

# Provisional NDCS note on Department for Education report: *Children with special educational needs 2010: an analysis*

[Updated: 12 November 2010]



## Introduction

The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Information Act (2008) requires the Secretary of State to publish an annual report setting out data on the outcomes achieved by children in England with SEN. In October 2010, the Department for Education published the second annual statistical publication<sup>1</sup> as required by the Act. This note summarises the information presented about deaf children.

The data is taken from the School Census and, in terms of deaf children, includes information on those who have a statement or who have been placed at School Action Plus (meaning that the school needs external specialist support to meet the needs of the child) and where deafness is the primary need. It does not include data on other deaf children.

We know that schools vary in the way that they formally record SEN. We also know that many deaf children are not being recorded as having a SEN, even where they receive regular external visits from specialist support staff. NDCS's most recent survey of local authorities suggests that the School Census underestimates the number of deaf pupils by around half. The data therefore needs to be treated with extreme caution. It is, however, the best data available and should be a reliable indicator of trends.

In many cases, the data splits deaf children according to whether they are recorded as having a statement of SEN or whether they have been placed at School Action Plus. As deafness is not a learning disability, NDCS sees no reason to split the data in this way for deaf children. For this reason, our analysis merges the two sub-groups to give a single figure for deaf children. As the government's figures are rounded to the nearest ten, there is a risk that some figures may be inaccurate by one or two figures. NDCS will be seeking to confirm these figures with the Department in coming weeks.

There are three different comparison groups used in this note:

- 1) All children. This includes children with a SEN.
- 2) All children who have any SEN. This includes deaf children.
- 3) Children who do not have any SEN

The data does not allow us to make a direct comparison between deaf children those who are not deaf. The most useful comparator is therefore 3) above – children who do not have any SEN.

## What the data says about deaf children's characteristics

According to the School Census, there are 15,520 deaf pupils formally recorded as having a special educational need, up from 14,770 in 2009. This is a 5% increase. It is also a larger increase than that found in the population of children with any special educational need (3%), whilst the number of pupils overall has effectively remained static.

7,230 deaf pupils attend primary school, whilst 6,730 attend secondary school.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STA/t000965/index.shtml>

1,570 deaf pupils attend special school, which is equal to 10.1% of deaf children on the School Census. This has fallen from 10.6% in 2009 and from 11.3% in 2008.

Of the 15,520 deaf children recorded, 9,100 have been placed at School Action Plus (59%) whilst 6420 have a statement (41%). This confirms that most deaf children don't have a statement.

As in 2009, 2.2% of all children with SEN are deaf. Of the government's 12 categories, deafness is 8<sup>th</sup> in terms of incidence. Categories of SEN that have a lower incidence rate than deafness are: profound and multiple learning difficulty (1.4%), visual impairment (1.2%) and multi-sensory impairment (0.1%). The most common are: moderate learning difficulty (24.2%) and behaviour, emotional and social difficulty (22.7%).

There are 8,020 deaf male pupils compared to 7,500 deaf female pupils, a fairly even gender split. Across all types of special educational needs, male pupils are overrepresented.

There are more deaf 14 year olds with a statement than any other age group (590). The number of deaf pupils drops from 570 to 240 from age 15 to 16.

27% of all deaf children are from a Black and Minority Ethnic Group. The largest ethnic group is white (76%) followed by Asian (14%).

21% of deaf children are known to be eligible for free school meals. Deaf children are more likely to be eligible compared to children who have no SEN (13%) but less likely when compared to all children with SEN (28%).

21% of deaf pupils are recorded as speaking English as an additional language, compared to 17% of children with no SEN. It is unclear whether sign language might be defined as an additional language in this context.

7% (960) of deaf children are recorded as being gifted and/or talented, compared to 17% of children with no SEN and 5% of children with any SEN. Of deaf children with statements, 4.5% are recorded as being gifted and/or talented. Of all children with any SEN, only children with autism or visual impairments are more likely to be recorded this way.

### How are deaf children doing at primary school?

Only data on Key Stage 2 and 4 is broken down by type of SEN. The below table shows that deaf children are much less likely to achieve Level 4 at Key Stage 2 in English or Maths, the expected level that all children are expected to reach. Around half of deaf children fail to achieve this benchmark.

Table 1: Percentage achieving Key Stage 2 benchmarks

	Achieved Level 4 or above at Key Stage 2 English		Achieved Level 4 or above at Key Stage 2 Maths	
	2008	2009	2008	2009
Children with no SEN	93%	92%	90%	90%
All children	81%	80%	78%	79%
Deaf children	52%	50%	52%	53%

The below table looks at the relative attainment gap between deaf children and a) children who have no SEN and b) all children. The relative attainment gap shows the likelihood that deaf

children will do as well as other children. It is calculated by looking at the difference in percentage points between two groups and calculating this as a percentage of the higher figure.

It confirms a wide attainment gap in all cases. For example, deaf children are 46% less likely to achieve the expected benchmark for Key Stage 2 than a child who does not have any SEN. This figure has not narrowed between 2008 and 2009.

Table 2: Attainment gap at Key Stage 2

	Key Stage 2 English		Key Stage 2 Maths	
	Attainment gap between deaf children and those with children no SEN	Attainment gap between deaf children and all children	Attainment gap between deaf children and those with children no SEN	Attainment gap between deaf children and all children
2008	44%	36%	42%	33%
2009	46%	38%	41%	33%

There are significant regional variations in the achievements of deaf children at Key Stage 2 English or Maths, confirming that deaf children are not getting a fair chance at school across England. The worse performing region for Key Stage 2 English is the East Midlands whereas for Maths, the worse performing region is the West Midlands. The North West comes out as the 'best' performing region on both measures, followed by London. These figures should be treated with particular caution due to the relatively low numbers of deaf children in some regions and the use of rounded figures.

Table 3: Regional variations at Key Stage 2

Region	% achieving Level 4 or above at Key Stage 2 English	% achieving Level 4 or above at Key Stage 2 Maths
North East	53%	57%
North West	55%	61%
Yorkshire and the Humber	49%	51%
East Midlands	45%	47%
West Midlands	48%	45%
East of England	47%	50%
London	54%	58%
South East	46%	53%
South West	51%	54%
<b>England</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>53%</b>

### How are deaf children doing at secondary school?

Some of the below figures had already been provided to NDCS by the Department and is available at [www.ndcs.org.uk/data](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/data). The data confirms that deaf children are also under achieving in terms of GCSEs. The Government's expected benchmark for success is 5 GCSEs (including English and Maths) at grades A\* to C. In 2009, only 29% of deaf children achieved this benchmark, compared to 51% of all children and 61% of children with no SEN. The figures also suggest that more deaf children are achieving this benchmark compared to the year before, but that other children are also doing better, and making faster progress too.

Table 4: Percentage achieving Key Stage 4 benchmarks

	% achieving 5 GCSEs (including English and Maths) at grades A* to C	
	2008	2009
Children with no SEN	58%	61%
All children	48%	51%
Deaf children	28%	29%

Table 5: Attainment gap at Key Stage 4

The below table confirms that, in terms this GCSEs measure, the attainment gap between deaf children and other children has not narrowed since 2008.

	Attainment gap between deaf children and children with no SEN	Attainment gap between deaf children and all children
2008	52%	42%
2009	52%	43%

The below table compares the attainment gap between deaf children and other children at Key Stage 2 (English) and 4 in 2009. It shows that the attainment gap widens as children get older.

Table 6: Attainment gap at Key Stage 2 and 4

	Attainment gap between deaf children and children with no SEN		Attainment gap between deaf children and all children	
	Key Stage 2 English	Key Stage 4	Key Stage 2 English	Key Stage 4
2009	46%	52%	38%	43%

Further analysis shows that:

- 33% of deaf girls achieve the GCSEs benchmark, compared to 26% of deaf boys. The gap between deaf boys and girls has widened from 16% in 2008 to 20% in 2009. Of all children with no SEN, the gap between boys and girls is only 5%. Of children with SEN, the gap is 14%. This suggests that deaf boys are particularly less likely to do as well as girls.
- Asian deaf children face particular challenges: only 19% of deaf Asian children achieve the GCSEs benchmark compared to 32% of white children. The attainment gap between these two groups is 43%. Among children with no SEN, all children with SEN and all children, Asian children outperform white children.
- Deaf children are more likely to under achieve if they are eligible for free school meals: 13% achieve the GCSEs benchmark against 34% of deaf children who do not claim free school meals. This means the attainment gap is 21%. The gap between those who claim free school meals and those that don't is much wider for children with no SEN (38%) and all children (51%).
- Where deaf children are studying in academies, 16% achieve this benchmark on GCSEs, compared to 29% of deaf children in all schools. Academies have traditionally been established in disadvantaged areas which could explain this gap. All children in academies are also less

likely to achieve this GCSE benchmark. However, the gap between deaf children in all schools and academies is much wider (45%) than for other groups of children: children with no SEN (19%) and all children (23%). The relatively low numbers of deaf children in academies and taking GCSEs mean that these figures must be treated with extreme caution.

As at Key Stage 2, there are considerable regional variations in the number of deaf children achieving 5 GCSEs (including English and Maths) at grades A\* to C.

Table 7<sup>2</sup>: Regional variations at Key Stage 4

Region	% achieving GCSEs benchmark
North East	29%
North West	35%
Yorkshire and the Humber	23%
East Midlands	29%
West Midlands	26%
East of England	31%
London	28%
South East	33%
South West	29%
England	29%

### What progress are deaf children making?

Data is now available on the proportion of deaf children who make two levels of progress between Key Stages, the “expected” level of progress for all children. Whilst some deaf children who have been diagnosed later in life or who have not received the necessary support in the early years may be starting at a lower rate, they should at least be making the same level of progress as other children, or better. Data on progression is not broken down by region.

Table 8: Percentage of children making expected levels of progress for English between Key Stage 1 and 2

	2007	2008	2009
Children with no SEN	87%	85%	85%
All children	84%	82%	82%
All children with SEN	73%	74%	74%
Deaf children	71%	72%	70%

Table 9: Percentage of children making expected levels of progress for Maths between Key Stage 1 and 2

	2007	2008	2009
Children with no SEN	82%	83%	87%
All children	76%	78%	81%
All children with SEN	58%	61%	62%
Deaf children	62%	66%	66%

Over two thirds of deaf children are making expected levels of progress at Key Stage 2. This proportion is still much lower than that for all children and children with no SEN. Deaf children are

<sup>2</sup> Figures shown in this table are those already provided to NDCS, and not those in the SEN report.

also less likely to make expected levels of progress in English than children with SEN. This is one of the few instances where deaf children do not do as well as their peers with SEN. The figures also suggest that deaf children are slightly less likely to make expected levels of progress on Maths, compared to English.

Table 10: Percentage of children making expected levels of progress for English between Key Stage 2 and 4

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Children with no SEN	62%	71%	73%
All children	61%	64%	66%
All children with SEN	34%	39%	42%
Deaf children	51%	55%	54%

Table 11: Percentage of children making expected levels of progress for Maths between Key Stage 2 and 4

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Children with no SEN	61%	65%	67%
All children	55%	57%	59%
All children with SEN	25%	28%	32%
Deaf children	47%	48%	48%

The proportion of deaf children making expected levels of progress at Key Stage 4 is around half – less than that found at Key Stage 2. This suggests that as deaf children move through the system, their progress becomes less consistent. Again, proportionally, all children and children with no SEN are more likely to make expected levels of progress. In addition, deaf children are less likely to make expected levels of progress in Maths, compared to English.

These figures are deeply worrying. Earlier, we found that the attainment gap between deaf children and other children does not seem to be narrowing. Whilst some deaf children may be starting from a lower base because of late diagnosis or a lack of early years support, there is still no reason why they should not be making the same level of progress as other children. Unless this happens, the attainment gap between deaf children and other children will not narrow in coming years.

### **How are deaf children doing post-16?**

The report shows that 36% of deaf children had achieved 2 A Levels (or equivalent) by age 19, compared to 55% of children with no SEN. When looking at gender differences, 33% of males achieve this benchmark compared to 40% of females.

There is no other data presented on deaf children's achievements and engagement post 16. For example, we don't know how many deaf children attend university or are undertaking apprenticeships.

### **Other data**

Other data presented in the report is not broken down by type of SEN and so is of less use to parents of deaf children, with one exception. The table overleaf sets out the percentage of statements that were issued within 26 weeks by region. Within the report, the data is also broken down by local authority.

Table 12: Issuing of statements

	<b>% within 26 weeks but excluding exceptional cases</b>	<b>% within 26 weeks of all cases</b>
North East	95	82
North West	90	87
Yorkshire and the Humber	95	85
East Midlands	93	86
West Midlands	94	86
East of England	94	81
London	89	75
South East	88	78
South West	87	78
England	91	82

Many parents welcome greater transparency over data on deaf children, to allow them to make informed choices about which provision will work better for their child, and also to hold local authorities to account where deaf children are falling behind. NDCS therefore welcomes the commitment within the report that the SEN Green Paper will consider how information on SEN and disabilities can be further improved.

NDCS continues to believe that data should be collected by type of disability, as well as by type of SEN, so that we can see how all deaf children are doing at school (and not just those who are formally recorded as having a special educational need). In addition, for example, we continue to lack data on wider outcomes, such as the number of deaf children who are bullied, subject to a social care plan or who engage in wider youth activities. We also lack data on provision available for deaf children. For example, the Government does not collect figures on the number of qualified Teachers of the Deaf or the number of schools with specialist provision for deaf children.