



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS

Schools' census results: February 2022

Statistics on schools, teachers and pupils including data for local authorities and Wales for February 2022.

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Introduction

This statistical release presents data collected from the annual census of maintained schools in Wales. Data for independent schools is also shown. It reports information on schools, pupils, ethnicity, free school meal eligibility, additional learning and special educational needs, class sizes, teachers and support staff.

The most recent data in this report relates to the situation as at February 2022. The Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) would usually take place in January. However, due to the level of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in January 2022, the census date was delayed to 15 February 2022. This decision was made to allow schools and local authorities to focus their available resources on reopening schools and supporting returning learners after the Christmas school holiday.

Note on quality assurance and data coverage

This is the final release of the schools' census 2022 data, following validation as part of the Local Government Finance settlement as in previous years. The counts of pupils have increased slightly since the provisional release of this data in May 2022 as the data for two schools that had not submitted data at that point has now been included.

Main points

- There were 1,470 local authority maintained schools, down 3 compared with April 2021.
- There were 471,131 pupils in local authority maintained schools, down 3,593

compared with April 2021. The number of pupils was higher in April 2021 partly due to the later census date which meant that more pupils had entered nursery classes by the census date.

- Of the 380,870 pupils aged 5 to 15, 23.3% were known to be eligible for free school meals, up from 22.9% at April 2021. These figures do not include transitional protection.
- There were 74,661 pupils with additional learning or special educational needs in maintained schools (15.8% of all pupils) at February 2022, down from 92,668 (19.5%) at April 2021. See additional learning and special educational needs section for an explanation of the changes to this data.
- There were 5,992 pupils (6.0%) in infant classes of over 30 pupils at February 2022, down from 7,617 pupils (7.5%) at April 2021.
- There were 24,657 full-time equivalent qualified teachers in local authority maintained schools, up 715 (3.0%) compared with April 2021.

Schools and pupils

This section presents information on schools and pupils. Local authority maintained schools meet their expenditure partly from council tax and partly from general grants made by the Welsh Government.

For definitions of types of school (including how they are classified in terms of language of teaching (medium)) see [definitions](#).

Table 1: Number of schools in Wales by sector, 2021 to 2022

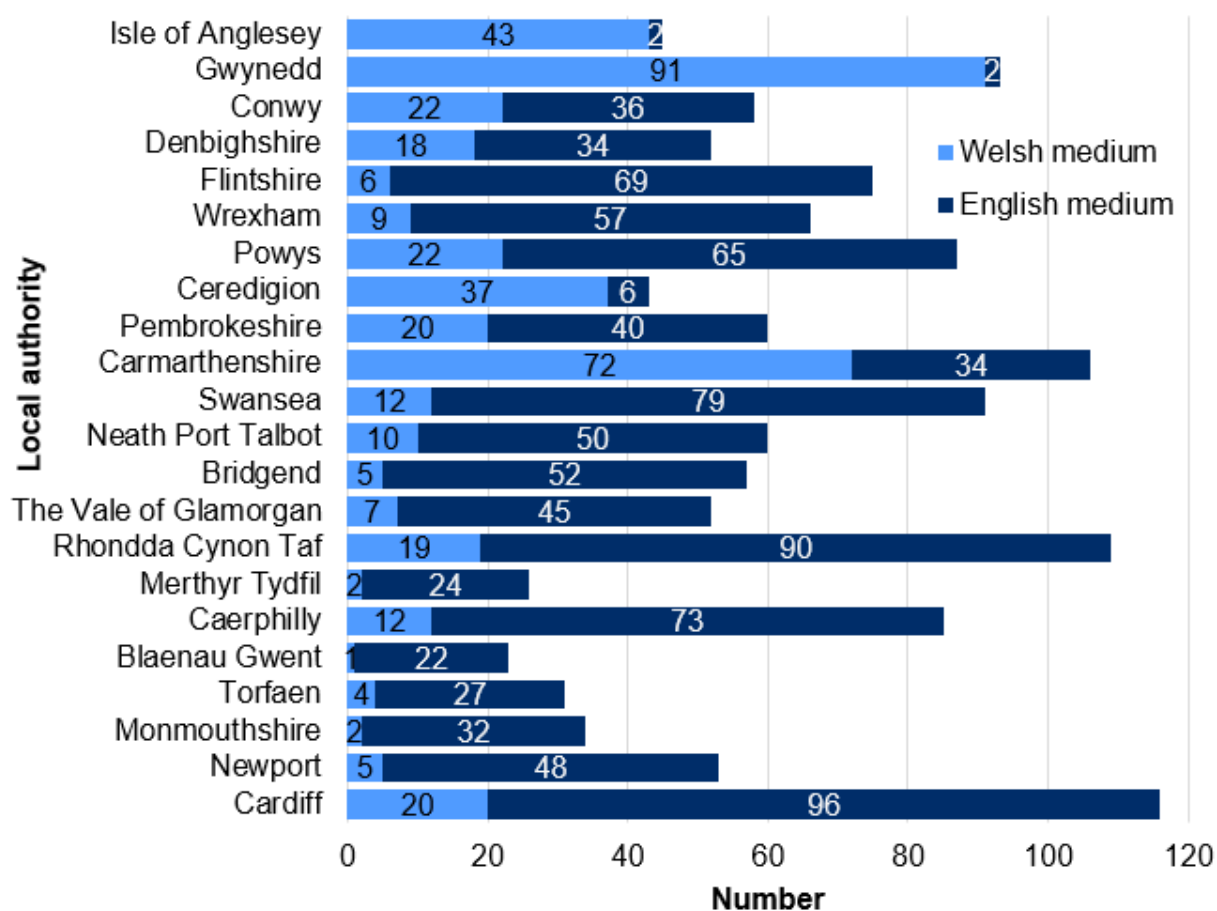
Sector	2021	2022
Nursery	9	8

Sector	2021	2022
Primary	1,219	1,217
Middle	23	23
Secondary	182	182
Special	40	40
Local authority maintained schools	1,473	1,470
Independent	80	79
All schools	1,553	1,549

Source: Schools Census

- There were 1,470 local authority maintained schools at February 2022, down 3 compared with April 2021.
- There were 79 independent schools, down 1 compared with April 2021.

Chart 1: Number of maintained schools by local authority and medium, 2022 (a)



Source: Schools Census

(a) Primary, middle and secondary schools (excluding nursery and special schools)

Number of maintained schools by local authority and medium (MS Excel)

- There were 439 Welsh medium schools at February 2022, with 109,331 pupils (23%) being educated in Welsh medium schools.
- Most schools in Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire were Welsh medium schools. In the other 18 local

authorities most schools were English medium.

Table 2: Number of pupils in Wales by sector, 2021 to 2022

Sector	2021	2022
Nursery	724	611
Primary	272,339	266,574
Middle	22,308	22,516
Secondary	174,133	175,957
Special	5,220	5,473
Local authority maintained schools	474,724	471,131
Independent (a)	9,855	10,034
All schools	484,579	481,165

(a) 10 independent schools did not submit data in 2021 and 10 independent schools did not submit data in 2022.

Source: Schools Census

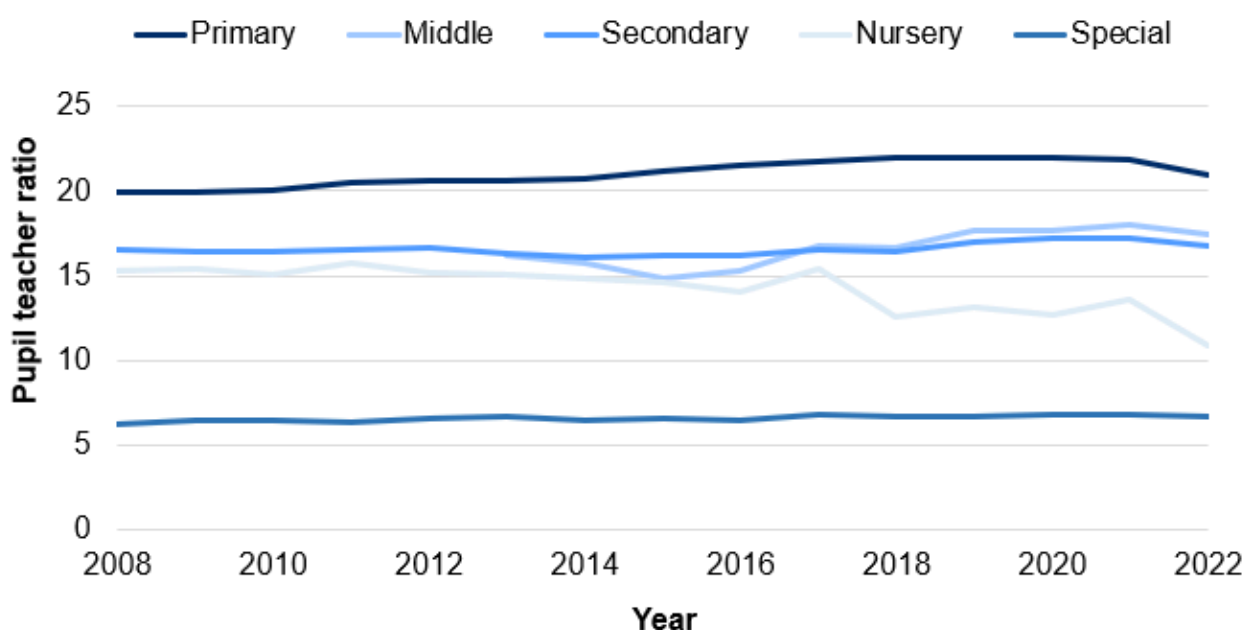
- There were 471,131 pupils in local authority maintained schools, down 3,593 compared with April 2021. The number of pupils was higher in April 2021 partly due to the later census date which meant that more pupils had entered

nursery classes by the census date.

- There were 10,034 pupils (2.1% of all pupils) in independent schools at February 2022, up 179 compared with April 2021.

All the data that follows in this release relates to local authority maintained schools only.

Chart 2: Pupil teacher ratio (PTR) by sector, 2008 to 2022



Source: Schools Census

Pupil teacher ratio (PTR) by sector (MS Excel)

- The **pupil teacher ratio** in February 2022 was highest in primary schools at 21.0 and lowest in special schools at 6.7. The ratio in secondary schools was 16.8.
- The pupil teacher ratio has decreased in all sectors in 2022. This may be partly due to the **Welsh Government funding** provided to schools under the “recruit, recover and raise standards” plan to recruit extra staff to support

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pupils during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Ethnic background

This is the ethnic group with which the pupil identifies her/himself.

Table 3: Number and percentage of pupils aged 5 or over by ethnic background, 2022

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
White	365,231	90.3
White British	350,842	86.7
Traveller	443	0.1
Gypsy/Roma	740	0.2
Any other White background	13,206	3.3
Mixed	14,775	3.7
White and Black Caribbean	2,754	0.7
White and Black African	2,198	0.5
White and Asian	3,011	0.7

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Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
Any other mixed background	6,812	1.7
Asian	10,520	2.6
Indian	2,641	0.7
Pakistani	3,285	0.8
Bangladeshi	3,304	0.8
Any other Asian background	1,290	0.3
Black	4,446	1.1
Black Caribbean	198	0.0
Black African	3,711	0.9
Any other Black background	537	0.1
Chinese	939	0.2
Any other ethnic group	6,059	1.5
Total with valid category	401,970	99.4
Unknown or not stated	2,511	0.6

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Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
All pupils	404,481	100.0

Source: Schools Census

- 86.7% of pupils aged 5 and over identified as White British at February 2022.
- This figure has been falling slightly for each of the past five years with pupils of most other ethnic backgrounds showing increases over the same period.
- Of those pupils from a minority ethnic background the largest groups are those from a mixed ethnic background (14,775 pupils), a White background other than White British (13,206), Asian (10,520) and Black (4,446); whilst over 6,000 pupils identify as another ethnic group.

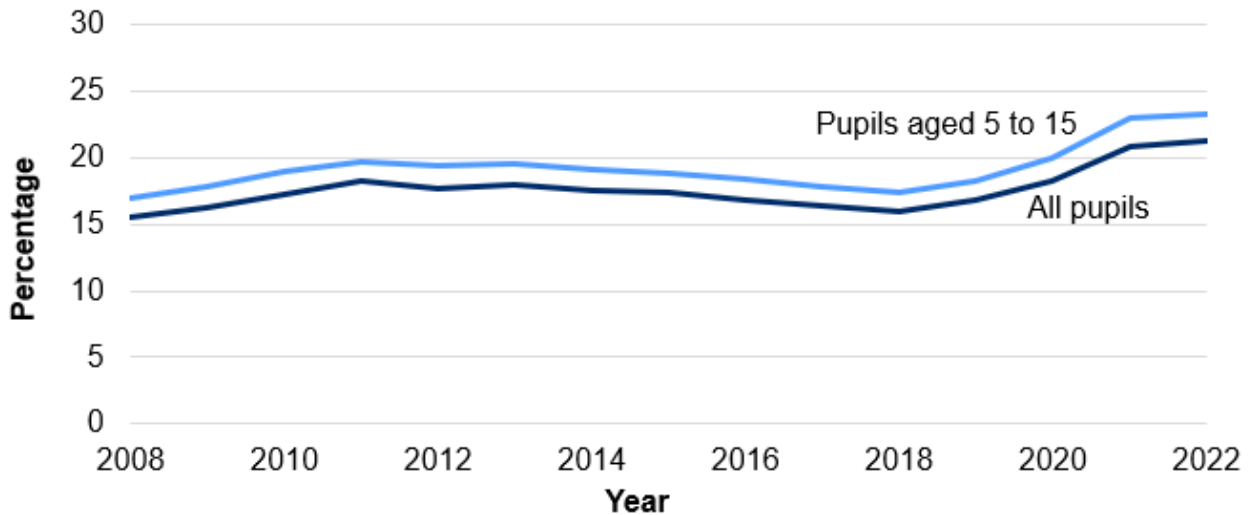
Free school meals

Pupils are eligible for **free school meals** if their families are in receipt of certain benefits/support payments.

On 17 December 2021, the Welsh Government announced that **free school meal entitlement would be extended to all primary school children**.

Implementation of this policy is planned to begin in September 2022, with the youngest learners in primary schools receiving free school meals initially.

Chart 3: Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, 2008 to 2022 (a)



Source: Schools Census

(a) Age as at 31st August of the previous year.

Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (MS Excel)

- The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals has increased each year since 2018.
- There were 100,305 pupils (21.3%) of all ages known to be eligible for free school meals at February 2022, up from 99,135 pupils (20.9%) at April 2021.
- There were 88,808 pupils (23.3%) aged 5 to 15 known to be eligible for free school meals at February 2022, up from 87,095 pupils (22.9%) at April 2021.
- These figures do not include transitional protection (see below).

Transitional protection for free school meals

On 1 April 2019 the Welsh Government introduced a new transitional protection

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for free school meals policy. This was brought in to ensure that pupils have their free school meals protected during the Universal Credit rollout period.

This protection applies to individual pupils and will continue until the end of their current schools phase, being the end of primary school or end of secondary school.

Any pupil that was eligible for free school meals on the introduction of the policy on 1 April 2019 should also be transitionally protected. In addition, any pupil that has become eligible at any point during the Universal Credit rollout under the new eligibility criteria should also be transitionally protected.

Table 4: Number and percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (FSM) or transitionally protected (TP), 2020 to 2022

	2020	2021	2022
Pupils aged 5 to 15			
Number eligible for FSM	75,157	87,095	88,808
% eligible for FSM	19.9	22.9	23.3
Number eligible for FSM or TP	79,587	95,532	102,391
% eligible for FSM or TP	21.1	25.2	26.9
Pupils of all ages			
Number eligible for FSM	85,731	99,135	100,305

	2020	2021	2022
% eligible for FSM	18.3	20.9	21.3
Number eligible for FSM or TP	90,662	108,447	114,992
% eligible for FSM or TP	19.3	22.8	24.4

Source: Schools Census

- There were 102,391 pupils (26.9%) aged 5 to 15 known to be eligible for free school meals or transitionally protected at February 2022, up from 95,532 pupils (25.2%) at April 2021.
- There were 114,992 pupils (24.4%) of all ages known to be eligible for free school meals or transitionally protected at February 2022, up from 108,447 pupils (22.8%) at April 2021.

Additional learning needs (ALN) and special educational needs (SEN)

A child has special needs if they have learning difficulties which requires special educational provision to be made for them. A learning difficulty means that the child has significantly greater difficulty in learning than most children of the same age or that the child has an impairment or health condition or is using British Sign Language and needs different educational facilities from those that the school generally provides for children. Pupils with **special educational needs** may have Statements issued by the local authority or may have their needs identified by the school. In the latter case they come under one of two further categories: **School Action** or **School Action Plus**.

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Changes to special educational needs data following the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

The **Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 (the ALN Code) and regulations** came into force on 1 September 2021 to ensure children and young people aged 0 to 25 can access additional support to meet their needs that is properly planned for and protected, with learners at the heart of the process.

Children are moving from the special educational needs (SEN) system to the additional learning needs (ALN) system in groups over 3 years, to ensure enough time for nurseries, schools, pupil referral units and local authorities to discuss the support needed and to prepare plans.

Implementation of the ALN Code has taken place in partnership with education transformation leads, delivery partners and education establishments, with a programme of learning and development, and creation of new statutory roles in local authorities, schools and the health service.

The 2022 schools census represents the first submissions from dedicated ALN Coordinators across Wales, as part of the Implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.

Analysis of the data, along with feedback from local authorities suggests that the fall in ALN/SEN pupils in 2022 is due to a systematic review by schools of their ALN/SEN registers in readiness for the rollout of the ALN system. Those pupils with low level needs, who were not identified as having a recognised ALN/SEN, were removed from the register.

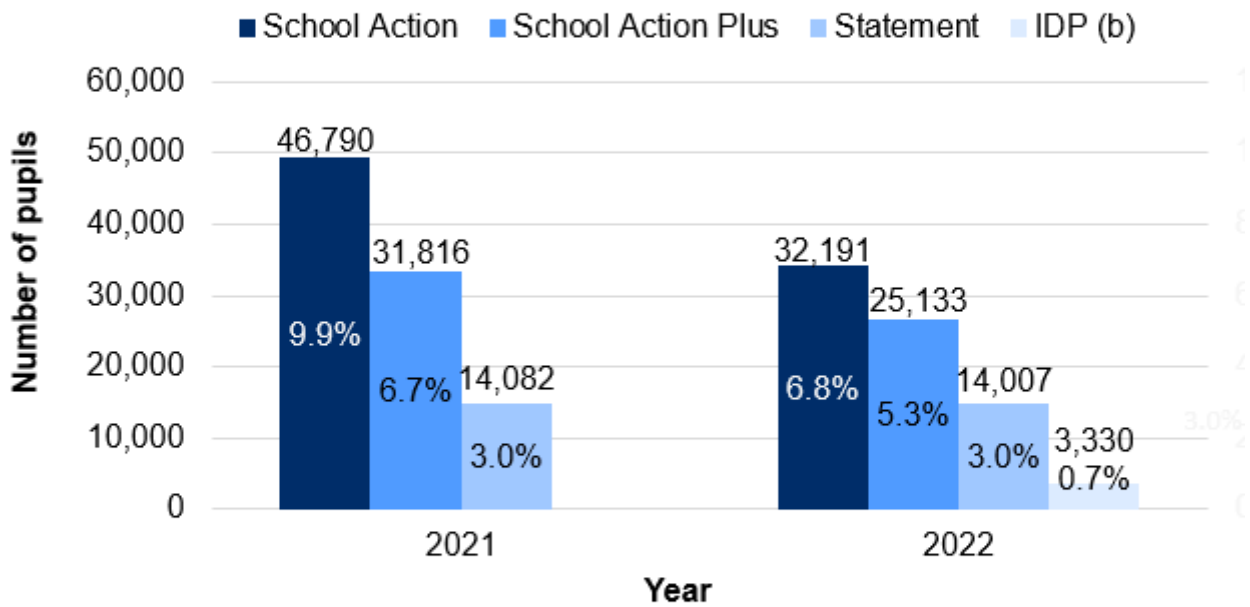
Schools were also asked to stop using the 'General learning difficulties' category and to reassess an appropriate category of need for such pupils. This category

had become a catch-all for those requiring catch up support, with minor needs and/or where multiple needs existed, instead of its original intent, which was to capture learners awaiting assessment. This has led to some pupils being removed from the register if they were identified as not having ALN/SEN. The 'General learning difficulties' category will be removed from the 2023 schools census.

Additionally, many pupils on School Action Plans (those requiring the least amount of special educational provision) have been removed from the ALN/SEN register. This was either because their needs were short term but they remained on the register, or they do not require provision additional to, or different from, that which is provided for other learners, that can be addressed as part of holistic provision.

Welsh Government will continue to monitor the numbers of learners with ALN/SEN throughout ALN system implementation and work with our partners to ensure the data presents an accurate reflection of the numbers and categories of learners with ALN/SEN in Wales, and to ensure that their needs are being met.

Chart 4: Number and percentage of pupils with additional learning needs or special educational needs in maintained schools by type of provision, 2021 to 2022 (a)



Source: Schools Census

(a) Percentages represent the percentage of all pupils with these types of SEN provision.
 (b) Individual Development Plans (IDPs) are statutory plans created under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, which came into force on 1 September 2021. A learner may have either a school maintained IDP or a local authority maintained IDP.

Number and percentage of pupils with additional learning or special educational needs in maintained schools by type of provision (MS Excel)

- There were 74,661 pupils with additional learning or special educational needs in maintained schools (15.8% of all pupils) at February 2022, down from 92,668 (19.5%) at April 2021.
- The number of pupils with School Action provision fell by 31% and the

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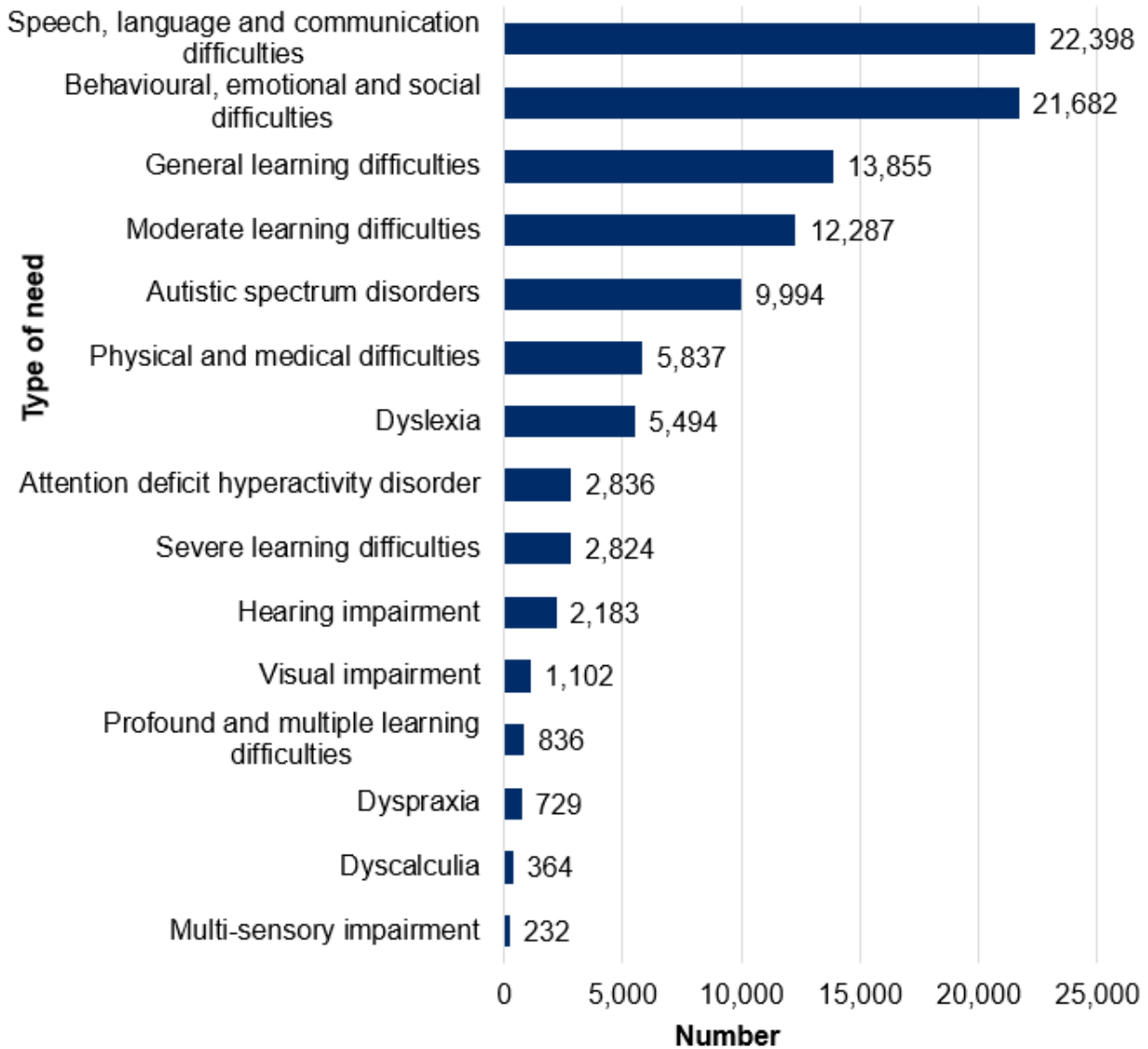
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number of pupils with School Action Plus provision fell by 21% in 2022.

- There was little change in the number of pupils with Statements of need in 2022.

Chart 5: Reports of additional learning or special educational needs in maintained schools by type of need, 2022 (a)



Source: Schools Census

(a) From January 2017 maintained schools were allowed to report as many special educational needs for a pupil as required. These reports are not ranked and therefore have no type of need that can be shown as a pupil's 'Major Need'. The chart above shows the number of times each type of need was reported. For example, if types 'Dyslexia' and 'Dyspraxia' are reported for a pupil that pupil is counted twice, once under each type. The number of ALN or SEN reports will therefore be greater than the number of pupils with ALN or SEN.

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Reports of additional learning or special educational needs in maintained schools by type of need (MS Excel)

- There were 102,653 reports of ALN or SEN type made, an average of 1.4 per pupil with ALN or SEN.
- The most common type of need reported was ‘Speech, language and communication difficulties’, representing 30.0% of pupils with some form of ALN or SEN.
- The next highest were ‘Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties’ (29.0%) and ‘General learning difficulties’ (18.6%).

Class sizes

Table 5: Average infant and junior class sizes, 2020 to 2022

Class	2020	2021	2022
Infant	25.4	25.3	24.9
Junior	26.3	26.2	25.8

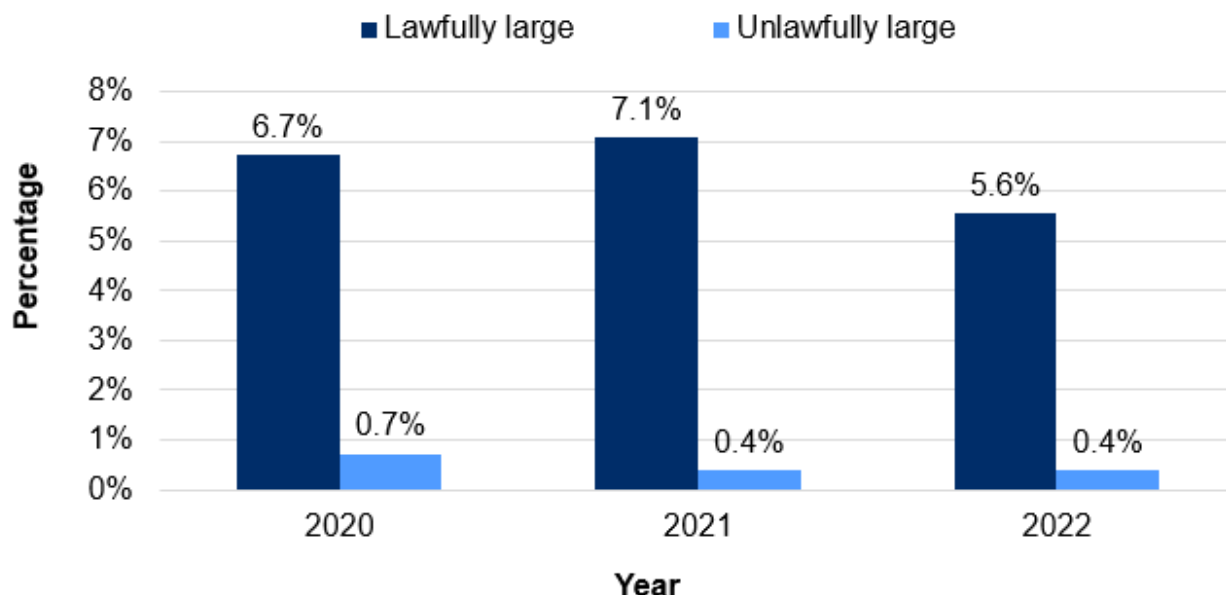
Source: Schools Census

- The average infant and junior class sizes both fell in 2022. This may be partly due to the **Welsh Government funding** provided to schools under the “recruit, recover and raise standards” plan to recruit extra staff to support pupils during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Infant classes of more than 30 pupils are unlawfully large unless specific

circumstances called 'exceptions' are satisfied.

Chart 6: Percentage of pupils in lawfully and unlawfully large infant classes, 2020 to 2022



Source: Schools Census

Percentage of pupils in lawfully and unlawfully large infant classes (MS Excel)

- There were 5,992 pupils (6.0%) in infant classes of over 30 pupils at February 2022, down from 7,617 pupils (7.5%) at April 2021.
- There were 391 pupils (0.4%) in unlawfully large classes of over 30 pupils at February 2022, little change from 385 pupils (0.4%) at April 2021.

Teachers and support staff

The School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC) was introduced in 2019 to

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provide more comprehensive information on the school workforce in Wales and help inform Welsh Government policy on issues relating to the school workforce in Wales. The data will be used in workforce planning and used to monitor equality and diversity of the school workforce. Data published in this statistical release (Schools' census results) derived using information from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) should continue to be used as the official statistics on the school workforce, and used for comparisons over time. The latest **SWAC statistical release** was published on 30 June 2022 as experimental statistics. Once the quality of the data collected through SWAC has been assured and any differences explained, the SWAC release will provide the official statistics on the school workforce in Wales.

From 2021, teacher sickness absence information has been collected through the SWAC. The SWAC collection provides greater coverage of school teacher absences in that it collects data from schools who have opted out of payroll or HR service level agreements with their local authority. For this reason, teacher sickness absence data is no longer collected separately from local authorities and is published as part of the **SWAC statistical release** only going forward.

Please see the **School Workforce Annual Census: quality report** for more details on the SWAC collection and a comparison of data items collected in SWAC and PLASC (relating to qualified teachers, teacher sickness absence and teacher recruitment and retention).

Table 6: Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) qualified teachers and support staff in maintained schools, 2020 to 2022

	2020	2021	2022
Qualified teachers	23,594	23,941	24,657

	2020	2021	2022
Support staff	23,796	23,779	24,517

Source: Schools Census

- There were 24,657 **full-time equivalent** qualified teachers in local authority maintained schools at February 2022, up 715 compared with April 2021.
- There were also 24,517 full-time equivalent support staff in local authority maintained schools at February 2022, up 738 compared with April 2021.

Definitions

Local authority maintained schools

Schools maintained by the local authorities. The authorities meet their expenditure partly from council tax and partly from general grants made by the Welsh Government.

Welsh medium schools

Primary schools include Welsh medium, dual stream and transitional schools. Middle and secondary schools include Welsh medium and bilingual schools. For further information please see these [guidance notes](#).

English medium schools

Includes English medium and English with significant Welsh.

Independent schools

Schools which charge fees and may also be financed by individuals, companies or charitable institutions.

Nursery schools

Age under 5.

Primary schools

Ages 3/4 to 10.

Middle schools

Ages 3/4 to 16/18.

Secondary schools

Ages 11 to 16/18.

Special schools

Special schools, both day and boarding, provide education for children with SEN who cannot be educated satisfactorily in mainstream schools.

Full-time equivalent (FTE)

FTE pupil numbers count part-time pupils as 0.5.

FTE of part-time teachers expresses the teachers' service in hours as a proportion of a school week: 32.5 hours for maintained schools and 26 hours for independent schools.

Pupil teacher ratio (PTR)

Calculated by dividing the FTE number of pupils by the FTE number of qualified teachers (head teachers, acting head teachers, assistant head teachers, deputy heads and other qualified teachers).

Additional learning and special educational needs

Pupils with statements

Pupils for whom the authority maintains a statement of special educational needs under Part iv of the Education Act 1996. A statement may be issued by the local authority after assessment of a child's needs.

School Action

When a class or subject teacher identify that a pupil has special educational needs they provide interventions that are additional to or different from those provided as part of the school's usual curriculum.

School Action Plus

When the class or subject teacher and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator are provided with advice or support from outside specialists, so that alternative interventions additional or different to those provided for the pupil through 'School Action' can be put in place. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator usually takes the lead although day-to-day provision continues to be the responsibility of class or subject teacher.

Individual Development Plans

Individual Development Plans (IDPs) are statutory plans created under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, which came into force on 1 September 2021. A learner may have either a school maintained IDP or a local authority maintained IDP.

Infant class sizes

The Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 and associated regulations placed a statutory duty on local authorities and governing bodies to limit the size of Reception classes to 30 from 1999; Reception and Year 1 classes from 2000 and Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 from 2001. Mixed year or mixed Key Stage classes are subject to the limit, where the majority of the class is made up of pupils in the appropriate year groups; this includes mixed nursery/reception classes.

Quality and methodology information

National Statistics status

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

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate. The designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in July 2010 following a **full assessment against the Code of Practice**.

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- added to and refined information about dimensions of quality and described links to policy
- produced the latest release in a new format to include charts which provide further insight into some of the key information
- made more data available on StatsWales

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will

discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability. It also covers specific issues relating to quality of 2022 data and describes the quality management tool applied to this area of work.

Relevance

These statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government. Some of the key users are:

- ministers and the Senedd Research in the Senedd
- members of the Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament
- education policy in the Welsh Government
- other areas of the Welsh Government
- Estyn
- the research community
- students, academics and universities
- individual citizens and private companies

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- resource allocation in the Welsh Local Government Finance Settlement and the Pupil Development Grant
- advice to ministers
- to inform the education policy decision-making process in Wales including school reorganisation
- to inform Estyn during school inspections

- the education domain of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation
- published on [My Local School](#)
- to assist in research in educational attainment

Accuracy

The census data in this release relates to all maintained and independent schools in Wales.

Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) / School Census (STATS1 Return)

Schools' data are derived from the Pupil Level Annual School Census returns and STATS1 returns supplied by schools open on Census day in January each year. The returns are authorised by headteachers and validated by Local Authorities. Due to the level of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in January 2022, the census date was delayed to 15 February 2022. School closures between December 2020 and March 2021 due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic meant that the 2021 census date was delayed to 20 April 2021.

PLASC is an electronic collection of pupil and school level data provided by all maintained schools in January each year. Schools record data on pupils and the school throughout the year in their Management Information System (MIS) software. This data is collated into an electronic PLASC return and submitted to the Welsh Government through DEWI, a secure online data transfer system developed by the Welsh Government. Various stages of automated validation and sense-checking are built into the process to ensure a high quality of data to inform policy making and funding.

Independent schools in Wales complete an aggregate STATS1 return.

Timeliness and punctuality

The census data in this release relate to the position on Tuesday 15 February 2022. DEWi was available for uploading files on 15 February 2022. Schools and local authorities were then asked to validate their data within the validation period, which closed on 20 May 2022.

Accessibility and clarity

This Statistical First Release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics section of the Welsh Government website. It is accompanied by an Open Document Spreadsheet and more detailed tables on [StatsWales](#), a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data. The data will also be published on [My Local School](#), a website designed to open up access to school data for parents and all others with an interest in their local school.

Comparability

Here is the latest available data for:

England

[Statistics: school and pupil numbers \(GOV.UK\)](#)

[Statistics: education and training UK \(GOV.UK\)](#)

Scotland

[Statistics and research \(Scottish Government\)](#)

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Northern Ireland

Education statistics (Department of Education, Northern Ireland)

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the [Wellbeing of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

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