

STAR CHAMBER SCRUTINY BOARD
Note of meeting, Thursday 1st October 2015
Extract from minutes

SC Ref 795: Changes to the School and EY Census

The department indicated that final approval to this business case was not necessarily expected in the meeting but that the proposal would need to be finalised by the November meeting to meet Census deadlines.

It was explained that the reason for the business case was to identify patterns of migration and how that affects the sector through the collection of three new data items: nationality, country of birth and proficiency in English. The Board indicated that ethnicity is already collected but the department stated the need to be able to break this down further and considered that the benefit will outweigh the burden to collect.

There will be no new requirement for evidence of nationality / country of birth to be seen by schools but schools should continue to use existing good practises and methods to undertake any checking.

It was agreed that schools would be notified as early as possible of these changes with an intention to introduce from the Autumn 16 Census. It was also suggested by the Board that buy in from schools would be increased if the proficiency in English data could be linked to attainment and allow schools to show progress combined with this. This was noted by the department but the proposal was only to collect proficiency in English for EAL pupils which the Board felt could be expanded.

The burden of the collection remained a concern for the Board which the department agreed to consider further and return in November. A request was made for sight of the proficiency framework in advance of that meeting and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] agreed to provide any required support.

STAR CHAMBER SCRUTINY BOARD
Note of meeting, Thursday 5th November 2015
Extract from minutes

SC Ref 795a: School Census / AP Census / EY Census – collection of nationality, country of birth and proficiency in English

This business case was re-presented following discussions that took place in the previous meeting.

It was confirmed that the data being sought in the business case was required to enable the department to understand the impact of migration on schools. The department will then be in a better position to consider what support is required and the data will allow appropriate planning and forecasting to be undertaken.

The department highlighted that this information is not currently available to it but it is anticipated that some of the information may already be held in school systems. This information cannot be collected as part of the admissions process, as regulations forbid the collection of information during the admissions process which is not required for allocating school places. Therefore, where it is not already held, small changes to data entry sheets may be needed to allow schools to collect this information from parents. The data will be collected for all pupils (not just new entrants) and will be included in the CTF for any pupils moving schools.

School management information systems will be used to capture the information and the department is working with suppliers to ensure that dual nationality can be recorded. It was also agreed that the code set for nationality should be aligned between school and LA systems.

Discussion around recording the proficiency in English took place with the Board suggesting this information could be particularly useful for schools to track pupils and therefore requested school MIS should be instructed to allow for a history of English proficiency to be retained rather than being overwritten each time it is assessed. The board thought that recording proficiency for all pupils should be undertaken as that would result in schools having more engagement with the collection and could result in improved data quality. However the Department believed that support required for English speakers with language difficulties was a different measure (closely linked to special educational needs) than proficiency levels for EAL pupils but agreed to engage with suppliers to potentially provide schools with the functionality to use this field for all pupils if they believed it was useful locally.

The proposals for collecting **country of birth and nationality were approved**. **Proficiency in English was approved in principle**, subject to guidance and the fields/codesets being provided to the Board. All of the data will be collected on a mandatory basis but with options for 'refused' and 'not yet assessed'.

STAR CHAMBER SCRUTINY BOARD
Note of meeting, Thursday 3rd December 2015
Extract from minutes

(a) SC Ref 795a – School Census

Members had a query about SC Ref 795a that was discussed in the previous meeting. It was considered that the method of collection for the Country of Birth and Nationality within the School Census was unclear.

It was confirmed that the nationality and country of birth data items will be introduced for all pupils in scope of the Census as otherwise we could be waiting a number of years to get a full dataset.

However, as with language and ethnicity, within the codeset there will be values for refused and not yet obtained as it is recognised that schools may experience issues in obtaining this information from parents. In particular for the first collection in autumn 2016 we would expect to receive a high proportion of 'not yet obtained' responses but would then expect that by the spring 2017 census responses should be obtained from the majority of parents.

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b) CTF

The proposed changes to the CTF for the 2016 to 2017 academic year were discussed, including:

- **Country of birth**

Pupil country of birth is being collected from 2016 and will be transferred when a pupil changes school, as part of the CTF.

- **Nationality**

Nationality is being collected from 2016 and will be transferred when a pupil changes school, as part of the CTF.

- **Proficiency in English**

Proficiency in English will be collected via the school census for all pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) in national curriculum year group R (reception) and above.

A proficiency in English history container will be included within the CTF to allow the full history of proficiency assessments, alongside the date the assessment was made, to be transferred.

Although the census restricts the collection to EAL pupils at key stage 1 and above, schools may hold proficiency in their system for all pupils. If proficiency data is present within the school system it will be transferred as part of the CTF.

The board fully supported the inclusion of the three data items listed above in the CTF alongside the availability of a partial CTF for transfer into the FE sector.

c) Language Proficiency

The board agreed with the approach outlined in the paper which, in the short to medium term, replicated the approach used in Wales. However the board were pleased that the Department recognised the limitations of the Welsh framework and supported the longer term commitment to further refine the scale to make it more useful for schools for developing detailed individual language plans for EAL pupils.

In response to feedback from the board, the Department confirmed that, although the census would restrict the collection of proficiency in English to EAL pupils at key stage 1 and above, they would be recommending to software suppliers that they make the data item available for all children in the systems to provide schools and local authorities with the ability to use the data item for all pupils if that was deemed useful locally.

Overall the proficiency in English framework was approved but the board requested that the changes be communicated to schools as soon as possible. The Department

confirmed that they would be looking to do this as soon as possible and would share any draft guidance with the board for comment.

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c.) Proficiency in English

The guidance to support this new data item in the School Census was requested by the Board. [REDACTED] agreed to release the guidance in confidence and invited comments which must be made quickly due to the planned timescales.