

Post-16 Outcomes by Ethnicity in England

Introduction and background

This document collates and contextualises available evidence on outcomes by ethnicity across the post-16 education system in England. This provides a rounded view of the data and trends. The report primarily draws on Department for Education publications, and data releases by the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). It does not attempt to assess the impact of various causes, such as cultural differences, geographic variation, or prior attainment, neither does it consider the impact of COVID-19 on different ethnic groups. Ethnicity will continue to be examined as a factor in other relevant DfE COVID-19 research.

Key findings

Progression from key stage 4 to Post-16

- At age 16, 94 per cent of all pupils go directly into some form of employment, education, or training. This rate is over 90 per cent in all ethnic groups, except for Gypsy, Roma (68%), and Irish Traveller (74%).
- At 91 per cent, mixed white/black Caribbean pupils are the least likely large group (excluding Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller groups) to be in some form of employment, education, and training following Key Stage 4. The national average is 94 per cent.
- In white (excluding Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller groups), Indian, Chinese, and mixed white/Asian groups, over 1 in 4 pupils taking A-levels achieved at least 3 A grades. The highest proportions of pupils achieving these top grades were found in Chinese (42.2%), Indian (32.2%), and mixed white/Asian (31.9%) groups.
- The above groups were also the highest performing groups at KS4. White British students who enter A-level exams are in line with the higher-performing groups, having been less high performing at prior levels of education. This is likely because white British students opt out of A-levels at higher rates.
- Black (16.5%), Pakistani (17.7%), Bangladeshi (21.4%), and Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller groups had significantly lower proportions of pupils receiving at least 3 As at A level. Average A-level results are also lower in these groups.
- Black, Pakistani, mixed white/black Caribbean and Irish Traveller pupils who take A-level exams average a low B grade, below the national average. Gypsy/Roma pupils are the only group to average a C grade.
- White British (4.9%), mixed white/black Caribbean (3%), and Irish Traveller groups (6.3%) are the groups most likely to be in sustained apprenticeships in the year following Key stage 4. No more than 3 per cent of pupils from any other group participate in apprenticeships in the year following Key Stage 4.

Post 16-18 study

- Following 16-18 study, around 4 in 5 pupils go into employment, education, or training. Seventy-six per cent of mixed white/black Caribbean pupils and 77 per

cent of black Caribbean pupils are in some form of employment, education, or training following 16-18 study. This compares to a national rate of 81 per cent and a rate of 81 per cent for white British pupils.

- The highest proportions of students progressing to employment, education, or further training at 18 are in the Chinese (90%), Indian (87%), Bangladeshi (86%), and Black African (86%) groups.
- Gypsy/ Roma (49%) and Irish Traveller (59%) pupils remain the most significant outliers.
- As a group, Chinese pupils have consistently been the highest ranked group in terms of progression to university (72% in 2021), 17 percentage points higher than the second highest ethnic group, Asian pupils. Forty-nine per cent of Black pupils progress to university.
- White pupils are the least likely to enter higher education at 33 per cent. This is driven by lower numbers of applications rather than a lower acceptance rate (see below).
- Chinese pupils are the most likely to be accepted into high tariff universities (40%), at almost 3 times the rate of Asian pupils, the group with the second highest acceptance rate (14.2%).
- Asian and black pupils are more likely to attend a lower tariff institution than a higher tariff institution; 20.9 per cent to 15.8 per cent for Asian pupils, 19.4 per cent to 11.1 per cent for black pupils. White and mixed pupils have similar entry rates across all tariff providers, while Chinese pupils are almost 4 times more likely to enter a higher tariff institution compared to a low tariff institution; 40.1 per cent to 11.7 per cent.
- Asian and black African students are most likely to take subjects associated with higher lifetime earnings such as business studies, computing, and law. However, White British, black Caribbean, and black other groups are more likely to study subjects associated with lower lifetime earnings, such as creative arts.
- Following 16-18 study, 11 per cent of Irish Traveller, 10 per cent of white British and 7 per cent of both mixed white/black Caribbean and white Irish pupils began apprenticeships. Other groups typically have 5 per cent or fewer of pupils starting apprenticeships.
- According to UCAS, White pupils apply to university at significantly lower rates than all other aggregate ethnic



groups. Across White groups, 42 per cent of pupils apply to university compared to an average of 60 per cent across all other groups.

University applications deep dive

- In the 2020 HE application cycle in England, the number of non-White applicants continued to grow, while applications from White pupils remained stable. This trend has been strongly in evidence since 2017.
- Just over half (50.3%) of 18-year-olds applied to HE through UCAS in 2021. Sixty-seven per cent of these pupils were White.
- Asian pupils were most likely to apply to Higher Education with just over three quarters of the population applying, while the White ethnic group were the least likely with 44 per cent applying. Sixty-three per cent of Black pupils applied.
- Although there was a drop in acceptance rates for all ethnic groups in 2021, they remain broadly similar across all ethnic groups.
- In 2021, 40 per cent of Chinese 18 year-olds were accepted to High Tariff providers. This is much higher than the proportion for any other groups. The figure for Asian pupils was 15.8 per cent, for Black students it was 11.1 per cent, and for White pupils it was 11.4 per cent.
- Overall, pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) were 19.1 percentage points less likely to progress to higher education than those not eligible for FSM. The progression gap was largest for White British and White Irish students.
- Among students who enter university, White students are the most likely to continue their first degree (joint with aggregated Asian group in 2020) and the most likely to achieve a 2:1 or higher, while Black students were the least likely to achieve either of these.
- Continuation rates for both apprenticeships and undergraduate degrees are the lowest for Black pupils (87%), while White and Asian pupils have the highest rates (93%).

The full document can be downloaded from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-education-outcomes-by-ethnicity-in-england>