

## **School Places Report**

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The report provides an overview of school place planning, including the Local Authority's (LA) statutory duties, pupil statistics, the demand for places, emerging trends, financial implications, the current process for securing additional places, other local authorities, risks and how information is communicated to the public.

### **Local Authority Duties**

2. LAs have statutory duties linked to the provision of education, including the duty to ensure there are sufficient school places (Education Act 1996).
3. Most Slough resident children will be provided with education by attending a mainstream school either in Slough or in a neighbouring borough. The demand for school places and the supply of school places in Slough is affected by the underlying birth rate trends, the number of children moving in and out of the borough, admissions criteria, the popularity of schools and for the secondary sector, the proportion of applicants who are successful in the 11+ test.
4. The objective in recent years has been to maintain a small surplus of places, so that supply just exceeds demand. This approach requires close monitoring of all of the above and a rapid response when there are new pressures.
5. Slough's duty is to offer all its own residents school places, adhering to the procedures within the Admissions Code. The majority of applicants are seeking places in reception classes and Year 7, but each year there are also around 1300 pupils placed in other year groups in Slough schools.
6. The LA can influence how schools prioritise applications for places through the annual admissions consultation process. Individual school's admission criteria often give priority to children living near the school, which can assist the LA in meeting its duty to provide places for Slough residents.

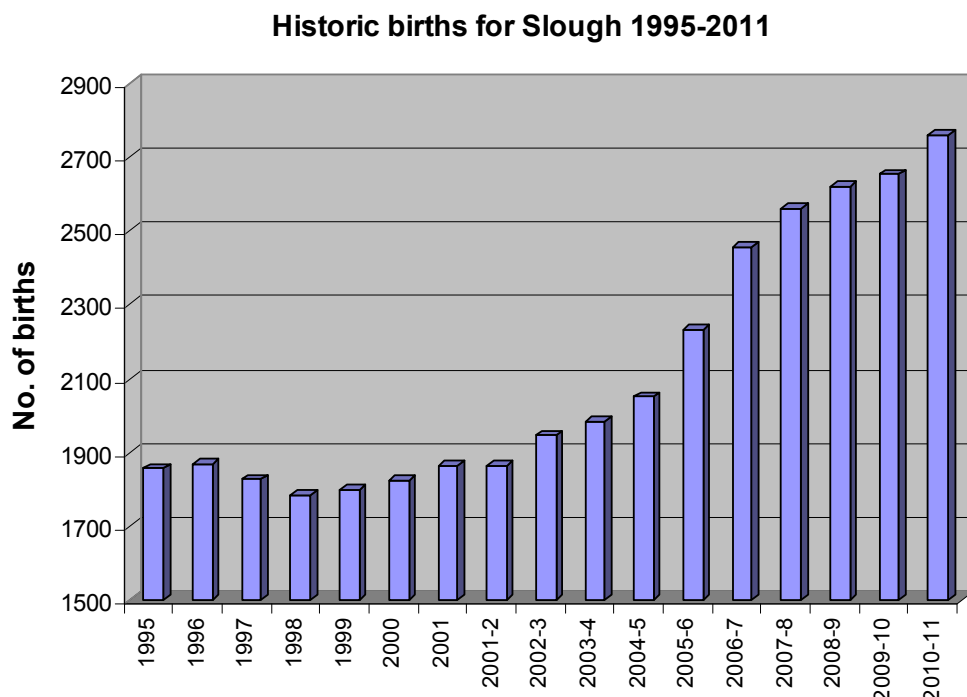
### **Pupil Statistics**

7. In January 2012 there were 25,676 pupils attending Slough nursery, primary, secondary and special schools. Of these 22,682 were Slough residents (88%) and 2994 (12%) from other boroughs. Of the 2994, most were from Buckinghamshire (770) followed by Hillingdon (692), Windsor and Maidenhead (464), Hounslow (402), and Ealing (279). The remainder were from 14 other boroughs. The grammar schools attract pupils from a wide area around Slough.
8. In January 2012 there were 3370 Slough residents attending schools in neighbouring boroughs. Most of these pupils attended schools in Windsor and Maidenhead (1618) followed by Buckinghamshire (1577) and Hillingdon (131), Reading (28), Surrey (14) and Wokingham (2). Only data for the boroughs adjacent to Slough is available. The number of pupils travelling further than this is likely to be low.
9. There are high levels of pupil mobility in Slough. Between January 2011 and January 2012 there were 1340 pupils admitted to year groups other than the normal year of entry. This

shows the high level of movement of pupils outside the normal admission points, despite the efforts of schools and the LA to restrict this.

### Demand for Primary Places and Emerging Trends

10. Slough has one of the fastest growing rates of births in the country. Since 2001-02 the number of births has increased by 48%. This growth is shown in the graph below:



11. The following table shows how the supply of reception places has increased to meet demand. It also shows how demand is likely to increase over the next 3 years based on the latest birth data. It is anticipated that between 1 and 2 additional classes will be required this school year as existing capacity is almost fully occupied. Altogether, by September 2015, between 7 and 10 new reception classes are expected to be required.

	Number of Reception classes available	Number of classes required (range)	Shortfall
<b>2007-08</b>	56	56	
<b>2008-09</b>	57	57	
<b>2009-10</b>	61	61	
<b>2010-11</b>	65	65	
<b>2011-12</b>	73.7	72	
<b>2012-13</b>	76.7*	77 - 78	1 - 2
<b>2013-14</b>	75.7	78 – 80	3 - 5
<b>2014-15</b>	75.7	79 – 81	4 - 6
<b>2015-16</b>	75.7	82 - 85	7 - 10

\* Includes one bulge class

12. Birth rates beyond 2010-11 (the latest data available from the Office for National Statistics - ONS) may rise or fall. To avoid speculation which would reduce the degree of accuracy, forecasts for reception places are only generated up to 2015-16. This is the year parents of the 2010-11 cohort will be applying for reception places.

13. When pupils are admitted to reception classes each September, the aim is to provide sufficient places for all Slough resident applicants. Most reception applicants prefer their child to attend a school nearby, so the number of Slough residents requiring a place is a good indicator of the number of places required in Slough schools.
14. It is prudent to provide slightly more places than expected to ensure all new arrivals obtain a place, with any over capacity used to reduce the number of new places required for the following school year. At the same time the over provision of places is avoided where possible as funding is limited and evidence of a declining demand would require a review of the expansion programme.
15. There is less flexibility accommodating reception pupils than those being admitted to secondary schools, as there is a class size limit of 30 in reception and for this reason expansion is planned in blocks of 30 (the number of pupils in a class).
16. Expansion projects are usually split into 2 phases. In the first phase schools are provided with infant classes and then in phase 2 with junior classes, ensuring capacity is available as pupils move up the school. This does create some surplus provision in the short term but less than would be the case with a single phase expansion.
17. There are currently no agreed expansion projects to provide additional places from 2013 to 2015, but discussions with primary schools are underway to identify expansion projects. It is possible that new Free School places will emerge to meet some of the required demand.

### **Demand for secondary places and emerging trends**

18. Demand for secondary places will increase as the large cohorts from the primary sector begin to transfer to secondary schools from September 2014 onwards. The forecasts below assume that spare capacity in neighbouring boroughs will be used. It does not show increases in capacity as a result of the new Free Schools opening during the next 2 years. This is covered in paragraph 19 below. It also excludes pupils admitted when schools temporarily exceed their planned admission number.

	<b>Number of classes available</b>	<b>Projected number of classes required</b>	<b>Projected shortfall</b>
<b>2013-14</b>	55.7	60.5	+ 2
<b>2014-15</b>	55.7	63.7	+ 5
<b>2015-16</b>	55.7	66.5	+ 8
<b>2016-17</b>	55.7	70.9	+ 13
<b>2017-18</b>	55.7	77.3	+ 19
<b>2018-19</b>	55.7	84.2	+ 26
<b>2019-20</b>	55.7	91.8	+ 34

19. Secondary place pressures are more complex to predict than primary because secondary children travel further to school, often across borough boundaries. Admissions legislation does not allow LAs to reserve school places in their own area for their own residents. The DfE are reviewing school transport provision at the moment which may affect travel patterns in future.

20. Preference data is a good indicator of the popularity of secondary schools. The total number of preferences for Slough schools has increased over the last three years from 8103 in 2010 to 9699 in 2012. This suggests Slough schools are becoming more popular.
21. Three Free Schools have been approved by the DfE and will open in September 2013 and September 2014. This is expected to create some surplus places between 2014 and 2017. The current popularity of Slough schools may mean that the surplus places are created in schools just outside Slough. This may change if schools close to Slough become more popular. Any surplus places will be filled as larger year groups move through the system in the following years. In the short term some schools in and around Slough may consider themselves vulnerable, if there is an over supply of school places. It is known that more expressions of interest will be submitted for new Free Schools in Slough and it is likely that some will be approved in future. The timing of these approvals and opening dates of new Free Schools is determined by the DfE and can't be influenced by the Authority.
22. For the secondary sector the LA's role is changing as Free Schools approved by the DfE meet the increase in demand for school places. The LA is becoming the facilitator of this process rather than the provider of places. This new role relies on good relationships with all schools, regardless of whether they are maintained, academies or Free Schools.
23. The table below compares current forecasts against the impact of the new Free Schools should they open as planned. The 3 Free Schools may create some surplus in the short term but it is expected that new places will be required by September 2017 and up to 3 new schools required by 2019.

Year	Cumulative projected new classes required	Free School Proposals			Cumulative growth in provision	Projected Surplus
		Sikh School	SASH School	Lynch Hill School		
Sep 2012						
Sep 2013	+ 2	3			+ 3	+ 1
Sep 2014	+ 5		4	4	+ 11	+ 6
Sep 2015	+ 8		2	2	+ 15	+ 7
Sep 2016	+ 13				+ 15	+ 2
Sep 2017	+ 19				+ 15	- 4
Sep 2018	+ 26				+ 15	- 11
Sep 2019	+ 34				+ 15	- 19

### **Demand for SEN places and emerging trends**

24. The demand for SEN places is generally expected to rise in proportion to the increase in population. Data suggests this is slightly faster for Slough. A task and finish group has been established to plan the expansion of SEN provision in response to the 48% increase in the birth numbers. Both nationally and locally the increase in the number of children on the autistic spectrum is rising faster than the population and this represents the area with the most significant pressure on provision.
25. Actions for increasing provision currently underway include the re-provision and enlargement of Slough's only secondary school specifically for children with BESD, enlargement of the primary equivalent and creation of a range of new SEN units at schools across the town.

Further resourced SEN units will be opened in a phased way as the population and demand continues to rise.

### **Demand for Early Years places and emerging trends**

26. The demand for places for 3 and 4 years olds is rising in line with the population. Provision of places for these age groups is non-statutory. There are social and economic reasons for ensuring provision is available as well as meeting the expectation of residents. Most of the primary expansion projects to date have increased nursery provision in line with the increase in planned admission number of the school.
27. The government has introduced a number of initiatives seeking to extend the childcare options available to parents, particularly for 2 year olds, but for younger groups also. A new capital allocation was announced recently providing £100m nationally to create 100,000 extra 2 year old places. When individual LA allocations are known a new programme of works will be agreed.

### **Demand for Post-16 places and emerging trends**

28. The pressure on places as a result of the rising birth rates won't be felt in the post-16 sector for some years. In the meantime additional places will be created at the 3 Free Schools due to open in 2013 and 2014. The main strategy for providing new places will be to expand post-16 provision at the same time as expanding secondary places whether this is at maintained schools, academies or Free Schools. The Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) and the significant investment planned at East Berkshire College may affect demand in future years.

### **Financial Implications**

- 29 The table below outlines the planned 5 year capital programme for the Education Department. In summary, the full programme is expected to be funded from grants received from the DFE and is reflected in the Councils overall capital budget to be approved by Council on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2013. Should the 3 Secondary Free Schools open as planned, then this could release the funding set aside for the expansion of Wexham School, leaving an unallocated sum of almost £9m at the end of this 5 year cycle.

	(000s)	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17			
<b>Primary Expansion Programme</b>									
P051	Infant and Junior Annexes	£4,374	£4,278	£4,790	£900	£1,260			
P076	Town Hall Conversion	£2,470	£61						
P048	Western House	£55							
P865	Parlaunt Park	£175							
P866	Wexham Court	£95							
<b>Secondary and Post 16 Expansion Programme</b>									
tbc	Purchase Castleview Land	£0	£1,250						
P095	Wexham School Expansion Project			£2,000	£5,000		(on hold)		
<b>Special Needs Expansion Programme</b>									
P856	Haybrook College	£1,350	£1,850						
P090	Littledown expansion	£102							
P101	SEN Resource	£630	£350	£250	£250	£250			

	Expansion Programme								
Early Years Expansion Programme									
var	Children's Centres combined	£278							
tbc	2-year old expansion programme		£300	£300			(provisional sum)		
	Other education capital commitments	£929	£2,754	£865	£865	£865			
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>£10,458</b>	<b>£10,843</b>	<b>£8,205</b>	<b>£7,015</b>	<b>£2,375</b>			
							<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Funding available</b>	<b>Still to be allocated</b>
Income received to date	Other income	£292					£292	£292	£0
	Section 106	£2,050					£2,050	£2,791	£741
	Modernisation 2011-12 & 2012-13	£929	£2,766				£3,695	£3,695	£0
	Basic Need 2011-12	£3,911					£3,911	£3,911	£0
	BNSV 2011-12	£3,276	£3,261	£2,924			£9,461	£9,461	£0
	Basic Need 2012-13		£2,601	£5,281	£1,027		£8,909	£8,909	£0
	BNSV 2012-13		£2,215		£5,988	£2,375	£10,578	£11,774	£1,196
2013-14 income	Modernisation 2013-14						£0	tbc	
	Basic Need 2013-14						£0	tbc	
	2-year old funding 2013-14						£0	tbc	
		<b>£10,458</b>	<b>£10,843</b>	<b>£8,205</b>	<b>£7,015</b>	<b>£2,375</b>	<b>£38,896</b>	<b>£40,833</b>	<b>£1,937</b>

BNSV – Basic Need Safety Valve Funding

Section 106 – this is ring-fenced and time constrained. It will be allocated to fund expansion schemes to ensure the conditions of individual funding agreements are satisfied and funding cannot be claimed back by developers.

## Future Funding

30. From 2014-15 onwards the James Review is expected to have an impact on the way capital funding is allocated to LAs. One suggestion in the Review was that a Local Investment Plan is agreed by the LA and all its schools and submitted to the DfE for approval. It is possible that some or all future capital funding is then retained by the DfE and devolved on a project by project basis. Larger capital projects may be delivered centrally in the same way that new Free Schools schemes are at the moment, and funding would not need to pass to the LA.

## Process for securing additional places

31. Currently this is a three stage process.

- Officers provide information and recommendations to the School Organisation Group (SOG). This includes the latest admissions data on the supply and demand for places and future forecasts. The SOG consists of representative Slough Heads and LA Officers.
- SOG is tasked with considering options for expanding schools based around an open and transparent discussion process. For primary expansions, a prioritisation matrix containing all schools is considered and a number of schools yet to expand are nominated for the next tranche of expansions. Schools in Ofsted categories would not normally be considered.

- (c) Once agreement is reached with the individual school then a business case is submitted for approval to the Capital Strategy Board. Expansion projects once agreed may arch over several years and be divided into a number of phases.
- (d) Each month CMT is provided with a progress report (Gold Project).

## Communications

- 32. Progress on major projects and new initiatives may be communicated to the press and public via the press office. This could for example include new expansion projects, updates on free schools and other long term planning issues. Recent examples include press releases on the Town Hall.
- 33. Routine communication with parents about the admissions process is provided on Slough's website. Parents can also contact Landmark Place by phone or in person with specific admissions queries. Parents also attend school open evenings at primary and secondary schools and a representative from the Admissions Team is available to discuss the process and give advice.

## Other Local Authorities

- 34. The DfE released data from all Local Authorities in January 2012, showing how pupil forecasts varied across England. For the primary sector Slough was forecasting the 8<sup>th</sup> highest increase in demand for places of all LAs when current numbers were compared with forecasts for 2015. For the secondary sector Slough was the 10<sup>th</sup> highest.

## Risks

Risk	Measures to Mitigate Risk
The Council operates an 'as and when' approach to the provision of additional school places to minimise the length of time that additional capacity remains unused. There is a risk that this approach can result in a temporary shortfall of places.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Closely monitor demand for places through the school admissions team and SOG.</li> <li>2. Agree candidates for expansion before additional places are required, so that projects can proceed at short notice.</li> <li>3. Secure funding for expansion projects before additional places are required so that projects can proceed at short notice.</li> <li>4. Use modular construction methods and existing procurement frameworks to shorten building projects.</li> <li>5. Consider bulge classes and the use of 'spare' classrooms in schools that have already expanded.</li> </ol>
Sufficient funding is not available for expansion projects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Split primary expansion projects into 2 phases to avoid front loading project costs.</li> <li>2. Provide capacity and forecast data to the DfE annually.</li> <li>3. Continue to lobby government via MPs and national bodies including EBD OG.</li> </ol>
Primary expansion projects require more than the £1.65m budgeted, due to site specific issues.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bring funding forward from future years.</li> <li>2. Look to prioritise sites that have fewer planning issues.</li> </ol>
Building projects are not	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with schools to ensure school is able to house</li> </ol>

complete before children are admitted	children in the interim period, either in current building or in temporary accommodation. 2. Use modular construction methods and existing procurement frameworks to shorten building project.
Secondary Free Schools do not open as planned by the DfE	1. Earmark funding for starting LA expansion projects at short notice. 2. Co-operate with the DfE in securing sites for Free Schools.
Free school approvals by the DfE result in an over provision of places with the result that some schools may be at risk as a result of reduced rolls and changes in parental preference patterns.	1. Maintain a co-ordinated approach to the provision of school places as far as possible with all stakeholders in the area. 2. Work with free school promoters and the DfE as far as possible to schedule expansions.

## Further Discussion

35. There are some suggestions below.

- (a) Whether the existing process for securing school places involving the SOG and Capital Strategy Board should be reviewed?
- (b) Should the 'as and when' approach continue and are the risks with this approach acceptable?
- (c) Should this report be developed into a long term place planning strategy for publication and possibly Cabinet approval?
- (d) Could communication with the public about major projects and more routine admission procedures be improved?

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**12<sup>th</sup> November 2012**