

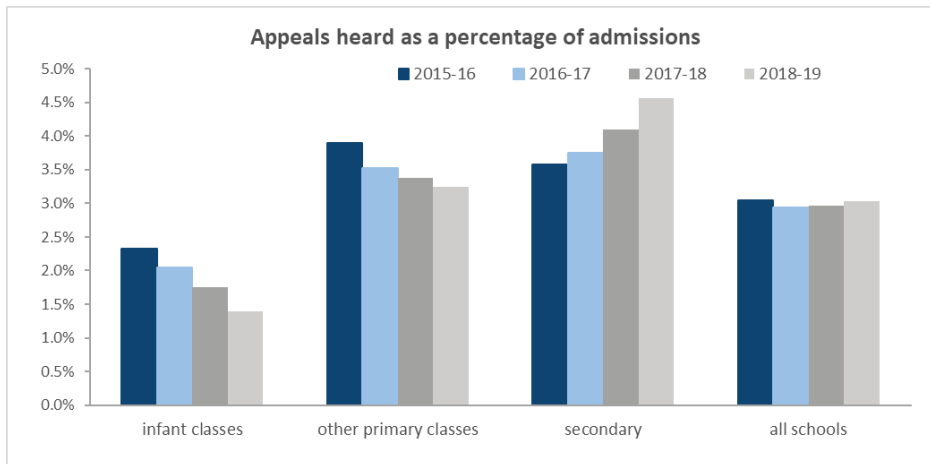


# Admissions appeals for maintained and academy primary and secondary schools in England: 2018 to 2019



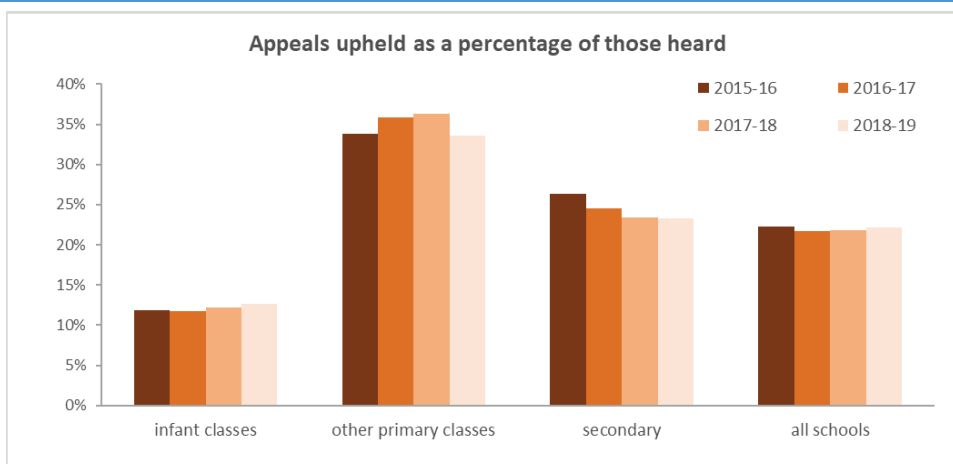
22 August 2019

Overall proportion of appeals heard reflects changing number of applicants at each level



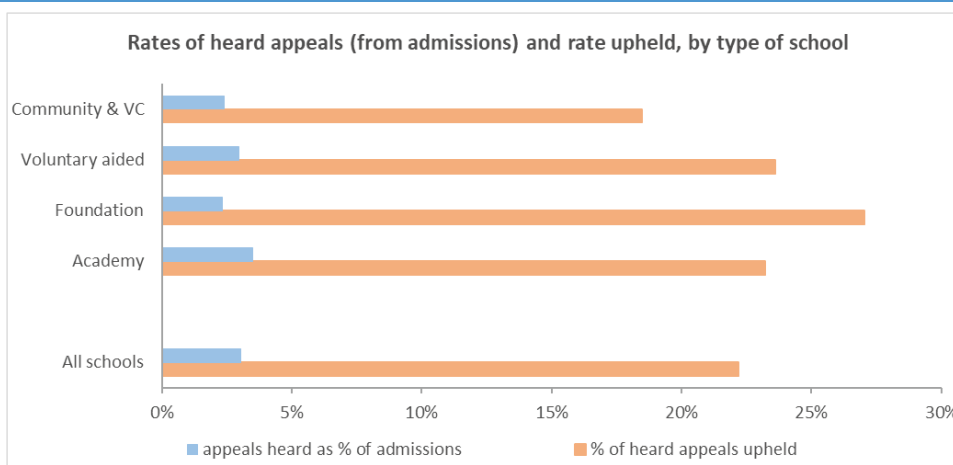
- The proportion of appeals heard stands at 3.0% of new admissions
- Secondary shows increase over whole time period
- Primary proportions drop, particularly for infant classes

Success rate of appeals very little changed other than for “other primary”



- The overall proportion of appeals upheld stands at 22.2%
- “Other primary” figure dropped for 2018-19
- Appeals for infant classes have notably lower success rate

Success rates vary for different school types



- The rate of appeals being heard varied from 2.3% (foundation) to 3.5% (academy).
- Appeals for foundation schools were the most likely to be successful at 27.1%.

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## About this release

This statistical release provides information about admissions appeals. Most appeals are made when an applicant has not received an offer, in the annual coordinated admissions process, of a place at their first preference school for entry into primary or secondary school. They can appeal for a place at any school ranked higher than the one they were offered. In addition, there will be appeals where applications have been made to transfer to a different school for the beginning of other years, and that application has been refused.

The release reports on appeals relating to admissions at the start of the 2018 to 2019 academic year. It is based on appeals lodged with the appropriate admissions authority by 1 September 2018.

The publication details, by school phase, the number and percentage of appeals lodged and the number and percentage which are heard by an appeals panel. Of those heard, the number and percentage which are found in the parent's favour (that is, upheld) is also given. The data is additionally broken down by school type (community and voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, foundation and academy) and, separately, by local authority.

## In this publication

The following tables are included in the statistical release:

National tables (Excel .xls)

Local authority tables (Excel .xls)

Underlying data (open format .csv and metadata .txt)

The accompanying quality and methodology information document, provides information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data.

## Feedback

We are always interested in improving how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at [Admissions.appeals@education.gov.uk](mailto:Admissions.appeals@education.gov.uk)

# 1. Headline results

Overall 59,420 appeals were lodged and reported to the department, via the admissions appeals collection or the school census, relating to an application for a school place at the start of the 2018-19 academic year. This equates to 3.9% of new admissions (table A below). This all schools figure has been stable for the last few years (Table 1).

These admissions, and the appeals relating to them, cover both entry into the first year of a school and also new admissions into other years, for example due to a house move, as long as the appeal relates to a request to start the school at the beginning of the academic year. Most of the appeals will relate to the first year of a school, most commonly reception at primary level and year 7 for entry into secondary school.

Applicants can lodge appeals for any school they have not been awarded a place in, but not all lodged appeals are heard as an appeal. They can be withdrawn before that point (for example because the child has been offered a place at the school via the waiting list). Therefore the best measure is the number of appeals which actually reach the stage of being heard by the appropriate authority, and this release focuses on these figures. In 2018-19 this was 45,855, or 3.0% of new admissions appeals heard. Again this proportion has been stable since this time series began in 2015-16.

Overall the number of appeals which were successful was 10,177 - a success rate of 22.2% of those appeals which were heard by an appeals panel. This is an increase from both the number (9,715) and percentage (21.8%) successful the previous year.

**Table A**

**Admissions appeals: all maintained and academy schools, 2018-19**

---

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Admissions</b>                          | 1,510,912 |
| <b>Admission appeals lodged by parents</b> |           |
| Number:                                    | 59,420    |
| Percentage of admissions                   | 3.9       |
| <b>Appeals heard by an appeals panel</b>   |           |
| Number:                                    | 45,855    |
| Percentage of admissions                   | 3.0       |
| <b>Appeals decided in parents' favour</b>  |           |
| Number:                                    | 10,177    |
| Percentage of appeals heard                | 22.2      |

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A detailed breakdown of the number of appeals by the type of school can be found in table B (below). Figures for community & voluntary controlled schools were provided the by local authorities as aggregated totals. These school types reported the lowest percentage of appeals being upheld (18.5% of those heard).

The highest percentage found in favour of the applicant by school type was from foundation schools with 27.1% of appeals heard being successful. However, foundation schools had a smaller rate of appeals heard – 2.3% of new admissions into foundation schools – compared to other school types. Note that as the number of foundation schools continues to drop (with a total of 1,619 on census day) these proportions are potentially more subject to variation.

Conversely, more than three fifths of the total appeals heard now relate to academies. This proportion does not affect the percentages as they are calculated on the number of admissions into that particular school type (but note the caveats section of the methodology document relating to the recording of pupils in newly converted academies). Appeals relating to academies were upheld in 23.2% of the appeals heard.

**Table B**  
**Appeals heard and upheld, by type of school, 2018-19**

|                                  | Appeals heard |     | Appeals upheld |      |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-----|----------------|------|
|                                  | Num           | %   | Num            | %    |
| Community & voluntary controlled | 11,607        | 2.4 | 2,145          | 18.5 |
| Voluntary aided                  | 4,437         | 3.0 | 1,048          | 23.6 |
| Foundation                       | 1,619         | 2.3 | 438            | 27.1 |
| Academy                          | 28,192        | 3.5 | 6,546          | 23.2 |
| Total                            | 45,855        | 3.0 | 10,177         | 22.2 |

## 2. Primary school results

At primary level the rate of appeals lodged was 2.6% of new admissions, with 1.7% reaching the next stage of being heard by an appeals panel (Table 1). The proportion of primary appeals heard has been dropping gradually, having been 2.6% in 2015/16. Although we can't know why each appeal was submitted by the applicant, this period had a reducing number of new admissions recorded year on year and the number of applicants who were offered one of their preferred schools was also increasing over the period.

The primary level data is further split into infant (reception and years one and two) and other primary classes (generally years three to six although middle-deemed primary schools may include years seven and/or eight). For the infant classes, the rate of appeals lodged was 2.0% of admissions into those years, with 1.4% heard by an appeals panel. The figures for the other primary classes were higher at 5.1% and 3.2% respectively (see table C below).

There are legal restrictions in place which require infant classes (reception and years 1 and 2) to be limited to 30 children<sup>1</sup>. This reduces the possibilities for appeal for these years, and indeed the figures show that the success rate was notably lower for infant years (12.6%) than it was for the other primary years (33.6%). It is plausible that one reason for the lower number of infant appeals over time is because of the realisation that there are more limited chances for such an appeal being successful.

The success rate for "other primary" classes dropped to 33.6% from 36.3% in 2017-18, the first drop in this time series. There are no known specific reasons, but one potential contribution is the number of infant and junior schools merging to create primary schools, reducing the number of applications (and potential appeals) for a place in a new school in year 3.

<sup>1</sup> The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012 prescribe certain limited circumstances in which pupils may be admitted as lawful exceptions to the infant class size limit of 30 for one-teacher classes. This means that a class of, for example, 32 pupils is lawful if two or more of those pupils have been admitted under lawful exceptions.

**Table C****Admissions appeals: primary appeals by infant and other primary classes, 2018-19**

|  | infant appeals | other primary class appeals | primary total |
|--|----------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Admissions</b>                          | 668,114        | 146,937                     | 815,051       |
| <b>Admission appeals lodged by parents</b> |                |                             |               |
| Number:                                    | 13,506         | 7,441                       | 20,947        |
| <b>Appeals heard by an appeals panel</b>   |                |                             |               |
| Number:                                    | 9,316          | 4,770                       | 14,086        |
| Percentage of admissions                   | 1.4            | 3.2                         | 1.7           |
| <b>Appeals decided in parents' favour</b>  |                |                             |               |
| Number:                                    | 1,176          | 1,603                       | 2,779         |
| Percentage of appeals heard                | 12.6           | 33.6                        | 19.7          |

There was further variation in the rate of appeals heard and successful within both infant and other primary levels by school type (Table 2). For infant classes, 9.6% of appeals heard relating to community and voluntary controlled schools were successful, compared to 19.9% for voluntary aided schools. For other primary classes the success rates were notably higher, ranging from 31.4% for community and voluntary controlled schools to 39.4% for voluntary aided schools.

Figures are provided at LA level, both for infant classes, total primary appeals (including the infant appeals), and secondary classes (Table 3). Because the number of appeals heard in each local authority varies widely, large differences in rates of appeals upheld (calculated as percentage of the appeals heard) can be driven by the results of a small number of appeals. Therefore some caution should be used when comparing figures within this dataset.

The proportion of appeals upheld for all primary schools for 2018-19 varied at local authority level from 80.0% (Bath & NE Somerset, but based on just 15 appeals heard) to 0.0% (several local authorities in London plus East Riding of Yorkshire, Bracknell Forest and Brighton & Hove). Of the local authorities who upheld no primary appeals, Westminster heard just two appeals and the authority with the highest number of appeals heard was East Riding of Yorkshire with 39 from all primary years. The local authority with the highest number of appeals heard for all primary schools was Essex with 547 (of which 15.0% were upheld).

### 3. Secondary school results

At secondary level the rate of appeals lodged was higher than at primary, at 5.5% of new admissions, with 4.6% being heard by an appeals panel. The proportion of secondary appeals heard has been gradually increasing from 3.6% in 2015-16. Note that over the same time period the number of new admissions has also been increasing as the increased births between 2002 and 2012 continue to feed into the secondary school system.

The success rate was higher than for primary schools as a whole at 23.3%. However, a better comparison is against other primary classes, as these do not have the restrictions of infant class size legislation. Other primary class appeals were more likely to be successful, at 33.6% against the 23.3% of heard appeals at secondary level, although the gap has narrowed since 2017/18.

Again the breakdown of appeals by school type shows a notable variation. As in previous years foundation secondary schools had the lowest rate of appeals heard, 3.0%, but the highest rate of those being

successful at 29.8%. Success rates for the other school types are quite close to each other, varying from 21.8% (voluntary aided) to 23.2% (academies).

The local authority data showed significant variation, both in the number of appeals heard and in the success rates for those that were. However, the varying number of appeals being heard in many local authorities can affect the figures significantly. The local authority with the highest number of secondary appeals heard was Kent (as it was in 2017-18) with 2,483 (of which 28.6% were upheld), with the next highest being Lancashire (1,177 appeals heard of which 31.4% were upheld).

In 2018-19 the local authority with the highest proportion of secondary appeals being upheld was Hartlepool, with 77.8% of heard appeals being upheld (based on nine hearings), followed by Bedford with 75.0% of successful appeals (out of 32 hearings).

At the other end of the scale, Knowsley upheld no appeals (with only seven being heard). The next lowest secondary appeals success rate was found in Harrow with 2.0% of the 50 appeals they heard being successful. There has been no evidence found that the likelihood of an appeal being successful within a local authority is affected by either the total number of new admissions or the number of appeals heard.

## 4. List of tables

The following tables are available in Excel format on the department's statistics [website](#):

### National tables

#### Table 1

Total appeals by parents against non-admission of their children to primary and secondary local authority maintained schools and academies, entry into the start of the 2015-16 to 2018-19 academic years, England.

#### Table 2

Appeals by parents against non-admission of their children to primary and secondary local authority maintained schools and academies, by type of school, entry into the start of the 2018-19 academic year, England

### Local authority tables

#### Table 3

Appeals by parents against non-admission of their children to primary and secondary local authority maintained schools and academies, entry into the start of the 2018-19 academic year, by local authority area.

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

- The time series provided in table 1 was restarted in 2015-16 because the improvements to the data in that year meant the appeals in that year were not comparable with the previous years.
- Increased flexibility (through the academy and free school programmes) allows schools to choose their own school terms, which could include starting in August, and a number of schools exercise this option. To allow for this the admissions totals used in this release have been calculated including August admissions.
- The number of new admissions is calculated using the pupil level January 2019 school census and is based on the pupils' entry dates and the school they are recorded as attending, both in 2019 and also in the previous academic year. Schools converting to academies or amalgamating (for example individual infant and nursery schools combining into a single primary school) sometimes change both the entry dates of all of their existing pupils and their school codes. All attempts have been made to allow for this when calculating the number of new admissions but it is possible that for a very small number of schools the number of new admissions has been incorrectly counted.
- The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires we take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality. These data tables have been assessed as not requiring suppression to preserve confidentiality.

## 5. National statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The Department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

## 6. Technical information

A quality and methodology information document accompanies this statistical release. This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed.

## 7. Get in touch

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Department  
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