

The link between absence and attainment at key stage 4

KS4 exams are taken by pupils at the end of secondary school education, with this key stage being taught over two years (from year 10 to year 11). These exams are designed so that by the end of KS4 most pupils are expected to achieve A*-C in English and maths. In this release the number of end of KS4 pupils achieving 5+ GCSEs A*-C or equivalent, 5+ GCSEs A*-C or equivalent including English and maths GCSEs and those achieving the English Baccalaureate have been considered. See technical note 4 for details of how to find out more information on the way attainment is measured at the end of KS4.

Attainment in KS4 qualifications by levels of overall absence split into percentage point bands

Figure 3: Percentage of pupils achieving stated qualifications at the end of KS4 in the 2012/13 academic year by percentage of sessions missed over KS4

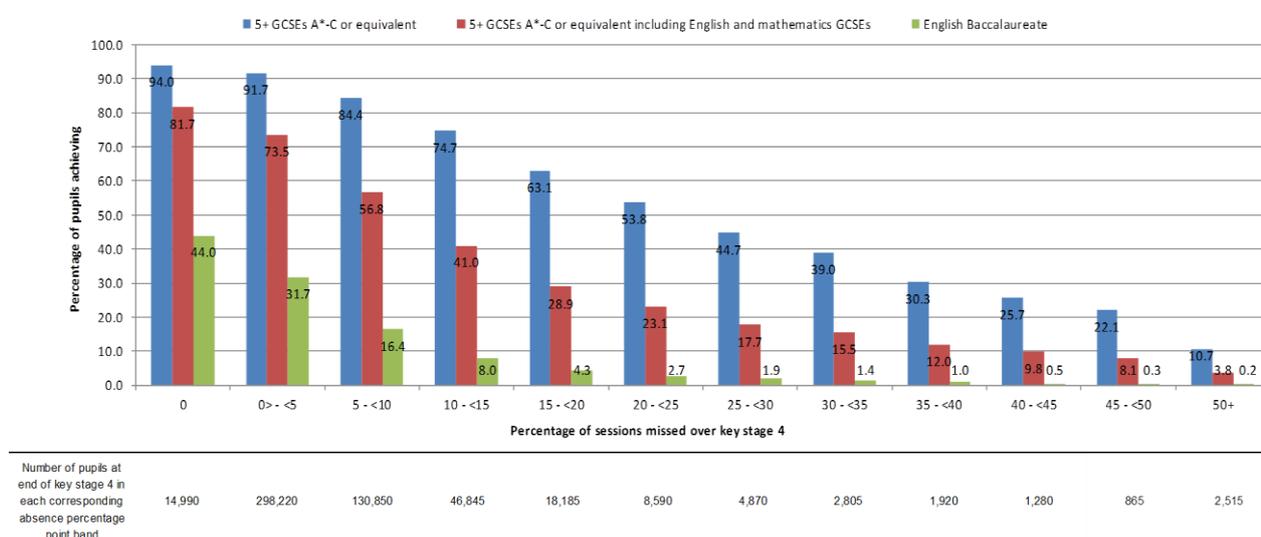


Figure 3 shows that in general the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage, the lower the likely level of attainment at the end of KS4. Specifically, pupils with no absence are 1.5 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C or equivalent and 2.8 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C or equivalent including English and mathematics than pupils missing 15-20 per cent of KS4 lessons. The difference in achievement is also evident with the English Baccalaureate, where pupils with no absence are around 10.2 times more likely to achieve the English Baccalaureate than pupils missing 15-20 per cent of KS4 lessons.

The relationship between absence and KS4 attainment remained similar over the past five academic years.

The number of pupils in the 30-<35 absence rate percentage point band and above represent a small proportion of pupils at the end of key stage 4 (around 1.8 per cent). Thus, any conclusions about absence rates above 30 per cent are highly volatile.