



Department
for Education

Statistical First Release

Secondary and primary school applications and offers: March to April 2015

Reference	SFR 17/2015
Date	16 June 2015
Coverage	England
Theme	Children, Education and Skills
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Internet	School applications data series

84.2% The proportion of applicants who were offered a place at their first choice of secondary school, down 1.0 percentage points from 85.2% in 2014.

96.4% The proportion of applicants receiving an offer of any of their preferred schools at secondary level, down 0.4 percentage points from 96.8% in 2014.

87.8% The proportion of applicants to primary school offered a place at their first choice of school, virtually unchanged from 87.7% in 2014.

96.5% The proportion who received a preferred offer at primary level. This was also virtually unchanged from 2014 when 96.4 per cent were offered one of their preferred schools.

2.3% Increase in the number of applications received at secondary level in 2015 compared to 2014. At primary level, the increase was 2.0%.

1. Results for secondary schools

This note sets out details of the number of applications received for a school place and the proportion of offers received in relation to preferences expressed (broken down into offers against first, second, third preferences, one of the top three preferences and so on) at Local Authority (LA), regional and England level. The secondary school figures have been collected since 2008 and come from the application and offer process undertaken by the LAs to enable them to send out offers of a place in a secondary school to all applicants on the national offer day which is 1 March (or the next working day, when applicable).

The headline figures for the proportion of children receiving their first preference or a preferred offer are given above. However, the data contains more information such as the number of applications made, the proportion of children for whom a preferred offer was not received and whether the applicants were provided with offers within or outside their home LA.

The number of applications has increased since 2014	The number of applications for a place in secondary school increased for the second successive year, by 2.3% from 521,274 in 2014 to 533,314. This followed a 4.3% increase between 2013 and 2014. See table A (below) for a time series of the number of applications and key preference rates.
First preferences are less likely to be met in London	As in previous years, London had the lowest number of applicants receiving their first preference offer, at 68.9%, down 1.3 percentage points on 2014. 2015 LA level results for the proportion of first preferences met by Inner London authorities ranged from 55.3% to 74.9%, and for Outer London from 62.8% to 77.6%
There is also a range of first preference proportions in regions outside London	Outside London, the lowest regional rate of first preferences being met was in the West Midlands, at 81.5%. The highest rate was in the North East, where 92.6% of applicants were offered their first preference school.
Offers were made in the absence of applications where places were needed	LAs made a total of 2,494 secondary school place offers to children for whom an application was not made, but who the LA were aware would need a school place. This was a small increase on 2,300 in 2014.

Table A: Time series of key secondary preference rates, England

Entry into academic year	% made 1st preference offer	% made 1 of top 3 preferences	% made offer of any preferred school	Number of applications
2008/09	82.0	94.0	95.5	568,723
2009/10	83.2	94.6	96.2	546,744
2010/11	83.2	94.9	96.6	529,645
2011/12	84.6	95.6	97.2	512,193
2012/13	85.3	95.9	97.6	503,734
2013/14	86.7	96.5	97.8	499,968
2014/15	85.2	95.5	96.8	521,274
2015/16	84.2	95.0	96.4	533,314

2. Primary results

In 2014, the department collected data for the first time on primary applications and offers based on the new primary national offer day of 16 April. Exactly the same information as for secondary applications was gathered from the LAs, but relating to applications for entry into the reception year of state-funded primary schools in England.

This year we are able to compare figures for 2015 against those seen in 2014, and to start a time series.

The proportion of first preferences for primary places met in 2015 was little changed	The rate of making first preference offers of primary school places for 2015 was 87.8%, virtually unchanged from the figure of 87.7% in 2014. See table B (below) for a time series of the key preference rates and the number of applications.
The number of applications for primary places increased	The recent increase in numbers of primary school pupils is well documented ¹ . The increase in the number of applications for a primary school place from 623,526 in 2014 to 636,279 (an increase of 2.0%) this year reflects this trend.
The proportion of first preference offers made in London has increased	In London, 82.1% of applications received an offer of a place at their first preference school, an improvement of 1.1% on 2014 (81.1%). For primary applications the London results are much closer to the England average than is the case at secondary level. However, at LA level 2015 results vary more widely than for secondary applications, with first preference rates for Inner London ranging from 59.0% to 86.9%, and for Outer London from 78.5% to 90.7%
There is also a range of first preference proportions in regions outside London	As for secondary applications, the North East was the region with the highest first preference rate, with 91.9% offered their first choice of primary school. The South East had the lowest first preference rate with 86.2% offered their first preference primary school.
There were only a few cases of offers being made where pupils needed a place but no applications were received.	Fewer offers than at secondary level were made in cases where there had not been an application. In 2015, 631 offers of a primary place were made to children for whom an application was not received, but who the LA were aware would need a school place.

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https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/433680/SFR16_2015_Main_T_ext.pdf, page 3.

Table B: Key primary preference rates, England

Entry into academic year	% made 1st preference offer	% made 1 of top 3 preferences	% made offer of any preferred school	Number of applications
2014/15	87.7	95.7	96.4	623,526
2015/16	87.8	95.9	96.5	636,279

3. List of tables

The following tables are available in excel format on the department's statistics website: [School applications data series](#)

- 1 Applications made to local authorities in England and offers made on National Offer Day for entry into secondary schools at the start of academic year 2015/16.
- 2 Applications made to local authorities in England and offers made on National Offer Day for entry into primary schools at the start of academic year 2015/16.

When reviewing the tables, please note the following:

We preserve confidentiality	The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires we take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality. The tables in this SFR have been analysed and we are satisfied that no suppression is required to preserve the confidentiality of the applicants for school places.
We have tried to make the tables clearer for the reader	In order to make the main tables easier to read, some figures have been moved to the underlying data tables. These are the percentage of applications which are online and the NC year of admission (i.e. the normal curriculum year of entry to schools in that phase in that LA). In addition the percentage of applicants not made an offer is provided (rather than having to be calculated).
How the applicants are included in the preference rates	The percentages for those provided with any preferred offer, those offered a non-preferred school and those made no offer together sum to 100 per cent of the applicants. Offers made to non-applicants are not included in any of these rates.
What is shown by the "total places" figure	This figure tells us how many places the LA has in the first year of entry of either primary schools or secondary schools. This includes places in mainstream schools only, for example not places in Pupil Referral Units, for either reception year (for primary schools) or for the main entry year (usually year 7, but sometimes year 9) for secondary schools.

4. Background: interpretation of the figures

4.1 The figures are based on the offers sent out by LAs on the respective national offer days. The final numbers of pupils starting in specific schools could be different due to late applicants, refusal of offers, subsequent offers made via a second offer round or via the schools' waiting lists, or successful appeals. Revised figures incorporating any subsequent changes are not collected or published.

4.2 If an LA is not able to make an offer of a preferred school, in most cases they offer a place at an alternative school. Some LAs, however, chose instead to send the applicant a list of schools with available places and invite them to state which of these schools they would prefer their child to go to. These incidences are recorded as the applicant receiving no offer. A total of eight LAs at secondary level and six at primary level made no alternative offers on national offer day to applicants to whom they were not able to make an offer of one of their preferred schools.

4.3 The percentages for offers made of schools within or outside the LA are calculated on the basis of all offers, including those made to non-applicants (see table notes).

4.4 In some cases an application was recorded by both the home LA (to whom the application was made) and also by the LA within which the school in which a place was offered is based. Only the Home LA, to whom the applicant sent their form, should record the application and offer. Therefore the duplicate record submitted by the LA in which the school is based has been removed.

4.5 The LAs were asked not to provide data on school places offered to children with statements of special educational needs (SEN), since the parents of these children were not required to apply for a school place. However, there are a number of applications where special schools were amongst the preferences stated and, in some cases, a special school has been offered. It is presumed these are offers to SEN children who do not have a statement.

4.6 Applications listing preferences and offers of only private schools were removed. Also removed were records of offers to schools which could not be identified from the school census, Edubase, or via one of the additional 'dummy' school codes used to identify new schools or split entries (see below).

4.7 At secondary level the application is for the main entry point into secondary school in that LA. This is usually year 7 but a small number of LAs have a main entry point in year 9 and this is what they report on. For LAs with more than one entry point, the intake with the largest number of places available is the one that is reported.

4.8 Places at schools such as UTCs and Studio Schools, whose intake is in year 10 (at age 14) are not allocated via the co-ordinated admissions process and therefore are not included in these figures.

4.9 Some schools have two entry routes. At primary school this is generally a school with a single school code but with two sites, each of which can be applied for separately. At secondary level the two routes are either a school with day and boarding places, or a school with a number of places reserved for those passing music or language tests. In these cases

parents can apply for both routes (e.g. for both sites of a split-site primary school), so a 'dummy' school code is used to identify the second option for each affected school.

4.10 All mainstream state-funded schools, including academies, are included. However, new opener free schools can have a rapid set-up process and may not be ready in time to make their offers within the LA co-ordinated exercise. Therefore, for their first year of operation only, free schools may make offers directly and those that do so will be excluded from these figures. In their second year of operation, they must make offers within the LA co-ordination process.

4.12 Other very small adjustments have been made to the source data as required to ensure that we provide as full and accurate a picture of the application and offer process as possible (for example, removing the second example where two offers have been recorded for one applicant, causing double counting).

4.13 The Isles of Scilly LA has one school which takes pupils between the ages of 3 and 16. Parents are not required to complete an application form and there is no competition for a place at the school. Therefore this LA has been omitted from both tables as preference rates cannot be calculated.

5. Background: the admissions process

Each LA runs the coordinated admissions process for all state-funded schools in its area. It receives applications for all children resident in its area, including for those children who wish to apply to schools in another LA. The LAs coordinate with each other to ensure that all applications for schools outside the home LA are received by, and included in, the coordination exercise of the LA in which the school is based. However, the applications are in all cases counted within these tables by the LA to whom the application is made.

Parents submit their application on a single form returned to their home LA, listing their preferred schools in order of preference.

LAs must allow parents to express at least three preferences at each level (primary and secondary). In practice, different LAs allow parents to express between three and six preferences. The number of preferences allowed can vary at primary and secondary level.

Applications for each school are ranked against the school's published priority and oversubscription criteria by the LA responsible for that school. Where a child can be offered a place at more than one of their preferred schools, they are offered the school listed as the highest preference.

LAs must publish information on the admissions criteria of schools in their area including data on volume of applications for the available places in previous years (i.e. whether they were oversubscribed in those years).

LAs send parents a single offer of a school place on national offer day, which is the 1 March (or next working day) for secondary offers and 16 April for primary offers.

Parents are entitled to appeal to the relevant admission authority against a refusal to offer a place. These appeals are not reported in this publication. Figures for appeals lodged, heard and the appeal result relating to entry into the start of the 2014/15 academic year will be published in July on the [website](#).

6. Background: changes to the collection and publication

Data on primary preferences has been collected	The introduction of a primary national offer day and changes to the relevant legislation allowed the department to collect data at both primary and secondary level for the first time in 2014.
A table showing primary preferences is now included	A second table detailing primary preference rates was therefore included in the SFR from 2014 onwards. It is the same format as the secondary level table.
Data were provided at pupil level	Both secondary and primary data were gathered from LAs at pupil level and this has been aggregated by the department into LA level figures. Cleaning of the data prior to aggregation may cause differences between the figures contained in this publication and any released by the LAs themselves close to the respective national offer days.
School level data are to be made available	The gathering of the data at pupil level allows us to produce school level figures of the number of applications received and the preference level of offers made. This data will shortly be made available by the department.
Secondary level data can be compared with previous years	This is the eighth year that secondary level preference rates have been gathered and published, allowing comparisons to be made over time. A five-year time series of key figures at England level has been provided above and all of the previous data can be found on the department's website .

7. Got a query? Like to give feedback?

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This document is also available from our website at : [School applications data series](#)