



## Education: Historical statistics

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The organisation of every stage of education has undergone significant change over the last century. These changes have fundamentally altered most aspects of education. Historical indicators are therefore particularly interesting, but also problematic. Very few series are consistent over more than a few decades. The definition/size of different stages of education (primary, secondary, further/higher), school leaving ages and examinations have changed markedly as have state organisation and funding. As key concepts in education change so do the types of statistics collected. The increased role of the state in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century also widened the scope of official education statistics.

This note presents a small number of long-term education indicators. Most start in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and all have a number of breaks. While these make interpretation of trends more difficult, the breaks themselves highlight the changes in the sector. Where possible UK figures are given, however with different departments being responsible for education in England and Wales and Scotland and latterly all four home countries, this is not possible for many series. Northern Ireland figures are included in UK data from the early 1920s onwards.

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## B. Changes in education in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

The most important factors as far as the statistical series go were

- The minimum school leaving age increased from 12 to 14 in 1918, to 15 in 1947 and 16 in 1972.
- The Education Act 1902 which replaced School Boards with local education authorities and gave them a duty of maintaining voluntary (church) schools.
- The Education Act 1918 which ended what fees that remained in public elementary schools and set up approved university examining bodies.
- Education Act 1944 which extended free education to all state secondary schools and introduced the tripartite system (grammar, technical and modern) to secondary education. It also introduced a common national distinction between primary and secondary education at 11.
- The 1965 circular 10/65 which encouraged local education authorities to move to non-selective secondary education.
- The introduction of the General Certificate of Education (GCE) examination in 1951 and the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in 1988.
- 1992 reorganisation of the higher education sector which brought former polytechnics into the university sector.

## C. Snapshots of education c1900-2010

Below are a range of statistics from the beginning and middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> and start of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries:<sup>1</sup>

### c1900

- In 1900 there were 34,300 elementary schools/departments inspected by the relevant bodies in England, Wales and Scotland. On average they had 154 pupils each and aggregate attendance was 5.3 million pupils. There was an average of 42 pupils per teacher (of varying qualification levels).
- There were 969 grant-aided secondary schools in England, Wales and Scotland in 1909 attended by 172,000 pupils. Their average size was 179 pupils and there was an average of 16 pupils per teacher.
- In 1900-01 the average salary of a certified teacher in England and Wales was £128 for a man and £86 for a woman. Up-rated for inflation these salaries would be worth around £10,500 and £7,100 in 2005 prices respectively.
- 5.9% of central government revenue was spent on education in 1900-01.
- In 1910-11 there were 639,000 students who attended grant-aided establishments of further education (mainly evening classes/institutions) in England and Wales.
- In 1919 28,800 pupils were entered for one or more school certificate examinations in England and Wales. In 1920 3,200 were entered for one or more Higher School Certificate Examinations.
- In 1922-23 9,200 students were awarded first degrees and 1,600 were awarded higher degrees.

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<sup>1</sup> While these include data from later in this note, they also include others figures that were only produced as 'one offs' in the earlier years -*Education 1900-1950 The report of the Ministry of Education and the statistics of public education for England and Wales for the year 1950*. B R Mitchell *British historical statistics* chapter XV; *Statistics of education 1975*, and earlier editions, Department of Education and Science. *Statistical abstract for the United Kingdom 1938*, and earlier years, Board of Trade. *Education and training statistics for the UK 2006*, and earlier editions, DfES. *Public expenditure statistical analysis 2006*, HM Treasury. House of Commons Library Research Paper 06/09 *Inflation: The value of the pound 1750-2005*.

- In 1913 5.8% of the 14-16 year old population in England and Wales were in full-time education in grant aided schools/colleges.

### **c1950**

- In 1951 there were 27,700 public primary schools or departments in the UK. These were attended by 4.8 million pupils, there was an average of 171 pupils in each school and an average of 30 pupils per teacher.
- In 1951 there were 5,900 public secondary schools in the UK. These were attended by 2.0 million pupils; there was an average of 342 pupils in each school and an average of 20.6 pupils per teacher.
- 7.7% of central government revenue was spend on education in 1949-50
- In 1949-50 there were 2.4 million students who attended grant-aided establishments of further education (again mainly evening and part-time courses) in England and Wales.
- In 1953-54 10.7% of the relevant age group passed five or more GCE O levels at schools in England and Wales. 5.5% of the relevant age group passed one or more GCE A level and public sector schools and further education establishments.
- In 1950 17,300 students were awarded first degrees and 2,400 were awarded higher degrees at UK universities.
- In 1950 30% of 15 year olds, 14% of 16 year olds and 7% of 17 year olds were in full-time education in England and Wales.

### **c2010**

- In 2010-11 there were 21,281 public sector mainstream primary schools. These were attended by 4.9 million pupils, there was an average of 231 pupils in each school and an average of 20.4 pupils per teacher.
- In 2010-11 there were 4,072 public sector mainstream secondary schools. These were attended by 3.9 million pupils; there was an average of 943 pupils in each school and an average of 15.3 pupils per teacher.
- The average salary of full-time qualified teachers in public sector schools in England was £34,700 in November 2011.
- Expenditure on education made up 13.3% of total public sector expenditure in 2010-11.
- In 2010/11 there were 4.9 million learners who started a publicly funded further education course in the UK.
- In 2010/11 79.6% of pupils in their last year of compulsory education in the UK achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A\*-C or equivalent. In 2003/04 39.2% of the relevant age group passed two or more A levels or equivalent.
- In 2010/11 331,000 full-time students were awarded first degrees at UK universities and 182,600 (all modes) were awarded higher degrees.
- At the end of 2010 88% of 16 year olds and 76% of 17 year olds in England were in full-time education.

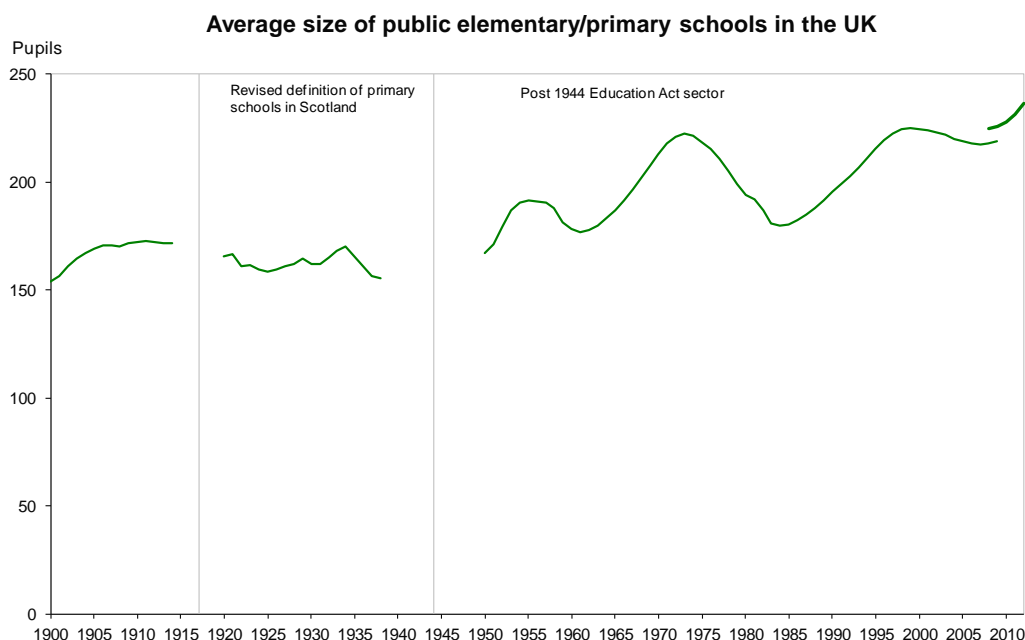
## D. Schools

### 1. Elementary/primary education

Elementary education became virtually free from 1891 and all fees in these schools were abolished in 1918. In addition the Elementary Education Act 1876 made it the duty of parents to ensure that every child aged under 14 received efficient instruction in reading writing and arithmetic.<sup>2</sup> Therefore many of the reforms that had the greatest impact on the scale of this sector happened before the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Table 1 at the end of this note summarises the trends, in schools, pupils and teachers. The chart below looks at the average size of primary/elementary schools. The average size changed little over the first half of the century. During this period the number of pupils peaked in 1914 at 6.1 million. The number of schools has tended to lag behind changes in pupil numbers, hence the decline to 5.3 million pupils in 1938 saw the average school size fall to 155.

After the Education Act 1944 the age range of primary schools was set at 5-10 nationally. The very clear 'waves' in average school size shown after then are primarily the result of demographics -post second world war 'baby boomers' reaching school age in the 1950s, their offspring doing so in the 1970s and so on. Added to this, school numbers again tended to lag behind pupil numbers and thus make these 'waves' larger<sup>3</sup>. Underlying these patterns was a 10% increase in pupil numbers between 1950 and 2010 and a decline in school numbers of 21%. Even given the different positions in the cycle of these dates, there has been a clear increase in average primary school size in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

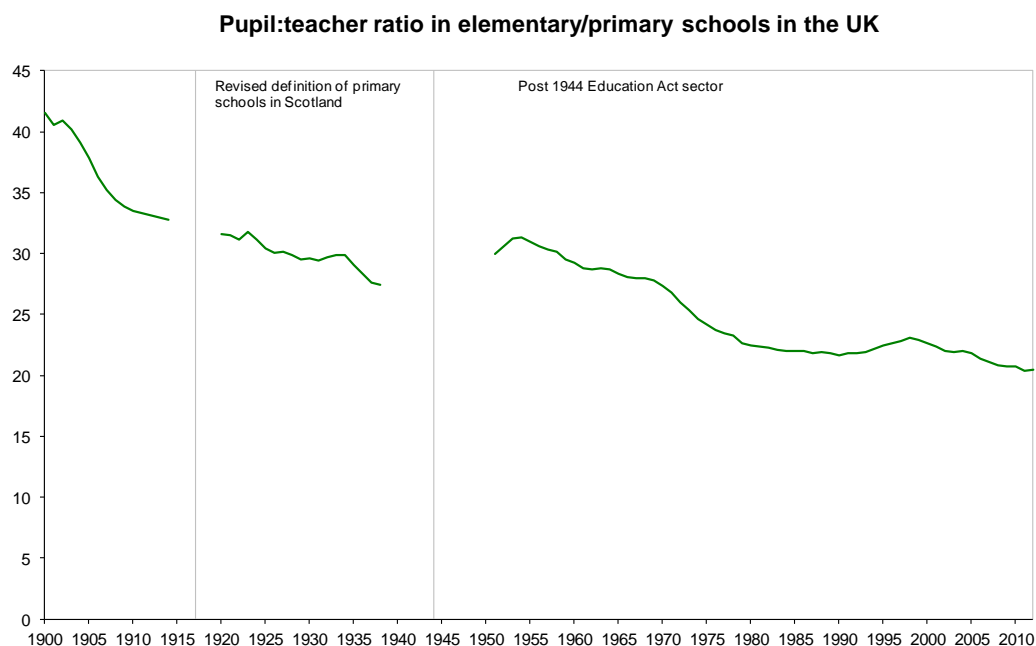


The next chart looks at the ratio of pupils to teachers. This looks at the overall numbers of teachers and pupils and therefore differs from class size statistics that focus on teachers who were teaching a class at the selected period when the schools census was carried out.

<sup>2</sup> *Education 1900-1950 The report of the Ministry of Education and the statistics of public education for England and Wales for the year 1950*, Ministry of Education

<sup>3</sup> Increases in pupil numbers are not initially matched by school numbers (which may be falling from a previous 'wave') so the average size increases. When pupil numbers start to fall numbers of schools may still be increasing, so the dip in average size is larger than that in pupil numbers.

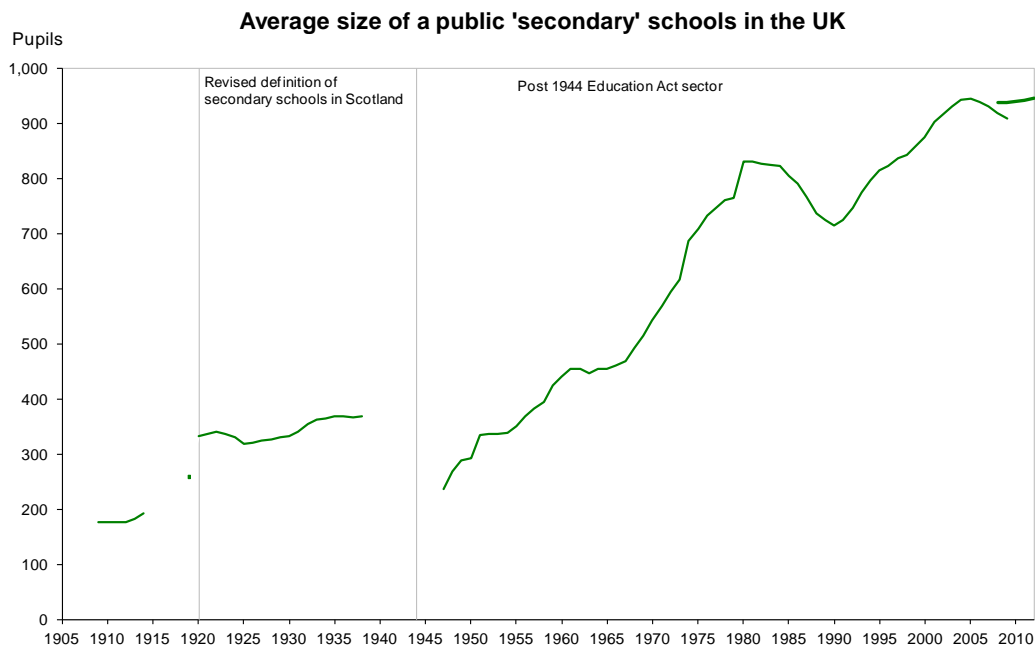
The ratio of pupils to teachers fell in nearly every year between 1900 and 1990. The occasions when it did increase were generally after reorganisations of the sector when pupil increases came before increases in the number of teachers. The major expansions in teacher numbers occurred in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in the 1960s/early 1970s. The only period of sustained increase in this ratio was between 1990 and 1998 when it went from 21.7 to 23.1 as increases in pupil numbers outstripped those in teachers. Since 1988 the ratio has fallen again and reached a record low level in 2010/11.



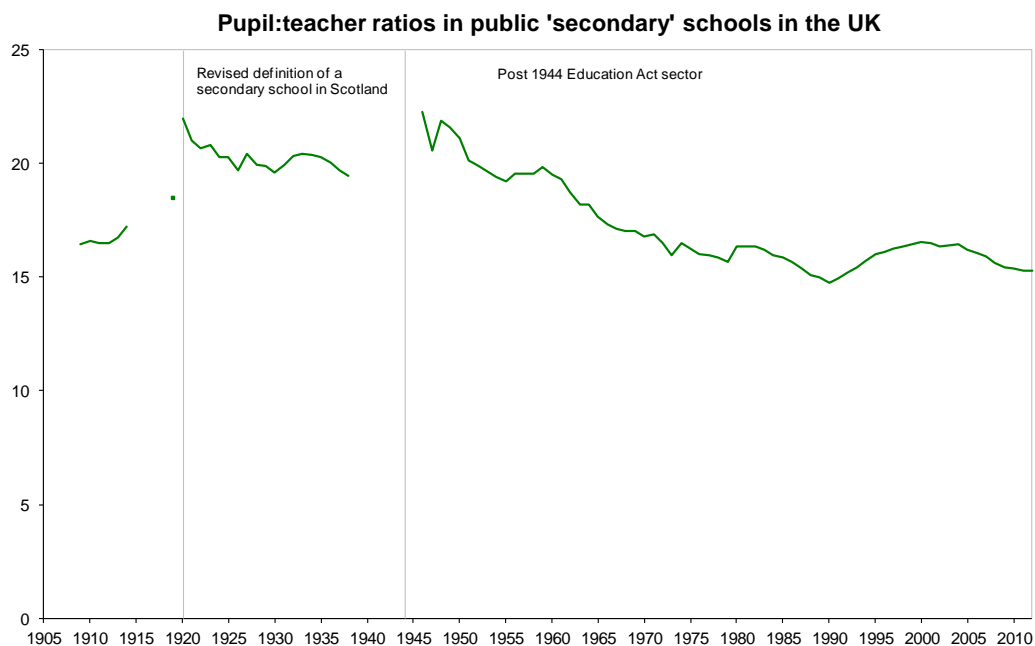
## 2. Secondary education

At the start of the century what we now know as secondary education was not part of the public system. Grants were paid both centrally and locally to aid certain types of instruction and there were a considerable number of children at what would now be deemed secondary age in what were elementary schools. 'Public sector' secondary schools in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century largely consisted of grammar schools that received funding from local or central government. Very few of these schools were entirely free though. It was not until the Education Act 1944 that fees were prohibited at maintained secondary schools.

Table 2 at the end of this note summarises the trends, in public sector schools, pupils and teachers. There was sustained increase in public sector schools from 575 in 1905 to just under 1,400 in the early 1940s. In the first figures after the 1944 act there were 4,500 secondary schools in England and Wales alone. The chart below shows that at that time secondary schools were little bigger on average than primary schools. After 1944 the number of secondary school pupils continued to rise rapidly as the increase in the school leaving age and the 'baby boomer' generation had their effect. Numbers increased from 1.3 million in 1946 to 3.2 million in 1961. The next big increase came after the leaving age was raised to 16 in 1972; this was followed by a natural increase in the rest of the decade as the children of the baby boomers reached secondary age. The chart below illustrates that as this was accommodated in a falling number of schools from the mid-1960s onwards there was a rapid and continued increase in the average school size which peaked at 830 in the early 1980s. This put most secondary schools on a completely different scale from the schools of just a few decades earlier. In the following decade the average size fell due to a decline in pupil numbers, but subsequent increases in pupils and a reduction in school numbers has seen new record average secondary sizes in each year from 1997 to 2005.



The ratio of secondary pupils to teachers has not fallen by the same amount as in primary schools. Before the Second World War secondary schools were the preserve of the minority and much better staffed than public sector elementary schools. The 1944 act created an entirely new system. Initially the ratio was higher than in earlier 'public sector' secondary schools. There was a consistent decline in the ratio from the late 1940s (over 22) to the late 1980s (less than 15). The only increases in this period were due to rising in pupil numbers and were short lived. As with primary schools the ratio increased from 1990 onwards, but this has only fallen again from 2003 onwards.

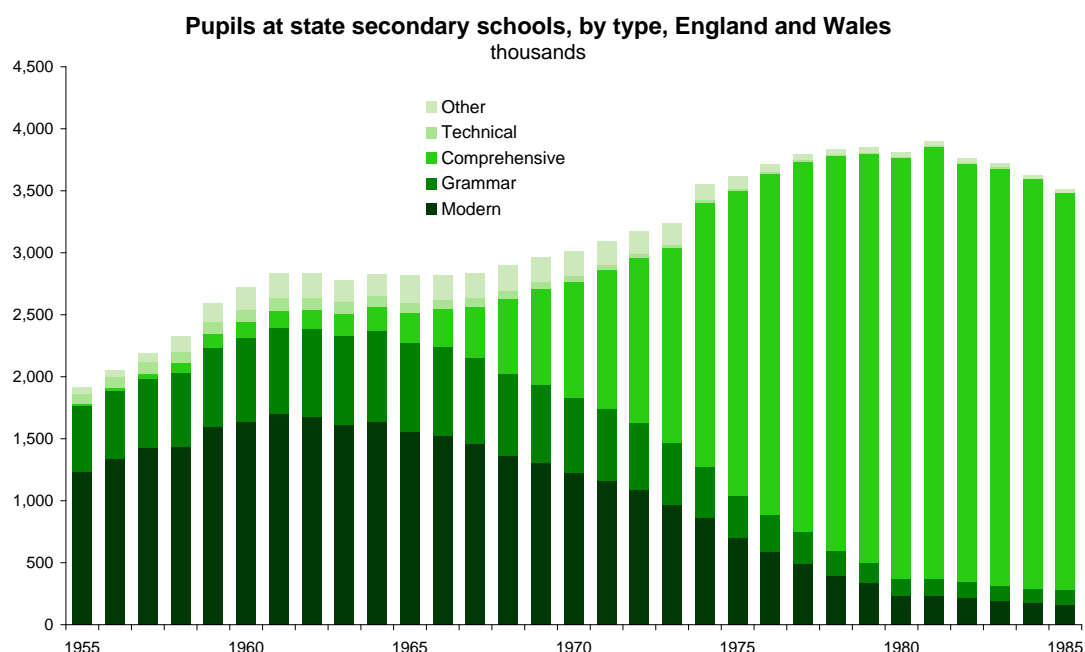


**a. Types of secondary schools**

A key element of the tripartite system introduced by the 1944 act was the 11-plus examination which determined which type of school a pupil would attend. In practice the secondary sector was dominated by secondary modern and grammar schools. The number of technical schools peaked in 1948 at 319 and had fallen to fewer than 100 by 1970. The comprehensive school emerged as an experiment in a few areas in the early 1950s. This

alternative to the 'tripartite' system increased modestly at first to just over 100 schools in 1959. More rapid expansion came from 1965 when circular 10/65 was issued by the Ministry of Education encouraging local education authorities to move to non-selective education.

The chart below and Table 3 look at trends in the relative size of each sector. The chart clearly illustrates the growth in the size of the comprehensive sector from 1965 as more and more local education authorities reorganized their secondary education. This continued until the early 1980s when only a handful of local education authorities retained grammar and secondary modern schools. The proportion of pupils at comprehensive schools increased from 7% in 1964 to 90% in 1982.



There has been little change in the size of the non-comprehensive sector since 1985. In September 2012 there were 166 grammars and 135 modern schools in England.<sup>4</sup>

### 3. Independent schools

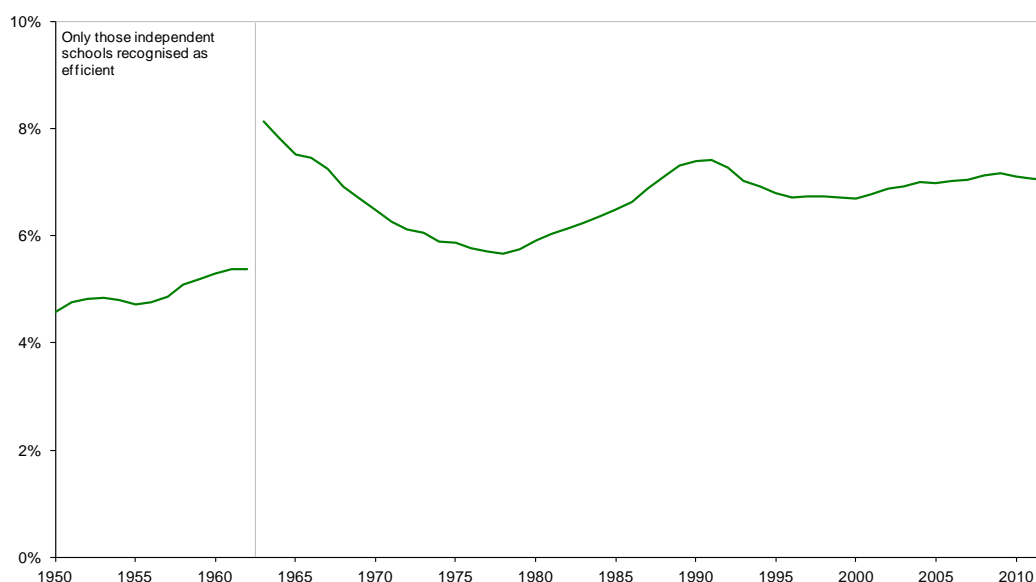
Published data on independent schools is much less long standing and complete than on state schools. The 1944 act set out provisions for the registration of independent schools, which included a requirement to make a statistical return to the (then) Ministry of Education. Until 1978 the education departments produced information on two groups of independent schools –those 'recognised as efficient' and 'other'. The former group had obtained recognition as efficient after inspection. This distinction was dropped after 1978. Table 4 looks at the number of independent schools and pupils. It includes all independent schools from 1963 onwards. It also includes schools that were formerly known as direct grant grammar schools. They received public funding to pay the fees of pupils from state primary schools that had to make up at least 25% of their places. In the mid-1970s these schools were given the option of becoming maintained comprehensives or losing their grant and becoming 'full' independent schools. For those schools that did not opt to join the state sector, their fees were phased out and they were reclassified as independent in 1980.

<sup>4</sup> Edubase, DfE



The following chart looks at the proportion of pupils attending independent schools. The change in definition to include all independent schools caused a clear break (in 1961 there were 410,000 pupils in recognised independent and direct grant grammar schools and 195,000 in other independent schools<sup>5</sup>). Between 1963 and 1978 the proportion of pupils at independent schools fell from 8.1% to 5.7%. The actual numbers at such schools fell to a lesser degree, but total pupil numbers at all schools increased at the same time (as shown in the previous chart). The opposite trends occurred in the 1980s (increase in independent school pupils and falling total pupil numbers) which saw the proportion at independent schools increase to 7.4%. These ‘contrary’ trends in state and independent school pupil numbers have not been present in the last 10 years when both have generally changed in the same direction and hence the proportion in independent schools has changed relatively little. The recent peak in the total number of pupils in independent schools was 573,000 in 2004; this was the highest total since 1963.

**Proportion of pupils at independent and direct grant grammar schools in England and Wales**



#### 4. Staying on /enrolment rates

Statistics on enrolment and staying on rates have been produced for most of the century, but changes in the school leaving age, examinations, further education and expectations about staying on after compulsory education has finished have changed what can be measured, or what is deemed most useful to measure. Therefore data series tend not to last more than a couple of decades and trends can be difficult to interpret.

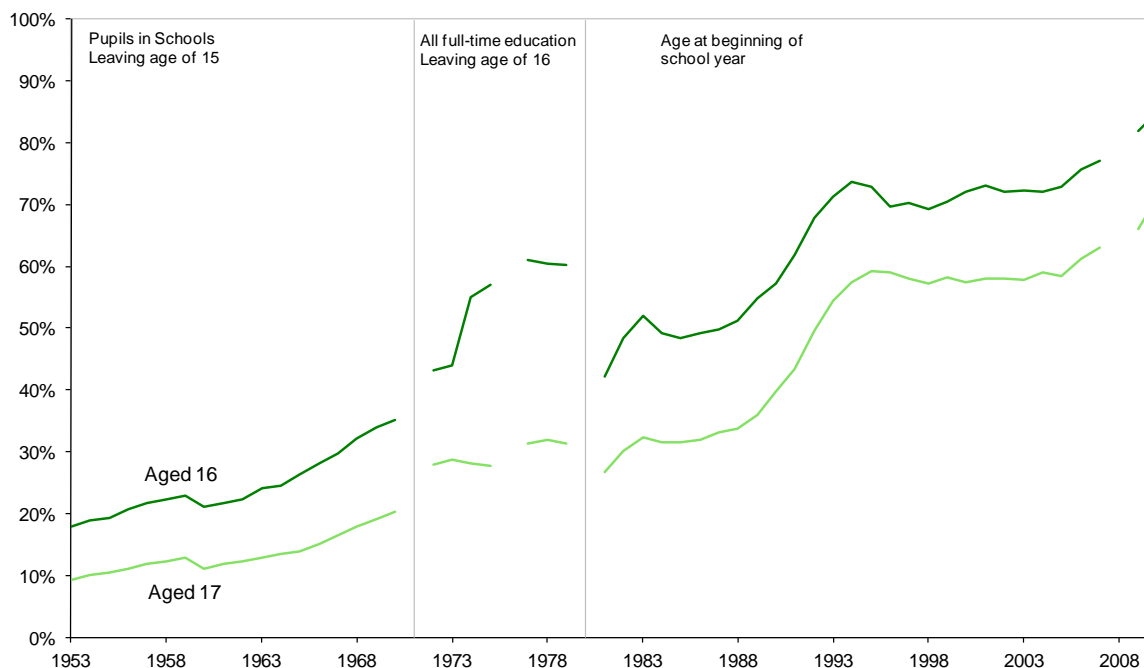
Trends are summarised in Table 5. In the first decades of the century there was a small increase in the proportion of 5-13 year olds in public sector schools, from just under 90% in 1913 to just over 90% in 1938. Over the same period there was a larger growth in the percentage of 14-16 year olds in such schools, from 5.8%, or around one in 17 children, to 19.6% or around one in every five children.

Trends since the Second World War are also illustrated in the following chart. The school leaving age was increased to 15 in 1947, affecting an estimated 340,000 children in the first

<sup>5</sup> *Statistics of education Part 1: 1961*, Ministry of Education

year.<sup>6</sup> This and the reorganisation of the secondary sector meant that the staying on rates recorded from this period were more comparable to current ones. There was a general upward trend in rates for 16 and 17 year olds during the 1960s. The increase in the school leaving age to 16 in 1972 had a marked impact on the proportion of 16 year olds in school, but it also fed through to 17 year olds.

**Pupils in full-time education beyond the leaving age**



The change in the way ages were recorded for these figures was changed in the early 1980s. The result was a shift downwards in the staying-on rate for 16 year olds as the figures recorded a younger age for many pupils than was the case in the earlier data. After this change there was a sharp increase in staying on rates in the early 1980s. This was followed by the first clear fall in both rates for 20 years. A partial explanation for the trends from 1980 is that in economic downturns (early 1980s and early 1990s) the lack of jobs for school leavers means that a greater number of potential school leavers stay on at school as leaving becomes less attractive. There has also been an underlying increase in staying on rates since 1980, hence when the economy recovers (mid to late 1980s and mid 1990s onwards) the reduction in staying on rates has been less severe and has lasted for a shorter period. Between 1980-81 and 1993-94 staying on rates for 16 year olds increased from 42% to 74% and the rate for 17 year olds went from 27% to 58%. This series is now no longer produced. At the end of 2011 an estimated 86% of 16 year olds in England and 76% of 17 year olds were in full-time education.<sup>7</sup>

## E. Examinations

The Secondary Schools Examinations Council was set up in 1917 to help bring order to external examinations that had been described as 'chaotic'.<sup>8</sup> It introduced the School

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Education estimate. This was the first question taken by the newly formed statistics section of the House of Commons Library in November 1946.

<sup>7</sup> *Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England, end 2011*, DfE

<sup>8</sup> *Education 1900-1950 The report of the Ministry of Education and the statistics of public education for England and Wales for the year 1950.*

Certificate and the Higher School Certificate soon afterwards. The number of pupils entered for the first examination in England and Wales increased from 28,800 in 1919 to 99,900 in 1950. The total number of candidates for the Higher School Certificate increased from 3,200 in 1920 to 34,400 in 1950.<sup>9</sup> In 1950 the aggregate pass rates (pupils who passed one or more examination as a proportion of the number who entered one or more) were 73% and 68% for the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate respectively.<sup>10</sup> The council introduced the new General Certificate of Education (GCE) examinations in 1951. There were split into Ordinary 'O' and Advanced 'A' level examinations that were normally taken at ages 16 and 18. GCSE examinations replaced O levels in 1988.

Table 6 looks and trends in examination achievement since 1953. The first chart illustrates trends in O level/GCSE achievement. This shows a consistent improvement in the proportion of school leavers who gained five or more passes, from just over 10% in 1953/54 to almost 30% in 1987/88. The number of leavers with no passes fell from 19% in 1974/75 to 10% in the late 1980s. This improvement was largely as a result of increases in the proportion of pupils staying on and taking examinations.

There has been a clear acceleration in the proportion of pupils achieving five or more good grades since the introduction of GCSEs. While staying on rates improved during the first part of this period, the continual improvement since then is mainly down to higher pass rates. Before the mid-1980s there were more or less fixed percentages of students who were awarded each grade and these proportions changed very little year to year. This 'norm-referencing' method meant that most improvements in national performance had to come from increases in entry rates. This method was replaced with 'criteria referencing' which attempts to set each grade boundary at a constant standard over time and hence if the performance of candidates improves then a higher proportion of candidates can gain top grades. Actual grade boundaries can vary year-to-year (as each years' papers are different), but the standard required to gain each grade should remain the same.<sup>11</sup>

This change has allowed improvements in examination performance to be reflected in national totals. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more good grades has increased in each year since the introduction of the GCSE and reached exceeded 80% 2011/12. Girls' performance on this indicator was seven percentage points higher than boys in the same year. This gap has closed somewhat over the past 10-15 years. Girls overtook boys on this measure in 1969/70.

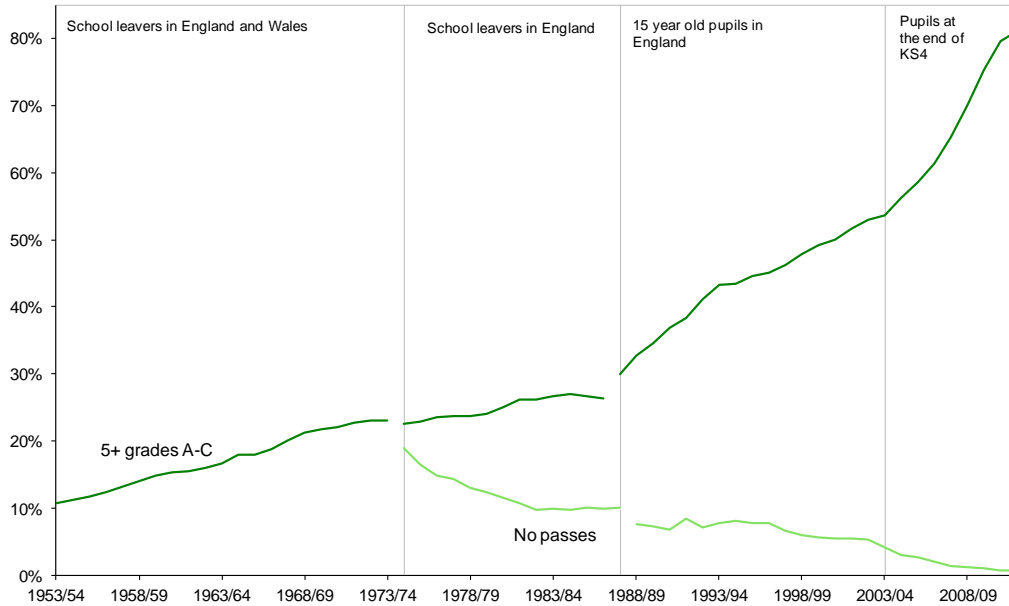
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<sup>9</sup> *Statistics of education 1974 vol. 2 -School leavers CSE and GCE*, DES. Table A

<sup>10</sup> *Education 1900-1950 The report of the Ministry of Education and the statistics of public education for England and Wales for the year 1950*. Table 30

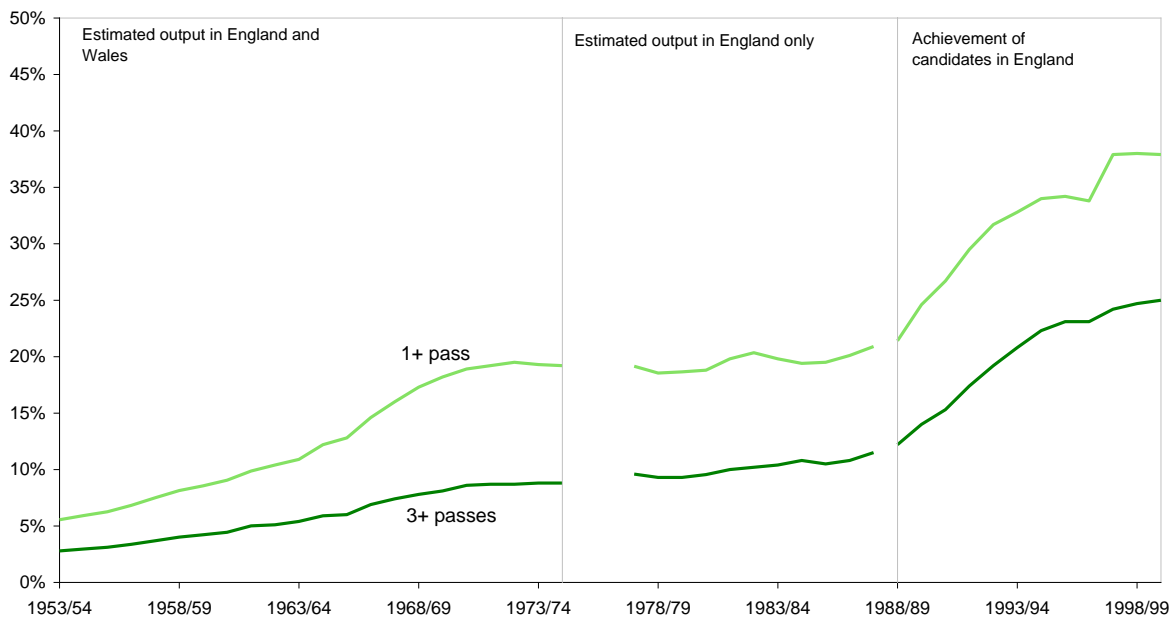
<sup>11</sup> *How are GCSE grades set? Q&A: About marking and grading*, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.  
[http://www.qca.org.uk/13195\\_13263.html](http://www.qca.org.uk/13195_13263.html)

### Achievement of O Levels/GCSEs



The next chart looks at A level performance; a summary is also included in Table 6. Trends are affected by similar factors as with O level/GCSE results. Primarily the increase in the number of pupils staying on and being entered for A levels over the first decade and improvements in the performance of candidates after the introduction of 'criteria referencing' from the mid-1980s onwards. Again there was a change in the way the data was collected at around the same time the change in the approach to marking was introduced. This had little impact on the trend.

### A level achievement at schools and colleges % of the relevant age group



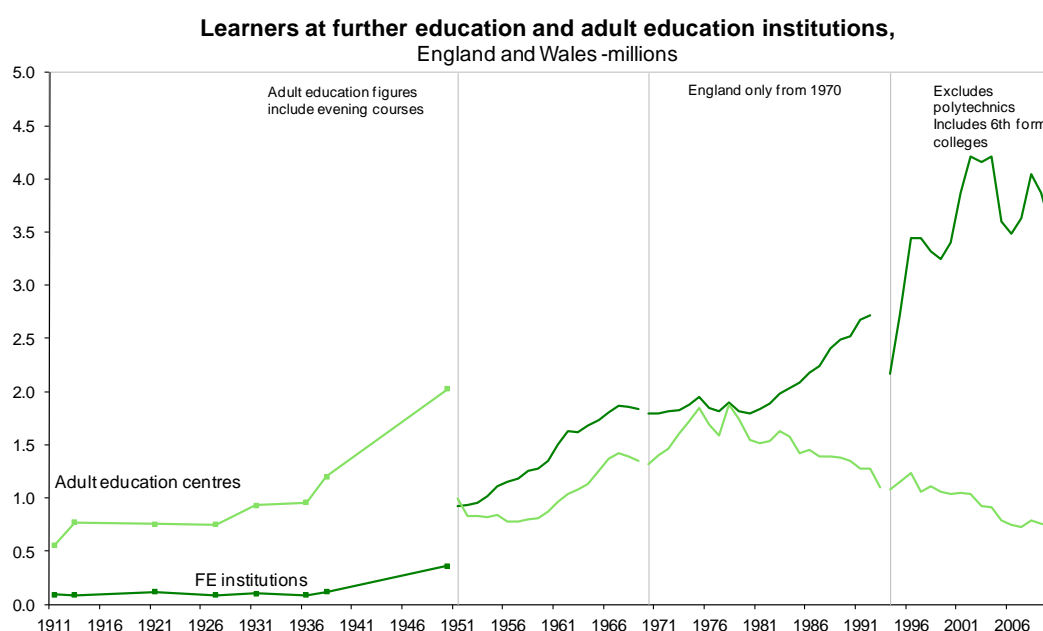
The Qualifying for Success reforms to the A level system that were introduced in 2000 mean that consistent figures since this time have not been published. The new system encouraged pupils to take a wider range of AS examinations in their first year and progress a number of these to full A levels in their second year. The statistics changed to reflect this by reporting cumulative progress rather than a single year snapshot. Provisional results for the UK in

2004/05 suggest that 39% of the 17 year old population in the UK gain one or more A level or equivalent passes and 30% gain 3 or more.<sup>12</sup>

## F. Further education

Table 7 and the next chart show trends in numbers at institutions of further and adult education. Over the period shown this sector has had a number of changes and been affected by reforms in the secondary and higher education sectors.

Data has not been published for every year in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These gaps mask some of the detail in trends, but there was a clear increase in both measures between 1936 and 1949-50. From 1951 onwards the number of learners on evening courses is included with others at FE institutions. The total number at adult education centres increased from 0.8 million in the late 1950s to just less than 1.9 million in 1978. Since then there has been a steady decline and numbers reached below 750,000 in 2010/11.



The two main periods of expansion in the number of learners at FE institutions were the 1950s/60s and the 1980s. The largest increase in both periods was among full-time students. There was a clear drop after 1994 when students at former Polytechnics were no longer included. Since then the number of learners has been highly erratic. Most of the underlying increase since 1994, and the erratic figures for certain years, has been down to large changes in the number of part-time and evening learners and changes to the funding of further education.

## G. Higher education

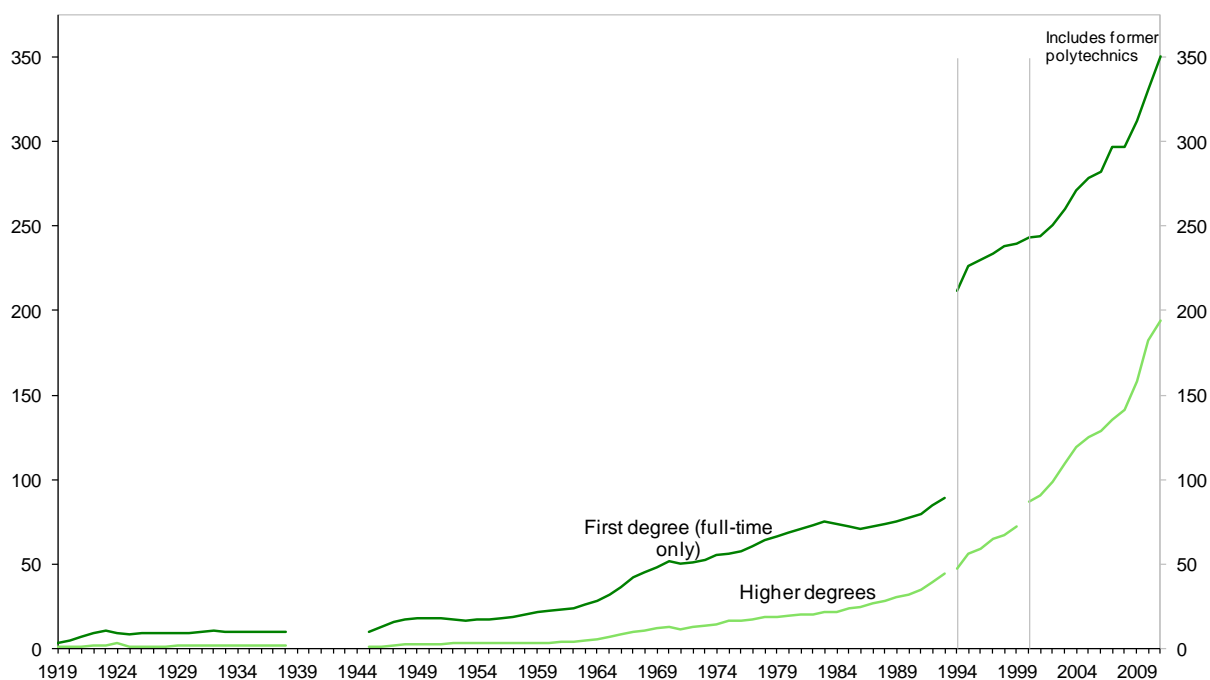
Data on the number of students obtaining degrees at university is one of the more consistent education series. This starts soon after the approved university examining bodies were set up and was unchanged until the reorganisation of the sector in 1990s. Trends are shown below and in Table 8. After an increase in the early 1920s, caused by the inclusion of a greater number of institutions, there was little change in the number of students getting either a first or higher degree before the Second World War. There was a clear increase in

<sup>12</sup> Education and training statistics for the United Kingdom 2006, DfES. Table 3.1

first degree attainment in the late 1940s as numbers were boosted by government schemes to support those who had served in the armed forces. The 1960s also saw a major expansion as numbers doubled in seven years to more than 50,000. This period saw an even larger proportionate increase in the number of higher degrees awarded. The only downturn in numbers in recent times was in the number of first degrees awarded in the mid-1980s. This in part reflected earlier trends in staying on rates, A level performance and demographics. It was also magnified by the early 1980s peak, which, as with staying on rates, may have been affected by the economic recession.

The data include degrees awarded at former polytechnics from 1994 onwards. This extension of what constituted a university meant that the number of university degrees awarded more than doubled. There was much less impact on the number of higher degrees awarded. A change in the treatment of students qualifying from a 'dormant' status<sup>13</sup> in 2000 had a much greater impact. The sharp growth in the number of degrees awarded in the last three years reflects earlier increases in student numbers. These figures cover all students regardless of their home country. In 2011/12 84% of full-time first degree and 41% of higher degree awards were to home students.<sup>14</sup>

**Students obtaining university degrees in the UK -thousands**



Overall participation in higher education increased from 3.4% in 1950, to 8.4% in 1970, 19.3% in 1990 and 33% in 2000.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Where a student is not actively studying for their qualification, this may be due to an administrative delay between completion and award.

<sup>14</sup> [www.hesa.ac.uk](http://www.hesa.ac.uk)

<sup>15</sup> National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing Report) *Report 6 Widening participation in higher education for students from lower socio-economic groups and students with disabilities*. Table 1.1

## H. Reference tables

Table 1

### Public sector elementary/primary schools in the UK

	Number of schools	Pupils (thousands)	Full-time teachers (thousands)	Pupils per school	Pupil:teacher ratio
1905	35,083	5,940	157	169	37.9
1914	35,651	6,121	187	172	32.8
1925	35,901	5,683	187	158	30.4
1935	34,262	5,671	195	166	29.0
1945	..	..	..	..	..
1955	28,245	5,411	175	192	31.0
1965	27,113	5,068	179	187	28.4
1975	27,318	5,972	248	219	24.1
1985	24,993	4,514	205	181	22.0
1995	23,516	5,065	226	215	22.4
2005	22,343	4,897	224	219	21.8
2010	21,427	4,882	238	228	20.7
2011	21,281	4,922	239	231	20.4
2012	21,165	5,007	..	237	20.5

Notes:

Schools -Number of primary schools or departments

Pupils -Average number of pupils attending/registered

Teachers- Includes full-time-equivalent of part-time teachers in England and Wales from 1946 onwards

Major breaks in series

1920 -local authority schools only in England and Wales from 1920 onwards. Little impact on numbers. Revised definition of a primary school introduced in Scotland

1922-Includes Northern Ireland from then on

1944 Education Act meant the reorganisation of primary schools and therefore data from before and after this time are not directly comparable

1951 -Primary departments of secondary schools in Scotland included from then on

1981 -Revised definition of primary schools introduced in Scotland.

1981-Pupil numbers are full-time equivalents

2010-Pupil numbers are headcounts, teacher numbers include nursery schools

Sources: *B.R. Mitchell, British Historical Statistics, Tables XV. 9&10*

*Annual abstract of Statistics, ONS*

*Education and Training Statistics for the United Kingdom 2012, DfE*

Table 2

**Public sector 'secondary' schools in the UK**

	Number of schools	Pupils (thousands)	Full-time teachers (thousands)	Pupils per school	Pupil:teacher ratio
1905	630	113	..	179	..
1914	1,083	207	12	192	17.2
1925	1,602	510	25	318	20.3
1935	1,704	627	31	368	20.3
1945	..	..	..	..	..
1955	6,093	2,191	112	360	19.6
1965	6,817	3,217	176	472	18.3
1975	5,680	4,190	248	738	16.9
1985	5,262	4,244	268	806	15.9
1995	4,479	3,656	228	816	16.0
2005	4,230	4,002	247	946	16.2
2010	4,149	3,907	..	942	15.4
2011	4,121	3,889	247	944	15.3
2012	4,072	3,856	..	947	15.3

## Notes:

All figures cover grant-aided schools to 1938 and public maintained schools thereafter

Teachers- Includes full-time-equivalent of part-time teachers in England and Wales from 1955 onwards. Excludes untrained teachers from 1970 onwards

## Major breaks in series

1920 -The definition of a secondary school changed in Scotland in 1920, the results was to increase the number nearly five-fold

1925 -Includes Northern Ireland from then on

1944 Education Act meant the reorganisation of primary schools and therefore data from before and after this time are not directly comparable

1951 -Primary departments of secondary schools in Scotland excluded from then on

2010-Pupil numbers are headcounts; teacher numbers are full-time equivalent qualified teacher and include all secondary academies and free schools and all through academies

Sources: *B.R. Mitchell, British Historical Statistics, Table XV.11*  
*Education statistics of the UK, various years, DES*  
*Annual abstract of Statistics, ONS*  
*Education and Training Statistics for the United Kingdom 2012, DfE*

Table 3

**Public secondary schools by type: England and Wales**

	Modern	Grammar	Technical	Comprehensive	Other	Total
<i>Schools</i>						
1955	3,550	1,180	302	16	96	5,144
1960	3,837	1,268	251	130	315	5,801
1965	3,727	1,285	172	262	417	5,863
1970	2,691	1,038	82	1,145	324	5,280
1975	1,216	566	29	2,596	155	4,562
1980	445	224	17	3,297	60	4,120
1985	284	173	4	3,479	42	4,028
<i>Pupils (thousands)</i>						
1955	1,234	528	87	16	49	1,914
1960	1,638	673	102	129	182	2,724
1965	1,555	719	85	240	221	2,820
1970	1,227	605	44	937	197	3,010
1975	698	344	18	2,460	100	3,620
1980	235	135	10	3,398	35	3,813
1985	166	114	3	3,205	26	3,513

Sources: *B.R. Mitchell, British Historical Statistics, Table XV.11*  
*Digest of Welsh historical statistics 1974-1996, Welsh Office*  
*Schools in England, various years, DES/DfEE*



Table 4

**Independent schools in England and Wales**

	Number of schools	Pupils	
		Thousands	% of pupils in all schools
1950	1,286	289	4.6%
1955	1,521	340	4.7%
1960	1,665	404	5.3%
1965	3,633	548	7.5%
1970	2,875	527	6.5%
1975	2,477	537	5.9%
1980	2,348	522	5.9%
1985	2,311	509	6.5%
1990	2,280	548	7.4%
1995	2,259	532	6.8%
2000	2,187	547	6.7%
2005	2,250	567	7.0%
2010	2,376	564	7.1%
2011	2,415	563	7.1%
2012	2,420	564	7.0%

## Major breaks in series

Up to 1962 includes all direct grant grammar schools and independent schools (excluding nursery schools) recognised as efficient in England and Wales.

From 1963 data cover England only and include all independent schools and direct grant grammar schools (these were reclassified as independent in 1980)

Sources: *B.R. Mitchell, British Historical Statistics, Table XV.12*  
*Statistics of Education 1961 part one, Ministry of Education*  
*Schools in England, various years, DfEE/DES*  
*Schools and Pupils in England: January 2006, and earlier, DfES*  
*Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics: January 2012, DfE*

Table 5

**Enrolment and post-compulsory staying-on rates, UK***Full time pupils in public sector schools and colleges as a % of the population*

	5-13 year olds	14-16 year olds
1913	88.5	5.8
1921	89.6	12.3
1930	92.1	17.8
1938	93.2	19.6

*Pupils at school beyond the statutory leaving age  
% of the equivalent 13 year olds age group*

	15	16	17	18+
1953	32.4	17.9	9.3	3.9
1955	34.5	19.3	10.4	4.1
1960	38.4	21.1	11.1	..
1965	43.8	26.3	13.9	5.0
1970	57.3	35.1	20.2	6.9

*% of the population in full-time education*

	15	16	17	18	16-18
1971-72	73	43	28	18	..
1976-77	100	61	31	19	..
1980-81	..	42	27	15	28
1985-86	..	49	32	18	33
1990-91	..	62	43	25	43
1995-96	..	70	59	40	57
2000-01	..	73	58	..	..
2005-06	..	76	61	..	..
2009-10		85	71		

## Notes:

1913-1938 data is for schools and colleges in England and Wales only

1953-1970 data compare cohorts, ie. the number of 16 year olds in 1960 compared to 13 year olds three years previously

## Major breaks in series

1963 -Christmas leaving data abolished in England and Wales, only affects 15 year olds

1980-81 onwards, age at preceeding 31 August, previously 21 December was used.

## Sources:

*Statistical abstract for the United Kingdom 1938 and earlier, Board of Trade**Statistics of Education 1962 part one, Ministry of Education**Education statistics for the United Kingdom 1970, DES**Education and training statistics for the United Kingdom 2011 and earlier, DCSF*

Table 6

**Examination results, England and Wales**

Estimated percentage of the relevant population achieving

	5+ GCE "O" level passes/GCSE grades A*- C or equivalent	GCE "A" Level passes (or AS equivalents)	
		1+	3+
1953/54	10.7	5.6	2.8
1955/56	11.7	6.3	3.1
1960/61	15.3	9.1	4.4
1965/66	18.0	12.8	6.0
1970/71	22.1	18.9	8.6
1975/76	22.9	..	..
1980/81	25.0	18.8	9.6
1985/86	26.7	19.5	10.5
1990/91	36.8	26.7	15.3
1995/96	44.5	34.2	23.1
2000/01	50.0	..	..
2005/06	58.5	..	..
2009/10	75.3	..	..
2010/11	79.6	..	..
2011/12	81.1	..	..

## Notes:

## O Level/GCSE

GCE O levels grades A-C and CSE grade 1 to 1986/87, GCSE thereafter

Estimated output of students at schools in England and Wales to 1973/74

Achievements of school leavers in England 1974/75 to 1987/88

Achievements of pupils aged 15 at start of the academic year in England 1988/89 onwards

## A Levels

Estimated output of students at schools and grant aided colleges of further education in England and Wales to 1973/74

Estimated output of schools leavers and home FE students aged 19 or less in England 1977/78 to 1982/83

A/AS Level achievement in all schools and colleges of further education in England 1983/84 to present

From 1999/00 changes in A/AS levels mean that equivalent figures are no longer published

## Sources:

*Statistics of education -volume 2 -school leavers, CSE and GCE, various years, DES**Statistics of education -public examinations GCSE and GCE, various years, DFE/DfEE/DfES**GCSE and equivalent results in England 2009/10 (provisional) and earlier, DCSF/DfES/DfE**GCE/VCE A/AS and Equivalent Examination Results in England, 2005/06, (Provisional), and earlier, DfES*

Table 7

**Learners at further education institutions, England and Wales**

Thousands

	Further education institutions			Adult education centres	Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Evening		
1910-1911	26	68	..	558	652
1920-1921	30	90	..	754	874
1930-1931	26	76	..	930	1,032
1937-1938	30	89	..	1,203	1,322
1949-1950	75	284	761	1,263	2,383
1960	151	488	713	877	2,229
1970	363	716	716	1,320	3,115
1980	483	701	616	1,543	3,343
1990	721	946	852	1,352	3,871
2000/01	851	2,552	..	1,041	4,444
2005/06	910	2,691	..	793	4,394
2010/11	..	..	..	738	4,265

## Major breaks in series

Up to 1949-50 evening classes included with adult education centres. Included with part-time courses from 1994 onwards  
1951 and onwards show learners at a single point in the year, earlier data cover numbers who attended at any time during the year

1965 and onwards includes agricultural colleges and excludes colleges of advanced technology.

1970 England only from then on

1993 includes sixth from colleges from then on

1994 excludes former Polytechnics from then on

2006/07 no breakdown available by mode across all funding streams

Source: *Further education book of facts, DfES; Education and training statistics for the UK 2012, and earlier, DfE*

Table 8

**Students obtaining university degrees, UK**

	First degrees			Higher degrees		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
1920	3,145	1,212	4,357	529	174	703
1930	6,494	2,635	9,129	1,123	200	1,323
1938	7,071	2,240	9,311	1,316	164	1,480
1950	13,398	3,939	17,337	2,149	261	2,410
1960	16,851	5,575	22,426	2,994	279	3,273
1970	35,571	15,618	51,189	11,186	1,715	12,901
1980	42,831	25,319	68,150	14,414	4,511	18,925
1990	43,297	33,866	77,163	20,905	10,419	31,324
2000	109,930	133,316	243,246	46,015	40,520	86,535
2005	122,155	156,225	278,380	63,035	62,050	125,085
2010	144,980	185,740	330,720	93,375	89,235	182,610
2011	153,235	197,565	350,800	96,280	97,990	194,270

## Notes:

All figures are for students from all domiciles

Full-time first degree students only

## Major breaks in series

1925 -Excludes higher degrees awarded without further study

1973 -includes universities in Northern Ireland

1994 - includes former Polytechnics and the Open University from now on

2000 -includes students qualifying from 'dormant' status - where a student is not actively studying for their qualification. This may be where there is an administrative delay between completion and award. These qualifications were not previously recorded. The main impact is on the number of doctorates.

Sources: *Statistical abstract for the United Kingdom 1935, Board of Trade*

*Annual abstract of statistics, ONS/CSO*

*Higher Education Statistics Agency*