

NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

FREE SCHOOL MEALS IN NORTHUMBERLAND

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The Corporate Research Unit (InfoNet) is part of the Policy & Partnerships Service of Northumberland County Council (in the Performance Directorate); it supports the Corporate Policy Team, other sections of the council and the NSP.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The number and percentage of pupils claiming free school meals has increased by at least 10% between 2008 and 2009.
- The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is much greater in the schools with an IMD of 30% or below (29%), compared to Northumberland as a whole (15%).
- The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals has increased in all the ranges of IMD, although by a smaller amount in least deprived areas.
- Other data sources suggest that the free school meals indicator should be used with caution as an indicator of poverty.
- It could well be that there are as many pupils as those receiving free school meals who are also below the poverty line, according to the worklessness data.
- That the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals within each area reflects the IMD profile of that area.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Free school meals (FSM) are used as an indicator of poverty, and used in calculations for school funding. However, it is a controversial indicator as there has been research done showing that it is not such an accurate measure of poverty as once thought. A recent report on such research in *The Guardian*¹ identified that around half of pupils living below the poverty line were not qualifying for free school meals. The most common definition of the poverty line is households earning 60% or less of the average UK household income in a year. A data set was constructed using data on Free School Meals and children in workless families (*The Guardian*²). This identified the percentage gap between the numbers of children receiving free school meals, and the number of children living in workless families. The percentage gap at regional level is a large 19 %, whereas for Northumberland it is 7%. Appendix A, Figure 4, has the full regional and county level data.

2.0 NORTHUMBERLAND 2008 - 2009

The data presented here is taken from the Northumberland 2008 and 2009 School censuses done in January each year. First school data has been used because older children have more choice in whether they eat at the school restaurant, bring sandwiches or eat outside the school, and specific local conditions could affect the results. The schools are allocated the Index of Multiple Deprivation indicator for their area, and this has formed the basis of the analysis. For example, an IMD indicator of 1% would show that this school was in an area belonging to the country's top 1% of most deprived areas. In the same way, an indicator 97% would indicate a very low rate of deprivation.

Figure 1 shows a comparison between 2008 and 2009 of all first school pupils, those falling into the 30% IMD rating and those falling into the top 30% rating (70%+). There was an increase in overall first school numbers of 1.1%, but an increase in the percentage of FSMs of 11.2%. The 30% IMD (worst deprived schools), of which there are 27 schools, showed a slight drop in school numbers of 0.8%, and an

increase in FSMs of 11.8%. In the 70%+IMDs (least deprived schools), of which there were 23 schools, there was an increase in school numbers of 4% and an increase in FSMs of 10%.

Fig.1: Free School Meals, numbers, for Northumberland First schools, according to IMD, 2008 - 2009

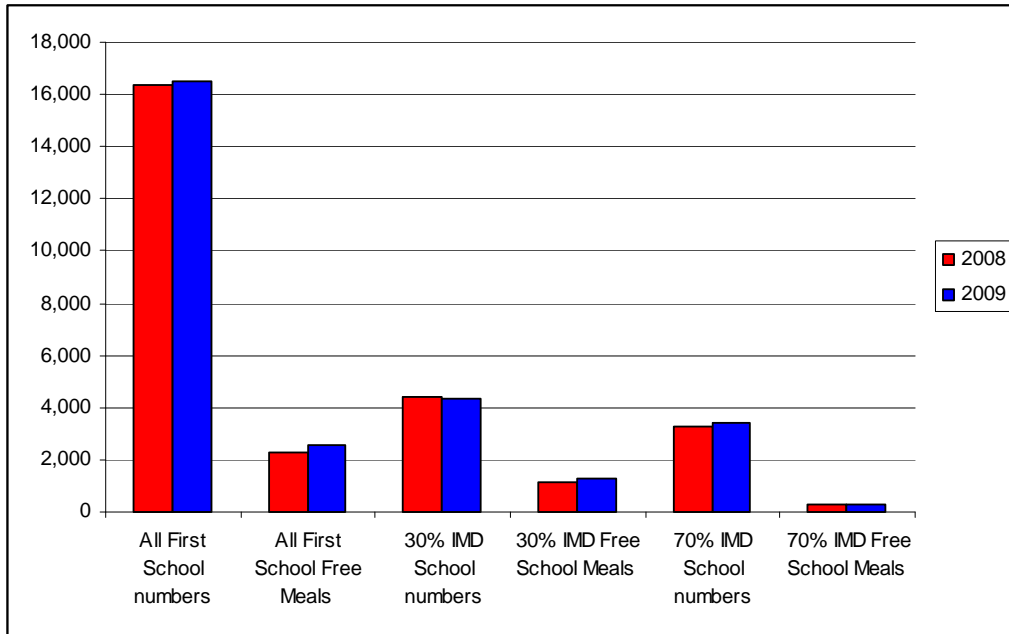
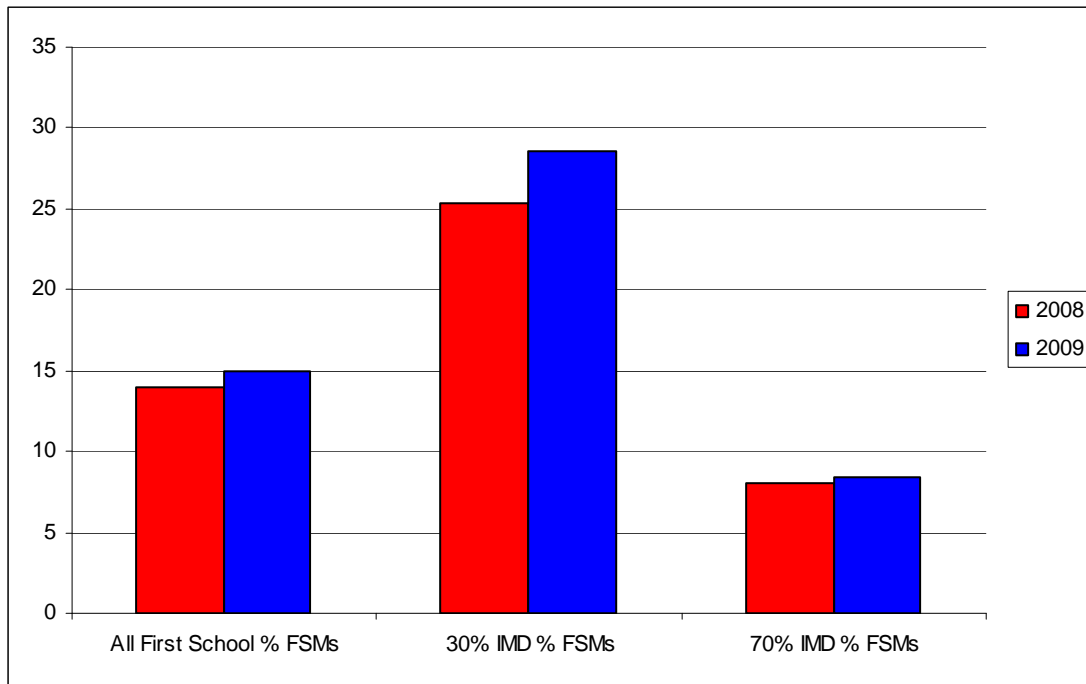


Figure 2 shows the percentage of pupils claiming FSMs. For all first schools in Northumberland, the rate has increased from 14% in 2008 to 15% in 2009; for those falling in the 30% IMD bracket, the rate has increased from 25.4% to 28.6%; and for those in the 70%+ bracket, the rate has increased from 8% to 8.4%. See Appendix B for full list of first/primary schools in Northumberland.

Fig. 2: The Percentage of Pupils claiming FSMs 2008 - 2009



Three areas

An analysis was done of free school meals eligibility in the three characteristic areas, the results can be seen in Figure 3. This shows that the South East has over one fifth of its first school children eligible for free school meals, that the West only has just over 6% and that the North has 11%. This is in line with the % of schools in each area falling into the 30% or less IMD bracket: with only 2 for the West, 6 for the North and 19 for the South East.

Fig. 3: Eligibility and IMD in the 3 areas 2009

Area	% of children eligible for fsm	No of schools with IMD 30% or below
North	11.0%	6
West	6.5%	2
South East	22.7%	19

REFERENCES

1. The Guardian: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/dec/16/school-meals-funding>
2. The Guardian: <http://spreadsheets.google.com/pub?key=phNtm3LmDZEOHGJjQ6VMmRg>

Data taken from the Department for Children, Schools and Families, and an independent consultant Donald Hirsch

APPENDIX A

Fig. 4: Free School Meals at Schools in England, Compared to Local Children in Poverty, 2008

	TOTAL free school meals, all schools	TOTAL PUPILS AT SCHOOL	% on free school meals	% those in area in workless households	% point gap between those on FSM and those in low-income households
ENGLAND	864,800	7,421,830	11.70%	30%	18%
NORTH EAST	53,910	382,890	14.10%	33%	19%
Darlington	2,090	15,054	13.90%	21%	7%
Durham	9,118	72,916	12.50%	16%	4%
Gateshead	3,963	28,344	14.00%	23%	9%
Hartlepool	2,604	15,277	17.00%	27%	10%
Middlesbrough	4,996	22,320	22.40%	31%	9%
Newcastle upon Tyne	6,902	36,189	19.10%	29%	10%
North Tyneside	3,042	29,500	10.30%	20%	9%
Northumberland	4,415	48,134	9.20%	17%	7%
Redcar and Cleveland	3,469	22,211	15.60%	25%	9%
South Tyneside	3,680	21,913	16.80%	27%	10%
Stockton-on-Tees	3,588	29,024	12.40%	21%	9%
Sunderland	6,066	42,017	14.40%	23%	9%

APPENDIX B

First / Primary Schools	IMD	No in school 2009	No. Eligible for FSM 2009
Blyth Morpeth Road First School	1%	202	127
Coulson Park First	4%	173	45
Welbeck Community First School	5%	137	37
Cambois First School	10%	48	31
Bedlington Stead Lane First School	10%	138	54
Lynemouth First School	12%	84	42
Bedlington Station First School	15%	138	33
Croftway First School	16%	309	80
Ashington Central First School	18%	381	138
Blyth New Delaval First School	18%	107	48
Blyth Newsham First School	18%	274	84
Morpeth Stobhillgate First School	18%	149	23
Mowbray First School	21%	209	64
Newbiggin by the Sea Moorside First School	21%	170	77
Amble Links First School	21%	89	38
ST Cuthbert's RC Voluntary Aided First School, Amble	21%	65	8
Hawthorn C of E controlled First School	22%	145	29
St Aidans RC Voluntary Aided First School	22%	159	20
Blyth Malvins Close First School	22%	299	66
St Andrews RC Voluntary Aided First School	22%	179	29
Pegswood County First School	22%	120	25
St Michaels CoE First School	27%	175	31
Seaton Delaval First School	28%	158	44
Ashington Wansbeck First School	29%	350	38
Herdley Bank C of E Voluntary Aided First School	30%	20	2
Whitfield C of E Voluntary Aided First School	30%	27	1
Choppington First School	30%	51	33
Holy Island C of E First School	31%	8	1
Scremerston First School	31%	44	3
Spittal Community School	33%	117	10
Abbeyfields First School	34%	250	32
Windsor First School	34%	138	38
Prudhoe Adderlane County First School	35%	85	22
Hareside Primary School	35%	427	55
Beaconhill Community Primary School	35%	207	64
St Cuthberts RC Voluntary Aided First School, Berwick	36%	67	9
Tweedmouth West First School	36%	140	14
Seghill First School	36%	128	34
Bedlington West End First School	37%	249	36
ST Bedes RC Voluntary Aided First School	37%	144	26
Hugh Joicey C of E Aided First School	38%	54	9

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Lowick Church of England controlled First School	38%	32	2
Milfield Community First School	38%	7	3
Berwick St. Mary's C.E. First School	38%	114	13
Branton Community First School	39%	16	1
Ellington First School	39%	144	8
Linton First School	39%	15	3
Cragside C of E controlled Primary School	40%	318	28
Prudhoe West First School	40%	280	26
Tweedmouth Prior Park First School	41%	150	35
Bedlington Whitley Memorial C of E First School	41%	242	44
Holywell Village First School	42%	146	12
Harbottle C of E Voluntary Aided First School	42%	23	0
Netherton Northside First School	42%	14	0
Whittingham C of E First School	42%	38	2
Stakeford First School	42%	106	19
Seaton Sluice First School	42%	127	9
Seahouses First School	43%	78	8
Cornhill County First School	44%	17	2
Norham St Ceolwulf's C of E First School	44%	23	5
Haltwhistle First School	44%	209	38
Broomhill First School	44%	64	5
Red Row Community First School	44%	72	25
Holy Trinity C of E First School	45%	131	7
Belford First School	45%	78	9
Shilbottle First	46%	100	14
Greenhaugh First School	46%	36	0
Kielder Community First School	46%	9	2
Otterburn First School	46%	48	1
Wark C of E First School	48%	33	0
Morpeth First School	48%	290	15
ST Roberts RC Voluntary Aided First School	48%	129	9
Embleton Vincent Edwards C of E First School	49%	22	4
Greenhead C of E First School	50%	34	3
Henshaw C of E First School	50%	49	2
Ponteland First School	50%	288	14
Belsay First School	51%	85	1
Cambo First School	51%	30	0
Ellingham C of E Aided First School	51%	45	4
ST Pauls RC Voluntary Aided First School	52%	129	11
Blyth Horton Grange First School	53%	270	89
ST Matthew's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School	54%	85	3
Rothbury First School	54%	77	6
Whittonstall First School	55%	66	4
Wooler First School	56%	89	10
Chollerton C of E Voluntary Aided First School	56%	29	4
Eglington C E First School	56%	17	0
Alnwick South First School	58%	211	22
St. John's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided First School	58%	95	12

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New Hartley First School	60%	102	13
Stannington First School	61%	60	0
Whalton C of E First School	61%	56	2
Bellingham First School	62%	42	5
West Woodburn First School	62%	30	3
Ovingham C of E First School	63%	135	12
Slaley First School	63%	50	0
Whitley Chapel C of E First School	63%	43	1
Acomb First School	63%	44	0
The Sele First School	63%	396	36
St Marys RC Voluntary Aided First School	63%	122	5
Haydon Bridge Shaftoe Trust First School	63%	83	6
Hipsburn First School	64%	68	3
Stamfordham First School	65%	70	6
Blyth South Beach First School	65%	400	25
Allendale Community First School	66%	95	5
Humshaugh C of E First School	66%	23	0
Acklington C of E Controlled First School	68%	23	4
Warkworth C of E First School	68%	63	2
Beaufront First School	68%	63	0
Broomhaugh C of E First School	68%	63	0
Newbrough C of E First School	70%	67	4
Ashington Alexandra First School	71%	125	71
Amble County First School	73%	135	28
Longhorsley St Helen's C of E First School	73%	74	1
Tritlington C of E First School	73%	41	1
Shanklea Primary School	74%	331	32
Eastlea Primary	76%	178	65
Prudhoe Castle First School	78%	124	4
Heddon on the Wall St. Andrew's C of E First School	79%	105	4
Felton C of E First School	81%	42	4
Swarland First School	81%	70	3
Guidepost Ringway First School	82%	81	7
Mickley First School	83%	60	2
Hexham East First School	86%	103	22
Longhoughton C of E First School	87%	126	1
Broomley First School	87%	118	2
Corbridge Cof E Aided First school	88%	146	4
Thropton Village First School	88%	34	0
Wylam First School	93%	125	2
Burnside	93%	410	10
Northburn Primary School	93%	314	9
Morpeth All Saints C of E Aided First School	97%	153	3
Darras Hall First School	97%	420	6

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