SCHOOL CENSUS SPRING 2025: LOCAL AUTHORITY GUIDANCE

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KEY DATES

Week commencing 16/12/2024 – 10/01/2025 January (4pm)	Optional. Department for Education (DfE) strongly recommended, if possible. COLLECT familiarisation test period: A 'beta' release is available for testing purposes only, via COLLECT, prior to the census going 'live', and will be removed in advance of the 'live' collection.
Thursday 16 January 2025	Census Day
Tuesday 21 January 2025	Maintained schools & PRU deadline for submission to the Local Authority for validation via <u>COLLECT</u> .
Wednesday 12 February 2025	Maintained schools & PRU deadline for submission to be approved by the Local Authority via <u>COLLECT</u> .
Wednesday 12 February 2025	Academies and free schools deadline for validated and approved submission directly by the Department for Education (DfE) via COLLECT.

Note: Following approval and final DfE checks, all state-funded school submissions must receive a final DfE 'authorised' status.

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 a return 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:

- all pupils on the register on census day
- any additional pupils subject to a suspension or permanent exclusion in 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 who were recorded as in receipt of learner funding and monitoring since the start of the academic year not applicable to nursery schools
- any additional pupils awarded a bursary since the start of the academic year not applicable to nursery, primary and middle schools

FUNDING AND THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL CENSUS

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.

The school census is the DfE's primary source of administrative data about pupils attending schools in England.

KEY CENSUS DATA ITEM COLLECTION PERIODS

Item	Period	
Term dates	2025-01-01 to Easter Sunday 2025-04-20	
	Periods of eligibility for free school meals with:	
Free school meal	(a) An FSM eligibility start date and no FSM eligibility end date; or,	
eligibility	(b) An FSM eligibility end date since the previous census, that is, on or after	
	2024-10-04 and up to including the spring census day (2025-01-16)	
Learner Funding and	Any Learner FAM assigned, where applicable since the beginning of the 2024	
Monitoring (FAM) entity	to 2025 academic year (from 2024-08-01) to students who are either on roll	
Worldding (FAW) entity	or off roll on census day (2025-01-16)	
Termly suspensions and		
permanent exclusions	Easter Monday 2024-04-01 to 2024-12-31	
Termly attendance	Start of the autumn term (from 2024-08-01) to 2024-12-31	
Alternative provision	any current (open) AP placements and	
(AP) placement	any previous placements where the pupil has already left an AP placement	
module	between: 2024-10-03 to 2025-01-15 inclusive	
Learner support	Any 16 to 19 bursaries awarded since the beginning of the 2024 to 2025	
(bursary funding for 16	academic year (from 2024-08-01) to students who are either on roll or off roll	
to 19 year olds)	on census day of 2025-01-16	

More school census data items information is at $\frac{\text{https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/data-items-2024-to-2025}}{\text{census/data-items-2024-to-2025}}$.

NEW, CHANGED & DELETED DATA ITEMS for SPRING 2025

1) New data items:

Item	Description
School Childcare	The 'School Childcare' module has been updated to record if:
	 a childcare place is available for every parent who wants one
	 the childcare provision is open from 8am or earlier (if before school)
	 the childcare provision offers childcare covering 8am to 6pm
	 the childcare provision is open to at least 6pm (if after school)
	 the holiday childcare provider is open from 8am or earlier and to at least 6pm

2) Existing data items:

Item	Description
Termly attendance	New attendance codes collected from spring 2025.
Ethnicity	The ethnicity code set (CS080) has been amended to align with
	the ONS 2021 census by including ABRI (Asian - British), AWL
	(Asian - Welsh), BBRI (Black - British), BWEL (Asian - Welsh),
	and ORAB (Arab). All are main codes except ORAB which is an
	extended code and covered by the main code of OOTH (Any
	other ethnic group). The description of WIRT has been updated
	to 'Irish Traveller'.
Childcare	Signposting to offsite childcare, the response code 'YF' has
	been updated from 'including transport' to 'including escort'.

3) Deleted data items:

Item	Description
Termly attendance	Sessions missed for Authorised, Unauthorised, Educational and
	Exceptional will be discontinued from spring 2025.

More information about data item changes for the whole of the academic year 2024 to 2025 is at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/changes-for-2024-to-2025.

EARLY YEARS DATA FOR SPRING 2025

The tables below clarify the early years data requirements for School Census Spring 2025.

Data Item	School Census Spr 25
Hours at Setting	Collected for all 9 months up to and including 4 year olds.
Funded Hours	Collected for disadvantage 2 year olds and all 3 and 4 year olds.
Extended Hours	Collected for 3 and 4 year olds with Eligibility Code.
Expanded Hours	Collected for 9 months up to and including 2 year olds with Eligibily Code.
30 Hour Code / Eligibility Code	Collected as Eligibility Code as necessary.
DAF Indicator	Collected for 9 months up to and including 4 year olds.
2 Year old Basis for Funding	Collected for 2 year olds.
Early Years Pupil Premium Receipt	Collected for 9 months up to and including 4 year olds.

Source: SIMS

Data item	Description
Funded universal entitlement	Funded early years entitlement hours are collected for eligible pupils
hours.	aged 2, 3 and 4 years in nursery provision.
	A specified subset of disadvantaged 2-year-olds also becomes eligible
(Maximum funded entitlement	from the term following their second birthday.
hours: 15 hours)	In some circumstances, 2-year-olds may be eligible for both the 15-hour
	entitlement for disadvantaged 2-year-olds and the expanded
	entitlement but can only take up one of these entitlements. In those
	circumstances, children should be recorded against the disadvantaged
	entitlement (funded hours).
Funded extended entitlement	Extended funded entitlement hours are collected for 3- and 4-year-old
hours.	children with working parents who are in education provision.
(0.4)	Extended funded entitlement hours are available for pupils aged 3 and
(Maximum funded entitlement hours:	those pupils aged 4 who are in year groups 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' or 'N2' only.
15 funded universal free	
entitlement hours + 15 extended	
free entitlement hours equals 30	
hours)	
Funded expanded entitlement	Expanded funded entitlement hours are collected for 9-month-olds to 2-
hours.	year-olds with working parents (where the parent has an eligibility
(0.4)	code), who are in education provision.
(Maximum funded entitlement	In some circumstances, 2-year-olds may be eligible for both the 15-hour
hours: 15 hours)	entitlement for disadvantaged 2-year-olds and the expanded
	entitlement but can only take up one of these entitlements. In those
	circumstances, children should be recorded against the disadvantaged
Eligibility code	entitlement (funded hours). The eligibility code indicator is an 11-digit integer that is required for
Lingibility code	pupils who claim extended or expanded funded entitlement hours. This
	applies to all eligible 9-month-olds to 3-year-olds and those pupils aged
	4 in year groups 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only, who are on roll on census
	day. The code confirms the eligibility of working parents to receive the
	15 extended funded entitlement hours, or the 15 expanded funded
	entitlement hours.
Hours at setting	Hours at setting are collected for the same pupils and schools for whom
9	funded entitlement hours are collected.
	This data item records, for pupils aged from 9 months to 4 years old, the
	total number of hours they spent in education provision at the school
	irrespective of who funded the hours. It is the total of:

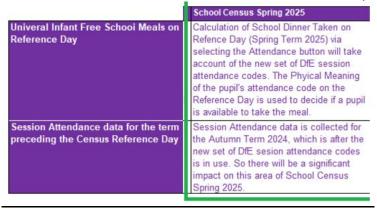
	any hours funded under the free early education entitlements:
	plus, any hours funded under extended funded entitlement (for
	working parents)plus, any hours funded under expanded funded entitlement (for
	working parents)
	 plus, any additional hours of education funded from other sources
	such as parents
2-year-old basis for funding	From summer 2024 onwards DfE collects termly. DfE collect the basis
	under which a 2-year-old has been funded whilst taking up a place in
	the school. This is not required for 2-year-olds taking up the expanded
	entitlement hours. You can enter more than one code if needed.
	ECO Economic criteria HSD High-level SEN or disability
	LAA Looked after or adopted from care
Disability access fund indicator	The disability access fund (DAF) indicator records whether a child aged
	from 9 months to 4 years old is in receipt of DAF from the local
	authority.
	To be eligible for DAF, the child must be in receipt of disability living
	allowance (DLA) and one of the early years entitlements.
	Pupils who are aged 4 as at the 31 August in reception and above, who
	are funded via the schools' block of the dedicated schools grant, are not
Early years pupil premium	eligible for DAF funding. The early years pupil premium (EYPP) is additional funding for early
Larry years pupil premium	years settings to improve the education they provide for disadvantaged
	9-month-olds, 2-year-olds, 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds in 'E1', 'E2', 'N1'
	and 'N2' only.
	Children are eligible to receive EYPP if they are taking any of the
	following:
	universal funded entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds
	disadvantaged entitlement for 2-year-olds
	expanded entitlement for 9-month-olds to 2-year-olds. The appropriate least side and the property of the
	They must also 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)
	 be 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)
	EYPP is not payable on the extended entitlement for 3 and 4-year-old
	children of working parents.
	For pupils in receipt of the early years pupil premium, the DfE also need
	the reason why they are receiving.

More information about these data items is $\frac{https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/data-items-2024-to-2025$.

UIFSM & SESSION ATTENDANCE DATA FOR SPRING 2025

The table below clarifies the new DfE attendance session codes impact on:

- 'school lunch taken' data used to determine Universal infant free school meal (UiFSM) funding
- attendance data that is collected in School Census Spring 2025.



Source: SIMS

As this will be the first school census to provide attendance data to the DfE that is based on the new DfE attendance codes introduced in August 2024. <u>Click here</u> to obtain a copy of the DfE guidance on their regulations.

CLASS INFORMATION FOR SPRING 2025

The DfE need details of all classes running at the selected time on spring census day. The 'selected time' is based on the last digit of a school's departmental establishment number.

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

More information is at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/data-items-2024-to-2025

'DRY RUN' & TESTING

Schools should take the opportunity to do a 'dry run' of their school census return from the school management information system (MIS). 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.

GENERATING MIS RETURN

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.

AUTHORISING MIS RETURN

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.

There should be a Headteacher sign-off process within each school. The Headteacher is responsible for reviewing and authorising census data before it is submitted.

SUBMITTING MIS RETURN TO COLLECT

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. Academies and Free schools submit data directly to the DfE using COLLECT for DfE approval and authorisation.

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.

DfE Sign-in

DfE Sign-in is how schools and other education organisations access DfE

To access your DfE online services, you'll either need:

- an existing DfE Sign-in account. This will be the email address and password you created when you first accessed DfE Sign-in.
- to create a DfE Sign-in account. If you haven't used DfE Sign-in before you'll need to create a DfE Sign-in account.



Sign-in to access DfE online services.

Sign in with username and password

Department for Education Sign-in

Email address

Password

Show

Forgotten your password?

By signing in you accept DfE Sign-in terms and conditions.

Select 'Collect'

Sign in Create account



Click 'Continue'



Select relevant School Census collection, and select 'Select Data Collection'



Select 'Upload Return from file', browse local computer and select XML school census return.



Follow on screen instructions to upload return.

COLLECT: FAMILIARISATION

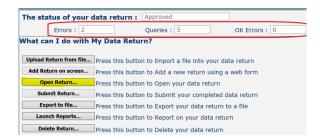
A 'beta' release of the 2025 spring school census will be available via <u>COLLECT</u> prior to the census going 'live' for testing purposes. Once the familiarisation period is over the COLLECT blade will be removed and cleared out in advance of the start of the live collection on Thursday 16 January 2025.

The Department for Education (DfE) and Local Authority strongly recommend that, if possible, all schools take the opportunity to upload a 'test' census XML return from the school 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. This will be especially important for any schools completing the school census for the first time. Please note that some COLLECT checks require reference data which is not yet in place so may trigger incorrectly – this will be in place in time for 'go live' so genuine errors will remain at that point.

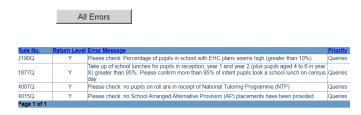
COLLECT familiarisation will take place on the same system as the 'live' collection. A DfE schools guide for using COLLECT is at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/collect-guides-for-schools-and-local-authorities.

COLLECT: RESOLVING ERRORS & QUERIES

Once the return is uploaded, the status screen indicates the status of the return; as well as any DfE COLLECT errors or queries present in the return following system validation.



To view the errors or queries, click on "Open Return", and click the 'All Errors' button.



- Errors must be resolved by amending the MIS return and resubmitting to COLLECT.
- Checked and ok'd queries can remain if you add an explanatory COLLECT return-level note for
 each one using the DfE list of acceptable notepad entries which can be found at
 https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/check-your-data (section 'Adding
 explanation notes for queries').

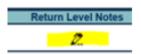
COLLECT: RETURN LEVEL NOTEPAD ENTRIES FOR OK'D QUERIES

Checked and ok'd queries can remain if you add an explanatory COLLECT return-level note for each one using the DfE list of acceptable notepad entries which can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/check-your-data (section 'Adding explanation notes for queries').

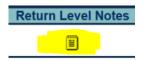
To create a return level note select 'Open Return'.



Once you have opened the return click on the pencil icon underneath "Return Level Notes" (all query notes needed to be added at return level, even if the query itself relates to an individual):



If you already have other notes on your return the icon will look like this:



Once you are on the notes page click on the "Add New Note" button



- It is acceptable to return a separate notepad entry for each query; or one notepad entry for numerous queries i.e. start a separate line for each query.
- You can now type in the note you want to add. Begin the note with the query number. When you have completed your note, making sure to use the exact notepad entry advised by the DfE list of acceptable notepad entries. For example "2190Q: confirmed as correct".
- If the DfE list of acceptable notepad entries states that a reason must be provided, do not return 'confirmed', 'correct', 'data is correct' etc. This would be an insufficient notepad entry and the DfE will be unable to process the return to 'authorised' stage.
- Where multiples of the same query occur, and the reason is the same for each one, use the "X" and number alongside the query number. For example: "5240Q X2 Though the pupil attends school for 25 hours or more, they do not attend the school for 10 sessions a week."

To view all the notes you have added, click on "All Notes".



COLLECT: REPORTS USED FOR FUNDING - DFE VALIDATION QUERY

There are a number of reports in COLLECT that you should use to check your data.

All relevant reports for your school phase or type should be run and checked.

The Department for Education (DfE) school census has a validation query to check that your school has run all relevant reports. Schools with this COLLECT validation query should run the reports although this query will not prevent the return from being 'authorised'.

A list of COLLECT reports is outlined below:

Report	Description
Pupil number report	This provides a headcount of your pupils by national curriculum year group, the headcount of your pupils minus subsidiary registrations and the number of pupils that will be used in numerous funding streams and therefore will account for funded and extended hours and unresolved duplicate UPNs.
Free school meals (FSM) report	Allows schools to check the FSM eligibility data submitted in their census return. This report only refers to FSM eligibility reported in the current census and not the FSM ever measure used to allocate the pupil premium.
Universal infant free school meals	Provides a breakdown of the infant pupils that the DfE will use in the universal infant FSM funding calculation.
Pupil premium	Allows schools to check and verify the data in their spring school census, which will feed into the deprivation, service child and post looked-after children report elements of the pupil premium allocation.
Early years pupil premium	Allows schools to check and verify the data in the census, which the DfE use for the early years pupil premium allocations.
Learner funding and monitoring (FAM)	Allows schools to check and verify the data returned in each termly census on pupils in receipt of specific elements of the education recovery package.
Zero funded hours	Highlights the number of early years pupils who have 'zero' funded hours recorded on the school census return. The DfE use funded hours to calculate the early years block of the dedicated schools grant.

More information about these reports is at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/check-your-data.

COLLECT: REPORTS USED FOR RESOLVING DUPLICATE RECORDS – DFE VALIDATION ERROR

Two COLLECT reports identify duplicate records in the census return, as outlined in the table below:

Report	Description
Duplicate report: Same UPN	A duplicate UPN is one where more than one pupil registration shares the same UPN and the registrations sharing the UPN have an invalid combination of enrolment statuses. Unresolved duplicates will impact on funding allocations such as the dedicated schools grant and pupil premium.

Duplicate report: Same Person	Includes all cases where there appears to be duplication of a
Different UPN	pupil based on the characteristics - for example, surname,
	forename, middle name, date of birth and gender - but where
	different UPNs are present.

More information about these reports is at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/check-your-data.

COLLECT validation error (DupUPNRprt)

The Department for Education (DfE) school census has a COLLECT validation error (DupUPNRprt) that will trigger if the COLLECT return has unresolved duplicates which impact funding allocations.

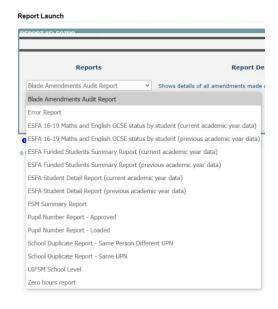
The return will not be authorised by the DfE until all errors are resolved. Please note if the return has been previously authorised and a duplicate UPN is introduced at any point during the 'live' collection the return status will revert to 'approved' i.e. not DfE authorised.

COLLECT: VIEWING & DOWNLOADING REPORTS

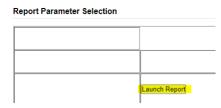
To run these reports



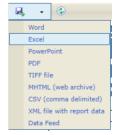
You will then see a page where you can launch a number of different reports, with a brief description of what each report shows. Just select the report you want from the drop-down menu and then click the launch button.



You may then see a second report parameters screen where you will need to click launch report again:



You can view the report in browser and page back and forth using the arrow buttons. Or you can export the report in a variety of different formats:



WHO TO CONTACT?

Contact	Support
Business Intelligence Team E-mail: edu.performance@walthamforest.gov.uk	School Census data collection and return queries. Note: Maintained schools make returns directly to the Local Authority and should contact them regarding any matters to do with the data submitted.
Department for Education (DfE)	School Census data collection and return queries.
Service Request: https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Data-collections-service-request-form	Note: Academies/free schools make returns directly to the DfE and should contact them regarding any matters to do with the data submitted.
Management information systems (MIS) support provider	For specific training and guidance about producing the CTF/XML return.
	Here are links to SIMS, Arbor and ScholarPack MIS guidance.

SPRING 2025 SCHOOL CENSUS – PREPARATION CHECKLIST

The checklist below 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-2024-to-2025.

Description of task	Completed
Check with your System Administrator/Manager that you have the appropriate permissions to run the Census and record associated data	
Carry out a dry run to determine what information needs to be updated	
Check school-level information:	
Check establishment details	
Check the school telephone number and email address	
Check the school's support unit	
Check school childcare information	
Check Special school information	
Collate admission appeals information PS AT Applicable to Foundation, Voluntary Aided schools and Academies only	
Check pupil/students' various registration details:	
Update information using the bulk update routine	
Check that leavers and re-admissions have been recorded	
Remove any pupil/student records entered in error	
Key: N Nursery schools P Primary schools S Secondary schools R AT All-Through schools R D Publi Referral Units	

Description of task	Completed
Check pupil/students' basic details (e.g. name, date of birth, gender, etc)	
Check pupil/students' registration details (e.g. enrolment status, admission date, year taught in, UPN, part-time information, Alternative Provision Placement, etc)	
Check and correct their National Curriculum year group	
Check pupil/students' home address information	
Check pupil/students' eligibility for free school meals	
Check pupil/students' ethnic and cultural information	
Check additional information	
Check welfare information P S SP AT PRU	
Check Special Educational Needs information	
Check exclusions information P S SP AT PRU	
Check class type information P AT	
Check attendance data B S SP AT PRU	
Check Universal Infant School Meals P SP AT Applicable to schools with pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2	
Check Early Years information N P SP AT PRU Applicable to schools with Early Years children	
Check top-up funding information	
y: Nursery schools P Primary schools Special schools AT All-Through schools PRU Pupil Referral Units	

Description of task	Completed
Check pupil/student's post-looked-after arrangements	
Update funding and monitoring details as required by the DfE P S SP AT PRU	
Key: N Nursery schools P Primary schools Secondary schools PRU Pupil Referral Units	