

# A summary picture of Children & Young People in Birmingham: School Years (5-16 Year Olds)

This document provides a summary of the key facts and figures on school age children and young people (those aged 5-16 years old) living in Birmingham.

For detailed information and a wider range of data (including sources), please see the [JSNA School Years dashboard](#).

Between the ages of four and sixteen, a child experiences many changes and transitions, with this period being foundational for personal, social and academic development. As they grow their interests, personality, emotional resilience and identity are all constantly being moulded by their experiences. The School Years Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) celebrates the opportunities to nurture and support children, families, and communities during these important life stages.

The School Years JSNA provides evidence-based insights to guide decision-making, ensuring resources are targeted effectively and interventions are designed to meet the unique needs of children and families within the city.

## Population

Birmingham is a predominantly young city, with more than half (51%) of the population being aged under 35. Around 182,199 of Birmingham citizens are aged between 5 and 15, representing 16% of the population. There are slightly more school-aged males (93,047) than females (89,152).

Of the 69 Birmingham wards, 59 have a higher proportion of school-aged children than the England average of 13.5%. Wards with the highest proportion of children aged 5-15 are in the east of the city: Bordesley Green (21.5%), Ward End (21.3%), and Heartlands (21.0%). Nine of the ten wards with the largest populations of school-aged children are in IMD decile 1, the most deprived areas of the city (Figure 1).

### Ethnicity

Figures from the 2021 Census reveal that ethnic minorities represent 51.4% of Birmingham's population, making Birmingham one of the first super-diverse cities in the UK.

Ethnic diversity is highest in the under-16 category, where 66.9% of residents are of non-white ethnicity. 38.2% of under-16s are of Asian or Asian British ethnicity, making this the majority ethnic group for this age band. 12.9% of under-16s are Black or Black British, 9.7% are of Mixed ethnicity and 6.1% are of 'other' ethnicity. The remaining 33.1% of children are of White ethnicity.

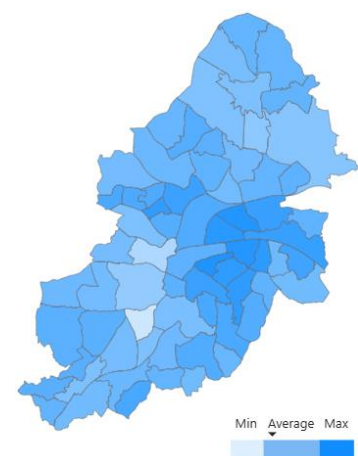


Figure 1: Proportion of population aged 5-15 years by ward (ONS 2022 Population Estimates)

## Deprivation

Birmingham is ranked the 7<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority in England, and 43% of the population live in LSOAs in the most deprived decile. For children, this proportion is higher: 51% of under-16s live in the most deprived decile.

The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) measures the proportion of children aged 0-15 living in income deprived families. Across Birmingham, 70,113 children (27.6%) live in income deprived households, significantly worse than the England average (17.1%).

Income deprivation is not spread evenly across the city (Figure 2). The wards with the highest IDACI are King's Norton South (41%), Newtown (40%), Garretts Green (39%), Nechells (38%) and Soho & Jewellery Quarter (38%). Notably, the five least income-deprived wards are clustered in the north of the city in the constituency of Sutton. Apart from Sutton Reddicap (20.3%), all wards in Sutton have IDACI below 10%.

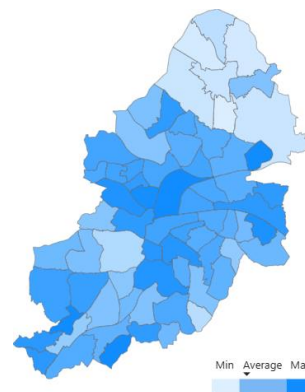


Figure 2: Proportion of children living in income-deprived households by ward (Fingertips data 2019)

### Low Income Families

In 2022/23 there were 104,433 children living in relative low income families, equivalent to around two in five children (40.8%). This is significantly higher than the England average (19.8%). Trends show that this rate is increasing and getting worse. There is substantial evidence suggesting that childhood poverty leads to premature mortality and poor health outcomes for adults.

### Free School Meals

Almost 4 in 10 Birmingham pupils (39.8%) were eligible for free school meals in 2023/24, equivalent to 82,702 children. This is significantly higher than the national average. Free school meal eligibility has increased over the past five years, a trend which is reflected regionally and nationally.

## Educational Development

### School Readiness

School readiness is the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for future progress in school and life. The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is used to inform plans for child development and identify where intervention is required.

In 2023/24:

- A significantly lower proportion of children in Birmingham achieved expected levels of development by the end of Reception when compared to the England average, across several indicators.

- A similar proportion of children in Birmingham achieved the expected level in their Year 1 phonics screening check to the England average.
- The proportion of children with free school meal status who achieved the expected level of development in Reception and Year 1 was significantly higher in Birmingham than across England.

Many factors influence whether a child reaches development goals, including deprivation, ethnicity and gender. Children living in the most affluent areas are more likely to reach expected levels of development. As many of Birmingham's children live in deprived areas, this has an impact on overall achievement, which is lower than average.

However, the percentage of children living in IDACI decile 1 (most deprived 10% nationally) who achieved expected levels of development was higher in Birmingham than the England average (Figure 3). 68% of girls and 55% of boys living in IDACI decile 1 in Birmingham achieved expected levels of development compared to 65% and 51% nationally.

Locally and nationally, more girls achieve expected levels of development than boys.

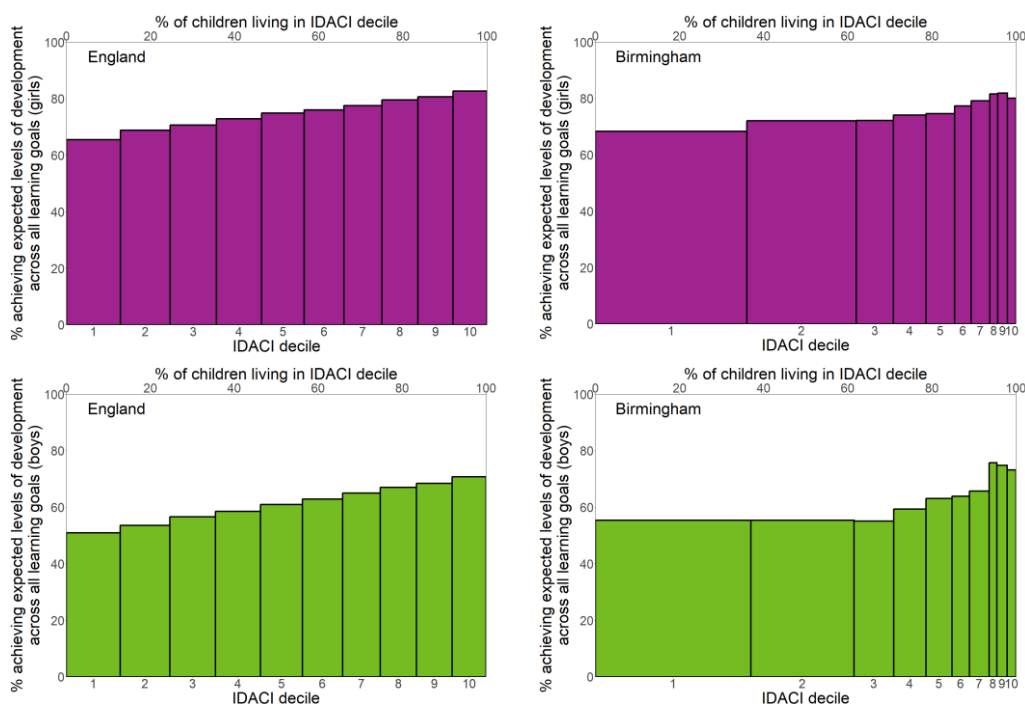


Figure 3. Percent of children achieving expected level of development across all learning goals, by IDACI decile.

## KS1 Standards

In 2021/22, a significantly lower proportion of Key Stage 1 pupils in Birmingham met expected standards across foundational skills compared to the England average. This included reading, writing, science and maths.

## Attainment 8

At the end of Key Stage 4, Attainment 8 assesses pupil achievement across 8 subjects (including English and maths), with a maximum score of 90.0.

In 2022/23:

- The average Attainment 8 score of Birmingham pupils was 44.8, lower than the England average of 46.2.
- The average Attainment 8 score of 'looked after' children in Birmingham was 21.9, lower than the average for all pupils in Birmingham but significantly higher than the England average of 19.4.

In 2020/21:

- The average Attainment 8 score of Birmingham pupils eligible for free school meals was 42.6, significantly higher than the England average of 39.1.

### Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Around 1 in 5 children (18.9%) in Birmingham were receiving SEN support or had an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan in place in 2023/24, a total of 39,295 children.

The largest primary care needs for pupils with SEN were moderate learning difficulty and speech, language and communication needs, each affecting 4.1% of pupils. Both rates are higher than the England average.

For children with an EHC plan, the largest primary care need was autistic spectrum disorder, affecting 1.7% of pupils, similar to the England average.

## Absence and Exclusions

### School Absence

Persistent absence (defined as missing 10% or more of all possible sessions) is a growing concern, both at a local and national level. More than 1 in 5 primary school pupils (22.3%) and 1 in 4 secondary school pupils (28.6%) were persistently absent in 2022/23, significantly higher than the England averages. Persistently absent children are less likely to do well at school and more likely to experience crime, struggle financially and suffer from poor health in later life.

### School Exclusions

There were 2,166 fixed period exclusions (also known as suspensions) in Birmingham primary schools in 2022/23, equivalent to 190 children in every 10,000. This is similar to the England rate. In the same period there were 1,453 exclusions per 10,000 secondary school pupils, lower than the England rate of 1,890.

## Mental Health and Wellbeing

### Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Needs

In 2023/24, 3.1% of school pupils in Birmingham had social, emotional and mental health needs as a SEN primary care need (either receiving SEN support or having an EHC plan). This was lower than the England rate.

## Loneliness

Around 11% of Birmingham children aged 11-16 described themselves as 'often or always lonely' in 2021. The largest proportion of children described themselves as 'hardly ever lonely' (28.9%), followed by 'occasionally lonely' (22.8%). Notably, a higher proportion of children in Birmingham described themselves as 'never lonely' (16.6%) than the England average (11.6%).

## Mental Wellbeing

- **Happiness:** In 2023/24, children in Birmingham appeared to be happier than average, with a mean happiness score of 7.2 (out of 10), compared to the England mean of 6.9.
- **Life satisfaction:** Life satisfaction among Birmingham children was similar to the England average in 2022/23, with a mean score of 6.6 out of 10 (England mean: 6.5).
- **Life worthwhileness:** The mean life worthwhileness score for children in Birmingham in 2022/23 was 6.7 out of 10, similar to the England average of 6.7.

# Physical Health and Lifestyle

## Overweight and Obesity - Reception

Around 1 in 5 Reception-aged children (22.6%) were classed as overweight or obese in 2023/24, similar to the England rate. Prevalence of overweight in Reception has been declining in Birmingham in recent years.

However, obesity and overweight are not spread evenly across the authority. Overweight and obesity prevalence ranged from 28.8% of pupils in Castle Vale to 15.7% of pupils in Sutton Trinity (Figure 4). Of the ten wards with the highest levels of obesity in Reception pupils, eight were in the most deprived areas of the city.

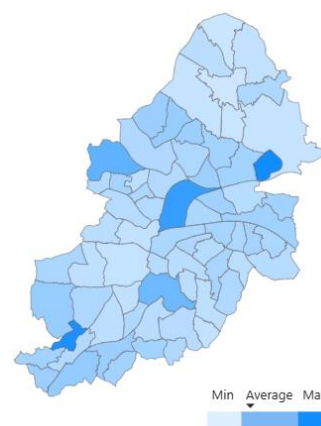


Figure 4: Proportion of Reception-aged children who are overweight or obese, by ward (Fingertips data 2021/22-23/24)

## Overweight and Obesity -Year 6

Around 2 in 5 Year 6 children (40.0%) were classed as overweight or obese in 2023/24, significantly higher than the England average. There has been no significant change in prevalence of overweight in Year 6 pupils in recent years.

Again, obesity and overweight are not spread evenly, and the inequalities are even greater for this age group. Prevalence of overweight and obesity was highest in Handsworth, where just under half of Year 6 pupils (49.2%) were overweight or obese, and lowest in Sutton Trinity (25.8%) (Figure 5).

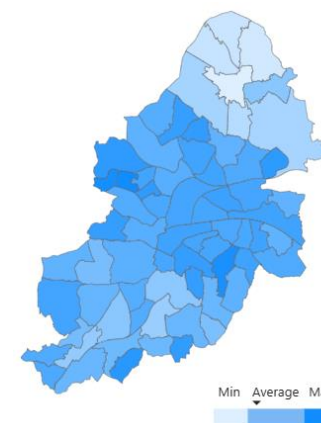


Figure 5: Proportion of Year 6 children who are overweight or obese, by ward (Fingertips data 2021/22-23/24)

More than three-quarters of the 69 Birmingham wards had higher rates of obesity in Year 6 pupils than the England average of 22.7%.

## Mean Height and Short Stature

On average, at age 5, boys and girls in Birmingham were a similar height to the England average in 2023/24 (110.4cm and 109.4cm respectively). However, 320 Reception-aged children were classed as having short stature (height below the second centile), equivalent to 2.3% of children and significantly higher than the England average (1.8%).

11-year-old girls in Birmingham had a mean height of 147.7cm, significantly taller than the England mean of 147.5cm. 11-year-old boys, conversely, were significantly shorter than the England mean, with a mean height of 146.1cm. Prevalence of short stature was 1.0%, again significantly higher than the England average (0.9%).

## Physical Activity

Only 2 in 10 children (41.6%) in Birmingham met the UK Chief Medical Officers' recommendation for an average of at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity activity per day in 2023/24. This is significantly worse than the England average (47.8%).

## Oral Health

Almost a third of five-year-old children (30.2%) sampled in Birmingham had visually obvious dental decay in 2023/24, significantly worse than England.

## Risk Behaviours

NHS England's 'Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England' survey asks 15-year-olds to self-report their usage and attitudes towards several risk behaviours. Data is only available at a national and regional level.

- **Smoking:** In 2023, 2% of respondents reported being a regular smoker (smoking at least one cigarette a week), equivalent to around 323 15-year-olds in Birmingham. In the same period, 5% of respondents reported being an occasional smoker (around 808 young people in Birmingham).
- **Vaping/e-Cigarettes:** Over 1 in 10 (10.9%) of respondents were regular users of e-cigarettes in 2023, equivalent to 1,763 young people in Birmingham. A much higher proportion (41.9%) said they had ever used an e-cigarette.
- **Alcohol:** Nearly 16% of respondents reported having drunk alcohol in the last week in 2023, equivalent to around 2,571 15-year-olds in Birmingham.

# Hospital Admissions

## Long-term health conditions

In 2023/24:

- **Asthma:** There were 710 emergency hospital admissions for asthma in children and young people (under 19 years), giving a rate of 214.6 admissions per 100,000 population. This was significantly higher than the England rate.
- **Diabetes:** There were 140 emergency hospital admissions for diabetes in under-19s, equivalent to a rate of 55.7 admissions per 100,000 population. This was similar to the England rate.



- **Epilepsy:** There were 225 emergency hospital admissions for epilepsy in under-19s. This is equivalent to a rate of 83.5 admissions per 100,000 population, similar to the England rate.

## Injuries

There were 2,065 hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in children aged 14 and under in 2023/24. This gives a rate of 86.1 admissions per 10,000 children, significantly higher than the England rate (72.7).

## A&E attendance

There were 497 A&E attendances per 100,000 children aged under 18 in 2023/24, equivalent to 143,880 children and young people. Birmingham's rate was significantly higher than the England rate.

## Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) on Roads

In the period 2020-2022, 134 children (aged 15 and under) were killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions in Birmingham, giving a rate of 17.4 per 100,000 population.

This rate was similar to the England rate, making 2020-2022 the first period in which Birmingham does not have a higher rate than England since data was first collected in 2008.

## Substance misuse

There were 113 alcohol-specific hospital admissions in under 18s in Birmingham in the period 2021/22 to 2023/24, a rate of 13.1 per 100,000 population. The rate for England was significantly higher, a trend which has remained the same for the past ten years.

In the period 2020/21 to 2022/23, there were 210 hospital admissions related to substance misuse in 15-24 year olds. This gives a rate of 38.6 per 100,000 population, significantly lower than the England rate.

# Immunisations

In general, uptake of school-age vaccines is decreasing, with recommended coverage goals not being met.

- **Flu vaccine (primary school):** In 2023, 37.8% of primary school children (aged 4-11) in Birmingham received a flu vaccination, significantly lower than the England average and well below the coverage goal of 65%. Trends analysis shows coverage is decreasing.
- **HPV (one dose):** 58.5% of girls in Birmingham (aged 12-13) received a first dose of the HPV vaccine in 2023/24, significantly lower than the England average and well below the coverage goal of 90%. Trends analysis shows no significant change in coverage.

- **HPV (two doses):** In 2022/23, 52.9% of girls (aged 13-14) received their second dose of HPV vaccine in Birmingham, significantly lower than the England average and below the coverage goal of 90%. Trends analysis shows a significant decrease in coverage over the past five years.
- **MenACWY:** In 2023/24, 65.6% of Birmingham children (aged 14-15) received a MenACWY vaccine for meningitis, significantly lower than the England average and well below the coverage goal of 90%. Trends analysis shows coverage is decreasing.