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Academic year 2024/25

School capacity

School places in primary and secondary state-funded schools including sixth form. Local authorities' pupil forecasts and planned changes to school places.

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Headline facts and figures

Net change in the number of school places since 2009/10

1,278,797

Of which, increases of 726,068 primary and 552,729 secondary places

► Net change since 2009/10



Net change in the number of school places since 2023/24

64,858

Of which, increases of 1,259 primary and 63,599 secondary places. This includes additional capacity revealed by the net capacity assessment programme.

► Net change since 2023/24



Primary schools at or over capacity in 2024/25

14%

Down from 16% in 2023/24 and down from a high of 23% in 2016/17

► Primary schools at or over capacity



Secondary schools at or over capacity in 2024/25

19%

Down from 24% in 2023/24 and up from a low of 14% in 2015/16. This will be affected by the capacity revealed by the net capacity assessment programme.

► Secondary schools at or over capacity



- There were 9.1 million state-funded school places reported in 2024/25: 5 million primary places and 4.1 million secondary places.
- The number of primary places increased by 1,300 (0.03%) between May 2024 and May 2025. Since May 2021, primary places have increased very little due to the decline in pupil numbers which began in 2018/19.
- The number of secondary places increased by 64,000 between May 2024 and May 2025. This is a larger change than last year as it will reflect places being added to

accommodate the recent peak in school age population which is moving through the secondary phase, and additional capacity revealed by the net capacity assessment programme.

- 15% of state-funded schools were at or in excess of capacity in 2024/25.

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About these statistics

This release publishes data reported by local authorities in England, in the annual School Capacity (SCAP) survey, as of 1 May 2025.

Information is included on:

- the numbers of primary and secondary state-funded school places in mainstream schools;
- unfilled school places and pupils in places that exceed their school's capacity;
- school sixth form capacity;
- local authority forecast pupil numbers;
- local authority planned changes to school places; and
- the Department's estimate of the future number of school places needed to meet predicted demand and future unfilled places.

This publication also includes Official Statistics in Development for special school capacity, the capacity of special educational needs (SEN) unit and resourced provision in mainstream schools, and local authority forecast demand for specialist provision.

These statistics are used by the department to estimate the future need for additional school places, to aid departmental monitoring of local authority school place sufficiency, and to support a range of policy developments and operational decisions.

Findings in this commentary are at a national level though information at regional, local authority, school, and planning area level are provided in the data files associated with this

release. Definition of [planning area](#) can be found in methodology.

In the commentary, pupil and school place numbers are rounded to two significant figures and school numbers to the nearest ten. Percentages are rounded to two significant figures. Unrounded numbers are provided in the accompanying tables and data files.

School place provision in local areas

This publication may be of interest to users who wish to see data on school place provision in their area.

To view local authority level data, please view the [featured tables](#).

To view [school level data](#), you can search for specific schools when creating tables from the school level capacity and school sixth form capacity data. School names may differ between academic years so please select all versions of the school's name to see all available data.

School capacity measures vary depending on the type of school and any exceptional circumstances. In some cases, the number of pupils on roll can be higher than the reported capacity, even though the school is comfortably accommodating all pupils. Please read the methodology, including the [definitions](#) of school capacity and schools at or over capacity, for more information.

Future school place demand in local areas

To view planning area level data, download the forecasts or place planning estimates file and filter on planning area in the geographic level column. You can find a schools' planning area code in the school level capacity file.

Please read 'School Place Planning Estimates Technical Guidance 2025', in the supporting files, for guidance on interpreting the place planning estimates. The commentary reports on 'additional need only' estimates which are provided in the place planning data file at national, regional, local authority and planning area level. A second version of estimates, 'additional need minus spare places' is also provided at local authority and planning area level only. These estimates take into account spare places and are most valid at planning area and year group level. Negative figures show estimates of future unfilled school places.

Net capacity assessment programme

Between 2023 and 2025, The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) visited government-funded mainstream secondary schools and special schools to collect data on pupil capacity as part of the department's [net capacity assessment programme \(opens in new tab\)](#). The net capacity assessment (NCA) programme was set up to ensure data on the pupil capacity of schools is accurate and up to date.

In the SCAP surveys prior to 2024/25, Local Authorities were asked to provide school net capacity as per an up-to-date net capacity assessment (NCA) for LA maintained mainstream schools and capacity as per the funding agreement for academies. In the 2024/25 SCAP survey, for all schools where an NCA has been carried out, Local Authorities were asked to report the capacity from the NCA.

Where the capacity of a school changes between one SCAP survey and the next, the reason for that change is not specifically collected as part of the SCAP Survey. For 2024/25, we therefore cannot accurately determine the capacity changes which occurred as a result of new places being added or removed and those which are the result of a new net capacity assessment having taken place.

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Current school capacity

Primary and secondary state-funded school places

Local authorities are expected to add school places where needed. These changes in school capacity are reflected in the number of school places reported in the SCAP survey as at 1 May each year. In times of population growth, the number of school places is expected to increase. Even in times of a declining population, there may still be increasing demand in some areas of the country, necessitating an increase in school places.

Overall, the number of school places has been increasing in line with the increase in pupil numbers. The increase in pupil numbers seen across the SCAP surveys are due to a large

birth cohort from 2008 to 2012, which has moved through primary and is now in secondary. The number of places started to increase nationally in 2010/11, in preparation for the increase in demand that started in 2011/12. This corresponds to the start of the school capacity data series in this publication as the first SCAP survey was run in 2009/10.

The number of places being added each year has slowed, particularly since 2021/22, as the large cohort has moved through primary and is now fully in secondary. However, places are still needed and are still being added in some areas of the country.

Nationally, between May 2024 and 2025, there has been a net increase of 1,300 primary places and 64,000 secondary places, 65,000 in total. This overall net change reflects both increases and decreases in local [capacity](#) within state-funded mainstream schools in England. This increase does not reflect the number of new school places being added, as it includes additional places revealed through the net capacity assessment programme.

The rate of primary places being added was 0.03% (1,300 places) in 2024/25, which has remained stable since 2022/23. This is after previous increases of over 2% (over 100,000 places) per year from 2012/13 to 2015/16 and of around 0.5% (around 27,000 places) per year on average from 2018/19 to 2020/21.

The number of secondary places increased by 64,000 (1.5%) between 2023/24 and 2024/25. However, the increase in the number of secondary places by 2024/25 will be affected by data sourced from the net capacity assessment programme. This increase therefore does not reflect the number of new school places being added.

Since the SCAP Survey began in 2009/10, there has been a net increase of 1.3 million school places, consisting of 730,000 primary places, and 550,000 secondary places. Most of this was added by 2016/17 for primary and by 2020/21 for secondary, in preparation for the growing pupil population in each phase.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

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Number of school places and pupils on roll in England between 2009/10 and 2024/25 by phase and academic year

	Number of pupils on roll		Number of school places	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
2024/25	4,283,709	3,632,400	4,951,383	4,115,847
2023/24	4,359,535	3,637,050	4,950,124	4,052,248
2022/23	4,393,178	3,600,575	4,949,245	4,028,801
2021/22	4,401,109	3,539,725	4,947,667	4,004,954
2020/21	4,403,235	3,469,500	4,943,111	3,962,856
2019/20	x	x	x	x
2018/19	4,439,571	3,301,023	4,896,469	3,897,512
2017/18	4,423,856	3,230,941	4,863,329	3,848,042
2016/17	4,381,270	3,197,519	4,804,157	3,811,284
2015/16	4,307,008	3,171,447	4,737,900	3,787,836
2014/15	4,210,503	3,163,191	4,633,934	3,755,545
2013/14	4,111,660	3,167,115	4,528,023	3,711,807
2012/13	4,011,425	3,191,472	4,416,208	3,637,301
2011/12	3,912,538	3,225,543	4,313,770	3,600,793
2010/11	3,845,738	3,252,983	4,253,301	3,608,971
2009/10	3,808,952	3,263,405	4,225,315	3,563,118

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[Data symbols](#) 

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Footnotes

1. Includes mainstream state schools with capacity in any of the year groups from reception to year 11 on 1 May for the relevant academic year.
2. Primary places include all reported capacity in primary and middle deemed primary schools. Capacity excludes nursery places.

[Show 4 more footnotes](#)

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School sixth form capacity

Secondary places include places in school sixth forms. In 2024/25 540,000 sixth form places were reported in 1,980 schools. The number of sixth form pupils on roll in 2024/25 is 410,000 which has remained stable since 2020/21. Sixth form numbers on roll are affected by the proportion of pupils staying on in school sixth forms as well as population changes.

The proportion of schools with unfilled sixth form places (where the number of sixth form pupils on roll are lower than the sixth form capacity) was 78% in 2024/25, which has remained stable since 2020/21. In 2024/25, 21% of schools were reported as being at or over reported sixth form capacity. See 'Current pupils in places' section for notes on schools being over capacity.

► Export options

**Sixth form places and pupils on roll in England
between 2020/21 and 2024/25**

	Number of schools with reported sixth form places	Reported sixth form places	Sixth form pupils on roll in schools with reported sixth form places
2024/25	1,979	544,667	409,915
2023/24	1,986	539,121	407,322
2022/23	1,989	538,765	409,805
2021/22	2,000	538,168	415,185
2020/21	2,006	535,357	407,060

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Footnotes

1. Number of pupils on roll for reception year group and above. Taken from the May school census for the relevant academic year, or gathered during the school capacity collection if census data was not available for a school.
2. Includes mainstream state schools with pupils in year groups 12, 13 and 14. Excludes 16-19 only establishments.

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As of July 2025, 2,232 mainstream middle, all through and secondary schools had finalised capacity data from the NCA programme. Of these, 932 (42%) had a different capacity reported in SCAP for May 2025 than was reported for May 2024. This is a proportionally larger amount of change than is usually seen for all schools. For comparison, only 12% of mainstream middle, all through and secondary schools reported a different capacity for May 2024 than was reported for May 2023.

Overall, 1,849 schools reported a different capacity for May 2025 than was reported for May 2024. These schools returned a net increase of 61,147 school places. Of these 1,849 schools, 932 (50%) had capacity data from the NCA programme, and these 932 schools are responsible for 51,748 (85%) of the net increase.

The reason for a capacity changing from one SCAP survey to the next is not specifically collected as part of the SCAP Survey. Therefore, for most of the schools which had capacity data from the NCA programme and reported a different capacity for May 2025, we do not know whether data from the net capacity assessment programme was the reason for the change in capacity. Even where it has been indicated that the change in capacity is due to data from the net capacity assessment programme, we do not know whether that change in capacity would have been reported in SCAP regardless of the net capacity assessment programme.

We can attribute 22,026 (43%) of this net increase to capacity revealed by new net capacity assessments (either carried out by the LA or as part of the net capacity assessment programme). However, some of this net increase in capacity will relate to changes to capacity which would have been reported through SCAP in May 2025 regardless of the net capacity assessment programme.

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Current pupils in places

Changing pupil numbers and the timing of school places being added or removed will impact:

- the number of schools at or over capacity,
- the number of pupils in places that exceed their school's capacity, and
- the number of unfilled places.

As places are built in advance of forecast demand, the number of unfilled places increases until those places are filled. As a large pupil cohort moves through schools, the number of schools operating over their reported capacity will increase. This does not mean schools are overcrowded.

A school is identified as at or in excess of capacity when their [pupil number on roll](#) is greater than or equal to the capacity reported in SCAP. A school's [reported capacity](#) may not fully reflect the way a school is able to operate and therefore in some cases the number of pupils on roll can be higher than the reported capacity without the school being overcrowded. Some schools choose to operate in excess of their stated capacity because they feel that they can comfortably do so, for example using non-teaching accommodation for temporary teaching space.

Schools at or over capacity

Nationally, the number of state-funded schools that were at or in excess of capacity in 2024/25 was 3,000, which equates to 15% of schools. This compares to 3,530 schools that were at or in excess of capacity in 2023/24. Particularly for secondary schools, this reduction will be affected by the additional capacity revealed through the net capacity assessment programme.

The number of state-funded primary schools that were at or in excess of capacity has remained broadly unchanged since last year at 2,350 schools in 2024/25. The proportion of primary schools at or in excess of capacity is at the lowest level since the data collection began at 14%, down from a high of 23% in 2014/15. This reflects places being added to accommodate the population bulge, which has now moved through and out of the primary phase. The vast majority (91%) of primary school that are at or in excess of capacity are operating within 10% of their reported capacity.

The number of state-funded secondary schools at or in excess of capacity was 651 in 2024/25 (19% of secondary schools). As with primary schools, the majority of over capacity secondary schools (93%) are operating within 10% of their reported capacity.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

► Export options

**Proportion of schools at or in excess of capacity in
England between 2009/10 and 2024/25**

	Number of schools at or in excess of capacity		Percentage of schools at or in excess of capacity	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
2024/25	2,353	651	14.1%	19.0%
2023/24	2,721	811	16.2%	23.7%
2022/23	2,874	787	17.1%	23.1%
2021/22	2,870	770	17.1%	22.6%
2020/21	2,785	752	16.6%	22.2%
2019/20	x	x	x	x
2018/19	3,340	562	19.9%	16.6%
2017/18	3,519	512	21.0%	15.2%
2016/17	3,826	548	22.8%	16.2%
2015/16	3,781	487	22.5%	14.4%
2014/15	3,807	500	22.7%	14.9%
2013/14	3,697	498	22.1%	15.0%
2012/13	3,514	582	20.9%	17.8%
2011/12	3,423	694	20.4%	21.3%
2010/11	3,438	837	20.4%	25.4%
2009/10	3,444	930	20.3%	28.1%

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Footnotes

1. Includes mainstream state schools with capacity in any of the year groups from reception to year 11 on 1 May for the relevant academic year.
2. Primary places include all reported capacity in primary and middle deemed primary schools. Capacity excludes nursery places.

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Pupils in places that exceed their school's capacity

Where the number on roll is higher than a school's capacity, the number of pupils in places that exceed their school's capacity is the difference between number on roll and capacity.

In total, the number of pupils in places that exceeded their school's capacity is 47,000 (0.5% of places) in May 2025. The number of pupils in places that exceeded their school's capacity has been between 47,000 (0.5%) and 60,000 (0.7%) in every academic year since 2012/13.

In primary schools, there were 18,000 pupils in places that exceed their school's capacity. This is a decrease from the 21,000 pupils in 2023/24. The proportion of pupils in places that exceed their school's capacity is 0.4%.

In secondary schools, there were 29,000 (0.7%) pupils in places that exceeded their school's capacity. This is lower than 2023/24, but this will be affected by the capacity revealed by the net capacity assessment programme.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

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**Pupils in places that exceed their school's capacity
in England between 2009/10 and 2024/25 by phase
and academic year**

	Pupils in places that exceed their school's capacity		Pupils in places that exceed their school's capacity as a percentage of total places	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
2024/25	17,732	29,007	0.4%	0.7%
2023/24	20,737	36,988	0.4%	0.9%
2022/23	21,580	37,036	0.4%	0.9%
2021/22	22,466	36,735	0.5%	0.9%
2020/21	20,930	35,438	0.4%	0.9%
2019/20	x	x	x	x
2018/19	25,481	24,915	0.5%	0.6%
2017/18	27,441	22,162	0.6%	0.6%
2016/17	29,974	24,171	0.6%	0.6%
2015/16	30,173	20,073	0.6%	0.5%
2014/15	30,539	19,790	0.7%	0.5%
2013/14	30,737	18,980	0.7%	0.5%
2012/13	30,276	23,612	0.7%	0.6%
2011/12	31,494	30,769	0.7%	0.9%
2010/11	36,845	40,256	0.9%	1.1%
2009/10	41,677	55,541	1.0%	1.6%

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Footnotes

1. Includes mainstream state schools with capacity in any of the year groups from reception to year 11 on 1 May for the relevant academic year.
2. Primary places include all reported capacity in primary and middle deemed primary schools. Capacity excludes nursery places.

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Unfilled places

A school has unfilled places if its capacity is higher than the number of pupils on roll. The number of unfilled places is the difference between the capacity and the number on roll.

Unfilled places can be evidence of local authorities having planned ahead for future need. This is recently evidenced in the number of unfilled secondary places, as local authorities increased the number of secondary places (and subsequently the number of unfilled secondary places) while the large cohort currently in secondary was in primary. As the cohort has now moved into secondary, the number of unfilled secondary places has now reduced. Unfilled places can also be attributed to the building of whole new schools, which fill up from the bottom, leaving space in the upper years until those year groups work their way through. Low or declining need for places will also contribute to the number of unfilled places.

As of May 2025, 86% of primary schools (14,390) had one or more unfilled place. This rate is the highest rate since the data collection began and reflects the continuing fall in primary aged pupils.

For secondary schools, 81% had one or more unfilled place (2,770 schools). This is

higher than 2023/24, but this will be affected by the capacity revealed by the net capacity assessment programme.

In 2024/25, there were 680,000 unfilled places in primary schools, which is the highest number of unfilled places since the data collection began in 2009/10. The number of unfilled primary places remained similar between 2009/10 and 2018/19 (around 450,000 places) and has increased steadily since 2020/21.

In secondary schools there were 510,000 unfilled places in 2024/25. This is higher than 2023/24, but this will be affected by the capacity revealed by the net capacity assessment programme.

Across both primary and secondary schools, the total number of unfilled places was 1.2 million in 2024/25 (13% of total school places available). The number and proportion of unfilled places had remained similar since 2013/14 as capacity has been added at a similar pace to school population growth. However, with primary numbers continuing to fall, secondary pupil numbers plateauing, and the net capacity assessment programme revealing additional capacity, the number of unfilled places is the highest since the SCAP survey began.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

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**Number of unfilled places in England between
2009/10 and 2024/25**

	Unfilled places		Unfilled places as a percentage of total places	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
2024/25	684,991	512,454	13.8%	12.5%
2023/24	611,326	452,186	12.3%	11.2%
2022/23	577,647	465,262	11.7%	11.5%
2021/22	569,024	501,964	11.5%	12.5%
2020/21	560,716	528,746	11.3%	13.3%
2019/20	x	x	x	x
2018/19	482,335	621,308	9.9%	15.9%
2017/18	466,824	639,167	9.6%	16.6%
2016/17	452,791	637,936	9.4%	16.7%
2015/16	461,065	636,462	9.7%	16.8%
2014/15	453,970	612,144	9.8%	16.3%
2013/14	447,100	563,672	9.9%	15.2%
2012/13	435,059	469,441	9.9%	12.9%
2011/12	432,726	406,019	10.0%	11.3%
2010/11	444,408	396,244	10.4%	11.0%
2009/10	458,040	355,254	10.8%	10.0%

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Footnotes

1. Includes mainstream state schools with capacity in any of the year groups from reception to year 11 on 1 May for the relevant academic year.
2. Primary places include all reported capacity in primary and middle deemed primary schools. Capacity excludes nursery places.

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There is variation in the percentage of unfilled school places across and within local authorities.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

 **Some rows and columns are not shown in this table as the data does not exist in the underlying file.**

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Unfilled places as a percentage of total places by local authority in 2024/25

		Primary	Secondary
North East	County Durham	22.0%	17.5%
	Darlington	14.0%	8.1%

	Darlington	11.8%	5.1%
	Gateshead	15.8%	5.9%
	Hartlepool	17.3%	13.3%
	Middlesbrough	9.6%	11.1%
	Newcastle upon Tyne	9.6%	16.2%
	North Tyneside	15.0%	14.2%
	Northumberland	26.3%	19.9%
	Redcar and Cleveland	20.0%	14.0%
	South Tyneside	11.5%	7.5%
	Stockton-on-Tees	17.4%	9.3%
	Sunderland	14.4%	17.8%
North West	Blackburn with Darwen	11.8%	8.3%
	Blackpool	11.6%	16.5%
	Bolton	3.6%	7.3%
	Bury	13.6%	10.1%
	Cheshire East	9.3%	7.9%
	Cheshire West and Chester	14.3%	11.4%
	Cumberland	19.9%	13.8%
	Halton	17.0%	23.1%
	Knowsley	9.0%	11.7%
	Lancashire	10.8%	12.1%
	Liverpool	6.7%	10.7%

Manchester	10.3%	9.9%	
Oldham	9.0%	10.3%	
Rochdale	7.1%	7.2%	
Salford	9.3%	10.2%	
Sefton	10.8%	15.0%	
St. Helens	11.9%	7.8%	
Stockport	13.2%	10.0%	
Tameside	12.1%	11.9%	
Trafford	7.7%	7.5%	
Warrington	7.3%	6.9%	
Westmorland and Furness	22.1%	20.5%	
Wigan	6.4%	12.7%	
Wirral	15.4%	13.0%	
Yorkshire and The Humber	Barnsley	9.4%	7.7%
	Bradford	11.1%	9.6%
	Calderdale	19.5%	13.1%
	Doncaster	14.5%	17.0%
	East Riding of Yorkshire	17.9%	23.5%
	Kingston upon Hull, City of	12.1%	9.9%
	Kirklees	13.2%	5.9%
	Leeds	9.5%	10.0%

	North East Lincolnshire	16.7%	16.6%
	North Lincolnshire	16.2%	14.1%
	North Yorkshire	20.9%	18.8%
	Rotherham	16.5%	14.9%
	Sheffield	9.1%	6.9%
	Wakefield	9.1%	15.3%
	York	16.6%	8.3%
East Midlands	Derby	11.3%	8.5%
	Derbyshire	16.3%	9.6%
	Leicester	6.8%	6.5%
	Leicestershire	14.6%	11.2%
	Lincolnshire	14.4%	11.4%
	North Northamptonshire	13.0%	14.4%
	Nottingham	8.0%	7.6%
	Nottinghamshire	12.4%	11.7%
	Rutland	23.6%	3.8%
	West Northamptonshire	15.5%	12.5%
West Midlands	Birmingham	9.8%	9.3%
	Coventry	4.9%	4.8%
	Dudley	8.0%	7.8%
	Herefordshire, County of	14.8%	17.2%

	Sandwell	6.1%	12.9%
	Shropshire	16.0%	13.4%
	Solihull	7.9%	12.3%
	Staffordshire	15.2%	15.8%
	Stoke-on-Trent	8.7%	9.2%
	Telford and Wrekin	9.2%	6.2%
	Walsall	6.1%	6.9%
	Warwickshire	11.2%	10.5%
	Wolverhampton	4.9%	7.8%
	Worcestershire	15.7%	15.2%
East of England	Bedford	18.1%	14.9%
	Cambridgeshire	22.0%	17.5%
	Central Bedfordshire	13.9%	14.3%
	Essex	9.7%	11.7%
	Hertfordshire	12.0%	10.4%
	Luton	10.5%	6.8%
	Norfolk	17.6%	13.5%
	Peterborough	15.1%	13.6%
	Southend-on-Sea	9.8%	9.8%
	Suffolk	17.2%	13.6%
	Thurrock	7.1%	20.0%

South East

Bracknell Forest	13.2%	14.9%
Brighton and Hove	17.5%	16.7%
Buckinghamshire	8.7%	5.3%
East Sussex	11.3%	13.1%
Hampshire	9.9%	8.5%
Isle of Wight	16.0%	16.6%
Kent	9.3%	14.2%
Medway	8.8%	14.0%
Milton Keynes	17.6%	10.4%
Oxfordshire	18.8%	17.5%
Portsmouth	8.7%	7.2%
Reading	14.2%	20.4%
Slough	7.7%	10.8%
Southampton	15.0%	7.4%
Surrey	10.7%	9.4%
West Berkshire	12.2%	11.5%
West Sussex	12.3%	10.2%
Windsor and Maidenhead	13.4%	11.5%
Wokingham	12.0%	7.6%

South West

Bath and North East Somerset	21.4%	15.2%
Bournemouth, Christchurch	13.8%	12.8%

and Poole

Bristol, City of	16.7%	9.9%
Cornwall	20.8%	19.7%
Devon	19.8%	22.6%
Dorset	20.0%	15.4%
Gloucestershire	11.5%	10.9%
Isles of Scilly	z	14.0%
North Somerset	14.7%	8.5%
Plymouth	19.3%	18.4%
Somerset	17.2%	15.2%
South Gloucestershire	11.4%	14.3%
Swindon	14.9%	17.1%
Torbay	15.6%	13.0%
Wiltshire	20.4%	16.8%
Inner London		
Camden	21.1%	21.9%
City of London	13.3%	z
Hackney	23.8%	11.7%
Hammersmith and Fulham	27.7%	12.7%
Haringey	20.0%	13.0%
Islington	22.0%	25.6%
Kensington and Chelsea	22.7%	4.5%
...

	Lambeth	32.3%	18.4%
	Lewisham	23.5%	17.5%
	Newham	19.6%	11.3%
	Southwark	25.8%	14.0%
	Tower Hamlets	16.9%	13.0%
	Wandsworth	29.4%	18.4%
	Westminster	32.4%	9.1%
Outer London	Barking and Dagenham	18.8%	19.3%
	Barnet	11.2%	10.9%
	Bexley	15.3%	15.5%
	Brent	17.4%	17.4%
	Bromley	12.0%	13.0%
	Croydon	20.3%	22.3%
	Ealing	13.1%	12.6%
	Enfield	18.5%	16.2%
	Greenwich	16.6%	10.9%
	Harrow	12.8%	5.1%
	Havering	8.2%	11.5%
	Hillingdon	20.7%	15.7%
	Hounslow	17.0%	15.8%
	Kingston upon Thames	14.2%	3.3%
	Merton	20.3%	12.6%

London	2015/16	12/13
Redbridge	11.7%	7.3%
Richmond upon Thames	19.0%	4.6%
Sutton	6.1%	4.0%
Waltham Forest	19.3%	12.7%

[Show full screen table](#)

[Data symbols](#) 

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Footnotes

1. Includes mainstream state schools with capacity in any of the year groups from reception to year 11 on 1 May for the relevant academic year.
2. Primary places include all reported capacity in primary and middle deemed primary schools. Capacity excludes nursery places.

[Show 4 more footnotes](#)

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Future demand for school places

Local authority pupil forecasts

Each local authority uses a fairly similar methodology, coupled with their own local knowledge, to generate pupil forecasts. These are 5 academic years ahead for primary and 7 academic years ahead for secondary. The forecasts reflect the number of pupils local authorities expect to provide a place for, in each year group for each academic year, in each pupil place [planning area](#).

The total anticipated number of primary pupils forecast by local authorities in England shows a decline of around 1% per year until the end of the forecast period (2029/30).

In contrast, the total number of forecast secondary school pupils is expected to continue to increase to a high of 3.6 million pupils in 2027/28. Local authorities then forecast a decline until the end of the forecast period (2031/32).

These trends are also seen in the [national pupil projections](#), however local authorities usually forecast higher numbers in total and predict that the peak will happen one year later for secondary. See '[Relationship with National Pupil Projections publication](#)' for further information on reasons for differences.

Please note there will be valid double counting in these total forecasts, because some pupils will move to a different local authority within an academic year. These pupils will need a place in both places within the same academic year. As with all forecasts, the level of accuracy is expected to reduce as forecasts are made further into the future and **care should be taken when using forecasts from the later years**.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

► Export options

Local authority pupil forecasts (includes 2024/25 actual pupil numbers) in England between 2025/26 and 2029/30 for primary and between 2025/26 and 2031/32 for secondary

Local authority pupil forecasts (includes 2024/25 actual pupil numbers)		
	Primary	Secondary
	Primary total	Secondary total
2024/25	4,363,514	3,566,044
2025/26	4,335,515	3,608,646
2026/27	4,300,424	3,634,074
2027/28	4,240,566	3,648,339
2028/29	4,190,111	3,642,696
2029/30	4,151,754	3,629,534
2030/31	no data	3,604,998
2031/32	no data	3,565,519

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[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. Number of actual pupils on roll in 2024/25 taken from January 2025 School Census.
2. Pupil forecasts are provided from 2025/26 to 2029/30 for primary (Reception to Year 6) and from 2025/26 to 2031/32 for secondary (Year 7 to Year 13).

[Show 2 more footnotes](#)

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Local authority planned changes to school places

Local authorities add and remove places to manage their school estates as necessary according to future demand. Local authority planned places are the cumulative number of places local authorities plan to add or remove in the next three academic years, at the time of the survey. They exclude places planned through DfE programmes such as centrally funded Free Schools.

Local authorities have reported a planned net increase of 37,000 places over the three year reporting period (to 2027/28). This is fewer places than the planned increase for the 3 year reporting period in SCAP 2024, again demonstrating that demand is slowing down.

► Export options

Local authority planned changes to school places in England by 2027/28

	2027/28		
	Total	Primary	Secondary
		Primary total	Secondary total
Additional places (permanent)	36,649	16,659	19,990
Bulge places (temporary additional places for large cohort)	3,164	724	2,440
Places to remove (permanent)	-8,874	-6,497	-2,377

[Show full screen table](#)

Footnotes

1. Cumulative places reported by local authorities in summer 2025 as planned to be added or permanently removed. Includes only projects with a high degree of certainty of going ahead, usually where funding has been committed.
2. Bulge places are places used to accommodate a specific large cohort. They move through the school with this cohort. Additional places are permanent places that will not move through the school with a specific cohort.

[Show 2 more footnotes](#)

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Future school places still needed (place planning)

The department use SCAP 2025 data, as well as other internal data, to produce place planning estimates up to 2029/30 for primary and 2031/32 for secondary. These show the estimated number of additional places needed to meet future predicted demand in each national curriculum year group and pupil place [planning area](#). These estimates of places needed, are in addition to the local authority planned places reported in SCAP.

The aggregate estimates as at 1 May 2025, show an estimated 26,000 primary places are

still needed across England in order to meet demand in academic year 2029/30. This is despite the expected decline in primary pupils nationally. Even in times of a declining population, there will still be increasing demand in some areas of the country. Secondary shows an estimated total of 21,000 places are still needed in order to meet demand in 2029/30.

These estimates identify place need only and do not take into account spare places. This acknowledges that pressure in one part of a local authority cannot necessarily be offset by spare places in another area of the same local authority.

Caution should be taken with interpretation of these estimates. Further information on how these estimates are calculated, how to interpret them and their limitations is provided in the technical guide to the school place planning estimates accompanying this release (see supporting files under 'Explore data and files').

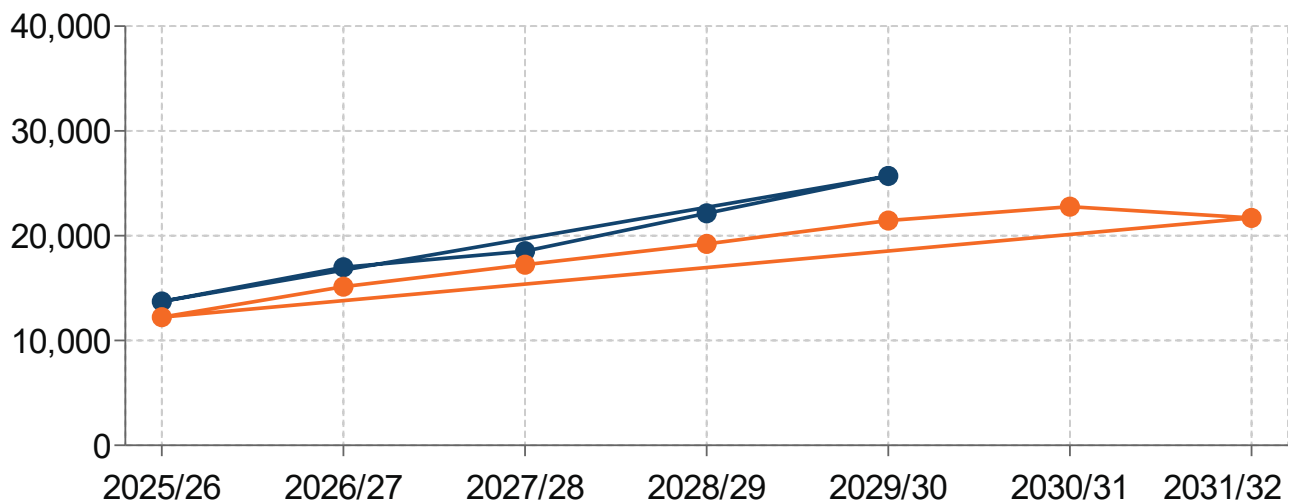
Chart

Table

► Export options

Estimated number of places needed: Additional need only in England between 2025/26 and 2031/32

- Primary
- Secondary



Footnotes

1. Estimates are based on capacity as at 1 May 2025, forecasts and planned changes to school capacity as reported during summer 2025, supplemented with DFE internal data on centrally funded programmes due to add or remove school places. Estimates are calculated at planning area and year group and then aggregated.
2. Estimates are provided from 2025/26 to 2029/30 for primary (Reception to Year 6) and from 2025/26 to 2031/32 for secondary (Year 7 to Year 11).

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

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Special educational needs provision – official statistics in development

Official statistics in development

Data on special educational needs (SEN) provision was collected for the first time in SCAP in 2023 to help support both the Department for Education (DfE) and the local government sector to better identify the location and number of specialist school places that may be needed in future.

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account of the methods used, and the accuracy, reliability, and value of the data are set out in the [methodology document](#). As a new data collection, we expect the quality of the data returns to improve over time as the collection becomes established, however it should be noted that all local authorities returned data as requested.

We welcome user feedback on these statistics via the details in the “contact us” section below.

Capacity

Local authorities provided the capacity, as at May 2025, of special schools plus SEN units and resourced provision in mainstream schools, as defined in the [data collection guidance \(opens in new tab\)](#). This includes post-16 capacity in secondary specialist provision, where appropriate, and does not include independent or alternative provision.

Capacity reported in SCAP may not reflect the current pupils on roll in a school due to the different and changing needs that a school caters for. Please note that the national aggregate hides the local variations as specialist provision is not uniform across the country or within each local authority. This section provides national level indicators, and data is available at school, local authority and regional level in the underlying data.

Special Schools

Local authorities reported [capacity](#) at May 2025 for 1,100 special schools; 190 primary, 240 secondary, and 670 all through and middle special schools. This is an increase of 12 schools compared to May 2024. This includes local authority maintained special schools, special academies, and non-maintained special schools.

There were 160,000 special school places reported; 63,000 primary places and 96,000 secondary places in primary, secondary, and all-through schools. This is an increase of 1,600 primary places and 3,300 secondary places, which represents data quality improvements as well as added places.

The corresponding [pupil numbers on roll](#) from the May 2025 school census for these special school places were around 170,000 pupils in total; 64,000 in primary and 105,000 in secondary. This means that there are approximately 11,000 more pupils on roll in special schools than reported capacity. This is due to the number of schools at or over capacity (around two thirds), but also may be a result of the way capacity has been

measured which does not take account of type of need. Caution should be taken when comparing pupils and capacity by phase, as any differences may be a result of how the total capacity of all-through schools has been apportioned between the primary and secondary phases.

SEN units and resourced provision in mainstream schools

Local authorities reported SEN unit and resourced provision capacity at May 2025 for 1,920 mainstream schools (local authority maintained and academies); 1,260 primary, 610 secondary, and 40 all-through schools.

There were 10,000 places in SEN units in mainstream schools reported; 6,900 primary places and 3,100 secondary places. There were 22,000 places in resourced provision in mainstream schools reported; 13,000 primary places and 9,000 secondary places.

The number of schools reported to have SEN unit or resourced provision capacity has increased since the last survey, which represents increased coverage as well as added places.

There are no corresponding pupil numbers on roll in SEN units and resourced provision available from the published school census.

Local Authority forecasts

Local authorities provided forecasts of the number of pupils resident in the LA who are expected to have an EHC plan and who require a place in specialist provision. These forecasts cover the following types of provision that these pupils are expected to need a place in.

- SEN units and resourced provision in mainstream schools
- State-funded special schools (LA maintained schools, special academies, and non-maintained special schools)
- Independent schools (independent schools and independent special schools)
- Alternative provision (pupil referral units, alternative provision academies and any other alternative provision)

The [Education, health and care plans, Reporting year 2025](#) and the [Special educational needs in England, Academic year 2024/25](#) publications both contain information about pupils with special educational needs. The local authority forecasts in this publication are a

subset of these populations, as they relate to only those with EHC plans who need a place in specialist provision and are of compulsory school age (year groups R to 11). Like for like comparisons cannot be made directly, but the data in these two publications provide a picture of historical trends that are useful for context.

Capacity data cannot be used with forecast data to calculate future additional places needed. This is for a number of reasons.

- Forecasts do not capture cross-border placements, whereas capacity data will reflect these.
- Data is not collected on LA planned capacity changes.
- Capacity data are not available for independent or alternative provision, which are covered by the forecasts.
- Total secondary capacity includes post-16 where appropriate, which is not covered by the forecasts.

The total anticipated number of pupils in years R to 11 with an EHC plan that will need a place in specialist provision is forecast by local authorities to be 260,000 in 2025/26. Local authorities forecast annual growth to gradually slow from 6.8% by 2025/26 to 4.2% by 2029/30, resulting in a forecast of 310,000 by 2029/30.

The fact that the number of pupils with an EHC plan that need a place in specialist provision is forecast to grow at the same time that the school age population is forecast to decline (primary) or level off (secondary), implies that the proportion of pupils with an EHC plan that need a place in specialist provision is forecast to increase. Although not directly comparable due to differing age group coverage, this is in line with the current trend in the overall [EHC plan rate](#), which has been increasing year on year since 2016. This information was collected in the summer of 2025 and pre-dates the department's announced reforms to Special Education Needs.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

► Export options

Local authority forecasts of pupils with an EHC plan in England that will require a place in specialist provision, from 2025/26 to 2029/30 for primary and from 2025/26 to 2031/32 for secondary

	Local authority pupil forecasts		
	Total	Primary	Secondary
2024/25	z	z	z
2025/26	255,378	110,307	145,071
2026/27	272,745	117,866	154,879
2027/28	287,611	123,863	163,748
2028/29	299,800	128,757	171,043
2029/30	312,251	133,157	179,094
2030/31	no data	no data	186,472
2031/32	no data	no data	194,008

[Show full screen table](#)

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. Pupil forecasts are provided from 2025/26 to 2029/30 for primary (Reception to Year 6) and from 2025/26 to 2031/32 for secondary (Year 7 to Year 11).

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Use our table tool to explore this data.

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Comparison to other statistics

Comparison to other statistics

The total national level forecasts of demand for school places in this release will differ from the national pupil projections published annually by the Department for Education due to methodological and timing reasons. This publication includes local authorities' own forecasts of future pupil numbers in each of their local areas, incorporating their own local-level information. The department's main pupil projections are produced at national level only within the department using a set methodology. They are published annually as an [official statistical release](#). See '[Relationship with National Pupil Projections publication](#)' for more information.

The [Education, health and care plans, Reporting year 2025](#) and the [Special educational needs in England, Academic year 2024/25](#) publications both contain information about pupils with special educational needs. The data on capacity and forecasts in this publication are a subset of these populations due to the age groups and provision types asked about in SCAP. Like for like comparisons cannot be made directly, but the data in these two publications provide a picture of historical trends that are useful for context.

Capacity data in this publication may differ to other sources due to different methods of measurement, the timing of measurements, and/or the types of need a school caters for.

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Contact us

If you have a specific enquiry about School capacity statistics and data:

Pupil Place Planning team

Email: SCAP.PPP@education.gov.uk

Contact name: Robert Miller

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:

Phone: 0370 000 2288

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