

A report on A Religious Studies examination entries in 2023

All data in part one is taken from tables published by the Joint Council for Qualifications (www.jcq.org.uk)

PART ONE

Key points:

1. **The overall trend in A level entries for Religious Studies over the last 4 years has been steeply downward in Wales but fairly stable in England (Table 1 and 2).**
 - a. Since 2020, entries for RS A level in Wales, have fallen by just over 33% from 1126 to 748
 - b. During the same period, entries in England, were fairly stable with a rise of just under 1% from 14,564 to 14,690
2. **Attainment at grades A*-C** was similar in Wales (77.8%) as England (79%), however, students in Wales achieved a higher percentage of A* and A grades (31.4%) than their peers in England (25.4%) (Tables 3 and 4)
3. **As with GCSE, there is a wide variation between the counties of England in terms of the uptake for RS A level. The range is 0.85 and 3.61% of the cohort. At the time of writing – this data was not available for the counties of Wales.**

Table 1

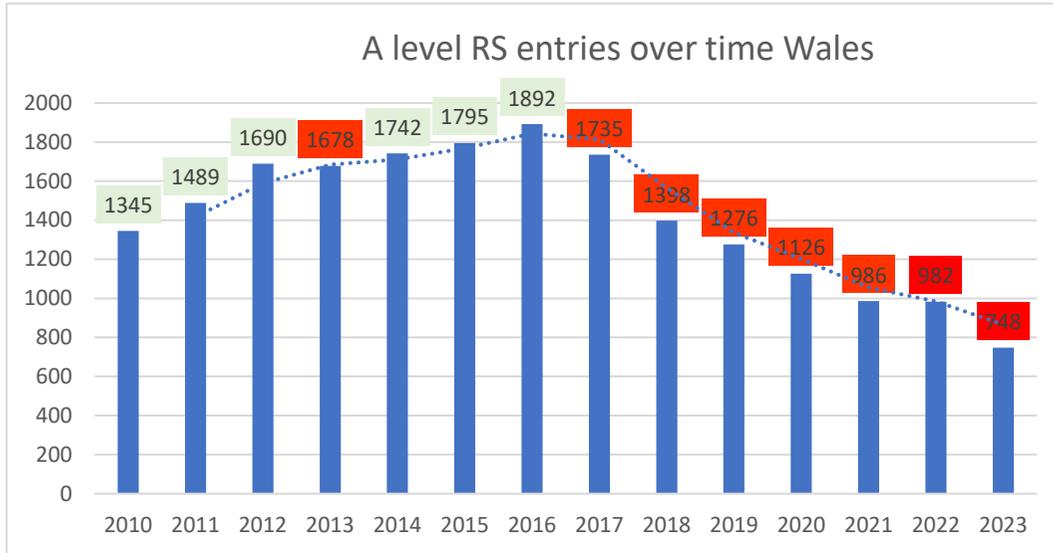


Table 2

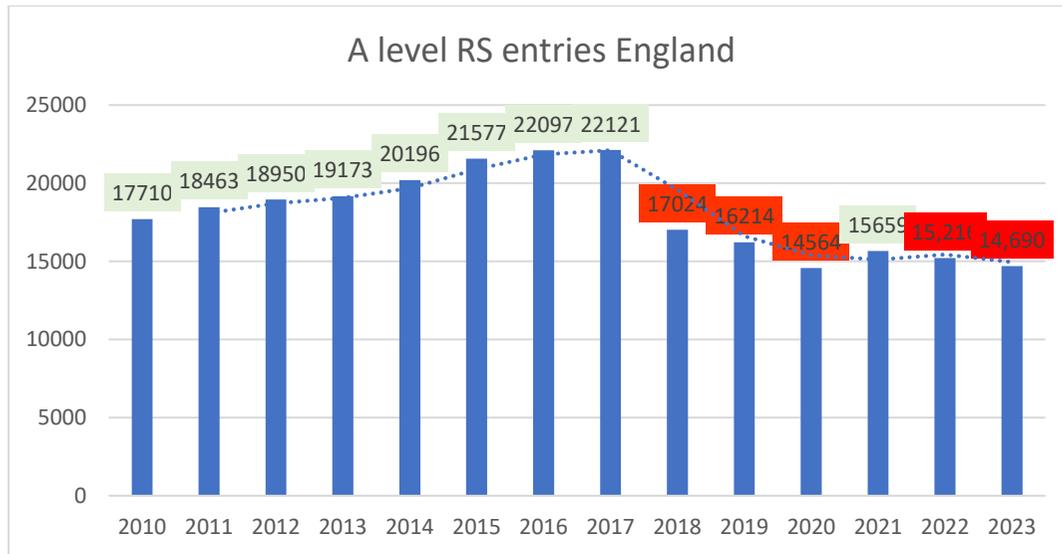


Table 3 :

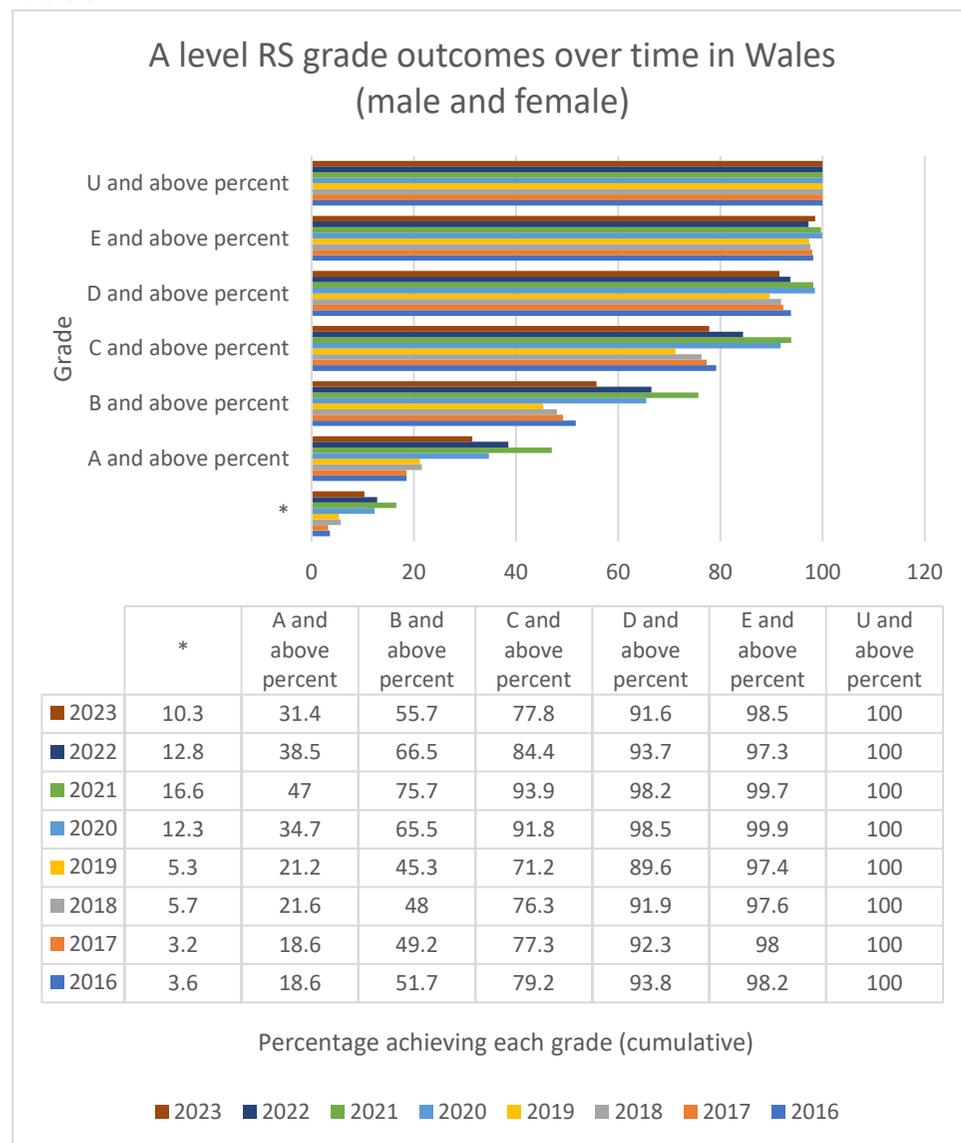
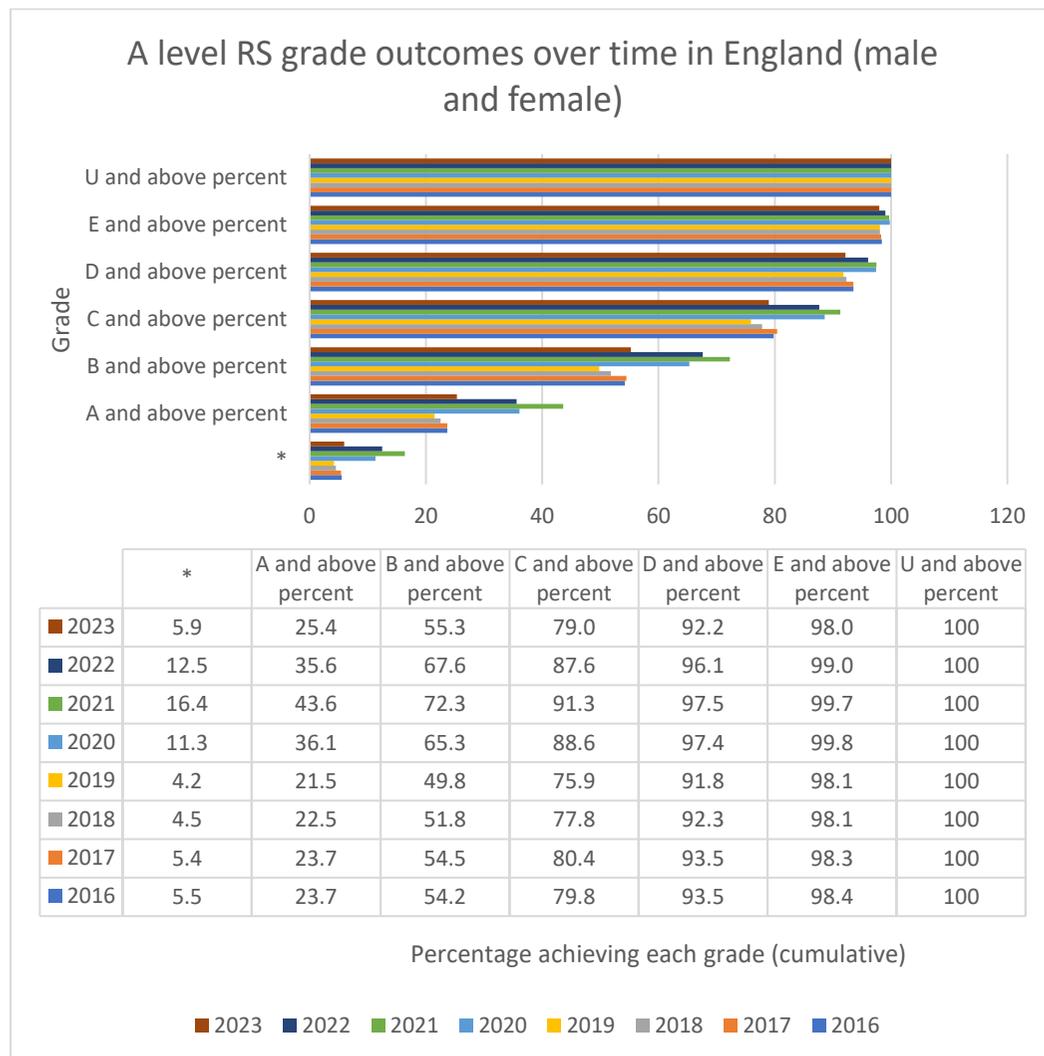


Table 4



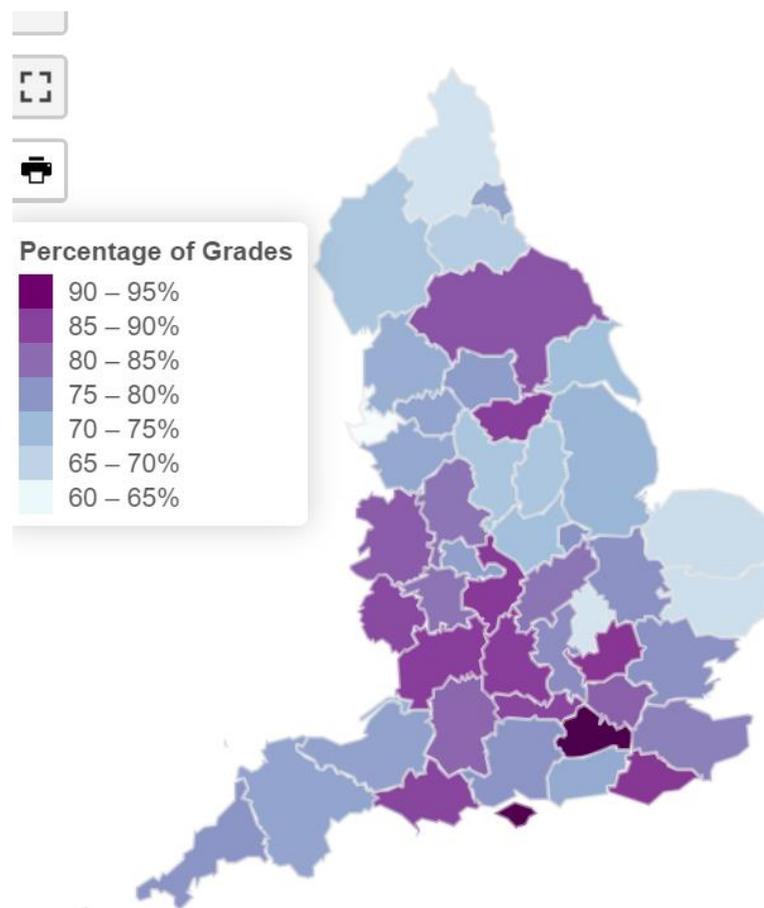
PART TWO: County variations

How does A level performance A*-C vary between counties in England?

Source: [Ofqual Analytics](#)

Counties ranked by % students attaining grades A*-C (Bold indicates average performance above the national average for England) -TABLE 5)

County	County Percent A*-C 2023 (Nat 79%)	Number of RS candidates	Number students in county overall	% Uptake in county (Nat 1.88%)
Surrey	90.3	370	25,785	1.43
Isle of Wight	90	25	1,180	0.85
Hertfordshire	84.8	540	25,885	2.09
East Sussex	84.7	120	12,365	0.97
Warwickshire	84.5	205	10,050	2.04
Gloucestershire	84.2	305	14,750	2.07
Oxfordshire	84.2	265	14,735	1.8
South Yorkshire	84.1	190	13,190	1.44
Dorset	83.6	275	10,335	2.66
Berkshire	83.5	425	19,310	2.2



Herefordshire	83.3	40	2,510	1.59
North Yorkshire	82.5	345	15,105	2.28
Shropshire	82	160	7,660	2.09
Greater London	81.6	3,120	151,435	2.06
Wiltshire	81.2	215	8,915	2.41
Worcestershire	80.1	150	7,265	2.06
Northamptonshire	80	160	9,700	1.65
Staffordshire	80	245	10,070	2.43
Kent	79.2	485	26,215	1.85
Buckinghamshire	78.3	255	15,845	1.61
Cambridgeshire	77.9	210	14,450	1.45
Essex	77.9	410	24,195	1.69
Hampshire	77.7	280	26,975	1.04
Cornwall	77.6	75	4,950	1.52
Rutland	77.6	50	1,385	3.61
West Yorkshire	77	565	29,265	1.93
West Midlands	76.7	925	38,340	2.41
Somerset	76.6	310	13,770	2.25
Devon	76.4	200	12,580	1.59
Greater Manchester	76.4	630	37,445	1.68
Tyne and Wear	76.3	285	11,185	2.55
Cheshire	76	240	14,930	1.61
West Sussex	75.8	95	10,505	0.9
Lancashire	75.5	290	17,090	1.7
County of Bristol	75	125	7,075	1.77
Lincolnshire	74.9	225	11,545	1.95
East Riding of Yorkshire	74	75	5,320	1.41

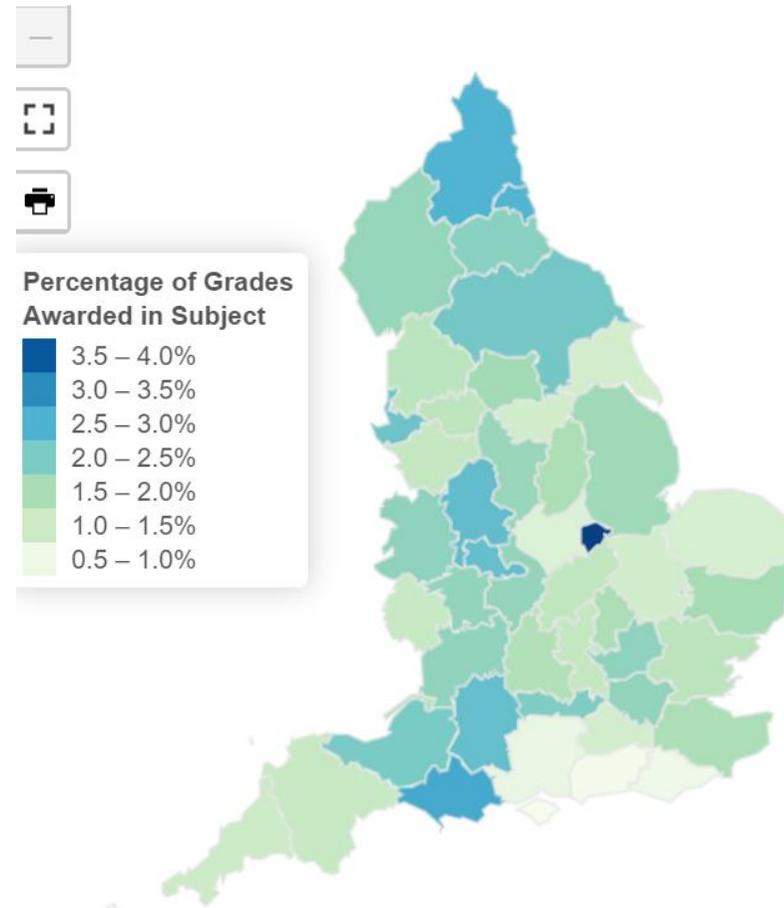
Leicestershire	73.8	185	14,645	1.26
Cumbria	73.1	105	5,185	2.03
Derbyshire	73	195	9,750	2
Nottinghamshire	73	255	13,885	1.84
Durham	72.1	190	8,905	2.13
Norfolk	70.1	125	9,290	1.35
Suffolk	69.9	165	8,745	1.89
Northumberland	69.3	75	2,930	2.56
Bedfordshire	69.1	165	8,985	1.84
Merseyside	64.9	355	15,155	2.34

How does A level uptake vary between the counties in England?

Counties ranked by % students entered for A level RS (Bold indicates average uptake above the national average for England)

TABLE 6

County	%Uptake in county (Nat 1.88%)	Number of RS candidates	County Percent A*-C 2023 (Nat 79%)	Number students in county in total
Rutland	3.61	50	77.6	1,385
Dorset	2.66	275	83.6	10,335
Northumberland	2.56	75	69.3	2,930
Tyne and Wear	2.55	285	76.3	11,185
Staffordshire	2.43	245	80	10,070
West Midlands	2.41	925	76.7	38,340
Wiltshire	2.41	215	81.2	8,915
Merseyside	2.34	355	64.9	15,155
North Yorkshire	2.28	345	82.5	15,105
Somerset	2.25	310	76.6	13,770



Berkshire	2.2	425	83.5	19,310
Durham	2.13	190	72.1	8,905
Hertfordshire	2.09	540	84.8	25,885
Shropshire	2.09	160	82	7,660
Gloucestershire	2.07	305	84.2	14,750
Greater London	2.06	3,120	81.6	151,435
Worcestershire	2.06	150	80.1	7,265
Warwickshire	2.04	205	84.5	10,050
Cumbria	2.03	105	73.1	5,185
Derbyshire	2	195	73	9,750
Lincolnshire	1.95	225	74.9	11,545
West Yorkshire	1.93	565	77	29,265
Suffolk	1.89	165	69.9	8,745
Kent	1.85	485	79.2	26,215
Bedfordshire	1.84	165	69.1	8,985
Nottinghamshire	1.84	255	73	13,885
Oxfordshire	1.8	265	84.2	14,735
County of Bristol	1.77	125	75	7,075
Lancashire	1.7	290	75.5	17,090
Essex	1.69	410	77.9	24,195
Greater Manchester	1.68	630	76.4	37,445
Northamptonshire	1.65	160	80	9,700
Buckinghamshire	1.61	255	78.3	15,845
Cheshire	1.61	240	76	14,930
Devon	1.59	200	76.4	12,580
Herefordshire	1.59	40	83.3	2,510
Cornwall	1.52	75	77.6	4,950
Cambridgeshire	1.45	210	77.9	14,450
South Yorkshire	1.44	190	84.1	13,190

Surrey	1.43	370	90.3	25,785
East Riding of Yorkshire	1.41	75	74	5,320
Norfolk	1.35	125	70.1	9,290
Leicestershire	1.26	185	73.8	14,645
Hampshire	1.04	280	77.7	26,975
East Sussex	0.97	120	84.7	12,365
West Sussex	0.9	95	75.8	10,505
Isle of Wight	0.85	25	90	1,180

Deborah Weston OBE: Research Officer NATRE (September 2023)