

Primary School Place Strategy 2019 – 2024





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1 Introduction

1.1

The Primary School Place Strategy sets out Portsmouth City Council's approach to the analysis of demand for primary school places and outlines how the demand will be met.

1.2

Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 requires Portsmouth City Council to ensure that there are sufficient school places for resident children. This duty requires the council to forecast future pupil populations so that it can ensure that sufficient places are provided.

1.3

The strategy considers forecasting data compared to capacity in Portsmouth schools, and determines whether action needs to be taken to meet anticipated future demand for school places by Portsmouth resident children.

1.4

The Strategy covers a 5-year period, but also looks forward to the longer term demand for places. This ensures that prompt action can be taken in a timely way if a future shortfall is identified.

1.5

All Councils are required to submit their pupil projections to the Department for Education (DfE) on an annual basis. The pupil projections inform the Government allocation of Basic Need capital funding to Councils. **Appendix A** explains the pupil forecasting methodology which supports the pupil projections.

1.6

The geography of Portsmouth is important for pupil place forecasting because the lack of permeable boundaries on the east, south and west greatly restricts the potential for migration in and out of the council area by pupils. Portsmouth is the most densely populated city in the UK, outside of London, with 5,000 people per km². Portsmouth parents generally have a broad choice of schools within a small distance. However, there is a significant barrier to pupil movement (as could be expressed through parental preference) due to the water course between the island and mainland parts of the City area. **Appendix B** is a map of Portsmouth showing school locations.

1.7

Since 2011, pupil numbers in Portsmouth have risen dramatically. This has put considerable pressure on the availability of primary school places and over 1,700 additional places have been added through school expansions. These additional pupils are now starting to impact on the availability of secondary school places as the numbers move through the year groups and into secondary provision.

1.8

The increase in demand is largely due to a rise in the number of children being born in the City, but it is also as a result of a range of other social and economic factors including:

- Inward migration
- Impact of housing developments and regeneration schemes
- Reduction in the number of children accessing independent education

1.9

Section 4 explains the forecasting methodology and the current pupil numbers and capacity within Portsmouth schools.

1.10

Section 5 covers the review of demand versus capacity and outlines pro-active steps which could be taken to address future pressure for primary school places.

1.11

The recommendations in **Section 7** focus on actions which need to be taken in the next 1-3 years to ensure that future demand (within the next 5 years) can be adequately addressed.

1.12

For longer-term projected demand potential actions are provisionally identified and documented, and kept under close scrutiny as the data and intelligence is refreshed each year, until there is sufficient reliable evidence to confirm whether action should or should not be taken. By their nature, longer term forecasts are less accurate than short term projections. This is because assumptions are made but actual occurrences may change over time for example, using estimated birth rates for children who are not yet born, or where expected housing developments are delayed or do not occur.

1.13

In addition to the Primary School Place Strategy, there is also a Secondary School Place Strategy, a SEND Provision Place Strategy, and a School Organisation policy document. The four documents are reviewed on an annual basis and updated to take account of refreshed forecast data and new or emerging intelligence.

2 Portsmouth Context

2.1

Summary of the pupils in maintained schools and academies.

See table 1

2.2

Some schools are maintained by the Local Authority, and other schools are academies within a Multi Academy Trust. In Portsmouth, all schools are encouraged over time to become part of a strong Multi Academy Trust.

See table 2

2.3

For the spread of pupils across primary, secondary and special school provision.

See table 3

2.4

The number of primary pupils has been rising significantly for over a decade. The demand for school places in Portsmouth has been fuelled by rising birth rates; inward migration and the impact of regeneration schemes and housing developments.

2.5

The number of live births in the city has risen by over 25% since 2001.

See table 4 overleaf

2.6

The economic climate can impact on pupil numbers, leading to a reduction in the proportion of pupils leaving the LA maintained sector for independent schools and/or a reduction in outward migration from the Local Authority area. Economic impact has affected pupil numbers across the majority of the country and this impact is evident in predicted pupil numbers across Portsmouth.

Table 1 : Statutory School Age Pupils in Portsmouth maintained schools and academies (as at January 2019 school census)

	No. of pupils	% of pupils
Primary	16,250	63%
Secondary	8,861	34%
Special	574	2%
Total	25,685	100%

This figure does not include pupils in private schools

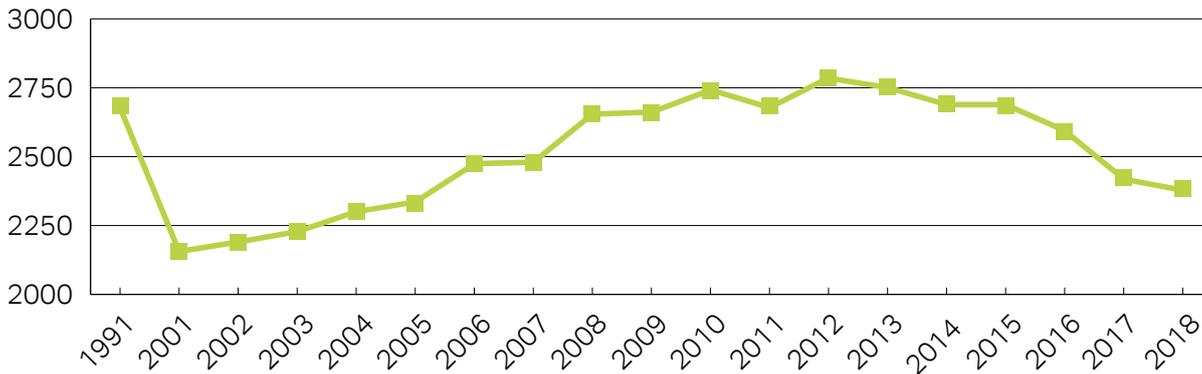
Table 2: Maintained and Academy Schools (as at September 2019)

	LA Maintained schools	Academies	Total
Infant	6	10	16
Junior	3	9	12
Primary	11	9	20
Secondary (including the University Technology College)	1	9	10
All-Through School	1	0	1
Special	1	3	4
Total	23	40	63

Table 3: Pupils across primary and secondary provision (as at January 2019 school census).

	LA Maintained schools	Academies	Total
Infant	1,609	2,135	3,744
Junior	1,161	3,516	4,677
Primary	4,340	3,489	7,829
Secondary	1,948	6,913	8,861
Special	169	405	574
Total	9,227	16,458	25,685

Table 4: Number of live births in Portsmouth per year



2.7

For planning and funding purposes, local authorities are required to plan pupil provision based on planning areas which reflect patterns of provision in a similar geographic area. Planning areas in Portsmouth are based on secondary school catchment areas.

2.8

Forecast data is showing a decrease in primary pupil number forecasts, which suggests that the number of Year R pupils will fall in the period 2019 - 2024, providing between 6 and 11% surplus places at Year R during this period.

2.9

The annual review of the Primary School Place Strategy ensures that there is a watching brief on school numbers and that prompt action can be taken in a timely way, if a future shortfall is identified within the next 5 years.

2.10

A **key priority** is to secure capital funding to address sufficiency of school places and also address the urgent condition issues in the city's schools.

2.11

The condition of many of our schools also remains a concern. The council will continue to use capital maintenance funding to address the most urgent condition works in LA maintained schools and academies will do the same either through their allocation from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) or through bids to the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF).

3 Portsmouth Education Partnership

3.1

The Portsmouth Education Partnership (PEP) brings together Multi Academy Trusts, individual schools and academies, colleges, early years settings, the Regional Schools Commissioner, the University, the Dioceses, the Education Business Partnership and Portsmouth City Council to drive improved attainment and opportunity for all children and young people across the city. The PEP was launched in November 2016.

3.2

88.5% of inspected schools are good or outstanding (as at September 2019), compared to 85% (as at July 2017).

3.3

The Education Strategy for Portsmouth 2017-2020: pulling together, achieving more has been drawn up through the PEP. It explains the actions that are being taken to address together key priorities for the city. Detailed plans are continually being updated, and the strategy sets out a high level summary of strategic objectives and key priorities with cross references and links to other documents and action plans. The full strategy document is available on the Portsmouth Education Partnership website and the summary of the Portsmouth Education Strategy 2017-2020 is at **Appendix C**.

3.4

The Education Strategy comprises ten strategic objectives. This strategic objective links directly to the Primary School Place Strategy:

Invest in school buildings to create additional school places and provide high quality learning environments that meet the needs of all children.

3.5

Key priorities under this Education Strategy objective and relevant to the School Place Strategy are:

- a) Work with LA maintained schools and Multi Academy Trusts to ensure that there are sufficient primary and secondary school places in Portsmouth in order to achieve a minimum surplus of 2%, through a strategy of expansion of existing schools.
- b) Secure capital funding to address sufficiency, condition and suitability issues through the allocation of basic need funding for the DfE, ESFA Priority School Building Programmes and Free School applications where appropriate.

Forecasting Primary School Places

Forecasting methodology

4.1

Pupil forecasts are reviewed on an annual basis by the council and the DfE. The data presented in this document is drawn from the annual review submitted to the DfE in July each year. The forecasts cover a 5 year period up to 2024/25. Forecasting pupil numbers is affected by a wide range of factors such as:

- Birth rate
- Inward and outward migration
- Navy movement
- Cross border changes
- Housing development timeframes and impact, such as Tipner/Milton
- Future Free Schools
- Impact of University Technology College (UTC)

4.2

The methodology and projections use an impressive range of data sources to model conversion ratios to establish the actual Reception Year cohort. The full forecasting methodology is at **Appendix A**.

4.3

Pupil forecasts are based upon Small Area Population Forecasts provided by Hampshire County Council Research and Intelligence group in the early spring to determine the population of 4 year old children. These are modified within the council's Geographical Information System to reflect primary school catchment areas.

4.4

The methodology for forecasting at the primary and secondary aggregate level for Portsmouth is based on a cohort survival method that assumes pupil numbers will roll forward from one year group to the next at the end of each academic year. Year on year changes, which may be influenced by such factors as migration, turbulence, demographic and building changes, are projected forward by using the highest value of the last 5 years. The Council has pupil census data going back to 1996. This model produces forecasts of the usually resident population by age and sex in each Census Output Area in the city and is based on census, birth and child health data and dwelling supply information. This tried and trusted methodology produces accurate forecasts.

National pupil projections

4.5

On an annual basis, the DFE publish national pupil projections for the number of pupils in schools in England by type of school and age group. The projections are based on Office of National Statistics (ONS) national population projections, ONS birth data and school census data.

4.6

The actual census total for all state-funded schools in 2018 was 14,000 lower than the 2018 figure projected in the 2017 pupil projections. The vast majority of this difference is found in secondary schools: Their actual population of 2,849,000, as measured in the 2018 school census is 14,000 lower than previously projected. By 2026, the 2018 model is projecting a secondary school population 53,000 lower than was forecast in the previous model. However, the new projected figure of 3,277,000 in 2026 still forecasts a rise in the secondary school population of 429,000 (15%).

4.7

The only school types to show a higher population in 2018 than had been projected in the 2017 model were state funded special schools (2,000 higher than previously projected) and independent schools (3,000 higher). The difference between the two projection models increases through the projection period, and by 2026 is mostly found at primary and nursery level. This is because most of the difference in the new underlying ONS national population projections is a drop in projected figures at age 0 (birth) which, over the timescale of this projection, feeds into the nursery and primary population. By 2026, the projected nursery and primary total is 151,000 (3.2%) lower than previously forecast. Thus whereas in the previous projections an increase in the nursery and primary population was forecast over the whole projection period, the DFE are now forecasting that, by 2026, the nursery and primary population will be 100,000 lower than it is in 2018.

4.8

Changes in the school age population are largely driven by the birth rate. However, the proportion of the overall population which actually attends school also has an effect, particularly in the early years, since parents can choose whether to send children aged under 5 to school.

4.9

Direct immigration of pupils born outside the UK has a very small effect on the school age population. However, the birth rate, which has a much larger effect, is affected by any increase in the number of children born to non-UK born women (who overall tend to have higher fertility rates).

Portsmouth pupil projections

4.10

In line with the rest of the country, Portsmouth has seen a rising birth rate which peaked in 2012. Since then, the overall number has started to decrease. This is shown in **Table 4** (section 2.5).

4.11

Inward migration has been an important consideration for Portsmouth in terms of pupil places in recent years, particularly as it is difficult to quantify and has occurred over a relatively short timescale. However, since a peak in new arrivals into the city in 2014/15, numbers stabilised and have shown a further decrease this year. With uncertainty regarding Brexit, it is likely that this number will continue to fall.

See table 5

4.12

Appendix D outlines the current pupil forecasts as outlined in the annual return to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Table 5: Portsmouth: New arrivals with English as an Additional Language

Year	Total number of new arrivals
2013 – 14	194
2014 – 15	252
2015 – 16	197
2016 – 17	195
2017 – 18	164
2018 – 19	145

Current numbers and capacity

4.13

In order to meet the demand for school places and ensure the Local Authority meets its statutory duty to provide every resident child with a school place, an additional 1,700 primary school places have been created in Portsmouth through two phases of primary expansion. This has been achieved by working with both LA maintained schools and academies, expanding existing primary schools. This level of investment and the forecast reduction in primary numbers provides between 6 and 11% surplus places at Year R (Reception intake).

4.14

The Government uses an assumption of 2% surplus for both primary and secondary as the basis for basic need funding allocations to Local Authorities. In light of this, the Council uses the aim of a 2% surplus for primary school place planning purposes.

4.15

The surplus places are scattered across the city. The pressure on primary places may be a challenge in some planning areas due to the limited surplus that is available in that location.

4.16

In September 2017, the Council provided a bulge year group of an additional 30 Year R places at Beacon View Primary Academy to meet demand in the King Richard planning area and to maintain a surplus of 1% – 2% across the city.

4.17

With the decrease in birth rate and the decrease in inward migration, combined with the number of pupils attending out of city schools and independent schools, forecast data suggests that the number of Year R pupils will continue to fall until 2023 when housing development impact is forecast and numbers will increase again.

4.18

Year 3 numbers are forecast to peak in 2020/21 leaving 4% surplus places.

4.19

The Council's Planning Department provided data for 50+ potential housing developments across the Local Authority area. From the Planning data, established models are used to estimate pupil yield for each site and therefore the potential impact on the local demand for school places. Pupil yield is based on the type and volume of housing (for example, the number of children who may live in a one-bedroom flat compared to a 5-bedroomed house may be different).

4.20

Where development impact is included in the Small Area Population Forecasts provided by Hampshire County Council Research and Intelligence group, it is reflected in Year R forecasts and then projected forward as these pupils move through year groups.

4.21

Where developments are tentative and formal planning permissions are not in place, potential pupil numbers are not reflected in the pupil place forecasts.

4.22

The council has agreed to fund an increase in the capacity of Arundel Court Primary School providing an additional 15 places per year group from September 2020. The additional classrooms will be provided as part of the government-funded Priority Schools Building Programme re-build project.

4.23

Portsmouth is yet to have any mainstream free schools. Opportunities are restricted by the lack of land availability, although there has been recent interest shown in Portsmouth as a potential location for a future free school. The impact on pupil numbers will need to be considered if a free school opens in Portsmouth.

Review of Future Demand and Capacity

Place Planning Areas

5.1

The primary school pupil numbers forecast in **Appendix D** show that, without further development impact, there are enough primary places at city wide level to provide an adequate number of surplus places for at least the next 4 years.

5.2

Portsmouth is densely populated. The national expectation at primary school age is that children should be able to access a school place within a reasonable distance. The reasonable distance is nationally interpreted as two miles. For any point within the City, a distance of two miles would result in a relatively large number of potential schools. **Appendix F** shows how a two mile radius circle drawn from College Park Infant School, which is central within the City, includes 27 out of 37 primary phase schools. Parents have a broad choice of schools within a small distance and few geographic barriers to navigate.

5.3

The geography of Portsmouth is important for pupil place planning because the lack of permeable boundaries on the east, south and west greatly restricts the potential for migration in and out of the city by pupils. This tight geography and the restrictions to internal movement reduce the relevance of pupil place planning areas and increase the focus on city-wide pupil place planning.

City-wide Place Planning

5.4

Appendix D outlines the comparison of capacity versus demands for school places.

5.5

Based on the pupil forecasts, urgent action is not required to address the sufficiency of school places and there is enough surplus capacity available at both Year R and Year 3 for the next 4 years.

5.6

It should be noted that, without the housing development impact, there would not be a pressure on primary school places in this timeframe, and therefore the assessment of housing impact is a vital factor in pupil forecasting.

5.7

The northern part of the city is on the mainland and has a boundary with Hampshire County Council. Pupil numbers in this area of the city are heavily impacted by cross border pupil movement. At meetings with Hampshire County Council, cross border impact is reviewed to ensure that any changes in pupil numbers are captured and to allow for adequate planning of school places. The discussion considers cross border pupil number flows, cross border development impact, change to school capacity and other known local issues that may impact on cross border pupil numbers.

Table 6: Pupil forecasts for Year R and Year 3

	Estimate				
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Year R					
Number on Roll (Actual and forecast)	2362	2341	2228	2201	2246
Capacity (Admission Limit including proposed changes)	2495	2495	2505	2505	2505
Surplus / (Deficit)	133	154	277	304	259
Year 3					
Number on Roll (Actual and forecast)	2373	2423	2330	2377	2335
Capacity (Admission Limit including proposed changes)	2480	2525	2495	2495	2495
Surplus / (Deficit)	107	102	165	118	160

5.8

Some parents have traditionally placed their children in Hampshire schools. However, forecasts provided by Hampshire County Council indicate that this is likely to reduce in future years. This is due to the rise in Hampshire pupil numbers as a result of the increase in the birth rate and the impact of housing developments in South East Hampshire. Discussions are continuing with Hampshire County Council and the forecasting methodology is regularly reviewed to ensure that any changes in pupil numbers are captured early to allow for adequate planning of school places.

See table 7

5.9

There is only one planning area that currently demonstrates demand for Year R places (Springfield) where the numbers of pupils exceeds the number of places available.

5.10

A high proportion of resident pupils attend the Springfield planning area school. Schools in this area have always been full due to parental demand and the nature of the locality. There is limited opportunity to expand primary provision in this area. However, falling primary numbers across the city will result in capacity in nearby planning areas.

5.11

The strategy for creating additional educational capacity has, to date, been to expand existing primary schools and academies to create additional capacity and a better spread of provision across a number of schools. This has been possible due to the compact size of Portsmouth and there are still schools which have capacity to expand.

5.12

In July 2018, the Education and Skills Funding Agency highlighted Portsmouth as being in the top 20 Local Authorities for the efficient delivery of value for money education capital projects. This supports the assertion that school expansions in Portsmouth offer value for money.

5.13

Consideration is given to determining whether to expand existing schools or seek a new school. Planning must allow sufficient time for feasibility to be established, funding sources to be identified, and capital projects to be undertaken to provide additional accommodation.

Table 7: Percentage of pupils allocated an out of city school

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Reception	2.1%	2.8%	2.4%	2.7%	2.7%
Junior	2.6%	2.6%	2.9%	1.9%	2.9%
Secondary	7.6%	6.7%	9.6%	9.7%	9.0%

5.14

A number of key actions are recommended to prepare for forecasted demand:

- a) Review the progress of forecast housing developments over time, to ensure that forecasting accurately captures likely build out rate and pupil yield from developments. Development impact should be carefully monitored to ensure that both the size/type and completion dates are reflected appropriately in future plans.
- b) The impact of the Tipner regeneration project is being closely monitored, to ensure that any future growth in pupil numbers can be accommodated. A number of solutions are being considered, and a final solution may not be determined for some time.
- c) There is a lead-in time for school expansion projects due to the time required to both develop architectural plans and to undertake the required capital building works. Ideally, a 3-year lead-in time would be used. It is therefore recommended that any feasibility studies should commence at the earliest opportunity to enable funding decisions to be made.

Capital Funding for Primary School Expansion Projects

6.1

Basic Need funding is allocated by the Government on the basis of a comparison of school capacity against forecast mainstream pupil numbers from Year R to Year 11, uplifted to provide a 2% surplus operating margin. Funding is allocated based on the annual returns of pupil numbers which the council makes to the DfE in July each year.

7

Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1

The Council continues to have a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for resident children and is committed to working with schools, academies and Multi-Academy Trusts for the benefit of children and young people in Portsmouth.

7.2

Detailed analysis and forecasting has confirmed that the number of pupils requiring primary schools places is within the current capacity for the next four years. This is based on a range of demographic indicators (see **Section 4**).

7.3

Pressure on capacity could be driven by potential housing developments and the schemes should be closely monitored to assess whether progress is delayed or the scheme has failed to proceed.

7.4

Due to the changes in national population projections since last year, and the slower progress with housing developments, the feasibility studies outlined in the 2018 Strategy have been re-considered.

7.5

The feasibility study at Langstone Infant and Junior schools was completed, and provided an understanding of how Early Years provision could be enhanced, but did not provide a viable option to increase pupil numbers.

7.6

The feasibility study at Moorings Way Infant, Meon Infant and Meon Junior schools is well-advanced and provides an understanding about how the three schools could be re-structured and deliver 4FE at all stages. This change would address the imbalance between capacity at the two Infant schools (totalling 3.5FE) and the Junior school (3FE), and provide an additional 165 places in total. This feasibility study also considered how Early Years provision could be enhanced. This plan could be considered in the future when primary numbers would support the increase.

7.7

The feasibility study at Medina Primary school will not take place, due to the reduction in the forecasts for primary school places. This site could be re-visited in the future when primary numbers would support further expansion projects.

7.8

The feasibility study at Flying Bull Academy will focus on expanding the SEND Inclusion provision on that site, instead of mainstream primary places. This study will take place in the autumn 2019.

7.9

The feasibility study at Stamshaw Junior School is on hold, pending finalisation of the details of the Tipner regeneration project.

7.10

It would not be prudent to invest in primary school expansions when the demand for places does not warrant expansion, as this would have a detrimental impact on the city as a whole. Therefore, taking account of the reduction in demand as indicated by demographic indicators and the slower progress with housing developments, no action is required this year in relation to the sufficiency of primary school places.

7.11

The Primary School Place Strategy is reviewed on an annual basis, alongside the annual pupil forecasting return to the DfE and refreshed pupil forecasts.





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