School Census Spring 2024 Preparation Guide

PURPOSE: To assist LA maintained schools & PRU in preparing for the School Census Spring 2024.

KEY DATES

Thursday 18 January 2024	Census Day
Tuesday 23 January 2024	Deadline for Waltham Forest maintained schools & PRU submit a return to the Local Authority via COLLECT https://services.signin.education.gov.uk

SCHOOLS INCLUDED:

The school census collects individual school characteristics and pupil records, 3 times a year.

In England, all of the following schools are required to provide the information collected in this census to DfE:

- maintained nursery, primary, middle-deemed primary, middle-deemed secondary, secondary, all-through, special schools (including non-maintained special schools), pupil referral units / alternative provision (PRU / AP), academies (including free schools, university technical colleges (UTCs) and studio schools) and city technology colleges (CTCs).

PUPILS TO BE INCLUDED:

Individual data will be included in the return for the following pupils. You should ensure that all relevant data is maintained and up to date for:

- all pupils on the register on census day

- any additional pupils subject to any type of suspension or permanent exclusion in the previous 2 terms

- any additional pupils who attended the school in the previous term for which termly attendance information is required - not for nursery schools.

- any additional pupils who had an alternative provision (AP) placement within the collection period (since the last census day), not applicable for nursery schools

- any additional pupils awarded a bursary since the start of the academic year - spring and summer census only and not for nursery, primary and middle schools.

- any additional pupils who were recorded as in receipt of learner funding and monitoring since the start of the academic year – not applicable to nursery schools.

FUNDING

The spring school census will be used to fund the early year's block of the dedicated schools grant as well as pupil premium (for pupil referral units and alternative provision academies and free schools) and universal infant school meals.

KEY CENSUS DATA ITEM COLLECTION PERIODS

Item	Period
Term dates	2024-01-01 to Easter Sunday 2024-03-31
Free school meal eligibility	(a) An FSM eligibility start date and no FSM eligibility end date; or, (b) An FSM eligibility end date since the previous census, that is, on or after 2023-10-06 and up to including the spring census day (2024-01-18)
Learner Funding and Monitoring (FAM) entity	Any Learner FAM assigned and hours, where applicable since the beginning of the 2023 to 2024 academic year (from 2023-08-01) to students who are either on roll or off roll on census day (2024-01-18)
Termly suspensions and permanent exclusions	Easter Monday 2023-04-10 to 2023-12-31
Termly attendance	Start of the autumn term (from 2023-08-01) to 2023-12-31
Alternative provision (AP) placement module	Any current (open) AP placements; and any previous placements where the pupil has already left an AP placement between: 2023-10-05 to 2024-01-17 inclusive
Learner support (bursary funding for 16 to 19 year olds)	Any 16 to 19 bursaries awarded since the beginning of the 2023 to 2024 academic year (from 2023-08-01) to students who are either on roll or off roll on census day of 2024-01-18

More DfE items info at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/data-items-2023-to-2024

NEW, CHANGED & DELETED DATA ITEMS FOR SPRING 2024

1) **NEW DATA ITEMS**

No changes to existing data items.

2) **EXISTING DATA ITEMS**

No changes to existing data items.

3) **DELETED DATA ITEMS**

No changes to existing data items.

GUIDANCE ABOUT DATA ITEMS

More information about data items is at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/data-items-2023-to-2024.

STEPS TO PRODUCING THE SCHOOL CENSUS RETURN

The process of producing the School Census can be separated into several steps, some of which might need to be repeated to eliminate validation errors and queries.
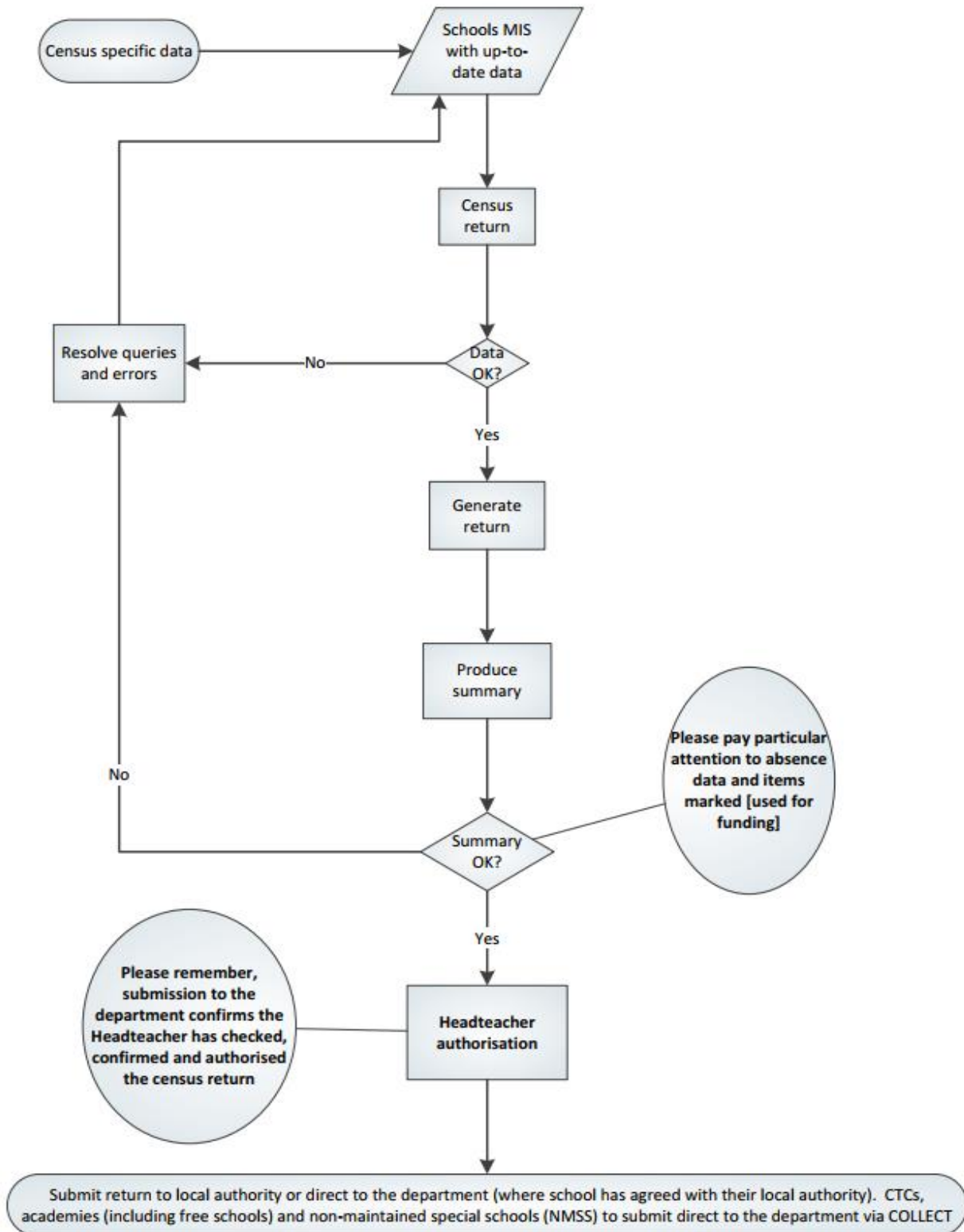
GENERATING, VALIDATING, AUTHORISING AND SUBMITTING THE RETURN

1) GENERATING & VALIDATING

All relevant pupil data has been entered and updated in your management information system (MIS) before the school census return is created.

Your MIS will have validation which will help you to identify and correct errors in your data before you generate your return. Follow your MIS support provider instructions to create, validate and authorise the return.

Schools should contact their MIS support provider for specific guidance on generating and validating the return.

2) AUTHORISING

Your MIS will automatically generate a summary of the data in the school census return that will:

- allow you to check that that the data is accurate and complete before sending it to the Headteacher; and

- allow the Headteacher authorising the return to check it is accurate and complete before submitting it to the local authority or DfE.

It is strongly recommended that you inspect the MIS summary report carefully, paying particular attention to the sections that might show that some individual pupil data was not entered onto the system before generating the return such as free school meal eligibility, the number of pupils with SEN, absence data and data items marked [used for funding] etc.

The Headteacher is responsible for reviewing and authorising census data before it is submitted.

3) SUBMITTING

Maintained schools including pupil referral units submit data to the Local Authority using COLLECT for further validation and approval before being submitted for DfE authorisation.

The act of submitting the data automatically confirms the return as authorised by the Headteacher.

To use COLLECT to submit your school census data, you will need to log in via DfE Sign-in https://services.signin.education.gov.uk. Contact your school approver, if you want to request a DfE sign-in username or password so you can access COLLECT, or 'school census' is not on the list of collections you can see in COLLECT.

All school census COLLECT errors are to be corrected. All queries checked and either amended (if there is an issue); or a notepad explanation is provided in the 'return level notes' section of COLLECT for DfE queries. A DFE list of acceptable notepad entries is at www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/check-your-data (section 'Adding explanatory notes for queries').

If the DfE has any queries about your return or any of the notes added, they may also add a note to the 'return level notes' section of COLLECT.

Note: Only add return-level notes for DFE queries to the COLLECT system. Explanatory notes for Local Authority queries should be added to your school validation report ('Comment' section of sheet 'ValidationReport') and sent securely to the Business Intelligence Team via AnyComms+.

More DfE guidance on submitting the return can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/submit-your-data; and checking at www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/check-your-data

'Dry Run' & Testing

Schools should take the opportunity to do a 'dry run' of their school census return. The purpose of a dry run is to provide details about any corrections that need to be made to your data to make it acceptable for inclusion. So that you are aware of any potential issues, it is advisable to do this as early as possible, even if you know that your data has not yet been fully prepared or checked. Contact your management information system (MIS) Support Provider for any procedural guidance to facilitate a dry run.

COLLECT Familiarisation

A 'beta' release of the School Census live COLLECT blade will be available to schools in the Spring Term 2024 prior to the 'live' collection.

COLLECT familiarisation will take place on the same system as the live collection and, therefore, can be accessed by logging into COLLECT.

The DfE would strongly recommend that, if possible, all schools take the chance to load a file output from their management information system (MIS) into COLLECT during the familiarisation process. This will allow schools to check that all the required data is being output correctly from their MIS into the census return and whether any validation errors or queries are generated against their data when loaded into COLLECT which need to be resolved before the collection goes live.

WHO TO CONTACT?

Contact	Support
Business Intelligence Team E-mail: edu.performance@walthamforest.gov.uk	School Census data collection and return queries.
Department for Education (DfE) https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Data-collections-service-request-form	DfE Data collections service request form.

SPRING 2024 SCHOOL CENSUS – CHECKLIST

This checklist indicates some of the tasks to undertake to prepare for the school census. Your MIS Support Provider may provide a more specific procedural list of tasks that you should follow. More information about school census data items is at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/data-items-2023-to-2024.

MIS Permissions: Check with your System Administrator/Manager that you have the appropriate permissions to run the School Census and record associated data.	☐
MIS is the correct version? Upgrade to the correct MIS version to run School Census.	☐
Dry Run: Carry out a dry run to determine what information needs to be updated.	☐
School information: Check school level information.	☐
Attendance: Check attendance data.	☐
Admission appeals: (Spring only) Figures on admission appeals are collected in the spring census, from schools that were responsible for their own appeals, relating to applicants having not received a requested offer of a place for the start of the current academic year.	☐
Childcare information: Check school childcare information (Spring only). You must return 4 records for type of childcare – one for each of the following categories: • before school • after school • holiday • under 5s	☐
Class information: [Primary, middle-deemed primary, middle-deemed secondary, secondary and all-through schools] (Spring only) Details of all classes running at the selected time on spring census day. Last digit of your departmental number Selected time 4, 7, 8 or 9 the selected time is one hour after the start of morning school 0, 1 or 5 the selected time is one hour before the end of morning school 2, 3 or 6 the selected time is one hour after the start of afternoon school	☐

Early years pupil premium [used for funding]: Children are eligible to receive EYPP if they receive the 15 hours funded entitlement and either:

- meet benefits related criteria equivalent to those for free school meals (receipt of free school meals does not automatically qualify a child for EYPP)
- are in the care of the local authority (in England or Wales)
- have left care (in England or Wales) through:
  - adoption
  - special guardianship
  - a child arrangements order (formerly known as a residence order)

The DfE will use this data, collected via the spring census, to determine the early years pupil premium allocation for local authorities to fund their early years providers.

This table shows the cohorts of children for whom early years pupil premium data is required.

Census	Age, school type and year group	Date of birth ranges
Spring 2024 only	all 3-year-olds and 4 year olds who have turned 4 since the start of the academic year – irrespective of school type and year group	Born between 2019-09-01 and 2020-12-31 (inclusive)
Spring 2024 only	4-year-olds who were also 4 at the start of the academic year - for nursery schools (phase equals 'NS') – all year groups	Born between 2019-01-01 and 2019-08-31 (inclusive)
Spring 2024 only	4-year-olds who were also 4 at the start of the academic year - for all schools other than nurseries (phase does not equal 'NS') – pupil national curriculum year groups 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only	Born between 2019-01-01 and 2019-08-31 (inclusive)

Pupils aged 4 at the start of the academic year in reception and above are eligible to receive the school age pupil premium and therefore are not eligible to receive early years pupil premium funding.

For pupils in receipt of the early years pupil premium, we also need the reason why they are receiving.

Code	Early years pupil premium basis for funding
RE	In receipt through eligibility for economic reasons: where they are in receipt via eligibility for the benefits related criteria for FSM
RO	In receipt through eligibility for other reasons: where they are in receipt due to eligibility for being in care or due to leaving care through adoption, a special guardianship order or a child arrangement order
RB	In receipt through eligibility for both reasons: where they are in receipt through eligibility for both economic and other reasons
RU	In receipt through eligibility for unknown basis: where the school knows the child is in receipt of EYPP (due to receiving funding from the local authority) but does not necessarily know the reason why

Enrolment Status – dual registrations: All pupils on roll at your school and another school/PRU must have the correct enrolment status recorded (i.e. M = Dual Main or S = Dual Subsidiary).

Ethnicity: Check the pupils' ethnicity information (Spring only).

The school must not ascribe any ethnicity to the pupil. This information must come from the parent / guardian or pupil.

Where the ethnicity has not yet been collected, this is recorded as 'NOBT' (information not yet obtained). Where a parent / guardian or pupil declines to provide ethnicity data, code 'REFU' (refused) is recorded and returned.

Free school meals taken: [Nursery, primary, middle-deemed primary, middle-deemed secondary, secondary, all-through and special schools] (Spring only)

The total number of children who are 'free school meal eligible' who actually had one on the day.

FSM: Check free school meal eligibility information. Transitional protections ensure that any pupil in receipt of free school meals on 31 March 2018 or after, should continue to receive free school meals until the end of the universal credit roll out period, and then until their phase of education ends. This covers until at least March 2025 and applies even if their circumstances change and they would no longer meet the eligibility criteria. **You should not enter end dates unless:** • a parent has said that they do not wish the child to be recorded as eligible for free school meals and receive a free school meal. • a pupil transfers from another UK country – their non-English free school meals must have an end date. • a parent notifies the school that their support under the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999 or the pension credit has ended. • a parent notifies the school that they no longer qualify for free school meals under the criteria for families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)	❏
Full-time/part-time status for pupils who are not of statutory school age: Please ensure that each pupil in these year groups is correctly shown as full-time or part-time.	❏
Funded hours for pupils aged 2, 3 or 4: Check the **funded entitlement hours** information.	❏
Hours at setting for pupils aged 2, 3 or 4: Check that it is the total of: • any hours funded under the free early education entitlements, plus • any hours funded under extended funded entitlement, plus • any additional hours of education funded from other sources such as parents.	❏
First Language: Check first language information. Collected for all pupils including nursery schools.	❏
Learner Funding and Monitoring (FAM): Update Funding and Monitoring details as required by the DfE. For the 2023 to 2024 academic year, it will identify pupils: • in receipt of tutoring funded by the National Tutoring Programme funding (this tutoring could be delivered via school-led tutoring, an academic mentor or a tuition partner) • in receipt of tutoring funded by the 16 to 19 tuition fund • resitting or retaking full or part of their 16 to 19 study programme	❏
Leavers: Check that leavers and re-admissions have been recorded.	❏
Post Looked After pupils: Check information collected for pupils who are on-roll on census day. Post looked after arrangements collects information regarding children, who have left local authority care in England and Wales through adoption, a special guardianship order, a residence order or a child arrangements order and are still subject to such orders on census day.	❏

Children who have left care under one of the measures listed above will be eligible for the post looked after element of the pupil premium.	
PRU or alternative provision indicators: Only PRU and AP schools (Spring only) • Child mother indicator • Teenage mother places • Childcare facilities indicator	❑
Pupil reconciliation: [Primary, middle-deemed primary, middle-deemed secondary, secondary and all-through schools] (Spring only) This checks that the number of registered pupils for whom the return contains individual pupil data is consistent with the number of pupils reported in classes as taught - after allowing for the fact that some registered pupils may not have been in class at the selected time. To enable the pupil reconciliation to be carried out the software will ask you to enter the number of pupils in each of the following groups: • pupils engaged in private study at the selected time. • pupils attending another educational provision at the selected time. • pupils attending FE college – middle-deemed secondary, secondary and all-through schools only. • pupils attending work experience – middle-deemed secondary, secondary and all-through schools only	❑
Pupil SEN provision: Check special educational needs information. SEN provision is collected for all pupils on roll on census day using the following codes: 'E' (education, health and care plan) or 'K' (SEN support) SEN provision at the time of any suspension or permanent exclusion and on entering and leaving an alternative provision placement will also be collected in the school census.	❑
Pupil SEN type & ranking: (Spring only) Required in the spring census for all pupils with SEN provision and indicates the type & ranking of a pupil's special educational need, as recorded in pupil SEN type.	❑
School lunches taken: This data item records whether an infant pupil has taken a school lunch on census day. This may include packed lunches provided by the school to children on school trips. This data item is collected each term from all schools with an appropriate age range and for the following pupils regardless of whether they are eligible for free school meals: all pupils on roll on census day in reception (NCYearActual equals 'R'); year 1 (NCYearActual equals '1'); year 2 (NCYearActual equals '2'); and aged 4 to 6 not following the national	❑

curriculum (NCYearActual equals 'X' and pupil born between 2016-09-01 and 2019-08-31 inclusive). The DfE collect this data each term from all schools and use it to allocate funding.	
Special school organisation: [special schools] (Spring only) Whether the school: • mainly provides accommodation for day pupils. • mainly provides accommodation for boarding pupils. • is a hospital school.	❏
Termly suspensions and permanent exclusions: Check information.	❏
Top-Up Funding Indicator: Check this information for those pupils on roll for whom the school receives, on census day, high needs top-up funding either from a local authority or, in the case of a PRU / AP, a local authority or another school. Usually, but not always, the pupils for whom a primary or secondary mainstream school receives top-up funding are those with an education, health and care plan (EHCP). More information is at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/data-items-2023-to-2024 ('**Top-up funding indicator'** section)**.**	❏
Unique Learner Numbers (ULN): ULNs are mandatory for all pupils on roll aged 14 and over on census day and for pupils no longer on roll who were aged 14 as at their leaving date.	❏
Unique Pupil Numbers (UPN): If you have pupils with a temporary UPN or new pupils that require a UPN, check whether they already have a permanent UPN assigned to them.	❏
Youth Support Services Agreement (YSSA) [Middle-deemed primary, middle-deemed secondary, secondary, all-through, special and PRU/AP schools]: There is a legal requirement under the Education and Skills Act 2008 for schools to pass information on request to the youth support service for pupils in or approaching the age of 13.	❏