



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS, DOCUMENT

Examination results: September 2023 to August 2024

Results of external examinations taken by pupils in year 11 or 17, which includes GCSE and A Levels for September 2023 to August 2024.

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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 then Minister for Education and Welsh Language in his [Written Statement of 19 January 2023, the Welsh Government has restarted reporting of Key Stage 4 outcomes at a school level using the approach adopted in 2018/19](#) (<https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-school-improvement-and-information-landscape>). This means that, for the academic year 2023/24, the Welsh Government will continue to publish 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#160084>) 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://www.qualificationswales.org/>) and the **Joint Centre for Qualifications (JCQ)** (<https://www.jcq.org.uk/>) (see **quality and methodology** (<https://www.gov.wales#160084>) below on coverage).

Examinations and centre assessed grades

The 2021/22 and 2022/23 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 2021/22 were given a wider choice of questions from the syllabus, with Qualifications Wales setting results at a national level broadly midway between 2018/19 (the last time examinations were sat) and 2020/21 outcomes. As we transitioned back to pre-pandemic assessment arrangements, some support remained in place for learners who sat exams in 2022/23. This support was in the form of advance information and a supportive approach to grading. In 2022/23 Qualifications Wales set the results at a national level broadly midway between 2018/19 and 2021/22 outcomes. **In 2023/24 Qualifications Wales have returned to awarding results in line with pre-pandemic results** (<https://qualifications.wales/news-views/the-return-to-pre-pandemic-gcse-as-and-a-level-standards/>), resulting in a slight decrease from the 2022/23 results.

Pupils that were awarded a qualification during the 2019/20 and 2020/21 summer periods were awarded **grades based on a centre determined or centre assessed grade model** (<https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-update-general-qualifications-2021-0>). 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 2018/19, 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 6.8%) represents the number of A* grades awarded in 2018/19 as a percentage of all entries in 2018/19.

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 results for 2023/24

GCSE, Year 11 pupils (Key Stage 4)

- In 2023/24 the average **Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version)** (<https://www.gov.wales#capped-9-indicator-interim-measure-version>) was 352.1 points, lower than 354.4 points in 2018/19 and 358.1 points in 2022/23.
- The average **Skills Challenge Certificate indicator** (<https://www.gov.wales#skills-challenge-certificate-scc-indicator>) was 30.2 points (Figure 1).
- Pupils scored highest in the Literacy indicator. The average Literacy indicator was 38.5 points, the average Numeracy indicator was 35.9 points and the average Science indicator is 36.0 points (Figure 2).

Results by selected pupil characteristics

- Females scored higher in the Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version). However, from 2018/19 to 2023/24 the Capped 9 indicator gap between males and females narrowed from 32.9 to 22.2 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 2023/24 the gap narrowed to 79.6 points from 87.1 points in 2022/23. This is similar to the gap of 77.3 in 2018/19.
- The gap between White British pupils and Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils narrowed in the Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version), with Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils achieving better outcomes than White British pupils. The gap narrowed from 22.7 points in 2022/23 to 19.9 points in 2023/24.
- The ethnic background that scored highest in the Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version) was Chinese or Chinese British pupils at 465.1 points.

A level, pupils aged 17 (Sixth Form)

- In 2023/24 the percentage of A level entries awarded A* to A and A* to C decreased from 2022/23. The largest decrease was at A* to A, with a decrease of 4.3 percentage points. There was no change at A* to E from 2022/23 to 2023/24.

Results by selected pupil characteristics

- The gap between females and males at A* to A in 2023/24 was 0.3 percentage points. Females have had higher results than males at A* to A since 2018/19 with a gap of 3.4 percentage points in 2022/23. Females achieved better outcomes than males at A* to C grades, with females

performing 5.9 percentage points higher than males. The gap at A* to E was negligible in 2023/24 (Figure 10).

- From 2022/23 to 2023/24 the gap between White British pupils and Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils remained the same at A* to A grades, with Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils achieving better outcomes than White British pupils by 4.4 percentage points. The gap at A* to E was negligible (Figure 11).
- Pupils with a Chinese or Chinese British ethnic background scoring highest with over half the qualifications awarded at A* to A (58.1%).

GCSE, Year 11 pupils (Key Stage 4)

<https://www.gov.walesnull> **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#160084) (<https://www.gov.wales#160084>) 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](https://www.gov.wales#definitions) (<https://www.gov.wales#definitions>) for a full breakdown of points by grade.

In 2023/24 the average Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version) was 352.1 points a decrease from 358.1 points in 2022/23. 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.

<https://www.gov.walesnull> **Skills challenge certificate (SCC)** **indicator**

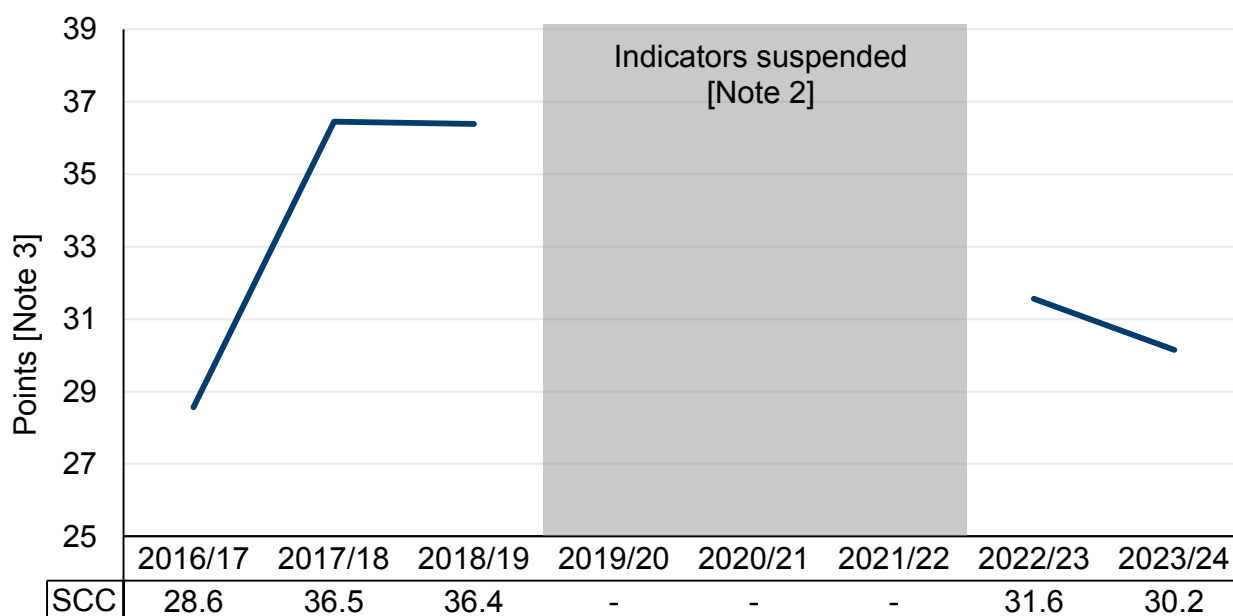
The Skills Challenge Certificate (WJEC Specification) (https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/welsh-baccalaureate-national-foundation/#tab_keydocuments) is a key part of Welsh Baccalaureate, available to learners at Foundation Level 1 or National Level 2. National Level 2 is graded A* to C and is converted 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 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.

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Figure 1: Average Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC) indicator by Year 11 pupils, 2016/17 to 2023/24 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 1: A line graph showing the Skills Challenge Certificate indicator from 2016/17 to 2023/24, excluding 2019/20 to 2021/22 see [Note 2]. From 2016/17 to 2018/19 the indicator increased. Following the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic the SCC indicator is lower but is still higher than the score in 2016/17.

Source: Welsh Examinations Database (WED), 2023/24

Data can be found in Table 1 of the supplementary tables

(<https://www.gov.wales/examination-results-september-2023-august-2024>)

[Note 1]: 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) is counted in our indicators.

[Note 2]: There is no data for school years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22, as

indicators were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

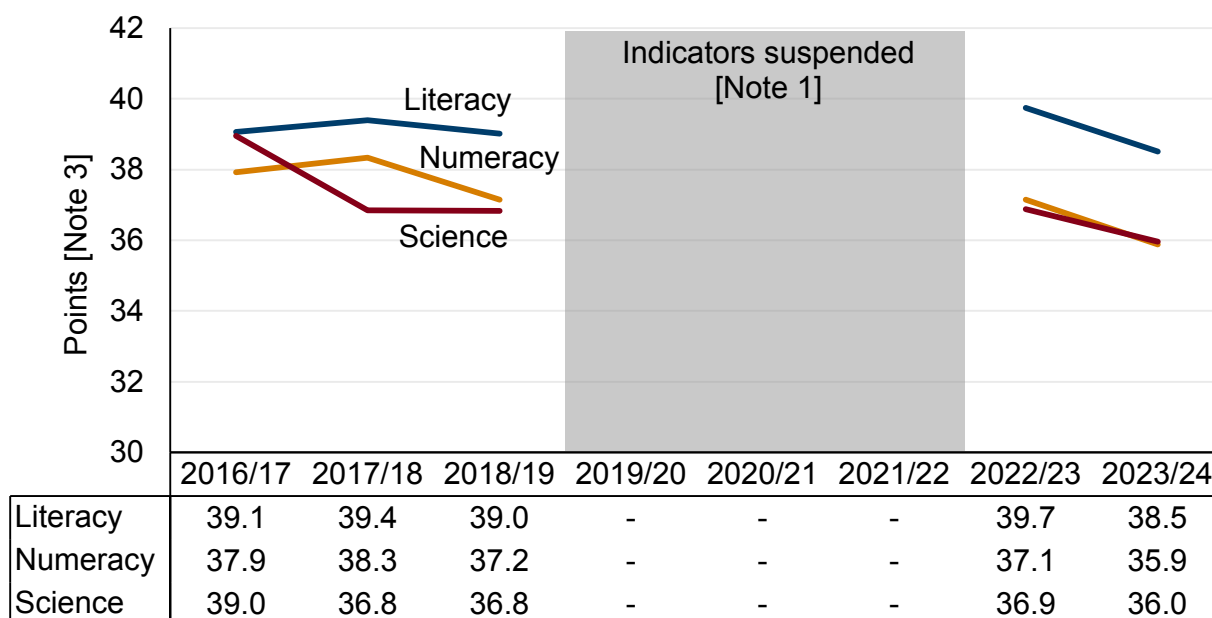
[Note 3]: The points in the Y-axis start at 25, not at 0.

Although SCC points were increasing from 2016/17 to 2018/19, 28.6 to 36.4, in 2022/23 the SCC indicator was lower at 31.6 with a further decrease to 30.2 in 2023/24.

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.

Figure 2: Average subject indicators by Year 11 pupils, 2016/17 to 2023/24



Description of Figure 2: A line graph showing the subject indicators; Literacy, Numeracy and Science from 2016/17 to 2023/24, excluding 2019/20 to 2021/22 [Note 1]. Pupils consistently score better in the Literacy indicator than the other two subject indicators. In the last 2 years, average scores in Numeracy and Science have been very similar.

Source: WED, 2023/24

Data can be found in Table 1 of the supplementary tables

(<https://www.gov.wales/examination-results-september-2023-august-2024>)

[Note 1]: There is no data for school years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22, as indicators were suspended due to the 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) is counted in our

indicators.

[Note 3]: The points in the Y-axis start at 30, not at 0.

The Literacy indicator is the highest overall, followed by Numeracy and then Science, except for 2016/17 and 2023/24 when the science indicator was higher than numeracy. All the indicators are between 35.9 and 39.7 points. From 2022/23 to 2023/24 all three indicators decreased by around one point. The difference between each grade is 6 points so this is equivalent to one sixth of the population attaining one grade lower compared to 2022/23.

Results by pupil characteristics

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

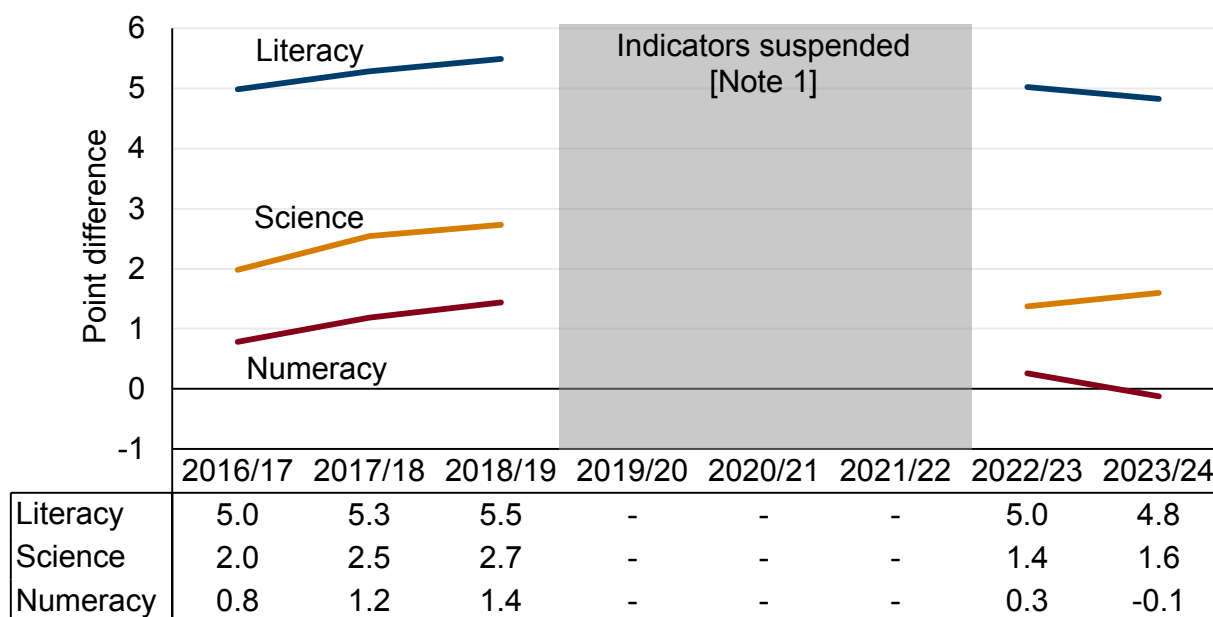
Sex

Capped 9 indicator (interim measure version) gap between the sexes

In 2023/24 females scored 363.6 and males scored 341.4 points on average in the Capped 9 indicator (interim measure version). This means that females score higher than males by 22.2 points. This narrowed from a gap of 32.9 points in 2018/19, and a gap of 24.0 points in 2022/23.

Subject indicator gap between the sexes

Figure 3: Gap between the sexes in subject indicators (female minus male), 2016/17 to 2023/24



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 2023/24, excluding 2019/20 to 2021/22 [Note1]. Historically, females have scored higher than males in all 3 indicators since 2016/17, however in 2023/24 males scored higher in Numeracy than females by 0.1 points. From 2018/19 to 2023/24 in all indicators the gap narrowed.

Source: WED, 2023/24

Data can be found in Table 2a of the supplementary tables

(<https://www.gov.wales/examination-results-september-2023-august-2024>)

[Note 1]: There is no data for school years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22, as indicators were suspended due to the 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) is counted in our indicators.

The widest gap was in Literacy in 2023/24 with a 4.8 point difference and the narrowest was Numeracy where males scored higher than females by 0.1 points. Unlike the Literacy and Numeracy indicator the gap in the Science indicator has slightly widened from 1.4 points in 2022/23 to 1.6 points in 2023/24.

Free School Meals (FSM)

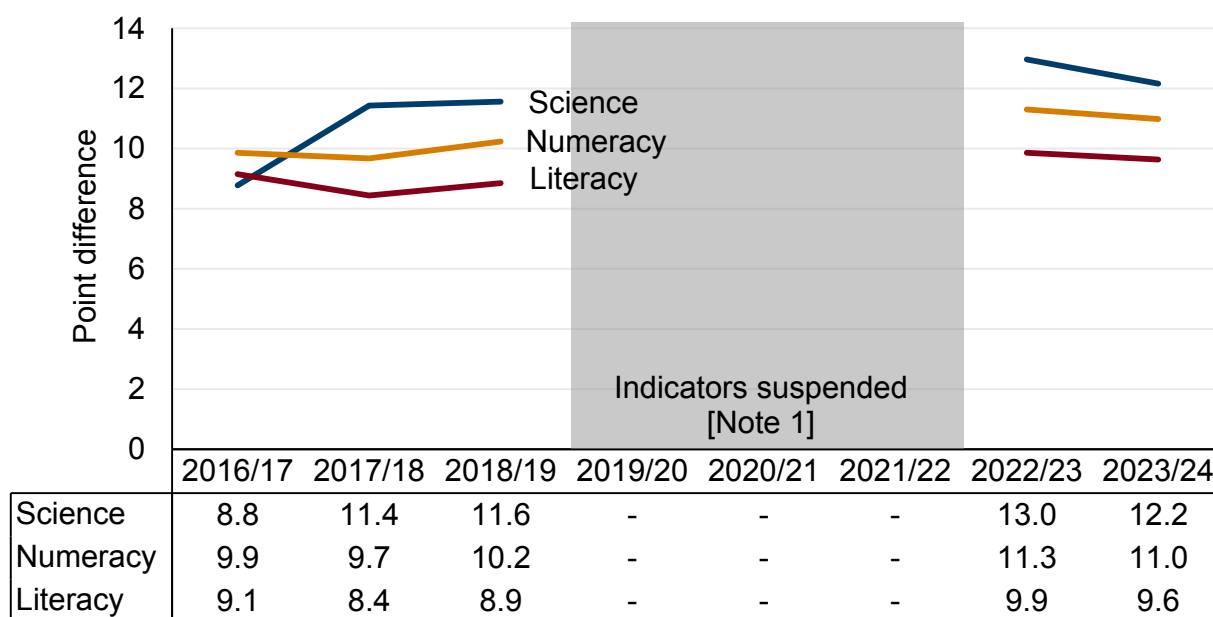
Pupils are **eligible for FSM** (<https://www.gov.wales/free-school-meals-information-local-authorities-and-schools>) if their families are in receipt of certain benefits/support payments or are on universal credit. There have been recent significant changes in FSM provision in Wales as part of the rollout of Universal Free School Meals. For further detail, please read the section in the **quality and methodology information** (<https://www.gov.wales#160084>).

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

In 2023/24 pupils eligible for FSM scored 298.6 points and pupils not eligible for FSM scored 378.2 points on average in the Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version). This means that pupils not eligible score higher than pupils eligible for FSM by 79.6 points. This is a decrease in the gap from 87.1 points in 2022/23.

Subject indicator Free School Meal status gap

Figure 4: FSM gap in subject indicators (not eligible for FSM minus eligible for FSM), 2016/17 to 2023/24



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 2023/24, excluding 2019/20 to 2021/22 [Note 1]. 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 2023/24 the gap widened in all three indicators.

Source: WED, 2023/24

Data can be found in Table 2b of the supplementary tables

(<https://www.gov.wales/examination-results-september-2023-august-2024>)

[Note 1]: There is no data for school years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22, as

indicators were suspended due to the 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) is counted in our indicators.

In 2023/24 the smallest gap was in Literacy at 9.6 points while the widest was in Science at 12.2 points. From 2022/23 to 2023/24 the gaps narrowed in all three indicators.

Ethnicity

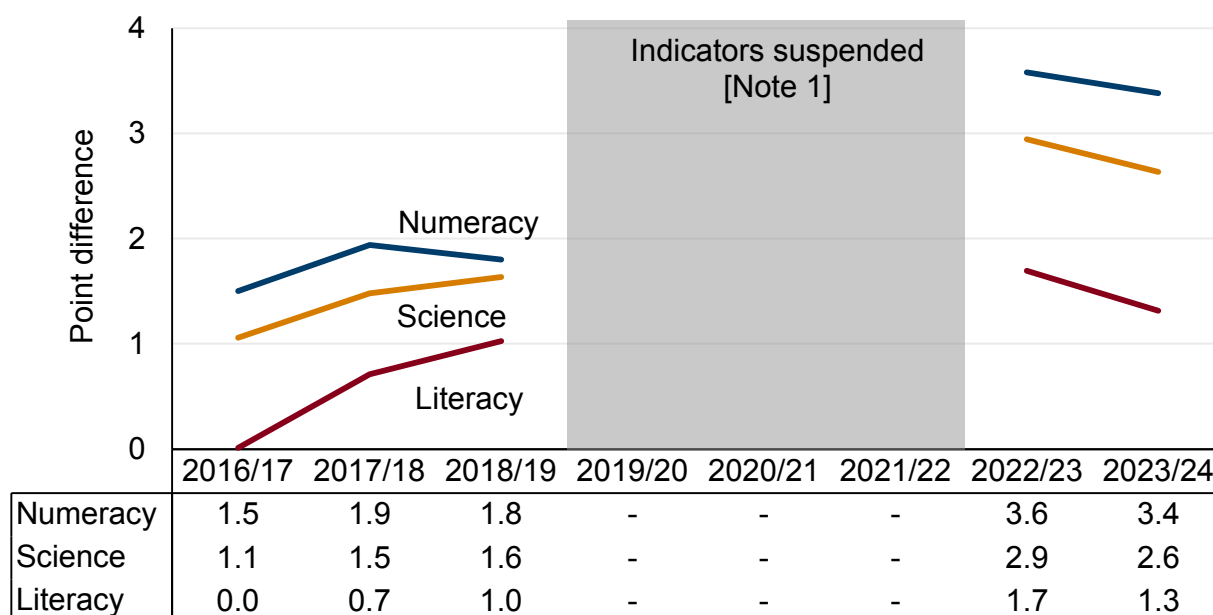
In the context of this publication the category "White" used below, refers to White British pupils only. All other pupils which have a recorded ethnicity are included under the Black, Asian and minority ethnic group. This category therefore also includes non-British White pupils. Pupils that have not 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-2023-august-2024) (https://www.gov.wales/examination-results-september-2023-august-2024) and in Figure 5 below.

Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version) ethnicity gap

In 2023/24 Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils scored 380.6 points and White British pupils scored 360.7 points on average in the Capped 9 indicator. This means that overall Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils score higher than White British pupils by 19.9 points. This is a narrowing of the gap from 22.7 points in 2022/23.

Subject indicator ethnicity gap

Figure 5: Ethnicity gap in subject indicators (Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils minus White pupils), 2016/17 to 2023/24



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 2023/24, excluding 2019/20 to 2021/22 [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, however in 2023/24 the gap narrowed slightly across all 3 subjects.

Source: WED, 2023/24

Data can be found in Table 2c of the supplementary tables

(<https://www.gov.wales/examination-results-september-2023-august-2024>)

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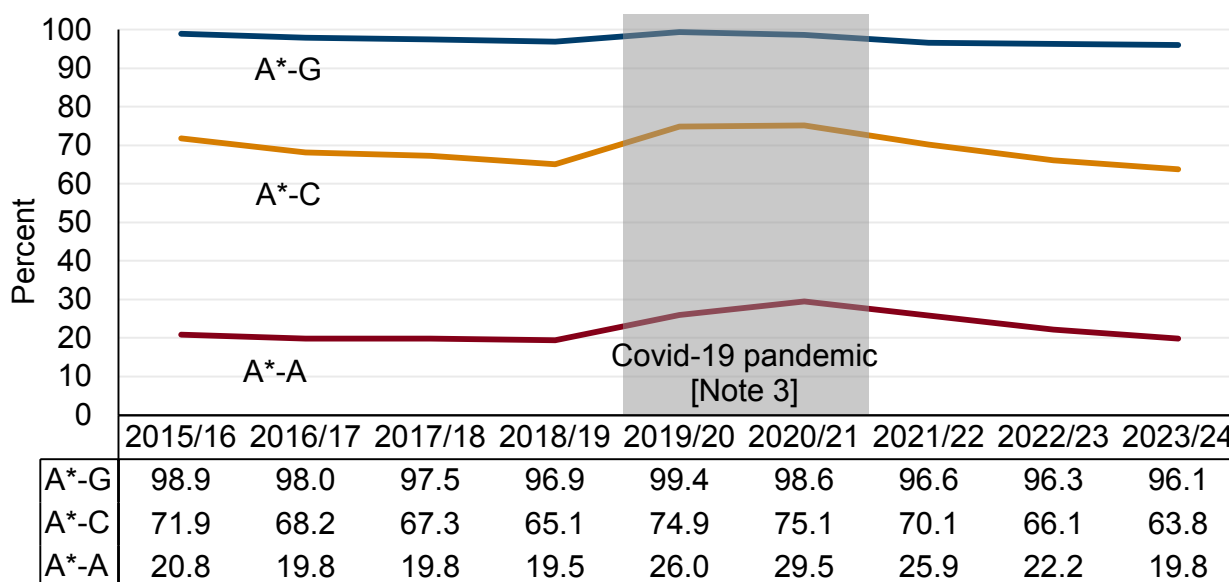
[Note 1]: There is no data for school years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22, as indicators were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[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) is counted in our indicators.

In 2023/24 the widest gap was 3.4 points for Numeracy and the narrowest gap was 1.3 points for Literacy. From 2018/19 to 2022/23 the gaps for all three subjects were growing year on year at a similar rate, however these gaps have narrowed in 2023/24.

Overall GCSE grade distribution

Figure 6: Percentage of GCSE entries by grade range in all subjects, 2015/16 to 2023/24 [Note 1] [Note 2]



Description of Figure 6: A line chart showing GCSE grade ranges A* to A, A* to

C and A* to G attained by Year 11 pupils between 2015/16 and 2023/24. For the years 2015/16 to 2018/19 the percentage GCSEs awarded across all grade ranges decreased. During the years 2019/20 and 2020/21, GCSEs were awarded based on Centre Assessed Grades and Centre Determined Grades [Note 3]. In 2021/22, 2022/2023 and 2023/24 the percentage of GCSEs awarded A* to A and A* to C grade ranges were lower than the percentage awarded during the COVID-19 pandemic, returning to the pre-pandemic levels in 2023/24.

Source: WED, 2023/24

Data can be found in Table 4a of the supplementary tables

(<https://www.gov.wales/examination-results-september-2023-august-2024>)

[Note 1]: 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 midway between 2018/19 and 2021/22. In 2023/24 Qualifications Wales have returned to awarding results in line with pre-pandemic results, resulting in a slight decrease from the 2022/23 results.

[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) is counted in our indicators.

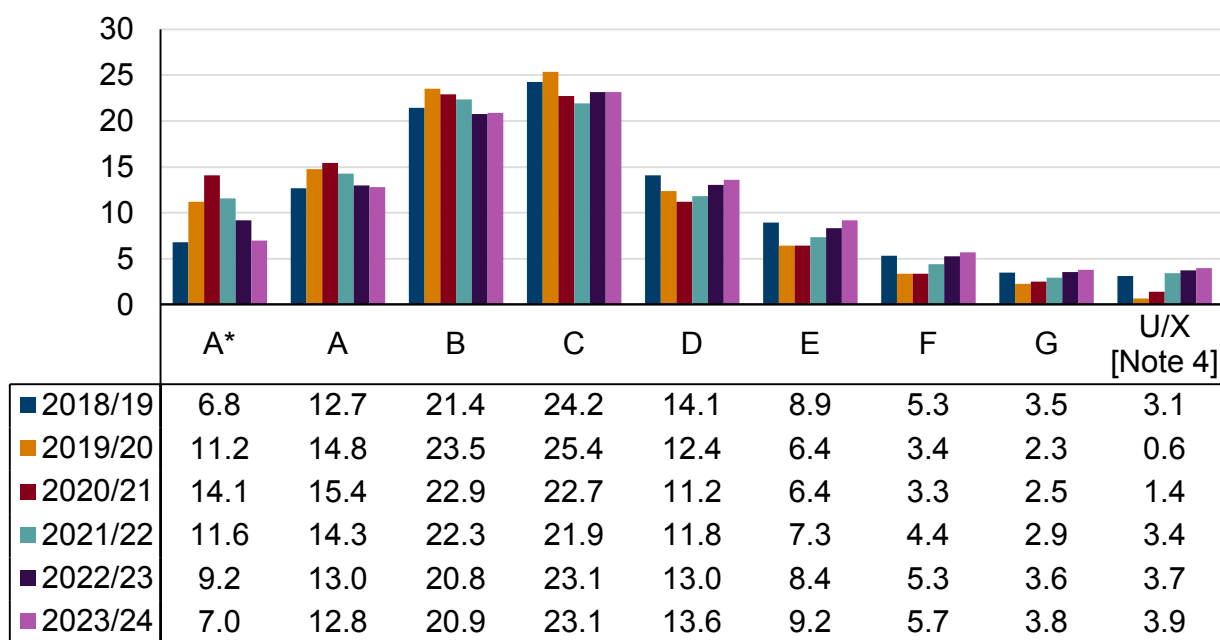
[Note 3]: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, **public examinations were suspended in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and pupils were awarded grades based on a centre determined or centre assessed grade model**

(<https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-update-general-qualifications-2021-0>).

Since 2015/16, between 96.1% and 99.4% of pupils have been awarded A* to G grades. The percentage of pupils being awarded A* to C grades was higher during the years of the COVID-19 pandemic increasing from 65.1% in 2018/19 (pre-pandemic) to 75.1% in 2020/21 (when Centre Determined Grades were

awarded). In 2023/24 this figure dropped to 63.8%, in line with pre-pandemic levels. The percentage of pupils being awarded A* to A grades was higher during the pandemic, increasing from 19.5 in 2018/19 to 29.5% in 2020/21. In 2023/24 this was lower at 19.8, close to the percent awarded these grades before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 7: Percentage of GCSE entries by individual grade in all subjects, 2018/19 and 2023/24



Description of Figure 7: A bar chart showing the percent of GCSE entries awarded at each grade between 2018/19 and 2023/24. During the years 2019/20 and 2020/21 GCSEs were awarded based on Centre Assessed Grades and Centre Determined Grades [Note 1]. The largest change in the distribution of grades occurred in 2019/20 and 2020/21 where there was a larger percentage of higher grades awarded. 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: WED, 2023/24

Data can be found in Table 4a of the supplementary tables

(<https://www.gov.wales/examination-results-september-2023-august-2024>)

[Note 1]: Due to the 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 midway between 2018/19 and 2021/22. In 2023/24 Qualifications Wales have returned to awarding results in line with pre-pandemic results, resulting in a slight decrease from the 2022/23 results.

[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) is counted in our indicators.

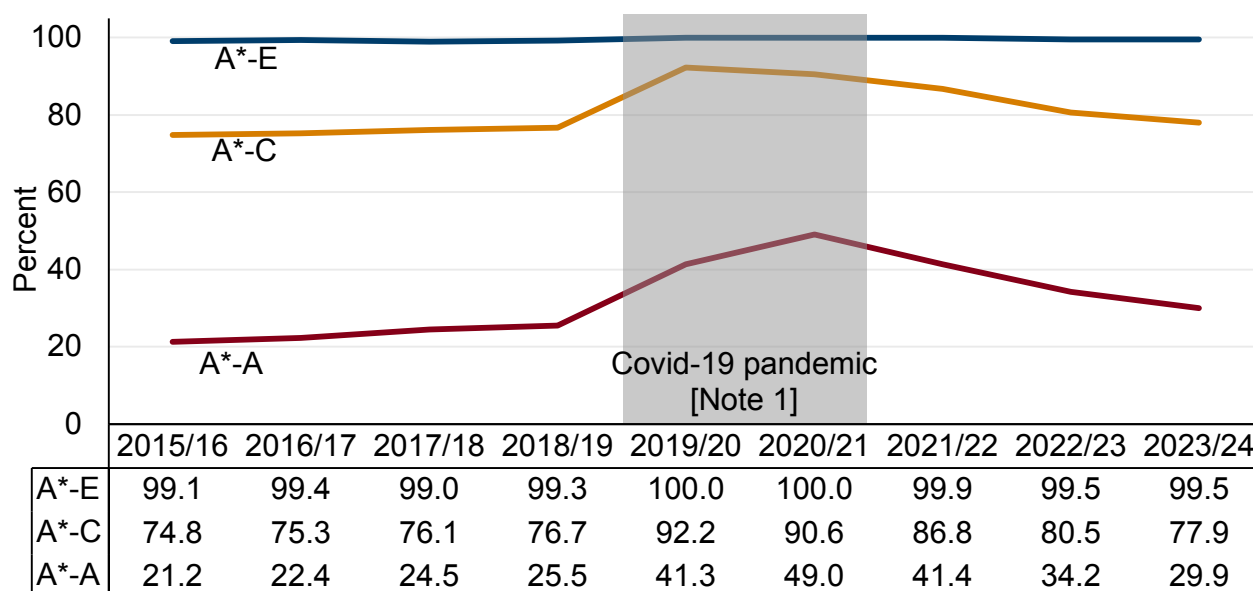
[Note 4]: U/X are entries that are ungraded.

In 2023/24 the distribution of grades has returned to a similar level seen before the pandemic. The percentage of GCSE entries awarded grades A* and A was lower compared to previous years, the largest difference is at A*. Correspondingly the percentage of GCSE entries awarded grades D, E, F and G in 2023/24 was higher. The change in percentage of entries awarded B and C was negligible. From 2018/19 to 2023/24 the number of grades awarded A* was higher by 0.2 percentage points.

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 2023/24



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 [Note 1]. In 2022/23 and 2023/24 the percentage of A levels awarded A* to A and A* to C grade ranges was lower than the percentage awarded during the COVID-19 pandemic but remain higher than the percentage awarded in 2018/19 (pre-pandemic).

Source: WED, 2023/24

Data can be found in Table 7 of the supplementary tables

(<https://www.gov.wales/examination-results-september-2023-august-2024>)

[Note 1]: Due to the 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. In 2023/24 Qualifications Wales have returned to awarding results in line with pre-pandemic results, resulting in a slight decrease from the 2022/23 results.

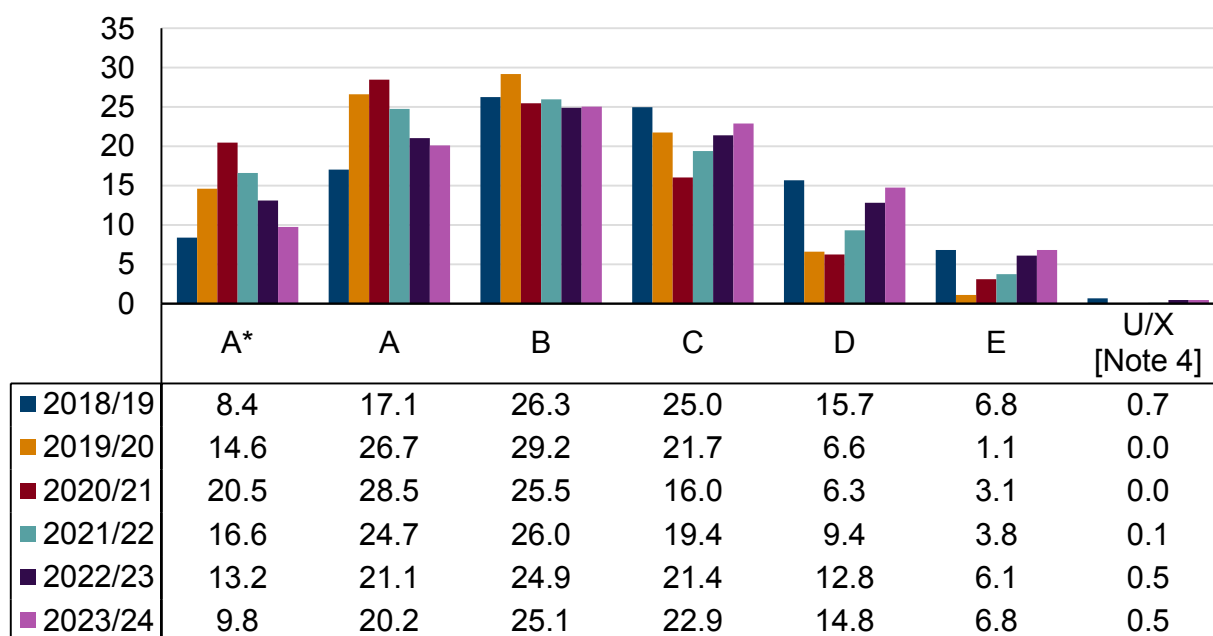
Since 2015/16, between 99% and 100% of pupils have been awarded A* to E grades. The percentage of pupils being awarded A* to C grades was higher during the years of the COVID-19 pandemic increasing from 76.7% in 2018/19 (pre-pandemic) to 92.2% in 2019/20 (when Centre Assessed Grades were awarded). In 2023/24, this figure dropped to 77.9%. The percentage of pupils being awarded A* to A grades was higher during the pandemic, increasing from 25.5% in 2018/19 to 49.0% in 2020/21. For 2023/24, the percentage of A level entries 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 2023/24



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 [Note 1]. The largest change in the distribution of grades occurred in 2019/20 and 2020/21. In 2023/24 the percent of A level entries awarded grades A* and A was lower compared to the last 4 years, the largest reduction is at A* (to 9.8 percentage points). Correspondingly there was a higher percentage of A level entries awarded grades C, D and E in 2023/24.

Source: WED, 2023/24

Data can be found in Table 7 of the supplementary tables

(<https://www.gov.wales/examination-results-september-2023-august-2024>)

[Note 1]: Due to the 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 midway between 2018/19 and 2021/22. In 2023/24 Qualifications Wales have returned to awarding results in line with pre-pandemic results, resulting in a slight decrease from the 2022/23 results.

[Note 4]: U/X are entries that are ungraded.

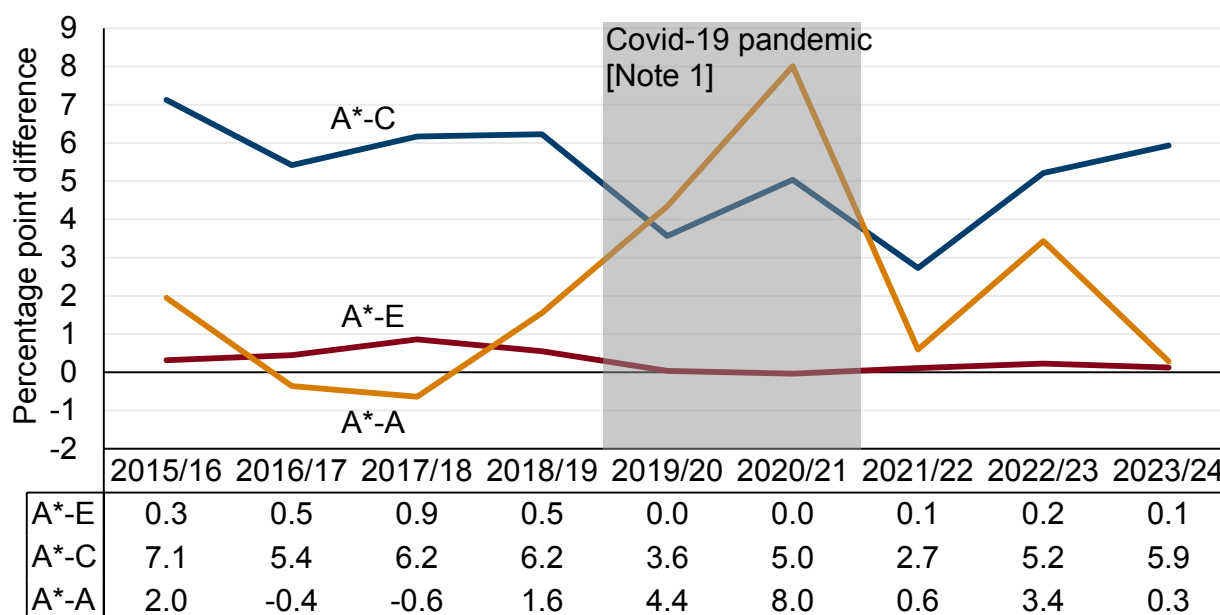
Results by pupil characteristics

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.

Sex

Figure 10: Gap between the sexes in achievement in all A level subjects for pupils aged 17, by grade range, 2016/17 to 2023/24 (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 2023/24. 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 and A* to A grades in 2023/24, at 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 2023/24.

Source: WED, 2023/24

Data can be found in Table 8a of the supplementary tables

(<https://www.gov.wales/examination-results-september-2023-august-2024>)

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[Note 1]: Due to the 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.

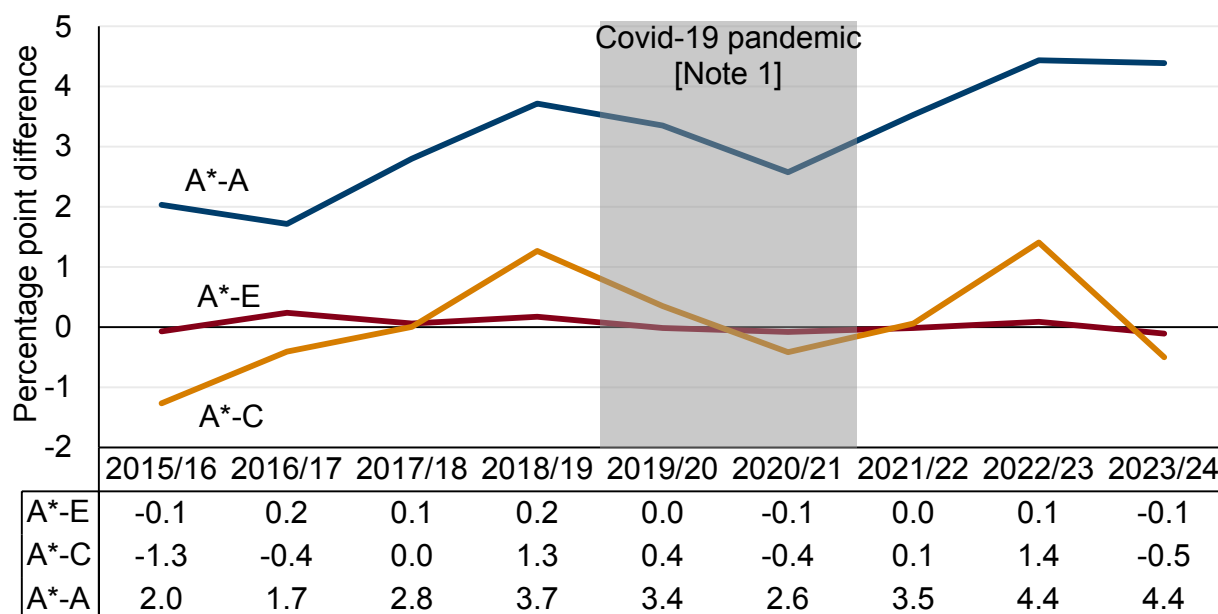
[Note 2]: The 2021/22 and 2022/23 examination periods were transitional years. In 2021/22 Qualifications Wales set the results at a national level broadly midway between 2018/19 and 2020/21 outcomes. In 2022/23 the national level was set at midway between 2018/19 and 2021/22.

From 2018/19 to 2020/21, the gap at A* to A grades considerably widened to 8.0 percentage points, however, there is a small gap in 2023/24 of 0.3 percentage points. The gap between females and males awarded grades A* to C at A level between 2015/16 and 2023/24 fluctuates and has slightly widened, from 5.4 percentage points in 2016/17 to 5.9 percentage points in 2023/24.

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.

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, 2015/16 to 2023/24 (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 2023/24. 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 [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 2023/24 period, while at A* to A grades the gap has consistently been high.

Source: WED, 2023/24

Data can be found in Table 8b of the supplementary tables

(<https://www.gov.wales/examination-results-september-2023-august-2024>)

[Note 1]: Due to the 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 midway between 2018/19 and 2021/22. In 2023/24 Qualifications Wales have returned to awarding results in line with pre-pandemic results, resulting in a slight decrease from the 2022/23 results.

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 2023/24. The gap between Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils and White pupils awarded grades A* to C between 2015/16 and 2023/24 has fluctuated, changing from -1.3 percentage points in 2015/16 to 1.4 percentage points in 2022/23, then reducing to -0.5 percentage points in 2023/24, similar to the gap in 2016/17.

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. In 2023/24 Qualifications Wales have returned to awarding

results in line with pre-pandemic results, resulting in a slight decrease from 2022/23 results.

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>).

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 and verified by schools on 19 November 2024. They may differ from results published earlier by either Qualifications Wales or the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). This statistical release focuses on pupils in year 11 in maintained schools in Wales and includes the results of successful appeals up to 26 September 2024. 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

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also been published in August 2024 by the 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).

In October 2024 Qualifications Wales published an equalities analysis of the 2023/24 GCSE and A level results (<https://www.qualifications.wales/publications-resources/equalities-analysis-of-general-qualifications-in-summer-2024/>).

This includes analysis by gender, FSM and SEN / ALN. The GCSE analysis will differ from that presented here as it will 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 26 September 2024.

<https://www.gov.walesnull> **Definitions**

Middle schools

Ages 3/4 to 16/18.

Secondary schools

Ages 11 to 16/18.

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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.

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>).

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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
- 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).

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

Transitional protection for free school meals

On 1 April 2019 the Welsh Government introduced a new **transitional protection for free school meals policy** (<https://www.gov.wales/free-school-meals-information-parents-and-carers>). This was brought in to ensure that pupils have their FSM 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 FSM 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.

Additional learning needs (ALN) and special educational needs (SEN)

A person has ALN/SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability (whether the learning difficulty or disability arises from a medical condition or otherwise) which calls for additional learning provision or special educational provision. Learners with ALN will have their needs identified in individual development plans (IDPs) which are statutory plans created under the ALN Act. Learners with SEN may have School Action, School Action Plus or a Statement, which will cease in August 2025 when the implementation of the ALN system is complete.

Changes to special educational needs data following the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

The **Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 (the ALN Code) and regulations** (<https://www.gov.wales/the-additional-learning-needs-code-and-regulations>) came into force on 1 September 2021 to ensure children and young people aged 0 to 25 can access the provision to meet their needs.

Implementation of the ALN system is ongoing, with children moving from the SEN system to the ALN system until August 2025. Learners with ALN will have their needs identified in IDPs maintained by either a school or a local authority.

Analysis of the data, along with feedback from local authorities suggest that the fall in ALN/SEN learners over the last three years is due to a systematic review by schools of their ALN/SEN identification and data, both in readiness for and during implementation of the ALN system. Learners supported through School Action and School Action Plus (those requiring the least amount of special educational provision) may no longer be identified as ALN/SEN in Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC). This is either because their needs are short

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term, do not require provision additional to, or different from, that which is provided for other learners, that can be addressed as part of holistic provision.

Additionally, schools were asked to stop using the 'General learning difficulties' category and to reassess an appropriate category of need for such pupils. This category had become a catch-all for those requiring catch up support, with minor needs and/or where multiple needs existed, instead of its original intent, which was to capture learners awaiting assessment. This has also led to some pupils no longer being identified as ALN/SEN in PLASC. The 'General learning difficulties' category was removed from the 2023 and 2024 schools' censuses.

Welsh Government will continue to monitor the numbers throughout implementation of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act and work with our partners to ensure the data presents an accurate reflection of the numbers and categories of learners with ALN in Wales.

Official statistics status

All official statistics should show the standards of the **Code of Practice for Statistics (UK Statistics Authority)** (<https://code.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>).

These are accredited official statistics. They were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in March 2019. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

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

Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

Statement of compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

All of our statistics are produced and published in accordance with a number of statements and protocols to enhance trustworthiness, quality and value. These are set out in the Welsh Government's **Statement of Compliance** (<https://www.gov.wales/about-statistics-and-research#Statementofcompliance>).

These **accredited official statistics (OSR)** (<https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/policies/official-statistics-policies/accredited-official-statistics-policy/>) demonstrate the standards expected around trustworthiness, quality and public value in the following ways.

Trustworthiness

The data in this release relates to the examination results of pupils in Year 11 (GCSE) or aged 17 (A level) in maintained middle, secondary, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), special schools and pupils Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS). The data is provided by awarding bodies following the summer exam period when the bulk of examinations take place.

We work closely with local authorities and schools to ensure all data is validated and signed off before tables are published in the final release.

All personal data underlying these statistics are processed in accordance with

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the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

These statistics are pre-announced on the **Statistics and Research area of the Welsh Government website** (<https://www.gov.wales/statistics-and-research/upcoming>). Access to the data during processing is restricted to those involved in the production of the statistics, quality assurance and for operational purposes. Pre-release access is restricted to eligible recipients in line with the **Code of Practice (UK Statistics Authority)** (<https://code.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/the-code/trustworthiness/t3-orderly-release/>).

Quality

The published figures provided are compiled by professional analysts using the latest available data and applying methods using their professional judgement and analytical skillset. Statistics published by Welsh Government adhere to the Statistical Quality Management Strategy which supplements the Quality pillar of the **Code of Practice for Statistics (UK Statistics Authority)** (<https://code.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>) and the European Statistical System principles of quality for statistical outputs.

The data in this release relates to the pupils in Year 11 or aged 17 in the 2023/24 academic school year and includes qualifications attained by pupils in previous years. For example, if a pupil completes a GCSE in Year 10 in 2022/23 it will be included in the pupils records for the 2023/24 academic year when the pupil is in Year 11.

Between the GCSE and A level results days in August and early October our external contractor will collect and match individual examination results from around 20 awarding bodies. This will include GCSE, A level and vocational qualifications (e.g. BTECs). The data is provided to the Welsh Government through a secure online data transfer system developed by the Welsh Government which includes various stages of automated validation and sense-

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checking to ensure a high quality of data.

The data is published as provisional in early October at which point the data is provided to local authorities and schools. This is the start of a 3 week validation period where schools and LAs will check the data against their own records and claim any missing qualifications or re-marked qualifications following appeals.

Once all updates to the data have been agreed in writing with schools, we will provide a second set of data for final verification by schools and LAs before the final data is published in early December. In previous years the change between provisional and final data at a national level in the key outcome measures was less than 0.1 percentage point. This year, due to an issue identified with the Welsh Baccalaureate Skill Challenge Certificate grades, the SCC indicator reduced by 5.0% from the provisional release. The capped 9 indicator increased by 0.3% following the identification of awards from the awarding body LIBF that were not included in the provisional data. All other key outcome measures were within 0.1% of the provisional value.

All stages in the collection, validation and production of these statistics are led by statisticians from the Government Statistical Group.

Value

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

- advice to ministers
- to inform the education policy decision-making process 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

This release is accompanied by an Open Document Spreadsheet which can be

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shared and reused widely and which complies with the **Government Analysis Function guidance on Releasing statistics in spreadsheets**

(<https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/releasing-statistics-in-spreadsheets/>). It is also accompanied by **detailed tables on StatsWales**

(<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Pupil-Level-Annual-School-Census>), a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data.

Data are clearly presented in each table, with the spreadsheet also including a cover sheet listing each table. The commentary and notes in the release have been developed to try to make the information as accessible as possible to the widest range of users. Furthermore, all our school statistics outputs are published in Welsh and English.

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

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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 well-being in their areas.

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.

Contact details

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