

## Statistical Bulletin 7/2018

# Annual enrolments at grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland 2018/19:

## Basic provisional statistics

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The purpose of this statistical release is to present basic provisional enrolment figures for schools and for children in funded pre-school education for 2018/19.

**Key points:**

- There are 174,522 pupils in **primary** schools (years 1-7), and this continues to increase even though there are fewer primary schools year on year.
- In total 142,237 pupils are enrolled in **post-primary** schools; an increase of almost 1,700 pupils from 2017/18.
- There are 23,576 pupils in **funded pre-school** education, that is, pupils attending a nursery school or class, reception or funded voluntary and private pre-school.
- Approximately 100,000 pupils in all schools in Northern Ireland are entitled to **free school meals** and this represents about three in ten of all pupils.

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## Introduction

The data in the following bulletin are taken from the school enrolments census, which was conducted in October 2018. Data collected through the school census exercise are used by the Department of Education (DE) to inform a wide range of policy areas, including finance allocations, school estate development and planning, special education, school improvement, area based planning, extended schools, additional educational needs, early years and integrated and Irish medium education. Other users include the Education Authority, the Education and Training Inspectorate and to inform responses to Assembly questions and requests from academic researchers, journalists, lobby groups and the public.

This first release of the basic statistics contains information which is used in the process to allocate funding to schools. These figures are provisional and subject to change. A further statistical release, containing a more detailed set of tables based on finalised and validated data, will be published in February 2019.

## Section 1: Schools in Northern Ireland

- The numbers of **schools** in Northern Ireland continues to decrease, from 1,180 in 2014/15 to 1,146 in 2018/19 (Table 1). Much of this decline is accounted for by the drop of 23 **primary schools** (including preparatory departments) and 10 **non-grammar schools** from 2014.
- The number of funded **pre-school settings** has dropped from 773 last year to 771 this year. This includes 386 voluntary and private pre-schools, 246 primary schools with nursery provision, 95 nursery schools and 44 primary schools with reception classes<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> To avoid double counting, the number of primary schools with nursery or reception classes have not been split out separately in table 1

**Table 1: Number of Schools and Pre-school Education Centres by Management Type**

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<b>VOLUNTARY and PRIVATE PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>401</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>386</b>
<b>NURSERY SCHOOLS</b>					
Controlled	64	64	64	64	64
Catholic Maintained	32	32	31	31	31
<b>Total nursery schools</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b>					
Controlled	370	368	366	365	365
Catholic Maintained	381	374	370	367	363
Other Maintained	29	29	28	28	28
Controlled Integrated	19	20	22	22	22
Grant Maintained Integrated	23	23	23	23	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>801</b>
Grammar school preparatory depts.	14	13	12	12	12
<b>Total primary schools and preparatory depts.</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>821</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>813</b>
<b>POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b>					
<b>Secondary (non grammar) schools</b>					
Controlled	51	49	49	49	48
Catholic Maintained	68	64	64	62	60
Other Maintained	1	2	2	2	2
Controlled Integrated	5	5	5	5	5
Grant Maintained Integrated	15	15	15	15	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>Grammar schools</b>					
Controlled	18	17	16	16	16
Voluntary					
Under Catholic management	29	29	29	29	29
Under other management	21	21	21	21	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Total Post Primary schools</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>SPECIAL SCHOOLS</b>	<b>Total</b>	39	39	39	39
<b>HOSPITAL SCHOOLS</b>	<b>Total</b>	1	1	1	1
<b>INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS</b>	<b>Total</b>	14	14	14	14
<b>ALL SCHOOLS<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,180</b>	<b>1,166</b>	<b>1,159</b>	<b>1,153</b>
<b>ALL SCHOOLS AND PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES</b>		<b>1,581</b>	<b>1,571</b>	<b>1,558</b>	<b>1,532</b>

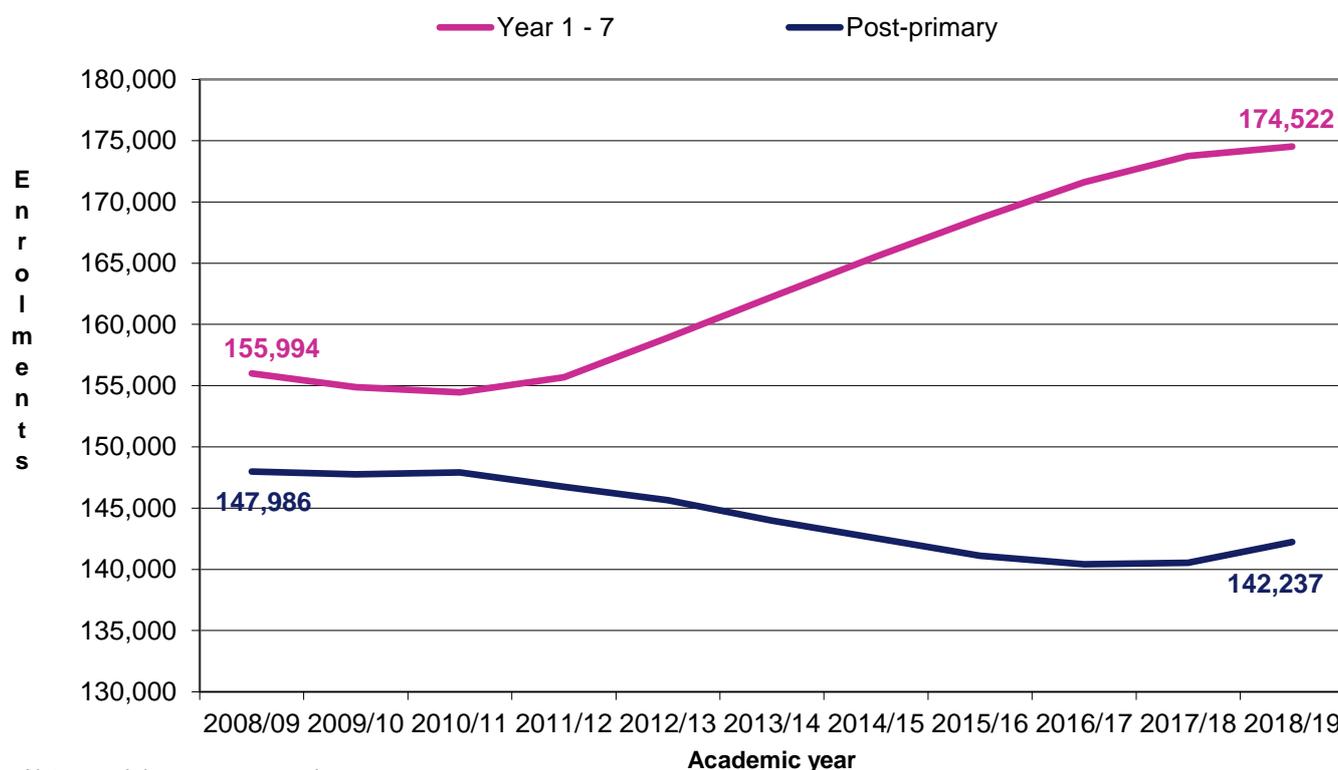
1 Voluntary and private centres funded under the Pre-school Education Expansion Programme, which began in 1998/99.

2 All schools total does not count preparatory departments as separate schools as they are so closely linked to grammar schools

## Section 2: Enrolments in schools in Northern Ireland

- There were almost 347,000 pupils in **all** funded schools (including voluntary and private pre-schools) in October 2018 (Table 2). This has increased for the ninth successive year, and has risen by almost 3,000 pupils alone compared to last year.
- Enrolments in **primary schools** (years 1-7) follow the overall trend, with an increase of almost 800 pupils on last year to 174,522 (Figure 1). This is the highest number of primary school pupils recorded since 1999. The increase observed is in line with the rise in the number of 4-10 year olds in NISRA's population estimates over the last five years<sup>2</sup>.

**Figure 1 - Enrolments in primary and post-primary schools in Northern Ireland 2008/09 - 2018/19**

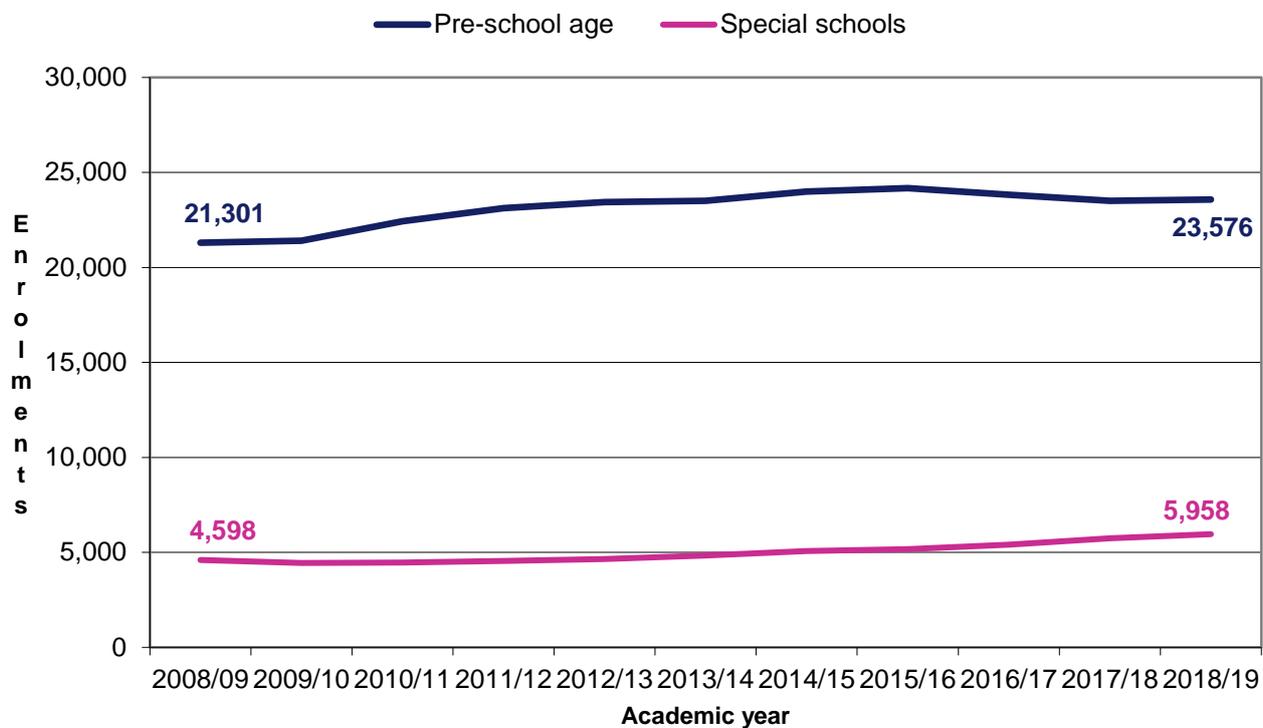


Note: graph has a non-zero axis

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/NI\\_sya\\_7117.xlsx](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/NI_sya_7117.xlsx)

- Enrolments in **post-primary schools** have increased for the second year in a row to 142,237 pupils.
  - Similarly to last year, enrolments have increased in **non-grammar**, with an increase this year of almost 1,700. In contrast to last year enrolments in **grammar** schools have increased slightly. (Table 2).
  - The number of pupils enrolled in **sixth form** has dropped for the fourth successive year. This year's enrolments have declined more than 400 pupils since last year and now stands at 28,073 (Table 2).
  - The number of pupils enrolled in **years 8 – 12** has risen by more than 2,000 since last year. This increase is in line with the rise in the number of 11 – 15 year olds in NISRA's population estimates.
- The number of children in funded **pre-school education**, that is, reception classes, nursery schools and units, or voluntary and private pre-school centres, is 23,576, which has increased by over 70 pupils since last year.
- **Special school** enrolments have also gradually increased, rising by nearly 900 pupils in the last five years to 5,958 in 2018/19.

**Figure 2 - Enrolments in special schools and funded pre-school education in Northern Ireland 2008/09 - 2018/19**



**Table 2: Number of Pupils in Schools and Children in Funded Pre-school Education by Type of Establishment attended**

		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	
<b>VOLUNTARY and PRIVATE</b>							
<b>PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>8,621</b>	<b>8,716</b>	<b>8,271</b>	<b>7,954</b>	<b>8,022</b>	
<b>NURSERY SCHOOLS</b>							
	Full-time	4,000	4,011	3,955	3,943	3,930	
	Part-time	1,882	1,893	1,909	1,894	1,901	
<b>Total nursery school pupils</b>		<b>5,882</b>	<b>5,904</b>	<b>5,864</b>	<b>5,837</b>	<b>5,831</b>	
<b>PRIMARY SCHOOLS and PREPARATORY DEPARTMENTS</b>							
<b>Nursery class pupils</b>							
	Full-time	5,103	5,195	5,174	5,146	5,439	
	Part-time	4,062	4,117	4,292	4,377	4,126	
<b>Total nursery class pupils<sup>3</sup></b>		<b>9,165</b>	<b>9,312</b>	<b>9,466</b>	<b>9,523</b>	<b>9,565</b>	
	Reception	<b>329</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>158</b>	
<b>Year 1-7 classes</b>							
	Primary schools (year 1 - 7)	163,735	166,912	169,908	172,034	172,862	
	Grammar school preparatory depts. (year 1 - 7)	1,813	1,757	1,704	1,710	1,660	
<b>Total year 1 - 7 pupils</b>		<b>165,548</b>	<b>168,669</b>	<b>171,612</b>	<b>173,744</b>	<b>174,522</b>	
<b>Total primary school pupils</b>		<b>175,042</b>	<b>178,222</b>	<b>181,302</b>	<b>183,453</b>	<b>184,245</b>	
<b>POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b>							
Non-grammar schools	Years 8-12	66,516	64,508	64,888	65,858	67,690	
	Sixth form <sup>4</sup>	13,324	13,245	12,544	11,869	11,686	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>79,840</b>	<b>77,753</b>	<b>77,432</b>	<b>77,727</b>	<b>79,376</b>	
Grammar schools	Years 8-12	45,324	46,034	46,040	46,191	46,474	
	Sixth form <sup>4</sup>	17,389	17,325	16,941	16,627	16,387	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>62,713</b>	<b>63,359</b>	<b>62,981</b>	<b>62,818</b>	<b>62,861</b>	
<b>Total post primary pupils</b>		<b>142,553</b>	<b>141,112</b>	<b>140,413</b>	<b>140,545</b>	<b>142,237</b>	
<b>SPECIAL SCHOOLS<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>5,064</b>	<b>5,173</b>	<b>5,407</b>	<b>5,735</b>	<b>5,958</b>
<b>INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>604</b>
<b>ALL SCHOOLS</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>329,183</b>	<b>331,069</b>	<b>333,500</b>	<b>336,174</b>	<b>338,875</b>
<b>ALL SCHOOLS AND PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES</b>			<b>337,804</b>	<b>339,785</b>	<b>341,771</b>	<b>344,128</b>	<b>346,897</b>

1. Voluntary and private centres funded under the Pre-school Education Expansion Programme, which began in 1998/99.

2. The number of pupils in the Hospital school have been removed. Their enrolments have been counted against the mainstream school they are registered to.

3. Nursery and reception pupils who are enrolled in preparatory departments of grammar schools have not been included as they are not funded by the Department.

4. Pupils in sixth form refer to those that are studying level 3 qualifications (i.e. A Level or equivalent)

### Section 3: Pupils entitled to free school meals<sup>3</sup>

- Based on provisional data, approximately 100,000 pupils are entitled to **free school meals** in 2018/19, which represents 29% of children in funded education (excluding voluntary and private pre-schools) (Table 3).
- The proportion of pupils that are free school meal entitled has dropped slightly from last year in **primary** (29% compared to 30% last year). The proportion in **post-primary** has stayed the same (28%) (Table 3).
- There are some differences in free school meal entitlement by school type. **Special schools** have a much higher than average proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (52%). **Non-grammar** pupils are also much more likely than **grammar** school pupils to be entitled to free school meals (39% compared to 14%) (Table 3).

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/school-milk-and-meals-background>

**Table 3: Percentage of Children Entitled to Free School Meals<sup>1,4,5</sup> by Type of Establishment attended**

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<b>VOLUNTARY and PRIVATE</b>					
<b>PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES<sup>1,2</sup></b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>NURSERY SCHOOLS<sup>1</sup></b>					
Full-time	47%	50%	48%	44%	46%
Part-time	11%	12%	10%	10%	10%
<b>All nursery schools</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b>					
<b>Nursery class pupils<sup>1,4</sup></b>					
Full-time	44%	44%	42%	42%	39%
Part-time	12%	12%	12%	11%	11%
<b>Total nursery class pupils<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>27%</b>
Reception	19%	14%	17%	12%	13%
<b>Year 1-7 classes</b>					
Primary schools (year 1 - 7)	32%	32%	32%	31%	30%
Grammar school preparatory depts. (year 1 - 7)	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%
<b>Total year 1 - 7 pupils</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Total primary school pupils</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b>					
Secondary (non grammar) schools	37%	40%	41%	39%	39%
Grammar schools	12%	14%	14%	14%	14%
<b>TOTAL POST PRIMARY PUPILS</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>SPECIAL SCHOOLS<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>ALL SCHOOLS<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>TOTAL SCHOOLS AND PRE-EDUCATION CENTRES</b>		<b>29%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>29%</b>

1. For pupils and children in the nursery sector and in voluntary and private pre-school centres, where free school meal entitlement data is not appropriate, the number of pupils with (a) parent(s) in receipt of Job Seeker's allowance or Income Support is used instead of free school meal entitlement.

2. Voluntary and private centres funded under the Pre-school Education Expansion Programme, which began in 1998/99.

3. Free school meal entitlement data is not validated for independent schools therefore has not been included.

4. Eligibility under the Working Tax Credit free school meal criterion was introduced on a phased basis with Nursery, Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils eligible from September 2010 and Key Stage 2 pupils eligible from September 2011. It was extended to post-primary pupils from September 2014.

5. These figures may be subject to revision once the Education Authority's auditing process is completed.

6. Nursery and reception pupils who are enrolled in preparatory departments of grammar schools have not been included as they are not funded by the Department.

## Notes for readers

### ***National Statistics***

1. The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation 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.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

2. For general enquiries about National Statistics, contact the National Statistics Public Enquiry Service on 0845 601 3034  
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E-mail: [info@statistics.gov.uk](mailto:info@statistics.gov.uk)

Fax: 01633 652747

Letters: Customer Contact Centre, Office for National Statistics, Rm 1.101,  
Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport, NP10 8XG

3. You can also find National Statistics on the Internet: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>

### ***School Census***

4. The statistics in this release have been derived from the annual School Census; details about the survey may be found at <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-enrolments-data-collection-and-validation>. For voluntary and private pre-school centres, and nursery schools, the census consists of a paper return comprising a number of tables; for post-primary, primary and special schools, it consists of a return comprising individual pupil records, made by Electronic Data Interchange.
5. The 2018/19 figures in this statistical release are based on information as at 5 October 2018. They may be subject to minor revision and these will be notified in accordance with our revisions policy. This can be accessed at <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/Statistical%20Revisions.pdf>.

6. A further statistical release, containing **finalised figures** and a more detailed set of tables, will be published in February 2019.
7. The figures for nursery *classes* relate to approved nursery classes in primary schools. The figures for reception refer to pupils who were below compulsory school age at 1st July 2018, who were admitted to a reception class or group in primary school following their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. Schools may admit reception pupils throughout the year, but only those who have been admitted by 31st October are counted in the school census.
8. Further statistics relating to school numbers and enrolments can be found on the DE website ([www.education-ni.gov.uk](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk)) under the Facts and Figures section.

The DE website presents figures taken from the school census, summarised at regional, former Education and Library Board and school level. Statistics on pupil attendance, pupil: teacher ratios, school leaver destinations and qualifications may also be accessed via the website.

9. Information on enrolments collected via the school census process are used to inform DE policy and procedures (particularly School Funding), as well as to inform Education Authority of detailed information useful to them in their auditing processes.

### **School types**

10. Definitions of school management types are as follows:

- **Controlled:** Schools are managed and funded by the Education Authority through Boards of Governors (BoG). Primary and post-primary school BoGs consist of representatives of transferors - mainly the Protestant churches - along with representatives of parents, teachers and the EA.
- **Voluntary:** Self-governing schools, generally of long standing, originally established to provide an academic education at post primary level on a fee paying basis. Now funded by the Department and managed by Boards of Governors. The BoGs are constituted in accordance with each school's scheme of management - usually representatives of foundation governors, parents, teachers and in most cases, DE or EA representatives. The BoGs is the employing authority and is responsible for the employment of all staff in its school.
- **Maintained** schools are managed by Boards of Governors which consist of members nominated by trustees, along with representatives of parents, teachers and the Education Authority. These schools are funded through the EA for their running costs and directly by the Department in relation to capital building works. For **Catholic Maintained** schools, the Employing Authority is the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS). **Other maintained** schools are any schools that are not Catholic maintained. They are typically, but not exclusively, **Irish medium schools**.
- **Controlled integrated:** Controlled schools which have acquired integrated status.
- **Grant Maintained integrated:** Self-governing schools with integrated education status, funded directly by the Department of Education and managed by Boards of Governors. The BoG is the employing authority and responsible for employing staff.

## 11. Definitions of other school types are as follows

- A **special school** is a controlled or voluntary school which is specially organised to provide education for pupils with special needs and is recognised by the DE as a special school.
- An **independent school** is a school at which full-time education is provided for pupils aged from four to 16 and is not grant aided. These schools set their own curriculum and admissions policies and are funded by fees paid by parents and income from investments. Each independent school must be registered with DE and is inspected regularly by ETI.

## Further enquiries

Request for further information should be addressed to:-

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Special analyses of the school census can be undertaken on request.

**Press enquiries should be made to the Department's Press Office at the same address, telephone (028) 9127 9207 / fax (028) 9127 9271.**

Feedback on this publication can be provided directly to Gemma Thomson (contact details above) or via the website: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/contacts/statistics-and-research-team>