

Provision of level 2 qualifications in English schools 2014

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Introduction

This report is a follow up to a previous report on changes over time in the provision of different level 2 qualifications in schools in England (Gill, 2013). The previous report looked at provision between 2008 and 2012. The current report is an update for 2014. The purpose of this report is to give an overall picture of provision at level 2, rather than focussing on one or two qualifications only (e.g. GCSEs).

Provision in a subject is usually defined as the percentage of schools (where the qualification is offered in any subject) with at least one student taking a particular subject. For example, provision of GCSE English is the percentage of schools offering GCSEs where at least one pupil is taking a GCSE in English. However, as this report looks at multiple qualifications this definition has changed to be the percentage of all schools in England (offering level 2 qualifications) with at least one student (at the end of Key Stage 4) taking a particular subject in a particular qualification.

Data

The data for these analyses were taken from the National Pupil Database (NPD) for 2014. 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. The Key Stage 4 (KS4) extract of the NPD was used, consisting of all students who were at the end of KS4 (i.e. in year 11).

The provision in different types of school was also investigated, using the five most common categories of schools (comprehensive, academy, grammar, independent and secondary modern schools). Table 1 presents the number of schools in each school type in 2014.

Table 1: Number and percentage of different school types

School type	Schools (n)	Schools (%)
City Academy	1,309	24.5
Comprehensive	1,588	29.7
Grammar	76	1.4
Independent	924	17.3
Secondary Modern	100	1.9

There were a very large number of different qualifications recorded in the KS4 extract of the NPD in all three years, but not all of these were included in this report. To make the analyses more manageable only KS4 qualifications that are worth at least the same as a GCSE (according to the NPD) were included.

One of the more common alternatives to GCSEs is the International GCSE (IGCSE). These were originally developed for use overseas, but independent schools in England began using them in recent years. More recently, accredited versions of some subjects have been developed for use in English state schools¹. Thus, there are currently two types of IGCSEs available to schools in England (accredited and non-accredited). However, only accredited IGCSEs are now included in the NPD. It is very rare for state schools to offer non-accredited

¹ Technically these are called either Level 1 / Level 2 Certificates, but they are generally referred to as IGCSEs

IGCSEs because they will not receive government funding, but these restrictions do not apply to independent schools. Thus, in the following analysis the provision of IGCSEs in independent schools will be under-estimated.

Results

Overall provision of qualifications

Table 2 presents the provision of the different qualifications, by school type and overall.

Virtually all schools offered GCSEs, as expected. Vocational GCSEs, IGCSEs, BTECs and OCR Nationals were all most likely to be offered by comprehensive, academy or secondary modern schools. It was rare for grammar or independent schools to offer BTECs, OCR Nationals or Vocational GCSEs. In comparison to 2012, there was an increase in schools offering IGCSEs (from 23.9% to 46.7%) and falls in the percentages offering OCR Nationals (from 48.0% to 31.0%) or VRQs (from 43.9% to 17.1%).

Table 2: Provision of level 2 qualifications, by school type (% of schools)

Qualification	Acad	Comp	Grammar	Ind	Sec Mod	All
AS level	38.2	31.9	61.8	25.9	27.0	26.8
BTEC	85.6	92.3	11.8	11.5	90.0	60.4
Diploma	4.7	4.0	1.3	0.2	4.0	2.7
GCSE	98.9	99.9	100.0	99.4	100.0	99.0
IGCSE	60.7	56.0	46.1	40.5	65.0	46.7
OCR Nationals	48.9	52.2	10.5	4.4	53.0	31.0
Other GQ	36.1	35.5	35.5	19.5	26.0	24.0
VRQ	24.1	23.0	19.7	9.4	20.0	17.1
Vocational GCSE	55.9	57.5	11.8	5.2	59.0	34.9

Combinations of qualifications offered by schools

Table 3 presents the top 10 different combinations of qualifications offered by schools.

Table 3: Most popular combinations of qualifications offered by schools

Combination	Schools	% Schools
GCSEs only	934	17.3
GCSE -BTEC	296	5.5
GCSE-IGCSE	283	5.2
GCSE -BTEC-IGCSE-OCR National-Vocational GCSE	219	4.0
GCSE-BTEC-IGCSE	169	3.1
GCSE-AS level	158	2.9
GCSE-BTEC-IGCSE-Vocational GCSE	132	2.4
GCSE-BTEC-IGCSE-OCR National	128	2.4
GCSE-BTEC-OCR National - Vocational GCSE	126	2.3
GCSE-AS level-IGCSE	124	2.3

Appendix A presents the five most popular combinations in each school type.

GCSEs only was the most popular combination, offered by 17.3% of schools, followed by GCSE and BTEC (5.5%) and GCSE and IGCSE (5.2%). In total there were 174 different combinations offered by schools.

Provision of individual subjects

Compulsory subjects

The National Curriculum requires all state-funded schools to provide pupils with access to core subjects (English, Mathematics and Sciences). In science the requirement is access to a course of study leading to at least two GCSEs (or equivalent). This essentially means offering core science and additional science or all three separate sciences. In English, most students take either a combined English qualification or separate qualifications in English language and English literature.

When looking at the school type breakdown, it is worth noting that independent schools and academy schools (of which there are a greatly increasing number) do not have to follow the National Curriculum and therefore do not have to offer these subjects.

Mathematics

Table 4 presents the different mathematics qualifications offered by schools.

Table 4: Provision of mathematics qualifications in schools

Qualification	Schools	% of all schools	% of all offering mathematics
GCSE	4,854	89.7	98.9
IGCSE	302	5.6	6.2
AS level	185	3.4	3.8
Any	4,908	90.7	100.0
None	503	9.3	n/a

Around 90% of schools offered a GCSE, with 5.6% offering an IGCSE in maths. Just over 9% apparently did not offer a maths qualification at all. However, many of these schools were independent schools (which might offer the non-accredited IGCSE) or they were non-mainstream schools such as special or performing arts schools.

Table 5 presents the provision of mathematics in different school types. For all school types apart from independent schools over 95% of schools offered the GCSE and between 6% and 8% offered the IGCSE. Just over 72% of independent schools offered the GCSE, with around 24% not offering either a GCSE or the accredited IGCSE.

Table 5: Provision of mathematics qualifications in schools, by school type

	Qualification	Schools	% of all schools	% of all offering mathematics
Academies	GCSE	1,298	99.16	99.69
	IGCSE	102	7.79	7.83
	AS level	59	4.51	4.53
	Any	1,302	99.47	100.00
	None	7	0.53	0.54
Comprehensive	GCSE	1,569	98.80	100.00
	IGCSE	101	6.36	6.44
	AS level	61	3.84	3.89
	Any	1,569	98.80	100.00
	None	19	1.20	1.21
Grammar	GCSE	73	96.05	97.33
	IGCSE	5	6.58	6.67
	AS level	7	9.21	9.33
	Any	75	98.68	100.00
	None	1	1.32	1.33
Independent	GCSE	667	72.19	95.97
	IGCSE	40	4.33	5.76
	AS level	22	2.38	3.17
	Any	695	75.22	100.00
	None	229	24.78	32.95
Secondary Modern	GCSE	98	98.00	100.00
	IGCSE	8	8.00	8.16
	AS level	8	8.00	8.16
	Any	98	98.00	100.00
	None	2	2.00	2.04

English

In 2013/14, most students took either English or both English Language and English Literature. Table 6 presents the provision of the combined English.

Table 6: Provision of different English qualifications

Qualification	Schools	% of all schools	% of all offering English
GCSE	2,950	54.5	99.6
IGCSE	12	0.2	0.4
AS level	24	0.4	0.8
Any	2,963	54.8	100.0
None	2,448	45.2	n/a

There were very few schools offering anything other than a GCSE in English. Around 45% of schools did not offer English at all.

English language

Provision of English language qualifications is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Provision of different English language qualifications

Qualification	Schools	% of all schools	% of all offering English language
GCSE	3,492	64.5	86.4
IGCSE	1,834	33.9	45.4
AS level	17	0.3	0.4
Any	4,041	74.7	100.0
None	1,370	25.3	n/a

Around 64% of schools offered a GCSE and 34% offered an IGCSE in English language. It is interesting to note that 1,278 (23.6%) of schools offered both the GCSE and IGCSE.

Table 8 presents this analysis by school type.

Table 8: Provision of different English language qualifications, by school type

	Qualification	Schools	% of all schools	% of all offering English language
Academies	GCSE	1,114	85.10	88.91
	IGCSE	655	50.04	52.27
	AS level	7	0.56	0.56
	Any	1,253	95.72	100.00
	None	56	4.28	4.47
Comprehensive	GCSE	1,404	88.41	92.13
	IGCSE	748	47.10	49.08
	AS level	4	0.26	0.26
	Any	1,523	95.97	100.00
	None	64	4.03	4.20
Grammar	GCSE	66	86.84	89.19
	IGCSE	17	22.37	22.97
	AS level	0	0.00	0.00
	Any	74	97.37	100.00
	None	2	2.63	2.70
Independent	GCSE	487	52.71	87.12
	IGCSE	94	10.17	16.82
	AS level	2	0.22	0.36
	Any	559	60.50	100.00
	None	365	39.50	65.30
Secondary Modern	GCSE	80	80.00	86.02
	IGCSE	58	58.00	62.37
	AS level	0	0.00	0.00
	Any	93	93.00	100.00
	None	7	7.00	7.53

Independent schools were the least likely to offer a GCSE (52.7%). In other school types between 80% and 88% offered a GCSE. Secondary modern schools were most likely to offer an IGCSE (58.0%), followed by academy (50.0%) and comprehensive (47.1%) schools. Relatively few grammar schools offered the IGCSE (22.4%). Only about 10% of independent schools offered the accredited IGCSE, but many more may have offered the non-accredited version.

English literature

Table 9 presents the provision of English literature qualifications. The percentage of schools offering the GCSE (64%) was similar to that for English language, but a much lower percentage (14.3%) offered an IGCSE.

Table 9: Provision of different English literature qualifications

Qualification	Schools	% of all schools	% of all offering English literature
GCSE	3,461	64.0	92.2
IGCSE	777	14.4	20.7
AS level	29	0.5	0.8
Any	3,753	69.4	100.0
None	1,658	30.6	n/a

Table 10 breaks down this analysis by school type. As with English language the percentage of independent schools offering the GCSE was much lower than the percentage of other school types. Secondary modern schools were the most likely to offer an IGCSE in the subject (32%).

Table 10: Provision of different English literature qualifications, by school type

	Qualification	Schools	% of all schools	% of all offering English literature
Academies	GCSE	1170	89.38	93.45
	IGCSE	285	21.77	22.76
	AS level	8	0.61	0.64
	Any	1252	95.65	100.00
	None	57	4.35	4.55
Comprehensive	GCSE	1445	90.99	94.20
	IGCSE	320	20.15	20.86
	AS level	12	0.76	0.78
	Any	1534	96.60	100.00
	None	54	3.40	3.52
Grammar	GCSE	66	86.84	90.41
	IGCSE	10	13.16	13.70
	AS level	.	0.00	0.00
	Any	73	96.05	100.00
	None	3	3.95	4.11
Independent	GCSE	508	54.98	91.70
	IGCSE	51	5.52	9.21
	AS level	5	0.54	0.90
	Any	553	59.96	100.00
	None	370	40.04	66.79
Secondary Modern	GCSE	81	81.00	89.01
	IGCSE	32	32.00	35.16
	AS level	2	2.00	2.20
	Any	91	91.00	100.00
	None	9	9.00	9.89

Sciences

Students usually take either combined science (one or two qualifications) or all three of the separate sciences. Combined science is either GCSEs in Core Science and (usually) Additional Science or an IGCSE in Double Science. For the first time this year a new Further Additional Science qualification was introduced, to be taken alongside the other two combined science subjects. This is intended to encourage students to progress to AS and A level sciences.

Provision of different science qualifications is presented in Table 11. It is worth noting the difference between the Applied Sciences and the Applied Science qualifications. The first refers to either a BTEC or an OCR National (which are equivalent to 1, 2 or 4 GCSEs), whereas the latter is a vocational GCSE double award.

Appendix B presents the same analysis broken down by school type.

Table 11: Provision of different science qualifications

Subject	Qualification	Schools	% of all schools	% of all offering Sciences
Science (Core)	GCSE	4,171	77.08	90.40
Science (Additional)	GCSE	3,547	65.55	76.87
Science (Further Additional)	GCSE	695	12.84	15.06
Biology	GCSE	2,791	51.58	60.49
	IGCSE	309	5.71	6.70
	AS level	20	0.37	0.43
Chemistry	GCSE	2,702	49.94	58.56
	IGCSE	262	4.84	5.68
	AS level	18	0.33	0.39
Physics	GCSE	2,706	50.01	58.65
	IGCSE	267	4.93	5.79
	AS level	17	0.31	0.37
Applied Sciences	BTEC	2,170	40.10	47.03
	OCR National	304	5.62	6.59
Additional Applied Science	Voc. GCSE	318	5.88	6.89
Science (Double Award)	IGCSE	168	3.10	3.64
Any	Any	4618	85.27	100.00
None	None	792	14.73	

Schools were most likely to offer core science (90.4%) or additional science (76.9%) GCSEs. Around 60% of schools offered GCSEs and 6-7% IGCSEs in the separate sciences. Schools were much more likely to offer the BTEC in applied sciences (47.0%) than the OCR National (6.6%).

Provision of individual subjects in other level 2 qualifications

Finally the provision of the most common subjects to be offered in other popular qualifications (BTECs, OCR Nationals and vocational GCSEs) is summarised below. These

are worth reporting as they make up a substantial percentage of the qualifications offered at level 2. Tables 12 to 14 present the 10 most popular subjects offered in these qualifications.

Table 12: Provision of popular BTEC subjects

Subject	Schools (n)	Schools (%)
Applied Sciences	2,169	40.1
Sports Studies	2,031	37.5
Speech & Drama	1,247	23.0
Business Studies	1,199	22.2
Health Studies	1,143	21.1
Building / Construction Operations	1,066	19.7
Art & Design	899	16.6
Music Studies (General)	790	14.6
Computer Appreciation / Introduction	608	11.2
Engineering Studies	598	11.1

Table 13: Provision of popular OCR Nationals subjects

Subject	Schools (n)	Schools (%)
Computer Appreciation / Introduction	1,398	25.8
Applied Sciences	304	5.6
Health Studies	142	2.6
Business Studies	140	2.6
Sports Studies	52	1.0
Small Business Management	36	0.7
Tourism	25	0.5
Film / Video / Television Production	15	0.3
Art & Design	14	0.3
Sports / Movement Science	11	0.2

Table 14: Provision of popular Vocational GCSE subjects

Subject	Schools (n)	Schools (%)
Catering Studies	1,035	19.1
Health & Social Care	483	8.9
Leisure & Tourism	345	6.4
Additional Applied Science	318	5.9
Applied Business	262	4.8
Hospitality & Catering	216	4.0
Applied Engineering	92	1.7
Manufacturing	18	0.3
Applied Science	4	0.1
Motor Vehicle Studies	2	<0.1

Gill, T. (2013). *Provision of level 2 qualifications in English schools 2008-2012*. *Statistics Report Series No.60*. Cambridge Assessment. Available at <http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/Images/150208-provision-of-level-2-qualifications-in-english-schools-2008-2012.pdf>

Appendix A: Combinations by school type

Table A1: Most popular combinations of qualifications offered, by school type

	Combination	Schools	% Schools
Academy	GCSE-BTEC-IGCSE-OCR National-Vocational GCSE	81	6.3
	GCSE-AS level-BTEC-IGCSE-OCR-Nat- Vocational GCSE	48	3.7
	GCSE-BTEC-IGCSE- Vocational GCSE	46	3.6
	GCSE-BTEC-OCR National- Vocational GCSE	45	3.5
	GCSE-BTEC-IGCSE-OCR National	44	3.4
Comprehensive	GCSE-BTEC-IGCSE-OCR National-Vocational GCSE	112	7.1
	GCSE-BTEC-OCR National-Vocational GCSE	73	4.6
	GCSE-BTEC-IGCSE-Vocational GCSE	68	4.2
	GCSE-BTEC-IGCSE-OCR National	64	4.0
	GCSE-BTEC-OCR National	55	3.5
Grammar	GCSE-AS level-IGCSE	11	14.5
	GCSE-AS level	9	11.8
	GCSE-Other GQ	7	9.2
	GCSE	6	7.9
	GCSE-AS level-IGCSE-VRQ	4	5.3
Independent	GCSE	282	30.5
	GCSE-IGCSE	128	13.9
	GCSE-AS level-IGCSE	77	8.4
	GCSE-AS level	72	7.8
	GCSE-Other GQ	42	4.5
Secondary Modern	GCSE-BTEC-IGCSE-OCR National-Vocational GCSE	12	12.0
	GCSE-AS level-BTEC-IGCSE-OCR National-Vocational GCSE	6	6.0
	GCSE	6	6.0
	GCSE-BTEC-Vocational GCSE	5	5.0
	GCSE-BTEC-IGCSE-OCR National	4	4.0

Appendix B: Science provision by school type

Academies

Subject	Qualification	Schools	% of all schools	% of all offering Sciences
Science (Core)	GCSE	1,235	94.35	95.37
Science (Additional)	GCSE	1,199	91.60	92.59
Science (Further Additional)	GCSE	252	19.25	19.46
Biology	GCSE	984	75.17	75.98
	IGCSE	87	6.65	6.72
	AS level	11	0.84	0.85
Chemistry	GCSE	968	73.95	74.75
	IGCSE	78	5.96	6.02
	AS level	7	0.53	0.54
Physics	GCSE	973	74.33	75.14
	IGCSE	80	6.11	6.18
	AS level	3	0.23	0.23
Applied Sciences	BTEC	805	61.50	62.16
	OCR National	125	9.55	9.65
Additional Applied Science	Voc. GCSE	138	10.54	10.66
Science (Double Award)	IGCSE	48	3.67	3.71
Any	Any	1,295	98.93	100.00

Comprehensives

Subject	Qualification	Schools	% of all schools	% of all offering Sciences
Science (Core)	GCSE	1558	98.11	99.62
Science (Additional)	GCSE	1539	96.91	98.40
Science (Further Additional)	GCSE	360	22.67	23.02
Biology	GCSE	1196	75.31	76.41
	IGCSE	47	2.96	3.01
	AS level	2	0.13	0.13
Chemistry	GCSE	1188	74.81	75.96
	IGCSE	30	1.89	1.92
	AS level	1	0.06	0.06
Physics	GCSE	1194	75.19	76.34
	IGCSE	31	1.95	1.98
	AS level	3	0.19	0.19
Applied Sciences	BTEC	1070	67.38	68.41
	OCR National	139	8.69	8.82
Additional Applied Science	Voc. GCSE	152	9.57	9.72
Science (Double Award)	IGCSE	35	2.20	2.24
Any	Any	1,564	98.49	100.00

Grammar schools

Subject	Qualification	Schools	% of all schools	% of all offering Sciences
Science (Core)	GCSE	54	71.05	72.97
Science (Additional)	GCSE	54	71.05	72.97
Science (Further Additional)	GCSE	5	6.58	6.76
Biology	GCSE	60	78.95	81.08
	IGCSE	12	15.79	16.22
	AS level	1	1.32	1.35
Chemistry	GCSE	60	78.95	81.08
	IGCSE	12	15.79	16.22
	AS level	1	1.32	1.35
Physics	GCSE	62	81.58	83.78
	IGCSE	9	11.84	12.16
	AS level	0	0.00	0.00
Applied Sciences	BTEC	3	3.95	4.05
	OCR National	0	0.00	0.00
Additional Applied Science	Voc. GCSE	1	1.32	1.35
Science (Double Award)	IGCSE	5	6.58	6.76
Any	Any	74	97.37	100.00

Independent schools

Subject	Qualification	Schools	% of all schools	% of all offering Sciences
Science (Core)	GCSE	566	61.26	77.32
Science (Additional)	GCSE	477	51.62	65.16
Science (Further Additional)	GCSE	43	4.65	5.87
Biology	GCSE	373	40.37	50.96
	IGCSE	105	11.36	14.34
	AS level	1	0.11	0.14
Chemistry	GCSE	357	38.64	48.77
	IGCSE	103	11.15	14.07
	AS level	2	0.22	0.27
Physics	GCSE	350	37.88	47.81
	IGCSE	107	11.58	14.62
	AS level	4	0.43	0.55
Applied Sciences	BTEC	35	3.79	4.78
	OCR National	6	0.65	0.82
Additional Applied Science	Voc. GCSE	10	1.08	1.37
Science (Double Award)	IGCSE	56	6.06	7.65
Any	Any	732	79.22	100.00

Secondary moderns

Subject	Qualification	Schools	% of all schools	% of all offering Sciences
Science (Core)	GCSE	96	96.00	100.00
Science (Additional)	GCSE	91	91.00	94.79
Science (Further Additional)	GCSE	22	22.00	22.92
Biology	GCSE	60	60.00	62.50
	IGCSE	6	6.00	6.25
	AS level	2	2.00	2.08
Chemistry	GCSE	61	61.00	63.54
	IGCSE	4	4.00	4.17
	AS level	2	2.00	2.08
Physics	GCSE	61	61.00	63.54
	IGCSE	1	1.00	1.04
	AS level	3	3.00	3.13
Applied Sciences	BTEC	63	63.00	65.63
	OCR National	8	8.00	8.33
Additional Applied Science	Voc. GCSE	5	5.00	5.21
Science (Double Award)	IGCSE	4	4.00	4.17
Any	Any	96	96.00	100.00