



Free School Meals in Warwickshire Schools

January 2019

This report reviews Free School Meals in Warwickshire, summarising the work undertaken to improve take up, current data and arising issues.

1. Cost of School Meals

The cost of school meals are set by each school.

Primary schools in Warwickshire charge around £2.20 per day, approximately £418 a year. Schools who use County Caterers usually include a small charge to cover the administration costs to the school of collecting dinner money.

Secondary schools provide a cafeteria type menu where pupils can choose from individually priced food items. County Caterers suggest £2.50 is sufficient or £3.50-£3.75 to cover the purchase of a snack at morning break. Costs across the year can range between £475-£712.

2. Universal entitlement to school meals for infant pupils

All Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in state-funded schools have free school meals. This is known as "universal entitlement". It was introduced by the Government in September 2014 with the aim to improve academic attainment and save families money.

3. Free School Meals (FSM)

Families who receive the following benefits are eligible for Free School Meals.

- Income support
- Income-based job seeker's allowance (JSA)
- Income-related employment and support allowance (ESA)
- Guarantee element of state pension credit
- Universal credit (with an annual income of less than £7,400)
- Both income-based and contribution-based JSA/ESA if you receive the same amount for both. You should also qualify if you receive both but the Income-based amount is greater, but not if the contribution-based amount is greater
- Families who are awarded Child Tax Credit and have an annual income, as assessed by HMRC, not in excess of £16,190 are also eligible to claim free school meals providing there is no entitlement to Working Tax Credit (unless in respect of a 4-week 'run-on').

In Warwickshire 10.7% (8,938) of pupils were eligible and claiming FSM in October 2018 (primary 11.3%, secondary 9.4%). This compares nationally to 13.6% in January 2018 (primary 13.7%, secondary 12.4%). This is the lowest proportion nationally since 2001, when the department began



collecting pupil level information¹. The decline is related to there being fewer parents than in previous years claiming the benefits which would make their children eligible for free school meals.

3.1 DfE on line checking system

LA's signed up in 2016 to the DfE online checking system. This confirms or denies eligibility to claim free school meals: it does not give any other information. For those currently in receipt of either Universal Credit or the 4-week run on of Working Tax Credit the system will not automatically be able to determine eligibility and proof will need to be sent to the authority.

The online checking system continuously checks eligibility status and inform parents and the school of any changes.

4. Pupil Premium (PP) Payments 2018/19

The Pupil Premium was introduced in April 2011 and is allocated to schools to help disadvantaged pupils of all abilities perform better, and close the gap between them and their peers. Schools receive PP funding for each pupil in receipt of FSM. There are three different elements – deprivation, service children and looked after children.

Parents of pupils in receipt of universal free school meals should still apply for FSMs so PP is allocated for their child.

In the 2018 to 2019 financial year, schools will receive the following funding for each pupil registered as eligible for free school meals (FSM) at any point in the last 6 years:

- £1,320 for pupils in Reception to Year 6
- £935 for pupils in Year 7 to Year 11
- Schools will receive £2,300 for any pupil identified as having left local authority care as a result of adoption; a special guardianship order; a child arrangements order (previously known as a residence order); who has been in local authority care for 1 day or more; recorded as both eligible for FSM in the last 6 years and as being looked after (or as having left local authority care). For pupils who attract the £2,300 rate, the [virtual school head](#) of the local authority that looks after the pupil will manage the funding.

More information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-conditions-of-grant-2018-to-2019>

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5. Warwickshire pupil premium funding

The PP allocation for Warwickshire County Council 2018/19 is **£17,615,875** (14,479 pupils). This is made up of the following:

Type of PP	No pupils	% pupils	PP funding
Primary deprivation PP	7,179	16.0%	£9,476,280
Secondary deprivation PP	5,697	18.9%	£5,326,695
Service Child Pupil Premium	437		£131,100
Post LAC	667		£1,534,100
LAC	499		£1,147,700
Total	14,479		£17,615,875

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-conditions-of-grant-2018-to-2019>

The proportion of national state funded schools pupils eligible for the deprivation PP are 23.2% primary schools and 28.2% secondary schools.

6. FSM Projects in Warwickshire

The Closing the Gap board was established in January 2015. The original strategy set out work streams one of which was 'FSM, Priority Families and Family Learning' with one of its aims being to 'maximise the levels of Pupil Premium available to all schools by improving FSM registration rates in the county'. The board receives updates from the Communities Directorate where project are funded to improve take up of FSMs.

2012-2016

Families from schools in Northern Warwickshire and East Warwickshire were targeted for benefits health checks. Between 2012-2016 £1.1m additional Pupil Premium funding in schools was secured.

May 2016

A Free School Meals Project was established as part of the Child Poverty Strategy. DfE research estimated that 29% of Warwickshire residents who are eligible to claim FSM do not do so. The Free School Meal Project sourced data from districts and boroughs looking at Housing Benefit and Child tax credit claimants. This was mapped against school catchment areas and FSM data from the School Admissions team. This enabled targeted work to families rather than generically through schools.

Between April 2014 and May 2016 successes were:

- The Lunch for Free Project advised 439 clients
- Advised on 229 separate benefit issues
- Secured just under £105,000 for schools in Pupil Premiums (£105k is only an annualised figure and is actually greater when you apply the 6 year principle)
- Just over £366,000 secured in additional benefits for families in Warwickshire. This figure includes £65,183 of benefit gains attributed to a previous FSM project in Rugby which had not previously been reported.



- At the time of the report the figures were expected to rise as there were still a significant number of cases awaiting benefit decisions and there were further referrals to the project, particularly in the Rugby area as work only started there at the beginning of 2016.

June 2017

The Communities Directorate worked with community centres etc to provide Holiday hunger projects over the summer.

July 2018

Warwickshire Welfare Rights Advice Service (WWRAS) ran a County Free School Meals Project in 2017-18. The project encourages take up of benefits within schools. Pupil premium gains in financial year are: £253,770. Work in Stratford Upon Avon School has been particularly successful gaining £95,370.

2018-2019

Warwickshire Financial Inclusion Partnership has been given some funding for Financial inclusion projects including FSM projects delivered locally by the Districts and Boroughs. Financial Inclusion Officers are due to start work at the end of January 2019.

7. Automated FSM enrolment

There has been a long term desire from schools, councillors and the Local Authority to establish automated FSM enrolment. The FSM project identified that unitary Councils appeared to be more successful in increasing FSM claimants through better shared data and application processes. Coventry was successful in developing an automated system. However since GDPR and restrictions on sharing data automated systems are no longer feasible and the automated process has stopped.

The DWP are looking to see if they are able to link activity to the Universal Credit Process with the work coaches.

As a two tier authority Warwickshire has further complications with Revenue and Benefits teams in boroughs and Schools Admissions in the County.

8. Online FSM applications in Warwickshire

Admissions software (Synergy) has been developed as part of the Digital by Design project. In July 2018 a FSM on line application process was developed which is completed at the point of applying for school or Early Years places on the parent platform for school admissions. The on line eligibility checker is available alongside the application process. This will go live in May 2019.

9. Impact of universal entitlement to school meals for KS1

The introduction of free meals for all children under 7 means parents often fail to register their eligibility for means-tested meals as their children automatically receive free food.

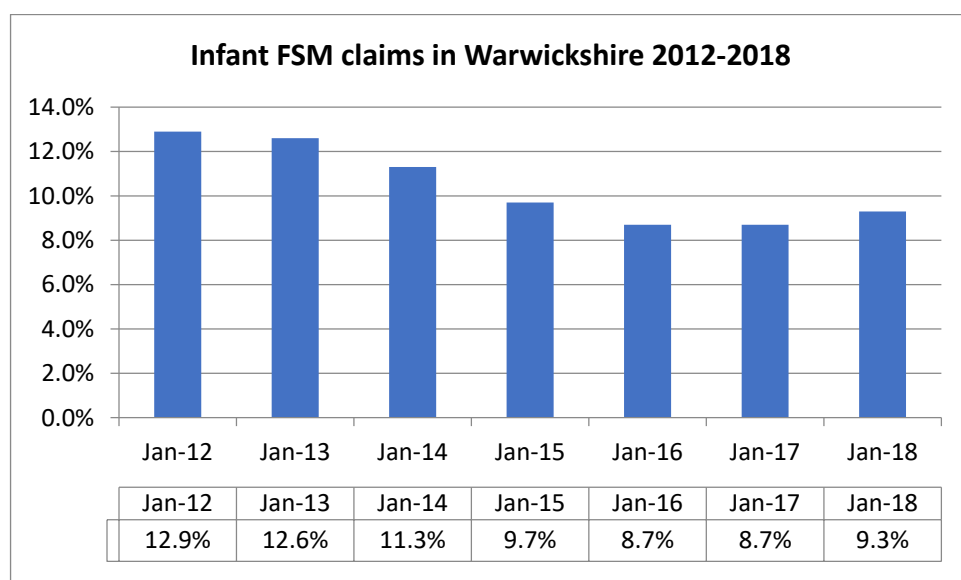
Warwickshire Insight Service (previously Business Commissioning Service) ran UIFSM (universal infant free school meal) & FSM comparisons up until January 18. These were run on an adhoc basis and used by the school funding team for funding purposes and by others, looking at uptake of FSM



and the impact of UIFSM (introduced in September 2014). Data is available from January 2012 to January 2018.

Up until January 2018 WCC obtained copies of school census files directly from academies/free schools. Due to the introduction of GDPR WCC were no able to access these and had to revert to downloading Academy/free school data directly from the DFE. These do not share UIFSM numbers and reports can no longer be produced.

The following chart shows there was a 1.6% decline in the proportion of infant FSM claims in primary schools between January 2014 and January 2015. The decline continued for the following two years to 8.7% in January 2017 reflecting the full impact (when first introduced pupils moving into year 1 or 2 will have previously claimed FSM in Reception or Year 1). **A drop of 2.6% equates to approximately 540 infant pupils meaning schools are missing out on £712,800 per year of pupil premium funding. Across three years in infant classes this equates to an estimated to £2.1m in lost pupil premium.**



Source: Insight Service

Schools weekly July 2017 reported that FSM take-up nationally has fallen to the lowest level since records began, with experts unable to explain either the overall drop or the local discrepancies. The data is also inconclusive about the impact of the introduction of universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) in 2014. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/investigation-schools-face-postcode-lottery-in-free-school-meals-take-up/>

However the previous year Schools Weekly, July 2016 reported that the dip in primary pupils registering for free school meals is twice that for secondary pupils, pointing towards universal free school meals as a factor in the change. Parents who fail to register their child for free meals also pose a problem for school budgets, as the pupil premium – a cash bonus paid to schools – is based on the number of FSM-eligible pupils. At that time Frank Field, the Labour MP, asked parliament to consider automatically registering eligible pupils for free school meals using cross-linked taxation or housing benefits data. The law had cross-party support but it ran out of time after its second reading was continuously delayed by parliament's outstanding bills and limited days for debates in its last session.



10. Under claiming FSM

Warwickshire

Estimates by DfE in 2016 suggest 29% of Warwickshire residents who are eligible to claim FSM do not do so.

National

There is no ongoing annual official estimate of pupils eligible, but not claiming free school meals. In 2013 The Department for Education published [Pupils not claiming free school meals](#). In it they compared data on benefit receipt and FSM figures and estimated that nationally around **200,000** children aged 4-15 'appear to be entitled' but were not claiming FSM. This implies that around **14%** of pupils entitled to FSM were not claiming them. This rate was highest for those at either end of this age range with 21% of 4 year olds and 22% of 15 year olds. It was also higher in less deprived areas; 23% in the South East and Eastern regions and more than 30% in some local authorities. 16 local authorities had 'apparent' full registration of FSM pupils.

11. FSM rates in Warwickshire

Number of pupils on roll by Year Group as at Oct 2018, Warwickshire

	Total number of pupils on roll	Number of pupils eligible for a Free School Meals on Census day	% of pupils eligible for a Free School Meals on Census day based on NOR
COUNTY	83188	8938	10.7
North Warwickshire	10911	1240	11.4
Nuneaton and Bedworth	18464	2748	14.9
Rugby	16494	2097	12.7
Stratford upon Avon	19431	1405	7.2
Warwick	17888	1448	8.1
Primary	33995	3690	10.9
Primary Academy	11287	1419	12.6
Primary Free	490	41	8.4
Primary Total	45772	5150	11.3
Secondary	4299	423	9.8
Secondary Academy	29804	2726	9.1
Secondary Free	526	99	18.8
Secondary Total	34629	3248	9.4
All Through	973	107	11.0
Special	460	97	21.1
Special Academy	969	312	32.2
Special Free	55	21	38.2
Special Total	1484	430	29.0

Source: Insight Service

- Primary schools have higher proportions of FSMs than secondary, 11.3% vs 9.4%.
- By district highest proportions of FSMs are seen in Nuneaton and Bedworth at 14.9%. Lowest proportions are in Stratford at 7.2%.



FSM by district – top 5 primary schools with highest proportions, Oct 2018

District	School Name	Total number of pupils on roll	Number of pupils eligible for a Free School Meals on Census day	% of pupils eligible for a Free School Meals on Census day based on NOR
North Warwickshire	Racemeadow Primary Academy	294	79	26.9%
	Outwoods Primary School	436	69	15.8%
	Michael Drayton Junior School	525	64	12.2%
	Nathaniel Newton Infant School	263	39	14.8%
	Arley Primary School	217	35	16.1%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	Camp Hill Primary School	445	156	35.1%
	St. Michael's C.Of E, Bedworth	430	121	28.1%
	Stockingford Primary School	672	185	27.5%
	All Saints C.Of E, Nuneaton	238	63	26.5%
	Goodyers End Primary School	390	97	24.9%
Rugby	Oakfield Primary School	401	132	32.9%
	Rokeby Primary School	204	56	27.5%
	Northlands Primary School	246	62	25.2%
	Henry Hinde Infant School	174	43	24.7%
	Henry Hinde Junior School	244	52	21.3%
Stratford	Lighthorne Heath Primary School	52	14	26.9%
	Thomas Jolyffe Primary School	351	75	21.4%
	Loxley C.Of E. Community Primary	33	6	18.2%
	Bishopton Primary School	220	38	17.3%
	Salford Priors CofE Academy	47	8	17.0%
Warwick	Lillington Nursery and Primary School	315	79	25.1%
	Whitnash Primary School	228	51	22.4%
	Kingsway Community Primary School	202	45	22.3%
	Our Lady & St. Teresa's Catholic	170	30	17.6%
	Heathcote Primary School	98	15	15.3%

Source: Insight Service, also available <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>

7.3 FSM by Secondary schools

School Name	District	Total number of pupils on roll	Number of pupils eligible for a Free School Meals on Census day	% of pupils eligible for a Free School Meals on Census day based on NOR
The Nuneaton Academy	Nuneaton & Bedworth	630	142	22.5%
Harris CofE Academy	Rugby	640	136	21.3%
Campion School	Warwick	749	148	19.8%
Rugby Free Secondary School	Rugby	526	99	18.8%
The Avon Valley School	Rugby	1096	205	18.7%
Hartshill School	North Warwickshire	996	181	18.2%
Nicholas Chamberlaine School	Nuneaton & Bedworth	1109	184	16.6%
The George Eliot School	Nuneaton & Bedworth	851	130	15.3%



The Queen Elizabeth Academy	North Warwickshire	625	89	14.2%
Etone College	Nuneaton & Bedworth	783	110	14.0%
Bilton School	Rugby	954	130	13.6%
Ash Green School	Nuneaton & Bedworth	972	130	13.4%
Trinity Catholic School	Warwick	566	73	12.9%
Shipston High School	Stratford on Avon	515	55	10.7%
Stratford-upon-Avon School	Stratford on Avon	1413	150	10.6%
Alcester Academy	Stratford on Avon	539	57	10.6%
Kingsbury School	North Warwickshire	704	68	9.7%
The Coleshill School	North Warwickshire	1210	110	9.1%
Kineton High School	Stratford on Avon	842	75	8.9%
Ashlawn School	Rugby	1841	154	8.4%
St. Thomas More Catholic School	Nuneaton & Bedworth	988	80	8.1%
Studley High School	Stratford on Avon	716	52	7.3%
The Polesworth School	North Warwickshire	1532	111	7.2%
Henley-In-Arden School	Stratford on Avon	605	43	7.1%
St. Benedict's Catholic High School	Stratford on Avon	772	48	6.2%
Myton School	Warwick	1595	97	6.1%
North Leamington School	Warwick	1386	80	5.8%
Higham Lane School	Nuneaton & Bedworth	1421	76	5.3%
Southam College	Stratford on Avon	1665	69	4.1%
Kenilworth School	Warwick	1795	70	3.9%
Rugby High School	Rugby	871	31	3.6%
Lawrence Sheriff School	Rugby	929	25	2.7%
Alcester Grammar School	Stratford on Avon	1229	23	1.9%
Stratford Girls' Grammar School	Stratford on Avon	818	10	1.2%
King Edward VI School	Stratford on Avon	746	7	0.9%

Source: Insight Service also available <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>

8. Schools with unexpectedly low FSM

The IDACI quintile is the 2015 Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index. The deprivation of provider is based on the mean of deprivation indices associated with the home post code of pupils attending school rather than the local of the school. Divided into quintiles, 5 most deprived, 1 least deprived.



The following table shows Warwickshire schools in the 4th or 5th IDACI quintiles with % of FSM.

School Name	Phase	District	Total number of pupils on roll	No of pupils eligible for a FSM on Census day	% of pupils eligible for a FSM on Census day based on NOR	IDACI quintile
Camp Hill Primary School	Primary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	445	156	35.1%	5
St. Michael's C.Of E. Primary	Primary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	430	121	28.1%	4
Stockingford Primary School	Primary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	672	185	27.5%	5
Rokeby Primary School	Primary	Rugby	204	56	27.5%	4
Lighthorne Heath Primary School	Primary	Stratford on Avon	52	14	26.9%	4
All Saints C.Of E, Nuneaton	Primary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	238	63	26.5%	5
Lillington Nursery and Primary	Primary	Warwick	315	79	25.1%	4
Park Lane Primary School	Primary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	380	92	24.2%	5
St. Anne's Catholic Primary School	Primary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	201	46	22.9%	5
The Nuneaton Academy	Secondary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	630	142	22.5%	4
Kingsway Community Primary	Primary	Warwick	202	45	22.3%	4
Riverside Academy	Primary	Rugby	236	50	21.2%	4
Queens CofE Academy	Primary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	322	64	19.9%	4
Race Leys Junior School	Primary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	232	45	19.4%	4
Race Leys Infant School	Primary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	172	33	19.2%	4
Croft Junior School	Primary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	325	60	18.5%	4
Hartshill School	Secondary	North Warwickshire	996	181	18.2%	4
Nursery Hill Primary School	Primary	North Warwickshire	137	24	17.5%	4
Abbey C.Of E. Infant School	Primary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	215	37	17.2%	4
Wembrook Primary School	Primary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	673	115	17.1%	4
Keresley Newland Primary	Primary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	163	27	16.6%	4
Middlemarch School	Primary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	201	33	16.4%	4
Arley Primary School	Primary	North Warwickshire	217	35	16.1%	4
The George Eliot School	Secondary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	851	130	15.3%	4
Nathaniel Newton Infant School	Primary	North Warwickshire	263	39	14.8%	4
Hurley Primary School	Primary	North Warwickshire	203	30	14.8%	4
Glendale Infant School	Primary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	265	39	14.7%	4
All Saints Bedworth C.Of E. Primary	Primary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	234	33	14.1%	4
Etone College	Secondary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	783	110	14.0%	4
St. Patrick's Catholic Primary	Primary	Warwick	188	23	12.2%	4
Michael Drayton Junior School	Primary	North Warwickshire	525	64	12.2%	4
Shrubland Street	Primary	Warwick	220	22	10.0%	4
Chilvers Coton Community Infant	Primary	Nuneaton&Bedworth	204	10	4.9%	4

IDACI Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/monthly-management-information-ofsted-school-inspections-outcomes>

FSM source: Insight Service

Shaded cells show those schools with below county average FSM despite being in the 4th IDACI quintile (primary 11.3%, secondary 9.4%).



9. Summary

- Although dated information it is believed there is significant under claiming of FSM in Warwickshire.
- The introduction of universal infant FSM led to a drop in infant FSM claimants in primary schools of between 2%-3% in Warwickshire equating to approximate loss of £712,800 in pupil premium funding per year.
- Projects working directly with schools to increase take up of FSM have seen significant successes but are subject to variable project funding.
- Automated FSM enrolment is not currently possible due to GDPR

10. Recommendations

- Consider targeting schools in the 4th IDACI quintile with below or close to the county average FSM claimants.
- Raise the profile of FSM claiming with the promotion of the on line application process which is expected to go live in May 2019.

Sophie Thompson, January 2019
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