

An introduction to the new School Workforce Census (SWF)

Introduction

In November 2010 the way the Department for Education collected data on the school workforce from maintained schools and academy schools changed. The School Workforce Census (SWF) was introduced during 2010 and is now the preferred method of collecting data on teachers and support staff from local authorities, local authority-maintained schools and academies. The SWF is now the statutory return for school workforce (by virtue of regulation SI2007/1264 made under Sections 113 and 114 of the Education Act 2005) and became the Department's primary source of data on the schools' workforce.

The first full census took place during November and December 2010 and replaced several collections including the local authority return, Form 618g, and the workforce element of the spring School Census.

Changes to the Statistical First Release

The data collected by the new census is much richer and timelier than the data previously collected (a complete list of all the data items collected by the SWF is available in the attached Annex) and consequently the Department is able to revamp the standard, annual, May Statistical First Release. The first Statistical First Release "School Workforce in England; November 2010" based on the November 2010 SWF is scheduled for April 2011. The proposed set of tables for the release are provided (<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/ols-swftables.xls>) to alert data users to the key changes to the SFR's content and to act as a reminder regarding the changes to the collection methodology, coverage and timing.

The revised SFR will cover similar topics to the previous statistical releases (the latest of which is the May 2010 Statistical First Release "School Workforce in England (including pupil:teacher ratios and pupil:adult ratios), January 2010" which can be found at the following link:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000927/index.shtml>

The key difference will be the revised publication will have a broader range of statistics including more detail on teacher and support staff characteristics, teacher pay and qualifications and curriculum. In many cases the data should be of better quality and/or be timelier.

As part of the Department's aim to make its statistics relevant and useful, a user consultation on the proposed "School Workforce in England; November 2010" publication is also being carried out. The survey is available (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CQ8S7Y6>) and users are invited to respond to the survey by 31 March 2011. Data users are welcome to offer suggestions for refinements to the proposed set of tables as well as offer suggestions for other tables that could be included as regular statistical outputs from the SWF in 2010, 2011 or future years. Suggestions for new tables to be included as standard outputs should appeal to a broad range of school workforce census data users.

Details of the proposed set of tables

Tables 1 and 2 of the new SFR provide users with a time series of the headline numbers of teachers and support staff in schools. The main difference between these tables and previous years' tables is that information for all schools, including academy schools, comes from the same data source – SWF. In previous years data on school support staff and staff in academy schools have been derived from the School Census and presented alongside teacher numbers from Form 618g.

Tables 3 and 4 provide teacher characteristic details such as age, gender, grade and QTS by school phase and are new for the SFR. The figures were previously available from the Database of Teacher Records (DTR - a by product of the administration of Teachers' Pensions Scheme) and published as additional tables to the main SFR. One consequence of this was the DTR data was upwards of two years out of date by the time they were released.

Tables 5 and 6 are completely new to the SFR. This will be the first time the Department has been able to publish comprehensive statistics on the ethnicity of teachers and support staff by grade, gender and phase. This is particularly helpful in meeting the previously unmet demand for ethnicity data for Head Teachers.

Tables 7 to 9 provide considerable detail on pay scale distributions and teachers' pay and are new to the SFR. This information, like Tables 3 and 4, was previously available from the DTR and published as additional tables. The data contained in **Table 10** – salaries of the school leadership group - is also new to the SFR. This information was available from the DTR but was not regularly produced due to some misreporting of teachers in school leadership grades. By deriving these tables from the new census and bringing them into the SFR we are improving the timeliness of this important set of data.

Tables 11 to 13 provide details of the highest post A level qualifications held by teachers, and, for a sample of secondary schools, shows the relationship between teachers, their qualifications and the subjects taught. This information was previously collected by the Secondary Schools Staffing and Curriculum Survey (SSSCS) which took place approximately every four to six years and was published separately. The data is now an integral part of the SWF and can be published annually.

Tables 14 and 15 contain details of the teaching vacancies in schools and are identical to the tables published in previous years apart from the inclusion of data on academy schools.

There is a **Table 16** in the annex which sets out the time series for teacher sickness absence and the numbers of days lost (same table as previous years). The intention would be to publish this data in the SFR. However, we are aware of a small number of quality issues experienced by the collection. At this stage the intention would be to investigate and assess the data and publish the table at a later date.

Background to the introduction of the School Workforce Census

In previous years the Department collected data on the school workforce every January via the Annual Survey of Teachers in Service and Teacher Vacancies (known as Form 618g). This exercise collected information at an aggregate level

from all local authorities on teacher numbers, some teacher characteristics (grade, phase, full or part-time), teacher sickness absence and the numbers and types of teaching vacancies. The results were then made public in a statistical releases published in the following April/May.

As the statistics from Form 618g were quite limited the SFRs were enhanced by information from a number of other data collections managed by the Department and its agencies; for example:

- Teacher characteristics such as age, sex and pay and pay scale were derived from administration data used to manage the Teachers Pension Scheme.
- Information on the delivery of the curriculum (e.g. proportion of maths lessons delivered by qualified maths teachers) was derived from the Secondary Schools Staffing and Curriculum Survey (SSSCS) - a survey of approximately 600 schools carried out every four to six years.
- Information on the numbers of support staff in schools including academies was derived from the School Census; a school-level aggregate headcount of teachers and support staff. (This was also the only data source for teacher numbers in academy schools.)
- Information on teachers' qualifications was derived from data held by the General Teaching Council for England.

The most recent school workforce SFRs can be found at the following links;

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000844/index.shtml> - May 2009 (provisional)

[DCSF: School Workforce in England \(including Local Authority level figures\), January 2009 \(Revised\)](#)

Each of the above data collection exercises were useful in their own right but together they could not provide a complete and consistent picture of the workforce in schools e.g. due to the collections often having different school or teacher coverage and often being run at different times of the year.

The Department's data strategy was to improve the data being collected by introducing the SWF (simultaneously reducing the data collection burden on schools and LAs). The detail collected by the Department through the SWF was developed through extensive consultation with local authorities (and through them, schools) over the last three years. The census was designed to collect detailed already held and used by schools by schools; it collects individual level information on teachers, for example, their personal characteristics (e.g. age, sex, and ethnicity), contract details (post, role and pay), qualifications, curriculum taught and sickness absence. It also collects a reduced set of data on other school staff e.g. teaching assistants and support staff (focussing on their characteristics and contract details). The census also collects data on the number and type of teaching vacancies in schools.

Impact on time series statistics

The SWF has been designed to replicate and enhance the data previously collected and it uses definitions which are consistent with previous collections. This should mean that the majority of the statistics collected on the schools workforce census will be consistent with previous years – however the change will introduce some small

time series discontinuities, for example:

a) improvements to scope: It is possible that bringing together data on local authority maintained schools and academies into the same return (rather than they being different returns) could result in some differences as new people involved in data collections take time to understand the data requirements.

b) the move to individual data: Similarly, as with most new data collection exercises there could be some small differences in teacher numbers as school and LA colleagues develop their understanding of the data requirement, prepare their data locally and become more familiar with the processes and procedures designed for this exercise. For example, the Form 618g collection was predominantly completed by local authority HR managers (using data they either held centrally or had collected through discussions with schools) who then manually input the data into a DfE designed web-form. The new census is quite different as all the data required will be extracted from school and/or LA Management Information Systems and uploaded to the Department. The data extraction routines will have been developed in consultation with their local software suppliers and there may be occasions where the local understanding of the data requirement is different to the intended scope of the census or it is possible that some local employment scenarios do not fit the standard national model set out in the data requirement.

c) the timing: The SWF is to be collected in November of each year whereas the previous collections had a census date in January. In general this should not be problematic as the number of schools, teachers and support staff does not change substantially between academic years. The key school workforce indicator which could be affected is the number of vacancies in schools. It is possible the SWF could show a slightly higher vacancy rate than before because the count is taken two months earlier (essentially allowing two months less time to fill the post).

d) the change of collection period for sickness absence data: In future teacher sickness absence statistics will be reported on an academic year basis rather than a calendar year however this shouldn't create too much of a difference in the statistics.

Further information

Further information on the School Workforce Census can be found on the Department's website

(<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmin/ims/datacollections/swf/a0063724/what-is-the-school-workforce-census>) and if you have any further

questions please contact our helpdesk at the following address:

(HELPDESK@education.gsi.gov.uk)

Annex

The information in the table applies to those staff with current contracts, or employed via a current service agreement, for one month or more on the Census Reference Date.

- √ indicates that this data item is required for this category of staff
- # indicates that this data item is optional for this category of staff
- X indicates that this data item is not applicable for this category of staff

	Teachers	Agency/Service Agreement Teachers	Teaching Assistants	Other support staff
Staff Details module				
Teacher Number	√	√	√ (if applicable)	√ (if applicable)
Family Name	√	√	√	√
Given Name	√	√	√	√
Former Family Name	√	#	√	#
National Insurance Number	√	√	√	√
Gender	√	√	√	√
Date of birth	√	√	√	√
Ethnic Code	√	√	√	√
Disability	√	√	√	√
QT Status	√	√	√	#
HLTA Status	√	#	√	√
QTS Route	√ (for those working towards QTS)	√ (for those working towards QTS)	#	#
Contract / Service Agreement module				
Contract / Agreement Type	√	√	√	√
Start Date	√	√	√	√
End Date	√	√	√	√
Date of Arrival in School	√ (where known or for those contracts / agreements that started from 1/9/2009)	√ (where known or for those contracts / agreements that started from 1/9/2009)	√ (where known or for those contracts / agreements that started from 1/9/2009)	#
Post	√	√	√	√

	Teachers	Agency/Service Agreement Teachers	Teaching Assistants	Other support staff
Role Identifier	√	√	√	√
Destination	√ (for those contracts / agreements that finished from 1/9/2009)	#	√ (for those contracts / agreements that finished from 1/9/2009)	#
Origin	√ (for those contracts / agreements that started from 1/9/2009)	#	√ (for those contracts / agreements that started from 1/9/2009)	#
Pay Scale	√	√ (not required if Daily Rate is provided)	√	#
Regional Pay Spine	√	√ (not required if Daily Rate is provided)	X	X
Spine Point	√	√ (not required if Daily Rate is provided)	X	X
Category of Additional Payment	√	√ (not required if Daily Rate is provided)	√	#
Additional Payment Amount	√	√ (not required if Daily Rate is provided)	√	#
Total Pay	√ (not required if Pay Scale, Regional Pay Spine and Spine Point are provided)	√ (not required if (a) Pay Scale, Regional Pay Spine and Spine Point or (b) Daily Rate are provided)	√	#
Safeguarded Salary	√	X	X	X

	Teachers	Agency/Service Agreement Teachers	Teaching Assistants	Other support staff
Daily Rate	X	√ (not required if Total Pay is provided)	X	X
Hours worked per week	√	√	√	#
FTE Hours per week	√	√	√	#
Weeks per year	√	√ (not required if Daily Rate is provided)	√	#
Absence module				
Absence Category	√	√	√	#
First Day	√	√	√	#
Last Day	√	√	√	#
Working Days Lost	√ (for sickness absence only)	√ (for sickness absence only)	√ (for sickness absence only)	#
Curriculum module <i>Secondary, middle deemed secondary and all-through schools only</i>				
Subject Code	√	√	√	X
Hours	√	√	√	X
Year Group	√	√	√	X
Qualification module Only those working in maths and science areas				
Qualification code	√	√	√	#
Subject Code 1	√	√	√	#
Subject Code 2	√ (if applicable)	√ (if applicable)	√ (if applicable)	#

√ indicates that this data item is required for this category of staff

indicates that this data item is optional for this category of staff

X indicates that this data item is not applicable for this category of staff