

What can we learn from data about local authorities with different rates of entry for GCSE Religious Studies in 2020?

Pupils in LAs with the highest rate of entry for GCSE Religious Studies perform the equivalent of one and a half grades higher on average than those in LAs with the lowest rates of entry.

Context: From DfE website: *"Public Examinations in England were cancelled for the summer of 2020 and pupils were instead awarded centre assessed grade. An analysis of the data shows that pupil level attainment statistics increased - more than would be expected in a typical year - between the 2018/19 and 2019/20 academic years. This almost certainly reflects the change to the way GCSE grades were awarded rather than improvements in pupil performance. As a result, the 2019/20 data cannot be considered comparable to attainment data from previous years for the purposes of measuring changes in student performance."*

For this reason, the Secretary of State for Education made a commitment not to publish school level data for the summer 2020 season, however, local authority level data is available which is the focus of this report. In table 1 and 2 below, Local Authorities are ranked according to the percentage of pupils who were entered for GCSE RS Full course in 2020 and the commentary that follows, presents an analysis of the characteristics of the highest and lowest 20 of 150 local authorities.

It is striking that the proportion of the Year 11 cohort entered for GCSE RS in 200 varies from 11% to 77%. Some of this variation can be explained by the fact that in the authorities with the top rates of entry, the proportion of pupils being educated in schools with a religious character is greater, but at only 7 percentage points above the national average, this factor can only be a small element of the explanation.

What do we know about the 20 local authorities that recorded the highest levels of entry for RS GCSE?

The average:

1. number of students from Black and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds in these local authorities is **18 percentage points above** the national average,
2. number of children in the authority being educated in a school with a religious character is **7 percentage points above** the national average,
3. entry of pupils in schools in these local authorities for GCSE RS is **40 percentage points higher** than the national average,
4. attainment of grades 9-4 in RS is **2 percentage points above** the national average,
5. attainment 8 score is **2 points above** the national average,
6. point score (APS) for EBacc subjects is **0.20 points above** the national average,
7. number of pupils entered for the EBacc in these local authorities is **7 percentage points higher** than the national average,
8. number of pupils that attained grades 9-4 for the English Baccalaureate is **6 percentage points above** the national average,
9. number of pupils entitled to claim free school meals is **0.8% percentage points lower** than the national average,

Also -

10. 8 of the Local Authorities in the top 20 were London Boroughs

Local authority entry rates for GCSE Religious Studies as a proportion of the Year 11 cohort in 2020 – top 20

	Number of secondary schools	% pupils in non-selective schools	% White British	% BAME	% pupils educated in schools with a religious character	% achieving 9-4 Full course RS (of those entered)	Average Attainment 8 score of all pupils	Average EBacc APS score per pupil	Percentage of pupils entering the English Baccalaureate	% of pupils achieving 9-4 in English Baccalaureate	Number of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4	% known to be eligible for Free School Meals	% entering Full course
1	23	87%	5%	95%	10%	85%	53.1	4.8	65%	41.0%	4,079	22%	77%
2	9	100%	30%	70%	36%	85%	53.1	4.8	50%	40.8%	1,555	18%	75%
3	13	77%	25%	75%	52%	90%	56.1	5.2	67%	52.1%	1,458	20%	74%
4	13	92%	9%	91%	15%	80%	53.4	4.9	65%	46.1%	2,334	14%	74%
5	6	100%	20%	80%	56%	89%	58.0	5.1	43%	35.7%	899	23%	71%
6	15	53%	14%	86%	26%	83%	55.9	4.9	47%	36.5%	1,958	11%	69%
7	16	94%	14%	86%	24%	83%	53.5	4.9	56%	44.1%	3,043	17%	68%
8	20	90%	9%	91%	17%	83%	50.1	4.5	54%	36.3%	3,082	37%	68%
9	18	100%	90%	10%	34%	69%	47.6	4.1	35%	27.0%	2,945	17%	63%
10	9	100%	86%	14%	38%	76%	54.0	4.8	46%	35.0%	1,755	9%	63%
11	15	93%	9%	91%	24%	88%	53.1	4.9	66%	46.9%	3,078	14%	62%
12	39	87%	91%	9%	20%	73%	50.0	4.3	30%	23.0%	5,109	11%	62%
13	13	77%	87%	13%	38%	78%	48.6	4.2	33%	23.6%	2,032	19%	60%
14	10	90%	81%	19%	0%	77%	51.9	4.6	52%	37.9%	1,856	8%	60%
15	15	53%	53%	47%	8%	70%	48.7	4.2	34%	23.5%	1,943	13%	59%
16	20	85%	25%	75%	19%	75%	46.2	4.0	34%	23.2%	3,898	19%	58%
17	10	100%	64%	36%	14%	85%	55.9	5.0	53%	43.2%	1,675	7%	58%
18	9	100%	90%	10%	41%	77%	45.9	3.9	25%	20.3%	1,639	22%	58%
19	20	85%	58%	42%	51%	74%	48.3	4.2	34%	26.6%	3,549	20%	57%
20	11	73%	43%	57%	18%	86%	58.9	5.5	64%	52.2%	1,767	8%	56%
Highest Group Average		87%	45%	55%	27%	80%	52.00	4.6	47%	36%	2,483	16.5%	65%
National Average		83%	63%	37%	20%	78%	50.00	4.40	40%	30%	3,772	17.3%	39%

Table 1

What do we know about the 20 local authorities that recorded the lowest levels of entry for RS GCSE?

The average:

1. number of students from Black and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds in these local authorities is **16 percentage points below** the national average,
2. number of children in the authority being educated in a school with a religious character is **8 percentage points below** the national average,
3. entry of pupils in schools in these local authorities for GCSE RS is **20% below** than the national average,
4. attainment of grades 9-4 in RS is **0.1 percentage points below** the national average,
5. attainment 8 score is **1.2 points below** the national average,
6. point score (APS) for EBacc subjects is **0.19 points below** the national average,
7. number of pupils entered for the EBacc in these local authorities is **6 percentage points below** than the national average,
8. number of pupils that attained grades 9-4 for the English Baccalaureate is **4 percentage points below** the national average,
9. number of pupils entitled to claim free school meals is **0.2 percentage points below** the national average,

Also -

10. 0 of the Local Authorities in the bottom 20 were London Boroughs.

Local authority entry rates for GCSE Religious Studies as a proportion of the Year 11 cohort in 2020 – lowest 20

Rank	Number of secondary schools	% pupils in non-selective schools	% White British	% BAME	% pupils educated in schools with a religious character	% achieving 9-4 Full course RS (of those entered)	Average Attainment 8 score of all pupils	Average EBacc APS score per pupil	Percentage of pupils entering the English Baccalaureate	% of pupils achieving 9-4 in English Baccalaureate	Number of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4	% known to be eligible for Free School Meals	% entering Full course Religious Studies
1	14	93%	80%	20%	21%	79%	51.3	4.49	42%	32.5%	2,808	15%	23%
2	13	77%	75%	25%	6%	75%	49.9	4.36	37%	28.7%	2,051	16%	22%
3	43	86%	91%	10%	10%	78%	50.2	4.37	36%	25.9%	6,895	12%	21%
4	14	86%	48%	52%	12%	82%	46.3	3.95	30%	21.1%	2,549	16%	20%
5	45	93%	83%	17%	15%	77%	50.5	4.42	38%	29.0%	8,094	14%	20%
6	32	84%	94%	6%	8%	81%	48.8	4.10	32%	25.7%	5,017	20%	20%
7	32	91%	90%	10%	0%	72%	48.8	4.11	25%	18.6%	5,233	14%	19%
8	42	93%	71%	30%	13%	77%	48.5	4.20	36%	26.9%	7,773	11%	19%
9	11	73%	94%	6%	15%	71%	48.0	4.10	29%	25.3%	1,600	21%	19%
10	16	69%	90%	10%	12%	74%	49.2	4.25	33%	24.5%	1,945	16%	19%
11	20	90%	41%	59%	18%	80%	46.1	3.83	28%	18.9%	3,773	24%	18%
12	28	50%	80%	20%	16%	73%	48.3	4.16	31%	21.3%	2,732	9%	18%
13	48	90%	81%	19%	9%	84%	48.4	4.18	33%	23.5%	7,413	13%	18%
14	29	59%	91%	9%	20%	77%	49.7	4.34	43%	29.1%	3,559	15%	18%
15	11	82%	73%	27%	18%	86%	45.7	3.95	38%	24.3%	1,839	22%	18%
16	47	81%	80%	20%	15%	80%	50.1	4.38	38%	28.1%	7,413	10%	18%
17	28	82%	58%	42%	7%	77%	48.6	4.25	38%	27.0%	4,963	23%	17%
18	20	80%	83%	17%	16%	77%	48.8	4.18	33%	24.0%	3,715	16%	17%
19	4	75%	90%	10%	0%	84%	55.3	4.89	41%	35.0%	497	7%	15%
20	10	100%	90%	10%	0%	76%	43.2	3.74	30%	22.3%	1,742	20%	11%
Group Average		81.6%	79.1%	20.9%	11.5%	78.0%	48.79	4.21	34.6%	25.6%	4080.55	15.7%	18.5%
National Average		82.9%	63.5%	36.5%	19.5%	78.1%	50.0	4.4	40.2%	30.0%	3771.651	17.3%	38.9%

Table 2

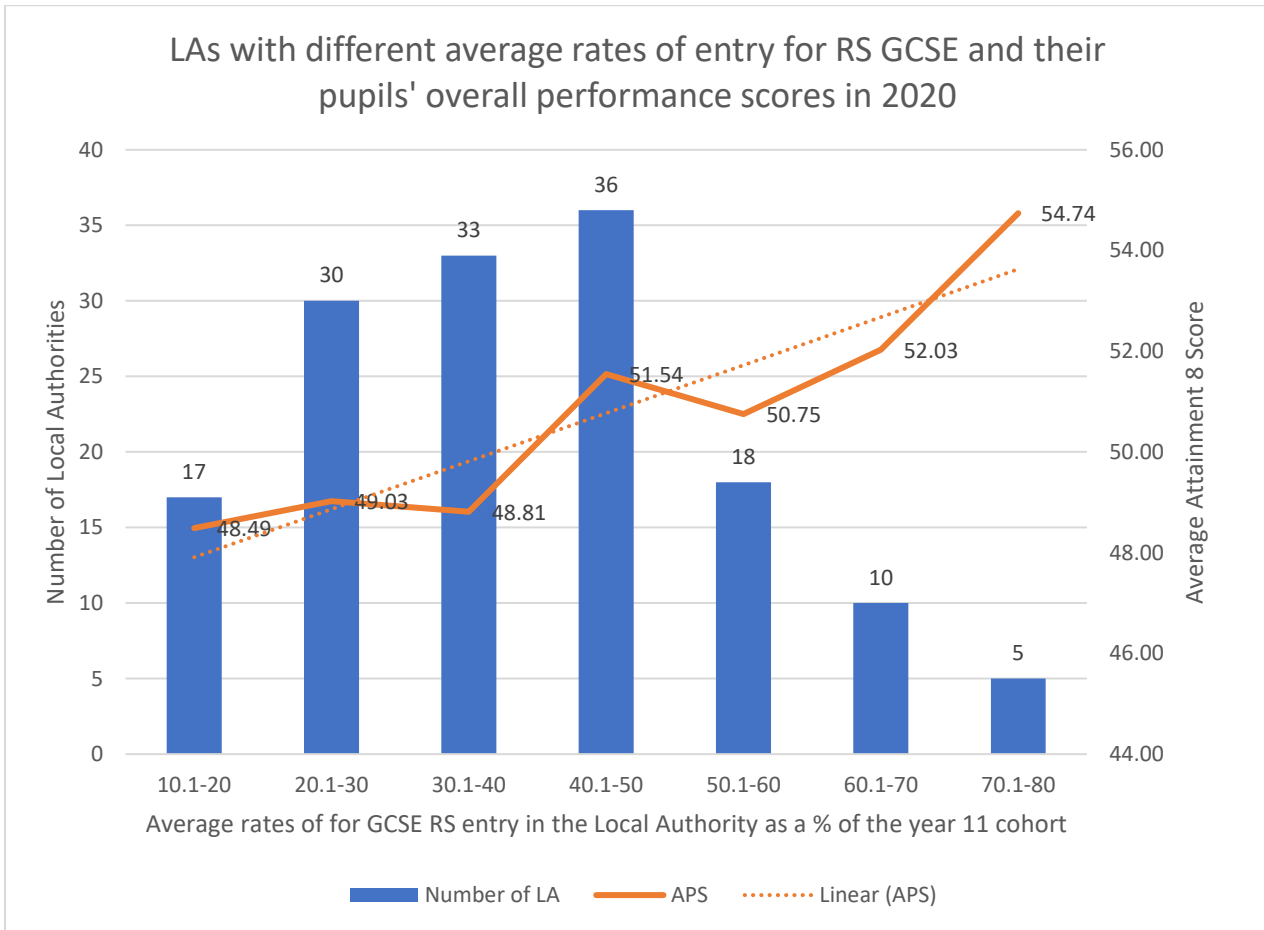


Figure 1

Rates of entry for GCSE Religious Studies 2020	Number of pupils at end of Key Stage 4	Number of LAs
10.1-20%	69,857	17
20.1-30%	132,260	30
30.1-40%	133,977	33
40.1-50%	125,890	36
50.1-60%	68,697	18
60.1-70%	20,970	10
70.1-80%	10,325	5

The trend line in figure 1 (dotted red) shows that in Local Authorities with the highest rates of entry for GCSE Religious Studies, the average points score for all pupils is just over 6 points higher than in those LAs with the lowest rates of entry. 6 points is the equivalent of one and a half standard pass grades across 8 subjects with English and Mathematics double weighted.

Attainment 8 measures the achievement of a pupil across 8 qualifications including mathematics (double weighted) and English (double weighted), 3 further qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) measure and 3 further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or any other non-GCSE qualifications on the DfE approved list. Each individual grade a pupil achieves is assigned a point score, which is then used to calculate a pupil's Attainment 8 score.



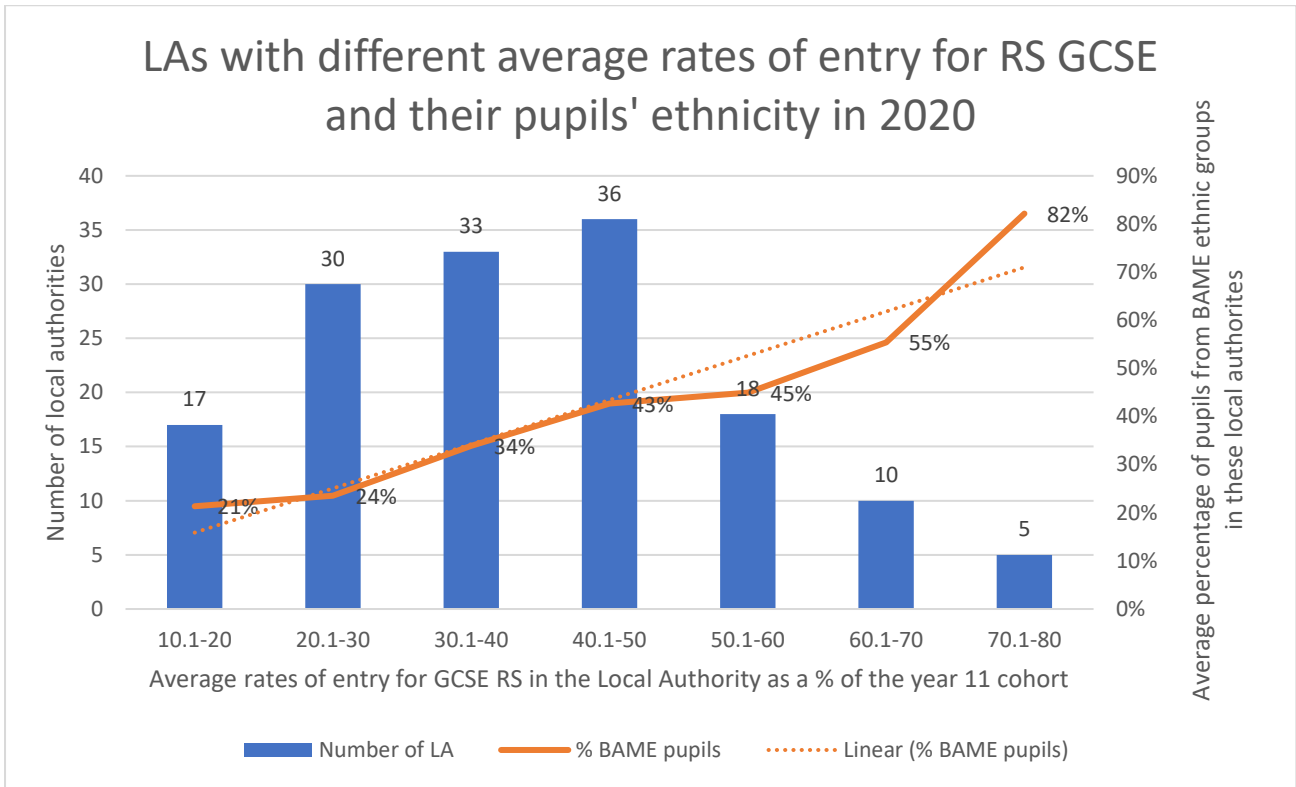


Figure 2

The trend line in figure 2 (dotted red) shows that in Local Authorities with the highest rates of entry for GCSE Religious Studies, serve populations with a greater proportion of pupils from black and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds.

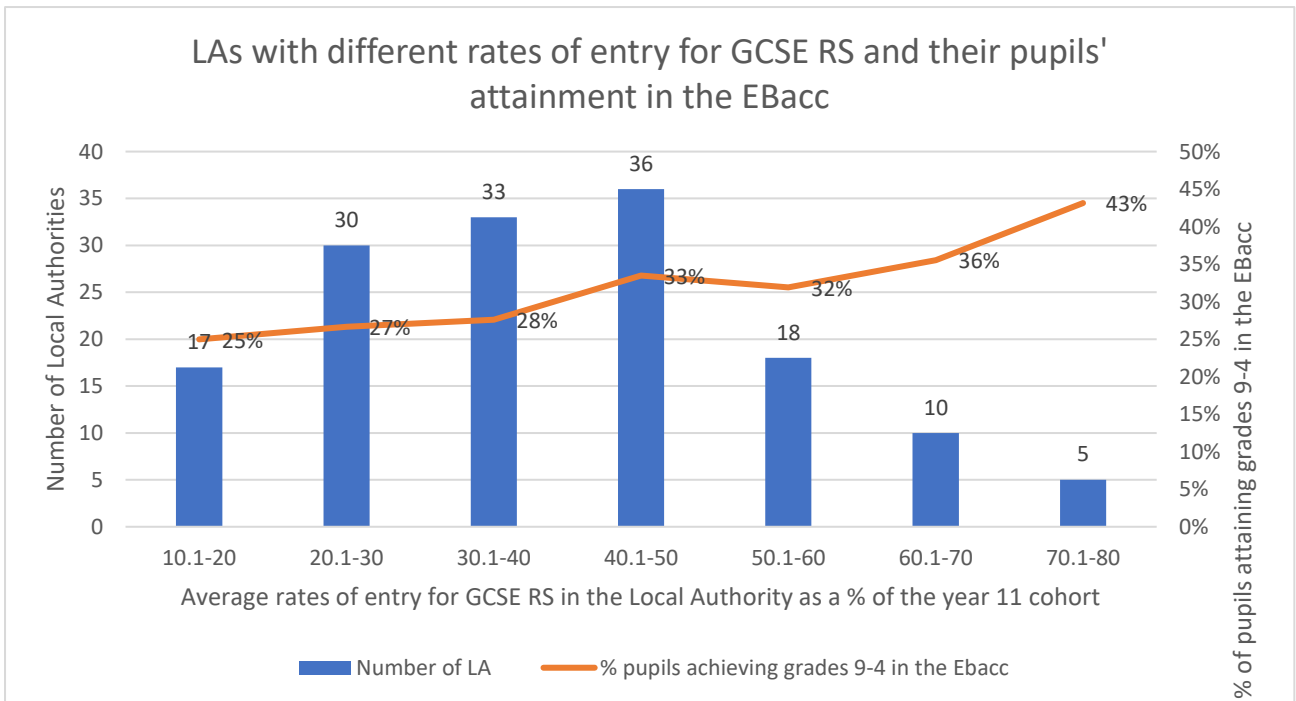


Figure 3

The trend line in figure 3 (dotted red) shows that in Local Authorities with the highest rates of entry for GCSE Religious Studies, the number of pupils attaining grades 9-4 in the EBacc is 18 percentage points higher than in than in those LAs with the lowest rates of entry.

