

# INCLUSION STRATEGY ANNEX

Cardiff Council • 2025



STRONGER  
FAIRER  
GREENER



# Children and Young People's Engagement - Summary of Findings

## Overview

223 pupils from 3 primary and 3 secondary schools in Cardiff shared their views on inclusion in education. Most respondents were aged 11–15 (81%), with a balanced gender split (53% female, 45% male). The survey explored experiences of safety, fairness, relationships, learning, and participation. While not statistically representative, the findings highlight children and young people's priorities for a more inclusive education system.

## Key positive findings

- **Relationships & Belonging:** 85% felt recognised by teachers (“Teachers say hi and know my name”), and 77% felt their culture, language, or religion was respected.
- **Trusted Adults:** 68% reported having at least one adult they could trust in school.
- **Engagement:** 53% said they felt included in lessons because teachers listened to them and they enjoyed the activities.
- **Safe Identity:** 54% felt encouraged to be themselves at school.

## Main challenges identified

- **Fairness & Representation:** Only 32% felt posters and signs reflected people like them; 52% felt rules were fair.
- **Public Discipline:** 50% said they were told off in front of others; 39% saw public embarrassment as a very serious problem.
- **Voice & Participation:** Almost half felt only confident or popular students were chosen to represent the class; 46% wanted stronger opportunities to influence decisions.
- **Learning Barriers:** 33% believed some pupils were expected to fail, and 34% said fear of embarrassment stopped them from asking for help.
- **Spaces & Clubs:** Many noted a lack of calm spaces and exclusion from clubs or trips due to cost, confidence, or discrimination.

## What children say matters most

- Feeling safe, having friends, and access to trusted adults.
- Being treated fairly, respected for identity, and listened to.
- Enjoying learning and receiving support without embarrassment.
- Equal opportunities for all, including play and extracurricular activities.

## Priorities for inclusion

- 1. Fair Rules & Welcoming Environments** – Clear, consistent rules and calm, safe spaces.
- 2. Voice & Participation** – All pupils should have a say, not just the confident or popular.
- 3. Supportive Relationships** – Adults must notice when children struggle and respond with kindness.
- 4. Inclusive Learning** – Flexible teaching methods, high expectations, and stigma-free support.
- 5. Break & Free Time** – Equal access to clubs, trips, and safe spaces for both quiet and active play.

## Conclusion

Children and young people in Cardiff want education settings where they feel safe, respected, supported, and listened to. They value fairness, positive relationships with adults, opportunities to participate, and equal chances to succeed both inside and outside the classroom. These insights should inform the Education Inclusion Strategy to ensure schools are places where every child feels they belong.

# Parent & Carer Survey - Summary of Findings

The survey on inclusion in Cardiff schools, conducted by the Cardiff Research & Engagement Centre (CREC), gathered feedback from 332 parents and carers from across Cardiff. The key findings are as follows:

## Theme 1: Sense of belonging (Q4 and Q5)

### Q4. Experience in school:

- High levels of agreement were noted for statements 'My child has friends in school' (85%), 'My child feels safe in school' (84.4%), and 'My child is happy in school' (79.7%).
- Areas of concern included coping with the level of teaching (17.4% disagreed) and that there are opportunities for extracurricular activities (16.9% disagreed)

### Q5. The school:

- High levels of agreement were noted for the statements 'My child's teacher cares about the pupils' (83.8%), 'My child's school has a clear set of values' (81.0%) and 'My child's school provides a welcoming environment to parents and responds positively to parental comments/feedback' (77.8%)
- Areas of concern included support for 'transitioning from one school to another, within a school year' (21.7% disagreed), 'opportunities for my child to contribute their views to their school' (19.4%) and 'The school's communication with parents and carers is accessible' (18.4%).

## Theme 2: Additional support (Q6 and Q7)

- **22.6%** of respondents' children have additional learning needs, and 16% have an Individual Development Plan (IDP) (Q6).
- **High agreement** was noted for knowing how to raise concerns their child is not making progress (85.6%) or that they may need extra help/ have additional learning needs, (81.8%, Q7) and seven in ten feel 'the school gives good feedback on the progress my child is making' (69.6%, Q7).

- **Disagreement** was highest for the effectiveness of additional learning provision (38.1% disagreed), the school's ability to work with external support services (29.4%), and that 'children who have a particular aptitude are given encouragement and opportunities for more challenging work and to excel' (28.2%)

## Theme 3: Attendance, Behaviour, and Exclusions (Q8)

- **High agreement** was noted for the statement that 'The school highlights the importance of good attendance' (87.9%), celebrates positive achievements (76.2%), and has a 'clear policy on children's behaviour' (74.4%).
- **Areas of concern** included the curriculum's responsiveness to children's needs (21.4% disagreed) and the effectiveness of tackling poor behaviour (20.8% disagreed) and bullying (19% disagreed)

## Theme 4: School Staff

Respondents agreed that school staff are a positive role model (78.7%), are skilled and motivated (74.8%) and are diverse, reflecting the wider community (63.1%)

# Inclusion Indicators

The following characteristics are included using data from CapitaOne:

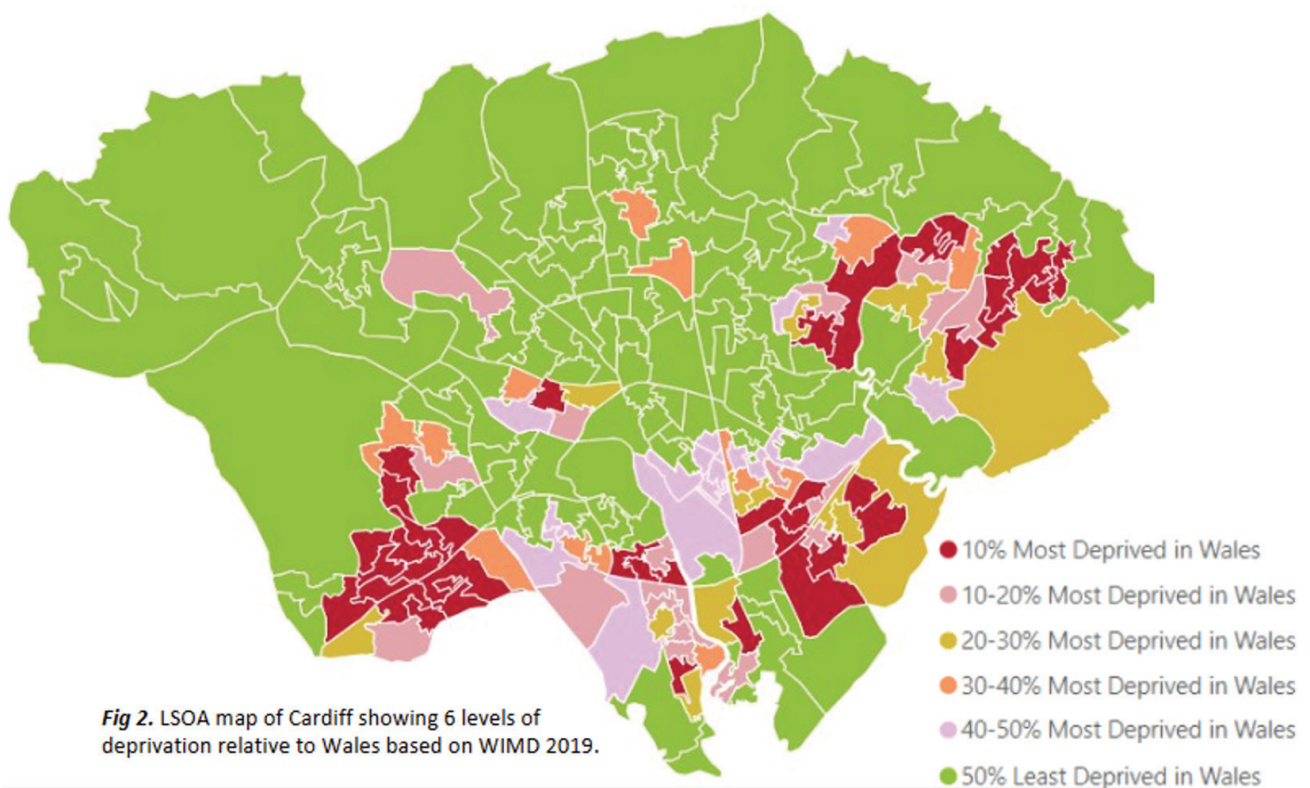
- **Age** - Number who were a given age on 31st August the preceding year. The focus is on age 4-15 but where available other age ranges have also been included.
- **Gender** - Matched using attendance records. Standardised as Percentage of Students of that gender.
- **Provision** - Type Calculated as Percentage of Students that attend the school type. Small numbers in some of the groups and some pupils being dual registered can impact on the accuracy of this data.
- **Additional Learning Needs** - Prior to January 2022, school aged children with additional learning needs were categorised using SEN. Since then, a new definition and categorisation has been in use, with the aim to setup new cases and transition all SEN judgements to Individual Development Plans for children and young people aged 0-25. Calculated as Percentage of Students with the stated level of additional learning needs who meet the performance indicator.

The following characteristics obtained from PLASC 2024 are included:

- **Ethnicity** - Identified as White British (WRBI), Unknown (unmatched, NOBT & REFU) or non-White British (all other groups). Standardised as Percentage of Students of that ethnicity.
- **Ethnicity** - Standardised as Percentage of Students of that ethnicity. Small numbers are more susceptible to chance and extreme values.
- **Free School Meal Eligibility (eFSM)** - Identified as Eligible, Not Eligible or Unknown. Standardised as Percentage of Students of that eligibility.
- **Home Address** - Standardised as Number per 1,000 aged 5-18 living in that ward based on Census 2021.
- **Home Address (Deprivation)** - Standardised as Number per 1,000 aged 5-19 living in an LSOA then grouped by deprivation relative to Wales using WIMD (2019).

# Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivations (WIMD)

This visual gives an indication of relative deprivation across Cardiff. The areas in green are among the 50% least deprived in Wales, where 30,598 children aged 5-19 live. The areas in dark red are amongst the 10% most deprived in Wales where 15,654 children aged 5-19 live – Half the number of children but significantly less than half the area.



# Attendance

Attendance was measured for statutory school aged children for September 2024 to February 2025 based on CapitaOne data. Three metrics were used overall present (higher is better), low attendance (number with overall present below 80% in last 6 months) and persistent absence (number with overall present below 50% in last 6 months).

**Age** - No clear trend in young age groups, but after age 11 attendance tends to get decline year on year

**Gender** - No significant impact on attendance. However, when combined with age, the attendance of females aged 13–15 was significantly below the level of their male equivalents.

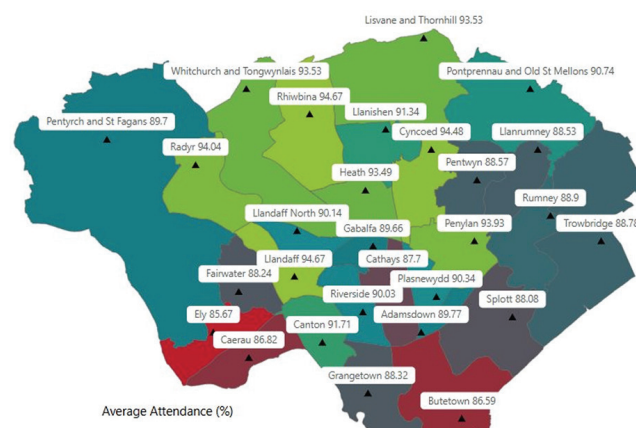
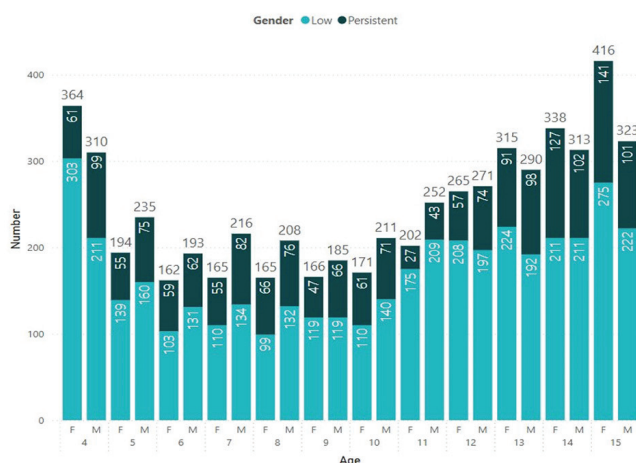
**Ethnicity** - There is no significant difference between white British and non-white British groups. Gypsy/Traveller pupils showed a 2.5 times increase in absence, a fourfold increase in low attendance, and a 4.8 times increase in persistent absence. Chinese, Black, and Asian pupils all had above the Cardiff average.

**Deprivation** - As WIMD deprivation increases, attendance declines. This was also seen with eFSM pupils who were 3.5 times more likely to have a low attendance and 3.6 times more likely to be persistently absent.

**Provision** - Primary schools have slightly higher attendance than secondary high schools. Attendance rates are lowest in special schools, EOTAS and PRU.

**Additional Learning Needs** - Pupils with ALN are 2.4 times more likely to have a low attendance and 3.3 times more likely to be persistently absent compared to pupils without.

**Locality** - Ely and Caerau showed lower attendance across all three metrics.



# Exclusions

Exclusions were measured for school children for Academic Year 2023-24 based on CapitaOne data. Two metrics were used: number of exclusions and number of days excluded

**Age** - From age 9 onwards exclusions increase significantly before peaking at age 13. Each secondary school age group had more exclusions than any primary school age group.

**Gender** - Males are excluded 1.9 times more often than females and miss 2.1 times more days through being excluded.

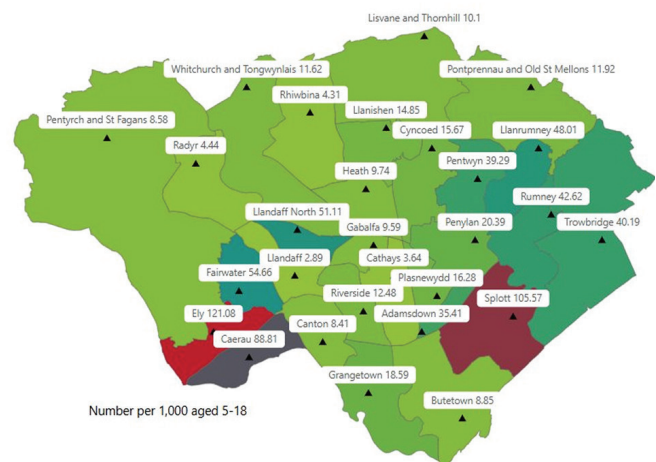
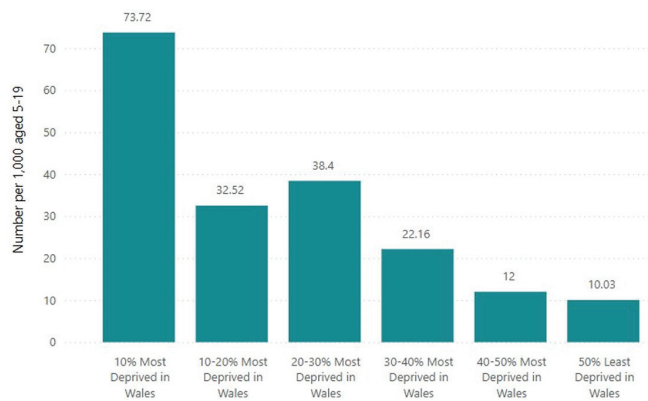
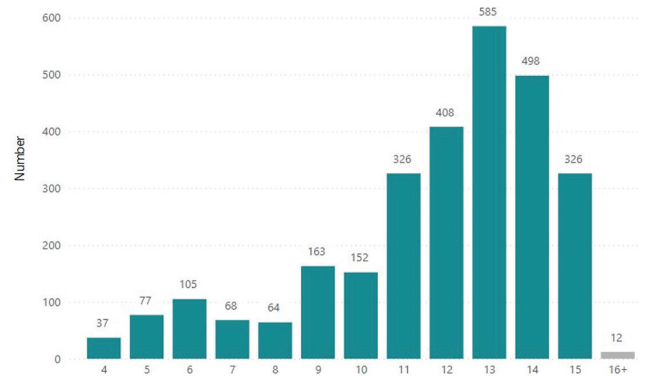
**Ethnicity** - White-British pupils are excluded 1.9 times more often and miss 1.8 times more days than non - white - British pupils. Gypsy/ Traveller pupils are excluded 3.2 times more often than other pupils and miss 3.1 times more days

**Deprivation** - As deprivation increases so does the number of exclusions and days excluded, with learners who are socio-economically disadvantaged being 7.3 times more likely to be excluded, losing 4.6 times more days than the least deprived learners. This was also seen with eFSM learners who had 5.2 times more exclusions and 4.7 times more days excluded than those not eligible.

**Provision** - Primary schools have the fewest exclusions, followed by secondary schools. Special schools had higher exclusions but had less exclusions per 1,000 than PRU, and both are similar to each other in terms of number of days excluded.

**Additional Learning Needs** - Pupils with ALN had 8 times more exclusions and spent 4.7 times more days excluded than pupils without

**Locality** - Ely, Caerau and Splott had the most exclusions when standardised per 1,000 pupils



# Pastoral Support Plans

Pastoral Support Plans (PSPs) were measured using the number that were open on 31st January 2025, using data from CapitaOne via the Single View Project.

**Age** - As age increases so does the number of PSPs.

**Gender** - Males are 2.2 times more likely to have a PSP than females.

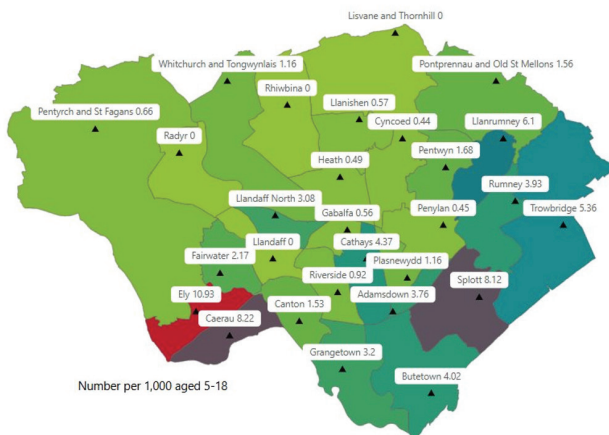
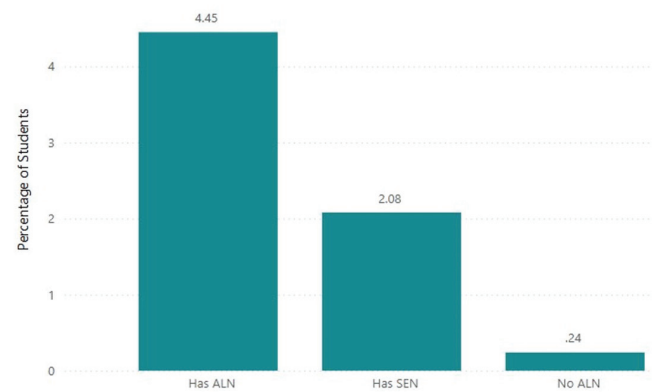
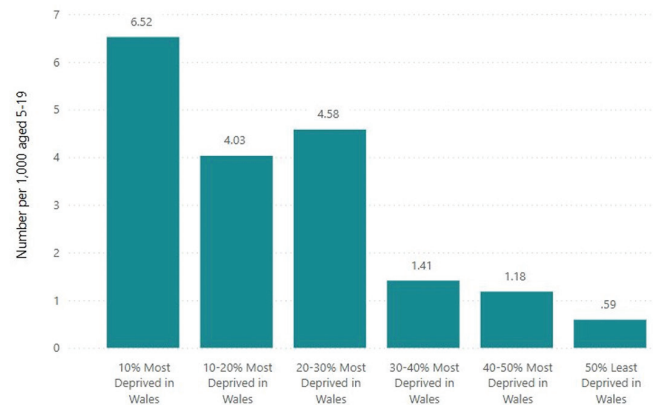
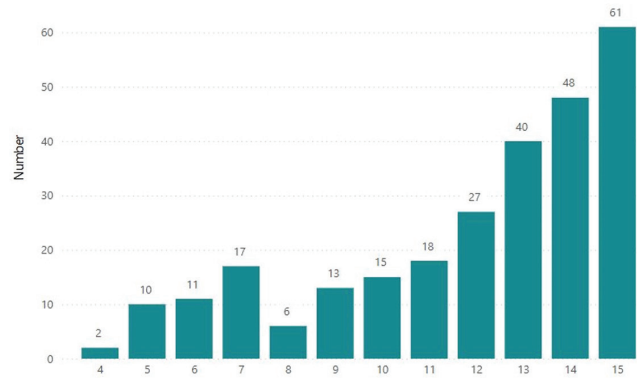
**Ethnicity** - White British are 1.8 times more likely to have a PSP than non-white British when standardised as percentage of students. Gypsy/ Traveller learners were 2 times more likely to have a PSP than others.

**Deprivation** - As WIMD deprivation increases so does the rate of PSPs, with being 11.1 times greater than the 50% least deprived learners. This was also seen with eFSM learners who were 6.7 times more likely to have a PSP than those not eligible.

**Provision** - Pupils with ALN were 18.6 times more likely to have a PSP than pupils without any form of additional learning needs.

**Additional Learning Needs** - Pupils with ALN were 18.6 times more likely to have a PSP than pupils without.

**Locality** - Ely, Caerau and Splott had the most PSPs per 1,000 learners aged 5-18.



# Attainment

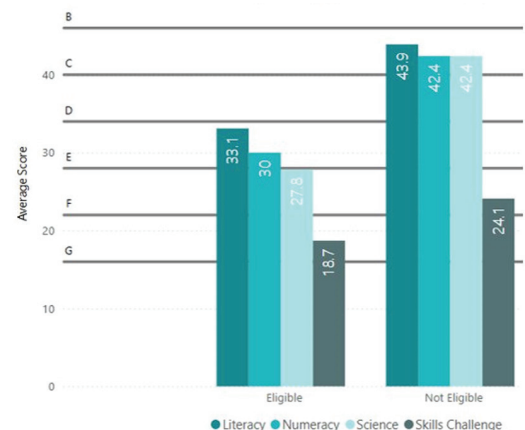
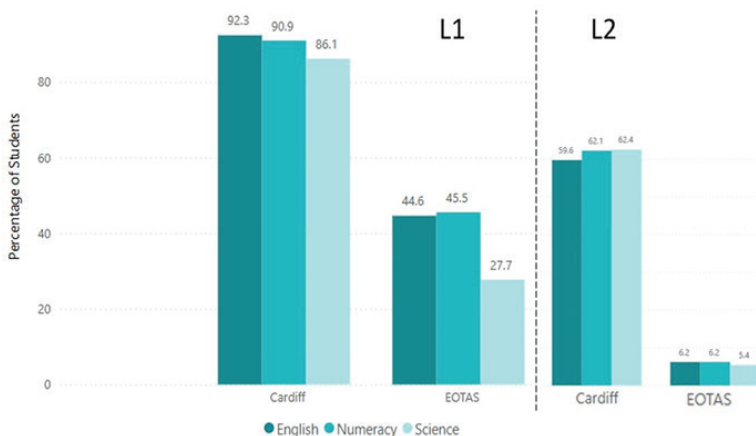
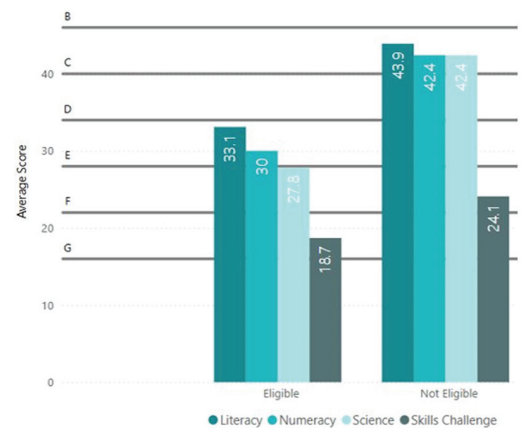
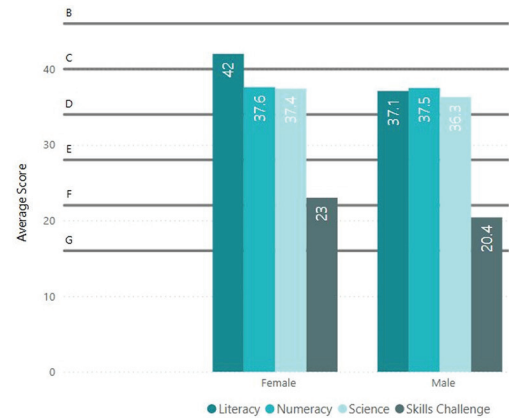
Attainment was measured using four different methods, The Capped 9 measures (3 + 6), percentage KS4 achieving 5+ A/A\*, percentage KS4 achieving L1 and percentage KS4 achieving L2. Data is based on 2024 results.

**Gender** - Females slightly outperform males in terms of Capped 9 Score, which pushes their average grade slightly above a C whilst males are slightly below a C. This is most notable in Literacy (+4.9) and Skills Challenge (+2.6). A higher proportion (29.9% vs 21.4%) of females achieved at least 5 A/A\*, which represents a 40% increase.

**Deprivation** - Pupils eligible for FSM averaged a grade D, compared to a grade C for those not eligible. This was noticeable across the 4 subjects viewed: Literacy (-10.8), Numeracy (-12.4), Science (-14.6) and Skills Challenge (-5.4). Only 9% of FSM eligible pupils achieved 5 A/A\* compared to 33.5% of not eligible pupils.

**Provision** - Learners educated other than at school had significantly lower scores compared to the rest of Cardiff across the four focus subjects: Literacy (-28.9), Science (-26.9), Numeracy (-25.9), and Skills Challenge (-21.2). The percentage of pupils achieving Level 1 was also notably lower for EOTAS: English (2x lower), Numeracy (2.1x), and Science (3.1x). In a further comparison, EOTAS had substantially reduced outcomes in Level 1 achievement: English (9.6x lower), Numeracy (10x), and Science (11.5x).

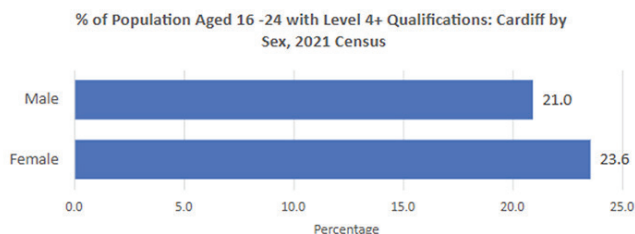
**Additional Learning Needs** - On average pupils with ALN performed below those without, representing a drop from an average grade C to an E. This was seen across all 4 subjects in focus; Science (-16.5), Numeracy (-15.4), Literacy (-14.3) and Skills Challenge (-9.1).



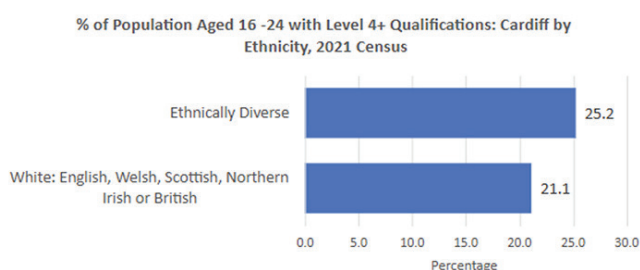
# Age 16-24 Outcomes

Outcomes were measured by considering economic inactivity, qualifications at level 4 or above, no qualifications (all Census 2021), were claiming Universal Credit and percentage in employment (both Stat-Xplore).

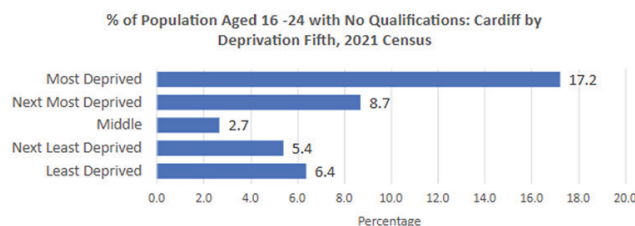
**Gender** - There is no difference in economic inactivity or percentage claiming Universal Credit. Females are slightly more qualified (23.6% vs 21%), and a lower proportion have no qualifications (6.3% vs 7.9%).



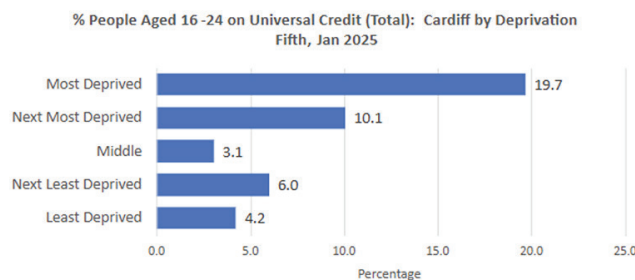
**Ethnicity** - Black, Asian and minority ethnic 16-24 year olds were more likely to be economically inactive (64% vs 54.6%) and have no qualifications (8.5% vs 6.4%). Despite this, black, Asian and minority ethnic 16-24 year olds had a larger proportion (25.2% vs 21.1%) of qualified to level 4 or above. Economic inactivity levels were very high (84.2%) for those belonging to the White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic group.



**Disability** - Residents with a disability were more likely to be economically inactive than those without a disability (62.4% vs 56.6%). The proportion of residents aged 16-24 with no qualifications was almost twice as high for those with a disability (11.4%) than those without a disability (6.3%).



**Deprivation** - The proportion of residents aged 16-24 that were qualified to level 4 or above was lowest in the most deprived areas. The proportion of residents aged 16-24 with no qualifications was highest in the most deprived areas (17.2%). The figure for the most deprived areas (19.7%) was nearly five times that of the least deprived areas (4.2%) for claiming Universal Credit.



**Locality** - Areas with a lower percentage qualified (to level 4 or above), and a larger percentage without any qualifications, had a larger percentage claiming Universal Credit. This highlights the importance of qualifications in future economic independence. Economic inactivity was also high in these areas but not the highest. Central Cardiff (likely influenced by university students) was higher.

# Known to Youth Justice Services

Youth Justice service involvement is measured as the number of Early Intervention & Prevention programmes (EIP) started in previous 6 months.

**Age** - EIPs peak at age 15 and are 3.4 times greater than at age 14.

**Gender** - There is no significant difference in rates for male vs female.

**Ethnicity** - White British were 2.2 times more likely to start an EIP than not white British. Gypsy/ Traveller were slightly (20%) more likely to start an EIP.

**Deprivation** - As WIMD deprivation increases so does the rate of EIPs started. There is a significant increase in the percentage of students eligible for FSM starting EIPs.

**Additional Learning Needs** - The rate of EIPs started is 2 times higher for pupils with ALN compared to no ALN.

