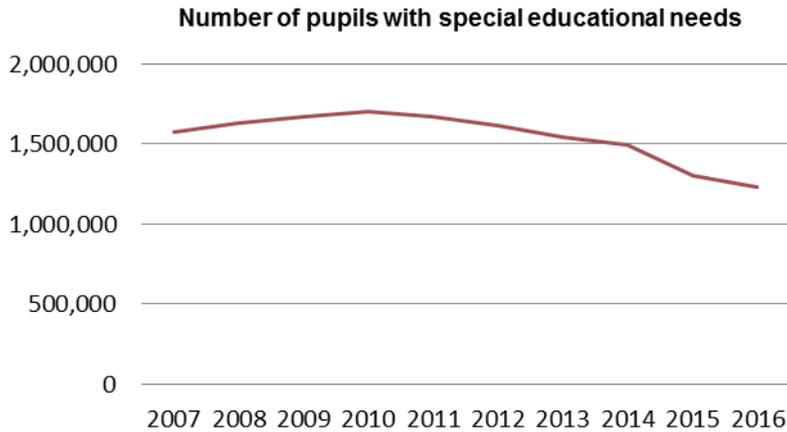




SFR 29/2016, 21 July 2016

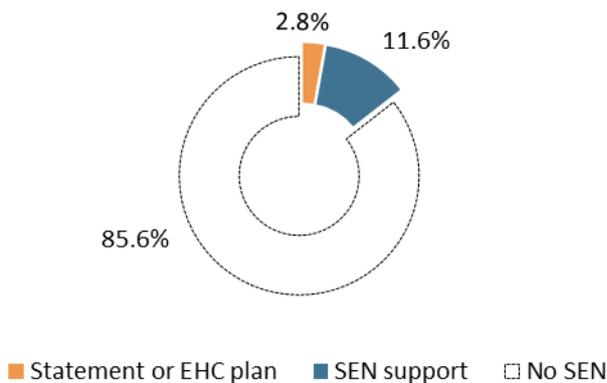
The number of pupils with special educational needs continues to decline...



The number of pupils with special educational needs has reduced from 1,301,445 in 2015 to 1,228,785 in 2016.

The reduction is due to a continuing decline in the number of pupils with special educational needs without a statement or education, health and care (EHC) plan.

...but the percentage of pupils with a statement or EHC plan remains at 2.8%

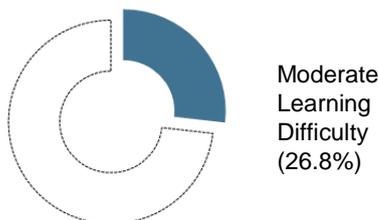


236,805 pupils have a statement of special educational needs or EHC plan. This is an increase of 640 since 2015, but remains equal to 2.8% of the total pupil population.

991,980 pupils are on SEN support. This is equal to 11.6% of the total pupil population.

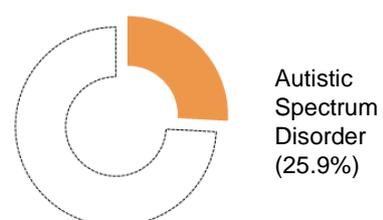
The most common primary types of needs have remained the same as in 2015

Primary type of need for pupils on SEN support



26.8% of pupils on SEN support have Moderate Learning Difficulty as a primary type of need.

Primary type of need for pupils with a statement or EHC plan



25.9% of pupils with a statement or EHC plan have Autistic Spectrum Disorder as a primary type of need.

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About this release

This statistical first release (SFR) publishes data from the January 2016 school census and annual school level census about pupils with special educational needs and information about special schools in England. This year for the first time, part of this data has previously been published in the '[Schools pupils and their characteristics: January 2016](#)' publication.

In addition to the previously published data, this SFR includes breakdowns by age, national curriculum year group gender, ethnicity, English as a first language and free school meal eligibility. It includes data about special schools and SEN units, and an 'additional tables' document.

In this publication

The following tables are included in the SFR:

National Tables (Excel .xls)
Local authority tables (Excel .xls)
Additional tables (Excel .xls)
Underlying data (open format .csv and metadata .txt)

The accompanying technical document provides information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data.

Feedback

We are changing how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at SEN.statistics@education.gsi.gov.uk

1. Pupils with special educational needs in schools (Table 1)

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Reforms

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provisions in the Children and Families Act 2014 were introduced on 1 September 2014.

From September 2014, children or young people who are newly referred to a local authority for assessment are considered under the new EHC plan assessment process. The legal test of when a child or young person requires an EHC plan remains the same as that for a statement under the Education Act 1996. Transferring children and young people with statements to EHC plans will be phased. Timescales are set out in [Transition to the new 0 to 25 special educational needs and disability system: Departmental advice for local authorities and their partners \(September 2015\)](#).

In addition, the previous 'School Action' and 'School Action Plus' categories were replaced by a new category 'SEN support'. It was expected that all transfers to this category should take place during the 2014/15 academic year.

See the [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25](#) for more detailed information on the reforms. The Code of Practice provides improved guidance to help schools and others more accurately identify children with SEN.

Pupils with special educational needs are currently classified as follows:

SEN Support

Extra or different help is given from that provided as part of the school's usual curriculum. The class teacher and special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) may receive advice or support from outside specialists. The pupil does not have a statement or education, health and care plan.

Statement of special educational needs (statement) or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan

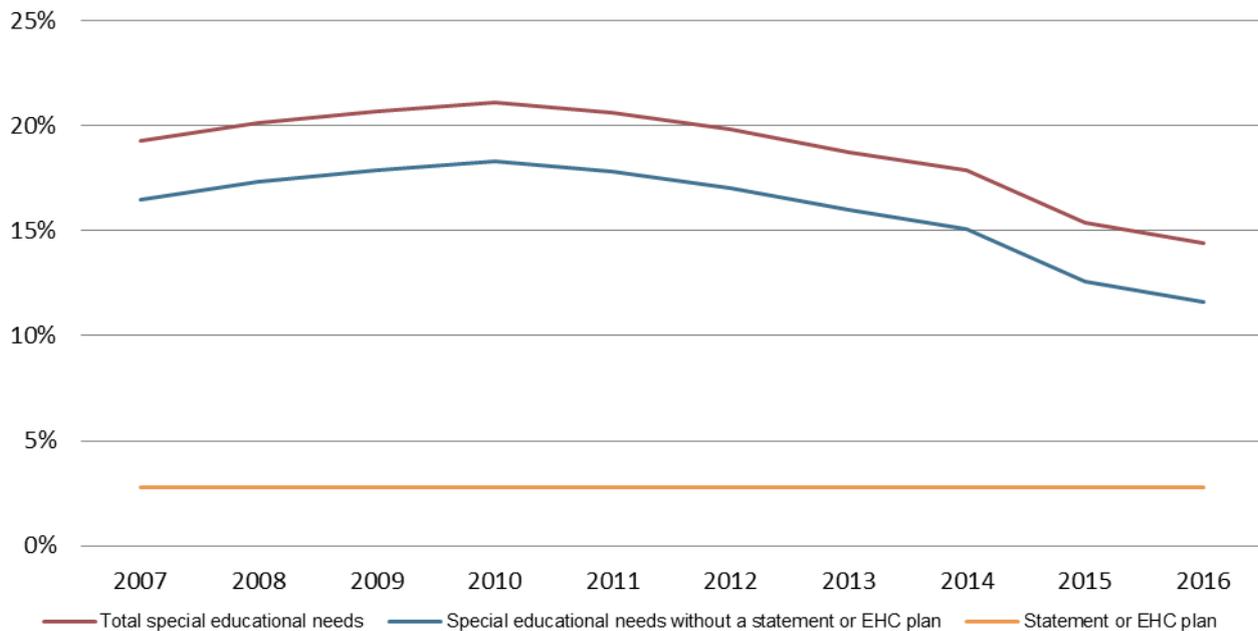
A pupil has a statement or EHC plan when a formal assessment has been made. A document is in place that sets out the child's need and the extra help they should receive.

Across all schools, the number of pupils with special educational needs has fallen from 1,301,445 in 2015 to 1,228,785 in 2016. 14.4% of pupils had special educational needs in 2016, a fall from 15.4% in 2015. This reduction is due to the decline in the number and percentage of pupils with special educational needs without a statement or EHC plan. This has declined in each of the past six years, falling from 18.3% of pupils in 2010 to 11.6% in 2016.

From 2015, the School Action and School Action Plus categories have combined to form one category of SEN support. This led to schools reviewing the needs of pupils previously under School Action and School Action Plus, and an increased expectation that parents/carers are informed of the decision.

236,805 pupils have a statement or EHC plan. This is an increase of 640 since 2015, but remains equal to 2.8% of the total pupil population. The percentage of pupils with statement or EHC plans has remained constant since 2007.

Figure A: Time series showing the percentage of pupils with special educational needs:
England 2007-2016



Source: school census 2007-2016 (as at January each year)

2. Primary type of need (Table 8)

Coverage

Primary type of need is collected for those pupils on SEN support or with a statement or EHC plan. The coverage for 2015 and 2016 is different to previous years. Pupils who were on School Action were not required to have a primary type of need recorded. From 2015 pupils who were on School Action who have transferred to SEN support will be recorded as having a primary type of need. This has led to an increase in the number of pupils recorded as having a primary type of need. There may have been some pupils who were still on school action in the 2015 collection who did not provide a primary type of need, however there were no pupils recorded as School Action in 2016.

Classification changes

There were changes to the classification of type of need in 2015: the previous code of 'Behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (BESD)' was removed. A new code 'Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH)' was introduced, although this was not intended to be a direct replacement. The code 'SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need' was also introduced in 2015.

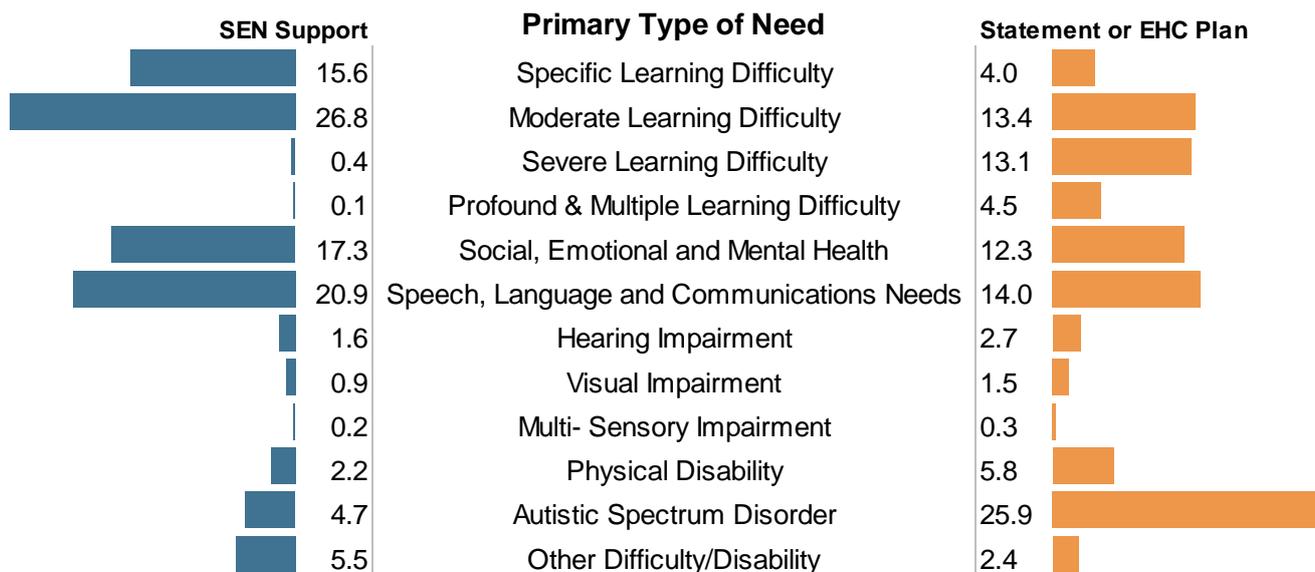
Due to the changes in coverage and classification, it is not possible to produce a direct comparison with data prior to 2015.

Moderate Learning Difficulty remains the most common primary type of need overall. 24.2% of pupils with special educational needs have this primary type of need. This percentage has increased since last year, from 23.8%.

Moderate Learning Difficulty is also the most common type of need for pupils on SEN support; 26.8% of pupils on SEN support had this primary type of need.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder remains the most common primary type of need for pupils with a statement or EHC plan, with 25.9% of pupils with a statement or EHC plan had this primary type of need. This has increased slightly from 24.5% in 2015.

Figure B: Percentage of pupils with each primary type of need who are either on SEN support or with a statement or EHC plan (pupils in state funded primary, secondary and special schools):
England 2016



Source: Schools census 2016

3. Types of school (Table 1 and table 2)

The percentage of pupils with a statement or EHC plan attending maintained special schools has gradually increased each year. In 2010, 38.2% of pupils with statements attended maintained special schools and this has increased to 42.9% of pupils with statements or EHC plans in 2016. The percentage of pupils with statements or EHC plans attending independent schools has also increased between 2010 and 2016, from 4.2% to 5.7%.

Figure C: percentage of pupils with a statement or EHC plan by type of provision:
England 2010-2016

School type	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Maintained nursery	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
State-funded primary	25.8	25.8	25.9	26.0	26.2	26.2	25.5
State-funded secondary	28.8	28.4	27.7	26.9	25.7	24.6	23.5
Maintained special	38.2	38.7	39.0	39.6	40.5	41.4	42.9
Pupil Referral Units	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6
Independent	4.2	4.3	4.7	4.9	5.1	5.3	5.7
Non-maintained special	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.6

Source: School census 2010-2016 (as at January each year)

Pupils with special educational needs in academies

The percentage of pupils with special educational needs in primary academies is 13.4%, the same as the overall percentage of pupils with special educational needs in all state funded primary schools. 12.4% of pupils in secondary academies have special educational needs, compared to 12.7% in all state funded secondary schools. The percentage of pupils in primary or secondary academies with a statement or EHC plan is the same as the overall percentage for all state funded primary and secondary schools (1.3% for primary schools and 1.7% in secondary schools).

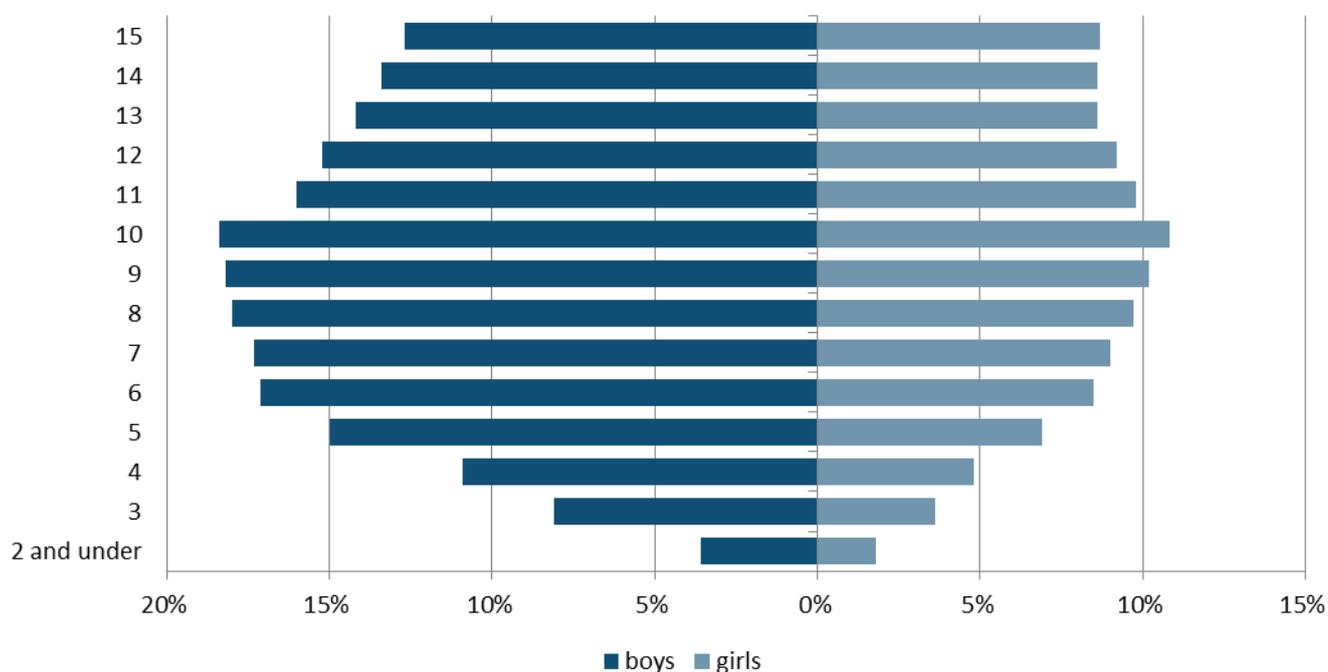
Academies

Academies have exactly the same duties for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) as all other schools. All schools have a duty to adhere to the equality act for pupils with disabilities, to have regard for the [SEND code of practice](#) and to use their best endeavours to meet pupils' needs. This means doing everything they can to meet children and young people's special educational needs. All schools have a duty to admit a young person, where the school is named in an EHC plan and engage with parents on the support provided for their children and involve them in reviewing progress.

4. Age and gender (table 3)

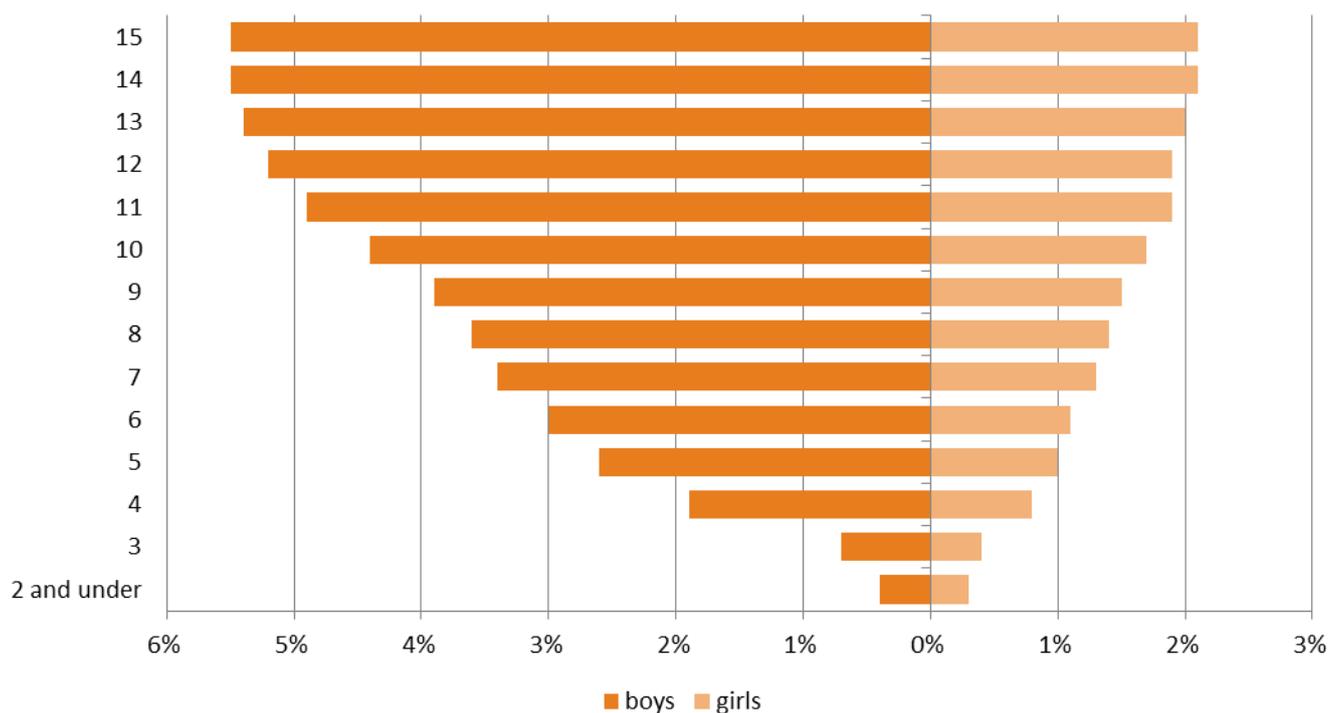
Special educational needs remain more prevalent in boys than girls. 14.7% of boys are on SEN support compared to 8.2% of girls. This is a reduction from last year when 16.0% of boys and 9.2% of girls were on SEN support. 4.0% of boys have a statement or EHC plan compared to 1.5% girls. This has fallen slightly from 4.1% boys and 1.6% girls in 2015.

Figure D: Percentage of pupils on SEN support by age and gender in state-funded primary, secondary and special schools: England 2016



Source: School Census 2016

Figure E: Percentage of pupils with a statement or EHC plan by age and gender in state-funded primary, secondary and special schools: England 2016



Source: School census 2016

SEN support is most prevalent among 10 year-olds. This is consistent with previous years. 14.7% of 10 year-old pupils were on SEN support. Statements or EHC plans are most prevalent at age 15, where 3.9% of pupils have a statement or EHC plan.

The decline in rates of SEN support was greatest for 13 year olds, with a fall from 13.2% in 2015 to 11.5% in 2016.

5. Other characteristics (table 5, 6 and 7)

Free school meal eligibility

Pupils with special educational needs remain more likely to be eligible for free school meals. 27.2% of pupils with special educational needs are eligible for free school meals compared to 12.1% of pupils without special educational needs. Pupils with statements or EHC plans are more likely to be eligible for free school meals than pupils on SEN support (31.5% compared to 26.2%)

Ethnicity

Special educational needs remain most prevalent in Travellers of Irish Heritage and Gypsy/Roma pupils with 35.5% and 30.9% respectively having special educational needs. The percentage of travellers of Irish heritage pupils with special educational needs has reduced from 40.2% in 2015. There has also been a reduction in black Caribbean pupils with special educational needs, from 23.5% in 2015 to 21.7% in 2016.

Travellers of Irish heritage and black Caribbean pupils had the highest proportion of pupils with statements or EHC plans (4.7% and 4.2% respectively). Indian pupils had the lowest percentage of pupils with statements or EHC plans at 1.9%, compared with 2.8% of all pupils nationally.

English as a first language

Pupils whose first language is known to be English were more likely to have special educational needs than those whose first language is known to be other than English. 15.5% of pupils whose first language is

known or believed to be English had special educational needs compared to 13.6% of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be other than English.

3.2% of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be English have a statement or EHC plan, whereas 2.5% of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be other than English have a statement or EHC plan.

6. Special schools (tables 9 and 10)

There are 1,039 state-funded and non-maintained special schools in England. The approved provision type is the type of special need for which the school is formally approved to make provision. The most common approved provision type for special schools is Autistic Spectrum Disorder. In total, 654 state funded and non-maintained special schools are approved for this provision type. 556 schools have approved provision for Severe Learning Difficulty, and 531 schools have approved provision for Moderate Learning Difficulty.

7. Other characteristics and primary type of need (additional tables)

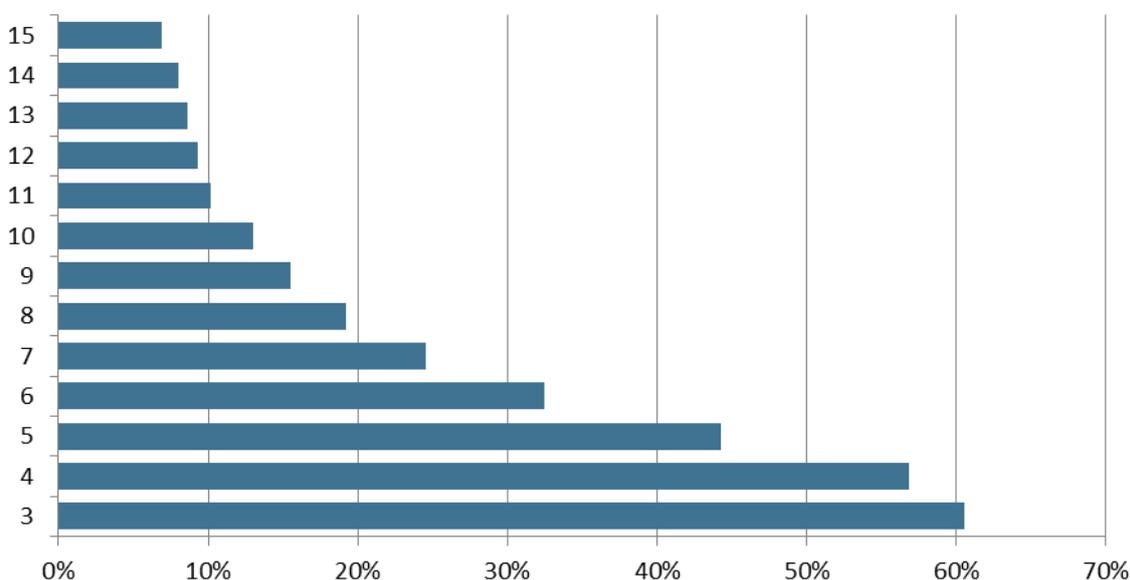
Gender

Boys with a statement or EHC plan are more likely to have Autistic Spectrum Disorder as a primary type of need than girls. 30.0% of boys with a statement or EHC plan have this primary type of need compared with 14.8% of girls.

Age

There is some variation among age groups for primary type of need. 60.5% of 3 year-olds on SEN support have a primary type of need of Speech Language and Communication needs. This reduces to 13% of 10 year-olds and 6.9% of 15 year-olds.

Figure F: Percentage of pupils on SEN support, with speech language and communication needs as a primary type of need by age (pupils in state funded primary, secondary and special schools):
England 2016



Source: School census 2016

Specific Learning Difficulty is more prevalent in secondary aged pupils with SEN support than primary aged pupils. 25.0% of 15 year olds on SEN support had this primary type of need compared with 10.8% of 7 year olds. The difference between age groups is less distinct for pupils with a statement or EHC plan, however Moderate Learning Difficulty and Social Emotional and Mental Health are both more prevalent in older pupils.

Ethnicity

Moderate Learning Difficulty was the most common primary type of need for pupils on SEN support for White, Mixed, Black and Asian ethnic groups. However, the most common primary type of need for Chinese pupils was Speech, Language and Communication Needs. There was no difference between ethnic groups for the most common primary type of need for pupils with a statement or EHC plan.

Free school meal eligibility

Pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health as their primary type of need are more likely to be eligible for free school meals than pupils with other primary type of need. 33.0% of pupils with SEN support and 42.5% of pupils with a statement or EHC plan with this type of need were eligible for free school meals.

English as a first language

Pupils with SEN support with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties as their primary type of need had the highest proportion of pupils whose first language was known to or believed to be other than English (33.3%). Pupils with SEN support with Autistic Spectrum Disorder as their primary type of need had the lowest proportion of pupils with a first language known or believed to be other than English (7.1%).

8. Accompanying tables

The following tables are available in Excel format on the department's statistics website: [Special educational needs statistics](#)

National tables

1. All Schools: Pupils with special educational needs by school type and type of provision
2. a. Academies: pupils with special educational needs by type of academy
2. b. Academies: Pupils with special educational needs time series
3. State-funded primary, secondary and special schools: Pupils with special educational needs by age and gender
4. State-funded primary, secondary and special schools: Number of pupils with special educational needs by national curriculum year group
5. State-funded primary, secondary and special schools: Pupils with special educational needs known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals
6. state-funded primary, secondary and special schools: number of pupils with special educational needs by ethnic group
7. state-funded primary, secondary and special schools: number and percentage of pupils with special educational needs by first language
8. State-funded primary, secondary and special schools: number and percentage of pupils with special educational needs by primary type of need
9. Special schools: types of provision for which schools have been approved
10. Special schools: number of schools by size
11. State-funded primary and secondary schools: number of schools with SEN units and resourced provisions

Local authority and regional tables

12. All Schools: Number of pupils with a statement or EHC plan, based on where the child attends school
13. All Schools: Number of pupils with SEN support, based on where the pupil attends school
14. State-funded primary, secondary and special schools: number of pupils with special educational needs, based on where the pupil attends school

15. All Schools: number of pupils with special educational needs, based on where the pupil attends school
16. State funded primary schools: number and percentage of pupils with special educational needs by primary type of need
17. State-funded secondary schools: number and percentage of pupils with special educational needs by primary type of need
18. Special schools: number and percentage of pupils with special educational needs by primary type of need
19. State-funded primary and secondary schools: number and percentage of pupils with special educational needs attending SEN units or placed in resourced provision

Additional tables

- A. State-funded primary, secondary and special schools: Number and percentage of pupils with special educational needs by gender and primary type of need
- B. State-funded primary, secondary and special schools : Number and percentage of pupils with special educational needs by age and primary type of need
- C. 1. state-funded primary, secondary and special schools: Number and percentage of pupils with SEN support by ethnic group and primary type of need
- C. 2. state-funded primary, secondary and special schools: Number and percentage of pupils with statements or EHC plans by ethnic group and primary type of need
- D. state-funded primary, secondary and special schools: Number and percentage of pupils with special educational needs by free school meal eligibility
- E. state-funded primary, secondary and special schools: Number and percentage of pupils with special educational needs by national curriculum year group and primary type of need
- F. state-funded primary, secondary and special schools: number and percentage of pupils with special educational needs by first language and primary type of need
- G. state-funded primary, secondary and special schools: Number and percentage of pupils with special educational needs by primary and secondary type of need

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

We preserve confidentiality	The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires we take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality.
We round and suppress numbers and percentages	<p>National figures in table 1, regional and national figures in table 19 and school level figures for number of pupils and number of pupils with special educational needs in the underlying data document have been rounded to the nearest 5.</p> <p>In table 19 and the underlying data table, numbers based on 1 or 2 pupils have been suppressed. Zeros have not been suppressed</p> <p>Percentages are calculated on unrounded data and are rounded to the nearest 0.1.</p> <p>This suppression is consistent with the Departmental statistical</p>

policy which can be found at:

[Departmental statistical policy.](#)

And adopt symbols to help identify this

Symbols are used in the tables as follows:

- . not applicable
 - .. not available
 - x suppressed figure
-

9. Further information is available

Previous publications

Previous versions of this publication can be found on our SEN statistics home page:

[Statistics: Special educational needs](#)

Other SEN Statistical publications

Statistics on pupils with SEN, including numbers with statements or EHC plans, information on educational attainment, destinations, absence, exclusions, and characteristics

[Statistics: Special educational needs](#)

SEND code of practice

Explains the duties of local authorities, health bodies, schools and colleges to provide for those with special educational needs under part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014

[SEND code of practice: 0- 25 years](#)

Special educational needs and disability regulations

Regulations supplement the procedural framework assessing a child or young person with special educational needs, and the procedure for making, reviewing, amending and ceasing to maintain an EHC plan

[The Education \(Special Educational Needs\) \(England\) \(Consolidation\) Regulations 2001](#)

[Special educational needs and disability regulations 2014](#)

Special educational needs and disability (SEND) information

Includes links to guidance and regulations about supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

[Special educational needs and disability \(SEND\)](#)

10. National Statistics

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

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

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

The Department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

11. Technical information

A technical document accompanies this SFR. This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed.

12. Get in touch

Media enquiries

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write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

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