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Welsh Government

STATISTICS, DOCUMENT

Examination results: September 2022 to August 2023 (provisional)

Results of external examinations taken by pupils in year 11 or 17, which includes GCSE and A Levels for September 2022 to August 2023.

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Introduction

This release reports on GCSE and A level examination results for pupils in Year 11 or aged 17 in maintained middle, secondary, special schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRU) or pupils Educated Other Than at School (EOTAS) or in Wales. This does not include pupils in independent schools or Further Education Institutions.

Changes to the production of these statistics

Reintroduction of GCSE headline indicators

As announced by the Minister for Education and Welsh Language in his **Written Statement of 19 January 2023, the Welsh Government will restart reporting of Key Stage 4 outcomes at a school level using the approach adopted in 2018 to 2019** (<https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-school-improvement-and-information-landscape>). This means that, for the academic year 2022 to 2023, the Welsh Government will be publishing the following headline indicators: Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version), Literacy indicator, Numeracy indicator, Science indicator, and the Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate indicator, all based on point scores (see **quality and methodology** (<https://www.gov.wales#131513>) below for more details). This will be for an interim period, beginning with outcomes data from academic year 2022/23, whilst we progress the development of a reformed information ecosystem for schools and, as part of that, the future reporting arrangements of qualifications outcomes data.

The analysis of results presented in this release is based on year 11 GCSE and age 17 A level results for pupils in maintained schools, Pupil Referral Units

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(PRU) and pupils Educated Other Than at School (EOTAS) in Wales (excluding Further Education Institutions and independent schools) similar to information released by **Qualifications Wales** (<https://qualifications.wales/>) and the **Joint Centre for Qualifications (JCQ)** (<https://www.jcq.org.uk/>) (see **quality and methodology** (<https://www.gov.wales#131513>) below on coverage).

Examinations and centre assessed grades

The 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023 examination periods were transitional years, where relevant qualifications sat by Welsh pupils returned to written examination arrangements. This was not a complete return to pre-pandemic examination arrangements. To compensate for any disruption to the school timetable, pupils who sat exams in 2021 to 2022 were given a wider choice of questions from the syllabus, with Qualifications Wales setting results at a national level broadly midway between 2018 to 2019 (the last time examinations were sat) and 2020 to 2021 outcomes. As we transition back to pre-pandemic assessment arrangements, some support remained in place for learners who sat exams in 2022 to 2023. This support was in the form of advance information and a supportive approach to grading. In 2022 to 2023 Qualifications Wales set the results at a national level broadly midway between 2018 to 2019 and 2021 to 2022 outcomes (see **Qualification Wales: Supporting learners in Wales as we continue the return to pre-pandemic exam arrangements** (<https://qualifications.wales/news-views/supporting-learners-in-wales-as-we-continue-the-return-to-pre-pandemic-exam-arrangements/>) for more details).

Pupils that were awarded a qualification during the 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021 summer periods were awarded grades based on a **centre determined or centre assessed grade** (<https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-update-general-qualifications-2021-0>) model. Grades were determined by schools, based on their assessment of learners' work, using a range of evidence (including non-examination assessments, mock exams, and classwork).

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Due to the varying examination arrangements in place since 2018 to 2019, caution must be exercised when comparing outcomes between subsequent years.

Grade distributions

The values in the figures in this release show the percentage of entries awarded at each individual grade, broken down by selected pupil characteristics. For example, in Figure 7, the first blue bar on the left (value 11.2%) represents the number of A* grades awarded in 2018 to 2019 as a percentage of all entries in 2018 to 2019.

These Grade distributions allow the results to be interrogated at a finer level and show results at both the upper and lower ability ranges. Grade distributions for Key Stage 4 are also provided in the supplementary tables.

Main points

GCSE, Year 11 pupils (Key Stage 4)

- In 2022/23 the average Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version) was 356.5 points a small increase from 354.4 points in 2018/19.
- The average Skills Challenge Certificate indicator is 31.6 points (Figure 1).
- Pupils scored highest in the Literacy indicator. The average Literacy indicator is 39.7 points, the average Numeracy indicator is 37.1 points and the average Science indicator is 36.9 points (Figure 2).

The results by selected pupil characteristics show that:

- females scored higher in the Capped 9 indicator (interim measures

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version); however, from 2018/19 to 2022/23 the Capped 9 indicator gap between males and females narrowed from 32.9 to 24.4 points

- pupils not eligible for Free School Meals consistently score higher in the Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version) than pupils eligible for Free School Meals; in 2022/23 the gap widened to 88.7 points from 77.3 points in 2018/19
- the gap between White British pupils and Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils widened in the Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version), with Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils achieving better outcomes than White British pupils; the gap widened from 17.0 points in 2018/19 to 21.4 points in 2022/23 (Figure 5)
- the ethnic background that scored highest in the Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version) was Chinese or Chinese British pupils at 450.3 points

A level, pupils aged 17 (Sixth Form)

- In 2022/23 the percentage of A level entries awarded A* to A, A* to C, and A* to E grades decreased from 2021/22. The largest decrease was at A* to A, with a decrease of 7.2 percentage points.

The results by selected pupil characteristics show that:

- from 2021/22 to 2022/23 the gap between females and males widened at A* to A and A* to C grades, with females achieving better outcomes than males at A* to C grades; the gap at A* to E was negligible in 2022/23 (Figure 10)
- from 2021/22 to 2022/23 the gap between White British pupils and Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils widened at A* to A and A* to C grades, with Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils achieving better outcomes than White British pupils; the gap at A* to E was negligible (Figure 11)
- pupils with an Indian ethnic background scoring highest with over half the qualifications awarded at A* to A (53.3%)

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GCSE, Year 11 pupils (Key Stage 4)

Capped 9 indicator (interim measure version)

The original Capped 9 indicator was introduced in 2016/17 and focuses on Year 11 pupils' best nine results from the qualifications available in Wales, including subject specific requirements. The Capped 9 score (interim indicator version) (see [quality and methodology](https://www.gov.wales#131513) (<https://www.gov.wales#131513>) below for more details) introduced in 2018/19 is made by adding a pupil's 9 best exam results which must include English or Welsh First Language or Literature, Mathematics or Numeracy, and a Science GCSE. As a guide a single A* grade at GCSE is worth 58 points, an A grade is worth 52 points, a C grade is worth 40 points and so on. See Definitions for a full breakdown of points by grade.

In 2022/23 the average Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version) was 356.5 points a small increase from 354.4 points in 2018/19. This does not indicate the range or distribution of scores for pupils in the cohort. Individual pupils will have a wide range of scores, some will be above and some will be below. This indicator is intended to reflect outcomes for schools in Wales and is not used to assess performance for individual pupils.

Skills challenge certificate (SCC) indicator

The Skills Challenge Certificate ([WJEC Specification](https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/welsh-baccalaureate-national-foundation/#tab_keydocuments) (https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/welsh-baccalaureate-national-foundation/#tab_keydocuments)) is a key part of Welsh Baccalaureate, available to learners at Foundation Level 1 or National Level 2. National Level 2 is graded A* to C and is converted into the same point scores as the subject indicators, with an A* as 58, an A as 52 and so on. The Foundation Level 1 is graded as Pass* and Pass, converted into a point score of 34 and 22. Caution should be taken when comparing this indicator to

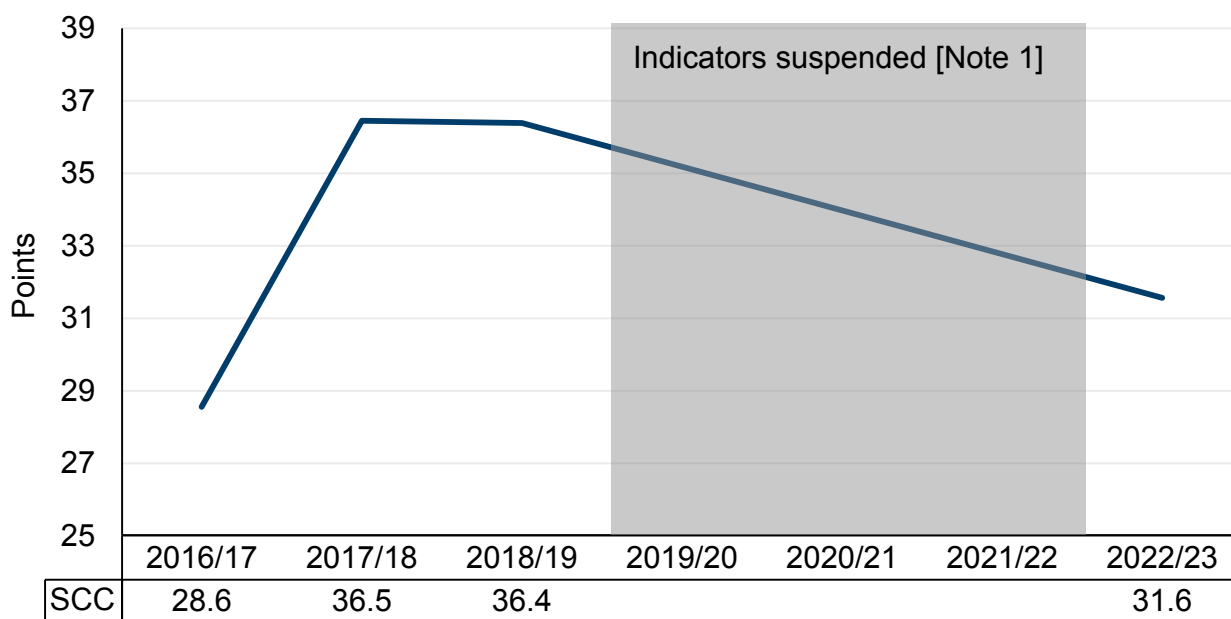
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the three subject performance indicators, which have differing methods of assessment. The SCC focuses more on course work completed throughout the academic year rather than a final exam at the end of the year/term.

Figure 1: Average Skills Challenge Certificate indicator by Year 11 pupils, 2016/17 to 2022/23



Description of Figure 1: A line graph showing the Skills Challenge Certificate indicator from 2016/17 to 2022/23, excluding 2019/20 to 2021/22 (see [Note 1]). From 2016/17 to 2018/19 the indicator increased. Following the COVID-19 pandemic the SCC indicator has decreased, but is still higher than the score in 2016/17.

Source: Welsh Examinations Database (WED), 2022/23

[Note 1]: There is no data for school years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22, as indicators were suspended due the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

[Note 2]: Prior to 2018/19, the best result for each pupil was used for indicators. From 2018/19, only the result of the first entry (chronologically) will be counted in our indicators.

Although there was an increase in the points awarded from 2016/17 to 2017/18 and 2018/19, going from 28.6 to 36.5 and 36.4, in 2022/23 there was a decrease to 31.6.

Subject performance indicators (average point scores)

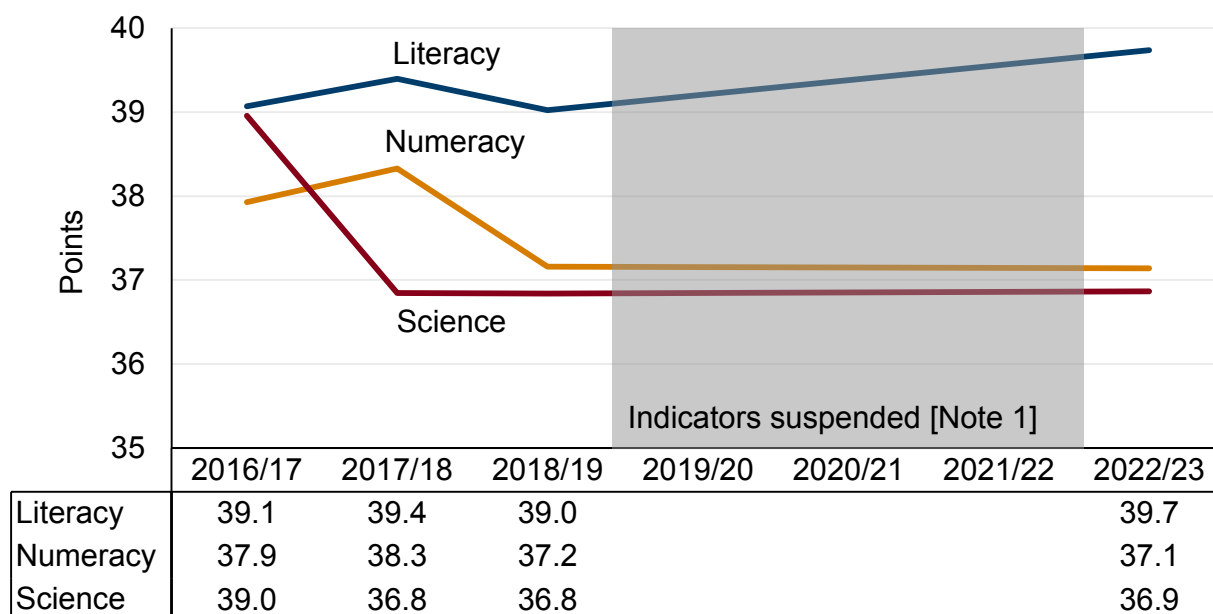
The headline subject indicators show the average score of all included pupils across Wales. For the Literacy, Numeracy and Science indicators, the highest average points score possible is 58 points should every pupil achieve an A* grade. The lowest average points score is 16 points should every pupil achieve a G grade. Note that these figures are average scores of all pupils across Wales, and some pupils will be performing above this level and some will be performing below this level. The figure is an average of all pupils across Wales and does not indicate the range or distribution of scores within the cohort.

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Figure 2: Average subject indicators by Year 11 pupils, 2016/17 to 2022/23



Description of Figure 2: A line graph showing the subject indicators (Literacy, Numeracy and Science) from 2016/17 to 2022/23, excluding 2019/20 to 2021/22 (see [Note 1]). Pupils consistently score better in the Literacy indicator than the other two subject indicators. Pupils narrowly score better in Numeracy over Science.

Source: Welsh Examinations Database (WED), 2022/23

[Note 1]: There is no data for school years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22, as indicators were suspended due the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

[Note 2]: Prior to 2018/19, the best result for each pupil was used for indicators. From 2018/19, only the result of the first entry (chronologically) will be counted in our indicators.

The Literacy indicator is the highest overall, followed by Numeracy and then Science, except for the 2016/17 when the science indicator was higher than numeracy. All the indicators are between 36.8 and 39.4 points. In 2022/23 Numeracy and Science remained constant, while Literacy had a small increase.

Results by pupil characteristics

The following figures show the difference in indicators over recent years by selected pupil characteristics.

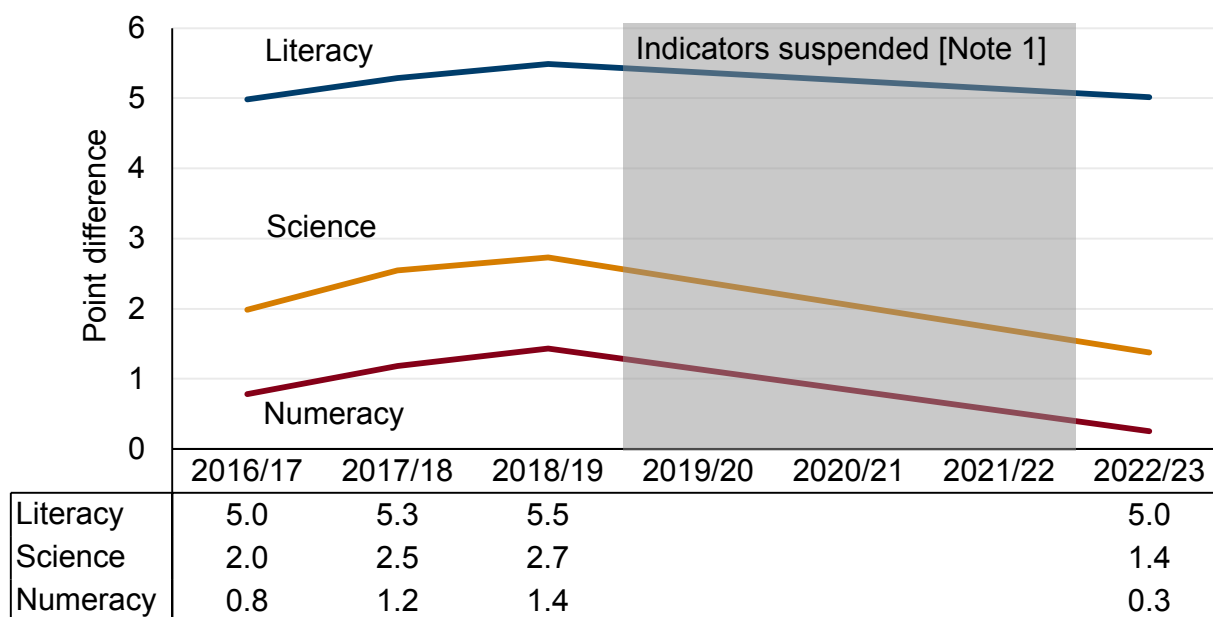
Gender

Capped 9 indicator (interim measure version) gender gap

In 2022/23 females scored 369.1 and males scored 344.7 points on average in the Capped 9 indicator (interim measure version). This means that females score higher than males by 24.4 points. This narrowed from a gap of 32.9 points in 2018/19.

Subject indicator gender gap

Figure 3: Gender gap in subject indicators (female minus male), 2016/17 to 2022/23



Description of Figure 3: A line graph showing the gap in the subject indicators (Literacy, Numeracy and Science) between females and males from 2016/17 to 2022/23, excluding 2019/20 to 2021/22 ([Note1]). For all three indicators females scored higher than males, the widest gaps are for Literacy and the narrowest gaps are for Numeracy. From 2018/19 to 2022/23 in all indicators the gap narrowed.

Source: Welsh Examinations Database (WED), 2022/23

[Note 1]: There is no data for school years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22, as indicators were suspended due the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

[Note 2]: Prior to 2018/19, the best result for each pupil was used for indicators.

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From 2018/19, only the result of the first entry (chronologically) will be counted in our indicators.

The widest gap was in Literacy in 2022/23 with a 5.0 point difference and the narrowest was Numeracy with a 0.3 point difference.

Free School Meals (FSM)

Pupils are **eligible for free school meals** (<https://www.gov.wales/free-school-meals-information-parents-and-carers>) if their families are in receipt of certain benefits/support payments or are on universal credit. There have been recent significant changes in FSM provision in Wales as part of the rollout of Universal Free School Meals. For further detail, please read the **quality and methodology** (<https://www.gov.wales#131513>) section.

Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version) Free School Meal status gap

In 2022/23 pupils eligible for FSM scored 293.8 points and pupils not eligible for FSM scored 382.6 points on average in the Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version). This means that pupils not eligible score higher than pupils by 88.8 points. This is an increase in the gap from 77.3 points in 2018/19.

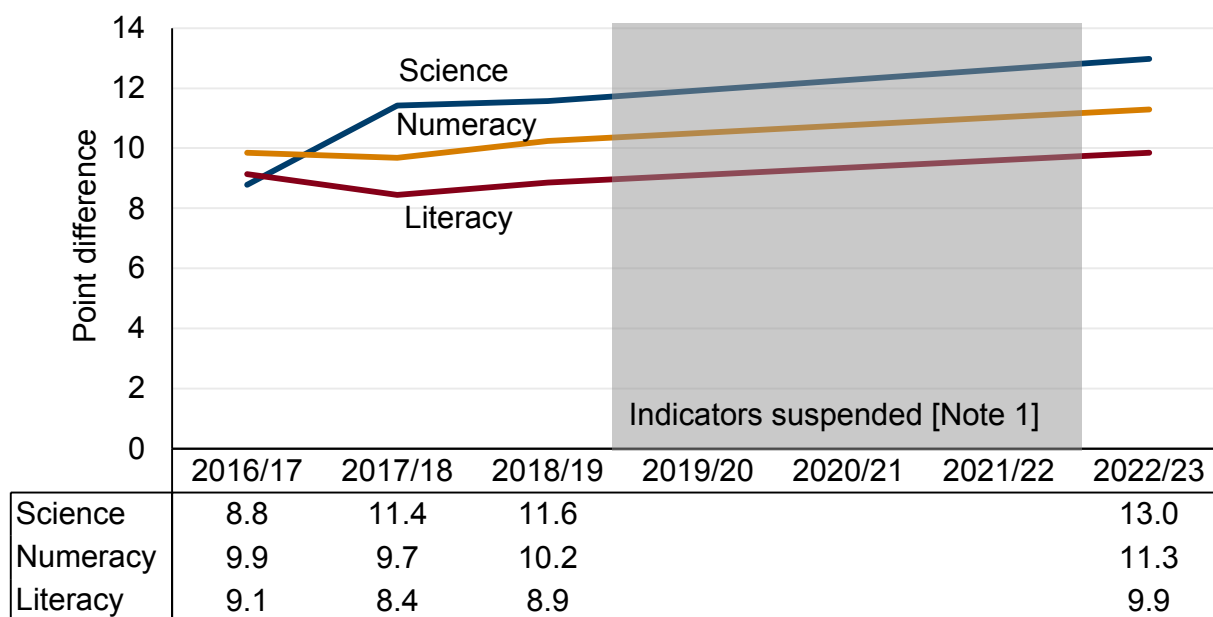
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Subject indicator Free School Meal status gap

Figure 4: FSM gap in subject indicators (nFSM minus eFSM), 2016/17 to 2022/23



Description of Figure 4: A line graph showing the gap in the subject indicators (Literacy, Numeracy and Science) between pupils eligible for FSM and pupils not eligible for FSM from 2016/17 to 2022/23, excluding 2019/20 to 2021/22 (see [Note1]). For all indicators on average pupils not eligible for FSM scored higher than pupils eligible for FSM. The gap is widest in Science and narrowest in Literacy. From 2018/19 to 2022/23 the gap widened in all three indicators.

Source: Welsh Examinations Database (WED), 2022/23

[Note 1]: There is no data for school years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22, as indicators were suspended due the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

[Note 2]: Prior to 2018/19, the best result for each pupil was used for indicators.

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From 2018/19, only the result of the first entry (chronologically) will be counted in our indicators.

In 2022/23 the smallest gap was in Literacy at 9.9 points while the widest was in Science at 13.0 points. From 2018/19 to 2022/23 the gap widened in all three indicators at a similar rate.

Ethnicity

In the context of this publication the category "White" used below, refers to White British pupils only. All other pupils which have a recorded ethnicity are included under the Black, Asian and minority ethnic group. This category therefore also includes non-British White pupils. Pupils that have not indicated their ethnicity have not been included. There are differences in achievement between groups within the Black, Asian and minority ethnic group category. Further analysis is available for more detailed ethnic groups in the [supplementary tables](https://www.gov.wales/examination-results-september-2022-august-2023) (<https://www.gov.wales/examination-results-september-2022-august-2023>) and in Figure 5 below.

Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version) ethnicity gap

In 2022/23 Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils scored 384.5 points and White British pupils scored 363.1 points on average in the Capped 9 indicator. This means that Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils score higher than White British pupils by 21.4 points. This is a widening of the gap from 17.0 points in 2018/19.

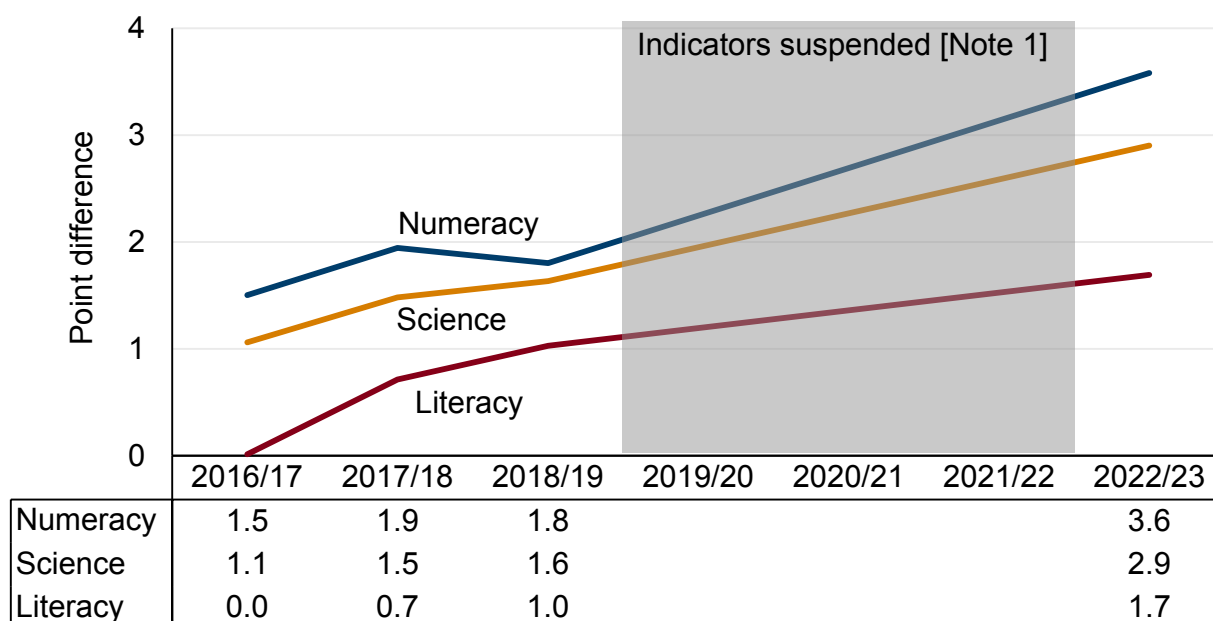
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Subject indicator ethnicity gap

Figure 5: Ethnicity gap in subject indicators, 2016/17 to 2022/23 (Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils minus White pupils)



Description of Figure 5: A line graph showing the gap in the subject indicators (Literacy, Numeracy and Science) between Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils and White British pupils from 2016/17 to 2022/23, excluding 2019/20 to 2021/22 (See [Note1]). For all indicators Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils scored higher than White British pupils. Overall the gap was widest for the Numeracy indicator and narrowest for the Literacy indicator. From 2018/19 to 2022/23 the gaps for all three subjects increased at a similar rate.

Source: Welsh Examinations Database (WED), 2022/23

[Note 1]: There is no data for school years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22, as indicators were suspended due the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

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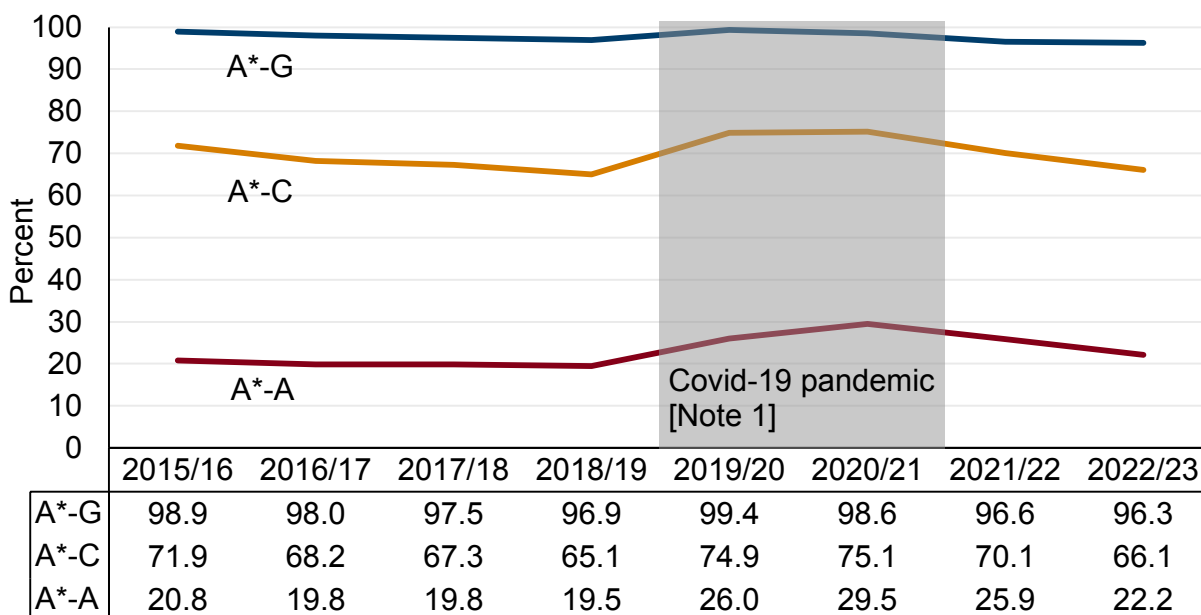
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[Note 2]: Prior to 2018/19, the best result for each pupil was used for indicators. From 2018/19, only the result of the first entry (chronologically) will be counted in our indicators.

In 2022/23 the widest gap was 3.6 points for Numeracy and the narrowest gap was 1.7 points for Literacy. From 2018/19 to 2022/23 the gaps for all three subjects increased at a similar rate.

Overall GCSE grade distribution

Figure 6: Percentage of GCSE entries by grade range in all subjects, 2015/16 to 2022/23



Description of Figure 6: A line graph showing the percent of GCSE entries attaining the grade boundaries A* to A, A* to C and A* to G. During the years 2019/20 and 2020/21, in the area shaded grey, GCSEs were awarded based on Centre Assessed Grades and Centre Determined Grades (see [Note 1]). In 2021/22 and 2022/23 the percentage of GCSEs awarded A* to A and A* to C

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grade ranges have decreased from the percentage awarded during the COVID-19 pandemic, almost returning to the pre-pandemic level.

Source: Welsh Examinations Database (WED), 2022/23

[Note 1]: Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, public examinations were suspended in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and pupils were awarded grades based on a centre determined or centre assessed grade model.

[Note 2]: The 2021/22 and 2022/23 examination periods were transitional years. In 2021/22 Qualifications Wales set the results at a national level broadly midway between 2018/19 and 2020/21 outcomes. In 2022/23 the national level was set at a midway between 2018/19 and 2021/22.

[Note 3]: Prior to 2018/19, the best result for each pupil was used for indicators. From 2018/19, only the result of the first entry (chronologically) will be counted in our indicators.

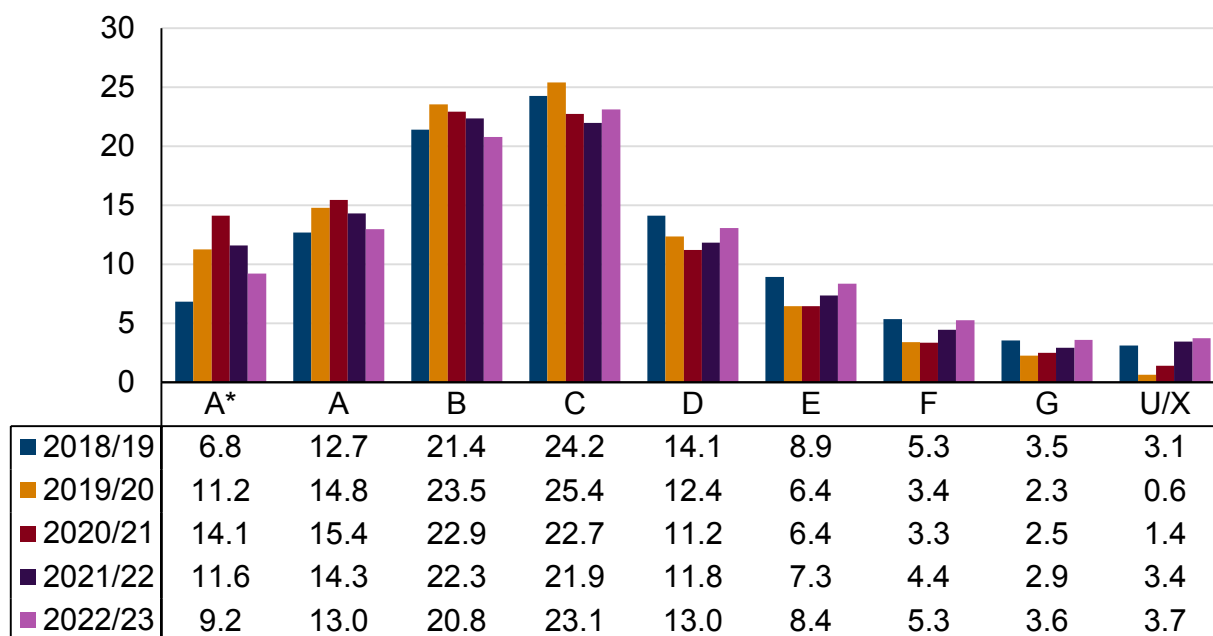
Since 2015/16 between 96.6% and 99.4% of pupils have been awarded A* to G grades. The percentage of pupils being awarded A* to C grades increased during the years of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic from 65.1% in 2018/19 (pre-pandemic) to 75.1% in 2020/21 (when Centre Determined Grades were awarded). In 2022/23 this figure dropped to 66.1%, in line with pre-pandemic levels. The percentage of pupils being awarded A* to A grades increased from 19.5 in 2018/19 to 29.5% in 2020/21. In 2022/23 this has also dropped to 22.6, closer to the percent awarded before the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Figure 7: Percentage of GCSE entries by individual grade in all subjects, 2018/19 and 2022/23



Description of Figure 7: A bar chart showing the percent of GCSE entries awarded at each grade. During the years 2019/20 and 2020/21 GCSEs were awarded based on Centre Assessed Grades and Centre Determined Grades (see [Note 1]). The largest change in the distribution of grades occurred in 2019/20 and 2020/21. Overall the distribution awarded grades have now returned to pre-pandemic levels, the largest difference between 2018/19 and 2022/23 is at the A* grade.

Source: Welsh Examinations Database (WED), 2022/23

[Note 1]: Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, public examinations were suspended in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and pupils were awarded grades based on a centre determined or centre assessed grade model.

[Note 2]: The 2021/22 and 2022/23 examination periods were transitional

years. In 2021/22 Qualifications Wales set the results at a national level broadly midway between 2018/19 and 2020/21 outcomes. In 2022/23 the national level was set at a midway between 2018/19 and 2021/22.

[Note 3]: Prior to 2018/19, the best result for each pupil was used for indicators. From 2018/19, only the result of the first entry (chronologically) will be counted in our indicators.

In 2022/23 the percent of GCSE entries awarded grades A*, A and B decreased compared to previous years, the largest decrease is at A*. There was a corresponding increase of GCSE entries awarded grades C, D, E, F and G in 2022/23. From 2018/19 to 2022/23 there was a large increase in the number of grades awarded A*, increasing by 2.4 percentage points. The number of GCSEs that were awarded A to U/X have returned to pre-pandemic levels.

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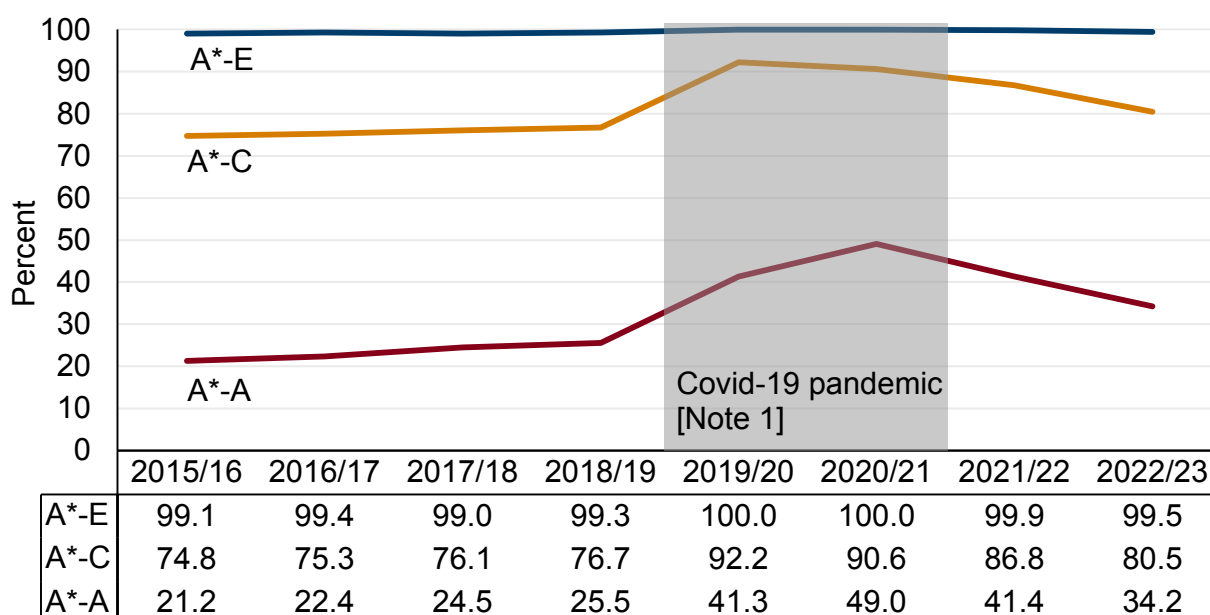
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Pupils aged 17 at the start of the school year in schools (Sixth Form)

Overall A level grade distribution

Figure 8: Percent of A level entries by pupils aged 17 awarded different grade range, 2015/16 to 2022/23



Description of Figure 8: A line graph showing the percent of A level entries attaining the grade boundaries A* to A, A* to C and A* to E. During the years 2019/20 and 2020/21, in the area shaded grey, A levels were awarded based on Centre Assessed Grades and Centre Determined Grades (see [Note 1]). In 2021/22 and 2022/23 the percentage of A levels awarded A* to A and A* to C grade ranges have decreased from the percentage awarded during the COVID-19 pandemic but remain higher than the percentage awarded in 2018/19 (pre-pandemic).

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Source: Welsh Examinations Database (WED), 2022/23

[Note 1]: Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, public examinations were suspended in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and pupils were awarded grades based on a centre determined or centre assessed grade model.

[Note 2]: The 2021/22 and 2022/23 examination periods were transitional years. In 2021/22 Qualifications Wales set the results at a national level broadly midway between 2018/19 and 2020/21 outcomes. In 2022/23 the national level was set at a midway between 2018/19 and 2021/22.

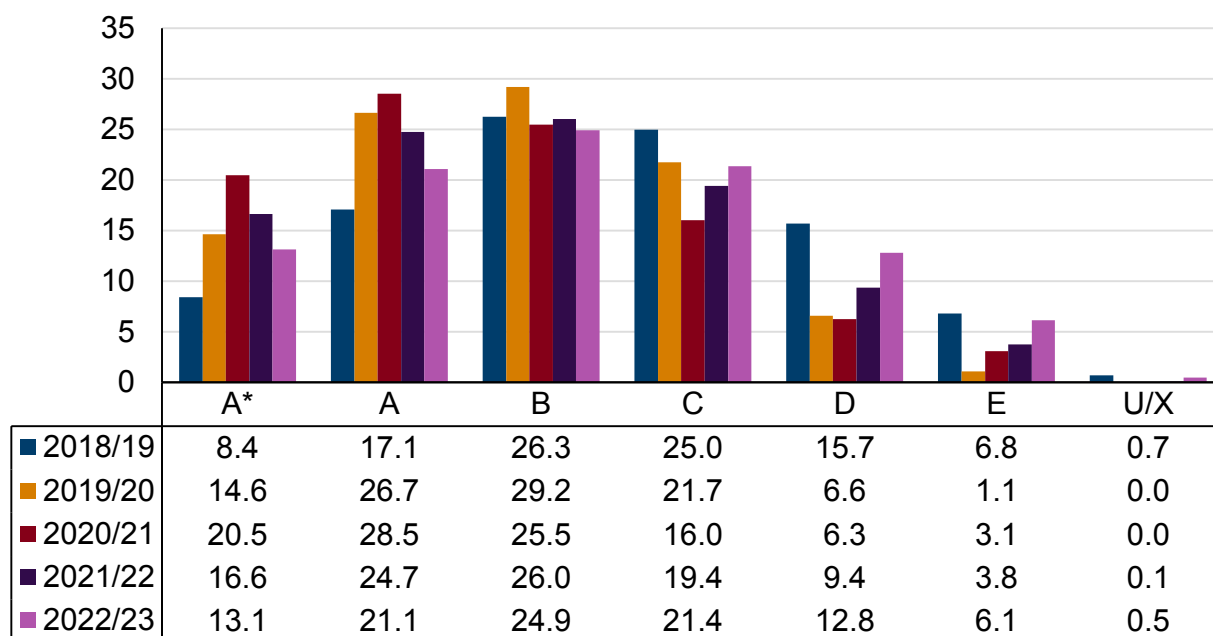
Since 2015/16 between 99% and 100% of pupils have been awarded A* to E grades. The percentage of pupils being awarded A* to C grades increased during the years of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic from 76.7% in 2018/19 (pre-pandemic) to 92.2% in 2019/20 (when Centre Assessed Grades were awarded). In 2022/23 this figure dropped to 80.5%. The percentage of pupils being awarded A* to A grades increased from 25.5% in 2018/19 to 49.0% in 2020/21. In 2022/23 decreased to 34.2% For 2022/23 A* to A and A* to C the percentage of A levels awarded A* to A and A* to C are still higher than pre-pandemic results.

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Figure 9: Percent of A level entries by pupils aged 17 awarded grade in all subjects, 2018/19 to 2022/23



Description of Figure 9: A bar chart showing the percent of A level entries awarded at each grade. During the years 2019/20 and 2020/21 A levels were awarded based on Centre Assessed Grades and Centre Determined Grades (see [Note 1]). The largest change in the distribution of grades occurred in 2019/20 and 2020/21. In 2022/23 the percent of A level entries awarded grades A*, A and B decreased compared to previous years, the largest decrease is at A (to 21.1 percentage points). There was a corresponding increase of A level entries awarded grades C, D and E in 2022/23. From 2018/19 to 2022/23 there was a large increase in the number of grades awarded A*, increasing by 4.7 percentage points.

Source: Welsh Examinations Database (WED), 2022/23

[Note 1]: Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, public examinations

were suspended in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and pupils were awarded grades based on a centre determined or centre assessed grade model.

[Note 2]: The 2021/22 and 2022/23 examination periods were transitional years. In 2021/22 Qualifications Wales set the results at a national level broadly midway between 2018/19 and 2020/21 outcomes. In 2022/23 the national level was set at a midway between 2018/19 and 2021/22.

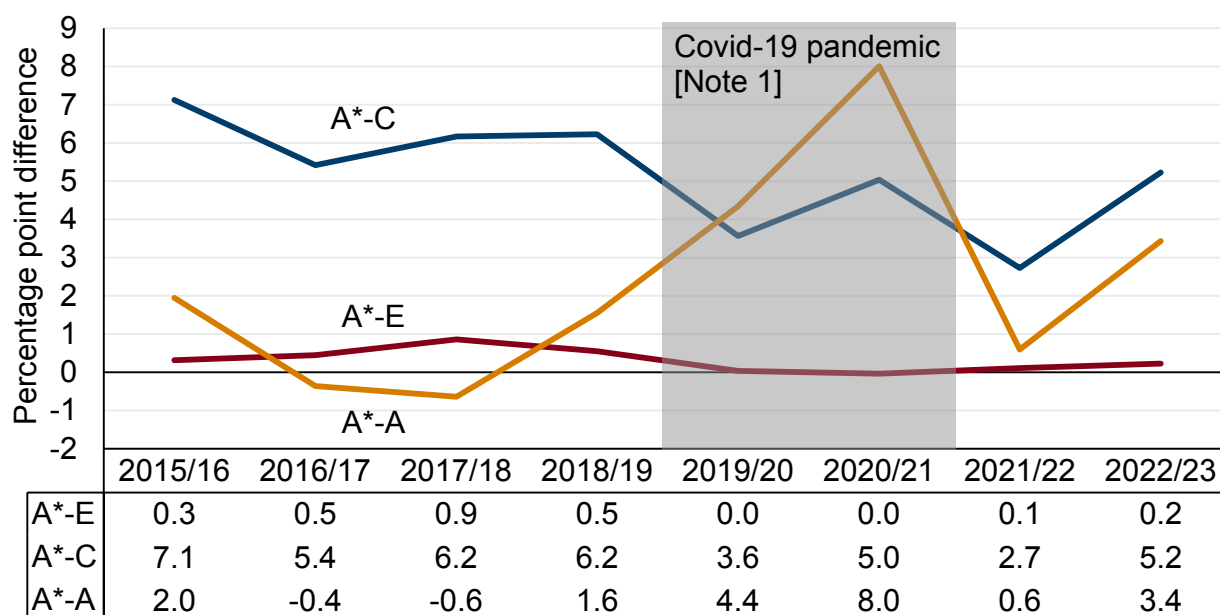
Results by pupil characteristics

The following figures show the difference in grade distribution in recent years by selected pupil characteristics. There is no figure for free school meal entitlement because the number of such pupils in year 13 in maintained schools is too low to allow any meaningful comparisons. Further comparisons by pupils' ethnicity can be found in the supplementary tables provided.

Figures 10 and 11 show the difference in the percentage of different groups of pupils achieving various grade ranges. For example, in figure 10 the chart shows the percentage point difference between the percentage of females awarded a particular grade range (such as A* to C) minus the percentage of males who were awarded that grade range.

Gender

Figure 10: Gender gap in achievement in all A level subjects for pupils aged 17, by grade range, 2016/17 to 2022/23 (females minus males)



Description of Figure 10: A line graph showing the gap in grade ranges A* to A, A* to C and A* to E between females and males from 2016/17 to 2022/23. During the years 2019/20 and 2020/21, in the area shaded grey, A levels were awarded based on Centre Assessed Grades and Centre Determined Grades (see [Note 1]). While the gap at A level is negligible for A* to E grades in 2022/23, at A* to A and A* to C grades females achieve a better outcome than males. While the gap narrowed in 2021/22 from pandemic levels, it has widened again in 2022/23.

Source: Welsh Examinations Database (WED), 2022/23

[Note 1]: Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, public examinations

were suspended in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and pupils were awarded grades based on a centre determined or centre assessed grade model.

[Note 2]: The 2021/22 and 2022/23 examination periods were transitional years. In 2021/22 Qualifications Wales set the results at a national level broadly midway between 2018/19 and 2020/21 outcomes. In 2022/23 the national level was set at a midway between 2018/19 and 2021/22.

From 2018/19 to 2020/21 the gap at A* to A grades considerably widened to 8.0 percentage points. While it narrowed to 0.6 percentage points in 2021/22 it has again widened to 3.4 percentage points in 2022/23. The gap between females and males awarded grades A* to C at A level between 2015/16 and 2022/23 fluctuates and has slightly narrowed, from 5.4 percentage points in 2016/17 to 5.2 percentage points in 2022/23.

Ethnicity

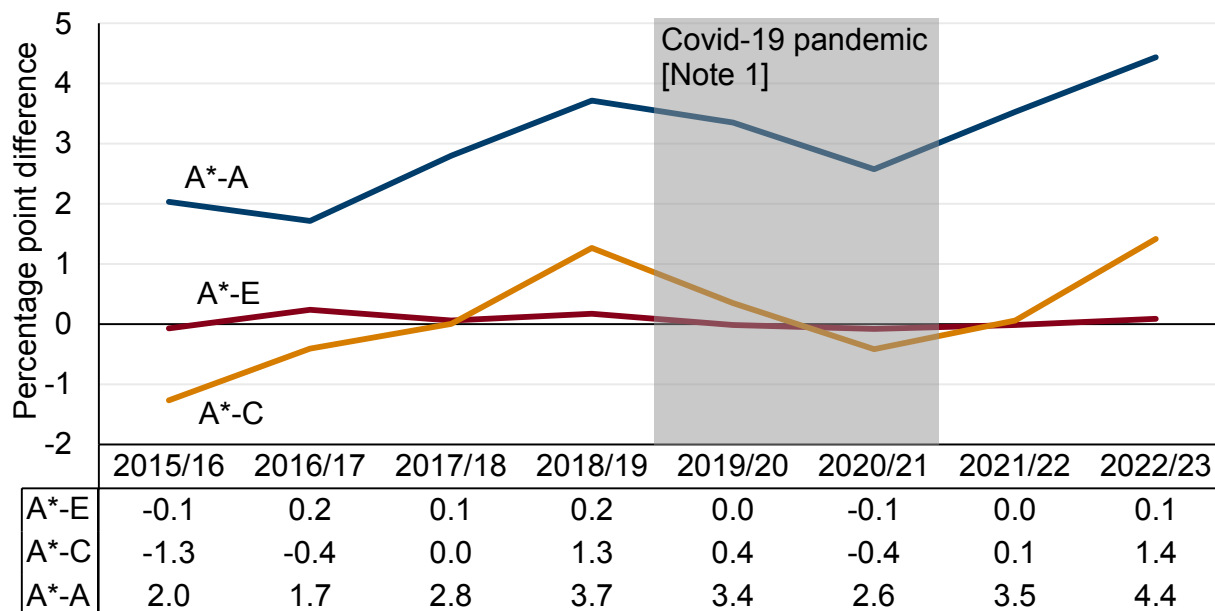
In the context of this publication the category "White" used below, refers to White British pupils only. All other pupils which have a recorded ethnicity are included under the Black, Asian and minority ethnic group category. This category therefore also includes non-British White pupils. Pupils that have not indicated their ethnicity have not been included. There are differences in achievement between groups within the Black, Asian and minority ethnic group category. Further analysis is available for more detailed ethnic groups in the supplementary tables provided.

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Figure 11: Gap in achievement in all A level subjects for pupils aged 17 between Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils and White pupils, by grade range (Black, Asian and minority ethnic minus White)



Description of Figure 11: A line graph showing the gap in grade ranges A* to A, A* to C and A* to E between Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils and White British pupils from 2016/17 to 2022/23. During the years 2019/20 and 2020/21, in the area shaded grey, A levels were awarded based on Centre Assessed Grades and Centre Determined Grades (see [Note 1]). The gap between Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils and White pupils at A Level is negligible for grade ranges A* to E. The gap in A* to C has fluctuated during the 2015/16 and 2022/23 period, while at A* to A grades the gap has consistently been high.

Source: Welsh Examinations Database (WED), 2022/23

[Note 1]: Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, public examinations were suspended in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and pupils were awarded grades based on a centre determined or centre assessed grade model.

[Note 2]: The 2021/22 and 2022/23 examination periods were transitional years. In 2021/22 Qualifications Wales set the results at a national level broadly midway between 2018/19 and 2020/21 outcomes. In 2022/23 the national level was set at a midway between 2018/19 and 2021/22.

At the A* to A grades Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils consistently achieve better outcomes than White pupils, with a gap of 4.4 percentage points in 2022/23. The gap between Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils and White pupils awarded grades A* to C between 2015/16 and 2022/23 has fluctuated, changing from -1.3 percentage points in 2015/16 to 1.4 percentage points in 2022/23, similar to the gap in 2018/19.

Quality and methodology information

Changes and comparisons

For GCSEs and A levels, the 2021/22 and 2022/23 examination period were transitional years, where relevant qualifications sat by Welsh pupils returned to written examination. This was not a complete return to pre-pandemic examinations. To compensate for any disruption to the school timetable, pupils who sat exams in 2021/22 were given a wider choice of questions from the syllabus, with Qualifications Wales setting results broadly midway between 2018/19 (the last time examinations were sat) and 2020/21 outcomes. In 2022/23 Qualifications Wales set the results broadly midway between 2018/19 and 2021/22 outcomes.

On 21 June 2021 the then **Minister for Education confirmed that learners entered for GCSE, AS and A Levels qualifications in summer 2021 would have their qualifications awarded through a centre determined grade model** (<https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-school-information-improvement-and-inspection-arrangements-supporting-renewal-and>).

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The closure of schools during the March to August 2020 period prevented the Welsh Government from completing a census of Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) schools or Educated Other Than at School (EOTAS) pupils. For this reason PRU and EOTAS pupils have not been included in the results for the 2019/20 academic year only. From 2019/20 onwards, these pupils have not been included in characteristics data.

The data in this release starts at 2015/16 due to a definition change of the GCSE cohort between 2014/15 and 2015/16 where the cohort was changed from pupils aged 15 to pupils in Year 11. Data for earlier years can be found on StatsWales.

Similar publications

These results represent the data that was available to awarding bodies as on 27th September 2023. They may differ from results published earlier by either Qualifications Wales or JCQ. This statistical release focuses on pupils in year 11 in maintained schools in Wales and includes the results of successful appeals up to 27th September 2023. Data published by other organisations may include grades awarded at other centres and to students of other ages. Data published earlier than the date of this release will include fewer successful appeals. Further information can be found in the notes section. Similar information has also been published in August 2022 by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). However, the information published by the JCQ will differ from that which is published here as they will include students of all ages who have undertaken GCSE or A Levels and at all examination centres (including further education institutions and independent schools) and will reflect the grades available on results day (JCQ).

During October 2023 Qualifications Wales will publish an equalities analysis of the 2022/23 GCSE and A level results. This will include analysis by gender, FSM and SEN / ALN. The GCSE analysis will differ from that presented here as it will

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only include the data as at results day in August and will not include any subsequent appeals and re-marks. The A level data will differ because it will also include qualifications achieved at FE colleges and again the data will refer to the position on results day in August. The results in this release are for students in year 11 or aged 17 in maintained schools in Wales and reflect the grades available as of 27th September 2023.

Definitions

Middle schools

Ages 3/4 to 16/18.

Secondary schools

Ages 11 to 16/18.

Special schools

Special schools, both day and boarding, provide education for children with ALN or SEN who cannot be educated satisfactorily in mainstream schools.

Average

Throughout this document any reference to the average refers to the mean.

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Multiple entry changes

From 2018/19, where a pupil is entered into a qualification more than once, only the result of the first entry (chronologically) will be counted in our KS4 performance indicators. This is irrespective of whether a later entry results in a higher grade. Prior to 2018/19, the best result for each pupil in each subject was used for performance indicators.

This change does not apply to pupils aged 17 (sixth form).

The Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version)

This indicator focuses on Year 11 pupils' best nine results from the qualifications available in Wales, including subject specific requirements. Since 2018/19 this includes one of English or Welsh (Language or Literature), Mathematics or Mathematics Numeracy and one Science GCSE. **A breakdown of this Capped 9 score and an explanation of the method used to calculate this indicator is available** (<https://www.gov.wales/capped-9-points-score-interim>).

Indicator to grade equivalent

The following list presents the point score for an achieved grade of a volume 1 GCSE, used to calculate the subject specific indicators and the Capped 9 indicator.

- A* is worth 58 points
- A is worth 52 points
- B is worth 46 points
- C is worth 40 points
- D is worth 34 points

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- E is worth 28 points
- F is worth 22 points
- G is worth 16 points
- U or X is worth 0 points

Literacy indicator

The best single GCSE grade from English Language, English Literature, Welsh First Language and Welsh Literature.

Numeracy indicator

The best single GCSE grade from Mathematics and Mathematics – Numeracy.

Science indicator

The best single GCSE grade from Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Applied Science (Single Award), Applied Science (Double Award) and Science (Double Award). Where a double award is made, each pupil is awarded two GCSE grades. For this indicator we will take the best single grade of the two.

Free school meals

Pupils are eligible for **free school meals** (<https://www.gov.wales/free-school-meals-information-parents-and-carers>) if their parents or guardians are in receipt of certain means-tested benefits or support payments.

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Transitional protection for free school meals

On 1 April 2019 the Welsh Government introduced a new transitional protection for free school meals policy. This was brought in to ensure that pupils have their free school meals protected during the Universal Credit rollout period.

This protection applies to individual pupils and will continue until the end of their current school phase, being the end of primary school or end of secondary school.

Any pupil that was eligible for free school meals on the introduction of the policy on 1 April 2019 should also be transitionally protected. In addition, any pupil that has become eligible at any point during the Universal Credit rollout under the new eligibility criteria should also be transitionally protected.

The FSM analysis in this release only includes pupils who are eligible through the means tested criteria. Those eligible through TP or UPFSM are not included.

Accuracy

Schools and local authorities will have an opportunity to assess the provisional results for accuracy and are able to supply amended information where applicable. In previous years the change between provisional and final data in this release was less than 1 percentage point.

National Statistics status

The **United Kingdom Statistics Authority** (<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the

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Code of Practice for Statistics (<https://code.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in 2019 following a compliance check by the Office for Statistics Regulation. These statistics last underwent a **full assessment against the Code of Practice in 2019** (<https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/compliance-check-of-wales-examination-results-statistics/>).

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Introduced a summary of the key indicators to the start of the publication, including a detailed explanation of the new key indicators and placed them into context in terms of grade equivalents.
- A breakdown of the new indicators by gender, ethnicity and Free School Meal eligibility has been included in the release and accompanying tables.

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- Introduced breakdowns by GCSE and A level grade including summaries of grade boundaries (e.g. A* to C).
- Updating publication of release to HTML and improving figures for accessibility.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 March 2016 and this release includes one of the national indicators namely indicator 7 “Average capped 9 points score of pupils, including the gap between those who are eligible or are not eligible for free school meals”.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the **Wellbeing of Wales report** (<https://www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales>).

As a national indicator under the Act they must be referred to in the analyses of local well-being produced by public services boards when they are analysing the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing in their areas.

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Further information on the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** (<https://www.gov.wales/well-being-future-generations-wales-act-2015-guidance>).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

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