



Fact sheet 5: New homes and school places

This fact sheet considers the relationship between new homes and school places. If you are reading this online, please click on the hyperlinks for further information. See the full New Homes Fact Sheet series [here](#).

If there are new homes, how many more children will require school places?



Local authorities calculate how many school-aged children will live in each new home within their area. The result is referred to as the ‘pupil yield’ and is designed to reflect local trends, including local household sizes. When considering the impact of new homes on schools in a local area, the local authority’s pupil yield calculation is used.

The Department for Education (DfE) also produces [national pupil yields from housing development](#), which show that, across England, the average number of school age children per home is 0.25 primary and 0.13 secondary school pupils. Based on DfE’s national average pupil yields:



100 homes typically include **25** primary and **13** secondary school pupils

500 homes typically include **125** primary and **65** secondary school pupils

1,000 homes typically include **250** primary and **130** secondary school pupils



The demand for school places will vary depending on the number of school-age children living in the new homes. Larger homes such as family-sized dwellings typically accommodate more school-age children than smaller homes, such as flats.



Evidence shows that new housing [tends to attract more young families](#) and therefore more demand for school places.

How many new homes are served by an average sized school?

While the size of schools differs across the country, the [latest data](#) for 2022/23 shows that the average size of a primary school in England accommodates 276 pupils. Secondary schools are typically bigger, and in 2022/23 the average secondary school in England accommodate 1,054 pupils.

Based on DfE’s national average pupil yields and 2022/23 average school sizes for England, the typical demand generated by new homes is equivalent to:



one average sized primary school
1,104 new homes



one average sized secondary school
8,107 new homes

Aside from new homes, what other factors influence demand for school places?

- **Changes in birth rates:** average birth rates have fallen nationally over the past 10 years, but with local variations
- **Migration:** residents moving into and out of school catchment areas. Some schools accommodate pupils who reside in another authority area
- **Local population profile:** areas with ageing populations, which is more common in rural areas, may have falling numbers of school-age children
- **Parental preference:** places at schools rated by Ofsted as ‘Outstanding’ can be more popular
- **Choice of school type:** people choosing mainstream compared to independent schools

Did you know?

Across England, the number of primary and secondary aged children is [projected to fall between 2023 and 2040](#), due to declining birth rates.



Primary

5.5 million
2023

5.2 million
2040



Secondary

4.3 million
2023

3.9 million
2040



How is the impact of new homes on school places calculated and planned for?

Education is a devolved matter in England and the [Education Act \(1996\)](#) establishes that all local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure there are enough school places to accommodate young people who reside in the local area.

Local authorities strategically plan for education provision as part of the Local Plan process. In addition, when a planning application for new housing is put forward, the potential impact of more school-age children on school places is assessed on a case-by-case basis at that point in time.

1. Engaging early is advised: Developers are advised to engage early with the relevant local authority that deals with education, to assess the impact of new housing on education facilities, and to proactively plan for new school places where required. All types of education are considered: early years, primary, secondary, sixth form and for those with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

2. Identifying nearby schools: Identifying schools that are close to a housing scheme is important to assess potential impacts, for example school catchment areas and other education facilities that can be reasonably accessed from the location of new housing.

3. Understanding current capacity at local schools: Consideration is given to the current patterns of capacity across relevant schools, as reported by the schools each year to the Department for Education (DfE). For further information on the current levels of capacity at local schools, refer to [data published by the DfE](#).

4. Forecasting future needs: Pupil projections reflect local trends such as birth rates and migration in and out of the local authority area. This is reviewed by the DfE, along with local authorities and county councils, where relevant. [National Pupil Projections](#) published in 2022 provide the latest data on future school needs.

5. Understanding the cumulative impact of multiple projects on education facilities: The local authority will review the cumulative impacts of new homes projects in the local area on education demand. For most major developments, planning applications will be accompanied by an assessment on education facilities, usually undertaken by specialist consultants.

6. Developers can contribute to funding school infrastructure: Developers can be legally required to pay [financial or 'in kind' contributions](#) for new school infrastructure, if new housing generates a need which cannot be met by existing local education facilities. This may include expanding existing schools and building new ones. Developers may also be required to contribute towards school transport, to support sustainable patterns of travel.

Can new schools be built before new housing is delivered?

The [DfE recommends](#) that new school places are made available in line with demand from new housing, so that local authorities can ensure the right balance of school places for local residents.

Can new schools help form new communities?

New schools can play a role in bringing a community together by creating opportunities to form new relationships and social networks. Schools are viewed as an [important placemaking component](#) in the design of large housing schemes.