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PROVISION FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OF AGE IN ENGLAND: JANUARY 2012

INTRODUCTION

This annual Statistical First Release (SFR) contains the latest information for January 2012 on provision of education for children under five in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors in England, together with figures for earlier years. The figures are used to:

- Monitor the take up of the free entitlement for three and four year olds;
- Enable a more accurate distribution of funding to schools and authorities;
- Provide a better demonstration of proper accountability for the expenditure in this area; and
- Allow for better formulation and evaluation of policy.

All four year olds have been **entitled** to a free early education place since 1998 and in 2004 this was extended to all three year olds.

While the proportion of the four year old population **benefitting from some free early education** has remained stable and very high (roughly 98 per cent) over the last five years, the proportion for three year olds, whilst still high, remains slightly lower at 93 per cent.

There are a number of possible explanations for lower take-up levels at age three. All four olds are entitled to a place in a maintained school reception class from the September following their fourth birthday.

Parental preferences and attitudes play an important part in decisions parents make about whether to take up a free place and for how many hours a week. We know from research¹ that some parents of three year olds consider that their child is too young to take up a free place, choosing to wait until their child is older; others choose to increase gradually the number of hours per week their child attends a setting as their child gets older over the year. Lack of awareness of the free entitlement and the different types of providers offering free early education places may also be a factor affecting take up. For example some parents may not realise that they can have their free place in a private nursery or with a childminder.

1 - Exploring the flexibility of the free entitlement – Research among parents - www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-RR217

KEY POINTS

There are three main counts provided in this publication:

1 – The number and proportion of children **benefiting from some free early education**. This is a count of children in receipt of some free early education, but where they are receiving free provision at more than one provider, they have only been counted one; it is a unique count of children.

2 – The **part-time equivalent number of places filled**. This is the number of complete 15 hour places filled (for example: a child taking 7 hours entitlement and a child taking 8 hours entitlement would equate to 1 part time equivalent place filled)

3 – Following on from the number of children benefiting from some free early education, figures are also available on the number and proportion of children **taking up early education places**. This is a count of the number of children that attend funded early education providers; it is not a count of children at all early years providers. This will include children benefiting from some free early education as included in the number benefiting from some free early education, and will also include children attending funded providers who are not receiving free early education at that provider (they may already have accessed their free entitlement elsewhere).

Number of 3 and 4 year olds benefiting from some free early education (Table 1)

- In January 2012, the number of 3 and 4 year olds benefiting from some free early education was 1,264,420 or 96 per cent of the 3 and 4 year old population. Although the percentage benefiting is up one percentage point from last year, the percentage has remained stable and fluctuated only slightly from 95 per cent to 96 per cent over the last five years.

Numbers of 3 year olds benefiting from some free early education (Table 2)

- The number of 3 year olds benefiting from some free early education was 625,440 or 93 per cent of the 3 year old population. This percentage is unchanged from last year and up one percentage point from 2008.

Numbers of 4 year olds benefiting from some free early education (Table 3)

- The number of 4 year olds benefiting from some free early education was 638,970 or 98 per cent of the 4 year old population. As with the 3 year old rate, the value of 98 per cent is consistent with previous years and only in 2010 did the value increase slightly to 99 per cent.

Over the past five years the **number** of children benefiting from some free early education has steadily increased with the vast majority of children now accessing over 13 hours per week. This increase has been broadly in line with the increase in the population hence the reason the **proportion** benefitting from some free early education has remained stable

Figure 1: Summary of Key Figures for the numbers benefiting from some free early education places, 2008 to 2012.

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
The number of 3 and 4 year olds benefiting from some free early education	number	1,137,560	1,158,760	1,186,370	1,224,470	1,264,420
	% of population	95	95	96	95	96
The number of 3 year olds benefiting from some free early education	number	558,650	563,440	585,480	604,320	625,440
	% of population	92	92	93	93	93
The number of 4 year olds benefiting from some free early education	number	578,920	595,310	600,890	620,150	638,970
	% of population	98	98	99	98	98

Figure 2: Percentage of 3 and 4 year old benefiting from some free early education, 2008 to 2012 (Table 1, 2 and 3)

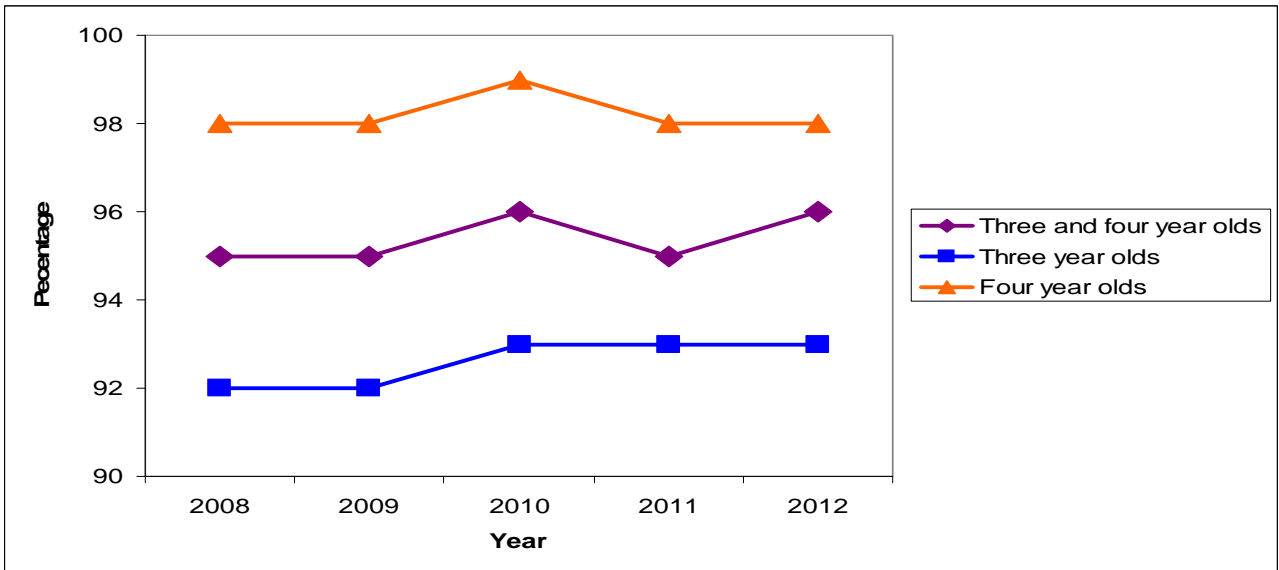
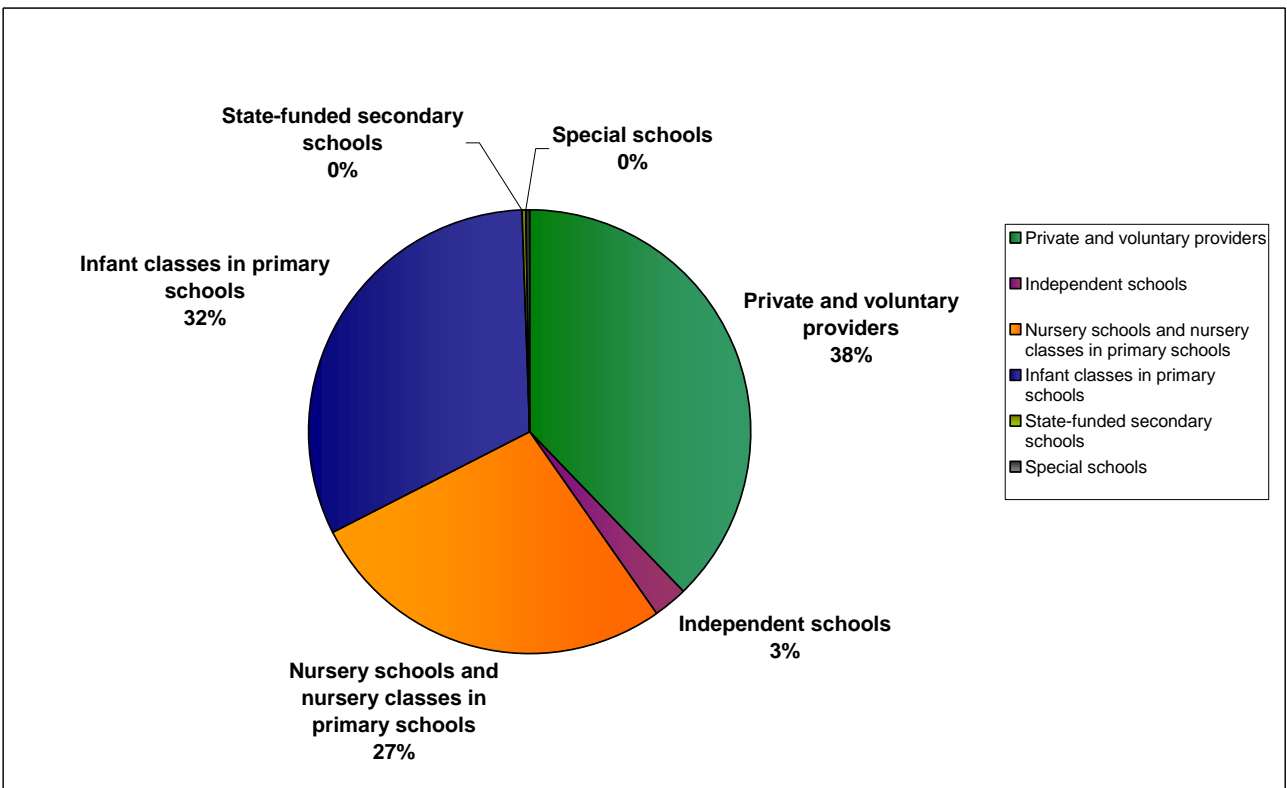


Figure 3: Distribution of number of 3 and 4 year old children benefiting from some free early education by type of provider (Table 1).



Percentage of 3 and 4 year olds benefiting from some free early education by local Authority

Figure 4 (Table 1b) shows the percentage of 3 and 4 year olds benefiting from some free early education broken down by local authority.

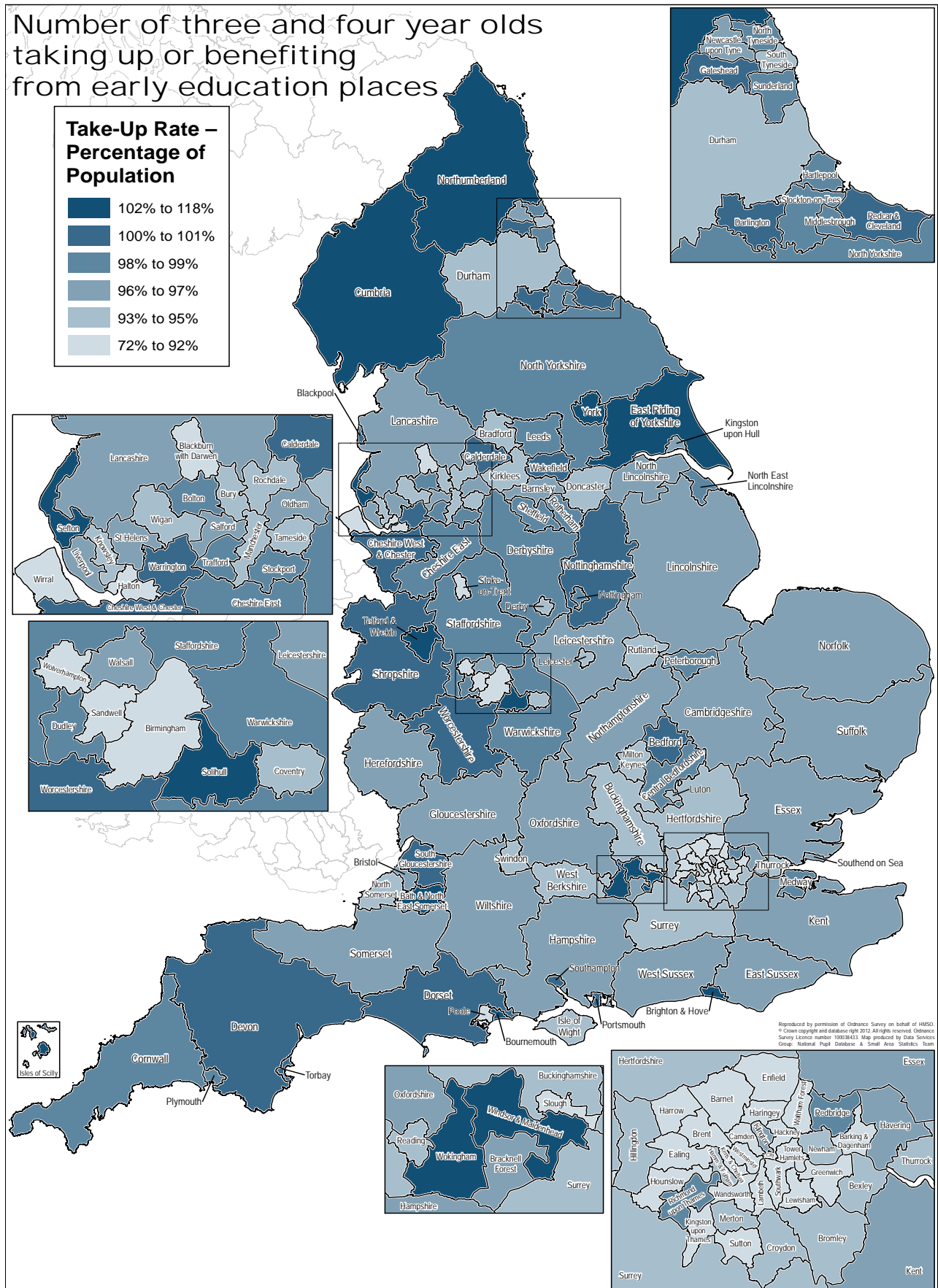
- The Isles of Scilly and Solihull local authority have the highest take-up rate of the free entitlement with take-up rates of 118 per cent and 110 per cent respectively.
- Kensington and Chelsea and Camden have the lowest take-up rates with values of 72 per cent and 77 per cent respectively.
- Take-up rates in London region are a lot lower than the national average; London has a take-up rate of 89 per cent for three and four year olds compared to the national value of 96 per cent.
- The North East, Yorkshire and the Humber, and the South West are the regions with the highest take-up rates with a take-up rate of 98 per cent for three and four year olds.

In some cases, local authority take-up rates can exceed 100 per cent. This can occur due to differences between how the Early Years Census data are counted and how the population data are calculated (see section 10 of Technical Notes for further information). However, population estimates at lower geographic levels, such as local authority, are subject to a greater degree of uncertainty than national population estimates. Also population estimates for individual age groups are more difficult to estimate than for multiple age groups; in this publication we only include children aged 3 or 4. Therefore, take-up rates at local authority level should be treated with more caution than national take-up rates.

Where true variability exists, the Department believes it can be explained in three ways:

- **Cross-border travel between authorities.** Analysis shows that low take-up authorities outside of London are usually next to a very high take-up area. Within London anecdotal evidence suggests that cross-border travel, combined with high levels of deprivation and unusual working patterns across London have impacted upon take-up.
- **Deprivation.** Research suggests take up from families in the most deprived quartile is very low when compared to take-up in the least deprived quartile which is much higher.
- **Ethnicity.** Research from the Childcare and Early Years parents' survey tells us that ethnic background has an impact on free entitlement take-up. Compared with children whose mothers were white, for who take up was high, children of Black African, Pakistani and Bangladeshi mothers were substantially less likely to receive free early years provision. We therefore anticipate that take-up rates in London in particular are likely to be affected, due to their greater ethnic diversity.

Figure 4: Percentage of 3 and 4 year olds benefiting from some free early education, January 2012 by Local Authority (Table 1b).



Part-time equivalent number of free early education places filled by 3 and 4 year olds (Table 4)

Figures for 2010 and before are not directly comparable with 2011 onwards.

Up to 2010, the free entitlement consisted of up to 12.5 hours per week. However, in certain circumstances some children were eligible to receive up to 15 hours per week. The number of children eligible to receive 15 hours per week increased significantly in 2010 when 25 per cent of children were entitled to 15 hours a week, before all children became eligible for 15 hours a week from 2011. As a part-time equivalent place was based on the standard 12.5 hours per week up to 2010, children accessing 15 hours were recorded as 1.2 part-time equivalent places filled. As all children in 2011 were entitled to up to 15 hours a week, 1 part-time equivalent place was redefined as 15 hours and no children were shown as accessing more than 1 part-time equivalent place. This change in methodology could be wholly or partly responsible for the drop in part-time equivalent places filled in 2011 which may not have been a true change but as a result of this change in methodology required to reflect changes in policy.

The figure for part-time equivalent funded places filled of 89 per cent of the three year old population is lower than the figure of 93 per cent who benefit from some free early education (where each child is counted once) as not all children take up their **full** entitlement to free early education. One part-time equivalent funded place may be filled by more than one child taking up less than their full entitlement.

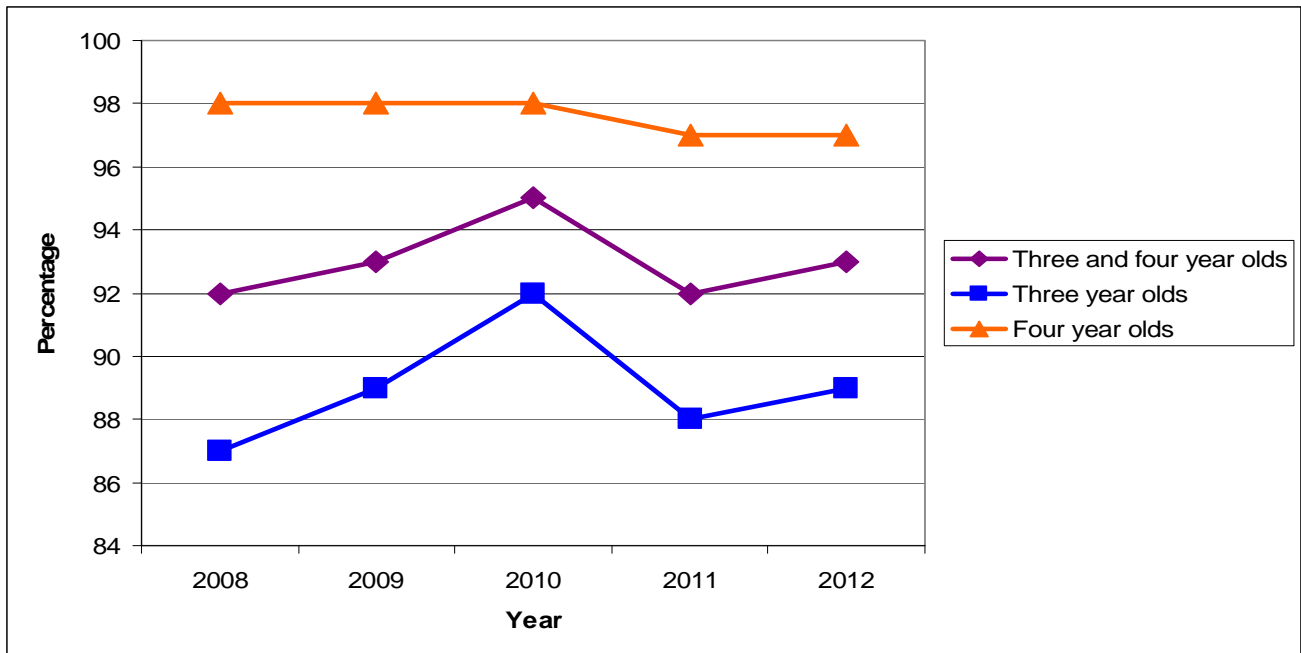
In a similar pattern to three year olds, not all four year olds take up their full entitlement, so the number of children benefiting from some free early education exceeds the part-time equivalent number of places filled. Figures show that four year olds are more likely to access the full entitlement than three year olds.

- The part-time equivalent number of free early education places taken up by 3 and 4 year olds was 1,229,500, or 93 per cent of 3 and 4 year old children. The proportion is up from last year when the figure was 92 per cent.
- The part-time equivalent number of free early education places taken up by 3 year olds was 596,400, or 89 per cent of 3 year old children. The proportion is up one percentage point from last year.
- The part-time equivalent number of free early education places taken up by 4 year olds was 633,100, or 97 per cent of 4 year old children. This is the same as last year and down one percentage point from five years ago.

Figure 5: Summary of part-time equivalent places figures, 2008 to 2012 (Table 4)

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
The part-time equivalent number of free early education places taken up by 3 and 4 year olds	number	1,099,500	1,133,600	1,175,300	1,186,400	1,229,500
	% of population	92	93	95	92	93
The part-time equivalent number of free early education places taken up by 3 year olds	number	525,500	540,000	579,400	572,700	596,400
	% of population	87	89	92	88	89
The part-time equivalent number of free early education places taken up by 4 year olds	number	574,000	593,500	595,900	613,800	633,100
	% of population	98	98	98	97	97

Figure 6: Part-time equivalent number of free early education places filled by 3 and 4 year olds, 2008 to 2012 (Table 4)



Number of children taking up early education places

- In January 2012, the number of children taking up early education places was 1,343,690 or 102 per cent (see section in Technical Notes on population estimates for an explanation of how this value can exceed 100 per cent). The percentage is up from 101 per cent which has been the rate for the last four years.
- The number of early education places taken up by 3 year olds was 672,460 or 100 per cent of the 3 year old population. This is up from last and from five years ago when the figure in both years was 98 per cent.
- The number of early education places taken up by 4 year olds was 671,230 or 103 per cent of the 4 year old population. The percentage benefiting is down one percentage point on last year and five years ago when the rate was 104 per cent.

Figure 7: Summary of Key Figures for the numbers taking up early education places, 2008-2012 (Tables 1, 2 and 3).

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
The number of early education places taken up by 3 and 4 year olds	number	1,201,170	1,223,730	1,259,750	1,294,920	1,343,690
	% of population	101	101	101	101	102
The number of early education places taken up by 3 year olds	number	591,720	602,840	621,000	639,150	672,460
	% of population	98	99	98	98	100
The number of early education places taken up by 4 year olds	number	609,450	620,900	638,750	655,760	671,230
	% of population	104	103	105	104	103

Figure 8: Take-up of full entitlement, 2008 to 2012 (Table 5 and 6).

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Percentage of three and four year olds receiving maximum ¹ funded hours in PVI's only (table 5)	number	304,660	327,020	361,610	364,020	390,300
	% of population	64	68	73	71	74
Percentage of three and four year olds receiving maximum ¹ funded hours in all setting types (table 6)	number	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,072,390	1,128,460
	% of population	N/A	N/A	N/A	86	88

(1) Figures up to 2010 based on 10.5 hours or more. Figures for 2011 onwards based on 13 hours or more.

TABLES

The tables to accompany this publication are listed below:

Table	Title	Coverage	Years
1	Number of three and four year old children taking up or benefiting from early education places by type of provider	England	2008-2012
1a	Number of three and four year old children taking up or benefiting from early education places by type of provider and local authority	Local Authority	2012
1b	Percentage of three and four year old children benefiting from early education places by local authority	Local Authority	2008-2012
2	Number of three year old children taking up or benefiting from early education places by type of provider	England	2008-2012
2a	Number of three year old children taking up or benefiting from early education places by type of provider and local authority	Local Authority	2012
3	Number of four year old children taking up or benefiting from early education places by type of provider	England	2008-2012
3a	Number of four year old children taking up or benefiting from early education places by type of provider and local authority	Local Authority	2012
4	Part time equivalent number of free early education places filled by three and four year olds by type of provider and age	England	2008-2012
4a	Part time equivalent number of free early education places filled by three and four year olds by type of provider and local authority	Local Authority	2012
4b	Part time equivalent number of free early education places filled by three year olds by type of provider and local authority	Local Authority	2012
4c	Part time equivalent number of free early education places filled by four year olds by type of provider and local authority	Local Authority	2012
5	Number of three and four year olds in free early education, in private, voluntary and independent providers, by banded number of funded hours and local authority	Local Authority	2012
6	Number of three and four year olds in free early education, in private, voluntary and independent providers, and in maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools by banded number of funded hours and local authority	Local Authority	2012
7	Number of free early education places taken up by three and four year olds in private, voluntary and independent providers, and in maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools by type of provider	England	2008-2012

Only national level tables have been included as part of this publication document. They are tables 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7 from the list above.

All of the tables above, including Local Authority level tables are available in Excel format under the "Additional Information" section on the Department's website at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001074/index.shtml>

As part of a Government drive for data transparency in official publications and to make data more accessible, supporting underlying data for this publication will be published at the same time as the publication and available in the 'Publication's Underlying Data' section from the link above.

TECHNICAL NOTES

Background and Methodology

1. Full details of the background and methodology used in this statistical first release are published as a separate document on the publication page which can be found at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001074/index.shtml>

2. In table 1, there are two different counts provided. The first is the number of 3 and 4 year olds **benefiting from some free early education**. This is a count of children in receipt of some free early education, but where they are receiving free provision at more than one provider, they have only been counted one; it is a unique count of children.

3. Following on from the number of children benefiting from some free early education, figures are also available on the number and proportion of children **taking up early education places**. This is a count of the number of children that attend funded early education providers; it is not a count of children at all early years providers. This will include children benefiting from some free early education as included in the number benefiting from some free early education, and will also include children attending funded providers who are not receiving free early education at that provider (they may already have accessed their free entitlement elsewhere).

4. In previous publications in this series, an intermediary count of **Number free early education places taken up** was provided. Prior to 2008, Local Authorities recorded the number of children benefiting from some free early education as part of the provider-level EYC data collection. This meant that any children attending more than one provider were counted more than once, at each provider they attended and therefore this count referred to places rather than number of children. The lack of child-level data meant that cases where children were at more than one provider could not be identified by the Department. These figures were included in order to show trends over a longer time period. This count has been removed from this publication now that a full five year time series for the number of children benefiting from some free early education can be provided.

5. All four year olds have been entitled to a free early education place since 1998 and from April 2004 this entitlement was extended to all three year olds. Children are eligible for a free part-time funded place from the 1 September, 1 January or 1 April following their third birthday, for up to two years before they reach compulsory school age. Free places can be accessed in a variety of settings in the maintained and private, voluntary and independent sectors and Local Authorities (LAs) make funding available to all providers to enable them to provide free places.

Data Quality and Uses of the Data

6. A separate document has been published which details issues relating to the quality of the data from the Early Years return along with details of users and the known uses made of the data. This can be found as a separate document on the publication page which can be found at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001074/index.shtml>

Population Estimates

7. The population estimates are derived from mid-year estimates and projections provided by the Office for National Statistics. They are subject to a margin of error and should be considered to be approximations and are not directly comparable to the EYC data.

(Visit <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/index.html> for more information on population estimates.)

8. Population estimates at lower geographic levels, such as local authority, are subject to a greater degree of error than national population estimates. Also population estimates for individual age groups are more difficult to estimate; in this publication we only include children aged 3 or 4. In some cases, local authority take-up rates can exceed 100 per cent. Therefore, take-up rates at local authority level should be treated with more caution than national take-up rates.

9. However, take-up rates have been presented in the publication at local authority level as there are valid reasons for why the take-up rate can exceed 100 per cent (see section 10 below). Also, the sources used in the calculation of take-up rates are consistent over time; therefore rates have been published as they allow a user to see any valid change in take-up rates in a local authority over time.

10. The reasons why the take-up rate can exceed 100 per cent are:

i) While national level estimates have relatively small levels of uncertainty, issues using ONS estimates exist. Firstly, ONS estimates only include long-term migrants, i.e. a person who changes their permanent residence for more than a year, while the Early Years Census includes all children, even if they are defined as being short-term migrants. The implication of this is that take up percentages are likely to be overestimated and could well exceed 100 per cent.

ii) Secondly sub-national ONS estimates are subject to greater levels of uncertainty. One of the reasons for this is due to the difficulties of estimating internal migration where estimates use changes in health service administrative data to approximate measures of movements of individuals between areas within the UK. International migration estimates, which affects both national and sub-national estimates, uses a combination of sources - predominantly the International Passenger Survey (IPS) which is subject to sampling and other types of error. These issues could under or overestimate the underlying population and therefore take-up percentages.

ii) Thirdly the national census has only been carried out every 10 years. Following the census previous years' estimates are revised – when the 2011 census results become available, estimates from 2002 to 2010 will be revised to ensure there is a coherent time series between the Census points. Since the greatest uncertainty around the estimates comes from the migration components, the further from the Census the estimates are, the greater the uncertainty. Once more this could lead to over or underestimation of take up rates.

Sources of data

11. The source for this publication is the Early Years Census and School Census. All schools and all Private, Voluntary, and Independent (PVI) providers receiving government funding are required to make (through their local authority) a child-level return. These collections are on a statutory basis through legislation which results in complete and accurate information being returned.

12. Schools making School Census return are required to submit child-level information for all children at the school. PVI providers are required to provide child-level information only for those children in receipt of some free early education provision. Only those providers with children receiving some free early education are required to make an Early Years Census return. For this reason, the Early Years census and therefore the *Provision for Children* publication does not provide a count of all children aged 3 or 4 in Private, Voluntary, and Independent providers. We are not aware of a source which would provide this information.

13. However, as the data source is a census and all providers return details of children in receipt of the free early education entitlement, this publication provides a full and accurate picture of the numbers of children receiving the free early education entitlement.

Confidentiality

14. In order to ensure confidentiality of children, the following suppression conventions have been used in this statistical release:

- Any numbers less than 3 have been suppressed and have been replaced by an 'x'. To protect the suppressed number, secondary suppression may be required in some cases.
- Percentages are displayed to the nearest whole number.
- Where any number is shown as zero (0), the original figure submitted was zero.
- A '.' represents data not available.
- A '-' represents less than 0.5 per cent.

Secondary suppression is the process of suppressing additional small numbers across other columns or tables to minimise the risk of identification by combining different pieces of information.

National Statistics

15. This is a National Statistics publication. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

Related Publications

16. Related publications can be found at:

Northern Ireland:

Statistics detailed in 'Children Order Statistical Tables for Northern Ireland 2009/10' were published on 27th May 2011 is available at:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-cib-3/statistics_and_research-cib-pub/children_statistics/stats-cib-children_order.htm

A range of statistics are published, including numbers of Day Nurseries, Child Minders, Play Groups and Out of School Clubs, places available, and limited information on children/child minders sponsored by Health and Social Care Trusts.

Scotland:

The latest Pre-School & Childcare Census results (as at January 2010), published in September 2010, can be found at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/bulletins/00856>

In addition, a Pre-School Education Census is carried out in order to monitor the number of pre-school education providers, the number of children receiving pre-school education and the number of staff/teachers. This Census is now conducted in September, and the latest publication was published in December 2010 (based on September 2010 Census). The latest publication can be found at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/04154230/0>

Wales:

The 'Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales' published information on numbers of regulated settings and related activity, including children's day care (under 8s provision or early years) as part of their 2009-10 Annual Report which is available at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/cssiwsite/newcssiw/publications/annualreports/annrep0910/;jsessionid=TVK4NnwGH2TpNWpnLVjHLJxbV7L2KdvfL6ZGXcrVTHs4J7n5H2ph!1917460886?lang=en>

This includes information about numbers of settings and places, inspection, complaints and protection activity. From 2011-12 they are planning to publish this information quarterly. The first publication for Q1 2011-12 is due in August 2012. There are also some plans to develop outputs with more details about staff and children based on the data collected in annual returns.

The Department for Children, Education, Life-long Learning and Skills is developing an Early Year's Census. This is at the pilot stage so there are no dates yet for the rollout or subsequent publication.

User Consultation

17. If you would like to be involved in future consultations, please contact the statistician for this publication (contact details can be found in the next section).

Queries

18. Any queries of comments on the statistics in this publication should be addressed to:

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**Table 1: Number of three and four year old children taking up or benefiting from early education places^{1,2} by type of provider
England
2008 - 2012**

Position in January each year

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Private and voluntary providers³					
Number taking up early education places ⁴	461,070	471,460	495,450	511,710	539,190
Percentage of population ⁵	39	39	40	40	41
Actual number benefiting from some free early education ⁶	413,150	421,530	436,960	457,600	477,550
Percentage of population ⁵	35	35	35	36	36
Independent schools					
Number taking up early education places ^{4,7}	52,080	51,340	49,980	50,010	50,170
Percentage of population ⁵	4	4	4	4	4
Actual number benefiting from some free early education ⁶	36,400	36,290	35,090	33,660	32,540
Percentage of population ⁵	3	3	3	3	2
Maintained nursery and state-funded primary schools⁸:					
Number benefiting from some free early education	683,300	695,740	707,710	726,050	746,390
Percentage of population ⁵	57	57	57	57	56
Nursery schools and nursery classes in primary schools					
Number benefiting from some free early education	321,360	323,650	329,030	335,280	342,010
Percentage of population ⁵	27	27	26	26	26
Infant classes in primary schools⁹					
Number benefiting from some free early education	361,940	372,090	378,680	390,780	404,380
Percentage of population ⁵	30	31	30	30	31
State-funded secondary schools¹⁰					
Number benefiting from some free early education ^{4,11}	770	1,240	2,610	3,100	3,700
Percentage of population ⁵	-	-	-	-	-
Special schools^{12,13}					
Number benefiting from some free early education	3,950	3,960	4,000	4,040	4,250
Percentage of population ⁵	-	-	-	-	-
All providers					
Number taking up early education places ⁴	1,201,170	1,223,730	1,259,750	1,294,920	1,343,690
Percentage of population ⁵	101	101	101	101	102
Actual number benefiting from some free early education ⁶	1,137,560	1,158,760	1,186,370	1,224,470	1,264,420
Percentage of population ⁵	95	95	96	95	96

Source: Early Years Census (EYC), School Census (SC), and School Level Annual School Census (SLASC)

(1) Count of children aged three and four at 31st December in the previous calendar year.

(2) Numbers of three and four year olds in schools may include some two year olds.

(3) Includes some Local Authority day nurseries registered to receive funding.

(4) Any child attending more than one provider may have been counted twice.

(5) Numbers of three and four year olds taking up places expressed as a percentage of the three and four year old population.

(6) Any child attending more than one provider will have only been counted once.

(7) Includes some children in direct grant nursery schools.

(8) Includes primary converter academies, primary sponsor-led academies and primary free schools

(9) Includes reception and other classes not designated as nursery classes.

(10) Includes maintained secondary schools, secondary converter academies, secondary sponsor-led academies, secondary free schools and city technology colleges.

(11) Local Authorities returned the number of three and four year olds for which they expected to receive funding.

(12) Includes general hospital schools.

(13) Excludes pupils who are also registered elsewhere.

- less than 0.5%

Table 2: Number of three year old children taking up or benefiting from early education places^{1,2} by type of provider**England****2008 - 2012****Position in January each year**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Private and voluntary providers³					
Number taking up early education places ⁴	341,080	352,530	361,990	376,020	402,380
Percentage of population ⁵	56	58	57	58	60
Actual number benefiting from some free early education ⁶	316,910	321,610	334,990	349,980	364,610
Percentage of population ⁵	52	53	53	54	54
Independent schools					
Number taking up early education places ^{4,7}	25,200	24,320	24,740	24,260	24,420
Percentage of population ⁵	4	4	4	4	4
Actual number benefiting from some free early education ⁶	16,300	15,860	16,220	15,470	15,170
Percentage of population ⁵	3	3	3	2	2
Maintained nursery and state-funded primary schools⁸:					
Number benefiting from some free early education	223,440	223,850	231,690	236,110	242,640
Percentage of population ⁵	37	37	37	36	36
Nursery schools and nursery classes in primary schools					
Number benefiting from some free early education	222,240	222,740	230,360	234,900	241,430
Percentage of population ⁵	37	37	36	36	36
Infant classes in primary schools⁹					
Number benefiting from some free early education	1,200	1,110	1,330	1,220	1,220
Percentage of population ⁵	-	-	-	-	-
State-funded secondary schools¹⁰					
Number benefiting from some free early education ^{4,11}	280	430	1,000	1,220	1,320
Percentage of population ⁵	-	-	-	-	-
Special schools^{12,13}					
Number benefiting from some free early education	1,720	1,690	1,580	1,540	1,700
Percentage of population ⁵	-	-	-	-	-
All providers					
Number taking up early education places ⁴	591,720	602,840	621,000	639,150	672,460
Percentage of population ⁵	98	99	98	98	100
Actual number benefiting from some free early education ⁶	558,650	563,440	585,480	604,320	625,440
Percentage of population ⁵	92	92	93	93	93

Source: Early Years Census (EYC), School Census (SC), and School Level Annual School Census (SLASC)

(1) Count of children aged three at 31st December in the previous calendar year.

(2) Numbers of three year olds in schools may include some two year olds.

(3) Includes some Local Authority day nurseries registered to receive funding.

(4) Any child attending more than one provider may have been counted twice.

(5) Numbers of three year olds taking up places expressed as a percentage of the three year old population.

(6) Any child attending more than one provider will have only been counted once.

(7) Includes some children in direct grant nursery schools.

(8) Includes primary converter academies, primary sponsor-led academies and primary free schools.

(9) Includes reception and other classes not designated as nursery classes.

(10) Includes maintained secondary schools, secondary converter academies, secondary sponsor-led academies, secondary free schools and city technology colleges.

(11) Local Authorities returned the number of three and four year olds for which they expected to receive funding.

(12) Includes general hospital schools.

(13) Excludes pupils who are also registered elsewhere.

- less than 0.5%

**Table 3: Number of four year old children taking up or benefiting from early education places¹ by type of provider
England
2008 - 2012**

Position in January each year

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Private and voluntary providers²					
Number taking up early education places ³	120,000	118,920	133,460	135,680	136,810
Percentage of population ⁴	20	20	22	21	21
Actual number benefiting from some free early education ⁵	96,240	99,920	101,980	107,620	112,940
Percentage of population ⁴	16	17	17	17	17
Independent schools					
Number taking up early education places ^{3,6}	26,890	27,020	25,250	25,750	25,750
Percentage of population ⁴	5	4	4	4	4
Actual number benefiting from some free early education ⁵	20,110	20,430	18,870	18,200	17,370
Percentage of population ⁴	3	3	3	3	3
Maintained nursery and state-funded primary schools⁷:					
Number benefiting from some free early education	459,850	471,890	476,020	489,940	503,740
Percentage of population ⁴	78	78	78	77	77
Nursery schools and nursery classes in primary schools					
Number benefiting from some free early education	99,110	100,910	98,670	100,380	100,590
Percentage of population ⁴	17	17	16	16	15
Infant classes in primary schools⁸					
Number benefiting from some free early education	360,740	370,980	377,350	389,560	403,160
Percentage of population ⁴	61	61	62	62	62
State-funded secondary schools⁹					
Number benefiting from some free early education ^{3,10}	490	810	1,610	1,890	2,380
Percentage of population ⁴	-	-	-	-	-
Special schools^{11,12}					
Number benefiting from some free early education	2,230	2,270	2,420	2,500	2,540
Percentage of population ⁴	-	-	-	-	-
All providers					
Number taking up early education places ³	609,450	620,900	638,750	655,760	671,230
Percentage of population ⁴	104	103	105	104	103
Actual number benefiting from some free early education ⁵	578,920	595,310	600,890	620,150	638,970
Percentage of population ⁴	98	98	99	98	98

Source: Early Years Census (EYC), School Census (SC), and School Level Annual School Census (SLASC)

(1) Count of children aged four at 31st December in the previous calendar year.

(2) Includes some Local Authority day nurseries registered to receive funding.

(3) Any child attending more than one provider may have been counted twice.

(4) Numbers of four year olds taking up places expressed as a percentage of the four year old population.

(5) Any child attending more than one provider will have only been counted once.

(6) Includes some children in direct grant nursery schools.

(7) Includes primary converter academies, primary sponsor-led academies and primary free schools.

(8) Includes reception and other classes not designated as nursery classes.

(9) Includes maintained secondary schools, secondary converter academies, secondary sponsor-led academies, secondary free schools and city technology colleges.

(10) Local Authorities returned the number of three and four year olds for which they expected to receive funding.

(11) Includes general hospital schools.

(12) Excludes pupils who are also registered elsewhere.

- less than 0.5%

Table 4: Part time equivalent number of free early education places filled by three and four year olds by type of provider and age^{1,2}

**England
2008 - 2012**

Position in January each year

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Three and four year olds					
Maintained nursery, state-funded primary and state-funded secondary schools^{3,4}					
Part time equivalent funded places filled	688,000	700,900	714,300	733,200	754,300
Percentage of population ⁵	58	58	58	57	57
Private, voluntary and independent providers⁶					
Part time equivalent funded places filled	411,500	432,600	461,000	453,200	475,200
Percentage of population ⁵	35	36	37	35	36
All maintained, private, voluntary and independent providers					
Part time equivalent funded places filled	1,099,500	1,133,600	1,175,300	1,186,400	1,229,500
Percentage of population ⁵	92	93	95	92	93
Three year olds					
Maintained nursery, state-funded primary and state-funded secondary schools^{3,4}					
Part time equivalent funded places filled	225,400	226,000	234,300	238,900	245,700
Percentage of population ⁵	37	37	37	37	37
Private, voluntary and independent providers⁶					
Part time equivalent funded places filled	300,100	314,000	345,100	333,800	350,800
Percentage of population ⁵	50	52	55	51	52
All maintained, private, voluntary and independent providers					
Part time equivalent funded places filled	525,500	540,000	579,400	572,700	596,400
Percentage of population ⁵	87	89	92	88	89
Four year olds					
Maintained nursery, state-funded primary and state-funded secondary schools^{3,4}					
Part time equivalent funded places filled	462,600	475,000	480,000	494,300	508,700
Percentage of population ⁵	79	79	79	78	78
Private, voluntary and independent providers⁶					
Part time equivalent funded places filled	111,500	118,600	115,900	119,400	124,400
Percentage of population ⁵	19	20	19	19	19
All maintained, private, voluntary and independent providers					
Part time equivalent funded places filled	574,000	593,500	595,900	613,800	633,100
Percentage of population ⁵	98	98	98	97	97

Source: Early Years Census (EYC), School Census (SC), and School Level Annual School Census (SLASC) ⁷

(1) Children do not necessarily take up their full free entitlement and so one part time equivalent funded place can be filled by more than one child. As a result, the number of children benefiting from some free early education (tables 1 to 3) can exceed the number of part-time equivalent funded places filled.

(2) A part-time equivalent place is equivalent to 15 hours. The part-time equivalent places filled is the number of funded places filled according to the amount of free entitlement a child is receiving. A child taking up a place at a maintained nursery or primary school is counted as one part-time equivalent funded place.

(3) Includes maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools, primary and secondary converter academies, primary and secondary sponsor-led academies, primary and secondary free schools, city technology colleges, special schools and general hospital schools.

(4) Headcount of children, age as at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the School Census. All children counted as 1 part-time equivalent.

(5) Numbers of part-time equivalent places filled expressed as a percentage of the three and four year old population.

(6) Part-time equivalent number of children, age as at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census exercise.

(7) Figures from private, voluntary and independent providers are taken from the Early Years Census and figures from maintained nursery, primary and other maintained providers are taken from School Census. Figures for general hospital schools are taken from SLASC. Figures exclude non-funded providers.

See methodology document on publication page for an explanation of comparability issues between data up to 2010 and data from 2011 onwards.

Table 7: Number of free early education places taken up by three and four year olds in private, voluntary and independent providers, and in maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools by type of provider^{1,2}

2008 - 2012

England

Position as at January

Type of Provider	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
	No. of providers	Number of free early education places taken up ³	No. of providers	Number of free early education places taken up ³	No. of providers	Number of free early education places taken up ³	No. of providers	Number of free early education places taken up ³	No. of providers	Number of free early education places taken up ³
Private or Voluntary Provider ⁴	17,880	411,050	18,070	422,410	17,930	427,890	17,970	446,530	18,430	472,220
Of which:										
Day Nursery	8,240	182,060	8,440	190,310	8,520	197,650	8,740	215,520	9,030	232,960
Playgroup or Pre-School	8,460	199,140	8,420	201,070	8,230	200,740	8,140	201,280	8,350	209,570
Nursery	590	16,590	610	17,220	550	15,690	510	14,890	550	15,620
Family/Combined/Integrated Centre	40	910	50	1,040	30	780	30	750	30	850
Sure Start Children's Centre - Main Centre Site	120	2,700	140	3,480	120	3,420	110	3,730	120	4,220
Sure Start Children's Centre - Linked Provider	210	4,880	270	6,350	230	5,430	240	6,090	160	4,250
Missing	70	1,650	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	150	3,120	150	2,950	240	4,180	210	4,260	210	4,760
Registered Independent School ⁴	1,060	36,690	1,070	36,460	1,040	35,380	980	33,970	940	32,780
Local Authority Day Nursery ⁴	430	8,660	470	10,210	460	10,140	450	10,380	390	9,690
Childminding Network ⁴	130	1,410	120	1,530	390	8,560	340	7,860	170	4,050
Other ⁴	660	15,860	460	10,450	510	13,140	560	14,150	480	12,060
Maintained Nursery Schools ⁵	450	37,140	440	37,050	430	37,520	420	38,730	420	39,300
State-funded Primary ^{5,6}	15,610	646,160	15,570	658,690	15,530	670,190	15,490	687,320	15,490	707,090
State-funded Secondary ^{5,7}	10	770	20	1,240	30	2,610	40	3,100	50	3,700
Special ^{5,8}	510	3,950	490	3,960	510	4,000	500	4,040	500	4,250
Totals⁹	36,740	1,161,680	36,700	1,182,000	36,840	1,209,420	36,750	1,246,090	36,890	1,285,120

Source: Early Years Census (EYC), School Census (SC), and School Level Annual School Census (SLASC)

(1) Count of children aged three and four at 31st December in the previous calendar year.

(2) Numbers of three and four year olds in schools may include some two year olds.

(3) Any child attending more than one provider will have been counted more than once.

(4) Source Early years Census

(5) Source School Census

(6) Includes primary converter academies, primary sponsor-led academies and primary free schools.

(7) Includes maintained secondary schools, secondary converter academies, secondary sponsor-led academies, secondary free schools and city technology colleges.

(8) Includes general hospital schools.

(9) Totals may not add due to rounding.