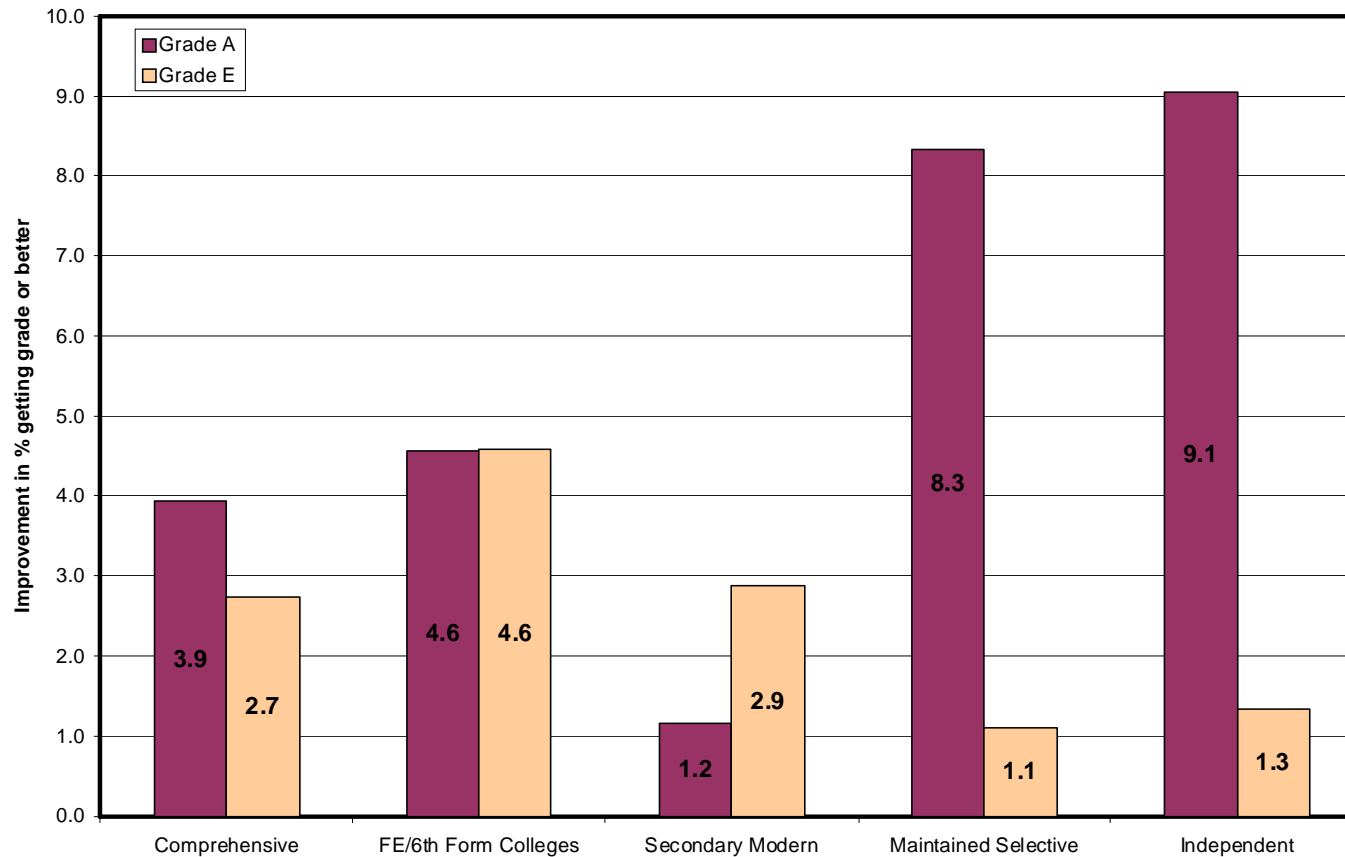




Slides showing data  
for centre types and regions

# Improvements in Grade A and Grade E pass rates, 2002 to 2008

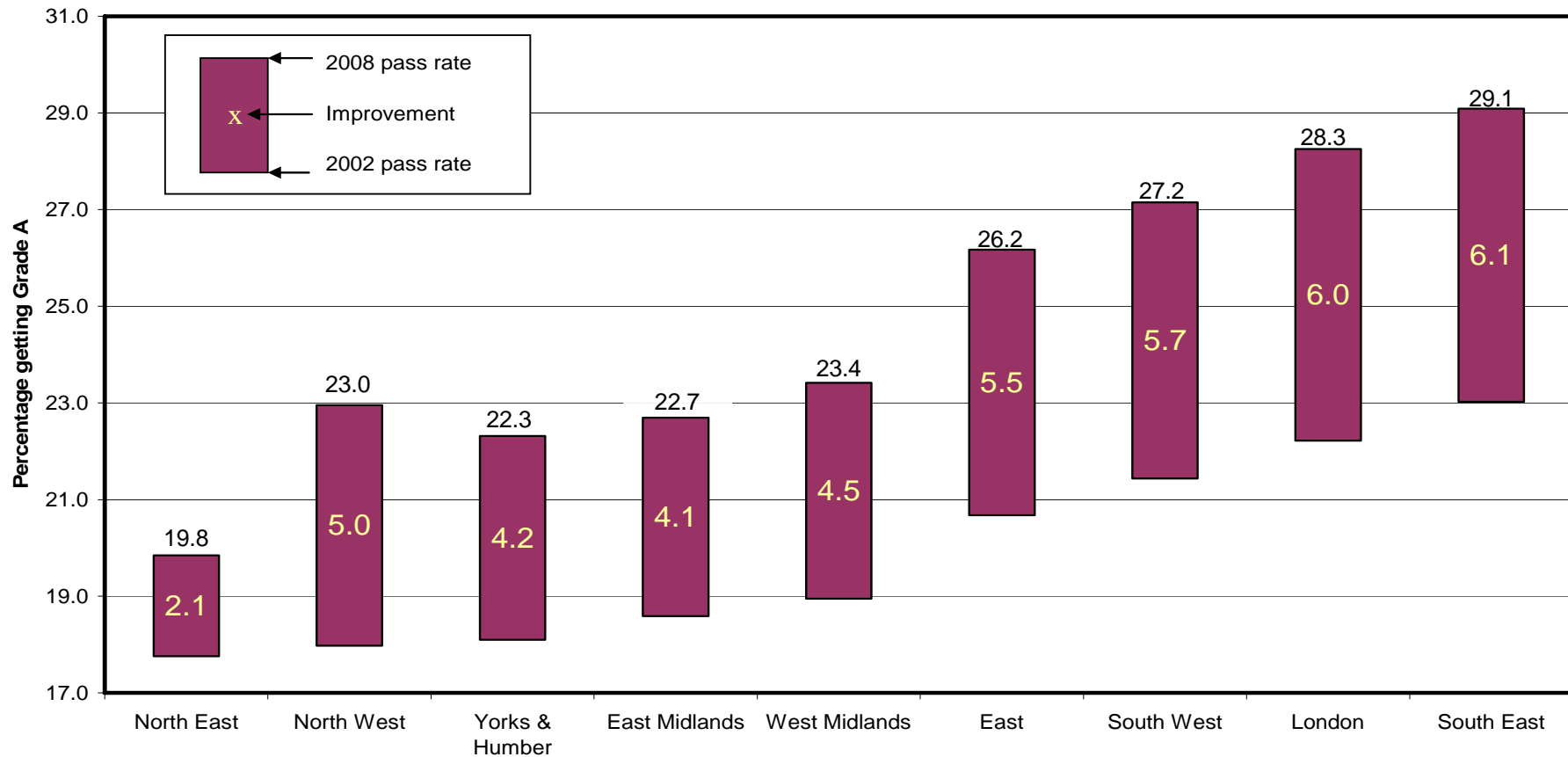


An update on last year's figures of how the recent improvements in A-level results differ by type of school and college is given on the previous slide.

The same overall pattern is seen as was reported last year:

- Selective and Independent schools show considerably bigger improvements at Grade A than comprehensives and colleges but very small increases at Grade E.
- These differences are interesting in their own right, but the main point is that young people in all schools and colleges take the same exams, marked and graded in the same way.
- So if the improved results were the result of the exams getting easier, it wouldn't matter which type of school you looked at, the improvements would be the same.
- To explain differences like these there must be differences in teaching and learning between schools and colleges of different types – and these differences explain the different levels of improvement in A-level results.

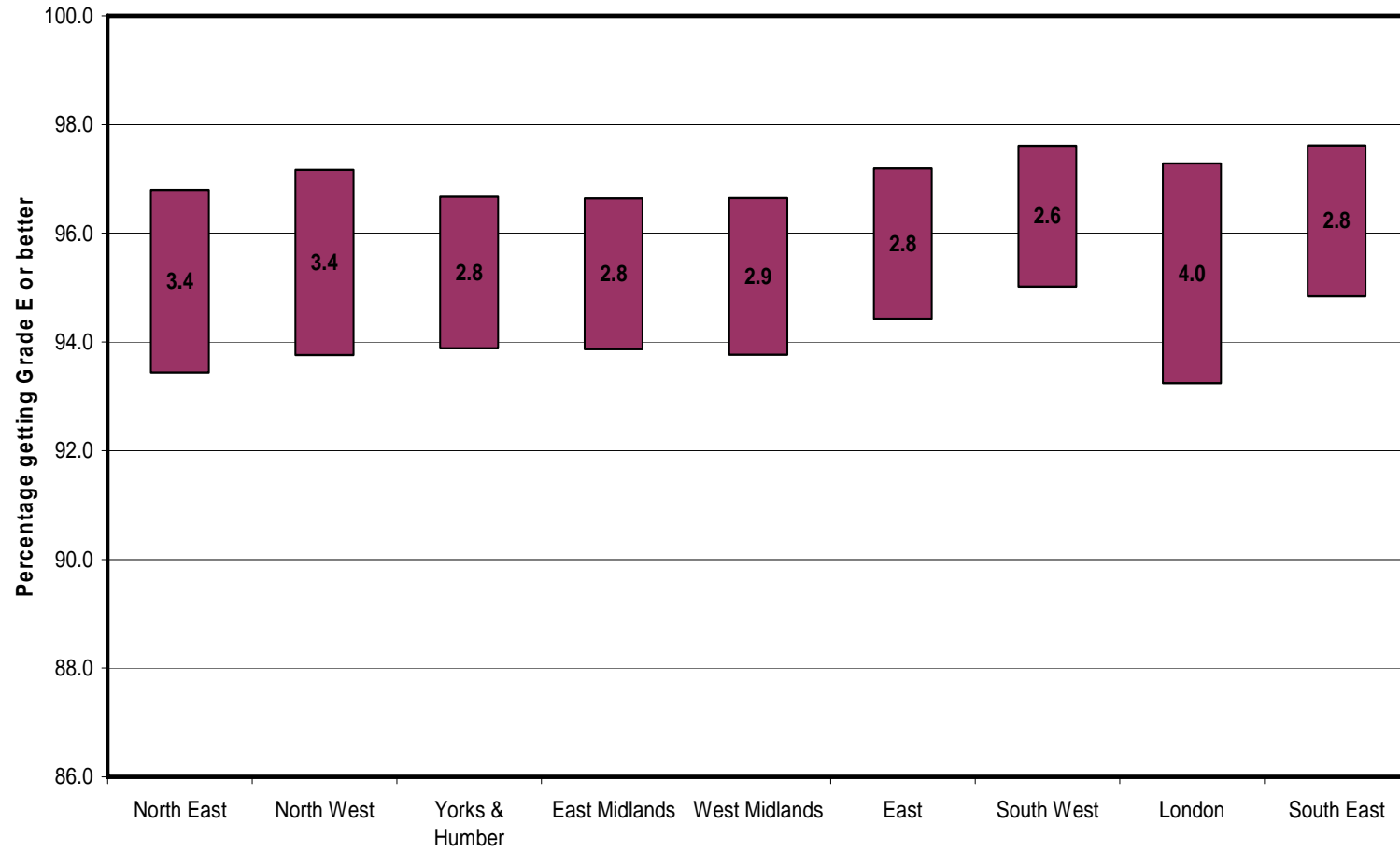
# Improvements in Grade A pass rate by English region, 2002 to 2008



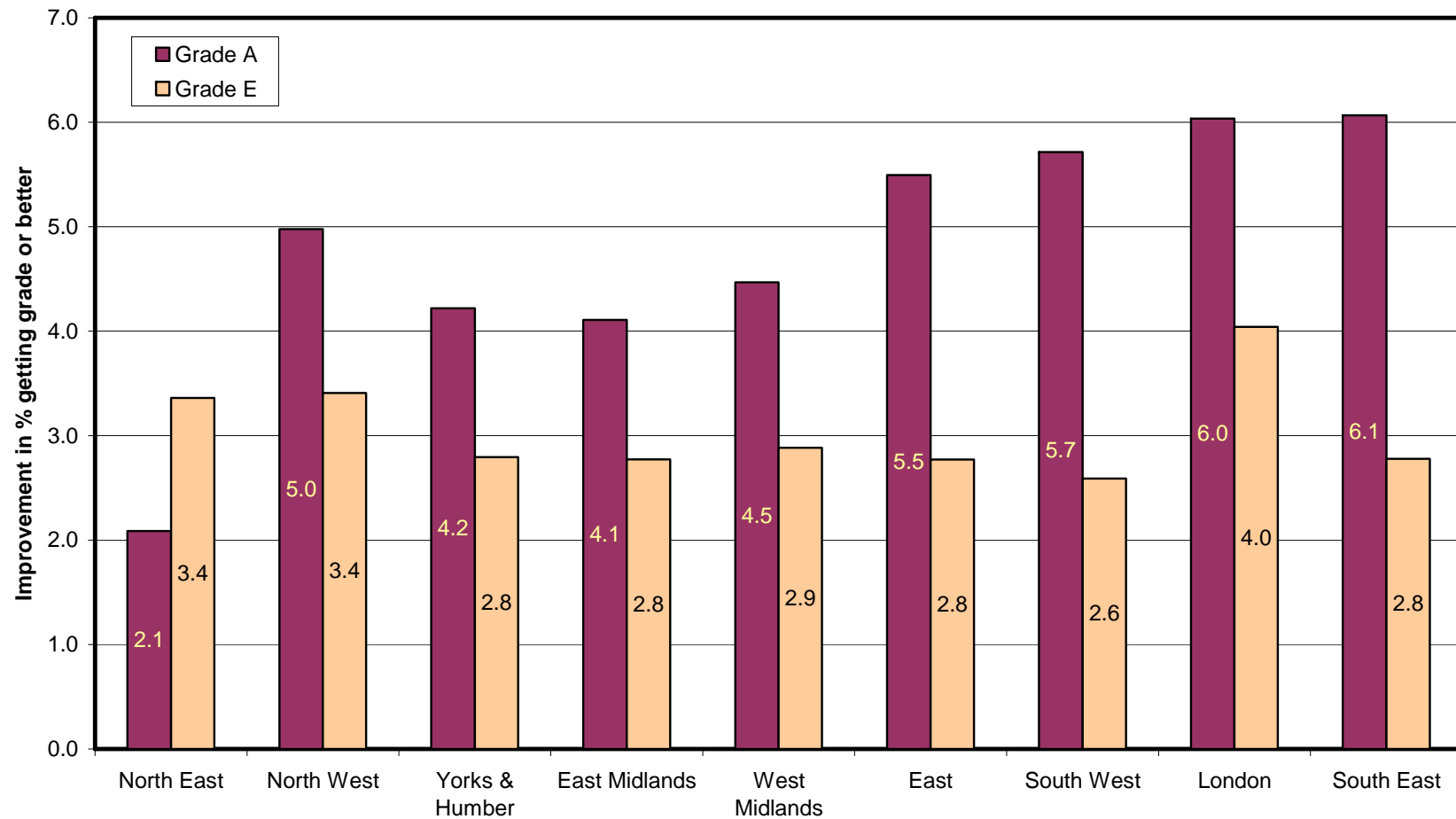
Exactly the same point is demonstrated in the preceding graph as in the one for centre type. It shows the improvements at Grade A since 2002 for the various English regions.

- The length of the bars is the size of improvement. So the North East has seen Grade A go up by 2.1 percentage points since 2002. The South East, on the other hand, has seen Grade A go up by 6.1 percentage points.
- The regions did not all start in the same place. 23.0% of A-level candidates in the South East got an A in 2002 and 29.1% got a Grade A this year – which is why the bar for the South East is 6.1 tall (29.1-23.0). So the bottom of each bar tells you the Grade A pass rate for the region in 2002 and the top tells you the Grade A pass rate this year.
- Just as for school type, different regions are showing very different rates of improvement, even though they took the same exams, marked and graded in the same way. So there is much more going on here than the standard of the examinations to account for the improvements we are seeing.

Improvements in Grade E pass rate by English region  
All centres, 2002 - 2008



# Improvements in Grade A and Grade E pass rates, 2002 to 2008



The same data is presented without the complication of the different starting points.

- So you can see the North East's Grade A rate has improved by 2.1, and so on – just as shown on the last slide.
- The orange bars show the same information for Grade E and here you can see that the North East is actually tying for second place in terms of its improvement in A-level passes at Grade E. In the South East, the increase in the Grade E pass rate is comparatively low, while London has shown relatively big improvements for both grades.
- So simple explanations like easier exams really do not stand up. The improvements in recent years are clearly reflecting the educational characteristics of schools and their students – they cannot be dismissed as simply the result of easier exams.