



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

Statistical Digest of Rural England

# Education and childcare

This document is part of the larger compendium publication the [Statistical Digest of Rural England](#), a collection of rural statistics on a wide range of social and economic government policy areas.

The Statistical Digest of Rural England is an official statistics publication meaning these statistics have been produced to the high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

More information on the Official Statistics Code of Practice can be found on the [Code of Practice web pages](#).

These statistics allow comparisons between the different rural and urban area classifications. The Rural-Urban Classification is used to distinguish rural and urban areas. The Classification defines areas as rural if they fall outside of settlements with more than 10,000 resident population.

More information on the Rural-Urban Classification can be found on the [Rural-Urban Classification web pages](#).

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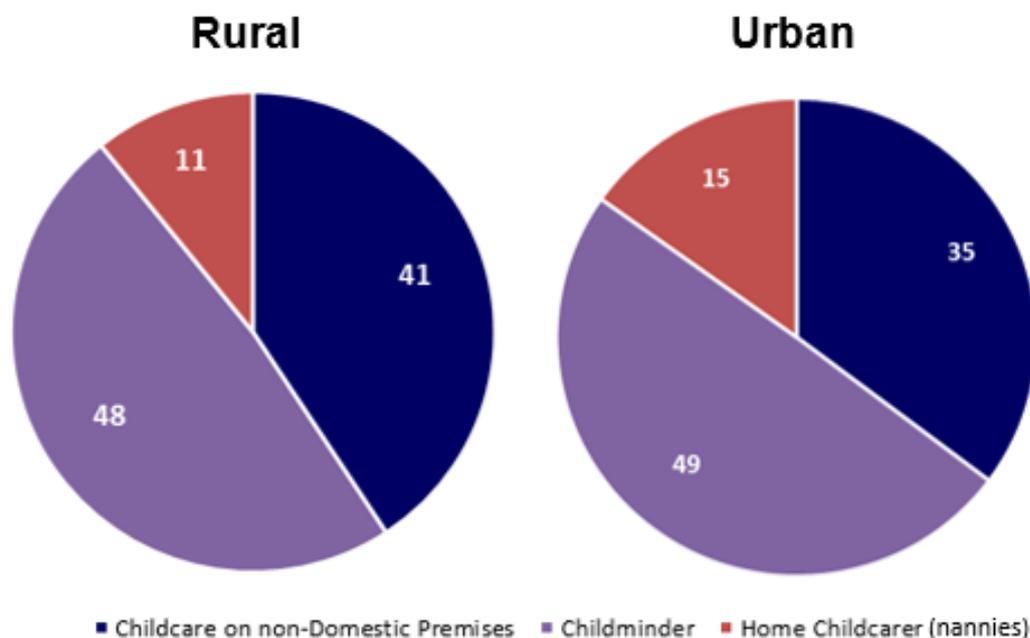
# Education

## Childcare provision

- The type of childcare provider is proportionally similar in both Rural and Urban areas, with almost half of providers being Childminders in both settings.
- The number of active childcare providers in Rural areas and Urban with Significant Rural areas has decreased by 20 per cent since 2015, while the in Urban areas there has a 13 per cent fall.
- Ofsted notes that despite the fall in the number of providers since 2015, the number of places on the Early Years Register (EYR) has remained broadly stable.
- The overall quality of childcare providers has improved in both Rural and Urban areas since 2015. The proportion of providers judged to be Good or Outstanding has increased by 10 per cent in Rural areas and by 13 per cent in Urban areas.

## Childcare provider types

Proportion of childcare providers \*, by type of provider and by rural urban classification, March 2020, England



\* Domestic Childcare not visible as it is less than 1 per cent of total proportion of providers

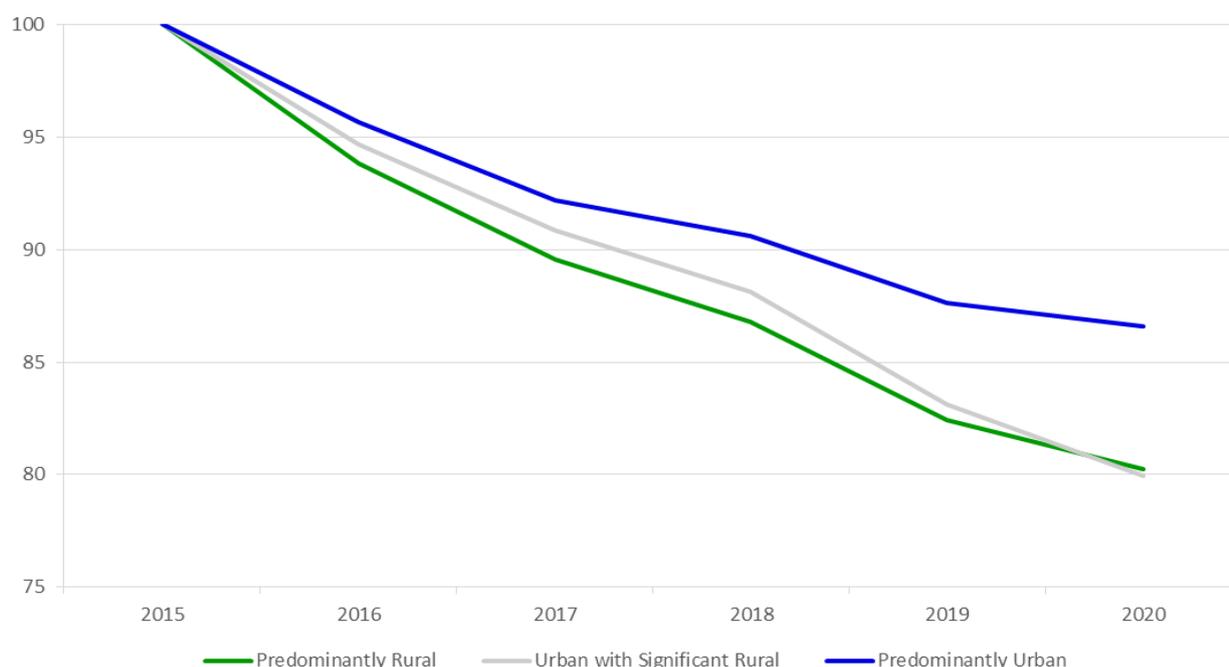
- Childminders make up almost 50 per cent of the childcare providers in both Rural and Urban areas.
- In Rural areas childcare on non-domestic premises makes up 41 per cent of total childcare providers, 6 percentage points higher than in Urban areas.
- Home Childcare (nannies) is slightly more prevalent in Urban areas, 4 percentage points higher as a proportion of providers than Rural areas.

### Number and percentage of Childcare Providers, by type of provider and by Parliamentary Constituency rural urban classification, March 2020, England

Number and percentage of childcare providers					
	Childcare on Domestic Premises	Childcare on non-Domestic Premises	Childminders	Home Childcare (nannies)	Total Providers
Predominantly Rural	61	5,863	6,974	1,559	14,457
Predominantly Urban	151	18,337	25,811	7,894	52,193
<b>England</b>	244	27,619	36,972	10,233	75,068
Predominantly Rural	0.4	40.6	48.2	10.8	100
Predominantly Urban	0.3	35.1	49.5	15.1	100
<b>England</b>	0.3	36.8	49.3	13.6	100

## Number of childcare providers

Index of total number of childcare providers (2015 = 100), by Parliamentary Constituency rural urban classification, March 2015 to March 2020, England



- The total number of active childcare providers has declined every year since 2015 in Predominantly Rural, Urban with Significant Rural, and predominately urban area types.
- The number of active childcare providers in Rural areas and Urban with Significant Rural areas has decreased by 20 per cent since 2015, while the in Urban areas there has a 13 per cent fall.
- Ofsted notes that despite the fall in the number of providers since 2015, the number of places on the Early Years Register (EYR) has remained broadly stable.
- Further tables showing the number of childcare providers and the index of change displayed below, broken down by rural-urban classification for 2015 to 2020 are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Index of change in Childcare Providers (2015 = 100), by rural urban classification, March 2015 to March 2020, England

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Predominantly Rural	100	93.8	89.6	86.8	82.4	80.3
Urban with Significant Rural	100	94.7	90.9	88.1	83.1	80.0
Predominantly Urban	100	95.6	92.2	90.6	87.6	86.6
<b>England</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>91.3</b>	<b>89.5</b>	<b>86.0</b>	<b>84.2</b>

## Quality of childcare providers

Early Year Registered (EYR) child carer inspection outcomes as percentage of total EYR childcare providers, by Parliamentary Constituency rural urban classification, March 2015 and March 2020, England



- The Early Year Register (EYR) is compulsory for providers who care for children up to the age of 5 years. Active EYR providers are inspected on a 4-year cycle and are given an Overall Effectiveness grade, in line with Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework (CIF), which measures the overall quality of childcare provision.
- Between 2015 and 2020 the percentage of EYR childcare providers judged to be Good or Outstanding in Rural areas increased from 87 per cent to 97 per cent of EYR providers, while in Urban areas it increased from 83 per cent to 96 per cent.
- The proportion of providers judged to be Good or Outstanding was higher in Rural areas compared with Urban areas in both 2015 and 2020, although the difference decreased from 4 percentage points in 2015 to 1 percentage point in 2020.

Number and percentage of Early Year Registered child carers most recent inspection outcome, by rural urban classification, March 2015 and March 2020, England

	<i>Predominantly Rural</i>				<i>Predominantly Urban</i>			
	<i>March 2015</i>		<i>March 2020</i>		<i>March 2015</i>		<i>March 2020</i>	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
Inspections with known outcome	13,507	100	9,293	100	41,547	100	29,997	100
<i>Outstanding</i>	2,059	15	1,832	20	5,046	12	5,053	17
<i>Good</i>	9,716	72	7,166	77	29,590	71	23,708	79
<i>Requires improvement</i>	1,585	12	228	2	6,337	15	973	3
<i>Inadequate</i>	147	1	67	1	574	1	263	1
Inspections with unknown outcome	1,859	-	2,828	-	7,364	-	9,775	-

Notes: A rural urban classification has been applied using the parliamentary constituency of each childcare provider, since this was the lowest level of geography published that covered all providers. There are 533 parliamentary constituencies in England.

The total childcare provider data, used for the index, is drawn together from three Ofsted registers: Early Years Register (EYR), Compulsory Childcare Register (CCR) and Voluntary Childcare Register (VCR). The individual register data is found in the Ofsted providers level data sourced below.

Type of provider	Description
Childcare on non-domestic premises	Nurseries, pre-schools, holiday clubs and other group-based settings, usually registered on the Early Years Register (EYR) because they look after children aged 0 to 5.
Childminders	People who look after one or more children they are not related to for payment or reward. The care takes place in a home that is not the child's own. The majority register on the EYR because they look after children aged 0 to 5, but those who look after 5 to 7-year olds need to register on the Childcare Register (CR).
Childcare on domestic premises	Where four or more people look after children together in a home that is not the child's. The majority are registered on the EYR and some are registered on the CR, depending on the age of the children they look after.
Home childcarers (nannies)	Individuals who care for children aged 0 to 18 wholly or mainly in the child's own home. They are not required to register with Ofsted. Though they may choose to do so on the Voluntary Childcare Register (VCR).

For more information see Main findings and methodology report at the [Childcare providers and inspections as at 31 March 2020 Official Statistics homepage](#)

Source: Ofsted [Childcare providers level data as at 31 March 2020 \(ODS Format\)](#)

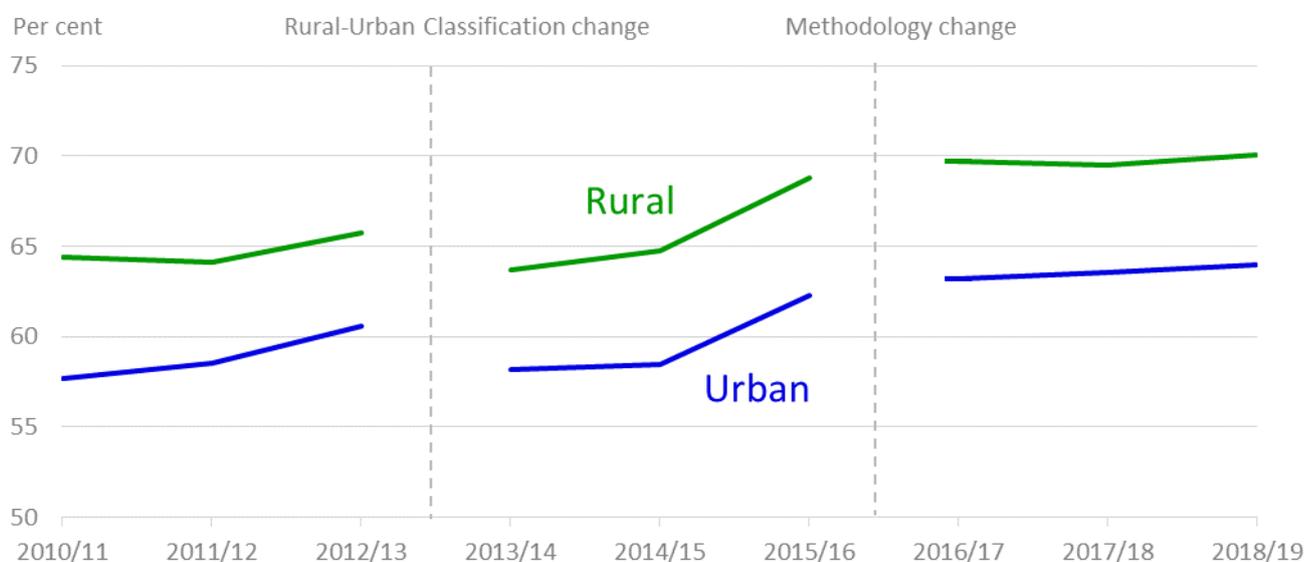
## Secondary education

- The introduction of a new secondary school accountability system in 2016 has changed how GCSE performance is measured. A 9 to 1-point measure was introduced to replace the A\* to G system, where a 9 to 4 score is equivalent to the previous A\* to C measure. Data from 2016/17 presents the new 9 to 4 measure, whereas data prior to 2016/17 presents the previous A\* to C measure.
- In the 2018/19 academic year, 70 per cent of pupils living in rural areas left school with English and Maths GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (equivalent to A\* to C). This was higher than for urban areas (64 per cent) and England overall (65 per cent).
- For a given level of deprivation, the attainment levels of pupils living in rural areas were lower than for pupils living in urban areas with a similar level of deprivation.
- There is a wide variation in the English and Maths GCSE attainment results for Local Authority District (LAD) areas, but at the regional level attainment is higher in rural areas.

### Pupils leaving school with English and Maths at grades A\* to C or equivalent at GCSE level, based on residency of pupils

- The introduction of a new secondary school accountability system in 2016 has changed how GCSE performance is measured. A 9 to 1-point measure was introduced to replace the A\* to G system, where a 9 to 4 score is equivalent to the previous A\* to C measure. On the chart below, data from 2016/17 onwards presents the new 9 to 4 measure, whereas data prior to 2016/17 presents the previous A\* to C measure.
- The proportion of pupils achieving English and Maths A\* to C grades or equivalent in their GCSEs at the end of Key Stage 4 (end of secondary-level education), based on residency of pupil:
  - increased between 2010/11 and 2018/19 for both rural and urban areas;
  - was always at least 5 percentage points higher in rural than in urban areas; and
  - was 6.1 percentage points higher in rural than urban areas in 2018/19.

### Achievement of English and Maths GCSEs at grades A\* to C or equivalent in England, based on pupil residence 2010/11 to 2018/19



## Percentage of pupils leaving school with English and Maths GCSEs at grades A\* to C or equivalent, based on residency of pupils in England

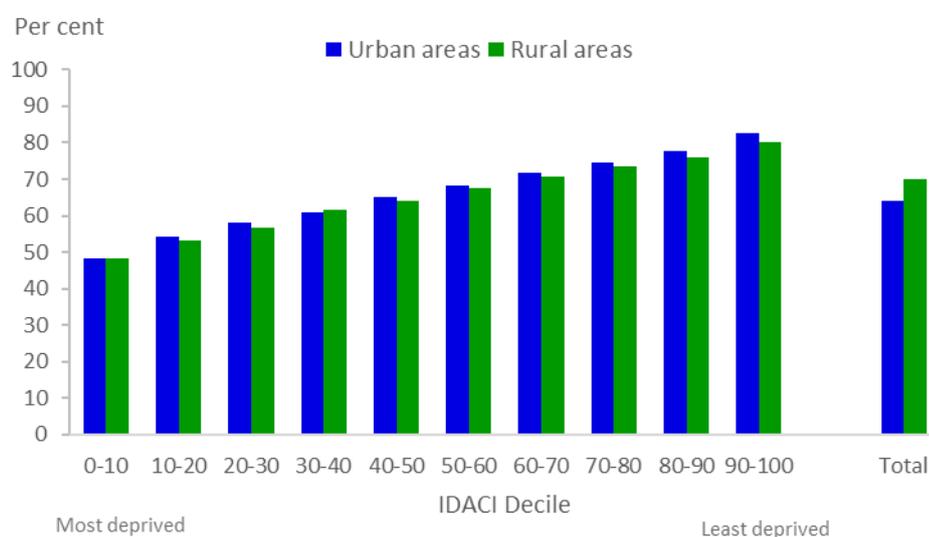
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Rural areas	64.4	64.1	65.7	63.7	64.7	68.8	69.7	69.5	70.1
Urban areas	57.7	58.5	60.6	58.2	58.4	62.3	63.2	63.5	64.0
<b>England</b>	<b>59.0</b>	<b>59.5</b>	<b>61.6</b>	<b>59.1</b>	<b>59.5</b>	<b>63.4</b>	<b>64.3</b>	<b>64.5</b>	<b>65.0</b>

The first vertical line on the chart and table indicates the introduction of the 2011 Rural-Urban Classification from 2013/14 that prevents comparison with previous years (see notes). The second vertical line indicates the introduction of the new 9-point scale for GCSE classification where a 4 or above is equivalent to the old A\* to C measure (see notes).

Data in the table above are available broken down by a more detailed rural-urban classification in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

## Pupils leaving school with English and Maths A\* to C grades or equivalent at GCSE level, based on Income Deprivation Affecting Children Indices (IDACI) decile and residency of pupils

- Results by the level of deprivation in the area where the pupil lives (using the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) adds context to the results presented above by taking into account the circumstances of children outside the influence of the school.
- When comparing results using deprivation level (IDACI decile bands), rural areas had lower achievement levels in English and Maths for almost all levels of deprivation compared with urban areas.
- The differing outcome at the aggregated rural level (rural areas seeing higher levels of attainment) and individual deprivation levels is explained by the different proportions of deprivation within rural and urban areas overall.
- In rural areas in 2018/19, 26 per cent of pupils were in areas with the highest levels of deprivation (decile bands 0 to 50) compared with 60 per cent of pupils in urban areas. Those pupils in these more deprived areas generally had lower achievement levels compared with those in less deprived areas (decile bands 50 to 100) where there are proportionately more pupils in rural areas. This factor results in a higher attainment average overall for rural pupils and the converse for urban pupils.
- **Achievement of English and Maths GCSEs at a 9 to 4 pass in England, based on Income Deprivation Affecting Children Indices (IDACI) decile and residency of pupil (2018/19)**



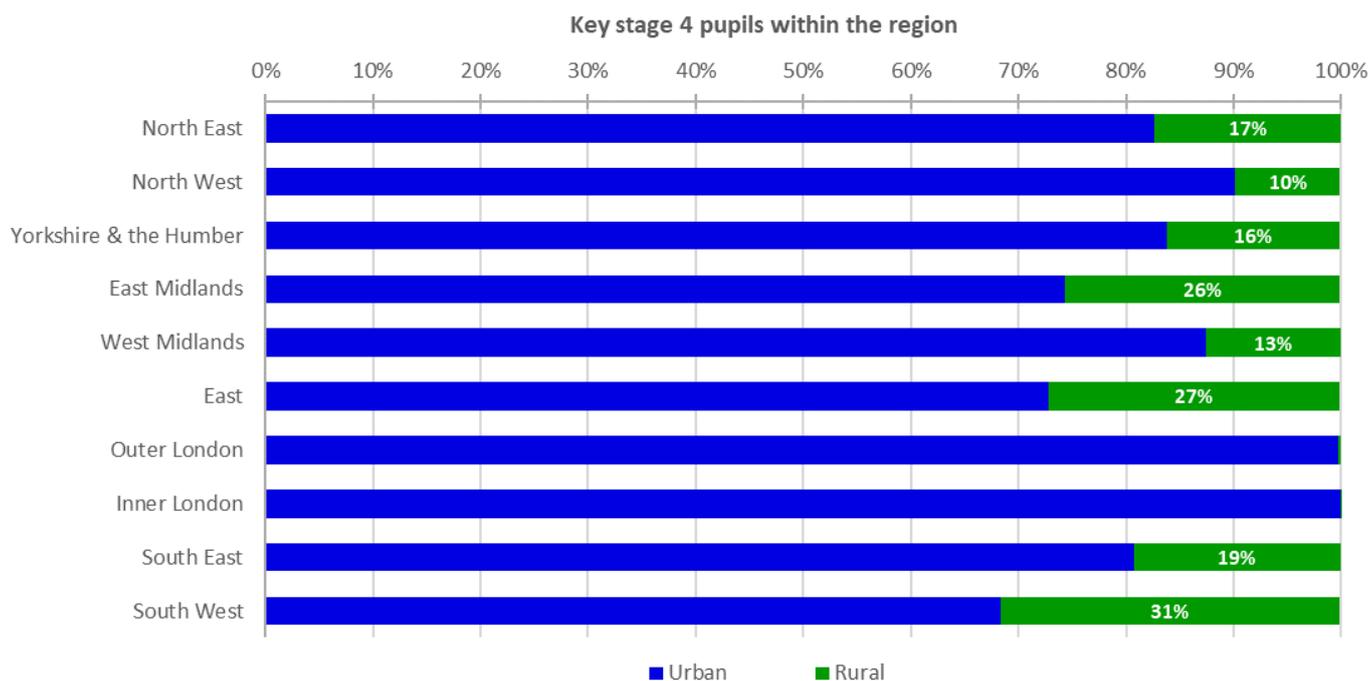
**Percentage of pupils leaving school with English and Maths GCSEs at a 9 to 4 pass (equivalent to A\* to C) in England, based on IDACI decile and residency of pupil (2018/19)**

IDAI Decile	Most deprived					Least deprived				
	0-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	90-100
<b>England</b>	<b>48.4</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>58.0</b>	<b>61.1</b>	<b>64.9</b>	<b>68.1</b>	<b>71.5</b>	<b>74.4</b>	<b>77.2</b>	<b>82.2</b>
Urban areas	48.4	54.1	58.1	61.0	65.1	68.2	71.8	74.7	77.7	82.7
Rural areas	48.2	53.2	56.6	61.6	64.2	67.7	70.8	73.6	76.0	80.3

Data in the table above are also available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#) with the inclusion of total pupil numbers in rural and urban areas for each of the IDACI deciles.

**Pupils leaving school with English and Maths at GCSE level, by geographical residency of pupils**

- In the South and East of the country the proportion of students achieving a 9 to 4 pass in English and Maths is above the England average (65 per cent), whilst in the North and the Midlands the proportion is below the England average. Nationally 16.5 per cent of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 (KS4) in the 2018/19 academic year lived in rural areas. This varies from one in ten KS4 pupils in the North West region to almost one in three in the South West region. Attainment in rural areas is higher than in urban areas in every region and the trend for lower attainment in the Midlands and the North is not replicated for rural areas.



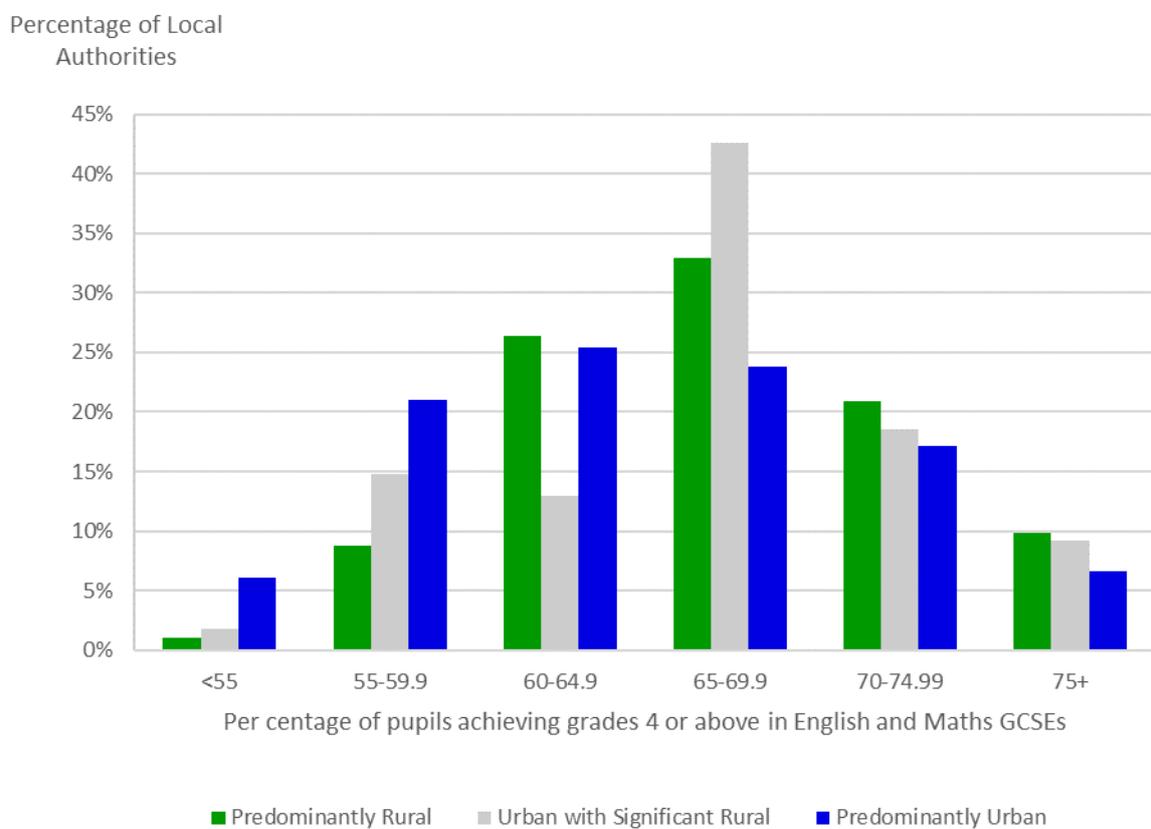
- There is a wide variation in the English and Maths GCSE A\* to C grades or equivalent attainment results at Local Authority District (LAD) area level. The proportion of pupils achieving these results in their English and Maths GCSEs at the end of Key Stage 4 was highest in Rushcliffe at 86 per cent (a Predominantly Rural local authority district) and lowest in Knowsley at 50 per cent (a Predominantly Urban local authority district). The urban area with the highest attainment was St Albans (81 per cent of pupils obtaining grade 9 to 4 in Maths and English). Only one Predominantly Rural local authority district (Tendring) had less than 55 per cent of pupils achieving grades 9 to 4 in Maths and English. The locations of the 4 authorities are shown as annotations on the subsequent map.

**Percentage of pupils leaving school with English and Maths GCSEs at a 9 to 4 pass (equivalent to A\* to C) and a 9-5 pass in England, based on the residency region of pupils (2018/19)**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Number of eligible pupils</b>	<b>% achieving English and Maths 9-5 pass</b>	<b>% achieving English and Maths 9-4 pass</b>
North East	25,300	40	62
Rural	4,400	42	65
Urban	20,900	39	61
North West	73,400	41	63
Rural	7,200	50	72
Urban	66,300	40	62
Yorkshire & the Humber	54,000	42	63
Rural	8,700	49	71
Urban	45,300	40	62
East Midlands	47,200	42	64
Rural	12,100	48	71
Urban	35,100	40	61
West Midlands	60,600	40	62
Rural	7,600	48	71
Urban	53,000	39	61
East	60,500	43	65
Rural	16,400	46	69
Urban	44,100	42	64
Outer London	53,800	51	70
Rural	100	50	72
Urban	53,700	51	70
Inner London	26,400	46	67
Rural	-	64	91
Urban	26,400	46	67
South East	85,600	46	67
Rural	16,400	52	72
Urban	69,100	45	66
South West	51,200	43	65
Rural	16,100	45	68
Urban	35,100	42	64
England	538,000	44	65
Rural	89,000	48	70
Urban	449,000	43	64

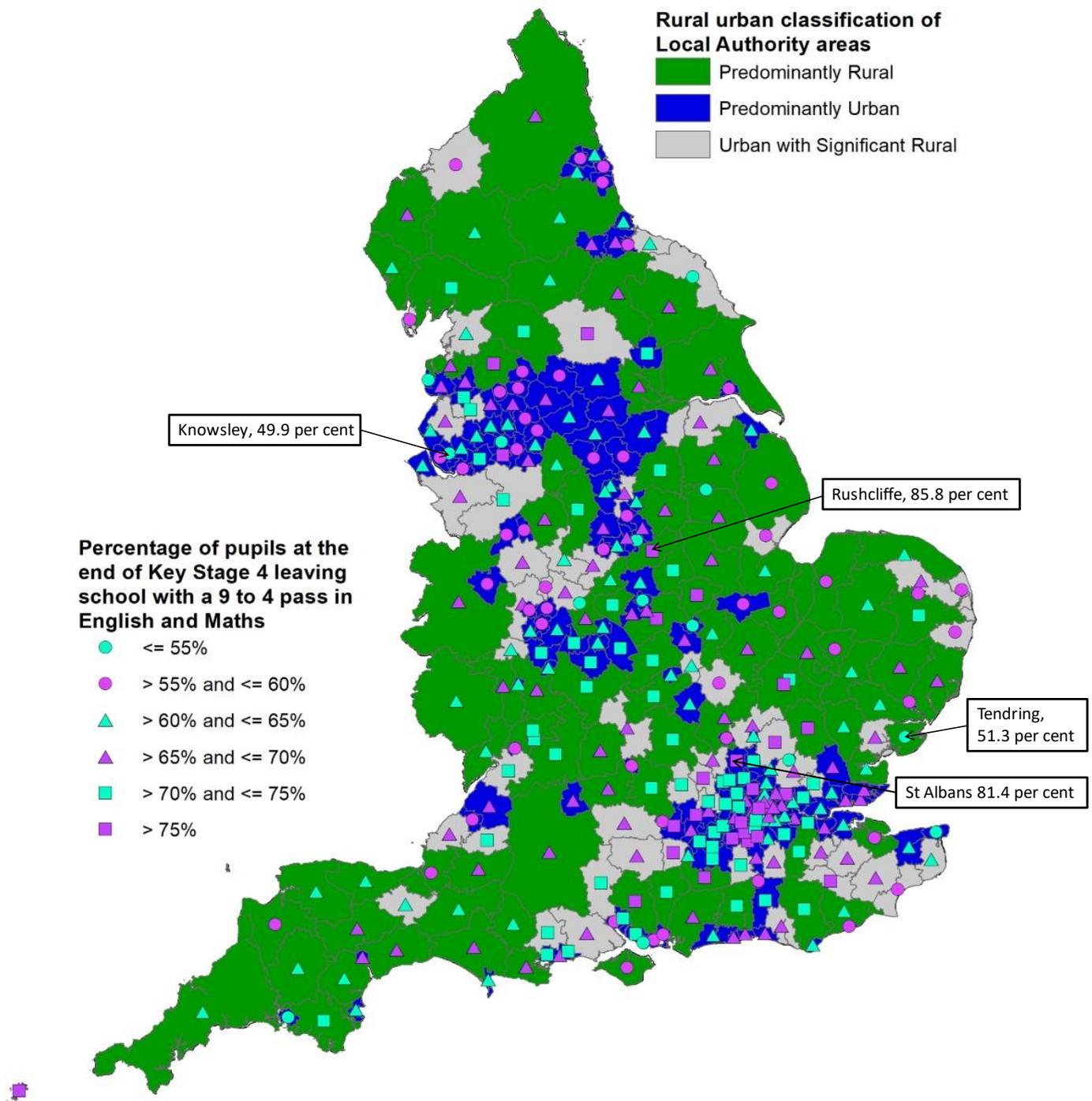
- Proportionally more Predominantly Urban Local Authorities had less than 60 per cent of pupils obtaining a 9 to 4 pass in GCSE Maths and English than for Predominantly Rural Local Authorities. Similarly, proportionally more Predominantly Rural Local Authorities had at least 75 per cent of pupils obtaining a 9 to 4 pass in GCSE Maths and English than urban areas.
- In 52 per cent of Predominantly Rural Local Authorities, at least two-thirds of students obtained a 9 to 4 pass in GCSE Maths and English in 2018/19. The median percentage of pupils obtaining a 9 to 4 pass in GCSE Maths and English for Predominantly Rural Local Authorities is higher than for Predominantly Urban Local Authorities (67 per cent compared to 64 per cent).

**The distribution of Local Authority English and Maths 9 to 4 pass attainment levels based on the rural urban classification of pupil residence (2018/19)**



- Coastal Local Authority District areas also show a pattern of lower attainment levels. Most of the authorities with high attainment levels can be found in the West Midlands and the South East. Very few Local Authorities with high attainment are found in the North and none of these are in the North East.

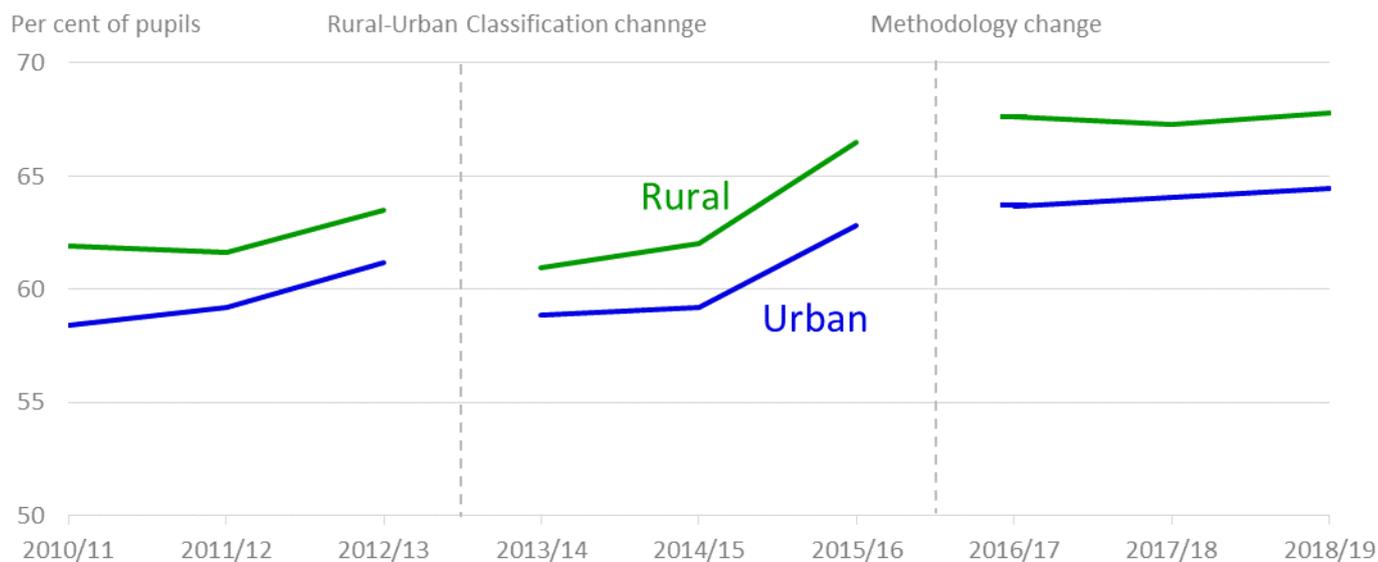
**Local Authority English and Maths 9 to 4 pass attainment levels based on location of pupil, by settlement type, in England (2018/19)**



## Pupils leaving school with English and Maths A\* to C grades or equivalent at GCSE level, based on school location

- The proportion of pupils achieving English and Maths A\* to C grades or equivalent in their GCSEs at the end of Key Stage 4 (end of secondary level education) based on school location was 3.3 percentage points higher in rural than urban areas in 2018/19.
- The percentage of pupils achieving English and Maths GCSEs at grades A\* to C or equivalent was higher for pupils who went to school in rural areas than for those who went to school in urban areas each year between 2010/11 and 2018/19.

### Achievement of English and Maths GCSEs at grades A\* to C or equivalent in England, based on school location 2010/11 to 2018/19



### Percentage of pupils leaving school with English and Maths GCSEs at grades A\* to C or equivalent, based on location of schools in England

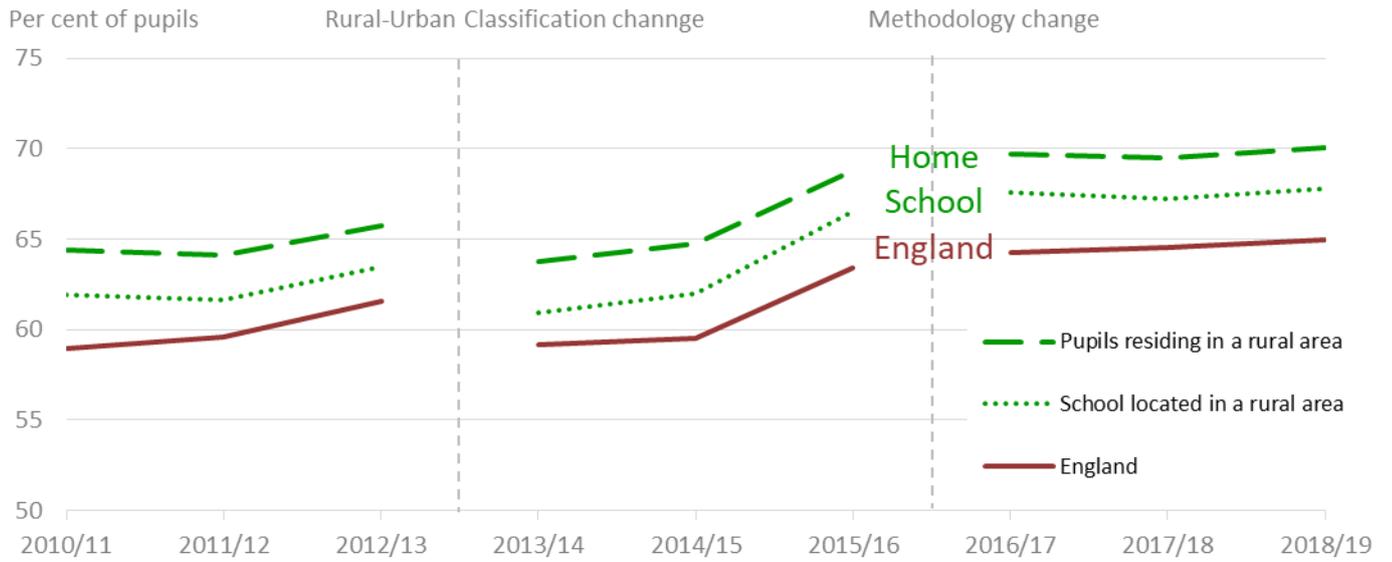
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Rural areas	61.9	61.6	63.5	60.9	62.0	66.5	67.6	67.3	67.8
Urban areas	58.4	59.2	61.2	58.8	59.2	62.8	63.7	64.0	64.5
<b>England</b>	<b>58.9</b>	<b>59.5</b>	<b>61.5</b>	<b>59.1</b>	<b>59.5</b>	<b>63.3</b>	<b>64.2</b>	<b>64.4</b>	<b>64.9</b>

The first vertical line on the chart and table indicates the introduction of the 2011 Rural-Urban Classification from 2013/14 that prevents comparison with previous years (see notes). The second vertical line indicates the introduction of the new 9-point scale for GCSE classification where a 4 or above is equivalent to the old A\* to C measure (see notes).

Data in the table above are available broken down by a more detailed rural-urban classification in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

- There will be differences between pupil residency and location of school as some pupils living in rural areas will travel to schools in urban areas and vice versa. The data show that those who live in rural areas have a higher attainment than those who attend schools in rural areas. In both cases the level of attainment is higher than the England average.

**Achievement of English and Maths GCSEs at grades A\* to C or equivalent in England, comparing achievement for pupils residing in rural areas and all students at rural schools, 2010/11 to 2018/19**



## School inspection outcomes, based on school location

Percentage of secondary schools with most recent school inspection outcome, as at 31 March 2019, based on rural urban classification of school location, England



- As at 31 March 2019, 18 per cent of secondary schools in rural areas had received ‘Outstanding’ as the most recent inspection outcome, compared with 22 per cent of secondary schools in urban areas.
- 63 per cent of secondary schools in rural areas had received a ‘Good’ inspection outcome.
- Overall, 81 per cent of secondary schools in rural areas had received ‘Outstanding’ or ‘Good’ inspection outcomes, compared with 74 per cent in urban areas.
- A table showing data on the most recent school inspection outcomes for English secondary schools, broken down by detailed rural-urban classification are available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).

Notes: Data includes pupils at the end of KS4 in each academic year and those taking International GCSEs. Pupils with missing/incorrect residential postcodes are excluded so school-location and pupil-location are not the same. A small number of pupils resident in Scotland or Wales who attend school in England are in the school-location analysis, but not pupil-location analysis. The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) is a subset of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, it shows the proportion of children in each Lower-layer Super Output Area that live in families that are income deprived. IDACI bands are based on 2010 IDACI scores. Information on IDACI can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015). Methodological changes mean that from 2013/14 onwards data aren’t comparable with previous years. This is due to incorporation of the recommendations of Professor Wolf’s independent review of vocational education and new early entry rules. For a summary of these changes, see [Quality and methodology information: SFR41/2014](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/366555/SFR41_2014_QualityandMethodology.pdf), ([www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/366555/SFR41\\_2014\\_QualityandMethodology.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/366555/SFR41_2014_QualityandMethodology.pdf)) The Department for Education hosts the independent Wolf Report ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-vocational-education-the-wolf-report](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-vocational-education-the-wolf-report)) and the final progress report ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/wolf-recommendations-progress-report](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wolf-recommendations-progress-report)).

Source: Department for Education *Pupil residency and school location tables: SFR 01/2016*, part of *Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2014 to 2015* ([www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2014-to-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2014-to-2015)) and table *SFR01/2016: GCSE and equivalent results in England 2014/15 (Revised)* ([www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/493479/SFR01\\_2016\\_Pupil\\_Residency\\_and\\_School\\_Location\\_Tables.xls](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/493479/SFR01_2016_Pupil_Residency_and_School_Location_Tables.xls)).

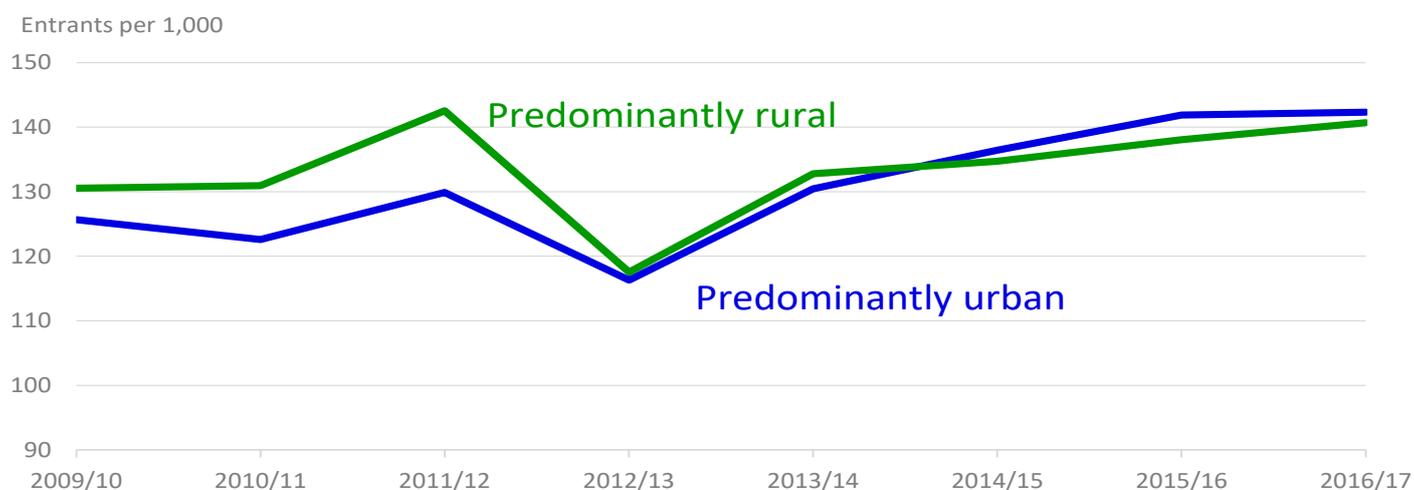
Ofsted Schools Management Information: [www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/monthly-management-information-ofsteds-school-inspections-outcomes](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/monthly-management-information-ofsteds-school-inspections-outcomes) and Defra analysis. For one secondary school, which had not been inspected, it was not possible to match its location and apply a rural urban classification. It has not been included in the table.

## Higher education

- The rate of full-time entry to higher education institutions by 18 to 20-year olds in 2016/17 was slightly lower in Predominantly Rural areas than in Predominantly Urban areas (141 compared with 142 entrants per 1,000 18 to 20-year olds respectively).
- For part-time entry the ratio was higher in Predominantly Rural areas (4 per 1,000) than in Predominantly Urban areas (3 per 1,000).
- Rates of entry to part-time higher education have been falling since around 2009/10.
- The rates for entrants to higher education institutions are based on where the students are living prior to commencing higher education and does not take account of the location of the higher education institutions.

### Full-time entrants to higher education

#### Full-time entrants to higher education per 1,000 people aged 18 to 20 in England



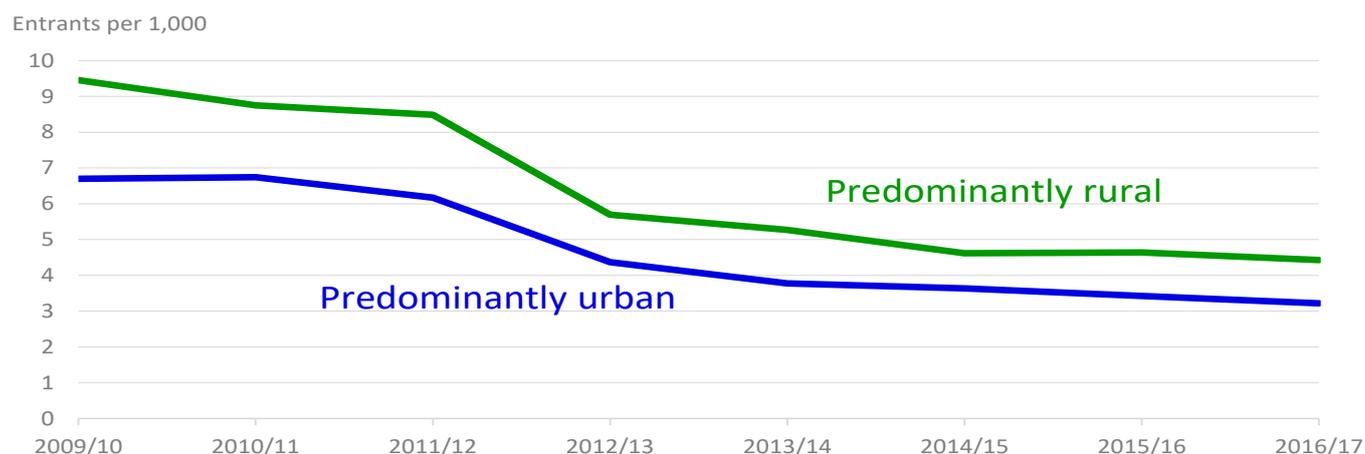
- There has been an increase in the rate of enrolment for full-time courses at higher education institutions in England since 2012/13. This followed a decrease in the previous year that coincided with changes to tuition fee arrangements.
- The rate of entry to higher education by 18 to 20-year olds has tended to be higher for those living in Predominantly Rural areas than Predominantly Urban areas, but the rate for Predominantly Urban areas rose above Predominantly Rural areas in 2014/15.

#### Full-time entrants to higher education per 1,000 population of 18 to 20-year olds in England

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Predominantly Rural	131	131	143	118	133	135	138	141
Urban with Significant Rural	143	142	152	129	142	145	149	151
Predominantly Urban	126	123	130	116	130	136	142	142
<b>England</b>	130	128	137	119	133	138	143	144

## Part-time entrants to higher education

### Part-time entrants to higher education per 1,000 people aged 18 to 20 in England



- The rate of 18 to 20-year olds enrolling for part-time courses at higher education institutions in England has been decreasing since 2009/10 in Predominantly Rural areas and 2010/11 in Predominantly Urban areas.
- In 2016/17 the entry rates for those living in Predominantly Rural areas prior to commencing higher education were 4 entrants per 1,000 population of 18 to 20-year olds compared with 3 entrants per 1,000 population for those living in Predominantly Urban areas.
- Predominantly Rural areas have had a consistently higher rate of part time enrolment to higher education for 18 to 20-year olds than Predominantly Urban areas.

### Part-time entrants to higher education per 1,000 population of 18 to 20-year olds in England

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Predominantly Rural	9	9	8	6	5	5	5	4
Urban with Significant Rural	8	8	7	5	5	5	5	5
Predominantly Urban	7	7	6	4	4	4	3	3
<b>England</b>	7	7	7	5	4	4	4	4

Notes: Rates are presented as the number of people per 1,000 aged 18 to 20, using mid-year population estimates as the baseline.

Data on entrants to higher education were provided at the scale of Local Education Authorities (LEAs), which were matched to the 2011 Rural-Urban Classification for counties.

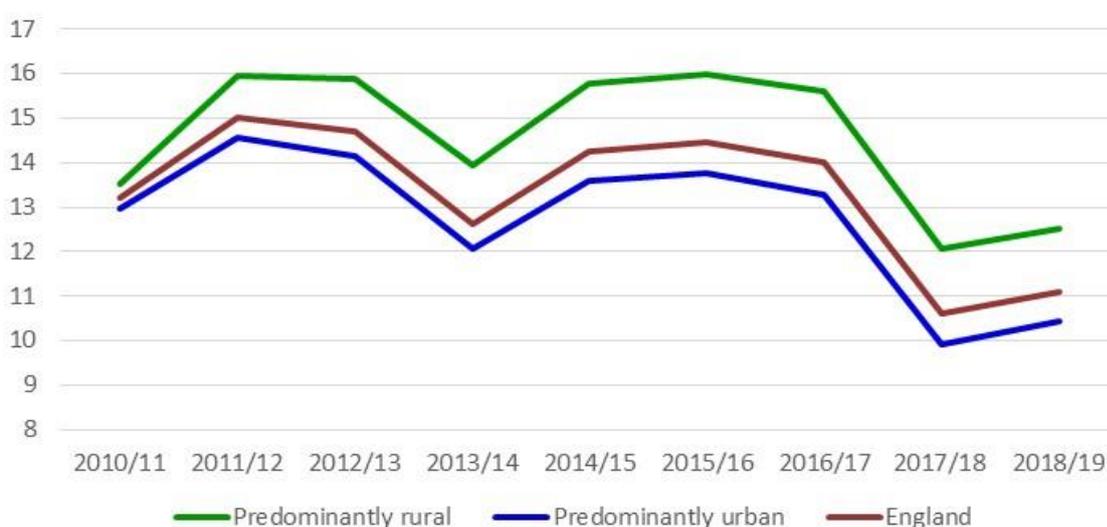
Source: Department for Education.

## Apprenticeships

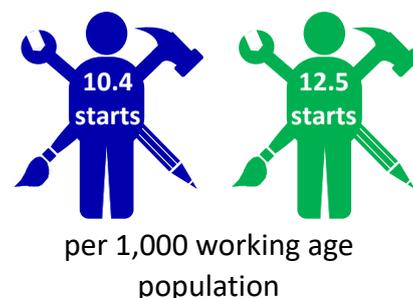
Apprentices are aged 16 or over and combine working with studying to gain skills and knowledge in a specific job. They can be new or current employees and are paid at least the minimum wage. As of May 2017, reforms were made to how apprenticeship funding works, including the introduction of the apprenticeship levy and apprenticeship service. The profile of apprenticeship starts changed significantly since the introduction of the levy which, along with the introduction of apprenticeship standards (that are replacing frameworks), has impacted on the number and nature of apprenticeship starts and participation.

The apprenticeship levy is a compulsory tax on employers in England to fund the development and delivery of apprenticeships, which aims to improve the quality and quantity of those available. For further information on the apprenticeship levy see the [policy paper 'Apprenticeship Levy'](#).

### Apprenticeship starts per 1,000 working age population, by Parliamentary Constituency level Classification, in England, 2010/11 to 2018/19



- In 2018/19 there were 12.5 apprenticeship starts per 1,000 working age population in Predominantly Rural areas, compared with 10.4 apprenticeship starts in Predominantly Urban areas. These numbers show a small increase on 2017/18 apprenticeship starts.
- Numbers of apprenticeship starts have fluctuated over time, however the relationship between rural and urban area types has remained the same with apprenticeship starts per 1,000 working age population consistently higher in rural areas.
- A table showing apprenticeship starts per 1,000 working age population, broken down by rural-urban classification for 2010/11 to 2018/19 is available in the [rural living supplementary data tables](#).



Notes: Numbers are a count of the number of starts at any point during the period. Learners starting more than one Apprenticeship will appear more than once. Geography is based upon the home postcode of the learner. Analysis is based on Parliamentary Constituency level data. Working age population are those aged 16 to 64.

Source: [ONS published data on Apprenticeship starts by Parliamentary Constituency since May 2010](#)