



Brent

**SCHOOLS FORUM
4 October 2017**

**Report from the Strategic
Director of Children and Young
People**

For Decision

Wards Affected: ALL

Pupil Demand And Pupil Growth Support

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides information on primary and secondary demand patterns for school places. Pupil numbers in secondary schools are set to increase over the next few years as larger cohorts feed through from primary schools.
- 1.2 Within this context, the report identifies areas that Schools Forum should consider for future use of Pupil Growth funding.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Schools Forum is requested to:
- a Note pupil demand patterns in primary and secondary.
 - b Agree that the Central Block Working Group considers future policy for the allocation of Pupil Growth funding.
 - C Note that a report detailing 2017/18 Pupil Growth Funding and proposals for 2018/19 Pupil Growth funding will be presented to the December Schools Forum.

Voting is open to all Schools Forum members

3.0 BACKGROUND – Pupil Demand

- 3.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places for children in their area. If the local authority cannot offer a school place or alternative education placement the authority is open to Ombudsman complaints and legal challenge.

- 3.2 In July 2017, Cabinet approved a refresh of the School Place Planning Strategy 2014-18, that reflects the latest forecasts provided by the Greater London Authority. The refreshed strategy can be accessed here: <https://www.brent.gov.uk/your-council/about-brent-council/council-structure-and-how-we-work/strategies-and-plans/>
- 3.3 **Primary:** In recent years Brent has seen an unprecedented increase in the demand for primary school places. The primary pupil population (Reception to Year 6) increased from 21,427 in May 2008 to 26,502 in May 2016, an increase of 23.7%.
- 3.4 The latest GLA projections (based on the schools census of January 2017) indicate that demand for Reception places will reduce from 2017 onwards underpinned by a decrease in birth rates, before recovering to near 2017 levels. As birth rates fluctuate and further housing developments are delivered, it is possible that projections may be revised upwards. Brent has in the past experienced considerable volatility in the primary-aged population and, while overall projections indicate a downward trend, it is likely that there will be growth and continued pressures in some areas of the Borough or in specific year groups.
- 3.5 Table 1 shows forecast demand for Reception places from 2017. The places available includes expanded provision at Byron Court, Elsley, Leopold and Uxendon Manor schools, which became permanent during the 2015/16 or 2016/17 academic years.

Table 1: Primary Reception projections and places

Year	Projected Reception intake (GLA January 2017)	Reception places available (excluding 2 planned free schools)	Surplus places	Surplus places as FE
2017/18	3855	4217	362	12.1
2018/19	3797	4277	480	16.0
2019/20	3781	4277	496	16.5
2020/21	3787	4277	490	16.3
2021/22	3812	4277	465	15.5
2022/23	3836	4277	441	14.7
2023/24	3853	4277	424	14.1
2024/25	3871	4277	406	13.5
2025/26	3889	4277	388	12.9

- 3.6 To meet increasing primary demand, Brent has used temporary provision and bulge classes, while a programme to provide sufficient flexibility in the permanent and temporary provision on school sites is being completed. Forecasts indicate that cohorts will continue to grow year on year, as new children arrive in Brent creating demand for additional in year places. Having

‘just enough’ places, therefore, in Reception would not supply enough places to meet the demand by the time the cohort reaches Year 6.

- 3.7 The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) has notified the local authority that the sponsor of Floreat Colindale Primary School, which would have provided 60 Reception places from 2019 (having been delayed to allow the school to open on its permanent site) has withdrawn from the project. Ark Somerville Primary, a Free School that will provide 90 Reception places, is anticipated to open in 2019. The opening date of a new all-through (primary and secondary) Free School by the Avanti Trust has not yet been confirmed by ESFA.
- 3.8 **Summary:** The Local Authority is anticipating an increasing number of spare places over the next few years and these will be concentrated in Planning Areas 2, 4 and 5. The Authority does not anticipate the need for further primary school expansions at this point in time. However, localised pressure due to population change or new housing developments will continue to be monitored.
- 3.9 **Secondary:** There are currently sufficient Year 7 places, but there will be a need for additional Year 7 places in future years. The significant growth that has been seen in the Primary phase since 2010 has begun to move through to the secondary phase, with demand expected to outstrip supply by 2020/21 (January 2017 GLA projections). The projected secondary capacity and place need is outlined in Table 2. By 2023/24, an additional 12 secondary forms of entry will be required in Brent. This is equivalent to two new secondary schools.

Table 2: Secondary Places and Projections

Year	Year 7 Projected intake	Year 7 places available	Surplus/ Deficit of places	Surplus/ Deficit as FE
2017/18	3250	3412	162	5.4
2018/19	3310	3412	102	3.4
2019/20	3397	3412	15	0.5
2020/21	3462	3412	-50	-1.7
2021/22	3570	3412	-158	-5.3
2022/23	3684	3412	-272	-9.1
2023/24	3763	3412	-351	-11.7
2024/25	3625	3412	-213	-7.1
2025/26	3579	3412	-167	-5.6
2026/27	3576	3412	-164	-5.5

- 3.10 Alperton High School is planning to expand by two forms of entry in 2018, which will help to address immediate pressures. Two new secondary Free Schools have been approved by the Secretary of State – the North Brent Free School and the Avanti Free School (which will be an all-through school providing primary and secondary places). We do not yet have confirmation from the ESFA of the sites for these schools or planned opening times. The Authority will also be exploring options for expanding existing secondary schools with headteachers and governors.

- 3.11 The Local Authority continues to receive significant numbers of in-year applications and, while Published Admissions Numbers indicate that there are currently sufficient secondary places in Years 7, 8 and 9, these places are concentrated in 4 secondary schools. We are monitoring the situation closely and working with the schools involved to ensure that they are organised and staffed to provide for more young people as the current academic year progresses. Based on in-migration patterns, it is likely that cohorts will continue to grow as they move through the school system.
- 3.12 There continues to be in-year pressure on places in Years 10 and 11 from inward migration. The well-established Choice Advice and Fair Access Interviews (CAFAl) process continues to be used to assess the needs of Year 10 and Year 11 new arrivals in Brent. 255 children were seen through the CAFAl in 2016/17 and since the end of July 2017 54 pupils have been seen. A further 42 children were invited for an interview on Monday 25/09/2017.
- 3.13 A significant number of pupils who come through the CAFAl process arrive in Brent not speaking any English or have significant special needs. There are five projects for new arrival pupils (see Table 3). Provision at Queens Park Community School (QPCS) and Claremont High School is funded through the Pupil Growth budget. Provision at Newman Catholic College is funded directly through the school's DSG allocation.

Table 3 EAL Projects

EAL Projects	School
City Learning Centre - EAL	Queens Park Community School
Reduced GCSE - Year 10 and 11	Queens Park Community School
Greenway Beginner	Claremont High School
Greenway Reduced GCSE - Year 10 and Year 11	Claremont High School
Year 11 mixed course	Newman Catholic College

- 3.14 An operational review of referral via the CAFAl process will be undertaken in 2017/18 with secondary headteachers to ensure delivery of good outcomes for young people.
- 3.15 **Summary:** Secondary provision will need to expand over the next 6 years and it is likely that additional capacity will take the form of new free schools and school expansions.

4.0 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Pupil Growth budget allows the council to meet its statutory duty to provide sufficient places for children within the area who request one. Schools that have expanded at the request of the local authority by at least one form of entry have been guaranteed funding for 30 pupils per class.
- 4.2 The current policy is focused on supporting primary schools. Under the policy, funding has been set at differing rates dependent on the nature of the expansion/project. Where schools expand on their school site the guarantee

is £3,300 per pupil, with the assumption of 30 pupils in a class. Where schools expand in an annexe or off-site building then the guarantee is £3,600 per pupil. The guarantee is for one year and two terms (7/12ths of the academic year, September – March for the first academic year, and full funding for the following financial year). The budget has also met associated building/refurbishment costs to premises that house annexe provision.

- 4.3 The Pupil Growth Budget also funds the CAFAI process, the secondary EAL projects and additional places for new arrivals at QPCS and Claremont, and alternative education placements for hard to place pupils.
- 4.4 Forecast expenditure for the Pupil Growth Budget for 2017/18 was anticipated to be lower than 2016/17 and resulted in a request to Schools Forum for a reduced amount of £2,500,000. This is primarily a demand led budget that allows the Local Authority to support schools to respond to unexpected pupil demand. An underspend of at least £500,000 is currently forecast for 2017/18, because lower primary demand has meant that temporary primary annexes are no longer required and there has not been a need to establish additional bulge classes or expand primary provision.
- 4.5 In addition to Pupil Growth funding, schools receive Rising Rolls funding when they meet the following criterion, as previously approved by the Schools Forum: that the school has had pupil growth of 1.75% or more (not including bulge classes) between the October and January census, and the October to October census. If this criterion is met, the school will receive pro-rata'd funding for each additional pupil above 1.75%.

5.0 FUTURE ALLOCATION OF PUPIL GROWTH FUNDING

- 5.1 It is important that schools which expand at the request of the Local Authority have sufficient funding to provide for additional pupils. Given the shift of demand pressures away from primary to the secondary sector, it is recommended that schools forum (the Central Block Working Party) review the approach taken to the allocation of growth funding for school expansions.

Primary Sector

- 5.2 Pupil Growth funding is provided to community and academy schools. The current policy was developed at a time of rapid increases in demand in the primary sector resulting in the expansion of almost all primary schools across the borough. The current policy of guaranteed funding recognises that the scale of primary schools budgets means it can be difficult for schools to respond to changing circumstances. Guaranteed funding has allowed schools that to secure necessary resources to support expansions and to avoid negative budgetary impacts due to lagged funding.
- 5.3 A number of primary schools that have expanded are now experiencing lower demand. Cabinet have agreed that the Local Authority should retain at least 5% spare places to manage in-migration and to future-proof against unexpected demographic shifts. The Local Authority is working with schools to manage the impacts of this in relation to school admissions and discussing with schools potential use for spare capacity that may not be needed for the immediate future.

- 5.4 Several schools that expanded to support the demographic increase have raised concern with the Authority about the pressures that the current uncertainty around pupil numbers is generating for school budgets, especially when staff are in place and may be needed if pupil numbers increase. Concerns have also been raised about the impact on school budgets of the responsibility to maintain expanded buildings after protected funding ceases, when pupil numbers are lower than anticipated. It has been suggested that this is a particular concern in areas of social, economic and/or educational deprivation.
- 5.5 It is usual for schools to carry some vacancies. However, Schools Forum may wish to consider if there are any circumstances where they feel continued support to schools that have expanded should apply.

Policy Question: Schools Forum to consider under criteria for additional support beyond current guaranteed funding for primary schools that have permanently expanded.

Secondary Sector

- 5.6 Growth Funding is provided to community and academy schools and effectively underwrites the risk of school budgets funding additional resources over the first five terms. It could be argued that secondary schools are better placed than primary schools to manage these issues given the size of their budgets, in particular if expansions are for only 30 or 60 pupils above current PAN each year.

Policy Question: Schools Forum to consider if funding should be used to support secondary schools that expand by 30 places or more at the request of the Local Authority.

- 5.7 The funding support provided to date for schools that are growing in size is a combination of Pupil Growth (funding for places not filled, where this is less than 30) and Rising Rolls Funding (funding that reflects the increased number of pupils). Schools receive Rising Rolls funding when pupil growth is 1.75% or more (between the October and January census, and the October to October census). Some schools have reported that this is unclear and can cause confusion for school budget managers. It is, therefore, proposed that Schools Forum also review the policy for rising rolls funding.

Policy Question: Schools Forum to review how Rising Rolls funding operates and the time period for support to schools.

- 5.8 Where schools undergo permanent expansion a one off payment of £25,000 is made to support schools with the additional management support required. This has been helpful for small primary schools and, while it would be welcomed by secondary schools, it could be argued that as larger institutions, secondary schools are better placed to absorb the impact on management capacity of a school expansion.

Policy Question: Schools Forum to consider if a one-off payment funding should apply to secondary schools.

- 5.9 **Next steps:** Officers will convene meetings with the Schools Forum Central Block Working Group to consider the policy questions set out above. A report detailing 2017/18 Pupil Growth Funding forecast expenditure and proposals for 2018/19 Pupil Growth funding will be presented to the December Schools Forum.

CONTACT OFFICERS

Shirley Parks
Head of Forward Planning, Performance and Partnerships
0208 937 4529

Brian Grady
Operational Director, Safeguarding, Performance and Strategy
0208 937 4122