



Department
for Education



Statistical First Release

Special educational needs in England: January 2015

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Internet	Statistics: special educational needs (SEN)

15.4% of pupils in schools in England have identified special educational needs (equating to 1,301,445 pupils). This has been decreasing since 2010 (21.1%) and is a fall of 2.5 percentage points since last year. This decrease is due to a decrease in SEN without a statement or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

2.8% of pupils in schools in England have statements of SEN or an EHC plan (equating to 236,165 pupils). This has remained at 2.8% since 2007.

23.8% of pupils with a primary need were recorded as having 'Moderate Learning Difficulty' as their primary need – the most common primary need.

This publication is based on data collected in the January 2015 School Census. Previously this publication also included data collected in the SEN2 return from local authorities on the assessment and placement of pupils with new statements of SEN or EHC plans. In 2015 the SEN2 information was published separately on 21 May in SFR 14/2015 Statements of **SEN and EHC plans: England 2015**. The publication of SEN2 data was brought forward in 2015 to allow timely access to data on the new EHC plans.

A National Statistics publication

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

1. Background and context

This statistical first release (SFR) publishes data from the January 2015 school census on pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and information about special schools in England. This SFR also provides data on the characteristics of pupils by their SEN provision.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Reforms

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provisions in the Children and Families Act 2014 were introduced on 1 September 2014.

From September, any children or young people who are newly referred to a local authority for assessment are considered under the new EHC plan assessment process. The legal test of when a child or young person requires an EHC plan remains the same as that for a statement under the Education Act 1996.

In addition, the previous 'School Action' and 'School Action Plus' categories were replaced by a new category 'SEN support' it is expected that all transfers to this category should take place during the 2014/15 academic year.

See the [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25](#) for more detailed information on the reforms. The Code of Practice provides improved guidance to help schools and others more accurately identify children with SEN.

[Guides](#) are available to support education settings to understand their statutory duties and responsibilities under the reforms in the Children and Families Act 2014 in relation to children in their care who have or may have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). Guides are also available for children, young people, their families and carers.

Pupils with SEN are currently categorised as follows:

SEN support	<p>Extra or different help is given from that provided as part of the school's usual curriculum. The class teacher and SEN Coordinator (SENCO) may receive advice or support from outside specialists.</p> <p>This category replaces the former 'School Action' and 'School Action Plus' categories.</p>
Statement/ EHC plan	<p>A pupil has a statement of SEN or an EHC plan when a formal assessment has been made. A document is in place that sets out the child's needs and the extra help they should receive.</p> <p>Transferring children with statements to EHC plans will be phased and timescales set out in Transition to the new 0 to 25 special educational needs and disability system: Departmental advice for local authorities and their partners (March 2015).</p>

2. Quality of the data

The January 2015 school census return contains data collected following the implementation of the new SEND system which came into effect from September 2014. There have been some changes to the data items collected compared to previous years which should be taken into consideration when looking at the time series.

The 'Quality, uses and methodology' document published alongside this SFR contains more information on the quality of the data.

3. Pupils with SEN in schools (Tables 1A-1C)

The number of pupils with SEN has declined since 2010 and there was a steeper drop in 2015

There has been a decline in the proportion with SEN since 2010 when 21.1% of pupils had SEN. In January 2015 there was a steeper drop and the number of pupils with SEN decreased from 1.49 million pupils (17.9%) in January 2014 to 1.30 million pupils (15.4%) in January 2015.

This has occurred because the number of children with SEN without statements/ EHC plans has declined which may be due to more accurate identification of those with SEN following implementation of the SEND reforms.

Proportion of children with a statement of SEN/ EHC plan has remained at 2.8% since 2007

The proportion of pupils with a statement/ EHC plan has remained at 2.8% since 2007. In 2015 there was an increase from 2014 of 3,975 in the number of pupils with a statement/ EHC plan to 236,165.

Number of pupils with SEN without a statement/ EHC plan (SEN support) has fallen since 2010

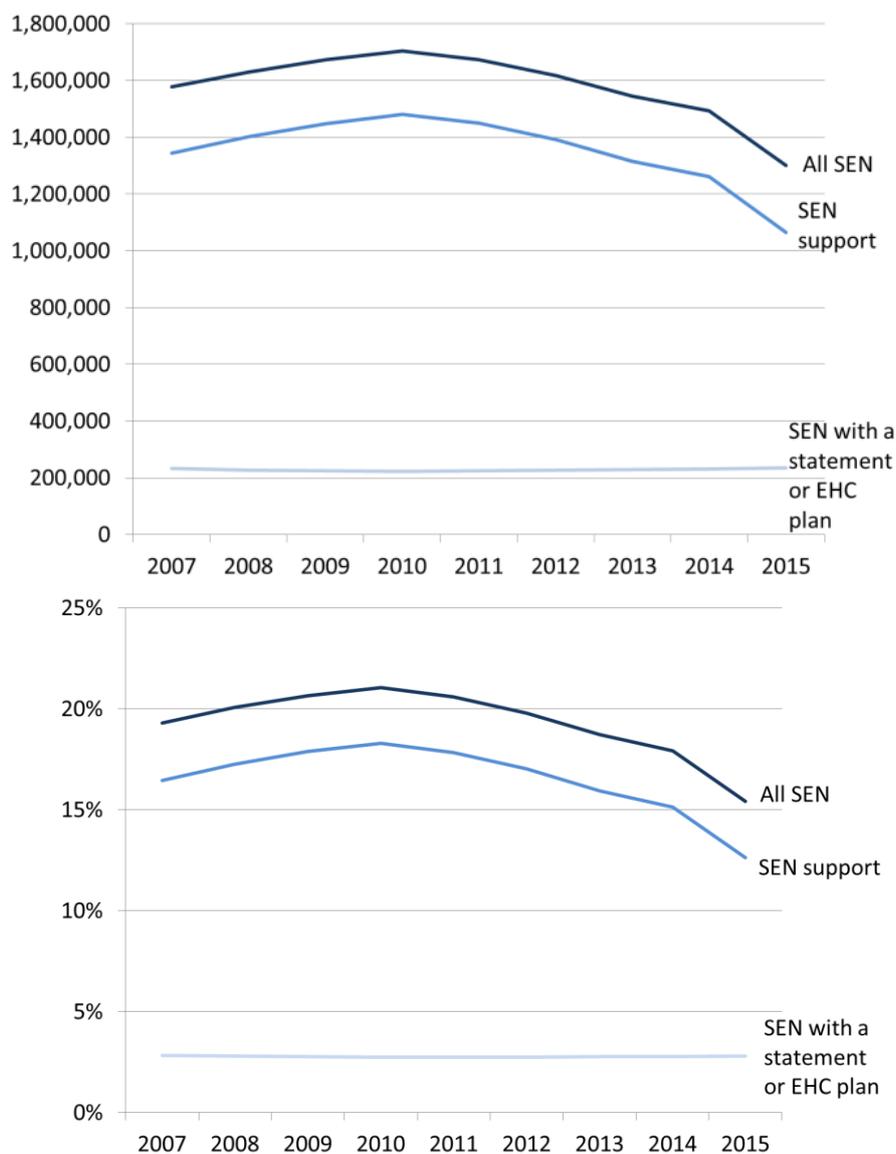
After an increase between 2007 and 2010, the percentage of pupils with SEN without statements/ EHC plans has fallen for the fifth year in a row, from 18.3% in 2010 to 12.6% in 2015.

The decline since 2010 in the number of children with SEN could be as the result of more accurate identification of those children who have SEN and those who do not. This may have been as a consequence of the [2010 Ofsted Special Educational Needs and Disability review](#) which found that a quarter of all children identified with SEN, and half of the children at School Action, did not have SEN.

It is possible that the implementation of the SEND reforms in September 2014 has also led to more accurate identification which has led to the steep decline in the number with SEN in January 2015.

Chart A: Number and percentage of pupils with SEN in all schools in England, 2007-2015

Proportion of pupils with SEN without a statement/ EHC plan falls which may be due to more accurate identification of those with SEN following implementation of the SEND reforms whilst those with a statement or EHC plan shows no change



4. Type of Primary Need (Table 8)

Coverage

Primary need is collected for those pupils on SEN support or with a statement of SEN/ EHC plan. The coverage for 2015 is different to previous years – pupils who were formerly School Action but have transferred to SEN support are now required to provide a type of need.

Classification changes

There have been changes to the classification of type of need in 2015: the previous code of 'Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)' has been removed. A new code 'Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)' has been introduced, although this shouldn't be a direct replacement. The code 'SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need' was also introduced in 2015.

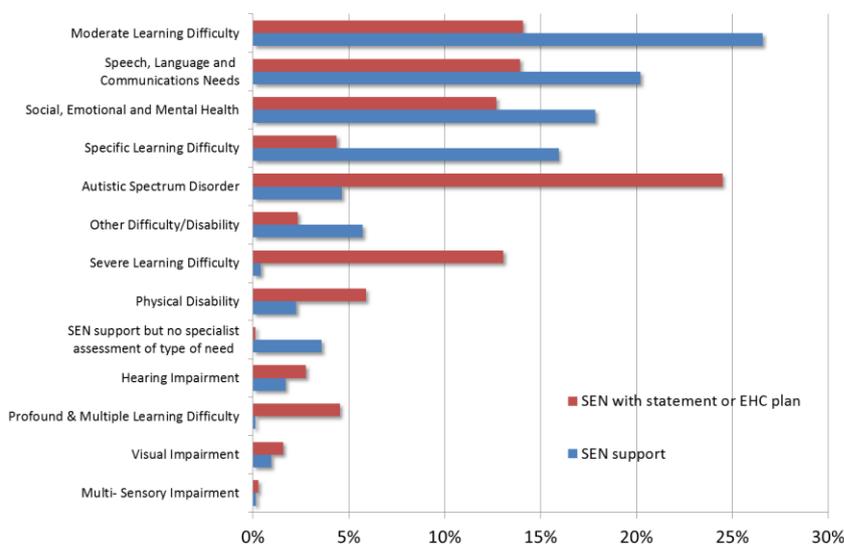
Due to the changes in coverage and classification, it is not possible to produce a direct comparison with data for previous years.

Moderate learning difficulty was the most common type of need 23.8% of pupils with a primary need recorded in January 2015 had this type of need.

Autistic spectrum disorder was the most common need for those with a statement or EHC plan 24.5% of pupils with a statement or EHC plan in January 2015 had their primary need recorded as this type.

Chart B: Proportion of pupils with statements/ EHC plans and SEN support by primary type of need, January 2015

Autistic Spectrum Disorder is the most common primary need amongst pupils with Statements/ EHC plans



5. Age and Gender (Table 3d)

SEN remains more prevalent in boys

Across all age groups and within state-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools 16.0% of boys are SEN support compared to 9.2% for girls. This is down from last year when 19.2% of boys and 11.4% of girls had SEN without statements. The gender differences for those with statements or EHC plans remains similar to previous years with 4.1% of boys with a statement or EHC plan compared to 1.6% of girls.

Older age groups are more likely to have statement of SEN/ EHC plan

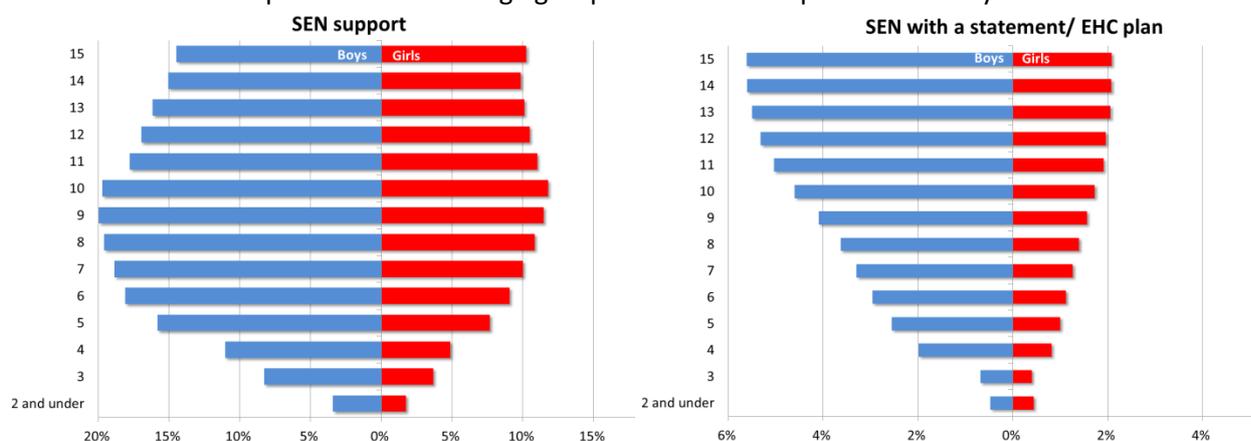
Those aged 14 and 15 at the 31 August 2014 are most likely to have a statement of SEN/ EHC plan (3.9%). This is consistent with previous years.

Likelihood of having SEN support peaks around age 9 and 10

The proportion of 9 and 10 year olds who have SEN support is 15.8%; these age groups have consistently had highest rates of SEN in recent years. The decline in rates of SEN in January 2015 was highest for 12 year olds, with a fall of 4.1 percentage points compared to a fall of 2.7 percentage points for all pupils.

Chart C: Proportion with SEN by age and gender in state-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools, January 2015

Statements are more prevalent in older age groups and SEN more prevalent in boys



6. Other characteristics (Table 5 and Table 6D)

Pupils with SEN are much more likely to be eligible for free school meals

Pupils with SEN are more than twice as likely to be eligible for free school meals than those without SEN (28.2% compared to 12.8%).

Black pupils, Gypsy/Roma & Travellers of Irish heritage have seen the largest drop in rates of SEN support

Between January 2014 and January 2015 the percentage of Black pupils with SEN support fell by 4.0 percentage points compared to the overall decline of 3.0 percentage points. (The smaller groups of Travellers of Irish heritage saw a fall of 9.1 percentage points and Gypsy / Roma fell by 6.4 percentage points).

7. List of tables

The following tables are available in excel format on the department's statistics website: [Special Educational Needs Statistics](#).

All tables relate to England at January 2015 unless otherwise stated.

Pupils with SEN

- 1A All schools: Pupils with statements of SEN or EHC plans, January 2007 to 2015
- 1B All schools: Pupils with SEN support – SEN without statements or EHC plans, January 2007 to 2015
- 1C All schools: Pupils with SEN, January 2007 to 2015
- 1D Academies: Pupils with special educational needs, January 2015

SEN by school type

- 2A State-funded primary schools: Number of schools by percentage of pupils with SEN by region
- 2B State-funded secondary schools: Number of schools by percentage of pupils with SEN by region

SEN by age and gender

- 3A State-funded primary schools: Number of pupils with SEN by age and gender
- 3B State-funded secondary schools: Number of pupils with SEN by age and gender
- 3C Special schools: Number of pupils with SEN by age and gender
- 3D State-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools: Number of pupils with SEN by age and gender

SEN by national curriculum year group

- 4A State-funded primary schools: Number of pupils with SEN by national curriculum year group
- 4B State-funded secondary schools: Number of pupils with SEN by national curriculum year group
- 4C Special schools: Number of pupils with SEN by national curriculum year group

- 4D State-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools: Number of pupils with SEN by national curriculum year group

SEN by free school meal status

- 5 State-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools: Number and percentage of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals by SEN provision

SEN by ethnicity

- 6A State-funded primary schools: Number of pupils with SEN by ethnic group
- 6B State-funded secondary schools: Number of pupils with SEN by ethnic group
- 6C Special schools: Number of pupils with SEN by ethnic group
- 6D State-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools: Number of pupils with SEN by ethnic group

SEN by first language

- 7 State-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools: Number and percentage of pupils with SEN by first language

SEN by primary type of need

- 8 State-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools: Number and percentage of pupils by primary type of need

Special schools

- 9 Special schools: Types of provision for which schools have been approved
- 10A Special schools: Number of schools by size
- 10B Special schools: Number of pupils by the size of their school

List of additional tables – Local Authority data

All tables relate to England at January 2015 unless otherwise stated.

Pupils with SEN, based upon where the pupil attends school

- 11A All schools: Pupils with SEN statement/ EHC plan, based on where the pupil attends school, January 2007 to 2015
- 11B All schools: Pupils with SEN support, based on where the pupil attends school, January 2009 to 2015
- 12 State-funded primary schools: Number of pupils with SEN, based on where the pupil attends school
- 13 State-funded secondary schools: Number of pupils with SEN, based on where the pupil attends school
- 14 All schools: number of pupils with SEN, based on where the pupil attends school

Pupils by type of need

- 15 State-funded primary schools: Number and percentage of pupils with SEN by primary type of need
- 16 State-funded secondary schools: Number and percentage of pupils with SEN by primary type of need
- 17 Special schools: Number and percentage of pupils with SEN by primary type of need

Pupils with SEN attending SEN units or in resourced provision

- 18 State-funded primary schools: Number and percentage of pupils with SEN attending SEN units or placed in resourced provision
- 19 State-funded secondary schools: Number and percentage of pupils with SEN attending SEN units or placed in resourced provision

List of additional tables – by type of need

All tables relate to state-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools in England at January 2015.

Pupils with SEN by primary type of need

- A Number and percentage of pupils with SEN by gender and primary type of need
- B1 Number and percentage of pupils with SEN support by age and primary type of need
- B2 Number and percentage of pupils with SEN statement/ EHC plan by age and primary type of need
- C1 Number and percentage of pupils with SEN support by ethnic group and primary type of need
- C2 Number and percentage of pupils with SEN statement/ EHC plan by ethnic group and primary type of need
- D Number and percentage of pupils with SEN by free school meal eligibility and primary type of need

- E1 Number and percentage of pupils with SEN support by national curriculum year group and primary type of need
- E2 Number and percentage of pupils with SEN statement/ EHC plan by national curriculum year group and primary type of need
- F Number and percentage of pupils with SEN by first language and primary type of need
- G1 Number and percentage of pupils with SEN support by primary type of need and secondary type of need
- G2 Number and percentage of pupils with SEN statement/ EHC plan by primary type of need and secondary type of need



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