

Questions & Answers

Projected Demand for School Places

March 2018

This document should be read alongside Intelligence Briefing 2018-01¹.

Why is the GLA publishing these figures?

In November 2015 the GLA published the first Pan-London Demand for School Places projections looking a decade ahead for the period of 2015 to 2025. The publication provided the first view of future demand for places in state-maintained schools across London. In the years since, the projections have proven a valuable resource in understanding emerging demand and helped inform strategic decisions about future provision and funding of places within the capital.

The 2018 Pan-London Demand for School Places projections updates the 2015 model. The model draws on updated data sources and incorporates methodology changes based on user feedback and an assessment of user requirements. The 2018 model projects demand for primary and secondary school places in London from academic year 2016/17 to 2027/28.

The GLA will continue to update the pupil demand projections and incorporate new data.

How urgent is the situation?

In the decade prior to 2012, London experienced a very high birth rate and low out-migration leading to rapid growth in the number of children living in the city. This resulted in the need for a significant expansion in the number of primary school places. These children are now reaching secondary school age and require a similar increase in secondary school provision.

Urgent action is required now to ensure that enough secondary places are available in time for the surge of children moving on from London's primaries. This surge has already begun and most boroughs are reporting real pressures in demand for places. This analysis suggests that 65,000 additional school places will be needed by 2027/28. This is equivalent to roughly 2,200 classes or 54 eight-form entry 1,200-pupil comprehensive schools.

Two options are available for delivering the extra places, expanding existing schools or building new ones. However, establishing brand new secondary schools requires considerably longer lead times.

The Mayor has joined forces with London Councils and boroughs to help support strategic join-up between the relevant agencies to tackle the fragmented nature of free schools' delivery and the difficulty of securing appropriate sites in London.

¹ <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/pan-london-school-place-demand>

Why is secondary demand still rising?

Our model suggests that the demand for secondary school places will keep growing until 2024/25 as the large cohorts seen in primary schools pass into and through the secondary system. After 2024/25 growth is projected to level off.

When does primary school demand decrease?

Recent births data suggest that the birth rate in London is slowing. The primary school-aged population in the capital is predicted to peak in the next two to three years. The impact on school places for London will be a reduction in primary school place demand in the medium to long term, although there will be variation between boroughs.

What is the Mayor doing?

The new draft London Plan (2017) social infrastructure policies set out how the Mayor expects boroughs and other stakeholders to plan for education facilities across London. Policy S3 (education and childcare facilities) requires boroughs to identify and address local needs for education facilities, and to use their Local Plans to identify sites for future provision. The Mayor has strengthened the London Plan to support the development of secondary schools and special schools. The Mayor is encouraging more innovative design solutions to enable multi-purpose sites, particularly in regard to schools and sports or leisure facilities. New schools should be located in accessible locations with healthy routes to school and inclusive for a range of users.

The updated pupil projections will assist planners and developers to assess the impact of increased pupil numbers. Work is also taking place with boroughs and London Councils to improve the data and accuracy of projections for pupils with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) and assessments of childcare sufficiency.

The GLA has launched a Pupil Mobility Demography Study with London Councils to identify the areas of the capital with the greatest probability of requiring a new secondary school in the next decade. This will help boroughs and the Education and Skills Funding Agency to make sure there are secondary schools in the right places in time for when they are needed.

The Mayor has included provision for the development of new schools at Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation. The Mayor is also working closely with boroughs in Opportunity Areas to ensure that the demand for new schools is considered as part of the redevelopment plans, for example through Development Infrastructure Funding Studies (DIFS).

Between 2012 and 2016 the GLA group assisted with sites for 21 new schools through, for example, the re-use of surplus police stations and fire stations.

The Mayor has made, and continues to make, representations to government for additional funding for new schools in London, to cover the higher costs of both land and building in the capital.

Who is responsible for ensuring sufficient new schools and school places?

The provision of sufficient school places is a statutory duty of local authorities. Under the statutory Academies Presumption (Education Act 2011 s6A) new schools must be free schools, i.e. new academies, financed directly by the Department for Education (DfE). Boroughs can extend their own schools (provided they are rated Good or Outstanding by OFSTED) but if they identify the need for a new school, it must be a free school.

What are the obstacles to creating schools?

A greater level of co-ordination is needed to ensure that we plan for new and expanded schools in Opportunity Areas and other places across the capital that are seeing significant growth in population and demand for school places. London Councils gathered data across the 32 boroughs to give a snapshot of

plans for new secondary schools in the “Do the Maths 2017” report. This showed that 50 per cent of sites for new schools had been secured to meet expected demand to 2023.

Where is the demand for new schools greatest?

The main purpose of the model is to estimate the total number of new places that are required across London as a whole. Pockets of high demand can be found across the capital with almost all boroughs having some wards with significant increases in demand over the next five years. The model suggests that over the next five years the greatest demand for secondary school places will be in East London: North Greenwich, South Barking and Dagenham and right across the borough of Havering. Particular concentrations of increased demand can be found in other boroughs such as Barnet, Brent and Hillingdon.

How do the figures take account of independent schools?

The main outputs from the model are demand projections for mainstream state school places. In order to estimate this, we modelled the proportion of the population expected to require a state school place. The difference between state demand and the total population is the ‘non-state’ population. This non-state population is comprised of independent pupils, those who are in non-mainstream state education, those who are home-schooled, and others not requiring a state school place.

How do the figures take account of cross-border mobility?

Cross-border mobility is the movement of children from one borough to another borough for schooling. Traditionally this has been difficult to incorporate into school roll projections at borough level because an overview of the entire system is required. The pan-London school place demand model was commissioned to provide exactly this type of integrated strategic overview of schooling in London. The model uses pupil-level data to understand the current patterns of cross-border mobility, both within London and across the GLA boundary, and then projects these forward to distribute projected populations to ward of schooling.

Why are there no variants in the 2018 demand projections?

In 2015, the first iteration of the demand model produced six variants, each defining the process by which demand arises in a different way. These model variants were provided to enable users to assess the impact of differing assumptions on the size and distribution of demand in London. Of the six variants the GLA recommended the ‘Hybrid Proportional model’ as being the most robust approach².

Following user feedback, we have decided not to produce this range of variants for the 2018 demand projections. Instead we have produced one projection using a methodology closely aligned to that used for the Hybrid Proportional model in 2015. We believe that this provides greater clarity to users.

To what extent are your projections for Boroughs and Wards consistent with Borough’s own school roll projections submitted to the DfE?

London Boroughs are responsible for submitting school roll projections to the DfE for their own areas. The figures in this model in no way replace or supersede those provided by the Boroughs. The advantage of this model is that it provides a strategic-level indication of where additional demand may arise in the future, using a consistent method of estimation across the capital. These projections should not be considered as definitive evidence that additional provision is required in a particular ward. Boroughs will draw on their own detailed local knowledge in order to understand the complex dynamics underpinning patterns of pupil mobility – for instance planned new provision; housing and transport development; changes to cross-border mobility and the proportion of pupils who will be educated in the borough where they live. These projections are not a replacement for this knowledge.

² See 2015 demand model documentation: <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/pan-london-school-place-demand>

How do these figures add to the data already available on the London Datastore 'London School's Atlas'?

The Atlas provides school place planners with a picture of current schooling patterns across the capital, which can be superimposed over future population projections and other contextual data. However, it does not constitute a projection of where future demand will manifest. The pan-London model offers a view on where demand may arise in the future, giving planners a new tool for understanding the relationship between school place demand and population change.

Is the GLA also looking at early years provision?

The GLA appreciates that many of the demand pressures identified in the primary and secondary sectors also impact on early years provision. We are currently developing a methodology for projecting early years demand and anticipate publishing findings later in 2018.