

# An Oxfordshire Education: What are the Chances?

Often heralded as the gold standard in higher education, Oxford is a well-known centre of excellence for university attainment. However, it is easy to be blinded by its academic reputation, which masks the huge variation in life chances for youngsters in the county.

The wealth and deprivation in Oxfordshire are in stark contrast to each other. There are currently 24,000 students at Oxford University, whilst there are 88,827 adults in the same county with no qualifications at all. In some areas, this amounts to over 35% of the population.

If your family live in Summertown, they will have an average of £16,906 more earnings (after housing costs) than a family in Blackbird Leys. There are over 13,000 children living in income deprived families in Oxfordshire.

Unfortunately, these barriers to success are likely to start converging before birth and accumulate at each stage of a child's developmental pathway.

## Family matters!

- Over 11% of 0–15-year-olds in Oxfordshire live in income deprived families (using the IDACI score – Income Deprivation Affecting Children – from 2015 data). This compares well against an England average of over 19%; however, the inequalities are evident as ever. For example, in Blackbird Leys 36.5% of children live in deprived families (with one area more than twice the England average at 41%), in comparison to areas in central Oxford (e.g. St Margaret's, only a couple of miles away) with an IDACI score of 0%.

**In Oxford City alone, children living in Blackbird Leys are 33% more likely than those in North Oxford to live in an income deprived family.**

- Nearly 3,000 vulnerable families are being supported by the council, with 616 children on child protection plans.
- There are 2,300 young carers in the county, 46% of whom will come from an economically deprived background. On average, young carers are 22% less likely to achieve five or

more GCSEs than other children.

## Primary education: bumps in the road

Just in terms of their family background, some children will face multiple challenges to attainment, including language barriers, transport to school, single parenting, domestic violence, substance misuse etc. The complexity of the challenges they are likely to face increases dramatically in specific areas of Oxfordshire.

- By age 7 (KS1), the average point score for reading, writing, maths and science, for all 7 year-olds as part of the national curriculum in England is 15.7.

**By age 7 (KS1) there is already a significant gap in attainment scores between those living in the most and least affluent areas of Oxfordshire.**



- An average 7-year-old living in Littlemore or Blackbird Leys is likely to get a score of 14. This is in comparison to the average 7-year-old in Headington or Summertown, who will achieve 17.5–18. This is a potential gap of 25% for 7-year-olds in Oxfordshire, solely depending on where they live.

## Secondary education: a steeper hill to climb

- By age 11 (KS2) the percentage of children that will have achieved the expected standard of reading and writing in Oxfordshire is 78.7%, the same as England average (78%). But in specific areas (Brackley, Cholsey, Oxford, Piddington, Witney and Berinsfield) the level drops below 50%.

**A child living in an area such as Witney, Brackley, is around 30% less likely to achieve the expected standard of reading and writing than an average Oxfordshire 11 year-old.**

- By age 16 (KS4) students will usually sit GCSEs. In England, 57% achieve five or more GCSEs (A–C), including English and maths. In Oxfordshire, the average is 60%, but inequalities are huge – e.g. Banbury 49%, Chipping Norton 45%, and LSOAs within these areas e.g. Witney, Dry Sandford are achieving less than 40%. Nineteen percent of students from Berinsfield achieve these five GCSEs, and in one LSOA this drops to 0%.
- If you are a 16-year-old in Witney, Dry Sandford for example, you are 20% less likely to achieve five or more GCSEs than your average Oxfordshire teenager.

## Higher education: a mountain to scale

Oxfordshire is, on the face of things, better educated in terms of higher education than the average measures across England (36% of people in Oxfordshire get degrees in contrast with an England average of 27%). However, the inequalities are stark – some LSOAs have as low as 9.2% in parts of Cherwell and 10% in West Oxfordshire and Oxford City.

**In parts of Cherwell and West Oxfordshire, residents are more than 17% less likely to get a degree than an average Oxfordshire resident.**

## Into employment: an inevitable challenge

**Four percent of economically active adults (16–64) in Oxfordshire are unemployed – 14,000 people.**

This makes Oxfordshire very similar to the picture in the rest of the South East (4.2%) and marginally better than the situation in England as a whole (5.2%). \*

- Officially, there is 0% unemployment in Oxfordshire. This is a misleading figure, as it is based on numbers of jobs available and the numbers of people not in employment and these figures cancel each other out. This is not representative of real unemployment as there is likely to be a skills mismatch.
- In parts of Cherwell and West Oxfordshire, residents are more than 17% less likely to have any qualifications than an average Oxfordshire resident.
- Banbury Ruscote, Northfield Brook and Blackbird Leys have amongst the highest rates of welfare benefits claimants in the county, between 14 and 16% of residents, in comparison with 1–2% in North Oxford and Carfax (the England average is 10.7%).
- The worst areas of deprivation are Banbury, Didcot, some areas of East Oxford and South Oxford. In Blackbird Leys 25% of people live in income deprivation.
- In Blackbird Leys, 1 in 4 people are income deprived (either out of work or on very low wages).

[\\*https://public.tableau.com/views/ILOUnemployment/Unemployment?:embed=y&:display\\_count=no&:showVizHome=no](https://public.tableau.com/views/ILOUnemployment/Unemployment?:embed=y&:display_count=no&:showVizHome=no)

