



Holiday Activities and Food Programme

Annual Report 2025

OWNER

Joseph Pegg

VERSION

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Brighter Futures for Children
Civic Offices, Bridge Street,
Reading RG1 2LU

Company number 11293709

Introduction

In 2020 the government announced that the holiday activities and food programme (HAF) would be expanded across the whole of England in 2021 and beyond. There have been pilot areas providing HAF since 2018. The government made up to £220 million available to local authorities to coordinate free holiday provision. The HAF programme was available to eligible children in every local authority in England. To implement the program, local authorities were asked to ensure that the offer of free holiday club provision was available for all children entitled to, and in receipt of, free school meals in their area. In 2023 Reading received £520,390.

HAF 2023 saw some changes as the DfE grant funding to Reading for the next three years is over £1,000,000. This meant we were required to go through a full commissioning process. This was time consuming and led to delays requiring a waiver being completed for Easter 23. However, commissioning was finished in time for the summer HAF so, despite the additional upfront work, we now have secure funding and 20 preferred providers up to the end of FY 2024/25.

Reading has a full time HAF coordinator, however, in January 2024 we were required to recruit to the post as Ciaran Delany resigned. We successfully recruited March 4th 2024 to the role and now have a new coordinator Joseph Pegg.

The HAF programme has been extended up until March 2026. This will provide activities throughout Easter, Summer and Christmas 2025 for children in and around Reading.

Purpose and benefits of HAF for children in Reading

The need for the HAF provision is at an all-time high as it has been recognised that school holidays create pressure points for some families because of increased costs (such as food and childcare).

Free holiday clubs are a response to this issue and evidence suggests that they can have a positive impact on children and young people.

As part of the offer, holiday club places were available for the equivalent of at least 4 hours a day, 4 days a week, 6 weeks a year.

As a result of this programme, we supported children who attended this provision to:

- Take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character, and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment.
- Be safe and not to be socially isolated.
- Have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition.
- Be more engaged with school and other local services.

Further our aim was offering families the opportunity:

- Develop their understanding of nutrition and food budgeting.
- Signpost towards other information and support, for example, health, employment, and education.

Eligible children in Reading

In the Reading area there were approximately 3800 children and young people eligible for benefit related free school meals when the programme was launched (2020 school census). However, the number of children on free school meals has risen to 5244 (January 2025 census). This is an increase of 8.6% from last year and an increase of 38% from when the HAF programme first began. This is the highest it has been since April 2020.

Year	Children eligible for FSM in Reading
2020	3800
2021	4213
2022	5107
2023	5235
2024 (April)	4827
2025 (January)	5244

- **Primary Schools:** Approximately 22.46% of primary school pupils are eligible for FSM.
- **Secondary Schools:** Around 16.25% of secondary school pupils are eligible.
 - **Nurseries:** About 23.83% of nursery pupils are eligible.
 - **Special Schools:** Eligibility rises to 47.57% in special schools.
- **Alternative Provision:** The eligibility rate is notably higher at 54.54%.

Children in alternative provision (AP) settings are more likely to be eligible for free school meals (FSM) due to several factors related to socio-economic disadvantage, educational needs, and systemic barriers.

➤ 1. Higher Rates of Socio-Economic Disadvantage

Approximately 54.54% of children in pupil referral units (PRUs) and AP academies are eligible for FSM, compared to 22.46% and 16.25% in all mainstream state-funded schools. This disparity reflects the higher levels of poverty and financial hardship among families whose children require alternative educational placements.

➤ 2. Prevalence of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

A significant proportion of children in AP have SEND, particularly social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs. In state-funded AP, 77.1% of children have SEND, compared to 14.4% in mainstream schools. These children often face additional challenges that can exacerbate financial hardship, leading to increased FSM eligibility.

➤ 3. Barriers to Accessing FSM in Mainstream Settings

Many children in poverty are ineligible for FSM due to restrictive eligibility criteria. For instance, in England, children from families claiming universal credit are only eligible if their family's post-tax earnings are below £7,400 annually.

➤ 4. Challenges in FSM Registration

The current opt-in system for FSM registration can be a barrier for many families, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. An estimated 250,000 eligible children miss out on FSM due to administrative hurdles, language barriers, or lack of awareness.

➤ 5. Policy and Systemic Factors

Recent policy changes have aimed to extend FSM eligibility to more children, including those from families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). However, implementation challenges and lack of awareness among schools and local authorities have resulted in many eligible children not receiving FSM .

Booking System

This year we also introduced an online booking system, which has allowed us to contact all Reading schools and ask them to upload their lists of children accessing free school meals Booking System

- Contact all Reading schools and ask them to upload their lists of children accessing free school meals directly to our booking system.
- Enable providers to upload their offer to attract families via the booking system.
- Offer easy access for families to book onto the activities and edit bookings if required.

The online booking system supported us to improve our admin and data capture on the previous years both for our own internal teams and for parents, carers and the HAF providers. One stand out area for us was an increase of schools signing their children up to our system and April 24 showed 98.8% only one school did not sign up, however, they had no eligible children hence them not signing up to the offer.

Below are some screen shots of the booking system.



HolidayActivities

- Home
- Dashboard
- Activities
- Providers
- Reports
- Settings

Name ^	Total available places ^	Booked places ^	Booked % ^	Attended places ^	Attended
BFFC Youth Service	0	0	0	0	0
Funtastic Kids - Reading	104	103	99	0	0
Get Active Sports Reading	120	98	81	0	0
Grassrootz	1	0	0	0	0
Junior Adventure- Reading	0	0	0	0	0
Little Musketeers (The Wren School)	200	181	90	0	0
Make Sense Theatre	48	44	91	0	0
Next Thing Education Camps- Reading	120	114	95	0	0

HAF Funding in Reading 2024/25

BFFC were awarded £520,720.00 to rollout the HAF project in Reading, based on number of children eligible for free school meals (FSM).

The below table indicates the HAF timetable for the three holiday periods. This assumed that the majority of children would access the offer during the summer holidays.

Holiday Period	Hours	Days	Weeks
Easter	4 hours a day	4 days	Two weeks
Summer	4 hours a day	4 days	Four weeks
Christmas	4 hours a day	4 days	One week

Annual program costings (approx)

<u>Holiday 24/25</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Summer 24	£300,927.61
Christmas 24	£57,536.00
Easter 25	£76,614.63
Admin	£56,945.94
Totals spend (Includes admin costs)	£492,024.18

HAF Procurement

To quality assure our providers we asked providers to complete a grant request form to access HAF funding. The grant form requested information on the following topics:

- Project details and cost of the project
- Service delivery
- Food, enriched activities, physical activities, nutritional education, food education for families and carers
- Signposting and referrals
- Impact of Covid-19
- Diversity and inclusion, systems, and processes, safeguarding, organisations policies.
- Insurance and references

HAF Providers

To ensure the HAF provision catered for as many eligible children as possible it was identified that we would need to commission more providers.

The HAF providers put on a multitude of activities over the year that included sports and football camps, holiday clubs, pantomime, public gardens been used as educational hubs, and clubs more focused on creative outlets.

<u>Holiday</u>	<u>Providers used</u>
Summer 24	19
Christmas 24	15
Easter 25	17

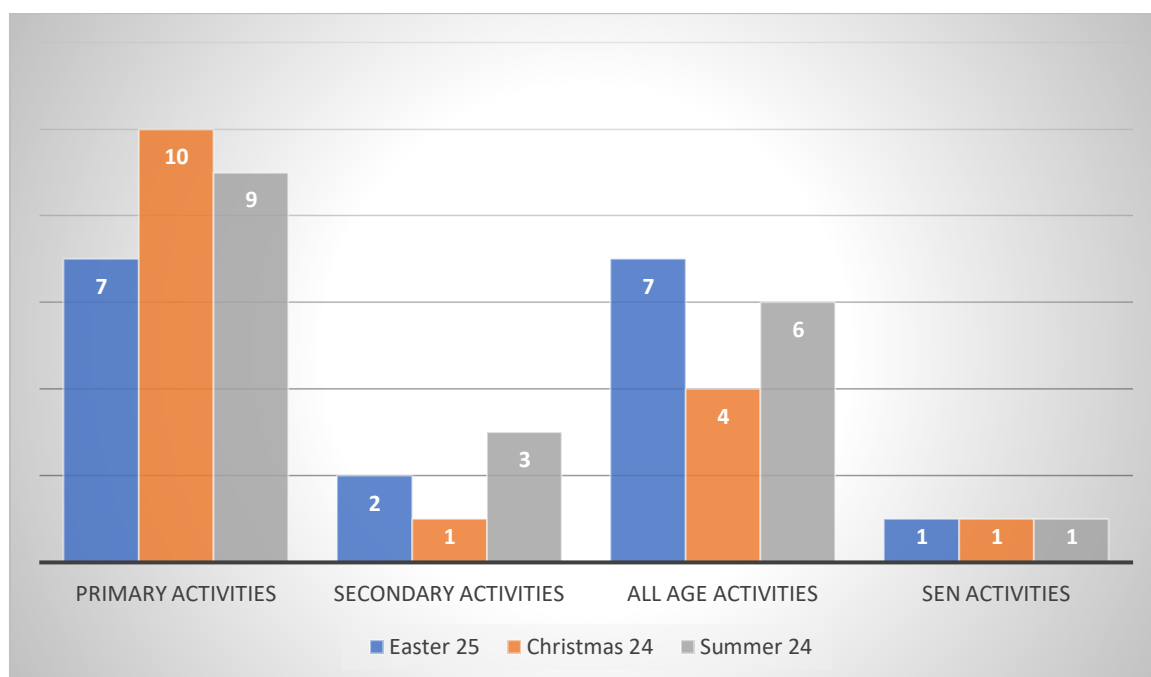
As seen from the table above, we now have a solid cohort of providers. We offer a diverse and inclusive range of activities for all ages. We have providers who connect and develop links within their communities to ensure activities are engaging and suitable for all.

A list of current providers below:

Provider	Location	Age Range
<i>Storyy</i>	<i>Prospect</i>	11-16 years old
<i>BFFC Youth</i>		11-16 years old
<i>Funtastic Kids</i>	<i>Whitley</i>	Primary
<i>Sportscool</i>	<i>Coley / Prospect</i>	Primary / 4-16 years old
<i>Reading Rep</i>	<i>Reading Town</i>	4-16 years old
<i>Rock Academy</i>	<i>South Reading Hub</i>	10-16 years old

Get Active Sport	<i>Alfred Sutton</i>	4-16 years old
Usport	<i>Caversham / New Town Primary / Geoffrey Field</i>	5-12 years old
NSSport	<i>Churchend School</i>	4-11 years old
Next Thing Education	<i>Manor</i>	5-11 years old
Weller Centre	<i>Weller Centre</i>	5-16 years old
Premier Education	<i>Wilson Primary / Meadow Park / New Christ Primary</i>	5-11 years old
Reading FC	<i>Reading School</i>	5-14 years old
Little Musketeers	<i>Wren</i>	5-12 years old
Make Sense CIC	<i>Avenue School</i>	SEN
Rabble Theatre	<i>Abbey School</i>	5-16 years old
Grassrootz	<i>Community Based</i>	5-16 years old
Junior Adventure Group	<i>Moorlands Primary / Micklands Primary</i>	5 – 11 year olds
Sport in Mind		11-16 year olds

Provider Activities



Above is a table comparing the number of Primary, Secondary, All age and SEN activities from Easter '25, December '24 and Summer '24.

Summer 2024 Sessions delivered

- Spaces offered – 12,532
- Spaces booked – 10,012
- Spaces used - 7084
- Unique children attended – 986
- % of Schools signed up – 98%

80% of sessions offered were booked. Out of the sessions booked 70% were attended.

Out of the 986 unique children for Summer they attended an average of 7.1 sessions.

Christmas 2024 Sessions delivered

- Spaces offered – 2,126
- Spaces booked – 1,888
- Spaces used – 1,356
- Unique children attended – 618
- % of Schools signed up – 100%

88% of sessions offered were booked. Out of the sessions booked 72% were attended.

Out of the 618 unique children for Christmas they attended an average of 2.2 sessions.

Easter 2025 sessions delivered.

- Spaces offered – 3095
- Spaces booked – 2882
- Spaces used - 2408
- Unique children attended – 1042
- % of Schools signed up – 100%

93 % of sessions offered were booked. Out of the sessions booked 83% were attended. This means there were 474 places not used.

Out of the 1042 unique children for eastern they attended an average of 2.3 sessions.

QA Visits

We visited our providers to conduct Quality Assurance checks. These checks are an integral part of our service to ensure our providers are delivering a professional, safe, and structured programme. Below is an overview of each visit:

Premier Education

Premier Education delivered a well-rounded sport HAF programme. The venue was excellent, and the children were engaged and happy.

Funtastic

Funtastic are an excellent provider who take pride in their standard of delivery and creativity. They provide high quality activities in a really deprived area of Reading and really focus on activities that can be replicated at home.

Get Active

Get active – A very professional provider who have excellent relationships with the children. They offer an excellent sport service and have a great variety of games.

Grassrootz

Grassroots are one of the most innovative and engaging providers I have worked with. They go into the heart of the community and set up activities in local parks for children and young people. They have developed a mentoring programme withing the service where young people can help deliver the activities.

Little Musketeers

Little Musketeers deliver a fencing and sports programme which is extremely well attended. They base themselves at an excellent venue and have well over 40 children each day.

Make Sense

Make sense are our only dedicated SEND offer. Make Sense offer an incredible service for children and young people with profound needs. The activities offered are so creative and tailored specifically for the attendees. The staff are so inspiring and do an amazing job to keep all the children safe and engaged.

Next Thing

Next thing deliver a Tech camp which is extremely well put together offering. They provide all home cooked food which the children love.

Rabble

Rabble deliver a theatrical camp with a showcase performance at the end. They performed High School Musical which was incredible.

Reading FC

Excellent numbers and great activities. The children absolutely loved it.

Rock Academy

Rock Academy deliver a music-based offering which is extremely popular. A very engaging camp where the children are fully immersed into what they are doing.

Sportscool

Sportscool is owned by Arun who is an extremely passionate individual. They provide fantastic opportunities for local families in a very nurturing environment.

USport

A very professional company who take pride in the quality of service. An excellent provision where all the children were extremely happy and engaged.

Weller centre

The Weller Centre provide a lifeline for children in the local area. A fantastic provision with dedicated staff who go above and beyond.

Reading Rep

A creative provision who provide a small and engaging product. Led and run by volunteers the programme provides a space where children can be themselves. Everyone was so engaged and happy.

Parent and Child Feedback

This summer we were lucky to partner with a charity called Reading BID. There was a massive effort by the charity and local businesses to donate and collect an array of useful items. In all over 120 boxes were collected and distributed.

Some of the items donated were:

- *Toothbrushes / toothpaste*
- *Sanitary and hygiene products*
 - *Clothes*
 - *Games and toys*
 - *Water bottles*



Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue's Red Watch Theale crew paid a special visit to one of our many HAF sessions at The Avenue School last Wednesday. The team took a fire engine along for the children to see up close and showed off some of the kit used. The children left some wonderful feedback for the crew, with one message reading: "Thanks for showing us how the fire engine works. It was great and I liked it, especially the hose. Thank you for letting me try on the helmet too!" As part of the session, the children also drew some fabulous pictures of the engine (above).

My son attended the HAF programme at New Town throughout the summer with Usports and I just wanted to share some feedback. The organisation of the sessions was excellent, on arrival we were always met with a friendly welcome, and a really clear plan for the day, which is something which was important for my son. The staff were very approachable and had an excellent way of managing the children throughout. Particularly for myself and my son, I was so impressed and thankful with their patience, honesty and guidance with managing behaviour.

My son was able to work hard on joining in and containing some of his behaviours, and with consistent positive praise this worked wonders.

At the end each session I had an informative feedback from the staff, this was personable to my son and delivered with kindness at all time.

Generally, I just want to share how impressed I was with the whole team and the sessions, my son achieved something each time and was ecstatic to even get star of the day at one session, something he is still extremely pleased with.

Before camp, she was just at home playing games and going on adventures - going out to the park and places like that. She wanted to attend because when she first started camp she really enjoyed it so she loves coming back. She likes to do more sports/activities like dodgeball and she finds it enjoyable, she said it brings more fun into her life. At first she was a bit scared and nervous because she didn't know anyone at camp. Now she feels more energetic and she likes it, She's not that scared or nervous anymore. "I think it's fantastic and great and it makes you feel really active!"

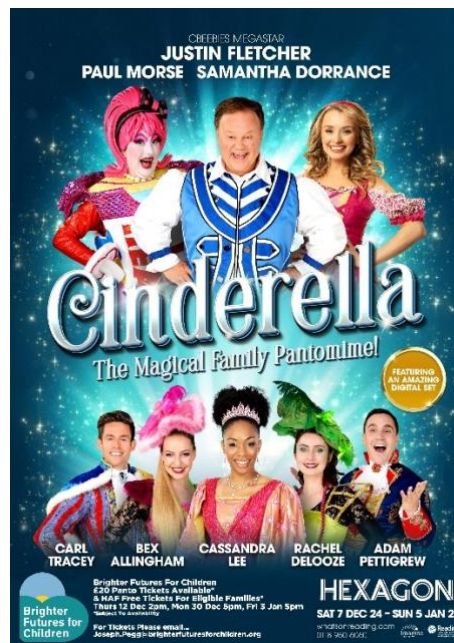
Daniel was doing home studies especially for maths, English and writing. He mostly does independent play in the garden looking for crawling insects. He has regular outdoor walks on weekdays and visits parks on the weekends.

As a child with autism, one of his main challenges is socialising. He needs to develop his social skills by making friends with other children. Interacting with other children will be a learning experience for Daniel.

Coming to camp has made Daniel feel happy when meeting new friends as well as giving him the chance to interact with adults too.

Daneil felt anxious at the start of camp but by the end of each session he seems really happy . He comes home from camp everyday telling me what is favourite part of the day was.

This Christmas we were very fortunate to be able to partnership with the Hexagon theatre to offer free children tickets and subsidised adult tickets to see the Cinderella Pantomime. We were able to offer up to 6 free tickets across 3 different viewings.



“The pantomime was amazing, and everyone enjoyed it and was joining in with everything! Such a good thing for families who want to go but cannot always afford to take the family”

“Myself and my children along with my friends and their families had a great time at the pantomime. We felt very grateful to have the opportunity to go from you organising it. Was a great show and so much fun for us all. We would love to go again next year.”

“Ah the panto was amazing! Unfortunately, my camera was broken so I wasn't able to take any pictures or videos, but it was an incredible experience for my daughters that I would not have otherwise been able to afford. It was something we were looking forward to for weeks! I really hope that next year you can secure the funding! We'd love to go again!”

"I just wanted to share that both my kids attended Next Thing Education, and they had a wonderful time there. The staff were very helpful, and they really enjoyed the activities. It was also great that food was provided, which made things even easier."

"The Pantomime was amazing, the children had a great time. They are asking for more. I did have a great time myself to be honest."

"It definitely helped. For us it was the only proper family activity we did over the Christmas period. I saw lots of friends posting about santas grottos and Legoland visits, and Christmas lights trails, and I felt guilty that I wasn't able to do any of those things. So, it was lovely to be able to do something Christmassy all together that was affordable for us."

"I was really happy with the discounted tickets, as you can imagine Christmas is a very expensive time and the panto isn't cheap! If I hadn't of got these discounted tickets, I wouldn't have gone to be honest. My daughter is in her last year of primary school, so everything is her last, she said it's my last time at the panto with school! (her school actually funds all ks2 children to go to the panto every year) she was telling me all about it so when I said would you like to go again with me she was so excited. We got really good seats was so lovely to see her excitement. I'm so glad I heard about these tickets and took her!"

Child feedback: "It was so fun! I loved making my 3D cake!"

Parent feedback: "He has had a brilliant week. He has come home happy and chatty everyday and loved all the activities. Thank you to the staff for providing such an engaging and fun camp"



"I loved how friendly and inviting everyone is. At this summer school I had a lot of fun but I also learnt a lot about film and acting in general."

"...the most fantastic week i tried new things and met new people"

"Really enjoyed learning about camera angles and how voiceovers actually work. Made some great friends and enjoyed the group."

Next Steps for Reading HAF program.

The DfE have announced the HAF funding will continue for another year throughout 2025.

The coordinator is planning to expand and improve Readings HAF offer by.

- Put together another donation in partnership with Reading BID focusing.
- Increase our secondary school offer by providing new and engaging activities aimed at children and young people 13 and over including targeted intervention programmes.
- Invite conversations with key stakeholders (schools) around improving uptake of the HAF offer.
- Produce a weekly HAF e-zine throughout the Summer.
- Increase the number of unique children attending our sessions
- Keep the booking percentile in the 90s.
- Look to get the attendance booking into the 90th percentile.
- Initiate conversations with new providers for HAF 26/27 subject to funding.

Key Findings for Reading HAF program

As you can see in the below data our Booked and Attended % data is really high and this is something we are extremely proud of. Below is the provider data.

Summer 24

Provider	Total Places Provided	Booked %	Attended %
Funtastic	385	99%	71%
Get Active	480	76%	56%

Grassrootz	1658	48%	100%
Little Muskeeters	781	78%	68%
Make Sense	114	85%	77%
Next Thing	721	80%	74%
NSSport	1024	101%	93%
Premier Education	1024	54%	60%
Rabble	300	86%	75%
Reading FC	920	98%	63%
Rock Academy	128	99%	50%
Sportscool	1360	100%	62%
U Sports	2248	89%	60%
Weller Centre	248	66%	98%
BfFC Youth Services	183	79%	100%
Reading Rep	140	100%	62%
Sport in Mind	63	55%	80%
Storry	320	35%	56%
JAG	480	63%	57%

December 24

Provider	Total Places Provided	Booked %	Attended %
Get Active	45	100%	26%
Grassrootz	480	83%	100%
Little Muskeeters	160	100%	75%
Make Sense	23	60%	71%
Next Thing	160	67%	82%
NSSport	195	98%	94%
Reading FC	80	100%	58%
Rock Academy	32	100%	43%
Sportscool	441	97%	59%

U Sports	410	73%	58%
Weller Centre	55	80%	43%
Reading Rep	50	100%	72%
Sport in Mind	9	88%	62%
Storry	40	52%	42%

Easter 25

Name	Places Available	Booked Places	Booked %	Attended Places	Attended %
Funtastic Kids - Reading	124	123	99%	100	81%
Get Active Sports Reading	60	52	86%	41	78%
Grassrootz	706	701	99%	701	100%
Junior Adventure Group - Reading	60	36	60%	22	61%
Little Musketeers (The Wren School)	200	171	85%	133	77%
Make Sense Theatre	55	30	54%	18	60%
Next Thing Education Camps- Reading	160	154	96%	111	72%
NSSport	272	276	101%	269	97%
Premier Education- Reading	80	75	93%	60	80%
Rabble Theatre	80	80	100%	64	80%
Reading FC	192	184	95%	115	62%
Reading Rep Summer School	172	156	90%	112	71%
Reading Rock Academy	32	19	59%	14	73%
Sport in Mind (SIM)	32	9	28%	2	22%
Sportscool - Reading	300	300	100%	248	82%
Storry Group	20	4	20%	3	75%
Usport- reading	470	470	100%	353	75%
Weller Center	80	42	52%	42	100%

An area we are focusing on is the number of unique children that are attending our provisions. We had our highest uptake this Easter 25 with 1042 unique children accessing our activities. There has been a huge focus on knowing the families we are working with and ensuring our activities are high quality, engaging and safe. Below is the school booking data for Easter:

Easter 25 Schools Booking Data

School Name	Issued Vouchers	Redeemed Vouchers	Redeemed Vouchers %	Booked Vouchers	Booked Vouchers %
Alfred Sutton Primary School	113	29	25	13	44
All Saints Church of England Aided Infant School	5	0	0	0	0
All Saints Junior School	7	5	71	3	60
Battle Primary Academy	117	26	22	6	23
Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School	169	33	19	12	36
Caversham Park Primary School	9	3	33	1	33
Caversham Primary School	16	9	56	5	55
Christ The King Catholic Primary School	127	38	29	17	44
Churchend Primary Academy	84	43	51	29	67
Civitas Academy	58	31	53	17	54
Coley Primary School	45	17	37	8	47
Cranbury College	28	5	17	0	0
E P Collier Primary School	77	22	28	10	45
Emmer Green Primary School	16	5	31	3	60
English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School	55	21	38	14	66
Geoffrey Field Infant School	71	22	30	12	54
Geoffrey Field Junior School	125	29	23	16	55
Green Park Village Primary Academy - CSV	23	11	47	5	45
Hamilton School	49	9	18	3	33
Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre	124	27	21	7	25
John Madejski Academy	262	40	15	7	17
Katesgrove Primary School	112	49	43	17	34
Kendrick School	55	18	32	5	27
King's Academy Prospect	450	78	17	14	17
Maiden Erlegh School in Reading	251	36	14	10	27
Manor Primary School	112	28	25	17	60
Meadow Park Academy	141	26	18	12	46
Micklands Primary School	88	38	43	14	36
Moorlands Primary School	131	26	19	16	61
New Christ Church Church of England (VA) Primary School	36	7	19	2	28
New Town Primary School	92	25	27	18	72
Oxford Road Community School	60	19	31	7	36
Park Lane Primary School	76	14	18	5	35
Ranikhet Academy	91	29	31	12	41

Reading Girls' School	251	36	14	4	11
Red Balloon Learner Centre Reading	5	2	40	0	0
Redlands Primary School	29	6	20	1	16
River Academy	52	16	30	11	68
Southcote Primary School	109	38	34	26	68
St Anne's Catholic Primary School	33	10	30	6	60
St John's Church of England Primary School	86	33	38	18	54
St Martin's Catholic Primary School	18	7	38	4	57
St Mary & All Saints Church of England Primary School	108	41	37	25	60
St Michael's Primary School	123	36	29	18	50
Thames Valley School	26	11	42	4	36
Thameside Primary School	62	26	41	15	57
The Avenue Special School	79	23	29	4	17
The Deenway Montessori School	0	0	0	0	0
The Heights Primary School	14	5	35	2	40
The Hill Primary School	16	2	12	1	50
The Holy Brook School	16	5	31	2	40
The Palmer Primary Academy	111	28	25	16	57
The Ridgeway Primary School	155	52	33	34	65
The WREN School	243	34	13	8	23
UTC Reading	34	6	17	0	0
Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School	193	50	25	21	42
Wilson Primary School	56	26	46	10	38