

SFR 27/2009

15 October 2009

Coverage: England

**Theme: Children
Education and
Skills**

Issued by

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GCSE AND EQUIVALENT RESULTS IN ENGLAND 2008/09 (PROVISIONAL)

INTRODUCTION

This Statistical First Release (SFR) provides the earliest information on the overall achievements of young people in GCSE examinations and other approved and accredited qualifications in 2008/09. The information is taken from data collated for the 2009 Secondary School Achievement and Attainment Tables, which is currently in the process of being checked by schools. The results shown in this SFR are based on pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 4.

The SFR includes national figures in Tables 1 to 12 and local authority figures in Table 13.

KEY POINTS

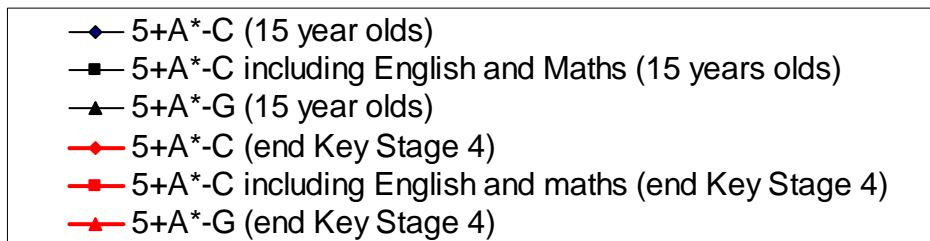
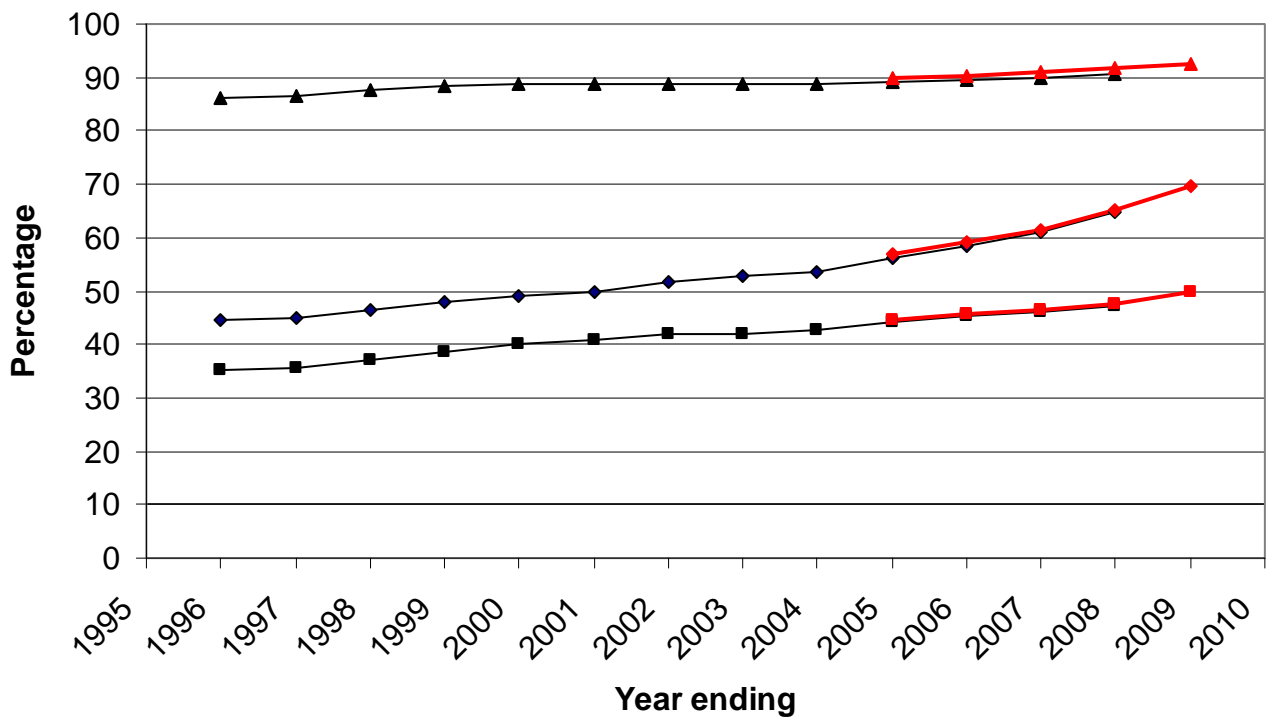
PUPILS AT THE END OF KEY STAGE 4

National results for pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in all schools

- 49.7 per cent achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grade A*-C or the equivalent including English and mathematics GCSEs, an increase of 2.1 percentage points from 2007/08 (Table 1).
- 50.4 per cent of pupils *in the maintained sector* achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grade A*-C or the equivalent including English and mathematics GCSEs, an increase of 2.1 percentage points from 2007/08 (Table 13).
- 47.7 per cent of pupils *in the independent sector* achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grade A*-C or the equivalent including English and mathematics GCSEs, an increase of 0.2 percentage points from 2007/08 (Table 3).
- 69.7 per cent achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grade A*-C or the equivalent. This is an increase of 4.4 percentage points from 2007/08 (Table 1).
- 88.4 per cent achieved 5 GCSEs at grade A*-G or the equivalent including English and mathematics GCSEs, up 1.0 percentage point from 2007/08 (Table 1).

The figures made available in this SFR differ from those published by Awarding Bodies in August. The Awarding Bodies' figures related to the outcome of the individual subject areas for all candidates in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, regardless of their age. The figures published in this SFR focus on the overall performance of candidates at the end of Key Stage 4 for GCSE and other approved examinations in England only.

Chart 1: Time Series of main GCSE and equivalent indicators in all schools



DEPARTMENTAL MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE

Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets

The current PSA threshold target at Key Stage 4 is to:

- Increase the proportion achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (and equivalent), including GCSEs in both English and maths, at Key Stage 4 to 53 per cent by 2011.

National Indicator Set (NIS)

The National Indicator Set for local authorities and local authority partnerships was announced as part of the Chancellor's Comprehensive Spending Review announcement on 9 October 2007. It was developed by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) to underpin the performance management framework for local government. There are three indicators related to KS4 attainment from the National Indicator Set (NI 75, 78 and 84) which are detailed below:

- NI 75: Achievement of 5 or more A*- C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and maths (Threshold).
- NI 78: Achievement of 5 or more A*- C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and maths (Floor).
- NI 84: Achievement of 2 or more A*- C grades in science GCSEs or equivalent.

Each of these is measured using revised data, and will be reported upon in the revised version of this SFR, scheduled for January 2010. Provisional data for NI 75 is given at LA level in Table 13. There were 151 LAs with results reported in 2008/09.

TABLES

Included within this document and available on the DCSF statistics website:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000880/index.shtml>

Table 1 Time series of GCSE and equivalent attempts and achievements, 1995/96 – 2008/09, England.

Table 2 National performance of pupils attaining Levels 1 and 2 (including English and maths), 2 or more sciences GCSEs and modern foreign language GCSE for pupils at the end of Key Stage 4

Further tables

Available on the DCSF statistics website:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000880/index.shtml>

Table 3 GCSE and equivalent attempts and achievements of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 by admissions basis, 2008/09, England.

Table 4 Average point scores of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4, 2008/09, England.

Table 5 GCSE and equivalent attempts and achievements of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 by school type, 2008/09, England.

Table 6 GCSE attempts and achievements in selected subjects of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in schools (numbers), 2008/09, England

Table 7 GCSE attempts and achievements in selected subjects of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in schools (percentages of all pupils), 2008/09, England

Table 8 GCSE attempts and achievements in selected subjects of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in schools (percentages of pupils attempting the subject), 2008/09, England

Table 9 GCSE results of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in schools, by subject and grade, 2008/09, England

Table 10 Results of GCSEs in Vocational subjects of end of Key Stage 4 pupils in educational establishments, by subject and grade, 2008/09, England

Table 11 GCSE (Short Course) results of pupils at the End of Key Stage 4 in all schools by subject and grade, 2008/09, England

Table 12 Other Qualifications results of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in all schools by type of qualification, 2008/09, England

Table 13 GCSE and equivalent results of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 by gender for each Local Authority and Government Office Region, 2008/09, England.

DEFINITIONS

Academic Age – Academic age used for reporting examinations and awards is the age at the start of the academic year. Please note Departmental targets are based on “age at the end of the academic year”. For the majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4, this will be age 16. The end of Key Stage 4 signals the end of compulsory education. From 2005, the Secondary School Achievement and Attainment Tables reported examination results for pupils at the end of Key Stage 4, rather than those aged 15. This shift to stage-based reporting removes any barriers to more flexible rates of learning.

Awarding Body – An organisation or consortium recognised by a regulatory authority for the purpose of awarding specified qualifications.

Level – In order to incorporate other approved qualifications into measures such as the proportion of pupils achieving the equivalent of 5 grades A*-C the contribution that a qualification makes towards the end of each level is used. The levels can be defined as follows:

Level 1 – The pupil has achieved the equivalent of 5 GCSEs at grades A*-G.

Level 2 – The pupil has achieved the equivalent of 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C.

The results reported incorporate entry level, level 1 and level 2 qualifications with the addition of GCE/VCE AS levels, which are level 3 qualifications.

Qualification Abbreviation/Descriptions – The following qualifications are reported within this SFR and the abbreviations used throughout stand for the following:

Entry Level – Qualifications with an academic standard below that of a G-grade GCSE.

GCE/Applied GCE – General Certificate of Education/Applied General Certificate of Education (Advanced Supplementary level qualifications only).

GCSE – General Certificate of Secondary Education.

NVQ – National Vocational Qualification.

VGCSE – A GCSE in a vocational subject (first reported in 2004).

VRQ – Vocationally Related Qualifications. (These also incorporate BTEC first diplomas, awards and certificates).

English and mathematics skills at level 2 – A pupil will fulfil this by achieving the equivalent of GCSE grades A*-C (level 2) in both English and mathematics. Valid equivalents, along with GCSEs, are Functional Skills, Key Skills and Basic Skills at level 2.

English and mathematics skills at level 1 – A pupil will fulfil this by achieving the equivalent of GCSE grades A*-G (level 1) in both English and mathematics. Valid equivalents, along with GCSEs, are Functional Skills, Key Skills and Basic Skills at level 1.

Further notes on coverage and definitions can be found at the bottom of each table.

TECHNICAL NOTES

The statistics in this first release cover the data prepared for the publication of the 2009 Secondary School Achievement and Attainment tables. From 2005 the Secondary School Achievement and Attainment tables have reported results on pupils at the end of Key Stage 4. This publication includes tables only for pupils at the end of Key Stage 4.

Qualifications included in GCSE and Equivalent results

Contribution of qualifications to a pupil's level

The Qualifications and Curriculum Development Authority (QCDA) is responsible for the accreditation of qualifications. As part of the process of reporting achievements in GCSE and equivalent qualifications, QCDA defines the age group for which the qualification is approved and the contribution each qualification make towards a pupil's attainment of levels 1 and 2.

National figures in this SFR include results from independent schools. The percentage of pupils in independent schools achieving the equivalent of 5 or more GCSEs at grade A*-C including English and maths GCSEs has risen this year after seeing a marked decrease in previous years (see Tables 3 and 5). This was most likely due to independent schools choosing qualifications that are not accredited by QCDA.

Average Point Score (Table 4)

Another measure of institution performance is an average point score. In order to incorporate a wider range of qualifications within average point scores, QCDA have attributed a number of points to all qualifications approved for pre-16 use – on a scale equivalent to GCSEs. These are based on the relative challenge of a qualification together with the guided learning hours that a qualification requires. The capped point score in Table 4 is based on a pupil's best 8 GCSEs or equivalent. Finally, a pupil at the end of Key Stage 4 that has accumulated a non-zero number of points is considered to have passed at least one qualification (see Tables 1,2,3,5 and 13).

It is important to note that the point scoring system developed by QCDA is designed as a means of institutional performance measurement. It is not intended that the figures replace national systems used for other purposes, for example UCAS tariffs of individual pupils.

Range of Qualifications

The general range of qualifications, together with the qualification families into which they fall, is set out in the box overleaf:

Box 1. The range of examinations and their families as set out by QCDA

General	GCE AS	GCSE (Full course)	GCSE Short Course	Entry Level 1-3
General Vocational	Applied GCE AS Double award	Applied GCE AS/ VCE AS	Vocational GCSE Single	Vocational GCSE Double
Occupational	NVQ Level 1-2			
Vocationally related	VRQ Level 2 or BTEC First	VRQ Level 1		
Key Skills	Key Skills Level 1-2			
Basic Skills	Basic Skills Level 1-2			
Vocational Languages	NVQ Language Unit at Level 1-2			
Graded Exams	Graded Exam (Grade 1-8)			
Free Standing Maths	Level 1-3			
Other General	Other General qualifications Level 1-2			

GCSE (Short Courses) are of the same academic standard as a full GCSE but have half the content. GCSEs in vocational subjects are of the same academic standard as a full GCSE but have double the content. The exception to this is the vocational GCSE in Additional Applied Science which has the same content as one GCSE.

Further information on approval, contributions to pupil level and point scores of qualifications can be found through QCDA's National Database of Accredited Qualifications website: www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk.

Coverage of the data

The coverage of the national statistics is all schools in England.

The coverage of the Local Authority (LA) statistics is maintained schools only in England. This includes City Technology Colleges and Academies but excludes hospital schools and pupil referral units.

The provisional figures reported in this SFR are subject to amendments provided by schools during the checking exercise.

A NATIONAL STATISTICS PUBLICATION

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

SFR28/2008 – [DCSF: GCSE and Equivalent Results in England, 2007/08 \(Provisional\)](#).

SFR02/2009 – [DCSF: GCSE and Equivalent Results in England 2007/08 \(Revised\)](#).

SFR28/2008 – [DCSF: GCE/Applied GCE A/AS and Equivalent Examination Results in England, 2008/09 \(Provisional\)](#)

Examination Results in Wales, 2007/08 (Provisional): This publication was produced by the Welsh Assembly Government and provides the earliest results of external examinations taken by pupils aged 15 or 17 in schools in Wales in 2008/09. It was published on 30 September 2009 and is available at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/schools2009/hdw200909303/?lang=en>

Statistics Publication Notice Education Series: SQA Examination Results in Scottish Schools, 2008/09. This publication was produced by the *Scottish Executive* and presents information attainment of National Qualifications by all pupils in publicly funded secondary schools. It was published on 22 September 2009 and is available at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/09/17165819/0>

ENQUIRIES

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Table 1: Time series of GCSE and equivalent attempts and achievements
Years: 1995/96 - 2008/09¹ (Provisional)²
Coverage: England

	Number of pupils ³	Percentage who achieved				Any passes ⁴
		5+ A*-C grades	5+ A*-C grades inc. English & Mathematics GCSEs	5+ A*-G grades	5+ A*-G grades inc. English & Mathematics GCSEs	
15 year olds						
1995/96	594,035	44.5	35.2	86.1	83.4	92.2
1996/97 ⁵	586,766	45.1	35.6	86.4	83.9	92.3
1997/98	575,210	46.3	37.0	87.5	83.8	93.4
1998/99	580,972	47.9	38.6	88.5	85.8	94.0
1999/00	580,393	49.2	40.0	88.9	86.8	94.4
2000/01	603,318	50.0	40.7	88.9	86.9	94.5
2001/02	606,554	51.6	42.1	88.9	87.1	94.6
2002/03	622,122	52.9	41.9	88.8	86.6	94.8
2003/04 ⁶	643,560	53.7	42.6	88.8	86.7	95.9
2004/05	636,771	56.3	44.3	89.0	86.9	96.4
2005/06	648,942	58.5	45.3	89.4	86.8	96.7
2006/07	656,396	60.9	46.0	90.0	86.4	97.3
2007/08	653,808	64.8	47.3	90.8	86.7	98.0
Pupils at end Key Stage 4						
2004/05	636,119	56.8	44.7	89.9	87.6	97.0
2005/06	648,833	59.0	45.6	90.1	87.4	97.3
2006/07	655,146	61.4	46.3	90.9	87.1	98.0
2007/08	653,045	65.3	47.6	91.6	87.4	98.6
2008/09	631,980	69.7	49.7	92.5	88.4	99.2

1. Including attempts and achievement in previous academic years.
2. Figures for 2008/09 are provisional, all other figures are final.
3. Number of pupils on roll aged 15 at the start of the academic year or at the end of Key Stage 4
4. From 2003/04 this includes attempts in entry level qualifications which do not contribute towards A*-C or A*-G thresholds.
5. Percentages from 1996/97 include GCSEs and GNVQs.
6. Percentages from 2003/04 include GCSEs and other equivalent qualifications approved for use pre-16.

Table 2: National performance of pupils attaining Levels 1 and 2 (including English and maths), 2 or more sciences GCSEs and modern foreign language GCSE for pupils at the end of Key Stage 4¹
Years: 2004/05 to 2008/09² (Provisional)³
Coverage: England

	2004/05			2005/06			2006/07			2007/08			2008/09		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of pupils	323,591	312,528	636,119	331,343	317,490	648,833	334,369	320,777	655,146	334,218	318,827	653,045	323,294	308,686	631,980
Percentage who achieved at GCSE or equivalent:															
5+A*-C grades	51.9	61.9	56.8	54.3	63.9	59.0	57.0	66.0	61.4	60.9	69.9	65.3	65.5	74.2	69.7
- Including English and Mathematics GCSE ⁴	40.5	49.0	44.7	41.3	50.1	45.6	41.9	51.0	46.3	43.2	52.3	47.6	45.6	54.0	49.7
- Including English and Mathematics skills at Level 2 ⁵	40.6	49.2	44.8	42.2	50.7	46.4	43.7	52.3	47.9	46.1	54.4	50.2	48.7	56.5	52.5
English and Mathematics skills at Level 2	42.1	50.4	46.2	44.0	52.1	47.9	45.9	53.9	49.8	48.3	55.9	52.0	50.7	57.7	54.1
5+A*-G grades	87.5	92.3	89.9	87.8	92.5	90.1	88.8	93.1	90.9	89.6	93.6	91.6	90.6	94.5	92.5
- Including English and Mathematics GCSE ⁶	85.0	90.4	87.6	84.6	90.3	87.4	84.5	89.9	87.1	84.8	90.1	87.4	86.0	90.9	88.4
- Including English and Mathematics skills at Level 1 ⁷	85.0	90.4	87.7	84.8	90.4	87.5	84.7	90.1	87.3	85.1	90.3	87.6	86.3	91.1	88.6
English and Mathematics skills at Level 1	88.1	92.4	90.2	88.1	92.4	90.2	87.9	92.2	90.0	88.1	92.3	90.2	89.2	92.9	91.0
2+ A*-C grades in Science subjects	.	.	.	.	.	.	48.8	50.9	49.8	48.8	51.9	50.3	51.8	55.7	53.7
A*-C grades in a Modern Foreign Language	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	24.9	36.8	30.7	26.0	37.7	31.7
A*-G GCSE short course or equivalent in a Modern Foreign Language	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	39.3	50.5	44.8	39.7	51.5	45.5
Any qualification ⁸	96.3	97.8	97.0	96.7	98.1	97.3	97.4	98.7	98.0	98.1	99.1	98.6	98.8	99.8	99.2

1. Number of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in academic year.

2. Including attempts and achievements by these pupils in previous academic years.

3. Figures for 2008/09 are provisional, all other figures are final.

4. Includes pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C together with grades A*-C in English and Mathematics GCSEs.

5. Includes pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C together with grades A*-C in English and Mathematics GCSEs, functional skills at level 2 in English or Mathematics or level 2 in Key Skills or Basic Skills in literacy and numeracy.

6. Includes pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-G together with grades A*-G in English and Mathematics GCSEs.

7. Includes pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-G together with grades A*-G in English and Mathematics GCSEs, functional skills at level 1 in English or Mathematics or level 1 in Key Skills or Basic Skills in literacy and numeracy.

8. This includes attempts in entry level qualifications which do not contribute towards A*-C or A*-G thresholds.

. Not applicable.