

PROPOSED CHANGES TO PUBLISHED ADMISSIONS NUMBER (PAN) OF FIELD END INFANT SCHOOL

Committee name	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
Officer reporting	Abi Preston – Director of Education & SEND
Papers with report	Appendix 1 – Proposed Community School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028
Ward	South Ruislip, All

HEADLINES

Hillingdon Council has a statutory responsibility to secure sufficient early years and school places for children resident in Hillingdon. Following review and discussions with the school, the Council is proposing to reduce the Published Admission Number (PAN) for Field End Infant School from 90 (three-form entry) to 60 (two-form entry). This PAN reduction will come into effect from September 2027 and there will be sufficient places to ensure that local residents and siblings can access places at the school. This reduction in PAN will also reduce the distance priority radius from 1,000 metres to 750 metres in line with the Council's admissions arrangements.

The proposed changes to the school admissions criteria will ensure that the Council continues to provide fair placements for children, so that priority is given to children to access places at schools as close to their home as possible.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Children, Families & Education Select Committee:

1. **Review the proposal to reduce the Published Admissions Number for Field End Infant School from 90 to 60;**
2. **Note the 4 responses from the consultation on a PAN change to community primary phase;**
3. **Note the proposals submitted to the Local Authority following formal consultations from non-community schools: Field End Junior School to reduce its Planned Admissions Number from 90 to 60, St Martin's Church of England Primary School to reduce its Planned Admissions Number from 60 to 30, and Park Academy West London to reduce its Planned Admissions Number from 180 to 150, all taking effect from September 2027; and**
4. **Provide comments to be included in the Cabinet report which will be presented on 19 February 2026.**

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

As an education authority, the Council must plan for a sufficiency of places and efficient use of resources. There has been a slight decline in demand across the primary sector since 2018, with some fluctuations, but the overall level of primary school surplus places continues to be high.

Each year the Council reviews the number of places against pupils rolls and projections and considers changing PAN in some schools.

Across the borough, small annual changes up and down are needed to meet parental demand. This ensures schools and the authority best meet the needs of all pupils across the Borough and make effective use of resources in schools. The PAN is the 'operating figure', and the physical building remains the same. Academy, Foundation and Voluntary Aided (VA) schools make their own decisions, and they must consult the Council and others on proposed reductions, but their Governors/ Trusts can agree temporary or permanent increases or decreases. The Cabinet is the relevant authority for the community primary schools, such as Field End Infant School.

The Local Authority recognise a need to reduce the published admission number in one of our community schools, by 30 places. This is due to demographic changes leading to declining pupil rolls and Reception intakes, over the past few years which is projected to continue for the foreseeable future. There would be no difference for current pupils after the proposed change takes effect from the Reception intake in 2027, and there would still be sufficient places to meet future demand from local residents for at least the next 5 to 7 years.

Following a review of school places, it is proposed to consult to reduce the Published Admission Numbers for:

- Field End Infant School - from 90 (three-form entry) to 60 (two-form entry) from September 2027. All local residents will still be able to access places there. This reduction will also reduce the distance priority radius from **1,000m to 750m** in line with our admissions arrangements.

Reduction of Published Admissions Numbers

The purpose of the statutory School Admissions Code (see [Background paper 1](#)) is to ensure that all school places for maintained schools (excluding maintained special schools) and academies are allocated in an open and fair way. The Code contains mandatory requirements, such as setting a Published Admissions Number for each school. The admission arrangements to community schools are determined by the Local Authority as the 'admission authority.'

In drawing up the admission arrangements to schools, admission authorities must ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are fair, clear and objective. Parents should be able to look at a set of arrangements and understand easily how places for that school will be allocated. All schools must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted. The admission authority for the school must also set out in the arrangements the oversubscription criteria against which places will be allocated at the school when there are more applications than places and the order in which the criteria will be applied.

All community schools have a PAN in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2021. This is the number of school places that the admission authority must offer in each relevant age group (Reception, Year 3 for Junior and Year 7 for Secondary) of a school for which it is the admission authority. Admission numbers are part of a school's admission arrangements.

Currently there are 14.74% of vacant places across all primary schools (May Census 2025). Pupil numbers will always fluctuate but the aim is to have around 8% vacancies which will ensure there will be sufficient places to meet parental demand in each area and for those moving in mid-year, securing stability for all schools. Having schools with a level of their local demand significantly below their PAN (around 30 pupils), means some schools can attract few additional pupils during

the year, requiring more classes to be run. This situation is not financially sustainable, with an inherent risk that if pupils join or leave the school, a class may need to be opened or closed, or very small class sizes may be in place. To balance school budgets, classes need to include around 25 or more pupils. Schools with declining or volatile rolls face the risk of significant changes in their annual budget, which could lead to a need to restructure or could lead to a deficit budget.

The aim of PAN reductions is to match the operational level of schools to local demand and improve the focus of resources in each school on their pupils and reduce the risk of budget deficits. Meanwhile the physical capacity will remain available if demand rises, when it is possible to increase the PAN immediately, without consultation. Should this be the case, officers would recommend that future increases to PANs be implemented on a temporary, year by year basis, while continuing to monitor parental demand.

Hillingdon has one of the largest pupil populations in London with 52,709 pupils on roll at schools in the Borough in the May 2025 census. The past few years of roll volatility require annual review and regular changes in PAN, to adjust the 'operating capacity' particularly when school finances are so challenging. Most London local Authorities have agreed or are planning reductions in primary capacity in response to falling demand for primary school places. As the birth rate has decreased, reception numbers have plateaued since 2016 and new pupil roll growth is more likely to come from new housing developments and migration into various year groups, and not just into reception classes. Half of primary schools are full to capacity but there are pockets of surplus places in a few schools that continue to grow. The demographic changes in the Borough, short and long-term effects of Brexit, Covid and employment and affordability of housing are all factors being monitored.

Field End Infant School

Field End Infant School have raised concerns about changes in their local demand and the governing body supports the reduction since it will enable the school to focus their budget and resources better for pupils, and in turn supporting school improvement. The governing body have agreed to increase the PAN should local demand for places rise. Importantly, though the process to reduce PAN requires considerable data and consultation, it is easy to reverse, so admissions authorities can quickly respond to a rise in demand and decide to admit over PAN on a temporary or permanent basis as necessary.

Below is a summary of the timeline for the ongoing discussions related to falling pupil numbers with Field End Infant School:

- October to December 2021: Consultation held between the school and the Local Authority on reducing the PAN of Field End Infant from 120 to 90, effective from September 2023
- February 2021: Cabinet approved PAN reduction from 120 to 90 effective September 2023 (see [Background paper 2](#))
- May-July 2025: Field End Infant School raised concerns about declining Reception numbers with multiple meetings with LA to monitor intake and understand the financial implications and explore options
- September 2025: Field End Junior School sent a letter outlining their intention to reduce their PAN and agreed to co-ordinate any consultation with LA and Field End Infant School
- September to October 2025: further meetings with both schools to discuss the consultation timeline and steps to support communities.

As you can see from the table below, Field End Infant School has seen an overall decline in pupil numbers over the past five years. Enrolment dropped from 291 pupils in 2020 to 207 in 2025, despite a reduction in PAN from 120 to 90 in 2023. Reception intake has remained well below capacity, falling from 82 pupils in 2020 to 67 in 2025. This trend, detailed in the School Organisation Plan (see [Background paper 3](#)), reflects reduced local demand and has led to financial pressures, reinforcing the need for further a PAN reduction to ensure sustainability. If this proposal is approved, Pupil Planning Area 5 would still have 8.15% of places vacant, which aligns with the Local Authority's expectations to maintain sufficient capacity for in year admissions.

Census		Nursery	Whole School PAN	Pupils on Roll				% Vacancies
				Rec	Yr 1	Yr 2	Total on Roll	
Oct-20	66	360	82	109	100	291	19%	
Oct-21	80	360	80	81	97	258	28%	
Oct-22	59	360	98	88	82	268	26%	
Oct-23	62	330*	70	94	80	244	26%	
Oct-24	58	300	81	74	85	240	20%	
Oct-25	59	270	67	72	68	207	23%	

*PAN reduction came into effect (120 to 90)

Non-Community School consultations

Three academies, acting as their own admissions authorities, are also consulting on proposals to reduce their Published Admissions Numbers due to sustained declines in pupil numbers with the details of the proposals listed below:

- Field End Junior School are proposing to reduce the schools PAN from 90 to 60, effective from September 2027. The decline in pupil numbers can be seen in the table below. The consultation period concluded on 15 December.

Census		Whole School PAN	Pupils on Roll					% Vacancies
			Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Total on Roll	
Oct-20	480	97	105	100	105	407	15.21%	
Oct-21	480	87	90	99	92	368	23.33%	
Oct-22	480	91	85	88	92	356	25.83%	
Oct-23	360*	70	86	87	84	327	9.17%	
Oct-24	360	57	70	70	89	286	20.56%	
Oct-25	360	75	50	68	66	259	28%	

*PAN reduction came into effect (120 to 90)

- St Martin's Church of England Primary School are proposing to reduce the school's PAN from 60 to 30, effective from September 2027. The decline in pupil numbers can be seen in the table below. The consultation period will conclude on 19 January 2026.

St Martin's Church of England Primary School											
Census	Nursery	Whole School PAN	Pupils on Roll								% Vacancies
			Rec	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Total on Roll	
Oct-20	13	380	46	57	48	43	44	30		268	29.47%
Oct-21	18	420	41	45	51	47	43	37	29	293	30.24%
Oct-22	5	420	44	41	50	42	44	46	34	301	28.33%
Oct-23	16	420	19	37	36	42	38	40	36	248	31.11%
Oct-24	7	420	26	18	34	37	39	40	39	233	44.52%
Oct-25	11	420	19	28	18	28	29	40	35	197	53%

- Park Academy West London secondary school are proposing to reduce the school's PAN from 180 to 150, effective from September 2027. The decline in pupil numbers from 2023 in particular, can be seen in the table below. Although the overall total pupil numbers remain slightly higher than they were in 2020, projections indicate that the size of the Year 7 cohort will gradually decrease in the coming years. This trend is detailed in the School Organisation Plan (see [Background paper 3](#)), which outlines demographic changes and their impact on future admissions. The consultation period will conclude on Monday 26 January 2026.

Park Academy West London								
Census	Whole School PAN	Pupils on Roll						% Vacancies
		Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11	Total on Roll	
Oct-20	1260	165	168	138	122	127	720	42.86%
Oct-21	1260	178	154	160	102	117	711	43.57%
Oct-22	1260	169	177	151	159	103	759	39.76%
Oct-23	1260	169	165	177	140	151	802	36.35%
Oct-24	1260	161	155	162	165	144	787	37.54%
Oct-25	1260	127	152	142	156	153	730	42.06%

A decision on all proposals is expected during the Spring 2026 term, following the completion of the consultation process. All schools must determine/ finalise their admissions arrangements by 28 February 2026 and publish them on their school's website by 15 March 2026, in line with the School Admissions Code.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

Over the past year, officers have undertaken a comprehensive review of all schools and discussed the proposal with the headteacher of Field End Infant School. The Headteacher informed parents during the autumn term, via the school newsletter, that a reduction in PAN was under consideration. This proposal would give stability to classes and benefit pupils, and siblings and other local parents would still be able to access the school.

The proposed changes, once agreed, will support fair and equitable school placements, maintaining the principle that children should be prioritised at schools closest to their home.

An inclusive consultation programme has been delivered, including the following elements:

- 'Have your say' via the Council website.

- Communication issued to all Hillingdon schools, advising them of the consultation with link to proposed admissions arrangements (Appendix 1).
- All adjoining neighbouring local authorities were consulted.
- A questionnaire available on-line and in paper form (on request), with the additional option to contact the team to discuss.
- Invitations to submit a written response.

The consultation was widely promoted and had the potential to reach a significant number of stakeholders, given that over 50,000 children attend schools in Hillingdon.

Consultation Responses

4 responses were received in total during the consultation period with all being submitted via the online questionnaire. The responses are summarised below.

Online Questionnaire responses are summarised below:

1. **2** respondents agreed with the proposal to reduce the Published Admissions Number of Field End Infant School from 90 (three-form entry) to 60 (two-form entry), effective from the September 2027 academic year.
 - Yes – 2
 - No – 2
 - Don't know - 0
2. Of the **2** respondents that answered 'No' or 'Don't know', reasons have been summarised below in the paper
3. **1** respondent did not agree that the proposed changes would disadvantage any Hillingdon residents.
 - Yes – 2
 - No – 1
 - Don't know – 1
4. Of the **2** respondents that agreed the changes will disadvantage Hillingdon residents, reasons have been summarised below in the paper.
5. **4** respondents have confirmed their interest in the proposal as:
 - A parent/carer/guardian - 2
 - A Local resident – 2
6. **4** respondents confirmed the number of children under the age of 18 living in their household:
 - None – 1
 - 1 – 1
 - 2 – 1
 - 3 - 0
 - 4 – 1
7. Respondents were invited to state which school(s) their child(ren) currently attend, and the responses were as follows:
 - Field End Infant School - 1

- Field End Junior School - 0
- Other Primary School in Hillingdon - 1
- Other Secondary School in Hillingdon - 1
- N/A - 1

8. 1 provided additional comment(s) on the proposals which are summarised below:

Some respondents expressed concern that reducing the distance priority radius from 1,000 metres to 750 metres could restrict children's access to high-quality education. The Local Authority do not feel there will be any material difference in admissions as a result of the reduction in distance criteria, as local children will still be able to request a place at the school, and there are forecast to still be more than sufficient places available after the PAN reduction.

The proposed reduction in PAN is driven by current and projected demand to ensure resources are used efficiently. Importantly, the school's physical capacity remains unchanged, allowing additional places to be reinstated in the future if there are substantial increases in birth rates or population growth. This will depend on local circumstances at the time of any request or increase in demand.

Conclusion

Reducing the PAN at Field End Infant School will give the school greater flexibility to manage its resources effectively whilst continuing to deliver high-quality education for the local community. The Local Authority will continue to monitor demographic trends and, if demand increases in the future, additional places can be reinstated at the school.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications are centred around staffing. The school is working with their commissioned HR provider to review the staff structure to reflect the PAN reduction. This will help in future planning to help reduce the financial pressure on the school and the risk of the school running into deficit. The spare physical space can be used in future if rolls rise in the relevant areas and will be used by the school as required meanwhile.

It is important that the Committee considers cost effective proposals that benefit resident taxpayers in relation to this review, which would ultimately be determined by Cabinet as part of the Council's broader budget planning process.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Background paper 1](#) - School Admissions Code 2021

[Background paper 2](#) - Cabinet Decision PAN reduction of Field End Infant School (Thursday 17 February 2022)

[Background paper 3](#) - London Borough of Hillingdon: School Organisation Plan 2025-26

APPENDIX

Appendix 1 – Proposed Community School Admissions Arrangements 2027-2028