

DRAFT

School Places Strategy

2023-27



Version: 2d

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Key

FE	Form of Entry, this equates to 7 classrooms for primary schools and 5 classes (plus sixth form places) for secondary school
PAN	Planned Admission Number, the number of places available in each school year group
NOR	Number on roll, this is a count of the number of pupils in an educational facility
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency (formerly EFA): national body responsible for school funding, delivering Free Schools and monitoring academies
ARP -	Additionally Resourced Provision, this is an umbrella for Resource Bases and SEN Units attached to mainstream schools. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ RB – Resource Base, this is where pupils will be spending more than 50% of the time in mainstream classes▪ SEN Unit - Where pupils will spend the majority of their school time in the unit.
DfE	Department for Education is the national body responsible for education, children's services, higher and further education policy
SCAP	School Capacity return. This is an annual return by SBC to the ESFA to explain projected shortfalls in school places. Early years, SEND and PRU places are not captured in this return
SBC	Slough Borough Council
LA	Local Authority or Slough Borough Council
AP	Alternative Provision also known as Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) for those not willing or able to attend mainstream school for a short period or longer term
SEND	Special Education Needs and Disabilities, refers to pupils with an EHCP, these pupils may attend a mainstream school possibly in a Resourced Unit or attend a Special School
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan, document which sets out the education, healthcare and social care needs of a child or young person who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities for whom extra support is needed in school
RD	Regional Director acts on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education and is responsible for intervening when academies or sponsors are underperforming, arranging sponsors for new academies and advising on new free schools.

1. Introduction

To be completed

The Slough School Places Strategy is aligned to other key council strategies and in particular supports delivery of the following:

Council's Corporate Plan 2022-25	Priority 3: A borough for children and young people to thrive
School Effectiveness Strategy 2022-25	Outlines how the local authority will fulfil its statutory duties in relation to school effectiveness and articulates our ambitions for the school system
SEND and Inclusion Strategy	Sets out the local authority's collective ambition for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) aged 0-25
Slough Wellbeing Strategy 2020-25	<p>Priority 1: Starting Well</p> <p>Starting Well focuses on the health and wellbeing of children and young people. The evidence tells us that when children start school with a good level of health and development, they are more likely to go on to succeed in later stages of education. Tackling health and wellbeing issues at an early stage in life prepares our young people for their future.</p> <p>Over the next 5 years, the Board will seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decrease the attainment gap between all children and the bottom 20% at Early Years Foundation Stage.• Reduce the number of Reception and Year 6 aged children classified as obese.• Improve immunisation rates amongst young people in Slough.• Improve oral health amongst children in Slough.

Signed

Sue Butcher
Executive Director for
People (Children)

Councillor Hulme
Cabinet Member for Children's Services,
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2. Place Planning Summary

Slough Borough Council (the Council) is responsible for ensuring there are sufficient school places available in its area for every child aged 5 to 16 that requires a school place. The Council also has a statutory duty to promote high standards, ensure fair access to opportunity for education and training and promote fulfilment of learning potential for children in its area and for young people who have an Education, Health and Care Plan. However, the diverse nature of the school estate means that the Council is responsible for commissioning the majority of school places rather than delivering them. Government funding is provided to local authorities for increasing the number of school places including places for children with SEND and alternative provision.

a) Primary Places:

The peak in births reached Reception in 2014-15 and 2015-16, and since then overall Reception numbers have been decreasing. The impact of this reduction in births is different for each planning area of the town:

- **West** Planning Area: There is a growing surplus of Reception places due to this area seeing a dramatic reduction in birth numbers. All year groups have surplus capacity and this is expected to remain the situation.
- **Central** Planning Area: There is some surplus capacity in Reception and Year 1 due to the opening of Grove Academy but other year groups are under pressure. With this area of the town likely to see significant development of new housing in coming years it is expected that there will remain a pressure on places.
- **East** Planning Area: There is a pressure for places in all year groups in the east of the town which can mean options are limited for in-year applications.

A certain level of surplus is planned in all year groups to accommodate new arrivals to Slough. While surplus places need to be planned by the Local Authority to ensure a sufficiency of places, it can put a financial pressure on those schools with too many empty places due to the per pupil funding model.

A number of schools, mainly in the west, have reduced their admission numbers in response to a reduced demand for places and others are considering a reduction. Any reductions will be coordinated by the Council to ensure capacity remains in place for the long-term need.

b) Secondary Places:

Over the last 10 years the number of pupils obtaining a year 7 place at a Slough secondary school has increased by just under 50%. Capacity has been increased to keep pace with this rising demand: 4 new free schools have

opened in Slough and many existing schools have increased their admission numbers.

September 2023 will see the largest Year 6 cohort applying for secondary school places before numbers start to reduce. There are sufficient Year 7 places available for this peak and forecasts suggest no further forms of entry are required.

c) Post-16:

Post-16 numbers at Slough schools are rising year-on year and are forecast to rise by almost 500 places by 2029-30, when they are expected to reach their peak. 3 new academy schools have delayed the opening of their sixth forms, this has meant fewer pupils than expected started in Year 12 for 2022-23. Any forecast growth is dependent on these places becoming available. Alternative places are available at local colleges.

d) SEND Places:

The majority of statutory age pupils with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) will be educated in mainstream schools. However, a proportion will always require specialist provision. Those requiring full time specialist provision may attend a Special School. For some pupils, a placement at a SEND Unit or a Resource Base attached to a mainstream school may be more appropriate. Some children with social, emotional and mental health needs may be placed in alternative provision (AP) where this is appropriate to meet their needs.

Over the last 10 years SBC has significantly increased specialist provision. This includes opening or expanding a number of resource bases and SEND units and both of Slough's existing special schools have been expanded.

The Council will be investing £3.5m over the next two years to continue to expand and support facilities for SEND pupils.

e) Alternative Provision (or PRU) places:

Alternative Provision caters for those pupils who have been excluded, are at risk of exclusion or cannot attend school for any reason. Some pupils can be educated in Littledown School, which is a special school that can cater for short term needs. New facilities are planned for Haybrook College who cater for secondary pupils, this will increase places for pupils with social, emotional and mental health issues where this provision best meets their needs and improve facilities for existing pupils.

3. Legal and Policy Context

The Council has statutory duties to:

- Ensure sufficient school places are available in their area (*Education Act 1996 Section 14*).
- Secure diversity in the provision of schools and increase opportunities for parental choice (S14 of the *Education Act 1996*).
- Make arrangements to enable a parent to express a preference as to the school they wish their child to be educated at (*School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Section 86*).
- Secure sufficient primary, secondary and further education to contribute to the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community and to meet the needs of the population (S13 of the *Education Act 1996*).
- Exercise functions with a view to the promotion of high standards, fair access to opportunity, fulfilment of the learning potential of children and young people in the local area (S13A of the *Education Act 1996*).

Paragraph 95 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied:

“It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and
- b) work with school promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.”

The Council is obligated to offer a place to every child of school age whose parents wish them to have one. The intention is that the place offered will be within a reasonable distance from the home address and if possible, at one of the schools preferred by the parent. There is no duty to offer a place at the preferred school although every effort is made to satisfy parental preference.

4. School Place Planning Principles

School place planning, in simple terms, is the comparison of the projected future demand for school places with current school capacity.

A small oversupply of places is planned to ensure that the LA can place new arrivals, cope with higher than forecast demand and enable as many parents as possible to secure places at their preferred school.

Our principles for managing school places are:

1. Locate new schools or expand existing schools where shortfalls are forecast so pupils can walk to school. Prioritisation criteria will consider quality of education and popularity of schools (those with a high number of 1st and 2nd preferences) and those schemes that offer better value for money
2. Work closely with the Regional Director for any expansion proposals by existing academies and to secure school promoters with a proven track record in delivering high quality education in the relevant phase
3. Avoid creating an over-supply of places in any single planning area unless the places are required in the longer term
4. Retain a small level of spare capacity to permit movement between schools and for new arrivals
5. Maximise the available sources of funding for programme delivery
6. Prioritise the creation of new places that are available to all pupils.

5. Demographics and Key Issues

5.1 Demographics

Slough is an urban town in the east of Berkshire, approximately 20 miles west of central London. It is home to 45,682 children and young people, 11,774 of which are aged 0-4. Out of a total population of 158,498, 29% are below the age of 19, making the population of Slough significantly younger than the average for south-east local authorities. The borough also includes a higher proportion of young adults aged 25-44, suggesting a large number of young families are resident. (Source: ONS Census 2021-Nov 2022)

Slough unitary authority was ranked 73rd out of the 317 English local authorities for deprivation in the 2019 Indices of Deprivation, significantly more deprived than other east Berkshire areas: Bracknell Forest (284th) and Windsor and Maidenhead (304th). (Source: Department for Communities and Local Government – Sep 2019).

5.2 Slough's Schools

Like other densely populated areas Slough has a high number of schools within a small area. There is a broad range of schools including faith schools (Sikh, Islamic, Roman Catholic and Church of England), grammar schools, single sex (girls' schools) as well as non-denominational, non-selective Community and Foundation schools. In 2017 a new 'all-through' school opened which combines primary and secondary education in one setting. Slough's primary schools are comparatively large with many offering 4 forms of entry and one primary school offering 8 forms of entry split across two sites.

The status of Slough schools is shown in the table below. Slough has a higher than average number of academies, where nationally 43% of schools were academies in 2020-21 including free schools (Source: Gov.uk website) in Slough the figure is currently 78% (excluding nurseries).

Total number of schools in Slough based on type* (Jan 2023)

	Maintained				Academy	Total
	Community	Voluntary Aided	Voluntary Controlled	Foundation	Converter	
Nursery	5					5
Primary	3	3	1	2	19	28
Secondary	1	1			12	14
All-through					1	1
Special/AP					3	3
Total	9	4	1	2	35	51

* Excluding private schools

Number of schools by admission criteria (Jan 2023) – two secondary schools are recorded in more than one column

	Non-selective	Banding	Grammar	Single Sex	Faith
Nursery	5				
Primary	20				8
Secondary	6	1	4	2	3
All-through	1				
Special	3				
Total	35	1	4	2	11

Types of Schools – the descriptions below apply to Slough schools.

- Maintained Schools** – overseen by the LA:

 - Community (C) the local authority owns the buildings and determines admission arrangements.
 - Foundation (F) the governing body own the school buildings, employ the staff and determine their own admission arrangements.
 - Voluntary Aided (VA) a trust or diocesan body own the building, employ the staff and determine their own admission arrangements.
 - Voluntary Controlled (VC) a diocesan body own the building, similar to voluntary aided schools but the local authority employs the staff and determines admission arrangements.
 - Grammar schools - select their pupils based on a test of academic ability. 3 of Slough’s 4 grammar schools are now academies, the other is VA.
- Non-maintained schools** – independent from the local council:

 - Academies - the trust owns or has a long lease on their site, they operate under a Funding Agreement with the government and can follow a different curriculum.

5.3 Academies

Section 6A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires local authorities to seek proposals for a new academy if it believes a new school needs to be established in its local area. As part of the process of inviting proposals, the Council would be expected to identify a site and funding for any building works. The Council is not able to determine where and when these schools open although the ESFA work closely with the LA to time openings to meet local demand. There are certain exceptions to the requirement to seek proposals for a new academy and these are set out in the legislation and expanded on in the statutory guidance “Opening and closing maintained schools – November 2019”.

Academies are able to apply direct to the Secretary of State if they wish to expand or reduce their admission numbers although the Local Authority is consulted on any changes. The Council needs to effectively plan school provision in a world where schools themselves have increasing autonomy. This strategy and local Headteacher consultative forums are the key local vehicles for influencing school plans. The Regional Director (RD) also has a role to play as their duties include advising on new school proposals and they are the decision maker when proposals for significant changes to academies are published.

5.4 School Performance

The proportion of all Slough schools judged as good and outstanding by Ofsted is 92%. This is above the national average of 88%. The proportion of good and outstanding primary schools in Slough is 100%, well above the national average of 89%. The proportion of good or outstanding secondary schools is 86% this is 6% above the national average of 80% (Ofsted inspections and outcomes Nov 2022).

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the summer 2020 and 2021 Early Year Foundation Stage Profile and Key Stage 2 assessments were cancelled.
 - For the Early Years Foundation Stage, Slough ranked 78th against all other local authorities for pupils achieving a good level of development in 2022. This is down 45 places from 33rd in 2019.
 - At Key Stage 2 Slough is ranked 31st against all other local authorities for pupils achieving the expected standards in Reading, Writing and Maths combined in 2022, which was the same rank as in 2019.
- Given the unprecedented change in the way GCSE and A-level results have been awarded in the summers of 2020 and 2021 and the resulting significant changes to the distribution of the grades received (in comparison to previous year’s exam results), pupil level attainment in 2020/21 is not comparable to that in 2019/20 or to that of the previous exam years for the purposes of measuring changes in pupil performance.
- At Key Stage 4, Slough ranked 13th for GCSE grade 5 or above in English and mathematics against all other local authorities in 2022. This is down 6 places from 7th in 2019.

- At Key Stage 5, Slough ranked 98th for average point score entry per A-Level against all other local authorities in 2022. This is up 18 places from 116th in 2019.

Performance tables and results for all schools can be found on the DfE website here: <https://www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables>

Ofsted reports for all schools can be found using the following link: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>

5.5 Site availability

Over the last decade one of the biggest challenges that Slough faced in seeking to expand the school estate by 50% was the shortage of available sites both for extensions to existing schools and for new schools. More than half of all Slough's schools have now expanded or are new schools, others are on small compact sites and others have planning constraints that mean expansion options are limited or undesirable.

5.6 Travel Patterns and Grammar Schools

Primary pupils generally attend schools close to home. Only a relatively small number of primary pupils cross into neighbouring authorities to attend school. Those who do so tend to live close to the boundary.

4 of Slough's 15 secondary schools are grammar schools. The effect of the grammar system is that cross border movement is more significant in the secondary sector. 27% of Year 7 pupils attending a Slough school were in a grammar setting as at January 2021. There are significant levels of cross border movement by secondary age pupils mainly due to the popularity of the grammar schools. The admission criteria for 3 of the 4 grammar schools now give some priority to pupils living in the Slough area and to date all Slough resident children who applied and were eligible have been offered a place. Even so, 3 of the 4 grammars have the majority of the pupils on roll from other LAs. Schools are not permitted to set admission criteria by reference to Borough boundaries or to prioritise children living with the Council's areas, although they can set a geographical area in which children will be prioritised. Of the 638 Year 7 pupils in Grammar Schools January 2021, 395 (62%) live in other authority areas. Very roughly speaking a similar number of Slough pupils travel out of borough for a school place as travel in each day.

The completion of the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) may mean an increase in applications to Slough's grammar schools from outside Slough as travel times reduce. Although this may mean pupils travelling greater distances for a school place the effect on Slough pupils may be negligible; this will be monitored.

5.7 New Housing

Slough is a growing community with an increasing demand for additional housing. It is estimated that Slough will require an additional 17,000 homes over the next 19 years, creating a pressure on land and local services including schools. The tables below show the additional homes completed in recent years and expected to be completed by 2023/24. The increase in the proportion of flats completed in recent years is a combined result of many 'Office to Residential' conversions and a minimal number of new homes being built on greenfield sites. Flats are expected to dominate completions in the future.

	Net Additional Homes	Houses	Flats
2015/16	778	34%	66%
2016/17	521	23%	77%
2017/18	846	35%	65%
2018/19	534	19%	81%
2019/20	503	10%	90%
2020/21	501	10%	90%
2021-22	532	6%	94%

	Expected completions
2022/23to 2023/24	500 per year

The level of new housing is closely monitored due to its potential impact on demand for school places. Where new housing completions are forecast to exceed recent trends then adjustment factors will be applied to pupil forecasts.

In order to measure the impact on demand for school places the Council carries out a survey every 5 years to assess the number of pupils that live in newly built housing in Slough. The last survey was conducted during 2019. The output from this survey is a series of tables showing the number and age of pupils produced by each dwelling type and size. The numbers in the output tables are called the Pupil Product Ratios.

It is often the case that families moving into new housing developments already reside in the borough and new families to Slough move into the vacated properties. This can mean that planning school provision as a result of new housing is not straightforward as pupil growth can be across the town as well as in the area of the development. This can also mean that there is a lag before local schools see the full impact of new housing developments, as pupils can remain at their previous school for a period.

Details of Slough's current Local Plan and progress to date on an update of the plan can be found here: <https://www.slough.gov.uk/planning-policy/emerging-local-plan-slough-2016-2036>

Developer Contributions – When planning applications are received for new housing developments the Local Authority considers whether there is a shortage of school provision for children moving into the new homes. Calculations of the numbers of children forecast to be produced are based on the Pupil Product Ratios mentioned above. For any shortfalls the developer is asked to contribute the capital cost of building the new places via Section 106 planning obligations, to address the impact new development will have on public infrastructure.

Until recently the LA has been expanding education provision for most sectors, so contributions were always sought from developers. This is starting to change and currently:

- Contributions for primary places are not required for developments in the west planning area and are occasionally reduced for the central planning area
- Contributions for secondary and post-16 places are being reviewed
- Early years are assessed on a site-by-site basis
- SEND contributions are being reviewed.

Applications for larger developments may trigger the need for a full new form of entry to be funded or even a new school. Due to the existing pressure on early years provision across the town accommodation for a nursery may be requested as part of the development for both medium and large sites.

Centre of Slough – Over the next 15-20 years the Council expects that up to 9000 new homes will be built in the central area of Slough, around the High Street and beyond the current edge of the town centre. A detailed piece of work will be required to assess the impact on school places of such a large number of new homes in a relatively small area.

Using the assumption that 9000 new flats are built with a split as follows: 3000x 1-bed, 5000x 2-bed and 1000x 3-bed, and applying the most recent Pupil Product Ratios, this would generate:

- 4200 primary pupils or the equivalent of 7 new schools.
- 1330 secondary pupils or the equivalent of 1.5 new secondary schools
- 200 post-16 pupils
- 2170 early years children or a high number of large new nurseries
- 79 pupils with EHCPs requiring specialist accommodation

This doesn't mean this many places need to be built as:

- SBC's forecasts already include an assumption that 600+ homes will be built across Slough each year based on recent experience (totalling 9000+ over 15 years)
- The reduced birth rate will continue to increase the number of surplus places in existing schools. Although there is a risk that the spare capacity is repurposed by schools/ academies and can't be brought back into use when required.

The main issue for Slough is the lack of schools within or close to the Centre. There is one primary school within the zone, St Mary's CE Primary. Without a new primary school or schools located near the centre of town then pupils will be asked to travel increasing distances to find a school place, this pressure will increase as time moves on and more homes are built. For instance, the highest concentration of spare capacity at the moment is towards the western edge of the town, this could be up to 3 miles by road from the town centre. There are a number of secondary schools within a reasonable distance of the town centre although these currently have little or no spare capacity.

Without new schools being built there will be a large increase in pupil movement from the town centre each day, this will add to congestion and a lack of convenient school places could possibly affect the sale of new homes.

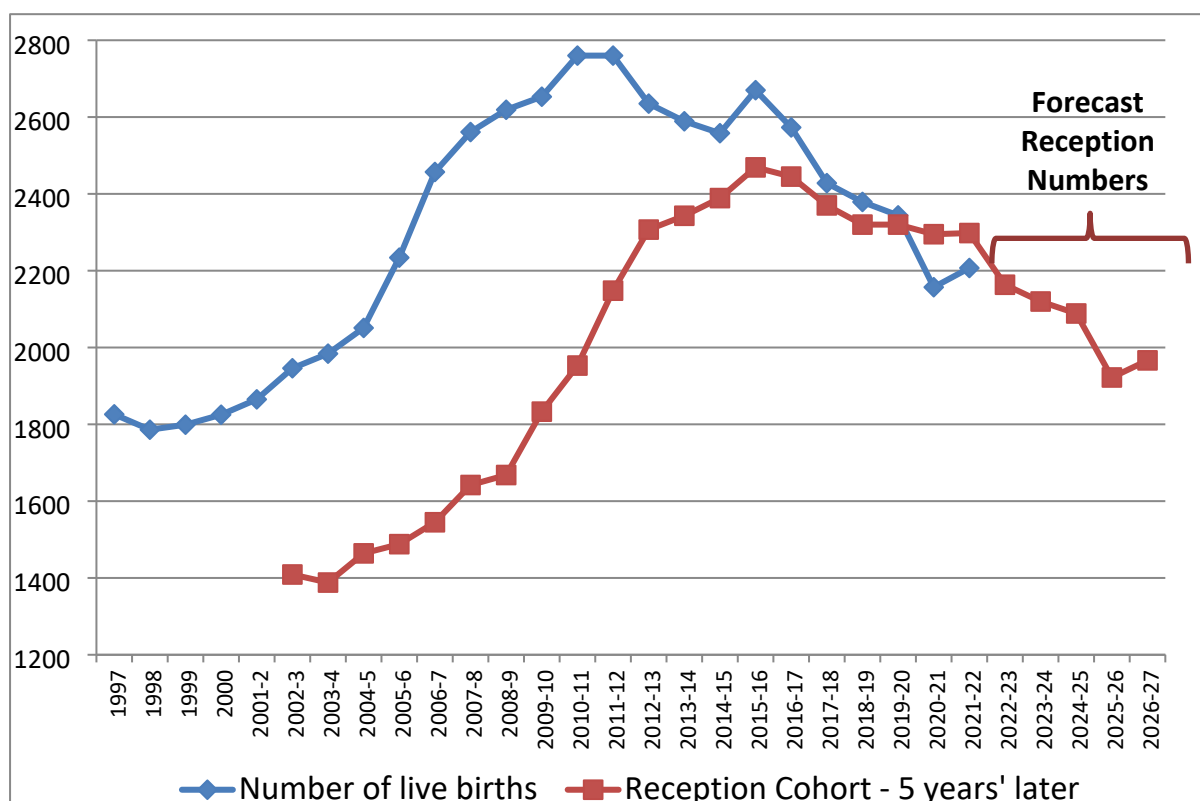
6. Pupil Forecasting

Pupil forecasts are calculated by applying recent trends to current known population data.

- The LA's forecasts of future Reception demand are mainly based on the number of births in Slough 5 years' earlier. A weighted average ratio for recent years is applied to new birth data to forecast Reception demand.
- Forecasts for all other year groups are based on patterns of retention between year groups in recent years, for instance if Year 2 to Year 3 normally grows by 1%, then the current Year 2 cohort is increased by 1% to forecast next year's Year 3.
- Adjustments: Reasons for adjusting the data could include known changes in demographics or school organisation. NHS Primary Care Registration data is a new source of data for the LA and is used for assessing pre-school cohort changes.

6.1 Birth Data

The most significant factor affecting demand for Reception places is the number of births in Slough. The graph below shows the number of births each year since 1997. Numbers rose steadily from 1999 until 2010-11 and 2011-12 when numbers were at their peak. Since then, the trend for birth numbers has been reducing. The pupils born in 2017-18 are those that will start in Reception classes in September 2022.



Sources: ONS live birth data and School Census

Actual ONS birth data is available to 2020-21. An estimate for 2021-22 has been produced based on NHS data, this has enabled projections to be produced for Reception demand up to 2026-27 (i.e an extra year).

Reception numbers for 2020-21 were around 4 percent lower than expected and for October 2022 were about 1.5% higher than expected. Suggesting that past patterns are no longer applicable and numbers are more volatile than in the past.

6.2 In-year Growth

In-year growth is the effect of movement into the borough of pupils looking for school places. In-year growth is used here to mean new arrivals to Slough applying for school places outside the usual start points of Reception and Year 7 including those starting after September in Reception and Year 7. The level of new arrivals will be influenced by many factors including the number of dwellings built in the town, the number of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO), local policy and national issues outside Slough's control.

The table below shows the net growth of each cohort in schools between January School Censuses. The first highlighted number, 34, represents the growth in cohort size between January 2015 and January 2016 of pupils currently in Year 1. The left, coloured diagonal line follows the growth in the cohort size for one primary year group from Reception through to Year 6; this cohort grew by 66 pupils or 11 pupils on average each year.

Note that the situation is very different for secondary classes, where there is an overall reduction in cohort size.

	Year R→1	Year 1→2	Year 2→3	Year 3→4	Year 4→5	Year 5→6	Year 7→8	Year 8→9	Year 9→10	Year 10→11		
2015/16	34	40	11	13	11	14	33	16	-20	-53		
2016/17	20	13	4	18	34	23	-29	-9	-26	-56		
2017/18	5	-32	-25	-19	-7	-2	-10	-29	-28	-43		
2018/19	17	12	9	21	18	37	-18	-4	22	-31		
2019/20	29	12	-1	-10	28	11	3	18	11	-23		
2020/21	-8	-22	-18	-28	7	-5	1	-22	-19	-11		
2021/22	62	21	31	26	38	10	-1	-9	7	16		
Average growth per year for the current year 6 cohort							11	Average reduction per year for the current year 11 cohort				-4

Primary cohort growth fluctuates from year to year. Most cohorts shrank from 2017 to 2018 and between 2020 and 2021, yet all cohorts grew between 2021 and 2022. This recent net growth in primary cohorts means that the latest forecasts produced by Slough will be higher than those produced last year.

7. Primary Place Planning

The Local Authority aims to provide the right number of high-quality school places in the right part of town, at the right time to meet future need. This can sometimes mean a reduction in places as well as expansion.

Planned Surplus: Slough plans for a small oversupply of places in all year groups to ensure places for:

- cohort growth up to Year 6,
- new arrivals to Slough above those forecast to arrive and
- some pupil movement between schools to satisfy parental preference.

A small surplus of only 15 places is the target for Year 6 and each year 15 more places are added to the target so that the target surplus for Reception is 115 places. The target per planning area is a third of the overall number.

		R	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Yr6
Target surplus:	overall	115	90	75	60	45	30	15
	per planning area	35	30	25	20	15	10	5

Oversupply: While some surplus places are required it is important not to generate an oversupply of places in a sector or one part of the town. An oversupply can be destabilising for one or more schools leading to questions of viability, quality and potentially to unplanned closures.

Flexibility: Unexpected increases or decreases in pupil demand can occur as a result of local or national changes, requiring a range of options that can be rolled out as and when required.

Gradual Opening: When new school places become available either at a new school or as part of an expansion project not all the classes are open to pupils in the first year. Usually only the lowest year group will open in the first year and this extra class or classes will gradually move up through the school one year at a time. This means that new schools or expanding schools will often have spare classes that will be needed over time. Similarly, for schools who reduce their admission number (PAN), this usually happens gradually one year at a time.

7.1 Projected Pressure on Places – Slough Overview

The following table shows the current and projected surplus places in Slough above the planned surplus level. The level of surplus places is above target in most year groups and very high for Year 3 (147 above target). The surplus is 2 below target in Reception.

Further schools are currently considering reducing their PAN by a class. If these reductions go ahead then this would reduce the future surpluses shown below.

Table showing projected surplus places across Slough to 2026/27 (May data)

Note that the planned surplus has been deducted first.

Year		Year R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2020/21	Actual	5	11	142	69	26	47	80
2021/22	Actual	-2	24	33	147	62	9	60
2022/23	Projected	65	-7	-3	-14	95	50	16
2023/24	Projected	106	60	11	-25	-32	72	46
2024/25	Projected	138	104	78	-10	-43	-56	68
2025/26	Projected	307	136	123	57	-28	-67	-60
2026/27	Projected	261	309	155	103	40	-52	-70

The table highlights two distinct issues:

- a projected pressure on places for current Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 cohorts as they progress up the year groups,
- the effect of the declining birth rate creating a large and increasing surplus of places in Reception classes. More than 3 classes in 2023-24 and 10 classes by 2025-26.

7.2 Reception Classes

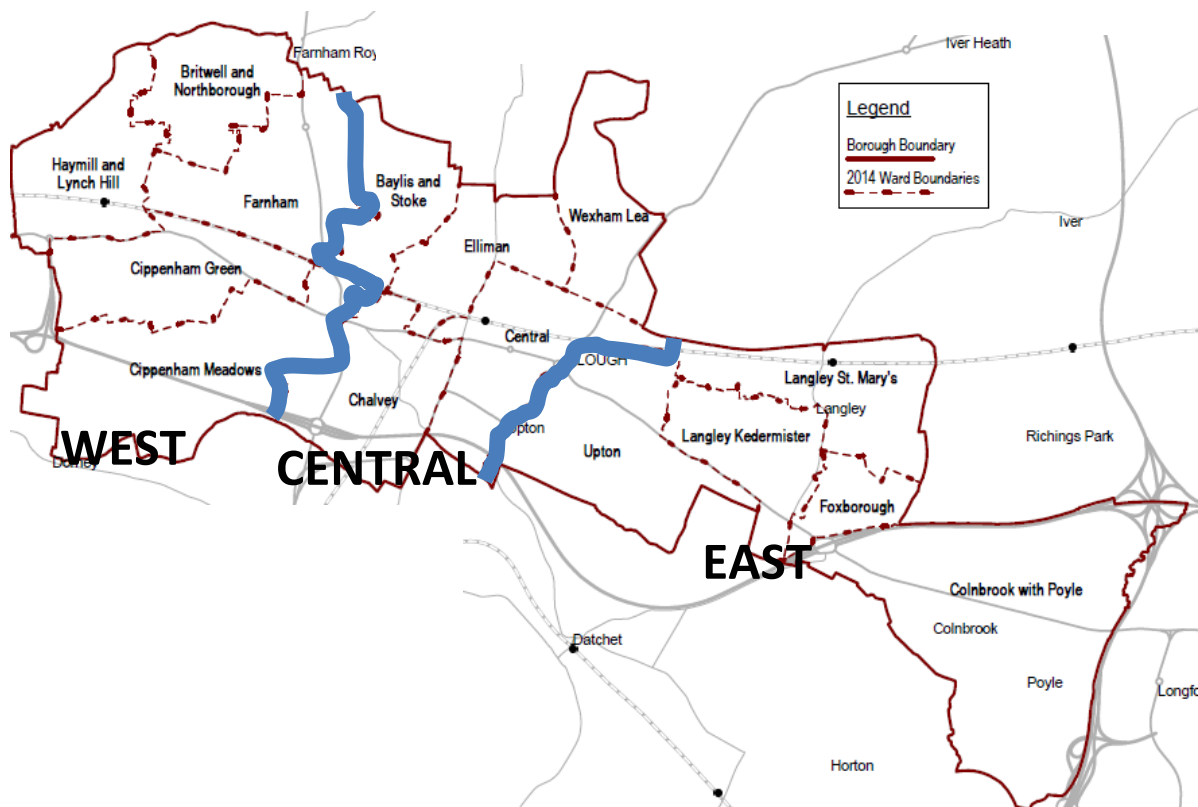
This section looks more closely at the current comparison of demand for Reception places with available capacity and forecasts to 2026-27. Currently, the surplus is close to the target of 4 classes, however the impact of reducing births mean that there may be a large surplus by 2025-26.

Year (May)	Reception demand	Available	Reception Surplus classes Target = 4	Comment
2019-20	77	83	6	+2 above target
2020-21	77	81	4	On target
2021-22	77	81	4	On target
2022-23	76	82	6	+2 above target
2023-24	73	81	8	+4 above target and increasing
2024-25	72	81	9	
2025-26	66	81	15	+10 above target
2026-27	68	81	13	

Over recent years 5 forms of entry have been closed and 2 more are expected to be closed by 2023-24. The opening of Grove Academy has replaced 4 of these forms of entry. These changes are already included in the table above.

7.3 Planning Areas

For primary school place planning purposes, the town is split into 3 planning areas: West, Central and East. The map below shows the 3 areas, each area has between 9 and 11 schools:



The table below shows which schools are in each planning area. Note that the catchment area of faith schools may cross these boundaries or even include all of Slough, however patterns are assumed to remain fairly consistent and no adjustments are made to the forecasts.

West	Central	East
Cippenham Primary School	Claycots School (Town Hall)	Castleview Primary School
Claycots School (Britwell)	Grove Academy	Colnbrook Church of England Primary School
Lynch Hill School Primary Academy	Iqra Slough Islamic Primary School	Foxborough Primary School
Our Lady of Peace Catholic Infant and Nursery School	James Elliman Academy	Holy Family Catholic Primary School
Phoenix Infant Academy	Khalsa Primary School	The Langley Academy Primary
Priory School	Montem Primary School	The Langley Heritage Primary
St Anthony's Catholic Primary School	Penn Wood Primary and Nursery School	Langley Hall Primary Academy
The Godolphin Junior School	St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School	Marish Primary School
Western House Primary School	St Mary's Church of England Primary School	Pippins School
	Wexham Court Primary School	Ryvers School
	Willow Primary School	

7.3.1 West Planning Area

The western part of Slough has seen a large reduction in birth levels and has a growing surplus of places. Between the peak in 2011-12 and 2020-21 births have reduced by 25% or 249. The table below shows the surplus places available as at October 2022:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6
West – Surplus places	145	75	76	54	133	51	24
Surplus above target	110	45	51	34	118	41	19

All year groups have surplus places above the target. Year groups R and 4 have at least 3.5 surplus classes above the target. Current forecasts suggest that the number of surplus Reception classes will rise for the next 4 years as birth numbers continue to reduce.

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School is reducing their Planned Admission Number from 2023 from 90 to 60. Two further reductions may be required over the next few years to assist in keeping surplus places down unless extra capacity is required to support growth in the central planning area.

7.3.2 Central Planning Area

The central planning area is seeing the most significant fluctuations in birth numbers, for instance the number of births in 2015-16 was 1161 while in 2018-19 it had fallen to 979, a reduction of 182 (-16%). Birth numbers rose to 1020 for 2019-20 then reduced again the year after.

The table below shows the surplus places available as at October 2022:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6
Central – Surplus places	68	35	0	0	13	27	2
Surplus above target	33	5	-25	-20	-2	17	-3

Highlighted in red are those year groups with less than the target surplus of places. While Reception has surplus places there is currently a pressure on places for Years 2-4.

The Centre of Slough will see up to 9000 new flats built over the next 10-15 years. The impact of this high density of new homes close to the High Street is uncertain but it will certainly lead to a large increase in demand for school places in and around the area.

7.3.3 East Planning Area

The east has not seen a decline in births, numbers have generally stayed buoyant, although the number for 2019-20 did see a dip. As a result of this 2024-25 may be the first year there will be more than 30 surplus places in Reception.

Schools in the east are popular and the planning area attracts more pupils from the central planning area than go the other way.

The table below shows the surplus places available as at October 2022:

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6
East – Surplus Places	16	-10	-2	-15	3	23	6
Surplus above target	-19	-40	-27	-35	-12	13	1

There is a pressure on places in 5 of the 7 year groups, with only Years 5 and 6 having more than the target of surplus places.

7.4 Contingency Planning - Options for Primary Places

The main solution for creating places in upper year groups is to open new bulge classes or where there is a small shortage of places and a whole class is not required then larger class sizes, of up to 32 pupils, will be considered. The maximum class size for infant age pupils is limited by regulations to 30 however larger classes are permitted where there is a basic need argument. This restriction doesn't apply to junior classes.

West Planning Area – no new places are required.

Central Planning Area – it may be necessary to increase capacity for Years 2 and 3 and 4. The situation is being closely monitored. One further option is to seek to reopen a form of entry previously closed at a school in the central planning area or close by.

East Planning Area - it may be necessary to increase capacity for Years R to 4. The situation is being closely monitored. One further option is to seek to reopen a form of entry previously closed at a school in the east planning area or close by.

The main risk over the next 5 years is that the rate of new arrivals to Slough is higher than anticipated and this increases the pressure on year groups already short on capacity. While the west of Slough can accommodate an increase of in-year applications without difficulty, the other 2 planning areas are already short on capacity in many year groups.

7.5 Removing Surplus Capacity

It is not efficient for the primary school estate to operate with a large surplus in capacity. It may be necessary for the LA to coordinate further reductions in capacity in the west and over time, in other planning areas. Given the uncertainty around demographic change and the fact that once capacity is removed it may be difficult to reinstate, Slough necessarily takes a cautious approach in reducing admission numbers.

When many schools were first being expanded in 2008-12, when long term growth was uncertain Slough's strategy for expanding primary schools was to utilise 'modular' or temporary accommodation split into 2 phases. 3 infant classes were added in the form of a modular block and a few years later a 4-classroom modular block was added to complete the full form of entry. Built into the strategy was the assumption that these blocks could be removed in later years when not required or recycled for other community uses. It is expected that schools in the west will be the first to consider alternative options for their modular blocks.

7.6 Monitoring and Review

The pressure on primary school places in the centre and east may affect enrolment times for in-year applicants. This will be regularly reviewed and extra places created where required to ensure that there are no undue delays to children starting school.

8. Secondary Place Planning

The rapid expansion seen in the primary sector since 2007 has been impacting on secondary schools since 2012. Slough has kept ahead of demand by planning and supporting a large expansion of secondary places. Since 2012, 4 new secondary free schools have opened providing 22 new forms of entry a further 6.5 forms of entry have been added at existing secondary schools. In addition to these physical expansions, 3 schools are admitting an extra form of entry without significantly increasing their accommodation. This represents a growth of 56% in Year 7 capacity.

There are a number of factors affecting secondary place planning that are different from those considered for primary places:

Forecasting: While forecasting secondary demand is made easier in some respects by knowing the exact number of Year 6 pupils in Slough schools, the effect of grammar schools and cross border movement creates a higher margin for error for Year 7 forecasts than other year groups.

Transfer Ratio: The net growth in the cohort size from Year 6 to Year 7 has been reducing in recent years. While the cohort growth some years ago was consistently at about +7%, this has been closer to +2% in recent years and for September 2022 is less than +1%.

In-year growth: In-year growth does not currently affect secondary schools in the same way as primary schools, as mentioned in section 6.2. Recent experience shows a slight decline in cohort size (on average) as pupils move up through the year groups. For this reason, long term place planning focusses on ensuring the right number of Year 7 places. This is different to primary place planning where inward migration has a more significant impact.

Cross border movement: A wider radius is considered for secondary place planning than primary. Slough is a small authority with a range of schools available within a 3-mile radius in most parts of the town. A study some years ago showed that 3400 pupils a day opted to attend a school outside Slough while a similar number come into Slough each day. The majority of this movement was by secondary pupils.

8.1 The Secondary Expansion Programme

Previous versions of the School Places Strategy were focused on planning ahead for the large growth in demand that was working its way through the primary school system. Place planning was based around ensuring sufficient capacity for the peak in demand for Year 7 places in 2022-23 and 2023-24. With the first of these 2 peak cohorts having started school in September 2022, it is possible to forecast with some confidence that no new Year 7 places need to be built in Slough.

This does not mean that there won't be some pressure on places. The table below shows the projected surplus of places for secondary schools. 3 cohorts are highlighted in bold, these may experience some pressure in future years although this will be dependent on the rate of in-year applications received.

Forecast Secondary Surplus Capacity (May data)

Year		Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11
2020-21	actual	93	29	109	129	23
2021-22	actual	103	54	18	104	101
2022-23*	forecast	141	70	88	42	105
2023-24	forecast	67	110	73	100	35
2024-25	forecast	98	34	113	85	93
2025-26	forecast	120	66	37	125	78
2026-27	forecast	112	89	69	50	117

* based on October 2022 School Census data

8.2 2022-23 onwards – options

If extra places are required in some year groups, the table below sets out the options available to the LA with pros and cons of each option listed.

Option	Pros	Cons
Schools admit pupils over PAN	Schools have been willing to do this in the past Can be agreed at short notice No extra capacity required No building or capital investment required Growth Fund can provide revenue funding in certain instances	Usually last minute and ad hoc
Bulge classes	Can open at short notice if spare classroom available Best solution for temporary growth Growth Funding available to support new class	Inconvenient for schools Unsuitable for permanent growth Long lead-in time and high capital cost if modular classroom required
Permanently expand existing Slough schools	No new site required Can improve financial viability of school Developer contributions may be available	DfE capital grant may be insufficient Build phase may negatively impact on teaching and learning Long lead-in time to deliver accommodation (minimum 24 months)

8.3 Monitoring and Review

Long term secondary forecasts will be sensitive to changes in the pattern of in-year growth seen in Slough's primary schools. In-year applications will be monitored closely and forecasts reviewed each year to reflect any changes in demographics.

8.4 Post-16 Place Planning

Forecasting for post-16 places is carried out in the same way as other secondary year groups and forecasts are based on the pattern of retention over the last 3 years.

The number of pupils in Year 12 in Slough schools has been steadily growing each year as the Year 11 cohort size the year before has grown. For 2022-23 however, this has remained unchanged despite the larger cohort, it is assumed this is due to the delay with opening 6th forms at 3 of the free schools (see below).

A major provider of post-16 education in the town is East Berkshire College, which provides an alternative option for pupils who do not want to stay on at school or cannot find a place at their preferred schools but want to continue studying.

School Name	Number on Roll (May 2022)	6 th Form Capacity	Future Growth – delayed opening
Baylis Court School	134	160	
Beechwood School	101	150	
Ditton Park Academy	225	200	
Eden Girls School			200
Grove Academy			200
Herschel Grammar School	320	320	
Langley Academy	250	250	
Langley Grammar School	335	370	
Lynch Hill Enterprise Academy			240
Slough & Eton C of E Business & Enterprise College	235	260	
St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School	337	250	
St Joseph's Catholic High School	196	200	
Upton Court Grammar School	291	330	
Westgate School	170	175	
Wexham School	147	225	
Totals	2741	2890	640

A significant change in recent years is the staying-on rate from Year 12 to Year 13 in Slough sixth forms. Where it used to be that less than 80% of the Year 12 cohort remained in sixth forms this has risen to over 90% for the last 3 years.

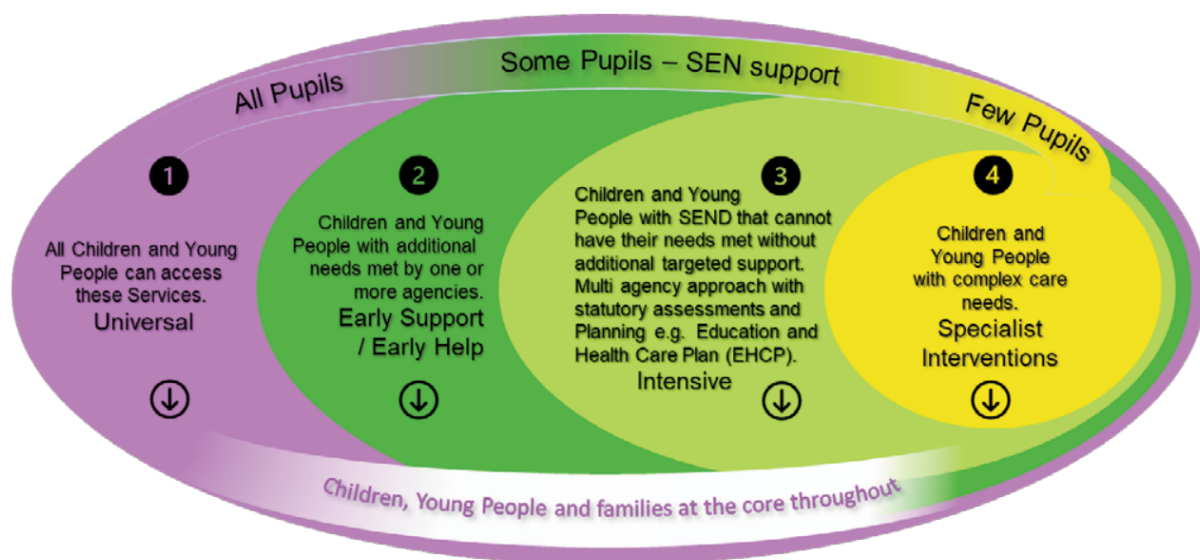
9. Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (PRU) Places

SEND Strategy and principles for providing SEN Places:

The SEND and Inclusion Strategy sets out the LA's strategic vision and how, through inclusive practice, all children and young people are happy, healthy, safe, take an active part in their community and have fulfilled lives.

Whilst the strategy stresses the need for a more inclusive approach to meeting additional needs within mainstream settings, Slough's overarching principle is to enable all children and young people to access the educational placement best suited to their particular needs, whether that is in a mainstream setting, a specialist provision in a mainstream setting or within a specialist setting.

The Strategy confirms Slough's commitment to maintain, improve and extend a continuum of quality provision and services for children and young people with complex needs and to develop closer partnerships between mainstream and specialist providers.



9.1 SEND Forecasts

Slough Borough Council takes a long-term strategic approach to school places planning to ensure all Slough children and young people including those requiring specialist SEND and AP provision secure a school place to 2026.

Forecasts for SEND and PRU growth are generally based on two factors:

- population projections
- detailed knowledge of individuals, local pressures and changes to provision.

However, the low numbers of pupils in any one cohort with a specific need makes it more difficult to forecast changes in the range of specialist provision needed than for mainstream primary and secondary schools.

9.1.1 Demographic trends – children and young people in Slough

The first table below shows the number of EHCPs for Slough pupils over the last 4 years by age band. Actual data is on the left side and projections are in a different colour on the right. The second table presents the same data by needs of the pupils. The third table again shows the same data, this time by provision that pupils currently attend and the projected capacity change required over time to 2026.

Total number of EHCPs by age group (with estimated future projections)

Jan	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Growth 2021-26
Under 5	89	97	101	69	80	80	78	75	75	6
Age 5 to 10	505	521	543	643	655	676	686	686	686	43
Age 11 to 15	386	430	492	570	576	590	605	615	615	45
Age 16 to 19	265	242	257	260	265	280	310	310	310	50
Age 20 to 25	50	60	78	153	169	155	138	133	133	-20
Total number of EHCPs	1,295	1,350	1,471	1,695	1,745	1,781	1,817	1,819	1,819	124

Introduction of EHCPs for 19-25 year olds is a relatively recent change and has meant this sector has grown rapidly in recent years.

Total number of EHCPs by primary need (with estimated future projections)

Jan	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Growth 2021-26
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	471	480	515	602	627	652	682	699	713	112
Hearing Impairment	46	46	50	61	62	63	64	64	64	3
Moderate Learning Difficulty	72	78	80	99	102	106	106	106	106	7
Multi- Sensory Impairment	8	6	8	9	9	9	9	9	9	0
Physical Disability	51	48	61	70	72	72	73	74	74	4
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	22	20	23	27	28	28	29	29	29	2
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	122	125	133	161	167	172	172	172	172	11
Speech, Language and Communications needs	211	218	233	275	285	285	285	285	285	10
Severe Learning Difficulty	45	41	57	69	70	72	73	73	73	4
Specific Learning Difficulty	37	34	37	41	41	41	42	42	42	1
Visual Impairment	24	23	26	31	32	32	33	33	33	2
Other Difficulty/Disability	77	84	84	86	86	85	85	83	78	12
SEN support (no specialist assessment of type of need)	109	147	164	164	164	164	164	150	141	-23
Total number of EHCPs by primary need	1,295	1,350	1,471	1,695	1,745	1,781	1,817	1,819	1,819	124

Total number of EHCPs by provision type (with estimated future projections)

Jan	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Growth 2021-26
Mainstream schools or academies				540	566	603	626	633	625	85
Resourced Provision or SEN Units				292	287	280	275	270	273	-19
Maintained special schools or special academies				487	496	496	496	496	496	9
NMSS or independent schools				64	60	60	60	60	60	-4
Hospital schools or Alternative Provision										
Post 16				204	228	239	267	272	277	73
Other				108	108	103	93	88	88	-20
Total number of EHCPs by placement type				1,695	1,745	1,781	1,817	1,819	1,819	124

9.1.2 Increased Demand

There has been a significant and sustained increase in the number of children and young people for whom the LA holds a statutory plan (statement or EHCP). As at January 2022, the LA held a total of 1,695 EHCPs – a growth of 667 since January 2018.

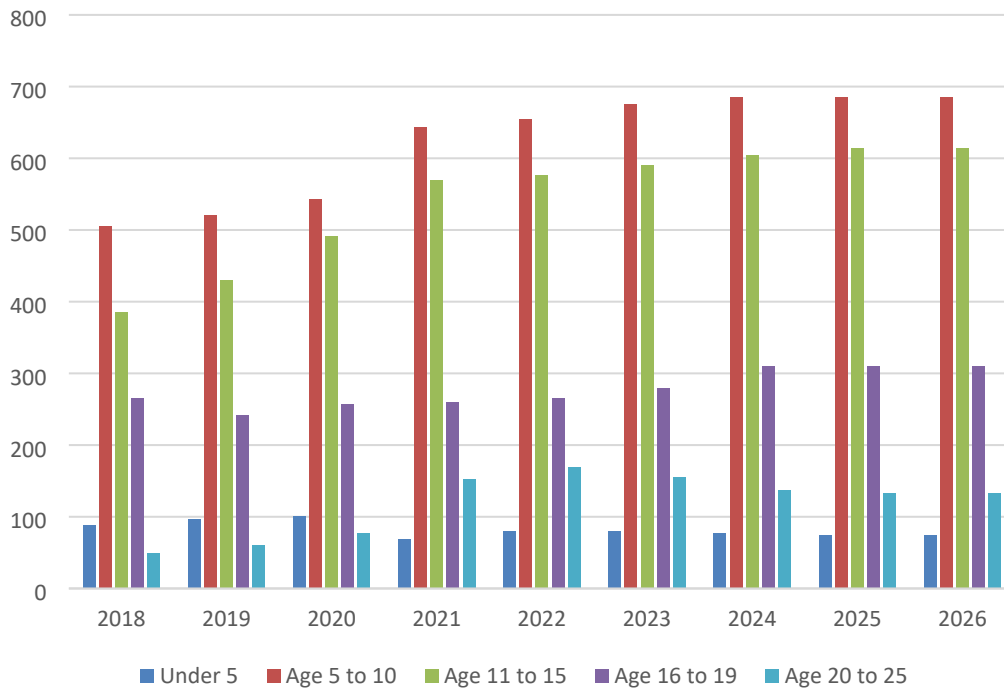
Since the introduction of the Children & Families Act 2014 and the SEND reforms, local authorities (LAs) across England have seen a year-on-year increase in the number of Education, Health and Care Plan's (EHCPs.) Whilst the increase in Slough is slightly lower than national and regional statistics (see below), the growing numbers have placed an increasing demand on statutory Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) resources.

Percentage of the School Age Population with EHCPs Over Time (DfE statistics)

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Slough	2.76	2.92	3.14	3.12	3.31	3.58	3.61
South East	2.77	2.79	2.90	3.07	3.32	3.65	3.95
England	2.93	2.97	3.09	3.26	3.53	3.87	4.23

Figure A below shows how the number of EHCPs has changed per age band since 2018 and how this is projected to change by 2026.

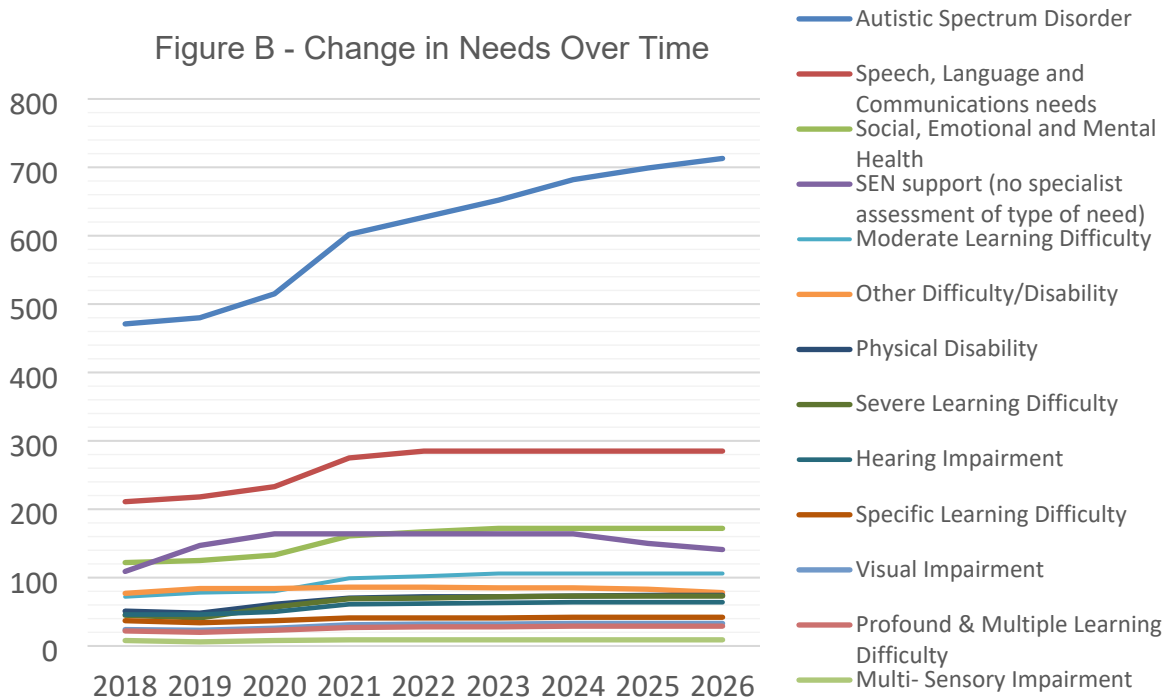
Figure A - Change In Cohort Age Band Over Time



The total primary school population peaked in 2019-20 and is forecast to reduce year on year.

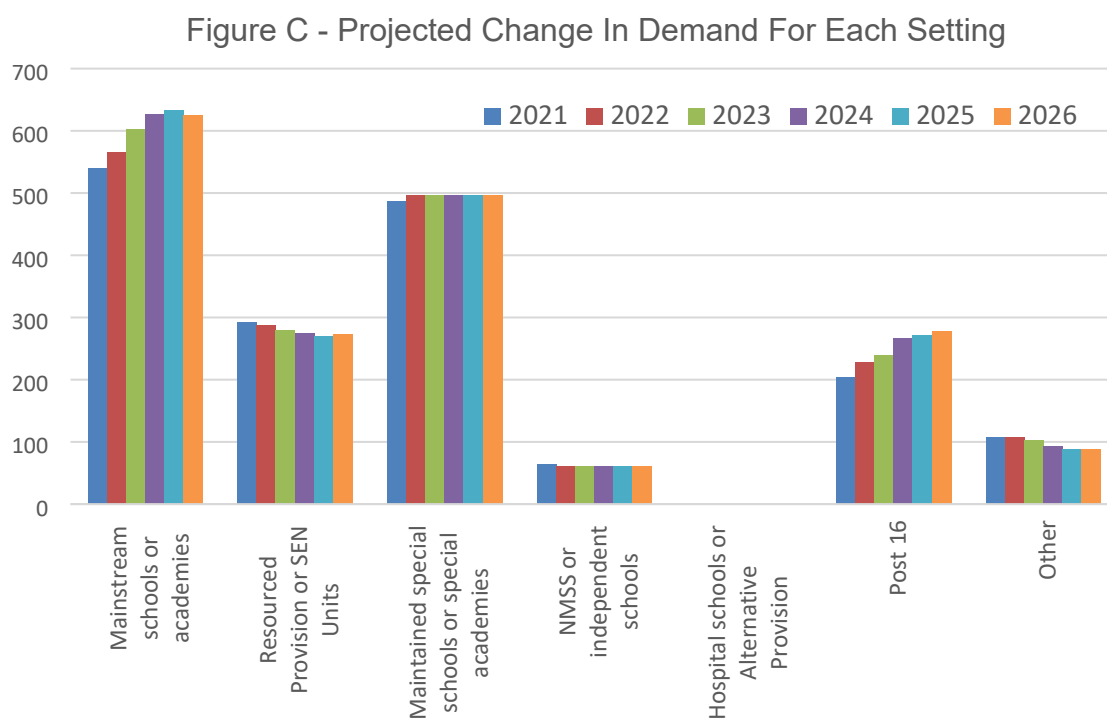
9.1.3 Changes in the pattern of demand

Figure B below shows the primary category of need for pupils for which it holds an EHCP. Consistent with national trends the largest category is ASD. Slough has seen an increase in the number of children and young people with ASD and this is forecast to continue rising until at least 2026.



9.1.3 Types of Provision

Figure C below shows that based on current forecasts there will be a slight rise in pupils in mainstream places until 2025, then a reduction for 2026. ARPs will see a steady reduction in places until 2025 due to the reduction in primary numbers (a primary Resource Base closed in 2022 due to demographic changes). Special school numbers are forecast to remain at current levels to 2026. Post-16 numbers will rise as larger cohorts work their way through the secondary school system.



9.2 Actions: Implications for SEND Provision

Planned capital investment:

- Up to £2m will be invested in Haybrook College to increase provision for pupils with EHCPs
- A new car park will be provided for Arbour Vale School to address the increased numbers on roll at the school
- Up to £1m, as a one-off, project, will be invested in improving existing provision for pupils with EHCPs – projects are being shortlisted early 2023
- Exploring potential projects for development of secondary and post-16 provision for young people with EHCPs.

Future key actions:

- Following a phase 1 review in 2020-21, the designation and commissioned places of all Resource Bases and SEN Units are being finalised, with SLAs and descriptors being developed to reflect this

- Ensure pathways in and out of resource bases are clear and well planned, ensuring pupils have appropriate support provision available at all levels of education

9.3 PRU Places – Alternative Provision

Alternative Provision (AP) is education for pupils who do not attend mainstream school for various reasons such as school exclusion, behaviour issues, school refusal or illness. Alternative Provision is delivered by Pupil Referral Units or PRUs where it is provided by the LA. It is possible to have Alternative Provision academies.

Slough's PRU provision at this time is provided by 2 schools; Littledown School (a special school) which caters for primary age children and Haybrook College which is an AP school and caters for secondary age pupils.

The number of AP places commissioned by SBC will be reduced over the next 3 years. This reflects the LA reducing its commitment back to statutory levels and its commitment to work with providers to develop a commissioning framework to support schools in identifying how best to purchase additional AP interventions and provisions.

9.4 Future Proposals

Working with local Colleges to consider proposals to develop specific provision to meet the needs of young people with social communication difficulties who have struggled to engage with the school curriculum in KS4/5. This has been identified as a gap in the Local Offer. The aim will be to see more youngsters progress from PRU provision to mainstream college.

Further development work with the local College to look at development of the Foundation courses and increase in placements to meet more young people's needs locally.

Appendix 1 Summary of Slough's current SEND provision:

Provision	Overview	Commissioned places for September 2022
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Specialist

Arbour Vale	Specialist, all-through (2-19)	325
Littledown	Primary Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs School also delivers SBC's primary AP services	38
Haybrook College	Secondary SEMH needs School also delivers SBC's secondary AP services	85
Total Specialist Provision		448

Resourced Mainstream Provision

Baylis Court Nursery		4
Chalvey Nursery		10
Slough Centre Nursery		6
Total Nursery Resourced Mainstream Provision		20
Colnbrook CE Primary		10
Castleview Primary		22
Phoenix Infant		9
Godolphin Junior		10
Marish Primary		55
Priory School		60
St Ethelbert's RC Primary		10
Total Primary Resourced Mainstream Provision		176
Ditton Park Academy		20
The Langley Academy		8
Slough & Eton College		23
The Westgate School		15
Wexham School		21
Grove Academy		9 (plus 3 each year to 15)
Total Secondary Resourced Mainstream Provision		96

Total Commissioned Specialist Places	740
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£16m was invested by SBC between 2012 and 2020 in creating new or re-provided specialist places for SEND and AP pupils. A further £3.5m will be invested from 2023 to 2025 to create new places and improve provision for SEND pupils.