

2021 Census: Education data for Suffolk

A first look at the results for Suffolk County and Districts and Boroughs.
The sources of all the data presented is the 2021 and 2011 Census.

[Census 2021: Education](#)

The following datasets are as at Census Day, 21 March 2021, released on 10th January 2023:

Indicator	Minimum Geography
Highest level of qualification	OA
Schoolchildren and full-time students	OA

*OA = Output Area. This is the smallest geography for which Census data is released. There are 2,527 OAs in Suffolk in 2021, with an average usual resident population of just over 300 people.

Highest level of qualification

The highest level of qualification is derived from the question asking residents of England and Wales aged 16 years and over (48.6 million) to indicate all qualifications held, or their nearest equivalent. This may include foreign qualifications where they were matched to the closest UK equivalent. Therefore, this dataset provides estimates that classify usual residents aged 16 years and over by their highest level of qualifications. The types of qualification included in each level are:

- **No qualifications:** no formal qualifications
- **Level 1 and entry level qualifications:** one to four GCSE passes (grade A* to C or grade 4 and above) and any other GCSEs at other grades, or equivalent qualifications
- **Level 2 qualifications:** five or more GCSE passes (grade A* to C or grade 4 and above) or equivalent qualifications.
- **Apprenticeships**
- **Level 3 qualifications:** two or more A Levels or equivalent qualifications
- **Level 4 qualifications and above:** Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma, Bachelor's degree, or postgraduate qualifications
- **Other qualifications,** of unknown level.

For equivalent qualifications, see [Measuring the data](#)

Please note, apprenticeships data collected by the census did not include the level or type of an apprenticeship. Advanced further education was deemed the best fit overall for traditional trade or craft and modern apprenticeships.

Key points

- Across Suffolk, on the day of the 2021 Census, over 1 in 4 of usual residents aged 16 and over indicated that their highest level of qualification was at Level 4 or above (28.1%).
- All of Suffolk's Districts and Boroughs have a lower percentage of residents whose highest level of qualification was at level 4 or above compared to the England and Wales estimate.

- All of Suffolk's Districts and Boroughs have a higher percentage of residents whose highest level of qualification were either apprenticeship, level 1 or level 2 compared to the England and Wales estimate.
- Across Suffolk, on the day of the 2021 Census, just under 17 in every 100 usual residents aged 5 years and over was a student.
- All of Suffolk's Districts and Boroughs have a lower percentage of the population that were schoolchildren and full-time students (aged 5 years and over), compared to the England and Wales.

Detailed findings:

Highest level of qualification

Highest level of qualifications achieved in Suffolk by count and as a percentage of usual residents aged 16 and over, Census 2011 and Census 2021:

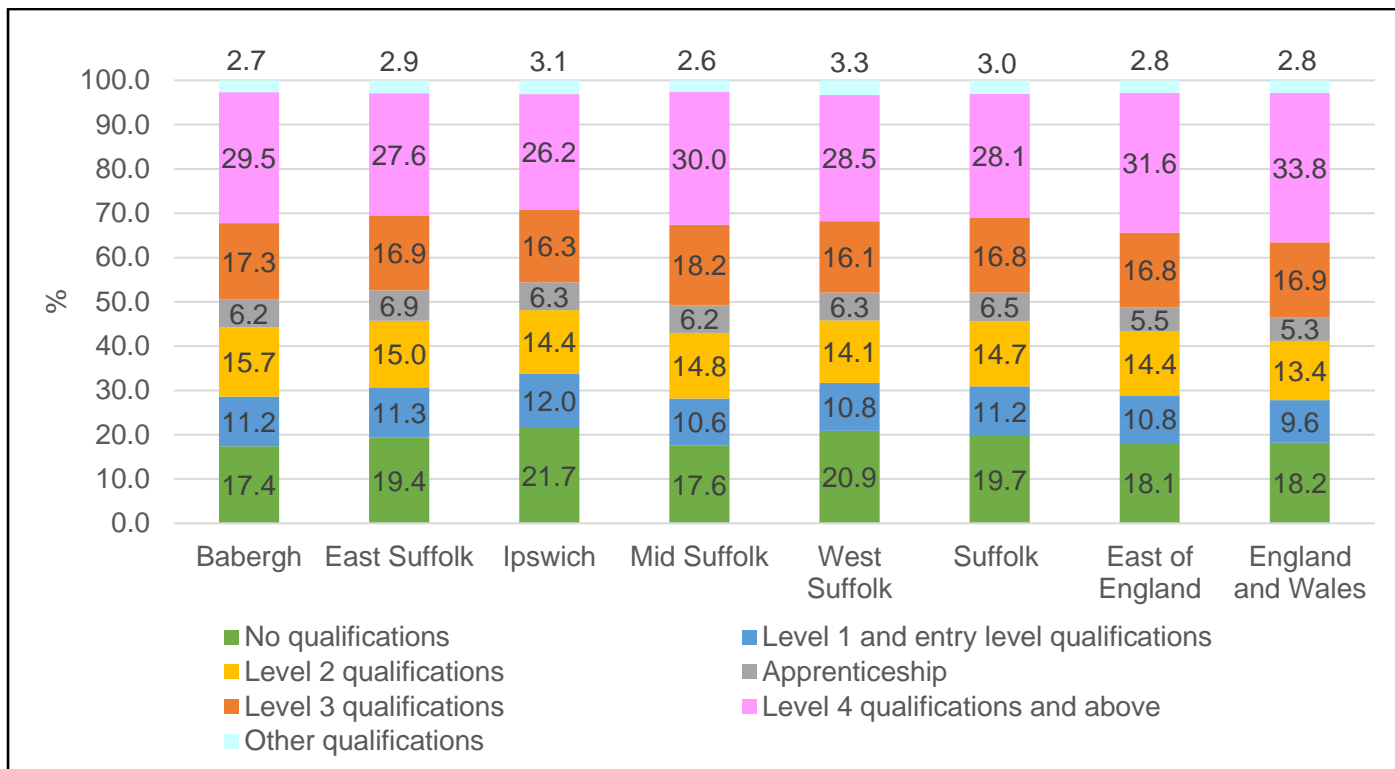
Highest level of qualification	Suffolk 2011		Suffolk 2021		Change	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
No qualifications	144,532	24.3	124,047	19.7	-20,485	-14.2
Level 1 qualifications	85,593	14.4	70,524	11.2	-15,069	-17.6
Level 2 qualifications	98,385	16.5	92,876	14.7	-5,509	-5.6
Apprenticeship	25,106	4.2	40,753	6.5	15,647	62.3
Level 3 qualifications	69,007	11.6	106,164	16.8	37,157	53.8
Level 4 qualifications	139,888	23.5	177,232	28.1	37,344	26.7
Other	32,750	5.5	18,763	3.0	-13,987	-42.7

- Across Suffolk, on the day of the 2021 Census, over 1 in 4 of usual residents aged 16 and over indicated that their highest level of qualification was at level 4 or above (28.1%, 117,232); 5.7 percentage points lower than the England and Wales estimate of 33.8% (16.4 million), but an increase of 26.7% (37,344) since the 2011 Census.
- The second most common category was no qualifications (19.7%, 124,047), 1.5 percentage points higher than the England and Wales estimate of 18.2% (8.8 million). Although, the number of Suffolk residents within this category has decreased by 14.2% (-20,485) since the 2011 Census.
- Level 1 qualifications were the highest level of qualification attained for 11.2% (70,524) of people, 1.6 percentage points higher than the England and Wales estimate of 9.6% (4.7 million). Although, the number of Suffolk residents within this category has decreased by 17.6% (-15,069) since the 2011 Census.
- Additionally, level 2 was the highest level of qualification achieved for 14.7% (92,876) of Suffolk residents; 1.3 percentage points higher than the England and Wales estimate of 13.4% (6.5 million) and indicating a 5.6% (-5,509) decrease since the 2011 Census.
- 16.8% (106,164) of Suffolk residents attained level 3 qualifications as their highest level of qualification, 0.1 percentage points lower than the England and Wales estimate of 16.9% (8.2 million) and a 53.8% (37,157) increase since the 2011 Census.
- Apprenticeships were the highest qualification for 6.5% (40,753) of people, 1.2 percentage points higher than the England and Wales estimate of 5.3% (2.6 million); also, showing the largest increase of 62.3% (15,647) since the 2011 Census.

Although highest level of qualification is broadly comparable between 2011 and 2021, there are caveats. The categories for this variable remain the same as the ones in the 2011 Census; however, in Census 2021 the question was revised and split up to group together different qualifications. Therefore, how the respondent was routed in the qualification questions changed

substantially from 2011. The changes to the collection methodology mean that a reasonable proportion of respondents will have identified a different qualification level than they did in 2011 even though they still hold the same qualifications. Therefore, any change in qualification levels when compared with 2011 will be partly a result of the methodology changes and be partly indicative of real change. As such, caution is advised in interpreting these with data - avoid drawing conclusions from the differences or using them to inform planning or evaluate policies.

Figure 1. Highest level of qualification across all of Suffolk’s Districts and Boroughs, East of England, and England and Wales as a percentage of their estimated population evidenced in the 2021 Census.



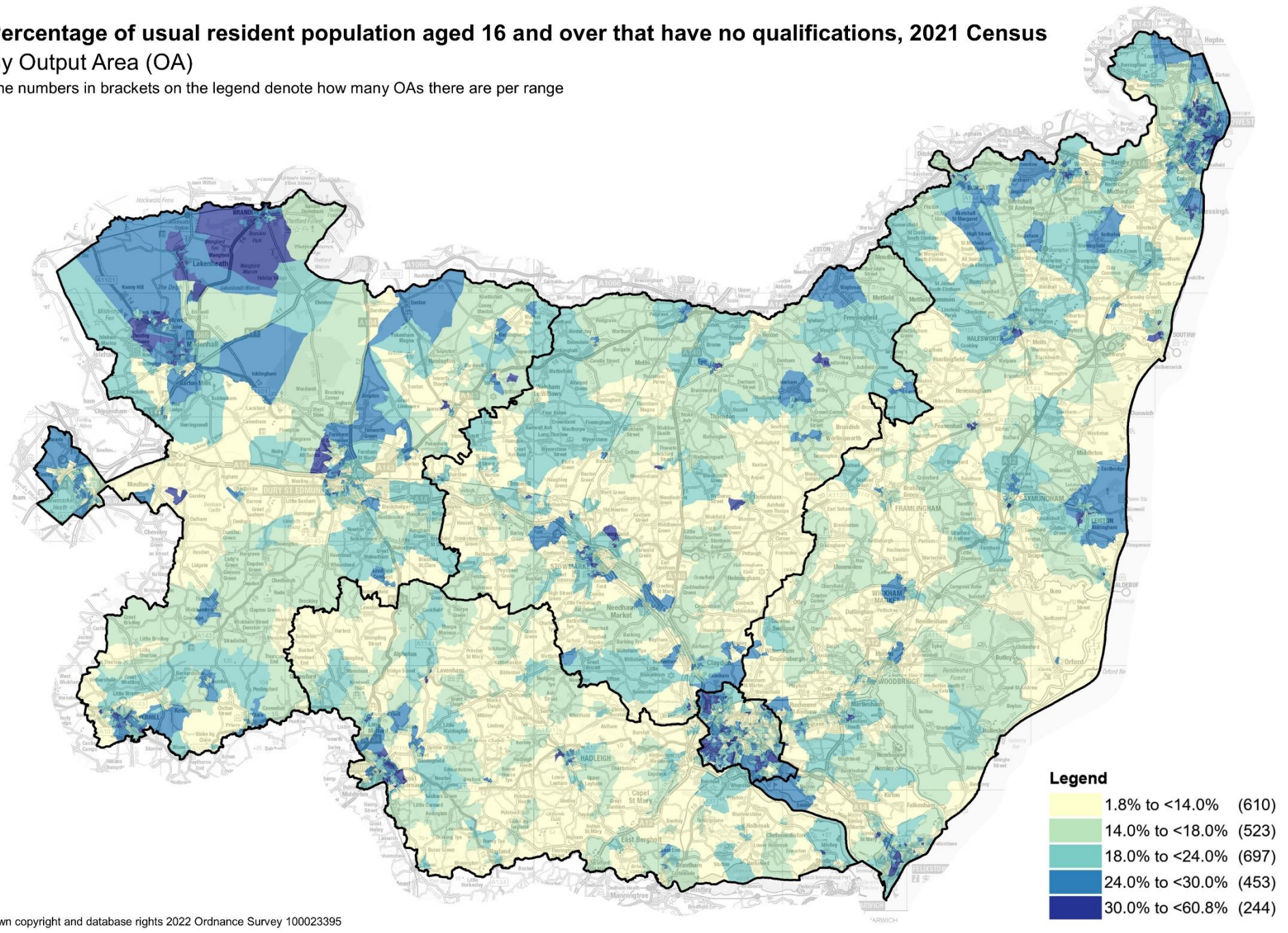
- All of Suffolk’s Districts and Boroughs have a lower percentage of residents whose highest level of qualification was at level 4 or above compared to the England and Wales estimate.
- All of Suffolk’s Districts and Boroughs have a higher percentage of residents whose highest level of qualification were either apprenticeship, level 1 or level 2 compared to the England and Wales estimate.
- East Suffolk has the largest proportion of residents (6.9%, 14,261) whose highest level of qualification achieved was apprenticeship.
- Babergh has the largest proportion of residents (15.7%, 12,142) whose highest level of qualification achieved was level 2.
- Ipswich has the smallest proportion of residents (26.2%, 29,295) whose highest level of qualification achieved was level 4 or above, and the largest proportion of residents whose highest level of qualification achieved was level 1 (12%, 13,437) and for residents with no qualifications (21.7%, 24,251).
- Mid Suffolk has the largest proportion of residents (18.2%, 15,667) whose highest level of qualifications achieved was level 3 or above.

The two maps below show the percentage of Suffolk residents who indicated that their highest level of qualification was at level 4 or above and residents who indicated that they have no qualifications by output area (OA) respectively.

Percentage of usual resident population aged 16 and over that have no qualifications, 2021 Census

By Output Area (OA)

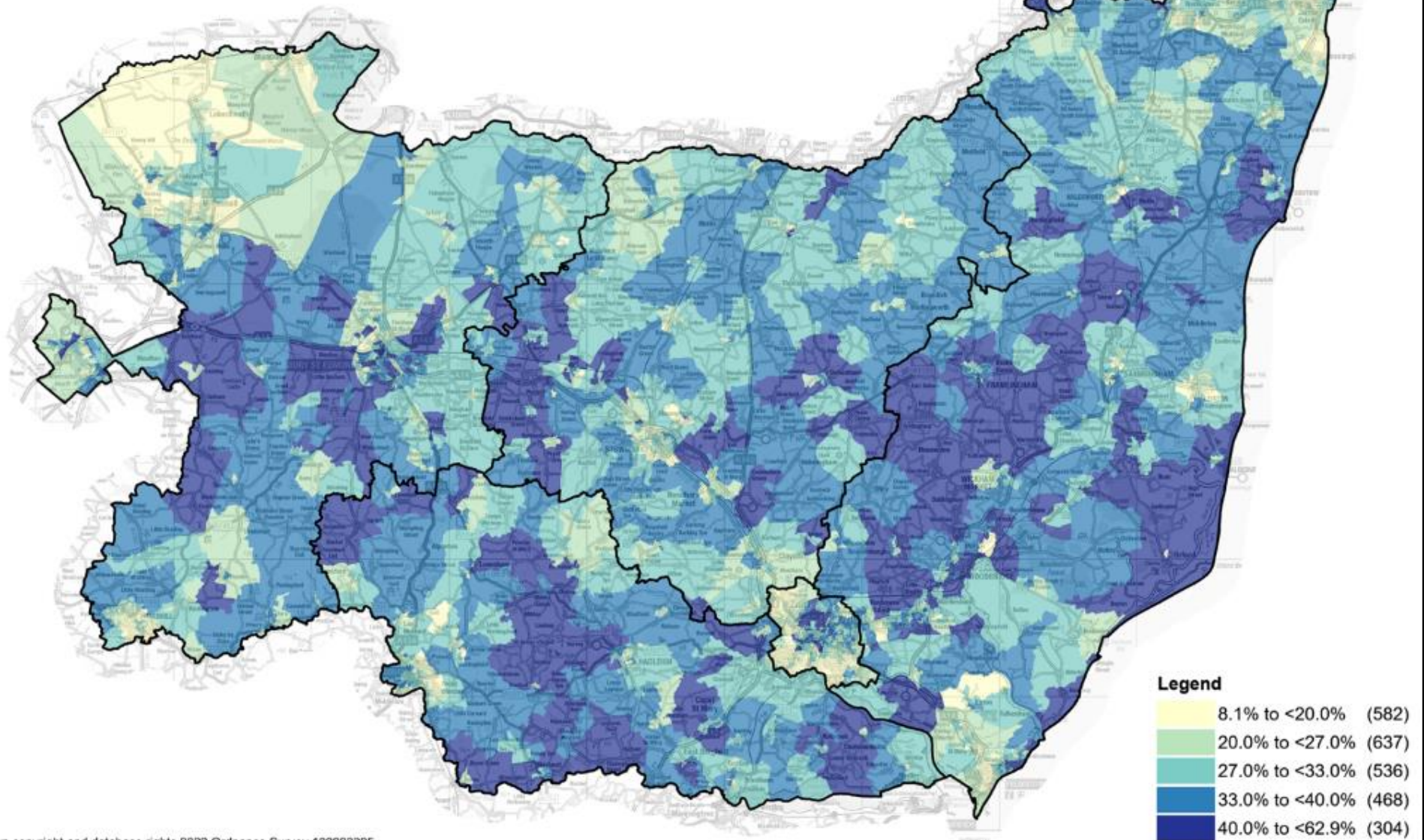
The numbers in brackets on the legend denote how many OAs there are per range



Percentage of usual resident population aged 16 and over qualified to Level 4 or above, 2021 Census By Output Area (OA)

The numbers in brackets on the legend denote how many OAs there are per range

Level 4 qualifications and above: degree (BA, BSc), higher degree (MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ level 4 to 5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher level, professional qualifications (for example, teaching, nursing, accountancy)



Schoolchildren and full-time students

Schoolchildren and full-time students census data indicates whether a person was in full-time education. This includes schoolchildren and adults in full-time education. Schoolchildren and students in full-time education studying away from home are treated as usually resident at their term-time address. This dataset provides estimates that classify all schoolchildren and full-time students aged 5 years and over.

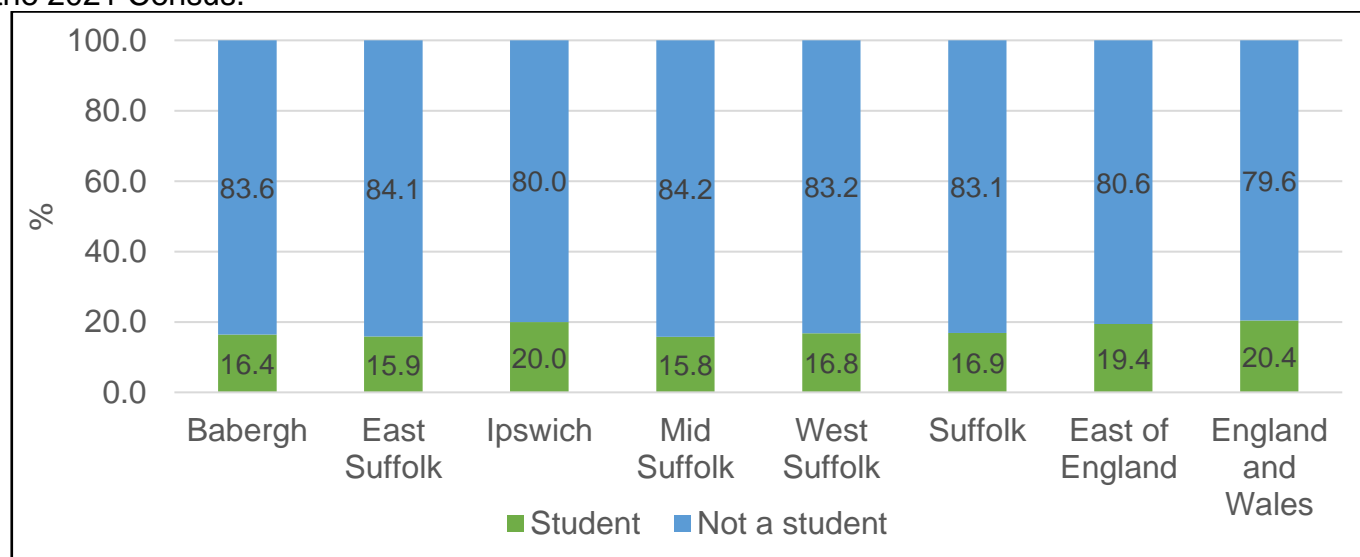
Schoolchildren and full-time students in Suffolk by count and as a percentage of usual residents aged 5 and over, Census 2011 and Census 2021:

Schoolchildren and full-time students	Suffolk 2011		Suffolk 2021		Change	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Student	126,116	18.4	122,376	16.9	-3,740	-3.0

- Across Suffolk, on the day of the 2021 Census, just under 17 in every 100 usual residents aged 5 years and over was a student (16.9%, 122,376); 3.5 percentage points lower than the England and Wales estimate of 20.4% (11,508,092).
- The number of students across Suffolk has decreased by 3% (-3,740) since the 2011 Census.

The categories for this variable are different to the ones in the 2011 Census. The category “Schoolchild or full-time student” has been removed and the age in which people were asked to answer the question has been raised from 4 years and over, in 2011, to 5 years and over, in 2021. Therefore, data from the 2021 Census is broadly comparable with data from the 2011 Census.

Figure 2. Schoolchildren and full-time students across all of Suffolk’s Districts and Boroughs, East of England, and England and Wales as a percentage of their estimated population evidenced in the 2021 Census.



- All of Suffolk’s Districts and Boroughs have a lower percentage of schoolchildren and full-time students aged 5 years and over compared to the England and Wales estimate.
- Ipswich has the largest proportion of schoolchildren and full-time students aged 5 years and over (20.0%, 26,287).
- Mid Suffolk has the largest proportion of residents aged 5 years and over classified as ‘not a student’ (84.2%, 82,653).

Appendix 1

Census 2021: Full Lower-Tier Local Authority (District and Borough) level data tables

Highest level of qualification

Area	Total: All usual residents	No qualifications		Level 1 qualifications		Level 2 qualifications		Apprenticeship		Level 3 qualifications		Level 4 qualifications		Other	
	number	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Babergh	77,377	13,491	17.4	8,642	11.2	12,142	15.7	4,783	6.2	13,410	17.3	22,817	29.5	2,092	2.7
East Suffolk	206,719	40,105	19.4	23,295	11.3	31,039	15.0	14,261	6.9	34,993	16.9	56,968	27.6	6,058	2.9
Ipswich	111,832	24,251	21.7	13,437	12.0	16,100	14.4	7,015	6.3	18,241	16.3	29,295	26.2	3,493	3.1
Mid Suffolk	86,305	15,185	17.6	9,148	10.6	12,784	14.8	5,345	6.2	15,667	18.2	25,917	30.0	2,259	2.6
West Suffolk	148,128	31,016	20.9	16,000	10.8	20,814	14.1	9,349	6.3	23,853	16.1	42,235	28.5	4,861	3.3
Suffolk	630,359	124,047	19.7	70,524	11.2	92,876	14.7	40,753	6.5	106,164	16.8	177,232	28.1	18,763	3.0
East of England	5,148,281	932,209	18.1	554,976	10.8	742,611	14.4	284,157	5.5	863,162	16.8	1,625,376	31.6	145,790	2.8
England and Wales	48,566,373	8,827,472	18.2	4,679,223	9.6	6,493,490	13.4	2,590,252	5.3	8,225,629	16.9	16,413,231	33.8	1,337,076	2.8

Appendix 2

Census 2011: Full Lower-Tier Local Authority (District and Borough) level data tables

Highest level of qualification

Area	Total: All usual residents	No qualifications		Level 1 qualifications		Level 2 qualifications		Apprenticeship		Level 3 qualifications		Level 4 qualifications		Other	
	number	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
Babergh	71,821	16,367	22.8	10,385	14.5	12,560	17.5	2,818	3.9	8,337	11.6	18,539	25.8	2,815	3.9
East Suffolk	197,770	50,039	25.3	27,334	13.8	32,568	16.5	9,417	4.8	22,710	11.5	46,730	23.6	8,972	4.5
Ipswich	107,396	27,723	25.8	17,054	15.9	17,469	16.3	4,098	3.8	12,269	11.4	22,152	20.6	6,631	6.2
Mid Suffolk	78,907	17,621	22.3	10,963	13.9	13,279	16.8	3,247	4.1	9,820	12.4	20,864	26.4	3,113	3.9
West Suffolk	139,367	32,782	23.5	19,857	14.2	22,509	16.2	5,526	4.0	15,871	11.4	31,603	22.7	11,219	8.0
Suffolk	595,261	144,532	24.3	85,593	14.4	98,385	16.5	25,106	4.2	69,007	11.6	139,888	23.5	32,750	5.5
East of England	4,738,333	1,067,449	22.5	693,576	14.6	769,520	16.2	177,366	3.7	557,318	11.8	1,218,862	25.7	254,242	5.4
England and Wales	45,496,780	10,307,327	22.7	6,047,384	13.3	6,938,433	15.3	1,631,777	3.6	5,617,802	12.3	12,383,477	27.2	2,570,580	5.7

Appendix 3

Census 2021: Full Lower-Tier Local Authority (District and Borough) level data tables

Schoolchildren and full-time students

Area	Total: All usual residents aged 5 years and over	Student		Not a student	
	number	number	%	number	%
Babergh	88,369	14,487	16.4	73,882	83.6
East Suffolk	235,424	37,529	15.9	197,895	84.1
Ipswich	131,316	26,287	20.0	105,029	80.0
Mid Suffolk	98,199	15,546	15.8	82,653	84.2
West Suffolk	170,119	28,527	16.8	141,592	83.2
Suffolk	723,427	122,376	16.9	601,051	83.1
England and Wales	56,365,506	11,508,092	20.4	44,857,414	79.6
East of England	5,985,931	1,159,811	19.4	4,826,120	80.6

Appendix 4

Census 2011: Full Lower-Tier Local Authority (District and Borough) level data tables

Schoolchildren and full-time students

Area	Total: All usual residents aged 5 years and over	Student	
	number	number	%
Babergh	83,289	15,581	18.7
East Suffolk	227,079	40,432	17.8
Ipswich	124,134	24,454	19.7
Mid Suffolk	91,465	17,001	18.6
West Suffolk	159,970	28,648	17.9
Suffolk	685,937	126,116	18.4
England and Wales	52,579,162	10,684,997	20.3
East of England	5,485,696	1,114,255	20.3

Further reading

- All of the 2021 data referenced here is available on the [Office for National Statistics website](https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/educationcensus2021inenglandandwales) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/educationcensus2021inenglandandwales>
- Data from the 2021 Census and previous editions of the Census [can also be found on NOMIS](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/) <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>
- 2021 Census data for Suffolk will also be made available on the [Suffolk Observatory](https://www.suffolkobservatory.info/) <https://www.suffolkobservatory.info/>
- For further information and analysis of some of the topics addressed in this paper, [see the Suffolk Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\) on the Healthy Suffolk website](https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/jsna/index-of-reports) <https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/jsna/index-of-reports>