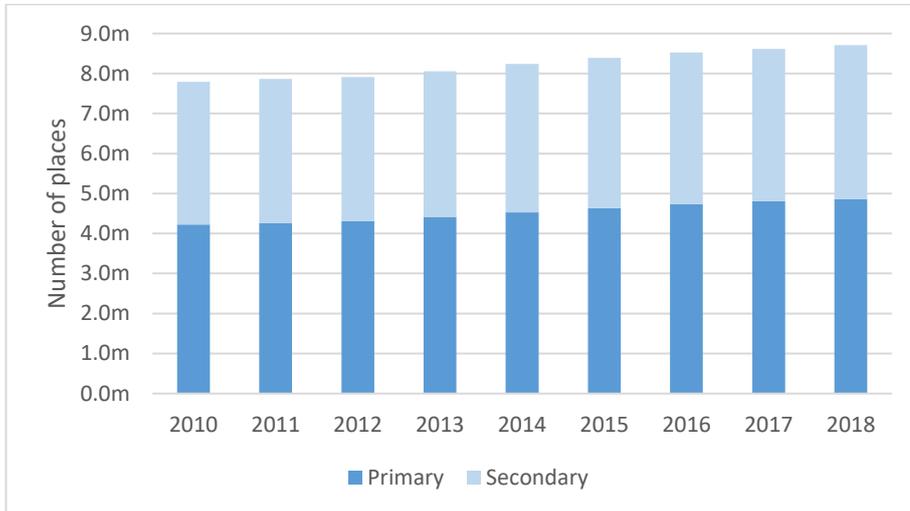




28 March 2019

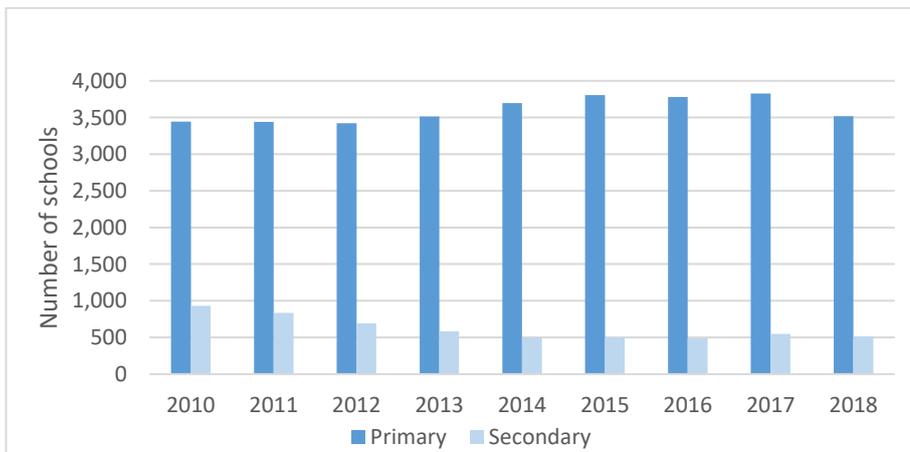
## Capacity: 921,000 mainstream school places added since 2010



There has been a net increase of 921,000 additional places since 2010, 636,000 primary (as deemed) places, and 285,000 secondary (as deemed) places (see note 6).

Between 2017 and 2018, 59,000 primary places and 37,000 secondary places were added to the school estate.

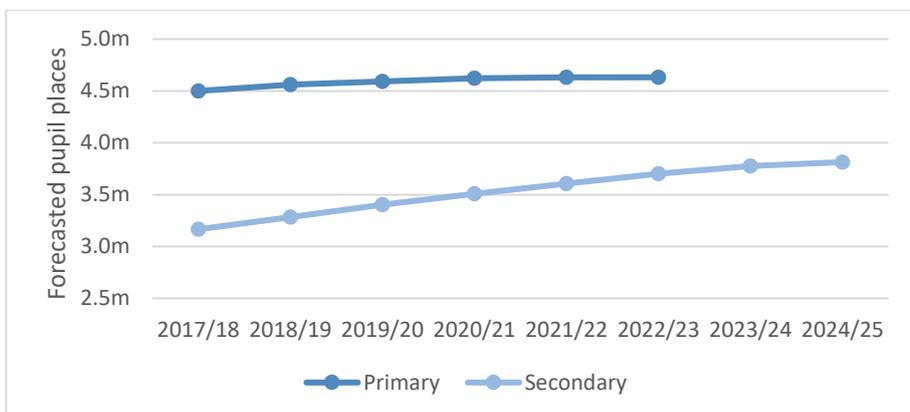
## Schools at or over capacity: the number of schools at or over capacity fell in 2018



The number of primary schools that are at or over capacity has decreased following a long term increase.

The number of secondary schools that are at or over capacity has decreased slightly.

## Forecasts: Demand for secondary places continues to rise



Local authority forecasts suggest primary pupil numbers may begin to plateau beyond 2020/21.

Secondary pupil numbers are forecast to continue to rise as the increase previously seen in primary pupil numbers arrives in the secondary phase.

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## About this release

This release reports on school capacity information in state-funded primary and secondary schools as of May 2018. Data are as reported by local authorities in the annual School Capacity (SCAP) Survey.

Information is included on the numbers of primary and secondary school places, unfilled school places and pupils in excess of school capacity. The release also provides pupil number forecasts up to 2022/23 at primary level and 2024/25 at secondary level, and compares forecasts with capacity to estimate the future number of places needed. Experimental statistics collected on sixth form capacity in schools are also provided.

Findings in this report are at a national level though information at regional and local authority (LA) level are included in the accompanying tables. School level information for capacity, and planning area level information for forecasts and planned places, are also provided in the release's underlying data section.

The numbers in this document are rounded to the nearest thousand for pupil level figures and to the nearest ten for school level numbers. Actual numbers are provided in the accompanying tables.

## In this publication

The following tables are included in the statistical release:

- School Capacity 2018 Main tables
- School Place Planning 2018 tables
- School Sixth Form Capacity 2018 - Experimental statistics

The accompanying School Place Planning 2018 Technical Guidance provides information on the data sources, their coverage and quality, and explains the methodology used in producing the School Place Planning tables.

## Feedback

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

# 1. School Capacity

## Places added

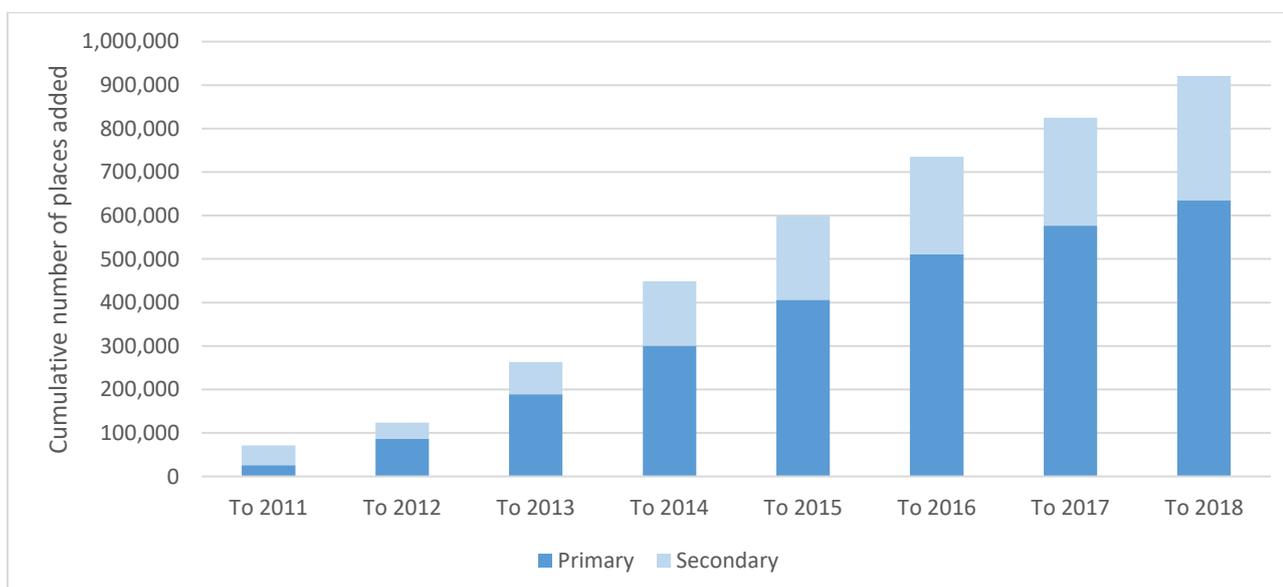
The net change in capacity reflects both increases and decreases in capacity within schools. Between 2017 and 2018, there has been a net increase of 59,000 primary places and 37,000 secondary places.

Combined with all the changes in previous years, there has been a net increase of 921,000 additional places since 2010, consisting of 636,000 primary places, and 285,000 secondary places. Places in middle schools and all through schools are reported as deemed (whether primary or secondary), and secondary places include those in school sixth forms.

**Figure 1: School capacity year on year change**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of primary places	4,228,000	4,253,000	4,314,000	4,416,000	4,528,000	4,634,000	4,738,000	4,804,000	4,863,000
Primary year on year change		26,000	60,000	102,000	112,000	106,000	104,000	66,000	59,000
Number of secondary places	3,563,000	3,609,000	3,601,000	3,637,000	3,712,000	3,756,000	3,788,000	3,811,000	3,848,000
Secondary year on year change		46,000	8,000	37,000	75,000	44,000	32,000	23,000	37,000

**Figure 2: Chart showing school capacity year on year change**



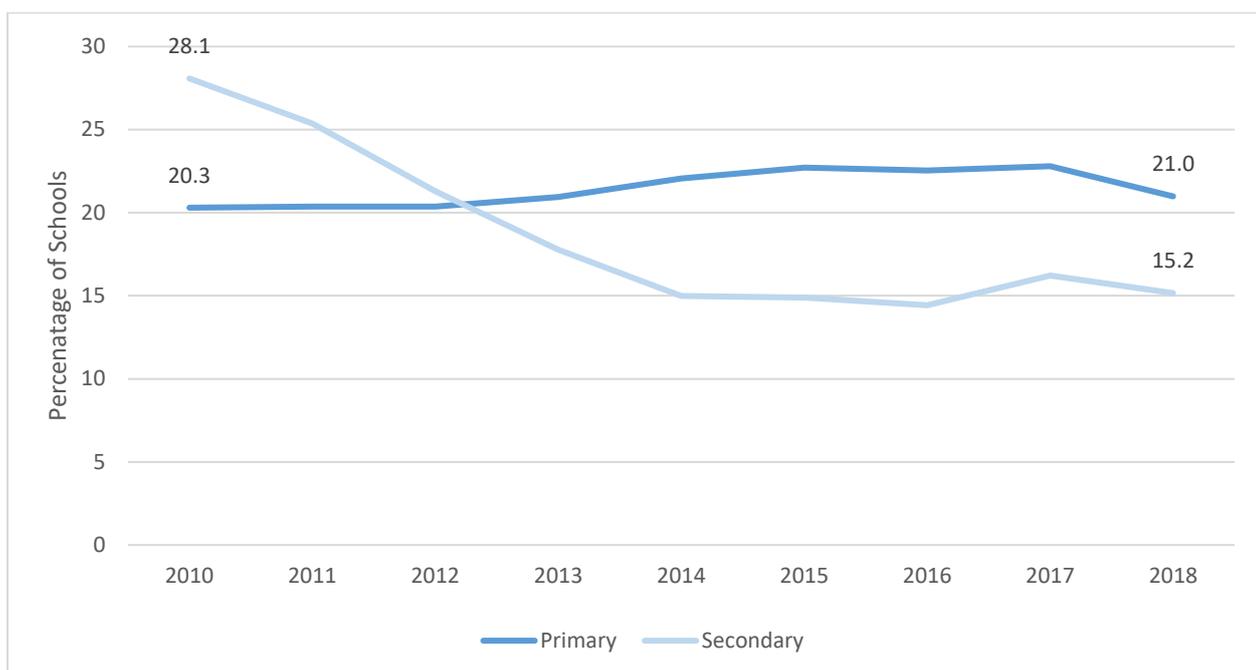
## Schools that are at or in excess of capacity

A school is identified as at or in excess of capacity when their number on roll is greater than or equal to capacity. Number on roll figures are taken from the summer (May 2018) census, except for new schools (including schools that have become academies) where figures are based on data gathered during the school capacity collection.

The percentage of state-funded primary schools that were at or had pupils in excess of capacity decreased from 23% (3,830 schools) in May 2017 to 21% (3,520 schools) in May 2018.

For state-funded secondary schools, the percentage of schools that were at or had pupils in excess of capacity decreased slightly from 16% (550 schools) in May 2017 to 15% (510 schools) in May 2018.

**Figure 3: The percentage of schools that are at or have one or more pupils in excess of school capacity**



### Pupils in excess of capacity

Where the number on roll is higher than capacity, the number of pupils in excess of capacity is the difference between number on roll and capacity.

The number of pupils in excess of capacity has decreased since 2010, from 97,000 in 2010 to 50,000 in 2018.

In primary schools, there were 27,000 pupils in excess of capacity, which is a decrease of 10% from the 30,000 pupils in 2017.

In secondary schools, there were just over 22,000 pupils in excess of capacity in 2018, a decrease of 8% from around 24,000 pupils in 2017.

### Unfilled places

The number of unfilled places is the extent of capacity above number on roll. Therefore, a school is identified as having unfilled places if the capacity is higher than the number of pupils on roll.

For primary and secondary schools, the total number of unfilled places has been increasing across recent years, from 814,000 places in 2010 to 1,106,000 places in 2018.

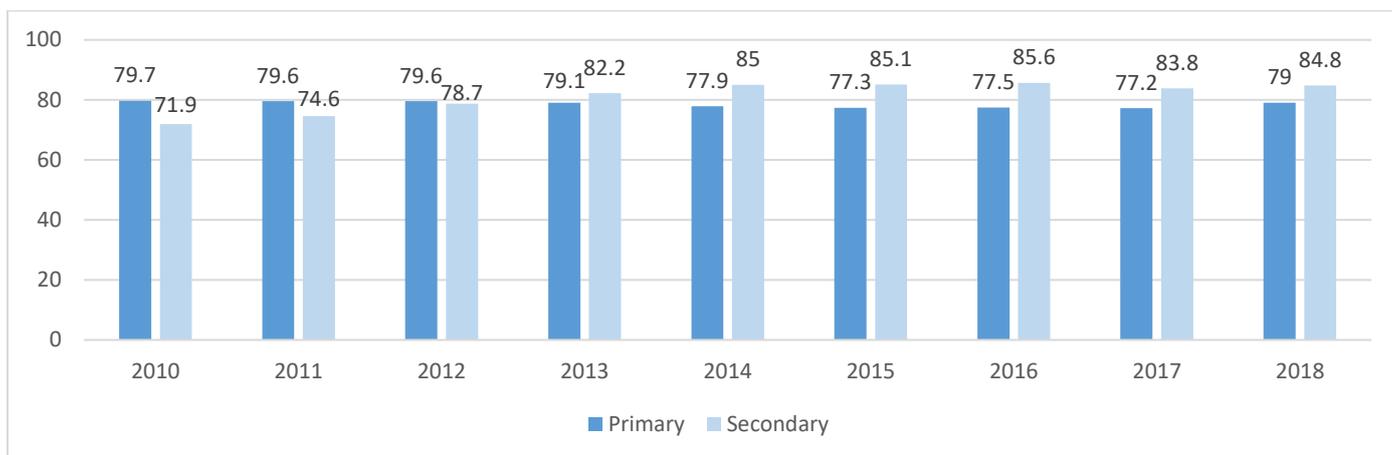
In 2018, there were 467,000 unfilled places in primary schools, an increase of 3% from the 453,000 places in 2017. In secondary schools there were 639,000 unfilled places in 2018, which is similar to 2017 (638,000 unfilled places).

The percentage of primary schools with unfilled places increased slightly in 2018 but has been fairly static at between 77 and 80 % since 2010. As of May 2018, 79% of primary schools had one or more unfilled places. The percentage of secondary schools with one or more unfilled places has been gradually increasing from 72% in 2010 to 85% in 2018.

Unfilled places can be evidence of local authorities planning ahead for future need, as the increase in pupil numbers at primary level over recent years is moving into secondary level, and will continue to do so over the coming years. Unfilled places can also be attributed to the building of whole new schools, which fill up

from the bottom, leaving space in the upper years until those year groups work their way through. In some areas, low or declining need for places will also contribute to the number of unfilled places.

**Figure 4: Percentage of schools with unfilled places**



## 2. Pupil Forecasts

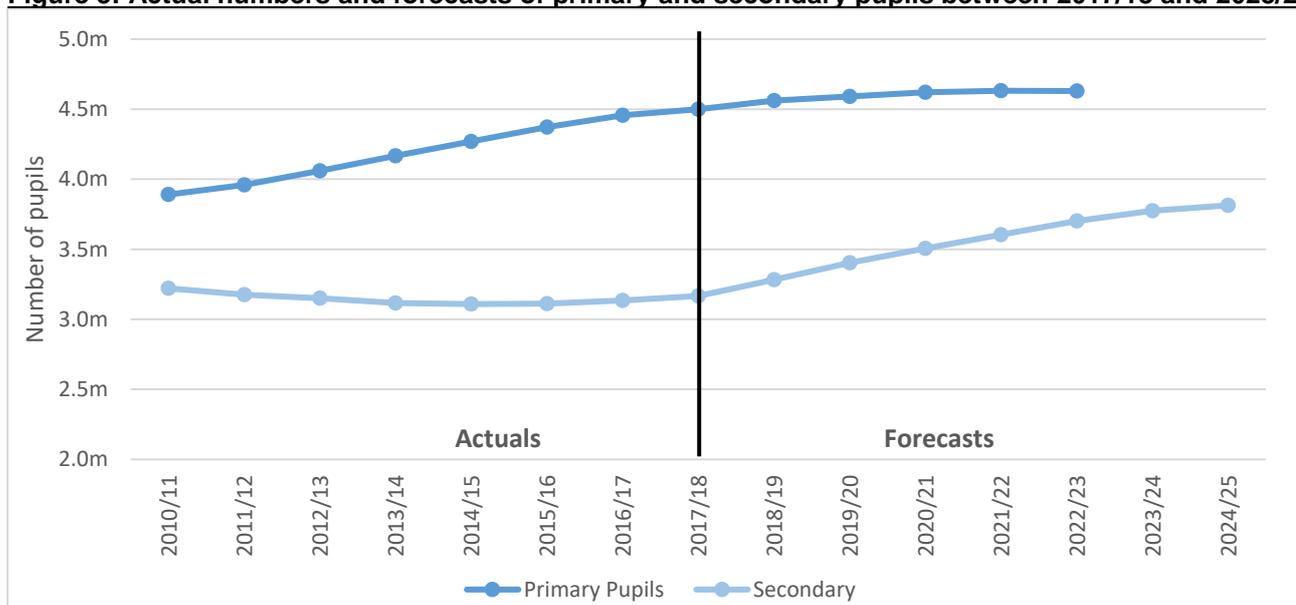
Each local authority uses their local knowledge to generate pupil forecasts, which reflect the number of pupils they expect to provide a place for in each academic year. These forecasts include places which are funded through housing developer contributions (HDC).

Local authorities provide forecasts 5 years ahead for primary pupils (from reception to year group 6) and 7 years ahead for secondary pupils (from year group 7 through to sixth form).

The forecast number of primary pupils continues to rise. However the rate of increase in the forecast number of primary school pupils has declined such that between 2021/22 and 2022/23 there is an actual forecast decrease of 1,200 pupils. In contrast, the rate of increase in the forecast number of secondary school pupils increases through to 2019/20, with an increase of over 119,000 pupils forecast between 2018/19 to 2019/20. Beyond that, there is still strong growth, but this slows to a forecast increase of around 39,000 pupils between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

As with all forecasts, the level of accuracy is expected to reduce as forecasts are made further into the future and care should be taken when using forecasts from the later years.

**Figure 5: Actual numbers and forecasts of primary and secondary pupils between 2017/18 and 2023/24**



### 3. LA Planned Places

LA planned places are collected via the SCAP Capital Spend Data (CSD) survey. These are the number of places local authorities plan to create, where funding has been committed. LA planned places exclude those created through centrally funded DfE programmes.

Local authorities have reported that they are planning to create 157,000 additional mainstream places between 2018/19 and 2020/21.

### 4. Place Planning Estimates

The place planning tables show the estimated number of places needed in order to meet future demand. These tables are provided for readers interested in planning school place provision.

The estimates factor in existing capacity reported at 1 May 2018, additional capacity that local authorities have reported they have firm plans for, and additional capacity being provided through centrally funded programmes (e.g. Free Schools). This capacity is then compared with the forecasts provided by the local authorities. The starting premise of the estimates is that identification of forecast need and identification of the corresponding capacity is carried out at planning area level and national curriculum year group level, i.e. places have to be available in the correct planning area and year group. Further information on how these estimates are calculated, how to interpret them and their limitations is provided in the technical guide (School Place Planning Tables 2018: Technical guidance).

Two versions of the place planning tables are provided in this publication. The first version (tables B1-B4) identifies places needed only, setting aside spare places identified within the calculation. The second version (tables B5-B6) retains spare places within the calculation, and allows for examination of the extent of spare places alongside places needed. The national and regional figures for the second version are not provided because pockets of demand and pockets of spare places are lost in the aggregation.

According to the data provided at 1 May 2018 and the analysis applied, an estimated 29,000 primary places were needed across England in order to meet demand in academic year 2018/19. Alternatively, looking further ahead, an estimated 63,000 primary places are needed across England to meet demand for academic year 2022/23. This translates to between 5,000 and 11,000 primary places needed each year. The profile at secondary shows a growing need for places over time. At secondary, an estimated 88,000 places are needed in order to meet demand for 2022/23. This translates to an annual need of around 12,000 extra places needed between 2018/19 and 2019/20 rising to around 24,000 places needed between 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Care should be taken with interpretation of these estimates. Please refer to the technical guidance.

### 5. School sixth form capacity: experimental statistics

Sixth form capacity in schools was collected for the first time in the 2018 school capacity survey, as a voluntary field. These statistics are considered experimental as there may be limitations to using this data due to partial coverage and the requirement for further operational testing. They are, however, useful to gauge capacity in sixth forms attached to schools and have been published for transparency purposes.

Table C1 shows the number of school sixth form places by local authority in England. A local authority may have submitted sixth form capacity for all their schools, some of their schools or none of their schools. These potential outcomes have been footnoted in the table. The table shows that number on roll is usually lower than sixth form capacity where data has been submitted.

## 6. Accompanying tables

The following tables and underlying data are available in Excel format on the department's statistics website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-capacity-academic-year-2017-to-2018>):

School Capacity 2018 Main tables (A1-A7)

School Capacity 2018 Main tables underlying data

School Place Planning 2018 tables (B1-B6)

School Place Planning 2018 underlying data

School Sixth Form Capacity 2018 - Experimental statistics (C1)

School Sixth Form Capacity 2018 underlying data

## 7. Further information

- Previous releases can be found at: [Statistics: school capacity](#)

## 8. Official Statistics

These are Official Statistics and have been produced in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

This can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

The Department has a set of statistical policies in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

## 9. Technical information

### Data collection

1. Information in this release has been derived from four data sources. More information can be found in the School Place Planning 2018 Technical Guidance
  - a) School Capacity survey – an annual survey returned by local authorities that collects capacity and forecast information.
  - b) Capital Spend Data survey – an annual survey returned by local authorities that collects information on local authority planned places and associated costs, excluding DfE centrally funded programmes.
  - c) School Census – a termly census of all schools in England, used to provide number on roll figures.
  - d) Central Programmes data – administrative data about the provision of places through centrally funded programmes (further detail in the School Place Planning Technical Guidance).

## Data coverage and quality

2. Guidance on how the data supplied through the School Capacity Collection should be reported by local authorities can be found here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-capacity-survey-2018-guide-for-local-authorities>  
All the data submitted have undergone a thorough data cleaning process with validation at source and at the Department. Anomalies have been raised with local authorities to check that the guidance has been followed. Except where noted in the tables, all data has been signed off by Directors of Children's Services (or equivalent roles) as complete and accurate.
3. Forecast data is generated by local authorities based on their own data and local knowledge. These forecasts are challenged extensively during data cleaning processes. There are variations in the forecasting methodologies and data sources used across local authorities. This means there is the potential for local anomalies within the methodology. As with any forecast figures, there will be variation between the forecasts and the subsequent actual pupil numbers. Forecasting accuracy measures are calculated and published for each local authority in the School Place Scorecards. The School Place Scorecards can be found here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/school-places-scorecards>
4. Forecasting accuracy is derived retrospectively, once actual pupil numbers for the forecast data become available. Most local authorities' forecasting accuracy tends to be within +/-1% one year ahead.
5. LA planned places are based on local authority estimates. Only places added in valid SCAP 18 planning areas are included.

## Notes for users

6. For capacity, schools are reported as deemed. Therefore, for a middle-deemed primary school all capacity is counted as primary and for a middle-deemed secondary school all capacity is counted as secondary. Pupil forecast data is split by phase, so primary includes year groups R-6 only, and secondary includes year groups 7-13.
7. Number on roll is the number of sole and dual main registered pupils attending a school as reported via the school census. Number on roll (actuals) within the forecast tables are based on the January 2018 census. Number on roll figures within the capacity tables are taken from the summer (May 2018) census, except for new schools (including schools that have become academies) where figures are based on data gathered during the School Capacity survey. Number on roll relates to pupils in reception year group and above.
8. Academies are not required to complete a net capacity assessment. Therefore, their final net capacity is reported as per their funding agreement (subject to any information that the local authority holds in addition).
9. Free Schools are reported at their final intended capacity and in their final intended planning area. The capacities of local authority maintained schools are reported as built and ready-to-use.

## 10. Get in touch

### Media enquiries

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### Other enquiries/feedback

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for Education

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