

**Schools Forum
16 January 2019
Update on 2-year-old expenditure**

1.0 Purpose of report

1.1 To update School Forum on the spend and impact of the 2 year old capital and trajectory fund that enables the LA to carry out its duty to provide early learning for eligible two year olds. The LA has a duty to ensure the supply of places for two year olds, the quality of the provision and to promote the take up of places. The report also shares plans for future spend. This report is based end of autumn term 2018 data.

2.0 Background

2.1 Take up of two-year-old places remains a priority in order to close the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children in Walsall. Research from the Education Endowment Foundation evidences that this is the single best strategy for improving outcomes by the age of five. Walsall’s strategy for two year old take up is to ensure that there are sufficient places in each ward within ‘pram pushing’ distance. Walsall also aims to have a mix of provider types in each ward, as some parents would not want their child to go to day care because they do want other adults caring for their young child but might be happy to send their child to school. Other parents may think their child is too young for school but may be happy for them to go to day-care or with a childminder.

2.2 Attainment of pupils who take up their two-year-old place is not measured by the LA (or nationally) until the child completes their Early Years Foundation Stage. The children who have been eligible for two-year-old places are not recorded as a separate data set but many of them would be included in the Free School Meal group. You will see from the table below that in 2018 there is still a gap of 14% between FSM and Non FSM children in Walsall by the age of five. Although this shows that there is a way to go in closing the attainment gap in Walsall, it must be noted that the national gap is 3% higher at 17%. Walsall’s outcomes for eligible FSM children is exactly in line with National Average of 57% GLD, evidencing how well schools and settings in Walsall support the attainment of this group of children. 2-year-old Early Learning is contributing to this success as reported by most headteachers delivering the 2-year-old provision.

Table 1: 3 Year trend percentage of 5 years olds reaching age related expectations (Good Level of Development)

Group		Walsall 2016	National 2016	Gap 2016	Walsall 2017	National 2017	Gap 2017	Walsall 2018	National 2018	Gap 2018
All		65	69	4%	66	71	5%	68	72	4%
Gender	Female	73	77	4	74	78	4	75	78	3
	Male	57	62	5	58	64	6	62	65	3
FSM	Eligible	55	54	No gap	56	56	No gap	57	57	No gap
	Non Eligible	68	72	4	69	73	4	71	74	3

2.3 In Walsall we are particularly strong in sharing data with Head teachers and Early Years leaders and delivering strategies for improvement. Schools and settings are aware that Reading, Writing, Number and Shape, Space and Measure are the areas where Eligible 2 year olds/ FSM children do less well. Most schools direct their EYPP into these areas for improvement.

3.0 Current Position - Supply and Demand

3.1 Currently seven nursery schools offer places to two year olds, 16 maintained primary or infant schools, 47 private nurseries and playgroups and 84 childminders. There has been an increase in private places available due to Kangaroo Pouch (private provider) extending two year provision at 3 sites to include Edgar Stammers, Bloxwich Children’s Centres and Rosehill and opening of two more new private providers. Also new places for 2 year olds have been created at Reedswood School.

Table 2 highlights six wards where supply for 2 year old places is very low (Yellow) and two wards where supply is low (Amber)

Ward	Total Number of Part Time 2 year old Places available (Childcare)	Total Number of Part Time 2 year old Places available (Schools)	Total Number of Part Time 2 year old Places available	Total 2 year olds requiring a place	Number of spare places available	% of spare places available
Aldridge Central & South	120	24	144	73	71	49%
Aldridge North & Walsall Wood	142	24	166	45	121	73%
Bentley & Darlaston North	246	32	278	171	107	38%
Birchills Leamore	294		294	272	22	7%
Blakenall	194	152	346	273	73	21%
Bloxwich East	10	48	58	154	-96	-166%
Bloxwich West	160	72	232	113	119	51%
Brownhills	116	40	156	81	75	48%
Darlaston South	322	164	486	223	263	54%
Paddock	86		86	62	24	28%
Palfrey	196	64	260	254	6	2%
Pelsall	114	48	162	48	114	70%
Pheasey Park Farm	162		162	26	136	84%
Pleck	88	64	152	254	-102	-67%
Rushall-Shelfield	78		78	79	-1	-1%
Short Heath	4	12	16	76	-60	-375%
St Matthew's	204		204	201	3	1%
Streetly	144		144	20	124	86%
Willenhall North	54	40	94	109	-15	-16%
Willenhall South	164	32	196	207	-11	-6%
Out of Borough						
	2898	816	3714	2741	1213	33%

Table 3 - highlights eight wards, in red, where there are numbers of 99 or more children in the ward not accessing their 2-year-old place.

Ward	Children on August 2018 DWP List	Children in a Setting	% Take Up	Number of children not accessing a place from current DWP List	Spare places available (from Current sufficiency data)
Aldridge Central & South	41	38	93%	35	71
Aldridge North & Walsall Wood	28	23	82%	22	121
Bentley & Darlaston North	123	72	59%	99	107
Birchills Leamore	170	114	67%	158	22
Blakenall	180	130	72%	143	73
Bloxwich East	103	81	79%	73	-96
Bloxwich West	76	50	66%	63	119
Brownhills	71	53	75%	28	75
Darlaston South	151	97	64%	126	263
Paddock	41	28	68%	34	24
Palfrey	194	121	62%	133	6
Pelsall	27	27	100%	21	114
Pheasey Park Farm	31	8	26%	18	136
Pleck	173	124	72%	130	-102
Rushall-Shelfield	57	42	74%	37	-1
Short Heath	46	32	70%	44	-60
St Matthew's	140	86	61%	115	3
Streetly	17	9	53%	11	124
Willenhall North	72	48	67%	61	-15
Willenhall South	125	84	67%	123	-11
Out of Borough	0	37			
Total	1866	1304	70%		

3.2 Actions taken to increase sufficiency of places in each of the highlighted wards to include:

- Bloxwich East. Meeting planned with St Peters/ Rivers schools to create places. Possible expansion, utilising trajectory fund, at Sandbank Nursery which is in the neighbouring ward of Bloxwich West
- Pleck. Increased places at Reedswood. Approached Hillary School but they are unable to offer places. South of Pleck can utilise new places being developed in Palfrey Ward
- Rushall – Shelfield. Places now available at a new provider in the neighbouring ward of Pelsall (Blossoms on the Common) and in existing provision in Pelsall and Aldridge.
- Short Heath. Lodge Farm have agreed to deliver 2 year old places. A meeting is also planned to scope a capital build at Woodlands to deliver places from September 2019.

- Willenhall North. Meetings have taken place to consider the creation of more places at beacon School utilising capital fund.
- Willenhall South. Meeting planned with Fibbersley and Barcroft Schools to explore the creation of places.
- St Mathews. A new private provider, Toddler Town, is creating places for two year olds from February 2019. Blue Coat Infant School are consider offering places utilising the capital fund
- Palfrey. Two new private providers (YMCA and Legacy) are creating places from April 2019. Abu Baker will also increase places from January 2019. Meeting planned with Delves Infant School to utilise capital funding to create places.
- Birchills Leamore. Meeting planned to have initial discussions with Croft Academy.
- Blakenall. Leamore School have agreed to utilise capital and revenue fund to create places. Christchurch have agreed to consider taking two year olds utilising capital and revenue fund.

3.3 Actions taken to increase take up particularly in the wards highlighted red in table 3 include:

- Information briefings to all health visitors, 3 Early Help teams and 1 Social Care Team
- Early Help Service audit to identify 2 year olds known to the LA and follow up targeted work (Through Family Information Service) with families to ensure those eligible are accessing their entitlement
- Paired visits with health visitors by the 2 Year Old Sufficiency Officer
- Leaflet developed for Health Visitors to use to promote the offer
- School Gates Campaign delivered to 10 schools
- Radio campaign with Ambur Radio (Dual language Station)
- Meeting planned with Polish Community Leader

4.0 Current Position - Take up and further analysis of gaps

Table 4

Children on August 2018 DWP List	1866
Children in a Setting	1304
Take Up	69.9%

4.1 Table 4 demonstrates an increase to 69.9% (Rounded to 70%) take up of places by the end of Autumn Term 2018 from 64% at the end of Spring Term 2018. This evidences the success of the current strategies to improve take up.

5.0 Further Plans

5.1 Plans are in place to repeat attendance at all team meetings, bi- annually, to ensure all frontline professionals understand the importance of the offer, eligibility criteria and the process to support families to take up their place, including using Family Information Service and the childcare directory.

5.2 Continue to fund a the temporary 2 Year Old Sufficiency Officer to work alongside health visitors, in the first instance, to ensure consistent messages are given about the importance of taking up the place, the options available and the process. The post holder will also develop further resources that frontline services can share with parents to help them promote the development of their two-year-old child.

5.3 School Ready Engagement officers (from the Children’s Centres) continue to work with all 80 infant and primary schools over the next few months to promote the offer to parents, through a school gates campaign.

5.4 A parent online portal has been purchased by the LA and will be set up and offered to parents as a quick way of accessing their code on line. This will cut down the need for them to contact Family Information Services.

5.5 The LA is currently working on information sharing protocol to enable health visitors to have details about the families eligible for funding in order that a ‘golden ticket’ can be given to them. This will speed up the process as it cuts out the need for families to check eligibility with Family Information Service or the need for them to check using the online portal as described in 5.4.

6.0 Financial Processes

6.1 Capital and trajectory spend on the expansion of two year old places is now approved by the Lead Advisor for EY’s using the agreed criteria. This includes evidence of demand, school/ settings financial viability, a good or outstanding Ofsted grade for EYFS and an application within the financial limits of the grant. The Capital Board may consider any applications that are not within the financial limits of the grant.

6.2 The Capital Board also makes decisions on school expansions for older age children and having an Early Years Team Representative in the group ensures that consideration is given to expansion of nursery and two-year-old places, where necessary, whilst at the feasibility stage.

7.0 Financial update

Capital to Create 2 year Old Places - DSG reserve (taken from last report to Schools Forum – currently being updated)		
Allocation of £2,383,116	£	Use of fund
Expenditure - 2015/16	1,102,359	Phase 1 and 2 capital projects creating 404 plus 726 places
Expenditure - 2016/17	61,881	Phase 1 and 2 capital projects creating 404 plus 726 places
Expenditure - 2017/18	665,106	Phase 3 (Children’s Centre configuration) creating at least 64 places at Edgar Stammers, Bloxwich and Rosehill
Expenditure – 2018/19 to date	105,023	Completion of works at Reedswood academy
Total Spend to date	1,934,469	
Balance remaining	448,647	

2 Year Old Trajectory - DSG reserve		
Allocation of £1.2m	£	Main use of fund
Expenditure - 2015/16	462,526	Resource provision, market the offer to families, transitional fund
Expenditure - 2016/17	40,508	Transitional Fund, market offer to families, Quality Audits
Expenditure - 2017/18	50,600	Improving provision through Achievement for All, market offer to families
Expenditure - 2018/19 to date	8138.51	Resourcing Reedswood 2 year old provision, temporary 2-Year-Old Sufficiency Post, marketing material, training 2-year-old practitioners.
Total Spend to date	561,772	
Balance remaining	638,228	

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 Schools Forum to continue to make the remaining funds available in order to further improve sufficiency, quality and take up.

Nicola Hart
 School Ready/ Early Years Lead Adviser