the EBacc are more likely to take at least one arts subject than those who do fulfil its requirements.** In 2016, this gap stood at 7.3 percentage points (56.5 per cent for pupils who do not enter the EBacc, compared with 49.2 per cent for those who do). Therefore, **although EBacc entrants are less likely to take an arts subject, nearly half of them nevertheless do so.**

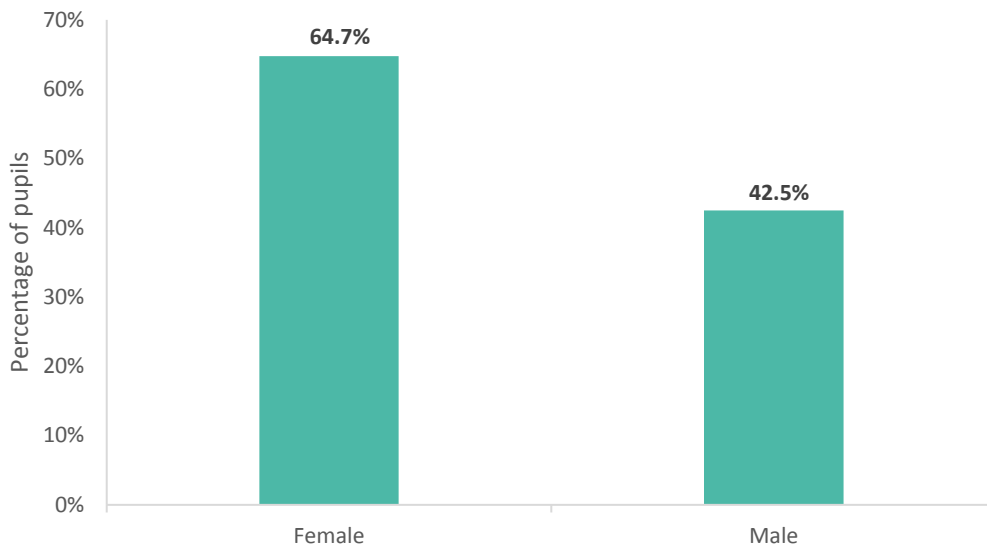
Figure 1.4: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by EBacc entry, 2011-16



Arts entries by pupil characteristics

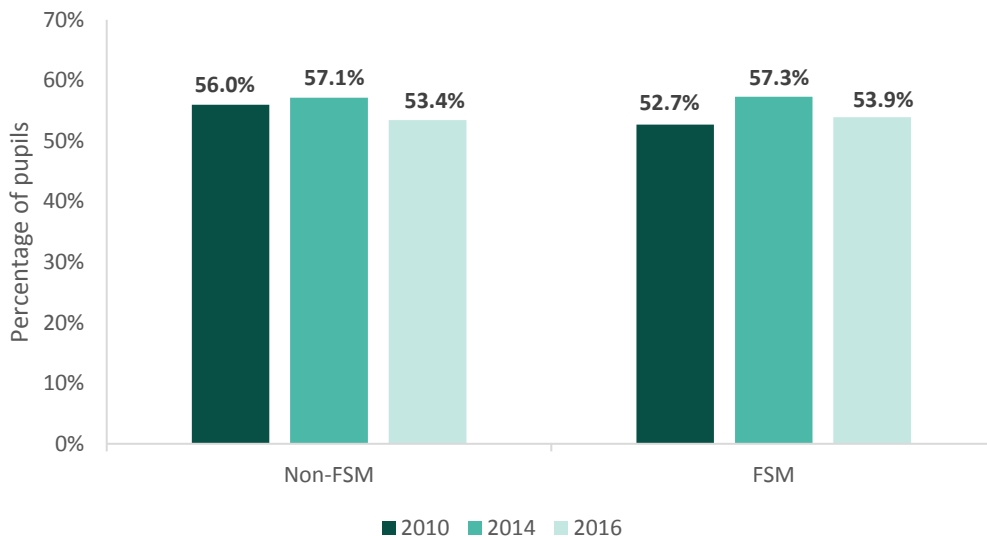
- There is a **very large gender gap in entries to arts subjects.** In 2016, 64.7 per cent of girls took at least one arts subject, compared with 42.5 per cent of boys, a **gap of 22.3 percentage points.**

Figure 1.5: Percentage of pupils with at least on arts entry, by gender, 2016



- Until 2014, pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) were less likely to enter at least one arts subject than were their peers. **Since 2014**, the proportion of pupils with at least one arts entry has fallen for both groups of pupils, but it remains **slightly higher for FSM pupils**. In 2016, the gap stood at 0.5 percentage points (53.9 per cent of FSM pupils, compared with 53.4 per cent of non-FSM pupils).

Figure 1.6: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by FSM eligibility, 2010-16



- At the start of the decade, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) were much less likely to enter at least one arts subject, but this gap has narrowed over the years. **In 2016, pupils with SEND were marginally more likely to have at least one arts entry**, with 53.9 per cent doing so, compared with 53.4 per cent of their peers.

- There are **substantial gaps in arts entries between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds**. Black Caribbean pupils have particularly high entry rates, whilst pupils from Indian and Pakistani backgrounds are much less likely to have at least one arts entry than those from other ethnic groups.
- **Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) have lower entry rates to arts subjects than their peers**. In 2016, 48.8 per cent of EAL pupils entered at least one arts subject, compared with 54.3 per cent of non-EAL pupils, a gap of 5.5 percentage points.

Part 1: Introduction

The state of arts subjects in England has been subject to heated debate in recent years. A number of organisations, including lobbyists from the arts sector and teaching unions, have warned that changes to school accountability measures and funding pressures have led to a decline in access to arts subjects in schools.⁵ Other organisations, however, including the Department for Education, have contested these claims and have pointed to evidence that this is not the case.⁶

This report seeks to provide clarity to this debate. It provides new analysis on trends in entries to arts subjects between 2007 and 2016, taking into account all types of qualification entered by pupils by the end of Key Stage 4, and providing breakdowns according to a variety of school and pupil characteristics. In order to identify potential causes of the patterns identified, the statistical analysis is supplemented by small-scale qualitative research obtained via a survey and interviews with current secondary school teachers.

Policy context

Changes experienced by schools in two key areas have been cited as having an impact on pupils' access to arts subjects: performance measures and funding. The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) was introduced as a school performance measure by the Coalition Government in 2010, with the intention of increasing pupil take-up of core academic subjects at Key Stage 4. A pupil is deemed to have achieved the EBacc if they attain a pass in a GCSE or equivalent qualification in its five components: English, maths, history or geography, the sciences, and a language.⁷ Subsequently, the Conservative Government which came to power in 2015 committed to extending the scope and significance of the measure.⁸ A government consultation launched in November 2015 outlined its aspiration that, ultimately, at least 90 per cent of pupils in mainstream secondary schools should enter the EBacc.⁹ The government has recently published its response to this consultation; this sets

⁵ Cultural Learning Alliance, 'Technical Briefing: English Baccalaureate', October 2016, p.5: https://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/images/uploads/Cultural_Learning_Alliance_EBacc_Technical_Briefing_Oct_2016.pdf; NSEAD, *The National Society for Education in Art and Design Survey Report 2015-16*, February 2016: <http://www.nsead.org/downloads/survey.pdf>; ASCL, *ASCL funding survey*, March 2017: <https://www.ascl.org.uk/utilities/document-summary.html?id=679589DE-3D92-4B00-9DACDFAC88914AB0>.

⁶ N. Gibb, 'The claim that EBacc squeezes out the arts is wrong', *The Telegraph*, 21 January 2016: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/leaguetables/12110986/The-claim-that-EBacc-squeezes-out-the-arts-is-wrong.html>; Department for Education, *Trends in arts subjects in schools where English Baccalaureate entry has increased*, July 2017: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/630223/Trends_in_arts_subjects_in_schools_where_English_Baccalaureate_entry_has_increased.pdf; E. Fellows, *The Two Cultures: Do schools have to choose between the EBacc and the arts?*, New Schools Network, February 2017: http://www.newschoolsnetwork.org/sites/default/files/NSN%20Arts%20Report%20-%20The%20Two%20Cultures_0.pdf.

⁷ Department for Education, 'English Baccalaureate (EBacc)', gov.uk website, February 2016: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-baccalaureate-ebacc/english-baccalaureate-ebacc>.

⁸ R. Long and P. Bolton, 'English Baccalaureate', House of Commons Library Briefing Paper 06045, June 2017: <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06045>.

⁹ Department for Education, *Consultation on implementing the English Baccalaureate*, launched 3 November 2015: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/473455/Consultation_on_implementing_the_English_Baccalaureate.pdf.

national targets for 75 per cent of pupils in state-funded mainstream schools to be starting EBacc courses by 2022 (entering exams for the full EBacc in 2024) and 90 per cent by 2025 (entering exams for the full EBacc in 2027).¹⁰

In addition, two new headline performance measures were introduced in 2016: Attainment 8 and Progress 8. Attainment 8 measures a pupil's achievement in eight subjects: English, maths, three EBacc qualifications, and three further subjects (which can be either EBacc subjects or other approved qualifications). Progress 8 measures the progress made by a pupil in the same eight subjects between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.¹¹ Progress 8 is used to determine whether or not a school is liable for intervention as a consequence of being defined as coasting or as falling below the floor standard. EBacc subjects have therefore assumed greater significance under this measure, although it does not require pupils to be entered for the full EBacc.

The proportion of pupils entered for the EBacc in state-funded schools has increased from 21.8 per cent in 2010 to 39.7 per cent in 2016, although the majority of this increase took place between 2012 and 2013.¹²

In addition to changes in performance measures, schools are experiencing funding pressures. Following large annual increases in per pupil spending during the 2000s (reaching around 5 per cent per year in real terms), school spending per pupil was broadly maintained at the same level in real terms from 2010-11 until 2015-16, since when school spending per pupil has been frozen in cash terms. Until recently, government spending commitments were such that, due to inflationary pressures and cuts to the Education Services Grant, it was unlikely that any school in England would avoid a real terms cut in per pupil funding between 2016-17 and 2019-20, and that approximately half of primary and secondary schools would experience large, real terms losses in per pupil funding of between 6 and 11 per cent by 2019-20.¹³ In July 2017, however, the government announced an additional £1.3 billion in funding for schools over 2018-19 and 2019-20, ensuring that per pupil funding will be maintained in real terms up to 2019-20.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the Institute for Fiscal Studies has stated that over the period between 2015 and 2020, school budgets will have fallen in real terms by 4.6 per cent.¹⁵

¹⁰ Department for Education, *Implementing the English Baccalaureate: Government consultation response*, July 2017, pp.8-9:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/630713/Implementing_the_English_Baccalaureate_-_Government_consultation_response.pdf.

¹¹ Department for Education, *Progress 8 and Attainment 8: Guide for maintained secondary schools, academies and free schools*, January 2017:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/583857/Progress_8_school_performance_measure_Jan_17.pdf.

¹² Department for Education, *Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2015 to 2016*, January 2017:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2015-to-2016>.

¹³ N. Perera, J. Andrews, and P. Sellen, *The implications of the National Funding Formula for schools*, Education Policy Institute, March 2017, p.7: https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/170314.NFFReportv_FINAL.pdf.

¹⁴ Department for Education, 'Justine Greening statement to parliament on school funding', July 2017:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/justine-greening-statement-to-parliament-on-school-funding>.

¹⁵ S. Coughlan, 'Extra cash in school budgets in funding shake-up', BBC News, 17 July 2017:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-40634472>.

According to critics, these factors have resulted in a decline in pupils studying arts subjects at Key Stage 4.¹⁶ Evidence for this has been derived from a combination of official statistics of exam entries from the Joint Council for Qualifications and Ofqual on the one hand,¹⁷ and surveys of teachers on the other.¹⁸ In contrast, the government has denied that arts subjects are suffering.¹⁹ Recent analysis by the Department for Education, based on data from the National Pupil Database, showed that the proportion of pupils entering at least one arts subject has remained generally stable between 2010-11 and 2015-16, both for schools which have experienced a large increase in EBacc entry rates and for other schools.²⁰ Moreover, a report published by the New Schools Network, based on Department for Education statistics, identified a small increase in the average number of arts GCSEs entered per pupil between 2011-12 and 2015-16.²¹

Some of the apparent contradictions in this debate have arisen due to differences in the types of statistics being used. Many of the concerns expressed about a decline in the arts have been based on raw entry numbers, whereas those defending the government position tend to take account of cohort sizes. In both cases, the use of entry numbers may result in a delayed identification of changes, as pupils tend to select their Key Stage 4 options two or three years before taking exams; this means that evidence from teacher surveys may highlight changes in access to arts subjects before such trends are evident in entry figures. Equally, however, such surveys may suffer from the self-selection of respondents who have particularly strong views on the issues covered in the survey and may therefore not necessarily be representative of the experience at a national level. On the other hand, the reports cited above which indicate stability or even increases in entry rates to arts

¹⁶ Criticism specifically of the impact of the EBacc on arts subjects has been voiced particularly strongly by the Bacc for the Future campaign, led and supported by over 200 arts and education organisations: <http://www.baccforthefuture.com/>.

¹⁷ Cultural Learning Alliance, 'Patterns in GCSE entries 2010 to 2016', August 2016: http://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/images/uploads/Patterns_in_GCSE_entries_2010_to_2016_England_only.pdf; Cultural Learning Alliance, 'Technical Briefing: English Baccalaureate', October 2016, p.5: https://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/images/uploads/Cultural_Learning_Alliance_EBacc_Technical_Briefing_Oct_2016.pdf; L. Hill, 'Arts in schools plummets, new figures show', Arts Professional, 21 June 2016: <http://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/exclusive-arts-schools-plummets-new-figures-show>; S. Merritt, 'Squeezing out arts for more 'useful' subjects will impoverish us all', The Guardian, 26 June 2016: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/25/squeezing-out-arts-for-commercially-useful-subjects-will-make-our-culture-poorer>.

¹⁸ University of Sussex, 'Teachers blame EBacc for decline in Music student numbers', 9 March 2017: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/broadcast/read/39525>; NSEAD, *The National Society for Education in Art and Design Survey Report 2015-16*, February 2016: <http://www.nsead.org/downloads/survey.pdf>; ASCL, *ASCL funding survey*, March 2017: <https://www.ascl.org.uk/utilities/document-summary.html?id=679589DE-3D92-4B00-9DACDFAC88914AB0>; ATL and NUT, *School Cuts – Harming Education*, April 2017: <https://www.atl.org.uk/sites/www.atl.org.uk/files/April%206%20for%2010%202017%20NUT%20ATL%20MEMBER%20SURVEY%20ON%20SCHOOL%20FUNDING%20report.pdf>.

¹⁹ N. Gibb, 'The claim that EBacc squeezes out the arts is wrong', The Telegraph, 21 January 2016: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/leaguetales/12110986/The-claim-that-EBacc-squeezes-out-the-arts-is-wrong.html>.

²⁰ Department for Education, *Trends in arts subjects in schools where English Baccalaureate entry has increased*, July 2017, pp.3-5: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/630223/Trends_in_arts_subjects_in_schools_where_English_Baccalaureate_entry_has_increased.pdf.

²¹ E. Fellows, *The Two Cultures: Do schools have to choose between the EBacc and the arts?*, New Schools Network, February 2017, p.12: http://www.newschoolsnetwork.org/sites/default/files/NSN%20Arts%20Report%20-%20The%20Two%20Cultures_0.pdf.

subjects are based on entries at Key Stage 4 to GCSEs only, or to GCSEs, level 1/2 certificates, and AS levels, rather than taking into account all of the different types of qualifications which pupils may take by this point in their education. Finally, it is not clear from existing research the extent to which access to arts subjects varies by different school and pupil characteristics.

Methodology

This report attempts to overcome these issues. Its conclusions are based on quantitative analysis of data supplied by the Department for Education from the National Pupil Database (NPD) and exam entry files for each cohort of pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 4 over the decade between 2007 and 2016.

The exam entry files record each qualification taken by each pupil by the end of Key Stage 4, and therefore include not only GCSEs, but a large variety of other qualifications, ranging from entry level to level 3 (equivalent to AS and A level). Qualifications which were discounted from school performance tables were excluded from the analysis so as to avoid double-counting similar qualifications taken by the same pupil.

Qualifications were grouped into various subject categories. For the purposes of this report, arts qualifications are defined as those which relate to the following subject areas: art and design; drama and theatre; media, film, and TV studies; music; dance; and performing arts. The analysis does not classify design and technology as an arts subject. This is in contrast to some of the existing analysis which criticises the impact of the EBacc on arts subjects and particularly on design and technology.²² However, design and technology has been excluded from the category of arts qualifications in this report because it includes subjects which have very little overlap with the arts, such as systems and control, and electronic products. It is also categorised separately from art and design in official publications by the Department for Education, including the national curriculum and statistical releases.

For each cohort, the exam entry files were matched with data contained within the NPD on school and pupil characteristics. Only pupils enrolled at mainstream schools were included in the analysis, which also focuses mainly on state-funded schools. This is because accountability measures that may be influencing entries are unlikely to have the same impact on non-mainstream and independent schools: proposals to extend the EBacc to more pupils have focused on those in mainstream schools,²³ and Progress 8 data are not published for independent schools; independent schools, special schools, pupil referral units, alternative provision, and hospital schools are also not subject to floor standards.²⁴

²² L. Hill, 'Arts in schools plummets, new figures show', Arts Professional, 21 June 2016: <http://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/exclusive-arts-schools-plummets-new-figures-show>; Cultural Learning Alliance, 'Patterns in GCSE entries 2010 to 2016', August 2016: http://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/images/uploads/Patterns_in_GCSE_entries_2010_to_2016_England_only.pdf.

²³ Department for Education, *Consultation on implementing the English Baccalaureate*, launched 3 November 2015: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/473455/Consultation_on_implementing_the_English_Baccalaureate.pdf.

²⁴ Department for Education, *Progress 8 and Attainment 8: Guide for maintained secondary schools, academies and free schools*, January 2017, pp.7, 8:

Access to arts subjects was then tracked for each year between 2007 and 2016 using the following two measures:

- Percentage of all entries taken by the cohort that were in arts subjects;
- Percentage of pupils in the cohort with at least one arts entry.

In addition to overall trends for each category of arts subject at a national level, these measures were used to identify patterns in arts entries in different regions and according to different school and pupil characteristics.

This data analysis is supplemented by small-scale qualitative evidence obtained directly from secondary school teachers and leaders via an online survey which was promoted via social media. A number of schools were also specifically targeted via email and (in some cases) telephone in order to request a survey response; these were selected on the basis of schools for which the percentage of exam entries in the arts showed a relatively high increase or decrease, or a high level of stability, when comparing 2010 with 2015. In total, 51 individuals submitted responses to the online survey. Of these, 11 people participated in follow-up telephone interviews in order to discuss their experiences and views in more detail. The evidence obtained from this exercise is used in the report to point to possible explanations for the patterns identified in the data analysis. It provides contextual information only and is not used to quantify the extent to which the various experiences and views of respondents are shared by teachers more widely.

Structure of report

This report proceeds as follows. The next section examines overall trends in entries to different arts subjects between 2007 and 2016, and compares these with entries to non-arts subjects over the same period. The third chapter compares differences in arts entries between the various regions in England, whilst the fourth provides breakdowns by different school characteristics, including size of school and whether it is located in the independent or state sector. The fifth chapter assesses entries by pupil attainment and overall entry patterns; the sixth section then considers variations in entries by different pupil demographic groups, including eligibility for free school meals, ethnicity, first language other than English, and gender. The seventh chapter discusses possible causes of the patterns identified in the preceding sections, drawing on the evidence obtained from secondary school teachers and leaders. The final section concludes by considering the implications of this research for future policy.

Part 2: Overall entries to subjects at Key Stage 4

Summary

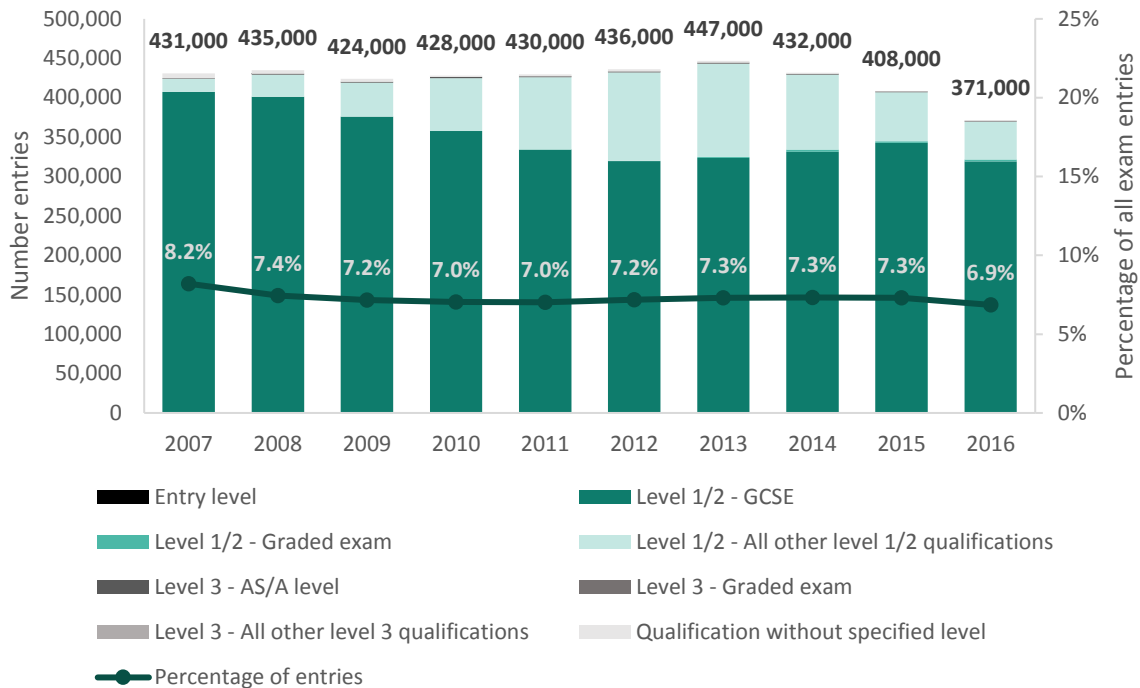
- Accounting for variation in cohort size, **entries to arts subjects by Key Stage 4 cohorts have declined over the past couple of years, following several years of gradual increases.**²⁵ The **2016 entry rates are the lowest of the decade.**
- The **average number of arts entries per pupil has fallen since 2013, standing at 0.70 in 2016; this is lower than at any other time in the period under review** and comes after an **increase between 2010 and 2013** from 0.75 to 0.80.
- Similarly, the **proportion of pupils taking at least one arts subject fell in both 2015 and 2016, reaching 53.5 per cent in the latter year. Again, this is the lowest figure for the decade and follows an increase between 2010 and 2014**, from 55.6 per cent to 57.1 per cent.
- **If in 2016 the same proportion of pupils had taken at least one arts entry as in 2014**, then this would have resulted in **around 19,000 more pupils accessing an arts subject**; if the same proportion had been evident as in **2007** then this would have meant **just over 11,000 more pupils** doing so.
- Provisional data relating to 2017 exam entries indicate that the **decline observed in the most recent years is continuing.**
- The **nature of arts entries has changed substantially over the past decade.** Between 2007 and 2012, entries to arts GCSEs fell, whilst entries to non-GCSE level 1/2 qualifications rose. These trends have since reversed, with a **more recent shift away from non-GCSE level 1/2 qualifications and back towards GCSEs.** This is likely to be due to the **reduction of the number of non-GCSE qualifications included in school performance tables in 2014.**

²⁵ In this report, arts qualifications are defined as those which relate to the following subject areas: art and design; drama and theatre; media, film, and TV studies; music; dance; and performing arts. Any qualification recorded in the Department for Education's exam entry files as having been taken by a pupil by the end of Key Stage 4 was included in the analysis, with the exception of those which are discounted from school performance tables.

Entries to arts subjects at Key Stage 4

Overall entries to arts subjects at Key Stage 4 for pupils in state-funded mainstream schools are outlined in the chart below for each year between 2007 and 2016.²⁶

Figure 2.1: Entries to all arts subjects, 2007-16



The number of entries to all arts subjects fluctuated around 430,000 most years between 2007 and 2014, with the exception of a particularly high number of entries (nearly 447,000) in 2013. In 2015, there was a notable fall in entries to just over 408,000, followed by a much larger decrease in 2016 to just over 371,000. These overall figures, however, conceal variation in the nature of entries during this period: the years 2007 to 2012 saw a decline in entries to GCSE arts qualifications, and a concomitant rise in non-GCSE level 1/2 arts qualifications. Between 2012 and 2015, the number of entries to arts GCSEs increased, whilst since 2013, the number of entries to non-GCSE level 1/2 arts qualifications has been falling. It is likely that these shifts have been driven by changes to school performance tables, introduced in 2014 in response to the Wolf Review of 2011. New quality criteria were applied to qualifications in order to determine inclusion in these performance tables; this led to a substantial reduction in the number of non-GCSE qualifications included. In addition, under the new system, no qualification can be counted as equivalent to more than one GCSE. A drop in non-GCSE level 1/2 qualifications is first evident in 2014 (the year that these changes were first applied to

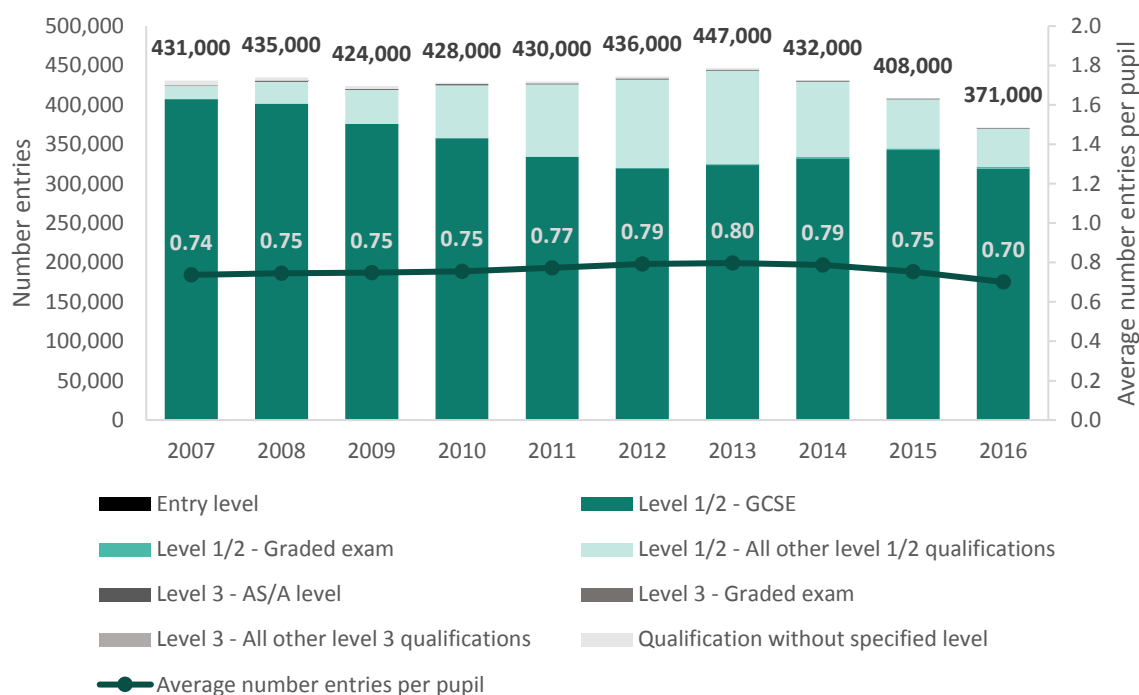
²⁶ Unless otherwise stated, this analysis looks at pupils in state-funded mainstream schools only. In Figures 2.1 to 2.11, total numbers of entries are in each case rounded to the nearest thousand. The qualification types included are: entry level; level 1/2 – GCSE (including short, full, and double GCSEs, and vocational GCSEs); level 1/2 – graded exam (graded drama, music, literature, speech, and dance exams at grades 1 to 5); level 1/2 – all other level 1/2 qualifications (any level 1/2 qualification not included in the previous two categories); level 3 – AS/A level (including full and double AS and A levels, and vocational and applied AS and A levels); level 3 – graded exam (graded drama, music, literature, speech, and dance exams at grades 6 to 8); level 3 – all other level 3 qualifications (any level 3 qualification not included in the previous two categories); and qualification without specified level (level of qualification not given in exam entry files).

school performance tables) and this decline appears to be ongoing. In 2016, entries to both GCSE and non-GCSE level 1/2 qualifications fell, meaning that the number of arts GCSE entries was lower than for any other year in the past decade.

Looking only at raw numbers of entries, however, does not allow for variations in the total number of exam entries each year. Focusing on the percentage of all exam entries which are arts subjects accounts for such variation. Following a drop between 2007 and 2008, this figure remained stable until 2015, and stood at 7.3 per cent for three consecutive years between 2013 and 2015; this is because the move away from non-GCSE level 1/2 qualifications was accompanied by a rise in GCSE entries. In 2016, however, entries to both GCSE and non-GCSE level 1/2 entries fell, meaning that the percentage of arts qualifications dropped by 0.4 percentage points to 6.9 per cent; this is lower than for any other year in the period under examination, although it is only slightly below the equivalent figure for 2010.

Controlling for the size of the pupil cohort, the average number of arts entries per pupil increased slightly up to 2013, but has since fallen. Between 2015 and 2016, it dropped by 0.05 from, 0.75 to 0.70; again, this is the lowest figure for the past decade, but not substantially below the level evident in 2010.

Figure 2.2: Average number arts entries per pupil, 2007-16



Provisional data released by Ofqual on 2017 exam entries to GCSE, level 1/2 certificates, and AS and A levels indicate that the drop seen in 2016 is ongoing. As a percentage of all entries for pupils in Year 11, the data indicate that arts qualifications fell from 7.6 per cent in 2015 to 7.1 per cent in 2016 and, most recently, to 6.7 per cent in 2017.²⁷

²⁷ These figures are calculated from data published in: Ofqual, 'Summer 2017 exam entries: GCSEs, level 1/2 certificates, AS and A levels in England', June 2017: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/summer-2017-exam-entries-gcses-level-1-2-certificates-as-and-a-levels-in-england>. They differ from those presented in

Entries to individual arts subject groupings have largely followed the overall pattern for arts qualifications, with numbers of entries to GCSEs mostly increasing from around 2012 or 2013 until 2015, whilst entries to non-GCSE level 1/2 qualifications have been falling over roughly the same period; entries to both GCSE and non-GCSE arts qualifications then fell in 2016. As a percentage of all exam entries, entries to individual arts subject groupings have remained broadly stable, although most show a small drop in 2016.

Figure 2.3: Entries to art and design, 2007-16

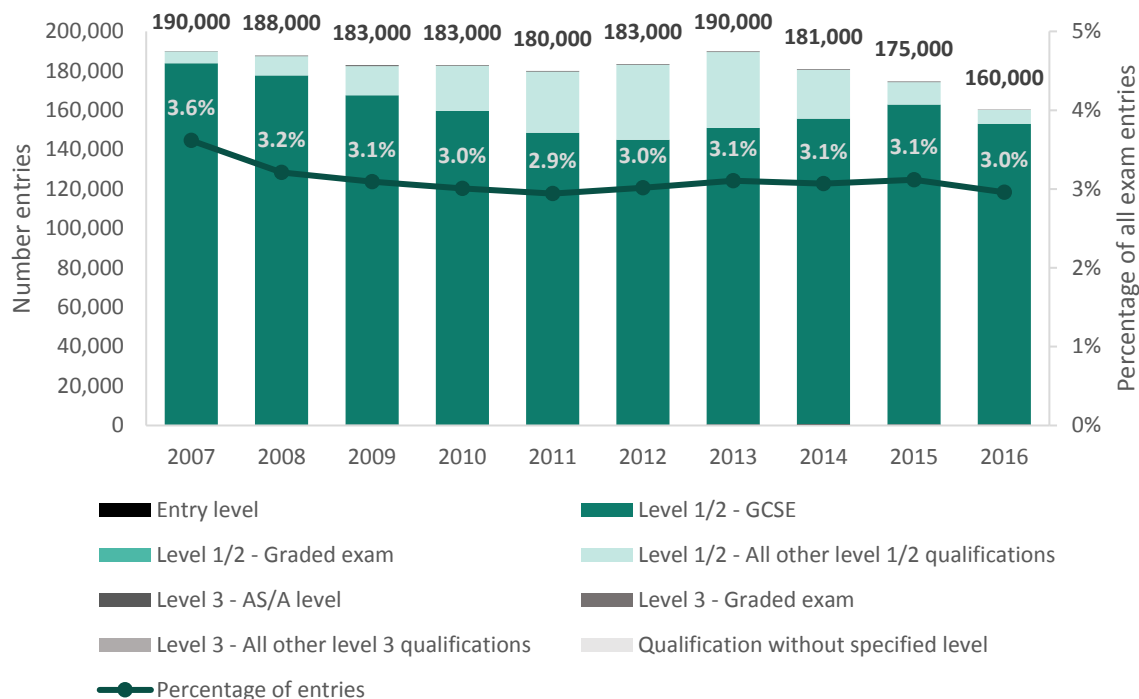


Figure 2.1, above, which are derived from underlying exam entries linked with the NPD. This is partly because the Ofqual figures relate to all schools and colleges, whereas the figures in this report focus on mainstream, state-funded schools (unless otherwise stated). In addition, the Ofqual figures include only GCSEs, level 1/2 certificates, and AS and A levels, whereas the exam entries include qualifications at all levels taken by the end of Key Stage 4.

Figure 2.4: Entries to drama and theatre, 2007-16

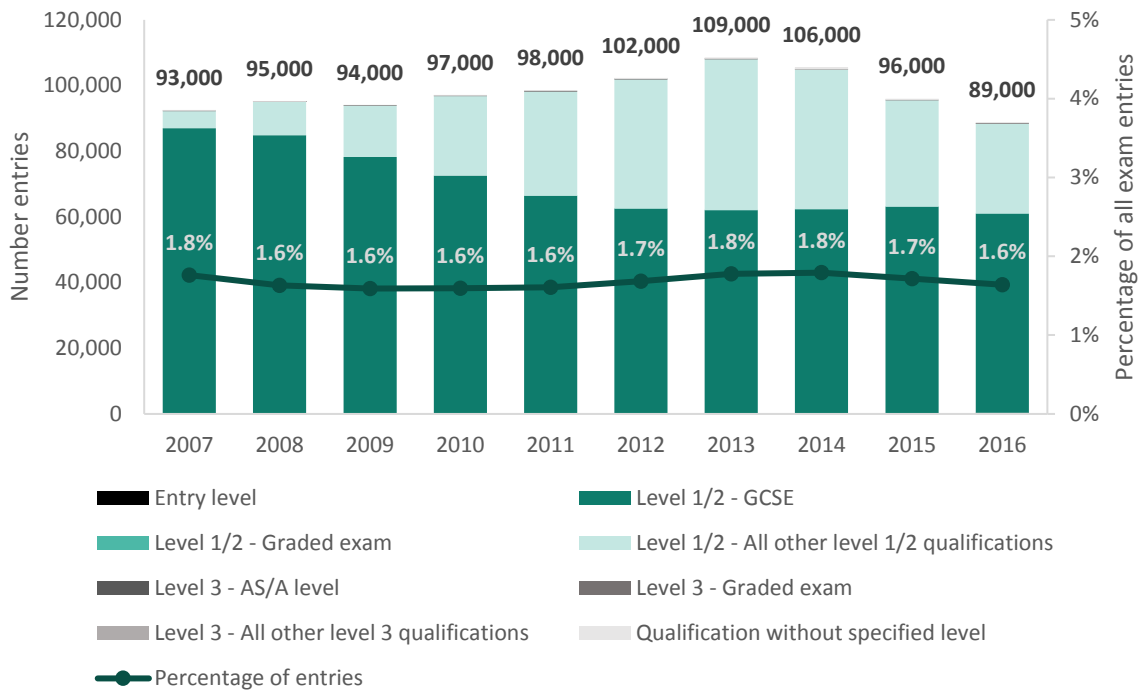


Figure 2.5: Entries to media, film, and TV studies, 2007-16

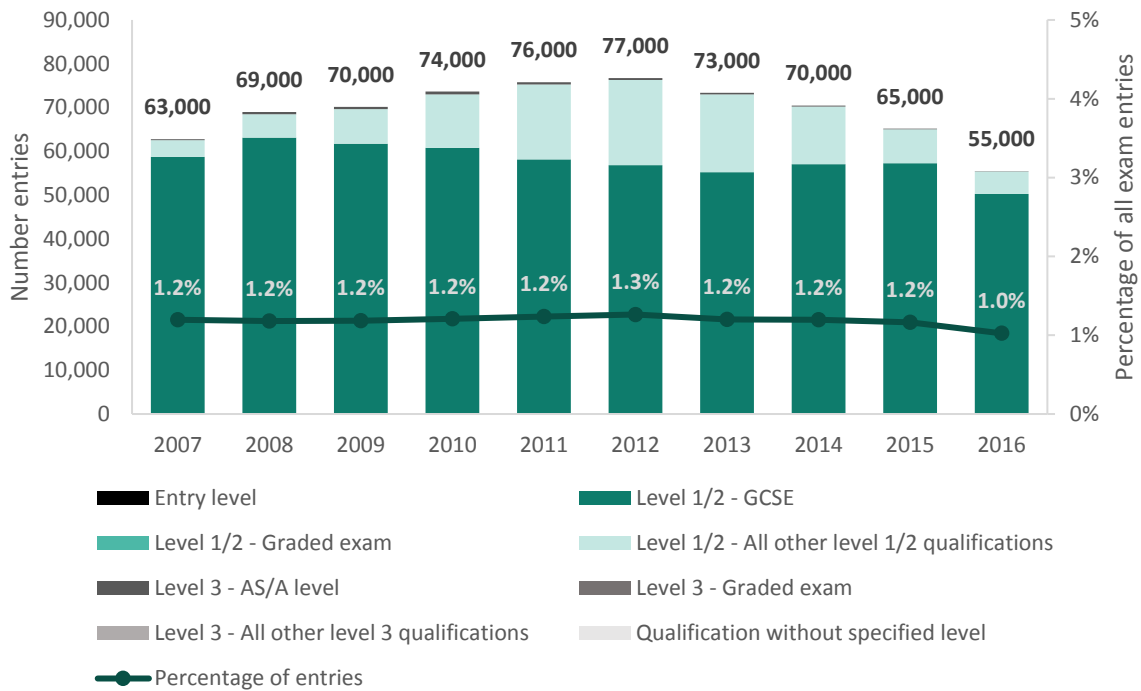


Figure 2.6: Entries to music, 2007-16

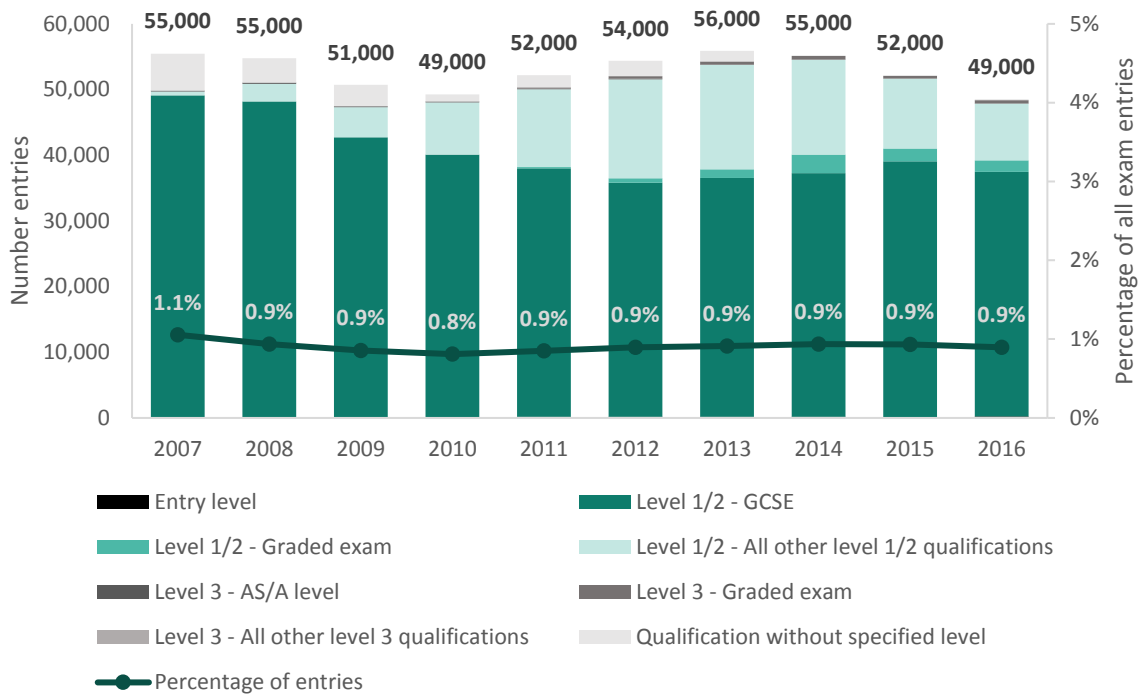


Figure 2.7: Entries to dance, 2007-16

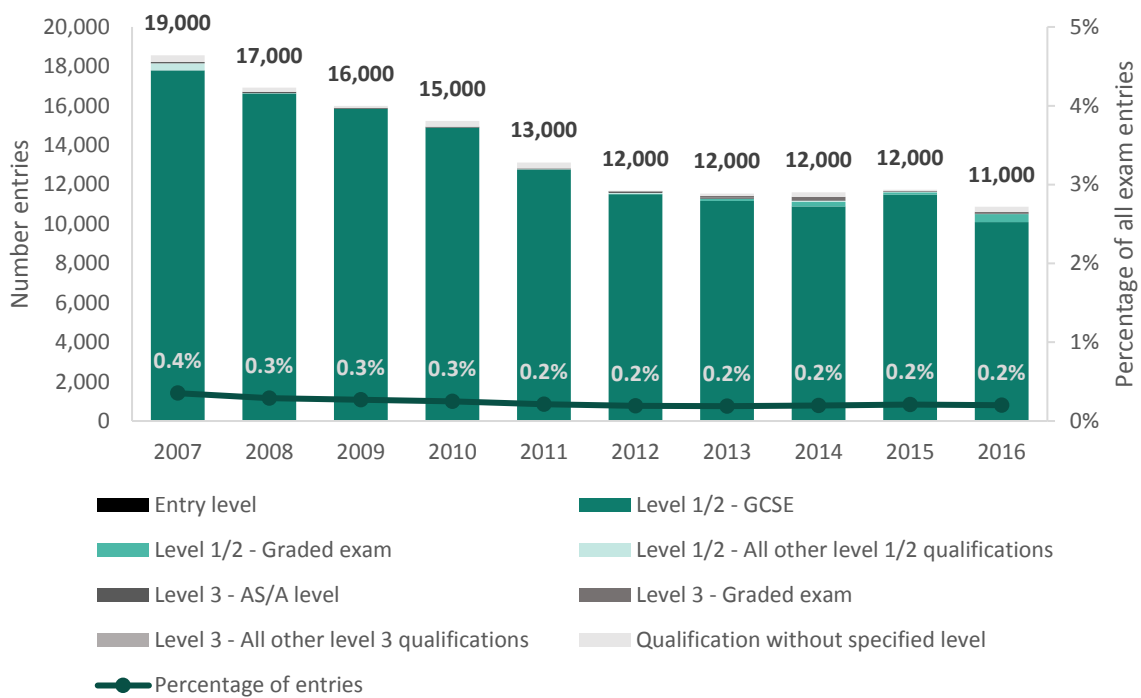
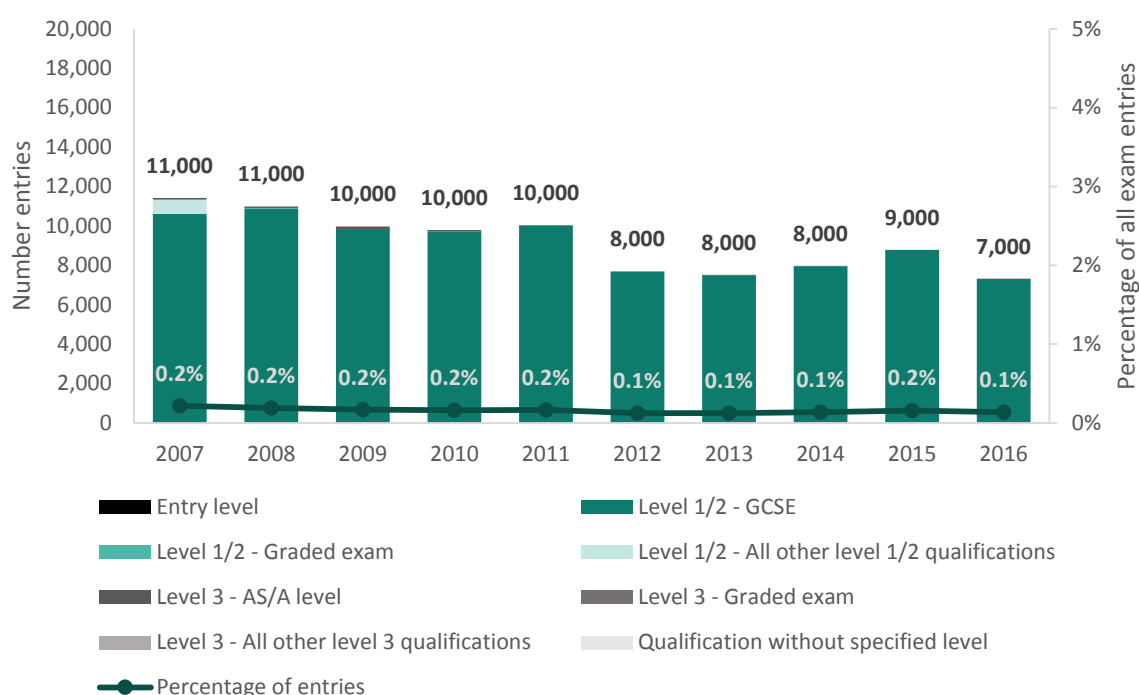


Figure 2.8: Entries to performing arts, 2007-16



The percentage of pupils with at least one entry to an arts subject has also remained broadly stable for much of the decade. However, small increases each year between 2009 and 2014 were followed by a fall of 1.2 percentage points in 2015, and a further decrease of 2.4 percentage points in 2016. At 53.5 per cent, the proportion of pupils taking at least one arts qualification was lower in 2016 than for any other year under review, but it is not substantially below the level evident in 2010.

In 2016, the total Key Stage 4 cohort for state-funded mainstream schools was approximately 530,000 pupils. If in 2016 the same proportion of pupils had taken at least one arts entry as in 2014, then this would have resulted in around 19,000 more pupils accessing an arts subject; if the same proportion had been evident as in 2007 then this would have meant just over 11,000 more pupils doing so.

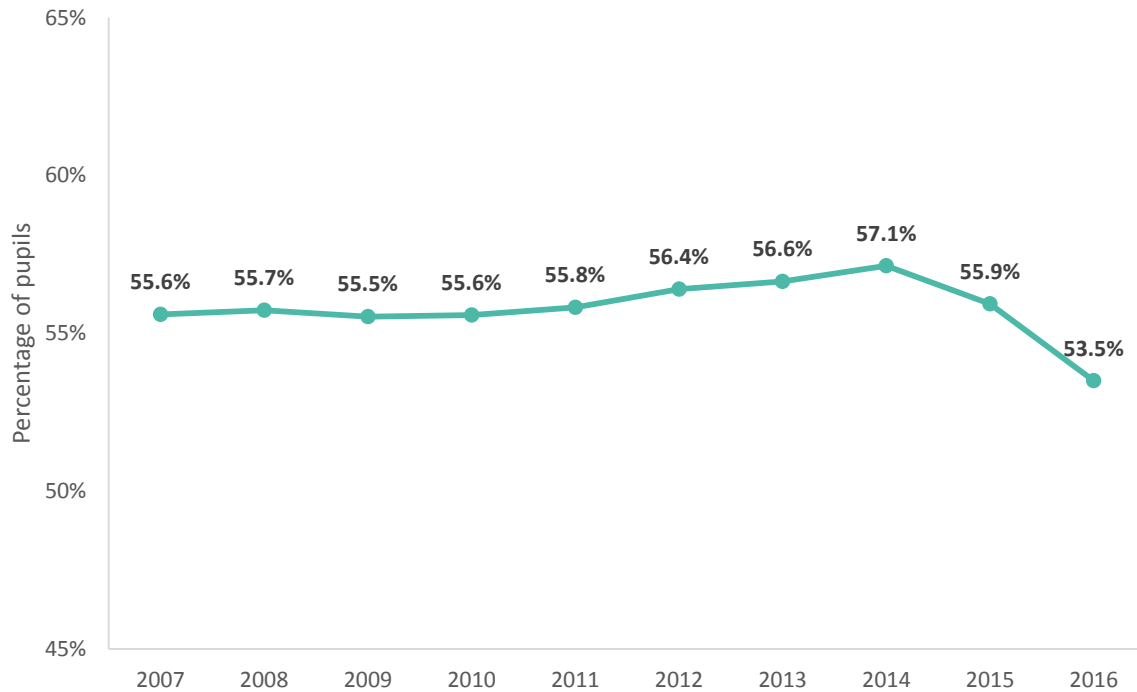
These findings differ from analysis recently published by the Department for Education on trends in entries to arts subjects, which describes the proportion of pupils entering at least one arts subject as ‘broadly stable’ between 2011 and 2016,²⁸ although its figures do indicate an increase of 3.3 percentage points in 2014 and a drop of 1.7 percentage points in 2016.²⁹ The analysis contained here instead indicates that the decline began in 2015 and that the drop for 2016 was larger – around 2.4 percentage points. The reason for these differences is the inclusion of different qualifications in the analysis. The Department for Education includes only full and double GCSEs, level 1/2 certificates, and AS levels, whereas this analysis includes all types of qualifications taken by pupils by the end of

²⁸ Department for Education, *Trends in arts subjects in schools where English Baccalaureate entry has increased*, July 2017, p.3: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/630223/Trends_in_arts_subjects_in_schools_where_English_Baccalaureate_entry_has_increased.pdf.

²⁹ Exact figures calculated from underlying data published alongside: Department for Education, *Trends in arts subjects in schools where English Baccalaureate entry has increased*, July 2017: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/trends-in-arts-subjects-in-schools-with-increased-ebacc-entry>.

Key Stage 4.³⁰ The shift outlined above towards GCSEs and away from non-GCSE level 1/2 qualifications means that focusing only on GCSEs, level 1/2 certificates, and AS levels underestimates the extent of the recent decline.

Figure 2.9: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, 2007-16



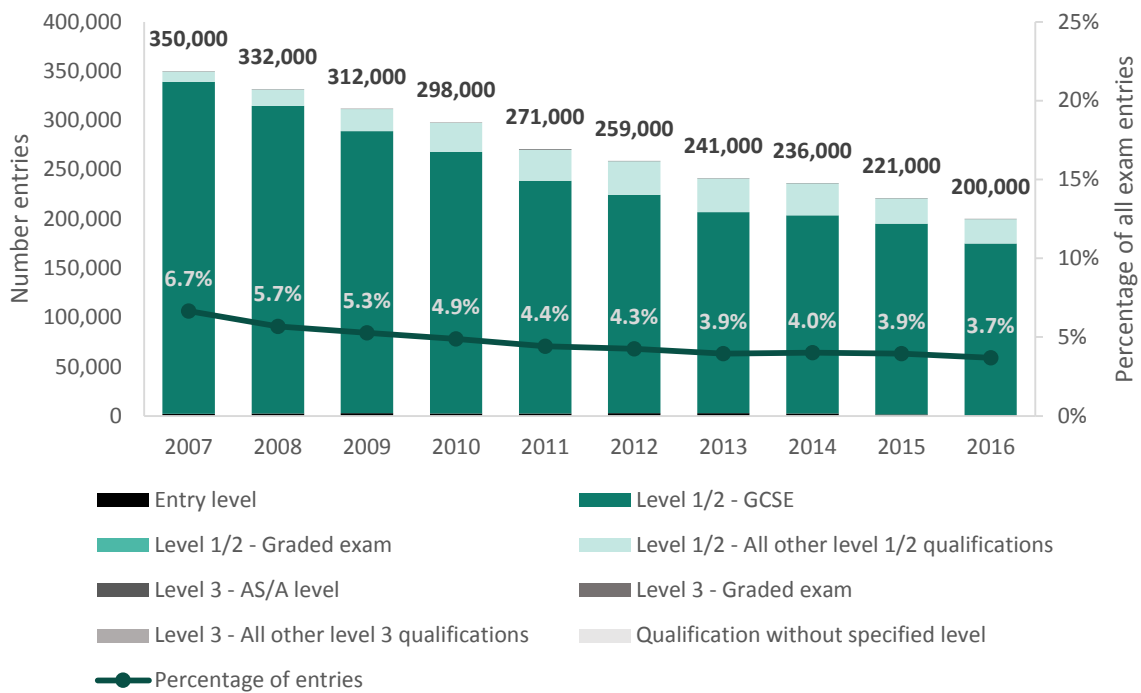
Entries to design and technology subjects at Key Stage 4

Changes in entries to technology and related subjects have been much more stark,³¹ with numbers of entries falling every year between 2007 and 2016, driven particularly by a drop in entries to GCSE qualifications. The percentage of all exam entries which are related to technology has declined steadily over most of the decade, from 6.7 per cent in 2007 to 3.7 per cent in 2016.

³⁰ It is for this reason also that this report identifies a higher proportion of pupils entering at least one arts subject in each year than does the Department for Education analysis.

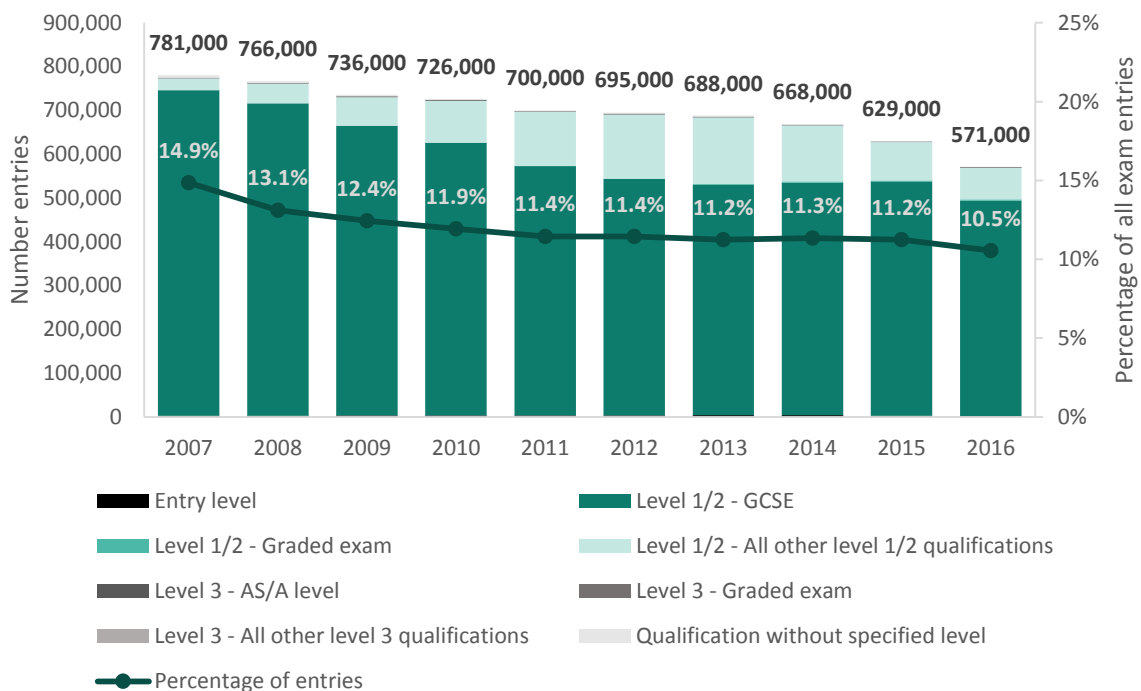
³¹ In addition to design and technology, this includes subjects related to engineering, construction, and manufacturing in this analysis.

Figure 2.10: Entries to design and technology and related subjects, 2007-16



When arts subjects are combined with design and technology and related subjects, the total number of entries has decreased every year between 2007 and 2016, but the percentage of all entries which fall into these categories remained largely stable between 2011 and 2015, fluctuating between 11.2 and 11.4 per cent. In 2016, however, the figure fell by 0.7 percentage points to 10.5 per cent, which is the lowest figure of the decade.

Figure 2.11: Entries to arts and design and technology and related subjects, 2007-16



Entries to non-arts subjects at Key Stage 4

Trends in entries to non-arts qualifications vary for different subjects. The proportion of all entries which are in science and English have increased notably since 2011 and 2013 respectively. History and geography have also experienced increases since 2011 and 2012 respectively, following periods of decline. This is likely to be an effect of the EBacc and of the EBacc element of Progress 8, as pupils have the option to take either history or geography in order to fulfil one of the EBacc components.

In contrast, the proportion of entries to modern foreign languages increased each year between 2008 and 2013, but has since fallen. The increase of 0.5 percentage points between 2012 and 2013 may be linked with the EBacc, as the 2013 cohort was the first to have selected their Key Stage 4 options under the EBacc. The subsequent decline is likely to be linked in part to the perception amongst pupils and schools that language GCSEs are more difficult than other options: a survey of teachers conducted in autumn 2015 found that by far the two most commonly cited barriers to take-up were the reluctance of some pupils to take a language, and the fact that GCSE language exams are not appropriate for all pupils. Written comments submitted by respondents emphasised that languages were regarded as too difficult for lower attaining pupils and more challenging than other subjects.³² The need for substantially more modern foreign language teachers in order to fulfil the EBacc has also been highlighted as a significant issue.³³

The proportion of entries to physical education has been falling since 2013, whilst the figure for religious studies has declined steadily throughout most of the decade. Neither of these subjects are part of the EBacc.

³² T. Tinsley and K. Board, *Language Trends 2015/16: The state of language learning in primary and secondary schools in England*, British Council, April 2016, pp.104-108: https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/language_trends_survey_2016_0.pdf.

³³ R. Allen, 'Revisiting how many language teachers we need to deliver the EBacc', Education DataLab, March 2016: <https://educationdatalab.org.uk/2016/03/revisiting-how-many-language-teachers-we-need-to-deliver-the-ebacc/>.

Figure 2.12: Percentages of all entries in non-arts subjects, 2007-16

Subject	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Business studies/economics	2.1	1.9	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.2
English	21.1	19.4	18.7	18.0	17.0	16.4	16.2	16.8	18.2	18.9
Geography	3.1	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.4	3.0	3.3	3.5	4.0
History	3.5	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.5	3.8	3.9	4.4
ICT/computing	7.1	6.7	6.7	6.9	7.3	7.5	7.1	7.2	6.3	6.3
Maths	12.2	11.7	12.0	12.1	11.8	11.4	10.9	10.9	11.1	11.3
Modern foreign languages	5.8	5.3	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.2	7.7	7.6	6.9	6.2
Physical education	4.0	3.9	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.2	3.9	3.6	3.4
Religious studies	7.3	6.7	6.6	6.4	6.2	6.1	6.0	6.1	5.8	5.5
Science ³⁴	12.5	18.4	18.1	18.0	17.7	18.0	18.7	19.6	20.8	21.7
Arts	8.2	7.4	7.2	7.0	7.0	7.2	7.3	7.3	7.3	6.9

³⁴ The large increase in the proportion of science entries in 2008 is due to the introduction of additional science.

Part 3: Entries to arts subjects by region

Summary

- There is a **clear and consistent North-South divide in entries to arts subjects**, with Southern regions showing higher entry rates than Northern regions.
- **In 2016, the North East experienced a particularly sharp drop in arts entries.** The proportion of pupils entering at least one arts subject now ranges from 57.3 per cent in the South West to 47.8 per cent in the North East, a **gap of 9.5 percentage points**.

Entries to arts subjects by region

In general over the past decade, Southern regions have consistently had a higher percentage of arts entries and a higher percentage of pupils entering at least one arts subjects than have Northern areas. Until 2015, regional disparities in the percentage of entries in arts subjects were generally narrowing over the decade, but in 2016 the North East experienced a drop of 1.2 percentage points, substantially more than the decline evident in any other region.

In terms of the proportion of pupils entering at least one arts subject, the differences between regions have fluctuated over the past ten years. Again, the drop for the North East, at 6.1 percentage points, was substantially higher in 2016 than for any other part of England. This means that there is now a gap of 9.5 percentage points between regions with the highest and lowest proportions of pupils entering at least one arts subject at Key Stage 4, ranging from 57.3 per cent in the South West to 47.8 per cent in the North East.

The charts below allow for comparisons of the trends over time between different regions for both the percentage of entries in arts subjects and the proportion of pupils with at least one arts exam entry. Tables with exact figures are given in Annex 1.

Figure 3.1: Percentage of entries to arts subjects, by region, 2007-16

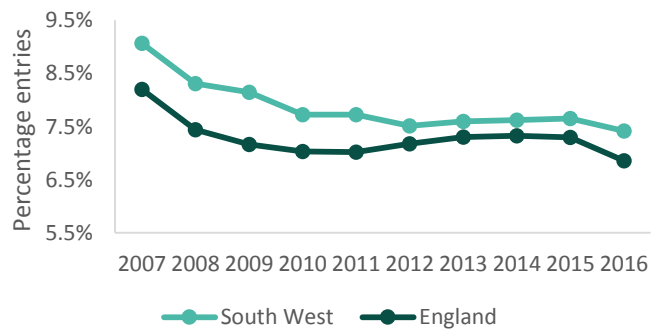
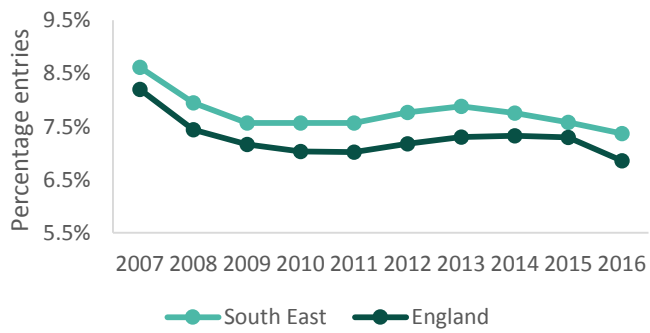
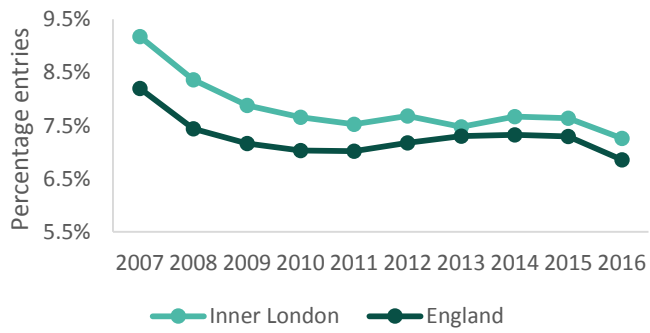
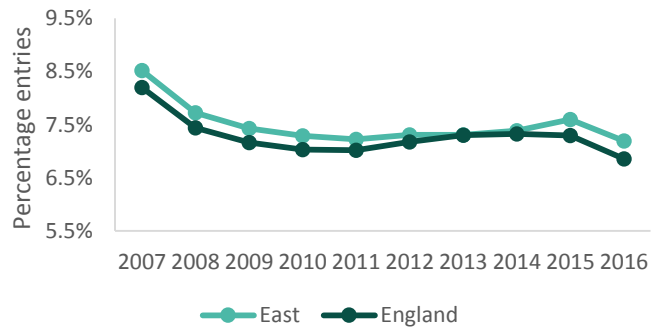
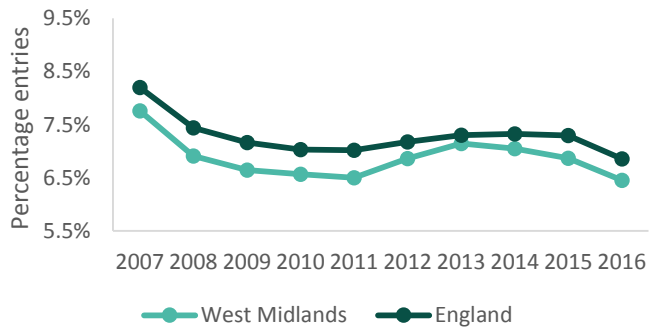
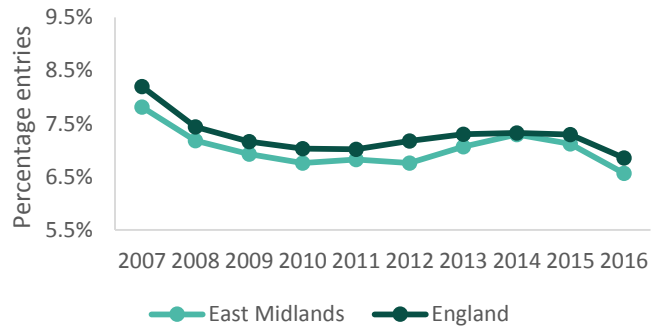
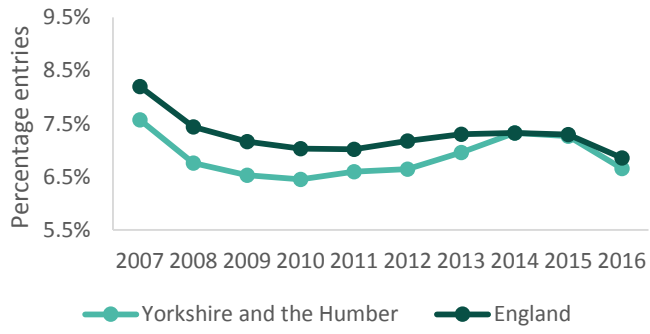
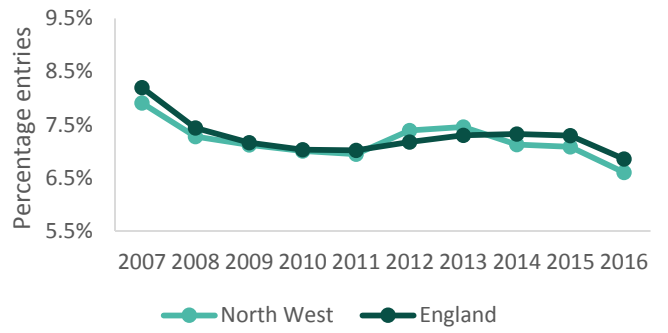
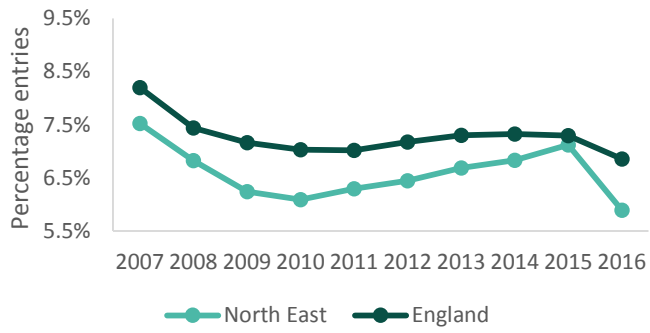
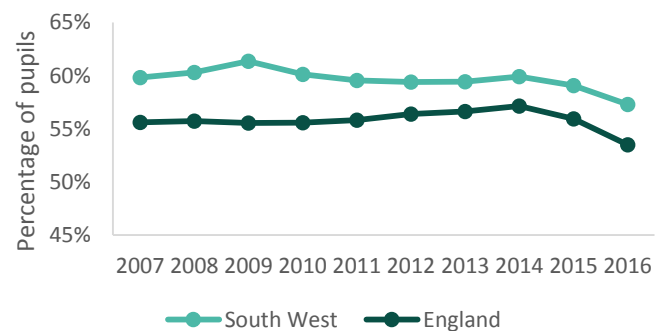
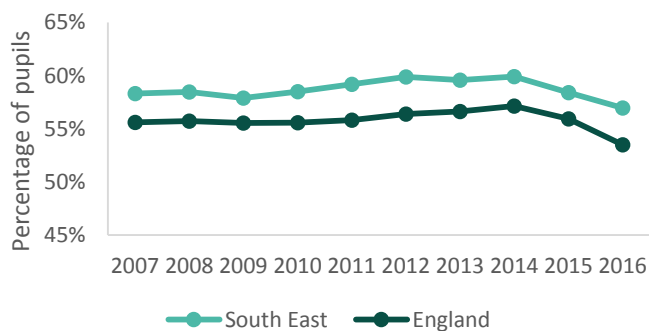
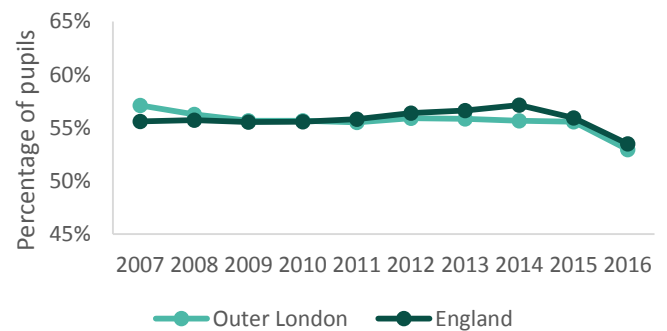
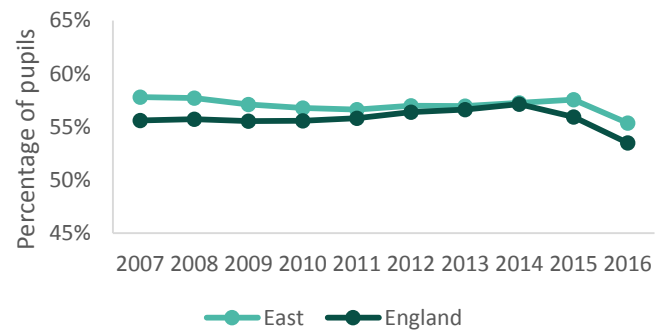
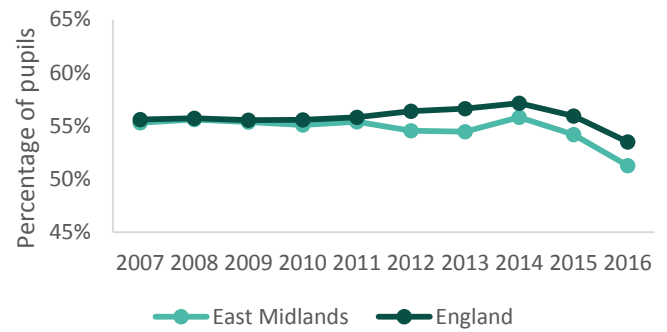
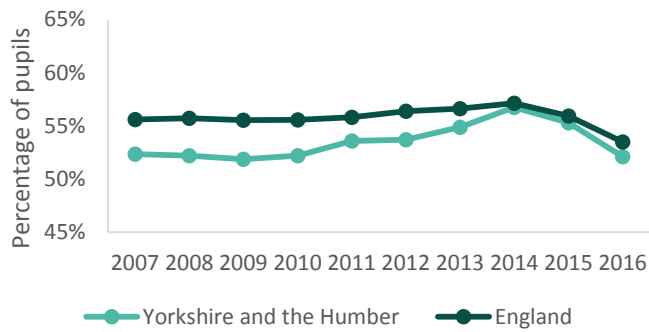
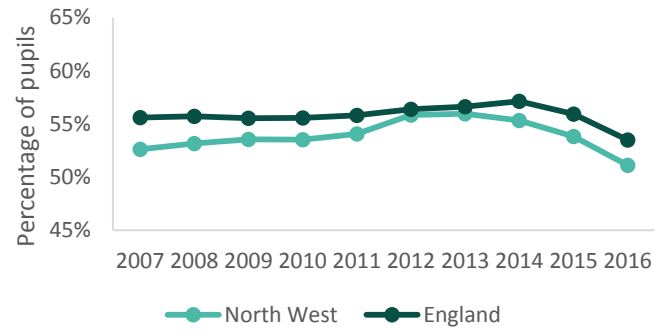


Figure 3.2: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by region, 2007-16



Part 4: Entries to arts subjects by school characteristics

Summary

- The median percentage of pupils entering at least one arts subject was **lower at state-funded schools than at independent schools each year between 2008 and 2011**; this pattern has been **reversed since 2012**. In **2016, the figure for state-funded schools was 3.6 percentage points higher than for independent schools** (51.3 per cent compared with 47.6 per cent).
- There is **much greater variation in arts entries at school level in the independent sector than there is in the state sector**.
- In general, there is **little variation in arts entries between different school cohort sizes**.

State-funded and independent schools

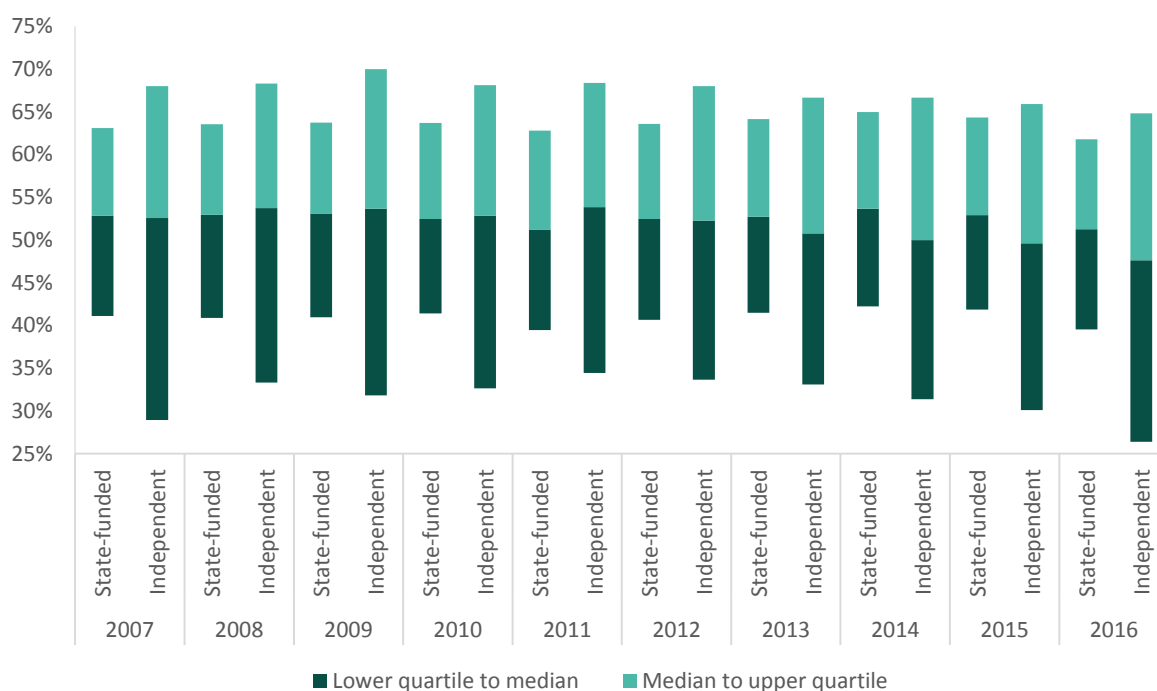
Using school level data to compare state-funded schools with independent schools, it is evident that the median proportion of entries to arts subjects has been slightly lower at state schools each year since 2008; this gap increased in 2014 and stood at 1.3 percentage points in 2015, before narrowing to 0.2 percentage points in 2016 due to a drop in the figure for independent schools. Throughout the past decade, there has been much more variation in the independent sector, with the difference between its schools at the 25th and 75th percentiles much higher than for state-funded schools.

Again comparing the median, the percentage of pupils entering at least one arts subject was lower for state-funded schools than for independent schools each year between 2008 and 2011, but has been higher since 2012. In 2016, the difference was 3.6 percentage points (51.3 per cent in state-funded schools, compared with 47.6 per cent in independent schools). Again, the variation (measured by the inter-quartile range) is greater in the independent sector. Tables with exact figures are given in Annex 2.

Figure 4.1: Percentage of entries to arts subjects, by school type, 2007-16



Figure 4.2: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by school type, 2007-16



School cohort size

There is no clear link between school cohort size and entries to arts subjects. For the most part, there is little variation by school cohort size in the median percentage of arts entries or the median percentage of pupils entering at least one arts subject. For clarity and ease of comparison, the charts

below focus specifically on schools with small cohorts (between 60 and 89 pupils in a year group), medium cohorts (between 150 and 179 pupils), and large cohorts (240 or more pupils in a year group). Tables showing the figures for schools with a full range of cohort sizes can be found in Annex 3.

Figure 4.3: Percentage of entries to arts subjects, by school cohort size, 2007-16

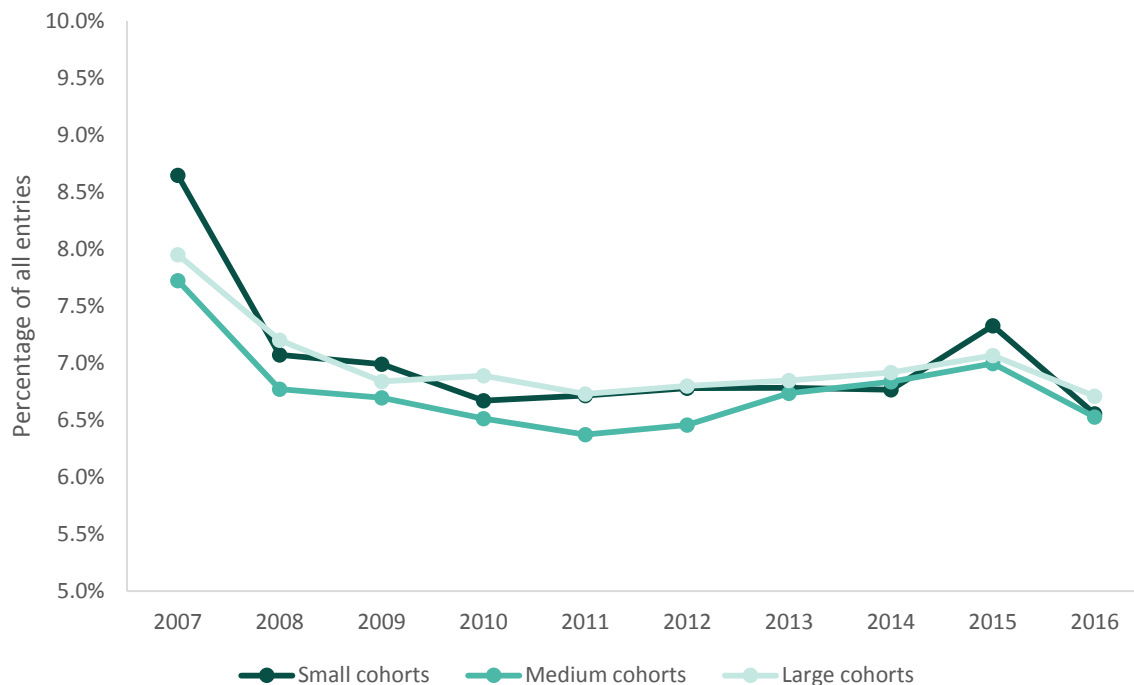
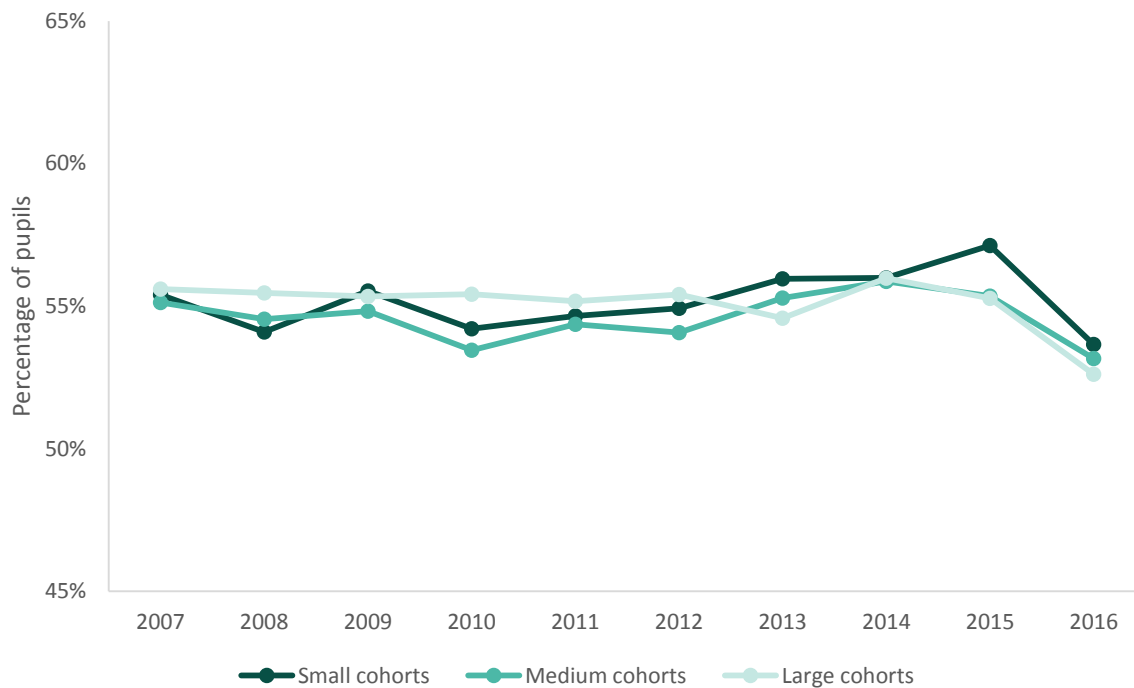


Figure 4.4: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by school cohort size, 2007-16



Part 5: Entries to arts subjects by pupil attainment

Summary

- Before 2013, pupils with high prior attainment were more likely than those with medium or low prior attainment to enter at least one arts subject. This pattern has since been reversed, and **those with medium or low prior attainment are now more likely to have at least one arts entry**. In 2016, the gap was 3.5 percentage points (54.4 per cent for pupils with medium and low prior attainment, compared with 50.9 per cent for those with high prior attainment).
- The proportion of pupils with at least one arts entry has been falling since 2011 for those with high prior attainment, and since 2014 for those with medium or low prior attainment.
- This could be because **high attaining pupils were the first to be encouraged by their schools to enter the EBacc**. In contrast, **those with medium or low prior attainment may have initially been guided towards arts subjects, away from vocational qualifications**, which the Coalition Government committed to reform soon after taking office. More recently, these pupils may have **shifted away from arts subjects as schools focus on ensuring that they fulfil the EBacc element of Progress 8**, even if they do not take the full set of EBacc subjects.
- **Pupils who do not enter the EBacc are more likely to take at least one arts subject than those who do fulfil its requirements**. In 2016, this gap stood at 7.3 percentage points (56.5 per cent for pupils who do not enter the EBacc, compared with 49.2 per cent for those who do). Therefore, **although EBacc entrants are less likely to take an arts subject, nearly half of them nevertheless do so**.

Prior attainment

Arts entries have consistently made up a higher percentage of all entries for pupils with medium or low prior attainment than for their peers with high prior attainment. This gap widened between 2011 and 2015, due both to increases in the figure for pupils with medium and low prior attainment and to decreases in the figure for pupils with high prior attainment. In 2016, it narrowed slightly because the proportion of arts entries for pupils with medium and low prior attainment fell by more than for those with high prior attainment, although the gap still stands at 1.2 percentage points. Part of the reason for this gap is that pupils with low and medium prior attainment enter fewer qualifications overall,³⁵ meaning that the arts make up a higher proportion of their total entries if they do take an arts subject than is the case for those with high prior attainment.

For pupils entering at least one arts subject, the pattern has been slightly different. Until 2013, pupils with high prior attainment were more likely to have at least one arts entry, but this pattern

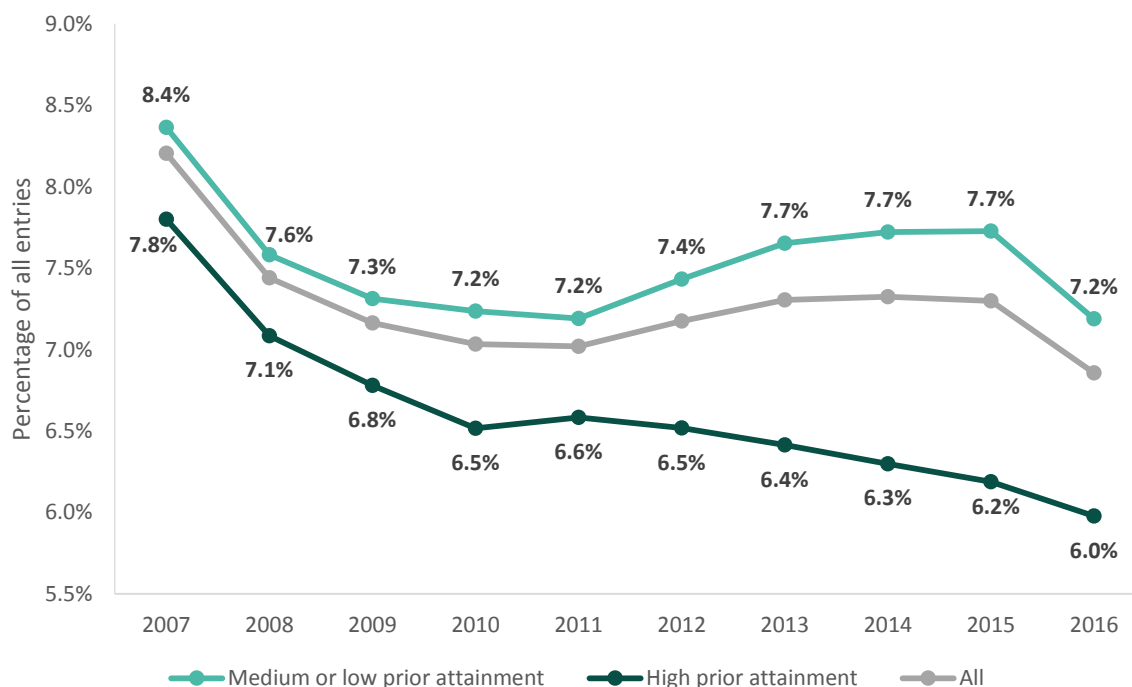
³⁵ Department for Education, 'Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England, 2015 to 2016', January 2017, p.6:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584473/SFR03_2017.pdf.

has been reversed in more recent years, and in 2016 the magnitude of the gap was almost the same as it was in 2007, but with pupils with high prior attainment less likely to have at least one arts entry (50.9 per cent) than their peers with medium or low prior attainment (54.4 per cent).

The proportion of pupils with high prior attainment entering at least one arts subject has been declining each year since 2011, and by 2016 was substantially lower than at the start of the decade. This may be because high attaining pupils were the first to be targeted by schools for entry into the EBacc: several respondents to the online survey and telephone interviews explained that high attaining pupils at their schools were particularly guided by the school towards entering the EBacc, and that this limited the number of subject options available to them.

On the other hand, the proportion of pupils with medium or low prior attainment with at least one arts entry increased between 2009 and 2014 and has since fallen in the past two years, to around the levels seen at the start of the period under review. It may therefore be that pupils with medium or low prior attainment initially switched into arts subjects, away from vocational qualifications: the intention to reform the quality and accountability arrangements for vocational qualifications was clear from the early days of the Coalition Government.³⁶ The more recent drop in the proportion of these pupils taking at least one arts subjects may be partly because the proportions of pupils with medium and low prior attainment entering the EBacc is still increasing slightly. However, the EBacc element of Progress 8 is likely to be more significant, as schools may have shifted their focus to ensuring that pupils with medium and low prior attainment fulfil the EBacc element of Progress 8 even if they are not entered for the full suite of EBacc subjects.³⁷

Figure 5.1: Percentage of entries to arts subjects, by prior attainment, 2007-16

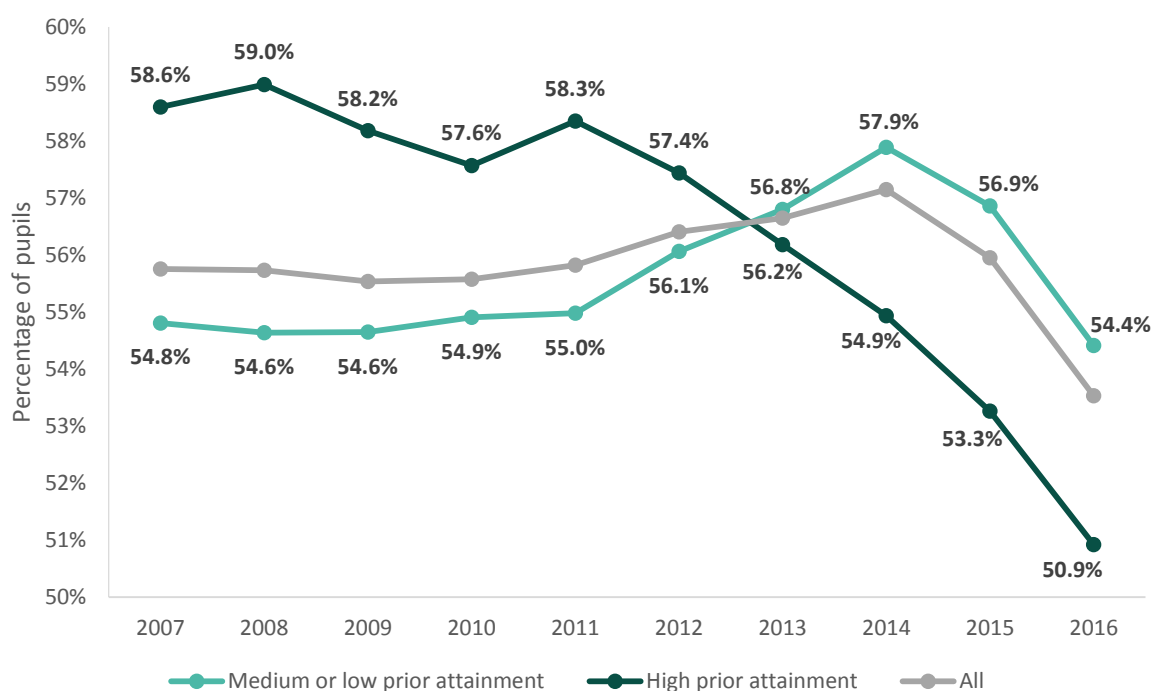


³⁶ Department for Education, *The Importance of Teaching: The Schools White Paper 2010*, November 2010, pp.49-50, 67-69:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175429/CM-7980.pdf.

³⁷ This is discussed in more detail in Part 7, below.

Figure 5.2: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by prior attainment, 2007-16



Attainment of five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C including English and maths

Arts entries have consistently made up a higher proportion of entries for pupils who do not achieve five or more GCSEs including English and maths than their peers who do achieve this benchmark. Between 2012 and 2015, this gap widened, due both to an increase in the figure for those who do not achieve the benchmark and a concomitant decrease in the figure for those who do achieve the benchmark. In 2016, however, the gap narrowed to 1 percentage point due to a drop in the percentage of arts entries by pupils who did not achieve five or more GCSEs including English and maths; this decrease was greater than for pupils who did achieve five or more GCSEs including English and maths.

On the other hand, there was previously a substantial gap in pupils entering at least one arts subject, with those achieving five or more GCSEs including English and maths considerably more likely to enter at least one arts subject than those who did not achieve this benchmark: in 2007, this gap stood at 7.3 percentage points (59.5 per cent compared with 52.2 per cent). This means that in the first part of the decade, pupils not attaining five or more GCSEs including English and maths were less likely to enter an arts subject, but for those that did, the arts made up a higher proportion of their exam entries. This is probably due to lower overall exam entry rates for these pupils.

Since 2011, the gap in the proportion of pupils entering at least one arts subject has narrowed and has recently been slightly reversed: in 2016, pupils who attained the benchmark were 0.3 percentage points less likely to have entered at least one arts subject than their peers (53.4 per cent for pupils reaching the threshold, compared with 53.7 per cent for those not meeting the benchmark). This has been due both to a decrease in the figure for those attaining the five GCSEs including English and maths benchmark, and an increase in the figure for those not achieving this benchmark until 2014; over the past two years, the proportion of pupils entering at least one arts

subject has fallen for both categories. These changes are likely to be driven by the same factors cited above as underpinning the trends evident for pupils with different levels of prior attainment.

Figure 5.3: Percentage of entries to arts subjects, by attainment of five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C including English and maths, 2007-16

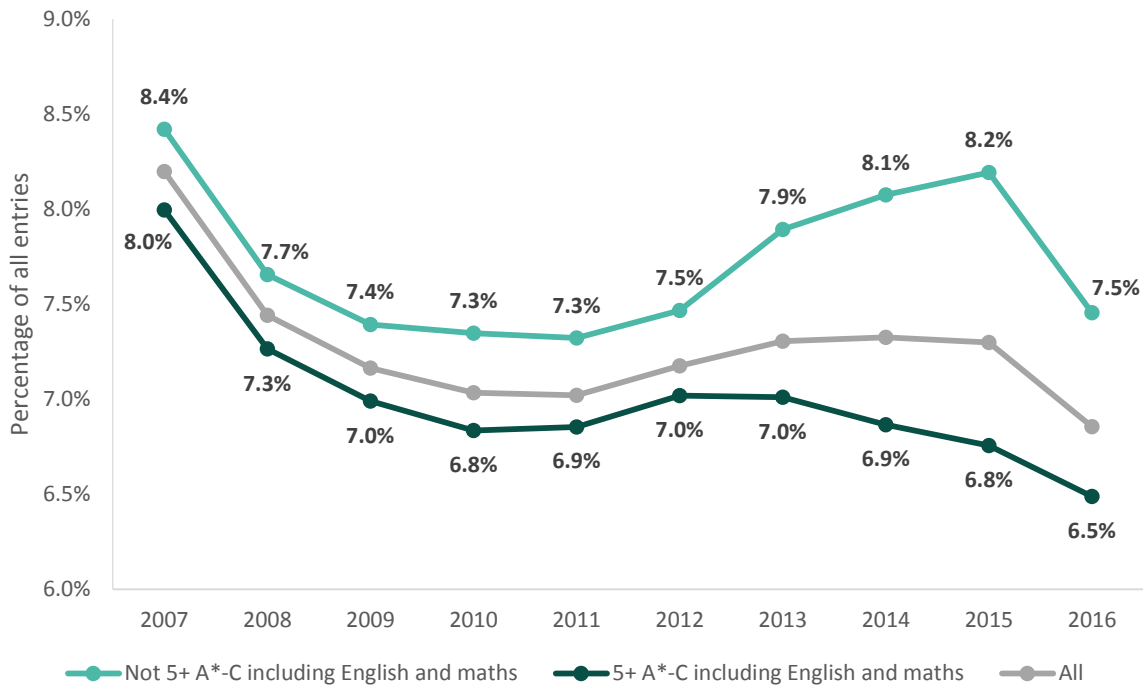
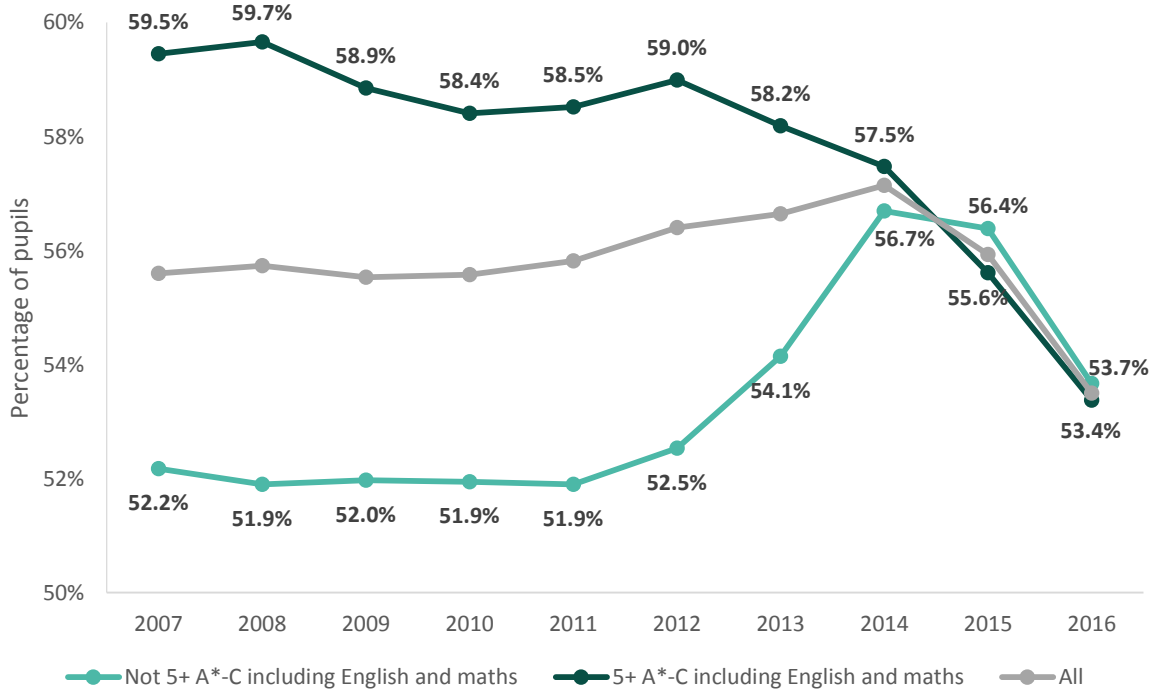


Figure 5.4: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by attainment of five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C including English and maths, 2007-16



EBacc entry and attainment

Arts subjects make up a higher proportion of entries for pupils who do not enter the EBacc than for those who do fulfil the EBacc entry requirements; this gap has remained broadly stable and stood at 2.3 percentage points in 2016. Likewise, there is a gap in the proportion of pupils with at least one arts entry, and this has increased since 2011 from 6.2 percentage points to 7.3 percentage points in 2016 (56.5 per cent compared with 49.2 per cent). However, this includes a fall from a gap of 8.4 percentage points in 2015, due to a sharper decline for pupils who did not enter the EBacc than for those who did in 2016.

Figure 5.5: Percentage of entries to arts subjects, by EBacc entry, 2011-16

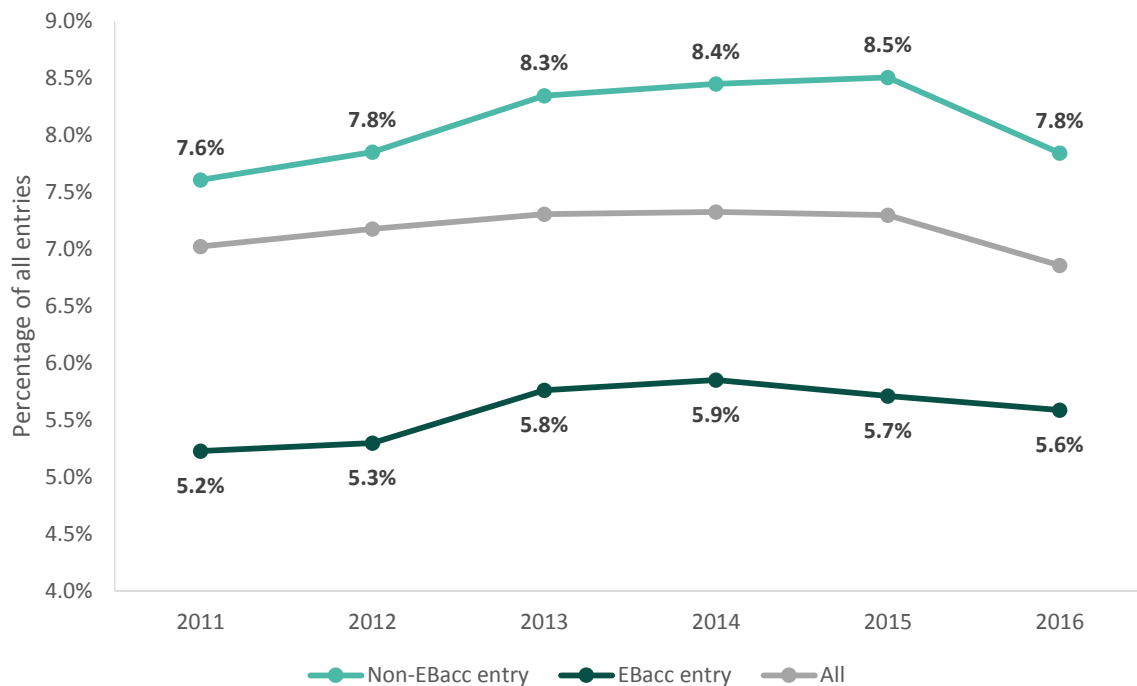
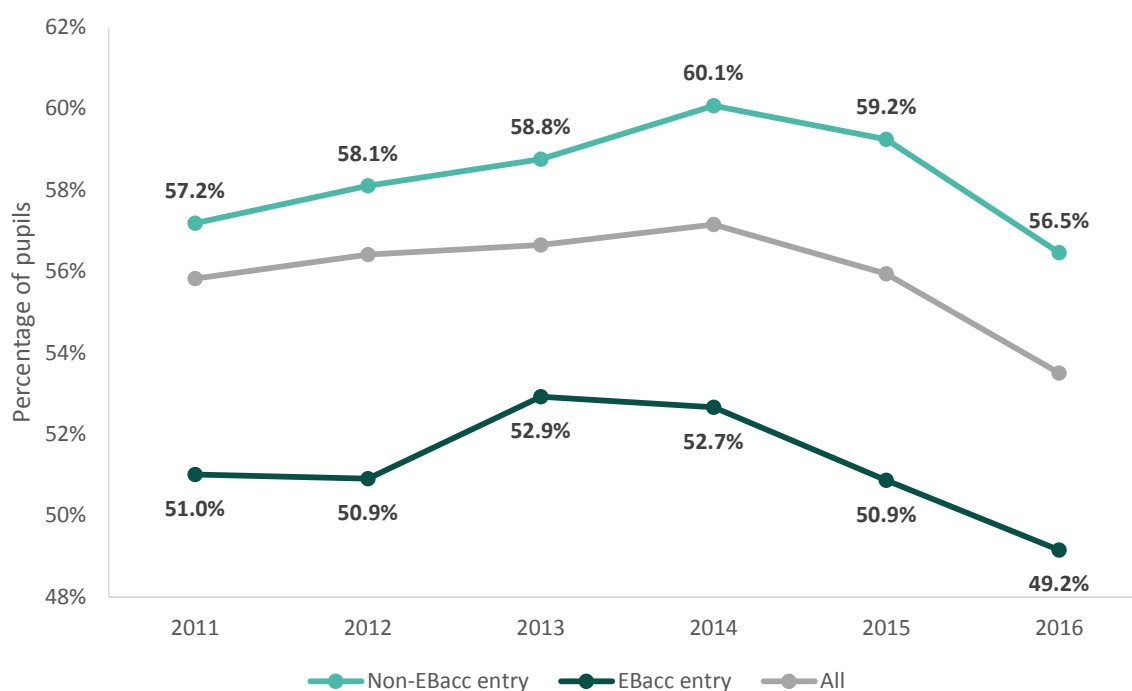


Figure 5.6: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by EBacc entry, 2011-16



A similar gap is evident when comparing pupils who attain the EBacc with those who do not, although it is slightly smaller in scale. The percentage of entries in arts subjects is higher for pupils who do not attain the EBacc, but the gap on this measure has remained stable since 2010, standing at 1.8 percentage points in 2016 (7.4 per cent compared with 5.6 per cent). The gap in pupils with at least one arts entry has fluctuated since 2010 but in 2016 stood at 5.2 percentage points (54.8 per cent for pupils who did not achieve the EBacc, compared with 49.6 per cent for those who did).

The EBacc was widely cited by teachers who responded to the online survey and participated in telephone interviews as the principal cause of a decline in arts subjects in schools. Clearly, pupils who enter the EBacc are less likely also to take an arts subjects. However, it is still the case that in 2016 nearly half of pupils who fulfilled the requirements of the EBacc also entered at least one arts subject; this suggests that the EBacc does not necessarily pose a barrier to accessing an arts subject, although it may do so for certain pupils or when combined with other factors. The gap between pupils attaining the EBacc is smaller than the gap between pupils entering and not entering the EBacc. This suggests that pupils who enter but do not achieve the EBacc are particularly unlikely to enter at least one arts subject; pupils who are on the borderline between attaining and not attaining the EBacc may be required by their school to focus on EBacc subjects, permitted fewer option subjects, and have fewer exam entries in total.

Figure 5.7: Percentage of entries to arts subjects, by EBacc attainment, 2010-16

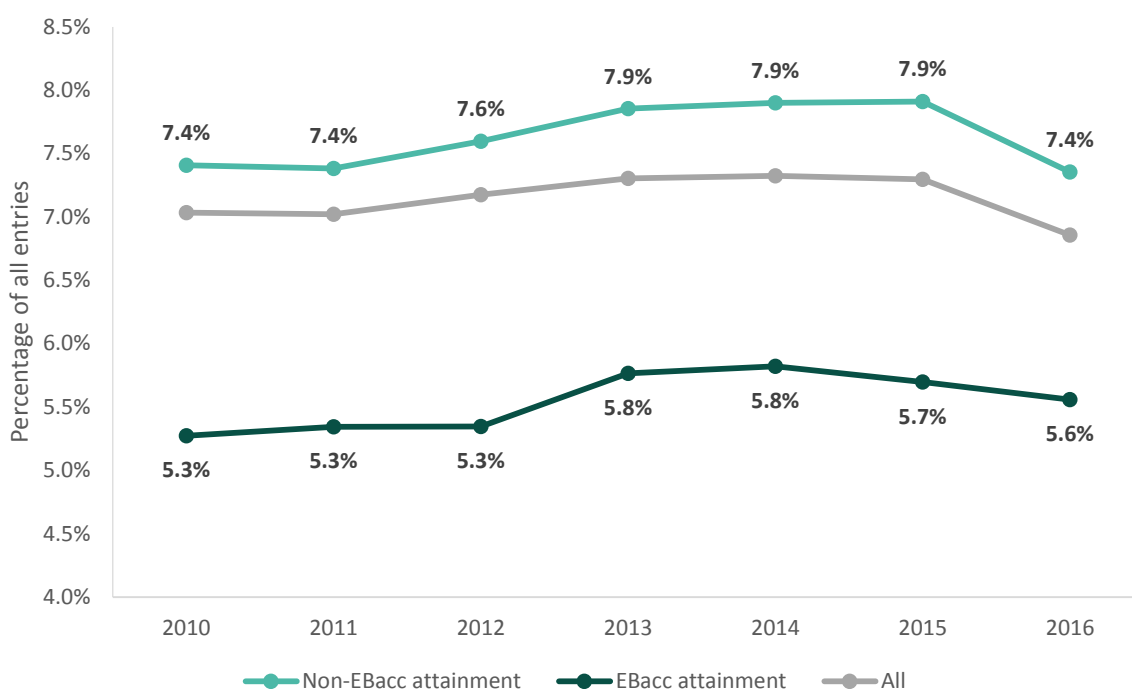
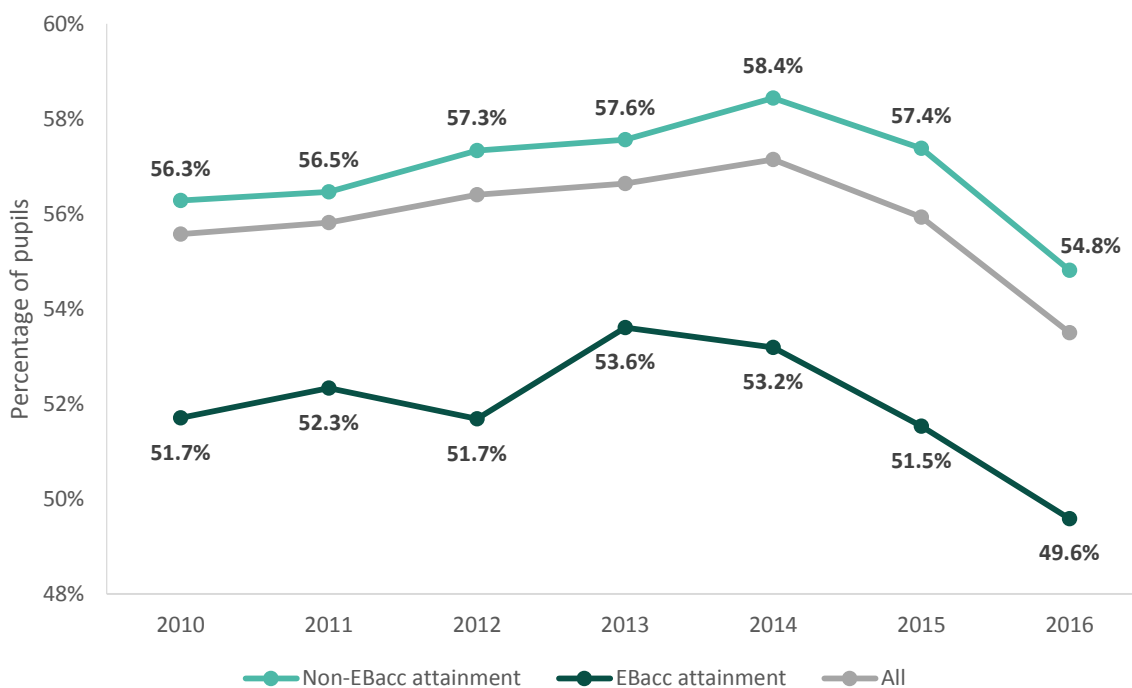


Figure 5.8: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by EBacc attainment, 2010-16



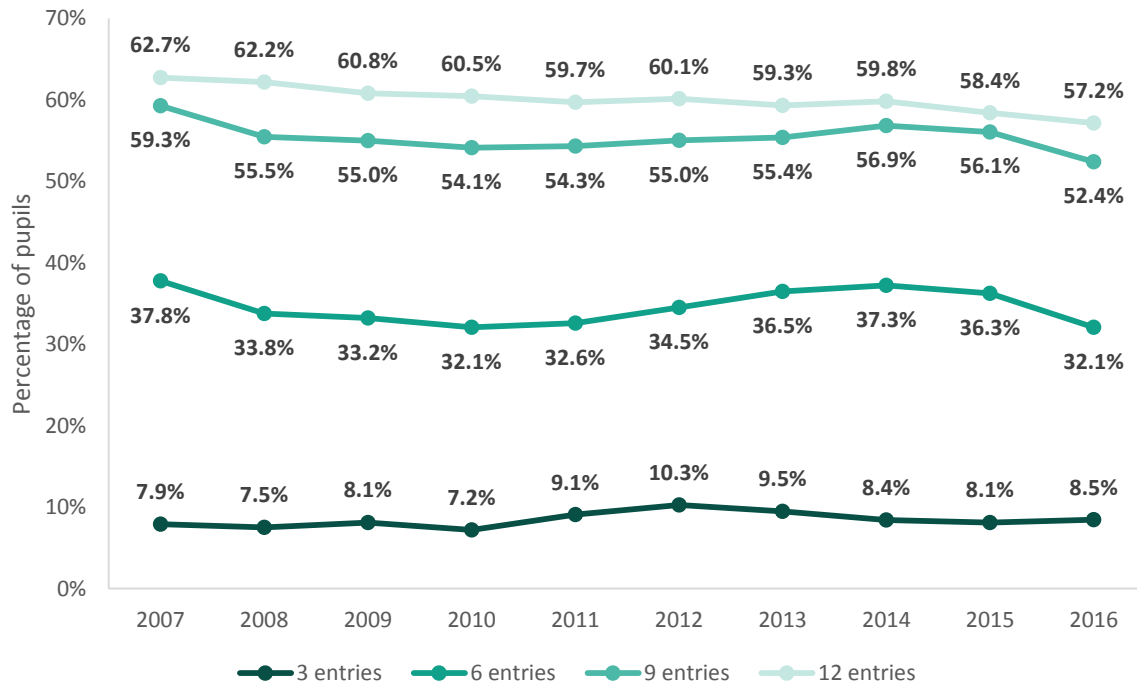
Total number of exam entries

Pupils with fewer than eight exam entries are substantially less likely to enter at least one arts subject. As a pupil’s total number of entries increases, so too does the likelihood of at least one of these entries including an arts subject; however, once eight entries are reached, the increase with each additional entry is generally smaller. Less than half of pupils with eight or fewer total entries

took at least one arts subject in 2016, compared with over half of pupils with nine or more total entries.

The chart below shows the percentage of pupils entering at least one arts subject for those with three, six, nine or twelve exam entries in total. A table showing the full range of total number of exam entries is available in Annex 4.

Figure 5.9: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by total number exam entries, 2007-16



Part 6: Entries to arts subjects by pupil characteristics

Summary

- There is a **very large gender gap in entries to arts subjects**. In 2016, 64.7 per cent of girls took at least one arts subject, compared with 42.5 per cent of boys, a **gap of 22.3 percentage points**.
- Until 2014, pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) were less likely to enter at least one arts subject than were their peers. **Since 2014**, the proportion of pupils with at least one arts entry has fallen for both groups of pupils, but it remains **slightly higher for FSM pupils**. In 2016, the gap stood at 0.5 percentage points (53.9 per cent of FSM pupils, compared with 53.4 per cent of non-FSM pupils).
- At the start of the decade, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) were much less likely to enter at least one arts subject, but this gap has narrowed over the years. **In 2016, pupils with SEND were marginally more likely to have at least one arts entry**, with 53.9 per cent doing so, compared with 53.4 per cent of their peers.
- There are **substantial gaps in arts entries between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds**. Black Caribbean pupils have particularly high entry rates, whilst pupils from Indian and Pakistani backgrounds are much less likely to have at least one arts entry than those from other ethnic groups.
- **Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) have lower entry rates to arts subjects than their peers**. In 2016, 48.8 per cent of EAL pupils entered at least one arts subject, compared with 54.3 per cent of non-EAL pupils, a gap of 5.5 percentage points.

Gender

There is a stark gender gap in entries to arts subjects, with girls far more likely to enter arts subjects than boys; this has been the case throughout the past decade and is true both for the percentage of entries which are in arts subjects and percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry. This gap has also been widening: in 2016, there was a 22.3 percentage point gap between the percentage of girls with at least one arts entry (64.7 per cent) compared with boys (42.5 per cent); in 2007 the equivalent gap was 17.0 percentage points. The widening of this gap is mainly due to increases in the percentage of girls taking at least one arts subject up to 2014, followed by a smaller decline in 2015 and 2016 than that experienced by boys.

Figure 6.1: Percentage of entries to arts subjects, by gender, 2007-16

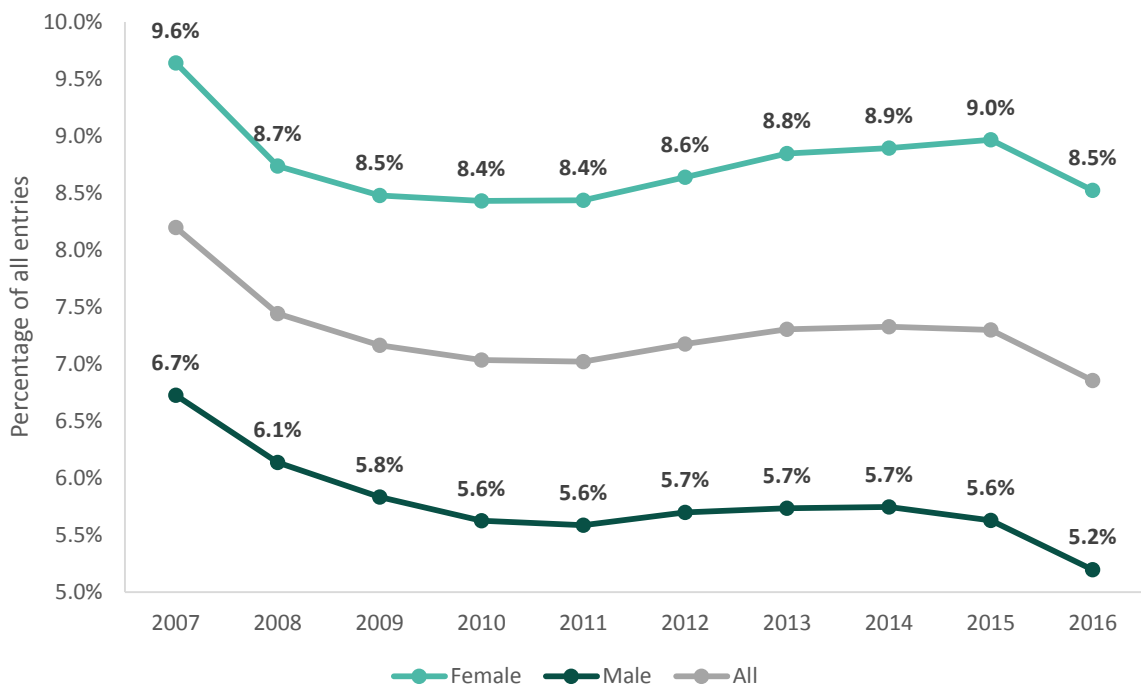
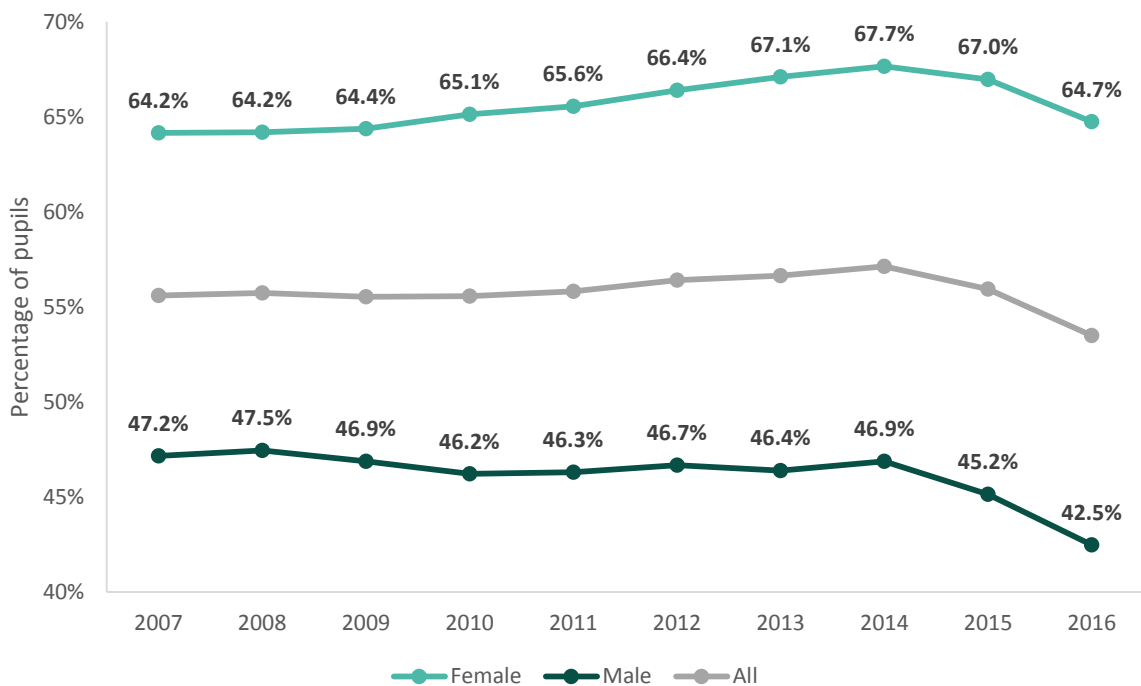


Figure 6.2: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by gender, 2007-16



Free school meals

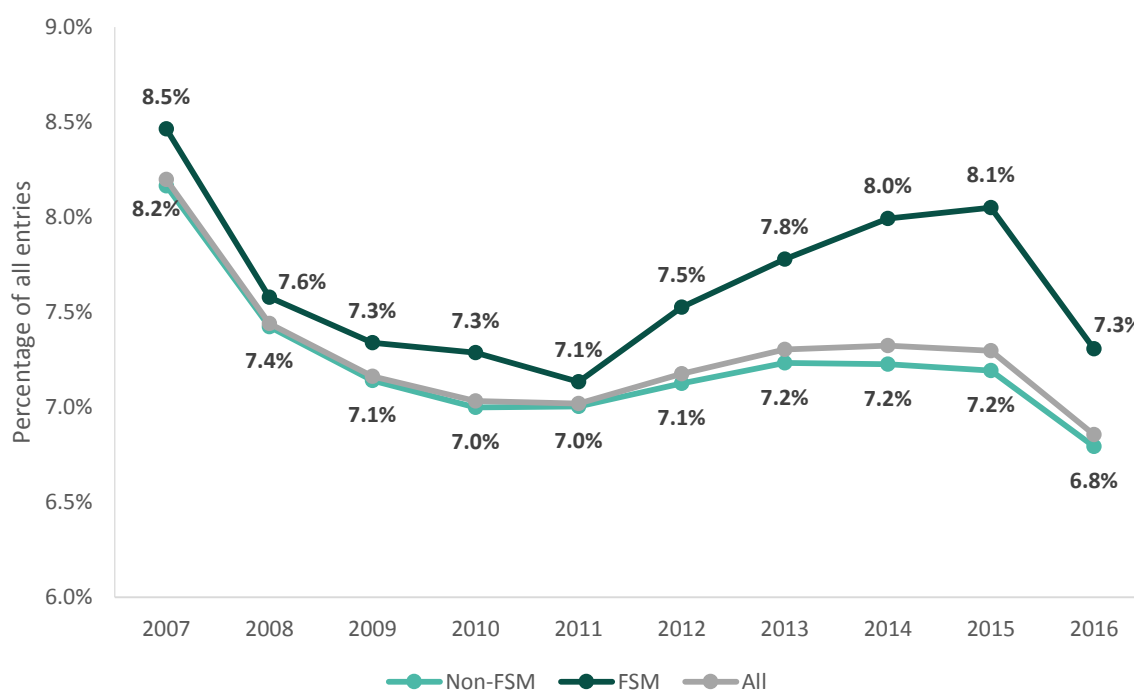
Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) have consistently had a higher percentage of entries to arts subjects than their peers over the past decade; this gap widened between 2011 and 2015, mainly due to increases in the figure for FSM pupils, but narrowed in 2016 due to a greater fall in percentage of arts entries for FSM pupils than for non-FSM pupils. In terms of pupils with at least

one entry to an arts subject, a lower proportion of FSM pupils were in this category in comparison to their non-FSM peers each year until 2014. This means that FSM pupils were previously less likely to take an arts subject, but for those that did, the arts made up a higher proportion of exam entries. This is likely to be indicative of lower overall exam entry rates for FSM pupils.

However, whereas the gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils with at least one arts entry stood at 4.3 percentage points in 2007, it narrowed each year since between 2011 and 2014 when, for the first time, a slightly higher proportion of FSM pupils entered at least one arts subject than did their non-FSM peers; this was due very largely to increases in the proportion of FSM pupils taking at least one arts subject. Since 2014, the proportion has fallen for both groups of pupils, but FSM pupils remain slightly more likely to enter at least one arts subject. In 2016, 53.9 per cent of FSM pupils entered at least one arts subject, 0.5 percentage points higher than the 53.4 per cent of non-FSM pupils in this category.

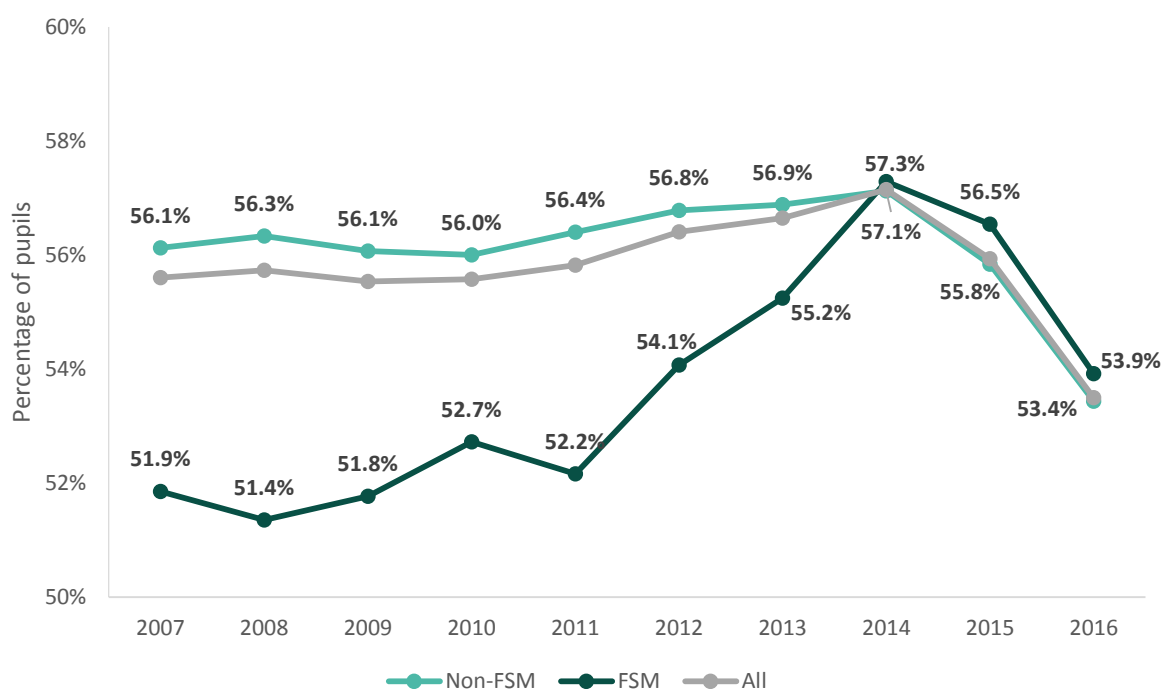
These trends are closely associated with those outlined in the previous chapter relating to pupils' prior attainment. This is because free school meal eligibility is closely linked to prior attainment: for the 2016 Key Stage 4 cohort only 6.0 per cent of pupils with high prior attainment (in the top 25 per cent at Key Stage 2) were eligible for free school meals, compared to 13.3 per cent across the whole cohort.³⁸

Figure 6.3: Percentage of entries to arts subjects, by free school meals eligibility, 2007-16



³⁸ J. Andrews, J. Hutchinson, and R. Johnes, *Grammar schools and social mobility*, Education Policy Institute, September 2016, p.26: https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Grammar-schools-and-social-mobility_.pdf.

Figure 6.4: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by free school meals eligibility, 2007-16



Special educational needs and disabilities

The two measures show apparently divergent trends in access to arts subjects by support for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). In terms of the percentage of all entries which are in arts subjects, there was virtually no gap between pupils with and without SEND until 2011; since then, arts entries have made up a higher percentage of entries for pupils with SEND than for their peers. Until 2015 this gap continued to grow; this was due to increases in the percentage of arts entries for SEND pupils, whilst the equivalent figure for non-SEND pupils remained stable. In 2016, the percentage of arts entries fell for both groups of pupils, but the gap remains, standing at 0.9 percentage points.

On the other hand, with regards to pupils with at least one arts entry, pupils with SEND were previously substantially less likely to enter at least one arts subject and this gap has now disappeared almost entirely. In 2007, SEND pupils were almost 10 percentage points less likely to have at least one arts entry (47.6 per cent, compared with 57.3 per cent for non-SEND pupils), but by 2016 the gap had slightly reversed, with the figure for SEND pupils standing 0.4 percentage points higher than for non-SEND pupils (53.9 per cent for pupils with SEND, compared with 53.4 per cent for those without SEND). This is due almost entirely to increases in the proportion of SEND pupils taking at least one arts subject up to 2014, and a smaller decline thereafter than that experienced by non-SEND pupils.

Figure 6.5: Percentage of entries to arts subjects, by special educational needs and disabilities, 2007-16

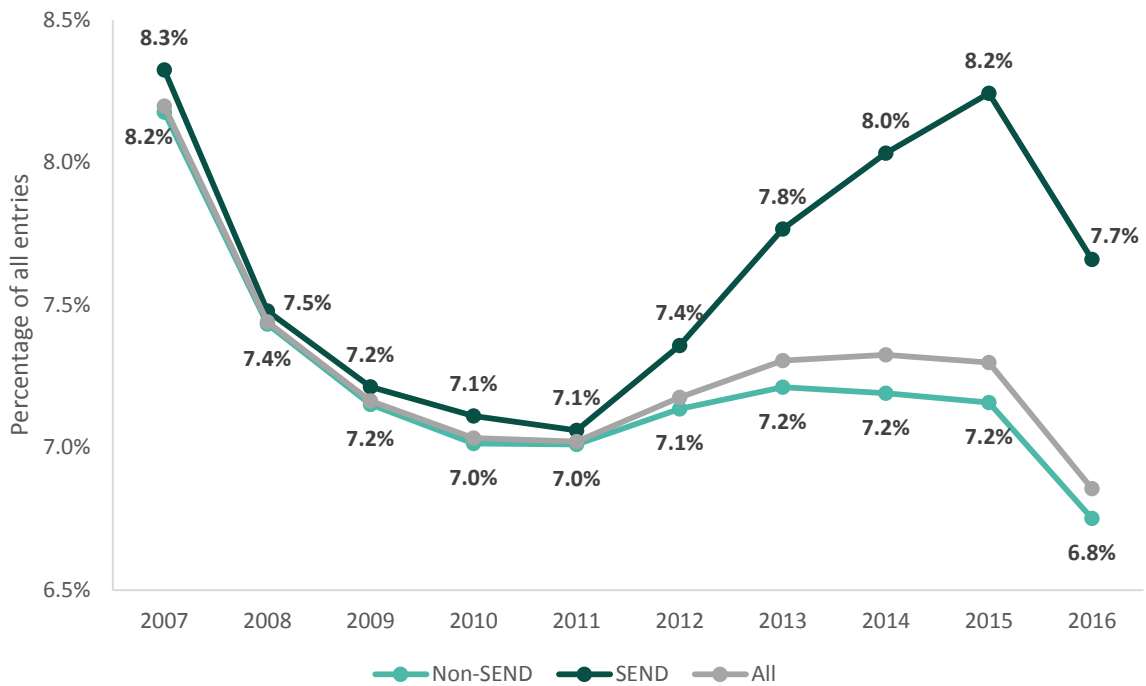
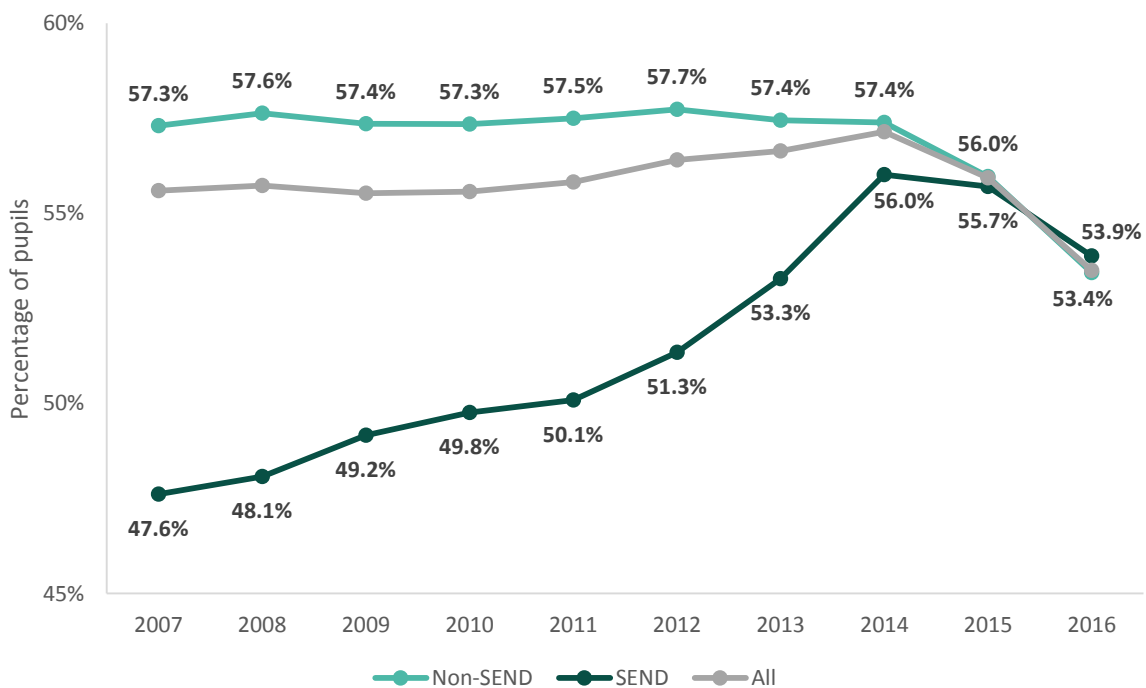


Figure 6.6: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by special educational needs and disabilities, 2007-16



Ethnicity

Throughout the past decade, there have been wide gaps between some ethnic groups, as measured by both percentage of arts entries and percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry. Black Caribbean pupils have had the highest figures on both measures in virtually every year. In contrast, pupils from Indian and Pakistani backgrounds have been less likely than pupils from other ethnic groups to enter at least one arts subject. In 2016, 59.8 per cent of Black Caribbean pupils entered at least one arts subject, compared with 41.9 per cent of Indian pupils and 39.5 per cent of Pakistani pupils. A small number of respondents to the online survey who worked in schools with high proportions of pupils from Asian backgrounds explained that uptake at their schools was hindered by the belief amongst parents and pupils that arts subjects were unlikely to help future career prospects.

In terms of change over the decade, most groups have experienced year-on-year fluctuations on both measures; this is particularly the case for pupils from gypsy/Roma and traveller of Irish heritage backgrounds, partly because these are very small groups of pupils. Comparing the figures for 2007 directly with the figures for 2016, the proportions of pupils from Bangladeshi, Black African, Chinese, and Indian backgrounds with at least one arts entry have declined notably, although much of this drop occurred in 2016. In particular, the figure for Bangladeshi pupils has fallen overall by 9.7 percentage points (57.0 per cent in 2007, compared with 47.3 per cent in 2016).

The tables below focus on the percentage of entries in arts subjects and the proportion of pupils with at least one arts entry for each ethnic group in the years 2007, 2010, 2014, and 2016. Full tables, showing the figures for each year between 2007 and 2016, are available in Annex 5.

Figure 6.7: Percentage of entries to arts subjects, by ethnicity, 2007-16

Ethnicity	2007	2010	2014	2016
Bangladeshi	8.1	6.5	6.2	5.6
Indian	6.1	5.0	5.0	4.6
Pakistani	5.8	4.8	4.9	4.5
Any Other Asian Background	7.1	6.1	6.1	5.6
Black African	8.3	6.7	6.6	5.9
Black Caribbean	10.0	8.6	8.8	8.1
Any Other Black Background	9.6	7.6	7.9	7.2
Chinese	8.3	6.8	6.8	6.6
White and Asian	8.6	7.1	7.2	6.9
White and Black African	8.9	8.1	8.7	7.4
White and Black Caribbean	9.5	8.2	8.9	7.8
Any Other Mixed Background	9.2	7.7	7.8	7.2
White British	8.3	7.1	7.5	7.1
White Irish	7.8	7.1	6.7	6.3
Traveller of Irish Heritage	9.0	8.5	8.1	6.8
Gypsy/Roma	8.7	7.5	8.2	9.4
Any Other White Background	8.5	7.2	7.8	7.3
Any Other Ethnic Group	8.0	6.6	6.5	6.3
All	8.2	7.0	7.3	6.9

Figure 6.8: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by ethnicity, 2007-16

Ethnicity	2007	2010	2014	2016
Bangladeshi	57.0	54.9	52.2	47.3
Indian	47.6	46.0	45.8	41.9
Pakistani	43.7	42.1	43.3	39.5
Any Other Asian Background	51.1	51.6	52.5	48.8
Black African	55.3	53.8	53.0	48.9
Black Caribbean	62.1	62.5	64.4	59.8
Any Other Black Background	60.7	58.8	59.3	56.3
Chinese	63.6	61.5	59.9	57.6
White and Asian	59.4	58.7	57.7	54.7
White and Black African	58.6	59.3	64.7	56.8
White and Black Caribbean	59.0	60.0	63.7	58.5
Any Other Mixed Background	60.6	60.0	60.1	55.7
White British	55.9	56.1	58.0	54.6
White Irish	52.1	55.9	54.1	48.7
Traveller of Irish Heritage	45.0	49.5	46.7	44.5
Gypsy/Roma	42.0	40.7	49.3	55.1
Any Other White Background	57.6	56.5	59.8	57.2
Any Other Ethnic Group	54.6	53.1	54.5	52.0
All	55.6	55.6	57.1	53.5

English as an additional language

Pupils who speak English as an additional language have consistently had a lower percentage of arts entries than non-EAL pupils; this gap has stood at just over 1 percentage point each year since 2007. Likewise, EAL pupils are less likely to have at least one entry to an arts subject; this gap has fluctuated and in 2016 stood at 5.5 percentage points, with 48.8 per cent of EAL pupils entering at least one arts subject, compared with 54.3 per cent of non-EAL pupils.

Figure 6.9: Percentage of entries to arts subjects, by English as additional language, 2007-16

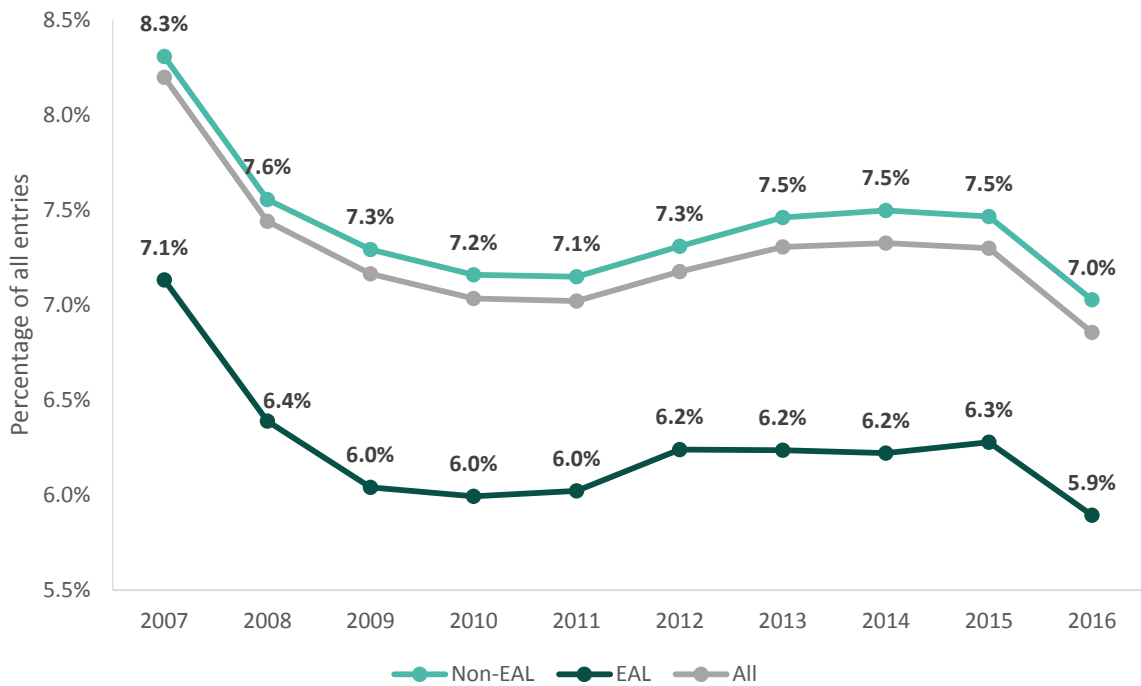
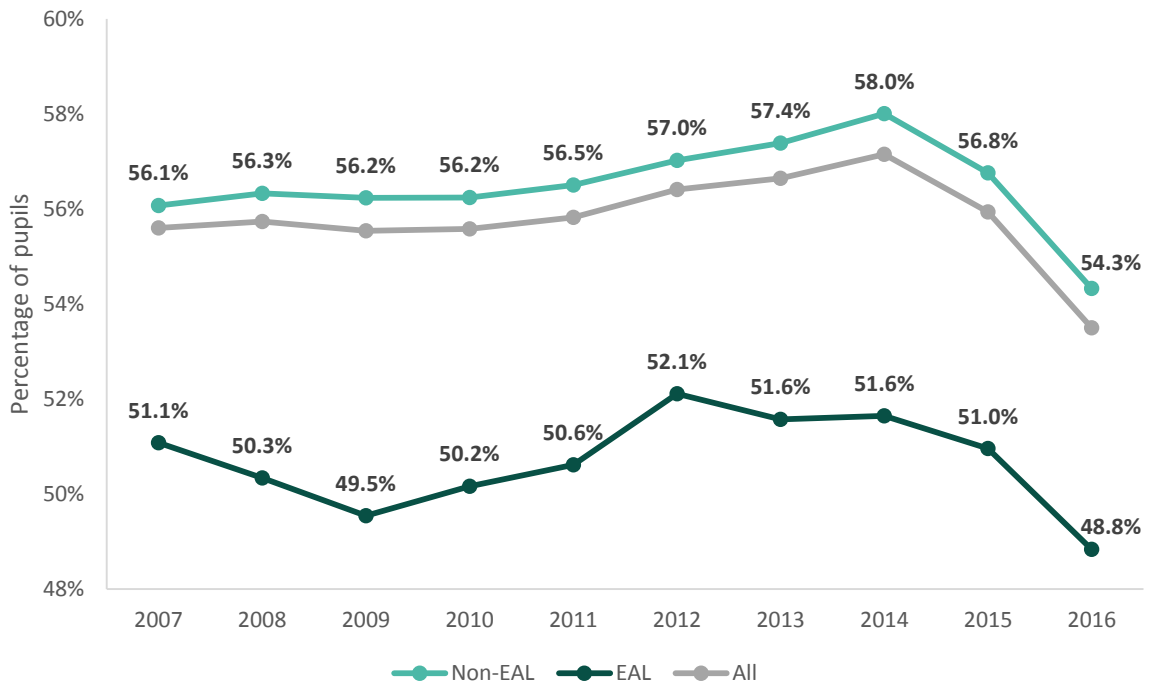


Figure 6.10: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by English as additional language, 2007-16



Part 7: Factors impacting on uptake of arts subjects

This section is based primarily on evidence gathered from survey responses and telephone interviews with secondary school teachers and leaders. Alongside national statistics published by the Department for Education, it is used to provide contextual information for the trends identified in the statistical analysis of this report. As it was a small-scale exercise, drawing on a self-selecting group of respondents, no attempt is made to quantify the extent to which the various experiences and views of participants is typical of teachers more widely.

The statistical analysis identified small increases in entry rates to arts subjects between 2010 and around 2014, followed by a decline in the percentage of entries in arts subjects and the proportion of pupils with at least one arts entry. This chapter examines the various experiences of schools which underpin these national trends and explores potential explanations both for these school level experiences and for the patterns seen at a national level.

Summary

- Evidence from teachers and school leaders indicates that various factors are placing **pressure on arts subjects**, including the EBacc, Progress 8, and financial issues. However, the extent to which this pressure impacts on a school's arts provision **depends on the precise combination of these factors within the school's specific context**, and the extent to which school leaders are able or willing to prioritise arts subjects under these circumstances.
- The **EBacc** was introduced and expanded with the **intention of raising the quality of academic education available to all pupils**. Existing research suggests that **it may be achieving these aims**, with pupils at schools that substantially increased their EBacc rates showing **higher average attainment in GCSE English and maths and lower probabilities of leaving education after the age of 16**. In addition, **pupils eligible for pupil premium funding benefited most** from the change in curriculum at these schools.³⁹ Yet at the same time, the **EBacc is often cited as a key threat to arts subjects**.⁴⁰
- It is likely that it is the **EBacc element of Progress 8 which is currently particularly putting pressure on arts subjects**, by limiting the number of option subject slots that can be filled by non-EBacc subjects. Progress 8 reserves a total of five slots for EBacc *subjects*, although it does not require pupils to be entered for all *components* of the EBacc.⁴¹ It is therefore likely to be considered accessible for a greater number of pupils. In addition, unlike the EBacc, Progress 8 is used to assess whether a school has met the minimum floor standard. This

³⁹ R. Allen and D. Thomson, *Changing the subject: How are the EBacc and Attainment 8 reforms changing results?*, The Sutton Trust, July 2016: https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Changing-the-subject_V4.pdf.

⁴⁰ The Bacc for the Future campaign, led and supported by over 200 arts and education organisations, has been particularly prominent in criticism of the impact of the EBacc on arts subjects: <http://www.baccforthefuture.com/>. In addition, the EBacc was commonly cited as causing a decline in the take-up of arts subjects by the small sample of teachers surveyed and interviewed for this report.

⁴¹ For example, a pupil with entries in English, mathematics, geography, and double award science would have entries in five EBacc subjects but would not be considered as having entered all components of the EBacc because they do not have an entry in a language.

means that the incentives are stronger for schools to ensure that pupils fulfil its requirements. In **2016**, the year that Progress 8 was first used across all schools, the **proportion of pupils entered for four EBacc components rose by 10.8 percentage points**, compared to a 1 percentage point increase in the proportion of pupils entered for the full EBacc. Schools currently appear to be entering pupils for a greater number of EBacc subjects, but not in a way that is increasing the proportion that are entered for the full EBacc – in other words, the behaviour seems to be **in response to improving Progress 8 outcomes rather than improving the EBacc measure itself**.

- However, **Progress 8 also provides an element of protection for arts subjects**, as it includes three slots which can be filled by a variety of subjects including the arts. This means that the measure **incentivises schools to limit the number of option slots available to pupils at Key Stage 4 whilst continuing to offer a variety of arts subjects if high grades are achieved by pupils who do choose to take them**.

Variation between schools

Many respondents indicated overall decline in arts entries at their schools. However, others pointed to increases in at least some areas, including the introduction of new subjects to their arts curriculum, such as photography, media, or dance. There was a consensus that various factors are placing pressure on arts subjects, but it appeared that the extent to which this is impacting on the provision and uptake of arts in a specific school is mediated by the precise combination of these factors within the school's context, and the way in which school leaders are able or willing to balance priorities in response to these challenges.

EBacc

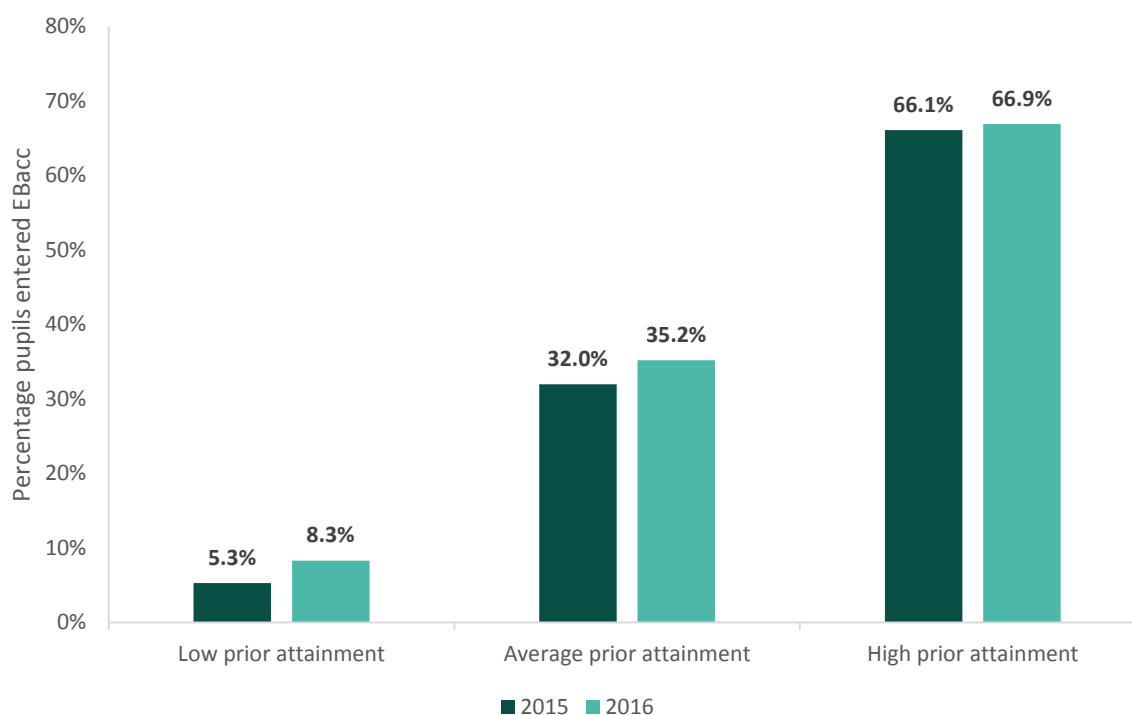
Overwhelmingly, the EBacc was regarded by respondents as placing arts subjects at risk. In many cases, it had led to a reduction in the number of option choices for pupils, as some schools have placed priority on increasing the proportion of pupils entered for the EBacc by guiding pupils towards this route. The average number of qualifications taken at Key Stage 4 in 2016 was 9.4: the full EBacc previously occupied at least six slots and could fill up to eight; from 2017, it requires entries to at least seven qualifications and can occupy up to eight slots.⁴² For the remaining options, pupils may have a number of courses on offer in addition to arts, including further EBacc subjects, design and technology, religious studies, business studies, PE, and a variety of vocational courses.

However, not all pupils are equally affected by this. Those with high prior attainment have a much higher EBacc entry rate than their peers: 66.9 per cent of pupils in this category were entered for the EBacc in 2016, compared with 35.2 per cent of pupils with average prior attainment, and 8.3 per

⁴² To meet the EBacc entry requirements from 2017, pupils must take at least seven qualifications: maths; English language and English literature; core and additional science, or double award science, or three sciences from biology, chemistry, physics, and computer science; history or geography; and a language. Previously, the minimum number of entries required was six, as entry to the English component could be met by taking GCSE English only; this qualification has been discontinued under the reformed GCSEs, the first results for which were published in 2017.

cent with low prior attainment. On the other hand, EBacc entry rates increased by more for pupils with medium and low prior attainment than for those with high prior attainment in 2016.

Figure 7.1: EBacc entry by prior attainment, 2015-16⁴³



EBacc entry is likely to restrict the subject options of pupils with low and average prior attainment, as the average number of entries at Key Stage 4 for this group are lower: 7.6 and 9.5 respectively in 2016, compared with 10.5 for high attainers.⁴⁴ This may in part explain the drop in arts entries for 2016, combined perhaps with concern around the time that the 2017 cohort selected their Key Stage 4 courses that the new Conservative Government, elected in May 2015 with a manifesto pledge to make the EBacc compulsory and require Ofsted to withhold its highest ratings from schools which do not teach the EBacc subjects, would strengthen the EBacc.⁴⁵ However, the overall proportion of pupils entering the EBacc has changed very little since 2014, standing at 38.7 per cent in both 2014 and 2015 and increasing to 39.7 per cent in 2016. This suggests that the EBacc is not the only, or perhaps even the primary, cause of the drop in arts entries in 2016.

Progress 8

The respect in which the EBacc may currently be having the greatest impact is the EBacc element of Progress 8. The Progress 8 measure is based on pupils' outcomes in eight qualifications: maths;

⁴³ Data refer to pupils in state-funded, mainstream schools. Replicated from: Department for Education, 'Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2015 to 2016', January 2017:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2015-to-2016>.

⁴⁴ Department for Education, 'Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England, 2015 to 2016', January 2017, p.6:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584473/SFR03_2017.pdf.

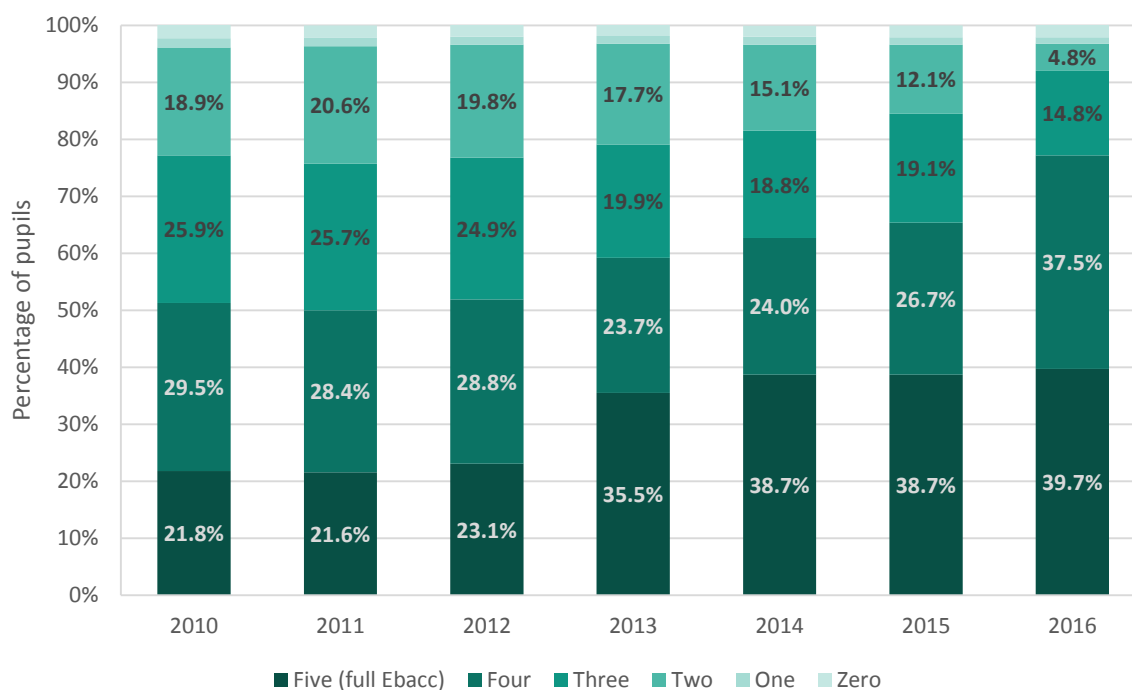
⁴⁵ Conservative Party, *The Conservative Party Manifesto 2015: Strong Leadership, A Clear Economic Plan, A Brighter, More Secure Future*, April 2015, p.34:

<https://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/Blog/ConservativeManifesto2015.pdf>.

English; three EBacc subjects; and three ‘other’ subjects, which may include further EBacc subjects, or other GCSEs or approved technical qualifications in non-EBacc subjects. This means that five of its slots must be filled by EBacc *subjects*, although it does not require pupils to be entered for all *components* of the EBacc.⁴⁶ It is therefore likely to be considered accessible for a greater number of pupils. Moreover, in contrast to the current arrangements for the EBacc, Progress 8 is used to identify schools liable for intervention, as it is the basis for floor standards and is also used in the criteria for coasting schools.

Although the proportion of pupils at state-funded schools entering the full EBacc increased by only 1 percentage point in 2016, from 38.7 per cent to 39.7 per cent, the proportion entered for four EBacc components rose by 10.8 percentage points, from 26.7 per cent in 2015 to 37.5 per cent in 2016; at the same time, the proportion of pupils taking just two or three EBacc subjects has fallen. Even where the full set of EBacc subjects is not taken, they are occupying a greater proportion of curriculum than was previously the case, and are likely to be reducing the number of subject options available to pupils.⁴⁷

Figure 7.2: Entry to EBacc components, 2010-16⁴⁸



⁴⁶ For example, a pupil with entries in English, mathematics, geography, and double award science would have entries in five EBacc subjects but would not be considered as having entered all components of the EBacc because they do not have an entry in a language.

⁴⁷ A recent research report commissioned by the Department for Education similarly highlighted cases in which schools had ceased to offer some non-EBacc subjects, including in the arts, due to a focus on ensuring that pupils filled the EBacc slots of Progress 8; this meant that other subjects faced limited resources:

CooperGibson Research, *Understanding schools' responses to the Progress 8 accountability measure*, July 2017, pp.16-17:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/629517/School_response_to_Progress_8_Report.pdf.

⁴⁸ Data refer to pupils in state-funded schools. Replicated from: Department for Education, 'Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2015 to 2016', January 2017:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2015-to-2016>.

In addition, English and maths are double-weighted under Progress 8. For English, this is the case only if the pupil has been entered for both English language and English literature. This measure is partly responsible for a substantial rise in entries to English language and English literature in 2017,⁴⁹ and may partly explain why some respondents pointed specifically to the prioritisation of English and maths within the school's timetable. In some cases, more curriculum time for maths and English had been created at the expense of arts subjects; either the curriculum time for arts or the number of option slots offered to pupils had been reduced.⁵⁰ This appeared to be linked to concerns that more time was needed to tackle the new, more challenging GCSE curricula, which were introduced for English and maths in September 2015, with the first exams in summer 2017. Although not the focus of this report, some respondents also reported that the prioritisation of English, maths, and other core subjects had reduced the time available for extra-curricular arts activities, as after-school time was increasingly being used for interventions and booster sessions in English and maths, or to make up for lost curriculum time in the arts by offering additional exam preparation.

On the other hand, some respondents felt that Progress 8 had provided a degree of protection for arts subjects at their school. This is because, in addition to English, maths, and three EBacc subjects, the final three subject slots of the measure can be filled with a variety of subjects which include the arts. In schools at which pupil outcomes in the arts were high, teachers stated that school leaders had come to recognise the contribution which these subjects could make to the school's performance on Progress 8.

Financial pressures

Funding issues were also cited as causing cuts to the arts curriculum, with some schools not replacing arts teachers when they left. Given that, at a national level, per pupil funding for schools was largely maintained in real terms between 2010-11 and 2015-16, it may be that in some cases the financial pressures cited consisted largely of a re-distribution of funding within the school, to focus resources towards subject areas which were gaining pupils and curriculum time as a consequence of the EBacc and Progress 8, and away from subjects which were experiencing a decline in uptake. On the other hand, towards the end of the period, increased employer contributions to teachers' pensions (introduced in April 2015) and to national insurance (introduced in April 2016), placed greater cost pressures on schools, which had to be balanced elsewhere within schools' budgets. Under these circumstances, cuts to arts departments are again likely to reflect priorities shaped by the EBacc and Progress 8.

Until recently, government spending commitments were such that it was unlikely that any school in England would avoid a real terms cut in per pupil funding between 2016-17 and 2019-20, including real terms cuts in per pupil funding of between 6 and 11 per cent for around half of primary and

⁴⁹ Ofqual, 'Summer 2017 exam entries: GCSEs, level 1/2 certificates, AS and A levels in England', June 2017: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/summer-2017-exam-entries-gcses-level-1-2-certificates-as-and-a-levels-in-england>.

⁵⁰ Research commissioned by the Department for Education similarly identified cases in which schools had increased teaching time for English and maths in response to their double-weightings under Progress 8. This had occurred at the expense of subjects in the 'other' element of Progress 8, including the arts; these subjects had experienced a decline in teaching time or removal from the curriculum: CooperGibson Research, *Understanding schools' responses to the Progress 8 accountability measure*, July 2017, pp.25-26: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/629517/School_response_to_Progress_8_Report.pdf.

secondary schools by 2019-20.⁵¹ In July, however, the government announced an additional £1.3 billion in funding for schools over 2018-19 and 2019-20, ensuring that per pupil funding will be maintained in real terms up to 2019-20.⁵² In spite of this, over the period between 2015 and 2020 school budgets will nevertheless have fallen in real terms by 4.6 per cent.⁵³ Therefore funding issues are likely to remain a challenge for arts subjects, although the scale of the pressure may not be as great as had been expected.

Again, although not within the main scope of this report, there was some concern expressed that budget cuts had reduced the extra-curricular arts offer: for example, one respondent noted that the high level of subsidy which had previously been offered to pupils wanting to take musical instrument lessons had been removed, leading to a drastic fall in the number of pupils enrolled for this tuition.

School leadership

Within the context of these various factors, some respondents emphasised the importance of the attitude of senior leaders towards arts subjects in re-balancing their priorities. In cases where the school had maintained or expanded its arts provision, this was often because the headteacher had decided to prioritise a strong arts offer over maximising EBacc entry rates.

In others, it was clear that the specific response to external factors at a school level had exacerbated pressure on arts subjects. Many respondents pointed to the difficulties caused by changes to the structure of subject blocks within their school: in a number of cases, arts subjects were offered as options in fewer of these subject blocks and faced competition both from each other and from various other non-EBacc subjects within the same slot, including business studies, PE, design and technology, and vocational subjects such as hospitality.

The priority which a headteacher places on arts subjects is likely to be shaped not only by their personal values and concern about the EBacc, but also by the characteristics of the school's intake. Under Progress 8, it is more difficult to ignore the pressure for pupils to be entered for at least five EBacc subjects, and it may be easier to maintain strong arts provision in schools in which the prior attainment of pupils renders it more realistic for them to take a higher number of qualifications, or in which there is a high demand from pupils and parents for these subjects.

Parents and pupils

The impact of the attitudes of parents and pupils on arts provision varied between different schools. In some cases, the school's strong arts provision was regarded as providing the school with publicity that could be used to attract prospective parents and pupils. In others, there was concern that parents and pupils did not place as much value on the arts as on core academic subjects, possibly

⁵¹ N. Perera, J. Andrews, and P. Sellen, *The implications of the National Funding Formula for schools*, Education Policy Institute, March 2017, p.7: https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/170314.NFFReportv_FINAL.pdf.

⁵² Department for Education, 'Justine Greening statement to parliament on school funding', July 2017: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/justine-greening-statement-to-parliament-on-school-funding>.

⁵³ S. Coughlan, 'Extra cash in school budgets in funding shake-up', BBC News, 17 July 2017: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-40634472>.

because their views had been shaped by the EBacc and perhaps also because arts subjects at Key Stage 5 are not considered to be 'facilitating' subjects by Russell Group universities.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Russell Group, *Informed Choices: A Russell Group guide to making decisions about post-16 education, 2016/17*, December 2016, p.29: <https://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/media/5272/informedchoices-print.pdf>.

Part 8: Conclusion

For much of the past decade, entries to arts subjects have demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of a number of different policy changes. In 2016, however, arts entries at Key Stage 4 fell to a level slightly below that for any year in the period under review; this is the case both for the proportion of arts entries and the percentage of pupils with at least one entry to an arts qualification. Provisional data suggest that this decline has continued into the 2017 cohort.

This is likely to be due to a combination of factors. The EBacc does not bar access to the arts for those who take it, but it does limit the number of option subject slots that can be filled by non-EBacc subjects. Pupils with high prior attainment have been particularly affected by this, as they are more likely to enter the EBacc; those with average prior attainment are also increasingly doing so. However, it is the Progress 8 requirement of entry into at least five EBacc subjects which appears to have been particularly important for arts entries in 2016: entry to the full EBacc increased very little in 2016, but entry to four EBacc components rose by over 10 percentage points. As schools adjust further to Progress 8 and the phasing in of more new GCSE curricula, as well as financial challenges, it seems likely that the pressure on arts subjects could increase further.

The EBacc was introduced and expanded with the intention of raising the quality of academic education available to all pupils, thereby improving opportunities for young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. In particular, it sought to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.⁵⁵ It may be that it is achieving these aims, at least in schools which have made significant changes to their curriculum offer in response to the measure. A study of pupils at 300 schools which substantially increased their EBacc entry rates between 2010 and 2013 found that pupils' average attainment in GCSE English and maths increased following the curriculum changes (even controlling for overall grade inflation), and that pupils at these schools were also less likely to have left education after the age of 16 than were their peers in comparison schools. In addition, pupils eligible for pupil premium funding benefited most from the change in curriculum at these schools, meaning that gaps in attainment between pupil premium pupils and their peers narrowed slightly more than in schools with similar pupil intakes.⁵⁶

Yet the government needs to acknowledge that at the same time, the EBacc and Progress 8 have brought increased pressure on arts subjects, and to consider the impact which reduced access to the arts is likely to have both on pupils and on the creative industries more widely.⁵⁷ Over the coming years it will be important to monitor pupils' access to the arts at Key Stage 4 and the impact of existing and future policy initiatives on this.

⁵⁵ Department for Education, *Consultation on implementing the English Baccalaureate*, launched November 2015, p.14:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/473455/Consultation_on_implementing_the_English_Baccalaureate.pdf.

⁵⁶ R. Allen and D. Thomson, *Changing the subject: How are the EBacc and Attainment 8 reforms changing results?*, The Sutton Trust, July 2016: https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Changing-the-subject_V4.pdf.

⁵⁷ For example, the Cultural Learning Alliance has outlined various benefits associated with arts and cultural learning, based on a review of evidence from existing cohort studies: Cultural Learning Alliance, *Key Research Findings: The Case for Cultural Learning*, 2017: https://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/images/uploads/CLA_key_findings_2017.pdf.

Annex 1

Figure A1.1: Percentage of entries to arts subjects, by region, 2007-16

Region	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
East	8.5	7.7	7.4	7.3	7.2	7.3	7.3	7.4	7.6	7.2
East Midlands	7.8	7.2	6.9	6.8	6.8	6.8	7.1	7.3	7.1	6.6
Inner London	9.2	8.4	7.9	7.7	7.5	7.7	7.5	7.7	7.6	7.3
North East	7.5	6.8	6.2	6.1	6.3	6.4	6.7	6.8	7.1	5.9
North West	7.9	7.3	7.1	7.0	6.9	7.4	7.5	7.1	7.1	6.6
Outer London	8.3	7.3	7.0	6.9	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.9	7.0	6.6
South East	8.6	7.9	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.8	7.9	7.8	7.6	7.4
South West	9.1	8.3	8.1	7.7	7.7	7.5	7.6	7.6	7.7	7.4
West Midlands	7.8	6.9	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.9	7.1	7.1	6.9	6.5
Yorkshire & Humber	7.6	6.8	6.5	6.5	6.6	6.6	7.0	7.3	7.3	6.7
England	8.2	7.4	7.2	7.0	7.0	7.2	7.3	7.3	7.3	6.9

Figure A1.2: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by region, 2007-16

Region	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
East	57.8	57.7	57.1	56.8	56.6	57.0	57.0	57.3	57.6	55.4
East Midlands	55.3	55.6	55.4	55.1	55.4	54.5	54.5	55.8	54.2	51.3
Inner London	59.5	59.3	58.6	58.8	58.9	59.8	58.8	59.7	58.1	56.7
North East	51.6	51.9	50.9	50.9	52.4	51.9	54.0	54.5	53.8	47.8
North West	52.6	53.2	53.6	53.5	54.1	55.8	56.0	55.3	53.8	51.1
Outer London	57.1	56.3	55.7	55.7	55.5	55.9	55.9	55.7	55.6	53.0
South East	58.3	58.5	57.9	58.5	59.2	59.9	59.6	59.9	58.4	57.0
South West	59.8	60.3	61.4	60.1	59.6	59.4	59.4	59.9	59.1	57.3
West Midlands	52.8	53.0	52.7	53.3	52.3	54.1	55.0	55.7	52.9	50.9
Yorkshire & Humber	52.3	52.2	51.9	52.2	53.6	53.7	54.9	56.7	55.3	52.1
England	55.6	55.7	55.5	55.6	55.8	56.4	56.6	57.1	55.9	53.5

Annex 2

Figure A2.1: Percentage of entries to arts subjects, by school type, 2007-16

Year	School type	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile
2007	State-funded	5.8	7.6	9.7
	Independent	4.1	7.6	10.6
2008	State-funded	5.2	6.8	8.9
	Independent	4.2	7.2	10.3
2009	State-funded	5.0	6.6	8.6
	Independent	4.1	7.4	10.0
2010	State-funded	4.9	6.5	8.5
	Independent	4.0	7.2	9.7
2011	State-funded	4.6	6.2	8.3
	Independent	4.4	6.9	9.7
2012	State-funded	4.7	6.5	8.4
	Independent	4.0	6.7	9.4
2013	State-funded	4.9	6.6	8.7
	Independent	4.0	6.9	9.7
2014	State-funded	5.0	6.7	8.8
	Independent	4.7	8.2	12.3
2015	State-funded	5.1	6.8	8.8
	Independent	4.4	8.1	11.5
2016	State-funded	4.8	6.5	8.3
	Independent	3.4	6.6	9.5

Figure A2.2: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by school type, 2007-16

Year	School type	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile
2007	State-funded	41.1	52.8	63.1
	Independent	28.9	52.6	68.0
2008	State-funded	40.9	52.9	63.6
	Independent	33.3	53.7	68.3
2009	State-funded	41.0	53.1	63.7
	Independent	31.8	53.7	70.0
2010	State-funded	41.4	52.4	63.7
	Independent	32.6	52.8	68.1
2011	State-funded	39.5	51.2	62.8
	Independent	34.5	53.8	68.4
2012	State-funded	40.7	52.5	63.6
	Independent	33.7	52.3	68.0
2013	State-funded	41.5	52.7	64.1
	Independent	33.1	50.8	66.7
2014	State-funded	42.2	53.7	65.0
	Independent	31.4	50.0	66.7
2015	State-funded	41.9	52.9	64.3
	Independent	30.1	49.6	65.9
2016	State-funded	39.5	51.3	61.8
	Independent	26.4	47.6	64.8

Annex 3

Figure A3.1: Percentage of entries to arts subjects, by school cohort size, 2007-16

School cohort size	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
60-89 pupils	8.6	7.1	7.0	6.7	6.7	6.8	6.8	6.8	7.3	6.6
90-119 pupils	7.5	6.8	6.5	6.4	5.9	6.6	6.5	6.9	6.7	6.4
120-149 pupils	7.6	6.7	6.6	6.5	6.6	6.6	6.7	6.9	6.8	6.5
150-179 pupils	7.7	6.8	6.7	6.5	6.4	6.5	6.7	6.8	7.0	6.5
180-209 pupils	7.9	7.2	6.9	6.7	6.7	6.9	6.9	7.1	6.8	6.6
210-239 pupils	7.8	7.2	6.9	6.5	6.6	6.8	7.1	7.1	7.3	6.7
240+ pupils	8.0	7.2	6.8	6.9	6.7	6.8	6.8	6.9	7.1	6.7

Figure A3.2: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by school cohort size, 2007-16

School cohort size	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
60-89 pupils	55.4	54.1	55.5	54.2	54.7	54.9	56.0	56.0	57.1	53.7
90-119 pupils	51.6	51.3	51.9	52.6	51.0	56.0	54.2	56.5	55.6	53.4
120-149 pupils	53.2	53.7	54.2	54.1	54.1	54.5	55.7	55.7	55.6	53.3
150-179 pupils	55.1	54.5	54.8	53.5	54.4	54.1	55.3	55.9	55.3	53.2
180-209 pupils	55.3	55.9	55.5	55.5	56.2	55.8	55.4	57.4	54.3	53.9
210-239 pupils	54.9	56.5	55.6	53.8	55.1	55.4	57.5	56.8	56.3	53.4
240+ pupils	55.6	55.5	55.3	55.4	55.2	55.4	54.6	56.0	55.3	52.6

Annex 4

Figure A4.1: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by total number exam entries, 2007-16

Total exam entries	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
1 entry	3.7	3.7	3.9	3.6	4.0	2.6	2.6	3.4	5.0	5.9
2 entries	5.0	4.7	4.8	3.7	5.2	4.3	5.2	6.3	7.1	7.2
3 entries	7.9	7.5	8.1	7.2	9.1	10.3	9.5	8.4	8.1	8.5
4 entries	15.2	13.5	14.8	14.4	14.7	13.8	16.2	15.3	14.1	12.6
5 entries	26.2	23.2	21.8	22.1	22.7	23.6	27.2	23.4	24.1	21.1
6 entries	37.8	33.8	33.2	32.1	32.6	34.5	36.5	37.3	36.3	32.1
7 entries	46.9	43.6	41.0	41.6	42.5	43.7	45.6	46.2	46.0	42.4
8 entries	54.8	50.8	48.9	48.7	49.1	50.8	51.7	53.8	53.6	49.6
9 entries	59.3	55.5	55.0	54.1	54.3	55.0	55.4	56.9	56.1	52.4
10 entries	62.5	59.0	57.7	57.9	57.4	57.4	57.2	57.8	56.9	53.8
11 entries	63.5	61.2	60.1	59.2	59.1	58.8	58.4	58.2	57.7	56.1
12 entries	62.7	62.2	60.8	60.5	59.7	60.1	59.3	59.8	58.4	57.2
13 entries	64.9	64.1	61.9	60.9	60.7	60.9	60.9	61.3	60.3	59.2
14 entries	68.7	64.6	62.9	61.1	60.6	61.3	63.0	62.4	61.1	61.3
15+ entries	70.4	66.4	63.6	62.2	61.6	62.0	63.8	62.9	65.1	62.6
All	55.6	55.7	55.5	55.6	55.8	56.4	56.6	57.1	55.9	53.5

Annex 5

Figure A5.1: Percentage of entries to arts subjects, by ethnicity, 2007-16

Ethnicity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bangladeshi	8.1	7.4	6.6	6.5	6.2	6.4	6.0	6.2	6.2	5.6
Indian	6.1	5.4	5.1	5.0	4.9	5.1	5.1	5.0	4.9	4.6
Pakistani	5.8	5.1	4.8	4.8	4.7	5.0	5.1	4.9	4.9	4.5
Any Other Asian Background	7.1	6.2	6.0	6.1	6.0	6.1	6.2	6.1	6.1	5.6
Black African	8.3	7.3	6.7	6.7	6.8	6.9	6.6	6.6	6.5	5.9
Black Caribbean	10.0	9.0	8.6	8.6	8.5	8.6	8.6	8.8	8.8	8.1
Any Other Black Background	9.6	8.6	8.0	7.6	7.7	7.8	8.1	7.9	7.8	7.2
Chinese	8.3	7.2	7.1	6.8	6.8	7.0	7.0	6.8	6.7	6.6
White and Asian	8.6	7.7	7.4	7.1	7.2	7.4	7.4	7.2	7.4	6.9
White and Black African	8.9	8.3	8.2	8.1	7.9	7.9	8.1	8.7	8.0	7.4
White and Black Caribbean	9.5	8.2	8.3	8.2	8.3	8.4	8.6	8.9	8.6	7.8
Any Other Mixed Background	9.2	8.3	8.1	7.7	7.8	7.8	7.9	7.8	7.6	7.2
White British	8.3	7.5	7.3	7.1	7.1	7.3	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.1
White Irish	7.8	7.4	7.3	7.1	6.7	6.8	7.0	6.7	6.8	6.3
Traveller of Irish Heritage	9.0	8.1	7.2	8.5	7.2	5.9	6.7	8.1	6.7	6.8
Gypsy/Roma	8.7	8.0	7.6	7.5	7.7	6.7	8.2	8.2	9.7	9.4
Any Other White Background	8.5	7.8	7.3	7.2	7.3	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.3
Any Other Ethnic Group	8.0	7.3	7.0	6.6	6.7	6.8	6.6	6.5	6.7	6.3
All	8.2	7.4	7.2	7.0	7.0	7.2	7.3	7.3	7.3	6.9

Figure A5.2: Percentage of pupils with at least one arts entry, by ethnicity, 2007-16

Ethnicity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bangladeshi	57.0	57.3	55.2	54.9	53.2	55.2	51.6	52.2	52.1	47.3
Indian	47.6	47.3	45.4	46.0	46.2	46.9	46.6	45.8	43.6	41.9
Pakistani	43.7	41.8	41.1	42.1	42.6	44.7	44.2	43.3	42.1	39.5
Any Other Asian Background	51.1	51.8	50.3	51.6	52.2	52.3	52.9	52.5	51.8	48.8
Black African	55.3	54.0	53.1	53.8	54.2	55.0	53.5	53.0	52.2	48.9
Black Caribbean	62.1	62.0	61.6	62.5	62.7	64.2	63.3	64.4	63.2	59.8
Any Other Black Background	60.7	60.3	58.0	58.8	58.4	60.4	60.4	59.3	57.5	56.3
Chinese	63.6	60.5	61.2	61.5	60.8	62.5	61.4	59.9	59.1	57.6
White and Asian	59.4	60.0	58.9	58.7	58.3	59.6	59.1	57.7	57.6	54.7
White and Black African	58.6	59.5	60.5	59.3	60.4	60.5	62.3	64.7	59.8	56.8
White and Black Caribbean	59.0	58.0	59.8	60.0	61.4	61.1	61.6	63.7	61.2	58.5
Any Other Mixed Background	60.6	60.6	61.1	60.0	60.4	61.0	61.8	60.1	59.0	55.7
White British	55.9	56.2	56.1	56.1	56.4	56.9	57.4	58.0	56.9	54.6
White Irish	52.1	54.6	55.7	55.9	53.6	53.8	54.5	54.1	52.8	48.7
Traveller of Irish Heritage	45.0	47.0	41.5	49.5	36.8	38.5	38.0	46.7	39.7	44.5
Gypsy/Roma	42.0	42.2	41.7	40.7	43.6	39.2	49.3	49.3	54.2	55.1
Any Other White Background	57.6	57.8	56.3	56.5	56.8	58.8	58.5	59.8	58.6	57.2
Any Other Ethnic Group	54.6	55.0	55.1	53.1	54.3	55.4	53.5	54.5	54.1	52.0
All	55.6	55.7	55.5	55.6	55.8	56.4	56.6	57.1	55.9	53.5