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Uptake of GCSE subjects 2000 – 2006

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Carmen L. Vidal Rodeiro

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Research Division – Statistics Group
Assessment Research and Development
Cambridge Assessment
1 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1GG

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1. Introduction

The examination most commonly taken at the end of key stage 4 is the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). Students can take a range of examinations in single subjects and there are no regulations governing the minimum or maximum number of subjects to be taken by a student at any one time. A certificate is issued listing the grade which a student has achieved in each subject attempted. The results are reported on an eight-point scale: A*, A, B, C, D, E, F and G. Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade G are recorded as 'U' (unclassified) and do not receive a certificate.

The publication *14-19: opportunity and excellence* confirmed ministers' intentions to make changes to the key stage 4 statutory requirements to increase curriculum flexibility and the potential for individualised learning programmes. Therefore, since 2004, students in maintained schools at Key Stage 4 are required to follow the National Curriculum programmes of study in:

- English,
- science,
- physical education,
- mathematics,
- citizenship, and
- information and communications technology.

There is a statutory requirement to teach careers education, sex education and work-related learning. A new category of entitlement areas within the National Curriculum, which comprises the arts, humanities, design and technology and modern foreign languages, was introduced. This means that schools must make these areas of the curriculum available to all students who wish to study courses in them.

This report is structured as follows. Firstly, there is a brief description of the examination data used. This is followed by a section that describes in detail the uptake, by gender, attainment and school type, of the core GCSE subjects (English, mathematics and science), the modern foreign languages and some of the other most popular GCSE courses. Finally, there are a series of tables (in sections 4 and 5 of the report) where the uptake of the most popular GCSE courses by school gender, school boarding status and a variety of neighbourhood characteristics is shown.

2. Data

Data for this report were extracted from the 16+/18+ databases. These databases are compiled for the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) from data supplied by all the awarding bodies in England. They contain background details and national examination data for all candidates who have their 16th, 17th and 18th birthdays in a particular school year. Candidates are allocated a unique number that remains the same throughout their Key Stage tests, allowing matching of examination data for longitudinal investigations.

In particular, we use data that includes all students in year 11 (key state 4) in the years 2000 and 2006 and includes all GCSE examinations taken by the students up to that point. There is a small proportion of students who take GCSE examinations early. One problem with these databases is that they contain details only of the examinations taken and have no information on any course that the students might have taken but which did not culminate in a public examination (e.g. IGCSE examinations¹).

Ability

To study the uptake of GCSE subjects by ability (or attainment) a measure of the students' performance needs to be computed. By assigning marks to the GCSE grades (A*=8, A=7, B=6, C=5, D=4, E=3, F=2, G=1, U=0) it is possible to arrive to a total GCSE score for each student. A 'mean GCSE' indicator can be calculated by dividing the total score by the number of subjects attempted. If a subject had been attempted twice the highest grade was considered. The distribution of the 'mean GCSE' indicator was obtained and used to divide the students into three attainment groups: low, medium and high.

School type

In this report schools have been categorised into four different groups:

- Comprehensive schools: schools providing secondary education which admit pupils of all academic abilities.
- Grammar schools: secondary schools which select all their pupils by ability.
- Secondary modern schools: secondary schools that normally take children who have failed to gain a grammar school place, in the areas that retain academic selection.
- Independent schools: schools at which full-time education is provided for five or more pupils of compulsory school age. This term does not include a school maintained by a Local Education Authority (LEA), a self-governing grant-maintained school or a special school not maintained by a LEA.

¹ The International General Certificate of Secondary Education, or IGCSE, is an international qualification for school students. The IGCSE is typically taken by 14 to 16-year-olds, and it prepares students for further academic work, including progression to AS/A Level study and the IB Diploma Programme.

3. Uptake by gender, ability and school type

3.1 Number of examinations taken

There were a total of 561407 students that attempted at least one GCSE examination in 2000. This number increased 12% to reach 629523 students in 2006. In both years of the study the number of boys taking at least one GCSE was higher than the number of girls.

The number of GCSE examinations sat by candidates in 2000 and 2006 is given in Tables 1 and 2. Around 80% of Year 11 students took at least eight GCSEs in 2000 and seven GCSEs in 2006. The average number of GCSEs taken in 2000 was 8.36 and 7.95 in 2006. This slight decline might be due to the increase in flexibility in the GCSE studies, with new applied options for traditionally academic subjects (recorded as different qualifications), changes in the National Curriculum requirements, increased use of entry level qualifications or new 'hybrid' GCSEs that allow students to study on either academic or applied tracks². The numbers of GCSEs examinations sat by gender are given in Tables 1 and 2 and by attainment group are given in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 1. Number of GCSE examinations sat by candidates in the 2000 cohort

Number of GCSEs	Boys		Girls		All	
	%	Cum. %	%	Cum. %	%	Cum. %
0	1.7	100.0	1.6	100.0	1.6	100.0
1	1.9	98.3	1.5	98.4	1.7	98.4
2	1.4	96.4	1.0	96.9	1.2	96.6
3	1.5	95.0	1.1	95.9	1.3	95.4
4	2.1	93.5	1.3	94.8	1.7	94.1
5	2.9	91.4	1.9	93.5	2.4	92.5
6	4.4	88.5	3.0	91.6	3.7	90.1
7	7.5	84.2	5.6	88.6	6.6	86.4
8	14.7	76.6	13.0	83.1	13.9	79.8
9	34.8	62.0	38.6	70.1	36.7	66.0
10	21.3	27.2	24.7	31.4	23.0	29.3
11	4.8	5.9	5.5	6.8	5.1	6.3
12	0.9	1.1	1.0	1.3	1.0	1.2
13+	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Number of candidates	284243		277164		561407	

² These new qualifications are not considered in this report.

Table 2. Number of GCSE examinations sat by candidates in the 2006 cohort

Number of GCSEs	Boys		Girls		All	
		Cum.		Cum.		Cum.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
0	0.7	100.0	0.6	100.0	0.7	100.0
1	1.9	99.3	1.2	99.4	1.5	99.3
2	1.8	97.4	1.2	98.2	1.5	97.8
3	2.3	95.6	1.6	97.0	2.0	96.3
4	3.5	93.3	2.6	95.4	3.0	94.4
5	5.3	89.8	4.3	92.9	4.8	91.3
6	7.8	84.5	6.8	88.6	7.3	86.5
7	12.5	76.7	11.9	81.8	12.2	79.2
8	16.4	64.1	15.4	69.8	15.9	67.0
9	24.6	47.7	27.7	54.4	26.1	51.0
10	17.3	23.1	20.1	26.7	18.7	24.9
11	4.9	5.8	5.5	6.7	5.2	6.2
12	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.2	0.9	1.1
13+	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Number of candidates	318479		311044		629523	

Table 3. Number of GCSE examinations sat by candidates in the 2000 cohort by attainment group

Number of GCSEs	Low		Medium		High	
		Cum.		Cum.		Cum.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
0	4.9	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.1
1	3.2	95.1	1.3	100.0	0.8	100.1
2	3.0	91.9	0.4	98.7	0.3	99.3
3	3.3	88.9	0.4	98.3	0.2	99.0
4	4.4	85.6	0.4	97.9	0.2	98.8
5	6.1	81.2	0.8	97.5	0.3	98.6
6	9.1	75.1	1.6	96.7	0.4	98.3
7	13.5	66.0	5.1	95.1	1.2	97.9
8	19.9	52.5	15.1	90.0	6.7	96.7
9	22.4	32.6	43.5	74.9	44.1	90.0
10	8.6	10.2	25.2	31.4	35.0	45.9
11	1.2	1.6	4.7	6.3	9.3	10.9
12	0.3	0.4	1.1	1.5	1.4	1.6
13+	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2
Number of candidates	187388		182426		191593	

Table 4. Number of GCSE examinations sat by candidates in the 2006 cohort by attainment group

Number of GCSEs	Low		Medium		High	
	%	Cum. %	%	Cum. %	%	Cum. %
0	2.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
1	3.2	98.0	0.6	100.0	0.8	100.0
2	3.9	94.8	0.4	99.4	0.2	99.2
3	5.3	90.9	0.5	99.0	0.1	99.0
4	7.7	85.6	1.3	98.5	0.2	98.9
5	10.9	77.9	3.0	97.3	0.6	98.7
6	14.5	66.9	6.5	94.3	1.2	98.2
7	18.1	52.5	14.2	87.9	4.6	97.0
8	16.5	34.4	21.1	73.6	10.4	92.4
9	13.3	18.0	30.9	52.5	34.0	82.0
10	4.2	4.6	17.8	21.6	33.8	48.0
11	0.4	0.5	3.4	3.9	11.6	14.2
12	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.4	2.3	2.7
13+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3
Number of candidates		209011	208013	212499		

The average number of examinations entered is higher for students attending grammar schools, followed by those attending independent schools. Note that for these two types of schools the average number of subjects attempted increased slightly from 2000 to 2006, making the gap between them and the comprehensive and secondary modern schools bigger (Figure 1). The distribution of the number of GCSEs taken by school type is shown in Table 5. The practice in some schools of allowing 13 or more subjects can create an unnecessarily heavy examination load, especially on those below the top level of ability. It should be recognised that the coursework may have spread some of the workload of the examination load through the year.

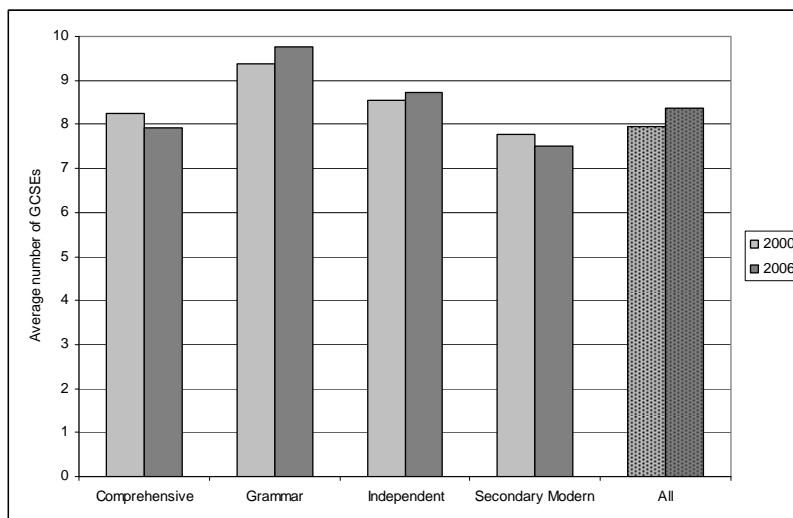


Figure 1: Average number of GCSEs by type of school

Table 5. Number of GCSE examinations sat by candidates in the 2000 and 2006 cohorts by school type

Number of GCSEs	2000				2006			
	Comprehensive	Grammar	Independent	Secondary Modern	Comprehensive	Grammar	Independent	Secondary Modern
0	1.1	0.6	3.7	1.2	0.5	0.2	0.7	0.5
1	1.3	0.1	2.2	1.5	1.1	0.1	2.1	1.1
2	1.2	0.1	0.9	1.2	1.2	0.0	0.6	1.4
3	1.5	0.0	0.8	1.6	1.9	0.1	0.6	2.0
4	2.0	0.1	0.9	2.5	3.2	0.1	0.7	3.8
5	3.0	0.1	1.4	3.8	5.2	0.3	1.1	6.9
6	4.7	0.3	2.3	6.9	7.9	0.6	2.7	10.9
7	7.9	1.2	3.9	12.7	13.3	1.4	4.9	17.3
8	15.4	8.1	8.9	22.8	16.9	3.6	12.9	20.1
9	36.8	43.2	36.2	34.3	25.6	28.5	41.6	19.9
10	21.1	37.0	28.8	9.4	17.6	43.9	25.7	12.1
11	3.6	8.1	8.3	2.1	4.7	18.3	5.7	3.3
12	0.5	1.0	1.4	0.1	0.9	2.8	0.9	0.7
13+	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1

Regulations introduced in England and Wales required secondary schools to set attainment targets for the GCSEs. These require the governing body of each secondary school to set and publish targets, among other things, for the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades at GCSE or equivalent.

The percentage of students who gained five or more grades A*-C (the standard normally needed to prepare them for advanced study) increased from 48.1% in 2000 to 55.6% in 2006. These two figures are much higher than the 37% a decade ago. These percentages are given by gender, attainment group and school type in Table 6.

Table 6. Percentage of students with at least five GCSEs at grades A* to C

	2000	2006
All	48.1	55.6
<i>Gender</i>		
Boys	43.3	50.8
Girls	52.9	60.6
<i>Attainment</i>		
Low	0.0	0.6
Medium	44.5	67.0
High	98.4	98.6
<i>School type</i>		
Comprehensive	39.6	52.4
Grammar	95.8	97.6
Independent	83.2	89.4
Secondary Modern	25.6	41.7

Schools also publish the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics. These percentages, by gender, attainment and school type, are given in Table 7.

Table 7. Percentage of students with at least five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics

	2000	2006
All	38.1	45.9
<i>Gender</i>		
Boys	34.7	41.9
Girls	41.5	50.1
<i>Attainment</i>		
Low	0.0	0.2
Medium	21.1	42.7
High	91.5	94.2
<i>School type</i>		
Comprehensive	30.2	42.8
Grammar	92.7	95.9
Independent	77.3	74.6
Secondary Modern	15.7	30.8

Secondary schools in England are going to be rated on the proportion of pupils getting two science GCSEs at grade C or above. This new measure will sit alongside the one showing how many students got five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics. The introduction of the science benchmark is part of the government's Science and Innovation Framework and it will be present in the 2007 Achievement and Attainment Tables. The aim of the indicator is to encourage the take up of science and improve performance so that more pupils progress to study GCE A levels in physics, chemistry, biology or applied science. For more information about this new indicator see 'The Government's *Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004-2014: Next Steps*' document, published in March 2007.

In this report, students are counted for the new science indicator (Table 8) if they have achieved grades A* to C in either:

- GCSE applied science double award
- at least two of the separate physics, chemistry and biology GCSEs.

The most striking feature of Table 8 is the disappearance of the gender gap in science. Boys are not underachieving in the key area of science. Also, grammar schools are particular effective at meeting the two science criterion if they are compared to other types of schools. Nearly one fifth of the candidates attending independent schools apparently fail this criterion (although this may be in part explained by the fact that IGCSEs are not included in the database used for this analysis). There are going to be serious problems with the meaningful interpretation of trends in educational statistics if IGCSE results are not gathered and made available for the statistical analysis of educational data. It is not possible to decide whether the independent sector has a particular weakness in science education at age 16 or has a strong predilection for using IGCSEs in the sciences.

Table 8. Percentage of students with two or more science GCSEs at grade C or above

	2000	2006
All	44.8	47.0
<i>Gender</i>		
Boys	44.4	46.8
Girls	45.2	47.2
<i>Attainment</i>		
Low	1.3	1.9
Medium	40.3	46.4
High	91.7	91.9
<i>School type</i>		
Comprehensive	37.5	43.5
Grammar	90.6	93.0
Independent	74.9	80.6
Secondary Modern	24.3	33.1

The Secretary of State is proposing to publish the following two languages indicators in the 2008 KS4 Tables:

- a) the percentage of pupils at the end of KS4 who have achieved at least one full GCSE (or equivalent) at grades A*-C in modern languages,
- b) the percentage of pupils at the end of KS4 who have achieved at least one short course GCSE (or equivalent) at grades A*-G in modern languages.

3.2 The core subjects: English, mathematics and science

In this section, the uptake of the core subjects, English, mathematics and science is considered. Virtually all candidates should be taking GCSEs in English, mathematics and science³: for English and mathematics the percentages of uptake are very close to 100% and have increased slightly for girls and boys in 2006. Also, the uptake of English literature rose around 2.5% in 2006.

The uptake of the separate sciences (biology, chemistry and physics) has also increased slightly in 2006. In 1997 the science double award had become dominant (Bell 2001). Although the percentages of students attempting this examination is higher than the percentages of students taking other science subjects, the trend might have started to change: the uptake of the double award in science fell almost 8 percentage points from 2000 to 2006.

Table 9 shows the uptake of core subjects by gender. Girls are less likely to do single sciences at GCSE (which will affect their progression onto science-based advance level study) and boys dominate in mathematics. However, the uptake of English and English literature is higher for girls. These patterns are the same in both years.

Table 9. Uptake of core subjects by sex (percentages of students)

Subject	2000			2006		
	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
English	93.0	95.5	94.2	95.7	97.5	96.6
English Literature	76.5	85.2	80.8	79.7	87.0	83.3
Mathematics	95.5	95.8	95.7	96.9	97.6	97.3
Biology	8.2	6.0	7.1	9.0	6.9	8.0
Chemistry	8.3	5.5	6.9	8.8	6.6	7.7
Physics	8.4	5.2	6.8	8.9	6.4	7.6
Science: single award	9.7	10.0	9.8	11.3	11.3	11.3
Science: double award	76.2	79.0	77.6	68.7	71.2	69.9

³ For the science GCSE, students may take:

- separate exams in biology, chemistry and physics; or
- a double award exam (equal to two GCSEs) that covers all three subjects; or
- a single award exam (equal to one GCSE) that covers all three sciences, but less fully.

Table 10 shows the uptake of the core subjects by attainment groups. It is noticeable that the uptake increases by attainment for these subjects. Table 10 also shows that the percentages of medium and high attainment students taking English literature are quite high and the percentages of low and medium attainment students in the three separate sciences are very low. It has always been the case that the uptake of biology, chemistry and physics has been higher for the higher attaining students. This might be a reason why the percentages of students entered for the single and double award science courses is lower for the high attaining group compared to the medium and low attaining groups.

Table 10. Uptake of core subjects by attainment group (percentages of students)

Subject	2000			2006		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
English	85.7	98.3	98.6	92.0	99.1	98.7
English Literature	59.5	87.8	95.0	62.5	90.7	96.5
Mathematics	89.1	98.8	99.1	95.6	99.3	96.9
Biology	0.8	3.6	16.7	0.8	3.5	19.4
Chemistry	0.6	3.1	16.6	0.5	3.3	19.2
Physics	0.6	3.1	16.4	0.4	3.2	19.0
Science: single award	17.6	8.8	3.2	22.1	8.9	3.1
Science: double award	69.2	86.2	77.6	58.1	78.0	73.7

Finally, Table 11 displays the uptake of the core subjects by school type. In independent schools, lower percentages of students take English and mathematics. This might be due to the fact that in this type of school there is a broader view of education than that prescribed by the national curriculum, to which state school education is, in practice, limited. The highest percentage of students taking English literature occurs in the grammar schools (although the uptake of this subject has increased in all types of schools in 2006).

The uptake of the separate sciences is much higher in the independent and grammar schools than in the comprehensive and secondary modern schools. With regard to the science double award, the uptake increased in independent schools (around 11 percentage points) but decreased in the other types of schools. On the other hand, the uptake of the science single award increased only in comprehensive schools.

The number of GCSE science examinations taken (double awards were counted as two examinations) is considered in Tables 12 to 14. This is a measure of the amount of science studied and it has been an area of concern for a long time. In Table 12, the percentage taking each number of science A-levels by gender is presented. The most notable feature of the table is the increase in the percentage attempting no GCSEs in science. Also, there is a decline in the percentages of students taking two science subjects. This might be related to the increase in the number of students taking three or more. Between 1984 and 1997, there

was a move away from taking three science subjects to taking just two (Bell 2001). Between 2000 and 2006 this trend has reversed.

Table 13 illustrates that science GCSEs are more commonly taken by high attaining students. Of the three approaches that satisfy the national curriculum, the most common is to enter a double award. Therefore, the highest percentages are for the uptake of two science subjects.

Students in independent and grammar schools are more likely to take three or more sciences than students in other types of centres (Table 14).

It is worth to mention that the percentages of students in grammar schools that take no science subjects are very small (less than 1%). This compares with percentages ranging from 6 to 11 in the other types of centres.

Table 11. Uptake of core subjects by school type (percentages of students)

Subject	2000				2006			
	Comprehensive	Grammar	Independent	Secondary Modern	Comprehensive	Grammar	Independent	Secondary Modern
English	94.6	99.3	90.9	94.5	97.4	99.7	94.9	97.7
English Literature	79.8	96.3	81.8	70.4	84.0	98.5	87.3	77.5
Mathematics	96.0	99.3	93.9	95.9	98.5	99.5	86.8	98.6
Biology	2.8	30.4	38.6	0.3	5.2	31.7	32.3	1.1
Chemistry	2.7	31.0	37.6	0.3	5.0	32.1	30.9	1.1
Physics	2.7	30.8	37.1	0.3	5.0	32.2	30.5	1.1
Science: Single award	10.7	2.7	4.7	20.9	11.8	1.7	4.2	13.8
Science: Double award	82.2	65.2	43.7	74.6	72.6	65.1	54.8	74.4

Table 12. Number of science subjects studied by gender (percentages of students)

Number of science subjects	2000			2006		
	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
0	5.9	5.5	5.7	10.7	10.5	10.6
1	9.7	10.1	9.9	11.2	11.2	11.2
2	76.3	78.9	77.5	69.7	72.1	70.9
3+	8.2	5.6	6.9	8.4	6.2	7.3

Table 13. Number of science subjects studied by attainment group (percentages of students)

Number of science subjects	2000			2006		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
0	12.9	2.5	1.6	19.1	9.6	3.4
1	17.4	8.4	4.0	22.1	8.6	2.9
2	68.6	85.0	79.1	58.3	78.8	75.4
3+	1.1	4.1	15.2	0.5	3.0	18.3

Table 14. Number of science subjects studied by school type (percentages of students)

Number of science subjects	2000				2006			
	Comprehensive	Grammar	Independent	Secondary Modern	Comprehensive	Grammar	Independent	Secondary Modern
0	4.5	0.9	9.2	4.4	10.4	0.8	6.1	10.8
1	10.5	3.0	8.6	20.8	11.4	1.1	6.8	13.8
2	82.0	66.3	50.4	74.4	73.2	67.0	60.3	74.4
3+	2.9	29.8	31.9	0.5	5.0	31.2	26.8	1.1

3.3 Modern Foreign Languages

One of the areas of particular concern at key stage 4 is the uptake of modern foreign languages (MFL). Schools can offer any of the following European Languages at key stage 4: Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Modern Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, Czech, Estonian, Finnish, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Slovak and Slovenian. However there is as yet no available external examination for Czech, Estonian, Finnish, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Slovak and Slovenian. Schools may, as well, offer courses in any other foreign language(s). In addition to the European languages mentioned above, there are approved qualifications available in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati, Irish, Japanese, Modern Hebrew, Panjabi, Persian, Russian, Turkish and Urdu.

From September 2004 it is no longer a statutory requirement that all students study a modern foreign language at key stage 4. Schools may, if they wish, continue to make MFL part of their compulsory key stage 4 curriculum, or they may allow students to decide whether or not to continue to learn a modern foreign language after year 9.

In Table 15, the uptake of the most common modern foreign languages is presented. The three main languages are French, German and Spanish. Females are more likely than males to be studying these languages. The effect of the changes in the curriculum mentioned in the above paragraph has led to a reduction in the percentage of candidates taking GCSEs in modern foreign languages. In particular the uptake of French dropped 22 percentage points between 2000 and 2006 and the uptake of German dropped 9 percentage points. On the other hand, the uptake of Spanish rose around 1 percentage point in the same time.

Table 15. Uptake of modern foreign languages by gender (percentages of students)

Subject	2000			2006		
	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
French	52.0	58.6	55.3	29.3	37.3	33.2
German	21.5	24.2	22.9	12.5	14.4	13.5
Spanish	6.0	8.8	7.4	6.7	9.8	8.2
Urdu	1.0	1.3	1.1	0.7	1.0	0.9
Italian	0.6	0.9	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.5

From Table 16, it is clear that GCSEs in modern languages tend to attract high attaining students. Also, the decrease in the uptake of MFL between 2000 and 2006 was bigger among the low and medium attaining students.

Table 16. Uptake of modern foreign languages by attainment group (percentages of students)

Subject	2000			2006		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
French	40.1	56.9	68.5	14.9	31.8	52.7
German	13.1	23.0	32.2	4.8	12.6	22.8
Spanish	4.3	7.1	10.7	3.0	7.2	14.4
Urdu	1.6	1.2	0.6	0.9	1.0	0.7
Italian	0.3	0.5	1.4	0.1	0.4	0.9

Table 17. Uptake of modern foreign languages by school type (percentages of students)

Subject	2000				2006			
	Comprehensive	Grammar	Independent	Secondary Modern	Comprehensive	Grammar	Independent	Secondary Modern
French	52.7	71.1	71.0	55.7	30.4	58.8	63.7	24.9
German	22.4	37.0	24.3	8.4	13.0	33.7	17.4	3.2
Spanish	6.4	11.2	14.7	4.7	6.9	18.2	21.6	5.1
Urdu	1.0	0.4	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.1	1.7	0.7
Italian	0.5	1.3	2.5	0.1	0.4	1.4	1.2	0.1

Tables 18 to 20 present the uptake of combinations of modern foreign languages by gender, attainment group and school type. In 2000, 24% of boys and 16% of girls were not studying a MFL. These figures increased to 54% and 43%, respectively, in 2006. Among the people studying at least one MFL, French was the most popular in both years of study although the uptake fell around 5 percentage points. Again, German and Spanish were the other two most popular choices.

For both years of study, there is a clear trend of increasing the uptake of each of the combinations with increasing attainment (Table 19).

Table 18. Uptake of combinations of modern foreign languages by gender (percentages of students)

Combination	2000			2006		
	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
No foreign languages	24.0	15.9	20.0	53.7	42.6	48.2
French	68.5	69.6	69.1	63.2 ⁴	65.0	64.2
German	28.3	28.8	28.6	27.0	25.1	26.0
Spanish	7.9	10.4	9.2	14.5	17.0	15.9
French and German	5.2	7.6	6.5	4.7	5.5	5.1
French and Spanish	2.1	3.6	2.9	3.9	5.1	4.6
More than one foreign language	8.9	13.4	11.2	10.9	13.4	12.3

Table 19. Uptake of combinations of modern foreign languages by attainment group (percentages of students)

Combination	2000			2006		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
No foreign languages	40.7	14.7	4.8	75.7	48.6	20.6
French	67.6	66.7	71.9	61.5	61.9	66.4
German	22.2	27.0	33.8	19.7	24.6	28.7
Spanish	7.3	8.3	11.2	12.4	14.0	18.1
French and German	0.8	3.0	12.8	0.7	2.2	8.3
French and Spanish	0.5	1.4	5.6	1.1	2.2	7.1
More than one foreign language	2.3	6.1	21.0	3.3	6.5	18.7

⁴ The figures in Tables 18-20 for the different combinations of MFL are percentages among those students that take at least one modern foreign language. For example, in 2006 51.8% students took at least one MFL. Among those, 64% took French, 26% studied German and 5% studied French and German.

Table 20. Uptake of combinations of modern foreign languages by school type (percentages of students)

Combination	2000				2006			
	Comprehensive	Grammar	Independent	Secondary Modern	Comprehensive	Grammar	Independent	Secondary Modern
No foreign languages	21.6	2.7	12.9	31.6	51.4	7.4	12.9	66.9
French	67.3	73.1	81.5	81.5	62.6	63.4	73.2	75.1
German	28.5	38.1	27.8	12.3	26.7	36.3	20.0	9.6
Spanish	8.1	11.5	16.9	6.9	14.1	19.7	24.8	15.3
French and German	4.6	17.1	18.4	0.9	4.0	11.5	9.0	1.4
French and Spanish	1.6	6.0	12.2	1.0	2.8	7.5	14.0	2.1
More than one foreign language	7.5	25.0	34.8	2.7	9.0	21.9	27.0	4.6

3.4 Other GCSE subjects

In Tables 21, 22 and 23 the uptake of other GCSE subjects by gender, attainment group and type of school is presented.

Design and Technology courses are, in general, favoured by boys. However, the uptake figures for Food Technology and Textiles Technology are higher for girls. Although Design and Technology is no longer compulsory at key stage 4 due to changes in the National Curriculum in 2004, the uptake of these subjects has not dropped very much between 2000 and 2006 and similar percentages of students are taking them (on average). The design and technology subjects are, in general, not favoured by the high attaining students.

There was a decline in the uptake of Home Economics, Humanities, Business Studies and Economics. But perhaps, more importantly, there has been a decline in the percentages of students taking geography (from 43% in 2000 to 30% in 2006). The uptake of Art and Design decreased among boys but increased among girls leaving the global figures similar in both years of the study.

Table 21. Uptake of other GCSE subjects by gender (percentages of students)

Subject	2000			2006		
	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
D&T	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.7
D&T Electronic Products	5.3	0.6	3.0	4.5	0.3	2.4
D&T Engineering	1.3	0.1	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.2
D&T Food Technology	9.1	27.6	18.2	8.1	19.0	13.5
D&T Graphic Products	18.6	12.4	15.5	14.2	10.5	12.4
D&T Product Design	-	-	-	3.7	2.1	2.9
D&T Resistant Materials	29.3	9.3	19.5	24.0	4.9	14.6
D&T Systems & Control Technology	4.5	0.8	2.7	3.1	0.2	1.7
D&T Textiles Technology	0.8	12.8	6.7	0.4	14.2	7.2
Geography	47.2	37.7	42.5	32.3	26.5	29.4
History	33.0	35.2	34.1	33.1	32.7	32.9
Art & Design	20.2	21.7	20.9	15.4	23.2	19.2
Religious Studies	13.5	20.6	17.0	19.9	26.4	23.1
Sport / P.E. Studies	19.5	9.3	14.5	28.3	15.3	21.9
Information Technology	10.9	6.3	8.7	15.7	13.0	14.4
Music	5.9	8.0	6.9	8.8	8.5	8.6
HE: Child Development	0.2	11.5	5.8	0.1	9.5	4.7
HE: Food	1.0	2.5	1.7	0.6	1.3	0.9
Humanities	3.8	4.3	4.0	2.2	2.4	2.3
Business Studies	16.7	14.7	15.8	13.6	10.2	11.9
Business Studies & Economics	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.5
Economics	1.6	0.7	1.1	0.6	0.2	0.4
Psychology	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.4
Sociology	1.6	3.9	2.7	1.3	3.9	2.6
Media/Film/TV Studies	3.5	3.8	3.6	8.3	8.3	8.3

On the other hand, the uptake of subjects such as Media Studies, P.E. Studies, Religious Studies or IT suffered an increase.

The uptake of History declined among the low and medium attainers but it rose 2% among the high attainers.

Table 22. Uptake of other GCSE subjects by attainment group (percentages of students)

Subject	2000			2006		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
D&T	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7
D&T Electronic Products	2.3	3.3	3.4	1.9	2.8	2.6
D&T Engineering	0.9	0.8	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1
D&T Food Technology	18.4	21.1	15.3	13.8	15.3	11.4
D&T Graphic Products	11.2	17.9	17.5	9.9	14.2	13.0
D&T Product Design	-	-	-	2.6	3.3	3.0
D&T Resistant Materials	21.9	21.7	14.9	16.8	15.9	11.0
D&T Systems & Control Technology	1.6	2.9	3.5	1.1	1.7	2.2
D&T Textiles Technology	5.7	7.5	6.9	5.5	8.1	8.1
Geography	30.2	45.3	51.8	17.7	30.1	40.2
History	21.6	33.3	47.0	17.2	31.9	49.3
Art & Design	20.1	22.5	20.2	17.3	20.6	19.8
Religious Studies	11.1	18.1	21.7	13.3	24.0	31.8
Sport / P.E. Studies	14.4	17.7	11.5	18.3	26.8	20.7
Information Technology	6.0	10.2	9.7	10.1	16.1	16.8
Music	3.6	6.0	11.0	4.6	8.0	13.3
HE: Child Development	7.9	6.9	2.7	6.1	5.6	2.5
HE: Food	1.6	1.9	1.8	0.9	1.0	0.9
Humanities	4.7	4.7	2.8	2.6	2.5	1.7
Business Studies	12.4	19.8	15.2	8.2	14.5	13.0
Business Studies & Economics	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.9
Economics	0.4	1.0	2.0	0.1	0.3	0.9
Psychology	0.4	0.8	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.5
Sociology	2.4	3.7	2.1	2.0	3.2	2.6
Media/Film/TV Studies	3.2	4.6	3.2	8.0	10.2	6.8

Table 23. Uptake of other GCSE subjects by school type (percentages of students)

Subject	2000				2006			
	Comprehensive	Grammar	Independent	Secondary Modern	Comprehensive	Grammar	Independent	Secondary Modern
Design& Technology	0.7	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.7	0.7	0.0	1.0
D&T Electronic Products	3.1	4.3	1.3	2.6	2.6	2.9	1.0	1.3
D&T Engineering	0.8	0.1	0.7	0.9	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1
D&T Food Technology	20.4	11.0	2.2	21.6	14.9	9.5	2.5	14.9
D&T Graphic Products	16.3	15.0	3.6	14.3	13.5	11.2	3.3	12.4
D&T Product Design	-	-	-	-	2.9	5.8	2.8	3.0
D&T Resistant Materials	21.1	15.1	12.8	23.4	14.9	12.6	13.1	17.1
D&T Systems & Control Technology	2.6	4.7	2.2	1.1	1.7	3.2	1.5	1.0
D&T Textiles Technology	7.2	6.1	1.3	7.8	7.9	6.7	2.2	6.0
Geography	41.0	55.4	51.7	35.7	28.1	44.8	45.0	25.3
History	31.7	50.4	47.9	25.5	31.3	55.1	50.9	26.0
Art & Design	21.3	18.5	15.0	20.8	19.4	16.5	18.2	19.7
Religious Studies	16.3	18.4	22.2	8.2	23.0	31.7	27.4	17.1
Sport / P.E. Studies	15.8	7.8	7.6	17.9	23.3	16.9	13.7	23.1
Information Technology	7.7	10.5	10.8	8.7	14.2	23.3	12.9	17.4
Music	6.3	10.7	9.7	6.0	8.4	13.3	11.5	7.4
HE: Child Development	7.0	0.8	0.7	9.0	5.3	0.7	0.5	6.8
HE: Food	1.6	0.9	4.3	2.4	0.8	0.2	3.0	1.0
Humanities	4.8	0.4	0.4	2.7	2.6	0.1	0.6	2.8
Business Studies	16.2	12.7	6.9	18.4	12.4	16.9	8.1	9.3
Business Studies & Economics	0.4	1.1	0.2	0.1	0.4	2.5	1.0	-
Economics	1.0	4.4	1.9	0.0	0.3	2.3	1.0	0.0
Psychology	0.1	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.5
Sociology	2.6	1.2	0.2	1.9	3.0	0.3	0.6	1.3
Media/Film/TV Studies	3.7	1.8	1.0	2.0	9.3	2.5	2.0	8.7

3.4 Combinations of courses

In this section the uptake of combinations of courses taken by Year 11 students is reported (Tables 24-26).

Table 24. Course combinations by gender (percentages of students taking the combination)

Subject combination containing	2000			2006		
	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
English and mathematics	91.6	93.9	92.7	94.2	96.4	95.3
<i>English and mathematics and:</i>						
at least one science	89.8	92.0	90.9	86.3	87.8	87.1
at least one language	74.0	82.6	78.2	44.8	56.4	50.5
<i>English, mathematics, at least one science and:</i>						
at least one language	73.5	81.8	77.6	42.9	53.4	48.1
history	32.2	34.6	33.4	30.8	30.5	30.6
geography	45.9	37.0	41.5	30.0	24.7	27.4
history or geography	67.1	64.3	65.7	51.1	48.6	49.9
history and geography	11.0	7.3	9.2	9.7	6.6	8.1
<i>English, mathematics, at least one science, at least one language and:</i>						
history	28.1	32.0	30.0	18.3	21.5	19.9
geography	39.3	34.0	36.7	17.1	16.9	17.0
history or geography	57.6	59.1	58.3	29.6	33.8	31.7
history and geography	9.8	6.8	8.4	5.8	4.6	5.2

Table 25. Course combinations by attainment group (percentages of students taking the combination)

Subject combination containing	2000			2006		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
English and mathematics	81.9	97.8	98.5	90.4	98.8	96.6
<i>English and mathematics and:</i>						
at least one science	78.0	96.8	98.0	76.7	90.0	94.3
at least one language	55.3	84.8	94.3	23.7	51.1	76.3
<i>English, mathematics, at least one science and:</i>						
at least one language	54.0	84.5	94.1	21.1	47.6	75.1
history	19.4	33.0	46.8	15.0	29.6	47.0
geography	27.9	45.0	51.5	15.5	28.1	38.4
history or geography	44.4	70.2	82.2	27.7	50.7	70.9
history and geography	3.4	7.8	16.0	2.8	6.9	14.5
<i>English, mathematics, at least one science, at least one language and:</i>						
history	15.0	29.3	45.3	5.0	16.3	38.2
geography	20.7	39.7	49.5	5.1	15.1	30.7
history or geography	33.1	62.2	79.3	9.3	28.0	54.4
history and geography	2.6	6.8	15.5	0.8	3.3	11.4

Table 26. Course combinations by school type (percentages of students taking the combination)

Subject combination containing	2000				2006			
	Comprehensive	Grammar	Independent	Secondary Modern	Comprehensive	Grammar	Independent	Secondary Modern
English and mathematics	92.8	99.1	90.3	92.8	96.8	99.5	85.0	97.1
<i>English and mathematics and:</i>								
at least one science	91.1	99.0	88.3	90.7	88.1	99.1	82.6	88.2
at least one language	76.3	97.1	83.6	66.5	48.2	92.4	74.4	32.8
<i>English, mathematics, at least one science and:</i>								
at least one language	75.6	97.1	82.3	65.8	45.6	92.2	73.0	30.7
history	30.8	50.3	46.9	24.8	29.3	54.9	43.5	24.4
geography	39.9	55.3	50.1	34.8	26.3	44.6	38.6	23.7
history or geography	63.2	85.7	75.3	55.2	48.5	81.2	65.4	41.8
history and geography	7.5	20.0	21.7	4.4	7.2	18.3	16.7	6.3
<i>English, mathematics, at least one science, at least one language and:</i>								
history	27.0	49.6	45.0	19.8	17.6	51.8	39.9	9.5
geography	34.5	54.3	47.6	25.8	15.0	42.0	34.8	9.6
history or geography	54.8	84.3	71.5	42.4	28.6	76.7	59.5	16.7
history and geography	6.7	19.7	21.0	3.1	4.0	17.2	15.3	2.3

4. Uptake by school gender and school boarding status

School gender and boarding information was obtained from EduBase. EduBase is a register of all educational establishments in England and Wales, maintained by the Department for children, family and schools. These data were matched to the National Centre Number register (NCN) maintained by OCR in behalf of all the awarding bodies in England using the DfES number of the centre and, if not available, the postcode. Table 27 shows the numbers and percentages of the different types of schools by gender and Table 28 by boarding status.

Table 27. School gender

School Sex	Number of schools	Percentages
Boys	318	6.5
Girls	434	8.9
Mixed	4090	83.9

Table 28. Boarding status

Boarding status	Number of schools	Percentages
Boarding	444	9.0
No boarding	4455	89.9
Boarding and independent	224	4.6
Boarding and non independent	220	4.5
Non boarding and independent	442	9.0
Non boarding and non independent	4013	81.9

In the next two sections, the uptake of the 41 most popular GCSE subjects by school gender and boarding status is displayed.

4.1 School gender

Table 29. Uptake of 'top 41' GCSE subjects by school gender

Subject	2000			2006		
	Boys	Girls	Mixed	Boys	Girls	Mixed
Art & Design	18.1	21.4	21.1	15.8	21.2	19.3
Art & Design (Fine Art)	-	-	-	10.2	9.4	8.0
Art & Design (Graphics)	1.0	0.5	1.0	0.9	0.6	0.8
Art & Design (Textiles)	0.1	1.7	1.0	0.1	2.0	1.1
Biology	28.8	15.3	5.5	25.2	13.2	6.5
Business Studies	12.9	9.8	16.4	14.8	9.0	12.1
Chemistry	29.7	14.7	5.3	24.8	12.7	6.3
D&T Electronic Products	4.9	0.7	3.1	3.7	0.2	2.6
D&T Food Technology	3.8	14.5	19.3	3.2	11.8	14.4
D&T Graphic Products	12.5	9.9	16.2	11.4	9.1	12.8
D&T Product Design	-	-	-	3.6	2.5	3.0
D&T Resistant Materials	24.1	10.5	19.9	21.9	6.3	15.0
D&T Systems & Control Technology	3.9	1.2	2.8	3.1	0.4	1.8
D&T Textiles Technology	0.6	10.1	6.9	0.2	11.6	7.3
Dance	0.1	1.8	1.0	0.0	4.0	2.6
Drama & Theatre Studies	6.1	14.7	14.4	8.0	19.2	15.0
English	94.4	95.9	94.4	96.2	98.0	96.7
English Literature	79.8	89.5	80.8	82.4	92.0	83.0
French	62.8	63.3	54.6	46.2	51.0	31.1
Geography	51.4	41.7	42.4	39.8	32.5	28.7
German	24.0	24.3	22.9	15.6	16.7	13.2
HE: Child Development	0.1	5.8	6.1	0.0	4.6	5.1
HE: Food	0.5	2.7	1.7	0.3	1.6	0.9
History	45.3	40.3	33.3	44.8	41.6	31.6
Humanities	1.2	2.2	4.3	0.3	0.9	2.6
Information Technology	11.6	6.9	8.6	18.5	16.2	14.0
Latin	10.5	7.6	1.0	7.8	6.0	0.7
Mathematics	96.5	96.2	95.8	93.5	96.8	97.7
Media/Film/TV Studies	2.8	2.9	3.8	5.8	4.9	8.9
Music	7.8	9.1	6.8	9.7	9.9	8.5
Office Technology	-	-	-	2.7	4.9	6.1
Performance Studies	0.9	2.5	2.3	0.2	1.5	1.3
Physics	29.7	14.1	5.2	24.9	12.4	6.2
Religious Studies	20.5	28.8	16.1	31.2	36.8	21.5
Science: Double award	54.1	71.6	79.6	58.8	70.7	71.0
Science: Single award	10.4	7.8	9.8	8.1	9.3	11.6
Sociology	0.8	3.1	2.8	0.2	4.4	2.6
Spanish	9.3	15.0	6.9	12.7	18.6	7.1
Sport / P.E. Studies	11.3	6.3	15.3	21.6	11.5	23.0
Statistics	2.1	0.7	1.9	11.6	7.8	9.4
Urdu	1.2	2.5	1.0	1.1	2.9	0.7

4.2 Boarding status

Table 30. Uptake of 'top 41' GCSE subjects by boarding status – 2000

Subject	Boarding and independent	Boarding and non independent	Non boarding and independent	Non boarding and non independent
Art & Design	12.8	21.1	17.2	21.5
Art & Design (Fine Art)	-	-	-	-
Art & Design (Graphics)	0.3	0.7	0.4	1.0
Art & Design (Textiles)	0.6	0.5	0.8	1.0
Biology	38.4	16.8	37.8	3.7
Business Studies	4.9	10.0	8.9	16.8
Chemistry	36.9	14.0	38.3	3.5
D&T Electronic Products	0.5	0.9	2.9	3.1
D&T Food Technology	1.4	4.1	6.7	19.8
D&T Graphic Products	2.5	7.5	9.2	16.6
D&T Product Design	-	-	-	-
D&T Resistant Materials	14.4	16.7	12.8	20.1
D&T Systems & Control Technology	2.3	1.1	3.6	2.7
D&T Textiles Technology	0.8	1.1	3.8	7.2
Dance	0.3	0.5	0.4	1.0
Drama & Theatre Studies	11.6	13.5	9.3	14.5
English	86.2	76.3	98.6	94.6
English Literature	77.7	57.2	95.1	80.6
French	73.6	43.3	75.2	53.5
Geography	52.4	37.3	56.6	41.4
German	21.5	14.5	33.9	22.4
HE: Child Development	0.2	1.3	0.5	6.4
HE: Food	3.6	5.6	2.2	1.6
History	49.1	28.3	52.2	32.5
Humanities	0.2	2.6	0.4	4.4
Information Technology	8.0	8.1	10.7	8.6
Latin	18.0	3.2	13.0	0.5
Mathematics	90.3	86.5	98.7	95.9
Media/Film/TV Studies	0.4	1.6	1.3	4.0
Music	9.7	8.3	10.8	6.6
Office Technology	-	-	-	-
Performance Studies	0.3	0.3	1.0	2.4
Physics	36.2	13.8	37.9	3.5
Religious Studies	20.2	13.4	22.0	16.7
Science: Double award	43.5	44.6	54.8	81.1
Science: Single award	3.4	14.9	2.4	10.4
Sociology	0.1	0.3	0.7	3.0
Spanish	15.8	7.5	13.0	6.8
Sport / P.E. Studies	6.8	12.8	6.6	15.4
Statistics	0.5	3.9	1.8	1.9
Urdu	0.5	-	0.3	1.2

Table 31. Uptake of 'top 41' GCSE subjects by boarding status – 2006

Subject	Boarding and independent	Boarding and non independent	Non boarding and independent	Non boarding and non independent
Art & Design	15.8	24.4	17.9	19.5
Art & Design (Graphics)	0.1	0.6	0.3	0.8
Art & Design (Textiles)	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.1
Art & Design (Fine Art)	13.7	8.2	11.4	7.8
Biology	33.8	16.6	34.5	5.1
Business Studies	5.5	13.4	12.1	12.1
Chemistry	32.4	14.1	34.1	4.9
D&T Electronic Products	0.3	0.0	1.7	2.6
D&T Food Technology	2.0	2.9	5.8	14.6
D&T Graphic Products	2.3	4.0	6.7	13.3
D&T Product Design	1.8	1.3	4.1	2.9
D&T Resistant Materials	16.3	15.0	11.5	14.8
D&T Systems & Control Technology	0.9	0.3	2.7	1.7
D&T Textiles Technology	1.7	0.7	4.5	7.7
Dance	0.4	0.7	1.2	2.8
Drama & Theatre Studies	19.0	15.2	14.3	14.9
English	91.5	79.9	99.2	96.8
English Literature	85.5	58.9	96.5	82.9
French	70.0	32.8	64.2	30.0
Geography	47.9	28.5	46.2	27.7
German	15.7	9.2	27.7	12.5
HE: Child Development	0.1	0.9	0.5	5.3
HE: Food	2.3	4.8	1.5	0.8
History	53.4	27.4	56.0	30.8
Humanities	0.0	0.8	0.0	2.5
Information Technology	9.3	16.8	19.0	14.3
Latin	16.7	1.7	11.5	0.3
Mathematics	83.0	88.5	93.2	98.2
Media/Film/TV Studies	0.7	3.5	1.5	9.2
Music	11.8	9.1	13.0	8.2
Office Technology	0.8	7.0	2.2	6.2
Performance Studies	0.4	0.1	0.6	1.4
Physics	32.4	13.0	33.8	4.8
Religious Studies	24.7	12.0	30.7	22.7
Science: Double award	55.5	45.0	60.0	71.8
Science: Single award	2.9	20.6	1.9	12.1
Sociology	0.2	.	0.2	2.9
Spanish	26.0	10.0	20.8	6.8
Sport / P.E. Studies	13.2	21.7	14.0	22.9
Statistics	2.8	6.0	8.6	9.6
Urdu	0.6	3.7	0.2	0.9

5. Uptake by neighbourhood characteristics

In this report, the characteristics of the neighbourhood in which a school is situated are considered. It should be borne in mind that, for large cities, the location of the school might not reflect the intake; in other words, there is a risk that the address of a school may not reflect its catchment area. For example, a school might be located near the boundaries of a ward thus attracting a large proportion of children from other ward, a school might be located in an area where students have to travel long distances to get to it or a school could have been affected by parental choice. Some of these problems could be removed if it were possible to use the postcodes of the students' home addresses (instead of the postcodes of the schools), in conjunction with the neighbourhood level data. However, considerably resources would be required to obtain this information. Despite these limitations, significant correlations can be identified between school examination performance and various indicators derived from the neighbourhood level data. This suggests that census data are a useful source of contextual information.

Neighbourhood information was obtained from the internet-based Neighbourhood Statistics Service (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/neighbourhood>), managed by the Office for National Statistics. These data are provided at various geographical levels (e.g. local authority, ward, lower super output area, etc). The variables used in this report were obtained at the finest level of detail available. The postcodes of the schools were obtained from the national centre database used by the awarding bodies. The area information was matched to the postcodes of the schools. To do this, we made use of the "All fields postcode directory (AFPD)", provided by the Office for National Statistics. The AFPD lists all postcodes in the United Kingdom and relates them to a range of administrative geographies. This enabled the neighbourhood level data to be matched with the information about the schools.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides around 150 pieces of information on the following areas:

- census statistics (age, economic activity, ethnic group, general health, population, qualifications, characteristics about the households, ...),
- access to services,
- community well-being / social environment,
- crime and safety,
- economic deprivation,
- education, skills and training,
- health and care,
- housing,
- indices of deprivation and classification,

- rural / urban classification.

In this report we focus on the following factors: rural/urban indicator, deprivation indices, employment rate and qualifications.

5.1 Urban/rural indicator

Choosing a suitable urban and rural definition is complicated by the number of different definitions in use - no single classification meets the needs of all users. In this report, we used a Rural and Urban Area Classification for super output areas that the Office for National Statistics developed in 2004. The categories for this indicator are as follows:

- Urban >10k (urban settlements with greater than 10,000 population)
- Town and Fringe
- Village, Hamlet & Isolated dwellings

The uptake of the 41 most popular GCSE subjects by urban/rural indicator is shown in Table 32.

5.2 Income deprivation affecting children

Income deprivation affecting children relates to the proportion of the population who are aged less than 16 living in low income families, that is, those reliant on means tested benefits. The domain score is therefore the proportion of the population living in low income families. Based on this score, children were grouped into three approximately equally sized deprivation groups: low, medium and high.

The uptake of GCSE subjects by deprivation affecting children is shown in Table 33.

5.3 Multiple deprivation

The index of multiple deprivation (IMD) measures multiple deprivation at the small area level. The model of multiple deprivation underpinning this is based on the idea of distinct dimensions of deprivation, experienced by individuals living in an area, which can be recognised and measured separately. The overall IMD was constructed by combining the seven transformed domain scores using the following weights:

- income deprivation (22.5%)
- employment deprivation (22.5%)
- health deprivation and disability (13.5%)
- education, skills and training deprivation (13.5%)
- barriers to housing and services (9.3%)
- crime (9.3%)
- living environment deprivation (9.3%)

As for the child deprivation score, using the multiple deprivation index, children were grouped into three approximately equally sized deprivation groups: low, medium and high. The uptake of GCSE subjects by deprivation is shown in Table 34.

5.4 Employment

As a proxy for parental unemployment a variable that indicates the employment rate in the area where the school is was considered. This variable shows the percentage of people who were employed in 2004, as a proportion of the working age population. For this variable, three categories (bottom, middle and top) were created to give the most even split of candidates. The uptake of GCSE subjects by employment rate is shown in Table 35.

5.5 Percentage of people with no qualifications

In this section, the uptake of the GCSE subjects is studied by the variable 'Percentage of people with no qualifications'. This indicator shows, for each area, the percentage of people aged 16 to 74 who were usually resident in the area at the time of the 2001 Census, with no formal qualifications (academic, vocational or professional qualifications).

Students were then classified into three equally sized groups: bottom (lowest percentage), middle and high. Table 36 shows the uptake of GCSE subjects by this variable.

5.6 Percentage of people with level 4 and level 5 qualifications

In this section, the percentages of people aged 16 to 74 who were usually resident in the area at the time of the 2001 Census, whose highest qualification attained was 'level 4/5' are considered. Level 4/5 qualifications are First degree, Higher degree, NVQ levels 4 and 5, HNC, HND, Qualified Teacher status, Qualified Medical Doctor, Qualified Dentist, Qualified Nurse, Midwife, Health Visitor.

Students were then classified into three equally sized groups: bottom (lowest percentage), middle and high. Table 37 shows the uptake of GCSE subjects by this variable.

Table 32. Uptake of 'top 41' GCSE subjects by urban/rural indicator

Subject	2000			2006		
	Urban	Town	Village	Urban	Town	Village
Art & Design	20.9	21.6	19.9	19.0	20.6	20.6
Art & Design (Graphics)	1.0	0.4	0.9	0.8	0.5	0.5
Art & Design (Textiles)	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.4	0.9
Art & Design (Fine Art)	-	-	-	8.0	9.6	9.8
Biology	7.1	5.0	12.2	8.0	6.9	9.5
Business Studies	15.9	14.7	13.5	12.0	12.4	10.2
Chemistry	6.9	4.9	11.3	7.8	6.7	9.0
D&T Electronic Products	3.1	2.5	2.1	2.5	2.4	2.1
D&T Food Technology	18.2	20.7	14.6	13.1	17.3	14.1
D&T Graphic Products	15.6	16.8	11.3	12.3	14.0	11.2
D&T Product Design	-	-	-	2.9	3.1	3.2
D&T Resistant Materials	19.1	22.5	21.1	14.2	17.7	17.6
D&T Systems & Control Technology	2.6	3.4	2.7	1.6	2.6	1.6
D&T Textiles Technology	6.8	6.4	4.9	7.2	8.4	5.6
Dance	1.0	0.8	0.9	2.6	2.1	2.1
Drama & Theatre Studies	13.9	15.1	13.9	14.7	16.2	16.9
English	94.3	95.5	91.0	96.6	97.7	96.1
English Literature	81.1	80.8	74.9	83.2	86.1	84.0
French	55.0	57.6	58.5	32.5	36.8	42.2
Geography	41.9	47.7	46.4	28.5	34.9	37.6
German	22.8	26.0	20.4	13.2	15.9	13.9
HE: Child Development	5.9	5.6	3.9	4.9	3.8	3.2
HE: Food	1.6	2.9	3.1	0.9	1.0	1.4
History	33.9	35.5	35.9	32.4	35.8	39.0
Humanities	4.0	5.3	3.2	2.2	3.5	1.1
Information Technology	8.8	6.7	8.0	14.6	13.1	13.2
Latin	1.8	1.3	4.1	1.5	1.0	2.6
Mathematics	95.7	96.9	93.6	97.3	97.9	95.7
Media/Film/TV Studies	3.7	3.6	1.7	8.5	8.3	5.4
Music	6.9	7.4	7.2	8.5	9.4	10.6
Office Technology	-	-	-	5.9	6.0	2.6
Performance Studies	2.2	2.0	3.3	1.3	1.2	1.3
Physics	6.9	4.8	10.8	7.7	6.7	8.8
Religious Studies	17.8	8.7	13.0	24.4	12.8	20.1
Science: Double award	77.5	82.9	68.7	69.1	78.3	74.6
Science: Single award	10.0	8.2	10.1	11.6	8.9	9.6
Sociology	3.0	0.7	1.5	2.7	1.6	1.9
Spanish	7.5	5.4	9.3	8.3	6.3	10.3
Sport / P.E. Studies	14.4	15.2	14.9	21.8	24.7	21.7
Statistics	2.0	1.2	0.7	9.5	9.0	6.9
Urdu	1.3	0.0	0.2	1.0	0.0	0.2

Table 33. Uptake of 'top 41' GCSE subjects by deprivation affecting children

Subject	2000			2006		
	Low deprivation	Medium deprivation	High deprivation	Low deprivation	Medium deprivation	High deprivation
Art & Design	20.9	21.0	20.9	19.1	20.0	18.4
Art & Design (Graphics)	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.8
Art & Design (Textiles)	0.9	0.8	1.3	1.1	1.0	1.5
Art & Design (Fine Art)	-	-	-	9.1	7.7	7.1
Biology	9.0	6.1	4.7	9.7	7.1	5.2
Business Studies	16.7	15.7	13.8	13.9	11.5	8.0
Chemistry	8.9	5.8	4.5	9.5	6.8	5.0
D&T Electronic Products	3.0	3.2	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.0
D&T Food Technology	17.7	18.9	18.1	13.7	14.0	12.4
D&T Graphic Products	15.7	15.7	14.7	12.5	13.1	11.1
D&T Product Design	-	-	-	3.4	3.0	1.8
D&T Resistant Materials	19.0	19.5	20.4	14.5	15.1	14.2
D&T Systems & Control Technology	3.0	2.7	1.8	2.0	1.7	0.9
D&T Textiles Technology	6.4	7.0	7.0	7.1	7.8	6.7
Dance	0.9	1.1	1.0	2.4	3.0	2.3
Drama & Theatre Studies	14.0	14.5	13.2	15.6	14.9	13.3
English	95.1	94.5	91.9	97.3	96.7	95.0
English Literature	82.5	81.4	76.6	85.8	83.4	78.1
French	57.9	55.7	48.8	38.0	31.7	24.8
Geography	45.6	42.0	36.5	32.4	29.2	22.9
German	25.8	22.8	16.8	16.9	12.7	6.9
HE: Child Development	5.5	6.1	5.9	4.9	5.0	4.0
HE: Food	2.0	1.6	1.4	0.9	1.1	0.8
History	36.3	33.8	29.7	35.9	32.5	26.8
Humanities	3.7	4.4	4.3	1.9	2.7	2.5
Information Technology	8.5	8.3	9.5	15.6	13.9	12.4
Latin	2.7	1.4	0.8	2.2	1.1	0.7
Mathematics	96.5	95.9	93.6	97.2	97.6	97.0
Media/Film/TV Studies	3.5	3.5	4.2	7.7	8.9	9.0
Music	7.3	7.1	6.0	9.3	8.6	7.1
Office Technology	-	-	-	4.9	6.5	6.7
Performance Studies	1.9	2.5	2.5	0.9	1.3	2.0
Physics	8.7	5.8	4.5	9.4	6.8	4.8
Religious Studies	16.9	16.0	18.8	22.6	22.2	26.0
Science: Double award	77.5	78.8	75.8	72.6	70.1	64.5
Science: Single award	8.7	10.1	11.9	9.4	12.2	14.1
Sociology	2.4	2.9	3.1	2.4	2.4	3.5
Spanish	7.8	6.8	7.5	9.2	7.7	6.6
Sport / P.E. Studies	14.5	14.9	13.8	22.5	22.6	20.1
Statistics	1.8	2.1	1.5	9.0	9.6	9.8
Urdu	0.5	1.2	2.4	0.4	0.8	2.2

Table 34. Uptake of 'top 41' GCSE subjects by deprivation

Subject	2000			2006		
	Low deprivation	Medium deprivation	High deprivation	Low deprivation	Medium deprivation	High deprivation
Art & Design	21.5	20.7	20.2	19.3	19.8	18.2
Art & Design (Graphics)	1.0	0.9	1.1	0.7	0.8	0.8
Art & Design (Textiles)	0.9	0.9	1.3	1.1	1.0	1.4
Art & Design (Fine Art)	-	-	-	9.1	7.6	7.1
Biology	8.3	6.6	5.3	9.5	7.2	5.2
Business Studies	16.9	15.3	14.2	13.9	11.5	7.9
Chemistry	8.1	6.4	5.0	9.3	7.0	4.8
D&T Electronic Products	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.5	2.6	2.0
D&T Food Technology	17.8	18.6	18.5	14.0	13.7	12.0
D&T Graphic Products	15.9	15.7	14.5	12.7	12.8	10.9
D&T Product Design	-	-	-	2.9	3.3	2.3
D&T Resistant Materials	19.0	19.6	20.3	15.0	14.5	13.8
D&T Systems & Control Technology	3.0	2.7	2.0	2.1	1.4	1.2
D&T Textiles Technology	6.3	7.2	6.9	7.3	7.4	6.9
Dance	1.0	0.9	1.1	2.6	2.6	2.3
Drama & Theatre Studies	14.9	13.5	12.9	16.3	14.4	12.6
English	95.3	94.2	92.1	97.4	96.5	94.9
English Literature	82.9	80.9	76.7	86.1	83.1	77.5
French	58.3	55.1	48.9	39.0	30.8	23.3
Geography	45.8	41.4	37.0	32.8	28.7	22.5
German	26.8	21.4	17.0	17.6	11.6	6.8
HE: Child Development	5.6	6.0	5.9	4.9	4.9	4.1
HE: Food	2.1	1.4	1.4	1.0	0.8	1.0
History	36.5	33.3	30.2	36.1	32.4	25.8
Humanities	3.9	4.4	3.9	2.2	2.3	2.6
Information Technology	8.0	9.0	9.4	15.6	14.0	12.1
Latin	2.6	1.5	0.8	2.1	1.1	0.7
Mathematics	96.6	95.5	93.9	97.3	97.6	96.8
Media/Film/TV Studies	3.4	3.6	4.3	7.6	9.2	8.6
Music	7.5	6.7	6.2	9.5	8.4	7.0
Office Technology	-	-	-	5.3	6.0	6.7
Performance Studies	1.9	2.6	2.3	0.9	1.5	1.8
Physics	8.0	6.4	5.1	9.3	6.9	4.7
Religious Studies	15.6	17.3	19.6	20.6	24.5	27.0
Science: Double award	78.5	77.5	76.1	73.5	69.6	62.6
Science: Single award	8.6	10.5	11.5	9.0	12.3	15.1
Sociology	2.5	2.9	2.9	2.4	2.6	3.1
Spanish	7.4	7.1	7.9	9.2	7.7	6.7
Sport / P.E. Studies	14.7	14.6	13.8	22.7	22.0	20.3
Statistics	1.9	1.9	1.6	9.0	9.5	10.1
Urdu	0.4	1.1	2.7	0.3	0.8	2.4

Table 35. Uptake of 'top 41' GCSE subjects by employment rate

Subject	2000			2006		
	Bottom	Middle	Top	Bottom	Middle	Top
Art & Design	19.9	21.6	21.0	18.8	18.9	19.9
Art & Design (Graphics)	1.2	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.7	0.7
Art & Design (Textiles)	1.2	0.8	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.2
Art & Design (Fine Art)	-	-	-	7.8	8.2	8.6
Biology	7.4	0.0	6.9	7.4	7.6	8.7
Business Studies	15.8	15.5	16.0	10.7	12.7	12.2
Chemistry	7.2	7.0	6.5	7.1	7.5	8.4
D&T Electronic Products	3.1	2.9	3.0	2.2	2.5	2.5
D&T Food Technology	16.9	18.7	18.7	12.3	13.5	14.5
D&T Graphic Products	14.7	15.9	15.8	11.9	12.6	12.7
D&T Product Design	-	-	-	3.0	3.0	2.8
D&T Resistant Materials	18.8	20.1	19.3	13.7	14.4	15.6
D&T Systems & Control Technology	2.5	2.8	2.7	1.4	1.9	1.7
D&T Textiles Technology	7.3	6.7	6.3	7.3	7.3	7.2
Dance	0.9	0.9	1.1	2.3	2.7	2.6
Drama & Theatre Studies	12.8	13.5	15.4	14.1	14.5	16.1
English	93.1	94.4	95.0	95.9	96.8	97.1
English Literature	80.2	80.2	82.2	82.3	83.6	84.3
French	51.5	54.9	58.6	29.3	33.4	36.3
Geography	39.0	42.4	45.4	26.5	29.4	31.9
German	18.8	23.4	25.7	10.1	13.4	16.3
HE: Child Development	5.7	5.9	5.8	3.9	5.0	5.1
HE: Food	1.3	2.0	1.9	0.8	1.0	0.9
History	32.6	34.0	35.5	31.1	32.7	34.8
Humanities	3.9	4.0	4.2	2.3	2.6	2.0
Information Technology	9.9	8.4	8.0	15.3	14.1	13.9
Latin	1.8	1.8	2.0	1.4	1.4	1.7
Mathematics	94.6	95.7	96.5	97.0	97.2	97.7
Media/Film/TV Studies	4.1	3.9	3.0	9.1	8.5	7.5
Music	6.4	6.7	7.6	8.0	8.5	9.3
Office Technology	-	-	-	6.3	5.2	6.1
Performance Studies	1.8	3.1	1.6	1.4	1.7	0.7
Physics	7.2	6.9	6.5	7.0	7.4	8.4
Religious Studies	19.3	16.7	15.5	27.5	22.7	20.2
Science: Double award	75.4	77.8	79.2	65.6	71.3	72.6
Science: Single award	10.7	9.7	9.3	13.8	11.1	9.4
Sociology	3.1	2.7	2.5	3.3	2.6	2.0
Spanish	8.4	7.3	6.7	8.2	8.5	7.9
Sport / P.E. Studies	13.5	14.6	15.1	20.2	22.7	22.7
Statistics	1.6	1.7	2.2	9.1	9.4	9.5
Urdu	1.7	1.5	0.3	1.4	1.1	0.2

Table 36. Uptake of 'top 41' GCSE subjects by the percentage of people with no qualifications

Subject	2000			2006		
	Bottom	Middle	Top	Bottom	Middle	Top
Art & Design	22.6	21.4	18.6	20.1	19.1	18.6
Art & Design (Graphics)	1.0	0.9	1.1	0.7	0.7	0.9
Art & Design (Textiles)	0.9	0.9	1.1	1.0	1.2	1.2
Art & Design (Fine Art)	-	-	-	8.5	8.5	7.6
Biology	11.0	6.0	4.2	12.5	7.1	4.4
Business Studies	15.9	16.6	14.7	13.9	12.6	9.2
Chemistry	10.8	5.7	4.1	12.2	6.8	4.2
D&T Electronic Products	2.9	3.0	3.2	2.4	2.5	2.4
D&T Food Technology	15.5	19.1	20.3	12.3	14.6	13.5
D&T Graphic Products	14.9	16.7	14.8	12.0	12.8	12.4
D&T Product Design	-	-	-	2.9	3.0	2.8
D&T Resistant Materials	17.7	20.1	20.7	13.9	15.2	14.7
D&T Systems & Control Technology	2.5	2.9	2.6	1.8	1.9	1.3
D&T Textiles Technology	6.0	7.0	7.1	7.0	7.5	7.2
Dance	1.0	1.1	0.8	2.4	2.9	2.3
Drama & Theatre Studies	15.1	14.4	12.3	16.9	15.5	12.3
English	94.7	94.9	93.2	97.1	97.2	95.7
English Literature	83.8	82.1	76.4	87.7	84.2	78.4
French	58.4	56.2	50.7	41.7	33.6	24.5
Geography	45.1	43.4	38.6	33.7	30.4	24.2
German	26.0	23.4	18.9	17.7	14.4	8.3
HE: Child Development	4.7	6.1	6.7	4.0	4.9	5.3
HE: Food	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.0	0.7	1.1
History	37.5	33.5	31.1	38.6	32.8	27.6
Humanities	3.2	4.5	4.4	1.6	2.7	2.5
Information Technology	8.2	8.6	9.2	15.6	14.0	13.6
Latin	3.8	1.2	0.5	3.4	0.8	0.3
Mathematics	95.9	96.2	94.8	96.3	98.0	97.5
Media/Film/TV Studies	3.4	4.1	3.5	6.5	9.6	8.7
Music	7.7	7.0	6.0	9.9	8.8	7.1
Office Technology	-	-	-	4.7	6.0	6.7
Performance Studies	1.6	2.4	2.7	0.8	1.2	1.9
Physics	10.7	5.7	4.0	12.1	6.8	4.1
Religious Studies	18.5	15.6	16.9	25.4	21.4	22.8
Science: Double award	74.7	79.4	78.8	71.5	72.5	66.2
Science: Single award	8.4	10.2	11.0	8.3	10.8	14.7
Sociology	2.9	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6
Spanish	9.0	6.7	6.4	11.7	7.6	5.4
Sport / P.E. Studies	13.4	15.3	14.8	21.1	22.9	21.9
Statistics	1.8	1.9	1.9	8.5	9.6	10.0
Urdu	0.6	0.7	2.1	0.4	0.5	1.7

Table 37. Uptake of 'top 41' GCSE subjects by the percentage of people with level 4/5 qualifications

Subject	2000			2006		
	Bottom	Middle	Top	Bottom	Middle	Top
Art & Design	19.2	21.1	22.7	18.8	19.1	20.0
Art & Design (Graphics)	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.6
Art & Design (Textiles)	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.2	1.1	1.1
Art & Design (Fine Art)	-	-	-	7.7	8.5	8.5
Biology	4.1	6.5	11.2	4.4	7.7	12.5
Business Studies	14.9	17.1	15.2	9.2	13.5	13.3
Chemistry	3.9	6.2	11.0	4.2	7.4	12.3
D&T Electronic Products	3.3	3.0	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.3
D&T Food Technology	20.8	18.7	14.9	14.6	14.1	11.5
D&T Graphic Products	15.3	16.4	14.8	12.7	12.9	11.4
D&T Product Design	-	-	-	3.1	3.0	2.7
D&T Resistant Materials	20.9	19.6	17.7	15.1	14.9	13.7
D&T Systems & Control Technology	2.7	2.9	2.4	1.3	2.0	1.7
D&T Textiles Technology	7.1	6.8	6.2	7.3	7.5	6.8
Dance	0.9	1.1	0.9	2.7	2.8	2.1
Drama & Theatre Studies	13.1	14.2	14.7	12.9	15.6	16.6
English	93.7	95.0	94.0	96.1	97.1	96.8
English Literature	77.8	81.6	83.6	78.9	84.4	87.9
French	52.6	55.8	57.7	25.1	34.7	41.4
Geography	39.8	43.7	44.1	25.2	30.6	33.2
German	20.0	24.3	24.6	9.2	15.4	16.3
HE: Child Development	6.9	5.9	4.4	5.4	4.9	3.7
HE: Food	1.6	1.8	1.9	1.0	0.8	1.0
History	31.6	34.2	36.8	28.4	33.3	38.2
Humanities	4.9	3.9	3.3	2.6	2.6	1.5
Information Technology	8.8	9.0	8.1	12.6	15.2	15.5
Latin	0.5	1.3	4.0	0.3	1.0	3.7
Mathematics	95.4	96.3	95.3	97.7	98.1	95.8
Media/Film/TV Studies	3.6	3.8	3.6	9.0	9.0	6.6
Music	6.2	6.9	7.8	7.3	8.8	10.1
Office Technology	-	-	-	6.9	6.0	4.3
Performance Studies	2.6	2.2	1.8	1.7	1.1	1.0
Physics	3.9	6.3	10.8	4.2	7.4	12.2
Religious Studies	15.8	15.6	20.0	20.4	22.0	27.9
Science: Double award	79.7	79.2	73.6	67.8	72.4	70.2
Science: Single award	10.9	9.9	8.5	13.7	10.7	8.9
Sociology	2.5	2.7	3.1	2.2	2.6	3.0
Spanish	6.3	6.8	9.3	5.4	7.7	12.3
Sport / P.E. Studies	15.7	15.0	12.6	22.8	23.3	19.6
Statistics	2.1	1.7	1.8	10.1	9.8	7.8
Urdu	1.5	1.0	0.8	1.2	0.7	0.6

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