**School Leavers**

The number of school leavers in the Borough fell by just 0.2% between 2022/23 and 2023/24 to 2,954.

|   | Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon |
| --- | --- |
| 2013/14 | 2,546 |
| 2014/15 | 2,393 |
| 2015/16 | 2,609 |
| 2016/17 | 2,554 |
| 2017/18 | 2,534 |
| 2018/19 | 2,520 |
| 2019/20 | 2,428 |
| 2020/21 | 2,609 |
| 2021/22 | 2,761 |
| 2022/23 | 2,960 |
| 2023/24 | 2,954 |

*Table 1: Number of school leavers in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2013/14 to 2023/24. Source: Northern Ireland School Leavers Survey, Department of Education.*

*Figure 1: Number of school leavers in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2013/14 to 2023/24. Source: Northern Ireland School Leavers Survey, Department of Education.*

The school leavers survey provides information on the achievements of school leavers at both A-level and GCSE. The data refers to the home residence of pupils. In 2023/24 just under 47% of school leavers in the borough achieved 2+ A-levels (or equivalent). This represents a further decrease on the previous school year and is the fourth consecutive year of decline. In Northern Ireland overall, just less than 54% of leavers achieved 2+ A-levels (or equivalent) in the academic year 2023/24.

With regards GCSE attainment, in 2023/24, just over 86% of school leavers in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough achieved at least 5 GCSE’s grades A\* - C (or equivalent). This remains lower than the Northern Ireland figure of 87.4% with both the Borough and Northern Ireland overall again having experienced a fall in the percentage of leavers achieving at least 5 GCSE’s grades A\* - C (or equivalent).

|   | Achieved 2+ A-levels (or equivalent) | Achieved at least 5 GCSE’s grades A\* - C (or equivalent) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ABC** | **NI** | **ABC** | **NI** |
| 2013/14 | 48.7% | 55.7% | 76.3% | 78.6% |
| 2014/15 | 52.2% | 57.7% | 81.1% | 81.1% |
| 2015/16 | 49.1% | 57.3% | 78.2% | 81.7% |
| 2016/17 | 52.3% | 58.5% | 81.4% | 83.8% |
| 2017/18 | 49.0% | 56.7% | 79.9% | 85.2% |
| 2018/19 | 46.9% | 55.6% | 82.5% | 86.4% |
| 2019/20 | 52.8% | 59.8% | 88.9% | 91.3% |
| 2020/21 | 50.7% | 60.5% | 90.5% | 92.1% |
| 2021/22 | 48.9% | 57.8% | 90.3% | 91.9% |
| 2022/23 | 47.3% | 56.2% | 87.0% | 89.8% |
| 2023/24 | 46.7% | 53.8% | 86.3% | 87.4% |

*Table 2: School leaver achievements in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2013/14 to 2023/24. Source: Northern Ireland School Leavers Survey, Department of Education.*

*Figure 2: School leavers achieving 2+ A-levels (or equivalent) in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2013/14 to 2023/24. Source: Northern Ireland School Leavers Survey, Department of Education.*

*Figure 3: School leavers achieving at least 5 GCSE’s grades A\* - C (or equivalent) in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2013/14 to 2023/24. Source: Northern Ireland School Leavers Survey, Department of Education.*

GCSE achievement figures are also available for those that include GCSE English and GCSE Maths. These results can further be broken down by those school leavers who were entitled to free school meals (FSME) and those who were not entitled to free school meals (Non-FSME).

|  | Achieved at least 5 GCSE’s grades A\* - C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and GCSE Maths |
| --- | --- |
| **Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon** | **Northern Ireland** |
| **Non-FSME** | **FSME** | **Overall** | **Non-FSME** | **FSME** | **Overall** |
| 2013/14 | 67.8% | 39.3% | 63.4% | 69.7% | 34.9% | 63.5% |
| 2014/15 | 74.9% | 43.4% | 68.1% | 73.7% | 41.3% | 66.0% |
| 2015/16 | 74.1% | 43.6% | 66.8% | 75.8% | 44.8% | 67.7% |
| 2016/17 | 76.8% | 47.2% | 70.1% | 77.4% | 47.5% | 69.6% |
| 2017/18 | 75.2% | 44.0% | 67.2% | 78.1% | 48.6% | 70.6% |
| 2018/19 | 74.6% | 48.7% | 68.3% | 78.5% | 49.5% | 70.8% |
| 2019/20 | 80.7% | 51.7% | 74.6% | 83.4% | 55.7% | 76.2% |
| 2020/21 | 79.8% | 54.7% | 74.4% | 83.8% | 59.8% | 77.7% |
| 2021/22 | 81.1% | 58.4% | 76.0% | 84.2% | 59.1% | 78.0% |
| 2022/23 | 78.0% | 49.5% | 72.3% | 82.3% | 56.5% | 76.1% |
| 2023/24 | 73.4% | 43.2% | 68.9% | 77.0% | 51.8% | 71.6% |

*Table 3: School leavers achieving at least 5 GCSE’s grades A\* - C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and GCSE Maths by free school meal entitlement in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2013/14 to 2023/24. Source: Northern Ireland School Leavers Survey, Department of Education.*

Non-FSME have higher percentages of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSE’s grades A\* - C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and GCSE Maths over the last ten years in both the Borough and Northern Ireland overall. In 2023/24 in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, just under three-quarters (73.4%) of non-FSME school leavers achieved at least 5 GCSE’s grades A\* - C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and GCSE Maths compared to just 43.2% of FSME school leavers, a gap of more than 30 percentage points. GCSE attainment for both Non-FSME and FSME students fell between 2022/23 and 2023/24 in the Borough by 4.6 and 6.3 percentage points respectively. While the rates also fell in Northern Ireland overall, achievement levels for both non-FSME and FSME students in the Borough remains well below Northern Ireland overall.

*Figure 4: School leavers achieving at least 5 GCSE’s grades A\* - C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and GCSE Maths by free school meal entitlement in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2013/14 to 2023/24. Source: Northern Ireland School Leavers Survey, Department of Education.*

In 2023/24, 36.1% of school leavers in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough entered Higher Education Institutions which is just 0.6 percentage points less than the previous year. The percentage continuing on to Institutes of Further Education has also fallen from 39.4% in 2022/23 to 38.4% in 2023/24. The proportions entering employment and training have increased for the fourth consecutive year. Entering employment or training straight after school appear to be becoming increasingly popular options with more than 1 in 5 students in the Borough and nearly 1 in 4 in Northern Ireland overall choosing one of these options. With regards the proportions entering unemployment/unknown, having been at its highest in 2022/23, this has fallen to 3.7% in the Borough in 2023/24 which puts it below the rate for Northern Ireland overall (4.1%).

|   | Higher Education | Further Education | Employment | Training | Unemployed / Unknown |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2013/14 | 40.0% | 43.9% | 3.9% | 8.9% | 3.3% |
| 2014/15 | 37.6% | 45.6% | 5.9% | 7.5% | 3.3% |
| 2015/16 | 36.9% | 43.1% | 5.7% | 9.4% | 4.8% |
| 2016/17 | 39.2% | 41.0% | 6.5% | 9.2% | 4.1% |
| 2017/18 | 39.8% | 40.9% | 5.6% | 10.3% | 3.4% |
| 2018/19 | 35.9% | 41.5% | 6.3% | 12.4% | 3.9% |
| 2019/20 | 39.7% | 42.1% | 4.9% | 9.8% | 3.5% |
| 2020/21 | 41.7% | 37.3% | 7.2% | 10.8% | 3.0% |
| 2021/22 | 39.4% | 37.4% | 7.4% | 11.5% | 4.3% |
| 2022/23 | 35.5% | 39.4% | 7.7% | 12.2% | 5.1% |
| 2023/24 | 36.1% | 38.4% | 7.8% | 14.1% | 3.7% |

*Table 4: Destination of school leavers in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2013/14 to 2023/24. Source: Northern Ireland School Leavers Survey, Department of Education.*

*Figure 5: Destination of school leavers in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2013/14 to 2023/24. Source: Northern Ireland School Leavers Survey, Department of Education.*

Over the years, in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, the proportions entering Higher Education Institutes haven’t been vastly different to those entering Institutes of Further Education. However, in Northern Ireland overall, the proportion of school leavers entering Higher Education Institutes has been much higher than those entering Further Education Institutes particularly in the years between 2019/20 and 2021/22.

|  | Higher Education | Further Education | Employment | Training | Unemployed / Unknown |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2013/14 | 41.8% | 35.4% | 6.9% | 10.4% | 5.5% |
| 2014/15 | 42.3% | 35.0% | 8.4% | 9.8% | 4.5% |
| 2015/16 | 42.9% | 34.4% | 8.9% | 9.7% | 4.2% |
| 2016/17 | 43.3% | 34.0% | 8.8% | 9.8% | 4.0% |
| 2017/18 | 43.1% | 33.5% | 9.7% | 9.9% | 3.8% |
| 2018/19 | 42.0% | 32.9% | 6.3% | 12.4% | 3.9% |
| 2019/20 | 47.9% | 29.2% | 8.7% | 9.5% | 4.7% |
| 2020/21 | 47.9% | 27.0% | 10.6% | 10.6% | 4.0% |
| 2021/22 | 43.7% | 27.4% | 12.9% | 11.8% | 4.2% |
| 2022/23 | 41.5% | 30.3% | 11.3% | 12.3% | 4.7% |
| 2023/24 | 40.3% | 30.8% | 11.3% | 13.6% | 4.1% |

*Table 5: Destination of school leavers in Northern Ireland 2013/14 to 2023/24. Source: Northern Ireland School Leavers Survey, Department of Education.*

Further information on school leavers can be found via the following link:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/school-leavers>