



Department  
for Education

# **School Capacity (SCAP) Survey 2024**

**Guide for local authorities**

**April 2024**

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## Summary

*How local authorities should collect and submit data for the annual school capacity survey (SCAP).*

The annual school capacity survey (SCAP) collects information on:

- School capacity: primary, secondary, and specialist provision<sup>1</sup> capacity for the current academic year.
- Pupil number forecasts:
  - for primary mainstream, pupil number forecasts for the next 5 academic years;
  - for secondary mainstream, pupil number forecasts for the next 7 academic years;
  - for primary specialist placements, pupil number forecasts for the next 5 academic years; and
  - for secondary specialist placements, pupil number forecasts for the next 7 academic years.
- Planned places: plans for changes to the number of primary and secondary places for the next 3 academic years

SCAP is a statutory collection, except where stated in this guidance.

We publish the data you provide in the [school capacity statistical releases](#).

The collection opens on **Monday 3 June 2024**.

You must submit your SCAP return by **Friday 26 July 2024**.

You are advised to start loading your data no later than **Friday 12 July 2024**.

For questions about this guidance or any issues you are unable to resolve email the Pupil Place Planning Data Team at [SCAP.PPP@education.gov.uk](mailto:SCAP.PPP@education.gov.uk) for advice.

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<sup>1</sup> For special schools and Special Educational Needs Units and Resourced Provision in mainstream schools only.

## Changes from the previous school capacity survey

*Details of what's changed since the last survey:*

- The Planned Places return is available for special schools, on a voluntary basis.

## Which schools to include

*Explains which schools are in scope for SCAP*

### Mainstream schools

Survey returns must include mainstream schools with capacity in any of the year groups from reception to year 11 on **1 May 2024**. This includes:

- local authority maintained schools
- academies, including:
  - free schools
  - city technology colleges
  - university technical colleges
  - studio schools

Survey returns must exclude:

- nursery schools and nursery units within schools
- pupil referral units and alternative provision settings
- mainstream independent schools
- 16-19 establishments

### Special schools (capacity return)

Survey returns must include special schools with capacity in any of the year groups from reception to year 11 on **1 May 2024**. This includes:

- local authority maintained schools
- academies, including free schools
- non-maintained special schools<sup>2</sup>

Survey returns must exclude:

- nursery schools and nursery units within schools
- pupil referral units and alternative provision settings<sup>3</sup>
- independent special schools
- 16-19 establishments

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<sup>2</sup> Whilst LA commissioning processes for NMSS may differ from other state-funded schools, for the purposes of this collection NMSSs are considered to be state-funded as they are maintained by way of a funding agreement with the Secretary of State and receive capital funding directly from the DfE for the purposes of condition and general maintenance.

<sup>3</sup> Due to local variation in alternative provision delivery models, we are not collecting capacity data on alternative provision settings as part of SCAP24. However the DfE will keep this position under review for future collections.

## How to determine net capacity

*Explains how to calculate the net capacity for reporting to the school capacity survey.*

The methodology used to calculate the net capacity reported to the school capacity survey depends on whether the school is a local authority maintained school, an academy, or a special school.

The net capacity of a school will not necessarily equal exactly the sum of the capacity by year groups, for a variety of reasons.

For mainstream schools, you should not record capacity figures that are lower than indicated by a Net Capacity Assessment or the funding agreement. Such capacity figures will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances and where the reduction in capacity is likely to be long-term, for example, where a school operates below capacity for a period as part of a strategy to improve school performance. In such circumstances we would expect this to have been discussed between the relevant Regional Director, local authority, academy trust and DfE Pupil Place Planning team as appropriate. You should record notes detailing such cases, as we may query the capacity of such schools.

### Capacity for local authority maintained schools

The net capacity of a maintained school is calculated using a net capacity assessment (NCA) which is based on the net area of all buildings that are available to that school. It should also include:

- all extra places that have been added to the school (even though they may not yet be in use);
- any classrooms that have been mothballed; and
- and non-teaching space that has been re-designated as a classroom.

Further guidance on calculating the net capacity of schools is [available](#).

### Capacity for academy schools

We would usually expect the capacity of an academy reported in the school capacity survey to be based on the capacity recorded in the school's funding agreement, which in turn should have been based on the most recent net capacity assessment before the school converted.

Where an NCA has been carried out, either through the Department's [NCA programme](#) or by some other means, the resulting net capacity figure should be reported.

If using an academies funding agreement as the source of capacity information: Where a change has been or is to be made to the physical capacity of an academy, the trust should first consult the [guidance](#) for making significant changes and follow the process

where required to gain approval for the change. Whether approval is needed or not, trusts should in all cases take action to amend the capacity figure in their funding agreement.

Where changes to an academy funding agreement have not yet been made following a capacity change, you may find the following examples helpful in completing the capacity return.

### Example 1

An academy has reduced its PAN below that stated in the funding agreement, but no buildings have been removed or re-purposed

Funding agreement capacity	Published Admission Number (PAN)	PAN x number of year groups	Number on roll	Reported SCAP capacity
750	120	600	598	750

The reduction or limiting of PAN should have been carried out in accordance with the admissions code but does not require a deed of variation to the funding agreement nor a change to the capacity reported in SCAP.

The physical space continues to be available should it be required in future and the funding agreement capacity should therefore, in general, continue to be recorded as the capacity in your return.

The capacity by year group reported should reflect the lower PAN of 120 for the year groups which admitted to the lower PAN of 120.

### Example 2

An academy has its PAN set above that indicated by the funding agreement, but no buildings have been added. The number on roll continues to be lower than the funding agreement.

Funding agreement capacity	Published Admission Number (PAN)	PAN x number of year groups	Number on roll	Reported SCAP capacity
750	180	900	654	750



An increased or high PAN can be used to facilitate an overall increase in pupil numbers where these are low.

If the numbers on roll continue to be lower than the capacity in the funding agreement there could be uncertainty about whether the physical space could accommodate the total number indicated by the PAN multiplied by the number of year groups.

The funding agreement capacity should, in general, continue to be recorded as the capacity in your return and the capacity by year group should reflect the higher PAN of 180 for the year groups which admitted to the higher PAN of 180.

However, if the academy is confident that higher numbers could be accommodated, it may be useful to discuss with the trust if a net capacity assessment could usefully establish the position, and if needed, a deed of variation taken forward to amend the capacity figure in the funding agreement.

### Example 3

An academy has its PAN set above that indicated by the funding agreement, but no buildings have been added. The number on roll reflects higher admission numbers.

<b>Funding agreement capacity</b>	<b>Published Admission Number (PAN)</b>	<b>PAN x number of year groups</b>	<b>Number on roll</b>	<b>Reported SCAP capacity</b>
750	180	900	897	900

Where the number on roll consistently reflects uptake of the higher PAN, and there is a high degree of certainty that the physical space can accommodate the total number indicated by the PAN multiplied by the number of year groups.

The PAN x number of year groups should, in general, be recorded as the net capacity in your return in these instances and the capacity by year group should reflect the higher PAN.

### Example 4

An academy's admissions are higher than the funding agreement capacity figure and PAN.

<b>Funding agreement capacity</b>	<b>Published Admission Number (PAN)</b>	<b>PAN x number of year groups</b>	<b>Number on roll</b>	<b>Reported SCAP capacity</b>
750	180	900	1025	900

As in example 3, there is a high degree of certainty that the physical space can accommodate the total number indicated by the PAN multiplied by the number of year groups.

The PAN x number of year groups should, in general, be recorded as the capacity in your return and the capacity by year group should reflect the higher PAN.

As the academy is under no obligation to admit above PAN or the funding agreement capacity, the higher admission numbers reflected in number on roll are uncertain and should not be used to determine capacity.

You should record notes to explain the pupils in excess of capacity, particularly for academies in areas of pressure, as we may undertake further investigation of the recorded capacity with the academy trust and the local authority.

### **Example 5**

An academy with sixth form has its PAN set above the capacity indicated by the funding agreement but no buildings have been added. The numbers on roll continue to be lower than the funding agreement capacity figure.

<b>Funding agreement capacity</b>	<b>Published Admission Number (PAN)</b>	<b>PAN x number of year groups</b>	<b>Number on roll</b>	<b>Reported SCAP capacity</b>
900 including 100 sixth form	170	950	891 (including 51 sixth form)	900

If the numbers on roll continue to be lower than the total capacity in the funding agreement there is uncertainty on whether the physical space could accommodate the total number indicated by the PAN multiplied by the number of year groups plus sixth form.

The increased pre-16 PAN may only be accommodated by temporary use of sixth form capacity.

The funding agreement capacity should, in general, continue to be recorded as the capacity in your return and the capacity by year group for pre-16 should reflect the higher PAN of 170.

Where the sixth form still operates, you should report a sixth form capacity using the guidance on calculating sixth form capacity.

### Example 6

An academy no longer admits to the sixth form but the funding agreement still contains a 6th form capacity.

Funding agreement capacity	Published Admission Number (PAN)	PAN x number of year groups	Number on roll	Reported SCAP capacity
750 which includes 150 sixth form	135	675	682 (0 in 6th form)	750 0 sixthform

Removal of the sixth form provision should have been carried out in accordance with the admissions code and [significant change](#) process.

Where the sixth form is no longer operating, the sixth form capacity may be reduced to 0.

The full funding agreement capacity should, in general, continue to be recorded as the capacity in your return and the capacity by year group for pre-16 should reflect the current PAN.

## Capacity for sixth forms/post 16

The school capacity survey includes a field for sixth form capacity, with an associated field describing the basis on which this figure has been calculated.

The existing field that provides the whole school net capacity should include the sixth form capacity. The sixth form capacity field should reflect the number of places out of the overall net capacity that are related to the sixth form.

Where sixth form capacity and calculation method has been completed, we would not expect these to change, unless there is a good reason (e.g. as a result of an updated NCA or an NCA has been carried out for the first time).

## **Option 1: Based on Net Capacity Assessment (Preferred method)**

Use the data within the net capacity assessment tool to calculate the sixth form capacity. The data required are:

- net capacity
- number of age groups
- average sixth form stay on rate
- year 12 admission, if applicable

A sixth form capacity can be calculated using the following calculation:

(net capacity divided by number of age groups) multiplied by (average sixth form stay on rate plus year 12 admission)

## **Option 2: Based on Funding agreement (for academies)**

Use the post-16/sixth form pupil capacity reported in the academies funding agreement.

Funding agreements can be found under the workforce and finance section of the [school performance service](#).

## **Other options for calculating capacity**

If options 1 and 2 are not suitable, you may use one of the following methodologies. If you use one of these methodologies, we may ask for information about why options 1 and 2 are not suitable.

Only use these options if it will result in a significantly different but more accurate sixth form capacity measurement than using options 1 or 2. If the sixth form capacity determined by any of the following options are similar to that under options 1 or 2, then please report the sixth form capacity using options 1 or 2.

## **Option 3: PAN or capacity by year group-based measure**

Subtract the total capacity by year groups for years 7 to 11 from the overall school capacity to leave a nominal sixth form capacity.

This method is not acceptable where you know that the school is operating at a substantially lower PAN than the capacity in the NCA or funding agreement indicates.

## **Option 4: typical operating style**

Use knowledge of your schools' typical operating style. For example, if you have had a conversation with the school and they have stated their sixth form capacity, which may differ from other methods but suits their operating style.

Only use the typical operating style if it better reflects 6th form capacity that is significantly different to options 1, 2 or 3.

### **Option 5: Other options for calculating sixth form capacity**

If you use a method not listed and it results in the same figure that would have been reached via options 1 to 4, then report that method rather than 'other'.

If you chose this option, add a note to COLLECT to inform us how you calculated the capacity.

We would not expect you to use this option if you have used any of the above in previous SCAP returns.

## Capacity for specialist provision

This is the second year we are collecting capacity data for special schools and SEN units and resourced provision within mainstream schools. As special schools sit outside the admissions code, and have a duty to admit pupils for whom the school is named in their EHCP, we recognise that some special schools will not have previously attempted to assess or define their available capacity. For the purposes of reporting capacity data LAs should therefore rely on the following sources of information in respect of the special schools in their area.

LAs should report the total available specialist capacity in any given institution. For SCAP24 we are again not requiring LAs to break down their available capacity into different types of SEND provision or categories of need.

### Recommended Option – Special School Net Capacity Assessment

The department has produced a new Special School Net Capacity Assessment Tool, designed to support local authorities to calculate the total pupil capacity of a special school. The tool has been designed to resemble the mainstream net capacity assessment tool used for mainstream schools, but with adaptations to reflect the additional complexity and space requirements of specialist provision.

Use of the Special School NCA tool is not compulsory, but we would strongly encourage any LAs seeking to establish the capacity of a special school for the first time to use the new tool as a guide to the potential capacity of said school. The tool is currently available as a 'Beta' version and we expect to continue to refine and develop the tool over time based on feedback from local authorities. Any LAs seeking access to the Special School NCA tool should email [SCAP.PPP@education.gov.uk](mailto:SCAP.PPP@education.gov.uk) to receive the latest copy of the tool and guidance.

As the Special School NCA tool remains a 'Beta' version, it is intended as a guide for available capacity in line with relevant space standards (i.e. BB104)<sup>4</sup>. It may not necessarily reflect capacity in use, or appropriately reflect every school's unique circumstances. Ultimately it is for LAs to determine whether a Special School NCA accurately reflects the capacity of the school in question, or whether it may be more appropriate to rely on alternative sources of information when reporting the capacity of the school in question.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/area-guidelines-and-net-capacity>

## Other Sources of Special School Capacity Information

If a special school net capacity assessment is not available, LAs can rely on other sources of data when reporting capacity of their special schools. In rough order of preference, these data sources include (but are not limited to):

- Any capacity figure for the school that may have been agreed as part of a significant change request, either as a [prescribed alteration to a maintained school](#) or as part of request for [a significant change to an open academy](#).
- The school's 'planned number of places' as per the schools funding agreement (academies only)
- The number of 'funded places' as agreed as part of ESFA's High Needs Place Funding process (academies and institutions funded by ESFA directly only)<sup>5</sup>
- Typical operating figure – any capacity figure that may be used or understood locally e.g. to help inform pupil placements and local strategic planning.
- A school's self-reported capacity as captured in [Get information about Schools](#)

LAs should specify the source of each special school's capacity information as part of their SCAP return.

We expect LAs and schools to work co-operatively to establish an appropriate capacity figure that best reflects the available capacity in that institution. For their part, schools should endeavour as far as is practical to support any LA efforts to establish an agreed capacity figure for their school, for example by facilitating access to conduct a net capacity assessment.

LAs and schools should note that the capacity information reported in SCAP is intended for planning purposes only. It does not have any wider statutory implication in respect of special schools' responsibilities under the 2014 Childrens and Families Act (i.e. it has no legal bearing on whether a particular placement at said school may or may not be appropriate), or in respect of any statutory 'prescribed alteration' that may apply, or any other relevant legislation. If a local authority and a school cannot agree a mutually acceptable capacity figure, as the responsibility for ensuring a sufficient supply of places rests with local authorities, the DfE will take the LAs determination of the school's capacity as final for the purposes of the SCAP24 collection.

LAs do not need to provide a breakdown of capacity by year group. For all-through schools LAs should provide capacity split by primary and secondary. See "Recording separate primary and secondary capacity" section. For secondary schools, LAs should

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<sup>5</sup> Only where funded places is reflective of capacity. If using 'places funded' LAs should ensure that this does not result in a reported capacity higher or lower than that which could be accommodated in practice.

attempt to report the capacity available for post-16. See 'Recording sixth form/post 16 capacity' section.

## SEN Units & Resourced Provision

SEN Units & resourced provision are forms of specialist provision found within mainstream schools. However, they are distinct from instances where pupils with or without an EHCP may be receiving special educational provision **solely in mainstream classes** (with or without additional SEND support or the with the assistance of High Needs revenue top-up funding). Some LAs may not locally make a clear distinction between SEN units, resourced provision, or other forms of support in mainstream classes, or may use alternative terms for equivalent types of provision (Enhanced Resource Bases etc.). For the purposes of SCAP, formal SEN Units and Resourced Provision are defined as follows:

- SEN units are special provisions within a mainstream school where the children are taught mainly within separate classes.
- Resourced Provision is where places are reserved at a mainstream school for pupils with a specific type or types of SEN, but who are taught mainly within mainstream classes but require a base and some specialist facilities around the school.
- SEN Units and resourced provision will generally:
  - receive additional funding from the local authority specifically for the purpose of the provision.
  - cater for a specific type or types of SEN (e.g., autistic spectrum disorders, severe learning difficulties etc.).
  - are usually for pupils with statements or EHC plans (but could include pupils with SEN but without a statement or plan<sup>6</sup>).

Other indications that a particular form of special provision in mainstream settings might be consider a formal SEN units and Resourced Provision, is that they will generally be 'reserved' for pupils with (or awaiting) an EHCP, and placements will usually be commissioned by the LA through the EHCP process, rather than accessed by pupils utilising standard admission arrangements. They will generally sit outside the school's mainstream PAN (though exact arrangements may differ from school to school). Finally SEN units and Resourced Provision will generally receive dedicated additional funding to support the specialist nature of the provision, usually in the form of receiving High Needs

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<sup>6</sup> Generally only where such a pupil is awaiting or undergoing an EHCP assessment.



place funding for a certain number of specialist places, as part of the LAs local high needs funding process.<sup>7</sup>

LAs will need to determine the capacity of any SEN units and resourced provision within mainstream schools, though utilising a full NCA assessment may not be appropriate unless the SEN unit operates in practice as a fully self-contained unit. Key sources of capacity information for SEN units and resourced provision are likely to include.

- The recorded capacity of any SEN unit or resourced provision that may be recorded in the academy's funding agreement (academies only)
- The number of 'funded places' agreed with the local authority as part of the LA's high needs place funding process.
- A typical operating figure – any capacity figure that may be used or understood locally e.g. to help inform pupil placements and local strategic planning.
- The maximum number of EHCP pupils the provision could accept before it would impact the schools ability to admit pupils without EHCPs up to its stated mainstream PAN.
- The capacity of any SEN units or resourced provision as captured in [Get information about Schools](#).
- Alternatively, local authorities may need to request this information from schools directly.

LAs do not need to provide a breakdown of SEN units or Resourced Provision capacity by year group. For all-through schools LAs should provide capacity split by primary and secondary. See "Recording separate primary and secondary capacity" section.

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<sup>7</sup> See High Needs Funding Operational Guidance for more information on place vs top-up funding of SEN units and resourced provision. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-funding-arrangements-2023-to-2024>

# The capacity data required and how to add the data to COLLECT

*Information on adding your school capacity data.*

The school capacity data is submitted using the COLLECT system which can be accessed using DfE Sign In. Guides for local authorities submitting data using COLLECT are available.

The school level data within the school capacity return should reflect the position as at 1 May 2024.

The list of schools and associated capacity data are prepopulated based on the lists confirmed with you in Spring 2024 and the capacity figures you provided in SCAP 2023. Any updates will be from information on the Get Information About Schools system.

## Recording updates to school list in COLLECT

If you have updates to the list of schools, you will need to make them in the COLLECT system.

To select a school in order to view the data and update the record, click on the school name. This will highlight the selected school in blue. Then click the 'Edit' button.

## Schools converted to academy status

For any listed schools that have since converted to academy status, mark the existing school on the list as closed. Then set the value of the 'close existing school and preserve data to create a new school (overnight)' field to 'true'.

After the overnight update, the school will appear in the new school section. You can then change the governance and any of the other school details which need to be updated.

## Schools that have merged

For any schools which have merged, you should mark one of the existing schools as closed. For the other school mark as closed and set the 'close existing school and preserve data to create a new school (overnight)' field to 'true'.

After the overnight update, you will need to update the new school section to reflect the school details and combined capacity. This includes updating the:

- school name
- establishment number
- governance code

- net capacity
- capacity by year group

## New schools

For any completely new schools (not including those created by academy conversion or amalgamation), add these in the 'new schools' section.

You must complete all other data fields for the school, including the number on roll as at May 2024.

## Closed schools

For any completely closed schools, mark them as closed.

## Split site schools (mainstream only)

Where a school is split between different planning areas because it operates from different sites, each site should be reported separately in the appropriate planning area. The capacity data reported should relate to each separate site.

Report the main site using the school's establishment number and report any ancillary sites using an artificial establishment number beginning with 99. This will raise a query within COLLECT. In response to the query, state the real establishment number of the school.

The split site indicator field will allow you to indicate that a school is split between different planning areas. This indicator should be reported against each site of a school, not only the main or ancillary sites.

If you are reporting a split site for the first time, you must complete all data fields for any ancillary sites in the "new schools" section, including the number on roll as at May 2024. The capacity details of the main site in the "existing schools" section should also be edited to be specific to the main site.

As **special schools** will form a single specialist planning area, LAs should simply report the total capacity across all relevant sites.

## Recording net capacity

Each school must have a value in the net capacity field. We would not expect a significant number of schools to lose capacity each year. If a school has significantly reduced capacity since the previous collection, you must add a note in COLLECT to explain why.

## Maintained schools

For local authority maintained schools, report the capacity as at 1 May 2024.

This should be based on an up-to-date net capacity assessment for each school, and not on how many children the school admits or the sum of deemed capacity by year group.

The net capacity should exclude any SEN Unit or resourced provision capacity, which should be recorded in the relevant separate fields. The net capacity assessment automatically excludes SEN Unit or resourced provision capacity, therefore any SEN Unit or resourced provision capacity will not need to be deducted from the capacity calculated by a net capacity assessment.

If you are aware of an upcoming change to a school's capacity, you should still record the capacity as at 1 May 2024. If appropriate, details of the upcoming change should be recorded in the planned places section (see below).

## Academies

For an academy, we would usually expect the capacity to be based on the capacity recorded in the school's funding agreement (this is usually based on the last net capacity assessment prior to conversion).

This should exclude any SEN unit or resourced provision capacity, which should be recorded in the relevant separate fields. The capacity recorded in the funding agreement should have been based on the most recent net capacity assessment before the school converted, which automatically excludes SEN Unit or resourced provision capacity. Therefore any SEN Unit or resourced provision capacity will not need to be deducted from the capacity recorded in the funding agreement.

Funding agreements can be found in the workforce and finance section of the [school performance tables](#) or the academy website. **You must confirm capacity details with your academies to check they are up to date.**

Where an academy has repeatedly operated an admission number higher than the capacity figure in the funding agreement (and repeatedly admitted up to that admission number), and you expect it will continue to do so, report the academy's capacity as the 2023/24 published admission number (PAN) multiplied by the number of year groups.

Any decrease in admissions not involving a physical change to the building should be carried out in accordance with the Admissions Code, and you should continue to report the capacity based on the funding agreement.

Where physical alterations are made to buildings which will reduce net capacity, a deed of variation (DoV) should be completed by the academy/trust to amend the capacity figure in their funding agreements. A Net Capacity Assessment may be required. Until

the physical capacity has been removed or an NCA has been carried out, you should continue to report capacity at the higher level.

Further examples on academy capacity are available in the “How to determine net capacity” section of this guidance.

## **New or expanded local authority maintained schools or academies filling up**

For new or expanded local authority maintained schools or academies filling up the built capacity year-on-year, net capacity should reflect the final intended total built capacity, even if it is still filling up or based on a temporary site with limited capacity.

## **Free schools**

For free schools, you should report the final intended capacity of the school as per the funding agreement, even if it is still filling up or based on a temporary site with limited capacity.

This should exclude any SEN Unit or resourced provision capacity, which should be recorded in the relevant separate fields.

For free schools that opened in September 2023, capacity information has been prepopulated for you based on the funding agreement.

We will only expect you to make changes to this information if you think this is incorrect or if there has been a change to the final intended capacity of the school.

## **Special schools**

For all special schools, report the available capacity as at 1 May 2024. As detailed the “How to determine net capacity” section above, this can be based on the most suitable method for the school, such as a special school net capacity assessment, funding agreement, or typical operating figure.

If you are aware of an upcoming change to a school’s capacity, you should still record the capacity as at 1 May 2024. If appropriate, details of the upcoming change can be recorded in the planned places section (see below).

## **Recording separate primary and secondary capacity**

Where the school (mainstream or special) is a middle or all-through school, you must also complete both the primary and secondary capacity fields to show how the capacity is split between the 2 phases.

The combined figures must equal the net capacity of the school.

Do not complete these fields for only primary and only secondary schools.

For mainstream schools only, this should exclude any SEN unit or resourced provision, which should instead be recorded in the relevant separate primary and secondary fields.

For middle and all-through special schools, or SEN units and resourced provision in middle and all-through mainstream schools – if the capacity by primary and secondary is not known, then LAs should make the best approximation they can based on the information available (e.g. split by current numbers on roll in each phase).

## **Recording sixth form/post 16 capacity**

Make sure you include sixth form or post-16 capacity within the total capacity figure for any school with post-16 provision. Where sixth form or post-16 capacity is provided, we may use this data to consider the impact of under-populated sixth forms.

For mainstream schools only, sixth form or post-16 capacity should exclude any SEN Unit or resourced provision capacity.

Where a figure for sixth form capacity is entered, select from the drop-down list the method used to calculate the capacity. Unless inappropriate for a given school, report the sixth form capacity based on funding agreement or net capacity assessment. If you choose to use another method, we may query your reason for not using one of these 2 methods. Further guidance on sixth form capacity is available in the “How to determine net capacity” section of this guidance.

For special schools with post-16 places, if the post-16 capacity is not known, then LAs should make the best approximation they can based on the information available (e.g. current numbers on roll).

## **Recording SEN unit/resourced provision capacity**

The capacity of SEN units and resourced provision should NOT be included in the school’s total capacity figure. The capacity of any SEN units and resourced provision within mainstream schools should be determined in line with the guidance set out above.

For primary and secondary schools, report all SEN unit and resourced provision under ‘SEN Unit Capacity’ and ‘RP Capacity’ respectively.

Where the school with a SEN unit or resourced provision is a middle or all-through school, you must complete both the primary and secondary capacity fields to show how the total capacity is split between the 2 phases, and the total SEN unit and RP capacity fields. If the capacity by primary and secondary is not known, then LAs should make the best approximation they can based on the information available (e.g. split by current numbers on roll in each phase).

## Recording Capacity by year group (mainstream only)

Capacity by year group should relate to the number of places available in each year group as at 1 May 2024. Usually, this will be the published admission number (PAN) for that year's cohort but may vary if accommodation was added later. Include any bulge classes (whether they were added at the point of entry or later) in this figure. If a small number of additional pupils were admitted over PAN through appeals, you do not need to add this to the capacity by year group.

For mainstream schools only, this should exclude any SEN unit or resourced provision capacity.

Capacity by year group will be prepopulated using the information provided in the previous school capacity survey, rolled forward by 1 year (for example, the previous year 7 capacity will now be in year 8). You will only need to enter capacity by year group for the missing year(s) of entry to the school, unless any changes have been made to capacity in other year groups. You must ensure capacity is recorded for each year group from reception to year 11 that has pupils on roll.

The sum of capacity by year group (year groups reception to 11 plus 6th form capacity) will not necessarily equal exactly the total capacity, for a variety of reasons. For example:

- An academy PAN reduction is unlikely to reduce the capacity in the funding agreement but will be reflected in the capacity of the year group(s) which have been affected by the PAN reduction.
- A bulge class accommodated in space not intended for long-term teaching, such as a library, would be reflected in the capacity by year group total but may not increase net capacity.

For year groups which have had their pupil numbers limited for operational reasons to a number below the PAN that was in place at the time the cohort was admitted, the year group capacity recorded should be the PAN that was in place at the time the cohort was admitted. When entering the data on COLLECT, state in the notes for the affected year groups the limited year group capacity.

## New or expanded local authority maintained schools or academies filling up

For new or expanded local authority maintained schools or academies filling up the built capacity year-on-year, capacity by year group should be specified for and reflect all year groups that will be served by the final intended total built capacity. This applies to any cohorts which have already been admitted, even if they were admitted with a reduced PAN. We will query capacity by year group which appears to show year on year growth of capacity in use rather than final intended capacity by year group.

For presumption schools that opened in September 2023, capacity by year group information has been pre-populated for you from departmental data.

Where school capacity is reducing, record the final intended capacity for each year group.

## **Free schools**

For free schools, you should report the final intended capacity by year group of the school as per the funding agreement, even if it is still filling up or based on a temporary site with limited capacity. For free schools that opened in September 2023, capacity by year group information has been pre-populated for you from their funding agreement. We would only expect you to make changes to this information if there has been a change to the final intended capacity by year group of the school.

## **Recording Pupil Numbers On Roll**

The numbers on roll information for each school will be prepopulated for all existing schools from the number of registered pupils on the most recent spring school census. All full-time and part-time pupils in designated nursery classes are excluded from the prepopulated number on roll.

The final school capacity survey dataset (and our published tables) will use the more up to date data from the summer school census.

If you are entering details in the 'new schools' section, you will need to provide the numbers on roll for each year group for that school. This should include any year 14 pupils, as recorded on the 2024 summer school census.

## **Recording net capacity method**

The method used to calculate net capacity can be reported. Where a net capacity assessment has been used to calculate net capacity, the date on which the net capacity assessment was completed can also be reported. The reporting of these data is voluntary. The completion of these data will improve our understanding of the application of the net capacity assessment and funding agreement data currently held, reducing communication required during data cleaning and informing future collection requirements

## **Using the Excel templates to upload data**

Your capacity data can be uploaded to COLLECT using the Excel XML template we provide. The Excel template cannot be used to submit your data via email.

The data collection service desk will send out the templates in late May 2024 to the nominated contact for your local authority. The templates will be sent via the secure



School to School (S2S) system. If you have issues with S2S, contact the service desk using the service request form.

## Common queries

### **Query: Unexpected school establishment number**

You must give details in the notes for any schools which are not present in the Get Information About Schools system. This will be required for the ancillary sites of any split site schools.

### **Query: The total of the capacity by year group fields does not match total capacity (mainstream only)**

We would expect the total capacity to be roughly equal to the sum of the capacity of each year group.

Check you have correctly reflected any expansions or contractions to the size of the school. For example, if you have added a 1FE expansion to a primary school, raising the total capacity by 210 places, the capacity of each year group should have increased by roughly 30.

If the same query was raised on the school in SCAP 2023, the note will be prepopulated for you. If your situation has changed, update the note.

### **Query: The number of pupils is in excess of capacity**

We would expect it to be difficult to fit many pupils into the school above its capacity. Check if you have forgotten to record an increase to the capacity of the school.

It may be that the school does manage to accommodate extra children, for example by:

- using non-teaching spaces as classrooms;
- classrooms being able to fit a few extra children into each class than whole school capacity would suggest.

You will need to explain the reason for the number of pupils being in excess of capacity in the note you attach to the query. If the same query was raised on the school in SCAP 2023, the note will be prepopulated for you. If your situation has changed, update the note.

### **Query: Capacity of the school has substantially decreased.**

We would usually expect, particularly in areas in which there is pressure on places, that capacity would remain static or increase year on year and that places would not be removed. If you have decreased capacity at some schools, give details in your notes.

## The forecast data required (mainstream only)

### What you have to include

Your forecasts must reflect the **actual number of pupils that you expect to have to provide a mainstream place for**, in each academic year in each planning area. This should be based on the total number of pupils you **expect will attend the** schools in that planning area, rather than where pupils are residents. We will query any forecast methodology which appears to be based on residency.

Where you have sixth form provision in secondary schools you will need to ensure that you have entered forecast data for years 12 and 13. If you expect any year 14 pupils, these should be included in your year 13 forecasts.

Do not include pupils attending nursery or special schools or pupils attending nursery or SEN units attached to mainstream schools.

Do not include a margin in your forecasts to reflect spare places that you need to manage in-year admissions, mobility, or parental choice. You can include in your forecast number your expectations about pupils arriving during the year. Most authorities do this based on their experience of in-year arrivals.

You should not project pupil numbers higher than the capacity of school places in a planning area when you fully expect excess pupil numbers to be redistributed to neighbouring planning areas with available places. This could be, for example, where pupils cannot secure a place in their local school and are allocated a place elsewhere, or where pupils are travelling to non-local schools that then become full.

You should only 'redistribute' pupils based on knowledge of established patterns of pupil attendance where these are expected to continue. This should not reflect any temporary redistribution of pupils which you do not expect to continue because of, for example, excessive home to school distances, transport issues or pending projects to add places in the preferred planning area.

Where there is no prior knowledge of established patterns of pupil attendance (for example, when you forecast popular schools becoming full and the anticipated excess demand is coming from outside of the planning area), you should reflect the excess demand in the planning area of its origin or another planning area with available space that satisfies the conditions above. This is because your planning area forecasts must reflect the actual number of pupils that you expect to have to provide a mainstream place for in that planning area, as mentioned at the start of this section.

*If a planning area is on a local authority border, you will need to check with the neighbouring authority to ensure that they have sufficient capacity to accommodate all the projected pupils who will need to be redistributed. This is to ensure the pupil redistribution will not create a shortfall in the neighbouring planning area where that LA is not responsible for providing places.*

## **Future school changes**

Where you are restructuring your school landscape (for example, from 3 to 2 tier education systems) you should record your forecasts based on the structure that will be in place in each of the forecast years. You should then record a note in COLLECT to notify us that a restructure is taking place.

If you are expecting to introduce a new planning area or hoping to change your planning area structure in the future, you should record the pupil forecasts in the most appropriate planning area that currently exists. Forecasts of pupil numbers for existing schools must be recorded in the planning area in which they currently sit.

You should forecast for new free school provision where you are confident that the project will go ahead and that it will affect the school landscape in your authority. Include a note to explain this.

## **Split site schools**

Where a school is split between different planning areas because it operates from different sites, please include the forecasts for each site in the relevant planning area.

## **Housing developments**

Your pupil forecasts should only include expected pupil yields from housing developments that have a high probability of being delivered within the timeframe of the forecasts. In most cases such developments will have full planning permission. If you believe a development that does not have full planning permission will proceed and will yield pupils within the forecast's timeframe, we expect that development to be present in the relevant planning authority's latest five-year land supply. You should explain the inclusion of such housing developments, as we may review the evidence on the site's deliverability to test the suitability of the development in your forecasts.

New housing developments may generate additional pupil forecasts, but you should be careful to avoid double-counting pupil yields which are already factored into your forecasts by default through cohort progression or migration.

You should continue to use the existing parameters for new housing in your forecasting models, unless there is a demonstrable increase in the rate at which new housing is being delivered. In this case, an appropriate additional yield figure should be determined.

## **Pupil forecasts from housing developer contributions (HDC) and Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)**

Housing developer contributions include new school places secured from developers through Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy. A small number of local authorities have also received or expect to receive funding from the Housing Infrastructure Fund for the provision of new or extended schools. Further information on the Housing Infrastructure Fund is available.

Forecasts of places to be funded through these should reflect the number of school places that will be created using this funding, or by developers in lieu of funding, from 2023 to 2024 onwards. Further guidance on securing developer contributions is available.

These funded places should be included in your main forecasts but also reported separately in the relevant sections of the forecast template and on COLLECT. This will enable these places to be split from the main forecasts for funding purposes.

Places provided by any projects that will use, or are expected to use, either of these funds must be included.

Where housing developer contributions funds have been received but not assigned to a project you should estimate the date of delivery and quantity of places to be delivered, and report these in the return.

Where you expect these funds to fund places within the forecasting timeframe, but have not yet received the funds, the places the funding will supply should also be estimated and included in your return.

Where this funding supplements an existing project, the number of pupils in these funded places should relate only to the proportion of places generated through housing developer contributions and the Housing Infrastructure Funding. There are many ways you can do this. For example, you may calculate the number of housing developer contributions places based on the amount the developer advised they would fund per place. You could also look at the project as a whole and calculate the proportion of places attributed to housing developer contributions or Housing Infrastructure Funding and the number of places this created.

If you have contributed housing developer contributions funding to a centrally-funded free school you should not include these places as part of your housing developer contributions forecast.

Where these funded places have been included in one forecast year, they should appear in future forecast years, along with any extra places added in those future years.

You should split housing developer contributions or Housing Infrastructure Fund forecasts across year groups unless you are certain they apply to only one year group.

The forecast of these funded places are not expected to follow the pupils through the school system as you are forecasting the number of pupils attending housing developer contributions funded places and the places do not move.

Any housing developer contributions or Housing Infrastructure Fund funded places in the first three years of your forecast return are expected to be present in your planned places return.

## Example of how to forecast pupils attending housing developer funded places

In 2025/26, 35 developer funded places are being created in a primary school. The places have then been apportioned across all year groups, which equates to 5 places per year group. Once the housing developer contributions places are added it is expected the places will be attended by pupils in all subsequent forecast years.

In 2027/28, a 15 place per year group expansion has been funded from housing developer contributions, creating 105 places in total. The places are again apportioned across all year groups creating 15 places per year. These places are in addition to the 5 places per year group to be created in 2025/26, resulting in 20 places being reported in each year group in 2027/28 and each academic year after.

Academic year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2024/25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025/26	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	35
2026/27	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	35
2027/28	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	140
2028/29	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	140

## Forecasting methodology (mainstream only)

*Explains potential methods to establish a forecast methodology for reporting to the school capacity survey.*

**There is separate guidance available on [forecasting pupil numbers](#) for specialist placements.**

You are responsible for providing forecasts of mainstream pupil numbers to the DfE as part of the School Capacity survey. This provides local authorities and the Department for Education (DfE) with key information for capital programmes, as well as providing the DfE with information to support basic need capital allocations and for its Pupil Place Planning (PPP) Advisers to fulfil their role in supporting local authorities to fulfil their duty to secure sufficient school places.

Before producing a new set of forecasts, local authorities should assess the accuracy of previous forecasts at planning area level. This can be done by comparing previous forecasts to actual pupil numbers.

For forecasting pupils in the Reception year group, population-based data from the Office for National Statistics' Live Birth Data, GP registration data or Early Years census data can be used.

To calculate pupil numbers for year groups which are not an intake year of the school, a cohort progression technique can be used.

### Assessing the accuracy of previous forecasts

Before producing a new set of forecasts, you should assess the accuracy of your previous forecasts to identify and correct any issues. You can do this by comparing your previous forecasts to actual pupil numbers.

The accuracy of historic forecasts can be measured as:

(Forecast pupil number minus actual pupil number) divided by Actual pupil number multiplied by 100

This will give you a figure for the percentage over forecast or under forecast. For example, if the calculation yields a figure of 3, this means there was a 3% over forecast. Similarly, a figure of -2 means a 2% under forecast.

This value will enable you to test whether inaccuracies exist. You can then investigate your forecasting methodologies in further detail to find the possible source of the inaccuracy. You should consider the accuracy of your forecasts at overall local authority level, as well as at planning area and year group levels. The latter may help you to

identify any specific areas or year groups where your forecasts are less accurate, to target particular areas for improvement.

You should consider how accuracy changes the further ahead you project. For example, you could consider how accurate your forecasts historically have been for five years ahead.

You should also consider changes in forecast accuracy over time as well as just looking at your last set of forecasts. This will enable you to check whether any changes you have made are making your forecasts more or less accurate so you can adjust your assumptions appropriately.

## **Forecasting year group pupil numbers**

### **Reception**

There are many methods that can be used to forecast reception pupil numbers, however we suggest that you use population-based data for the number of children who live in your local authority as well as other local authorities that may contribute pupils to your reception cohort (due to students travelling into your LA to attend school).

Potential sources of population data include:

- Office for National Statistics - Live Birth Data
- GP registration data
- Early Years census data

For the final year of reception forecasts required, you will need to produce a population estimate or use an external source of population or birth forecasts, as some of these children will not yet be born when you produce your forecasts.

### **Non-intake year groups**

A suggested method for calculating forecast pupil numbers for year groups which are not the intake year of the school is to use a cohort progression technique.

This is based on the premise that the number of children in a given year group at a school will increase/decrease according to historic trends as they move into the next year group in the next academic year.

### **Year 7 or other “intake year” pupil numbers**

For other intake years, the method described for reception pupils or the method described for non-intake year groups can be used.

## Other factors

The process described above is intended to give a basis for forecasts and is based largely on historical trends continuing. It may be that in your local authority, you need to make some manual adjustments to account for particular situations.

### Migration

Changes to historic migration patterns as a result of foreseeable events should also be considered. Only include factors that have a degree of certainty and/or that indicate a long-term shift in trends, to avoid introducing volatility. Example factors to take account of could be:

- an expected increase in inward/outward migration to/from a local area;
- a change in general migration patterns; or
- a known influx of arrivals.

Be mindful that in some cases for some factors children will already be in school and included in the numbers on roll data. We encourage LAs to provide accurate projections of population growth based on trends, evidence and projected future growth, even if this is short- or medium-term (rather than longer term). LAs should take care not to over-project the impact of migration, and, as per the usual quality assurance process, we will challenge forecasts if we feel there is evidence of over-estimated pupil numbers.

We are aware that some factors will be 'known unknowns', for example the numbers of overseas children from Ukraine, Afghanistan, Hong Kong, and asylum seekers. There will be different things to consider with each route, in addition to the actual number of children expected, for example: the rate of arrivals, the timeframe they are anticipated to arrive in, and how long children are expected to remain in the country/area. We expect forecasts to include these children only where there is some certainty around these things, and where numbers can sensibly be interpreted at an LA and planning area level. We do not expect to see forecasts changing on the basis of speculation.

Where a significant influx of arrivals are included under the conditions above but are expected to leave again within the forecast period, we would expect to see any step change or peak in your figures to revert back to near normal levels within the forecast period.

### Housing

One situation where you may wish to adjust your forecasts is to account for inflow of pupils due to new housing being built. Housing developments can have a big impact on the demand for places in individual planning areas, or across entire local authorities.

The pupil forecasts you submit in SCAP should only include expected pupil yields from housing developments that have a high probability of being delivered within the timeframe of the forecasts. In most cases such developments will have full planning



permission. If you believe a development that does not have full planning permission will proceed and will yield pupils within the forecast's timeframe, we expect that development to be present in the relevant planning authority's latest 5-year land supply. Wherever this is the case we may test the suitability of inclusion of such housing developments in SCAP forecasts by reviewing evidence on the site's deliverability and assessing delivery against previous 5-year land supply plans in the relevant planning authority.

The data you collect on housing developments is likely to come from many different sources. It should be as detailed as possible, enabling you to identify:

- Number of units
- Housing size and mix
- Location
- Completion timescale

In forecasting for housing developments, you should consider patterns of movement to these developments. You should consider if new developments are likely to be populated by families moving in from outside your local authority. If so, it is important to ensure that these pupils are only counted once and are not added both as part of your "housing yield" calculation and as inward migrants, where these are counted separately.

If new developments are more likely to be populated by local families moving a short distance, consider who will fill the houses they move out of. If there is a lot of local movement, consider that some of the pupils who move into the new developments might remain in their existing school places. This could mean the effect of the new development on school place need is spread over a wider area.

One thing to consider is the rate at which houses are built in the area. If this is fairly steady over time (i.e. housing stock increases by x% each year) then it is likely that the pupil yield will already be captured in a migration factor or cohort progression rate. It is only if the speed of house building changes (up or down) that you may need to adjust your forecasts to take account of this. Consider the following examples:

1. A planning area has a large new housing development, which has planning permission but has not yet started. It is on the edge of the town and the planning area has not recently experienced significant levels of housing being built. It would be reasonable in this scenario to include all the forecast yield in future forecasts (assuming of course that the local authority's yield calculation already has a factor for local children taking up residence in the housing development)
2. A planning area has planned housing developments of around 800 units per year. This is following a period of similar levels of housing over the last five years. This means that many of the 'number on roll' figures used in the baseline forecasting already include cohort growth from housing. If the local authority was to include all pupil yield from each of the 800 units in future years, they may well be double counting, as the basic method is already accounting for this growth.

Where there is a demonstrable increase in the rate at which new housing is being delivered, an appropriate additional yield figure above that which is included in the forecasting models should be determined.

## **Office for National Statistics core projections model**

As part of a wider review of the school capacity collection, the department commissioned the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to develop a model to project local authority and planning area pupil numbers. The model is based upon nationally available data such as births and school census returns. It therefore provides a 'core' projection that does not include local factors such as changes to housing yield, or planned school changes, that may influence local authorities' forecasts.

The methodology used in the model is described in the core forecasting tool itself.

The model will be available at the beginning of June 2024.

### **Core Forecasting Tool**

The core forecast is provided for use in an Excel based forecasting tool. The tool uses the same Excel XML template local authorities currently complete for the school capacity forecast blade.

Local authorities can use the tool in two ways,

1. Comparing to local authority forecasts and identifying factors which may contribute to forecast differences.
2. Modifying the core forecast to account for local factors.

### **Use of the forecast model**

The model was tested by running forecasts from a historic base year (2016/17) using only the data that would have been available at the time, allowing the accuracy of the model to be assessed and compared with forecasts from the SCAP return. In many cases, the SCAP forecast was more accurate than the core forecast, suggesting that local factors had been applied and had improved the forecast. Equally there were many cases where the core forecast was more accurate than the SCAP forecast, possibly due to methodology problems such as including extra factors that are already accounted for within the cohort progression ratios.

It is intended that the core model will help within the forecasting process in the following ways:

- Providing a baseline figure to local authorities for comparative purposes
- Aid common understanding of the factors that influence the forecast for a particular planning area

- Potentially highlight where it may be possible to improve the methodology used for certain planning areas
- Help identify where forecasts may need to be reviewed

Some of these benefits may be realised over time, as data is built up for the core forecasting model over several years.

## Validation

You should monitor your forecasting process rigorously to ensure it is fit for purpose and produces results that are accurate and based on sound evidence.

It is essential that forecasts are completed as you intended. Make sure that appropriate formulas are used, and that the correct data are referenced. You may wish to focus on one or two examples and work all the way through your forecast model to ensure that you can see that each step is working in the way intended and that the outcome is logical.

You should perform quality assurance checks on the input data you use for your forecasts to ensure it appears to be fit for purpose. The underlying assumptions you use in your forecasts should be realistic and evidence-based.

It is important to compare current forecasts to those of previous years to identify significant changes and ensure they make sense. For example, is an overall increase in pupil numbers the result of an increase in a particular year group, or planning area, and does this match your expectations?

You should also compare your forecasts to other data sources, for example data on admission applications for the upcoming September.

You should work closely with neighbouring local authorities, particularly where there are significant cross border flows. For example, your projections may need to consider planned changes to school organisation in neighbouring authorities. You should check that your understanding of cross border flows matches that of your neighbours. For example, if you are forecasting significant inward migration from a neighbouring local authority, is this also reflected in their forecasts, or are pupils being counted twice?

If you are outsourcing your forecasting, you should still carefully sense check the outputs and review the reason behind any changes to previous forecasts.

## Example of forecasting reception pupil numbers

The following describes a suggested method for forecasting pupils in the reception year group.

## Population data

Suppose you receive the following data for registrations at GP surgeries.

Academic year	Age group	GP registrations
2020 to 2021	Aged 4 as at 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2020 (birth in 2015 to 2016 academic year)	514
2021 to 2022	Aged 4 as at 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2021 (birth in 2016 to 2017 academic year)	516
2022 to 2023	Aged 4 as at 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2022 (birth in 2017 to 2018 academic year)	520
2023 to 2024	Aged 4 as at 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2023 (birth in 2018 to 2019 academic year)	536
2024 to 2025	Aged 4 as at 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2024 (birth in 2019 to 2020 academic year)	540
2025 to 2026	Aged 4 as at 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2025 (birth in 2020 to 2021 academic year)	556
2026 to 2027	Aged 4 as at 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2026 (birth in 2021 to 2022 academic year)	580
2027 to 2028	Aged 4 as at 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2027 (birth in 2022 to 2023 academic year)	602
2028 to 2029	Aged 4 as at 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2028 (birth in 2023 to 2024 academic year)	To be estimated

You will need to estimate an underlying population figure for those aged 4 at 31st August 2028, as some of these children will not yet be born.

You can do this by using historic information about changes in population and assume trends will continue. You should use historic data which you think will best reflect the trends carrying forward.

Calculate the difference in population size between each year, as shown below.

Academic Year	GP registrations	Increase in population size of
2024 to 2025	540	
2025 to 2026	556	16
2026 to 2027	580	24
2027 to 2028	602	22

Next, take a weighted average of the increases as follows:

$$((22 \times 3) + (24 \times 2) + (16 \times 1)) / 6 = 130 / 6 = 21.67$$

We may therefore assume that the population for 2027 to 2028 will be 22 higher than the previous year, so 624.

### Calculate uptake factor

The next step is to calculate an uptake factor to determine what proportion of the children in your underlying population will require a mainstream, state-funded school place.

You may wish to base this on historical uptake. To determine the uptake factor for each year, calculate the actual number of pupils in the year group as a proportion of the total number of children of the appropriate age in your population data. For example, if there were 200 4-year-old children in the population and 164 children in your reception cohort, the uptake factor would be 82%.

Consider whether applying the historic uptake factor is accurate. You may wish to consider whether over the past few years the historic uptake factor has been stable, volatile, or shown a trend, and whether that trend is likely to continue.

The uptake factor is calculated as the actual number of pupils in the year group divided by the underlying population of the relevant age in the relevant year. The table below demonstrates an example of how to do this.

Academic year	GP registrations	Actual pupil numbers	Uptake factor
2020 to 2021	514	430	83.70%
2021 to 2022	516	443	85.90%
2022 to 2023	520	448	86.20%
2023 to 2024	536	455	84.90%

### Apply your chosen uptake factor

For each year of your forecast, multiply the number of children of the appropriate age from your population data by the uptake factor you chose in the previous step.

In this example, we can see that the uptake factor is relatively stable over time, at about 85%. We can therefore apply last year's uptake factor of 84.9% to the future data, as shown below, to give final forecast figures for the reception year group.

Academic year	GP registrations	Forecast pupils
2024 to 2025	540	458
2025 to 2026	556	472
2026 to 2027	580	492
2027 to 2028	602	511
2028 to 2029	624	530

## Example of forecasting non-intake pupil numbers

To forecast using a cohort progression technique, you will need data on the current pupil numbers in each school or planning area.

It may be more robust to base pupil number forecasts on cohort progression over a number of years. In the example below, the past four years of pupil number data for a planning area is used to calculate cohort progression ratios for each year group in each year.

The table below gives data for pupil numbers in the current academic year and each of the last three years.

Year group	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
<b>R</b>	430	443	448	455
<b>1</b>	432	440	456	460
<b>2</b>	435	437	443	458
<b>3</b>	480	486	492	509
<b>4</b>	478	485	495	510
<b>5</b>	470	472	485	495
<b>6</b>	469	471	471	488

In order to calculate cohort progression ratios, divide each pupil number by the number of pupils who were in that “cohort” the year before. So, for example, divide the number of pupils in Year 1 in 2021 to 2022 (440) by the number of pupils in Reception in 2020 to 2021 (430), to get the ratio 1.023.

The table below shows these ratios for each year group and each year.

Year Group progression	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024	Average	Weighted average	Trend projection
<b>Year R to 1</b>	1.023	1.029	1.027	1.026	1.027	1.030
<b>Year 1 to 2</b>	1.012	1.007	1.004	1.008	1.006	1
<b>Year 2 to 3</b>	1.117	1.126	1.149	1.131	1.136	1.163
<b>Year 3 to 4</b>	1.01	1.019	1.037	1.022	1.026	1.049
<b>Year 4 to 5</b>	0.987	1	1	0.996	0.998	1.009
<b>Year 5 to 6</b>	1.002	0.998	1.006	1.002	1.003	1.006

You should consider whether using the most recent ratio, an average, a weighted average or a trended figure is the most appropriate.

In this example, progression from Year 2 to Year 3 and from Year 3 to Year 4 shows a clear pattern (cohort progression ratios are steadily becoming higher, indicating that more children are joining this planning area at those year groups). You should consider what might be behind this where you see this is the case. For example, this might be the result of there being a poorly performing junior school in an adjacent planning area and

resulting pupil movement away from that school into this area. You should consider before applying the trended figure whether you believe this pattern is likely to continue.

The next step is to apply the calculated cohort progression rates to your current pupil numbers. Multiply the rate you chose for Year R to Year 1 progression by the current number of pupils in Year R to get a figure for the number of Year 1 pupils expected next year. You can then apply the Year 1 to Year 2 rate to this figure to get a figure for Year 2 pupils the year after, and so on.

In the table below, the results of applying the weighted average cohort progression to most year groups, with the trended cohort progression applied to Year 3 and Year 4. The blue text show the results of the reception forecast calculated earlier.

<b>Year group</b>	<b>2020 to 2021</b>	<b>2021 to 2022</b>	<b>2022 to 2023</b>	<b>2023 to 2024</b>	<b>2024 to 2025</b>	<b>2025 to 2026</b>	<b>2026 to 2027</b>	<b>2027 to 2028</b>	<b>2028 to 2029</b>
<b>9R</b>	430	443	448	455	458	472	501	520	538
<b>1</b>	432	440	456	460	467	470	485	515	534
<b>2</b>	435	437	443	458	463	470	473	488	518
<b>3</b>	480	486	492	509	534	539	548	551	568
<b>4</b>	478	485	495	510	534	560	566	575	579
<b>5</b>	470	472	485	495	509	533	559	565	574
<b>6</b>	469	471	471	488	496	510	535	560	566

## **Adding forecast data to COLLECT (mainstream and special)**

### *Information on adding your pupil forecast data*

The pupil forecast data is submitted using the COLLECT system which can be accessed using DfE Sign In. Guides for local authorities submitting data using COLLECT are available.

You must provide forecasts of pupil numbers broken down by year group for each mainstream and specialist planning area in your local authority.

Specialist planning area names and numbers will be provided by the DfE. They will be LA wide and will relate to the types of provision (SEN units, Resourced provision, Special schools, Independent special schools, and Alternative provision) – see ‘Forecasting demand for SEND Provision – Guidance for Local Authorities’ for more details. Note this is a wider list of provision than is required for the capacity return.

Primary forecasts must extend 5 years ahead and cover reception to year 6.

Secondary forecasts must extend 7 years ahead and cover years 7 to 11. It must also include years 12 to 13 where schools in the planning area have sixth forms.

Primary specialist placements forecasts must extend 5 years ahead and cover reception to year 6.

Secondary specialist placements forecasts must extend 7 years ahead and cover years 7 to 11. It does NOT need to include years 12 to 13 where schools in the planning area have post-16 provision.

## **Forecast methodology statement**

The methodology statement is intended to set the figures in context. This is important since projection methodology varies from one local authority to another.

You must provide comprehensive information including how your forecasts have been checked and quality assured. We may ask for further detail, including requesting a copy of your forecasting model. If you include rates (for example, cohort survival rates, progression rates or pupil yield rates) that you apply to existing cohorts or housing data, explain how these rates have been calculated.

Before we will accept your data, we must be satisfied with the robustness of your forecasts.

Your forecast methodology should include information on cross-border flows, with confirmation that import, or export assumptions have been checked with neighbouring



local authorities. There will also be a new section to cover how you have arrived at your specialist placements forecast (for further detail on potential forecast methodologies, please see the stand-alone specialist placements forecast guidance).

The forecast methodology can be returned via COLLECT or as a Word document using the template and sent to [SCAP.PPP@education.gov.uk](mailto:SCAP.PPP@education.gov.uk).

## Using the Excel templates to upload data

Your forecast data can be uploaded to COLLECT using the Excel XML template we provide. The Excel template cannot be used to submit your data via email.

The data collection service desk will send out the templates in late May 2024 to the nominated contact for your local authority. The templates will be sent via the secure School to School (S2S) system. If you have issues with S2S, contact the service desk using the service request form.

## Common queries

### **Query: Cohorts not progressing as expected**

For example, comparison of Year 3 forecast in 2024/25 to Year 4 forecast in 2025/26.

We would normally expect most pupils in Year X in one year to progress on to Year X+1 in the same planning area the next academic year.

Check the forecast you have submitted is a true reflection of how pupils progress through the school years in that planning area. It may be that you do expect large fluctuations in cohorts, for example if:

- large housing developments are planned in the planning area and you expect a large increase in children joining schools above the standard entry year;
- there is a drop or increase every year at a specific cohort due to schools with unusual age ranges.

You will need to explain this in the note you attach to the query.

### **Query: Fluctuations in pupil numbers year on year**

For example, comparison of Year 7 forecast in 2024/25 to Year 7 forecast in 2023/24

We would not normally expect large fluctuations in pupil numbers year on year, as we would expect schools to take a relatively stable number of pupils each year.

Check the forecast you have submitted does not contain any mistakes.

It may be that the planning area does experience large fluctuations, for example, because it is rural and birth rates are highly variable.

You will need to explain this in the note you attach to the query.

**Query: Forecasts vastly different to current number on roll**

You will also need to provide an explanation where there is a large difference between the pupil forecast in the final forecast year and the current number on roll.

# The planned places data required and how to add the data to COLLECT (mainstream only)

## *Information on adding your planned places data*

The planned places data is submitted using the COLLECT system which can be accessed using DfE Sign In. Guides for local authorities submitting data using COLLECT are available.

You must provide details of local plans to add to or remove places from net capacity, broken down by year group for each school, for the next 3 academic years:

- 2024 to 2025
- 2025 to 2026
- 2026 to 2027

Any recorded planned changes to net capacity should be carried out in accordance with the guidance for [LA maintained schools](#) and [academy trusts](#).

## What you have to include

You should include places related to any project undertaken by the school, local authority or MAT where the following 3 criteria all apply.

1. Mainstream school net capacity being added or removed

You should include all places:

- from locally funded projects that are being added or removed from net capacity, irrespective of how much they cost (including zero cost projects)
- added from presumption free schools which are expected to open in the next 3 years

You should not include:

- changes to admission numbers unless these will also result in a change in capacity in the net capacity assessment or academy funding agreement
- SEN or nursery places, even if they use basic need funding

2. The addition or removal of places is not centrally funded

You should not include changes in places resulting from projects that are funded by:

- the Priority School Building Programme
- a centrally delivered free school programme (includes free schools, UTCs and studio schools)
- the Condition Improvement Fund

- the Selective Schools Expansion Fund
- the capital scheme for voluntary-aided schools
- the school rebuilding programme

You should also not include whole school academy closures.

If you are providing supplementary funding or places to any of these centrally funded programmes, then you should record the number of places that relate to that supplementary funding only. If you record the total, we will ask you to correct the data.

If you are awaiting a decision on whether a new free school will be opened in your authority and have had to plan a contingency in case the free school does not open, only include this if you plan to bring in the contingency regardless of the outcome of the free school decision.

### 3. You have a high degree of certainty that the project will go ahead

We would normally expect this to be where funding has been committed, for example where the local decision-maker has signed off the capital plans or where contracts have been let.

For presumption free schools, we would also normally expect the provisional opening date of the school to have been set.

If you are adding places and removing places within the same planning area, you should report both separately rather than simply reporting the net added or removed places.

**Report places under the first full academic year that the places will be available in time for. This should be based on when places are built in time for, rather than when they are due to fill up with pupils.**

If the places will not be available in September, record the project under the following academic year. For example, if the places will be built by November 2024 or February 2025, record this in the academic year 2025 to 2026.

If you need help reflecting changes to school reorganisation, for example moving from a three tier to two tier structure, please contact us.

## Recording Added Places

This should be used to report any increase in the net capacity where the additional places will remain in the year group reported, rather than moving through with a specific large cohort. For example, a project to increase the size of reception to year 2 accommodation in a primary school.

Added places should be reported cumulatively. For example, if 15 places are added in years 7 to 11 in 2023/24, and a further 15 places in 2024/25, then a total of 30 places should be reported in years 7 to 11 in 2025/26 and 2026/27.

We would not expect PAN increases to be included unless the change increases net capacity or exceeds the funding agreement capacity.

For added places which relate to schools which are due to open during the planned places timeframe, please state the final intended planning area of the school. Where the establishment number of the school is not known please use a artificial establishment number.

## **Recording Removed Places**

This should be used to report any works which remove physical capacity from the school, for example, the demolition of a block or removal of temporary classrooms.

Please do not report whole school academy closures.

Places should be reported as negative figures.

## **Recording Bulge Class Places**

This should be used to report any additional capacity providing places for a cohort that will move through the school. For example, a project to accommodate a one-off additional form of entry.

We would expect to see this move through the school in your data. For example, if there are 30 places in year 7 in 2024/25, we would then expect to see those places in year 8 in 2025/26.

Do not include existing bulges that are already included in the capacity return.

## **Using the Excel templates to upload data**

Your planned places data can be uploaded to COLLECT using the Excel XML template we provide. The Excel template cannot be used to submit your data via email.

The data collection service desk will send out the templates in late May 2024 to the nominated contact for your local authority. The templates will be sent via the secure School to School (S2S) system. If you have issues with S2S, contact the service desk using the service request form.

## Examples

### Example 1:

One school is planning a 1 FE expansion which will be ready to start filling up from September 2024, while another school will remove 5 places per year group due to internal reconfiguration from 2025/26.

Added Places for School 1:

Academic year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6
2024/25	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
2025/26	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
2026/27	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

Removed Places for School 2:

Academic year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6
2024/25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025/26	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5
2026/27	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5

Added and removed places should be recorded in the first year they are built or removed in time for. Added and removed places should be permanent so the places shown in 2024/25 should also be shown in 2025/26, and so on.

### Example 2:

Secondary school 1 took a bulge class of 30 in Year 7 in September 2023, the bulge class will be in Year 8 in 2024/25. The bulge class which entered the school in September 2023 should not be included in the Planned places return. It should be reflected in the capacity by year group data in the capacity return as the bulge would be in the school as at 1 May 2022

Secondary school 2 will accommodate a Year 7 bulge class of 30 from September 2023:

Bulge places for school 2:

Academic year	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
2024/25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025/26	30	0	0	0	0	0	0
2026/27	0	30	0	0	0	0	0

### Example 3:

A secondary school is becoming an all-through school and will start admitting to year R in September 2024. Currently it admits 7FE to year 7 and does not have a sixth form. From September 2024 it will admit 3FE in year R and 5FE for year 7. Secondary capacity will therefore reduce by 2FE in September 2024.

As the school currently admits 7FE to year 7, the capacity by year group in the capacity return is reported as 210 for year groups 7 to 11, as this is the capacity as at 1 May 2024.

In the planned places return, when recording added places, you should show the the new primary places on a gradual basis. You should also record the primary planning area that this school will be in.

Academic year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6
2024/25	90	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025/26	90	90	0	0	0	0	0
2026/27	90	90	90	0	0	0	0

When recording removed places, you should show the reduction in capacity for secondary year groups on a gradual basis, as the existing pupils who entered the school at the time of the higher PAN will still be there.

Academic year	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
2024/25	-60	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025/26	-60	-60	0	0	0	0	0
2026/27	-60	-60	-60	0	0	0	0

## Common queries

### Query: The number of places added or removed are only for a single year group

We would normally expect non-bulge projects to add or remove net capacity to affect multiple year groups in a school

Check that you have recorded future places as built rather than when they are due to fill up with pupils.

You will need to explain this in the note you attach to the query.

## Commentary

### *Information on completing your commentary template*

Email your completed commentary templates to [SCAP.PPP@education.gov.uk](mailto:SCAP.PPP@education.gov.uk).

As part of the school capacity survey, you must complete a place planning commentary template. It provides information to help the analysis of areas with pupil place planning pressures and areas with spare places. It also gives context to the high needs data submitted under SCAP.

The commentary must link to each of your planning areas, identifying any local pockets where school capacity is an issue (shortfalls or surpluses) or where there are whole new schools planned.

Use the commentary to explain:

- where there is planned action to secure additional capacity or remove capacity, indicating if it is temporary or permanent and in new schools or expansions;
- any other significant changes to capacity, when they would be implemented and how this would affect the places available;
- any plans that would significantly impact available capacity.

Make sure any references to specific schools include their 4-digit establishment number so that we can match up the information easily.

We will compare the commentary for each planning area against the data you have provided in capacity, forecast and planned places. If the commentary does not appear to match what your data shows, we may ask for further clarification to check your data is accurate.

Examples might be where:

- you have said an area has high growth or housing developments, but your forecasts do not appear to show this increase
- your data indicates a future pressure in a planning area but the commentary does not mention this
- you have said a school will provide temporary accommodation for a bulge class from September 2023 but there are no places recorded



## Accessing, submitting and checking a return

*How to access the COLLECT data collection system, send us your school capacity survey data, check your data and resolve any errors*

### Accessing the data collection systems

You should use the COLLECT data collection system to submit data on:

- Capacity
- Forecasts
- Planned places

Access COLLECT via DfE Sign In.

For issues accessing COLLECT or technical problems while using COLLECT, contact the data collection service desk using the service request form.

### Checking your data

We will email your nominated contact a QA checklist. This list provides a guide on checking your data before submission.

As well as using this list you should check the data as it is entered. Accurate data entry and completion of this list will reduce the number of questions that we may need to ask you.

COLLECT includes a reports feature which allows you to view and download output reports containing your data. The COLLECT system refreshes overnight, so any data that you input will not show on the output reports until the following day.

Use these output reports alongside the QA checklist to help you address any issues with your data before you submit it.

### Submitting your return

You will need to arrange for your own internal review of your data before submitting it to us. You will be unable to submit your returns if you have not addressed all error messages. When addressing an error message, make sure the note is against the error or query itself.

If you are unable to resolve any errors, email [SCAP.PPP@education.gov.uk](mailto:SCAP.PPP@education.gov.uk) for advice. Make sure you give details of the error and which school or planning area it relates to.

All data must be submitted using the online systems. Email copies of the downloaded spreadsheets or output reports will not be accepted.

Email accompanying information to SCAP.PPP@education.gov.uk. It should include:

- the commentary
- the forecast methodology using the latest template (if not submitted via the COLLECT system).

You should submit your data by **Friday 26 July 2024**.

Your return will only be considered complete when you have provided all elements.

## **Director of Children's Services (DCS) sign-off**

After submission, we will quality assure your data. When this process is complete, we will provide you with a template for DCS sign off.

We expect DCS sign off to happen around December 2024, once the checks on all local authorities have been completed.



Department  
for Education

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