Staffordshire County Council

Department for Education

# Spring School Census – January 2026
# Guidance notes for all schools

## Key Dates

Census Date: **Thursday 15th January 2026**
Census Deadline: **Thursday 22nd January 2026**

**Please note these are Staffordshire collection dates, to ensure all schools have adequate time to check and confirm data with the local authority. You may see alternative deadline dates on the DfE website. However, please support the Schools Data Team by meeting the Staffordshire deadline dates.**

## What is important in this Census?

**These notes have been produced for Staffordshire schools using SIMS. If you use any other Management Information System (MIS), please use in conjunction with <u>your own supplier notes</u> and <u>contact them</u> for further assistance, if required.**

**You can also use the DfE supporting guidance via**
**https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/data-items-2025-to-2026**

### WHAT TIME TO RUN YOUR CENSUS

Details are required of all classes running at a selected time on spring census day. The selected period is based on the last digit of a schools' DfE establishment number as follows:

0, 1 or 5      the selected time is one hour before the end of morning school
2, 3 or 6      the selected time is one hour after the start of afternoon school
4, 7, 8 or 9   the selected time is one hour after the start of morning school

See the Class Information pages on the DfE website for more information

### DELETED DATA ITEMS FOR 2025/2026

Information about traineeships will be discontinued from Autumn 2025.

### CHANGES TO EXISTING DATA ITEMS FOR 2025/2026

#### Learner Funding and Monitoring

Data item N00763 (Learner Funding and Monitoring (FAM) Type) – the linking code set CS 130 has been created to record English and maths minimum hours.

Data item N00764 (Learner Funding and Monitoring (FAM) TypeCode) – the linking code set CS117 has been updated to record English and maths minimum hours.

Expanded hours (N00787) has been amended to allow up to 30 hours to be claimed, following the policy change from September 2025.

## PLEASE READ BEFORE COMPLETING YOUR RETURN

You need to ensure that you have latest SIMS Version installed (to check the version of SIMS installed, open SIMS then select Help/About SIMS). You also need the latest SIMS Fileset (to check the version number, go to **Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census**).

Alternatively, for any other MIS provider, please ensure you have the latest version installed, you have the latest supplier notes available and their contact information for help, if needed.

Ensure that <u>any pupils who have left your school before Census Day</u> have been taken <u>off roll</u>.

If a pupil is <u>admitted into your school before or on Census Day</u>, then please ensure that you <u>contact their previous school and obtain their details</u> (in particular, their UPN). **As per DfE guidance, temporary UPNs should not be used in the school census.**

It is important to ensure you have recorded to the correct enrolment status. Students should only be counted on one school's Census return unless they are dual registered. If a pupil is on a 'Managed Move', they should have the appropriate dual registration code recorded. It is essential that if you do have dual registered pupils you liaise with the other school to agree who is recording which enrolment status, if these are not matching it will cause a duplicate on your school's submission which will prevent authorisation of your census.

It is advised to try a dry run of your Census before the Census date. You can work with your supplier / IT support to arrange this.

Please submit your Census return confirmation sheet - **this is included in the back of this booklet**. Without this we are unable to approve your Census for submission to the DfE. It can also be found on the Staffordshire Learning Net .

# Contents

# School Census Flow Chart

**Stage 1 - <u>Setting up your Return.</u>**
- Ensure you have the latest SIMS File set (or your MIS equivalent). The term should be Spring 2026.
- The Census date should read 15/01/2026.

**Stage 2 - <u>Validating your Census Return</u>**
- Click **'Create and Validate'**. Please note errors will not be accepted.
- Remember to produce a detailed report to check your data.

**Stage 3 - <u>Amending pupil Data.</u>**
- Go to '**Focus | Pupil | Pupil Details'** or click on the Pupil Details Icon.

**Stage 4 - <u>Producing a Census Summary Report</u>**
- To view this, click onto the **'Summary'** button.

**Stage 5 - <u>Authorising the Census File</u>**
- Click **'Authorise'**, you will see a warning sign appear stating the return cannot be edited once authorised, if you wish to continue click '**Yes'.**
- A Headteacher authorisation screen will appear, and you need to confirm that the Headteacher is satisfied with the return.

**Stage 6 - <u>Uploading Census file to Collect.</u>**
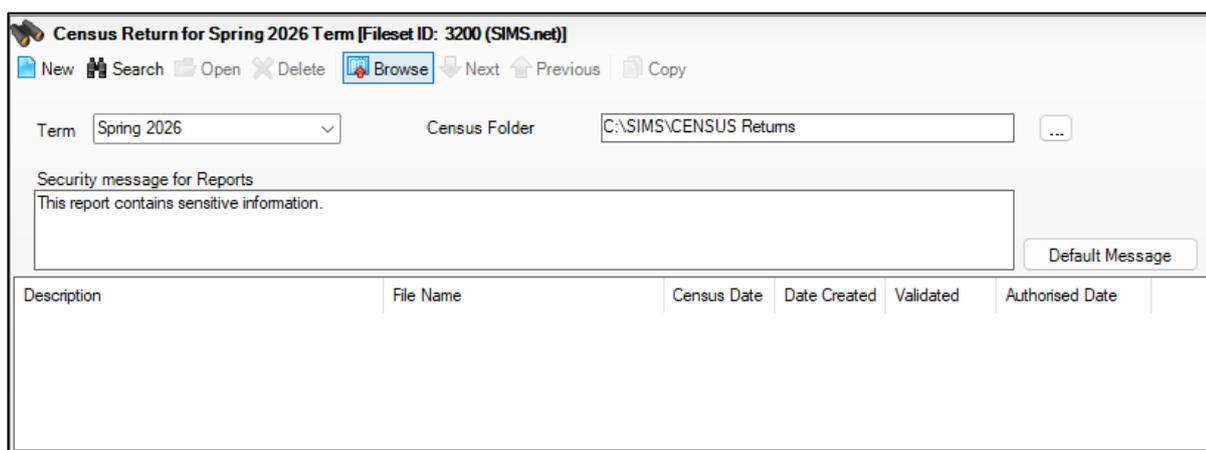
**Stage 7 – <u>Complete Confirmation Sheet.</u>**
- Forward signed confirmation sheet to schools.capitadatateam@staffordshire.gov.uk

# Stage 1: Setting up your Return

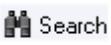To begin the School Census return, go to **Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census on SIMS.**

The Term should be **'Spring 2026'**, and the Census Folder should show **(f) or (s):\SIMS\Star\ASCOut** (or the network drive where SIMS sits).

Security message for Reports - The message here is what will appear at the top of any Detail Reports that you print out. This can be edited if you wish.
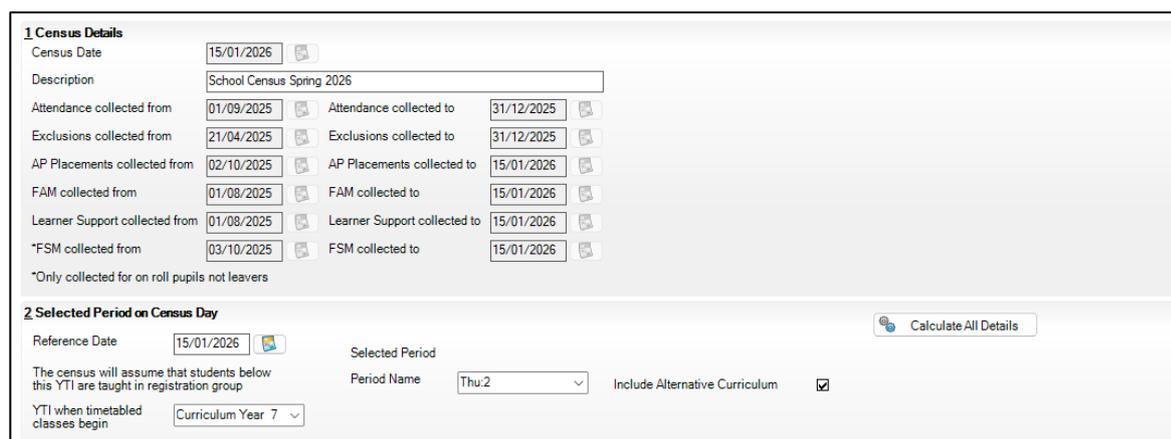


If you are starting a new return, click **New**

If you have already set up a return that you wish to go back to, just click **Search** and then double click the appropriate return.

**Once started, remember to Save the return on a regular basis!**

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## Census Details



The **Census Date** should be **15/01/2026.** If the required Reference Date is different to that displayed (e.g. because the school is closed on census day due to severe weather conditions), enter an alternative date or select a date from the Calendar.

Take note of the **Description**.  It will automatically show **School Census Spring 2026**. If you are doing a second version of the Census, you will need to amend the description to reflect this (e.g. School Census Spring 2026 version 2). All other fields here will be picked up automatically and cannot be changed.

**Please note:** Section 2: 'The Selected Period on Census Day' is specific only to schools who use the Nova-T timetabling software i.e. Secondary Schools.
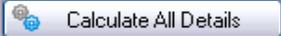
The [Calculate All Details] button now appears in this first panel.

> **Important Note:** Clicking the **Calculate All Details** button overwrites any edited data in every panel with the original data saved in SIMS. Do not use this button if you wish to keep any changes you have made.

Clicking **Calculate All Details** will bring up a warning - click **Yes** to this to generate the rest of the return.

**Remember that you only need to click 'Calculate All Details' ONCE. Clicking it a second time will wipe out any information you have entered manually and reset the entire form. There are individual 'Recalculate' buttons in each section should you need them.**

## School Information

Most of the information here should already be completed.
**Please note that the e-mail address should be**
- accessible by the Headteacher
- **NOT** a personal e-mail address such as john.smith@hotmail.com (**the DfE recommend using the headteacher@ account)**

To change any of the information on this screen, click on the [School Detail] button.

## Establishment Unique Reference Number (URN)

The **School Information** panel displays details that have previously been recorded on the **School Details** page in SIMS (**Focus | School | School Details**). The information displayed may vary depending on your school and the details entered, e.g. Academy specific information. The details displayed are read-only but can be amended, if necessary, via the **School Detail** button.



1. If any details are missing or incorrect, click the **School Detail** button to display the **School Details** dialog, where information applicable to your school is displayed.

2. Add or amend the school details, selecting from the drop-down lists where applicable. Ensure that the establishment's six-digit **Unique Reference Number** (URN) is entered. The number is available via the summary screen on the Get Information About Schools website (https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/).

3. Please remember for the data item **School Time**, this is the total compulsory time pupils spend in schools in a typical 5-day week.

4. Click the **Save** button then click the **OK** button to return to the **Census Return Details** page, where some of the updated details are displayed.

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## Early Years (Applicable to Nursery, Infant, First, Primary and All-through Schools)

**Maintained schools:** **Remember this is only if there is a nursery child at your setting, that has an EHCP**

Please ensure that you are only recording pupils on SIMS or other management system (and therefore your Census return) if they are attending an LA designated nursery class **OR have an EHCP**. You should not record any pupils solely attending a private setting on school grounds. If you are in any doubt about which pupils to record on your return, please email the Schools Data Team at schools.capitadatateam@staffordshire.gov.uk.

For the Census, schools need to record (to the nearest half hour) both the hours a child actually attends the school for education purposes, and the number of hours funded by the LA (up to 15 hours for 2 and 3 year olds, up to 25 hours for 4 year olds). Please remember to also record whether a pupil is full or part-time.

### EARLY YEARS – ACADEMIES ONLY

**Following the changes in the Autumn 2025 School Census:**

**ALL EARLY YEAR'S PUPILS attending early years provision run by an academy, on academy premises MUST BE recorded as registered pupils of the school and must be recorded on the SCHOOL CENSUS.**

To access the Hours information, click **Edit**. Click **OK** to the message displayed in the example below
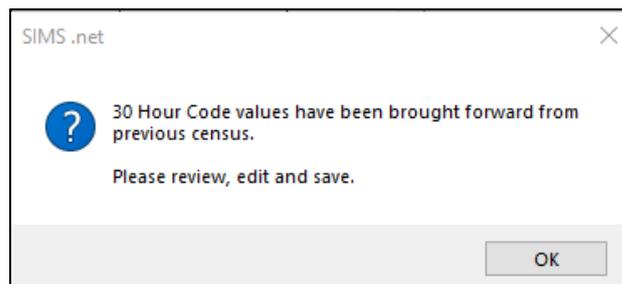


You can alter the pupils you wish to view here – the most useful filter is **Year Taught In (YTI)**.



If your school has any N2 pupils with an EHCP, additional panels will display.

**Please remember to Save any changes.**

To bulk update the record of every pupil on this screen, right-click over the header of the column you wish to edit and choose **Select All**. You can then enter the Hours in the column for any child, and all pupils will change to this value.

When the hours are complete for all pupils click **Save** then **OK** to close the window to return to the Census.

**How to record the hours for a pupil attending more than one school – Example**

*A 3-year-old pupil attends two different schools, spending 12 hours a week in a classroom situation (i.e. 'Education hours') at school A and 8 hours a week in a classroom situation at school B.  The Local Authority (and the DfE) will only fund this pupil for 15 hours in total.*
*Because the pupil spends more time at School A, they will record the pupil as Dual Registered – Main.*
*School B will have the pupil recorded as Dual Registered – Subsidiary.*
*School A will receive funding for all 12 hours, so would record 12 in both columns.*
*School B would only be funded for the remaining 3 hours available, so they would put 8 in Hours at Setting, but only 3 in Funded Hours.*

The above example would require liaison between schools (and the parents of the pupil) – the Headteachers may agree to have 7.5 hours each and so would need to record that accordingly. Pupils will only ever be funded for 15 hours in total in a nursery class and 25 hours in total in a reception class.

## Class Type (Applicable to Nursery, Infant, First, Primary and All-through Schools)

You will need to enter data for pupils. Click the **Edit** button. Click **OK** to the message to open a new window as shown below.



To update records for all pupil/students, make sure YTI, Reg and Status are set to All.

To specify the class type for an individual pupil, click the associated **Nursery** or **Other** cell to enter a tick. To change your selection, click in a different cell or click again in the current cell to remove the tick.

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

**Right–click** the **Other** column header then select **Check All.**

**Nursery children only**: in the **Pupils View** panel, select **Year N** from the **YTI** drop-down list. **Nursery** pupils only are displayed in the **Pupils** panel.

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

Remember to **Save** any changes before clicking **OK** to close the window.

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

Remember to **Save** any changes before clicking **OK** to close the window.

# Classes (All schools)



**10 Classes**

Number of classes with unexplained excess: 1

| Class Name | Pupils(On Roll) | Pupils(Guest) | Teachers | PPA Teachers | Support Staff | YTI | Type | KeyStage | Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ▶ **2GH** | 31 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | Year 2 | Other | Key Stage 1 | |
| 2JB | 29 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | Year 2 | Other | Key Stage 1 | |
| 3CB | 36 | 0 | 1 | (n/a) | 0 | Year 3 | Other | Key Stage 2 | |
| 3TO | 33 | 0 | 1 | (n/a) | 0 | Year 3 | Other | Key Stage 2 | |
| 4ES | 30 | 0 | 1 | (n/a) | 0 | Year 4 | Other | Key Stage 2 | |
| 4SL | 30 | 0 | 1 | (n/a) | 0 | Year 4 | Other | Key Stage 2 | |
| 5BB | 31 | 0 | 1 | (n/a) | 0 | Year 5 | Other | Key Stage 2 | |
| 5DT | 29 | 0 | 1 | (n/a) | 0 | Year 5 | Other | Key Stage 2 | |
| 6KH | 28 | 0 | 1 | (n/a) | 0 | Year 6 | Other | Key Stage 2 | |
| Total | 448 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 1 | | | | |

Recalculate
New
Delete
Class Size Exceptions

**11 Pupil Reconciliation**

| On roll pupils in classes | 448 | | Total pupils | 448 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Part-time pupils not at school | 0 | | Must agree with | |
| Private study pupils | 0 | | Pupils on roll | 448 |
| Pupils at another school | 0 | | | |

*Please note:*
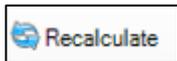
 **Recalculate** wipes out manual amendments to Classes information ONLY

 **New** will allow you to add any class that hasn't come through

 **Delete** will allow you to delete a class (e.g. a class not running at the selected time)

The Classes section should reflect the classes as taught at the selected time. Your Selected Time is based on the last digit of your DfE number.

| 0, 1 or 5 | the selected time is one hour before the end of morning school |
|---|---|
| 2, 3 or 6 | the selected time is one hour after the start of afternoon school |
| 4, 7, 8 or 9 | the selected time is one hour before the start of morning school |

Where the selected time is not appropriate to the school timetable (for example, if the selected time is when the whole school or a large proportion of the school is in an assembly with the head teacher) schools should choose an hour / period that reflects a 'normal' class situation that applies at the selected time each Thursday of the term.

**Pupils (On Roll)** – this is the number of pupils in the class at the selected time. This should include any pupils usually in the class but absent on the census day. If a class is not running at the selected time, you need to delete the class (highlight the class and click **Delete** on the right) rather than entering 0 here.

**Teachers** – Number of teachers in class at the selected time – exclude those providing support to individual pupils. If a teacher is on PPA time, you should not record them here. This may result in a query, which can be ignored (please put a note on the confirmation sheet returned to us (i.e. *Class 5 – Teacher on PPA*)).

**Support Staff** – Number of teaching assistants, SEN support etc, in the class at the selected time. Again, do not include staff present in class to support an individual pupil.

**Year Taught In** – National Curriculum Year Group of the class. Note that the presence of one or two individual pupils who have been held back or advanced a year does not qualify the class as *Mixed Year.*

**Type – Only primary and all-through schools need to send this information**. This should be *Nursery* or *Other*.

**Key Stage – Only primary and all-through schools need to send this information**. Nursery & Reception = Foundation, Year 1 & 2 = Key Stage 1, Year 3, 4, 5 & 6 = Key Stage 2.

**Activities – Only primary and all-through schools need to send this information.** This should be the Activities that the classes are doing at your selected time.

**Do not** use the activities of '*PE or Games'*, '*Music, Singing and Drama'* or '*Watching TV or listening to the radio'* for Reception or Key Stage 1 classes. These activities can often mean two or more classes coming together, which will provide an inaccurate idea of class size. If one of your Reception or Key Stage 1 classes is doing one of these activities at the given selected time, please choose an alternative selected time when they are engaged in an academic activity. If you choose an alternative selected time for an infant class, you should also apply this selected time to all other classes.

Reception / Key Stage 1 Class Size Limit – If you have a Reception or Key Stage 1 class in breach of the legal class size limit of 30 pupils, please specify the class and give the reason for the breach on the confirmation sheet.

Exceptions accepted are:

a. children admitted outside the normal admissions round with statements of special educational needs specifying a school

b. looked after children and previously looked after children admitted outside the normal admissions round

c. children admitted, after initial allocation of places, because of a procedural error made by the admission authority or local authority in the original application process

d. children admitted after an independent appeals panel upholds an appeal

e. children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round for whom there is no other available school within reasonable distance (the local authority has to confirm that the child qualifies under this category)

f. children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round

g. children whose twin or sibling from a multiple birth is admitted otherwise than as an excepted pupil

h. children with special educational needs who are normally taught in a special educational needs unit attached to the school, or registered at a special school, who attend some infant classes within the mainstream school

These children will remain an 'excepted pupil' for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit.

# Childcare (All schools)

This section is a mandatory collection.



To edit this section, you will need to click on the **Edit** button and then click on **6. Childcare**



To edit this information, highlight the '**Type**', then click on **Open** and fill in the relevant details





**Please remember to Save any changes.**
The provision of or signposting to childcare together with the nature of the childcare provided or signposting to is captured using the following eight data items:
- Childcare on site – records whether childcare is provided on the school premises
- Childcare off site – records whether childcare is undertaken off the school premises
- Childcare places – records the max. number of children the service can simultaneously provide places for
- Childcare provider – records who provides the childcare service
- Childcare number of weeks open – records the number of weeks of childcare provided per year
- Other schools – records whether the service is made available to children from other schools
- Opening time – records the time the service becomes available
- Closing time – records the time the service ceases operation.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Schools who do not provide on-site childcare and do not signpost off-site provision must enter a **No for onsite** and **No for signposting** against each type of childcare

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## Pupil Reconciliation (All schools)



| 9 Student Reconciliation | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| On roll students in classes | 1013 | Total students | 1041 |
| Part-time students not at school | 1 | Students on work experience | 0 | Must agree with |
| Private study students | 23 | Students at FE colleges | 2 | Students on roll | 1041 |
| Students at another school | 2 | | |

If all your pupils are in class at the selected time, then you should not need to reconcile the total. If you have classes which are not running at the selected time, then you will need to account for those pupils in this section.

Once the **Total Pupils** agrees with the **Pupils on Roll**, continue to the next section.

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## Top-up Funding (All schools)

This data item indicates those pupils/students on roll on Census Day for which a school receives top up funding from the local authority.

In mainstream schools it is **only pupils/students in receipt of AEN funding that you need to flag**. Please note pupils/students with Medical AEN funding can be flagged in receipt of top up funding as well.

To record a pupil/student who is entitled to top up funding click the **Edit** button and the window below will open. This can also be done through: **Tools | Statutory Returns Tools | Update Top–Up Funding on SIMS.**

Please note that if you record a pupil/student who does not have a EHCP Plan and is in receipt of top up funding, the DfE will require a note of explanation to be added on COLLECT. This could be that the pupil/student has SEN High Needs for example.



You need to **search** for the pupil/student who is entitled to top up funding. Highlight the relevant pupil/student (a faint blue line will show).

You will need to **Add** the pupil/student into the top up funding section below. Click **Update** before you click **OK**.

## Post Looked After Arrangements (All schools)

This data item will identify those children on roll on Census Day who were looked after immediately before adoption, being placed on a special guardianship or residence order. It will be up to those who have parental responsibility (adoptive parents, special guardians and carers of former looked after children on residence orders) to decide if they wish schools to know whether such children have been adopted, under a special guardianship order or a residence order.

To enter a child as being adopted you will need to click the **Edit** button in this panel, or through **Tools | Statutory Returns Tools | Update Post Looked After Arrangements on SIMS.** You will then need to search for the adopted pupil. Ensure the term is set to Spring 2026.

Select the pupil in the top half of the window and click **Add** to put them in the bottom half of the window.

You will also need to select the appropriate value under the **PLAA** status. You will also have the option to tick to show you have seen evidence.

Click **Update** before you click **OK**.



After running the census, a new detailed Post Looked After Arrangements Report will be produced.

# Learner Funding and Monitoring (All schools)

All schools (except nursery) with appropriate year groups or age ranges need to send this information in each census, for pupils who are either on roll on census day or became off roll since the start of the academic year.

For the 2025 to 2026 academic year, it will identify pupils:

- in receipt of tutoring
- resitting or retaking up to one year of 16 to 19 funded provisions

There is no action required by schools where none of these attributes applies to the pupil.

The Learner Funding and Monitoring area can be found via the **Tools** menu. Select **Tools | Statutory Return Tools |Update Funding and Monitoring on SIMS.**
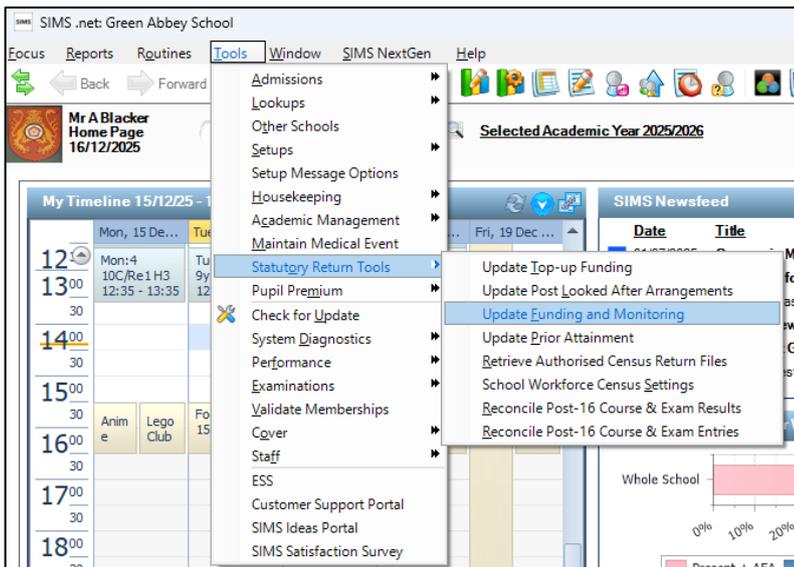


After running the census, a new detailed Funding and Monitoring Report will be produced.

You may highlight and copy and paste to excel if you would like to check through any of the information.
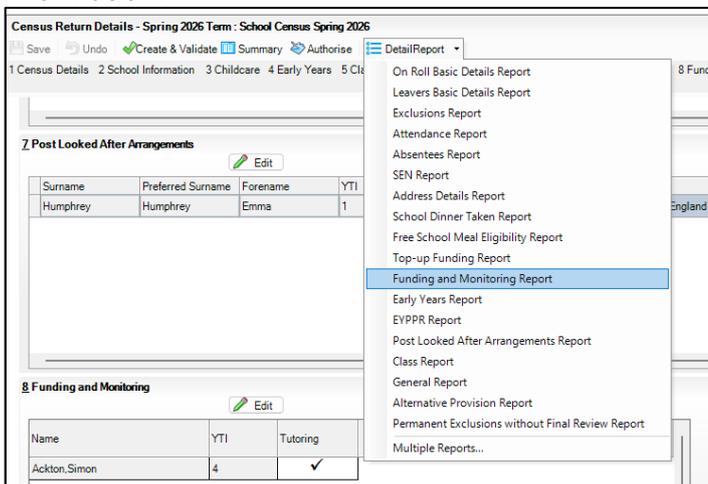
## School Dinner Taken (schools with Reception, Year 1 and/or Year 2 classes)

You can choose to calculate from Attendance or Dinner Money if you wish or simply click **Tick All** to tick every eligible pupil/student, then take the ticks out of those pupils who did not take a meal by clicking in the appropriate cell (this will remove the tick).



You will see the totals of pupils taking / not taking a school meal to enable you to double check the correct number of pupils are identified.

*WARNING: Clicking the **Reset** button removes all existing ticks from the School Dinner Taken column.*
*Clicking the **Calculate From Dinner Money** button overwrites all existing data in the School Dinner Taken panel.*

## Free School Meals (All schools)

Check your pupils who are eligible for FSM on Census Day against the latest list from the Awards Team. Ensure these pupils have a Start Date in **Pupil Details | Dietary | Eligible for Free Meals on SIMS**.

To minimise the impact of the rollout of universal credit and the introduction of a net-earned income threshold to determine eligibility for free school meals, transitional arrangements have been put in place to ensure that no pupil loses a meal as a result of these changes.

Transitional protections ensure that any pupil in receipt of free school meals on 31 March 2018 or after, should continue to receive free school meals until the end of the universal credit roll out period, and then until their phase of education ends. This covers until at least March 2025 and applies even if their circumstances change, and they would no longer meet the eligibility criteria.

## Attendance (All schools)

For the Spring 2026 census, information should be included for pupils who were:

- aged 4 to 15 as of 31/08/2025 (where their date of birth falls between 01/09/2009 and 31/08/2021).

- on the school roll for at least one session during the specified term

Attendance data is only required for non-boarder pupils (where pupil boarder indicator is equal to 'N').

## Collection periods

For the Spring 2026 collection, the school Census collects the attendance data from 01/08/2025 to 31/12/2025.

**From Autumn 2024, schools must keep the attendance register electronically and use the national attendance and absence codes.**

IMPORTANT NOTE – If you have clicked the **Calculate All Details** button, the information displayed in the Attendance panel is dependent on which of the following is applicable to your school:

- Attendance/Lesson Monitor is in use, the attendance codes being used are DfE compliant and they are either missing marks or no missing marks.
- Attendance/Lesson Monitor is in use and the attendance codes being used are DfE non-compliant.
- Attendance/Lesson Monitor is not in use.

 **If you do not see either of these messages, please contact your MIS Advisory Team.**

The data required for each pupil will be the combined number of possible attendance sessions and the actual number of absences (by reason) for each attendance period.

## Alternative Provision (AP) Placements (All Schools)

The DfE would like schools to record and submit data on alternative provision (AP) placements that have been arranged for their pupils.

Schools that have not arranged any placements during the academic year do not need to record and submit any information.

This will support national reforms which aim to deliver significantly improved outcomes for the often vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people who attend AP.

**Alternative provision placements arranged by schools.**

This should be completed by any school that has arranged a placement.  For the purposes of this data collection, AP is defined as follows.

AP is full-or part-time education arranged by:

- local authorities, either directly or working with schools, for pupils who, because of permanent exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education
- schools for pupils to improve their behaviour off-site, or during a suspension

Recorded via student record- **Focus | Student | Student Details on SIMS**
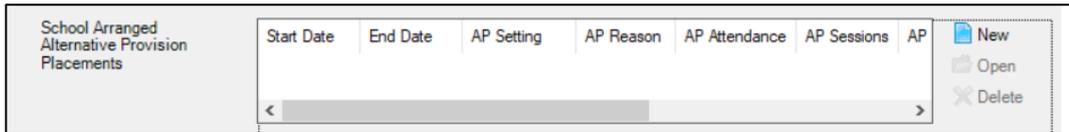
## Collection Period

Placements are returned 'as at census day'. For the Spring 2026 census the collection period is for all open placements that ended between 02/10/2025 and the 14/01/2026 (inclusive).

## Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions (All Schools)

For the purpose of this document, where 'suspensions' is written, it refers to the definition of fixed-period exclusions as defined in s.51a of the Education Act 2002.

For the Spring 2026 collection the school census collects suspensions and exclusions for the period between 21/04/2025 and 31/12/2025.

It is expected that only permanent exclusions upheld by the governing body or Independent Review Panel (IRP) are recorded. This may mean that some exclusions are reported on two consecutive census returns. This will not result in double counting in national statistics.

This data is collected for **both on roll and off roll pupils**.
**Correct reporting of both suspensions and permanent exclusions within your School Census are important for district, county and national data analysis and to inform future commissioning requirements and focussed interventions. Where schools/academies have incorrectly reported permanent exclusions, the Local Authority share this information with the Chairs of your District Inclusion Partnership and at our regular meeting with HMI.**

## SEN Information (All Schools)

**Schools should not record EHC Plans without a signed plan and the involvement of our SEN Assessments Team**.

If you are changing the status of a pupil or adding a pupil who has never been on the SEN register before, you will need to go to the pupil's SEN record and click **New** to add a review in **Section 4: Reviews.**

For School Census purposes, you only need to enter the **Start Date** and the **Status**.

**Start Date** – The date of the last review of the child. This will always be in the **past**.

**SEN Status** - The outcome stage of the pupil determined at the review – this must be either **N**, **K or E**.

Click **OK** once you have entered these details. This will automatically update the **Status** and **Start Date** in Section 3: Basic SEN details.

Needs are collected in the Summer Census and should be entered as a matter of course for pupils on status K or E.

## Dual Registration (All schools)

As there has been some confusion with the dual registration status of pupils recorded in the past, the following is intended as clarification:

Please be aware that **if you have a pupil who is dual registered** then they **should not be recorded as single registration** on your MIS. Where a pupil is dual registered there are two types of Enrolment Status that **must** be recorded, in combination on the School Census. A dual registered pupil will be included in the School Census return of both establishments, they must be recorded with complimentary statuses, as follows:

> Main dual registration by one establishment; and
> Subsidiary dual registration by the other establishment.

Incorrect recording of registration status will create errors / queries and potential duplicates – The Department of Education will not authorise your Census until these have been resolved. If it is after the deadline, it could result in you receiving split funding.

Please note that the definition of main or subsidiary is NOT determined simply by the amount of time spent at each school.

**The two schools need to liaise to agree which is the 'Main' and which is the 'Subsidiary' base.**

**The Enrolment Status Single Registration must not be recorded for a dually registered pupil.**

| Type | Definition |
|------|-----------|
| Single Registration | Pupil solely educated at this school. The school maintain the student's enrolment status as Single Registration |
| Main Dual Registration | Pupil may be on a managed move. The original school maintain the pupil's enrolment status as Dual Registration – Main |
| Subsidiary Dual | Pupil may be on a managed move. The receiving school will maintain the pupil's enrolment status as Dual Registration – Subsidiary |

**Managed / Negotiated Transfers**

A pupil may transfer to another school on a trial basis. In such a case, the original school maintains the pupil's registration. If the receiving school decide to accept the pupil on a permanent basis, the registration transfers at that time. During the trial period, there is no method of recording this situation in the receiving school. As the data collected during the census is used for future funding purposes, the inability to credit the receiving school is perceived as a disincentive to accept the pupil, often to the pupil's detriment. The financial arrangements between the schools are a matter for their mutual agreement, but it is important to be able to identify pupils in this situation.

It is recommended that for the duration of any trial period:

- The original school maintains the pupil's record with an enrolment status of 'M' (current main - dual registration)
- The receiving school maintains the pupil's record with an enrolment status of 'S' (current subsidiary - dual registration)

## Stage 2 – Validating Your Census

You are now ready to check the return for errors. Click **Create & Validate.** You will now get a progress bar showing the validation process. If errors are found, they will appear in the bottom half of your screen.

- Double clicking on an error will take you to the appropriate section or record.
- You can filter the validation to show just errors, just queries or by error code.
- Take note of the '**Type**' column - please note that failures (F) must be resolved before returning the Census file to us. Queries (Q) simply require you to check that the data is accurate.
- The 🖨 Report button opens the report in your Internet browser. This can be printed out or exported to Excel by right-clicking anywhere onscreen and choosing '**Export to Microsoft Excel**'.

**Returns with errors will not be accepted**. Please attempt to rectify all errors or queries before submitting the return. If you are unable to do so, please address all queries when returning the confirmation sheet to the LA, as in the example below:

**Errors and Queries**

Returns should not be uploaded with errors – if you have any outstanding errors and queries on your census return, please remember to enter a note on your return when you upload to COLLECT. Instructions for doing this are in the main guidance notes. Any other information you want us to be aware of can be entered below:

| Error Code | Explanation |
|---|---|
| 2550Q | Data is correct, there were no unauthorised absences for this term |
|  |  |

If you make amendments, you will need to **Create & Validate** again to remove the errors. You can Create & Validate as many times as you like, but please remember that you should never Calculate All Details on a return that has already been set up – this will wipe out any manual amendments.

## Detail Reports

The **Detail Reports** are a useful way to check your data. Click **Detail Report** to access the reports.
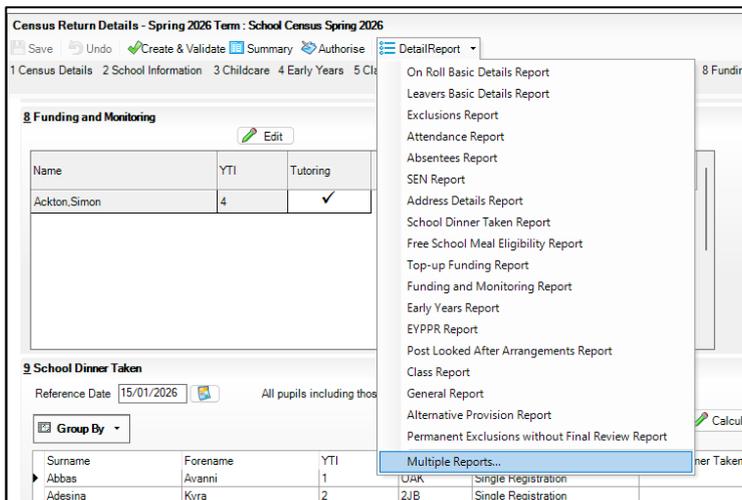


You can now run multiple Detail Reports at once. Just select **Multiple Reports…** from the drop-down list, tick which reports you want to run and click **Report**.

**Please note that <u>these reports will show the data in your Census return NOT the data currently on your SIMS (or MIS) system</u>. If you have made amendments to data after running these reports, you will need to Create & Validate (no need to '*Calculate All Details*' again) and re-run the report to pick up the change(s).**

## Stage 3: Amending your Pupil Data

If the validation routine or Detail Reports bring up any incorrect data, you will need to amend it. To amend basic pupil level data, go to **Focus | Pupil | Pupil Details on SIMS.**

## Pupil Details

### Panel 2 Registration - Year Taught In
This reflects the year that a pupil is taught in, regardless of their age. If a pupil is taught out of year, the **Year Group** field should reflect the correct year for their age, and the **Year Taught In** field should reflect the year in which the pupil is taught. However, if a child's expected year group is outside the range of the school, the **Year Group** and **Year Taught In** can be the same.

### Panel 2 Registration - Enrolment Status
The Enrolment Status will usually be Single Registration. If a pupil is dually registered, you will need to select either Main-Dual Registration or Subsidiary-Dual Registration.

If a pupil is on a Managed Move, the school they are moving **from** should record Main–Dual Registration, and the school they are moving **to** should record Subsidiary–Dual Registration. When the move is complete, the pupil should be Single Registration at the new school.

## Panel 3 Addresses - Home Address:



Every pupil must have something recorded in the following: -

- At least one of House name or House Number

- At least one of District, Town/City or Country

- Most addresses will also have a **Street**. However, if there is no street in the address (e.g. a farm) it is acceptable to leave this field blank - farm names should be recorded in **House Name**, NOT **Apartment**.

Please note that if a pupil has something recorded in the **Apartment** field, they must also have something recorded in **House Name** or **House Number.**

## Panel 6 Dietary - Eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)



Check your pupils who are eligible for FSM on Census Day against the latest list from the Awards Team. Ensure these pupils have a Start Date in the section within the Dietary Panel on a pupil's record.
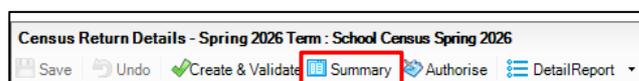
## Panel 8 Ethnic/Cultural

This is collected in the Census for all pupils. You will need to record the correct ethnicity for all pupils. If you have not yet collected pupil's ethnicity you can record **Not Yet Obtained**.

**Panel 8 First Language**
Each pupil must have a language recorded. A **First Language** other than English should be recorded where a child was exposed to another language during early development and continues to be exposed to this language in the home or in the community. If a pupil was exposed to both English and another language during early development, the language other than English should be recorded (irrespective of the child's fluency in English). Please note that **Home Language** is not collected in the School Census. There is a **First Language Source** which can be entered if you wish - this is not collected in the Census.

## Stage 4: Producing a Census Summary Report

To produce a summary, click the **Summary** button.

Census Return Details - Spring 2026 Term : School Census Spring 2026
Save | Undo | Create & Validate | Summary | Authorise | DetailReport ▾

The summary should now appear in your internet browser (the screen may open behind SIMS – it should appear on the task bar at the bottom of the screen as **School Census Spring 2026 School Summary**. If you click this, it should bring the summary to the front).
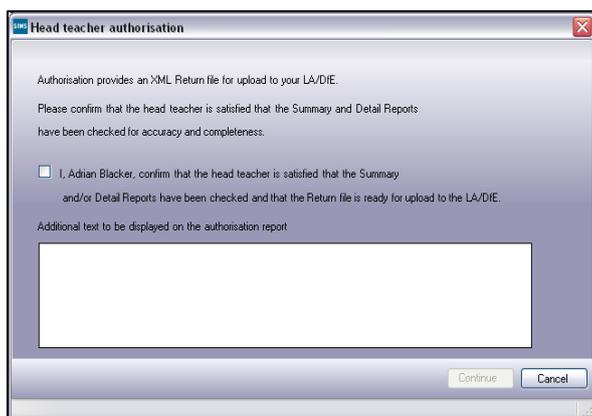
The summary should be printed out (**File | Print**) and checked thoroughly before Authorisation (stage 5).

**If there is any data in the summary that is incorrect**, you will need to go back and amend the data and then **Create & Validate** the return again to bring through any changes.

*If you are happy that the data on the printout is correct,* ***please proceed to Stage 5 (Authorising the Census File).***

## Stage 5: Authorising the Census File

Click [Authorise] to authorise the file.

Head teacher authorisation

Authorisation provides an XML Return file for upload to your LA/DfE.

Please confirm that the head teacher is satisfied that the Summary and Detail Reports have been checked for accuracy and completeness.

☐ I, Adrian Blacker, confirm that the head teacher is satisfied that the Summary

and/or Detail Reports have been checked and that the Return file is ready for upload to the LA/DfE.

Additional text to be displayed on the authorisation report

[                    ]

Continue | Cancel

A warning will appear stating that the return cannot be edited once authorised and asking if you wish to continue. Click **Yes**.

You will then see a Headteacher authorisation screen.

This requires you to tick the box confirming that the Headteacher is satisfied with the return.

Once the box is ticked and you have clicked **Continue**, SIMS will display all Detail Reports from the Census return, meaning that several browser windows will open on screen.

The final window to open will be the Authorisation Report. This should be reviewed to ensure accuracy.

You may wish to save the other reports for future reference, but we do not need copies of the Detail Reports.

The name of the file that you will need to upload to COLLECT is listed on this authorisation report, which is useful when you are browsing for the file later.

## Stage 6: Uploading the Census File to Collect

**To send the Census return:**

The return is now complete and ready to send to the Schools Data Team using the COLLECT website.

Open a web browser, e.g. Internet Explorer.  The COLLECT website is now part of the Secure Access Website - **https://services.signin.education.gov.uk**.
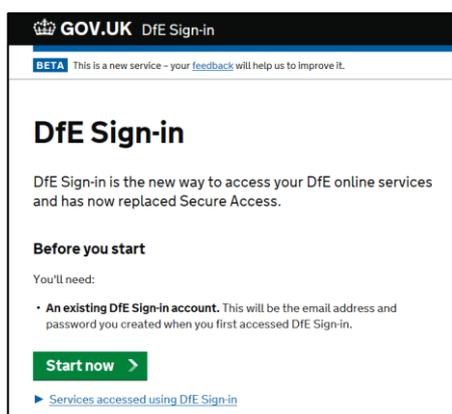


Once you have logged into Secure Access, you will see a link to the COLLECT site.
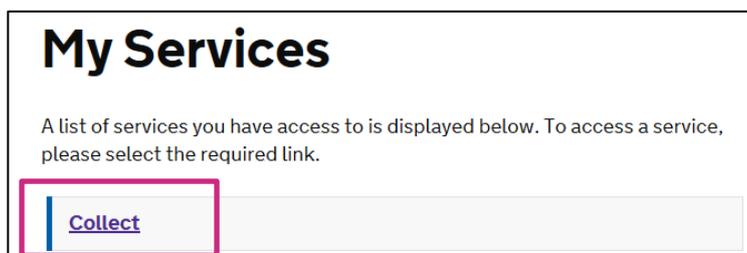


At this point, you will need to click the **Continue** button to proceed into COLLECT.

If there is more than one Data Collection available ('Live'), you will need to click **SchoolCensus 2026_Spring** and then click **Select Data Collection.**

If **you are unable to see SchoolCensus 2026_Spring**, simply click **Select Data Collection.**

This will take you to a screen similar to this.
Click **Upload Return from file**

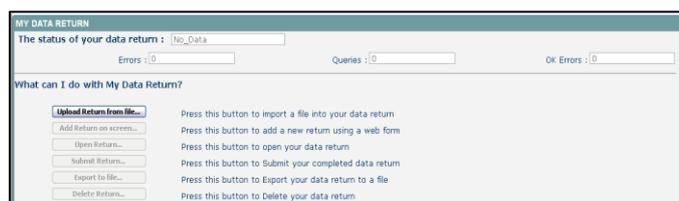Click **Browse** and navigate to **(f) or (s):\SIMS\STAR\ASCOut**, or where SIMS sits on your network drive. The filename will be in the format **860DfEN_SC1_860LL26_xxx.xml** (where DfEN is the DfE number of the school, and xxx is the version number).
**Please note that the date on the file will be the date you last *Created and Validated* the Census return, which may be different to the date it was *Authorised*.**

**If you are unable to see the file type extension, hover your mouse over the different file names and a box like this should appear telling you the file type.**

```
Type: XML Document
Date Modified: 05/12/2008 09:14
Size: 256 KB
```

Double click the required file and then click **Upload.**

**If you get an error at this point, please double check that you are uploading the correct file (in the format 860DfEN_SC1_860LL26_xxx.xml), not the summary or any other files.**

It may take a while for your file to upload, but you should be able to see it processing. When it has finished processing, you will get a message to say your data return has been successfully loaded and is queued for validation. Click **OK.**

Once your file has uploaded, it will be placed in a validation queue.
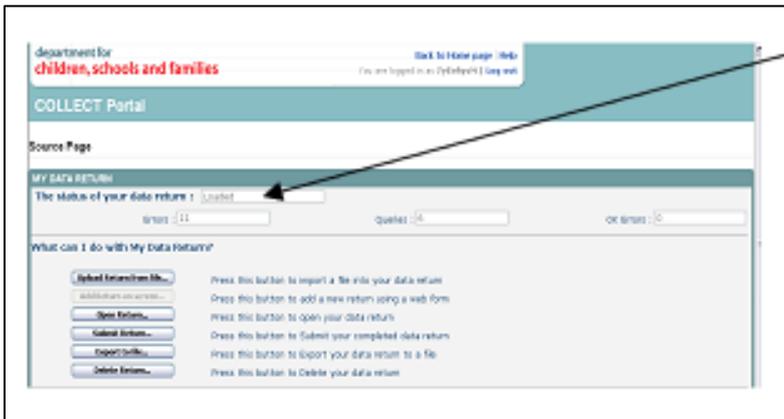


You should be able to see the status of your file here.

If the status of your file reads either **Waiting for Validation** or **Validation in Progress**, log out of COLLECT for the moment. It may take a couple of hours for the validation to take place, so log back in to COLLECT later to complete the submission.

If the status of your file reads **Loaded & Validated**, you can move straight on to the next stage.

**If you are logging back in to COLLECT after waiting for validation to take place**, Select **School Census 2026_SPRING** and then click **Select Data Collection.**

**If you are continuing from the above stage without logging out**, you will be taken to the correct screen automatically. This screen will show you the status of your return (as in the screenshot above). If the status of your return reads **Loaded & Validated**, you are now able to continue.

We are now asking schools to add notepad entries to COLLECT themselves when there are outstanding errors or queries on the return. You will see from the summary screen whether you have errors or queries. If you have, click on **Open Return**. You will now be able to view your Census return. Click on **All Errors** at the top of the screen to see your errors and queries.

**Blade Error Report – School Census 2026 Spring**

| Rule No. | Return Level | Error Message | Priority | OK'd | | | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | Count 16 |
| 2070Q | | Please check: pupil's class type and year group incompatible | Queries | OK | Details | | ✗ |
| 2070Q | | Please check: pupil's class type and year group incompatible | Queries | OK | Details | | ✗ |
| 2070Q | | Please check: pupil's class type and year group incompatible | Queries | OK | Details | | ✗ |
| 2070Q | | Please check: pupil's class type and year group incompatible | Queries | OK | Details | | ✗ |
| 2070Q | | Please check: pupil's class type and year group incompatible | Queries | OK | Details | | ✗ |
| 2070Q | | Please check: pupil's class type and year group incompatible | Queries | OK | Details | | ✗ |
| 2070Q | | Please check: pupil's class type and year group incompatible | Queries | OK | Details | | ✗ |
| 2070Q | | Please check: pupil's class type and year group incompatible | Queries | OK | Details | | ✗ |
| 2070Q | | Please check: pupil's class type and year group incompatible | Queries | OK | Details | | ✗ |
| 2070Q | | Please check: pupil's class type and year group incompatible | Queries | OK | Details | | ✗ |
| Page 1 of 2 | | | | | | | 1 2 |

To view more details about an error or query, click Details. Clicking on one of the data items that appear to the right of the screen will then take you to the appropriate record.

The DfE recommend adding all notes at 'Return-Level' to avoid them being overwritten in the event of a resubmission. To do this, click **Return** towards the top right of the screen and then click the pencil icon under Return Level Notes. Click **Add New Note** and then type the error number you are referring to and the note before clicking Create.

| Errors | | OK Errors | Return Level Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| E | Q | | |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | ✎ |

Click **Add New Note** and then <u>type the error number you are referring to</u> and the note before clicking Create.

You should ensure there is a note for every error or query (you can enter them all in the same note if you wish e.g. – 3 x 2020Q – Confirmed as Correct, 1 x 1780Q – Confirmed as Correct, 2 x 2502Q – Pupils are dually registered and did not attend this establishment in Spring term). **It is imperative that your notes match the DfE list of acceptable notepad entries.** This aids in the authorisation of your submission. A list of these can be obtained from the DfE webpages or via the Staffordshire Learning Net.

Click **Submit Return...** The status of your data return should now read either **Awaiting Submission, Submission in Progress** or **Submitted**. If your status shows one of these, your file is on its way to us - you can log out of **COLLECT** and close your web browser.

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**\*\*\*\* Please remember to Submit the return rather than just uploading it, as we cannot access the data until you click Submit \*\*\*\***

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# Additional Information

## Historical Editing

If you are editing pupil data on your MIS system after the Census date, the changes will not come through automatically, as the Census routinely picks up data 'as at' the Census date. For the changes to come through on the return, you will need to edit the pupil's history.

These instructions use the example of changing a pupil's **First Language**, but the history will also need to be amended if you are making changes to certain other fields (**Year Taught In, Ethnicity**).

Open the pupil record (**Focus | Pupil | Pupil Details on SIMS**) and go to the required section (in this case, **Ethnic/Cultural**).  Make sure the data is entered in the correct field. Once you've filled in the required data, click the **History** button in the bottom right corner of the panel.



This will bring up a **History Details** screen.  Double click in the orange box relating to the data item you've just edited. In this example, you would double click in the orange box reading *Panjabi*, to the right of First Language.



This will bring up a further screen, showing only the data item you wish to edit.  **Please note if you are looking for *English* in this list it is right at the bottom.**

In order to change the date range, double click in the orange box. This will bring up the Add/Edit Date Range – you need to ensure that the 'Start Date' is before the Census date with the end date left blank. **Recommendation is that the start date matches the pupil's date of admission.**

Click **OK** to all 3 open screens to take you back to the pupil record and remember to **SAVE**.   The Census should now pick up the changes**.** Don't forget to Create & Validate again.

## Completing Headteachers Confirmation Sheet

Please note we are unable to approve your Census without a signed copy of the Confirmation Sheet for the Spring 2026 School Census.

**The Confirmation Sheet can be found at the end of these guidance notes.**

## Important Contacts

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Data Enquiries | The Schools Data Team | 01785 895600<br>schools.capitadatateam@staffordshire.gov.uk |
| SIMS Enquiries | The MIS Advisory Team | 0333 300 1900 |

# Additional notes available

Please find a list of Additional Notes on the Staffordshire Learning Net which include:

Alternative Provision Placements
Attendance recording
Carrying out a school census dry run
Checking your data and correcting errors
Childcare
Class Information
Copying and resubmitting a school census return
Dual registration
Early Years
Ethnicity Codes
Exclusions
Gender recording
Free School Meals
Language Codes
Learner funding and monitoring
Learner support codes
Recording class size exceptions
Temporary UPN's
Recording pupil / student names
Notepad Entries

The Staffordshire Learning Net can be accessed at: [Staffordshire Learning Net](#)

Staffordshire County Council

# Headteachers Confirmation Sheet
# Spring 2026 School Census

**Please return this sheet to the Schools Data Team by**
**Thursday 22nd January 2026**

**Return methods:**
Email to: **schools.capitadatateam@staffordshire.gov.uk** **OR** Upload to Perspective Lite

Please complete the form below and ask the Headteacher to check the summary and sign the declaration (there is no need to return the full summary).

**DfE Number:**_____**School:** _____

**School Census contact name:** _____

## Headteacher's declaration

Please note that you should thoroughly check the summary report from the School Census return before signing this declaration.

Key items to check are:

- **All notepads have been added to collect and are in the DfE format.**
- **All required COLLECT reports have been run, including duplicates and actioned appropriately.**
- No temporary UPNs should be on your return (these end with a letter and should be replaced with a permanent UPN before submission).
- All enrolment status of pupils have been checked and are correct.
- Post Looked After Children checks have been completed and can confirm all have been included.
- Free School Meals – You can confirm this data is up to date.
- All exclusion data has been entered according to the requirements from the DfE.

I certify that I have actioned they key items above and checked the census summary report and all data in the Spring 2025 School Census is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge:

Signed: _____     Date: _____