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Department for Education

Academic year 2025/26

Key stage 2 attainment: National headlines

Accredited official statistics on the headline statistics on attainment in key stage 2 national curriculum assessments in England.

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Background information

This publication provides the latest headline statistics on attainment in key stage 2 national curriculum assessments in England.

These statistics cover attainment in the following assessments taken by pupils at the end of year 6, when most are age 11:

- Reading test
- Maths test
- Grammar, punctuation and spelling test
- Writing teacher assessment
- Science teacher assessment

Attainment in 2026 is compared to 2025 and previous years where possible. There were no assessments in 2020 and 2021.

Headline facts and figures

Percentage meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined)

63%

up from 62% in 2025

These statistics cover the attainment of year 6 pupils who took assessments in summer 2026. These pupils experienced disruption to their learning during the pandemic, particularly at the end of reception and in year 1. Attainment in all subjects, other than reading, has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Attainment in all of reading, writing and maths (combined) has increased since 2025.

In all of **reading, writing and maths**, 63% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 62% in 2025.

Attainment increased or remained stable in all subjects compared to 2025.

In **reading**, 75% of pupils met the expected standard, unchanged from 2025.

In **maths**, 75% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 74% in 2025.

In **writing**, 73% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 72% in 2025.

In **grammar, punctuation and spelling**, 74% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 73% in 2025.

In **science**, 82% of pupils met the expected standard, unchanged from 2025.

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Attainment in reading, writing and maths (combined)

In 2026, 63% of pupils met the expected standard in all of reading, writing and maths, up from 62% in 2025. This is a 1.1 percentage point increase. However, this is below 2019 attainment, where 65% of pupils met the standard. Attainment in all of reading, writing and maths is not directly comparable to some earlier years (2016 and 2017) because of changes to writing teacher assessment frameworks in 2018.

Data is not available for 2020 and 2021 as assessments were cancelled in these years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chart

Table

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Attainment in reading, writing and maths (combined), 2016 to 2026 (England, all schools)

**Percentage meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths
(combined)**

2015/16	54%
2016/17	61%
2017/18	64%
2018/19	65%
2019/20	x
2020/21	x
2021/22	59%
2022/23	60%
2023/24	61%
2024/25	62%
2025/26	63%

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Footnotes

1. Includes pupils who reached the expected standard in all of reading, writing and maths. The expected standard in reading and maths is a scaled score of 100 or above. The expected standard in writing is a teacher assessment of 'working at the expected standard' or 'working at greater depth'.
2. Includes all schools with pupils eligible for assessment at key stage 2. Participation by independent schools is voluntary, therefore figures include results from independent schools that chose to submit data and met the requirements for assessment and moderation.

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Combinations of reading, writing and maths attainment

Figures throughout the commentary within this section are based on calculations using unrounded data. These may differ from any calculations derived from the rounded figures in diagrams. Please find further breakdowns and the underlying data in the data catalogue for this publication.

For the purposes of this section, the terms “following assessment” and “assessed” refer to the reading and maths tests and the teacher assessment of writing used for pupils working at the level of the key stage 2 curriculum, who are assessed using the standard key stage 2 tests and teacher assessment guidance. Pupils deemed to be working below the requirements set out in the key stage 2 national curriculum assessments in one or more subjects are assessed using pre-key stage standards and/or the engagement model (included in ‘other circumstances’).

Pupils that were assessed against the key stage 2 curriculum

In 2026, 63.3% of pupils met the expected standard in all of reading, writing and maths. Roughly 3 in 10 pupils (28.0%) at the end of key stage 2 were assessed as not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined). The remaining 8.7% of pupils were unable to meet the expected standard in reading, writing and maths for other reasons (including those working below the requirements of the curriculum, absence, or for another reason). This year, 182,167 pupils were assessed as not meeting the expected standard, and since the pandemic over one million pupils have not met the expected standard in reading, writing and maths following assessment.

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The Venn diagram shows the percentages of all English pupils who were assessed as meeting the expected standard for combinations of the three subjects. For example, 4.6% of pupils met the standard in reading and maths but not in writing and 2.8% of pupils met the standard in reading only. The centre of the diagram are the 63.3% of pupils that met the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined).

The first box on the left outside of the Venn diagram shows that 7.9% of pupils were assessed at the level of the key stage 2 curriculum in all three of the individual subjects and did not meet the expected standard in any of the three subjects.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)



Some rows and columns are not shown in this table as the data does not exist in the underlying file.

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Combinations of attainment at the expected standard in reading, writing and maths for all pupils, 2019 to 2026 (England, all schools)

	2018/19	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Assessed and meeting expected standard in 3 subjects: Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined)	64.853%	58.721%	59.537%	60.645%	62.203%	63.262%
Assessed and meeting expected standard in 2 subjects: Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and maths but not in writing TA	2.990%	5.959%	4.954%	4.959%	4.974%	4.602%
Assessed and meeting expected standard in 2 subjects: Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and	3.461%	5.346%	4.540%	4.781%	4.304%	3.932%

standard in reading and writing but not in maths

Assessed and meeting expected standard in 2 subjects: Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in writing and maths but not in reading	7.010%	3.129%	4.645%	3.923%	3.417%	3.772%
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Assessed and meeting expected standard in 1 subject: Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in maths but not in reading and writing	3.466%	3.310%	3.361%	3.088%	2.927%	2.952%
--	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------

Assessed and meeting expected standard in 1 subject: Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in writing but not in reading and maths	2.847%	2.011%	2.526%	2.185%	2.033%	1.996%
--	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------

Assessed and meeting expected standard in 1 subject: Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading but not in writing and maths	1.705%	4.251%	3.325%	3.471%	3.166%	2.836%
--	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------

Assessed and meeting expected standard in 0	8.084%	9.940%	9.317%	8.672%	8.430%	7.900%
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subjects: Percentage of pupils not meeting the expected standard in all 3 subjects

Not assessed in at least 1 subject: Percentage of pupils working below the requirements of the curriculum in at least one subject	5.169%	6.557%	7.121%	7.627%	7.969%	8.147%
--	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------

Not assessed in at least 1 subject: Percentage all other combinations	0.414%	0.777%	0.674%	0.647%	0.576%	0.600%
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Footnotes

1. Includes pupils who reached the expected standard in all of reading, writing and maths. The expected standard in reading and maths is a scaled score of 100 or above. The expected standard in writing is a teacher assessment of 'working at the expected standard' or 'working at greater depth'.
2. Includes all schools with pupils eligible for assessment at key stage 2. Participation by independent schools is voluntary, therefore figures include results from independent schools that chose to submit data and met the requirements for assessment and moderation.

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Other circumstances

On the right-hand side, the boxes show that a total of 8.7% of pupils at the end of key stage 2 were unable to meet the expected standard in reading, writing and maths for other reasons (either because they were working below the requirements of the curriculum, absent, or for another reason). These pupils could still be meeting the standard for some subjects.

0.6% of pupils were not below the requirements of the curriculum, but were not assessed or do not have a result in at least one subject for other reasons, for example, they were absent, unable to access the test even with suitable access arrangements, had just arrived from a different education system, had a missing result, or an outcome was pending a maladministration case.

Working below the requirements of the curriculum

8.1% of pupils were working below the requirements of the curriculum in at least one subject and so did not take the test or the writing teacher assessment against the relevant standard. This is where the school has deemed that the pupil is working below the overall standard of the key stage 2 curriculum for a subject, such that a different assessment is required. These pupils could still be meeting the standard for other subjects. Pupils working below the requirements of the curriculum but engaged in subject-specific study will receive teacher assessments against the [pre-key stage 2 standards \(opens in new tab\)](#). Pupils working below the requirements of the curriculum and not engaged in subject-specific study will be assessed using the [engagement model \(opens in new tab\)](#).

The table below shows that 48% of the pupils in this group were only below the requirements of the curriculum in writing. 43% of pupils in this group were deemed to be below the requirements of the curriculum in all three subjects.

Of the 43% of pupils that were below the requirements of the curriculum in all three subjects, 83% were assessed using pre-key stage standards in all three subjects and 14% were assessed using the engagement model in all 3 subjects. The remainder used a combination of these alternate assessment methods.

In 2025, in state-funded schools, 81% of pupils that were working below the requirements of the curriculum in at least one subject had a special educational need.

Pupils that were working below the requirements of the national curriculum, broken down by subject, 2026

Number of subjects that the pupil is working below the requirements of the curriculum in	Subjects working below the requirements of the curriculum	Pupil count	Pupil percent
1	Maths	522	1%
1	Writing	25,275	48%
1	Reading	334	1%
2	Reading and Maths	1,484	3%
2	Writing and Maths	566	1%
2	Reading and Writing	2,092	4%
3	Reading, Writing and Maths	22,752	43%

Trends over time

The percentage of pupils that were assessed as not meeting the standard in reading, writing and maths (combined) has reduced this year to 28.0% compared to 29.3% in 2025. The percentage of pupils working below the requirements of the curriculum in at least 1 subject was 5.2% prior to the pandemic in 2019, and has increased every year to 8.1% in 2026. This suggests that, whilst the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard has been increasing, increases in pupils working below the requirements of the curriculum are also driving the reduction in the percentage of pupils not meeting the standard in reading, writing and maths (combined) following assessment.

Chart

Table

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Combinations of meeting the expected standard by summary group and all pupils, 2019 to 2026 (England, all schools)

	2018/19	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Assessed and meeting expected standard in 3 subjects: Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined)	64.853%	58.721%	59.537%	60.645%	62.203%	63.262%
Assessed and meeting	13.461%	14.434%	14.138%	13.663%	12.695%	12.306%

expected standard in 2 subjects: Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in 2 subjects

Assessed and meeting expected standard in 1 subjects: Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in 1 subject	8.019%	9.572%	9.212%	8.745%	8.126%	7.785%
--	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------

Assessed and meeting expected standard in 0 subjects: Percentage of pupils not meeting the expected standard in all 3 subjects	8.084%	9.940%	9.317%	8.672%	8.430%	7.900%
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Not assessed in at least 1 subject: Percentage of pupils working below the requirements of the curriculum in at least one subject	5.169%	6.557%	7.121%	7.627%	7.969%	8.147%
--	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------

Not assessed in at least 1 subject: Percentage all other combinations	0.414%	0.777%	0.674%	0.647%	0.576%	0.600%
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Footnotes

1. Includes pupils who reached the expected standard in all of reading, writing and maths. The expected standard in reading and maths is a scaled score of 100 or above. The expected standard in writing is a teacher assessment of 'working at the expected standard' or 'working at greater depth'.
2. Includes all schools with pupils eligible for assessment at key stage 2. Participation by independent schools is voluntary, therefore figures include results from independent schools that chose to submit data and met the requirements for assessment and moderation.

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Attainment in individual subjects

In **reading**, 75% of pupils reached the expected standard in 2026, unchanged from 2025. This figure has

fluctuated between 72% and 75% since 2017.

In **writing** teacher assessment, 73% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 72% in 2025. Attainment in writing is not directly comparable to some earlier years (2016 and 2017) because of changes to writing teacher assessment frameworks in 2018.

In **maths**, 75% of pupils reached the expected standard, up from 74% in 2025.

Attainment amongst reading, writing and maths was lowest in writing, this has been the same since 2022. Before the pandemic attainment amongst these three subjects was lowest in reading.

In **grammar, punctuation and spelling**, 74% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 73% in 2025.

In **science** teacher assessment, 82% of pupils reached the expected standard in 2026, unchanged from 2025 but an increase of 0.8 percentage points based on unrounded data. Attainment in science is not directly comparable to some earlier years because of changes to science teacher assessment frameworks in 2019.

Chart

Table

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Percentage of pupils at the end of key stage 2 meeting the expected standard by subjects, 2016 to 2026, (England, all schools)

	Percentage meeting the expected standard in reading	Percentage meeting the expected standard in writing TA	Percentage meeting the expected standard in maths	Percentage meeting the expected standard in grammar, punctuation and spelling	Percentage meeting the expected standard in science TA
2015/16	66%	74%	70%	73%	81%
2016/17	72%	76%	75%	77%	82%
2017/18	75%	78%	76%	78%	82%
2018/19	73%	78%	79%	78%	83%
2019/20	x	x	x	x	x
2020/21	x	x	x	x	x
2021/22	75%	69%	72%	73%	79%
2022/23	73%	71%	73%	72%	81%
2023/24	74%	72%	73%	72%	81%
2024/25	75%	72%	74%	73%	82%
2025/26	75%	73%	75%	74%	82%

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Footnotes

1. Includes all schools with pupils eligible for assessment at key stage 2. Participation by independent schools is voluntary, therefore figures include results from independent schools that chose to submit data and met the requirements for assessment and moderation.
2. Data is not available for 2020 and 2021 as assessments were cancelled in these years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Average scaled scores in reading, maths, and grammar, punctuation and spelling

We use [scaled scores \(opens in new tab\)](#) to report the results of tests so we can make accurate comparisons of performance over time. Scaled scores range from 80 to 120. The total number of marks a pupil achieves in each test subject (raw score) is converted into a scaled score to ensure accurate comparisons can be made over time, even if the difficulty of the test itself varies.

The average scaled scores for each subject have remained the same as last year. The average scaled score for grammar, punctuation and spelling has remained unchanged since 2022.

In **reading**, the average scaled score is 106, unchanged from 2025.

In **maths**, the average scaled score is 105, unchanged from 2025.

In **grammar, punctuation and spelling**, the average scaled score is 105, unchanged since 2022.

The average scaled score is the mean scaled score of all pupils awarded a scaled score. It only includes pupils who took the test and achieved a scaled score. It gives us a measure of the typical performance of a pupil taking the tests. It is affected by the performance of pupils at all points in the range of scores. By contrast, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard focuses on the proportion of pupils above or below one particular score (100). As a consequence, changes in one measure may not be matched by changes in the other measure of the same size and direction.

► Export options

Average scaled scores in reading, maths and grammar, spelling and punctuation, 2016 to 2026 (England, all schools)

	Average scaled score in reading	Average scaled score in maths	Average scaled score in grammar, punctuation and spelling
2015/16	103	103	104
2016/17	104	104	106
2017/18	105	104	106
2018/19	104	105	106
2019/20	x	x	x
2020/21	x	x	x
2021/22	105	104	105
2022/23	105	104	105
2023/24	105	104	105
2024/25	106	105	105
2025/26	106	105	105

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Footnotes

1. Includes all schools with pupils eligible for assessment at key stage 2. Participation by independent schools is voluntary, therefore figures include results from independent schools that chose to submit data and met the requirements for assessment and moderation.
2. Data is not available for 2020 and 2021 as assessments were cancelled in these years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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About these statistics

This publication provides headline statistics for attainment in key stage 2 national curriculum assessments for pupils in schools in England. It provides key figures at national level to help schools and parents put results in context.

1. The expected standard

Key stage 2 assessments tell us if pupils have met the expected standard in five subjects by the end of primary school:

- reading
- maths
- writing
- grammar, punctuation and spelling
- science

Tests are used to assess pupils in reading, maths and grammar, punctuation and spelling. Teacher assessment is used to assess pupils in writing and science. In addition to the individual subjects we report on pupils who meet the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined.

In the tests, pupils meet the expected standard if they achieve a scaled score of 100 or more. The [test frameworks \(opens in new tab\)](#) provide performance descriptors for the typical characteristics of pupils working at the expected standard.

The [teacher assessment frameworks \(opens in new tab\)](#) include 'pupil can' statements. For example, 'the pupil can maintain legibility in joined handwriting when writing at speed'. To meet the expected standard, the teacher must judge there to be evidence that the pupil can meet all of the relevant statements.

DfE [raised the expected standard in 2016 \(opens in new tab\)](#), following the introduction of a new, more challenging national curriculum in 2014.

Pupils not meeting the expected standard

It is incorrect to say that pupils who have not met the expected standard in reading cannot read, or that those who have not met the expected standard in writing cannot write, and so on.

There is a spectrum of attainment among pupils who do not meet the expected standard, with some coming close and others further away.

A pupil who achieves below the expected standard will still be able to read. For example, they may be able to retrieve simple information from a text but be unable to make developed inferences about what they have read.

We also classify pupils as not meeting the expected standard when it has not been possible to assess their ability, for example, because of absence. This is the case for less than 1% of pupils.

2. Technical information

National curriculum assessment figures published here are based on test and teacher assessment data provided to the Department by the Standards and Testing Agency on 16 July 2026.

This data contained all available marked key stage 2 tests and teacher assessments:

- Reading test: 99.9%
- Maths test: 99.9%
- Grammar, punctuation and spelling test: 99.9%
- Writing teacher assessment: 99.8%
- Science teacher assessment: 99.8%

See the methodology for further detail.

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Further information will be available

Further provisional statistics will be published in early September 2026 in the 'Key stage 2 attainment

(provisional)' publication.

Revised figures will be published in the 'Key stage 2 attainment (revised)' publication in December 2026.

1. National level figures broken down by pupil and school characteristics

National level data with pupil characteristics breakdowns, including data broken down by gender, ethnicity, month of birth, free school meal eligibility, special educational needs provision, first language, disadvantage and the disadvantage gap index, will be published in the provisional publication in September.

School characteristics breakdowns, including school type, phase, cohort size and religious character, will also be published in September.

2. Regional, local authority and local authority district level figures

Regional, local authority and local authority district level data - including data broken down by gender, ethnicity, free school meal eligibility, special educational needs provision, first language and disadvantage - will be published in the provisional publication in September.

3. Progress measures

Progress measures were not published for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years as KS2 pupils in these years did not have KS1 assessments due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The KS1 to KS2 progress measures will return for 2025/26 in the revised publication in December.

4. School level figures

School level data will be published in December.

Contact us

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