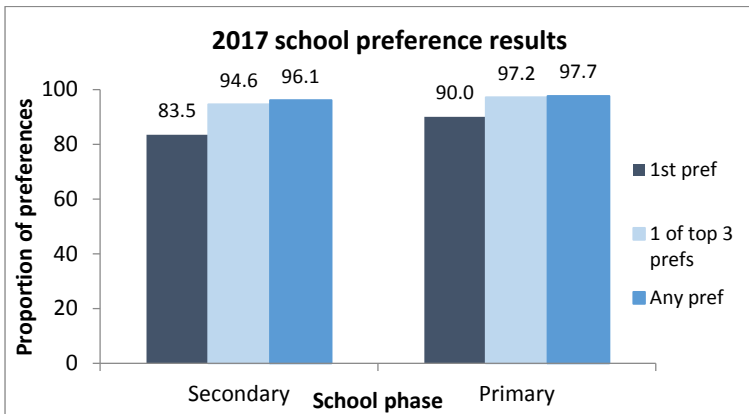




Secondary and primary school applications and offers: March and April 2017

SFR 24/2017, 13 June 2017

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



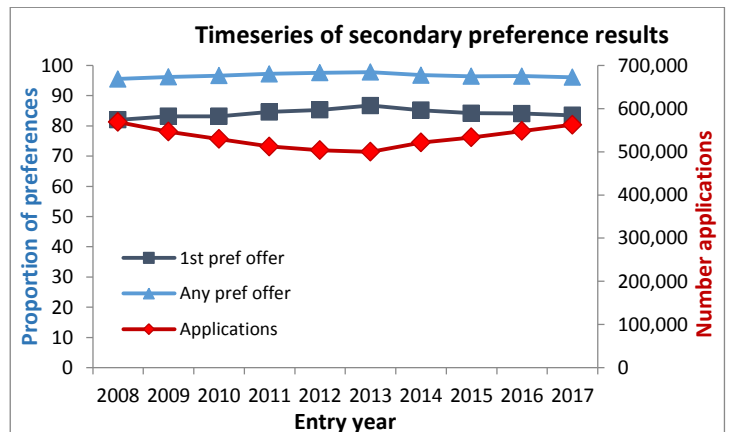
In 2017 83.5% of applicants for a **secondary** school place received an offer of their first preference school. 94.6% received an offer of one of their top three preferences.

At **primary** level, 90.0% of applicants received an offer of their first choice school, and 97.2% received an offer of one of their top three preferences.

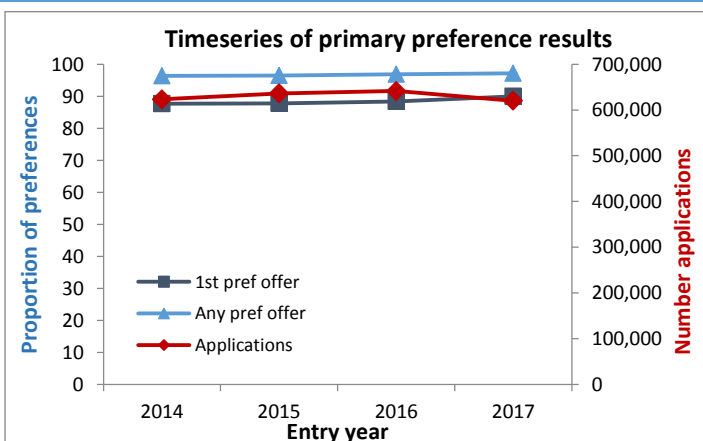
There has been a continued increase in applications for secondary school places

In 2017 562,487 applications for a secondary school place were received, an increase of 2.6% on 2016 and the highest number of applications received since 2008 (568,723).

The proportion of first preference offers dropped slightly to 83.5%, compared to 84.1% in 2016. The proportion receiving an offer of any of their preferences also dropped slightly to 96.1% in 2017, from 96.5% in 2016.



Applications for primary places have dropped



Applications for a primary school place have dropped by 3.3% from 2016, with 620,330 applications. This total is the lowest seen in the four years that primary level figures have been collected.

The proportion of primary applicants who received an offer of their first choice school increased from 88.4% in 2016 to 90.0%. The proportion receiving an offer of any of their preferences also increased from 96.9% to 97.7%.

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 (1st, 2nd, 3rd 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 2017.

The offers were made, and data collected, based on the national offer days of 1 March 2017 (secondary) and 18 April 2017 (primary).

In this publication

The following documents are included as part of this SFR:

Local authority tables (Excel .xlsx)

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.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 2017. The secondary figures have been collected since 2008 and a time series of the key figures has been provided below.

562,487 applications were received for a place at secondary school in 2017, a 2.6% increase on 2016. This continues the increase first seen since 2013, when the rise in births which began the previous decade started to reach secondary school age, and follows a 2.8% increase between 2015 and 2016.

The proportion of secondary applicants receiving an offer of their first choice school has dropped slightly from 84.1% in 2016 to 83.5% in 2017. The proportion of applicants who received an offer of any of their preferred schools also dropped slightly to 96.1% in 2017 (from 96.5%).

At local authority level Northumberland (98.2%), Cornwall (97.3%) and Bedford (96.8%) achieved the three best first preference rates in 2017. Northumberland and Cornwall have been top three performers in this measure for the last three years.

As in previous years, the lowest first preference rates at secondary level are all in London. Hammersmith & Fulham (53.6%), Westminster (56.6%) and Lewisham (57.8%) achieved the lowest rates in 2017. Hammersmith & Fulham and Westminster have been in the lowest three since 2015 but both achieved higher preference rates in 2017 compared to 2016 (52.0% and 53.4% respectively).

An applicant can apply for any school, including those situated in another local authority. Their authority liaises with the requested school, to ensure the applicant is considered under the admissions criteria, and makes the offer. In 2017 8.6% of secondary offers made were of schools outside the home authority. This figure has been stable for the past few years.

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
2017/18	83.5	94.6	96.1	8.6	562,487

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 2017. 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 four years of data are available currently. A timeseries of the key figures has been provided below.

The number of applications for a primary school place in 2017 was 620,330, 3.3% lower than in 2016 (641,572). This decrease is a result of the notable drop in births in 2013, which is now feeding into primary school applications. The number of applications is the lowest seen in the four years that this data has been collected.

The proportion of applicants receiving their first preference offer has risen to 90.0%, up 1.6 percentage points on 2016. The proportion receiving an offer of any of their preferences has also increased, from 96.9% (2016) to 97.7%.

At local authority level Redcar & Cleveland (98.7%), Hartlepool (97.7%) and Cumbria (97.4%) achieved the best first preference rates in 2017. Both Redcar & Cleveland and Cumbria were top three performers in 2016, and both have further improved their results (97.4% and 96.4% respectively in 2016).

Discounting City of London (because of the tiny number of applications they receive) the local authorities with the worst first preference rates in 2017 were Kensington & Chelsea with 68.4%, Hammersmith & Fulham (75.2%) and Reading (78.9%). Kensington & Chelsea's results were virtually the same as in 2016 (68.3%) but Hammersmith & Fulham improved by 3.3 percentage points (71.9% in 2016).

Overall, London local authorities continue to perform much better at primary level than at secondary. For London as a whole the first preference rate at primary level was 85.9% (83.7% in 2016), compared to 68.2% at secondary level (68.8% in 2016).

As in previous years, at primary level a notably smaller proportion of offers were made of schools outside the applicant's local authority compared to secondary level. In 2017 2.8% of offers were outside the home authority. This has remained stable for the four years for which primary data is available.

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
2017/18	90.0	97.2	97.7	2.8	620,330

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 2017/18.
- 2 Applications and offers for entry to primary schools in England for the start of academic year 2017/18.

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.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

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Department
for Education



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

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