

Uptake of GCSE subjects 2010
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Tim Gill

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

Please note that this is a revised report. The previous version did not include GCSEs taken by candidates prior to summer of year 11. The true levels of uptake in some subjects were therefore underestimated. The report has now been amended to include these qualifications.

Introduction

This report looks at the uptake of GCSE subjects in England in 2010. The data for these analyses were taken from the National Pupil Database (NPD). This is a database held by the Department for Education, consisting of results for all students in all subjects in schools and colleges in England, as well as pupil and school background characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity and level of deprivation.

For the analysis of uptake at GCSE the Key Stage 4 (KS4) extract of the NPD was used, consisting of all students who were at the end of KS4 in 2010 (i.e. in year 11). Uptake in this report is defined as the percentage of these students taking a GCSE in the subject, and includes exams taken by these students in previous years.

Table 1 presents a breakdown of the number of GCSEs taken by students.

Table 1: Number of GCSEs taken (% of GCSE students)

Number of GCSEs	Percentage
1	1.3
2	2.2
3	3.9
4	5.9
5	7.9
6	10.3
7	12.7
8	14.7
9	18.5
10	14.2
11	6.2
12+	2.2
No of students	614,335

Uptake of GCSEs in this report is presented by different student classifications: gender, school type, prior attainment, school gender and deprivation level. In the following tables the numbers of students in each of the classifications are presented.

School type

There are several different types of school where students study for GCSEs. For this report these were classified into five groups. Table 2 presents the number and percentage of GCSE students attending each school type.

Table 2: GCSE students by school type

School type	Number of students	Percentage
Academy	30,204	4.9
Comprehensive	487,299	79.4
Grammar	22,985	3.7
Independent	47,464	7.7
Secondary Modern	26,012	4.2

Pupil attainment

Students were classified by their attainment at GCSE. GCSE grades were converted into scores (A* = 8, A= 7, B= 6 etc) and a mean GCSE was calculated for each student, which was then used to divide students up into three approximately equally sized attainment groups: low, medium and high. Table 3 presents the number in each group as well as the mean, minimum and maximum value of mean GCSE for each group.

Table 3: GCSE students by attainment

Pupils' attainment group	Number of students	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Low	202,756	1.0	4.4	3.3
Medium	206,247	4.4	5.7	5.1
High	202,181	5.7	8.0	6.6

Deprivation level

The level of deprivation that a student experiences was measured by the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI). This is a measure of the proportion of children in a very small geographical area (Lower Layer Super Output Area or LSOA) who live in families that are income deprived. It varies between 0 and 1, with 0 representing minimum deprivation and 1 maximum deprivation.

It should be noted that there was some missing data for this measure (8.1% of students had no record). Students who did have a measure of deprivation were divided up into three equally sized groups. Table 4 presents the number of students and the mean, minimum and maximum IDACI values in each group.

Table 4: GCSE students by deprivation level

Pupils' deprivation group	Number of students	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Low	186,563	0.01	0.10	0.06
Medium	186,568	0.10	0.26	0.17
High	186,570	0.26	1.00	0.44

School gender

The school gender variable was determined by the female ratio (number of females over the total number of students) in the school. If this ratio was greater than 0.95, the school was considered to be a "Girls" school. If the female ratio was less than 0.05, then the school was designated a

“Boys” school. The rest of the schools were considered “Mixed” schools. Table 5 shows the numbers and percentages of students attending the different types of schools.

Table 5: GCSE students by school gender

School gender	Number of students	Percentage
Boys school	33,225	5.4
Girls school	49,110	8.0
Mixed school	532,000	86.6

Number of GCSEs taken

The number of GCSEs taken by students in each of the classifications is presented in Tables 6-9. For example, Table 6 shows that 8.6% of students in Academies took 9 GCSEs, compared with 26.9% of students in independent schools. Table 7 shows that 6.8% of students with low attainment took 9 GCSEs, compared with 25.6% of students with high attainment.

Table 6: Number of GCSEs taken, by school type (% of students)

Number of GCSEs	Acad	Comp	Grammar	Ind	Sec Mod
1	2.4	1.2	0.2	3.0	1.3
2	6.7	2.1	0.2	1.2	2.9
3	9.9	3.9	0.1	1.8	5.1
4	11.8	5.9	0.1	3.4	8.4
5	14.8	8.1	0.3	3.0	10.9
6	14.3	10.5	0.6	9.9	13.0
7	12.9	13.3	1.5	10.6	15.5
8	10.8	15.4	3.6	14.1	15.3
9	8.6	18.6	17.6	26.9	13.9
10	4.6	13.5	38.4	18.9	8.7
11	1.8	5.6	26.9	5.8	3.4
12+	1.5	2.0	10.6	1.6	1.5
Number of students	30,204	487,299	22,985	47,464	26,012

Table 7: Number of GCSEs taken, by attainment (% of students)

Number of GCSEs	Low	Medium	High
1	2.0	0.3	0.8
2	5.2	0.8	0.3
3	9.8	1.6	0.3
4	13.1	3.6	0.9
5	16.6	5.9	1.2
6	17.0	10.6	3.6
7	14.8	16.5	6.9
8	11.7	20.0	12.4
9	6.8	23.4	25.6
10	2.4	12.4	28.1
11	0.5	3.9	14.3
12+	0.2	1.1	5.5
Number of students	202,756	206,247	202,181

Table 8: Number of GCSEs taken, by deprivation level (%of students)

Number of GCSEs	Low	Medium	High
1	0.3	0.6	1.3
2	0.7	1.6	3.7
3	1.7	3.4	6.8
4	3.0	5.6	9.4
5	4.9	8.2	11.9
6	7.4	10.6	13.5
7	11.0	13.4	14.5
8	15.0	15.7	13.9
9	22.7	18.6	12.8
10	20.1	13.8	8.0
11	9.4	6.2	3.2
12+	3.7	2.3	1.0
Number of students	186,563	186,568	186,570

Table 9: Number of GCSEs taken, by school gender (%)

Number of GCSEs	Boys school	Girls school	Mixed school
1	1.3	1.3	1.3
2	1.4	0.9	2.4
3	3.4	1.4	4.2
4	3.8	2.7	6.3
5	4.9	3.9	8.4
6	9.9	7.0	10.7
7	11.1	8.7	13.2
8	10.9	12.8	15.1
9	16.8	25.3	18.0
10	20.4	22.7	13.1
11	12.0	9.7	5.5
12+	4.1	3.5	2.0
Number of students	33,225	49,110	532,000

Uptake of individual GCSE subjects

In the following tables the uptake of individual subjects is presented, broken down into the classifications outlined above. Subjects with an overall uptake level of less than 1% are not included. In each table the subjects are ordered by overall uptake (highest first). Thus, English Language had the highest level of uptake, being taken by 96.5% of all GCSE students, 95.9% of males and 97.2% of females.

It is worth noting that the expectation is that virtually all pupils take some core subjects, such as English and mathematics. However, the increasing popularity, particularly in independent schools, of IGCSEs (which are not currently recorded in the NPD) means that the percentages for these subjects are reduced somewhat in these tables.

Table 11: Uptake of individual subjects by gender (% of students)

Subject	Boys	Girls	All
English Language	95.9	97.2	96.5
Mathematics	95.2	96.1	95.7
English Literature	71.7	80.2	75.9
Science (Core)	65.5	68.1	66.8
Additional Science	46.3	48.2	47.2
History	32.0	32.4	32.2
Religious Studies	24.7	30.8	27.7
Geography	30.1	24.8	27.5
French	22.3	30.1	26.2
Biology	20.4	17.8	19.1
Chemistry	20.0	16.9	18.5
Physics	19.9	16.7	18.3
Physical Education/Sports Studies	22.9	12.7	17.9
Art & Design	11.2	20.6	15.9
Drama & Theatre Studies	10.0	16.2	13.1
Statistics	11.7	11.0	11.4
D&T Resistant Materials	18.1	3.5	10.9
Business Studies:Single	12.6	8.9	10.8
German	9.9	11.5	10.7
D&T Food Technology	7.2	13.0	10.1
Media/Film/Tv Studies	9.2	9.8	9.5
Spanish	8.0	11.0	9.5
D&T Graphic Products	9.5	7.1	8.3
Music	7.7	7.0	7.4
Art & Design (Fine Art)	5.5	9.3	7.3
Information & Communications Technology	7.7	6.3	7.0
D&T Textiles Technology	0.4	11.4	5.8
D&T Product Design	6.3	3.3	4.8
Office Technology	4.5	4.3	4.4
Home Economics: Child Development	0.1	6.6	3.3
Sociology	1.4	4.0	2.7
Dance	0.3	4.6	2.4
Additional Mathematics	2.4	2.2	2.3
Catering Studies	1.9	2.6	2.2
Humanities: Single	2.0	2.1	2.0
D&T Electronic Products	3.2	0.3	1.8
Latin	1.5	1.5	1.5
Home Economics: Food	0.9	1.9	1.4
Art & Design (Photography)	1.1	1.5	1.3
General Studies	1.2	1.1	1.2
Art & Design (Textiles)	0.1	2.2	1.2
Expressive Arts & Performance Studies	0.8	1.4	1.1
Psychology	0.6	1.4	1.0

Table 12: Uptake of individual subjects by school type (% of students)

Subject	Academy	Comprehensive	Grammar	Independent	Secondary Modern
English Language & Literature	94.8	97.3	99.1	88.2	97.3
Mathematics	98.7	98.7	99.7	58.7	98.9
English Literature	59.6	76.1	96.4	79.6	66.5
Science (Core)	59.4	70.5	40.0	39.4	78.6
Additional Science	34.8	49.6	35.7	34.1	50.4
History	20.7	30.4	54.5	50.5	26.1
Religious Studies	16.7	27.8	37.9	30.4	24.5
Geography	15.6	25.7	47.2	46.5	23.1
French	13.5	23.6	50.5	55.1	15.6
Biology	10.8	16.3	62.8	38.1	8.8
Chemistry	10.2	15.7	62.0	36.7	7.5
Physics	10.6	15.7	62.0	34.9	7.5
Physical Education/Sports Studies	13.3	18.6	18.5	14.9	14.9
Art & Design	13.0	16.1	15.1	15.8	15.4
Drama & Theatre Studies	8.8	13.0	14.8	17.0	10.6
Statistics	7.7	11.8	18.2	3.6	16.1
D&T Resistant Materials	8.4	10.9	11.0	11.9	10.3
Business Studies:Single	6.4	11.1	19.8	8.6	6.4
German	4.0	10.1	31.3	16.1	3.0
D&T Food Technology	8.1	11.1	8.7	1.9	9.5
Media/Film/Tv Studies	9.3	10.4	3.8	1.2	12.6
Spanish	4.7	7.9	22.7	24.5	6.0
D&T Graphic Products	5.4	9.1	9.2	2.1	7.4
Music	4.0	7.1	12.8	11.2	4.9
Art & Design (Fine Art)	4.1	7.0	11.3	12.0	6.3
Information & Communications Technology	2.6	6.4	17.7	10.6	7.4
D&T Textiles Technology	5.0	6.3	5.8	2.0	4.6
D&T Product Design	6.9	4.8	5.8	2.2	5.0
Office Technology	4.9	4.7	1.6	2.2	5.4
Home Economics: Child Development	1.7	3.8	0.3	0.3	4.5
Sociology	2.8	3.0	0.9	0.5	2.0
Dance	1.6	2.6	1.7	0.8	2.9
Additional Mathematics	1.2	2.4	2.8	2.2	2.4
Catering Studies	2.0	2.5	0.2	0.1	3.6
Humanities: Single	2.2	2.2	0.2	0.3	3.7
D&T Electronic Products	1.1	1.9	3.1	0.9	1.6
Latin	0.2	0.3	6.4	13.7	0.0
Home Economics: Food	0.9	1.2	0.9	3.3	2.0
Art & Design (Photography)	1.5	1.3	0.2	0.9	2.5
General Studies	0.6	1.4	0.7	0.1	0.4
Art & Design (Textiles)	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.3	1.7
Expressive Arts & Performance Studies	1.2	1.1	0.8	0.4	2.3
Psychology	1.8	1.1	1.4	0.3	0.4

Table 13: Uptake of individual subjects by attainment (% of students)

Subject	Low attainment	Medium attainment	High attainment
English Language & Literature	95.3	98.1	96.8
Mathematics	97.8	99.0	90.9
English Literature	51.4	83.6	93.7
Science (Core)	71.3	75.9	53.5
Additional Science	34.5	59.2	48.5
History	17.2	31.3	48.6
Religious Studies	17.2	28.7	37.7
Geography	15.5	27.5	39.9
French	9.2	23.6	46.2
Biology	2.4	13.0	42.5
Chemistry	1.7	12.2	41.9
Physics	1.7	12.2	41.5
Physical Education/Sports Studies	13.3	21.8	18.7
Art & Design	13.8	17.0	16.9
Drama & Theatre Studies	9.5	14.4	15.5
Statistics	4.6	12.0	17.6
D&T Resistant Materials	12.9	11.6	8.3
Business Studies:Single	6.9	13.1	12.6
German	3.3	9.6	19.5
D&T Food Technology	11.2	11.0	8.1
Media/Film/Tv Studies	9.5	11.5	7.6
Spanish	3.1	8.3	17.3
D&T Graphic Products	7.0	9.5	8.6
Music	3.5	6.7	12.0
Art & Design (Fine Art)	5.7	7.4	9.0
Information & Communications Technology	4.1	7.3	9.9
D&T Textiles Technology	4.6	6.5	6.5
D&T Product Design	4.9	5.2	4.2
Office Technology	4.3	5.1	4.0
Home Economics: Child Development	4.8	3.7	1.4
Sociology	2.1	3.5	2.6
Dance	2.0	3.0	2.3
Additional Mathematics	1.4	2.5	3.0
Catering Studies	3.1	2.5	1.2
Humanities: Single	2.3	2.2	1.6
D&T Electronic Products	1.5	1.9	2.0
Latin	0.0	0.1	4.5
Home Economics: Food	1.5	1.5	1.2
Art & Design (Photography)	1.2	1.6	1.1
General Studies	1.3	1.3	0.9
Art & Design (Textiles)	1.0	1.3	1.2
Expressive Arts & Performance Studies	1.1	1.2	1.0
Psychology	0.6	1.3	1.2

Table 14: Uptake of individual subjects by deprivation group (% of students)

Subject	Low deprivation	Medium deprivation	High deprivation
English Language & Literature	99.0	98.0	96.2
Mathematics	99.6	99.2	98.7
English Literature	85.6	76.9	66.6
Science (Core)	69.2	71.2	68.0
Additional Science	53.2	50.2	43.0
History	37.6	32.0	23.5
Religious Studies	29.3	26.1	28.0
Geography	32.8	27.0	18.7
French	31.7	23.8	16.5
Biology	24.8	17.5	10.9
Chemistry	24.3	16.9	10.3
Physics	24.3	16.9	10.2
Physical Education/Sports Studies	22.8	18.8	13.4
Art & Design	16.5	16.4	15.0
Drama & Theatre Studies	14.6	13.3	10.7
Statistics	13.8	12.4	10.0
D&T Resistant Materials	11.4	11.3	9.9
Business Studies:Single	14.0	11.1	8.3
German	15.3	10.4	5.5
D&T Food Technology	11.8	11.3	9.4
Media/Film/Tv Studies	9.7	11.0	10.1
Spanish	10.4	8.0	6.4
D&T Graphic Products	10.1	9.0	7.6
Music	9.2	7.2	4.9
Art & Design (Fine Art)	8.0	7.4	5.7
Information & Communications Technology	8.8	6.9	4.7
D&T Textiles Technology	6.8	6.2	5.6
D&T Product Design	5.3	5.1	4.8
Office Technology	5.0	4.8	4.2
Home Economics: Child Development	3.1	3.9	3.8
Sociology	2.6	2.6	3.6
Dance	2.9	2.8	2.0
Additional Mathematics	3.0	2.6	1.5
Catering Studies	2.3	2.7	2.3
Humanities: Single	2.1	2.1	2.4
D&T Electronic Products	2.3	2.0	1.4
Latin	0.8	0.5	0.2
Home Economics: Food	1.3	1.3	1.1
Art & Design (Photography)	1.4	1.5	1.2
General Studies	1.2	1.4	1.2
Art & Design (Textiles)	1.1	1.1	1.3
Expressive Arts & Performance Studies	1.1	1.1	1.3
Psychology	1.2	1.1	1.0

Table 15: Uptake of individual subjects by school gender (% of students)

Subject	Boys School	Girls School	Mixed School
English Language & Literature	93.4	97.2	96.7
Mathematics	83.4	90.3	96.9
English Literature	76.1	89.1	74.7
Science (Core)	47.8	60.5	68.6
Additional Science	36.5	48.6	47.8
History	43.3	42.5	30.6
Religious Studies	35.0	41.7	26.0
Geography	40.3	32.5	26.2
French	41.0	43.6	23.6
Biology	37.0	28.8	17.1
Chemistry	36.4	27.6	16.5
Physics	36.9	27.5	16.3
Physical Education/Sports Studies	16.7	10.3	18.6
Art & Design	12.0	18.5	15.9
Drama & Theatre Studies	9.4	18.1	12.8
Statistics	11.8	10.2	11.4
D&T Resistant Materials	15.9	3.9	11.2
Business Studies:Single	14.3	8.9	10.8
German	15.0	15.0	10.1
D&T Food Technology	3.0	9.0	10.6
Media/Film/Tv Studies	5.8	7.0	10.0
Spanish	15.2	19.4	8.2
D&T Graphic Products	7.2	6.2	8.6
Music	9.1	9.1	7.1
Art & Design (Fine Art)	9.4	9.2	7.0
Information & Communications Technology	11.9	10.0	6.5
D&T Textiles Technology	0.1	9.9	5.8
D&T Product Design	5.8	3.3	4.8
Office Technology	2.3	3.2	4.7
Home Economics: Child Development	0.0	3.0	3.5
Sociology	0.6	4.4	2.7
Dance	0.1	3.7	2.5
Additional Mathematics	3.2	1.6	2.3
Catering Studies	1.0	1.4	2.4
Humanities: Single	1.3	0.8	2.2
D&T Electronic Products	4.0	0.2	1.8
Latin	7.8	5.7	0.7
Home Economics: Food	0.2	2.5	1.4
Art & Design (Photography)	1.6	1.1	1.3
General Studies	1.0	0.0	1.3
Art & Design (Textiles)	0.0	2.1	1.1
Expressive Arts & Performance Studies	0.1	1.0	1.2
Psychology	0.6	0.7	1.1