

## **Proposed School Place Supply Strategy**

### **Introduction**

This strategy sets out the context, approach and proposed approach to ensure sufficiency of school places in Croydon. Currently the demand for additional school places is being felt in the primary educational phase, mainly in the South West of the borough. An increase in demand is expected to be felt in other areas, such as, Central and South due to planned housing developments. Over the next - 5 years demand will transfer to secondary schools.

### **Context**

Croydon's population is growing. The borough population recorded in Census 2001 was 330,587 and in the 2011 Census it had increased to 363,378 (9.9%). Based on ONS mid-year estimates for 2017, Croydon is home to 384,837 people and this is expected to increase to just under 500,000 by 2050.

Croydon has the largest population of 0-18 year olds in London at 97,200 residents (mid 2014 population estimate), which makes up 25.8% of the total population of Croydon. The number of residents aged 0-18 years will increase by approximately 8,200 residents by 2021. The Spring 2016 School Census showed there was a total of 56,565 pupils attending state funded schools in Croydon. The latest ONS Mid-year estimate (MYE) indicates that 1 in 4 residents (24.6%) is aged between 0-17 years in Croydon. This is a higher percentage than both across London and nationally.

Population is significantly denser in wards in the north of the borough, with a fifth of all Croydon residents living in just four northern wards.

Croydon has the highest number of looked after children of any London borough due to the high numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) looked after by the borough. As at March 2019 there were 272 UASC looked after children and 571 local looked after children in Croydon.

Croydon remains one of the most affordable areas to live in London both to buy and to rent. Croydon has the largest borough housing stock in London but its social housing stock is smaller than many other London boroughs. Social housing in Croydon is mainly concentrated in the north and the eastern edge of the borough

### **Births**

The number of live births in Croydon rose dramatically from just over 5,200 a year in 2009 to around 5,900 in 2012. Despite a drop to 5,600 in 2013, the annual birth numbers gradually rose each year, from 2013-2016. The latest figure for 2017 has seen a reduction to a similar level as 2011 at 5,761. Not all babies born within the borough will require a primary place 5 years later, but a significant percentage will. As such, birth data provides a key component in patterns of demand for school place.

### **Migration**

The international inflows into Croydon continue to exceed the international outflows and this results in more migrants from outside the UK. For 2016, the ONS has estimated that around 11% of the Croydon population is made up of members from

the EU and about 8% come from the rest of the World. The increase in international inflows in Croydon could be due to Croydon being home to a Borders Agency (Home Office) which would encourage more migrants to the borough.  
(*Croydon Observatory*)

### School Admissions

Local authorities coordinate the admissions process at entry point, and they also have the responsibility for ensuring that there are adequate school places in their areas. For all other admissions outside of the normal admissions round, places will be offered by the admission authority for each school, which may be either the local authority or the school's governing body. Local authorities are the admission authority for community and voluntary-controlled schools. Free schools and academies are their own admission authorities.

If a school is under-subscribed, then it must accept all of its applicants. If it is over-subscribed then its admission authority must consider the applicants against its published over-subscription criteria.

The School Admissions Code 2014 is used to ensure that all school places for maintained schools (excluding maintained special schools) and Academies are allocated and offered in an open and fair way. Admission authorities and local authorities must also comply with the regulations and legislation set out in the Appendix to this Code.

Openness and fairness are applicable to both process and outcomes of applications. The process of applying for school places need to be transparent, consistent and impartial, and decisions made on grounds that are clear and all children are treated equally.

The current system is based on the principle of parental preference and parents will naturally chose what they perceive as the best school for their child. This tends to result in popular schools being oversubscribed and less popular schools being undersubscribed. Parents can choose up to six schools and name them in order of preference. Schools are required to have a published admission number (PAN), that is, the amount of places they can offer each year, so not all preferences can be met.

### Criteria for additional school places

The following criteria is normally used to determine the provision of additional places: location of need; educational capacity, likelihood of school acceptance (for currently operating school sites); cost; site capacity, building capacity and compliance; planning considerations and deliverability of building project.

In order to identify the schools that could be expanded, an analysis will be carried out of all of the borough's primary schools in areas where there is a projected increase in demand. Some schools will be ruled out on the basis that the site does not have the physical capacity for expansion, or because they have already expanded. Informal discussions are taking place with the governors and/or head teachers, of relevant schools.

### School Place Supply Strategy

For the primary educational phase, Croydon has six educational planning areas –

North West, East, Central, South East, South, South West, and two for the secondary phase. Each area has its own distinct demographic profile and match between demand for and the supply of places varies across planning areas.

Demand for school places is greatest in Central, South and South West of the borough. There is a higher than expected increase in demand for school places in the South West due to pupil yield from the Cane Hill housing development. Croydon currently has a housing target allocated of 1645 new homes a year as published in Croydon's Local Plan 2018. The Local Plan is currently under review to take account of the emerging New London Plan. The proposed housing target allocated to Croydon is 2949 new homes a year between 2019-2029. The location of these houses will shape the pattern of future supply of school places.

To ensure sufficiency of school places, for the 2019/20 academic year, an additional 30 reception places will be provided in the South West through an internal bulge class at Smitham Primary School. There are no firm plans to create additional places for the next two years, however various options are being explored. The council will continue to monitor demand on a regular basis to ensure supply matches demand.

An additional 180 Year 7 places will be provided in 2020/21 through a new free school – Ark Blake Academy. In 2021/22 an existing free school is proposed to be expanded by 2FE (60 Year 7 places) – Coombe Wood School.

Pupil projections indicate that although demand for school places is likely to grow, the pace of growth will not outstrip supply at borough level in the secondary phase for the next 3 years.

### **Proposed supply strategy for the next 3 academic years**

#### **Primary**

<b>Planning Area</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
North	No planned project	No planned project	No planned project
East	No planned project	No planned project	No planned project
Central	Under review	Under review	Under review
South East	Under review	Under review	Under review
South	Under review	Under review	Under review
South West	1FE (30 Reception places) bulge class – Smitham Primary School	Under review	Under review

**Secondary**

<b>Planning Area</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
North	No planned project	New school: 6FE (180 Year 7 places) new school – Ark Blake Academy	No planned project
South	No planned project	Under review	Existing school: 2FE (60 Year 7 places) permanent expansion – Coombe Wood School (Free School)