

**REPLY BY THE PRESIDENT OF
THE COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION, SPORT & CULTURE
TO QUESTIONS ASKED PURSUANT TO RULE 14 OF THE RULES OF
PROCEDURE BY DEPUTY HEIDI SOULSBY**

Response preamble

When reviewing the information provided in the following responses it should be noted that the usual examination appeals process is still underway in respect of the 2023 results set out below. The full validation of results will take place only after the outcome of the appeals process has been published. Given this, the results that follow are provisional and subject to further change prior to their official publication in the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture's 'Education Strategy Annual Report' in January 2024. The ongoing validation process explains why the data below differs slightly from that published on 'results day' in August.

It is important to note that 2023 data is not directly comparable with that from 2020, 2021 and 2022 as the method of assessment and grading in 2023 is fundamentally different from the last three years. 2023 was the first time since 2019 that public examinations were marked using pre-COVID grading methodology.

In 2020 and 2021 no public examinations took place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022 grade boundaries were more generous than in pre-COVID years. Results from these years are therefore not comparable with results from earlier years when public examinations did take place and cannot be used to make valid inferences about the quality of education.

Furthermore, in 2019, the most recent year against which valid comparisons can be made, it was still permitted for schools to record the highest result a student achieved rather than their first result when reporting performance measures. This has now changed. Schools now report the first result rather than the best result. This should be taken into consideration when comparing results from 2019 with 2023.

It should also be noted that, although the questions could be interpreted as asking for the requested data to be provided at a school-specific level, it is premature to provide the data in that format for two reasons: 1) as explained above, the data has yet to be validated following the completion of the formal appeals process and it is the Committee's usual practice that the non-validated data is not shared publicly beyond that reported on 'results day'; and 2) the validated data is published in the Committee's Annual Report in January, so as to allow time for the validated data to be shared and discussed with the Committee and shared with each settings' Interim Governing Board for discussion at their Autumn governance meeting with each setting, before the information is released more widely.

The decision not to provide a setting-by-setting analysis of the data at this time aligns with the principles of the States of Guernsey's Freedom of Information Code which, at sections 2.10 and 2.11 provides for the following in relation to 'Exception to the Presumption of Publication':

2.10 Publication and prematurity in relation to publication

- Information, which is or will soon be published, or whose disclosure would be premature in relation to a planned announcement or publication.

2.11 Research, statistics and analysis

- Information relating to incomplete analysis, research or statistics, where disclosure could be misleading or deprive the holder of priority of publication or commercial value.

Question 1

On 24 August 2023 the Committee issued a media release headed 'GCSE/Level 2 Results Published'. Detailed in the release were the percentage of students who had achieved a Level 4 or above in both GCSE English language or literature and maths for each of the State Maintained schools from 2019 to 2023. However, a similar analysis was not provided for English and maths separately. Please can you provide this analysis.

Answer 1

Percentage of students achieving:	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Grade 4+ Maths	60.8%	68.8%	68.4%	63.8%	57.7%
Grade 4+ English Language and/or Literature	80.9%	84.1%	76.8%	74.9%	70.4%

The percentage of students obtaining a grade 4 or above in either English language or English literature in States' schools is comparable with the result for England. This achievement is all the more significant given that locally a much higher proportion of children are educated in the Grant-Aided Colleges rather than the States-maintained Schools than in the equivalent sectors of education in England (28% in Guernsey v approximately 6% in England), and the prior attainment profile in each sector is skewed as a result. (In other words, it is generally learners with a higher than average prior attainment profile in the States-maintained schools who transfer to the Grant-Aided Colleges in the secondary phase.)

Readers should be reassured that, as confirmed in the President’s Update Statement to the States of Deliberation on Wednesday 27th September 2023, our education professionals are working hard to address the discrepancy between results in English and maths. Every States-maintained school underwent an in-depth maths review during the last academic year and our educationalists and teaching professionals are deploying considerable energy to ensure standards improve in this vital area having undertaken a similar improvement programme in English in the recent past which is already showing improvement in younger year groups. Secondary schools are halfway through a two-year programme focusing on improving maths. They have a new, very detailed curriculum alongside online tutoring access for all and consultant support to help improve outcomes.

Question 2

Please can you provide a similar analysis for the percentage of students who achieved a Level 7 or above in English, maths and English and maths jointly as you have provided for Level 4 and above.

Answer 2

Percentage of students achieving:	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Grade 7+ Maths	8.4%	17.1%	18.8%	18.1%	10.8%
Grade 7 + English Language and/or Literature	21.1%	24.9%	24.0%	27.2%	18.1%
Grade 7+ English Language and/or Literature and Maths	4.8%	12.1%	12.3%	7.5%	7.0%

The percentage of students obtaining a grade 7 or above in either English language or English literature in States-maintained schools is comparable with the result for England. As with the proportion obtaining a grade 4 or above, this achievement is all the more significant given that a much higher proportion of children are educated in the Grant-Aided Colleges rather than the States-maintained Schools than in the equivalent sectors of education in England and that the prior attainment profile in each sector is skewed as a result. (In other words, it is generally learners with a higher than average prior attainment profile in the States-maintained schools who transfer to the Grant-Aided Colleges in the secondary phase.)

The much lower proportion of learners obtaining a grade 7 or above in maths than in English once again illustrates the discrepancy between results in English and maths that we are working hard to improve.

Question 3

Please can you provide an analysis of the number of students who sat English, maths, and both English and maths in each of the State Maintained schools and the total cohort of students of the relevant year group in each school for 2023.

Answer 3

Number of students, 2023	Number of students	Proportion of cohort
Sitting English	400	93.9%
Sitting English Literature	378	88.7%
Sitting maths	399	93.7%
Sitting both maths and at least one of English language or literature	395	92.7%
Total cohort size	426	

Date of receipt of the Question: 21st September 2023

Date of Reply: 6th October 2023