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Academic year 2024/25

Schools, pupils and their characteristics

This is the latest release



Published 5 June 2025

Next update June 2026

Last updated 7 July 2025
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This release contains the latest statistics on school and pupil numbers and their characteristics, including age, gender, free school meals (FSM) eligibility, English as an additional language, ethnicity, school characteristics and class sizes.

The publication combines information from the January (spring) school census, school level annual school census, general hospital school census and alternative provision census.

For information on funding, including allocations and the conditions of grant for pupil premium, visit [Local authorities: pre-16 schools funding - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\) \(opens in a new tab\)](#).

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Methodologies

[Schools, pupils and their characteristics](#)

Headline facts and figures - 2024/25

Total headcount

9,032,426

All schools in England - decrease of 59,600 from 2024

► What is total headcount?

Number of schools

24,479

All schools in England - increase of 26 from 2024

► What is number of schools?

Average class size

26.2

Infant classes - decrease of 0.4 from 2024

► What is average class size?

FSM - Percentage of pupils

25.7

Eligible for free school meals - up from 24.6 in 2024

► What is FSM?

The number of pupils in schools in England has decreased

There has been an decrease of 59,600 (0.7%) pupils across all school types from the previous year, with a total of over 9 million pupils. This includes all state-funded and independent schools. The number of schools has increased slightly, by 26 to 24,479.

Free school meal eligibility continues to increase

25.7% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, up from 24.6% in 2024. This represents almost 2.2 million pupils.

1.6 million infant pupils were recorded as taking a free school meal on census day

Of those, almost 1.3 million are not normally eligible for FSM through the criteria above and

received them under the Universal Infant FSM policy. This is a similar pattern to previous years.

The average class size for infant pupils (reception, year 1 and year 2) has decreased

Infant class size has decreased slightly to 26.2 from 26.6 in 2024, this is the lowest infant class size since 2009. There is a statutory limit of 30 pupils in an infant class.

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Additional supporting files

 Hide

All supporting files from this release are listed for individual download below:

[School level underlying data - class sizes - 2024/25 \(csv, 10 Mb\)](#)

One row per school at January 2025 - includes class size data for infants and key stage 2, and primary/secondary split

[School level underlying data 2025 \(csv, 22 Mb\)](#)

One row per school at January 2025 - includes school information and pupil characteristics including headcount, year group, age, sex, FSM, ethnicity, language data at school level, and young carers.

Schools and pupils

State-funded **primary schools** and state-funded **secondary schools** – Primary schools typically accept pupils aged 5-10 and secondary schools aged 11 and above, who take pupils of all compulsory school ages. These schools include academies and free schools and are included in the totals for secondary schools.

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

Alternative provision (AP) is defined in the [Alternative Provision Statutory Guidance \(opens in a new tab\)](#) as education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a suspension; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour. These placements are typically for children unable to attend a mainstream or special school.

Where this publication refers to **state-funded AP schools**, this includes pupil referral units or alternative provision academies or free schools. Local authorities can also fund places not maintained by the local authority. Alternative provision is covered in more detail in the “State-funded AP schools and alternative provision” section below.

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 schools – these are local authority-maintained schools that focus exclusively on the early years. 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.

There are just over 9 million pupils in January 2025, an decrease of 59,600 from last year

There are fewer pupils in primary schools and independent schools this year compared to last year, with little change to pupil numbers in state-funded secondary, AP schools, special schools and non-maintained schools. This is primarily driven by demographic changes, following a peak of births in 2013, as children reach secondary school age and lower numbers of pupils are moving into primary school age.

The primary population is projected to continue to decrease to the end of the projection period in 2028, whilst the secondary population is projected to increase until 2027 then slowly decrease (see the department's [pupil projections](#) release).

The number of pupils in state-funded nurseries has increased marginally by 549 (1.5%) to 37,300 but this is still below the series peak of 43,800 in 2016/17 academic year. This coincides with expanded entitlement to early childcare for 2-year olds from April 2024, and for children aged 9 to 23 months in September 2024.

The number of pupils in state-funded AP schools has increased by 4.9% to 16,600 which is the second highest in the series. The number of pupils in state-funded AP schools is similar to pre-pandemic levels. AP schools typically have high mobility with pupils having shorter spells than in other schools.

The number of pupils in state-funded and non-maintained special schools has increased by 5.3%, to 170,000, continuing the trend of increases seen in recent years.

The number of pupils in independent schools has decreased by 1.9% to 582,500 after increases in recent years, meaning the population is similar to that in 2021/22.

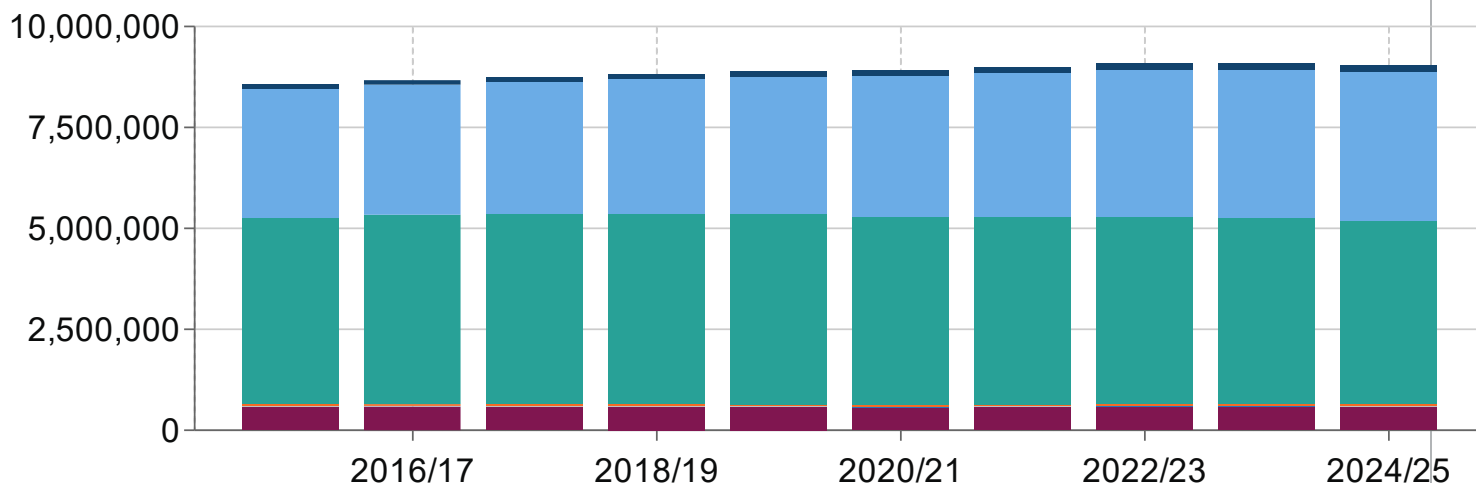
The number of schools has increased

There are 26 more schools in England in 2025 compared to 2024. This was due to increases in some phases (4 more secondary schools, 9 state-funded special schools, 1 AP school and 35 independent schools) and decreases in others (21 primary and 2 nursery schools).

Chart	<u>Table</u>
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► Export options

Headcount of pupils by school type, 2015/16 to 2024/25



- State-funded special school
- State-funded secondary
- State-funded primary
- State-funded nursery
- State-funded AP school
- Non-maintained special school
- Independent school

Source: School Census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

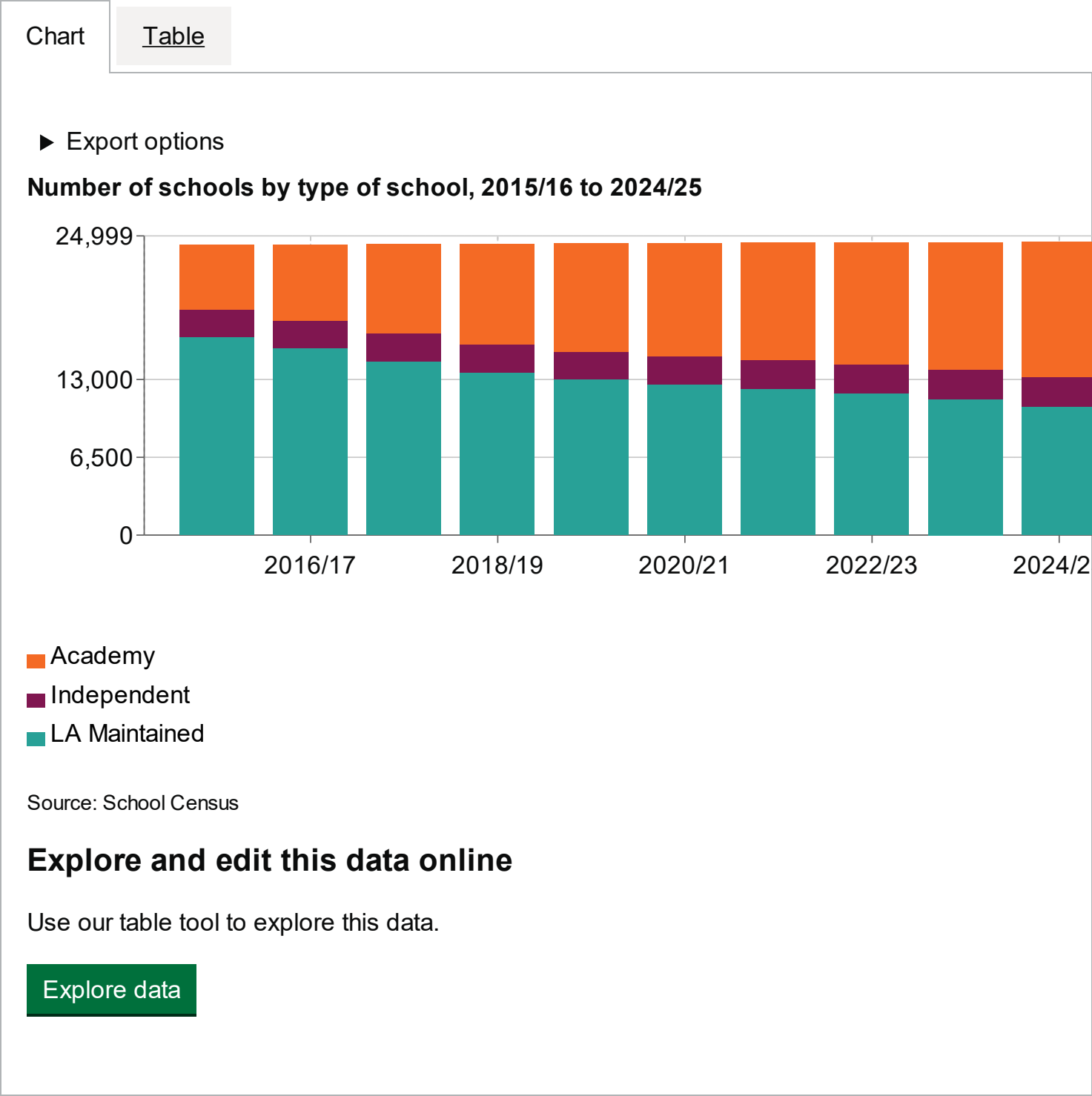
Explore data

The number of pupils attending academies (including free schools) has continued to grow, along with the number of academies. While 46.1% of all schools were academies, over half of all pupils (58.4%) were attending an academy. At January 2025:

- 46.1% of primary schools are now academies or free schools, accounting for 47.3% of the primary school population.

- 83.0% of secondary schools are academies or free schools, accounting for 82.7% of secondary school pupils.
- 49.6% of state-funded special schools are academies or free schools, accounting for 46.4% of special school pupils

For up-to-date information on open academies, free schools, studio schools and UTCs, see [monthly transparency data \(opens in a new tab\)](#).



Information on the total compulsory time pupils spend in school in a typical 5 day week is now collected in the January school census. For information on the data collected, please see the [school census guidance \(opens in a new tab\)](#).

Information on school hours (time) has been published in the underlying school data file and can be found under additional supporting files.

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State-funded AP schools and alternative provision

[⌵ Hide](#)

Alternative provision is defined in the [Alternative Provision Statutory Guidance \(opens in a new tab\)](#) as education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a suspension; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour. These placements are typically for children unable to attend a mainstream or special school.

This section details all pupils in state funded AP schools, as well as placements made by schools in AP settings (state- and non-state-funded) as well as LAs in non-state-funded provision.

a) **State-funded alternative provision schools** - includes pupil referral units, AP academies and AP free schools and the data is collected through the school census. This includes placements arranged by local authorities and by schools.

b) **School arranged alternative provision** - Data on alternative provision arranged by schools is also collected in the school census from Spring 2023. This includes full or part-time education arranged by schools.

c) **Local authority funded alternative provision in non-state-funded provision collected via the alternative provision census.**

This includes placements in non-state-funded provision when:

- i) LA arrange education for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; using their Section 19 powers.
- ii) LAs make educational provision for children and young people with Education, Health

and Care plans under their duties in the Children and Families Act.

Non-state-funded provision includes non-maintained special schools, independent schools, independent special schools, FE colleges and unregistered alternative provision settings.

This may include some pupils who are included in the school census or school level annual school census, for example where the local authority is funding a placement in a non-maintained special school or independent special school.

There are expected to be some overlaps between these groups. This includes pupils attending pupil referral units, who also have other alternative provision either arranged by the school, or local authority funded alternative provision. It is therefore **not advised to sum across the totals in each section**.

State-funded alternative provision (AP) schools

This includes pupil referral units, alternative provision academies and free schools.

The number of pupils in state-funded AP schools has increased by 4.9% to 16,600. This includes pupils placed by schools and LAs, and whose sole or main registration is in a state-funded AP school. The number of pupils in AP decreased between 2017/18 and 2021/22, but has since increased and returned to 2017/18 pupil numbers.

A third (66.6%) of pupils in AP schools are male; this proportion has been decreasing since 2021/22. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals are disproportionately represented in AP schools (63.2% compared to 25.7% in the overall school population).

There are a further 11,100 dual subsidiary enrolments in state-funded AP schools. It should not be assumed that this equates to 11,100 pupils as it is possible for a pupil to have multiple dual placements.

► Export options

Number of state-funded AP schools and number of pupils attending, by type of school, 2020/21 to 2024/25

		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Headcount - Total	Total	12,785	11,684	13,191	15,866	16,643
	Academy alternative provision converter	2,786	2,617	3,041	3,977	4,565
	Academy alternative provision sponsor led	1,187	1,114	1,323	1,546	2,036
	Pupil referral unit	7,665	6,774	7,470	8,874	8,572
Number of schools	Total	348	338	335	333	334
	Academy alternative provision converter	74	78	78	83	88
	Academy alternative provision sponsor led	28	28	29	29	33
	Pupil referral unit	197	182	177	170	159

[Data symbols](#) 

Source: School Census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

This includes open placements at census day where a school has arranged alternative provision for a pupil.

There were 27,900 pupils in school arranged AP at January 2025. The most common reason recorded for schools arranging AP was off-site placement for behavioural support (53.1%). Of the pupils in school arranged AP:

- 30.1% had an education, health and care (EHC) plan and a further 41.0% were in receipt of special educational need (SEN) support.
- 62.2% were male.
- 56.0% were eligible for free school meals.

► Export options

**School arranged alternative provision, by type of setting and placement reason
2024/25**

		Total	Education setting with URN	Non-maintained further education college	One on one tuition	Other unregistered provider
Total		27,880	10,408	422	4,041	8,772
Placement Reason	Medical condition (mental health need)	5,381	1,865	45	1,287	1,498
	Medical condition (physical health need)	627	331	5	123	104
	Off-site placement for behavioural support	14,814	6,127	295	1,542	4,588
	Other	6,575	1,936	74	1,074	2,292
	Permanent exclusion (where still	415	108	no data	10	282

[Data symbols](#) 

Source: School Census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Local authority arranged placements in non state-funded alternative provision

This includes placements in non-state-funded provision when:

- i) LA arrange education for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; using their Section 19 powers.
- ii) LAs make educational provision for children and young people with Education, Health and Care plans under their duties in the Children and Families Act.

This includes open placements at census day where the pupil is in a local authority funded AP setting.

There are more placements than pupils, as pupils can have multiple placements.

The number of placements in AP has increased by 24% to 59,700 in 2024/25. The number of open placements has more than doubled since 2017/18. The majority of LA funded placements (73.5%) are in an education setting, and the most common reason for placement is that the setting was named on an Education, Health and Care plan (78.2%).

By pupil characteristics:

- As in previous years, most placements are for males (70.4%). However, there has been a year on year reduction in this proportion, from 76.5% in 2017/18.
- Pupils in these placements have a lower rate of free school meal eligibility (24.1%) than the overall school population (25.7%).

► Export options

Reason for placement in local authority-arranged alternative provision, 2022/23 to 2024/25

	2024/25		2023/24		Number of placements
	Number of placements	Percentage of placements	Number of placements	Percentage of placements	
Total	59,678	100.00	48,133	100.00	41
Mental health need	669	1.12	799	1.66	
New arrival without a school place	898	1.50	746	1.55	
Other including pregnancy/childcare	7,999	13.40	5,536	11.50	4
Permanent exclusion	3,021	5.06	1,797	3.73	1
Physical health need	334	0.56	263	0.55	
Pupil in young offender institutes / secure training centres	63	0.11	40	0.08	
Setting named on EHC plan	46,694	78.24	38,952	80.93	34

[Data symbols](#) ?

Source: Alternative Provision Census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

► Export options

Alternative provision - local authority arranged placements, number of placements by setting type, 2022/23 to 2024/25

	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23
Total	59,678	48,133	41,319
Education setting with URN	43,877	36,646	33,008
Non-maintained further education college	541	804	707
One on one tuition	7,062	5,275	3,541
Other unregistered provider	4,621	3,043	2,557
Registered provider with UKPRN	3,331	2,068	1,245
Unknown	no data	no data	4
Work based placement	246	297	257

[Data symbols](#) ?

Source: Alternative Provision Census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

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Free school meals eligibility

⌵ Hide

Children in state-funded schools in England are 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
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits)

Pupils in families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) can also be eligible for free school meals – see here for further information: [Providing free school meals to families with no recourse to public funds \(NRPF\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/providing-free-school-meals-to-families-with-no-recourse-to-public-funds-nrpf). (opens in a new tab)

Children in nursery schools are eligible if they meet the criteria and attend for full days, or if part time, receiving education before and after the lunch break. Pupils are still eligible for free school meals in school in sixth form, but not sixth form college or further education.

Since 1 April 2018, transitional protections have been in place which will continue during the roll out of Universal Credit. This has meant that pupils eligible for free school meals on or after 1 April 2018 retain their free school meals eligibility even if their circumstances change. Prior to the pandemic, this had been the main driver in the increase in the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals as pupils continue to become eligible but fewer pupils stop being eligible.

Any pupil gaining eligibility for free school meals after 1 April 2018 will be protected against losing free school meals until March 2025. After March 2025, any existing claimants that no longer meet the eligibility criteria at that point (because they are earning above the threshold or are no longer a recipient of Universal Credit) will continue to receive free school meals until the end of their current phase of education (i.e. primary or secondary).

The number of pupils eligible for free school meals has continued to increase

In January 2025, almost 2.2 million pupils were eligible for free school meals, 25.7% of all pupils.

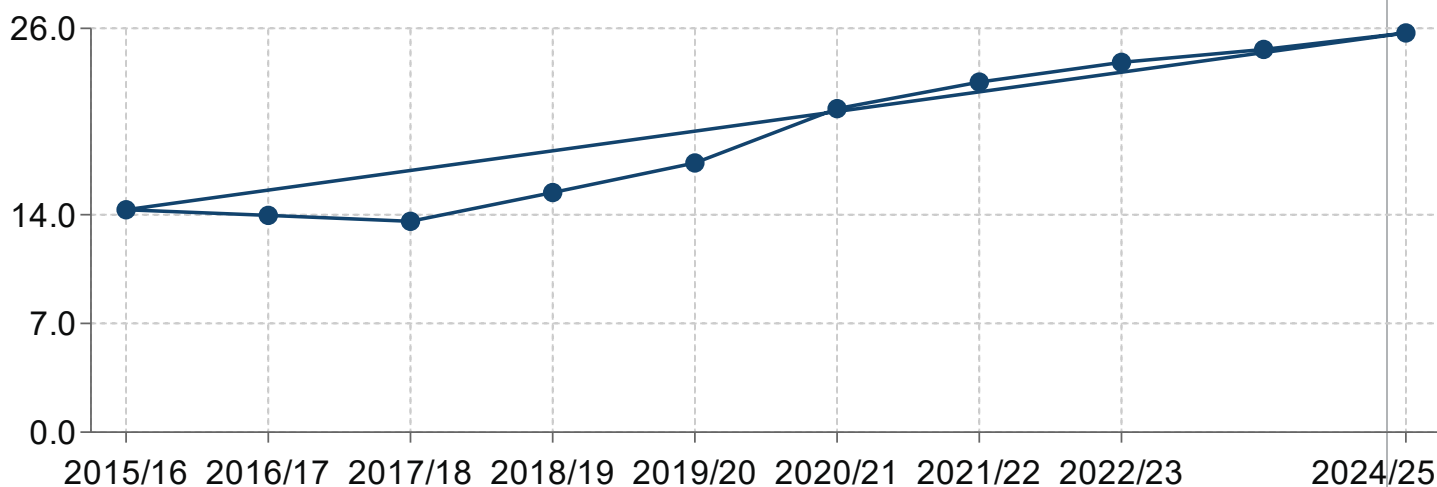
This is an increase of 77,700 pupils since January 2024, when 2.1 million (24.6%) pupils were eligible for free school meals and continues the increasing trend that began in 2018/19.

The continuing year on year increase in the number and rate of pupils eligible for FSM reflects the continuation of the transitional protections described above. There is an increasing number of pupils who are FSM eligible as pupils flow on to free school meals when becoming eligible, but protections mean pupils do not flow off in similar quantities.

Chart	<u>Table</u>
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► Export options

The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals continues to increase



● Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

Footnotes

1. Totals include state-funded nursery, primary, secondary, alternative provision (AP) schools and special schools, and non-maintained special schools. Does not include independent schools nor general hospital schools. This is because independent and hospital schools submit an aggregate school level census that does not include characteristics breakdowns such as ethnicity, age and language.

Source: School Census

Explore and edit this data online

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Explore data

Free school meal eligibility varies by region

The North East has the highest rate of free school meal eligibility (32.3%) and the South East and East of England have the lowest rates (20.6% and 20.7%, respectively).

All regions had an increase in the rate of free school meal eligibility, but the West Midlands had the largest increase of 2 percentage points, to 30.9% of pupils.

Chart

Table

► Export options

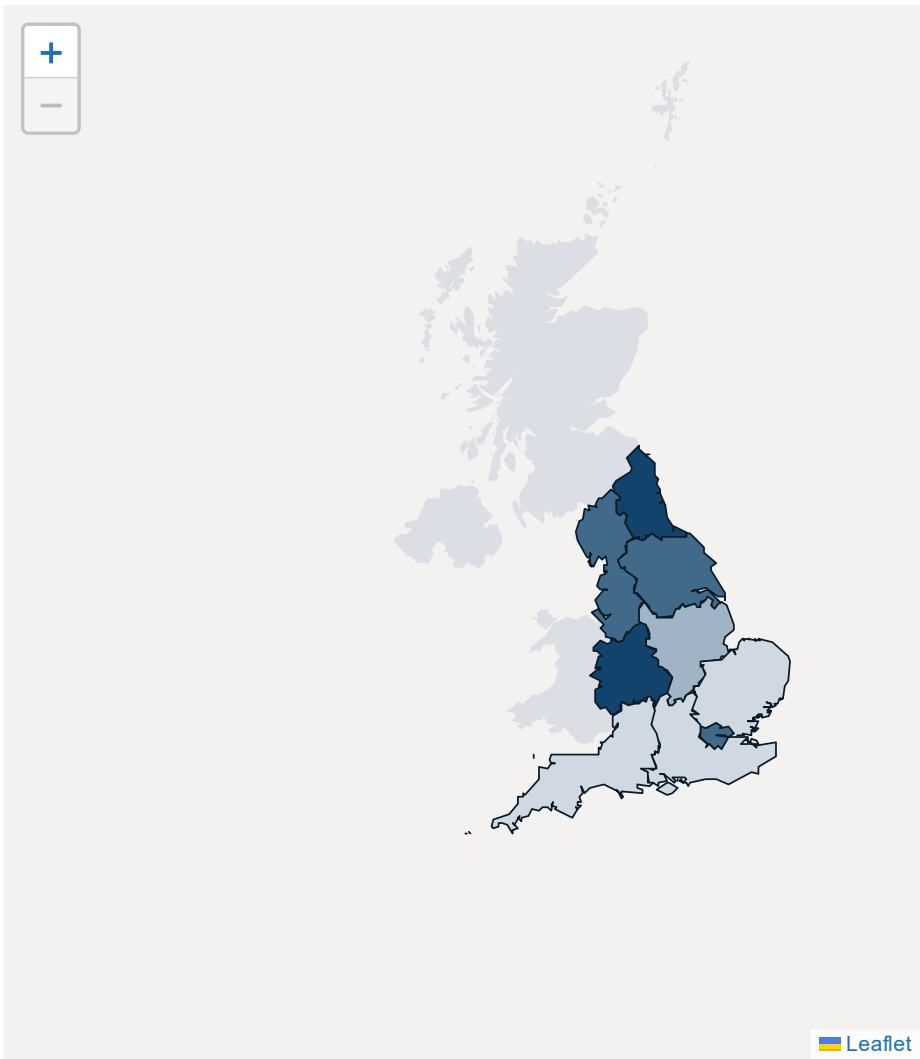
Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals by region, England, 2015/16 to 2024/25

1. Select data to view

2015/16

2. Select a Region

None selected



Key to 2024/25

- 20.6 to 22.9
- 23.0 to 25.3
- 25.4 to 27.7
- 27.8 to 30.1
- 30.2 to 32.3

Footnotes

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submit an aggregate school level census that does not include characteristics breakdowns such as ethnicity, age and language.

2. This map uses the boundary data Regions England BUC 2022/12

Source: School Census

Explore and edit this data online

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Explore data

Free school meal eligibility varies by national curriculum year group

FSM eligibility rates are highest for pupils during the years of compulsory schooling; reception to year 11. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals peaks among pupils of national curriculum year 6 - in 2025 it was 30.7% - and declines throughout the later national curriculum years. Please note that national curriculum years contain primary, secondary, non-maintained special schools, state-funded special schools and state-funded alternative provision schools.

The percentage of pupils in both reception and year 1 who are eligible for free school meals has declined for the third year running and the percentage of pupils in years 7 and 11 who are eligible has seen the largest increase of 2.1% from 2024. There have been increases across all other year groups except for year 2.

There are high rates of FSM eligibility among pupils in year 14. This is a small cohort including pupils retaking the final year of key stage 5. Pupils not following the National Curriculum are also a small group who attend some special schools.

► Export options

FSM Eligibility by National Curriculum Year Group 2015/16 to 2024/25

		Percentage					
		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
NC year group	Early 1	no data	2.0	2.5	5.2	4.0	4.1
	Early 2	no data	4.5	3.7	3.7	3.6	4.6
	Nursery 1	5.3	5.0	4.6	4.7	4.9	6.1
	Nursery 2	7.2	6.9	6.4	6.6	6.8	8.3
	Reception	14.3	14.0	13.7	14.4	15.0	18.8
	Year 1	14.5	14.2	13.9	16.4	17.6	21.8
	Year 2	15.3	14.2	13.8	16.2	18.8	23.0
	Year 3	16.0	15.7	15.1	17.4	20.1	24.5
	Year 4	15.9	15.6	15.2	17.5	19.9	24.0
	Year 5	15.9	15.4	15.0	17.4	19.8	23.5
	Year 6	15.7	15.4	14.9	17.1	19.5	23.2
	Year 7	15.4	15.1	14.7	16.7	19.0	22.3
	Year 8	15.1	14.8	14.3	16.1	18.3	21.6
	Year 9	14.8	14.4	14.0	15.6	17.5	20.8
	Year 10	14.4	14.0	13.5	15.1	16.9	19.9

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. Totals include state-funded nursery, primary, secondary, alternative provision (AP) schools and special schools, and non-maintained special schools. Does not include independent schools nor general hospital schools. This is because independent and hospital schools submit an aggregate school level census that does not include characteristics breakdowns such as ethnicity, age and language.

Source: School Census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Free school meals eligibility varies by ethnicity

Rates of FSM eligibility in 2025 were highest among pupils in the Traveller of Irish heritage ethnic group (67.3%) and Gypsy/Roma ethnic group (61.2%). Rates were lowest among pupils of Indian and Chinese ethnic groups, both at 7.5%.

► Export options

FSM eligibility by ethnicity 2015/16 to 2024/25

		Percentage					
		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Ethnicity Minor	Any other ethnic group	23.1	22.4	20.8	23.6	26.2	31.1
	Asian - Any other Asian background	12.0	11.7	10.9	12.7	14.4	18.1
	Asian - Bangladeshi	23.6	22.2	19.1	20.7	21.9	27.4
	Asian - Chinese	6.7	6.4	5.9	6.8	7.6	9.5
	Asian - Indian	6.1	5.6	4.8	5.3	5.8	7.5
	Asian - Pakistani	18.9	17.9	15.6	17.0	18.5	22.5
	Black - Any other Black background	25.2	23.6	21.1	24.4	27.4	32.8
	Black - Black African	24.0	22.1	19.8	22.5	25.3	30.4
	Black - Black Caribbean	26.9	25.8	24.9	28.5	32.0	37.0

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. Totals include state-funded nursery, primary, secondary, alternative provision (AP) schools and special schools, and non-maintained special schools. Does not include independent schools nor general hospital schools. This is because independent and hospital schools submit an aggregate school level census that does not include characteristics breakdowns such as ethnicity, age and language.

Source: School Census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Universal Infant Free school meals (UIFSM)

The table below shows the number of pupils who took a free school meal on census day and the total number of infant pupils.

1.6 million infant pupils were recorded as taking a free school meal on census day, of which almost 1.3 million are not normally eligible for FSM through the criteria above but received them under the Universal Infant FSM policy. The proportion of infant pupils taking a free school meal on census day rose to 88.2% in 2025, from 87.4% in 2024. Breakdowns of UIFSM take up by local authority and region are available in the underlying data and via the table tool.

► Export options

Universal Infant Free School Meal (UIFSM) uptake by FSM Eligibility 2015/16 to 2024/25

	Total		FSM Eligible		Not FSM Eligible	
	Number of infant pupils taking a meal	Total number of infant pupils	Number of infant pupils taking a meal	Total number of infant pupils	Number of infant pupils taking a meal	Total number of infant pupils
2015/16	1,667,106	1,958,888	250,299	287,755	1,416,807	1,671,133
2016/17	1,711,203	1,986,445	245,420	280,401	1,465,783	1,706,044
2017/18	1,710,433	1,980,966	237,869	273,565	1,472,564	1,707,401
2018/19	1,702,244	1,952,833	268,575	306,054	1,433,669	1,646,779
2019/20	1,695,806	1,923,822	292,218	329,461	1,403,588	1,594,361
2020/21	1,668,790	1,899,526	361,798	402,757	1,306,992	1,496,769
2021/22	1,611,131	1,895,574	352,069	414,237	1,259,062	1,481,337
2022/23	1,647,325	1,890,654	358,004	412,109	1,289,321	1,478,545
2023/24	1,629,560	1,864,207	346,715	400,102	1,282,845	1,464,105
2024/25	1,605,843	1,820,409	340,444	388,802	1,265,399	1,431,607

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. Totals include state-funded nursery, primary, secondary, alternative provision (AP) schools and special schools, and non-maintained special schools. Does not include independent schools nor general hospital schools. This is because independent and hospital schools submit an aggregate school level census that does not include characteristics breakdowns such as ethnicity, age and language.

Source: School Census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

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Ethnicity

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38.0% of pupils are from a minority ethnic background

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 background in this release.

Across all school types, 38.0% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is an increase of one percentage point since 2024, continuing the increasing trend. This varies by school type:

- 38.4% in primary schools (up from 37.4% in 2023/24)
- 37.8% in secondary schools (up from 36.6% in 2023/24)
- 32.0% in special schools (up from 31.7% in 2023/24)
- 25.4% in AP schools (down from 25.8% in 2023/24)

These figures do not include those where ethnicity is unclassified.

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Number and percentage of pupils by ethnicity, 2022/23 to 2024/25

	Headcount			Percent		
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Total	8,481,287	8,497,935	8,449,209	100.0	100.0	100.0
Any other ethnic group	195,998	203,561	210,504	2.3	2.4	2.5
Asian - Any other Asian background	179,066	188,037	192,938	2.1	2.2	2.3
Asian - Bangladeshi	151,644	151,875	152,024	1.8	1.8	1.8
Asian - Chinese	58,731	63,774	65,703	0.7	0.8	0.8
Asian - Indian	311,012	337,382	351,620	3.7	4.0	4.2
Asian - Pakistani	383,457	388,315	393,720	4.5	4.6	4.7
Black - Any other Black background	65,855	66,036	64,719	0.8	0.8	0.8
Black - Black African	362,477	406,246	437,625	4.3	4.8	5.2
Black - Black Caribbean	80,353	78,817	76,646	0.9	0.9	0.9

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. Totals include state-funded nursery, primary, secondary, alternative provision (AP) schools and special schools, and non-maintained special schools. Does not include independent schools nor general hospital schools. This is because independent and hospital schools submit an aggregate school level census that does not include characteristics breakdowns such as ethnicity, age and language.
2. Prior to 2017/18, Ethnicity and Language data was collected for compulsory school age children only.

Source: School Census

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First language

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78.2% of pupils were recorded as having a first language known or believed to be English

A pupil is recorded to have English as an additional language if they are 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.

21.4% of pupils were recorded as having a first language known or believed to be other than English. This is an increase of 0.6% from 2023/24 and continuing a recent trend of increases.

This varies by school type; from 7.6% in AP schools to 30.2% in nursery schools. In primary schools, the percentage recorded as other than English has increased from 22.8% to 23.4% while in secondary there has been an increase from 18.6% to 19.2%, following further small increases in recent years.

Numbers may not sum to 100%, due to a small number of pupils with an unclassified language.

► Export options

First language of pupils by school type, 2023/24 and 2024/25

		Total		Known or believed to be English		Known or to be oth Eng
		2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24
Total	Headcount	8,497,935	8,449,209	6,685,364	6,605,568	1,770,160
	Percent	100.0	100.0	78.7	78.2	20.8
Non-maintained special school	Headcount	4,120	4,398	3,644	3,892	439
	Percent	100.0	100.0	88.4	88.5	10.7
State-funded AP school	Headcount	15,866	16,643	14,468	15,264	1,231
	Percent	100.0	100.0	91.2	91.7	7.8
State-funded nursery	Headcount	36,726	37,275	25,326	25,871	11,264
	Percent	100.0	100.0	69.0	69.4	30.7
State-funded primary	Headcount	4,614,990	4,554,974	3,549,551	3,474,334	1,050,199
	Percent	100.0	100.0	76.9	76.3	22.8
State-funded secondary	Headcount	3,669,933	3,671,427	2,959,140	2,946,050	684,422
	Percent	100.0	100.0	80.6	80.2	18.6
State-funded tertiary	Headcount	156,300	161,402	122,225	110,157	22,605

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. Totals include state-funded nursery, primary, secondary, alternative provision (AP) schools and special schools, and non-maintained special schools. Does not include independent schools nor general hospital schools. This is because independent and hospital schools submit an aggregate school level census that does not include characteristics breakdowns such as ethnicity, age and language.
2. Prior to 2017/18, Ethnicity and Language data was collected for compulsory school age children only.

Source: School Census

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Young carers

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64,500 pupils were identified as being a young carer in 2024/25

Data on young carers was collected in the school census for the first time in 2022/23, and this is the third publication of information on young carers in the series.

The young carer indicator identifies, for those children on roll on spring census day, whether they have been identified as a young carer either by the school (including where the pupil self declares) or by parent or guardian.

Section 17ZA of the Children Act 1989 says a young carer is a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (which isn't a contract or voluntary work).

All schools (except nursery, independent and hospital schools) must send this information as part of the Spring school census but the recording and handling of the information is at the school's discretion. 69% of schools recorded no young carers in 2025, down from 72% in 2024.

Young carers carry immense responsibility in providing care and support at home but their own needs may remain 'hidden' from wider view. The increased pressures young carers have faced due to the pandemic has further highlighted the need to improve formal identification of this cohort in schools, understand their needs and to provide early help as outlined in statutory guidance on [keeping children safe in education \(opens in a new tab\)](#).

[Working together to safeguard children \(opens in a new tab\)](#) also outlines how school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need of early help for students who have taken on caring responsibilities.

64,500 pupils were identified as being known to be a young carer in 2024/25, an increase of 10,500 from 2023/24. Increases in the first few years of data collection should be treated with caution as this is likely to be a result of the data item becoming established within the school census collection, rather than reflecting a true increase in young carers. For information, the Office for National Statistics also [publishes information on unpaid care \(opens in a new tab\)](#).

► Export options

Number of pupils known to be a young carer, 2022/23 to 2024/25

	2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
	Number of pupils	Percentage	Number of pupils	Percentage	Number of pupils	Percentage
Total	38,983	0.5	53,975	0.6	64,475	0.8
State-funded primary	15,441	0.3	21,001	0.5	24,519	0.5
State-funded secondary	23,261	0.6	32,473	0.9	39,366	1.1
State-funded special school	238	0.2	411	0.3	465	0.3
Non-maintained special school	2	0.1	1	0.0	9	0.2
State-funded AP school	41	0.3	89	0.6	116	0.7

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. Totals include state-funded nursery, primary, secondary, alternative provision (AP) schools and special schools, and non-maintained special schools. Does not include independent schools nor general hospital schools. This is because independent and hospital schools submit an aggregate school level census that does not include characteristics breakdowns such as ethnicity, age and language.
2. Data on young carers was collected in the school census for the first time in 2022/23. The young carer indicator identifies, for those children on roll on spring census day, whether they have been identified as a young carer either by the school (including where the pupil self declares) or by parent or guardian.

Source: School Census

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Class size

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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.

Lawful and unlawful infant classes - The [School Admissions \(Infant Class Sizes\) \(England\) Regulations 2012 \(opens in a new tab\)](#) 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'.

Classes taught by one teacher - The figures below represent classes taught by one teacher only, and therefore do not total to the overall number of pupils across the year

groups.

The average class size for infant classes has slightly decreased

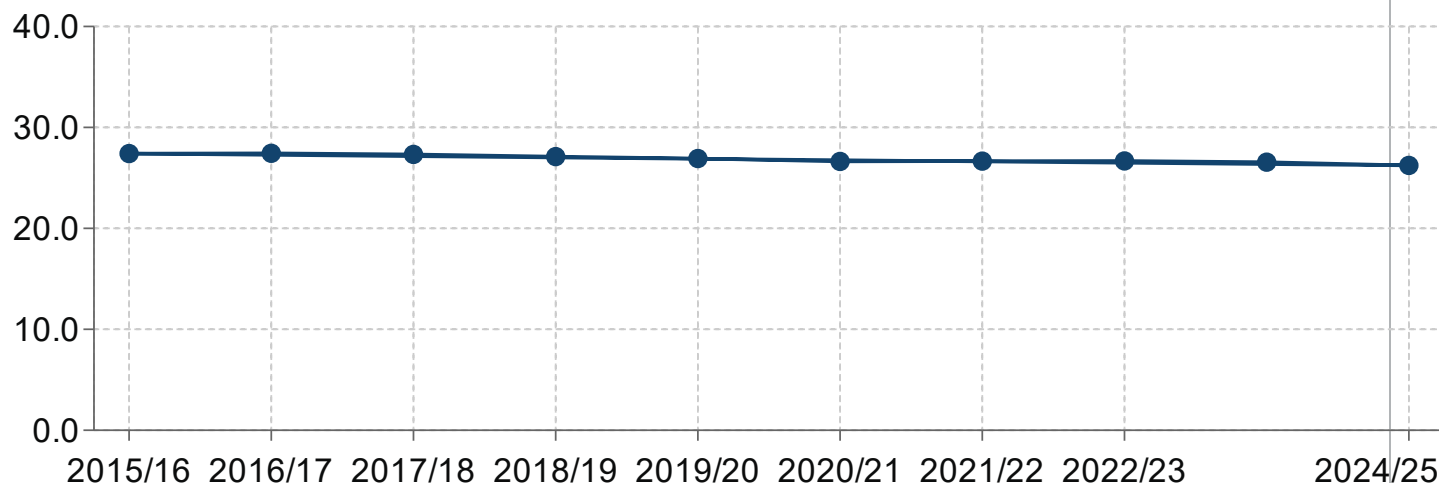
The average infant class size was 26.2, a decrease of 0.4 since 2023/24. Between 2020/21 and 2023/24, average infant class sizes were stable following a period of decreases. The number of pupils in large classes has decreased from 57,500 to 47,500 which represents 3.1% of all pupils in infant classes.

Infant classes cover reception and key stage 1 (years 1 and 2) and class sizes are subject to the large class limits outlined above. For further information on class sizes, see the featured table, [Infant classes by size of class, England, 2022/23 to 2024/25](#).

Chart	<u>Table</u>
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► Export options

Infant average class sizes (reception plus KS1), England, 2015/16 to 2024/25



● Average class size (Infant)

Footnotes

1. Totals include state-funded nursery, primary, secondary, alternative provision (AP) schools and special schools, and non-maintained special schools. Does not include independent schools nor general hospital schools. This is because independent and hospital schools submit an aggregate school level census that does not include characteristics breakdowns such as ethnicity, age and language.

Source: School Census

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The average class size in key stage 2 has increased

The average class size remained stable at 27.9, the number of pupils in large classes has increased from 421,600 to 439,000, representing 19.6% of pupils in key stage 2 (pupils in years 3 to 6).

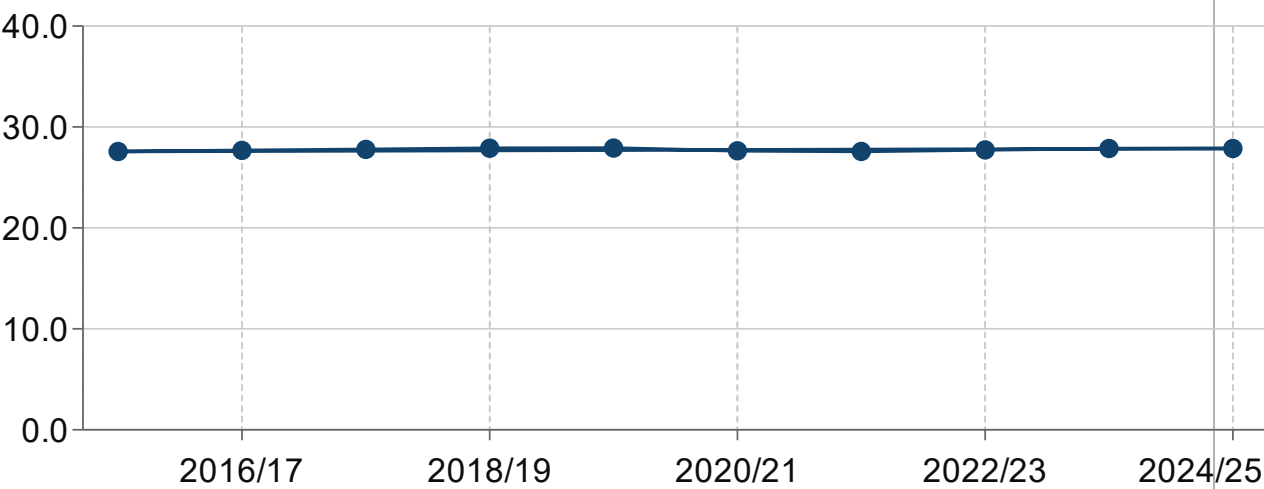
For further information on class sizes, see the featured table, [KS2 classes by size of class, England](#).

Chart

Table

► Export options

KS2 average class sizes, England, 2015/16 to 2024/25



● Average class size (KS2)

Footnotes

1. Totals include state-funded nursery, primary, secondary, alternative provision (AP) schools and special schools, and non-maintained special schools. Does not include independent schools nor general hospital schools. This is because independent and hospital schools submit an aggregate school level census that does not include characteristics breakdowns such as ethnicity, age and language.

Source: School Census

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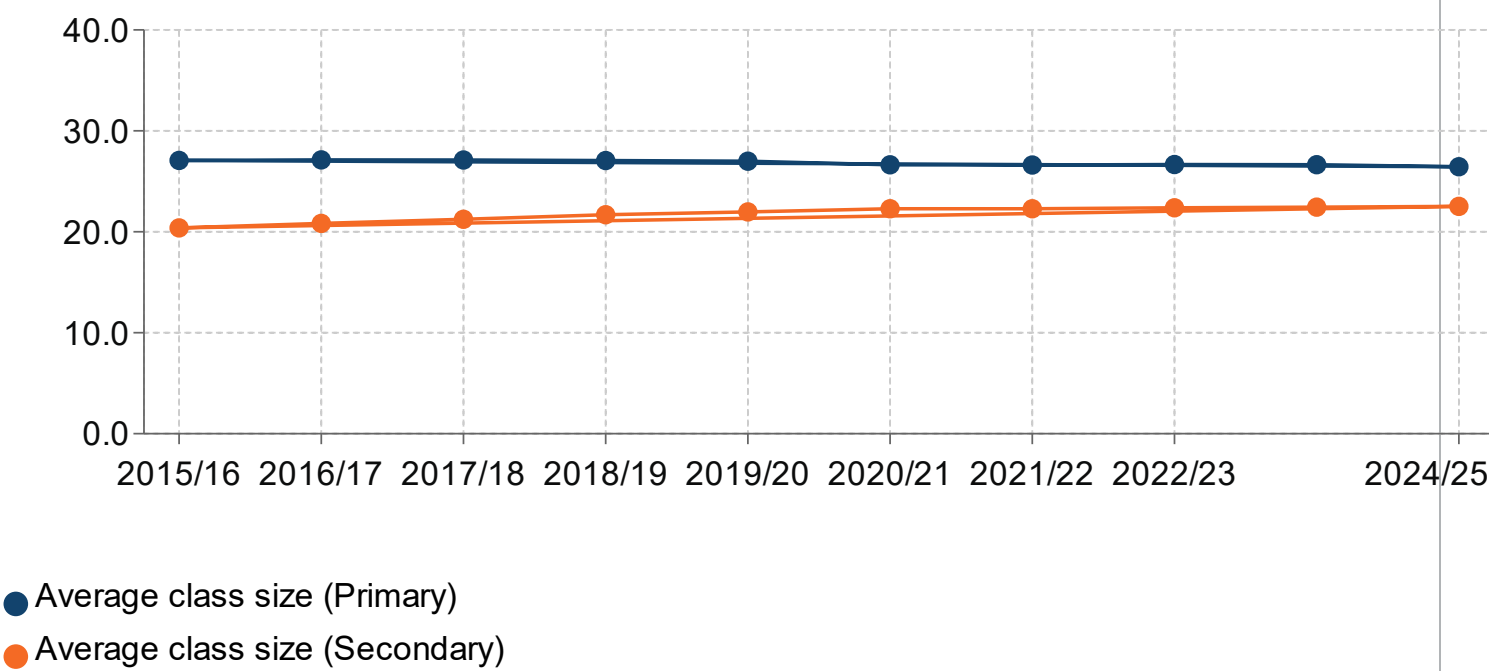
Primary school class size has slightly decreased and secondary has slightly increased

The average primary class size has decreased slightly by 0.2 to 26.4 following a period of stability between 2020/21 to 2023/24. Average secondary class size has increased slightly by 0.1 to 22.5.

Chart Table

► Export options

Primary and secondary average class sizes 2015/16 to 2024/25



Footnotes

1. Totals include state-funded nursery, primary, secondary, alternative provision (AP) schools and special schools, and non-maintained special schools. Does not include independent schools nor general hospital schools. This is because independent and hospital schools submit an aggregate school level census that does not include characteristics breakdowns such as ethnicity, age and language.

Source: School Census

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Further information - Pupil teacher ratios

Pupil teacher ratios (PTR) are published in the [School workforce in England](#) release. The PTRs are calculated as the number of pupils reported in the January School Census divided by the number of teachers reported in the November School Workforce Census. This demonstrates the size of the workforce in relation to the size of the learner population. A decrease in PTR means that there are fewer pupils per teacher.

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Cross border movement

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Cross border movement data describes patterns of movement for pupils who live in one local authority area while receiving state-funded education in another. Pupils educated in independent schools are not included in this data. Local authorities use the information for financial planning.

Cross border movement data for this current academic year data will be published in summer 2025.

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