

SCHOOL PLACES UPDATE

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REASON FOR ITEM

To update the Committee on demand for school places in the Borough.

SUGGESTED COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Note the update.
2. Question officers about the update.

INFORMATION

Introduction

This paper presents to the Children, Young People and Learning Policy Overview Committee an update on demand and planning for primary and secondary school places in Hillingdon.

Background

Demand for school places is being driven by a number of interrelated factors including birth rates, new residential developments and families moving into the Borough. Therefore, year-to-year changes in the forecast are to be expected. The forecasts are updated annually and the 2017 update was completed during the summer. However, monitoring demand for places and related analytical work takes place throughout the year, particularly following Pupil Census dates (which provide figures for the actual number of places taken up / available) and to support in-year admissions, including the placement of pupils through Fair Access mechanisms.

Future Demand for School Places

The key points from the 2017 Hillingdon forecast were reported at the October meeting of the Committee. The next update will be in summer 2018 and therefore in the interim reporting will focus on comparison of forecasts compared with actual demand. The most comprehensive data on actual take-up of places is the October 2017 census. Information from the January 2018 census will be available in March. If information is available, a verbal update will be given at the meeting.

Demand & Capacity 2017/18

- The forecasts are based at the midpoint of the school year (January 2018). Therefore, it is to be expected that the October roll would be lower than the pupil forecast for January. The following comparison of the number of places compared with capacity shows that,

overall, there is an appropriate level of capacity in the system to manage demand. Feedback from some West London boroughs suggests that, generally, demand for places is lower than anticipated. This is being kept under review.

- The generally accepted reasonable margin of capacity to manage in-year fluctuations in demand is 5-10% and therefore available capacity is within this margin. The number of Year 7 vacancies is almost the same as previously reported. The proportion of vacant Reception vacancies has reduced, as expected. There are variations in capacity between place planning areas and it still remains the case that capacity is not evenly spread, reflecting the relative popularity (and location) of individual schools. At October Census nineteen primary schools had more than 10% vacant Reception places.
- Fair Access mechanisms are working effectively to ensure that pupils are offered places. The School Placement and Admissions Team works collaboratively with schools, especially where pupil numbers are lower than anticipated, taking into account the needs of the child and those of the school. In the secondary sector, most of the capacity at Year 7 is in three schools. However, although Reception intakes are forecast to reduce and stabilize over the next five years reflecting lower birth rates, secondary intakes will continue to increase as historically high primary intakes progress through the year groups.
- It should be noted that school capacity is affected by decisions made by own admission authority schools (voluntary aided and academy schools). Four of these schools (Bishop Winnington Ingram, Pinkwell Primary, Uxbridge High and Haydon) have now determined reduced admission numbers from 2019/20. The local authority will be seeking further advice regarding these changes.
- Work on the expansions of Vyners and Ruislip High School is proceeding. However, delivery dates for new free school provision are still subject to confirmation - sites have not yet been confirmed.
- The 1st March was National Offer Day for Secondary School places. 95% of all places available in Year 7 were offered which allows for late applications and subsequent in-year applications.

October Census Data - Reception

A comparison of Reception and Year 7 on roll data and the forecast is shown below.

Reception October Census (mainstream schools)	3982
Reception forecast	4207
Actual as percentage of forecast	94.7
Reception places	4551
Percentage of capacity remaining October 2017	7.6

October Census Data - Year 7

Year 7 forecast	3527
Actual as percentage of forecast	96.5
Year 7 places	3629
Percentage of capacity remaining October 2017	6.2