



Department  
for Education

# **Collection of data on pupil nationality, country of birth and proficiency in English**

**Summary report**

**December 2017**

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 About this publication

This publication provides a high-level summary of the information collected via the 2017 spring (January) school census relating to the nationality, country of birth and proficiency in English of pupils attending schools in England.

Tables providing a national and local authority level breakdown of the data collected accompany this summary publication. The following tables are available:

- Table 1: Number and percentage of pupils by country of birth (national level)
- Table 2: Number and percentage of pupils by nationality (national level)
- Table 3: Number and percentage of pupils with English as an additional language at key stage 1 and above by proficiency in English assessment (national level)
- Table 4: Number and percentage of pupils by country of birth (local authority level)
- Table 5: Number and percentage of pupils by nationality (local authority level)
- Table 6: Number and percentage of pupils with English as an additional language at key stage 1 and above by proficiency in English assessment (local authority level)

We welcome feedback on any aspect of this publication and, in particular, whether the content and presentation of the tables provided alongside this summary meet your needs as a potential user of these statistics. Please send any comments you would like to make to [marcia.merchant@education.gov.uk](mailto:marcia.merchant@education.gov.uk).

## 1.2 Background to the data included in this publication

In accordance with Section 537A of the Education Act 1996, the Department for Education (DfE) has been collecting administrative data about pupils attending state-funded schools in England through the school census for over ten years. Information from the school census is used for the purpose of improving and promoting the education and well-being of children in England. It helps the DfE to make sure funds are allocated where they are needed and that no groups of children are missing out on the education they deserve.

During the 2016/17 academic year schools were asked, for the first time, to provide additional information on the nationality, country of birth and English language proficiency of pupils. These new data items are collected solely for the purpose of internal educational research by the DfE and are not shared with any third party (including other government departments).

This publication provides a high-level summary of the new information collected with the intention of improving understanding about the quality, and representativeness, of this data source and its suitability for helping the Department to ensure that all children, wherever they are from, have the best possible education.

### **1.3 How is the data collected?**

The return of the school census is a statutory requirement placed on schools. It is not possible for a parent / guardian or individual child to opt out of the school census collection. However, some information must be reported as declared by the parent / guardian or the pupil<sup>1</sup> and, as such, they retain a right to decline to provide this information.

The return of nationality and country of birth data is completely optional and parents are under no obligation to provide this data if they do not want to. Schools are instructed via the data collection guidance that they must not request to see any documentation (such as, a passport or birth certificate) to verify the nationality and country of birth information declared by the parent / guardian or pupil for the purposes of the census.

For pupils with multiple nationalities more than one nationality may be recorded.

Proficiency in English is collected for all children at key stage 1 and above, who have been recorded on the census with English as an additional language (EAL)<sup>2</sup>. Schools are required to assess their EAL pupils against a five-point scale of reading, writing and spoken language proficiency and make a 'best fit' judgement as to the overall proficiency stage to which the pupil most closely corresponds.

These new data items were collected for the first time in the 2016 autumn school census. Information on nationality and country of birth continues to be collected termly. For proficiency in English, following a 'one-off' initial collection in autumn 2016, this data item is collected annually via the spring school census in January.

Further information about the collection of these data items is provided within the school census guide available on the [school census page on GOV.UK](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Information can only be requested from a pupil where they are deemed mature enough to have capacity to understand and agree to share their personal data with others.

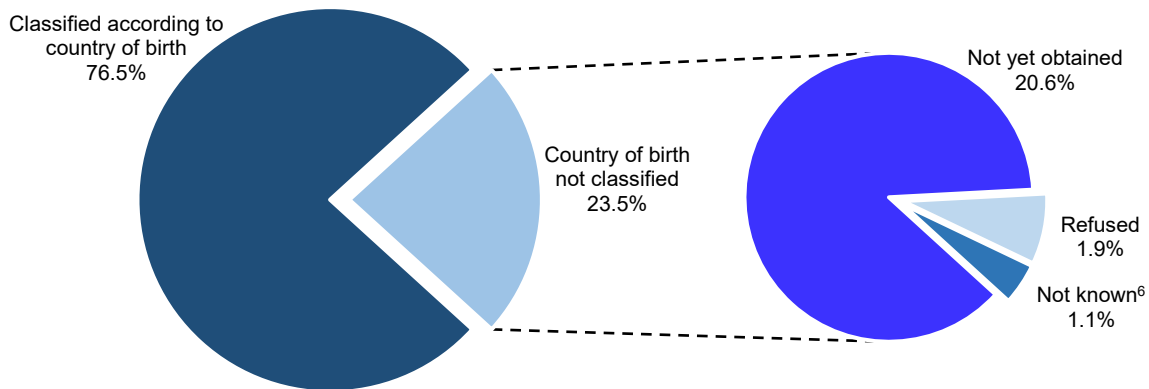
<sup>2</sup> Proficiency in English is required for pupils where language has been recorded as anything other than 'English', 'Believed to be English' or 'British Sign Language'.

## 2 High level summary of data

### 2.1 Pupil country of birth (Tables 1 and 4)

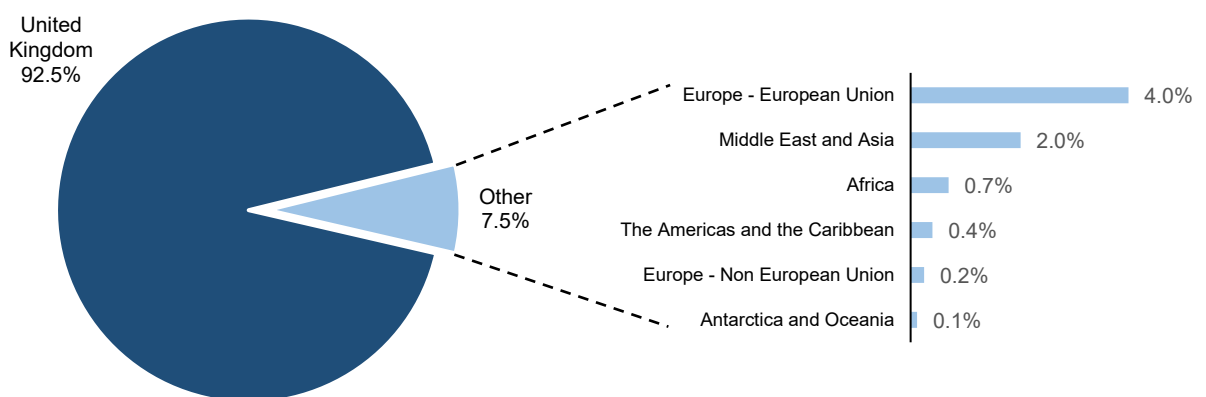
In January 2017, there were 8.1 million pupils registered at schools<sup>3</sup> in England. Of these, 76.5 per cent of pupils were recorded with a specific country of birth<sup>4</sup> (see figure 1).

**Figure 1: All pupils - country of birth<sup>4</sup> response rates<sup>5</sup>, January 2017**



Of those pupils where a country of birth<sup>4</sup> was provided, 92.5 per cent were recorded with a country of birth of UK (see figure 2).

**Figure 2: Percentage of pupils with a classified country of birth<sup>4</sup> split by geographical region<sup>5,7</sup>, January 2017**



<sup>3</sup> Includes all state funded nursery, state-funded primary, state-funded secondary, pupil referral units, state-funded special and non-maintained special schools.

<sup>4</sup> Please see [Annex A1](#) for the definition used for the country of birth variable collected via the school census.

<sup>5</sup> Figures may not sum due to rounding.

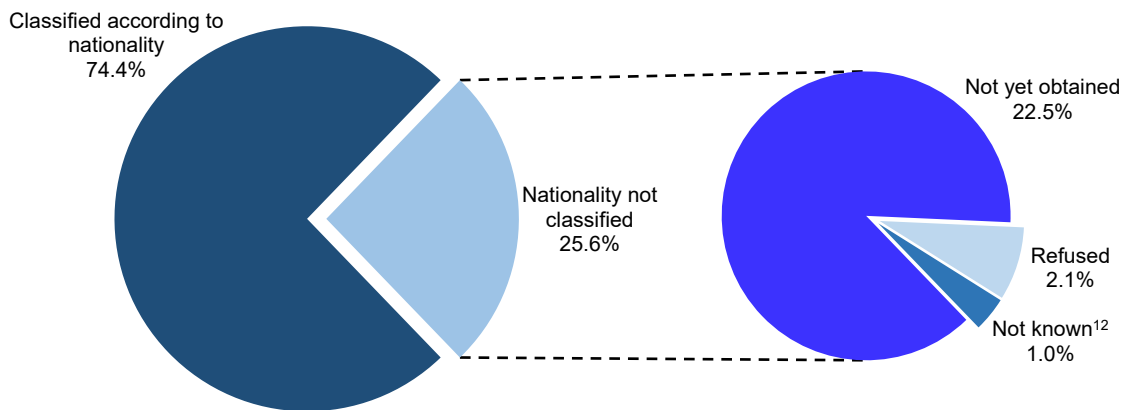
<sup>6</sup> 'Not known' denotes where a guardian or adoptive parent has taken care of the child and this information is not known.

<sup>7</sup> Based on Office for National Statistics (ONS) - [National Statistics Country Classification \(NSCC\)](#) groupings.

## 2.2 Pupil nationality (Tables 2 and 5)

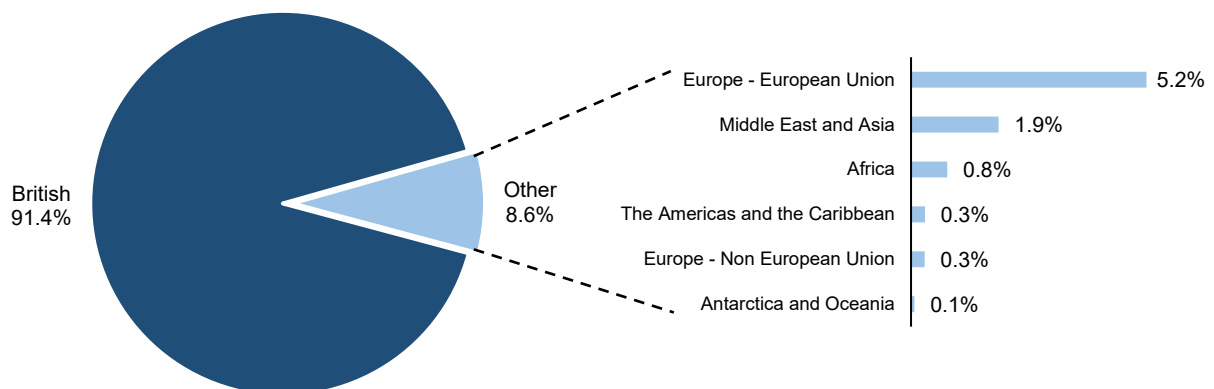
In January 2017, there were 8.1 million pupils registered at schools<sup>8</sup> in England. Of these, 74.4 per cent of pupils were recorded with a specific nationality<sup>9,10</sup> (see figure 3).

**Figure 3: All pupils - nationality<sup>9,10</sup> response rates<sup>11</sup>, January 2017**



Of those pupils where a nationality<sup>9,10</sup> was provided, 91.4 per cent were recorded with a nationality of British (see figure 4).

**Figure 4: Percentage of pupils with a classified nationality<sup>9,10</sup> split by geographical region<sup>11,13</sup>, January 2017**



<sup>8</sup> Includes all state funded nursery, state-funded primary, state-funded secondary, pupil referral units, state-funded special and non-maintained special schools.

<sup>9</sup> Please see [Annex A2](#) for the definition used for the nationality variable collected via the school census.

<sup>10</sup> Where a pupil has been recorded with multiple nationalities, the first nationality that was returned within the census submission has been used for the purposes of this publication.

<sup>11</sup> Figures may not sum due to rounding.

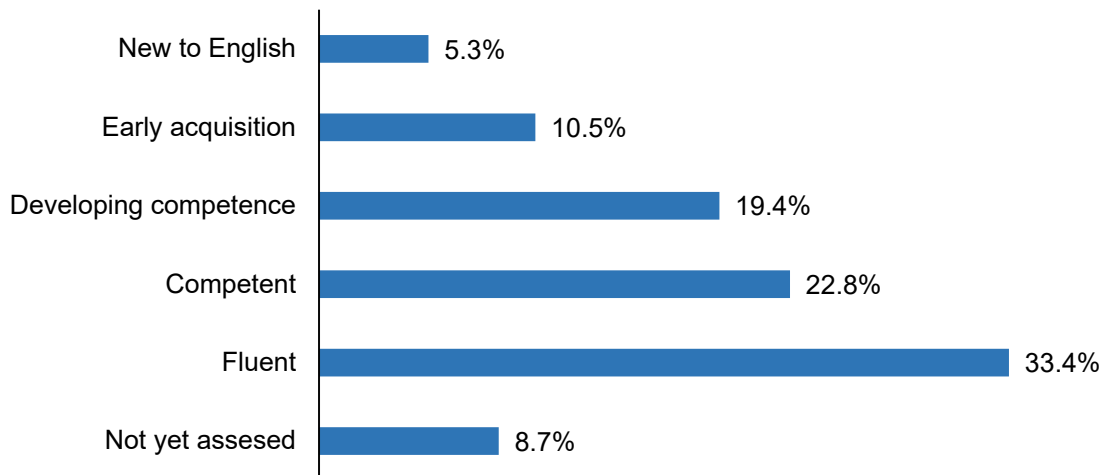
<sup>12</sup> Not known denotes where a guardian or adoptive parent has taken care of the child and this information is not known.

<sup>13</sup> Based on Office for National Statistics (ONS) - [National Statistics Country Classification \(NSCC\)](#) groupings.

## 2.3 Pupil proficiency in English (Tables 3 and 6)

In January 2017, there were 1.5 million pupils (18.0 per cent of the school population) recorded on the school census at key stage 1 and above with English as an additional language (EAL)<sup>14</sup>. Of these, 5.3 per cent of the EAL population had been assessed with an English proficiency level<sup>15</sup> of 'new to English' and 33.4 per cent had been assessed as 'fluent' (see figure 5).

**Figure 5: Percentage of EAL pupils<sup>14</sup> by proficiency in English assessment<sup>15,16</sup>, January 2017**



<sup>14</sup> Proficiency in English is required for all pupils at key stage 1 and above where language has been recorded as anything other than 'English', 'Believed to be English' or 'British Sign Language'.

<sup>15</sup> Please see [Annex A3](#) for the definitions used for each level of the proficiency in English framework collected via the school census.

<sup>16</sup> Figures may not sum due to rounding.

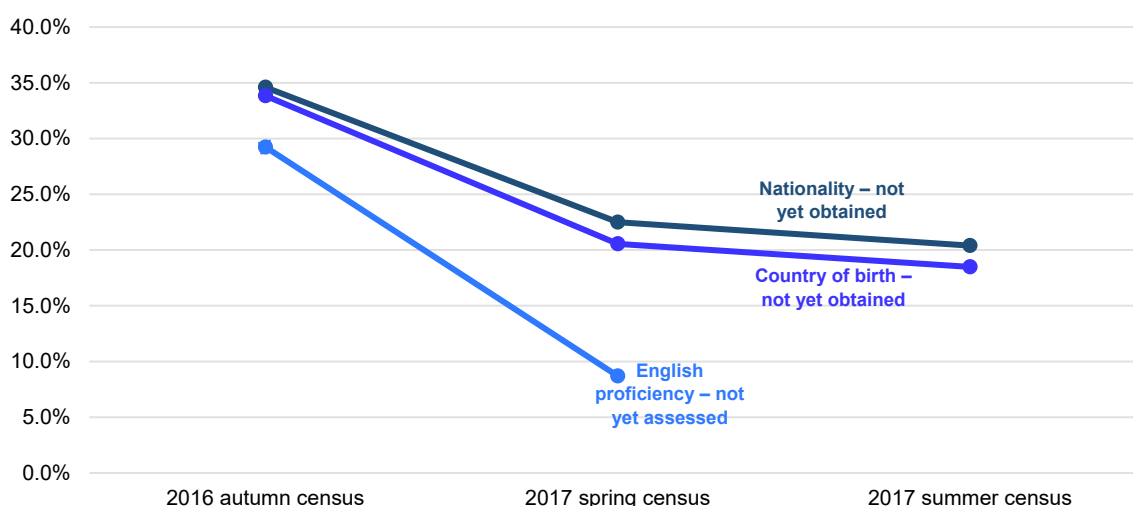
### 3 Data coverage and data quality

Figures from the first collection in the 2016 autumn school census showed there were approximately a third of pupils where information on nationality (34.6 per cent) and country of birth (33.8 per cent) had 'not yet been obtained' by the school. It is expected that, as time goes on and schools have had further opportunity to collect these data from parents / guardians, that these proportions will decrease.

This was already evident by the 2017 spring school census, when the proportion of pupils who were reported to have nationality and country of birth 'not yet obtained' decreased from 34.6 per cent to 22.5 per cent and 33.8 per cent to 20.6 per cent respectively between the autumn and spring collections. Similarly, for proficiency in English, in autumn 2016 29.2 per cent of EAL pupils had not been assessed but this reduced to 8.7 per cent of pupils by spring 2017 (see figure 6).

Due to the proximity of the autumn census to the start of the academic year, and the fact that schools might not have sufficient time to collate and process all data received from parents / guardians by census day, it is expected that the autumn census will have a higher proportion of records 'not yet obtained' than subsequent collections later in the academic year. Also, as many schools will only request this type of information from parents once each academic year, it will not be until the next academic year that we would expect to see a further substantial drop in records 'not yet obtained' when compared with figures from the spring collection.

**Figure 6: Percentage of pupils where nationality, country of birth and proficiency in English has not been obtained / assessed, 2016/17 academic year<sup>17</sup>**



<sup>17</sup> These new data items were collected for the first time in the 2016 autumn school census. Information on nationality and country of birth continues to be collected termly. For proficiency in English, following a 'one-off' initial collection in autumn 2016, this data item is collected annually via the spring school census in January.



Comparisons with UK population estimates published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)<sup>18</sup> illustrates a higher than expected proportion of children being reported on the school census with a country of birth of UK when compared to the overall population (see figure 7). The coverage, and methodology used, for the ONS population estimates and school census are different and not expected to match. The ONS population estimates, derived from a sample based household survey, estimate the nationality and country of birth of the population of England covering residents of all ages living in private households whereas the school census is a census of the school population in England. However, the scale of the differences suggest that either the country of birth of the school population is not representative of the wider population or, during this first year of collection, a disproportionate number of children on the school census where country of birth data has not yet been collected may be born outside of the UK.

**Figure 7: Comparisons between country of birth reported via the school census and country of birth reported in ONS population estimates<sup>18,19</sup> by geographical region<sup>20</sup>**

	Percentage of pupils with classified country of birth split by geographical region (school census)	Percentage of population country of birth split by geographical region (ONS population estimate)
United Kingdom	92.5%	84.4%
Europe - European Union	4.0%	5.9%
Europe - Non European Union	0.2%	0.6%
Africa	0.7%	2.5%
Middle East and Asia	2.0%	4.9%
The Americas and the Caribbean	0.4%	1.3%
Antarctica and Oceania	0.1%	0.4%

However, the nationality data collected via the school census is much more comparable with the UK population estimates published by the ONS (see figure 8). This could suggest that either the nationality of the school population is reflective of the wider population (for example, as many pupils will share the nationality of their parents or wider family) or, during this first year of collection, the number of pupils for whom a nationality has not been provided is spread proportionately across the overall school population.

<sup>18</sup> ONS Statistical bulletin: [Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality](#): July 2016 to June 2017 [published 30 November 2017].

<sup>19</sup> Figures may not sum due to rounding.

<sup>20</sup> Based on Office for National Statistics (ONS) - [National Statistics Country Classification \(NSCC\)](#) groupings.

**Figure 8: Comparisons between nationality reported via the school census<sup>21, 22</sup> and nationality reported in ONS population estimates, by geographical region<sup>23</sup>**

	Percentage of pupils with classified nationality split by geographical region <b>(school census)</b>	Percentage of population nationality split by geographical region <b>(ONS population estimate)</b>
British	91.4%	89.9%
Europe - European Union	5.2%	6.0%
Europe - Non European Union	0.3%	0.3%
Africa	0.8%	0.9%
Middle East and Asia	1.9%	2.1%
The Americas and the Caribbean	0.3%	0.6%
Antarctica and Oceania	0.1%	0.2%

<sup>21</sup> ONS Statistical bulletin: [Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality](#): July 2016 to June 2017 [published 30 November 2017].

<sup>22</sup> Figures may not sum due to rounding.

<sup>23</sup> Based on Office for National Statistics (ONS) - [National Statistics Country Classification \(NSCC\)](#) groupings.

## 4 Further information and queries

### 4.1 Further information

Information on the school census data collection is available on the [school census page on GOV.UK](#).

The school census only collects information from schools in England. For information for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, contact the departments below or access their statistics at the following links:

- **Northern Ireland:** [statistics@deni.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@deni.gov.uk) or [NI Department of Education - Statistics and Research](#)
- **Scotland:** [school.stats@scotland.gov.uk](mailto:school.stats@scotland.gov.uk) or [Scottish Government School Education Statistics](#)
- **Wales:** [school.stats@gov.wales](mailto:school.stats@gov.wales) or [Welsh Government Statistics and Research](#)

### 4.2 Media enquiries

DfE Media Team, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.

Tel: 020 7783 8300

### 4.3 Other enquiries/feedback

Marcia Merchant, Education Data Division, Department for Education, Bishopsgate House, Feethams, Darlington DL1 5QE

Email: [marcia.merchant@education.gov.uk](mailto:marcia.merchant@education.gov.uk)

## **Annex A – Definitions of data used in this publication**

The current guidance provided to schools and local authorities to assist them with completing the school census is available on the [school census page on GOV.UK](#). The [school census: closed collections page](#) provides the guides used for historical collections.

Provided below are extracts from these guides relating to the nationality, country of birth and proficiency in English data items referred to in this publication.

### **A1 – Pupil country of birth**

Country of birth is collected for all pupils and records the country in which the pupil was born, as stated by the parent / guardian or child. There is absolutely no requirement for schools to request, or see, any documentary evidence of a pupil's country of birth. Schools must not request to see any documentation (such as a birth certificate) to verify the country of birth information declared by the parent / guardian or pupil for the purposes of the census.

Where a child was born in unusual circumstances – such as outside of national boundaries (in international water) - the pupil may be classified as “stateless”.

The school must not ascribe a country of birth to the pupil but may, where appropriate, use the following codes:

- ‘refused’ – where the parent or guardian has declined to provide the information requested
- ‘not yet obtained’ - where the data has not been obtained by census day
- ‘not known’ - this code is only to be used where a guardian or adoptive parent has taken care of the child and this information is not known.

Please see section 5.3.4 of the [school census guide](#) for further information.

### **A2 – Pupil nationality**

Pupil nationality is collected for all pupils and records the nationality of the pupil as stated by the parent / guardian or child. There is absolutely no requirement for schools to request, or see, any documentary evidence of a pupil's nationality. Schools must not request to see any documentation (such as a passport) to verify the nationality information declared by the parent / guardian or pupil for the purposes of the census.

For pupils with ‘Multiple Nationality’ more than one nationality may be recorded. Where the child was born in unusual circumstances; such as outside of national

boundaries (in international water), the pupil may be classified under the nationality of the parent or as “stateless”.

The school must not ascribe nationality to the pupil but may, where appropriate, use the following codes:

- ‘refused’ – where the parent or guardian has declined to provide the information requested
- ‘not yet obtained’ - where the data has not been obtained by census day
- ‘not known’ - this code is only to be used where a guardian or adoptive parent has taken care of the child and this information is not known

Please see section 5.3.5 of the [school census guide](#) for further information.

### **A3 – Proficiency in English**

Where ‘Proficiency in English’ is required, schools will assess the position of their EAL pupils against a five-point scale of reading, writing and spoken language proficiency (see below) and make a ‘best fit’ judgement as to the proficiency stage that a pupil corresponds most closely to:

- **New to English [Code ‘A’]:** May use first language for learning and other purposes. May remain completely silent in the classroom. May be copying / repeating some words or phrases. May understand some everyday expressions in English but may have minimal or no literacy in English. Needs a considerable amount of EAL support.
- **Early acquisition [Code ‘B’]:** May follow day-to-day social communication in English and participate in learning activities with support. Beginning to use spoken English for social purposes. May understand simple instructions and can follow narrative / accounts with visual support. May have developed some skills in reading and writing. May have become familiar with some subject specific vocabulary. Still needs a significant amount of EAL support to access the curriculum.
- **Developing competence [Code ‘C’]:** May participate in learning activities with increasing independence. Able to express self orally in English, but structural inaccuracies are still apparent. Literacy will require ongoing support, particularly for understanding text and writing. May be able to follow abstract concepts and more complex written English. Requires ongoing EAL support to access the curriculum fully.
- **Competent [Code ‘D’]:** Oral English will be developing well, enabling successful engagement in activities across the curriculum. Can read and

understand a wide variety of texts. Written English may lack complexity and contain occasional evidence of errors in structure. Needs some support to access subtle nuances of meaning, to refine English usage, and to develop abstract vocabulary. Needs some/occasional EAL support to access complex curriculum material and tasks.

- **Fluent [Code 'E']:** Can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a pupil who uses English as his/her first language. Operates without EAL support across the curriculum.

Alongside the scale outlined above, 'Not Yet Assessed' [Code 'N'] is available for use where the school has not yet had time to assess proficiency.

Please see section 5.3.3 of the [school census guide](#) for further information.



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write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

About this publication:

enquiries <https://www.education.gov.uk/form/data-collection-request-form>

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