



Department
for Education

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

**Summary report
December 2018**

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	High level summary of data	3
2.1	Pupil country of birth (Tables 1a, 1b and 1c)	3
2.2	Pupil nationality (Tables 2a, 2b and 2c)	4
2.3	Pupil proficiency in English (Tables 3a, 3b and 3c)	4
3	About this publication	5
3.1	Background to the data included in this publication	5
3.2	How is the data collected?	6
4	Data Coverage and data quality	6
5	List of tables included in this publication	9
6	Further information and queries	10
6.1	Further information	10
6.2	Media enquiries	10
6.3	Other enquiries/ feedback	10
	Annex A – Definitions of data used in this publication	11

1 Introduction

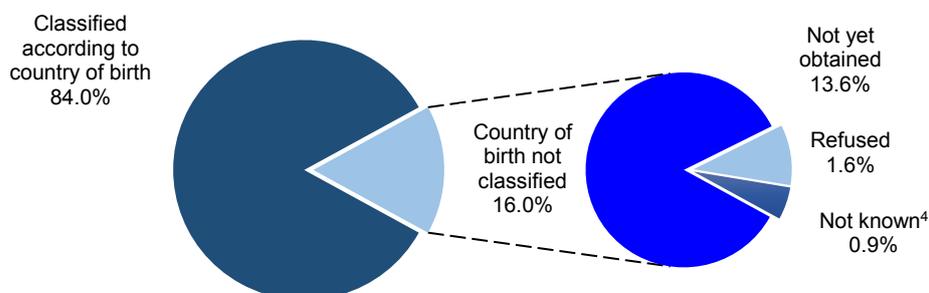
This publication provides a high-level summary of the information collected via the 2018 spring (January) school census relating to the nationality, country of birth and proficiency in English of pupils attending schools in England.

2 High level summary of data

2.1 Pupil country of birth (Tables 1a, 1b and 1c)

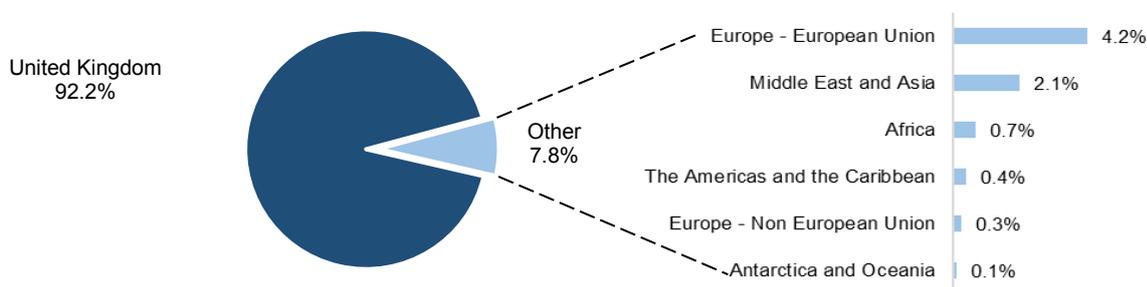
In January 2018, there were 8.2 million pupils registered at schools¹ in England. Of these, 84.0% of pupils were recorded with a specific country of birth² (see figure 1), compared with 76.5% of pupils in January 2017.

Figure 1: All pupils - country of birth² response rates³, January 2018



Of those pupils where a country of birth² was provided, 92.2% were recorded with a country of birth of UK (see figure 2), a 0.4 percentage point decrease from 92.5% in 2017.

Figure 2: Percentage of pupils³ with a classified country of birth² split by geographical region⁵ January 2018



¹ Includes all state funded nursery, state-funded primary, state-funded secondary, pupil referral units, state-funded special and non-maintained special schools.

² Please see [Annex A](#) for the definition used for the country of birth, nationality and proficiency in English collected via the school census.

³ Figures may not sum due to rounding.

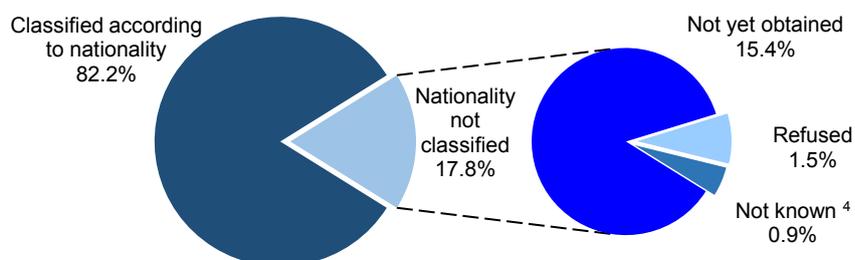
⁴ Not known denotes where a guardian or adoptive parent has taken care of the child and this information is not known.

⁵ Based on Office for National Statistics (ONS) - [National Statistics Country Classification \(NSCC\)](#) groupings.

2.2 Pupil nationality (Tables 2a, 2b and 2c)

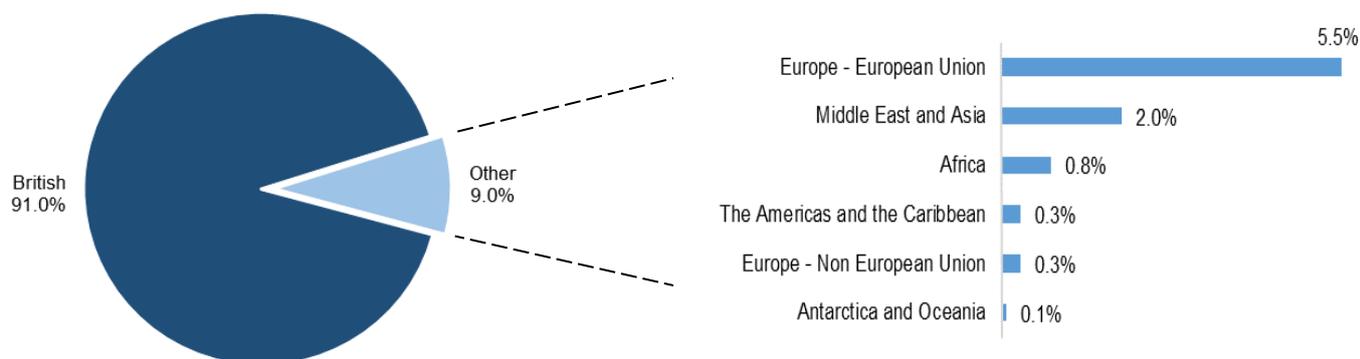
In January 2018, there were 8.2 million pupils registered at schools in England¹. Of these, 82.2% of pupils were recorded with a specific nationality^{2,6} (see figure 3), compared with 74.4% the previous year.

Figure 3: All pupils – nationality^{2,6} response rates³, January 2018



Of those pupils where a nationality^{2,6} was provided, 91.0% were recorded with a nationality of British (see figure 4), a 0.5 percentage point decrease from 91.4% in 2017.

Figure 4: Percentage of pupils³ with a classified nationality^{2,6} split by geographical



2.3 Pupil proficiency in English (Tables 3a, 3b and 3c)

In January 2018, there were 1.5 million pupils (18.0% of the school population at key stage 1 or above) recorded on the school census at key stage 1 and above with English as an additional language (EAL)⁷. Of the EAL population, 5.9% had been assessed² with an English proficiency level of 'new to English' and 33.8% had been assessed as 'fluent'. The distribution of proficiency in English was broadly comparable to that seen in 2017.

⁶ 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.

⁷ Proficiency in English was 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'.

Figure 5: Percentage of EAL pupils³ by proficiency in English assessment^{2,7}, January 2017 and January 2018



3 About this publication

3.1 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 and 2017/18 academic years, schools were asked to provide information on the nationality, country of birth and English proficiency of pupils. These data items were collected solely for the purpose of internal educational research by the DfE and are not shared at an individual level, or in any manner which would allow an individual to be identified, with any third party (including other government departments). At the end of the 2017/18 academic year, the Department had collected sufficient data to support the research it wishes to undertake and proactively decided to remove the data collection burden placed on schools and parents. As such, the collection of nationality, country of birth and proficiency in English data has been removed from the school census from the 2018/19 academic year onwards.

This publication follows on from the equivalent publication for the 2016/17 academic year⁸ and provides a high-level summary of the information collected during 2017/18 with the

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-nationality-country-of-birth-and-proficiency-in-english>

intention of improving external transparency about the quality, and representativeness, of this data source.

3.2 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 pupil⁹ and, as such, they retain a right to decline to provide this information.

The return of nationality and country of birth data was completely optional and parents were under no obligation to provide this data if they did not want to. Schools were 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 could be recorded.

Proficiency in English was collected for all children at key stage 1 and above, who had been recorded on the census with English as an additional language (EAL)⁷. Schools were 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 corresponded.

Further information about the collection of these data items is provided within the 2017/18 school census guide available on the [school census page on GOV.UK](#).

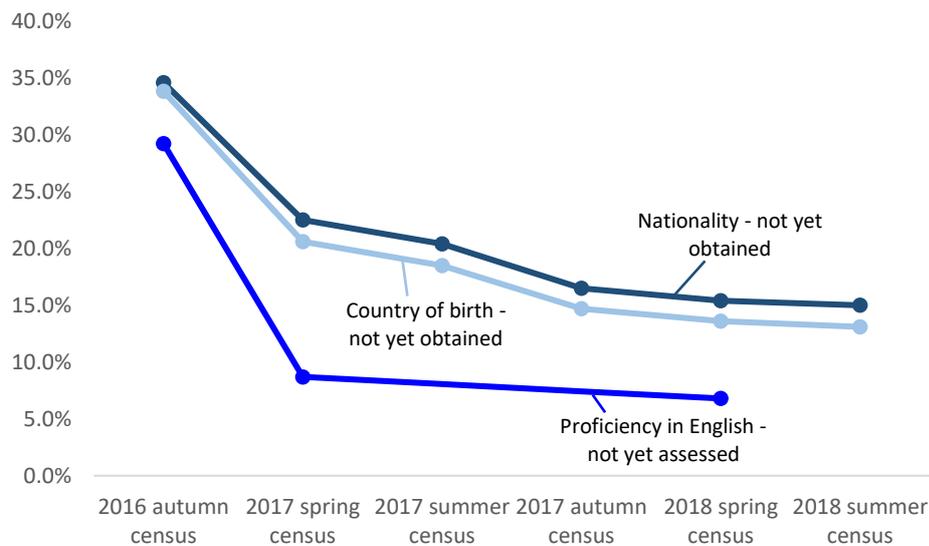
4 Data coverage and data quality

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%) and country of birth (33.8%) was 'not yet obtained' by the school. As time went on, and schools had further opportunity to collect these data from parents / guardians, these proportions have decreased. In the 2018 spring school census the proportion of pupils who were reported to have nationality and country of birth 'not yet obtained' was 15.4% and 13.6% respectively.

Similarly, for proficiency in English, in autumn 2016 29.2% of EAL pupils had not been assessed but this reduced to 6.8% in spring 2018 (see figure 6).

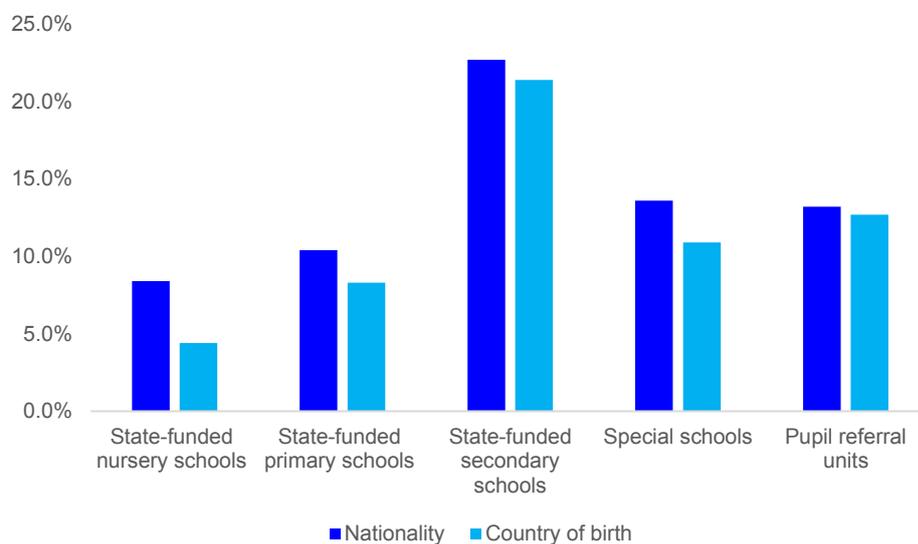
⁹ Information should only have been requested from a pupil where they were deemed mature enough to have capacity to understand and agree to share their personal data with others.

Figure 6: Percentage of pupils where nationality, country of birth and proficiency in English has not been obtained / assessed¹⁰, 2016/17 to 2017/18



The data collected shows a higher proportion of pupils attending secondary schools where country of birth and nationality was not yet obtained than for other phases of education (see figure 7).

Figure 7: Percentage of pupils with nationality and country of birth not yet obtained, split by phase of education, January 2018



¹⁰ These new data items were collected for the first time in the 2016 autumn school census. Information on nationality and country of birth was collected termly up until the end of 2017-18 academic year. For proficiency in English, following a 'one-off' initial collection in autumn 2016, this data item was collected annually via the spring school census in January until the end of the 2017-18 academic year.

Comparisons with UK population estimates published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)¹¹ 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 8). 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, whilst the differences between these sources reduced between 2016/17 and 2017/18, the scale of the differences suggest that either the country of birth of the school population is not representative of the wider population or 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 8: Comparisons between country of birth reported via the school census and country of birth reported in ONS population estimates^{3,11} by geographical region⁵

	Percentage of pupils with classified country of birth split by geographical region (school census) ²	Percentage of population country of birth split by geographical region (ONS population estimate) ¹¹
United Kingdom	92.2%	84.4%
Europe - European Union	4.2%	5.9%
Europe - Non European Union	0.3%	0.6%
Africa	0.7%	2.4%
Middle East and Asia	2.1%	5.0%
The Americas and the Caribbean	0.4%	1.3%
Antarctica and Oceania	0.1%	0.3%

However, the nationality data collected via the school census is much more comparable with the UK population estimates published by the ONS (see figure 9). 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 the number of pupils for whom a nationality was not provided is spread proportionately across the overall school population.

¹¹ ONS Statistical bulletin: [Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality](#): July 2017 to June 2018 [published 29 November 2018].

Figure 9: Comparisons between nationality reported via the school census and nationality reported in ONS population estimates³, by geographical region⁵

	Percentage of pupils with classified nationality split by geographical region (school census) ²	Percentage of population nationality split by geographical region (ONS population estimate) ¹¹
United Kingdom	91.0%	89.9%
Europe - European Union	5.5%	6.0%
Europe - Non European Union	0.3%	0.3%
Africa	0.8%	0.8%
Middle East and Asia	2.1%	2.1%
The Americas and the Caribbean	0.3%	0.6%
Antarctica and Oceania	0.2%	0.2%

5 List of tables included in this publication

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

- Table 1a: Number and percentage of pupils by country of birth, January 2017 to January 2018 (national level)
- Table 1b: Number and percentage of pupils by country of birth, January 2018 (national level by school type)
- Table 1c: Number and percentage of pupils by country of birth, January 2018 (local authority level)
- Table 2a: Number and percentage of pupils by nationality, January 2017 to January 2018 (national level)
- Table 2b: Number and percentage of pupils by nationality, January 2018 (national level by school type)
- Table 2c: Number and percentage of pupils by nationality, January 2018 (local authority level)
- Table 3a: Number and percentage of pupils for whom English is an additional language at key stage 1 and above by proficiency in English assessment, January 2017 to January 2018 (national level)
- Table 3b: Number and percentage of pupils with English as an additional language at key stage 1 and above by proficiency in English assessment, January 2018 (national level by school type)
- Table 3c: Number and percentage of pupils with English as an additional language at key stage 1 and above by proficiency in English assessment, January 2018 (local authority level)

6. Further information and queries

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

6.2 Media enquiries

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

Tel: 020 7783 8300

6.3 Other enquiries/feedback

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

Email: 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.



Department
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About this publication:

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

download www.gov.uk/government/publications

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