



Statistical First Release

Secondary and primary school applications and offers: March to April 2014

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Secondary first preference rate drops to 85.2% The proportion of applicants who were offered a place at their highest preference secondary school has dropped to 85.2%, down 1.5 percentage points from the 2013 figure of 86.7%.

96.8% received preferred offer at secondary level The proportion of applicants receiving an offer of any of their preferred schools at secondary level has also dropped slightly, down 1.0 percentage points from the 2013 figure of 97.8%.

Primary first preference rate 87.7% Figures relating to applications for primary school across England are available for the first time. In 2014 87.7% received an offer of their first preference school.

96.4% received preferred offer at primary level The proportion who received a preferred offer at primary level was very similar to that at secondary level, with 96.4% receiving an offer of one of their preferred schools.

School level figures to be published later The revised collection means that we can produce school level figures on the number of offers made (for example number as first preference, one of top three preferences) and the number of times each school has been requested (also by preference level). These will be published in October 2014.

A National Statistics publication

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1. Secondary results

This note sets out details of the number of applications received for a school place and the proportion of preferred offers received (broken down into 1st preference offer, one of top three preferences offered, for example) at Local Authority (LA), regional and England level. The secondary figures have been collected since 2008 and come from the application and offer process undertaken by the LAs to enable them to send out offers of a place in a secondary school to all applicants on the national offer day of 1 March (or next working day).

The headline figures for the proportion of children receiving their first preference or a preferred offer are given above. However, the data contains more information such as the number of applications made, the proportion who did not receive a preferred offer and whether the applicants were provided with offers within or outside their home LA.

Number of applications increases	The number of applications for a place in secondary school increased by 4.3% to 521,274 from 2013. This was the first increase since we started collecting the data in 2008.
London results	As in previous years, London had the lowest number of applicants receiving their first preference offer, at 70.2%, down 0.9 percentage points on 2013 (lower than the decrease at England level). 2014 LA level results for Inner London ranged from 58.4% to 74.5%, and for Outer London from 64.6% to 81.0%
Other regional results	Outside London, the highest first preference rate was seen in the North East, with 92.4%. The lowest regional first preference rate after London was seen in the West Midlands, where 81.9% of applicants were offered their highest preference school.
Non applicant offers	For the first time LAs were asked to give figures for the number of offers they made to children for whom an application was not made, but who the LA were aware would need a school place. At secondary level a total of 2,300 such offers were made.

Table 1: Timeseries of key secondary preference rates, England

Entry into academic year	% made 1st preference offer	% made 1 of top 3 preferences	% made offer of any preferred school	Number of applications
2010/11	83.2	94.9	96.6	529,645
2011/12	84.6	95.6	97.2	512,193
2012/13	85.3	95.9	97.6	503,734
2013/14	86.7	96.5	97.8	499,968
2014/15	85.2	95.5	96.8	521,274

2. Primary results

For the first time this year the department also collected data relating to the new primary national offer day of 16 April 2014. Exactly the same information was gathered but related to applications for entry into the reception year of state funded primary schools within England. All LAs reported on the same entry year.

The increase in birth rates, and following on from that the pressure on primary school places, has been well documented over the last few years. Despite this the overall proportion of applicants receiving their first preference offer was higher than at secondary level at 87.7%.

There is no comparison data from previous years, so observations are made on figures for 2014 only. In future years a timeseries will be built up.

London results	At primary level, London's first preference rate was 81.1%. Whilst lower than the other regions, it is closer to the England rate (87.7%) than at secondary level. Overall 95.3% of London's applicants received an offer of a preferred school, just 1.1 percentage points behind the England figure of 96.4%.
Other region's results	As at secondary level, the North East has the highest first preference rate at 91.5%. Both Yorkshire & the Humber and the East Midlands offered 90.1% of their applicants their first preference school.
Proportion not receiving an alternative offer	At primary level, as at secondary, 0.6% of applicants did not receive an offer of one of their preferred schools and also did not receive an alternative offer. In some LAs this may be because they are waiting for confirmation of a new school opening in September 2014, or because they are in the process of organising bulge classes. Some LAs, however, choose not to impose an alternative offer on unsuccessful applicants, instead sending details of schools with availability and asking parents to make a second choice from this list. These LAs are mostly in the London area and will therefore show a higher percentage of children receiving no offer.

Table 2: Key primary preference rates, England

Entry into academic year	% made 1st preference offer	% made 1 of top 3 preferences	% made offer of any preferred school	Number of applications
2014/15	87.7	95.7	96.4	623,526

3. List of tables

The following tables are available in excel format on the department's statistics website:

[School applications data series](#)

- 1 Applications made to local authorities in England and offers made on National Offer Day for entry into secondary schools at the start of academic year 2014/15.
- 2 Applications made to local authorities in England and offers made on National Offer Day for entry into primary schools at the start of academic year 2014/15.

List of tables (continued)

When reviewing the tables, please note the following:

We preserve confidentiality	The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires we take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality.
So we remove some small numbers and round others	Numbers of 1 or 2, and their percentages, have been suppressed. Where necessary additional figures for an LA have also been suppressed to prevent the removed figure from being calculated. Region totals have been rounded to the nearest ten throughout for the same reason. Where necessary England totals have been rounded to ten for the same reason. Therefore there may be discrepancies between the sum of individual figures and the totals as shown.
The tables have been made clearer	In order to make the main tables easier to read, some figures have been moved to the underlying data tables. These are the percentage of applications which are online and the NC year of admission (i.e. the normal curriculum year of entry to schools in that phase in that LA). In addition the percentage of applicants not made an offer is directly provided rather than having to be calculated.
New figure on offers to non-applicants provided	Some LAs make offers to children whose parents have not made an application but who the LA is aware will need a school place (for example because they are in year 6 or nursery within the LA). For the first time this figure has been requested from the LAs and is listed in the tables.
How all the applicants are covered in the preference rates	The percentages for those provided with any preferred offer, those offered a non-preferred school and those made no offer together total 100 per cent of the applicants. Offers made to non-applicants are not included in any of these rates.
What total places figure includes	This figure tells us how many places the LA has in the first year of entry of either primary school or secondary school. This includes places in mainstream schools only, for example not places in Pupil Referral Units, for either reception year (for primary schools) or for the main entry year (usually year 7 but sometimes year 9) for secondary schools.

4. Background: interpretation of the figures

4.1 The figures are based on the offers sent out on the respective national offer days. The final numbers starting each school could be different due to offers 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 these changes are not collected or published.

4.2 If an LA is not able to make an offer of a preferred school, in most cases they offer a place at an alternative school. Some LAs, however, chose to instead send to the applicant a list of schools with available places and invite them to state which of these schools they would prefer their child to go to. These incidences will be recorded as the applicant receiving no offer.

4.3 The percentages for whether offers were made of a school within or outside the LA are calculated based on all offers including those made to non-applicants (see table notes).

4.4 In some cases an application was recorded by both the Home LA (to whom the application was made) and also by the LA within which the offered school is based. Only the Home LA, to whom the applicant sent their form, should record the application and offer. Therefore the duplicate record submitted by the LA the school is based in has been removed.

4.5 The LAs were asked not to provide school places offered to children with statements of special educational needs (SEN), as the parents of these children were not required to apply for a school place. There are a number of applications recorded where special schools were amongst the preferences stated and, in some cases, a special school has been offered. It is presumed these are offers to SEN children who do not have a statement. 40 LAs at secondary level and 37 at primary level recorded such applications.

4.6 Applications listing preferences and offers of pupil referral units or private schools were removed. Also removed were records of offers to schools which could not be identified from the school census, Edubase, or via one of the additional 'dummy' school codes used to identify new schools or split entries (see below).

4.7 At secondary level the application is for the main entry point into secondary school in that LA. This is usually year 7 but a small number of LAs have a main entry point in year 9 and this is what they report on. For LAs with more than one entry point, the intake with the largest number of places available is that reported on.

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

4.9 Some schools have two entry routes. At primary school this is generally a school with a single school code but two sites which can be applied for separately. At secondary level the two routes are either a school with day and boarding places, or a school with a certain number of places reserved for those passing music or language tests. Parents can apply for both routes (e.g. for both sites of a split-site primary school), therefore a 'dummy' school code is used to identify the second option for each affected school.

4.10 All mainstream state funded schools, including academies, are included. However, new free schools can have a rapid set-up process and may not be ready in time to make their offers within LA co-ordination. Therefore, for their first year of operation only, free schools may make offers direct and thus be excluded from these figures. In their second year they must make offers within the LA co-ordination process.

4.11 In one instance a free school was applied for via an additional form submitted to the LA. When its September 2014 opening was confirmed the applicants were offered a school from their main application form plus a place at the free school, and asked to advise which of the two places they wished to take up. Therefore the number of applications and offers made by that LA will be slightly increased.

4.12 Other very small adjustments have been made to the source data as required to ensure that we provide as full and accurate a picture of the application and offer process as possible.

4.13 The Isles of Scilly LA 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 LA has been omitted from both tables as preference rates cannot be calculated.

5. Background: the admissions process

Each LA coordinates admissions to all the state-funded schools in its area. It receives applications for all children resident in its area, including for its children who wish to apply to schools in another LA. The LAs coordinate with each other to ensure that all applications for schools outside the home LA are received, and therefore included in the coordination, by the LA in which the school is based. However, the application is in all cases counted within these tables by the LA to whom the application is made.

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

LAs must allow parents to express at least three preferences at each level (primary and secondary). In practice different LAs allow parents to express between three and six preferences. The number of preferences allowed can vary at primary and secondary level.

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

LAs must publish information on the admissions criteria of schools in their area including data on volume of applications for the available places in previous years (i.e. whether they were oversubscribed in those years).

LAs 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 for primary offers.

Parents are entitled to appeal to the relevant admission authority against their refusal to offer a place. These appeals are not reported on in this publication. Figures for appeals lodged, heard and the appeal result relating to entry into the start of the 2013/14 academic year will be published in July on the [website](#).

6. Background: changes to the collection and publication

Primary preferences collected	The introduction of a primary national offer day and changes to the relevant legislation has allowed the department to collect data at both primary and secondary level for the first time in 2014.
Primary preference table appears for the first time	A second table detailing primary preference rates has been included in the SFR for the first time. It is the same as the secondary level table.
Data provided at pupil level	Both secondary and primary data was gathered from LAs at pupil level which has been aggregated by the department into LA level figures. Cleaning of the data prior to aggregation may cause differences between the figures contained in this publication and any released by the LAs themselves close to the respective national offer days.
School level data to be published later	The gathering of the data at pupil level allows us to produce school level figures of the number of applications received and the preference level of offers made. These figures will be published in October 2014.
Secondary level data can be compared with previous years	This is the seventh year that secondary level preference rates have been gathered and published, allowing comparisons to be made over time. A five-year timeseries of key figures at England level has been provided above and all of the previous data can be found on the department's website .
Non-applicant offers included	The opportunity has been taken to make the table easier to follow, with all of the preference rates leading on from each other. This means that some figures are now only found in the underlying data tables published at the same time. An addition to the main table, however, is the number of offers made to non-applicants (see notes on the tables for further information).

7. Got a query? Like to give feedback?

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