

School Meals in Northern Ireland

2020-21

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The purpose of this statistical bulletin is to provide results of the annual data collection relating to the uptake of school meals in grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland in 2020/21.

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Reader Information

Purpose	The purpose of this statistical release is to provide results of the annual data collection relating to the uptake of school meals in grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland in 2020/21.
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Frequency	Annual
Theme	Children, Education and Skills

Key Points

- 162,600 school meals¹, both free and paid, were taken by pupils on school meals census day², which equates to a school meals uptake level of 52.3% by pupils present for lunch³ on the day.
- The school meals uptake level for 2020/21 is 7.2 percentage points lower than the previous year.
- 97,631 pupils in grant-aided schools are entitled to free school meals; this represents 28.4% of pupils, which is the same as the previous year.
- The uptake level for free school meals by entitled pupils is 74.9%; this is 5.6 percentage points lower than the previous year.

¹ Includes food provision by the Education Authority (EA) and individual Voluntary Grammar and Grant -Maintained Integrated Schools for pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) who were unable to attend school due to COVID-19 restrictions but who were engaging in distance learning (see background note 22).

² In 2020/21 school meals census day was 6 November 2020.

³ Includes pupils who were engaging in distance learning from home (see background note 21).

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Introduction

The purpose of this statistical bulletin is to provide results of the latest annual data collection relating to the uptake of school meals in Northern Ireland schools, commonly known as the school meals census.

Data collected through the school meals census are used by policy teams within the Department of Education and by other users across the education service, most notably by the Education Authority. The data are also used to inform a number of Assembly questions. The Department is responsible for formulating and developing policy and the associated financial arrangements in relation to school meals.

The information was collected with a reference point of 6 November 2020 and relates to all grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland. The school meals census had originally been scheduled for 9 October 2020. However, due to circumstances relating to the COVID-19 crisis, free school meal entitlement numbers recorded by schools in October were significantly lower than expected. The Education Authority and the Department agreed there would be an extension to the closing date for free school meal entitlement applications to be counted on the main school census until the 6 November. As a result the reference date for the school meals uptake census was also moved to 6 November so that free school meal uptake and entitlement data would be better aligned.

The COVID-19 crisis has had an impact on the uptake of school meals, both paid and free in 2020/21. Further detail on the impact can be found in the Notes to readers (paragraphs 21-26).

1. Uptake of school meals (free and paid)

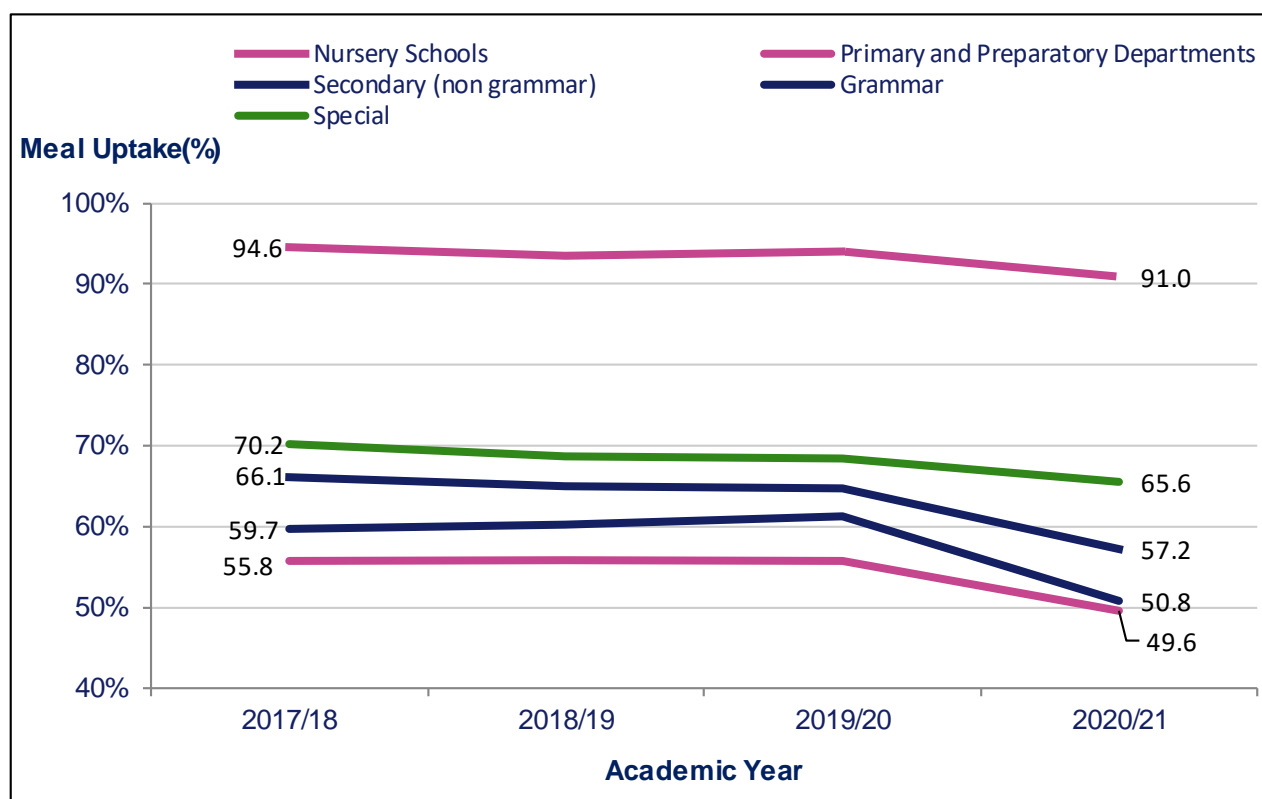
- 162,600 school meals⁴, both free and paid, were taken by pupils on school meals census day⁵. Pupils not taking a school meal are making alternative arrangements for lunch, which can include bringing their own food into school, or having lunch at home. Almost 48% of meals fall into this category (Tables 1 and 2). This is more than 7 percentage points higher than the previous year and is most likely a direct result of the COVID-19 crisis in that many pupils are not able to access, or are choosing not to access, the school meals service.
- The school meals uptake level by pupils present for lunch⁶ on census day is 52.3%. The 2020/21 school meals uptake level is 7.2 percentage points lower than the previous year (Table 3). The proportion of pupils paying for a school meal fell almost 6 percentage points (from 34.8% in 2019/20 to 29% in 2020/21), while the proportion of pupils having a free school meal fell by 1.3 percentage points (from 24.6% in 2019/20 to 23.3% in 2020/21). During the COVID-19 crisis some schools may have been unable to provide a full school meals service which has led to an increase in the proportion of pupils making other arrangements for lunch. Also any pupils who were engaging in distance learning from home as a result of COVID-19 would be counted as making alternative arrangements for lunch, unless they were in receipt of a free food parcel.
- There is variation in the level of uptake across school types with nursery schools having the highest uptake at 91.0%. This is followed by special schools with 66.0% and secondary schools with 57.2%. Grammar schools and primary/preparatory schools have lower levels of uptake with 50.8% and 49.5% respectively (Table 3).

⁴ Includes food provision by the Education Authority (EA) and individual Voluntary Grammar and Grant -Maintained Integrated Schools for pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) who were unable to attend school due to COVID-19 restrictions but who were engaging in distance learning (see background note 22).

⁵ In 2020/21 school meals census day was 6 November 2020.

⁶ Includes pupils who were engaging in distance learning from home (see background note 21).

Figure 1: Uptake of school meals (free and paid), by school type: 2017/18 - 2020/21



¹Nursery only includes pupils in nursery schools

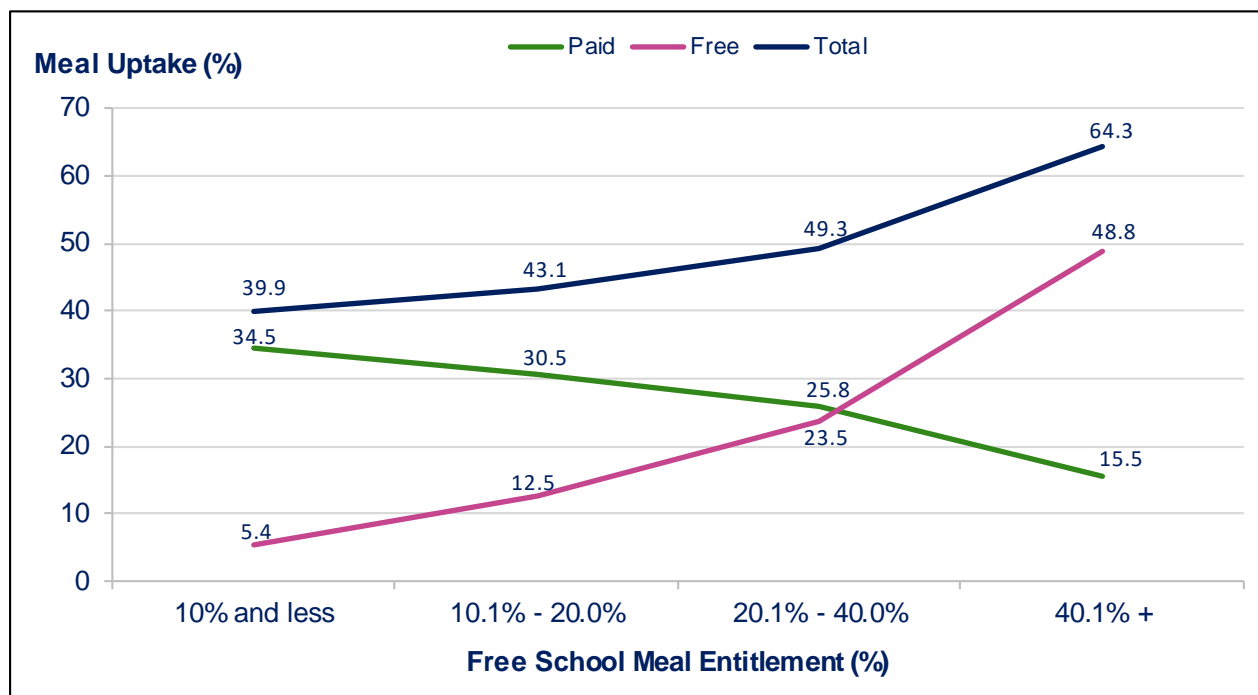
²Primary includes pupils in reception and nursery classes

³In 2020/21 the school meal numbers include food provision to pupils who were unable to attend school due to COVID-19 but who were engaging in distance learning. The uptake figure is based on the number of pupils present for lunch on census day, including pupils who were engaging in distance learning.

⁴Data taken from Table 3

Pupils from the least affluent schools (as measured by free school meal entitlement (FSME) were more likely to take a school meal, rather than make other lunch arrangements. For both primary and post-primary schools the uptake of school meals was lowest in schools where 10% or less of the pupils enrolled were entitled to free school meals (FSME). Uptake increased as the level of free school meal entitlement increased. For example, 64.3% of pupils in primary schools with 40% or more FSME pupils took a school meal compared to 39.9% in primary schools with 10% or less FSME pupils.

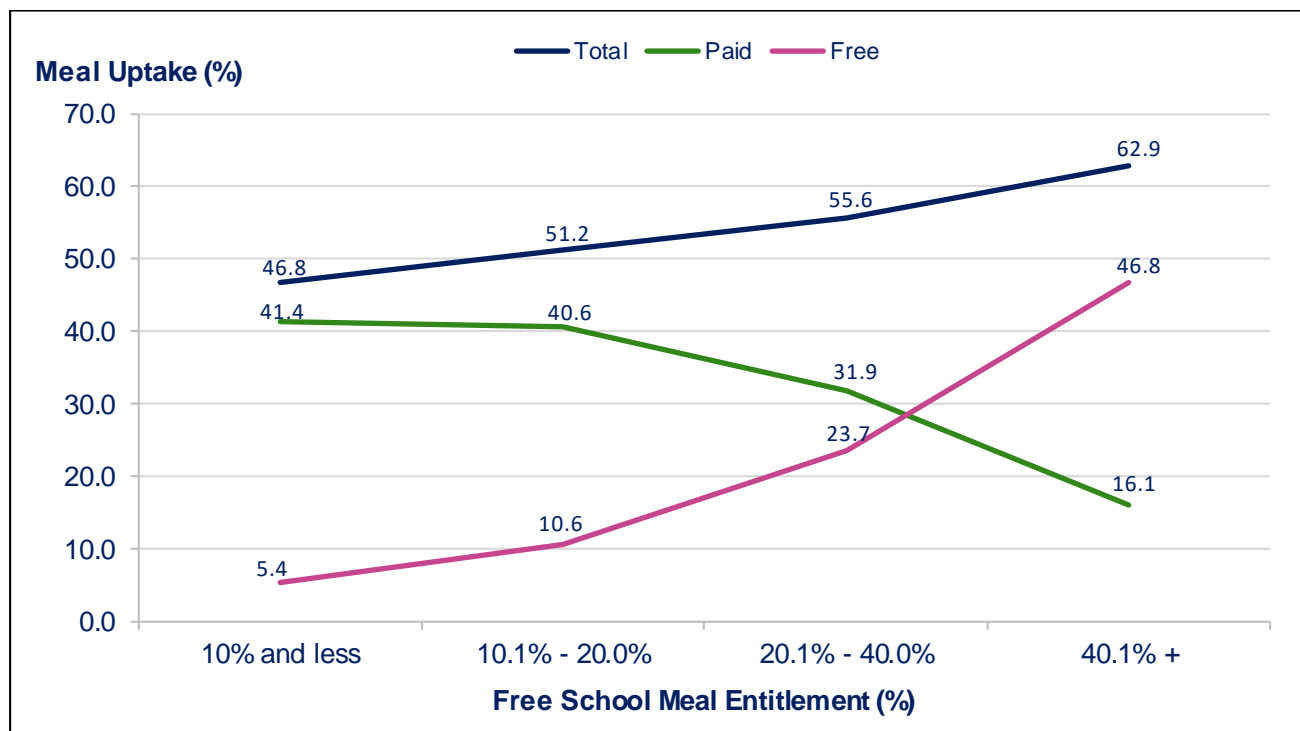
Figure 2: Uptake of school meals in primary schools, according to relative FSME 2020/21



¹Includes preparatory departments, pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools. Excludes schools where no meal service is available.

²Data taken from Table 5

Figure 3: Uptake of school meals in post-primary schools, according to relative FSME 2020/21



¹Excludes schools where no meal service is available

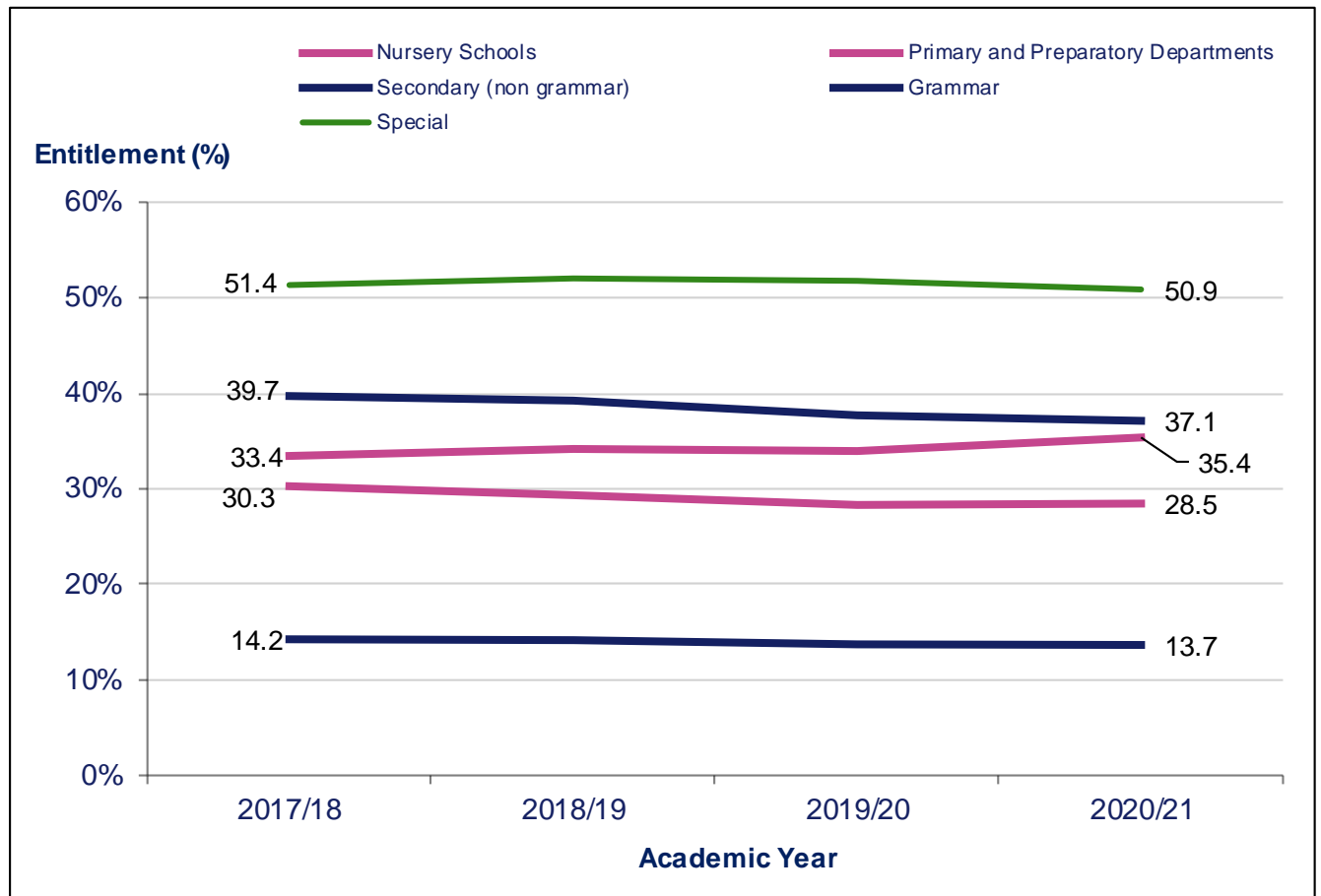
²Data taken from Table 5

2. Entitlement to free school meals

- Across all school types, including special schools, 97,631 pupils were entitled to free school meals⁷, which is an increase of 945 pupils on the previous year (Table 6). The overall percentage of children entitled to free school meals has remained the same as last year at 28.4%.
- There are slight decreases in the proportion of pupils that are free school meal entitled in non-grammar (37.1% compared to 37.8%) and special schools (50.9% compared to 51.7%) compared to last year. On the other hand, there are slight increases in the proportion of pupils that are free school meal entitled in nursery schools (35.4% compared to 34.0%) and primary and preparatory departments (28.5% compared to 28.3%) compared to last year. Grammar schools remained constant at 13.7%.
- Due to circumstances relating to the COVID-19 crisis, free school meal entitlement numbers recorded by schools in October were significantly lower than expected. The Education Authority and the Department agreed there would be an extension to the closing date for free school meal applications to be counted on the census until the 6 November. This extension to the closing date has resulted in free school meal entitlement figures now presenting at expected levels.

⁷ Parental receipt of certain social security benefits is used as a proxy for free school meal entitlement for pupils in nursery schools and nursery classes in primary schools. Does not include pupils in EOTAS centres.

Figure 4: Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, by school type: 2017/18 - 2020/21



¹Nursery only includes pupils in nursery schools

²Primary includes pupils in reception and nursery classes

³Data taken from Table 7

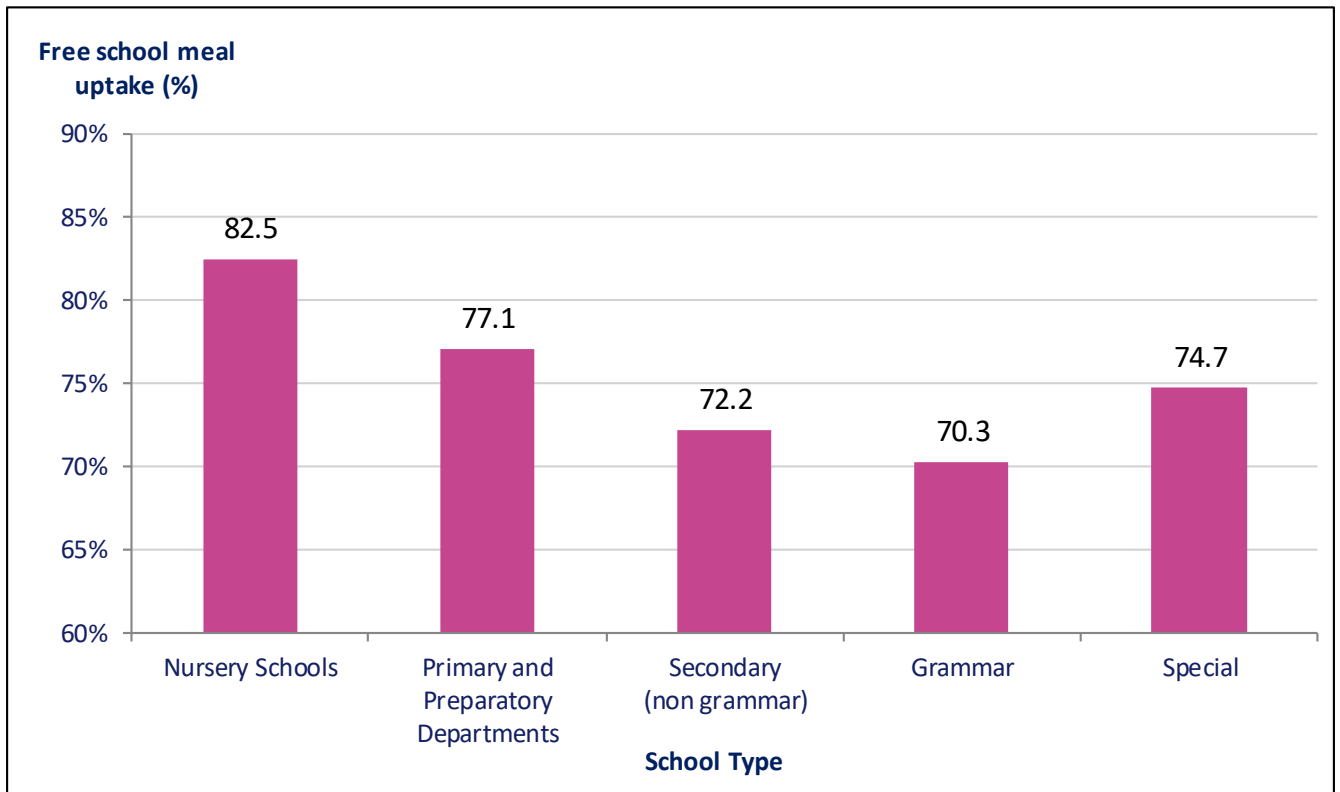
3. Uptake of free school meals

- There were 72,343 free school meals⁸ taken by pupils across all school types, this is a decrease of 4,867 on the previous year (Table 9). This represents 44.5% of all meals provided by schools, which is 3.2 percentage points higher than the previous year.
- When considering the number of free school meals provided as a proportion of the number of pupils with actual entitlement to free school meals⁹, uptake of free school meals was 74.9% (Table 9). In this regards, the 2020/21 free school meals uptake level is 5.6 percentage points lower than the previous year. While there is likely a direct impact of the COVID-19 crisis, resulting in fewer pupils wanting to take a free school meal, there is also potentially an impact caused by the arrangements agreed for the retrospective recording of free school meal entitlement numbers (see paragraphs 21-26 of Notes to readers).
- There is variation in the level of uptake of free school meals by those entitled across school types. The chart below shows that uptake is highest in nursery schools (82.5%). This is followed by primary and preparatory departments and special schools, with 77.1% and 74.7% uptake respectively. Uptake in non-grammar schools is 72.2% and is lowest in grammar schools with 70.3% (Table 9).

⁸ Includes food provision by the Education Authority (EA) and individual Voluntary Grammar and Grant -Maintained Integrated Schools for pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) who were unable to attend school due to COVID-19 restrictions but who were engaging in distance learning (see background note 22).

⁹ For the purposes of calculating uptake the actual entitlement figure for nursery schools and primary schools with nursery pupils is based on full-time pupils only and excludes pupils counted under the proxy measure of free school meal entitlement (parental receipt of certain social security benefits). This change was introduced in 2016/17 so figures for previous years are not directly comparable. See background note 15.

Figure 5: Uptake of free school meals, by school type 2020/21



¹Nursery only includes pupils in nursery schools

²Primary includes pupils in reception and nursery classes

³Data taken from Table 9

Notes to readers

Official Statistics

1. This is an Official Statistics publication. Official statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.
2. For general enquiries about the Code of Practice for Statistics, contact the National Statistics Public Enquiry Service on
Tel: 0845 601 3034
Minicom: 01633 812399
E-mail: info@ons.gov.uk
Fax: 01633 652747
Letters: Customer Contact Centre, Office for National Statistics, Room D265, Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport, South Wales, NP10 8XG
3. You can also find Official Statistics on the Internet: [ONS website \(opens in new window; http://www.ons.gov.uk\)](http://www.ons.gov.uk)

School meal provision

4. The Education Authority is responsible for the day to day operation of the school meals service in all grant-aided schools, with the exception of voluntary grammar schools and grant-maintained integrated schools, where the responsibility lies with the Trustees/Boards of Governors.
5. The service is provided in line with the Approved Arrangements for the Provision of Milk, Meals and Related Facilities made under Articles 58 and 59 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 drawn up by the Department of Education (DE), which will be referred to as 'the Arrangements' in the remainder of this document.
([DE website \(opens in new window; https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/school-milk-and-meals-background\)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/school-milk-and-meals-background))
6. Two main types of school meal service exist:
 - A traditional meal comprising a main course and dessert; and
 - A cash cafeteria service, where items are priced separately.

Free school meal provision

7. With regard to free school meal provision the following terms are used:
 - Eligibility: When a pupil within a family meets one of the criteria contained in paragraph 6 of the Arrangements for the provision of milk, meals and related facilities.
 - Entitlement: When an application for free school meals is made on behalf of a pupil and the application is successful.
 - Uptake: When a pupil who is entitled to free school meals makes use of the free school meal provision by taking a free school meal.
8. Certain categories of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Details of the qualifying criteria are contained in paragraph 6 of the Arrangements. The Education Authority is responsible for administering the award of free school meals. Entitlement to free school meals is widely used as an indicator of deprivation.
9. An additional eligibility criterion was added to the Arrangements with effect from 27 September 2017 to reflect the roll-out of Universal Credit as part of Welfare Reform.

School Meals Census

10. The main statistics in this statistical bulletin have been derived from the annual school meals data collection, commonly known as the school meals census. The data collection for the 2020/21 school meals census was undertaken by the Department, with data collected directly from each grant-aided school. Prior to 2012/13 the former ELBs were responsible for the collection of data in relation to schools in the controlled and maintained sectors and provided a collated return for their area to the Department.
11. The 2020/21 school meals census figures in this statistical bulletin are based on information as at 6 November 2020¹⁰. This data collection was originally scheduled for 9 October 2020 but the reference date was subsequently changed to align with a later cut-off date for free school meals entitlement in the main school census (see paragraph 23 for further information). Some tables in this statistical bulletin include data on school enrolments and the number of pupils entitled to free school meals. Data on school enrolments and free school meal entitlement (FSME) were collected as part of the annual school enrolments data collection exercise. Enrolments data is based on a reference date of 9 October 2020 while the cut-off date for numbers entitled to free school meals was 6 November 2020.
12. In nursery and primary schools, new pupils often have a phased introduction to school with some pupils not starting school until late October. Also new pupils may have a shorter day initially, without a lunch break. The school meals census date is usually the Friday of the first full week in October. This means that not all pupils will have started school, or be staying for lunch break. While pupils due to start later in the month will be counted in school enrolment, and free school meal entitlement figures, they will not be present to take a meal and will not therefore be counted in the school meals census figures, resulting in an artificially low uptake rate. Due to the later reference date for the school meals census in 2020/21 the impact of a phased introduction to school should be less, if occurring at all.
13. In schools with a cash cafeteria system, school meal numbers are calculated from lunchtime income. Schools also include income from sales at morning break but income from breakfast clubs is not included (from the 2012/13 data collection onwards)¹¹. The cost of a fixed price meal is used to convert income from lunch and break-time sales to equated meal numbers. Equated meal numbers will not exactly match pupils present for meals.
14. There were 6,625 pupils who were recorded as being present on school meals census day (6 November 2020) but schools indicated they were not availing of a school lunch break. These pupils were mainly in nursery and primary schools. This will include part-time nursery pupils and primary pupils whose school day, by census date, did not yet include a lunch break. From the 2012/13 school meals census data onwards these pupils have been excluded from the count of pupils present for meals for the purposes of calculating uptake of school meals.
15. From 2016/17 onwards the figures presented for uptake of free school meals by pupils entitled in nursery schools and primary schools with nursery units has changed. The

¹⁰ If school meals were not being provided by the school on census day or are not typical of a normal day, the school could choose to conduct the census on the nearest day on which meals are provided. This may mean that dual registered pupils could be included in both their main and subsidiary schools' figures.

¹¹ During the 2016/17 data validation process it emerged that some schools may have erroneously included breakfast income in 2016/17 data returned to the Department. While some breakfast income may have been included in the data it is not considered to have a big impact on the final estimates of school meal uptake.

denominator used in the calculation of the percentages is now based on full-time pupils only and excludes pupils counted under the proxy measure of free school meal entitlement (receipt of Income Support or Income Based Job Seeker's Allowance). Data was not available to enable the revision of figures for previous years. For this reason caution should be used in drawing any comparison between data from 2016/17 onwards and data from previous years. This change affects Table 8 and Table 9.

16. There were 12 schools indicating that they do not provide a school meals service. Nine are nursery schools where none of the pupils have a lunch break included as part of their hours of attendance. A total of 26 pupils at the remaining 3 schools do receive a lunch break. These 26 pupils are recorded as 'making other lunch arrangements' and are included in the count of pupils present for lunch when calculating percentage uptake of school meals (Tables 3 and 8).
17. Some figures have been estimated for a school that did not make a return for the 2020/21 school meals census.
18. From the 2013/14 data collection onwards the previous categories of 'other lunch arrangements' and 'taking own food' have been merged together to create a 'pupils making other lunch arrangements' category, which includes pupils taking their own food. This was due to difficulties, expressed by some schools, in capturing accurate data for the categories previously used.
19. Free school meal entitlement (FSME) data for special schools was not validated prior to 2014/15.
20. Figures for primary schools may include nursery and/or reception pupils attending primary schools and preparatory departments.

Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on data for uptake of school meals

21. As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, on the date for the school meals census (6 November 2020) many schools were not experiencing typical numbers of pupils present on site in school or accessing the school meals service. Using data collected by DE on school attendance during the COVID-19 outbreak it is estimated that around 9000 pupils (excluding Nursery schools) may have been present but engaged in distance learning on the reference date. The instructions for the school meals data collection informed schools that they should include in their count of pupils present those pupils who are not in school but who are engaged in distance learning. As these pupils could not access the school meals service they were to be recorded as making other lunch arrangements, unless they were in receipt of a free food parcel (see paragraph 22 below). This will have contributed to a reduced uptake figure for school meals and free school meals.
22. The Department's Food in Schools Team wrote to School Principals on 2 November 2020 regarding making food provision (food parcels) to pupils entitled to free school meals who are unable to attend school due to COVID-19 and who wish such provision (Notice 15). In order to capture this provision schools were asked to include it in their free school meals uptake figures where a pupil was not present in school but engaged in distance learning and in receipt of the provision on the reference date. Schools reported that 231 pupils engaged in distance learning were in receipt of food parcels on the reference date.
23. The school meals census had originally been scheduled for 9 October 2020. However, due to circumstances relating to the COVID-19 crisis, free school meal entitlement numbers recorded by schools in October were significantly lower than expected. The Education Authority and the Department agreed there would be an extension to the closing date for free school meal entitlement applications to be counted on the main

school census until the 6th November. As a result the reference date for the school meals uptake census was also moved to 6th November so that free school meal uptake and entitlement data would be better aligned.

24. On 6 November it was possible for an application to have already been made for free school meal entitlement for a pupil but the application had not yet been processed due to COVID-related issues. The pupil therefore did not have entitlement to a free school meal on that date. While arrangements were in place that would result in that pupil being retrospectively counted in the free school meal entitlement count once the application had been processed and was successful, on 6 November when the uptake of meals was counted the pupil would not have had entitlement to a free school meal and may not have been able to receive a free meal. This would translate as a reduced uptake level of free school meals. Information provided by the Education Authority suggests that 1610 pupils had applications for FSM submitted on their behalf by the cut-off date of 6 November which were processed later and included in the count at 6 November. However, information gained through validation checks suggests that some schools may have provided a free meal to pupils in need, without established entitlement at that point. It is not possible to quantify the exact impact on the free school meal uptake rate.
25. Some schools commented as part of their return that they were only providing a meals service to pupils entitled to free school meals. It was also reported by some that they were not yet providing a hot meals service and there was some reported anecdotal evidence that pupils entitled to free schools meals were declining the meal on offer in favour of bringing their own lunch. These factors are also likely to have impacted on the uptake rate of school meals, both paid and free.
26. A small number of schools did not respond to follow up data validation checks despite multiple contacts. The risk of the data for these schools being incorrect is thought to be low.

Other useful information

27. Information presenting uptake of school meals in Northern Ireland, England and Scotland was discontinued as policy differences between the regions and availability of up-to-date information for other regions make comparisons difficult.
28. The figures in this statistical bulletin may be subject to minor revision and these will be notified in accordance with our revisions policy. This can be accessed at [DE website \(opens in a new window; https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/statistical-policies\)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/statistical-policies)
29. More detail about the collection of data on school meals can be found on the DE website. This can be accessed at [DE website \(opens in a new window; https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-meals-data-collection-and-validation\)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-meals-data-collection-and-validation)
30. The Statistics and Research section of the DE website ([DE website \(opens in a new window; https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research-1\)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research-1)) also presents data from the school meals census. Statistics on school enrolments, school performance, pupil attendance, teacher numbers, pupil:teacher ratios, school leaver destinations and qualifications may also be accessed via the website.

General

31. The following symbols may be used in the tables in this statistical bulletin:
* = Relates to fewer than 5 cases

= Number (5 or more) suppressed to prevent disclosure of small numbers elsewhere

- = Indicates no schools in this category

Further enquiries

32. For more details about the statistics contained in this statistical bulletin, to request further information and analysis, or to provide any feedback on this publication please contact:

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Email: mealcensus@education-ni.gov.uk

33. Press enquiries should be made to the Department's Press Office at the same address, telephone (028) 9127 9268/ fax (028) 9127 9271.

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Table 1: Number and type of meals taken on school meals census day, by school type and school management type: 2020/21

School Type	Management Type	Meals provided by school ¹			Other meals ²	Total ^{1,2,3}
		Paid school meals ³	Free school meals ¹	All school meals ^{1,3}	Pupils making other lunch arrangements (including own food)	
Nursery Schools ⁴	Controlled	1,072	764	1,836	169	2,005
	Catholic Maintained	527	618	1,145	127	1,272
	TOTAL	1,599	1,382	2,981	296	3,277
Primary ⁵ and Preparatory Departments	Controlled	18,345	16,128	34,473	41,754	76,227
	Voluntary	839	13	852	598	1,450
	Catholic Maintained	21,721	20,087	41,808	34,421	76,229
	Other Maintained	801	1,152	1,953	1,721	3,674
	Controlled Integrated	663	1,120	1,783	2,414	4,197
	Grant Maintained Integrated	1,216	1,203	2,419	3,919	6,338
	TOTAL	43,585	39,703	83,288	84,827	168,115
	Secondary (Non Grammar)	Controlled	6,933	6,917	13,850	12,962
Catholic Maintained		9,397	11,715	21,112	12,808	33,920
Other Maintained		55	474	529	402	931
Controlled Integrated		411	689	1,100	1,541	2,641
Grant Maintained Integrated		2,539	2,859	5,398	3,741	9,139
TOTAL		19,335	22,654	41,989	31,454	73,443
Grammar		Controlled	3,724	1,084	4,808	8,743
	Voluntary	21,004	5,097	26,101	21,216	47,317
	TOTAL	24,728	6,181	30,909	29,959	60,868
Post-Primary	TOTAL	44,063	28,835	72,898	61,413	134,311
Special	Controlled	982	2,208	3,190	1,647	4,837
	Catholic Maintained	17	177	194	104	298
	Other Maintained	11	38	49	15	64
	TOTAL	1,010	2,423	3,433	1,766	5,199
All Grant-aided Schools	Controlled	31,056	27,101	58,157	65,275	123,432
	Voluntary	21,843	5,110	26,953	21,814	48,767
	Catholic Maintained	31,662	32,597	64,259	47,460	111,719
	Other Maintained	867	1,664	2,531	2,138	4,669
	Controlled Integrated	1,074	1,809	2,883	3,955	6,838
	Grant Maintained Integrated	3,755	4,062	7,817	7,660	15,477
	GRAND TOTAL	90,257	72,343	162,600	148,302	310,902

Source: NI school meals census 2020/21

¹Includes food provision by the Education Authority (EA) and individual Voluntary Grammar and Grant-Maintained Integrated Schools for pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) who were unable to attend school due to COVID-19 restrictions but who were engaging in distance learning (see background note 22).

²Excludes pupils present on school meals census day whose school day did not include a lunch break, including part-time nursery pupils and some P1 pupils (see background note 14). Includes pupils who were engaging in distance learning from home (see background note 21).

³Paid meal figures presented are equated meals: Where schools have a cash cafeteria system for lunch the meal numbers are calculated based on lunchtime income. Income from morning break provision is also included in the calculation of meal numbers (see background note 13).

⁴Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

⁵Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools.

Table 2: Percentage and type of meals taken on school meals census day, by school type and school management type: 2020/21

School Type	Management Type	Meals provided by school ¹			Other meals ²	Total ^{1,2,3}
		Paid school meals ³ %	Free school meals ¹ %	All school meals ^{1,3} %	Pupils making other lunch arrangements (including own food) %	
Nursery Schools ⁴	Controlled	53.5	38.1	91.6	8.4	100.0
	Catholic Maintained	41.4	48.6	90.0	10.0	100.0
	TOTAL	48.8	42.2	91.0	9.0	100.0
Primary ⁵ and Preparatory Departments	Controlled	24.1	21.2	45.2	54.8	100.0
	Voluntary	57.9	0.9	58.8	41.2	100.0
	Catholic Maintained	28.5	26.4	54.8	45.2	100.0
	Other Maintained	21.8	31.4	53.2	46.8	100.0
	Controlled Integrated	15.8	26.7	42.5	57.5	100.0
	Grant Maintained Integrated	19.2	19.0	38.2	61.8	100.0
	TOTAL	25.9	23.6	49.5	50.5	100.0
Secondary (Non Grammar)	Controlled	25.9	25.8	51.7	48.3	100.0
	Catholic Maintained	27.7	34.5	62.2	37.8	100.0
	Other Maintained	5.9	50.9	56.8	43.2	100.0
	Controlled Integrated	15.6	26.1	41.7	58.3	100.0
	Grant Maintained Integrated	27.8	31.3	59.1	40.9	100.0
	TOTAL	26.3	30.8	57.2	42.8	100.0
Grammar	Controlled	27.5	8.0	35.5	64.5	100.0
	Voluntary	44.4	10.8	55.2	44.8	100.0
	TOTAL	40.6	10.2	50.8	49.2	100.0
Post-Primary	TOTAL	32.8	21.5	54.3	45.7	100.0
Special	Controlled	20.3	45.6	65.9	34.1	100.0
	Catholic Maintained	5.7	59.4	65.1	34.9	100.0
	Other Maintained	17.2	59.4	76.6	23.4	100.0
	TOTAL	19.4	46.6	66.0	34.0	100.0
All Grant-aided Schools	Controlled	25.2	22.0	47.1	52.9	100.0
	Voluntary	44.8	10.5	55.3	44.7	100.0
	Catholic Maintained	28.3	29.2	57.5	42.5	100.0
	Other Maintained	18.6	35.6	54.2	45.8	100.0
	Controlled Integrated	15.7	26.5	42.2	57.8	100.0
	Grant Maintained Integrated	24.3	26.2	50.5	49.5	100.0
	GRAND TOTAL	29.0	23.3	52.3	47.7	100.0

Source: NI school meals census 2020/21

Figures may not add due to rounding.

¹Includes food provision by the Education Authority (EA) and individual Voluntary Grammar and Grant-Maintained Integrated Schools for pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) who were unable to attend school due to COVID-19 restrictions but who were engaging in distance learning (see background note 22).

²Excludes pupils present on school meals census day whose school day did not include a lunch break, including part-time nursery pupils and some P1 pupils (see background note 14). Includes pupils who were engaging in distance learning from home (see background note 21).

³Paid meal figures presented are equated meals: Where schools have a cash cafeteria system for lunch the meal numbers are calculated based on lunchtime income. Income from morning break provision is also included in the calculation of meal numbers (see background note 13).

⁴Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

⁵Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools.

Table 3: Uptake of school meals (free and paid) - number and percentage of pupils present for lunch on school meals census day, by school type and school management type: 2017/18- 2020/21

School Type	Management Type	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
		School meals provided ¹	Uptake ² %	School meals provided ¹	Uptake ² %	School meals provided ¹	Uptake ² %	School meals provided ^{1, 5}	Uptake ^{2, 5} %
Nursery Schools ³	Controlled	1,847	96.8	1,802	96.0	1,906	95.6	1,836	91.6
	Catholic Maintained	1,088	91.1	1,084	90.0	1,168	92.0	1,145	90.0
	TOTAL	2,935	94.6	2,886	93.6	3,074	94.2	2,981	91.0
Primary ⁴ and Preparatory Departments	Controlled	39,957	51.2	39,935	51.1	39,631	51.1	34,473	45.3
	Voluntary	1,079	67.4	1,110	71.2	1,034	69.0	852	58.8
	Catholic Maintained	47,304	60.4	47,427	60.5	47,268	60.5	41,808	54.9
	Other Maintained	2,253	63.0	2,290	62.1	2,244	60.4	1,953	53.2
	Controlled Integrated	2,009	50.3	2,057	49.5	1,998	48.8	1,783	42.5
	Grant Maintained Integrated	3,030	50.6	3,183	53.7	3,227	52.8	2,419	38.3
	TOTAL	95,632	55.8	96,002	55.9	95,402	55.7	83,288	49.6
Secondary (Non Grammar)	Controlled	15,246	60.3	15,307	59.3	15,234	57.5	13,850	51.9
	Catholic Maintained	23,115	69.0	23,036	67.9	23,327	68.0	21,112	62.2
	Other Maintained	444	65.7	404	55.9	467	57.1	529	57.4
	Controlled Integrated	1,132	50.0	1,217	48.5	1,333	50.2	1,100	41.7
	Grant Maintained Integrated	6,674	76.1	6,852	75.4	7,140	78.5	5,398	59.1
TOTAL	46,611	66.1	46,816	65.0	47,501	64.7	41,989	57.2	
Grammar	Controlled	7,010	51.8	6,929	51.7	6,599	48.9	4,808	35.1
	Voluntary	28,832	62.0	29,222	62.9	30,497	64.8	26,101	55.4
TOTAL	35,842	59.7	36,151	60.4	37,096	61.3	30,909	50.8	
Post-Primary	TOTAL	82,453	63.2	82,967	62.9	84,597	63.2	72,898	54.3
Special	Controlled	3,225	69.8	3,310	68.3	3,400	67.7	3,190	65.4
	Catholic Maintained	181	79.0	185	74.0	196	78.7	194	65.1
	Other Maintained	52	69.3	53	72.6	53	79.1	49	76.6
	TOTAL	3,458	70.2	3,548	68.6	3,649	68.4	3,433	65.6
All Grant-aided Schools	Controlled	67,285	54.5	67,283	54.2	66,770	53.6	58,157	47.1
	Voluntary	29,911	62.2	30,332	63.1	31,531	65.0	26,953	55.5
	Catholic Maintained	71,688	63.3	71,732	63.1	71,959	63.1	64,259	57.5
	Other Maintained	2,749	63.5	2,747	61.2	2,764	60.1	2,531	54.3
	Controlled Integrated	3,141	50.2	3,274	49.1	3,331	49.4	2,883	42.2
	Grant Maintained Integrated	9,704	65.7	10,035	66.8	10,367	68.2	7,817	50.6
	GRAND TOTAL	184,478	59.5	185,403	59.4	186,722	59.5	162,600	52.3

Source: NI school meals census 2017/18 - 2020/21

¹Meal figures presented are equated meals: Where schools have a cash cafeteria system for lunch the meal numbers are calculated based on lunchtime income. Income from morning break provision is also included in the calculation of meal numbers (see background note 13).

²Uptake is expressed as the number of school meals provided (free and paid) as a percentage of the number of pupils present for lunch on census day. Pupils present for lunch excludes pupils present on school meals census day whose school day did not include a lunch break, including part-time nursery pupils and some P1 pupils (see background note 14).

³Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

⁴Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools

⁵In 2020/21 the school meal numbers include food provision to pupils who were unable to attend school due to COVID-19 but who were engaging in distance learning. The uptake figure is based on the number of pupils present for lunch on census day, including pupils who were engaging in distance learning (see background notes 21-22).

Table 4: Number and percentage of school meals provided (free and paid) by type of meal provision, school type and school management type: 2020/21

School Type	Management Type	Traditional meals		Cash cafeteria meals ¹	
		Number	%	Number	%
Nursery Schools ²	Controlled	1,836	100.0	0	0.0
	Catholic Maintained	1,145	100.0	0	0.0
	TOTAL	2,981	100.0	0	0.0
Primary ³ and Preparatory Departments	Controlled	34,166	99.1	307	0.9
	Voluntary	762	89.4	90	10.6
	Catholic Maintained	41,665	99.7	143	0.3
	Other Maintained	1,953	100.0	0	0.0
	Controlled Integrated	1,783	100.0	0	0.0
	Grant Maintained Integrated	2,395	99.0	24	1.0
	TOTAL	82,724	99.3	564	0.7
Secondary (Non Grammar)	Controlled	546	3.9	13,304	96.1
	Catholic Maintained	2,484	11.8	18,628	88.2
	Other Maintained	432	81.7	97	18.3
	Controlled Integrated	104	9.5	996	90.5
	Grant Maintained Integrated	1,113	20.6	4,285	79.4
	TOTAL	4,679	11.1	37,310	88.9
Grammar	Controlled	0	0.0	4,808	100.0
	Voluntary	961	3.7	25,140	96.3
	TOTAL	961	3.1	29,948	96.9
Post-Primary	TOTAL	5,640	7.7	67,258	92.3
Special	Controlled	3,088	96.8	102	3.2
	Catholic Maintained	194	100.0	0	0.0
	Other Maintained	49	100.0	0	0.0
	TOTAL	3,331	97.0	102	3.0
All Grant-aided Schools	Controlled	39,636	68.2	18,521	31.8
	Voluntary	1,723	6.4	25,230	93.6
	Catholic Maintained	45,488	70.8	18,771	29.2
	Other Maintained	2,434	96.2	97	3.8
	Controlled Integrated	1,887	65.5	996	34.5
	Grant Maintained Integrated	3,508	44.9	4,309	55.1
	GRAND TOTAL	94,676	58.2	67,924	41.8

Source: NI school meals census 2020/21

¹Cash cafeteria meal figures presented are equated meals: Where schools have a cash cafeteria system for lunch the meal numbers are calculated based on lunchtime income. Income from morning break provision is also included in the calculation of meal numbers (see background note 13).

²Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

³Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools

⁴Due to COVID-19 schools may not have provided their usual type of meal but for the purposes of this Census they still recorded the meals as per their usual type of provision (Traditional or Cash cafeteria).

Table 5: Uptake of school meals (free and paid) - number and percentage of pupils present for lunch on school meals census day, according to relative free school meal entitlement, by school type: 2020/21

Proportion entitled to free school meals	School Type	Paid school meals ¹		Free school meals ³		All meals provided ^{1,3,4}	
		School meals provided	Uptake ² %	School meals provided	Uptake ² %	School meals provided	Uptake ² %
10% and less	Nursery Schools ⁴	44	#	*	#	#	100.0
	Primary ⁵ and Preparatory Departments	5,588	34.5	869	5.4	6,457	39.9
	Secondary (non grammar)	0	-	0	-	0	-
	Grammar	9,613	41.4	1,261	5.4	10,874	46.8
	Post-primary	9,613	41.4	1,261	5.4	10,874	46.8
	Special	0	-	0	-	0	-
	All Grant-aided Schools⁶	15,245	#	#	#	#	44.0
10.1% - 20.0%	Nursery Schools ⁴	258	72.9	66	18.6	324	91.5
	Primary ⁵ and Preparatory Departments	14,446	30.5	5,936	12.5	20,382	43.1
	Secondary (non grammar)	1,591	30.1	690	13.0	2,281	43.1
	Grammar	11,579	42.6	2,748	10.1	14,327	52.8
	Post-primary	13,170	40.6	3,438	10.6	16,608	51.2
	Special	0	-	0	-	0	-
	All Grant-aided Schools⁶	27,874	34.8	9,440	11.8	37,314	46.6
20.1% - 40.0%	Nursery Schools ⁴	830	57.6	409	28.4	1,239	86.0
	Primary ⁵ and Preparatory Departments	18,426	25.8	16,803	23.5	35,229	49.3
	Secondary (non grammar)	13,882	31.5	10,753	24.4	24,635	55.8
	Grammar	3,536	33.8	2,172	20.8	5,708	54.5
	Post-primary	17,418	31.9	12,925	23.7	30,343	55.6
	Special	301	25.5	392	33.2	693	58.8
	All Grant-aided Schools⁶	36,975	28.7	30,529	23.7	67,504	52.5
40.1% +	Nursery Schools ⁴	467	32.5	904	63.0	1,371	95.5
	Primary ⁵ and Preparatory Departments	5,125	15.5	16,095	48.8	21,220	64.3
	Secondary (non grammar)	3,862	16.1	11,211	46.8	15,073	62.9
	Grammar	0	-	0	-	0	-
	Post-primary	3,862	16.1	11,211	46.8	15,073	62.9
	Special	709	17.5	2,031	50.1	2,740	67.6
	All Grant-aided Schools⁶	10,163	16.3	30,241	48.4	40,404	64.7

Source: NI school meals census 2020/21

¹Meal figures presented are equated meals: Where schools have a cash cafeteria system for lunch the meal numbers are calculated based on lunchtime income. Income from morning break provision is also included in the calculation of meal numbers (see background note 13).

²Uptake is expressed as the number of school meals provided (free and paid) as a percentage of the number of pupils present for lunch on census day. Pupils present for lunch excludes pupils present on school meals census day whose school day did not include a lunch break, including part-time nursery pupils and some P1 pupils (see background note 14) but includes pupils who were engaging in distance learning from home (see background note 21).

³Includes food provision by the Education Authority (EA) and individual Voluntary Grammar and Grant-Maintained Integrated Schools for pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) who were unable to attend school due to COVID-19 restrictions but who were engaging in distance learning (see background note 22).

⁴Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

⁵Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools

⁶Does not include pupils attending EOTAS centres.

Table 6: Number and percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals¹ by school type: 2017/18 - 2020/21

		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Total enrolment	Nursery Schools ³	5,837	5,832	5,824	5,835
	Primary ⁴ and Preparatory Departments	183,453	184,245	183,711	183,079
	Secondary (non grammar)	77,727	79,377	81,662	84,520
	Grammar	62,818	62,862	63,423	64,398
	Special	5,735	5,959	6,174	6,403
	All Grant-aided Schools⁵	335,570	338,275	340,794	344,235
Entitlement to free school meals¹	Nursery Schools ³	1,952	1,997	1,983	2,064
	Primary ⁴ and Preparatory Departments	55,536	54,117	52,011	52,145
	Secondary (non grammar)	30,866	31,080	30,833	31,372
	Grammar	8,951	8,848	8,665	8,793
	Special	2,949	3,100	3,194	3,257
	All Grant-aided Schools⁵	100,254	99,142	96,686	97,631
Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals^{1,2}	Nursery Schools ³	33.4	34.2	34.0	35.4
	Primary ⁴ and Preparatory Departments	30.3	29.4	28.3	28.5
	Secondary (non grammar)	39.7	39.2	37.8	37.1
	Grammar	14.2	14.1	13.7	13.7
	Special	51.4	52.0	51.7	50.9
	All Grant-aided Schools⁵	29.9	29.3	28.4	28.4

Source: NI school census 2017/18 - 2020/21

¹Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment Support Allowance where an award of income-based job-seekers allowance has been converted and the amount of the award remains unchanged; and Universal Credit are some of the benefits which determine eligibility for free school meals. As school meals are not universally available to children in pre-school education, parental receipt of these benefits is a better indicator of social disadvantage for the pre-school sector.

²Percentages express the number of pupils entitled to free school meals in a particular category (e.g. those at primary school) as a proportion of the total pupil enrolment in the same category.

³Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

⁴Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools.

⁵Does not include pupils attending EOTAS centres.

Table 7: Number and percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals¹, by school type and school management type: 2020/21

School Type	Management Type	Pupils entitled to free school meals ¹	Free school meal entitlement ² %
Nursery Schools³	Controlled	1,269	30.9
	Catholic Maintained	795	46.1
	TOTAL	2,064	35.4
Primary⁴ and Preparatory Department	Controlled	22,326	26.8
	Voluntary	17	1.1
	Catholic Maintained	25,180	30.4
	Other Maintained	1,449	35.0
	Controlled Integrated	1,416	31.8
	Grant Maintained Integrated	1,757	25.3
TOTAL	52,145	28.5	
Secondary (Non Grammar)	Controlled	10,498	34.2
	Catholic Maintained	15,577	39.6
	Other Maintained	508	49.9
	Controlled Integrated	1,122	36.1
	Grant Maintained Integrated	3,667	35.4
TOTAL	31,372	37.1	
Grammar	Controlled	1,801	12.4
	Voluntary	6,992	14.0
	TOTAL	8,793	13.7
Post-Primary	TOTAL	40,165	27.0
Special	Controlled	2,999	50.0
	Catholic Maintained	220	66.1
	Other Maintained	38	50.0
	TOTAL	3,257	50.9
All Grant-aided Schools⁵	Controlled	38,893	28.1
	Voluntary	7,009	13.6
	Catholic Maintained	41,772	33.6
	Other Maintained	1,995	38.1
	Controlled Integrated	2,538	33.6
	Grant Maintained Integrated	5,424	31.4
GRAND TOTAL	97,631	28.4	

Source: NI school census 2020/21

¹Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment Support Allowance where an award of income-based job-seekers allowance has been converted and the amount of the award remains unchanged; and Universal Credit are some of the benefits which determine eligibility for free school meals. As school meals are not universally available to children in pre-school education, parental receipt of these benefits is a better indicator of social disadvantage for the pre-school sector.

²Percentages express the number of pupils entitled to free school meals in a particular category (e.g. those at primary school) as a proportion of the total pupil enrolment in the same category.

³Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

⁴Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools.

⁵Does not include pupils attending EOTAS centres.

Table 8: Number and percentage of pupils taking free school meals as a proportion of all school meals provided and as a proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals¹, by school type and school management type: 2020/21

School Type	Management Type	Free school meals taken by pupils present ²	Free meals as a proportion of all school meals provided ³ %	Free school meals taken as a proportion of pupils entitled ¹ %
Nursery Schools ⁴	Controlled	764	41.6	79.8
	Catholic Maintained	618	54.0	86.1
	TOTAL	1,382	46.4	82.5
Primary ⁵ and Preparatory Department	Controlled	16,128	46.8	73.2
	Voluntary	13	1.5	76.5
	Catholic Maintained	20,087	48.0	80.6
	Other Maintained	1,152	59.0	81.1
	Controlled Integrated	1,120	62.8	79.9
	Grant Maintained Integrated	1,203	49.7	70.5
	TOTAL	39,703	47.7	77.1
Secondary (Non grammar)	Controlled	6,917	49.9	65.9
	Catholic Maintained	11,715	55.5	75.2
	Other Maintained	474	89.6	93.3
	Controlled Integrated	689	62.6	61.4
	Grant Maintained Integrated	2,859	53.0	78.0
	TOTAL	22,654	54.0	72.2
Grammar	Controlled	1,084	22.5	60.2
	Voluntary	5,097	19.5	72.9
	TOTAL	6,181	20.0	70.3
Post-Primary	TOTAL	28,835	39.6	71.8
Special	Controlled	2,208	69.2	74.0
	Catholic Maintained	177	91.2	80.5
	Other Maintained	38	77.6	100.0
	TOTAL	2,423	70.6	74.7
All grant-aided schools ⁶	Controlled	27,101	46.6	70.8
	Voluntary	5,110	19.0	72.9
	Catholic Maintained	32,597	50.7	78.7
	Other Maintained	1,664	65.7	84.6
	Controlled Integrated	1,809	62.7	71.7
	Grant Maintained Integrated	4,062	52.0	75.6
	GRAND TOTAL	72,343	44.5	74.9

Source: NI school meals census 2020/21

¹For the purposes of calculating uptake of free school meals by pupils entitled the denominator used is based on full-time pupils only and excludes pupils counted under the proxy measure of free school meal entitlement (parental receipt of qualifying benefits). This only applies to nursery and primary schools. See background note 15.

²Includes food provision by the Education Authority (EA) and individual Voluntary Grammar and Grant-Maintained Integrated Schools for pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) who were unable to attend school due to COVID-19 restrictions but who were engaging in distance learning (see background note 22).

³Percentages express the number of pupils taking free school meals in a particular category (e.g. those at primary school) as a proportion of all school meals provided in the same category.

⁴Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

⁵Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools

⁶Does not include pupils attending EOTAS centres.

Table 9: Uptake of free school meals - number and percentage¹ of pupils entitled to free school meals, by school type: 2017/18 - 2020/21

		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Free school meals taken by pupils present²	Nursery Schools ⁴	1,230	1,238	1,321	1,382
	Primary and Preparatory Departments ⁴	45,658	44,955	43,027	39,703
	Secondary (non grammar)	23,680	23,628	23,299	22,654
	Grammar	7,273	7,116	7,016	6,181
	Special	2,374	2,501	2,547	2,423
	All grant-aided schools	80,215	79,438	77,210	72,343
Pupils entitled to free school meals³	Nursery Schools ⁴ (excluding part-time pupils and proxy FSME)	1,679	1,714	1,692	1,675
	Primary and Preparatory Departments ⁴ (excluding part-time pupils and proxy FSME)	54,852	53,482	51,493	51,484
	Secondary (non grammar)	30,866	31,080	30,833	31,372
	Grammar	8,951	8,848	8,665	8,793
	Special	2,949	3,100	3,184	3,242
	All grant-aided schools (excluding part-time pupils and proxy FSME)	99,297	98,224	95,867	96,566
Free school meals taken as a proportion of pupils entitled^{1,2,3}	Nursery Schools ⁴ (excluding part-time pupils and proxy FSME)	73.3	72.2	78.1	82.5
	Primary and Preparatory Departments ⁴ (excluding part-time pupils and proxy FSME)	83.2	84.1	83.6	77.1
	Secondary (non grammar)	76.7	76.0	75.6	72.2
	Grammar	81.3	80.4	81.0	70.3
	Special	80.5	80.7	80.0	74.7
	All grant-aided schools (excluding part-time pupils and proxy FSME)	80.8	80.9	80.5	74.9

Entitlement Source: NI school census 2017/18 - 2020/21

Uptake Source: NI school meals census 2017/18 - 2020/21

¹Percentages express the number of free school meals taken in a particular category (e.g. those at primary school) as a proportion of the number of pupils entitled to free school meals in the same category.

²Includes food provision by the Education Authority (EA) and individual Voluntary Grammar and Grant-Maintained Integrated Schools for pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) who were unable to attend school due to COVID-19 restrictions but who were engaging in distance learning (see background note 22).

³For the purposes of calculating uptake of free school meals by pupils entitled the free school meal entitlement figure used is based on full-time pupils only and excludes pupils counted under the proxy measure of free school meal entitlement (parental receipt of qualifying benefits). This only applies to nursery and primary schools. Figures prior to 2016/17 are not directly comparable. See background note 15.

⁴The nursery figures only include pupils at nursery schools. The primary figures include pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools.

Table 10: Adults taking school meals, by school type: 2020/21

	Adults taking school meal (free or paid)	Adults taking free school meal ¹ %
Nursery Schools ²	260	91.9
Primary ³ and Preparatory Departments	5,082	94.3
Secondary (non-grammar)	2,425	89.0
Grammar	1,497	71.9
Post-Primary Total	3,922	82.5
Special	661	99.1
All grant-aided schools	9,925	89.9

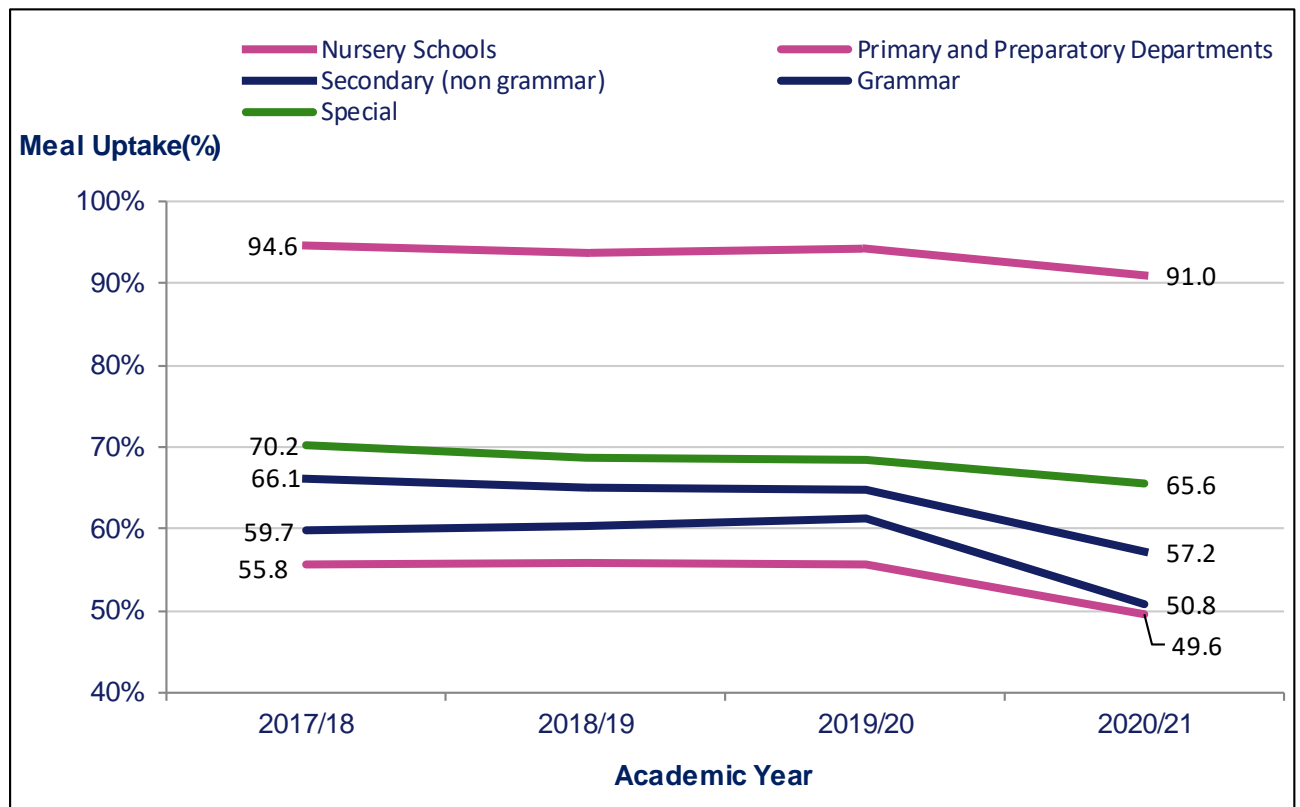
Source: NI school meals census 2020/21

¹Depending on their terms and conditions kitchen staff and mid-day supervisors may be entitled to a free mid-day meal. Those who opt in for a free meal have a small daily deduction per day from salary.

²Only includes nursery classes in nursery schools.

³Includes reception and nursery classes in primary schools.

Figure 1: Uptake of school meals (free and paid), by school type: 2017/18 - 2020/21



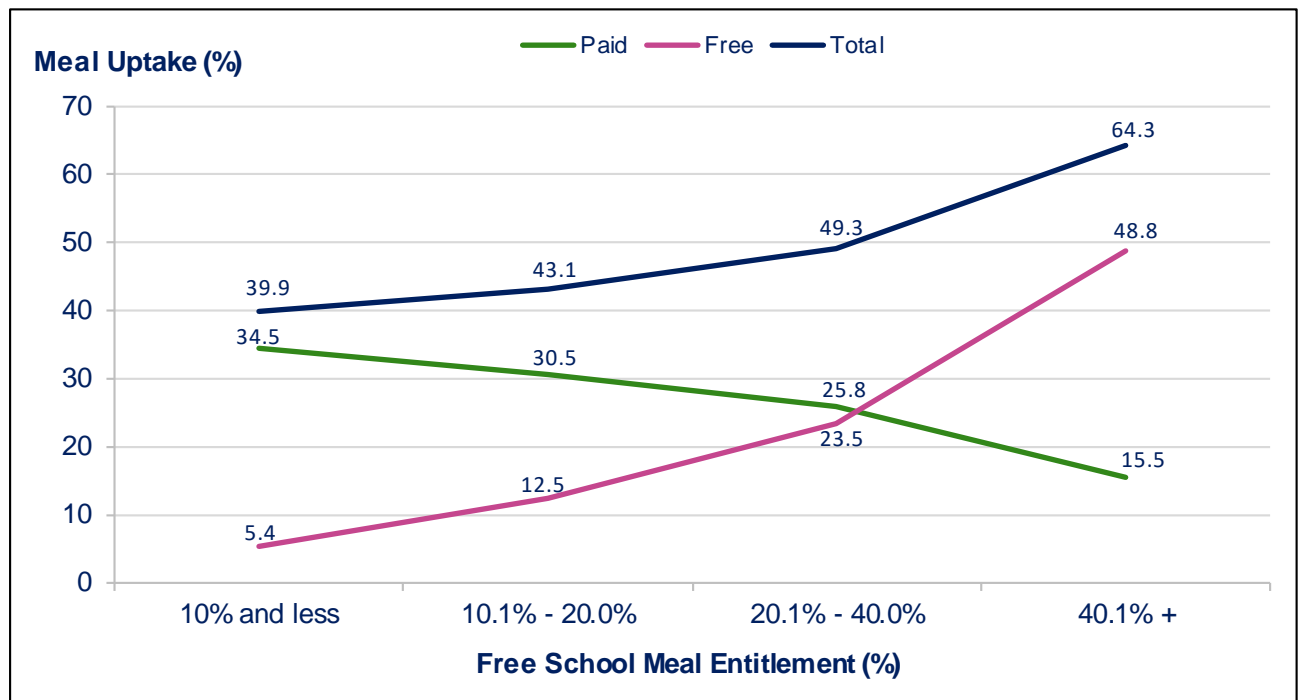
¹Nursery only includes pupils in nursery schools

²Primary includes pupils in reception and nursery classes

³In 2020/21 the school meal numbers include food provision to pupils who were unable to attend school due to COVID-19 but who were engaging in distance learning. The uptake figure is based on the number of pupils present for lunch on census day, including pupils who were engaging in distance learning.

⁴Data taken from Table 3

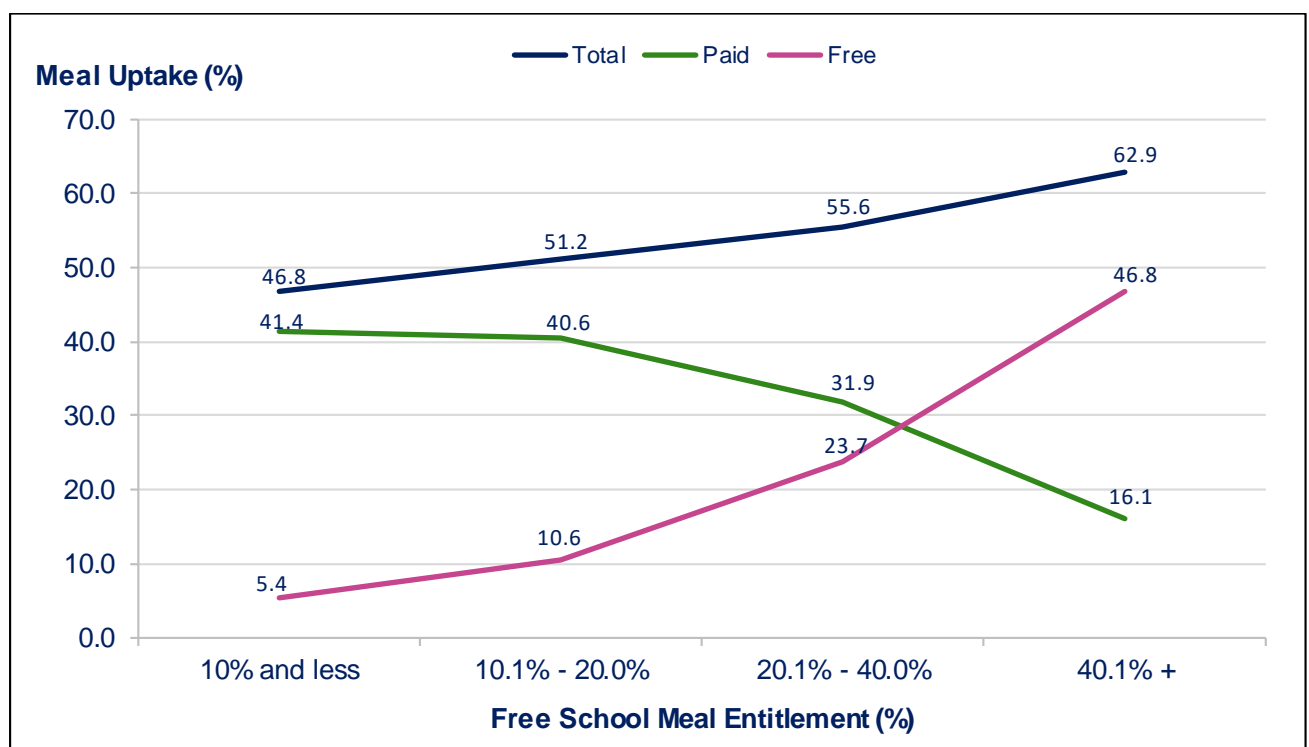
Figure 2: Uptake of school meals in primary schools, according to relative FSME 2020/21



¹Includes preparatory departments, pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools. Excludes schools where no meal service is available.

²Data taken from Table 5

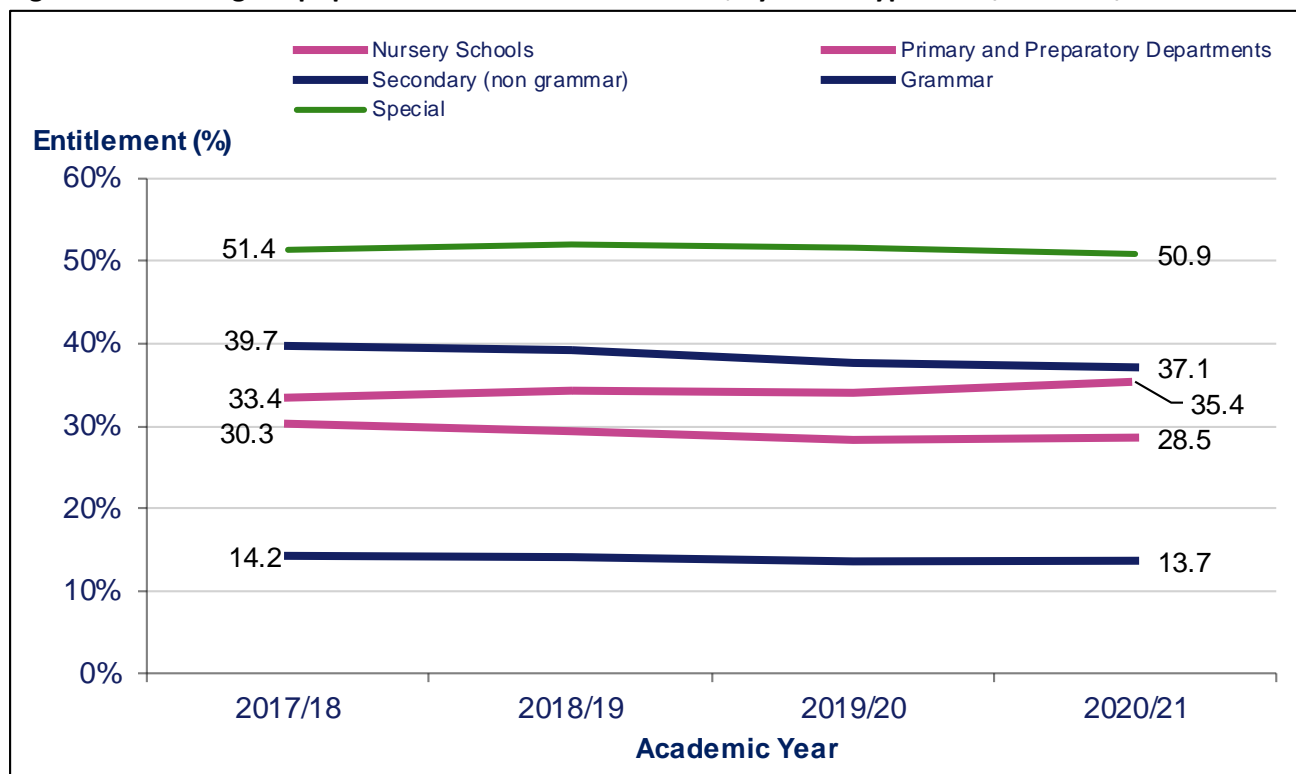
Figure 3: Uptake of school meals in post-primary schools, according to relative FSME 2020/21



¹Excludes schools where no meal service is available

²Data taken from Table 5

Figure 4: Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, by school type: 2017/18 - 2020/21

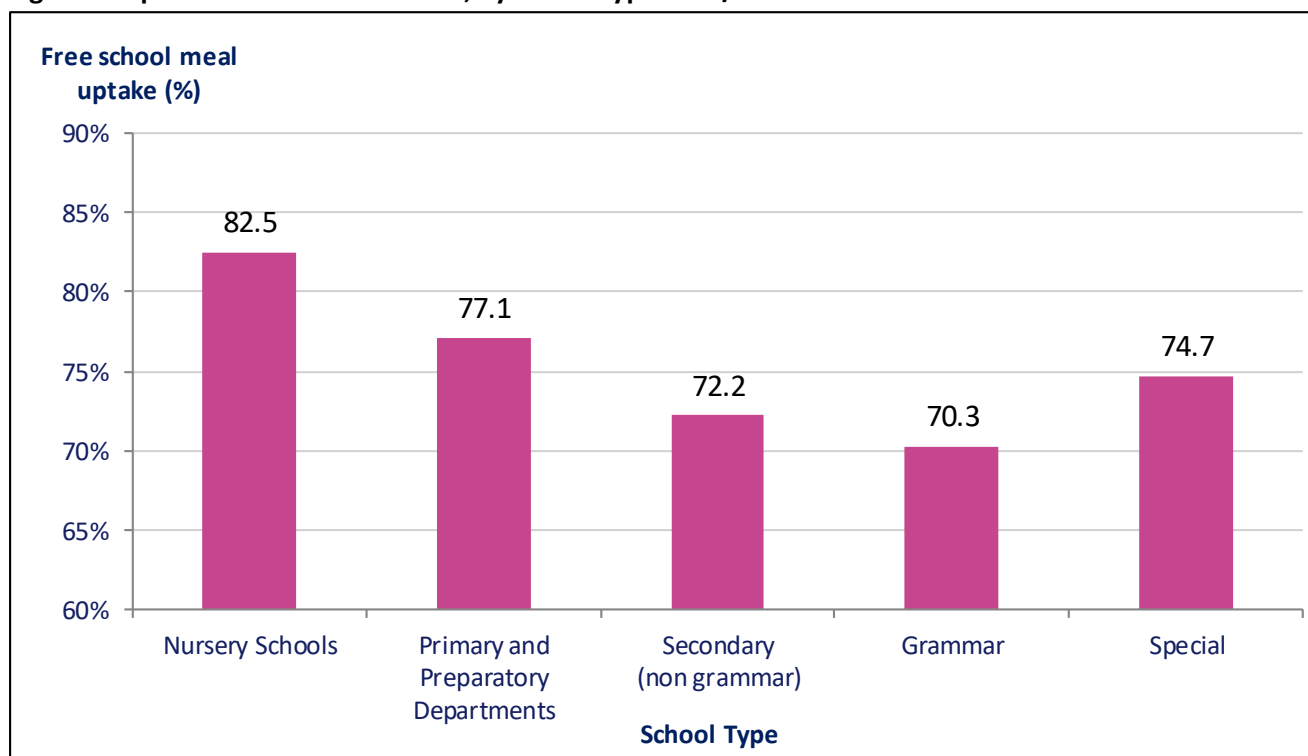


¹Nursery only includes pupils in nursery schools

²Primary includes pupils in reception and nursery classes

³Data taken from Table 7

Figure 5: Uptake of free school meals, by school type 2020/21



¹Nursery only includes pupils in nursery schools

²Primary includes pupils in reception and nursery classes

³Data taken from Table 9

Notes

School Management Types

Controlled schools are owned and managed by the Education Authority through Boards of Governors. Primary and secondary school Boards of Governors consist of representatives of transferors (mainly the Protestant Churches) along with representatives of parents, teachers and the Education Authority. Controlled nursery, grammar and special school boards of governors consist only of representatives of the latter 3 categories. Within the controlled school sector there are a number of integrated schools and a small but growing number of Irish-medium schools.

Catholic maintained schools are voluntary schools owned by trustees (appointed by the Roman Catholic Church) and managed by CCMS through boards of governors. Board of Governors consist of members nominated by the trustees along with representatives of parents, teachers and the Education Authority. Within the Catholic maintained sector there are a small number of Irish-medium schools.

Other maintained schools are voluntary schools owned by trustees and managed by Boards of Governors which consist of members nominated by trustees along with representatives of parents, teachers and the Education Authority. This sector includes a number of Irish Medium schools.

Voluntary grammar schools are owned by trustees and managed by Boards of Governors which consist of members nominated by trustees along with representatives of parents, teachers, the Department and, in most cases, the Education Authority. (Voluntary grammar schools vary in the rates of capital grant to which they are entitled depending on the management structure they have adopted, with the vast majority entitled to capital grants of 100%.)

Grant-maintained integrated schools are owned and managed by their Boards of Governors, which consist of foundation governors along with representatives of parents, teachers and the Department.

All of the above are types of grant-aided school. Independent Schools do not receive any funding from the Education Authority or the Department of Education.

Further background notes can be found within the School Meals Statistical Bulletin at:

[Statistics and Research - School meals statistical bulletins \(opens in a new window\)](#)