

## **Exempt or confidential report**

The following paragraph of Part 4b Section 10 of the constitution applies in respect of information **within the appendices of this report** and the appendices are therefore exempt from publication:

Information which is likely to reveal the identity of any individual

**Members and officers are advised not to disclose the contents of the appendices**

**Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

**Date: 7<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

Wards: All wards

**Subject: Provision of School Places**

Lead officer: Rachael Wardell, Director of Children, Schools and Families Department

Lead member: Cllr Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Education

Contact officer: Tom Procter, Head of Contracts and School Organisation

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## **Recommendations**

For Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel to comment and note the current position regarding the provision and admissions to primary, secondary and special school places outlined in this report.

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### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the latest position with regard to supply and demand of school places, and in particular to address specific requests from a member of this committee regarding the availability of secondary school places. The last similar report to this committee was on 11 October 2016
- 1.2 In separate sections the report considers the matters in relation to mainstream primary and secondary school places, and special school places.
- 1.3 It should be noted that roll data for 2018/19 is not available until the October census has been data cleansed so figures for the current year are forecasts or based on

schools admissions information. There will therefore be some minor variation compared to when official figures are released.

## 2 DETAILS

2.1 Merton in its role as the Local Authority seeks:

- To provide the highest standards of education and ensure all our schools are good or outstanding;
- Results for attainment and progress which compare with the best in London;
- To ensure that all children and young people enjoy learning opportunities, feel rewarded by their experience and achieve their full potential;
- Provision which contributes to the broader well-being of children and families
- Provision which is a positive choice for families

2.2 The following sections consider the school provision in the sectors of mainstream primary, mainstream secondary, and special provision

### Primary school places

2.3 With regard to primary school places, the council experienced an exceptional increase in demand for places, which required a substantial increase in reception year (first year of primary school) places from 2008 to 2015. In 2017/18 there were more pupils in Merton primary schools than there had been for more than a generation – a rise of 4,367 pupils on roll (34%) compared to 11 years previously.

2.4 However, in 2016/17 there started to be a drop in demand for reception year places that has continued to 2018/19. The GLA forecast is for the reception year roll to now be relatively stable for the forthcoming years, but as the lower numbers flow through all year groups there is forecast to be some 1,300 fewer pupils in primary school than at the peak, though still 3,000 more than in 2006/07. Uncertainty over migration patterns and future live births will also impact on demand.

2.5 The table below shows this actual and forecast rise and fall in reception year (the first year of primary school) and in total for primary schools. The full table for all year groups is in appendix 1.

	Yr R	Total
2006/07	1,879	12,683
2007/08	1,937	12,803
2008/09	2,140	13,102
2009/10	2,229	13,488
2010/11	2,285	13,920
2011/12	2,651	14,839
2012/13	2,599	15,479
2013/14	2,547	15,930
2014/15	2,627	16,557
2015/16	2,628	16,909

2016/17	2,524	17,048
2017/18	2,437	17,050
2018/19 *	2,374	16,764
2019/20 *	2,376	16,551
2020/21 *	2,346	16,281
2021/22 *	2,321	15,994
2022/23 *	2,322	15,747

\* is forecast figures. These are the council's official school roll forecasts submitted to the DfE in July 2018

- 2.6 The recent fall in the primary school roll at a time of financial constraint has the potential to cause budget issues for a number of primary schools so some schools have reduced their admission numbers by a multiple of 30 to ensure that they have largely full classes. Because the increase in demand was catered for by expansion of existing schools, with the exception of one Free School that was delivered after the council's required expansions, schools are of a larger size so are more equipped to deal with the reduction in demand than previously.
- 2.7 There are still some heavily oversubscribed primary schools in Merton, with six school still only offering places to those living less than 600 metres distance on offer day for September 2018.

### **Secondary school places**

#### **Level of demand**

- 2.8 With the substantial increase in demand for primary school places starting in 2008, it follows that the increase in demand for year 7 (the start of secondary school) places has followed seven years later. Following the significant increase in demand for reception year places in September 2011, the biggest increase for year 7 places has been, as expected, in September 2018.
- 2.9 However, the pattern of demand for Merton secondary schools is very different with the families willing to travel much greater distances and parental preference patterns being more significant.
- 2.10 For many years Merton has been a net 'exporter' of pupils i.e. more Merton resident children travel to out of the borough state schools for their secondary schooling than the other way around, or 'imported'. Since the level of 'exports' and 'imports' in the primary sector is relatively minor (though Merton is a slight 'importer'), the simplest way to track this is by looking at the transfer rate from the total year 6 roll in Merton state funded primary schools to the following year 7 in Merton state funded secondary schools.
- 2.11 Standards in Merton secondary schools have risen significantly over the last 10 years, and the DfE figures in late 2017 showed that they were the best in the country for progress from primary school to the end of Key Stage 4 (GCSE year).

- 2.12 However, in the five years from 2010 to 2015 a number of popular schools close to Merton's borders increased their capacity prior to the increase in the relevant age child population. This led to the year 6 to year 7 transfer rate falling by some 15%. The council therefore reduced its previous secondary school expansion plans to only 8 forms of entry (FE – 1 FE is a year group of 30 pupils) – 2FE through the expansion of Harris Academy Merton and 6 FE through Harris Academy Wimbledon, opened in September 2018 on a temporary site.
- 2.13 The council's secondary school expansion strategy and rationale for facilitating the new school in South Wimbledon was documented in the 11 October 2016 Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel paper.
- 2.14 The table below shows the actual and forecast roll based on the council's year 6 to 7 transfer remaining stable over the next few years, and also shows the GLA forecast which, to be accurate, would necessitate a change back to levels not seen since the late 2000s. Since the pupil retention model shows that numbers flowing through from year 6 are forecast to be very stable over the next 4-5 years, officers are not implementing any further secondary school expansion plans. However, there is currently provision in the council's five year capital programme in case the position changes.

	<b>Pupil retention</b>	<b>Pupil retention</b>			
Year	Year 7	Total school Yrs 7-11	Year 6 to 7 transfer		
2006/07	1,531	7,907	88.5%		
2007/08	1,518	7,849	89.7%		
2008/09	1,583	7,818	88.2%		
2009/10	1,544	7,857	87.6%		
2010/11	1,502	7,758	85.5%		
2011/12	1,457	7,724	84.5%		
2012/13	1,454	7,573	79.2%		
2013/14	1,465	7,399	80.6%		
2014/15	1,492	7,347	80.7%		
2015/16	1,578	7,381	78.0%		
2016/17	1,556	7,408	74.8%	<b>GLA forecast</b>	
2017/18	1,569	7,523	74.3%	<b>Year 7</b>	<b>Yrs 7-11</b>
2018/19 *	1,785	7,925	75.0%	1,774	7,887
2019/20 *	1,762	8,226	74.8%	1,840	8,231
2020/21 *	1,728	8,390	74.8%	1,877	8,493
2021/22 *	1,741	8,585	74.8%	1,920	8,824
2022/23 *	1,740	8,756	74.8%	1,941	9,170
2023/24 *	1,659	8,630	74.8%	1,960	9,349
2024/25 *	1,608	8,477	74.8%	1,885	9,394

\* is forecast figures

## Review of secondary school admissions for September 2018 entry

- 2.15 September 2018 saw the largest single year increase in demand for year 7 places in over a generation with 2316 Merton resident children receiving a school place offer on offer day (1 April 2018), 263 more than the previous year (12.8% increase).
- 2.16 The position was slightly complicated as the new school Harris Academy Wimbledon was not in the co-ordinated arrangements in the first year, but by the end of April, with the extra places from Harris Wimbledon, all children received a 'reasonable' offer of a school place – this is defined as either being within 2 miles or 45 minutes public transport journey from their home.
- 2.17 The offer day figures were as follows:

Percentage allocations	2018	2017	2016	2015
Percentage receiving first preference offer	59.90%	65.20%	64.86%	62.76%
Percentage receiving a 1st to 3rd pref offer	84.30%	88.00%	88.58%	88.35%

Note in 2018 Harris Wimbledon was not in co-ordination so is not reflected in the above figures

- 2.18 Figures in the London region are always the lowest in the country due to the wide variety of schools within travelling distance, and Merton's figures are particularly challenged by the high number of over-subscribed schools in the area, including five fully selective schools in Sutton, two in Kingston, and the majority of schools in Wandsworth being partially selective.
- 2.19 For the preparation of this paper officers have been asked about the current most important gaps / 'matters in need of improvement' with regard to admissions e.g. geographically within the Borough, and what is the current thinking on potential areas to consider addressing.
- 2.20 As outlined in paragraph 2.16, all residents received a reasonable offer of a secondary school place, and on the basis of our forecasts this will continue to be the case, but will be monitored. However, this is not the same as residents all getting the same choice of school. Appendix 4 provides a summary of admissions criteria for each of the Merton secondary schools, together with allocation data for 2018. Information is included for the new Harris Academy Wimbledon but it needs to be taken into account that this is the first year of opening, it is on a temporary site some 1 mile from the previous site, and for this year only it was not in admissions co-ordination i.e. families needed to apply directly to the school rather than as one of six preferences through the council's School Admissions team
- 2.21 There is some differential in choice for residents in that four of Merton's nine state funded secondary schools are single sex. Ursuline and Wimbledon College are Catholic Schools and so like most church schools have an admissions policy based on church attendance. They therefore cover a wide geographic area but generally for Catholics only. Rutlish and Ricards Lodge have an admissions policy that, after

LAC (Looked after Children), SEN etc. and siblings, is based on distance from the school. The furthest offer day distance for these schools on 2018 offer day was 2100 metres and 2506 metres respectively, increasing to 2565 metres and 3668 metres respectively by the autumn.

- 2.22 Due to the schools being some 2200 metres apart there is inevitably more choice for a Merton single sex school depending on where you live in the borough i.e. more choice for a girls' school to the north, and for a boys' school towards the south.
- 2.23 Appendix 3 shows the range of schools that received a preference from Merton residents and lists the 13 schools where more than 25 places were allocated to Merton residents on 2018 offer day.

### **Special school places**

- 2.24 LB Merton caters for pupils with SEN (Special Educational needs) through mainstream schools, specialist provision within mainstream schools (“additional resourced provision”), special schools, and use of independent provision. For children with an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan which replaced SEN statements) there are three maintained special schools; in addition three primary and three secondary schools provide specialist provision for pupils with ASD (autistic spectrum disorders) and SCLN (Speech, language and communication needs). There is also a Pupil Referral Unit (SMART centre) which operates under the same management as Melrose, our special school for pupils with SEMH (Social, emotional and mental health).
- 2.25 When there is not a suitable placement for a child with an EHCP within the state funded sector the council is financially responsible for commissioning suitable specialist placements within the Independent sector.
- 2.26 The growth in demand for SEN placements has received national attention recently, and the problem is significant in Merton. The growth in EHCPs and the specialist placements by school type over the past 6 years is shown in the table below.

Type of Provision	Jan 2012 (Statements)		Jan 2013 (Statements)		Jan 2014 (Statements)		Jan 2015 (Statements and EHCPs)		Jan 2016 (Statements and EHCPs)		Jan 2017 (Statements and EHCPs)		Jan 2018 (Statements and EHCPs)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Mainstream School (inc. Academies)	436	47%	451	46%	470	45%	456	44%	423	39%	432	34%	526	35%
State Funded Special School	287	31%	327	33%	339	33%	338	32%	354	33%	386	31%	415	28%
Independent/Non-Maintained Provision (including Other Independent Special Schools)	96	10%	91	9%	110	11%	119	11%	145	13%	178	14%	217	15%
ARP (Additional Resourced Provision)	92	10%	101	10%	109	10%	113	11%	108	10%	137	11%	116	8%
Further Education	0	0%	1	0%	1	0%	0	0%	20	2%	97	8%	164	11%
Early Years (inc. Private & Voluntary Settings)	10	1%	8	1%	2	0%	4	0%	5	0%	2	0%	7	0%
Other (including children Educated at Home, Pupil Referral Units and Secure Units)	7	1%	9	1%	8	1%	15	1%	23	2%	32	3%	41	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>928</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1039</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1045</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1078</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1264</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1486</b>	<b>100%</b>

2.27 164 (circa 30%) of the 558 increase is due to the council's increased responsibility for young people in Further Education up to the age of 25, but there is also a general significant increase in demand at statutory school age.

2.28 The council has been active in seeking special school expansion in recent years, through a new site and then expansion of Perseid School, additional Resourced Provision (ARP) at Hatfeild, and the previous and present expansion of Cricket Green School. However, this has not stemmed our increased reliance on Independent Schools and as part of the review of the capital programme for 2019 and beyond, the funding of further expansion proposals will be considered.

### **3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

3.1 This paper is for briefing purposes rather than providing any options for decision.

### **4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

4.1 No new decisions are set out in this paper

### **5 TIMETABLE**

5.1 No firm proposals are set for a timetable.

### **6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

#### Revenue

6.1 The increase in demand for specialist provision for SEND children with EHCPs has resulted in costs through the National High Needs Funding Formula contributing to a significant overspend in the Dedicated School Grant.

6.2 The increased numbers outlined above has also resulted in a significantly increased number of requests for transport for children with EHCP which is leading to corresponding overspends in the council's general fund

#### Capital

6.3 All school expansions outlined in this paper have been approved in the council's capital programme or will be considered as part of the review of the council's budget for 2019/20 and beyond.

### **7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The council has a duty under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to secure that sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education are available for its area. The Act provides that schools available for an area shall not be regarded

as sufficient unless they are sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education. The local authority must exercise its functions under section 14 with a view to securing, diversity in the provision of schools, and increasing opportunities for parental choice. The Local Authority must in particular have regard to: (a) the need for securing that primary and secondary education are provided in separate schools; (b) the need for securing that special educational provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs; and (c) the expediency of securing the provision of boarding accommodation (in boarding schools or otherwise) for pupils for whom education as boarders is considered by their parents and the authority to be desirable. A local authority is required to respond to any parental representations on the exercise of its duty under section 14.

7.2 Since February 2012 under an amendment introduced by the Education Act 2011 there has been a presumption that new publicly funded schools will be academies.

## **8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 No specific implications from this report

## **9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 No specific implications from this report

## **10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 No specific implications from this report

**11 APPENDICES** – the following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report. They include Information which is likely to reveal the identity of any individual and are therefore exempt from publication under Part 4b Section 10 of the council's constitution:

Appendix 1 - School roll forecasts

Appendix 2 - Preference and allocations data with PANs over past 3 years for Merton secondary schools (issues of Harris)

Appendix 3 - Merton Residents allocations to in and out of borough secondary schools, September 2018

Appendix 4 - Summary of admissions criteria for each of the Borough Secondary Schools, together with allocation data for 2018

Appendix 5- Total number pupils for each of the secondary and primary schools 2015-2018 by PA

## **12 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel 11 October 2016 paper