Preparing for the School Census Spring Return

English Primary, Nursery and Special phase schools

applicable to 7.226 onwards

Preparation Guide

School Census Spring Preparation Check List

Use this checklist to tick off each of the preparation tasks when they have been completed.

Complete	Task Description
☐	Check with your System Administrator/Manager that you have the appropriate permissions to run the School Census and to record associated data (please see *Setting SIMS Permissions* on page *2*).
☐	Upgrade to the SIMS 2025 Autumn Release (SIMS 7.226) or later as soon as possible to enable dry runs to be carried out (please see *What Version of SIMS is Required?* on page *3*).
☐	Check with your System Administrator/Manager that the latest fileset version has been imported (please see *Importing Revised Filesets for Validation and Reports* on page *3*).
☐	Carry out a dry run to determine what information needs to be updated (please see *Why Carry out a Dry Run?* on page *9*).
☐	Check School Level information, e.g. establishment details, school email, etc. (please see *Checking Establishment Details* on page *15*).
☐	Check school childcare information (please see *Checking School Childcare Details* on page *18*).
☐	Ensure that leavers and re-admissions have been recorded (please see *Recording Leavers and Re-Admissions* on page *29*), and that any pupil records created in error have been deleted (please see *Deleting Pupil Records Entered in Error* on page *32*).
☐	Check the pupils' basic details, e.g. name, date of birth, sex, etc. (please see *Checking a Pupil's Basic Details* on page *32*).
☐	Check the pupils' various registration details, e.g. enrolment status, admission date, year taught in, UPN, part-time information, Alternative Provision Placement, etc. (please see *Checking Registration Details* on page *34*).
☐	Check the pupils' home address information (please see *Checking Home Address Information* on page *47*).
☐	Check the pupils' eligibility for free school meals (please see *Checking Free School Meals Eligibility* on page *49*).
☐	Check the pupils' ethnic and cultural information (please see *Checking Ethnic and Cultural Information* on page *51*).
☐	Check any additional information required for the return (please see *Checking Additional Information* on page *52*).
☐	Check Special Educational Needs information (please see *Checking Special Educational Needs Information* on page *53*).
☐	Check exclusions information (please see *Preparing Exclusions Information* on page *56*). Not applicable to Nursery schools

Complete	Task Description
☐	Check attendance data (please see *Preparing Termly Attendance Information* on page *58*). Not applicable to Nursery schools
☐	Check Early Years information (please see *Updating Early Years Information* on page *64*). Applicable to schools that have 2-, 3- or 4-year-old pupils only
☐	Check class type information (please see *Updating Class Types* on page *59*).
☐	Check top-up funding information (please see *Updating Pupils with Top-Up Funding* on page *67*).
☐	Check adopted from care information (please see *Updating Pupils Post Looked After Arrangements* on page *68*).
☐	Update Funding and Monitoring details as required by the DfE (please see *Editing Funding and Monitoring* on page *70*). Not applicable to Nursery schools

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01 | **Introduction**

Introduction

This preparation guide has been produced to help to identify the most common tasks that need to be carried out before running the School Census Spring Return.

The information in this guide applies to all LA maintained Nursery, Primary, Middle deemed Primary, All-Through (nursery and primary phase) and Special schools, and Pupil Referral Units (primary phase). It also applies to Academies that cover any of these school phases.

Where the information relates to a specific school phase, it is indicated in red, e.g. Applicable to Special schools only.

> **NOTE** The content of the graphics (dates, names, etc.) displayed in this preparation guide are examples only of what you might expect to see when using SIMS to prepare for the forthcoming School Census Return.

How has the School Census Spring Return Changed since Last Year?

Changes to the return include the following:

School Census Spring 2026 Key Dates

- Census day 15/01/2026
- Attendance collected from start of Autumn term to 31/12/2025 (not applicable to Nursery schools)
- Exclusions collected from 21/04/2025 to 31/12/2025 (not applicable to Nursery schools)
- Alternative Provision Placements collected from 02/10/2025 to 15/01/2026 (not applicable to Nursery schools)
- Funding and Monitoring collected from 01/08/2025 to 15/01/2026 (not applicable to Nursery schools)
- Learner Support collected from 01/08/2025 to 15/01/2026 (not applicable to Nursery or Primary schools)
- Free School Meal Eligibility collected from 03/10/2025 to 15/01/2026.

Setting SIMS Permissions

The following permissions are applicable to users who deal with returns.

Running the Return

To run the return, you must be a member of one of the following user groups in System Manager:

- Returns Manager
- Returns Operator.

Editing and Preparing Data

Users who edit and prepare data must have permissions to access additional areas of SIMS, e.g. pupil details, school details, etc. These users must be a member of the user groups applicable to the areas they are editing (please see *Where to find More Information about Permissions* on page *3*).

Permissions Required to Import a Revised Fileset

The Import Fileset functionality enables updates to the Validation Errors Summary and the Summary report (derived from files supplied by the Statutory Body), and detail reports (provided by SIMS) to be imported into SIMS between SIMS releases.

To use the Import Fileset functionality (via **Tools | Setups | Import Fileset**), you must be a member of one of the following user groups in System Manager:

- Returns Manager
- System Manager.

For more information about the Import Fileset functionality, please refer to the applicable preparation guide. To access the SIMS **Documentation Centre**. Click the **Documentation** button located on the top right-hand side of the SIMS **Home Page**.

Where to find More Information about Permissions

Please contact your System Administrator/Manager if you are not sure whether you have the required permissions. For more information, please refer to the Managing SIMS Users, Groups and Databases handbook.

The SIMS Permissions spreadsheet describing the numerous permissions available in SIMS is available on the support portal.

What Version of SIMS is Required?

To run the return, you must have the latest SIMS Release installed.

To check which version of SIMS is installed, open SIMS and then select **Help | About SIMS**. A dialog similar to the one shown in the following graphic is displayed.

Importing Revised Filesets for Validation and Reports

Applicable to the Personnel Officer, Returns Manager and System Manager

The Validation Errors Summary and the Summary report are derived from files supplied by the Statutory Body. In addition, SIMS provides detail reports to enable the checking of data used to generate the return. These report files are initially installed automatically during the SIMS release upgrade.

Occasionally, additions or corrections are made to these files, after a SIMS release, which are required for the forthcoming return. The Import Fileset functionality is provided to enable these files to be imported into SIMS (between releases) by the Personnel Officer, Returns Manager or System Manager.

> **NOTE** Use of the Import Fileset routine between releases is not always required. If updated files are available for import, a notification is displayed on the support portal.

Revised files can be:

- downloaded from the support portal to a folder of your choice.

  The files available for download from the portal are zipped. Once the zip file is downloaded it should be unzipped to a folder of your choice. The Import Fileset routine can then be run by a user at the school who has the appropriate permissions.

  > **IMPORTANT** Ensure that the Document Management Server (DMS) is configured correctly before attempting to import the files.

- authorised and deployed to schools via SOLUS3. The Import Fileset routine can then be run by a user at the school who has the appropriate permissions.

  > **IMPORTANT** In SOLUS3, administrators must ensure that the SIMS user details (SIMS username and password) and SIMS database are set up in **Targets**.

  For more information, please refer to the SOLUS3 for Local Authorities handbook.

> **TIP** To check which version of the fileset is currently in use, select **Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census** to display the **Census Return** browser. The **Validation Fileset ID** is displayed in the browser header.

Before Importing the Revised Files

To enable the file(s) to be imported successfully, ensure that the DMS is configured correctly. This is achieved via **Tools | Setups | Document Management Server**. Click the **Test server connection** button to check if the specified DMS is available for use and functioning correctly.

If the connection is unsuccessful, check the following details:

- The **Protocol** field defaults to **http** and should not be edited.
- The **Computer name** should be the name/number of the PC on which the DMS is installed.
- The **Port** number is usually 8080. The number must be between 0 and 65535.
- The **Active** check box must be selected, indicating that the server is in use.

Click the **Test server connection** button again. If the DMS is now working correctly, click the **Save** button.

 Additional Resources:

Setting up and Administering SIMS handbook

Importing the Revised Files

1. In SIMS, select **Tools | Setups | Import Fileset** to display the **Import Fileset** page, where the current fileset number is displayed.

2. Click the **Browse** button to display the **Open** dialog.

3. Navigate to the location of the downloaded fileset. The file name is made up of the following data fields: `<Fileset Number>-StatutoryReturns-<Term and Year>_Fileset.mfs`.

    > **IMPORTANT** If more than one MFS file is displayed in the **Open** dialog, care should be taken to select the correct file.

4. Highlight the file then click the **Open** button. Alternatively, double-click the required MFS file to return to the **Import Fileset** page.

    > **NOTE** The following graphics show example data <u>only</u>.
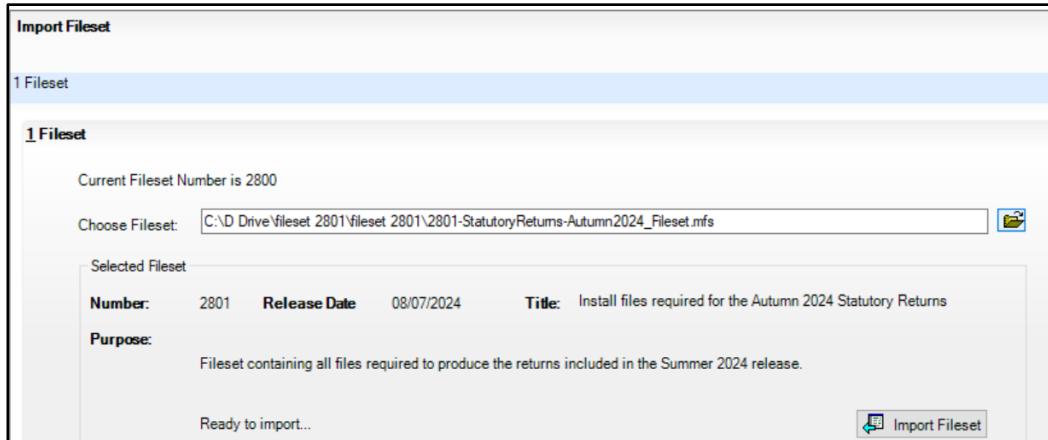
    Details of the selected fileset are displayed, including the version **Number** of the fileset, the **Release Date** and the fileset description (**Title**).

5. Click the **Import Fileset** button to import the fileset into the DMS.

    When the import process is finished, **Import successful** is displayed at the bottom left-hand side of the **Fileset** panel and you are advised to restart SIMS. This ensures that the newly imported data will take effect.

6. Click the **OK** button, then restart SIMS.

7. Run the return in the usual way.

☐ **Completed**

School Census Return Process Flow

The following provides a brief outline of the steps involved in producing the School Census Spring return. If data has been regularly and accurately maintained, many of the activities in this document are unnecessary. However, it is advisable to check to ensure that the information is up-to-date.

1. Upgrade to the latest version of SIMS.

2. Carry out one or more dry runs to identify any errors that may exist in your data.

3. Ensure that the relevant pupil and school data exists in SIMS and that it is complete and correct. Use the Bulk Update routine (**Routines | Pupil | Bulk Update**) to add missing or correct invalid data, if required.

4. Complete the information on the **Census Return Details** page.

5. Create and validate the return.

6. Resolve any validation errors/queries and then create and validate the return again.

   Continue to resolve the validation failures then repeat the Create and Validate routine until you are satisfied that the content of the return is correct.

   The detail reports and Summary report can be generated to assess the accuracy and completeness of the return.

7. Provide the Head Teacher with the latest copy of the Summary report to enable them to check that all information is correct before they give approval for authorisation of the return.

   The Summary report can be used in conjunction with the detail reports.

8. Once approval has been given, authorise the return (**Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census** – **Authorise** button).

9. Upload the return to the DfE COLLECT data collection website or submit it to your Local Authority, as applicable.

Upgrade to the latest available release of SIMS.

Configure the **Census Folder** and specify the **Security message for Reports**.

Ensure that the school details and pupil/student details are correct and up-to-date.

Start a new return.

Calculate All Details.

Check all information displayed on the **Census Return Details** page and edit, if required.

Create and validate the return.

Any errors or queries?

YES

NO

Produce the Validation Errors Summary report to assist with the resolution of errors and queries.

Produce the detail reports and the Summary report to assist with the resolution of errors and queries.

Resolve errors and check queries.

Produce the Summary report then check the report content to ensure that the return is acceptable before authorising the return.

Authorise the return.

Confirm that the Head Teacher is satisfied that the return file is ready for upload. Enter additional text to be displayed on the authorisation report, if required.

On authorisation, the Validation Errors Summary report, Authorisation report and Summary report are generated and displayed in your web browser.
All reports (including the detail reports) can be viewed via the Retrieve Authorised Census Return Files routine.

Submit the return.

02 | **Carrying out a Dry Run**

Why Carry out a Dry Run?

> **NOTE** When you have upgraded to the SIMS 2025 Autumn Release (7.226), you can carry out one or more dry runs of the return.

The purpose of a dry run is to produce the Validation Errors Summary, which provides details about any corrections that need to be made to your data to make it acceptable for inclusion in the return. To ensure that you are aware of 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.

Whilst a significant number of errors may be generated, many of the errors that relate to pupils, e.g. language, can be fixed quickly using the Bulk Update routine (please see *Updating Information Using the Bulk Update Routine* on page *26*).

The Dry Run Process

1. Select **Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census** to display the **Census Return for Spring Term** browser.
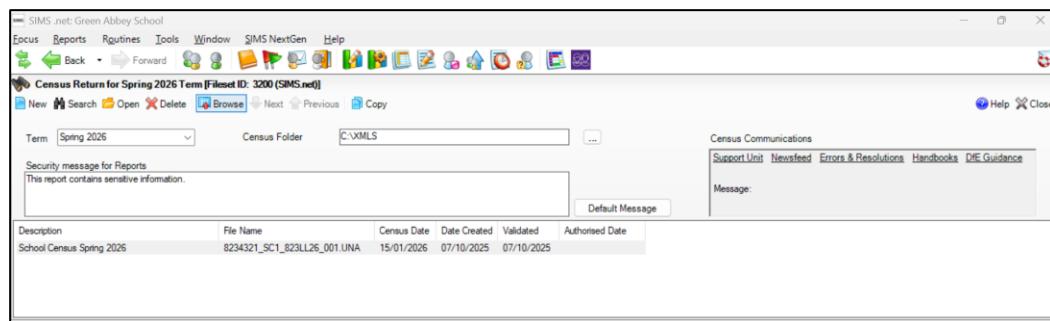
2. Select an existing School **Census Folder** or enter a new location in which the School Census files will be stored. You may wish to make this a temporary folder for the purpose of producing a dry run.

> **IMPORTANT** Due to the sensitive nature of some of the data stored in SIMS, careful consideration should be given when specifying the location of any folder into which you save sensitive data, e.g. census returns, imported and exported CTFs, etc. You should be mindful of your school's responsibilities with respect to information security.

> Consider which users have access to the chosen folder, especially if the folder is shared on a server. Please refer to the government website for more information about securing your information (https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/technology/securing-your-information). If you are in any doubt, you should consult with your IT Security Officer before proceeding.

3. Click the **New** button to display the **Census Return Details** page.

4. By default, the return **Description** is displayed as **School Census [Term] [Year]**. Edit the **Description** to any name that will clearly distinguish this dry run from the actual return, which will be generated later, e.g. `Spring26Test`.

5. Click the **Calculate All Details** button to extract the required information from the SIMS database and display the results in the various panels of the **Census Return Details** page.

6. If there is any missing or invalid data, an error message is displayed on the Status Bar. This data must be added/corrected before you can create and validate the return.

7. Click the **Create & Validate** button to start the validation process, which may take some time depending on the amount of data. Any missing or invalid data is listed in the **Validation Errors Summary** panel, located at the bottom of the page.

Additional Resources:

Detailed information about completing the individual panels on the **Census Return Details** page is available in the *Producing the School Census Spring Return* handbook applicable to your school phase.

Resolving Validation Errors and Checking Queries

After creating the return file and validating the data, any errors and queries found are listed in the **Validation Errors Summary** panel.

The **Validation Errors Summary** panel header displays the number of errors and queries found when the Create and Validate routine was run. A pupil and error search facility is also available.

The following information is provided to help with the resolution of validation failures:

- **Type** - the type of validation rule.
  - Failure (**F** displayed in red) indicates an error that must be resolved.
  - Query (**Q** displayed in black) indicates that there are unusual data conditions. These should be considered and corrected, if necessary.
- **Sequence** - the validation error or query number.

- **Message** - the validation error or query message text.
- **Location** - the specific record in SIMS that contains the error or query.
- **Solution** - the SIMS menu route and/or instructions about where/how the error can be corrected or the query checked.

> **TIP** Using the Solution hyperlinks
>
> When the pointer is hovered over an error or query row, it changes to a hand if a hyperlink is available to the area of SIMS where the problem can be checked.
>
> A hyperlink is also indicated by a hash symbol (**#**) preceding the **Solution** text.
>
> Click the required hyperlink to display the specific area in SIMS where the record(s) can be checked/corrected.

To assist in the viewing of errors and queries:

- When the mouse pointer is hovered over a **Message**, **Location** or **Solution**, hover help displays the entire content of that cell.
- The Student Search functionality can be used to display all errors and queries relating to a particular pupil.

    a. Enter all or part of a UPN, pupil's surname or date of birth in the **Student Search** field.

    b. Select the required record from the **Student Search** drop-down list to populate the **Student Search** field.

    c. Click the **Find** button to display the applicable validation records.

- Use the **Errors Search** to display the required error or query you want to view. Select **ALL**, **ERRORS**, **QUERIES** or the required number from the drop-down list. The total number of rows that relate to the selected validation is displayed adjacent to the **Error Search** field.
- By default, when **ALL** is selected from the **Errors Search** drop-down list, the errors are displayed at the top of the list.

    The order of the items in the list can be changed by clicking the appropriate column heading.

    The width of the columns can be changed by dragging the dividing line between the column headings until the required size is achieved.

- View a summary of validation failures by clicking the **Report** button (located above the **Validation Errors Summary** panel, on the left-hand side). The report is displayed in your web browser, from where it can be printed or transferred to another application, if required.

    The report is saved automatically in the **Census Folder** (specified previously via the census browser). The original report, which was generated when the **Create & Validate** button was clicked is also stored in this folder.

    - Your generated report file name: `Validation Errors Summary.HTML`

    - Original report file name:
      `<LACode><SchoolNumber>_<SurveyType>_<LACode><LL><Year>_<SerialNumber>_ValidationErrorsSummary.HTML`

For guidance on navigating to files on your local workstation when you are working in a <u>Hosted</u> environment, please contact your System Manager or Local Support Unit.

Resolve as many errors and check as many queries as possible then revalidate the return details. Continue to resolve failures and revalidate the return as many times as necessary.

> **NOTE** All errors must be resolved, and all queries must be investigated.

If at any point you want to hide the list of error and queries, click the **Close** button located at the top right-hand side of the **Validation Errors Summary** panel. The list is displayed again when the Create and Validate process is run.

Many of the errors generated can be fixed quickly using bulk update functionality (via **Routines | Pupil | Bulk Update**). For more information, please refer to the [Managing Pupils/Students handbook](#).

Producing Detail Reports

Detail reports can be used to check the data stored in SIMS that has been used to create the return.

The following reports are currently available, depending on your school's phase:

- On-Roll Basic Detail Report
- Leavers Basic Details Report (not applicable to Nursery schools)
- Exclusions Report (not applicable to Nursery schools)
- Attendance Report (not applicable to Nursery schools)
- Absentees Report (not applicable to Nursery schools)
- SEN Report
- Address Details Report
- School Dinner Taken (applicable to schools children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 only)
- Free School Meal Eligibility Report
- Top-up Funding Report
- Funding and Monitoring Report (not applicable to Nursery schools)
- Early Years Report (applicable to schools with Early Years children only)
- Early Years Pupil Premium Receipt (EYPPR) Report (applicable to schools with Early Years children only)
- 2 Year Old Basis for Funding Report (applicable to schools with Early Years children only)
- Post Looked After Arrangements Report
- Class Report (applicable to Primary schools only)
- General Report
- Alternative Provision Report (not applicable to Nursery schools)
- Permanent Exclusions without Final Review Report (not applicable to Nursery schools)
- Learner Support Report (applicable to Special schools).

Selecting a Single Detail Report

Select the required report from the **Detail Report** drop-down list, located at the top of the **Census Return Details** page. The selected report is generated automatically and displayed in your web browser.

The following example displays the reports available for Primary schools.

Selecting Multiple Detail Reports

Selecting Multiple Detail Reports

1. Select **Multiple Reports** from the bottom of the **Detail Report** drop-down list to display the **Detail Reports** dialog. By default, all detail reports are selected.
2. If any reports are not required, deselect the associated check boxes.
3. Click the **Report** button to generate the selected reports, which are displayed in your web browser.

   The reports are saved automatically in the folder specified in the **Census Return for Spring Term** browser.

   > **TIP** If required, the report can be transferred to a spreadsheet application, which enables the data to be sorted and the column order to be changed, etc. Right-click the report then select the required option from the drop-down list.

☐ **Completed**

03|Preparing School Level Information

Checking Establishment Details

The following establishment details are required for the return and therefore need to be checked to ensure that they are recorded correctly in SIMS:

- **Unique Reference Number** (URN)
- **School Type**
- **School Governance**
- **Intake Type**
- **School Time** Not applicable to Nursery schools.

    School Time is the total compulsory time pupils spend in school, in a typical five-day week, i.e. from morning registration to the end of the school day (official home time). This includes breaks and lunchtime but not optional activities before or after school.

The following <u>read-only</u> items are also collected. Please contact your Local Support Unit if the information displayed in SIMS is incorrect.

- **School Name**
- **LA** number
- **Establishment Number**
- **School Phase**
- **Curriculum Years** (highest and lowest national curriculum year group).

1. Select **Focus | School | School Details** to display the **School Details** page.

2. Check that the details displayed in the **Establishment** panel are correct.
3. Ensure that the **School Type**, **School Governance** and **Intake Type** are displayed correctly. Select the correct value from the drop-down lists, if required.

> **NOTE** The **School Name**, **LA** number, **Establishment Number** and **School Phase** were set up when SIMS was installed. If these details are incorrect, please contact your Local Support Unit for assistance.

4. Ensure that the establishment's six-digit **Unique Reference Number** (URN) is entered. The number is available via the Get information about schools website (https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/), which is a register of schools and colleges in England.
5. Ensure that the **School Time** is entered, i.e. the number of hours and minutes the school is open during a typical week, recorded to two decimal places, e.g. 32.5 hours (not applicable to Nursery schools).
6. If you have edited any information in the **Establishment** panel, click the **Save** button.

☐ **Completed**

Information for Academies

Academies should also ensure that the following information is recorded, if applicable:

- The **School Type** and **School Governance**.

    Select **Academies** from the applicable drop-down lists.

- The **Previous Name** and **Date Name Changed**.

- The **Previous Estab Number** and **Earliest DOA** (date of admission).

    This information is used by School Census. If the establishment number (DfE number) has changed for sponsor-led Academies, historical information is not collected, and the earliest date of admission is reported in the School Census.

- The **Previous URN Number** (used by other census returns) and **Date Number Changed**.

    This information is used by the School Workforce Census. For all types of Academies opened in the collection period, the date that the establishment's URN changed is used to determine when the academy was formed. Historical information is not collected from before the date the URN changed.

Checking School Telephone and Email Information

The following school contact details are collected for the return and therefore need to be checked to ensure that they are up-to-date and correctly recorded in SIMS:

- School **Email** Address

- School **Telephone** Number.

1. Select **Focus | School | School Details** to display the **School Details** page.

2. Click the **Contact Details** hyperlink to display the **Contact Details** panel.

3. Ensure that a **Telephone** number has been recorded (including the STD code).

4. Ensure that the school's official communications **Email** address has been recorded correctly (it must include the **@** character together with a minimum of one full stop).

    The email address must be the account used on a regular basis. It must also be accessible to the Head Teacher as it might be used for future DfE correspondence.

5. Click the **Save** button if changes have been made.

☐ **Completed**

Checking School Childcare Details

The childcare details can be recorded via the **Focus** menu, enabling the information to be maintained at any time throughout the year.

1. Select **Focus | School | School Details** to display the **School Details** page.

2. Click the **Childcare** hyperlink to display the **Childcare** panel, where the current childcare details are displayed.

3. Double-click one of the four existing records to display the **Update Childcare Details** dialog. Alternatively, highlight a record then click the **Open** button.

4. Enter the applicable details.

> **IMPORTANT** For each childcare type, the fields that require completion will vary.

- **Type** - based on the record you have opened, the type of childcare being provided is displayed automatically. The four types of childcare collected for the return are:
  - **Before School Childcare**
  - **After School Childcare**
  - **Holiday Childcare**
  - **Under Fives Childcare**.
- **On-Site** - select an applicable option from the drop-down list:
  - **Yes** - select this option if childcare is being provided on the school premises.
  - **No** - select this option if childcare is <u>not</u> being provided on the school premises.
- **Opening Time** - enter the time that the service becomes available (not applicable to after school care).
- **Closing Time** - enter the time that the service closed (not applicable to before school care).

> **NOTE** Ensure that the time is entered in 24 hour format. A colon should be entered between the hours and the minutes, e.g. `07:00`.

- **Number of Childcare Places** - enter the maximum number of childcare places that the service can provide.
- **Able to Offer Places to Everyone** – are you currently able to offer places to every parent who wants one?
  - **Yes**
  - **No**
  - **Information not available from external provider**
  - **Unknown**.
- **Provider** - select the description from the drop-down list that most accurately describes the provider of the service:
  - **School**
  - **School in Partnership** (with another provider)
  - **Other**
  - **Private/Independent Provider**
  - **Voluntary Provider**.
- **Other Schools** - is the service made available to children from other schools? Select as applicable from the drop-down list:
  - **Yes**
  - **No**
  - **Unknown**.
- **Weeks Open** - enter the number of weeks for which childcare is provided (applicable to holiday and under-fives childcare only).

- **Signposted** - one of the following options must always be selected from the drop-down list:
  - **Yes, formal arrangements including escort to/from the site** - select this option if your school has formal arrangements with another provider that provides childcare for your pupils, including escort to their site.
  - **Yes, list of providers that pick up from school** - select this option if a list of local providers that will pick up pupils from the school to help parents is provided.
  - **No**
  - **Not Known**.
- **Open Before 8am** – is the provision open 8am or earlier? (applicable to before-school childcare)
- **Open Until 6pm** – is the provision open to at least 6pm? (applicable to after-school childcare)
- **Open 8am until 6pm** – is the provision open 8am or earlier and to at least 6pm? (applicable to holiday childcare)
- **Listed Providers Cover 8am-6pm**
  - **All** – 100%
  - **Most** – (Over 50%)
  - **Some** – (less than 50%)
  - **None**
  - **Unknown**.
- **Notes** - notes can be added and then edited later, if required (not collected in for the return).

5. Click the **OK** button to return to the **School Details** page.
6. Repeat the process to edit other records, if required.

Childcare provisions are included in the General detail report, which is available from the **Detail Report** drop-down list via **Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census**.

☐ **Completed**

Checking Special School Information

Applicable to Special schools only

The following Special school information is collected for the return:

- Special school **Organisation**
- **Maximum Day Pupils**
- **Maximum Boarding Pupils**
- **Minimum Age** for **Male students**
- **Minimum Age** for **Female students**
- **Maximum Age** for **Male students**
- **Maximum Age** for **Female students**
- SEN **Provision** (formerly stage)

1. Select **Focus | School | School Details** to display the **School Details** page.

2. Click the **Special Schools Information** hyperlink to display the **Special Schools Information** panel.

3. Check that all fields in the **Special Schools Information** panel are populated with the correct information:

    ▪ Ensure that the correct **Organisation** is selected (**Day Pupils (mainly)**, **Boarding Pupils (mainly)** or **Hospital Special School**). Reselect from the drop-down list, if necessary.

    ▪ Ensure that all minimum and maximum values are displayed correctly. Edit if necessary.

    ▪ Ensure that any SEN **Provision**(s) listed are correct.

        ▪ If a provision description is wrong, highlight the record then click the **Delete** button. The record is deleted immediately.

        ▪ To add a SEN **Provision**, click the **New** button then select the required **Provision** from the displayed list. Click the **OK** button to return to the **Special School Information** panel.

        ▪ To rank the SEN **Provision** in the required order, highlight a record then click either the **Move Up** or **Move Down** button.

4. Click the **Save** button, if you have made any changes.

☐ **Completed**

Collating Admission Appeals Information

Applicable to Foundation, Voluntary Aided schools and Academies only

> **NOTE** Academies that were Voluntary Aided or Foundation Schools at the time that the appeals were lodged should complete this panel.

The admissions appeals information is collected from Primary/Middle deemed Primary and All-Through schools that are responsible for their own admission appeals (i.e. Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools).

Data is required for appeals lodged before 1ˢᵗ September where a refusal to admit a pupil into the school was for a place at the start of the current academic year.

The following admission appeals information is collected in the return:

- Admission appeals lodged
- Admission appeals withdrawn
- Admission appeals heard by independent admissions committee
- Admission appeals upheld by independent admissions committee
- Admission appeals rejected by independent admissions committee.

Admission appeals are dealt with by the LA and consequently there is no specific functionality in SIMS relating to this area of admissions. Therefore, the information must be entered manually in the **Infant Admission Appeals** and the **Primary Admission Appeals** panels when completing the School Census Spring Return (via **Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census**).

13 Infant Admissions Appeals			
Foundation Schools/Voluntary Aided Schools/Academies must complete this section.(this does not include AP Academies, AP Free Schools, Academy Special Schools)		Independent Admissions Committee	
		Heard	0
Lodged	0	Upheld	0
Withdrawn	0	Rejected	0

The infant appeals information is collected from Primary and All-Through schools that are responsible for their own admission appeals (i.e. Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools).

Any infant appeals should be included in the overall count of appeals entered in the **Primary Admission Appeals** panel. They should also be recorded separately in the **Infant Admission Appeals** panel.

14 Primary Admissions Appeals			
Foundation Schools/Voluntary Aided Schools/Academies must complete this section.(this does not include AP Academies, AP Free Schools, Academy Special Schools)		Independent Admissions Committee	
		Heard	0
Lodged	0	Upheld	0
Withdrawn	0	Rejected	0

Ensure that the admission appeals information is easily accessible to the member of staff who will be completing the return.

☐ **Completed**

04| **Preparing Pupil Level Information**

Checking Pupil Details

Before starting the School Census return, ensure that all current pupils are recorded in SIMS and that as far as possible, the information is up-to-date and accurate. Ensure that:

- new pupils have been added.

- leavers have been recorded as such.

> **NOTE** Ensure that a pupil's first language and boarder status are entered before they are recorded as a leaver.

- duplicate or unwanted pupil records have been deleted.

- part-time details have been checked/updated.

The following sections provide additional information and specific instructions on checking and completing Pupil Level data. Some of this data can be checked/updated using the Bulk Update routine (please see *Updating Information Using the Bulk Update Routine* on page *26*).

When you have upgraded to the latest SIMS Release, it is strongly recommended that one or more dry runs are carried out to identify the validation errors and queries that need to be resolved.

Updating Information Using the Bulk Update Routine

To prevent validation errors from occurring, it is advisable to check your SIMS data for accuracy before the return is created and validated.

Many items can be checked using the Bulk Update routine. This functionality enables you to search for missing or invalid data, then update in bulk. For example, it is possible to search for all pupils who do not have a First Language recorded against their name. From the pupils found, a value can be assigned to all or several pupils. This prevents the need to enter/change values manually for individual pupils.

1. Select **Routines | Pupil | Bulk Update** to display the **Bulk update Pupil** browser.

2. In the **Bulk Update** panel, select the required **Group Type** and **Group** from the drop-down lists.

The **Group Type** indicates the type of group to list while the **Group** enables the specific group of pupils to be listed. For example, selecting a **Group Type** of **Year Group** enables a specific year to be selected from the **Group** drop-down list, such as **Year 8**.

If searching for missing information, select the particular data field from the **Group Type** drop-down list, such as **First Language**, and then select a specific **Group**, such as **<NONE>**.

It is also possible to use this functionality to review the data entered for all the pupils in the school. This is achieved by selecting **Year Group** from the **Group Type** drop-down list and **<ANY>** from the **Group** drop-down list and then selecting the required **Data Item**.

The following table provides some examples of the searches that can be carried out to identify missing data.

Group Type	Group	Data Item	Comment
Year Group	Year 8 (and above)	Boarder Status	Searches for all pupils in Year Group 8 and then displays the boarder status recorded against each pupil's name.
First Language	<NONE>	First Language	Identifies pupils who do not have a First Language recorded. Can also be used to change existing values as required.

Group Type	Group	Data Item	Comment
SEN Status	Education, Health and Care Plan	SEN Provision Type	Lists pupils with a SEN Status of **E** enabling the SEN Provision to be selected.

3. Select the required **Data Item** from the drop-down list, e.g. **First Language**.

4. The **Effective Date** is the date on which the membership of the group is based and defaults to today's date. In most circumstances, it is advisable to change this date to the start of the academic year because most data recorded is applicable from the start of the academic year.
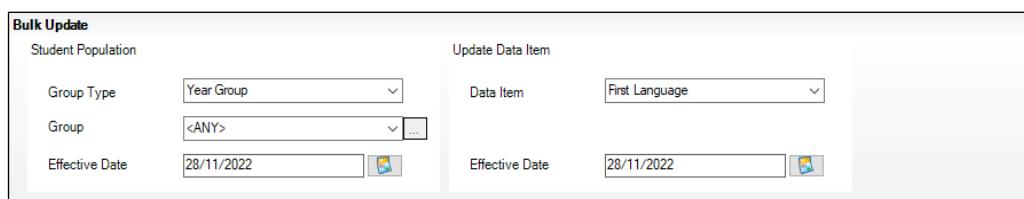
5. Click the **Search** button to display the **Members** panel, which displays a list of pupils matching the chosen criteria and the choice of **First Language** types.

> **TIPS** Use the horizontal and vertical scroll bars to view additional columns or rows as required. To increase the number of columns visible on the page, right-click any column heading and then select **Narrow Columns** from the pop-up menu.

Bulk Updating Data with the Same Data Item then Editing the Exceptions

Often, the most effective way of populating missing data is to fill all the rows with the same data item and then edit the exceptions (for example, depending on the ethnic range within your school).

The following example illustrates how to set the ethnicity of all pupils as **English,** then edit the exceptions.

1. Right-click the **English** data entry column header (hover over the heading to see the full title, if required), then select **Check All** from the pop-up menu.

All the cells within that column are then populated with ticks.

Edit the exceptions by clicking in the cell associated with the individual pupil and their status, e.g. the first language of Alisha Abhra is Estonian.

2. Once you have made all the required changes, click the **Save** button to bulk update the records.

Bulk Updating Data for a Selection of Pupils

There are two methods for selecting more than one pupil.

- Entering a value for a selection of Pupils

    a. Highlight the first pupil you want to select, then hold down the **Ctrl** key and highlight the other required pupils.

    b. Release the **Ctrl** key and then click one of the highlighted cells in the required data item column.

    A tick indicates that the pupil has been assigned that value.

- Entering a value for sequentially listed Pupils

    This method can be used for assigning a value to a group of sequentially listed pupils. For example, clicking the **Assigned** column heading displays all unassigned pupil at the top of the list.

    a. Highlight the first pupil in the group, hold down the **Shift** key and then click the last pupil in the group (alternatively, hold down the **Shift** key and press the **Down Arrow** key).

    b. Release the **Shift** key, then click one of the highlighted cells in the required data item column.

    A tick indicates that the pupil has been assigned that value.

☐ **Completed**

Recording Leavers and Re-Admissions

Ensure that all your leavers are taken off-roll and any returning pupils are re-admitted.

The accuracy of pupil numbers can be checked by running the Population Analysis (Dated) report (**Reports | Run Report** – **Focus** – **Student**). This is a predefined report that gives a breakdown of the number of pupils (including numbers by sex) for each registration group in each year, together with a grand total.

Recording a Leaver

Not applicable to Nursery schools

The **Date of Leaving** is collected for all schools with the exception of Nursery schools.

> **WARNING** Recording a **Date of Leaving** and **Reason for Leaving** makes the learner a leaver. This means that some details are then locked and are no longer editable.

1. Select **Routines | Pupil | Leavers** to display the **Find Pupil(s)** browser.

2. Ensure that the **Status** of **On Roll** is selected.
3. Click the **Search** button to display a list of all on-roll pupils.

4. Highlight the pupils you wish to record as leavers, then click the **Select** button. The selected pupils are displayed in the **Students** panel.

5. In the **Leaving Information** panel, enter the **Date of Leaving** or click the **Calendar** button and select the required date.

    The date of leaving should be the date that the pupil is leaving the school, unless they are transferring from Junior/Primary phase to Secondary phase because Local Authorities normally specify the dates to be used for school transfers so that they match. If you are in any doubt, please contact your Local Authority for advice.

    > **IMPORTANT** It is recommended that Year 11 pupils are not given a **Date of Leaving** until it is confirmed that they will be leaving the school at the end of the Summer term and are not returning to Year 12.
    >
    > For pupils who stay on for Year 12, without a gap in learning from Year 11, the DfE expects their **Date of Admission** to be the same as it was when the pupil was in Year 11. It is also expected that no date of leaving was recorded for the end of Year 11.

6. Select the **Reason for Leaving** from the drop-down list, e.g. **Elective Home Education**, then either:

    -   highlight the pupils to whom this information applies (for multiple selection, use the **Ctrl** or **Shift** functionality) and then click the **Assign to Selected** button; or

    -   if the information applies to all the pupils in the list, click the **Assign to All** button.

7. Enter the **Destination after Leaving**, if known, then use the **Assign to All** or **Assign to Selected** options, as required.

8. Specify the **Destination Institution**, if known.

    a. Click the **Browse** button (adjacent to the **Destination Institution** field) to display the **School Browse** dialog.

    b. **Search** for, then select the relevant institution. Alternatively, click the **New** button to add a new institution.

    c. Click the **OK** button(s) to return to the **Leaving Information** panel.

    d. Use the **Assign to All** or **Assign to Selected** options, as required.

9. Enter the **Destination Expected Start Date** (or select the relevant date from the Calendar), then use the **Assign to All** or **Assign to Selected** options, as required.

10. If the pupil is a child deemed missing in education, select the **Grounds for Removal** from the drop-down list, e.g. **E - Distance**, then use the **Assign to All** or **Assign to Selected** options, as applicable.

> **IMPORTANT** To comply with the Children Missing in Education legislation, schools are required to record this information for all pupils on leaving the school.

11. Select the **Learning Aim Withdrawal Reason** from the drop-down list, e.g. **Personal**, (applicable to Pupil Referral Units only).

    The reason for withdrawing from a Learning Aim is collected in the Autumn Return for any Learning Aim with the status of **Withdrawn**.

12. Click the **Assign to All** button or **Assign to Selected** button, as applicable.

13. Click the **Save** button.

> **TIPS** To remove a pupil from the **Students** list, highlight their record, then click the **Remove** button.
>
> To correct details enter in error, highlight the applicable pupil, then click the **Clear** button. This removes the details drawn from the **Leaving Information** panel for the selected pupil only. Re-enter the information as required.
>
> The **Learning Aim Reason** column remains populated after clicking the **Clear** button. However, the data is updated automatically if a different reason is selected and assigned.

☐ **Completed**

Re-Admitting a Pupil

Any pupil who leaves the school and subsequently decides to return must be re-admitted.

> **NOTES** Do not remove the leaving date, as the pupil's period of absence from the school will not be recorded.
>
> However, if a pupil is intending to leave but subsequently changes their mind and decides not to leave, the date of leaving can be removed, as continuous attendance has been maintained.

1. Select **Focus | Pupil | Pupil Details** to display the **Find Student** browser.

2. Click the **New** button to display the **Add Student** page. It is necessary to enter limited information here as you know that the person already exists.

3. Click the **Continue** button to display a list of **Matched People**, based on the criteria entered on the **Add Pupil** page.

4. Highlight the required pupil, then click the **Open** button. The following warning message is displayed:

The selected student is a leaver. Do you want to re-admit the student?

5. Click the **Yes** button if you are certain that this is the pupil who should be re-admitted. Their details are displayed on the **Student Details** page.

6. Complete the mandatory fields (**Date of birth**, **Sex**, **Year Group**, **Enrolment Status**, **Year Taught In** and **Admission Date**) and check any other details that may have changed since they were last on-roll, such as their address.

7. Check that the original **UPN** is displayed.

    If it did not previously exist, generate a new **UPN** by clicking the button adjacent to the **UPN** field to display the **Issue UPN** dialog.

    Select either the **Issue Permanent** or **Issue Temporary UPN** radio button, then click the **OK** button to return to the **Registration** panel.

    The temporary/permanent UPN is issued on save.

8. Click the **Save** button to re-admit the pupil.

> **NOTE** If the pupil's registration status has changed from when they were previously on-roll, their enrolment status should be changed via **Routines | Pupil | Change Enrolment Status**.

☐ **Completed**

Deleting Pupil Records Entered in Error

If there are pupil records that have been entered in error (such as those resulting in duplicates), ensure that the record is deleted, so that it is not included in the return. This is achieved via **Routines | Pupil | Delete Pupil**.

After selecting the required pupil, you can review and print their details before deciding whether to delete their record permanently.

> **WARNING** The deletion is irreversible; therefore, a pupil's record must <u>only</u> be deleted if it has been entered in error.

☐ **Completed**

Checking a Pupil's Basic Details

Ensure that basic details for all pupils are correct. It may be necessary to make changes for a number of reasons, e.g. to correct inaccurately entered information, legal adoption, change of legal surname, etc.

The following information is collected in the return:

- **Legal Forename** (mandatory information in SIMS)
- **Middle Names**
- **Legal Surname** (mandatory information in SIMS)

- **Former Surname**
- **Preferred Surname** (mandatory information in SIMS)
- **Sex** (mandatory information in SIMS)
- **Date of Birth** (mandatory information in SIMS).

1. Select **Focus | Pupil | Pupil Details** to display the **Find Pupil** browser.

2. Search for, then double-click the name of the required pupil to display the **Pupil Details** page.

3. Check that all the details displayed in the **Basic Details** panel are up-to-date and accurate, paying particular attention to the data collected in the return (listed previously).

   If a legal change (rather than a correction) is made to the **Legal Forename**, **Middle Name(s)** or **Legal Surname**, a **Reason** and **Date of Change** must be recorded. Legal name changes can be recorded via the **History** button.

4. If you want to prevent the selected pupil's data from being deleted by the Bulk Delete Pupil Data process, select the **Protect from Bulk Data Deletion** check box.

5. If any changes are made, click the **Save** button.

☐ **Completed**

Recording a Pupil's Change of Surname

It is a requirement of the return that a history of pupils' previous surname(s) is recorded.

1. In the **Basic Details** panel, edit the pupil's **Legal Surname**.

2. Click the **Save** button. The following message is displayed:

   Is this a correction to the name or a legal change to the student's name? If it is a legal change, please select Yes.

3. Click the **Yes** button to display the **Reason For Change** dialog.
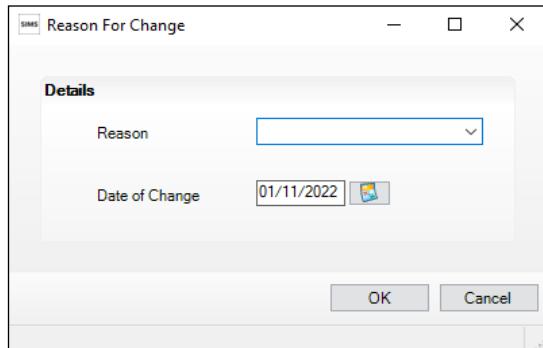
4. Select the applicable **Reason** for change from the drop-down list. This entry is optional but is recommended to maintain a complete history of name changes.

5. The **Date of Change** defaults to today's date but can be amended by clicking the **Calendar** button and selecting an alternative date, if required.

6. Click the **OK** button to return to the **Basic Details** panel.

7. Click the **Save** button.

8. To view a list of the pupil's previous names, click the **History** button to display the **Previous Names for** dialog.
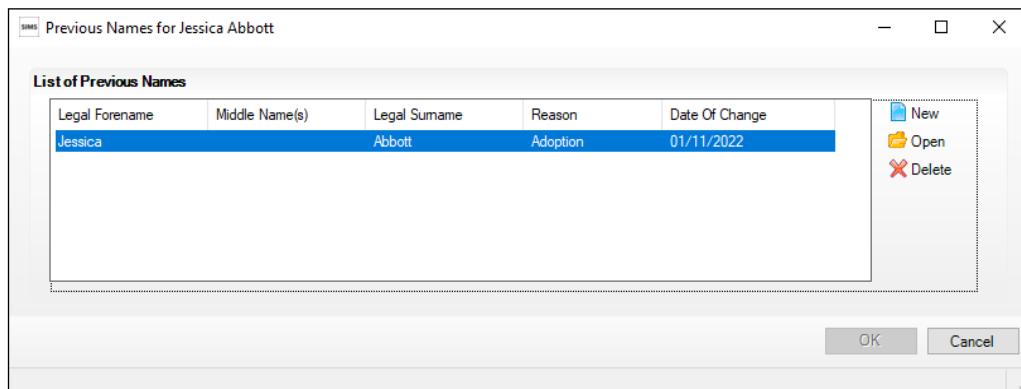
9. Click the **Cancel** button to return to the **Basic Details** panel.

☐ **Completed**

Checking Registration Details

The following registration information is collected in the return and should therefore be checked and corrected, if necessary:

- **Admission Date** (mandatory information in SIMS)
- **Year Taught In**, i.e. National Curriculum Year Group (mandatory information in SIMS)
- **Boarder Status**
- **UPN**

- **Former UPN** (this is a read-only field, which is populated automatically if the UPN is changed)
- **Unique Learner Number** (applicable to Pupil Referral Units and Special schools only)
- **Part Time Details** (please see *Checking Part-Time Pupil Information* on page *37*)
- **Enrolment Status** (mandatory information in SIMS).

    The **Pupil** area of SIMS displays read-only enrolment status information only. A pupil's enrolment status can be changed via **Routines | Pupil | Change Enrolment Status** (please see *Changing an Enrolment Status* on page *71*).
- **School Arranged Alternative Provision Placement** details (please see *Checking School Arranged Alternative Provision Placements* on page *39*).

Checking Unique Pupil Numbers

Ensure that all pupils have a UPN recorded and that all UPNs are in the correct format. A temporary UPN is acceptable in some circumstances.

1. Select **Focus | Pupil | Pupil Details** to display the **Find Pupil** browser.
2. Search for, then double-click the name of the required pupil to display the **Pupil Details** page.
3. Click the **Registration** hyperlink to display the **Registration** panel.

> **NOTE** The **Early Years Attendance Patterns** section of the **Registration** panel is visible to Primary schools only.

A unique UPN should be entered in the **UPN** field. If the UPN entered has an invalid format, the field turns red, indicating that the UPN is incorrect and should be re-entered.

- **Permanent UPNs** are issued to a new pupil only when it is believed that they have never previously been allocated a UPN or to replace a temporary UPN.
- **Temporary UPNs** are issued to a pupil when the permanent UPN is not known to the school, e.g. awaiting transfer file/applicant's information. A temporary UPN can be recognised by the letter after the UPN number, e.g. H82020010701**A**.

4. If necessary, issue a new UPN by clicking the **Generate UPN** button adjacent to the **UPN** field to display the **Issue UPN** dialog.

 Generate UPN button
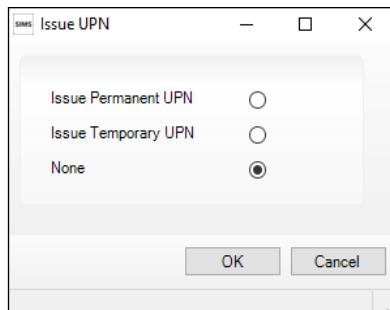
5. Select either the **Issue Permanent UPN** or **Issue Temporary UPN** radio button.
6. Click the **OK** button to return to the **Registration** panel.
7. Click the **Save** button. The UPN is generated automatically when the record is saved.

> **NOTE** A pupil who is adopted after being allocated a UPN is often issued with a new permanent UPN. However, the exact process might vary depending on the circumstances and the guidance issued by your LA/DfE.
>
> For information about issuing a new UPN for an adopted child, please seek advice from your LA, if applicable.
>
> DfE guidance is also available on the GOV.UK website (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/unique-pupil-numbers).

☐ **Completed**

Checking Unique Learner Numbers

Applicable to schools with pupils over the age of 14

A Unique Learner Number (ULN) is a 10-digit identifier that is retained and stays with the pupil's learning record throughout their lives. Currently, this applies to pupils over the age of 14 involved in UK education or training.

Learning Records Service (previously known as the Managing Information Across Partners Programme) issues and maintains a ULN record for applicable pupils. ULNs can be obtained in one or more of the following ways:

▪ The DfE ULN service to upload a CTF file via a web page on the **S2S** website (http://www.education.gov.uk/researchandstatistics/datatdatam/s2s/a0064650/school-to-school-s2s).

▪ The **Learning Records Service** website to obtain individual ULNs (https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/learning-records-service).

If available, enter a ULN for each pupil over the age of 14.

1. Select **Focus | Pupil | Pupil Details** to display the **Find Pupil** browser.
2. Search for, then double-click the name of the required pupil to display the **Pupil Details** page.

3. In the **Registration** panel, check the content of the **Unique Learner Number** field. Enter the 10-digit identifier, if not currently displayed.

> **NOTE** The **UCI** (Unique Candidate Identifier) and **Exam Number** information is read only. The fields are populated with data held in Examinations Organiser.

4. Click the **Save** button to save any changes, if applicable.

☐ **Completed**

Checking Part-Time Pupil Information

The collection of part-time details is mainly relevant to Nursery schools (or schools with nursery age children) and Primary schools with Reception years. However, any pupil can be marked as part-time if their attendance is anything less than 10 sessions per week.

For dual registered pupils, time in other schools should be considered. For example, three full days in one school and two full days in another school should <u>not</u> be classified by either school as part-time.

1. Select **Focus | Pupil | Pupil Details** to display the **Find Pupil** browser.
2. Search for, then double-click the name of the required pupil to display the **Pupil Details** page.

3. Click the **Registration** hyperlink to display the **Registration** panel.

> **NOTE** The **Early Years Attendance Patterns** section of the **Registration** panel is visible to Primary schools only. If applicable, Primary schools should complete the **Early Years Attendance Patterns**, as this will help when updating Hours at Setting.

4. Check the details in the **Part Time Details** section. A minimum of a **Start Date** must be displayed for each record. To edit the details, highlight the record, then click the **Open** button to display the **Edit Part-time Attendance** dialog.

   Alternatively, part-time details can be added by clicking the **New** button to display the **Add Part-time Attendance** dialog.
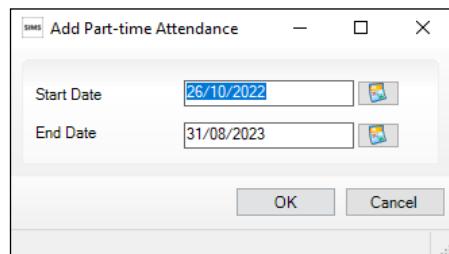
5. Enter a minimum of the **Start Date**, then click the **OK** button to return to the **Registration** panel.

6. Click the **Save** button to save any changes.

> **IMPORTANT** It is equally important to edit the details of any pupils who are no longer part-time. This is achieved by highlighting the pupil's **Part Time Details** record, then clicking the **Open** button to display the **Add Part-time Attendance** dialog. Enter the correct **End Date**, then click the **OK** button to return to the **Registration** panel.

☐ **Completed**

Checking School Arranged Alternative Provision Placements

Not applicable to Nursery schools

In most cases, placement information should be recorded by the school that arranged the placement. The exception to this is where the alternative provision has been arranged by the Local Authority but the pupil remains dual registered with the mainstream school and the Pupil Referral Unit/Alternative Provision school. In such cases, the mainstream school should record the required information.

The following Alternative Provision Placement information is collected in the return:

- Unique Reference Number (**AP URN**)

  or

- UK Provider Register Number (**AP UKPRN**)

  or

- setting type (**AP Settings**)

- **Companies House No**

- Alternative Provision postcode (**AP Postcode**)

- placement reason (**AP Reason**)

- placement entry date (**Start Date**)

- * SEN status at the start date of the placement

- placement leaving date (**End Date**)

- * SEN status at the end date of the placement

- attendance pattern (**AP Attendance**)

- sessions per week (**AP Sessions**).

> * **NOTE**
>
> The SEN information is collected automatically from the pupil's SEN history, which is available to view via the **SEN History** button in the **Basic SEN Details** panel (please see Checking Special Educational Needs Information on page 53).

1. Select **Focus | Pupil | Pupil Details** to display the **Find Pupil** browser.
2. Search for, then double-click the name of the required pupil to display the **Pupil Details** page.
3. Navigate to the **School Arranged Alternative Provision Placements** section of the **Registration** panel.

4. Check the school arranged alternative provision placement details.

5. To amend existing details, highlight an existing placement then click the **Open** button adjacent to the **School Arranged Alternative Provision Placements** panel to display the **Add/Edit Alternative Provision Placements** dialog. Alternatively, click the **New** button to add an new record.
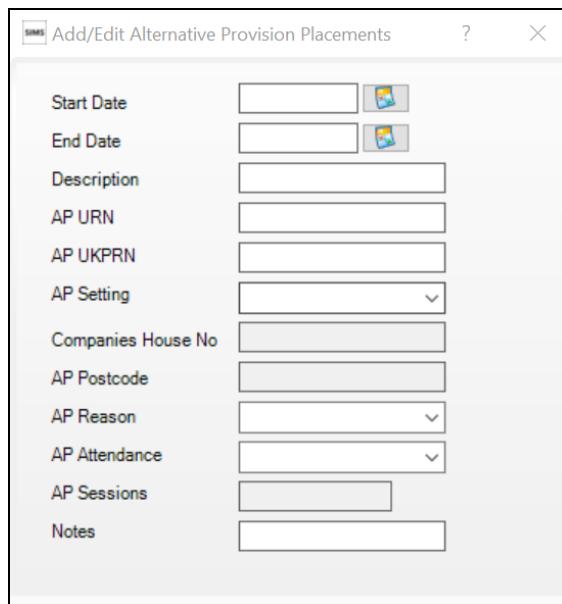
6. Enter the **Start Date** and **End Date**, if known.

7. Enter the **Description** of the AP Provider, e.g. the name of the AP establishment (optional).

8. Record one of the following three options:
   - Enter the **AP URN** (Alternative Provision Unique Reference Number)
   - Enter the **AP UKPRN** (Alternative Provision United Kingdom Provider Reference Number)
   - Select the required **AP Setting** from the drop-down list. Then enter the **Companies House No** and **AP Postcode**.

9. Select the required **AP Reason** from the drop-down list.

   AP Reason is the reason for a pupil going into the Alternative Provision Placement and why the placement has been arranged.

10. Select the required **AP Attendance** (i.e. the pupil's planned attendance pattern at the Alternative Provision provider) from the associated drop-down list:
    - **Part Time** - if selected, enter the number of **AP Sessions** per week.
    - **Full Time**.

11. Enter any relevant **Notes**.

12. Click the **OK** button to return to the **Pupil Details** page then click the **Save** button.

☐ **Completed**

Checking National Curriculum Year Groups

The National Curriculum Year Group (Year Taught In) is the year group in which the pupil is taught for the majority of the time, regardless of their chronological age. In most cases, this will be the same as the Year Group. However, some children are taught in the year above or below the expected year (based on their age), perhaps because they are academically advanced or behind. It is very important that the correct **Year Taught In** has been recorded in SIMS.

The following table shows the Curriculum Year that pupils in England are expected to be taught in (**Year Taught In**), according to their date of birth (during the academic year 2025/2026).

Please note this table is provided for reference only.

Year Taught In	Date of Birth Range	Age Range
	After 31/08/2023	1 and under
N1	01/09/2022 to 31/08/2023	2 – 3
N2	01/09/2021 to 31/08/2022	3 – 4
R	01/09/2020 to 31/08/2021	4 – 5
1	01/09/2019 to 31/08/2020	5 – 6
2	01/09/2018 to 31/08/2019	6 – 7
3	01/09/2017 to 31/08/2018	7 – 8
4	01/09/2016 to 31/08/2017	8 – 9
5	01/09/2015 to 31/08/2016	9 – 10
6	01/09/2014 to 31/08/2015	10 – 11
7	01/09/2013 to 31/08/2014	11 – 12
8	01/09/2012 to 31/08/2013	12 – 13
9	01/09/2011 to 31/08/2012	13 – 14
10	01/09/2010 to 31/08/2011	14 – 15
11	01/09/2009 to 31/08/2010	15 – 16
12	01/09/2008 to 31/08/2009	16 – 17
13	01/09/2007 to 31/08/2008	17 – 18
	Before 31/08/2007	19+

There are three ways to check a pupil's curriculum year and date of birth in SIMS:

- Via individual pupil records (**Focus | Pupil | Pupil Details**).
- Via the pastoral structure by curriculum year (**Focus | School | Pastoral Structure | Current Structure**).
- Via the pastoral structure for the whole school (**Focus | School | Pastoral Structure | Current Structure**).

Additional Resources:

Managing Pupils/Students handbook

Setting up and Administering SIMS handbook

Checking the Pupil's Year Taught In Record

1. Select **Focus | Pupil | Pupil Details** to display the **Find Pupil** browser.
2. Search for, then double-click the name of the required pupil to display the **Pupil Details** page.
3. Click the **Registration** hyperlink to display the **Registration** panel.

| 2 Registration			
Class	3TO	House	
Year Group	Year 3	Year Taught In	Curriculum Year 3
Enrolment Status	Single Registration	Boarder Status	Not a Boarder
Admission Date	03/09/2020	Admission Number	001780
Former UPN		Attendance Mode	All day
UPN	M823299920001	Local UPN	

NOTE The Early Years Attendance Patterns section of the **Registration** panel is visible to Primary schools only.

4. Ensure that the **Year Taught In** field displays the actual National Curriculum year in which the pupil is taught the majority of the time. If necessary, select the correct year from the drop-down list.

NOTE Any change made in the **Registration** panel is effective from today's date. If the **Year Taught In** change was applicable from an earlier date, click the **History** button and apply the change from the actual date the change is required.

## Checking the Year Taught In via the Pastoral Structure by Curriculum Year

1. Select **Focus | School | Pastoral Structure | Current Structure** to display the **Current Academic Year Pastoral Structure** page.

2. Click the **Go** button.
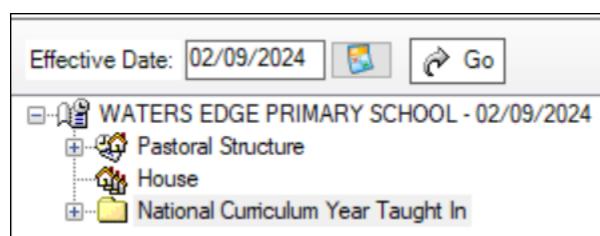
3. Expand the **National Curriculum Year Taught In** folder by clicking the **+** icon or double-clicking the folder name. The curriculum years are displayed beneath.
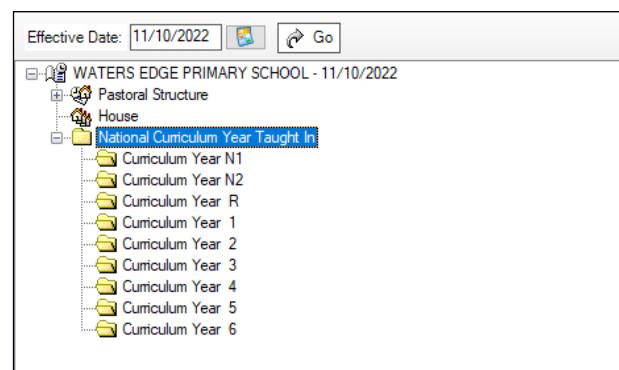
4. Right-click the required curriculum year folder and then select **Members** from the pop-up menu.

The **Allocate Pupils/Applicants** dialog is displayed.

5. Ensure that the **Effective Date Range** is changed to **Over the whole academic year** by selecting the applicable radio button.

6. To change a pupil's memberships of the **National Curriculum Year Taught In**, click the applicable cell in the grid.

   By default, the records are displayed in alphabetical surname order. To sort the pupil names in date of birth order, right-click the **DOB** column heading, then select **Sort By** from the pop-up menu.

   The following graphic shows that one pupil is taught in Year **4**.

7. Ensure that <u>all</u> pupils are allocated membership to the correct **National Curriculum Year Taught In** and then click the **OK** button to return to the **Current Academic Year Pastoral Structure** page.

8. Repeat for the other curriculum years, where applicable.

9. Click the **Save** button.

Checking the Year Taught In via the Pastoral Structure for the Whole School

1. Select **Focus | School | Pastoral Structure | Current Structure** to display the **Current Academic Year Pastoral Structure** page.

2. Click the **Go** button.
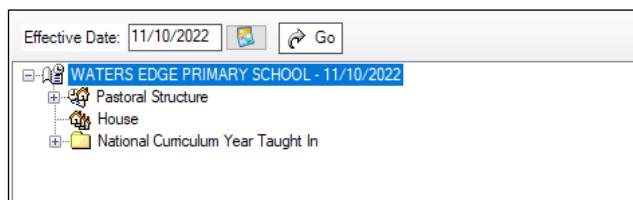
3. Right-click the **National Curriculum Year Taught In** folder and then select **Members** from the pop-up menu.

The **Allocate Pupils/Applicants** dialog is displayed.

4. Ensure that the **Effective Date Range** is changed to **Over the whole academic year** by selecting the applicable radio button.

   By default, the records are displayed in alphabetical surname order. Sorting the names in year group order assists in locating pupils who do not have a **Year Taught In** selected.

5. Right-click the **Year Group** heading, then select **Sort By** from the pop-up menu. Any pupils who have not been allocated a year taught in are displayed at the top of the list.

> **TIP** To sort the pupil names in date of birth order, right-click the **DOB** column heading, then select **Sort By** from the pop-up menu.

6. Indicate which year the pupils with missing data are taught in by clicking the appropriate cell in the grid.

7. Ensure that all pupils have been allocated a year taught in, then click the **OK** button to return to the **Current Academic Year Pastoral Structure** page.

8. Click the **Save** button.

☐ **Completed**

Checking Home Address Information

A pupil's current home address is required for the return. Where a pupil has multiple current addresses, details of all addresses should be recorded.

All aspects of the address are collected and therefore all address details should be recorded to avoid validation errors. It is particularly important to check that a **House Name** or **House Number** and a **Post Code** are entered in the correct fields.

Post codes must be entered in the correct format. A validation error is generated if a post code has not been entered (although it is understood that in some instances, such as Traveller children, a post code is not available).

The Unique Property Reference Number (**UPRN**) is a unique identifier that links together related address records across different software programmes. This enables organisations to collate and share information based on a common reference number.

1. Select **Focus | Pupil | Pupil Details** to display the **Find Pupil** browser.

2. Search for, then double-click the name of the required pupil to display the **Pupil Details** page.

3. In the **Addresses** panel, check that the **Post Code** and **House Number/Name** exist and that they are valid.

   These details can be checked by clicking the **Address** button to launch the selected mapping website (specified via **Tools | Setups | User Options**), where a map of the area surrounding the address is displayed.

> **NOTE** British Forces Post Office numbers can be added as post codes.

4. If the Unique Property Reference Number (**UPRN**) is not displayed below the **Current Home Address Details**:

   a. Click the **Validate** button to display the **Find Matching Addresses** dialog.

   b. Highlight the required address, then click the **OK** button to return to the **Addresses** panel, where the **UPRN** is displayed below the address.

5. If you have edited the address, click the **Save** button.

6. If the pupil has an additional <u>current</u> address, i.e. a **Second Home**, enter the additional address and then click the **Continue** button (adjacent to the address) to display the **New Address Details** panel.

7. Enter the remaining address details and the **Address Type**, then click the **Save** button to refresh the display.

> **NOTE** Any contacts (parents, applicants, staff, etc) who share the same address as the pupil are displayed in the **Linked People** dialog, which can be accessed via the **Modify Address** button.

☐ **Completed**

Checking Free School Meals Eligibility

The number of free school meals taken on census day by pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals, must be entered manually (in the **General** panel) when completing the return.

This information and other free school meal eligibility related data is collected in the return.

Only pupils who have been approved by the LA to receive a free school meal should be recorded in SIMS as being eligible. It is advisable to check that all eligible pupils are recorded.

> **NOTE** for schools with Reception, Year 1 and Year 2:
>
> All pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are offered a meal regardless of whether they are eligible for free school meals.
>
> Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 must only be recorded as eligible for a free school meal if they meet the criteria for free school meals.

Free school meal guidance for schools and Local Authorities is available from the GOV.UK website (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools-and-local-authorities).

The following free school meal eligibility related data is collected in for the return:

- **Start Date**
- **End Date** (if known)

  The DfE does not expect free school meal (FSM) end dates to be entered by schools during the transitional period to universal credit except where there are exceptions.
- UK **Country** in which the eligibility applies.

Meal Patterns are not required for the return but can be recorded for information purposes only. It is perfectly acceptable, for example, for a pupil to be eligible for free school meals, but to bring sandwiches (**PL** (packed lunch)) or to go home (**HO** (home)).

1. Select **Focus | Pupil | Pupil Details** to display the **Find Pupil** browser.
2. Search for, then double-click the required pupil to display the **Pupil Details** page.

3. In the **Dietary** panel, ensure the minimum of a **Start Date** and **Country** are displayed in the **Eligible for Free Meals** panel. If you need to edit the data, highlight the required record and then click the **Open** button.

If a new record is required, click the adjacent **New** button to display the **Add Student Free Meals Details** dialog.

4. Enter the **Start Date** (and **End Date** if available) for the free meal period, as supplied by your Local Authority.

5. Ensure that the UK **Country** in which the eligibility applies is correct. Select from the drop-down list, if required.

6. Enter **Notes**, if required.

7. Click the **OK** button to return to the **Dietary** panel, where the new information is displayed.

8. Click the **Save** button.

Ensure that this information is checked/amended on a regular basis.

☐ **Completed**

Checking Ethnic and Cultural Information

The following ethnic and cultural information is collected in the return:

- **Ethnicity**
- **First Language**
    - A First Language other than English should be recorded where a pupil was exposed to the language during early development and continues to be exposed to this language at home or in the community.
    - If the child was exposed to more than one language (which may include English) during early development, the language other than English should be recorded, irrespective of the pupil's proficiency in English.

1. Select **Focus | Pupil | Pupil Details** to display the **Find Pupil** browser.
2. Search for, then double-click the required pupil to display the **Pupil Details** page.
3. Navigate to the **Ethnic/Cultural** panel.

4. Select the pupil's **Ethnicity** from the drop-down list.
5. Select the pupil's **First Language** from the drop-down list.
6. Click the **Save** button.

> **TIPS**
>
> It is possible to bulk update **Ethnicity** and **First Language** for a selected group of pupils by selecting the relevant option from the **Data Item** drop-down list via **Routines | Pupil | Bulk Update**.
>
> Home language is no longer collected in the School Census. Users with School Administrator permissions can remove the **Home Language** field from the **Student Details** and **Application** pages, if required. This is achieved by selecting the **Hide Home Language** check box in the **School Options** panel via **Tools | Setups | School Options**.
>
> Home language is always included in CTF imports, CTF exports and the Reporting Dictionary, even if it is _not_ displayed on the **Student Details** and **Application** pages.

☐ **Completed**

Checking Additional Information

Ensure that the following additional information is recorded in SIMS:

Service Children in Education information.

The Bulk Update routine can be used to assign and edit these values for a specific selection of pupils at the same time, if required (please see *Updating Information Using the Bulk Update Routine* on page *26*).

1. Select **Focus | Pupil | Pupil Details** to display the **Find Pupil** browser.

2. Search for, then double-click the required pupil to display the **Pupil Details** page.

3. Navigate to the **Additional Information** panel.

> **NOTE** The meal information is now entered via the **Dietary** panel.

4. If the pupil is the child of a parent(s) in the armed forces, ensure that the correct value is selected from the **Service Children in Education** drop-down list.

5. Select how the school was notified about the **Service Children in Education** information by selecting from the **Source of Service Children in Education** drop-down list.

6. Ensure that any **Service Children Concerns** are recorded. Click the adjacent **New** or **Open** button, as required.

7. Ensure that the **Pupil Premium Indicator for year 2024/2025** check box is selected, if applicable. To enter a note related to the applicable year, click the **Search** button adjacent to the **Notes** field.

Although Pupil Premium information is not collected in the return, it is important for schools that are in receipt of this funding, which is allocated to children from low-income families, to be able to give a full account of its use. The national school performance tables now include information about the progress of pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium and information is required to be sent to parents about how it has been used and what impact it has had on pupil progress.

8. Click the **Save** button.

☐ **Completed**

Checking Welfare Information

Not applicable to Nursery schools

Schools are required to record whether a pupil has been identified as a young carer and by whom.

A young carer is a person under the age of 18 who provides care and support for another person at home (not a contract or voluntary work).

1. Select **Focus | Pupil | Pupil Details** to display the **Find Pupil** browser.
2. Search for, then double-click the name of the required pupil to display the **Pupil Details** page.
3. Navigate to the **Young Carer** section of the **Welfare** panel.

	Start Date	End Date	Identified By	Notes	
Young Carer	11/1/2022	3/30/2023	Parent or Guardian	Young Carer is identifi...	📄 New 📂 Open ❌ Delete

4. Check the young carer details.
5. To amend details, highlight an existing record then click the **Open** button adjacent to the **Young Carer** panel to display the **Add/Edit Young Carer** dialog. Alternatively, click the **New** button to add an new record.
6. Check that the date(s) are correct.
7. Ensure that the applicable **Identified by** information has been selected from the drop-down list:
   - **Identified by Parent or guardian**
   - **Identified by School**.
8. Click **OK** to return to the return to the **Pupil Details** page then click the **Save** button.

☐ **Completed**

Checking Special Educational Needs Information

The following Special Educational Needs (SEN) items are collected in the return:

- SEN **Status** (SEN Provision)
  - **E** – **Education, Health and Care Plan** (EHCP) – the LA has reviewed the pupil and a plan has been issued.
  - **N** – **No Special Educational Need** - No special educational need has been identified.
  - **K** – **SEN Support** – actions have been put in place or will be put in place to support the pupil with their need once a SEN need or potential SEN need has been identified.
- SEN **Need Type**
- SEN Type **Ranking**

- **Provision Type** (not applicable to Pupil Referral Units and Special schools)
    - **Time in SEN Unit** - member of SEN Unit
    - **Resourced Provision**

1. Select **Focus | Pupil | Special Educational Needs** to display the **Find SEN Student** browser.

2. Select the required **SEN Status** from the drop-down list. Additional search criteria can be selected, if required, e.g. **Year Group**.

3. Click the **Search** button to display a list of pupils who match the criteria.

4. Double-click the name of the required pupil to display the **Student SEN details** page.

5. In the **Basic SEN Details** panel, ensure that the SEN **Status** and **Start Date** are correct.

To amend an error in the current **Status** or **Start Date**, click the **Edit** button. Select the required **Status** from the drop-down list and edit the **Start Date**, if required.

Alternatively, click the **New** button. This removes the original **Status** and the **Start Date** defaults to today's date. Select the applicable **Status** and change the **Start Date**, if required.

To view changes that have taken place to the pupil's SEN Status, click the **Status History** button to display the **Status History** page.

6. Ensure that the **Current Needs** information is up-to-date and correct.
    a. To add a **Need Type**, click the **New** button (adjacent the **Current Needs** panel) to display the **Add SEN Need** dialog.

    A temporary **Ranking** is calculated automatically.

    b. By default, today's date is displayed as the **Start Date** but this can be edited, if required.

    c.   Select the **Need Type** from the drop-down list, then enter a **Description** (optional).
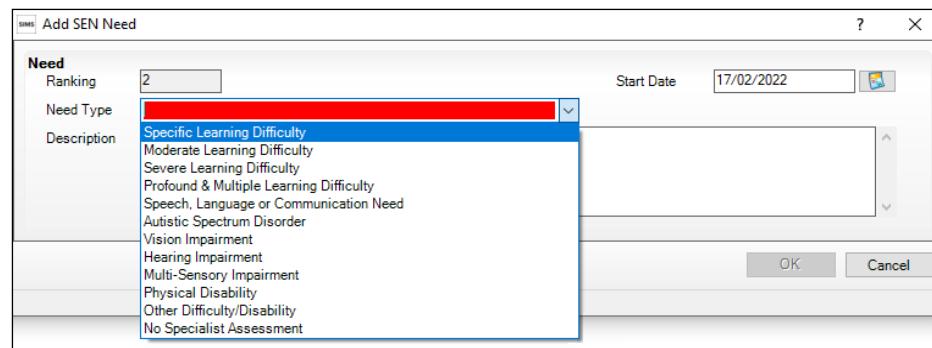
    d.   Click the **OK** button to return to the **Basic SEN Details** panel.

    e.   To rank the SEN Needs in the required order, highlight a record and then click the **Move Up** or **Move Down** button, as required.

    f.   To edit the **SEN Need** or **Description**, highlight the record and then click the **Open** button to display the **Edit SEN Need** dialog. Edit the details as required, then click the **OK** button to return to the **Basic SEN Details** panel.

7.   In the **Provisions** panel, ensure that records with a **Provision Type** of **Time in Unit** or **Resourced Provision** are recorded correctly.

8.   To edit an existing record, highlight the required record and then click the **Open** button.

To create a new record, click the **New** button to display the **Add/Edit SEN Provision** dialog.

9.   Ensure that the details are entered correctly, paying particular attention to the **Provision Type**.

10.   Click the **OK** button to return to the **Provisions** panel.

11. Update the other information on the **Student SEN details** page, if required and then click the **Save** button.

   The DfE website (http://www.gov.uk/schools-colleges/special-educational-needs) provides more information about Special Educational Needs, if required.

☐ **Completed**

Preparing Exclusions Information

Not applicable to Nursery schools

Exclusions Enhancement

Up to 3 reasons can be recorded; each reason must be different and filled in consecutively. For example, Reason 2 cannot be left blank if Reason 3 is recorded.

Suspensions and exclusions with a final governor review which took place in the two terms prior to the school census are collected. E.g. for the Summer Census, suspensions and exclusions are collected from the preceding Autumn and Spring terms. Permanent exclusions without a final governor review are <u>not</u> included in the census.

Lunchtime exclusions are no longer collected for the return.

> **NOTE** Exclusions terminology has changed: 'Suspension' is known as 'Fixed term exclusion'.

The following exclusion related data items are collected for the return:

- Suspension and permanent exclusion **Type** (**Exclusion Details** panel).
- Suspension and permanent exclusion **Reason**(s) (**Exclusion Details** panel).
- Suspension and permanent exclusion **Start Date** (**Exclusion Details** panel).
- Suspension and permanent exclusion length, i.e. the number of sessions from which the pupil was excluded (**Exclusion Details** panel - **Length School Days**).
- SEN Provision (please see *Checking Special Educational Needs Information* on page *53*).

> **IMPORTANT NOTE about Permanent Exclusions:** Any permanently excluded pupils should be marked as leavers as soon as the exclusion has been confirmed by the LA. As part of this process but <u>before</u> making them a leaver, ensure that you have recorded the following information:
> ▪ SEN Status (if applicable)
> ▪ Ethnicity
> ▪ Ethnic Source
> ▪ Part-time indicator (if applicable)

> ▪ Date of Admission.

Recording an Exclusion

1. Select **Focus | Pupil | Exclusions** to display the **Find Exclusions Student** browser.
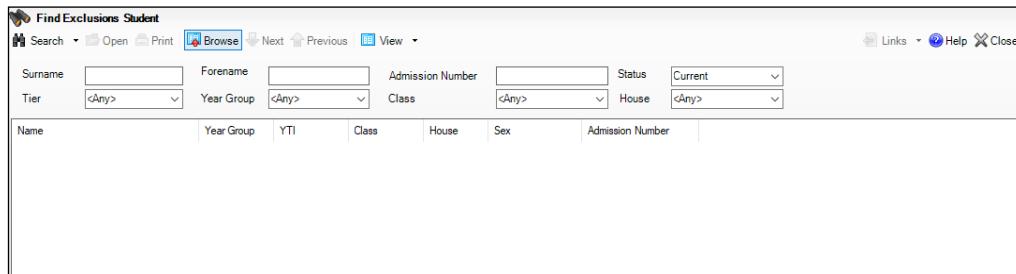
2. Search for, then double-click the required pupil to display the **Exclusion Details** page.

3. Highlight an existing exclusion, then click the **Open** button adjacent to the **Exclusions** panel to view/edit the exclusion details.

   If a permanent exclusion is recorded, ensure that the details of the **Final Governor Review Outcome** are entered, when the review result is received.
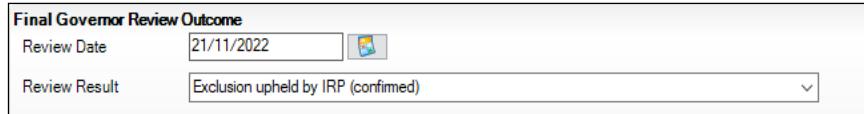
   Alternatively, click the **New** button to display the **Add Exclusion** dialog.

4. In the **Exclusion Details** panel, select the exclusion **Type** from the drop-down list.
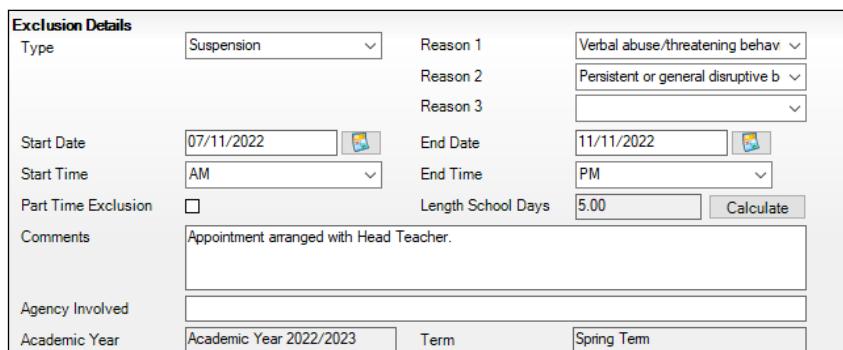
5. Select up to three **Reason**(s) for the exclusion from the associated drop-down list.

6. Enter the exclusion **Start Date** and **End Date** (if applicable) or click the appropriate **Calendar** button, then select the required date.

7. Select a **Start Time** and **End Time** (i.e. **AM** or **PM**) from the associated drop-down list.

8. Click the **Calculate** button to populate the **Length School Days** automatically.

9. Enter any additional information currently known, then click the **OK** button to save the exclusion details and return to the **Exclusion Details** page, where a summary of the new exclusion is displayed.

    The **Academic Year** and the total number of exclusion days in that year are displayed at the bottom of the page.

10. Click the **OK** button to save the exclusion.

11. Click the **Save** button.

    For more information about exclusions, please refer to the DfE website (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion).

☐ **Completed**

Preparing Termly Attendance Information

Not applicable to Nursery schools

Termly attendance data (including attendance codes and the number of sessions missed) should be provided for non-boarder pupils and leavers aged four to 15 inclusive, who were on-roll for at least one session during the collection period.

For information and advice about school attendance, please refer to the DfE website (https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statutory-guidance-schools#behaviour-and-attendance--).

Additional Resources:

Producing the School Census Spring Return handbook
Managing Pupil/Student Attendance handbook (SIMS Attendance users)
Monitoring Session and Lesson Attendance handbook (SIMS Lesson Monitor users)

☐ **Completed**

Recording Universal Infant School Meals

Applicable to schools with pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2

> **NOTE** for Special schools: The School Dinner Taken routine is applicable to Special schools that have on-roll pupils aged 4 to 6 not following the National Curriculumn (NC year Actual equals 'X' AND pupil born between 01/09/2017 and 31/08/2020 inclusive).

All pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 in English state-funded schools are offered a Universal Infant School Meal, i.e. a hot meal at lunchtime. This applies to Academies, Free Schools and Pupil Referral Units, as well as to schools maintained by the Local Authority. The School Census collects information about pupils who receive a Universal Infant School Meal (school dinner) on census day.

School dinners taken on the **Reference Date** (by default, census day) can be calculated from the information stored in Dinner Money. Dinner Money users should therefore ensure that school dinners taken are recorded correctly via **Focus | Attendance | Take Register** or **Focus | Dinner Money | Record Pupil Meals**.

- If default meal patterns have been entered (via **Focus | Dinner Money | Pupil Default Meal Patterns**), the Dinner Register is populated automatically with the default meals.

  For more information about setting up default meal patterns, please refer to the Setting up and Maintaining Dinner Money handbook.

- Where any 'pupil not present' attendance marks have been entered, the Dinner Register is populated automatically with an absent mark.

- Any special meals entered in advance are displayed and are not overwritten by the default meal pattern.

The attendance data recorded for census day morning can be used to calculate all pupils who are present and are likely to be taking a school dinner. Therefore, when completing the School Census **School Dinner Taken** panel, the calculated numbers must be edited to reflect hot meals provided by the school only. Ensure that the pupils listed on the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 attendance registers are accurate and that the registers are taken on census day morning (before completing the School Census **School Dinner Taken** panel).

☐ **Completed**

Updating Class Types

Applicable to Primary schools only

Before starting the return, it is necessary to indicate which class a pupil is a member of – either **Nursery** (if the child is currently in a LA designated Nursery Unit) or **Other** (any other class). This is only needed for newly added pupils where they have transferred from a LA designated Nursery Unit into an 'Other' class.

> **NOTE** If new pupils exist, the default class type is displayed as blank.

1. Select **Tools | Statutory Return Tools | Update Class Type** to display the **Update Class Type** page.

The values displayed on the **Update Class Type** page default to those of the previous return. Existing details should be checked and edited, if necessary, and the details of any new pupils added.

2. To specify the class type for an individual pupil, click in the applicable cell of the **Nursery** or **Other** column to enter a tick. Clicking the cell again removes the tick.

3. If all or the majority of pupils need to be assigned the same class type, the following method can be used to quickly populate the **Nursery** and **Other** columns:

   a. Right-click the **Other** column header, then select **Check All**.

   b. In the **Pupils View** panel, select, for example, Year **N2** from the year taught in (**YTI**) drop-down list. Only Year **N2** pupils are then displayed in the **Pupils** panel.

   c. Right-click the **Nursery** column header, then select **Check All**.

   d. Repeat steps *b* and *c* for any additional Nursery classes.

   e. To check your selections, select **All** from the **YTI** drop-down list.

4. Click the **Save** button.

   If a message is displayed advising that some pupils have not been assigned a class type, click the **Yes** button and then ensure that a class type is allocated to every pupil before saving again.

   Click the **OK** button to return to the **Census Return Details** page, where the updated class types are displayed.

Resetting All Class Types

To reset all class types (via the **Update Class Type** page), right-click the **Nursery** (or **Other**) column header, then select **Remove All** from the pop-up list. The **Nursery** (or **Other**) column is cleared of all ticks.

Re-enter the correct class types for all pupils as previously described.

Identifying which Pupils have no Class Type Specified

To ensure that all pupils are assigned to a class type (via the **Update Class Type** page), select **No Class Type** from the **Status** drop-down list in the **Pupils View** panel. Any pupils without a **Class Type** are displayed in the **Pupils** panel.

Specify a class type for these pupils, as previously described.

☐ **Completed**

Editing Early Years

Applicable to schools with Early Years children only.

Expanded Hours is applicable to children from 9 months old to 2 years old from Autumn 2024.
EYPPR is applicable to children from 9 months old to 4 years old from Autumn 2024.
DAF is applicable to children from 9 months old to 4 years old from Autumn 2024.

The early years data collected in the School Census is used to determine the amount of the dedicated schools grant (DSG) allocation provided to local authorities to fund their early years providers.

More information about the early years national funding formula (allocations and guidance) is available on the GOV.UK website.

The **Early Years** panel consists of three grids:
Early Years
Early Years Pupil Premium Receipt
2 Year Old Basis for Funding.

Early Years data is collected from all schools that have early years pupils on-roll on census day. The following items are collected:

- Hours at Setting
- Funded Hours
- Disability Access Fund
- Eligibility Code
- Extended Funded Hours
- Expanded Funded Hours.

Funded Hours and Hours at Setting

Funded universal free entitlement hours are the total number of free childcare hours that a child receives. All three- and four-year-old pupils are eligible for 15 hours of funded childcare a week. Advice about the eligibility of two year old children for funded childcare can be found on the DfE website (https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds).

Hours at Setting include funded free entitlement hours (as described previously) plus any additional hours funded by other means.

The hours collected in this return are for the week in which the census day falls.

Disability Access Fund

DAF is applicable to children from 9 months old to 4 years old from Autumn 2024.

The Disability Access Fund (DAF) is payable as a lump sum once a year and awarded to children who meet the following criteria:

- They are in receipt of child Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

  and

- They access their entitlement to free early learning and childcare, e.g. funded hours.

Disability Access Fund data is collected in this return for pupils who are in receipt of the fund on census day.

Additional information about the Disability Access Fund is available via the DfE website (https://www.gov.uk/education/early-years-funding).

Extended Funded Hours and Eligibility Code

Extended Funded Hours are the number of hours that a child can receive in addition to the initial 15 funded hours. Extended Funded Hours are applicable to three- and four-year-old pupils only.

In contrast to the universal entitlement (which only has an age criterion), for 30 hours free childcare, parents also need to meet a set of eligibility requirements (i.e. income requirements). A child will be entitled to the additional free hours from the term after both of the following conditions are satisfied: (1) the child has attained the age of three; (2) the child's parent has a current positive determination of eligibility from HMRC i.e. a valid eligibility code.

Parents can check online whether they could be eligible for a range of government childcare offers, including 30 hours, via Childcare Choices or the Childcare Calculator.

The 11-digit Eligibility Code and the number of extended funded hours are collected in this return for the week in which the census day falls.

Expanded Funded Hours are the number of hours that a child can receive up to 30 hours. Expanded Funded Hours are applicable for 9 month to 2-year-old (inclusive) pupils with working parents who hold a valid eligibility code.

Extended Funded Hours information provided by the DfE can be found on their website (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/30-hours-free-childcare-la-and-early-years-provider-guide).

Early Years Date of Birth Matrix 2025/2026

Date of Birth Range		Age as at 31/08/2025	Funded Hours	Extended Hours	Disability Access Fund	Expanded Hours	EYPPR	2 Year basis for funding
before 31/08/2020		5	N	N	N	N	N	N
01/09/2020 31/12/2020	E1, E2, N1, N2	4	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
01/01/2021 31/03/2021	E1, E2, N1, N2	4	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
01/04/2021 31/08/2021	E1, E2, N1, N2	4	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
01/09/2021 31/12/2021		3	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
01/01/2022 31/03/2022		3	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
01/04/2022 31/08/2022		3	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
01/09/2022 31/12/2022		2	Y*	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
01/01/2023 31/03/2023		2	Y*	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
01/04/2023 31/08/2023		2	Y*	N	Y	Y	Y	Y

Date of Birth Range		Age as at 31/08/2025	Funded Hours	Extended Hours	Disability Access Fund	Expanded Hours	EYPPR	2 Year basis for funding
01/09/2023 31/12/2023		1	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N
01/01/2024 31/03/2024		1	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N
01/04/2024 01/08/2024		1	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N
01/09/2024 30/11/2024		0*	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N
01/12/2024 31/03/2025		0	N	N	N	N	N	N
01/04/2025 30/06/2025		0	N	N	N	N	N	N
and after								

Y* = subset of disadvantaged 2-year-olds may be eligible for funded hours.

0* = 9 months old.

Updating Early Years Information

Expanded Hours is applicable to children from 9 months old to 2 years old from Autumn 2024.

Early Years data is collected from all schools that have early years pupils on-roll on census day.

Information about the following items must be recorded while completing the return (via **Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census** - **Early Years** panel):

- **Basis for EYPP Eligibility** - The basis for Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) funding should be specified when completing the return, i.e. **Not Eligible**, **Receipt-economic**, **Receipt-other**, **Receipt-economic and other**, **Receipt-unknown**.

- **2 Year Old Basis for Funding** - The basis of funding, i.e. **Economic Criteria**, **High level SEN or Disability** or **Looked After or Adopted From Care**, should be specified when completing the return.

Data for the following items can be recorded before completing the return (via **Tools | Statutory Return Tools | Update Early Years**):

- **Funded Hours** - Funded hours are the total number of free childcare hours that a child receives.
- **Hours at Setting** - Hours at setting include funded hours plus any additional hours funded by other means.
- **Disability Access Fund** - The child is in receipt of disability living allowance and receives funded hours - for 0-4-year-olds.
- **Eligibility Code** - The 11-digit Eligibility Code must be obtained from the Tax Office (HM Revenue & Customs) by parents who meet the extended funded hours criteria.
- **Extended Funded Hours** – up to 15 additional hours for 3- and 4-year-olds of working parents with a valid eligibility code (funded by the LA).
- **Expanded Funded Hours** - up to 30 hours for 9 months-2-year-olds of working parents with a valid eligibility code (funded by the LA).

The early years data is collected for the week in which the census day falls with the exception of disability access fund, which is collected for pupils who are in receipt of the fund on census day.

1. Select **Tools | Statutory Return Tools | Update Early Years** to display the **Update Early Years** page. Only cohorts applicable to your school are displayed.

2. Where available, the hours data is brought forward from the previous Census.

Update Early Years

Save | Undo

Census

Term Spring 2026 | Update Hours

Pupils View

Age at 31/12/2025 | All | YTI | All | Reg | All | Status | All

Pupils

Expanded Hours are collected for pupils aged 9 months to 2 at 31/12/2025 if they have an Eligibility Code.
Extended Hours are collected for pupils aged 3 & 4 at 31/12/2025 if they have an Eligibility Code.

Name	Date of Birth	AdNo.	YTI	Reg	Age at 31/12/2025	Hours at Setting	Funded Hours	Disability Access Fund	Eligibility Code	Extended Funded Hours	Expanded Funded Hours
Ahmad,Carina	01/09/2022	002084	N1	N1	3	15	15				
Bridges,Stephen	26/12/2022	002134	N2	PM	3	30	15		98765432198	15	
Caldwell,Ley	04/01/2022	002088	N2	AM	3	30	15		87654321987	15	
Cheadle,Lauren	26/02/2022	002135	N2	PM	3	30	15		12345678901	15	
Christian,Laura	08/08/2021	002091	N2	AM	4	30	15		12345678902	15	
Dean,Rosanna	20/05/2022	002137	N2	PM	3	30	15		12345678904	15	
Franklinson,Alexis	14/11/2023	002138	N2	PM	2	30	0		98765432199		30

3. The **Update Hours** button is available to Primary phase schools only. It enables Hours at Setting, for pupils who are receiving free nursery care, to be updated automatically (provided that Early Years Attendance Patterns have been defined via **Focus | Pupil | Pupil Details**).

   a. Click the **Update Hours** button to display the number of hours that the listed pupils are expected to attend during the census week (based on the early years provision times recorded as part of their attendance pattern).

> **NOTE** If your school does not use the Define Early Years Attendance Patterns functionality, the data can be entered in the grid manually.

4. To add or edit the number of **Hours at Setting**, **Funded Hours**, **Extended Funded Hours** and **Expanded Funded Hours** for an individual pupil, select the required criteria from the options in the **Pupils View** panel.

5. Highlight the required pupil record in the **Pupils** panel, click the applicable cell and then enter the required number of hours.

> **IMPORTANT** Values for **Funded Hours**, **Hours at Setting**, **Extended Funded Hours** and **Expanded Funded Hours** should be entered using two decimal places. For example, 1 hour 15 minutes must be entered as 1.25. Zero (0) is an accepted value.
>
> If the value entered is within the accepted range but higher than expected by the DfE, a validation error is displayed when the return is created and validated. An explanation as to why the value is higher should be recorded on the COLLECT Portal.

6. If most of the pupils are receiving the same number of hours, the following method can be used to quickly populate the column:

    a. In the **Pupils View** panel, select the required year group from the **YTI** (Year Taught In) drop-down list. Only the selected pupils are displayed in the **Pupils** panel.

    b. Right-click in the **Pupils** panel, then select **Select All** from the drop-down list.

    c. Click in one of the highlighted cells of the column you wish to populate, i.e. **Hours at Setting**, **Funded Hours**, **Extended Funded Hours** or **Expanded Hours**, then enter the number of hours that is applicable to the majority of pupils.

    d. This number is then entered automatically for the remaining pupils.

    e. Click to the right of the grid to deselect all.

    f. Edit the entry for each pupil who is receiving a different number of hours. This is achieved by highlighting the required pupil, clicking in the associated **Hours at Setting**, **Funded Hours** or **Extended Funded Hours** cell, as applicable and then entering the required number.

7. Indicate whether the pupils are in receipt of the **Disability Access Fund**. Click the applicable cell, then select **Yes** or **No** from the drop-down list.

8. Enter the 11-digit Eligibility Code in the applicable cell, if in receipt of extended funded hours.

9. Click the **Save** button.

    The Early Years report is available from the **Detail Report** drop-down list via **Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census**.

☐ **Completed**

Using the Status to determine if Hours at Setting or Funded Hours are recorded

1. In the **Pupils View** panel, ensure that the required **Age at** date, **YTI** and **Reg** group are selected and then select **No Hours at Setting** (or **No Funded Hours**) from the **Status** drop-down list.

    Only pupils who do not have an entry for **Hours at Setting** (or **Funded Hours**) are displayed.

2. Enter the required values for these pupils as described previously.

3. Click the **Save** button.

☐ **Completed**

Updating Pupils with Top-Up Funding

Top-up funding is supplied to schools, in most cases by the Local Authority, to meet the additional costs of support for high needs pupils.

1. Select **Tools | Statutory Return Tools | Update Top-Up Funding** to display the **Update Pupils with Top-up Funding** page.

    Any pupils currently recorded as having top-up funding are displayed in the **Top-up Funding** list (located in the bottom half of the page).

2. Use the **Students On-Roll on Census Day** search criteria to locate the additional pupils you wish to record as having top-up funding, then highlight their details.

Term	Spring 2023 ⌄		Students On-Roll on Census Day			
Surname	white	Forename		YTI	All ⌄	Reg	All ⌄
Preferred Surname		SEN	<Any> ⌄	Ever in care at this school	<Any> ⌄	🔍 Search

Surname	Preferred Surname	Forename	YTI	Reg	SEN	Ever in Care
White	White	Theo	4	4ES		No
▶ Whitehead	Whitehead	William	6	6VC		No
Whitemore	Whitemore	Paige	4	4SL		No

3. Click the **Add** button to move the highlighted pupil(s) to the **Top-up Funding** list.

4. To remove a pupil from the **Top-up Funding** list, highlight the required pupil and then click the **Remove** button. The pupil's record is moved to the **Students On-Roll on Census Day** list, from where it can be reselected, if required.

5. Click the **Update** button to save the data and arrange the list of pupils in **Surname** order.

☐ **Completed**

Updating Pupils Post Looked After Arrangements

Post Looked After Arrangements (previously named Adopted from Care) is collected for pupils who are on-roll on census day and the information is then used for funding purposes.

The values available for selection enable schools to indicate which pupils were looked after immediately before adoption or prior to being the subject of a residence or special guardianship order. However, those who have parental responsibility are not obliged to provide this information to the school.

1. Select **Tools | Statutory Return Tools | Update Post Looked After Arrangements** to display the **Update Students Post Looked After Arrangements** page.

Any pupils currently recorded as having post looked after arrangements are displayed in the **Post Looked After Arrangements** list (located in the bottom half of the page).

2. Use the **Students On-Roll on Census Day** search criteria to locate the pupils you want to record as having PLAA.

3. Highlight the required pupils, then click the **Add** button to move the selected pupils to the **Post Looked After Arrangements** list.

4. Ensure that the correct post looked after arrangement is displayed for each pupil by clicking the **Ceased to be looked after through** cell adjacent to their name, then selecting the applicable status from the drop-down list:

   - Adoption from England and Wales
   - Adoption from state care outside of England and Wales
   - Special guardianship order (SGO) from England and Wales
   - Residence order (RO) from England and Wales
   - Child arrangement order (CAO) from England and Wales.

5. Select the **Evidence Obtained** check box, if documents have been obtained that provide evidence of the post looked after arrangements.

   > **NOTE Evidence Obtained** is not collected in the School Census return but should be recorded as prove of DfE/Ofsted compliance.

6. To remove a pupil from the **Post Looked After Arrangements** list, highlight the required pupil then click the **Remove** button. The pupil's record is automatically moved to the **Students On-Roll on Census Day** list, from where it can be reselected, if required.

7. Click the **Update** button to save the information and arrange the names in surname order.

   If you have indicated that evidence has been obtained, you are reminded to ensure that the necessary documents are stored securely outside of SIMS or within the Document Management Server (DMS).

☐ **Completed**

Updating Funding and Monitoring

Not applicable to Nursery schools

The National Tutoring Programme has now ended but schools are to record if students receive school funded tutoring and if they repeat a post-16 year.

Tutoring is defined as those who are in receipt of school-funded tutoring. Repeating Post-16 Year is for post-16 students repeating a year. A pupil can be in receipt of both codes.

The information can be recorded via the **Tools** menu and maintained at any time during the academic year.

The information required is based on individual pupils:

- **Pupil/student in receipt of school-funded tutoring**: Applicable to all schools (except Nursery), with appropriate year group or age-ranges Pupils: Only applicable to pupils and in NCYearActual 1-14 Or where national curriculum year groups do not apply, aged 5 to 19 (as at 31 August) in NCYearActual 'X'.

- **Pupil/student repeating up to one full year of 16 to 19 funded provision**: Applicable to Secondary, All-Through and PRU / AP with appropriate year groups Pupils: Only applicable to pupils in NCYearActual 12 or above, with current single registration ('C') or current main dual registration ('M'). PRU / AP for any pupils with the following enrolment status: 'C', 'M', 'F' or 'O'.

Detailed guidance about the expectations and conditions attached to tutoring funding is available on the GOV.UK.

Editing Funding and Monitoring

1. Select **Tools | Statutory Return Tools | Update Funding and Monitoring** to display the **Update Funding and Monitoring** page.

2. In the **Pupil View** panel, specify the required filters. The content of the **Pupil** panel changes to reflect the options selected.

   Read-only pupil information is displayed in the columns on the left-hand side of the **Pupil** panel. This information is shown as at the system date.

   Cells with a white background are editable.

3. Right-click anywhere in the **Tutoring** column, then select the required option from the pop-up menu.

   a. If most or all of the pupils have been receiving tutoring, select the **Check All** option.

b. Any pupils who have not been receiving tutoring can then be deselected by clicking the **Tutoring** cell adjacent to their name.

4. Enter **Notes**, if required. This information is for your school's use and is not collected in the census.

5. Click the **Save** button.

> **NOTE** All validation errors (red cells) must the resolved before saving the data.

DfE guidance about Learner funding and monitoring (FAM) is available on the GOV.UK website.

Additional Resources:

Producing the School Census Spring Return handbook

☐ **Completed**

Changing an Enrolment Status

> A pupil **Enrolment Status** defaults to **Single Registration** but can be changed via the **Routines** menu, if required.

The following enrolment statuses are available:

- **Single Registration** - this status represents a normal, full-time pupil who is only registered as on-roll at your school.

- **Guest Pupil** - this status represents a pupil who is on-roll at another school but attends your school for certain lessons. There is no need to register them as on-roll at your school.

- **Main-Dual Registration** - this status indicates that the pupil is registered at another school for some of their timetable, but the majority of their time is spent at your school. This status carries legal and financial implications and should only be used after agreement with the other school involved.

- **Subsidiary-Dual Registration** - this status indicates that the pupil is registered at another school for the majority of their timetable and only a minority of their time is spent at your school. This status carries legal and financial implications and should only be used after agreement with the other school involved.

- **FE College** (applicable to Pupil Referral Units in England only) - this status indicates that the pupil is registered at a Further Education College and only a minority of their time is spent at your school.

- **Other Provider** (applicable to Pupil Referral Units in England only) - this status indicates that the pupil is registered at another provider and only a minority of their time is spent at your school.

> **NOTE** SIMS uses the information in the enrolment status change log to determine enrolment on census day.

1. Select **Routines | Pupil | Change Enrolment Status** to display the **Find Pupil** browser.

2. Search for, then double-click the name of the required pupil to display the **Change Enrolment Status** page.

> **NOTE** The pupil's basic details are displayed for information only. Edits to basic details can be made via **Focus | Pupil | Basic Details**.

3. In the **Registration** panel, select the applicable **Enrolment Status** from the drop-down list.
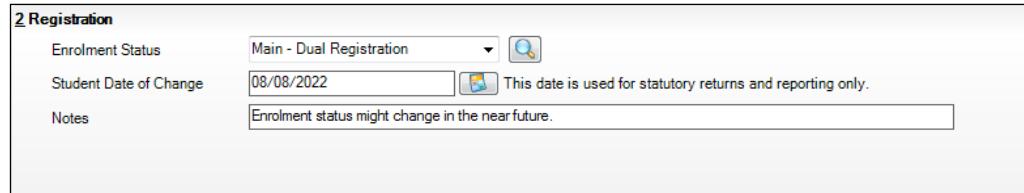
If the pupil's enrolment status has been changed before, a history of the **Enrolment Status History** can be viewed by clicking the adjacent **Search** button.

4. The **Student Date of Change** defaults to today's date but can be edited by selecting the required date from the adjacent Calendar. This date is for information only and does not impact any other part of SIMS.

5. Enter any associated **Notes**.

6. Click the **Save** button. A confirmation message is displayed.

> **WARNING** The details of the confirmation message is different depending on the change of enrolment status. For example:
>
> ▪ If the enrolment status is changed to **Guest pupil**, all previously recorded session attendance marks are deleted.
>
> ▪ If the enrolment status change has taken place during the academic year, the applicable attendance marks might need to be corrected.
>
> In some circumstances a new admission number is allocated to the pupil if you confirm the enrolment status change.

7. Click the **Yes** button if you want to continue.

☐ **Completed**

05| **What Next?**

After carrying out the preparation routines documented in this guide, ensure that any subsequent changes at your school (e.g. pupil basic detail changes, SEN provisions changes, leavers and admissions/re-admissions, etc.) are recorded accurately in SIMS.

The latest SIMS Release must be installed before completing the School Census Spring Return. It is advisable to check whether a later version of SIMS is available and then upgrade to the current release, if necessary, because it might include updates applicable to the forthcoming return.

You should now be ready to produce the final School Census Spring Return.

Where Can I Get More Information?

In addition to this preparation guide, the following resources are also available:

- *Producing the School Census Spring Return (English Primary/Middle deemed Primary Schools)* handbook - this handbook outlines the School Census process in SIMS for Primary and Middle deemed Primary schools.

- *Producing the School Census Spring Return (English Nursery Schools)* handbook - this handbook outlines the School Census process in SIMS for Nursery schools.

- *Producing the School Census Spring Return (English Special Schools)* handbook - this handbook outlines the School Census process in SIMS for Special schools.

- *Producing the School Census Spring Return (English All-Through Schools)* handbook - this handbook outlines the School Census process in SIMS for All-Through schools.

- *Producing the School Census Spring Return (English Pupil Referral Units)* handbook - this handbook outlines the School Census process in SIMS for Pupil Referral Units.

- Managing Pupils/Students handbook - this handbook provides details about the processes that relate to the management of pupil data in SIMS.

- Setting up and Administering SIMS handbook - this handbook provides information on how to set up the various areas of SIMS in readiness for day-to-day use, such as setting up lookups (drop-down lists), creating academic year/admission groups, setting up behaviour management defaults, etc. It also covers the more complex processes that are likely to be carried out by a School/System Administrator.

Guidance about data protection and how pupil data is shared is available from the GOV.UK website (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/data-protection-how-we-collect-and-share-research-data).

Online help can be accessed by pressing **F1** or clicking the applicable **Help** button in SIMS.

A wide range of documentation is available from the SIMS Documentation Centre, including handbooks, quick reference sheets and tutorials. Click the **Documentation** button located on the top right-hand side of the SIMS **Home Page**, select the required category, then select the document you require.

> **IMPORTANT** If you receive support from a local authority or third-party support team, check with them before using any of the solutions.

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