

## Statistical Bulletin 4/2017

### School Meals in Northern Ireland, 2016/17

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**Issued by:**

Analytical Services Unit  
Department of Education  
Rathgael House  
Balloo Road  
Bangor  
BT19 7PR

**Telephone**

Press Office:

028 9127 9207

Analytical Services Unit:

028 9127 9241

**Statistician:**

Adele McCauley

**Email:**

[statistics@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@education-ni.gov.uk)

**Internet**

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-meals-201617-statistical-bulletin-11-april-2017>

The purpose of this statistical bulletin is to provide results of the annual data collection relating to the uptake of school meals in Northern Ireland schools in 2016/17.

**Key points:**

- **Over 187,000 school meals**, both free and paid, were taken by pupils on census day, which equates to a **school meals uptake level of 61.1%** by pupils present for lunch on the day.
- The school meals uptake level for 2016/17 is **0.5 percentage points higher than the previous year**.
- **102,127 pupils are entitled to free school meals**; this represents 30.7% of pupils.
- The **uptake level for free school meals by entitled pupils is 82.2%**.

## CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SECTION 1: UPTAKE OF SCHOOL MEALS (FREE AND PAID).....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>SECTION 2: ENTITLEMENT TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SECTION 3: UPTAKE OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>NOTES FOR READERS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES AND CHARTS .....</b>	<b>11</b>

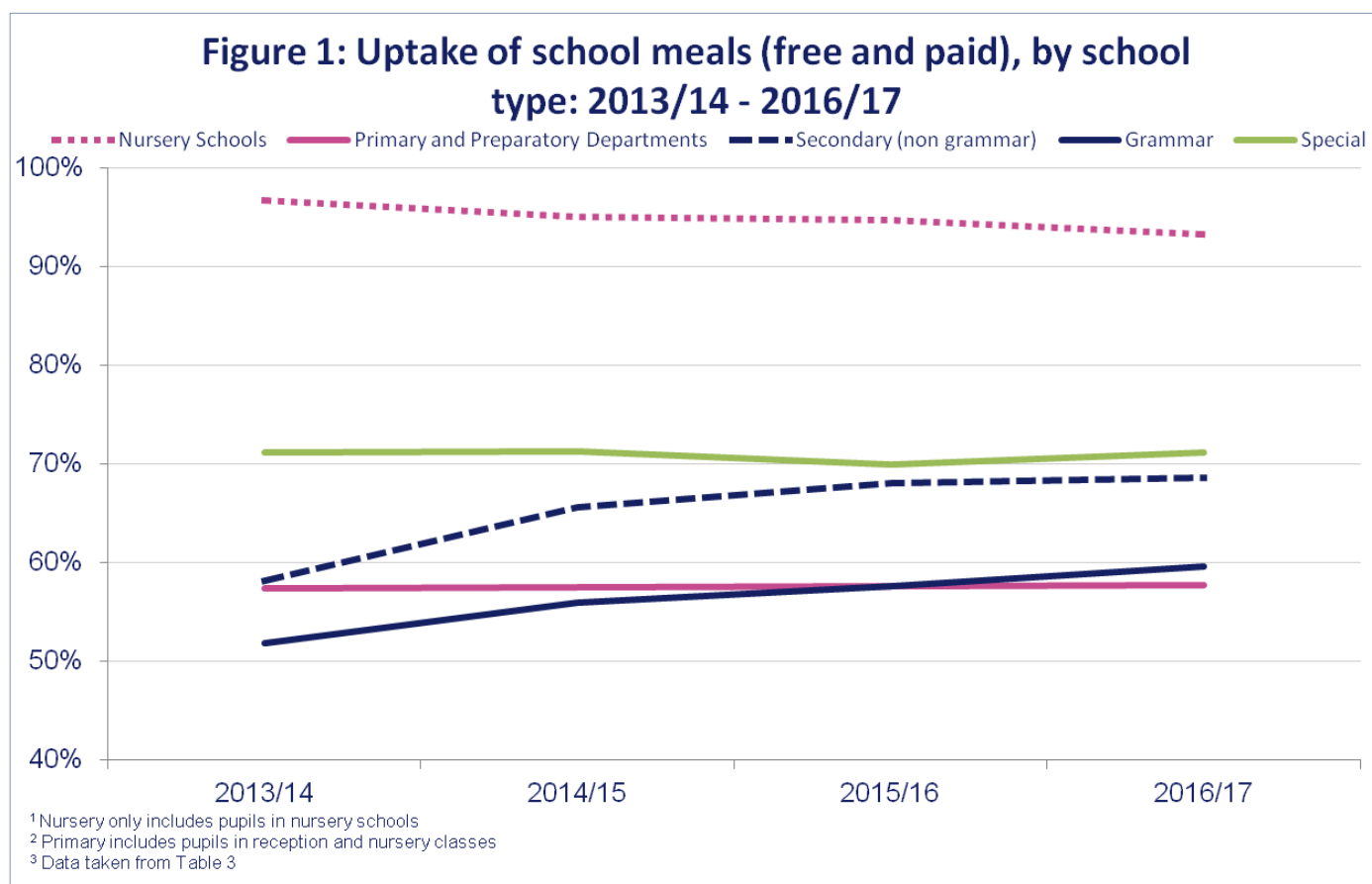
## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this statistical bulletin is to provide results of the latest annual data collection relating to the uptake of school meals in Northern Ireland schools, commonly known as the school meals census. The information was collected with a reference point of 7 October 2016 and relates to all grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland.

Data collected through the school meals census are used by policy teams within the Department of Education and by other users across the education service, most notably by the Education Authority. The data are also used to inform a number of Assembly questions. The Department is responsible for formulating and developing policy and the associated financial arrangements in relation to school meals.

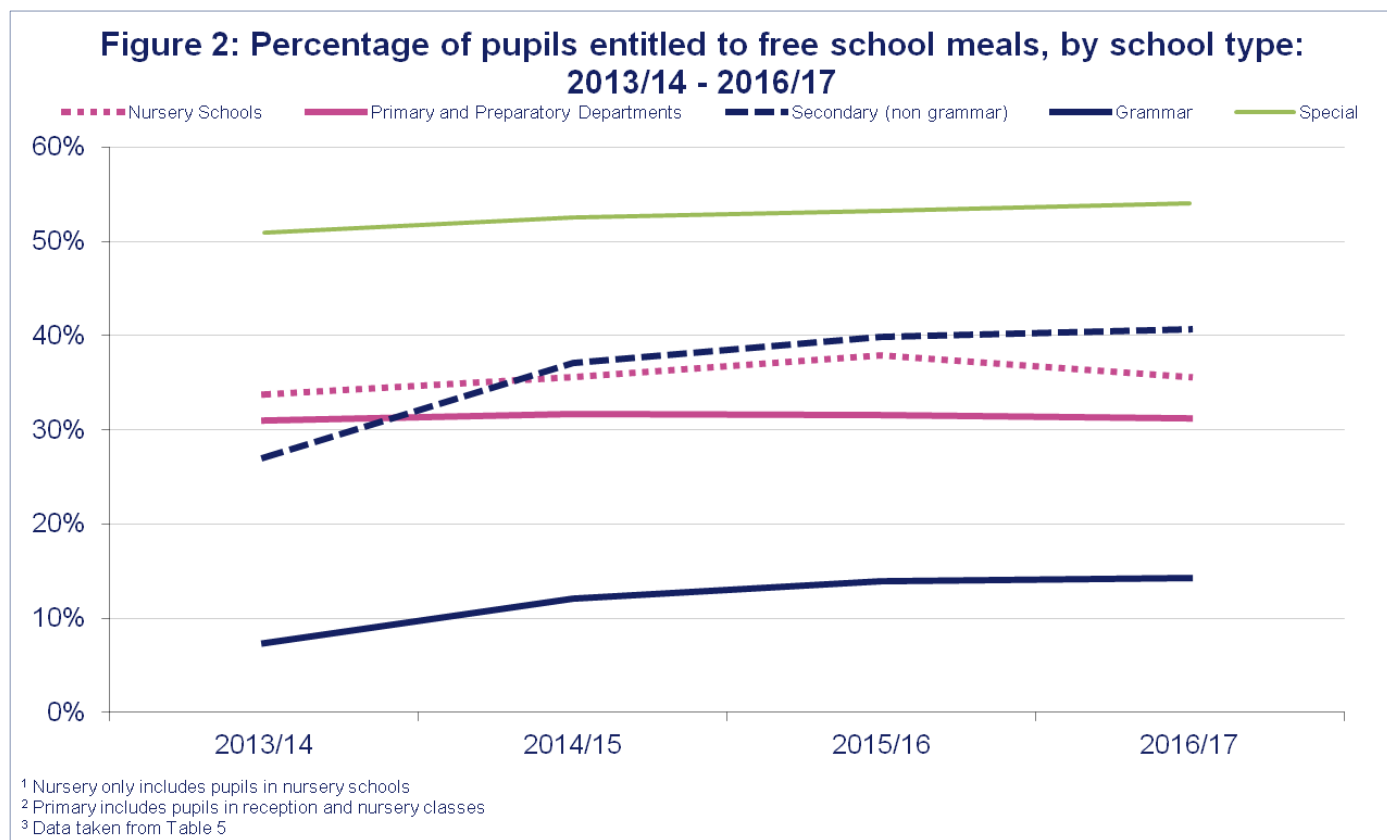
## SECTION 1: UPTAKE OF SCHOOL MEALS (FREE AND PAID)

- 187,845 school meals, both free and paid, were taken by pupils on census day. Pupils not taking a school meal are making alternative arrangements for lunch, which can include bringing their own food into school. Almost 39% of meals fall into this category (Tables 1 and 2).
- The school meals uptake level by pupils present for lunch on census day is 61.1%. The 2016/17 school meals uptake level is 0.5 percentage points higher than the previous year (Table 3).
- There is variation in the level of uptake across school types with nursery schools having the highest uptake at 93.2%. This is followed by special schools with 71.2% and secondary schools with 68.6%. Grammar schools and primary/preparatory schools have lower levels of uptake with 59.5% and 57.7% respectively (Table 3).



## SECTION 2: ENTITLEMENT TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS

- Across all school types, including special schools, 102,127 pupils were entitled to free school meals<sup>1</sup>. This represents 30.7% of the total school enrolment, which is an increase of 1,064 pupils on the previous year (Table 5).
- There are only very slight changes compared to last year in the proportion of pupils that are free school meal entitled by school type:
  - A lower proportion of nursery school (35.6% compared to 37.9%) and primary and preparatory department (31.3% compared to 31.6%) pupils are free school meal entitled compared to last year.
  - A higher proportion of non-grammar (40.6% compared to 39.9%), grammar (14.3% compared to 13.9%) and special school (54.0% compared to 53.3%) pupils are entitled to free school meals than last year.

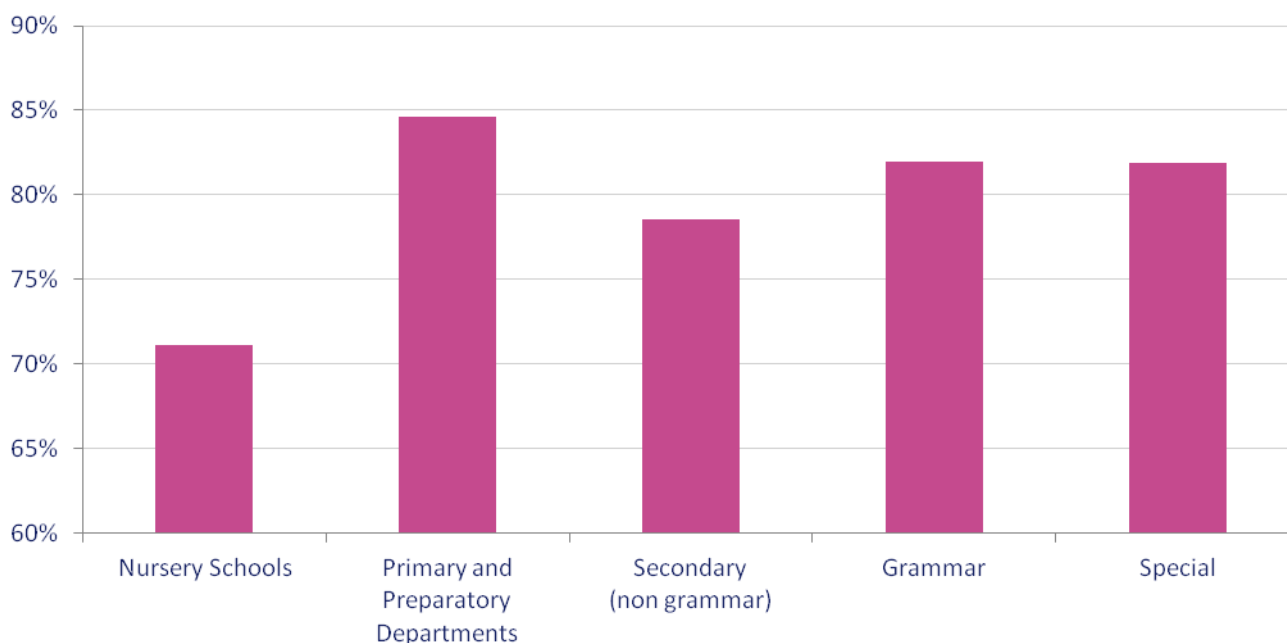


<sup>1</sup> Receipt of Income support or Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance is used as a proxy for free school meal entitlement for pupils in nursery schools and nursery classes in primary schools.

### SECTION 3: UPTAKE OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS

- There were 83,091 free school meals taken by pupils across all school types, this is an increase of 1,089 on the previous year (Table 8). This represents 44.2% of all meals provided by schools.
- When considering the number of free school meals provided as a proportion of the number of pupils with actual entitlement to free school meals<sup>2</sup>, uptake of free school meals was 82.2%. (Table 8).
- There is variation in the level of uptake of free school meals by those entitled across school types. The chart below shows that uptake is highest in primary and preparatory departments (84.6%). This is followed by special and grammar schools, both with 81.9% uptake. Uptake in secondary schools is 78.5% and is lowest in nursery schools with 71.1% (Table 8).

**Figure 3: Uptake of free school meals, by school type 2016/17**



<sup>1</sup> Nursery only includes pupils in nursery schools

<sup>2</sup> Primary includes pupils in reception and nursery classes

<sup>3</sup> Data taken from Table 8.

<sup>4</sup> See background note 12, 14, 15

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of calculating uptake the actual entitlement figure for nursery schools and primary schools with nursery pupils is based on full-time pupils only and excludes pupils counted under the proxy measure of free school meal entitlement (receipt of Income Support or Income Support Jobseeker's Allowance). This change was introduced in 2016/17 so figures for previous years are not directly comparable. See background note 15.

## NOTES FOR READERS

### Official Statistics

1. This is an Official Statistics publication. Official statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.
2. For general enquiries about the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, contact the National Statistics Public Enquiry Service on 0845 601 3034  
minicom: 01633 815044  
E-mail: [info@statistics.gov.uk](mailto:info@statistics.gov.uk)  
Fax: 01633 652747  
Letters: Customer Contact Centre, Room D265, Office for National Statistics, Cardiff Road, Newport, NP10 8XG
3. You can also find Official Statistics on the Internet: [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

### School meal provision

4. The Education Authority is responsible for the day to day operation of the school meals service in all grant-aided schools, with the exception of voluntary grammar schools and grant-maintained integrated schools, where the responsibility lies with the Trustees/Boards of Governors.
5. The service is provided in line with the Approved Arrangements for the Provision of Milk, Meals and Related Facilities made under Articles 58 and 59 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 drawn up by the Department of Education (DE), which will be referred to as 'the Arrangements' in the remainder of this document.  
(<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/school-milk-and-meals-background>)
6. Two main types of school meal service exist:
  - A traditional meal comprising a main course and dessert; and
  - A cash cafeteria service, where items are priced separately.

### Free school meal provision

7. With regard to free school meal provision the following terms are used:
  - Eligibility: When a pupil within a family meets one of the criteria contained in paragraph 6 of the Arrangements for the provision of milk, meals and related facilities.
  - Entitlement: When an application for free school meals is made on behalf of a pupil and the application is successful.
  - Uptake: When a pupil who is entitled to free school meals makes use of the free school meal provision by taking a free school meal.

8. Certain categories of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Details of the qualifying criteria are contained in paragraph 6 of the Arrangements. The Education Authority is responsible for administering the award of free school meals. Entitlement to free school meals is widely used as an indicator of deprivation.
9. From the start of the 2010/11 school year the eligibility criteria for free school meals was extended to include full-time nursery and primary school children whose parents are in receipt of Working Tax Credit and have an annual taxable income which does not exceed £16,190 (in 2015/16). The new criterion was introduced on a phased basis with nursery, foundation stage and key stage 1 pupils eligible from September 2010. This was extended in September 2011 to key stage 2 pupils. It was further extended to post-primary school pupils from September 2014.

### **School Meals Census**

10. The main statistics in this statistical bulletin have been derived from the annual school meals data collection, commonly known as the school meals census. The data collection for the 2016/17 school meals census was undertaken by the Department, with data collected directly from each grant-aided school. Prior to 2012/13 the former ELBs were responsible for the collection of data in relation to schools in the controlled and maintained sectors and provided a collated return for their area to the Department.
11. The 2016/17 school meals census figures in this statistical bulletin are based on information as at 7<sup>th</sup> October 2016<sup>3</sup>. Some tables in this statistical bulletin include data on school enrolments and the number of pupils entitled to free school meals. Data on school enrolments and free school meal entitlement (FSME) were collected as part of the annual school enrolments data collection exercise and are also based on information as at 7<sup>th</sup> October 2016.
12. In nursery and primary schools, new pupils often have a phased introduction to school with some pupils not starting school until late October. Also new pupils may have a shorter day initially, without a lunch break. The school meals census date is usually the Friday of the first full week in October. This means that not all pupils will have started school, or be staying for lunch break. While pupils due to start later in the month will be counted in school enrolment, and free school meal entitlement figures, they will not be present to take a meal and will not therefore be counted in school meals census figures. Figures presented for free school meal uptake in nursery and primary schools, but particularly nursery, will therefore be lower than would be the case with a later census date.
13. In schools with a cash cafeteria system, school meal numbers are calculated from lunchtime income. Schools also include income from sales at morning break but income from breakfast clubs is not included (from the 2012/13 data collection onwards)<sup>4</sup>. The cost of a fixed price meal is used to convert income from lunch and break-time sales to equated meal numbers. Equated meal numbers will not exactly match pupils present for meals.

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<sup>3</sup> If school meals were not being provided by the school on census day the school could choose to conduct the census on the nearest day on which meals are provided.

<sup>4</sup> During the 2016/17 data validation process it emerged that some schools may have erroneously included breakfast income in 2016/17 data returned to the Department. While some breakfast income may have been included in the data it is not considered to have a big impact on the final estimates of school meal uptake.



14. There were 7,672 pupils who were recorded as being present on census day but schools indicated they were not availing of a school lunch break. These pupils were mainly in nursery and primary schools. This will include part-time nursery pupils and primary pupils whose school day, by census date, did not yet include a lunch break. From the 2012/13 school meals census data onwards these pupils have been excluded from the count of pupils present for the purposes of calculating uptake of school meals.
15. In 2016/17 the figures presented for uptake of free school meals by pupils entitled in nursery schools and primary schools with nursery units has changed. The denominator used in the calculation of the percentages is now based on full-time pupils only and excludes pupils counted under the proxy measure of free school meal entitlement (receipt of Income Support or Income Based Job Seeker's Allowance). Data was not available to enable the revision of figures for previous years, For this reason caution should be used in drawing any comparison between data from 2016/17 onwards and data from previous years. This change affects Table 7 and Table 8.
16. There were 12 schools indicating that they do not provide a school meals service. Of these schools 9 are nursery schools where none of the pupils have a lunch break included as part of their hours of attendance. A total of 49 pupils at the remaining three schools do receive a lunch break. These 49 pupils are recorded as 'making other lunch arrangements' and are included in the count of pupils present for lunch when calculating percentage uptake of school meals (Tables 3 and 7).
17. For the 2013/14 data collection the categories of 'other lunch arrangements' and 'taking own food' were merged together to create a 'pupils making other lunch arrangements' category, which includes pupils taking their own food. This was due to difficulties, expressed by some schools, in capturing accurate data for the categories previously used.
18. Free school meal entitlement (FSME) data for special schools was not validated prior to 2014/15.
19. Figures for primary schools may include nursery and/or reception pupils attending primary schools and preparatory departments.
20. Information presenting uptake of school meals in Northern Ireland, England and Scotland was discontinued as policy differences between the regions and availability of up-to-date information for other regions make comparisons difficult.
21. The figures in this statistical bulletin may be subject to minor revision and these will be notified in accordance with our revisions policy. This can be accessed at <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Revisions%20policy.pdf>
22. More detail about the collection of data on school meals can be found on the DE website. This can be accessed at <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-meals-data-collection-and-validation>
23. The Statistics and Research section of the DE website (<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research-1>) also presents data from the school meals census. Statistics on school enrolments, school performance, pupil attendance, teacher numbers, pupil:teacher ratios, school leaver destinations and qualifications may also be accessed via the website.

## General

24. The following symbols are used in the tables in this statistical bulletin:

\* = Relates to fewer than 5 cases

# = Number (5 or more) suppressed to prevent disclosure of small numbers elsewhere

- = Indicates no schools in this category

## Further enquiries

25. For more details about the statistics contained in this statistical bulletin, to request further information and analysis, or to provide any feedback on this publication please contact:

Adele McCauley  
Analytical Services Unit  
Department of Education  
Rathgael House  
Balloo Road  
BANGOR  
BT19 7PR  
Tel. 028 9127 9241  
Email [adele.mccauley@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:adele.mccauley@education-ni.gov.uk)

26. DE Statistical Bulletins can be accessed on the DE website (<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research-1>) under the Statistics and Research section.

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

## LIST OF TABLES AND CHARTS

<b>School meals (free and paid for)</b>	Table 1	Number and type of meals taken on school meals census day, by school type and school management type: 2016/17
	Table 2	Percentage and type of meals taken on school meals census day, by school type and school management type: 2016/17
	Table 3	Uptake of school meals (free and paid) - number and percentage of pupils present for lunch on school meals census day, by school type and school management type: 2013/14 - 2016/17
	Table 4	Number and percentage of school meals provided (free and paid) by type of meal provision, school type and school management type: 2016/17
<b>Free school meals</b>	Table 5	Number and percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals by school type: 2013/14 – 2016/17
	Table 6	Number and percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, by school type and school management type: 2016/17
	Table 7	Number and percentage of pupils taking free school meals as a proportion of all school meals provided and as a proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, by school type and school management type: 2016/17
	Table 8	Uptake of free school meals - number and percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, by school type: 2013/14 – 2016/17
<b>Adults taking school meals</b>	Table 9	Adults taking school meals, by school type: 2016/17
<b>Charts</b>	Figure 1	Uptake of school meals (free and paid), by school type: 2013/14 - 2016/17
	Figure 2	Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals: 2013/14 – 2016/17
	Figure 3	Uptake of free school meals, by school type: 2016/17

Table 1: Number and type of meals taken on school meals census day, by school type and school management type: 2016/17

School Type	Management Type	Meals provided by school			Other meals <sup>1</sup>	Total <sup>1</sup>
		Paid school meals <sup>2</sup>	Free school meals	All school meals <sup>2</sup>	Pupils making other lunch arrangements (including own food)	
Nursery Schools <sup>3</sup>	Controlled	1,089	723	1,812	101	1,913
	Catholic Maintained	530	556	1,086	109	1,195
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,619</b>	<b>1,279</b>	<b>2,898</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>3,108</b>
Primary <sup>4</sup> and Preparatory Departments	Controlled	22,228	19,320	41,548	35,936	77,484
	Voluntary	1,062	22	1,084	502	1,586
	Catholic Maintained	23,705	24,204	47,909	29,971	77,880
	Other Maintained	889	1,324	2,213	1,165	3,378
	Controlled Integrated	910	1,084	1,994	1,984	3,978
	Grant Maintained Integrated	1,728	1,400	3,128	2,660	5,788
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50,522</b>	<b>47,354</b>	<b>97,876</b>	<b>72,218</b>	<b>170,094</b>
Secondary (non grammar)	Controlled	8,296	7,437	15,733	9,077	24,810
	Catholic Maintained	10,807	13,209	24,016	9,401	33,417
	Other Maintained	66	317	383	252	635
	Controlled Integrated	530	689	1,219	1,010	2,229
	Grant Maintained Integrated	3,568	3,057	6,625	2,047	8,672
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23,267</b>	<b>24,709</b>	<b>47,976</b>	<b>21,787</b>	<b>69,763</b>	
Grammar	Controlled	5,919	1,373	7,292	6,235	13,527
	Voluntary	22,422	5,983	28,405	17,970	46,375
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28,341</b>	<b>7,356</b>	<b>35,697</b>	<b>24,205</b>	<b>59,902</b>
<b>Post-Primary Total</b>	<b>51,608</b>	<b>32,065</b>	<b>83,673</b>	<b>45,992</b>	<b>129,665</b>	
Special	Controlled	968	2,191	3,159	1,324	4,483
	Catholic Maintained	19	164	183	34	217
	Other Maintained	18	38	56	19	75
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,005</b>	<b>2,393</b>	<b>3,398</b>	<b>1,377</b>	<b>4,775</b>
All grant-aided schools	Controlled	38,500	31,044	69,544	52,673	122,217
	Voluntary	23,484	6,005	29,489	18,472	47,961
	Catholic Maintained	35,061	38,133	73,194	39,515	112,709
	Other Maintained	973	1,679	2,652	1,436	4,088
	Controlled Integrated	1,440	1,773	3,213	2,994	6,207
	Grant Maintained Integrated	5,296	4,457	9,753	4,707	14,460
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>104,754</b>	<b>83,091</b>	<b>187,845</b>	<b>119,797</b>	<b>307,642</b>

Source: NI school meals census 2016/17

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Excludes pupils present on school meals census day whose school day did not include a lunch break, including part-time nursery pupils and some P1 pupils (see background note 14).

<sup>2</sup> Paid meal figures presented are equated meals: Where schools have a cash cafeteria system for lunch the meal numbers are calculated based on lunchtime income. Income from morning break provision is also included in the calculation of meal numbers (see background note 13).

<sup>3</sup> Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

<sup>4</sup> Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools.

Table 2: Percentage and type of meals taken on school meals census day, by school type and school management type: 2016/17

School Type	Management Type	Meals provided by school			Other meals <sup>1</sup>	Total <sup>1</sup>
		Paid school meals <sup>2</sup>	Free school meals	All school meals <sup>2</sup>	Pupils making other lunch arrangements (including own food)	
		%	%	%	%	
Nursery Schools <sup>3</sup>	Controlled	56.9	37.8	94.7	5.3	100.0
	Catholic Maintained	44.4	46.5	90.9	9.1	100.0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52.1</b>	<b>41.2</b>	<b>93.2</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Primary <sup>4</sup> and Preparatory Departments	Controlled	28.7	24.9	53.6	46.4	100.0
	Voluntary	67.0	1.4	68.3	31.7	100.0
	Catholic Maintained	30.4	31.1	61.5	38.5	100.0
	Other Maintained	26.3	39.2	65.5	34.5	100.0
	Controlled Integrated	22.9	27.2	50.1	49.9	100.0
	Grant Maintained Integrated	29.9	24.2	54.0	46.0	100.0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>57.5</b>	<b>42.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Secondary (non grammar)	Controlled	33.4	30.0	63.4	36.6	100.0
	Catholic Maintained	32.3	39.5	71.9	28.1	100.0
	Other Maintained	10.4	49.9	60.3	39.7	100.0
	Controlled Integrated	23.8	30.9	54.7	45.3	100.0
	Grant Maintained Integrated	41.1	35.3	76.4	23.6	100.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>35.4</b>	<b>68.8</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Grammar	Controlled	43.8	10.2	53.9	46.1	100.0
	Voluntary	48.3	12.9	61.3	38.7	100.0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47.3</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>59.6</b>	<b>40.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Post-Primary Total</b>		<b>39.8</b>	<b>24.7</b>	<b>64.5</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Special	Controlled	21.6	48.9	70.5	29.5	100.0
	Catholic Maintained	8.8	75.6	84.3	15.7	100.0
	Other Maintained	24.0	50.7	74.7	25.3	100.0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>50.1</b>	<b>71.2</b>	<b>28.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>
All grant-aided schools	Controlled	31.5	25.4	56.9	43.1	100.0
	Voluntary	49.0	12.5	61.5	38.5	100.0
	Catholic Maintained	31.1	33.8	64.9	35.1	100.0
	Other Maintained	23.8	41.1	64.9	35.1	100.0
	Controlled Integrated	23.2	28.6	51.8	48.2	100.0
	Grant Maintained Integrated	36.6	30.8	67.4	32.6	100.0
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>34.1</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>61.1</b>	<b>38.9</b>

Source: NI school meals census 2016/17

Notes:

Figures may not add due to rounding.

<sup>1</sup> Excludes pupils present on school meals census day whose school day did not include a lunch break, including part-time nursery pupils and some P1 pupils (see background note 14).

<sup>2</sup> Paid meal figures presented are equated meals: Where schools have a cash cafeteria system for lunch the meal numbers are calculated based on lunchtime income.

Income from morning break provision is also included in the calculation of meal numbers (see background note 13).

<sup>3</sup> Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

<sup>4</sup> Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools

**Table 3: Uptake of school meals (free and paid) - number and percentage of pupils present for lunch on school meals census day, by school type and school management type: 2013/14- 2016/17**

School Type	Management Type	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17	
		School meals provided <sup>1</sup>	Uptake <sup>2</sup> %	School meals provided <sup>1</sup>	Uptake <sup>2</sup> %	School meals provided <sup>1</sup>	Uptake <sup>2</sup> %	School meals provided <sup>1</sup>	Uptake <sup>2</sup> %
Nursery Schools <sup>3</sup>	Controlled	1,740	97.2	1,745	96.2	1,891	96.7	1,812	94.7
	Catholic Maintained	1,133	95.8	1,177	93.3	1,210	91.5	1,086	90.9
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,873</b>	<b>96.6</b>	<b>2,922</b>	<b>95.0</b>	<b>3,101</b>	<b>94.6</b>	<b>2,898</b>	<b>93.2</b>
Primary <sup>4</sup> and Preparatory Departments	Controlled	39,505	54.3	39,909	53.7	40,847	53.5	41,548	53.8
	Voluntary	1,035	68.1	1,068	67.2	1,109	69.7	1,084	68.7
	Catholic Maintained	44,652	60.9	46,186	61.7	47,427	62.3	47,909	61.6
	Other Maintained	1,833	64.1	1,980	65.2	2,099	64.9	2,213	65.5
	Controlled Integrated	1,628	47.9	1,813	50.6	1,891	50.1	1,994	50.5
	Grant Maintained Integrated	2,707	49.7	2,776	49.6	2,998	52.7	3,128	54.0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>91,360</b>	<b>57.4</b>	<b>93,732</b>	<b>57.5</b>	<b>96,371</b>	<b>57.8</b>	<b>97,876</b>	<b>57.7</b>
Secondary (non grammar)	Controlled	14,119	54.4	15,337	61.4	15,418	62.8	15,733	63.2
	Catholic Maintained	22,071	60.9	24,365	68.4	24,259	70.7	24,016	71.6
	Other Maintained	246	47.1	358	65.1	381	66.4	383	60.3
	Controlled Integrated	825	36.7	901	40.8	1,106	49.1	1,219	54.7
	Grant Maintained Integrated	5,516	63.8	6,231	72.6	6,426	76.4	6,625	76.6
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42,777</b>	<b>58.1</b>	<b>47,192</b>	<b>65.6</b>	<b>47,590</b>	<b>67.9</b>	<b>47,976</b>	<b>68.6</b>
Grammar	Controlled	7,046	48.4	7,787	51.8	7,930	55.4	7,292	54.0
	Voluntary	24,050	52.9	25,787	57.3	27,038	58.2	28,405	61.2
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31,096</b>	<b>51.8</b>	<b>33,574</b>	<b>55.9</b>	<b>34,968</b>	<b>57.5</b>	<b>35,697</b>	<b>59.5</b>
Post-Primary	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>73,873</b>	<b>55.3</b>	<b>80,766</b>	<b>61.2</b>	<b>82,558</b>	<b>63.1</b>	<b>83,673</b>	<b>64.4</b>
Special	Controlled	2,877	70.4	3,044	70.2	3,047	69.6	3,159	70.5
	Catholic Maintained	163	80.7	175	86.6	179	81.7	183	84.3
	Other Maintained	38	97.4	40	100.0	37	53.6	56	74.7
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,078</b>	<b>71.2</b>	<b>3,259</b>	<b>71.2</b>	<b>3,263</b>	<b>69.9</b>	<b>3,398</b>	<b>71.2</b>
All grant-aided schools	Controlled	65,287	54.8	67,822	56.3	69,133	56.8	69,544	57.0
	Voluntary	25,085	53.4	26,855	57.7	28,147	58.6	29,489	61.4
	Catholic Maintained	68,019	61.3	71,903	64.2	73,075	65.2	73,194	64.9
	Other Maintained	2,117	61.9	2,378	65.5	2,517	64.9	2,652	64.9
	Controlled Integrated	2,453	43.4	2,714	46.8	2,997	49.7	3,213	52.0
	Grant Maintained Integrated	8,223	58.3	9,007	63.5	9,424	66.9	9,753	67.6
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>171,184</b>	<b>57.0</b>	<b>180,679</b>	<b>59.7</b>	<b>185,293</b>	<b>60.6</b>	<b>187,845</b>	<b>61.1</b>	

Source: NI school meals census 2013/14 - 2016/17

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Meal figures presented are equated meals: Where schools have a cash cafeteria system for lunch the meal numbers are calculated based on lunchtime income. Income from morning break provision is also included in the calculation of meal numbers (see background note 13).

<sup>2</sup> Uptake is expressed as the number of school meals provided (free and paid) as a percentage of the number of pupils present for lunch on census day. Pupils present for lunch excludes pupils present on school meals census day whose school day did not include a lunch break, including part-time nursery pupils and some P1 pupils (see background note 14).

<sup>3</sup> Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

<sup>4</sup> Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools

**Table 4: Number and percentage of school meals provided (free and paid) by type of meal provision, school type and school management type: 2016/17**

School Type	Management Type	Traditional meals		Cash cafeteria meals <sup>1</sup>	
		Number	%	Number	%
Nursery Schools <sup>2</sup>	Controlled	1,812	100.0	0	0.0
	Catholic Maintained	1,086	100.0	0	0.0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,898</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Primary <sup>3</sup> and Preparatory Departments	Controlled	40,735	98.0	813	2.0
	Voluntary	923	85.1	161	14.9
	Catholic Maintained	46,583	97.2	1,326	2.8
	Other Maintained	2,213	100.0	0	0.0
	Controlled Integrated	1,994	100.0	0	0.0
	Grant Maintained Integrated	3,128	100.0	0	0.0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>95,576</b>	<b>97.7</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>2.3</b>
Secondary (non grammar)	Controlled	602	3.8	15,131	96.2
	Catholic Maintained	2,014	8.4	22,002	91.6
	Other Maintained	360	94.0	23	6.0
	Controlled Integrated	0	0.0	1,219	100.0
	Grant Maintained Integrated	691	10.4	5,934	89.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,667</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>44,309</b>	<b>92.4</b>	
Grammar	Controlled	0	0.0	7,292	100.0
	Voluntary	2,521	8.9	25,884	91.1
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,521</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>33,176</b>	<b>92.9</b>
<b>Post-Primary Total</b>		<b>6,188</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>77,485</b>	<b>92.6</b>
Special	Controlled	2,999	94.9	160	5.1
	Catholic Maintained	183	100.0	0	0.0
	Other Maintained	56	100.0	0	0.0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,238</b>	<b>95.3</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>4.7</b>
All grant-aided schools	Controlled	46,148	66.4	23,396	33.6
	Voluntary	3,444	11.7	26,045	88.3
	Catholic Maintained	49,866	68.1	23,328	31.9
	Other Maintained	2,629	99.1	23	0.9
	Controlled Integrated	1,994	62.1	1,219	37.9
	Grant Maintained Integrated	3,819	39.2	5,934	60.8
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>107,900</b>	<b>57.4</b>	<b>79,945</b>

Source: NI school meals census 2016/17

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Cash cafeteria meal figures presented are equated meals: Where schools have a cash cafeteria system for lunch the meal numbers are calculated based on lunchtime income. Income from morning break provision is also included in the calculation of meal numbers (see background note 13).

<sup>2</sup> Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

<sup>3</sup> Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools

**Table 5: Number and percentage<sup>1</sup> of pupils entitled to free school meals by school type: 2013/14 - 2016/17**

		<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
<b>Total enrolment</b>	Nursery Schools <sup>2</sup>	5,852	5,882	5,904	5,864
	Primary <sup>3</sup> and Preparatory Departments	171,548	175,042	178,222	181,302
	Secondary (non grammar)	81,339	79,840	77,753	77,432
	Grammar	62,634	62,713	63,359	62,981
	Special	4,832	5,064	5,173	5,407
	<b>All grant-aided schools</b>	<b>326,205</b>	<b>328,541</b>	<b>330,411</b>	<b>332,986</b>
<b>Entitlement to free school meals</b>	Nursery Schools <sup>2</sup>	1,977	2,096	2,240	2,085
	Primary <sup>3</sup> and Preparatory Departments	53,197	55,526	56,265	56,681
	Secondary (non grammar)	22,046	29,626	30,990	31,461
	Grammar	4,606	7,610	8,811	8,978
	Special <sup>4</sup>	2,460	2,660	2,757	2,922
	<b>All grant-aided schools</b>	<b>84,286</b>	<b>97,518</b>	<b>101,063</b>	<b>102,127</b>
<b>Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals<sup>1</sup></b>	Nursery Schools <sup>2</sup>	33.8	35.6	37.9	35.6
	Primary <sup>3</sup> and Preparatory Departments	31.0	31.7	31.6	31.3
	Secondary (non grammar)	27.1	37.1	39.9	40.6
	Grammar	7.4	12.1	13.9	14.3
	Special <sup>4</sup>	50.9	52.5	53.3	54.0
	<b>All grant-aided schools</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>30.6</b>	<b>30.7</b>

Source: NI school census 2013/14 - 2016/17

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Percentages express the number of pupils entitled to free school meals in a particular category (e.g. those at primary school) as a proportion of the total pupil enrolment in the same category.

<sup>2</sup> As school meals are not universally available to children in pre-school education, receipt of Income Support or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance is used as a proxy for free school meal entitlement. Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

<sup>3</sup> Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools

<sup>4</sup> Prior to 2014/15 free school meal entitlement data for special schools was not validated.



**Table 6: Number and percentage<sup>1</sup> of pupils entitled to free school meals, by school type and school management type: 2016/17**

<b>School Type</b>	<b>Management Type</b>	<b>Pupils entitled to free school meals</b>	<b>Free school meal entitlement %</b>
<b>Nursery Schools<sup>2</sup></b>	Controlled	1,269	30.6
	Catholic Maintained	816	47.4
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,085</b>	<b>35.6</b>
<b>Primary<sup>3</sup> and Preparatory Department</b>	Controlled	24,107	29.0
	Voluntary	26	1.6
	Catholic Maintained	27,926	33.8
	Other Maintained	1,482	41.1
	Controlled Integrated	1,447	34.4
	Grant Maintained Integrated	1,693	26.6
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>56,681</b>	<b>31.3</b>
<b>Secondary (non grammar)</b>	Controlled	9,868	36.0
	Catholic Maintained	16,500	44.3
	Other Maintained	427	61.5
	Controlled Integrated	992	39.8
	Grant Maintained Integrated	3,674	38.5
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31,461</b>	<b>40.6</b>
<b>Grammar</b>	Controlled	1,779	12.5
	Voluntary	7,199	14.8
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,978</b>	<b>14.3</b>
<b>Post-Primary</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40,439</b>	<b>28.8</b>
<b>Special</b>	Controlled	2,707	53.1
	Catholic Maintained	177	76.3
	Other Maintained	38	48.7
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,922</b>	<b>54.0</b>
<b>All grant-aided schools</b>	Controlled	39,137	30.1
	Voluntary	7,225	14.4
	Catholic Maintained	45,087	37.6
	Other Maintained	1,926	45.3
	Controlled Integrated	2,433	36.3
	Grant Maintained Integrated	5,315	34.2
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>102,127</b>	<b>30.7</b>

Source: NI school census 2016/17

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Percentages express the number of pupils entitled to free school meals in a particular category (e.g. those at primary school) as a proportion of the total pupil enrolment in the same category.

<sup>2</sup> As school meals are not universally available to children in pre-school education, receipt of Income Support or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance is used as a proxy for free school meal entitlement. Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

<sup>3</sup> Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools.

**Table 7: Number and percentage of pupils taking free school meals as a proportion of all school meals provided and as a proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals<sup>1</sup>, by school type and school management type: 2016/17**

<b>School Type</b>	<b>Management Type</b>	<b>Free school meals taken by pupils present</b>	<b>Free meals as a proportion of all school meals provided<sup>2</sup> %</b>	<b>Free school meals taken as a proportion of pupils entitled<sup>1</sup> %</b>
<b>Nursery Schools<sup>3</sup></b>	Controlled	723	39.9	70.8
	Catholic Maintained	556	51.2	71.5
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,279</b>	<b>44.1</b>	<b>71.1</b>
<b>Primary<sup>4</sup> and Preparatory Department</b>	Controlled	19,320	46.5	81.3
	Voluntary	22	2.0	84.6
	Catholic Maintained	24,204	50.5	87.6
	Other Maintained	1,324	59.8	90.6
	Controlled Integrated	1,084	54.4	75.2
	Grant Maintained Integrated	1,400	44.8	85.3
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47,354</b>	<b>48.4</b>	<b>84.6</b>
<b>Secondary (non grammar)</b>	Controlled	7,437	47.3	75.4
	Catholic Maintained	13,209	55.0	80.1
	Other Maintained	317	82.8	74.2
	Controlled Integrated	689	56.5	69.5
	Grant Maintained Integrated	3,057	46.1	83.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,709</b>	<b>51.5</b>	<b>78.5</b>	
<b>Grammar</b>	Controlled	1,373	18.8	77.2
	Voluntary	5,983	21.1	83.1
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,356</b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>81.9</b>
<b>Post-Primary</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32,065</b>	<b>38.3</b>	<b>79.3</b>
<b>Special</b>	Controlled	2,191	69.4	81.1
	Catholic Maintained	164	89.6	92.7
	Other Maintained	38	67.9	100.0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,393</b>	<b>70.4</b>	<b>82.0</b>
<b>All grant-aided schools</b>	Controlled	31,044	44.6	79.3
	Voluntary	6,005	20.4	83.1
	Catholic Maintained	38,133	52.1	84.6
	Other Maintained	1,679	63.3	87.2
	Controlled Integrated	1,773	55.2	72.9
	Grant Maintained Integrated	4,457	45.7	83.9
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>83,091</b>	<b>44.2</b>	<b>82.2</b>

Source: NI school meals census 2016/17

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of calculating uptake of free school meals by pupils entitled the denominator used is based on full-time pupils only and excludes pupils counted under the proxy measure of free school meal entitlement (receipt of Income Support or Income Support Jobseeker's Allowance). This only applies to nursery and primary schools. See background note 15.

<sup>2</sup> Percentages express the number of pupils taking free school meals in a particular category (e.g. those at primary school) as a proportion of all school meals provided in the same category.

<sup>3</sup> Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

<sup>4</sup> Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools

**Table 8: Uptake of free school meals - number and percentage<sup>1</sup> of pupils entitled to free school meals, by school type: 2013/14 - 2016/17**

		2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
<b>Free school meals taken by pupils present</b>	Nursery Schools <sup>2</sup>	1,240	1,264	1,473	1,279
	Primary <sup>2</sup> and Preparatory Departments	44,292	46,078	47,001	47,354
	Secondary (non grammar)	16,715	22,838	24,098	24,709
	Grammar	3,674	6,132	7,191	7,356
	Special	2,001	2,248	2,239	2,393
	<b>All grant-aided schools</b>	<b>67,922</b>	<b>78,560</b>	<b>82,002</b>	<b>83,091</b>
<b>Pupils entitled to free school meals</b>	Nursery Schools <sup>2,3</sup>	1,977	2,096	2,240	-
	Nursery Schools <sup>2,3</sup> (excluding part-time pupils and proxy FSME)	-	-	-	1,799
	Primary <sup>2,3</sup> and Preparatory Departments	53,197	55,526	56,265	-
	Primary <sup>2,3</sup> and Preparatory Departments (excluding part-time pupils and proxy FSME)	-	-	-	55,963
	Secondary (non grammar)	22,046	29,626	30,990	31,461
	Grammar	4,606	7,610	8,811	8,978
	Special <sup>4</sup>	2,460	2,660	2,757	2,922
	<b>All grant-aided schools</b>	<b>84,286</b>	<b>97,518</b>	<b>101,063</b>	<b>101,123*</b>
<b>Free school meals taken as a proportion of pupils entitled<sup>1</sup></b>	Nursery Schools <sup>2,3</sup>	62.7	60.3	65.8	-
	Nursery Schools <sup>2,3</sup> (excluding part-time pupils and proxy FSME)	-	-	-	71.1
	Primary <sup>2,3</sup> and Preparatory Departments	83.3	83.0	83.5	-
	Primary <sup>2,3</sup> and Preparatory Departments (excluding part-time pupils and proxy FSME)	-	-	-	84.6
	Secondary (non grammar)	75.8	77.1	77.8	78.5
	Grammar	79.8	80.6	81.6	81.9
	Special <sup>4</sup>	81.3	84.5	81.2	81.9
	<b>All grant-aided schools</b>	<b>80.6</b>	<b>80.6</b>	<b>81.1</b>	<b>82.2*</b>

Entitlement Source: NI school census 2013/14 - 2016/17

Uptake Source: NI school meals census 2013/14 - 2016/17

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Percentages express the number of free school meals taken in a particular category (e.g. those at primary school) as a proportion of the number of pupils entitled to free school meals in the same category.

<sup>2</sup> The nursery figures only include pupils at nursery schools. The primary figures include pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools.

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of calculating uptake of free school meals by pupils entitled the free school meal entitlement figure used in 2016/17 is based on full-time pupils only and excludes pupils counted under the proxy measure of free school meal entitlement (receipt of Income Support or Income Support Jobseeker's Allowance). This only applies to nursery and primary schools. **Figures prior to 2016/17 are not directly comparable.** See background note 15.

<sup>4</sup> Prior to 2014/15 free school meal entitlement data for special schools was not validated.

\* Excluding part-time pupils and proxy FSME

**Table 9: Adults taking school meals, by school type: 2016/17**

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	Adults taking school meal (free or paid)	Adults taking free school meal <sup>1</sup> %
Nursery Schools <sup>2</sup>	314	98.1
Primary <sup>3</sup> and Preparatory Departments	5,921	91.3
Secondary (non grammar)	2,646	84.8
Grammar	1,752	65.5
Post-Primary Total	4,398	77.1
Special	730	94.7
<b>All grant-aided schools</b>	<b>11,363</b>	<b>86.2</b>

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Source: NI school meals census 2016/17

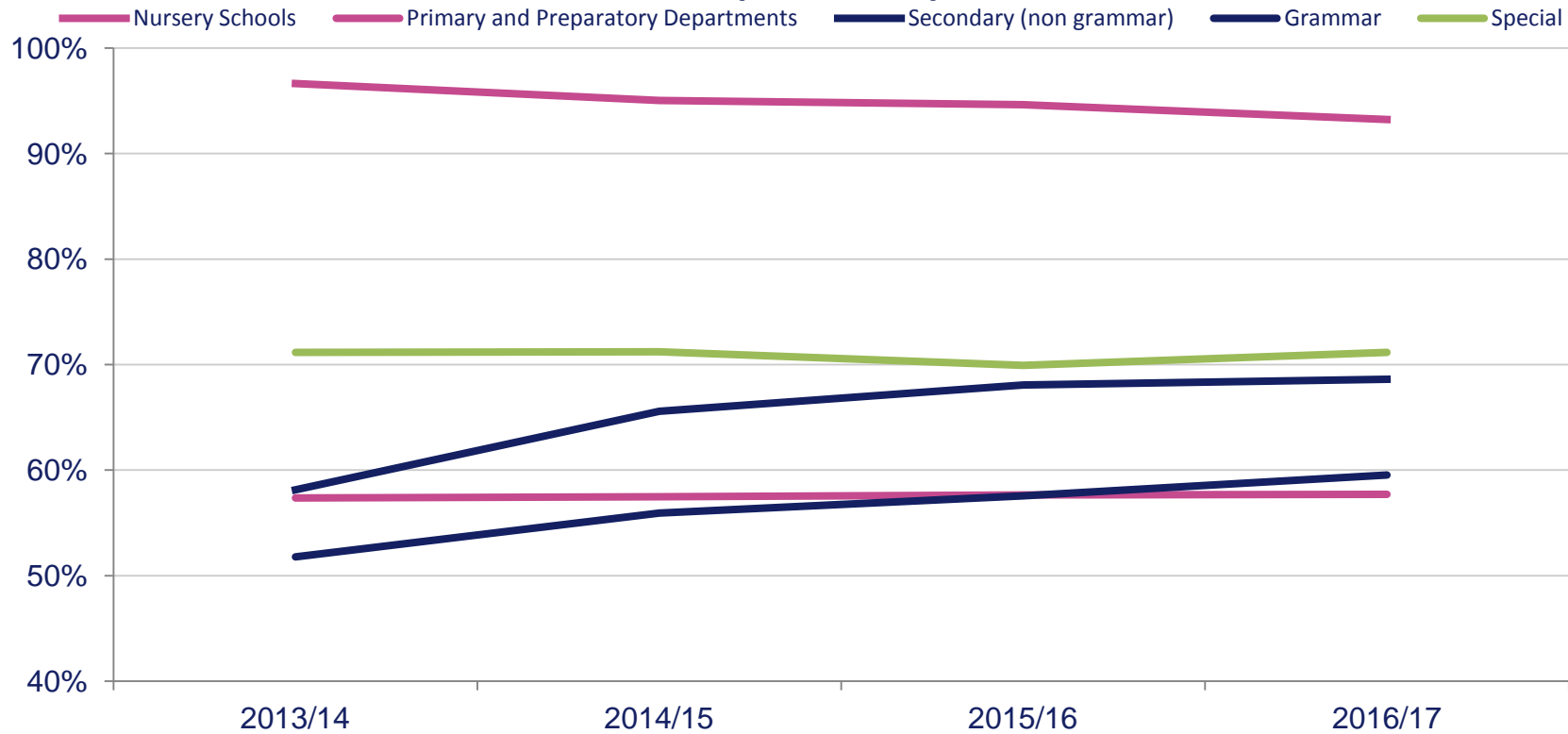
Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Depending on their terms and conditions kitchen staff and mid-day supervisors may be entitled to a free mid-day meal.

<sup>2</sup> Only includes nursery classes in nursery schools.

<sup>3</sup> Includes reception and nursery classes in primary schools.

**Figure 1: Uptake of school meals (free and paid), by school type:  
2013/14 - 2016/17**

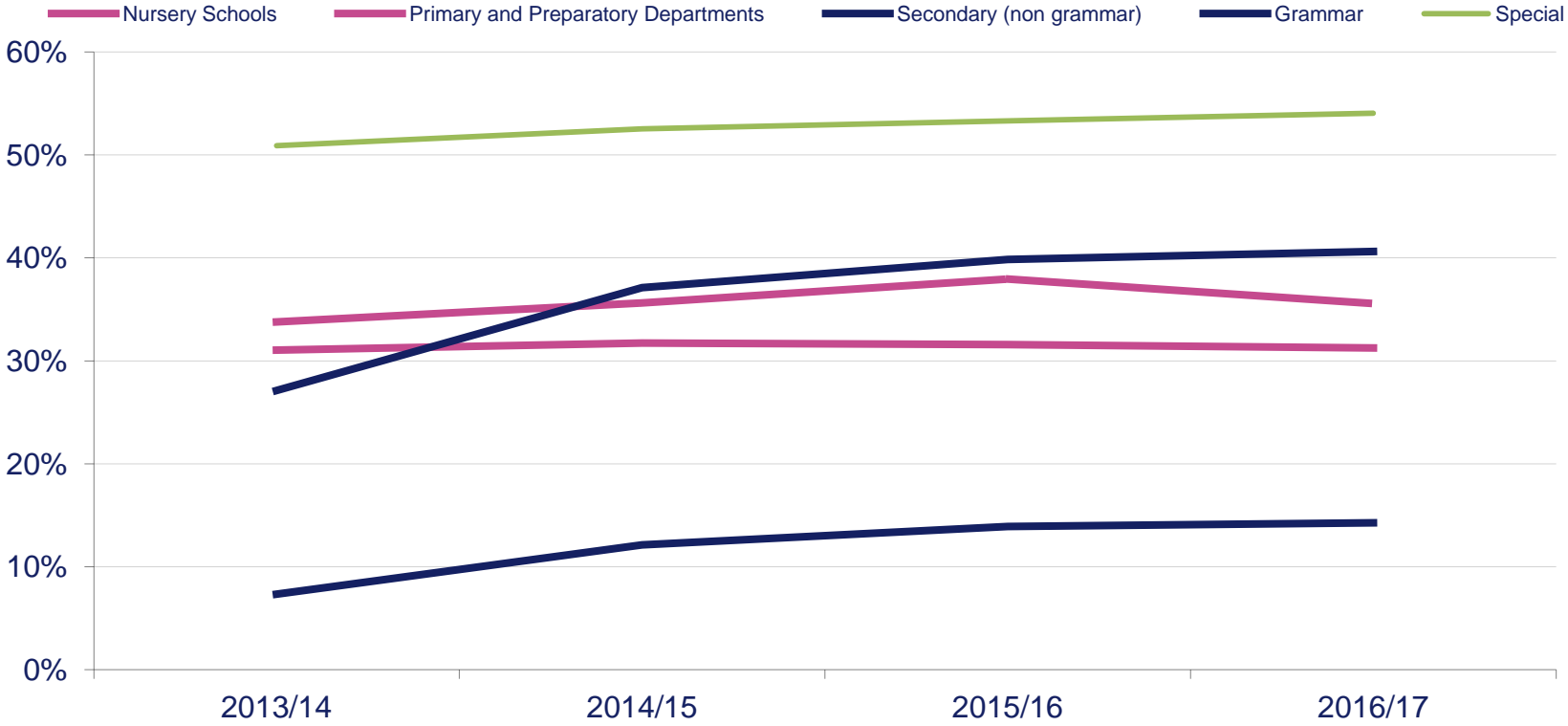


<sup>1</sup> Nursery only includes pupils in nursery schools

<sup>2</sup> Primary includes pupils in reception and nursery classes

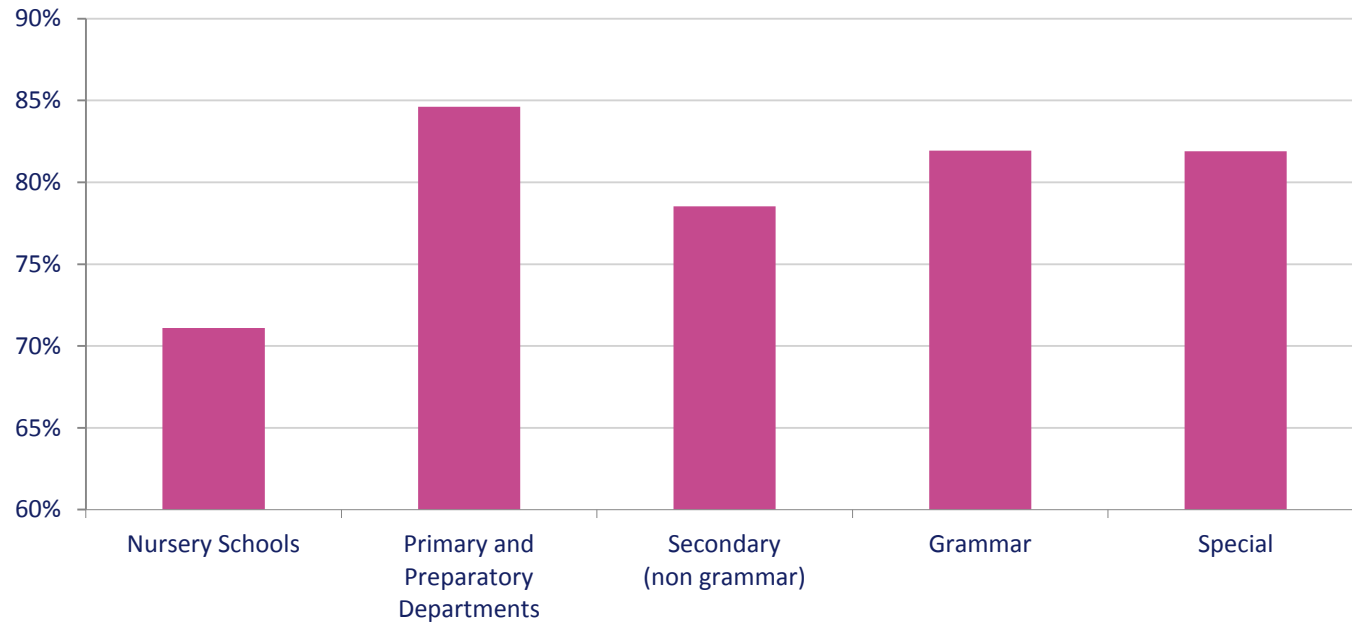
<sup>3</sup> Data taken from Table 3

**Figure 2: Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, by school type:  
2013/14 - 2016/17**



<sup>1</sup> Nursery only includes pupils in nursery schools  
<sup>2</sup> Primary includes pupils in reception and nursery classes  
<sup>3</sup> Data taken from Table 5

**Figure 3: Uptake of free school meals, by school type  
2016/17**



<sup>1</sup> Nursery only includes pupils in nursery schools

<sup>2</sup> Primary includes pupils in reception and nursery classes

<sup>3</sup> Data taken from Table 8.

<sup>4</sup> See background note 12, 14, 15

## **School Management Types**

**Controlled** schools are owned and managed by the Education Authority through Boards of Governors. Primary and secondary school Boards of Governors consist of representatives of transferors (mainly the Protestant Churches) along with representatives of parents, teachers and the Education Authority. Controlled nursery, grammar and special school boards of governors consist only of representatives of the latter 3 categories. Within the controlled school sector there are a number of integrated schools and a small but growing number of Irish-medium schools.

**Catholic maintained** schools are voluntary schools owned by trustees (appointed by the Roman Catholic Church) and managed by CCMS through boards of governors. Board of Governors consist of members nominated by the trustees along with representatives of parents, teachers and the Education Authority. Within the Catholic maintained sector there are a small number of Irish-medium schools.

**Other maintained** schools are voluntary schools owned by trustees and managed by Boards of Governors which consist of members nominated by trustees along with representatives of parents, teachers and the Education Authority. This sector includes a number of Irish Medium schools.

**Voluntary grammar** schools are owned by trustees and managed by Boards of Governors which consist of members nominated by trustees along with representatives of parents, teachers, the Department and, in most cases, the Education Authority. (Voluntary grammar schools vary in the rates of capital grant to which they are entitled depending on the management structure they have adopted, with the vast majority entitled to capital grants of 100%.)

**Grant-maintained integrated** schools are owned and managed by their Boards of Governors, which consist of foundation governors along with representatives of parents, teachers and the Department. All of the above are types of grant-aided school. **Independent Schools** do not receive any funding from the Education Authority or the Department of Education.

Futher background notes can be found within the School Meals Statistical Bulletin at:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-meals-201617-statistical-bulletin-11-april-2017>