

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING  
SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

**Agenda  
Item No.**

**DATE: 22<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER, 2005**

**13**

**PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES IN ALDRIDGE**

**Ward(s)** Aldridge Central and South  
Aldridge North and Walsall Wood

**Portfolios:** Cllr EF Hughes – Children's Services

**Summary of report:**

The report provides details of the availability of primary school places in the Aldridge area and sets these in the context of future demand for places.

**Background papers:**

Information relating to: pre-school pupils; school places; pupil projections.

**Reason for scrutiny:**

The School Organisation Committee recently approved the closure of Redhouse Primary School from 31 August 2005. In the context of consideration of issues relating to this, the Chair of Scrutiny and Performance Panel requested that a report on primary school places be brought to this Panel.



**Signed:**

**Managing Director, Education Walsall: Helen Denton**

**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> December 2005**

**Resource and legal considerations:**

The Council has a duty to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the

supply of and demand for school places. This report demonstrates that, based upon current information, sufficient school places will be available in the Aldridge area.

**Citizen impact:**

School places will be available in the area for those requiring a school place for their children.

**Environmental impact:**

There are no direct impacts.

**Performance management:**

This report is for information and will not therefore directly impact on the management of the Council's performance in respect of service delivery, policy, etc.

**Equality Implications:**

Residents will have access to school places in the area for their children.

**Consultation:**

**Contact Officer:**

Susan Lupton – Strategic Leader: School Organisation, Admissions, Capital & Asset Management  
Education Walsall  
Tel. 01922 686231  
[Susan.lupton@we.serco.com](mailto:Susan.lupton@we.serco.com)

## **1. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SUPPLY OF AND DEMAND FOR SCHOOL PLACES**

- 1.1 Local Education Authorities have a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for pupils of compulsory school age. Resources must be used in the most efficient and cost effective way to raise educational standards. This requires the balance between the supply of school places and the demand for school places to be reviewed regularly and any identified imbalances to be addressed in order to ensure cost effective sufficiency of provision.
- 1.2 Many LEAs use 10% as a guideline for the extent to which the number of places planned for future intakes should exceed the projected number of pupils. This is in line with Audit Commission recommendations and recognises the dynamics of changing pupil populations. Some level of surplus places is necessary to maintain the denominational mix of schools, to provide flexibility in the system, to cater for changing patterns of entry and to cater for parental preferences. It does not equate to a surplus places level of 10%.
- 1.3 The number of pupils in the primary sector has fallen from the mid-1990s and projections based on births and other data provided by the Office for National Statistics indicate that this trend will continue at Borough level although this may vary in some years at individual ward level. Overall, in Walsall, the number of children entering reception classes is slightly less than the number of births in the relevant preceding year.
- 1.4 During times of declining pupil numbers, school places in areas perceived to be desirable by parents are able to be accessed those living some distance away and this distorts the general pattern of admissions. If a school has a place available and a parent wishes their child to be admitted, the school cannot refuse to offer a place.
- 1.5 The DfES considers that primary school children under the age of 8 can walk 2 miles to access a school place; for children aged 8 and over this distance is increased to 3 miles.

## **2. ALDRIDGE**

- 2.1 For the purpose of this report, Aldridge has been considered as the area delimited on the map provided as Appendix 1. Schools within 2 miles of Aldridge are described as within the wider Aldridge area. This is the planning area that the DfES expects LEAs to take account of when considering the availability of school places.
- 2.2 Aldridge itself is largely within the Aldridge Central and South ward; only a small part, the Druid's Heath area, is in the Aldridge North and Walsall Wood ward.

2.3 The primary schools in the Aldridge wards are listed below.

<u>Primary Schools in Aldridge Central &amp; South</u>	<u>Primary Schools in Aldridge North &amp; Walsall Wood</u>
Cooper and Jordan CE VA	Castlefort
Leighswood	St John's CE
St Mary of the Angels Catholic	Walsall Wood
Whetstone Field	

### 3. PUPIL NUMBERS

#### 3.1 Current Pupil Numbers

3.1.1 A total of 33 schools serve the Aldridge area ie they are located within 2 miles of Aldridge as delimited on the map provided as Appendix 1. Five of these schools are located in Aldridge itself and one of these, Redhouse Primary, will close on 31 August 2006. Redhouse Primary School is a 1 FE (form of entry) school with 210 places; the number of pupils for whom an alternative school place will be required in September 2006 is 36.

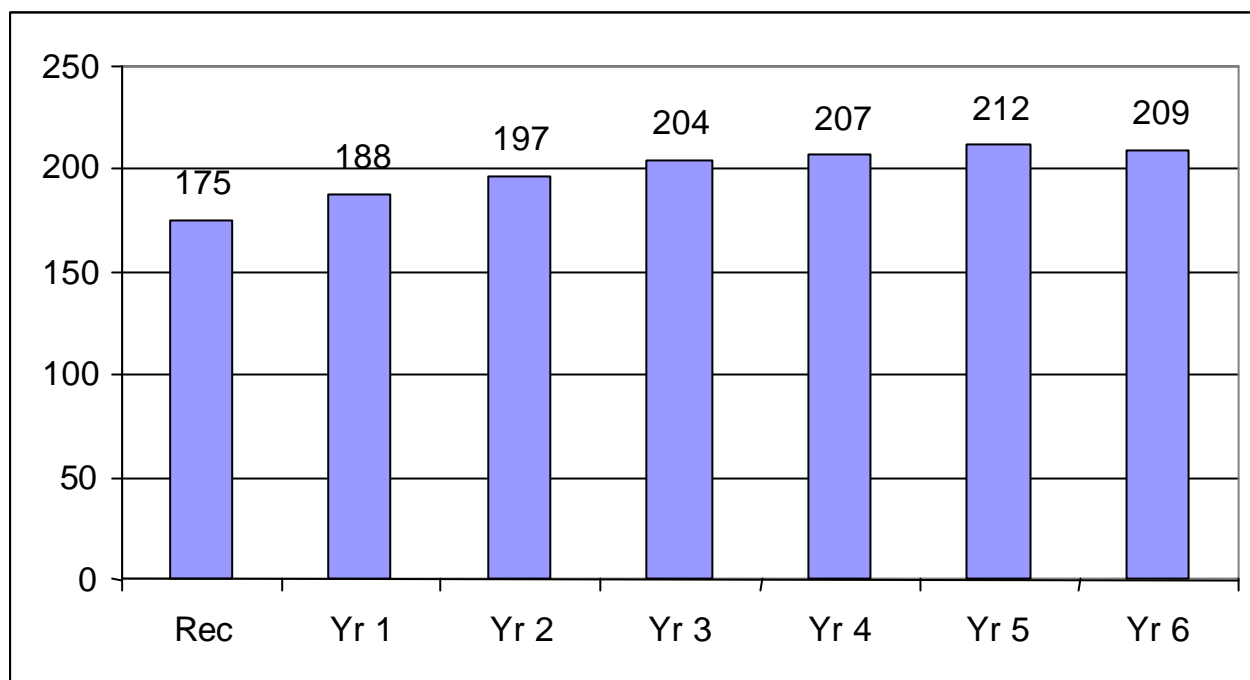
3.1.2 Table 1 below provides details of the number of pupils attending schools within this larger area and within Aldridge. A detailed breakdown is provided as Appendix 2. Overall, the reduction in the number of pupils from the oldest year group (Y6) to the youngest (Reception) is equivalent to the number admitted by three 1FE (Forms of Entry) schools and within Aldridge itself this fall in numbers is equivalent to one form of entry.

Table 1: Pupil Numbers by Year Group, September 2005

<b>Schools</b>	<b>Adm No</b>	<b>Rec</b>	<b>Y 1</b>	<b>Y 2</b>	<b>Y 3</b>	<b>Y 4</b>	<b>Y 5</b>	<b>Y 6</b>	<b>Total</b>
Cooper & Jordan CE Primary	60	59	58	60	65	68	66	63	439
Leighswood	70	56	72	71	70	71	71	71	482
Redhouse Primary *	0	4	7	6	5	5	9	8	44
St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary	30	26	21	30	33	33	35	33	211
Whetstone Field Primary	30	30	30	30	31	30	31	34	216
<b>Total Aldridge Schools</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>1392</b>
<b>Total Schools within 2 miles of Aldridge</b>	<b>1,377</b>	<b>1,167</b>	<b>1,249</b>	<b>1,231</b>	<b>1,323</b>	<b>1,328</b>	<b>1,289</b>	<b>1,265</b>	<b>8,852</b>

\* School closes 31 August 2006

Figure 1: Pupil numbers by year group for Aldridge Schools



3.1.3 A significant number of pupils admitted to Aldridge primary schools do not live in Aldridge. Over recent years this pattern of admissions and the extensive house-building which has taken place in the area have protected Aldridge schools from the full impact of falling birth rates. **In the September 2005 admissions round, a total of 175 reception places were offered at Aldridge primary schools but only 123 of these were to Aldridge residents. Approximately 29% of the pupils admitted to reception classes in Aldridge primary schools in September 2005 do not live in Aldridge.**

3.1.4 There is a total of 190 reception places available in Aldridge primary schools (excluding Redhouse) and a total of 1,377 reception places in the wider Aldridge area.

### 3.2 Future Pupil Numbers

3.2.1 Information about the likely demand for places in future years is available from birth rates and the numbers of pre-school children.

3.2.2 Details of the numbers of births in Aldridge Central & South and Aldridge North & Walsall Wood are provided in Table 2 below. This shows that falling birth rates will be a factor in the demand for places in Aldridge Central and South (the ward in which most of Aldridge is located) through to 2008 but that demand for places in Aldridge North and Walsall Wood will begin to increase from 2006. This is largely as a result of extensive house building in Walsall Wood and Shire Oak/Brownhills. In recent years there has been very limited development in the Druid's Heath area of Aldridge. Many children resident in the Walsall Wood area attend primary schools in Brownhills and Clayhanger.

Table 2: Number of Births in Aldridge Wards

	Adm No	Admission to Reception in September							
		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Aldridge Central & South	190	134	128	111	107	101	100	91	112
Aldridge North & Walsall Wood	105	155	151	144	128	120	141	141	139
Total	295	289	279	255	235	221	241	232	251

3.2.3 More up-to-date information is available from the health authority which has provided details of all pre-school children resident in Aldridge as at 1 September 2005. This data is based upon GP registrations and therefore includes people who have recently moved into the area in addition to births which have occurred since the last release of data by the Office for National Statistics (there is a time lag of up to 18 months).

3.2.4 Table 3 below shows that there are more than sufficient reception places at schools (Cooper and Jordan, Leighswood, St Mary of the Angels, Whetstone Field) within Aldridge itself for the number of children currently registered with GPs through to 2010. The number of spare places is projected to vary from 35 to 59 which is equivalent to between one and two forms of entry. In practice, it is likely that some of these places will, as in previous years, be taken up by non-Aldridge residents.

Table 3: Pre-schoolchildren Living in Aldridge

	Children Entering Reception in September				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total number of Children	136	155	132	131	145
Places Available	190	190	190	190	190
Spare Places	54	35	58	59	45

Source tPCT; data as at 1 September 2005

3.2.5 The data in Table 3 takes account of all children currently living in Aldridge. Further residential developments are under construction or are proposed. Whilst the number of children an individual development is likely to yield varies, the projection used nationally is 3 children per year group per 100 dwellings. Actual figures may be lower if a significant number of dwellings have 2 bedrooms (eg apartments). It is evident from Table 3 that there are sufficient places to cater for a significant increase in the demand for reception places and for places in other year groups provided that there is not a further increase in non-Aldridge residents applying for school places in Aldridge. If this were to occur, it could result in schools elsewhere facing a disproportionate fall in pupil numbers and could potentially lead to viability issues.

#### 4. SCHOOL PLACES

- 41 There are a total of 1,377 reception places in the primary sector in the wider Aldridge area and 190 of these are available at the four schools located in Aldridge. Details of the admission number and the total number of places at these schools is provided in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Primary School Places in Aldridge

School	Admission Number	Total number of places*
Cooper & Jordan	60	420
Leighswood	70	490
St Mary of the Angels	30	210
Whetstone Field	30	210
<b>Total Aldridge Schools</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>1,330</b>
<b>Total Schools within 2 miles of Aldridge</b>	<b>1,377</b>	<b>9,727</b>

\* Admission number x number of year groups

- 4.2 The number of places in each year group is generally the same as the admission number although for historic reasons some junior year groups are larger. Admission numbers were reviewed when the infant class size limit was introduced by the government and year groups which predate this may be larger. Admission numbers at junior schools were not necessarily reduced to match a reduced admission number at their paired infants school. Some year groups are larger because of successful appeals.
- 4.3 Details of the current availability of primary school places in the Aldridge area are provided in Table 5 below. A detailed breakdown is provided as Appendix 3.

Table 5: Current availability of Primary School Places by Year Group, September 2005 – including places taken by children from outside the Aldridge area

School Name	Adm No	Rec	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6
Cooper & Jordan CE Primary	60	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Leighswood	70	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary	30	4	9	0	0	0	0	0
Whetstone Field Primary	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Aldridge Schools</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Pupils at Redhouse Primary *	-	4	7	6	5	5	9	8
<b>Total Schools within 2 miles of Aldridge</b>	<b>1,377</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>161</b>

\* School closes 31 August 2006

Data from September 2005

# see para 3.1.3

- 4.4 The closure of Redhouse Primary School from 31 August 2006 will place some pressure on school places in Aldridge itself - but not the wider Aldridge area - in junior year groups. Alternative school places will be offered to 36 children at Redhouse who will require a primary school place in September 2006. In future

years children resident in the Redhouse estate will be able to get a place at primary schools in Aldridge.

4.5 Overall, there are sufficient school places in Aldridge for children resident in Aldridge and a greater choice of schools within the wider Aldridge area.

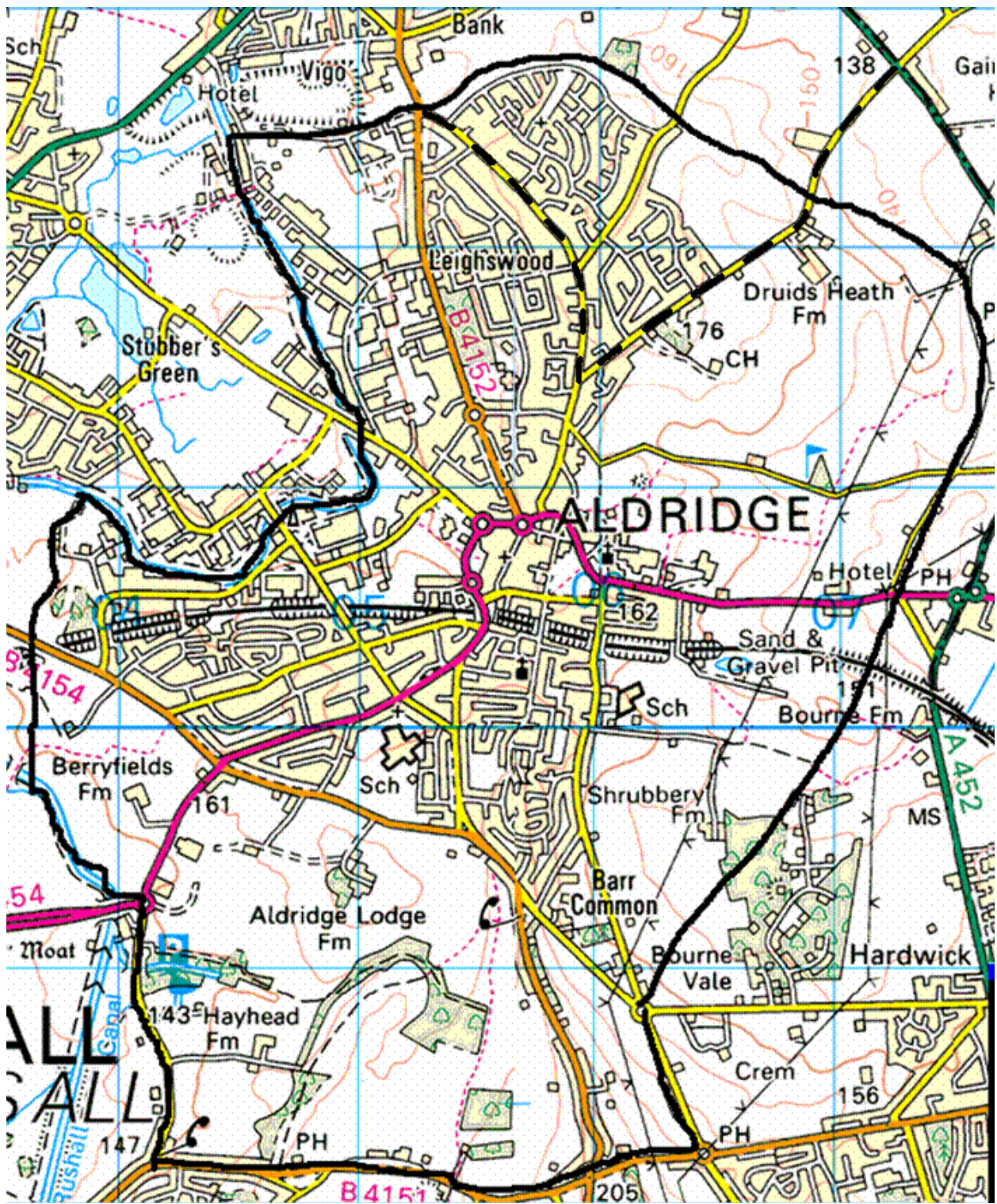
## **5 SUMMARY**

5.1 Key issues of the report.

- There are sufficient school places in Aldridge for those children resident in Aldridge
- Many school places in Aldridge are taken up by children who live some distance away.
- Birth rates in Aldridge are well below the number of reception places available for 4 year olds.
- GP registrations of preschool children demonstrate that there are more than sufficient places for reception children through to 2010.
- The fact that so many children from outside the area attend Aldridge schools can make it difficult for parents of older children to find a place at the school of their choice.
- Schools in Aldridge are viable and sustainable in part because of the number of children who travel from outside the immediate area.



Appendix 1: Map of Aldridge



The solid black line indicates the area considered as Aldridge for the purpose of this report.

The broken line denotes the ward boundary between the Aldridge Central & South ward (to the south) and the Aldridge North & Walsall Wood ward (to the north).

## Appendix 2: Pupil numbers at all primary schools within 2 miles of Aldridge

Schools	Adm No	Rec	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6	Total
Blackwood	75	70	75	74	69	75	72	71	506
Butts Primary	30	30	30	30	32	35	23	30	210
Castlefort JMI	30	16	27	28	30	24	30	30	185
Chuckery Primary	60	54	60	48	58	59	42	54	375
Cooper & Jordan CE Primary	60	59	58	60	65	68	66	63	439
Edgar Stammers Infant	60	41	39	38	0	0	0	0	80
Edgar Stammers Junior	70	0	0	0	55	49	54	29	225
Greenfield Primary	45	36	33	32	40	46	36	34	257
Harden Primary	45	24	42	32	41	36	40	20	235
Holy Trinity CE Primary	30	30	30	30	30	30	31	30	211
Leighswood	70	56	72	71	70	71	71	71	482
Lindens Primary	50	46	36	40	44	40	44	51	301
Manor Primary	42	29	42	34	42	41	41	39	268
Meadow View JMI	60	28	37	35	45	43	38	44	270
Millfield Primary	30	22	30	30	29	28	25	30	194
North Walsall Primary	30	30	25	28	25	21	20	17	166
Park Hall Infant	90	88	90	90	0	0	0	0	178
Park Hall Junior	102	0	0	0	100	100	100	102	492
Pelsall Village	60	34	43	31	36	35	38	36	253
Pheasey Park Farm Primary	90	90	87	88	86	111	78	91	631
Radleys Primary	30	28	25	29	29	34	33	31	209
Redhouse Primary *	-	4	7	6	5	5	9	8	44
Rushall JMI	30	27	33	31	31	31	26	31	210
Ryders Hayes	60	53	57	60	60	61	57	52	400
St Anne's Catholic Primary	30	24	24	30	26	32	31	32	199
St Francis Catholic Primary	30	29	27	30	30	30	26	27	199
St James Primary	30	30	30	28	29	24	39	30	210
St John's CE Primary	45	42	43	41	47	47	46	54	320
St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary	30	26	21	30	33	33	35	33	211
St Michael's CE Primary	45	45	45	43	45	45	45	46	314
St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary	30	30	28	24	28	26	28	24	188
Walsall Wood	30	16	23	30	32	18	34	21	174
Whetstone Field Primary	30	30	30	30	31	30	31	34	216
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,377**</b>	<b>1,167</b>	<b>1,249</b>	<b>1,231</b>	<b>1,323</b>	<b>1,328</b>	<b>1,289</b>	<b>1,265</b>	<b>8,852</b>

Notes

\*\* Excludes Year 3 admission numbers at Edgar Stammers and Park Hall Junior Schools

\* School closes 31 August 2006

Data: September 2005

### Appendix 3: Available places at primary schools within 2 miles of Aldridge

School Name	Adm No	Rec	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6
Blackwood	75	5	0	1	6	0	3	4
Butts Primary	30	0	0	0	0	0	7	0
Castlefort JMI	30	14	3	2	0	6	0	0
Chuckery Primary	60	6	0	12	2	1	18	6
Cooper & Jordan CE Primary	60	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Edgar Stammers Infant	60	19	21	22	0	0	0	0
Edgar Stammers Junior	70	0	0	0	15	21	16	41
Greenfield Primary	45	9	12	13	5	0	9	11
Harden Primary	45	21	3	13	4	9	5	25
Holy Trinity CE Primary	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leighswood	70	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lindens Primary	50	4	14	10	6	10	6	0
Manor Primary	42	13	0	8	0	1	1	3
Meadow View JMI	60	32	23	25	15	17	22	16
Millfield Primary	30	8	0	0	1	2	5	0
North Walsall Primary	30	0	5	2	5	9	10	13
Park Hall Infant	90	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Park Hall Junior	102	0	0	12	2	2	2	0
Pelsall Village	60	26	17	29	24	25	22	24
Pheasey Park Farm Primary	90	0	3	2	4	0	12	0
Radleys Primary	30	2	5	1	1	0	0	0
Rushall JMI	30	3	0	0	0	0	4	0
Ryders Hayes	60	7	3	0	0	0	3	8
St Anne's Catholic Primary	30	6	6	0	4	0	0	0
St Francis Catholic Primary	30	1	3	0	0	0	4	3
St James Primary	30	0	0	2	1	6	0	0
St John's CE Primary	45	3	2	4	0	0	0	0
St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary	30	4	9	0	0	0	0	0
St Michael's CE Primary	45	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary	30	0	2	6	2	4	2	6
Walsall Wood	30	14	7	0	0	12	0	9
Whetstone Field Primary	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1,377**</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>169</b>
Pupils at Redhouse Primary *	-	4	7	6	5	5	9	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,377**</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>161</b>

Notes

\*\* Excludes Year 3 admission numbers at Edgar Stammers and Park Hall Junior Schools

\* School closes 31 August 2006

Data: September 2005