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Your ref: JCNOV018/PR

Lesley Gouldbourne  
Chair of Brent Teachers Panel

Dear Lesley

**A Strategy for the Development of School Places (Executive Report – 13.11.06)**

I am writing following your statements at the JCC about school roll forecasts.

In 2004/05 we commissioned a review of the GLA projections of pupil numbers because there was a mismatch between the projections and the subsequent actual admission numbers. The findings of the review are set out in the attached report titled Review of Secondary School Places (March 2005). Departments across the Council contributed to the process; discussions were held with neighbouring Authorities and data exchanged and tested; exchanges took place with the GLA. Information was transmitted across to the London Challenge team, whose pan-London report relied on historical Brent data.

The report, issued in March 2005, interrogated the pupil projections and with some assumptions made on future housing development, highlighted that demand for school places would be greater than predicted by the GLA and by 2014 in the secondary sector there would be a shortage of school places equivalent to 14FE .

In the short term that report identified that by September 2006 there would be a demand for 2746 (91 FE) school places in Year 7 which would leave very little spare capacity in the system (Planned admission capacity of 2896 places or 96 FE). In fact that figure has now proved to be an underestimate compounded by the significant inward migration in recent months. Actual numbers on roll in September 2006 were 2829 (94 FE – 3 FE more than forecast in the report). Excluding Cardinal Hinsley, which has 2 FE spare capacity, schools are now full. There are currently 23 year 7 pupils who we still need to place. Of these, 16 are girls and 7 are boys with a muslim faith background. Cardinal Hinsley is a Catholic Boys School and is not suitable for many of the new arrivals. Numbers at Cardinal Hinsley have continued to improve since it came out of special measures and we expect in the future that the school will attract back families whom have been sending children to Catholic schools outside of the Borough.



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The impact of increasing numbers has not only been felt in Year 7 but across all year groups. There is thus no evidence to support a proposal that we should not continue to plan for a significant increase in secondary school places in our schools through to 2014. Indeed the March 2005 report ( the subject of a recent – February 2006 – Schools Panel Task Group of the Scrutiny Committee) has been reviewed in relation to the latest GLA projections. These now confirm Brent's projections and identify a need, through to 2016, for a total additional capacity of 16FE.

The pressure on school places is rising. Over the last 12 months, 2,000 new pupils have come to live in Brent. An indicator of this pressure is the numbers of children newly arrived (49) already assessed and awaiting a permanent school place and those more recent arrivals (46) since the last assessment centre on 5 October 2006. The next assessment centre is due to take place on 20 November 2006 and we expect numbers to rise further.

Eight of the 14 Brent secondary schools have provided additional provision through a mixture of projects and specific Year 10 and Year 11 classes to meet the current demand (200 short term places in total)

In view of all of this I find it astonishing that you have made statements that there are places available in secondary schools and that the predicted September 2006 shortfall was wrong.

The forecasts we have made are subject to external scrutiny and review. If you wish to meet with colleagues to go through the details I should be pleased to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely



**John Christie**  
**Director of Children and Families**

Enclosed:

Review of Secondary School Places (March 2005)

School Places Task Group Report (March 2006)

Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel – School Places Task Group Report  
(April 2006 Executive)

Table showing capacity and Numbers on Roll Across Brent Schools



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