



Department
for Education

How to read your Net Capacity Assessment (NCA) report: special schools

Introduction

This guide describes the key features and figures that will be of interest.

Not everyone needs to have expert knowledge of all elements of the report: this document explains the fundamental parts of the report and how the figures are calculated.

If you would like further information on the formulas used and the methodology, you can find more details in the [Net Capacity Assessment guidance](#).

Summary

The report uses data on the size and type of every room in the school to generate a number of workplaces.

These are added up, and adjustments are made using a tried and tested formula to ensure the school also has enough space for non-teaching resources and facilities.

The adjustments also allow for limits on the number of pupils allowed in some teaching rooms for health and safety reasons and assume not all rooms are timetabled at all times.

This results in maximum and minimum capacity figures.

These are compared against the school's planned number of places, to generate a single net capacity figure.

The workplaces for special schools are initially based on the calculations for mainstream schools but there are extra adjustments in the calculations to take account of the significant additional space requirements for pupils in special schools and the wide variety of needs of pupils in special schools.

Sections of the report

Version control

This is used to show which version of the NCA tool was used to produce the report.

Guidance

This section explains the purpose of the report.

It provides step-by-step instructions on the sections in the report (tabs on the net capacity report Excel spreadsheet)

This section also includes definitions of the different types of room and other spaces in the school.

It goes on to show how the number of Workplaces is calculated, using the size and type of each room. The number of workplaces is broadly equivalent to the number of pupils that can be accommodated.

Basic workplaces are those that can be used for teaching.

The formula allows 10 to 30 basic Workplaces per room, or multiples of 30 for larger rooms– but that room can have additional resource workplaces. 'for special schools these figures do not represent actual class sizes - later on in the calculations there is an adjustment which reduces the workplaces in classrooms to 35% of these figures.

Resource workplaces are used for support space, and may include offices, storage and break-out spaces. Note that all rooms under 19.5 m sq in special schools only generate resource workplaces.

The guidance section also includes other useful definitions, such as:

Spaces that are unusable as basic workplaces and so don't count towards the capacity figure – such as those without enough light.

The status of each space, which determines whether the space is included in the capacity calculations. The status can be:

- a primary class base
- teaching spaces
- early years and childcare spaces
- other 'non-school' spaces that aren't normally available for teaching or learning.
- blank or not applicable

Establishment details

These are important as they aren't just for reference – the following information is used in the capacity calculations:

- establishment age range
- building information including number of sites and total site area
- main admissions details including planned number of places
- nursery admissions details

Room details

This section can be really useful, as it gives a complete list of the size, type and use of every room and space in the school.

This information forms the raw data that is used to make the capacity calculations.

Net capacity

This is the part of the report that shows the key elements of the Net Capacity Assessment.

There is a definition for each box, which represents a figure used for the calculations.

The calculations include some adjustments depending on the size of the site and the type of school:

The 'utilisation factor' is the average proportion of time that any workplace is in use. For special schools this is between 25% and 30%, depending on the age range.

The 'basic workplace allowance' is an adjustment that recognises that smaller schools need some large non-teaching spaces and halls.

The key numbers to look out for on this page are:

Maximum workplaces available: The maximum number of pupils that can be accommodated once the adjustments have been made to the total number of workplaces (to ensure that there is enough space available for support areas and curriculum needs).

Minimum workplaces available: In mainstream schools this is 90% of the maximum workplaces available.

Capacity based on planned admission number (PAN): This is the school's planned number of places.

The **net capacity** is equal to the capacity based on PAN (planned number of places) in special schools, if it is within the minimum to maximum range.

If capacity based on PAN is below the minimum, the net capacity defaults to the minimum workplaces available.

If capacity based on PAN is above the maximum, the net capacity defaults to the maximum workplaces available.

You can find more detailed descriptions of the net capacity method on the report itself in the [Net Capacity Assessment guidance](#).