



Department
for Education

Early years benchmarking tables

Technical note

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Introduction

The purpose of this technical note is to give background information on the methodology which underpins the foundation years benchmarking tool. It contains information on the datasets used and any calculations done by the Department. It is divided into sections as follows:

- Funding
- Quality
- Take up of funded early education
- Staff Qualifications
- Child Development (EYFS Profile results)
- Contextual data

For each of the spreadsheets, users are able to compare authorities across the Children's Services Statistical Neighbours or with up to ten other authorities. A more detailed explanation of statistical neighbours can be found in Appendix A of the following guide:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/360557/LA_IT_user_guide.pdf

Early Years Funding

Introduction

The funding benchmarking table includes the projected spend on early years providers to deliver early learning places for two, three and four-year-olds. The funding spreadsheet includes a breakdown into provider types and includes expenditure lines from the Section 251 Budget LA Table.

The layout of the tables mirror those published in the schools benchmarking tables, showing the minimum, maximum, median and mean for each column. Graphs and pie charts are available to allow ready interpretation of the statistics.

The final table uses Section 251 budget statement data loaded on the COLLECT system as at 2 September 2014. All financial data is based on this return. This data has been summarised in a Statistical Release and in benchmarking tables:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/planned-expenditure-on-schools-education-and-childrens-services>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-benchmarking-tables-2014-to-2015>

The Funding Benchmarking Tables – calculation and underlying data

The spreadsheets are split into two sections: key budget statistics and benchmarking; and include separate worksheets for three and four year olds, two year olds and central spend information.

Summary for the key budget statistics

The key budget statistics gives the total number of pupils and the total projected spend on each of the provider types: PVI (Private, Voluntary & Independent), Nursery Schools and Primary Nursery Places.

The total number of pupils is calculated from the total number of hours reported in the budget return, on the basis of taking up 15 hours per week, 38 weeks per year. Note that this is 0.6 of the usual full time equivalent for pupils. Also note that this pupil count in the funding benchmarking table will not match the take up figure in the main benchmarking tables as the take up data is based on census data. The pupil counts are used as the divisor throughout the benchmarking part of the table.

The total delegated budget for three and four year olds is the sum of base rates, supplements, other formula and additional funded free hours as reported in the early years proforma for maintained nursery schools and primary nursery places. For PVI's this excludes any additional government funded hours which is accounted within the central spend data.

The total delegated budget for two year olds includes the sum of two year old base rates and supplements.

The key budget statistics in the central spend worksheet includes a summary of the total delegated budget for three and four year olds and for two year olds broken down by provider types.

This section also includes graphs to illustrate the total delegated budget and full time equivalent number of pupils per provider types for two, three and four year olds under the respective worksheets.

Summary for the benchmarking

The England mean and median are given for each of the columns as well as the figures for the selected local authorities. The mean, median, maximum and minimum of the selected local authorities is also given, where possible.

The benchmarking table shows the average cost per pupil and per hour by early years provider types.

Per Pupil

The average cost per pupil is given by provider types by taking the delegated budget and dividing by the total number of pupils, as calculated for the key budget statistics.

Per Hour

The average cost per hour is given by provider types by taking the delegated budget per pupil and dividing by 570. It is important to note that the hourly rate may not be the actual rate a provider receives. The data presented here is an average for each provider type across individual local authorities.

Central spend

The central spend budget data is the sum of:

- Early years contingency;
- Early years centrally retained spending; and
- Additional funded hours for PVI (funded hours beyond the statutory 15 hours a week) for three and four year olds.

This section also shows the percentage of centrally retained budget against the early years delegated budget. This is calculated by the sum of central spend and total delegated budgets for two, three and four year olds divided by the central spend.

This section also includes the government funded total revenue allocation for early learning for two year olds.

Early Years Proforma

The early years proforma provides more detailed information on how each local authority allocates early education funding. The proforma is intended to complement the benchmarking tables. The early years proforma contains, for each local authority, details of:

- The early years single funding formula (EYSFF) for two, three and four year olds, setting out the base rates, supplements and lump sums paid;
- Details on any additional hours funded by the authority;
- Information on how early years central spend is utilised; and
- The size of early years contingency funding.

Providing this greater level of detail, in a comparable format across every local authority, will enable a more detailed comparison by authorities, providers and others, on the use of early education funding locally.

Quality

Childcare and Early Years Settings

Figures for the percentage of childcare and Early Years settings rated good or outstanding by Ofsted are taken from *Official statistics: Early Years and childcare registered providers inspections and outcomes*.

The latest publication which reports on Early Years and childcare inspections that occurred between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2014 is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/early-years-and-childcare-registered-providers-inspections-and-outcomes-july-to-august-2014>

Full details of the background and methodology used in this release are available on the Ofsted website. The main points are summarised below.

Methodology

The data in this release are from inspections carried out between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2014.

This report includes data from inspections carried out since September 2012 under the new inspection arrangements for early years providers. A key change is the reduction in the number of judgements that are reported. From September 2012 there are now four, including an overall effectiveness judgement. This judgement is comparable with the overall effectiveness judgement made in the previous inspection cycle.

Statistics relating to inspections carried out between 1 July 2014 and 31 August 2014 are provisional and include inspections in the period where the inspection report was published by 30 September 2014.

Statistics relating to the most recent inspection outcome of providers include inspections from 1 September 2008 up to 31 August 2014, where the inspection report was also published at that date. This means that where the most recent inspection outcome of a provider took place during the period, but the report was not published at the end of the period, it will be excluded from the analysis. Where there is one, the outcome of the next most recent inspection will be included in the analysis instead.

Data on provider type are taken from the end of the reporting period rather than at the point of inspection. As such, graded outcomes from Early Years Register inspections can occasionally be shown against providers that would not normally receive these inspections (such as home childcarers) if they changed provider type after their inspection but before the end of the reporting period.

Early years and childcare providers are allocated to local authority areas according to their postcode, using the National Statistics Postcode Directory. For a small number of providers, local authority and region information was not available at the time of analysis. These providers are categorised as 'Local authority not recorded' and 'Region not recorded'.

A small proportion of early years registered providers are inspected as part of a school inspection. The outcomes from these providers are not included in this release, but will be covered within Ofsted's official statistics on maintained schools inspection and outcomes and independent schools inspections and outcomes.

Revisions are published in line with Ofsted's revisions policy for official statistics. For more information about the policy please visit the Ofsted website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-standards-for-official-statistics>

The current inspection framework has been revised for inspections from 4 November 2013 onwards and the satisfactory grade has been replaced by requires improvement. Before this a new inspection framework for providers on the Early Years Register and on the Childcare Register commenced in September 2012, and replaced the framework published in September 2008.

For more information about the new framework please go to the Ofsted website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/framework-for-the-regulation-of-provision-on-the-early-years-register>

Take up of funded early education

Figures for the number and percentage of two, three and four-year-olds benefiting from some funded early education are based on the SFR series *DfE: Provision for Children Under Five Years of Age in England* – January 2012 to January 2014.

The January 2014 publication is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provision-for-children-under-5-years-of-age-january-2014>

Full details of the background and methodology are published in the statistical first release. The main points are summarised below.

Background and Methodology

The number of two, three and four-year-olds benefiting from some funded early education is a count of children in receipt of some funded early education, but where they are receiving funded provision at more than one provider, they have only been counted once; it is a unique count of children. The percentage of three and four-year-olds benefitting from some funded early education is calculated using mid-year population estimates from Office for National Statistics (ONS) (see population estimates section below for more details).

All four-year-olds have been entitled to a funded early education place since 1998 and from April 2004 this entitlement was extended to all three year olds.

From September 2013, the entitlement to 15 hours of funded early education per week was extended to 2-year-olds meeting certain economic eligibility criteria (see the statistical first release for more information).

Funded places can be accessed in a variety of settings in the maintained and private, voluntary and independent sectors and Local Authorities (LAs) make funding available to all providers to enable them to provide funded places.

Population Estimates

The population estimates are derived from mid-year estimates and projections provided by the ONS. They are subject to a margin of error and should be considered to be approximations.

Population estimates at lower geographic levels, such as local authority, are subject to a greater degree of error than national population estimates. Also population estimates for individual age groups are more difficult to estimate; in this publication we only include children aged three or four. In some cases, local authority take-up rates can exceed 100 per cent. Therefore, take-up rates at local authority level should be treated with more caution than national take-up rates.

However, take-up rates have been presented in the publication at local authority level as there are valid reasons for why the take-up rate can exceed 100 per cent (see section below). Also, the sources used in the calculation of take-up rates are consistent over time; therefore rates have been published as they allow a user to see any valid change in take-up rates in a local authority over time.

The reasons why the take-up rate can exceed 100 per cent are:

- i). While national level estimates have relatively small levels of uncertainty, issues using ONS estimates exist. Firstly, ONS estimates only include long-term migrants, i.e. a person who changes their permanent residence for more than a year, while the Early Years Census includes all children, even if they are defined as being short-term migrants. The implication of this is that take up percentages are likely to be overestimated and could well exceed 100%.
- ii). Secondly sub-national ONS estimates are subject to greater levels of uncertainty. One of the reasons for this is due to the difficulties of estimating internal migration where estimates use changes in health service administrative data to approximate measures of movements of individuals between areas within the UK. International migration estimates, which affects both national and sub-national estimates, uses a combination of sources - predominantly the International Passenger Survey (IPS) which is subject to sampling and other types of error. These issues could under or overestimate the underlying population and therefore take up percentages.
- iii). Thirdly the national census has only been carried out every 10 years. Following the census previous years' estimates are revised – when the 2011 census results became available, estimates from 2002 to 2010 were revised to ensure a coherent time series between the Census points. Since the greatest uncertainty around the estimates comes from the migration components, the further from the Census the estimates are, the greater the uncertainty. Once more this could lead to over or underestimation of take-up rates.

Sources of data

The source for this publication is the Early Years Census and School Census. All schools and all Private, Voluntary, and Independent (PVI) providers receiving government funding are required to make (through their local authority) a child-level return. These collections are on a statutory basis through legislation which results in complete and accurate information being returned.

Schools making School Census return are required to submit child-level information for all children at the school. PVI providers are required to provide child-level information only for those children in receipt of some funded early education provision. Only those providers with children receiving some funded early education are required to make an Early Years Census return. For this reason, the Early Years Census and therefore the

Provision for Children publication does not provide a count of all children aged three or four in Private, Voluntary, and Independent providers. We are not aware of a source which would provide this information.

However, as the data source is a census and all providers return details of children in receipt of the funded early education, this publication provides a full and accurate picture of the numbers of children receiving funded early education.

Confidentiality

In order to ensure confidentiality of children, the following suppression conventions have been used in this statistical release:

- Any numbers less than three have been suppressed and have been replaced by an 'x'. To protect the suppressed number, secondary suppression may be required in some cases.
- Percentages are displayed to the nearest whole number.
- Where any number is shown as zero (0), the original figure submitted was zero.
- A '..' represents data not available.
- A '- ' represents less than 0.5 per cent.

Secondary suppression is the process of suppressing additional small numbers across other columns or tables to minimise the risk of identification by combining different pieces of information.

Staff Qualifications

Figures for the percentage of private, voluntary and independent providers with staff with Qualified Teacher Status/Early Years Professional Status who work directly with two, three and four year olds are based on the SFR series *DfE: Provision for Children Under Five Years of Age in England* – January 2012 to January 2014.

The January 2014 publication is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provision-for-children-under-5-years-of-age-january-2014>

This is the same source as the figures in the **Take up of funded early education** section above. See this section for more details on the background and methodology.

Child Development – Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Outcomes

Figures are based on the following two Statistical First Release series:

DfE: Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results in England, 2012/13 to 2013/14

DfE: Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Attainment by Pupil Characteristics in England – 2012/13 to 2013/14

The latest publications are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results-2013-to-2014>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eyfsp-attainment-by-pupil-characteristics-2013-to-2014>

Full details of the background and methodology used in the statistical first releases are available following the above links. The main points are summarised below.

Background

The EYFS Profile is a teacher assessment of children's development at the end of the EYFS (the end of the academic year in which the child turns five). It should support a smooth transition to Key Stage 1 (KS1) by informing the professional dialogue between EYFS and KS1 teachers. This information should help Year 1 teachers plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children. The Profile is also designed to inform parents or carers about their child's development against the early learning goals (ELGs).

Following an independent review of the EYFS by Dame Clare Tickell, a new Profile was published in March 2012. The new Profile and revised EYFS have a stronger emphasis on the three prime areas which are most essential for children's healthy development. These three areas are: communication and language; physical; and personal, social and emotional development. The new Profile made changes to the way in which children are assessed at the end of the EYFS. The new Profile requires practitioners to make a best-fit assessment of whether children are emerging, expected or exceeding against each of the new 17 ELGs. The new Profile was introduced in September 2012.

Further information on the EYFS Profile assessment and reporting arrangements, alongside other EYFS resources, can be found [here](#).

Details of how the new profile differs from the old profile can be found [here](#).

The areas of learning

The EYFS framework contains seven areas of learning covering children's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development;

1. Communication and language (3 Early Learning Goals)
2. Physical development (2 Early Learning Goals)
3. Personal, social and emotional development (3 Early Learning Goals)
4. Literacy (2 Early Learning Goals)
5. Mathematics (2 Early Learning Goals)
6. Understanding the world (3 Early Learning Goals)
7. Expressive arts and design (2 Early Learning Goals)

The assessment scales

The EYFS Profile captures the Areas of Learning as a set of Early Learning Goals. Children are assessed against the seventeen Early Learning Goals.

Assessment rating

1 – Indicates a child who is at the emerging level at the end of the EYFS

2 - Indicates a child who is at the expected level at the end of the EYFS.

3 –indicates a child who is at the exceeding level at the end of the EYFS

A – Indicates a child who has not been assessed due to long periods of absence, for instance a prolonged illness, and arrives too late in the summer term for teacher assessment to be carried out, or for an exemption.

For more detailed information on the assessment scales see the [EYFSP handbook](#).

TECHNICAL NOTES

Coverage information

Tables include results for those children who were in receipt of a government funded early education place at the end of the EYFS **only**. Children who are not in receipt of a funded place at the end of the EYFS are not in the scope of the Department's EYFS Profile data collection and therefore not included in the results.

The results are for funded children who were assessed at the end of the 2013/2014 academic year. Children who have been held back will be included in the results cohort

for the year in which they are assessed and so these tables may include results from some children outside of the usual EYFS age range.

Ordinarily the EYFS Profile must be completed in the final term of the academic year in which the child reaches the age of five, the only exceptions being:

- Where an exemption from all or part of the EYFS assessment arrangements has been granted for the setting by the Secretary of State for Education; or
- Where a child is continuing in EYFS provision beyond the year in which they turn five.

Children with any A (exemption) or missing scores in any area of their EYFS Profile **are excluded** from all summary scale tables.

Good level of development definition

Children will be defined as having reached a Good Level of Development at the end of the EYFS if they achieve at least the expected level in: the early learning goals in the prime areas of learning (personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language) and; the early learning goals in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy.

Free School Meals gap calculation

The Free School Meals (FSM) gap is the percentage gap between those eligible for FSM and the rest in achieving a Good Level of Development.

There are pupils whose FSM eligibility could not be determined, these have been recorded as unclassified but have been grouped with pupils known not to be eligible for FSM for the purposes of this calculation.

Data collection arrangements

Schools and early years providers submit data to their LA. LAs then load the data into the DfE bespoke data collection system; COLLECT (Collections On-Line for Learning, Education, Children and Teachers).

The system is stored securely on DfE servers and is accessed by LAs via the internet, with each LA given secure log in details.

COLLECT has built-in validation rules which flag up data which is invalid or the quality is questionable. This allows LAs to identify errors and clean the data before they submit it to DfE. Validation rules can either be errors (data is invalid) or queries (data quality is questionable but could be accurate in certain circumstances).

LAs are encouraged to clean all errors and double-check data where queries are flagged. LAs can add notes to their return if there is a genuine reason for “unusual” data.

Guidance notes and specifications (including validation rules) for this collection can be accessed [here](#).

Contextual Data

Population

Figures for the population of local authorities are taken from ONS *Annual Mid-year Population Estimates, 2013* available here:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/pop-estimate/population-estimates-for-uk--england-and-wales--scotland-and-northern-ireland/2013/stb---mid-2013-uk-population-estimates.html>

The mid-year population estimates refer to the usually resident population on 30 June of the reference year and are published annually.

The estimates are based on the 2011 Census, updated each year using the cohort component method with a combination of registration, survey and administrative data sources. They are used by central and local government and the health sector for planning and monitoring service delivery, resource allocation and managing the economy.

Deprivation

Figures for the percentage of children taking the EYFSP who are eligible for free school meals are based on the SFR *DfE: Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Attainment by Pupil Characteristics in England – 2012/13 to 2013/14*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eyfsp-attainment-by-pupil-characteristics-2013-to-2014>

This is the same source as the figures in the **Child Development – Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Outcomes** section above. See this section for more details on the background and methodology.

Funded Early Education

Free early education in private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers.

Figures are based on the SFR *DfE: Provision for Children Under Five Years of Age in England* available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provision-for-children-under-5-years-of-age-in-england-january-2013>

This is the same source as the figures in the **Take up of funded early education** section above. See this section for more details on the background and methodology.



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