



## Statistical Bulletin 8/2015

# Annual enrolments at grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland 2015/16:

## Basic provisional statistics

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The purpose of this statistical release is to present basic provisional enrolment figures for schools and for children in funded pre-school education for 2015/16.

**Key points:**

- There are 168,669 pupils in **primary** schools (years 1-7), and this continues to increase even though there are fewer primary schools year on year.
- In total 141,110 pupils are enrolled in **post-primary** schools, showing a decline for the fifth year in a row. This decrease is witnessed in enrolments to non-grammar schools, but grammar school enrolments increase slightly.
- Pupils in **funded pre-school** education is at its highest level ever recorded, with 24,147 pupils attending a nursery school or class, reception or funded voluntary and private pre-school.
- More than 100,000 pupils in Northern Ireland are entitled to **free school meals** and this represents three in ten of all pupils.

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## Introduction

The data in the following bulletin are taken from the school enrolments census, which was conducted in October 2015. Data collected through the school census exercise are used by the Department of Education (DE) to inform a wide range of policy areas, including finance allocations, school estate development and planning, special education, school improvement, area based planning, extended schools, additional educational needs, early years and integrated and Irish medium education. Other users include the Education Authority, the Education and Training Inspectorate and to inform responses to Assembly questions and requests from academic researchers, journalists, lobby groups and the public.

This first release of the basic statistics contains information which is used in the process to allocate funding to schools. These figures are provisional and subject to change. A further statistical release, containing a more detailed set of tables based on finalised and validated data, will be published in February 2016.

## Section 1: Schools in Northern Ireland

- The numbers of **schools** in Northern Ireland continues to decrease, from 1,210 in 2011 to 1,166 in 2015 (Table 1). Much of this decline is accounted for by the drop of 27 **primary schools** (including preparatory departments) and 13 **non-grammar schools** from 2011.
- However, the number of funded **voluntary and private pre-school centres** continues to increase, rising from 381 in 2011 to 402 this year (Table 1).

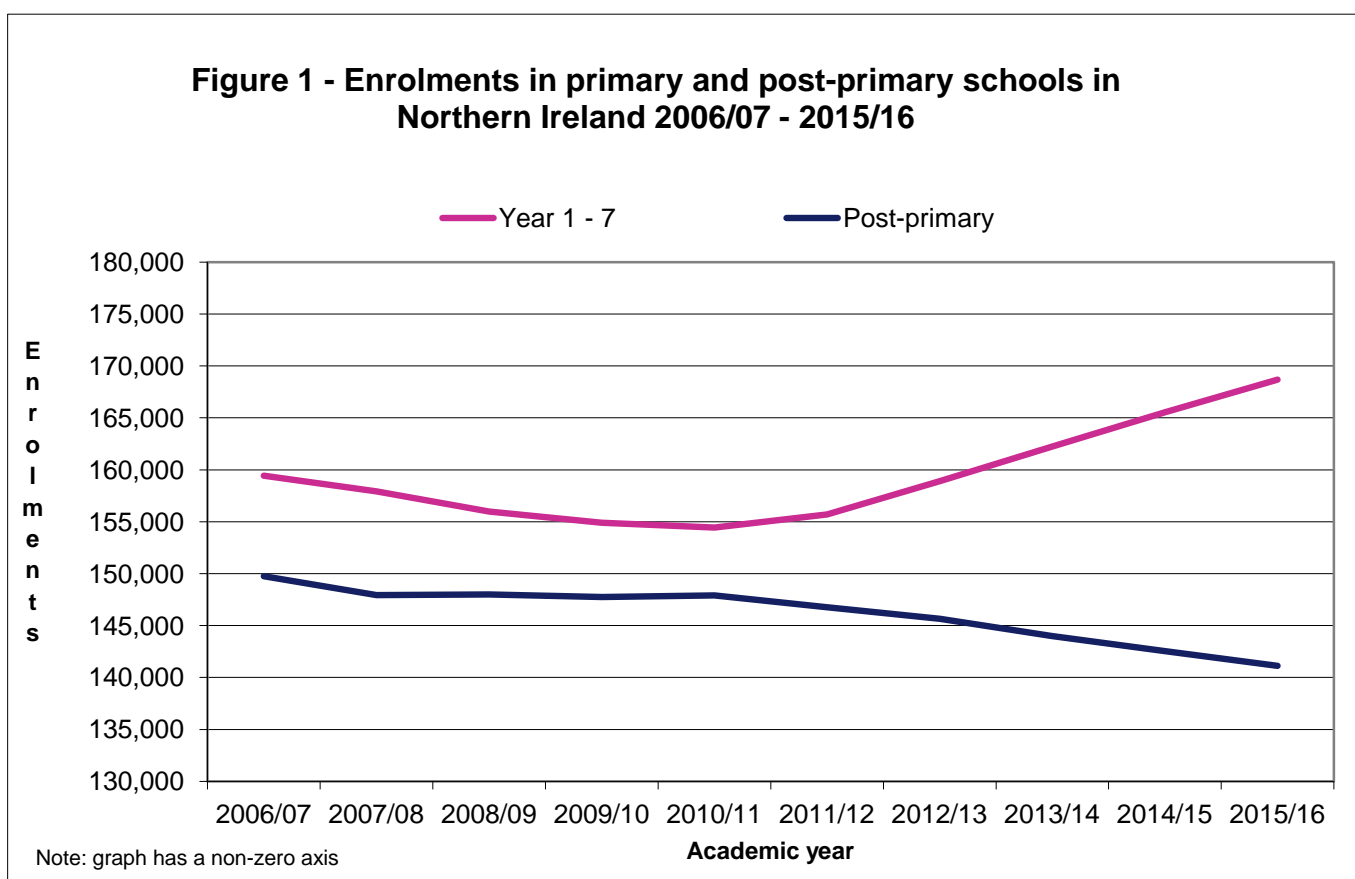
**Table 1: Number of Schools and Pre-school Education Centres by Management Type**

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<b>VOLUNTARY and PRIVATE PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>381</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>402</b>
<b>NURSERY SCHOOLS</b>					
Controlled	65	65	64	64	64
Catholic Maintained	32	32	32	32	32
<b>Total nursery schools</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b>					
Controlled	378	374	370	370	368
Catholic Maintained	392	387	384	381	374
Other Maintained	27	29	29	29	29
Controlled Integrated	19	19	19	19	20
Grant Maintained Integrated	23	23	23	23	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>839</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>825</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>814</b>
Grammar school preparatory depts.	15	15	14	14	13
<b>Total primary schools and preparatory depts.</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>839</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>827</b>
<b>POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b>					
<b>Secondary (non grammar) schools</b>					
Controlled	56	55	53	51	49
Catholic Maintained	71	71	68	68	64
Other Maintained	1	1	1	1	2
Controlled Integrated	5	5	5	5	5
Grant Maintained Integrated	15	15	15	15	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Grammar schools</b>					
Controlled	17	17	17	18	17
Voluntary					
Under Catholic management	29	29	29	29	29
Under other management	22	22	22	21	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Total Post Primary schools</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>SPECIAL SCHOOLS</b>	<b>Total</b>	41	40	40	39
<b>HOSPITAL SCHOOLS</b>	<b>Total</b>	2	1	1	1
<b>INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS</b>	<b>Total</b>	15	15	15	14
<b>ALL SCHOOLS</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,210</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,187</b>	<b>1,180</b>
<b>ALL SCHOOLS AND PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES</b>		<b>1,591</b>	<b>1,590</b>	<b>1,583</b>	<b>1,581</b>

1 Voluntary and private centres funded under the Pre-school Education Expansion Programme, which began in 1998/99.

## Section 2: Enrolments in schools in Northern Ireland

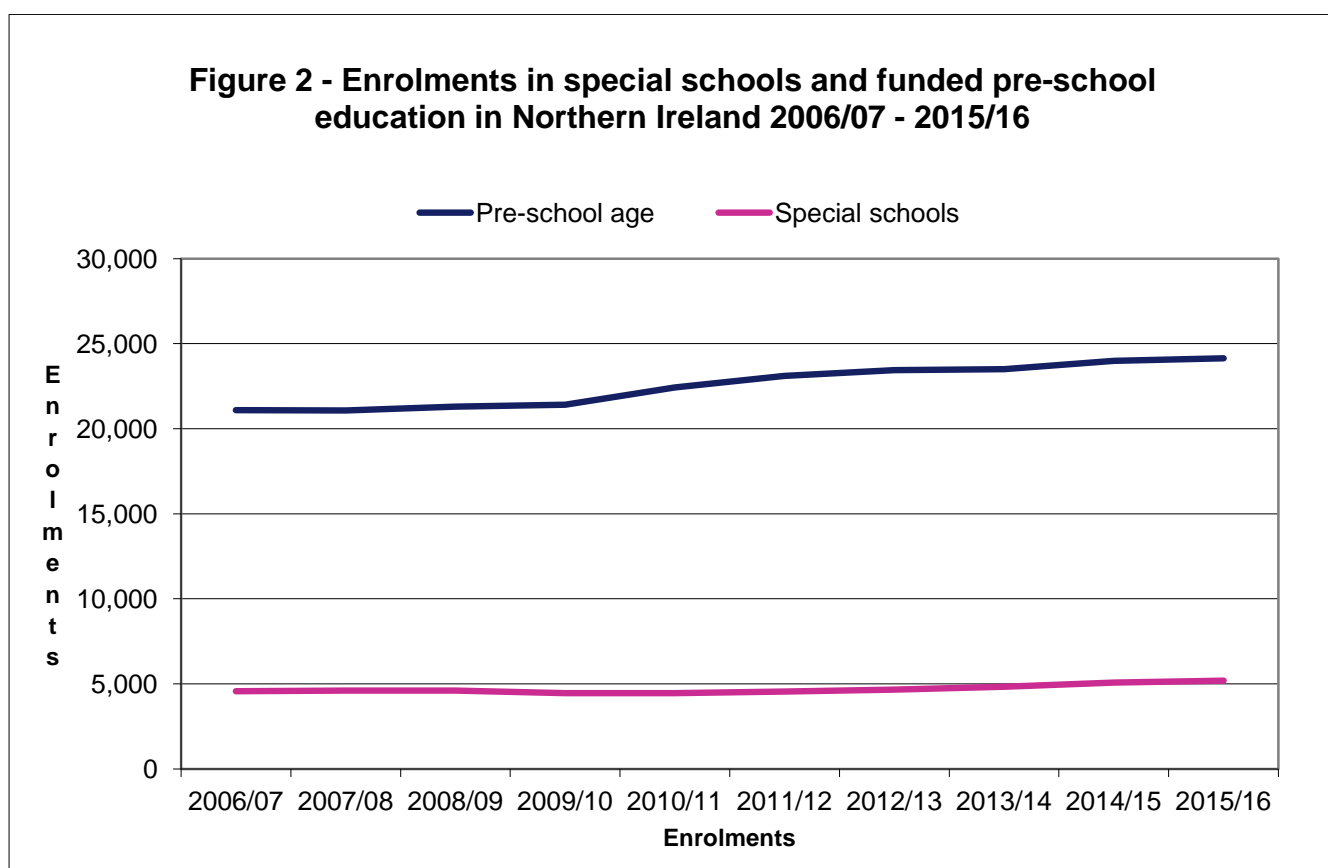
- There were almost 340,000 pupils in **all** funded schools (including voluntary and private pre-schools) in October 2015 (Table 2). This has increased for the sixth successive year, and has risen by almost 2,000 pupils alone compared to last year.
- Enrolments in **primary schools** follow the overall trend, with an increase of more than 3,000 pupils on last year to almost 169,000 (Figure 1). This is the highest number of primary school pupils recorded since 2001. The increase observed is in line with the rise in the number of 4-10 year olds in NISRA's population estimates over the last three years<sup>1</sup>.



- By contrast, enrolments in **post-primary schools** have declined for the fifth consecutive year to 141,110 pupils. It is currently at its lowest level since 1990. This is approximately 1,500 fewer pupils compared to 2014 (Figure 1). Again this mirrors the decrease seen in NISRA's population estimates in the same period.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/midyear/NI-sya-6114.xls>

- This trend only exists in **non-grammar schools**, where enrolments have dropped by almost 6,500 since 2011. Enrolments in **grammar school** enrolments have increased by 800 pupils in the same period (Table 2).
- The number of children in funded **pre-school education**, that is, reception classes, nursery schools and units, or voluntary and private pre-school centres, was 24,147. This has steadily increased by 1,000 pupils in the last four years. Much of this increase is attributable to the rise in pupils in voluntary and private pre-school education centres and nursery classes within primary schools. Enrolments in reception classes has halved in the same period, down to just 243 pupils in 2015/16.
- **Special school** enrolments have also gradually increased, rising by over 600 pupils in the last four years to 5,185 in 2015/16.



**Table 2: Number of Pupils in Schools and Children in Funded Pre-school Education by Type of Establishment attended**

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	
<b>VOLUNTARY and PRIVATE PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>8,149</b>	<b>8,410</b>	<b>8,360</b>	<b>8,621</b>	<b>8,691</b>	
<b>NURSERY SCHOOLS</b>						
Full-time	3,981	3,986	3,983	4,000	4,011	
Part-time	1,930	1,924	1,869	1,882	1,893	
<b>Total nursery school pupils</b>	<b>5,911</b>	<b>5,910</b>	<b>5,852</b>	<b>5,882</b>	<b>5,904</b>	
<b>PRIMARY SCHOOLS and PREPARATORY DEPARTMENTS</b>						
<b>Nursery class pupils</b>						
Full-time	5,106	5,070	5,110	5,103	5,405	
Part-time	3,502	3,633	3,842	4,062	3,904	
<b>Total nursery class pupils<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>8,608</b>	<b>8,703</b>	<b>8,952</b>	<b>9,165</b>	<b>9,309</b>	
Reception	444	417	343	329	243	
<b>Year 1-7 classes</b>						
Primary schools (year 1 - 7)	153,740	157,082	160,453	163,735	166,912	
Grammar school preparatory depts. (year 1 - 7)	1,954	1,832	1,800	1,813	1,757	
<b>Total year 1 - 7 pupils</b>	<b>155,694</b>	<b>158,914</b>	<b>162,253</b>	<b>165,548</b>	<b>168,669</b>	
<b>Total primary school pupils</b>	<b>164,746</b>	<b>168,034</b>	<b>171,548</b>	<b>175,042</b>	<b>178,221</b>	
<b>POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b>						
Secondary (non grammar) schools	84,193	83,059	81,339	79,840	77,750	
Grammar schools	62,554	62,599	62,634	62,713	63,360	
<b>Total post primary pupils</b>	<b>146,747</b>	<b>145,658</b>	<b>143,973</b>	<b>142,553</b>	<b>141,110</b>	
<b>SPECIAL SCHOOLS<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Total</b>	4,549	4,653	4,832	5,064	5,185
<b>HOSPITAL SCHOOLS</b>	<b>Total</b>	191	78	72	112	85
<b>INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS</b>	<b>Total</b>	681	687	688	642	658
<b>ALL SCHOOLS</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>322,891</b>	<b>325,020</b>	<b>326,965</b>	<b>329,295</b>	<b>331,163</b>
<b>ALL SCHOOLS AND PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES</b>		<b>331,040</b>	<b>333,430</b>	<b>335,325</b>	<b>337,916</b>	<b>339,854</b>

1. Voluntary and private centres funded under the Pre-school Education Expansion Programme, which began in 1998/99.

2. Pupils placed in special schools or units on a temporary basis were counted at their main school from 2009/10 onwards.

3. Nursery and reception pupils who are enrolled in preparatory departments of grammar schools have not been included as they are not funded by the Department.

### Section 3: Pupils entitled to free school meals<sup>2</sup>

- Based on provisional data, more than 100,000 pupils are entitled to **free school meals** in 2015/16, which represents 30% of children in funded schools (excluding voluntary and private pre-schools) (Table 3). This proportion is unchanged from last year.
- Free school meal entitlement varies across school type. **Special schools** have a much higher than average proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (54%). **Non-grammar** pupils are also much more likely than **grammar** school pupils to be entitled to free school meals (40% compared to 14%) (Table 3).
- Free school meal entitlement has risen from 26% to 28% in the last year in **post-primary schools** (Table 3). This increase is likely to be a continuation of the sharp rise witnessed last year when the Working Tax Credit free school meal criterion was extended to post-primary pupils in September 2014<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.deni.gov.uk/articles/school-milk-and-meals-background>

<sup>3</sup> Eligibility under the Working Tax Credit free school meal criterion was introduced on a phased basis with Nursery, Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils eligible from September 2010 and Key Stage 2 pupils eligible from September 2011. It was extended to post-primary pupils from September 2014.



**Table 3: Percentage of Children Entitled to Free School Meals<sup>1,4,5</sup> by Type of Establishment attended**

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
<b>VOLUNTARY and PRIVATE PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES<sup>1,2</sup></b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>NURSERY SCHOOLS<sup>1</sup></b>					
Full-time	43%	45%	45%	47%	50%
Part-time	9%	8%	9%	11%	12%
<b>All nursery schools</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b>					
<b>Nursery class pupils<sup>1,4</sup></b>					
Full-time	36%	38%	43%	44%	42%
Part-time	11%	12%	11%	12%	12%
<b>Total nursery class pupils<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>29%</b>
Reception	13%	11%	17%	19%	13%
<b>Year 1-7 classes</b>					
Primary schools (year 1 - 7)	27%	30%	31%	32%	32%
Grammar school preparatory depts. (year 1 - 7)	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
<b>Total year 1 - 7 pupils</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>Total primary school pupils</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b>					
Secondary (non grammar) schools	27%	28%	27%	37%	40%
Grammar schools	7%	7%	7%	12%	14%
<b>TOTAL POST PRIMARY PUPILS</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>SPECIAL SCHOOLS<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>ALL SCHOOLS<sup>3</sup> Total</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>TOTAL SCHOOLS AND PRE-EDUCATION CENTRES</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>30%</b>

1. For pupils and children in the nursery sector and in voluntary and private pre-school centres, where free school meal entitlement data is not appropriate, the number of pupils with (a) parent(s) in receipt of Job

Seeker's allowance or Income Support is used instead of free school meal entitlement.

2. Voluntary and private centres funded under the Pre-school Education Expansion Programme, which began in 1998/99.

3. Free school meal entitlement data is not collected for pupils at hospital schools. Figures for independent schools are not validated.

4. Eligibility under the Working Tax Credit free school meal criterion was introduced on a phased basis with Nursery, Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils eligible from September 2010 and Key Stage 2 pupils eligible from September 2011. It was extended to post-primary pupils from September 2014.

5. These figures may be subject to minor revision once the Education Authority's auditing process is completed.

6. Nursery and reception pupils who are enrolled in preparatory departments of grammar schools have not been included as they are not funded by the Department.

7. Free school meal data for special schools was not validated by the Department before 2014/15

## Notes for readers

### *National Statistics*

1. 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.

2. For general enquiries about National Statistics, contact the National Statistics Public Enquiry Service on 0845 601 3034  
minicom: 01633 812399

E-mail: [info@statistics.gov.uk](mailto:info@statistics.gov.uk)

Fax: 01633 652747

Letters: Customer Contact Centre, Office for National Statistics, Rm 1.101,  
Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport, NP10 8XG

3. You can also find National Statistics on the Internet: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>

### *School Census*

4. The statistics in this release have been derived from the annual School Census; details about the survey may be found at <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/Census%20description%20for%20web%201516.docx>. For voluntary and private pre-school centres, and nursery schools, the census consists of a paper return comprising a number of tables; for post-primary, primary and special schools, it consists of a return comprising individual pupil records, made by Electronic Data Interchange.
5. The 2015/16 figures in this statistical release are based on information as at 9 October 2015. They may be subject to minor revision and these will be notified in accordance with our revisions policy. This can be accessed at <https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/Statistical%20Revisions.pdf>.

6. A further statistical release, containing a more detailed set of tables, will be published in February 2016.
7. The figures for nursery *classes* relate to approved nursery classes in primary schools. The figures for reception refer to pupils who were below compulsory school age at 1st July 2015, who were admitted to a reception class or group in primary school following their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. Schools may admit reception pupils throughout the year, but only those who have been admitted by 31st October are counted in the school census.
8. Further statistics relating to school numbers and enrolments can be found on the DE website ([www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)) under the Facts and Figures section.

The DE website presents figures taken from the school census, summarised at regional, former Education and Library Board and school level. Statistics on pupil attendance, pupil: teacher ratios, school leaver destinations and qualifications may also be accessed via the website.

8. Information on enrolments collected via the school census process are used to inform DE policy and procedures (particularly School Funding), as well as to inform Education Authority of detailed information useful to them in their auditing processes.

### *School types*

9. Definitions of school management types are as follows:
  - **Controlled:** Schools are managed and funded by the Education Authority through Boards of Governors (BoG). Primary and post-primary school BoGs consist of representatives of transferors - mainly the Protestant churches - along with representatives of parents, teachers and the EA.
  - **Voluntary:** Self-governing schools, generally of long standing, originally established to provide an academic education at post primary level on a fee paying basis. Now funded by the Department and managed by Boards of Governors. The BoGs are constituted in accordance with each school's scheme of management - usually representatives of foundation governors, parents, teachers and in most cases, DE or EA representatives. The BoGs is the employing authority and is responsible for the employment of all staff in its school.
  - **Maintained** schools are managed by Boards of Governors which consist of members nominated by trustees, along with representatives of parents, teachers and the Education Authority. These schools are funded through the EA for their running costs and directly by the Department in relation to capital building works. For **Catholic Maintained** schools, the Employing Authority is the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS). **Other maintained** schools are any schools that are not Catholic maintained. They are typically, but not exclusively, **Irish medium schools**.
  - **Controlled integrated:** Controlled schools which have acquired integrated status.
  - **Grant Maintained integrated:** Self-governing schools with integrated education status, funded directly by the Department of Education and managed by Boards of Governors. The BoG is the employing authority and responsible for employing staff.

10. Definitions of other school types are as follows

- A **special school** is a controlled or voluntary school which is specially organised to provide education for pupils with special needs and is recognised by the DE as a special school.
- An **independent school** is a school at which full-time education is provided for pupils aged from four to 16 and is not grant aided. These schools set their own curriculum and admissions policies and are funded by fees paid by parents and income from investments. Each independent school must be registered with DE and is inspected regularly by ETI.

**Further enquiries**

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Special analyses of the school census can be undertaken on request.

**Press enquiries should be made to the Department's Press Office at the same address, telephone (028) 9127 9207 / fax (028) 9127 9271.**

Feedback on this publication can be provided directly to Paul Matthews (contact details above) or via the feedback questionnaire on our website.

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/feedback.htm>