



# Department for Education

## National curriculum assessments at key stage 2 in England, 2015 (provisional)

### Continued improvement in attainment in most subjects ...

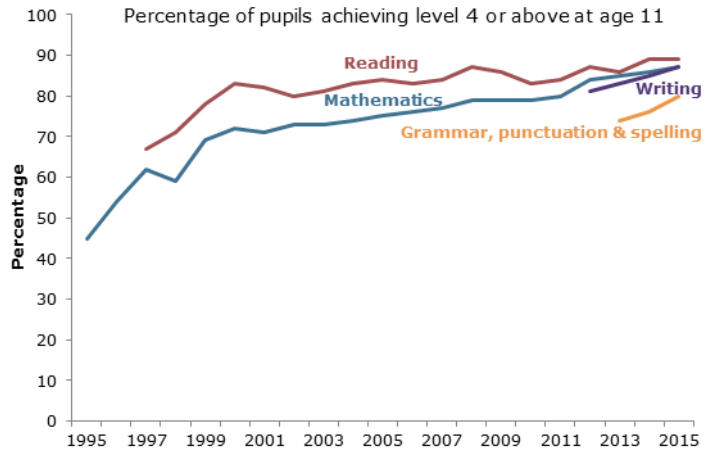
#### About this release

This statistical first release (SFR) provides provisional 2015 key stage 2 national curriculum assessment results for pupils in schools in England at national, regional and local authority level.

It also provides figures on expected progress between key stage 1 (typically age 7) and key stage 2 (typically age 11).

Grammar, punctuation and spelling test results have increased by 4 percentage points.

Writing and mathematics increased by 2 percentage points and 1 percentage point respectively.



There was no change in attainment at level 4 or above in reading.

#### In this publication

The following tables are included in the SFR:

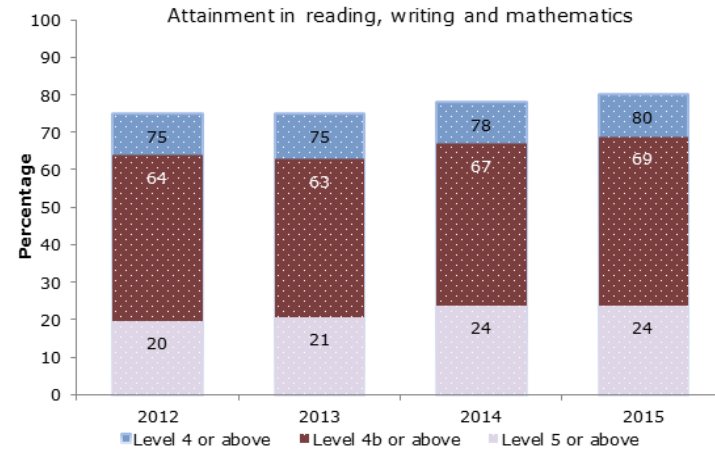
- KS2 national tables (Excel .xls)
- KS2 local authority tables (Excel .xls)
- Underlying data (open format .csv and metadata .txt)

The accompanying quality and methodology information document, provides information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data.

#### Contents

Individual subjects	2
Progress	4
Prior attainment	4
Gender gaps	5
School type	6
Local authorities	8

### ... has led to a continued increase in the overall attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.

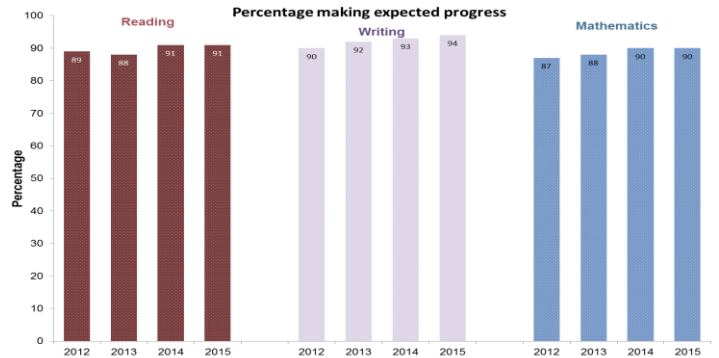


Attainment has continued to rise. 80% of pupils achieved level 4 or above in all of reading, writing and mathematics, compared to 78% in 2014.

### Proportion of pupils making expected progress remain similar to last year.

The percentage of pupils making expected progress in writing has increased by 1 percentage point to 94 per cent.

There was no change in the figures for reading (91%) and mathematics (90%).



# 1. Attainment by subject (Tables 1, 2a & 2b)

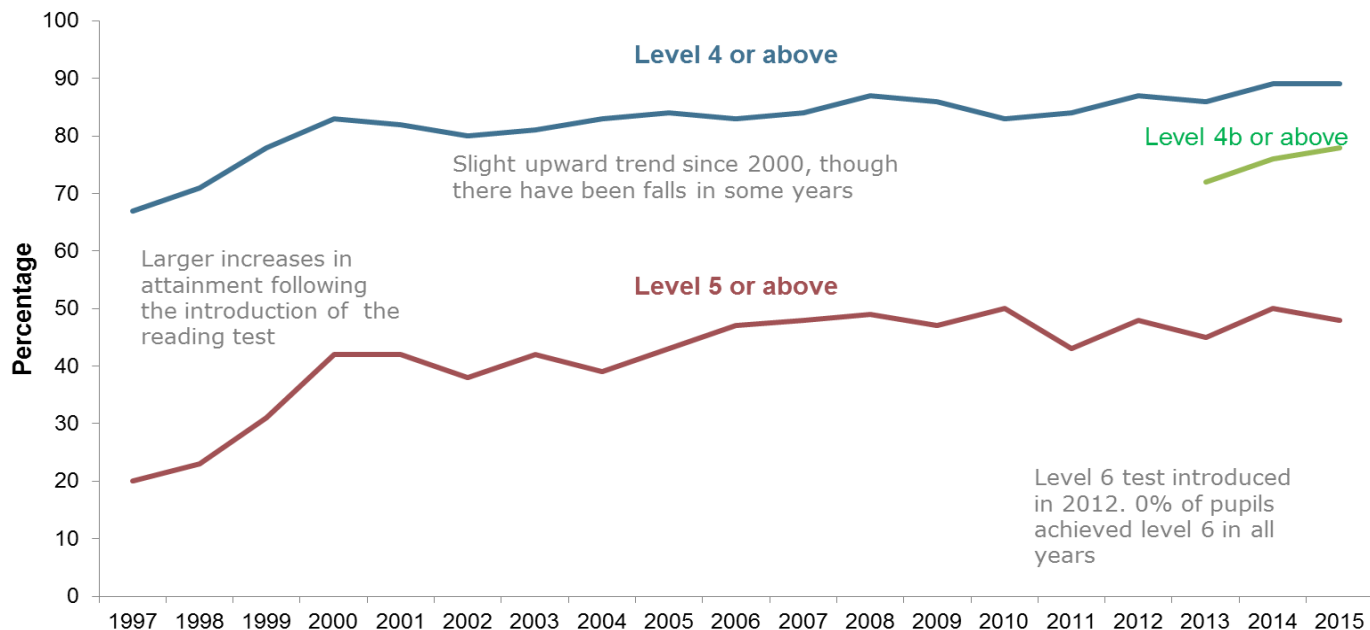
## Reading

Attainment in the reading test at level 4 or above is unchanged from 2014 at 89%; compared with 83% in 2010 and 67% in 1997. Attainment at level 4b or above increased by 2 percentage points to 80%. Attainment at level 5 or above fell by 1<sup>1</sup> percentage point to 48% following the large increase (of 5 percentage points) last year. There was no change in attainment at level 6 in reading.

From 2016, pupils will sit a new test reported as a scaled score, rather than as levels or sub-levels. There will be a higher expected standard for pupils at the end of key stage 2, roughly equivalent to level 4b. It is possible that the increase in attainment at level 4b or above, in 2015 in all three test subjects, is a result of schools' increased focus on ensuring that more pupils achieve this standard<sup>2</sup>.

These pupils did not take the phonics screening check which is now taken by pupils aged 6 as it was only introduced in 2012. Therefore, it is too soon for the emphasis on teaching phonics to younger pupils to have had any direct impact on key stage 2 reading results.

**Figure 1: Attainment in the reading test: England, 1997 – 2015 (all schools)**



Source: National pupil database and provisional performance data

## Grammar, punctuation and spelling

Attainment in the grammar, punctuation and spelling test has increased in 2015 but the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above remains below that for other subjects (80% compared to 89% in reading, 87% in writing and 87% in mathematics). One reason may be that pupils and teachers are still adjusting to the requirements of the new test since it was only introduced in 2013. The old national curriculum that was

<sup>1</sup> All gaps and changes are calculated from unrounded data.

<sup>2</sup> When standards are equated to determine the level thresholds for the test, it is necessary to either round up or down from the equivalent score to ensure the level threshold is a whole number<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, we expect some annual variation in the results and, while we cannot be sure, the fall in the percentage at level 5 or above may be a reflection of this rather than a genuine fall in attainment at this level.

assessed in these tests was not as explicit about the grammar, punctuation and spelling that needed to be taught in key stage 2 as the new national curriculum that will be assessed from next year. At level 4, pupils are expected to know and be using the curriculum content while at level 5 they need to show that they can apply it accurately and consistently. It appears that once children have secured the level 4 content and meta-language, their ability to apply it accurately and consistently progresses rapidly. The differences between level 4 and level 5 are more significant in the other subjects.

Compared to other subjects, attainment at level 5 or above is already very high in grammar, punctuation and spelling: 56% of pupils achieved level 5 or above in grammar, punctuation and spelling compared to 48% in reading, 36% in writing and 42% in mathematics

### Writing

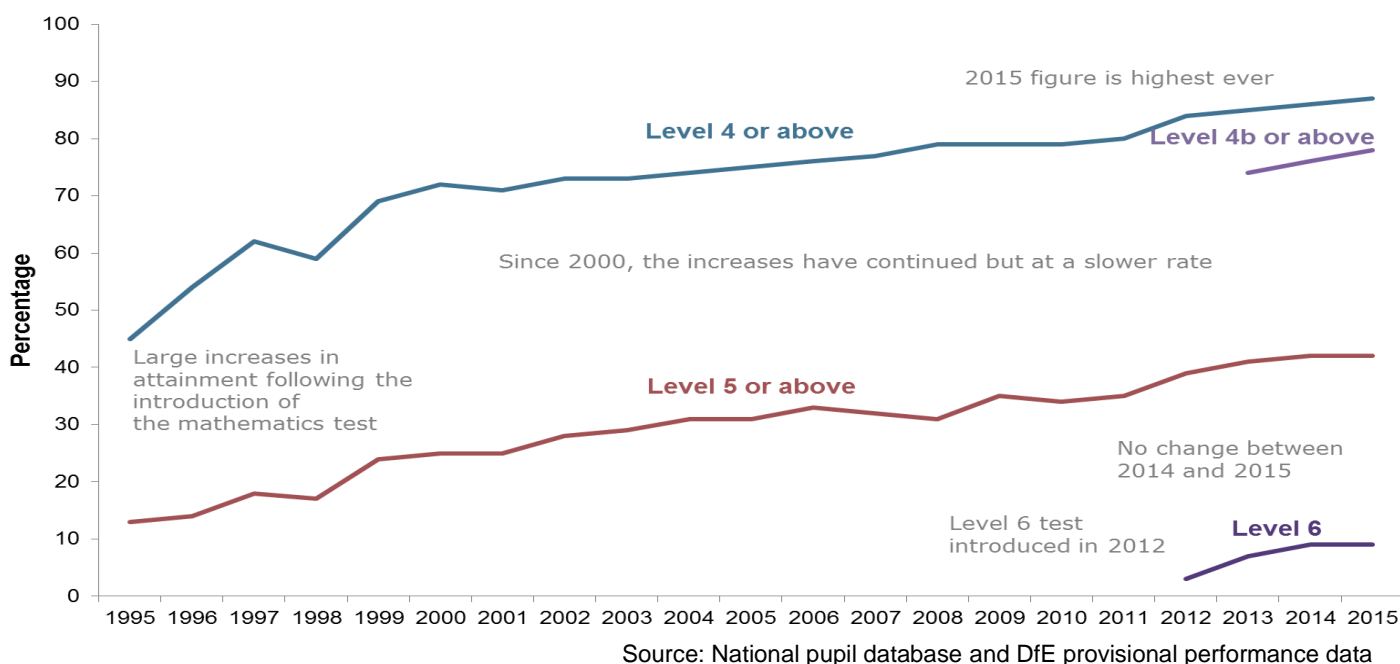
Attainment in writing teacher assessment has increased in 2015: 87% of pupils achieved level 4 or above and 36% achieved level 5 or above. Schools have only been required to submit separate writing teacher assessments since 2012, so a longer time series is not available.

### Mathematics

Attainment at level 4 (87%) has increased by one percentage point, and compares with 79% in 2010 and 54% in 1996<sup>3</sup>. Attainment at level 4b or above (77%) in the mathematics test has also continued to increase. Attainment at level 5 or above is unchanged from last year at 42%.

Most pupils who were at the end of key stage 2 in 2015 would have been at the end of key stage 1 in 2011. Attainment levels in key stage 1 mathematics for 2011 were 1 percentage point higher than those in 2010, matching the key stage 2 increase in 2015 compared with 2014. This suggests that the improvement in key stage 2 mathematics attainment may be due to pupils entering key stage 2 with better mathematics skills rather than them making greater progress during key stage 2.

**Figure 2: Attainment in the mathematics test: England, 1995 – 2015 (all schools)**



<sup>3</sup> The first year of full participation by state funded schools in these tests

## 2. Progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2 (Table 4)

Pupils are expected to make at least two levels of progress between key stage 1 and key stage 2.

Since 2012, the proportion of children making expected progress in each subject has increased – by 2 percentage points for reading; by 4 percentage points for writing; and by 3 percentage points for mathematics.

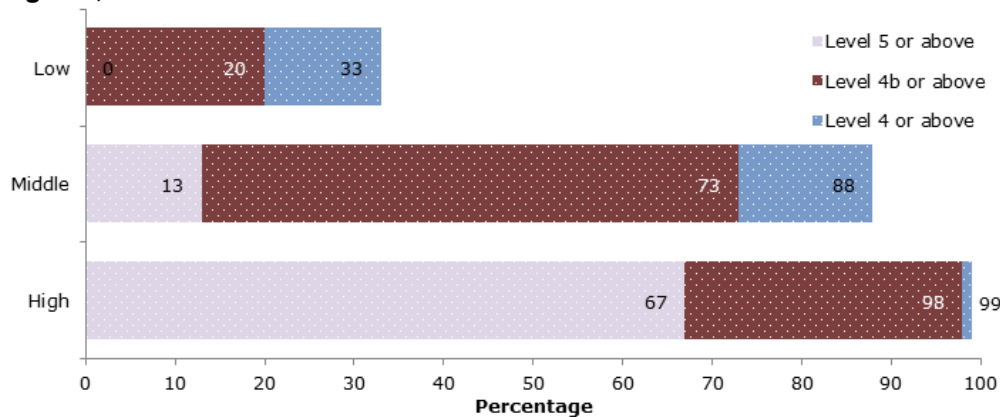
The lack of change in progress in mathematics between 2014 and 2015, despite a slight increase in attainment, supports the earlier comment that the increase in mathematics attainment may be driven by pupils entering key stage 2 with better mathematics skills than the previous year.

**Table A: Percentage of pupils making at least two levels of progress:**  
England, 2012 - 2015 (state-funded schools)

	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
<b>2015</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>90%</b>
2014	91%	93%	90%
2013	88%	92%	88%
2012	89%	90%	87%

## 3. Attainment by prior attainment bands (Tables 7 & 8)

**Figure 3: Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by prior attainment England, 2015**



Source: Provisional performance data

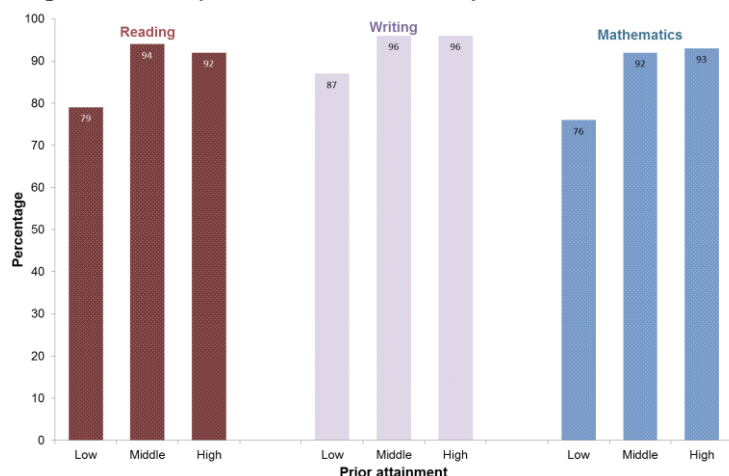
Pupils are grouped into prior attainment bands based on their key stage 1 results.

- Low attaining = below level 2 at the end of KS1.
- Middle attaining = at level 2 at the end of KS1.
- High attaining = above level 2 at the end of KS1.

Any pupils without KS1 results are excluded. More information is provided in the quality and methodology information.

As expected, pupils with high prior attainment are more likely than those with middle prior attainment to achieve higher results at the end of key stage 2. Similarly, those with middle prior attainment are more likely than those with low prior attainment to achieve higher results.

**Figure 4: Pupils making expected progress by prior attainment England, 2015 (state-funded schools)**



Source: Provisional performance data

However, pupils with low prior attainment are also less likely to make expected progress in each subject than those with either middle or high prior attainment.

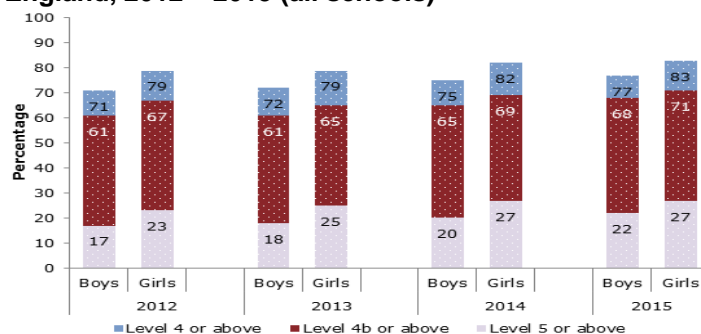
Table 7 in the annex gives more detailed information on low prior attainers. Pupils who were at level 1 at the end of key stage 1 are almost as likely as those with higher prior attainment to make expected progress. However, those who were working below level 1 at the end of key stage 1 are much less likely to make expected progress. For some pupils on P scales at the end of key stage 1 reaching level 2 by the end of key stage 2 may not be realistic.

## 4. Gender gaps

Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics combined has improved for both boys and girls. The gender gap at level 4 or above has remained at 6 percentage points. The gender gaps for higher attainment have narrowed slightly to 3 (level 4b or above) and 5 (level 5 or above) percentage points.

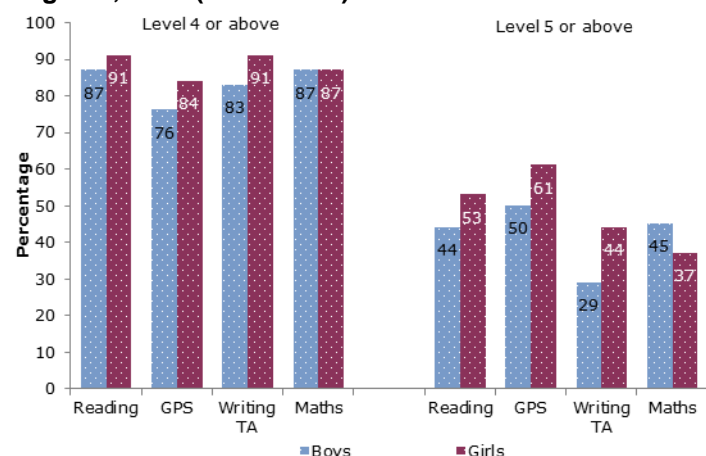
Girls continue to outperform boys at all levels.

**Figure 5: Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics combined by gender England, 2012 – 2015 (all schools)**



Source: National pupil database and provisional performance data<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 6: Attainment by subject and gender England, 2015 (all schools)**



Source: Provisional performance data

Girls have continued to outperform boys in the reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling tests. Girls also performed better than boys in the writing teacher assessment.

As in previous years, boys and girls have similar levels of attainment at level 4 or above in the mathematics tests but boys outperform girls at level 5 or above.

<sup>4</sup> All gaps and changes are calculated from unrounded data

## 5. Attainment by school type (Tables 5a & 5b)

Attainment levels in mainstream academies and free schools as a group are very similar to those in local authority maintained mainstream schools. But this masks important variation between the different types of schools within this group. Converter academies have a higher percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above than the average of all state-funded mainstream schools. This may be explained by the fact that schools which chose to convert to academies are usually already high performing schools.

The converse may be true of sponsored academies, which perform below the average for state-funded mainstream schools, as these are schools that were already low performing before their conversion to academy status (see table B).

There are also differences in the percentages making expected progress in these two types of academy, but these are smaller than the differences for attainment.

### Number of primary schools<sup>5</sup>

There were 14,888 state-funded mainstream primary schools with key stage 2 results in 2015.

- 12,803 (86%) were LA maintained schools.
- 1,375 (9%) were converter academies
- 689 (5%) were sponsored academies.
- 21 were free schools.

See the methodology and quality information for information on different types of school.

**Table B: Attainment in key stage 2 assessments by type of school England, 2015 (mainstream schools)**

	Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics		Progress in reading	Progress in writing	Progress in maths
	Level 4 or above	Level 5 or above			
LA maintained schools	81%	24%	92%	95%	91%
Academies and free schools	80%	23%	91%	95%	90%
Sponsored academies	71%	15%	88%	93%	86%
Converter academies	84%	27%	92%	96%	91%

Source: Provisional performance data

The number of free schools with 11 year old pupils is too small to allow robust conclusions to be drawn about their performance at the end of key stage 2<sup>6</sup>. Please also note that many of the free schools which currently have results are former independent schools rather than new provision, since the latter have only been open for a relatively short time and many don't yet have a cohort of 11 year old pupils.

It is difficult to interpret changes in results across years due to the conversion of schools from one type to another. This means that comparing the headline figures for any of these groups captures not only the change in performance, but also the change in composition. For example, if the additional schools to a group all had attainment that was below the average for the group, the effect would be to lower the average for the group even if each individual school saw no change in its own results.

A better way of showing time series is to look at individual cohorts of schools. These data are shown in table C. Shaded cells highlight results from predecessor schools to aid comparison.

This shows that attainment in sponsored academies increased from 67% to 71% between 2014 and 2015, compared to 1 percentage point in converter academies and LA maintained schools.

Measures of improvement are important. They show whether underperforming schools or groups of schools (for example, schools that have become sponsored academies) are catching up with higher performing

<sup>5</sup> Where schools have changed type during the academic year, they are shown under their type as on 12 September 2014.

<sup>6</sup> There were 21 free schools with KS2 results in 2015



schools. However, when interpreting such measures it should be noted that the extent to which a school improves is related to a range of factors. Schools with the lowest previous outcomes tend to see the largest improvements but simply controlling for starting points does nothing to account for the very different circumstances which may exist in two schools. For example, in two schools with the same outcomes, pupils might be far exceeding expectations given prior attainment in one while, in the other, pupils might be making less progress than expected. This will affect the relative ability to demonstrate improvement.

For further discussion and analysis of these issues, see [Attainment by pupils in academies 2012](#) and [Measuring the performance of schools within academy chains and local authorities](#).

**Table C: Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in reading, writing and mathematics in academies by length of time open  
England, 2012 - 2015 (mainstream schools)<sup>7</sup>**

	Number of schools with results <sup>8</sup>	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Sponsored academies<sup>9</sup></b>	<b>689</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>71%</b>
Open for one academic year	269	.	.	66%	71%
Open for two academic years	271	.	61%	68%	71%
Open for three academic years	114	59%	60%	67%	69%
Open for four or more academic years	35	65%	66%	73%	75%
<b>Converter academies<sup>9</sup></b>	<b>1,375</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>84%</b>
Open for one academic year	364	.	.	82%	83%
Open for two academic years	389	.	78%	81%	82%
Open for three academic years	363	80%	79%	83%	84%
Open for four or more academic years	259	81%	82%	84%	85%
<b>LA maintained schools<sup>10</sup></b>	<b>12,803</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>81%</b>

Source: National pupil database and provisional performance data

<sup>7</sup> Includes schools which were mainstream sponsored academies, mainstream converter academies or LA maintained mainstreamed schools on 12 September 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Results for all years include this same set of schools.

<sup>9</sup> The 'Sponsored academies' and 'Converter academies' figures include data for all schools which were academies on 12 September 2014 irrespective of their type in previous years.

<sup>10</sup> Since 2011, new provision has usually been met through the establishment of academies and free schools rather than local authority maintained schools under the academies and free schools presumption. This limited the number of LA maintained schools opening over this period. As approx. 98% of LA maintained schools open in 2015 were also open in 2012, a breakdown by length of time open has not been provided

## 6. Local authority achievement (Tables 9 - 18)

There is considerable variation between local authorities in attainment levels. Table D shows the minimum and maximum LA percentages achieving level 4 or above in each subject and also the minimum and maximum LA percentages making expected progress in each subject (excluding the City of London and Isles of Scilly which only have 1 school each).

### Floor standards

School level data is not ready to be published as it is subject to change. It will be published in the primary school performance tables in December.

**Table D: Minimum and maximum local authority percentages: England, 2015 (state-funded schools only)**

	Minimum	Maximum	Range (percentage points)
<b>% achieving level 4 or above</b>			
Reading, writing and mathematics	73%	90%	17
Reading test	83%	95%	12
Grammar, punctuation and spelling test	72%	92%	20
Mathematics test	80%	94%	14
Writing teacher assessment	81%	93%	12
<b>% making expected progress</b>			
Reading	85%	96%	11
Writing	88%	98%	10
Mathematics	80%	96%	16

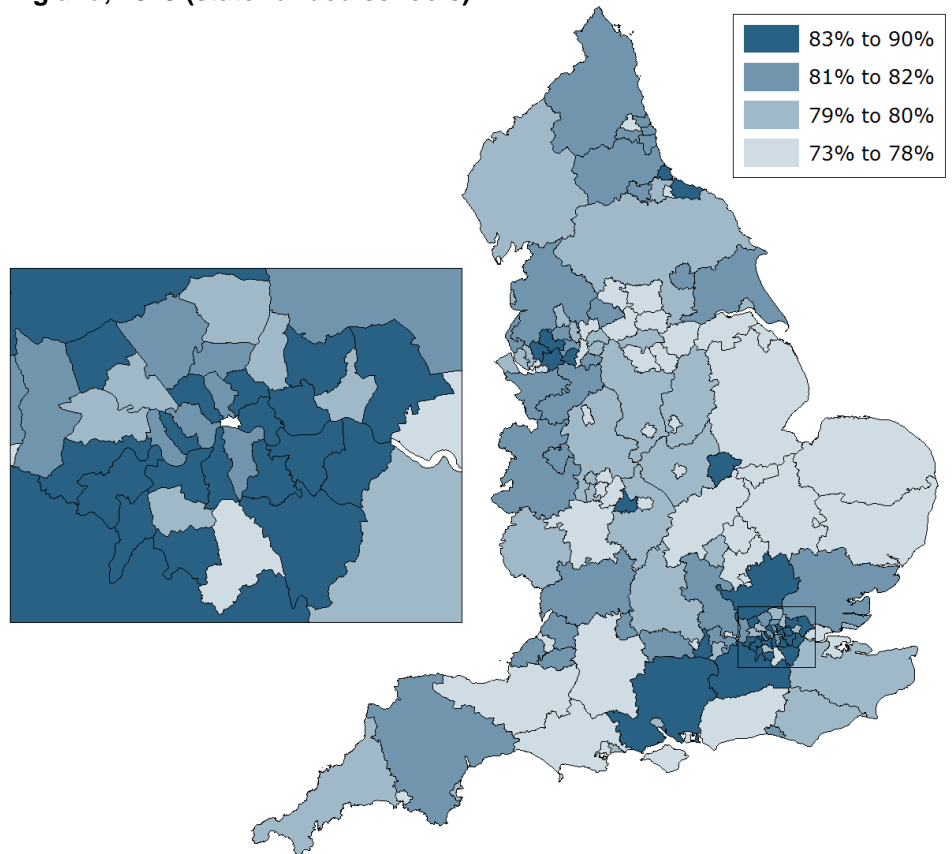
Source: Provisional performance data



The difference between the lowest and highest performing local authorities is considerably greater for grammar, punctuation and spelling than for the other subjects. However, this is partly due to two local authorities having very high attainment in this subject.

The highest performing local authorities are concentrated in London and the North East. The poorest performing areas are in Yorkshire and East Anglia.

**Figure 8: Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in reading, writing and mathematics by local authority: England, 2015 (state-funded schools)**



Source: Provisional performance data

## 7. Accompanying tables

The following tables are available in Excel format on the department's statistics [website](#):

### National tables

- |    |  |   |  |
|----|--|---|--|
| 1  | Levels of attainment in key stage 2 tests by subject, 1995 - 2015                    | 6 | Attainment of pupils at key stage 2 by school phase, 2015                      |
| 2a | Attainment in key stage 2 tests by gender, 2007 - 2015                               | 7 | Attainment of pupils at key stage 2 by prior attainment at key stage 1, 2015   |
| 2b | Attainment in key stage 2 teacher assessments by gender, 2007 - 2015                 | 8 | Attainment of pupils at key stage 2 by prior attainment bands and gender, 2015 |
| 2c | Attainment at key stage 2 in combinations of subjects by gender, 2007 - 2015         |   |  |
| 3  | Levels of attainment at key stage 2 by subject and gender, 2015                      |   |  |
| 4  | Expected progression between key stage 1 and key stage 2 by gender, 2009 - 2015      |   |  |
| 5a | Attainment of pupils at key stage 2 by school type, 2015                             |   |  |
| 5b | Attainment of pupils at key stage 2 in academies by length of time open, 2012 - 2015 |   |  |

## Local authority and regional tables

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 9 Attainment at key stage 2 in reading test, writing TA and mathematics test by local authority, region and gender, 2012 - 2015 | 14 Attainment in key stage 2 English teacher assessment by local authority, region and gender, 2015   |
| 10 Attainment in key stage 2 reading by local authority, region and gender, 2015  | 15 Attainment in key stage 2 science teacher assessment by local authority, region and gender, 2015   |
| 11 Attainment in key stage 2 grammar, punctuation and spelling test by local authority, region and gender, 2015                 | 16 Percentage of pupils making expected progress in reading between key stage 1 and key stage 2, by local authority and region, 2012 - 2015     |
| 12 Attainment in key stage 2 mathematics by local authority, region and gender, 2015  | 17 Percentage of pupils making expected progress in writing between key stage 1 and key stage 2, by local authority and region, 2012 - 2015     |
| 13 Attainment in key stage 2 writing teacher assessment by local authority, region and gender, 2015                             | 18 Percentage of pupils making expected progress in mathematics between key stage 1 and key stage 2, by local authority and region, 2009 – 2015 |

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

---

We preserve confidentiality	The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires us to take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality.
<hr/>	
so we suppress some figures,	Values of 1 or 2, or a percentage based on 1 or 2 pupils who achieved; or 0, 1 or 2 pupils who did not achieve a particular level are suppressed. Some additional figures have been suppressed to prevent the possibility of a suppressed figure being revealed.  This suppression is consistent with our <a href="#">Statistical policy statement on confidentiality</a> .
<hr/>	
adopt symbols to help identify this	Symbols are used in the tables as follows: · not applicable .. not available # not published due to lack of sufficiently representative data as a result of industrial action (2010 figures only) x publication of that figure would be disclosive * LA level data based on a single school
<hr/>	
and round numbers	Percentages in this SFR are given to the nearest whole number but all gaps and differences have been calculated on unrounded data. Therefore some figures may not match those produced from the rounded figures shown in the tables.  All pupil numbers at regional level are rounded to the nearest 10. This is so that it is not possible to deduce the figures for LAs which have been suppressed. However percentages have been calculated from unrounded data.
<hr/>	
We haven't made any significant changes this year	Since national curriculum assessments at key stage 2 were introduced in 1995, there have been a number of changes to the process by which the assessments are run and tests are marked which are likely to affect year

---

---

on year comparisons.

There were significant changes to KS2 assessment in 2012 and 2013 which are described in the quality and methodology information which accompanies this SFR.

There were no significant changes to how primary school assessments were conducted in 2015. However, this is the first year in which all tests have been marked onscreen.

---

This is provisional data

2015 figures in this publication are provisional. We will publish revised figures in the revised 'National curriculum assessments at key stage 2' statistical first release in December.

Small changes may not be indicative of a true change in attainment. This is because there may be small differences between these figures and the revised figures published later in the year. The differences between provisional and revised national figures are usually negligible but LA level figures may be larger.

Any unplanned revisions will be made in accordance with our [Statistical policy statement on revisions](#).

---

We provide underlying data

The SFR is accompanied by national and local authority underlying data and metadata describing this data. This data is provided in csv format so that it can be loaded into the software of your choice.

---

## 8. Further information is available

---

School level figures

School level data will be published in the performance tables in December.

---

Data for lower level geographies

Pupil residency based tables showing 2015 small area attainment data will be published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on the [neighbourhood statistics service \(NeSS\) website](#) in summer 2016.

---

Characteristics breakdowns

Characteristics breakdowns will be published in the revised SFR in December.

---

Previously published figures

SFR50/2014: [National curriculum assessments at key stage 2, 2014](#)  
Primary school [performance tables](#) 2014

---

Attainment for other key stages	SFR34/2014: <a href="#">Phonics screening check and key stage 1 assessments: England 2014</a> SFR02/2015: <a href="#">Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2013 to 2014</a> SFR03/2015: <a href="#">A level and other level 3 results: 2013 to 2014 (revised)</a>
Assessing the performance of academies	SFR09/2015 <a href="#">Measuring the performance of schools within academy chains and local authorities</a>
Pupil numbers	SFR15/2015: <a href="#">Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics: January 2015</a>
Attainment in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and international comparisons.	See the quality and methodology information which accompanies this release for details of similar data available for other areas.

## 9. 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 Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The Department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

## 10. Technical Information

A quality and methodology information document accompanies this SFR. This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed.

National curriculum assessment figures published in this statistical first release (SFR) are based on the data that will be used to prepare the 2015 primary school performance tables. This data will be shared with schools and local authorities as part of the checking exercise on 7 September 2015. It is based on test and teacher assessment data provided to the Department by the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) on 7 July 2015 which has been matched to key stage 1 data to calculate pupil progress.

## 11. Got a query? Like to give feedback?

---

If from the media

Press Office News Desk, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings,  
Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.  
020 7783 8300

If non-media

Jayne Middlemas, Education Data Division, Department for Education, 2  
St Paul's Place, 125 Norfolk Street, Sheffield S1 2FJ.  
0114 2742117 [primary.attainment@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:primary.attainment@education.gsi.gov.uk)

---



Department  
for Education



© Crown copyright 2015

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [Open Government Licence](#) or e-mail: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

Jayne Middlemas, Education Data Division, Department for Education,  
2 St Paul's Place, 125 Norfolk Street, Sheffield S1 2FJ.

0114 2742117 [primary.attainment@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:primary.attainment@education.gsi.gov.uk)

This document is also available from our [website](#).