

## **Pupil level annual school census (PLASC)**

### **Census day: 16 January 2024**

The collection of PLASC data for the 2023/2024 academic year

## **Frequently asked questions:**

### **Quick reference index**

**Date of issue:** 25 October 2023

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# PLASC data collection

## 16 January 2024 (census day)

<b>Audience</b>	Headteachers of maintained schools and local authorities.
<b>Overview</b>	These technical completion notes are provided by the Welsh Government as guidance to support the above audience in complying with their statutory duties.
<b>Action required</b>	All maintained nursery, primary, secondary, middle and special schools in Wales must submit a PLASC collection return.
<b>Further information</b>	If you need further advice on the completion of any part of your PLASC collection return, please contact your local authority in the first instance.

Enquiries about this document should be directed to:

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This document is also available in Welsh.



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## Contents

1.	All schools	1
2.	Primary schools	7
3.	Middle schools	11
4.	Secondary schools	12
5.	Special schools	16
6.	Nursery schools/units	18
7.	Pupil referral units (PRUs)	22
8.	Where can I get more help?	23

## 1. All schools

### 1.1 When is census day?

This year's census date is **Tuesday 16 January 2024**.

### 1.2 By when must I submit a PLASC return?

Your local authority will specify the deadline for schools to submit PLASC return files.

You must send your school return to them by this specified deadline for them to check it, resolve any queries with schools and send it on to the Welsh Government in the required timeframe.

### 1.3 Where do I send my completed PLASC return?

When you have completed your PLASC return and checked it for errors and queries you should send it to your local authority. They will do some additional checks then send it on to the Welsh Government. Please see [question 1.4](#) for information on how to send your PLASC file.

### 1.4 How do I send my completed PLASC file to my local authority?

Schools should use the secure transfer website for Wales, the [Data Exchange Wales initiative \(DEWi\)](#), to submit their PLASC files.

Every school should have previously received guidance notes but for more information about [DEWi](#) or to access guidance online go to <https://gov.wales/pupil-level-annual-school-census-plasc>.

### 1.5 How can I access DEWi?

Each school has been allocated a username and a password for [DEWi](#).

If you have forgotten your password you are now able to reset it by clicking on the *forgotten password* link on the home page of [DEWi](#). An email will be automatically sent to the address recorded for the school in [DEWi](#). The email will contain instructions on how to reset the password.

If you do not have a school email address recorded in [DEWi](#), have forgotten your user identification or have difficulty logging into the site then please contact your local authority for help.

### 1.6 How can I check my data?

Once you have submitted a file to the local authority and it has been successfully imported into the [DEWi](#) system, you are able to view a number of reports for an overview on your school's data; these include: number of pupils by age group, ethnicity, Welsh language, free school meals eligibility, special educational needs and first language (excluding nursery schools for first language). These will greatly assist you in ensuring your data is accurate.

You are also able to view the full school summary report in [DEWi](#), as is produced by your management information system (MIS).

Please thoroughly check the reports created in [DEWi](#) to verify pupil numbers and entitlement to free school meals as **this has a major impact on future funding calculations**.

For further information on how to view the reports please click on the help link once logged in to [DEWi](#). If you have problems viewing reports then please contact your local authority.

### 1.7 I can't find an unknown value for pupil ethnic code, what should I put?

**Unknown** is not a valid option for the pupil ethnic code item.

When a school has not had a response from the pupil or parent after having endeavoured to get one, or there has been insufficient time to seek this information, then the value **information not obtained (NOBT)** should be assigned to that pupil.

Further information on the collecting and recording of pupils' ethnic background data can be found in the [Welsh Government guidance document, Circular 006/2009](#).

### 1.8 Should a pupil not funded by my local authority be included in my PLASC return?

There are occasions where schools have pupils on roll who are not funded by their local authority or the Welsh Government. In these cases, please notify the Welsh Government of such pupils included in the PLASC return by emailing [PLASC@gov.wales](mailto:PLASC@gov.wales).

### 1.9 What should I do if I don't know a pupil's home postcode?

Whilst there are occasions where it is not possible to find and record an accurate postcode for a pupil these should be the exception not the norm. Try searching the [Royal Mail website](#) to find the correct postcode if the pupil or parents cannot provide it.

Only in exceptional circumstances should you use the school postcode in place of the actual one.

### 1.10 What should I do if I am unable to ascertain a pupil's surname?

There are some occasions where it is not possible to find out a pupil's surname due to a refusal from the parent to disclose this information. In such circumstances the local authority support team should email the Welsh Government at [PLASC@gov.wales](mailto:PLASC@gov.wales) but please be aware not to include any personal information

### 1.11 How will PLASC data impact on the collection of teacher assessments results?

In 2021/22 only the teacher assessment data for Baseline Assessments and Key Stage 3 will be collected via the regular National Data Collection (NDC).

### 1.12 Do I need to provide data on the workforce?

Yes, all schools should provide information on the workforce.

The School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC) was introduced in November 2019, to provide a comprehensive picture of the school workforce. However, the information

collected on the workforce as part of PLASC is still required to be submitted for the 2023 return. The intention is that once the accuracy and comparability of SWAC is ensured, and any differences between SWAC and PLASC data explained, the workforce elements of the PLASC return will be phased out.

### 1.13 Do I need to provide data on teaching assistants?

Yes, all schools should provide information on the number of teaching assistants (TA) if any are present in the school. If no assistants are present then no information is required.

Higher level teaching assistants (HLTA) are included as a separate category. Where a member of support staff is contracted to work as both an HLTA and a TA for different parts of the week, they should be reported in the HLTA category, but support staff should only be reported in the HLTA category if they have been formally awarded HLTA status having successfully completed the assessment process administered by the Welsh Government in Wales or the TDA in England and are deployed in a HLTA capacity for part or all of the week.

### 1.14 Should I include teachers covering planning, preparation and assessment time (PPA) in my PLASC return?

Yes. All teachers in school should be included on the PLASC return, including those in floating posts covering more than one class.

Consequently, in primary schools, the numbers of teachers in class will differ from the total full time equivalent of teachers. The validation processes at the Welsh Government will not trigger an error if the number of teachers is up to two more than the number of classes.

### 1.15 Where can I access the latest guidance on SEN data in PLASC?

Detailed guidance on special education needs (SEN) data items and selecting appropriate values was issued to local authorities and schools as <https://gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-special-educational-needs>.

The Pupil SEN Type codes are as follows:

<b>DYSL</b>	SPLD - Dyslexia
<b>DYSC</b>	SPLD - Dyscalculia
<b>DYSP</b>	SPLD - Dyspraxia
<b>ADHD</b>	SPLD - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
<b>MLD</b>	Moderate Learning Difficulties
<b>SLD</b>	Severe Learning Difficulties
<b>PMLD</b>	Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties
<b>BESD</b>	Behavioural, Emotional & Social Difficulties
<b>SLCD</b>	Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties
<b>HI</b>	Hearing Impairment
<b>VI</b>	Visual Impairment
<b>MSI</b>	Multi-Sensory Impairment
<b>PMED</b>	Physical and Medical Difficulties
<b>ASD</b>	Autistic Spectrum Disorders
<b>DNA</b>	Does not apply

**1.16 The SEN guidance no longer includes 'Q - School Action Plus and Statutory Assessment' as a valid value for the 'Pupil SEN Provision' field, but my software allows me to select it.**

Most MIS software still includes this value for local use within schools. On creation of PLASC this should automatically be changed to 'P - School Action Plus or Early Years Action Plus'. No errors should be reported.

**1.17 Why are there several items called 'provision' for SEN information?**

SEN provision is the fieldname given to 'provision types' under the SEN Code of Practice, formerly known as SEN Stage or SEN Status. Four further SEN items detail the **provision of support**: 'Curriculum and Teaching Methods', 'Grouping and Support', 'Specialised resources', and 'Advice and Assessment'.

**1.18 Should support staff employed for a one-to-one purpose be included in PLASC?**

Support staff who are present in a class specifically for one-to-one work should **not** be included in the Non Teacher count reported for each class in PLASC. They **should**, however, be counted in the staffing information section of PLASC under support staff.

**1.19 Do school email addresses need to be reported this year?**

No. Email addresses are not required.

**1.20 Census day is approaching and I've just received a new pupil in the school. How can I avoid any potential problems?**

Schools receiving a new pupil need to confirm that their former school is aware that the pupil has left and has ended their registration with them.

The receiving school should endeavour to obtain the pupil's Common Transfer File (CTF) as soon as possible to aid the data collection and inputting needs for that pupil's record. The pupil's record needs to be complete prior to producing the PLASC return.

Guidance on the common transfer system can be found in [Welsh Government circular 18/2006](#) and via the **S2S Documentation** link on the [Schools' Portal](#).

**1.21 How do I find out what the valid ethnicity codes are?**

For further information on the collection and recording of pupils' ethnic background data please consult the [PLASC technical completion notes](#).

**1.22 Do I still need to record details of SEN provision of support for pupils who have been permanently excluded but are still recorded on roll at the school on census day as an appeal is pending?**

In the case of pupils with SEN who are permanently excluded from school with an appeal pending, the school should record the pupil's SEN data including their level of provision, regardless of whether they are currently providing SEN support to that pupil or not. As the appeal process has not been concluded it is still appropriate to record what support that

pupil received before the exclusion and would receive should the appeal be upheld.

### 1.23 How should I report data if the school was closed for the whole or part of census day due to adverse weather conditions?

In abnormal situations such as school closures due to adverse weather conditions, data items that require counts specifically on Census day (full time pupils present on Census day for example) should be based on the next normal day. Please see the [PLASC technical completion notes](#) for detailed guidance against each data item required.

### 1.24 How do I record free school meal and transitional protection eligibility?

Free school meals are awarded where the parent or pupil meets the eligibility criteria and a request has been made by, or on behalf of the parent or pupil for free school meals. (A person acting on behalf of the parent or pupil would normally be a relative or friend, or someone working with/on behalf of a family to help them access all benefits they may be entitled to, for example, a representative from the [Citizens Advice Bureau](#)).

Free school meal eligibility cannot be awarded for a pupil without a request for free school meals having been made by, or on behalf of the parent or pupil. A local authority may contact a parent/carer to ask them if they would like to apply for free school meals for their children).

From 1 April 2019 the eligibility criteria for free school meals was changed in Wales due to the rollout of Universal Credit. From this date, the current eligibility is to be in receipt of Universal Credit **and** in receipt of an annual income threshold of £7,400 or less.

On 1 April 2019, the Welsh Government also introduced the policy for free school meal transitional protection. This protection is applied to any pupil who was eligible for free school meals under the previous criteria on 1 April 2019 and any pupil who becomes eligible under the new criteria during the Universal Credit rollout period, which at present is due to conclude in December 2023. Pupils who are transitionally protected will receive their free school meals under this policy until the end of their school phase, defined as the end of primary school or end of secondary school.

Note that pupils can be ineligible for free school meals as reported by the Eligibility Checking System (ECS) when the local authority processes the application, whilst at the same time entitled to free school meals due to being transitionally protected.

### 1.25 Are exclusions mandatory?

Yes, both fixed-term and permanent exclusions are mandatory.

### 1.26 What are the valid exclusion codes for this year?

The valid codes for exclusions are shown in the table below.

#### Exclusions reasons codeset

PP	Physical assault against a pupil
PA	Physical assault against an adult
VP	Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against a pupil



## Pupil Leven Annual School Census (PLASC) 2023 FAQ

VA	Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult
BU	Bullying
RA	Racist abuse
SM	Sexual misconduct
DA	Drug and alcohol related
DM	Damage
TH	Theft
DB	Persistent disruptive behaviour
OT	Other

### Exclusions category codeset

FIXD	Fixed Period
PERM	Permanent

For any further queries regarding exclusions, refer to the guidance published on the DfES website: <https://gov.wales/exclusion-schools-and-pupil-referral-units-pru>.

### 1.27 What do 'FP', 'LCW' and 'WLD' mean in the context of Study Welsh?

'FP' refers to the Foundation Phase; 'LCW' to Language, Literacy and Communication Skills (in Welsh) and 'WLD' to Welsh Language Development.

### 1.28 My school has become Federated School Status. Where do I obtain the Federated School ID/Number from?

You first need to inform the Governor Support Officer at your local authority and include an Instrument of Government. The Governor Support Officer will then inform the School Governance team who will issue a federation number, which they then pass back to the Governor Support Officer.

## 2. Primary schools

### 2.1 Free school milk eligibility for pupils is no longer required but my system is still asking me for Free school milk information.

The WG no longer requires free school milk eligibility information for each pupil but schools are still required to report on the total of free school milk taken on census day.

### 2.2 My MIS is changing the Welsh Class data fields when I select a Welsh School Medium Type.

Some MIS software is known to change the 'Welsh Class' categories reported for classes when the Welsh School Medium Type for the school is selected. Please select the correct Welsh School Medium Type *before* any editing is done on class data to avoid the selection of a different school category overriding any Welsh Class data already inputted. Please check that the Welsh Class values are reported correctly and changed if necessary prior to uploading to DEWi.

### 2.3 I'm told to enter information on the number of pupils who took a free breakfast in the week prior to census day, but the school was closed for part of that week. What information should I enter?

If the week prior to census day is not a full or typical school week then the data should be taken from the nearest typical full week prior to census day.

For more information on Free Breakfast data in PLASC then please see further guidance at <https://gov.wales/free-breakfast-primary-schools>.

### 2.4 On census day a member of staff is spending some time in one class in the morning and then with another class in the afternoon. How should that member of staff be reported?

When a teacher or member of support staff works with one class in the morning and another in the afternoon, they need to be recorded in both classes in PLASC, even if the morning class continues as an afternoon class, or if the afternoon class where the staff member moves to was also a morning class.

### 2.5 My school has three classes in the morning but continue into the afternoon as two classes. How should this situation be reported in PLASC?

The three classes that took place in the morning are those that need to be recorded, even if some pupils from one of the morning classes are part-time, assuming that there were three qualified teachers between the morning classes.

## 2.6 My school has a 'CACHE teacher in training' member of staff who isn't timetabled to work in the school on census day. Should I include this member of staff in the PLASC count?

No. This member of staff should not be included in the PLASC count of CACHE teachers in training. Only those CACHE teachers in training who work on census day should be counted in the PLASC return to avoid any double counting

## 2.7 A member of support staff in the school is contracted to work part of the week as a teaching assistant and the other part as a higher-level teaching assistant. How should I record them in PLASC?

In this instance the member of staff should be reported in the higher-level teaching assistant category only, but support staff should only be reported in the HLTA category if they have been formally awarded HLTA status having successfully completed the assessment process administered by the Welsh Government in Wales or the TDA in England and are deployed in a HLTA capacity for part or all of the week.

## 2.8 Do I need to report English as an additional language (EAL) data for pupils in PLASC this year?

The collection of stages of EAL was introduced in PLASC in 2009. Further information on this can be found in the PLASC completion notes at <https://gov.wales/pupil-level-annual-school-census-plasc-technical-completion-notes>.

## 2.9 Why should I record and report the EAL data for pupils?

The data will be very useful for schools in assessing the attainment and progressive development of EAL pupils as part of their self evaluation process and for comparison purposes. The data will also provide Local Authorities (local authorities) and the Welsh Government with a baseline for analyses and reports to support monitoring of progress by this group of learners.

## 2.10 Should pupils whose first language is Welsh be assessed and their language acquisition recorded in the EAL field?

No, this data item is **not** intended to capture English fluency levels for Welsh first language speakers, but rather to identify the English language proficiency for additional language learners whose first languages are neither English nor Welsh. Schools should use and input the same data in the EAL field for *pupils learning EAL* as supplied to the EMAS/EAL service as part of the annual survey.

## 2.11 How will I know the right EAL stage?

Details of pupils' stages of EAL are surveyed annually by specialist Ethnic Minority Achievement Services (EMAS) or EAL services within local authorities. Schools should use and input the same data in the EAL field for

*pupils learning EAL* as supplied to the EMAS/EAL service as part of the annual survey.

## **2.12 There is no SEN Provision for Foundation Phase pupils. What should be recorded for action being taken?**

Foundation Phase pupils should be considered as Early Years pupils for the purpose of SEN. Valid SEN provision categories are:

S	Statement
A	School Action/Early Years Action
P	School Action plus/Early Years Action plus
N	No Special Educational Need
C	School Maintained Individual Development Plan
L	Local Authority Maintained Individual Development Plan

## **2.13 Where have the in care details gone? Is this no longer collected in PLASC?**

We have removed all care-related items from PLASC and EOTAS due to this being collected in the [Children Receiving Care and Support Census](#).

## **2.14 PLASC and the Foundation Phase**

Data from PLASC is used to estimate the overall national cost of implementing the Foundation Phase. Allocations to local authorities are determined separately using the primary school SSA formula, as agreed with ADEW and the WLGA.

The following data items are used in these calculations. All data items are at individual class level. Further information on these data items can be found in section 6 of the PLASC guidance notes.

### **Class type, Year Group and Key stage**

The combination of these three fields is used to determine the appropriate ratio for the class.

### **Pupil numbers**

These should be recorded as headcounts and not full-time equivalents. Dually registered pupils should be included, as should pupils normally present in the class but absent on Census day. The number of pupils in the class is used to determine the staff needed to meet the appropriate ratio.

### **Teachers and support staff**

These should be recorded as headcounts and not full-time equivalents. Staff should be included regardless of how they are funded e.g., LMS, Foundation Phase grant or other sources. Exclude staff who are solely employed as part of the RAISE initiative or those providing one to one support for pupils with special educational needs.

**Staff should be recorded in all classes for which they are involved in teaching or assisting on the day of the Census e.g., for separate morning and afternoon nursery classes with the same members of staff,**

**these staff should be recorded twice.** Query 12189 will be reported rather than an error to take account of this.

## 2.15 Will my PLASC data be used in the All Wales Core Data Sets?

Yes, PLASC provides much of the contextual data that is used in the All Wales Core Data Sets.

The data sets are delivered to schools and local authorities to support school self-evaluation, promote challenge and help to identify and share good practice. The data sets are also used by Estyn as part of their inspection materials.

It is important that the PLASC data is accurately reported by schools to ensure that these tools are useful and appropriate to the school and local authority. **Of particular importance are the fields relating to each pupil's free school meal eligibility, postcode, EAL stage and special educational needs, and the size and medium of delivery in the school, all of which are currently used to determine the school families which underpin these packs.**

## 2.16 Query 12190 is reported but the teacher headcount is equal to or more than the number of teachers reported in classes. What should I do?

Rule 12190, checking teacher headcount against reported classes, may incorrectly trigger in schools' MIS as the rule isn't counting the new teaching categories AC (Acting Headteachers) and AS (Assistant Headteachers), giving an incorrect headcount figure in the error message. Schools can ignore this query and the file can be uploaded to DEWi – rule 12190 will not trigger on DEWi.

### 3. Middle schools

#### 3.1 My school is a new middle school – how do I fill in my PLASC return this January?

All middle schools should complete their own return in the same way as any other school. Any general enquiries should be directed to [IMS@gov.wales](mailto:IMS@gov.wales).

## 4. Secondary schools

### 4.1 Do I need to provide data on teaching assistants?

Yes; secondary schools are required to provide information on the number of teaching assistants.

### 4.2 For which pupils do I need to provide information on literacy and numeracy (basic skills)?

Basic skills data is not required for PLASC.

### 4.3 How do I return data for a pupil aged under 16 but taught a post-16 curriculum/taught in year 12 or above?

These pupils will be funded through the Post-16 Planning & Funding framework.

Information for any such pupils should be returned via the Post-16 collection process in October 2024.

### 4.4 How do I return data for a pupil aged over 16 but taught a key stage 4 curriculum/taught in year 11 or below?

These pupils are funded through the local authorities' Revenue Support Grant (RSG). The distribution of that grant takes account of pupils **aged over 16 but taught a key stage 4 curriculum/taught in year 11 or below** as a result of their inclusion on the PLASC return.

### 4.5 ERROR 3520 – I have recorded all my teachers who teach Welsh but I am still getting an error message, number 3520?

Check that a Teaching Welsh code has been entered for all teachers and headteachers with a teaching commitment, the error should not then be triggered.

A Teaching Welsh category should be entered for ALL teachers (that is all those who are either HT, DH, AC, AS or QT in their teacher status) except for a non-teaching headteachers. All teachers who do not or cannot teach Welsh need to be given a code of either 'NW = Qualified teachers able to teach Welsh or through the medium of Welsh, but not doing so', or 'NT = not teaching Welsh or through the medium of Welsh'.

Hence the total number of teachers with a teaching welsh category must either:

- equal the total numbers of teachers with a teaching commitment (all those who are HT, DH, AC, AS or QT)

or:

- the total numbers of teachers excluding the HT if they have no teaching

commitment (all those who are DH, AC, AS or QT).

#### **4.6 My MIS is changing the Welsh class data fields when I select a Welsh school medium type.**

Some MIS software is known to change the Welsh class categories reported for classes when the Welsh school medium type for the school is selected. Please select the correct Welsh school medium type *before* any editing is done on class data to avoid the selection of a different school category overriding any Welsh class data already inputted. Please check that the Welsh class values are reported correctly and changed if necessary, prior to uploading to DEWi.

#### **4.7 A member of support staff in the school is contracted to work part of the week as a teaching assistant and the other part as a higher level teaching assistant. How should I record them in PLASC?**

In this instance the member of staff should be reported in the higher level teaching assistant category only, but support staff should only be reported in the HLTA category if they have been formally awarded HLTA status having successfully completed the assessment process administered by the Welsh Government in Wales or the TDA in England and are deployed in a HLTA capacity for part or all of the week.

#### **4.8 Do I need to report English as an additional language (EAL) data for pupils in PLASC?**

The collection of stages of EAL was introduced in PLASC in 2009. Further information on this can be found in the PLASC completion notes at <https://gov.wales/pupil-level-annual-school-census-plasc-technical-completion-notes>.

#### **4.9 Why should I record and report the EAL data for pupils?**

The data will be very useful for schools in assessing the attainment and progressive development of EAL pupils as part of their self evaluation process and for comparison purposes. The data will also provide local authorities (LAs) and the Welsh Government with a baseline for analyses and reports to support monitoring of progress by this group of learners.

#### **4.10 Should pupils whose first language is Welsh be assessed and their language acquisition recorded in the EAL field?**

No, this data item is **not** intended to capture English fluency levels for Welsh first language speakers, but rather to identify the English language proficiency for additional language learners whose first languages are neither English nor Welsh. Schools should use and input the same data in the EAL field for *pupils learning EAL* as supplied to the EMAS/EAL service as part of the annual survey.



#### 4.11 How will I know the right EAL stage?

Details of pupils' stages of EAL are surveyed annually by specialist Ethnic Minority Achievement Services (EMAS) or EAL services within local authorities. Schools should use and input the same data in the EAL field for *pupils learning EAL* as supplied to the EMAS/EAL service as part of the annual survey.

#### 4.12 Where have the in care details gone? Is this no longer collected in PLASC?

We have removed all care-related items from PLASC and EOTAS due to this being collected in the [Children Receiving Care and Support Census](#).

#### 4.13 Error 601 and/or 11251 is reported for a 14-19 class taught off-site with no teacher attached to the class. What should I do?

Please continue with this submission. Your local authority support team should enter these details in the comments box alongside the error in DEWi.

#### 4.14 Will my PLASC data be used in the All Wales Core Data Sets?

Yes, PLASC provides much of the contextual data that is used in the All Wales Core Data Sets. The data sets are delivered to schools and local authorities to support school self-evaluation, promote challenge and help to identify and share good practice. The data sets are also used by Estyn as part of their inspection materials. It is important that the PLASC data is accurately reported by schools to ensure that these tools are useful and appropriate to the school and local authority.

**Of particular importance are the fields relating to each pupil's free school meal eligibility, postcode, EAL stage and special educational needs, and the medium of delivery in the school, all of which are currently used to determine the school families which underpin these packs.**

#### 4.15 What is a Unique Learner Number (ULN)?

The ULN is a unique 10-digit number allocated to learners over the age of 14. This number enables a learner to build a lifelong record of their qualifications and achievements in education.

#### 4.16 How do I get ULNs for my pupils?

A Learner cannot get a ULN themselves. ULNs can only be obtained from the Learning Records Service at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/learning-records-service>.

Firstly, **all** schools in Wales wishing to obtain ULNs for their pupils and students will need to:

- Check that the school's details are up to date on the Provider Register at <http://www.ukrlp.co.uk/> and note the UK Provider Reference Number

(UKPRN);

- Register with the Learning Records Service (LRS) as a Learner Registration Body;
- Issue pupils with a revised Privacy (formerly Fair Processing) Notice (available in English and Welsh on the [DfES website](#)) and record any individual's choice to 'opt out' of data sharing;
- If a school agrees to their file being sent to the LRS as part of the PLASC process, a file containing ULNs will be provided in DEWi.

#### **4.17 Error 12181 triggers for my Post-16 pupils who are not studying Welsh. What should I do?**

We have removed Codes 3 (Taught other Welsh) and 4 (Not taught Welsh at all) from the Study Welsh options, meaning those pupils with a code 3 or 4 attributed to them will need to be updated with either 1 (Taught Welsh as a first language), 2 (Taught Welsh as a second language) or 5 (Disapplied).

For the majority of non post-16 pupils codes 1, 2 or 5 will apply. However, this is not the case for Post-16 pupils who are not studying Welsh and are not statutorily obliged to do so. **Please record these pupils as 5.**

## 5. Special schools

### 5.1 Do special schools need to submit a PLASC return?

Yes, all special schools are expected to submit a PLASC return. Special schools, both with and without Post-16 provision are only required to complete the standard PLASC information. Post-16 information is **not** required from special schools.

### 5.2 My MIS system is telling me I need to include information on support staff but there are no support staff in the school.

This is an optional item for Special Schools, though it should be included if there are support staff in the school. If there are no support staff then please ignore query 840 and upload the file as normal in DEWi.

### 5.3 I'm told to enter information on the number of pupils who took a free breakfast in the week prior to census day, but the school was closed for part of that week. What information should I enter?

If the week prior to census day is not a full or typical school week then the data should be taken from the nearest typical full week prior to census day.

For more information on Free Breakfast data in PLASC then please see further guidance at: <https://gov.wales/free-breakfast-primary-schools>.

### 5.4 A member of support staff in the school is contracted to work part of the week as a teaching assistant and the other part as a higher level teaching assistant. How should I record them in PLASC?

In this instance the member of staff should be reported in the higher level teaching assistant category only, but support staff should only be reported in the HLTA category if they have been formally awarded HLTA status having successfully completed the assessment process administered by the Welsh Government in Wales or the TDA in England and are deployed in a HLTA capacity for part or all of the week.

### 5.5 Where have the in care details gone? Is this no longer collected in PLASC?

We have removed all care-related items from PLASC and EOTAS due to this being collected in the [Children Receiving Care and Support Census](#).

### 5.6 PLASC and the Foundation Phase

Data from PLASC is used to estimate the overall national cost of implementing the Foundation Phase. Allocations to local authorities are determined separately using the primary school SSA formula, as agreed with ADEW and the WLGA.

The following data items are used in these calculations. All data items are at

individual class level. Further information on these data items can be found in section 6 of the PLASC guidance notes.

### **Class type, Year Group and Key stage**

The combination of these three fields is used to determine the appropriate ratio for the class.

### **Pupil numbers**

These should be recorded as headcounts and not full-time equivalents. Dually registered pupils should be included, as should pupils normally present in the class but absent on Census day. The number of pupils in the class is used to determine the staff needed to meet the appropriate ratio.

### **Teachers and support staff**

These should be recorded as headcounts and not full-time equivalents. Staff should be included regardless of how they are funded e.g. LMS, Foundation Phase grant or other sources. Exclude staff who are solely employed as part of the RAISE initiative or those providing one to one support for pupils with special educational needs.

**Staff should be recorded in all classes for which they are involved in teaching or assisting on the day of the Census e.g. for separate morning and afternoon nursery classes with the same members of staff, these staff should be recorded twice.** Errors 616 and 895 can be ignored if caused by this double recording.

## 6. Nursery schools/units

### 6.1 Do nursery schools need to submit a PLASC return?

Yes, all nursery schools maintained by the local authority should complete and submit a PLASC return. Primary schools with nursery units must include information relating to their nursery pupils in their PLASC return.

### 6.2 When should data for Nursery pupils in early years settings be included in a PLASC?

If the funded education provision is operated by a private company or individual then this is non-maintained and PLASC data is not required regardless of whether the setting is located on school owned premises and even if a school or local authority provides some qualified teacher input. If the provision is operated (i.e. managed and staffed) by a school then it is effectively maintained. These settings should maintain pupil records and provide details through the PLASC return in the normal manner.

### 6.3 What data is required for Nursery pupils?

The PLASC data requirements are fewer for pupils below compulsory school age, for example you are not required to provide details of ethnic group or National identity.

The guidance for Nursery schools provides full details and can be found at <https://gov.wales/pupil-level-annual-school-census-plasc-technical-completion-notes>.

### 6.4 How should I record data for 3 year olds funded through the Early Years Grant in my Nursery?

Data for all nursery pupils should be recorded in the same manner as other pupils on the school management information system. In the past we have asked schools to use registration status to try and distinguish between pupils funded through revenue settlement grant and the early years grant but this is no longer necessary.

### 6.5 I'm told to enter information on the number of pupils who took a free breakfast in the week prior to census day, but the school was closed for part of that week. What information should I enter?

If the week prior to census day is not a full or typical school week then the data should be taken from the nearest typical full week prior to census day.

For more information on Free Breakfast data in PLASC then please see further guidance at: <https://gov.wales/free-breakfast-primary-schools>.

**6.6 On census day a member of staff is spending some time in one class in the morning and then with another class in the afternoon. How should that member of staff be reported?**

When a teacher or member of support staff works with one class in the morning and another in the afternoon, they need to be recorded in both classes in PLASC, even if the morning class continues as an afternoon class, or if the afternoon class where the staff member moves to was also a morning class.

**6.7 My school has three classes in the morning but continue into the afternoon as two classes. How should this situation be reported in PLASC?**

The three classes that took place in the morning are those that need to be recorded, even if some pupils from one of the morning classes are part-time, assuming that there were three qualified teachers between the morning classes.

**6.8 My school has a 'CACHE teacher in training' member of staff who isn't timetabled to work in the school on census day. Should I include this member of staff in the PLASC count?**

No. This member of staff should not be included in the PLASC count of CACHE teachers in training. Only those CACHE teachers in training who work on census day should be counted in the PLASC return to avoid any double counting.

**6.9 A member of support staff in the school is contracted to work part of the week as a teaching assistant and the other part as a higher level teaching assistant. How should I record them in PLASC?**

In this instance the member of staff should be reported in the higher level teaching assistant category only, but support staff should only be reported in the HLTA category if they have been formally awarded HLTA status having successfully completed the assessment process administered by the Welsh Government in Wales or the TDA in England and are deployed in a HLTA capacity for part or all of the week.

**6.10 Do I need to report English as an additional language (EAL) data for pupils in PLASC this year?**

The collection of stages of EAL was introduced in PLASC in 2009.

Further information on this can be found in the PLASC completion notes at <https://gov.wales/pupil-level-annual-school-census-plasc-technical-completion-notes>.

### 6.11 Why should I record and report the EAL data for pupils?

The data will be very useful for schools in assessing the attainment and progressive development of EAL pupils as part of their self evaluation process and for comparison purposes. The data will also provide local authorities and the Welsh Government with a baseline for analyses and reports to support monitoring of progress by this group of learners.

### 6.12 Should pupils whose first language is Welsh be assessed and their language acquisition recorded in the EAL field?

No, this data item is **not** intended to capture English fluency levels for Welsh first language speakers, but rather to identify the English language proficiency for additional language learners whose first languages are neither English nor Welsh. Schools should use and input the same data in the EAL field for *pupils learning EAL* as supplied to the EMAS/EAL service as part of the annual survey.

### 6.13 How will I know the right EAL stage?

Details of pupils' stages of EAL are surveyed annually by specialist Ethnic Minority Achievement Services (EMAS) or EAL services within local authorities. Schools should use and input the same data in the EAL field for *pupils learning EAL* as supplied to the EMAS/EAL service as part of the annual survey.

### 6.14 There is no SEN Provision for Foundation Phase pupils. What should be recorded for action being taken?

Foundation Phase pupils should be considered as Early Years pupils for the purpose of SEN in PLASC 2023. Valid SEN provision categories are:

S	Statement
A	School Action/Early Years Action
P	School Action plus/Early Years Action plus
N	No Special Educational Need
C	School Maintained Individual Development Plan
L	Local Authority Maintained Individual Development Plan

### 6.15 PLASC and the Foundation Phase.

Data from PLASC is used to estimate the overall national cost of implementing the Foundation Phase. Allocations to local authorities are determined separately using the primary school SSA formula, as agreed with ADEW and the WLGA.

The following data items are used in these calculations. All data items are at individual class level. Further information on these data items can be found in section 6 of the PLASC guidance notes.

#### **Class type, Year Group and Key stage**

The combination of these three fields is used to determine the appropriate ratio for the class.

### **Pupil numbers**

These should be recorded as headcounts and not full-time equivalents. Dually registered pupils should be included, as should pupils normally present in the class but absent on Census day. The number of pupils in the class is used to determine the staff needed to meet the appropriate ratio.

### **Teachers and support staff**

These should be recorded as headcounts and not full-time equivalents. Staff should be included regardless of how they are funded e.g. LMS, Foundation Phase grant or other sources. Exclude staff who are solely employed as part of the RAISE initiative or those providing one to one support for pupils with special educational needs.

**Staff should be recorded in all classes for which they are involved in teaching or assisting on the day of the Census e.g. for separate morning and afternoon nursery classes with the same members of staff, these staff should be recorded twice.** Query 12189 will be reported rather than an error to take account of this.

## **6.16 Query 12190 is reported but the teacher headcount is equal to or more than the number of teachers reported in classes. What should I do?**

Rule 12190, checking teacher headcount against reported classes, may incorrectly trigger in schools' MIS as the rule isn't counting the new teaching categories AC (Acting Headteachers) and AS (Assistant Headteachers), giving an incorrect headcount figure in the error message. Schools can ignore this query and the file can be uploaded to DEWi – rule 12190 will not trigger on DEWi.



## 7. Pupil referral units (PRUs)

### 7.1 Do pupil referral units need to submit a PLASC return?

No, a separate local authority data collection on EOTAS pupils is carried out, this includes the collection of information on pupils in PRUs. Therefore, PRUs should not submit their own PLASC.

Pupils who do not attend a mainstream school **must not** be recorded as such on the PLASC return – they **must** be recorded through EOTAS. For more information on this please email [school.stats@gov.wales](mailto:school.stats@gov.wales).

## 8. Where can I get more help?

### 8.1 Where can I get more help about PLASC?

This Q&A will be updated periodically if other issues arise that are relevant to many schools. We will place updates on our website and email local authority contacts. Completion notes are also available on our website at:

<https://gov.wales/pupil-level-annual-school-census-plasc-technical-completion-notes>. Follow links to 'Data Collections' and 'Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC)'

For queries on PLASC contact us at [PLASC@gov.wales](mailto:PLASC@gov.wales) or [IMS@gov.wales](mailto:IMS@gov.wales).

For URGENT matters contact Catherine Singleton on 0300 025 1744.