

Cabinet – 17 March 2010

Provision of Primary School Places

Portfolio: Councillor Walker, Children's Services

Service: Walsall Children's Services - Serco

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Summary of report

The report advises Cabinet of the demand for primary school places in Walsall and sets out proposals for meeting the changing demand for places in the short and medium term.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the schedule of primary school places as set out in **Appendix A** of this report.
- 2.2 That Cabinet modifies the implementation date of the significant enlargement of Birchills CE Primary School and brings it forward from September 2011 to September 2010.
- 2.3 That Cabinet notes that it is proposed to go over the published admission number at Hillary Primary School and to admit up to 90 pupils in September 2010.
- 2.4 That Cabinet approves consultation on the proposal to significantly enlarge Hillary Primary School and increase the intake from 60 to 90 places from September 2011.
- 2.5 That Cabinet notes that it is proposed to go over the published admission number at King Charles Primary School and to admit up to 45 pupils in September 2010.
- 2.6 That Cabinet approves consultation on the proposal to significantly enlarge King Charles Primary School and increase the intake from 30 to 45 places from September 2011.

3. Background information

- 3.1 In September 2009, Cabinet considered a report on the supply and demand for school places in Walsall and asked officers to undertake further work to establish the likely demand for primary school places over the next few years and to bring details of a strategy to address any issues to a future Cabinet meeting.

PUPIL NUMBER FORECASTS

- 3.2 Details of forecast numbers for the primary sector through to 2013/14 were considered by Cabinet on 16 September 2009 as part of a report on the Supply of School Places.

Births

- 3.3.1 Since then, details of births for 2008 have become available, and these together with updated information about admissions to schools and associated trends in the admissions, cross-border pupil movements, cohort survival, and housing developments have been factored into revised projections for the period to the 2013/14 academic year. This planning period is the same as that used by the DCSF.
- 3.3.2 Members will be aware that nationally there has recently been an increase in the birth rate and that one of the consequences of this has been an increase in the demand for primary school places. Table 1 below provides details of actual births in Walsall from the 2005/06 school year through to 2008 and birth projections from 2009 onwards. All of this births data has been provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Actual births in 2005/06 totalled 3,627; however, they fell by approx 150 in the following year before returning to the previous level. The projections produced by the ONS are for births to increase in subsequent years to approximately 3,680 – 3,700. Births data for 2009 will not be available until summer 2010.

Table 1 Births data for Walsall

Year of birth	Births	Projected demand for Reception places	Reception admission year	Notes
2005/06	3,627	3,543	2010/11	Actual births from ONS
2006/07	3,475	3,395	2011/12	Actual births from ONS
2007/08	3,619	3,536	2012/13	Actual births from ONS
2008/09	3,638	3,554	2013/14	Part actual and part projected births from ONS
2009/10	3,665	3,581	2014/15	ONS birth projections
2010/11	3,687	3,602	2015/16	ONS birth projections
2011/12	3,696	3,610	2016/17	ONS birth projections
2012/13	3,694	3,606	2017/18	ONS birth projections
2013/14	3,687	3,598	2018/19	ONS birth projections

ONS: Office for National Statistics

- 3.3.3 Table 1 also provides details of the projected demand for reception places. Demand for places is lower than the number of births and this pattern arises as a result of migration / family relocation and also because of cross-border pupil movement for education. These data include an uplift to allow for pupil yield from residential developments with planning consent.

Trend in Primary Pupil Numbers

- 3.4.1 Details of the actual number of primary pupils on roll at schools in Walsall since the 1996/97 school year to 2009 are provided in Table 2 below. This table also includes projected pupil numbers through to 2018/19 although the DCSF planning period only extends to 2013/14. There is, of course, a degree of uncertainty about projections for 2013/14 and in following years; this uncertainty increases with the number of years ahead because the number of births in future years may be affected by a variety of factors. As children are admitted to reception as rising 5s (ie all have had their 4th birthday), the actual lead-in time is short, especially given the time lag between births and the data being made available.
- 3.4.2 The data also include an uplift for pupil yield associated with residential developments in the borough but, given the economic situation, the rate at which dwellings will be completed over the next few years is very uncertain.

Table 2 Trend in primary pupil numbers in Walsall from 1997 to 2019/20.

School Year	Number of Primary Pupils (January)	Number of Reception pupils
1996/97	25,451	3,766
1997/98	25,261	3,534
1998/99	25,115	3,451
1999/2000	24,806	3,340
2000/01	24,562	3,325
2001/02	24,281	3,407
2002/03	23,968	3,381
2003/04	23,544	3,310
2004/05	23,406	3,315
2005/06	23,110	3,150
2006/07	22,910	3,135
2007/08	22,855	3,257
2008/09	22,654	3,266
2009/10	22,698*	3,317*
2010/11	23,004*	3,543*
2011/12	23,137*	3,395*
2012/13	23,561*	3,536*
2013/14	23,994*	3,554*
2014/15	24,331*	3,581*
2015/16	24,653*	3,602*
2016/17	24,946*	3,610*
2017/18	24,871*	3,606*
2018/19	25,065*	3,598*

*Projected

Shaded cells indicate DCSF planning period

- 3.4.3 Following a period of reducing rolls in the primary sector from 1996/97 through to 2008/09, the total number of pupils on roll is forecast to increase in 2009/10 as a result of an increase in reception admissions. This will mark the start of a trend of increasing numbers following a period of decline when pupil numbers fell by 2,800 over a 12 year period and during which a number of primary schools became unviable and were closed as part of the Council's strategy to reduce the high level of surplus places in the primary sector. By 2013/14, the projected number of primary pupils – 23,994 – is similar to numbers in 2002/03. Projected numbers beyond this date are less secure as they are progressively based on projected births rather than actual births; however, they do indicate further increases although totals are forecast to still be below the higher levels of the mid 1990s.
- 3.4.4 Admissions to reception in September 2010 are forecast to be in the region of 3,540 which is approx 200 higher than in September 2009. Although reception admissions are projected to be some 150 lower the following year (September 2011), this higher level of admissions is forecast to be sustained from 2012/13 for the next five years or so.
- 3.4.5 Table 3 below provides details of the size of the year group cohorts and it can be seen that smaller Key Stage 2 cohorts are being replaced by larger Reception cohorts.

Table 3 Primary projections by year group to 2013/14

	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total	Data source
2005/06	3,150	3,315	3,300	3,363	3,400	3,269	3,313	23,110	PLASC Jan 2006
2006/07	3,135	3,158	3,310	3,300	3,349	3,386	3,272	22,910	PLASC Jan 2007
2007/08	3,257	3,155	3,141	3,295	3,294	3,311	3,402	22,855	PLASC Jan 2008
2008/09	3,266	3,243	3,145	3,134	3,294	3,263	3,309	22,654	PLASC Jan 2009
2009/10	3,317	3,286	3,255	3,139	3,136	3,292	3,273	22,698	Oct 2009 Census
2010/11	3,543	3,323	3,292	3,261	3,145	3,142	3,298	23,004	Projection
2011/12	3,395	3,549	3,329	3,298	3,267	3,151	3,148	23,137	Projection
2012/13	3,536	3,401	3,555	3,335	3,304	3,273	3,157	23,561	Projection
2013/14	3,554	3,542	3,407	3,561	3,341	3,310	3,279	23,994	Projection

SUPPLY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES

- 3.5.1 The number of primary school places was reduced significantly between 2003 and 2007. The level of surplus places in the primary sector was unacceptably high during this period and a number of schools were becoming unviable educationally, financially and socially. Many of the reductions in places were achieved through the 'amalgamation' of infant and junior schools to create more viable schools with fewer surplus places. Since then, in response to an increasing demand, additional places have been created at Leighswood Primary School (admission number increased from 70 to 75 from September 2010) and Birchills CE Primary School (admission number increased from 45 to 60) from September 2011. In a number of schools surplus places were removed and the released accommodation used for Children's Centres.

- 3.5.2 Throughout the planning period to 2013/14 the total number of places in Walsall schools in the primary sector is greater than the projected total number of pupils. However, as pupil numbers are projected to continue to increase as a result of the larger cohorts being admitted to reception, this will increasingly place pressures on school accommodation.
- 3.5.3 The total number of places available for reception pupils at schools in Walsall in September 2010 is 3,615 (admission numbers for all schools are provided in **Appendix A**). This will increase to 3,630 in September 2011. Admission numbers for primary and infant schools are mostly 30, 60 or 90 or other multiples of 15 in order to comply with legislation on infant class sizes which requires the number of pupils in infant classes not to exceed 30 per teacher. Only in the most limited, very specific and time-limited circumstances can this pupil teacher ratio be exceeded. As a result, it is not possible for admission numbers to be exceeded and for schools to admit a small number of additional pupils. For financial viability reasons it would be necessary to create additional places by increasing admission numbers by 15 (or a multiple thereof) as this would enable additional classes to be run. In some schools this could be accommodated in the short term without the provision of additional classrooms and other facilities. Whilst the creation of additional places may ease pressure in a particular area of the borough, it is possible that the need to create a minimum of 15 additional places may impact on admissions at neighbouring schools.
- 3.5.4 The projected number of pupils for whom a reception place will be required in September 2010 is 3,543. The total number of reception places available is 3,615. At the time of writing this report, a total of 3,406 requests for places have been received. Although the closing date for receipt of applications was 4 December 2009, a small number of applications are still being received. There are some 130 known children for whom a school place has not yet been requested and the Choice Adviser is working with families to ensure that applications are received for all children for whom a reception place is required.
- 3.5.5 On the basis of the applications received, the number of reception places is 209 greater than the number of applicants. This equates to 5.8% surplus places in the reception year group. If the projected number of applications is received, this would be reduced to 72 which would equate to 2% surplus.
- 3.5.6 Details of the demand for school places at 'natural community' level are set out in **Appendix A**. The main areas of pressure are the town centre and Willenhall.
- 3.5.7 In 2011, the demand for reception places is projected to fall to 3,395 and the number of places available will be 3,630. This margin, which equates to 6.5% surplus places in the year group, is considered to be adequate.
- 3.5.8 In 2012 and 2013, the demand for reception places is projected to be similar to the level of demand in 2010.
- 3.5.9 At levels of surplus places in the region of 6%, there could be an expectation by the DCSF that the provision of additional places in one or more parts of the borough was offset by plans to remove surplus places at schools in other areas. This could present considerable challenges because of the implications of the infant class size legislation.

PROPOSED SUPPLY OF SCHOOL PLACES

- 3.6 In order to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the supply of and demand for school places consideration has been given to a wide range of factors including the pattern of provision of schools in the primary sector, trends in pupil numbers in the various areas, patterns of cross border pupil movements, the relative accessibility of schools, and the pattern of housing developments and sites with planning permission for residential development. As a result of this changes in the number of places at a small number of schools are proposed.
- 3.7 In the light of the above information and expected late applications for known children, Cabinet is recommended to take steps to increase the number of reception places available at schools in the borough from September 2010. The proposals set out below would result in an additional 60 reception places, increasing the total to 3,675. If late applications are received for all known children, a total of 137 places would be available across the borough.
- 3.8 Cabinet has previously determined a statutory proposal to significantly increase Birchills CE Primary School and to increase the number of reception places from 45 to 60 from September 2011. In the light of increased demand for places in the central part of the borough it is proposed to modify this proposal and bring the implementation date forward to September 2010. This can be accommodated within the accommodation available at the school.
- 3.9 Most of the town centre schools are already large (3FE (forms of entry)) or are on very restricted sites. This results in few opportunities to enlarge schools; however, Hillary Primary was a 3 FE school until some years ago when the number of places was reduced. Some additional places are required for September 2010 and it is proposed to go over the published admission number at Hillary Primary School and to admit up to 90 pupils. This is a temporary arrangement for the 2010/11 school year. It is also proposed to significantly enlarge the school and increase the intake from 60 to 90 places from September 2011 and Cabinet is recommended to approve consultation on this proposal.
- 3.10 In the Willenhall area it is proposed to create some additional reception places however, the size of existing schools, new build schemes and site issues limit the schools at which expansion could be reasonably undertaken. In view of these factors it is proposed to provide additional places at King Charles Primary School. Some additional places are required for September 2010 and it is proposed to go over the published admission number at King Charles Primary School and to admit up to 45 pupils. This is a temporary arrangement for the 2010/11 school year. It is also proposed to significantly enlarge the school and increase the intake from 30 to 45 places from September 2011 and Cabinet is recommended to approve consultation on this proposal.
- 3.11 Subject to approval of the recommendations in this report by Cabinet, it is proposed to commence improvements to the school accommodation and associated facilities at Hillary Primary School and King Charles Primary School. These improvements will primarily benefit current pupils at the schools and those to be admitted in September 2010. It is proposed to fund these capital works

using the remainder of the Primary Capital Programme allocation and details of proposed schemes will be brought to a future Cabinet meeting.

- 3.12 The arrangements described above would provide for the admission of a further 60 pupils in September 2010 at schools in the areas of the borough where the demand for places is greatest. If applications are received for all known children (see para 3.5.5 above), this would increase the number of available places to 132. This would provide some flexibility within the system and enable class sizes requirements to be complied with.
- 3.13 A number of schools in other areas have the potential to be enlarged readily; however, at present the demand for places can be met in these areas.

4. Resource considerations

4.1 Financial:

- 4.1.1 High levels of surplus places are inefficient and are not cost effective; they also impact adversely on the level of revenue funding all schools receive through the formula.
- 4.1.2 Walsall Council receives modest allocations of capital from the government for the provision of new school places. This is supplemented by S106 developer contributions when the level of school places in an area is considered insufficient to meet the additional demand for school places expected to be generated from housing developments. Recently a number of developers have been able to demonstrate that the profitability of developments is such that these contributions are unaffordable. This has resulted in the loss of some contributions and means that the financial burden of providing school places will fall on the Council and that scarce capital resources will have to be diverted from other education priorities at schools across the borough.
- 4.1.3 Funding remains available within the Education Capital Programme (Primary Capital Programme) to address the priorities identified in this report and a report detailing investment proposals will be brought to a future Cabinet meeting.

4.2 Legal:

- 4.2.1 All LAs are required to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the supply of and demand for school places in order to secure provision of an efficient and cost effective education service. In the event that LAs do not implement strategies to address imbalances between the supply of and demand for school places, the Secretary of State may direct that action is taken.

- 4.3 **Staffing:** There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

5. Citizen impact

The efficient provision of school places enables greater resources to be targeted at teaching and learning thereby contributing to the raising of standards.

6. Community safety

There are no safety implications as a result of this report.

7. Environmental impact

There are no direct environmental impacts as a result of this report.

8. Performance and risk management issues

8.1 **Risk:** All LAs are statutorily required to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the supply of and demand for school places in order to secure provision of an efficient and cost effective education service.

8.2 **Performance management:** The overall percentage of surplus places and the number of schools with more than 25% surplus places are performance indicators

9. Equality implications

The efficient provision of school places enables greater resources to be targeted at teaching and learning thereby enhancing equality of opportunity.

10. Consultation

The report has not been subject to any community consultation.

Background papers

Data relating to births, PLASC.

Cabinet report: Supply of School Places; 16 September 2009.

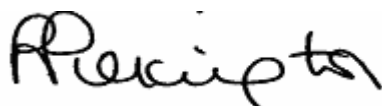
Author

Susan Lupton

Head of Planning and Development Services

☎ 01922 686231

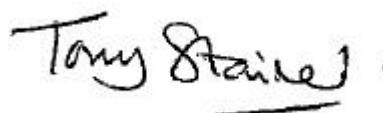
✉ susan.lupton@walsallcs.serco.com



Signed:

Executive Director: Pauline Pilkington

Date: 5 March 2010



Signed:

Managing Director, Walsall Children's
Services - Serco

Date: 5 March 2010



Signed:

Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Walker

Date: 5 March 2010

Admission numbers in primary and infant schools

School	Admission number 2010	Admission number 2011	Notes
Abbey Primary	30	30	
Alumwell Infant	90	90	
Barcroft Primary	60	60	
Beacon Primary	45	45	
Bentley Drive Primary	60	60	
Bentley West Primary	60	60	
Birchills CE Primary	45	60	Proposed to bring forward implementation date to September 2010
Blackwood School	90	90	
Bloxwich CE JMI	45	45	
Blue Coat CE Infant	90	90	
Brownhills West Primary	30	30	
Busill Jones Primary	45	45	
Butts Primary	30	30	
Caldmore Community Primary	30	30	
Castlefort JMI	30	30	
Christ Church CE Primary	30	30	
Chuckery Primary	60	60	
Cooper and Jordan CE Primary	60	60	
County Bridge Primary	30	30	
Croft Community Primary	30	30	
Delves Infant	90	90	
Edgar Stammers Primary	45	45	
Elmore Green Primary	45	45	
Fibbersley Park Primary	60	60	
Green Rock Primary	30	30	
Greenfield Primary	30	30	
Harden Primary	45	45	
Hatherton Primary	60	60	
Hillary Primary	60	90*	Proposed to admit over the admission number in Sept 2010 and to significantly enlarge the school from Sept 2011.
Holy Trinity CE Primary	30	30	
King Charles Primary	30	45*	Proposed to admit over the admission number in Sept 2010 and to significantly enlarge the school from Sept 2011.
Kings Hill Primary	45	45	
Leamore Primary	30	30	
Leighswood Primary	75	75	
Lindens Primary	45	45	
Little Bloxwich CE JMI	30	30	
Lodge Farm Primary	45	45	
Lower Farm Primary	60	60	
Manor Primary	45	45	
Meadow View JMI	60	60	

Millfield Primary	30	30	
Moorcroft Wood Primary	30	30	
Mossley Primary	30	30	
New Invention Infant	90	90	
North Walsall Primary	30	30	
Old Church CE Primary	45	45	
Palfrey Infant	90	90	
Park Hall Infant	90	90	
Pelsall Village Primary	45	45	
Pheasey Park Farm Primary	90	90	
Pinfold Street JMI	60	60	
Pool Hayes Primary	30	30	
Rosedale CE Infant	60	60	
Rough Hay Primary	45	45	
Rushall JMI	30	30	
Ryders Hayes Primary	60	60	
Salisbury Primary	45	45	
St Anne's Catholic Primary	30	30	
St Bernadette's Catholic Primary	30	30	
St Francis Catholic Primary	30	30	
St Giles CE Primary	45	45	
St James Primary	30	30	
St John's CE Primary	45	45	
St Joseph's Catholic Primary	30	30	
St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary	30	30	
St Mary's the Mount Catholic Primary	30	30	
St Michael's CE Primary	45	45	
St Patrick's Catholic Primary	30	30	
St Peter's Catholic Primary	30	30	
St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary	30	30	
Sunshine Infant	60	60	
The Radleys Primary	30	30	
Walsall Wood Primary	30	30	
Watling Street JMI	30	30	
Whetstone Field Primary	30	30	
Whitehall Nursery and Infant	90	90	
Woodlands Primary	60	60	
Total	3,615	3,675	

Note

* Proposed change

Overview of demand for school places, by natural communities

Area / natural community	
Brownhills	No additional places required.
Walsall Wood	Places available in the area and at other nearby schools.
Aldridge	Additional places previously at Leighswood Primary School from September 2010. Demand for places is high; places available at nearby schools.
Streetly	Demand for places in line with availability.
Great Barr	Places available in the area.
Pelsall	Places available.
Rushall	Places available.
Willenhall North	Demand for places has increased. Proposed to admit additional children at King Charles Primary School and to consult on significant enlargement.
Short Heath	
Willenhall South	
Bentley and Darlaston North	
Darlaston	No additional places required.
Town centre: N&W	Demand for places has increased. Proposed to bring forward implementation date of enlargement at Birchills CE Primary School.
Town centre: S&E	Demand for places has increased. Proposed to admit additional children at Hillary Primary School and to consult on significant enlargement.
Bloxwich and Blakenall	No additional places required.