



Analysis of Special Educational Need and Disability Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools

Data from published school census information – 2016 - 2021

Report by:

**Performance Improvement and Quality Team
Children's Services
Walsall Council**

September 2021

Analysis of SEND Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools

Summary

1. Analysis of SEND Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools

- 1.1. The following analysis is based on the January 2021 school census and relates to children who attend Walsall Schools.
- 1.2. It should be noted that this is not a reflection of all children with SEN in Walsall as some Walsall children attend schools outside of the borough and some children who attend Walsall schools reside in different Local Authorities.
- 1.3. This data relating to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in this analysis, is not therefore directly comparable to local or SEN2 data relating to EHCPs which focusses on plans maintained by Walsall LA, regardless of whether the child or young person attends a Walsall school.

2. Headlines

- 2.1. The percentage of pupils who are in receipt of SEN Support and EHCPs in Walsall is lower than regional and national comparators but is growing at a faster rate.
- 2.2. The number of pupils who receive SEN Support that attend Primary School settings is growing at a faster rate than the number who attend secondary settings indicating improvements in identifying the need for SEN Support earlier.
- 2.3. The proportion of pupils with an EHCP that attend special schools is slightly lower than regional and national comparators. The number of pupils has grown at a higher rate than regional comparators over the past six years, but was lower between 2019 and 2020.
- 2.4. Although the number of pupils in special schools is increasing, the overall percentage of pupils with an EHCP that attend special schools has fallen. This is the same picture regionally and nationally. This indicates a possible slight shift in ensuring that where possible and appropriate, children with an EHCP can continue to be educated in mainstream education, however, it may also be linked to special school placement sufficiency. As Walsall implements it's new Inclusion Strategy, this is a trend that is expected to continue.
- 2.5. Pupils with SEN Support are just as likely to attend academies as they are LA maintained schools. However, a significantly smaller percentage of pupils who attend academies are in receipt of an EHCP than those who attend LA Maintained schools - however this is likely to be due to special schools in Walsall being LA Maintained.
- 2.6. A lower proportion of pupils in receipt of SEND Support in Walsall have a primary need of SEMH and a higher proportion have MLD in contrast to comparators. Specific Learning Difficulties also appear to be under recognised as a primary need. For pupils with an EHCP, primary needs are more in line with comparators.
- 2.7. Boys are almost twice as likely as girls to be in receipt of SEN Support and almost three times more likely to be in receipt of an EHCP. Boys are a third more likely to be diagnosed with Autism than girls and also more likely to have SEMH recognised as a primary need.
- 2.8. Pupils from Asian ethnic groups are significantly less likely to have recognised and supported SEN needs compared to their white, Black and mixed ethnicity peers.

Analysis of SEND Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools

- 2.9. Children who speak English are a third more likely to receive support for SEND and are around 10% less likely to attend special school, however, they are more likely to receive support at primary school. Pupils in receipt of SEN Support who are EAL are over 50% more likely to have a primary need of Speech, Language and Communication, but are less than half as likely to have a Primary Need of SEMH - further work is needed to understand whether the speech language and communication needs are genuine SEND or in relation to language barriers and whether a focus on this is preventing pupils who are EAL from receiving support for SEMH.
- 2.10. Pupils who are EAL and in receipt of an EHCP are also more likely to have SLCN as their primary need, but almost half as likely to have a primary need of Autism.
- 2.11. The number of pupils in receipt of Free School Meals is increasing and higher than comparators. Pupils in receipt of Free School Meals are twice as likely to have a recognised SEN as their peers who do not receive FSM and a higher proportion attend special school.

3. Next Actions

- 3.1. While this analysis confirms that there has been significant improvement in identifying pupils with Special Educational Needs in Walsall over the past six years, however, there is still some way to go before proportions of are line with comparators. The transformation of SEN Services in the borough and the implementation of the SEND Strategy and Inclusion Strategy will support in the continued closure of this gap and will ensure that pupils who need additional support in Walsall receive it.
- 3.2. However there is some specific work to be undertaken to understand further, the underlying reasons for the disproportionality in SEND Need, particularly for girls, children from Asian ethnic backgrounds and pupils who speak English as an Additional Language.
- 3.3. This is something that will be picked up at a number of levels:
- Operationally the SEND team will examine this data further and review it in line with process transformation to ensure that disproportionality is not built into the system.
 - Children's Services will be reviewing their strategic approach to disproportionality as part of the wider Walsall Right 4 Children Transformation Plan – with Equalities being a key part of the WR4C Outcomes Framework and focus of discussion over the coming months.
 - We will work with partners to ensure disproportionality is understood across the system and that services for children with SEND meet the needs of all children equally.

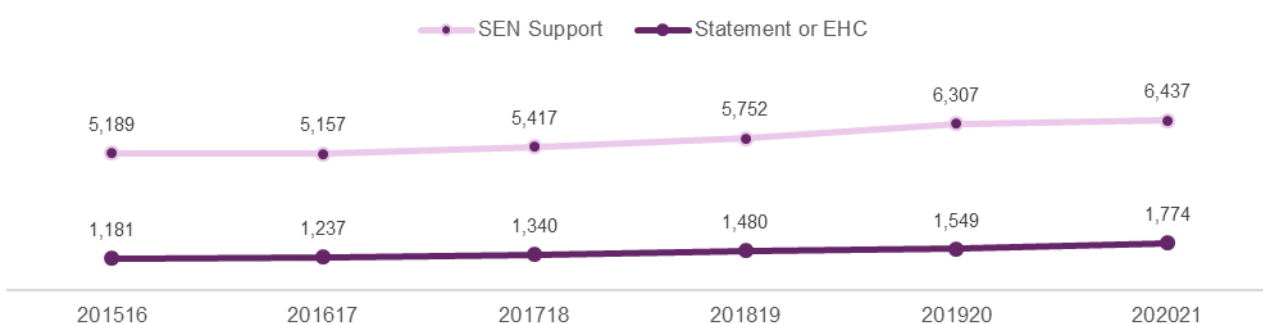
Analysis of SEND Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools

Detailed Analysis

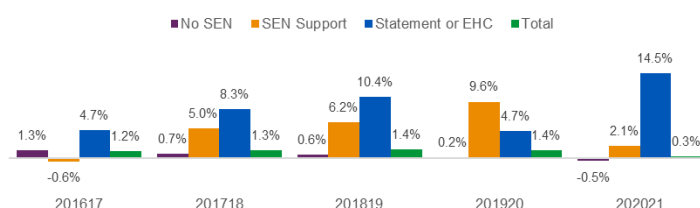
4. Demographics of Walsall's SEN population

- 4.1. As of January 2021, 53,105 children attend Walsall schools. This is an increase of 5.7% over the past six years and an increase of 0.3% in the past 12 months. Walsall's school population is increasing at a slightly quicker rate than regional neighbours (4.9% in 6 years and 0.2% in the past 12 months) and national neighbours (4.6% in 6 years and 0.4% in the past 12 months).
- 4.2. 6,437 children (12.1%) benefit from SEN Support and 1,774 (3.3%) of children are supported via an EHCP. Both the number of children with SEN Support and the number with an EHCP have increased continually over the past six years.
- 4.3. SEN Support has increased by 24.1% in the past six years and 2.1% in the past 12 months – this is a significant increase compared with regional neighbours (7.6% in 6 years and 0.8% in the past 12 months) and national peers (8.1% in the past six years and 0.3% in the past 12 months).
- 4.4. Conversely, although the number of children with an EHCP has increased more than regional and national comparators in the past six years (50.2% compared with 25.9% in the West Midlands and 36.2% nationally), in the past 12 months, the increase has been slightly lower (14.5% compared with 8.1% regionally and 10.2% nationally).
- 4.5. It is likely that this is at least in part due to the back log of EHCP assessments that have been continued to be completed and a large number of new requests received throughout the end of the 2020 calendar year and into the 2021 calendar year. However, it should be noted that any anticipated increase is dependent upon how many of the children with plans have placements in Walsall schools and whether there is any movement with children from other boroughs leaving Walsall schools which may counteract the increase in local EHCP numbers.

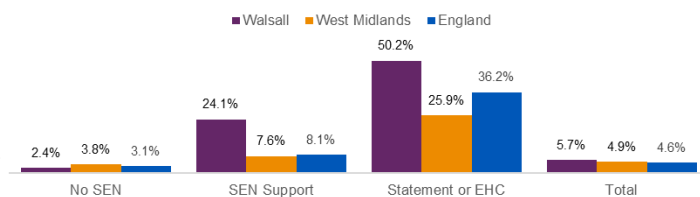
Percentage of school children with SEND Support



Percentage change in children attending Walsall schools by SEN need year on year



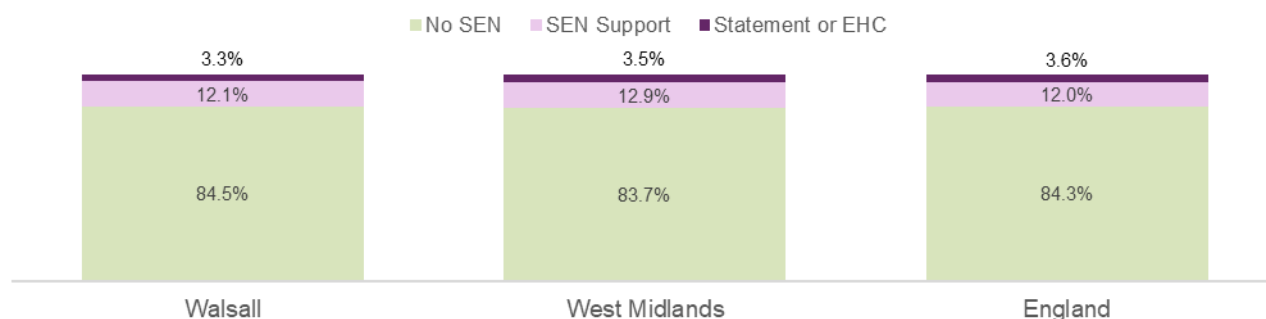
Percentage change in children attending schools by SEN type between 2015-16 and 2020-21



Analysis of SEND Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools

- 4.6. Despite the increases in the number of children benefitting from SEN Support and EHCPs in Walsall, the percentage of children in receipt of SEN services remains lower overall than comparators

Percentage of children in Walsall schools by SEND Status

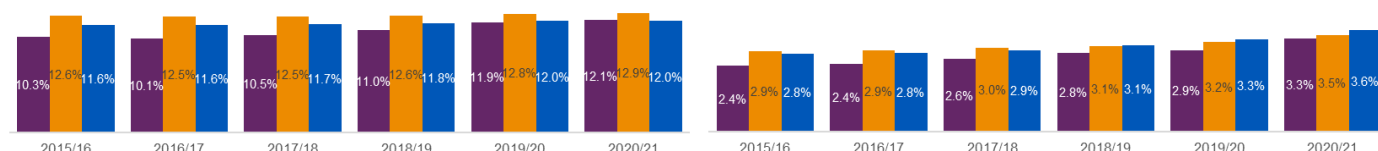


Percentage of school children with SEND Support

■ Walsall SEN Support ■ West Midlands SEN Support ■ England SEN Support

Percentage of school children with an EHCP

■ Walsall EHCP ■ West Midlands EHCP ■ England EHCP

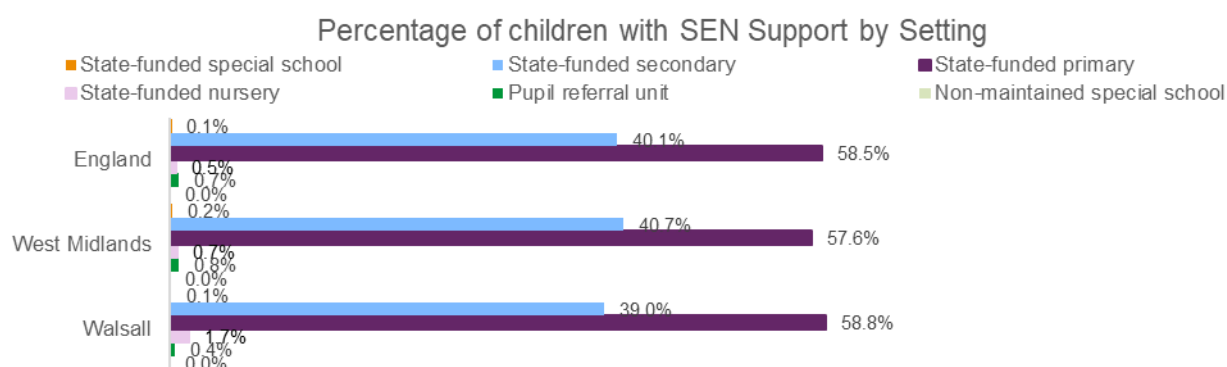


5. SEN Need by Setting

SEN Support

- 5.1. The proportion of children in receipt of SEN Support in primary and secondary school settings in Walsall is broadly in line with regional and national peers. Over the past six years the number of children receiving SEN Support in primary schools has increased at 25.2%, just above the number of children in secondary school settings (21.7%) indicating that there has been an improvement in identifying the number of children in need of SEN support at an earlier stage in their schools career across the six years. However, in the past 12 months the number of children receiving SEN Support in primary schools has decreased by 1.6%, compared to an increase of 8.9% in secondary school settings.
- 5.2. Although numbers remain small, there has also been an increase in the number of children receiving SEN support in nursery settings (108 in January 2021 up from 59 in 2016). The overall percentage of children with SEN Support in nursery settings is slightly higher in Walsall (1.7%) than regional (0.7%) and national (0.5%) peers, again suggesting that SEN needs in Walsall are starting to be identified earlier.

Analysis of SEND Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools



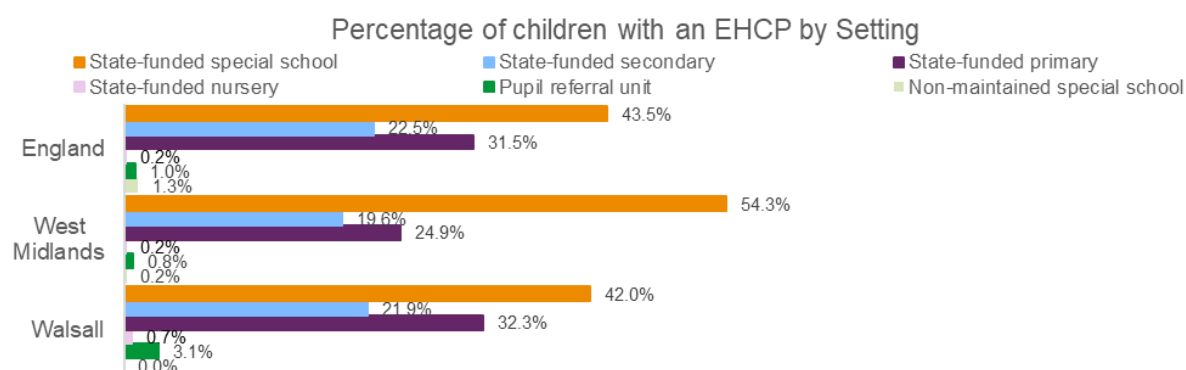
EHCPs

5.3. Data for children in receipt of an EHCP varies more when compared with national and regional neighbours. 42% of children with an EHCP attend special schools compared with 43.5% nationally and 54.3% in the West Midlands. The higher rate in the overall West Midlands may be due to higher number of special schools and therefore special school places being available in some neighbouring areas.

5.4. The percentage of pupils with an EHCP in special schools has increased by 30.5% in Walsall over the past six years – this is a higher increase than regionally 23.6%, but on par with national (30.6%), however, in the past 12 months, the increase has only been 0.9% compared to 3.1% regionally and 5.5% nationally.

5.5. Although the number of pupils in special school has increased, as a proportion of the total number of children with an EHCP, the percentage in special schools has fallen from 48.3% in 2016 and 47.6% in 2020 to 42.0% in 2021, whereas the proportion in primary school has increased from 27.7% in 2016, 29.2% in 2020 to 32.3% in 2021. This indicates a possible slight shift in ensuring that where possible and appropriate, children with an EHCP can continue to be educated in mainstream education, however, it may also be linked to special school placement sufficiency.

5.6. The number of children with an EHCP attending PRUs in Walsall has tripled from 18 in 2019 to 55 in 2021. This is in line with changes in the way that children who have to attend the PRU following exclusions are worked with and indicates an improved recognition and support of SEND needs that may have previously gone unrecognised by this cohort.



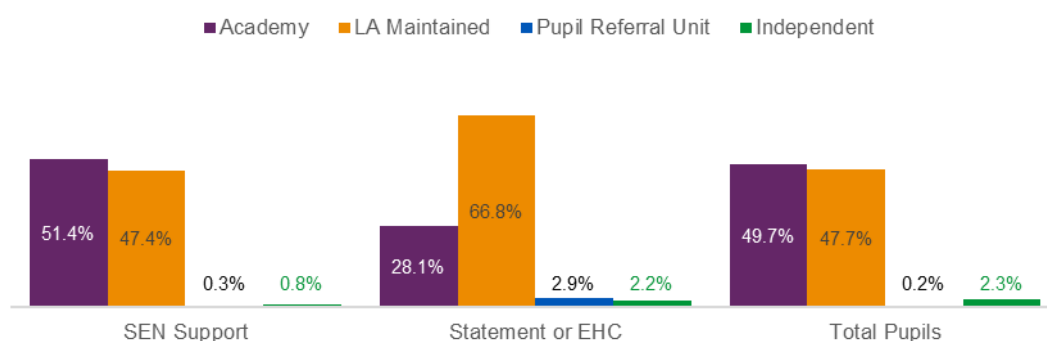
Academies vs LA Maintained Schools

5.7. In Walsall, 49.7% of pupils attend academies, 47.7% attend LA maintained schools 0.2% attend pupil referral units and 2.3% attend independent schools. A lower

Analysis of SEND Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools

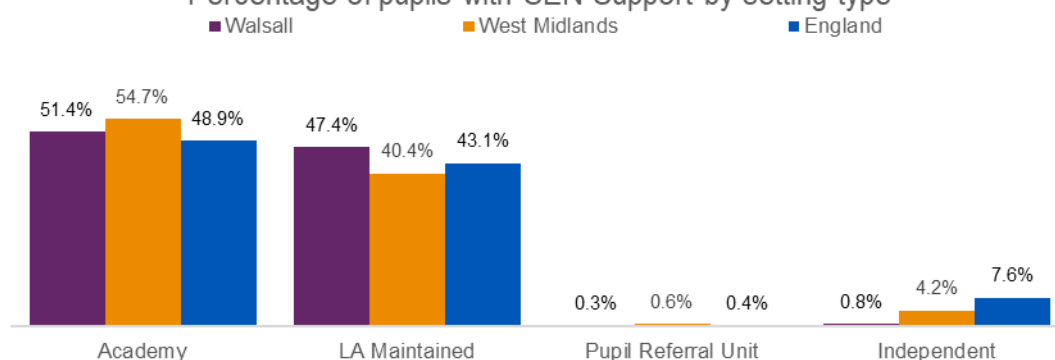
proportion of Walsall children attend academies compared with regional and national peers (56.2% and 50.4% respectively) and similarly a smaller proportion attend independent schools (4.3% in the West Midlands, 6.6% nationally)

Percentage of school children with SEND by setting type



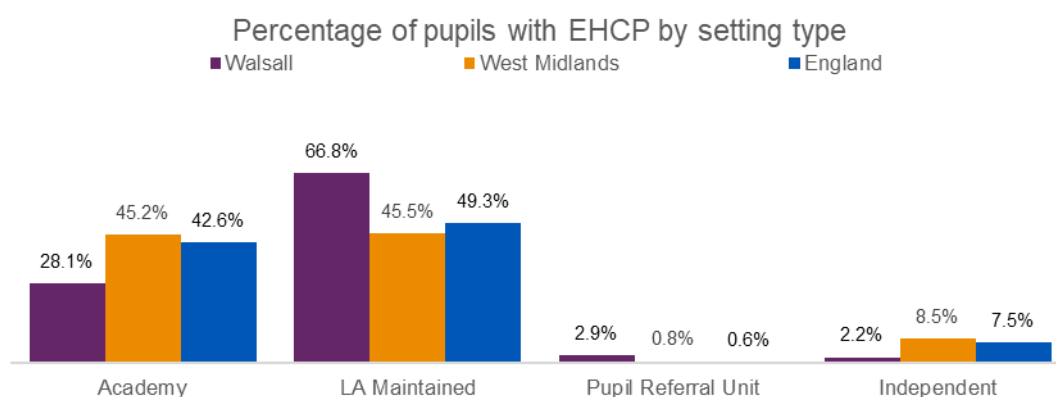
- 5.8. For children who are in receipt of SEN Support the proportion attending academies increases to 51.4%. The fact that a higher proportion of children with SEN Support attend academies than the overall pupil's population is in contrast to regional and national peers, where a smaller percentage of pupils with SEN Support attend academies than the overall population.
- 5.9. A much smaller percentage of pupils who attend independent schools in Walsall are in receipt of SEN Support, however, this is likely to be due to fewer children attending independent schools overall.

Percentage of pupils with SEN Support by setting type

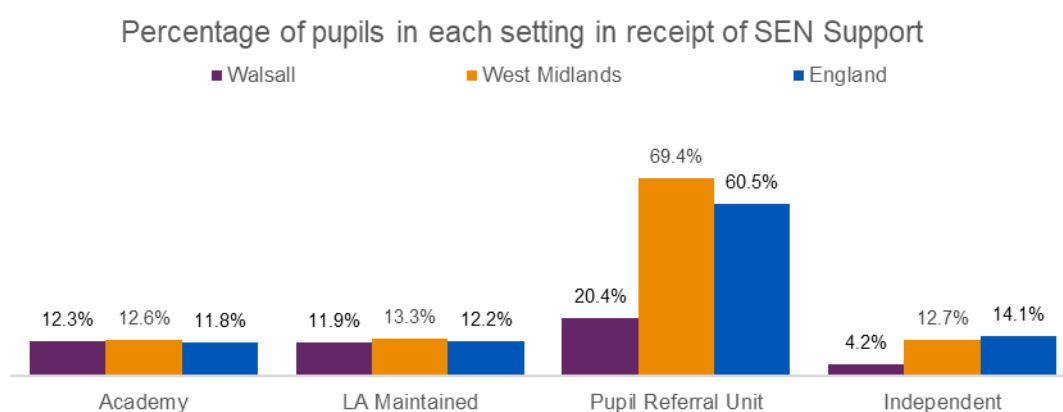
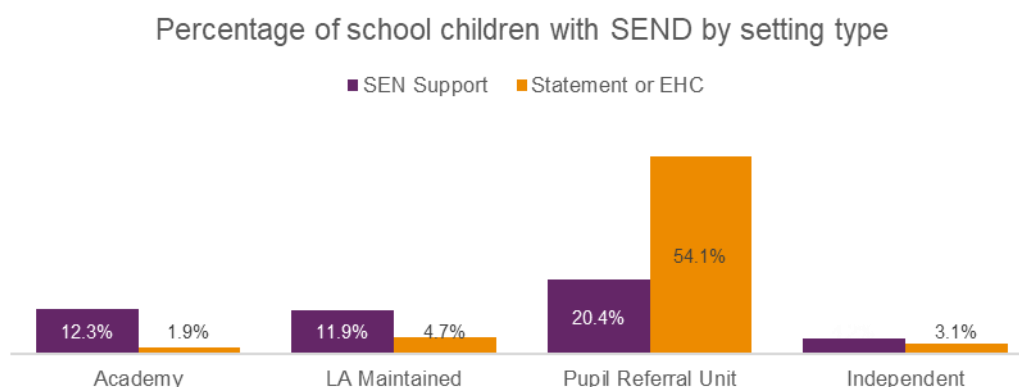


- 5.10. Only 28.1% of the pupils in Walsall who are in receipt of EHCPs attend academies in Walsall – the vast majority – 66.8% attend LA maintained schools – this is in significant contrast to regional and national peers where the proportions of pupils with an EHCP attending academies and LA schools is more balanced.

Analysis of SEND Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools



5.11. When the data is looked at in relation to the SEN need within each setting, it shows that the proportion of children in each setting who are in receipt of SEN Support is fairly balanced between academies, where 12.3% of pupils are in receipt of SEN Support compared with 11.9% in LA maintained schools. This is also in line with the pattern seen among regional and national peers, although a higher proportion of pupils in mainstream settings are in receipt of SEN Support regionally and nationally.

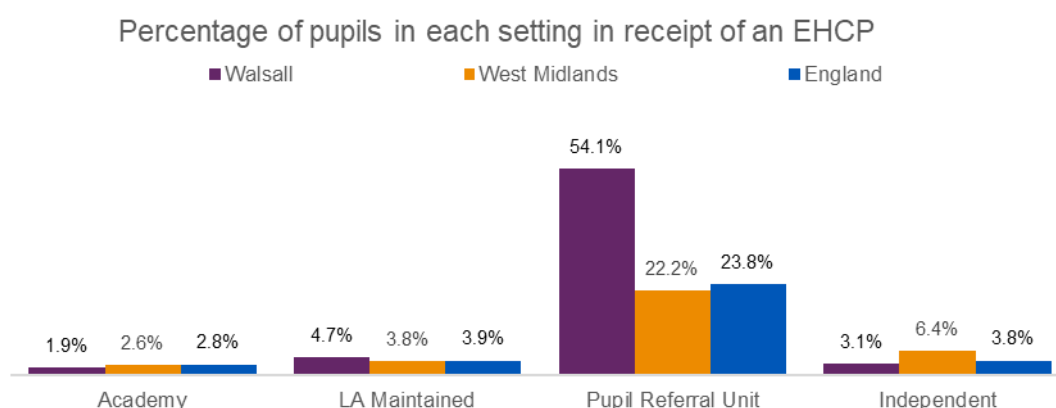


5.12. Conversely a much smaller percentage of pupils who attend academies are in receipt of an EHCP than the pupils who attend mainstream settings with just 1.9% of pupils who attend academies being in receipt of an EHCP compared with 4.7% of pupils who attend mainstream settings. Although this is likely to be due to special schools in Walsall being LA Maintained.

5.13. There is a similar disparity among regional and national peers, although a higher proportion of children who attend academies regionally and nationally have an EHCP –

Analysis of SEND Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools

this may however, be affected by a higher proportion of special schools being academies in other areas.

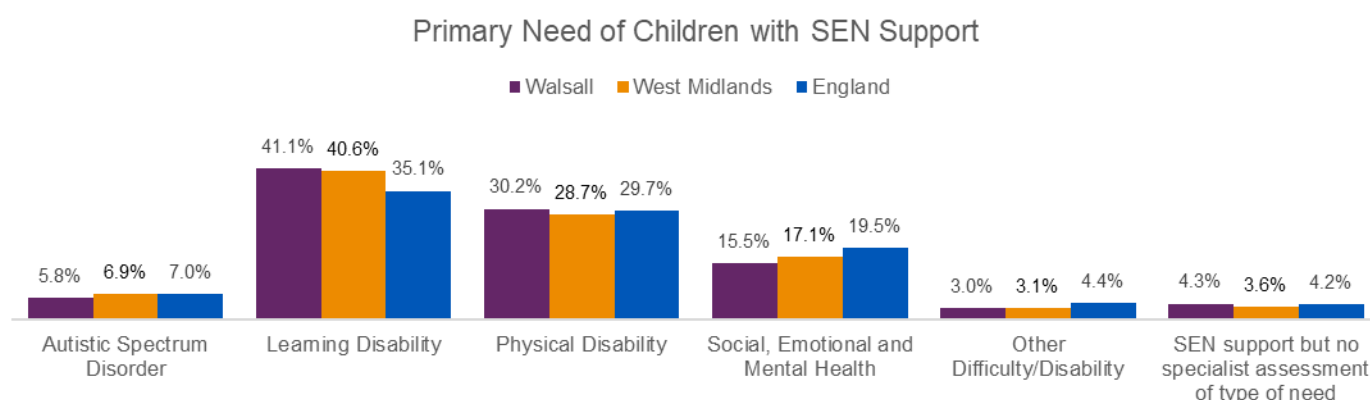


5.14. A significantly higher proportion of pupils in pupil referral units are in receipt of an EHCP compared with regional and national peers, while a much lower proportion are in receipt of SEND. While smaller numbers of pupils attending PRUs mean this data should be treated with some caution, it is an area that warrants further consideration, but is likely linked to historical non-early recognition of SEND which has led to more children with SEND being expelled from school and their EHCP assessments being completed when they have entered the PRU.

6. Primary Need

6.1. When primary needs are grouped into categories, the highest need for children in receipt of SEN Support in Walsall is Learning Disability at 41.1%. This is broadly in line with regional peers, although higher than the regional figure of 35.1%.

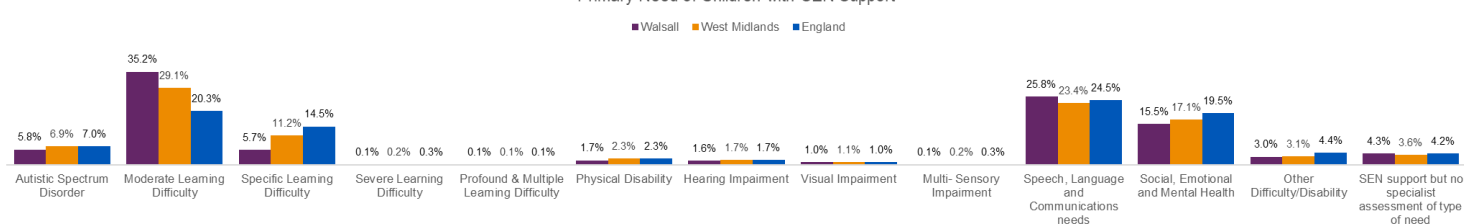
6.2. A far lower percentage of children in Walsall who are in receipt of SEN Support have a primary need of Social, Emotional and Mental Health. This is something that has been recognised and work is taking place with schools to ensure that children with SEMH are recognised and supported.



6.3. While overall the proportion of children with a learning disability primary need is in line with regional peers, when the needs are broken down in detail, it shows that there are a higher proportion of children with a moderate learning disability and significantly smaller proportion with a specific learning disability identified as their primary need. This needs to be explored in more detail to understand whether specific learning difficulties are going unrecognised or whether they are being mis-categorised as moderate learning disabilities.

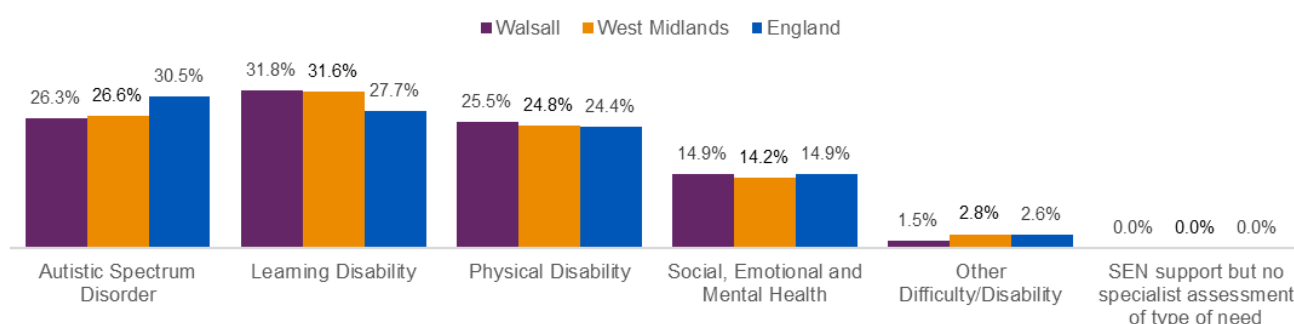
Analysis of SEND Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools

Primary Need of Children with SEN Support



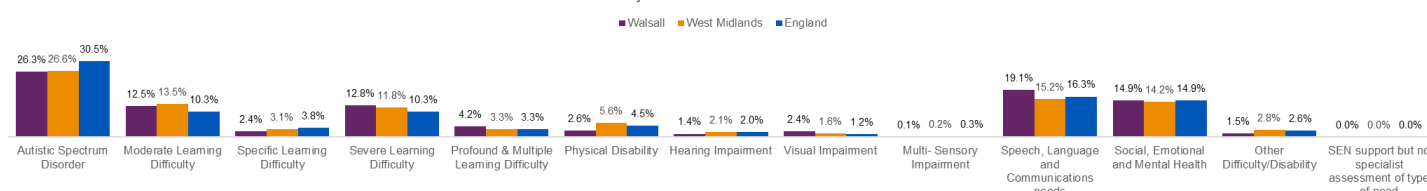
6.4. For children in receipt of and EHCP, learning disability again, accounts for the highest proportion, although for this group it is closely followed by autistic spectrum disorder and physical disability. In all primary needs there are slight differences with regional and national peers, however, all needs are broadly in line with comparators.

Primary Need of Children with EHCP



6.5. The detailed breakdown of need is also more in line with regional and national peers for children with an EHCP than it is for children in receipt of SEN Support although the proportion of children with speech language and communication needs is slightly higher while the proportion with a physical disability is slightly lower.

Primary Need of Children with EHCP



Demographics

7. Gender

7.1. Boys are significantly more likely to have an identified SEN Need than girls. While boys make up 51.2% of Walsall's school population they account for 64.7% of pupils in receipt of SEN Support and three quarters (74.2%) of pupils with an EHCP. This follows a similar pattern regionally and nationally.

7.2. There has been very little change in these proportions over the past six years and in fact, while the proportion of pupils in receipt of SEN Support that are female has increased slightly, the proportion in receipt of an EHCP has reduced. In January 2016 33.2% of the pupils in receipt of SEN Support and 27.7% of the pupils in receipt of an EHCP were female compared with 35.3% and 25.8% in January 2021.

Analysis of SEND Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools

Girl / Boy Comparison - January 2021		Walsall		West Midlands		England	
Phase	Total						
Primary Need	Total	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
No SEN		51.7%	48.3%	51.9%	48.1%	51.8%	48.2%
SEN Support		35.3%	64.7%	35.7%	64.3%	35.8%	64.2%
Statement or EHC		25.8%	74.2%	27.7%	72.3%	26.9%	73.1%
Total		48.8%	51.2%	49.0%	51.0%	49.0%	51.0%

Girl / Boy Comparison - January 2016		Walsall		West Midlands		England	
Phase	Total						
Primary Need	Total	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
No SEN		51.1%	48.9%	51.7%	48.3%	51.6%	48.4%
SEN Support		33.2%	66.8%	34.9%	65.1%	34.8%	65.2%
Statement or EHC		27.7%	72.3%	27.7%	72.3%	27.1%	72.9%
Total		48.7%	51.3%	48.9%	51.1%	49.0%	51.0%

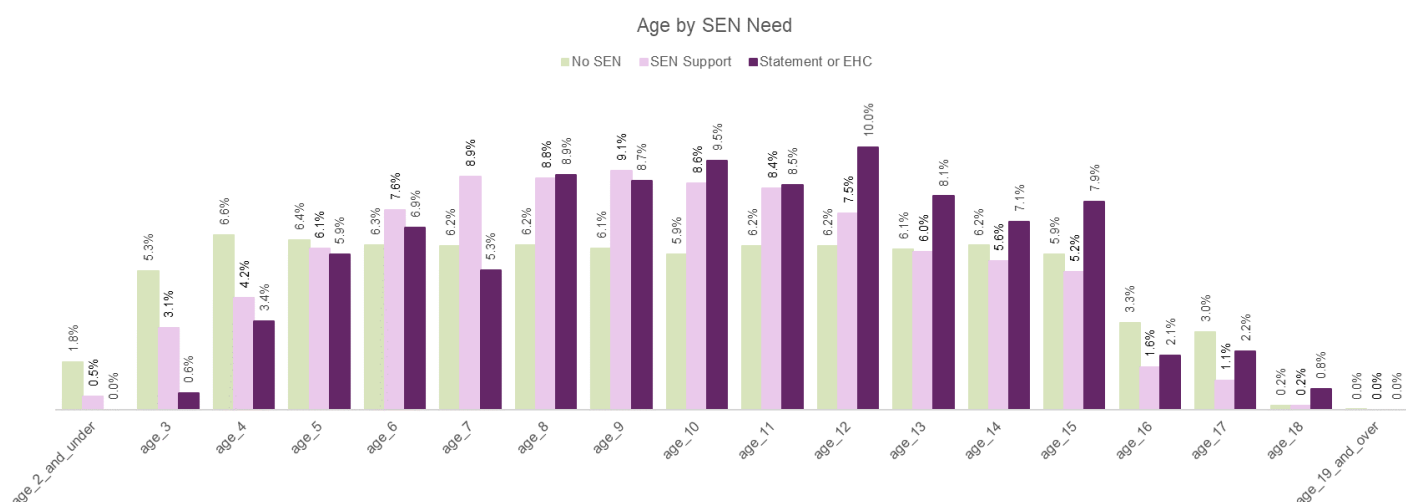
- 7.3. 8.8% of all girls are in receipt of SEN Support and 1.8% are in receipt of EHCPs, conversely 15.3% of boys are in receipt of SEN support and 4.8% are in receipt of EHCPs.
- 7.4. The number of girls in receipt of SEN Support has increased 31.8% over the past six years and the number in receipt of EHCPs has increased by 39.8%, for boys the increase in receipt of SEN Support has been slightly lower at 20.2%, however, the increase in receipt of EHCPs has been significantly higher at 54.2%.
- 7.5. In terms of setting, the proportion of both boys and girls with an EHCP who attend special schools is broadly similar at 41.4% for girls and 42.2% for boys. However the data for primary and secondary schools suggests that as well as boys being more likely to have a recognised SEN, their needs are also more likely to be recognised earlier. 55.8% of girls in receipt of SEN Support and 30% in receipt of EHCPs attend primary schools compared with 60.5% of boys in receipt of SEN Support and 33.1% in receipt of an EHCP.
- 7.6. For pupils in receipt of SEN Support, the top three primary needs for boys and girls are the same; Moderate Learning Disability (MLD), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH). However, once again these proportions differ. For girls 41.5% have MLD, 20.8% have SLCN and 13.4% have SEMH. For boys this is 31.8% with MLD, 28.6% with SLCN and 16.6% with SEMH.
- 7.7. The top three primary needs for pupils who are in receipt of EHCPs differs between groups. For boys, the top three needs are: Autism – 28.6%, SLCN – 19.3% and SEMH – 16.2%. For girls, the top three primary needs are: Autism – 19.5%, SLCN – 18.4% and MLD – 15.3%.

8. Age

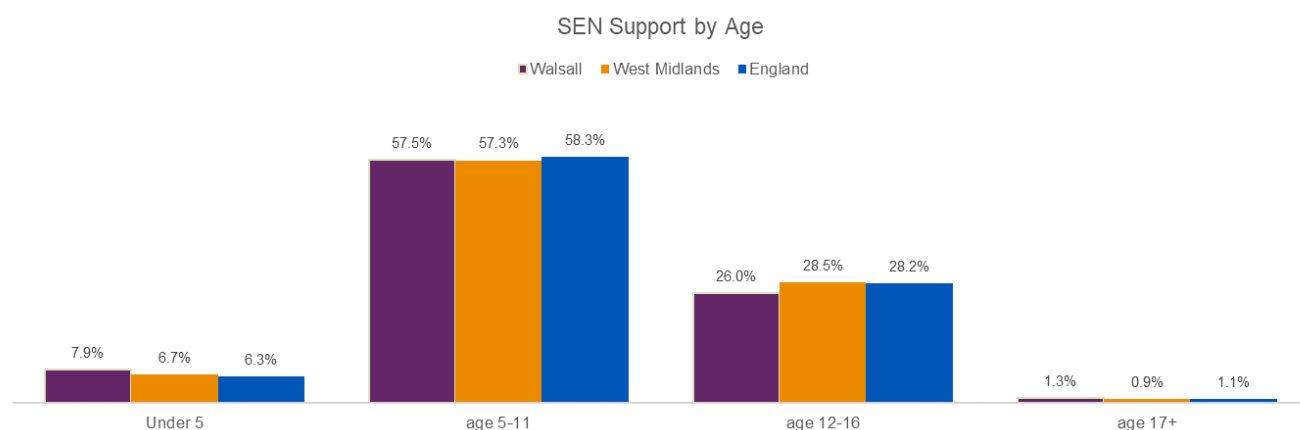
- 8.1. Up until the age of 10, there are higher proportions of children in receipt of SEN support than there are of children with an EHCP (with the exception of age 8 where there is a 0.1 percentage point difference between SEN support and children with an EHCP), however, from the age of 10 there are higher proportions of children in receipt of EHCPs. There are a number of factors which influence this including; needs increasing in severity as children get older and primary schools being able to support children in smaller, more intimate settings but being concerned about how children with additional needs will fare in secondary school. Questions around whether

Analysis of SEND Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools

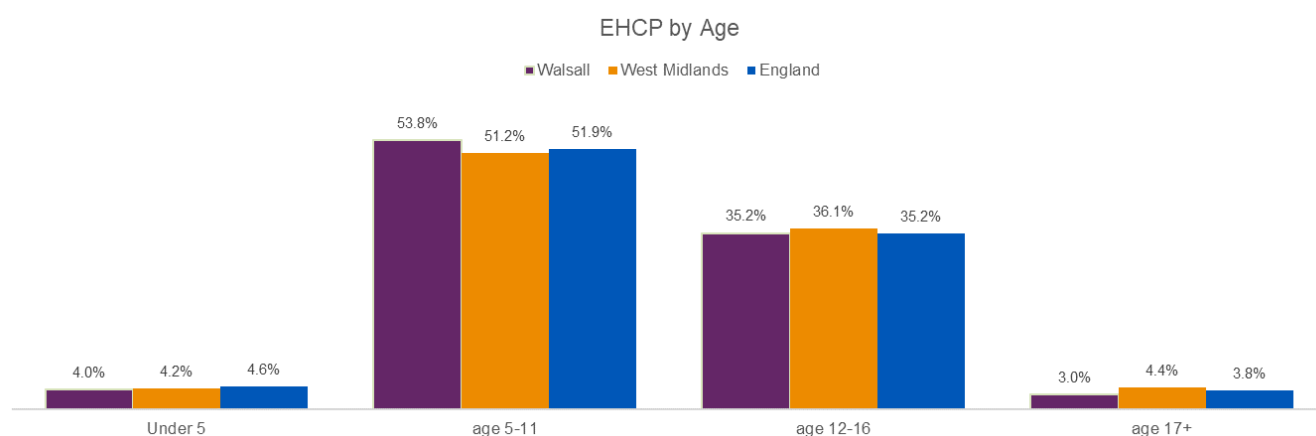
secondary schools are appropriately recognising and delivering SEN Support also need to be explored.



- 8.2. However, despite the differences in the age that children receive different types of support, the data indicates that children receiving support for SEND are younger in Walsall than among regional and national peers. What is not clear and needs to be explored further is whether this is because needs are recognised earlier or whether children whose needs may not become apparent until they are older are not receiving the support that they need.
- 8.3. Benchmarking indicates that Walsall has a lower percentage of older children in receipt of SEN Support, but a higher proportion of under 5's are receiving SEN Support than regional and national peers. For children in receipt of EHCPs, a higher proportion are aged 5-11 than comparators.

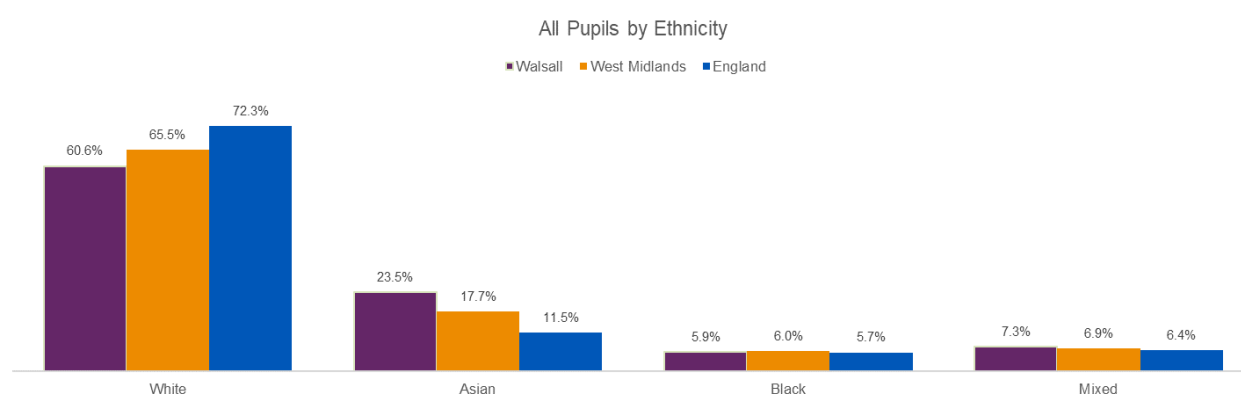


Analysis of SEND Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools



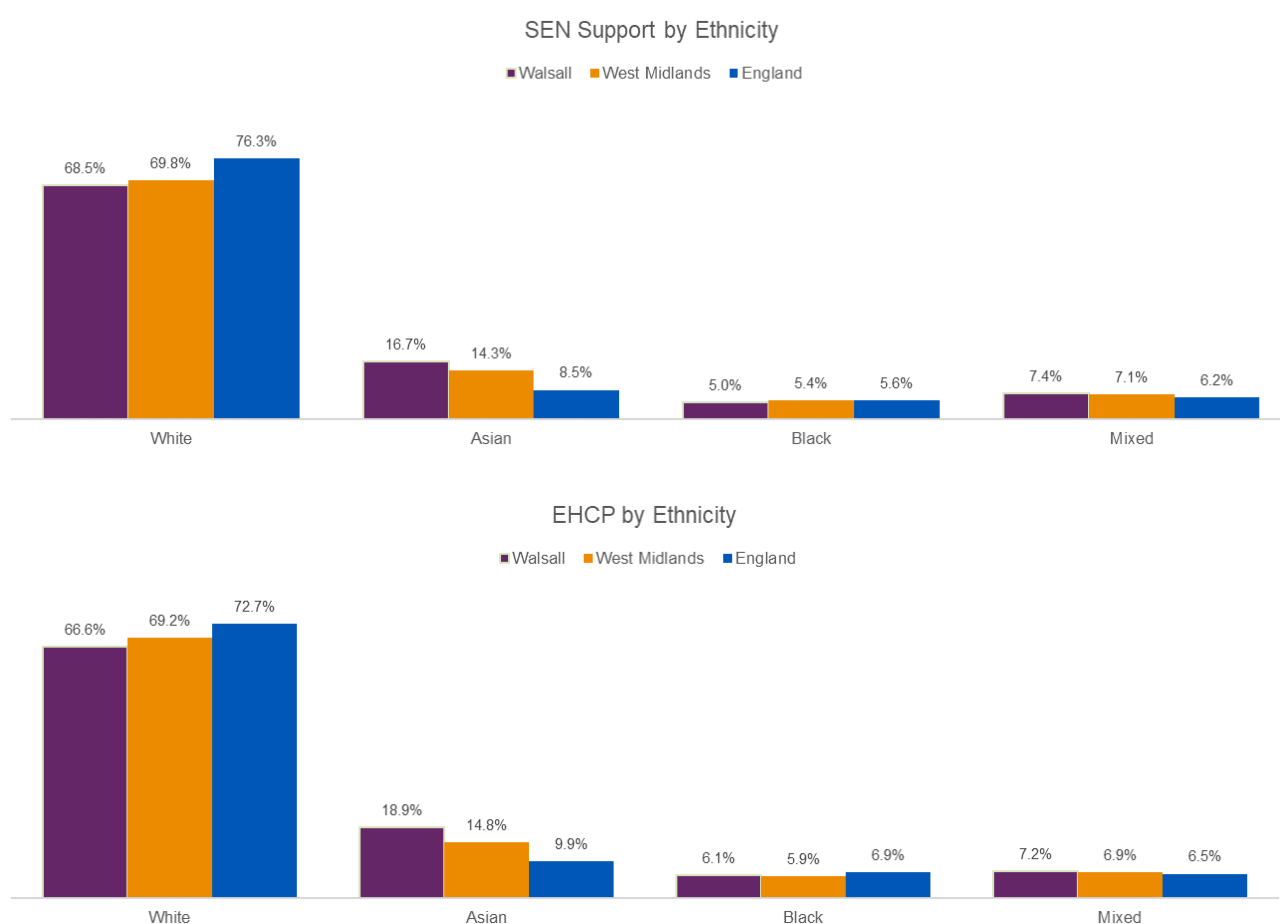
9. Ethnicity

- 9.1. In Walsall schools, 60.6% of pupils are from white ethnic groups, 23.5% are from Asian ethnic groups, 5.9% are from black ethnic groups and 7.3% are from mixed groups. A higher proportion of pupils are from BAME backgrounds than regionally and nationally, however, it is the fact that there are a much higher number of pupils from Asian groups which causes this difference – the proportion of pupils from Black groups and mixed ethnicity groups is broadly in line with the regional and national proportions.



- 9.2. For pupils in receipt of SEN Support, the proportion that are from mixed ethnicity groups are broadly in line with overall pupil numbers and the proportion from Black ethnicity backgrounds are only slightly lower at 5.0%. However, the biggest disproportionality is among Asian groups where only 16.7% of pupils in receipt of SEN Support are from Asian ethnicity backgrounds.
- 9.3. The gap between the overall proportion of pupils that are from Asian groups and the proportion from those groups in receipt of SEN Support is 6.8% points in Walsall. This is higher than the gap regionally at 3.4% points and nationally at 3% points.
- 9.4. There is slightly less disproportionality among pupils in receipt of EHCP where 18.9% of pupils are from Asian groups a gap of 4.6% points compared to 2.9% points regionally and 1.6% points nationally.

Analysis of SEND Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools

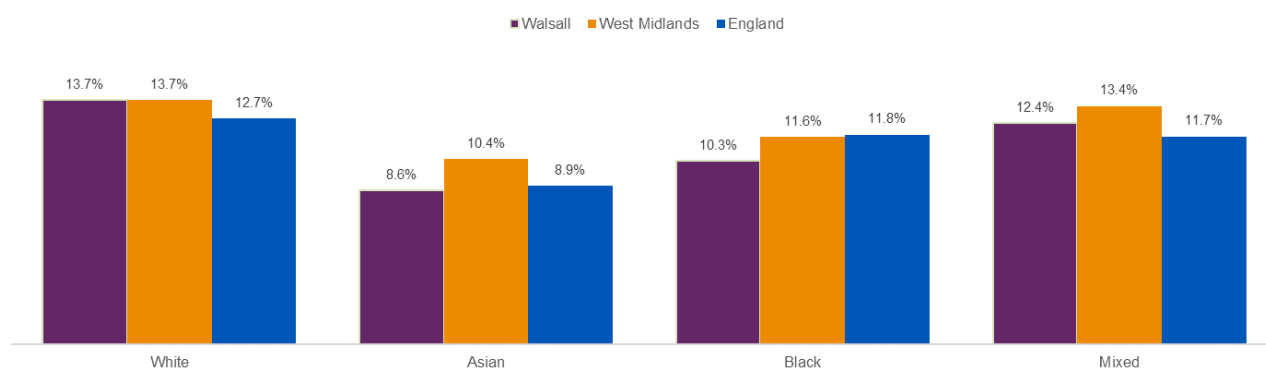


9.5. When the proportion of pupils in each ethnic group that have a SEN need are looked at, the disproportionality among each group becomes even more stark:

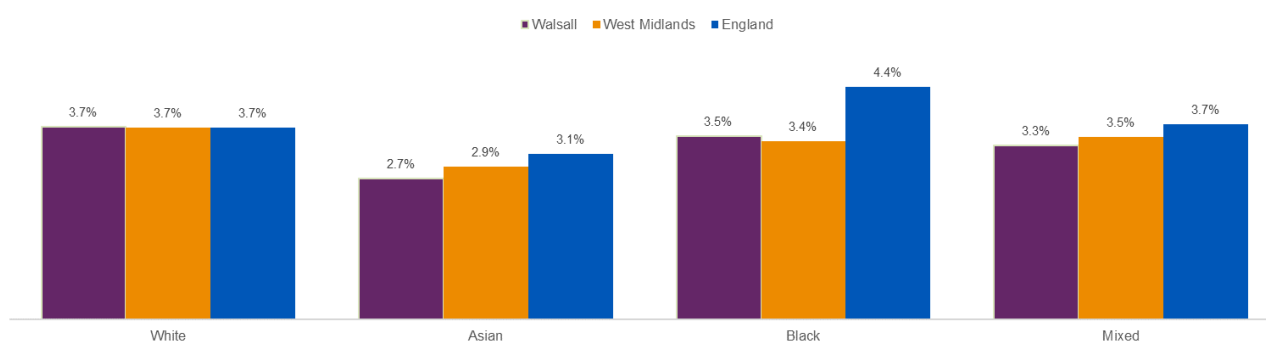
- 13.7% of pupils from white ethnic backgrounds are in receipt of SEN Support and 3.7% are in receipt of and EHCP. This is broadly on line with regional and national comparators.
- Only 8.6% of pupils from Asian ethnic backgrounds are in receipt of SEN Support and just 2.7% are in receipt of an EHCP – this is lower than Asian groups among both regional and national comparators.
- Similarly while the proportion of children in receipt of SEN Support and EHCPs from Black ethnic backgrounds are broadly in line with overall proportions of Black pupils, only 10.3% of students from Black ethnic backgrounds are in receipt of SEN support and 3.5% are in receipt of an EHCP. Again, this is lower than national and regional comparators for children in receipt of SEN Support. This is broadly in line with regional for those in receipt on an EHCP (3.4%), but lower when compared to 4.4% nationally.
- While still slightly lower than pupils from white ethnic backgrounds, a higher proportion of pupils from mixed ethnic backgrounds are in receipt of SEN Support at 12.4% and EHCPs at 3.3%. Although for SEN Support this remain below regional comparators and for EHCPs below both regional and national comparators.

Analysis of SEND Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools

Percentage of pupils by ethnicity that are in receipt of SEN Support



Percentage of pupils by ethnicity that are in receipt of an EHCP



10. English as an Additional Language

- 10.1. 23% of pupils in Walsall schools have a first language that is something other than English. This is higher than regional neighbours at 21.1% and national peers at 19.3%. However, a significantly lower proportion of pupils who are in receipt of SEN Support and EHCPs speak a language other than English and the gaps for these groups is larger than for comparators.
- 10.2. Just 18.6% of pupils in receipt of SEN Support speak English as an additional language compared to 18.0% regionally and 15.8% nationally. That is a gap between the proportion of pupils in receipt of SEN Support that are EAL and all pupils of 4.4% points in Walsall compared with 3.1% points regionally and 3.5% points nationally.
- 10.3. 16.9% of pupils in receipt of an EHCP speak English as an additional language compared to 15.6% regionally and 15.4% nationally. That is a gap between the proportion of pupils in receipt of EHCPs that are EAL and all pupils of 6.1% points in Walsall compared with 5.5% points regionally and 3.9% points nationally.

Analysis of SEND Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools

EAL / English Comparison - January 2021		Walsall		West Midlands		England	
Phase	Total						
Primary Need	Total	EAL	English	EAL	English	EAL	English
No SEN		23.9%	75.8%	21.8%	77.8%	19.9%	79.7%
SEN Support		18.6%	81.2%	18.0%	81.7%	15.8%	83.9%
Statement or EHC		16.9%	83.1%	15.6%	84.0%	15.4%	84.2%
Total		23.0%	76.7%	21.1%	78.5%	19.3%	80.3%

EAL / English Comparison - January 2016		Walsall		West Midlands		England	
Phase	Total						
Primary Need	Total	EAL	English	EAL	English	EAL	English
No SEN		20.6%	74.6%	19.1%	76.7%	18.5%	79.3%
SEN Support		18.5%	79.1%	17.8%	79.3%	16.6%	81.9%
Statement or EHC		17.8%	80.9%	15.2%	82.9%	14.6%	84.4%
Total		20.3%	75.2%	18.8%	77.2%	18.1%	79.8%

- 10.4. 9.8% of pupils whose first language is not English are in receipt of SEN Support and 2.4% are in receipt of an EHCP. This compares to 12.8% and 3.6% respectively of children whose first language is English.
- 10.5. The number of pupils who speak English as an Additional Language who are in receipt of support for SEN is also growing at a slower rate than for those whose first language is English. Between January 2016 and January 2021 the number of pupils who were EAL and in receipt of SEN Support increased by 24.9% and by 42.4% for those in receipt of an EHCP compared with 27.3% for SEN Support and 54.2% for EHCPs for those whose first language is English.
- 10.6. 39.5% of pupils with an EHCP who are EAL attend a special school compared with 42.5% of pupils who speak English as their first language. However, pupils who speak English as an Additional Language are more likely to receive support at primary school with 65.5% of those who are in receipt of SEN Support and 43.8% of those who are in receipt of EHCPs receiving support in primary settings compared with 57.3% and 30% of pupils who do not have EAL.
- 10.7. As with the gender split, the top three primary needs for both groups in receipt of SEN Support remains the same; MLD, SLCN and SEMH – however, pupils who speak English as their first language are significantly more likely to have their needs recognised as SEMH, whereas pupils who have EAL are more likely to have their needs recognised as SLCN (EAL pupils: MLD – 38.9%, SLCN – 35.6%, SEMH – 8.8%, non EAL pupils: MLD – 34.3%, SLCN – 23.6%, SEMH – 17%). Further exploration of this is needed to understand whether the speech language and communication needs are genuine SEND or in relation to language barriers and whether a focus on this is preventing pupils who are EAL from receiving support for SEMH.
- 10.8. The top three primary needs for pupils who are in receipt of EHCPs differs between groups. For pupils who speak English as their first language, the top three needs are: Autism – 28.2%, SLCN – 18.3% and SEMH – 17.1%. For pupils who are EAL, the top three primary needs are: SLCN – 22.4%, Severe Learning Disability – 20.7% and Autism – 16.7%. Again, this raises a number of questions around whether language barriers are preventing the effective diagnosis of Autism among pupils who are EAL and whether SEMH needs are being appropriately supported (SEMh as a primary need among pupils in receipt of an EHCP is just 4.0%).

Analysis of SEND Prevalence and Need in Walsall Schools

11. Free School Meals

11.1. 29.6% of all pupils are in receipt of free school meals (FSM). This is higher than comparators where 24.5% of pupils regionally receive FSM and 20.8% nationally. The proportion of pupils who receive FSM are also growing at a faster rate than regionally and nationally with an increase of 9.9% points between January 2016 and January 2021 compared with 7.5% points regionally and 6.5% points nationally.

11.2. However, children who have an SEN need are almost twice as likely to be in receipt of free schools meals with 45.2% of pupils who receive SEN Support also receiving FSM and 47% of pupils with an EHCP.

FSM / Non-FSM Comparison - January 2021		Walsall		West Midlands		England	
Phase	Total						
Primary Need	Total	FSM	No FSM	FSM	No FSM	FSM	No FSM
No SEN		26.7%	73.3%	21.8%	78.2%	18.2%	81.8%
SEN Support		45.2%	54.8%	37.6%	62.4%	34.3%	65.7%
Statement or EHC		47.0%	53.0%	41.0%	59.0%	38.0%	62.0%
Total		29.6%	70.4%	24.5%	75.5%	20.8%	79.2%

FSM / Non-FSM Comparison - January 2016		Walsall		West Midlands		England	
Phase	Total						
Primary Need	Total	FSM	No FSM	FSM	No FSM	FSM	No FSM
No SEN		17.7%	82.3%	14.6%	85.4%	12.1%	87.9%
SEN Support		33.1%	66.9%	29.0%	71.0%	26.3%	73.7%
Statement or EHC		37.1%	62.9%	34.0%	66.0%	31.6%	68.4%
Total		19.7%	80.3%	17.0%	83.0%	14.3%	85.7%

11.3. Overall, 18.5% of pupils in receipt of FSM also receive SEN Support and 5.3% are in receipt of an EHCP compared with 9.4% and 2.5% of their peers who do not receive free school meals.

11.4. The number of pupils in receipt of free school meals that also receive SEN Support has grown by 69.2% in the past six years and the number in receipt of an EHCP has grown by 90.4%. This is significantly higher growth than the proportion of pupils who do not receive free school meals where the number in receipt on an SEN Support has grown by just 1.7% and the number in receipt of an EHCP by 26.5%.

11.5. 47.1% of pupils with an EHCP who receive FSM attend a special school compared with 37.4% of pupils who do not receive FSM. However, pupils who receive FSM are, like children who speak EAL are more likely to receive support at primary school with 63.2% of those who are in receipt of SEN Support and 29.6% of those who are in receipt of EHCPs receiving support in primary settings compared with 55.3% and 34.7% of pupils who do not receive FSM. The proportion of non-FSM pupils with an EHCP in primary school is higher, however, this is offset by the higher proportion of pupils in receipt of FSM who attend a special school.

11.6. As with the gender and EAL split, the top three primary needs for both groups in receipt of SEN Support remains the same; MLD, SLCN and SEMH – however, pupils who are in receipt of FSM are more likely to have their needs recognised as MLD (FSM pupils: MLD – 39.8%, SLCN – 22.8%, SEMH – 17.8%, non FSM pupils: MLD – 31.4%, SLCN – 28.4%, SEMH – 13.6%).

11.7. The top three primary needs for pupils who are in receipt of EHCPs differs between groups. For pupils who are in receipt of FSM, the top three needs are: Autism – 25.7%, SLCN – 17.3% and SEMH – 18.0%. For pupils who not in receipt of FSM, the top three primary needs are: Autism – 26.8%, SLCN– 20.6% and Severe Learning Disability – 13.4%. SEMH as a primary need among this group is just 12.1%.