

# Section 5: Commentary on performance

Annual Report 2011-2012



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In this section of the annual report, we set out and comment on a series of charts to illustrate the outcomes of end-of-key-stage teacher assessments and external examination results.

# Key to terminology used

Core subjects	English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science
Key stage 1	Until 2011, seven-year-olds were assessed against National Curriculum levels and were expected to attain level 2.
Foundation Phase	This has replaced key stage 1 for five to seven-year-olds. Children are assessed at seven years and are expected to attain outcome 5.
Key stage 2	For seven to 11-year-olds. Pupils are assessed at 11 years and are expected to attain level 4.
Key stage 3	For 11 to 14-year-olds. Pupils are assessed at 14 years and are expected to attain level 5.
Key stage 4	For 14 to 16-year-olds
Level 2 threshold	This includes GCSE qualifications and a range of equivalent non-GCSE qualifications, including vocational qualifications, and represents a volume of qualifications at level 2 equivalent to the volume of five GCSEs at grades A*-C.
Level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics	This includes GCSE qualifications and a range of equivalent non-GCSE qualifications, including vocational qualifications. It represents a volume of qualifications at level 2 equivalent to the volume of five GCSEs at grades A*-C, but also includes GCSEs in English or Welsh first language and mathematics at grades A*-C.
Level 1 threshold	This includes GCSE qualifications and a range of equivalent non-GCSE qualifications, including vocational qualifications, and represents a volume of qualifications at level 1 equivalent to the volume of five GCSEs at grades D-G.
Core subject indicator	This relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science in combination.
Capped average wider points score	This score is calculated using the best eight results of all qualifications approved for use in Wales.
Level 3 threshold	This includes A level outcomes and the full range of approved level 3 qualifications and represents a volume of qualifications at level 3 equivalent to the volume of two levels at grades A-E.
Wider points score	This score comprises all qualifications approved for use in Wales.
Success rates	These indicate the number of learners who achieve a qualification as a percentage of those who started the course.

# The performance of pupils the Foundation Phase<sup>1</sup>

This year, for the first time, all seven-year-olds in Wales were assessed by their teachers against the Foundation Phase outcomes instead of National Curriculum levels. Pupils are expected to attain Foundation Phase outcome 5 by this age, with the most able reaching outcome 6 or higher. Because this was the first year of the Foundation Phase assessments there are no results for previous years.

Figure 5.1 shows the results for 2012.

PSD – Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity

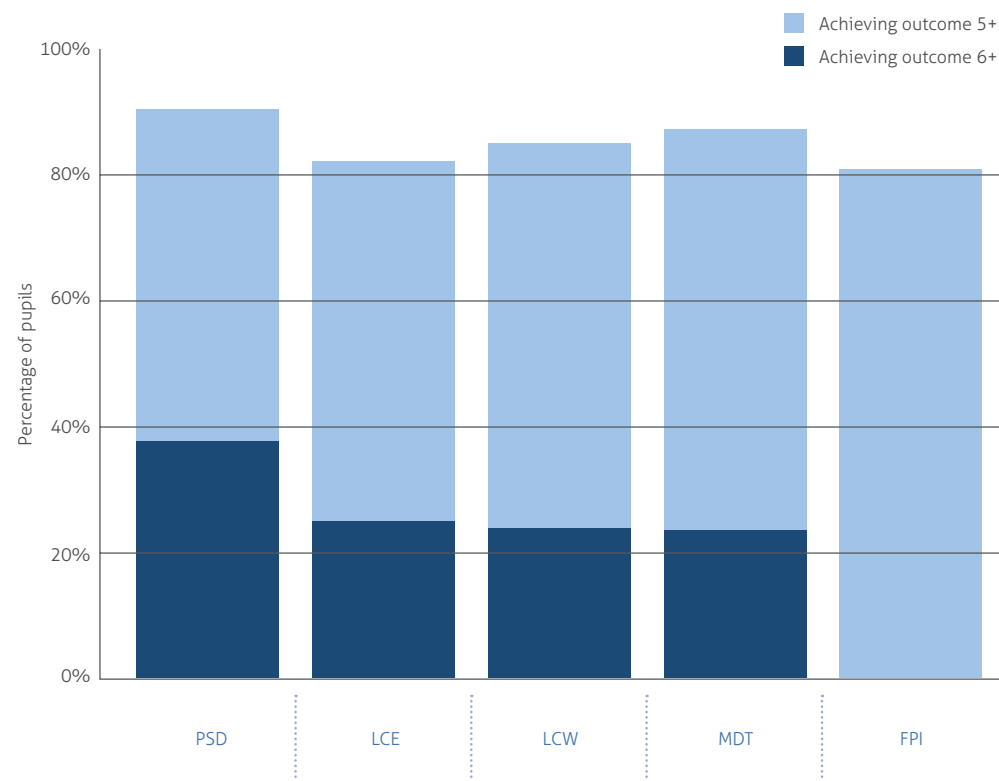
LCE – Language, literacy and communication skills – English

LCW – Language, literacy and communication skills – Welsh

MDT – Mathematical development

FPI – Foundation Phase indicator

Figure 5.1: Foundation Phase – percentage of pupils achieving the expected outcome (outcome 5) or the expected outcome plus one (outcome 6), 2012

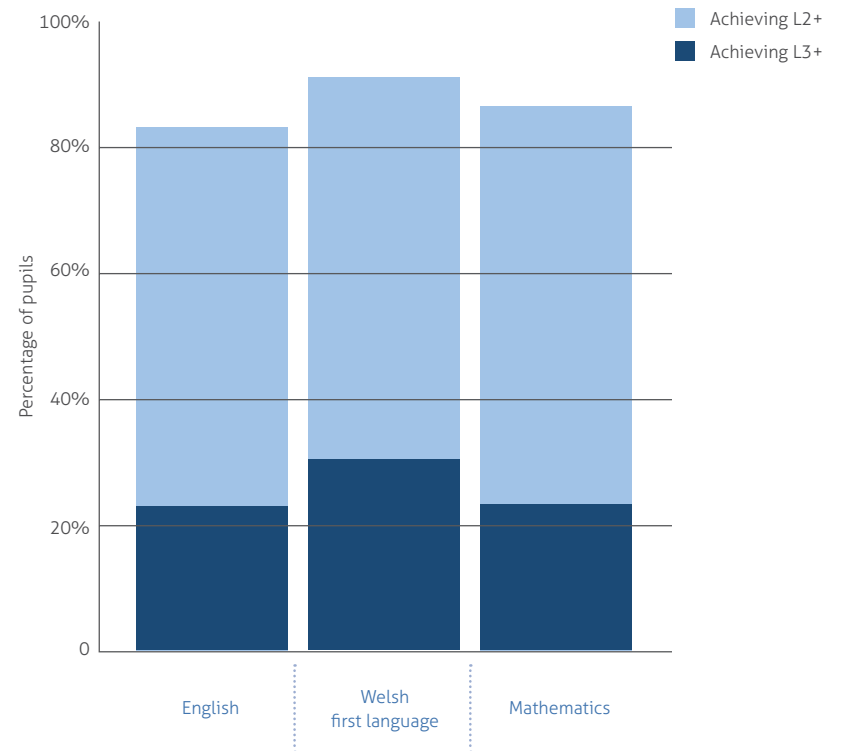


<sup>1</sup> SDR 129/2012 End of Foundation Phase Outcomes and National Curriculum Teacher Assessment of Core Subjects at Key Stages 2 and 3, 2012, Welsh Government <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/schools2012/1208141/?lang=en>

In 2012 more than nine of every ten pupils gained at least outcome 5 in the learning area of personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity (PSDWCD). However, only just over eight out of ten pupils gained this level in all three learning areas of PSDWCD, language, literacy and communication skills in either English or Welsh first language and mathematical development.

In language, literacy and communication skills and in mathematical development only about a quarter of pupils gained the higher outcomes of 6 or above. However, in PSDWCD nearly four out of ten pupils gained the higher outcomes.

Figure 5.2: Key stage 1 – percentage of pupils achieving the expected National Curriculum level (level 2) and the expected level plus one (level 3), 2011



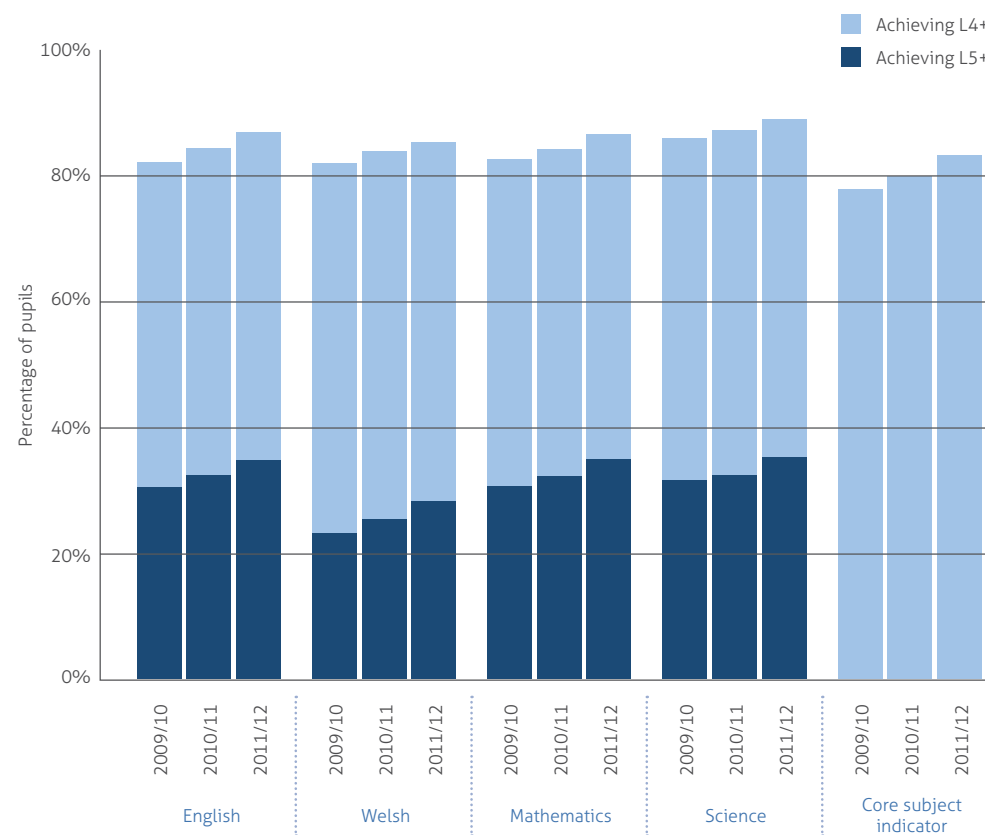
# The performance of pupils key stage 2 and key stage 3<sup>2</sup>

When assessed by their teachers in the National Curriculum core subjects (English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science) pupils are expected to achieve level 4 by the end of key stage 2 when they are 11 years old and the most able are expected to reach level 5. Pupils at the end of key stage 3 when they are 14 years old are expected to reach at least level 5 with the most able reaching level 7 or above.

In key stage 2 in 2012, results improved in all subjects. The percentage of pupils who gain at least the expected level in all three core subjects (known as the core subject indicator, or the CSI) has improved by more than two and a half percentage points. This is the biggest improvement in recent years.

The percentage of pupils gaining the higher levels also improved in all subjects in key stage 2 in 2012. The biggest improvement was in English. About a third of all pupils now gain level 6 or above in English, mathematics and science. However, only just over a quarter of pupils reach this level in Welsh first language.

Figure 5.3: Key stage 2 – percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 4) and the expected level plus one (level 5), 2009-2012

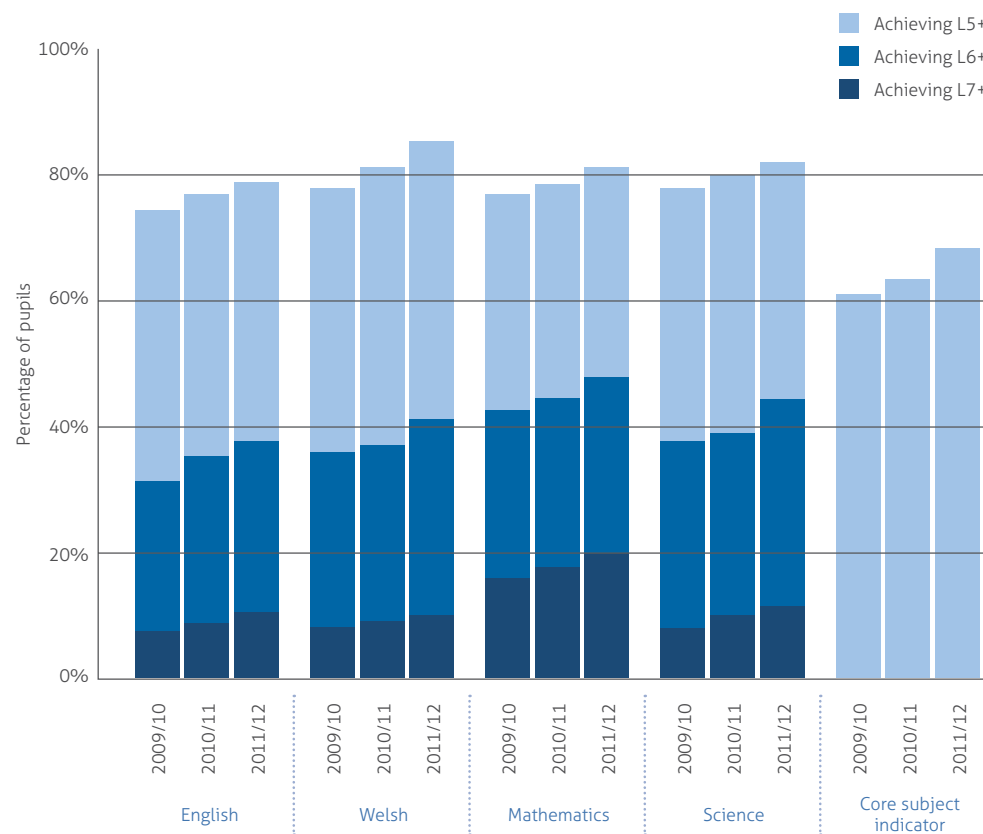


<sup>2</sup> SDR 129/2012 End of Foundation Phase Outcomes and National Curriculum Teacher Assessment of Core Subjects at Key Stages 2 and 3, 2012, Welsh Government <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/schools2012/1208141/?lang=en>

In key stage 3 in 2012, results improved in all subjects by three percentage points or more. The percentage of 14-year-olds gaining at least level 5 in all three core subjects improved by more than 4.5 percentage points. In this key stage again this is the biggest improvement in recent years.

The percentage gaining the higher levels also improved in key stage 3. The highest percentages gaining these levels is once again in mathematics where about half of all pupils gain at least level 6 and one in five gain level 7. The lowest percentages are in English where fewer than four in every ten pupils gain at least level 6 and only one in ten reach level 7.

Figure 5.4: Key stage 3 – percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 5) the expected level plus one (level 6) and expected level plus two (level 7), 2009-2012



# Examinations at key stage 4<sup>3</sup>

Figure 5.5: Examination results for 15-year-olds in schools in Wales

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Percentage achieving the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics	47.2%	49.4%	50.1%	51.1%
Percentage achieving the level 2 threshold	60.7%	63.8%	67.3%	72.6%
Percentage points difference between these two indicators	13.5	14.4	17.2	21.5

At the end of key stage 4, 15-year-old pupils take external examinations. In 2012, more than seven in ten of these pupils gained the level 2 threshold. However, the percentage gaining this threshold with a level 2 qualification in English or Welsh first language and in mathematics did not improve as fast as this. We have said in previous years that we are concerned about the widening gap between these results. In 2012 this gap has widened even further. Schools are not making enough progress in making sure that pupils gaining the level 2 threshold also gain qualifications in these key areas, which are national priorities for Wales.

Performance in mathematics is worse than that in the other core subjects (English, Welsh first language and science) and the gap compared with performance in England has grown wider over recent years.

<sup>3</sup> SDR 212/2012 Examination Results in Wales, 2011/12, Welsh Government <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/schools2012/121206/?lang=en>



Figure 5.6: Examination results for 15-year-olds in schools in Wales (continued)

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Percentage achieving the level 1 threshold	88.2%	89.7%	90.3%	91.8%
Percentage achieving the core subject indicator	46.0%	48.0%	48.7%	48.9%
Capped average wider points score		305.1	311.6	323.5
Percentage who left full time education without a recognised qualification <sup>4</sup>	0.9%	0.8%	0.6%	0.4%

Improvement on the other indicators varied in 2012. The capped points score and the percentage gaining the level 1 threshold improved at a slightly faster rate than the previous year. However, the percentage gaining the core subject indicator did not improve significantly. The percentage of learners leaving full-time education without a recognised qualification improved again in 2012 and is less than half of one per cent.

<sup>4</sup> SDR 213/2012 Pupils Leaving Full-time Education with No Qualifications, 2011/12, Welsh Government <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/schools2012/121211/?lang=en>

# Differences in performance between boys & girls

Figure 5.7: Performance of boys and girls across the Foundation Phase and key stages

2012	Boys	Girls	Percentage points' difference
Percentage gaining Foundation Phase indicator	75.5%	85.7%	10.2
Percentage gaining key stage 2 core subject indicator	79.4%	86.0%	6.6
Percentage gaining key stage 3 core subject indicator	67.2%	78.2%	11
Percentage gaining key stage 4 core subject indicator	45.1%	52.8%	7.8

This year, again, girls continue to outperform boys at all key stages. For the core subject indicator the biggest difference is at key stage 3.

The biggest differences in the Foundation Phase are in the better outcomes for girls in language, literature and communication skills in English and in Welsh first language. However, boys perform better than girls in attaining the higher outcomes in mathematical development.

Boys' performance at level 4 or above improved more quickly than that of the girls in key stage 2 in 2012. As a result, the difference between the percentage of boys and girls who gained this level in all three core subjects is the smallest for five years. However, the difference in performance increased for those gaining the higher levels in all subjects except mathematics where boys continue to outperform girls slightly.

At key stage 3, the differences between boys and girls increased further in 2012 in all subjects at all levels except Welsh first language at level 5 or above. The largest differences continue to be in English and Welsh first language and the smallest in mathematics.

In recent years, the gap in performance between boys and girls has reduced steadily at key stage 4. However, in 2012 the difference has increased slightly for all the main indicators.

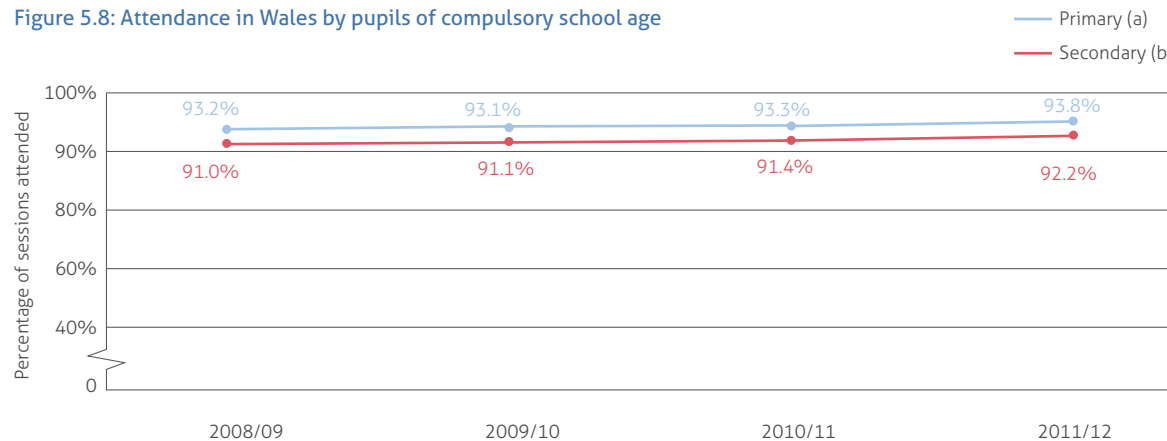
# Attendance and exclusions

In primary schools<sup>5</sup>, attendance rates at an all-Wales level have been stable at around 93% since 2002-2003. In 2011-2012, there was an improvement of 0.5 percentage points in overall attendance in primary schools. Attendance rates improved in all twenty-two local authorities. The highest rate of attendance was in Ceredigion while the lowest was in Merthyr Tydfil.

There has been an improvement of 0.7 percentage points in attendance rates at an all Wales level in secondary schools<sup>6</sup> this year. This maintains the gradual improvement that has taken place since 2005-2006. Girls continue to have higher overall absence rates than boys, although the gap has narrowed slightly. Attendance rates this year improved in 14 local authorities, remained the same as last year's rates in three authorities but fell in five authorities.

Illness accounted for more than 50% of recorded absence in primary and secondary schools.

Figure 5.8: Attendance in Wales by pupils of compulsory school age



(a) Primary attendance also includes data for special and independent schools where provided.

(b) Secondary attendance also includes data for special and independent schools where provided.

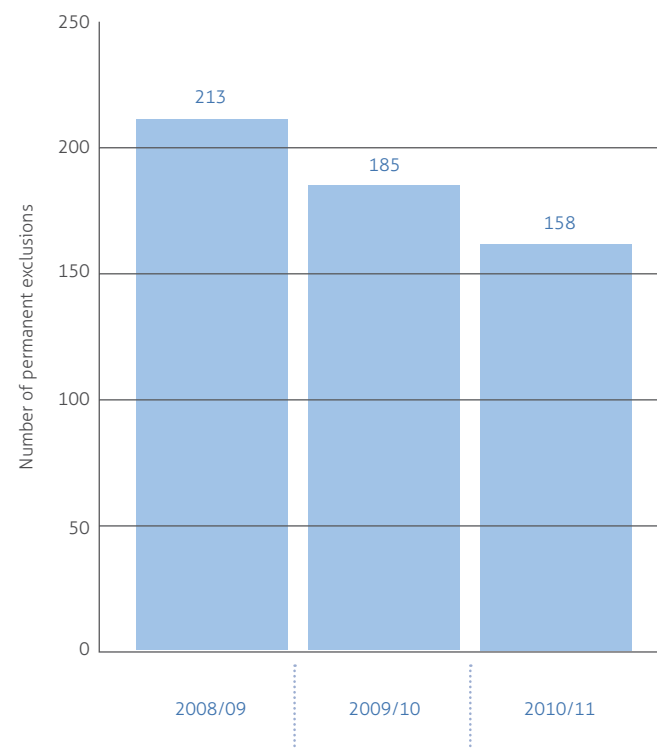
<sup>5</sup> SDR 9/2013 Absenteeism from primary schools 2011-2012, Welsh Government <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/schools2013/absenteeism-primary-schools-2011-12/?jsessionid=9BED35A0AA7ADBFCE37D641B96786C63?lang=en>

<sup>6</sup> SDR 159/2012 Absenteeism from secondary schools 2011-2012, Welsh Government <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/schools2012/120925/?lang=en>

The number of permanent exclusions<sup>7</sup> in Wales continues to fall every year since its peak in 2004-2005. Boys account for 73% of permanent exclusions, which is a 10 percentage points decrease from last year. At 30%, more excluded pupils are given home tuition than any other education provision, whereas 15% of excluded pupils receive no provision. Assault or violence towards pupils and staff are the main reasons given for permanent exclusions. These reasons account for over 40% of permanent exclusions.

The total number of fixed-term exclusions of six days or more has fallen to its lowest level for the past ten years. However, the total number of fixed-term exclusions of five days or fewer has risen slightly from last year's figures. Defiance of rules is the most common reason given for fixed-term exclusions of five days or fewer, or six days or more.

**Figure 5.9: Number of permanent exclusions from maintained primary, secondary and special schools and pupil referral units in Wales, 2008-2011**



<sup>7</sup> SDR 33/2012 Exclusions from schools in Wales, 2010-2011, Welsh Government <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/schools2012/120228/?lang=en>

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# Post-16 learners in schools

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In 2012, the percentage of post-16 learners in schools who achieved the level 3 threshold was similar to that in 2011. The average wider points score attained by these learners declined.

Results for the average wider points score were lower than they have been in recent years.

Figure 5.10: Examination results for post-16 learners in schools in Wales

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Percentage achieving the level 3 threshold	94.9%	96.3%	96.9%
Wider points score	747.9	798.9	772.9

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# Young people not in education, employment or training<sup>8</sup>

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There was a rise of one percentage point since last year in the percentage of 16 to 18-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training. However, the percentage of young people aged 19 to 24 who are not in education, employment or training has fallen by nearly a percentage point.

Figure 5.11: The percentage of young people not in education, employment or training, 2009-2011

Age	2009	2010	2011
16-18	12.2%	11.1%	12.0%
19-24	22.0%	23.0%	22.2%

<sup>8</sup> SB 95/2012 Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) (Year to 30 June 2012), Welsh Government <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/post16education2012/121010/?lang=en>

# Beyond compulsory education: skills, further education and lifelong learning<sup>9</sup>

Overall, qualification levels in Wales increased in 2011, continuing the general increase seen in recent years. In 2011, an estimated 11% of working age adults in Wales reported having no qualifications, compared with 12% the year before. In 2011, 74% of working age adults held qualifications at least up to level 2 compared with 72% in 2010. The proportion holding degree-level qualifications (level 4 or above) was 32% compared with 31% in 2010.

The proportion of working age adults with no qualifications who were in employment in 2011 was 41% compared with 50% in 2001. The change in employment rates between 2001 and 2011 is less for those with higher levels of qualification.

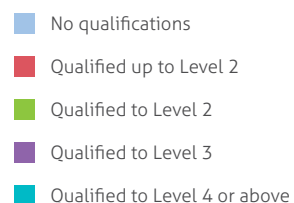


Figure 5.12: Level of highest qualification held by working age adults, 2002-2011



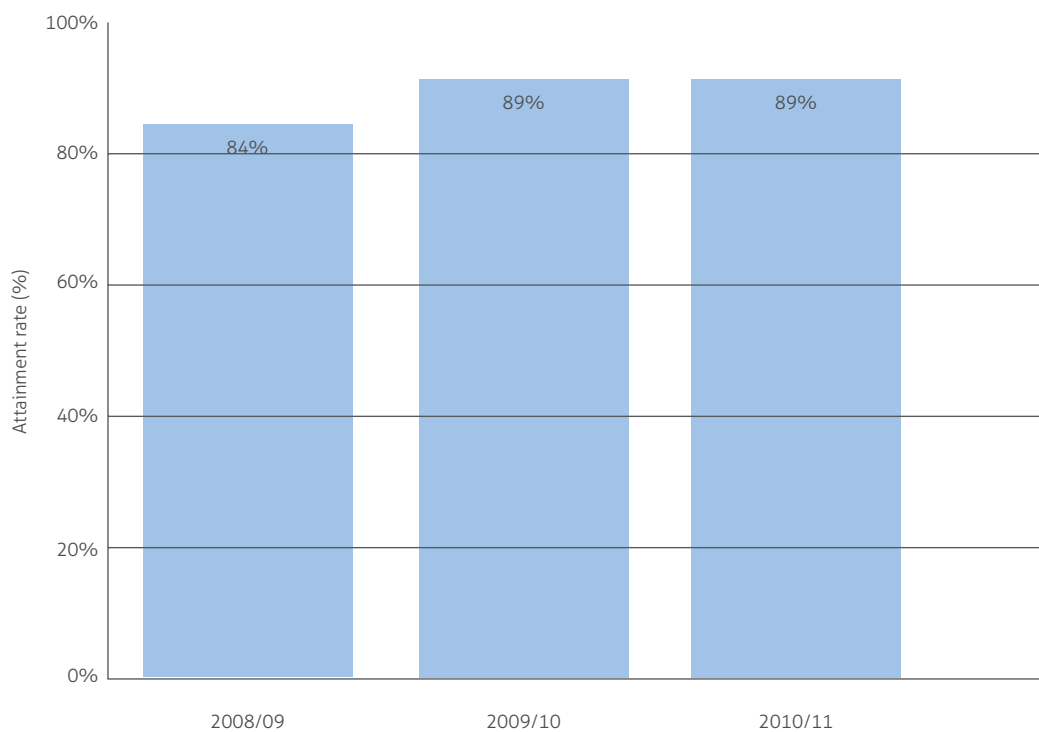
<sup>9</sup> SB111/2012 The Levels of Highest Qualification held by Working Age Adults in Wales, 2011, Welsh Government <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/post16education2012/121121/?lang=en>

# Further education<sup>10</sup>

Attainment rates improved very slightly from 2009-2010 in nearly all learning areas and at all levels. Attainment rates in long courses ranged from 84% in business, administration and law to 94% in hospitality and catering.

The overall attainment rate for all long courses was 89%, the same as in the previous year.

Figure 5.13: Attainment rates for long courses in further education institutions, 2008-2011



The overall success rate for all courses at further education colleges for 2010-2011 was 81%, the same rate as for the previous year. For long courses, success rates were highest at level 1 and lowest at level 3. At level 2, the success rate was 78%, the same as in the previous year. The success rates on long courses at levels 1 and 3 were 81% and 77% respectively, similar rates to the previous year – 81% and 76% respectively.

<sup>10</sup> SDR56/2012 National Comparators for Further Education and Work-Based Learning: 2010/2011, Welsh Government: <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/post16education2012/120405/?lang=en>



# Work-based learning<sup>11</sup>

In 2010-2011, work-based learning activity success rates in all types of programmes were very similar overall to the previous year's rates. The success rates in Modern Apprenticeships improved from 84% to 85% while those in Foundation Modern Apprenticeships decreased from 85% to 84%.

Success rates in Skill Build programmes remain similar to those of the previous year. However, the number of Skill Build learners has dropped by around 80% on those of the previous year since the introduction of the new Traineeships and Steps to Employment programmes.

A lower percentage of learners (16%) entered new employment or changed employment than in 2009-2010. The percentage of learners who were seeking work or were unemployed remained at about 28%.

Work-based learning framework success rates in 2010-2011 for all subject areas were 81% in Foundation Modern Apprenticeships and 83% in Modern Apprenticeships. These figures are the same as in the previous year for Foundation Modern Apprenticeships and three percentage points higher for Modern Apprenticeships than in the previous year.

Figure 5.14: Learning activity success rates in work-based learning provision, 2008-2011



<sup>11</sup> SDR56/2012 National Comparators for Further Education and Work-Based Learning:2010/2011.Welsh Government <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/post16education2012/120405/?lang=en>