

14 January 2014

Report on the availability and take up of primary school places in Walsall

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr R Andrew – Children's Services

Executive Summary:

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places to meet the needs of every Walsall resident child. This report provides information on the current availability and take up of primary school places in Walsall and of projected numbers of pupils expected to enter Reception in Walsall in the period 2014 to 2017.

In line with national trends Walsall has seen increases in birth rates over recent years. This report shows details of the actions which have already been taken by the Council to address a shortfall of primary places in the borough and identifies areas of Walsall where there is a projected shortfall of primary places in the period 2014 to 2017.

The report also provides information on the number of children who are registered as elective home educated because they could not be offered their parent's preferred school for admission to Reception.

Reason for scrutiny:

The report was requested by members of the Scrutiny Panel.

Recommendations:

That: Scrutiny note the report and give consideration to the information provided.

Background papers:

- List of Walsall's Primary Planning Areas, included as Appendix 1
- Map of Walsall's Primary Planning Areas, included as Appendix 2

Resource and legal considerations:

Any resource implications arising from this report will be found from within approved budgets. There are no legal considerations arising from this report.

Citizen impact:

The effective provision of sufficient primary school places will impact on the outcomes for Walsall children.

Environmental impact:

There is no specific environmental impact from this report.

Performance management:

All functions within pupil place planning activities comply with required performance management arrangements.


Equality Implications:

The availability of school places and access to them impacts on the outcomes for all Walsall children.

Consultation:

There has been no formal consultation in relation to this report.

Contact Officer:

Kate Mann
Service Manager – Admissions and Pupil Place Planning
 01922 652581
mannkate@walsall.gov.uk

Alan Michell
Head of Services
Integrated Young People's Support Services
Tel: 01922 650320

1.0 Report on the availability and take up of primary school places in Walsall

- 1.1** In line with National trends Walsall has seen increases in birth rates over recent years and current projections show this continuing in at least to 2016/2017. Whilst this is the case it should be stated that although the requirement for additional places has been and continues to be significant, Walsall is not in the same critical situation as some larger cities, other areas in the West Midlands and London Boroughs.
- 1.2** Walsall has benefited from having robust Pupil Place Planning projections over recent years which has provided early notification of the requirement for additional places. Validated figures from the October 2013 pupil census have been used to provide actual 2013 Reception numbers and these have been included in this report.
- 1.3** In Summer 2009, as a result of rising birth rates Children's Services commenced a programme of increasing the availability of reception places as part of a co-ordinated programme using funding from various sources including the Basic Need and Primary Capital Programme. This programme resulted in the first additional places being available from September 2010.
- 1.4** Additional places have been provided at the following schools;
- Birchills CE Community Academy [15 additional places from September 2010]
 - King Charles Primary [15 additional places from September 2011]
 - Hillary Primary [30 additional places from September 2011]
 - Caldmore Village Primary [30 additional places from September 2012]
- 1.5** On the advice of the DfE/Education Funding Agency (EFA) and to enable us to more accurately assess where our local needs are we have split the Borough into 11 primary pupil place planning areas. Details of the schools in each planning area are given in Appendix 1 and on the map of Walsall primary planning areas in Appendix 2.

2.0 Availability of primary places in 2012/13:

- 2.1** In 2012/13 there was surplus capacity in Reception in 38 of the 79 Walsall Primary Schools and Infant Schools which admit children to Reception. This represented a total of 142 surplus Reception places available across the borough. Surplus places were available in 10 of Walsall's 11 Primary Planning Areas.

3.0 Current Situation 2013/14:

- 3.1** The main challenge is that in September 2013 there is significant pressure on places in 3 of the 11 planning areas. There is limited surplus in planning area 2, but there are no surplus Reception places available in planning areas 8 and 10.

There are difficulties facing parents seeking midyear admission to schools in these areas where there is little, if any surplus capacity in some year groups.

3.2 2013 Primary Admissions Round:

On the primary offer date of 26 April 2013 a total of 3460 applications had been received from Walsall resident children. 3094 (89%) Walsall resident children whose parents submitted an application for Reception were offered their parents' first preference, 178 (5%) were offered their parent's second preference and 43 (1%) were offered their parents' third preference. A total of 145 (5%) of applicants could not be offered either of their parents preferred schools and were offered a place at a school which is within the two mile statutory walking distance of their home address.

4.0 Future Projections:

- 4.1** Current projections show that the places we have are sufficient for the Council to exercise its statutory duty in September 2014 but we have continuing increases in population that need to be addressed by the provision of additional reception places ready for September 2015.
- 4.2** The table below shows the total Published Admission Number (PAN) for Reception in the borough of Walsall, the actual Number on Roll (NOR) in Reception taken from the October 2013 pupil census and future projected Reception pupil numbers:

Total PAN	Actual NOR 2013	2014/15 Project No's	2015/16 Project No's	2016/17 Project No's
3705	3542	3507	3770	3723

- 4.3** The table below shows the figures for the 3 planning areas identified above as areas of concern and for planning areas where additional school places are planned:

Planning Areas	PAN	Actual NOR 2013	2014/15 Project No's	2015/16 Project No's	2016/17 Project No's
Planning Area 1	435	423	405	467	487
Planning Area 2	450	446	443	480	431
Planning Area 4	330	317	332	357	347
Planning Area 8	195	196	212	222	210
Planning Area 10	105	105	101	114	75

- 4.4** The annual School Capacity [SCAP] return was submitted to DfE/Education Funding Agency (EFA) in July 2013 and this indicates the following.

Planning area 1: 15 additional 'permanent' places for September 2015 together with any required bulge class or classes (a temporary increase to the PAN) arrangements. We will closely monitor actual numbers (against projected numbers) and future projected numbers and review requirements as necessary.

Planning area 2: 30 additional 'permanent' places

Planning area 4: 15 additional 'permanent' places for September 2015. We will also consider the use of a bulge class to accommodate the 2015/16 increase (numbers are projected to reduce in 2016/17) as required.

In view of the increase in numbers in planning areas 8 and 10, the Council is also reviewing provision in these two areas.

- 4.5** It is proposed that all additional provision that is required will be created through the expansion of existing primary schools located within each of the planning areas. Where projected figures indicate a temporary rise in pupil numbers followed by an immediate fall, it may be necessary to provide additional pupil places on a temporary basis and it is proposed that these would be provided through a bulge year group which is a temporary increase in PAN at an existing school.

5.0 Elective Home Education (EHE)

- 5.1** There has been an increase in the number of parents choosing either to withdraw their children from mainstream education, or not to take up a school place, in order to educate them at home.

- 5.2** The table below shows the reasons provided by parents (to the Education Welfare Service) for registering their children for elective home education in the primary phase during the 2012/13 school year and for the 2013/14 school year to date. The numbers given in brackets are children included in the figure who were in the Reception cohort at the point of registration for EHE:

Reason given for choosing EHE	Children registered for EHE in 2012/13	Children registered for EHE in 2013/14
Risk of exclusion	11 (1)	0
Permanent exclusion	1	0
Bullying	10	3
Children Missing Education	1 (1)	0
Conflict with current school	27 (1)	5
Cultural Reasons	6	4(1)
Philosophy/Ideology	3 (2)	0
Parental desire	9 (1)	0
Medical	2	4
Refused school preference	3 (1)	0
Dissatisfied with the system	9	1
Special Educational Needs	1	0
Short Term Intervention	21 (2)	2 (1)
Other	0	1
Total number of new registrations of primary aged children for EHE	104	20

Three children were registered for EHE in 2012/13 after their parents were refused a school preference. One of these children was in the Reception cohort at the time of registration; this child's parents initially accepted a place at a school which was 0.5 miles from their home address, but the family moved after the primary offer date to an address which was 1.89 miles from the school and the child did not take up the place offered and was registered as EHE. The child has now been admitted to a primary school. The other two children took up places at primary schools in Reception and were withdrawn from school and registered as EHE later on; one of these children was registered as EHE in Year 2 and the other was registered as EHE in Year 3. All three of these children are now on roll at a Walsall school. In the 2013/14 year to date no primary children have been registered as EHE because they were refused a place at their parents' preferred school.

- 5.3** The information in the above table suggests that in the past two years none of the parents who have registered their children for Elective Home Education have done so because they were unable to gain a place for their child in the Reception admission round at a school within the statutory walking distance of two miles from their home address. The significant majority of parents who have registered their children for Elective Home Education] did so subsequent to their child attending a Walsall school.

Appendix 1

Planning Areas for infant schools and primary schools which admit pupils to Reception

Planning Area 1:

Bentley West Primary
County Bridge Primary
King Charles Primary
King's Hill Primary
Moorcroft Wood Primary
Old Church CE Primary
Pinfold Street JMI
Rough Hay Primary
Salisbury Primary
St Joseph's Catholic Primary

Planning Area 2:

Lodge Farm JMI
Barcroft Primary
Fibbersley Park Primary
New Invention Infant
Pool Hayes Primary
Rosedale CE Infant
St Giles CE Primary
Woodlands Academy of Learning

Planning Area 3:

Abbey Primary
Beacon Primary
Bloxwich CE JMI
Busill Jones Primary
Elmore Green Primary
Little Bloxwich CE Primary
Lower Farm Primary
Jubilee Academy
St Peter's Catholic Primary

Planning Area 4:

Christ Church CE JMI
Edgar Stammers Primary
The Rivers Academy

Goldsmith Academy
Leamore Primary
St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary
Sunshine Infant and Nursery
Mirus Academy

Planning Area 5:

Alumwell Infant
Reedswood Academy
Delves Infant
Hillary Primary
Palfrey Infant
Whitehall Nursery and Infant

Planning Area 6:

Birchills CE Primary Community Academy
Blue Coat CE Infant
Butts Primary
Caldmore Community Primary
Chuckery Primary
Croft Academy
Charles Cuddy Walker Primary Academy
Park Hall Infant Academy
St Mary's the Mount Catholic Primary
St Patrick's Catholic Primary

Planning Area 7:

Blackwood Primary
Lindens Primary
Manor Primary
Meadow View JMI
Pheasey Park Farm Primary
St Anne's Catholic Primary

Planning Area 8:

Cooper & Jordan CE Primary
Leighswood Primary
St Mary's of the Angels Catholic Primary
Whetstone Field Primary

Planning Area 9:

Greenfield Primary
Pelsall Village
Radleys Primary
Rushall JMI
Ryders Hayes Academy
St Francis Catholic Primary
St Michael's CE Primary

Planning Area 10:

Castefort JMI
St John's CE Primary
Walsall Wood Primary

Planning Area 11:

Brownhills West Primary
Holy Trinity CE Primary
Millfield Primary
St Bernadette's Catholic Primary
St James Primary
Watling Street JM

Appendix Primary Planning Areas

