



Department
for Education

Secondary and primary school applications and offers: March and April 2019

**Quality and methodology information
document**

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Summary

The release which this note accompanies provides information at national, regional and local authority level on the number of applications received for a school place in 2019 and the proportion of offers made which were for the applicants' first, second etc. preferred school.

The figures come from the application and offer processes undertaken by the local authorities to enable them to send out offers of a school place on the respective national offer days of 1 March (or next working day when applicable) for secondary school offers and 16 April (or next working day) for primary school offers. Separate results are provided for applications and offers for secondary and primary school places.

The headline figures are the proportion of children receiving their first preference or a preferred offer. However, more information such as the number of applications made, the proportion of children for whom a preferred offer was not received and whether the applicants were provided with offers within or outside their home local authority is also provided in the tables.

The admissions process

Each local authority runs the coordinated admissions process for all state-funded schools in its area. It receives applications for all children resident in its area, including for those who wish to apply to schools in another local authority. The authorities liaise with each other to ensure that all applications for schools outside the home local authority are received by, and included in, the coordination exercise of the local authority in which the school is based. However, the applications are in all cases reported within these tables under the local authority to whom the application is made (that is, the one in which the child is resident).

Parents submit their application on a single form returned to their home authority, listing their preferred schools in order of preference.

Local authorities must allow parents to express at least three preferences at each level (primary and secondary). In practice, different local authorities allow parents to express between three and six preferences. The number of preferences allowed by an authority can vary at primary and at secondary level.

Applications for each school are ranked against the school's published priority and oversubscription criteria. Where a child could be offered a place at more than one of their preferred schools, they are offered the school listed as the highest preference.

Authorities must publish information on the admissions criteria of all the schools in their area, including data on volume of applications for the available places in previous years (that is, whether they received more or fewer applications than they had places available in those years).

Local authorities send parents a single offer of a school place on national offer day, which is the 1 March (or next working day) for secondary offers and 16 April (or next working day) for primary offers.

Parents are entitled to appeal to the relevant admission authority against a refusal to offer a place. These appeals are not reported in this publication. Figures for appeals lodged, heard and the appeal result relating to entry into the start of the 2018/19 academic year will be published in August on the department's website.

Collection and cleaning of the data

Secondary and primary data were gathered from local authorities at pupil level, with a record for each applicant for a school place. This data has been aggregated by the department into the local authority level figures provided in this publication.

The data collected is the position as at the respective national offer day. It includes all offers made on that day, regardless of whether they were subsequently accepted or refused.

Cleaning of the data prior to aggregation may cause slight differences between the figures contained in this publication and any released by the local authorities themselves closer to the respective national offer days.

In some cases an application was recorded by both the home authority (to whom the application was made) and also by the local authority within which the school where a place was offered is based. To be correct, only the home authority to whom the applicant sent their form should record the application and offer. Therefore the duplicate record submitted by the local authority in which the school is based has been removed.

Applications listing preferences or offers to schools which could not be identified from the school census, [Get Information About Schools](#), or via one of the additional 'dummy' school codes used to identify new schools or split entries (see below) were removed.

Other very small adjustments have been made as required to the source data to ensure that we provide as full and accurate a picture of the application and offer process as possible (for example, removing the second example if two offers have been recorded for one applicant, causing double-counting).

Interpretation of the figures

The figures are based on the offers sent out by local authorities on the respective national offer days. The final numbers of pupils starting in specific schools is likely to be different due to late applicants, refusal of offers, subsequent offers made via a second offer round or via the schools' waiting lists, or successful appeals. Revised figures incorporating any subsequent changes are not collected or published.

The inclusion of a school by an applicant as one of their preferences does not mean that they meet the admissions criteria for that school. Examples of where the applicant has little or no chance of being admitted on national offer day include naming a selective school having not passed the grammar entrance test, living a long way out of catchment for a popular community school and requesting a place for a boy at a girls' school.

Some schools offer places via a lottery, where everyone who applies has an equal (subject to fair banding) chance of being considered, which may encourage applications.

If an authority is not able to make an offer of a preferred school, in most cases they offer a place at an alternative school. Some authorities, however, chose instead to send the applicant a list of schools with available places and invite them to state which of these schools they would prefer their child to attend. These incidences are recorded as the applicant receiving no offer. A total of five local authorities made no alternative offers on

secondary national offer day, to applicants to whom they were not able to make an offer of one of their preferred schools, and five made no alternative offers on primary national offer day.

The tables include the percentage of offers which are of schools a) within or b) outside the local authority to which the application was made. These are calculated as a proportion of all offers, including those made to non-applicants (see table notes).

The local authorities were asked not to provide data on school places offered to children with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) or statement of special educational needs (SEN), since the parents of these children were not required to apply for a school place. However, there are a number of applications where special schools were amongst the preferences stated and, in some cases, a special school has been offered. It is assumed these are offers to SEN children who do not have a statement or EHCP. These preferences and offers have been included in the final figures.

At secondary level the application is for the main entry point into secondary school in that local authority. This is usually year 7 but Central Bedfordshire's largest entry point is in year 9 and this is what they report on. For local authorities with more than one entry point, the intake with the largest number of places available is the one reported.

Places at schools such as UTCs and Studio Schools, whose intake is in year 10 (at age 14) are not allocated via the co-ordinated admissions process and therefore are not included in these figures.

Some schools have two entry routes. At primary school this is generally a school with a single school code but with two sites, each of which can be applied for separately. At secondary level the two routes are usually either a school with day and boarding places, or a school with a number of places reserved for those passing aptitude tests (for example in music or languages). In these cases, parents can apply for both routes (for example for both sites of a split-site primary school), so a 'dummy' school code is used to identify the second option for each affected school.

All mainstream state-funded schools, including academies, are included in the figures. However, new opener free schools can have a rapid set-up process and may not be ready in time to make their offers within the local authority co-ordinated exercise. Therefore, for their first year of operation only, free schools may make offers directly and those that do so will be excluded from these figures. In their second year of operation, they must make offers within the local authority co-ordination process.

The Isles of Scilly local authority has one school which takes pupils between the ages of 3 and 16. Parents are not required to complete an application form and there is no competition for a place at the school. Therefore this authority has been omitted from both tables as preference rates cannot be calculated.

Further information

This publication is the latest in an annual series. The publications from 2011 onwards are available on the department's statistics [website](#). However, information on primary level preferences is only included from 2014 onwards. This is when the department started collecting data on primary applications and offers, based on the newly introduced national primary offer day of 16 April (or next working day).



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