



Examination results in schools in Wales, 2018/19 - Revised

23 January 2020
SFR 119/2019(R)

Revisions to 2018/19 Exam results in schools in Wales

Statistics for 2018/19 were first published on 4 December 2019. Following publication, issues were identified with the calculation of the Capped 9 point score (interim measure version), the KS4 subject performance measures and the percentage of pupils age 17 entering at least 2 A levels or equivalent achieving 3 A*-A and 3 A*-C grades. Revised numbers are marked with an (r) or (rr). See [Notes](#) (page 14) for further information.

Performance measures for Year 11

New performance measures have been introduced for 2018/19. These measures are now based on point scores and converts each grade achieved into a point score (see Definitions). The measures are:

Capped 9 points score (interim measure version, see below)

Literacy measure: the best qualification a pupil has achieved in (first Language Welsh or English) Language or Literature GCSE

Numeracy measure: the best qualification from Mathematics or Mathematics - Numeracy GCSEs.

Science measure: takes the best single qualification in a Science GCSE (where a double GCSE is taken the higher grade will be counted).

Skills Challenge Certificate: part of the Welsh Baccalaureate that can be taken at Foundation or National Level

For further information regarding the introduction of these new measures please see the [Interim Key Stage 4 School Performance Arrangements: Measures and Analyses Guidance](#).

Multiple entry changes for Year 11

Prior to 2018/19, the best result for each Year 11 pupil in each subject was used for performance measures. From 2018/19, the first entry in each subject is used instead, regardless of whether any resits have resulted in a higher grade. This will affect comparability of the data with previous years. Please see page 8 which gives an indication of the impact of this change.

About this release

This Statistical Release provides an analysis of external examinations taken by pupils in Year 11 (KS4; aged 15) or pupils in 6th form (aged 17 at the start of the academic year) in schools in Wales in 2018/19 and previous years. For more data and detailed analysis, see the [supplementary tables](#).

In this release

Year 11 pupils (KS4)

Headline indicators	2
Local Authorities	6
Subject performance	7
Free School Meals	8

Pupils aged 17 (6th form)

Headline indicators	9
Local Authorities	10
Subject performance	11

Annex

Definitions	12
Notes	14

Capped 9 points score (interim measure version)

The Capped 9 measure has been changed since last year by reducing the number of subject specific requirements. The measure still includes the best nine GCSEs or equivalent volume of qualifications, but now only three of the nine slots cover specific GCSE subjects, down from five in previous years. These specific subjects are English or Welsh First Language or Literature, Mathematics or Numeracy and a Science.

The Capped 9 points score is one of the Well-being of Future Generations (WFG) Headline Indicators. Due to these changes to the Capped 9 points score (interim measure version) comparisons to previous Capped 9 scores should be avoided. A breakdown of this Capped 9 score (interim measure version) and an explanation of the method used to calculate this measure is available in this [guidance document](#).

The Pupils aged 17 (6th form) headline performance measures have not changed from last year.

1. Key results for 2018/19

Year 11 (Key Stage 4)

- The average Literacy point score is 39.0, the average Numeracy point score is 37.2 (rr) and the average Science point score is 36.8.
- The average Skills Challenge Certificate point score is 36.4.
- The average Capped 9 points score (interim measure version) is 354.4 (rr).
- Girls outperformed boys in each of these five indicators, and pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals had a lower average score than those who were not eligible.
- 53.8 per cent of pupils achieved 5 GCSEs (or equivalent) at grade A*-C including English/Welsh and Maths (Level 2 inclusive threshold).

Pupils aged 17 at the start of the school year (6th form)

9,148 (89.4 per cent of) pupils aged 17 entered a volume of qualifications equivalent to 2 A levels. Of those:

- 97.9 per cent achieved 2 A*-E grades at A level (Level 3 threshold).
- 58.4 per cent achieved 3 A*-C grades at A level.
- 13.2 (r) per cent achieved 3 A*-A grades at A level.

2. Year 11 pupils (Key Stage 4)

Comparisons with previous years

New performance measures have been introduced for 2018/19. Some of these indicators are provided from 2016/17 onwards, but comparisons between these indicators and similar indicators from previous publications should not be made.

Changes have been made to performance measures and qualifications across the last few years, which can have a further impact on comparability. The average Capped 9 points score (interim

(rr) Figures have been revised (22/01/20)

measure version) is defined differently to the capped 9 points score from previous years and is not comparable. A new Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC) was introduced in 2016/17, so comparisons for the SCC measure should only be made this far back. Similarly, from 2017/18 only GCSE Science qualifications count towards the measures and comparisons for earlier years should be avoided. The Literacy and Numeracy measures can be compared over a longer time period.

From 2018/19, only the results of the first awarding of a complete qualification (including vocational qualifications) will count towards performance measures. This change encourages schools to enter learners when schools are confident they are ready to gain their best possible result. It does not prevent a learner resitting should a school or learner wish to attempt to improve their results, but the resit result would not count towards KS4 performance measures, even if the outcome is higher.

The table below shows the effect of this change on this year's results.

<u>Measure</u>	<u>Points score with first entry</u>	<u>Points score with best entry</u>	<u>Difference (points score)</u>
Literacy	39.0	39.1(rr)	-0.1(rr)
Numeracy	37.2 (rr)	37.5(rr)	-0.3
Science	36.8	36.8	0.0
Skills Challenge Certificate	36.4	36.4	0.0

It is not possible to quantify the impact of the changes in policy on pupil and school choices around curriculum options and entry. Therefore, comparisons with previous years should be avoided.

Capped 9 points score (interim measure version)

The original Capped 9 point score 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 measure version) introduced in 2018/19 must include GCSEs in English or Welsh First Language or Literature, Mathematics or Numeracy, and Science.



As a guide, an 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. The average Capped 9 points score (interim measure version) this year is just below the equivalent of 9 C grades (360 points). See Definitions for a full breakdown of points by grade.

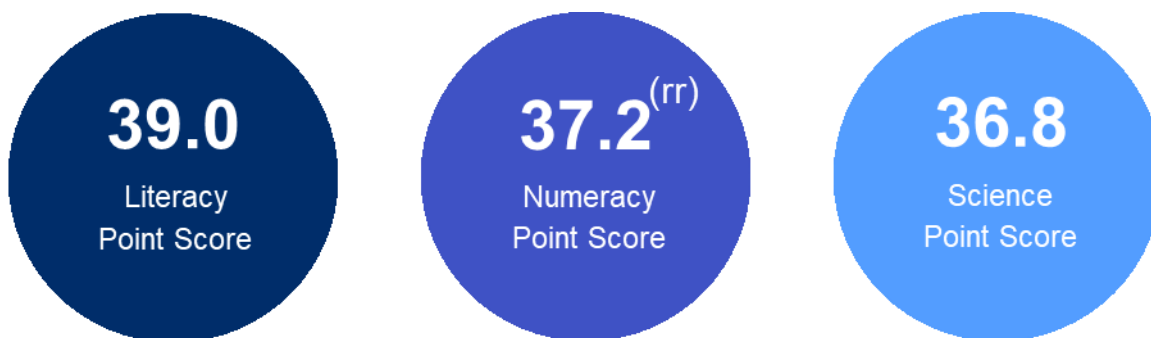
Skills challenge certificate measure

The Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC) is a key part of Welsh Baccalaureate, available to learners at Foundation Level 1 or National Level 2. National Level 2 is graded A-C and is converted into the same point scores as the subject measures, with an A as 52 and C as 40. The Foundation Level 1 is graded as Pass* and Pass, converted into a point score of 31 and 22. This means caution should be taken when comparing this measure to the three subject performance measures.



(rr) Figures have been revised (22/01/20)

Subject performance measures (average point scores)



Pupils achieved a higher point score in Literacy and Numeracy than they did in Science.

The headline measures show the average score of all included pupils across Wales. For the Literacy, Numeracy and Science measures, 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. Each of the three measures would be roughly equivalent to just below a C grade (40 points). 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. This does not mean most pupils achieved a D grade in the relevant subject.

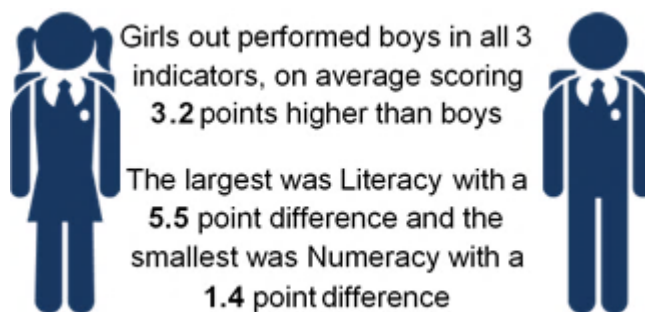
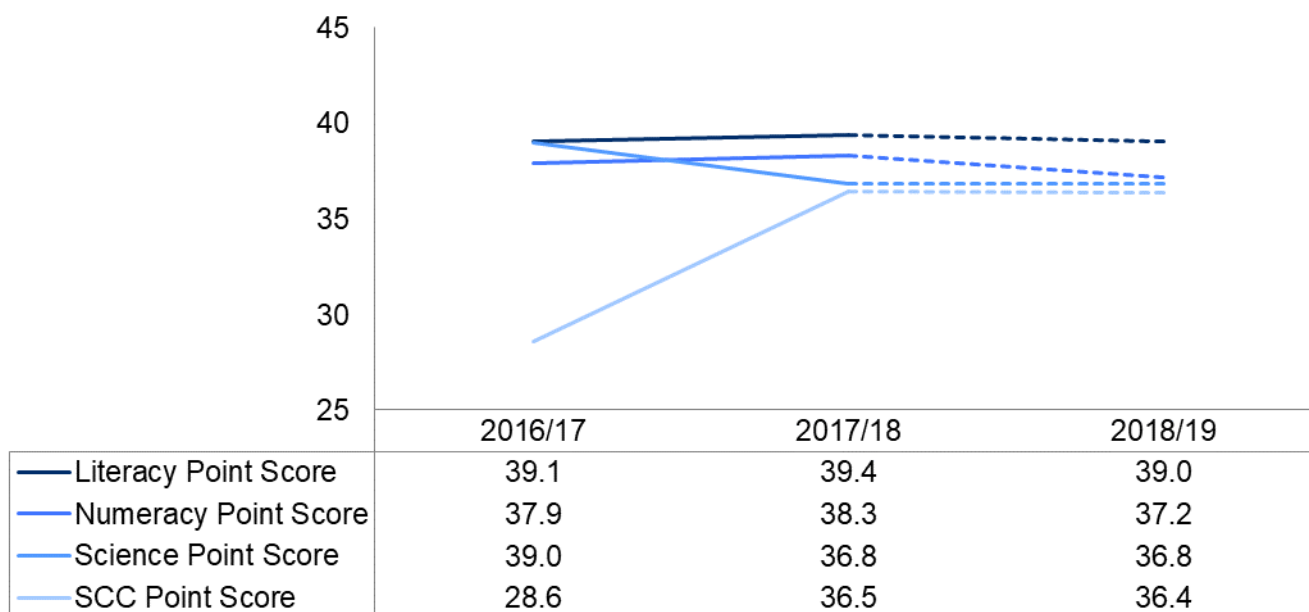


Chart 1: Average subject specific point scores by pupils in Year 11 (rr)



The dotted lines indicate a change from the best entry being counted to the first entry being counted. Data before and after this point should not be compared.

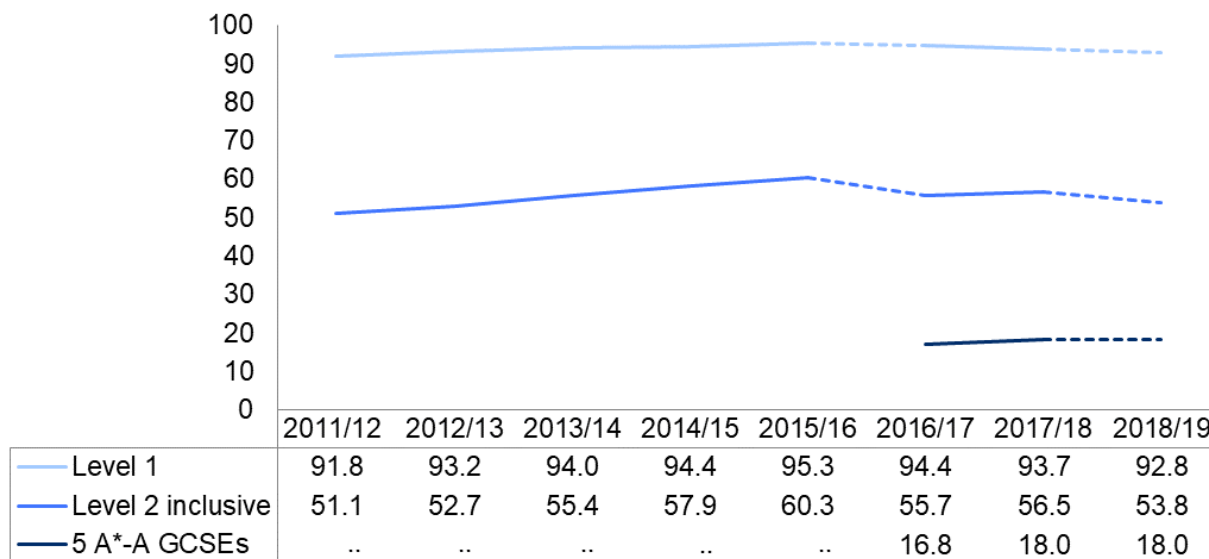
In 2018/19 pupils in Year 11 performed best in the Literacy Point Score, achieving 39.0 on average. The subject score pupils scored the worst in the Science Point Score at 36.8 points.

(rr) Figures have been revised (22/01/20)

Other indicators

Making comparisons to performance prior to 2016/17 is difficult due to significant changes in how the indicators are calculated. See the definitions (page 7) for more information

Chart 2: Percentage of Year 11 pupils achieving different thresholds



The dotted lines indicate a change in definition. Data before and after these points should not be compared.



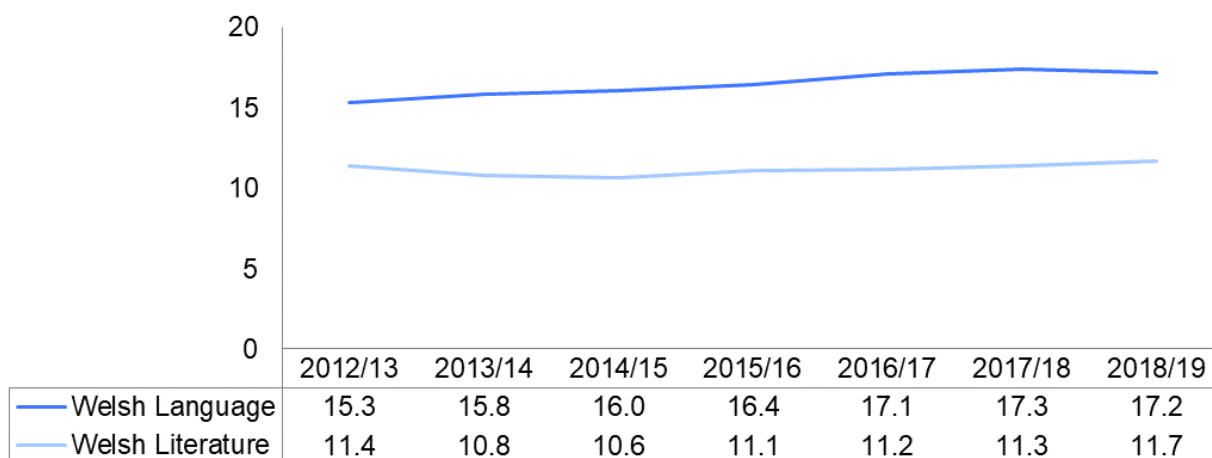
59.0% of girls achieved 5 GCSEs at grade A*-C (including Maths & English/Welsh) compared to 48.9% of boys



The percentage of pupils achieving the level 2 inclusive threshold (5 GCSEs at grade A*-C including Maths & English/Welsh, see Notes for further details) was 53.8 per cent. Girls continued to perform better than boys at KS4; the Level 2 inclusive gender gap was 10.1 percentage points, which widened from 9.5 percentage points in 2017/18.

Welsh language

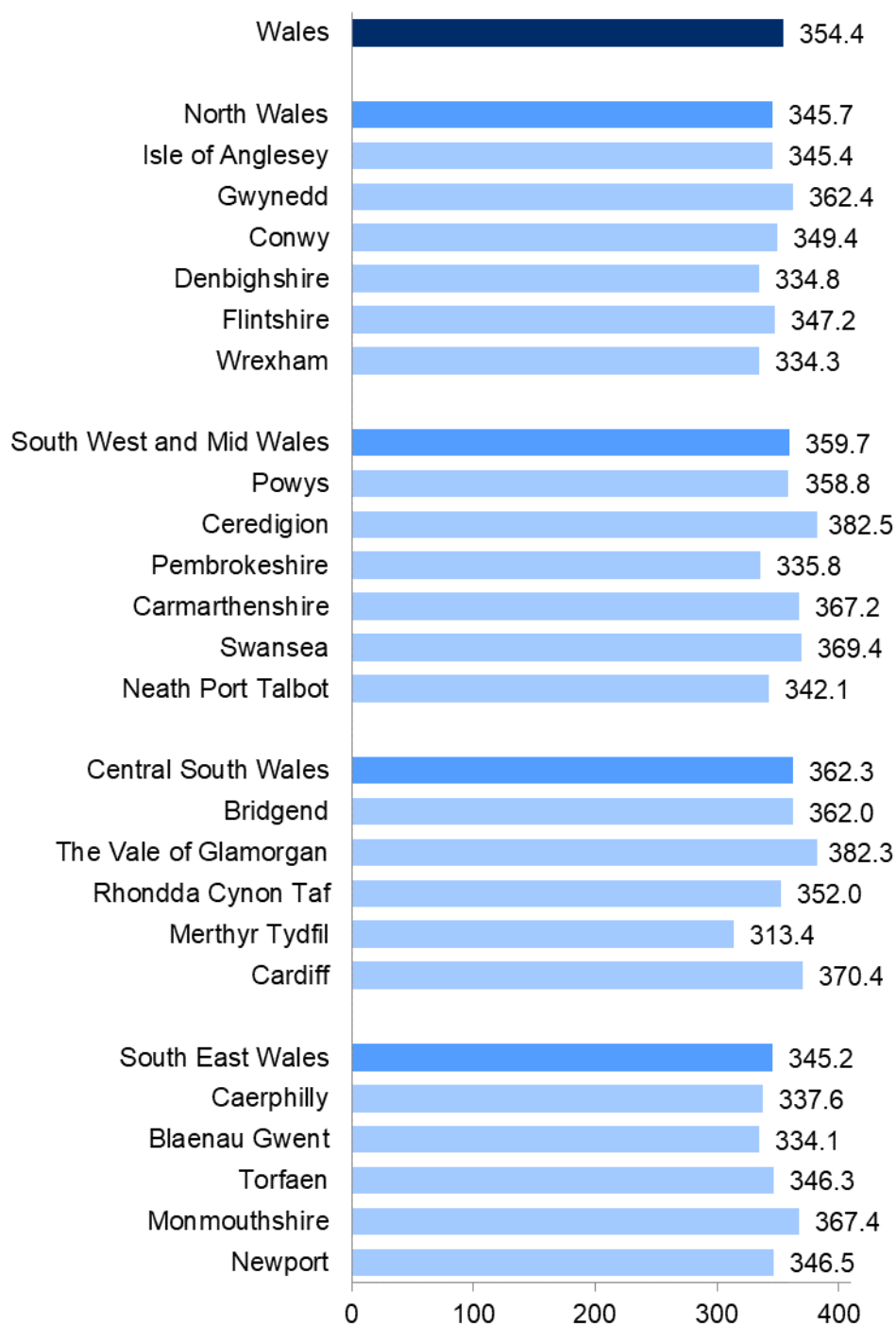
Chart 3: Percentage of Year 11 pupils entering into GCSE Welsh First Language or Literature



The percentage of Year 11 pupils entering into Welsh First Language increased from 15.3 per cent in 2012/13 to 17.3 per cent in 2017/18, and decreased slightly to 17.2 per cent in 2018/19. Welsh Literature entries have increased year on year since 2013/14, rising to 11.7 per cent in 2018/19.

Local authorities

Chart 4: Average Capped 9 points score (interim measure version) by region and Local Authority, 2018/19 (r) (rr)



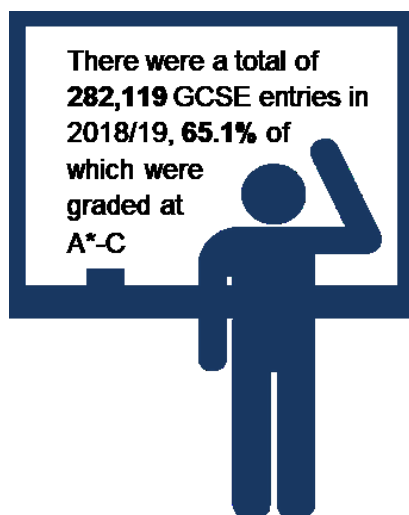
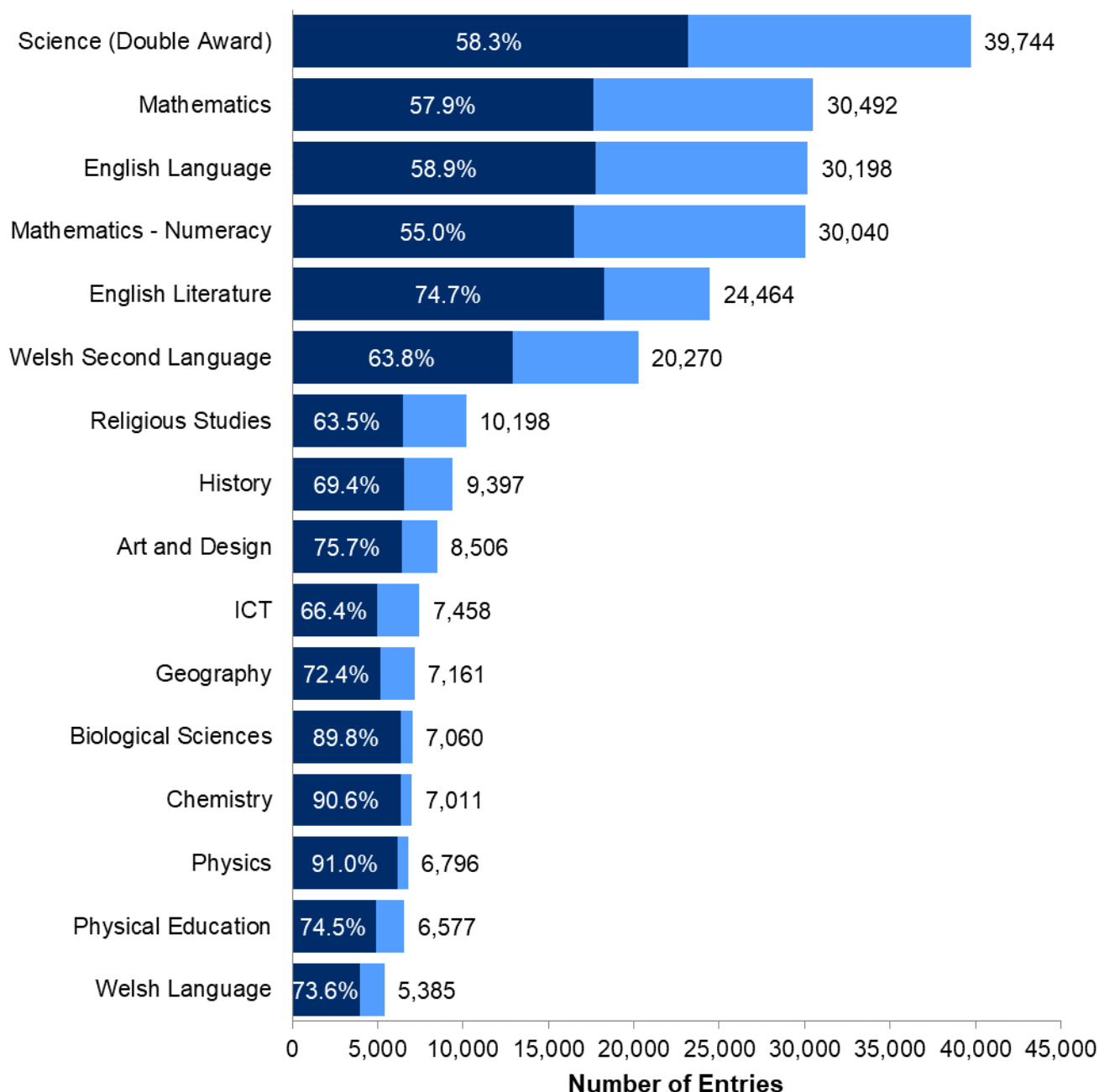
In 2018/19, Central South Wales was the region with the highest average Capped 9 points score (interim measure version) with 362.3(r) points, whilst South East Wales was the lowest with 345.2(r) points.

The Local Authority achieving the highest average Capped 9 points score (interim measure version) was Ceredigion at 382.5(r). The lowest scoring Local Authority was Merthyr Tydfil with 313.4 points.

(r) Figures have been revised (19/12/19)

(r) Figures have been revised (17/12/20)

Chart 5: Top GCSE subject entries and corresponding percentage of A*-C grades, 2018/19



The greatest numbers of GCSE entries are in Mathematics, English and Science subjects (note that double awards are counted as two individual GCSE entries).

The most popular GCSEs after these are Welsh Second Language and Religious Studies with 20,270 and 10,198 entries respectively.

In 2018/19, between 89.8 and 91.0 per cent of GCSEs in Chemistry, Physics and Biological Sciences were graded at A*-C.

Full data on all individual subjects are available in the [supplementary tables](#).

Free School Meals (FSM)

Pupils are [eligible for free school meals](#) if their families are in receipt of certain benefits/support payments or are on universal credit. Chart 5 illustrates the magnitude of the gap between those eligible for FSM and those who are not.

Chart 6a: Subject specific average point scores by FSM status, 2018/19 [eligible for FSM](#) and [not eligible for FSM](#) (rr)

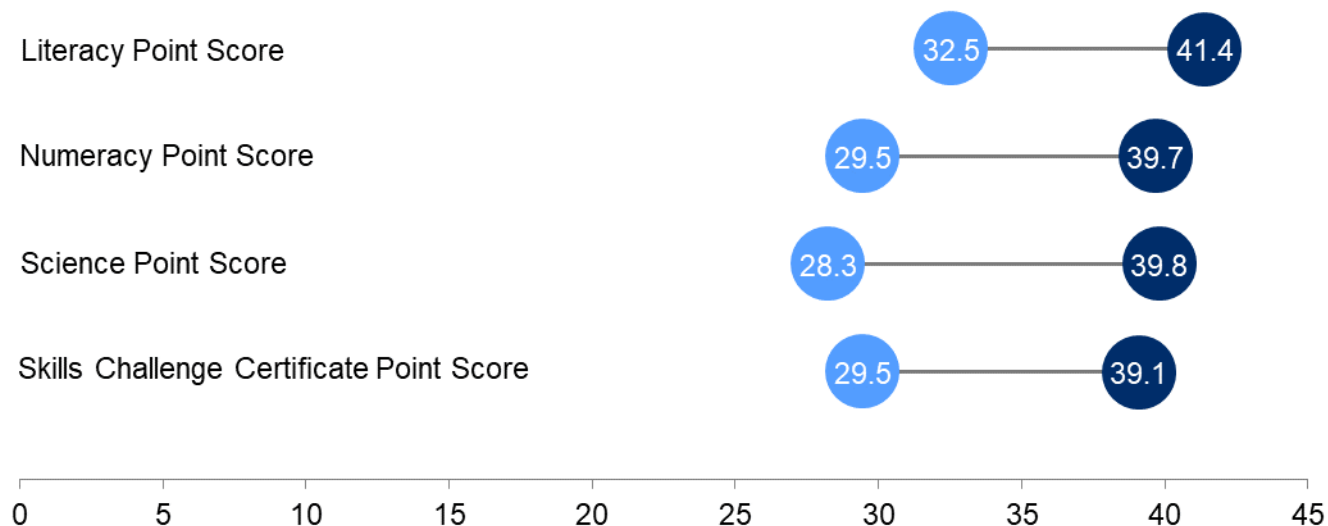
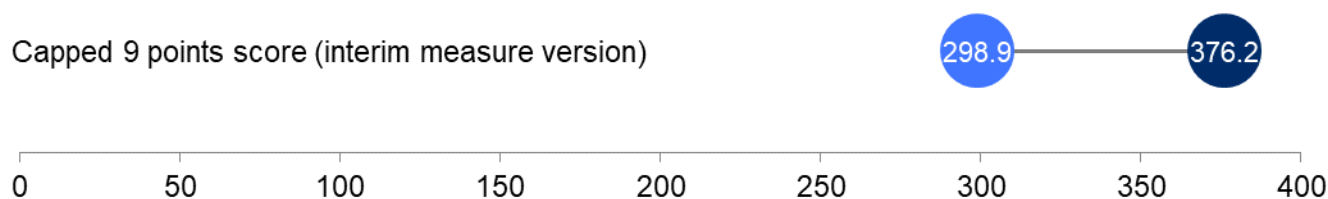


Chart 6b: Capped 9 points score (interim measure version) by FSM status, 2018/19 [eligible for FSM](#) and [not eligible for FSM](#) (rr)



Pupils who are not eligible for FSM consistently achieve higher results than their FSM-eligible counterparts. The gap between pupils eligible for FSM and those who are not was widest in Science and narrowest in Literacy.

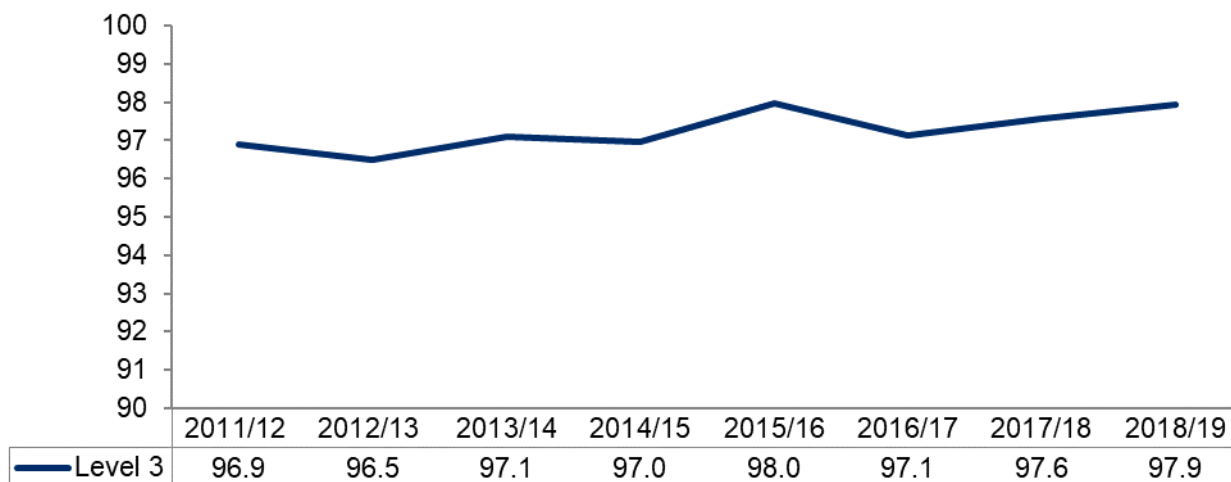
For more detailed information on performance measures for pupils who are eligible for FSM, please see the [supplementary tables](#).

28.4% of pupils eligible for FSM achieved 5 GCSEs at grade A*-C (including Maths and English/Welsh) compared to **60.5%** of those who were not eligible

3. Pupils aged 17 at the start of the school year in schools (6th form)

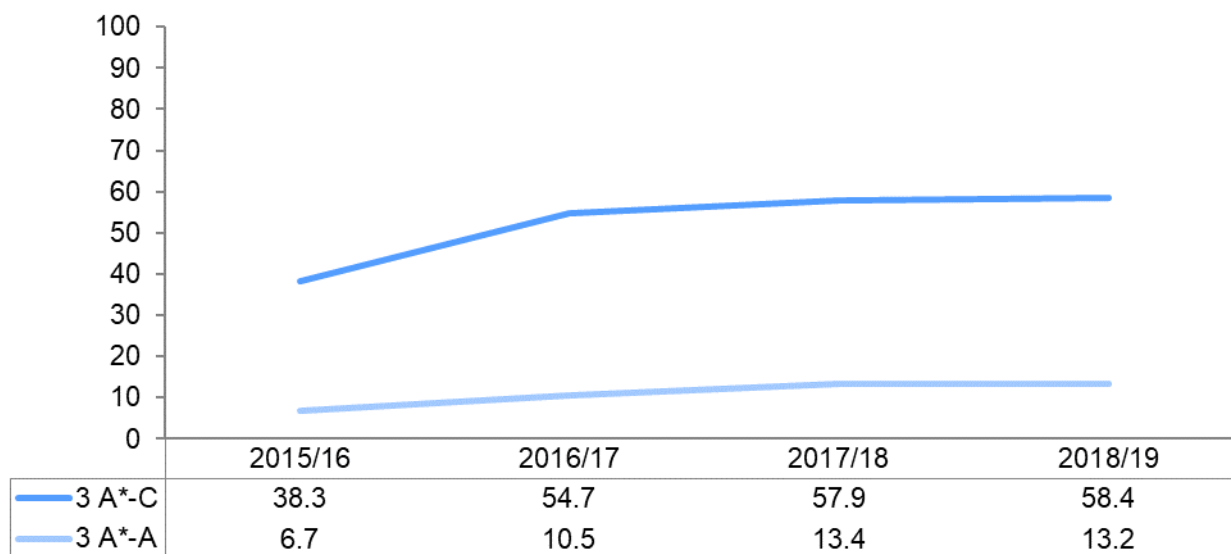
Headline indicators

Chart 7: Percentage of pupils aged 17 achieving the Level 3 threshold



Of the pupils that took two or more A Levels, the percentage achieving 2 A*-E grades (Level 3 threshold, see Notes for further details) in 2017/18 has increased by 0.4 percentage points from last year.

Chart 8: Percentage of pupils aged 17 achieving different A Level grade thresholds (r)



64.1% of girls achieved 3 A levels at grade A*-C compared to 51.1%(r) of boys
14.5%(r) of girls achieved 3 A levels at grade A*-A compared to 11.7%(r) of boys



The percentage of pupils in school achieving 3 A*-C grades in A level (or equivalent) has increased by 0.4% from 2017/18. The percentage of pupils achieving 3 A*-A grades has decreased by 0.2% (r) from 2017/18.

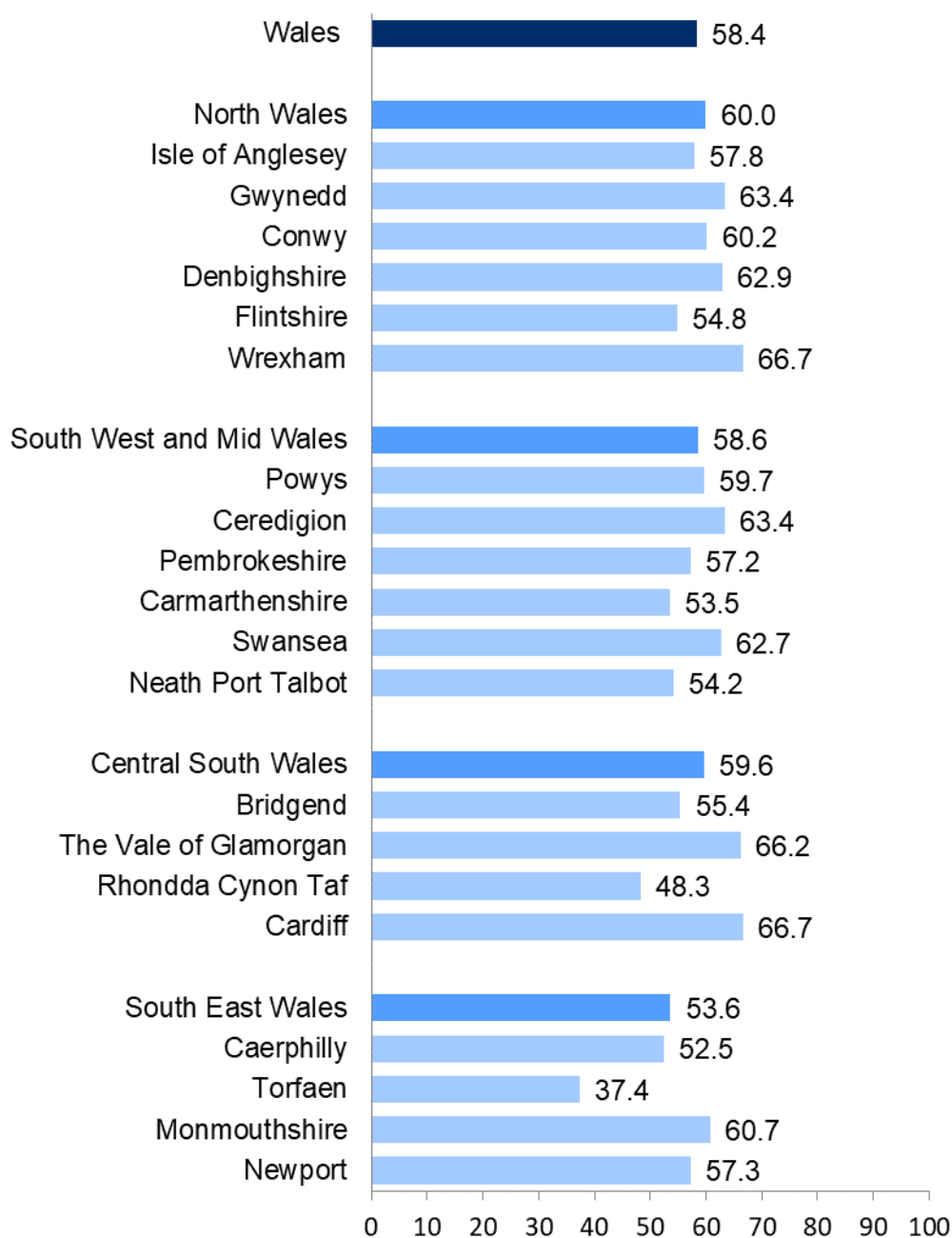
Girls out-performed boys at 6th form; however this gap is smaller for high achievers (those achieving 3 A*-A grades).

The figures do not include learners pursuing A Levels or equivalent qualifications at Further Education Institutions.

(r) Figures have been revised (19/12/19)

Local authorities

Chart 9: Percentage of pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 or more A levels achieving 3 A* - C grades in A level (or equivalent) by region and Local Authority, 2018/19 (r)



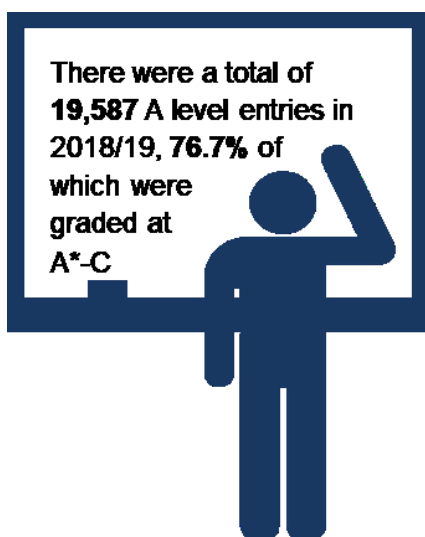
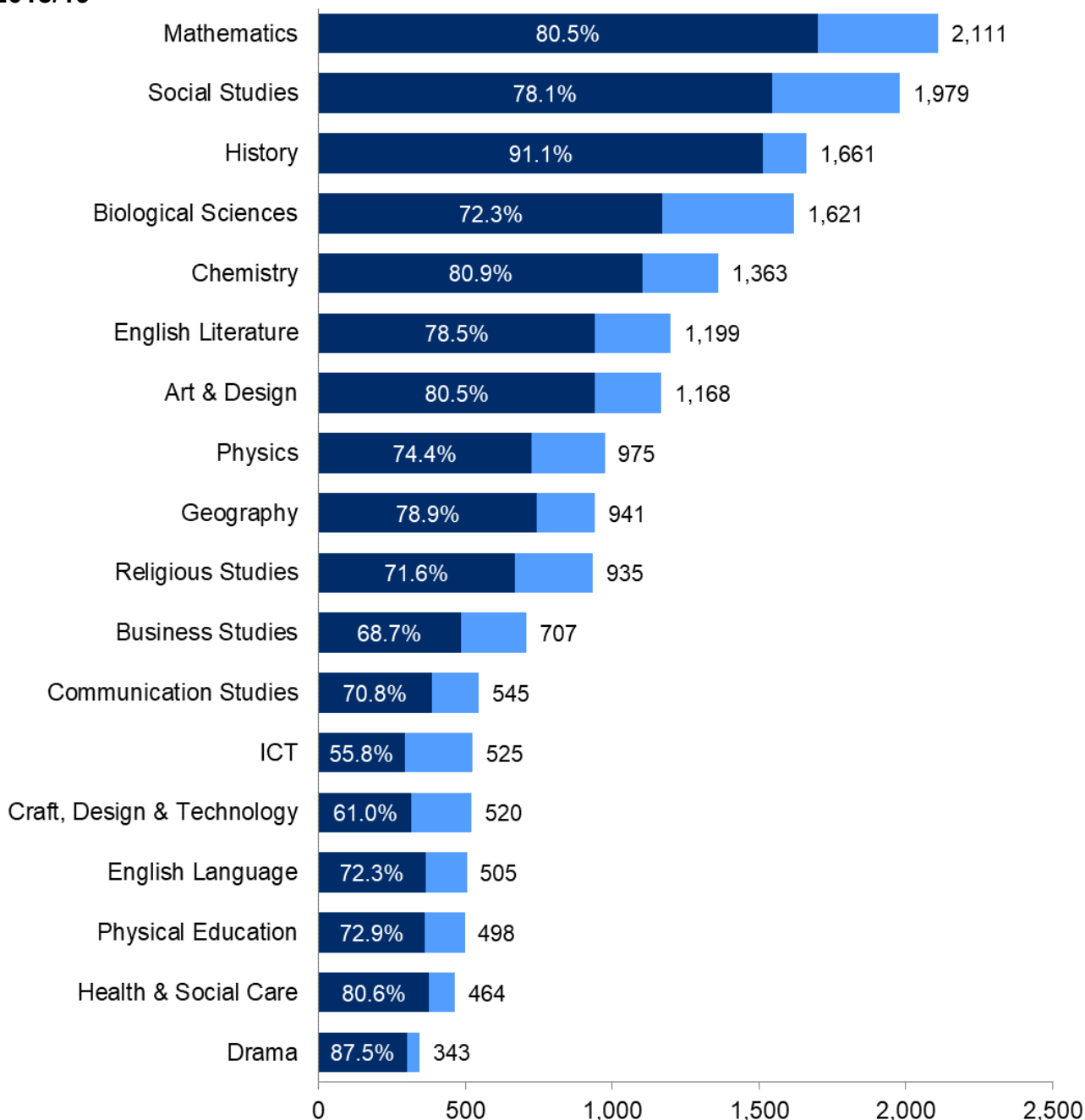
In 2018/19, North Wales was the region with the highest percentage of pupils aged 17 entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels achieving 3 A*-C grades, with 60.0 per cent. South East Wales on the other hand had the lowest percentage, with 53.6 per cent.

Wrexham and Cardiff were the Local Authority with the highest percentage of pupils aged 17 entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels achieving 3 A*-C grades, with 66.7 per cent. Torfaen had the lowest percentage, with 37.4 per cent. Note there are no 6th forms in schools in Blaenau Gwent or Merthyr Tydfil.

For the highest achievers (those achieving 3 A*-A grades), Cardiff had the largest percentage with 19.7(r) per cent of pupils, while Conwy had the smallest, with 7.3 per cent.

Subject performance

Chart 10: Top A level subject entries and corresponding percentage of A*-C grades, 2018/19



The most popular A level in Wales was Mathematics, with 2,111 entries in 2018/19. Mathematics also saw one of the highest rates of A*-C grade achievement of any A level subject, with 80.5 per cent of pupils achieving these grades.

History and German were two of the highest A*-C graded subjects in 2017/18 with 91.1 per cent and 89.8 per cent of entries being awarded one of these grades respectively. On the other hand, ICT had the lowest proportion of A*-C grades, with 55.1 per cent.

Full data on all individual subjects and their corresponding grade distributions are available in the [supplementary tables](#).

4. Definitions

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 measures.

This change does not apply to 6th form.

Year 11 pupils (Key Stage 4)

The capped 9 score (interim measure version)

This point score focuses on Year 11 pupils' best nine results from the qualifications available in Wales, including subject specific requirements. For 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 measure is available.](#)

Point score to grade equivalent

The following table presents the point score for an achieved grade of a volume 1 GCSE, used to calculate the Subject Specific Point Scores and the Capped 9 point score.

Grade	Point Score	Grade	Point Score
A*	58	D	34
A	52	E	28
B	46	F	22
C	40	G	16

Literacy measure

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

Numeracy measure

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

Science measure

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

Level 1

5 GCSEs (or equivalent) at grade A*-G.

Level 2 inclusive

5 GCSEs (or equivalent) at grade A*-C including at least one of English Language, English Literature, Welsh First Language or Welsh Literature, and Mathematics or Numeracy. The literature qualifications have been retroactively added to the measure for 2016/17 and 2017/18.

5 A*-A

5 GCSEs (or equivalent) at grade A*-A.

Pupils aged 17 (6th form)

Level 3

2 A levels (or equivalent) at grade A*-E as a percentage of those entering 2 or more A levels.

3 A*-C

3 A*-C grades at A level (or equivalent) having entered at least 2 A levels (or equivalent).

3 A*-A

3 A*-A grades at A level (or equivalent) having entered at least 2 A levels (or equivalent).

Changes and comparisons

The introduction of the Key Stage 4 performance measures mark a move away from threshold based measures. The information provided by Welsh Government to schools and local authorities for self-evaluation will no longer include analyses on the percentage of learners achieving: individual subjects, including the Welsh Baccalaureate at Foundation or National, or threshold performance measures (namely the Core Subject Indicator or Level 2 threshold). The exceptions to this are the Level 2 inclusive and Level 1 threshold measures, as the requirement for schools to set targets for Key Stage 4 learners against these measures has remained in legislation for the 2018/19 academic year. In order to assist schools with monitoring progress against such targets, Level 2 inclusive and Level 1 attainment data are still being provided, in addition to the new measures data. Welsh Government does not expect schools to be placed under disproportionate scrutiny on the basis of a small number of performance measures, in isolation. Local authorities and regional consortia are encouraged to use a wide range of information, including performance measures, other data and contextual information, in order to support schools.

From 2017/18, following recommendations from independent reviews, vocational Science qualifications no longer count towards the core Science element of performance measures. This applies to the capped 9 points score (interim measure version) and the science measure.

From 2016/17, there is a 40% cap on the contribution vocational qualifications can make towards the L1 and L2 inclusive measures. This cap does not apply to any of the new 5 performance measures. This, in addition to the removal of literature qualifications from the English and Welsh First Language indicators, mean that comparisons between 2016/17 or later should not be made to figures from 2015/16 or earlier.

From 2015/16, the Key Stage 4 cohort is based on pupils in Year 11. Up to 2014/15, the cohort was based on pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year. There is also a maximum of two GCSE equivalence value applied to any individual non-GCSE qualification. This applies to all performance measures in this release.

5. Notes

Revisions to key performance measures

Following the results published on 4th December 2019 it was found that the calculation of these measures was incorrect. The Capped 9 point score had an issue where double awards were incorrectly prioritised. The 3 A*-A and A*-C measures had an issue where a qualification with an unusual grading structure was incorrectly accredited as a C or A grade. Any figures that changed as a consequence of this change are identifiable by an (r).

It was later found that the Capped 9 point score (interim measure version, Literacy point score, Numeracy point score and the Science point score had not been calculated properly. This is due to pupils identified as New to the English/Welsh Based Education System (NEWBES) not being included in the numerator of these calculations. As these pupils are excluded from Local Authority level data, this only has an impact on Wales level data. Any figures that changed as a consequence of this change are identifiable by an (rr).

Full details of the changes in this latest revision can be found in the tables below, however it should be noted that there are further changes that did not have an impact on the figures in this publication. Full details of all revisions can be found in the [supplementary tables](#).

Changes in Revision 22/01/20

	KS4 Capped 9 points score (interim measure version)		Difference
	Published	Revised	
Wales	353.9	354.4	0.5
Wales eFSM	298.3	298.9	0.6
Wales non FSM	375.7	376.2	0.5

	KS4 Science point score		Difference
	Published	Revised	
Wales eligible FSM	28.2	28.3	0.1

	KS4 Numeracy point score		Difference
	Published	Revised	
Wales	37.1	37.2	0.1
Wales eligible FSM	29.4	29.5	0.1
Wales not eligible FSM	39.6	39.7	0.1

Accuracy

Schools and local authorities have now had an opportunity to assess the provisional results for accuracy, and have supplied amended information where applicable. In keeping with previous years, the change between provisional and final data for all indicators is less than 1 percentage point.

National Statistics

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

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

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in 2019 following a [compliance check by the Office for Statistics Regulation](#). These statistics last underwent a [full assessment against the Code of Practice in 2019](#).

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

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

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 the average capped points score per pupil, including the gap between those who are eligible or are not eligible for free school meals.

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

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 and supplementary tables are available at:

<https://gov.wales/examination-results-september-2018-august-2019>

Further technical information can be found in the notes document also on the examination results webpage.

Next update

October 2020 (provisional)

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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