

A report on GCSE 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. **In both England and Wales, GCSE entries for Religious Studies Full Course have risen substantially (Tables 1 and 2).**
 - a. Since 2010, GCSE entries for RS full course in England, have risen by just over 30% (51,645) from 170,767 to 222,412
 - b. Similarly, GCSE entries for RS full course in Wales, have risen by just over 36% (3537) from 6100 to 222,412
2. **Short course entries in both nations in the same period, have fallen dramatically, but in England more rapidly than in Wales, almost certainly due to the removal of the short course in all subjects being removed from performance measures in England. (Tables 1 and 2)**
 - a. In the same period, short course entries in England have fallen by just over 92% from 254,698 to 18,837
 - b. Also short course entries in Wales have fallen by 85% from 19,683 to 3020
3. **Far fewer pupils in England and Wales leave school with a qualification in RS in 2023, than did in 2010 (Table 1 and 2)**
 - a. Whereas around 425,465 pupils in England entered a GCSE qualification in 2010, in 2023 only 241,249 pupils did so in 2023 – a fall of 184,216 pupils (43%).
 - b. Similarly, 26,425 pupils in Wales entered a GCSE qualification in 2010, in 2023 only 12,657 pupils did so in 2023 – a fall of 13,768 pupils (52%).
4. **The trend in Religious Studies Full course entries over the last 5-6 years has been stable at around 22,000 students in England and between 9 and 10,000 in Wales (Table 3)**
5. **When compared to the other Humanities subjects, the number of entries for RS are relatively similar but whereas the trend for RS is stable, the trend for History and Geography is upwards (Table 3).**
6. **There are significant regional variations in rates of entry for GCSE and performance. These warrant further investigation.**

Table 1

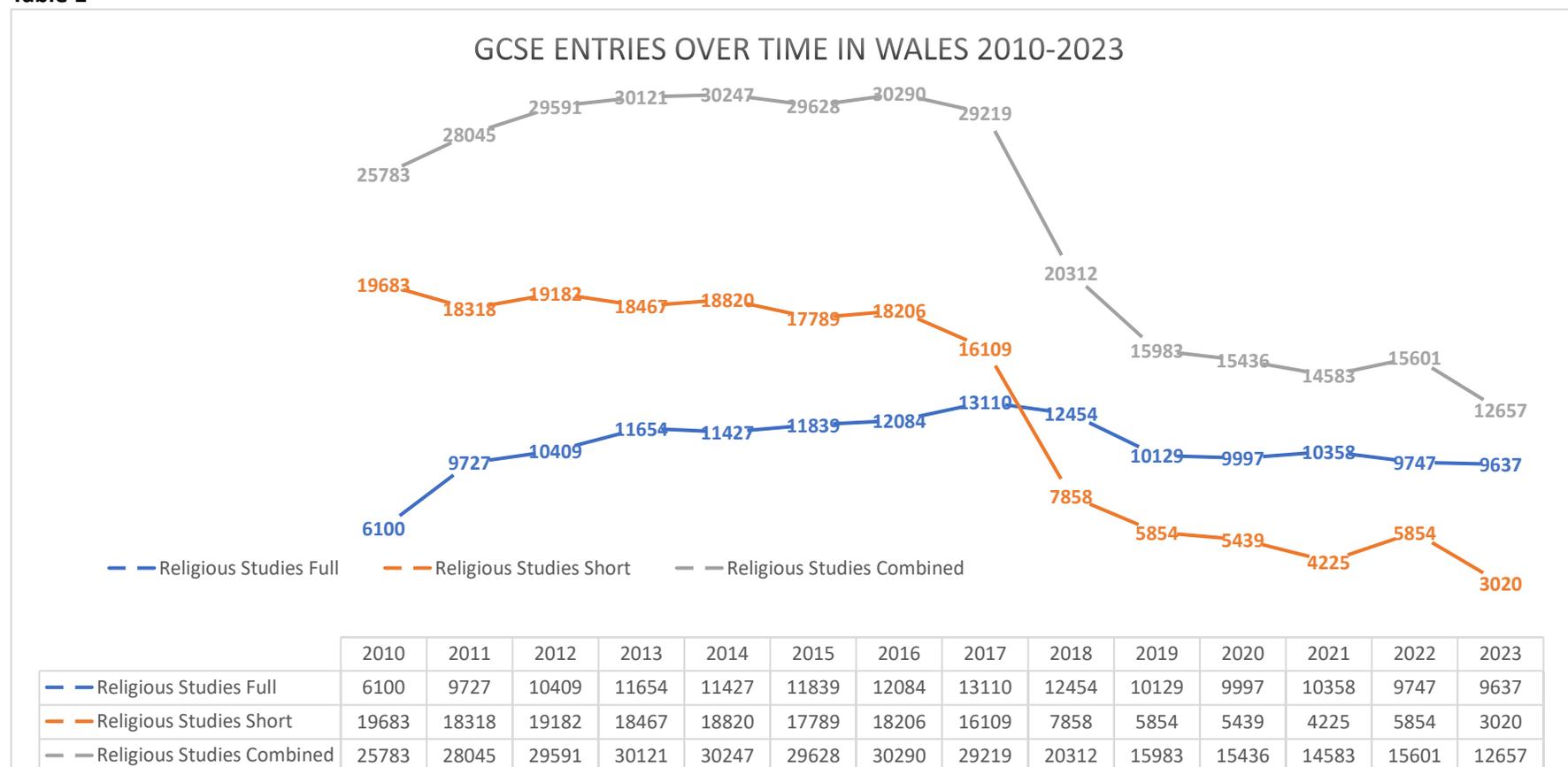
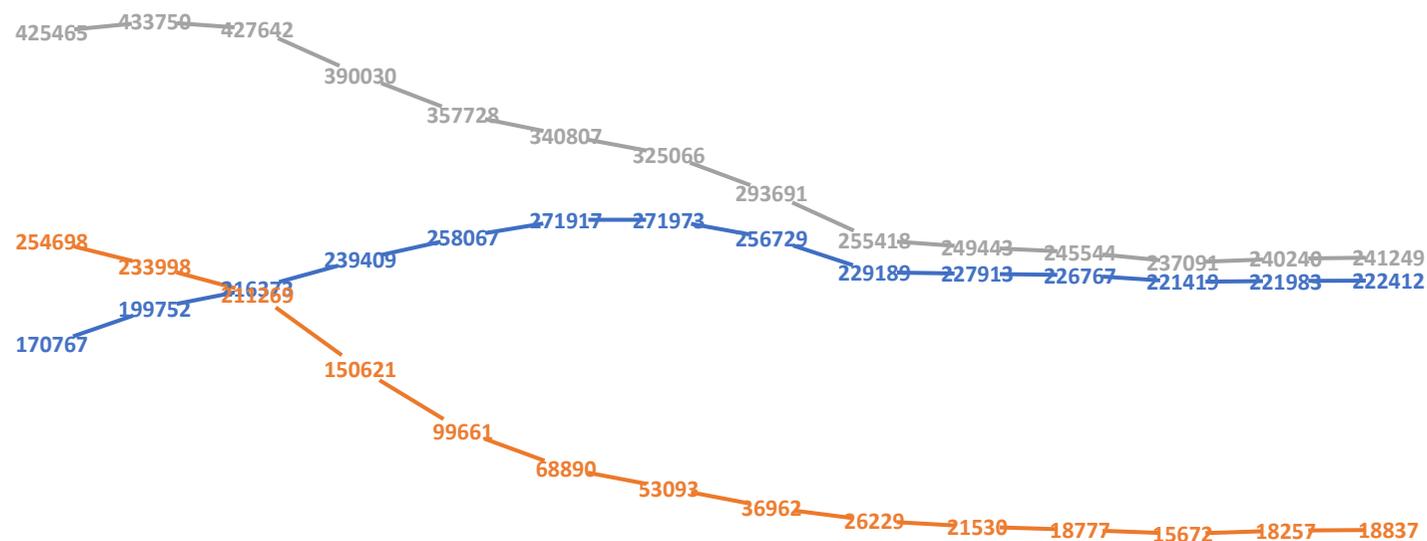


Table 2

GCSE ENTRIES OVER TIME IN ENGLAND 2010-2023

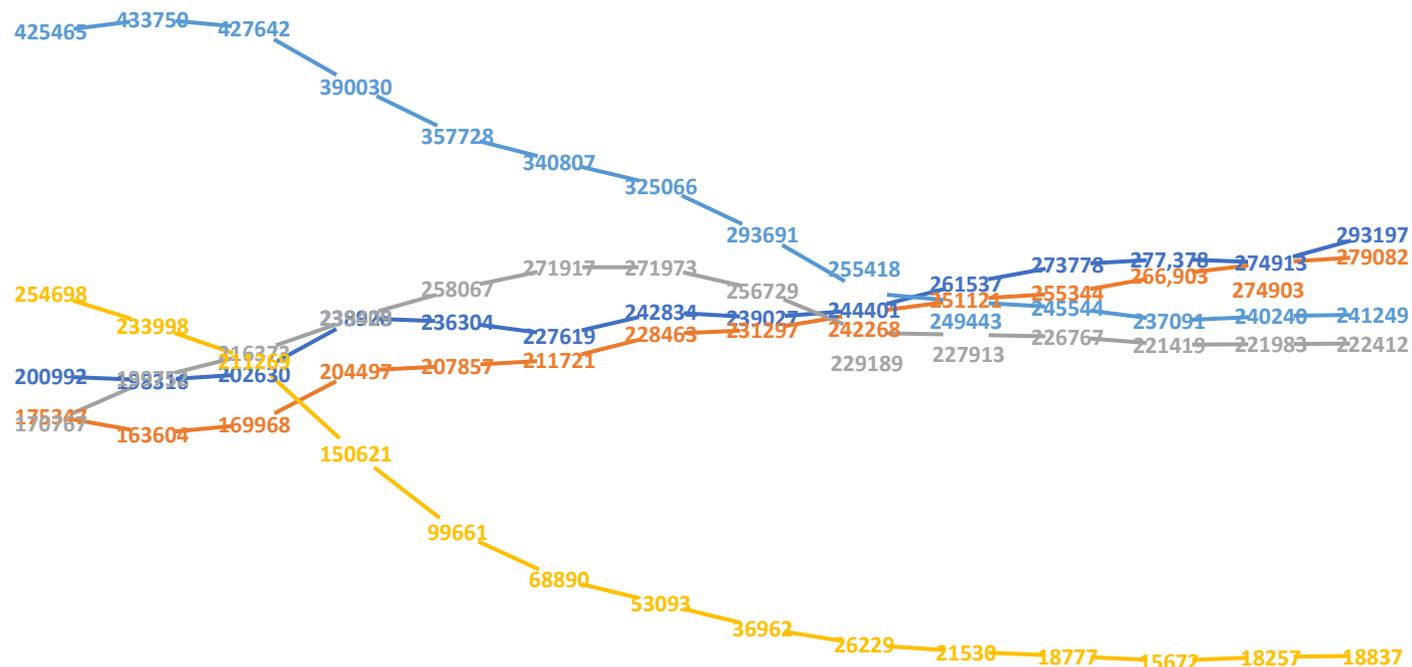


	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
— Religious Studies Full	170767	199752	216373	239409	258067	271917	271973	256729	229189	227913	226767	221419	221983	222412
— Religious Studies Short	254698	233998	211269	150621	99661	68890	53093	36962	26229	21530	18777	15672	18257	18837
— Religious Studies Combined	425465	433750	427642	390030	357728	340807	325066	293691	255418	249443	245544	237091	240240	241249

— Religious Studies Full — Religious Studies Short — Religious Studies Combined

Table 3 :

GCSE HUMANITIES ENTRIES OVER TIME IN ENGLAND 2010-2023



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
History	200992	198316	202630	238928	236304	227619	242834	239027	244401	261537	273778	277,378	274913	293197
Geography	175347	163604	169968	204497	207857	211721	228463	231297	242268	251121	255344	266,903	274903	279082
Religious Studies Full	170767	199752	216373	239409	258067	271917	271973	256729	229189	227913	226767	221419	221983	222412
Religious Studies Short	254698	233998	211269	150621	99661	68890	53093	36962	26229	21530	18777	15672	18257	18837
Religious Studies Combined	425465	433750	427642	390030	357728	340807	325066	293691	255418	249443	245544	237091	240240	241249

History Geography Religious Studies Full Religious Studies Short Religious Studies Combined

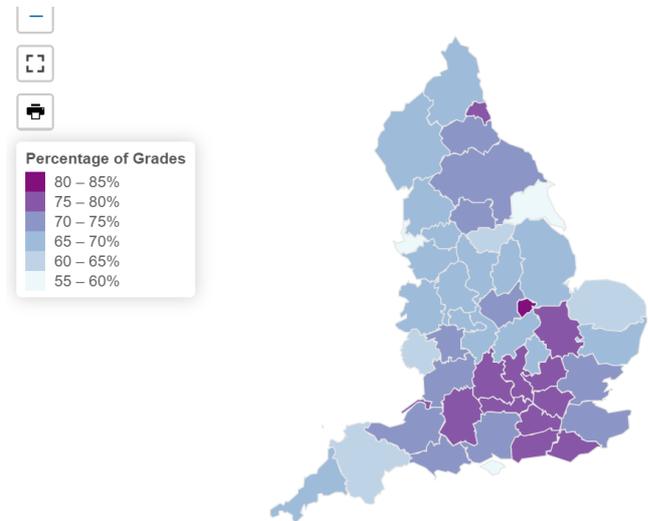
PART TWO: County variations

How does GCSE RS performance 9-4 vary between counties in England?

Source: [Ofqual Analytics](#)

Counties ranked by % students attaining grades 9-4 (Bold indicates average performance above the national average for England) -TABLE 4)

County	County % grade 9-4 (Nat 72.2%)	Uptake county % Students (Nat 25.7%)
Rutland	82.1	18.5
Cambridgeshire	79.6	13.6
Hertfordshire	79.4	24.9
County of Bristol	78.9	20.4
Oxfordshire	78.4	18.2
West Sussex	77.8	17.7
Surrey	77.6	34.6
Berkshire	77.4	24.5
Greater London	77.3	32.5
Buckinghamshire	77.3	22.8
Tyne and Wear	77	22.1
East Sussex	76.8	13.6
Wiltshire	75.8	23.2
Kent	74.6	18.5
Essex	74.6	16.8
Gloucestershire	73.9	15.4
West Yorkshire	73.5	17
Somerset	73.4	13.8
Dorset	73.2	34.1
Leicestershire	73.1	21.6
Durham	73	27.7
Hampshire	72.9	15.9
Worcestershire	71.9	20.8
North Yorkshire	70.4	23.6
West Midlands	69.9	27.2
Nottinghamshire	69.9	16
Northamptonshire	69.9	13.4
Cumbria	69.7	19.7
Suffolk	69.1	16
Greater Manchester	68.6	27.5
Bedfordshire	68.6	26.7
Warwickshire	68.6	19.8
Derbyshire	68.4	15.8
Lancashire	67.6	33.8
Lincolnshire	67.5	19.4
Staffordshire	67	25.9
Cornwall	66.7	12.4
Northumberland	65.9	21.6
Shropshire	65.8	18
Cheshire	65.6	24.1
Devon	63.8	21.1
South Yorkshire	63.5	15.1
Herefordshire	63	18.8
Norfolk	62.1	17.1
East Riding of Yorkshire	59.7	15.2
Merseyside	58.8	29.1
Isle of Wight	56.8	10.7



How does GCSE uptake vary between the counties in England?

Counties ranked by % students entered for GCSE RS (Bold indicates average uptake above the national average for England) TABLE 5

County	uptake county % Students (Nat 25.7%)	County % grade 9-4 (Nat 72.2%)
Surrey	34.6	77.6
Dorset	34.1	73.2
Lancashire	33.8	67.6
Greater London	32.5	77.3
Merseyside	29.1	58.8
Durham	27.7	73
Greater Manchester	27.5	68.6
West Midlands	27.2	69.9
Bedfordshire	26.7	68.6
Staffordshire	25.9	67
Hertfordshire	24.9	79.4
Berkshire	24.5	77.4
Cheshire	24.1	65.6
North Yorkshire	23.6	70.4
Wiltshire	23.2	75.8
Buckinghamshire	22.8	77.3
Tyne and Wear	22.1	77
Leicestershire	21.6	73.1
Northumberland	21.6	65.9
Devon	21.1	63.8
Worcestershire	20.8	71.9
County of Bristol	20.4	78.9
Warwickshire	19.8	68.6
Cumbria	19.7	69.7
Lincolnshire	19.4	67.5
Herefordshire	18.8	63
Rutland	18.5	82.1
Kent	18.5	74.6
Oxfordshire	18.2	78.4
Shropshire	18	65.8
West Sussex	17.7	77.8
Norfolk	17.1	62.1
West Yorkshire	17	73.5
Essex	16.8	74.6
Nottinghamshire	16	69.9
Suffolk	16	69.1
Hampshire	15.9	72.9
Derbyshire	15.8	68.4
Gloucestershire	15.4	73.9
East Riding of Yorkshire	15.2	59.7
South Yorkshire	15.1	63.5
Somerset	13.8	73.4
Cambridgeshire	13.6	79.6
East Sussex	13.6	76.8
Northamptonshire	13.4	69.9
Cornwall	12.4	66.7
Isle of Wight	10.7	56.8

