



Department
for Education

Ad-hoc Notice

**Universal infant free school meals:
Take up by infant pupils based on the
autumn (October) census 2014**

December 2014

Background

On 1 September 2014 all state-funded schools in England became required by law to offer a free school meal to all pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2.

This statistical notice reports the number and percentage of infant pupils who took a free school meal on 2 October 2014, as reported by schools in the autumn school census. Data was received from 100 per cent of schools with infant pupils in the specified year groups (16,510 schools).

An update to this release with more detailed breakdowns, including local authority level data, based on the January 2015 school census, will be provided with the publication 'Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics: January 2015' which will be published in June 2015.

Results

Table 1 - Take up of school lunches by infant pupils on 2 October 2014 census day [1] [2]

Region	Number of infant pupils who took a lunch on census day	Number of infant pupils who did not take a lunch on census day [3]	Percentage of infant pupils who took a lunch on census day	Percentage of infant pupils who did not take a lunch on census day [3]
England	1,640,530	285,490	85.2	14.8
North East	79,875	9,595	89.3	10.7
North West	228,765	30,570	88.2	11.8
Yorkshire and Humber	167,645	27,580	85.9	14.1
East Midlands	135,520	27,885	82.9	17.1
West Midlands	182,575	28,170	86.6	13.4
East of England	177,535	36,900	82.8	17.2
Inner London	96,720	9,980	90.6	9.4
Outer London	172,190	30,945	84.8	15.2
South East	249,895	56,665	81.5	18.5
South West	149,810	27,200	84.6	15.4

Source: Autumn school census 2014

1. Infant pupils includes those in reception, year 1, year 2 and those not following the national curriculum and who are of infant age.
2. Figures include dually registered pupils (e.g. in a mainstream school and also attends a special school for specialist support) who will be recorded as taking a lunch at the school where the meal is provided. These pupils will always be recorded twice, either: 1) taking and not taking a school lunch on census day; or 2) not taking a school lunch at both schools on census day.
3. Figures include pupils who were absent on census day.

Take up of free school meals

Over 1.6 million infant pupils (85.2 per cent of all infant pupils) took a free school meal on autumn census day in 2014. This is a rise of 1.3 million from the 0.3 million infant pupils who were estimated¹ to have taken a free school meal in the January 2014 school census (which was prior to the introduction of universal infant free school meals).

Take up of free school meals varied by region, with 90.6% in inner London, and 81.5% in the South East.

¹ Data on the number and proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals who took a meal on census day was collected at school level in January 2014, and not split by age of pupil. Therefore, to estimate the number of infant pupils who took a free school meal, the proportion of all primary-age free school meal eligible pupils who took a meal on census day has been applied to the number of infant pupils eligible for free school meals.



Department
for Education

© Crown 2014

You may re-use this document/publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

To view this licence:

visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3

email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

About this publication:

enquiries www.education.gov.uk/contactus

download www.gov.uk/government/publications

Reference: DFE-00720-2014



Follow us on Twitter:
[@educationgovuk](https://twitter.com/educationgovuk)



Like us on Facebook:
facebook.com/educationgovuk