

Wokingham Borough Council

School Organisation Plan 2025 to 2030

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Introduction

The Council has statutory duties to ensure that sufficient, suitable school and childcare places are available for children and young people living in the borough. This plan looks at:

- The need for provision, now and in the near future;
- The provision that is available and currently planned for; and
- The current and near future sufficiency of the provision, by comparing need and supply.

From this analysis, it proposes changes to provision, either to increase or decrease the supply of places, to ensure both that statutory duties are fulfilled and resources are used effectively.

The plan is divided into four sections, reflecting the main areas of interest:

- Early Years and Childcare;
- Mainstream school provision (itself divided into primary and secondary sections);
- Post-16;
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision.

These four areas of interest are characterised by different statutory requirements. Early Years and childcare provision are made up of a mix of state, private, independent, and voluntary providers, and the Council's role is to ensure that a sufficient mix of free and paid for provision is available to meet parental needs and entitlements. Mainstream school provision is a universal offer of free provision, made through schools (predominantly in the borough), some funded by the local authority (maintained schools) and some directly by Department for Education (Academies and Free Schools)¹. Post-16 provision is partly in schools (in sixth forms) and partly in local colleges in neighbouring borough areas. Formally designated SEND provision is available to children after a statutory assessment process, and can be made in Maintained, Academy and Free Schools, but also by independent schools (including "for profit" schools) and non-maintained special schools (often run by charities).

Key recommendations

For Early Years, to:

- Continue to provide advice and guidance to individuals and bodies looking to enlarge or create new early years provision.
- Support schools and trusts where they are seeking to create new provision, particularly where this increases the number of places for younger children (aged 9 months to 2 years).
- Seek to maintain or increase the number of places for children aged 4 and under in mainstream schools.

For Primary mainstream education, to:

¹ Independent provision also exists in this sector, although largely outside of the purview of the local authority.

- Work with schools and Trusts to rationalise provision in the borough, to better align the number of places with a falling pupil population.
- Should new schools be required to meet needs in areas of large-scale residential development, have a system approach to sufficiency, exploring creative options, including relocation of existing under-subscribed schools to these places.

For Secondary mainstream education, to:

- Maintain current levels of additional provision, while the number of children coming through each year from the primary phase maintains surplus capacity at $\leq 7\%$.
- As the number of children requiring Year 7 places reduces, deliver a phased school PAN reduction, through agreement with academy trusts, to a sustainable level, ensuring that schools remain viable throughout.

For Post-16 education, to:

- Complete the new sixth form at the Bohunt School and replace the temporary sixth form premises at the Emmbrook School, to ensure that there are sufficient places as the high numbers of students admitted to Year 7 over the last 4 years progress to Post-16 education.
- Monitor need annually, in case access to out of borough provision should become restricted and additional academic sixth form capacity becomes necessary.
- Work with internal and external partners, as well as secondary schools and Academy Trusts to ensure that the Borough's SEND and Inclusion Strategy and the emerging skills and employment strategy sets out the needs of Post-16 students pursuing vocational practice-based courses, and that suitable provision is made for such learners, by local providers.

For SEND to:

- Deliver the agreed programme of additional SEND capacity.
- Agree new projects to extend the in-borough SEND offer, including 50 primary places at 4 new settings, 57 secondary (11 to 16) places at 4 new settings and 80 new Post-16 places at 2 settings.

Summary

There are linked changes to the local child population that underpin all areas of interest.

Firstly, the changing nature of the local child population, reflecting national birth rate changes. In the years leading to 2012/13, the number of children born to borough residents increased to a maximum of 1,963 in 2012. By 2023, births had reduced to 1,668, a fall of 295 children (or 15% of the 2012 figure). This population "bulge" led to a need for additional primary school places in the early to mid-2010s. Since then, the birth rate has subsequently fallen, there are now significant numbers of unfilled Reception class places. This creates a pressing need to reduce the number of available places. The bulge is now passing into the secondary sector and will shortly pass through Post-16 education too. As the peak of the bulge passes through the number of children requiring places is expected to drop. Note too, that the birth rate has not returned to levels seen in the years leading up to the 2012 peak, it is at a historically low level, with no convincing signs of reversal.

Secondly, the impact of large-scale house building, focused on a small number of larger scale developments means that, in these areas, child numbers have been maintained (or even increased). A continued emphasis on the delivery of new homes in national planning policy and the (relative) economic buoyancy of the Thames Valley, points to housebuilding continuing to be a major local factor until at least 2040 (the end of the next Local Plan).

Early Years and Childcare

The Council has duties to ensure there is sufficient childcare to meet the needs of working parents in the borough and to fund free childcare for certain children.

Statutory free provision is:

- a universal offer of 15 hours childcare per week for all children aged 3 and 4 years old;
- additional entitlement for children of working parents (15 hours per week for 3- and 4-year-olds, in addition to the universal entitlement);
- for children of working parents, from 9 months to 2 years old, 15 hours per week, increasing to 30 hours per week from September 2025; and
- a 15 hour per week entitlement for children receiving additional support (because of low income or Special Educational Needs).

All weekly entitlements are for 38 weeks in a year but can be used flexibly.

Take up of free provision has increased markedly between 2023 and 2024 (98% between Autumn 2023 and Autumn 2024), driven by a mix of conversion of paid for provision to free provision and parents' increased use of designated childcare provision. Available data does not show the proportion of the increase due to conversion and new usage. Falling child numbers and increased usage rates will, to some extent, cancel one another out.

Most formal funded childcare is provided by Day Nurseries, with c.1,900 places provided in Autumn 2024 (c.50% of c. 4,000 childcare places), followed by play schools / pre-schools (c.800 places / c.20% of places), state funded school nurseries (c.650 / 15%), child minders (c.450 / 10%) and others (state maintained nursery and independent schools) combined (c.200 / 5%). It is estimated that there are c.4,700 places, taking account of parent funded provision.

Given a certain degree of uncertainty about potential provision in the borough, the gap analysis must be tentative. However, there are good reasons to be positive. There is no indication that there is any shortfall in the borough, as evidenced by:

- The lack of complaints about the difficulty of finding suitable provision made by parents to the Council's Early Years Team,
- The fact that new early year's providers have been established in the borough in the recent past.
- A DfE assessment that Wokingham has the largest number of 'Childcare Oases' nationally, based on neighbourhood access to childcare.

The only caveats are around government funding rates. There will be significant pressure on local providers should costs increase significantly, but funding rates are not updated to match.

This points to a need to maintain advice and support for local providers, to work to maintain and increase provision in local state funded schools and to ensure that childcare places are protected in both new provision and any reorganisation of existing provision.

Primary Mainstream

The Council has a duty to ensure there are sufficient school places for children aged 4 (rising 5) to 16 living in the Borough and to provide opportunities for parental choice. Parents are entitled to express preferences for schools both in and out of the Borough. Primary schools are for children aged 4 to 11 years; infant schools are for children aged 4 to 7 years and junior schools are for children aged 8 to 11 years.

Currently there are c.2,000 children in Reception classes and c.15,600 children on primary phase rolls. Current projections are that the number of children in Reception classes and on roll will decline to c.1,800 and c.13,600 respectively by 2030/31, with a sharp fall occurring between 2025 and 2027.

Changes to independent school taxation and cross border movement have had a limited impact on primary phase rolls. New house building does have a marked impact but is localised in major development areas. The Council's 'South West' Primary phase planning area, in particular, has seen rising rolls (strongest in Shinfield parish schools), reflecting the impact of major developments in Shinfield Parish and around the former Arborfield Garrison.

Currently there are c.2,350 Reception class places and c. 16,500 places in total. Agreements have been made with a number of schools, so Reception places (not capacity) will reduce in 2026 to c.2,140 places (and total places will reduce accordingly over time, as the reduced places cohort moves through the age range).

There are also plans for additional provision in new communities, with planning permission for new schools south of the Wokingham town area, in Shinfield and in the Arborfield Green / Finchwood Park area.

Gap analysis points to there being a continued surplus of places, despite reductions in admission numbers (Reception year places) in 2026/27. This points to excess surplus places totalling c. 240 / 8 classes from 2027/28 and the need for further PAN reductions across Wokingham to reflect this.

Secondary 11 to 16 Mainstream

As noted above, the Council has a duty to ensure there are sufficient secondary phase (age 11 to 16 years) school places for all children living in the borough, who require one.

Also, as noted above, the peak of the bulge in child numbers centred on children born in 2012/13 has now transitioned from the primary phase into the secondary phase. Current (2024/25) Year 7 rolls are c.2,300 and are projected to decline to c.2,100 by 2030/31. School rolls (Years 7 to 11) are projected to peak in 2026/27 (c.11,500) and reduce over the remainder of the projection period to c.11,000 pupils. Migration, cross border movement and independent school take up are the most important factors, after Wokingham primary school rolls, in determining 11- to 16-year-old rolls in the borough. Migration is significant for early years and primary year groups, but, except in 2021 and 2022, has had little impact on secondary rolls. Wokingham Borough has significant interchange of pupils with neighbouring boroughs, with a current balance towards Wokingham resident children securing places in out of borough schools. Edgbarrow School (serving Crowthorne) and Grammar schools (in Reading and Slough) are significant destinations. The most significant movement into Borough schools are from Reading into Reading-fringe schools. National statistics collect independent school rolls,

but (as they are school level) do not collect numbers of pupils by local authority of residence. There is no evidence to indicate that the recent change in taxation of fees has had a significant impact on independent school take up.

The Council has agreed an investment programme with a number of schools to ensure that they are able to admit sufficient children to ensure all Wokingham resident children who need a place receive one. Under current arrangements c. 2,400 Year 7 places are available. This includes places agreed with schools, which are supported by revenue monies from the Dedicated Schools Grant Growth Fund and (in most cases) capital investment by the Council.

Projections and capacity analysis point to an increasing school place surplus (to 355 or 15% of Year 7 places and c. 1,100 or 9% of total capacity by 2030/31).

This points to a need for a phased reduction in the number of places available, through agreements with schools and their trusts, to achieve an approximate annual 5% surplus balance between Year 7 rolls and offered places.

Exploring creative options at an early stage will provide an opportunity to co-produce solutions through a system approach to promote inclusion in mainstream schools.

For school place planning purposes, the borough is split North and South (Earley, Woodley, and communities north of the A329M being in the North, and other areas in the South). The North Area is characterised by minor place deficits in a few year groups to 2030/31. To a considerable extent, this reflects an imbalance in the number of places available in one area (Earley), against the number of resident children (279 places v 400 local children in the 2025 admissions round). There is no case for investment in the area as the deficits are met by children being allocated accessible schools in the South Area.

Post-16

The Council has a duty to secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people in their area who are over compulsory school age but under 19, or aged 19 to 25 and for whom an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is maintained. It has further duties to ensure support is available to encourage, enable, or assist all young people aged 13 to 19 and to those between 20 and 25 with SEND, to participate in education or training.

There is a distinction to be made between those students who require “theory” based qualifications, such as A-Levels and some T-levels, and those who need practice-based vocational education and training. The borough’s young people aged 16 to 18 years (2-year groups) are split two-thirds requiring theory-based provision and one-third practice-based provision.

Out of c.4,000 identified Wokingham resident students, c. 2,500 are undertaking theory-based courses (c.1,600 attending Wokingham sixth forms) and c.1,500 are in practice focused settings (FE colleges, training, and apprenticeships). There are also c.450 young people on the roll of Wokingham school sixth forms who do not live in the Wokingham area. By 2031, the number of young people in this age group is projected to increase to 4,300, with c. 2,700 requiring theory-based provision (c. 2,200 attending Wokingham school sixth forms) and c. 1,600 requiring practice-based provision. The number of out of borough students attending Wokingham sixth forms (factored into this overall figure) is also projected to increase to c.600 by 2031,

Current theory-based provision is in Wokingham school sixth forms, out of borough sixth forms, out of borough Sixth Form colleges and some in Further Education colleges.

All “practice” based provision is out of borough (predominantly in Further Education colleges in Bracknell, Reading and near Maidenhead).

School sixth form capacity calculations are tentative. The DfE has recommended several ways of calculating capacity (which would give slightly different results). More importantly, though, sixth form capacity is not separate to 11 to 16 capacity. There are some sixth form specific spaces (independent study and social areas) but in the main teaching will be in the same accommodation used by 11- to 16-year-olds. The Council and Trusts are investing in premises, to secure 11 to 16 places, so final total capacity figures at several schools may be higher than currently estimated.

Noting these caveats, current assessed sixth form capacities total 2,300 places, with a further 300 places at the Bohunt School Wokingham to be delivered in 2026.

An initial gap analysis for theory-based needs pointed to the likelihood of a significant borough sixth form place deficit from 2026/27. However, this was based on a few schools showing apparent place deficits now (in one case a very significant deficit), and other schools having significant current surplus capacity. Since the schools with apparent deficits are known to operate successfully, a further analysis was undertaken, discounting 80% of the current deficit. This pointed to a very close balance between places and supply in 2027/28 and minor deficits in 2028/29 and 2029/30. While it is important to deliver identified capital schemes (Bohunt sixth form and Emmbrook School replacement of temporary premises) it is likely that no further capital investment will be required.

The challenge with practice-based provision is that this is provided by out of borough FE colleges, run by sub-regional chains although, historically, they have been proactive in addressing changing need. It will be important to ensure that Post-16 provision is aligned with the developing Wokingham Skills & Employment Strategy.

SEND

The Council has duties to support the education of children and young people with SEND, in some cases to age 25. Where children have high level and complex needs, they must prepare and agree an Education Health and Care Plan. This will name the school the child should attend, which could be a mainstream school, or otherwise specialist provision, which could be resourced provision as part of a mainstream school, or a Special School. Special Educational Needs fall into these categories:

- Communication and Interaction / Autism (C&I and ASD)
- Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
- Cognition and Learning Needs (C&L)
- Physical & Sensory Needs (P&S)
- Other needs

Some needs require single-need focus provision (SEMH, 75% of children with autism), while others can be educated in broad spectrum special schools and resourced provision in mainstream schools.

The number of children requiring specialist provision has increased significantly in recent years and is projected to increase further. The most recent actual figure (2024) is c.850 children and young people placed in specialist settings. This is projected to increase to c.1,300 by 2030, an increase of c.480 placements. Half of this increase will come from children with EHCPs for C&I and ASD. One quarter of the increase will come from children with SEMH. One fifth of the increase will come from children with C&L. Physical and sensory and other needs are projected to remain at current levels. Unlike mainstream roll changes, changes here are primarily driven by incidence rates, not demography.

While growth is expected in all education phases, the most significant growth is projected in the post-16 phase.

The Council has ambitious plans for growth, with two new all through schools (SEMH and Broad-Spectrum focus), alongside plans for a substantial roll-out of Resource Bases / SEND Units on mainstream school sites. By phase, these would increase provision between 2024 and 2030 as follows:

- Early Years: from 31 to 46 places.
- Primary: from 161 to 305 places.
- Secondary: from 169 to 349 places.
- Post-16: from 36 to 95 places.

The gap analysis (comparison of planned places and projected demand) points to a need for additional capacity, with an immediate shortfall of 539 places (across all needs and phases), increasing to a maximum deficiency of 662 places (in 2027), culminating in a 558-place shortfall in 2030.

This deficit could be addressed by:

- Primary phase – 4 additional resourced settings (2 ASD, 1 Cognition and Learning, 1 SEMH (50 places)
- Secondary phase – 4 additional resourced settings (1 ASD, 1 Cognition and Learning, 2 SEMH (72 places)
- Post-16 – SEND Vocational Centre (40 places) and Specialist Post-16 Phase 3 (40 places)

These additional places would reduce the deficit to 335 by 2030, with further reductions beyond the forecast horizon, as places fill.

Delivery would be dependent on agreement to additional capital spend. It will also benefit from being delivered in tandem with an Education Strategy that promotes and supports mainstream school inclusive approaches.

Early years childcare and early education sufficiency

What are we required to do?

The Council has statutory duties to ensure there are sufficient childcare and early learning places for children, under the Childcare Act 2006 and 2016, These duties include:

- the duty to ensure, as far as reasonably practical, that there is sufficient childcare for working families and,
- the duty to ensure that there are sufficient free childcare places.

The national childcare free entitlement places offers are:

- For children aged 3 and 4:
 - For all children: 15 hours per week over 38 weeks (which can be taken flexibly over a longer period)
 - For children of working parents: an additional 15 hours per week over 38 weeks (which can be taken flexibly over a longer period)
- For children aged 2: 15 hours per week (over 38 weeks) early learning for 2-year-olds receiving some additional support (due to their child having Special Education Needs or the family having a low income)
- For children of working parents aged 9 months or more, 15 hours per week over 38 weeks (which can be taken flexibly over a longer period) (introduced 2024).

Note that when children aged 2 qualify for both 'working parents' and 'additional support' entitlements, they will only receive support under the 'additional support' entitlement.

From September 2025, the entitlement for children of eligible working parents increased to 30 hours from age 9 months old.

The Council also has a duty that sufficient wrap around and holiday childcare is available for children of statutory school age.

Current and future need

The following analysis focuses on the needs of children up to the age of 4 years, with a particular focus on the entitlement to free childcare and early learning.

Over the course of each academic year, the number of children eligible for free childcare places increases term by term. This is because children become eligible for the entitlements dependent on their family circumstances, the term after they turn 9 months, or 2 or 3 years of age, (so at three different points in the school year), while they lose entitlement at a single point in time, the September after they turn 4 (when they start their Reception year).

There has been a significant increase in the number of children benefitting from free childcare between the Spring 2024 and the Summer / Autumn 2024 early years returns to the DfE (compared to corresponding figures for 2023). This is though, entirely driven by increases in take up of provision for younger age groups (ages 0 to 2), because of the extension of free childcare to children of eligible working parents aged 9 months or more.

	Spring 2023	Summer 2023	Autumn 2023	Spring 2024	Summer 2024	Autumn 2024
Total take up	2,238	2,538	1,710	2,108	3,228	3,383

	Change	Percentage change
Spring 23 to Spring 24	-130	-6%
Summer 23 to Summer 24	690	27%
Autumn 23 to Autumn 24	1,673	98%

Total take up of free childcare 2023 to 2024.

Conversely, the overall numbers of children aged 3 and 4 benefitting from free provision has fallen slightly between 2023 and 2024. This fall (evidenced in the table below) reflects a reducing child population.

	Spring 2023	Summer 2023	Autumn 2023	Spring 2024	Summer 2024	Autumn 2024
3-Year-olds	1,474	1,460	1,405	1,375	1,399	1,378
4-Year-olds	633	961	166	600	885	146
Total	2,107	2,421	1,571	1,975	2,284	1,524

	Change	Percentage change
Spring 23 to Spring 24	-132	-6%
Summer 23 to Summer 24	-137	-6%
Autumn 23 to Autumn 24	-47	-3%

Free childcare take up for 3- and 4-year-olds 2023 to 2024

Note that a significant proportion of the increase represents children who would otherwise have taken paid for places, benefitting from the free entitlement. Children receiving parent or carer funded childcare are not, though, captured in the census data, so the increase in actual demand is difficult to ascertain.

The Early Years projections (derived from current NHS registration data, and taking account of new home impacts) that underpin the current school roll projections point to a falling child population over most of this period:

	Age 0	Age 1	Age 2	Age 3	Age 4
2023/24	1701	1914	1978	2042	2215
2024/25	1701	1775	1984	2062	2120
2025/26	1701	1760	1830	2053	2125
2026/27	1701	1757	1812	1896	2113
2027/28		1753	1805	1874	1952
2028/29			1814	1880	1943
2029/30				1894	1953
2030/31					1971

WBC Early Years Projection

Note though, that neither set of projections take account of future changes to significant factors that affect the child population and cannot be accurately modelled, including the

fertility rate and international migration. In addition, whilst the projection takes account of the Council's current new home plans, set out in the 5 Year Housing Land Supply figures and the Local Plan (including the current draft Local Plan); it cannot take account of the impact of possible changes to national housing policy that could lead to additional homes being granted planning permission.

The DfE provide a regular update on the readiness of individual local authorities to ensure the roll out of the expansion of early education and childcare entitlements. They use national childcare usage rates and apply them to each ward's estimated child population to generate a ward-based model of childcare usage, with assumptions about the impact of the increased free entitlement on total usage. Based on the DfE's calculations of ward-based demand for free early years places for September 2024 and 2025, the projection is for a 5,514-hour increase (26%) for children under two, and a 3,652 hour increase for children aged over 2 (15%). At 26 hours average free childcare take up per child, this would be a 353 additional place need (noting that a significant number of these places are already taken up, but as parent-funded places).

It is reasonable to presume that the fall in underlying population and increased take up due to improved financial support for younger children will, to some extent, cancel one another out in their impact on the total requirement for provision for 0- to 4-year-olds.

Vulnerable learners: the Council is committed to supporting vulnerable children to access early education in Wokingham. These include children with SEND needs as well as those eligible for 2-year-old free entitlement and those children in care or have previously been looked after by the Local Authority.

	Spring 2023	Summer 2023	Autumn 2023	Spring 2024	Summer 2024	Autumn 2024
Childminder	21	24	21	16	35	14
Day Nursery	55	44	34	39	10	28
Playgroup or Pre-School	44	38	77	72	56	53
Independent School				1	1	2
State Maintained Nursery	11	11	7	5	4	10
Sub Total	131	117	139	133	106	107

Vulnerable learners by childcare type

This table shows the number of funded 2-year-olds accessing a space in independent schools, a state funded nursery, private setting or childminder in Wokingham. In addition to the above numbers, a small number of 2-year-olds are supported within school settings and a number of 2-year-olds are supported in settings outside of the borough due to parental choice.

It is of interest that while the number of children requiring EHCPs has increased, the number of children benefiting from the free provision for children with additional support needs aged 2 (which also includes children whose parents receive a defined benefit) has fallen slightly. This may reflect the fact that most formal diagnoses are given to older children.

Current provision

Funded childcare is delivered by child minders, schools (state funded and independent), day nurseries, play groups and pre-schools, through local authorities, school trusts, private sector, voluntary and independent sector providers.

The number of state funded childcare providers increased over the Spring 2023 to Autumn 2024 period, most notably:

- State funded child minders, whose number has increased significantly in Spring and Autumn 2024 from an average of 65 to 110 individuals.
- Day nurseries, where two new nurseries have opened.
- Nursery classes, where two established primary schools have opened nursery classes.
- Specialist provision, where one established special school has opened nursery provision.

Note though that the number of childminders (state and parent / carer funded) has decreased over an extended period to 148, compared to over 300 a decade ago.

	Spring 2023	Summer 2023	Autumn 2023	Spring 2024	Summer 2024	Autumn 2024
Childminder	67	73	54	68	111	110
Day Nursery	32	32	32	33	34	34
Playgroup or Pre-School	26	27	29	29	28	27
Independent School	3	3	3	3	3	3
State Maintained Nursery	1	1	1	1	1	1
Nursery classes in state funded schools	19	19	19	20	20	21
Specialist providers	1	1	1	2	2	2

Numbers of provider by provision categories

Although the number of places taken up is not a good indicator of current borough capacity (as explained above), it is indicative of minimum capacity in the borough.

	Spring 2023	Summer 2023	Autumn 2023	Spring 2024	Summer 2024	Autumn 2024
Childminder	170	212	134	138	343	449
Day Nursery	1056	1192	805	1024	1686	1898
Playgroup or Pre-School	868	998	666	831	1043	827
Independent School	132	124	98	110	134	156
State Maintained Nursery	12	12	7	5	22	53
Grand Total	2238	2538	1710	2108	3228	3383

Take up of places by provision categories.

These figures exclude nursery places taken at state funded schools (645 in Autumn 2024) and at one of the two specialist settings. This points to provision for c.4,000 children.

As an alternative measure, Ofsted provide management information about childcare. Their report “Childcare providers and inspections as at 30 June 2024” provided the following information.

Early Education / Childcare provider type	Places	Percentage available for pre-school age children	Adjusted places
Childcare on domestic premises	55		28
Full day care	55	50%	28
Childcare on non-domestic premises	3819		3671
Full day care	3081	100%	3081
Sessional day care	738	80%	590
(blank)	0		
Childminder	787		394
Home child carer	35	50%	18
(blank)	752	50%	376
Grand Total	4661		4092

Ofsted data on child care places in Wokingham

These figures (which include parent funded childcare) point to a higher potential supply of places (c.4,700). These higher figures would be consistent with a significant number of places being taken up by parent-funded places.

Note:

- That some parents will use two or more settings and that where provision is part-time, two or more children may be using what is in effect a single “place” and conversely, multiple settings may be needed to meet the needs of one child.
- That child level data is for all children using Wokingham Borough providers. Some of these children will be resident in other boroughs, and conversely, some Wokingham resident children will be placed in out of borough provision.
- The DfE readiness report provides the data in the form of hours of usage at a ward level, typical term time week, so is not directly comparable with the data above.

Gap analysis

The lack of hard data on childcare use and place availability by single year of age (including parent-funded use) at a borough level is a significant barrier to a full gap analysis. However, the lack of formal complaints about childcare availability and the responsiveness of the childcare provider market (evidenced by the opening of new day nursery provision) indicates both that there is no immediate shortfall in provision and that the childcare provider market can respond rapidly to increasing demand.

The childcare market in Wokingham continues to remain strong and the forecasts indicate that there is a broad sufficiency of Early Years provision in the Borough, with no identified areas of under provision. This was recognised in the recent Ofsted Annual Report (December 2024), which states that more neighbourhoods in Wokingham are classed as ‘childcare oases’ than in any other local authority in the country. An oasis is where there are more childcare places in an area than are predicted to be needed. Ofsted conducted this research alongside the Office for National Statistics.

Looking at the Autumn term 2024 data, there is an apparent discrepancy between the number of resident children aged 0 to 3 (at this point the majority of 4 year olds are in Reception classes

(c.7,600), the number of places taken up (c. 4,000), which implies a take up rate of 53%, against a national take up rate of 63% (source DfE Childcare and early years survey of parents 2023 reporting year), for the 0 to 4 year old age group. This is likely because the national data (which is not broken down to single years of age) is skewed by high formal childcare usage rates for 3- and 4-year-olds. The critical issue, though, is the degree to which the new national support for younger children will increase the proportion of younger children making use of formal childcare.

It is clear, therefore, that a better understanding of take up rates is required, once the 30 hours free childcare for the children age 9 months to 2 years of age for entitled working parents is in place. As a new policy initiative, this is likely to come from experience, rather than further analysis of currently published data.

Even in advance of the additional free hours being in place in September 2025, it is important to note that take-up will increase from Autumn 2024 onwards, and shortfalls in provision (if any) in the 2024/25 year will only become apparent in the spring and (more likely) summer terms in 2025. It is likely that any shortfalls that do arise will primarily affect places for children aged 9 months to 2 years old, as provision for 3- and 4-year-olds already reaches c.95% of the child population.

These younger children are more challenging to provide support for, as they have higher level personal care needs than older children. Some sectors (and, in particular, provision in state funded schools) have little experience to date of provision for children aged 2 or less.

The DfE's September 2024 local authority readiness report modelling uses a ward-based methodology that lists ward deficits and surpluses separately and does not allow for full movement across ward boundaries to mitigate deficits. This calculation states a need for 139 additional places by September 2025.

Actions to be taken in response to the gap analysis.

Although the gap analysis does not lead to a clear near future sufficiency analysis, existing data indicates that the Council has a strong track record of delivering sufficient early years places and is well-placed to adapt to legislative expansions to childcare entitlement. The Council, through current future activity, can work to both support the creation of new provision and the retention of existing capacity.

The Council's Early Years Team has extensive experience of supporting potential new and existing providers to increase the number of places offered and to sustain high quality established provision. Over the Autumn Term 2024 the team has worked to support a number of schools wishing to make bids under the national 'School Based Nursery Capital Grant' scheme. This could give schools access to up to £150,000 to create additional early years provision on their sites. A particular focus of the interaction with the schools and Trusts has been the need to create places for younger children (and, in particular, for 2-year-olds).

The Council is looking to rationalise primary school provision, to reduce the oversupply of school places. As part of this work, the aim is to ensure that school-based nursery provision is protected.

The Council has no current commitments to new primary school provision. However, should the Council commit to new projects (noting that work is ongoing on a proposal for Shinfield) then it is likely that Early Years provision will be a feature of the new settings.

The critical issue though, given the vastly increased proportion of formal childcare that is eligible for free provision, is the per child funding rate set by the government. Should this fail to keep pace with inflation, the local market will be increasingly dependent on school-based settings, as this one of the few forms of provision that normally does not carry premises acquisition or lease costs. Otherwise, providers are reliant on additional charges for food and additional hours (for example for school holidays) to maintain viable provision.

Experience indicates that local providers are responsive to changing demand, so provided that funding remains at a rate that meets provider costs, there are good grounds to be confident that local needs will be met. Wokingham should continue to be a high-ranked authority based on the proportion of neighbourhoods that are “childcare oases” (as established in ‘The annual report of His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills 2023/24’).

Mainstream School Sufficiency

What are we required to do?

Local authorities with statutory education duties are required to:

- Ensure sufficient school places (Education Act 1996 Section 14).
- Increase opportunities for parental choice (Section 2 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which inserts sub-section 3A into S14 of the Education Act 1996).
- Comply with any preference expressed by parents provided compliance with the preference would not prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources (School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Section 86).
- Ensure fair access to educational opportunity (Section 1 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserts sub-section 1(b) into S13 of the Education Act 1996).

The core education duty applies to children of statutory school age (ages 4 to 16).

Under land use planning duties, paragraph 95 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that it is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities.

The Mainstream School Sufficiency sections of this document are divided as follows:

- Primary (4 to 11)
 - Primary planning areas (7)
- Secondary (11 to 16)
 - Secondary planning areas (2)

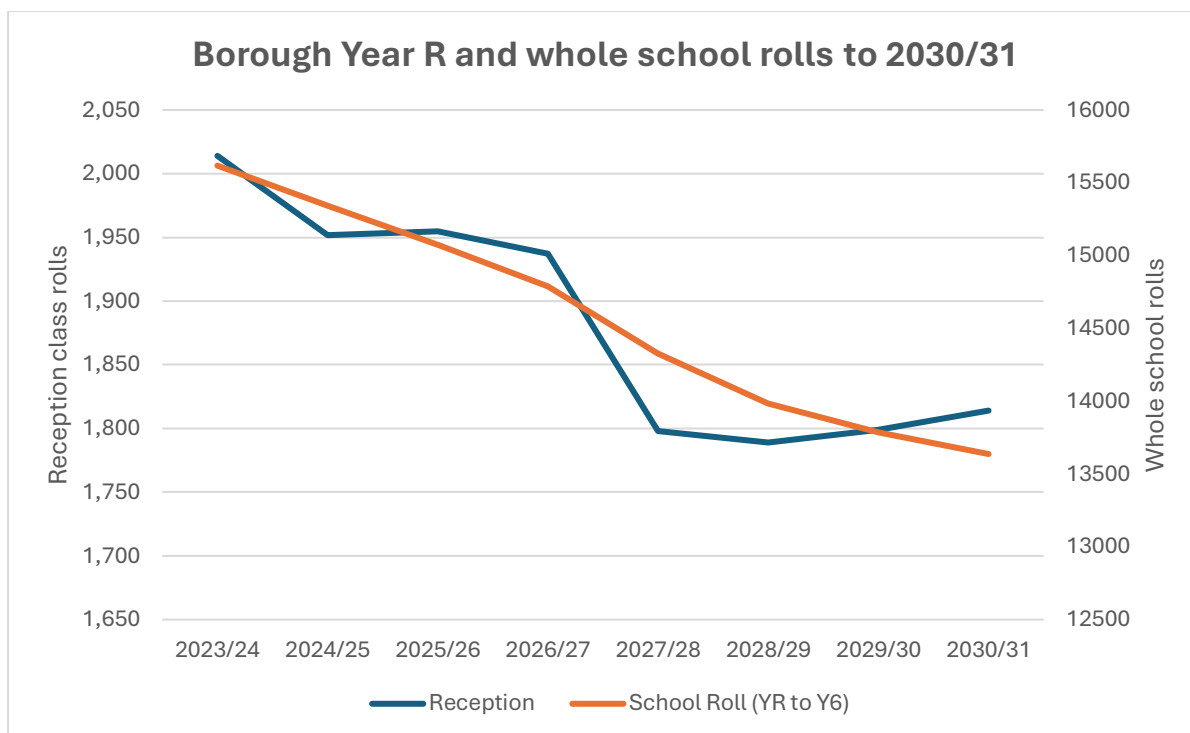
Primary (Reception to Year 6)

Borough Current and Future Need

The most recent roll projections for the period 2023/24 to 2030/31 are set out in the table below:

Borough	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	School Roll (YR to Y6)
2023/24	2,014	2,094	2,204	2,297	2,269	2,312	2,428	15618
2024/25	1,952	2,069	2,120	2,237	2,313	2,298	2,355	15343
2025/26	1,955	1,996	2,083	2,141	2,241	2,330	2,329	15075
2026/27	1,937	1,994	2,006	2,100	2,141	2,254	2,357	14790
2027/28	1,798	1,974	2,002	2,021	2,098	2,152	2,279	14325
2028/29	1,789	1,844	1,991	2,026	2,028	2,118	2,186	13983
2029/30	1,799	1,842	1,868	2,023	2,040	2,055	2,159	13787
2030/31	1,814	1,853	1,867	1,900	2,038	2,068	2,097	13637

Borough academic year level roll projections to 2030/31



The primary roll projection model uses the same data sources set out in the secondary phase section below. The primary phase model uses NHS registration data provided by the DfE to create an age 0 to 4 population projection that provides the basis for the Reception projection. Both primary and early years (0 to 4) projections separate out population growth driven by household churn in existing households and that driven by families moving into new homes. Projections for both primary and early years phases are therefore responsive to planned changes in housing delivery numbers in each area.

As with the secondary sector, a range of factors impact on primary rolls. That said, the importance of these varies from their importance to the secondary sector.

Cross border movement has a very limited impact on primary school age allocations, reflecting the fact that primary school education is delivered through smaller schools, generally serving a smaller catchment than secondary schools. In the secondary sector, 13% of all Year 7 allocations made by the borough were for out of borough schools, with 9% of all offers being of Wokingham school places to Out of Borough resident children. In contrast, in the primary sector, only 4% of offers were out of borough offers to Wokingham residents and 6% of offers were of Wokingham schools to out of borough residents.

There are a number of independent schools in the borough and adjoining communities and a significant number of Wokingham resident children attend such schools. So far there has been no readily discernible impact of the introduction of VAT on school fees on independent school take up, so it is assumed that current take up rates will be maintained.

New housebuilding will have an impact on child numbers, albeit focused on the areas of large-scale housebuilding. The current expectation is that over the course of the plan period major development will be seen:

- To the south of Wokingham Town (in the Wokingham Without Ward, with the impact mainly on Wokingham Town East schools).
- In the Barkham and Arborfield ward (Arborfield Green / Finchwood Park).
- Subject to approval, in the Barkham and Arborfield ward (Loddon Valley Garden Village).

The projection points to declining rolls over the forecast period (to 2030/31), despite expected strong rates of new home construction (which has led to localised child population growth in parts of the borough). This reflects the fact that birth rates are currently low, having declined from their peak in the 2012/13 year. Reception rolls are projected to fall by 10% over the course of the forecast period, and whole school rolls by 13%.

Current and Planned Provision

There are 56 primary phase schools, made up of 34 Academies, 3 Free Schools, 11 Community schools, 4 voluntary aided and 4 voluntary controlled schools. There are 21 schools with a religious affiliation (2 Catholic and 19 Church of England). There are 38 primary setting (37 primary schools and the primary division of an all-through school), 9 infant and 9 junior schools. For planning purposes, they are divided into 7 planning areas.

The table below shows the number of places expected to be available for each year group until 2031/32. It takes account of agreed reductions in admission numbers from September 2026 (when a reduction of 210 places was agreed with schools and trusts). Note though that admission numbers only apply to the normal year of entry to each school, and schools can decide to admit fewer children in older year groups (Year1 onwards for primary and infant schools, Year 4 onwards for junior schools), on the basis that this reduction ensures the efficient delivery of education.

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2023/24	2,324	2,324	2,309	2,406	2,346	2,380	2,440	16,529
2024/25	2,354	2,324	2,324	2,361	2,406	2,380	2,380	16,529
2025/26	2,347	2,354	2,324	2,376	2,361	2,440	2,380	16,582
2026/27	2,142	2,347	2,354	2,376	2,376	2,361	2,440	16,396
2027/28	2,142	2,142	2,345	2,376	2,376	2,376	2,391	16,148
2028/29	2,142	2,142	2,142	2,369	2,376	2,376	2,376	15,923
2030/31	2,142	2,142	2,142	2,154	2,269	2,369	2,376	15,594
2031/32	2,142	2,142	2,142	2,154	2,235	2,269	2,369	15,453

Estimated school place provision by year group to 2030/31.

There are a number of school schemes embedded in the planning consents for large developments in the borough. Some have been built out, but others are still at an early stage of development. No decisions have been made concerning when these schools will be built or the number of places they will offer. The schools and their locations are:

- South Wokingham Strategic Development Location (SDL) 2nd school – 420 place primary school.
- Shinfield (Spencers Wood) SDL 2nd school – 210 place primary school
- Arborfield (Finchwood Park) SDL 2nd school – 420 place primary school

Other schools are expected to be incorporated in plans for future large scale housing development schemes (e.g. Loddon Valley Garden Village).

It is important to note that new school premises could be occupied by entirely new schools (like the recent Alder Grove and St Cecilia's schools) or by the relocation of an existing school (as was the case for the Farley Hill School's relocation to Arborfield Green). Given the need to reduce capacity across the borough and the desirability of retaining staff and successful schools, relocation of existing schools should be a priority.

Borough Gap Analysis

The following tables show the "gap" between provision and need (in surplus/deficit places and as a percentage of places). There are no projected deficit year groups, and despite the 2026/27 reduction in Reception place admission numbers, surplus capacity continues to increase. Note that this excludes new schools in new communities.

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	School Roll (YR to Y6)
2023/24	310	230	120	79	77	68	12	896
2024/25	402	255	204	139	93	82	25	1,201
2025/26	392	358	241	235	165	110	51	1,552
2026/27	205	353	348	276	265	152	83	1,681
2027/28	344	168	343	355	308	254	157	1,928
2028/29	353	298	151	343	378	288	235	2,045
2029/30	343	300	274	131	229	314	262	1,852
2030/31	328	289	275	254	197	216	287	1,846

Borough Surplus / Deficit (places)

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	School Roll (YR to Y6)
2023/24	13%	10%	6%	3%	6%	3%	0%	6%
2024/25	16%	11%	9%	6%	4%	3%	1%	7%
2025/26	16%	14%	10%	9%	7%	2%	2%	9%
2026/27	9%	15%	14%	10%	10%	6%	1%	9%
2027/28	16%	8%	14%	14%	12%	9%	5%	11%
2028/29	16%	14%	7%	14%	15%	11%	9%	12%
2029/30	16%	14%	13%	6%	10%	13%	10%	12%
2030/31	15%	13%	13%	12%	9%	9%	11%	12%

Borough Percentage Surplus / Deficit

Key

Green – 0 to 5% surplus

Amber - 5% to 10% surplus

Red: - greater than 10% surplus / any deficit

Actions to be taken in response to the Gap Analysis

The standard expectation is that councils should aim to maintain 5% surplus capacity across a school system. This allows for year-to-year variation in rolls; fluctuation in parental preference;

and ensures there is capacity for children moving to the Borough. It can be seen from the projected surplus capacity figures that, even taking account of the Admission Number reductions agreed for 2026/27, the projected surplus for that year exceeds the 5% target.

To ensure that schools can operate efficiently, it will be a priority for the 2025 and 2026 years to broker further capacity reductions, from 27/28 onwards. These will be achieved through reduced admission numbers but may also (less certainly, and subject to further agreements) require school amalgamation and closure. To achieve a c.5% surplus, the reductions would need to be in the order of 225-240 places per year from 2027/28 (in addition to the 2026/27 reductions).

If it should be judged that additional capacity is required in new communities, it is proposed that that this should be achieved (where possible) through school relocation. The Council will look to make use of capacity in existing schools, where these are within walking distance of new developments, but the larger developments are generally in what is currently open countryside, and there is likely to be a mismatch between the number of children requiring places and places at schools within walking distance of their homes. The alternative is for the Council to budget to transport children (reflecting the Council's statutory home to school transport duties), which would create a substantial pressure on the home to school transport budget.

Planning Area Summaries

Earley Area

This area corresponds to the Earley Parish area.

The area schools with their 2025/26 and 2026/27 Reception admissions numbers are:

DfE No.	Schools	2025/26	2026/27
2116	Aldryngton Primary School	45	45
2238	Hillside Primary School	60	60
3371	Loddon Primary School	60	60
2235	Radstock Primary School	45	30
2105	Whiteknights Primary School	60	60
2237	Hawkedon Primary School	90	60
3312	Earley St Peter's Church of England Primary School	70	60
	Total	430	375

Area Current and Future Need

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2023/24	389	403	425	470	466	479	477	3109
2024/25	338	387	407	432	485	464	494	3,008
2025/26	350	336	391	414	447	483	479	2,901
2026/27	324	348	340	398	429	445	498	2,783
2027/28	310	322	352	347	413	427	460	2,631
2028/29	310	308	326	359	362	411	442	2,518
2030/31	310	308	312	333	374	360	426	2,423
2031/32	310	308	312	319	348	372	375	2,344

Actual and projected rolls for the Earley area until 2031/32

Although Reception numbers are projected to fall (reflecting falling birth numbers), rolls are projected to increase as cohorts age. This reflects the local importance of migration into the area, despite there being no significant housebuilding locally in the area. It is noted though, that an element of the growth is due to the oversubscription of schools in the adjoining South West area (Shinfield).

Current and Planned Provision

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2023/24	430	430	430	475	475	475	475	3,190
2024/25	430	430	430	430	475	475	475	3,145
2025/26	430	430	430	430	430	475	475	3,100
2026/27	375	430	430	430	430	430	475	3,000
2027/28	375	375	430	430	430	430	430	2,900
2028/29	375	375	375	430	430	430	430	2,845
2030/31	375	375	375	375	430	430	430	2,790
2031/32	375	375	375	375	375	430	430	2,735

Estimated and projected provision by academic year for the Earley area to 2031/32

Admission number reductions (55 places) have been agreed at 3 schools in this area.

No new mainstream provision is planned in the area.

Gap Analysis

The tables below point to a future surplus, significantly above the target level of c.5%.

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	School Roll (YR to Y6)
2023/24	41	27	5	5	9	-4	-2	81
2024/25	92	43	23	-2	-10	11	-19	137
2025/26	80	94	39	16	-17	-8	-4	199
2026/27	51	82	90	32	1	-15	-23	217
2027/28	65	53	78	83	17	3	-30	269
2028/29	65	67	49	71	68	19	-12	327
2029/30	65	67	63	42	56	70	4	367
2030/31	65	67	63	56	27	58	55	391

Surplus / Deficit (places)

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	School Roll (YR to Y6)
2023/24	10%	6%	1%	1%	2%	-1%	0%	3%
2024/25	21%	10%	5%	0%	-2%	2%	-4%	4%
2025/26	19%	22%	9%	4%	-4%	-2%	-1%	6%
2026/27	14%	19%	21%	7%	0%	-4%	-5%	7%
2027/28	17%	14%	18%	19%	4%	1%	-7%	9%

2028/29	17%	18%	13%	17%	16%	4%	-3%	11%
2029/30	17%	18%	17%	11%	13%	16%	1%	13%
2030/31	17%	18%	17%	15%	7%	13%	13%	14%

Percentage Surplus / Deficit

Despite agreed admission number reductions for 2026/27, projected surplus place levels are expected to remain high, unless further action is taken.

Actions to be taken in response to the Gap Analysis

Admission number reductions have been agreed for 2026/27 with a number of schools. There is though scope for further reductions without risk to the viability of any local school. Based on the data, a reduction of at least an additional 45 places per year is required to reduce surplus capacity to less than 10%.

North Area

This area consists of the parishes north of the A329M, excluding Woodley.

The area schools with their 2025/26 and 2026/27 Reception admissions numbers are:

DfE No.	Schools	2025/26	2026/27
3057	Robert Piggott CofE Infant School	45	30
3061	Robert Piggott Junior		
2149	The Colleton Primary School	45	30
4505	The Piggott School	30	30
3048	Crazies Hill CofE Primary School	15	15
3046	Polehampton Church of England Infant School	60	60
3370	Polehampton Junior		
3320	Sonning CofE Primary School	30	30
3037	St Nicholas Church of England Primary, Hurst	20	20
	Total	245	215

Current and Future Need

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2023/24	210	214	229	234	247	216	264	1,614
2024/25	200	217	212	225	232	253	217	1,556
2025/26	207	206	214	207	222	237	253	1,545
2026/27	227	213	203	208	203	226	236	1,517
2027/28	192	232	209	197	204	207	225	1,466
2028/29	190	197	228	203	193	208	206	1,425
2030/31	189	195	193	222	199	197	207	1,402
2031/32	189	194	191	187	218	203	196	1,378

Actual and projected rolls for the North area until 2031/32

Local demand is projected to be relatively stable over this period (albeit at a lower level than seen before the projection period). Much of this area has protected Greenbelt designation, so only limited housebuilding is anticipated in this period.

Current and Planned Provision

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2023/24	245	245	260	264	264	264	264	1,806
2024/25	245	245	245	264	264	264	264	1,791
2025/26	245	245	245	249	264	264	264	1,776
2026/27	215	245	245	249	249	264	264	1,731
2027/28	215	215	245	249	249	249	264	1,686
2028/29	215	215	215	249	249	249	249	1,641
2030/31	215	215	215	215	249	249	249	1,607
2031/32	215	215	215	215	215	249	249	1,573

Estimated and projected provision by academic year for the North area to 2031/32

Admission number reductions have been agreed at two schools in this area.

There is no planned new provision.

Gap Analysis

Surplus capacity (see tables below) is projected to be numerically low (less than one Reception class from 2026/27 onwards) but is still (for most years) projected to be above the 5% level.

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	School Roll (YR to Y6)
2023/24	35	31	31	30	17	48	0	192
2024/25	45	28	33	39	32	11	47	235
2025/26	38	39	31	42	42	27	11	231
2026/27	-12	32	42	41	46	38	28	214
2027/28	23	-17	36	52	45	42	39	220
2028/29	25	18	-13	46	56	41	43	216
2029/30	26	20	22	-7	50	52	42	205
2030/31	26	21	24	28	-3	46	53	195

Surplus / Deficit (places)

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	School Roll (YR to Y6)
2023/24	14%	13%	12%	11%	6%	18%	0%	11%
2024/25	18%	11%	13%	15%	12%	4%	18%	13%
2025/26	15%	16%	13%	17%	16%	10%	4%	13%
2026/27	-6%	13%	17%	16%	18%	14%	10%	12%
2027/28	11%	-8%	15%	21%	18%	17%	15%	13%
2028/29	12%	8%	-6%	18%	23%	16%	17%	13%
2029/30	12%	9%	10%	-3%	20%	21%	17%	13%
2030/31	12%	10%	11%	13%	-%	18%	21%	12%

Percentage Surplus / Deficit

Actions to be taken in response to the Gap Analysis

Consideration will be given to measures that could reduce supply by c.15 places year.

South East Area

This area corresponds to most of the Wokingham Without and Finchampstead Ward areas (excluding that part of the Wokingham Without Ward to the north of Gardeners Green).

The area schools with their 2025/26 and 2026/27 Reception admissions numbers are:

DfE No.	Schools	2025/26	2026/27
3315	Finchampstead CofE VA Primary School	17	17
2232	Gorse Ride Infants' School	30	30
2148	Gorse Ride Junior		
2067	Nine Mile Ride Primary School	54	54
2163	Hatch Ride Primary School	30	30
2132	Oaklands Infant School	60	60
2062	Oaklands Junior		
3330	Saint Sebastians Church of England Primary School	15	15
	Total	206	206

Current and Future Need

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2023/24	181	185	203	206	224	233	246	1,478
2024/25	182	190	189	209	207	223	233	1,431
2025/26	162	189	192	193	208	204	221	1,367
2026/27	179	170	192	197	193	206	203	1,338
2027/28	162	186	172	196	196	190	204	1,305
2028/29	161	169	188	176	195	193	188	1,269
2030/31	161	168	171	192	175	192	191	1,250
2031/32	161	168	170	175	191	172	190	1,227

Actual and projected rolls for the South East area until 2031/32

The South East area sits between three major housing development areas (the South Wokingham SDL, the Arborfield SDL and the Bucklers Park development in neighbouring Bracknell Forest). Although housing in the South Wokingham SDL is in the Wokingham Without Parish, road, and pedestrian links (reflecting proximity) will lead to the area being integrated into the Wokingham Town area, irrespective of the Parish or ward boundaries. For example, the Montague Park Primary School (Wokingham Town East) was built to serve new homes either side of the Wokingham to Bracknell Railway line.

Current and Planned Provision

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2023/24	213	213	213	217	217	251	251	1,575

2024/25	213	213	213	217	217	251	251	1,575
2025/26	206	213	213	217	217	251	251	1,568
2026/27	206	206	213	217	217	217	251	1,527
2027/28	206	206	206	217	217	217	217	1,486
2028/29	206	206	206	210	217	217	217	1,479
2030/31	206	206	206	210	210	217	217	1,472
2031/32	206	206	206	210	210	210	217	1,465

Estimated and projected provision by academic year for the South East area to 2031/32

Admission number reductions have been agreed at one school.

There are no plans or proposals for additional capacity in this area.

Gap Analysis

The analysis (tables below) points to surplus levels significantly above the target 5% level.

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	School Roll (YR to Y6)
2023/24	32	28	10	11	-7	18	5	97
2024/25	31	23	24	8	10	28	18	144
2025/26	44	24	21	24	9	47	30	201
2026/27	27	36	21	20	24	11	48	189
2027/28	44	20	34	21	21	27	13	181
2028/29	45	37	18	34	22	24	29	210
2029/30	45	38	35	18	35	25	26	222
2030/31	45	38	36	35	19	38	27	238

Surplus / Deficit (places)

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	School Roll (YR to Y6)
2023/24	15%	13%	5%	5%	-3%	7%	2%	6%
2024/25	14%	11%	11%	4%	5%	11%	7%	9%
2025/26	22%	11%	10%	11%	4%	19%	12%	13%
2026/27	13%	18%	10%	9%	11%	5%	19%	12%
2027/28	21%	10%	17%	10%	10%	13%	6%	12%
2028/29	22%	18%	9%	16%	10%	11%	14%	14%
2029/30	22%	19%	17%	9%	17%	11%	12%	15%
2030/31	22%	18%	18%	17%	9%	18%	12%	16%

Percentage Surplus / Deficit

Actions to be taken in response to the Gap Analysis

Consideration should be given to further admission number or capacity reductions to secure surplus levels below 10% of capacity (and preferably at or below 5%). Based on these figures, reductions would be in the 30 places per year range.

South West Area

This area corresponds to Shinfield and Swallowfield Parishes, and Barkham and Arborfield Ward.

The area schools with their 2025/26 and 2026/27 Reception admissions numbers are:

DfE No.	Schools	2025/26	2026/27
2088	Farley Hill Primary School	60	60
3319	Grazeley Parochial Church of England Aided Primary	30	30
2089	Lambs Lane Primary School	30	30
2157	Shinfield Infant and Nursery School	90	90
3041	Shinfield St Mary's		
2006	The Coombes Church of England Primary School	60	60
2009	Alder Grove CofE Primary School	60	60
	Total	330	330

Current and Future Need

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2023/24	307	293	295	288	228	238	249	1,898
2024/25	318	314	300	286	289	231	245	1,982
2025/26	339	320	316	286	282	287	233	2,064
2026/27	328	339	320	300	280	278	287	2,131
2027/28	291	327	338	302	293	275	277	2,103
2028/29	289	295	332	326	301	293	279	2,115
2030/31	293	296	303	323	327	304	300	2,146
2031/32	300	301	305	295	325	332	312	2,171

Actual and projected rolls for the South West area until 2031/32

Current projections point to the South West Area having stable Reception demand and increasing roll numbers overall through the projection period. This reflects the impact of two major housing development areas, in Shinfield and around the Arborfield Garrison. While development in the Shinfield area is likely to be at reduced level during the projection period compared to that seen in the preceding 5 years, development around the former Arborfield Garrison is likely to be maintained at current levels.

A development of c.4,000 homes is planned (but not yet approved) in the area, between Sindlesham and Arborfield village, named the Loddon Valley Garden Village.

Current and Planned Provision

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2023/24	330	330	300	300	240	240	255	1995
2024/25	330	330	330	300	300	240	240	2070
2025/26	330	330	330	330	300	300	240	2160
2026/27	330	330	330	330	330	300	300	2250
2027/28	330	330	330	330	330	330	330	2310

2028/29	330	330	330	330	330	330	330	2310
2030/31	330	330	330	330	330	330	330	2310
2031/32	330	330	330	330	330	330	330	2310

Estimated and projected provision by academic year for the South West area to 2031/32

The master plans for the two major development areas (agreed c.15 years ago) included 2 additional primary schools in each area. Two of these four schools have been built, one each in Shinfield and Arborfield Green, and outline planning permission has been granted for both remaining schools. The Council has submitted a reserved matters application for a 210-place school in Spencers Wood (Shinfield). No further action has been taken concerning the second school in the Arborfield development.

The Loddon Valley Garden Village is expected to include provision for two primary schools, reflecting the scale and the relative isolation of much of the development from areas with significant numbers of unfilled school places. It is possible that neither of these will be required during the projection period.

Gap Analysis

The table below points to possible surplus capacity, from 2027/28 onwards. However, given the scale of planned housebuilding in the area, it is likely that these places will be required to meet local needs.

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	School Roll (YR to Y6)
2023/24	23	37	5	12	12	2	6	97
2024/25	12	16	30	14	11	9	-5	88
2025/26	-9	10	14	44	18	13	7	96
2026/27	2	-9	10	30	50	22	13	119
2027/28	39	3	-8	28	37	55	53	207
2028/29	41	35	-2	4	29	37	51	195
2029/30	37	34	27	7	3	26	30	164
2030/31	30	29	25	35	5	-2	18	139

Surplus / Deficit (places)

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	School Roll (YR to Y6)
2023/24	7%	11%	2%	4%	5%	1%	2%	5%
2024/25	4%	5%	9%	5%	4%	4%	-2%	4%
2025/26	-3%	3%	4%	13%	6%	4%	3%	4%
2026/27	1%	-3%	3%	9%	15%	7%	4%	5%
2027/28	12%	1%	-2%	8%	11%	17%	16%	9%
2028/29	12%	10%	0%	1%	9%	11%	15%	8%
2029/30	11%	10%	8%	2%	1%	8%	9%	7%
2030/31	9%	9%	8%	11%	1%	-1%	5%	6%

Percentage Surplus / Deficit

Actions to be taken in response to the Gap Analysis

As additional housing development is planned in both major housing development areas, further investigation of the local impact of development needs to be undertaken, prior to making any decisions on area-wide school capacity levels. Currently only one school in this area has surplus places, reflecting the impact of parental preference, rather than lack of local demand. It is important to note too, that the South West planning area is made up of two major communities (Shinfield and around the former Arborfield Garrison), split by the Loddon River valley. All the Shinfield area schools are full (discounting un-opened classes at a new primary school), and it may be appropriate to create new provision in this area, reflecting continued roll rises. Given the necessity to reduce place numbers in surrounding areas, this growth would best be achieved by school relocation, which might entail a period during which a school operates from two sites, depending on the school in question.

Wokingham Town East Area

This area corresponds to the Wokingham Town Council area, east of Wokingham train station, (including Eastheath and Evendons Primary School).

The area schools with their 2025/26 and 2026/27 Reception admissions numbers are:

DfE No.	Schools	2025/26	2026/27
3372	All Saints Church of England Primary School	45	30
2002	Evendons Primary School	60	60
2003	Floreat Montague Park Primary School	60	60
2106	Keep Hatch Primary School	60	60
3341	St Teresa's Catholic Academy	45	45
2101	Wescott Infant School	56	56
2184	Westende Junior		
	Total	326	311

Current and Future Need

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2023/24	251	295	297	291	312	329	368	2,143
2024/25	273	260	301	310	293	328	337	2,099
2025/26	268	278	261	309	307	304	331	2,061
2026/27	273	270	276	267	304	316	305	2,010
2027/28	263	274	268	282	261	312	316	1,978
2028/29	260	268	276	277	280	273	316	1,951
2030/31	265	271	276	291	281	297	283	1,964
2031/32	273	275	278	290	294	298	307	2,014

Actual and projected rolls for the Wokingham Town East area until 2031/32

While the child population in the established residential areas is not expected to increase, there may be growth associated with new homes. Although little housebuilding is expected in the area between the A329M and the rail line linking Bracknell and Wokingham to Reading (most available sites having been built out through North and South Wokingham Strategic Development Location schemes) the current built area abuts the South Wokingham SDL

extension area, to the south of the rail line. Although this area is in the Wokingham Without Ward (normally associated with the South East Planning Area), the new community there will be an extension of the Wokingham Town area and consequently must be considered to be part of the Wokingham Town East Planning Area.

Current and Planned Provision

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2023/24	326	326	326	330	330	330	375	2343
2024/25	326	326	326	330	330	330	330	2298
2025/26	326	326	326	330	330	330	330	2298
2026/27	311	326	326	330	330	330	330	2283
2027/28	311	311	324	330	330	330	330	2266
2028/29	311	311	311	330	330	330	330	2253
2030/31	311	311	311	315	330	330	330	2238
2031/32	311	311	311	315	315	330	330	2223

Estimated and projected provision by academic year for the Wokingham Town East area to 2031/32

One school has reduced its PAN for 2026/27, to make a better match with demand.

New home construction is expected to commence in this area shortly.

New provision is planned in the new development areas to the south of the Bracknell to Wokingham rail line. Two new schools were planned in the South Wokingham SDL area c.15years ago, one of which (Floreat Montague Park) has been built, to serve the new communities north and south of the rail line. A second may be built within the projection period, should the new development create sufficient demand to fill unfilled places in other Wokingham Town East Planning Area schools.

Gap Analysis

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	School Roll (YR to Y6)
2023/24	75	31	29	39	18	1	7	200
2024/25	53	66	25	20	37	2	-7	199
2025/26	58	48	65	21	23	26	-1	237
2026/27	38	56	50	63	26	14	25	273
2027/28	48	37	56	48	69	18	14	288
2028/29	51	43	35	53	50	57	14	302
2029/30	46	40	35	24	49	33	47	274
2030/31	38	36	33	25	21	32	23	209

Surplus / Deficit (places)

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	School Roll (YR to Y6)
2023/24	23%	10%	9%	12%	5%	0%	2%	9%
2024/25	16%	20%	8%	6%	11%	1%	-2%	9%
2025/26	18%	15%	20%	6%	7%	8%	0%	10%
2026/27	12%	17%	15%	19%	8%	4%	8%	12%
2027/28	15%	12%	17%	15%	21%	5%	4%	13%
2028/29	16%	14%	11%	16%	15%	17%	4%	13%
2029/30	15%	13%	11%	8%	15%	10%	14%	12%
2030/31	12%	12%	11%	8%	7%	10%	7%	9%

Percentage Surplus / Deficit

Actions to be taken in response to the Gap Analysis

Although admission number reductions have been agreed for 2026/27, further reductions (of c.30 places per year) would lead to a better alignment between supply and demand. However, it will also be relevant to consider the pace of planned development south of the rail line, as this could have a material impact on local demand for school places.

Wokingham Town West Area

This corresponds to the western half of the Wokingham Town Council area, plus Winnersh Parish.

The area schools with their 2025/26 and 2026/27 Reception admissions numbers are:

DfE No.	Schools	2025/26	2026/27
2100	Bearwood Primary School	45	30
2227	The Hawthorns Primary School	60	60
2137	Walter Infant School	90	60
3055	St Paul's Junior		
2146	Winnersh Primary School	60	30
2001	Wheatfield Primary School	30	30
2000	Windmill Primary School	30	30
2010	St Cecilia's CoE Primary School	30	30
2121	Emmbrook Infant School	60	60
2130	Emmbrook Junior School		
	Total	405	330

Current and Future Need

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2023/24	324	342	367	404	398	403	412	2,650
2024/25	301	331	352	378	405	399	418	2,587
2025/26	286	308	342	364	380	407	415	2,502
2026/27	280	294	320	354	366	382	423	2,420

2027/28	256	288	305	332	357	369	399	2,305
2028/29	256	264	300	318	334	359	385	2,215
2030/31	256	263	274	311	319	336	374	2,134
2031/32	257	264	274	286	312	320	351	2,063

This area included a number of significant housing sites, most of which are now built out. There are limited opportunities for further housing development though. In area birth numbers and churn in established communities will be the most significant factors in determining future child numbers in this area.

Current and Planned Provision

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2023/24	375	375	375	415	415	415	415	2,785
2024/25	405	375	375	415	415	415	415	2,815
2025/26	405	405	375	415	415	415	415	2,845
2026/27	330	405	405	415	415	415	415	2,800
2027/28	330	330	405	415	415	415	415	2,725
2028/29	330	330	330	415	415	415	415	2,650
2030/31	330	330	330	334	415	415	415	2,569
2031/32	330	330	330	334	385	415	415	2,539

Estimated and projected provision by academic year for the Wokingham Town West area to 2031/32

Two local schools have agreed to admission number reductions from 2026/27.

There are no proposals for new provision in this area.

Gap Analysis

The deficit is projected to increase to c.22% of places.

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	School Roll (YR to Y6)
2023/24	51	33	8	11	17	12	3	135
2024/25	104	44	23	37	10	16	-3	228
2025/26	119	97	33	51	35	8	0	343
2026/27	50	111	85	61	49	33	-8	380
2027/28	74	42	100	83	58	46	16	420
2028/29	74	66	30	97	81	56	30	435
2029/30	74	67	56	23	96	79	41	435
2030/31	73	66	56	48	73	95	64	476

Surplus / Deficit (places)

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	School Roll (YR to Y6)
2023/24	14%	9%	2%	3%	4%	3%	1%	5%
2024/25	26%	12%	6%	9%	2%	4%	-1%	8%
2025/26	30%	24%	9%	12%	8%	2%	0%	12%

2026/27	15%	27%	21%	15%	12%	8%	-2%	14%
2027/28	23%	13%	25%	20%	14%	11%	4%	15%
2028/29	22%	20%	9%	23%	19%	13%	7%	16%
2029/30	22%	20%	17%	7%	23%	19%	10%	17%
2030/31	22%	20%	17%	14%	19%	23%	15%	19%

Percentage Surplus / Deficit

Actions to be taken in response to the Gap Analysis

Current projections indicate that there is a case for a substantial place reduction (c.60 places) in this area, to bring surplus capacity figures down to c.5%. This might require the closure or relocation of an existing school.

Woodley Area

This area corresponds to the Woodley Town Council area.

The area schools with their 2025/26 and 2026/27 Reception admissions numbers are:

DfE No.	Schools	2025/26	2026/27
2246	Highwood Primary School	60	60
3368	St Dominic Savio Catholic Primary School	60	60
2160	Willow Bank Infant School	60	60
2161	Willow Bank Junior		
3056	Woodley CofE Primary School	45	45
2167	Rivermead Primary School	60	60
2008	Beechwood Primary School	60	30
2247	South Lake Primary School	60	60
	Total	405	375

Current and Future Need

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2023/24	352	362	388	404	394	414	412	2,726
2024/25	341	370	359	397	402	400	411	2,680
2025/26	343	358	367	368	395	408	397	2,636
2026/27	326	361	355	376	366	401	405	2,590
2027/28	324	344	358	365	374	372	398	2,536
2028/29	324	342	342	367	363	381	370	2,488
2030/31	324	342	339	351	365	369	378	2,469
2031/32	325	342	339	348	349	371	366	2,441

Actual and projected rolls for the Woodley area until 2031/32

This is an area with only limited potential for further residential development. Over the past 15 years most identified development sites have been built out. Consequently, child population changes will be driven by household churn in established communities and local birth numbers.

Current and Planned Provision

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2023/24	405	405	405	405	405	405	405	2835
2024/25	405	405	405	405	405	405	405	2835
2025/26	405	405	405	405	405	405	405	2835
2026/27	375	405	405	405	405	405	405	2805
2027/28	375	375	405	405	405	405	405	2775
2028/29	375	375	375	405	405	405	405	2745
2030/31	375	375	375	375	405	405	405	2715
2031/32	375	375	375	375	405	405	405	2715

Estimated and projected provision by academic year for the Woodley area to 2031/32

One Woodley School will reduce its admission number in 2026/27. There are no schemes for additional provision in the area.

Gap Analysis

The gap analysis (tables below) points to a moderate level of surplus capacity, but above the 5% target level.

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	School Roll (YR to Y6)
2023/24	53	43	17	1	11	-9	-7	109
2024/25	64	35	46	8	3	5	-6	155
2025/26	62	47	38	37	10	-3	8	199
2026/27	49	44	50	29	39	4	0	215
2027/28	51	31	47	40	31	33	7	239
2028/29	51	33	33	38	42	24	35	257
2029/30	51	33	36	24	40	36	27	246
2030/31	50	33	36	27	56	34	39	274

Surplus / Deficit (places)

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	School Roll (YR to Y6)
2023/24	13%	11%	4%	0%	3%	-2%	-2%	4%
2024/25	16%	9%	11%	2%	1%	1%	-1%	5%
2025/26	15%	11%	9%	9%	2%	-1%	2%	7%
2026/27	13%	11%	12%	7%	10%	1%	0%	8%
2027/28	14%	8%	12%	10%	8%	8%	2%	9%
2028/29	14%	9%	9%	9%	10%	6%	9%	9%
2029/30	14%	9%	10%	6%	10%	9%	7%	9%
2030/31	13%	9%	10%	7%	14%	8%	10%	10%

Percentage Surplus / Deficit

Actions to be taken in response to the Gap Analysis

The Gap Analysis points to a need for a further 30 place per year reduction to return surplus capacity to c.6%.

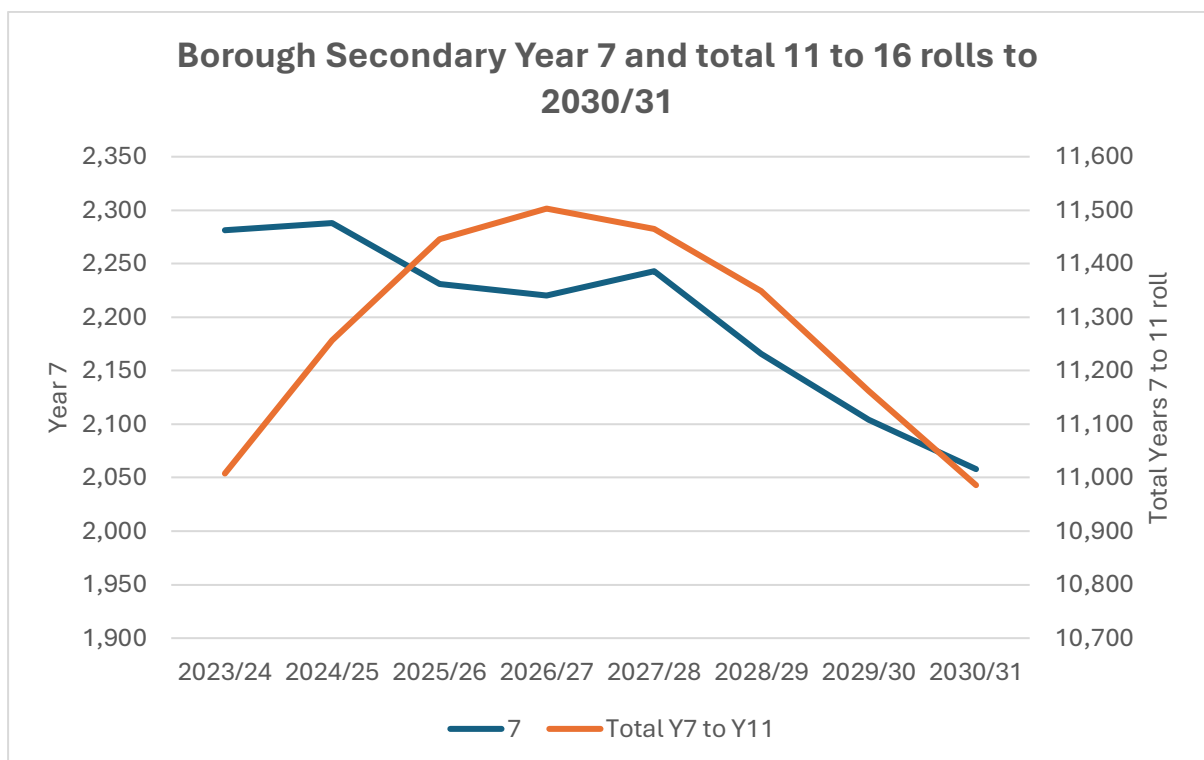
Secondary (11 to 16)

Borough Current and Future Need

The most recent roll projections for the period 2023/24 to 2030/31 are set out in the table below:

	7	8	9	10	11	Total Y7 to Y11
2023/24	2,281	2,304	2,217	2,104	2,102	11,008
2024/25	2,288	2,306	2,333	2,224	2,106	11,257
2025/26	2,231	2,313	2,335	2,341	2,226	11,446
2026/27	2,220	2,256	2,342	2,342	2,343	11,503
2027/28	2,243	2,244	2,284	2,350	2,344	11,465
2028/29	2,166	2,268	2,272	2,291	2,352	11,349
2029/30	2,104	2,190	2,296	2,279	2,293	11,162
2030/31	2,058	2,127	2,217	2,303	2,281	10,986

Borough roll projection 2024 – Years 7 to 11



Borough roll projection chart 'Year 7' and '7 to 11' totals

These figures are derived from the most recent version of the Wokingham School Roll Projection Model (the model). The model was comprehensively re-written in 2024 to make it responsive to changing housing delivery numbers. The model is area, not individual school based, as parental preference for individual schools can fluctuate due to many factors that cannot be accurately forecast. It uses NHS GP registration, school census roll, and home post code age data. The new model separates annual child cohort growth in older homes (reflecting household churn) from growth associated with new homes (strongly affected by migration into each Planning Area) for early years and primary phase. This enables future school place planning area growth forecasts to be adjusted according to planned annual house building in each area. The rate of new home construction is slowing in some areas (such as Shinfield) while new home construction is expected to restart in South Wokingham, as the developments south of the Wokingham to Bracknell railway line commence.

It is projected that the number of Year 7 students are currently at or around their peak and will begin to decline from 2025/26 onwards, by circa 10% in total. The maximum overall 11 to 16 roll is projected to be in 2026/27.

There are a number of factors that could affect future rolls and lead in variance between the projection and outcomes. These include:

1. **Cross border movement changes.** Currently the number of Wokingham Borough resident students attending out of borough schools is greater than the number crossing the other way. Significant movements include:
 - Wokingham residents on roll at Grammar Schools in Reading and Slough (160 Year 7 2024/25 admissions - half of out of borough allocations).
 - Wokingham residents living in Crowthorne (Wokingham Without Ward) attending Edgbarrow School in Bracknell Forest (Crowthorne) (73 in Year 7 2024/25 admissions – a quarter of out of borough allocations).
 - Reading residents attending schools with long standing admission arrangement ties to Reading communities (Oakbank, Maiden Erlegh and Bulmershe schools, 114 Year 7 2024/25 admissions – just over half of out of borough residents' allocations to Wokingham schools).

The movements could be affected by:

- Changes to admissions arrangements
- Changes to local population
- Changes to school popularity

Another factor that could have a significant impact is the opening (or closure) of schools in neighbouring boroughs. Reading BC has opened a new secondary school near the River Thames, which might have an indirect impact on Wokingham through changes to Reading Borough admissions.

2. **Independent school take up.** In recent years, a significant number of applications for Year 7 places are withdrawn because parents have opted for independent schools (Year 7 2024/25 admissions – 134 children between offer day and the start of the school year). Other parents opt for independent education for their children, but do not make applications for state funded schools (the overall numbers are uncertain because the annual independent school census does not record home addresses of children

attending independent schools). The recent imposition of VAT on independent school fees has not to date had a significant local impact on numbers of children in the independent sector. The Council continues to monitor this factor closely.

3. **Migration.** Wokingham Borough has long been an area that families with children move to. However, historically, the most significant movement has been families with younger children (Early Years and Primary phases), allowing sufficient lead in for strategic secondary place planning. However, exceptional international migration of children into the borough over the summers of 2021 and 2022 demonstrated that the borough can be subject to sudden influxes of children requiring school places. This period saw high arrival rates in all year groups, including secondary year groups, driven by a combination of community preference, changes to national policy (visa arrangements) and events overseas.

Current and Planned Provision

There are 10 secondary schools in the borough. They range in size from Maiden Erlegh in Earley (279 PAN) to Oakbank in Shinfield (112 PAN). Their distribution broadly reflects the population distribution, except that the Shinfield and Earley parishes are underserved (and conversely Winnersh and Wokingham Town are over provided).

The number of places planned to be provided for each year group over the period to 2030/31 is set out below. The figures include additional places agreed with schools and Trusts to ensure that the primary school bulge (driven by high birth rates, which peaked in 2012/13) could be accommodated in the borough's secondary schools. The figures are the number of places that the Council expects to be available. They may differ from the national measure of school capacity, Net Capacity, which can be based on old information.

School Year Group >	7	8	9	10	11	Total
2023/24	2,323	2,338	2,363	2,187	2,187	11,398
2024/25	2,443	2,323	2,393	2,278	2,187	11,624
2025/26	2,413	2,443	2,378	2,338	2,278	11,850
2026/27	2,413	2,413	2,443	2,478	2,338	12,085
2027/28	2,413	2,413	2,413	2,443	2,478	12,160
2028/29	2,413	2,413	2,413	2,413	2,443	12,095
2029/30	2,413	2,413	2,413	2,413	2,413	12,065
2030/31	2,413	2,413	2,413	2,413	2,413	12,065

Admission numbers (agreed, current and historical) and estimated year group offer.

There are two important caveats with school capacity measured as places available.

Firstly, schools are required by law to at offer at least their Published Admission Number (PAN) in the year of entry (Year 7). However, they can vary the numbers admitted in later years if adhering to the original PAN as an admissions limit in future years would lead to prejudice to the efficient delivery of education. This may lead to falling capacity as year groups age.

Secondly, the Borough has two schools with single sex year groups. The Holt, which offers single sex girls' education for Years 7 to 11 and the Forest School, which is converting from single sex boys to co-education through co-educational admissions into Year 7 (2024/25 being

the first co-educational Year 7 intake). Higher year groups will remain single sex boys, with this progressively phasing out as the co-educational cohort moves through the year groups.

Borough Gap Analysis

The table below sets out the projected surplus or deficit for each year group. It shows how, as the peak cohort years move through the system, significant surplus capacity will return to the secondary system.

The expectation is that surpluses will begin to build in Year 7 if current additional capacity figures are maintained. It is worth noting, though, that the projected surplus figures are still low at a whole school level (not exceeding 5% until 2027/28 and never reaching 10%).

	7	8	9	10	11	Total
2023/24	97	34	96	83	85	395
2024/25	155	72	5	59	81	372
2025/26	178	130	43	-3	57	406
2026/27	185	154	101	36	-5	470
2027/28	159	161	125	93	34	572
2028/29	236	135	133	118	91	713
2029/30	295	212	106	125	116	855
2030/31	335	272	185	99	123	1,013

Borough Surplus / Deficit (places)

	7	8	9	10	11	Total
2023/24	4%	1%	4%	4%	4%	3%
2024/25	6%	3%	0%	3%	4%	3%
2025/26	7%	5%	2%	0%	2%	3%
2026/27	8%	6%	4%	2%	0%	4%
2027/28	7%	7%	5%	4%	1%	5%
2028/29	10%	6%	5%	5%	4%	6%
2029/30	12%	9%	4%	5%	5%	7%
2030/31	14%	11%	8%	4%	5%	8%

Percentage Surplus Borough

Note here that, in line with parental preference, substantially oversubscribed schools are still likely to fill in future and therefore any surplus capacity will inevitably be concentrated in a small number of schools.

Actions to be taken in response to the Gap Analysis

Agreed capacity numbers will be maintained for the 2025/26 year. Future years will be monitored to see if the projected surplus numbers are achieved. If they are, the Council will seek to reduce capacity (and, in particular, Year 7 places) from 2028/29 onwards in partnership with schools, so as to ensure that the transition is managed in a fashion that avoids exposing individual schools to financial challenges, wherever possible.

Area Analysis

North Area Current and Future Need

The North area consists of Earley, Woodley, and parishes north of the A329M. The table below shows the projected rolls for the North area schools until 2030/31. The projection indicates that Year 7 roll numbers will stabilise and then fall towards the end of the period. Looking at factors that can be important for school rolls it can be seen that:

For new homes, the impacts are minimal. Only Woodley has seen significant home building rates in the last decade, and development sites are largely built out. Northern parts of the North area are also protected by Green Belt policy restrictions.

For cross border movement, there is significant interchange in this area with Reading. Maiden Erlegh and Bulmershe attract significant numbers of children from Reading (reflecting long established cross border admissions arrangements), while significant numbers of children go on to Reading and Slough Grammar Schools.

North area	7	8	9	10	11	Total
2023/24	1,041	1,029	1,025	970	971	5,036
2024/25	1,038	1,047	1,032	1,023	973	5,113
2025/26	1,013	1,044	1,050	1,030	1,026	5,163
2026/27	1,029	1,018	1,047	1,048	1,034	5,176
2027/28	1,033	1,035	1,021	1,045	1,052	5,186
2028/29	982	1,038	1,038	1,019	1,049	5,126
2029/30	944	987	1,042	1,036	1,023	5,032
2030/31	925	949	990	1,039	1,040	4,944

Borough projections until 2030/31

North Area Current Provision

There are four secondary schools (all 11 to 18 schools) in the North Area: Maiden Erlegh, Bulmershe, Waingels and The Piggott. Their Year 7 PAN (2025/26) with agreed additional places are:

DfE No	School	Year 7 PAN	Agreed additional places	Total
4051	Bulmershe	240	15	255
4053	Maiden Erlegh	279	0	279
4505	Piggott Senior	206	46	252
4060	Waingels College	240	0	240
	Total	965	61	1026

North Area Admission Numbers

As part of the programme to ensure all children requiring a Year 7 place are made an offer while the 2012/13 births centred bulge moves through secondary phase, additional places were agreed at the Piggott School, Bulmershe School and (for one year only) Waingels College. Significant investment is in progress at the Piggott School, with new science laboratories and additional temporary general classrooms complete and work to create a new multi-purpose hall in progress.

Planned capacity for the projection period (including temporary premises) is set out in the following table:

Year	7	8	9	10	11	Total
2023/24	1,026	1,056	1,026	965	965	5,038
2024/25	1,026	1,026	1,056	1,026	965	5,099
2025/26	1,026	1,026	1,026	1,056	1,026	5,160
2026/27	1,026	1,026	1,026	1,026	1,056	5,160
2027/28	1,026	1,026	1,026	1,026	1,026	5,130
2028/29	1,026	1,026	1,026	1,026	1,026	5,130
2029/30	1,026	1,026	1,026	1,026	1,026	5,130
2030/31	1,026	1,026	1,026	1,026	1,026	5,130

North area estimated places by year group.

North Area Gap Analysis

The table below shows the projected surplus and deficit for each age 11-to-16-year group until 2030/31:

	7	8	9	10	11	Total
2023/24	-15	27	1	-5	-6	2
2024/25	-12	-21	24	3	-8	-14
2025/26	13	-18	-24	26	0	-3
2026/27	-3	8	-21	-22	22	-16
2027/28	-7	-9	5	-19	-26	-56
2028/29	44	-12	-12	7	-23	4
2029/30	82	39	-16	-10	3	98
2030/31	101	77	36	-13	-14	186

North Surplus / Deficit (Places)

	7	8	9	10	11	Total
2023/24	-1%	3%	0%	-1%	-1%	0%
2024/25	-1%	-2%	2%	0%	-1%	0%
2025/26	1%	-2%	-2%	2%	0%	0%
2026/27	0%	1%	-2%	-2%	2%	0%
2027/28	-1%	-1%	0%	-2%	-2%	-1%
2028/29	4%	-1%	-1%	1%	-2%	0%
2029/30	8%	4%	-2%	-1%	0%	2%
2030/31	10%	7%	3%	-1%	-1%	4%

North Percentage Surplus / Deficit

It can be seen that in most years a small deficit or surplus is projected, with increasing surplus capacity from 2028/29 onwards.

Note that this is largely driven by an imbalance in Earley, where there are significantly more resident children than there are places available in the single school, Maiden Erlegh. Using the former Earley ward boundaries (Maiden Erlegh, Hawkedon and Hillside wards), there were 400 Year 7 Earley ward applications for September 2025, against 279 Maiden Erlegh places.

Response to the North Area Gap Analysis

There is no case to seek additional capacity in this area (which would be challenging to achieve without significant investment) because projected deficits can be managed with South Area offers. Note too, no opportunity to address the imbalance in this area has been identified.

The case for reduced PANs will be reviewed in later iterations of this plan, dependent on the projected need at that point.

South Area Current and Future Need

The table below shows the projected rolls by year groups until 2030/31. It can be seen that Year 7 numbers are projected to fall, by c. 9%, over the period to 2030/31. Peak school rolls are projected to be reached in 2026/27.

Year	7	8	9	10	11	Total
2023/24	1,240	1,275	1,192	1,134	1,131	5,972
2024/25	1,250	1,259	1,301	1,201	1,133	6,143
2025/26	1,219	1,269	1,285	1,311	1,200	6,283
2026/27	1,191	1,237	1,295	1,294	1,309	6,326
2027/28	1,211	1,209	1,263	1,305	1,293	6,280
2028/29	1,184	1,230	1,234	1,272	1,303	6,223
2029/30	1,160	1,203	1,255	1,243	1,271	6,131
2030/31	1,133	1,178	1,227	1,264	1,241	6,043

South Area actual and projections to 2030/31

Looking at factors that could have an impact on demand:

New housing: most new housing in the borough is likely to be in this area. Near future housing development impacts are accounted for in the roll projections that form part of the sufficiency calculations. Recent planned developments will be built out over a longer period though so not all impacts will be seen in the plan period. If new home-led migration into the borough reflects historical patterns, the greatest impact will initially be on early years and primary age groups, with a subsequent progression to the secondary phase. The next major developments will be south of Wokingham Town (where planning permission has been granted) and (subject to planning permission) around Hall Farm in Sindlesham. While some planned developments are largely completed (Shinfield and North Wokingham Strategic Development Locations), the Arborfield Green / Finchwood Park developments are some years from completion.

Cross border movement: the most significant movement in this area is of children from Crowthorne (Wokingham Without Parish) to Edgbarrow School in Bracknell Forest. In recent years some of the children who live in this area have been unable to secure places at the Edgbarrow School.

South Area Current Provision

There are six secondary schools in this area. Three are in the Wokingham Town area (St. Crispins, The Holt (girls' school), and Emmbrook schools). One, Bohunt Wokingham, is in the southwest of the Borough in the Arborfield Green development. Another, Forest School, is in Winnersh and the Shinfield area is served by Oakbank School. Year 7 places, with agreed additional places for 2025/26 are as follows:

DfE No	School	Year 7 PAN	Agreed additional places	Total
4001	Bohunt	240	30	270
4049	Emmbrook	210	30	240
4050	Forest	210	60	270
4047	Holt	240	0	240
4000	Oakbank	112	0	112
4048	St Crispin's	200	55	255
	South Total	1212	175	1387

South area current places by school

The planned provision by year group until 2030/31 is set out in the following table:

Year	7	8	9	10	11	Total
2023/24	1,297	1,337	1,252	1,222	1,222	6,330
2024/25	1,417	1,297	1,337	1,252	1,222	6,525
2025/26	1,387	1,417	1,322	1,312	1,252	6,690
2026/27	1,387	1,387	1,417	1,422	1,312	6,925
2027/28	1,387	1,387	1,387	1,417	1,422	7,000
2028/29	1,387	1,387	1,387	1,387	1,417	6,965
2029/30	1,387	1,387	1,387	1,387	1,387	6,935
2030/31	1,387	1,387	1,387	1,387	1,387	6,935

South area estimated place provision by year group to 2030/31.

This includes additional (potentially time limited) places at:

- St Crispins School
- Emmbrook School
- Forest School
- Bohunt Wokingham School.

Note that these places are backed by formal agreements with scheduled revenue payments. The agreements were negotiated to ensure that the Council would have sufficient capacity for arriving Year 7 students, at a time when there was appreciable flux in the number of children who required places.

South Area Gap Analysis

The table below sets out the surplus or deficit per year group until 2030/31.

	7	8	9	10	11	Total
2023/24	57	62	60	88	91	358
2024/25	167	38	36	51	89	382
2025/26	168	148	37	1	52	407
2026/27	196	150	122	128	3	599
2027/28	176	178	124	112	129	720
2028/29	203	157	153	115	114	742
2029/30	227	184	132	144	116	804
2030/31	254	209	160	123	146	892

South Surplus / Deficit Places

	7	8	9	10	11	Total
2023/24	4%	5%	5%	7%	7%	6%
2024/25	12%	3%	3%	4%	7%	6%
2025/26	12%	10%	3%	0%	4%	6%
2026/27	14%	11%	9%	9%	0%	9%
2027/28	13%	13%	9%	8%	9%	10%
2028/29	15%	11%	11%	8%	8%	11%
2029/30	16%	13%	10%	10%	8%	12%
2030/31	18%	15%	12%	9%	10%	13%

Percentage Surplus South

Although the number of projected surplus places (particularly those originating in Year 7) is high, this has to be set in the context of the North Area projected deficits until 2028/29. The South Area is holding the surplus capacity that North areas rely on, in pupil place planning terms.

These area figures mask some local area sufficiency problems though.

Firstly, the Shinfield area is served by a single small school, Oakbank, but Shinfield generates significantly more than the 112 places the school offers each year. Children need to travel to Wokingham Town and Winnersh schools. This issue is exacerbated by current low demand for places at the Oakbank school, increasing the number of children travelling large distances to school.

Secondly, the Crowthorne area (Wokingham Without Ward and Parish) is served by Edgbarrow School in Bracknell Forest. In recent years, a number of children living in this area have not been allocated preferred places at Edgbarrow School. Alternative local Wokingham Schools are oversubscribed and beyond walking distance. Looking at 2024 admissions, though, by September allocations for Wokingham Without children were largely in accordance with parental preferences. It will be necessary to look at this area in the next iteration of the Plan, but the 2024 outcomes point to the problem being resolved by falling pupil rolls.

Response to the South Area Gap analysis

Given that borough wide surpluses are limited and there are still uncertainties over the number of children who will require school places in future, it is not proposed to make changes to agreed place supply arrangements at this point. This will be kept under review, with anticipated PAN adjustments for 2028/29 admission, as indicated above.

Post-16

What are we required to do?

Local authorities hold responsibilities for the sufficiency of post-16 education and training and promoting continuing education to young people. Specifically, these responsibilities are:

- To secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people in their area who are over compulsory school age but under 19, or aged 19 to 25 and for whom an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is maintained (Education Act 1996 S15ZA). To fulfil this, local authorities need to have a strategic overview of the provision available in their area and to identify and resolve gaps in provision.
- To make available to all young people aged 13-19, and to those between 20 and 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), support that will encourage, enable, or assist them to participate in education or training under Section 68 of the ESA 2008.

However, the Council's legal duty in relation to young people's post-16 participation and its statutory powers to enable it to fulfil this duty are not precisely aligned. The Council has no formal role in the planning of Further Education provision; it can propose sixth form provision, but decision-making lies with the DfE Regional Director. Therefore, to fulfil this legal duty, the Council is required to work in partnership with education / training providers, and local businesses.

Note that in this document, the need for specialist provision for young people with SEND is dealt with in the Special Education Needs and Disabilities section. This section focuses on the needs of young people requiring mainstream education and training opportunities at post-16.

Current and future need

To meet its statutory duty, the Council must be confident that there will be sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the rising pupil population.

Needs are considered in two parts:

- For level 3 theory-based qualifications (A-levels and some T-levels²). This is provision that is made in sixth forms in the borough's schools, but also in school sixth forms, sixth form colleges and further education colleges in neighbouring council areas.
- For practice-based vocational education and training (some level 2 and some level 3) provided through further education colleges, apprenticeships, and other training providers in neighbouring council areas.

Broadly, the borough's young people are split two-thirds requiring theory-based provision and one-third requiring practice-based provision (see table below).

Forecasts

The projection of the number of places required takes account of:

² Qualifications are banded by degree of depth and challenge. Level 2 qualifications include GCSEs. Level 3 qualifications include A-level and new T-levels. T-levels are vocational qualifications, where one T-level is equivalent to three A-levels.

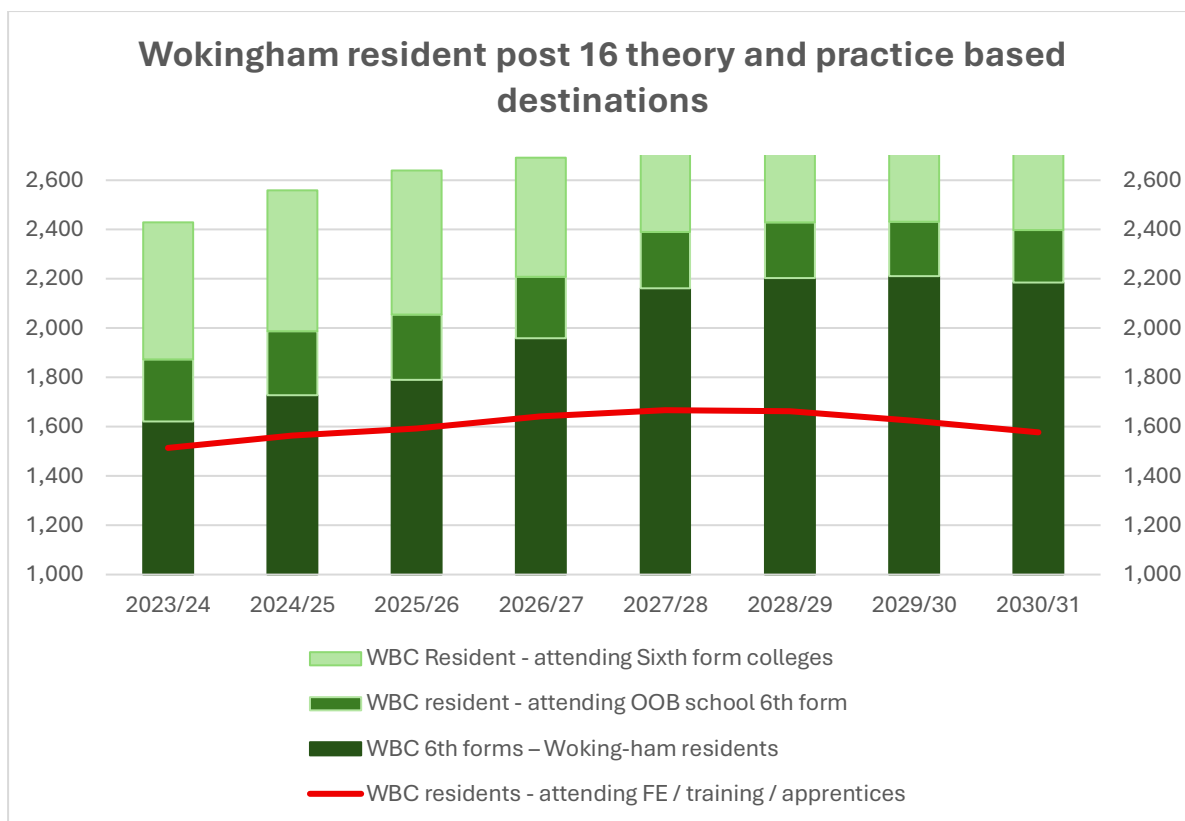
- The projected number of Year 11 students taking sixth form places in the borough, from both Wokingham and other borough resident young people.
- The established transition to 6th form rate between Year 11 and Year 12.
- The impact of the new Bohunt sixth form project on demand for sixth form places in the borough.
- The existing take up of sixth form places in schools and sixth form colleges in other boroughs by Wokingham resident young people.
- The ONS 2018 base projection.
- ONS post Stage 4 destination data.

The table below shows the projected outcomes for Wokingham School Sixth forms (with Wokingham and out of borough residents split), sixth form provision in other boroughs (school and sixth form colleges) and practice-base vocational training course requirements (all out of borough). The Wokingham sixth form projection reflects both the forecast Year 11 rolls and the historic proportion of young people transferring to Year 12. However, significant numbers of Wokingham young people are educated in other boroughs (where the Council holds no roll data). The forecasts for this category of pupils are based on ratios taken from historical ONS data (now seven years old), so the projection of the number of young people taking up other provision is necessarily less reliable. Outcomes may therefore diverge more significantly from projections for this cohort of pupils than for the in-Borough projections.

Aside from overall cohort growth, which reflects peak birth years currently moving through the secondary age range, there is one factor that leads to significant growth in Wokingham sixth form rolls in the projections. Currently very few young people from the Bohunt Wokingham School take up sixth form places in the borough. It is anticipated that the opening of the new sixth form at the school will lead to a high proportion of that school's Year 11 roll opting to attend the school's sixth form, increasing demand for in-borough provision. In the projection, this leads to falls in sixth form college and out of borough school sixth form numbers but has no impact on the figures for Further Education colleges / other vocational destinations. All Wokingham sixth forms are academically selective, so it is reasonably anticipated that the impact will be on the number attending similar provision out of the borough, rather than on settings offering practice-based vocational and other Level 2 courses.

				Identified WBC Resident need				
			Theory-based focus				Practice-based focus	
Year	Total 16 + 17	Acad- emic year	WBC 6th Forms - OOB resid- ent rolls	WBC 6th forms – Woking- ham residents	WBC Resident - attending Sixth form colleges	WBC resident - attending OOB school 6th form	WBC residents - attending FE / training / apprentices	Total WBC identifie d
2024	5,045	2023/24	457	1,622	555	252	1,514	3,942
2025	5,209	2024/25	487	1,727	573	260	1,563	4,123
2026	5,311	2025/26	505	1,789	584	266	1,593	4,233
2027	5,470	2026/27	553	1,960	482	249	1,641	4,331
2028	5,557	2027/28	610	2,162	371	228	1,667	4,429
2029	5,548	2028/29	621	2,203	370	227	1,664	4,465
2030	5,412	2029/30	623	2,210	355	221	1,624	4,409
2031	5,252	2030/31	617	2,186	338	213	1,576	4,312

Table of known Post 16 destinations



Current and planned provision

There are 10 secondary schools in the Borough. Eight of these currently have sixth forms. Another, the Bohunt Wokingham School, in Arborfield Green, is in the process of developing a sixth form. The Oakbank School in Shinfield is an 11 to 16 school, and there are no proposals to open a sixth form. All these schools are Academies or Free Schools.

The Borough holds sixth form capacity records for all schools in the borough. However, there is some ambiguity in the number of places available at each school. This reflects a number of factors including:

- That the DfE has set out a number of measures of sixth form capacity, which necessarily means there may be a number of divergent capacity figures.
- That sixth form capacity is, to an extent, a trade off with 11 to 16 places in schools and therefore subject to flexibility. Sixth form specific teaching accommodation is limited. Independent study and social areas, supported by some smaller sixth form teaching rooms are required, but otherwise teaching will normally occur in standard teaching areas in schools.
- Measured school capacity, particularly in the secondary phase, is not an absolute barrier to school growth. Successful schools often operate in what are, by official measures, overcrowded premises.

- The Council is working in partnership with a number of schools to provide additional accommodation to enable additional Year 7 students to be admitted to these schools. These schemes may, on completion, enable additional sixth form students to be educated at these schools.
- A number of Wokingham schools operate with apparent sixth form place deficits. It is reasonable to presume that there is no case to increase accommodation further at such schools, so this deficit can be discounted in the overall needs assessment.

Current sixth form capacity by school is set out in the table below:

School	Sixth form capacity
The Holt School	247
St Crispin's School	230
The Emmbrook School	220
The Forest School	300
The Bulmershe School	312
Maiden Erlegh School	397
Waingels	258
The Piggott School	322
Total	2,286

The planned new sixth form premises at the Bohunt School will add a further 300 sixth form places, from 2026.

Wokingham students also attend:

Out of borough sixth form colleges:

- Farnborough Sixth Form College
- Henley Sixth Form College

Out of borough school sixth forms.

Many secondary schools in neighbouring boroughs are 11 to 18, so Wokingham students have, dependent on where they live in the borough, the potential to attend a significant number of schools in surrounding areas.

Most of this provision was established to meet local needs, rather than Wokingham needs (although some schools, established by Berkshire County Council, serve areas that span borough boundaries). Bracknell Forest's Edgbarrow School, which serves Crowthorne (itself split between Wokingham and Bracknell Forest Boroughs) has a sixth form. Population growth in these areas will lead to increased demand for Post-16 places, and it is possible that Wokingham residents will lose the ability to access this provision. Sixth form colleges have site and accommodation limits so may need to focus on meeting needs in Hampshire, Surrey, and Oxfordshire.

Practice-based vocational provision is made at local Colleges of Further Education in Reading and Bracknell and at Berkshire College of Agriculture, near Maidenhead. Some young people engage directly with employers, particularly through apprenticeships.

Gap analysis

The following numerical gap analysis only applies to Wokingham school sixth forms, owing to this being the segment of the education sector within which the Council has direct influence. As indicated above though, significant numbers of Wokingham resident young people attend schools and colleges in neighbouring boroughs, and commentary is provided below the Wokingham 6th form analysis in this respect.

The analysis discounts 80% of the current calculated deficits, as these are no barrier to current successful sixth form education delivery and are likely to be largely resolved through ongoing investment into Year 7 places at the schools concerned.

The table below indicates that:

- There is a likely balance between places and need at the point of peak demand.
- There is a risk associated with the cohort of Wokingham student currently pursuing sixth form courses in other boroughs and where they might be accommodated in future.

The risk referenced above is considered low. Nine of the ten borough schools will have sixth forms by the time sixth form needs peak. It is reasonable to presume that any proportion of the cohort that would otherwise have gone on to out of borough provision will stay on their Wokingham school rolls. The only school that will be left as an 11 to 16 school, Oakbank, is a small school (max 112 per year group), whose students have historically gone onto post-16 provision in Reading (where a significant proportion of the school's roll live). Given the limited impact, capacity could readily be found for these students in other Wokingham schools, if necessary.

Acad- emic year	WBC school 1 6th forms - WBC residen- ts	WBC school 6th forms - other borough residen- ts	WBC 6th form rolls (in and out of borough residen- ts)	Capa- city (adjust- ed for 230 deficit places)	Surplus / deficit adjusted for current deficit (equiv- alent to 230 addition- al places)	WBC Residen- t attend- ing OOB Sixth form colleges	WBC residen- t attend- ing OOB school 6th forms	Total WBC resident - 6th forms in other borough h
2023/24	1,622	457	2,079	2,516	437	555	252	807
2024/25	1,727	487	2,214	2,516	303	573	260	833
2025/26	1,789	505	2,294	2,516	222	584	266	850
2026/27	1,960	553	2,513	2,666	154	482	250	732
2027/28	2,162	610	2,772	2,816	44	371	230	601
2028/29	2,203	621	2,824	2,816	-8	370	229	599
2029/30	2,210	623	2,833	2,816	-17	355	223	578
2030/31	2,186	617	2,802	2,816	14	338	215	553

NB the adjustment for current deficits is equivalent to 230 additional sixth form places in each year.

The table above provides a borough level overview. However, school sixth form sizes vary considerably, between 109 and 500 students on roll. While there is no directive on minimum

sizes for established school sixth forms, the DfE advises that new school sixth forms should have a minimum roll of 200 students (which might be delivered in partnership with other schools). Two of the borough's sixth forms had less than 200 on roll in October 2024 and another was just over 200. This indicates there is headroom within the school system for sixth form roll growth.

The most significant area of concern in sufficiency terms is the projected 10% increase in the number of students requiring Level 2 / practice based vocational provision (detailed in the first table). As noted above, it is not possible to provide a borough level analysis of out of borough provision, particularly for those students pursuing level 2 or practice-based vocational courses, as the Council has neither oversight of, nor influence over the capacity that such provision can deliver. This said, the implication of relying on out of borough provision is that as numbers rise, Wokingham students may find it increasingly challenging to find places on their chosen courses, especially as similar pressures are likely to be experienced in neighbouring boroughs. Furthermore, some evidence from support services for vulnerable cohorts points to the difficulty in accessing out of borough Level 1 and Level 2 courses due to their vulnerabilities and distances. Wokingham is currently in the process of developing a Skills & Employment Strategy, which will consider these potential pressures in more detail and how they can be addressed in a fashion that aligns with the overall Borough growth plan. It will be important for provision to deliver courses that match the skills required as work requirement continue to evolve. This will inform future iterations of the School Organisation Plan.

Proposed Response to Gap Analysis

The gap analysis indicates that it is likely there will be sufficient 6th form capacity without further investment in school sixth form expansion by the Council. However, one implication of the analysis above is that as the balance between place availability and demand will be very close in the peak cohort years, it will be important to ensure that all current and proposed works schemes at secondary schools are completed as planned, particularly where accommodation that will support sixth form teaching is involved. This includes therefore the Bohunt sixth form project, the Piggott School's multi-purpose hall and the replacement sixth form independent study, common room, reception, teaching rooms and ancillary rooms at the Emmbrook School. These schemes are essential to ensure that the Borough's sixth form estate is fit for purpose; should guarantee that the Council is able to robustly manage its within-Borough sufficiency duties for post-16 education; and deliver this in a fashion that represents value for money.

The number of sixth forms with low rolls is both an opportunity and a risk. They are an opportunity as roll growth will make them more sustainable. They are a risk, because Trusts may come to see them as unsustainable in the long-term, especially as the lower pupil cohort rolls at primary level (detailed in the relevant section of this document) move through to post-16. Coordinated planning for these lower cohorts will be required as an element within the medium-term.

Post-16 practice-based sufficiency is more challenging. Sufficiency planning needs to be at a regional or subregional level (particularly so for Wokingham, as the borough's residents rely on out of borough colleges). The Skills & Employment Strategy will need to take account of this need for wider partnership planning.

Special Educational Needs and Disability

What are we required to do?

The Council has statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 to ensure that children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities, up to age 25, (if necessary) are supported to achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes. When children have high level and complex special needs the Council must agree Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), to ensure they receive necessary support. Most of these children can be educated in mainstream schools with additional support. However, for approximately 44% of Wokingham's EHCP population, dedicated specialist provision presents the most appropriate option. Such provision can take the form of resourced provision in mainstream schools, special schools and colleges, both state funded and in the generally more expensive independent and non-maintained sector.

The Council's task is to ensure that there is appropriate provision for these children and young people in the borough and to minimise the reliance on high-cost provision, to provide an excellent standard of education within the limits of the Council's resources.

Current and future need

This document uses the DfE's categories of SEND, which are used across England's education system and enable benchmarking with comparable areas. The categories are:

Communication & Interaction / Autism (C&I and ASD): These are children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) or autism (ASD) (who may also have difficulties with social interaction).

- C.75% of the children and young people with ASD requiring a specialist placement are cognitively able to access aspects of the national curriculum but may require sensory or curriculum adaptations, and smaller social groupings and are not able to thrive purely in a mainstream classroom.
- C.25% of these children and young people will also have significant Learning Disabilities and are identified as having “**Autism with Complex Needs.**”
- Some 0- to 25-year-olds with “**Complex Speech Language & Communication Needs**”) are likely to be cognitively unable to access aspects of the national curriculum. Therefore, they will not be able to thrive purely in a mainstream classroom and may require sensory or curriculum adaptations and smaller group sizes.

Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH): The focus here, for provision purposes, is on those cognitively able to access aspects of the national curriculum but who are not able to thrive purely in a mainstream classroom. They may require sensory or curriculum adaptations, and smaller group sizes.

Cognition and Learning Needs (C&L): Including Moderate Learning Disability (MLD), Severe Learning Disability (SLD) and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD). Pupils with MLD are likely to be able to access aspects of the national curriculum with some adaptation and support whilst children with SLD and PMLD will be unable to follow the National

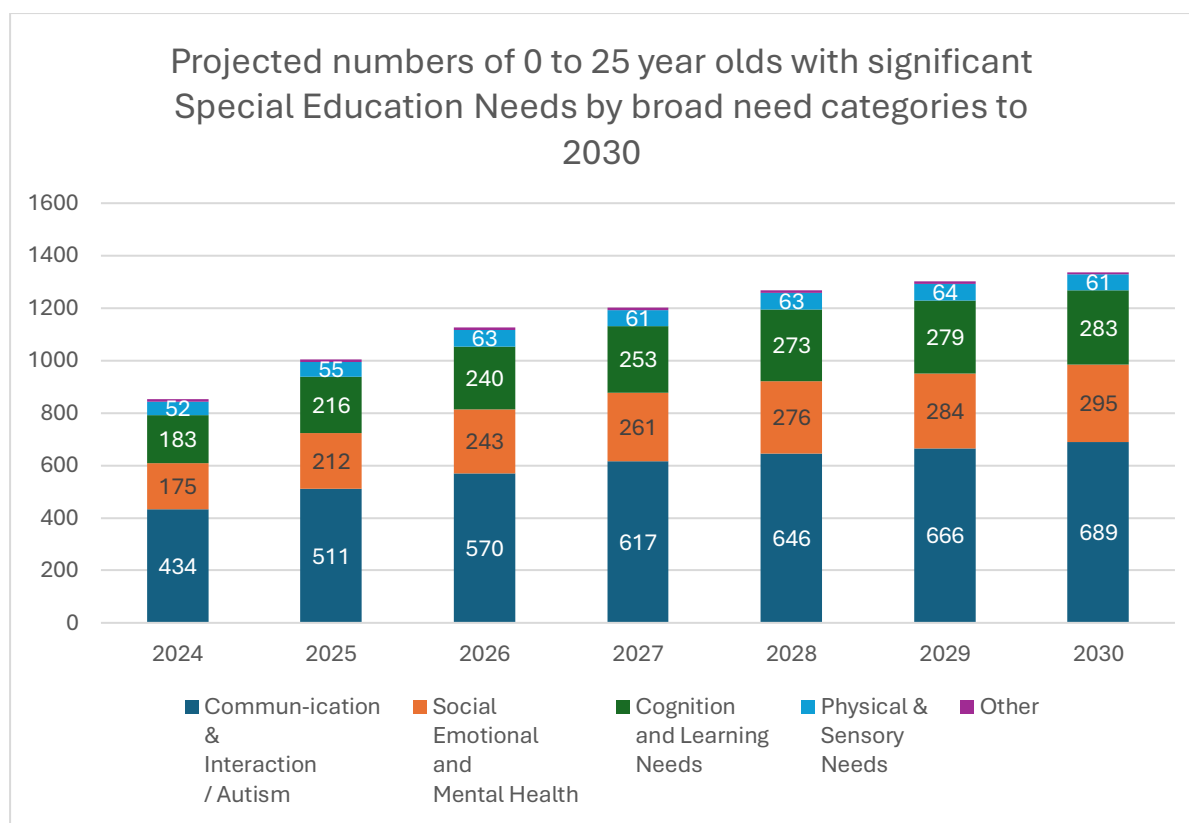
Curriculum, even with support and differentiation. Children with Moderate Learning Disabilities may require resourced provision in mainstream schools, as these can provide them with a suitably differentiated curriculum but still provide them with an opportunity to socialise with their mainstream peers.

Physical & Sensory Needs (P&S) These are children with physical impairments (PI) visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) and multiple sensory impairments (MSI). Pupils with EHCPs at the moderate level can thrive in mainstream with adaptations, whereas more complex needs may be cognitively unable to access aspects of the national curriculum, may require sensory or curriculum adaptations, and smaller group sizes in specialist provision.

Other needs: a small number of children and young people do not fall into the categories above but still require a place in a specialist setting. These include children and young people with specific learning needs (for example, Dyslexia). Children with Specific Learning Disabilities will often require resourced provision in mainstream schools, as these can provide them with a suitably differentiated curriculum but still provide them with an opportunity to socialise with their mainstream peers.

The projected number of Wokingham residents aged 0 to 25 with these needs requiring a place in a specialist setting, from 2024 to 2030 is set out below:

0-25 YEARS	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Growth to 2030	% of total growth
Communication & Interaction / Autism	434	511	570	617	646	666	689	255	53%
Social Emotional and Mental Health	175	212	243	261	276	284	295	120	25%
Cognition and Learning Needs	183	216	240	253	273	279	283	100	21%
Physical & Sensory Needs	52	55	63	61	63	64	61	9	2%
Other	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	-1	0%
TOTAL	854	1,004	1,126	1,202	1,268	1,302	1,337	483	100%
Annual %ge increase		18%	12%	7%	5%	3%	3%		
%ge increase from 2024 base		18%	32%	41%	48%	52%	57%		



Significant points to be drawn from this data include:

- A projected increase of 483 placements or 60% by 2030.
- Within this, autism and related needs are projected to increase by 255 by 2030 to be both c. 50% of need and just over 50% of the increase in need over this period.
- The numbers of those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Cognition and Learning needs requiring specialist placements are also projected to increase. Individually they account for c.23% of the projected growth in the period to 2030.
- The numbers of 0-to-25-year-olds with Physical and Sensory and Other needs constitute less than 10% of need and neither category of need is expected to see any significant change in the 2024 to 2030 period (<1% of projected growth).

The following tables look at need by education phase and break the Communication & Interaction / Autism category down into Autism (ASD) (the 75% of the children and young people with autism who require dedicated provision), Autism with Complex Needs and Complex Speech Language & Communication Needs. This reflects a presumption that a very high proportion of needs can be met in three types of school:

- Autism focus,
- Social Emotional and Mental Health focus, and
- Broad Spectrum (other needs, including Autism with Complex Needs and Complex Speech Language & Communication Needs).

Early Years: 73% of need is in the Communication & Interaction category, split 48% ASD / 27% SLCN. Need is projected to increase from 49 children to c.77 children by 2030 (an increase of 28 children). Twenty-seven of these additional children fall into the Communication & Interaction category (split 15 additional children with ASD and 12 with SLCN).

Primary: Significant growth to 2030 is expected in the primary phase, from 283 in 2024 to 436 in 2030 (so by 153, or over 50%). While the greatest growth is seen in ASD and SEMH needs (+50 and +32 respectively), the needs that could be met in a Broad Spectrum school are projected to grow most significantly (by 69 in total), with the greatest increases seen in Learning Difficulties (+33) and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (+28).

Secondary: Secondary growth follows a similar pattern to primary, with growth of 171 children (from 303 in 2024 to 474 in 2030) by 2030. There is a comparable growth pattern, with ASD increasing by 77 additional children (45% of growth), SEMH growing by 36 children (21% of growth) and Broad-Spectrum needs increasing by 58 (or 34% of growth). The Learning Difficulties category is projected to grow by 42 children, as the second most significant growth.

Post-16: Significant growth in need is projected (60% to 2030). Total numbers of young people are projected to increase from 219 in 2024 to 350 in 2030. However, the “Broad Spectrum” needs (LD, P&S, ASD with complex needs and SLCN) are only 22% of growth (29 young people), while both SEMH and ASD are projected to grow by 51 young people (39% of growth each).

Current and planned provision

The table below shows the settings, with the anticipated number of places for Wokingham residents, for 2024 (current provision) and 2030 (to show the currently planned provision during the period), broken down by education phase (Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Post-16).

Full breakdowns by year and need category are captured in the gap analysis section.

		2024				2030			
Category of Need	Provision	Early Years	Primary	Secondary	16+	Early Years	Primary	Secondary	16+
Communication & Interaction / Autism	Resourced provision	0	44	23	0	0	44	45	0
	Chiltern Way	0	8	28	0	0	8	45	8
	Oak Tree	0	18	24	0	0	32	36	0
Post-16 Hub		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32
Sub Total		0	70	75	0	0	84	126	40
SEMH	Resourced provision	0	0	0	0	0	18	14	0
	Phoenix CAMHS	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0
	Rooks Nest School	0	0	0	0	0	54	54	10
Sub Total		0	0	2	0	0	72	70	10
Broad Spectrum	Resourced provision	0	16	0	0	0	20	7	0
	Addington School (note 2)	16	75	92	36	16	75	92	36
	Strawberry Fields School	0	0	0	0	0	54	54	9
	Dingleys	15	0	0	0	30			
Sub Total		31	91	92	36	46	149	153	45
Total		31	161	169	36	46	305	349	95

Note (1) There is a general assumption in the capacity section that c.10% of placements will be resident in other boroughs (so this applies to all provision listed above).

Note (2) Based on current WBC placement levels (2024) but it should be noted that between 20-30% of Addington's places are taken up by non-WBC pupils so this capacity could increase through more effective placement planning.

Gap analysis

Wokingham 2025-30 Specialist Place Gap Analysis

Need Category	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Early Years	-12	-20	-24	-27	-29	-31
Primary SEMH	-54	-53	-51	-48	-35	-8
Primary C&L	-22	-23	-25	-26	-26	-25
Primary C&I	-25	-32	-43	-48	-54	-55
Primary Broad	-42	-54	-65	-61	-54	-36
Primary Total	-143	-162	-184	-183	-169	-124
Secondary SEMH	-73	-81	-84	-65	-53	-30
Secondary C&L	-23	-24	-28	-29	-31	-32
Secondary C&I	-24	-28	-28	-29	-31	-32
Secondary Broad	-45	-61	-65	-66	-57	-32
Secondary Total	-165	-194	-205	-189	-172	-126
Post-16 SEMH	-41	-53	-60	-64	-67	-74
Post-16 C&L	-22	-24	-26	-27	-27	-28
Post-16 C&I	-72	-80	-87	-91	-94	-99
Post-16 Broad	-83	-79	-76	-78	-78	-75
Post-16 Total	-218	-236	-249	260	-266	-276

The gap analysis shows that even with current planned provision, there is still expected to be a significant provision shortfall by 2030. The most significant gap will be in Post-16 provision, where the shortfall is expected to increase by c.60 places. The early years shortfall is also expected to increase, by c.20 places. Primary and secondary shortfalls are expected to reduce, by c.20 places (primary) and c.40 places (secondary 11-16), reflecting approved plans to expand specialist capacity.

Looking at expected gaps by need, the greatest increase in the need for Wokingham places can be seen in places for children with Communication and Interaction needs (largely Autism), with Cognition and Learning Needs also seeing a growing deficit. The local deficit in place provision for Social Emotional and Mental Health and “Broad Band” Needs (which includes c.25% of children with Autism and a significant proportion of children with Cognition and Learning needs) showing falling deficits over the period to 2030.

Proposed Response to Gap Analysis

The proposed additional provision included in the figures set out above would constitute a significant growth in capacity. However, even with the planned additional capacity there is still a projected deficit in all age groupings and all categories of need to 2030. A deficit of some level is to be expected though, as:

- some parents will inevitably prefer state funded provision in other boroughs and independent and non-maintained schools;
- some children will require specialist support that it would not be possible or financially viable to recreate in the borough; and
- some parents will prefer to home educate.

Note too that given the projected increase in the number of children with EHCPs naming specialist settings, the absolute size of the deficit may grow, but the deficit, as a proportion of the total may reduce.

A critical issue is the management of the financial deficit. The current financial deficit is unsustainable as it cannot be contained within available resources. The issue is not therefore the relative size of the deficit in terms of children not placed within in-borough state provision, but whether the local authority's plans can deliver a substantial reduction in the number of children placed in high cost independent and non-maintained schools, so as to enable children and young people to be educated closer to home, whilst reducing the financial pressure on the Council's resources.

The impact of the continued shortfall will (if it comes to pass) very much depend on where alternative provision is found and what category of school it is made in. Provision in state funded schools or other settings in neighbouring boroughs may meet need, respect parent's wishes and be affordable.

The gap analysis supports the current planned new provision. However, it is noted that this planned provision carries some degree of risk:

- The two planned new Special Free Schools are significantly behind the original schedule.
- The delivery of additional Resource Bases / SEND Units is dependent on agreements with schools and Trusts.

The new Government has stated plans and ambitions to change the education system to increase inclusion within mainstream as one of their key priorities and this is expected to have an impact on the proportion of children with EHCPs who are educated within mainstream settings. Therefore, some caution is advisable in developing additional specialist capacity in advance of shortly anticipated government announcements regarding the future of the national education system.

With this national context in mind, the following actions are recommended to ensure that the deficit can be reduced further:

- Provision needs should be forecast annually, to ensure that plans are as closely aligned with needs as resources permit.
- In addition to new schools and other specialist settings, the Council will work to support inclusion in mainstream schools.
- A systems approach to addressing education sufficiency by investigating the opportunities of falling rolls in mainstream schools.
- Further proposals for additional provision are developed, as set out in the table below. The core of the proposals is for 8 additional resourced units / bases, across both primary and secondary phases. Engagement with parents / carers indicates that this is a

key priority area for meeting parental preference and the inclusion agenda. There is a clear expressed desire for:

- A greater number of Resource Bases / SEND Units
- A greater range of Resource Bases / SEND Units (in terms of need types catered for)
- A better geographical spread of Resource Base / SEND Unit provision, especially in terms of the key growth areas of ASD and SEMH
- A potential need for new secondary HI provision, in particular – the provision at primary level is currently not matched at secondary.
- It was also noted that the benefits of such provision extend to the mainstream pupil population, in that schools with an emphasis on inclusion build more diverse communities that understand and value difference.
- Delivery of additional capacity would be dependent on agreement to additional capital spend.

PHASE	EXISTING PLANS (in calculation of “Gap”)	PROJECTIONS AS TO REQUIRED PROVISION WITH NO CURRENT PLAN IN PLACE
EARLY YEARS	Discussions underway between Children’s Commissioning and existing providers to address need	
PRIMARY	2 New Free Schools RESOURCE BASES / SEND UNITS Phase 1: Development of Primary RB and Primary Unit, both for Autism (Loddon and Radstock Primaries) Phase 2; Development of Primary RB and Primary Unit, both for SEMH	2*21 place additional Autism provision 1* 21 place Cognition & Learning provision 1* 8 place SEMH provision
SECONDARY	2 New Free Schools RESOURCE BASES / SEND UNITS Phase 1: Development of Secondary Unit for C&I/Autism Development of Secondary Resource Base for HI Phase 2; Development of Secondary Unit for SEMH	1*21 place additional Autism provision 1*21 place additional Cognition & Learning provision 2* 15 place SEMH provision
POST-16	New Post-16 Hub (40 places) New Post-16 VI Form (10 places)	SEND Vocational Centre (40 places) Specialist Post-16 Phase 3 (40 places)

