

Briefing note on increased demand for English and maths in colleges 2023/24

Summary

- The combination of a larger cohort of 16-year-olds and lower GCSE grade 4+ pass rates this summer has led to a big increase in the number of retake students in colleges.
- The growth in the total number of students needing to retake English and/or maths is over 60,000 overall, an increase of 22% overall – with more growth in English and less in maths.
- Our enrolment survey showed that over 90% of responding colleges have seen an increase in their English and maths retake numbers this year and these have increased by around 30% overall.
- We estimate the cost of meeting this additional need to be roughly £24m per year*, this includes £21m for additional teaching time and an additional £3m in exam registration fees.
- The additional £150m promised from next year for all English & maths retakes (not just level 3 as now) is very welcome and increases the allocation for English and maths (currently £26.6m for level 3 across all colleges). This helps to address the funding shortfall, but the funding challenge remains. However, if this new funding also replacing the Tuition Fund, it would reduce the impact of the increase by around £60m.
- The greatest challenge is the availability of sufficient English and maths teachers, a problem that requires more than additional funding to resolve in the short term.
- The growth in the numbers of 16-year-olds with GCSE grades 1-3 has not been even across the country, ranging from +29% to +12% by county area (see appendices)
- Although colleges can make in-year growth claims where their overall student numbers have grown strongly, there is no system for making in-year growth claims for exceptional growth in English and maths. In some cases, the impact of may be greater.

Feedback from colleges

Our recent survey of 95 colleges showed that: 91% have seen an increase in their English and maths retake numbers over last year. English GCSE enrolments have increased by 35%, maths GCSE enrolments have increased by 30%.

Functional skills English enrolments have increased by 19% and Functional skills maths enrolments have increased by 14%.

It is clear that for many colleges the additional costs will certainly exceed any growth in Disadvantage funding this year. Disadvantage Block 2 was designed as another proxy for disadvantage and was not intended simply to fund English and maths classes.

Post-16 retake numbers for 2023/24

Based on the number of Year 11 students in England who achieved grade 1-3 in GCSE English or maths this summer,

Y11 students grade 1-3	2022	2023	growth	%
GCSE English	134,061	172,434	+38,373	+29%
GCSE maths	145,997	167,764	+21,767	+15%

Geographical distribution of 16-year-olds with GCSE grades 1-3

The areas with the highest growth in student numbers with GCSE grades 1-3 between 2022 and 2023 across both subjects include: **Greater London (+7,416), West Midlands, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Hampshire, Essex, Kent, Lancashire, Merseyside, Staffordshire (+1,679)**. (see appendix for details)

The areas with the highest proportionate growth in students with GCSE grades 1-3 between 2022 and 2023 across both subjects include: **Dorset (+29.1%), Cambridgeshire, Herefordshire, Oxfordshire, Shropshire, Hampshire, Staffordshire, Bristol, Suffolk and Berkshire (+26.4%)**. (see appendix for details)

What colleges are doing:

Colleges are responding in various ways to the growth in demand: reduced teaching hours per group, delaying the start or end of English and maths courses, opening up new classroom space, moving more provision online...

The greatest challenge is the availability of specialist English and maths teachers, a problem that requires more than additional funding to solve.

*The additional cost assumes: 16 students per class at £5,625 per year per class (2.5hrs a week over 30 weeks, costed at £75 per taught hour per group) plus exam entries at £48 per entry.

Appendix

Combined numbers of GCSE English and maths grade 1-3 instances, ranked by proportional growth:

English & maths retake instances				
County	2022	2023	incr	incr. %
Rutland	137	238	101	73.7%
Dorset	3071	3966	895	29.1%
Cambridgeshire	3891	5023	1132	29.1%
Herefordshire	819	1050	231	28.2%
Oxfordshire	2811	3600	789	28.1%
Shropshire	2733	3484	751	27.5%
Hampshire	8432	10722	2290	27.2%
Staffordshire	6252	7931	1679	26.9%
County of Bristol	1868	2369	501	26.8%
Suffolk	3613	4579	966	26.7%
Berkshire	4037	5101	1064	26.4%
East Riding of Yorkshire	3180	3968	788	24.8%
West Midlands	18913	23595	4682	24.8%
Norfolk	4155	5168	1013	24.4%
Northamptonshire	4217	5233	1016	24.1%
Essex	9335	11554	2219	23.8%
Surrey	3919	4827	908	23.2%
Worcestershire	2798	3438	640	22.9%
Nottinghamshire	6022	7395	1373	22.8%
Buckinghamshire	3509	4301	792	22.6%
Cornwall	2966	3624	658	22.2%
Tyne and Wear	5915	7214	1299	22.0%
Cheshire	5325	6489	1164	21.9%

Cumbria	2656	3235	579	21.8%
Greater London	34423	41839	7416	21.5%
Gloucestershire	3898	4734	836	21.4%
Wiltshire	3448	4177	729	21.1%
Leicestershire	5766	6984	1218	21.1%
Merseyside	8440	10214	1774	21.0%
West Sussex	3869	4663	794	20.5%
Bedfordshire	4149	4993	844	20.3%
Lancashire	8988	10787	1799	20.0%
Somerset	4668	5596	928	19.9%
Devon	5574	6673	1099	19.7%
Greater Manchester	17616	21070	3454	19.6%
Durham	4795	5728	933	19.5%
North Yorkshire	5420	6474	1054	19.4%
South Yorkshire	8075	9600	1525	18.9%
Isle of Wight	725	859	134	18.5%
Kent	10061	11862	1801	17.9%
East Sussex	3651	4296	645	17.7%
Lincolnshire	6124	7195	1071	17.5%
Hertfordshire	4996	5845	849	17.0%
Derbyshire	5782	6759	977	16.9%
West Yorkshire	14442	16828	2386	16.5%
Warwickshire	2785	3195	410	14.7%
Northumberland	1660	1852	192	11.6%
National	279,929	340,327	60,398	21.6%

The detail by subject and area (alphabetical):

County	GCSE English KS4 grades 1-3				GCSE maths KS4 grades 1-3			
	2022	2023	incr.	%	2022	2023	incr.	%
Bedfordshire	1997	2559	561	28%	2152	2434	282	13%
Berkshire	1891	2563	672	36%	2146	2538	392	18%
Buckinghamshire	1713	2170	458	27%	1796	2131	334	19%
Cambridgeshire	1930	2541	611	32%	1961	2482	522	27%
Cheshire	2471	3255	785	32%	2854	3234	381	13%
Cornwall	1445	1878	432	30%	1521	1746	225	15%
County of Bristol	868	1184	316	36%	1000	1185	185	19%
Cumbria	1266	1701	435	34%	1390	1534	144	10%
Derbyshire	2774	3447	673	24%	3008	3312	304	10%

Devon	2695	3481	786	29%	2879	3192	313	11%
Dorset	1545	2096	551	36%	1526	1870	344	23%
Durham	2265	2916	652	29%	2530	2812	282	11%
East Riding of Yorks.	1458	1923	465	32%	1722	2045	322	19%
East Sussex	1784	2230	446	25%	1867	2066	198	11%
Essex	4443	5878	1435	32%	4892	5676	784	16%
Gloucestershire	1884	2417	533	28%	2014	2317	304	15%
Greater London	16567	20653	4086	25%	17856	21186	3330	19%
Greater Manchester	8496	10680	2183	26%	9120	10390	1269	14%
Hampshire	4108	5662	1555	38%	4324	5060	736	17%
Herefordshire	392	556	165	42%	427	494	67	16%
Hertfordshire	2330	2914	584	25%	2666	2931	266	10%
Isle of Wight	338	441	103	30%	387	418	31	8%
Kent	4917	6173	1255	26%	5144	5689	545	11%
Lancashire	4283	5513	1230	29%	4705	5274	569	12%
Leicestershire	2867	3590	723	25%	2899	3394	495	17%
Lincolnshire	2912	3698	787	27%	3212	3497	285	9%
Merseyside	3958	5051	1093	28%	4482	5163	681	15%
Norfolk	2065	2716	651	32%	2090	2452	362	17%
North Yorkshire	2547	3241	694	27%	2873	3233	360	13%
Northamptonshire	2076	2743	668	32%	2141	2490	348	16%
Northumberland	833	958	125	15%	827	894	66	8%
Nottinghamshire	2940	3815	875	30%	3082	3580	498	16%
Oxfordshire	1328	1797	469	35%	1483	1803	320	22%
Rutland	64	126	62	97%	73	112	39	53%
Shropshire	1255	1669	414	33%	1478	1815	337	23%
Somerset	2264	2904	640	28%	2404	2692	288	12%
South Yorkshire	3898	4836	938	24%	4177	4764	586	14%
Staffordshire	3056	4014	958	31%	3196	3917	721	23%
Suffolk	1733	2367	635	37%	1880	2212	332	18%
Surrey	1821	2439	618	34%	2098	2388	290	14%
Tyne and Wear	2783	3648	865	31%	3132	3566	434	14%
Warwickshire	1367	1637	270	20%	1418	1558	140	10%
West Midlands	8839	11575	2736	31%	10074	12020	1945	19%
West Sussex	1839	2416	577	31%	2030	2247	217	11%
West Yorkshire	7002	8514	1513	22%	7440	8314	875	12%
Wiltshire	1656	2134	477	29%	1792	2043	251	14%
Worcestershire	1334	1787	453	34%	1464	1651	188	13%
National	134297	172506	38210	28%	145632	167821	22189	15%

v.6 Eddie Playfair 26/10/23

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