

Wokingham Borough Secondary (11 to 16) School Places Strategy



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Content

Content	1
Scope.....	1
Strategy Development Process.....	1
Public engagement and response analysis	2
Future need modelling.....	2
Insights and Trends: Borough Wide.....	2
Local Area analysis	5
Place Needs 2021-29.....	6
Local Plan Update (LPU) & longer term needs	7
Addressing need.....	7
Next Steps	8

Scope

This strategy is intended to:

- Plan to address sufficiency of statutory school places (Years 7 – 11, ages 11-16)
- Model the effects of changing demographics and growth, now and future years, and forecasting impact on place sufficiency
- Setting out options for meeting demand pressures

The Post-16 phase will be the subject of a separate strategy.

Strategy Development Process

The strategy is based on analysis of Wokingham held data, including roll and housing growth data, national population projections, nationally collected schools' data, and engagement with the public and school.

School rolls reflect births to borough residents, migration (including housing led growth) into and out of the borough, cross border movement (children in one borough attending a school in another), the relative popularity of schools and the number of children educated at home or in the independent sector. School roll modelling uses a limited data set but can be validated or amended in the light of contextual information.

The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that the Borough's statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient places is met, and that where possible the places are easily accessible to children and young people. Plans support the provision of places in good or excellent schools, to promote continued educational improvement.

The strategy has been written with the assistance of parent and schools.

Public engagement and response analysis

The initial data analysis was shared with the public in 2022. There were 800 responses, and key messages included:

- Support for additional places in Twyford (at Piggott) and Wokingham Town / Evendons area
- Support for Earley and Shinfield growth
- Concerns around analysis of the implications of the growth in homes for education infrastructure needs.

Future need modelling

The core roll projection is roll led and uses recent cohort (children born in one academic year) transfer and progression data to project future roll numbers. Cross border movement is captured from the recent proportion of the Year 7 intake not formerly on the roll of a Wokingham primary school. This model indirectly captures the impact of local house building, other migration and cross border movement. Where underlying factors are expected to change (e.g., when housing development ends in an area) contextual information (ONS population projections, future housebuilding rates, cross border movement) has also informed the analysis.

Longer term projections (to the end of the decade and beyond) are population projection led and are reliant on the 2018 base Office for National Statistics Wokingham population projection, supplemented by Wokingham held housing data. This indicates declining need in the early 2030s.

The second key element in the analysis is the number of places available. As academies, most Wokingham secondary schools are not required to maintain the national Net Capacity measure and the Funding Agreements (which record places) have not been updated as building projects have been completed. Moreover, while schools must set admission numbers for Year 7, they are not bound to this number for older age groups.

The key message from this is that future need and capacity analysis is necessary, but the cumulative impacts of various models and estimates make it hard to establish a reliable single definitive view of future demand/requirements.

Wokingham: North and South

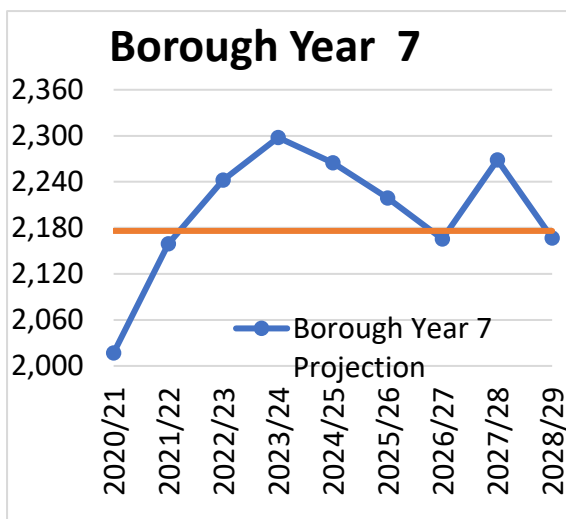
In accordance with DfE requirements, place planning is based on two areas:

The North: Maiden Erlegh, Bulmershe, Waingels, Piggott schools (therefore Earley, Woodley, and parishes to north of A329M)

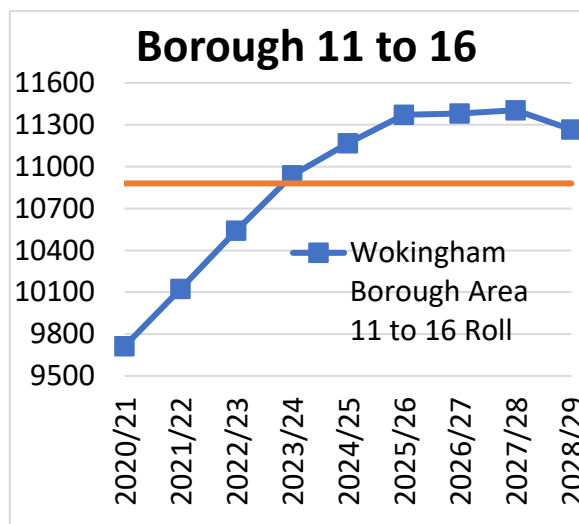
The South: Oakbank, Bohunt, St. Crispins, Holt, Emmbrook, Forest Schools (therefore parishes to the south of A329M, and M4, plus Hurst (shared with the north)).

Insights and Trends: Borough Wide

The Borough projections show that the current growth in Year 7 numbers will cease in 2023/24 (peaking at 2,300 Year 7 children or circa 150 places above 2021/22 Year 7 numbers) dropping back to current levels by 2028/29. Overall numbers will reach a plateau of just over 11,300 places before dropping back later in the decade.



Graph1: Borough Year 7 projection



Graph 2: Borough 11 to 16 capacity

Current pressures

Outside of the Year 7 issue, the key concerns are that cohort sizes are increasing in size as they age (reflecting migration into the borough), there are too few places for girls in a number of year groups, and a risk of an absolute shortfall in places for 21-22 Year 7 cohort. The table below shows the low number of available places in both Year 7 and Year 9.

	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11
Potential places	2176	2176	2176	2176	2176
October 021 roll	2148	2046	2082	1975	1875
Variance	28	130	94	201	301
% of places	1%	6%	4%	9%	14%

Table 1: Years 7 – 11 places and rolls, October 2021

Contextual factors

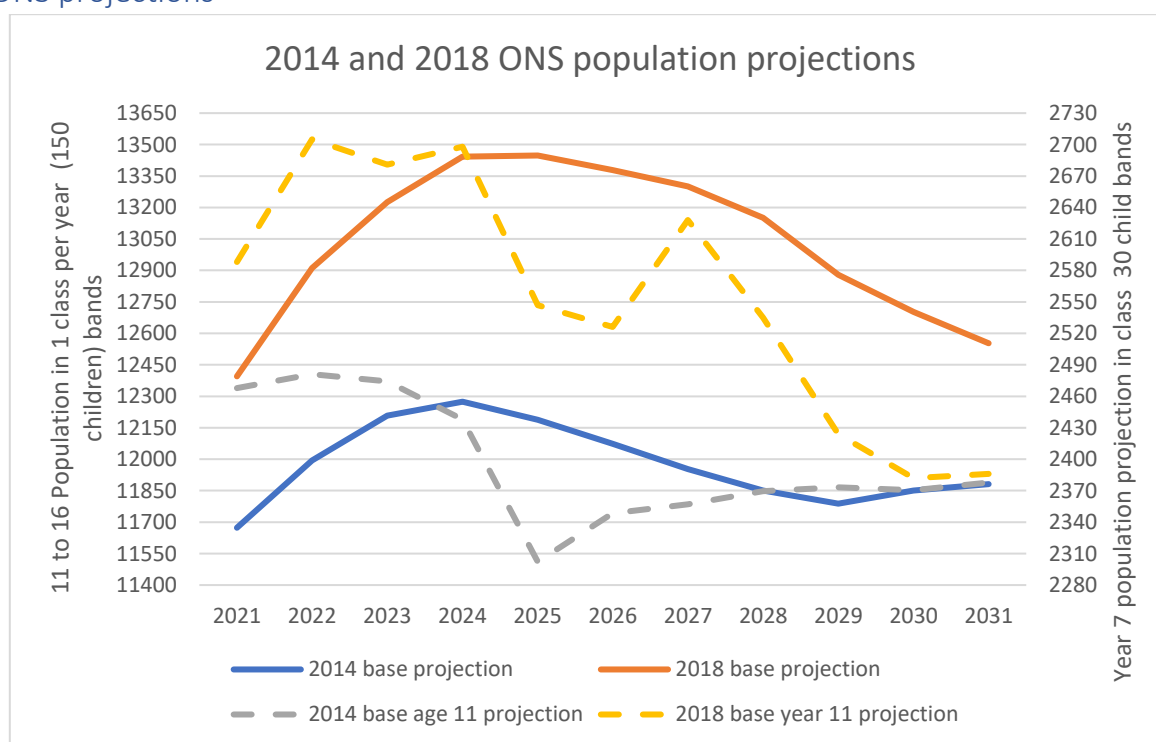
The table below sets out a summary of a number of contextual factors, with ONS population projections and local factors set out separately. These are important, but there was no indication that these factors pointed to a need to revise the analysis derived from the roll projection.

Contextual Factor	Implications
Wokingham Births	Rising numbers until 2012/13, requiring additional Reception places. Secondary roll projections are expected to peak (largely based on birth-rate trends) in 2023-4

Contextual Factor	Implications
Migration	Significant national migration in the period 2015-20, with 700+ children under 10 moving into the Borough in 2020, 300 more than in 2015 The impacts of the new points-based immigration system are not yet known, (reflecting the presumably temporary impact of Covid) but international migration is evident in mid-year intakes into Borough schools.
Housing-led migration	Impacts of Housing developments as set out in the Wokingham Local Plan, with high rates of housebuilding in the south of the borough expected to be maintained into the future throughout the strategy period.
Cross-border movement	Historically balanced (15% coming from out of Borough, 16% Wokingham children educated out of Borough), but shifting slightly. Mainly between Reading and Bracknell.

Table 2: Contextual factors that are relevant to roll projections

ONS projections



Graph 3 ONS 2014 and 2018 Wokingham Borough Base Projections

The most recent population projection is 2018 based (these figures are not directly comparable to roll figures as the projection year runs 1st July to end June and the school year runs 1st September to end August and they include children educated at home and in independent schools). The population for the whole 11 to 16 school age group is projected to peak in the years 2024 to 2025 (at just under 13,500 children), dropping back to slightly above the 2021 level by 2031. The age group

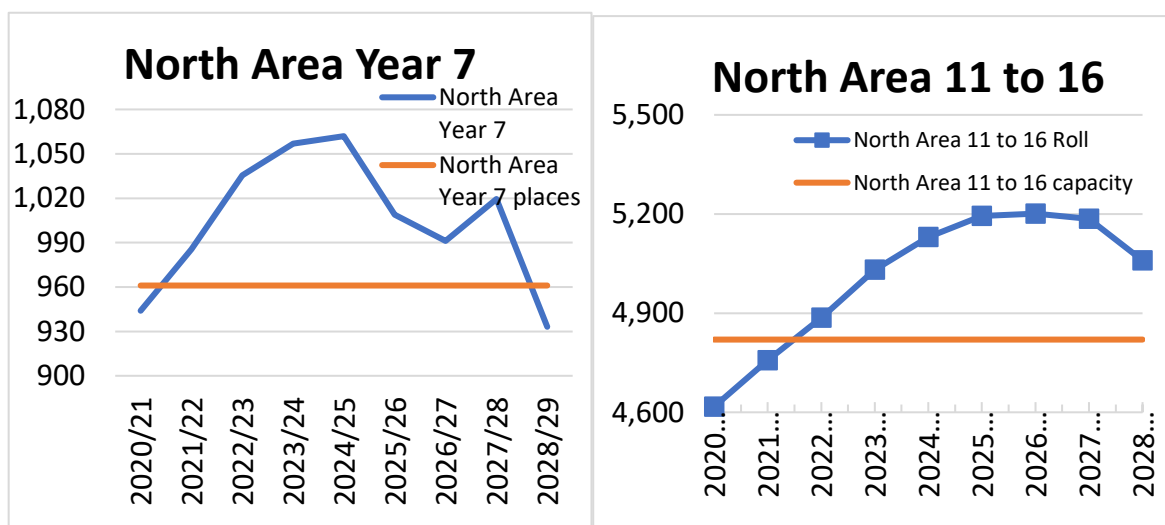
corresponding to Year 7 is projected to start at 2,600 children, to reach a peak over the period 2022 to 2024 (circa 2,700 children), dropping back to 2,400 children by the end of the decade.

The pattern of change is comparable though, with that shown in the Wokingham roll projections, although these indicate a less sharp decline in Year 7 numbers and no plateau in 11 to 16 rolls, which would be consistent with the likely impacts of recent high rates of home construction.

Local Area analysis

North Area trends

The north area projections show a close affinity to the borough population projection, with clear peaks and declining roll numbers later in the period. The local need for Year 7 places significantly exceeds local capacity, with a projected 90 place “gap”.



Graph 4: North area Year 7 projection

Graph 5: North area 11 to 16 projection

North area specific challenges included that in south Twyford rising demand has meant that families were unable to secure Year 7 places in 2021 at the only school within walking distance (the Piggott School) and that demand is also increasing in the Earley and Woodley areas (noting that some respondents have expressed concern about the Earley area).

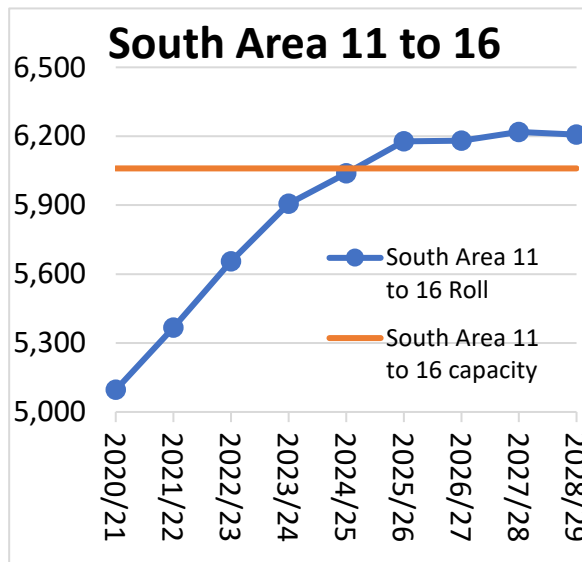
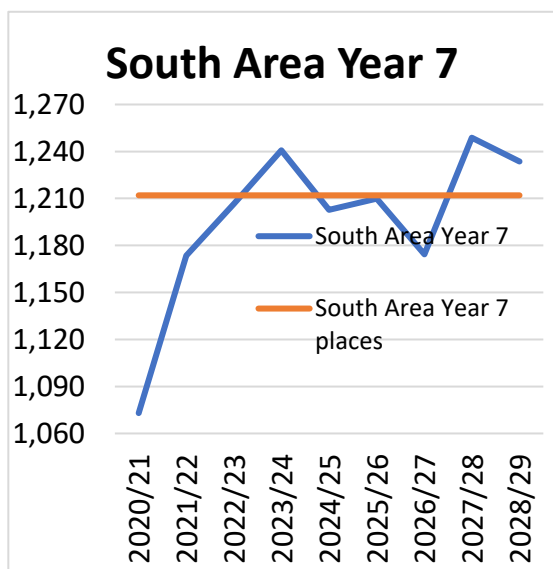
South area trends

The need for Year 7 places in the South area is projected to increase sharply until 2023/24. Thereafter demand fluctuates around the current number of available Year 7 places (with a range of + / - 40 places). Looking at 11 to 16 need and place availability in this area, projected need is expected to increase towards capacity by 2028/29.

In looking at the areas it is noted that the sustained (if fluctuating) high demand for Year 7 places in the area is understood to reflect the number of new homes being built in the area. The current expectations are:

- Development will be seen into the next decade in and around the Wokingham Town and Winnersh area (particularly in the South Wokingham SDL in Wokingham Without Parish), Shinfield and Arborfield Green areas (particularly in Finchampstead Parish).
- Development around other rural communities is expected to be at a much-reduced level.

This area includes the borough’s two co-educational schools. The Holt School (for girls) has been oversubscribed in recent years, while the Forest School (for boys) has attracted fewer preferences. The need to ensure that the council could meet its duty to provide sufficient places and ensure a gender balanced allocation in 2021/22 led to additional capacity being agreed in co-educational schools. It is expected that additional capacity will be required in 2022/23 too.



Graph 6: North Area Year 7

Graph 7: North Area 11 to 16

Place Needs 2021-29

The table below shows the changing number of places required for both Year 7 and Years 11 to 16 up until 2028/29. The 11 to 16 element includes the implicit impact of the potential necessity to agree additional places to ensure gender balanced allocations.

	2021 /22	2022 /23	2023 /24	2024 /25	2025 /26	2026 /27	2027 /28	2028 /29
Year 7 places	2,176	2,176	2,176	2,176	2,176	2,176	2,176	2,176
Year 7 projection	2,159	2,242	2,298	2,265	2,219	2,166	2,268	2,167
Year 7 additional capacity requirement	90	75						
Total Need	2,249	2,242	2,298	2,265	2,219	2,166	2,268	2,167
Year 7 Need Versus Places	-73	-141	-122	-89	-43	10	-92	9
11 to 16 places	10,865	10,865	10,865	10,865	10,865	10,865	10,865	10,865
11 to 16 projections	10,124	10,542	10,938	11,169	11,372	11,382	11,404	11,267

11 to 16 additional capacity requirements	390	225	150	75	0	0	0	0
Total Need	10,514	10,767	11,088	11,244	11,372	11,382	11,404	11,267
11 to 16 Need Versus Places	351	98	-223	-379	-507	-517	-539	-402

Table 3 additional capacity need to 2028/29

Local Plan Update (LPU) & longer-term needs

The ONS 2018 base population projection, shows the 11 to 16 child population declining from the late 2020s, before stabilising in the mid-2030s. However, recent annual housebuilding numbers point to the population increasing at a higher rate than projected, and it is prudent to plan to address this additional need should it arise. New housing will be largely in the south of the borough, as northern areas are either largely built out or protected by Green Belt status. This will inevitably mean that there will be a potential mismatch between school provision and the Wokingham population. Currently Shinfield Parish has primary schools admitting 210 pupils and a secondary school admitting only 112 pupils. The largest LPU site under consideration, the Hall Farm site between Sindlesham and Shinfield, is expected to include a designated secondary school site, and this could mitigate the risks of there being too few places or too few readily accessible places.

Addressing need

Three key approaches

Three approaches to the creation of additional capacity have been identified:

1. Utilising surplus places in older age groups

Wokingham Schools report there is limited ability to offer additional capacity in schools from 2022 onwards, and none without undertakings to provide significant investment for future years. This reflects a number of factors, the most significant of which (for 2022 allocations) is that capacity for growth was used to make provision to ensure girls were offered places in 2021/22. It is though, potentially a partial solution to meet 2022 pressures.

2. Expanding existing schools (most deliverable option for next 5 years)

Expansion is dependent on agreement with school Trusts. A number of schools have increased their rolls in recent years and not all Trusts wish to grow further. Expansion is also dependent on securing planning consent for schemes.

Resource limitations mean that the extent of the building works required to secure a satisfactory expansion and the time required to execute schemes may limit the Council's ability to offer additional places at some schools. If additional works (over and above those required to create classrooms for the additional pupils) are required it may be necessary to focus works on a limited number of schools, to ensure the programme can be delivered within available resources.

3. Opening new schools

This would require significant site and capital investment. Sites within established residential areas are likely to be unsuitable; most likely a new site would be acquired through the master planning

process for a new residential community. Linking to housing development could enable a new school (probably in the 2030s), subject to need. This might still be required, though, at an earlier date, if insufficient capacity can be agreed through school partnerships.

Of these options, only two and three are credible. Option 2 is preferred because it is deliverable, is likely to be less costly than option 3, and given that both Year 7 and 11 to 16 rolls are expected to be reducing towards the end of the projection period, is less likely to leave the borough with a long-term legacy of surplus capacity.

Actions Relating to Y7 sufficiency

The council has engaged with all secondary schools to understand their ability and willingness to provide additional places. Five schools responded positively, and out of these it is currently proposed to proceed with proposals at three schools. These proposals are intended to provide immediate capacity and to address some long-standing issues at schools. The selection takes account of a number of factors, including:

- the degree of certainty that additional capacity would serve the borough,
- the ability of schools to meet needs in their local community or in adjoining areas,
- the future value of any investment and
- the degree of certainty that suitable proposals can be agreed and delivered for September 2022.

School specific plans

- **St Crispin's School:** which has planning consent for a sixth form extension, sits on the edge of the South Wokingham SDL area and where additional places are expected to benefit families living to the south-west of the school site.
- **The Emmbrook School:** which has a central location, near to areas of ongoing housing development and is accessible from Earley, Woodley and Wokingham Town.
- **The Piggott School:** which helps address need in the north of the borough and ensures that south Twyford families can walk to school.

Additional capacity may be required within the next decade, but it is anticipated this will be delivered in conjunction with other schemes.

Next Steps

- Confirm resources required for 2023-7 to support permanent expansions and build into MTFP
- Work collaboratively with the expanding schools to meet the Sept 2023 deadline
- Proceed to stage 2 of Secondary Strategy (post-16 provision)