

Report of the Link Officer

Report to the Children and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4th June 2008

Literacy and numeracy

1. Purpose of the Report

- To provide information on the standards of literacy and numeracy achieved by children attending Birmingham maintained schools.
- To review the research evidence on factors affecting attainment in literacy and the reasons for the significant gender differences.
- To provide information on the differences in course content between GCSE English and the Basic Skills Level 2 literacy qualification at Key Stage 4.
- To provide information on what is being done to support schools in raising literacy standards.

2. Recommendation

That the Committee note the information contained in the report.

3. Contact Officer Details

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4. Background

- 4.1 Following the presentation of a report on Birmingham's examination and assessment results to the November 2007 Children and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee, members requested further information on standards of literacy and numeracy at each Key Stage. Members were particularly interested in the reasons for the significant gender differences in literacy standards, the content of GCSE English compared to vocational literacy courses at Key Stage 4 and what was being done to raise standards of literacy.
- 4.2 The first section of this report compares performance in English and Maths for girls and boys in Birmingham with the national average. This section also includes a review of the research evidence on the reasons for gender differences and what can be done to close the gaps.
- 4.3 Section 2 and Appendix 2 show performance trends in English and Maths at each Key Stage over the last five years, comparisons by ethnic group and ward and an examination of the content of GCSE English and the Basic Skills literacy qualification at Key Stage 4.
- 4.4 Appendix 1 provides a description of the support schools receive to help raise standards, with a particular focus on literacy.

5. Key Issues

5.1 Performance at each Key Stage by gender

Fig. 1 shows Birmingham's performance in English and Mathematics by gender at each Key Stage and Table 1 compares Birmingham's performance with the national average.

As Fig.1 and Table 1 show, there is a significant gender gap in English from Foundation Stage through to GCSE. The gap is largest at Key Stages 3 and 4.

The gender gap in Maths is smaller than in English but girls are performing slightly better than boys at Foundation Stage, and at Key Stages 1, 3 and 4. At Key Stage 2, boys perform slightly better than girls in Maths.

The size of the gender gap at each Key Stage in Birmingham is similar to the national gender gap.

5.2 Research on the reasons for gender differences.

Concern about 'boys' underachievement' is nothing new – in the 11+ (1950s/60s) girls' scores were adjusted downwards so that grammar school places were more balanced; the number of boys referred to 'remedial reading services' has always considerably exceeded that of girls.

Research findings on the reasons for the gender gap include:

- Early experiences. For example, parents are more likely to read and teach songs and nursery rhymes with their daughters than their sons.
- Peer group pressures and self-stereotyping. Boys are more likely to be influenced by their male peer group, which can devalue schoolwork and put them at odds with academic achievement. Overall trends indicate that girls and boys seem to relate differently to schooling and girls find it easier to succeed in school settings.
- Girls are more likely than boys to read for enjoyment. International research has also shown that girls are more likely than boys to read fiction whereas boys are more likely than girls to read newspapers and comic books.
- Learning styles. Girls and boys tend to use different styles of learning. Girls tend to show greater levels of motivation and respond differently to the materials and tasks given. Girls are more likely than boys to review what they have learned and what they still need to learn.
- Other aspects of the curriculum, assessment structure and content have also been implicated. For example, reading assessments which focus on narrative may accentuate the gender gap compared to more factual-based assessment. Boys perform significantly better on reading comprehension tasks involving factual content compared to one based on narrative content. Girls' reading comprehension scores are less influenced by the content of the task.
- Boys do better with multiple choice questions and girls with essays and coursework. The use of coursework in examinations may advantage girls but the research does not find that this alone accounts for the gender gap.

Source: Gender and education: the evidence on pupils in England (DCSF June 2007, Ref. RTP01-07)

5.3 Closing the gender gap

In developing strategies to raise boys' achievement it is important to make sure that this is not done in a way that could be detrimental to girls' social or academic progress. Strategies to raise boys' achievement, if successful, are also likely to raise girls' achievement.

Research on what makes a difference has identified the following factors.

- Combating images of laddish masculinity and establishing a strong school ethos.
- Paying more attention to how the transition from 'literacy as teacher-directed work' to 'literacy as self-directed activity' is managed;
- Adopting 'visible pedagogies' and making explicit to pupils 'what counts as reading' - offering opportunities for reading/writing in the three contexts of reading/writing for proficiency, reading/writing for choice and procedural reading and writing;

- Introducing the concept of linear and non-linear texts, their structure and purposes; teaching appropriate strategies for the reading or text construction of each type;
- Embracing ‘new literacies studies’ framework and conceptualisation that literacy is more than the ability to encode and decode printed texts;
- Being prepared to introduce into and value ‘out-of-school literacies’ within classroom contexts;
- Raising boys’ self-esteem and self-concept as readers and writers, validating different types of reading and text construction;
- Providing active reading opportunities that are engaging to boys and social and interactive in character since “boys’ participation improves significantly when the work requires an active response.” (HMI);
- Reviewing the choice of books available to pupils, ensuring a balance of fiction, non-fiction and electronic texts;
- Encouraging boys to read more widely – “Boys are often less experienced readers, and this can affect their development in writing”;
- Ensuring that a range of experiences are offered for engaging in story-writing – “storytelling demonstrates the pleasures of story writing and develops a sense of audience, ability to imagine and empathise and thus enhances the quality of children’s writing”;
- Using drama and role-play activities as a means of getting boys into writing, stimulating vocabulary and developing empathy for characters – “introducing a range of drama and video into literacy lessons helped both improve the quality of the writing and the boys’ enjoyment of the writing process”;
- Including opportunities to produce electronic multimodal texts – “boys’ enthusiasm in the computer suite contrasted markedly with their lack of enthusiasm for writing in the classroom. This provided the catalyst for enabling them to create purposeful texts using ICT”;
- Exploring the structure and purposes of a wide range of text types in a variety of forms, then offer a wide range of writing opportunities - “young writers need experience of composing in a range of modes and media....there are important differences in the ways boys and girls tend to construct texts which reflect their reading and viewing choices. Children should be given greater scope in their text-making by explicit discussion of variations on the structures, purposes and effects of multimodal as well as written texts. For this to happen, teachers themselves need to know how such texts work and to be aware of just how sophisticated and complex children’s multimodal narratives can be.”;
- Providing students with choice, encourage their diversity, build on where they are at, use positive re-inforcement, set achievable goals and reward effort.

Sources:

Barrs, M. & Pidgeon, S. (1998) (eds) *Boys and Reading*, London, CLPE.

Barrs, M. & Pidgeon, S. (2002) (eds) *Boys and Writing*, London, CLPE.

Moss, G. (2007) *Literacy and Gender – Researching Texts, Contexts and Readers*, Abingdon, Routledge.

Rowan, L., Knobel, M., Bigum, C. & Lankshear, C. (2002) *Boys, Literacies and Schooling*, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Fig. 1 Comparison between girls and boys performance at the end of each Key stage 2007

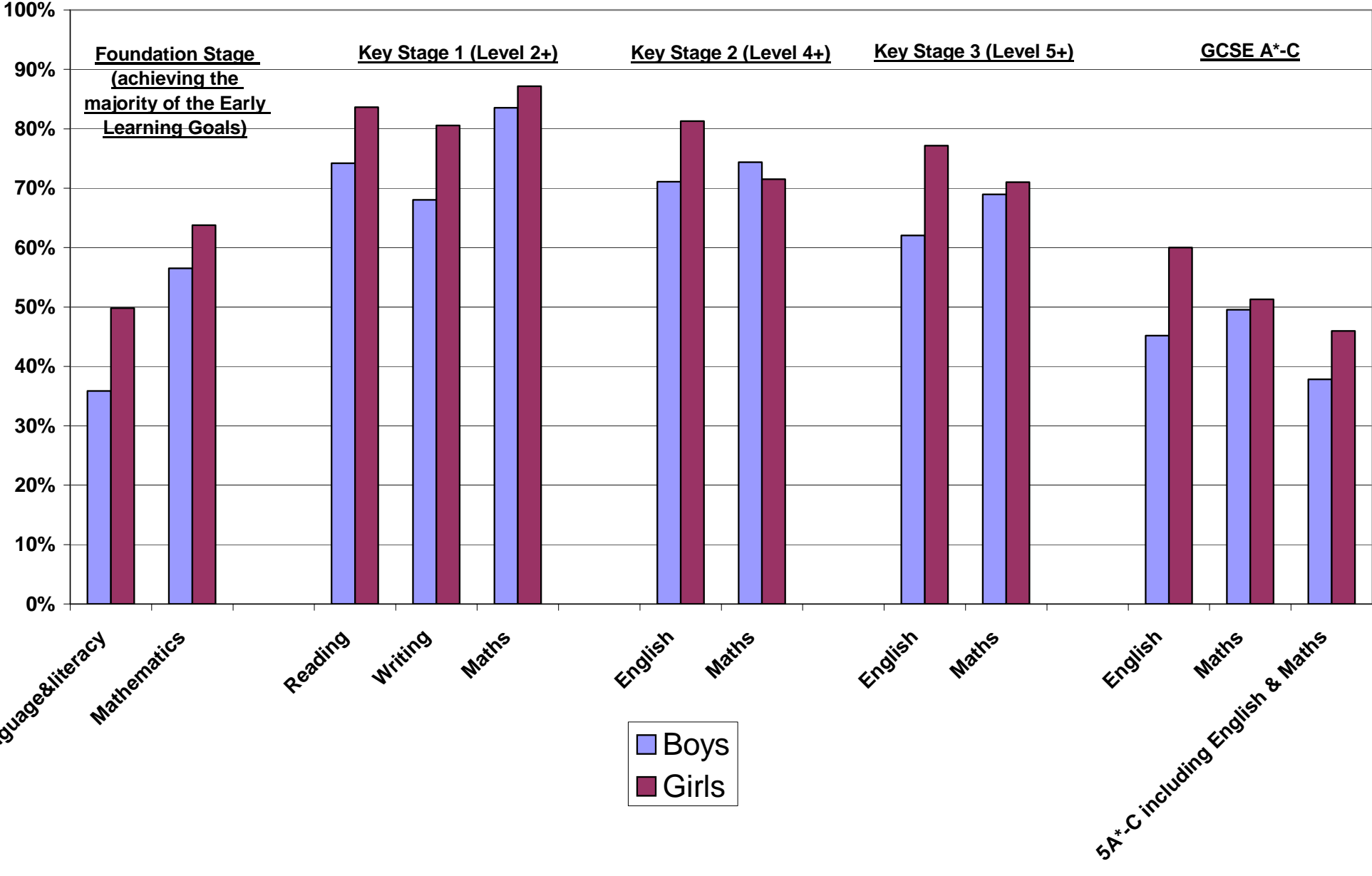


Table 1 Comparison between Girls and Boys performance at the end of each Key Stage 2007

	Birmingham		Difference (Girls compared to Boys)	England		Difference (Girls compared to Boys)
	Boys	Girls		Boys	Girls	
	Foundation Stage (Children achieving the majority of the Early Learning Goals)					
Language	67%	77%	10%	74%	83%	9%
Linking sounds and letters	51%	62%	11%	59%	70%	11%
Reading	58%	68%	10%	64%	74%	10%
Writing	45%	61%	16%	50%	67%	17%
Numbers	82%	87%	5%	85%	89%	4%
Calculating	62%	68%	6%	68%	73%	5%
Shape,space,measures	72%	78%	7%	78%	83%	5%
Key Stage 1 (Level 2 and above)						
Reading	74%	84%	9%	80%	89%	9%
Writing	68%	81%	13%	76%	87%	11%
Maths	84%	87%	3%	89%	92%	3%
Key Stage 2 (Level 4 and above)						
English	71%	81%	10%	74%	84%	10%
Maths	74%	72%	-2%	76%	75%	-1%
Key Stage 3 (Level 5 and above)						
English	62%	77%	15%	65%	80%	15%
Maths	69%	71%	2%	76%	77%	1%
Key Stage 4 (GCSE A*-C grade)						
English	45%	60%	15%	53%	68%	15%
Maths	50%	51%	1%	53%	56%	3%
5A*-C including English & Maths	38%	46%	8%	42%	51%	9%

5.4 Performance Trends

Figs. 2-27 in **Appendix 1** show performance trends in English and Maths at each Key Stage by gender and ethnic group.

5.5 Foundation Stage (Figs. 2-7)

There have been slight increases in the percentages of Birmingham children achieving the majority of the Early Learning Goals in Communication, language and literacy over the last three years compared with decreases of 2% nationally.

This is encouraging given the varied linguistic backgrounds of Birmingham children and the increasing proportion that are still developing their competence in English in the early years. With government funding, the LA has introduced Communication, Language and Literacy Development (CLLD) for 19 schools and 43 early years settings, a programme that focuses on improving children's literacy skills in areas where outcomes are low. As this programme is rolled out to more schools and settings a further positive impact should be seen in attainments in this area of children's development.

Performance in Maths has remained the same over the last four years compared to a decrease of 1% nationally.

Differences are evident by ethnic group and gender. White, Indian, Mixed Race and Black Caribbean girls are the highest attainers and Somali, Arab/Yemini, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African boys are the lowest attainers in Communication, language and literacy

5.6 Key Stage 1 (Figs. 8-12)

There has been little change over the past five years both in Birmingham and nationally in the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2.

Last year, the proportion of Birmingham pupils attaining Level 2 and above increased by 1% in reading for both boys and girls, and remained unchanged in writing. Nationally the percentages of pupils attaining Level 2 and above have remained unchanged in reading and dropped by 1% in writing.

Underlying these figures is a continuation of a pattern of change in both Birmingham and national data over the past few years, with slight decreases in the percentages of pupils attaining the higher levels (Levels 3 and 2A) and commensurate slight increases in the percentages attaining Level 1.

Differences in attainment by ethnic group and gender are similar to Foundation Stage with Indian, White British, Black Caribbean and Black African girls the highest attainers in reading/writing and Somali and Arab/Yemeni the lowest attainers. Since 2001 the gap has narrowed for Bangladeshi and Pakistani boys in English. In 2001 the gap in Reading compared to the LA average for boys was 9% for Pakistani boys and 11% for Bangladeshi boys. In 2007 this gap had narrowed to 3% and 1% respectively.

5.7 Key Stage 2 (Figs. 13-16)

Over the past five years, the percentage of boys attaining Level 4 and above in English at Key Stage 2 has improved by 8% to 71% (compared to a 6% improvement nationally) and for girls it has improved by 5% to 81% (compared to a 4% improvement nationally).

In Maths, results have improved by 7% for boys to 78% (compared to a 5% improvement nationally) and for girls by 4% to 76% (compared to a 4% improvement nationally).

Over this period the attainment gap has narrowed for Bangladeshi and Pakistani boys in English to 6% and 8% respectively. However, a 10%+ gap remains for African/Caribbean boys, Arab/Yemeni boys and Somali boys and girls.

The number of Birmingham schools below the Government's floor target of at least 65% Level 4+ has decreased from 98 in 2001 to 56 in 2007 for English and from 111 in 2001 to 71 in 2007 for Mathematics.

5.8 Key Stage 3 (Figs. 17-20)

Over the past five years, the percentage of boys attaining Level 5 and above in English at Key Stage 3 has improved by 7% to 62% (compared to a 6% improvement nationally) and for girls it has improved by 8% to 77% (compared to a 5% improvement nationally).

In Maths, results have improved by 8% for boys to 69% (compared to a 5% improvement nationally) and for girls by 8% to 71% (compared to a 4% improvement nationally).

Over this period the attainment gap has narrowed for Bangladeshi and Pakistani boys in English to 8%. However, a 10%+ gap remains for African/Caribbean boys, Arab/Yemeni boys and Somali boys.

The number of Birmingham secondary schools below the Government's floor targets of at least 50% Level 5+ has decreased from 25 in 2001 to 10 in 2007 for English, and from 33 in 2001 to 4 in 2007 for Mathematics,

5.9 Key Stage 4 (Figs. 21-27)

Over the past five years, the percentage of boys attaining an A*-C grade in English at Key Stage 4 has improved by 4% to 45% (compared to a 5% improvement nationally) and for girls it has improved by 2% to 68% (compared to a 4% improvement nationally).

In Maths, A*-C results have improved by 11% for boys to 50% (compared to a 6% improvement nationally) and for girls by 11% to 51% (compared to a 7% improvement nationally).

The percentage of boys achieving 5A*-C including English and Maths has improved by 6% to 38% (compared to a 3% improvement nationally) and for girls it has improved by 8% to 46% (compared to a 4% improvement nationally).

Although gaps remain, there have been some significant improvements for groups at risk of underachieving. For example over the past five years the percentage of Black Caribbean boys achieving 5A*-C including English and Maths has increased by 10% to 26%; Pakistani boys' results have improved by 9% to 33% and Bangladeshi boys' results have improved by 9% to 34%.

5.10 The relationship between gender, ethnic group, poverty and achievement

There is a correlation between levels of deprivation and low educational achievement which affects all groups to a greater or lesser degree. As Table 2 shows, pupils' eligible for free school meals have lower levels of attainment on average compared to pupils not eligible for free school meals and this gap is wider than both the gender and ethnic group gaps. Reducing social inequalities would undoubtedly contribute to reducing education inequalities.

The "poverty gap" in attainment in Birmingham is not quite as large as nationally and pupils eligible for free school meals achieve slightly higher standards than the national average for pupils eligible for free school meals.

Table 2 Comparison between the results achieved by pupils eligible for free school and the results achieved by pupils not eligible for free school at the end of each Key						
	Birmingham		Difference (Not eligible FSM compared to eligible)	England		Difference (Not eligible FSM compared to eligible)
	Eligible for FSM	Not eligible for FSM		Eligible for FSM	Not eligible for FSM	
Foundation Stage						
achieving the majority of the Learning						
Communication, language & Maths	31%	49%	18%			
	49%	66%	17%			
Key Stage 1 (Level 2 and						
Reading	70%	84%	14%	69%	87%	18%
Writing	64%	80%	16%	63%	84%	21%
Maths	80%	88%	9%	80%	92%	12%
Key Stage 2 (Level 4 and						
English	65%	82%	18%	62%	83%	21%
Maths	63%	78%	15%	60%	80%	20%
Key Stage 3 (Level 5 and						
English	57%	76%	19%	52%	78%	26%
Maths	58%	77%	19%	55%	79%	24%
Key Stage 4 (GCSE A*-C						
English	35%	61%	26%			
Maths	35%	58%	23%			
5A*-C including English &	24%	50%	26%	21%	49%	28%

5.11 Differences between GCSE English and the 'Basic Skills' Literacy Qualification.

In 2007, 1091 pupils (9% of the Y11 roll) were entered for Basic Skills Literacy at Level 2 (equivalent to a half a GCSE grade B). This compares to 93% of the Y11 roll entered for GCSE English. Most of the pupils entered for the Basic Skills Level 2 qualification (99%) were also entered for GCSE English.

Thirty eight schools entered one or more pupils for the Basic Skills qualification. In five of these schools (Cockshut Hill, King's Norton High, Hodge Hill, Moseley, Perry Beeches) around half the Y11 pupils were entered for the qualification. In the other schools it was a third or less.

As Table 3 shows, the addition of the Basic Skills qualification to GCSE English makes a small difference (3%) to the percentage of Birmingham pupils achieving a Level 2 qualification (equivalent to an A*-C grade). At an individual school level, the inclusion of Basic Skills makes a difference of 10% or more to the percentage of pupils achieving a Level 2 qualification in nine schools (Cockshut Hill, Castle Vale, Moseley, Waverley, Plantsbrook, Perry Beeches, Hodge Hill, Lordswood Boys' and King's Norton High).

GCSE English and Basic Skills literacy examinations represent different models of what 'literacy' means and thus require students to demonstrate very different skills.

The Basic Skills qualification only tests reading comprehension. Pupils are expected to read twelve texts taken from 'real life' documents and respond to a total of forty multiple choice questions relating to these texts. Thus at no point are they required to give a written response. The range of texts includes advertisements, newspaper articles, letters, information sheets and advice. Questions concern information retrieval (literal comprehension), identification of purpose, recognition of fact and opinion, use of punctuation, spelling and vocabulary.

Overall, it resembles a 'traditional' style reading comprehension test, examining a very narrow range of reading skills and superficial technical knowledge of how Standard English is written. The test can be completed on-line, lasts 1 hour and can be re-taken as many times and whenever the school wishes.

GCSE English, on the other hand, represents a comprehensive examination, not only of knowledge, skills and understanding of all three language modes, but also includes response to literature. It is a test of the subject 'English' not of literacy skills per se.

There are three main components to the examination:

1. Speaking and Listening (worth 10%) – teacher assessment of oral performance in four different situations and for different purposes.
2. Coursework (worth 30%) – 4 pieces demonstrating understanding of literary and media texts, and proficiency in original writing.
3. Written examination (60%) – two papers which include response to media and non-fiction texts, a literary essay comparing two poems from the anthology collection of poems from different cultures and traditions, writing to argue/persuade/advise and writing to inform/describe/explain.

The examination papers last c.1 ½ hours, dependent on the specification

studied. Thus reading 'skills' are demonstrated through writing and entail the demonstration of understanding of authorial craft and the ability to make a personal response rather than through the ability to decode.

New specifications for GCSE are currently under development. These will reflect the revised National Curriculum at KS3 and KS4, but are not yet available. First accreditation under these specifications is scheduled for 2010.

Secondary schools may use the Basic Skills Level 2 qualification as a way of ensuring that pupils at the D/C borderline achieve a functional literacy qualification. It is also used for pupils whose attendance or effort/motivation have been such that coursework for GCSE English has not been completed appropriately. The qualification contributes the equivalent of half a GCSE at grade B in terms of point score.

From 2010 this examination will no longer be available. At that point it will be necessary to obtain a Functional Skills Level 2 pass in order to be awarded a GCSE English pass at Grade C or above. To achieve this pupils will have to reach this standard in each of the three modes of speaking and listening, reading and writing. The test will include problem-solving tasks related to real life situations. Emphasis, in all three modes, is on accuracy, with pupils needing to use the language and conventions appropriate to audience, form and purpose. Functional Skills Level 2 accreditation (in English, Mathematics and ICT) is a requirement for obtaining a Higher Level Diploma. Thus, from September 2008 students in Birmingham schools embarking on the Engineering, Construction and Creative and Media Diplomas will have to obtain this qualification. With the inclusion of further Diplomas in September 2009, further KS4 students will be involved with this.

Table 3 Percentage of pupils entered for GCSE English and Basic Skills Literacy at Level 2 in each school and qualifications achieved

School	Y11 roll	Percentage of Y11 pupils entered for GCSE English	Percentage of Y11 pupils entered for Basic Skills Level 2 in Literacy	Percentage of Y11 pupils achieving a GCSE English A*-C grade	Percentage of Y11 pupils achieving Basic Skills Level 2 in literacy	Percentage of Y11 pupils achieving "functional literacy" at Level 2 (includes GCSE and Basic Skills in literacy)	Difference Basic Skills literacy makes to the percentage of Y11 pupils achieving level 2 in functional literacy
	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007
AL-HIJRAH	50	100%	0%	78%	0%	78%	0%
ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY RC	211	98%	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%
ARTHUR TERRY	246	99%	0%	72%	0%	72%	0%
ASTON MANOR	130	100%	13%	44%	13%	48%	5%
BARTLEY GREEN	163	99%	13%	59%	13%	62%	3%
BAVERSTOCK	223	94%	4%	47%	4%	48%	2%
BISHOP CHALLONER	189	97%	0%	66%	0%	66%	0%
BISHOP VESEY'S GRAMMAR	117	100%	0%	99%	0%	99%	0%
BISHOP WALSH RC	147	99%	0%	84%	0%	84%	0%
BORDESLEY GREEN GIRLS'	116	99%	28%	59%	28%	65%	5%
BOURNVILLE	200	100%	2%	51%	2%	52%	1%
BROADWAY	212	89%	0%	33%	0%	33%	0%
CARDINAL WISEMAN RC	112	96%	0%	71%	0%	71%	0%
CASTLE VALE	156	91%	21%	28%	21%	41%	13%
COCKSHUT HILL	240	83%	57%	51%	57%	63%	12%
COLMERS	215	98%	0%	51%	0%	51%	0%
DAME ELIZABETH CADBURY	108	90%	5%	29%	5%	33%	5%
FAIRFAX	224	98%	0%	78%	0%	78%	0%
FOUR DWELLINGS	134	99%	0%	29%	0%	29%	0%
FRANKLEY COMMUNITY	90	88%	1%	19%	1%	20%	1%
GEORGE DIXON INT.	176	86%	0%	43%	0%	43%	0%
GOLDEN HILLOCK	168	95%	0%	43%	0%	43%	0%
GREAT BARR	417	100%	0%	46%	0%	47%	0%
HALL GREEN SECONDARY	150	98%	1%	78%	1%	79%	1%
HAMSTEAD HALL	175	78%	0%	71%	0%	71%	0%
HANDSWORTH GRAMMAR	139	100%	0%	95%	0%	95%	0%
HANDSWORTH WOOD GIRLS	121	98%	0%	51%	0%	51%	0%
HARBORNE HILL	97	100%	19%	39%	19%	43%	4%
HILLCREST	153	97%	9%	42%	9%	48%	6%
HODGE HILL	219	92%	49%	40%	49%	63%	23%
HODGE HILL GIRLS'	134	95%	0%	65%	0%	65%	0%
HOLTE	167	99%	0%	40%	0%	40%	0%
HOLY TRINITY RC	120	97%	18%	62%	18%	64%	3%
HOLYHEAD	195	93%	3%	51%	3%	51%	0%
JOHN WILLMOTT	194	100%	0%	53%	0%	53%	0%

School	Y11 roll	Percentage of Y11 pupils entered for GCSE English	Percentage of Y11 pupils entered for Basic Skills Level 2 in Literacy	Percentage of Y11 pupils achieving a GCSE English A*-C grade	Percentage of Y11 pupils achieving Basic Skills Level 2 in literacy	Percentage of Y11 pupils achieving "functional literacy" at Level 2 (includes GCSE and Basic Skills in literacy)	Difference Basic Skills literacy makes to the percentage of Y11 pupils achieving level 2 in functional literacy
KING EDWARD VI ASTON	102	100%	0%	99%	0%	99%	0%
KING EDWARD VI CAMP HILL BO	105	100%	0%	98%	0%	98%	0%
KING EDWARD VI CAMP HILL GI	119	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
KING EDWARD VI FIVE WAYS	149	100%	0%	99%	0%	99%	0%
KING EDWARD VI HANDSWORT	129	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
KING'S HEATH BOYS'	112	98%	14%	33%	14%	38%	4%
KING'S NORTON BOYS'	121	98%	0%	66%	0%	66%	0%
KINGS NORTON GIRLS'	148	99%	5%	80%	5%	82%	2%
KINGS NORTON HIGH	121	94%	60%	21%	60%	60%	39%
KINGSBURY	165	97%	8%	48%	8%	50%	2%
LORDSWOOD BOYS'	115	100%	36%	31%	36%	58%	27%
LORDSWOOD GIRLS'	136	100%	0%	79%	0%	79%	0%
MOSELEY	239	97%	46%	36%	46%	49%	13%
NINESTILES	236	99%	0%	64%	0%	64%	0%
PARK VIEW	112	100%	1%	45%	1%	45%	0%
PERRY BEECHES	168	97%	42%	32%	42%	54%	23%
PLANTSBROOK	228	97%	33%	66%	33%	82%	15%
QUEENSBRIDGE	105	98%	0%	41%	0%	41%	0%
SALTLEY	171	99%	20%	32%	20%	40%	8%
SELLY PARK GIRLS'	156	100%	0%	58%	0%	58%	0%
SHELDON HEATH COMMUNITY	206	89%	0%	28%	0%	28%	0%
SHENLEY COURT	257	99%	0%	33%	0%	33%	0%
SMALL HEATH	213	100%	7%	53%	7%	56%	3%
ST. ALBAN'S CE	76	76%	12%	25%	12%	26%	1%
ST. EDMUND CAMPION RC	163	88%	4%	55%	4%	56%	1%
ST. JOHN WALL R.C.	113	93%	5%	45%	5%	50%	5%
ST. PAUL'S GIRLS'	151	99%	0%	92%	0%	92%	0%
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS RC	201	100%	0%	65%	0%	65%	0%
STOCKLAND GREEN	114	89%	0%	32%	0%	32%	0%
SUTTON COLDFIELD GIRLS	149	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
SWANHURST	311	98%	0%	61%	0%	61%	0%
THE COLLEGE HIGH	190	99%	0%	32%	0%	32%	0%
THE HEARTLANDS HIGH	105	98%	5%	29%	5%	31%	3%
THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL	232	98%	0%	38%	0%	38%	0%
TURVES GREEN BOYS'	131	99%	0%	48%	0%	48%	0%
TURVES GREEN GIRLS'	156	99%	0%	60%	0%	60%	0%
WASHWOOD HEATH	253	98%	38%	52%	38%	57%	5%
WAVERLEY	138	99%	33%	23%	33%	37%	14%
WHEELERS LANE	120	100%	0%	48%	0%	48%	0%
YARDLEYS	171	97%	13%	33%	13%	38%	5%
BIRMINGHAM	12618	93%	9%	53%	9%	56%	3%

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 There is a significant gender gap in English from Foundation Stage through to GCSE. The gap is largest at Key Stages 3 and 4. The gender gap in Maths is smaller than in English but girls are performing slightly better than boys at Foundation Stage, and at Key Stages 1, 3 and 4. The size of the gender gap at each Key Stage in Birmingham is similar to the national gender gap.
- 6.2 Over the last five years improvements in performance have been at a similar rate for both boys and girls so the gender gap does not show any significant signs of closing. The exceptions are in KS2 Mathematics where boys have improved by 5% compared to 3% for girls and in GCSE English where boys have improved by 4% compared to 2% for girls.
- 6.3 While support for schools is aimed at raising standards for both boys and girls, it is recognised that boys need particular help with their reading and writing if they are to do as well as girls in English. This requires gender specific strategies that recognise differences in learning styles and reading habits. These are incorporated into the support and guidance provided to schools.
- 6.4 Most students achieve a GCSE qualification in English and Mathematics at the end of Key Stage 4 and over the past five years there has been an increase in the percentage achieving an A*-C grade. For girls the percentage achieving an A*-C grade in English has increased from 58% to 60% and in Maths from 40% to 51%. For boys the percentage achieving an A*-C grade in English has increased from 41% to 45% and in Maths from 39% to 50%.
- 6.5 While there have been some improvements in closing the “equality gaps” for pupils at risk of underachieving, significant gaps remain particularly for disadvantaged children and those from some minority ethnic groups. The gaps in performance for these groups are not quite as wide as the national average, showing that Birmingham is having some success. However, the focus needs to be maintained if the gaps are to continue to narrow.

Appendix 1 Support for schools

Early Years and Primary

A continuum of support is identified for schools and settings according to an in-depth analysis of their needs:

- Those schools and settings that require the greatest amount of support, based on quantifiable and qualitative data include:
 - Early years settings in which the attainment gap needs to be reduced at the end of the Foundation Stage – specifically communication, language and literacy;
 - Schools in Ofsted categories and those deemed to be at risk of being placed in a category;
 - Schools receiving Head teacher mentoring and support;
 - Schools identified nationally as ‘hard to shift’ schools (i.e. below the KS2 floor targets for 4 years).

- Some schools receive a range of personalised interventions to meet the schools’ specific need. Schools also self-select for these programmes. Examples of interventions include:
 - Intensifying Support Programme (ISP);
 - Primary Leadership Programme (PLP);
 - Every Child a Reader (ECaR);
 - Communication, Language and Literacy Development (CLLD).

- All schools are entitled to participate in a range of networks and programmes. Examples of these networks include:
 - Area subject leader networks;
 - English as an Additional Language networks;
 - Visual literacy action research programme.

Interventions range from whole school improvement to programmes targeted at specific underachieving groups and individual pupils.

Targeted Provision

Communication, Language and Literacy Development (CLLD)

(19 schools, 43 private, voluntary and independent (PVI) settings and nurseries schools involved)

The programme focuses on developing the interdependent strands of language, speaking and listening, reading and writing by using the Primary National Strategy teaching programme “Letters and Sounds”. This enables children to use and apply their phonic skills to become confident and capable readers and writers.

Despite the programme running for only 6 months, the results at the end of the academic year 2006/07 were very positive with the majority of children reaching their targets by the end of the year.

Every Child a Reader (ECaR)

ECaR and Reading Recovery target the lowest 20% of six and seven year old children who struggle to learn to read and write.

In five months of engaging with this programme, the children's rates of progress were accelerated resulting in reading age gains of 21 months within five months.

Intensify Support Programme. (ISP) – 23 schools

This National Strategy funded programme is prescriptive and is aimed at raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. It focuses intensely on tracking pupils' progress. Attainment for 11 year olds in Mathematics has improved by 3% at level 4 and in English their progress was sustained overall. This disguises the success of some individual schools that focused on raising attainment in English rather than Mathematics. In one school for example, the attainment at level 4+ in English rose by 10% and in another school it increased by 18%.

Strategic Achievement Group (SAG) – 50 schools

This is an enquiry based programme designed in Birmingham to address personalised learning for underachieving groups that have been identified by schools using their pupil level data.

Overall there was a 1% increase in level 4+ in English. However, 18 schools increased the number of pupils attaining level 4+ by 10% or more.

Primary Leadership Programme (PLP) – 30 schools

This National Strategy funded whole school leadership programme focused on senior leaders driving improvements in English and Mathematics.

English results rose by 3% to 72% at level 4+ in 2007. Some schools reported outstanding improvements of between 12% and 20% gains at level 4+.

Making a difference (MaD) – 28 schools

This is a short-term intervention devised in Birmingham for those schools whose results fell below the floor targets.

English increased by 11% to 77% at level 4+ for all schools in the programme. Some schools reported outstanding improvements between 16% and 43% at level 4+.

Hard to shift (HtS) – 13 schools

This is a National Strategy funded programme that is targeted at schools that have been below floor targets for the last four years. This is an intensive support programme involving 13 schools in a two year programme.

English results after the first term were up by 1% to 53% level 4+ in 2007. Results for 2008 will be analysed in due course.

Intervention Targeted Support (ITS)

This is a personalised support programme for schools causing concern. Individual support for English is planned and delivered by the literacy consultants. Impact is monitored every term. In schools that have been removed from an OfSTED category, the attainment gap in English has been reduced.

Universal Provision

Early Years Area Networks

These networks have had a strong emphasis on implementing the recommendations of the Sir Jim Rose Review with a clear focus on the importance of Early Reading, Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL) and training for all Foundation Stage practitioners on the teaching of letters and sounds.

Area subject leader networks

Organised into six geographical areas, the networks are facilitated by the literacy and numeracy consultants. The drive over the last year has been training for the implementation of the National Strategy renewed frameworks for literacy and numeracy.

Visual literacy action research project

This programme focused on using film to engage pupils, especially boys, in writing techniques. Accelerated progress was observed in 80% of the pupils.

Secondary

Improving pupil skills in reading and writing has been a major focus in Birmingham since the inception of the KS3 Literacy Project in 1998 (subsequently KS3 Literacy Strategy and the Secondary Strategy) and is an ongoing major focus nationally within the Secondary National Strategy. Four main approaches are to be found in most schools:

- Explicit teaching of reading and/or writing strategies to pupils who enter Y7 below L3 in English. Such provision is usually the responsibility of the Learning Support / SEN department and is delivered through discrete teaching at individual or small group level.
- Reading skills teaching within English lessons, linked to the Assessment Framework.
- Incidental teaching of reading within the context of other subjects. Many of the schools that have embraced *Literacy and Learning as a Whole School Initiative* have focused on reading as a cross-curricular theme, developing pupil skills in 'reading for meaning' or 'reading for information'.
- Development of wider and independent reading – usually resulting from joint working between the School Librarian and the English Department.

The Secondary English Team support work in all four strands, with a different emphasis in each school. This work is enhanced by the strong partnership with Schools Library Service.

Within each of these strands schools offer a variety of activities.

For example, at **Key Stage 3:**

Wave 1 provision – whole class teaching

- Reading lessons within English curriculum time – structured lessons, with instruction in particular skills.
- Identifying individual / group strengths and weaknesses in reading and writing, subsequently producing tailored units of work to address these skills through personalised learning.
- 'Pathways Curriculum' at entry, foundation and intermediate levels.
- RML – a focused programme for those entering secondary with very low Reading Ages; focuses on basic decoding skills.
- SATs revision programme, driven by practice tests and tailored to group needs.
- Pre-SATs breakfast sessions for entire cohort.

Wave 2 provision – small group tuition

- *Literacy Progress Units* – DCSF resources for small group tuition in reading or writing.
- SATs Booster Classes for targeted groups e.g. L4/5 borderliners or L6/7 borderliners.

Wave 3 provision – individual tuition

- Individual coaching, generally in reading.
- *Reading Challenge* – a form of paired reading with tightly focused targets; coaches may be adults or older pupils who have been specially trained.

Also:

- KS3 Book Award – run for the last four years and thematically based (*KS3 Laughs, KS3 Imagines, KS3 Explores, KS3 Dares*) this has been a major activity for engaging young people with reading and is proving particularly effective in encouraging boys to read.
- *Talking Texts* – following a book talk, this provides an opportunity for pupils to engage with librarians in e-mail dialogue about their reading interests.
- Reading Groups (extra-curricula clubs, generally run by school librarian).
- Reading Mentors – opportunity for gifted and talented readers to engage in book talk with committed adult readers.
- Literacy workshops for the parents of pupils targeted for particular intervention programmes.
- Summer Literacy School – a thematic cross-curricular approach for Y7/8 pupils who have not reached Level 4.
- Provision of laptops for pupils below Level 4 to support learning outside school.
- Theatre-in-education experiences to develop knowledge and understanding of the set scenes for the Y9 Shakespeare text.
- Writing workshops led by writers / poets in residence.
- Author visits.
- Participation in events within the Birmingham *Young Readers Festival* e.g. debate, KS3 Author Panel.

Key Stage 4

- Gender based teaching groups.
- Rotating teachers to teach specific modules so that all students experience a range of teaching styles and specialist teaching.
- Re-setting after the Y11 GCSE Mock examination to take account of individual skills and target groups performing at specific levels.
- Early entry for GCSE English (thus offering opportunity for re-sits).
- Selective approach to the study of English Literature at GCSE e.g. student has to have gained a 'C' in GCSE English early entry below being allowed to study for the literature examination.

- Use of Progression maps for target setting and tailoring of teaching.
- 'Awaydays' for borderline C/D candidates – intensive day of coaching with school-based staff / external teacher.
- Easter 'revision school' prior to examination in Y11.
- Coursework 'surgeries' to support pupils in completing / enhancing the quality of coursework.
- Use of 'Review Days' to focus with specific groups on particular skills – intensive interactive learning.
- Completion of coursework by the end of Y10, to enable focus on skills tested in the examination in Y11.
- Development of KS4 curriculum for English that provides regular experiences / skill tuition in reading media and non-fiction texts throughout the course and provides variety by interspersing language and literature elements of the course. (It has been discovered that this aspect of teaching was often neglected or left until late Y11 and was the aspect in which pupils scored most poorly.)
- Theatre visits, theatre-in-education experiences, poetry readings etc related to set texts.
- Selection of exam specification most suited to pupils. (For example, some schools switched to the Edexcel GCSE English Pilot as the variety in content and modular approach offered opportunities to engage different types of learners. This has proved successful across the full ability range and particularly for boys).

APPENDIX 2 PERFORMANCE TRENDS IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Fig. 2 Percentage of pupils achieving the majority of the Early Learning Goals in Communication, Language and Literacy at the end of the Foundation Stage - Birmingham compared to the England average (2004-2007)

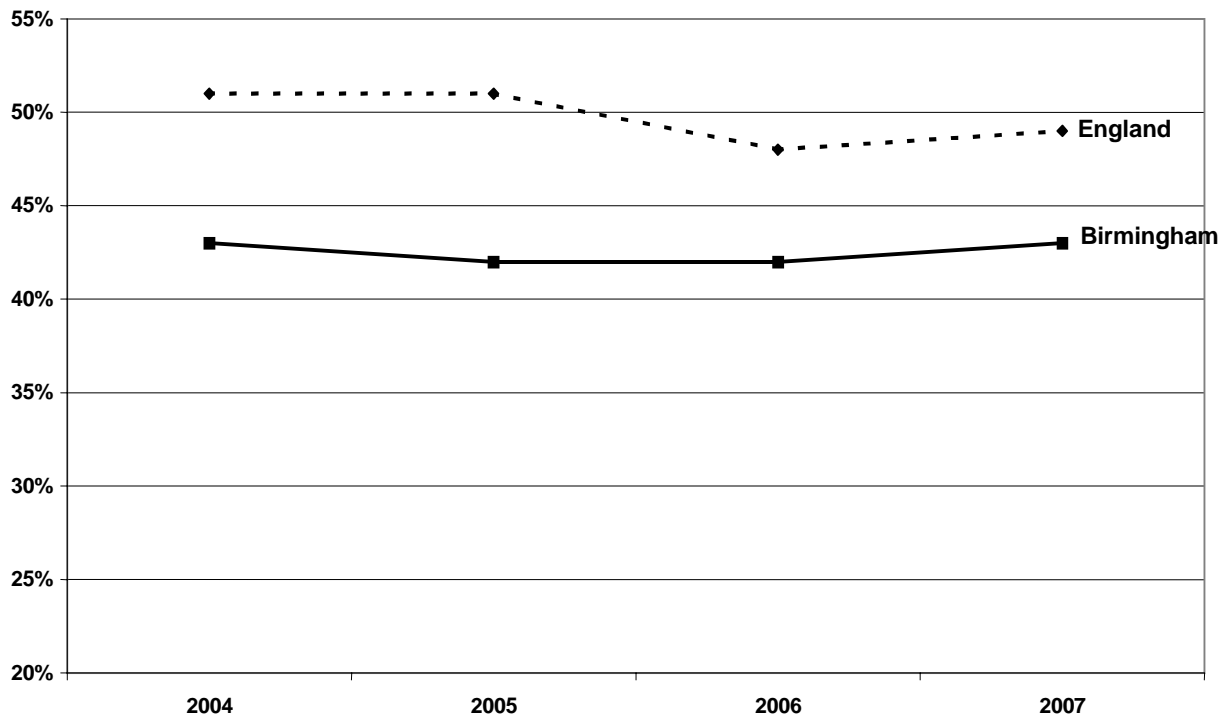


Fig. 3 Percentage of Birmingham boys and girls achieving the majority of the Early Learning Goals in Communication, Language and Literacy at the end of the Foundation Stage (2004-2007)

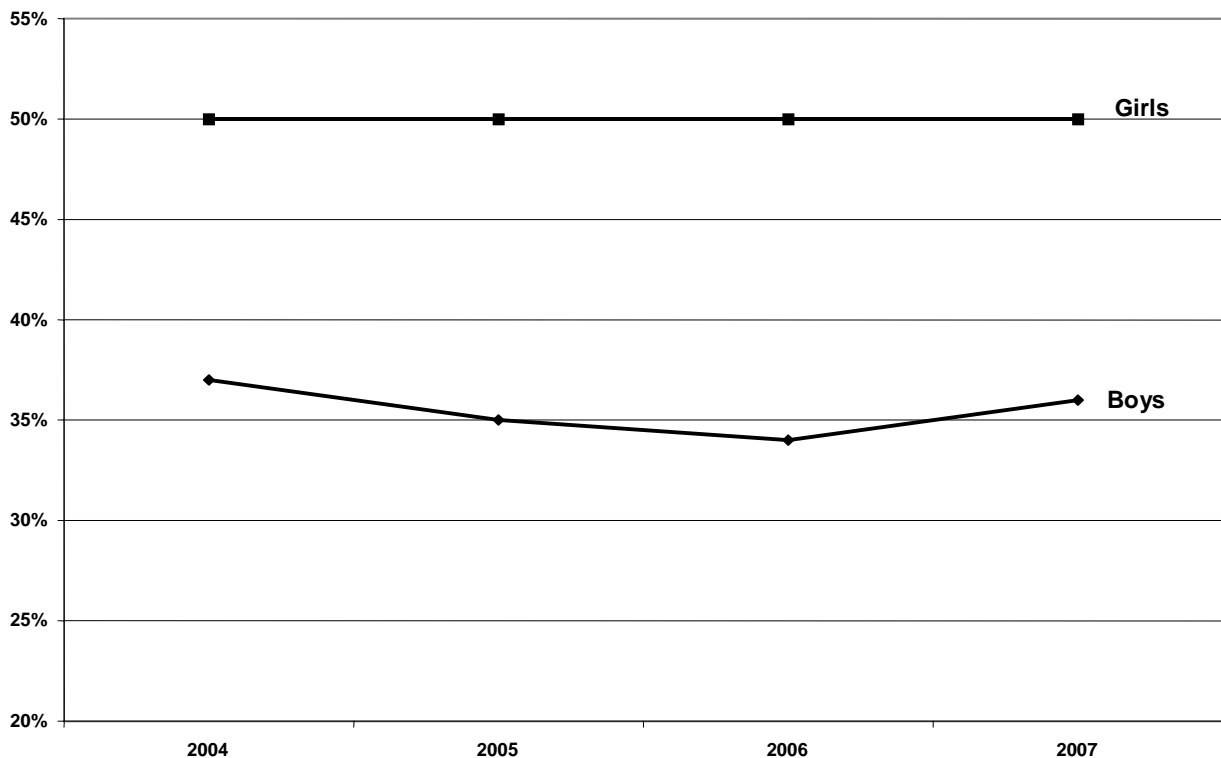


Fig. 4 Percentage of pupils achieving the majority of the Early Learning Goals in Mathematics at the end of the Foundation Stage - Birmingham compared to the England average (2004-2007)

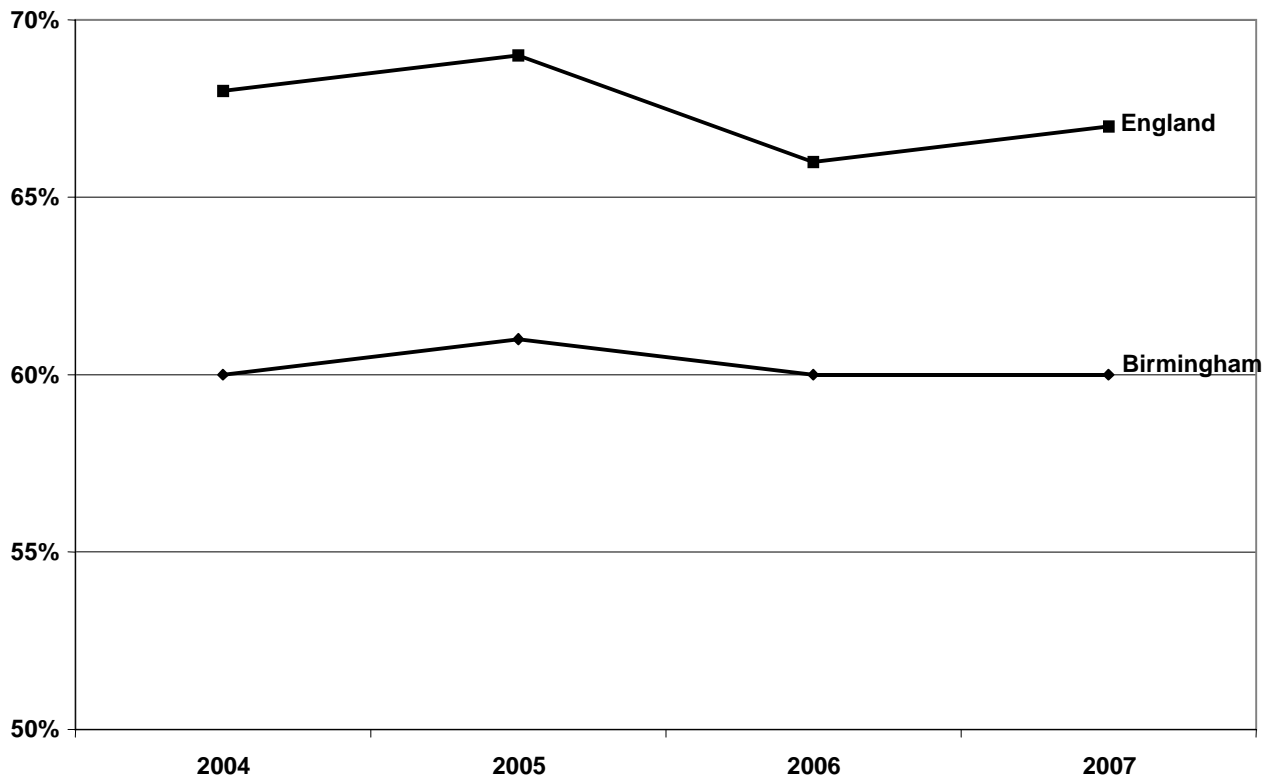


Fig. 5 Percentage of Birmingham boys and girls achieving the majority of the Early Learning Goals in Mathematics at the end of the Foundation Stage (2004-2007)

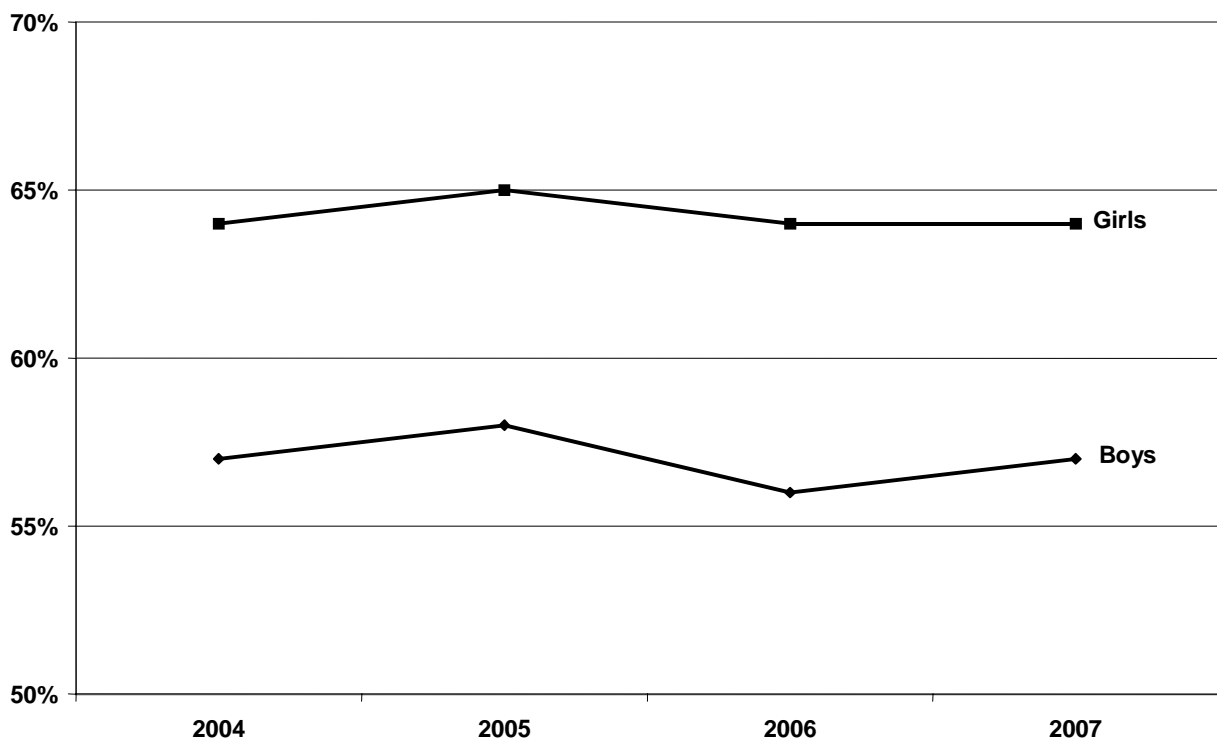


Fig. 6 Percentage of pupils achieving the majority of the Early Learning Goals in Communication, Language and Literacy at the end of the Foundation Stage by ethnic group and gender 2007

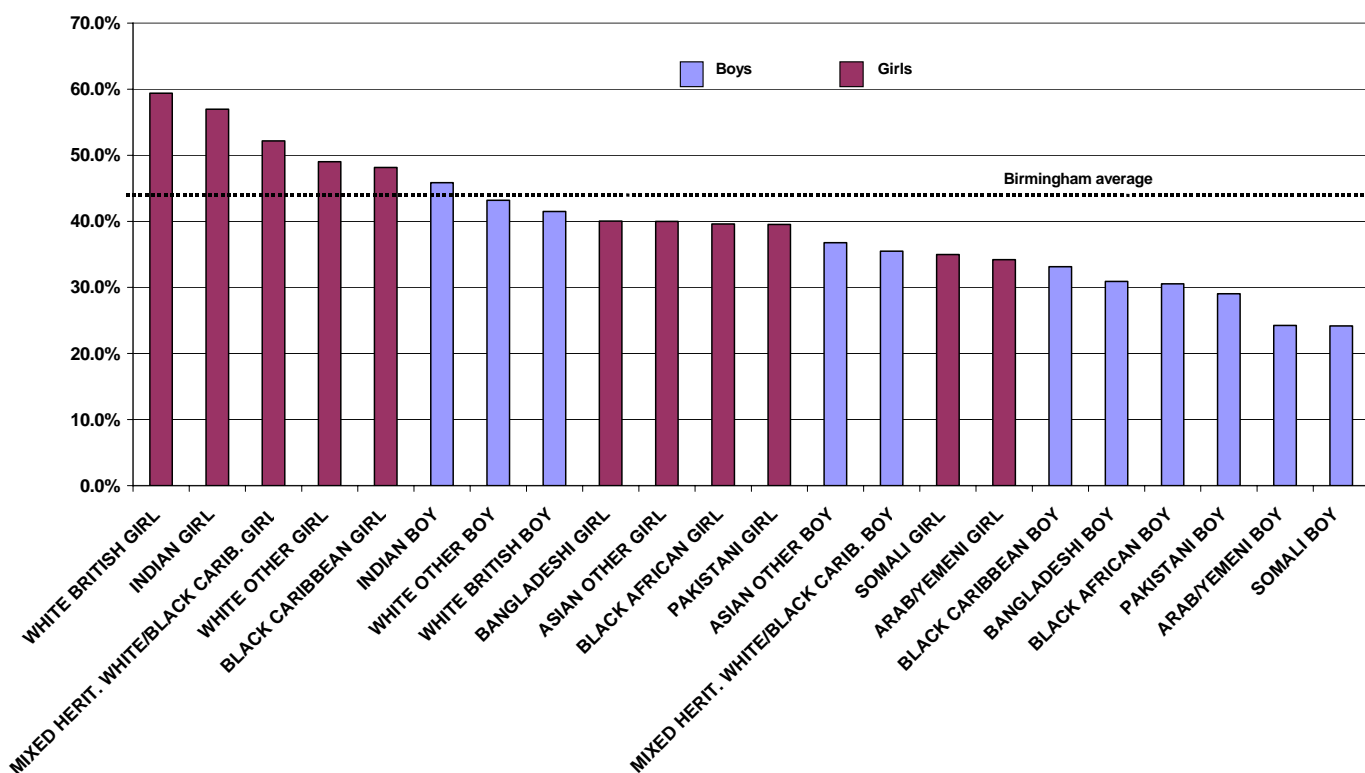


Fig. 7 Percentage of pupils achieving the majority of the Early Learning Goals in Mathematics at the end of the Foundation Stage by ethnic group and gender 2007

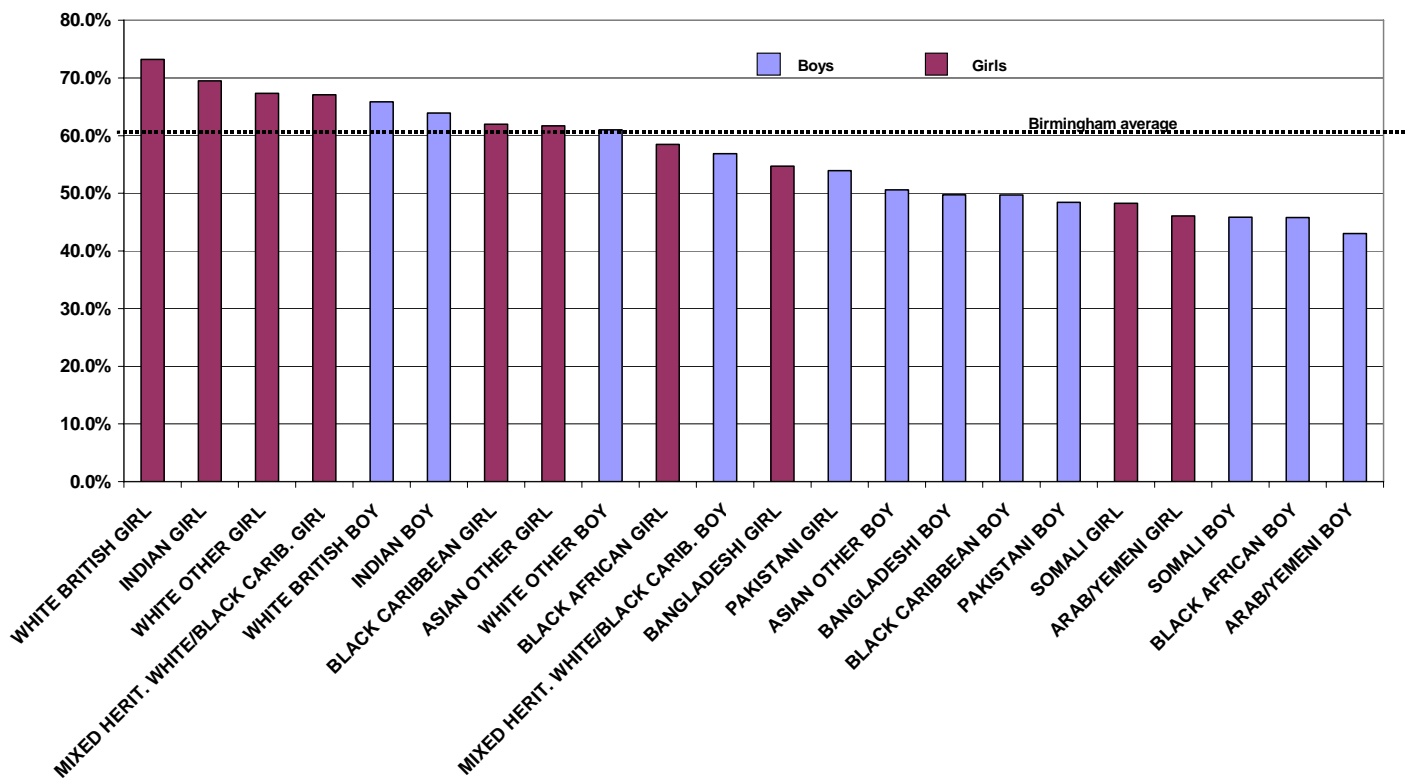


Fig. 8

Percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 and above in Reading at the end of KS1 (Birmingham compared to national)

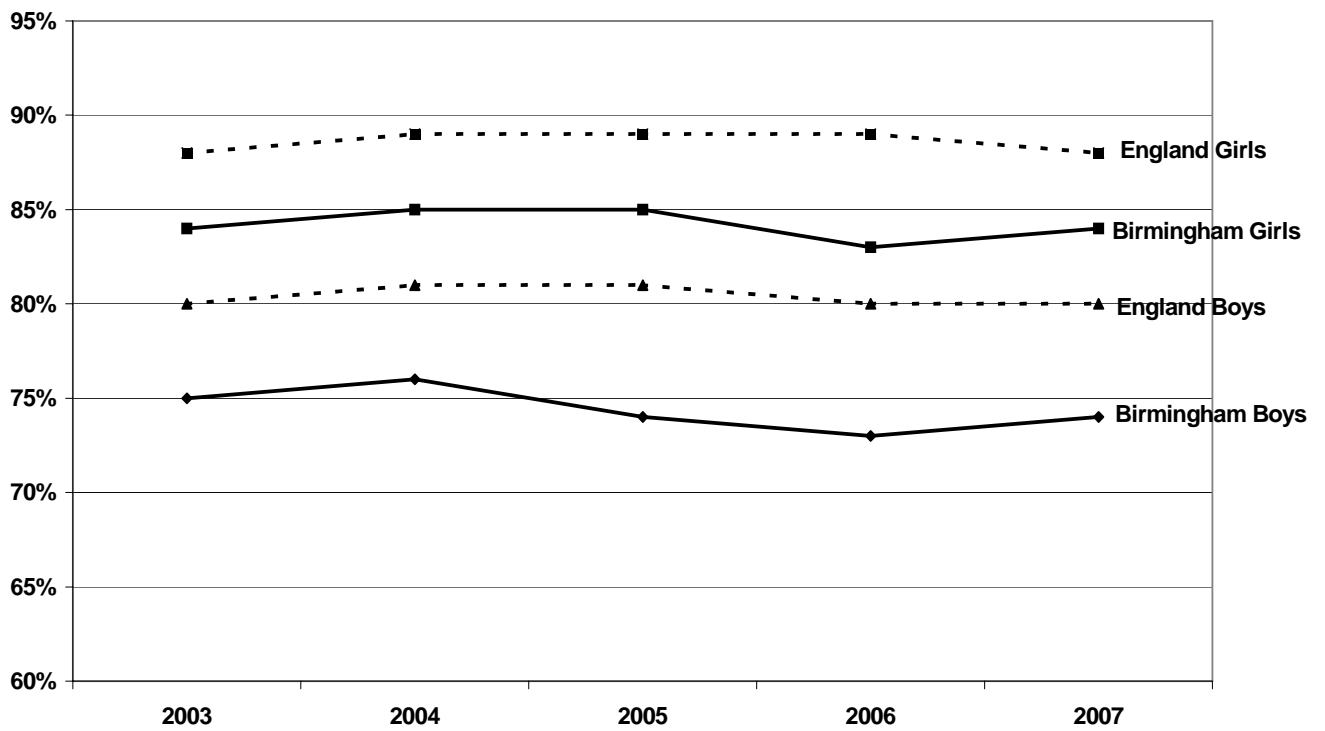


Fig. 9

Percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 and above in Writing at the end of KS1 (Birmingham compared to national)

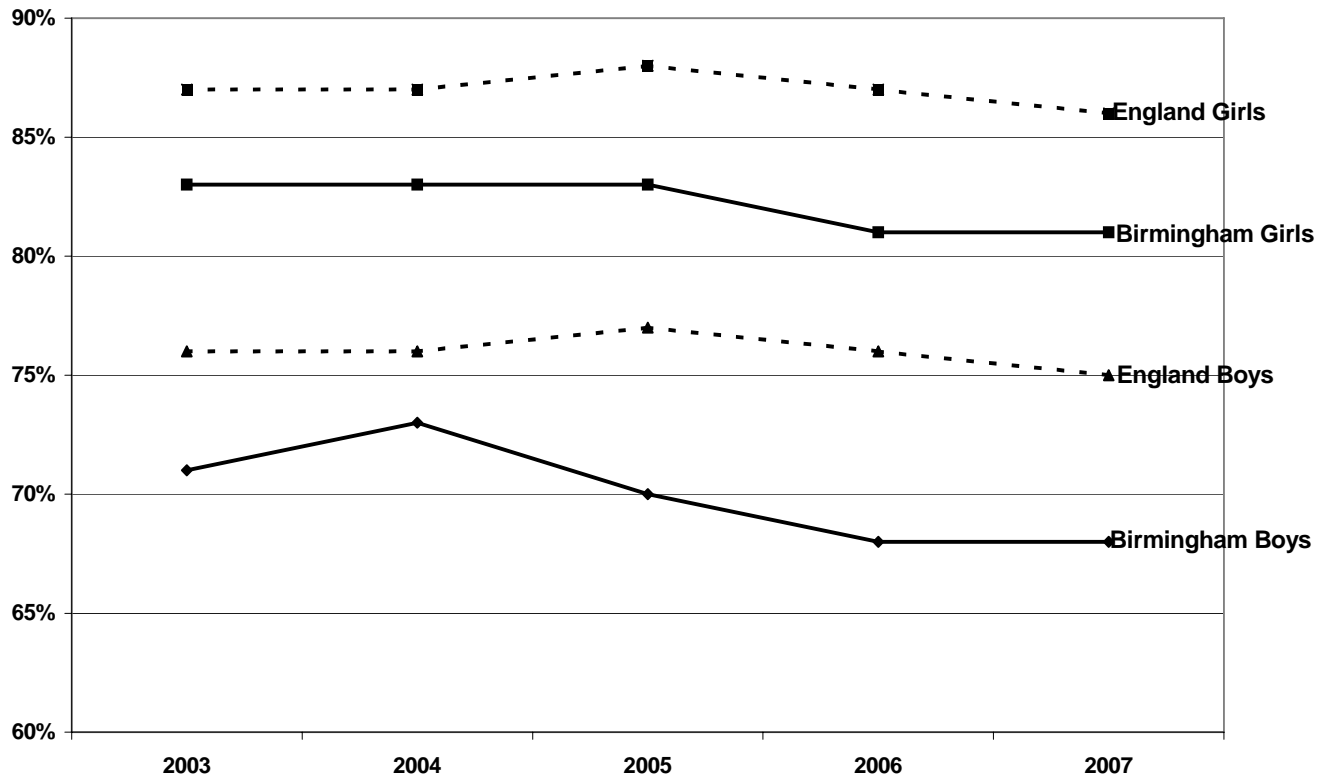


Fig. 10

Percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 and above in Mathematics at the end of KS1 (Birmingham compared to national)

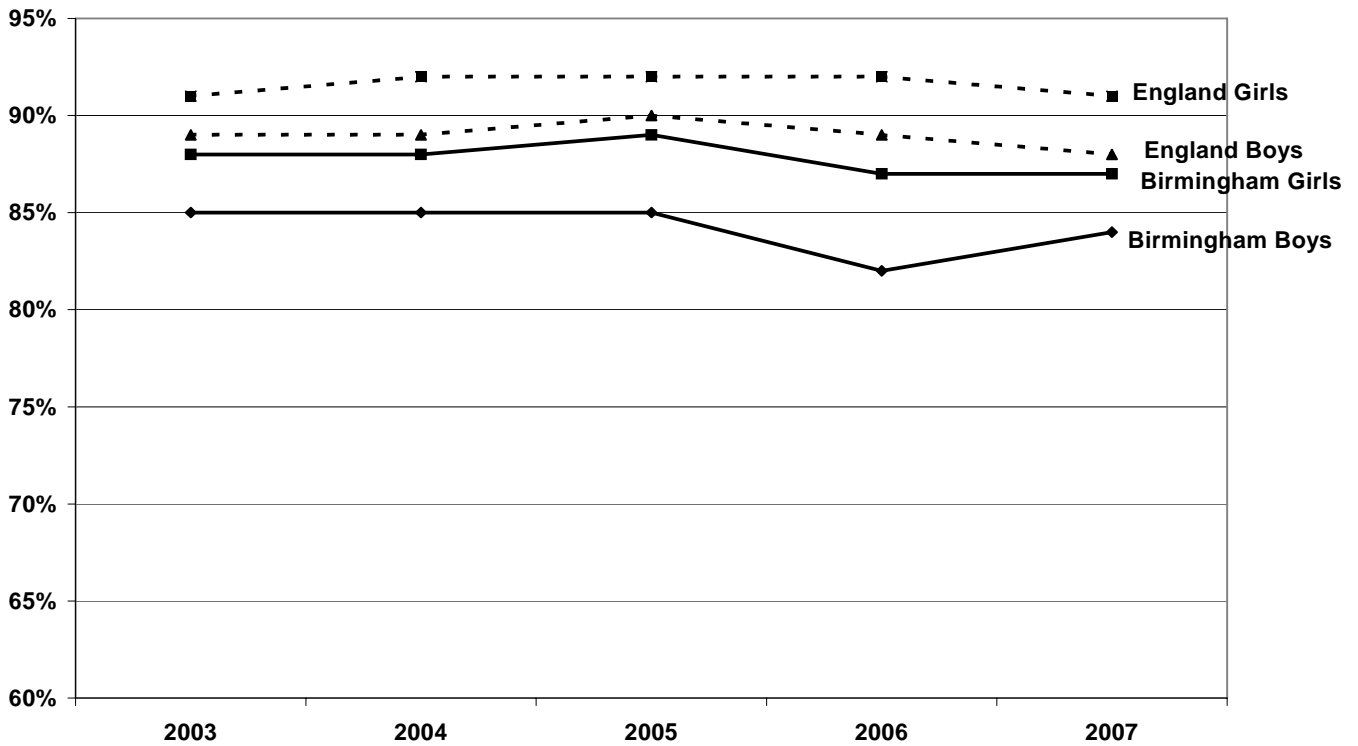


Fig. 11

Percentage of pupils achieving Level 2+ in Reading and Writing at the end of KS1 by ethnic group and gender 2007

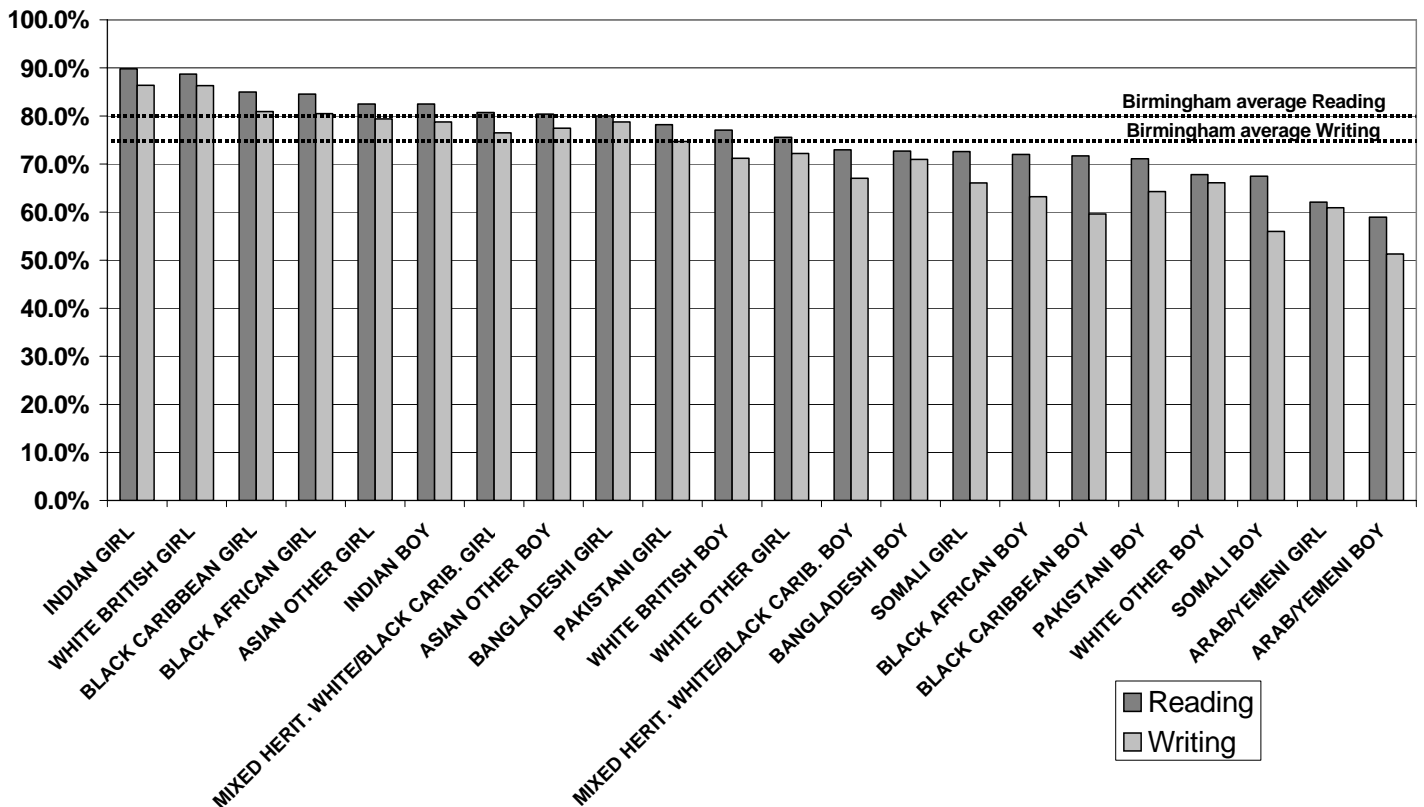


Fig. 12

Percentage of pupils achieving Level 2+ in Mathematics at the end of KS1 by ethnic group and gender 2007

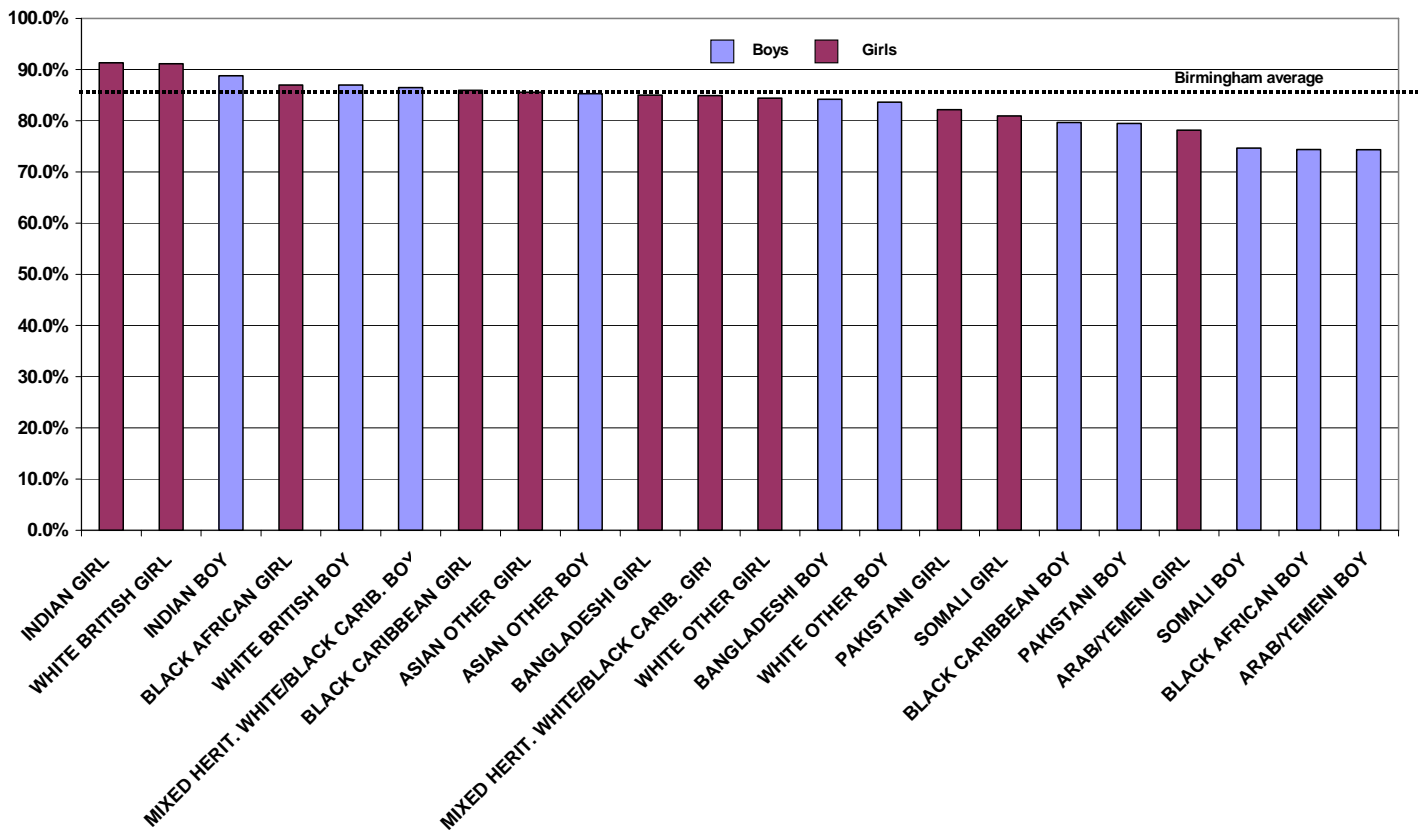


Fig. 13

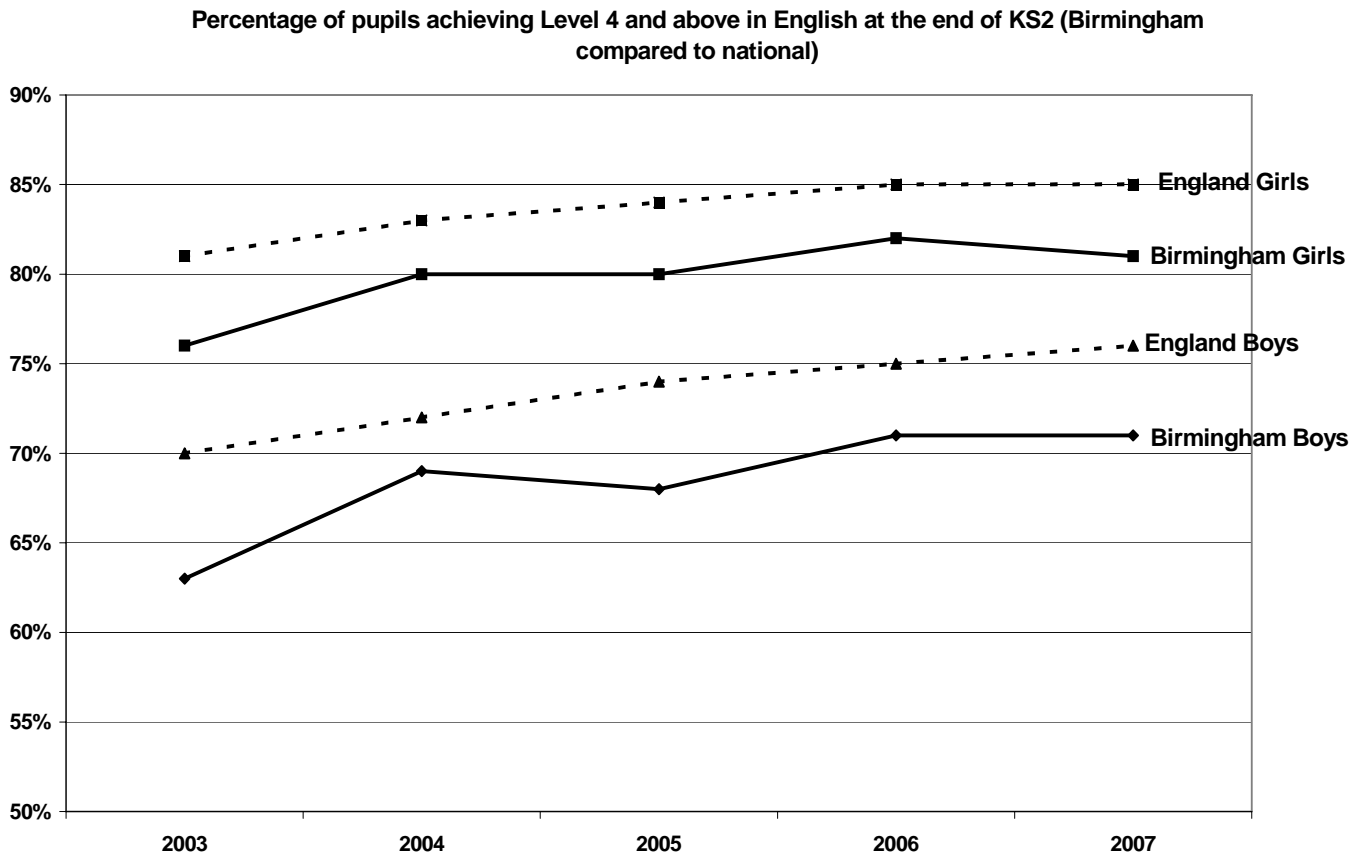


Fig. 14

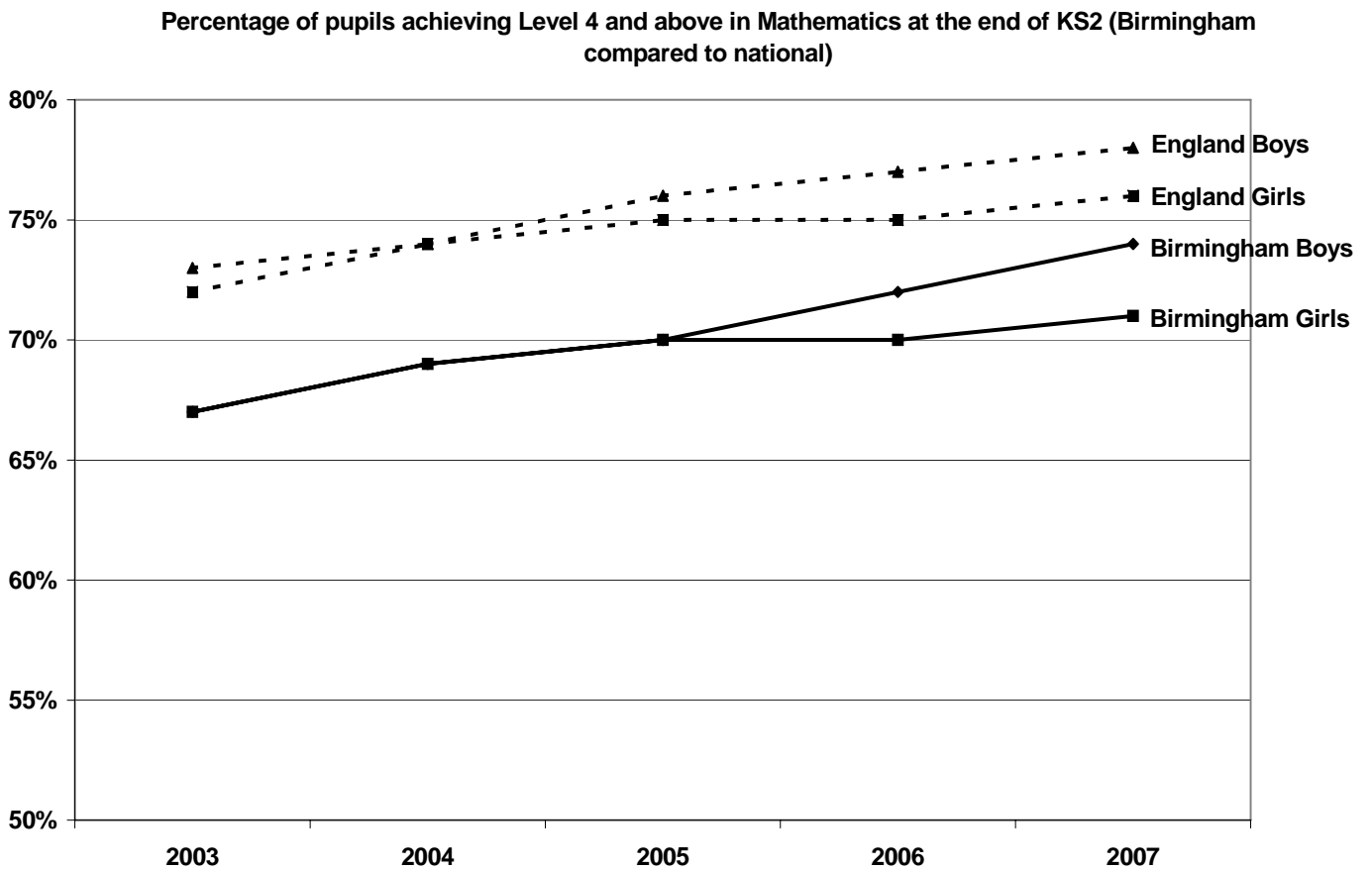


Fig. 15 Percentage of pupils achieving Level 4+ in English at the end of KS2 by ethnic group and gender 2007

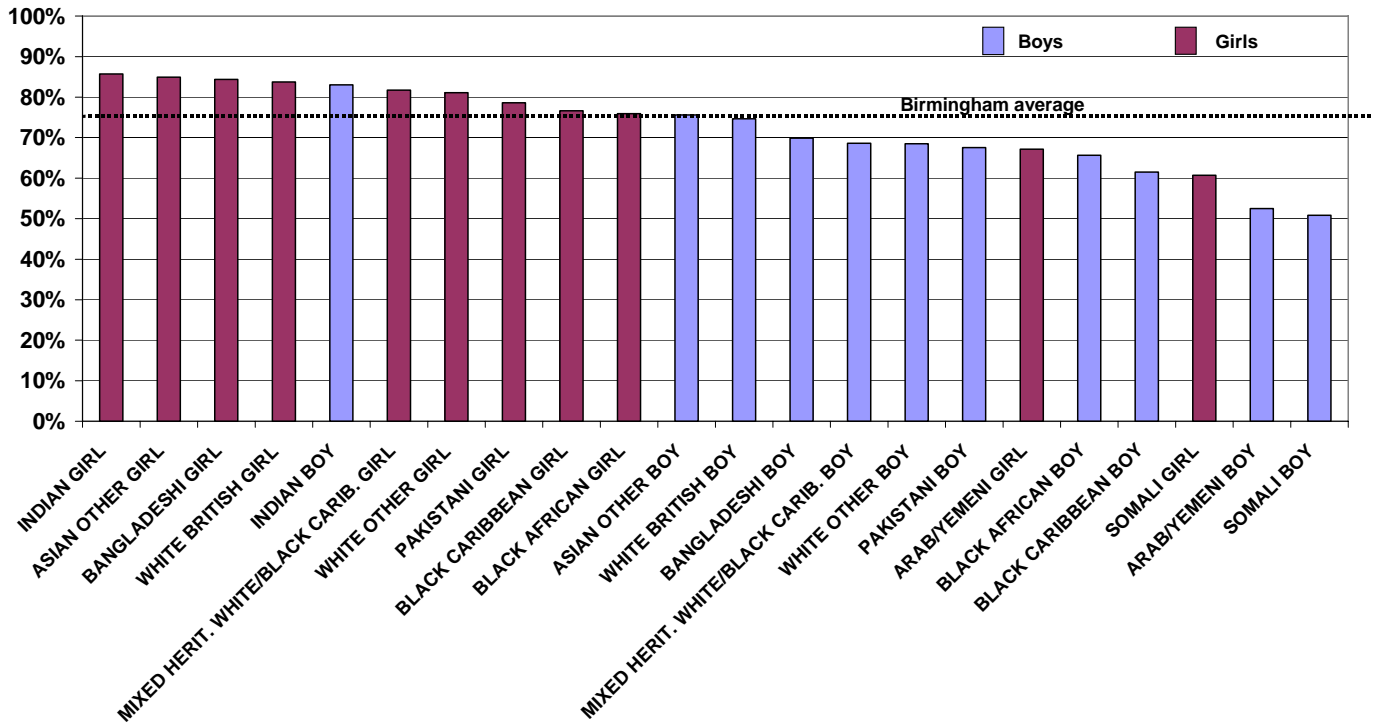


Fig. 16 Percentage of pupils achieving Level 4+ in Mathematics at the end of KS2 by ethnic group and gender 2007

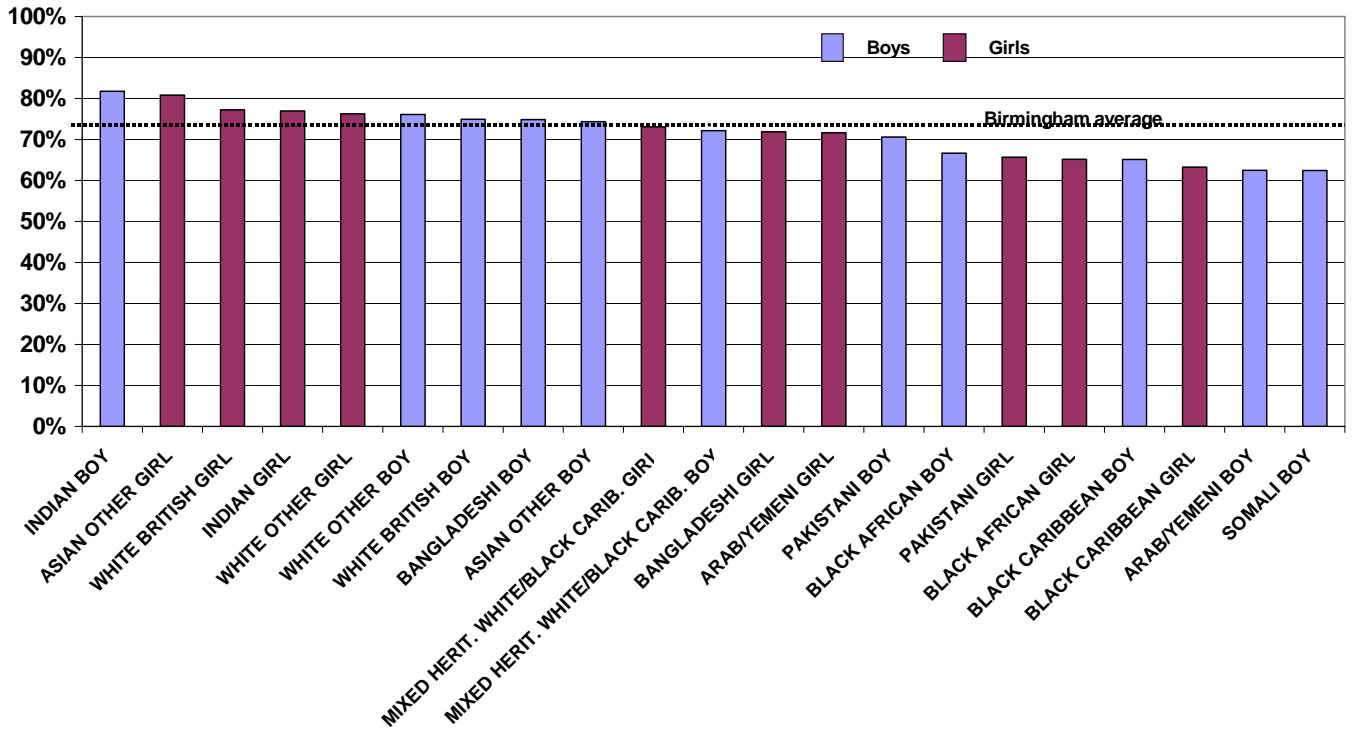


Fig. 17

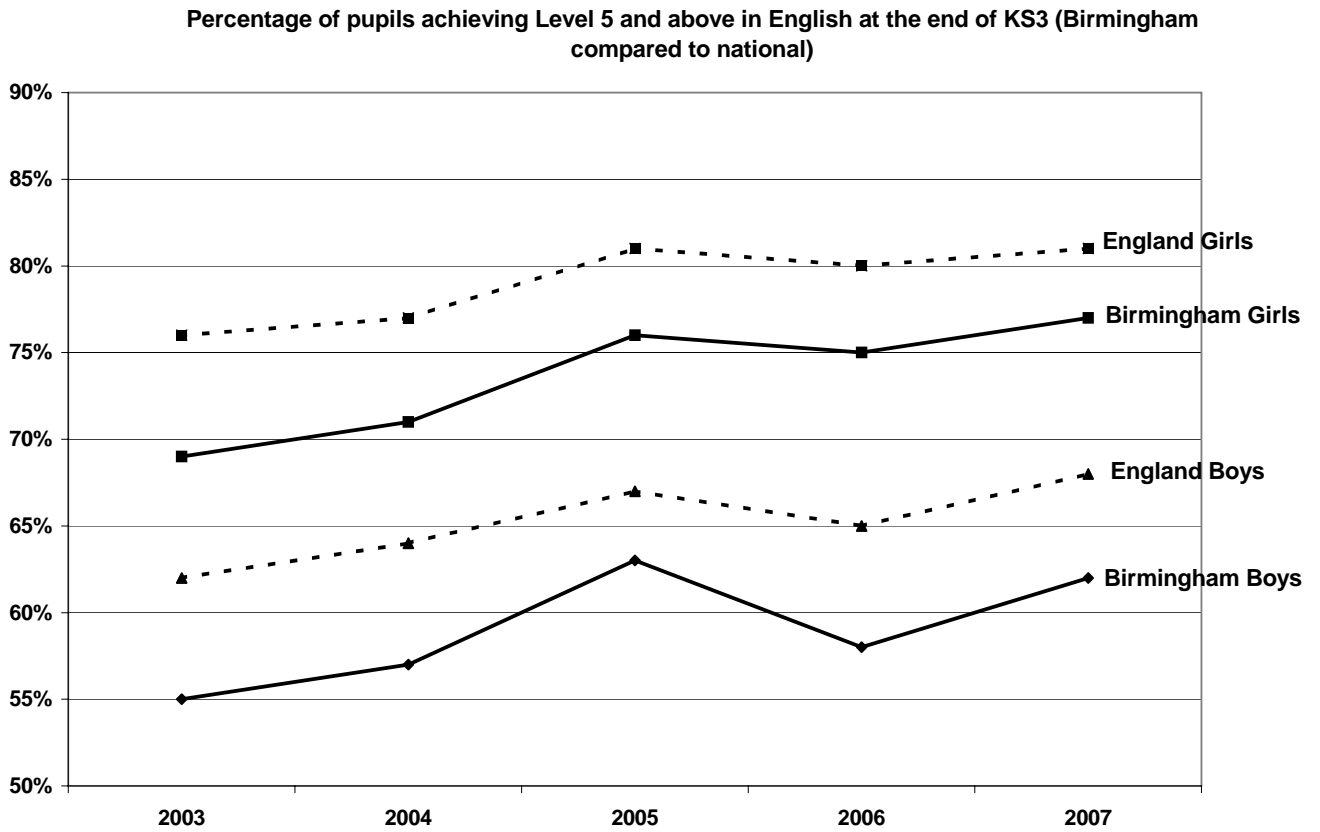


Fig.18

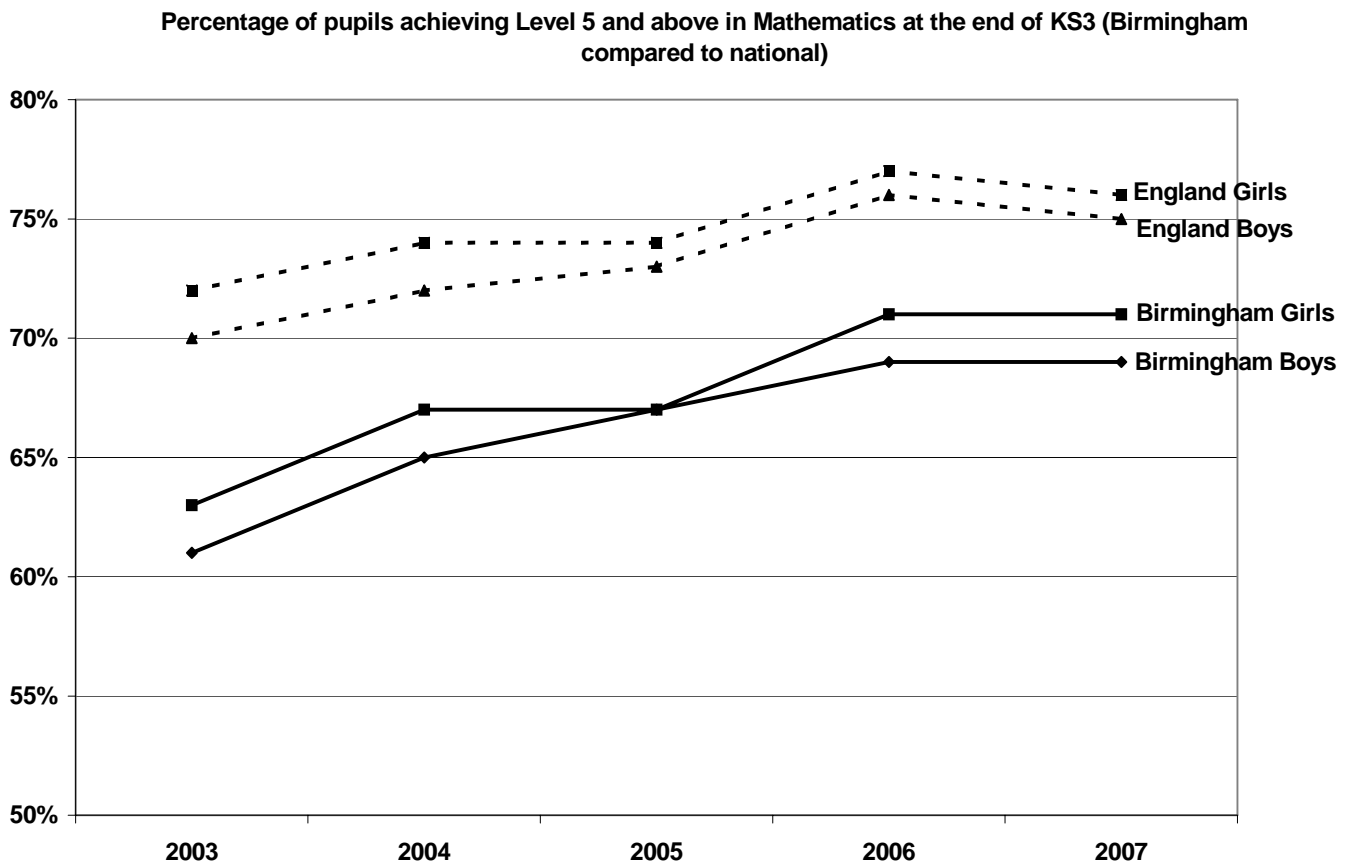


Fig. 19 Percentage of pupils achieving Level 5+ in English at the end of KS3 by ethnic group and gender 2007

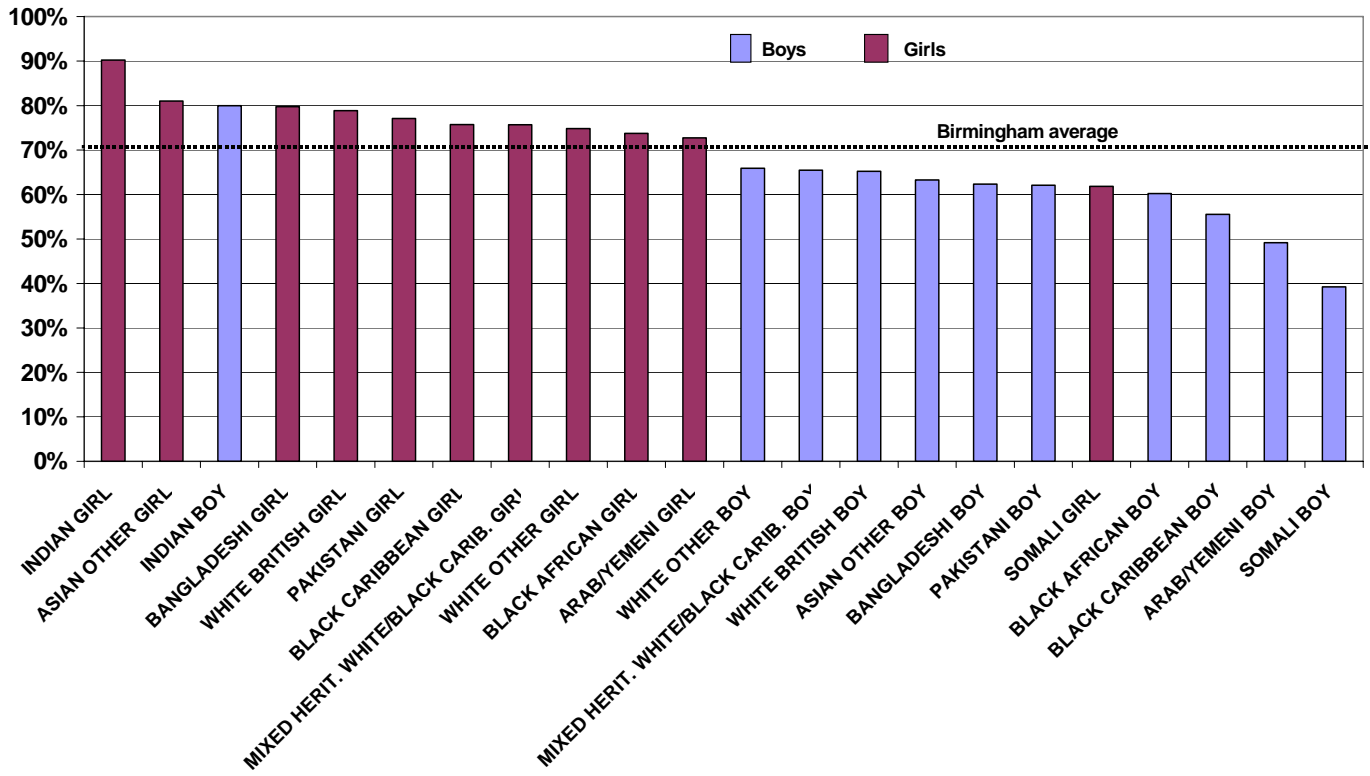


Fig. 20 Percentage of pupils achieving Level 5+ in Mathematics at the end of KS3 by ethnic group and gender 2007

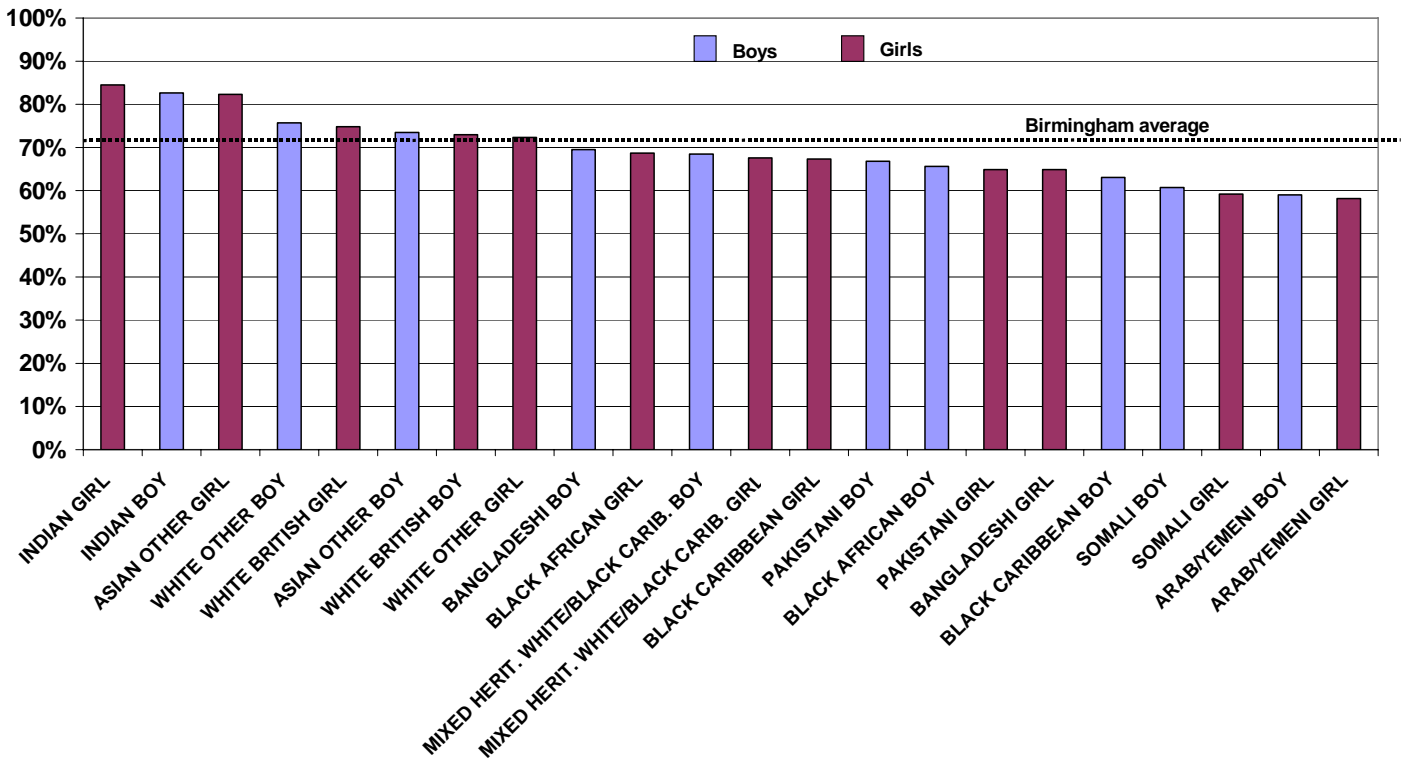


Fig. 21

Percentage of pupils achieving an 5+ A*-C grades including GCSE English and Maths at the end of Key Stage 4 (Birmingham compared to the national average)

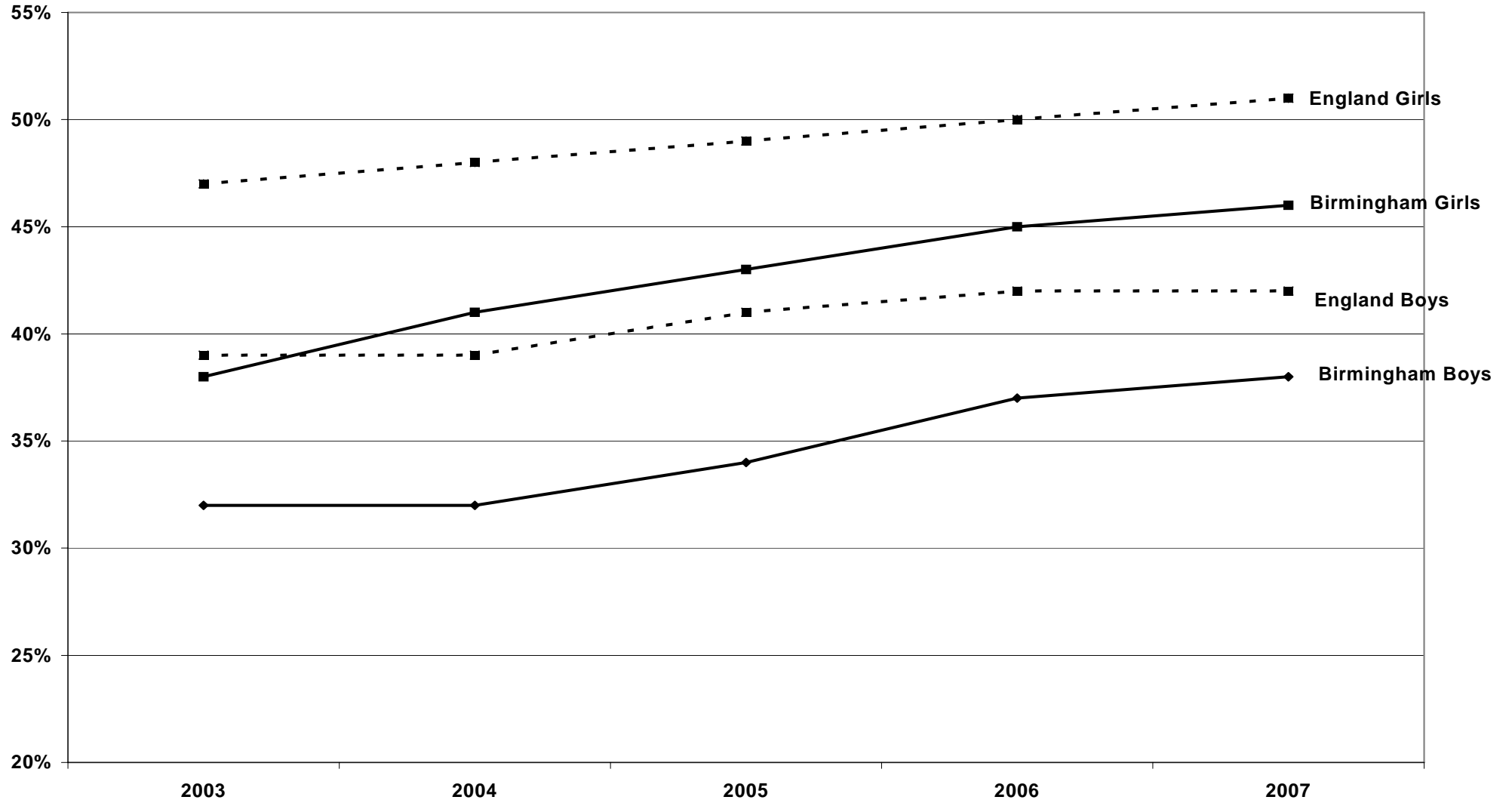


Fig. 22

Percentage of pupils achieving an A*-C grade in GCSE English at the end of Key Stage 4 (Birmingham compared to the national average)

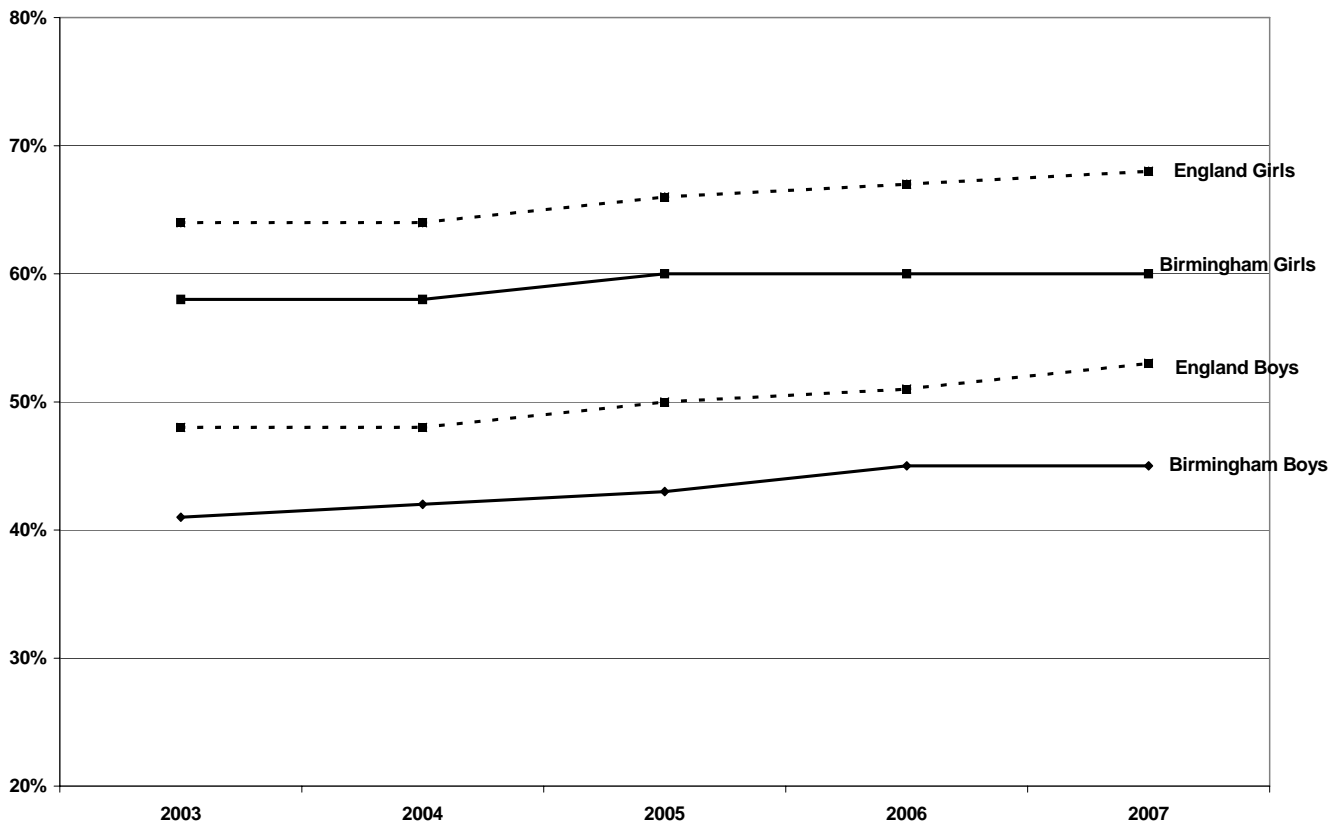


Fig. 23

Percentage of pupils achieving an A*-G grade in GCSE English at the end of Key Stage 4 (Birmingham compared to the national average)

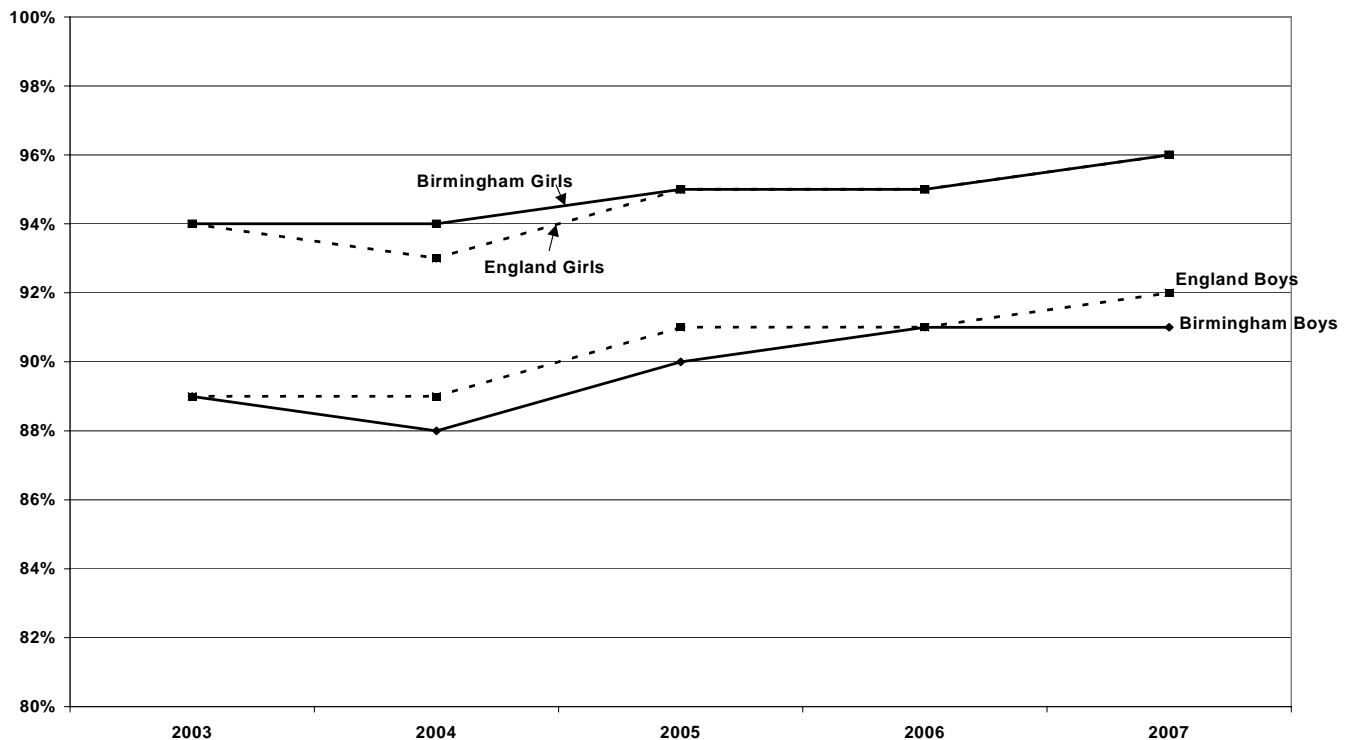


Fig 24

Percentage of pupils achieving an A*-C grade in GCSE Maths at the end of Key Stage 4 (Birmingham compared to the national average)

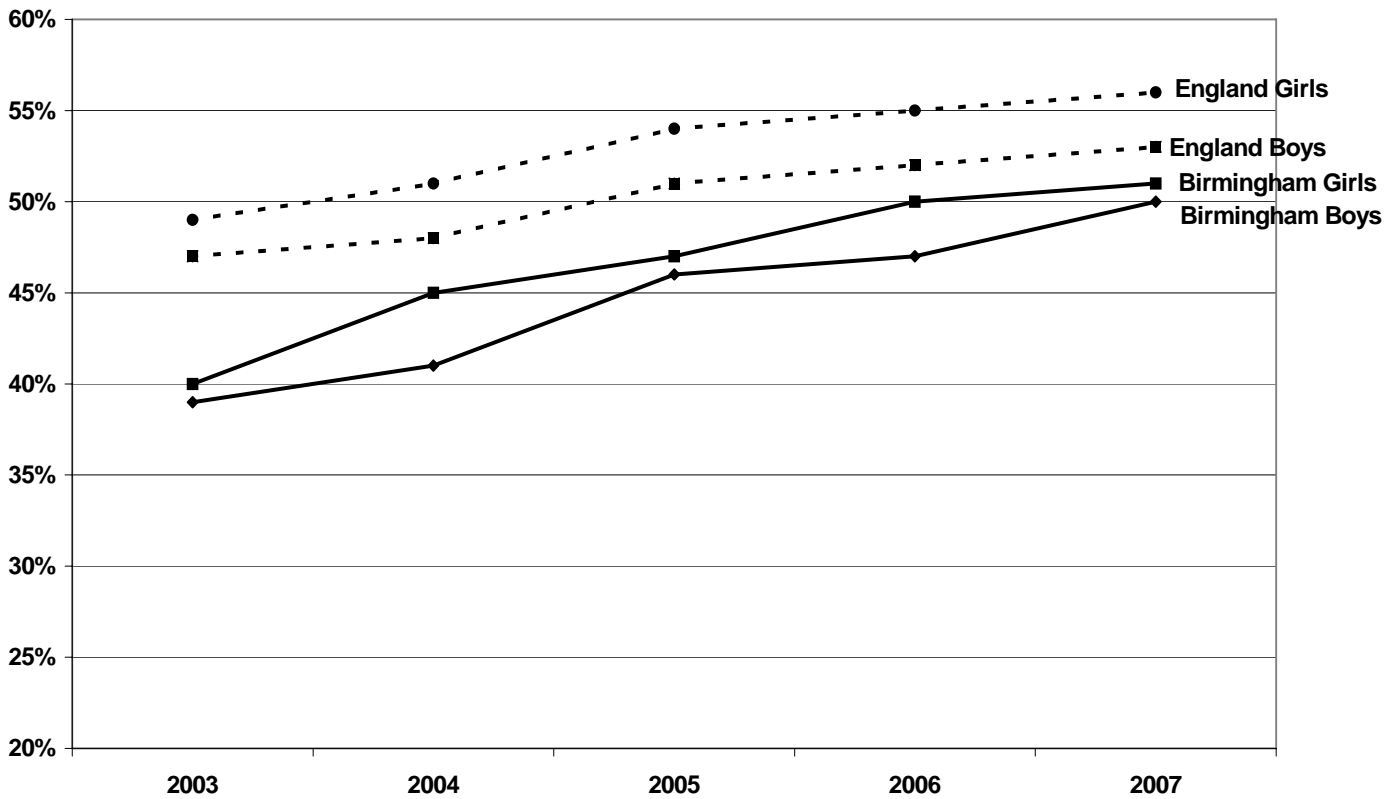


Fig. 25

Percentage of pupils achieving an A*-G grade in GCSE Maths at the end of Key Stage 4 (Birmingham compared to the national average)

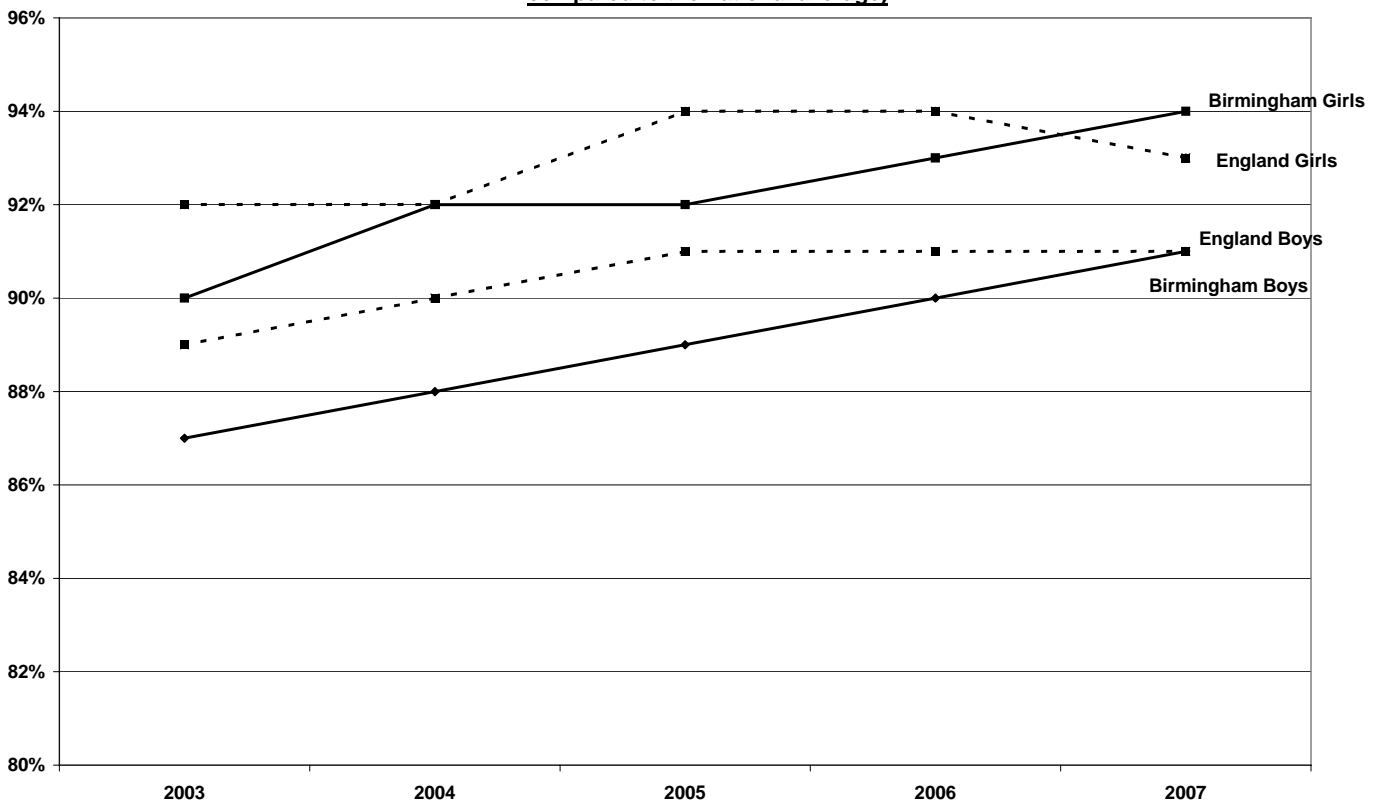


Fig. 26 Percentage of pupils achieving an A*-C grade in GCSE English at the end of KS4 by ethnic group and gender 2007

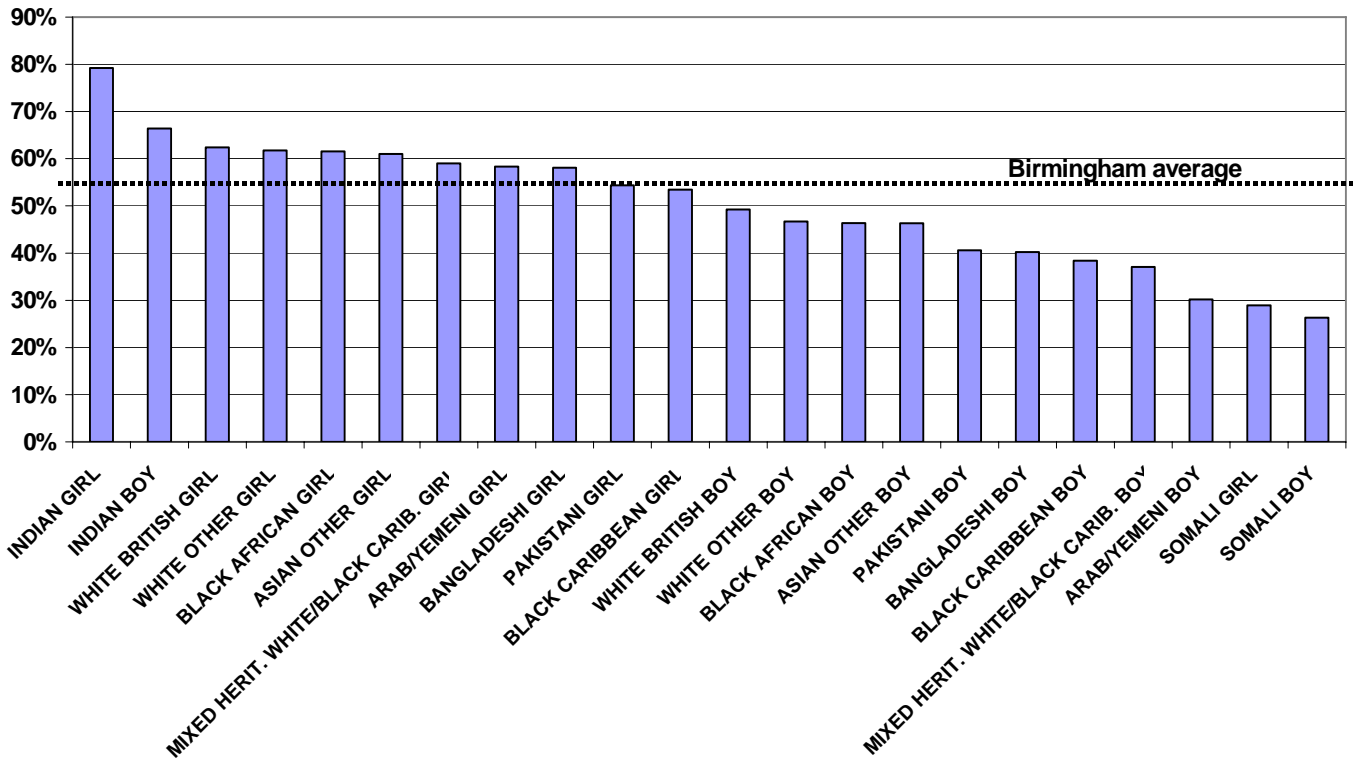


Fig. 27 Percentage of pupils achieving an A*-C grade in GCSE Mathematics at the end of KS4 by ethnic group and gender 2007

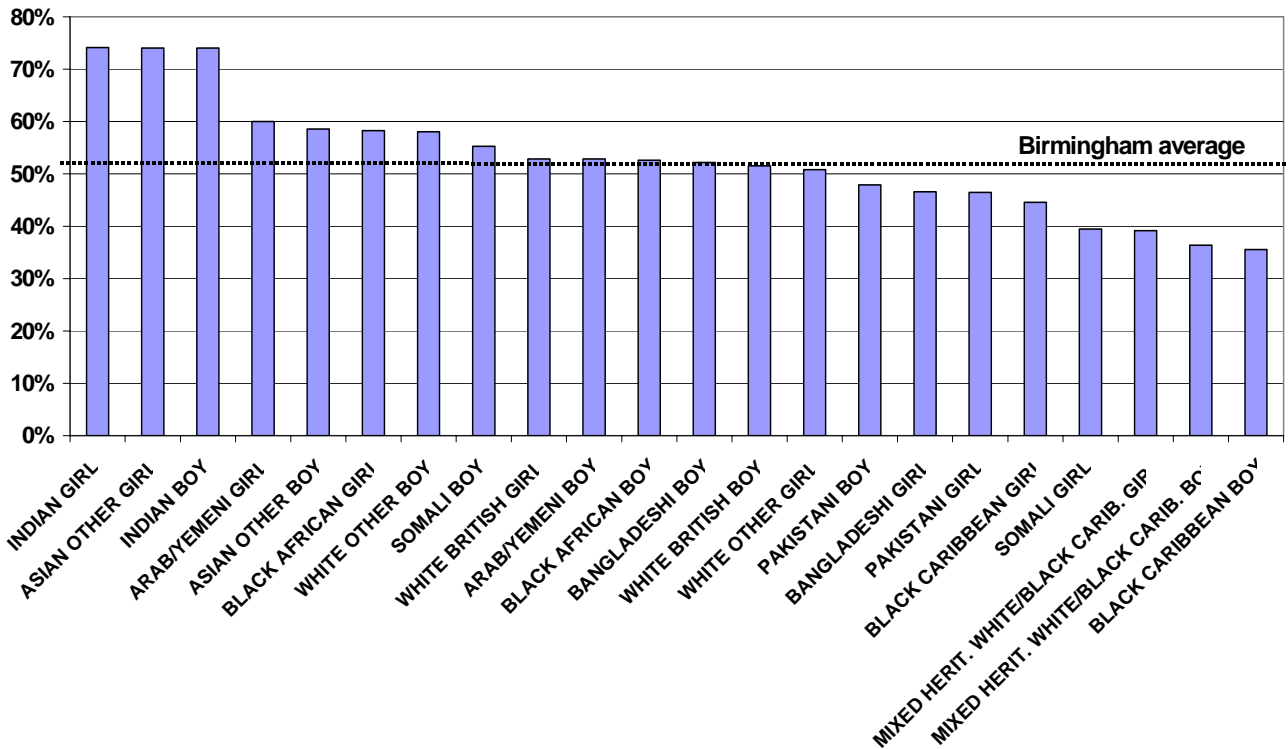


Fig. 28 Percentage of pupils living in each ward and attending Birmingham maintained schools achieving 5 or more A*-C grades including GCSE English and Maths (2007)

Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C including English and Maths - 2007 results

