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The
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Of
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THE IMPACT OF *SKILLS FOR LIFE* ON ADULT LITERACY, LANGUAGE AND NUMERACY LEARNERS

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**Full report on the analysis of existing
quantitative data**

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Project team and authorship for this report

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Professor Ann-Marie Bathmaker led the project strand concerning the analysis of existing statistical data for the NRDC project 'The impact of *Skills for Life* on adult literacy, language and numeracy learners' and wrote this report (except Appendix 3).

Dr Mark Pilling carried out all the statistical analyses, produced the graphs in the report, and also prepared all the graphs and tables in the statistical annex.

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The Learning and Skills Council supplied the datasets on which the analyses presented in this report are based.

Professor Greg Brooks (University of Sheffield) was the overall project director, wrote Appendix 3, edited the report in October 2011 in preparation for publication, and lightly revised it again in May 2017.

Pam Cole (University of Sheffield), who worked on another strand of the project, gave helpful ideas and feedback on drafts of this report.

Dr Sam Roberts (now at University of Chester) and Dr Sammy Rashid (University of Sheffield) carried out some earlier but superseded statistical analyses.

Executive summary

THE IMPACT OF *SKILLS FOR LIFE* ON ADULT LITERACY, LANGUAGE AND NUMERACY LEARNERS Full report on the analysis of existing quantitative data

Headline findings

Young people aged 16-18 made up a considerable proportion of learners considered to be part of adult literacy, language and numeracy (ALLN) provision, and represented more than half of the numbers which counted towards the *Skills for Life* (SfL) policy target.

Learners from across different ethnic groups were well represented in the numbers for participation and achievement in ALLN, but the numbers for white learners were increasing at a greater rate than for other ethnic groups.

More qualifications were achieved by women than by men, except amongst 16- to 18-year-olds and in Work-Based Learning (WBL) provision.

Learners participating in WBL achieved fewer qualification outcomes as a percentage of those enrolled compared with learners in Further Education.

Learners were more successful in achieving basic skills qualifications than key skills.

During the first five years of SfL, there was a year-on-year increase in the numbers of learners participating in ALLN provision and achieving qualifications.

Learners achieved more qualifications in literacy than in numeracy or ESOL.

Learners achieved more qualifications at Level 1 than at Entry level or Level 2.

Overview and aims of the project

The *Skills for Life* strategy was introduced in 2001 with a key aim of making sure that England had one of the best adult literacy and numeracy rates in the world. When the strategy was introduced, three targets were set. The initial target was to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults in England by July 2004, the second to increase this figure to 1.5 million by 2007 and the final target to reach 2.25 million by 2010 (DfEE, 2001). The aim of this research project was to provide evidence on the question 'What impact has the *Skills for Life* strategy had on learners?'

The project ran from October 2003 until March 2007, and had three strands:

- quantitative analysis of existing national data on adult literacy, language and numeracy (ALLN) learners in the Learning and Skills Council's databases for 2000/01 to 2004/05
- quantitative analysis of new data on ALLN learners

- qualitative fieldwork involving interviewing stakeholders, including large numbers of ALLN learners, in 2004-06

This report is concerned with the first strand. The aim of all three strands was to provide converging evidence related to the impact of the strategy on learners. There was a parallel and linked study of the impact of *Skills for Life* on teachers. Drafts of the various reports from both projects informed the government's 'refreshing' of the *Skills for Life* strategy in 2007.

Methods

Data on adult literacy, language and numeracy (ALLN) from the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) Individualised Learner Record database were analysed as a means of investigating the impact of *Skills for Life* on learners. The analysis focused on trends and patterns in participation and achievement over the five-year period from 2000/01 to 2004/05. This represented the first years of the *Skills for Life* strategy, and included 2004, the year of the first government target of 750,000 learners improving their skills. This report examines data for all ALLN provision, and also looks at literacy, numeracy and ESOL separately. A number of factors are explored, including patterns and trends in the level and type of qualification pursued by learners, and patterns in the age, gender and ethnicity of learners.

All ALLN provision

The number of people taking part in ALLN learning increased year on year between 2000 and 2005. Enrolments more than doubled over the period as a whole.

The number of people achieving literacy, numeracy and ESOL qualifications also increased year on year between 2000 and 2005. The number of qualifications achieved almost tripled over the period as a whole.

There was a considerable gap every year between the number of enrolments and the number of achievements. By 2004/05, 59% of enrolments resulted in achievement. While the proportion improved over the five-year period, the trend was flattening out.

The majority of participation and achievement by learners was in basic skills qualifications, rather than key skills or GCSEs. The proportion increased between 2000 and 2005. In 2004/05, 65% of enrolments and 83% of qualifications achieved were in basic skills qualifications.

Learners aged 19 and over were more successful in achieving qualifications than 16- to 18-year-olds, and made up a higher proportion of qualifications achieved throughout the period, rising from 65% of all qualifications achieved in 2000 to 75% in 2005.

Numbers participating in provision generally increased for all ethnic groups between 2000/01 and 2004/05. The numbers more than tripled for white learners, while for other ethnic groups, they doubled.

Literacy

Literacy had the highest number of enrolments and qualifications achieved between 2000/01 and 2004/05 compared with numeracy and ESOL.

The majority of qualifications achieved in literacy throughout the five years were at Level 1.

At Level 1, success rates in literacy qualifications were much higher for basic skills than for key skills. For basic skills, achievement rates as a percentage of enrolments rose by 17 percentage points to 84% between 2000/01 and 2004/05, while for key skills they were almost the same throughout at 25%-26%.

At Level 2 in literacy, enrolments were highest for key skills, but qualifications achieved as a percentage of enrolments were lowest. In 2004/05 under 50% of courses completed in key skills resulted in successful achievement, compared with 80% for basic skills and 93% for GCSEs.

Between 2000 and 2005 the largest number of enrolments in literacy for every year except one was by 16- to 18-year-olds.

The largest number of qualifications achieved in literacy throughout the five years was by 25- to 59-year-olds. However, at Level 2, the largest number of qualifications achieved was by 16- to 18-year-olds.

Enrolments and qualifications achieved by women slightly outnumbered those by men throughout the five years. Amongst 16- to 18-year-olds, this was reversed and the numbers for males were slightly higher than those for females.

Throughout the five years, white learners represented over three quarters of the numbers for participation and qualifications achieved in literacy, and this proportion was increasing slowly.

Numeracy

Numeracy had the second highest proportion of enrolments (35% reducing to 31%) between 2000/01 and 2004/05, compared with literacy (c.40%). Numeracy had the lowest proportion of qualifications achieved (27% dropping to 25%, then returning to 27%), after both literacy and ESOL.

Qualifications achieved at Level 1 in numeracy far outnumbered those at Level 2 or Entry level by 2004/05.

Rates of completion and achievement in numeracy, as a proportion of enrolments, were much lower for key skills qualifications than for basic skills or GCSE qualifications.

Older learners (25-59) tended to be much more successful in achieving a qualification outcome than 16- to 18-year-olds. However, a greater proportion of 16- to 18-year-olds than of older learners enrolled for Level 2 qualifications, and a far greater number of qualifications achieved at Level 2 were by 16- to 18-year-olds than by older learners.

Women made up slightly more than half of the total numbers for participation and achievement in numeracy throughout the five-year period. However, amongst 16- to 18-year-olds the proportion of males was slightly higher than females.

Over three quarters of the figures for participation and achievement in numeracy were by learners who identified themselves as white throughout the five years.

ESOL

Enrolments in ESOL formed just over a quarter of all enrolments in ALLN provision between 2000 and 2005.

Qualifications achieved in ESOL represented 30% or slightly over of all qualifications achieved in ALLN provision between 2000 and 2005. Qualifications achieved in ESOL outnumbered those in numeracy throughout the period.

The success rate at achieving qualifications was higher for ESOL than for literacy or numeracy, and rose from 56% of enrolments leading to successful achievement in 2000/01 to 72% in 2004/05.

From 2002/03, the majority of qualifications achieved in ESOL were at Entry level, followed by Level 1. By 2004/05, 97% of qualifications achieved were split almost equally between Entry level and Level 1.

Young people aged 16-18 made up only a small proportion of ESOL enrolments and qualifications achieved (9% in 2000/01, falling to 6% in 2004/05).

More than half of the total number of enrolments and qualifications achieved in ESOL throughout the five-year period were by women (58% in 2000/01 rising to 61% in 2004/05).

Learners who identified themselves as white formed the highest proportion of enrolments and qualifications achieved in ESOL throughout the five years (31% of the total in 2000/01 and 34% in 2004/05). Asian learners represented the second highest proportion, at around 18%, with black learners representing around 15% of the total throughout.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview and aims of the project

This project began in October 2003 and ran until March 2007. It had three strands, shown here with the names of those who worked on them:

1. Quantitative analysis of existing national data on adult literacy, language and numeracy (ALLN) learners in the Learning and Skills Council's databases for 2000/01 to 2004/05; Professor Ann-Marie Bathmaker (University of Sheffield to 31/12/06; University of the West of England from 1/1/07), Dr Sammy Rashid (from August 2005) and Dr Mark Pilling (from August 2006) (both University of Sheffield)
2. Quantitative analysis of new data on ALLN learners gathered by the market research organisation GfK NOP in 2004-06; Professor Greg Brooks and Dr Mark Pilling (University of Sheffield)
3. Qualitative fieldwork involving interviewing stakeholders, including large numbers of ALLN learners, in 2004-06; Yvon Appleby, Paul Davies, Ann-Marie Money and Linda Pearce (Lancaster University), Ann-Marie Bathmaker and Pam Cole (University of Sheffield).

This report is concerned with the first strand. The aim of all three strands was to provide converging evidence on the question 'What impact has the *Skills for Life* strategy had on learners?', and the whole project, together with the parallel and linked study of the impact of *Skills for Life* on teachers, was intended to inform the government's 'refreshing' of the strategy in 2007.

This report presents an analysis of trends and patterns in participation and achievement over a five-year period from 2000/01 to 2004/05. These were the first years of the *Skills for Life* strategy, and included 2004, the year of the first government *SfL* target of 750,000 learners improving their skills.

Context

A key aim of the *Skills for Life* strategy was to make sure that England had adult literacy and numeracy rates that were among the best in the world. When the strategy was introduced in 2001, three targets were set. The initial target was to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults in England by July 2004, the second to increase this figure to 1.5 million by 2007 and the final target to reach 2.25 million by 2010 (DfEE, 2001). This aim encouraged a strong focus on the achievement of qualification outcomes linked to national targets for the improvement of levels of adult literacy and numeracy. The targets, which were measured by the number of qualifications achieved by learners, represented one form of impact on learners. While this was not the only impact that might be hoped for from the *Skills for Life* strategy, it represented an important element in evaluating the strategy. One method of trying to get some purchase on this aspect of the impact of *Skills for Life* on learners was to ask whether data which were being collected from the field anyway showed such an impact.

There were three types of statistical data available in England which provided information on adult literacy, language and numeracy levels: first, on the scale of need; secondly, on learners' progress; and thirdly, on learners' levels of achievement. Although they all contributed to an overall picture, each type of data offered a different perspective, though each also had its limitations.

Data on scale of need

There have been a number of surveys in England which provided data on the scale of need in adult basic skills (reviewed by Brooks et al., 2001a; Brooks, 2009; Brooks and Lahmar, 2017). These surveys used one-off performance tests undertaken by nationally representative samples of the adult population to estimate overall levels of need, defined as the percentage of adults having literacy or numeracy skills below Level 1 (= within Entry level). Although different approaches to collecting the data were used from one survey to another, the findings tended to converge on estimates for both skills in the range 17%-23%. However, when the *Skills for Life* strategy was initiated in 2001, the most recent evidence came from three surveys conducted in 1996, and a specifically *Skills for Life* survey was carried out between June 2002 and May 2003 in England.

The purpose of the survey was to produce a national profile of levels of competence in literacy and numeracy, and to assess the impact of different levels of skill on people's lives, the latter broken down into work and everyday life. A total of 8,730 randomly selected adults completed a questionnaire, which gathered behavioural and demographic data, and completed three assessments, one each for literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The percentage responses were then applied to the population of England as a whole. The data (Williams et al., 2003) suggested that in 2002/03 16% or 5 million adults of working age (16- to 65-year-olds) had literacy skills at Entry level, and that 47% or 14.6 million adults had numeracy skills at Entry level. The latter figure suggested such an enormous scale of need that the government adopted 'below Entry level 3' as its definition of poor numeracy: on this criterion, the figures were instead 21% or 6.5 million adults.

[Note added in 2017: When the second *Skills for Life* survey was conducted in 2011, the results (BIS, 2012) showed little change in the proportions with poor literacy and numeracy – but it should be remembered that this comparison is not longitudinal, that is, none of those involved in 2002/03 were re-tested in 2011.]

Data on progress

Progress studies, on the other hand, do re-test the same people. Before NRDC was established, only two studies had been undertaken specifically to assess learners' progress using a skills assessment instrument, where learners (that is, adults attending basic skills courses – such samples therefore being necessarily not representative of the whole adult population) were tested on their skill level, and then re-tested at a later date to evaluate progress. Both of these studies investigated adult literacy, and not numeracy or ESOL. The first was carried out in 1976-79 for the Department of Education and Science by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) (Gorman, 1981; Gorman and Moss, 1979). The second was undertaken twenty years later in 1998-99 by NFER for the Basic Skills Agency (Brooks et al., 2001b). The first suffered such severe attrition that estimates of progress would be unreliable; the second found that the average amount of progress

in reading over an academic year was small, and in writing minute. Within the Learner Study of which this report was one outcome, the second strand involved a further study to assess learners' progress, and that strand is reported separately (Brooks and Pilling, 2013).

By 2009, when this report was first written, NRDC had mounted several other progress studies. Those which measured progress in literacy are listed most conveniently, with their results summarised, in Brooks and Hannon (2013: 201-202). The principal studies (besides Brooks and Pilling, 2013) which measured progress in numeracy and ESOL were Coben et al. (2007) and Baynham et al. (2007) respectively. In general, amounts of progress were rather small.

In addition to the above research, there were two further studies, both of which formed part of lifetime cohort studies undertaken in England, where comparable data were collected over time. The first involved 3000+ people in the 1946 lifetime cohort study who took a reading test in 1961 at age 15, and the same test again in 1972 at age 26; the average score had risen significantly (reported in Rodgers, 1986). The second was part of the 2004 sweep of the British Cohort Study (BCS70), when the participants were aged 34. This used some of the same literacy and numeracy items as were used in a previous sweep with this lifetime cohort in 1991-92, when they were 21; the results for both literacy and numeracy were virtually identical on the two occasions (Bynner and Parsons, 2008).

Data on levels of achievement

Extensive data were available on levels of achievement, if achievement is understood as completion of certificated outcomes. Awarding bodies held data on the number of candidates achieving their qualifications. In addition, after the introduction of the *Skills for Life* strategy, a number of different organisations were involved in providing data on levels of achievement, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Organisations which collected data on achievement of *Skills for Life* targets

Learning and Skills Council (LSC) (largely replaced by the Skills Funding Agency)	data on all provision which was funded in the Learning and Skills sector, particularly further education colleges
Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS), previously the Offenders Learning and Skills Unit (OLSU) (until 2006)	data on prisoners and those on probation
Jobcentre Plus (based in the Department for Work and Pensions)	data on unemployed/jobseekers who had basic skills needs
Qualifications Awarding Bodies such as OCR, Edexcel and City and Guilds	data on achievement of awarding body qualifications
The (then) Department for Education and Skills (DfES) statistical branch	data from all the above organisations, which were then reviewed and monitored by the DfES

Data on offenders (gathered by OLASS) and data on jobseekers (gathered by Jobcentre Plus) were global figures collected on a regular basis, which simply gave the total number of individuals achieving qualifications which counted towards the *Skills for Life* target in the collection period. Awarding bodies for qualifications gathered more detailed data than this, but data gathered by them which were relevant to *Skills for Life* targets were almost all incorporated into the Learning and Skills Council database. The Learning and Skills Council dataset was the most detailed, offering a breakdown of the data using a range of factors, which included for

example age, gender and ethnicity. The DfES statistical branch checked LSC data against those collected by other organisations, and carried out further analysis, but the DfES did not undertake additional data-gathering. It was for these reasons that the analyses in this report were based on Learning and Skills Council data. Moreover, reports on *Skills for Life* by the National Audit Office (2004) and by the House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (2006) all relied on LSC data.

The original aim of exploring existing statistical data was to develop a picture of the impact of *Skills for Life* on learners' *progress* based on such data. However, it was not possible to fulfil this aim precisely, because none of the datasets identified above, including the LSC data, recorded individual progress with any accuracy. Whilst available data provided information about learners' **achievement** of certificated outcomes, this was not necessarily the same as **progress**. This was partly because the records did not provide accurate data on learners' levels of achievement at the start of a programme of learning, so they could not offer an accurate picture of subsequent progress. Furthermore, from the point of view of assessing learners' skill levels, researchers who used standardised assessment instruments would be concerned that, even when records were kept of learners' achievement before and after a programme, these data were not based on matched tests, whereby learners' skills are assessed at the beginning of a programme of study and at a later point using the same or a statistically equated instrument. It is the latter approach which has been used in strand two of this project (Brooks and Pilling, 2013).

Whilst it was therefore important to be cautious about what we could learn about the impact of *Skills for Life* on learners from the statistical data gathered by the Learning and Skills Council, it was nevertheless possible to detect trends in participation and achievement using these data.

It is important to note that this report does not take as its central focus the progress made towards achieving the *Skills for Life* Public Service Agreement targets. The data analysed for this report included all data on ALLN provision gathered by the Learning and Skills Council, and not just figures for provision which counted towards the targets.

Some key dates relating to *Skills for Life* policy and provision relevant to this study

- 1999 Moser Report *A Fresh Start* published (DfEE, 1999). Reported on adult literacy and numeracy levels and formed the basis for developing the *Skills for Life* strategy.
- 2001 *Skills for Life* strategy introduced
September: National Tests for adult literacy and numeracy launched
- 2002 September: approved list of literacy and numeracy qualifications (accredited by QCA) published
- 2003 October: *Skills for Life* needs and impact survey published (Williams et al., 2003)
- 2004 Date of first PSA target. 750,000 adults to improve their literacy and numeracy achievement
- 2005 January: Certificates in ESOL *Skills for Life* became the only ESOL qualifications to count towards the *SfL* target
- 2007 Date of second PSA target. 1.5 million adults to improve their literacy and numeracy achievement
September: new ESOL for work qualifications introduced, aimed particularly at migrant workers
- 2010 Date of third PSA target. 2.25 million adults to improve their literacy and numeracy achievement

Structure of the report

The next chapter (chapter 2) of this report explains the methods used for analysis, and explains how the figures and graphs were derived from the LSC dataset.

Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 report in detail on the data. Chapter 3 looks at ALLN provision as a whole, and chapters 4, 5 and 6 consider literacy, numeracy and ESOL separately.

The final chapter presents the conclusions of the study.

There is an additional statistical annex to the report, provided as a separate document. This contains all the tables and graphs that were produced during the analysis of the LSC data on ALLN provision, and therefore provides considerably more detail than could be included here. Readers are directed to sections of the annex at various points in the report, where this may be useful for further information.

A list of the tables and graphs in the statistical annex is provided in Appendix 1 of this report. Appendix 2 gives technical details of the sources of data and of the analytic methods. Appendix 3 defines essential terms related to *Skills for Life*.

Chapter 2: Methods

This report is based on data obtained from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The LSC gathered data on all learners participating in LSC-funded provision for funding, monitoring and audit purposes, using an Individualised Learner Record (ILR). Adult literacy, language and numeracy (ALLN) courses formed one small part of the overall datasets gathered by the LSC.

The LSC datasets were very detailed and there were many avenues that could have been explored. In our analysis we were particularly interested in trends and patterns in participation and achievement over time. The time period examined was 2000/01 to 2004/05. This represented the first years of the *Skills for Life* strategy, and included 2004, the year of the first government target of 750,000 learners improving their skills. At the time of working on this project, there were no further years of data available for analysis, so that we were unable to extend our investigation to subsequent years.

The ILR recorded data on learners in relation to their learning aims. A learning aim was the goal that a learner was aiming to achieve at the outset of a programme of learning. One learner might have more than one learning aim. Data were collected in relation to:

- i) enrolment (learning aims taken up)
- ii) completion (learning aims completed)
- iii) achievement (learning aims achieved)

The ILR was therefore concerned with learning aims rather than individual learners, so that the numbers in the ILR dataset **and in this report** do not represent individuals, they represent 'learning aims'.

We used the numbers for enrolment, completion and achievement of learning aims to create percentages showing:

- i) completion as a proportion of enrolments (completed/enrolled)
- ii) achievement as a proportion of enrolments (achieved/enrolled) and
- iii) achievement as a proportion of completions (achieved/completed).

In the report we do not always present the data for all of the stages (enrolment, completion, achievement), except where we found differences that were of particular interest.

Our analysis generated a very large number of tables and graphs. We have provided these as an annex, provided as a separate document. In the report we sometimes refer to graphs or tables that appear in the annex, to enable readers who wish to pursue issues in more detail to access the full figures in the annex.

Reading the graphs

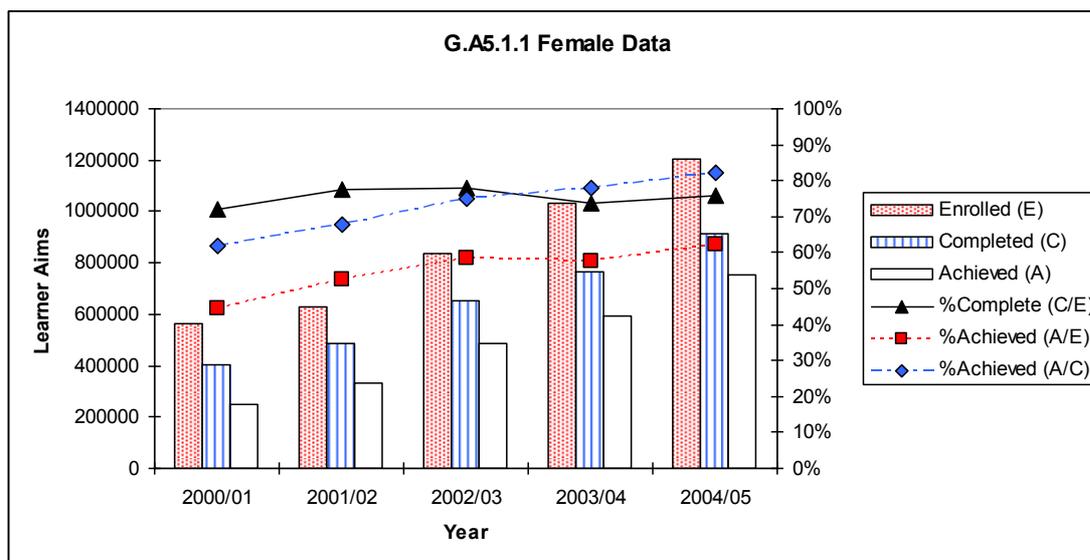
The numbers in all graphs represent learning aims, not individual learners. Except where specified, the numbers shown in the graphs include both provision which counted towards the *SfL* Public Sector Agreement target, and provision considered to be 'non-counting' in relation to the target. (See Brooks et al., 2011, for further statistical analysis based on this distinction.) Provision which counted towards the target involved learners who were working towards a learning aim at Entry level 3, Level 1 or Level 2, for a qualification which was approved for inclusion in the National Qualifications framework. Learners must not previously have counted towards the target. All other *Skills for Life* learners were non-counting¹.

Many of the graphs in this report combine bar graphs and line graphs. The bar graphs are used to show total figures for each year. The line graphs show how these total figures translate into proportions of the whole.

The left axis usually shows whole numbers, allowing total numbers to be read off from the bar graphs.

The right axis usually shows percentages, allowing proportions to be read off from the line graphs.

Graph 1: Total enrolments, achievements and completions by females in ALLN provision between 2000 and 2005



As an example, in Graph 1, the bars show total enrolments, completions and achievements by females as three bars for each year from 2000/01 to 2004/05. The line graphs show percentage completion and achievement rates as follows:

- The line with the symbol ▲ (black) shows learning aims completed as a percentage of learning aims 'taken up'. Learning aims taken up refers to the number of enrolments for individual learning aims, and is shown as 'enrolled' on the graph.

¹ See Appendix 3 on definitions in this report for full explanation of counting and non-counting provision

- The line with the symbol ■ (red) represents learning aims achieved as a percentage of enrolments (or 'learning aims taken up').
- The line with the symbol ◆ (blue) also shows learning aims achieved, but this time as a percentage of learning aims completed.

A similar approach is used to the presentation of graphs throughout this report.

Titles and numbering of graphs

All the graphs in this report have two titles and reference numbers. The title and numbering which appear above each graph describe the graphs as they appear in this report. Within each graph there is a second title and reference number. These references relate to the larger dataset of tables and graphs which appears in full in the annex. These references have been included so that readers who wish to refer to and use the data available in the annex can move between the report and the data in the annex more easily.

Overview of chapters 3 to 6

The following four chapters look in detail at data on adult literacy, language and numeracy (ALLN) provision. Chapter 3 looks at Adult literacy, language and numeracy provision as a whole, and the chapter discusses and compares data on provision across the three skills of literacy, numeracy and ESOL. This is followed by separate chapters on literacy (Chapter 4), numeracy (chapter 5) and ESOL (chapter 6).

The chapter on Methods provides details about the data used in this report, and an explanation of how to read the graphs. This information may be useful and may clarify technical queries when reading the following chapters. A more detailed discussion of the data used and how the analysis was carried out appears in the technical annex, in Appendix 2.

Chapter 3: Overall trends and patterns in participation and achievement in adult literacy, language and numeracy

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with provision across the three skill areas of literacy, language and numeracy. The chapter examines a number of factors, including comparisons of type of skill pursued, level of qualification, type of qualification, and the age, gender and ethnicity of learners.

The data presented in this chapter show that there was a year-on-year increase in numbers for participation in ALLN provision and achievement of qualifications over the first five years of SfL. However, a breakdown by provision which counted towards the government *SfL* target, and provision which did not, shows that an increasing number of enrolments and achievements did not count towards the target over the five-year period².

Literacy attracted the highest number of achievements, with the majority of qualifications achieved across all three skills in Level 1 basic skills qualifications. There was a gap each year between the number of enrolments and the number of completions. In particular, data on Work-Based Learning (WBL) provision (here meaning Apprenticeships and Entry-to-Employment only) showed a considerable disparity between the number of enrolments and the number of achievements.

Women made up the greater proportion of enrolments and qualifications achieved throughout the five years, except in WBL provision, where men formed the majority.

Learners from minority ethnic groups made up nearly 30% of enrolments throughout the five years, though their representation was higher in further education provision than in WBL, and the numbers of white learners were increasing at a greater rate than the numbers of minority ethnic learners.

Young learners aged 16 to 18 made up a considerable proportion of total numbers, particularly in provision which counted towards the *SfL* target.

3.1: Total participation and achievement in ALLN provision

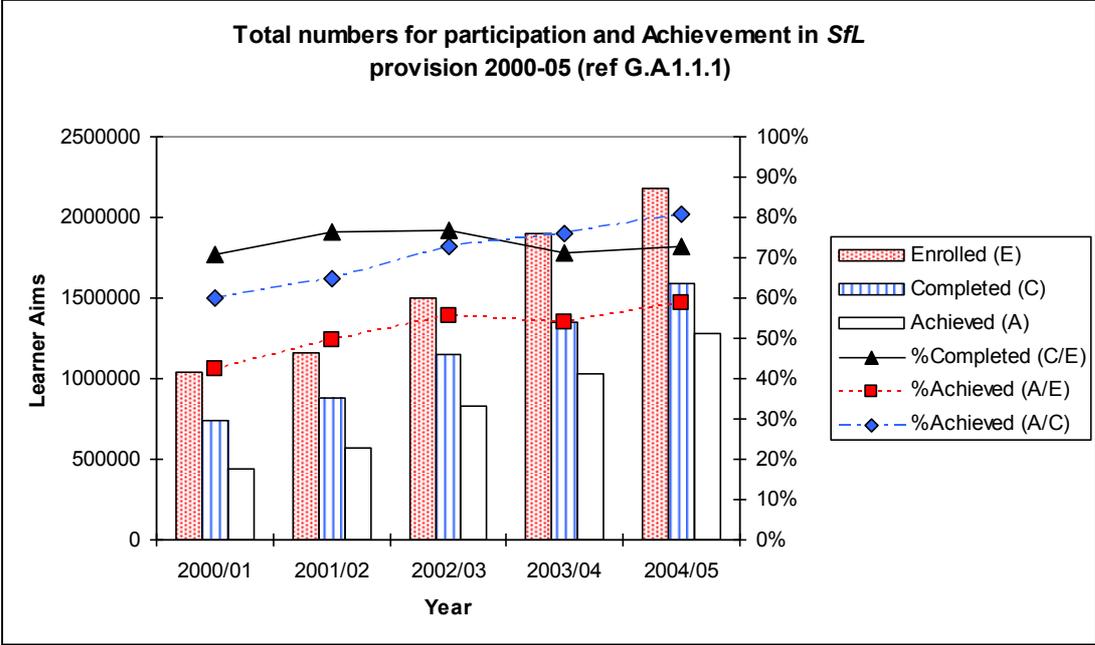
The first section of this chapter presents figures for total participation and achievement, and a breakdown of how much of this provision counted towards the government *SfL* target and how much did not. This section also presents data on Work-Based Learning provision of ALLN.

The LSC data showed that there was a considerable increase in overall figures for enrolment, completion and achievement in ALLN provision over the five years

² Provision which counted towards the target involved learners who were working towards a learning aim at Entry level 3, Level 1 or Level 2, for a qualification which was approved for inclusion in the National Qualifications Framework. Learners must not previously have counted towards the target. All other *Skills for Life* learners were non-counting.

considered in this report. The total numbers of learning aims taken up, completed and achieved for each academic year from 2000/01 to 2004/05 are shown in Graph 2.

Graph 2: Total participation and achievement in ALLN provision between 2000 and 2005



The bars in the graph show that between 2000/01 to 2004/05 enrolments more than doubled, from 1,043,087 to 2,180,253, whilst achievements rose by an even greater amount and almost tripled, from 441,364 to 1,284,531. However, although the number of enrolments, completions and achievements increased each year, there was a considerable difference every year between the number of enrolments in ALLN provision and the numbers for course completion, and again between the number of completions and the number of achievements recorded.

The line graphs show the differences in overall numbers for enrolment, completion and achievement as proportions. The number of completions as a proportion of enrolments stayed almost the same throughout the period, rising from 71% in 2000/01 to 73% in 2004/05.

The proportion of enrolments that resulted in achievement was lower, but this figure rose, particularly in the first three years, from 42% of enrolments leading to achievement in 2000/01, to 59% leading to achievement in 2004/05. This represented a 17 percentage point increase in total.

There were much higher rates of achievement where programmes of learning were completed. The number of achievements as a proportion of completions rose steadily over the five-year period, by a total of just under 21 percentage points, and in 2004/05 the number of completions that resulted in achievement was 81%.

The area where there was little improvement was in completion rates. At just over 70% throughout the period the retention rate was high for adult learners participating in adult basic and key skills provision. At the same time, since completion rates

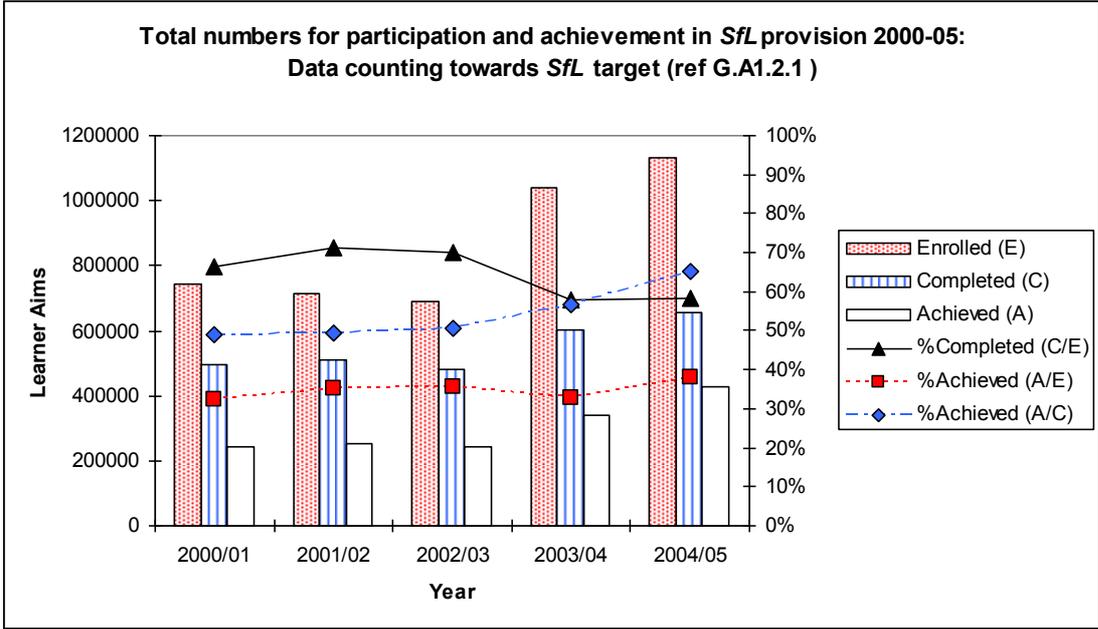
would appear to have a direct impact on overall achievement rates, this was an important area for further consideration.

Doing courses that counted towards the Sfl target

The majority of this report is based on numbers in the LSC dataset for all ALLN provision, whether that provision counted towards the government *Skills for Life* targets or not. Provision which counted towards the target involved learners who were working towards a learning aim at Entry level 3, Level 1 or Level 2, for a qualification which was approved for inclusion in the National Qualifications Framework. Learners must not previously have counted towards the target. All other *Skills for Life* learners were non-counting³.

The decision to look at all ALLN provision was taken because the focus of the study was the impact of **all** ALLN provision on learners. It was not only concerned with whether the government target had been met⁴. However, it is worth highlighting in this report that there were very noticeable differences in overall enrolments, completions and achievements between provision which was recorded as counting towards the target and provision which did not count towards the target. These differences are shown in Graph 3 and Graph 4. Graph 3 shows the figures for counting provision and Graph 4 the figures for non-counting provision.

Graph 3: Total participation and achievement between 2000 and 2005 in provision counting towards the government Sfl target



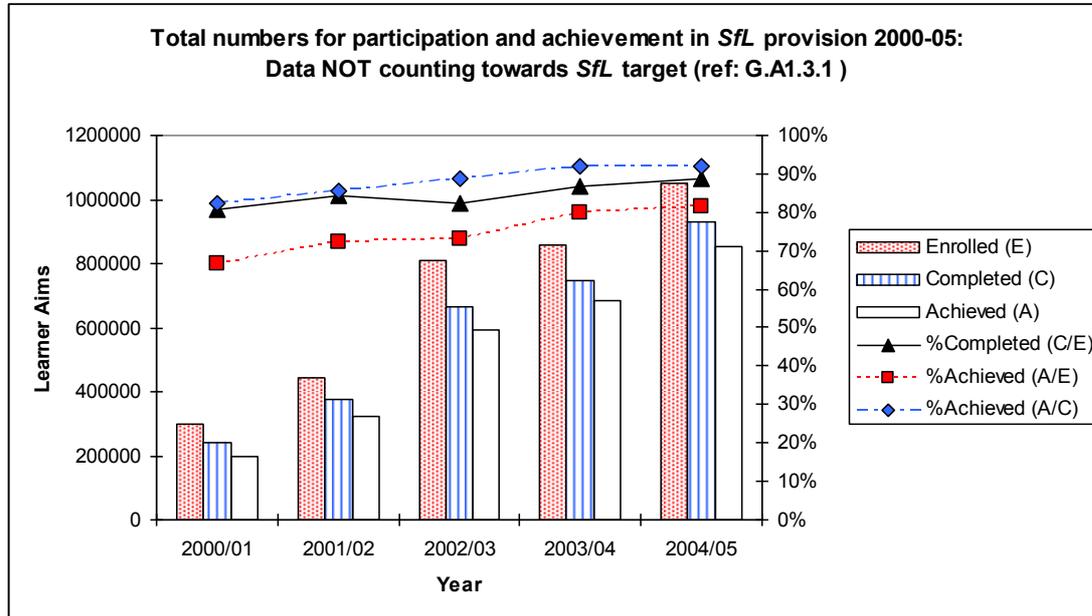
The number of learning aims taken up and completed in counting provision (Graph 3) started out in 2000/01 as more than double the figures for non-counting provision (Graph 4) in that year, though the difference in number of achievements was smaller (244,003 for counting compared with 199,361 for non-counting provision). By 2004/05 the gap between the number of enrolments for counting and non-counting

³ See Appendix 3 on definitions in this report for full explanation of counting and non-counting provision

⁴ A study entitled Stepping Stones (NRDC project PG5.8) has examined the difference between counting and non-counting provision in much greater detail (Brooks et al., 2011).

provision had closed considerably (1,131,343, enrolments in counting provision compared with 1,048,910 for non-counting provision), and the figures for completion and achievement were now higher for non-counting provision.

Graph 4: Total participation and achievement between 2000 and 2005 in provision NOT counting towards the government SfL target



In 2004/05 there were twice as many achievements in provision which did not count towards the *Skills for Life* target as in provision which did count (855,377 compared with 429,154). Moreover, completion and achievement rates as a percentage of enrolments started out and stayed much higher for non-counting provision. More than 80% of enrolments led to completion over the five-year period in non-counting provision, with a slowly rising trend. For counting provision, the same figures showed an overall downward trend, starting at 67% completion as a percentage of enrolments, rising to 71% in 2001/02, but dropping to 58% in 2004/05.

Achievement rates for both counting and non-counting provision showed a rising trend. However, the figures were much lower for counting provision, and the trend was smaller than for non-counting provision. Achievement in counting provision as a proportion of enrolments started at 33% in 2000/01, and rose by 5 percentage points to 38% by 2004/05, whereas for non-counting provision achievement started at 67% as a proportion of enrolments, and rose by 15 percentage points to 82% by 2004/05.

The pattern for achievement rates as a proportion of completions also showed a rising trend for both counting and non-counting provision. Here, the increase was greater for counting provision, with 49% of completions resulting in successful achievement in 2000/01, rising to 65% in 2004/05, an increase of 16 percentage points. For non-counting provision, which started from a much higher base at 82% in 2000/01, and rose to 92% in 2004/05, the increase was 10 percentage points.

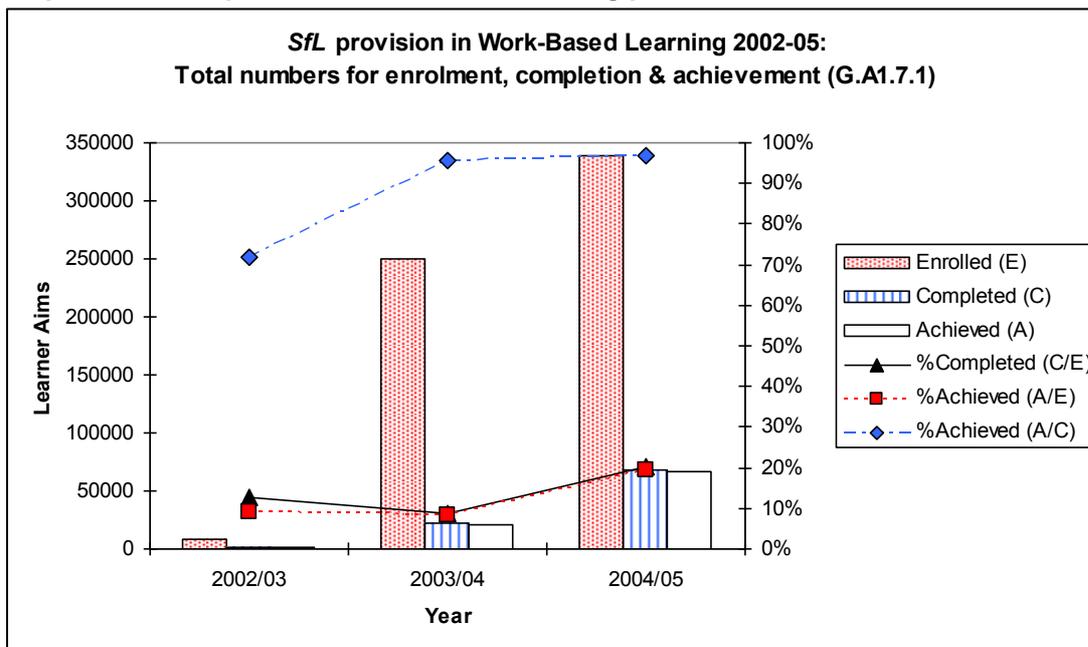
The differences between counting and non-counting provision were therefore considerable; moreover, an increasing number of enrolments and achievements did not count towards the target between 2000 and 2005.

Provision in Further Education and Work-Based Learning

Work-Based Learning (WBL) was considered to be an important site for acquiring literacy, language and numeracy skills. The LSC data for this period provided only a partial picture of such provision. This was firstly because WBL provision and Further Education (FE) provision had only been recorded separately by the LSC since 2002/03. Secondly, for the purposes of LSC data collection during this period, the term Work-Based Learning was used to refer to Apprenticeship and Entry-to-Employment programmes aimed at young people up to the age of 24. The data below relate to this definition of WBL.

The trends in participation and achievement for FE provision were very similar to those for the overall figures shown above, but the WBL trends were not. Graph 5 shows figures for enrolment, completion and achievement in WBL provision for 2002/03 through to 2004/05. From a very small base of 8,973 enrolments and 818 achievements in 2002/03, provision expanded to 339,561 enrolments and 66,071 achievements in 2004/05.

Graph 5: Participation in Work-Based Learning provision between 2002/03 and 2004/05



However, as Graph 5 shows very clearly, the huge increase in enrolments in WBL provision was not matched by a similar rate of increase in achievements. In 2002/03, only 9% of enrolments led to successful achievement. This percentage rose over the three years. Nevertheless, by 2004/05, only 19% of enrolments resulted in successful achievement. In contrast, there was a high success rate amongst those who completed their programme, shown in the ratio of achievements to completions, which rose from 72% in 2002/03 to 97% in 2004/05.

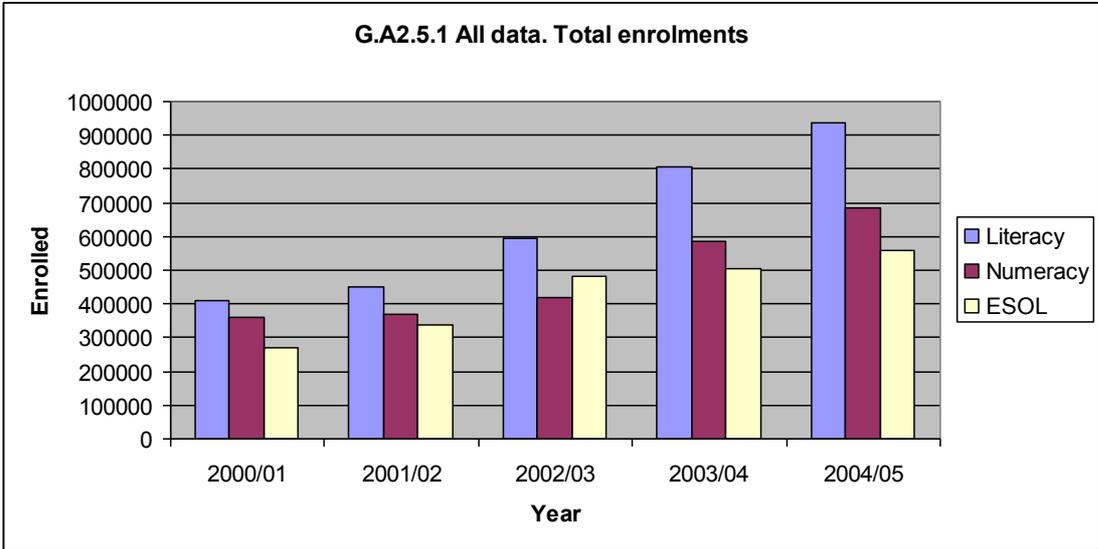
These patterns applied to both literacy and numeracy provision, though not to ESOL, where the numbers were very small – only 1,195 enrolments in WBL ESOL provision in 2004/05 – but of these, the success rate was 81% (a total of 970 achievements).

What is striking about these figures is that they are very different from those for provision as a whole. They suggest questions about processes of recruitment and whether the high levels of enrolment actually match the needs of learners and employers.

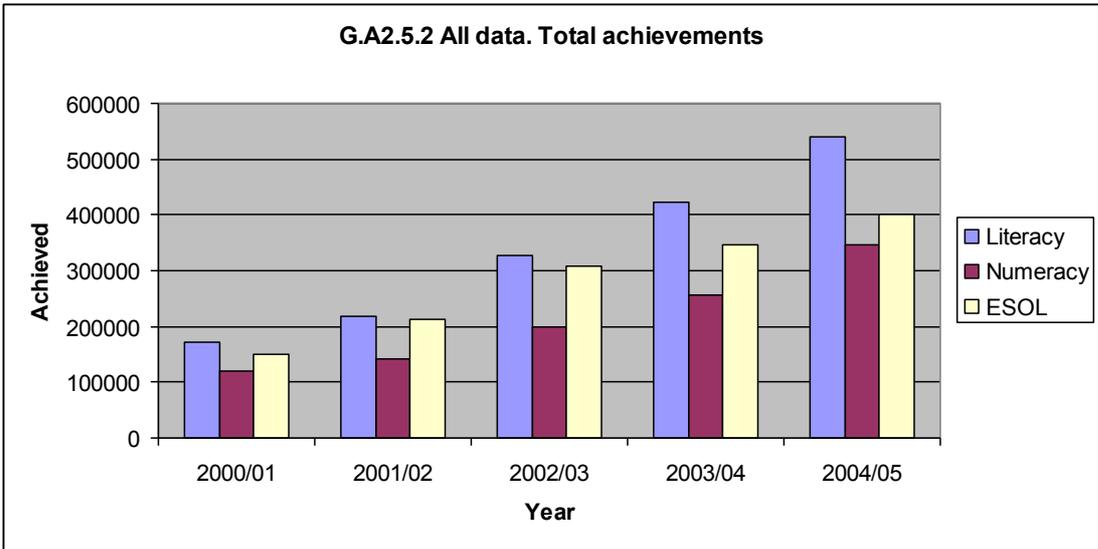
3.2: Which skills did learners pursue?

In chapters 4, 5 and 6, this report looks at the skill areas of literacy, numeracy and ESOL separately and in more detail. Here, we show a comparison of participation and achievement across the three skill areas. As was noted in section 3.1, there was a considerable increase in total numbers for participation and achievement in ALLN provision over the five-year period examined in this report. While this increase applied to all three skill areas, the amount of increase varied between literacy, numeracy and ESOL as shown in Graph 6 and Graph 7.

Graph 6: Comparison of total enrolments in literacy, numeracy and ESOL from 2000/01 to 2004/05

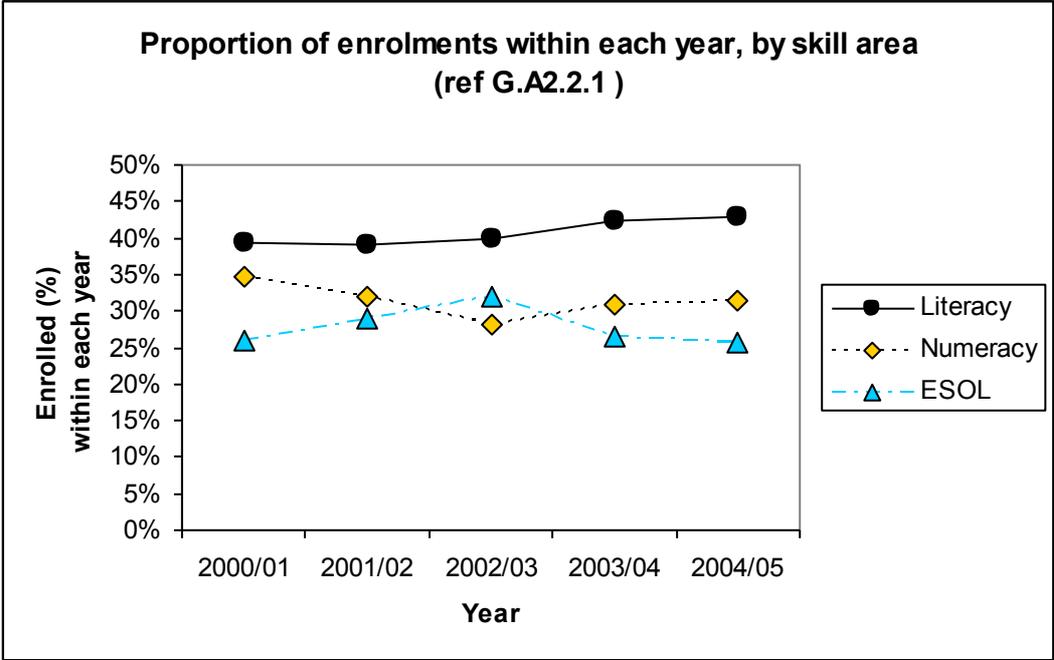


Graph 7: Comparison of total achievements in literacy, numeracy and ESOL from 2000/01 to 2004/05



The proportion of the total numbers made up by the different skills therefore changed over the five years. Graph 8 and Graph 9 demonstrate this, by showing what percentage of total enrolments (Graph 8) and achievements (Graph 9) were in literacy, numeracy or ESOL provision from 2000/01 to 2004/05.

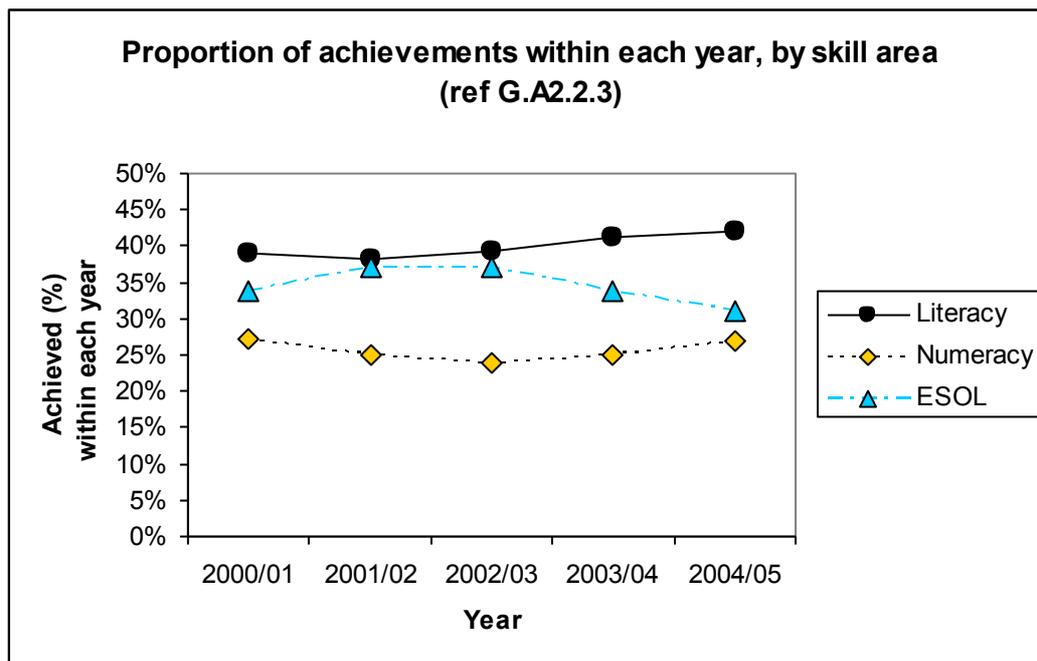
Graph 8: Proportion of enrolments within each year by skill area



The graphs show that literacy provision received the highest proportion of both enrolments and achievements throughout at around 40% (39% rising to 43% for enrolments; 39% rising to 42% for achievements). The patterns for numeracy and ESOL were less straightforward. Enrolments for numeracy (see Graph 8) were the second highest proportion over the period as a whole, starting at just under 35% of total provision and reducing slightly to 31.5% by 2004/05. The proportion of enrolments made up by ESOL remained virtually the same over this period, at just under 26%, though in 2002/03 there was a rise in the proportion of ESOL enrolments to 32%.

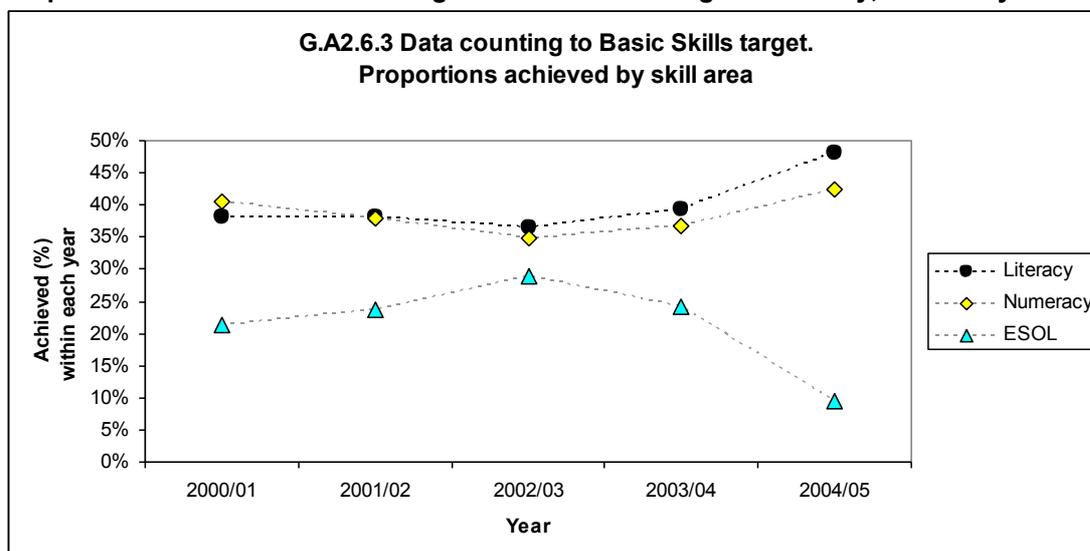
In relation to achievements, numeracy and ESOL reversed their positions. Graph 9 shows that throughout the five-year period the proportion of all achievements made up by ESOL (34% rising to 37% and then dropping to 31%) was higher than for numeracy (27% dropping to 24%, then returning to 27%), though from 2003/04 ESOL showed a downward trend.

Graph 9: Proportion of achievements within each year by skill area



However, far fewer ESOL achievements counted towards the *Skills for Life* target, and they made up an ever-decreasing proportion of the numbers that counted over the five years, as shown in Graph 10.

Graph 10: Achievements counting towards the *SfL* target in literacy, numeracy and ESOL



3.3: What level of qualification did learners achieve?

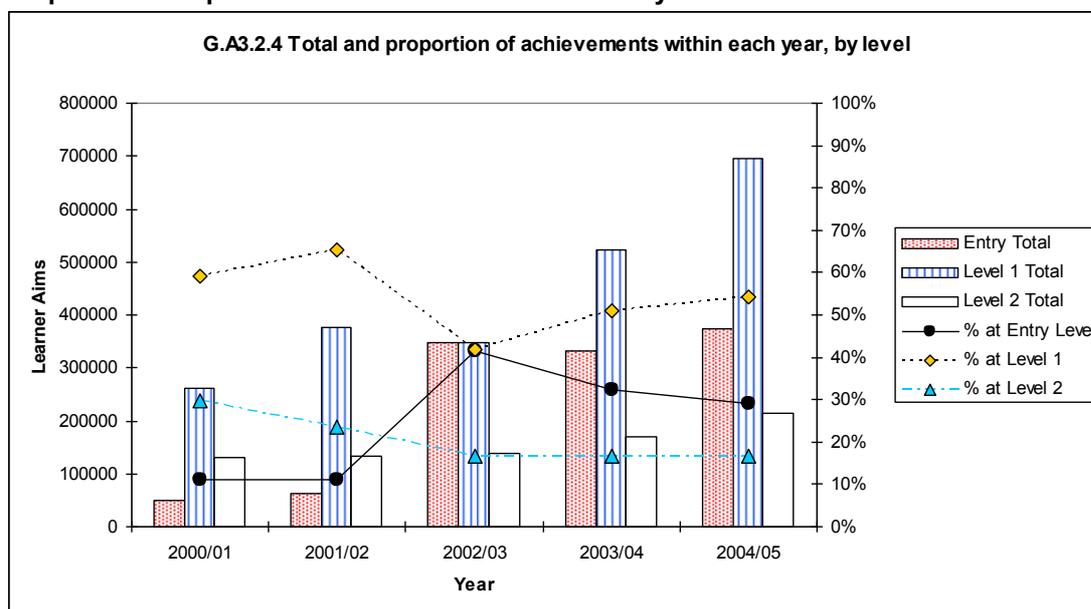
ALLN provision is offered at three levels, within the National Qualifications Framework (now the Qualifications and Credit Framework) for England, starting with Entry level, progressing to Level 1 and finally on to Level 2⁵. Level 2 is the equivalent of GCSEs at grades A*-C, which is considered to represent successful completion of qualifications by 16-year-olds at the end of compulsory schooling. Level 2 is also the

⁵ See Annex 3 *Skills for Life provision: defining terms* in this report for an explanation of the National Qualifications Framework in relation to *Skills for Life*.

first level of qualification defined in government policy on workforce skills as representing an adequate base level of skill in the context of a competitive, globalised economy (HM Treasury, 2005; DfES *et al.*, 2005).

Graph 11 shows both the overall figures for achievement at these three different levels (shown as bars in the graph), and the proportion of all achievements by level (shown by the line graphs). The bar graphs show that the number of qualifications achieved was highest for Level 1 qualifications throughout the five years, and reached 696,073 in 2004/05. The number was lowest for Entry level at the start of the five-year period in 2000/01, but Entry level figures increased substantially in 2002/03, overtaking the number of achievements at Level 2. From this year on, Level 2 achievements represented the lowest number for all three levels. In 2004/05 there were 373,334 achievements at Entry level compared with 215,124 at Level 2.

Graph 11: Comparison of achievements in ALLN by level



The proportion of all achievements by level is shown by the line graphs. These show that the proportion of the total made up by Level 2 achievements fell between 2000/01 and 2002/03, and remained steady from then on at 17% of all achievements. The proportion of the total made up by Entry level rose between 2000/01 and 2002/03 and fell for Level 1. By 2002/03 Entry level and Level 1 shared an almost identical proportion of achievements at 41.6% for Entry level and 41.8% for Level 1. The proportions then reduced for Entry level, to 29.1% of the total by 2004/05 whilst for Level 1 they rose to 54.2% of the total in the same year.

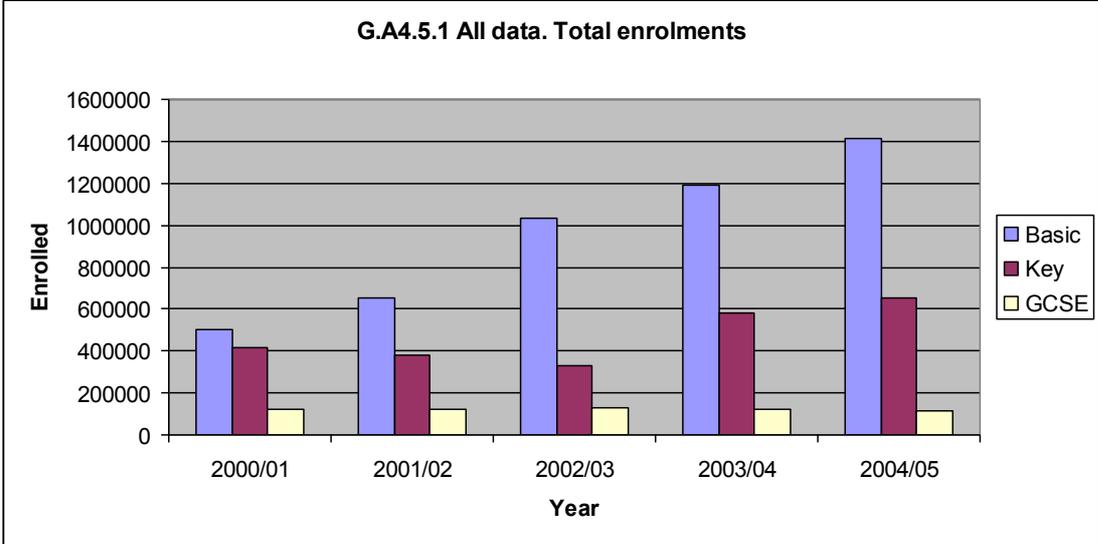
3.4: What type of qualification did learners achieve?

As with other areas of education and training, there is a range of different qualifications which accredited achievement in the skills of literacy, numeracy and ESOL. One of the things that *Skills for Life* did was to regulate which qualifications were funded as part of LSC provision. This changed over the period under examination as qualifications were revised over time and brought into line with *Skills for Life* policy. ESOL qualifications were the last to be brought into line, and by early 2005 there was a list of recognized qualifications published by the LSC.

The qualifications fell into three broad types: basic skills, key skills and GCSEs. National tests for literacy and numeracy were introduced in September 2001, and basic skills and key skills used the same test. Key skills qualifications required a portfolio in addition to the achievement of the test. The GCSE was a quite separate qualification, representing the standard qualification in English and maths taken by school students at 16, and also available to adults, usually through a course at a further education college.

Graph 12 shows enrolments by type of qualification and Graph 13 achievements by type of qualification.

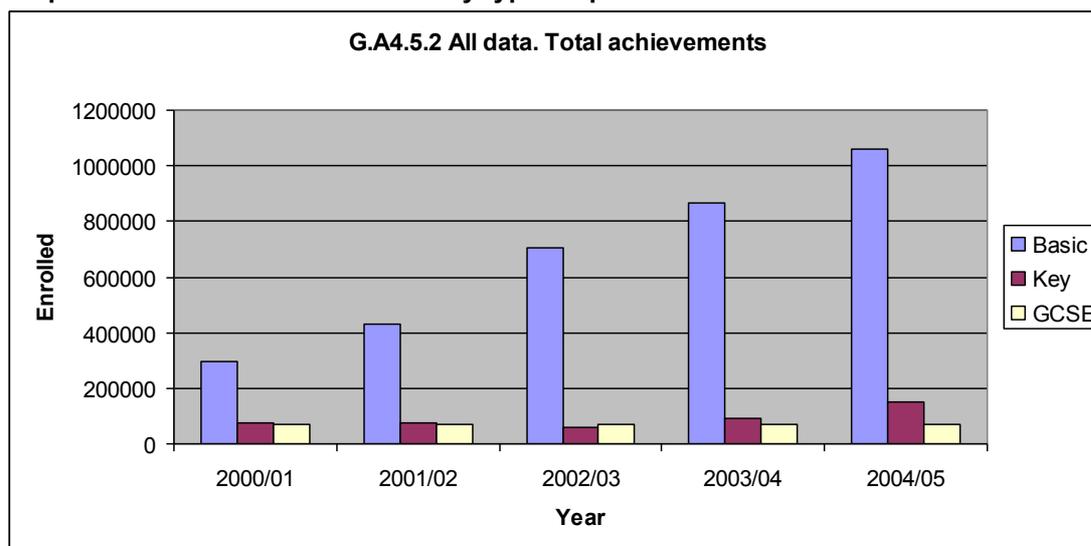
Graph 12: Enrolments in ALLN by type of qualification



Graph 12 shows that basic skills made up the highest number of all enrolments, 504,050 in 2000/01 rising to 1,413,086 in 2004/05. Because these numbers increased so considerably, this also meant that the proportion represented by basic skills rose from just over 48% in 2000/01 to just under 65% in 2004/05.

The figures for achievement followed this pattern even more strongly.

Graph 13: Achievements in ALLN by type of qualification



Figures for achievement in basic skills rose from 296,743 in 2000/01 to 1,062,409 in 2004/05. This meant that basic skills qualifications made up an even greater proportion of all achievements, rising from 67% of overall achievements in 2000/01 to 84% in 2002/03, and then remaining almost steady for the following two years. Over the same period, there was a small but steady decrease in the proportion of enrolments and achievements represented by GCSEs.

3.5: Did participation and achievement differ by age?

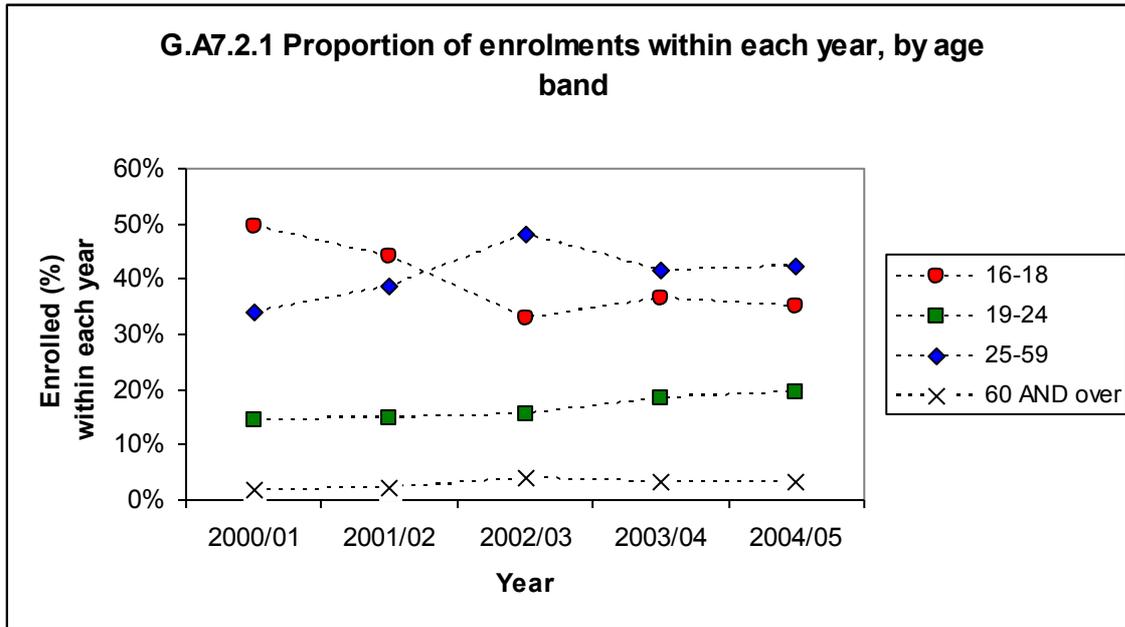
Skills for Life originated in a concern for adult literacy, language and numeracy skills. However, there was no straightforward definition of 'adult' in relation to provision of learning opportunities in England. In this section we first offer a breakdown of the overall figures for both counting and non-counting provision by age, using four age categories⁶. We then consider a breakdown of counting provision only, comparing 16- to 18-year-olds and those aged 19+. It should be noted that, in the first part below, the 25-59 category embraces a much wider age band than the two younger age categories.

An analysis of participation and achievement by age showed that young learners aged 16-18 made up an important proportion of learners involved in ALLN provision. This analysis also revealed differences between the proportion of enrolments and achievements made up by the different age groups.

Graph 14 shows that 16- to 18-year-olds represented half of all enrolments at the start of the period, but this proportion dropped by 2002/03, when they were overtaken by 25- to 59-year-olds. By 2004/05 25- to 59-year-olds represented 42% of all enrolments, 16- to 18-year-olds had reduced to 35%, 19- to 24-year-olds represented 20%, and those over 60 formed 3% of the total figure.

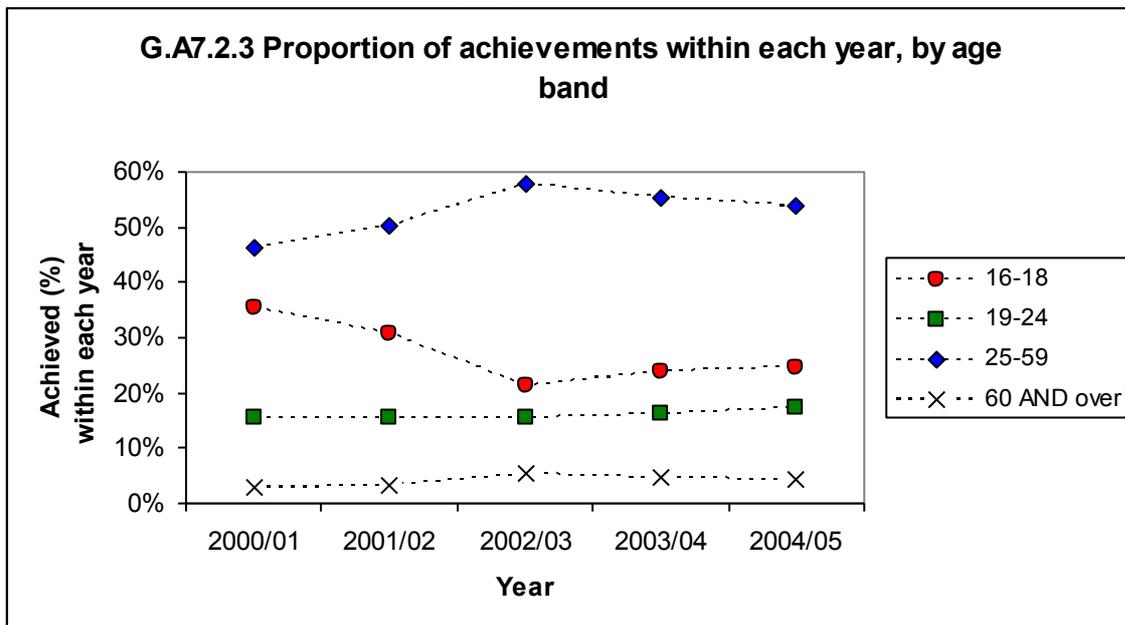
⁶ The age bands used in this report are explained more fully in the technical annex.

Graph 14: Enrolments in ALLN provision by age



The pattern for achievements shown in Graph 15 shows 25- to 59-year-olds dominating the picture throughout the period.

Graph 15: Achievements in ALLN by age



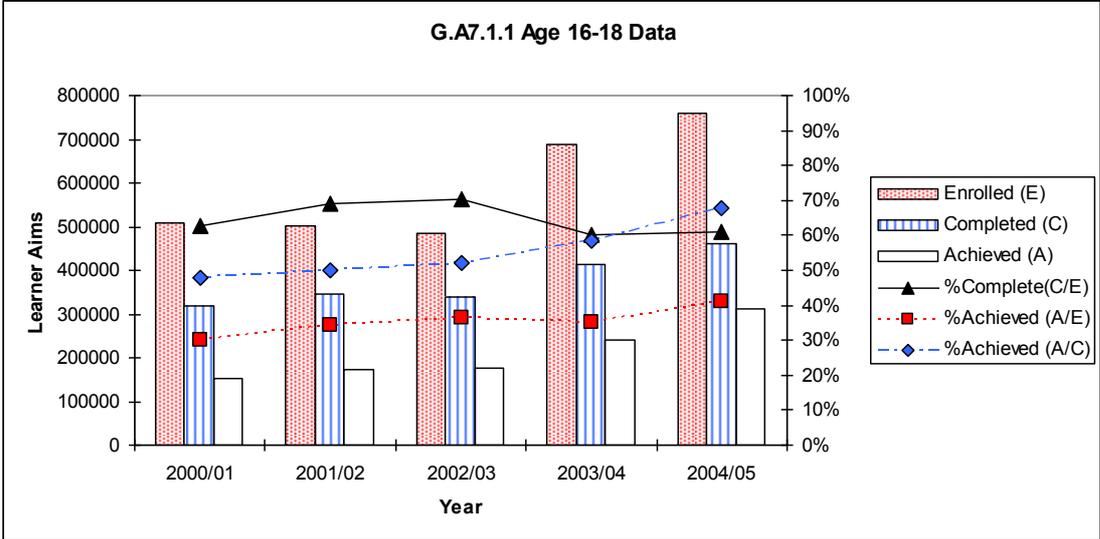
In 2000/01 25- to 59-year-olds made up 46% of all achievements, reached a high point of 58% in 2002/03, and represented 54% of achievements in 2004/05. By comparison, the proportion of achievements by 16- to 18-year-olds reduced from 35% to 25% of the total.

The much lower level of participation and achievement by 19- to 24-year-olds in comparison to 25- to 59-year-olds may be explained in part by the much larger age band represented by the older age group. However, this was not the case for 16- to

18-year-olds, at least in relation to enrolments. It may be that 16- to 18-year-olds were strongly encouraged, if not required, to participate in literacy and numeracy provision. Some of these learners may have achieved and therefore moved out of ALLN provision, whilst those that did not achieve may have stopped participating.

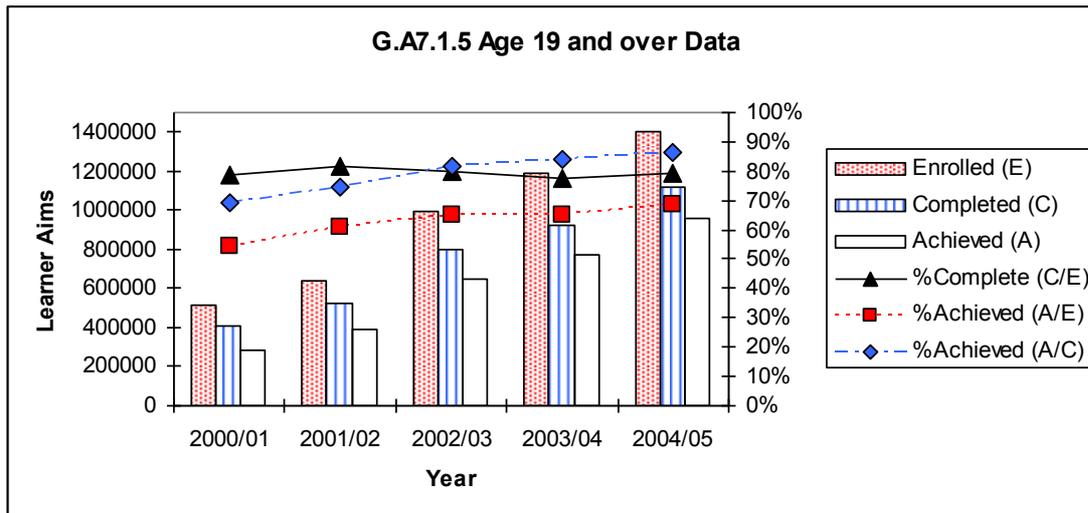
We looked more closely at completion and achievement rates by 16- to 18-year-olds in comparison to all those aged 19 and over. While there were improvements over time for both groups, the figures in Graph 16 and Graph 17 present the differences in the level of improvement. Graph 16 shows that for the younger age group of 16- to 18-year-olds, completion rates were virtually the same at the beginning and the end of the period (62% and 61% respectively) after a rise in 2002/03 to 70%. Of those who completed, the rate of achievement rose from just under half (48%) of completions leading to achievement, to two thirds (68%) in 2004/05. Achievement rates as a proportion of enrolments were considerably lower. These rose from 30% in 2000/01 to 41% in 2004/05.

Graph 16: Enrolment, completion and achievement in ALLN by 16- to 18-year-olds



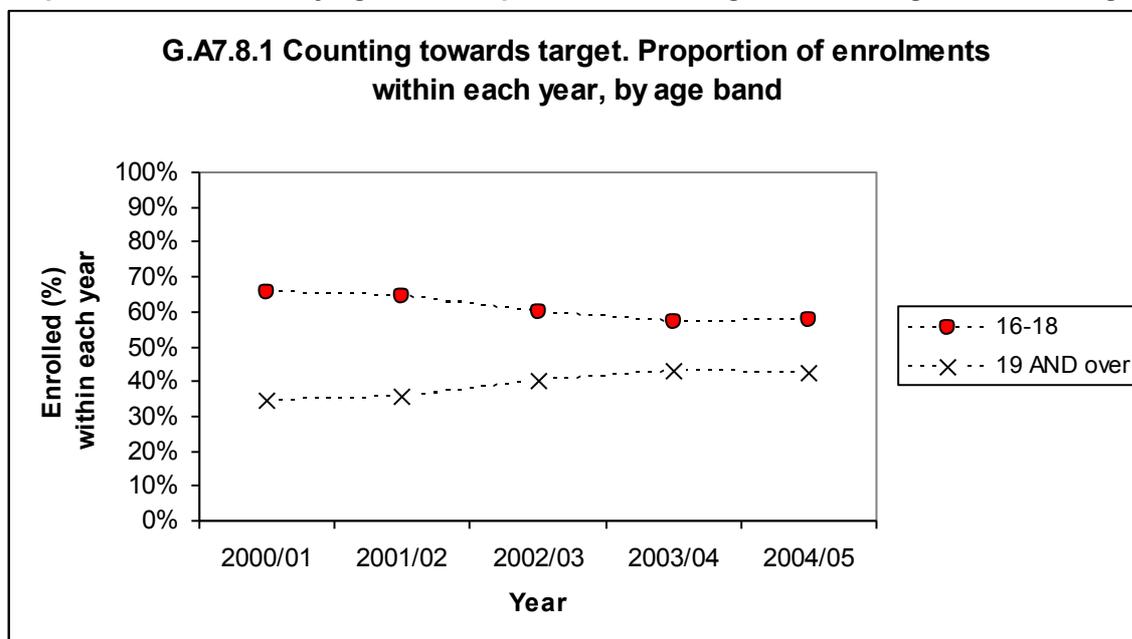
By comparison, for those aged 19 and over (see Graph 17) completion rates were nearly 80% throughout the same period (78% in 2000/01, and 79% in 2004/05). Achievements as a proportion of enrolments were always above 50% for this age group. They rose from 54% in 2000/01 to 68% in 2004/05, while achievements as a proportion of completions rose by 17 percentage points over the five-year period, from 69% to 86%.

Graph 17: Enrolment, completion and achievement in ALLN by those aged 19 and over



However, the above figures were for **all** ALLN provision, and did not reflect the figures reported in the National Audit Office report (National Audit Office, 2004), where roughly half of all the achievements which counted towards the 2004 target were achieved by 16- to 18-year-olds. An additional analysis based only on numbers counting towards the *Skills for Life* target showed a very different picture to that above for 16- to 18-year-olds. In contrast to Graph 14, Graph 18 shows that 16- to 18-year-olds made up around 60% of enrolments that counted towards the government target over the five-year period, dropping slowly from 66% in 2000/01 to 58% in 2004/05.

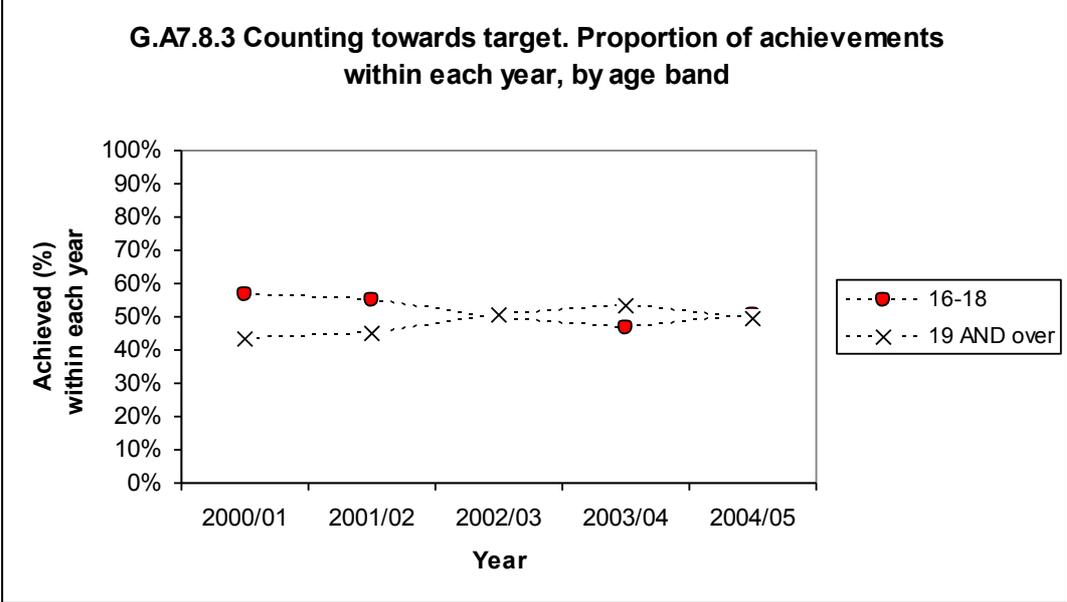
Graph 18: Enrolments by age in ALLN provision counting towards the government target



The difference in achievement figures for all provision and that counting towards the target was even greater. Whereas the proportion of achievements by 16- to 18-year-olds reduced from 35% to 25% in all ALLN provision (see graph 15), this age group made up over half of all achievements which counted towards the *SfL* target in the

first two years of the period, and then hovered at just above or below 50% of all achievements for the final 3 years (57% in 2000/01, reducing to 47% in 2003/04, and rising to 51% in 2004/05), as shown in Graph 19.

Graph 19: Achievements by age in ALLN provision counting towards the government target



3.6: Were there gender patterns in participation and achievement?

There were differences in the proportion of males and females participating in ALLN provision during the five-year period analysed for this report. Whilst the overall numbers of enrolments, completions and achievements for both men and women rose year by year, women made up a greater proportion of enrolments, completions and achievements throughout the period, except in Work-Based Learning provision. These proportions were greater than the difference in numbers of women and men in the population as a whole. In 2001, 51.8% of the population of England as a whole were women, and 48.2% were men (Source: Census 2001, Office for National Statistics; NOMIS database, England).

Females represented nearly three-fifths of all achievements in ALLN between 2000/01 and 2004/05, compared with two-fifths represented by males. Female achievements represented 57% of all achievements in 2000/01 and this proportion rose by 1 percentage point, to 58%, by 2004/05.

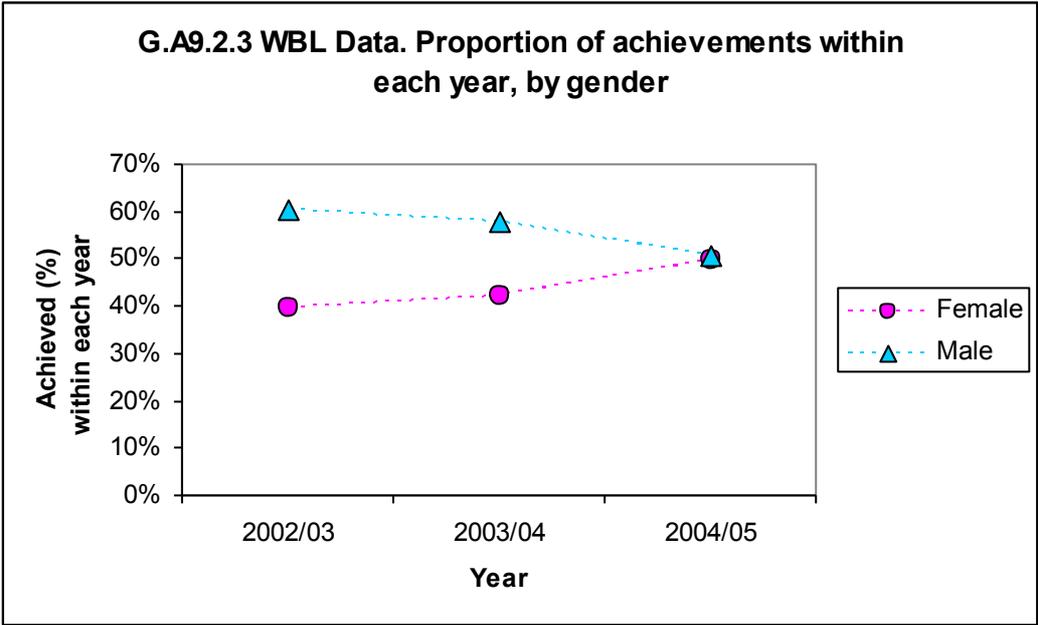
These proportions translated into a considerable difference in the overall numbers for participation and achievement in ALLN qualifications by women and men. In 2000/01 there were 563,170 enrolments by women compared with 479,917 by men. By 2004/05 the figure was 1,207,012 for women, compared with 973,151 for men. The numbers for achievement over the same period were 251,465 achievements by females in 2000/01 compared with 189,899 by males, rising to 750,538 for females and 533,993 for males in 2004/05⁷.

The overall pattern described above was very similar for FE provision, with females representing 57% of achievements in 2000/01, rising to 59% in 2004/05. However,

⁷ See section A5 in the annex, graphs GA5.1.1 and GA5.1.2, for more detail

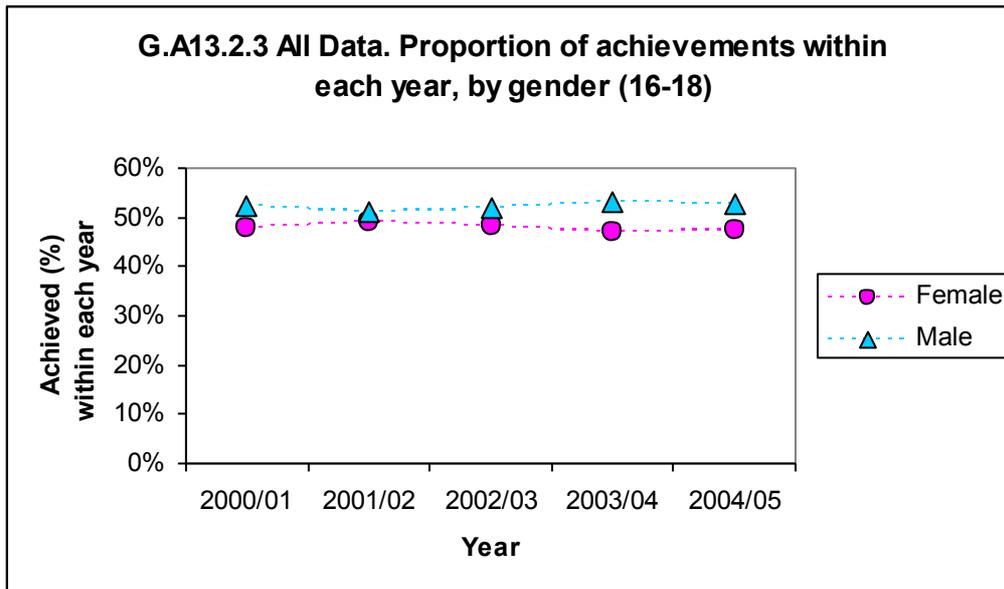
the proportion and trends in Work-Based Learning presented a different picture. Graph 20 shows the proportion of overall achievement by males and females in WBL provision between 2002/03 and 2004/05 (separate data for WBL were not recorded before 2002/03). Here, the proportion of achievements by males comprised 60% in 2002/03, which is a reversal of the male/female proportions in the figures overall and for FE provision. Male achievements remained in the majority throughout the three years – in 2004/05 males were just over the 50% mark. However, the downward trend meant that by 2004/05 female achievements were almost equal in number to males.

Graph 20: Achievements by males and females in work-based learning provision between 2002/03 and 2004/05



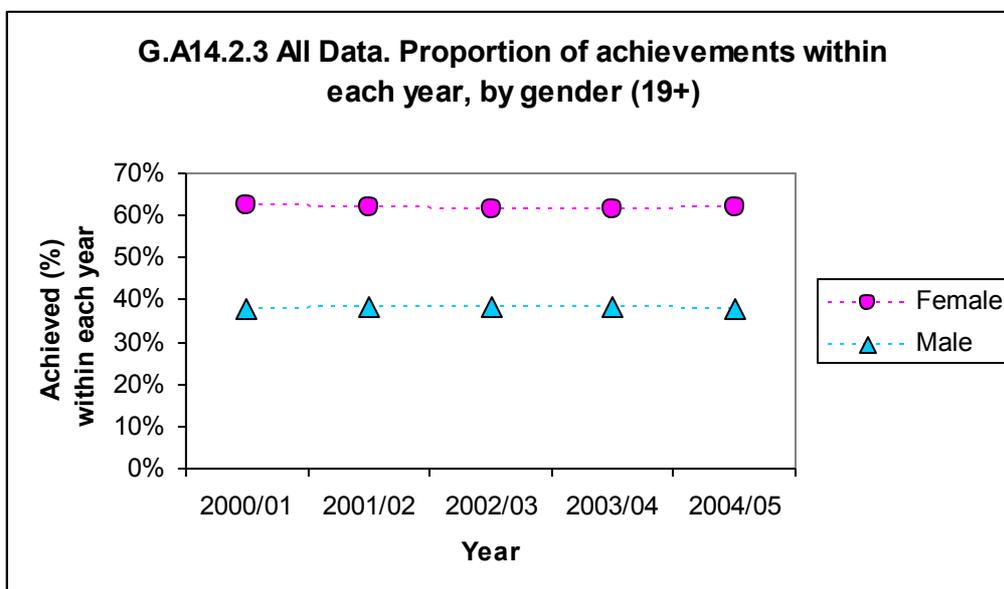
Patterns of achievement by gender also differed according to age, with male achievements higher amongst 16- to 18-year-olds, and female achievements higher amongst those aged 19 and over. Whereas there were slightly fewer achievements by 16- to 18-year-old females compared with males throughout the five years (Graph 21), during the same period female achievements amongst those aged 19 and over considerably outnumbered those by males (Graph 22). Amongst 16- to 18-year-olds, female achievement represented 48%-49% of achievements throughout, which translated into 72,856 achievements in 2000/01 and 147,715 in 2004/05, compared with 79,950 in 2000/01 for males, and 164,680 in 2004/05.

Graph 21: Proportion of achievements by males and females aged 16-18 between 2002/03 and 2004/05



Amongst those aged 19 and over, female achievements represented 62% of the total throughout the period, with 174,507 achievements in 2000/01 and 597,976 in 2004/05. This compared with 106,035 achievements for males in 2000/01, rising to 363,902 in 2004/05, which constituted 38% of the combined total for males and females throughout the five years.

Graph 22: Proportion of achievements by males and females aged 19 and over between 2002/03 and 2004/05



3.7: Patterns of participation and achievement in ALLN provision by ethnicity

We investigated whether there were particular patterns of participation and achievement by ethnicity. It was not possible to do a straight comparison between the numbers of people from different ethnic groups within the over-16 population as a whole and the numbers participating in Learning and Skills funded provision, or ALLN

provision. This was because the records in the LSC dataset represented learning aims, not individual learners. In addition, the categories used for different ethnicities changed over the time period of this study. Nevertheless, Table 2 below shows up some clear differences between the distribution of different ethnic groups within the population of England and a breakdown of learning aims for ALLN in the LSC dataset by ethnicity. The table compares the data from the 2001 census with the LSC's data for 2001/2002.

Table 2: Comparison of the population of England by ethnic group and the LSC dataset by ethnic group

	All people (=100%) (thousands)*	Percentage of overall population*	Total ALLN learning aims in LSC dataset 2001/02**	Percentage of ALLN learning aims in LSC dataset 2001/02
White	36,120,797	92%	633880	63%
Black	838,019	2%	107638	11%
Indian	792,943	2%	39532	4%
Pakistani	459,175	1%	58445	6%
Bangladeshi	169,584	<1%	20745	2%
Chinese	353,802	1%	19911	2%
Other	502,930	1%	132703	13%
Total	39,237,250	100%	1012854	100%

*Source: Census 2001, Office for National Statistics; NOMIS database, England, ages 16+

** Source: TA6.1 in statistical annex for this report

The majority of learning aims for ALLN in the LSC dataset were for white learners, who made up 63% of learning aims in 2001/02. This proportion was nevertheless considerably lower than the presence of white people in the overall population. In contrast, the proportion of learning aims in LSC funded provision for all other ethnic groups was higher than their presence in the adult population.

The majority of participation in ALLN provision over the period 2001/02-2004/05 was by white learners. They made up nearly 70% of enrolments throughout the five-year period. Black learners made up 10% of enrolments in 2000/01, and 9% by 2004/05. Pakistani learners comprised 6% of total enrolments in 2000/01, dropping to 4% in 2004/05. Indian learners formed 4% of enrolments in 2000/01, dropping to 3% in 2004/05 and Bangladeshi learners made up just under 2% of enrolments throughout. Chinese learners made up the smallest proportion of enrolments, falling from 2% in 2000/01 to 1% in 2004/05. These proportions could be seen to represent the pattern of need across different ethnic groups within the population particularly for ESOL. For all ethnic groups, the number of enrolments increased considerably over the five-year period.

At the same time, overall figures for participation indicate a much greater increase for white learners than for other groups. The number of enrolments by black learners in ALLN provision more than doubled over the five-year period from 87,933 in 2000/01 to 189,853 in 2004/05. For Asian learners, the numbers did not quite double, rising from 101,538 to 193,203, and for Chinese learners, the numbers rose by just over two thirds, from 16,445 to 28,223. For white learners over the same period, the numbers more than tripled from 599,352 to 1,465,219. Thus the trend was for a far greater increase in participation by white learners than by other groups within the population.

Differences were also found in achievement rates. The proportion of achievements by white learners rose from 61% to 66%, while that for all other ethnic groups was static or falling. For Asian learners the proportion went down by 2 percentage points over the five-year period (from 12.5% to 10.4%), for Chinese learners it fell from 2.1% to 1.6%, and for black learners the proportion remained the same at 10%⁸. In Further Education provision the pattern of participation and achievement was very similar to that discussed above⁹, but the same was not the case for Work-Based Learning provision. Here, achievement figures were dominated by white learners, who made up over 90% of all achievements between 2002 and 2005. This compared with 3% for Asian learners, 2% for black learners and 0.1% for Chinese learners, and although there was a small rising trend for Asian learners, there was a downward trend from 2003/04 to 2004/05 for black and Chinese learners¹⁰.

Summary

The number of people taking part in Adult Literacy, Language and Numeracy (ALLN) learning increased year on year between 2000 and 2005. Enrolments more than doubled over the period as a whole.

The number of people achieving literacy, numeracy and ESOL qualifications also increased year on year between 2000 and 2005. The number of qualifications achieved almost tripled over the period as a whole.

Literacy attracted the most learners throughout the five-year period, followed by numeracy then ESOL.

The highest proportion of qualifications achieved was in literacy (c.40%), followed by ESOL and then numeracy.

The majority of qualifications achieved were at Level 1 throughout the period. They represented over 50% of qualifications achieved in 2005. From 2002 qualifications achieved by learners at Level 2 remained steady at 17% of the total.

The expansion of participation in Work-Based Learning provision for people up to the age of 24 has not been matched in the achievement of qualifications. Only 19% of enrolments resulted in successful achievement in 2004/05, compared with 66% in further education provision.

There was a considerable gap every year between the number of enrolments and the number of achievements. By 2004/05, 59% of enrolments resulted in achievement. While the ratio improved over the five-year period, the trend was flattening out.

The majority of participation and achievement by learners was in basic skills qualifications, rather than key skills or GCSEs. The proportion increased between 2000 and 2005. In 2004/05, 65% of enrolments and 83% of qualifications achieved were in basic skills qualifications.

⁸ See GA6.6.3 in the statistical annex

⁹ See G.A10.6.1 and G.A10.6.3 in the statistical annex

¹⁰ See GA11.6.3 in the statistical annex

Young people aged 16 to 18 made up a considerable proportion of total numbers. They represented 50% of all enrolments in 2000/01, but this proportion reduced to 35% by 2004/05.

Learners aged 19 and over were more successful in achieving qualifications than 16- to 18-year-olds. They made up a higher proportion of qualifications achieved throughout the period, rising from 65% of all qualifications achieved in 2000 to 75% in 2005.

However, more 16- to 18-year-olds were involved in provision that counted towards the *SfL* target than any other age group. 16- to 18-year-olds made up more than 60% of enrolments and more than 55% of qualifications achieved that counted towards the target throughout the five-year period.

Women made up the greater proportion of enrolments and qualifications achieved throughout the five years, except in Work-Based Learning provision. In WBL men formed the majority, but there was a downward trend over the five years, and numbers were almost equal by 2004/05.

Nearly 30% of enrolments in ALLN provision over the five years were by learners from minority ethnic groups. There was a greater increase in participation by white learners than by other ethnic groups between 2000/01 and 2004/05. The numbers more than tripled for white learners, while for other ethnic groups combined, they doubled. Participation and achievement rates by minority ethnic learners were lower in WBL than in Further Education (FE). In 2005, just under 10% of achievements in WBL were by minority ethnic learners, compared with 34% of all achievements in FE.

Provision which counted towards the *Skills for Life* PSA target did not represent all participation and achievement in ALLN, and the balance of provision changed between 2000/01 and 2004/05. In 2000, more of the qualifications achieved counted towards the *Skills for Life* target than not. By 2005 this pattern was reversed, and there were twice as many achievements in qualifications that did **not** count towards the target.

Achievement rates as a percentage of enrolments were considerably higher for provision which did not count towards the *SfL* target than for provision which did count. In non-counting provision achievement rates rose by 15 percentage points from 67% of all enrolments resulting in achievement in 2000/01 to 82% in 2004/05. In provision counting towards the *SfL* target, there was an overall downward trend in the percentage of learner enrolments which resulted in course completion (9% over the five years). However, the number of achievements by those who completed increased by 16% over the five years, and as a result, achievement rates as a proportion of enrolments increased by 5 percentage points overall (from 33% in 2000/01 to 38% in 2004/05).

Chapter 4: Trends and patterns in participation and achievement in literacy provision

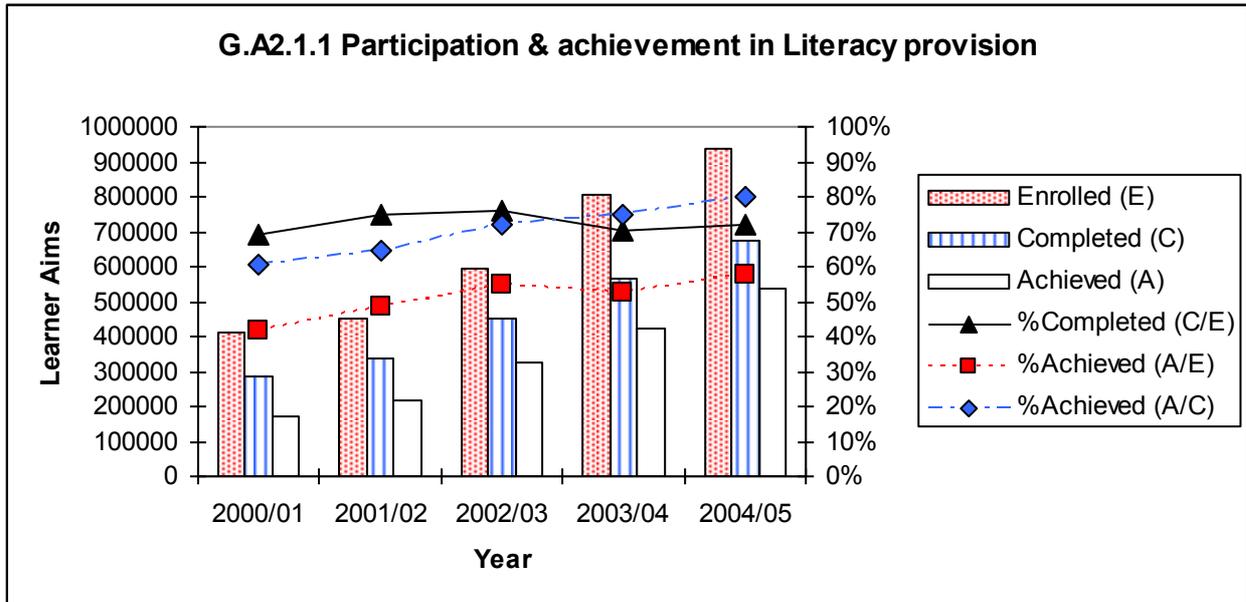
This chapter examines the data on literacy, and looks at trends in participation and achievement between 2000 and 2005 found in the LSC data. Literacy attracted more learners and resulted in more achievements than numeracy and ESOL throughout this period (see chapter 3 section 2).

There was a year on year rise in participation and achievement in literacy. This trend was particularly strong for Level 1 basic skills qualifications. While 16- to 18-year-olds represented the highest proportion of enrolments, compared with other age groups, 25- to 59-year-olds had the highest proportion of achievements. It is possible that these differences reflected the greater number of 16- to 18-year-olds taking Level 2 qualifications. The proportions of enrolment and achievement by age changed over time, as the detail of this chapter shows.

More women than men engaged in literacy, except amongst 16- to 18-year-olds, where this pattern was reversed. Over the five years, the gap between male and female participation and achievement reduced very slightly. There was representation by different ethnic groups in literacy provision, but the numbers for white learners increased at a greater rate than for other ethnic groups. This chapter presents data related to all these trends in more detail.

Total numbers for participation and achievement in literacy rose year on year from 2000/01 to 2004/05, as shown in Graph 23, so that by 2004/05 enrolments had more than doubled (from 411,187 to 934,796) and achievements had more than tripled (from 171,961 to 539,115). In 2005, literacy represented 43% of all enrolments and 42% of all achievements in the combined numbers for all three skills of literacy, language and numeracy.

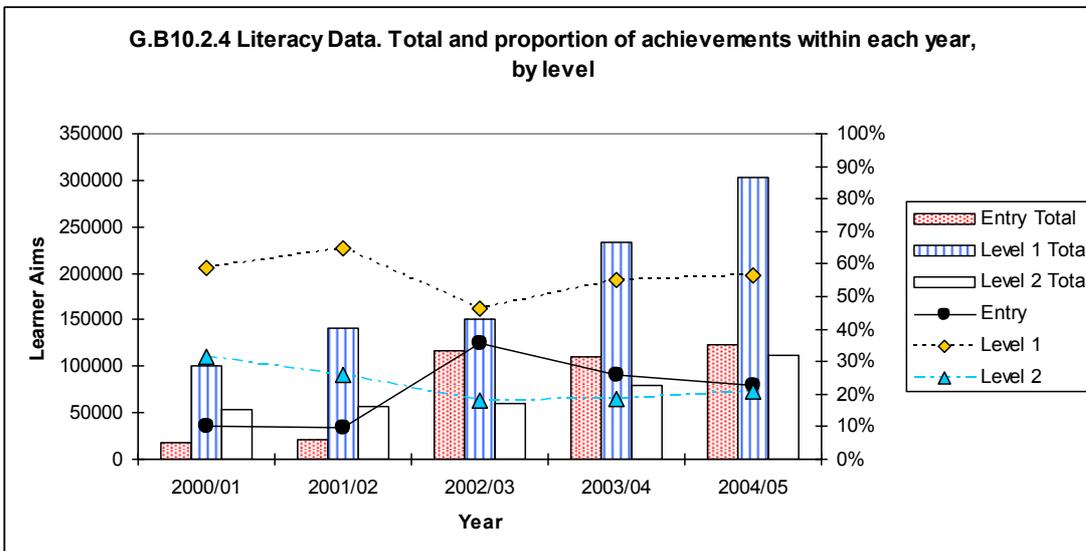
Graph 23: Overall participation and achievement in literacy 2000/01 to 2004/05



4.1: What level of qualification did learners achieve in literacy?

Although the number of achievements in literacy overall showed a very large increase over the five-year period, a breakdown of achievement figures by aim level, as shown in Graph 24, indicated that the numbers at Level 1 dominated throughout the period.

Graph 24: Achievement in literacy by level of qualification



Between 2000/01 and 2004/05, achievements at Level 1 tripled. During the same period, Entry level achievements saw a dramatic increase, from a very low base of 17,126 achievements in 2000/01, to 116,713 in 2002/03, rising much more slowly thereafter to reach a total of 123,531 in 2004/05. At Level 2, there was a steady increase in achievements, so that the overall numbers doubled from 53,901 in 2000/01 to 111,795 in 2004/05. However, because of the even greater increases at Entry level and Level 1, the proportion made up by Level 2 achievements reduced from their highest point in 2000/01 at 31% to 18% in 2002/03, then rising slightly to

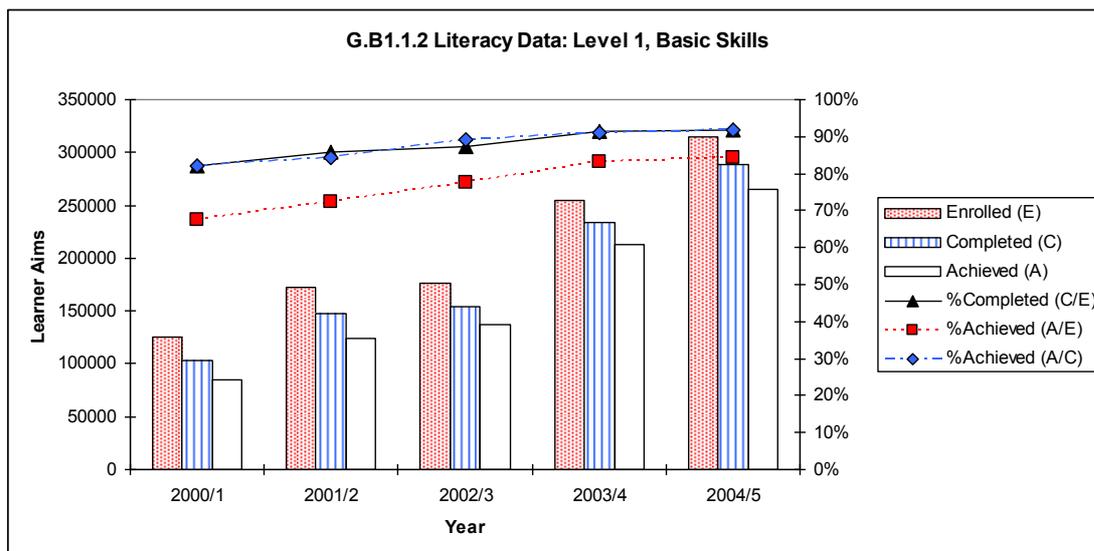
21% by 2004/05. This meant that in 2004/05 four fifths (79%) of all achievements were at entry (23%) and Level 1 (56%).

4.2: What type of qualification did learners achieve in literacy?

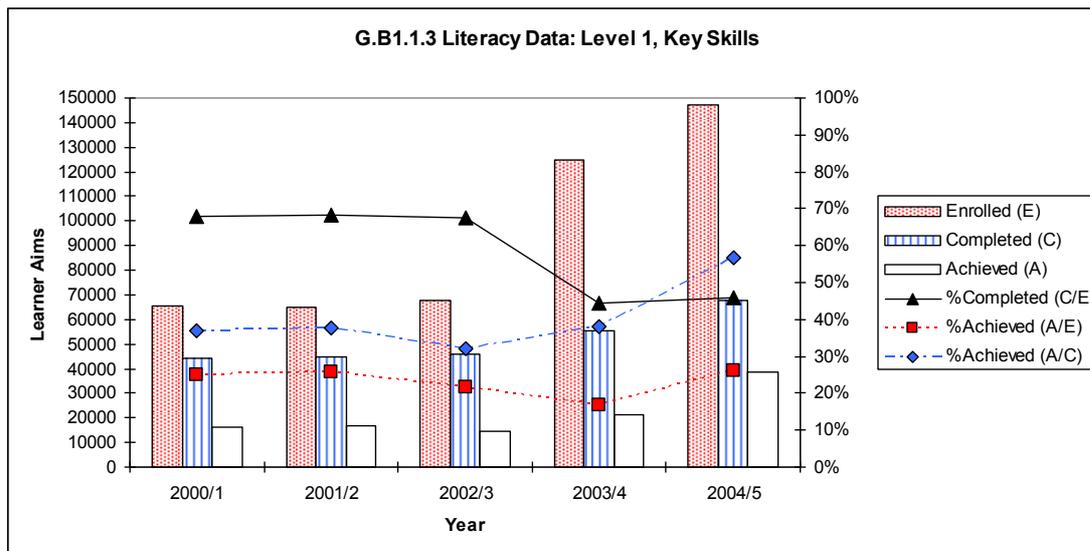
Section 3.4 showed overall numbers following the different types of qualification offered in ALLN provision. At Entry level, there is only a basic skills qualification. At Level 1, learners may follow a basic or a key skills qualification. At Level 2 they may follow a basic skills, key skills or GCSE qualification. It was shown that basic skills comprised by far the largest proportion of enrolments and achievements in provision as a whole, across all levels, with key skills and then GCSEs making up a much smaller proportion. In the context of literacy, the patterns of participation and achievement over the five-year period varied at different levels for different types of qualification.

At Level 1, enrolments for both basic skills (Graph 25) and key skills (Graph 26) more than doubled over the period as a whole, but in numbers there were many more enrolments for basic skills. The latter rose from 125,454 in 2000/01 to 314,692 in 2005/06, whilst those for key skills started at 65,316, rising to 147,351.

Graph 25: Participation and achievement in basic skills qualifications at Level 1 in literacy from 2000/01 to 2004/05



Graph 26: Participation and achievement in key skills qualifications at Level 1 in literacy from 2000/01 to 2004/05

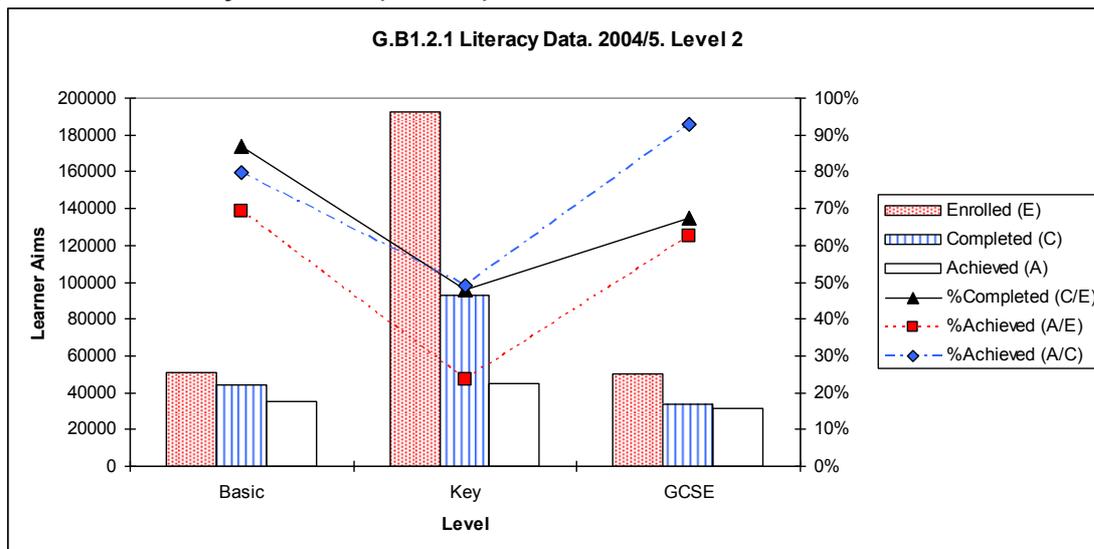


Comparing the two graphs shows not only that the number of completions reflected the difference in uptake, but also that there was a big difference in completion rates between the two types of qualification. For basic skills qualifications, completion rates as a proportion of enrolments started at 82% in 2000/01 and rose to 92% by 2004/05, whereas for key skills, completion rates started at 68% and dropped to 46%. This meant that in 2004/05 at Level 1 there were 289,200 learning aims completed in basic skills compared to 67,828 in key skills.

The total number of achievements rose for both basic and key skills at Level 1, but again, the numbers were much higher for basic skills than key skills. While achievements in key skills literacy qualifications more than doubled from 16,354 in 2000/01 to 38,397 in 2004/05, those for basic skills literacy qualifications more than tripled, rising from 84,580 in 2000/01 to 265,392 in 2004/05. Although there was a large increase in overall achievements for key skills, the proportion of enrolments resulting in achievements was the same in 2004/05 (26%) as it was in 2000/01 (25%). In contrast, achievement as a proportion of enrolments in basic skills qualifications rose from 67% in 2000/01 to 84% in 2004/05.

Moving on to look at Level 2, here learners had the possibility of taking a GCSE as well as basic and key skills qualifications. The data showed that by far the greatest number of enrolments was in key skills. Key skills enrolments rose from 137,450 in 2000/01 to 192,620 in 2004/05, while basic skills enrolments started at 2,317 and rose to 50,690, and those for GCSEs stayed almost the same throughout the period, rising by less than 300 from 49,922 in 2000/01 to 50,212 in 2004/05. However, differences in completion and achievement rates in the different qualifications were so marked, that by 2004/05, the overall number of *achievements* was spread much more evenly across the three types of qualification. To demonstrate this, the figures for 2004/05 are shown in Graph 27: 35,050 achievements were in basic skills, 45,297 in key skills, and 31,448 in GCSE.

Graph 27: Comparison of participation and achievement in different types of qualification for literacy at Level 2 (2004/05)



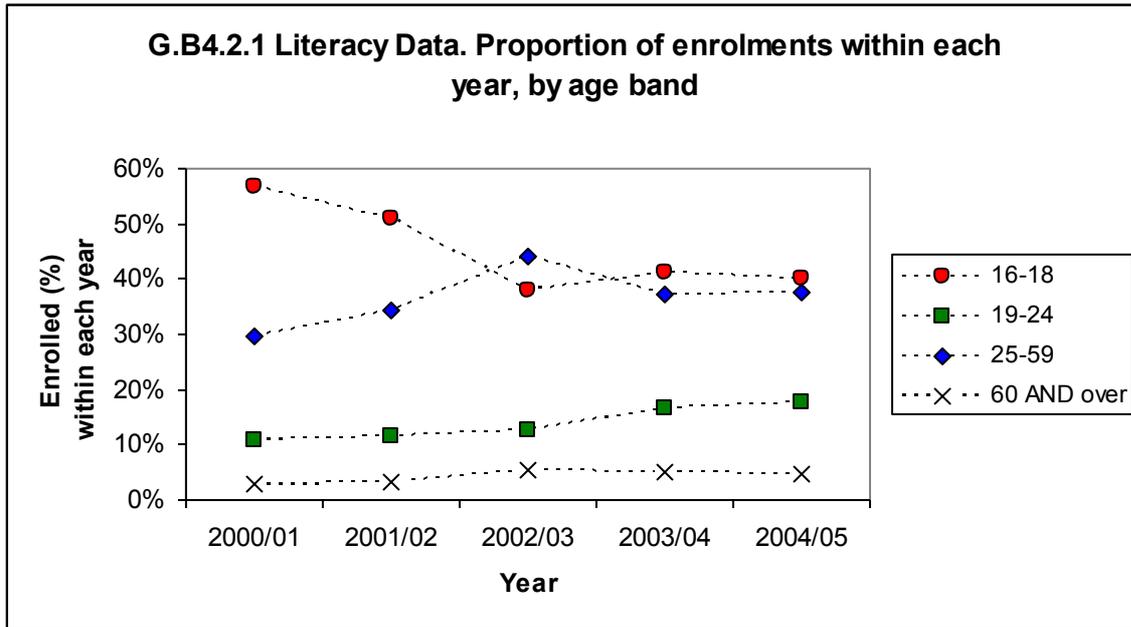
Completion as well as achievement rates varied enormously, particularly in key skills compared to basic skills and GCSEs. Completion and achievement rates in basic skills qualifications were high (87% of enrolments led to completion, and 69% of enrolments to achievement). In GCSEs, more than two thirds of enrolments (67%) led to completion, and nearly two thirds of enrolments (63%) led to achievement. In key skills, less than half of enrolments (48%) led to completion, and only 24% of enrolments resulted in successful achievement. Not only was there a high attrition rate between enrolment and completion for key skills, but a similar gap between completions and achievement; only 49% of completions in key skills resulted in achievement. In contrast, 80% of basic skills completions and 93% of GCSE completions resulted in achievement.

4.3: Did participation and achievement differ by age?

Between the start and the end of the five-year period, the total numbers participating and achieving in literacy for all age groups rose considerably. However, patterns of participation and achievement for different age groups were slightly different to overall trends for ALLN provision (see section 3.5).

The proportions of enrolments made up by different age groups are presented in Graph 28, which shows that 16- to 18-year-olds made up the largest proportion of enrolments for every year except 2002/03.

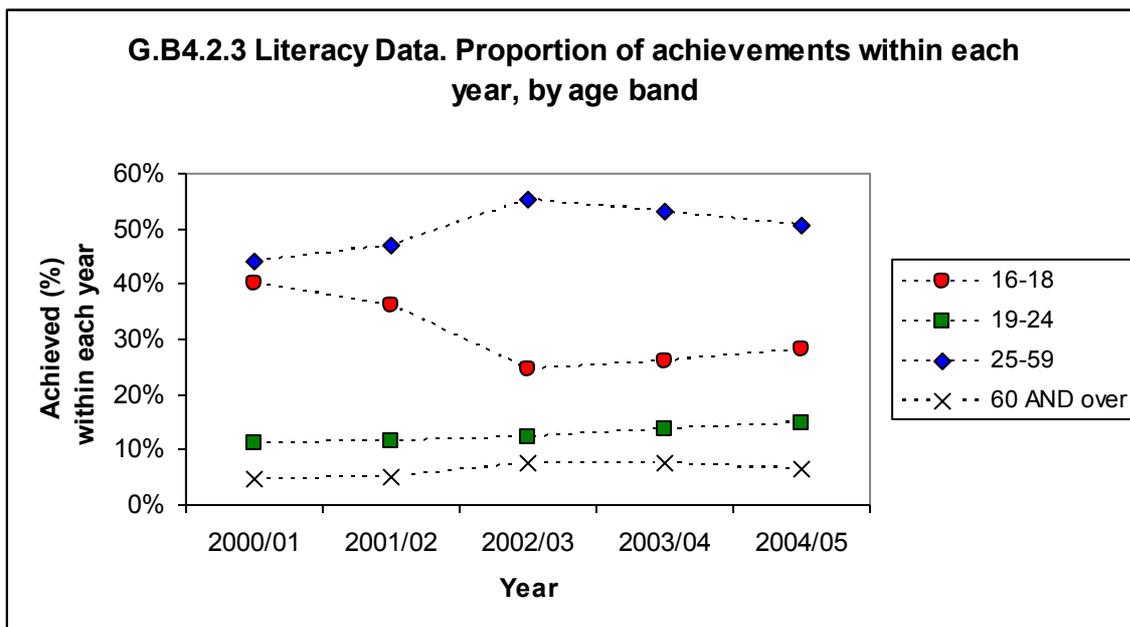
Graph 28: Enrolments in literacy courses by age



In 2000/01, 16- to 18-year-olds dominated the figures, representing 56% of all enrolments. At the end of the 5-year period, 16- to 18-year-olds still represented the highest proportion of enrolments, but this had reduced to 40% of the total. After the dip in 2002/03, they were only just above the figure for 25- to 59-year-olds, which increased to 38% by 2004/05. Meanwhile, the proportion made up by 19- 24-year-olds rose slowly over the period to reach 18% in 2004/05, while that for those aged 60 and over rose slightly to 6% in 2002/03 and then fell slightly to 4%. These changes in proportion reflect a big increase in the total numbers of those between the ages of 25 and 59 enrolling on courses, and also a reduction in 2002/03 (from 226,658 in 2001/02 to 223,038 in 2002/03) in the total numbers of 16- to 18-year-olds enrolling for literacy courses.

The pattern for achievement rates was different to those for enrolment above. Graph 29 shows the proportion of achievements represented by different age groups.

Graph 29: Achievement in literacy courses by age

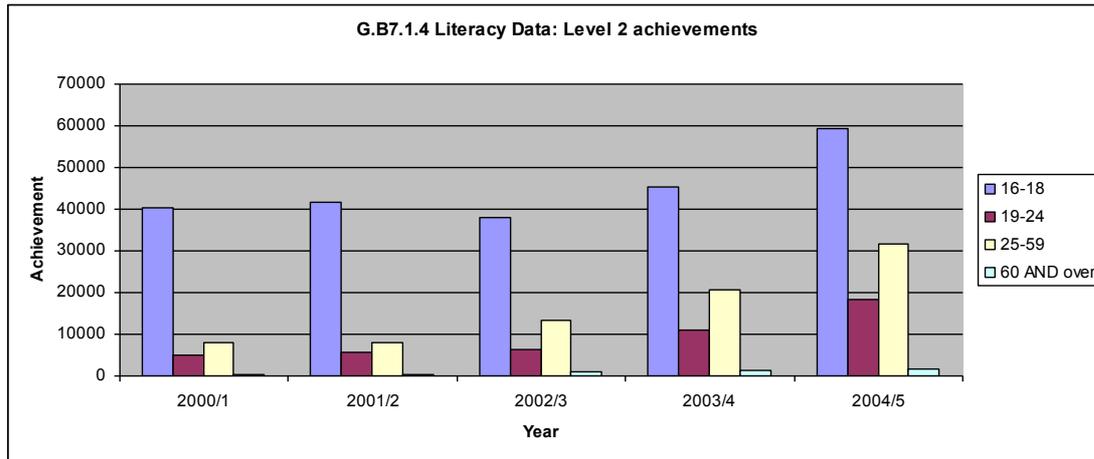


Successful achievement was greatest amongst 25- to 59-year-olds throughout the period, and in 2004/05 represented 50% of all achievements, while 16- to 18-year-olds accounted for only just over a quarter (28%) of achievements in the same year. While this pattern reflects the general overall trend across literacy, numeracy and ESOL, these differences are slightly less marked for literacy than for ALLN provision as a whole (see section 3.5 for comparison).

4.4: Were there age differences in the level of qualification pursued?

In addition to the differences in participation and achievement by age shown in the previous section, there were further differences by age according to level of qualification pursued. The previous section showed that the highest proportion of achievements overall was by 25- 29-year-olds. This pattern applied to qualifications at both Entry level and Level 1. However, it was not the case at Level 2, as shown in Graph 30. Here, 16- to 18-year-olds represented the highest number of achievements throughout the five years, rising from 40,251 in 2000/01 to 59,236 in 2004/05. This compared with 7,873 achievements by 25- to 59-year-olds in 2000/01, rising to 31,821 in 2004/05, who represented the age group with the second highest number of achievements. In fact 16- 18-year-olds' achievements at Level 2 outnumbered those by all other age groups combined in 2004/05 (59,236 compared with 51,849).

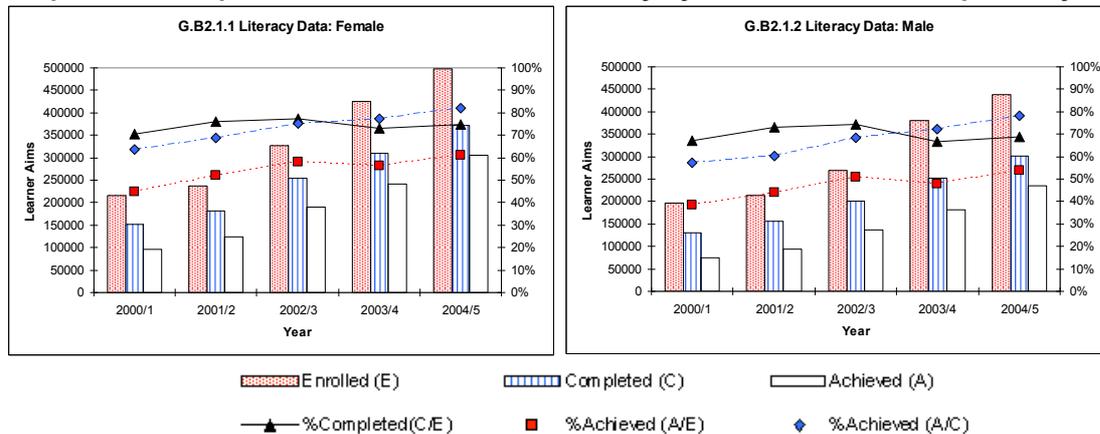
Graph 30: Level 2 achievements in literacy by different age groups from 2000/01 to 2004/05



4.5: Were there gender patterns in participation and achievement in literacy?

As with ALLN overall, numbers for overall participation and achievement in literacy were higher for women than for men. Graph 31 shows a breakdown by gender of the number of enrolments, completions and achievements in literacy provision between 2000/01 and 2004/05. The graph on the left shows females and that on the right, males.

Graph 31: Participation and achievement in literacy by women and men respectively



There was a considerable increase in total numbers for both men and women each year from 2000/01 to 2004/05. The total number of enrolments for both more than doubled between 2000/01 and 2004/05, and the total number of achievements more than tripled.

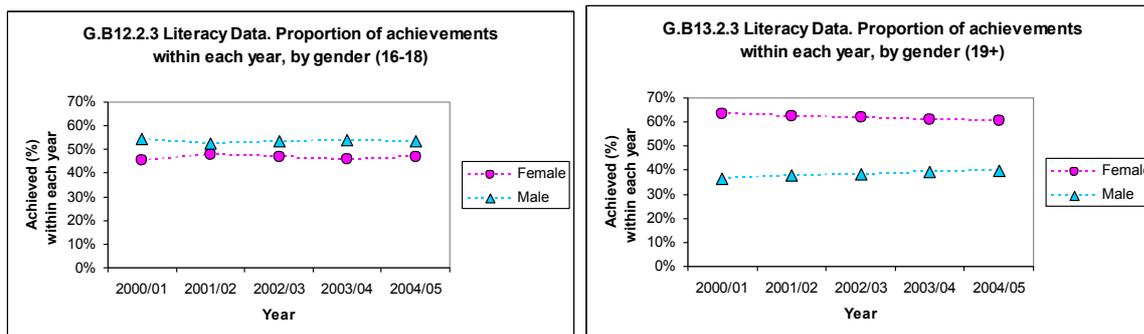
Women made up slightly more than half of the total numbers involved in literacy, and the balance remained virtually the same throughout the five years, with women representing 53% of enrolments, 55% of completions and 56% of achievements in 2004/5¹¹.

In addition to the overall figures above, we looked at gender and age together, to see whether there were differences in participation and achievement by men and women

¹¹ See Section B2 of the statistical annex, graphs G.B2.2.1, G.B2.2.2 and G.B2.2.3 for more detail

depending on age, in particular by young people under 19 and those aged 19+. We found that the trends across the five years were the same as the overall figures, but that the proportions represented by men and women in the two age groups were different. This is shown in Graph 32, which compares the proportion of achievements by men and women aged 16-18 and those by men and women aged 19+. Amongst 16- to 18-year-olds, males made up the higher proportion of achievements throughout the five years (55% in 2000/01 and 53% by 2004/05). Amongst those aged 19+ this was reversed, and females made up the higher proportion, representing 63% of overall achievements in 2000/01, and 60% by 2004/05.

Graph 32: Comparison of achievements in literacy by women and men aged 16-18 and 19+



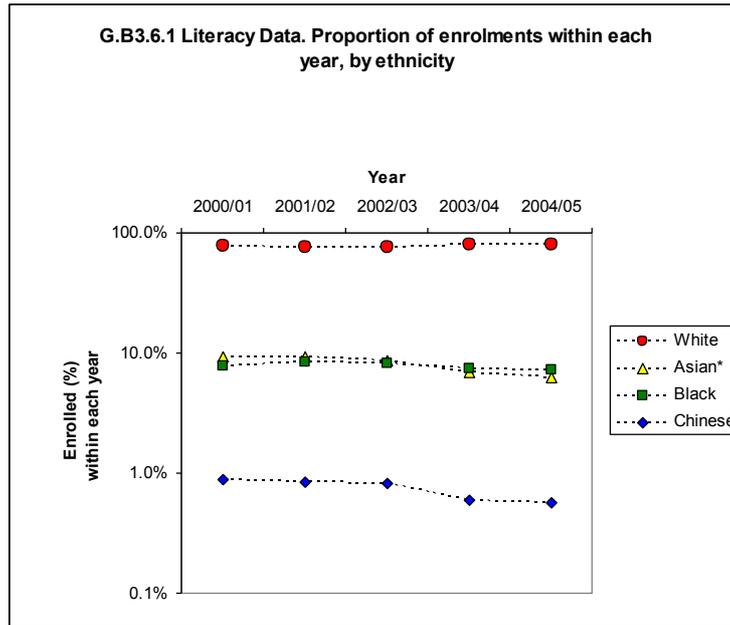
4.6: Participation and achievement in literacy by ethnicity

The total numbers for participation and achievement in literacy rose for each of the different ethnic groups identified in this study. The patterns of participation and achievement by ethnic group are shown in Graph 33 and Graph 34. The graphs show the proportion of enrolments (Graph 33) and achievements (Graph 34) by different ethnic groups.

Because of the small numbers from minority ethnic groups, the data in these graphs are plotted on a logarithmic scale, and so they need to be read with care. Each number on the vertical axis is ten times as large as the one below it¹².

¹² This is because the magnitude of the values is quite different, and plotting the values on an evenly spaced axis would have hidden some features of the ethnicity figures.

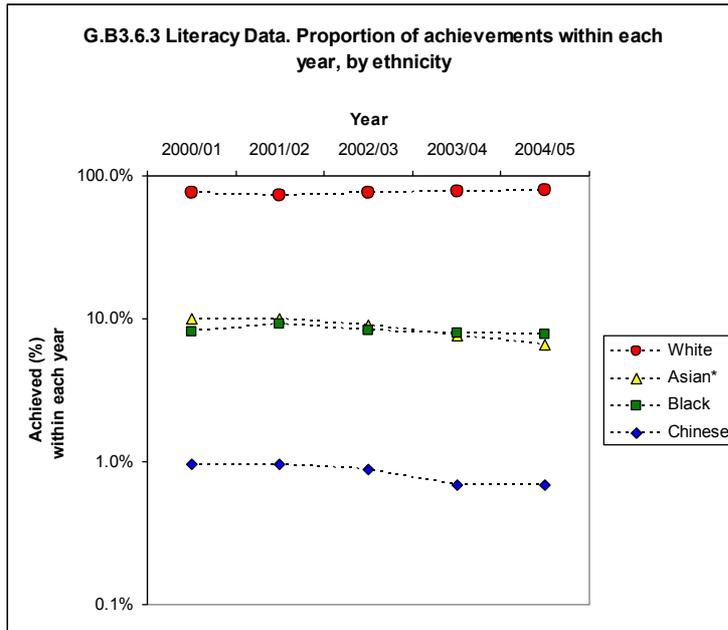
Graph 33: Proportion of enrolments in literacy within each year by ethnicity



Over three quarters of the total numbers for participation (77%) and achievement (75%) in literacy in 2000/01 were from those who identified themselves as white, and the proportion rose by just over 3 percentage points for both participation and achievement during the five-year period.

Enrolments by Asian learners comprised just over 9% of the total in 2000/01 but reduced to just over 6% of the total by 2004/05, while achievements by Asian learners showed a similar reduction, from 10% of the overall figure in 2000/01 to 7% in 2004/05. Enrolments by Black learners as a proportion of the total remained the same throughout at just over 7%, and achievements also remained the same, though slightly higher than enrolments, at 8% of the total. The proportion of enrolments by Chinese learners was the same throughout, though they made up only a very small proportion of the overall number, at 0.6%. Achievements by Chinese learners accounted for 1% of the total figure in 2000/04, falling to 0.7% in 2004/05.

Graph 34: Proportion of achievements in literacy within each year by ethnicity



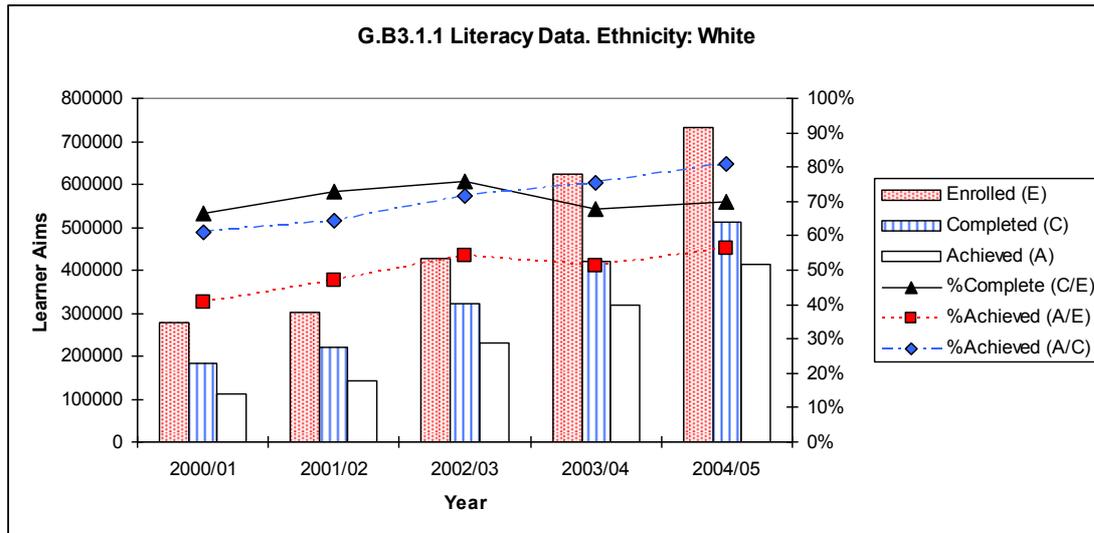
One reason for the changes to the proportion of participation and achievement by ethnicity was because the rise in the total number of learners involved in ALLN was much greater for white learners than for other ethnic groups. To demonstrate this point, Graph 35 and

Graph 36 show the total numbers for enrolment, completion and achievement for white learners (Graph 35) and for Asian learners (

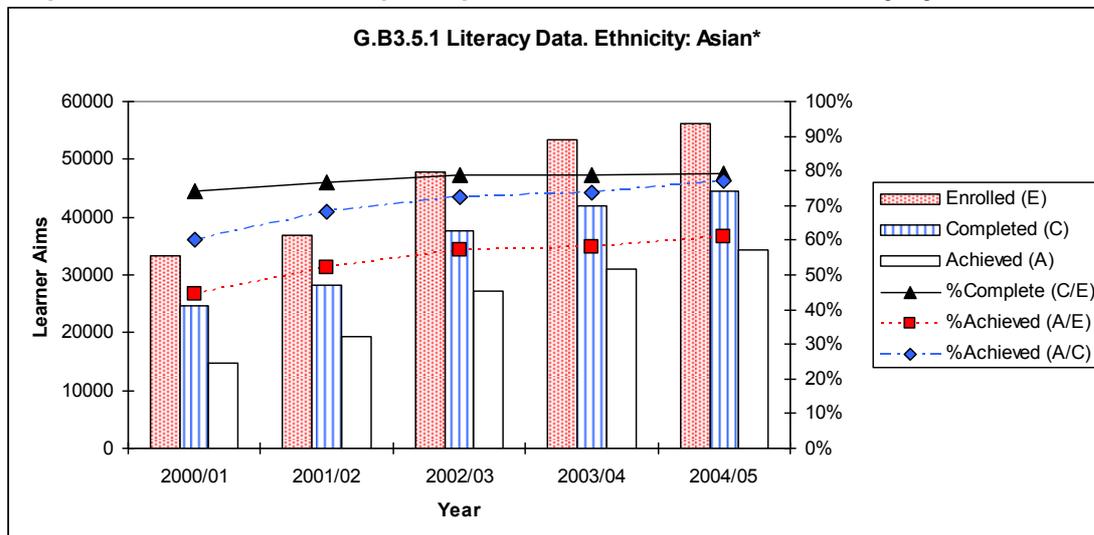
Graph 36)¹³ between 2000/01 and 2004/05. Whilst the numbers rose progressively over the five-year period for both groups, the actual numbers, represented by the bars in the graph, showed a much greater increase for white than for Asian learners. Moreover, the graphs show that by 2004/5 the increase in numbers for Asian learners was flattening out faster than for white learners.

¹³ The figures for Asian learners demonstrate the trend. The figures for other ethnic groups are contained in the statistical annex, section B3, B3.1.1 to B3.1.6

Graph 35: Total numbers for participation and achievement in literacy by white learners



Graph 36: Total numbers for participation and achievement in literacy by Asian learners



Summary

Overall participation and achievement in literacy

Literacy had the highest number of enrolments and qualifications achieved between 2000/01 and 2004/05 compared with numeracy and ESOL.

The majority of qualifications achieved in literacy throughout the five years were at Level 1.

Different types of qualification led to different rates of successful achievement at both Level 1 and Level 2. At Level 1, success rates in literacy were much higher for basic skills than for key skills qualifications. Achievement rates as a percentage of enrolments in basic skills rose by 17 percentage points between 2000/01 and 2004/05 to reach 84%, while for key skills they remained almost the same throughout at 25%-26%.

At Level 2 in literacy, enrolments were highest for key skills, but qualifications achieved as a percentage of those enrolled were lowest. In 2004/05, under 50% of

courses completed in key skills resulted in successful achievement, compared with 80% for basic skills and 93% for GCSEs.

Participation and achievement in literacy by age, gender and ethnicity

There were considerable differences in participation and achievement by different age groups, particularly 16- to 18-year-olds compared with learners aged 19 and over. Between 2000 and 2005 the largest number of enrolments in literacy for every year except one was by 16- to 18-year-olds. However, the largest number of qualifications achieved in literacy throughout the five years was by 25- to 59-year-olds.

Achievement at Level 2 was an exception to this pattern. Here the largest number of qualifications achieved throughout was by 16- to 18-year-olds. At Level 2, achievements by 16- to 18-year-olds outnumbered those by all other age groups combined.

Enrolments and qualifications achieved by women slightly outnumbered those by men throughout the five years. However, amongst 16- to 18-year-olds, this was reversed and the numbers for males were higher than those for females.

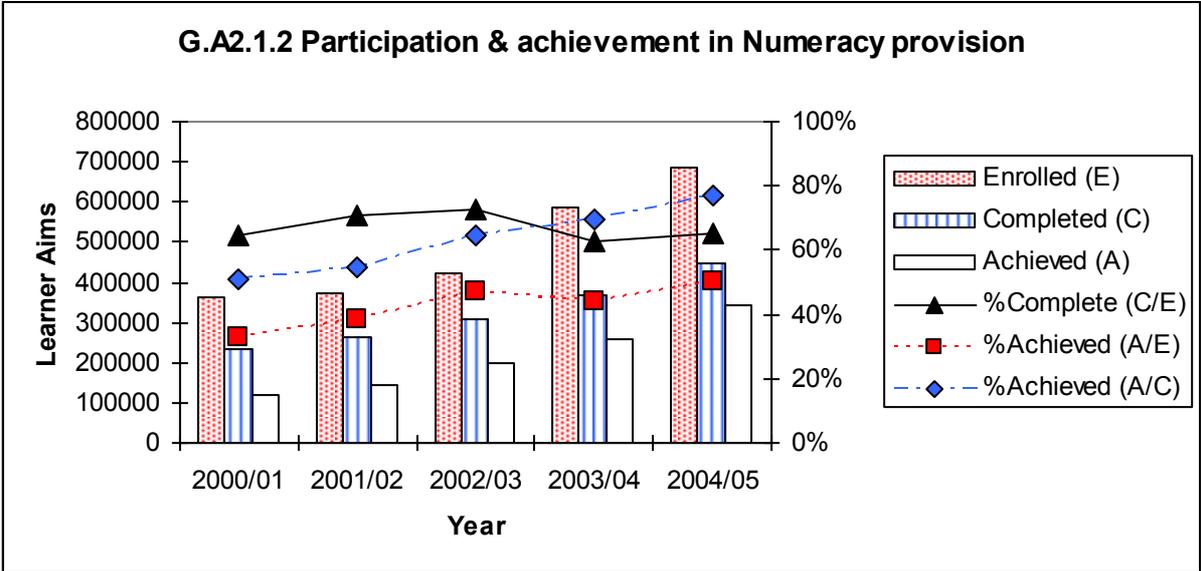
Participation and achievement in literacy increased for each ethnic group. Throughout the five years, white learners represented the largest proportion, accounting for over three quarters of the numbers for participation and qualifications achieved in literacy. This proportion increased by 3 percentage points over the five-year period.

Chapter 5: Trends and patterns in participation and achievement in numeracy provision

This chapter focuses on numeracy, and looks at trends in participation and achievement found in the LSC data on ALLN provision. The data presented in the chapter indicate a number of trends. There was a considerable year on year increase in participation and achievement in numeracy, particularly at Level 1: 16- to 18-year-olds represented more than half of all enrolments throughout the period and they formed a considerable majority of enrolments at Level 2. This perhaps reflects the importance attached to achieving a Level 2 qualification or a GCSE at grade C amongst 16- to 18-year-olds who remain within education and training post-16. However, age difference in enrolments and achievements were reducing over the five years of this study. Participation and achievement were higher by women than by men over the five years, except amongst 16- to 18-year-olds, where men were just in the majority. There was engagement in numeracy provision across different ethnic groups, though the numbers for white learners increased at a greater rate over the five years than for other ethnic groups. These trends are all explained in more detail in this chapter.

Total numbers for participation and achievement in numeracy rose considerably between 2000/01 and 2004/05, as shown by the bars in Graph 37.

Graph 37: Participation and achievement in numeracy provision



In 2004/05 enrolments showed an increase to 89%, or almost double the 2000/01 figure, from 362,340 to 686,223. Achievements nearly tripled (a rise of 188%), increasing from 119,666 to 345,161. During this period the rate of achievement as a proportion of enrolments, shown in the line graphs, rose slowly from a third (33%) of all enrolments leading to achievement in 2000/01, to a 50% achievement rate in 2004/05.

However, although Moser (DfEE, 1999) and the DfES baseline survey (DfES, 2003) highlighted numeracy skills amongst adults as a much greater ‘problem’ than literacy, numbers engaged in numeracy were lower than for literacy throughout the five-year period (see chapter 3 section 2 of this report).

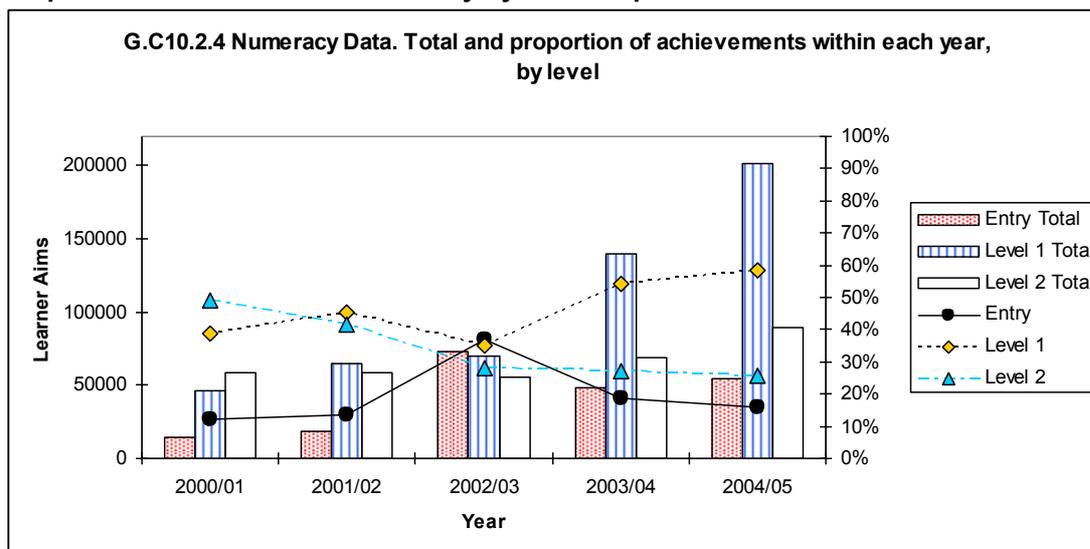
Numeracy followed literacy in numbers of enrolments, except in 2002/03, when ESOL enrolments were higher than those for numeracy. Numeracy as a proportion of all ALLN enrolments reduced over the five years, from nearly 35% in 2000/01, to 31% in 2004/05.

Achievement figures for numeracy compared to literacy and ESOL were lower. Numeracy achievements represented the lowest proportion for all three skill areas throughout, amounting to 27% of all achievements at the beginning and end of the five-year period, with a slight drop in between.

5.1: What level of qualification did learners achieve in numeracy?

Achievement in different levels of numeracy showed some marked differences over the five-year period, as shown in Graph 38. In 2003/04 and 2004/05, Level 1 achievement dominated the overall numbers (as represented by the bars in the graph). Total numbers rose from 46,239 in 2000/01 to 201,276 in 2004/05, a more than four-fold increase in achievement. The numbers involved at Level 1 tend to overshadow those for Level 2 achievement, but here too there was an increase in the number of achievements. They rose from 58,967 at the beginning of the five-year period to 89,215 at the end, which represented an increase of over 50% in achievements. Entry level achievements were much smaller in number than both Level 1 and Level 2, except for one year, 2002/03, when they represented the highest number of achievements compared with Level 1 and Level 2. Overall, Entry level achievements rose from 14,460 in 2000/01 to 54,670 in 2004/05, which nevertheless represented a nearly four-fold increase in number of achievements.

Graph 38: Achievement in numeracy by level of qualification



In 2000/01 Level 2 achievements made up the largest proportion (49%) of achievements overall, as shown by the line graph in Graph 38. By 2004/05 this proportion had reduced to 26%. This shift reflects the very large rise in the number of

Level 1 achievements. Whereas they made up 39% of all achievements in 2000/01, by 2004/05 Level 1 represented 58% of all achievements.

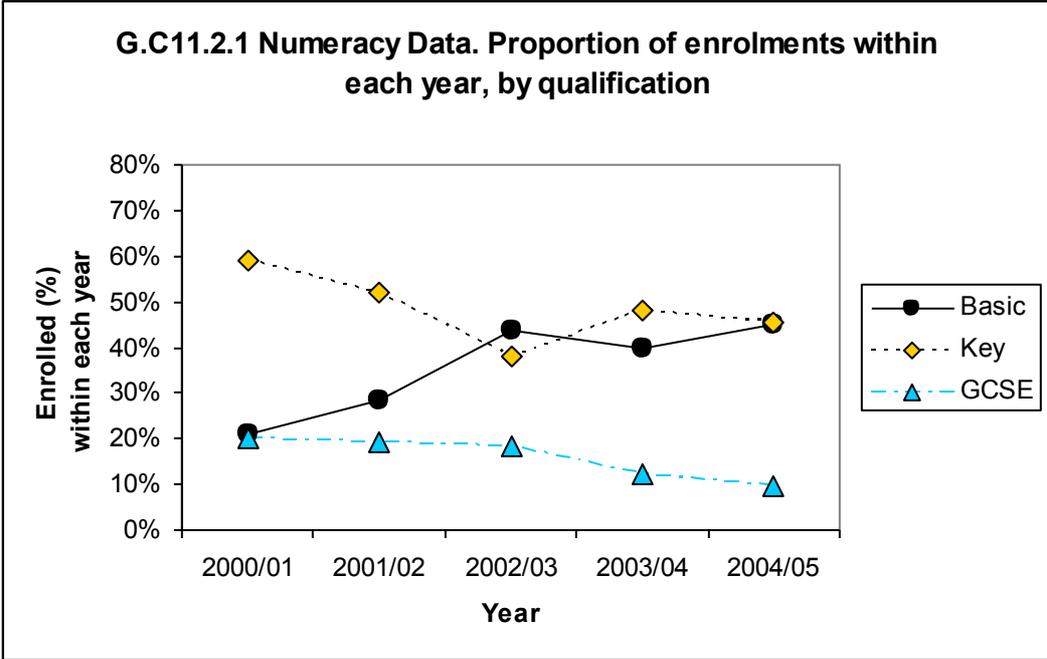
5.2: What type of qualification did learners achieve in numeracy?

Unlike provision overall, where basic skills qualifications dominated both enrolments and achievements, in numeracy provision the highest proportion of enrolments for all years except 2002/03 was in key skills qualifications, while basic skills represented the highest proportion of achievements¹⁴.

Although there were more enrolments in key skills, the trend for both participation and achievement in the different types of numeracy qualification – basic skills, key skills and GCSE – was in favour of basic skills qualifications. This trend was even greater for achievements (shown in Graph 40) than enrolments (shown in Graph 39).

The dwindling proportion represented by GCSEs reflects a reduction in overall numbers for participation in GCSEs, which reduced from 72,075 in 2000/01 to 65,782 in 2004/05, and an almost static number of achievements (39,768 in 2000/01 and 39,565 in 2004/05)¹⁵.

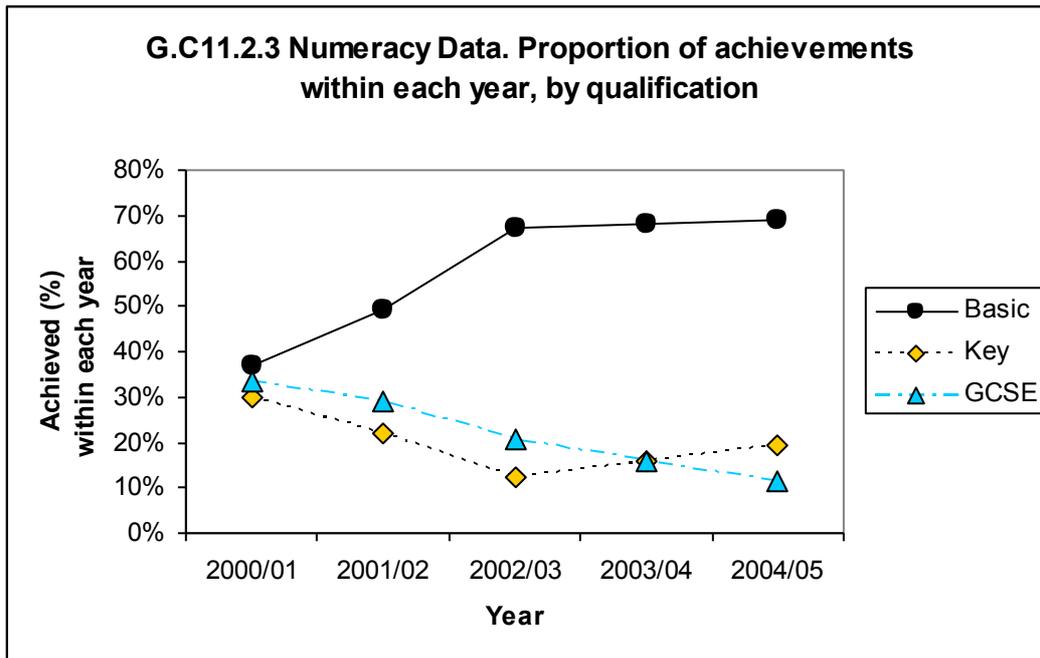
Graph 39: Enrolments in numeracy provision by type of qualification



¹⁴ see G.C11.2.1 and G.C11.2.2 of statistical annex

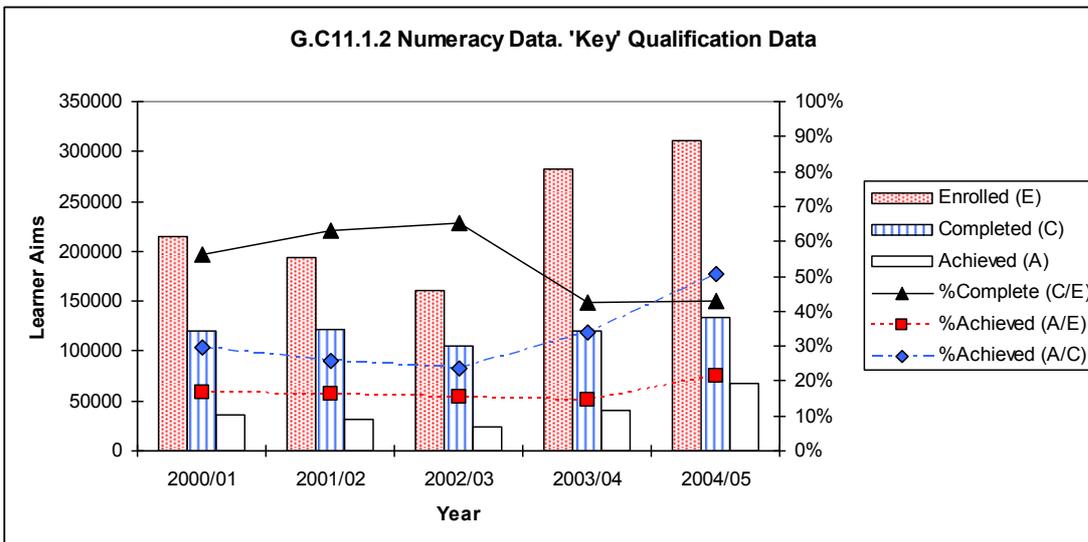
¹⁵ These achievements include only achievements at grades A*-C, not achievements at D-G

Graph 40: Achievements in numeracy provision by type of qualification



In contrast, the overall reduction in the proportion of enrolments represented by key skills was not due to a reduction in actual numbers for participation. As shown in Graph 41, actual numbers of enrolments were higher in 2004/05 (311,196) than in 2000/01 (214,274), as were achievements (67,415 in 2004/05 compared with 35,714 in 2000/01).

Graph 41: Participation and achievement in Key Skills numeracy

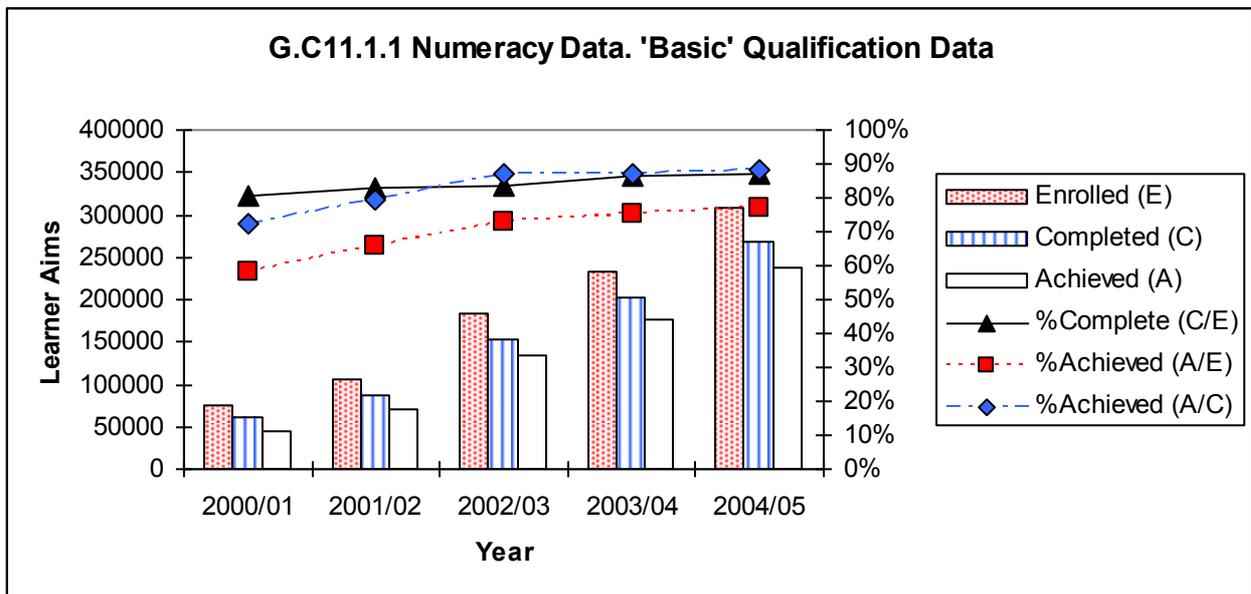


There were, however, poor rates of completion as a proportion of enrolment in key skills, and very poor rates of achievement as a proportion of enrolments. They were at their highest rate in 2004/05, at only 22% achievement of those enrolled.

These figures were in marked contrast to the pattern for basic skills provision shown in Graph 42. Here there was not only a large increase in overall numbers for

enrolment, completion and achievement, but also a high rate of achievement (77%) as a proportion of those enrolled.

Graph 42: Participation and achievement in Basic Skills numeracy



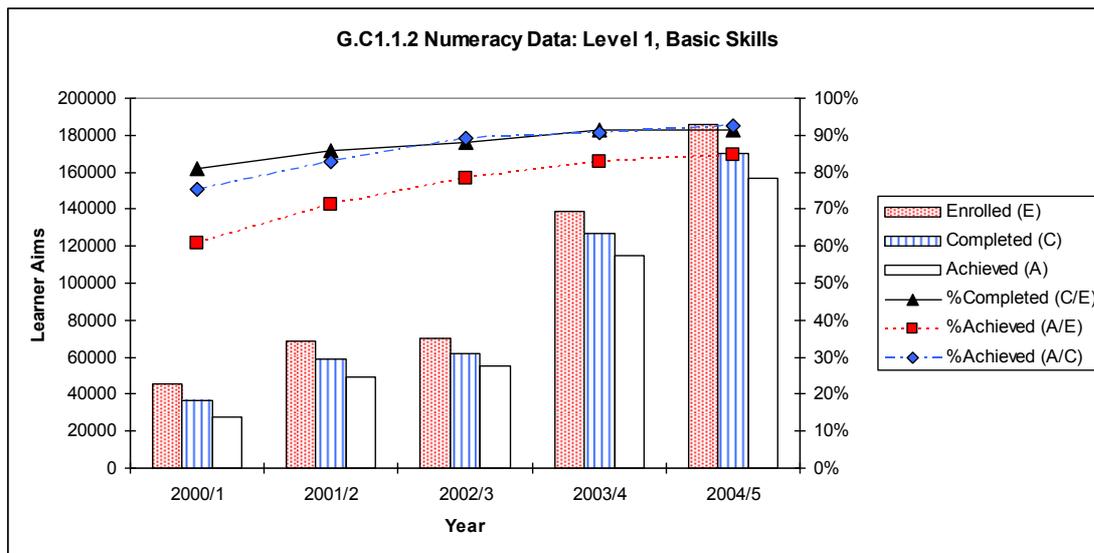
The above data represented participation and achievements at all levels (Entry level, Level 1 and Level 2). Patterns of participation and achievement in different types of qualification were examined further for Level 1 and Level 2 separately.

At Level 1, where learners could take either a basic skills or a key skills qualification, enrolments for basic skills (Graph 43) more than quadrupled over the period as a whole (rising from 45,568 to 185,775), so that by 2004/05 there were more enrolments in basic skills than key skills. Enrolments for key skills (Graph 44) dropped during the first three years (from 81,700 to 73,663), but then rose in the following two years so that they more than doubled over the period as a whole (rising to 178,897).

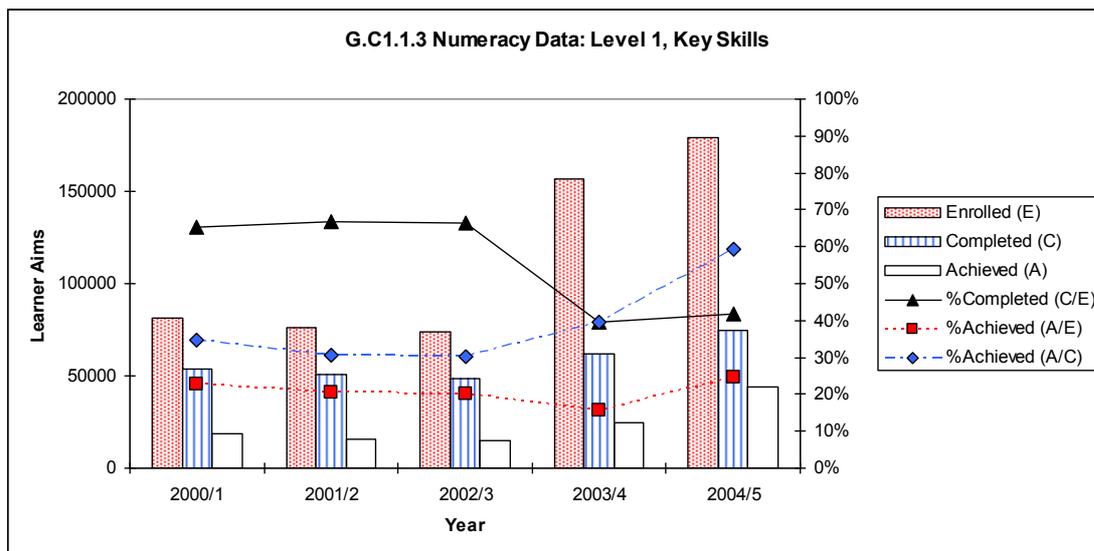
Completion rates in the two qualifications showed major differences. In basic skills, completion rates rose from 81% to 91% of those enrolled over the five-year period, while completion rates for key skills dropped from just over 65% during the first three years, to just over 40% in the final two years of the period. As a result, 169,811 learning aims in basic skills numeracy were completed in 2004/05, compared with 74,655 in key skills.

The number of achievements rose for both basic and key skills qualifications, but there was again a very big difference between the two types of qualification. The proportion of achievements relative to numbers enrolled improved from 61% to 85% in basic skills, while in key skills the proportion dropped over the first four years from 23% to 16% and then picked up in 2004/05 to 25%; that is, for most of the period, under a quarter of all enrolments in key skills led to successful achievement. This meant that in 2004/05 there were 44,219 achievements in key skills numeracy at Level 1 compared with 157,057 in basic skills.

Graph 43: Participation and achievement in basic skills qualifications at Level 1 in numeracy from 2000/01 to 2004/05



Graph 44: Participation and achievement in key skills qualifications at Level 1 in numeracy from 2000/01 to 2004/05

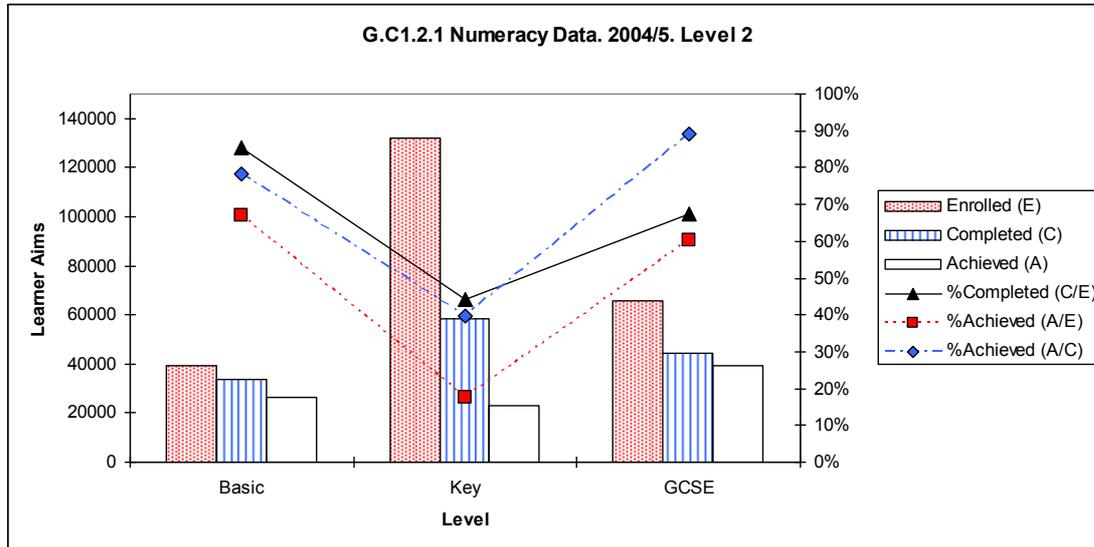


At Level 2, where learners might enrol on a basic skills, key skills or GCSE qualification, by far the greatest number of enrolments was in key skills, as demonstrated in Graph 45 for the year 2004/05. There was not, however, a growing trend in overall numbers. The number of enrolments in both key skills and GCSEs was almost the same in 2004/05 as it was in 2000/01. There were 132,574 key skills enrolments in 2000/01 and 132,299 in 2004/05, with a slight drop in between. There were 72,075 GCSE enrolments in 2000/01 and 65,782 in 2004/05 with a slight rise in between. The total number of enrolments at Level 2 remained lowest for basic skills, even though there was a massive increase in enrolments, particularly in the final 2 years of the period. Over the five years, the number rose from 3,901 in 2000/01 to 39,565 in 2004/05¹⁶. Nevertheless, as Graph 45 shows clearly, this did not bring basic skills enrolments up to the level of that for key skills or GCSEs.

¹⁶ See G.C1.1.4, G.C1.1.5 and G.C1.1.6 in the annex for more detail

However, completion and achievement rates were so much better for basic skills and GCSEs than for key skills that the overall number of achievements in 2004/05 was highest for GCSEs (39,565), followed by basic skills (26,454), with key skills achievements the lowest of the three (23,196).

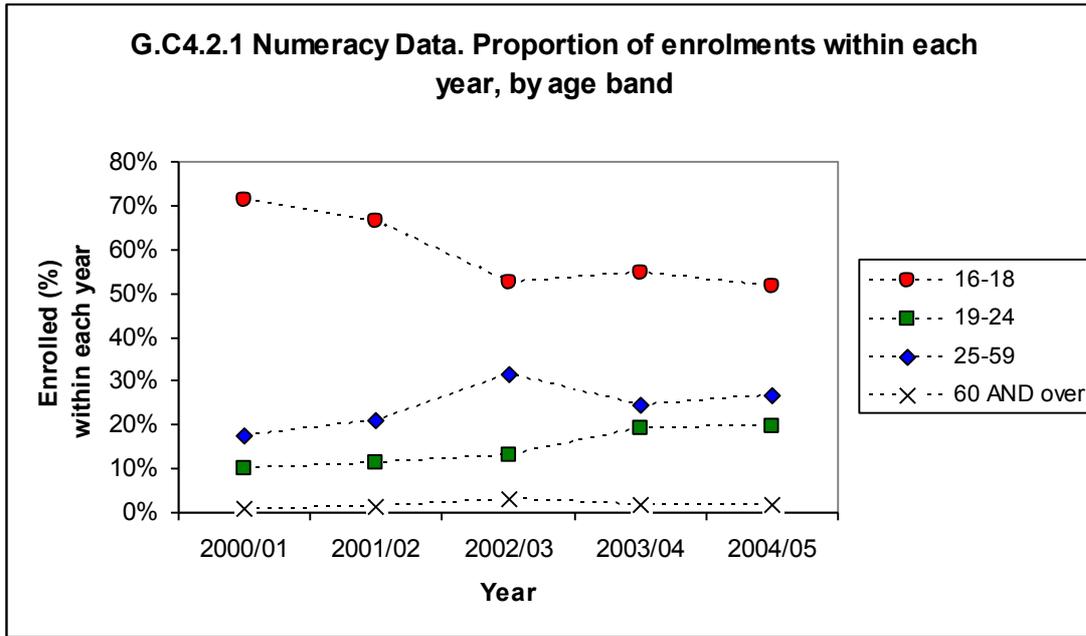
Graph 45: Comparison of participation and achievement in different types of qualification for numeracy at Level 2



5.3: Did participation and achievement differ by age?

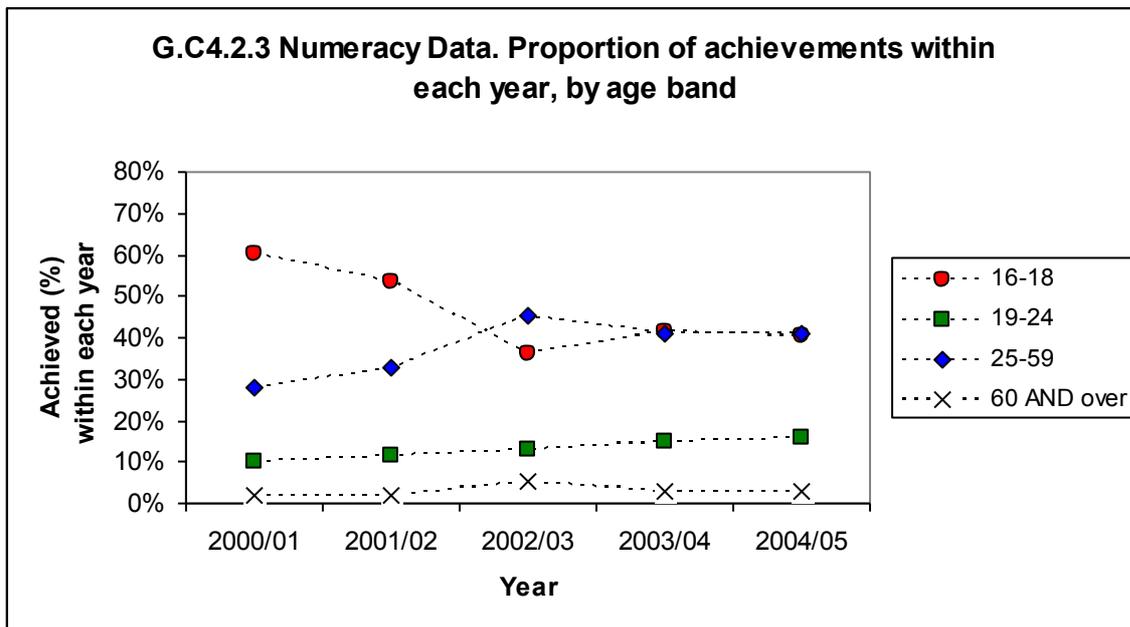
Numbers for participation and achievement in numeracy provision rose year on year for all age groups except those aged 60 and over (where the numbers reached their highest point in 2002/03). There were, however, differences between age groups in the numbers of enrolments compared to achievements: 16- to 18-year-olds formed over half of all enrolments throughout the period (see Graph 46), though this proportion reduced from 71% in 2000/01 to 52% in 2004/05. The proportion for all other age bands increased between the beginning and the end of the five years, 19- to 24-year-olds showing the greatest increase, nearly doubling from 10% to just under 20% of total enrolments, with 25- to 59-year-olds increasing from 18% to 27% of all enrolments. This distribution was different from that for literacy. By 2004/05 the number of enrolments by 16- to 18-year-olds and 25- to 59-year-olds in literacy was almost the same. In numeracy, the number of enrolments in 2004/05 by 16- to 18-year-olds (351,556) was almost double that by 25- to 59-year-olds (182,800).

Graph 46: Age distribution of enrolments in numeracy



The distribution by age of achievement in numeracy, presented in Graph 47, showed a different picture to that for enrolments.

Graph 47: Age distribution of achievements in numeracy

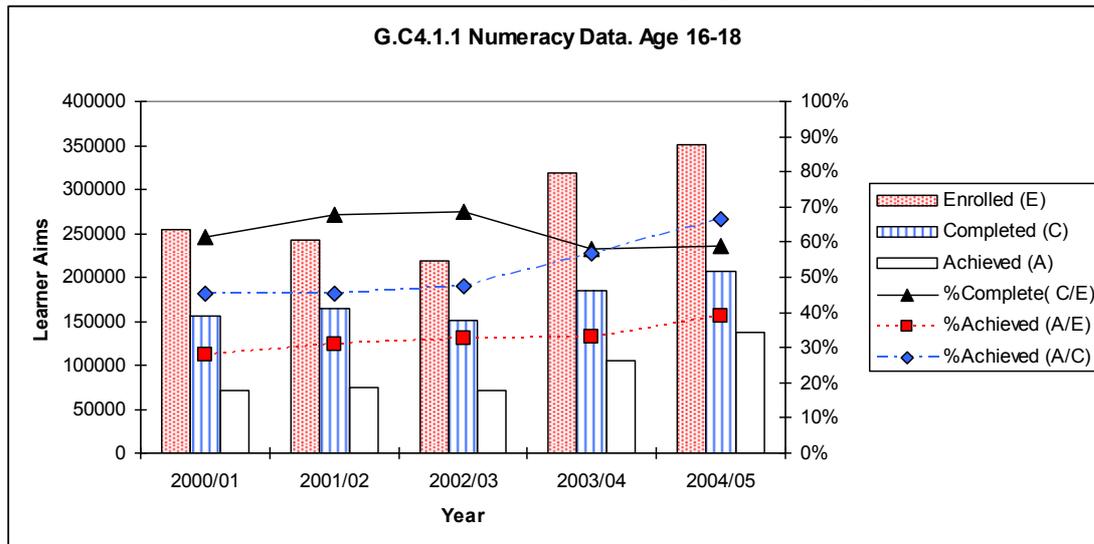


Here, there was a similar overall reduction in the proportion of achievements by 16- to 18-year-olds, and it was only in the first and second years of the five-year period that they clearly formed the largest proportion of achievements. In 2003/04 16- to 18-year-olds formed 41.2% of the total, and just outnumbered 25- to 59-year-olds who represented 40.9% of the total. In 2004/05 16- to 18-year-olds represented 40% of all achievements, though they comprised 52% of enrolments; 25- to 59-year-olds now represented the largest proportion of achievements at 41%, though they formed only 27% of all enrolments. Similar differences between enrolment and achievement rates

were found for literacy, though here the proportion of achievements by 25- to 59-year-olds in 2004/05 was much higher (50%) than that by 16- to 18-year-olds (28%).

The figures for numeracy reflect considerable differences in rates of achievement to enrolment amongst these two age groups in particular. Graph 48 shows the total numbers of enrolments, completions and achievements in numeracy by 16- to 18-year-olds (the bar graphs), and also shows achievements as a proportion of completions and as a proportion of enrolments (the line graphs).

Graph 48: Participation and achievement in numeracy by 16- to 18-year-olds

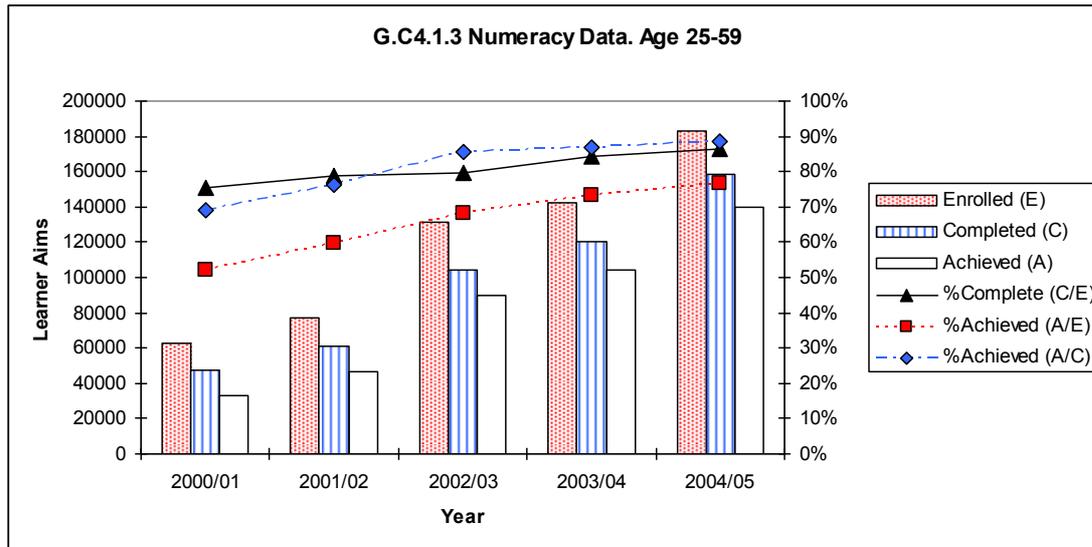


The graph shows that the rate of achievement as a proportion of enrolments amongst 16- to 18-year-olds remained below 40%, rising from 28% of enrolments leading to successful achievement in 2000/01 to 39% in 2004/05.

Graph 49 shows the same figures for 25- to 59-year-olds. Here, while overall numbers of enrolments were smaller, achievement rates were much higher, so that in 2000/01, 52% of all enrolments led to successful achievement, and by 2004/05 the figure was 77%¹⁷.

¹⁷ Achievement rates/enrolment for 19-24 year olds were similar to 16-18 year olds, while those for 60 and over were similar to 25-59 year olds.

Graph 49: Participation and achievement in numeracy by 25- to 59-year-olds



These figures need to be treated with caution, however, as the differences might not have been simply a matter of age, but to do with the differences in the level of qualification taken by different age groups.

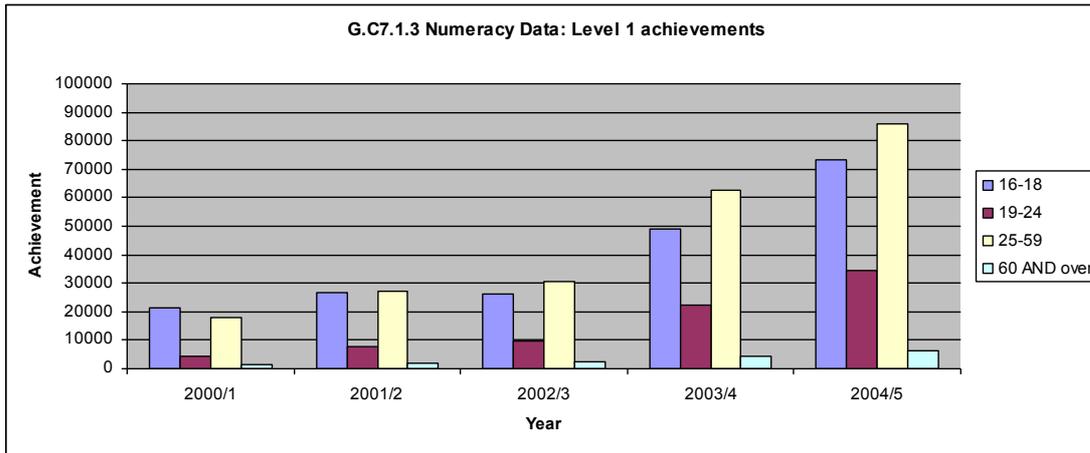
5.4: Were there age differences in the level of qualification pursued?

Section 3.3 of this report showed the much higher achievement to enrolment rates for Level 1 qualifications overall, compared with Level 2 qualifications. This might suggest that if 16- to 18-year-olds were tending to enrol for Level 2 qualifications, and 25- to 59-year-olds for Level 1 qualifications, then the lower achievement rate amongst the younger age group might at least in part reflect the level of qualification taken: that is, they were pursuing a ‘harder’ level of qualification, and their success rate might therefore be expected to be lower.

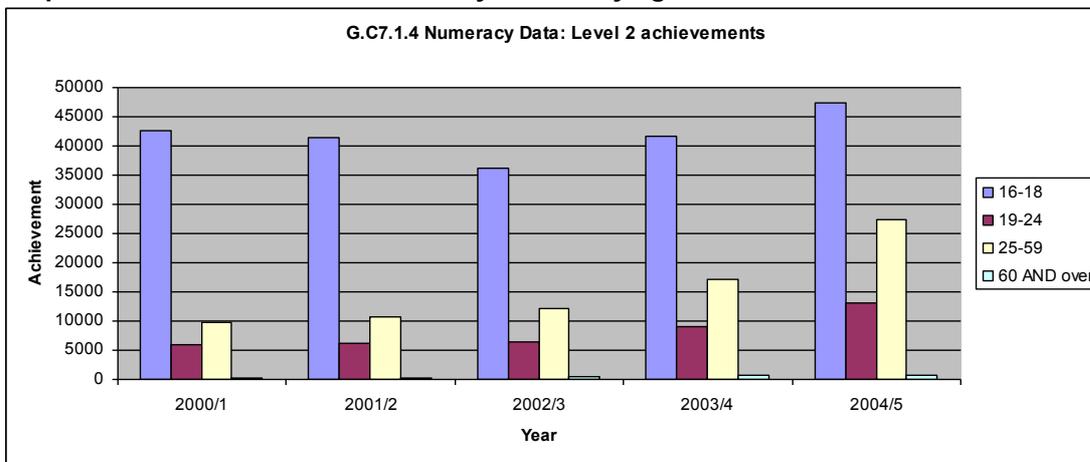
Over the period as a whole, it was indeed the case that the largest number of enrolments in numeracy by 16- to 18-year-olds was for Level 2 qualifications, though from 2003/04, slightly more 16- to 18-year-olds enrolled for Level 1 qualifications than for Level 2¹⁸. During the same period, by far the largest number of enrolments by 25- to 59-year-olds was for Level 1 qualifications, except in 2002/03 when Entry level formed the majority. This pattern then shows up in the number of achievements by different age groups (Graph 50 and Graph 51) where from 2001/02 onwards, 25- to 59-year-olds have the highest number of achievements at Level 1 in numeracy of all age groups, while 16- to 18-year-olds have by far the largest number of achievements at Level 2. Even in 2004/05, when the gap was at its smallest, there were 47,400 achievements at Level 2 by 16- to 18-year-olds compared with 27,468 by 25- to 59-year-olds.

¹⁸ See T.B7.1 in statistical annex for detailed numbers

Graph 50: Achievements in numeracy Level 1 by age



Graph 51: Achievements in numeracy Level 2 by age

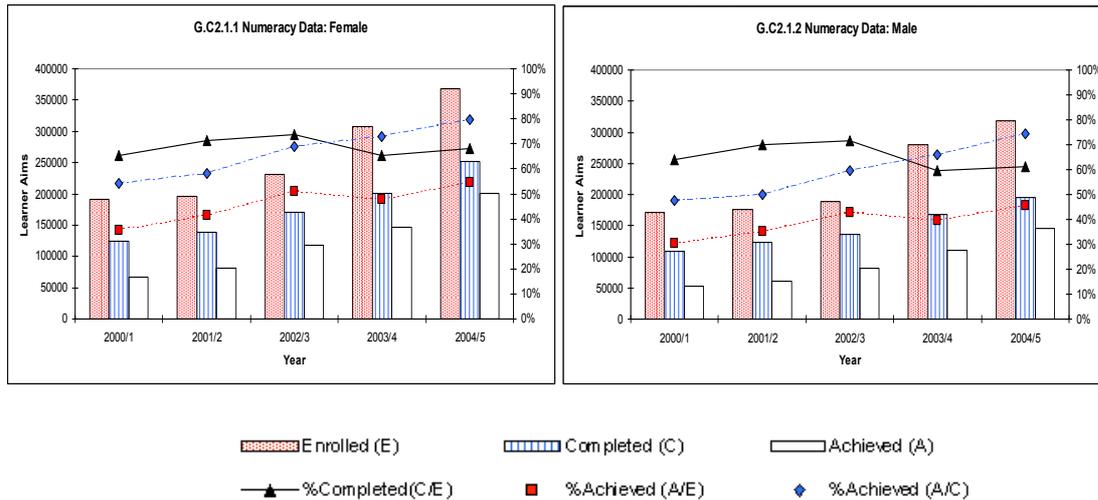


5.5: Were there gender patterns in participation and achievement in numeracy?

Women formed a slightly higher proportion of enrolments and achievements in literacy (just over 50%), and the same pattern applied to numeracy provision. Here too, there were more enrolments and achievements by women than by men. Graph 52 shows a breakdown by gender of the number of enrolments, completions and achievements in numeracy between 2000/01 and 2004/05, with females shown in the graph on the left hand side and males on right.

There was a considerable increase in total numbers for both men and women each year from 2000/01 to 2004/05. The total number of enrolments nearly doubled for both men and women between 2000/01 and 2004/05. For women the total number of enrolments increased from 191,226 to 367,997. For men the numbers increased from 171,114 to 318,226. The total number of achievements was nearing triple for both men and women. The total number of achievements by women rose from 67,527 in 2000/01 to 200,126 in 2004/05. The numbers for men increased from 52,139 to 145,035.

Graph 52: Participation and achievement in numeracy by women & men respectively



As with literacy, women made up slightly more than half of the total numbers involved in numeracy, and the balance remained virtually the same throughout the five years, with women representing 54% of enrolments, 56% of completions and 58% of achievements in 2004/5¹⁹.

In addition to the overall figures above, we looked at gender and age together, to see whether there were differences in participation and achievement by men and women depending on age, in particular by young people aged 16-18 and those aged 19+. We found that there was indeed a difference, with males making up a slightly higher proportion of enrolments, completions and achievements amongst 16- to 18-year-olds, while females represented a considerably higher proportion amongst those aged 19 and over.

Graph 32 shows a comparison of the proportion of achievements by men and women aged 16-18 and those by men and women aged 19+. Amongst 16- to 18-year-olds, males represented just over half of all achievements throughout the five years (53% or just under throughout). Amongst those aged 19+ this was reversed, and females made up the higher proportion, representing 65% of overall achievements in 2000/01, and 62% by 2004/05.

Graph 53: Comparison of achievements in numeracy by women and men aged 16-18 and 19+

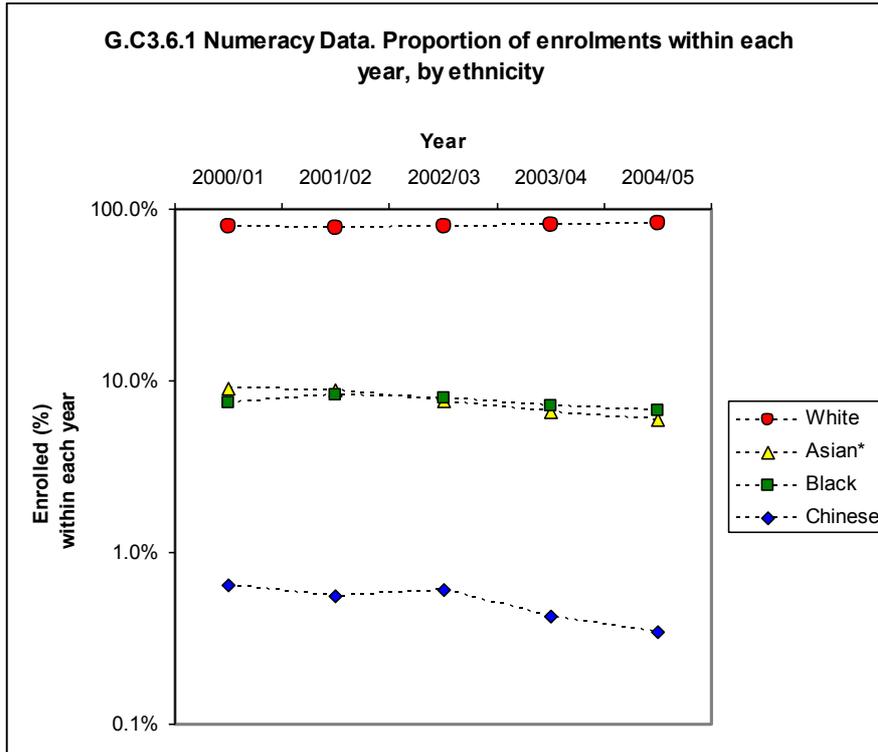


¹⁹ See Section C2 of the annex, graphs G.C2.2.1, G.C2.2.2 and G.C2.2.3 for more detail

5.6: Participation and achievement in numeracy by ethnicity

Participation and achievement in numeracy provision by ethnic group are shown in Graph 54 and Graph 55. The graphs show the proportion of enrolments (Graph 54) and achievements (Graph 55) by different ethnic groups. Because of the small numbers from minority ethnic groups, the data in these graphs are plotted on a logarithmic scale, and so they need to be read with care. Each number on the vertical axis is ten times as large as the one below it²⁰.

Graph 54: Proportion of enrolments in numeracy within each year by ethnicity

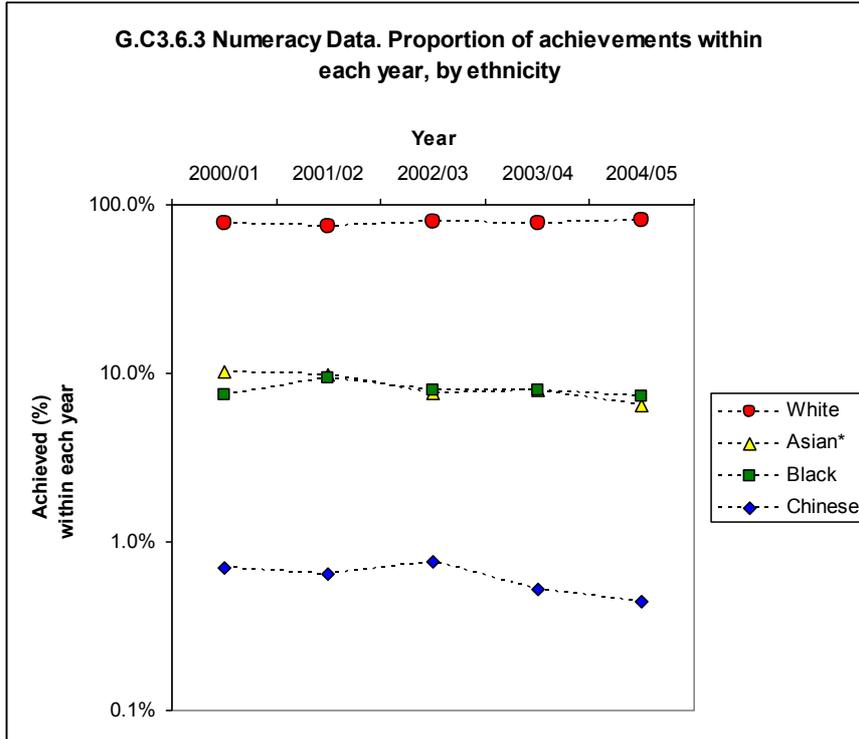


Over three quarters of the total figures for participation and achievement were from those who identified themselves as white. This proportion rose by 4 percentage points for both participation (from 79% to 83%) and achievement (from 77% to 81%) during the five-year period.

Enrolments by Asian learners comprised 9% of the total in 2000/01, but reduced to 6% of the total by 2004/05. Achievements by Asian learners showed a similar reduction, from 10% of the overall figure in 2000/01 to 6% in 2004/05. Enrolments and achievements by Black learners were at just around 7%-8% throughout the period. Chinese learners made up a very small proportion of enrolments and achievements throughout, 0.6% of enrolments at the beginning of the five-year period, reducing to 0.3% at the end, and 0.7% of achievements, reducing to 0.4% at the end.

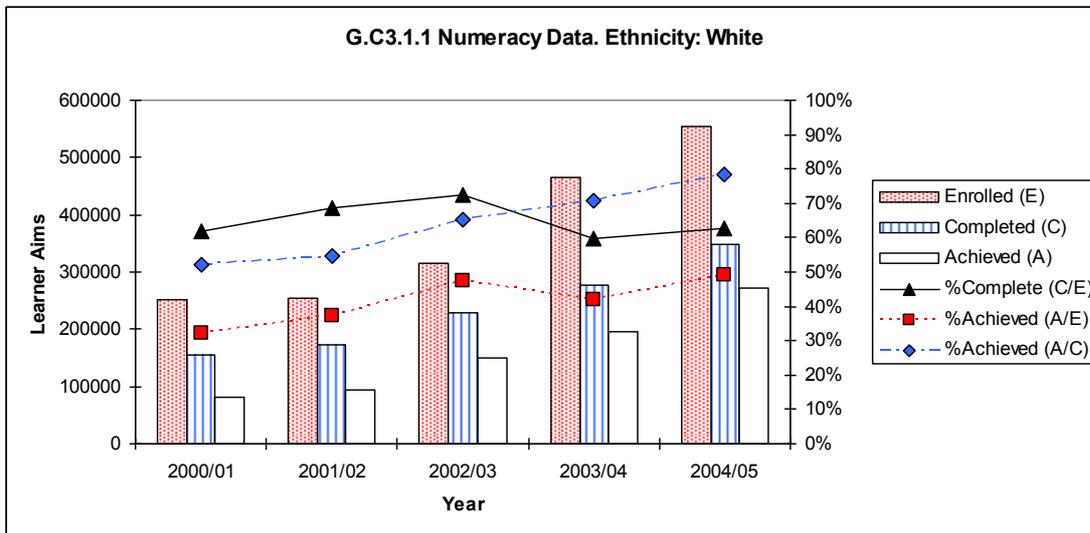
²⁰ This is because the magnitude of the values is quite different, and plotting the values on an evenly spaced axis would have hidden some features of the ethnicity figures.

Graph 55: Proportion of achievements in numeracy within each year by ethnicity



As with literacy, one of the reasons for the increase in the proportion of white learners was the considerable increase in the actual numbers for participation and achievement by this group, as shown in Graph 56.

Graph 56: Total numbers for participation and achievement in numeracy by white learners

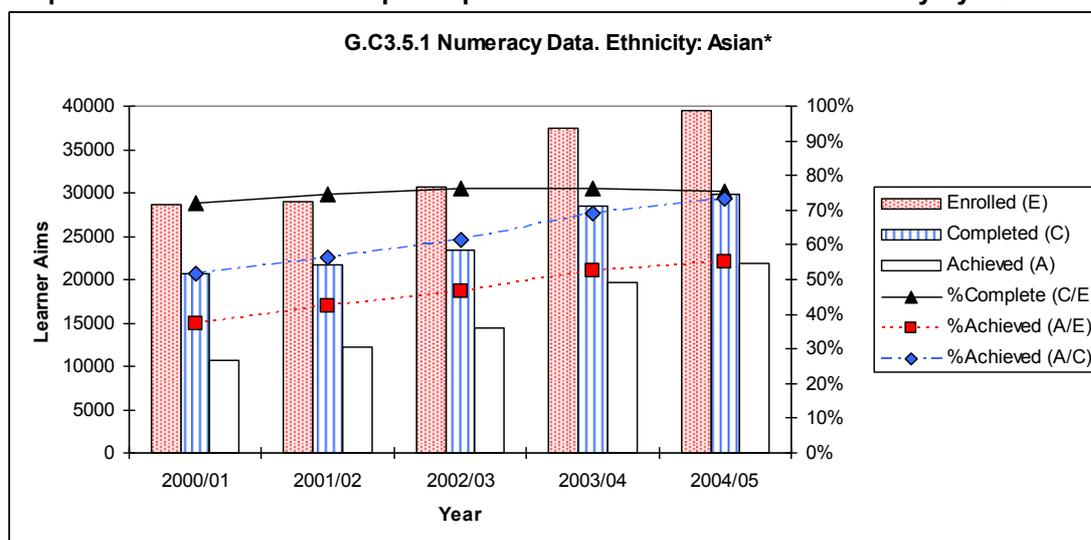


Enrolments by white learners more than doubled, from 251,177 in 2000/01 to 553,404 in 2004/05. Achievements by white learners during the same period more than tripled from 81,203 to 271,833.

In contrast, Graph 57 shows that enrolments by Asian learners rose by just over one third from 28,645 to 39,525 between 2000 and 2005, while achievements doubled from 10,665 to 21,813. Additional data (see statistical annex, section C4) show that

from 2003/04, the number of enrolments in numeracy by Chinese and Bangladeshi learners actually fell, and achievements by Bangladeshi learners also fell.

Graph 57: Total numbers for participation and achievement in numeracy by Asian learners



Summary

Numbers for participation and achievement in numeracy rose considerably between 2000/01 and 2004/05. Enrolments nearly doubled and achievements nearly tripled. Numeracy represented the second highest proportion of all ALLN enrolments (35% reducing to 31%) between 2000/01 and 2004/05, following literacy (c.40%).

Achievements in numeracy formed the lowest proportion of all qualifications achieved (27% dropping to 24%, then returning to 27%), after both literacy and ESOL.

The number of qualifications achieved in numeracy at all levels (Entry level, Level 1 and Level 2) increased between 2000/01 and 2004/05. However, achievements at Level 1 far outnumbered those at Level 2 or Entry level by 2004/05.

Rates of achievement in key skills qualifications in numeracy were low throughout the five years. In 2004/05, 22% of enrolments resulted in achievements. These rates of achievement were much lower than for basic skills or GCSE qualifications.

Young people aged 16-18 formed the majority of enrolments in numeracy qualifications, though the proportion reduced over the five years from 71% to 52% of all learners. However, achievement rates for 16- to 18-year-olds were lower than for all other age groups.

A greater proportion of 16- to 18-year-olds enrolled for Level 2 qualifications than older learners, and a far greater number of qualifications achieved at Level 2 were by 16- to 18-year-olds than by older learners.

Women made up slightly more than half of the total numbers for participation and achievement in numeracy throughout the five-year period. However, amongst 16- to 18-year-olds the proportion of males was slightly higher than females.

Over three quarters of the figures for participation and achievement in numeracy were by learners who identified themselves as white. The numbers of enrolments and qualifications achieved by white learners also increased by a much greater amount between 2000 and 2005 than for learners from any other ethnic origin.

Chapter 6: Trends and patterns in participation and achievement in the provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

This chapter focuses on ESOL, and looks at trends that were found in the LSC data concerning participation and achievement in this area of provision. During the first five years of the *SfL* strategy, recognized ESOL qualifications were slower to be established than those for literacy and numeracy. Qualifications that were offered in ESOL by the end of the period were of one type – basic skills – and were not offered as key skills or GCSEs²¹.

ESOL provision may be pursued by learners from a range of different origins. By 2006, the demand for ESOL was becoming a cause for concern, particularly in relation to funding. A report by NIACE (2006, p5) stated that:

Demand for ESOL is high and growing. The increased demand from migrant workers, especially from the A8 countries, has attracted much publicity and it is undoubtedly significant. But such learners, and refugees and asylum seekers, are only one element, although a growing element, of current ESOL learners. There are also increasing demands from the settled communities.

The data presented in this chapter provide some indication of who participated in ESOL and whether any changes could be found over the five years from 2000/01 to 2004/05.

ESOL represents the third strand of *ALLN* provision. ESOL provision is concerned with improving the English language skills of learners for whom English is not the first language. Learners who have a sufficient level of proficiency might also choose to improve their language skills by participating in literacy provision as well as, or instead of, ESOL.

The numbers for participation in ESOL provision were smaller than for literacy or numeracy, except in 2002/03 when ESOL enrolments were higher than those for numeracy. Over the five years from 2000 to 2005, enrolments in ESOL represented just over a quarter (26%) of total enrolments in *ALLN* provision.

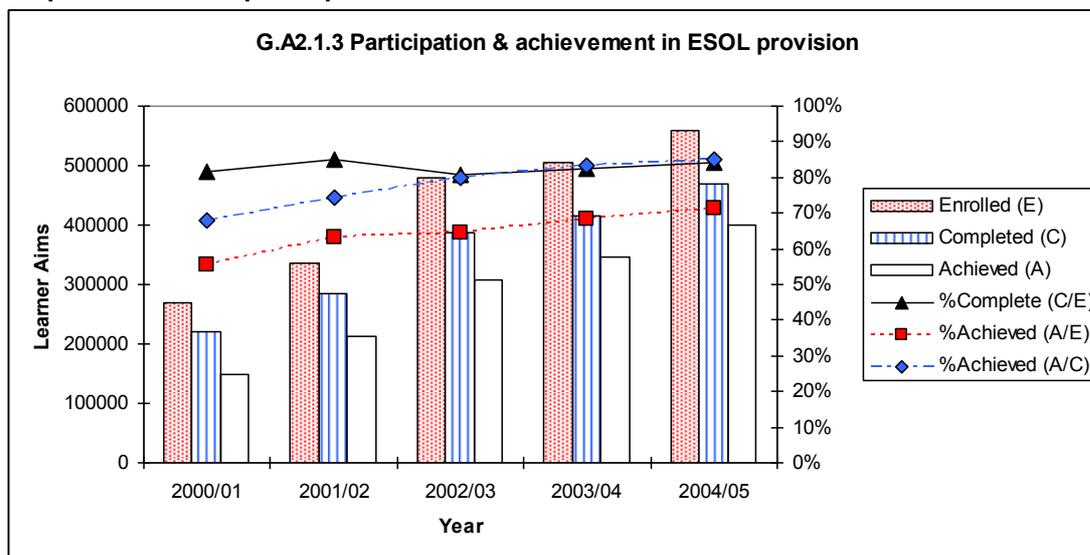
During the same period, qualifications achieved in ESOL represented a higher proportion of total achievements than numeracy, though there was a downward trend in this proportion after 2002/03. In 2000/01 ESOL made up 34% of all achievements compared with 27% for numeracy and 39% for literacy. By 2004/05, after a small rise, ESOL achievements made up a slightly smaller proportion of the total at 31%. This was still higher than numeracy achievements (27%), with literacy increasing to 42%.

²¹ In 2007 the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) accredited a range of new ESOL international qualifications to with a job-focused, practical approach to English language skills aimed particularly at migrant workers.

Whilst it might be assumed that ESOL learners would not be from the indigenous white population, section 6.6 of this chapter shows that learners who identified themselves as white still dominated the figures for participation and achievement in ESOL.

Overall figures for participation and achievement in ESOL rose throughout the period, as shown by the bars in Graph 58, so that by 2004/05 enrolments had more than doubled (from 269,560 to 559,234) and achievements had risen by a greater ratio, from 149,737 to 400,255. In addition, levels of attrition between enrolment and achievement were lower for ESOL than for literacy or numeracy, indicated by the line graphs in Graph 58. In 2000/01 over half (56%) of enrolments led to successful achievement, and this rose to nearly three quarter (72%) in 2004/05.

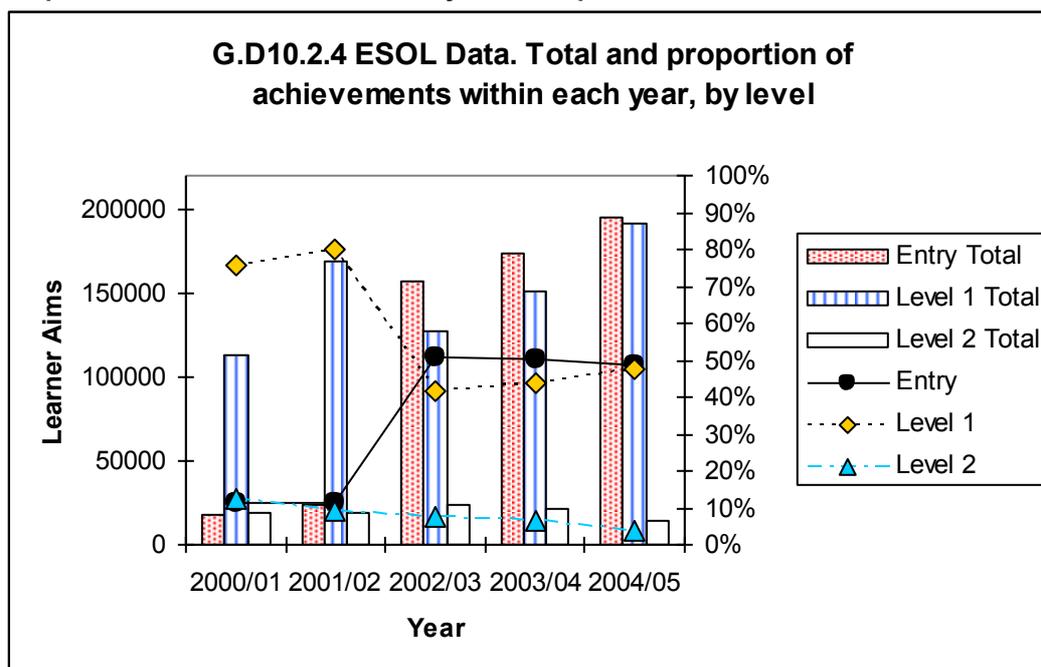
Graph 58: Overall participation and achievement in ESOL 2000/01 to 2004/05



6.1: What level of qualification did learners achieve in ESOL?

Graph 59 shows that participation and achievement in ESOL were dominated by Entry level and Level 1.

Graph 59: Achievement in ESOL by level of qualification



There was a huge increase in participation and achievement at Entry level in 2002/03. The number rose from a very low base of 17,376 achievements in 2000/01, to 157,139 in 2002/3, rising much more slowly thereafter to reach a total of 195,133 in 2004/05. The overall trend at Level 1 was a year on year increase in achievements (with the exception of 2001/02 when the rise was greater than for the following year). Between 2000/01 and 2004/05, achievements at Level 1 increased by more than 50% from 113,439 to 191,008.

At Level 2 there was a decrease in the number of achievements between 2000/01 and 2004/05. A possible reason may be that ESOL learners aiming to achieve a Level 2 qualification might well be encouraged to participate in literacy provision, rather than ESOL. By 2004/05, nearly all (97%) achievements in ESOL were split almost equally between Level 1 (48%) and Entry level (49%) qualifications. Achievements at Level 2 represented 3% (14,114) in 2004/05, whereas they had formed 13% (18,922) of all achievements in 2000/01.

6.2: What type of qualification did learners achieve in ESOL?

In literacy and numeracy provision, there were three types of qualification that learners may follow: basic skills, key skills and GCSEs. This was not the case for ESOL, where the only qualifications that were recorded for ALLN were basic skills qualifications.

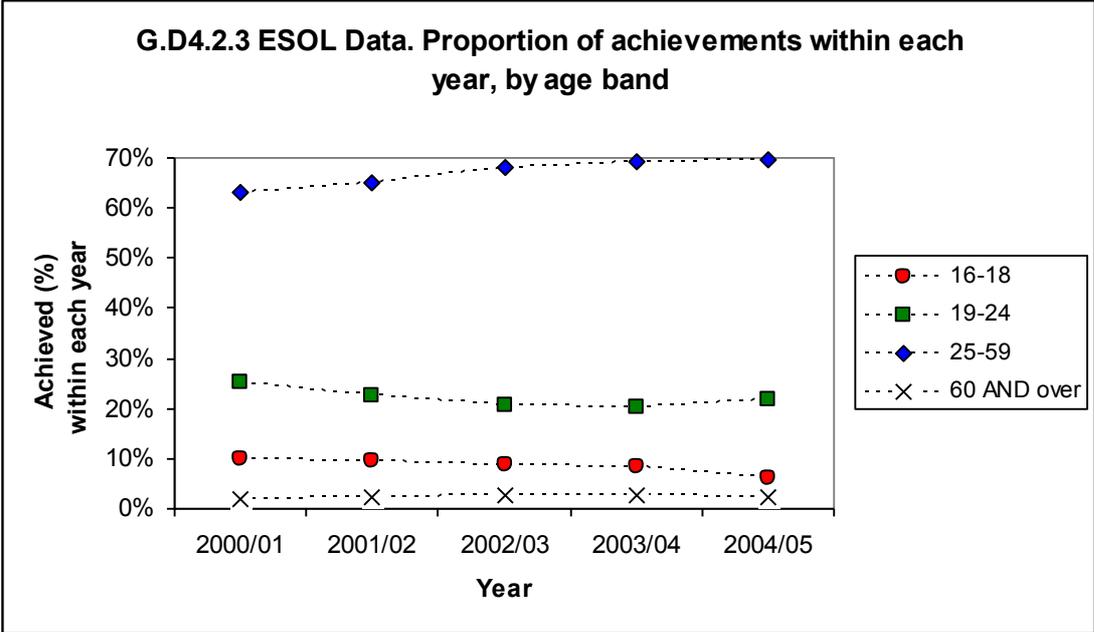
6.3: Did participation and achievement differ by age?

Between the start and the end of the five-year period, the total numbers participating and achieving in ESOL for all age groups put together rose considerably. The proportion of achievements made up by different age groups is presented in Graph 60. (The figures for enrolments were the same as those for achievements²².) The highest participation and achievement rates were amongst 25- to 59-year-olds, and

²² See graph G.D4.2.1 in annex D, section 4

this was a growing trend: 25- to 59-year-olds formed 63% of all enrolments and achievements in 2000/01, rising to 70% by 2004/05. Young people aged 16-18 made up only a small proportion of both enrolments and achievements in ESOL, 9% in 2000/01, falling to 6% in 2004/05. This age group formed a much smaller proportion of participation and achievement in ESOL compared with the figures for literacy and numeracy. It is likely that many 16- to 18-year-olds would have attended school in England. They would be more likely to have, at the very least, a sufficient working knowledge of English to wish to improve their literacy or numeracy rather than to attend ESOL classes.

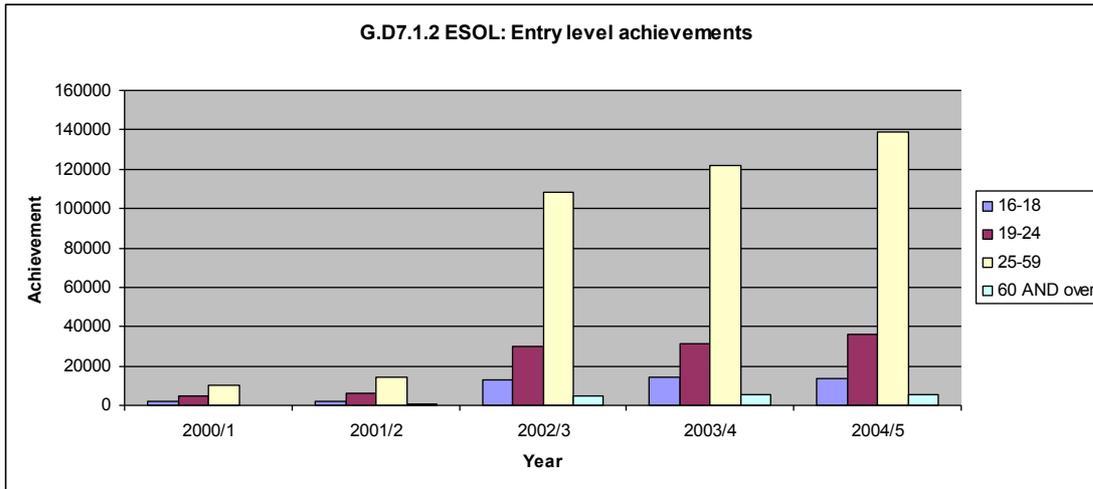
Graph 60: Achievement in ESOL courses by age



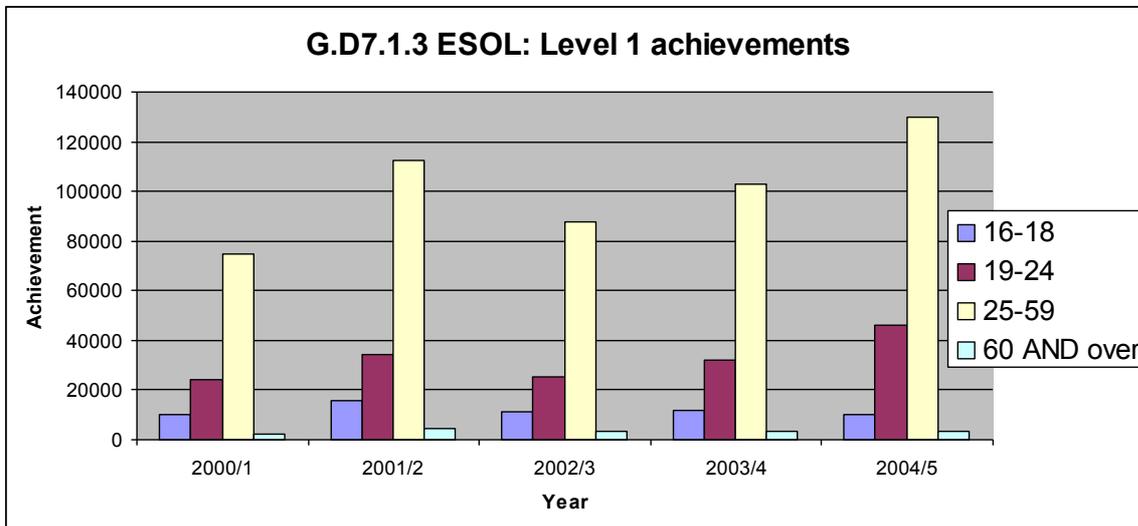
6.4: Were there age differences in the level of qualification pursued?

The data on achievement at Entry level, Level 1 and Level 2 for ESOL did not indicate a strong tendency for one age group to pursue a particular level of qualification. However, as Graph 62 shows, there was a drop in the number of qualifications achieved at Level 1 for all age groups in 2002/03. The comparable figures for Entry level achievements shown in Graph 61 suggest that this was the result of the considerably increased numbers appearing in Entry level figures from 2002/03 onwards.

Graph 61: Achievements by age at Entry level in ESOL between 2000 and 2005

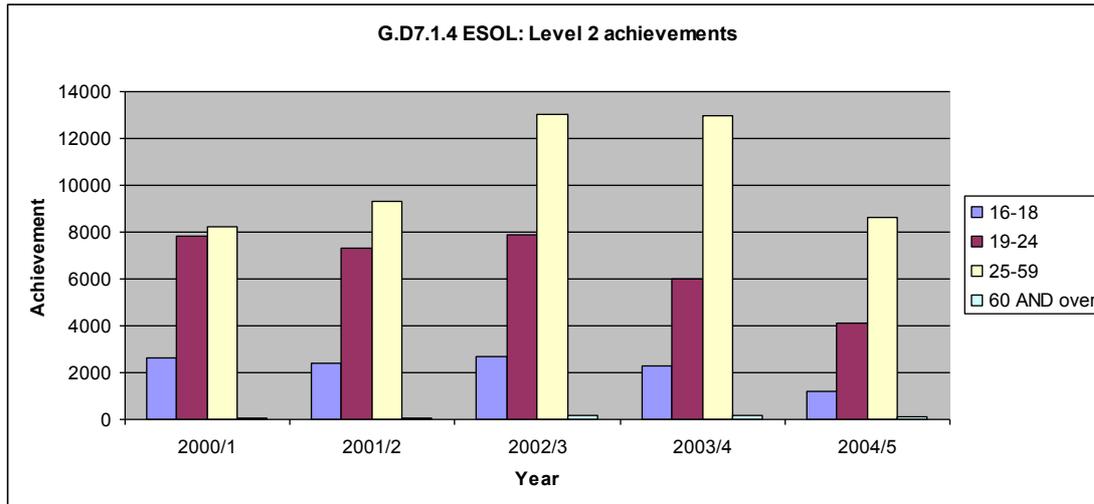


Graph 62: Achievements by age at Level 1 in ESOL between 2000 and 2005



Level 2 achievements were small in total numbers for all age groups (Graph 63). Again, 25- to 59-year-olds outnumbered other age groups, though 19- to 24-year-olds did figure more highly here than at other levels. ESOL therefore did not follow the pattern in literacy and numeracy, where the highest number of achievements at Level 2 was by 16- to 18-year-olds.

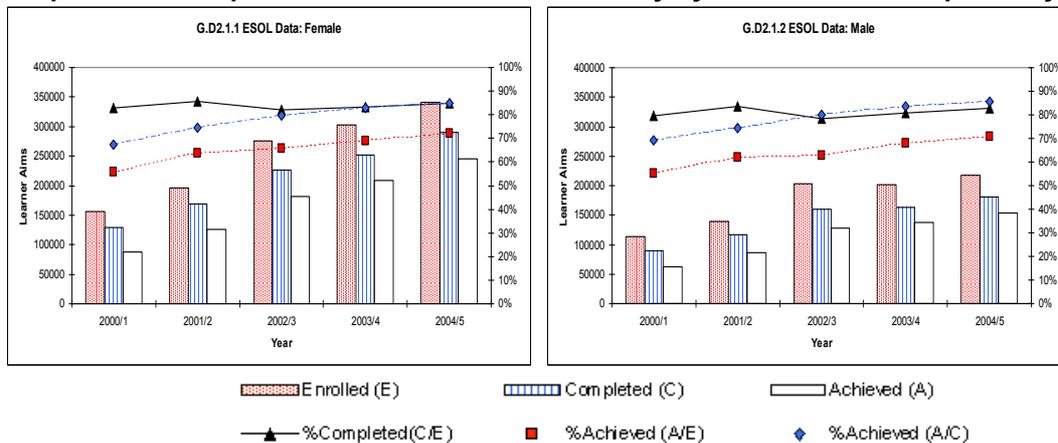
Graph 63: Achievements by age at Level 2 in ESOL between 2000 and 2005



6.5: Were there gender patterns in participation and achievement in ESOL?

As with ALLN overall, numbers for overall participation and achievement in ESOL were higher for women than for men. Graph 64 shows a breakdown by gender of the number of enrolments, completions and achievements in ESOL provision between 2000/01 and 2004/05. The graph on the left shows females and that on the right, males.

Graph 64: Participation and achievement in literacy by women & men respectively



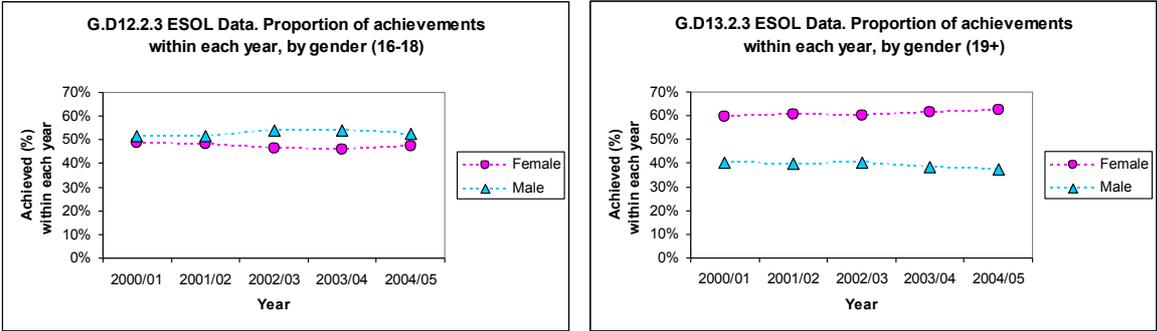
There was a steady rise in total numbers for women each year from 2000/01 to 2004/05, and a smaller rise for men over the same period, except for enrolments by men in 2003/04, when the number fell slightly.

Between the beginning and the end of the five years, the total number of enrolments by women more than doubled, from 156,460 to 341,491, while that by men rose by slightly less, from 113,100 to 217,743. Total achievements by women tripled from 87,472 to 245,914, while those by men more than doubled from 62,265 to 154,341.

More than half of the total numbers for ESOL were females, and the balance remained virtually the same throughout the five years, with women representing 58% of all enrolments and achievements in 2000/01 and 61% in 2004/05.

In addition to the overall figures above, we looked at gender and age together, to see whether there were differences in participation and achievement by men and women depending on age, in particular by young people under 19 and those aged 19+. We found that the proportions represented by men and women in the two age groups were different. This is shown in Graph 65, which compares the proportion of achievements by men and women aged 16-18 and those by men and women aged 19+. Amongst 16- to 18-year-olds, males made up the higher proportion of achievements throughout the five years (51% in 2000/01 and 53% in 2004/05). Amongst those aged 19+ this was reversed, and females made up the higher proportion, representing 60% of overall achievements in 2000/01, and 62% in 2004/05.

Graph 65: Comparison of achievements in ESOL by women and men aged 16-18 and 19+

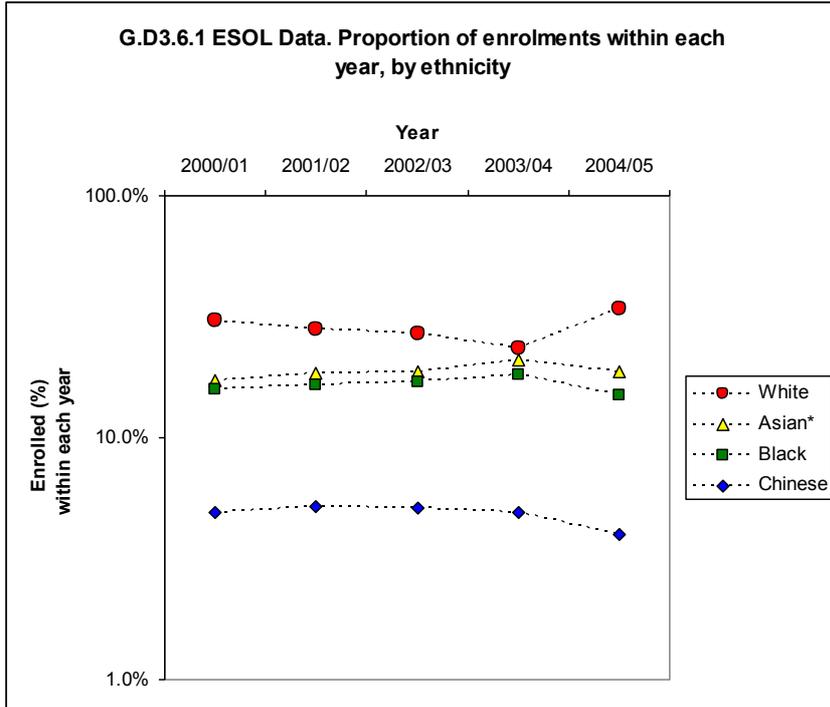


6.6: Participation and achievement in ESOL by ethnicity

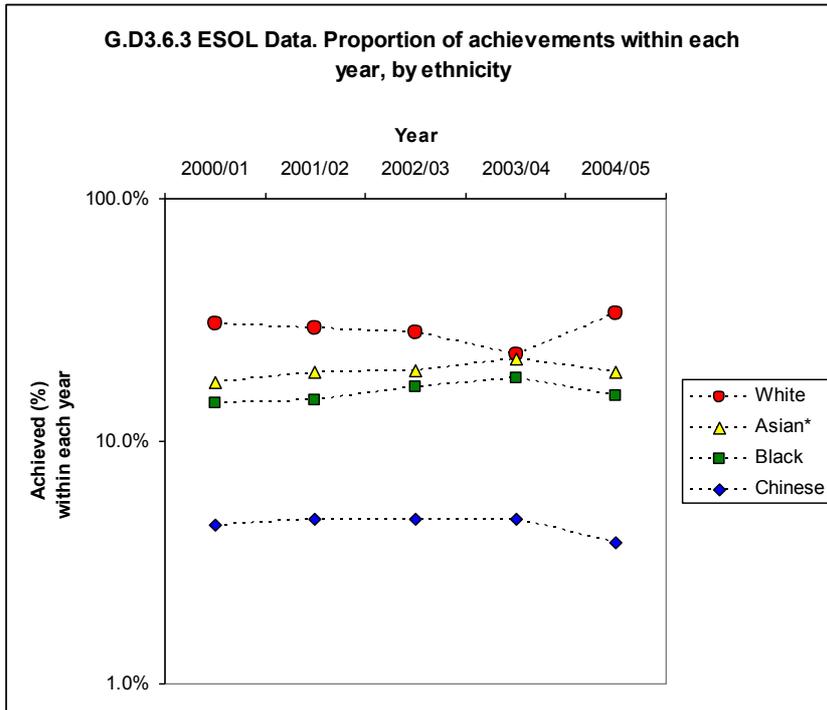
Data on the pattern of participation and achievement in ESOL provision by ethnic group are shown in Graph 66 and Graph 67. The graphs show the proportion of enrolments (Graph 66) and achievements (Graph 67) from different ethnic groups. Because of the small numbers from minority ethnic groups, the data in these graphs are plotted on a logarithmic scale, and so they need to be read with care. Each number on the vertical axis is ten times as large as the one below it²³.

²³ This is because the magnitude of the values is quite different, and plotting the values on an evenly spaced axis would have hidden some features of the ethnicity figures.

Graph 66: Proportion of enrolments in ESOL within each year by ethnicity



Graph 67: Proportion of achievements in ESOL within each year by ethnicity



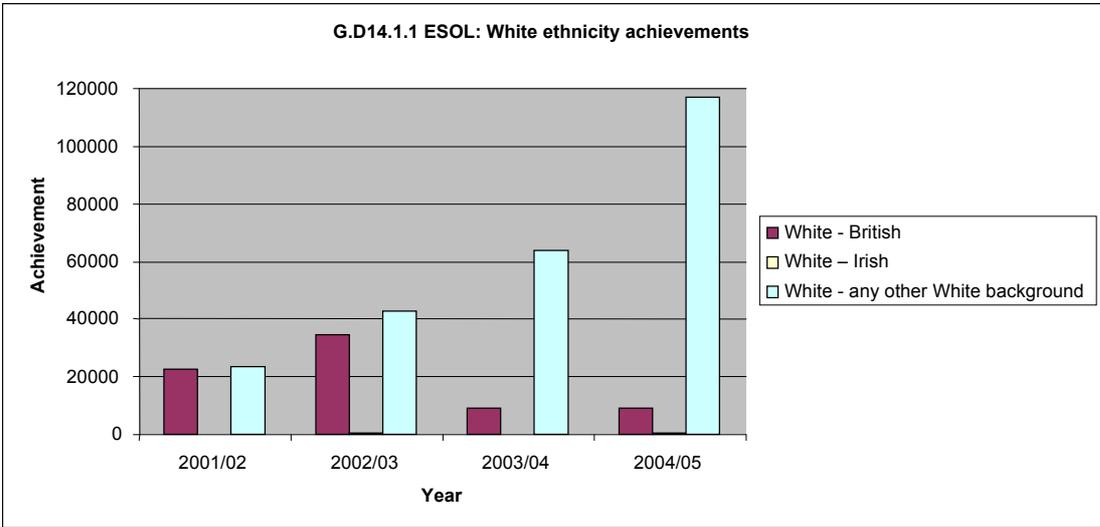
Even in ESOL provision, the highest proportion for participation and achievement was by learners who identified themselves as white: 31% of both enrolments and achievements were by white people in 2000/01 and, after a slow decline to 23% in 2003/04, the figure rose to 34% in 2004/05.

The second highest proportion was Asian learners, who represented 17% of enrolments and 18% of achievements in 2000/01 and 18% of enrolments and 19% of

achievements in 2004/05. For both Black and Chinese learners, the proportion of enrolments dropped very slightly over the five years, for Black learners from 16% of the total in 2000/01 to 15% in 2004/05, and for Chinese learners from 5% to 4%, while the proportion of achievements by Black learners rose from 14% to 15%, and for Chinese learners fell from 5% to 4%.

One reason for the considerable number of white learners involved in ESOL provision may have been the rise in migration from eastern European countries. Graph 68 shows a breakdown of ESOL achievements by white people into three categories: White British, White Irish and any other White background. While there was no further information available from the LSC database concerning what 'any other White background' included, the graph shows a large rise in the numbers identified in this category, especially from 2003/04.

Graph 68: Achievements in ESOL by different categories of white people



Summary

Enrolments in ESOL formed just over a quarter of all enrolments in ALLN provision between 2000 and 2005.

Qualifications achieved in ESOL represented 30% or slightly over of all qualifications achieved in ALLN provision between 2000 and 2005. Qualifications achieved in ESOL outnumbered those in numeracy throughout the period.

The success rate at achieving qualifications was higher for ESOL than for literacy or numeracy, and rose from 56% of enrolments leading to successful achievement in 2000/01 to 72% in 2004/05.

After 2002/03, the majority of qualifications achieved in ESOL were at Entry level, followed by Level 1. By 2004/05, 97% of qualifications achieved were split almost equally between Entry level and Level 1 qualifications.

Young people aged 16-18 made up only a small proportion of ESOL enrolments and qualifications achieved (9% in 2000/01, falling to 6% in 2004/05).

More than half of the total number of enrolments and qualifications achieved in ESOL throughout the five-year period were by women (58% in 2000/01 rising to 61% in 2004/05).

Learners who identified themselves as white formed the highest proportion of enrolments and qualifications achieved in ESOL throughout the five years (31% of the total in 2000/01 and 34% in 2004/05). Asian learners represented the second highest proportion at around 18% with black learners representing around 15% of the total throughout.

Chapter 7: Discussion and conclusions

The five years of data analysed for this report, from 2000/01 to 2004/05, started with the year in which the government *Skills for Life* strategy was launched (March 2001) and ended with the year following the date of the first interim Public Sector Agreement target (July 2004). The target aimed to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults by that date. The data presented in chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 demonstrate the very large expansion of adult literacy, language and numeracy (ALLN) provision and the even greater increase in the number of qualifications achieved during this period.

However, as chapter 2 (Methods) explained, the numbers presented in this report do not represent individual learners, because of the difficulties (at the time) of deriving numbers for individual learners from the Learning and Skills Council's Individualised Learner Record dataset. The numbers represent what the LSC recorded as learning 'aims', and one learner might have several learning aims. Moreover, this report has looked at all data on ALLN provision, and not just data for provision that was deemed as counting towards the policy target. This means that the numbers presented in the report cannot be automatically matched up to the policy target. The advantage of this approach was that it was possible to gain a broader picture of what happened in ALLN provision over the first five years of the *Skills for Life* strategy, and to present some of the patterns and trends that were emerging.

The increases in overall enrolments and qualifications achieved in ALLN were very considerable. Participation, as represented by numbers of enrolments, more than doubled from 1,043,087 to 2,180,253 enrolments. The number of qualifications achieved almost tripled, from 441,364 to 1,284,531. Behind these overall figures, there were patterns in participation and achievement across different skill areas and by different categories of learners, which might be expected for ALLN provision, but which raised issues for the next phase of the *Skills for Life* strategy.

Whilst the actual numbers for all three skills – literacy, numeracy and ESOL – increased over the five-year period, the highest proportion of enrolments and qualifications achieved were in literacy, at around 40%, and this proportion slowly increased. At the other end of the spectrum, the number of qualifications achieved was lower for numeracy than for ESOL or literacy throughout the five years. Since the DfES baseline survey for *Skills for Life* (DfES, 2003) identified more adults as having problems with basic numeracy than literacy, this picture raised concerns.

ALLN qualifications in the context of *Skills for Life* are offered at Entry level, Level 1 and Level 2 in the National Qualifications Framework (see Appendix 3). Across all ALLN provision, the main level of qualification achieved throughout the five years was Level 1. This pattern also applied to literacy. In numeracy, Level 1 was the main level achieved for three of the five years: 2001/02, 2003/04 and 2004/05. In 2000/01 the highest number of achievements in numeracy was at Level 2, and in 2002/03 the highest number was for Entry level, though the numbers were quite closely split across the three levels. The picture for ESOL was different again. In ESOL the majority of qualifications achieved from 2002/03 onwards were at Entry level.

However, the numbers for Level 1 qualifications in ESOL were generally increasing, so that by 2004/05 the total number of qualifications achieved was split almost equally between Entry level and Level 1.

These achievements at Level 1 represented a very important step forward from Entry level for ALLN provision, and the increase from 260,612 qualifications achieved at Level 1 in 2000/01 to 696,073 in 2004/05 indicated considerable progress. Taken in the wider context of the UK government's skills strategy, however, Level 1 is not enough. Level 2 is seen as the minimum level of skill required for business and economic competitiveness (see DfES et al., 2005; Leitch, 2006).

At Level 2 the number of qualifications achieved was much smaller and grew more slowly. The total number rose from 131,790 qualifications achieved in 2000/01 to 215,124 in 2004/05. Within these overall figures, the highest number was for literacy, where in 2004/05 there were 111,795 qualifications achieved, compared with 89,215 in numeracy, and 14,114 in ESOL. In relation to ESOL it is quite possible that learners would move on to literacy provision when working at Level 2, and this might in part explain the very small numbers here. For the literacy and numeracy figures, the lower numbers of qualifications achieved suggested a possible boundary or barrier between Level 1 and Level 2, which was not easy for learners to overcome. It therefore seemed to be an important next step to consider further how to enable learners who had succeeded at Level 1 to progress to Level 2 qualifications.

Moreover, if there were to be an increase in achievement of Level 2 qualifications, it was quite likely to come from those who had achieved a Level 1 qualification in the first five years of the *Skills for Life* strategy. However, such learners would not count towards further Public Sector Agreement targets for *Skills for Life*, since individuals were not supposed to be counted twice. This dilemma raised an anomaly for policy, in that there appeared to be a contradiction between trying to attract new learners into provision, and encouraging existing learners to progress.

Three main types of ALLN qualifications were recorded in the LSC database: basic skills, key skills and GCSEs. All three types of qualification were available in literacy and numeracy. In ESOL, only basic skills qualifications were offered. By far the largest numbers in terms of both participation and achievement in ALLN provision as a whole were for basic skills qualifications. Achievement figures for basic skills in particular dominated the overall numbers, representing 84% of the total in 2002/03 and 2003/04 and 83% in 2004/05. This may not have been due simply to the influence of ESOL figures, where only basic skills qualifications were offered, but may have been associated with the introduction of the national tests in basic skills in 2001, which made assessment much more accessible and straightforward for learners. Whilst this may be seen as a positive development, the predominance of basic skills qualifications highlighted an issue related to credibility, and drew attention to the importance of ensuring that basic skills qualifications were recognized and had currency in the labour market and in educational contexts.

'Adults' in ALLN means anyone over the age of 16. This age boundary was used in the *Skills for Life* strategy and has also been used internationally, for example by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) in the International Adult Literacy Survey (see OECD, 1997; Carey, 2000). This means that

16- to 18-year-olds, who were continuing their education and training, were included in the figures, as well as learners over the age of 18, who had moved beyond the end of schooling or what became defined as 14-19 provision.

Perhaps not surprisingly, since they spanned a wide age range, 25- to 59-year-olds represented the highest proportion of participation and achievement in ALLN provision overall²⁴. At the same time, 16- to 18-year-olds made up a considerable proportion of the figures. In 2004/05, 25% of all qualifications achieved were by 16- to 18-year-olds, while 54% were by 25- to 59-year-olds. The figures for 16- to 18-year-olds in provision which counted towards the SfL policy target were even higher; here more than half the qualifications achieved were by 16- to 18-year-olds at the start of the period, and the figure remained at just under or over 50% for the remainder of the five years.

Moreover, at Level 2 in literacy and numeracy, the highest total number of qualifications achieved throughout the five years was by 16- to 18-year-olds. These figures for participation and achievement by 16- to 18-year-olds not only redefined 'adult' learning towards younger learners, but raised questions about a possible differential between the value attached to the level of some of the qualifications being pursued by those over 18, compared with 16- to 18-year-olds.

The proportion of women in relation to men varied across ALLN provision. A greater number of enrolments and qualifications achieved overall were by women. This pattern applied to literacy, numeracy and ESOL separately. However, there were differences by age. Amongst 16- to 18-year-olds, the figures for men were slightly higher than those for women, whereas amongst those aged 19+ the figures for women were considerably higher than those for men. The number of achievements by men was also higher than by women in Work-Based Learning Apprenticeship provision for people up to the age of 24, though there was a downward trend here, and the numbers were almost equal by 2004/05.

A breakdown of the numbers participating in ALLN provision by ethnicity showed that participation by those from minority ethnic groups was higher than their presence in the population as a whole. Since this pattern applied to literacy and numeracy separately as well as to the overall figures, this indicated that the figures were not over-inflated by participation in ESOL, and suggested that ALLN might be reaching those who failed to achieve at school. There was a very considerable proportion of learners who identified themselves as white ('white other' rather than 'white British') amongst ESOL learners. They formed the largest group overall, representing 31% of both enrolments and achievements in 2000/01 and, after a slow decline to 23% in 2003/04, the figure rose again to 34% in 2004/05. This might have been related to recent economic migration from eastern European states, but the categories used for ethnicity in the LSC dataset did not allow us to pursue this further.

In Work-Based Learning provision for people up to the age of 24 in Apprenticeships there was a much higher predominance of white learners. The percentage of achievements by white learners was considerably higher than the corresponding figure for FE provision (92% of achievements in WBL were by white learners in 2005

²⁴ The age ranges used in this study were: 16-18; 19-24; 25-59; 60+.

compared with 64% in FE). Furthermore, in provision overall, numbers for participation and achievement rose more over the five years for learners who defined themselves as white than for other learners. The findings across all provision suggested on the one hand that ALLN was reaching a range of learners from different ethnic groups and was not biased in its provision towards white learners, but the figures for WBL and the trend in favour of white learners signalled a need for continued monitoring.

At the beginning of this chapter, it was explained that the numbers used in this study were for all ALLN provision and not just for that part of provision which counted towards the *Skills for Life* policy target. The separate figures for 'counting' provision showed that there was a dip in overall numbers in 2002/03 and a considerable rise in numbers in 2003/04, that is, around the time of the first SfL target. This could have been a 'target effect' on the numbers counting towards the target, but it could also have been the impact of the increasing use of the national tests for literacy and numeracy. Certainly, the same pattern was not found in ALLN provision as a whole. Here, the overall picture was generally one of increases in both participation and achievement year on year from 2000/01 to 2004/05.

Headline conclusions: the impact of Skills for Life on adult literacy, language and numeracy learners

During the first five years of the Skills for Life strategy, there was a year on year increase in the numbers of learners participating in ALLN provision and achieving qualifications.

Learners achieved more qualifications in literacy than in numeracy or ESOL.

The majority of qualifications achieved were at Level 1 throughout the period. They represented over 50% of achievements in 2005. From 2002 qualifications achieved at Level 2 remained steady at 17% of the total.

Learners were more successful in achieving basic skills qualifications than key skills.

The expansion of participation in Work-Based Learning Apprenticeship provision had not been matched in the achievement of qualifications. Only 19% of enrolments resulted in successful achievement in 2004/05, compared with 66% in further education provision.

More qualifications were achieved by women than by men throughout the five years with two exceptions. In Work-Based Learning Apprenticeship provision men formed the majority, but there was a downward trend over the five years, and numbers were almost equal by 2004/05. Amongst 16- to 18-year-olds, the numbers for males were slightly higher than those for females.

Learners from across different ethnic groups were well represented in the numbers for participation and achievement in ALLN, but the numbers for white learners were increasing at a greater rate than for other ethnic groups. Learners from minority ethnic groups represented almost 25% of the figures for literacy and numeracy, and almost 70% of the figures for ESOL throughout the five years. Learners who

identified themselves as white increased from 30% and under to over 30% of the total numbers in ESOL provision by 2004/05.

Participation and achievement rates by minority ethnic learners were lower in WBL Apprenticeship provision than in Further Education (FE). In 2005, just under 10% of qualifications achieved in WBL were by minority ethnic learners, compared with 36% of qualifications achieved in FE.

In 2000 more qualifications achieved counted towards the *Skills for Life (SfL)* target than not. By 2005 this pattern was reversed and there were twice as many qualifications achieved that did **not** count towards the target. More 16- to 18-year-olds achieved qualifications that counted towards the *SfL* target than any other single age group. They accounted for around 50% of qualifications achieved that counted towards the target throughout the five-year period.

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Appendix 1

List of tables and graphs in statistical annex

List of the tables and graphs produced for the Full Report on the analysis of existing quantitative data related to NRDC Project PG5.4 The Impact of *Skills for Life* on adult literacy, language and numeracy learners.

All tables and graphs listed are available in the separate statistical annex to this report.

SectionA_Results_FINAL.XLS (used in chapter 3)

Figures for enrolled, completed & achieved.

A1. Tables & graphs by year.

- For valid data (i.e. LSC definition of valid population, which is that excluding students with unknown outcomes).
- For aims counting towards *Skills for Life* target.
- For aims NOT counting towards *Skills for Life* target.
- Learning outcomes.
- FE only data
- WBL only data.

A2. Split by skill area (Literacy, Numeracy, ESOL)

A3. Split by level (Entry, Level 1, Level 2)

A4. Split by qualification (Basic, Key, GCSE)

A5. Split by gender (Female, Male)

A6. Split by ethnicity

- White, Bangladeshi, Black, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Other
- White, Asian*, Black, Chinese, Other

A7. Split by age (16-18, 19-24, 25-59, 60 AND over)

A8. Split by provision (FE, WBL)

A9. Split by provision & gender

A10. Split by FE provision & ethnicity

A11. Split by WBL provision & ethnicity

A12. Split by Basic qualification & level

SectionB_Results_FINAL.XLS (used in chapter 4)

Literacy Data Only

B1. Split by level and qualification

B2. Split by gender

B3. Split by ethnicity

- White, Bangladeshi, Black, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Other
- White, Asian*, Black, Chinese, Other

B4. Split by age (16-18, 19-24, 25-59, 60 AND over)

B5. Split by gender and level

B6. Split by ethnicity & level

- B7. Split by age & level
- B8. Split by provision (FE, WBL)
- B9. Split by region
- B10. Split by level
- B11. Split by qualification
- B11. Split by gender (age 16-18 only)
- B11. Split by gender (age 19+ only)

SectionC_Results_FINAL.XLS (used in chapter 5)
Numeracy Data Only – ordered as for Section B.

SectionC_Results_FINAL.XLS (used in chapter 6)
ESOL Data Only – ordered as for Section B.

With the addition of

- D14. Split by white ethnicity

Appendix 2

Technical annex

The data analysed in this report were provided by the Learning and Skills Council to the University of Sheffield in October 2006 and deemed correct by the LSC on that date. The data consisted of information gathered for all learners in England over a period of five academic years, from 2000/1 to 2004/5. The data files that were used for the analysis are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: ILR data files used for analysis

File Name
wbl_ilr_stdfile_p16e (Apr 00 to Jul 02)
isr22fe_qual.sav (00/01)
isr25fd_qual.sav (01/02)
ilrf05_0203_aims.sav (02/03)
ilrw_0203_aims.sav (02/03)
ilrf05_0304_aims.sav (03/04)
ilr0304_w_aims.sav (03/04)
ilr0405_w_aims.sav (04/05)
ilr0405_f05_aims.sav (04/05)

The data were provided on discs by the LSC. Information on variables was provided through online documentation. Care had to be taken because variable names and definitions changed over the years. The LSC was unable to provide support for the datasets once they had been released.

The time period examined was 2000/01 to 2004/05. At the time of working on this analysis, there were no further years of data available for analysis, so that we were unable to extend our investigation to subsequent years.

Issues in using the LSC Individualised Learner Record

The LSC dataset was the most comprehensive dataset available to analyse participation and achievement in ALLN provision and also progress towards the achievement of the UK government's *Skills for Life* targets. However, the ILR was not designed with this purpose in mind and this raised some issues in relation to analysis.

The ILR was concerned with learning aims rather than individual learners, so that the numbers in the ILR dataset and in this report do not represent individuals, they represent 'learning aims'. Any one learner might have a number of learning aims. In relation to ALLN provision for example, one learner might have a learning aim for numeracy and another learning aim for literacy.

However, the *Skills for Life* policy targets were concerned with individual learners, not 'learning aims'. In order to calculate the number of individual learners who had achieved towards the *Skills for Life* target, a formula was used by those presenting policy reports for government, which converted the number of learning aims into a figure representing the number of individual learners (see Table 4). Taking 2003-4 as

an example, the table shows that 1,066,085 enrolments were translated into 240,758 learners, by allocating an average of 4.4 learning aims to each learner. Over the period as a whole, a crude average of approximately 4 learning aims was allocated to each learner.

Table 4: Ratio of enrolments to learners counting towards the target 2000/01 to 2003/04

	Number of enrolments on Sfl qualifications that count towards the target	Number of enrolments on all Sfl courses	Number of learners counting towards the target	Number of enrolments on Sfl target qualifications per learner counting towards the target	Number of enrolments on Sfl courses per learner counting towards the target
2000/01	537,877	726,244	157,700	3.4	4.6
2001/02	686,755	1,117,752	179,300	3.8	6.2
2002/03	633,622	1,360,512	169,152	3.7	8.0
2003/04	1,066,085	2,027,214	240,758	4.4	8.4
Total	2,924,339	5,231,722	746,910	3.9	7.0

Source: Headline_stats_for_NRDC_as_per_report! target v non-target.XLS file, provided by LSC in 2005

However, the ratios shown in the table were based on an earlier summary dataset provided by the LSC in 2005. The full dataset we analysed for this report did not allow us to identify individual learners, and in the report, we did not attempt to convert learning aims into numbers of individual learners, and we did not use the formulae shown in the table. This means that the numbers used in the report relate to *learning aims* and **not** to *individual learners*.

A further issue in using the LSC dataset was that the data for the ILR were collected by providers and returned to the Learning and Skills Council. This meant that they were dependent on whether providers had interpreted the data fields correctly, and whether they had collected data accurately, particularly for widely varying provision such as ALLN. Both the LSC and practitioners in colleges expressed concerns at various meetings where we were present about the robustness of the data that were collected. Whilst remaining aware of these limitations, the LSC data nevertheless offered a large-scale picture of emerging trends and patterns.

The data represented the complete population of learning aims for England, and as such, techniques for the statistical hypothesis-testing of a sample from the population were not used. Instead, summary statistics of the total dataset were produced and basic demographic graphs presented. This approach also avoided the possibility of type 2 errors²⁵.

The numbers: enrolment, completion and achievement of learning aims

The ILR recorded data on learners in relation to their learning aims. A learning aim was the goal that a learner was aiming to achieve at the outset of a programme of

²⁵ With a hypothesis test, we fix the type 1 error (α , or the probability of obtaining a 'false positive' result) and type 2 error (β , or the probability of obtaining a 'false negative' result) error rates. This is usually done so that if $p < 5\%$ we say the result is statistically significant. However, multiple testing of the same data (e.g. by repeatedly testing different subsets of the same data) can lead to spurious results. To avoid this, one method is to take into account the number of tests (say, k) being performed and to adjust the level at which p-value is judged to be significant using the Bonferroni correction (which is conservative for large k). The test is now only significant if $p < 5\%/k$.

learning. One learner might have more than one learning aim. Data were collected in relation to:

- i) enrolment (learning aims taken up)
- ii) completion (learning aims completed)
- iii) achievement (learning aims achieved)

Completion data were recorded by the LSC using the categories shown in Table 5. In the raw dataset which was supplied by the LSC, some learners were in the contradictory situation where they had apparently not completed yet they had achieved. We cleaned the data and changed all learning aims that were recorded as having been achieved as also having been completed.

Table 5: ILR categories to record completion of learning aims

2000-02: Reference Q19		2002-05: Reference A34		Counts as completion?
1	the student is continuing or intending to continue the learning activities leading to the qualification aim	1	Same	No
2	the student has completed the learning activities leading to the qualification aim	2	Same	Yes
3	the student has withdrawn from the learning activities leading to the qualification aim	3	Same	No
4	the student has transferred to a new qualification aim. That is, the student has withdrawn from this qualification aim and as a direct result has at the same time started studying for another qualification aim	4	Same	No
-		5	changes in learning within the same programme type and area of learning / funding category, and remaining with the existing provider	No

Achievement data are recorded by the LSC using the categories shown in Table 6.

Table 6: ILR categories to record achievement of learning aims

2000-02: Reference Q20		2002-05: Reference A35		Counts as achievement?
2	partial achievement	2	partial achievement	No
3	no achievement	3	no achievement	No
4	exam taken but result not yet known	4	Exam taken but result not yet known	No
5	learning activities are complete but the exam has not yet been taken and there is an intention to take the exam	5	learning activities are complete but the exam has not yet been taken and there is an intention to take the exam	No
6	qualification aim achieved and achievement funding is being claimed	1	achieved	Yes
7	qualification aim achieved and achievement funding is not being claimed	1	achieved	Yes
9	study continuing	9	study continuing	No
0	null value	-		No

In previous analyses performed by the LSC, aims for which the outcome was recorded as “unknown” or “continuing” were not included in the results. That is, aims with these two outcomes were completely removed from the analysis, including the numbers for enrolment as well as for achievement. This had the effect of inflating the reported percentages for completion and achievement so that they were higher than those based on the raw data. In the annex which contains the full data analysis which we undertook, we have referred to figures based on this reduced set of data as “valid”, because they follow the Learning and Skills Council’s adjustment of the figures. We do not intend the use of the term “valid” to imply that the LSC’s approach was the correct one and that the approach we used, which included all outcomes, was incorrect, or “invalid”. The two approaches were *different* and could potentially lead to different conclusions from the data.

Factors/variables examined in the analysis

The three skill areas: literacy, numeracy, ESOL

Variables: a_bstypd

2000/01 and 2001/02

Learning Aim Reference Q01

2002/03, 2003/04 and 2004/5

Learning Aim Reference A09

Codes:

Literacy {1,4,7,9,11,14,16,18,21,24}

Numeracy {2,5,8,10,12,15,17,19,22,25}

ESOL {3,6,13,20,23,26}

The skill area variable was created by merging two variables: a_bstypd and the Learning Aim Reference variable. The a_bstypd variable was taken from the .LAD files, which contain over 90,000 course codes. The Learning Aim Reference variable was included in the datasets supplied by the LSC.

Type of qualification: basic skills, key skills, GCSE

The type of qualification pursued was identified using the following variable and codes:

Variable: a_bstypd

Codes:

Basic Skills – {1,2,3,4,5,6,11,12,13,18-26}

Key Skills – {7,8,14,15}

GCSE – {9,10,16,17}

There were no aims at Level 1 (grades D-G) for GCSE. The aim recorded for every learner enrolled for a GCSE qualification was at Level 2 (grades A*-C). ESOL was only offered as a basic skills qualification.

Level

Variable: a_bstypd

The level of each aim was identified using the following codes:

Codes

Entry – {1,2,3,18,19,20}

Level 1 – {4,5,6,7,8,9,10,21,22,23}

Level 2 – {11,12,13,14,15,16,17,24,25,26}

Type of provision: Further Education (FE) and Work-Based Learning (WBL)

The Learning and Skills Council distinguished between Further Education and Work-Based Learning in its datasets.

Work-Based Learning had a particular meaning in the context of the LSC data. It referred to the provision of learning for people up to the age of 24 who were following Apprenticeship and Advanced Apprenticeship programmes (which were known as Foundation Modern Apprenticeships and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships prior to 2004/05), which were offered at levels 2 and 3 in the National Qualifications Framework (see Appendix 3). It also referred to NVQ learning (other training), including Entry to Employment (E2E), in cases where an Apprenticeship was not available, or the individual would not benefit from such a programme. The latter are therefore usually at Level 1 or below²⁶.

The information on WBL and FE used in this report was provided in separate data files. For all five years from 2000/01 to 2004/05 there were records for aims in Further Education provision. Work-Based Learning provision was not recorded separately until 2002/03. In that year, approximately 9000 aims were recorded for WBL. This increased to 250,000 aims in 2003/04 and 340,000 aims in 2004/05. This compared with approximately 1.5 million, 1.6 million and 1.8 million aims recorded for FE provision in 2002/03, 2003/04 and 2004/05 respectively.

Counting and non-counting provision

Variable: a_bsflag

Codes: N=No, Y=Yes

This variable allowed the data on ALLN provision in the ILR datasets to be sorted into aims which counted towards the *SfL* policy target ('counting' provision) and aims which did not ('non-counting' provision)²⁷. However, in this report, we examined provision as a whole, rather than only provision deemed as counting towards the target, except in one or two instances specified in the report.

Gender

Variables

2000/01, 2001/02 S05 – sex

2002/03, 2003/04, 2004/5 L13 – sex

Codes: F/M.

In 2001, 51.8% of the population of England as a whole were women, and 48.2% were men (Source: Census 2001, Office for National Statistics; NOMIS database, England).

²⁶ This information is based on

²⁷ See Appendix 3 on definitions in this report for full explanation of counting and non-counting provision

Age

Variables

2000/01, 2001/02

S04 – DOB

2002/03, 2003/04, 2004/5

L11 – Date of birth

The age of the learner was the age of the learner at a fixed date in the academic year in which they enrolled. For example, for a learner with a learning aim starting in the 2004/05 academic year, their date of birth was used to calculate their age on August 31st 2004. We removed unusual ages (e.g. -1, 137, 142) prior to analysis.

There were some learners aged under 16 in the LSC dataset, but they represented a very small fraction of the population in the dataset overall (barely over 1%). Thus in the 2004/05 figures only 0.8% of aims were for under 16s. In our analysis all ages in the dataset have been included, except in the sections on age, where the under 16 category was removed. However, although under-16s formed part of the numbers included in the majority of results in this study, we do not believe that this affected our conclusions.

From the LSC dataset we created another variable for age which had the following categories {under 16, 16-18, 19-20, 21-24, 25-59, 60 and over, missing}.

For some of the analysis we reduced the age categories to just four {16-18, 19-24, 25-59, 60 and over} and elsewhere to just two {16-18, 19 and over}, as these categories represent important boundaries in the context of English education policy.

The figures in the 2001 Census (taken from the Office for National Statistics NOMIS database, England) show the following breakdown of age for the population of England as a whole.

Table 7: Age breakdown of population of England, 2001

Age	Total	Percentage
16-18	1,933,219	4.7%
19-24	3,744,583	9.0%
25-59	25,017,850	60.2%
60+	10,857,528	26.1%
Total	41,553,180	100.0%

Ethnicity

Variables:

2000/01, 2001/02 S08 – ethnicity.

2002/03, 2003/04, 2004/5 L12 – ethnicity

Codes: shown as ‘categories’ in Table 8.

The LSC collected data on learners’ ethnicity using the categories and codes shown in Table 8. In 2000/01, the first year of data included in this report, the LSC used one set of categories, which are shown in the left hand column. From 2002/03 onwards, the categories were replaced with those used in the 2001 national census. These are shown in the right hand column. 2001/02 was an interim year when a combination of both sets of categories was used.

Table 8: LSC ILR categories used to record ethnicity

Pre 2001 categories		2001 census categories	
1	Bangladeshi	11	Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
2	Black African	15	Black or Black British - African
3	Black Caribbean	16	Black or Black British - Caribbean
4	Black Other	17	Black or Black British - any other Black background
5	Chinese	18	Chinese
6	Indian	12	Asian or Asian British - Indian
7	Pakistani	13	Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
8	White	23	White - British
		24	White - Irish
		25	White - any other White background
9	other - Asian	14	Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background
98	Other (not comparable over time)	19	Mixed - White and Asian
		20	Mixed - White and Black African
		21	Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
		22	Mixed - any other Mixed background
		98	Other
99	not known/not provided	99	not known/not provided

The LSC data on ethnicity were based on self-reporting by learners using ethnic monitoring forms. The forms were given to learners by their tutors when they enrolled on courses. Learners could choose not to supply information about their ethnicity, in which case they were asked to enter the code 99 ‘Not Known / Not Provided’. The figures on ethnicity are therefore dependent on accurate self-reporting. Whilst the same applies to other characteristics of learners, this category may be vulnerable to less accurate and also less complete reporting, since ethnic monitoring is a sensitive issue.

In our research, we did a first analysis using the categories shown in

Table 9.

Table 9: Ethnicity categories used in first analysis

Categories used in 1 st analysis	Pre 2001 categories	
Bangladeshi	1	Bangladeshi
Black	2	Black African
	3	Black Caribbean
	4	Black Other
Chinese	5	Chinese
Indian	6	Indian
Pakistani	7	Pakistani
White	8	White
Other	9	other – Asian
	98	Other (not comparable over time)
	99	not known/not provided

These categories were further combined for this report, because the differences between Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi learners were very small, and the trends over time were very similar. The same applied to Black African, Black Caribbean and Black Other. The ethnicity categories used in this report are listed in Table 10. They further group together the categories shown in Table 8 and

Table 9.

Table 10: Ethnicity categories used in this report

Ethnicity category	What the category includes
Black	Black
Chinese	Chinese
Asian (*does not include 'other - Asian')	Bangladeshi
	Indian
	Pakistani
White	White
Other	Other
	not known/not provided

Source: *Census 2001, Office for National Statistics; NOMIS database, England*

'Asian' includes Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi learners. Initially we looked at data for each of these groups separately, to see whether there were differences between them, since GCSE data from schools did show differences. Because the overall patterns for Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani learners were similar within ALLN provision, we decided to merge them into one category – Asian.

Black includes all 'black categories'. The categorizations over the years suggested to us that it would be impossible to make justifiable claims about any more specific breakdown of 'black' learners.

Chinese learners were kept separate as they represented a small but significant grouping, who might otherwise have been categorized into an 'any other' category.

The LSC category 'other Asian' was merged into 'Other'.

White included white British, white Irish and white other. In analysing the data for ESOL we found a considerable number of 'white' learners, so we re-analysed, and separated these three white categories for this section of the report only.

2 on page 38 shows a comparison of the population of England by ethnic group and a breakdown of the LSC figures for ALLN learning aims by ethnic origin.

Other factors

The following factors were not investigated:

- Disability
- Socio-economic background
- Different types of provision, apart from WBL and FE
- Breakdown by LSC region or postcode. We were unable to perform a breakdown by region due to ongoing queries about the region variables supplied in the data.

Appendix 3

Skills for Life provision: defining terms

Greg Brooks, July 2006

Note added in October 2011: This paper is included as originally written, and its definitions were valid in 2006, hence the present tense – but much has changed in the interim and (further note added in 2017) even more now.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This paper provides definitions of a series of terms used to describe and distinguish provision under *Skills for Life*:

- (non-) accredited
- the LSC's 80%-20% rule
- (non-) counting
- stepping stones.

The final section offers answers to commonly asked questions.

1.2 One purpose of the paper is to clarify often misunderstood terminology – in particular 'counting provision' and the LSCs '80%-20%' guidance. 'Counting' provision is conceived in relation to the government's Public Sector Agreement (PSA) target for *Skills for Life*; the '80%-20%' guidance refers, respectively, to provision that is or is not formally accredited. These are quite separate categories, as we explain below.

2. KEY TERMS

'Accredited'

2.1 Accredited provision is provision accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and approved for inclusion in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Non-accredited provision is provision neither accredited by QCA nor included in the NQF.

2.2 Table 1 shows the levels of equivalence of national qualifications, highlighting in yellow those at Level 2 and below which can be accredited.

Table 1: Levels of equivalence of national qualifications, and those at Level 2 and below which can be accredited

	National Qualifications Framework	Key skills	Standards for adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL	General/ academic qualifications	
Level	5				
	4	4			
	3	3		A levels	
	2	2	2	GCSE A*-C	
	1	1	1	GCSE D-G	
	Entry			Entry 3	
				Entry 2	
				Entry 1	
Pre-entry		Pre-entry			

- The yellow (shaded) boxes show the qualification levels which can be accredited at Level 2 and below

The LSC's 80% - 20% guidance

- 2.3** The figures of 80% and 20% refer respectively to provision that is or is not formally accredited; the 80% does *not* refer to provision that counts towards the PSA target.
- 2.4** '80%' refers to the proportion of provision available from any one provider that is, or ought to be, formally accredited; that is, recognised as a national qualification. '20%' refers to the proportion of provision available from any one provider that need not be formally accredited.
- 2.5** Provision within the 80% bracket can include provision that does *not* count towards the PSA target; this is because provision may be formally accredited, but at a level of the National Curriculum that does not count – i.e. provision at pre-Entry level, Entry level 1, Entry level 2 and some Entry level 3.
- 2.6** Each provider is advised by the LSC to offer as many national qualifications as possible – preferably 80% of all provision; 'other provision' – provision for which no national qualifications are available – is capped at 20% of the total offer. The LSC regard national qualifications at Entry level 1 and Entry level 2 (and pre-Entry level) as desirable; these *do* fall under the category of 'accredited' provision, but achievement at these levels does not count towards the PSA target – see Table 2. Provision can be accredited without counting; but all non-accredited provision is non-counting.

Table 2: Accredited provision and counting provision are not coterminous

		Accredited?	
		Yes – should be at least 80%	No – should not be more than 20%
Counting?	Yes	All provision in the highlighted area of Table 3, subject to the caveats below the Table	(does not exist)
	No	All provision at Entry level 2 and below, plus Entry level 3 Speaking and Listening	All provision that is not aiming for any of the qualifications listed above Table 3

‘Counting’

- 2.7** A counting *learner* is one who:
- has at least one learning aim at Entry level 3 (other than Speaking and Listening), Level 1 or Level 2
 - and has not previously counted towards the *Skills for Life* targets.
- All other *Skills for Life* learners are non-counting.
- 2.8** *Provision* ‘counts’ if it has the potential to contribute towards the PSA target; that is, it offers learners the opportunity to achieve a National Qualification at Entry level 3 (other than Speaking and Listening), Level 1 or Level 2.
- 2.9** The relevant qualifications are those accredited at these levels by QCA and approved for inclusion in the National Qualifications Framework. They are summarised in Table 3 and listed in section 3.
- 2.10** Entry level 1 and Entry level 2 (and pre-Entry level) courses and qualifications do not count; they are stages towards the completion of Entry level, which occurs at Entry level 3. Level 1, Level 2, and Entry level 3 courses do count, with the exception of Entry level 3 Speaking and Listening – see Table 3.
- 2.11** ‘Non-counting’ courses can include courses that *do* lead to an approved national qualification, because not all national qualifications count towards the PSA target – see again Table 2.

Table 3: Levels of qualifications which count towards the *Skills for Life* targets

Level	National Qualifications Framework	Key skills	Standards for adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL	General/ academic qualifications
5				
4		4		
3		3		A levels
2		2	2	GCSE A*-C §
1		1	1	GCSE D-G §
Entry			Entry 3 §§	
			Entry 2	
			Entry 1	
Pre-entry			Pre-entry	

- The grey boxes show the qualification levels which count towards the *Skills for Life* targets, but:
- Each learner counts only once
- § GCSEs only count if achieved after school-leaving age
- §§ Entry level 3 qualifications in Speaking and Listening alone do not count

‘Stepping Stone’ provision

2.12 Provision acts as a ‘stepping stone’ if it enables a learner to move from *not* counting towards the PSA targets to counting towards them.

3. RECOGNISED AND APPROVED QUALIFICATIONS WITHIN SKILLS FOR LIFE

3.1 Recognised and approved qualifications within *Skills for Life* include:

- national literacy and numeracy qualifications accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)
- national ESOL qualifications accredited by QCA (currently includes qualifications being submitted for accreditation)
- key skills tests in communication or application of number at Level 1 or Level 2
- national tests for adult literacy and numeracy at Levels 1 and 2. These are identical to the key skills tests, and learners may then go on to build a portfolio of evidence to achieve a key skills qualification
- full key skills qualifications in communication or application of number at Level 1 or Level 2 (a test and a portfolio of evidence)
- GCSEs in Maths or English at grade D-G (Level 1) or C and above (Level 2) provided they are achieved after school-leaving age.

4. COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Does provision at Entry level 3 count towards the PSA target?

The Entry level 3 national literacy, numeracy and ESOL tests do count; Entry level 3 Speaking and Listening does not. The PSA target was based on the national Literacy test – the only one in existence at the time. Speaking and listening elements were added later as part of developments in ESOL, but the target remained unchanged.

Does the achievement of a non-award-bearing learning aim count?

Non-award-bearing achievements do not count, either towards the PSA target or towards the 80% (although achievement of a set learning aim can draw down funding). The LSC's 20% allowance is intended to cater for non-award-bearing achievements.

Why do Entry level 1 and Entry level 2 qualifications not count towards the PSA target?

Entry level 1 and Entry level 2 don't count because they are sub-divisions of a single level within the National Qualifications Framework. It is the exit point from a level that counts – that is, in respect of the 3 Entry levels, Entry level 3.

What is the status of a course that includes some learners who do count and some who don't?

Many courses will include learners who do and learners who don't count towards the PSA target. The course nevertheless constitutes counting provision so long as it is provision on which learners have the opportunity to achieve a National Qualification at a requisite level. The fact that a course is attended by learners who don't count is not a reason for regarding it as 'non-counting' provision. Provision could only be considered 'non-counting' if offered only at Entry level 1 and/or Entry level 2.

Does the 'learning aim' at Entry level 3 or higher have to be an 'aim' to get an accredited national qualification to count towards the target?

Yes. An 'aim' that is stated as just to learn to that level without aiming for an accredited qualification does not count.

Do people count once only, or once per year? For instance, if someone gets an Entry level 3 or Level 1 qualification one year, and a Level 2 qualification the following year, do they only count in the first year?

Each learner *can count only once in their lifetime*. An individual learner can only count once towards the PSA target, for achieving a nationally recognised qualification at either Entry level 3, Level 1 or Level 2. Any further achievements from the same learner do not count towards the target, no matter what those further achievements are or when they occurred.

Large numbers of learners in 'counting' provision will not count towards the target because they have already been counted once. This applies both to those taking more than one counting course in the same year and to those who take more than one otherwise counting course in different years. (It follows, for example, that a learner who secures his/her first numeracy qualification at Level 1 does not count if s/he has already secured a PSA recognised literacy qualification.)

The reason for the 'count once in a lifetime' stipulation is that the PSA target is strictly defined in terms of individuals; when the government announces it has helped 750,000 learners it wants it to be understood that it has helped 750,000 different individuals.