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Reporting year 2025

National pupil projections

This is the latest release

Published	17 July 2025
Next update	July 2026
Release type	Official statistics 
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Related information

This annual release provides national projections for the number of pupils in schools in England by type of school and age.

These statistics are calculated based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) population estimates and projections, monthly birth registration data up to and including 2023, and school census data up to and including January 2025.

The pupil projections use the most recent ONS data available:

- ONS population estimates, which last year were rebased back to 2011 to take account of the 2021 Census
- ONS [latest mid-2022 based projections \(opens in new tab\)](#), which now also take account of the 2021 Census

These mid-2022 based projections include the results of the 2021 census, updated long term fertility and mortality assumptions, and alternative scenarios (variant projections). These ONS projections assume a higher long-term international migration, lower future fertility, and longer life expectancy than in the previous (2021-based interim) national population projections.

The latest long-term international migration provisional release was published after the ONS population estimates and projections used in our modelling. It showed that for the calendar year ending December 2024 indicated long-term net migration is down by almost 50% compared to December 2023. This follows a 20% reduction seen in year ending June 2024 (compared to the year ending June 2023), which is taken account of in ONS's population projections. We have not made any adjustments as a result of the new migration

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data and continue to use the principal projection variant, as the impact of using the low migration variant is minimal and there is still uncertainty around future migration.

For more information, please see the methodology document.

All projections are subject to uncertainty as they depend on the information available at any given moment in time and cannot allow for future changes in demographic behaviour.

Due to the increased uncertainty in long-term net migration assumptions, pupil projections in this release are published up to 2030, rather than up to 2035 as would be the standard. The previous model published in 2024 only projected to 2028 due to increased uncertainty in longer term fertility assumptions at that time, therefore there are some references to 2028 in this publication when making comparisons.

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Headline facts and figures - 2025

Summary

Table

Number of pupils

4,205,117

in nursery & primary schools by 2030, an expected fall of 300,000 from the population in 2025

► nursey and primary schools 2030 proj...

Number of pupils

3,135,086

in secondary schools by 2030, an expected fall of 97,000 from the population in 2025

► secondary schools 2030 projection

- The population attending primary and nursery schools peaked in 2019 and the figures have been gradually falling since then. This is primarily due to the number of births generally falling since 2012.
- Since 2018, the population in secondary schools had been steadily increasing by around 2% a year until 2023 where it then slowed down to a 1.3% increase in 2024. The latest census shows a 0.1% decrease in 2025. Projections data indicate that the secondary school population is likely to have plateaued between 2024 and 2025, will remain at a similar level until 2026, and is then projected to start declining slowly. This is two years earlier than the peak projected last year but may be subject to change if pupil numbers bounce back, fluctuate, or plateau for a few years.
- The population in state-funded special schools has seen year on year increase of 6% between 2018 and 2022 and 5% since 2023. Projections data indicate that numbers are expected to peak in 2026 - 2027.
- The number of children in alternative provision schools dropped substantially in 2021 (by 18%) and 2022 (by a further 9%) as the pandemic reduced the opportunities to refer children. Figures returned to the approximate pre-

pandemic levels in 2024 and increased a further 5% in 2025. Projected figures are expected to peak in 2026 – 2027 then gradually fall. However, the level of change seen in 2021 and 2022 that is used in the modelling means that this projection is more uncertain than usual.

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Methodology

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Contact us

If you have a specific enquiry about National pupil projections statistics and data:

Pupils and School Finance team

Email: PupilPopulation.PROJECTIONS@education.gov.uk

Contact name: Dexter Roberts

Press office

If you have a media enquiry:

Telephone: 020 7783 8300

Public enquiries

If you have a general enquiry about the Department for Education (DfE) or education:

Telephone: 037 0000 2288

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