

SDR 220/2011

29 November 2011

Class Sizes in Primary Schools in Wales: September 2011

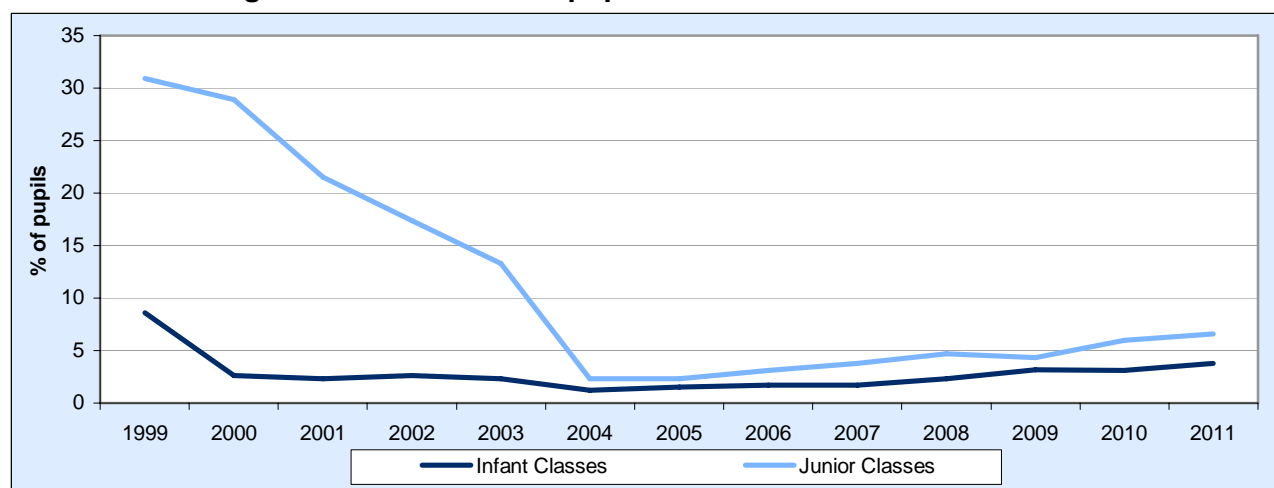
This Statistical First Release presents the results of the September 2011 Class Size Count which was carried out in all maintained primary schools in Wales. Local authorities supplied the Welsh Government with details of the registered ordinary classes in primary schools in their authority.

This will be the last time that this exercise is carried out in September. From 2013 the data will be collected as part of the annual January PLASC (Pupil Level Annual School Census) collection and published in the summer.

Key Points

Last year the number of infant classes of over 30 pupils (and pupils within such classes) increased; there was a corresponding increase in the number of junior classes of over 30 pupils. The total number of infant and junior classes of over 30 pupils has risen a little over the past 7 years but remains lower than a decade ago when the statutory duties on local authorities in respect of infant class sizes were introduced.

Chart 1: Percentage of Infant and Junior pupils in classes over 30



Infant classes (Key Stage 1) (Tables 1-2)

- 3.8 per cent of pupils (3,882 pupils) were in infant classes of over 30 pupils.
- 122 infant classes (3.0 per cent) in Wales had more than 30 pupils, with 105 of these classes having permissible exceptions. This is more than at September 2010 when 97 classes (2.4 per cent) had over 30 pupils, of which 85 had permissible exceptions.

Junior classes (Key Stage 2) (Tables 4-5)

- 6.6 per cent of pupils (8,175 pupils) were in junior classes of over 30 pupils.
- 257 junior classes (5.1 per cent) in Wales had more than 30 pupils, with 153 of these classes having permissible exceptions. This is more than at September 2010 when 236 classes (4.7 per cent) had over 30 pupils, of which 135 had permissible exceptions.

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Infant Classes

Here are the key points for infant classes:

Pupils

- At September 2011, 3,882 pupils (3.8 per cent) were in infant classes of over 30. This compares with 3,077 pupils (3.1 per cent) at September 2010 and 9,236 pupils (8.6 per cent) at September 1999.
- Excluding pupils in classes with permissible exceptions to the class size limit of 30 (see Key Quality Information) there were 547 pupils (0.5 per cent) in classes of over 30.

Classes

- At September 2011, 122 of the 4,055 infant classes (3.0 per cent) in Wales had more than 30 pupils. This compares with 97 classes (2.4 per cent) at September 2010 and 285 classes (6.4 per cent) at September 1999.
- Excluding classes with permissible exceptions to the class size limit of 30 (see Key Quality Information), there were 17 classes with more than 30 pupils. The percentage of classes without excepted pupils has increased from 0.3 per cent in September 2010 to 0.4 per cent in September 2011.

Table 1: Infant classes including exception categories, 2010 and 2011

	Number of classes		Number of pupils	
	2010	2011	2010	2011
Up to 20 pupils	845	730	13,173	11,673
21 - 25 pupils	1,134	1,053	26,369	24,620
26 - 30 pupils	1,989	2,150	56,451	61,138
31 - 35 pupils	95	119	2,985	3,764
36 or more pupils	2	3	92	118
Classes over 30:				
with pupils admitted due to a statement of SEN	5	8	155	255
with pupils admitted after admission appeal	10	17	319	552
with pupils admitted outside normal admission round	55	61	1,730	1,921
with pupils admitted due to Welsh medium provision	10	17	317	545
with pupils registered at special schools	4	1	124	31
with pupils admitted for a combination of the above reasons	1	2	32	64
Total - with excepted pupils	85	105	2,677	3,335
Total - with and without excepted pupils	0	1	0	33
Total - without excepted pupils	12	16	400	514
Total classes over 30 without permissible exceptions	12	17	400	547
Total	4,065	4,055	99,070	101,313
Percentage of classes with over 30 pupils	2.4	3.0	3.1	3.8
Percentage of classes with over 30 pupils without excepted pupils	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5

Table 2: Infant classes by year group, 2011

	Majority Reception (a)	Year 1	Year 2	Mixed year	Mixed Key Stage (b)	All infant classes
Number of classes of:						
Up to 20 pupils	216	97	120	267	30	730
21 - 25 pupils	282	188	221	341	21	1,053
26 - 30 pupils	594	415	445	638	58	2,150
31 - 35 pupils	38	16	26	38	1	119
36 or more pupils	2	1	0	0	0	3
Total	1,132	717	812	1,284	110	4,055
Number of pupils in classes of:						
Up to 20 pupils	3,563	1,655	2,047	3,915	493	11,673
21 - 25 pupils	6,565	4,395	5,149	8,020	491	24,620
26 - 30 pupils	16,918	11,906	12,661	17,987	1,666	61,138
31 - 35 pupils	1,203	506	818	1,206	31	3,764
36 or more pupils	78	40	0	0	0	118
Total	28,327	18,502	20,675	31,128	2,681	101,313
Classes with over 30 pupils (c):						
Number of classes	40	17	26	38	1	122
Number of pupils	1,281	546	818	1,206	31	3,882
Percentage of classes	3.5	2.4	3.2	3.0	0.9	3.0
Percentage of pupils	4.5	3.0	4.0	3.9	1.2	3.8

(a) Mixed nursery/ reception classes, with majority reception pupils.

(b) Includes mixed Key Stage classes where majority of pupils are Key Stage 1.

(c) Of which 105 classes (with 3,335 pupils) were classes with exceptions.

Table 3: Infant classes by year group, 2010

	Majority Reception (a)	Year 1	Year 2	Mixed year	Mixed Key Stage (b)	All infant classes
Number of classes of:						
Up to 20 pupils	264	108	144	302	27	845
21 - 25 pupils	329	209	230	348	18	1,134
26 - 30 pupils	530	404	434	578	43	1,989
31 - 35 pupils	36	17	10	29	3	95
36 or more pupils	1	0	0	1	0	2
Total	1,160	738	818	1,258	91	4,065
Number of pupils in classes of:						
Up to 20 pupils	4,256	1,734	2,396	4,390	397	13,173
21 - 25 pupils	7,625	4,875	5,348	8,097	424	26,369
26 - 30 pupils	15,120	11,477	12,298	16,340	1,216	56,451
31 - 35 pupils	1,131	537	313	908	96	2,985
36 or more pupils	38	0	0	54	0	92
Total	28,170	18,623	20,355	29,789	2,133	99,070
Classes with over 30 pupils (c)						
Number of classes	37	17	10	30	3	97
Number of pupils	1,169	537	313	962	96	3,077
Percentage of classes	3.2	2.3	1.2	2.4	3.3	2.4
Percentage of pupils	4.1	2.9	1.5	3.2	4.5	3.1

(a) Mixed nursery/ reception classes, with majority reception pupils.

(b) Includes mixed Key Stage classes where majority of pupils are Key Stage 1.

(c) Of which 85 classes (with 2,677 pupils) were classes with exceptions.

Junior Classes

Here are the key points for junior classes:

Pupils

- At September 2011, 8,175 pupils (6.6 per cent) were in junior classes of over 30. This compares with 7,474 (6.0 per cent) at September 2010 and 45,784 pupils (30.9 per cent) at September 1999.
- Excluding pupils in classes with permissible exceptions to the class size target of 30 (see Key Quality Information), there were 3,330 pupils (2.7 per cent) in classes of over 30.

Classes

- At September 2011, 257 of the 4,994 junior classes (5.1 per cent) in Wales had more than 30 pupils. This compares with 236 classes (4.7 per cent) at September 2010 and 1,398 classes (25.2 per cent) at September 1999.
- Excluding classes with permissible exceptions to the class size target of 30 (see Key Quality Information), there were 104 classes with more than 30 pupils at September 2011. The percentage of classes without excepted pupils has increased from 2.0 per cent in September 2010 to 2.1 per cent in September 2011.

Table 4: Junior classes including exception categories, 2010 and 2011

	Number of classes		Number of pupils	
	2010	2011	2010	2011
Up to 20 pupils	890	857	14,114	14,212
21 - 25 pupils	1,498	1,488	34,907	34,619
26 - 30 pupils	2,414	2,392	68,038	67,485
31 - 35 pupils	234	252	7,397	7,986
36 or more pupils	2	5	77	189
Classes over 30:				
with pupils admitted due to a statement of SEN	8	6	249	188
with pupils admitted after admission appeal	14	26	444	817
with pupils admitted outside normal admission round	80	91	2,506	2,876
with pupils admitted due to Welsh medium provision or a provision of a religious denomination	32	31	1,024	998
with pupils admitted for a combination of the above reasons	1	1	34	32
Total - with excepted pupils	135	153	4,257	4,845
Total - with and without excepted pupils	0	2	0	66
Total - without excepted pupils	101	102	3,217	3,264
Total classes over 30 without permissible exceptions	101	104	3,217	3,330
Total	5,038	4,994	124,533	124,491
Percentage with over 30 pupils	4.7	5.1	6.0	6.6
Percentage with over 30 pupils without excepted pupils	2.0	2.1	2.6	2.7

Table 5: Junior classes by year group, 2011

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Mixed	Mixed Key Stage (a)	Total
Number of classes of:							
Up to 20 pupils	104	81	104	107	439	22	857
21 - 25 pupils	250	224	188	235	570	21	1,488
26 - 30 pupils	396	345	334	396	877	44	2,392
31 - 35 pupils	27	23	28	55	117	2	252
36 or more pupils	2	1	2	0	0	0	5
Total	779	674	656	793	2,003	89	4,994
Number of pupils in classes of:							
Up to 20 pupils	1,845	1,387	1,826	1,893	6,925	336	14,212
21 - 25 pupils	5,821	5,258	4,371	5,478	13,200	491	34,619
26 - 30 pupils	11,165	9,756	9,387	11,213	24,696	1,268	67,485
31 - 35 pupils	847	729	889	1,749	3,709	63	7,986
36 or more pupils	74	38	77	0	0	0	189
Total	19,752	17,168	16,550	20,333	48,530	2,158	124,491
Classes with over 30 pupils (b):							
Number of classes	29	24	30	55	117	2	257
Number of pupils	921	767	966	1,749	3,709	63	8,175
Percentage of classes	3.7	3.6	4.6	6.9	5.8	2.2	5.1
Percentage of pupils	4.7	4.5	5.8	8.6	7.6	2.9	6.6

(a) Mixed Key Stage classes, with majority Key Stage 2 pupils.

(b) Of which 153 classes (with 4,845 pupils) were classes with exceptions.

Table 6: Junior Classes by year group, 2010

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Mixed	Mixed Key Stage (a)	Total
Number of classes of:							
Up to 20 pupils	108	94	90	118	461	19	890
21 - 25 pupils	228	204	191	226	615	34	1,498
26 - 30 pupils	364	308	328	395	972	47	2,414
31 - 35 pupils	30	28	34	44	95	3	234
36 - 40 pupils	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Total	731	635	643	783	2,143	103	5,038
Number of pupils in classes of:							
Up to 20 pupils	1,777	1,546	1,469	1,944	7,135	243	14,114
21 - 25 pupils	5,332	4,738	4,433	5,244	14,370	790	34,907
26 - 30 pupils	10,259	8,713	9,283	11,138	27,321	1,324	68,038
31 - 35 pupils	945	884	1,073	1,405	2,995	95	7,397
36 - 40 pupils	38	39	0	0	0	0	77
Total	18,351	15,920	16,258	19,731	51,821	2,452	124,533
Classes with over 30 pupils (b):							
Number of classes	31	29	34	44	95	3	236
Number of pupils	983	923	1,073	1,405	2,995	95	7,474
Percentage of classes	4.2	4.6	5.3	5.6	4.4	2.9	4.7
Percentage of pupils	5.4	5.8	6.6	7.1	5.8	3.9	6.0

(a) Mixed Key Stage classes, with majority Key Stage 2 pupils.

(b) Of which 135 classes (with 4,257 pupils) were classes with exceptions.

Ordinary Classes in Primary Schools

Here are the key points for all ordinary classes in primary schools:

- The average class size for all registered ordinary classes was 25.0 pupils at September 2011, higher than the September 2010 figure of 24.6 pupils.
- At September 2011, 4.4 per cent of all ordinary classes recorded contained more than 30 pupils, an increase from 3.8 per cent at September 2010.
- At September 2011, 5.6 per cent of all primary school pupils were registered in classes of over 30 pupils, an increase from 5.0 per cent at September 2010.

Table 7: Distribution of registered ordinary classes in primary schools in September

	<i>number of classes</i>										
	1999 (a)	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Up to 20 pupils	1,756	1,964	1,904	1,965	1,947	1,944	1,877	1,828	1,808	1,822	1,628
21 - 30 pupils	6,749	7,417	7,481	7,880	7,700	7,567	7,404	7,263	7,191	7,181	7,187
31 - 35 pupils	1,567	851	626	151	156	198	224	271	281	344	387
36 - 40 pupils	129	33	33	1	1	4	5	13	7	11	14
41 or more pupils	4	1	4	0	1	5	2	1	5	5	1
Total	10,205	10,266	10,048	9,997	9,805	9,718	9,512	9,376	9,292	9,363	9,217

(a) 1999 data includes mixed nursery/reception classes that were reported and excludes nursery and special classes.
Data for all other years include all mixed nursery/reception classes and excludes nursery and special classes.

Table 8: Distribution of pupils in registered ordinary classes in primary schools in September

	<i>number of pupils</i>										
	1999 (a)	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Up to 20 pupils	20,006	31,976	30,567	32,127	31,895	31,476	30,652	29,864	29,665	28,554	26,498
21 - 30 pupils	175,805	192,641	195,178	206,476	202,701	198,881	194,725	190,932	189,195	189,536	190,629
31 - 35 pupils	50,645	27,381	20,112	4,755	4,893	6,260	7,100	8,571	8,884	10,876	12,275
36 - 40 pupils	4,753	1,228	1,223	36	39	152	184	487	262	420	533
41 or more pupils	171	44	171	0	47	235	95	42	221	236	42
Total	259,380	253,270	247,251	243,394	239,575	237,004	232,756	229,896	228,227	229,622	229,977

(a) 1999 data includes mixed nursery/reception classes that were reported and excludes nursery and special classes.
Data for all other years include all mixed nursery/reception classes and excludes nursery and special classes.

Table 9: Average class sizes of registered ordinary classes in primary schools in September

	1999 (a)	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Percentage change 2010- 2011
Reception/Key											
Stage 1 classes:											
Reception	23.5	23.6	23.5	23.5	23.2	23.8	23.9	24.4	24.3	25.0	3.0
Year 1	25.0	25.0	24.6	24.7	24.6	24.6	24.8	25.2	25.2	25.8	2.3
Year 2	25.3	25.4	25.2	25.2	24.6	24.9	24.6	24.8	24.9	25.5	2.3
Mixed year	22.8	22.7	22.4	22.7	22.9	22.7	23.0	23.4	23.7	24.2	2.4
Total	24.0	24.0	23.7	23.8	23.7	23.8	23.9	24.3	24.4	25.0	2.5
Key Stage 2 classes:											
Year 3	27.2	25.7	25.5	25.5	25.1	24.9	25.1	24.8	25.1	25.4	1.0
Year 4	27.7	25.9	25.7	25.6	25.8	25.6	25.2	25.4	25.1	25.5	1.6
Year 5	27.6	26.0	25.3	25.6	25.8	25.9	25.8	25.2	25.3	25.2	-0.2
Year 6	27.3	25.8	25.1	25.4	25.6	25.8	26.0	25.6	25.2	25.6	1.8
Mixed year	25.2	24.0	24.0	24.1	24.0	24.3	24.2	24.2	24.2	24.2	0.2
Total	26.7	25.1	24.9	25.0	24.9	25.0	25.0	24.8	24.7	24.9	0.8
Mixed Key Stage	22.9	22.9	23.4	23.3	24.3	23.4	24.1	23.1	23.6	24.3	2.9
All ordinary classes	25.4	24.6	24.3	24.4	24.4	24.5	24.5	24.6	24.6	25.0	1.6

(a) 1999 data includes mixed nursery/reception classes that were reported and excludes nursery and special classes.
Data for all other years include all mixed nursery/reception classes and excludes nursery and special classes.

Notes

1. Coverage, content and timeliness

The 2011 September Class Size Count took place on Tuesday 20 September 2011.

A copy of the data collection form and accompanying guidance can be found here:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/about/data-collection/schools/septembercount/?lang=en>

All maintained primary schools with pupils on roll at 20 September 2011 have supplied data.

Information at local authority (LA) level is published alongside this release, available to download on the web.

2. Policy / operational context

2.1 Infant classes

The 'September Class Size Count' was introduced in September 1999 to collect information on ordinary registered classes to provide information to monitor the Government pledge to reduce infant classes to 30 pupils or fewer by September 2001.

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

Between September 1998 and August 2001 grants were made available to all 22 local authorities to employ additional teachers and build new classrooms in order to reduce infant class sizes. A commensurate level of funding was then transferred to the Local Government Revenue Settlement.

2.2 Junior classes

The September Class Size Count also collects information on junior classes (classes of 8 to 11 year olds). The Welsh Government set a target to reduce junior classes in line with infant classes by September 2003, with an interim target of no classes of over 35 by September 2002.

Between 2001-02 and 2005-06, special grant funding was paid to local authorities to assist with the reduction of junior class sizes to 30 or fewer in accordance with the Welsh Government's target of eliminating junior class sizes of more than 30. Since 2006-07, this funding was transferred to the Revenue Support Grant.

3. Exceptions to the Class Size Limit

Both infant and junior classes with one teacher are allowed to have more than 30 children in very specific circumstances. These are called exceptions. Exception categories for infant classes are defined in the Schedule to the Education (Infant Class Sizes) (Wales) Regulations 1998, as amended by the Education (Infant Class Sizes) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2009. Exception categories for junior classes are not set out in regulations but are enforced as part of the data collection.

A full list of the exception categories for both infant and junior classes can be found here:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/about/data-collection/schools/septembercount/?lang=en>

4. Key Quality Information

This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability. It also covers specific issues relating to quality of 2011 data, and describes the quality management tool applied to this area of work. Between September and November 2010 we conducted a public consultation on our

Education Statistics outputs, in which we asked for feedback on the quality of the outputs. A summary of responses has been published and is available here:

<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/statistics/education/?lang=en>

4.1 Relevance

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor educational trends and as a baseline for further analysis of the underlying data. Some of the key users are:

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales;
- Local authorities;
- Wales Audit Office;
- The Department for Education and Skills in the Welsh Government;
- Other areas of the Welsh Government;
- The research community;
- Students, academics and universities;
- Individual citizens and private companies.

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

- to monitor against infant class size legislation;
- to monitor against junior class size targets;
- advice to Ministers;
- to inform the education policy decision-making process in Wales;
- contributes to the National Performance Indicators;
- to assist in educational research.

4.2 Accuracy

The Welsh Government works closely with LAs in order to ensure all data are validated before tables are published. Data is collated into an electronic return and submitted to the Welsh Government through DEWi, a secure online data transfer system developed by the Welsh Government.

4.3 Timeliness and Punctuality

DEWi was available for uploading files from September when the forms were sent out, with LAs asked to submit data to include all registered classes (apart from nursery and special classes) in all primary schools in their authority on Tuesday 20 September 2011. LAs were then asked to load their data onto DEWi by 7 October.

Improvements in the data collection method and procedures and considerable effort by colleagues in local authorities and schools have resulted in fewer errors being introduced from inputting the data.

4.4 Accessibility and Clarity

This Statistical First Release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics section of the Welsh Government website. It is accompanied by more detailed tables at Local Authority level.

4.5 Comparability

In the September 1999 count, information was not requested on the composition of mixed nursery/reception classes. In September 2000, count information was not requested on the composition of mixed key stage classes. Comparisons using these years need to be treated with some caution, but the scale of the discontinuity is likely to have a minimal effect.

This will be the last time that this exercise is carried out in September. From 2013, the data will be collected as part of the annual January PLASC collection and published in the summer. As a result, part of the considered analysis of the collection through PLASC will be to look into any comparability issues that may arise between the two different sources in future years.