



PRE-PRIMARY AND SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA - SCHOOL YEAR 2025/2026

The main results from the annual comprehensive surveys conducted by the National Statistical Institute (NSI) on pre-primary and school education are as follows:

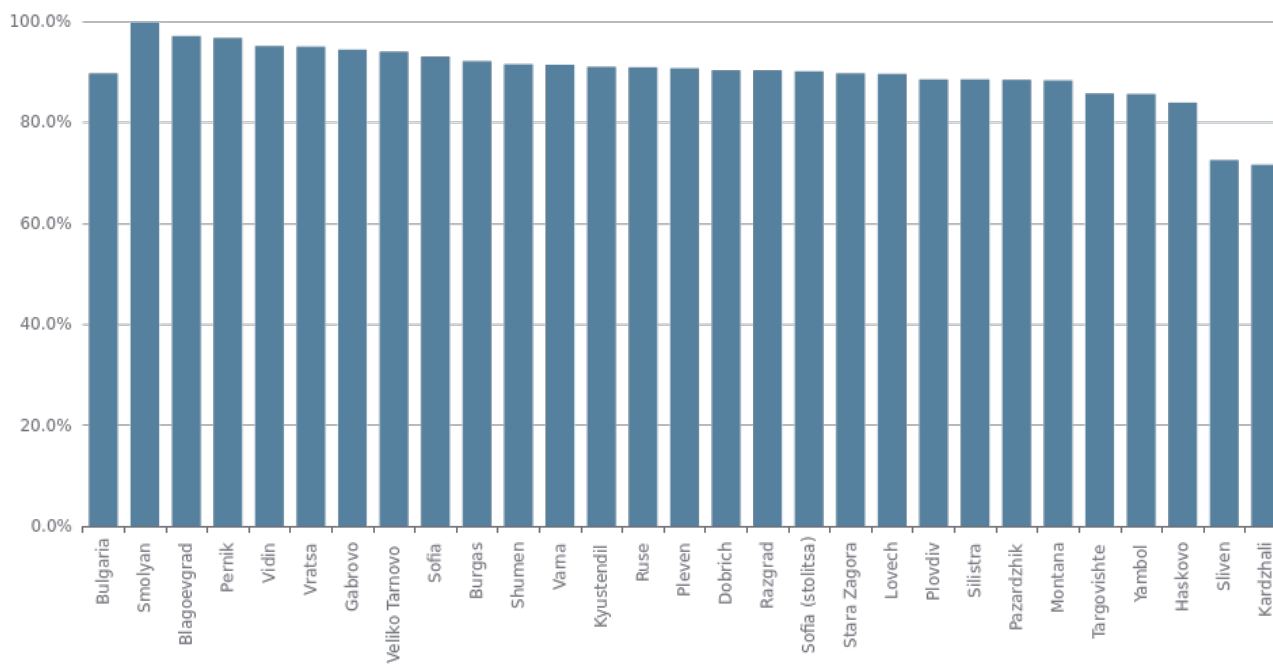
- In 2025/2026 school year, in pre-primary education (at kindergartens and preparatory groups at schools) were enrolled 215.4 thousand children.
- As of 31.12.2025, there were 2 319 schools operating in the country, with 712.3 thousand students enrolled.
- In 2025, the number of basic education graduates was 56.5 thousand students and the number of upper-secondary education graduates was 44.7 thousand students.

Pre-primary education

As of 31.12.2025, there were 1 829 independent kindergartens in the country, of which 130 private. In pre-primary education, conducted in kindergartens and preparatory groups at schools, there were 215.4 thousand children enrolled, of whom 51.4% were boys.

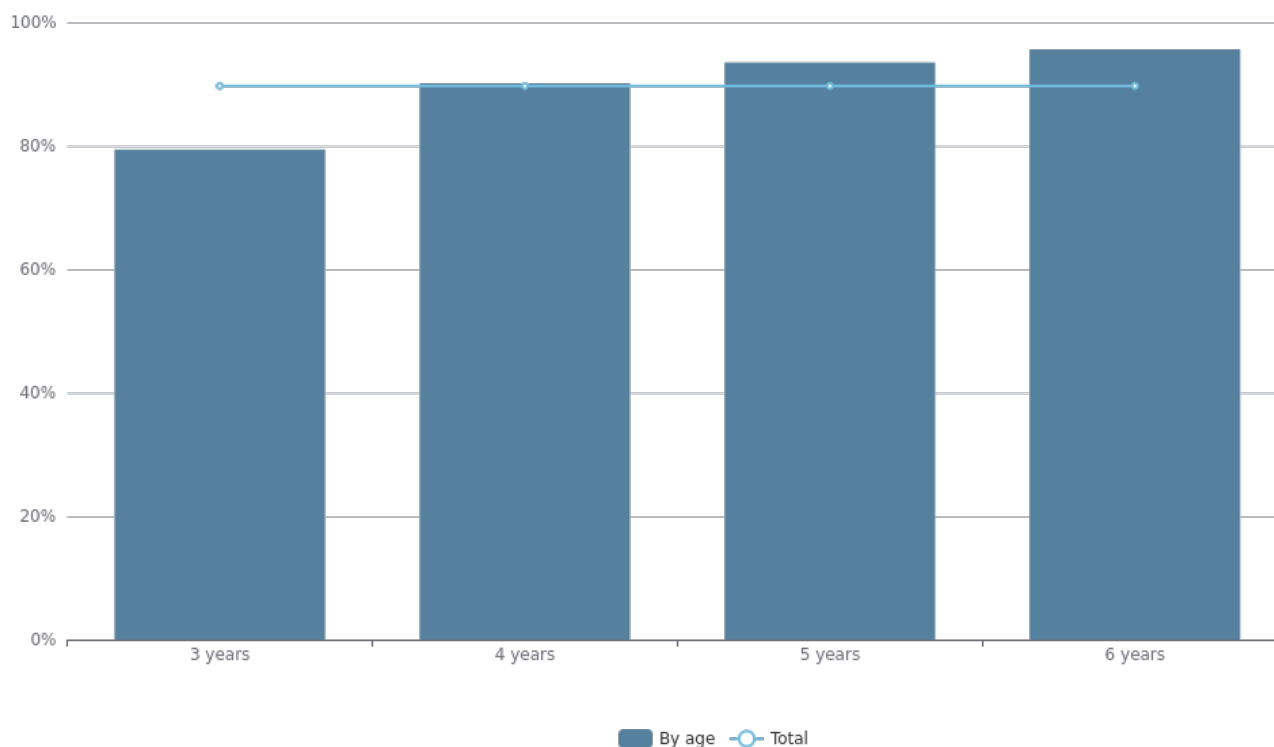
The coverage of children at this education level estimated by the net enrolment rate^[1] for the 2025/2026 school year was 89.7%. The highest was in Smolyan district (99.8%) and the lowest - in Kardzhali district (71.6%).

Figure 1. Enrolment rate of the children in pre-primary education by district, 2025/2026 school year



Despite the gradual introduction of compulsory pre-primary education from the age of 4, the enrolment rate did not reach full coverage (100%) in any age group, but increased from 90.1% among 4-year-olds to 95.6% among 6-year-olds.

Figure 2. Enrolment rate of the children in pre-primary education by age, 2025/2026 school year



In 2025/2026 school year, 6 523 children were enrolled in private educational institutions, or 3.0% of the total number of children in pre-primary education.

The teaching personnel employed in pre-primary education were 21.2 thousand persons. Kindergarten teachers were 84.9% of all personnel in pre-primary education. Women predominated among kindergarten teachers (99.5%).

School education

As of 31.12.2025, there were 2 319 schools operating in the country, including 125 primary schools, 1 103 basic schools, 67 integrated schools, 115 upper secondary schools, 499 secondary schools, 21 schools of arts, 24 sports schools, and 357 vocational gymnasiums. Compared with the previous year, the total number of schools decreased by 10.

The number of students enrolled in all types of schools was 712.3 thousand, of which 16.3 thousand were enrolled in private schools. On average, there were 22 students per class in public schools and 14 in private schools.

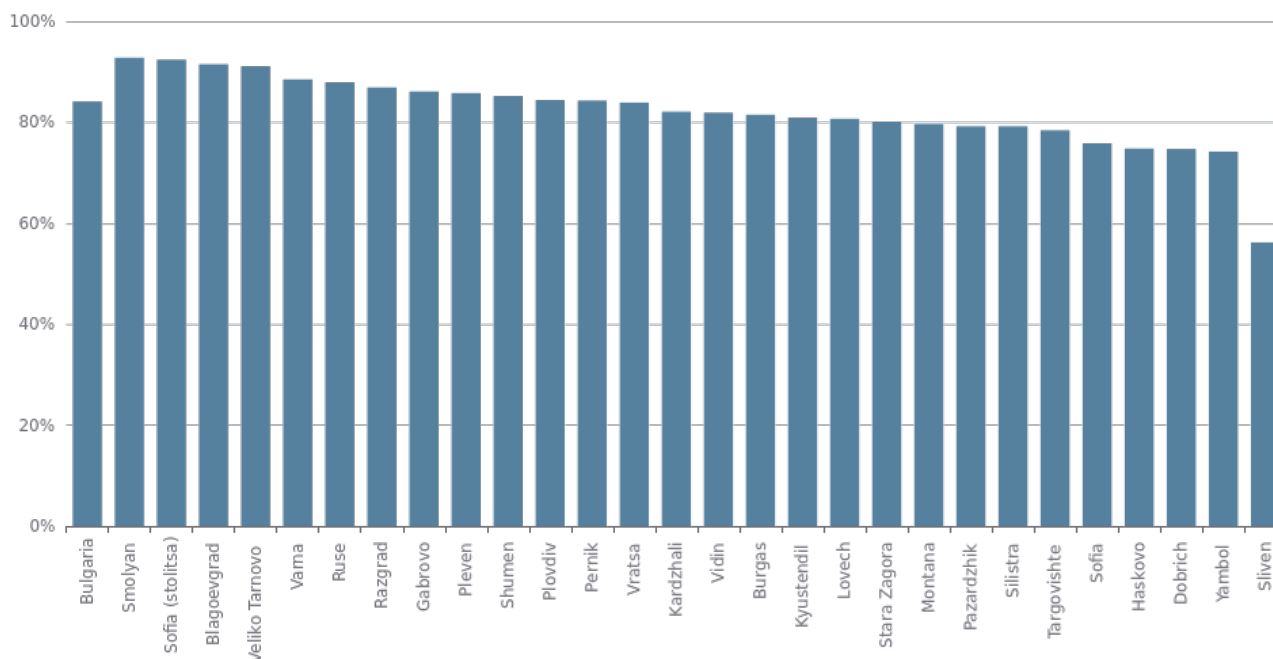
A total of 169.2 thousand students were enrolled in vocational programmes, with boys accounting for the majority - 58.0% of the total.

The coverage of school education, calculated through the group net enrolment rate^[2] for the 2025/2026 school year, was:

- 93.3% for the primary education;
- 89.5% for the lower secondary;
- 84.1% for the upper secondary.

The rate for the upper secondary education was 85.1% for boys and 83.0% for girls, with regional variations ranging from 92.8% in Smolyan district to 56.2% in Sliven district.

Figure 3. Group net enrolment rate for the upper secondary education by district, 2025/2026 school year



In 2025, 56.5 thousand students graduated from basic education, and 44.7 thousand graduated from secondary education.

A professional qualification level was obtained as follows:

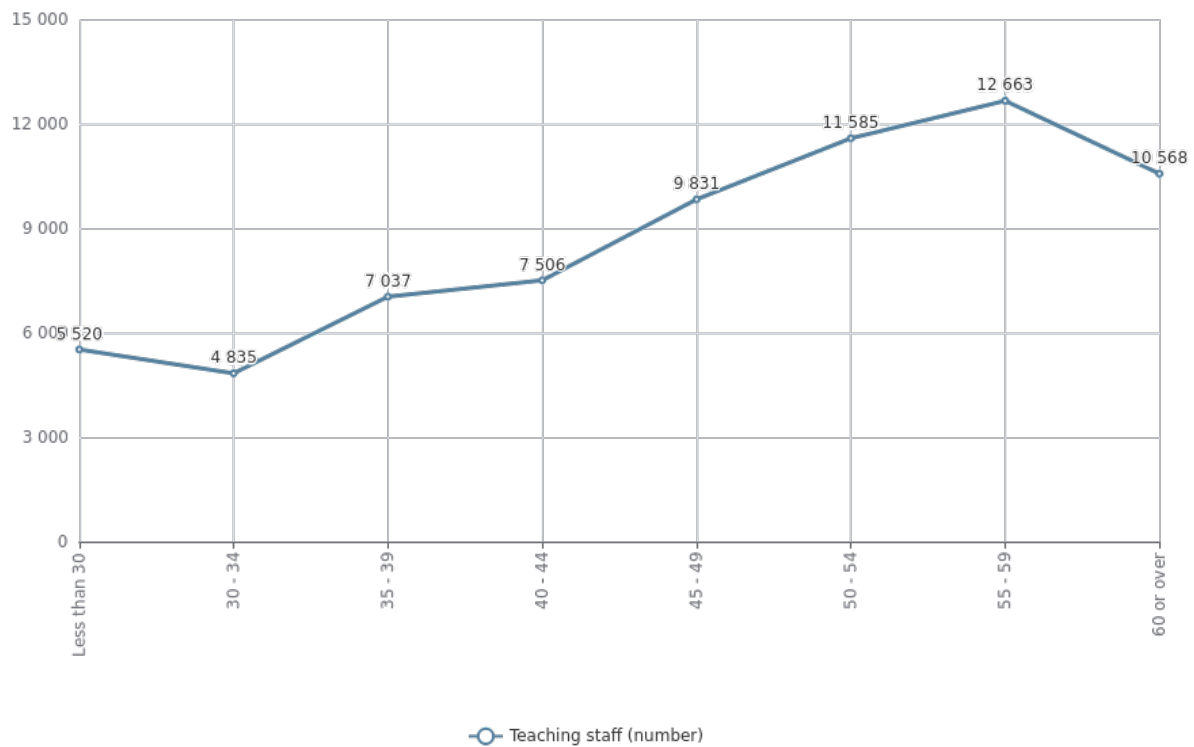
- First level - by 520 students;
- Second and third levels - by 2.6 thousand and 21.0 thousand students, respectively.

Among those who completed programs for acquiring a third-level professional qualification, the highest relative shares were of students studied specialties in the following fields^[3]:

- Engineering - 24.1%;
- Informatics - 18.1%;
- Personal services - 15.8%;
- Arts - 12.1%;
- Business management and administration - 12.0%.

During the 2025/2026 school year, there were 69.5 thousand teachers (including principals and deputy principals with teaching responsibilities) across all types of schools. Of these, 68.4% held a master's degree. The teaching profession is predominantly female, women accounting for 82.0% of all teachers. One-third of the teaching staff were aged 55 or above.

Figure 4. Teaching staff by age groups in 2025/2026 school year



[1] The rate is calculated as a share of children enrolled in pre-primary education in the 3-6 age group (including 6-year-old children enrolled in the 1st grade) relative to the total population in the same age group.

[2] The group net enrollment rate in school education is calculated as a percentage, representing the ratio of the number of students aged 7-10 in primary education, 11-13 in lower secondary education, and 14-18 in upper secondary education to the population in the respective age groups.

[3] For vocational education and training, the fields of education are presented according to the List of Occupations for Vocational Education and Training.

Methodological notes

For the surveys on pre-primary and school education, the National Statistical Institute (NSI) uses information from the administrative registers of the Ministry of Education and Science. Additional information is published on the NSI's website within the survey's metadata (<https://nsi.bg/bg/node/3415> and <https://nsi.bg/bg/node/3433>).

Education statistics was developed on the basis of Regulation № 452/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the production and development of statistics on education and lifelong learning, the current legal basis in Bulgaria in the area of education, the International Standard Classification of Education - revision 2011 (ISCED 2011) and the concomitant methodological instructions.

ISCED was designed to serve as a framework to classify educational activities as defined in programmes and the resulting qualifications into internationally agreed categories.

The National Statistical Institute conducts yearly exhaustive surveys that characterize the activity of educational institutions.

Educational institutions directly conduct teaching via educational programmes to the enrolments in organized classes (groups) or via distance mode of learning. Those programmes lead to the attainment of an education degree and/or level of professional qualification. Non-formal training and informal learning are not covered by the scope of the education system according to the used ISCED 2011 definitions.

With its surveys, NSI aims to determine the number of students in the education system as of a given date of observation. This is the basis for calculating the internationally accepted indicator 'Participation Rate of the Population in the Education System', which represents the relative share of students enrolled from a certain age group in relation to the number of the constant population of the country in the same age group.