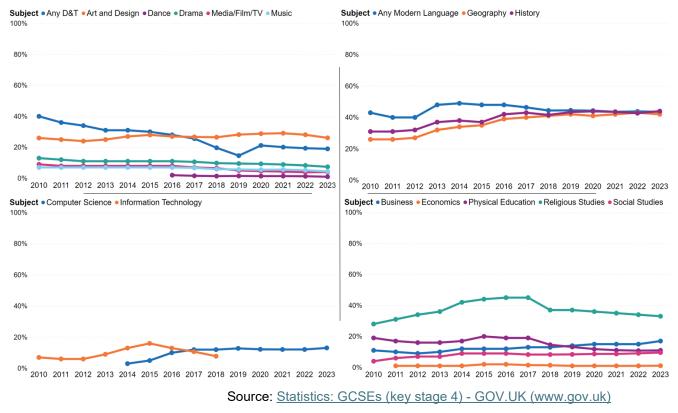
#### Curriculum subject trends over time

The curriculum is our collective means of securing the knowledge and skills needed by the next generation to thrive individually while advancing our society. As such, the content is crucial but often controversial. And judgement calls on content can be difficult given the wealth of collective knowledge and finite curriculum time.

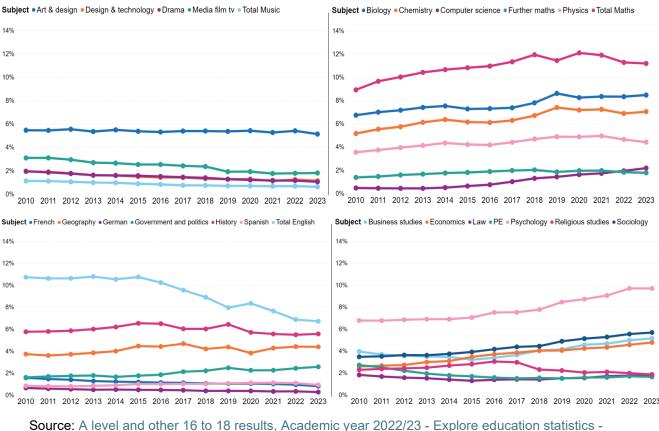
The independent Curriculum and Assessment Review is tasked with ensuring that young people can access a broad and balanced curriculum. We have promised to be rigorously evidence and data informed. As such, it has been important to investigate patterns of subject take-up and curriculum dedication over time.

The data shows some interesting trends, and a more nuanced picture than is often assumed.

### Figure 1: GCSE entries by subject, as proportion of all pupils at the end of KS4, 2009/10 to 2022/23



# Figure 2: A level entries by subject, as a proportion of all A level entries, 2009/10 to 2022/23



GOV.UK (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

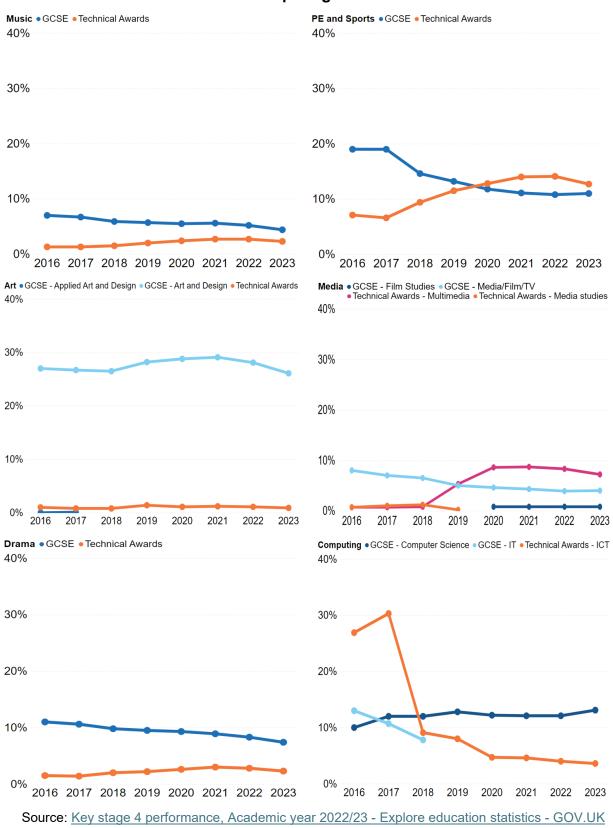
There has been a trend towards significantly higher numbers of young people taking Maths A Level – and indeed a slight increase in uptake of STEM subjects at A Level across the board – reflecting successful delivery of long-term policy objectives to support STEM subjects and their engagement by young people.

There has been a very slight decline in arts subjects at A Level, but this doesn't match the uptake for STEM. Instead, we see a more complex picture, with more significant declines in other areas such as English.

At GCSE, we can see that History and Geography have strong uptake, potentially reflecting their inclusion in the EBacc measure. Religious Studies also remains popular at GCSE, despite not featuring in the EBacc.

Meanwhile, Art and Design continues to thrive at GCSE: it remains among the most popular subjects for take up. In contrast, some subjects within the category 'the arts' have seen a decline: notably Drama, and (to a lesser extent) Music. However, Design and Technology stands out as the subject that has fared worst over time.

These patterns are complicated even further by vocational qualifications. 43% of young people take a Technical Award at Key Stage 4 as a GCSE equivalent. And some of these vocational qualifications comprise arts subjects. Looking at Technical Awards and GCSEs together, we see the following trends at Key Stage 4:



#### Figure 3: Proportion of pupils at the end of KS4 entering GCSEs or Technical Awards in Music; PE and Sports subjects; Art; Media/Film/TV subjects; Drama; and Computing and ICT

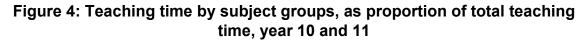
(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

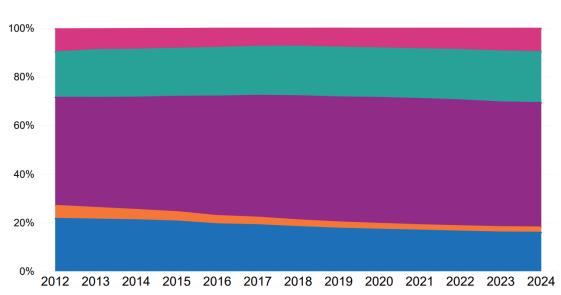
While these do not reverse the trends noted above, they mediate them. For example, whilst the proportion of pupils entering Music GCSEs has declined from 7% in 2016 to 5% in 2022, we have seen an increase of entries into Technical Awards in Music from 1% to 3% over the same period, before both falling slightly in 2023. There were also similar patterns in Drama and Media and for PE/Sports, where the proportion of pupils taking Technical Awards had overtaken GCSEs by 2020.

If we return to Figure 1, we see that some other subjects have either low uptake or uptake has decline substantially in recent years. Citizenship<sup>1</sup> has very low uptake. Computing has likewise seen a significant reduction in uptake since the introduction of the Computing CGSE and withdrawal of alternative qualifications, especially for female entry.

A focus on dedicated curriculum time raises further issues.

The school workforce census (SWC) records number of hours that are taught for each subject. The chart below shows each subject group as a proportion of the overall teaching time given to a curriculum subject (School workforce census guide 2023 (publishing.service.gov.uk). Note that these taught hours include both teacher and teaching assistant time.





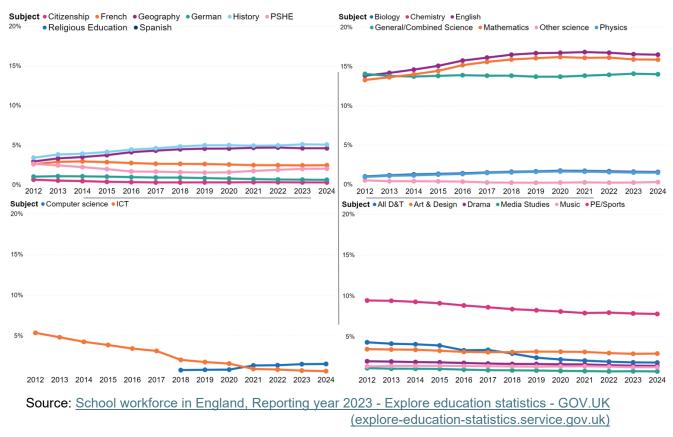
Subject • Arts, D&T and PE • Computer science & ICT • Core subjects • Humanities and languages • Other

Notes: - Arts, D&T and PE covers All D&T, Art and Design, Drama, Media Studies, Music and PE/Sports. – Computer Science and ICT covers Computer Science and ICT. – Core subjects covers Biology, Chemistry, Physics, General/Combined Science, Other Science, Mathematics and English. – Humanities and languages covers Citizenship, French, German, Spanish, Geography, History, PSHE, Religious Education, Other Humanities and Other Modern Foreign Languages. – Other covers Business studies, Careers and key skills, Engineering, General studies, Other social studies, Other and Other/ Combined Technology

Source: <u>School workforce in England</u>, <u>Reporting year 2023 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK</u> (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Here included in 'social studies'

### Figure 5: Teaching time by subject, as proportion of total teaching time, year 10 and 11



While time for Maths and English has expanded, we can see pressure on some other subjects, including PE. PE is part of the national curriculum and schools have a statutory obligation to teach it, yet we see a decline in dedicated time at KS4. Likewise, sex education (RSHE) and citizenship have had time further squeezed.

We hope that sharing this information aids our evidence-led conversation as we consider curriculum breadth and balance.

Category	Subject	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Arts	Music	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%	5%	4%
Arts	Art and Design	26%	25%	24%	25%	27%	28%	27%	27%	27%	28%	29%	29%	28%	26%
Arts	Drama	13%	12%	11%	11%	11%	11%	11%	11%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	7%
Arts	Media/Film/TV	9%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	7%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%
Arts	Applied Art and Design			0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%						
Arts	Performing Arts			0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%						
Arts	Dance							2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Arts	Film Studies											1%	1%	1%	1%
Business	Applied Business			1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%					
Classical	Classical Studies	2%	2%	2%											
Classical	Any Classical Study				2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Classical	Classical Civilisation				1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Classical	Classical Greek				0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Classical	Latin				1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Classical	Other Classical Studies				0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%				
Classical	Biblical Hebrew											0%	0%	0%	0%
Computing	Information Technology	7%	6%	6%	9%	13%	16%	13%	11%	8%					
Computing	Computer Science					3%	5%	10%	12%	12%	13%	12%	12%	12%	13%
Design & Technology	Any Design & Technology	40%	36%	34%	31%	31%	30%	28%	26%	20%	15%	21%	20%	19%	19%
English	Any English	94%	94%	91%	87%	74%	59%	90%			93%				
English	English Literature	73%	72%	69%	67%	66%	66%	80%	89%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
English	English (combined)			21%	23%	17%	11%	5%							

### Table 1: GCSE entries by subject, as proportion of all pupils at the end of KS4, 2009/10 to 2022/23

English	English Language			71%	64%	57%	49%	84%	91%	92%	92%	92%	92%	92%	92%
English	English Studies			1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%						
History	Ancient History							0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Humanities	Geography	26%	26%	27%	32%	34%	35%	39%	40%	41%	42%	41%	42%	43%	42%
Humanities	History	31%	31%	32%	37%	38%	37%	42%	43%	42%	43%	44%	43%	43%	44%
Humanities	Humanities	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	0%						
Languages	Any Modern Language	43%	40%	40%	48%	49%	48%	48%	46%	44%	45%	44%	44%	44%	44%
Languages	French	25%	23%	22%	26%	26%	25%	24%	22%	20%	20%	20%	20%	19%	19%
Languages	German	10%	9%	9%	10%	9%	9%	9%	8%	7%	7%	7%	6%	5%	5%
Languages	Spanish	9%	9%	10%	13%	14%	14%	15%	15%	15%	16%	17%	17%	18%	18%
Mathematics	Mathematics	93%	93%	93%	93%	93%	91%	93%	91%	92%	92%	91%	92%	92%	92%
Mathematics	Statistics		10%	8%	7%	8%	8%	8%	5%	4%	2%	4%	3%	3%	4%
Other	Business	11%	10%	9%	10%	12%	12%	12%	13%	13%	14%	15%	15%	15%	17%
Other	Home Economics	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	2%					
Other	Social Studies	4%	6%	7%	7%	9%	9%	9%	8%	8%	8%	9%	9%	9%	10%
Other	Communication Studies	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%				
Other	Physical Education	19%	17%	16%	16%	17%	20%	19%	19%	15%	13%	12%	11%	11%	11%
Other	Religious Studies	28%	31%	34%	36%	42%	44%	45%	45%	37%	37%	36%	35%	34%	33%
Other	Economics		1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other	General Studies			1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%					
Science	Any Science	85%	80%	76%	76%	79%	83%	90%	91%	91%	92%	92%	92%	92%	92%
Science	Core Science	63%	56%	50%	51%	56%	60%	66%	66%						
Science	Additional Science	45%	40%	39%	39%	44%	50%	58%	61%						
Science	Additional Applied Science	6%	5%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	0%						
Science	Physics	18%	21%	24%	24%	21%	20%	23%	24%	27%	26%	25%	26%	25%	25%
Science	Chemistry	18%	21%	24%	24%	21%	20%	23%	24%	27%	26%	25%	26%	25%	25%

Science	Biology	18%	21%	24%	24%	21%	21%	23%	24%	27%	27%	26%	26%	26%	26%
Science	Other Sciences	3%	3%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Science	Further Additional Science					3%	4%	3%	2%						
Science	Combined Science									63%	64%	65%	65%	65%	65%

Source: Statistics: GCSEs (key stage 4) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Note: Figures include all schools and are taken from subject tables from various reports in the source. Discounting has been applied where pupils have taken the same subject more than once and only one entry is counted in these circumstances

Subject	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Accounting and finance	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Art & design	5.5%	5.4%	5.5%	5.3%	5.5%	5.4%	5.3%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.3%	5.4%	5.1%
Biology	6.7%	7.0%	7.2%	7.4%	7.5%	7.3%	7.3%	7.4%	7.8%	8.6%	8.2%	8.3%	8.3%	8.5%
Business studies	4.0%	3.7%	3.6%	3.5%	3.5%	3.2%	3.4%	3.6%	4.0%	4.2%	4.6%	4.7%	5.0%	5.1%
Chemistry	5.2%	5.5%	5.7%	6.1%	6.4%	6.1%	6.1%	6.3%	6.7%	7.4%	7.2%	7.2%	6.9%	7.0%
Computer science	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%	0.8%	1.0%	1.3%	1.4%	1.6%	1.7%	1.9%	2.2%
Design & technology	1.9%	1.9%	1.8%	1.6%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%
Drama	1.9%	1.9%	1.8%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%
Economics	2.6%	2.7%	2.7%	3.0%	3.1%	3.5%	3.7%	3.8%	4.0%	4.0%	4.2%	4.3%	4.6%	4.8%
English language							2.8%	2.5%	2.2%	1.9%	2.0%	1.9%	1.8%	1.6%
English language & literature							1.5%	1.4%	1.2%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.8%
English literature							5.9%	5.7%	5.5%	5.1%	5.3%	4.8%	4.2%	4.2%
French	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.8%
Further mathematics	1.4%	1.5%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.8%	1.9%	2.0%	2.0%	1.8%	2.0%	2.0%	1.8%	1.8%
General studies	6.1%	5.5%	4.8%	4.3%	3.2%	2.4%	1.6%	1.0%	0.5%	0.0%				
Geography	3.7%	3.6%	3.7%	3.8%	4.0%	4.5%	4.4%	4.7%	4.2%	4.4%	3.8%	4.3%	4.4%	4.4%

#### Table 1: A level entries by subject, as a proportion of all A level entries, 2009/10 to 2022/23

German	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Government and politics	1.6%	1.7%	1.7%	1.8%	1.7%	1.8%	1.9%	2.1%	2.2%	2.5%	2.3%	2.3%	2.4%	2.6%
History	5.8%	5.8%	5.9%	6.0%	6.2%	6.5%	6.5%	6.0%	6.0%	6.4%	5.7%	5.6%	5.5%	5.6%
ICT	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%	0.7%	0.5%	0.0%				
Law	1.8%	1.7%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.5%	1.5%	1.7%	1.8%	1.8%
Maths							10.6%	11.0%	11.6%	11.3%	11.9%	11.8%	11.2%	11.1%
Media film tv	3.1%	3.1%	2.9%	2.7%	2.6%	2.5%	2.5%	2.4%	2.4%	1.9%	1.9%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%
Other modern languages	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	0.9%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%
Other sciences	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%
Physical education	2.7%	2.5%	2.2%	1.9%	1.8%	1.7%	1.6%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%	1.6%
Physics	3.5%	3.7%	3.9%	4.1%	4.3%	4.2%	4.2%	4.4%	4.7%	4.9%	4.9%	4.9%	4.6%	4.4%
Psychology	6.8%	6.8%	6.8%	6.9%	6.9%	7.0%	7.5%	7.5%	7.8%	8.5%	8.7%	9.1%	9.7%	9.7%
Religious studies	2.3%	2.4%	2.4%	2.5%	2.7%	2.8%	3.0%	3.0%	2.3%	2.2%	2.0%	2.1%	2.0%	1.9%
Sociology	3.5%	3.5%	3.6%	3.6%	3.7%	3.9%	4.2%	4.4%	4.4%	4.9%	5.1%	5.3%	5.5%	5.7%
Spanish	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	0.9%
Total Classical studies	0.8%	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%
Total English	10.7%	10.6%	10.6%	10.8%	10.5%	10.7%	10.2%	9.6%	8.9%	8.0%	8.3%	7.7%	6.9%	6.7%
Total Maths	8.9%	9.7%	10.0%	10.4%	10.6%	10.8%	11.0%	11.3%	11.9%	11.4%	12.1%	11.9%	11.3%	11.2%
Total Music	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%

Source: <u>16 to 18 time series attainment and single year entry dashboard</u>

#### Table 3a: Proportion of pupils at the end of KS4 who have entered Music in GCSE or Technical Awards

Qualification & Subject	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
GCSE - Music	7.0%	6.7%	5.9%	5.7%	5.5%	5.6%	5.2%	4.4%
Technical Awards - Music	1.3%	1.3%	1.5%	2.0%	2.4%	2.7%	2.7%	2.3%

Source: Statistics: GCSEs (key stage 4) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

#### Table 3b: Proportion of pupils at the end of KS4 who have entered PE GCSE or Sports subjects Technical Awards

Qualification & Subject	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
GCSE – Physical Education	19.0%	19.0%	14.6%	13.2%	11.8%	11.1%	10.8%	11.0%
Technical Awards - Sports	7.1%	6.6%	9.4%	11.5%	12.8%	14.0%	14.1%	12.7%

Source: Statistics: GCSEs (key stage 4) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

#### Table 3c: Proportion of pupils at the end of KS4 who have entered Art and design subjects in GCSE or Technical Awards

Qualification & Subject	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
GCSE – Art and Design	27.0%	26.7%	26.5%	28.2%	28.8%	29.1%	28.1%	26.1%
GCSE – Applied Art and Design	0.0%	0.1%						
Technical Awards - Art and Design	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%	1.4%	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%	0.9%

Source: Statistics: GCSEs (key stage 4) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

## Table 3d: Proportion of pupils at the end of KS4 who have entered in TV/Film/Media subjects in GCSE or Technical Awards

Qualification & Subject	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
GCSE – Media/Film/TV	8.0%	7.0%	6.5%	5.0%	4.6%	4.3%	3.9%	4.0%
GCSE – Film studies					0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%
Technical Awards - Media Studies	0.7%	1.0%	1.2%	0.2%				
Technical Awards - Multimedia	0.7%	0.7%	0.8%	5.3%	8.6%	8.7%	8.3%	7.2%

Source: Statistics: GCSEs (key stage 4) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

# Table 3e: Proportion of pupils at the end of KS4 who have entered in Drama GCSE and Speech and Drama subjects inTechnical Awards

Qualification & Subject	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
GCSE - Drama	11.0%	10.6%	9.8%	9.5%	9.3%	8.9%	8.3%	7.4%
Technical Awards - Speech & Drama	1.5%	1.4%	2.0%	2.2%	2.6%	3.0%	2.8%	2.3%

Source: Statistics: GCSEs (key stage 4) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

# Table 3f: Proportion of pupils at the end of KS4 who have entered Computer Science or ICT in GCSE or ICT in TechnicalAwards

Qualification & Subject	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
GCSE – Information Technology	13.0%	10.7%	7.8%					
GCSE – Computer Science	10.0%	12.0%	12.0%	12.8%	12.2%	12.1%	12.1%	13.1%
Technical Awards – Information and Communication Technology	26.9%	30.3%	9.1%	8.0%	4.7%	4.6%	4.0%	3.6%

Source: Statistics: GCSEs (key stage 4) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

#### Table 4: Teaching time by subject, as proportion of total teaching time, year 10 and 11

Subject	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
All D&T	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Art & Design	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Biology	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Business Studies	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%
Careers and Key Skills					0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Chemistry	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Citizenship	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Computer science							1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%
Drama	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%
Engineering	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
English	14%	14%	15%	15%	16%	16%	16%	17%	17%	17%	17%	17%	16%
French	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
General Studies	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
General/Combined Science	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%
Geography	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%

German	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
History	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
ICT	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Mathematics	13%	14%	14%	14%	15%	16%	16%	16%	16%	16%	16%	16%	16%
Media Studies	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Music	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other Humanities	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Modern Foreign Language	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other science	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Social Studies	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Other/Combined Technology	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
PE/Sports	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%
Physics	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%
PSHE	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Religious Education	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Spanish	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%

Source: School workforce in England, Reporting year 2023 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk), includes

school workforce in state funded schools only. The school workforce census (SWC) records number of hours that are taught for each subject. The table below shows each subject total as a proportion of the overall teaching time given to a curriculum subject (<u>School workforce census guide 2023</u> (publishing.service.gov.uk). Note that these taught hours include both teacher and teaching assistant time.