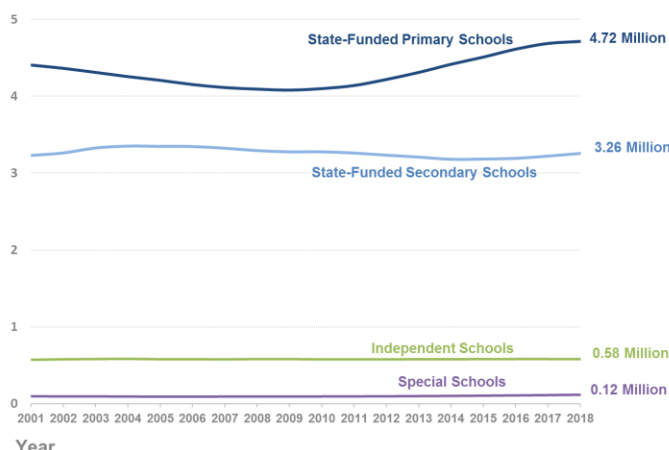




Statistical Publication, 28 June 2018

## There are 66,000 more pupils in the school system than in January 2017

Millions of Pupils

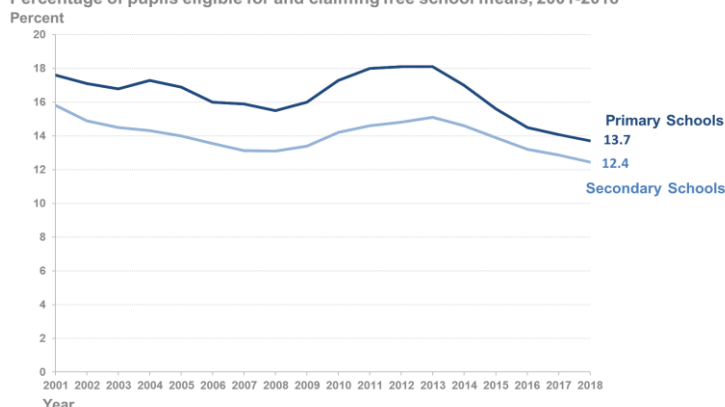


Between January 2017 and January 2018 the number of pupils across all school types rose by 66,000.

Although some of this increase was still in primary schools, with 26,600 more pupils in January 2018 than in 2017, most of the rise is now seen in secondary schools. Numbers increased by 35,400 between 2018 and 2017 (compared to a 29,700 increase between 2016 and 2017). In addition there are 5,300 more pupils in special schools.

## The proportion of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals continues to drop.

Percentage of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals, 2001-2018

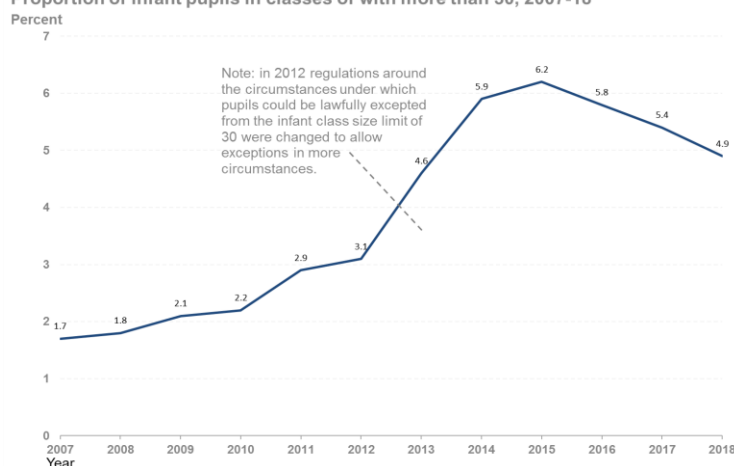


In January 2018, for all school types, 13.6% of pupils were eligible for and claiming free school meals. This is the lowest proportion since 2001, when the department began collecting pupil level information.

Entitlement to free school meals is determined by the receipt of income-related benefits. As the number of benefit claimants decreases, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals also falls.

## The proportion of infant pupils in large classes has fallen for the third year.

Proportion of infant pupils in classes of with more than 30, 2007-18



4.9% of infant pupils are in classes of more than 30 pupils. This has decreased for the third year and is 1.3 percentage points lower than the peak of 2015. However, it still remains higher than the proportion in 2013 (4.6%).

Of infants in classes with more than 30 pupils, the vast majority (96.4%) are in classes with 31 or 32 pupils.

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## About this publication

This statistical publication provides the number of schools and pupils in schools in England, using data from the January 2018 School Census.

Breakdowns are given for school types as well as for pupil characteristics including free school meal eligibility, English as an additional language and ethnicity. This release also contains information about average class sizes.

SEN tables previously provided in this publication will be published in the statistical publication 'Special educational needs in England: January 2018' scheduled for release on 26 July 2018.

Cross border movement tables will be added to this publication later this year.

## In this publication

The following tables are included in the statistical publication:

National tables (Excel .xlsx)

Local authority tables (Excel .xlsx)

Underlying data (open format .csv and metadata .txt)

The accompanying quality and methodology information document, provides information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data.

## Feedback

We are changing how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at [infrastructure.statistics@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:infrastructure.statistics@education.gsi.gov.uk).

## 1. Pupil Numbers (Tables 1a-1e)

There is a total of 8.74 million pupils in all schools in England. This is an increase of just over 66,000 pupils, or 0.8%, since 2017. The total number of pupils has grown every year since 2009 and there are now 643,000 more pupils in schools than at that point.

The number of pupils in state funded primary schools rose – as it has since 2009 – although at a slower rate than in recent years. There are 26,600 more pupils than in 2017, and 101,100 more since the 2016 census.

The number of pupils in state funded secondary schools rose for the fourth year in a row, and in 2018 had a greater increase in population than primary schools. The increased number of primary pupils since 2010 are now moving into secondary schools so, as can be seen in the [national pupil projections](#), we expect to see the number of secondary pupils continue to increase in the coming years.

**Table A: School population: primary, secondary and all pupils:**

Schools in England, 2006-2018

Year	State funded primary schools	State funded secondary schools	All schools types (including independent schools)
2006	4,150,595	3,347,500	8,231,055
2007	4,110,750	3,325,625	8,167,715
2008	4,090,400	3,294,575	8,121,955
2009	4,077,350	3,278,130	8,092,280
2010	4,096,580	3,278,485	8,098,360
2011	4,137,755	3,262,635	8,123,865
2012	4,217,000	3,234,875	8,178,200
2013	4,309,580	3,210,120	8,249,810
2014	4,416,710	3,181,360	8,331,385
2015	4,510,310	3,184,730	8,438,145
2016	4,615,170	3,193,420	8,559,540
2017	4,689,660	3,223,090	8,669,085
2018	4,716,244	3,258,451	8,735,098

Source: school census

## 2. School Numbers (Tables 2a-2f)

Between January 2017 and January 2018 there was a net decrease of 20 state-funded primary schools and a net increase of 28 state-funded secondary schools. There was also a net decrease of 3 maintained nursery schools. The total number of schools has increased by 35 to 24,316 because of the rise in the number of state-funded secondary schools (28 more than in 2017), special schools (6 more), pupil referral units (1 more) and independent schools (23 more).

Despite a small increase in the number of schools, the increase in pupil numbers means schools are on average larger. At primary level the average state-funded school now has 281 pupils on its roll, up from 279 pupils in January 2017. While there was a slight fall in the total number of primary pupils between 2006 and 2009, the average size of primary schools has not decreased in any year since 2006, when it was 237 pupils. Since 2009, the average size of primary schools has increased by 42 pupils, the equivalent of more than one extra class per school.

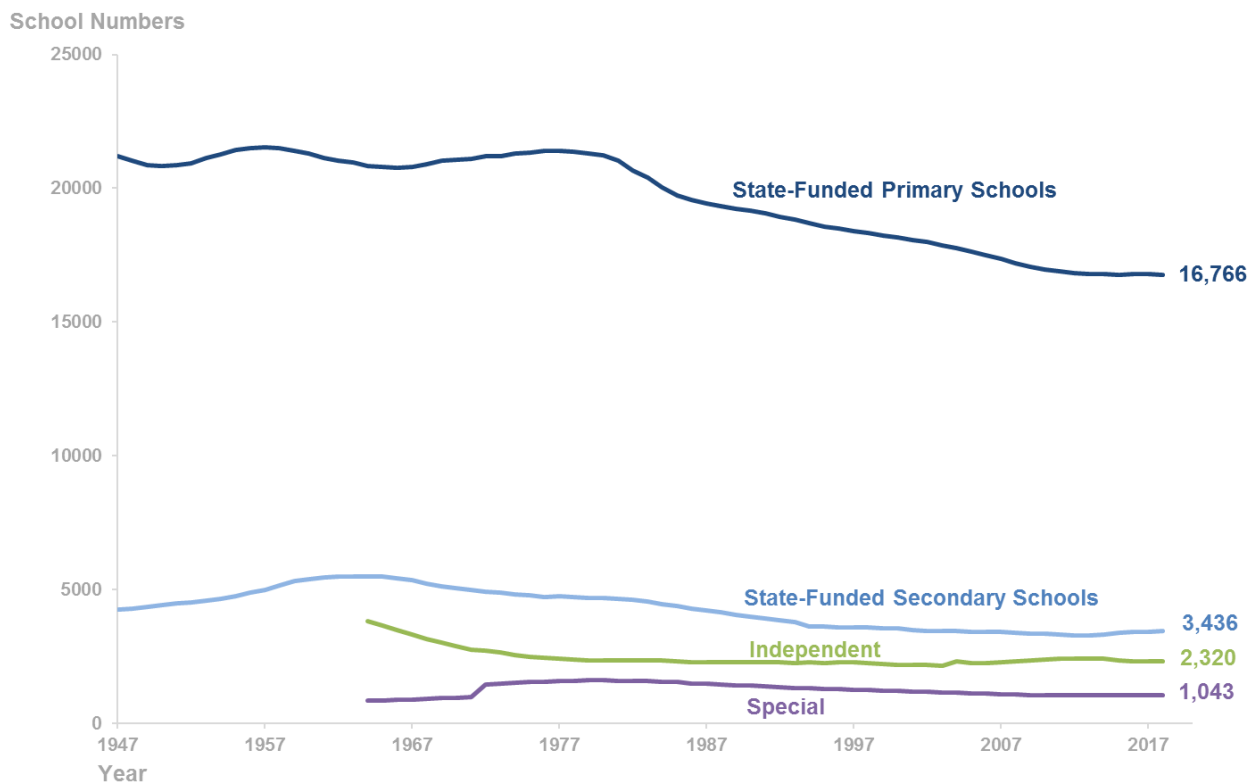
Schools which teach both primary and secondary year groups are growing in number. In January 2017 there were 150 such schools, but this figure has increased to 163 state-funded schools in January 2018.

Nearly 3.8 million pupils now attend academies and free schools. Over 2.3 million of these are in secondary schools (72.3% of all secondary school pupils) and over 1.4 million in primary schools (29.7% of all primary school pupils).

The remainder of the total academy population are in special and alternative provision academies.

**Figure A: The number of secondary schools in England has increased in the last year, while primary school numbers have decreased. Overall, the number of schools has increased reaching the 2015 school level.**

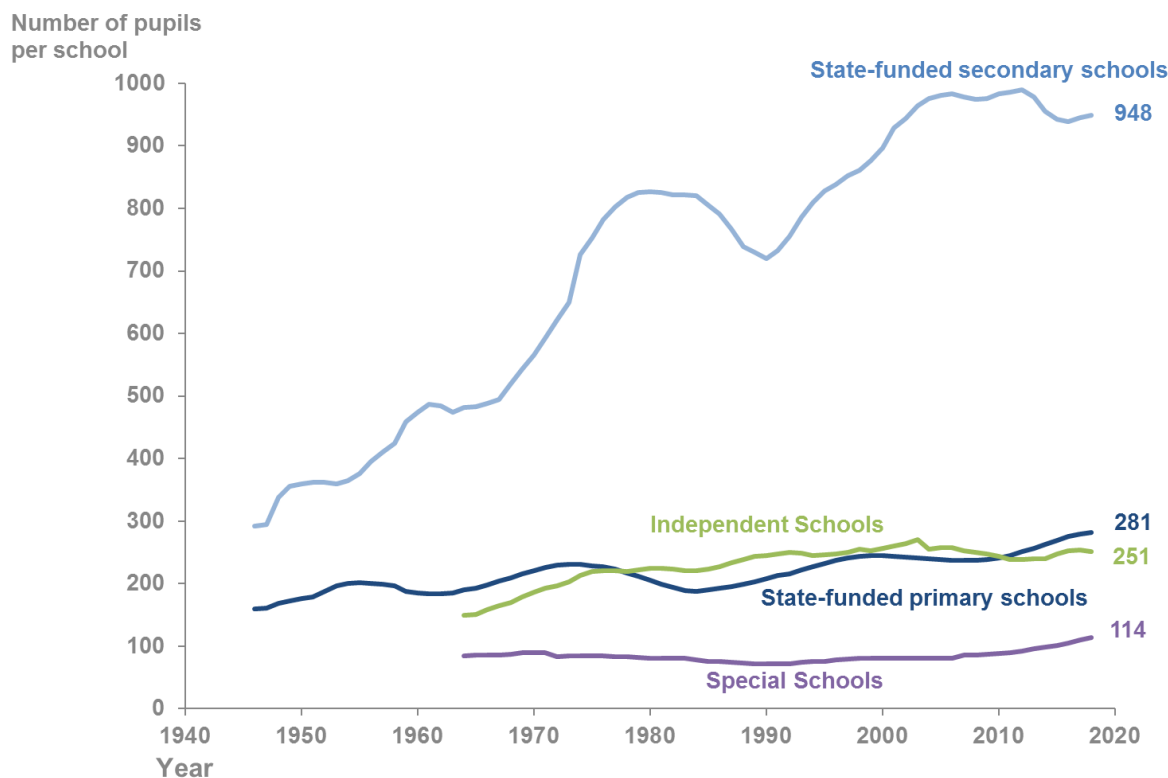
Number of schools in England, 1947-2018



Source: Get Information about Schools

**Figure B: The average size of all school types apart from independent schools increased in 2018, with secondary schools reversing the drops in average size in recent years**

Average pupil numbers in state-funded primary and secondary schools in England, 1947-2018.



Source: School Census

### Types of Schools

**State-funded primary schools and state-funded secondary schools** – these include community schools, foundation schools, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled, academies and free schools. Primary schools typically accept pupils aged 5-10 and secondary schools aged 11 and above, but there are increasing numbers of **All-through schools**, who take pupils of all compulsory school ages.

**State-funded special schools** – these are schools which provide tailored provision for pupils with special educational needs.

**Alternative provision** – these are education settings for children unable to attend a mainstream school. Local authority maintained establishments providing alternative provision, are often referred to as **pupil referral units**. There are also an increasing number of **alternative provision academies and free schools**.

**Independent schools and non-maintained special schools** – these are registered schools which do not receive government funding. They often charge fees for pupils to attend.

**State-funded nursery** – these are nurseries maintained by the local authority in which they operate. Other nurseries, such as private and voluntary nurseries, are not included in the school census. Schools with a nursery attached will complete the school census as a school rather than as a nursery.

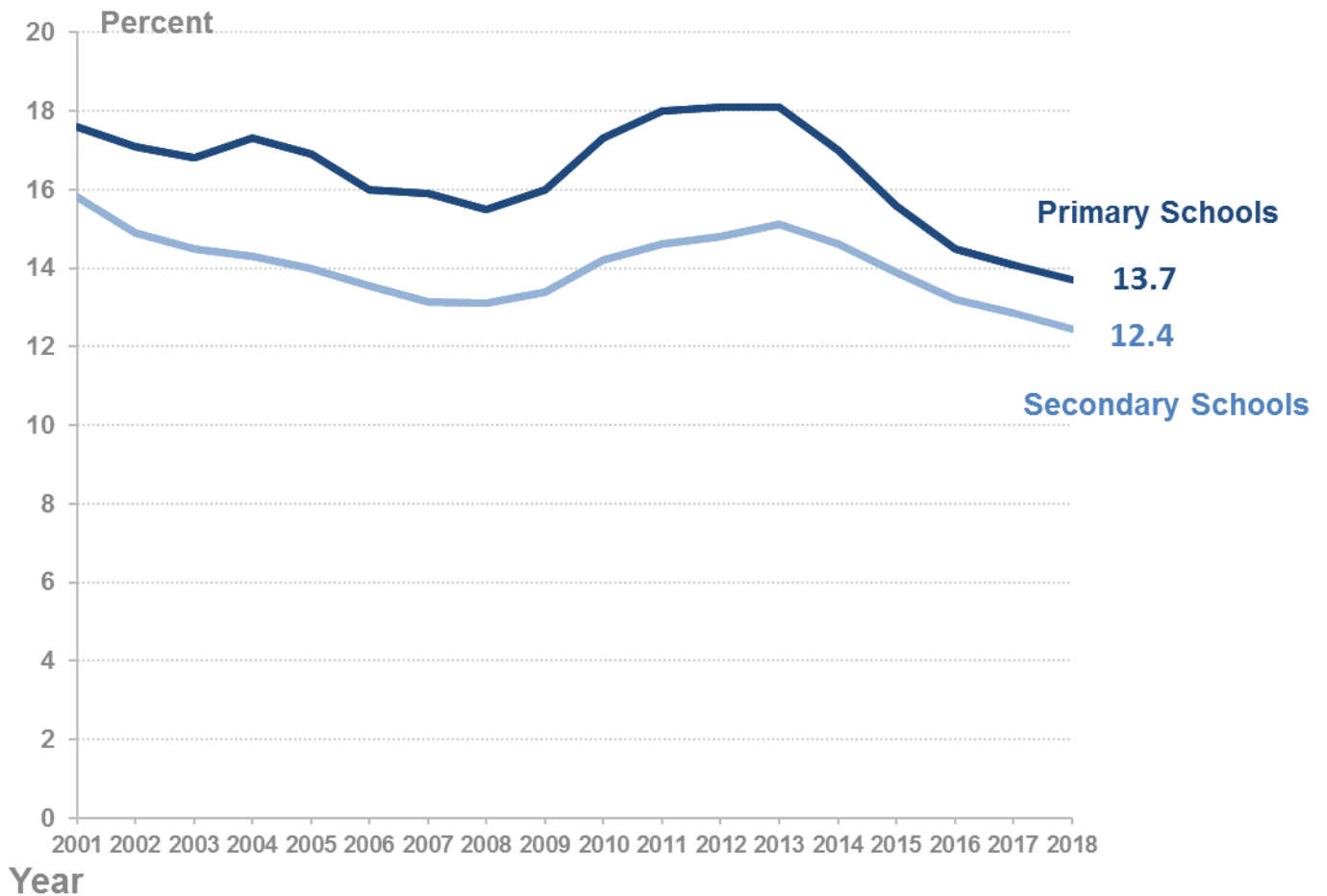
### 3. Free School Meals Eligibility (Tables 3a-3d)

In primary schools, 13.7% of pupils are known to be eligible for, and claiming, free school meals. In secondary schools, it is 12.4%.

The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for, and claiming, free school meals has been declining since 2013. At both primary and secondary levels it is now at its lowest level in any year since 2001, when pupil level information was first collected.

**Figure C: Rates of eligibility for free school meals have continued to decline**

Percentage of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals, 2001-2018 (excludes universal infant free school meals – see note)



Source: School Census

Note: this chart is based on those pupils who are eligible for and claiming free school meals based on household income and benefit receipt. It does not include pupils claiming a free school meal under the Universal Infant Free School Meals programme, where free school meals are available to all infant pupils regardless of household income or benefit claims.

#### Free School Meals: who was entitled?

In England in January 2018, children in state-funded schools were entitled to receive free school meals if a parent or carer were in receipt of any of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit

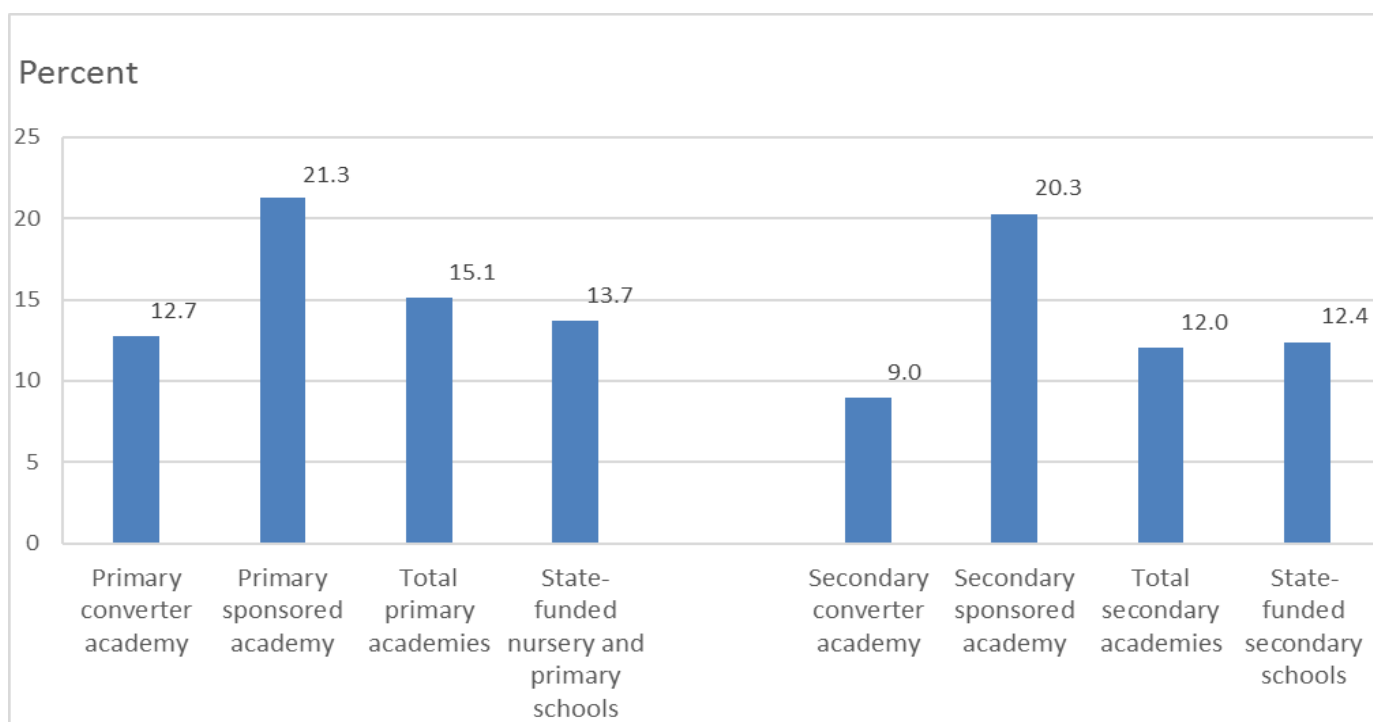
- Child Tax Credit (provided they were not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and had an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs)
  - Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
  - During the initial roll out of the benefit, Universal Credit (this category was added from 29 April 2013)
- Additionally, [all infant pupils](#) were entitled to receive free school meals from September 2014.

Fewer pupils are eligible for, and claiming, free school meals (FSM) in January 2018 than in 2017, in both primary and secondary schools. The decline is seen in a large number of areas across the country (tables 8a/b) and is related to there being fewer parents than in previous years claiming the benefits which would make their children eligible for free school meals.

When compared to all primary schools, primary academies have a higher than average rate of eligibility, with 15.1% of pupils eligible for FSM, compared with 13.7% across all primary schools<sup>1</sup> (tables 3a/3c). However, the FSM rate varies notably between academy types. Sponsored primary academies had the highest rate of pupils eligible for, and claiming, FSM at 21.3%. Primary converter academies, however, had an FSM rate of 12.7%. In January 2018 there were only a small number of pupils in primary free schools (3,682), with an average FSM rate of 12.4%.

Conversely, all secondary academies combined have a lower than average rate, with 12.0% of pupils eligible for, and claiming FSM compared with 12.4% across all secondary schools<sup>2</sup>. By academy types, a similar pattern is seen as for primary schools, with sponsored secondary academies having the highest rate at 20.3% and converter academies the lowest at 9.0%, while secondary free schools have an average FSM rate of 13.7%.

**Figure D: Primary and secondary, sponsored academies have the highest rate of eligibility for, and claiming, free school meals while primary and secondary, converter academies have the lowest rate**  
Percentage of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals, by type of school



Source: School Census

<sup>1</sup> Including the academies: academy and free schools now make up 27% of primary schools

<sup>2</sup> Including the academies: academy and free schools now make up 72% of secondary schools

## 4. Ethnic Group (Tables 4a-4d)

### Minority Ethnic Origin

Those pupils of all school age who have been classified according to their ethnic group and are of any origin other than White British are defined as being of minority ethnic origin.

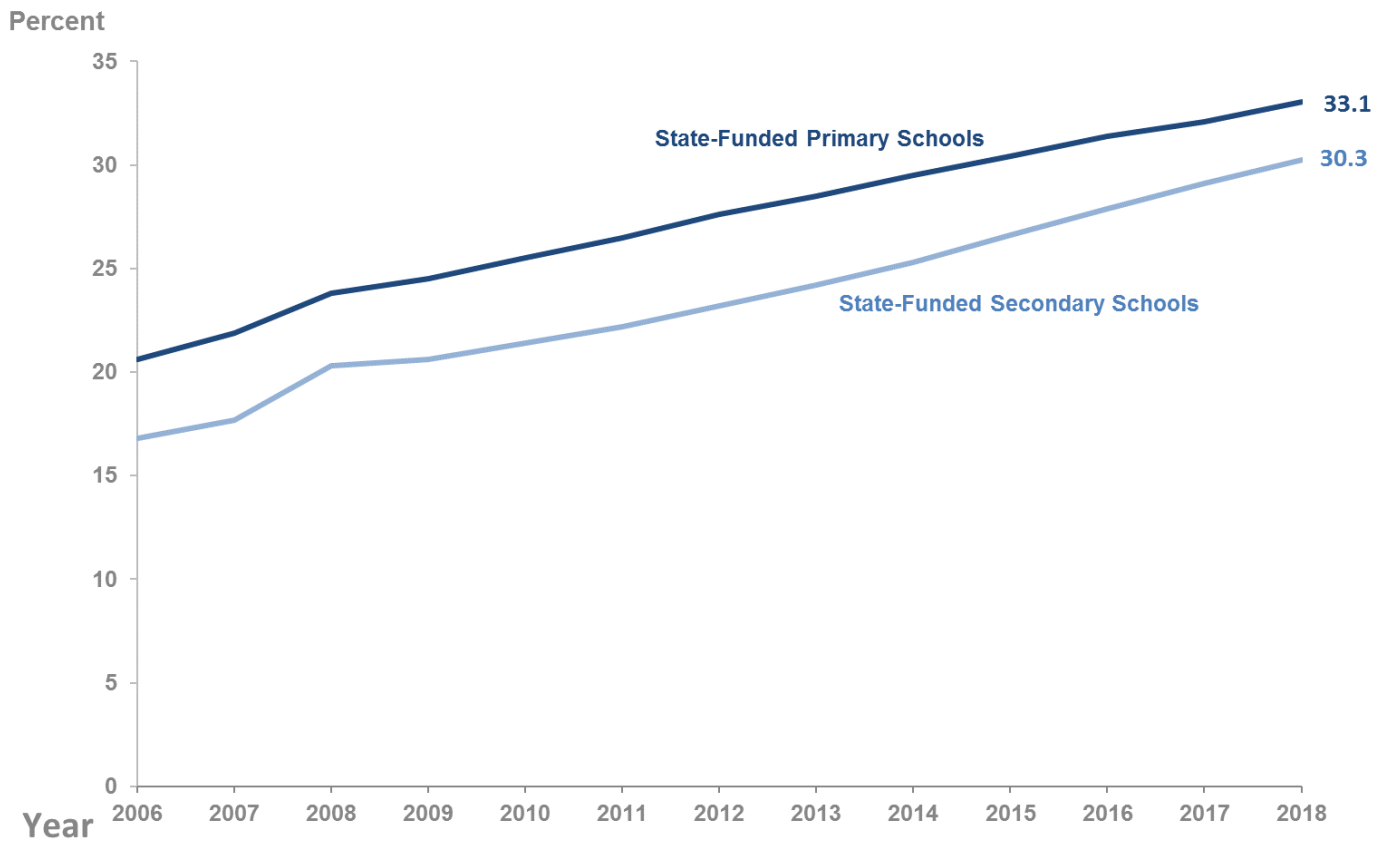
The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic origins, as defined above, has been rising steadily since 2006.

In primary schools, 33.1% of pupils of school age are of minority ethnic origins, an increase from 32.1% in January 2017.

In secondary schools, 30.3% of pupils are of minority ethnic origins, an increase from 29.1% in 2017.

### Figure E: The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins has increased

Primary and secondary schools in England, 2006-2018

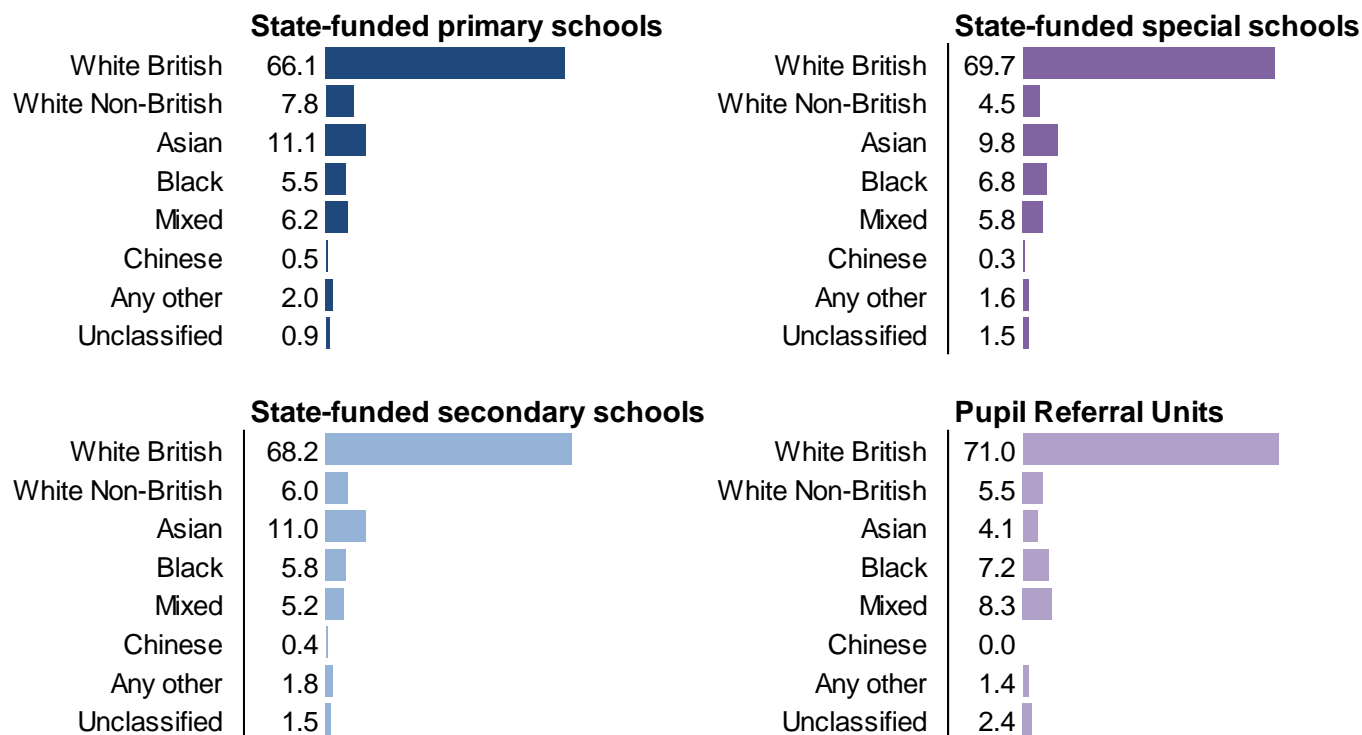


Source: School Census



**Figure F: Percentage of pupils by ethnic origin**

State-funded schools in England, 2018



Source: School Census

White non-British pupils now make up 7.8% of the population in primary schools. This is the fifth year that this ethnic group is the second largest ethnic minority, after pupils from Asian origins, who continue to be the largest minority.

At secondary level, the White Non-British ethnic group is the second largest ethnic group, with 6.0%, having overtaken pupils of Black origins in 2017. The Asian group is still the largest minority ethnic group in secondary schools. In pupil referral units, there are a greater proportion of black pupils and pupils from mixed ethnic origins than in mainstream schools, and a smaller proportion of Asian pupils.

## 5. First Language (Tables 5a-5b)

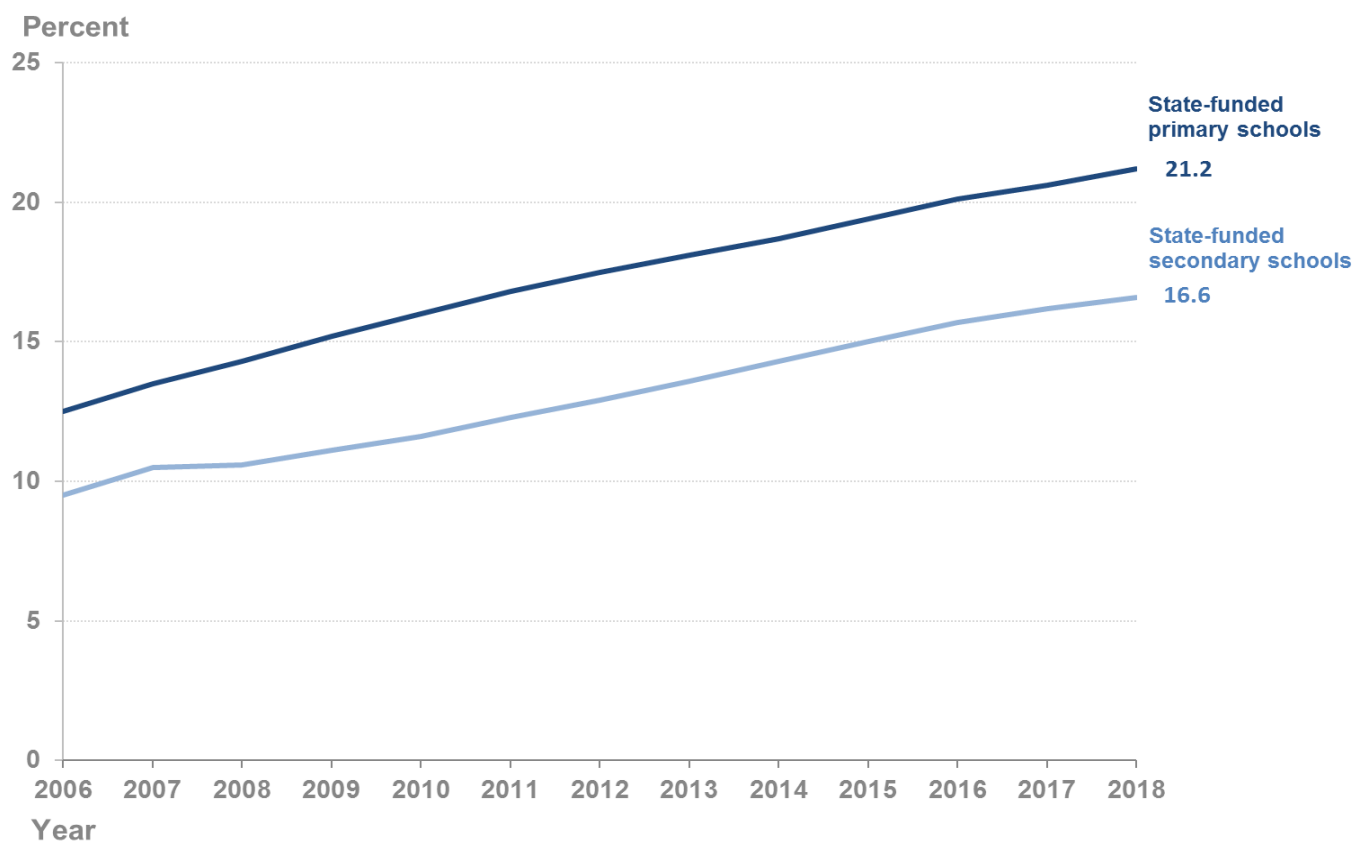
### English as an additional language

A pupil is recorded to have English as an additional language if she/he is exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English. This measure is not a measure of English language proficiency or a good proxy for recent immigration.

In primary schools, 21.2% of pupils are exposed to a language known or believed to be other than English in their home. This is an increase of 0.6 percentage points since January 2017, and the figure has been steadily rising since 2006.

In secondary schools, 16.6% of pupils are exposed to a non-English language in their home. This rate has also steadily increased over the last ten years and by 0.4 percentage points since January 2017.

**Figure G: The percentage of pupils exposed to a language other than English at home has increased**  
Pupils with English as an additional language 2010-2018, primary and secondary schools



Source: School Census

### Why the increase?

This is related to the breakdown in the increase in the number of pupils. This increase in pupil numbers is largely driven by increases in the birth rate (rather than direct current immigration), which is driven in turn by an increase in the number of children born to non-UK born women (compared to those born to UK-born women). The number of children born to non-UK born women increased by around 75 per cent between 2002 and 2013 (the years in which most children currently in schools were born), although this was a period of increased births generally. For more information about this, we recommend the following links:

[Parents' country of birth statistics 2015, ONS](#)

[England and Wales birth summary tables 2015, ONS](#)

[Births by parents' country of birth, England and Wales: 2016](#)

## 6. Class Sizes (Tables 6a-b)

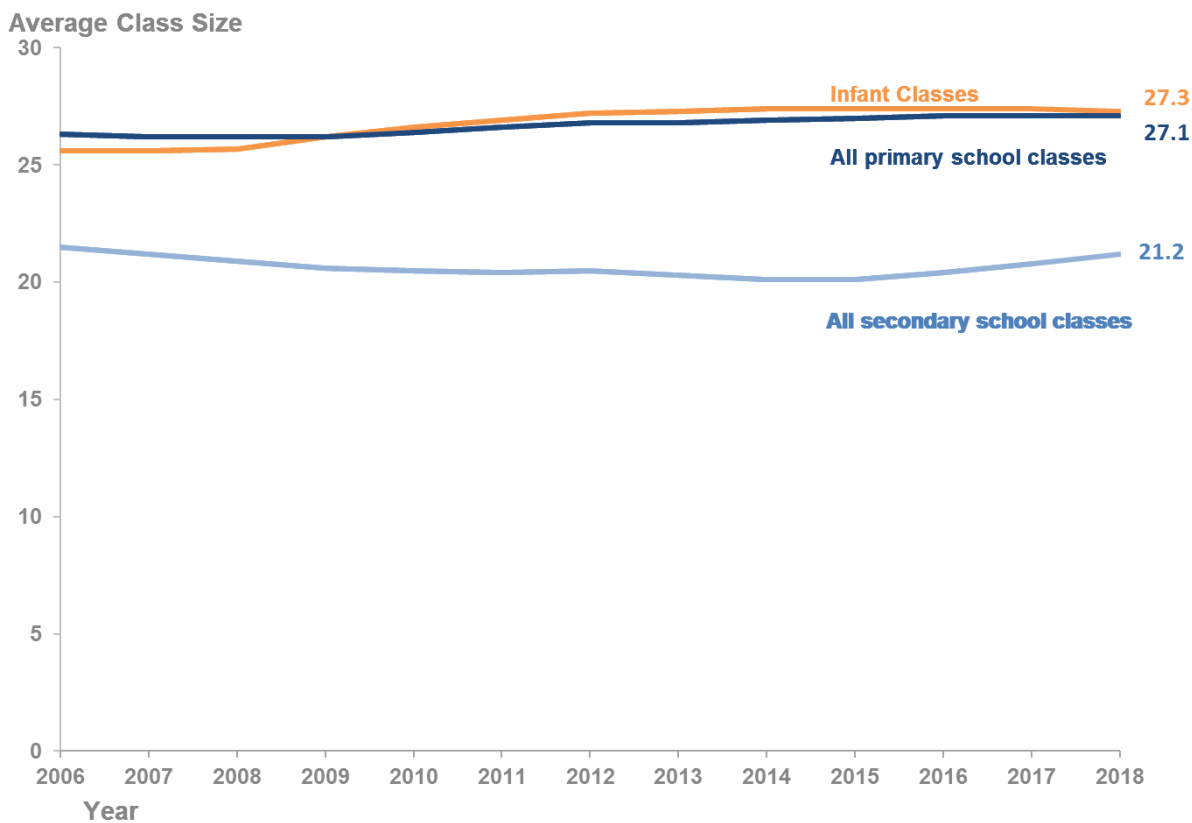
### Large Classes

An infant class is described as 'large' when it exceeds the statutory limit of 30 pupils. There are no formal policy restrictions on any other class sizes.

The number and proportion of infants in large classes fell again between 2017 and 2018. In 2018, 4.9% of infants were in classes with more than 30 pupils, compared with 5.4% in 2017. This corresponds to 81,635 infants in class with more than 30 pupils in 2018, compared with 90,870 in 2017.

The average infant class size decreased very slightly to 27.3, from 27.4 in 2017, where it remained unchanged since 2014, but has increased from 25.6 in 2006. The average class size for all primary school classes is unchanged compared to 2017.

**Figure H: Average one-teacher class sizes**  
Infant, primary and secondary school classes in England, 2006-2018



Source: School Census

### Lawful and unlawful infant classes

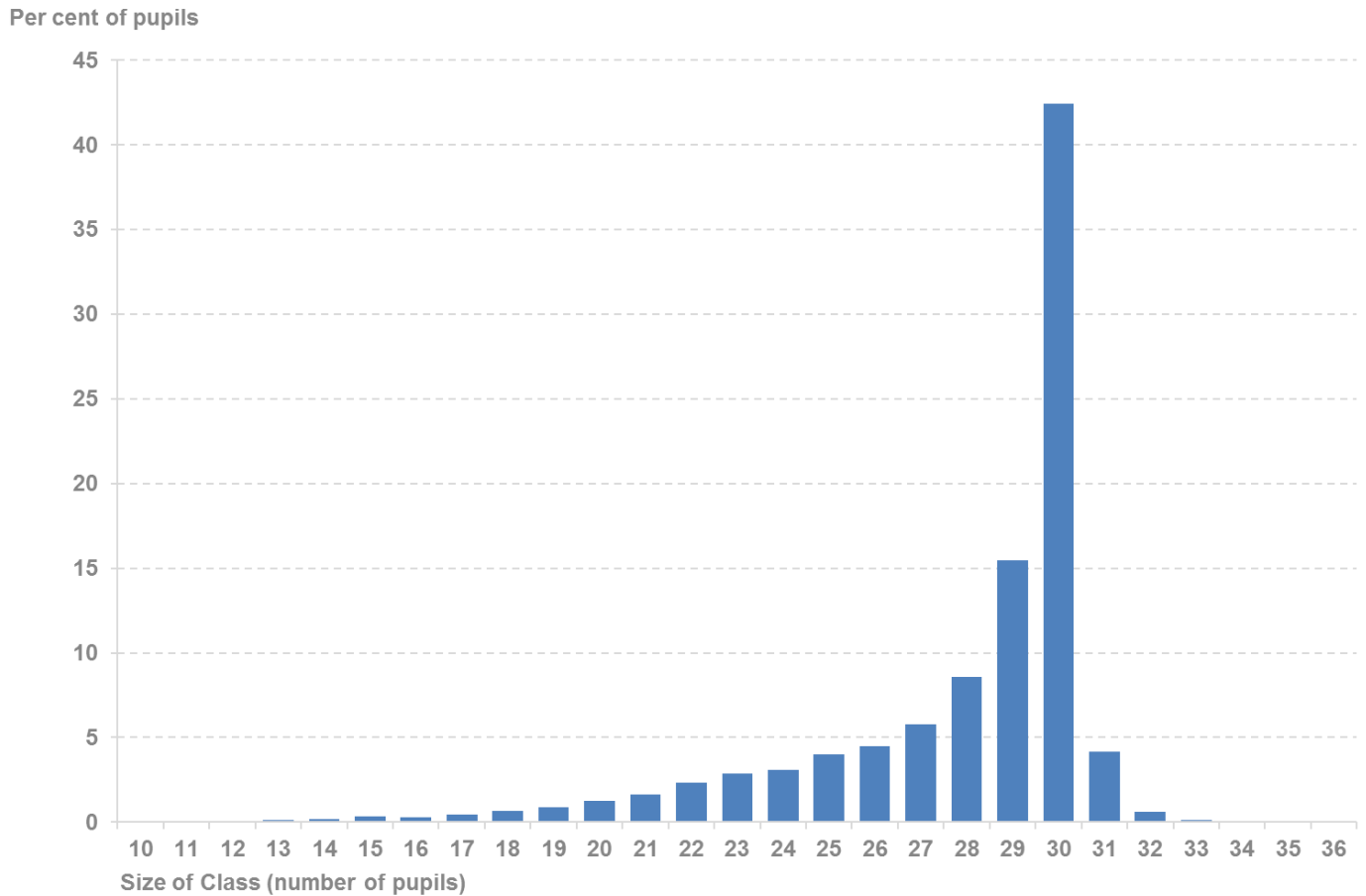
The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012 prescribe certain limited circumstances in which pupils may be admitted as lawful exceptions to the infant class size limit of 30 for one-teacher classes. This means that a class of, for example, 32 pupils is lawful if two or more of those pupils have been admitted under lawful exceptions. If fewer than two have been admitted as lawful exceptions then the class is termed 'unlawful'.

Following concerns about the accuracy of the unlawful / lawful split of large infant classes in 2014 the national statistics designation was removed from this data item. Following improvement to the quality of the data this has now been designated as a national statistics. For ease of reference all years data are presented in this publication but data on the number of unlawfully large classes in 2014 should be treated with caution.

More than half of one-teacher key stage 1 classes have either 29 or 30 pupils in them, with 42.4% of infant pupils being in classes of exactly 30 pupils.

4.9% of pupils are in large classes, of which just under 4.8% are in classes of 31 or 32 pupils and just under 0.2% are in classes of 33 or more. Thus, classes larger than 32 pupils are extremely uncommon.

**Figure I: Infant pupils are most commonly in classes of exactly 30**  
Infant class size distribution, January 2018



Source: School Census

## 7. Accompanying tables

The following tables are available in Excel format on the department's statistics [website](#):

### National tables

#### 1 Pupil numbers by age and gender

- 1a State-funded primary, secondary and special schools: Number of pupils by age and gender, January 2018
- 1b Pupil referral units and local authority alternative provision: Number of pupils by age and gender, January 2018
- 1c Independent schools: Number of pupils by age and gender, January 2018
- 1d State-funded primary, secondary and special schools: Number of pupils by national curriculum year group and gender, January 2018
- 1e Pupil referral units and alternative provision academies and free schools: Number of pupils by national curriculum year group and gender, January 2018

#### 2 Pupil numbers by school characteristics

- 2a All schools: Number of schools and pupils by type of school, January 2003 to 2018
- 2b Academies: Number of schools and pupils by type of academy, January 2018
- 2c State-funded primary and secondary schools: Number of schools by their status and religious character, January 2018
- 2d State-funded primary and secondary schools: Number (headcount) of pupils by the status and religious character of their schools, January 2018
- 2e State-funded primary and secondary schools: Number of schools by size, January 2018
- 2f State-funded primary and secondary schools: Number (headcount) of pupils by the size of their school, January 2018

#### 3 Free School Meals eligibility

- 3a State-funded nursery, state-funded primary, state-funded secondary, special schools, pupil referral units and local authority alternative provision: Number of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals by age and gender, January 2018
- 3b State-funded nursery, state-funded primary, state-funded secondary, special schools and pupil referral units: Number of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals based on Performance Tables, January 2018
- 3c Academies: Number of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals, January 2018
- 3d Infant Pupils: Number of free school meals taken on census day, January 2018

#### 4 Ethnicity

- 4a State-funded primary, secondary, and special schools, pupil referral units and local authority alternative provision: Number and percentage of pupils by ethnic group, January 2018
- 4b Primary academies: Number and percentages of pupils by ethnic group, January 2018
- 4c Secondary academies: Number and percentages of pupils by ethnic group, January 2018
- 4d Special and alternative provision academies: Number and percentages of pupils by ethnic group, January 2018

#### 5 First Language

- 5a State-funded primary, secondary, special schools and pupil referral units: Number and percentage of pupils by first language, January 2018
- 5b Academies: Number and percentage of pupils by first language, January 2018

#### 6 Class Sizes

- 6a State-funded schools: Key stage 1 and 2 classes, as at January each year, January 2006 to 2018
- 6b State-funded primary and secondary schools: Classes as taught, as at January each year, January 2006 to 2018

## Local authority and regional tables

### 7 Pupil numbers by pupil characteristics

- 7a All schools: Number of schools by type of school, by local authority area and region in England, January 2018
- 7b All schools: Number (headcount) of pupils by type of school, by local authority area and region in England, January 2018
- 7c State-funded secondary schools: Number of schools and number (headcount) of pupils, by admissions policy, by local authority area and region in England, January 2018
- 7d State-funded primary schools: Number of schools and number (headcount) of pupils, by the status of their school, by local authority area and region in England, January 2018
- 7e State-funded secondary schools: Number of schools and number (headcount) of pupils, by the status of their school, by local authority area and region in England, January 2018
- 7f State-funded primary schools: Number of schools and number (headcount) of pupils, by the religious character of school, by local authority area and region in England, January 2018
- 7g State-funded secondary schools: Number of schools and number (headcount) of pupils, by the religious character of school, by local authority area and region in England, January 2018

### 8 Free School Meals eligibility

- 8a State-funded nursery and state-funded primary schools: Number of pupils taking free school meals and number of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals by local authority area and region in England, January 2018
- 8b State-funded secondary schools: Number of pupils taking free school meals and number of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals by local authority area and region in England, January 2018
- 8c Special schools: Number of pupils taking free school meals and number of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals by local authority area and region in England, January 2018
- 8d Pupil referral units and alternative provision academies and free schools: Number of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals by local authority area and region in England, January 2018
- 8e All schools: Number and percentage of infant pupils taking a free school meal on census day, by local authority area and region in England, January 2018

### 9 Ethnicity

- 9a State-funded primary schools: Number of pupils by ethnic group, by local authority area and region in England, January 2018
- 9b State-funded secondary schools: Number of pupils by ethnic group, by local authority area and region in England, January 2018
- 9c Special schools: Number of pupils by ethnic group, by local authority area and region in England, January 2018

### 10 First Language

- 10a State-funded primary schools: Number and percentage of pupils by first language, by local authority area and region in England, January 2018
- 10b State-funded secondary schools: Number and percentage of pupils by first language, by local authority area and region in England, January 2018
- 10c Special schools: Number and percentage of pupils by first language, by local authority area and region in England, January 2018
- 10d State-funded primary schools: Classes as taught by key stage of pupils, by local authority area, by region, January 2018

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

- **Free school meals tables**  
Free school meals tables are based on the performance tables methodology and include full time pupils aged 0-15 and part time pupils aged 5-15. All other tables include pupils of all ages.
- **There are twenty four schools which do not complete the school census**  
These are all 16-19 schools, which instead complete the individualised learner record (ILR). These schools are counted in school number counts, but not pupil number counts.
- **Pupils are counted based on enrolment status**  
Pupils are counted at the school where they have either a sole or main dual registration. This means that pupil referral units and alternative provision institutions often teach more pupils than listed in these tables, but their additional pupils are counted at another institution.
- **These figures are a snapshot**  
Figures are correct as at January 2018. They may no longer reflect the situation on an individual school level due to pupil movements.

## 8. Further information is available

- **School level figures**  
These can be found in the underlying data tables as follows:

<b>Statistics covered</b>	<b>Underlying data file name suffix</b>
Pupil numbers by age, free school meals eligibility, ethnicity, first language, and SEN provision	_Schools_Pupils_UD
Pupil numbers by national curriculum year group	_Schools_NCYear_UD
Class Sizes	_Schools_Classes_UD
Alternative provision at LA level	_LA_level_APcensus_UD

- **Cross border movement tables**  
These figures show the number of pupils residing in one local authority, but attending school in another. Figures will be added to this release in due course.
- **Figures from previous years**  
You can find analogous figures from previous years within the statistical collection '[Statistics: school and pupil numbers](#)'.
- **SEN data**  
Statistics related to SEN are available in the [special educational needs statistics collection](#) on the department's website.

'Special Educational Needs: England 2018' will be published on 26th July 2018.

### Figures for other UK countries

The School Census only collects information from schools in England. For information for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, contact the departments below or access their statistics at the following links:

**Wales:** email [school.stats@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:school.stats@wales.gsi.gov.uk) or visit [StatsWales](#)

This includes comparable information about [pupil numbers](#), [classes](#), [free school meals eligibility](#), and [ethnicity](#), [language](#) and [special educational needs](#).

**Scotland:** email [school.stats@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:school.stats@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) or visit [Scottish Government - School Education Statistics](#)

This includes comparable information on [pupil numbers](#), [class sizes](#), [ethnicity and English as an additional language](#) and [free school meal eligibility](#)

**Northern Ireland:** email [statistics@deni.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@deni.gov.uk) or visit [Department of Education - Education Statistics](#)

This includes comparable [information about pupil numbers](#), [free school meals eligibility](#), and [ethnicity](#).

Note that any data from these locations may refer to different time periods, and each administration may have its own way of defining key statistics. However, '[Education and training statistics for the United Kingdom](#)' brings together information from each administration, which is directly comparable. Chapter 1 covers schools and includes breakdowns of pupil numbers.

- **Data from the January 2019 School Census**

This is an annual publication, usually released in June each year. Information from the January 2019 school census is likely to be available in June 2019. When a release date is known, it will be given in the department's [Forthcoming Publications](#) list.

## 9. National Statistics

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.

The Department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

## 10. Technical information

A quality and methodology information document accompanies this statistical publication. This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed.

## 11. Using this data

We know that there is a wide range of users of the data from this publication, including Local Authorities, academic researchers, journalists, museums, businesses, schools and other Government departments. Please see the methodology document for a list of uses and limitations of the statistics in this publication.



## 12. Get in touch

### Media enquiries

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Department  
for Education



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About this publication:

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-school-and-pupil-numbers>

Reference: Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2018



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