

Statistical Bulletin 8/2019

Annual enrolments at grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland 2019/20:

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 2019/20.

Key points:

- There are 173,884 pupils in **primary** schools (years 1-7), a small decrease from the previous year.
- In total 145,077 pupils are enrolled in **post-primary** schools; an increase of over 2,800 pupils from 2018/19.
- There are 23,735 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 2019. 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 2020.

Section 1: Schools in Northern Ireland

- The numbers of **schools** in Northern Ireland continues to decrease, from 1,166 in 2015/16 to 1,136 in 2019/20 (Table 1). Much of this decline is accounted for by the drop of 21 **primary schools** (including preparatory departments) and 8 **non-grammar schools** from 2015.
- The number of funded **pre-school settings** has dropped from 771 last year to 767 this year. This includes 380 voluntary and private pre-schools, 246 primary schools with nursery provision, 95 nursery schools and 46 primary schools with reception classes¹.

¹ 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

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
VOLUNTARY and PRIVATE PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES¹	405	399	383	386	380
NURSERY SCHOOLS					
Controlled	64	64	64	64	64
Catholic Maintained	32	31	31	31	31
Total nursery schools	96	95	95	95	95
PRIMARY SCHOOLS					
Controlled	368	366	365	365	361
Catholic Maintained ²	374	370	367	363	360
Other Maintained	29	28	28	28	28
Controlled Integrated	20	22	22	22	22
Grant Maintained Integrated	23	23	23	23	23
Total	814	809	805	801	794
Grammar school preparatory depts.	13	12	12	12	12
Total primary schools and preparatory depts.	827	821	817	813	806
POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS					
Secondary (non grammar) schools					
Controlled	49	49	49	48	48
Catholic Maintained	64	64	62	60	57
Other Maintained	2	2	2	2	2
Controlled Integrated	5	5	5	5	5
Grant Maintained Integrated	15	15	15	15	15
Total	135	135	133	130	127
Grammar schools					
Controlled	17	16	16	16	16
Voluntary					
Under Catholic management	29	29	29	29	29
Under other management	21	21	21	21	21
Total	67	66	66	66	66
Total Post Primary schools	202	201	199	196	193
SPECIAL SCHOOLS	Total	39	39	39	39
HOSPITAL SCHOOLS	Total	1	1	1	1
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS	Total	14	14	14	14
ALL SCHOOLS³	Total	1,166	1,159	1,153	1,146
ALL SCHOOLS AND PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES		1,571	1,558	1,536	1,532

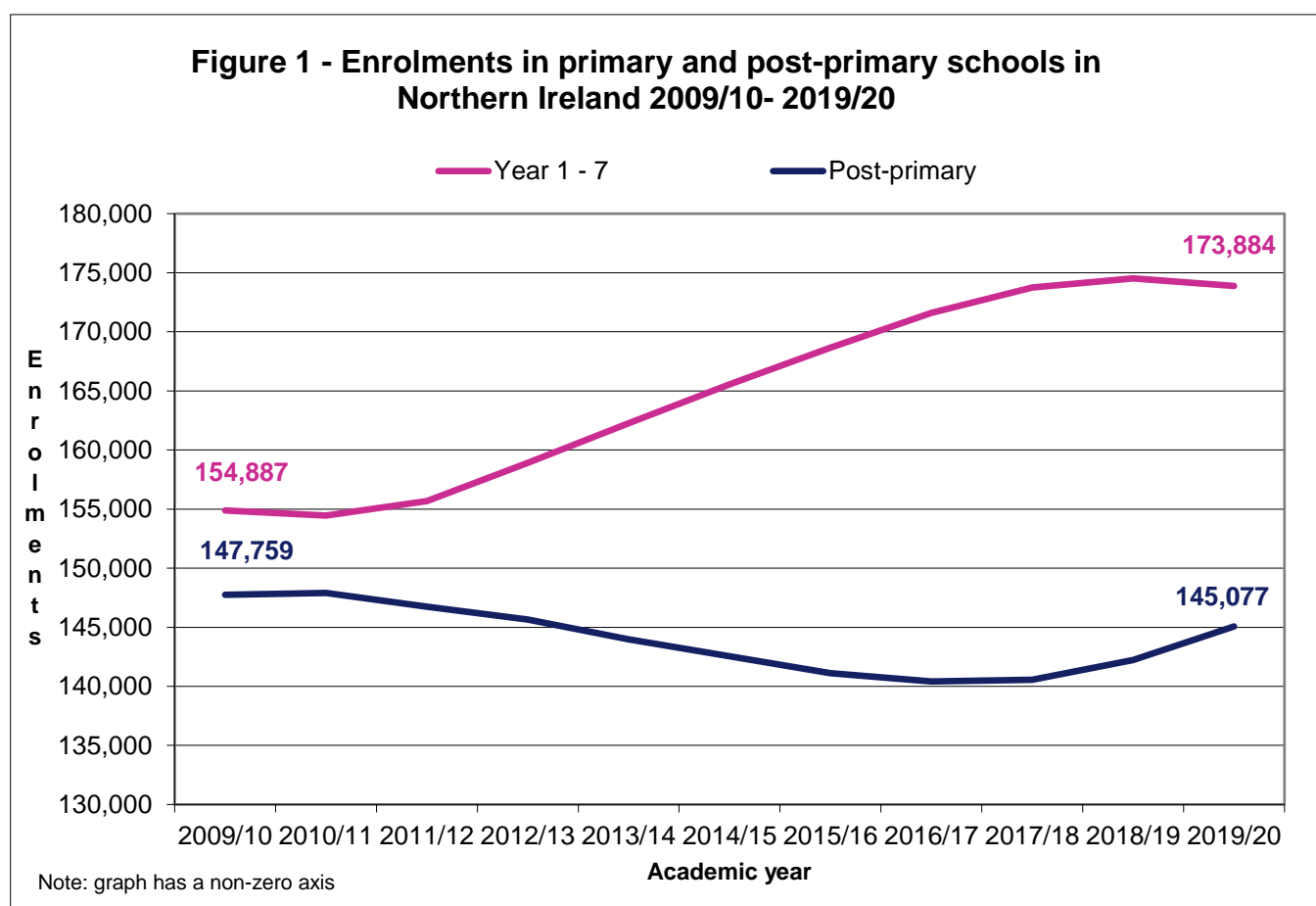
1. Voluntary and private centres funded under the Pre-school Education Expansion Programme, which began in 1998/99.

2. Catholic Maintained total includes a school that did not have any pupils enrolled on census day

3. 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

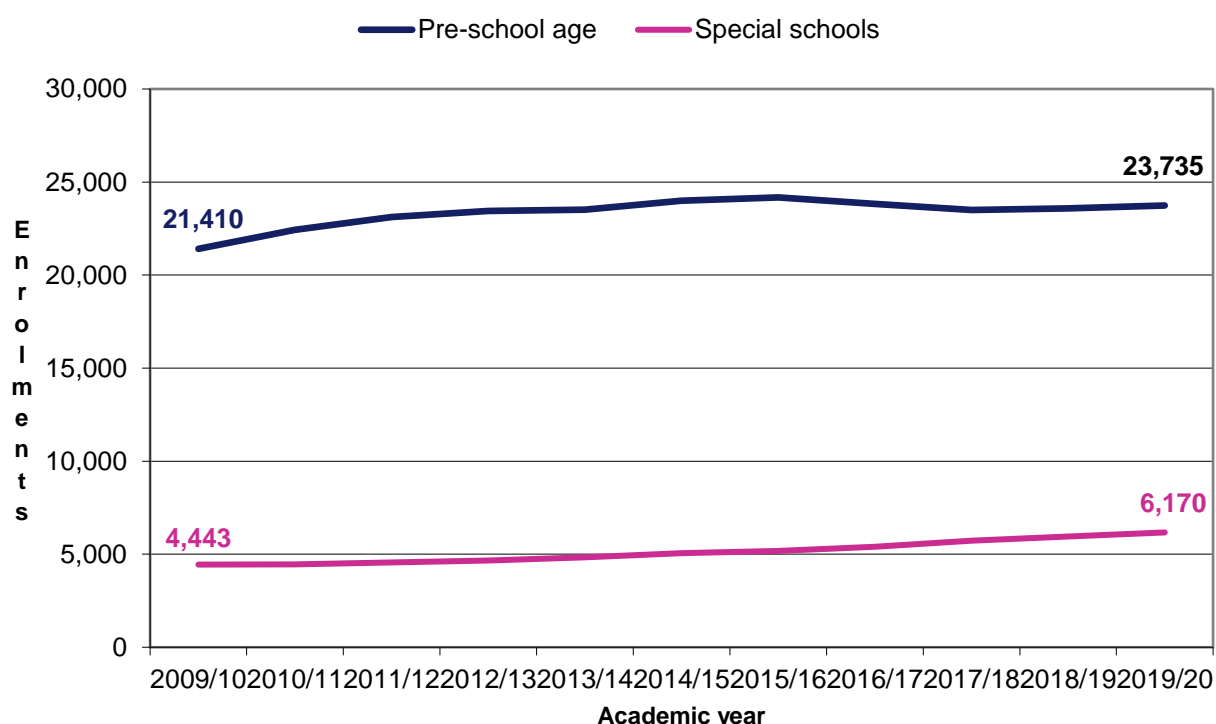
- There were over 349,000 pupils in **all** funded schools (including voluntary and private pre-schools) in October 2019 (Table 2). This has increased for the tenth successive year, and has risen by almost 2,500 pupils alone compared to last year.
- Enrolments in **primary schools** (years 1-7) have decreased for the first time since 2010/11, by more than 600 pupils when compared to last year (from 174,523 to 173,884) (Figure 1).



- Enrolments in **post-primary schools** have increased for the third year in a row to 145,077 pupils.
 - Similarly to last year, enrolments have increased in **non-grammar**, with an increase this year of almost 2,300. Enrolments in **grammar** schools have also increased slightly, rising by nearly 600 pupils. (Table 2).

- The number of pupils enrolled in **sixth form** has dropped for the fifth successive year. This year’s enrolments have declined by almost 600 pupils since last year and now stands at 27,503 (Table 2).
 - The number of pupils enrolled in **years 8 – 12** has risen by more than 3,000 since last year. This increase is in line with the rise in the number of 11 – 15 year olds in NISRA’s population estimates².
- 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 23,735, which has increased by over 150 pupils since last year.
 - **Special school** enrolments have also gradually increased, rising by nearly 1,000 pupils in the last five years to 6,170 in 2019/20.

Figure 2 - Enrolments in special schools and funded pre-school education in Northern Ireland 2009/10 - 2019/20



² https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/NI_sya_7117.xlsx

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

		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	
VOLUNTARY and PRIVATE PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES¹							
		8,716	8,271	7,954	8,022	8,080	
NURSERY SCHOOLS							
	Full-time	4,011	3,955	3,943	3,930	3,935	
	Part-time	1,893	1,909	1,894	1,902	1,890	
	Total nursery school pupils	5,904	5,864	5,837	5,832	5,825	
PRIMARY SCHOOLS and PREPARATORY DEPARTMENTS							
Nursery class pupils							
	Full-time	5,195	5,174	5,146	5,194	5,686	
	Part-time	4,117	4,292	4,377	4,360	3,959	
	Total nursery class pupils³	9,312	9,466	9,523	9,554	9,645	
	Reception	241	224	186	168	185	
Year 1-7 classes							
	Primary schools (year 1 - 7)	166,912	169,908	172,034	172,863	172,283	
	Grammar school preparatory depts. (year 1 - 7)	1,757	1,704	1,710	1,660	1,601	
	Total year 1 - 7 pupils	168,669	171,612	173,744	174,523	173,884	
	Total primary school pupils	178,222	181,302	183,453	184,245	183,714	
POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS							
	Non-grammar schools						
		Years 8-12	64,508	64,888	65,858	67,692	70,500
		Sixth form ⁴	13,245	12,544	11,869	11,685	11,154
		Total	77,753	77,432	77,727	79,377	81,654
	Grammar schools						
		Years 8-12	46,034	46,040	46,191	46,475	47,074
		Sixth form ⁴	17,325	16,941	16,627	16,387	16,349
		Total	63,359	62,981	62,818	62,862	63,423
	Total post primary pupils	141,112	140,413	140,545	142,239	145,077	
	SPECIAL SCHOOLS²	Total	5,173	5,407	5,735	5,959	6,170
	INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS	Total	658	514	604	611	608
	ALL SCHOOLS	Total	331,069	333,500	336,174	338,886	341,394
	ALL SCHOOLS AND PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES		339,785	341,771	344,128	346,908	349,474

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 meals³

- Based on provisional data, approximately 100,000 pupils are entitled to **free school meals** in 2019/20, which represents 28% 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** (28% compared to 30% last year). The proportion in **post-primary** has also dropped (27% compared to 28% last year). (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 (38% compared to 14%) (Table 3).

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

Table 3: Percentage of Children Entitled to Free School Meals^{1,4,5} by Type of Establishment attended

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
VOLUNTARY and PRIVATE					
PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRES^{1,2}	11%	11%	10%	9%	8%
NURSERY SCHOOLS¹					
Full-time	50%	48%	44%	46%	46%
Part-time	12%	10%	10%	10%	9%
All nursery schools	38%	36%	33%	34%	34%
PRIMARY SCHOOLS					
Nursery class pupils^{1,4}					
Full-time	44%	42%	42%	40%	35%
Part-time	12%	12%	11%	11%	9%
Total nursery class pupils⁶	30%	28%	28%	27%	24%
Reception	14%	17%	12%	14%	10%
Year 1-7 classes					
Primary schools (year 1 - 7)	32%	32%	31%	30%	29%
Grammar school preparatory depts. (year 1 - 7)	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Total year 1 - 7 pupils	32%	31%	30%	30%	29%
Total primary school pupils	32%	31%	30%	30%	28%
POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS					
Secondary (non grammar) schools	40%	41%	39%	39%	38%
Grammar schools	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%
TOTAL POST PRIMARY PUPILS	28%	29%	28%	28%	27%
SPECIAL SCHOOLS⁷	53%	54%	51%	52%	52%
ALL SCHOOLS³					
Total	31%	31%	30%	29%	28%
TOTAL SCHOOLS AND PRE-EDUCATION CENTRES	30%	30%	30%	29%	28%

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
minicom: 01633 812399

E-mail: 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 summary return made on an electronic application; for post-primary, primary and special schools, it consists of a return comprising individual pupil records, made by Electronic Data Interchange.
5. The 2019/20 figures in this statistical release are based on information as at 11 October 2019. 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 2020.
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 2019, who were admitted to a reception class or group in primary school following their 4th 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) 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

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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 9772 / fax (028) 9127 9271.

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