

ALL Statement on 2026 GCSE results

This year saw the first exams of the new GCSEs in French, German and Spanish. ALL has been closely involved throughout the whole process, working with DfE, Ofqual, the exam boards and other organisations to ensure that the change was successful and of benefit to pupils.

Inevitably with a new specification, there is a learning process as everyone looks at the specification and the initial (published) Sample Assessment Materials and gives feedback. We were pleased that the exam boards responded to the suggestion to have two rather than one further sample to use in mock exams which was not put into the public domain. In tiered subjects such as ML, this is particularly helpful when deciding on tiering. The provisional entries analysis published by Ofqual in June showed an increase in entries to Higher tier, as well as a drop in entries for French, leading to concerns that there may be an impact on results.

The good news is that there has been a smooth transition from the previous specification to the new one. In particular, there has not been a noticeable increase in the number getting a U when entered for Higher Tier. In overall terms there has been a small but noticeable increase in the percentages getting the key grades (9, 7, 4, 1) showing how teachers and pupils have worked hard on getting to grips with the new specification. Senior examiners look at the standards at these key points so that Ofqual is assured that the rise is a result of higher standards.

ALL London is holding a free webinar on Thursday August 27th 7pm - 8pm 'Exploring the results in the new GCSEs in French, German and Spanish'. All are welcome. Please sign up at: [Exploring the results in the new GCSEs in French, German and Spanish](#)

Ofqual had begun a process in 2019 to make positive adjustment to the grading in GCSE French and German, interrupted by the pandemic but continued when grading returned to normal. As a result, and taken together with this year's improvement in all three languages, there have been increases which reflect the standards achieved.

This year, within a national context where the proportion of grades at 7 and above has increased only slightly by an average of **0.1 percentage points** and grades at 4 and above by **0.2 percentage points**, German, French and Spanish have seen comparatively higher rises.

Grade 7 and above

The proportion of candidates achieving grade 7+ has risen again in all three languages.

- **French** has reached **30.2% in 2026**, following **29.7% in 2025**, **28% in 2024**, and **26% in 2023**.
- **German** has risen to **34.8% in 2026**, after **34% in 2025**, **32.1% in 2024**, and **27.6% in 2023**.
- **Spanish** has increased to **28.9% in 2026**, from **27.1% in 2025**, **26.7% in 2024**, and **26.1% in 2023**.

Grade 4 and above

A similar pattern is evident at grade 4+, with consistent year-on-year improvements.

- **French** has risen to **73.6% in 2026**, following **72.9% in 2025**, **71.2% in 2024**, and **70.5% in 2023**.
- **German** has reached **80.2% in 2026**, after **79.6% in 2025**, **77.5% in 2024**, and **76.9% in 2023**.
- **Spanish** has increased to **71.9% in 2026**, from **70.6% in 2025**, **69.8% in 2024**, and **69.2% in 2023**.

It is really important when looking at raw percentages of grades awarded to note that the three languages (French, German and Spanish) have different and changing ability profiles, which affects the distribution of grades awarded e.g. Spanish has a broader profile than German which has a high proportion of students with high prior attainment (more details in [blogpost](#) by ALL Trustee, Helen Myers looking at 2024, the last year with KS2 prior attainment).

The overall number of GCSE entries across all subjects has risen by 1%. However, when viewed as a proportion of total entries, the picture for the main languages is more mixed:

- **French** has seen a substantial fall of 6,960 candidates, with its share dropping to **2.10% in 2026** from **2.24% in 2025**, having already declined from **2.27% in 2024** to **2.24% in 2025**.
- **German** has increased marginally by 57 candidates and remains at **0.57% of total entries in 2026**, following a decrease from **0.61% in 2024** to **0.57% in 2025**.
- **Spanish** has grown by 660 candidates, but its share of overall entries has slipped slightly to **2.29% in 2026**, down from **2.31% in 2025**, despite rising from **2.25% in 2024** to **2.31% in 2025**.

ALL will continue to argue that there should be a greater adjustment to all three languages so that pupils will see that their GCSE grades in ML are comparable, on average, with their grades in other subjects previously part of EBacc, rather than thinking (incorrectly) that they are not as good at ML as other “EBacc” subjects. In the meantime, we hope that the positive change we are seeing this year will encourage students and teachers of ML.

There has been a decrease in the number taking ‘Other Modern Languages’ (comprising 15 languages) this year (40,437 in 2026 having risen in 2025 to 42,113 from 41,475 in 2024). This year statistics have been made available to show the breakdown in each language at the key grades 7, 4 and 1. These show that the vast majority score highly – 93% at Grade 4 or equivalent and above and 72.8% at Grade 7 or equivalent and above. ALL continues to support and encourage the delivery of Home, Heritage and Community Languages (HHCL) and the work of Supplementary schools and understands the value of recognising student achievement through recognised qualifications. We made this point in our response to the Curriculum and Assessment Review, and would support any initiative to make such qualifications available for a wider range of languages.

ALL Co-Presidents, Anna Lise Gordon and Steven Fawkes, share this message with students receiving GCSE results this year: “Learning a new language (or languages!) alongside studies in many other subjects can be demanding and we congratulate all students on their GCSE results. Languages play such a vital role in the world and your efforts over many years are a real cause for celebration. We would also like to commend students who have taken GCSE qualifications in languages learnt outside of school, perhaps in their families and other educational settings. You should all feel very proud of your achievements! We’d love you to continue with your language learning in the future - you never know where languages might take you!” Anna Lise and Steven also wish to thank teachers everywhere for their unflinching dedication to nurturing our precious linguists to achieve their best in language learning. Congratulations, everyone!

ALL’s webpage for school-aged students is here: [Languages for Living](#)

Appendix with links

ALL London is holding a webinar on Thursday August 27th 7-8 ‘Exploring the results in the new GCSEs in French, German and Spanish’. All are welcome.

[Exploring the results in the new GCSEs in French, German and Spanish](#)

JCQ has shared main results tables, press notice and other results tables for 2026. Use the filters on this page to access these: [JCQ Exam results data](#)

They have also established a very useful GCSE interactive results dashboard, allowing efficient comparisons between different years: [JCQ GCSE interactive results dashboard](#) and welcome feedback as this tool is developed.

Direct links to JCQ documents relating to MFL GCSE:

Tables

- GCSE results by key grades, subjects, age, sex and country, 2026 (Table 1) [Click here](#)
- GCSE results by main grades, subjects, age and sex, England, 2026 (Table 2) [Click here](#)
- GCSE results by main grades, subjects, age and sex, Wales, 2026 (Table 3) [Click here](#)
- GCSE results by main grades, subjects, age and sex, Northern Ireland, 2026 (Table 4) [Click here](#)
- GCSE Miscellaneous, 2026 (Table 8) [Note that tab 3h has 'Other Modern Languages' [Click here](#)

Press Notices

- JCQ 2026 Level 1_2 Press Notice [Click here](#)
- JCQ 2026 Level 1_2 Press Notice NI [Click here](#)
- JCQ 2026 Level 1_2 Press Notice Wales [Click here](#)

Ofqual has a page dedicated to **Qualification results in England: summer 2026**. [Click here](#)

The FFT education Datalab post 'GCSE and Level 1/2 results 2026: The main trends in grades and entries' gives a very useful analysis of trends: [Click here](#)

Thursday 13 August 2026, 11:00am