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# Language Diversity and Attainment in Secondary Schools in England

Feyisa Demie
Andrew Hau
James McDonald

**Feyisa Demie**
**Andrew Hau**

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**Education and Learning**
**10th Floor International House**
**Canterbury Crescent**
**London SW9 7QE**



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# Language Diversity and Attainment in Secondary Schools

## Executive Summary

This research examines pupil performance differences among the main ethnic groups, by language spoken at home and EAL fluency in English. The sample size of the pupils who completed GCSE in summer 2014 is 558,432. The findings of the analysis of KS4 results in England suggests that:-

- EAL pupils not fluent in English achieve significantly below the national average compared to monolingual English speakers in English schools.

- There is a wide variation in performance between regions in England with large attainment gaps in the Yorkshire and the Humber, East, South West, East Midlands, and the North West regions.

- A further analysis of the EAL data by languages spoken at home suggests over 240 languages are spoken in English schools by KS4 pupils. Of the Black African language groups, Portuguese, Wolof, Lingala, Hausa, Bemba, French, Chichewa, Tigrinya and Zulu speakers were the lowest achieving groups while the Igbo, Edo/Bini, Yoruba, Swedish, Amharic, English, Luganda, Akan Twi-Fante and Arabic speaking Black African pupils achieved better than White British and the national average. The data also show Somali, Ga, Krio, Shona and Swahili speakers are narrowing the achievement gap. Within the Indian EAL groups the highest performing language groups were Marathi, Telugu, Bengali, Malayalam and English speaking pupils all above the national average and White British. Those pupils within Pakistani language groups performed less well, with Pahari, Panjabi and Kashmiri speakers peforming ten percentage points or more below the national average. Hindko, English and Gujarati speaking Pakistani pupils all performed above White British and the national average. Within the White Other category, there is a large variation in performance depending on the language that is spoken. Among the highest achieving groups were west European language speakers of Danish, French, Dutch/Flemish, Swedish, English, German, Greek and Italian, who all out-performed pupils who had English as a first language. Hebrew, Ukrainian and Serbian/Croatian/Bosnia speakers also performed very well. The lowest achieving groups were from Central and Eastern Europe including Czech, Slovak, Latvian, Lithuanian, Hungarian, Romanian and Polish speaking pupils, with all of these groups performing at least ten percentage points below the national average. Also low-performing were Portuguese, Kurdish and Turkish speaking pupils. Of the larger European language groups in English schools, Polish, Portuguese, Turkish and Lithuanian speakers, were achieving below the national average.

- An examination of EAL pupils' attainment by level of fluency in English also confirms that there is a strong relationship between the stage of fluency in English and educational attainment. The results suggest that the percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSE examinations graded A* to C including English and mathematics, increased as stage of proficiency in English increased. Pupils in the early stages of fluency performed at low levels, while EAL pupils who were fully fluent in English far outstripped those of pupils for whom English was their only language.

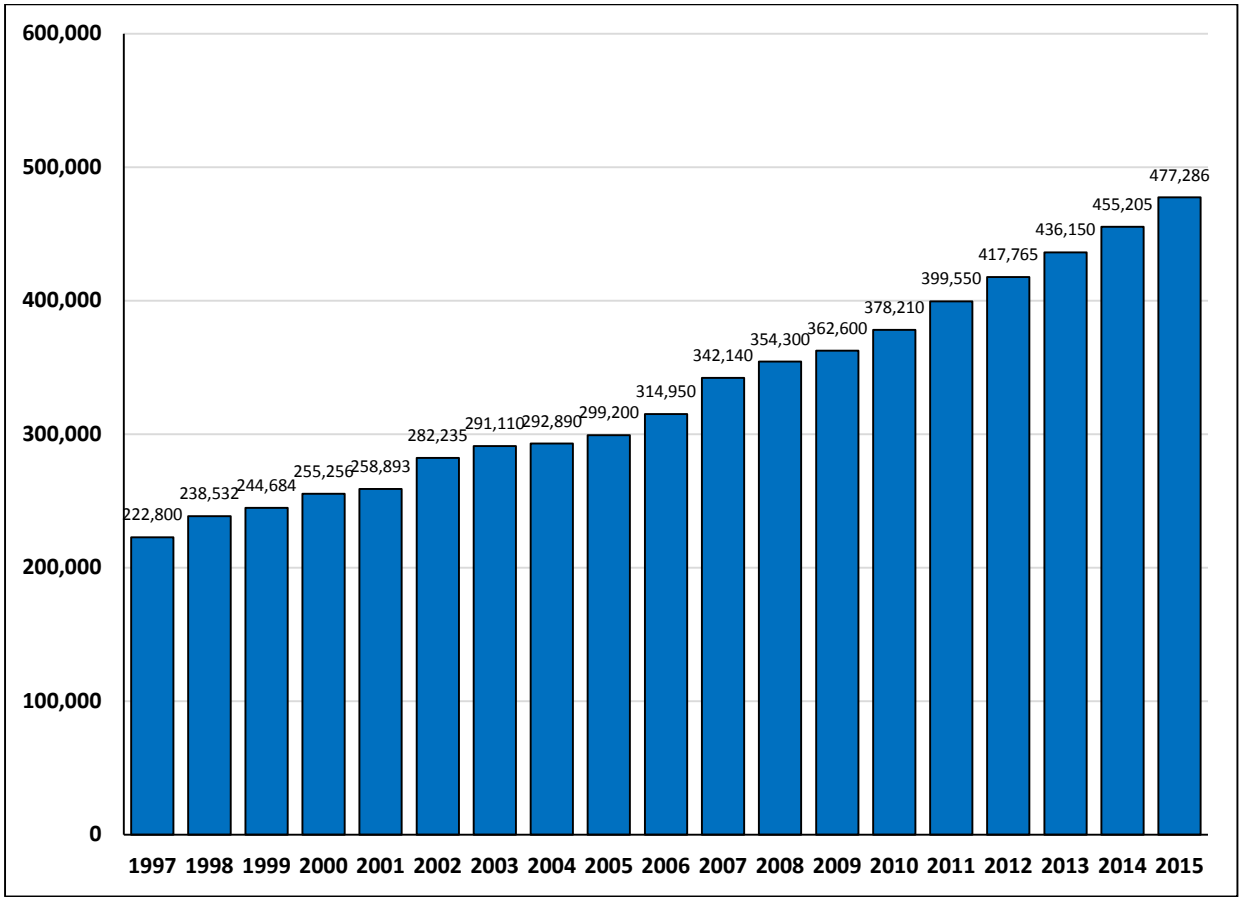
Overall the conclusion from this study suggests that language barriers remain the key factor affecting the performance of EAL pupils in English schools. We would argue that the worryingly low achievement of EAL pupils who are not fluent in English has been masked by failure of government statistics to distinguish EAL pupils by stages of fluency in English and languages spoken at home. The recommendations from our findings are that if England is serious about tackling pupil underachievement in schools, policy makers need to recognise the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity. Such data is fundamental in identifying which ethnic and linguistic groups are most at risk of underachievement and to design specific interventions that will be effective in raising achievement, whatever the pupils' background.

## 1. Introduction: Ethnic background and achievement

There has been much research into factors affecting performance in schools. Recent British studies focused on the relationship between factors such as gender, ethnicity, pupil mobility, parental occupation and free school meals and educational achievement (Demie and Strand 2006; Strand 2015) but review of literature in this area suggests there are relatively few studies that have examined EAL attainment and language diversity and the relationship between EAL stages of English fluency and attainment (Demie 2013, Demie and Strand 2006 and Strand et al 2015, Demie et al 2003).

A review of the literature suggests there is a wealth of research into the growth of the EAL population and attainment in schools. The number of pupils in England with English as an additional language has seen a dramatic increase over the years from 499,000 in 1997 to 1,185,960 in 2015 (Demie 2015,5; DfE 2015), an increase of 138%. The issue of EAL achievement is increasingly important given the growth in the EAL population in England over the last decade. There are now more than a million pupils between 5–18 years old in England schools speaking in excess of 360 languages between them, and who are at varying stages in their learning of EAL, from newcomers to English to those that are fluent. About 16% of the school population in England and Wales now speak English as an additional language (Figure 1).

***Figure 1. Number of Secondary School Pupils with English as an Additional Language, 1997-2015***




There is also a wealth of research into ethnic background and achievement in English schools. The most comprehensive influential policy studies and inquiries into the education of children of ethnic minorities were undertaken by the Rampton Committee (1981), Swann Committee (1985) and

Parekh Commission (2000). Each of these appeared to show considerable underachievement of Caribbean and Other Black pupils, when compared with the average level of achievement of White and Asian children. Some of the findings in these reports are supported by studies in the last two decades and show that pupils from the major ethnic groups tend to have a level of attainment below the average for that of their White British peers (Mortimor et al 1988, Demie 2001, Smith and Tomlinson, 1989; Ofsted, 2002a, b; Cabinet Office, 2007; DCSF, 2008b). These documents reflect widespread concerns within the government, academia and schools that a disproportionate number of Black children tend to underperform in public examinations in comparison to their White British peers.

***Table 1: GCSE performance in England by ethnic background***

| Ethnic Group | GCSE Cohort 2014 | | 5 + A*C incl. English and Maths |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of Eligible Pupils | % | |
| Chinese | 2152 | 0.4% | 74% |
| Indian | 13394 | 2.4% | 73% |
| White and Asian | 4610 | 0.8% | 67% |
| Irish | 1883 | 0.3% | 66% |
| Any Other Asian Background | 7992 | 1.4% | 62% |
| Bangladeshi | 8139 | 1.5% | 61% |
| Any Other Mixed Background | 7616 | 1.4% | 61% |
| White and Black African | 2351 | 0.4% | 57% |
| Any Other Ethnic Group | 7513 | 1.3% | 57% |
| Black African | 16257 | 2.9% | 57% |
| White British | 422376 | 75.6% | 56% |
| Unclassified | 5513 | 1.0% | 54% |
| Any Other White Background | 20898 | 3.7% | 53% |
| Pakistani | 18575 | 3.3% | 51% |
| Any Other Black Background | 3097 | 0.6% | 49% |
| White and Black Caribbean | 7379 | 1.3% | 49% |
| Black Caribbean | 7606 | 1.4% | 47% |
| Traveller of Irish Heritage | 129 | 0.0% | 14% |
| Gypsy/Roma | 952 | 0.2% | 8% |
| **All pupils** | 558432 | 100.0% | **57%** |

*Source: National Pupil Database (NPD), Department for Education, January 2014.*

In addition to the studies reviewed above, the three most recent significant overviews of research on ethnic differences in levels of achievement have been published by Ofsted (Gillborn & Gipps, 1996; Gillborn & Mirza, 2000), DfE (2009), Bradbury (2011), and Strand (2013, 2010 and 2012). These research reports also reviewed the stage of recent changes in the educational achievements of ethnic minority pupils. The results confirm previous research findings which suggest considerable underachievement of Caribbean and Other Black pupils, on average, compared with White British and Asian children. This concern has increased in the wake of recent KS1, KS2, KS3 and GCSE results which

show the under-achievement of Black African, Pakistani and Black Caribbean pupils in both primary and secondary schools (DfE 2006; Demie 2001; Strand 2012). This is further supported by recent studies by Dustmann et al (2010) which argued that at the start of school, pupils from most ethnic groups substantially lag behind White British pupils and the gaps decline for all groups through compulsory schooling. The Department for Education (DfE) School Census also suggests that amongst those ending their compulsory education in the UK, Black Caribbean and Pakistani pupils were least successful academically with only 47% of Black Caribbean, 51% of Pakistani pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to C including English and Maths (Table 1). However, we need to be cautious as ethnicity categorisation has not always been helpful to study achievement of the performance of all pupils in English schools. We would argue that none of these ethnic categories are homogenous. Research shows that the worryingly low achievement levels of many pupils in British schools are masked by Government statistics that fail to distinguish between different European, African and Asian ethnic groups (Hollingsworth and Mansaray 2012; Demie 2011; Demie and Lewis 2010, 2011).

Previous research has noted that the recording of ethnicity in England usually refers, confusingly, to a combination of national boundaries (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi) but also colour (Black, White) and more general geographic distinctions, that supersede national boundaries (Black Caribbean, Black African) (see Hollingsworth and Mansaray 2012;Von Ahn et all 2010; Mitton 2011; Demie 2011). Research shows that collapsing into White Other makes comparison problematic as this group contains a range of other European ethnic groups such as Polish, Czech, Portuguese, Spanish, Turkish, Albanian, Russian etc. Similarly the conflation of the Black African, Black Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic groups is not helpful and tells us little about the role of language. There is therefore a need to unpick how national ethnic categorisations may be used to improve our understanding of the performance of pupils who speak different languages in schools. However, even in the few studies where ethnic differences and educational achievement are considered, the importance of language spoken at home and of English language fluency in achievement between ethnic groups is rarely reported. Thus, it is not possible to tell from most studies whether pupils who are fully fluent in English from different ethnic groups do better than those who are not fluent in English. Furthermore, previous studies lacked data on differences in performance between the different ethnic groups by language spoken. The few recent studies of attainment and language spoken show that there are significant differences between ethnic categories. For example Demie and McLean (2007) KS2 and GCSE data analysis of Black African ethnic group achievement by language confirm that Igbo, Yoruba and Twi- Fante speaking Black African pupils achieved better than other ethnic groups including Indian and White British at a national level. In contrast, Somali and Lingala speakers tend to have very low attainment compared to other groups. This is further supported by Von Ahn et al (2010:7) analysis of KS2 results that indicate the '*Black African group has some of the highest and some of the lowest achieving groups. For example, the three lowest achieving groups – Lingala, French and Somali speakers tend to have low attainment well below that of the lowest attaining ethnic group overall (Black Caribbean), whilst Igbo, Yoruba and English speaking Black Africans achieve as well as the White British group.'* These research findings also suggest that '*some of the ethnic grouping may be too broad to be useful, and that language data can provide more insight into which pupils may be in need of particular support*.' We would argue that there are large attainment gaps in England when data is analysed further by language spoken and English proficiency in addition to ethnic background.

## *The aims and research methods*

### Research questions

This research paper considers empirical evidence from England and examines pupil performance differences among the main ethnic groups, by language spoken at home. Three overarching questions guided this research:

- What does the data tell us about language diversity and attainment?
- What is the relationship beteen English language proficiency and attainment?
- What are the implications for policy and practice?

### The data

The strength of the article is its data source of the National Pupil Database. The National Pupil Database (NPD) is a pupil level database which matches pupil and school characteristic data to pupil level attainment. The sample size of the pupils who completed GCSE in summer 2014 is 558,432. The data on state schools is highly accurate and has a number of key features. Firstly, the fact that it is a census dataset containing the population of all pupils in state schools is very helpful for a number of different analyses, compared to a dataset based on just a sample of schools. It provides a much richer set of data on school and pupil characteristics. The dataset includes information on language spoken at home, ethnicity, free school meals, gender and results at Key Stage 4.

### Measures of pupil background

***Pupil Performance*** **-** It is important to note that in the English education system, pupils aged 15 to 16 years at the end of KS4 take General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exams. These are the major qualifications taken by pupils at the end of compulsory schooling at the age of 16, and are a series of examinations in the individual subjects the pupils have been studying. For the purpose of this paper underachievement is defined as low attainment which is attainment that is below national average or below age-related expectations.

## *English as an Additional Language and Attainment in England*

Historically, nationally at Key Stage 4, pupils with English as an additional language achieved less well at GCSE than those with English as their first language. The DfE 2015 GCSE data also suggest similar findings where 57% of White British pupils achieve 5+A*-C including English and maths compared to 55% of EAL pupils (DfE 2015 and Table 2).

***Table 2. EAL and White British GCSE Performance in England***

| | 5 + A*C including English and Maths | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ethnicity** | **2006** | **2007** | **2008** | **2009** | **2010** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** |
| White British- English only | 44% | 46% | 49% | 51% | 55% | 59% | 59% | 61% | 56% | 57% |
| EAL Pupils* | 42% | 44% | 45% | 48% | 52% | 56% | 56% | 58% | 55% | 55% |

*All EAL pupils including fully fluent in English

*Source: DfE National Pupil Database (NPD)*

## *English as an Additional Language and GCSE Attainment by Region*

Pupil performance at the end of Key Stage 4 also varies across the ten DfE regions. Inner London has the highest density of EAL pupils in England at 51.8%. It also outperforms non-EAL pupils at GCSE, the only region to reverse the trend of English-only pupils outperforming EAL pupils (Figure 3). The South West and North East had the lowest levels of EAL pupils taking GCSE in 2014 (see Table 3). EAL pupils from Yorkshire and the Humber showed the lowest achievement with only 41.5% achieving expected levels.

***Table 3. GCSE Achievement of EAL pupils by Region of England***

| **Region** | **% EAL Pupils** | **% A*-C inc EM** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **EAL** | **Non-EAL** | **Gap** |
| Inner London | 51.8% | 59.6% | 57.7% | 1.9% |
| Outer London | 33.9% | 60.7% | 62.4% | -1.7% |
| West Midlands | 14.8% | 53.3% | 55.1% | -1.8% |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 10.9% | 41.5% | 55.1% | -13.6% |
| North West | 9.5% | 51.5% | 56.1% | -4.6% |
| East Midlands | 9.5% | 49.1% | 54.2% | -5.2% |
| East | 9.0% | 51.4% | 57.6% | -6.1% |
| South East | 8.8% | 56.7% | 59.0% | -2.3% |
| South West | 4.3% | 51.1% | 56.9% | -5.8% |
| North East | 4.2% | 50.7% | 54.8% | -4.0% |
| **All England** | **13.4%** | **54.8%** | **56.9%** | **-2.1%** |

Figure 2 shows how the density of pupils with EAL in LAs across England varies widely, with as many as 70% to 79% of pupils recorded as EAL in some areas, particularly inner-cities and particularly inner and outer London.

***Figure 2. Percentage of GCSE pupils with EAL across England in 2014***

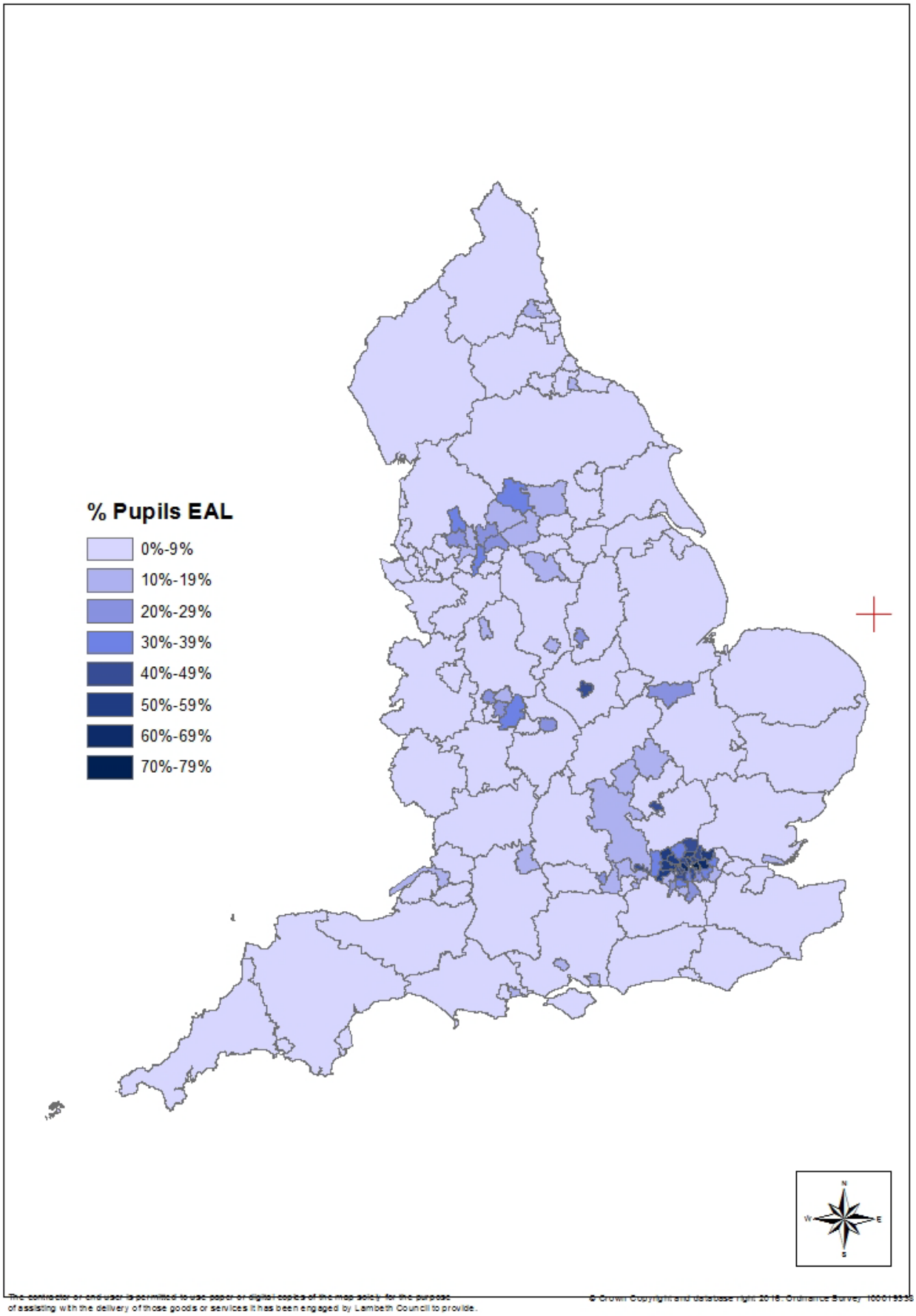
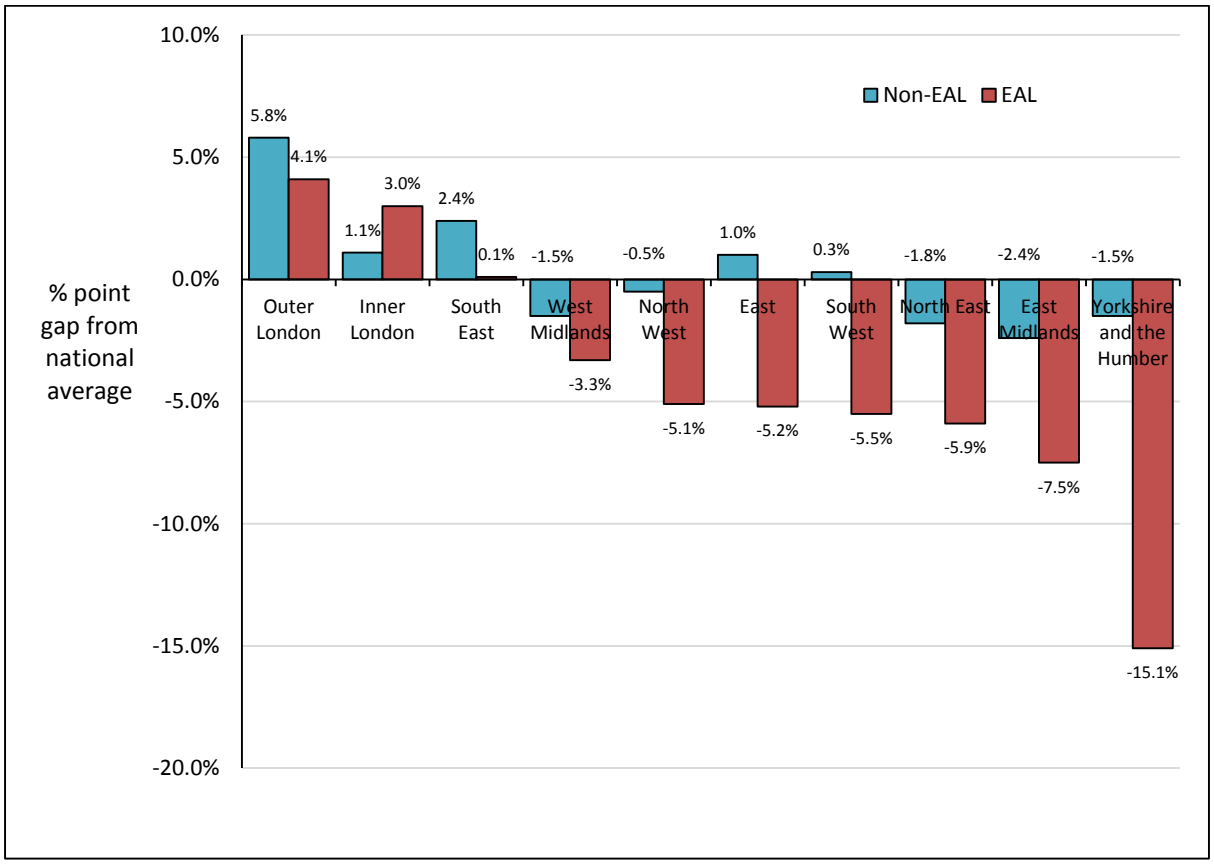


***Fig 3: EAL and non-EAL Achievement by Region at GCSE 2014***



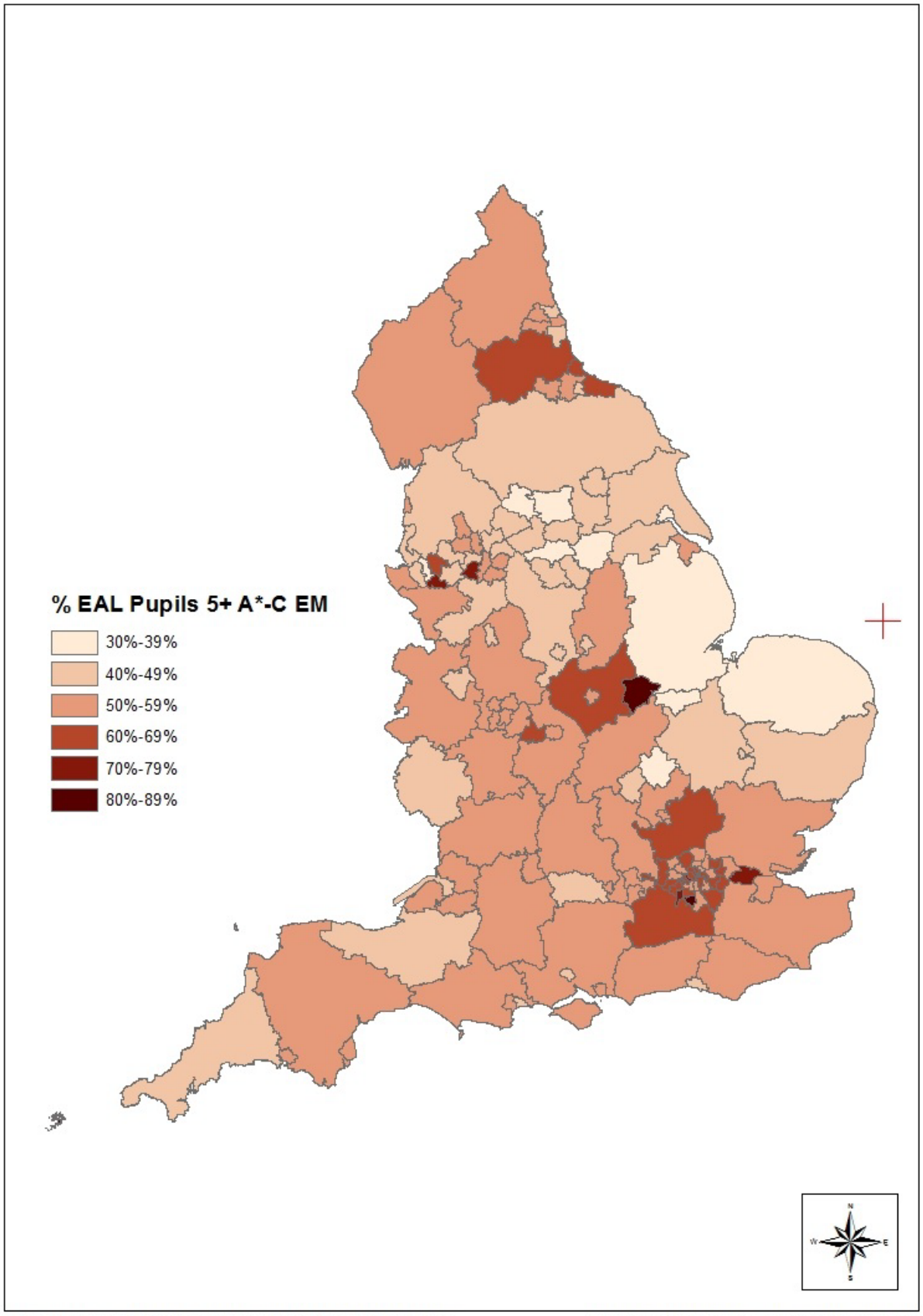

However EAL and non-EAL data which is collected as part of census data does not tell us much about EAL performance (See Table 3). Researchers have now recognised the weaknesses of using such national data in EAL achievement studies and have argued as unhelpful information which does not differentiate pupils performance by levels of fluency in English and languages spoken at home.

Overall the analysis by language category illuminates the spread of attainment within ethnic categories and suggests that some of the commonly used ethnic groupings may be too broad to be useful, and that language data can provide greater insight into which pupils may be in need of particular support. Figure 3, shows the gap by region between EAL and non-EAL pupils and the national GCSE average of 57%.

Figure 4, overleaf, shows the distribution of GCSE results for EAL pupils in 2014 across England reduced further to a Local Authority Level.

However, it is important to note from the above analysis that using EAL status alone is not necessarily an accurate marker for studying the impact on attainment. Knowing that a pupil has English as an additional language has limited use when researching underachieving groups. EAL is a very heterogeneous group made up of pupils from many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, which are likely to show a wide variation in achievement. We need to be cautious and recognise that 'EAL *is not a precise measure of language proficiency at pupil-level. 'First language' which is used here is the language to which a child was initially exposed during early development and continues to be exposed to in the home or in the community. It does not mean that pupils are necessarily fluent in a language other than English, or that they cannot speak English fluently. Pupils can therefore be identified in the census as EAL when they are bilingual and have no specific need of support to access mainstream education in English.'* (See DfE 2016a:27)

***Figure 4. EAL Pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and Maths***



A number of researchers have also commented on the inadequacy of EAL/not EAL as an accurate marker in statistical studies e.g.

> *'Using EAL status alone is not necessarily an accurate marker for studying the impact on attainment. Knowing that a pupil has English as an additional language has limited use when researching underachieving groups. EAL is a very heterogeneous group made up of pupils from many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, which are likely to show a wide variation in achievement.'* (Demie, Hau and McDonald, 2016: 7)

Other researchers have also argued that:-

> '*The NPD EAL data clearly needs to be interpreted with some caution. It is explicitly not a measure of the pupil's fluency in English: pupils recorded as EAL may speak no English at all or they may be fully fluent in English. Indeed there is huge heterogeneity within the group coded as EAL. On the one hand, this might include second or third generation ethnic minority students who may be exposed to a language other than English as part of their cultural heritage but use it rarely if at all, using English as their everyday language and being quite fluent in it. At the other extreme it might include new migrants arriving in England who speak no English at all, and may have varying levels of literacy in their previous country of origin'* (Strand et al 2015).

Leedham (2016) also noted that as a result of using EAL status, undifferentiated by stages or levels of proficiency and language spoken at home, a number of previous researchers and policy makers 'reinforced a misleading and inaccurate picture of EAL achievement by repeating a familiar narrative that EAL learners outperform their monolingual peers'. She argued that 'meaningful analysis of outcomes of EAL pupils achievement is only achieved through data disaggregated by stages of fluency in English, languages and ethnic background.'

We would further argue that EAL and non EAL data which is collected as part of census data does not tell us much about EAL performance (Demie and Strand 2006, Strand et al 2015). Researchers have now recognised the weaknesses of using such national data in EAL achievement studies and have argued as unhelpful information which does not differentiate pupils performance by levels of fluency in English or language background (Demie 2015, Von Ahn et al 2011, Demie and Strand 2006). There is a need for more research on languages spoken at home and attainment including the relationship between stages of fluency in English and attainment to improve our knowledge about EAL pupils' performance in schools. Other languages spoken at home and proficiency in English is therefore potentially a powerful predictor of differential attainment among EAL pupils at all key stages and an important factor in pupil achievement.

This will be examined in the following sections.

### *Language Diversity and Attainment*

The above analysis of EAL performance by regions is invaluable in improving our knowledge related to a pupil's background and achievement, but it is useful to be cautious when using the national School Census categories. EAL is clearly an important category which is connected to ethnicity, though obviously does not map straightforwardly onto it. Even in the few studies where EAL educational achievement is considered, the importance of language diversity in achievement between language groups is rarely reported.

In England many languages are spoken at home in addition to English, reflecting the different cultures experiences and identities of the people in the community. Until 2007 there was no nationally collected data of language spoken at home in England. However, from January 2007, where a pupil's first language is not English, schools were asked by the government to record the actual first language spoken.

Table 4 shows language spoken for pupils nationally at Key Stage 4. After English speakers (86.6% of KS4 pupils), the most common groups were the Asian languages of Panjabi, Urdu and Bengali respectively. This was followed by sizeable groups of Polish, Gujarati, Somali, Arabic, Portuguese, Turkish, Tamil, Chinese, French, Tagalog, Spanish, Pashto and Yoruba speaking pupils.

***Table 4: Main Language Groups (1000 speakers of more) in England at KS4 2014***

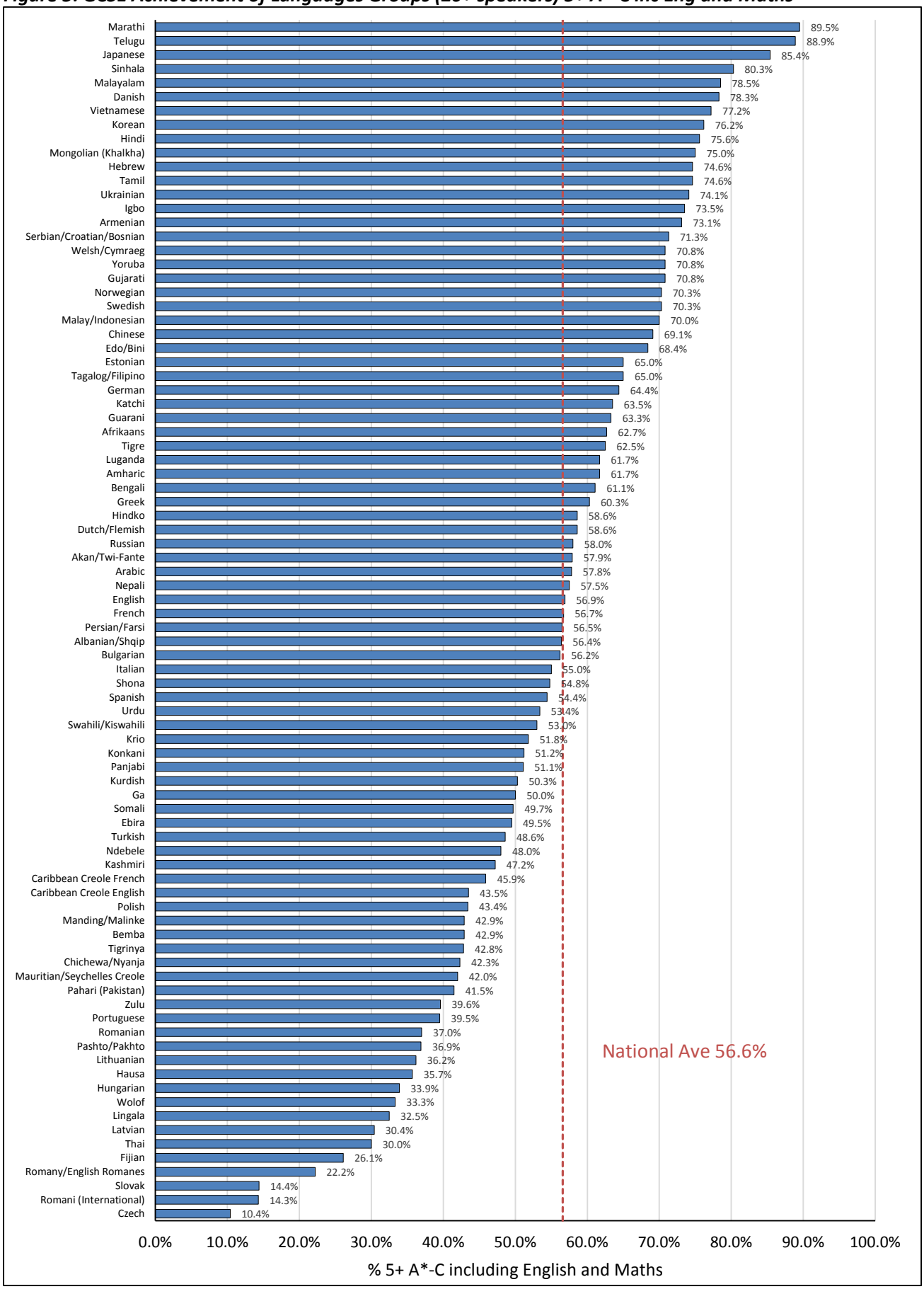
| Language | Total | 5+ A*-C inc Eng and Maths | Main ethnic Groups |
|---|---|---|---|
| English | 482436 | 56.9% | White British, Black Caribbean, Black African |
| Other than English | 12602 | 56.6% | |
| Panjabi | 8023 | 51.1% | Indian, Pakistani |
| Urdu | 7012 | 53.4% | Pakistani |
| Bengali | 6446 | 61.1% | Bangladeshi |
| Polish | 4064 | 43.4% | White Other |
| Gujarati | 3155 | 70.8% | Indian |
| Somali | 3084 | 49.7% | Black African |
| Arabic | 2517 | 57.8% | Any other Group, Black African |
| Portuguese | 2081 | 39.5% | White Other, Any Other Group |
| Turkish | 1445 | 48.6% | White Other |
| Tamil | 1388 | 74.6% | Asian Other |
| Chinese | 1380 | 69.1% | Chinese |
| French | 1331 | 56.7% | White Other, Black African |
| Tagalog/Filipino | 1160 | 65.0% | Asian Other |
| Spanish | 1052 | 54.4% | White Other, Any Other Group |
| Pashto/Pakhto | 1023 | 36.9% | Pakistani, Any Other Group |
| Yoruba | 1001 | 70.8% | Black African |
| **Total** | **558432** | **56.6%** | |

*Source: National Pupil Database (NPD), Department for Education, January 2014.*

Information from the January 2014 School Census in England indicated that that there were about 190 different languages spoken by the GCSE cohort in schools. Of these, 17 languages were spoken by more than 1000 pupils, 27 languages spoken by more than 500 pupils, 52 languages spoken by over 100 speakers and 87 languages spoken by over 20 speakers with a further 104 languages spoken by under 20 speakers (see DfE 2014).

When examining the achievement of each language group, a wide spread of GCSE attainment was observed. Of the major language groups (over 1000 speakers), Tamil speakers were the highest achieving with 74.6% achieving expected outcomes. They were followed by Gujurati and Yoruba speakers (70.8%) and then Chinese speaking pupils (69.1%). Of the major languages, the lowest achieving groups were Pashto speaking pupils (36.9%), Portuguese (39.5%) and Polish (43.4%).

***Figure 5: GCSE Achievement of Languages Groups (20+ speakers) 5+ A*-C inc Eng and Maths***



There were 43 of the language groups with 20 or more speakers above the national average for Key Stage 4. The highest performing language groups overall were the Indian languages of Marathi (89.5%) and Telugu (88.9%) speaking pupils who were over 30 percentage points higher than the national figure. Also achieving well were Japanese (85.4%), Sinhala (80.3%), Malayalaam (78.5%), Danish (78.3%) and Vietnamese (77.2%) speakers all being more than 20 percentage points higher than the national figure.

The lowest achieving groups overall were Czech speakers with just 10.4% achieving five or more A*-C including English and Maths. Also, very low achieving at GCSE, were Romani (14.3%), Slovak (14.4%) and Romany/English Romanes (22.2%) speaking pupils, who were more than 30 percentage points lower than the national average.

Figure 5, shows the breadth of GCSE results by language in England. Using five or more GCSEs including English and maths as an indicator, outcomes vary from Japanese speakers achieving 85.4% to Czech speakers achieving 10.4% compared to the national average of 57%. Only pupil cohorts over 80 were used in this analysis.

## *Language Diversity and Attainment of Black African Pupils*

***Table 5: Languages Spoken by KS4 Black African Pupils in England 2014 (20+ speakers)***

| Language | No. of speakers | % of Black African | | Language | No. of speakers | % of Black African |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English | 6054 | 37.2% | | Ndebele | 89 | 0.5% |
| Somali | 2959 | 18.2% | | Dutch/Flemish | 85 | 0.5% |
| Other than English | 1661 | 10.2% | | German | 81 | 0.5% |
| Yoruba | 929 | 5.7% | | Amharic | 79 | 0.5% |
| Shona | 632 | 3.9% | | Classification Pending | 51 | 0.3% |
| French | 560 | 3.4% | | Krio | 48 | 0.3% |
| Akan/Twi-Fante | 518 | 3.2% | | Wolof | 43 | 0.3% |
| Swahili/Kiswahili | 341 | 2.1% | | Ga | 41 | 0.3% |
| Arabic | 299 | 1.8% | | Zulu | 40 | 0.2% |
| Portuguese | 260 | 1.6% | | Edo/Bini | 33 | 0.2% |
| Lingala | 242 | 1.5% | | Bemba | 30 | 0.2% |
| Igbo | 187 | 1.2% | | Information not obtained | 27 | 0.2% |
| Tigrinya | 170 | 1.0% | | Hausa | 25 | 0.2% |
| Other Language | 166 | 1.0% | | Chichewa/Nyanja | 24 | 0.1% |
| Italian | 103 | 0.6% | | Swedish | 23 | 0.1% |
| Luganda | 93 | 0.6% | | Caribbean Creole English | 21 | 0.1% |

In the few studies where ethnic differences and educational achievement are considered, the importance of language diversity in achievement between ethnic groups is rarely reported. As argued earlier, a pupil's ethnic background is often imprecise, constrained by categorisation of the official data available at national level. Ethnicity is clearly an important category which is connected to language, though obviously does not map straightforwardly onto it. As Von Ahn et al noted '*while many languages "attach" to particular ethnic groups … knowing a person's language does not tell us about their country of origin or ethnic heritage*' (2010, p. 6). The national data suggests that some of the ethnic groups demonstrate a high degree of linguistic homogeneity. For example, 98% of White

British and 94% of Black Caribbean children spoke English at home, whilst 84% of the Bangladeshi ethnic group spoke Bengali. However other ethnic groups are very linguistically diverse. In particular, the Black African, White Other, Indian and Pakistani ethnic categories gloss over enormous linguistic diversity.

In 2014, Black African are the third largest ethnic minority group of KS4 pupils in English schools. The majority of these pupils live in Inner and Outer London. The empirical evidence in this research showed that the Black African category is one of the most linguistically diverse with 37.2% of KS4 pupils speaking English as their language at home, followed by Somali (18.2%), Yoruba (5.7%), Shona (3.9%), French (3.4%) and Akan Twi-Fante (3.2%). Other languages such as Swahili, Arabic, Portuguese, Lingala, Igbo, Tigrinya, Ndebele, Amharic, Luganda, Krio and Ga, have each between 20 and 500 speakers. There are further languages with an even smaller number of speakers. In total, 106 different languages were recorded for Black African pupils.

***Table 6: GCSE performance of Black African pupils by language spoken at home (20+ speakers)***

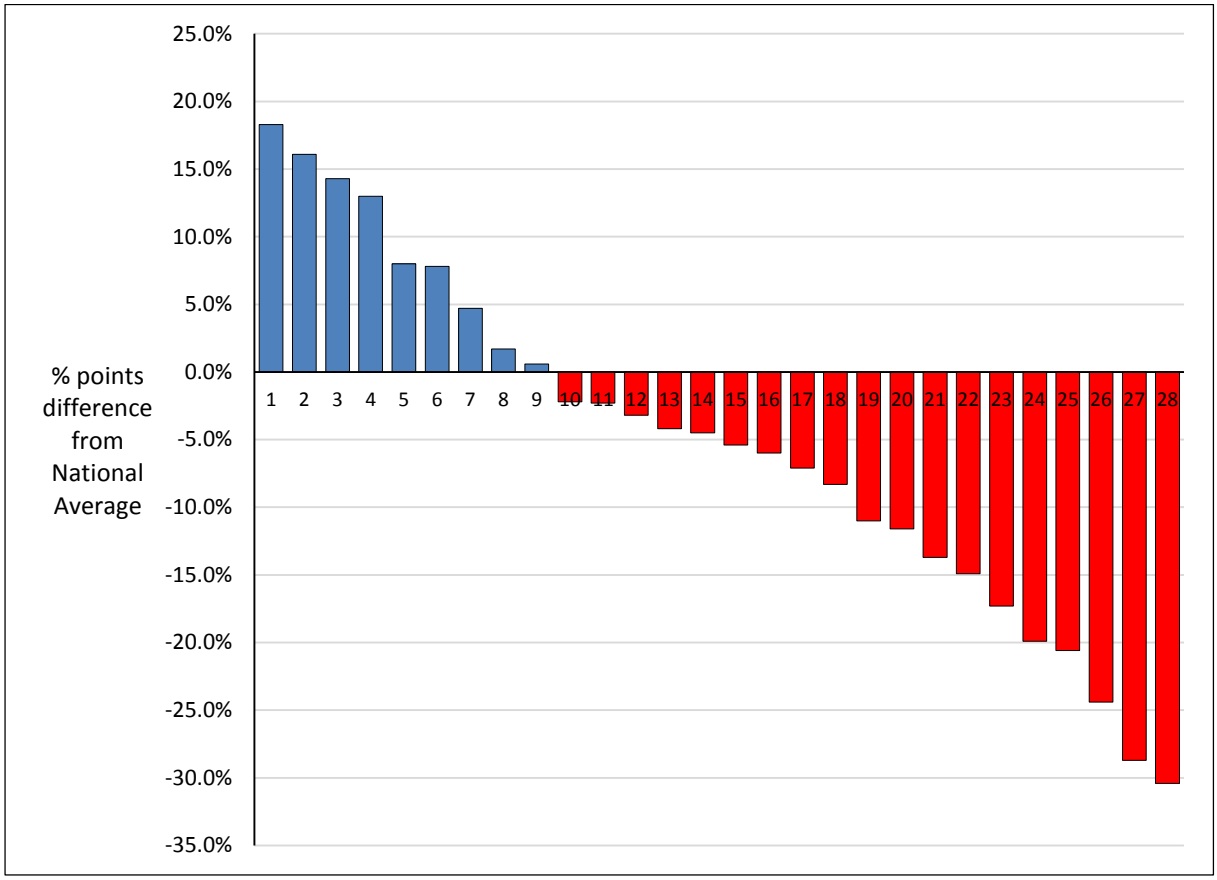
| Language | Associated African Country | % 5+ A*-C | Cohort |
|---|---|---|---|
| Igbo | Nigeria | 74.9% | 187 |
| Edo/Bini | Nigeria | 72.7% | 33 |
| Yoruba | Nigeria | 70.9% | 929 |
| Swedish | N/A | 69.6% | 23 |
| Amharic | Ethiopia | 64.6% | 79 |
| English | N/A | 64.4% | 6054 |
| Luganda | Uganda | 61.3% | 93 |
| Akan/Twi-Fante | Ghana | 58.3% | 518 |
| Arabic | Various | 57.2% | 299 |
| Shona | Zimbabwe | 54.4% | 632 |
| German | Namibia | 54.3% | 81 |
| Swahili/Kiswahili | Tanzania, Kenya | 53.4% | 341 |
| Caribbean Creole English | N/A | 52.4% | 21 |
| Krio | Sierra Leone | 52.1% | 48 |
| Ga | Ghana | 51.2% | 41 |
| Dutch/Flemish | Suriname | 50.6% | 85 |
| Somali | Somalia | 49.5% | 2959 |
| Ndebele | Zimbabwe, South Africa | 48.3% | 89 |
| Italian | Libya | 45.6% | 103 |
| Zulu | South Africa | 45.0% | 40 |
| Tigrinya | Eritrea, Ethiopia | 42.9% | 170 |
| Chichewa/Nyanja | Malawi/Zimbabwe | 41.7% | 24 |
| French | Ivory Coast, Senegal, Gabon | 39.3% | 560 |
| Bemba | Zambia | 36.7% | 30 |
| Hausa | Nigeria | 36.0% | 25 |
| Lingala | Congo | 32.2% | 242 |
| Wolof | Senegal, Gambia | 27.9% | 43 |
| Portuguese | Angola, Cape Verde | 26.2% | 260 |
| **Black African** | | **56.8%** | **16257** |
| **National** | | **56.6%** | **558432** |

*Source: National Pupil Database (NPD), Department for Education, January 2014*

In terms of educational attainment, the Black African ethnic category was performing close to the GCSE national average for pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and Maths. There are however significant differences within ethnic categories, when the data is disaggregated by language spoken (Table 6).

The Black African ethnic group contains some of the highest achieving language groups, but also some of the lowest. Pupils who spoke Igbo were the highest achieving Black African language group (74.9%) followed by Edo/Bini (72.7%) and Yoruba (70.9%). Swedish, Amharic, English, Luganda, Akan Twi-Fante and Arabic speaking pupils also do better than the national average, but many other languages are underachieving (see Table 6 and Figure 6).

***Figure 6. GCSE performance gap of Black African languages (20+ speakers) 5+A*-C inc. Eng and Maths***




| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Igbo | 8. Akan/Twi-Fante | 15. Ga | 22. Chichewa/Nyanja |
| 2. Edo/Bini | 9. Arabic | 16. Dutch/Flemish | 23. French |
| 3. Yoruba | 10. Shona | 17. Somali | 24. Bemba |
| 4. Swedish | 11. German | 18. Ndebele | 25. Hausa |
| 5. Amharic | 12. Swahili/Kiswahili | 19. Italian | 26. Lingala |
| 6. English | 13. Caribbean Creole Eng | 20. Zulu | 27. Wolof |
| 7. Luganda | 14. Krio | 21.Tigrinya | 28. Portuguese |

Of the 28 languages spoken by 20 pupils or more, 19 language groups were underperforming. Ten Black African languages performed 10 percentage points or more below the national average. These are Italian, Zulu, Tigrinya, Chichewa/Nyanja, French, Bemba, Hausa, Lingala, Wolof and finally Portuguese.

A further examination of the data suggests that the highest achieving Black African language groups tend to be of East African origin or certain parts of West Africa. Many countries in these regions,

such as Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda are part of the Commonwealth and have English as an official language. Other countries in these regions such as Ethiopia, are not part of the Commonwealth but have English as the most widely spoken foreign language and is the language of instruction used in secondary and further education. The three highest achieving Black African language groups in this research, Igo, Edo/Bini and Yoruba are all native to Nigeria.

The underachieving language groups tend to be associated with African countries which are not part of the Commonwealth and/or may not have English as an official or main foreign language. These countries tend to be in Central Africa, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo or parts of West Africa where there are clusters of French-speaking African countries, such as the Ivory Coast and Senegal and also Portuguese colonies such as Angola and Cape Verde and where English is generally not spoken. The three lowest performing Black African language groups, Portuguese (Angola, Cape Verde), Wolof (Senegal, Gambia) and Lingala (DR of Congo) are associated with these former French and Portuguese colonies. The one language that performs above the national average with no Commonwealth association is Swedish. However, it is more likely that these pupils are of Somali ethnicity and originally resident in Sweden, a country which has welcomed Somali refugees.

### *Language Diversity and Attainment of White Other Pupils*

White Other pupils are the largest ethnic minority group in schools in England and the fastest growing. White Other pupils are spread throughout the country with the largest numbers in Inner and Outer London, the East and the South-east of England. They are an underachieving group at KS4 in 2014, 3.3% below the national average for pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including England and Maths.

The White Other ethnic category is very linguistically diverse. The empirical evidence shows that pupils sitting GCSE in 2014 spanned 66 different languages spoken with English being the most commonly spoken (31%). They were followed by sizeable groups of pupils speaking Polish (18%), Turkish (5%), Portuguese (5%), Lithuanian (4%) and Albanian/Shqip (3%). Other languages such as Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Latvian, Slovak, Hungarian, Bulgaria, Italian, Greek, French and German have between 200 and 500 speakers. There were a further 11 languages with 20 or more speakers (Table 7).

***Table 7: Languages Spoken by KS4 White Other Pupils in England 2014 (20+ speakers)***

| Language | No. of speakers | % of White Other | | Language | No. of speakers | % of White Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English | 6582 | 31.5% | | French | 208 | 1.0% |
| Polish | 3754 | 18.0% | | German | 205 | 1.0% |
| Other than English | 2398 | 11.5% | | Czech | 190 | 0.9% |
| Turkish | 1125 | 5.4% | | Arabic | 146 | 0.7% |
| Portuguese | 1105 | 5.3% | | Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian | 124 | 0.6% |
| Lithuanian | 934 | 4.5% | | Other Language | 57 | 0.3% |
| Albanian/Shqip | 621 | 3.0% | | Dutch/Flemish | 52 | 0.2% |
| Romanian | 499 | 2.4% | | Ukrainian | 46 | 0.2% |
| Russian | 426 | 2.0% | | Kurdish | 41 | 0.2% |
| Spanish | 413 | 2.0% | | Swedish | 34 | 0.2% |
| Latvian | 344 | 1.6% | | Classification Pending | 29 | 0.1% |
| Slovak | 293 | 1.4% | | Afrikaans | 28 | 0.1% |
| Hungarian | 265 | 1.3% | | Persian/Farsi | 26 | 0.1% |
| Bulgarian | 253 | 1.2% | | Danish | 25 | 0.1% |
| Italian | 247 | 1.2% | | Hebrew | 25 | 0.1% |
| Greek | 230 | 1.1% | | Information not obtained | 23 | 0.1% |

There is a wide variation in the attainment of different language groups within the White Other ethnic group (Table 8). There are several high-achieving White Other language groups, including Hebrew (88%), Danish (84%), French (77%) and Dutch/Flemish (77%) who were 20 percentage points above the GCSE national average (which is largely determined by the achievement of the White British ethnic group who make up 76% of the KS4 pupil cohort). An interesting comparison can be made between this French language cohort and the large cohort of French-speaking Black African pupils of whom only 39% achieved expected levels. Also, above the national average were 12 further language groups including Swedish, Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian, Ukrainian, English, Afrikaans, German, Greek and Italian (Figure 7). Despite being an underperforming ethnic group, many White Other pupils in this research are in fact high achieving.

***Table 8: GCSE performance of White Other pupils by language spoken (20+ speakers)***

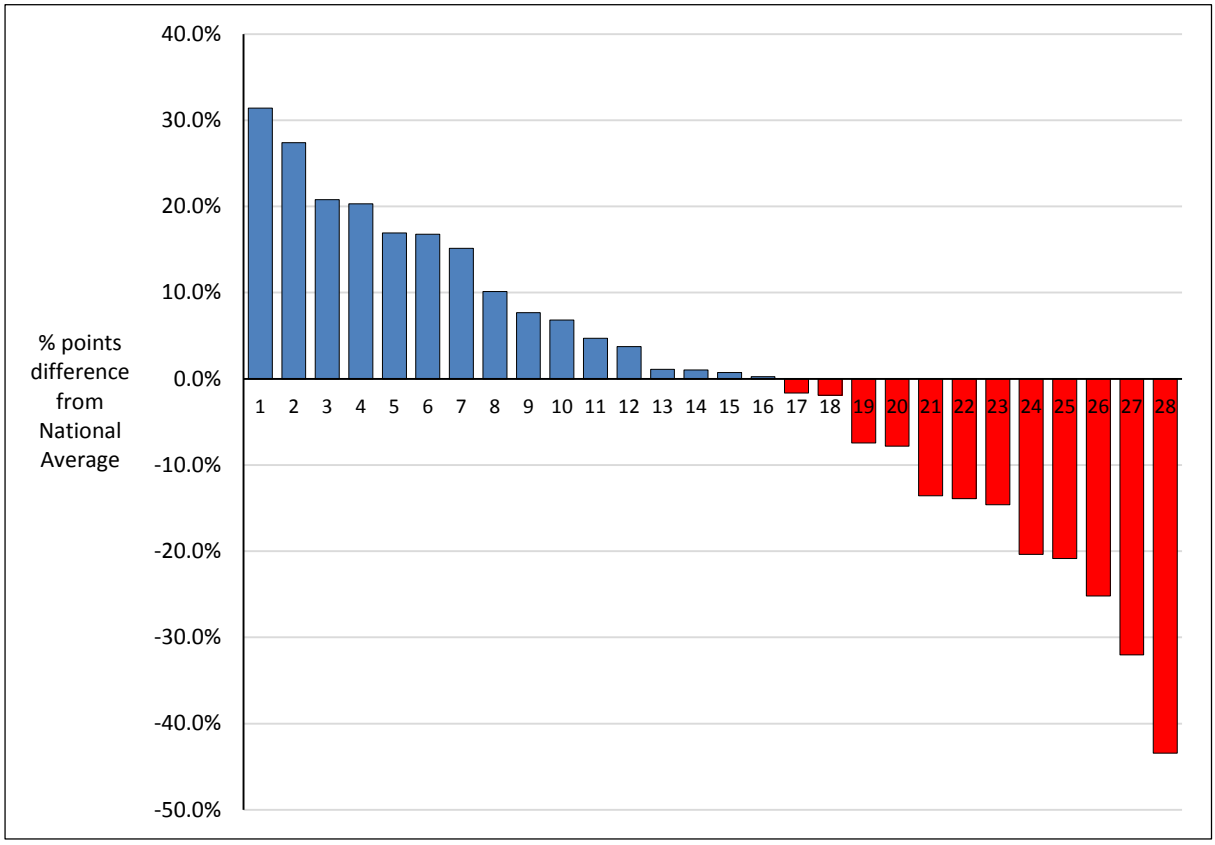
| Language | % 5+ A*-C | Cohort | | Language | % 5+ A*-C | Cohort |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hebrew | 88.0% | 25 | | Arabic | 56.8% | 146 |
| Danish | 84.0% | 25 | | Bulgarian | 54.9% | 253 |
| French | 77.4% | 208 | | Russian | 54.7% | 426 |
| Dutch/Flemish | 76.9% | 52 | | Turkish | 49.2% | 1125 |
| Swedish | 73.5% | 34 | | Kurdish | 48.8% | 41 |
| Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian | 73.4% | 124 | | Polish | 43.0% | 3754 |
| Ukrainian | 71.7% | 46 | | Romanian | 42.7% | 499 |
| English | 66.7% | 6582 | | Portuguese | 42.0% | 1105 |
| Afrikaans | 64.3% | 28 | | Hungarian | 36.2% | 265 |
| German | 63.4% | 205 | | Lithuanian | 35.8% | 934 |
| Greek | 61.3% | 230 | | Latvian | 31.4% | 344 |
| Italian | 60.3% | 247 | | Slovak | 24.6% | 293 |
| Persian/Farsi | 57.7% | 26 | | Czech | 13.2% | 190 |
| Spanish | 57.6% | 413 | | **White Other** | **53.1%** | **11094** |
| Albanian/Shqip | 57.3% | 621 | | **National** | **56.6%** | **558432** |

*Source: National Pupil Database (NPD), Department for Education, January 2014*

In contrast, Czech speaking pupils were by far the lowest performing in the KS4 White Other category with just 13.2% of a cohort of 190 pupils achieving expected levels, followed by Slovak (24.6%), Latvian (31.4%) and Lithuanian (35.8%). It is notable that this largely mirrors the underachieving White Other language groups in research into pupils sitting KS2 exams in 2014 (Demie and Hau 2014) where Czech, Slovak, Kurdish and Latvian were identified as the lowest performing.

One of the reasons for underachievement by some White Other language groups is the language barrier. Previous research shows that '*between 64% and 80% of pupils who are underachieving are not fluent in English, compared to French, Danish, Swedish, Dutch, German, Serb-Croatian, Afrikaans and Albanian speakers with a significant number of pupils fully fluent in English.' (See Demie and Hau 2013a, p.17).* Some of the high achieving children in the White Other ethnic group are second or third generation, born in the UK with a good knowledge of English.

***Figure 7: GCSE performance gap of White Other languages (20+ speakers) 5+A*-C inc. Eng and Maths***

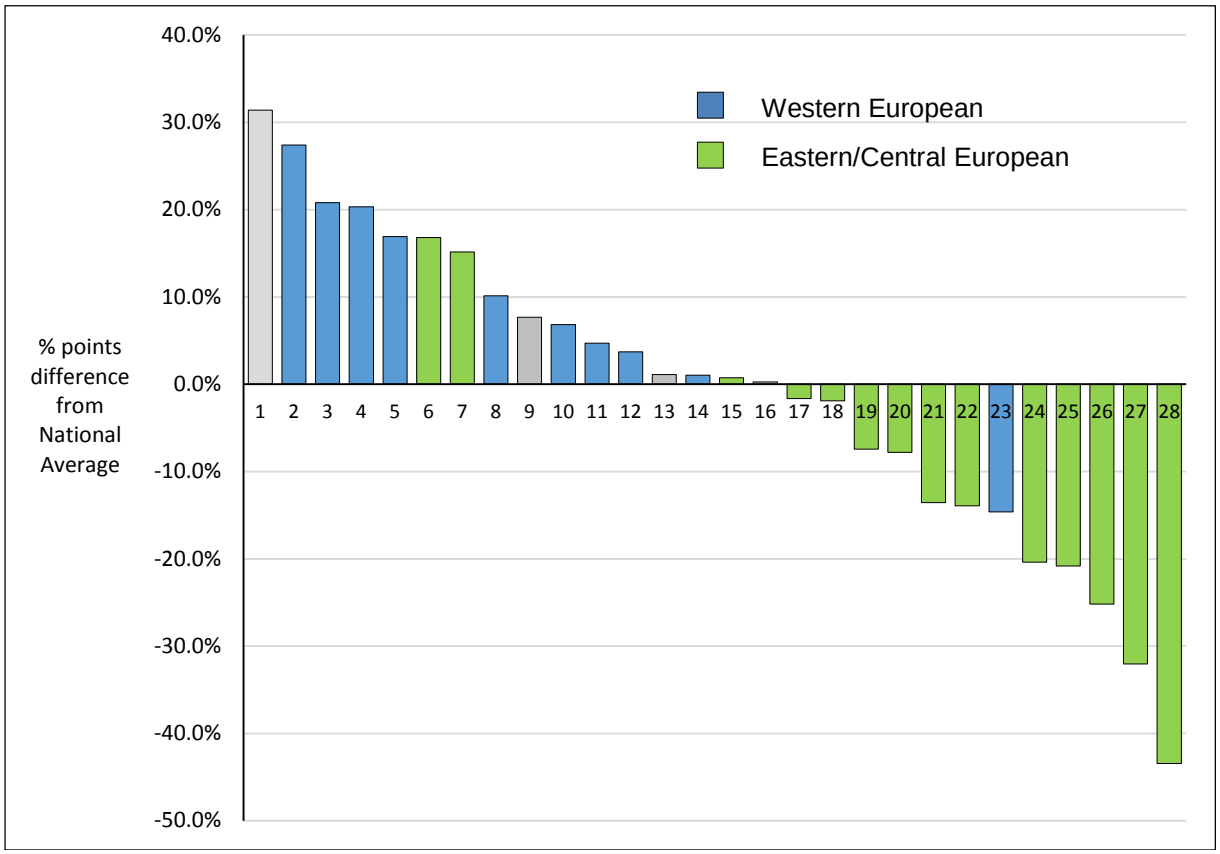



| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Hebrew | 8. English | 15. Albanian/Shqip | 22. Romanian |
| 2. Danish | 9. Afrikaans | 16. Arabic | 23. Portuguese |
| 3. French | 10. German | 17. Bulgarian | 24. Hungarian |
| 4. Dutch/Flemish | 11. Greek | 18. Russian | 25. Lithuanian |
| 5. Swedish | 12. Italian | 19. Turkish | 26. Latvian |
| 6. Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian | 13. Persian/Farsi | 20. Kurdish | 27. Slovak |
| 7. Ukrainian | 14. Spanish | 21. Polish | 28. Czech |

The suggestion is that most of the language groups associated with the White Other ethnicity are of European descent. However, there is an unequivocal difference when comparing languages from countries in Western Europe to those associated with Central and Eastern Europe (Fig 8). In the White Other ethnic category, Western European languages such as Danish, French, Dutch/Flemish and Swedish are the among the highest achieving, performing well above the national average. The notable exception to this and the only Western European language group to fall below the national average is Portuguese, an identified consistently underperforming group with just 42% achieving the expected benchmark, a significant 15 percentage points below the national average.

Conversely and an area which requires scrutiny, pupils speaking languages associated with Central and Eastern Europe, such as Czech, Slovak, Latvian, Lithuanian, Hungarian, and Romanian are some of the lowest achieving groups of all the languages spoken.

***Figure 8: GCSE performance gap of Western and Eastern European White Other languages***




1. Hebrew
2. Danish
3. French
4. Dutch/Flemish
5. Swedish
6. Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian
7. Ukrainian
8. English
9. Afrikaans
10. German
11. Greek
12. Italian
13. Persian/Farsi
14. Spanish
15. Albanian/Shqip
16. Arabic
17. Bulgarian
18. Russian
19. Turkish
20. Kurdish
21. Polish
22. Romanian
23. Portuguese
24. Hungarian
25. Lithuanian
26. Latvian
27. Slovak
28. Czech

Researchers have suggested that that a large proportion of Czech and Slovak speaking pupils in England may also belong to the Roma migrant community (Tereshchenko and Archer 2015), a disadvantaged group with limited access to academic education. Of particular concern are the large number of Polish speaking pupils, one of the fastest growing groups in the UK, but who are nearly 17 percentage points below the GCSE national average.

The rapid rise in the number of pupils of Eastern European descent is a relatively recent phenomenon and there is a suggestion that these pupils are from families of EU migrants who are newer to the country and their proficiency in English is likely to be lower than their EAL peers who have settled in England for longer. The effect of this proficiency in English, not only involves the pupils, but also their families, as a home environment that is less fluent in English is not condusive to language acquisition and can impair a pupil's approach to full fluency in English.

## *Language Diversity and Attainment of Indian Pupils*

The Indian ethnic group are one of the highest achieving groups of pupils in England. They consistently achieve well above expected levels at GCSE. Indian pupils are spread throughout the country with the largest numbers in Outer London, the East and West Midlands and the North-west. The empirical evidence demonstrates a high level of achievement at 5+A*-C including English and Maths. In 2014, 73% of Indian pupils achieved 5+A*-C compared to the national average of 53%.

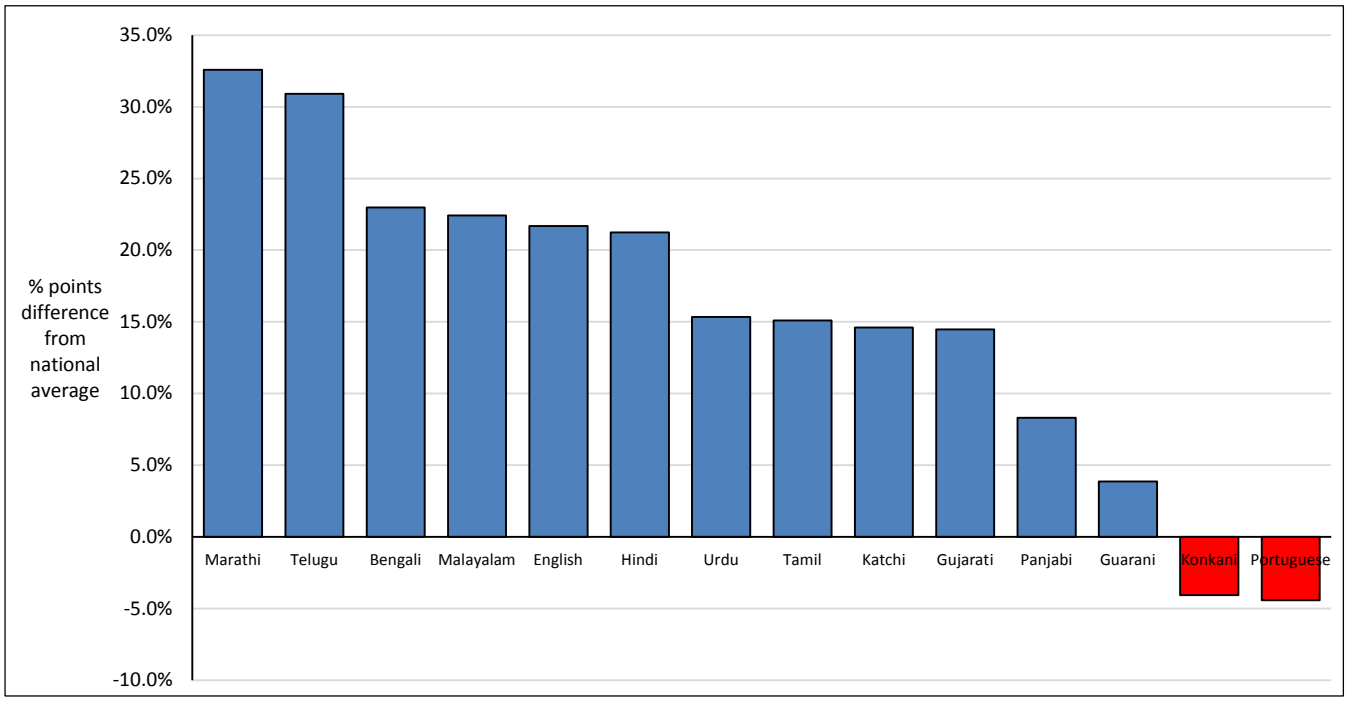
***Table 9: Languages Spoken and Performance of KS4 White Other Pupils in England 2014 (20+ speakers)***

| Language | % 5+A*-C inc. English and Maths | Cohort | % of Indian |
|---|---|---|---|
| English | 78.3% | 4438 | 33.1% |
| Gujarati | 71.1% | 2952 | 22.0% |
| Panjabi | 64.9% | 2733 | 20.4% |
| Other than English | 73.9% | 1460 | 10.9% |
| Hindi | 77.8% | 424 | 3.2% |
| Malayalam | 79.0% | 410 | 3.1% |
| Urdu | 71.9% | 253 | 1.9% |
| Tamil | 71.7% | 159 | 1.2% |
| Konkani | 52.5% | 118 | 0.9% |
| Katchi | 71.2% | 66 | 0.5% |
| Bengali | 79.6% | 49 | 0.4% |
| Guarani | 60.5% | 43 | 0.3% |
| Telugu | 87.5% | 40 | 0.3% |
| Marathi | 89.2% | 37 | 0.3% |
| Other Language | 75.7% | 37 | 0.3% |
| Portuguese | 52.2% | 23 | 0.2% |
| **Indian** | **72.9%** | **13394** | **100%** |
| **National** | **56.6%** | **558432** | |

The GCSE national data showed a remarkable 58 different languages spoken within the Indian ethnic category of 13,394 pupils. The largest language groups within this category are English (33%), Gujarati (22%) and Panjabi (20%) making up 75% of the Indian cohort. A further 11 language groups had 20 speakers or more, including Hindi, Malayalam, Urdu, Tamil and Konkani (Table 9).

In the languages with cohorts over 20 pupils, the highest performing language groups were Marathi (89%), Telugu (88%), Bengali (83%), Malayam (79%), English (78%) and Hindi (78%). Despite being the highest performing ethnic group at GCSE, Indian pupils who spoke Portuguese and Konkani appeared to be many percentage points lower than their Indian peers and about 5% below the national average (Figure 9). The underachievement of Konkani speaking pupils is analogous to performance at KS2 where they were also among the lower achieving language groups of pupils sitting KS2 tests in 2014.

***Figure 9: GCSE performance gap of Indian languages (20+ speakers) 5+A*-C inc. Eng and Maths***




## *Language Diversity and Attainment of Pakistani Pupils*

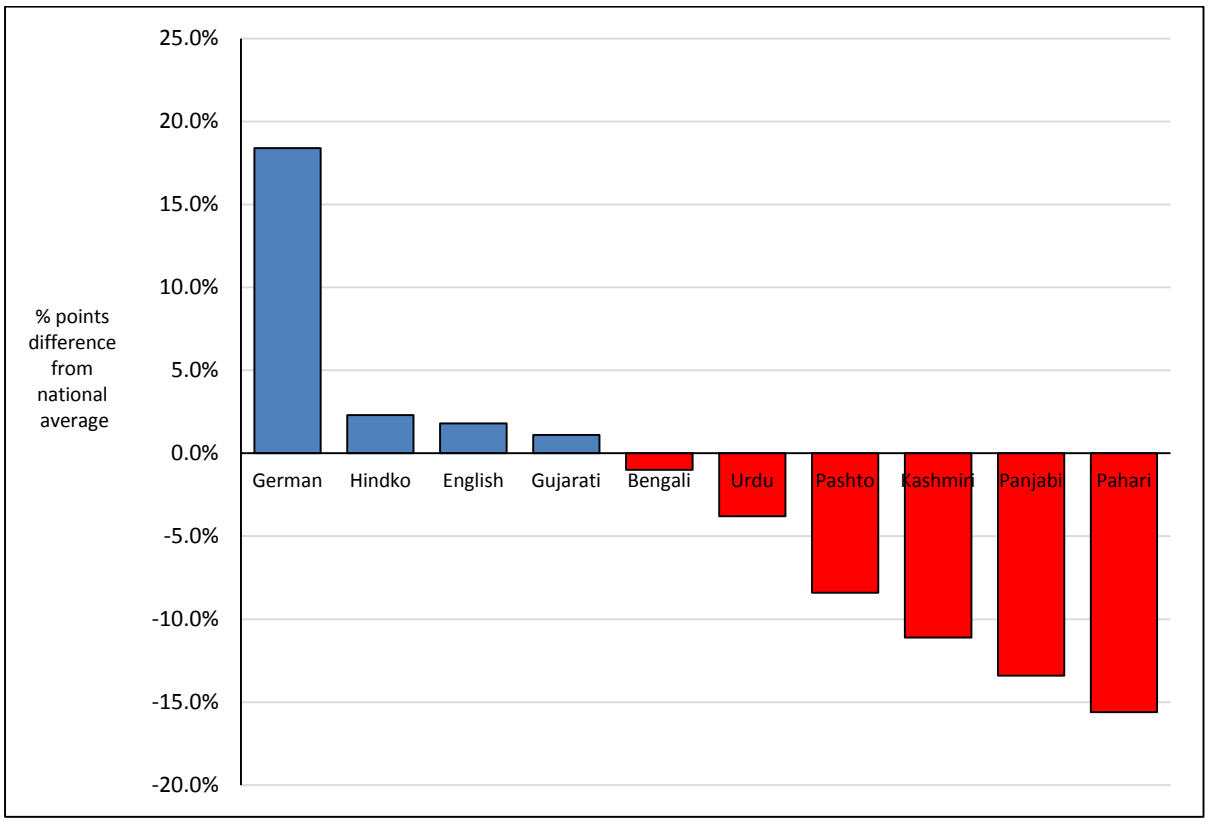
Pupils with a Pakistani ethnic background make up the third highest cohort at KS4 in 2014, behind White British and White Other. The largest numbers of Pakistani pupils are based in the West Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber and the North-west of England. In contrast to their Asian peers, the Indian ethnic group, Pakistani pupils are one of the lowest performing at GCSE with 51% achieving five or more A*-C including English and Maths and being only above the well-publicised underachieving Black Caribbean ethnic groups and pupils of Gypsy/Roma/Traveller heritage.

***Table 10: Languages Spoken and Performance of KS4 Pakistani Pupils in England 2014 (20+ speakers)***

| Language | % 5+A*-C | Cohort | % of Pakistani |
|---|---|---|---|
| Urdu | 52.8% | 6297 | 33.9% |
| Panjabi | 43.2% | 4855 | 26.1% |
| English | 58.4% | 4162 | 22.4% |
| Other than English | 52.4% | 2330 | 12.5% |
| Pashto/Pakhto | 48.2% | 425 | 2.3% |
| Pahari (Pakistan) | 41.0% | 117 | 0.6% |
| Hindko | 58.9% | 56 | 0.3% |
| Bengali | 55.6% | 36 | 0.2% |
| Kashmiri | 45.5% | 33 | 0.2% |
| Other Language | 58.1% | 31 | 0.2% |
| German | 75.0% | 28 | 0.2% |
| Classification Pending | 42.3% | 26 | 0.1% |
| Gujarati | 57.7% | 26 | 0.1% |
| **All Pakistani** | **51.3%** | **18575** | **100.0%** |
| **National** | **56.6%** | **558432** | |

The Pakistani ethnic group is less linguistically diverse than some other ethnic groups, but there are still ten languages with 20 or more speakers at KS4 in 2014. The majority of Pakistani pupils speak either Urdu (34%) or Panjabi (26%), but there are also smaller numbers of English, Pashto/Pakhto, Pahari, Hindko, Bengali, Kashmiri, German and Gujurati speakers.

***Figure 10: GCSE performance gap of Pakistani languages (20+ speakers) 5+A*-C inc. Eng and Maths***




Many of the Pakistani language groups were underachieving, with Pahari (41% 5+A*-C incl. EM) and Panjabi (43.2%) being the lowest attaining, several percentage points below even that of the low-achieving Black Caribbean group (Figure 10). This pattern was emulated in the analysis of 2014 KS2 pupils, where Pahari speakers were again the lowest achieving, followed by Panjabi. The largest Pakistani language group, Urdu, was also below the national average. With 60% of the Pakistani ethnic group, the achievement of Panjabi and Urdu has a large influence on the overall performance of the ethnic cohort. (Table 10 and Figure 10)

However, this may mask some Pakistani language groups who are performing at or above the KS4 national average. The highest performing Pakistani language group was German (75% 5+ A*-C inc EM). While initially seeming atypical for a European language (other than English) to be represented, this group may be accounted for by families of Pakistani heritage who have become naturalized as citizens in Germany, attracted by it's affordable higher education, particularly in technology. The skilled professions of these families and the teaching of English in the secondary German curriculum, may go some way to explain the distinctly higher achievement of this group.

Also above the national average were Pakistani pupils speaking Hindko (59%), English (58%) and Gujurati (58%).

## *EAL Stages of English Acquisition and GCSE Attainment*

English language proficency is the major factor to study the performance of EAL pupils. Research on the relationship between fluency in English and attainment in inner London also confirms that language barriers remain one of the key factors affecting the performance of English as Additional Language (EAL) pupils in British schools (Demie 2011 and 2012; Strand 2006 and Strand and Demie 2005). There are no national validated scales that are complementary to the current English assessment scales used in the national curriculum (NALDIC 2005). However, a study based on well moderated English fluency stages at an Inner London local authority by EAL professionals, teachers and LA advisers (see Strand and Demie 2005), confirmed that there is a strong relationship between stage of fluency in English and educational attainment. The results suggest that the percentage of pupils attaining level 4 or above at KS2 or 5 or more A*-C at GCSE increases as their proficiency in English increases. EAL pupils in the early stages of English fluency performed at low levels, while EAL pupils who were fully fluent in English far outstripped even pupils for whom English was their only language (see Strand 1999; Demie 2013; Demie and Strand 2006 and Strand and Demie 2005).

However, at the moment EAL proficiency data is not available at the national level. The Government collects only ethnicity, language and EAL aggregated data. As a result of a lack of national data we will use data from Lambeth local authority as a case study. The authority has a history of collecting reliable data on level of fluency and language at home, for all pupils attending the authority's schools since 1990 (Demie and Strand 2006).

The case study LA is one of the most ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse boroughs in Britain. In common with many other inner London boroughs, the LA has a high proportion of pupils whose first language is not English. The LA 2015 EAL English language fluency survey showed that overall 85.7% of pupils in LA schools belonged to black and ethnic minority communities. The variety of different languages spoken has increased, with 150 different languages spoken by Lambeth pupils in 2015. Approximately 53% of pupils in primary schools and 46% in secondary schools were classed as being EAL. Of those pupils who spoke or understood a language in addition to English, 39% at KS1, 30% at KS2 and 10% at GCSE were classified as non-fluent in English (Table 11).

***Table 11: Pupils at each level of fluency by Key Stage in 2014-15***

| Fluency Level | Key Stage 1 | Key Stage 2 | Key Stage 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **EAL Stage 1 (*Beginners-New to English)*** | 6% | 2% | 1% |
| **EAL Stage 2 (*Becoming familiar with English)*** | 16% | 9% | 2% |
| **EAL Stage 3 (*Becoming confident as user of English)*** | 17% | 19% | 7% |
| **EAL Stage 4 (*Fully Fluent in English*)** | 13% | 23% | 30% |
| **EAL Stage 1-3 *(Not Fluent in English)*** | 39% | 30% | 10% |
| **English Only** | 48% | 47% | 52% |

*Source: Schools Research and Statistics Unit, Lambeth LA*

Table 11 also shows Lambeth pupils by stages of fluency in English at KS1, KS2 and KS4. The data shows that more Key Stage 1 EAL pupils are at low levels of English fluency, but by the time they reach secondary school there are far fewer pupils at this level.

The EAL learning needs of pupils vary greatly from beginners to advanced learners. The four stages of English fluency used in the survey are widely used by LA schools 'as a diagnostic tool to analyse

needs for future teaching focus and…to provide baseline information for statistical purposes' (Hall, 1996:31). It has been used in the LA since 1988 and is a very popular assessment with local schools.

***Table 12. GCSE Performance – 5+ A*-C including English and Maths 2013 -15 in Lambeth LA (%)***

| ***GCSE by EAL Stages of English Fluency*** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** |
|---|---|---|---|
| EAL Stage 1 (*Beginners-New to English)* | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| EAL Stage 2 (*Becoming familiar with English)* | 7% | 7% | 11% |
| EAL Stage 3 (*Becoming confident as user of English)* | 45% | 34% | 40% |
| EAL Stage 4 (*Fully Fluent in English*) | 75% | 66% | 65% |
| English Only | 62% | 55% | 52% |
| All Pupils- LA average | 62% | 57% | 57% |
| All Pupils- National Average | 59% | 53% | 54% |

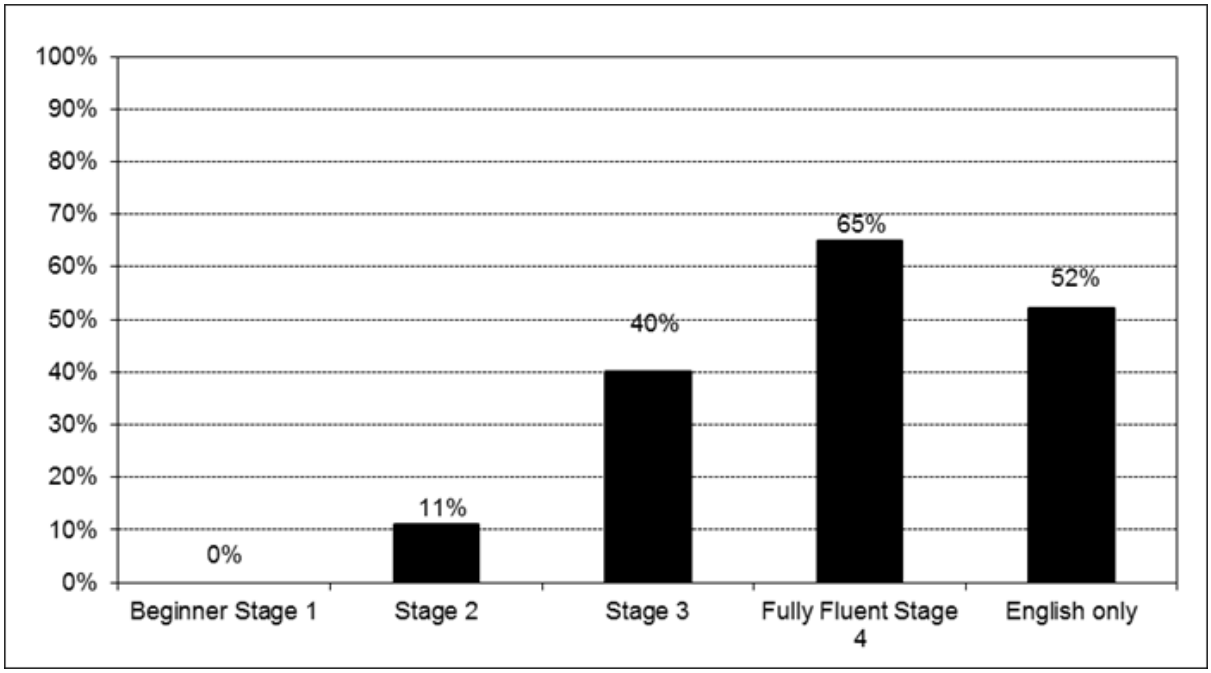
*Source: School Research and Statistics Unit, Lambeth LA*

Table 12 gives the average performance of EAL pupils at the end of secondary education from 2013 to 2015. The results of the GCSE analysis show that in 2013, the percentage of pupils attaining 5+A*-C including English and Maths at the end of secondary education increased as the stage of proficiency in English increased. Overall, the data shows that in 2013, no pupils on stage 1 level of fluency in English achieved 5+A*-C including English and Maths compared to 7% on stage 2, 45% on stage 3 and 75% on stage 4 (fully fluent in English). EAL pupils who were fully fluent in English were also much more likely to get level 5+A*-C when compared with English-only speakers.

However, after 2013 the way GCSE results were assessed and reported in England had changed so as not to be directly comparable with previous years. Despite this change, new data in 2014 and 2015 shows that fully fluent bilingual pupils were the highest achieving group. (Table 11 and Figure 11). In 2015, 65% gained five good passes including English and maths. They were followed by English only speakers with 52% reaching this level. For stage 3 fluency pupils this figure was 40%. It should be remembered that pupils at the earliest stages of English fluency often comprise small cohorts, especially at secondary level. At each key stage their improvement rate was much lower than that found in the borough overall, and the gap is widening with their more fluent peers.

Overall the data shows that there is a strong relationship between the stages of fluency in English and educational attainment. Empirical evidence from the LA demonstrates that the performance lof EAL pupils increases as their fluency in English increases. Pupils in the early stages of fluency perform at low levels and EAL pupils not fluent in English achieve significantly below White British pupils who speak English only. The data also shows that EAL pupils assessed as fully fluent in English perform above the LA outcomes at all key stages. These findings offer much encouragement for policy makers and school improvement practitioners. They demonstrate that once the disadvantage of language is overcome, it is possible to attain high levels of achievement.

***Figure 11. GCSE % 5+ A*-C including English and maths attainment in 2015 by fluency in English***




To conclude, the evidence from the above empirical data shows the biggest underachievers in the UK are EAL non-fluent in English. We suggest that aggregate EAL is not a useful indicator for attainment data analysis. We would argue that the worryingly low achievement of EAL pupils who are not fluent in English has been masked by failure of Government statistics to distinguish EAL pupils by stages of fluency in English or languages spoken at home.

## *4. Discussion and Implication for Policy and Practice*

Building on past research, which suggested links between ethnic background and academic achievement, this study extends the current literature by exploring the potential roles of language data to analyse pupil performance. Its focus is on Black African, White Other, Indian and Pakistani ethnic groups which have the greatest linguistic diversity. The findings of this study suggest that analysing an ethnic group's performance by language adds to our understanding of the associations between language and ethnic background and also confirm that children from different ethnic groups show differences in educational attainment. Indian, Chinese, Bangladeshi and White British pupils achieve higher results, on average, than Black Caribbean, Black African, White Other and Pakistani pupils. Black Caribbean, Black African, White Other, Pakistani, Black Other and Mixed White/Black Caribbean pupils are the main underachieving ethnic groups.

However, we would argue that none of these ethnic categories are homogenous. A further analysis of the data by language spoken highlighted the potential of language data to help disaggregate school census ethnic categories and give greater insight into the performance of different groups in schools. In particular the White Other and the Black African groups had the greatest linguistic diversity and attainment patterns. Of the Black African language groups, the lowest achieving group were Lingala, Wolof and Portuguese speakers. These groups showed attainment well below that of the lowest attaining main ethnic group Black Caribbean, whilst Igbo, Edo/Bini, Yoruba, Amharic, Luganda and Akan Twi-Fante speaking Black African pupils achieve better than White British pupils and the national average. Within the White Other Category, pupils speaking French, German, Italian and Greek were above the GCSE national average. However, Czech, Slovak, Latvian and Lithuanian speaking pupils achieved considerably lower attainment at GCSE than the national average. In higher

numbers, Polish, Turkish and Portuguese speaking pupils also showed low attainment. The predominance of Central and East European language groups in the lowest attaining groups should be of concern, as this pattern of attainment is repeated at KS2.

This research illustrates the diverse nature of current ethnic group categories and calls for a rethink of the categories that we use to understand educational achievement in British schools. Researching the achievement of different ethnic groups in British schools is complicated by the problem of categorisation under groups which are too broadly defined nationally as Black African, White Other, Black Other, Indian, Pakistani, Other Ethnic Group etc. As a result of the lack of detailed ethnically based data, there are limitations in past research into different ethnic groups. The absence of detailed national data which identifies patterns of achievement of ethnic minority children of African, Asian and European heritage in British schools, places serious constraints on effective targeting policies and developments at national and local level. As Von Ahn et al (2011) and Demie et al (2011) have articulated, this study suggests that language spoken provides a better means to understand the relationship between ethnicity and educational achievement. There is, therefore, a clear requirement for further research into language groups whose needs are obscured in the White Other ethnic category, speaking languages such as Polish, Albanian, German, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italian, Turkish, Greek, Lithuanian etc. Similarly obscured are the Indian ethnic group who mainly tend to speak Gujarati, Punjabi and Hindi; the Pakistani ethnic group who tend to speak Urdu and Punjabi as well as smaller numbers of Pashto, Pahari and Hindko and the Black African ethnic group which masks the performance of pupils who tend to speak many different languages including Igbo, Yoruba, Somali, Akan Twi-Fante, French, Krio, Tigrinya, Lingala, Arabic, Swahili, Luganda, Amharic, Portuguese and Shona to gain a fuller picture of their educational achievements.

There are also some limitations to this study that should be noted. Previous research suggests that the number of speakers in some of these groups are too small to make any meaningful comparison with other languages (Demie and Hau 2013a; Demie 2012). As a result we have not taken into consideration any language groups with less than 20 speakers. We would argue any conclusions or interpretations drawn from these small cohorts should be made with care, since the performance of a few pupils can significantly weight the overall performance of a group. Despite these limitations, the broad findings of our research are in line with other studies (see Von Ahn et al 2011 and Demie et al 2011, Mitton 2011, Demie and Mclean 2007, Demie and Hau 2012) and offer significant new insight by extending our existing knowledge in the area of ethnicity, language and achievement.

The findings of this study have implications for the collection and use of disaggregated data at national and international level. As highlighted above, the British system of data collection can be considered the most elaborate when it comes to collecting data related to ethnically based statistics. In Britain, census data is considered the most important source of information about schools and is used by Ministers, Parliament, central and local government, pressure groups and the public to monitor government policies and their effectiveness (DfE 2006; Gill and Demie 2011). We pointed out that accurate and reliable disaggregated ethnic and language data are important to address education inequalities. Such data are important to identify knowledge gaps and develop effective programmes and policies. However, the extent to which ethnic and linguistic data is collected and used varies from country to country (Goldscheider 2002; Graves 2011 and Ford 2013). We would argue as a matter of good practice, government and public institutions need an account of peoples culture, ethnic and linguistic background in formulating national and local policy. While for example some countries such as UK, USA, Australia and Canada recognise the importance of collecting detailed data, many states believe that recognising ethnic and linguistic differences will have a negative and destabilising effect on the country (see Blum 2002, Goldscheider 2002). In some countries, efforts to deny the existence of different ethnic and linguistic groups can stem from the desire to create a homogenised identity in order to maintain national unity (Blum 2002). For

example in France '*it is illegal to include ethnic and language data in official statistics or for Census to include questions about race or origin, ethnic and linguistic background.' (See Gray 2009:57).* But the negative impact of such a policy means some communities are consistently excluded and marginalised with resources remaining in the hands of specific ethnic and linguistic groups. Other researchers highlighted particularly the issues related to the ethnic classification used in census. The census in many countries collects data on ethnicity or language by asking respondents to choose the ethnic group or language they feel best describes them from the list (Gill and Demie 2011). Issues that are hotly debated in UK and USA include the use of terms such as Black, White, Asian, African, Mixed Race, Other Ethnic Groups and inconsistencies in category descriptions of different communities. Such classification is confusing, inconsistent and inaccurate and hides the real diversities within the country.

There are also other concerns and a growing debate around the need to disaggregate ethnicity and language data. Some governments have been reluctant to detail disaggregated data and have argued a number of reasons related predominately to legal and moral considerations, including privacy of individual data against potential abusers. In countries such as Turkey and France, constitutional provisions and data protection laws have thus been claimed for not articulating data collection on minority groups (Blum 2002, Goldscheider 2002). Furthermore, some governments are reluctant to carry out ethnic and language monitoring to avoiding shedding light on complex problems within the country. Overall, in many countries, there is a lack of relevant disaggregated statistical data which prevents monitoring performance and measuring the effectiveness of government policies.

We would argue that inequality in access in education will not end without detailed disaggregated ethnic and language data and a carefully designed targeted national programme. Detailed disaggregated data by language and ethnic background provides evidence that can be used to design interventions that tackle the root cause of underachievement of different groups in schools. The recommendations from our findings are that if any country is serious about tackling pupil underachievement in schools, they need to recognise first the importance of cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity. In addition they must collect disaggregated ethnic data and language spoken at home to benefit all groups attending schools. Such data is fundamental in identifying which ethnic and linguistic groups are most at risk of underachievement and to design specific interventions that will be effective in raising achievement, whatever their background.

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***Appendix A - Achievement of Languages spoken nationally at GCSE 2014 - 5 or more A* to C grades including English and Maths***

| Language | Cohort | 5+A*-C | Language | Cohort | 5+A*-C | Language | Cohort | 5+A*-C | Language | Cohort | 5+A*-C |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English | 482436 | 56.9% | Persian/Farsi | 481 | 59.5% | Arabic (any other) | 125 | 51.2% | British Sign Language | 47 | 17.0% |
| Urdu | 7012 | 53.4% | Malayalam | 437 | 78.5% | Caribbean Creole English | 124 | 43.5% | Arabic (Yemen) | 45 | 51.1% |
| Panjabi | 6378 | 51.3% | Chinese (Cantonese) | 401 | 73.6% | Swahili (any other) | 124 | 54.0% | Telugu | 45 | 88.9% |
| Bengali | 4952 | 60.5% | Panjabi (any other) | 388 | 50.5% | Romanian (Romania) | 115 | 37.4% | Ga | 44 | 50.0% |
| Polish | 4064 | 43.4% | Akan/Twi-Fante | 359 | 58.5% | Katchi | 115 | 63.5% | Edo/Bini | 38 | 68.4% |
| Gujarati | 3155 | 70.8% | Latvian | 358 | 30.4% | Amharic | 107 | 61.7% | Marathi | 38 | 89.5% |
| Somali | 3084 | 49.7% | Czech | 345 | 10.4% | Luganda | 107 | 61.7% | Akan (Fante) | 37 | 56.8% |
| Arabic | 2182 | 58.5% | Hungarian | 330 | 33.9% | Swedish | 101 | 70.3% | Norwegian | 37 | 70.3% |
| Portuguese | 1973 | 39.2% | Kurdish | 329 | 50.5% | Ebira | 91 | 49.5% | Kashmiri | 36 | 47.2% |
| Turkish | 1445 | 48.6% | Farsi/Persian (any other) | 305 | 60.3% | Serbian/Croatian/ Bosnian | 89 | 74.2% | Bemba | 35 | 42.9% |
| Tamil | 1388 | 74.6% | Bengali (any other) | 304 | 65.5% | Japanese | 89 | 85.4% | Arabic (Algeria) | 30 | 70.0% |
| French | 1331 | 56.7% | Thai | 297 | 30.0% | Caribbean Creole French | 85 | 45.9% | Hausa | 28 | 35.7% |
| Bengali (Sylheti) | 1183 | 62.5% | Greek | 294 | 59.9% | Korean | 84 | 76.2% | Malay/Indonesian | 28 | 75.0% |
| Spanish | 1052 | 54.4% | Swahili/Kiswahili | 275 | 53.5% | Hebrew | 71 | 74.6% | Malay (any other) | 28 | 71.4% |
| Pashto/Pakhto | 1023 | 36.9% | Bulgarian | 274 | 56.2% | Afrikaans | 67 | 62.7% | Romani (International) | 28 | 14.3% |
| Yoruba | 1001 | 70.8% | Lingala | 265 | 32.5% | Ndebele | 67 | 46.3% | Croatian | 28 | 78.6% |
| Panjabi (Mirpuri) | 983 | 45.7% | Dutch/Flemish | 263 | 58.6% | Arabic (Morocco) | 62 | 53.2% | Romany/English Romanes | 27 | 22.2% |
| Lithuanian | 981 | 36.2% | Tagalog | 239 | 65.3% | Danish | 60 | 78.3% | Armenian | 26 | 73.1% |
| Chinese | 823 | 68.5% | Vietnamese | 232 | 77.2% | Hindko | 58 | 58.6% | Chichewa/Nyanja | 26 | 42.3% |
| Nepali | 810 | 57.5% | Panjabi (Gurmukhi) | 222 | 72.1% | Portuguese (Brazil) | 58 | 48.3% | Ndebele (Zimbabwe) | 26 | 46.2% |
| Shona | 714 | 54.8% | Filipino | 219 | 61.6% | Ukrainian | 58 | 74.1% | Serbian | 26 | 61.5% |
| Albanian/Shqip | 711 | 56.4% | Igbo | 211 | 73.5% | Arabic (Iraq) | 56 | 48.2% | Welsh/Cymraeg | 24 | 70.8% |
| Tagalog/Filipino | 702 | 66.0% | Tigrinya | 194 | 42.8% | Krio | 56 | 51.8% | Tigre | 24 | 62.5% |
| Italian | 620 | 53.9% | Dari Persian | 188 | 42.6% | Wolof | 54 | 33.3% | Fijian | 23 | 26.1% |
| Slovak | 571 | 14.4% | Akan (Twi/Asante) | 177 | 57.1% | Zulu | 53 | 39.6% | Chinese (any other) | 22 | 77.3% |
| Russian | 521 | 58.0% | Sinhala | 142 | 80.3% | Panjabi (Pothwari) | 52 | 38.5% | Bosnian | 21 | 61.9% |
| Romanian | 502 | 37.1% | Pahari (Pakistan) | 135 | 41.5% | Mauritian/Seychelles Creole | 50 | 42.0% | Other*/Refused/ Unclassified | 14830 | 56.2% |
| Hindi | 499 | 75.6% | Chinese (Mandarin/Putonghua) | 129 | 56.6% | Portuguese (any other) | 50 | 38.0% | *Other includes language cohorts between 1 and 20 who for statistical reasons have not been included in the analysis | | |
| German | 492 | 64.4% | Konkani | 127 | 51.2% | Guarani | 49 | 63.3% | | | |

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