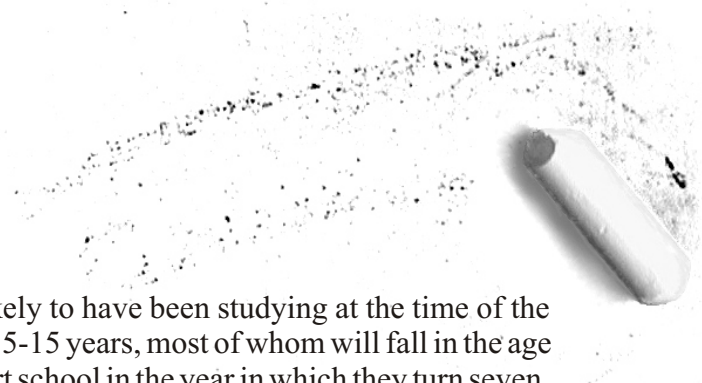


## SECTION 3 SCHOLARS AND STUDENTS



This section focuses on those people who were most likely to have been studying at the time of the 1996 population census. It looks, firstly, at the age group 5-15 years, most of whom will fall in the age of compulsory schooling. (Children currently should start school in the year in which they turn seven, but at the time of Census '96 the starting age was lower, and moreover was less strictly applied in different circumstances.) Secondly, this section looks at those aged 16-25 years.

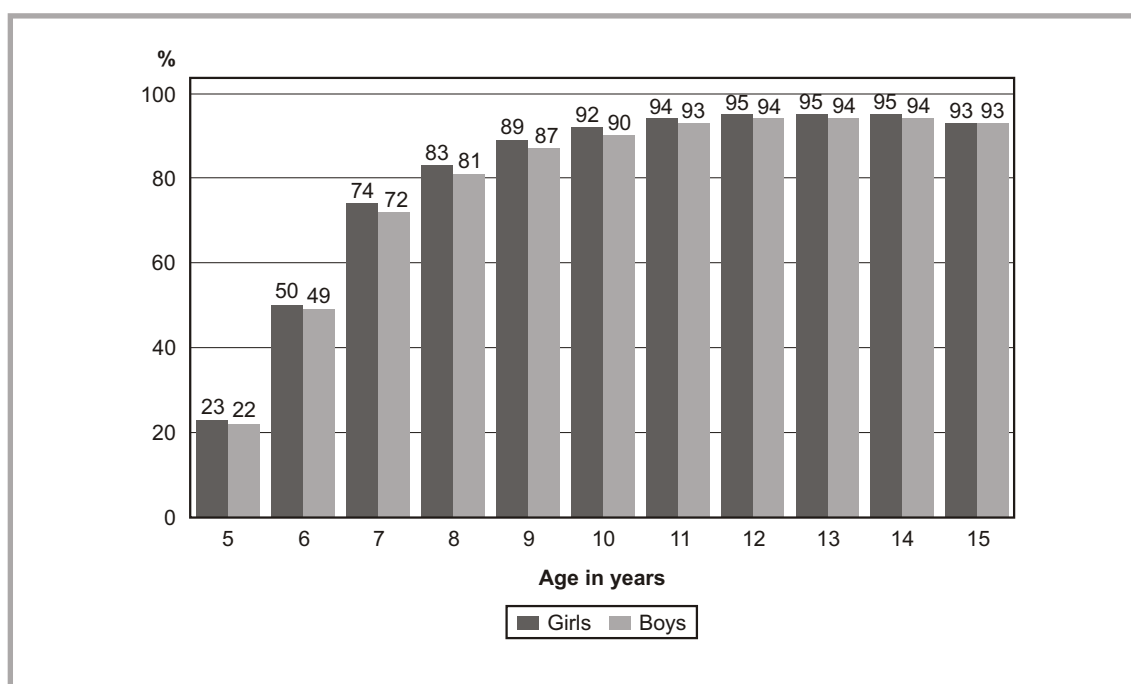
South African law states that all children should attend school, at least until they reach the age of 15 or complete the ninth grade. Schooling is thus not compulsory in the second age range which we analyse below. However, many young people will not have completed the ninth grade of schooling by the age of 15 by reason of late starting, repetition and other difficulties. Further, many will study beyond the ninth grade at higher school levels or beyond.

### SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

According to Census '96, there were 10,1 million children aged 5 to 15 years in South Africa in October 1996, of whom fractionally more than half were girls. Altogether, 79% of all children in this age group were attending school (excluding unspecified). Among those aged 7 to 15 years, the new compulsory school-going age, 89% were attending school (excluding unspecified).

Figure 1 shows the percentage of boys and girls aged 5-15 years who were reported to be attending school in October 1996, in single year age categories. Only those children for whom school attendance information was available are included in the analysis.<sup>1</sup>

**FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN AGED 5-15 YEARS ATTENDING SCHOOL BY AGE AND SEX**

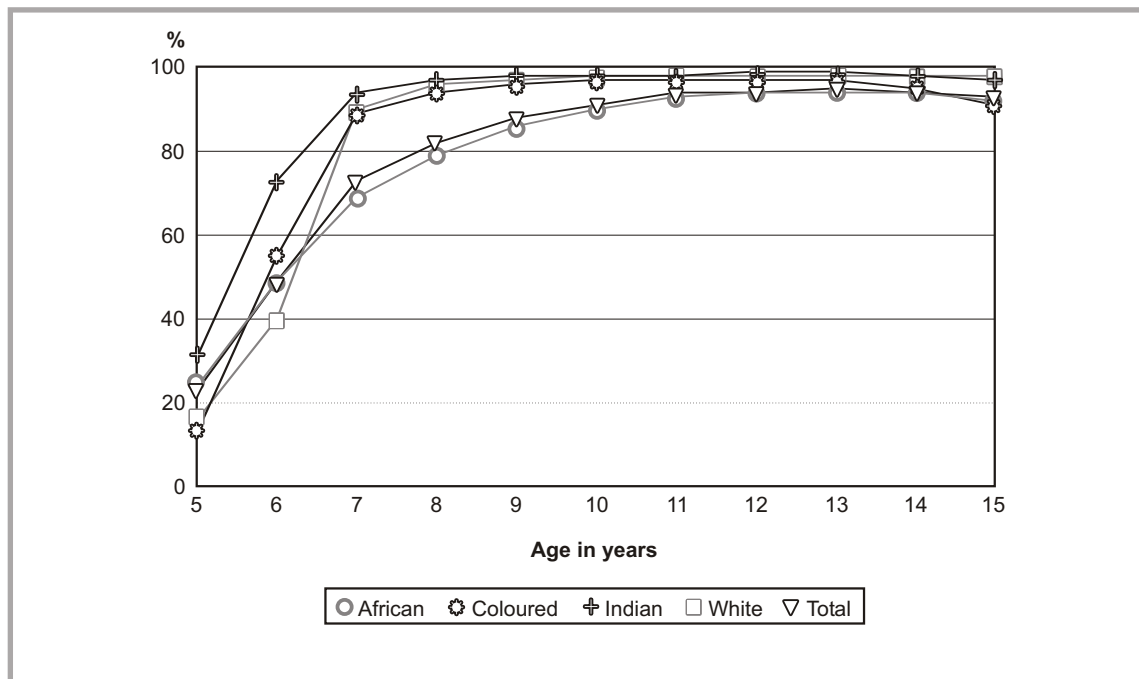


<sup>1</sup>In this and other tables and figures in this document, we omit data on persons for whom at least one of the variables being examined is unspecified. Further, in this and other tables percentages may sometimes not sum exactly to 100 because of both rounding and omission of unspecified categories.

The figure shows that, although some children started school as early as five years, attendance increased markedly by age seven. The figure also shows that, despite government's efforts to make education compulsory for those aged 7-15, attendance was still not universal in 1996. However, in the age group 10-15 years, attendance was 90% or higher for both girls and boys. The figure shows peak attendance at ages 12-14 for both girls and boys.

Figure 2 compares the proportions of children studying at different ages across the four population groups. The curve for African children is very similar to that for all children combined, reflecting the dominance of African children in the child population. The graph suggests that Indian children tended to start school at a younger age than those of other age groups. By the age of seven years, a smaller proportion of African children were attending school than for all other population groups. This pattern continued until age 14. At age 15, the coloured group had the lowest percentage of children attending school.

**FIGURE 2: PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN AGED 5-15 YEARS ATTENDING SCHOOL BY AGE AND POPULATION GROUP**



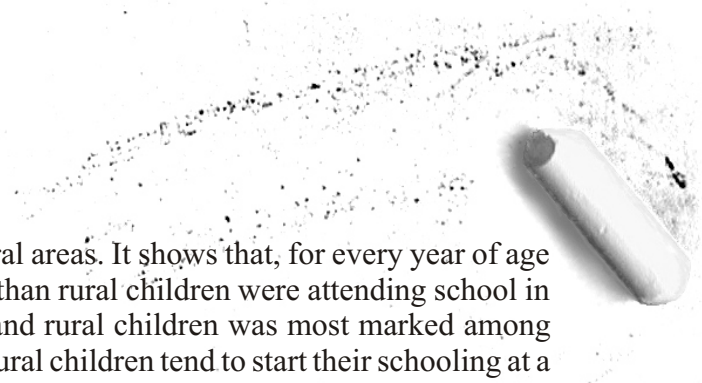
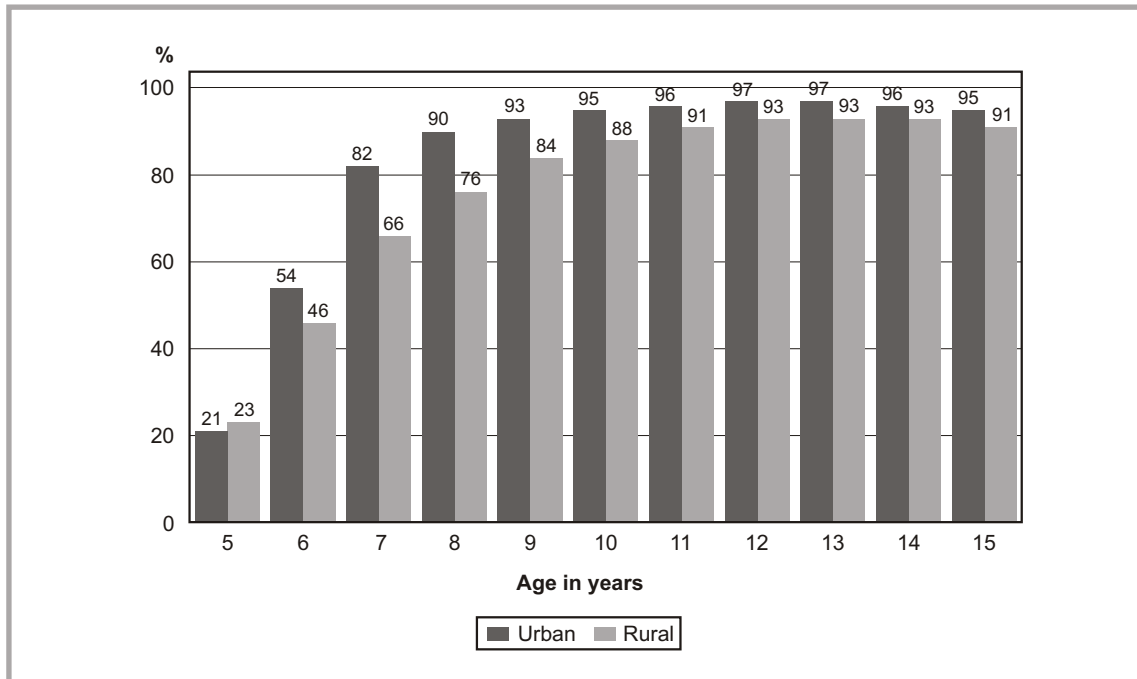


Figure 3 depicts the situation in respect of urban and rural areas. It shows that, for every year of age between six and 15 years, a higher proportion of urban than rural children were attending school in October 1996. The relative difference between urban and rural children was most marked among children aged seven and eight years. This suggests that rural children tend to start their schooling at a later age than children in urban areas.

**FIGURE 3: PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN AGED 5-15 YEARS ATTENDING SCHOOL BY AGE AND LOCATION**



## HIGHEST CLASS COMPLETED BY YOUTH

Education is not compulsory for the population aged 16-25 years. Many in this age group pursue their studies at higher levels of education. Others drop out of school, and yet others have already completed their schooling.

The 1996 population census showed that there were 7 990 138 persons in the age band 16 to 25 years. The female proportion was just above half (51%), at 4 114 365. As in other age groups, African people dominated, at 80%. Forty-six per cent of this age group were living in rural areas in October 1996.

Figure 4 shows the proportions of people aged 16-25 years who had completed different educational levels by sex, population group and locality. Overall, 6% in this age group had no formal schooling, 13% had not completed primary schooling, and a further 58% had not completed secondary schooling. On the other hand, 3% had achieved a qualification higher than matric.

**FIGURE 4: HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF POPULATION AGED 16-25 BY SEX, POPULATION GROUP AND LOCATION**

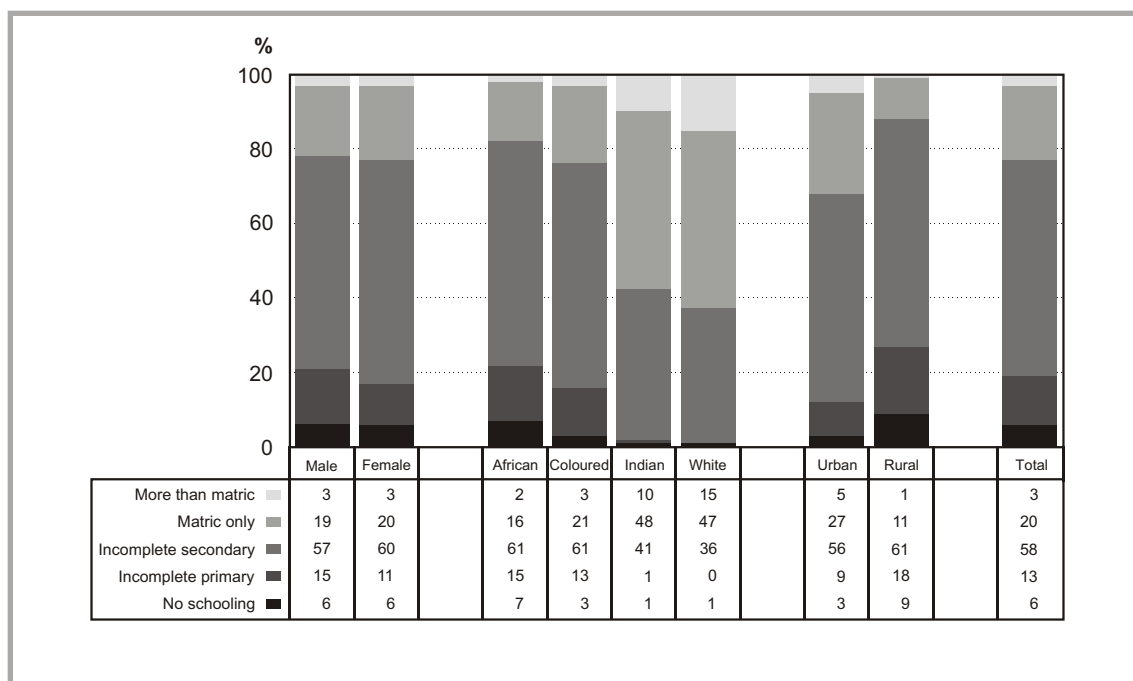




Figure 4 shows very similar educational achievements for the young women and men in this age group. However, in grades 7 to 11 and matric categories, there were slightly higher proportions of women than men. Thus 60% of women as against 57% of men had completed grades 7-11, and 20% of women and 19% of men had completed matric as their highest educational qualification. Comparison by population group shows much bigger differences. Only 1% of white and Indian people in this age group had no formal schooling, compared to 7% of African people. Over six in ten white people (62%) had a matric or higher qualification, compared to 18% of African people and 24% of coloured. Similarly, rural people in this age group were clearly lagging behind their urban counterparts in terms of educational achievement. A third (33%) of those in urban areas had a matric or higher qualification, as against 12% in rural areas.

Many people in the age group 16-25 were still studying at the time of the census. The proportion studying was 89% among 16 year olds, falling to 18% among 25 year olds. In particular, more than half of the people aged between 16 and 20 were studying at the time of the 1996 population census. The patterns reflected above do not, therefore, show what the final educational attainment of many of these individuals will be.

Table 1 shows, for each level of educational achievement, the percentage constituted by each one year age group. For example, among those with no schooling, 9% were 16 years of age, 8% 17 years of age, and so on. Among those with grade 12 as their highest educational qualification, 2% were aged 17 years, 6% aged 18 years, and so on. The table shows, on the one hand, that an increasing proportion of those aged between 22 and 25 years had obtained post-school qualifications. This is expected. On the other hand, the table also shows that a relatively larger proportion with no education were in these age categories (22-25 years). This pattern reflects the legacy of poorer access to education when these people were children.

**TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AGED 16-25 BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL**

	16yrs	17yrs	18yrs	19yrs	20yrs	21yrs	22yrs	23yrs	24yrs	25yrs	Total
No schooling %	9	8	8	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	100
Incomplete primary %	19	12	10	9	8	8	8	8	9	8	100
Incomplete secondary %	14	14	12	11	10	9	8	8	8	6	100
Matric only %	0	2	6	10	13	14	14	14	14	12	100
More than matric %	0	1	2	4	7	10	15	18	21	22	100
<b>Total %</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>

## STUDENTS WHO HAD GIVEN BIRTH

The census asked of all females aged 12 or more whether or not they had ever given birth and, if so, how many of these children were still alive.

The country's Bill of Rights states that no person may be discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, on the basis of pregnancy. Government policy states that pupils may not be excluded from schools on account of pregnancy or having given birth.

In the census, 18 255 girls between the ages of 12-15 (2% of all girls in this age group), 1 329 419 between the ages of 16-25 (43% of the age group) and 7 642 770 aged 26 years or more (82% of the age group) were reported to have given birth to at least one child.

Figure 5 compares the status, in terms of studying, of women with no children with that of women with at least one child. It distinguishes between girls aged 12-15 years, young women aged 16-25 years and women aged 26 years and above. The figure shows that the proportion of women who were studying decreases with increasing age. In addition, it confirms that in every age group women who have given birth are less likely to be studying than those who have not had children. For example, in the 12-15 year age group, only 5% of girls with no children were not studying, compared to 44% of those with at least one child. The differences are smallest in the oldest age group, where very few women – with or without children – were studying. In all age groups, only a very small proportion of women were studying part-time. However, of the 341 621 women aged 26 years or more who had given birth to at least one child and were studying, 46% (157 192) were studying part-time.

**FIGURE 5: STUDYING STATUS OF WOMEN WITH NO CHILDREN AND WOMEN WITH AT LEAST ONE CHILD, BY AGE CATEGORY**

