

Report to: People Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting: 12 March 2026
By: Director of Children's Services
Title: East Sussex Education Attainment and Performance 2025
Purpose: To inform the People Scrutiny Committee of the attainment results for academic year 2024/25

RECOMMENDATIONS

The People Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider the attainment results for academic year 2024/25

1 Background

1.1 This report provides an overview of the attainment results for academic year 2024/25 for early years, primary and secondary pupils. The data in these reports, comes from the published Department for Education (DfE) reports or Nexus Insight reports, depending on availability. The DfE reports are publicly available data sets and are the data sets used to produce the statistical neighbours' reports.

1.2 The data in the report shows the latest data available from the DfE. The provisional and revised national data is set out in Appendix 1. Please note the following in relation to the data:

- Key Stage 4 data from the DfE is provisional and will be revised by the DfE in early 2026. Provisional and revised national data where available is set out in Appendix 1.

1.3 There is no Key Stage 1 data for academic year 2024/25. This follows the DfE announcement that, from academic year 2023 to 2024 onwards, end of Key Stage 1 assessment is now non-statutory.

1.4 The local authority has a statutory duty to promote high standards of education. This duty is discharged within the context of the removal of the DfE grant for school improvement and the expectation that schools themselves should lead improvement. In East Sussex, we deliver this duty through working collaboratively with all schools through our partnership structures and supporting a school led system of improvement. The local authority only has powers of intervention for maintained schools and, where we intervene, we have impact and outcomes improve. We have no formal powers of intervention in academy schools; 74% of secondary schools, 39% of primary schools, 100% of all-through schools and 100% of special schools are academies.

2 Supporting information

2.1 **Headlines:** For all pupils overall, performance at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) remains above the national average. Performance in Year 1 Phonics, Key Stage 2, and Key Stage 4 are all below the national averages. However, Key Stage 4 provisional data

at school level indicates that there has been an improvement in attainment results across secondary schools in Hastings, albeit from a low starting point. This has reduced in county variability, however, where schools do not perform as well, this has a significant impact on the overall average for East Sussex.

2.2 Foundation Stage: The percentage of children achieving a good level of development in East Sussex in 2025 is 70.3% compared to the national figure of 68.3%. The percentage point gap between children receiving free school meals achieving a good level of development and their peers is 22.5%. The national average gap for this cohort for 2025 is 21.3%.

2.3 Phonics: In 2025, 78.0% of pupils in East Sussex were working at the required level in phonics at the end of Year 1, compared to the national average of 79.8%. In 2025 63.7% of disadvantaged pupils in East Sussex were working at the expected level in phonics at the end of Year 1. The 2025 national average for this cohort is 66.6%.

2.4 Key Stage 2

Reading/Writing/Maths (R/W/M) Combined: In 2025, 60.6% of pupils in East Sussex achieved the expected standard in R/W/M combined, compared with the national average of 62.6%. This is an increase from the previous year and continues an upward trend since 2022. 6.0% of pupils were working at higher standard in R/W/M combined in 2025 compared to the national average of 8.5%. 44.3% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard in R/W/M combined, compared to the national average of 47.7%. 2.4% of disadvantaged pupils were working at higher standard in R/W/M combined compared to the national average of 3.6%.

Reading: In 2025, 74.4% of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, compared with the national average of 75.8%. 30.9% of pupils were working at higher standard in reading in 2025 compared with the national average of 33.8%. 62.4% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard in reading compared to the national average of 63.8%. 19.3% of disadvantaged pupils were working at higher standard in reading in 2025, compared to the national average of 21.5%.

Writing: In 2025, 72.4% of pupils achieved the expected standard in writing, compared with the national average of 72.6%. 10.5% of pupils were working at higher standard in writing in 2025 compared with the national average of 12.9%. 57.5% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard in writing in 2025 compared to the national average of 59.5%. 5.3% of disadvantaged pupils were working at higher standard in writing in 2025 compared to the national average of 6.6%.

Maths: In 2025, 71.2% of pupils achieved the expected standard in maths, compared with the national average of 74.6%. 21.3% of pupils were working at higher standard in maths in 2025 compared with the national average of 26.6%. 57.4% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard in maths in 2025 compared to the national average of 60.9%. 11.8% of disadvantaged pupils were working at higher standard in maths in 2025 compared to the national average of 15.2%.

English Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (EGPS): In 2025, 66.3% of pupils achieved the expected standard in EGPS compared with the national average of 73.2%. 19.5% of

pupils were working at higher standard in EGPS in 2025, compared with the national average of 29.9%. 51.2% of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard in EGPS in 2025. 10.2% of disadvantaged pupils were working at higher standard in EGPS in 2025. The 2025 national averages for this cohort are expected standard 60.2%, higher standard 18.8%.

There are no Key Stage 2 progress scores available for academic year 2024/25.

2.5 Key Stage 4

- The provisional Attainment 8 score for East Sussex in 2025 is 43.0 compared to the provisional national score of 45.9. The provisional attainment 8 score for disadvantaged pupils is 30.3 compared to the provisional national score of 34.9.
- Attainment 8 for all pupils is in the 79th percentile, down 1 place from the last academic year.
- 62.9% of East Sussex pupils achieved grades 9-4 in English and maths in 2025. 41.5% of East Sussex pupils achieved grades 9-5 in English and Maths in 2025.
- 37.9% of disadvantaged pupils achieved grades 9-4 in English and Maths, and 20.2% of disadvantaged pupils achieved grades 9-5 in 2025.
- 23.2% of pupils achieved grades 9-4 in all EBacc subjects. 16.2% of pupils achieved grades 9-5 in all EBacc subjects.
- 10.0% of disadvantaged pupils achieved grades 9-4 in all EBacc subjects. 6.6% of disadvantaged pupils achieved grades 9-5 in all EBacc subjects.
- Progress 8 scores will not be produced for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 academic years due to the disruption of Key Stage 2 SATs during the COVID-19 pandemic, which means there is no prior attainment data to calculate the measure.
- Performance varies significantly between schools. Performance has improved at the three schools in Hastings, and at the Eastbourne Academy, however it remains below the national average. This contrasts with schools in the Wealden/Lewes area where the average of these schools is above the national average.

2.6 Key Stage 5

The local authority does not collect or report on KS5 attainment data. The DfE published performance data for 16-18 providers in February 2026 and this has been included in the slides in Appendix 1.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The Committee is asked to consider the attainment results for summer 2025. Analysis of these results informs strategic and operational decisions about the priorities for improvement, and support to schools, including for the remainder of the 2025/26 academic year.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Appendix 1: Attainment Report 2025