



Examination results in Wales, 2016/17 (Provisional)

5 October 2017
SFR 112/2017

Changes to the production of these statistics

Following recommendations from independent reviews and policy changes announced by Welsh Government, several key changes have been implemented to the Key Stage 4 (KS4) performance measures data in this 2016/17 release which impacts on comparisons with previous years. Where possible, we have sought to quantify some of the impact of this in the Notes section below. However, it is not possible to quantify the impact of the changes in policy to pupil and school choices around curriculum options and entry. Therefore, comparisons with previous years should be made with caution.

Introduction of the Capped 9 Score

The Capped 9 measure focuses on Year 11 pupils' results from nine of the qualifications available in Wales, including subject specific requirements. The main changes compared to the previous capped points score are:

- An increase from eight to nine GCSEs or equivalent volume of qualifications
- The introduction of subject specific attainment requirements in English/Welsh, Mathematics – Numeracy, Mathematics and Science.

Cap on non-GCSEs to threshold measures

From 2017, a maximum of two vocational (non-GCSE) qualifications will count towards all threshold measures, depending on size of the qualification (i.e. no more than 40% of the threshold).

Literature in threshold measures

Literature qualifications no longer count towards the literacy elements in the Level 2 inclusive or Capped 9 score from 2017 onwards, but can still count in the non-subject specific elements.

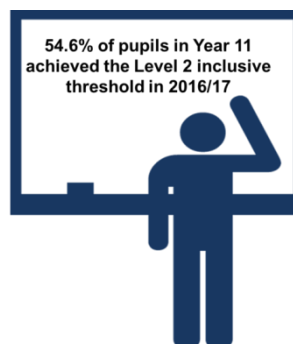
New Mathematics GCSEs

This is the first summer that pupils are expected to sit two GCSEs in Mathematics – GCSE Mathematics and GCSE Mathematics Numeracy.

Key results for 2016/17

Pupils in Year 11

- 54.6 per cent of pupils in Year 11 achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold (Level 2 including a grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and Mathematics).



About this release

This Statistical Release provides the provisional analysis of external examinations taken by pupils in Year 11 (“Key Stage 4”) or pupils aged 17 at the start of the academic year in schools in Wales in 2016/17, as well as final information for previous years.

Schools are currently checking this latest information and therefore the figures are subject to change.

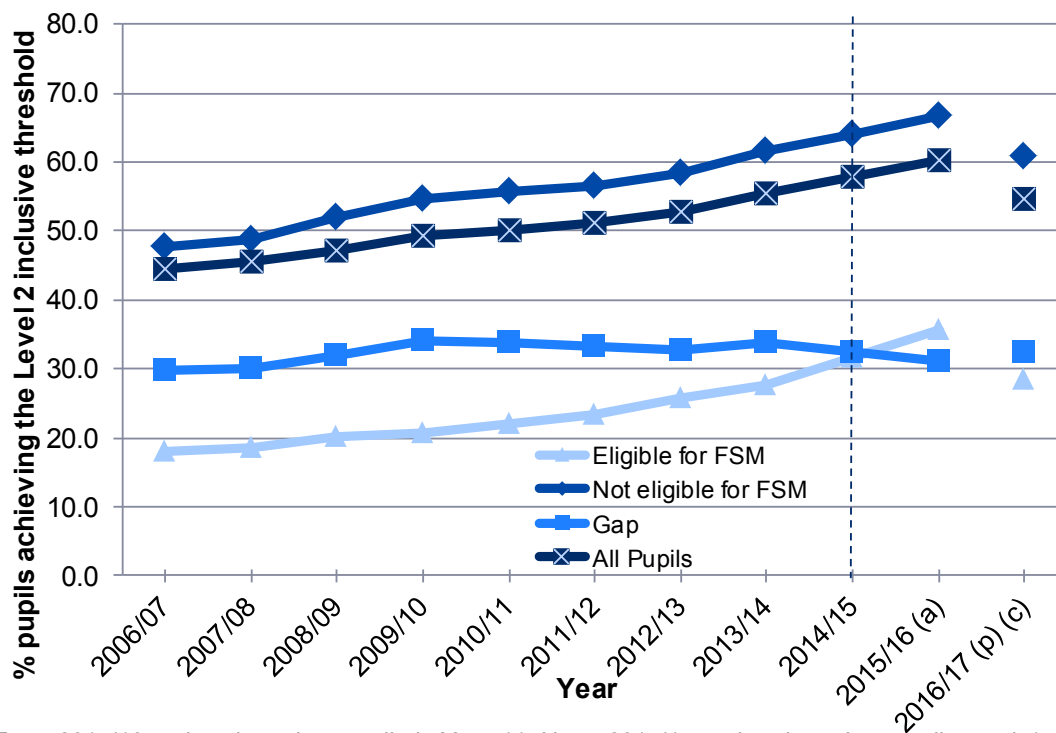
Note that this release contains one of the 46 National Indicators - ‘Percentage of pupils who have achieved the “Level 2 threshold” including English or Welsh first language and Mathematics, including the gap between those who are eligible or are not eligible for free school meals’ (Indicator 7).

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- The average capped wider points score was 324.9.
- The Capped 9 Score was 350.0.
- 28.5 per cent of pupils eligible for FSM achieved the L2 inclusive threshold.
- 67.2 per cent of pupils achieved A*-C in either English or Welsh first language. This is decrease of 3.2 percentage points from the previous year.
- 62.5 per cent of pupils achieved A*-C in either Mathematics/Mathematics-Numeracy. Looking at each subject individually, 58.7 per cent achieved A*-C in Mathematics and 56.9 per cent achieved A*-C in Mathematics-Numeracy.

Chart 1 - Percentage of pupils in Year 11/aged 15 achieving the Level 2 inclusive, by FSM status (a) (b) (c)



(a) From 2015/16, cohort based on pupils in Year 11. Up to 2014/15, cohort based on pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year.

(b) L2 inclusive threshold: 5 A*-C GCSEs or equivalents including English or Welsh First Language and Mathematics.

(c) From 2016/17, only the new specifications for GCSE English Language, GCSE Welsh Language and GCSE Mathematics/Mathematics-Numeracy will count towards the literacy and maths elements of the Level 2 Inclusive threshold measure. The legacy GCSE Mathematics specification will not count towards the maths element of the Level 2 Inclusive measure. Literature qualifications do not count towards the literacy element of the Level 2 inclusive.

Pupils aged 17

- 97.1 per cent of those entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels achieved the Level 3 threshold, compared to 98.0 per cent in 2015/16.
- The average wider points score was 733.0, 90.2 points lower than in 2015/16.

Pupils in Year 11

Table 1 presents the latest headline indicators for pupils in Year 11 at the start of this academic year 2016/17. Note that before 2015/16, this data relates to pupils aged 15. These measures include the Level 1 threshold, a volume of qualifications at Level 1 equivalent to the volume of 5 GCSE's at grade A*-G, the Level 2 threshold, a volume of qualifications at Level 2 equivalent to the volume of 5 GCSE's at grade A*-C and the Level 2 inclusive threshold, achieving Level 2 including a grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and Mathematics.

Table 1: Headline indicators for pupils in Year 11/ aged 15 at the start of the academic year (a) (b) (c)

	Number of Pupils	Percentage of pupils who...					Average capped (d) wider points score
		achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics (e)	Capped 9 Score	Average wider points score	
Pupils aged 15							
2001/02	37,116	84.8	50.5	..	..	..	..
2002/03	37,993	85.1	51.1	..	..	..	..
2003/04	39,212	85.3	51.4	..	..	324.7	..
2004/05	38,495	85.2	52.2	..	..	327.7	..
2005/06	38,859	86.0	53.8	..	..	335.4	..
2006/07	39,576	86.0	55.0	44.4	..	343.9	..
2007/08	39,027	86.8	58.0	45.6	..	356.0	..
2008/09	37,607	88.2	60.7	47.2	..	378.9	..
2009/10	37,072	89.7	63.8	49.4	..	394.3	305.1
2010/11	36,088	90.3	67.3	50.1	..	422.9	311.6
2011/12	35,404	91.8	72.6	51.1	..	465.0	323.5
2012/13	36,617	93.2	77.8	52.7	..	501.2	333.1
2013/14	35,168	94.0	82.3	55.4	..	524.5	340.8
2014/15	34,004	94.4	84.1	57.9	..	530.7	343.5
Pupils in Year 11							
2015/16	32,248	95.3	84.0	60.3	..	529.3	344.6
2016/17 (p)	31,381	94.4	66.9	54.6	350.0	456.0	324.9
Males	16,149	93.1	61.6	50.6	337.2	431.9	312.7
Females	15,232	95.9	72.5	58.8	363.6	481.5	337.9

- (a) From 2015/16, cohort based on pupils in Year 11. Up to 2014/15, cohort based on pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year.
- (b) Up to 2014/15, includes results for maintained schools (including special schools and PRUs) and independent schools, achieved during the academic year and any examinations taken at earlier age. From 2015/16, the table also includes pupils receiving education other than at school that are not in PRUs.
- (c) Up to 2005/06, includes GCSEs, GCSE Short Course, GNVQs and NVQs. From 2006/07, includes all qualifications approved for pre-16 use in Wales.
- (d) Average capped wider point scores are calculated using the best 8 results.
- (e) From 2017, only the new specifications for GCSE English Language, GCSE Welsh Language and GCSE Mathematics/ Mathematics-Numeracy will count towards the literacy and maths elements of the Level 2 Inclusive threshold measure. The legacy GCSE Mathematics specification will not count towards the maths element of the level 2 Inclusive measure. Literature qualifications do not count towards the literacy elements.

In 2016/17, 54.6 per cent of pupils in Year 11 achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold. The Level 2 inclusive threshold has had a number of significant changes this year, making it difficult to compare with previous years. From this year, only the new specifications for GCSE English Language, GCSE Welsh Language, GCSE Mathematics and GCSE Mathematics-Numeracy will count towards the literacy and maths elements of the Level 2 Inclusive threshold measure. The legacy GCSE Mathematics specification will not count towards the maths element of the Level 2 Inclusive measure. Literature qualifications also do not count towards the literacy elements from 2017 onwards. These changes have led to a discontinuity between this year and previous year's data. Please see the [Notes](#) section for more information about these changes, which includes an estimate of the impact of the removal of English Literature from the literacy element of the Level 2 inclusive threshold.

Performance continues to be higher for females than for males in all headline indicators, with an 8.2 percentage point gap in their respective Level 2 inclusive scores. For 2017, the Capped 9 score in Wales is 350.0. Females outperformed boys by 26.4 points.

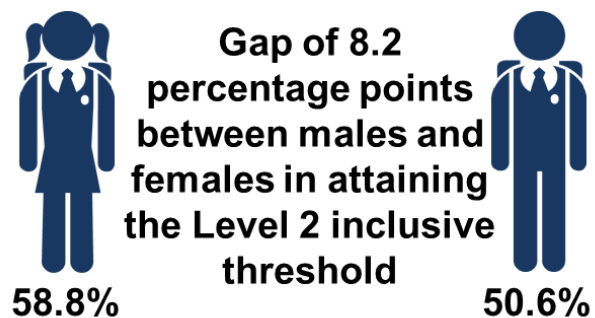


Table 2a presents the performance by individual subject for pupils in Year 11 in English/Welsh, English, Science and Welsh First Language. Apart from in Science, where non-GCSEs were increasingly popular, these figures are more consistent on a year by year basis since issues around the equivalence of non-GCSE qualifications do not have an impact.

Table 2a: Performance by individual subject for pupils in Year 11/ aged 15 at the start of the academic year (a) (b) (c)

	Percentage of pupils who...				Of those who entered Welsh First Language:	
	Number of pupils	achieved A*-C in English/Welsh (d)	achieved A*-C in English (e)	achieved A*-C in Science (f)	entered Welsh First Language	achieved A*-C in Welsh (g)
Pupils aged 15						
2010/11	36,088	63.7	62.8	65.9	5,242	74.6
2011/12	35,404	63.5	62.2	70.6	5,207	73.8
2012/13	36,617	64.0	62.9	74.8	5,591	73.5
2013/14	35,168	67.2	66.2	82.3	5,548	73.7
2014/15	34,004	69.7	68.6	84.0	5,452	75.2
Pupils in Year 11						
2015/16	32,248	70.4	69.3	82.4	5,285	75.1
2016/17 (p)	31,381	67.2	63.6	75.6	5,441	73.2

- (a) From 2015/16, cohort based on pupils in Year 11. Up to 2014/15, cohort based on pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year.
- (b) Includes all core qualifications approved for pre-16 use in Wales.
- (c) Up to 2014/15, includes results for maintained schools (including special schools and PRUs) and independent schools, achieved during the academic year and any examinations taken at earlier age. From 2015/16, the table also includes pupils receiving education other than at school that are not in PRUs.
- (d) Up to 2015/16, for each pupil the best grade of English language, English literature, Welsh first language and Welsh literature is taken. From 2016/17, the best grade of English Language and Welsh Language is taken.
- (e) Up to 2015/16, for each pupil the best grade of English language and English literature is taken. From 2017, only English Language is used.
- (f) Includes single and double award core science.
- (g) Up to 2015/16, for each pupil the best grade of Welsh language and Welsh literature is taken. From 2016/17, only Welsh language is used. The denominator for this indicator is the number of 15 year olds/pupils in Year 11 who entered Welsh First Language, rather than the total number of 15 year olds/Year 11 pupils.

In 2016/17 the percentage of pupils achieving Welsh was 73.2 per cent, a decrease of 1.9 percentage points, though there has been an increase of pupils entering Welsh First Language.

The decrease in the percentage of pupils achieving A*-C in English and Welsh may be due to the removal of English/Welsh Literature in these performance measures, as well as the new specifications in both English and Welsh Language. Only these new specifications will count towards the literacy element of the new Capped 9 score and the Level 2 inclusive threshold measure. Legacy English qualifications or any Literature qualification will no longer count towards the literacy elements.

Table 2b presents the performance in Mathematics for pupils in Year 11. This is the first summer that pupils are expected to sit two GCSEs in Mathematics – GCSE Mathematics and GCSE Mathematics Numeracy. The ‘best of’ score can be used as the nearest comparison to historical data.

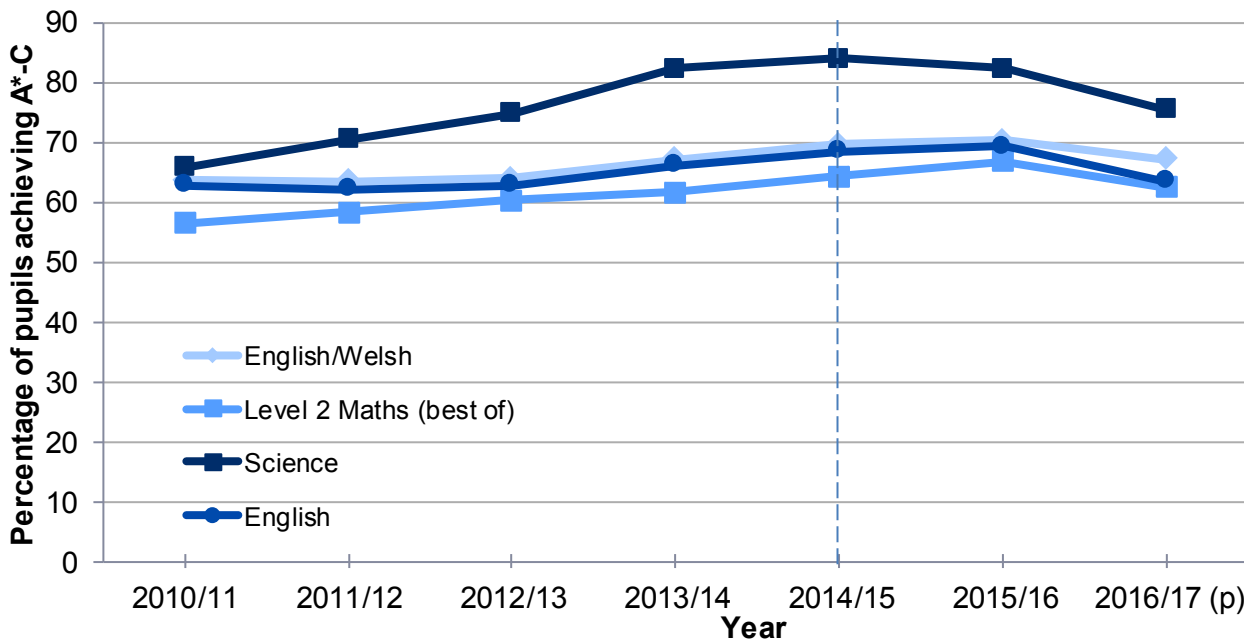
Table 2b: Performance in Mathematics for pupils in Year 11/ aged 15 at the start of the academic year (a) (b) (c)

	Number of pupils	Percentage of pupils w ho...		
		achieved	achieved	achieved
		A*-C in Maths (best of) (d)	A*-C in GCSE Mathematics	A*-C in GCSE Mathematics - Numeracy
<u>Pupils aged 15</u>				
2010/11	36,088	56.5	..	..
2011/12	35,404	58.4	..	..
2012/13	36,617	60.3	..	..
2013/14	35,168	61.7	..	..
2014/15	34,004	64.4	..	..
<u>Pupils in Year 11</u>				
2015/16	32,248	66.9	..	..
2016/17 (p)	31,381	62.5	58.7	56.9

- (a) From 2015/16, cohort based on pupils in Year 11. Up to 2014/15, cohort based on pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year.
- (b) Includes all core qualifications approved for pre-16 use in Wales.
- (c) Up to 2014/15, includes results for maintained schools (including special schools and PRUs) and independent schools, achieved during the academic year and any examinations taken at earlier age. From 2015/16, the table also includes pupils receiving education other than at school that are not in PRUs.
- (d) From 2016/17, the best of GCSE Mathematics/ Mathematics - Numeracy is used to calculate the overall Mathematics A*-C.

In 2016/17, the A*-C in Mathematics (best of) pass rate was 62.5 per cent. Looking at Mathematics and Mathematics-Numeracy separately, it can be seen that the pass rate was higher in Mathematics by 1.8 percentage points.

Chart 2 - Percentage of pupils in Year 11/ aged 15 achieving A*-C by individual subjects (a)(b)



(a) From 2015/16, cohort based on pupils in Year 11 . Up to 2014/15, cohort based on pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year.
 (b) From 2016/17, the best of GCSE Mathematics/ Mathematics - Numeracy is used to calculate the overall Mathematics A*-C pass rate.

Table 3 presents the headline indicators for Year 11 pupils by free school meals entitlement (FSM). Pupils are eligible for free school meals if their families are in receipt of certain benefits/support payments, which are outlined in the following [webpage](#).

Table 3: Key Stage 4 indicators by free school meal entitlement (a) (b) (c)

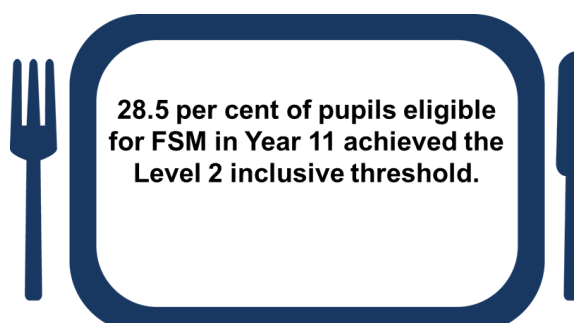
Pupils in Year 11/aged 15 at the start of the academic year

Please note that in this table, unlike table 1, EOTAS pupils have not been included at present.

FSM Eligibility	Year	Cohort	Percentage of pupils achieving:				
			Level 1 threshold	Level 2 threshold	Level 2 including English/ Welsh and Mathematics (d)	Capped 9 Score	Average capped wider points score
Eligible for FSM	2006/07	4,944	73.8	26.7	18.0	..	..
	2007/08	4,831	72.1	28.0	18.7	..	..
	2008/09	4,966	75.8	32.5	20.1	..	..
	2009/10	5,148	78.3	35.3	20.7	..	237.5
	2010/11	5,366	79.8	40.9	22.0	..	247.8
	2011/12	5,186	83.3	50.9	23.4	..	268.5
	2012/13	5,705	85.8	57.8	25.8	..	281.8
	2013/14	5,338	87.7	65.3	27.8	..	295.2
	2014/15	5,154	89.4	69.4	31.6	..	303.7
Pupils in Year 11	2015/16	4,837	92.0	71.6	35.6	..	311.3
	2016/17 (p)	4,760	88.4	41.1	28.5	289.2	275.3
Not eligible for FSM	2006/07	31,854	92.0	60.4	47.7	..	..
	2007/08	31,908	91.6	61.9	48.7	..	..
	2008/09	30,729	92.9	66.4	52.1	..	..
	2009/10	30,106	93.9	69.6	54.6	..	321.9
	2010/11	28,979	94.7	73.5	55.7	..	329.6
	2011/12	28,584	95.5	78.0	56.6	..	339.4
	2012/13	29,449	96.4	83.0	58.5	..	347.7
	2013/14	28,370	97.3	87.4	61.6	..	356.0
	2014/15	27,426	97.6	88.9	64.1	..	358.1
Pupils in Year 11	2015/16	26,495	98.2	89.0	66.8	..	359.1
	2016/17 (p)	25,899	97.6	73.4	60.8	368.6	340.6

- (a) From 2015/16, cohort based on pupils in Year 11. Up to 2014/15, cohort based on pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year.
- (b) Up to 2005/06, includes GCSEs, GCSE Short Course, GNVQs and NVQs. From 2006/07, includes all qualifications approved
- (c) The sum of pupils eligible and not eligible for free school meals does not equal the total number of pupils in Year 11/ aged 15 shown in Table 1. This is because the data in this table only includes pupils who we are able to match between the Welsh Examinations Database and the School Census. Independent schools, PRUs and EOTAS do not complete the school census
- (d) From 2017, only the new specifications for GCSE English Language, GCSE Welsh Language and GCSE Mathematics/Mathematics-Numeracy will count towards the literacy and maths elements of the Level 2 Inclusive threshold measure. The legacy GCSE Mathematics specifications will not count towards the maths element of the level 2 Inclusive measure. Literature qualifications do not count towards the literacy elements.

28.5 per cent of pupils eligible for FSM achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold. The gap between these pupils and those not eligible for FSM is now 32.3 percentage points.



Pupils aged 17

Table 4 presents the latest headline indicators for pupils aged 17 at the start of the academic year. These measures include the percentage of pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold, which consists of a volume of qualifications at Level 3 equivalent to the volume of 2 A levels at grade A*-E. It also contains the average wider points score for pupils aged 17. More information can be found in the Notes. None of the data in this section is affected by the changes as a result of the Review of Qualifications and valid comparisons can be made over time.

Table 4: Headline indicators for pupils aged 17 at the start of the academic year (a)

	Number of pupils aged 17 entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Number of pupils aged 17	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17	Percentage of pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels who achieved 3 A*-A grades	Percentage of pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels who achieved 3 A*-C grades
2001/02	9,486	94.4	11,201	..	..	..
2002/03	9,848	93.9	11,568	..	..	..
2003/04	10,041	94.9	11,822	..	..	..
2004/05	10,373	94.4	12,072	..	..	..
2005/06	10,731	93.9	12,507	..	..	..
2006/07	10,592	93.9	12,418	618.5	..	..
2007/08	10,943	94.2	12,653	630.9	..	..
2008/09	11,544	95.9	13,241	687.7	..	..
2009/10	11,662	94.8	13,586	747.9	..	..
2010/11	11,489	96.5	13,615	798.9	..	..
2011/12	11,538	96.9	13,632	772.9	..	..
2012/13	11,706	96.5	13,365	806.6	..	..
2013/14	11,447	97.1	13,102	804.1	..	..
2014/15	11,838	97.0	13,473	799.7	..	..
2015/16	10,804	98.0	12,066	823.2	6.7	38.3
2016/17 (p)	10,181	97.1	11,429	733.0	10.4	54.6
Males	4,576	96.1	5,287	683.5	10.3	47.5
Females	5,605	97.9	6,142	775.5	10.5	60.4

(a) Up to 2005/06, includes A levels, AS levels and Advanced Vocational Certificates of Education (AVCE). From 2006/07, includes all qualifications approved for use in Wales.

In 2016/17, 97.1 per cent of 17 year old pupils that entered a volume equivalent to 2 A levels achieved the Level 3 threshold, a decrease of 0.9 percentage points from the previous year.

The average wider points score for pupils aged 17 this year is 733.0. This includes all qualifications approved for 16-18 year olds in Wales. The average wider points score is higher for females than for males, with a difference of 92 points between them. Females continue to outperform males across all headline indicators at age 17.



Notes

1. Context

1.1 Related Publications

Data for England, Northern Ireland and Scotland can be found in the links below. Note that the data produced by these administrations are based on pupils at the end of Key Stage 4, whereas we publish on the basis of pupils in Year 11. Following the changes to qualifications levels, equivalencies, discounting and rules around re-entry in England in 2014, data for England are no longer on a comparable basis – see also section 5.5. Comparisons cannot be made with Scotland because their examination system and qualifications are different.

For further information or advice on the constraints of international comparisons please email school.stats@gov.wales.

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

England

[GCSE and Equivalent Results in England 2015/16](#)

[A-Level and other 16-18 Results in England 2015/16](#)

Northern Ireland

[Qualifications and Destinations of Northern Ireland School Leavers 2015/16](#)

Scotland

[Summary statistics for attainment, leaver destinations and healthy living, No.7: 2017 Edition](#)

We also publish information on teacher assessments in core and non core subjects at foundation phase and key stages 2 and 3, which can be found on the [Statistics and Research page](#).

The figures differ from those published by Awarding Organisations in August. The Awarding Organisations' figures related to the outcome of the individual subject areas for all candidates in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, regardless of their age. The figures published in this Statistical First Release focus on the overall performance of candidates in Year 11/ aged 15 and those aged 17 taking these examinations in Wales only. These figures can be found on the [JCQ website](#).

2. Data source

The statistics are collated from a number of awarding organisations over the summer. The following awarding organisations provided data for this release:

ABC Awards, Agored Cymru, AQA, ASDAN, Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), British Computer Society (BCS), British Safety Council (BSC), CACHE, City and Guilds, CCEA, Cambridge International Examinations (CIE), Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), C Skills, EMTA Awards Ltd (EAL), ILM, IMI Awards Ltd (IMIAL), LIBF, NCFE, National

Open College Network (NOCN), OCR, Pearson (Edexcel/EDI), Prince's Trust, Rock School Ltd (RSL), Sports Leaders UK, VTCT, WJEC.

3. Definitions

3.1 Coverage

The statistics in this release cover all maintained schools in Wales. Only results for pupils who are in Year 11 and pupils aged 17 received from the awarding organisations listed above are included. Examinations taken at an earlier age are also included. Any examinations achieved before the pupil is in Year 11 will be held back and included in the school year in which the pupil enters Year 11. Note that the information in this release relates to all schools for Wales figures.

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

Up to 2005/06, the statistics include GCSEs, GCSE short course, GNVQs and NVQs only. From 2006/07, the statistics include all qualifications approved for pre-16 or 16-18 use in Wales. The introduction of the wider definition has meant the inclusion of a larger range of qualifications and thus an increase in the headline indicators of performance. An explanation of the different types of qualifications can be found [here](#).

3.2 Threshold indicators and points

Indicators showing threshold equivalencies were published (as provisional indicators) for the first time in 2007 and are now the headline indicators of performance in secondary schools.

Thresholds represent a volume, or 'size', of qualifications at a specific level on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Three thresholds have been established:

- Level 1 – a volume of qualifications at Level 1 equivalent to the volume of 5 GCSEs at grade A*-G;
- Level 2 – a volume of qualifications at Level 2 equivalent to the volume of 5 GCSEs at grade A*-C;
- Level 3 – a volume of qualifications at Level 3 equivalent to the volume of 2 A levels at grade A*-E.

The Capped 9 score is calculated using the best 9 results for each pupil, with subject specific requirements in English/Welsh, Mathematics, Mathematics-Numeracy and Science. Further information on how the capped points score is calculated can be found [here](#).

3.3 Discounting

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

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

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

Group 3: Free standing maths qualifications

Group 4: Key skills

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

Group 6: NVQs

Group 7: BTECs and other qualifications

Group 8: the Welsh Baccalaureate

3.4 Performance of pupils eligible for FSM

Since 2014/15, this release has included a table (Table 4) which shows the key indicators for pupils at Key Stage 4 by FSM eligibility. In previous years this data has been published in the January or March as part of the following [statistical release](#).

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

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

3.5 Changes in this release

Capped 9 Score:

The Capped 9 measure focuses on Year 11 pupils' results from nine of the qualifications available in Wales, including subject specific requirements. This measure recognises performance and allocates points across the whole spectrum of grades to reflect attainment levels for all learners in Wales. The main changes to the capped points score are:

- Increased from eight to nine GCSEs or equivalent volume of qualifications
- The introduction of subject specific attainment requirements:
 1. English/Welsh
 2. Mathematics – numeracy
 3. Mathematics
 4. 2 x Science.

A breakdown of this Capped 9 score and an explanation of the method used to calculate this measure can be found [here](#).

New specifications in English, Welsh and Mathematics/Mathematics-Numeracy:

New specifications in English, Welsh and the introduction of the new GCSE Mathematics and GCSE Mathematics-Numeracy will be used in school performance measures this year. Only the new specifications for GCSE English Language, GCSE Welsh First Language, GCSE Mathematics-Numeracy and GCSE Mathematics will count towards the literacy and maths elements of the new Capped 9 score. Legacy qualifications will not count towards the literacy and maths elements, and Literature qualifications will no longer count towards the literacy elements.

In addition, only the new specifications for GCSE English Language, GCSE Welsh Language and GCSE Mathematics/Mathematics-Numeracy will count towards the literacy and maths elements of the Level 2 Inclusive threshold measure. The legacy GCSE Mathematics specification will not count towards the maths element of the level 2 Inclusive measure. Literature qualifications do not count towards the literacy elements from 2017 onwards. The table below shows the effect of changing the Level 2 inclusive indicator to no longer include English/Welsh Literature in the literacy element:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Percentage of pupils who achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold (excluding English/Welsh Literature in the literacy element) (a)</u>	<u>Percentage of pupils who achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold (including English/Welsh Literature in the literacy element) (a)</u>	<u>Difference (percentage points)</u>
2016/17	54.6	56.3	-1.8

(a) includes 40% cap on non-GCSEs

Legacy specification GCSEs in English, Welsh and Mathematics will count towards the general (non literacy and numeracy) requirements for performance measures. However **these will only count for learners who do not also have the corresponding new GCSEs.**

Cap on non-GCSEs to threshold measures:

From 2017, a maximum of two vocational qualifications will count towards all threshold measures, depending on size of the qualification (i.e. no more than 40% of the threshold). In the new Capped 9 score for 2017, it will be possible for up to six qualifications to be vocational (two science and four others) depending on size of the qualification. The table below shows the effect of the 40% cap on non-GCSEs to the Level 2 inclusive indicator.

Whilst we can quantify the statistical difference between the two methods this does not account for any changes in pupil or school behaviour around curriculum options which may have resulted from the restrictions around vocational qualifications.

Year	Percentage of pupils who achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold (with 40% cap on non-GCSEs) (a)	Percentage of pupils who achieved the Level 2 inclusive threshold (without 40% cap on non-GCSEs) (a)	Difference (percentage points)
2016/17	54.6	54.6	-0.1

(a) figures excluding English Literature in the literacy element of the Level 2 inclusive threshold

Essential Skills Wales:

Essential Skills Wales and Wider Key Skills no longer hold a contribution value in Key Stage 4 measures.

Changes in previous years:

Note that from 2015/16, we moved to reporting school performance on a Year 11 cohort basis rather than for pupils aged 15 at the start of the year. The Year 11 cohort is based on the number of pupils who were registered as being on roll in Year 11 in the school on the day of the school census.

Before 2015/16, data was based on mainstream schools, special schools, independent schools and PRU's (Pupil Referral Units). We did not include those pupils who were educated other than at school (EOTAS) who did not attend a PRU. This additional EOTAS data has been included in the matching process and is therefore included in our results from 2015/16.

In 2015/16, a limit to the contribution value of non-GCSE qualifications to performance measures has been introduced. This means that any single level 1 or level 2 qualification will have a maximum equivalence value, in performance terms, of 2 GCSEs, applying to all measures.

The statistics in this release previously covered all maintained and independent schools in Wales. From 2015/16, independent schools have been removed from the Wales figures. This is due to fact that data are only collected on qualifications approved by the Welsh Government for use in schools. Independent schools can choose other qualifications which are not approved, such as iGCSEs, and these are not included in our figures. In addition, participation from independent schools in the school data checking exercises held during October to November tends to be low.

4. Rounding and symbols

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

The following symbols have been used throughout the publication:

- (p) provisional
- percentages less than 0.5 but higher than zero
- . not applicable
- .. not available

~ not yet available

* figure is less than 5, or is based on a figure less than 5.

5. Key Quality Information

This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability. It also covers specific issues relating to quality of 2016 data, and describes the quality management tool applied to this area of work.

5.1 Relevance

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

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales;
- The Department for Education and Skills in the Welsh Government;
- Estyn;
- Other government departments;
- The research community;
- Regional education consortia, Local Authorities and schools;
- Students, academics and universities;
- Individual citizens, private companies and the media.

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

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

5.2 Accuracy

The data are labelled as provisional because during October they will be sent to schools for checking. The data may be revised if schools provide factual evidence of errors in the data or of additional qualifications obtained with awarding organisations that we have not approached. In a typical year we would expect the final indicators, to be published in December, to differ from these provisional statistics by up to half a percentage point for all indicators apart from the one that measures no recognised qualifications (which is based on small numbers and is more sensitive to changes).

5.3 Timeliness and Punctuality

The data relate to all qualifications achieved between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017.

5.4 Accessibility and Clarity

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

School-level data is available through the My Local School website. This provisional data will not be added to My Local School but final data for 2016/17 will be added later in the year.

5.5 Comparability and coherence

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

- Data for England limits the size of vocational qualifications to a maximum of 1 GCSE. Since 2015/16, data for Wales limits the size of vocational qualifications to a maximum of 2 GCSEs, following the recommendation in the Review of Qualifications. Prior to this, there was no limit on the size of vocational qualifications, with many choices being equivalent in size to 4 GCSE's.
- Data for England only allow the first entry in any examination to count regardless of grade. The best grade is taken in Wales.
- England has changed the way they discount qualifications so that similar general and vocational qualifications cannot both count in their statistics. This restriction does not apply in Wales.

More information on the changes to Key Stage 4 performance measures in Wales and their comparability can be found in our [statistical article](#).

Information about GCSE reform in England as well as [The Wolf Review of Vocational Qualifications](#) can be found [here](#).

There is also more information about the Wolf Review of Vocational Education in the statistical release [GCSE and Equivalent Results in England 2013/14 \(Revised\)](#)

In Wales, the Review of Qualifications started from the academic year 2015/16. This means that the way we calculate our performance measures will change. This will have an impact on comparability over time and will further limit our ability to compare educational attainment in Wales with the rest of the UK. See [Review of Qualifications](#) for more information.

National Statistics status

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

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 Official 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.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being 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 Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly.

The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016 and this release includes 1 of the national indicators namely 'Percentage of pupils who have achieved the "Level 2 threshold" including English or Welsh first language and Mathematics, including the gap between those who are eligible or are not eligible for free school meals.

Information on indicators and associated technical information - [How do you measure a nation's progress? - National Indicators](#)

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 well-being in their areas.

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

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 well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

Further details

The document is available at:

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

Next update

06 December 2017

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to school.stats@gov.wales.

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