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CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Summary statistics for schools in Scotland

14 December 2021

This annual statistical publication provides information on:

- The annual census of **pupils and teachers** in publicly funded schools in Scotland, conducted on 15 September 2021
- **Early learning and childcare** provision in Scotland, collected in the week commencing 13 September 2021

The statistics in this bulletin supersede all previously published statistics

Supplementary data tables for early learning and childcare can be found at:

[Early learning and childcare statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

Supplementary statistics on school staff and pupils for 2021 are scheduled for publication in March 2022. Supplementary statistics for previous years can be found at:

[School education statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

Further breakdowns of post-probationer teacher statistics can be found here:

[Post-probationer teacher employment dashboard - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

A school information dashboard is also available:

[School education statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

Summary statistics for schools in Scotland 2021

Pupils

704,723 Pupils	↑	2,526 from 2020
390,313 Primary	↓	3,644 from 2020
306,811 Secondary	↑	5,857 from 2020
7,599 Special	↑	313 from 2020

The pupil teacher ratio decreased from 13.3 in 2020 to 13.2 in 2021.



-0.1 since 2020

The average primary class size increased from 23.1 in 2020 to 23.2 in 2021.



+0.1 since 2020

Teachers

54,285 Teachers	↑	885 from 2020
25,807 Primary	↑	155 from 2020
24,782 Secondary	↑	704 from 2020
2,005 Special	↑	70 from 2020
988 Centrally employed	↓	21 from 2020
704 ELC	↓	24 from 2020



-5 pp since 2020

The percentage of Teacher Induction Scheme probationers teaching in publicly funded schools the following year decreased from 85% in 2020 to 80% in 2021.

Early Learning & Childcare

91,603 Registrations	↑	1,477 from 2020
97% Uptake for age 3&4	↑	2 pp from 2020
3,150 Graduate staff	↑	429 from 2020

pp = percentage points

The attendance rate, excluding periods of COVID-19 related school closures, was 92.0%. This is a decrease from 93.0% in 2018/19



Exclusions

8,323 cases of exclusion in the 2020/21 school year.

↓ 6,667 from 2018/19



Cases of exclusion have fallen from 40 cases per 1,000 pupils in 2010/11 to 11.9 cases per 1,000 pupils in 2020/21.

pp= percentage points

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This publication brings together information on pupils and teachers at publicly funded schools and early learning and childcare provision.

Early learning and childcare

- Local authorities have a duty to secure a part-time funded place (currently 1,140 hours a year) for three and four year olds and eligible two year olds
- Places are provided by local authority services, or secured through partnership arrangements with private or third sector services

Primary schools

- Children usually start school between 4½ and 5½ years old
- There are seven stages from Primary 1 (P1) to Primary 7 (P7)
- Pupils are not streamed by ability at primary school and automatically move up a stage each year

Secondary schools

- Pupils attend for up to six years (S1-S6)
- Qualifications are usually taken in S4 to S6 starting at age 15-16

Special schools

- Most children with additional support needs are educated in mainstream schools but some with complex or specific needs are educated in special schools
- Not all local authorities have special schools
- In these statistics pupils attending special schools are not assigned to primary or secondary or to a stage

Teachers

- Most teachers have a four year degree including or concurrent with a teaching qualification, or have completed a Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) following a degree
- Teaching graduates from a Scottish university are guaranteed a one year probationary teaching post and are referred to as induction scheme teachers in these statistics

Chapter 2: Overview

91,603 **registrations** in 2,630 early learning & childcare centres (ELC)
 704,723 **pupils** in 2,469 primary, secondary and special schools
 54,285 **teachers** (full-time equivalent, including ELC)
 13.2 **pupil teacher ratio** in schools

The overall number of pupils and teachers both increased in 2021. The pupil teacher ratio (PTR) in schools, which gives a measure of the size of the teaching workforce relative to the pupil population, decreased to 13.2.

Table 2.1: Schools, pupils, teachers and PTR

	2015 ⁽¹⁾	2016	2017	2018 ⁽⁶⁾	2019	2020	2021
Schools							
ELC ⁽²⁾	2,492	2,514	2,532	2,544	2,576	2,587	2,630
Primary	2,039	2,031	2,019	2,012	2,004	2,005	2,001
Secondary	361	359	360	357	358	357	357
Special	144	141	135	114	114	114	111
Pupils							
ELC ⁽²⁾	97,262	96,961	95,893	96,549	96,375	90,126	91,603
Primary	391,148	396,697	400,312	400,276	398,794	393,957	390,313
Secondary	281,939	280,983	281,993	286,152	292,063	300,954	306,811
Special ⁽³⁾	6,871	6,668	6,654	6,823	7,132	7,286	7,599
Total (excluding ELC) ⁽³⁾	679,958	684,348	688,959	693,251	697,989	702,197	704,723
Teachers							
ELC ⁽²⁾	1,038	985	921	821	798	729	704
School based	48,395	48,746	49,463	50,099	50,477	51,663	52,593
Primary	23,425	23,920	24,477	24,899	25,027	25,651	25,807
Secondary	23,059	22,957	23,150	23,317	23,522	24,077	24,782
Special	1,911	1,869	1,836	1,883	1,927	1,934	2,005
Centrally employed (school)	1,283	1,239	1,129	1,039	972	1,009	988
Total school (excluding ELC)	49,679	49,985	50,592	51,138	51,449	52,672	53,581
Total (including ELC)	50,717	50,970	51,513	51,959	52,247	53,400	54,285
Pupil Teacher Ratios							
Publicly funded schools ⁽⁴⁾	13.7	13.7	13.6	13.6	13.6	13.3	13.2
Total based in schools ⁽⁵⁾	14.0	14.0	13.9	13.8	13.8	13.6	13.4
Primary	16.7	16.6	16.4	16.1	15.9	15.4	15.1
Secondary	12.2	12.2	12.2	12.3	12.4	12.5	12.4
Special	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.8

(1) The pupil teacher ratio for Total based in schools in 2015 was amended in October 2017. See background notes for details.

(2) ELC centre count includes local authority and partnership centres, and ELC teacher figures include ELC home visiting.

(3) Special and total pupil count were updated for 2011-2016 in October 2017. See background notes for details.

(4) Includes all school based and centrally employed teachers. Includes grant-aided pupils and teachers.

(5) Excludes centrally employed teachers.

(6) Prior to 2018, special schools with no pupils or where no pupils were on roll but pupils from other schools attended were included in school counts in this table. From 2018, they have been excluded.

The numbers of teachers increased in primary, secondary and special schools while the number of centrally employed and early learning & childcare teachers decreased. The decrease in primary pupils combined with the increase in primary teachers meant there were fewer pupils per teacher and consequently the primary PTR decreased to 15.1. This is the lowest ever PTR for primary schools. In secondary schools the increase in teachers was proportionally higher than the increase in pupils meaning there were fewer pupils per teacher, so the secondary PTR decreased slightly to 12.4. (Statistics pre-2015 are available from the [supplementary statistics](#) and [historical time series](#)).

Chapter 3: School teachers

53,581 teachers in schools compared to 52,672 in 2020 (excludes ELC)
13.2 pupil teacher ratio for publicly funded schools
80% of teachers on the 2020/21 Teacher Induction Scheme were in employment the following school year

Table 3.1: Teachers in Scotland by sector and local authority, 2021

Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Local Authority	Primary	Secondary	Special	Centrally employed	Total
Aberdeen City	884	778	30	53	1,745
Aberdeenshire	1,377	1,269	49	36	2,731
Angus	582	567	0	23	1,172
Argyll and Bute	432	410	6	13	860
City of Edinburgh	1,684	1,665	172	93	3,615
Clackmannanshire	299	227	29	2	556
Dumfries and Galloway	654	670	23	75	1,421
Dundee City	659	631	57	29	1,375
East Ayrshire	607	554	81	20	1,263
East Dunbartonshire	585	699	53	38	1,374
East Lothian	506	499	0	25	1,031
East Renfrewshire	612	690	35	3	1,341
Falkirk	760	819	77	6	1,663
Fife	1,798	1,651	102	85	3,636
Glasgow City	2,782	2,398	337	105	5,621
Highland	1,079	1,187	44	42	2,352
Inverclyde	370	375	44	6	795
Midlothian	504	471	25	24	1,024
Moray	475	455	0	22	952
Na h-Eileanan Siar	161	149	0	8	317
North Ayrshire	701	665	41	54	1,462
North Lanarkshire	1,824	1,651	239	64	3,778
Orkney Islands	122	128	0	7	257
Perth and Kinross	683	649	15	39	1,386
Renfrewshire	841	840	87	26	1,793
Scottish Borders	500	509	39	6	1,054
Shetland Islands	160	158	0	11	329
South Ayrshire	529	531	29	40	1,128
South Lanarkshire	1,696	1,634	149	0	3,480
Stirling	437	489	20	17	963
West Dunbartonshire	463	431	50	16	959
West Lothian	1,021	881	126	0	2,029
All local authorities	25,783	24,731	1,959	988	53,461
Grant aided	23	51	46	#	120
Scotland	25,807	24,782	2,005	988	53,581

Table 3.2 shows that the total number of teachers (primary, secondary, special and centrally employed) increased by 909 between 2020 and 2021. Total teacher numbers rose in each year from 2014 to 2021. (Statistics pre-2015 are available from the [supplementary statistics](#) and [historical time series](#)).

One of the drivers for the increase in teacher numbers could be the additional funding that has been made available to local authorities for the recruitment of more teachers. Further information on funding for additional teachers including COVID-19 education recovery funding and the Attainment Scotland Fund, can be found in the background notes.

Although the number of teachers has increased since 2020, this was not the case for each local authority. In 28 local authorities the number of teachers increased or stayed the same, with the largest increase of 9% seen in Moray; followed by Inverclyde, with an increase of 6%. The other four local authorities saw small decreases in teachers this year, of up to 2%.

Table 3.2: Teachers (all sectors excluding ELC)⁽¹⁾

Full Time Equivalent (FTE)							
Local Authority	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Aberdeen City	1,632	1,603	1,624	1,636	1,675	1,725	1,745
Aberdeenshire	2,650	2,655	2,675	2,650	2,696	2,720	2,731
Angus	1,136	1,125	1,133	1,160	1,172	1,197	1,172
Argyll and Bute	844	841	825	861	834	846	860
City of Edinburgh	3,193	3,213	3,281	3,346	3,452	3,518	3,615
Clackmannanshire	490	528	513	512	520	554	556
Dumfries and Galloway	1,479	1,466	1,470	1,436	1,436	1,413	1,421
Dundee City	1,375	1,367	1,330	1,321	1,316	1,340	1,375
East Ayrshire	1,151	1,149	1,189	1,185	1,205	1,233	1,263
East Dunbartonshire	1,204	1,217	1,245	1,248	1,269	1,366	1,374
East Lothian	920	913	935	960	973	1,008	1,031
East Renfrewshire	1,213	1,227	1,265	1,277	1,306	1,322	1,341
Falkirk	1,581	1,605	1,620	1,634	1,629	1,688	1,663
Fife	3,476	3,494	3,498	3,503	3,530	3,627	3,636
Glasgow City	4,779	4,869	5,020	5,263	5,352	5,446	5,621
Highland	2,357	2,355	2,365	2,388	2,300	2,284	2,352
Inverclyde	734	735	738	745	730	751	795
Midlothian	866	873	892	930	941	985	1,024
Moray	874	848	856	868	866	873	952
Na h-Eileanan Siar	324	321	327	327	313	312	317
North Ayrshire	1,332	1,371	1,396	1,393	1,376	1,412	1,462
North Lanarkshire	3,406	3,474	3,502	3,545	3,590	3,742	3,778
Orkney Islands	255	260	253	250	251	247	257
Perth and Kinross	1,337	1,329	1,329	1,346	1,329	1,346	1,386
Renfrewshire	1,596	1,633	1,656	1,676	1,674	1,778	1,793
Scottish Borders	1,049	1,052	1,055	1,070	1,038	1,065	1,054
Shetland Islands	323	318	323	322	320	329	329
South Ayrshire	1,063	1,043	1,056	1,048	1,065	1,101	1,128
South Lanarkshire	3,176	3,202	3,282	3,298	3,341	3,438	3,480
Stirling	921	942	925	934	938	954	963
West Dunbartonshire	921	928	961	956	980	964	959
West Lothian	1,880	1,899	1,924	1,924	1,909	1,971	2,029
All local authorities	49,538	49,858	50,464	51,012	51,327	52,555	53,461
Grant aided	141	127	127	126	122	117	120
Scotland	49,679	49,985	50,592	51,138	51,449	52,672	53,581

(1) Includes centrally employed teachers.

Table 3.3 shows pupil teacher ratios (PTRs) which give a measure of the size of the teaching workforce relative to the pupil population. The national PTR decreased from 13.3 in 2020 to from 13.2 in 2021, the lowest national PTR since 2008. (Statistics pre-2014 are available from the [supplementary statistics](#) and [historical time series](#)).

Across Scotland, 26 local authorities have decreased or maintained their PTR from 2020. The biggest decrease was seen in Moray, which decreased by 1.1. Since 2015, North Ayrshire and North Lanarkshire have had the largest decrease in PTR at 1.4. The largest increase in PTR since 2015 was in Dumfries and Galloway at 0.5.

Table 3.3: Pupil teacher ratio (PTR) (all sectors excluding ELC)⁽¹⁾

Pupils per teacher							
Local Authority	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Aberdeen City	13.6	14.0	14.0	14.1	13.8	13.7	13.9
Aberdeenshire	13.3	13.4	13.3	13.5	13.3	13.4	13.4
Angus	13.2	13.3	13.3	13.1	13.0	12.8	12.9
Argyll and Bute	12.4	12.3	12.5	12.0	12.2	12.0	11.7
City of Edinburgh	14.9	15.1	15.1	15.1	14.9	14.8	14.5
Clackmannanshire	13.4	12.5	12.9	13.0	12.8	12.0	12.1
Dumfries and Galloway	12.7	12.7	12.8	13.1	13.1	13.2	13.2
Dundee City	13.0	13.2	13.7	13.8	13.9	13.7	13.4
East Ayrshire	13.9	13.9	13.3	13.5	13.4	13.2	12.9
East Dunbartonshire	13.6	13.5	13.4	13.6	13.5	12.7	12.7
East Lothian	15.1	15.4	15.2	15.1	15.1	14.8	14.6
East Renfrewshire	13.7	13.7	13.5	13.5	13.2	13.2	13.1
Falkirk	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.4	13.5	13.0	13.1
Fife	14.0	14.1	14.1	14.2	14.2	13.9	13.8
Glasgow City	13.8	13.8	13.5	13.1	13.0	12.9	12.6
Highland	13.1	13.1	13.0	12.9	13.5	13.5	13.1
Inverclyde	13.5	13.5	13.4	13.2	13.6	13.1	12.3
Midlothian	14.2	14.2	14.2	13.8	14.0	13.7	13.5
Moray	13.7	14.1	13.9	13.7	13.8	13.9	12.8
Na h-Eileanan Siar	10.3	10.5	10.3	10.2	10.6	10.7	10.4
North Ayrshire	13.6	13.3	13.1	13.1	13.1	12.8	12.2
North Lanarkshire	14.4	14.1	14.0	13.8	13.7	13.2	13.0
Orkney Islands	10.5	10.4	10.8	11.1	11.1	11.3	10.9
Perth and Kinross	13.3	13.6	13.5	13.3	13.6	13.5	13.1
Renfrewshire	14.6	14.3	14.2	14.1	14.2	13.4	13.3
Scottish Borders	13.8	13.8	13.8	13.6	14.0	13.6	13.7
Shetland Islands	10.0	10.2	10.0	10.1	10.2	10.0	10.1
South Ayrshire	13.2	13.4	13.3	13.3	13.2	13.0	12.7
South Lanarkshire	13.7	13.7	13.4	13.4	13.4	13.1	13.0
Stirling	13.4	13.2	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.4	13.3
West Dunbartonshire	13.5	13.4	13.1	13.1	12.8	13.0	13.0
West Lothian	14.1	14.1	14.0	14.1	14.3	13.9	13.6
All local authorities	13.7	13.7	13.6	13.6	13.6	13.3	13.2
Grant aided ⁽²⁾	8.6	9.2	9.3	9.4	9.6	10.0	9.7
Scotland	13.7	13.7	13.6	13.6	13.6	13.3	13.2

(1) Includes centrally employed teachers.

(2) The pupil teacher ratio for grant aided schools in 2011-2016 was amended in October 2017. See background notes for details.

Chart 1 shows that the age profile of teachers has changed much over the past 10 years. The prominent peak of teachers aged in their fifties, as seen in 2011, no longer exists. In 2021, teacher numbers were highest between the ages of 25 and 41.

The average (mean) age of primary, secondary and special school teachers was 40 in 2021, compared to 43 in 2011, so the teacher workforce was, on average, younger in 2021 than in 2011.

Chart 1: Age profile of teachers (excluding ELC)

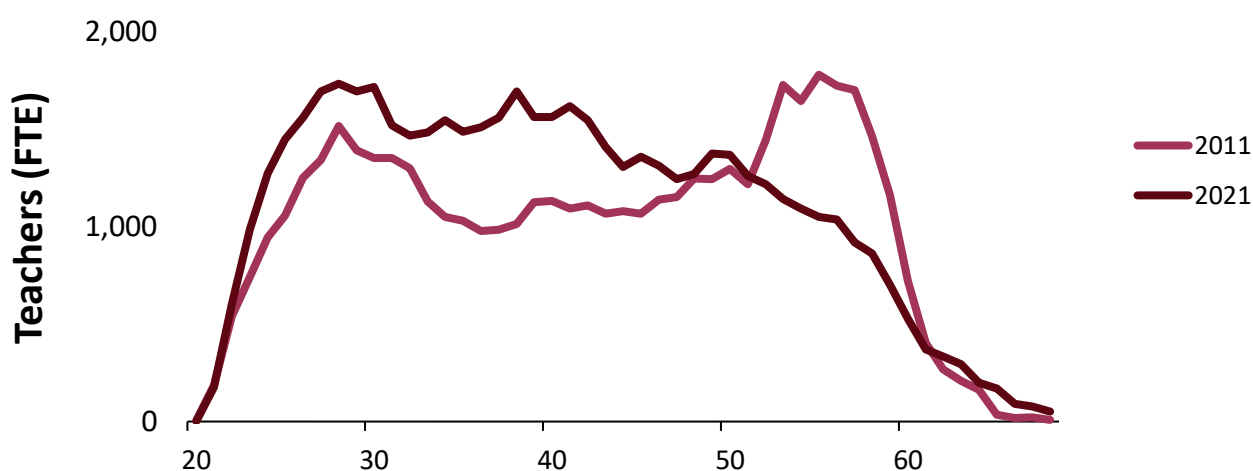


Table 3.4 shows that there are many more female teachers than male, especially in the primary sector where 89% of teachers are female. However, in both primary and secondary sectors there was a lower proportion of female teachers in promoted posts compared to main grade or chartered teachers. In secondary schools 65% of teachers at all grades were female compared to 44% of head teachers.

A new role of Lead Teacher was established in June 2021 by the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers. There were no Lead Teachers in post at the time of this year’s school staff census in September.

Teaching posts were classified into three employment types for the purposes of the school staff census: Permanent, Temporary and Teacher Induction Scheme. Teachers may be employed on a permanent contract but be recorded in the staff census as temporary if they are working in a post classified as a temporary employment type, for example while covering a vacancy. The proportion of teachers in temporary posts was 13% (compared with 12% last year). This increase in temporary posts was seen across the primary, secondary and special school sectors. Further details on the recording of employment types is included in the background notes.

In 2021, the percentage of teachers working part-time, as a proportion of all FTE, was 17%. There was a higher rate amongst females (20%), than males (8%) (data not shown).

Table 3.4: Teacher characteristics

Percentage of Full Time Equivalents (FTE)

Characteristic	School Type				Total
	Primary	Secondary	Special	Centrally Employed	
Sex					
Female	89	65	77	83	77
Male	11	35	23	17	23
Age (years)					
Under 25	6	5	2	1	6
25 to 34	32	29	17	9	30
35 to 44	28	28	32	25	28
45 to 54	23	23	31	34	24
55 or over	10	14	18	31	13
Average Age	39	41	44	48	40
Ethnicity⁽¹⁾					
White - Scottish	70	63	66	54	66
White - other British	21	24	22	26	23
White - other	2	4	5	5	3
Minority ethnic group	1	2	2	5	2
Not known	4	4	3	8	4
Not disclosed	2	3	2	3	2
Post employment type					
Permanent	78	83	84	85	81
Temporary	16	11	16	15	13
Teacher Induction Scheme	7	6	0	0	6
Grade					
Head teacher	6	1	5	4	4
Percentage female	84	44	79	77	78
Depute head teacher	5	5	7	3	5
Percentage female	88	57	77	86	74
Principal teacher	7	22	10	11	14
Percentage female	86	63	73	76	69
Teacher or chartered	81	73	78	83	77
Percentage female	90	66	77	84	79
All - percentage female	89	65	77	83	77
Mode of working ⁽²⁾					
Full-time	79	87	81	70	83
Percentage female	88	62	75	80	75
Part-time	21	13	19	30	17
Percentage female	95	83	86	91	90

(1) More information on the ethnicity categories can be found in the Ethnicity section in the background notes.

(2) The mode of working is the percentage of FTE by working pattern in a school sector at a particular grade. See background notes for more details.

Teachers provisionally registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) (for example those that have recently completed their initial teacher education) are required to complete a period of probation before becoming eligible for full registration. Probation can be completed through either the one year full-time Teacher Induction Scheme (TIS) or a flexible route.

Table 3.5 shows the percentage of previous TIS probationers who were in teaching posts in a publicly funded school in Scotland in the year following their probation. The percentage of teachers in such employment in the first year following probation has decreased to 80% for the most recent cohort (2020/21) from 85% for the cohort last year. This is the lowest rate since the 2013/14 cohort but remains substantially higher than the three cohorts from 2007/08 to 2009/10 when less than 60% of teachers found such employment in the first year following their probation. Teachers not in a post in a publicly funded school may be teaching elsewhere (including abroad or in the independent sector), in non-teaching employment or unemployed.

For the 2020/21 cohort, the proportion of TIS probationers in a full-time permanent post at the time of the following year's census was 31%, down from 38% for the previous cohort. This proportion has decreased for the last five years from a high of 57% for the 2016/17 cohort. The proportion of the TIS probationer cohort that were in a full-time temporary post at the time of the following year's census was higher, having risen from 27% in 2015/16 to 42% in 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Statistics on pre 2014/15 cohorts are available from the [supplementary statistics](#).

Further breakdowns of post-probationer data, by sector, local authority and secondary subject can be found on the [post probationer teacher employment dashboard](#).

Table 3.5: Teacher Induction Scheme post-probationers teaching in the year following their probation

Percentage of headcount

	TIS probationer cohort						
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Full-time permanent	45	55	57	55	48	38	31
Full-time temporary	35	27	28	27	30	42	42
Part-time permanent	2	2	1	2	2	1	1
Part-time temporary	4	2	2	3	5	3	6
Other ⁽¹⁾	14	13	12	13	16	15	20
All teaching post types'	86	87	88	87	84	85	80
Headcount of teachers in cohort	2,448	2,524	2,630	2,852	2,836	3,076	3,123

(1) The "Other" category includes those teaching elsewhere, including in the independent sector, those who have found supply work, and those who are unemployed or who have left teaching, although this detail is not included in the census data.

Table 3.6 shows the percentage of TIS probationers in teaching posts up to seven years following their probation.

Table 3.6: Long-term employment of Teacher Induction Scheme probationers

Percentage headcount

	Sep-15	Sep-16	Sep-17	Sep-18	Sep-19	Sep-20	Sep-21
2014/15 cohort	86	83	82	80	79	79	78
2015/16 cohort		87	84	83	81	80	79
2016/17 cohort			88	85	83	83	82
2017/18 cohort				87	84	84	84
2018/19 cohort					84	85	85
2019/20 cohort						85	84
2020/21 cohort							80

Chapter 4: Classes and pupils

12.5% of P1-P3 pupils were taught in classes of 18 or fewer compared to 14.0% in 2020.

23.2 Average class size for pupils in primary school – this has increased from 23.1 in 2020.

Table 4.1 shows average class sizes for each stage in primary school alongside the overall primary school average. In 2021 the overall average class size for primary has increased from 23.1 in 2020 to 23.2. The average class size for P1-P3 increased from 22.9 to 23.0 between 2020 and 2021 while the average class size for P4-7 remained the same at 25.5. Statistics on class sizes in the secondary sector are not collected as class size varies widely across subjects.

Table 4.1: Average class size of primary school pupils⁽¹⁾

Headcount							
Stage	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
P1	21.1	21.2	21.0	20.9	21.0	20.8	20.9
P2	24.1	24.0	23.9	23.9	23.9	23.8	23.7
P3	24.8	24.7	24.7	24.6	24.7	24.2	24.4
P4	26.0	26.0	26.0	25.7	25.7	25.3	25.3
P5	26.0	26.1	26.1	26.1	26.0	25.5	25.6
P6	25.8	26.0	26.1	26.0	26.0	25.5	25.6
P7	25.4	25.8	25.9	26.0	25.9	25.6	25.5
P1-P3	23.3	23.3	23.2	23.2	23.2	22.9	23.0
P4-P7	25.8	26.0	26.0	25.9	25.9	25.5	25.5
Primary	23.4	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.1	23.2

(1) Data refers to the average class size of pupils in each stage, not the average class size of single stage classes. The total primary average class size is calculated on a different basis to all the other class sizes shown, see background notes for details.

Table 4.2 shows that the percentage of P1-P3 pupils taught in classes of 18 or fewer decreased to 12.5% (20,328 pupils) in 2021 from 14.0% (22,899 pupils) in 2020. Over the same period, the number of pupils taught in classes of 26 or more decreased from 40,064 in 2020 to 39,723. However, decreases in the total primary school roll mean that this represented a slightly higher percentage of pupils – 24.5% in 2021 compared to 24.4% in 2020 (data not shown).

Table 4.2: P1-P3 pupils by class size⁽¹⁾

Headcount							
Class Size	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
0 - 18	20,999	21,906	20,997	20,613	20,591	22,899	20,328
19 - 25	104,426	104,517	106,023	104,453	103,326	100,948	102,233
26 - 30	46,489	45,486	44,340	44,362	43,410	39,874	39,626
31 or more	658	807	625	350	224	190	97

% in classes of 18 or fewer or in two teacher classes of 36 or fewer	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	12.2	12.7	12.2	12.1	12.3	14.0	12.5

(1) The percentage of P1-P3 pupils in classes of 18 or fewer includes two-teacher classes with 36 or fewer. Classes taught by two teachers at all times are treated as two classes of half the size.

Legislation limits class sizes to 25 for P1 pupils and to 30 for P2 and P3 (see background notes for more information). Table 4.3 shows the number of P1 pupils by class size. Some P1 pupils may be in classes of over 25 due to the inclusion of one or more 'excepted pupils' (see background note).

In 2021 the number of P1 pupils in classes of 26 or more was 293; this was an increase from 188 in 2020. In 2021, there were 12 classes with 26 or more pupils and at least one P1 pupil, compared to 7 such classes in 2020 (data not shown).

Table 4.3: P1 pupils by class size

Headcount							
Class size	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
0 - 18	11,213	11,737	11,925	11,326	11,393	12,570	11,017
19 - 25	45,307	45,102	44,195	43,254	43,525	40,551	41,724
26 or more	637	698	631	511	267	188	293

Table 4.4 shows that the percentage of P1-P3 pupils in classes of 18 or fewer varied considerably between local authorities and years. One of the main reasons for this was the differing number of small schools between local authorities.

Table 4.4: P1-P3 pupils in classes of size 18 or fewer or in two teacher classes with a pupil teacher ratio of 18 or fewer

Percentage Headcount							
Local Authority	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Aberdeen City	10.6	11.0	13.0	9.9	13.5	12.8	5.7
Aberdeenshire	12.4	14.7	17.7	16.0	20.0	18.6	15.0
Angus	22.4	19.6	16.5	20.1	19.2	17.7	18.2
Argyll and Bute	24.2	27.2	27.1	34.6	28.5	39.1	37.9
City of Edinburgh	6.1	5.7	6.0	5.2	4.5	6.0	5.8
Clackmannanshire	11.8	19.7	14.1	11.8	16.5	13.1	12.9
Dumfries and Galloway	13.6	17.1	22.0	20.2	17.7	16.8	13.9
Dundee City	3.4	2.6	4.4	3.1	5.9	7.1	6.3
East Ayrshire	9.5	11.1	9.9	8.3	12.0	17.0	17.8
East Dunbartonshire	10.6	12.9	10.3	10.5	9.3	10.1	8.1
East Lothian	6.0	4.2	6.5	8.8	6.1	12.2	10.7
East Renfrewshire	9.5	16.5	12.6	11.9	18.3	9.5	13.6
Falkirk	8.5	5.6	7.9	8.8	10.6	15.2	14.1
Fife	20.8	20.8	11.6	7.1	3.7	7.1	4.1
Glasgow City	3.6	4.2	5.5	6.5	8.0	10.9	9.7
Highland	20.5	19.1	18.1	18.8	16.7	21.0	20.5
Inverclyde	7.5	6.5	5.0	6.1	8.0	4.8	7.1
Midlothian	10.3	16.7	11.2	16.2	9.4	11.4	8.3
Moray	10.8	8.0	8.1	9.0	11.0	9.0	15.3
Na h-Eileanan Siar	51.3	57.8	52.3	56.4	60.4	55.3	65.9
North Ayrshire	10.8	13.0	9.9	10.9	16.4	14.6	11.9
North Lanarkshire	8.6	9.8	11.4	8.9	9.4	13.7	13.3
Orkney Islands	22.6	19.8	24.7	24.8	30.6	36.8	31.8
Perth and Kinross	14.3	14.7	11.0	11.8	16.7	17.5	17.9
Renfrewshire	11.9	13.3	14.4	16.1	13.7	15.4	12.2
Scottish Borders	14.3	10.3	14.4	12.5	10.6	13.0	10.8
Shetland Islands	25.5	33.9	32.2	36.2	31.3	46.7	42.1
South Ayrshire	24.6	19.5	20.1	15.4	14.1	19.2	16.2
South Lanarkshire	16.1	15.5	16.8	19.2	18.1	16.9	12.1
Stirling	17.4	14.9	11.3	10.0	13.9	17.0	11.6
West Dunbartonshire	13.6	16.2	14.0	19.2	15.7	16.4	21.8
West Lothian	13.6	16.3	14.7	17.1	13.6	17.1	17.4
Scotland⁽¹⁾	12.2	12.7	12.2	12.1	12.3	14.0	12.5

(1) The statistics for Scotland include one grant-aided mainstream school.

Table 4.5 shows pupil characteristics used in equalities monitoring. In 2021, 82.6% of pupils were recorded as being White-Scottish or White-Other British. The next largest proportions of ethnic backgrounds were White-Other (3.3%), White-Polish (2.4%), Asian Pakistani (2.1%) and Mixed (1.6%).

The number of pupils recorded with ASN has increased markedly since 2010 and there continue to be year on year increases (see table 1.5 of the [supplementary tables](#)). These increases were likely due in part to continued improvements in recording and the introduction of the additional need types 'Child plans' and 'Other' in 2011.

There were 232,753 pupils (33.0% of all pupils) with an additional support need (ASN) recorded in 2021. This was an increase of 0.7 percentage points on 2020 (226,838 pupils with an ASN record, 32.3% of all pupils). However, this is first time since 2009 that the rate has increased by less than one percentage point.

Statistics on additional support needs include pupils in special schools and those in mainstream schools who are assessed or declared disabled or have a Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP), Individualised Education Programme (IEP), Child Plan or another type of support. Pupils may have more than one type of ASN, therefore the totals for ASN do not equal the sum of individual types of ASN.

Table 4.5: Pupil characteristics⁽¹⁾

Headcount	Female	Male	Total
Total Pupils	345,119	359,604	704,723
Ethnicity			
White - Scottish	263,185	273,819	537,004
White - Other British	21,814	23,028	44,842
White - Irish	731	768	1,499
White - Polish	8,159	8,631	16,790
White - Gypsy/Traveller	682	753	1,435
White - Other	11,368	11,883	23,251
Mixed	5,835	5,698	11,533
Asian - Indian	3,656	3,786	7,442
Asian - Pakistani	7,211	7,560	14,771
Asian - Bangladeshi	681	678	1,359
Asian - Chinese	2,456	2,466	4,922
Asian - Other	2,289	2,378	4,667
Caribbean/Black - Scottish/British	472	458	930
Caribbean/Black - Other	234	265	499
African - Scottish/British	3,307	3,249	6,556
African - Other	1,834	1,905	3,739
Arab	1,954	2,131	4,085
Other	2,154	2,369	4,523
Not known	5,445	5,910	11,355
Not disclosed	1,652	1,869	3,521
English as an Additional Language	23,569	25,872	49,441
Additional Support Needs (ASN)			
CSP (Co-ordinated Support Plan)	542	878	1,420
IEP (Individualised Education Programme)	10,913	23,197	34,110
Child Plans	17,227	29,855	47,082
Assessed/Declared Disabled	6,213	12,892	19,105
Other ⁽²⁾	82,244	105,680	187,924
All pupils with ASN⁽³⁾	98,486	134,267	232,753
All pupils with ASN (excluding Other type)⁽³⁾	27,834	50,181	78,015

(1) Statistics for English as an Additional Language do not include grant-aided special schools as this information is not collected. There were 125 pupils at grant-aided special schools in 2021.

(2) See the background notes for further information on what the other category includes.

(3) Pupils may have more than one type of ASN, therefore the totals for ASN may not equal the sum of individual types of ASN.

Chapter 5: Early Learning and Childcare

97% of eligible three and four year olds were registered for funded ELC (95% in 2020)

13% of two year olds were registered for funded ELC (9% in 2020)

Table 5.1 shows that there were 91,603 registrations for funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) in September 2021, an increase of 1.6% since September 2020 when there were 90,126 registrations. Uptake of funded ELC for eligible three and four year olds has also increased, with an estimated 97% registered (95% in 2020). Children registered to receive funded ELC at more than one centre may be counted more than once, so this will slightly overestimate true uptake. Children may also attend centres outside of the local authority they live in, which would also affect these figures.

The number of two year olds registered has increased from 4,863 in 2020 to 6,474 in 2021. This represents 13% of all two year olds, an increase from 9% in 2020. It should be noted that the proportion of the two year old population registered will be affected by the proportion of the population eligible for funded ELC. Although the exact number of children eligible is not known, it is estimated that around a quarter of two year olds are eligible for funded ELC through the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and subsequent secondary legislation which commenced in August 2015.

At local authority level, the proportion of two year olds registered varies considerably, with the highest proportions found in East Ayrshire (27%), Inverclyde (22%) and Clackmannanshire (21%). Aberdeen City (5%), East Lothian (5%) and Shetland Islands (5%) had the lowest proportions of their two year old populations registered for ELC.

The number of deferred registrations for funded ELC increased by 9% from 5,940 in 2020 to 6,459 in 2021. Of children potentially eligible for a funded place due to deferral, 24% were registered for funded ELC in 2021, compared with 21% in 2020. Five local authorities (Angus, Argyll and Bute, Falkirk, Scottish Borders, and Shetland Islands) are currently piloting implementation of entitlement to funded ELC for all children whose school start is deferred¹.

¹ In other Local Authorities, all children born between September and February inclusive are potentially eligible for funded ELC if they defer entry to primary school. Children born in January and February are entitled to additional funded ELC, while children born between September and December are funded at the discretion of the Local Authority.

Table 5.1: Registrations⁽¹⁾ for funded early learning and childcare at local authority and partnership centres, September 2021

	Under 2	2 year olds		3 & 4 year olds ⁽²⁾		Deferred entry ⁽⁴⁾		Total
		Number	% of population	Number	% of those eligible ⁽³⁾	Number	% of those eligible ⁽⁵⁾	
Aberdeen City	0	113	5	3,055	94	265	24	3,433
Aberdeenshire	4	166	6	4,348	99	355	24	4,873
Angus	0	121	12	1,485	91	192	35	1,798
Argyll and Bute	0	59	9	1,113	106	131	37	1,303
City of Edinburgh	90	508	11	6,389	90	438	19	7,425
Clackmannanshire	1	106	21	803	100	36	13	946
Dumfries and Galloway	0	175	15	2,013	106	190	30	2,378
Dundee City	1	255	18	2,052	96	213	29	2,521
East Ayrshire	55	322	27	1,765	96	114	18	2,256
East Dunbartonshire	15	102	10	1,821	101	178	29	2,116
East Lothian	2	50	5	1,760	105	137	24	1,949
East Renfrewshire	16	66	7	1,693	100	135	23	1,910
Falkirk	0	182	12	2,344	98	246	31	2,772
Fife	0	592	17	5,365	99	347	19	6,304
Glasgow City	57	906	15	8,460	91	569	18	9,992
Highland	0	159	8	3,360	105	573	53	4,092
Inverclyde	50	150	22	1,028	101	63	18	1,291
Midlothian	0	166	15	1,711	96	185	31	2,062
Moray	0	70	8	1,306	103	136	31	1,512
Na h-Eileanan Siar	1	18	8	349	96	53	41	421
North Ayrshire	0	215	18	1,793	95	100	16	2,108
North Lanarkshire	33	368	11	5,181	95	281	16	5,863
Orkney Islands	0	14	8	308	104	48	46	370
Perth and Kinross	0	144	11	1,974	99	206	31	2,324
Renfrewshire	101	335	20	2,729	102	198	22	3,363
Scottish Borders	0	90	9	1,519	94	142	27	1,751
Shetland Islands	0	12	5	354	96	51	40	417
South Ayrshire	19	167	18	1,526	100	95	19	1,807
South Lanarkshire	57	429	14	5,016	100	388	23	5,890
Stirling	7	73	9	1,233	95	89	20	1,402
West Dunbartonshire	46	154	18	1,285	98	91	20	1,576
West Lothian	0	187	10	2,977	94	214	20	3,378
Scotland	555	6,474	13	78,115	97	6,459	24	91,603

(1) This is a snapshot of registrations at census week (13-17 September 2021). It does not include children who were registered between census week and the end of December.

(2) Refers to academic year - three and four year olds were previously referred to as 'ante pre-school' and 'pre-school' respectively. Three year olds are children born between 1st March 2018 and 31st August 2019, and four year olds are children born between 1st March 2017 and 28th February 2018.

(3) Eligible children are estimated from National Records of Scotland population projections. For three year olds, only around half of children are eligible at the time of the census (13-17 September 2021). Children are counted once for each centre they are registered with, so the same child may be counted multiple times if they attend more than one centre. Children may also attend centres outside of the local authority they live in, which would also affect these figures.

(4) Refers to children who are eligible to attend primary school but have deferred entry and remain in ELC.

(5) Eligibility figures for deferral are calculated on the assumption that all children born from September to February inclusive are potentially eligible for funded ELC if they defer entry to primary school; January and February born children are entitled to the additional year of funded ELC, while for September to December

born children, the local authority decides whether to provide it. Children born after school commencement date in mid-August can also defer entry to primary school, but they are not included in the calculation for the percentage of those eligible for deferred entry to avoid double counting with the four year old category. Five local authorities (Angus, Argyll and Bute, Falkirk, Scottish Borders, and Shetland Islands) are currently piloting funded ELC for all children whose school start is deferred.

Table 5.2 shows that the overall FTE of teachers, graduates, and staff working towards the SSSC benchmark degree level qualifications in ELC was 5,387 in 2021, an increase of 7% from 5,015 in 2020. The FTE of teachers working in ELC was 704 in 2021, compared with 729 in 2020, a 3% decrease of 24 FTE. The FTE of graduates with degrees relevant to early years working in ELC was 3,150 in 2021, a 16% increase of 429 FTE compared with 2,721 recorded in 2020. The FTE of ELC staff working towards the SSSC benchmark degree level qualifications decreased by 32 FTE to 1,533 in 2021, a 2% decrease compared with 1,565 FTE in 2020.

Table 5.2: Teachers, graduate staff, and staff working towards graduate qualifications at centres providing funded early learning and childcare, by local authority, September 2021

Full Time Equivalent (FTE) and percentage

	Teachers ⁽¹⁾	Graduates ⁽²⁾	Working towards graduate qualifications ⁽³⁾	Total	
				FTE	% change since 2019
Aberdeen City	18	105	74	197	20
Aberdeenshire	21	107	77	206	7
Angus	10	45	57	112	17
Argyll and Bute	12	34	16	62	-16
City of Edinburgh	52	290	112	453	-18
Clackmannanshire	3	31	21	55	8
Dumfries and Galloway	12	114	13	139	10
Dundee City	43	61	58	162	29
East Ayrshire	12	121	71	204	30
East Dunbartonshire	35	96	43	175	39
East Lothian	5	38	22	65	2
East Renfrewshire	40	67	35	142	24
Falkirk	5	70	41	116	9
Fife	72	89	68	229	-1
Glasgow City	59	567	213	838	8
Highland	33	44	28	104	12
Inverclyde	10	50	43	103	10
Midlothian	17	62	13	92	-11
Moray	14	36	28	78	-2
Na h-Eileanan Siar	5	9	8	22	59
North Ayrshire	8	100	27	136	-13
North Lanarkshire	5	216	75	296	9
Orkney Islands	4	9	13	27	-1
Perth and Kinross	40	93	60	193	5
Renfrewshire	11	158	61	230	34
Scottish Borders	26	36	21	82	25
Shetland Islands	8	8	6	23	-13
South Ayrshire	34	66	55	155	12
South Lanarkshire	47	200	62	309	3
Stirling	6	84	35	125	1
West Dunbartonshire	17	58	40	115	14
West Lothian	21	86	37	144	21
Scotland	704	3,150	1,533	5,387	7

(1) GTCS registered teachers. Includes teachers in ELC centres, centrally employed teachers, and home visiting teachers.

(2) Includes staff that hold: a degree level benchmark qualification required by the SSSC for registration as a manager/lead practitioner (see background notes for list of benchmark qualifications); a degree level (SCQF level 9) qualification relevant to early years and are working towards a degree level benchmark qualification required by the SSSC for registration as a manager/lead practitioner; or a degree level qualification sufficient to meet the registration standards of another regulatory body (e.g. Nursing and Midwifery Council, General Medical Council).

(3) Staff that do not hold degrees (SCQF level 9) relevant to early years, but are working towards a SSSC benchmark degree level qualification for registration as a manager/lead practitioner.

Table 5.3 shows the characteristics of teachers in ELC centres and centrally employed teachers. The vast majority of teachers (92%) were female. Since 2015, the proportion of male teachers has more than doubled from 3% to 8%.

Table 5.3: ELC Teacher characteristics percentages, 2020

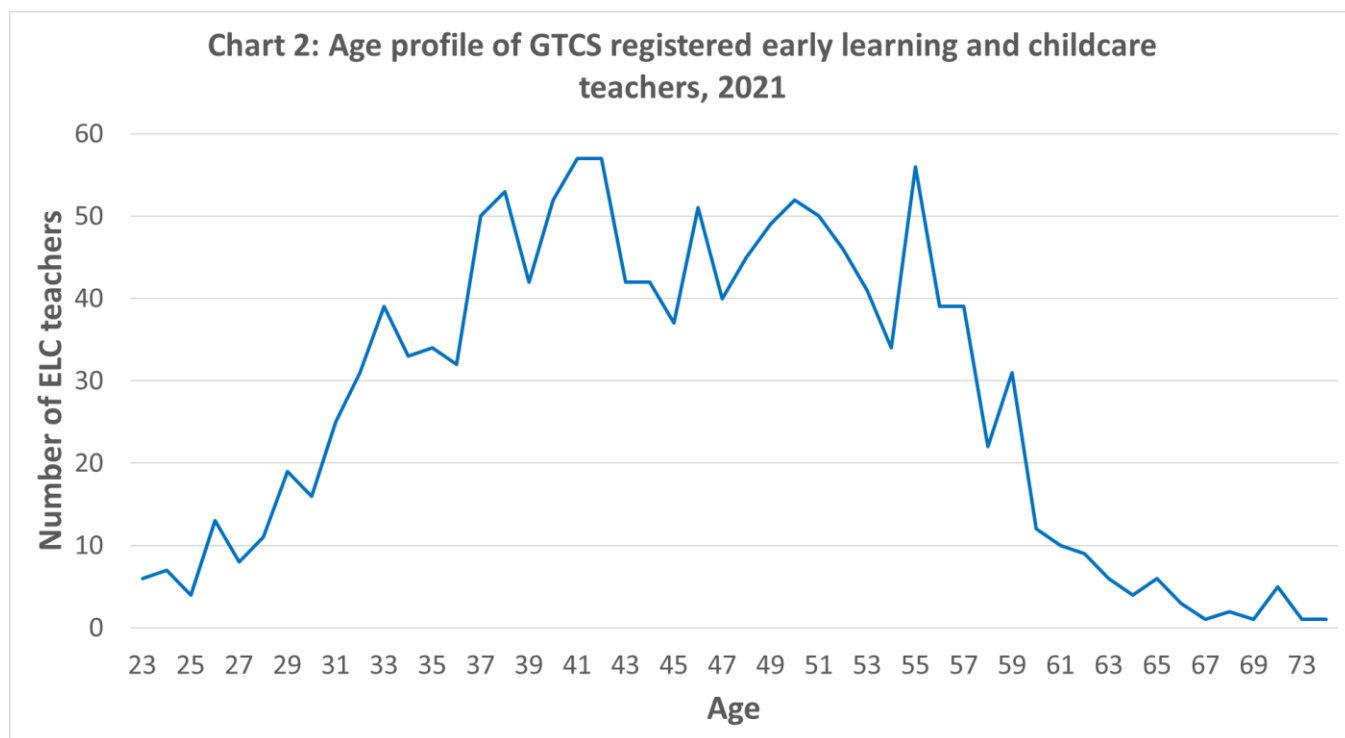
Percentage of headcount

Sex		Age					Average Age
Female	Male	Under 25	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 or over	Age
92	8	1	15	34	33	18	45

Since 2012, the average age of teachers has remained around age 45. Data on age and sex is only available for teachers, although they form only part of the graduate workforce in ELC.

Chart 2 shows the age profile of GTCS registered ELC teachers, as at September 2021. The number of teachers generally increases to age 41, then peaks at ages 41 and 42, before decreasing sharply after age 55, with a small increase at age 59.

Chart 2: Age profile of GTCS registered early learning and childcare teachers



Chapter 6: Attendance and absence

92.0% attendance in 2020/21, down from 93.0% in 2018/19.

- The 2020/21 rate refers to attendance when schools were open.
- Comparisons between rates for when schools were open in 2020/21 and rates from previous years can be made at national and local authority level provided that the impact of COVID-19 is borne in mind.

COVID-19 impact on attendance recording

During 2020/21 there was disruption to school attendance caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This included:

- pupils being absent after testing positive for COVID-19 or when required to self-isolate.
- school closures following local outbreaks or when there were COVID-19 related staff absences.
- the closure of most school buildings between January and April 2021.

During periods where school buildings were closed to pupils, education continued via home-learning for the majority of pupils. For those vulnerable pupils who would benefit from being in school, and for children of key workers, provision was made to allow them to attend school buildings. Please see the background notes for more information on school closures during 2020/21.

To account for these changed circumstances, new attendance and absence codes were made available to schools to allow them to capture COVID-19 related absence and home learning provision. Due to the fast pace of their introduction, it was anticipated that use of these codes may be inconsistent between different schools and local authorities.

Some of these expected inconsistencies were evident during the preparation of these statistics alongside evidence that the usage of the new codes varied over the course of the year within individual schools and authorities, including underreporting of absence from home learning. This should be borne in mind when interpreting these statistics.

The background notes contain more information on these codes and the circumstances they were designed to capture as well as further information on the quality of these statistics.

Statistics on pupil attendance and absence

Statistics on attendance and absence are collected every two years.

For 2020/21 attendance and absence has been defined in three ways:

- 'Attendance or absence – schools open' includes attendance or absence only for the occasions when schools were open to pupils. Home-learning when the school was open but an individual pupil could not attend due to their personal circumstances (including COVID-19 related reasons) is included in this measure.
- 'Attendance or absence – schools closed' includes attendance at or absence from home learning when schools were closed to pupils due to a COVID-19 related reason. This includes instances when a whole school was shut or when a school was shut to a certain class or bubble of pupils. It does not include any attendance

or absence for periods when schools were shut for non-COVID-19 reasons, for example school holidays or in-service days.

- ‘Attendance or absence – full year’ covers the whole school year, including occasions when schools were open and when they were closed due to COVID-19 related reasons.

The rates reported in the ‘attendance or absence – schools open’ measure is methodologically consistent to attendance rates from previous years as it is not affected by the known underreporting of absence from home-learning. Therefore this measure is comparable to previous years (bearing in mind the impact of COVID-19) and the main measure reported in this bulletin. The ‘attendance or absence – full year’ measure provides a complete picture of attendance across the whole school year. For details on the attendance and absence codes included in each of the measures see the background notes.

Other than Tables 6.1 and 6.2 all reporting and commentary in this bulletin refers to ‘attendance or absence – schools open’. In line with statistics from previous years, the statistics shown here are calculated on the basis of the number of half days (or openings) during school term-time.

Table 6.1: Attendance and absence, 2020/21

Percentage of half days

	Schools open	Full year
Attendance	92.0	93.6
Absence (authorised and unauthorised)	7.9	6.4
Temporary exclusion	0.0	0.0

Table 6.1 shows that the ‘attendance – schools open’ attendance rate was 92.0% and that the ‘attendance – full year’ attendance rate was 93.6%. Table 6.2 shows that school buildings were open (‘attendance or absence – schools open’) for nearly four-fifths (or 78.9% of possible half days) of the 2020/21 school year.

Table 6.2: Attendance and absence by whether schools were open, 2020/21

	Cumulative half days across all pupils	Percentage of full year
Attendance or absence - schools open	199,386,910	78.9
Attendance - schools open	183,518,507	72.6
Authorised absence - schools open	9,455,818	3.7
Unauthorised absence - schools open	6,377,448	2.5
Temporary exclusion	35,137	0.0
Attendance or absence - schools closed	53,348,444	21.1
Home-learning - schools closed	53,033,388	21.0
Absence from home-learning - schools closed	315,056	0.1
Attendance or absence - full year	252,735,354	100.0

Table 6.3 shows school attendance, absence and temporary exclusion rates over the period 2012/13 to 2020/21. The rate of attendance has decreased in each year data has been collected since 2014/15, with the biggest decrease between 2018/19 and 2020/21, reflecting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This most recent decrease in the attendance rate was caused by an increase in both authorised and unauthorised absence (Table 6.3). In 2020/21 absence due to parents isolating their child against public health advice relating to COVID-19 was included in 'other unauthorised absence' which may explain the increase in the aggregated unauthorised absence figures. However, the data collected by the Scottish Government does not include a breakdown of the instances where this situation was recorded to confirm this.

The increase in authorised absence in 2020/21 was largely driven by absence due to COVID-19 self-isolation without provision for home-learning which was not a factor in 2018/19 and earlier.

Table 6.3 - Attendance and absence by detailed reason - schools open, 2012/13-2020/21⁽¹⁾

Percentage of half days

	2012/13	2014/15	2016/17	2018/19	2020/21 ⁽²⁾
Attendance - schools open	93.6	93.7	93.3	93.0	92.0
In school	91.7	91.6	91.1	90.6	88.2
Late	1.7	1.9	2.0	2.2	1.8
Work experience	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0
Sickness with education provision	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
COVID-19 sickness with provision for home-learning ⁽³⁾	#	#	#	#	0.1
COVID-19 self-isolation with provision for home-learning ⁽³⁾	#	#	#	#	1.8
Authorised absence - schools open	4.5	4.3	4.2	4.4	4.7
Sickness without education provision	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.5
Very late	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Authorised holidays	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0
Exceptional domestic circumstances	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Other authorised ⁽⁴⁾	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7
COVID-19 sickness without provision for home-learning ⁽³⁾	#	#	#	#	0.0
COVID-19 self-isolation without provision for home-learning ⁽³⁾	#	#	#	#	0.3
Unauthorised absence - schools open	1.8	2.0	2.4	2.6	3.2
Unauthorised holidays	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.3
Unexplained absence, including truancy	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.7	2.1
Exceptional domestic circumstances (unauthorised)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other unauthorised (including 'parents isolating their child against public health advice relating to COVID-19' ⁽³⁾)	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.8
All absences (authorised and unauthorised) - schools open	6.4	6.3	6.6	7.0	7.9
Temporary exclusion	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

(1) Detailed absence reasons will be affected by differing reporting practices across local authorities and over time. Overall absence and attendance are comparable.

(2) Attendance and absence reporting in 2020/21 was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. All figures in this table are comparable to those from previous years. Please see the background notes for more information.

(3) COVID-19 codes were not available in collections prior to 2020/21.

(4) Includes part-time timetable (exclusion related) and part-time timetable (health related). Please see the background notes for more information.

Table 6.4 shows the 2020/21 'attendance – schools open' rate across each sector broken down by sex, ethnicity, additional support needs and the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 (SIMD, 20% most deprived versus 20% least deprived).

As in previous years, pupils with additional support needs had a lower attendance rate than pupils with no additional support needs, with the difference being greater in secondary schools than primary schools.

Pupils living in the most deprived areas had lower attendance rates in all sectors than those living in the least deprived areas – across all sectors, pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas had an attendance rate of 88.7% compared to 95.0% for those living in the 20% least deprived areas. This effect was the greatest in secondary schools, with pupils living in the least deprived areas having an attendance rate 7.7 percentage points higher than those living in the most deprived areas.

Table 6.4 - Attendance by pupil characteristics - schools open, 2020/21

Percentage of half days

	Primary	Secondary	Special	Total
All Pupils	94.0	89.1	89.3	92.0
Sex				
Male	93.9	89.3	89.3	92.1
Female	94.1	88.9	89.3	92.0
Ethnicity				
White Scottish	94.2	88.8	89.2	92.0
White non-Scottish	93.6	89.3	90.3	92.1
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	94.6	90.4	92.7	93.2
Asian	92.4	91.5	87.9	92.0
African/Black/Caribbean	95.3	93.4	92.4	94.6
All other ethnic groups	91.9	89.2	88.8	91.0
Not Disclosed / Not Known	92.4	87.8	88.5	91.2
Additional Support Needs⁽¹⁾				
Pupils with ASN	92.0	86.4	89.3	89.4
Pupils with no ASN	94.8	90.6	#	93.3
SIMD⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾				
Most deprived 20% of SIMD	90.9	85.1	87.6	88.7
Least deprived 20% of SIMD	96.5	92.8	92.1	95.0

(1) Pupils that were not matched to the Pupil Census have not been included.

(2) SIMD data not available for 12,160 pupil enrolments (1.67% of the total) including the pupils not matched to the Pupil Census. Please see the background notes for more information.

Table 6.5 shows local authority attendance rates over the period 2012/13 to 2020/21. In 2020/21 the 'attendance – schools open' rate varied between 89.8% and 95.5%. This range in attendance rates was wider than the preceding years. Variations between local authorities will reflect different local impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and variations in recording practices as well as pupils' attendance behaviour. Comparisons between local authorities should only be made when these factors are taken into consideration.

Table 6.5 - Attendance by local authority - schools open, 2012/13 to 2020/21

Percentage of half days

Local Authority	2012/13	2014/15	2016/17	2018/19	2020/21
Aberdeen City	93.0	93.5	93.6	93.3	93.0
Aberdeenshire	94.5	94.8	94.9	94.4	94.9
Angus	94.2	94.3	93.7	93.4	92.8
Argyll and Bute	94.3	94.2	93.7	93.5	93.3
City of Edinburgh	93.9	94.1	93.9	93.8	92.6
Clackmannanshire	93.4	93.3	92.9	92.9	92.9
Dumfries and Galloway	94.2	94.5	94.2	93.6	93.2
Dundee City	92.3	92.4	92.3	91.8	90.6
East Ayrshire	93.4	93.4	93.0	92.2	90.9
East Dunbartonshire	95.2	95.3	95.0	94.9	94.3
East Lothian	94.2	93.9	93.7	93.1	91.8
East Renfrewshire	95.5	95.6	95.3	95.2	94.6
Falkirk	93.8	93.6	93.1	92.9	92.0
Fife	93.0	93.5	93.0	92.6	91.1
Glasgow City	92.6	92.8	92.5	92.2	90.6
Highland	93.0	93.2	93.4	92.7	91.5
Inverclyde	93.4	93.0	92.5	92.2	92.3
Midlothian	93.2	93.0	92.6	92.6	92.3
Moray	94.2	94.1	94.0	93.9	93.8
Na h-Eileanan Siar	93.9	94.9	95.2	94.0	93.7
North Ayrshire	93.5	93.3	92.6	92.1	91.4
North Lanarkshire	92.9	92.8	91.8	91.2	89.8
Orkney Islands	93.8	94.2	94.6	93.8	94.9
Perth and Kinross	94.0	93.9	93.6	93.3	91.9
Renfrewshire	94.0	93.6	93.3	93.0	91.9
Scottish Borders	94.3	94.4	94.2	93.7	93.3
Shetland Islands	94.5	94.4	94.5	94.4	95.5
South Ayrshire	93.2	93.2	93.2	92.6	91.5
South Lanarkshire	93.8	93.9	93.4	92.9	91.6
Stirling	94.1	94.4	94.1	93.7	93.4
West Dunbartonshire	93.3	92.7	91.8	91.8	90.4
West Lothian	93.9	93.9	93.3	92.7	92.3
Grant-Aided ⁽¹⁾	96.9	96.8	97.1	96.7	97.5

(1) Includes the mainstream grant-aided school, Jordanhill, only. Grant-aided special schools are not included in this collection.

Chapter 7: Exclusions

8,323 cases of exclusion in 2020/21, down from 14,990 in 2018/19
11.9 cases of exclusion per 1,000 pupils in 2020/21, down from 21.7 in 2018/19

In Scotland, the power exists to exclude children and young people from school where it is considered that to allow the child or young person to continue attendance at school would be seriously detrimental to order and discipline in the school or the educational wellbeing of the learners there. The Scottish Government published [detailed guidance](#) on managing school exclusions in June 2017.

Information on exclusions was not collected in 2011/12, 2013/14, 2015/16, 2017/18 or 2019/20 as this data is collected only every two years.

Table 7.1 below provides information on the number of cases of exclusion in recent academic years (statistics from before the 2010/11 school year are available in the [supplementary tables](#)). Cases of exclusion refers to the number of incidences of exclusion, not the number of individual pupils excluded, as a pupil can be excluded multiple times. Both the cases of exclusion and the exclusion rate per 1,000 pupils have fallen in recent years.

Cases of exclusion have fallen from high of 44,794 in 2006/07 to 8,323 in 2020/21. There was a particularly notable decrease in exclusion between 2018/19 and 2020/21, with cases of exclusion falling 44%. This decrease is partly attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic, with many local authorities citing the lower amount of time spent in school as a reason for the reduction in their case numbers.

Over 99% of all exclusions were for a fixed period of time, referred to here as temporary exclusions, with pupils expected to return to their original school when the exclusion period is completed. In a small number of cases, one in 2020/21, an excluded pupil is 'removed from the register'. When this occurs a pupil does not return to their original school and will be educated at another school or in some other educational provision.

Table 7.1: Cases and rate of exclusion by type of exclusion, 2010/11 to 2020/21

	2010/11	2012/13	2014/15	2016/17 ⁽¹⁾	2018/19	2020/21
Exclusions in total	26,844	21,955	18,430	18,381	14,990	8,323
Of which:						
Temporary exclusions	26,784	21,934	18,425	18,376	14,987	8,322
Removed from register	60	21	5	5	3	1
Exclusion rate per 1,000 pupils	40	32.8	27.2	26.8	21.7	11.9
Of which						
Temporary exclusion rate	39.9	32.7	27.2	26.8	21.7	11.9
Removed from register rate	0.1	~	~	~	~	~

(1) The exclusions in the total and the removed from register figures for 2016/17 were updated in June 2018 to take into account 4 pupils removed from the register who were not included in the original analysis.

Table 7.2 shows cases of exclusion and exclusion rate per 1,000 pupils broken down by the excluded pupils' characteristics.

The exclusion rate per 1,000 pupils was more than three times higher for male pupils (18.2 cases of exclusion per 1,000) than female pupils (5.3 cases of exclusion per 1,000).

Having an additional support need also increases the likelihood of exclusion. The rate of exclusion for pupils with an additional support need was 25.5 exclusions per 1,000 pupils in 2020/21, almost five times the rate for pupils without an additional support need (5.3 exclusions per 1,000 pupils).

Living in an relatively more deprived area was also associated with a higher exclusion rate. Rates of exclusions per 1,000 pupils were almost four times greater for pupils living in the 20% of areas associated with most deprivation, compared with pupils living in the 20% associated with least deprivation, as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

However, this association has lessened since 2016/17 when the rate of exclusion per 1,000 pupils was more than five times higher for pupils living in the 20% of areas associated with most deprivation, compared with pupils living in the 20% associated with least deprivation. This was due to there being a greater reduction in the cases of exclusions for pupils living in the most deprived areas (7,436 in 2016/17 to 2,978 2020/21) than there was for pupils living in the least deprived areas (1,226 to 653).

Table 7.2: Case and rate of exclusion by pupil characteristic, 2020/21

	Cases of exclusions ⁽²⁾	Rate per 1,000 pupils
Gender		
Male	6,497	18.2
Female	1,826	5.3
Additional Support Needs⁽¹⁾		
Pupils with Additional Support needs	5,788	25.5
Pupils with no Additional support needs	2,511	5.3
SIMD⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾		
Lowest 20% of SIMD (Most deprived)	2,978	18.8
Highest 20% of SIMD (Least deprived)	653	4.8

(1) Cases of exclusion for pupils that were not matched to the Pupil Census have not been included. See the background notes for more information.

(2) SIMD data not available for 34 cases of exclusion, including cases for pupils not matched to the Pupil Census.

Chapter 8: Glossary

Additional support needs (ASN):

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland Act 2004 (as amended) states that a child or young person has an additional support need where they need additional support in order to benefit from school education.

Cases of exclusion:

Cases of exclusion refers to the number of incidences of exclusion, not the number of pupils excluded, as a pupil can be excluded multiple times.

Centrally employed teachers:

Teachers who were recorded as working across a local authority rather than an individual school or early learning and childcare centre.

Child Plans:

Single or multi agency plans based on an assessment guided by the Getting it Right for Every Child National Practice Model. More information about the Getting it Right for Every Child National Practice Model can be found here:

www.gov.scot/Publications/2012/11/7143.

Children and Young People Act:

This act came into force in 2014. More information about the act can be found here:

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/62233.aspx>

Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP):

This statutory education plan is prepared by local authorities to identify, and ensure provision of, services for children and young people with complex or multiple additional support needs.

Early Learning and Childcare (ELC):

Three and four year olds and eligible two year olds are entitled to 1,140 hours of funded early learning and childcare (ELC). ELC is secured by local authorities through their own provision, or through partner providers in the private, independent or third sector.

English as an Additional Language (EAL):

Refers to pupils for whom English is a second or additional language.

Excepted pupils:

These pupils do not count towards class size for the purpose of class size limits. A list of the reasons that a pupil may be defined as excepted can be found in the background note.

Full-time equivalent (FTE):

The total number of hours worked by all teachers divided by the number of hours in a standard full-time working week.

Grant-aided Schools (GAS):

Schools that are supported financially directly by the Scottish Government and follow the Curriculum for Excellence but are independent from Local Authorities. Grant-aided schools are not equivalent to schools termed 'academies' in some parts of the UK.

Grant-aided special schools (GASS):

These schools provide for young people with a wide range of ASN. There are seven GASS in Scotland.

General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS):

The independent professional body responsible for keeping a register of teachers in public education in Scotland and advising the Scottish Ministers on teacher education. All teachers in public education must be registered with the GTCS.

Individualised Education Programme (IEP):

Individualised Education Programmes are written plans setting targets that a child with additional support needs is expected to achieve.

Independent schools:

Privately owned and self-financing schools (also known as private or fee-paying schools).

Least Deprived (LD):

Pupils whose home address is in the 20% of least deprived data zones as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (<http://www.gov.scot/simd>).

Local authority early learning and childcare (ELC) centres:

ELC centres which are run and financed by the local authority.

Local authority schools:

Schools which are run and financed by the local authority.

Most Deprived (MD):

Pupils whose home address is in the 20% of most deprived data zones as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (<http://www.gov.scot/simd>).

Partnership agreement – (relating to ELC entitlement):

This is the agreement between local authorities and partner providers through which they deliver the early learning and childcare entitlement.

Partnership ELC centres:

This is partner provider settings in the private, third or independent sectors which could include private or third sector nurseries, playgroups, family centres and school based nurseries. Child-minders are not currently included in the census, although they can and do also work as partner providers with local authorities.

Pupil enrolments

As pupils can attend multiple schools during a year, the attendance, absence and exclusions collection counts pupil enrolments rather than total pupils. These are identified using the combination of a school's unique identifier (SEED code) and a pupil's Scottish

Candidate Number. A pupil who is on roll at one school during the year will have one enrolment, whereas a pupil who was on roll at two or more schools will have multiple enrolments.

Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR):

The average number of pupils per teacher.

Publicly funded schools:

Includes local authority and grant-aided schools.

Removed from the register:

This refers to a pupil who is excluded and their name removed from the school register. Such a pupil would then be educated at another school or via an alternative form of provision.

Registration (for funded ELC):

A funded place received by a child at an ELC centre. Children are counted once for each centre they are registered with, so the same child may be counted multiple times if they attend more than one centre.

SIMD – Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation:

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across Scotland. More information can be found here:

<http://www.gov.scot/simd>.

Teacher Induction Scheme probationer:

GTCS provides a guaranteed one-year training post in a local authority to every eligible student graduating with a teaching qualification from one of Scotland's universities.

Temporary exclusion:

This is when a pupil is excluded from school but remains on the school's register because they are expected to return after the period of exclusion.

Chapter 9: Background notes

National Statistics publication

This is a National Statistics Publication. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

These statistics undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. This publication has been assessed by the UK Statistics Authority.

Sources and Timing

The information in this publication is derived from a number of sources: the Pupil Census, the school staff census, and the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) census. The 2021 pupil and school staff censuses were carried out on 15 September 2021. The early learning and childcare census took place in the week commencing 13 September 2021.

Supplementary tables on the school staff census and the Pupil Census will be published in March 2022. Additional early learning and childcare tables are available on the Scottish Government website at:

[Early learning and childcare statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

The information required to complete the pupil and staff censuses was collected electronically, through local authorities, from all publicly funded primary, secondary and special schools, as part of the [ScotXed](#) programme. The information collected is largely sourced from school management information systems, thus reducing the burden on data provider.

The ELC census is completed by the approximately 2,600 centres that provide funded early learning and childcare in Scotland, and the figures are validated by local authorities.

Following the September 2010 consultation of users of school statistics, and changes to the legislation around school handbooks, we have made a number of changes to our collections and publications. This included moving the absence and exclusions data to a biennial (two yearly) collection. Local authorities continue to collect information on pupils' attendance, absence and exclusions each year on their management information systems and this can be requested directly from local authorities.

Teachers

The school staff census covers all publicly funded schools in Scotland (i.e. local authority and grant-aided schools).

Definitions and data quality

Teacher number statistics and the number of teachers used in pupil teacher ratio calculations include only those teachers defined as 'on roll' (or 'in complement'). This is based on the full-time equivalent (FTE) of teachers in post at the time of the census with one of the following status categories:

Teacher Status	Further information
Normal complement	Classroom teacher
Long term sick absence replacement	Replacement for a teacher on sick absence
Secondment replacement	Replacement for a teacher on secondment
Maternity leave replacement	Replacement for a teacher on maternity leave
Other replacement (over two days)*	Other replacement includes teachers who are on short term contracts over two days to cover a vacancy and are teaching on census day.
Supernumerary	In addition to normal teaching staff
Long term training/staff development replacement	Replacement for a teacher on absent due to training
Temporary contract covering a vacancy	
Teacher abroad on foreign exchange	
Other	
Short term supply teacher (2 days or fewer) and centrally employed (mainstream supply teacher from supply pool)	If an authority runs a supply pool, those teachers should be included 'in complement' if they are assigned to a school on the census day. They can be included either in the assigned sector, or in the centrally employed total, but not both.

*as per changes to the Teacher Pay deal in 2013.

For the purposes of these statistics:

- An individual teacher cannot exceed 1 FTE.
- Centrally employed teachers (including peripatetic/visiting specialists, hospital teaching service and home visiting tutors) who are teaching on census day will be assigned a status as above and are included in the total number of teachers in Scotland and the overall pupil/teacher ratio. Where they teach at a number of schools it is permissible to split their time across those schools.
- Teachers recorded in roles such as quality improvement officer or educational advisor are classed as support staff, and are not included in these teacher statistics or PTR calculations.
- Vacant posts are not included.

If a normal complement teacher is unexpectedly absent during census week and requires cover, the replacement teacher covering this post can be recorded under a number of statuses, depending on the nature of the cover.

Some local authorities will only record the replacement teacher as having a qualifying status if the teacher they are replacing is absent 'long term' (there is no fixed definition of long term). In this circumstance, the absent teacher would be recorded under the appropriate status, such 'long term absence' to describe their reason for absence.

Other local authorities, however, may record the replacement teacher as 'short term supply teacher (up to two days) covering a normal complement teacher'. If this teacher is not centrally employed they would not be counted as on roll for the purposes of these statistics. The absent teacher will continue to be recorded as normal complement and as such will be included in calculations of the number of teachers.

Some local authorities record replacement teachers as 'other replacement' and do not change the status of the normal complement teacher who is absent. This situation may result in double counting of an absent teacher and their replacement, however such cases are rare.

Further information on teacher status categories can be found in the staff census data specification/guidance which is available here:

[Scottish Exchange of Data: staff census - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/Scottish-Exchange-of-Data:staff-census)

Centrally Employed Teachers

There are some differences in the way in which authorities deal with centrally employed teachers. In some cases these visiting specialists are considered as allocated to the schools where they teach and have been included, with relevant partial FTE, in the school-level data. In other cases they are included as centrally employed staff. We are also aware that local authorities have changed procedures for reporting centrally employed teachers during recent years. Centrally employed teachers are a small proportion of the total FTE, only around 2%, so the effect of these different recording methods is small.

Special Schools

Statistics for the special school sector are compiled from schools formally designated as special schools in the Scottish Government's School Establishment collection. There is not always a clear distinction between special schools and special units or classes within a mainstream school. This should be kept in mind when analysing the statistics.

Probationers

In these statistics a Teacher Induction Scheme probationer is defined as an individual in a post on the Teacher Induction Scheme and individuals on other probationer schemes providing that scheme only spans a single September. Other probationers, that enter into teaching via a flexible or alternative route, will be recorded with a temporary post employment type.

In Table 3.6, induction scheme teachers in 2018 onwards were defined as teachers in a post where the employment type was reported as induction scheme. Prior to 2018, induction scheme teachers were based on a list of registration identifiers provided by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) on an annual basis. Post-induction scheme teachers are identified by matching this registration identifier with the identifier collected as part of the following year's school staff census.

Headcount

The headcount of a teacher is defined as having unique GTCnumber, date of birth and gender.

Grade

For the purposes of the school staff census, only the teacher's substantive grade is collected. However, in some local authorities where a teacher holds a post on temporary promotion, the substantive grade is changed to the grade of the promoted post. In some cases, such as when a teacher is on a temporary promoted post, a teacher may have multiple posts, each at a different grade.

Mode of working (full-time/ part-time)

The mode of working statistics in Table 3.4: Teacher Characteristics define working pattern on the cumulative FTE for an individual within a single school type (primary, secondary, special or centrally employed) and specific grade. Therefore, teachers working across multiple sectors or at multiple grades will be counted as part time for each sector and grade combination, even if their total FTE sums to one. In 2021, there were 739 FTE teachers working for a total of one FTE but across more than one grade or sector so have therefore been recorded as part time in Table 3.4.

Employment type

Employment type (permanent, temporary and Teacher Induction Scheme) relates to each post that a teacher holds, rather than their employment contract. This means that you could have permanent employment contract but be recorded with a temporary employment type for an individual post.

Where local authorities record posts under the SEEMiS categories 'acting up' or 'seconded' the employment type will be returned as permanent for the purposes of the school staff census. We are aware that local authorities are taking different approaches to recording temporary promotions.

For example, in the situation where a main-grade teacher is on temporary promotion to a principal teacher post they may be reported as having a temporary employment type and principal teacher grade.

Alternatively they may be recorded as 'acting up' in SEEMiS and so reported as permanent in the school staff census, at their substantive grade (main-grade teacher).

It is also possible that this situation reported as permanent principal teacher or a temporary main-grade teacher.

Ethnicity

The ethnicity groupings used in Table 3.4 contain the following categories:

- White – other British includes White – Other British and White – Irish
- White – other includes White – Other, White – Other and White – Polish
- Ethnic minority group includes African – African / Scottish / British, Caribbean or Black – Caribbean / British / Scottish, Asian – Indian/British/Scottish, Asian – Pakistani / British / Scottish, Asian – Pakistani / British / Scottish, Asian – Chinese / British / Scottish, Mixed or multiple ethnic groups, Asian – Other, African – Other and Other – Arab.

Prior to 2019, 'not disclosed' ethnic background presented in Table 3.4 included the categories 'unknown' and 'not disclosed'. In 2019 these categories have been presented separately.

Pupil teacher ratio (PTR)

Any commentary on changes to PTR over time, such as the commentary for Table 3.3, is based on the difference after rounding the PTR to one decimal place.

Teachers funded through the Attainment Scotland Fund

The Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF) is a targeted initiative focused on closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children. It is delivered through two primary routes: the Scottish Attainment Challenge and the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). One way in which this funding may be used is to recruit additional teaching capacity.

Since 2016, the total FTE of ASF funded teachers across Scotland has been published as part of the reporting on the school staff census. This information helps with the monitoring and development of ASF policy.

In 2018, a new field was added to the local authority management information system (SEEMiS) with the aim of recording the 'funding source' for each teaching post. Analysis of 2018 and 2019 data has revealed that the way in which teaching posts are funded has become increasingly complex.

As such, it is not always possible, or meaningful, to assign a single source of funding to a teaching post or teacher.

For example:

- Some posts may be funded jointly through core local authority budgets and ASF budgets. Where it is not possible to account for posts with a single source of funding then the source which funds the majority of the post should be returned in the school staff census.
- A specific example of this joint funding are cases where PEF has been used to fund the difference between a teacher's substantive post and their promoted post (e.g. where a teacher has taken on additional responsibility for ASF related work).
- ASF funding may also be being used indirectly. For example, PEF may be used to allow a school to recruit additional probationer teachers which, in turn, enables existing staff (who are core funded) to undertake PEF related work.

- The innovative nature of ASF work means that it is challenging the commonly held definition of what a teaching post entails; and this may vary between local authorities.

In addition, there are other factors that may affect the reliability of the data on the funding source for teaching posts collected through the school staff census:

- Unlike the majority of school staff data which is also used operationally by schools and local authorities, data on the funding source for teaching posts is generally only recorded on SEEMiS for the purpose of the school staff census. Therefore any anomalies with these figures would not necessarily be identified in the usual course of business, as would be the case for other aspects of the school staff census data.
- The increasingly diverse models of school education provision may also mean that schools and local authorities take different approaches to the recording of similar situations.

Therefore, all of these factors have implications for the interpretation and use of the information collected on the funding source of teaching posts. Even where it is appropriate to measure the teacher FTE funded through ASF, the factors described above may result in an over count in some circumstances and an undercount in others. Therefore, the number of FTE teachers funded through ASF is an estimate based on the data recorded and submitted by local authorities.

Taking all of this into account, using the information collected as part of the 2021 school staff census, it is estimated that 1,123 FTE teachers were funded through ASF, which is higher than the estimate of 939 FTE in 2020.

The Scottish Government will continue to work with local authorities through the school staff census framework to further understand the use of ASF funding in terms of teaching resource whilst seeking to minimise the reporting burden on local authorities and schools.

COVID-19 Education Recovery funded teachers

Across the 2020/21 and 2021/22 school years the Scottish Government distributed funding to local authorities to employ staff to support recovery of education provision following the disruption caused by COVID-19.

Teachers that were employed using these sources of funding to perform a role that meets the definition of 'on roll' and were in post at the time of the census have been included in the teacher statistics presented here. However, the data collected through the teacher census does not include any identifiers that allow these teachers to be analysed separately from teachers funded through core local authority budgets.

[Details of funding allocations and management information](#) on the number of teachers funded through COVID-19 Education Recovery are available on the Scottish Government website. This management information is not collected on the same basis as the statistics presented here so it is not possible to make direct comparisons between them.

Classes and Pupils

Scope and timing

The Pupil Census covers all publicly funded schools in Scotland (local authority and grant-aided). Where a school has more than one department, for example a secondary school with a primary department, these are counted as separate schools.

At September 2021 there was one grant-aided mainstream school, with primary and secondary departments, and seven grant-aided special schools. These schools are included in national totals, but are identified separately in the local authority level tables. In publications prior to 2003 they were included within the local authority of their location.

Pupils included in this census are those recorded by the school as being “on the roll of the school except those in full time education at another institution” (‘status 01’ in the Pupil Census data specification). Schools have only been included in school counts where they have at least one pupil on the school roll meeting this definition.

The data gathered in the Pupil Census is drawn from management information held by schools and local authorities for the purposes of administering education. The information published is therefore a reflection of the information provided by school staff and pupils’ parents/guardians.

Primary schools

Children in Scotland usually start school between 4½ and 5½ years old.

A class is a group of pupils normally supervised by one teacher. However, when a class is large and cannot be split, for instance an additional classroom is not available, team teaching may be used. Team teaching is when two (or more) teachers are present in the class at all times. When this occurs, the pupil teacher ratio will not exceed maximum class size regulations.

Maximum class sizes in primary schools are as follows:

- 25 for pupils in P1
- 30 for single stage class P2 or P3
- 33 for single stage class P4-P7
- 25 for composite stage class

A composite class is a class of pupils from two or more stages. Class sizes for P1, P2 and P3 are set out in the Education (Lower Primary Class Sizes) (Scotland) Regulations 1999 (as amended).

Classes may exceed these maximums due to the presence of one or more ‘excepted pupils’. In class size legislation these are defined as:

- Children whose record of additional support needs (ASN) specifies that they should be educated at the school concerned, and who are placed in the school outside a normal placing round.
- Children initially refused a place at a school, but subsequently on appeal offered a place outside a normal placing round or because the education authority recognise that an error was made in implementing their placing arrangements for the school.
- Children who cannot gain a place at any other suitable school within a reasonable distance of their home because they moved into the area outside a normal placing round.
- Children who are pupils at special schools, but who receive part of their education at a mainstream school.
- Children with ASN who are normally educated in a special unit in a mainstream school, but who receive part of their lessons in a non-special class.

Class size calculations

All class size calculations treat a two-teacher class as two classes with half the pupils in each. Total average class size is calculated by dividing the number of pupils by the number of classes. Average class size for pupils in a particular stage (or range of stages) uses the average class size experienced by pupils, which takes into account the number of pupils experiencing each class size.

Examples of how the class size figures in this bulletin were calculated are provided below:

P1-P3 average class sizes

The P1-P3 average class size statistics describe the size of classes that pupils experience. The methodology used is described below:

1. Effective class size - each class containing any P1, P2 or P3 pupils and two teachers present at all times is assigned an “effective class size” that is half the size of the actual class.
2. Weight each class by its size - for each class multiply the number of P1-P3 pupils in each class by the effective class size.
3. Total pupils and weighted classes - sum all P1, P2 and P3 pupils across all classes and sum weighted classes.
4. Average class size - divide the total weighted classes by total P1, P2 and P3 pupils.

Example:

Class	Count of P1-P3 pupils	Total pupils	Count of teachers	Step 1:	Step 2:
				Effective class size	Weighted class
P1a	25	25	1	25	625
P1b	15	15	1	15	225
P3	30	30	2	15	450
P3/4	5	25	1	25	125
Step 3: 75					1,425
				Step 4: Average class size	19

This method produces a different value to the simple average of pupils per class (i.e. dividing the number of pupils by the number of classes). In the example above, not weighting the classes would give an average class size of $75 \text{ pupils} \div 5 \text{ classes} = 15$.

Weighting the classes gives a better representation of the class sizes experienced by pupils as it shows the average class size per pupil. The simple average method shows the average number of pupils per class.

Percentage of P1-P3 pupils in classes of 18 or fewer

P1-P3 pupils in classes of 18 or fewer includes two teacher classes with 36 or fewer pupils and composite classes.

The percentage of all P1-P3 pupils in such classes is calculated as described below:

1. Effective class size - each class containing any P1, P2 or P3 pupils and two teachers present at all times is assigned an “effective class size” that is half the size of the actual class. This is the same as step 1 above.
2. Sum the total number of P1, P2 and P3 pupils in classes with an effective size of 18 or fewer, then divide this by the total number of P1, P2 and P3 pupils, then multiply by 100.

Using data from the table above: $(15+30)/(25+15+30+5)*100 = 60\%$.

Secondary schools

Pupils in Scotland usually begin attending secondary school between the ages of 11½ and 12½ years. These schools have six stages. However, pupils can leave school from the age of 16.

Class size data is not collected for secondary schools as class sizes vary widely across subjects.

Special schools

Most children with additional support needs are educated in mainstream schools but some with complex or specific needs are educated in special schools. These schools cover primary and secondary education. A few authorities do not have special schools and may fund places in neighbouring authorities for their pupils.

Statistics for the special school sector are compiled from schools formally designated as special schools in the Scottish Government’s School Establishment collection. There is not always a clear distinction between special schools and special units or classes within a mainstream school. This should be kept in mind when analysing the statistics.

Where pupils attend a ‘special unit’ attached to a mainstream school, they are usually included in the figures for the mainstream school. However, some schools and local authorities have reported pupils from ‘special units’ separately.

Prior to 2018, open special schools with no pupils or where no pupils were on roll but pupils from other schools attended were included in school counts in this publication. From 2018, they have been excluded. Figures for years prior to 2018 have not been revised to exclude these schools. This methodological change accounts for the large decrease in the number of special schools between 2017 and 2018.

Some special schools have pupils from a wide age range and this is reflected in the data collected from this sector. Some schools or local authorities may assign their special pupils stages but this information is not collected by the Scottish Government. Instead, all special school pupils are assigned the stage ‘SP’ (‘special’) at the time of the Pupil Census.

Pupils attending special schools are generally between the ages of two and 18 years old.

Pupils with additional support needs

The Pupil Census collects information on the number of pupils who require additional support to access education (and the reason they need this support), not the number of pupils who have been diagnosed with specific needs.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland Act 2004 (as amended) states that a child or young person has an additional support need where they need additional support in order to overcome barriers and benefit from school education. The Act also

states that education authorities must have arrangements in place to identify pupils with additional support needs (ASN) and from among them, those who may require a specific support plan. Education authorities must also be able to identify the reason(s) that additional support is needed.

In 2010, the way in which ASN information was collected changed and for the first time information on reasons for support and nature of support was collected separately for each type of additional support need (CSP, IEP, disability, other). In previous years, while information on reasons and nature of support was collected, it was not linked to specific need types. Since 2012, six extra categories of reasons for support (communication support needs, young carer, bereavement, substance misuse, family issues and risk of exclusion) have been introduced.

The number of pupils identified with ASN has increased markedly since 2010 and there continue to be year on year increases. These increases are likely due in part to continued improvements in recording and the introduction of the additional need types 'Child plans' and 'Other' in 2011.

The Pupil Census collects information on pupils who are assessed or declared disabled or have one of the following need types:

- **Individualised Educational Programme (IEP)** is a tailored, individualised plan or programme of support which is expected to last up to a year. Learning targets within the plan are usually of multiple months or termly duration and this plan is reviewed. This plan may also be known as an additional support plan, or other similar name. The statutory criteria and content for an IEP can be found in the Supporting Children's Learning Code of Practice at:

[Supporting children's learning: code of practice \(revised 2010\) - gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot/supporting-childrens-learning-code-of-practice-revised-2010)
(www.gov.scot)

Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs) are statutory education plans prepared by local authorities to identify, and ensure provision of, services for children and young people with complex or multiple additional support needs. Targets should be limited in number and focus on key priorities of learning. They should be simple, clearly expressed and measurable. The statutory criteria and content for a CSP can be found in the Supporting Children's Learning Code of Practice at:

[Supporting children's learning: code of practice \(revised 2010\) - gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot/supporting-childrens-learning-code-of-practice-revised-2010)
(www.gov.scot)

- **Child plans** are single or multi agency plans based on an assessment guided by the Getting it Right for every Child National Practice Model.

This bulletin also includes information on 'other' types of support. 'Other' type refers to additional support needs which have been identified and are being supported but which do not fall within the subcategories of need collected in the Pupil Census. These may be needs which are of short-term duration, or which do not need significant differentiation of learning and teaching to overcome barriers to learning.

Pupil ethnicity and national identity

The categories used to collect ethnicity and national identity data changed in the 2011 Pupil Census to align with the categories used in the main population census. This should be kept in mind when making comparisons with information collected in previous years.

Pupils and parents/guardians are given the option of not disclosing a pupil's ethnicity and in such cases pupils are recorded as 'not disclosed'. Prior to 2019, figures in this bulletin combined the 'not disclosed' category with the 'not known' category. However, these are split out from 2019 onwards.

Information on country of birth and nationality are not collected.

English as an Additional Language

The Pupil Census collects information on a pupil's level of English in addition to information on whether a pupil has 'English as an Additional Language' (EAL) as a reason for having an additional support need (ASN).

Reconciliation of these two sets of information has identified widespread discrepancies between them, including pupils reported with low levels of English but without EAL as a reason for ASN.

Looked after children

The definitive source for statistical information in relation to the number and characteristics of looked after children (LAC) is the Scottish Government 'Children Looked After Survey' (CLAS). The information in the CLAS is provided by local authority social work services departments.

Up until 2016, figures on children looked after by the local authority as reported by schools were published in the Pupil Census Supplementary Tables. These figures are no longer published due to concerns about the data quality.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

Information on pupil deprivation status is obtained by linking the information gathered in the Pupil Census to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). This is done using pupils' postcodes.

No SIMD data is available for a small proportion of pupils recorded in the Census. This is usually because no postcode has been provided or the provided postcode is invalid. Some local authorities have also reported having no postcode available for children of Gypsy/Traveller families.

More information about SIMD can be found here: [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-index-multiple-deprivation-2020/pages/introduction.aspx)

These statistics use the most recent SIMD version available at the time of the Pupil Census. Therefore, statistics from the 2021 Pupil Census use SIMD 2020.

Urban/rural classifications

The urban/rural classifications in Pupil Census Supplementary Data are based on the 2016 urban rural classification, described here:

[Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2016 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/urban-rural-classification-2016/pages/introduction.aspx)

Denominational schools

For the purposes of the information in the Pupil Census Supplementary Data denominational schools have been restricted to those schools where a specific denomination is named. Multi- and inter-denominational schools have therefore been grouped with non-denominational schools.

Early Learning and Childcare

The Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) census covers all centres providing funded ELC as defined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 ('the 2014 Act'). This was previously referred to as pre-school. Three and four year olds and eligible two year olds are entitled to 1,140 hours of funded early learning and childcare (ELC).

Centres

A centre is a local authority, private or voluntary setting providing funded ELC. Childminders are not currently included in the ELC census, although they also provide funded ELC for children. Approximately 2,600 centres that provide funded ELC in Scotland complete the census. Similar numbers of centres completed the census this year as in previous years.

Eligibility for funded ELC

Local authorities have a duty to provide funded ELC to all 'eligible children' in their area. They also have a power to provide (discretionary) funded ELC to any other child (before school starting age), as they see fit.

'Eligible children' are all three and four year olds from the relevant start date and the two year olds who meet statutory eligibility criteria. For three year olds, only around half of children are eligible at the time of the census. More information on this can be found on the [Scottish Government website](#). The census counts children registered for funded ELC during the period 14-18 of September 2020.

The profile of eligible two year olds has changed since the 2014 Act first introduced a duty on local authorities to provide funded ELC for this age. Eligibility criteria were set out originally in 2014 and these have been subsequently amended in 2015, 2017 and 2019. The changes from 2014 to 2015 expanded the eligibility criteria (to more closely match criteria for Free School Meals). The change in 2017 and 2019 made a technical change to account for the roll out of Universal Credit and changes to account for threshold freezes for Tax Credits.

Teacher access

Early learning and childcare centres were asked how many children had access to a General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) registered teacher during census week. In the guidance notes, 'access to a teacher' was defined as 'the teacher being present in an early learning and childcare setting when the child is in attendance', and it was acknowledged that systems for providing access to teachers vary.

Centres under a 'regular arrangement' include those who employ a teacher themselves and/or receive regular scheduled access from a centrally employed teacher. Centres with non-regular access are those that receive support only from external teachers on an occasional or ad hoc basis.

Statistics on teacher access in funded early learning and childcare are published in the additional tables accompanying this publication.

Timing

In 2010 the date of the early learning and childcare census was moved from January to September. As a result of the timing, data collected prior to and after September 2010 are not directly comparable.

Teachers

In 2014, local authorities supplied information on centrally employed ELC teachers separate from the teachers recorded at centres for the first time.

ELC home visiting teachers reported by local authorities as part of the school teacher collection are included in Tables 2.1 and 5.2 in addition to the data collected through the ELC census.

Graduate staff

From 2017, data was collected on the number of graduates (other than teachers) working in ELC. Graduates include ELC staff that hold either: (1) a degree level benchmark qualification required by the SSSC for registration as a manager/lead practitioner (see list of qualifications below); (2) a degree level (SCQF level 9) qualification relevant to early years and are working towards a degree level benchmark qualification required by the SSSC for registration as a manager/lead practitioner; (3) or a degree level qualification sufficient to meet the registration standards of another regulatory body (e.g. Nursing and Midwifery Council, General Medical Council). Data was also collected on the number of ELC staff that don't currently hold a degree level (SCQF level 9) qualification relevant to early years, but are working towards one of the SSSC benchmark qualifications required by the SSSC for registration as a manager/lead practitioner. Note that these staff may hold degrees in subjects unrelated to early years, such as physics or accountancy, or may hold early years qualifications below SCQF level 9.

SSSC Benchmark qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA Childhood Practice • BA (Honours) Childhood Practice (Strathclyde University) • Graduate Diploma Childhood Practice (the University of the West of Scotland) • SQA Professional Development Award Childhood Practice (360 credits at SCQF Level 9) • Postgraduate Diploma in Childhood Practice • Master of Education Childhood Practice, Glasgow University and Dundee University

Equity and Excellence Leads

From 2018, data has also been collected information on staff working in ELC funded through the [commitment](#) to fund additional graduate level posts in all local authorities. These staff are also known as Equity and Excellence leads. This is a Scottish Government commitment to fund additional posts in nurseries located in the most deprived areas of Scotland. These posts are for either teachers with early years expertise, or graduate practitioners with, or working towards, one of the benchmark qualifications required by the

SSSC for registration as a manager/lead practitioner. These staff are also counted in the relevant teacher and graduate staff tables associated with this publication.

Improvements to the ELC census

The method for calculating the percentage uptake of ELC has been improved from 2018 to account for local authorities who use different eligibility criteria for three year olds to the statutory criteria that a child becomes eligible for funded ELC in the term after their 3rd birthday. More information on this change is available in Table 4 of the additional ELC tables accompanying this publication.

Previously, if a centre that was providing funded ELC did not return any data then information from the previous census was imputed (i.e. rolled forward). From 2016 onwards, data is no longer imputed so the quality of data should be higher.

In 2015, for the first time, local authorities were able to check and amend data for settings within their local authority before submitting it to the Scottish Government. This additional validation process has continued, and resulted in higher data quality. Increased scrutiny of the funded ELC data by local authorities has affected all funded ELC data from 2015 onwards.

In particular, the recording of children aged under three has improved (as previously children who were not receiving funded ELC, but were attending centres had been wrongly included by centres), and of ELC teachers (as teachers had been double counted), leading to lower numbers in these categories than in previous years.

In 2014 an additional check was added to the quality assurance process which identified a small number of teachers (less than 0.5% of the total) that had been recorded across ELC and the school census with an FTE over one (i.e. recorded as working more than full time hours). We worked with local authorities to resolve this issue, leading to reductions in FTE in both sectors but the majority were removed from ELC. This check has continued from 2015 onwards, and working with local authorities cases where teachers are recorded with an FTE over one are resolved, often resulting in a decrease in teacher FTE within the ELC sector.

Quality assurance of the 2012 data identified the possibility that some teachers who worked in early learning and childcare and primary could be double counted. This was addressed in 2013 by giving local authorities the opportunity to re-submit their teacher numbers for 2010, 2011 and 2012 to remove this double counting. As a result of this, eight local authorities amended their early learning and childcare teacher numbers (Angus, East Dunbartonshire, Midlothian, North Lanarkshire, Perth and Kinross, Shetland Islands, South Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire), three local authorities amended both primary and early learning and childcare teacher numbers (Aberdeenshire, Highland, Orkney), and one local authority (West Lothian) amended their primary school teacher numbers only. This resulted in minor changes to the primary teacher numbers and substantial changes to the early learning and childcare teacher numbers in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

Attendance and Absence

Key points for using 2020/21 attendance and absence statistics

- The 'attendance and absence - full year' statistics are not comparable on a like for like basis to attendance statistics from previous years.

- The rates reported for ‘attendance or absence – schools open’ are comparable to attendance rates from previous years provided the impact of COVID-19 is borne in mind.
- Comparisons may be made between local authorities for the following aggregated attendance and absence categories:
 - Attendance – schools open
 - Authorised absence – schools open
 - Unauthorised absence – schools open
 - Temporary exclusion
- Comparisons for individual categories – e.g. late or unauthorised holidays – should not be made between local authorities.
- All school level figures – due to be published in March 2022 – are subject to a greater degree of error than the national and local authority level statistics and the equivalent school level statistics from previous years. Therefore comparisons school level statistics over time and between schools for 2020/21 are not appropriate.

Guidance on attendance and absence recording

In 2007, the Scottish Government published guidance [Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1](#) which replaced Scottish Executive Circular 5/03 on the management of attendance and absence in Scottish schools. An [updated version](#) of this guidance was published in June 2019.

Timing and scope

Information on attendance and absence is collected biennially. The figures published in this bulletin refer to the 2020/21 school year. It will next be collected for the 2022/23 school year.

The 2020/21 school year was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please see the section ‘COVID-19 impact on the quality of attendance reporting in 2020/21’ below for more information on the impact of the pandemic on attendance and absence recording.

The collection covers all publicly funded local authority schools in Scotland and Jordanhill, the grant-aided mainstream school. It does not cover grant-aided special schools, independent schools or early learning and childcare establishments.

Attendance and absence information is collected and published for pupils with Pupil Census status 01 (“pupil on roll of this school (except for those attending full time Further Education courses outside this school)”), status 04 (“pupil on roll of this school attending full time Further Education course outside of this school”) or status 05 (“pupil on roll of this school attending full time course other than Further Education outside of this school”).

Any school that was open and had pupils with one of the above statuses on its roll during the collection year is included in the statistics, regardless of the length of time it was open for. Therefore, schools that opened or closed during the year will still be captured.

S6 pupils are included in all figures in this publication.

Further information on what is collected in the attendance and absence collection may be found in the [collection specification](#).

COVID-19 impact on schools' operations

During 2020/21 there was disruption to school attendance caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This included:

- pupils being absent after testing positive for COVID-19 or while required to self-isolate.
- school closures following local outbreaks or when there were COVID-19 related staff absences.
- the closure of most schools between January and April 2021. Details of these closures by sector are included below. The dates for individual schools will have varied slightly depending on the end date of their winter (Christmas) holidays, the start date of their spring (Easter) holidays and any holidays or in-service days between these. School term dates are set by local authorities.
 - Primary schools
 - Full closure from end of winter holiday to 19th February.
 - Open for P1-P3 pupils only between 22nd February and 12th March.
 - Open to all pupils from 15th March to spring holiday.
 - Secondary schools
 - Fully closed from end of winter holiday to 12th March.
 - Very limited openings for practical classes for pupils studying vocational national qualifications between 22nd February and 12th March.
 - Open to all pupils on a part-time basis from 15th March to spring holiday. Priority was given to senior phase pupils working towards national qualifications.
 - Special schools
 - The diverse nature of provision across special schools meant there was more variation in their openings and closures during this period.
 - Across all sectors priority for in school education was given to vulnerable pupils and those with complex additional support needs. Special schools serving these pupils may therefore have reopened much earlier than primary or secondary schools.
 - Other special schools operate as primary or secondary schools, with similar stage or class structures but adapted curriculums. These schools are likely to have reopened on the same schedule as mainstream schools in the respective sector.

Please see [this timeline](#) prepared by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre for more information on the timeline of the COVID-19 pandemic in Scotland, including its impact on schools.

Data sources

An extract of pupils' attendance records for the whole school year is usually obtained from schools' management information systems at the beginning of the attendance and absence collection. This would then be used as the basis of all published attendance and absence statistics. However, during the 2020/21 school year daily extracts of pupils' attendance reports were taken to allow the Scottish Government to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on schools. Local authorities were given the opportunity to use this daily data for the 2020/21 attendance and absence collection rather than having a new extract taken covering the whole year. 12 of the 32 local authorities chose to do this.

There were some days missing at the beginning of the 2020/21 school year when the daily collection was not yet established and some days missing around school holidays when too few schools were open to justify extracts being taken. This means the number of attendance and absence markings for pupils was lower in authorities using their daily

extracts. These equated to a very small number of days in the year and local authorities indicated that the figures without them were still accurate representations of their attendance and absence.

Quality assurance identified widespread issues with the quality of the daily extracts linked to how soon it was obtained after the day it concerned. For most days this was a week later but for some it was only on the evening of that day. In either case, schools had little time to review and amend the data. Errors which would usually have been picked up by school and local authority checks before an annual extract was taken were therefore still present in the data. These included issues such as such as incorrectly recorded school holidays and miscoding absences.

A large number of these issues were identified and corrected during the preparation of this publication. However, the volume of these corrections indicates that there were likely other issues that had not been identified. This means that the data may be of lower quality for the 12 local authorities who based their submission on the daily extracts.

Their aggregated attendance and absence figures – e.g. ‘authorised absence – schools open’ – are considered robust and may be compared to those of other authorities and figures from previous years. However, comparisons involving lower level categories – e.g. ‘authorised holidays’ – should not be made.

The 12 affected local authorities are:

- Aberdeen City
- Angus
- East Dunbartonshire
- Na h-Eileanan Siar
- Highland
- Inverclyde
- Moray
- Orkney Islands
- Perth and Kinross
- Renfrewshire
- Scottish Borders
- West Lothian

Calculation of attendance and absence rates – possible half days

Rates of attendance and absence relate to the total number of possible half day attendances. This number will differ for each pupil enrolment as it accounts for on the length of time the pupil is on the roll of the school, the number of half day openings the school operates, and whether the pupil has any ‘extended leave with parental consent’ recorded (no openings recorded as extended leave with parental consent are considered to be possible attendances).

Many schools operate 380 half-day sessions during the school year. However, some schools operate 342 longer half-day sessions in the school year. Schools doing so include:

- All schools in the City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, West Lothian and the Scottish Borders.
- All secondary schools in Angus.
- Four secondary schools in Fife.

- All secondary schools, 54 primary schools and one special school in Highland.
- Crathie Primary School, Aberdeenshire.
- Kinross High School, Perth and Kinross.

There has been an increase in the number of schools operating 342 half-day sessions in recent years meaning the number of possible openings for Scotland is lower than previously. However, figures remain comparable.

Attendance and absence codes

The attendance and absence and absence categories used for these statistics are described below.

Attendance

- Attendance at school
- Lateness when the pupil has arrived during the first half of the opening
- Learning outwith the school provided by a college or other learning provider while still on the roll of the school
- Educational visits, day and residential visits to outdoor centres
- Interviews and visits relating to further and higher education or careers events
- Debates, sports, musical or drama activities in conjunction with the school
- Study leave for pupils participating in national exams, if arranged by the school during the period of the national examination timetable
- Receiving tuition via hospital or outreach teaching services
- Medical or dental appointments
- Work experience, arranged or agreed by the school
- Volunteering, arranged or agreed by the school
- Sickness with educational provision
- COVID-19 sickness with provision for home learning
- COVID-19 self-isolation with provision for home learning

Authorised absence

- Sickness without educational provision
- Lateness when the pupil has arrived during the second half of the opening
- Family holidays authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances
- Short-term exceptional domestic circumstances
- Other authorised absence, including:
 - Immediate family weddings
 - Bereavements
 - Religious observances
 - Attendance at court

- Attendance at childcare review
- Attendance at children's hearing
- Lack of transport – including due to bad weather
- Sporting & cultural events not arranged by the school, but approved by them
- Extended absence in relation to children of travelling families
- Part-time timetable (health related)
- Part-time timetable (exclusion related)
- COVID-19 sickness without provision to home learn
- COVID-19 self-isolation without provision to home learn

Unauthorised absence

- 'Occasional absence without parental awareness' (previously 'truancy')
- Family holidays not authorised by the school
- Long-term exceptional domestic circumstances
- Other unauthorised absences, e.g. where a parent is in dispute with the school. From 2020/21 this included 'parents isolating their child against public health advice relating to COVID-19'.

Temporary exclusion

- Openings when a pupil has been excluded from school on a temporary basis

Home learning during COVID-19 related school closure

- Home learning – school closed (COVID-19)
- Absence from home learning – school closed (COVID-19)

Extended leave with parental consent

- Recorded separately outwith the figures for attendance and absence, and includes circumstances such as:
 - extended overseas educational trips not organised by the school
 - short-term parental placement abroad
 - family returning to its country of origin (to care for relative, or for cultural reasons)

Calculation of attendance and absence rates – 2020/21 measures accounting for COVID-19 school closures and home learning

For 2020/21 there are three possible definitions of attendance and absence:

- **'Attendance or absence – schools open'** includes attendance or absence only for the occasions when schools were open to pupils. Home-learning when the school was open but an individual pupil could not attend due to their personal circumstances (including COVID-19 related reasons) is included in this measure.
- **'Attendance or absence – schools closed'** includes attendance at or absence from home learning when schools were closed to pupils due to a COVID-19 related reason. This includes instances when a whole school was shut or when a school

was shut to a certain class or bubble of pupils. It does not include any attendance or absence for periods when schools were shut for non-COVID-19 reasons, for example school holidays or in-service days.

- **‘Attendance or absence – full year’** covers the whole school year, including occasions when schools were open and when they were closed due to COVID-19 related reasons.

These rates were developed to account for the impact of absence from home learning during COVID-19 school closures being underreported. The absence figures reported for that code likely underestimate the amount of absence that happened during the periods they were used for. As this was not an issue in previous attendance and absence years when there was not such wide-scale home learning any figures including home learning are not comparable with them.

The individual attendance and absence codes included in each of the three measures are:

- Attendance or absence – schools open
 - In school
 - Late
 - Work experience
 - Sickness with educational provision
 - COVID-19 sickness with provision for home learning
 - COVID-19 self-isolation with provision for home learning
 - Sickness without educational provision
 - Very late
 - Authorised holidays
 - Exceptional domestic circumstances (authorised)
 - Other authorised absence
 - Part-time timetable – health related
 - Part-time timetable – exclusion related
 - COVID-19 sickness without provision to home learn
 - COVID-19 self-isolation without provision to home learn
 - Unauthorised holidays
 - Unexplained absence, including truancy
 - Exceptional domestic circumstances (unauthorised)
 - Other unauthorised absence (including 'parents isolating their child against public health advice relating to COVID-19')
 - Temporary exclusion
- Attendance or absence – schools closed
 - Home learning – school closed (COVID-19)
 - Absence from home learning – school closed (COVID-19)

- Attendance or absence – full year
 - All codes from the other two measures.

Please see the [collection specification](#) for detailed definitions of these codes.

The number of possible half days for each of these measures was calculated by summing all of the reported openings for each code they encompass. This meant that home learning during school closure openings weren't counted as possible openings when schools were open, for example.

Pupil characteristics and linkage to the Pupil Census

Information on pupils' sex, ethnicity, national identity and school stage are collected alongside the attendance and absence data. However, information on all other pupil characteristics is obtained by linking the attendance and absence data to the Pupil Census conducted in the school year the data pertains to. The 2020/21 attendance and absence data was linked to the 2020 Pupil Census data.

This linkage is done using combinations of identifiers and characteristics of the pupils in the attendance and absence data. These include school attended, Scottish Candidate Number, sex and ethnicity. Pupils who move between local authority schools after the Pupil Census was conducted (September of the school year) will be matched to their census records even if their school differs. However, any pupils who were not attending any local authority school in Scotland on census day will not be matched to the census data. This is likely to occur when a pupil has, for example, moved to Scotland or from an independent school to a local authority funded school during the school year.

For the 2020/21 attendance and absence collection 98.4% of pupil enrolments were matched to the Pupil Census. This is about one percentage point lower than the rate for previous years. This was likely caused by the use of the daily data submissions for 12 local authorities which had lower quality pupil information than the usual annual submission made for these statistics. The number is still a minority of the total pupils and figures are still comparable with those from previous collections.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Data

The information on the deprivation of pupils, as measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020, was obtained using the postcode information linked to their Pupil Census records. Pupils who were unable to be linked to the Pupil Census therefore have no SIMD data available. An additional 0.1% of pupil enrolments had no SIMD data available as their postcode information from the Pupil Census could not be matched to the SIMD. Reasons for this include the postcode being missing or invalid. This rate is consistent with that for previous attendance and absence collections.

Notes on the interpretation of the data

Part-time timetable codes

Two new absence codes – part-time timetable (health related) and part-time timetable (exclusion related) – were available for schools to use from the 2018/19 school year. Variation in their use and incorrect applications of them was identified during the quality assurance of the 2018/19 attendance and absence data. There was evidence that this was still happening – although to a lesser extent – in the 2020/21 data.

As a result all absences recorded using these part-time timetable codes have been recoded as ‘other authorised absence’ for the purposes of the 2018/19 and 2020/21 statistics. The number of absences reported using these codes was very small (less than 0.1% of possible attendances) so the inclusion of them as ‘other authorised absence’ does not have a large impact on the size or quality of this category.

Comparison to the exclusions collection

Status 05 pupils (“pupil on roll of this school attending full time course other than Further Education outside of this school”) and pupils attending the mainstream grant-aided school, Jordanhill, are included in the attendance and absence collection but not the exclusions collection. As a result, any exclusions of these pupils will be recorded in one but not the other, making the total number of half days pupils were temporarily excluded for higher in the attendance collection than the exclusions collection. This issue occurs at national, local authority and school level. However, number of these pupils, their cases of exclusion and the half days they were excluded for are very low. Therefore, that it is not considered to have an impact on the quality of the figures from either collection or the use of them together.

Comparison to COVID-19 school attendance and absence daily data

During the 2020/21 and 2021/22 school years the Scottish Government has published management information on pupils’ attendance in the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): daily data for Scotland](#). This management information was collected specifically to provide data on the number of children not present in school buildings and the reasons why. The methodology used was therefore different to that used for the statistics shown in this bulletin. In addition the daily data was produced in near real time and so was not subject to the same rigorous quality assurance as the statistics in this bulletin. Direct comparisons between figures from these two sources are therefore not appropriate.

The daily attendance information was extracted from schools’ management information systems and published days later, providing little time to validate the information. The figures in this publication have, however, been subject to robust validation with extensive corrections have made to the data that would have been used in the daily attendance information. Issues that were corrected included:

- Removing records for pupils who should not have been in the data. This included children at early learning and childcare settings, adults attending day education at a school and ‘dummy’ records that schools had added to test their systems.
- Amending instances where pupils with home learning provision had been reported as being without provision.
- Adding absences related to COVID-19 school closures that had not been reported.
- Removing attendances and absences recorded on days that were actually school holidays or in-service days.
- Adding attendances and absences for days incorrectly reported as school holidays or in-service days.
- Updating instances where absences had initially been reported as unexplained or unknown but the school had later established the cause and amended the code associated with the absence.

These issues being identified on a large scale indicates that the management information published for COVID-19 monitoring is of poorer quality than the information published here. Therefore, where possible, please use these statistics rather than the management information.

Additionally, the methodology used to calculate the daily attendance reporting figures differ to those reported here. The daily attendance figures report on pupils who were not in school and whether this was due to a COVID-19 related reason. The figures in this bulletin, however, report on all attendance, including that outwith schools. Things such as self-isolation or COVID-19 sickness with provision to home learn are therefore treated as absence in the daily management data but as attendance in these figures.

COVID-19 impact on the quality of attendance reporting in 2020/21

The below sections detail some of the issues identified with the recording of attendance and absence during the COVID-19 pandemic. The scale and impact of each issue is specified. As noted at in Chapter Six and the beginning of this section, these issues should be borne in mind when making comparisons between years and authorities.

Recording school closures

When schools were closed – whether to all pupils or a subset like a stage or class – due to COVID-19 provision to home learn should have been provided to all pupils. As such, pupils would be expected to be recorded as ‘home learning – school closure’ or ‘absent from home learning – school closure’.

However, the guidance provided with the new COVID-19 attendance and absence codes also indicated that schools could record themselves as entirely closed, as they would do during a school holiday. This would mean that no attendance or absence markings would be recorded for the period of closure. This is what schools had been asked to do when schools were closed in the final term of the 2019/20 school year and some continued doing this when local outbreaks caused closures between August and December 2020.

Overall, the impact of this is that the figures on the percentage of the year schools were open may be slightly too high and those for when schools closed may be slightly too low. Given the relatively short nature of most local school closures this is not considered to be a major discrepancy.

Clearer guidance asking schools to use the ‘home learning – school closed’ codes was issued during the national school closures in early 2021 and it is thought that these were used almost universally during the national closures and any subsequent local closures.

COVID-19 sickness and self-isolation vs home learning during school closure

The COVID-19 attendance and absence codes were divided into two categories based upon whether they referred to periods when schools were closed to pupils or periods when schools were open but individual pupils could not attend for a COVID-19 related reason.

Due to the swiftness of the introduction of the COVID-19 attendance and absence codes, some schools and local authorities lacked clarity on which codes should be used when. This resulted in the codes for when schools were closed being used when it was only individual pupils learning at home and vice versa.

Instances where this had happened on a large scale at a particular school were identified and corrected during the validation of the data for this publication. However, cases where

it was only a small number of pupils at a school affected likely remain incorrect due to limited capacity to identify these.

In general, however, it is thought that half days have been accurately recorded as an attendance or absence relating to home learning even if it was the incorrect code for the reason for home learning.

Parents isolating child against advice

During quality assurance of the data several local authorities highlighted that parents/guardians had often been reporting their child as ill or self-isolating when they were known to instead be isolating them against advice. This meant these pupils were often incorrectly recorded as having sickness with or without provision, COVID-19 sickness with or without provision to home learn or COVID-19 self-isolation with or without provision to home learn.

Some of these instances were identified and corrected during the preparation of these statistics but it is likely that some remain. Therefore, the sickness and self-isolation with and without provision codes are likely to be slightly over reported while 'other unauthorised absence' – which includes 'parents isolating their child against public health advice relating to COVID-19' – is likely to be underreported.

Pupils not taking part in COVID-19 home learning

Schools across Scotland provided home learning for pupils unable to attend their school buildings either because of school closures or individual pupils testing positive for COVID-19 or self-isolating.

The nature of this home learning significantly limited the ability of school staff to monitor pupils' attendance. If pupils were in school, they would be registered at least twice a day, with school staff able to monitor their presence throughout the day. However, the nature of home learning meant that school staff did not have the same continuous interaction with pupils during their learning. Instead, in some cases they may have been in contact with pupils electronically only a few times a week, with pupils learning independently (via materials provided by the school) the rest of the time.

Therefore, to make these statistics more accurate and to better reflect the learning that was available to pupils these codes measure whether the pupil had provision to learn rather than if they were undertaking that learning. This is analogous to situations when pupils may be in school but not engaging in the lessons they're attending.

However, it differs to the longstanding code 'sickness with educational provision' which should only be used when a pupil is taking up provision. The different treatment of these codes is appropriate as there are far fewer instances of 'sickness with educational provision' than there were of COVID-19 sickness or self-isolation in 2020/21. This smaller number makes it easier for schools to track and record who was engaging with the learning provided.

Despite the difficulties in recording attendance during periods of home learning, it is still expected that schools know who was or was not engaging and are providing appropriate support for all of their pupils following periods of home learning.

'Absence from home learning – school closure' underreporting

The issues around being unable to record who was and wasn't engaging in home learning became pronounced during whole school closures, both those during the national period of closures in early 2021 and school closures following local outbreaks.

During these periods there were a very high number of pupils receiving education at home meaning the issues around monitoring attendance discussed in the previous section were more extensive than at other times when there may only have been a small number of pupils learning at home.

Because of the challenges facing school staff, absence reporting relied almost entirely on parents/carers reporting their child/young person as being unable to take part in home learning on a day by day basis. During the introduction of the COVID-19 attendance and absence codes local authorities highlighted concerns that this would not happen with the same reliability as it would when schools were open. It was subsequently confirmed that this had happened during validation of the 2020/21 statistics. This likely was due to a number of factors including school staff being less able to identify when pupils were not present and parental non-engagement in pupils' learning.

This underreporting is reflected in the statistics. The figures for 'absence from home learning – schools closed' are substantially lower than for 'absence – schools open'. Some of this can be accounted for by lower rates of family holidays and non-COVID illness resulting from COVID-19 restrictions. However, this cannot account for the full extent of it. Instead, it is very likely there were many cases where pupils did not part in the home learning provided to them but they were recorded as in attendance.

Selected in school attendance during early 2021 school closures

There were additional challenges around quality assuring the reporting of attendance for vulnerable children and children of key workers during the national school closures in early 2021 as there were no indicators of these designations on pupils' school records. Additionally, the attendance of key workers' children often depended on their parent/guardian's work patterns. It was therefore difficult to retrospectively check their attendance records were correct as it wasn't always known which days they were expected to be at school.

There were issues around the recording of absence for pupils attending school for practical lessons for vocational national qualifications they were working towards. These pupils may have only been present for one or two classes in a day, equating to part of a half day. They may subsequently have been marked as present for a whole half day when they were only present for part of it. Similarly, they may have been reported as not attending at all.

Cancellation of the exam diet

Usually, those leaving school following the annual exam diet would be marked as leavers following their final exam and no attendance or absence would be recorded for them after this. However, with the cancellation of the annual Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) exam diet in 2020/21 pupils remained on the rolls of their schools – with attendance and absence recorded – until the end of June when the coursework and teacher judgements used in place of exams were submitted.

This created a problem for many schools as Scottish pupils usually progress to their next stage in May (after the exam diet), with timetables changing at the same point. Many leavers therefore were left without a timetable for their time in school after May. In some cases they may have continued attending school full or part time while working towards their qualifications. However, many leavers were not required to attend at all in this period.

For those not required to attend schools were asked to mark them as 'should not attend', allowing them to remain on the school's roll while not having any attendance or absence

markings recorded. For those still attending, school attendance marking should have continued as usual.

However, the use of the ‘should not attend’ code was an issue for leavers receiving Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) as the period they could receive this was extended beyond the usual end of the exam diet to the end of June but some authorities’ systems require pupils to be marked as in attendance to receive their EMA. A ‘should not attend’ marking would therefore mean they didn’t get their EMA. To prevent this and to prevent pupils being marked as in the school building when they were not, schools were instructed to use the SEEMiS code ‘Other Attendance Out of School (OAT)’. This maps to ‘in school’ in these figures.

The relatively small number of leavers and the even smaller proportion of those who would be receiving EMA mean that this is not a concern at local authority or national level. However, schools with high concentrations of pupils in receipt of EMA this may have inflated attendance figures.

Quality assurance

The final issue concerns the capacity of officials in schools, local authorities and the Scottish Government to validate the data for 2020/21. With the additional recording issues introduced by the pandemic the volume of work involved in this process was substantially higher than it had been in previous years. Coming at the same time as local authorities had reduced capacity due to additional reporting required on impacts of the pandemic on schools, it proved a significant challenge to fully quality assure all data.

While figures at national and local authority level were able to be confirmed, the scope to investigate figures at school level was more limited. Therefore, all school level figures – scheduled for publication in March 2022 – are subject to a greater degree of error than the national and local authority level statistics and the equivalent school level statistics from previous years.

Exclusions

Under Circulars 10/93 and 1/95, local authorities are required each year to collect certain statistics from schools on exclusions. The statistics relate to half-days of temporary exclusions and number of pupils removed from the register (previously known as ‘permanent’ exclusions). An exclusion is temporary when a pupil is excluded from a school but remains on the register of that school because they are expected to return when the exclusion period is completed. The term ‘removed from the register’ refers to a pupil who is excluded and their name removed from the school register. Such a pupil would then be educated at another school or via some other form of provision.

New [guidance on exclusions](#) from school was published in 2017.

Timing and scope

Information on exclusions is collected biennially. The figures published in this bulletin refer to the 2020/21 school year. It will next be collected for the 2022/23 school year.

The collection covers all publically funded local authority schools in Scotland. It does not cover grant-aided schools (including Jordanhill School), independent schools or early learning and childcare establishments.

Prior to the 2018/19 collection exclusions information was collected for the grant-aided mainstream school, Jordanhill. This information ceased to be collected from the 2018/19

collection as the cases of exclusions and number of pupils excluded at this school were consistently low in previous collections. Publishing this information therefore risked the identification of the pupils and/or incidents concerned without disclosure control being applied. This disclosure control would also reduce the information available on exclusions in other schools and local authorities to the detriment of the interpretation the figures. It was therefore decided to stop the collection of exclusions figures for Jordanhill. The small number of exclusions concerned means that this change is not considered to impact the comparability of figures from the 2018/19 collection onwards with those from previous collections.

Exclusions information is only collected and published for pupils with status 01 (“pupil on roll of this school (except for those attending full time Further Education courses outside this school)”) or status 04 (“pupil on roll of this school attending full time Further Education course outside of this school”).

Further information on what is collected in the exclusions collection may be found in the [collection specification](#).

Pupil characteristics and linkage to the Pupil Census

Information on pupils’ sex, ethnicity, national identity and school stage are collected alongside the exclusions data. However, information on all other pupil characteristics is obtained by linking the exclusions data to the Pupil Census conducted in the school year the data pertains to. The 2020/21 exclusions data was linked to the 2020 Pupil Census data.

This linkage is done using combinations of identifiers and characteristics of the pupils in the exclusions data, including school attended, Scottish Candidate Number, sex and ethnicity. Pupils who move between local authority schools after the date the Pupil Census was conducted (September of the school year) will still be matched to their census records even if their school differs. However, any pupils who were not attending any local authority school in Scotland on census day will be unable to be matched to the census data. This is likely to occur when a pupil has, for example, moved to Scotland or from an independent school to a local authority funded school during the school year.

For the 2020/21 exclusions collection 99.7% of pupil enrolments with an exclusion recorded were matched to the Pupil Census. These enrolments accounted for 99.7% of the recorded cases of exclusion.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Data

The information on the deprivation of pupils, as measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020, was obtained using the postcode information linked to their Pupil Census records. Pupils who were unable to be linked to the Pupil Census therefore have no SIMD data available. An additional 0.1% the total pupil enrolments with an exclusion recorded (accounting for 0.1% of the total cases of exclusion) had no SIMD data available as their postcode information from the 2020 Pupil Census could not be matched to the SIMD data. Reasons for this include the postcode being missing or invalid.

Notes on the interpretation of the data

While the number of pupils ‘removed from the register’ has dropped in recent years, local authorities may also reach agreements with parents to move a pupil to another school without the use of a formal ‘removal from register’, but where the pupil is unlikely to have the option of staying in the school.

Status 05 pupils and pupils attending the mainstream grant-aided school, Jordanhill, are included in the attendance and absence collection but not the exclusions collection. As a result, any exclusions of these pupils will be recorded in one but not the other, making the total number of half days pupils were temporarily excluded for higher in the attendance collection than the exclusions collection. This issue occurs at all levels. However, the cases of exclusion for these pupils and the number of half days these pupils were excluded for are very low. Therefore, that it is not considered to have an impact on the figures from either collection or the use of them together.

There is a small discrepancy (around 340 openings) in the number of openings recorded as absence due to temporary exclusion in the 2020/21 attendance and absence collection and the total number of half days pupils' exclusions lasted as recorded in the 2020/21 exclusions collection, with the number being higher in the attendance collection. It is unclear whether this is due to over reporting in the attendance data or underreporting of exclusions but the size of the discrepancy means that it does not impact the figures from either collection.

COVID-19 impact on 2020/21 exclusions collection

The school year covered by the 2020/21 exclusions statistics was substantially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Significantly, most schools in Scotland were shut in early 2021 and many had shorter local closures throughout the rest of the year (see the attendance and absence background notes above for more detail on these school closures). Additionally, many pupils were absent for periods of time when they had tested positive for COVID-19 or were required to self-isolate.

It can therefore be said that some of the decrease in exclusions between 2018/19 and 2020/21 was due to the pandemic limiting the time pupils were in school. So long as one takes into account the different context of education in 2020/21 versus previous years, figures are comparable at national and local authority level.

There were no additional concerns about the quality of the exclusions data due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Corrections

There are no scheduled revisions to these statistics. The Scottish Government policy on revisions and corrections is available here:

<https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/CPsonRevisionsCorrections/Q/EditMode/on/ForceUpdate/on>

It is not always feasible to correct all instances of incorrect statistics across all historical publications and releases. However, all statistics shown in new publication bulletins will be correct at the time of release, including statistics for previous years. The statistics in the latest published edition of the bulletin therefore supersede all previous statistics.

Costs

Pupil Census and school staff census data: This information is collected from the management information systems of schools. The estimated cost to local authorities of extracting and validating this information is around £130,000 based on the 2015 collection.

Early Learning and Childcare census: This information is collected directly from ELC centres and we have no information on how much it costs them to complete this. However, local authorities have taken on a role in validating the ELC data (and in some local authorities completing the data on behalf of the centres), and it costs them an estimated £27,000 to do this.

Rounding and symbols

All full time equivalent (FTE) statistics in this publication have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

All percentages and FTEs are rounded separately so breakdowns may not sum to the total shown.

The following symbols are used:

: = not available

0 = nil or rounds to nil

= not applicable

* = value suppressed to protect against the risk of disclosure of personal information

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The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

- are available in more detail through statistics.gov.scot
- are available via an alternative route
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