

LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES**EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: 21 NOVEMBER 2011

REPORT OF: CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS

SUBJECT: SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES

WARDS: ALL

SUMMARY

1. This report outlines the Council's secondary school pupil forecasts and its plans for providing sufficient numbers of high-quality secondary school places over the next decade.

PURPOSE OF REPORT GOING TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2. This report enables the committee to scrutinize the secondary school pupil forecasts and how the Council expects to ensure that there are enough places to meet that forecast demand.

RECOMMENDATION

3. That the Committee notes the forecasts and plans.

DETAILS

4. In December 2010, the Council published an Education 'White Paper', its overarching education strategy, *Choice and diversity: a policy paper for Education and Children's Services*. The strategy, which Cabinet approved on 6 December 2010, outlines plans for key educational priorities, including the provision of sufficient numbers of high-quality secondary school places.

- 4.1 At its meeting on 17 October 2011, the Committee requested that an update be provided for information purposes.

4.2 Current capacity

Despite the 25% increase in live births per year between 2000 and 2010, there has traditionally been, and still is, considerable spare capacity in the secondary school provision within the borough, with, as at 17 October 2011, 209 spare places in Year 7 across the borough.

4.3 **Take-up rate from Year 6 to Year 7**

As can be seen from the chart in **Appendix 1**, which summarizes the forecast demand and plans, the take-up rate from Year 6 of the 34 primary and junior schools in the borough to Year 7 of the eight secondary schools and academies in the borough in 2011 was 82.7% 1,401 out of 1,694. However, that percentage masks the fact that of the 1,401 children who entered Year 7 in the eight schools, only 959 (68%) live within the borough. As there are therefore 442 out-borough children within the current Year 7 cohort, it is the case that there is, in addition to the 209 vacancies in Year 7, a second cushion against in-borough resident demand outstripping supply: a significant proportion of those out-borough children would have been displaced had the demand on the part of in-borough parents been higher.

4.4 **Out-borough children in in-borough schools and academies**

It is a matter of debate as to how large the minimum number of out-borough children would ever be within the Year 7 cohort, but it is estimated that, due to a combination of factors which this report will address in the next few paragraphs, it may decrease to almost as few as 200. The three current academies are all fairly close to the borough boundary and it is reasonable to expect that they would each continue to recruit around a third of their Year 7 intakes from outside the borough; but in the other five schools, which are all situated further from out-borough residential areas, it is anticipated that the total number of out-borough Year 7 starters could, by the end of this decade, shrink as low as 25.

4.5 **The new community secondary school in north Kingston**

As Christ's and Grey Court are already oversubscribed, the forecasts of the in-/out-borough Year 7 starters at both schools are largely dependent upon whether or not the eight-form entry (240 places) community secondary school in north Kingston comes, as planned, to fruition in September 2015. Given, though, that of the out-borough starters (15 and 120 respectively) at the two schools almost all live in north Kingston, it is highly likely that, in a fairly short space of time, parents of primary school children in that area who have long campaigned for a new secondary school will, *en masse*, opt to take up places at the new school on their doorstep, to which the north Kingston primary schools would no doubt be linked (informally at least), rather than send them further afield to Christ's or Grey Court. That would mean that the only Kingston resident children entering Christ's or Grey Court would be those with older siblings at the schools or whose parents would prefer either of the schools to the new north Kingston school.

4.6 **Developments in other neighbouring authorities' areas**

4.6.1 *Hammersmith and Fulham*

- The openings of Hammersmith Academy and West London Free School, both with 120 Year 7 pupils, in September 2011 have further reduced the number of Hammersmith and Fulham children who have entered or will enter Richmond Park Academy. Both schools are heavily oversubscribed.
- A new academy is due to open in north Kensington in September 2012, which is expected to recruit a considerable number of Hammersmith and Fulham children, which, in turn, could further reduce the number of Hammersmith and Fulham children starting in Year 7 at Richmond Park Academy.
- The number of Hammersmith and Fulham children entering Year 7 at Richmond Park Academy has reduced from 15 in 2010/2011 to 10 in 2011/2012 and is expected to decrease further.

4.6.2 *Hounslow*

- In September 2012, the Reach Academy, an all-through primary and secondary free school, has been approved to open in Feltham, with 60 children admitted into its Year 7. This additional provision, and the improvement in standards at Feltham Community College in recent years has resulted in increased recruitment of students to the point that it is now full in Year 7, may well reduce the numbers of children transferring from Crane Park Primary to Twickenham Academy, and from Forge Lane Primary and Oriel Primary to Hampton Academy.
- Most, if not all, of the community secondary schools in Hounslow have become or are set to become academies and in so doing are likely to increase their published admission numbers in order to reflect perceived demand.

4.6.3 *Surrey*

- Each year, a number of Richmond Borough children – mostly in Hampton or Hampton Hill – transfer to schools in Elmbridge or Spelthorne; 37 children in total in 2011: Bishop Wand (13); St Paul's Catholic College (14); Sunbury Manor (1); and Thamesmead (9). Surrey County Council say that there are no planned changes or additions to those schools, although some schools further afield within Elmbridge may be expanded in the medium-term.
- Conversely, the number of Surrey children transferring into schools or academies in Richmond Borough is very low: just five this year: Hampton Academy (2) and Teddington (3 – all siblings).

4.6.4 *Wandsworth*

A secondary free school – Bolingbroke Academy – will open on the site of Bolingbroke Hospital, south Battersea, in September 2012, with 120 Year 7 pupils. This, too, could reduce the number of out-borough pupils who will enter Year 7 at Richmond Park Academy in 2012 and subsequent years.

- Elliott School in Putney was put into ‘special measures’ in 2009 but was deemed to have improved sufficiently by November 2010 to be out again. That improvement is set to be built upon by the school becoming an academy sponsored by ARK, who will also manage Bolingbroke Academy.
- The number of Wandsworth children entering Year 7 at Richmond Park Academy has increased from 34 in 2009/2010 to 57 in 2011/2012, but is expected to decrease as Wandsworth parents become attracted by Bolingbroke and the revived Elliott.

4.7 The three sponsored academies

4.7.1 The table below shows that, for 2012/2013 entry, although the overall application numbers have risen at Hampton and Richmond Park, only 114 first preferences for the three academies have been expressed by in-borough parents, an increase of just six on the comparable 2011/2012 numbers.

School	1st pref.		2nd pref.		3rd pref.		4th pref.		5th pref.		6th pref.		Total	
	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012
Hampton Academy	64	59	45	54	42	46	15	15	15	20	15	13	196	207
Richmond Park Academy	16	35	15	18	20	27	18	23	19	21	15	18	103	142
Twickenham Academy	28	30	27	45	48	37	22	12	17	13	17	14	159	151

In the cases of Hampton and Twickenham, the overall application numbers are not significantly increased from those – 193 and 123 respectively – for 2010/2011 entry; although the comparable increase at Richmond Park, from 58 in 2010, is much greater, albeit from a lower starting-point.

These data should also be seen in the context of the overall in-borough application cohort size, which, due to demographic growth and the economic downturn, has changed in recent years as follows:

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
1,327	1,444	1,510	1,548	1,519	1,554

4.7.2 It therefore appears that, despite the fact that the 2012 application cohort is larger than it has been in the preceding five years, the translation of the academies’ improvements in standards into significantly increased popularity among local residents, and towards oversubscription, has not kept up with the overall in-borough application cohort growth and, although completion of the building work in 2013, may consequently be slower than was envisaged in the assumptions that underscored the Education ‘White Paper’. That means that the three academies’ wishes to reduce their admission numbers – from 210 to 180 at Hampton and Twickenham from 2013

onwards; and from 220 to 180 at Richmond Park from 2014 onwards – in order to accommodate sixth forms (see paragraph 4.15 below) could be managed, as indicated in the chart in Appendix 1, without imperilling the Council’s ability to ensure that there are enough places in local schools for all in-borough children whose parents apply for them. The Government capital funding that the academies have received for their building work was allocated on the basis of the current Year 7 admission numbers. If the academies feel that additional funding would be needed to create suitable accommodation for sixth forms, the Council will, in accordance with the Partnering Agreements it signed with the Learning Schools Trust and the Academies Enterprise Trust, help to make the case to Government.

4.8 Christ’s

The governing body of Christ’s and the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education have expressed a desire for the school to be expanded from four- to five-form entry from 2013 if investment in adequate buildings were available. This proposal, which the Council supports, would make more viable the school’s budgetary position and ability to compete with other schools on a more even playing field. At present, 70 of the 120 places are designated as ‘Foundation’ for practising Christian children and 50 as ‘Open’ for any other children, although in practice the Foundation category has been slightly undersubscribed in recent years, allowing more places for the wider community. If the school expanded to accommodate 150 children per Year 7 intake, the likely intention would be that the places would be split 75:75 between Foundation and Open, but the possibility of a Catholic secondary school being established in the borough could have the effect of the real split becoming 50:100.

4.8 Grey Court

It has been agreed that from 2013 entry onwards, the temporary increase in Grey Court’s admission number between 2010 and 2012 should be reversed down to its normal 200. Again, the forecast demand outlined in the chart Appendix 1 indicates that this could be managed without risking the ability to provide sufficient places on a short- or longer-term basis.

4.9 Orleans Park, Teddington and Waldegrave

The capacity at Orleans Park, Teddington and Waldegrave is likely to remain as at present, i.e. Orleans Park and Waldegrave would admit 200 pupils per year and Teddington would admit 240, although, as per paragraph 4.11, academy status could affect that.

4.10 Linked school policy for Grey Court, Orleans Park and Teddington

4.10.1 At its meeting on 21 September, Richmond upon Thames Admissions Forum considered a report which looked at the history and purpose of the linked schools policy (LSP) and which contained some modelling of what might happen in future years if the LSP were to be removed and 'home to school distance' became the principal oversubscription criterion for the three schools. The Admissions Forum achieved consensus to recommend to the Council that it should consult upon abolishing the LSP for 2013 entry.

4.10.2 The report is attached as an appendix to the separate LSP report to the Committee. Essentially, albeit that it does not *precisely* reflect what may happen, the modelling indicates that if the LSP had not been used for the 2011 entry admissions round, there would have been a net gain for Richmond Borough children of 33 places across the three schools. The Council is therefore consulting upon removing the LSP for 2013 entry.

4.11 Converter academies

The five non-academy secondary schools in the borough have all recently consulted upon converting to academy status and are expected to make decisions one way or the other in the coming months, possibly with a view to converting in April 2012, subject to ratification by the Secretary of State for Education. One consequence of conversion would be that each school would become its own admissions authority; and that status means that each could avail itself of a clause (1.3) in the proposed revised School Admissions Code, to raise its published admissions number (PAN) at any point, as they would "not [be] required to consult on any proposed increase to the PAN in any consultation on their admission arrangements". Whether or not any of the three schools would have the inclination and accommodation to raise their PAN is debatable but the possibility remains that extra places could be provided by this route.

4.12 New secondary school at Clifden Road, Twickenham

4.12.1 The factors considered above, and the forecasts in Appendix 1 would seem to indicate that there is no short-term need for the Clifden Road site in Twickenham to be used for the establishment of a community secondary school, and that, if such a school were to be opened, it would adversely affect the recruitment of children to the three sponsored academies.

4.12.2 The possible establishment by the Diocese of Westminster of a Catholic secondary school in 2013 would release some places at the eight schools, most notably at Christ's, which has traditionally admitted 10-15 Catholic children per year under its 'Foundation' category.

4.12.3 At the time of writing, the outcome is not yet known of the Diocese's Section 10 application to the secretary of State for permission to publish a statutory proposal to establish a Catholic secondary school in the borough. If permission were granted, the Council would undertake full consultation with local residents as to the best use of the Clifden Road site.

4.13 **Free schools**

There are three proposals in development for free schools to be established within the borough in September 2013 and each would include secondary-phase provision. The Secretary of State recently stated that he would like to see free schools established London "in areas such as Kingston, Sutton and Richmond, where there is said to be a shortage of places" and, if all three were to be approved, 150 additional places would be provided. The forecasts in Appendix 1 assume that two of the proposals will be approved and that the schools will be popular with local parents.

4.14 **New community secondary school**

4.14.1 The Education 'White Paper' stated that the Council "will undertake feasibility for one, possibly two, additional secondary schools (including one Roman Catholic) in the borough". Despite the apparently slower progress than anticipated towards oversubscription at the three sponsored academies noted above, it remains the case that the Council's pupil forecasts in Appendix 1 indicate that a new community secondary school may be required from September 2016, although it may be able to manage demand without such a school for several years after that. Opening a community secondary school sooner than it would be absolutely necessary would almost certainly affect the growth in recruitment at Richmond Park Academy and Twickenham Academy. In order to maintain flexibility, the Council is nevertheless working with partners to secure a suitable site and accommodation for a new school.

4.14.2 The size of such a school would be crucial. As was noted with Christ's in paragraph 4.8, a four-form entry school could find it difficult to compete with larger schools as its budget would be much smaller. Nevertheless, there would be a risk that a five-form (or larger) school would constitute an over-provision of places.

4.15 **Sixth forms**

The Council outlined in the Education 'White Paper' its ambition for sixth forms to be opened in all eight secondary schools and academies and, subject to the approval of statutory proposals, it is likely that this will be achieved by September 2013 for seven of the eight, with Richmond Park Academy following suit a year later. It is possible that the establishment of successful sixth forms will prove popular not just in relation to recruitment to Year 12 but to Year 7 also, i.e. that the

schools may attract some children whose parents would otherwise have opted for private schools; however, it is difficult to hypothesize, and then factor into the forecasts, the extent to which that may happen.

4.16 **Private schools**

4.16.1 Two new private schools partially or entirely covering the secondary-phase year have opened in the borough in the last two years: The Falcons Preparatory School opened in Richmond in September 2011, and St James' Boys' School's move from Pope's Villa in Twickenham to Ashford freed up that site for the establishment in September 2011 of a co-educational, selective independent day school, Radnor House.

4.16.2 It is not known if there are any other proposed private schools in the borough, but in all probability more will open in the years to come.

4.17 **Summary**

4.17.1 It is probable that the increased demand in the primary sector will not lead to capacity being exceeded until beyond 2016 at the earliest, if at all. However, the relatively small amount of spare capacity that will be available means that a new community secondary school may be needed

4.17.2 The pupil forecasts in **Appendix 2** are predicated on recruitment to the three sponsored academies increasing more rapidly than in the likely scenario outlined in Appendix 1, but even if those forecasts turn out to be more accurate it would still be the case that a new community secondary school would not be required until 2016.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 In accordance with the requirement of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, a cash limit will be set for each school place planning project to ensure focussed management of costs. This will include such items as: professional fees; surveys; internal fees; information and communication technology; fixed furniture and equipment, transition costs; external works; building costs and all other expenditure associated with each particular school project.

5.2 Costs associated with the proposals covered within this report are outlined within a separate report that was considered by Finance and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 November 2011.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS/CONSIDERATIONS

6. This report addresses the Council's key educational priorities.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7. The Council has a duty under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to secure that sufficient school places are available within its area. School expansions and the establishment of new schools and sixth forms are subject to statutory consultation, as set out in Department for Education guidance.

EQUALITY IMPACT/CONSIDERATIONS

8. The provision of additional school places will meet the local authority's statutory duty and the wishes of residents who would like their children to be educated in schools in Richmond upon Thames. An Equalities Impact Needs Assessment (EINA) was undertaken in December 2007 on the local authority's school place planning policy and procedures. This EINA was updated in December 2009.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

- 9.1 As a design tool and a method of measurement, the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) will be used to determine the exact level of environmental performance of new school buildings.
- 9.2 Providing additional local school places enables children to access school places within a reasonable distance from their homes, rather than having to travel by car or bus to schools much further afield.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND LINKS

10.
 - [Education White Paper: Provision of High Quality Places in Education, Report of the Cabinet Member for Schools, 6 December 2010.](#)
 - ['Choice and diversity: a policy paper for Education and Children's Services'.](#)
 - [Proposed revised School Admissions Code.](#)

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