



**THE ACHIEVEMENT OF AFRICAN PUPILS IN LAMBETH SCHOOLS –  
EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE 2023**

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## Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. THE LA CONTEXT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Number of African Pupils in Lambeth Schools</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The Dataset</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Measures of Performance</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4. THE ACHIEVEMENT OF AFRICAN PUPILS IN SCHOOLS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>KS1 and KS2 Trend Evidence</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>GCSE Evidence</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5. FACTORS AFFECTING ACHIEVEMENT OF AFRICAN HERITAGE PUPILS</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Social Characteristics of African Pupils in Schools</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Gender Differences and Achievement</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Social Background and Achievement</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>English Language Acquisition and Achievement</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Pupil Mobility and Achievement</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>6. AFRICAN PUPILS AND LANGUAGES</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>7. CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>21-25</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Evidence in Lambeth and at a national level, show that there are marked differences in performance between different ethnic groups. Chinese, Indian and White British pupils are the highest achieving groups, followed by Black African, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean at all key stages. This is not surprising as the findings from a number of previous studies came to similar conclusions (Demie 2001; Gillborn and Mirza 2000; Gillborn and Gipps 1996). Perhaps the most important new evidence from the national data is that there is now some evidence that Chinese, Bangladeshi and Indian heritage pupils are improving at higher rates, leading to a narrowing of the gap between these groups and White British pupils.

Black African pupils, have shown sufficient rates of improvement to close and overtake the attainment gap.

In recent years considerable attention has been devoted to the issue of underachievement of Black Pupils in British schools. The first official recognition of the problem was The Rampton Report (Rampton 1981), the interim report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children of Ethnic Minority Groups. This report dealt in detail specifically with the underachievement of pupils of Caribbean backgrounds and concluded, "West Indian Children as a group are underachieving in our Education System" (Rampton, 1981:80). The Swann report (Swann, 1985) also gives a good deal of attention to the underachievement of pupils of Black Caribbean backgrounds and confirms that they "are underachieving, both by comparison with their school fellows in the White majority" (Swann 1985: 81).

Research in the 1980s and 1990s reflected the earlier findings, with Black Caribbean and African pupils continuing to make less progress on average than other pupils (Mortimore et al, 1988; Nuttall et al, 1989; Kendall, 1998; Gillborn and Gipps, 1996; Demie, 2001; Demie, 2005). Each of these studies appeared to show considerable underachievement of Black Caribbean and Black African pupils in comparison with the achievement of White and Asian pupils.

The previous OFSTED review of research in this area also described the differences in attainment between certain ethnic groups (Gillborn and Gipps, 1996; Gillborn and Mirza, 2000). This review noted that the gap between the highest and lowest achieving ethnic groups is growing in many LAs, and that African and Caribbean pupils, especially boys, have not shared equally in the increasing rates of educational achievement. The review concluded that "Black pupils generally may be falling further behind the average achievement of the majority of their peers" (Gillborn and Gipps, 1996, p 29).

African pupils in Lambeth schools have, however, bucked the national trend through the use of a range of strategies which include leadership, effective teaching and learning, parental involvement, partnership with parents and the African community, an inclusive curriculum, effective use of data, co-ordinated support and guidance, effective use of diverse a Black and White workforce and a commitment to equal opportunities and diversity agenda. Black African students who attend schools in the authority are performing above the national average suggesting that with commitment, similar results could be achieved elsewhere.

The findings that African heritage pupils do well in good schools provides positive messages as to what can be done to raise standards at national levels. There is strong evidence from the Lambeth schools to suggest that some of these approaches are likely to have a positive impact on achievement levels. We would argue, however, that more needs to be done by the government to recognise extra burdens and responsibilities placed on staff in some schools caused by the concentration of pupils in their school facing multiple problems by providing additional resources to meet these needs. Based on this study it is suggested that policy makers should design strategies and programmes to raise the achievement of African heritage pupils in schools.

## **2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

This research project aims to raise the achievement of African heritage pupils at all key stages. Specific objectives are:

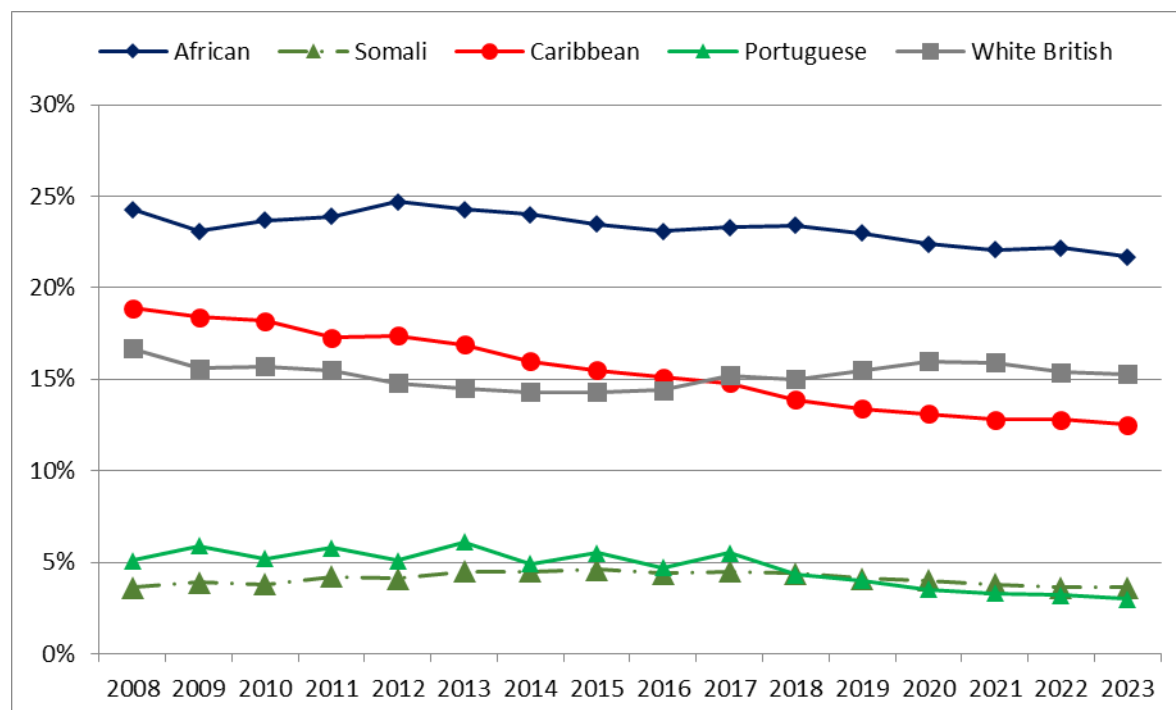
- To study the achievement of African heritage pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, and GCSE.
- To examine the school experiences of African heritage pupils.
- To identify reasons for good achievement.

### 3. THE LA CONTEXT

#### Number of African Pupils in Lambeth Schools

This research paper considers evidence from Lambeth, an inner London Authority. Lambeth LA is one of the most ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse boroughs in Britain. Approximately 85% of pupils are from black and ethnic minority groups. The 2023 January Schools Census shows that there were 36,942 pupils in the LA's schools. Of these, African pupils formed the largest ethnic group with 21.7% followed by White British (15.3%), Black Caribbean (12.5%), White Other (11.6%), Mixed Other (7.5%), and Any Other Group (5.9%).

**Figure 1. Changes in the School Composition in the LA by Main Ethnic Group**

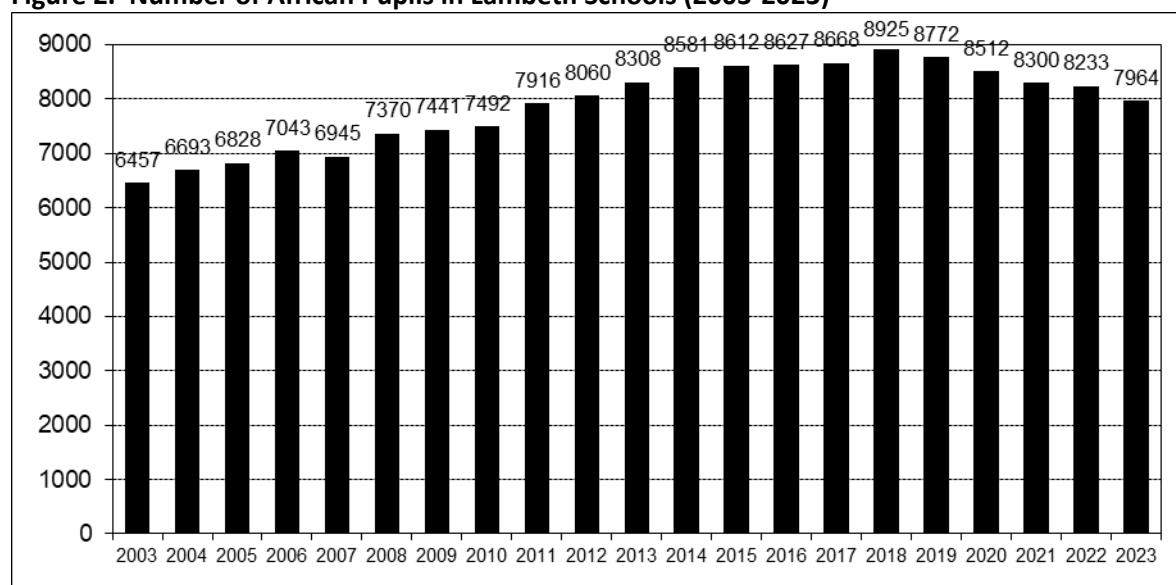


\*African total includes Somali pupils

There has been a change in the overall composition of the black and ethnic minority population in Lambeth schools. The 1991 ONS census showed that overall 66% of pupils in the LA's schools belonged to black and other ethnic minority communities compared to 85% in 2011.

The number of African pupils in Lambeth schools has risen from 5,573 in 1999 to 8,925 in 2018, but has since dropped to 7,964 in 2023, see figure 2, below.

**Figure 2. Number of African Pupils in Lambeth Schools (2003-2023)**



The focus of this research is Lambeth schools. Data on the number of African pupils in primary, secondary and special schools, as well as performance data relating to KS1, KS2, and KS4 was analysed. In addition all the LA's schools were asked to provide details of their pupils' backgrounds such as name, date of birth, sex, ethnic background, free school meal eligibility, date of admission or mobility data and level of fluency in English for contextual analysis. Where available we also drew evidence from national data published by the Department for Education (DfE).

The main findings in figure 2 illustrate that overall numbers of African pupils attending Lambeth schools has increased since 2003 from 6,457 to 7,964 in 2023.

### **The Dataset**

The sample consisted of pupils who completed National Curriculum Assessment tests at the end of KS1, KS2, and KS4. In addition, all the LA's schools were asked to provide details of their pupils' backgrounds such as name, date of birth, sex, ethnic background, free school meal eligibility, date of admission or mobility data and level of fluency in English for contextual analysis. Where available we also drew evidence from national data published by the Department of Families and Education (DfE).

### **Measures of Performance**

It is important to note that in the English education system, pupils aged 5 to 11 years are taught National Curriculum subjects and are tested in English, mathematics and science. These tests are age dependent and divided into three key stages: KS1, KS2, and KS4. They are intended to show whether children have reached the National Curriculum expected standards at Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2). At the end of KS4, most 15 and 16-year-olds also 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 15, and are a series of examinations in the individual subjects the pupils have been studying. In 2016, levels were removed from key stage assessments and instead, pupils' marks in tests indicate whether they have reached the expected threshold for other pupils of their age. Therefore the measure of performance used in the analysis is "expected" or above for KS1 and KS2, and 9 to 4 in both English and Maths, and Attainment 8 and Progress 8 for GCSE. An overall indicator of pupil attainment in KS2 was also derived by taking the average of the Reading and Maths tests (KS2) and pupils attaining the "expected" for all of Reading, Writing

and Maths at KS2. At KS1 an overall indicator for Teacher Assessments was taken – the average of Reading, Writing and Mathematics.

The next section examines the achievement of African students in Lambeth schools at the end of KS1, KS2, and GCSE. Two methodological approaches are used. Firstly, the study looks at the pattern of the performance in the LA to establish the achievement of African pupils in Lambeth schools compared to the other main ethnic groups in the UK. This is followed by detailed data analysis of factors affecting the performance of African pupils. The main questions posed are:

- How well do African pupils perform in Lambeth schools?
- What are the differences in level of attainment at the end of KS1, KS2, and GCSE between schools?
- What are the factors influencing performance?

#### 4. THE ACHIEVEMENT OF AFRICAN PUPILS IN LAMBETH SCHOOLS

##### KS1 and KS2 Trend Evidence

The following section outlines outcomes and trends for African pupils and other ethnic groups within Lambeth over the past eight years. Keys Stage 1 pupils spent a high percentage of their schooling from Reception in 2020 to Year 2 in 2022 under various Covid restrictions.

**Table 1. KS1 Attainment by Ethnic Background (2013-2023)**

Ethnic Group	Key Stage 1 Average (Reading, Writing, Maths)								
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2022	2023
African	77%	79%	81%	74%	78%	78%	77%	69%	67%
<i>Somali</i>	72%	76%	78%	75%	77%	74%	75%	71%	63%
Black Other	72%	74%	86%	71%	71%	66%	71%	57%	66%
Caribbean	71%	73%	76%	71%	70%	73%	68%	55%	54%
<i>Polish</i>	77%	78%	82%	72%	86%	79%	82%	73%	76%
Portuguese	62%	64%	62%	63%	61%	69%	67%	59%	59%
White British	83%	87%	86%	83%	85%	83%	84%	82%	82%
White Other	78%	78%	80%	74%	79%	77%	80%	72%	72%
<b>Lambeth -all</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>National</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>66%</b>

*Note: For KS1 from 2010 onwards the average is calculated using the teacher assessment outcomes at Level 2B+ in reading, writing and maths. There are no levels after 2015 and pupils are calculated on whether they have met the “expected” for their age group.*

Whilst 2016 cannot be compared to previous years because of the change from levels to “expected”; we can still compare relative gaps within the year groups. The performance of Somali pupils has also been included in this table (and the other key stage tables), and this group is a subset of the African data.

The gap between African and White British (the strongest performers) is 15 percentage points in 2023. This is an increase from 2019 when the gap was 7 percentage points. African pupils perform third strongest of the largest ethnic groups with 67%, behind White Other pupils at 72%. White British perform the highest at KS1 with 82%.

The Somali subgroup of African pupils performed slightly lower than African pupils as a whole with 63% reaching the expected standard. Caribbean were lowest performers of the larger Lambeth ethnic groups with an attainment score of 54%.



**Table 2. KS2 Attainment by Ethnic Background (2013-2023)**

Ethnic Group	Reading and maths average			RWM					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2022	2023
African	90%	90%	92%	60%	70%	69%	72%	60%	63%
<i>Somali</i>	92%	91%	92%	62%	71%	72%	68%	60%	63%
Black Other	91%	85%	94%	65%	67%	66%	61%	43%	55%
Caribbean	87%	86%	87%	51%	62%	57%	60%	47%	49%
<i>Polish</i>	98%	95%	94%	58%	62%	80%	78%	70%	84%
Portuguese	88%	85%	86%	43%	54%	55%	54%	52%	56%
White British	96%	95%	96%	79%	80%	82%	80%	77%	78%
White Other	92%	95%	92%	63%	71%	74%	74%	65%	73%
<b>Lambeth</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>64%</b>
<b>National</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>60%</b>

*The DfE changed the KS2 tests in 2013 to no longer include an overall English level, so the reading and maths average is now shown here.*

**Table 2a KS2 Attainment by Ethnic Background (2022-2023)**

	2022				2023				RWM +/-
	Reading	Writ TA	Maths	RWM	Reading	Writ TA	Maths	RWM	
African	77%	71%	72%	60%	75%	75%	79%	63%	+3%
<i>Somali</i>	76%	83%	87%	60%	77%	72%	80%	63%	+3%
Black Other	63%	57%	57%	43%	68%	62%	72%	55%	+12%
Caribbean	70%	64%	58%	47%	67%	64%	62%	49%	+2%
<i>Polish</i>	84%	76%	85%	70%	87%	86%	92%	84%	+14%
Portuguese	71%	67%	73%	52%	73%	69%	76%	56%	+4%
White British	87%	83%	85%	77%	88%	85%	85%	78%	+1%
White Other	79%	73%	81%	65%	81%	79%	85%	73%	+8%
<b>Lambeth</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>+3%</b>
<b>National</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>+1%</b>

*There are no levels after 2015 and pupils are calculated on whether they have met the “expected” for their age group.*

The performance of African pupils has been on or around the borough average every year since 2012, including 2023. African pupils comprise a third of the major ethnicities, with 63% at the expected standard in RWM compared to White British at 78%. The latter continue to be a high achieving group and have positively widened the gap to the overall Lambeth outcomes. Caribbean pupils, generally a lower performing group, were 15 percentage points below the borough average in RWM this year. This is a negative increase over the pre-COVID gap of 11 points.

Portuguese continue to be a low performing group, and they are 8 percentage points below the borough average.

The gap between the highest (White British) and lowest (Black Caribbean) achievers in 2023, is 29 percentage points.

## GCSE Trend Evidence

In 2022/23, qualifications returned to pre-pandemic standards. Performance measures that are based on qualification results will reflect this and cannot be directly compared to measures from 2021/2022.

**Table 3. English and Maths 9 to 4/A\* to C Attainment by Ethnic Background**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2022	2023	+/- 19-23
African	66%	61%	65%	64%	75%	69%	+5%
<i>Somali</i>	81%	60%	78%	59%	67%	67%	+8%
Black Other	62%	53%	62%	37%	57%	51%	+14%
Caribbean	45%	50%	43%	47%	52%	48%	+1%
<i>Polish</i>	68%	56%	76%	78%	81%	86%	+8%
Portuguese	59%	58%	47%	50%	72%	62%	+12%
White British	67%	60%	63%	64%	65%	68%	+4%
White Other	71%	65%	71%	67%	71%	70%	+3%
<b>Lambeth</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>+4%</b>
<b>National</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>+1%</b>

*With the large number of changes to GCSE examinations in 2014 following the “Wolf Report” recommendations, it is no longer possible to compare GCSE results with previous years. From 2017 grade 9 to 4 is the equivalent of A\* to C*

African pupils achieved 69% at 9 to 4 in English and Maths this year. This is an increase from 2019 of 5 percentage points. Lambeth results increased overall at this measure in 2022 especially amongst EAL groups. The increasingly larger number of Polish pupils are above both Lambeth and the national average.

Of the largest ethnic cohorts in Lambeth, African pupils with 75%, sit between White Other 70% and White British with 68% in Lambeth.

New GCSE indicators mean that “5 or more A\* to C including English and Maths” has now been superseded by new indicators so the DfE are not releasing national data at a socio-economic level any more. Instead, the new progress measures of Attainment 8 and Progress 8 have been introduced in 2016. Table 4, shows the achievement over the last 2 years of African pupils at Attainment 8 and Progress 8.

**Table 4. Attainment 8 and Progress 8 by Ethnic Background**

	Attainment 8				Progress 8			
	Lambeth		National		Lambeth		National	
	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023
African	48.1	45.9	50.8	48.6	-0.02	0.14	0.35	0.37
<i>Somali</i>	44.2	43.6	47.8	45.4	-0.30	-0.03	0.24	0.25
Black Other	41.4	40.6	46.8	44.2	-0.41	-0.33	0.11	0.09
Caribbean	37.8	35.5	41.6	39.9	-0.73	-0.58	-0.33	-0.24
<i>Polish</i>	58.3	59.6	51.3	49.9	0.68	1.02	0.57	0.51
Portuguese	49.8	45.4	46.0	43.2	0.28	0.38	0.47	0.44
White British	47.8	47.9	47.6	44.8	-0.38	-0.03	-0.18	-0.18
White Other	50.8	50.4	50.7	48.3	0.48	0.55	0.49	0.46
<b>Lambeth</b>	<b>46.3</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>47.2</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>-0.15</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>-0.06</b>	<b>-0.06</b>

The Attainment 8 measure is calculated using a pupil’s best eight GCSE results, then averaging the results for the school, LA and different socio-economic factors. It is worth noting that if the

Attainment 8 score is divided by 10 this gives an average grade. Therefore, an Attainment 8 score of 50 is equivalent to an average grade of 5 across all eight subjects. So, when we compare, for example in 2023, Lambeth's score of 44.7 with the African score of 45.9 they are very close in average grade terms. Lambeth is averaging a solid grade 4 and African pupils averaging a high grade 4.

In 2023 African pupils scored above the Lambeth average of 44.7 with an Attainment 8 score of 45.9. Of ethnic groups with a cohort more than 30 pupils, the highest attainers were Polish at 59.6, followed by White Other (inc. Polish) 50.4, White British 47.9, then African at 45.9.

Lowest were Caribbean with an Attainment 8 score of 35.5.

Nationally, in 2023, African pupils had an Attainment 8 score of 48.6.

Progress 8 is a value-added measure of the progress a student makes from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 by comparing the pupil's average grade and the average grade achieved by those pupils on a similar starting point/prior attainment. A positive score shows a higher progress than similar pupils. Likewise, a negative score shows lower progress. Nationally, Progress 8 is always statistically close to zero. When interpreting scores it is important to note that a score of +1.00 is equivalent to a pupil, institution or socio-economic group achieving on average one grade higher than pupils with a similar KS2 starting point nationally. Equally, -1.00 is one grade lower, +0.20 one fifth grade higher, -0.53 about a half grade lower etc.

Lambeth's Progress 8 score remained was 0.00 in 2023. On average, all pupils expected and actual results were the same.

African pupils scored +0.14 in 2023. Highest performers were Polish and White Other with 1.02 and 0.55 followed by Portuguese at 0.38. Lowest performers were Caribbean at -0.58 followed by Black Other at -0.33.

In interpretation, this may show good progress from a low starting point by Polish and White Other, and indeed African pupils, possibly due to language acquisition at KS2. However, it also shows not as good progress by White British and Caribbean.

Nationally, in 2023, African pupils had a Progress 8 score of +0.37.

## 5. FACTORS AFFECTING ACHIEVEMENT OF AFRICAN HERITAGE PUPILS

Four factors that are helpful in understanding the effect of background factors on attainment of African pupils in schools were considered - eligibility for free school meals (FSM), gender, pupil mobility and level of fluency in English. The findings from table 5 confirm that African pupils are somewhat disadvantaged. For example, the table shows that 47% of KS1 pupils were eligible for FSM, and also 56% of KS2 pupils. The national figures for FSM eligibility are considerably lower at each key stage (c.17% for primary schools overall and 15% for secondary schools).

**Table 5. Social Characteristics of African pupils in Lambeth schools by Key Stage Cohorts 2023**

Key Stages	Total Cohort	Gender		FSM (%)	EAL			Mobility rate (%)
		Boys (%)	Girls (%)		Stage A-C Not fluent in English (%)	Stage D – Competent (%)	Stage E Fully fluent in English (%)	
Key Stage 1	539	51%	49%	47%	42%	14%	10%	20%
Key Stage 2	605	47%	53%	56%	21%	30%	28%	14%
Key Stage 4	585	47%	53%	45%	3%	7%	35%	7%

### Gender Differences and Achievement

Tables 5 and 6 repeat patterns established earlier, whereby girls tend to outperform boys (Demie, 2001; Gillborn and Gipps, 1996). The findings of the results between key stages indicate overall in the LA that girls achieve higher averages than boys by a noticeable margin. This is true for African and Caribbean pupils at all key stages, however historically White British boys at GCSE were more likely to perform at or above the level of girls (Demie et al 2006).

**Table 6: African Pupils KS1, KS2, and GCSE Performance in Lambeth by Gender - 2023**

Key Stages		All African pupils	Boys	Girls	Gap Girls-Boys
KS1 - Expected	Reading	70%	66%	74%	+8%
	Writing	63%	57%	68%	+11%
	Maths	69%	69%	70%	+1%
	Average	68%	64%	71%	+7%
KS2 - Expected	Reading	75%	70%	79%	+9%
	Maths	79%	75%	81%	+6%
	Writing TA	75%	70%	79%	+9%
	All RWM	63%	56%	69%	+13%
GCSE	9 to 4 English and Maths	69%	66%	71%	+5%
	Attainment 8	45.9	43.3	48.3	+5.0
	Progress 8	0.14	-0.03	0.29	+0.32

**Table 6: Lambeth KS2 and GCSE Performance by Ethnicity and Gender 2018 to 2023**

Ethnic Group	Year	KS2 (Reading, Writing, Maths)				9 to 4 (A*-C) English and Maths			
		All	Boys	Girls	Gap	All	Boys	Girls	Gap
African	2018	69%	67%	72%	+5%	65%	62%	69%	+7%
	2019	72%	66%	78%	+12%	64%	57%	69%	+12%
	2022	60%	56%	63%	+7%	75%	67%	81%	+14%
	2023	63%	56%	69%	13%	69%	66%	71%	+5%
Somali	2018	72%	70%	74%	+4%	78%	74%	81%	+6%
	2019	68%	59%	75%	+16%	59%	47%	74%	+27%
	2022	60%	54%	64%	+10%	67%	62%	79%	+17%
	2023	63%	65%	61%	-4%	67%	69%	65%	-4%
Caribbean	2018	57%	54%	59%	+5%	43%	36%	49%	+14%
	2019	60%	55%	65%	+10%	47%	44%	50%	+6%
	2022	47%	39%	56%	+17%	52%	49%	54%	+5%
	2023	49%	46%	52%	+6%	48%	44%	51%	+7%
Portuguese	2018	55%	49%	61%	+12%	47%	47%	48%	+1%
	2019	55%	51%	60%	+9%	50%	45%	56%	+11%
	2022	52%	48%	55%	+7%	72%	71%	72%	+1%
	2023	56%	44%	66%	+22%	62%	60%	66%	+6%
Polish	2018	80%	70%	87%	+17%	76%	59%	90%	+31%
	2019	78%	85%	92%	+7%	78%	79%	76%	-3%
	2022	70%	70%	69%	-1%	81%	86%	74%	-12%
	2023	84%	82%	86%	+4%	86%	78%	94%	+16%
White British	2018	82%	76%	88%	+12%	63%	59%	66%	+7%
	2019	80%	82%	79%	-3%	64%	60%	70%	+10%
	2022	77%	75%	80%	+5%	65%	66%	64%	-2%
	2023	78%	73%	83%	+10%	68%	65%	71%	+6%
Lambeth	2018	70%	66%	74%	+8%	60%	57%	63%	+6%
	2019	71%	68%	74%	+6%	59%	55%	62%	+7%
	2022	61%	57%	65%	+8%	66%	64%	68%	+4%
	2023	64%	60%	68%	+8%	63%	60%	65%	+5%
National	2018	64%	61%	68%	+7%	59%	56%	64%	+8%
	2019	65%	60%	70%	+10%	60%	56%	64%	+8%
	2022	59%	54%	63%	+7%	64%	61%	67%	+6%
	2023	60%	56%	63%	+7%	61%	62%	67%	+5%

### Social Background and Achievement

The free school meals variable is often used as a proxy measure of the extent of social deprivation in pupils' backgrounds and has been linked to underachievement in a number of studies (Gillborn and Youdell, 2002; Demie, 2001). School level data demonstrates a clear relationship between the concentration of poverty levels in schools and tests and examination results. The proportion of African pupils taking KS2 in 2022 who were eligible for free school meals (FSM) was 56%, and for the GCSE cohort it was 45%. At the end of primary education, the difference between African pupils eligible for FSM and others is 5 percentage points, with 61% of eligible pupils achieving a KS2 expected result in all Reading, Writing and Maths, whereas 66% of pupils who were not eligible achieved this standard. GCSE data shows 64% of pupils on free school meals gained 9 to 4 in both English and Maths this year, compared to 73% of those not eligible. Overall, the findings from the LA data confirm that pupils eligible for school meals often performed considerably below their more affluent peers.

**Table 7. Performance of African pupils by Free School Meal status (2022 & 2023)**

Key Stage		2022			2023		
		Free Meals	Paid Meals	Gap	Free Meals	Paid Meals	Gap
KS1 - Expected	Reading	70%	72%	+2	69%	71%	-2%
	Writing	62%	62%	0	64%	62%	+2%
	Maths	69%	70%	+1	69%	69%	0%
	Average	67%	68%	+1	67%	67%	0%
KS2 - Expected	Reading	73%	81%	+8	72%	78%	+6%
	Maths	66%	79%	+13	77%	80%	+3%
	Writing TA	66%	76%	+10	71%	80%	+9%
	RWM	53%	66%	+13	61%	66%	+5%
GCSE	Progress 8	-0.25	0.14	+0.39	0.15	0.13	-0.02
	Attainment 8	44.0	51.2	+7.2	44.8	46.8	+2.0
	EBacc APS	3.94	4.62	+0.68	3.94	4.11	+0.17
	9 to 4 EM	69%	80%	+11%	64%	73%	+9%

There are also some striking differences within the main ethnic groups when the data is further analysed by eligibility for free school meals. Table 8 shows that at GCSE, 58% of Caribbean pupils not eligible for free school meals achieved 9 to 4 in English and Maths, compared with 40% of pupils who were eligible; a gap of 18 percentage points. There was a much larger gap for White British pupils of 41 percentage points. This finding underlines the importance of treating any measure of school or LA performance which does not include the influence of background factors such as social class and deprivation, with scepticism. As we have argued in the previous section, our analysis is not complete because of a lack of data on social class. Care must be taken in generalizing the results particularly of White British pupils from this study to a wider context.

A number of studies have confirmed that London's white population is not representative of the social class composition of White pupils more generally in the UK and tends to be more skewed towards people with a working class background (Demie, 2001). Because of the social class profile, 'it is possible that in inner London, low attainment by white working class pupils is a particular issue, and that markedly different results might be found in a less disadvantaged rural setting. Further research into populations outside inner London is clearly required (Strand, 1999, p199).

**Table 8. Performance by Key Stage, FSM and Ethnic Background in Lambeth, 2023**

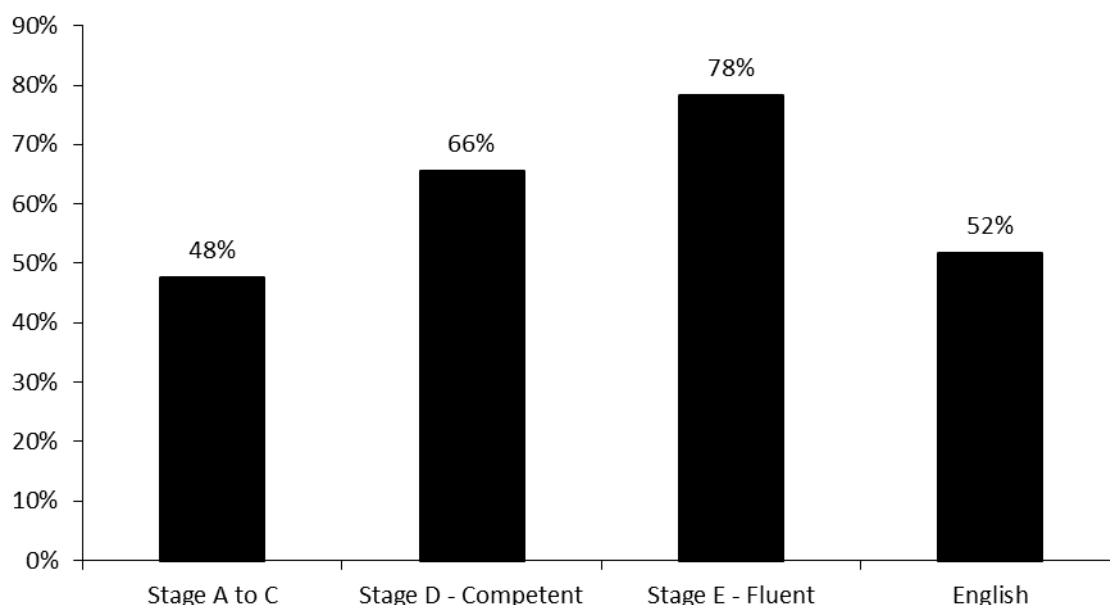
	KS2 Reading Writing Maths (% Expected)			9 to 4 English and Maths		
	% of pupils eligible	Eligible	Not Eligible	% of pupils eligible	Eligible	Not Eligible
African	56%	61%	66%	45%	64%	73%
<i>Somali</i>	57%	60%	67%	46%	61%	72%
Caribbean	56%	60%	76%	53%	40%	58%
Polish	14%	81%	88%	13%	78%	87%
Portuguese	41%	62%	51%	39%	52%	69%
White British	20%	70%	92%	27%	38%	79%
<b>Lambeth</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>70%</b>

## English Language Acquisition and Achievement

Another important factor relating to ethnic background and African achievement is English fluency. For students to have access to the curriculum it is clear that they need to be fluent in the language of instruction. Some students of African heritage are fluent in English while others may not be.

A number of studies have explored the relationship between English fluency and pupil attainment. Demie and Strand (2005) examined the results at KS2 and GCSE whilst at the same time controlling for age, gender, free school meals, ethnic background and mobility rate. The results indicated that pupils who spoke English as an additional language scored significantly lower than those who spoke English as first language or were fluent in English.

**Figure 6. Average Key Stage 2 Attainment of African Pupils by Proficiency in English 2023**



Tables 9 and 10 give the average KS1 and KS2 performance by level of fluency in English. African pupils' performance at KS1 and KS2 increases as the stage of proficiency in English increases. Bilingual African speakers who were fully fluent in English were more likely to gain the expected standard at KS2 than those at the early stages of English acquisition.

**Table 9. KS1 Average Attainment by Ethnicity and Fluency in English – 2023**

Proficiency	African		Polish		Somali		Portuguese		White British	
	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result
Stages A to C – Non-Fluent	228	58%	45	65%	59	57%	39	51%	12	47%
Stage D - Competent	73	80%	14	98%	9	85%	15	78%	6	89%
Stage E - Fluent	53	89%	9	96%	6	94%	6	78%	7	90%
English Only	143	67%	0	n/a	0	n/a	3	33%	416	84%
<b>All Pupils</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>82%</b>

Analysis of GCSE results also shows that fluency in English continues to have an influence on the performance of pupils with EAL (see table11). Overall empirical evidence at the end of primary

and secondary education from the authority suggests pupils in the early stages of fluency perform at very low levels, while bilingual pupils who are reasonably proficient in English perform better, on average, than English only speakers despite some yearly fluctuations. African pupils assessed as fully fluent in English tend to perform above the national averages at all key stages.

**Table 10. KS2 attaining Reading, Writing and Maths by Ethnicity and Fluency in English – 2023**

Proficiency	African		Polish		Somali		Portuguese		White British	
	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result
Stages A to C – Non-Fluent	126	48%	23	43%	43	49%	25	32%	2	100%
Stage D - Competent	180	66%	45	93%	46	67%	39	62%	5	80%
Stage E - Fluent	170	78%	39	97%	24	65%	23	74%	16	100%
English Only	114	52%	0	n/a	0	n/a	1	0%	425	76%
<b>All Pupils</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>78%</b>

There are also some striking differences within the main ethnic groups when the KS2 and GCSE data is further analysed by levels of fluency in English. Tables 10 and 11 show that performance for all main ethnic groups increases when combined with improved English acquisition amongst the bilingual cohort. These findings support a number of studies that have explored the relationship between English fluency and pupil attainment. Demie and Strand (2005) examined the results at KS2 and GCSE whilst at the same time controlling for age, gender, free school meals, ethnic background and mobility rate.

In 2017 the DfE introduced Proficiency in English as a national measure. The results indicated that pupils who were at the early stages of proficiency achieved significantly lower outcomes than those who spoke English as a first language, or were fully fluent in English. This has since, however, been discontinued.

**Table 11. 9 to 4 English & Maths Attainment by Ethnicity and Proficiency in English – 2023**

Proficiency	African		Somali		Polish		Portuguese		White British	
	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result	Cohort	Result
Stages A to C – Non-Fluent	16	19%	4	0%	24	86%	7	57%	5	80%
Stage D - Competent	42	64%	11	45%	17	76%	15	67%	7	57%
Stage E - Fluent	203	74%	50	70%	18	89%	22	73%	13	46%
English Only	106	73%	0	n/a	0	n/a	1	0%	225	73%
<b>All Pupils</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>68%</b>

\*We do not have access to some Academy EAL fluency so figures may not add to total

These findings offer much encouragement for policy makers and school improvement practitioners. They demonstrate that once the language barrier is overcome, it is possible to attain good levels of achievement for all key stages.

### **Pupil Mobility and Achievement**

It is now widely recognised that mobility can have an adverse effect on educational attainment. Mobile pupils are those who join or leave a school at a point other than at the age they would normally start or finish their education at a school. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector reported that high pupil mobility was one of the greatest problems, if not the greatest problem that any school can face.



**Table 12. Attainment of African Pupils by Mobility (2022 & 2023)**

Key Stage		2022			2023		
		Non-mobile	Mobile	Gap	Non-mobile	Mobile	Gap
KS2 % expected	Reading	78%	68%	+10%	76%	70%	+6%
	Maths	75%	57%	+18%	79%	75%	+4%
	Writing TA	72%	61%	+11%	75%	74%	+1%
	RWM	61%	49%	+12%	63%	65%	-2%
GCSE % achieving	A*-C (9 -4) EM	76%	55%	+21%	70%	49%	+21%
	Attainment 8	48.7	38.1	+10.6	36.9	46.8	+9.9
	Progress 8	0.00	-0.73	+0.73	-0.47	0.16	+0.63

Non-mobile pupils were more likely than their mobile peers of the same ethnicity to gain the expected level. Tables 12 and 13, illustrate this point with, on average, African pupils who spent all of KS2 in the same school achieving better than the Year 4 and 5 arrivals. Those African pupils who joined late in the key stage have shown improvements in their attainment this year, although the small cohort sizes involved should be borne in mind.

**Table 13. African Pupil Average Attainment by Length of Time Spent in School, 2022 & 2023**

Key stage	Mobility by Length of Time Spent in School	Number		Performance	
		2022	2023	2022	2023
KS2 – Reading, Writing, Maths	Joined in Year 3 or before	471	521	62%	76%
	Joined in Year 4&5	99	78	56%	71%
	Joined in Year 6	69	6	49%	67%
A*-C (9-4) English and Maths	Joined in Year 7	536	502	77%	72%
	Joined in Year 8&9	41	36	61%	53%
	Joined in Year 10	31	37	61%	46%
	Joined in Year 11	7	8	29%	63%

## 6. AFRICAN PUPILS AND LANGUAGES

African pupils in Lambeth speak a wide number of languages, both African and European. At Key Stage 2 there were 20 different languages, and at GCSE pupils spoke 31 different languages.

Table 14, shows the performance for pupils at Key Stage 2 by language. Languages with less than 10 pupils have been collated into the category “Other Language”.

**Table 14. African Pupil KS2 Attainment by Language**

Language	Cohort	Reading	Math	Writing TA	RWM Expected
English	131	69%	68%	66%	53%
Somali	108	79%	81%	74%	66%
Yoruba	63	86%	89%	86%	71%
French	51	65%	84%	75%	63%
Akan/Twi-Fante	43	72%	84%	79%	63%
Amharic	34	76%	85%	79%	71%
Tigrinya	26	77%	85%	69%	62%
Arabic	19	68%	79%	79%	63%
Igbo	16	100%	94%	88%	88%
Krio	11	82%	55%	64%	45%
Portuguese	11	82%	64%	73%	64%
Lingala	8	63%	50%	75%	38%
Luganda	7	86%	71%	86%	71%
Other Language*	77	73%	78%	78%	66%
<b>All African Pupils</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>63%</b>
<b>Lambeth</b>		<b>77%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>64%</b>
<b>National</b>		<b>73%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>60%</b>

\* Languages included are Swahili/Kiswahili, Italian, Ga, Greek, Hausa, Dutch/Flemish, Spanish, Swedish

Pupils speaking Igbo performed particularly well with 88 attaining the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths, followed by Yoruba, Amharic and Luganda at 71%.

Table 15, shows the performance for pupils at GCSE by language. Languages with less than 5 pupils have been collated into the category “Other Language”.

**Table 15. African Pupil GCSE Attainment by Language**

Language	Cohort	9 to 4 English and Maths	Attainment 8	Progress 8
English	188	65%	42.6	-0.21
Somali	94	67%	44.7	0.07
French	56	64%	44.8	0.10
Yoruba	51	80%	49.5	0.41
Akan/Twi-Fante	40	60%	47.4	0.55
Arabic	29	79%	53.1	0.81
Tigrinya	21	81%	53.0	0.44
Lingala	16	56%	43.3	0.15
Portuguese	13	69%	42.7	-0.18
Amharic	12	92%	51.6	0.64
Spanish	10	70%	49.1	0.16
Igbo	7	57%	45.6	1.03
Krio	6	100%	59.8	0.38
Any Other Language	42	69%	48.1	0.33
<b>All African Pupils</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>45.9</b>	<b>0.14</b>
<b>Lambeth</b>		<b>63%</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>National</b>		<b>61%</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>-0.06</b>

For the measure, 9 to 4 in English and Maths, pupils who spoke Krio achieved the highest with 100%. These were followed by pupils speaking Amharic 92% and Tigrinya 81%.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

In this study we examined educational inequalities and the achievement of African pupils in schools. A number of conclusions can be drawn from key stages and GCSE evidence. The findings of the case study LA and national data suggest that:

- At KS1 and KS2, African pupils are amongst the highest achieving compared to all main ethnic groups. The new GCSE methodology has seen a drop in African performance.
- Children from different ethnic groups show differences in educational attainment at the end of each key stage. Indian and Chinese children achieve higher results on average than African, Caribbean, Irish and White British pupils.
- Performances of pupils of Black African origin are higher than Black Caribbean pupils at all key stages.

Overall, the achievement of African pupils is a very positive story in Lambeth.

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Appendix 3. Key Stage 1 - 4 Performance for African Pupils 2016 - 2023 - By Gender

	KS1 (Expected)				KS2 (Expected)				GCSE			
	Read	Writ	Maths	Av	Read	Writ	Maths	RWM	Progress 8	Attainment 8	AC EM	EBacc APS
<b>African All Pupils</b>												
2016	78%	72%	74%	74%	71%	82%	79%	75%	+0.14	50.6	66%	
2017	81%	76%	79%	78%	76%	85%	84%	70%	+0.09	44.8	61%	
2018	79%	77%	78%	78%	76%	83%	81%	69%	+0.08	46.0	65%	4.13
2019	76%	74%	79%	77%	79%	82%	85%	72%	+0.13	45.5	64%	4.02
2022	72%	64%	70%	69%	77%	71%	72%	60%	-0.02	48.1	75%	4.33
2023	70%	63%	69%	67%	75%	75%	79%	63%	+0.14	45.9	69%	4.03
<b>African Boys Only</b>												
2016	74%	65%	72%	70%	66%	77%	80%	73%	-0.06	47.0	59%	
2017	76%	70%	76%	74%	74%	79%	83%	65%	-0.26	39.2	51%	
2018	75%	71%	76%	74%	73%	79%	80%	67%	-0.26	42.9	62%	3.80
2019	74%	69%	77%	73%	73%	79%	84%	66%	-0.26	41.1	57%	3.56
2022	69%	58%	70%	66%	72%	73%	68%	56%	-0.22	42.2	67%	3.76
2023	66%	57%	69%	64%	70%	70%	75%	56%	-0.03	43.3	66%	3.82
<b>African Girls Only</b>												
2016	82%	78%	75%	78%	76%	87%	79%	77%	+0.33	53.8	73%	
2017	84%	81%	81%	82%	79%	91%	86%	74%	+0.38	49.4	70%	
2018	83%	83%	80%	82%	80%	88%	82%	72%	+0.49	49.0	69%	4.44
2019	79%	80%	81%	80%	84%	88%	87%	78%	+0.46	49.2	69%	4.41
2022	75%	69%	71%	72%	81%	72%	74%	63%	+0.33	53.3	81%	4.82
2023	74%	68%	70%	71%	79%	79%	81%	69%	0.29	48.3	71%	4.22

#### Appendix 4. Key Stage 2 Results of African Pupils by Language 2023

Language	Cohort	Reading	Maths	Writing	RWM Expected
Akan/Twi-Fante	43	72%	84%	79%	63%
Amharic	34	76%	85%	79%	71%
Arabic	19	68%	79%	79%	63%
Dutch/Flemish	1	100%	100%	100%	100%
English	131	69%	68%	66%	53%
French	51	65%	84%	75%	63%
Ga	6	83%	83%	83%	83%
Hausa	6	83%	100%	100%	83%
Igbo	16	100%	94%	88%	88%
Italian	1	100%	100%	100%	100%
Krio	11	82%	55%	64%	45%
Lingala	8	63%	50%	75%	38%
Luganda	7	86%	71%	86%	71%
Not Known	59	71%	75%	75%	63%
Portuguese	11	82%	64%	73%	64%
Somali	108	79%	81%	74%	66%
Spanish	1	100%	100%	100%	100%
Swahili/Kiswahili	2	50%	50%	50%	50%
Swedish	1	0%	100%	100%	0%
Tigrinya	26	77%	85%	69%	62%
Yoruba	63	86%	89%	86%	71%
<b>All African Pupils</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>63%</b>
<b>Lambeth</b>		<b>77%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>64%</b>
<b>National</b>		<b>73%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>60%</b>

## Appendix 5. GCSE Results of African Pupils by Language 2023

Language	Cohort	9 to 4 English and Maths	Attainment 8	Progress 8
English	188	65%	42.6	-0.21
Somali	94	67%	44.7	0.07
French	56	64%	44.8	0.10
Yoruba	51	80%	49.5	0.41
Akan/Twi-Fante	40	60%	47.4	0.55
Arabic	29	79%	53.1	0.81
Tigrinya	21	81%	53.0	0.44
Lingala	16	56%	43.3	0.15
Portuguese	13	69%	42.7	-0.18
Amharic	12	92%	51.6	0.64
Spanish	10	70%	49.1	0.16
Igbo	7	57%	45.6	1.03
Krio	6	100%	59.8	0.38
Ga	5	80%	62.4	1.65
Edo/Bini	3	100%	57.7	0.52
Luganda	3	100%	63.0	0.84
Manding/Malinke	3	100%	41.3	-0.43
Swahili/Kiswahili	3	0%	27.3	-1.97
Italian	2	100%	59.5	0.00
Other than English	2	100%	51.0	0.99
Slovenian	2	50%	35.0	0.69
Bengali	1	0%	29.0	-1.08
Caribbean Creole English	1	0%	44.3	0.63
Caribbean Creole French	1	100%	58.0	0.52
Dutch/Flemish	1	100%	62.0	0.65
Fon	1	0%	38.0	-0.56
German	1	100%	48.0	2.42
Hausa	1	100%	67.0	0.65
Itsekiri	1	0%	39.0	-0.65
Luo (Kenya/Tanzania)	1	100%	53.0	0.75
Swedish	1	0%	49.0	0.00
Tamil	1	100%	38.0	0.34
<b>Lambeth African Pupils</b>		<b>69%</b>	<b>45.9</b>	<b>0.14</b>