



## SFR 20/2016 – Technical Annex

### 1. Introduction

Statistics on the numbers of pupils in infant classes are published annually each June in the statistical first release “schools, pupils and their characteristics”. These statistics are produced using data collected from local authorities and schools as a part of the January school census.

#### What do we count as an infant class?

Our statistics cover classes listed on the school census as either containing reception year or key stage 1 pupils and one teacher. Our statistics cover ordinary teaching sessions and do not include classes with no teachers, or more than one teacher.

The legislation affecting class sizes applies only to classes where the majority of pupils will attain the age of five, six or seven during the course of the school year. Therefore mixed classes are not included, for example mixes of nursery and reception pupils, or key stage 1 and 2 pupils.

In this note, any infant class containing more than 30 pupils is termed a ‘large infant class’.

### 2. Legislation

The [School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#) limits the size of an infant class to 30 pupils per school teacher. An infant class is one in which the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6 or 7 during the school year i.e. reception, year 1 and year 2.

[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. If fewer than two have been admitted as lawful exceptions then the class is termed ‘unlawful’.

### 3. Context

Since 2010, there has been an increasing primary pupil population and an associated increase in the number of infant classes from 53,887 in 2010 to 59,214 in 2015. In some areas, this has also been associated with infant class sizes larger than the statutory maximum size of 30; the number of infant classes larger than 30 grew from 995 in 2010 to 3,324 in 2015.

Since 2006, the department has published figures on large infant class sizes, net of exempted pupils, as a data series called “Unlawful infant classes”, following a review of the presentation of infant class size statistics. The figures enable users of the statistics to understand how many, and what proportion, of the total number of large infant classes are defined as unlawful or lawful and how many pupils are in those classes.

In March 2015, the UK statistics authority confirmed that future publications of unlawful infant class size statistics should not be designated as National Statistics, pending further quality improvements and a future-reassessment by the Authority. The rationale behind this de-designation can be found in part 2 of this annex.

The unlawfully large class size statistics are a small part of the broader set of school class size statistics. The class size statistics which are unaffected by this issue and which retain National Statistics status are:

- average infant class sizes;

- number of infant classes of sizes 1-30, 31 or more;
- number of infant pupils in classes of size 1-30, 31 or more;
- number of infant pupils in classes of 31 or more with 'excepted activity'; and
- all class size statistics for key stage 2 and the split by primary/secondary schools

These statistics can be found in the main text and tables of this statistical first release. This technical annex contains the statistics on unlawful infant classes which have been de-designated as National Statistics, and cannot currently be published under the UKSA National Statistics kite mark.

**Table A1: State-funded primary schools: Large infant classes in England, 2007-2016 (1)**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>All Key Stage 1 Classes (2)</b>										
Number of classes	53,350	53,160	53,497	53,887	54,788	55,506	56,597	58,256	59,214	60,039
Number of pupils	1,364,960	1,367,860	1,399,040	1,434,450	1,474,960	1,507,705	1,547,390	1,594,665	1,622,755	1,645,880
<b>Lawfully Large Classes With 'Excepted' Pupils (3)</b>										
Number of classes	590	530	612	857	1,061	1,301	2,074	2,436	3,085	2,932
Percentage of all classes	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.6	1.9	2.3	3.7	4.2	5.2	4.9
Number of pupils	18,510	16,430	19,130	26,795	33,135	40,690	64,815	76,075	96,390	91,595
Percentage of all pupils	1.4	1.2	1.4	1.9	2.2	2.7	4.2	4.8	5.9	5.6
<b>Unlawfully large classes (4)</b>										
Number of classes	130	200	276	138	311	207	225	549	139	113
Percentage of all classes	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.9	0.2	0.2
Number of pupils	4,280	6,380	8,835	4,475	9,935	6,595	7,125	17,270	4,375	3,615
Percentage of all pupils	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.5	1.1	0.3	0.2

1. One teacher classes as taught during a single selected period in each school on the day of the census in January. Key stage as recorded by the school. Classes with missing key stage information are not included unless they are reception year group classes.

2. Includes middle schools as deemed, academies, free schools and reception classes.

3. Includes only those classes where there are pupils who have been admitted as exceptions making the class size within the legal limit of 30 pupils or less.

4. Classes of 31 or more, excluding those large classes engaged in an excepted activity

Source: School Census

**Table A2: State funded schools: Key Stage 1: One teacher classes and excepted pupils in England, January 2016 (1)(2)**

	In State-funded primary schools	In all State Funded Schools
Total number of lawfully large classes with excepted pupils	2,933	2,952
Total number of unlawfully large classes (3)(4)(5)	112	114
<b>Number of excepted pupils</b>		
admitted outside normal admissions round with statements of special educational needs specifying a school	297	300
looked after or previously looked after admitted outside normal admission round	345	345
admitted, after initial allocation of places, because of a procedural error made by the admission authority or local authority in the original application process	253	253
admitted after an independent appeals panel upholds an appeal	1,004	1,021
who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance (the Local Authority has to confirm that the child qualifies under this category)	1,393	1,400
who are children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round	170	170
whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil	199	199
with special educational needs who are normally taught in an special educational needs unit attached to the school, or registered at a special school, who attend some infant classes within the mainstream school	246	147

1. One teacher classes as taught during a single selected period in each school on the day of the census in January. Key stage as recorded by the school, classes with missing key stage information are not included unless they are reception year group classes.

2. Includes reception classes.

3. Infant classes with 31 or more pupils without excepted pupils and not engaged in excepted activity.

4. May include some classes with excepted pupils but the class size still exceeds the legal limit of 30 pupils or less.

5. These figures can include excepted pupils that are in a class that remains unlawfully large after excepted pupils are taken into account.

Source: School Census

**Table A3: State funded primary schools: Key Stage 1 Classes taught by 1 teacher: January 2016**  
By local authority area and region in England

LA Code	LA Name	Lawfully large classes with excepted pupils		Unlawfully large classes	
		No. of pupils	No. of classes	No. of pupils	No. of classes
<b>ENGLAND</b>		<b>91,626</b>	<b>2,933</b>	<b>3,582</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>NORTH EAST</b>		<b>2,902</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>6</b>
E06000005	841 Darlington	94	3	0	0
E06000047	840 Durham	344	11	0	0
E08000020	390 Gateshead	279	9	0	0
E06000001	805 Hartlepool	190	6	0	0
E06000002	806 Middlesbrough	189	6	0	0
E08000021	391 Newcastle upon Tyne	591	19	94	3
E08000022	392 North Tyneside	124	4	31	1
E06000048	929 Northumberland	249	8	31	1
E06000003	807 Redcar and Cleveland	32	1	0	0
E08000023	393 South Tyneside	0	0	31	1
E06000004	808 Stockton-on-Tees	311	10	0	0
E08000024	394 Sunderland	499	16	0	0
<b>NORTH WEST</b>		<b>16,335</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>23</b>
E06000008	889 Blackburn with Darwen	218	7	0	0
E06000009	890 Blackpool	0	0	0	0
E08000001	350 Bolton	380	12	0	0
E08000002	351 Bury	473	15	235	7
E06000049	895 Cheshire East	591	19	62	2
E06000050	896 Cheshire West and Chester	466	15	62	2
E10000006	909 Cumbria	192	6	0	0
E06000006	876 Halton	94	3	0	0
E08000011	340 Knowsley	155	5	0	0
E10000017	888 Lancashire	964	31	169	5
E08000012	341 Liverpool	812	26	0	0
E08000003	352 Manchester	1,248	40	62	2
E08000004	353 Oldham	2,061	66	62	2
E08000005	354 Rochdale	310	10	0	0
E08000006	355 Salford	603	19	0	0
E08000014	343 Sefton	1,030	33	0	0
E08000013	342 St. Helens	372	12	31	1
E08000007	356 Stockport	1,253	40	0	0
E08000008	357 Tameside	2,278	72	0	0
E08000009	358 Trafford	528	17	0	0
E06000007	877 Warrington	965	31	66	2
E08000010	359 Wigan	934	30	0	0
E08000015	344 Wirral	408	13	0	0

LA Code	LA Name	Lawfully large classes with excepted pupils		Unlawfully large classes	
		No. of pupils	No. of classes	No. of pupils	No. of classes
<b>YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER</b>		<b>14,123</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>16</b>
E08000016	370 Barnsley	411	13	81	2
E08000032	380 Bradford	3,999	127	125	4
E08000033	381 Calderdale	311	10	0	0
E08000017	371 Doncaster	342	11	0	0
E06000011	811 East Riding of Yorkshire	567	18	0	0
E06000010	810 Kingston Upon Hull, City of	728	23	89	2
E08000034	382 Kirklees	1,287	41	0	0
E08000035	383 Leeds	2,777	89	129	4
E06000012	812 North East Lincolnshire	124	4	0	0
E06000013	813 North Lincolnshire	252	8	0	0
E10000023	815 North Yorkshire	755	24	33	1
E08000018	372 Rotherham	499	16	0	0
E08000019	373 Sheffield	936	30	31	1
E08000036	384 Wakefield	693	22	32	1
E06000014	816 York	473	15	0	0
<b>EAST MIDLANDS</b>		<b>8,620</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>2</b>
E06000015	831 Derby	126	4	0	0
E10000007	830 Derbyshire	311	10	0	0
E06000016	856 Leicester	3,793	122	0	0
E10000018	855 Leicestershire	2,327	74	0	0
E10000019	925 Lincolnshire	372	12	0	0
E10000021	928 Northamptonshire	591	19	32	1
E06000018	892 Nottingham	125	4	0	0
E10000024	891 Nottinghamshire	975	31	0	0
E06000017	857 Rutland	0	0	31	1
<b>WEST MIDLANDS</b>		<b>9,811</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>9</b>
E08000025	330 Birmingham	1,310	42	218	7
E08000026	331 Coventry	93	3	0	0
E08000027	332 Dudley	279	9	0	0
E06000019	884 Herefordshire	280	9	0	0
E08000028	333 Sandwell	1,366	44	0	0
E06000051	893 Shropshire	280	9	0	0
E08000029	334 Solihull	687	22	0	0
E10000028	860 Staffordshire	1,540	49	63	2
E06000021	861 Stoke-on-Trent	905	29	0	0
E06000020	894 Telford and Wrekin	284	9	0	0
E08000030	335 Walsall	498	16	0	0
E10000031	937 Warwickshire	851	27	0	0

LA Code	LA Name	Lawfully large classes with excepted pupils		Unlawfully large classes	
		No. of pupils	No. of classes	No. of pupils	No. of classes
E08000031	336 Wolverhampton	1,004	32	0	0
E10000034	885 Worcestershire	434	14	0	0
	<b>EAST OF ENGLAND</b>	<b>9,013</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>14</b>
E06000055	822 Bedford	93	3	0	0
E06000056	823 Central Bedfordshire	156	5	0	0
E10000003	873 Cambridgeshire	838	27	33	1
E10000012	881 Essex	3,316	106	187	6
E10000015	919 Hertfordshire	1,677	54	93	3
E06000032	821 Luton	31	1	0	0
E10000020	926 Norfolk	1,094	35	93	3
E06000031	874 Peterborough	343	11	0	0
E06000033	882 Southend-on-Sea	564	18	0	0
E10000029	935 Suffolk	684	22	32	1
E06000034	883 Thurrock	217	7	0	0
	<b>LONDON</b>	<b>10,064</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>2,173</b>	<b>70</b>
	<b>INNER LONDON</b>	<b>1,307</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>11</b>
E09000007	202 Camden	62	2	0	0
E09000001	201 City of London	0	0	0	0
E09000012	204 Hackney	186	6	0	0
E09000013	205 Hammersmith and Fulham	62	2	0	0
E09000014	309 Haringey	155	5	0	0
E09000019	206 Islington	94	3	0	0
E09000020	207 Kensington and Chelsea	0	0	0	0
E09000022	208 Lambeth	93	3	0	0
E09000023	209 Lewisham	217	7	155	5
E09000025	316 Newham	0	0	95	3
E09000028	210 Southwark	283	9	31	1
E09000030	211 Tower Hamlets	93	3	62	2
E09000032	212 Wandsworth	62	2	0	0
E09000033	213 Westminster	0	0	0	0
	<b>OUTER LONDON</b>	<b>8,757</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>1,830</b>	<b>59</b>
E09000002	301 Barking and Dagenham	282	9	0	0
E09000003	302 Barnet	1,336	43	0	0
E09000004	303 Bexley	124	4	0	0
E09000005	304 Brent	311	10	0	0
E09000006	305 Bromley	1,066	34	93	3
E09000008	306 Croydon	534	17	0	0
E09000009	307 Ealing	497	16	0	0
E09000010	308 Enfield	217	7	0	0
E09000011	203 Greenwich	436	14	0	0

LA Code	LA Name	Lawfully large classes with excepted pupils		Unlawfully large classes	
		No. of pupils	No. of classes	No. of pupils	No. of classes
E09000015	310 Harrow	1,241	40	0	0
E09000016	311 Havering	435	14	31	1
E09000017	312 Hillingdon	311	10	62	2
E09000018	313 Hounslow	156	5	0	0
E09000021	314 Kingston upon Thames	372	12	0	0
E09000024	315 Merton	93	3	0	0
E09000026	317 Redbridge	1551	50	62	2
E09000027	318 Richmond upon Thames	626	20	62	2
E09000029	319 Sutton	217	7	0	0
E09000031	320 Waltham Forest	441	14	31	1
	<b>SOUTH EAST</b>	<b>12,555</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>9</b>
E06000036	867 Bracknell Forest	0	0	0	0
E06000043	846 Brighton and Hove	155	5	0	0
E10000002	825 Buckinghamshire	683	22	32	1
E10000011	845 East Sussex	1,901	61	31	1
E10000014	850 Hampshire	1,273	41	0	0
E06000046	921 Isle of Wight	124	4	31	1
E10000016	886 Kent	2,716	87	95	3
E06000035	887 Medway	406	13	0	0
E06000042	826 Milton Keynes	372	12	31	1
E10000025	931 Oxfordshire	656	21	0	0
E06000044	851 Portsmouth	124	4	0	0
E06000038	870 Reading	93	3	0	0
E06000039	871 Slough	310	10	0	0
E06000045	852 Southampton	124	4	0	0
E10000030	936 Surrey	1,251	40	0	0
E06000037	869 West Berkshire	251	8	0	0
E10000032	938 West Sussex	1,586	51	62	2
E06000040	868 Windsor and Maidenhead	279	9	0	0
E06000041	872 Wokingham	251	8	0	0
	<b>SOUTH WEST</b>	<b>6,683</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>12</b>
E06000022	800 Bath and North East Somerset	156	5	0	0
E06000028	837 Bournemouth	62	2	0	0
E06000023	801 Bristol, City of	281	9	0	0
E06000052	908 Cornwall	812	26	126	4
E10000008	878 Devon	498	16	93	3
E10000009	835 Dorset	341	11	31	1
E10000013	916 Gloucestershire	1,190	38	31	1
E06000053	420 Isles of Scilly	..	..	..	..
E06000024	802 North Somerset	156	5	0	0

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LA Code	LA Name	Lawfully large classes with excepted pupils		Unlawfully large classes	
		No. of pupils	No. of classes	No. of pupils	No. of classes
E06000026	879 Plymouth	749	24	0	0
E06000029	836 Poole	217	7	0	0
E10000027	933 Somerset	809	26	35	1
E06000025	803 South Gloucestershire	31	1	0	0
E06000030	866 Swindon	313	10	0	0
E06000027	880 Torbay	248	8	0	0
E06000054	865 Wiltshire	820	26	62	2

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## 4. Unlawful infant class size data quality

Following publication of the infant class size statistics in June 2014 some users, including local authorities, raised concerns about the substantially increased number of unlawful infant classes. Further analysis showed that nine local authority areas had reported substantial increases since the previous year.

The department contacted these local authorities and all indicated that they believed that at least some of the data submitted from their authority was inaccurate. In some instances lawful exceptions applied but this had not been indicated (by providing the number of pupils under each of the statutory exception reasons where appropriate) during the data collection.

Under the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#), published statistics must satisfy quality dimensions including accuracy, comparability, coherence and meeting user need. Our concern over the accuracy of the statistics led us to withdraw the statistics on unlawful/lawful infant classes in July 2014 pending further investigation with the local authorities and schools that had provided data indicating they had unlawfully large infant classes. We advertised the removal of these statistics on gov.uk and in a revised version of the statistical release to highlight this change to users.

Following the further investigation with local authorities, the department's Head of Profession for Statistics concluded that the statistics on unlawfully (and lawfully) large infant classes were not fit-for-purpose and wrote to the UK Statistics Authority recommending that they should be de-designated as National Statistics and removed from the main statistical first release. He also set out an Action Plan for improving the quality of these statistics so they can be re-assessed for National Statistics status by the UK Statistics Authority as soon as possible. This action plan is detailed in the Technical Note to the Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics: January 2014 statistical first release:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/409360/InfantClassSizes\\_TechnicalNote.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/409360/InfantClassSizes_TechnicalNote.pdf)

The re-assessment for National Statistics status by the UK Statistics Authority should be completed and the findings published later in 2016.

## 5. Get in touch

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# Department for Education

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