



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS, DOCUMENT

Academic achievement of pupils at Key Stage 3: September 2023 to August 2024

A report looking at pupil achievements at Key Stage 3, including information by sex, free school meals and level of achievement for 2024.

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Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Results for all pupils](#)

[Results for males and females](#)

[Results by free school meal \(FSM\) eligibility](#)

[Further information](#)

[Quality and methodology information](#)

[Contact details](#)

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Introduction

Key Stage 3 teacher assessment results relate to 14 year olds. A **new curriculum** for Wales began being rolled out in schools and settings in September 2022. As a result, Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 teacher assessment results are no longer collected and this is the final publication of Key Stage 3 results.

All data in this report is collected by the Welsh Government from schools in an electronic return called the National Data Collection (NDC). The data was not collected in 2020 and 2021 due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Results for all pupils

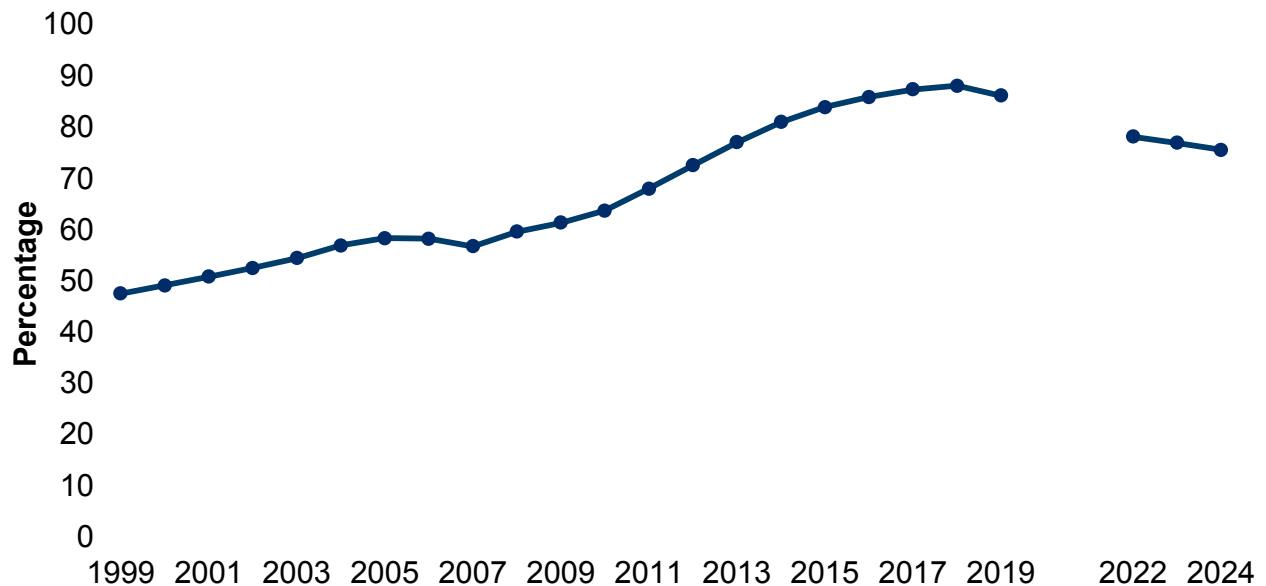
The Core Subject Indicator (CSI) at Key Stage 3 represents the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 5 or above), based on teacher assessments, in English or Welsh (first language), Mathematics and Science in combination at the end of Key Stage 3.

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Figure 1: Percentage of pupils achieving the Key Stage 3 CSI, 1999 to 2024



Description of Figure 1: A line chart showing the percentage of pupils achieving the CSI at Key Stage 3 increased in every year from 2007 to 2018 but has fallen since then.

Percentage of pupils achieving the Key Stage 3 CSI (StatsWales)

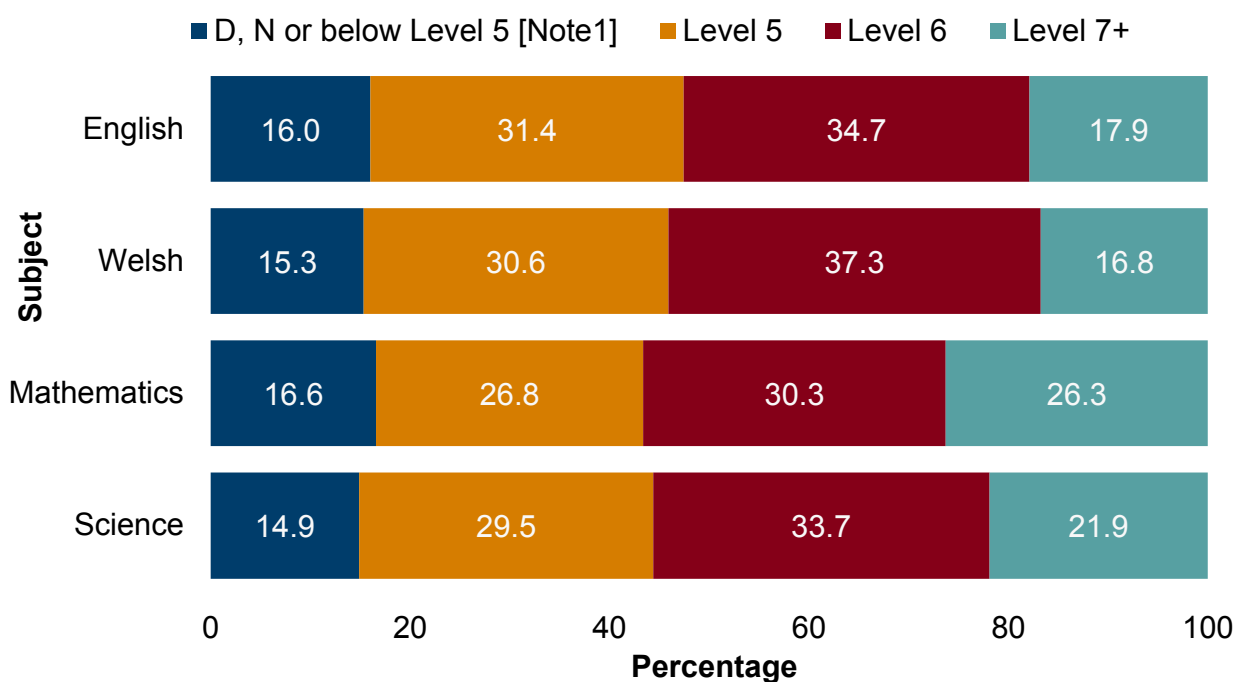
- 75.6% of pupils achieved the CSI at Key Stage 3 in 2024, down from 77.0% in 2023 and 86.2% in 2019.
- The fall between 2019 and 2022 may be partly due to the disruption to schools caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

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Figure 2: Percentage of pupils achieving Key Stage 3 levels in core subjects, 2024



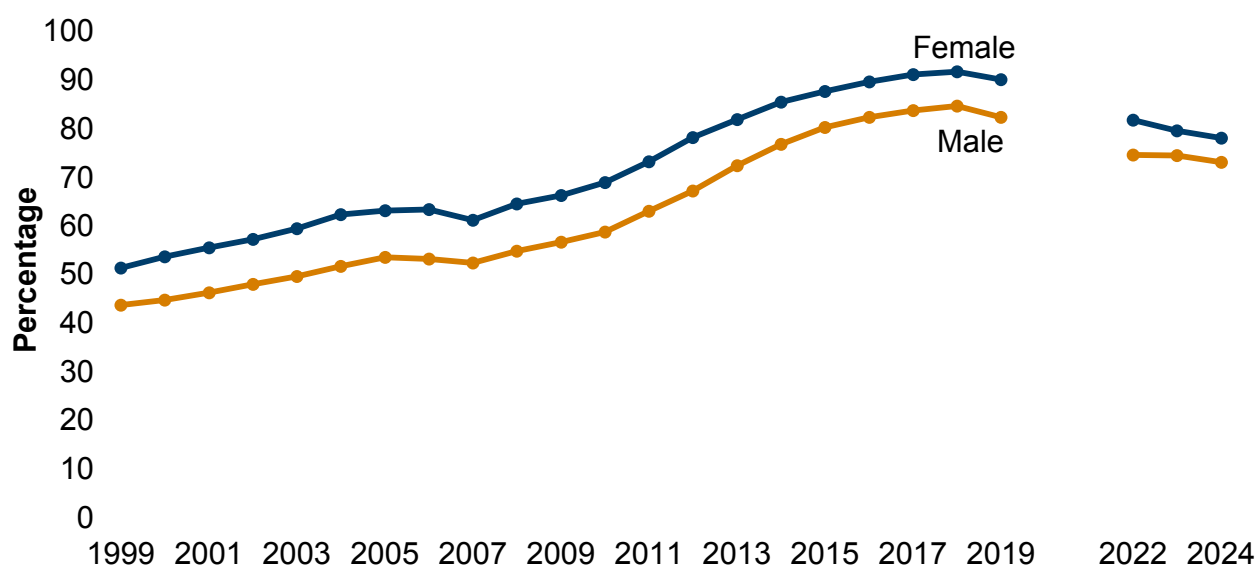
Description of Figure 2: A stacked bar chart showing that more than 80% of pupils achieved at least the expected level of Level 5 or above in each core subject in 2024. More than half of pupils achieved Level 6 or above in each subject.

Percentage of pupils achieving Key Stage 3 levels in core subjects (StatsWales)

[Note 1] D (Disapplied) represents pupils who were exempt from all or part of the National Curriculum under sections 113 - 116 of the 2002 Education Act, or pupils for whom teachers were unable to provide an assessment. N represents pupils not awarded a level for reasons other than disapplication.

Results for males and females

Figure 3: Percentage of males and females achieving the Key Stage 3 CSI, 1999 to 2024



Description of figure 3: A line chart showing that the percentage of females achieving the CSI at Key Stage 3 has been higher than males in every year since 1999, but the gap has been smaller since 2015 than in previous years.

Percentage of pupils achieving the Key Stage 3 CSI, by sex (StatsWales)

78.1% of females and 73.1% of males achieved the CSI at Key Stage 3 in 2024, a gap of 5.0 percentage points. This is the smallest gap since data collection began in 1999.

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Table 1: Percentage of males and females achieving the Key Stage 3 expected level in core subjects, 2024

Subject	Female	Male
English	87.8	80.3
Welsh	88.7	80.5
Mathematics	83.7	83.2
Science	86.6	83.7
Core Subject Indicator	78.1	73.1
Reading, Writing and Mathematics	79.1	72.5
Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science	76.9	70.1

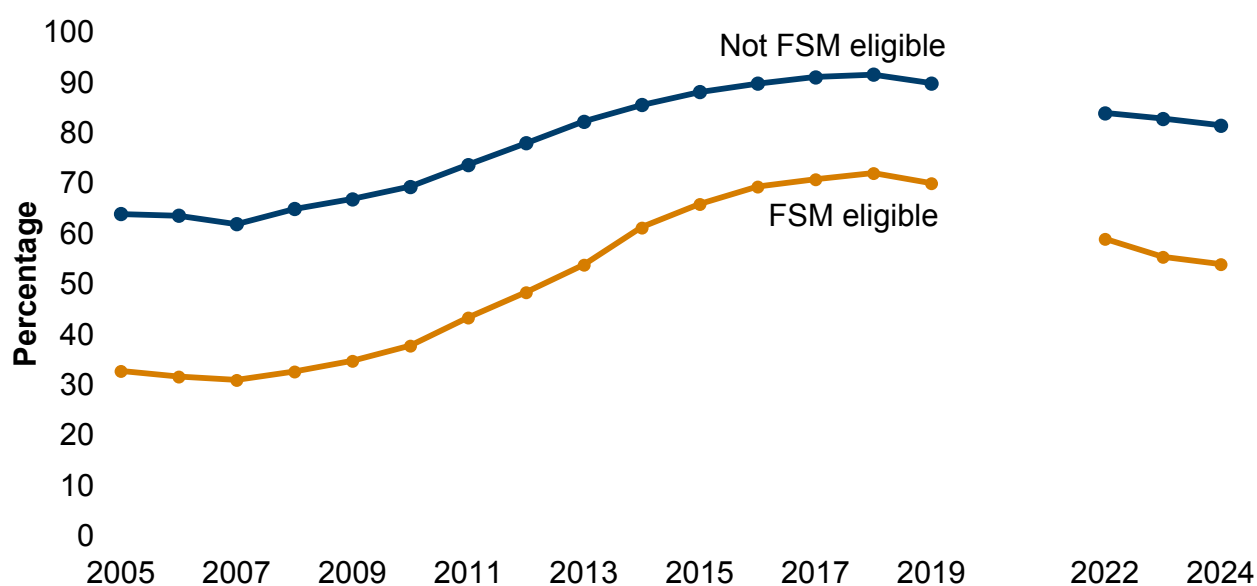
The table shows that a higher percentage of females than males achieved the Key Stage 3 expected level in all core subjects in 2024.

- The gap between females and males in the percentage achieving at least the expected level was largest in Welsh (8.2 percentage points) and smallest in Mathematics (0.5 percentage points).
- The gap between females and males in the percentage of pupils achieving at least the expected level in Reading and Writing (English or Welsh) and Mathematics and in Reading and Writing (English or Welsh), Mathematics and Science was 6.6 and 6.8 percentage points respectively in 2024.

Results by free school meal (FSM) eligibility

For pupils of this age, they are **eligible for FSM** if their parents or guardians are in receipt of certain means-tested benefits or support payments. The number of pupils eligible for FSM through the means-tested criteria may have been over recorded in 2020 to 2022, which may have a small impact on comparisons between 2022 and other years. It is not possible to revise this 2022 data. Please see our **Chief Statistician's update** on this.

Figure 4: Percentage of pupils achieving the Key Stage 3 CSI, by FSM eligibility, 2005 to 2024



Description of Figure 4: A line chart showing that the gap in the percentage of pupils not eligible for FSM and pupils who were eligible for FSM achieving the CSI at Key Stage 3 was lowest between 2016 and 2019 and has widened since the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

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Percentage of pupils achieving the Key Stage 3 CSI, by FSM eligibility (StatsWales)

81.5% of pupils not eligible for FSM and 54.0% of pupils eligible for FSM achieved the CSI at Key Stage 3 in 2024, a gap of 27.5 percentage points.

This is higher than the gap of around 20 percentage points seen in the 4 years before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The gap decreased each year between 2008 and 2018.

Table 2: Percentage of pupils achieving the Key Stage 3 expected level in core subjects, by FSM eligibility, 2024

Subject	Not FSM eligible	FSM eligible
English	88.3	68.6
Welsh	87.1	65.3
Mathematics	88.0	66.5
Science	89.5	69.3
Core Subject Indicator	81.5	54.0

The table shows that the gap between pupils not eligible for FSM and pupils eligible for FSM in the percentage achieving at least the expected level was largest in Welsh (21.8 percentage points) and smallest in English (19.7 percentage points).

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Further information

Key Stage 3 results for core subjects by pupil characteristics can be found on StatsWales. In general:

- pupils from a Chinese or Chinese British ethnic background had higher results than pupils from other ethnic backgrounds
- pupils studying English as an Additional Language had higher results where they were classified as 'competent' or 'fluent'
- pupils with lower levels of additional learning or special educational needs had higher results
- pupils born earlier in the academic year had higher results than pupils born later in the year
- pupils with higher attendance rates had higher results

This is consistent with analysis from previous years.

Key Stage 3 results for non-core subjects can also be found on **StatsWales**. The non-core subjects are Art and design, Design and technology, Geography, History, Information and communication technology, Modern foreign languages, Music, Physical education and Welsh second language.

Quality and methodology information

Official statistics status

All official statistics should show the standards of the **Code of Practice for Statistics**.

These are accredited official statistics. They were independently reviewed by the

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Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) in July 2010. 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 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](#).

These [accredited official statistics \(OSR\)](#) demonstrate the standards expected around trustworthiness, quality and public value in the following ways.

Trustworthiness

The data in this release relates to maintained schools and pupil referral units in

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Wales which contain pupils with end of Key Stage 3 results. Data is not collected from special schools. The data is derived from an electronic return called the National Data Collection (NDC). The returns are authorised by headteachers and validated by local authorities.

Following a [written statement by the Minister for Education in July 2018](#) and a [consultation](#) which ended in January 2018, teacher assessment data is no longer published at a school, local authority and consortia level. This is a significant move away from gathering information about young people's performance on a school by school basis for accountability purposes.

The percentage of pupils achieving at least the expected level fell in 2019 in all core subjects/areas of learning at the end of Foundation Phase and for both Key Stages. This could be a reflection of these changes, whereby the prime purpose of teacher assessments has started to shift back to individual learners and away from holding schools to account.

The data collection and validation is carried out between May and June. The data is normally published in August.

These statistics are published in an accessible, orderly, pre-announced manner on the Welsh Government website at 9:30am on the day of publication.

This output adheres to the Code of Practice by pre-announcing the date of publication through the [upcoming calendar](#) web pages.

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

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the [Code of Practice for Statistics \(UK Statistical Authority\)](#) and the European Statistical System principles of quality for statistical outputs.

NDC is an electronic collection of pupil level data. Schools record data on pupils and the school throughout the year in their Management Information System (MIS) software. This data is collated into an electronic NDC return and submitted to the Welsh Government through DEWI, a secure online data transfer system developed by the Welsh Government. Various stages of automated validation and sense-checking are built into the process to ensure a high quality of data.

More information on the Key Stage 3 levels can be found in the [National Data Collection technical completion notes](#) and [2008 curriculum guidance](#).

DEWi was available for uploading files on 14 May 2024, with schools asked to submit data for every pupil on roll at the school on 14 May with end of Key Stage 3 results. Schools and LAs were then asked to validate their data within the validation period, which closed on 28 June 2024.

Value

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

- general background and research
- inclusions in reports and briefings
- advice to Ministers
- to inform the education policy decision-making process in Wales including school reorganisation
- the education domain of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation
- to assist in research in educational attainment

[More detailed tables are available on StatsWales](#), a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data.

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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.

Comparability

Data for Wales is not comparable with other UK countries.

[England education statistics \(Department for Education\)](#)

[Scotland education statistics \(Scottish Government\)](#)

[Northern Ireland education statistics \(Department of Education, Northern Ireland\)](#)

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 Well-being 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

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on 16 March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

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 wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

Contact details

Statistician: Steve Hughes
Email: school.stats@gov.wales

Media: 0300 025 8099

SFR 76/2024



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