

Interim publication of 2025 to 2028 school place planning data and intelligence

This is an interim update before the full 2025–2028 School Place Planning Document is released. It includes population data for both primary and secondary school planning areas. Cross-border pupil movement data focuses on the secondary phase, where most movement happens.

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Kirklees Learning and Early Support Service

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1 Population and pupil cohorts

Chart 1 compares two key data sources used for planning school places. Data extracted from the NHS GP patient register provides the number of children and young people aged between 0-16 years resident in Kirklees. Data collection methods ensure that children and young people living in Kirklees but accessing a GP outside Kirklees are included and, conversely, that children and young people living outside Kirklees using a Kirklees-based GP are removed. While not perfect, this is the most reliable data available.

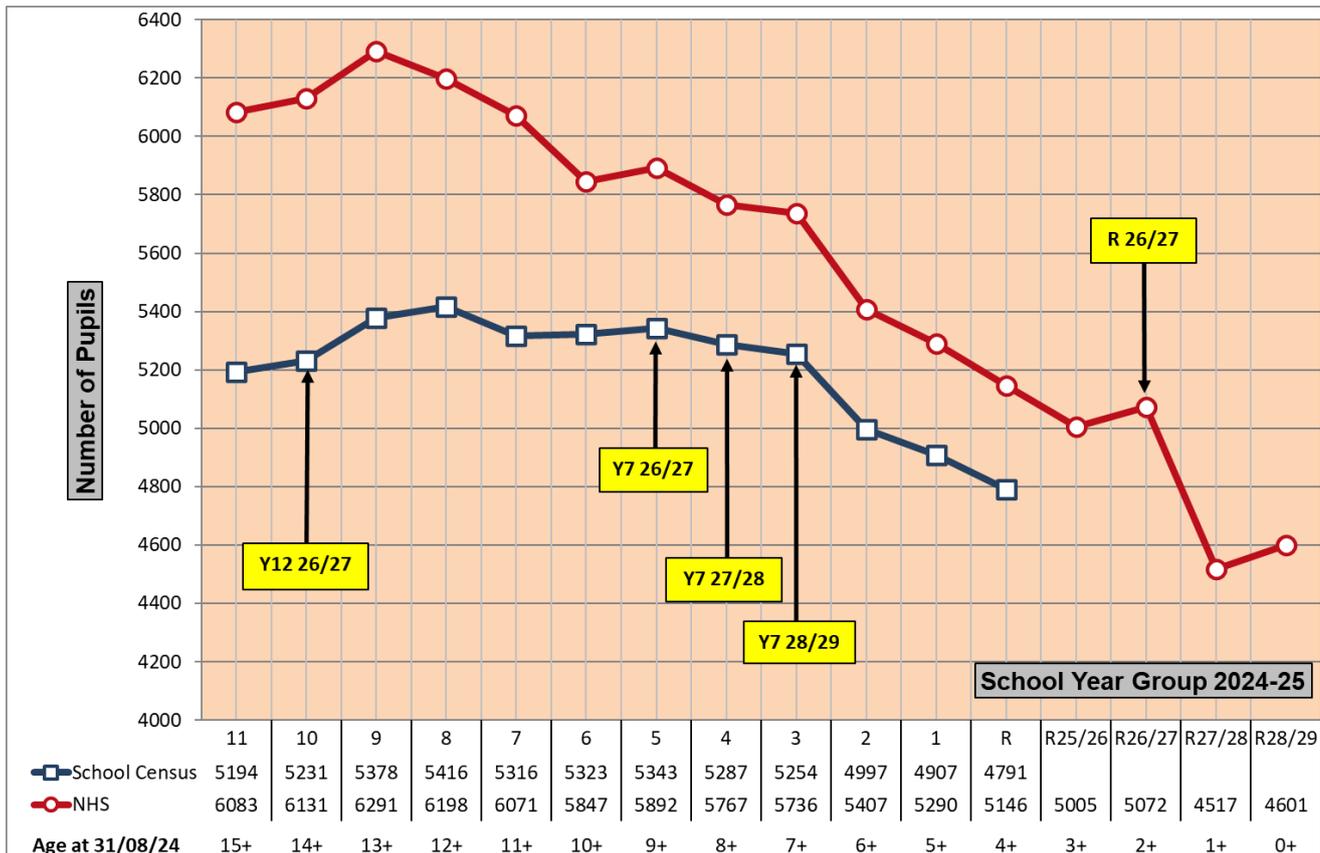
The School Census provides a count of the number of pupils on school rolls at a fixed point in time. January Census is used as this represents a stable position after which movement associated with normal round admission appeals is limited. The purpose of this collection is to obtain accurate data about publicly funded schools and their pupils and is used for statistical analysis. The population data indicates the overall potential demand for school places. The NHS GP patient register for 0–4-year-olds is key for forecasting future demand; however, it should be noted that data for 0-1-year-olds can under-represent the cohort size.

1.1 Chart 1: Year group numbers 2024-25 – NHS Data and Kirklees School Pupil Census

Sources: NHS GP registration data May 2025 – NHS Digital

Kirklees School Census January 2025 – Data & Insight, Public Health & Corporate

Resources directorate



1.1.1 Explanatory notes to accompany Chart 1

- The population data shown is derived from a snapshot of GP registration data provided by NHS Digital from the NHS Primary Care Registration (Demographic) database. The snapshot of data is from 1 May 2025. It breaks down the number of children living in Kirklees postcodes and registered at a GP practice. Historically, this is the best measure of the population because it gives an update on births, migration in and out of the area, and changes in residents due to tenancy changes or house building.
- The Kirklees School Census data in Chart 1 shows the total number of all pupils in Kirklees schools. A more detailed breakdown of pupil numbers by school year and type of school they attend will be available when the full school place planning document is published.
- The difference between the NHS and school census datasets reflects:
 - The number of children attending non-state funded education
 - Children missing education
 - Home educated children
- The difference between the NHS and school census datasets also indicates the number of children attending schools in neighbouring authorities, which is only partly offset by children living in other authorities who attend schools in Kirklees. Recent data on these movements between authorities is presented below. The greater difference between population and school numbers for secondary-aged young people reflects the larger number of secondary-aged pupils in neighbouring LA schools.

Chart 1 demonstrates significant consistency between population and census trends in future years when comparing cohort sizes.

2 Primary places

The population of Reception-age children across Kirklees has been declining since a peak in 2015/16. In South Kirklees, this downward trend is expected to continue steadily through to 2026/27. In North Kirklees, a brief one-year increase is projected in 2026/27, but NHS GP registration data then shows a sharp drop in 2027/28 across the district. A slight recovery is anticipated in 2028/29, though numbers are not expected to return to previous levels. Recent analysis shows Reception numbers grow during the school year, partly balancing the population drop. Further analysis of in-year movement will be provided in the 2025 place planning document.

Generally, the decline in population provides greater choice for parents, and their preferences continue to have a significant impact on the demand for school places at planning area and individual school level. A combination of falling population and the dynamics of parental preference is placing a different pressure on the school system, where surplus places in some areas are impacting upon the budgets of individual schools. Since school budgets depend largely on pupil numbers, falling rolls mean budget cuts and fewer staff.

Continued engagement is required with the school system about the level of surplus places and opportunities that may exist.

In planning areas with the highest levels of surplus, where previous engagement has not led to meaningful reduction in the surplus, further action is required to raise the profile of this issue with school leaders, governing bodies, and Multi-Academy Trusts.

3 Secondary places

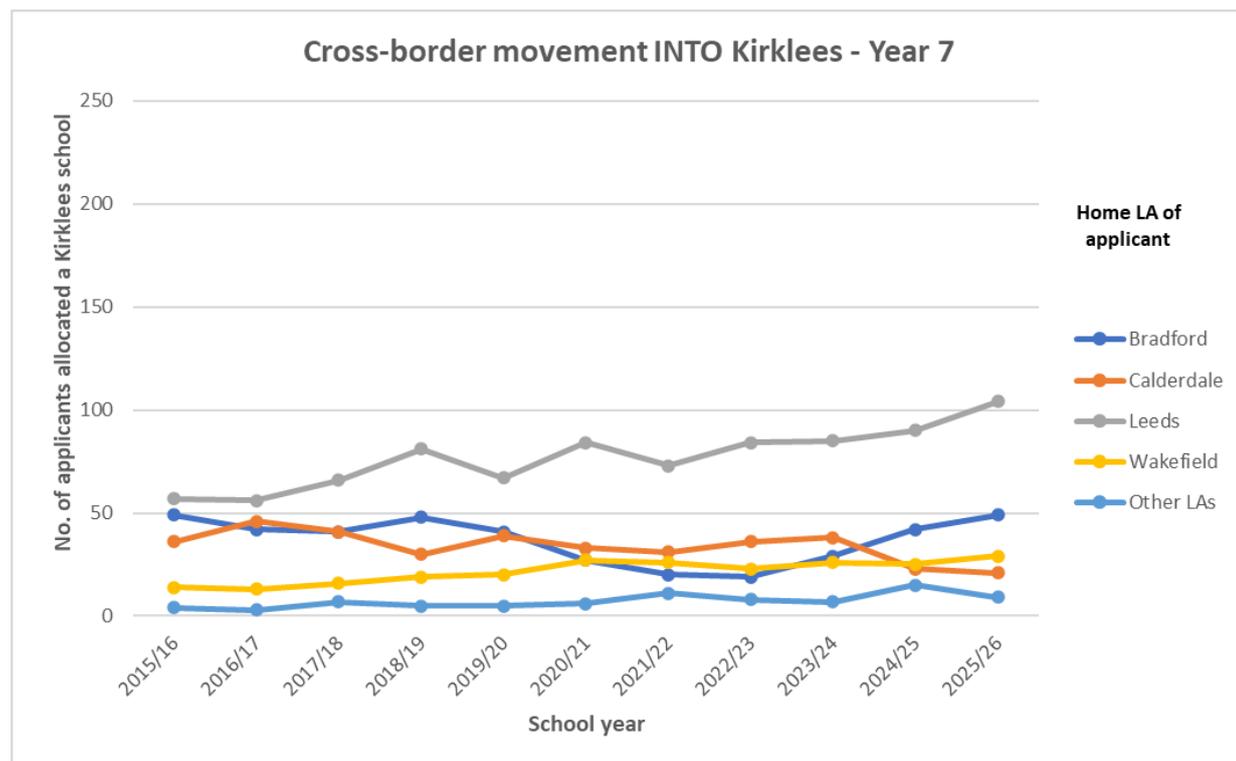
Despite population data continuing to indicate the largest population peak came in 2022/23, actual demand for secondary school places peaked in 2023/24. As suggested by population data, demand began to decline in 2024/25 and continued to fall in 2025/26. While bulge places were still required, the number needed has reduced year on year, although in 2024/5 pockets of pressure remained, particularly in the South. The limited number of Year 7 bulge places needed in 2025/26 were all in the North.

For the second consecutive year, additional bulge places had to be introduced after National Offer Day, prior to the initial round of reallocations. This was likely due to in-year movement between the application deadline and National Offer Day, resulting in late applications or changes in parental preference. The continued lower number of Kirklees residents securing places at secondary schools in neighbouring local authorities may also have contributed. Further analysis is needed to fully understand the factors driving the need for these additional post-offer day bulge places.

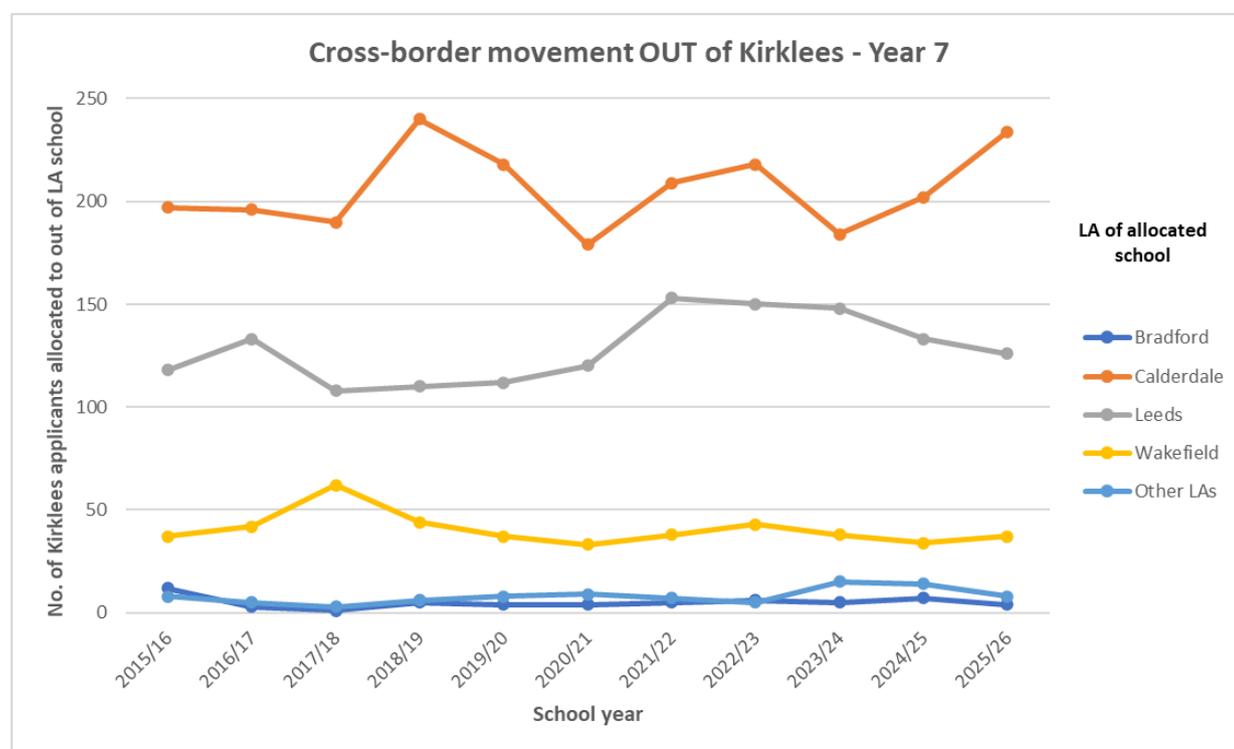
Looking ahead, demand is expected to continue to decline for an extended period of time. Initially, at a steady rate towards 2028, after which a sharper decline is anticipated. The previous period of high demand for places was managed by the carefully planned introduction of temporary bulge places, made possible by the collaboration and goodwill of the Kirklees school system. These bulge cohorts are still progressing through the system and continue to present challenges for in-year pupil movement. However, as demand for Year 7 places eases in line with the declining population, the pressure on in-year admissions is also expected to reduce year by year.

3.1 Cross border movement of secondary pupils at Year 7

3.1.1 Chart 2: Number of places being allocated at Kirklees schools to children living in different local authorities



3.1.2 Chart 3: Number of pupils resident in Kirklees who secured a place in schools in other local authorities



Charts 2 and 3 reflect the position on National Offer Day, rather than the final numbers captured in subsequent school censuses. The same data are presented below in Tables 1 and 2, along with a third table which demonstrates the overall net outward movement of pupils and how this has changed over time.

Net outward movement of Year 7 pupils peaked in 2021/22 and 2022/23. In 2025/26, it remained broadly consistent with the previous year. The number of Kirklees pupils securing places at Calderdale schools continues to fluctuate, reaching its highest level in a decade in 2025/26 following a notable dip in 2023/24. In contrast, the number of Kirklees pupils allocated places at Leeds schools has steadily declined, reaching its lowest point in five years in 2025/26 — a figure now more in line with pre-population peak levels.

Regular cross-border engagement takes place with school place planning colleagues in both Calderdale and Leeds. Shared data between Kirklees and Leeds indicates it is likely that Kirklees pupils will continue to secure places there. However, while population is a key element affecting the allocation of school places, it is only one of many factors. Parental preference, for example, plays a significant role in shaping demand. Future cross-border movement between Kirklees and Calderdale is less predictable, particularly given the potential impact of two large strategic housing developments located on either side of the border. The full implications of these developments on demand for school places remain to be seen.

Geographically, Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield cross-border pupil movement predominantly have an impact in North Kirklees, and Calderdale predominantly in South Kirklees. Tables 1-3 below detail the outward, inward, and overall net cross-border pupil movement.

Table 1 – outward movement

LA of allocated School	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Bradford	12	3	1	5	4	4	5	6	5	7	4
Calderdale	197	196	190	240	218	179	209	218	184	202	234
Leeds	118	133	108	110	112	120	153	150	148	133	126
Wakefield	37	42	62	44	37	33	38	43	38	34	37
Other LAs	8	5	3	6	8	9	7	5	15	14	8

Table 2 - inward movement

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Bradford	49	42	41	48	41	27	20	19	29	42	49
Calderdale	36	46	41	30	39	33	31	36	38	23	21
Leeds	57	56	66	81	67	84	73	84	85	90	104
Wakefield	14	13	16	19	20	27	26	23	26	25	29
Other LAs	4	3	7	5	5	6	11	8	7	15	9

Table 3 - net movement (-outward/+inward)

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Bradford	37	39	40	43	37	23	15	13	24	35	45
Calderdale	-161	-150	-149	-210	-179	-146	-178	-182	-146	-179	-213
Leeds	-61	-77	-42	-29	-45	-36	-80	-66	-63	-43	-22
Wakefield	-23	-29	-46	-25	-17	-6	-12	-20	-12	-9	-8
Other LAs	-4	-2	4	-1	-3	-3	4	3	-8	1	1
Net movement	-212	-219	-193	-222	-207	-168	-251	-252	-205	-195	-197