

CHAPTER 1

Prevalence of pupils with special educational needs

Introduction

This chapter contains information on the numbers of pupils with special educational needs. It provides a breakdown according to a pupil's characteristics (for instance their ethnic group and eligibility for free school meals for each of the levels of provision for special educational need and primary types of need. It also provides information on the prevalence of special educational needs among looked after children.

See Data Annex 1 for further detail on the material covered in this chapter. Referenced tables and publications can be found in the Statistical First Release *Special Educational Needs in England, January 2012* at <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001075/index.shtml>. All numbers which appear in this chapter were taken from the School Census (see Data Annex 1 for further details) unless otherwise stated. Numbers and levels of provision for special educational need were based on the position in the January of the year in question unless otherwise stated.

Key findings on the prevalence and characteristics of pupils with special educational needs

Overall prevalence

The number of pupils with special educational needs in England decreased from around 1.70 million (21.1 per cent of) pupils in 2009/10 to 1.62 million (19.8 per cent) in 2011/12 after a rise between 2007/08 and 2009/10. The number of pupils with statements of special educational need increased slightly from around 224,000 pupils in 2009/10 to 226,000 pupils in 2011/12.

Gender

Boys were two and a half times more likely to have statements of special educational needs at primary schools and were nearly three times more likely to have statements at secondary schools compared to girls.

Free school meal eligibility

Pupils with special educational needs were much more likely to be eligible for free school meals compared with those without special educational needs.

Ethnicity

Black pupils were more likely and Chinese pupils were least likely to have special educational needs than pupils of other ethnic groups.

Pupils with special educational needs

Tables 1A and 1B of the above Statistical First Release and Figure 1.1 below show the percentage of all pupils in England with special educational needs, from 2008 to 2012 by their level of provision for need. It shows the percentages of pupils at School Action, School Action Plus and with statements of special educational needs

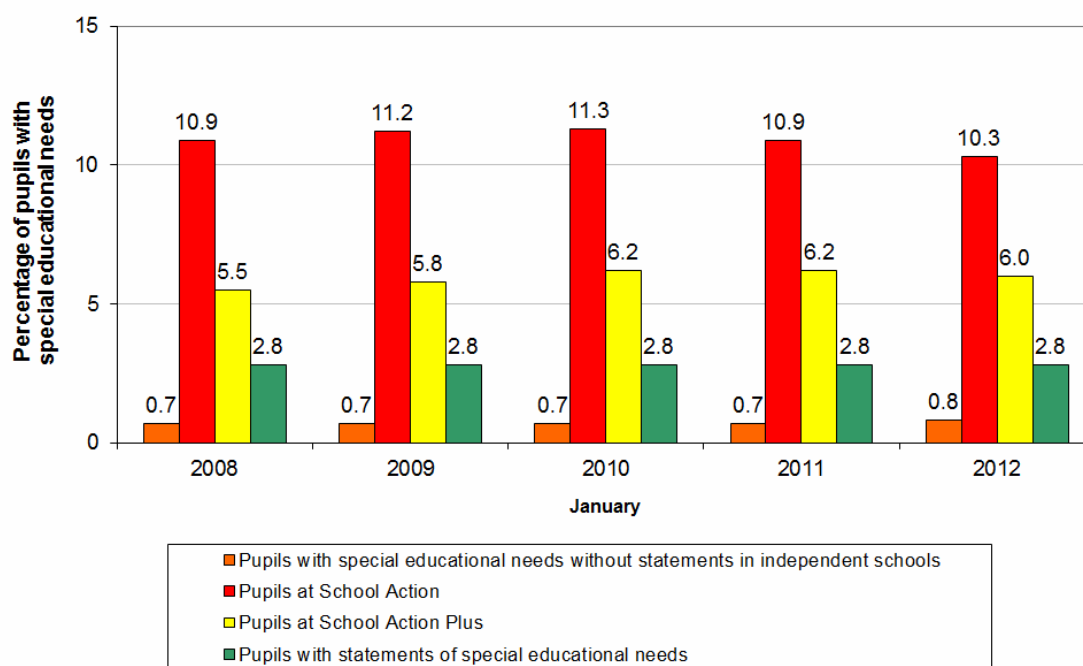
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in the January of each of the years. Data on level of provision for pupils at independent schools are not collected separately and so these are shown in a separate column in the chart.

The combined number of pupils at School Action, School Action Plus or with statements of special educational needs decreased from 1.70 million (21.1 per cent of) pupils in 2010 to approximately 1.62 million (19.8 per cent of) pupils in 2012. Prior to 2010, there had been a slight rise from 1.63 million (20.1 per cent of) pupils since 2008.

Figure 1.1: Percentage of pupils at all schools with special educational needs in the years 2007/08 to 2011/12



School types attended by pupils with special educational needs

Table 1B of the above Statistical First Release and Figure 1.2 below show the school types attended by the 1,392,215 pupils who had special educational needs without statements (i.e. those at School Action and School Action Plus) in 2011/12. The vast majority of these pupils attended state-funded primary (51.8 per cent) or secondary schools (42.5 per cent) with 4.5 per cent attending independent schools. The remaining pupils (around 1.2 per cent) attended one of the other school types shown in Figure 1.2. The description 'state-funded' refers to those schools maintained by the Local Authority, including middle schools as they are deemed, city technology colleges, academies and free schools. All-through schools are included as state-funded secondary schools.

Data on school types attended by all pupils can be found in the Statistical First Release *Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics, January 2012*, which is available at <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001071/index.shtml>. Table 2a in this Statistical First Release shows that the distribution of school types attended by all pupils in January 2012 was very similar to those with special educational needs

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without statements. However, pupils with special educational needs without statements were less likely to attend independent schools than all pupils.

Figure 1.2: Percentage of pupils with special educational needs without statements by school type attended in 2011/12

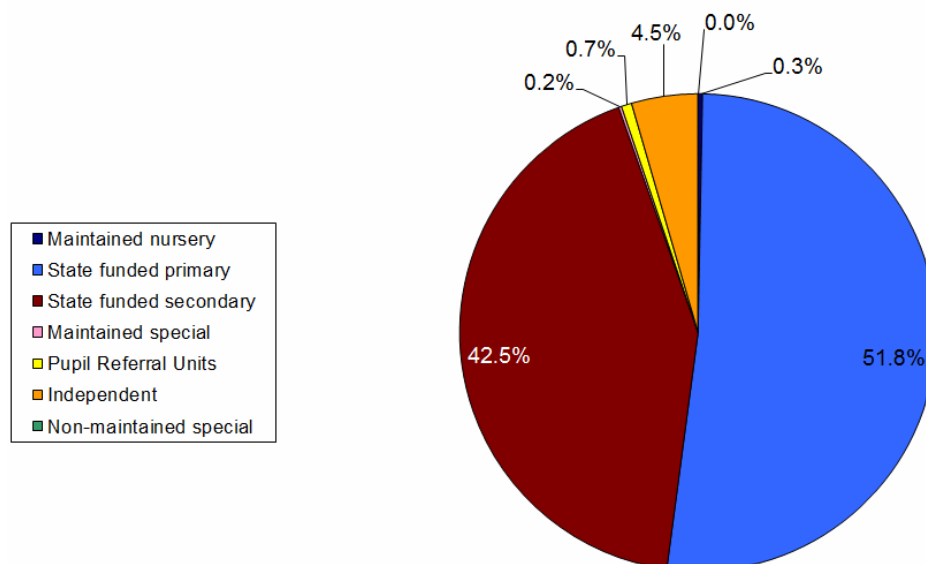
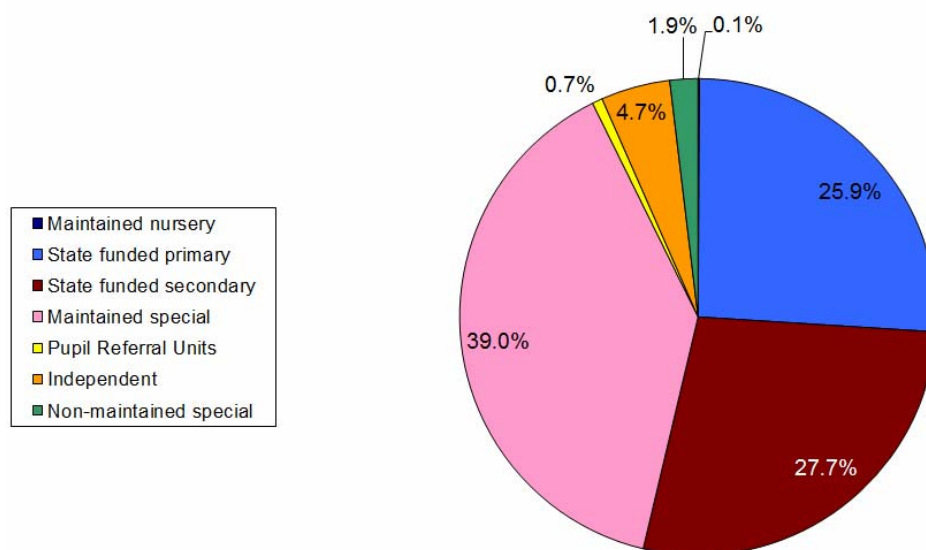


Table 1A of the above Statistical First Release and Figure 1.3 below show the school types attended by the 226,125 pupils who had statements of special educational needs in 2011/12. The distribution of school types attended by pupils with statements was markedly different from those without statements. Of the pupils with statements of special educational needs in 2012, 39.0 per cent attended maintained special schools (including general hospital schools and special academies), 27.7 per cent attended state-funded secondary schools, 25.9 per cent attended state-funded primary schools, 4.7 per cent attended independent schools and 1.9 per cent attended non-maintained special schools. The remaining pupils (around 0.8 per cent) attended pupil referral units or maintained nursery schools.

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Figure 1.3: Percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs by school type attended in 2011/12



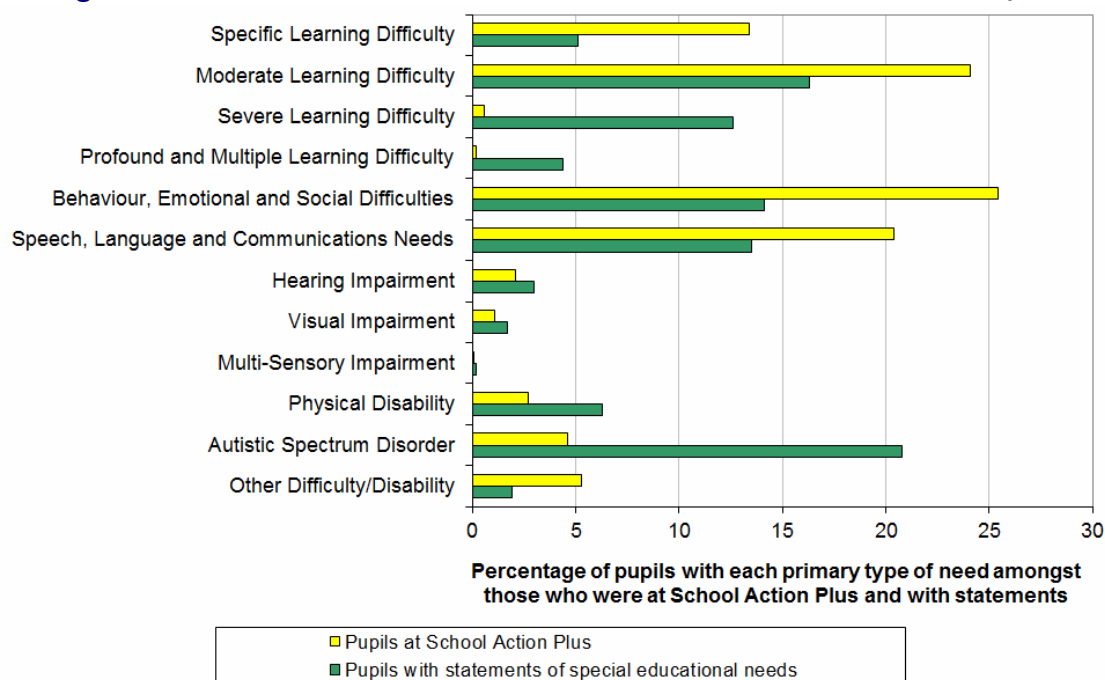
Pupils with primary type of special educational need

Table 10A of the above Statistical First Release and Figure 1.4 shows percentages of pupils who were under each of the 12 primary types of special educational need (e.g. pupils with specific learning difficulty, hearing impaired, etc) at School Action Plus and with statements in 2011/12. Primary need information is only available for these two levels of provision for need.

Of the 213,385 pupils with statements attending state-funded primary, state-funded secondary and all special schools (both maintained and non-maintained) in 2011/12, the most common type of primary type of need was autistic spectrum disorder (20.8 per cent) and the least common was multi-sensory impairment (0.2 per cent). Of the 475,995 pupils at School Action Plus within the same school types as above, the most common types of need were behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (25.4 per cent) and moderate learning difficulty (24.1 per cent) and the least common were multi-sensory impairment (0.1 per cent) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (0.2 per cent).

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Figure 1.4: Percentage of pupils with each primary type of special educational need amongst those who were at School Action Plus and with statements in 2011/12



In January 2011, 29.1 per cent of all state-funded primary school pupils at School Action Plus or with statements had speech, language and communication needs. This was the most common type of primary need in state-funded primary schools. 29.0 per cent of all state-funded secondary school pupils at School Action Plus or with statements had behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. This was the most common type of primary need in state-funded secondary schools. Pupils at special schools (both maintained and non-maintained) were most likely to have severe learning difficulties (24.6 per cent).

Pupils with special educational needs by gender

Tables 5A to 5D of the above Statistical First Release show the percentage of boys and girls with special educational needs by school type. They show the numbers without statements (pupils at School Action and School Action Plus) and those with statements in January 2012.

Boys were two and a half times more likely than girls to have statements of special educational needs at state-funded primary schools and were nearly three times more likely to have statements at state-funded secondary schools compared to girls in 2011/12. 2.0 per cent of boys (42,540 pupils) at primary schools had statements compared to 0.8 per cent of girls (16,000 pupils). At secondary schools, 2.9 per cent of boys (46,560 pupils) had statements compared to 1.0 per cent of girls (16,070 pupils).

There were also more boys than girls with special educational needs without statements in 2011/12. 21.8 per cent of boys at primary schools (468,445 pupils) and 22.1 per cent of boys at secondary schools (360,000 pupils) were at School Action and School Action Plus compared to 12.2 per cent of girls at primary schools (252,675 pupils) and 14.5 per cent of girls at secondary schools (231,990 pupils).

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Pupils with special educational needs by gender and primary type of need

Table A of the above Statistical First Release shows the number and percentage of pupils at School Action Plus and with statements by their primary type of special educational need and gender. It shows that boys are over twice as likely as girls to have autistic spectrum disorder and are also more likely to have behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. Girls are more than twice as likely as boys to have a hearing impairment than boys and also more likely to have moderate and severe learning difficulties.

Pupils with special educational needs by age

Tables 5A to 5D of the above Statistical First Release show the percentage of pupils with special educational needs, with and without statements at January 2012, according to their age at the start of the academic year. Table 5A shows information on school aged pupils at state-funded primary schools, while Table 5B focuses on school aged pupils at state-funded secondary schools.

Table 5A shows that the percentage of pupils at primary schools with special educational needs without statements increased steadily in each year group up to the age of 9 with a slight drop at the age of 10. Pupils generally attend primary schools between the ages of 4 and 10 years (ages at the start of the academic year). Figures outside this age range in Table 5A should be treated with caution due to the small numbers of pupils involved. 9.0 per cent of pupils aged 4 years had special educational needs without statements in 2012. This increased to 21.4 per cent for pupils aged 10 years. The percentage of pupils with statements increased steadily from 0.8 per cent aged 4 years to 12.2 per cent aged 10 years.

Table 5B shows that the percentage of pupils at secondary schools with special educational needs without statements decreased from 21.3 per cent aged 11 years to 18.9 per cent aged 15 years. Pupils generally attend secondary schools between the ages of 11 and 15 years and figures outside this age range in Table 5B should be treated with caution. The percentage of pupils with statements remained steady at between 2.0 and 2.1 per cent for all ages between 11 and 15.

Pupils with special educational needs by age and primary type of need

Tables B1 and B2 of the above Statistical First Release show that younger children are more likely to have speech, language and communication needs as their primary type of special educational need than older children. Older children between the ages of 11 and 15 years are more likely than younger children to have specific and moderate learning difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

Pupils with special educational needs by free school meal eligibility

Table 7 of the above Statistical First Release shows the percentage of pupils with special educational needs at state-funded primary schools, state-funded secondary schools and all special schools in January 2012 who were known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals.

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Pupils with special educational needs were more than twice as likely to be eligible for and claiming free school meals than those without special educational needs (29.8 per cent compared to 13.7 per cent)

At primary schools, pupils with special educational needs without statements were over twice as likely to be eligible for free school meals (31.7 per cent), than those with no special educational needs (15.2 per cent). Those with statements were almost twice as likely to be eligible (29.2 per cent) as those without special educational needs.

Similarly, secondary school pupils with special educational needs were more than twice as likely to be eligible for free school meals (26.9 per cent for those with special educational needs without statements and 26.5 per cent for those with statements), compared to those with no special educational needs (11.7 per cent).

Pupils with special educational needs by free school meal eligibility and primary type of need

Table D of the above Statistical First Release shows that pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and those with a moderate learning difficulty were the most likely to be eligible for and claiming free school meals of all the primary types of special educational need. For pupils at School Action Plus, those with hearing impairment were the least likely to be eligible for free school meals and for those with statements of special educational needs, pupils with multi-sensory impairment were the least likely.

Pupils with special educational needs by ethnicity

Tables 8A to 8D of the above Statistical First Release show the percentage of pupils with special educational needs at state-funded primary schools, state-funded secondary schools and all special schools in January 2012 by their ethnicity.

They show that Black pupils were more likely and Chinese pupils were least likely to have special educational needs than pupils of other ethnic groups.

Table 8A shows that at primary schools, Black pupils were most likely to have special educational needs without statements (23.4 per cent) and also most likely to have statements of special educational needs (1.9 per cent) than White and Asian pupils and those of mixed ethnicity.

Table 8B shows that at secondary schools, 22.8 per cent of Black pupils had special educational needs without statements compared to 18.1 per cent of White pupils, 19.2 per cent of pupils with mixed ethnicity and 17.0 per cent of Asian pupils. 2.0 per cent of Black pupils, White pupils and those of mixed ethnicity had statements of special educational needs in secondary schools compared to 1.4 per cent of Asian pupils.

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Pupils with special educational needs by ethnicity and primary type of need

Tables C1 and C2 of the above Statistical First Release show the number and percentage of pupils by their primary type of special educational need and ethnic group for pupils at School Action Plus and with statements of special educational needs. They show that White and Asian pupils were the most likely to have a moderate learning difficulty. Mixed race pupils were the most likely to have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and Chinese pupils were the most likely to have speech, language and communication needs.

Looked after children with special educational needs

This section of Chapter 1 contains information on looked after children with special educational needs in 2011. A child is included if he or she is looked after for at least a year at 31 March 2011. All references to looked after children in the remainder of this chapter refer to children filling this criterion.

Key findings of looked after children

72.8 per cent of the 28,440 children looked after for at least a year at 31 March 2011 had special educational needs, compared to 20.6 per cent of all pupils in January 2011. This means that looked after children were approximately three and a half times more likely to have special educational needs compared to all children. Looked after children were over ten times more likely than all pupils to have statements of special educational needs.

Looked after children with statements of special educational needs were nearly three times more likely to have behaviour, emotional and social difficulty than all pupils with statements.

All numbers which appear in this section were taken from the matched looked after children-National Pupil Database dataset (see Data Annex 1 for further details). Data are based on children looked after by Local Authorities in England for at least a year at 31 March 2011 and level of special educational need provision was obtained from the January 2011 School Census which feeds into the National Pupil Database. Referenced tables and publications can be found in the Statistical First Release *Outcomes for Children Looked After as at 31 March 2011* at <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001046/index.shtml>.

28,440 of the children looked after for at least a year at 31 March 2011 were successfully matched to the special educational needs data in the January 2011 School Census. Table 11 of the above Statistical First Release shows the distribution of level of special educational need provision amongst the 28,440 looked after children.

The table shows that just under three quarters (72.8 per cent) of the 28,440 children looked after had special educational needs. Table 1C in the Statistical First Release *Special Educational Needs in England, January 2012*, which is referenced at the beginning of this chapter, showed that 20.6 per cent of all pupils in England had special educational needs in January 2011. This means that looked after children

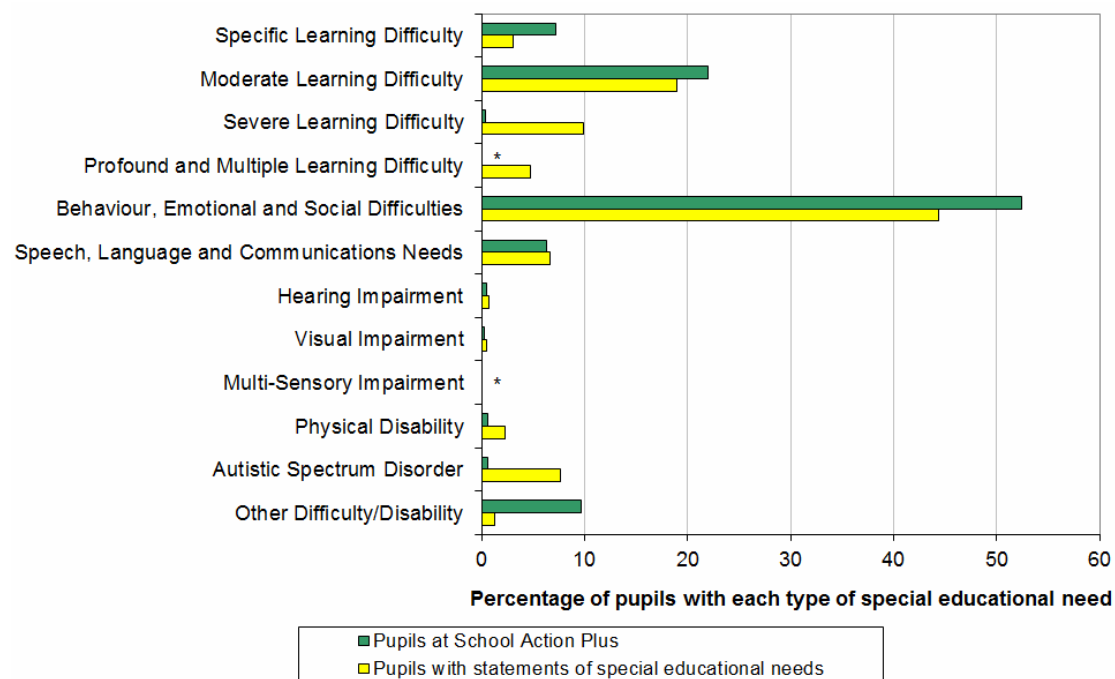
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were approximately 3.5 times more likely to have special educational needs compared to all children. However, pupils who were looked after were far more likely to have statements of special educational needs as 2.8 per cent of all pupils had a statement of special educational needs in January 2011 compared to 29.4 per cent of looked after children at 31 March 2011. 17.8 per cent of all pupils had special educational needs without statements in January 2011 compared to 43.5 per cent of looked after children at 31 March 2011.

Looked after children with special educational needs by primary type of need

Table 12 in the above Statistical First Release and Figure 1.5 below compare the percentages of looked after children of each primary type of special educational need at School Action Plus with those with statements in 2011. Of the 14,940 children looked after at School Action Plus or with statements in 2011, by far the most common primary need was behaviour, emotional and social difficulty (52.4 per cent of those at School Action Plus and 44.4 per cent of those with statements). Children looked after are more than twice as likely to have behaviour, emotional and social difficulty compared to all pupils. Figure 1.4 provides the equivalent figures for all children.

Figure 1.5: Percentage of children looked after for at least a year at 31 March 2011 with each primary type of special educational need in 2011



* Percentages for pupils at School Action Plus with profound and multiple learning difficulties and both levels of provision for special educational need with multi-sensory impairments have not been displayed due to low figures in these groups.

Local Authority indicator on timeliness of statements

Key findings of timeliness of statements

93 per cent of all statements of special education need excluding accepted exception cases were completed within 26 weeks in 2011-12. 86 per cent of all statements were completed within 26 weeks.

This Local Authority measure focuses on statements of special educational needs issued within 26 weeks. The measure has two separate elements or indicators:

- A – The number of final statements of special educational needs issued within 26 weeks excluding exception cases as a proportion of all such statements issued in the year.
- B – The number of final statements of special educational needs issued within 26 weeks as a proportion of all such statements issued in the year.

The data provides useful information for Local Authorities to compare the percentage of statements they produce within the statutory time limits against the performance of other authorities.

The commitment to develop an indicator on the production of statements within 26 weeks was given in the Government's response to the Education and Skills Committee's 2006 report on special educational needs.

The 26 week limit is made up of:

- 6 weeks from when the Local Authority receives the parental or school request for an assessment, or informs the parent that it is thinking of carrying out an assessment, until the decision whether to assess or not.
- 10 weeks in which to carry out the assessment and decide whether to draw up a statement, including 6 weeks for the Local Authority to seek and receive advice.
- 2 weeks in which to draw up a proposed statement.
- 8 weeks to finalise the statement.

The Education (Special Educational Needs) (England) (Consolidation) Regulations 2001 allow for exceptions to these internal time limits, for example where the Local Authority has not received advice from those from whom it has been requested for the assessment within time. Data Annex 1 contains more in depth information on this indicator. Part A excludes cases where exceptions have occurred, while part B includes all statements.

Local Authority results

Figure 1.6 shows the figures for Local Authority measures A and B for 2011-12. Local Authority results can be found in the additional tables to the Statistical First Release *Special Educational Needs in England, January 2012* which is referenced at the beginning of this chapter.

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On part A 93 per cent (17,470) of the 18,880 final statements of special educational needs in England in 2011-12 were issued within 26 weeks (excluding exception cases). On part B, 86 per cent (23,720) of the 27,490 final statements in England in 2011-12 were issued within 26 weeks. In 2010-11, the equivalent figures were 95 per cent for part A and 88 per cent for part B so both measures have decreased slightly.

Figure 1.6: Local Authority performance – percentage of final statements of special educational needs in 2011-12 that were issued within 26 weeks, excluding (A) and including (B) exception cases

