



Statistical Bulletin 3/2019

School Meals in Northern Ireland, 2018/19

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This bulletin was revised on 17 April 2020 to correct the aggregated totals for each management type in Tables 1 and 2, as highlighted.

This bulletin was revised on 12 April 2019 to correct the uptake level for free school meals by entitled pupils (Section 3 and Table 9 only).

The purpose of this statistical bulletin is to provide results of the annual data collection relating to the uptake of school meals in grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland in 2018/19.

Key points:

- **Over 185,000 school meals**, both free and paid, were taken by pupils on census day, which equates to a **school meals uptake level of 59.4%** by pupils present for lunch on the day.
- The school meals uptake level for 2018/19 is **0.1 percentage points lower than the previous year.**
- **99,142 pupils in grant-aided schools are entitled to free school meals**; this represents 29.3% of pupils.
- The **uptake level for free school meals by entitled pupils is 80.9%**^r.

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INTRODUCTION

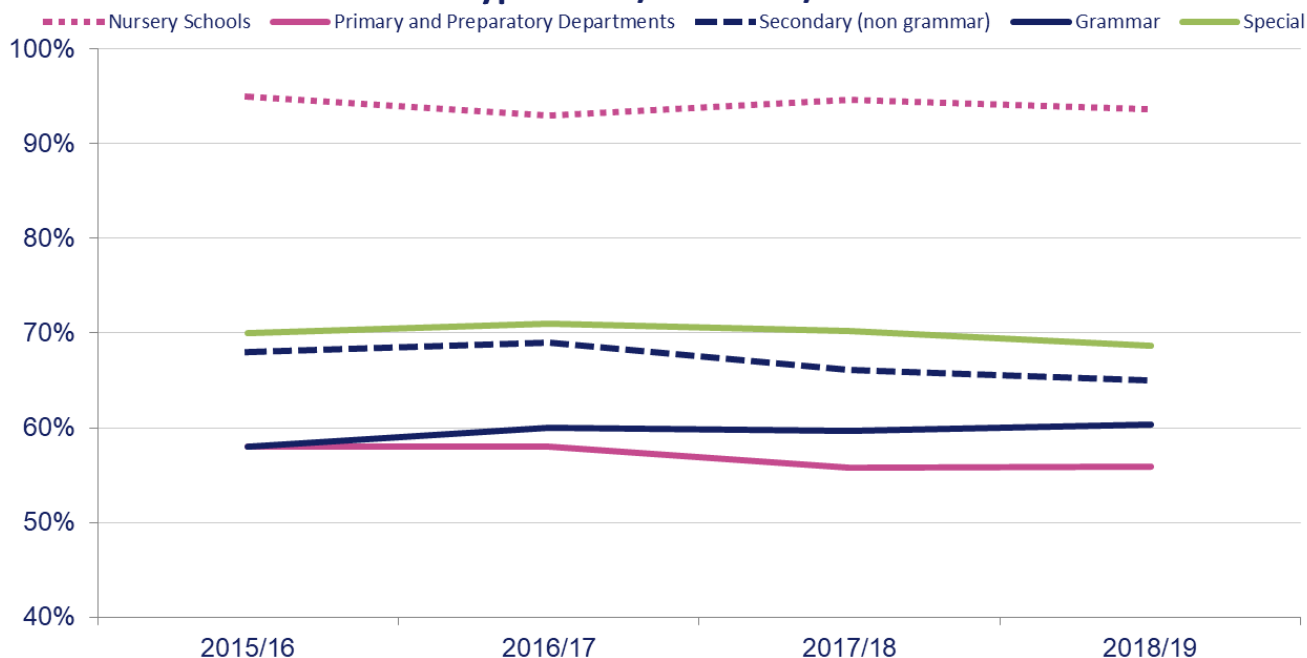
The purpose of this statistical bulletin is to provide results of the latest annual data collection relating to the uptake of school meals in Northern Ireland schools, commonly known as the school meals census. The information was collected with a reference point of 5 October 2018 and relates to all grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland.

Data collected through the school meals census are used by policy teams within the Department of Education and by other users across the education service, most notably by the Education Authority. The data are also used to inform a number of Assembly questions. The Department is responsible for formulating and developing policy and the associated financial arrangements in relation to school meals.

SECTION 1: UPTAKE OF SCHOOL MEALS (FREE AND PAID)

- 185,403 school meals, both free and paid, were taken by pupils on census day. Pupils not taking a school meal are making alternative arrangements for lunch, which can include bringing their own food into school. Almost 41% of meals fall into this category (Tables 1 and 2).
- The school meals uptake level by pupils present for lunch on census day is 59.4%. The 2018/19 school meals uptake level is 0.1 percentage points lower than the previous year (Table 3).
- There is variation in the level of uptake across school types with nursery schools having the highest uptake at 93.6%. This is followed by special schools with 68.6% and secondary schools with 65.0%. Grammar schools and primary/preparatory schools have lower levels of uptake with 60.4% and 55.9% respectively (Table 3).

Figure 1: Uptake of school meals (free and paid), by school type: 2015/16 - 2018/19



¹ Nursery only includes pupils in nursery schools

² Primary includes pupils in reception and nursery classes

³ Data taken from Table 3

Pupils from the least affluent schools (as measured by FSME) were more likely to take a school meal. For both primary and post-primary schools the uptake of school meals was lowest in schools where 10% or less of the pupils enrolled were entitled to free school meals (FSME). Uptake increased as the level of free school meal entitlement increased. For example, 69.6% of

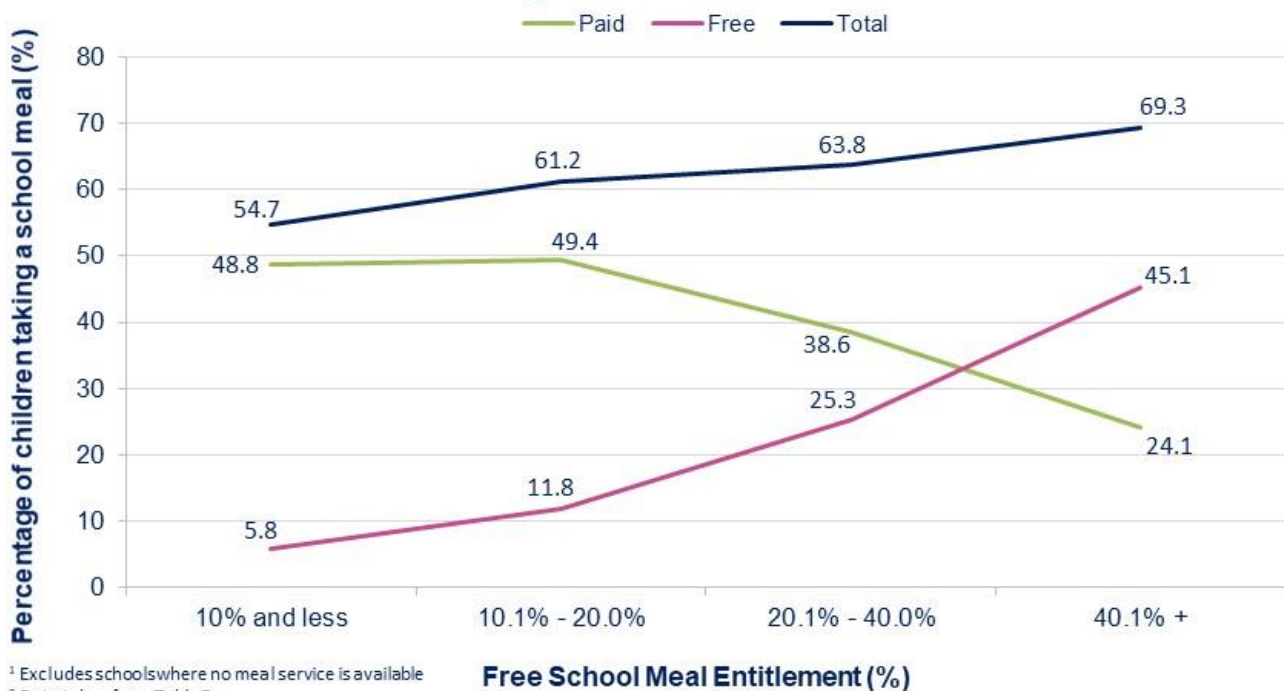
pupils in primary schools with 40% or more FSME took a school meal compared to 43.7% in primary schools with 10% or less FSME.

Figure 2: Uptake of school meals in primary schools, according to relative FSME 2018/19



¹ Includes preparatory departments, pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools. Excludes schools where no meal service is available.
³ Data taken from Table 5

Figure 3: Uptake of school meals in post-primary schools, according to relative FSME 2018/19

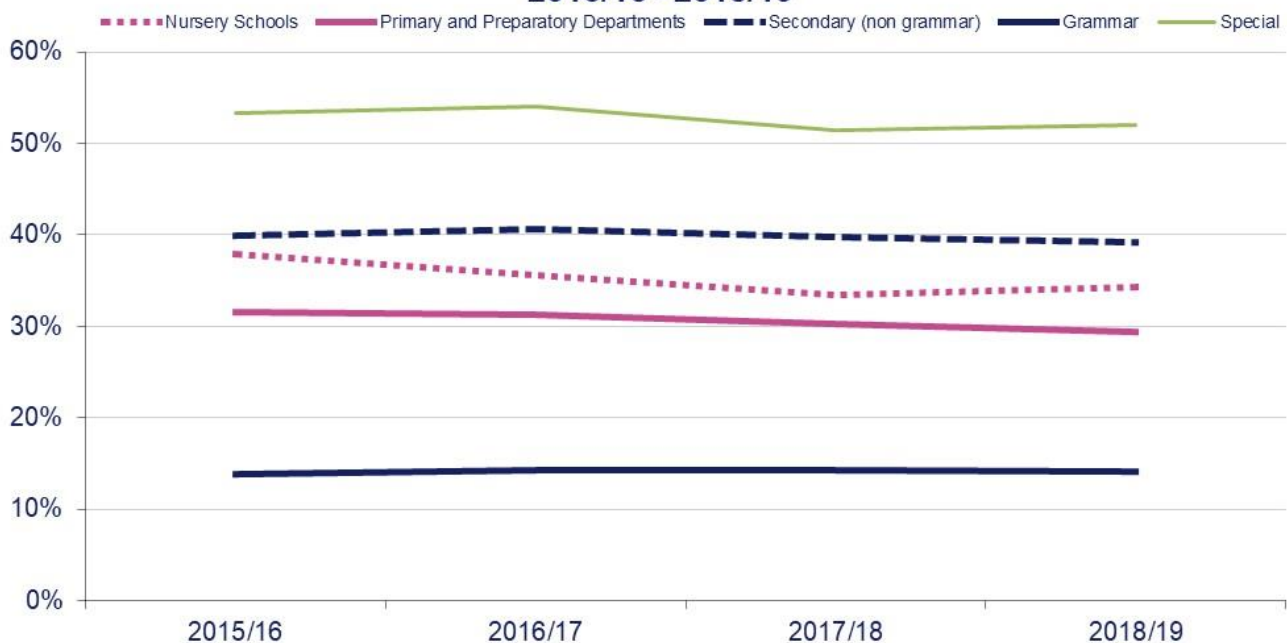


¹ Excludes schools where no meal service is available
² Data taken from Table 5

SECTION 2: ENTITLEMENT TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS

- Across all school types, including special schools, 99,142 pupils were entitled to free school meals¹, which is a decrease of 1,112 pupils on the previous year (Table 6). Pupils entitled to free schools meals represent 29.3% of the total school enrolment.
- There are slight increases in the proportion of pupils that are free school meal entitled in both nursery schools (34.2% compared to 33.4%) and special (52.0% compared to 51.4%) compared to last year. A lower proportion was found in primary and preparatory departments (29.4% compared to 30.3%), non-grammar (39.2% compared to 39.7%), and grammar schools (14.1% compared to 14.2%).

Figure 4: Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, by school type: 2015/16 - 2018/19



¹ Nursery only includes pupils in nursery schools

² Primary includes pupils in reception and nursery classes

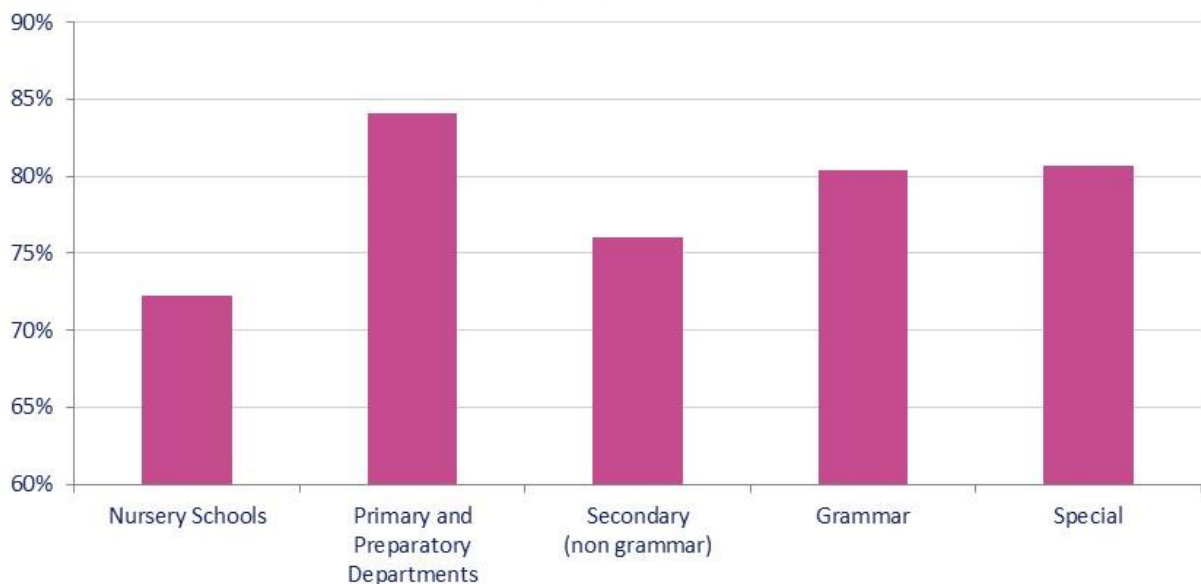
³ Data taken from Table 7

¹ Receipt of Income support or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance is used as a proxy for free school meal entitlement for pupils in nursery schools and nursery classes in primary schools. Does not include pupils in EOTAS centres.

SECTION 3: UPTAKE OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS

- There were 79,438 free school meals taken by pupils across all school types, this is a decrease of 777 on the previous year (Table 9). This represents 42.8% of all meals provided by schools.
- When considering the number of free school meals provided as a proportion of the number of pupils with actual entitlement to free school meals², uptake of free school meals was 80.9%^r. (Table 9). The 2018/19 free school meals uptake level is 0.1^r percentage points higher than the previous year.
- There is variation in the level of uptake of free school meals by those entitled across school types. The chart below shows that uptake is highest in primary and preparatory departments (84.1%). This is followed by special schools and grammar schools, with 80.7% and 80.4% uptake respectively. Uptake in secondary schools is 76.0% and is lowest in nursery schools with 72.2% (Table 9).

Figure 5: Uptake of free school meals, by school type 2018/19



¹ Nursery only includes pupils in nursery schools

² Primary includes pupils in reception and nursery classes

³ Data taken from Table 9

⁴ See background notes 12, 14, and 15

² For the purposes of calculating uptake the actual entitlement figure for nursery schools and primary schools with nursery pupils is based on full-time pupils only and excludes pupils counted under the proxy measure of free school meal entitlement (receipt of Income Support or Income Support Jobseeker's Allowance). This change was introduced in 2016/17 so figures for previous years are not directly comparable. See background note 15.

^r Revised figures

NOTES FOR READERS

Official Statistics

1. This is an Official Statistics publication. Official statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.
2. For general enquiries about the Code of Practice for Statistics, contact the National Statistics Public Enquiry Service on
Tel: 0845 601 3034
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Letters: Customer Contact Centre, Office for National Statistics, Room D265, Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport, South Wales, NP10 8XG
3. You can also find Official Statistics on the Internet: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/>

School meal provision

4. The Education Authority is responsible for the day to day operation of the school meals service in all grant-aided schools, with the exception of voluntary grammar schools and grant-maintained integrated schools, where the responsibility lies with the Trustees/Boards of Governors.
5. The service is provided in line with the Approved Arrangements for the Provision of Milk, Meals and Related Facilities made under Articles 58 and 59 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 drawn up by the Department of Education (DE), which will be referred to as 'the Arrangements' in the remainder of this document.
(<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/school-milk-and-meals-background>)
6. Two main types of school meal service exist:
 - A traditional meal comprising a main course and dessert; and
 - A cash cafeteria service, where items are priced separately.

Free school meal provision

7. With regard to free school meal provision the following terms are used:
 - Eligibility: When a pupil within a family meets one of the criteria contained in paragraph 6 of the Arrangements for the provision of milk, meals and related facilities.
 - Entitlement: When an application for free school meals is made on behalf of a pupil and the application is successful.
 - Uptake: When a pupil who is entitled to free school meals makes use of the free school meal provision by taking a free school meal.
8. Certain categories of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Details of the qualifying criteria are contained in paragraph 6 of the Arrangements. The Education Authority is responsible for administering the award of free school meals. Entitlement to free school meals is widely used as an indicator of deprivation.
9. An additional eligibility criterion was added to the Arrangements with effect from 27 September 2017 to reflect the roll-out of Universal Credit as part of Welfare Reform.

School Meals Census

10. The main statistics in this statistical bulletin have been derived from the annual school meals data collection, commonly known as the school meals census. The data collection for the 2018/19 school meals census was undertaken by the Department, with data collected directly from each grant-aided school. Prior to 2012/13 the former ELBs were responsible for the collection of data in relation to schools in the controlled and maintained sectors and provided a collated return for their area to the Department.
11. The 2018/19 school meals census figures in this statistical bulletin are based on information as at 5th October 2018³. Some tables in this statistical bulletin include data on school enrolments and the number of pupils entitled to free school meals. Data on school enrolments and free school meal entitlement (FSME) were collected as part of the annual school enrolments data collection exercise and are also based on information as at 5th October 2018.
12. In nursery and primary schools, new pupils often have a phased introduction to school with some pupils not starting school until late October. Also new pupils may have a shorter day initially, without a lunch break. The school meals census date is usually the Friday of the first full week in October. This means that not all pupils will have started school, or be staying for lunch break. While pupils due to start later in the month will be counted in school enrolment, and free school meal entitlement figures, they will not be present to take a meal and will not therefore be counted in school meals census figures. Figures presented for free school meal uptake in nursery and primary schools, but particularly nursery, will therefore be lower than would be the case with a later census date.
13. In schools with a cash cafeteria system, school meal numbers are calculated from lunchtime income. Schools also include income from sales at morning break but income from breakfast clubs is not included (from the 2012/13 data collection onwards)⁴. The cost of a fixed price meal is used to convert income from lunch and break-time sales to equated meal numbers. Equated meal numbers will not exactly match pupils present for meals.
14. There were 7,865 pupils who were recorded as being present on census day but schools indicated they were not availing of a school lunch break. These pupils were mainly in nursery and primary schools. This will include part-time nursery pupils and primary pupils whose school day, by census date, did not yet include a lunch break. From the 2012/13 school meals census data onwards these pupils have been excluded from the count of pupils present for meals for the purposes of calculating uptake of school meals.
15. From 2016/17 onwards the figures presented for uptake of free school meals by pupils entitled in nursery schools and primary schools with nursery units has changed. The denominator used in the calculation of the percentages is now based on full-time pupils only and excludes pupils counted under the proxy measure of free school meal entitlement (receipt of Income Support or Income Based Job Seeker's Allowance). Data was not available to enable the revision of figures for previous years. For this reason caution should be used in drawing any comparison between data from 2016/17 onwards and data from previous years. This change affects Table 8 and Table 9.
16. There were 12 schools indicating that they do not provide a school meals service. Of these schools 9 are nursery schools where none of the pupils have a lunch break included as part of their hours of attendance. A total of 45 pupils at the remaining three schools do receive a lunch break. These 45

³ If school meals were not being provided by the school on census day or are not typical of a normal day, the school could choose to conduct the census on the nearest day on which meals are provided. This may mean that dual registered pupils could be included in both their main and subsidiary schools' figures.

⁴ During the 2016/17 data validation process it emerged that some schools may have erroneously included breakfast income in 2016/17 data returned to the Department. While some breakfast income may have been included in the data it is not considered to have a big impact on the final estimates of school meal uptake.

- pupils are recorded as 'making other lunch arrangements' and are included in the count of pupils present for lunch when calculating percentage uptake of school meals (Tables 3 and 8).
17. Some figures have been estimated for a school that did not make a return for the 2018/19 school meals census.
 18. From the 2013/14 data collection onwards the previous categories of 'other lunch arrangements' and 'taking own food' have been merged together to create a 'pupils making other lunch arrangements' category, which includes pupils taking their own food. This was due to difficulties, expressed by some schools, in capturing accurate data for the categories previously used.
 19. Free school meal entitlement (FSME) data for special schools was not validated prior to 2014/15.
 20. Figures for primary schools may include nursery and/or reception pupils attending primary schools and preparatory departments.
 21. Information presenting uptake of school meals in Northern Ireland, England and Scotland was discontinued as policy differences between the regions and availability of up-to-date information for other regions make comparisons difficult.
 22. The figures in this statistical bulletin may be subject to minor revision and these will be notified in accordance with our revisions policy. This can be accessed at <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Revisions%20policy.pdf>
 23. More detail about the collection of data on school meals can be found on the DE website. This can be accessed at <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-meals-data-collection-and-validation>
 24. The Statistics and Research section of the DE website (<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research-1>) also presents data from the school meals census. Statistics on school enrolments, school performance, pupil attendance, teacher numbers, pupil: teacher ratios, school leaver destinations and qualifications may also be accessed via the website.

General

25. The following symbols are used in the tables in this statistical bulletin:
 - * = Relates to fewer than 5 cases
 - # = Number (5 or more) suppressed to prevent disclosure of small numbers elsewhere
 - = Indicates no schools in this category

Further enquiries

26. For more details about the statistics contained in this statistical bulletin, to request further information and analysis, or to provide any feedback on this publication please contact:

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27. Press enquiries should be made to the Department's Press Office at the same address, telephone (028) 9127 9268/ fax (028) 9127 9271.

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Table 1: Number and type of meals taken on school meals census day, by school type and school management type: 2018/19

School Type	Management Type	Meals provided by school			Other meals ¹	
		Paid school meals ²	Free school meals	All school meals ²	Pupils making other lunch arrangements (including own food)	Total ¹
Nursery Schools ³	Controlled	1,123	679	1,802	89	1,891
	Catholic Maintained	525	559	1,084	120	1,204
	TOTAL	1,648	1,238	2,886	209	3,095
Primary ⁴ and Preparatory Departments	Controlled	21,528	18,407	39,935	38,365	78,300
	Voluntary	1,095	15	1,110	450	1,560
	Catholic Maintained	24,639	22,788	47,427	30,996	78,423
	Other Maintained	994	1,296	2,290	1,399	3,689
	Controlled Integrated	924	1,133	2,057	2,097	4,154
	Grant Maintained Integrated	1,867	1,316	3,183	2,742	5,925
	TOTAL	51,047	44,955	96,002	76,049	172,051
Secondary (Non Grammar)	Controlled	8,070	7,237	15,307	10,302	25,609
	Catholic Maintained	10,730	12,306	23,036	10,862	33,898
	Other Maintained	89	315	404	319	723
	Controlled Integrated	515	702	1,217	1,291	2,508
	Grant Maintained Integrated	3,784	3,068	6,852	2,261	9,113
TOTAL	23,188	23,628	46,816	25,035	71,851	
Grammar	Controlled	5,624	1,305	6,929	6,666	13,595
	Voluntary	23,411	5,811	29,222	17,267	46,489
	TOTAL	29,035	7,116	36,151	23,933	60,084
Post-Primary Total	52,223	30,744	82,967	48,968	131,935	
Special	Controlled	1,014	2,296	3,310	1,538	4,848
	Catholic Maintained	16	169	185	65	250
	Other Maintained	17	36	53	20	73
	TOTAL	1,047	2,501	3,548	1,623	5,171
All Grant-aided Schools ⁵	Controlled	37,359	29,924	67,283	56,960	124,243
	Voluntary	24,506	5,826	30,332	17,717	48,049
	Catholic Maintained	35,910	35,822	71,732	42,043	113,775
	Other Maintained	1,100	1,647	2,747	1,738	4,485
	Controlled Integrated	1,439	1,835	3,274	3,388	6,662
	Grant Maintained Integrated	5,651	4,384	10,035	5,003	15,038
GRAND TOTAL	105,965	79,438	185,403	126,849	312,252	

Source: NI school meals census 2018/19

Notes:

¹ Excludes pupils present on school meals census day whose school day did not include a lunch break, including part-time nursery pupils and some P1 pupils (see background note 14).

² Paid meal figures presented are equated meals: Where schools have a cash cafeteria system for lunch the meal numbers are calculated based on lunchtime income.

Income from morning break provision is also included in the calculation of meal numbers (see background note 13).

³ Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

⁴ Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools.

⁵ Totals by management type corrected on 17 April 2020.

Table 2: Percentage and type of meals taken on school meals census day, by school type and school management type: 2018/19¹

School Type	Management Type	Meals provided by school			Other meals ²	Total ¹
		Paid school meals ³	Free school meals	All school meals ³	Pupils making other lunch arrangements (including own food)	
		%	%	%	%	
Nursery Schools ⁴	Controlled	59.4	35.9	95.3	4.7	100.0
	Catholic Maintained	43.6	46.4	90.0	10.0	100.0
	TOTAL	53.2	40.0	93.2	6.8	100.0
Primary ⁵ and Preparatory Departments	Controlled	27.5	23.5	51.0	49.0	100.0
	Voluntary	70.2	1.0	71.2	28.8	100.0
	Catholic Maintained	31.4	29.1	60.5	39.5	100.0
	Other Maintained	26.9	35.1	62.1	37.9	100.0
	Controlled Integrated	22.2	27.3	49.5	50.5	100.0
	Grant Maintained Integrated	31.5	22.2	53.7	46.3	100.0
	TOTAL	29.7	26.1	55.8	44.2	100.0
Secondary (Non Grammar)	Controlled	31.5	28.3	59.8	40.2	100.0
	Catholic Maintained	31.7	36.3	68.0	32.0	100.0
	Other Maintained	12.3	43.6	55.9	44.1	100.0
	Controlled Integrated	20.5	28.0	48.5	51.5	100.0
	Grant Maintained Integrated	41.5	33.7	75.2	24.8	100.0
TOTAL	32.3	32.9	65.2	34.8	100.0	
Grammar	Controlled	41.4	9.6	51.0	49.0	100.0
	Voluntary	50.4	12.5	62.9	37.1	100.0
	TOTAL	48.3	11.8	60.2	39.8	100.0
Post-Primary Total		39.6	23.3	62.9	37.1	100.0
Special	Controlled	20.9	47.4	68.3	31.7	100.0
	Catholic Maintained	6.4	67.6	74.0	26.0	100.0
	Other Maintained	23.3	49.3	72.6	27.4	100.0
	TOTAL	20.2	48.4	68.6	31.4	100.0
All Grant-aided Schools ⁶	Controlled	30.1	24.1	54.2	45.8	100.0
	Voluntary	51.0	12.1	63.1	36.9	100.0
	Catholic Maintained	31.6	31.5	63.0	37.0	100.0
	Other Maintained	24.5	36.7	61.2	38.8	100.0
	Controlled Integrated	21.6	27.5	49.1	50.9	100.0
	Grant Maintained Integrated	37.6	29.2	66.7	33.3	100.0
	GRAND TOTAL		33.9	25.4	59.4	40.6

Source: NI school meals census 2018/19

Notes:

¹Figures may not add due to rounding.

² Excludes pupils present on school meals census day whose school day did not include a lunch break, including part-time nursery pupils and some P1 pupils (see background note 14).

³ Paid meal figures presented are equated meals: Where schools have a cash cafeteria system for lunch the meal numbers are calculated based on lunchtime income.

Income from morning break provision is also included in the calculation of meal numbers (see background note 13).

⁴ Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

⁵ Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools

Table 3: Uptake of school meals (free and paid) - number and percentage of pupils present for lunch on school meals census day, by school type and school management type: 2015/16- 2018/19

School Type	Management Type	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
		School meals provided ¹	Uptake ² %	School meals provided ¹	Uptake ² %	School meals provided ¹	Uptake ² %	School meals provided ¹	Uptake ² %
Nursery Schools ³	Controlled	1,891	96.7	1,812	94.7	1,847	96.8	1,802	96.0
	Catholic Maintained	1,210	91.5	1,086	90.9	1,088	91.1	1,084	90.0
	TOTAL	3,101	94.6	2,898	93.2	2,935	94.6	2,886	93.6
Primary ⁴ and Preparatory Departments	Controlled	40,847	53.5	41,548	53.8	39,957	51.2	39,935	51.1
	Voluntary	1,109	69.7	1,084	68.7	1,079	67.4	1,110	71.2
	Catholic Maintained	47,427	62.3	47,909	61.6	47,304	60.4	47,427	60.5
	Other Maintained	2,099	64.9	2,213	65.5	2,253	63.0	2,290	62.1
	Controlled Integrated	1,891	50.1	1,994	50.5	2,009	50.3	2,057	49.5
	Grant Maintained Integrated	2,998	52.7	3,128	54.0	3,030	50.6	3,183	53.7
TOTAL	96,371	57.8	97,876	57.7	95,632	55.8	96,002	55.9	
Secondary (Non Grammar)	Controlled	15,418	62.8	15,733	63.2	15,246	60.3	15,307	59.3
	Catholic Maintained	24,259	70.7	24,016	71.6	23,115	69.0	23,036	67.9
	Other Maintained	381	66.4	383	60.3	444	65.7	404	55.9
	Controlled Integrated	1,106	49.1	1,219	54.7	1,132	50.0	1,217	48.5
	Grant Maintained Integrated	6,426	76.4	6,625	76.6	6,674	76.1	6,852	75.4
TOTAL	47,590	67.9	47,976	68.6	46,611	66.1	46,816	65.0	
Grammar	Controlled	7,930	55.4	7,292	54.0	7,010	51.8	6,929	51.7
	Voluntary	27,038	58.2	28,405	61.2	28,832	62.0	29,222	62.9
	TOTAL	34,968	57.5	35,697	59.5	35,842	59.7	36,151	60.4
Post-Primary	TOTAL	82,558	63.1	83,673	64.4	82,453	63.2	82,967	62.9
Special	Controlled	3,047	69.6	3,159	70.5	3,225	69.8	3,310	68.3
	Catholic Maintained	179	81.7	183	84.3	181	79.0	185	74.0
	Other Maintained	37	53.6	56	74.7	52	69.3	53	72.6
	TOTAL	3,263	69.9	3,398	71.2	3,458	70.2	3,548	68.6
All Grant-aided Schools	Controlled	69,133	56.8	69,544	57.0	67,285	54.5	67,283	54.2
	Voluntary	28,147	58.6	29,489	61.4	29,911	62.2	30,332	63.1
	Catholic Maintained	73,075	65.2	73,194	64.9	71,688	63.3	71,732	63.1
	Other Maintained	2,517	64.9	2,652	64.9	2,749	63.5	2,747	61.2
	Controlled Integrated	2,997	49.7	3,213	52.0	3,141	50.2	3,274	49.1
	Grant Maintained Integrated	9,424	66.9	9,753	67.6	9,704	65.7	10,035	66.8
GRAND TOTAL	185,293	60.6	187,845	61.1	184,478	59.5	185,403	59.4	

Source: NI school meals census 2015/16 - 2018/19

Notes:

¹ Meal figures presented are equated meals: Where schools have a cash cafeteria system for lunch the meal numbers are calculated based on lunchtime income. Income from morning break provision is also included in the calculation of meal numbers (see background note 13).

² Uptake is expressed as the number of school meals provided (free and paid) as a percentage of the number of pupils present for lunch on census day. Pupils present for lunch excludes pupils present on school meals census day whose school day did not include a lunch break, including part-time nursery pupils and some P1 pupils (see background note 14).

³ Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

⁴ Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools

Table 4: Number and percentage of school meals provided (free and paid) by type of meal provision, school type and school management type: 2018/19

School Type	Management Type	Traditional meals		Cash cafeteria meals ¹	
		Number	%	Number	%
Nursery Schools ²	Controlled	1,802	100.0	0	0.0
	Catholic Maintained	1,084	100.0	0	0.0
	TOTAL	2,886	100.0	0	0.0
Primary ³ and Preparatory Departments	Controlled	39,484	98.9	451	1.1
	Voluntary	999	90.0	111	10.0
	Catholic Maintained	46,113	97.2	1,314	2.8
	Other Maintained	2,290	100.0	0	0.0
	Controlled Integrated	2,057	100.0	0	0.0
	Grant Maintained Integrated	3,183	100.0	0	0.0
	TOTAL	94,126	98.0	1,876	2.0
Secondary (Non Grammar)	Controlled	456	3.0	14,851	97.0
	Catholic Maintained	2,207	9.6	20,829	90.4
	Other Maintained	337	83.4	67	16.6
	Controlled Integrated	0	0.0	1,217	100.0
	Grant Maintained Integrated	0	0.0	6,852	100.0
TOTAL	3,000	6.4	43,816	93.6	
Grammar	Controlled	155	2.2	6,774	97.8
	Voluntary	1,825	6.2	27,397	93.8
	TOTAL	1,980	5.5	34,171	94.5
Post-Primary Total		4,980	6.0	77,987	94.0
Special	Controlled	3,164	95.6	146	4.4
	Catholic Maintained	185	100.0	0	0.0
	Other Maintained	53	100.0	0	0.0
	TOTAL	3,402	95.9	146	4.1
All Grant-aided Schools	Controlled	45,061	67.0	22,222	33.0
	Voluntary	2,824	9.3	27,508	90.7
	Catholic Maintained	49,589	69.1	22,143	30.9
	Other Maintained	2,680	97.6	67	2.4
	Controlled Integrated	2,057	62.8	1,217	37.2
	Grant Maintained Integrated	3,183	31.7	6,852	68.3
GRAND TOTAL		105,394	56.8	80,009	43.2

Source: NI school meals census 2018/19

Notes:

¹ Cash cafeteria meal figures presented are equated meals: Where schools have a cash cafeteria system for lunch the meal numbers are calculated based on lunchtime income. Income from morning break provision is also included in the calculation of meal numbers (see background note 13).

² Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

³ Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools

Table 5: Uptake of school meals (free and paid) - number and percentage of pupils present for lunch on school meals census day, according to relative free school meal entitlement, by school type: 2018/19

Proportion entitled to free school meals	School Type	Paid school meals			Free school meals			All meals provided ⁴		
		School meals provided ¹	Uptake ²	%	School meals provided	Uptake ²	%	School meals provided ¹	Uptake ²	%
10% and less	Nursery Schools ³	84	94.4		5	5.6		89	100.0	
	Primary ⁴ and Preparatory Departments	6,104	38.3		859	5.4		6,963	43.7	
	Secondary (non grammar)	0	-		0	-		0	-	
	Grammar	10,628	48.8		1,270	5.8		11,898	54.7	
	Post-primary	10,628	48.8		1,270	5.8		11,898	54.7	
	Special	0	-		0	-		-	-	
	All Grant-aided Schools⁵	16,816	44.5		2,134	5.6		18,950	50.2	
10.1% - 20.0%	Nursery Schools ³	398	71.7		100	18.0		498	89.7	
	Primary ⁴ and Preparatory Departments	15,056	33.7		5,871	13.1		20,927	46.9	
	Secondary (non grammar)	1,322	36.0		450	12.3		1,772	48.3	
	Grammar	13,613	51.2		3,125	11.8		16,738	63.0	
	Post-primary	14,935	49.4		3,575	11.8		18,510	61.2	
	Special	0	-		0	-		-	-	
	All Grant-aided Schools⁵	30,389	40.3		9,546	12.6		39,935	52.9	
20.1% - 40.0%	Nursery Schools ³	698	63.1		314	28.4		1,012	91.5	
	Primary ⁴ and Preparatory Departments	23,036	31.2		18,971	25.7		42,007	57.0	
	Secondary (non grammar)	14,923	37.7		10,186	25.7		25,109	63.4	
	Grammar	4,794	41.6		2,721	23.6		7,515	65.2	
	Post-primary	19,717	38.6		12,907	25.3		32,624	63.8	
	Special	296	24.7		388	32.4		684	57.0	
	All Grant-aided Schools⁵	43,747	34.4		32,580	25.6		76,327	60.0	
40.1% +	Nursery Schools ³	468	34.8		819	60.9		1,287	95.7	
	Primary ⁴ and Preparatory Departments	6,851	18.3		19,254	51.3		26,105	69.6	
	Secondary (non grammar)	6,943	24.1		12,992	45.1		19,935	69.3	
	Grammar	0	-		0	-		-	-	
	Post-primary	6,943	24.1		12,992	45.1		19,935	69.3	
	Special	751	18.9		2,113	53.3		2,864	72.3	
	All Grant-aided Schools⁵	15,013	21.0		35,178	49.1		50,191	70.1	

Source: NI school meals census 2018/19

Notes:

¹ Meal figures presented are equated meals: Where schools have a cash cafeteria system for lunch the meal numbers are calculated based on lunchtime income. Income from morning break provision is also included in the calculation of meal numbers (see background note 13).

² Uptake is expressed as the number of school meals provided (free and paid) as a percentage of the number of pupils present for lunch on census day. Pupils present for lunch excludes pupils present on school meals census day whose school day did not include a lunch break, including part-time nursery pupils and some P1 pupils (see background note 14).

³ Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

⁴ Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools

⁵ Does not include pupils attending EOTAS centres.

Table 6: Number and percentage¹ of pupils entitled to free school meals by school type: 2015/16 - 2018/19

		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Total enrolment	Nursery Schools ²	5,904	5,864	5,837	5,832
	Primary ³ and Preparatory Departments	178,222	181,302	183,453	184,245
	Secondary (non grammar)	77,753	77,432	77,727	79,377
	Grammar	63,359	62,981	62,818	62,862
	Special	5,173	5,407	5,735	5,959
	All Grant-aided Schools⁵	330,411	332,986	335,570	338,275
Entitlement to free school meals	Nursery Schools ²	2,240	2,085	1,952	1,997
	Primary ³ and Preparatory Departments	56,265	56,681	55,536	54,117
	Secondary (non grammar)	30,990	31,461	30,866	31,080
	Grammar	8,811	8,978	8,951	8,848
	Special ⁴	2,757	2,922	2,949	3,100
	All Grant-aided Schools⁵	101,063	102,127	100,254	99,142
Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals¹	Nursery Schools ²	37.9	35.6	33.4	34.2
	Primary ³ and Preparatory Departments	31.6	31.3	30.3	29.4
	Secondary (non grammar)	39.9	40.6	39.7	39.2
	Grammar	13.9	14.3	14.2	14.1
	Special ⁴	53.3	54.0	51.4	52.0
	All Grant-aided Schools⁵	30.6	30.7	29.9	29.3

Source: NI school census 2015/16 - 2018/19

Notes:

¹ Percentages express the number of pupils entitled to free school meals in a particular category (e.g. those at primary school) as a proportion of the total pupil enrolment in the same category.

² As school meals are not universally available to children in pre-school education, receipt of Income Support or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance is used as a proxy for free school meal entitlement. Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

³ Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools

⁴ Prior to 2014/15 free school meal entitlement data for special schools was not validated.

⁵ Does not include pupils attending EOTAS centres.

Table 7: Number and percentage¹ of pupils entitled to free school meals, by school type and school management type: 2018/19

School Type	Management Type	Pupils entitled to free school meals	Free school meal entitlement %
Nursery Schools²	Controlled	1,193	29.0
	Catholic Maintained	804	46.7
	TOTAL	1,997	34.2
Primary³ and Preparatory Department	Controlled	23,112	27.4
	Voluntary	25	1.6
	Catholic Maintained	26,402	31.7
	Other Maintained	1,504	37.6
	Controlled Integrated	1,404	31.8
	Grant Maintained Integrated	1,670	24.9
TOTAL	54,117	29.4	
Secondary (Non Grammar)	Controlled	10,057	35.3
	Catholic Maintained	15,819	42.1
	Other Maintained	457	57.2
	Controlled Integrated	1,078	38.9
	Grant Maintained Integrated	3,669	37.7
TOTAL	31,080	39.2	
Grammar	Controlled	1,746	12.5
	Voluntary	7,102	14.5
	TOTAL	8,848	14.1
Post-Primary	TOTAL	39,928	28.1
Special	Controlled	2,863	51.1
	Catholic Maintained	201	71.3
	Other Maintained	36	45.6
	TOTAL	3,100	52.0
All Grant-aided Schools	Controlled	38,971	28.6
	Voluntary	7,127	14.1
	Catholic Maintained	43,226	35.2
	Other Maintained	1,997	41.0
	Controlled Integrated	2,482	34.6
	Grant Maintained Integrated	5,339	32.5
GRAND TOTAL	99,142	29.3	

Source: NI school census 2018/19

Notes:

¹ Percentages express the number of pupils entitled to free school meals in a particular category (e.g. those at primary school) as a proportion of the total pupil enrolment in the same category.

² As school meals are not universally available to children in pre-school education, receipt of Income Support or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance is used as a proxy for free school meal entitlement. Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

³ Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools.

Table 8: Number and percentage of pupils taking free school meals as a proportion of all school meals provided and as a proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals¹, by school type and school management type: 2018/19

School Type	Management Type	Free school meals taken by pupils present	Free meals as a proportion of all school meals provided² %	Free school meals taken as a proportion of pupils entitled¹ %
Nursery Schools³	Controlled	679	37.7	72.1
	Catholic Maintained	559	51.6	72.4
	TOTAL	1,238	42.9	72.2
Primary⁴ and Preparatory Department	Controlled	18,407	46.1	80.7
	Voluntary	15	1.4	60.0
	Catholic Maintained	22,788	48.0	87.1
	Other Maintained	1,296	56.6	87.9
	Controlled Integrated	1,133	55.1	81.2
	Grant Maintained Integrated	1,316	41.3	80.8
	TOTAL	44,955	46.8	84.1
Secondary (non grammar)	Controlled	7,237	47.3	72.0
	Catholic Maintained	12,306	53.4	77.8
	Other Maintained	315	78.0	68.9
	Controlled Integrated	702	57.7	65.1
	Grant Maintained Integrated	3,068	44.8	83.6
TOTAL	23,628	50.5	76.0	
Grammar	Controlled	1,305	18.8	74.7
	Voluntary	5,811	19.9	81.8
	TOTAL	7,116	19.7	80.4
Post-Primary	TOTAL	30,744	37.1	77.0
Special	Controlled	2,296	69.4	80.2
	Catholic Maintained	169	91.4	84.1
	Other Maintained	36	67.9	100.0
	TOTAL	2,501	70.5	80.7
All grant-aided schools	Controlled	29,924	44.5	77.9
	Voluntary	5,826	19.2	81.7
	Catholic Maintained	35,822	49.9	83.4
	Other Maintained	1,647	60.0	83.7
	Controlled Integrated	1,835	56.0	74.2
	Grant Maintained Integrated	4,384	43.7	82.7
GRAND TOTAL	79,438	42.8	80.9	

Source: NI school meals census 2018/19

Notes:

¹ For the purposes of calculating uptake of free school meals by pupils entitled the denominator used is based on full-time pupils only and excludes pupils counted under the proxy measure of free school meal entitlement (receipt of Income Support or Income Support Jobseeker's Allowance). This only applies to nursery and primary schools. See background note 15.

² Percentages express the number of pupils taking free school meals in a particular category (e.g. those at primary school) as a proportion of all school meals provided in the same category.

³ Only includes pupils at nursery schools.

⁴ Includes pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools

Table 9: Uptake of free school meals - number and percentage¹ of pupils entitled to free school meals, by school type: 2015/16 - 2018/19

		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Free school meals taken by pupils present	Nursery Schools ²	1,473	1,279	1,230	1,238
	Primary ² and Preparatory Departments	47,001	47,354	45,658	44,955
	Secondary (non grammar)	24,098	24,709	23,680	23,628
	Grammar	7,191	7,356	7,273	7,116
	Special	2,239	2,393	2,374	2,501
	All grant-aided schools	82,002	83,091	80,215	79,438
Pupils entitled to free school meals	Nursery Schools ^{2,3}	2,240	-	-	-
	Nursery Schools ^{2,3} (excluding part-time pupils and proxy FSME)	-	1,799	1,679	1,714
	Primary ^{2,3} and Preparatory Departments	56,265	-	-	-
	Primary ^{2,3} and Preparatory Departments (excluding part-time pupils and proxy FSME)	-	55,963	54,852	53,482 ^f
	Secondary (non grammar)	30,990	31,461	30,866	31,080
	Grammar	8,811	8,978	8,951	8,848
	Special ⁴	2,757	2,922	2,949	3,100
	All grant-aided schools	101,063	101,123*	99,297*	98224^f
Free school meals taken as a proportion of pupils entitled¹	Nursery Schools ^{2,3}	65.8	-	-	-
	Nursery Schools ^{2,3} (excluding part-time pupils and proxy FSME)	-	71.1	73.3	72.2
	Primary ^{2,3} and Preparatory Departments	83.5	-	-	-
	Primary ^{2,3} and Preparatory Departments (excluding part-time pupils and proxy FSME)	-	84.6	83.2	84.1
	Secondary (non grammar)	77.8	78.5	76.7	76.0
	Grammar	81.6	81.9	81.3	80.4
	Special ⁴	81.2	81.9	80.5	80.7
	All grant-aided schools	81.1	82.2*	80.8*	80.9*^f

Entitlement Source: NI school census 2015/16 - 2018/19

Uptake Source: NI school meals census 2015/16 - 2018/19

Notes:

¹ Percentages express the number of free school meals taken in a particular category (e.g. those at primary school) as a proportion of the number of pupils entitled to free school meals in the same category.

² The nursery figures only include pupils at nursery schools. The primary figures include pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools.

³ For the purposes of calculating uptake of free school meals by pupils entitled the free school meal entitlement figure used in 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 is based on full-time pupils only and excludes pupils counted under the proxy measure of free school meal entitlement (receipt of Income Support or Income Support Jobseeker's Allowance). This only applies to nursery and primary schools. Figures prior to 2016/17 are not directly comparable. See background note 15.

⁴ Prior to 2014/15 free school meal entitlement data for special schools was not validated.

* Excluding part-time pupils and proxy FSME

Table 10: Adults taking school meals, by school type: 2018/19

	Adults taking school meal (free or paid)	Adults taking free school meal ¹ %
Nursery Schools ²	316	90.5
Primary ³ and Preparatory Departments	5,769	91.3
Secondary (non grammar)	2,800	81.1
Grammar	1,753	61.3
Post-Primary Total	4,553	73.5
Special	714	95.7
All grant-aided schools	11,352	84.4

Source: NI school meals census 2018/19

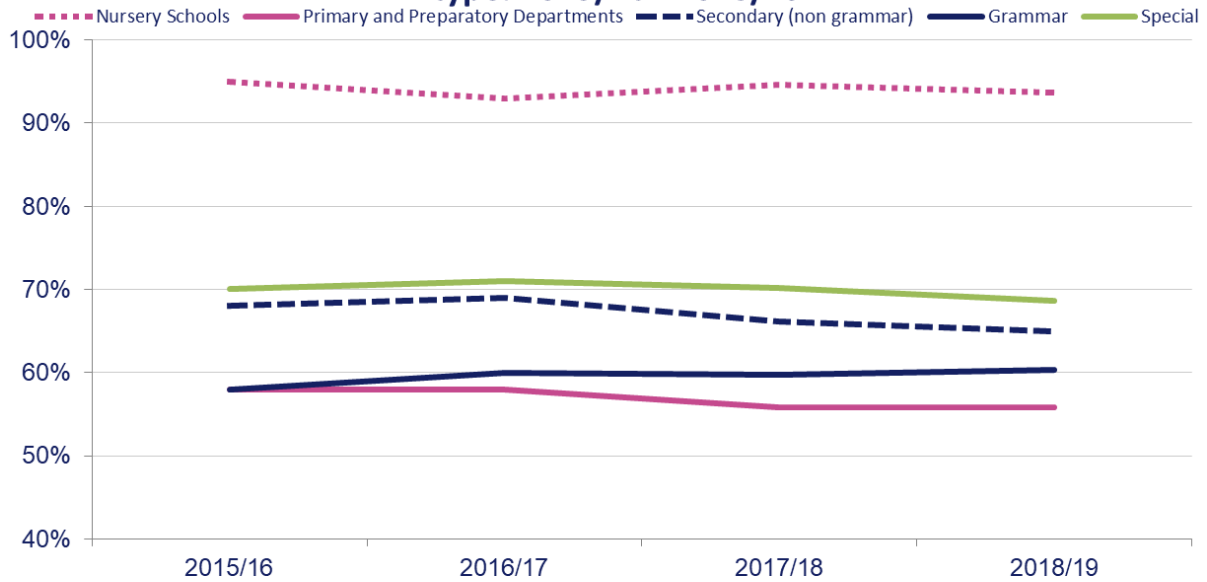
Notes:

¹ Depending on their terms and conditions kitchen staff and mid-day supervisors may be entitled to a free mid-day meal.

² Only includes nursery classes in nursery schools.

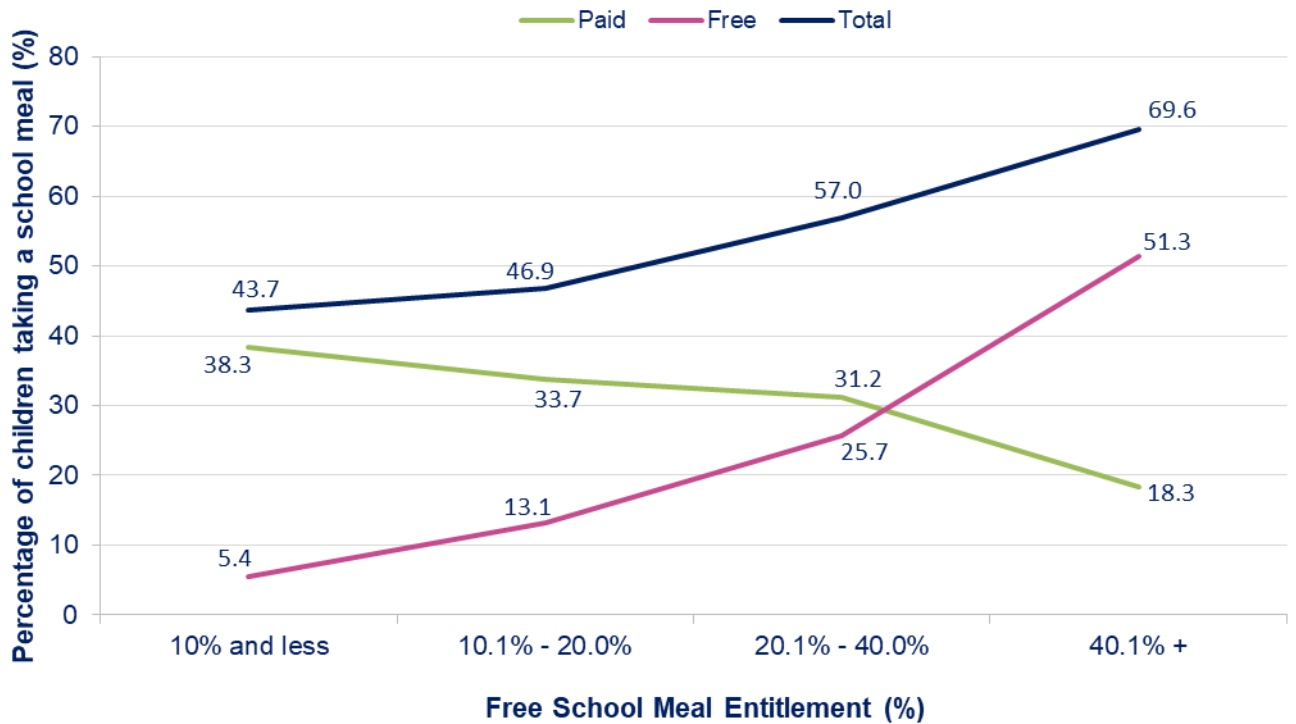
³ Includes reception and nursery classes in primary schools.

Figure 1: Uptake of school meals (free and paid), by school type: 2015/16 - 2018/19



¹ Nursery only includes pupils in nursery schools
² Primary includes pupils in reception and nursery classes
³ Data taken from Table 3

Figure 2: Uptake of school meals in primary schools, according to relative FSME 2018/19



¹ Includes preparatory departments, pupils in reception and nursery classes of primary schools. Excludes schools where no meal service is available.
³ Data taken from Table 5

Figure 3: Uptake of school meals in post-primary schools, according to relative FSME 2018/19

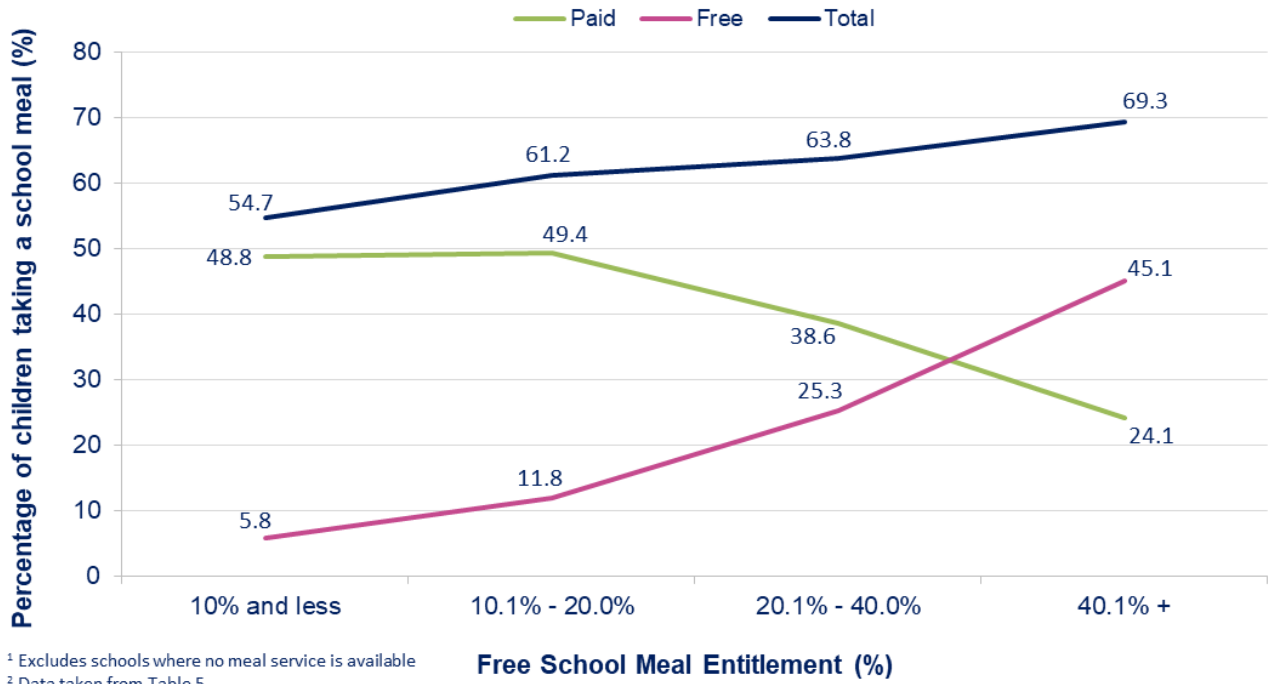
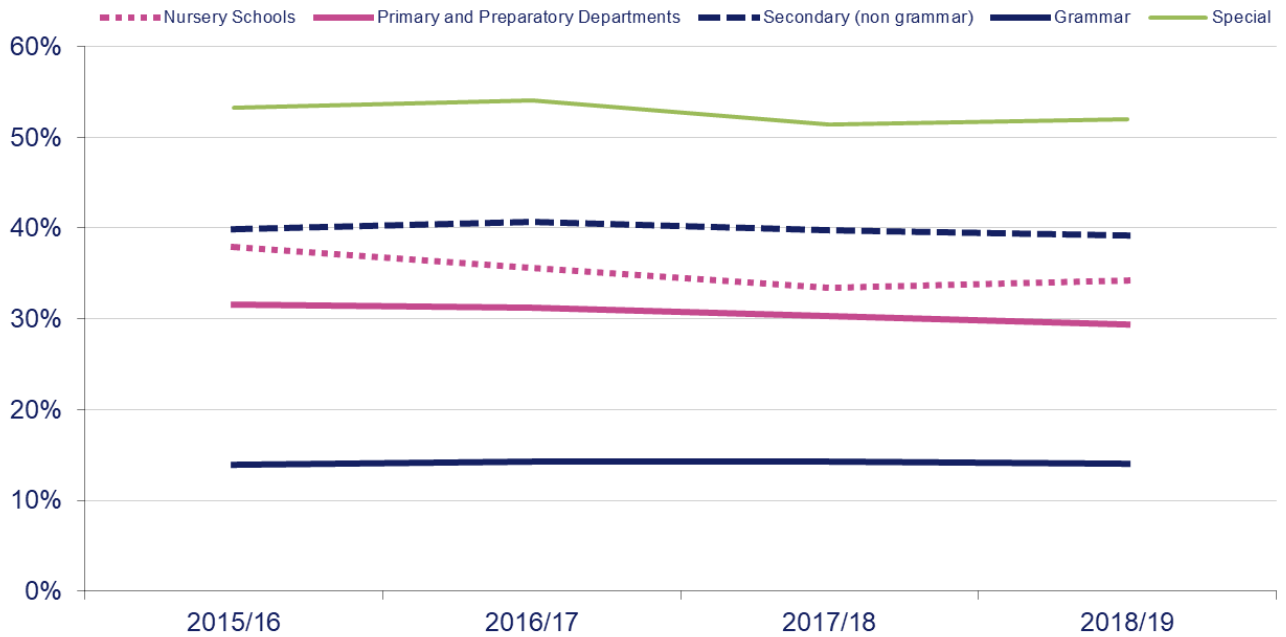
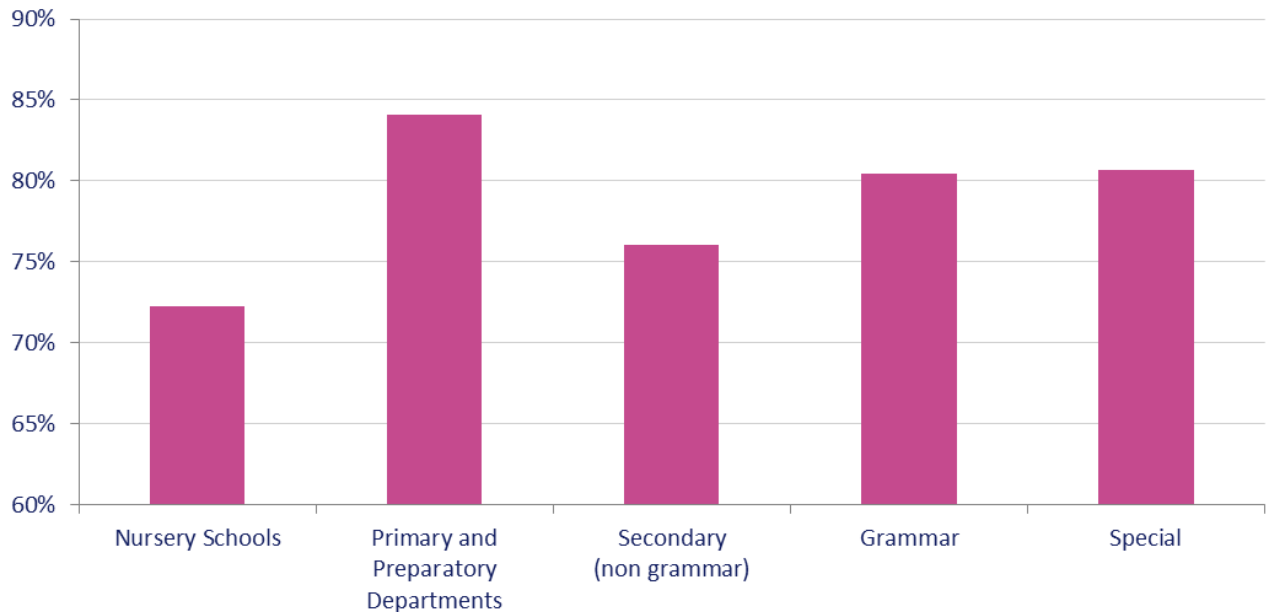


Figure 4: Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, by school type: 2015/16 - 2018/19



¹ Nursery only includes pupils in nursery schools
² Primary includes pupils in reception and nursery classes
³ Data taken from Table 7

**Figure 5: Uptake of free school meals, by school type
2018/19**



¹ Nursery only includes pupils in nursery schools

² Primary includes pupils in reception and nursery classes

³ Data taken from Table 9

⁴ See background notes 12, 14, and 15

Notes

School Management Types

Controlled schools are owned and managed by the Education Authority through Boards of Governors. Primary and secondary school Boards of Governors consist of representatives of transferors (mainly the Protestant Churches) along with representatives of parents, teachers and the Education Authority. Controlled nursery, grammar and special school boards of governors consist only of representatives of the latter 3 categories. Within the controlled school sector there are a number of integrated schools and a small but growing number of Irish-medium schools.

Catholic maintained schools are voluntary schools owned by trustees (appointed by the Roman Catholic Church) and managed by CCMS through boards of governors. Board of Governors consist of members nominated by the trustees along with representatives of parents, teachers and the Education Authority. Within the Catholic maintained sector there are a small number of Irish-medium schools.

Other maintained schools are voluntary schools owned by trustees and managed by Boards of Governors which consist of members nominated by trustees along with representatives of parents, teachers and the Education Authority. This sector includes a number of Irish Medium schools.

Voluntary grammar schools are owned by trustees and managed by Boards of Governors which consist of members nominated by trustees along with representatives of parents, teachers, the Department and, in most cases, the Education Authority. (Voluntary grammar schools vary in the rates of capital grant to which they are entitled depending on the management structure they have adopted, with the vast majority entitled to capital grants of 100%.)

Grant-maintained integrated schools are owned and managed by their Boards of Governors, which consist of foundation governors along with representatives of parents, teachers and the Department.

All of the above are types of grant-aided school. Independent Schools do not receive any funding from the Education Authority or the Department of Education.