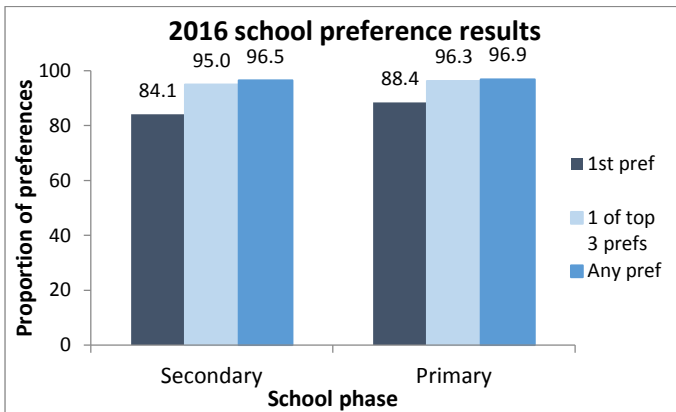




SFR 19/2016, 14 June 2016

## The majority of applicants for a school place received a preferred offer



In 2016 84.1% of applicants for a **secondary** school place received an offer of their first preference school. 95.0% received an offer of one of their top three preferences.

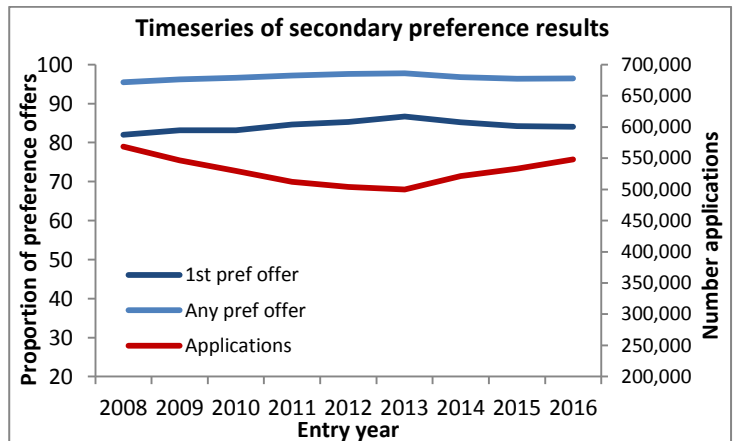
At **primary** level, 88.4% of applicants received an offer of their first choice school, and 96.3% received an offer of one of their top three preferences.

## There has been a continued increase in applications for secondary school places

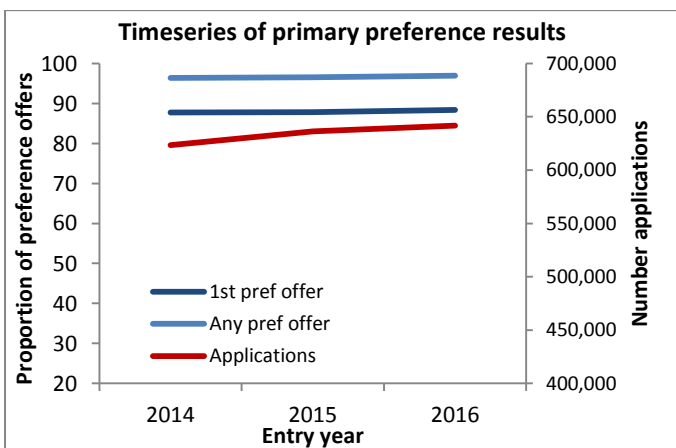
In 2016 548,006 applications for a secondary school place were received, an increase of 2.8% on 2015.

Despite the increase, the proportion of first preference offers remained stable at 84.1%, compared to 84.2% in 2015. The proportion receiving an offer of any of their preferences was also stable, at 96.4% in 2015 and 96.5% in 2016.

The number of applications was the highest received since 2008 (568,723).



## Applications for primary places also increased, but by a smaller amount



Applications for a primary school place increased by a smaller proportion than at secondary level, with 0.8% more applications than in 2015 (641,572 in total).

Despite the increase in pupils, the proportion of primary applicants who received an offer of their first choice school increased from 87.8% in 2015 to 88.4%. The proportion receiving an offer of any of their preferences increased slightly from 96.5% to 96.9%.

Primary level data has only been collected since the introduction of a primary national offer day in 2014.

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## About this release

This statistical first release (SFR) provides the number of offers made to applicants for both secondary and primary school places and the proportion which have received preferred offers (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> preference etc).

The data is collected from local authorities, where it is produced as part of the annual application and offer process for applicants requiring a place to start at secondary or at primary school in September 2016.

The offers were made, and data collected, based on the national offer days of 1 March 2016 (secondary) and 18 April 2016 (primary).

## In this publication

The following documents are included as part of this SFR:

Local authority tables (Excel .xls)

Underlying data (open format .csv and metadata .txt)

An accompanying quality and methodology information document provides information on the data source, the coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data.

## Feedback

We are changing how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at [school.preference@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:school.preference@education.gsi.gov.uk).

## 1. Secondary results

These figures come from the application and offer process undertaken by local authorities to enable them to send out offers of a place in a secondary school to all applicants on the national offer day of 1 March 2016. The secondary figures have been collected since 2008 and a time series of the key figures has been provided below.

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<b>The number of applications continues to increase</b>	548,006 applications were received for a place at secondary school in 2016, a 2.8% increase on 2015 (533,314). This continues the increase seen since 2013, when the rise in births which began in the previous decade started to reach secondary school age. See table A (below) for a time series of the number of applications and key preference rates.
<b>First preferences rates stable</b>	Despite the increase in applications, the proportion of secondary applicants receiving an offer of their first choice school remained stable at 84.1%, compared to 84.2% in 2015. The proportion of applicants who received an offer of any of their preferred schools was also stable, at 96.4% in 2015 and 96.5% in 2016.
<b>First preferences are less likely to be met in London</b>	Results for each local authority and for the ten regions are provided in the main tables. As in previous years, London has the lowest proportion of applicants receiving an offer of their first choice school. The figure for 2016 was 68.8%, virtually unchanged from the figure of 68.9% in 2015. Outer London authorities between them made first preference offers to 70.4% of their applicants in 2016, compared to 65.6% for Inner London authorities.
<b>Regions with highest first preference rates are at opposite ends of the country</b>	The regions with the highest proportion of applicants receiving an offer of their first choice secondary school in 2016 were the South West with 91.9% and the North East with 91.8%.
<b>Local authorities with highest first preferences unchanged from 2015</b>	At local authority level Northumberland (98.7%), Central Bedfordshire (98.6%) and Cornwall (98.4%) achieved the three best first preference rates in 2016. The same authorities were also the best performers for this measure in 2015.
<b>London authorities remain the lowest performers</b>	As in 2015, the authorities with the lowest first preference rates at secondary level were all in London. Hammersmith & Fulham (52.0%), Westminster (53.4%) and Lambeth (57.9%) achieved the lowest rates in 2016. Both Hammersmith & Fulham and Westminster were also in the lowest three in 2015.
<b>Offers can be to schools outside the applicant's authority</b>	An applicant can apply for any school, including those situated in another local authority. Their authority liaises with the selected school, to ensure the applicant is considered under the admissions criteria, and makes the offer. In 2016 8.6% of secondary offers made were of schools outside the home authority (see table A below). This figure is currently stable but the long-term trend shows a gradual increase. In 2008 7.2% of applicants received an offer of a school outside their local authority.

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**Table A: Timeseries 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	% of offers to school in another authority	Number of applications
2008/09	82.0	94.0	95.5	7.2	568,723
2009/10	83.2	94.6	96.2	7.1	546,744
2010/11	83.2	94.9	96.6	7.6	529,645
2011/12	84.6	95.6	97.2	7.9	512,193
2012/13	85.3	95.9	97.6	8.2	503,734
2013/14	86.7	96.5	97.8	8.4	499,968
2014/15	85.2	95.5	96.8	8.4	521,274
2015/16	84.2	95.0	96.4	8.5	533,314
2016/17	84.1	95.0	96.5	8.6	548,006

This SFR concentrates on the headline figures for the proportion of children receiving their first preference or a preferred offer. However, the main tables provide more information such as the number of places available, 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 authority.

## 2. Primary results

The Primary table is based on the offers made by local authorities on the primary national offer day of 18 April 2016. This national offer day was introduced in 2014, which was the first year that primary application and offer data were collected and published. Therefore only three years of data are available currently.

### **The number of applications rises but at a slower rate than previously**

The number of applications for a primary school place in 2016 was 641,572, a 0.8% increase on the figure for 2015 (636,279). However, this is a lower rate of increase than between 2014 and 2015 (2.0%) and, with birth figures showing a drop in 2013, the increasing numbers of primary applications may soon start to level out.

### **Proportion of first preference offers increases**

Despite the increase in applications, the proportion of applicants receiving their first preference offer increased to 88.4%, up 0.6 percentage points on 2015. The proportion receiving an offer of any of their preferences also increased but by a smaller margin, from 96.5% (2015) to 96.9%.

### **The proportion of first preference offers made in London continues to improve**

Across all of London, 83.7% of applications received an offer of a place at their first preference school, continuing the year-on-year improvement seen last year and a rise of 2.6 percentage points since 2014. This was led by an improvement in several Inner London authorities, with an overall improvement since 2015 for Inner London of 3.1 percentage points, to 83.1% of first preferences being met in 2016.

<b>Regional preference rates for primary places are generally higher than for secondary applications</b>	<p>For all regions apart from the South West, primary first preference rates are higher than at secondary level. London has the largest difference with a 15% higher proportion of applicants for primary places received a first preference offer than applicants for secondary places.</p> <p>Overall, the North East has the highest proportions of primary school applicants receiving a first preference offer, at 92.7%.</p>
<b>Best performing local authorities change from 2015</b>	<p>In contrast to secondary results, the local authorities that achieved the highest first preference rates in 2016 were different to 2015. In 2016 Redcar &amp; Cleveland (97.4%), Cumbria (96.4%) and Doncaster (96.3%) had the highest first preference rates.</p>
<b>Lowest local authority performance significantly improved</b>	<p>The three local authorities with the lowest first preference rates were Kensington &amp; Chelsea (as in 2015 but, at 68.3%, showing a substantial increase on the 59.0% rate in 2015), Hammersmith &amp; Fulham (71.9%) and Bournemouth (76.1%) – the first time since 2014 that a non-London authority had one of the three lowest first preference rates.</p>
<b>Fewer offers outside the local authority than for secondary</b>	<p>At primary level a smaller proportion of offers were made of schools outside the applicant's local authority, compared to secondary. In 2016 2.7% of offers were outside the home authority. This has remained stable in the three years of primary data available.</p>

**Table B: Timeseries of 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	% of offers to school in another authority	Number of applications
2014/15	87.7	95.7	96.4	2.6	623,526
2015/16	87.8	95.9	96.5	2.7	636,279
2016/17	88.4	96.3	96.9	2.7	641,572

### 3. List of tables

The following tables are available in Excel format on the department's statistics [website](#):

- 1 Applications and offers for entry to secondary schools in England for the start of academic year 2016/17.
- 2 Applications and offers for entry to primary schools in England for the start of academic year 2016/17.

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

- The 'total places' figure tells us how many places the local authority had available in the first year of entry of either primary schools or secondary schools. This covers 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.
- The percentages in the tables for those applicants 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.
- 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.

### 4. Further information

The main tables provide the number of school places available and applications, and the proportion of preferences met or not met (by rank). The underlying data available on the department's statistics [website](#) provides the numbers for those who received an offer of their first preference, second preference etc. It also provides information on each local authority's national curriculum (NC) year of admission (reception for primary school places and either year 7 or year 9 for secondary places), the number of preferences that each local authority permits and the number and proportion of applications which were made online.

The application and offer data is gathered at pupil level and aggregated by the department into the local authority level data provided in this publication. The original data being at pupil level allows us to produce school level figures of the number of applications received and the preference level of offers made. Contact the department at [school.preference@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:school.preference@education.gsi.gov.uk) for more information about this dataset.

### 5. Technical information

A quality and methodology information document accompanies this SFR. This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it was processed.

## 6. Get in touch

### Media enquiries

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Department  
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<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-preference-data-collections>

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