

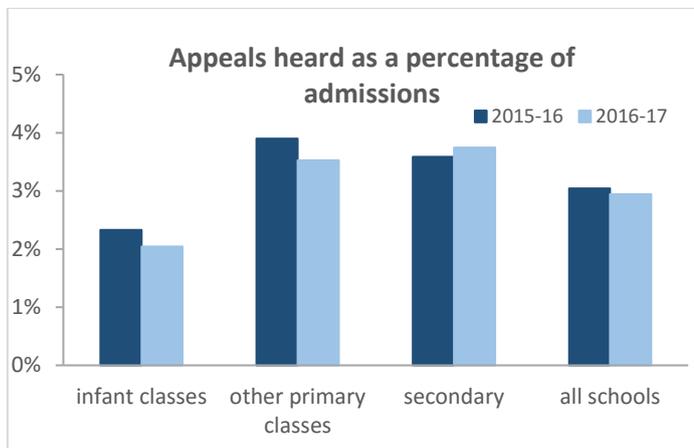


Admissions appeals for maintained and academy primary and secondary schools in England: 2016 to 2017



SFR 44/2017, 31 August 2017

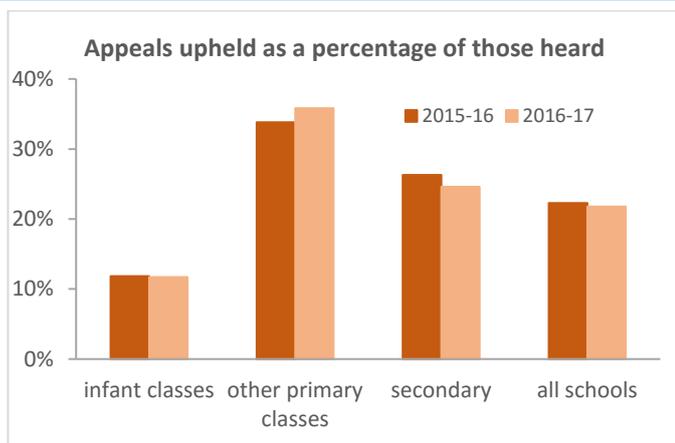
Overall proportion of appeals drops slightly, but results vary by phase



Applicants can lodge appeals for any school they have not been awarded a place in, but not all such appeals reach the stage of being heard by an appeals panel (for example if they are withdrawn). The heard rate is therefore a better measure of the general appeal rate.

In 2016-17 the highest percentage of appeals heard (3.7% of new admissions) was at secondary level. In 2015-16 other primary classes had recorded the highest proportion of appeals heard, but the proportion at this phase dropped 0.4 percentage points to 3.5% in 2016-17.

Success rate of appeals varies for primary and secondary schools

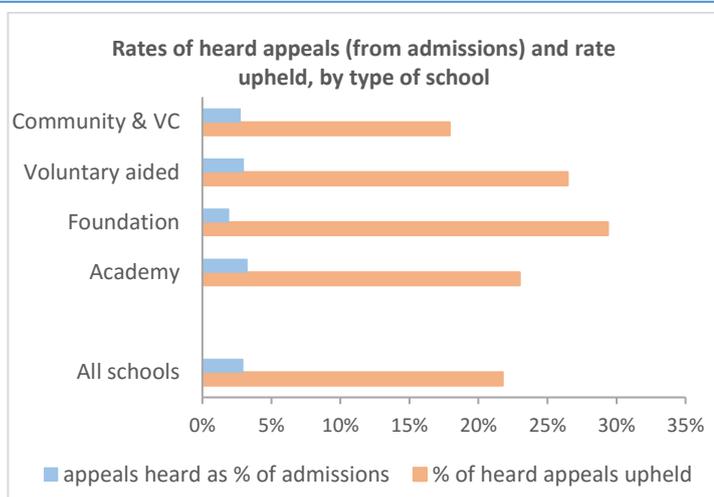


For all school phases, the 2016-17 figure of 21.8% of heard appeals being upheld, or found in favour of the applicant, was a slight drop on the result for 2015-16 (22.3%).

The success rate varies significantly by school phase: other primary classes continued to have the highest proportion of heard appeals being upheld, at 35.8%, and also was the only phase to see an increase in 2016-17.

Infant class appeals upheld were much lower at 11.7%, and were virtually unchanged from 2015-16.

Success rates also vary for different school types



The rate of appeals being heard (as a proportion of new admissions) and the chance of their success varies by school type. Overall, the rate of appeals heard was 2.9%, but results varied from 1.9% (foundation) to 3.2% (academy).

Once the appeals had been heard, those relating to foundation schools were the most likely to be successful at 29.4% of heard appeals. The lowest success rate was 17.9% for community & voluntary controlled schools. The percentage of heard appeals which were successful for all schools was 21.8%.

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About this release

This statistical first release (SFR) provides information about admissions appeals. Appeals can be made when an applicant has not received an offer of a place into their first preference school. They can appeal for a place at any school ranked higher than the one they were offered.

The release reports on appeals relating to admissions at the start of the 2016 to 2017 academic year. It is based on appeals lodged with the appropriate admissions authority by 1 September 2016.

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

Improvements were made to the 2017 school census which means that appeals and new admissions (the denominator to the proportion of appeals lodged and heard) to all through schools are all now allocated to the correct phase, as defined by national curriculum (NC) year. Previously appeals reported via the school census could not be divided into primary or secondary phases and so, to ensure consistency with the infant appeals, were placed in primary years.

The effect of this has been to decrease the number of both appeals and new admissions in the 'other primary' phase and increase the numbers in the secondary phase. The proportions are unaffected.

More details are provided in the methodology document which accompanies this release.

In this publication

The following tables are included in the SFR:

National tables (Excel .xls)

Local authority tables (Excel .xls)

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

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

Feedback

We are changing how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at infrastructure.statistics@education.gov.uk

1. Headline results

Overall 60,886 appeals were lodged and reported to the department, via the admissions appeals collection or the school census, relating to an application for a school place at the start of the 2016-17 academic year. This equates to 4.0 per cent of new admissions (table A below). These admissions, and appeals relating to them, cover both entry into the first year of a school and also new admissions into other years, for example due to a house move, as long as they relate to a request to start the school at the beginning of the academic year.

Not all lodged appeals are heard as an appeal can be withdrawn (for example because the child has been offered a place at the school via the waiting list). This SFR focuses on the number of appeals which actually reach the stage of being heard by the appropriate authority. In 2016-17 this was 44,626, or 2.9 per cent of new admissions.

Overall the number of appeals which were successful was 9,714 - a success rate of 21.8 per cent of those appeals which were heard by an appeals panel.

Table A

Admissions appeals: all maintained and academy schools, 2016-17

Admissions	1,516,322
Admission appeals lodged by parents	
Number:	60,886
Percentage of admissions	4.0
Appeals heard by an appeals panel	
Number:	44,626
Percentage of admissions	2.9
Appeals decided in parents' favour	
Number:	9,714
Percentage of appeals heard	21.8

A detailed breakdown of the number of appeals by the type of school can be found in table B (below). Figures for community & voluntary controlled schools are provided by local authorities as aggregated totals. These school types reported the lowest percentage of appeals being upheld (17.9 per cent of those heard).

The highest percentage found in favour of the applicant was from foundation schools with 29.4 per cent of appeals heard being successful. However, foundation schools had a smaller rate of appeals heard – 1.9 per cent of new admissions into foundation schools – than other school types (between 2.7 per cent for community & voluntary schools and 3.2 per cent for academies).

The number of admissions and appeals by school type continue to be affected by the increased conversion of other school types into academies. The percentages are unaffected as they are calculated on the number of admissions into that particular school type (but note the caveats section of the methodology document relating to the recording of pupils in newly converted academies).

In addition, the number of admissions and appeals by phase show differences compared to 2016 due to census improvements which means that appeals in all through schools can be correctly categorised into the primary or secondary phase. This results in a drop in the number of appeals (and admissions) reported for the other primary years, and a corresponding increase in the number of appeals (and admissions) reported for the secondary years. The percentages are unaffected.

Table B
Appeals heard and upheld, by type of school, 2016-17

	Appeals heard		Appeals upheld	
	Num	%	Num	%
Community & voluntary controlled	16,127	2.7	2,889	17.9
Voluntary aided	4,896	3.0	1,296	26.5
Foundation	1,572	1.9	462	29.4
Academy	22,031	3.2	5,067	23.0
Total	44,626	10.9	9,714	21.8

2. Primary school results

At primary level the rate of appeals lodged was 3.4 per cent of new admissions, with 2.3 per cent reaching the next stage of being heard by an appeals panel (Table 1).

The primary level data is further split into infant (reception and years one and two) and other primary classes (generally years three to six although middle-deemed primary schools may include years seven or eight). For the infant classes, the rate of appeals lodged was 3.0 per cent of admissions into those years, with 2.0 per cent heard by an appeals panel. The figures for the other primary classes were higher at 5.3 per cent and 3.5 per cent respectively.

There are legal restrictions in place which require infant classes (reception and years 1 and 2) to be limited to 30 children¹. This reduces the possibilities for appeal for these years, and indeed the figures show that the success rate was notably lower for infant years (11.7 per cent) than it was for the other primary years (35.8 per cent).

There was further variation in the rate of appeals heard and successful within both infant and other primary levels by school type (table 2). For infant classes, 9.2 per cent of appeals heard relating to community and voluntary controlled schools were successful, compared to 19.2 per cent for voluntary aided schools. For other primary classes, however, the school type with the lowest success rate was academy schools at 32.2 per cent, rising to 40.9 per cent for foundation schools.

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

As an example of this, the proportion of appeals upheld for all primary schools varied at local authority level from 60.6 per cent (Hartlepool, based on 33 appeals heard) to 0.0 per cent (several local authorities in the London and South East regions). Of the local authorities who upheld no primary appeals, Westminster heard the lowest number of appeals with 8 and Newham the highest with 104 from all primary years. The local authority with the highest number of appeals heard for all primary schools was Birmingham with 594 (of which 4.9 per cent were upheld).

¹ 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.

3. Secondary school results

At secondary level the rate of appeals lodged was higher than at primary, at 4.8 per cent of new admissions, with 3.7 per cent being heard by an appeals panel.

The success rate was higher than for primary schools as a whole at 24.6 per cent. However, a better comparison is against other primary classes, as these do not have the restrictions of infant class size legislation. Other primary class appeals were more likely to be successful, at 35.8 per cent against 24.6 per cent of heard appeals at secondary level.

Again the breakdown of appeals by school type shows a notable variation. Foundation secondary schools had the lowest rate of appeals heard, 2.1 per cent, but the highest rate of those being successful at 33.0 per cent. Voluntary aided schools had the highest proportion of appeals heard (4.7 per cent of new admissions), but it was academy schools which had the lowest success rate (23.8 per cent of appeals heard being upheld).

Again the local authority data showed significant variation, both in the number of appeals heard and in the success rates for those that were. However, the small number of appeals being heard in many local authorities can affect the figures significantly. In 2016-17 the local authority with the highest proportion of heard appeals being upheld was Darlington, with 73.1 per cent of heard appeals being upheld (based on 78 hearings).

At the other end of the scale, the lowest appeals success rate was Reading who upheld none of the 17 secondary appeals they heard. The local authority with the highest number of appeals heard was Kent with 1,948 (of which 33.7 per cent were upheld).

4. List of tables

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

National tables

Table 1

Total appeals by parents against non-admission of their children to primary and secondary local authority maintained schools and academies, entry into the start of the 2015-16 to 2016-17 academic years, England.

Table 2

Appeals by parents against non-admission of their children to primary and secondary local authority maintained schools and academies, by type of school, entry into the start of the 2016-17 academic years, England

Local authority tables

Table 3

Appeals by parents against non-admission of their children to primary and secondary local authority maintained schools and academies, entry into the start of the 2016-17 academic year, by local authority area.

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

- The time series provided in table 1 was restarted in 2015-16 because the improvements to the data in that year meant the appeals in that year were not comparable with the previous two years.
- Increased flexibility (through the academy and free school programmes) allows schools to choose their own school terms, which could include starting in August, and a number of schools exercise this option. To allow for this the admissions totals used in this SFR have been calculated including August admissions.
- The number of new admissions is calculated using the pupil level January 2017 school census and is based on the pupils' entry dates and the school they are recorded as attending, both in 2017 and also in the previous academic year. Schools converting to academies or amalgamating (for example individual infant and nursery schools combining into a single primary school) sometimes change both the entry dates of all of their existing pupils and their school codes. All attempts have been made to allow for this when calculating the number of new admissions but it is possible that for a very small number of schools the number of new admissions has been incorrectly counted.
- The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires we take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality. These data tables have been assessed as not requiring suppression to preserve confidentiality.

5. National statistics

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

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

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

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

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

6. Technical information

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

7. Get in touch

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Reference: SFR 44/2017



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