

London Borough of Brent
School Place Planning Strategy

2024 – 2028

1st Refresh – November 2024

*Working in partnership with schools in Brent to ensure
the sustainability and sufficiency of school places*



Brent

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School Place Planning Strategy 2024 – 2028
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1. Introduction

Brent Council is focused on equipping Brent children and young people for the future. The Borough Plan 2023 – 2027 sets out the Council’s priority to support young people to achieve the best start in life and receive the support they need when they need it. Working with schools and partners we will make sure access to education is fair and equal, and our children and young people receive a quality education which develops their skills and enables them to realise their aspirations.

Brent Council holds the statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places for Brent children (Education Act 1996, Section 14). This strategy sets out how Brent will deliver sufficient school places in the context of these statutory duties, ensuring school place planning delivers the best quality of education provision and achievement of the best outcomes for Brent children.

The Brent School Place Planning Strategy 2024-28 sets out the Council’s priorities and the principles that underpin the Council’s approach to school organisation. The focus is to ensure there is sufficient capacity to meet demand for all pupils who require a place, while also maintaining the sustainability of provision where schools may be experiencing falling demand. For the purposes of school place planning, the borough is split into six primary and three secondary school planning areas. This strategy provides the likely demand in each planning area, alongside details about the measures available or necessary to support areas experiencing falling demand or under pressure for more places.

The strategy was first published in October 2023 and will receive an annual refresh update each autumn term until the end of 2027. This is to ensure any new factors that impact on pupil forecasts are considered and refine the Council’s understanding of future need. This edition is the first refresh, dated November 2024 and highlights a deeper focus on Special Education Needs and Alternative Provision. A new five-year strategy will be published in autumn 2028.

1.1 The Brent Context

Brent is one of the most culturally diverse areas in England. The dynamic mix of communities continues to enrich and inform the social, economic and cultural make-up of the borough. The largest defined ethnic groups of statutory school in Brent age are: Asian Indian (18.9%), White British (8.8%), White Eastern European (7.2%), Black Somali (6.1%), Black Caribbean (4.7%), Asian Pakistani (3.5%) and Afghan (3%). Undefined ethnic groups include Other – Any Other (6%), Asian – Other Asian (4.5%) and White – White Other (3.3%) (Source: January 2024 School Census).

In addition to new arrivals, socio-economic pressures placed on many of Brent’s families combined with a housing stock which relies heavily on privately rented accommodation, contribute to relatively high levels of pupil turnover in many of our schools. The proportion of Brent pupils in primary and secondary schools classed as disadvantaged is 24% (2023/24), below the national figure of 25% and the London average of 27% (based on pupil premium allocations). The number of disadvantaged pupils in Brent is considered to be under reported. A cross Council working group has been focused on the auto enrolment of primary and

secondary aged Brent residents attending Brent schools who are eligible for Free School Meals but are not accessing this support. This is expected to result in an increase in pupils classed as disadvantaged.

1.2 School Effectiveness

Over the last six years, Brent's self-improving system has become firmly embedded in the borough, with a shared responsibility for school effectiveness and improvement between the Local Authority and schools.

There are 89 state schools in Brent. This includes 4 Nursery Schools, 2 all-through schools, 60 primary schools, 14 secondary schools, 6 special schools, 2 Pupil Referral Units and 1 Alternative Provision School.

The quality of education provision in the borough is high. At the end of the 2023-24 academic year, Ofsted had judged the overall effectiveness of 95.3% of Brent schools as good or outstanding. This put Brent 5.6% percentage points above the national average of 89.7% and 0.8% percentage points slightly below the London average of 96.1%. All maintained nurseries, pupil referral units and secondary schools including all-through schools have been judged good or outstanding. Three of the borough's five special schools are judged as outstanding.

In 2023, Brent's Strategic School Effectiveness Partnership Board approved a revised 'Strategic Framework for School Effectiveness in Brent 2023-2027'. The Framework sets the following priorities which will be supported by the delivery of this Place Planning Strategy:

- Sustaining Ofsted 'good' and 'outstanding' judgements for all schools
- Raising the attainment of vulnerable children and priority groups to address disproportionate educational outcomes
- Supporting pupil wellbeing and mental health to support educational achievement
- Ensuring that school governance meets national quality expectations, and that governing boards are equipped to challenge school leaders to address the underperformance of groups in their schools
- Building leadership capacity across the borough including headteacher succession planning

2. Background Summary

The Education Act 1996 requires that local authorities shall secure sufficient school places to provide primary and secondary education in their area. In exercising this duty, local authorities should have a view to securing diversity in the provision of schools and increasing opportunities for parental choice.

Brent Council has overarching responsibilities for school admissions in the borough, co-ordinating admissions at Reception, Year 3 (transition from infant to junior school) and at secondary transfer in Year 7. This is as well as processing in-year admissions and ensuring a school place is offered for any child not already on roll at a suitable school.

In addition to securing school places for pupils aged five to 16, Brent Council has related statutory responsibilities in relation to:

- **Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)** where the Council has to make suitable provision to meet their needs
- **Early years provision**, where the Council has responsibility for childcare sufficiency and for children aged nine months to statutory school age
- **Post-16 education and training** where the Council leads the local 16 to 19 partnership and takes overall responsibility for the sufficiency and suitability of provision, so all young people can stay in education or training until at least their 18th birthday.

Brent Council works with schools and multi-academy trusts to deliver its statutory duties, as well as local trusts and Dioceses and the Department for Education Regional Director where this involves academies and free schools.

Planning for places for children in Brent falls under these five separate strands.

- Childcare and early years provision
- Mainstream primary school provision
- Mainstream secondary school provision
- Post-16 provision
- SEND places and Alternative Provision

2.1 Childcare and Early Years Provision

Alongside the statutory duty to provide school places, Brent Council has a duty to secure sufficient childcare and early education. Existing entitlements for parents and carers include 15 hours of free early education children 9+ months in working families, two-year-olds in low/no-income households or who are vulnerable and all 3 and 4-year-olds, and 30 hours for 3 and 4-year-olds from working families.

In March 2023 the government announced an expansion of these entitlements to include 15 hours free early education for children aged 9 months upwards from September 2024, with all children aged 9 months upwards from working families able to access 30 hours of free early education by September 2025. This was a significant change for the sector which has adapted, and many providers have already started delivering these new entitlements.

Since September 2017, the Council has administered the free entitlement for schools and private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers. This enables a full overview of early years provision, monitoring the take up both at ward level and across the borough. Detailed sufficiency monitoring takes place each autumn in order to achieve a comprehensive picture of demand and availability of places for the new entitlements and identify where demand may outstrip supply. This exercise informs future sufficiency activity to target issues and gaps in provision.

The childcare sector is diverse within the borough, operating in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sectors, as well as through maintained provision. Provision for children before they reach statutory school age can include self-employed childminders operating from home, preschool play groups (often run by voluntary management committees), day nurseries (mainly privately run) and school-based provision. Childcare which supports school-age children (often known as 'out of school' or 'wraparound' childcare), could be offered by childminders, voluntary or private groups, and schools. In Brent, this mixed economy of 0-5 childcare provision currently sees 59% of free entitlement places delivered by the PVI sector and 41% by the maintained sector.

2.2 Demand for Primary Places

Following consistent growth in the need for primary school places in Brent from 2006-2015, demand for primary school places across the Borough peaked in 2017 and has been declining since then. The latest Greater London Authority (GLA) projections indicate demand will continue to fall until at least 2029 where it will reach a level last seen in 2013. Longer term forecasts suggest that demand will rise again after this point, but for the purposes of this strategy primary projections are provided up to 2029. This is because projections are less reliable after this time due to uncertainty over future birth rates.

The fall in demand is a result of a number of factors including lower birth rates across the whole of London, the impacts of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic, which led to some migration away from the area, and more recently the cost of living crisis where families are finding they are unable to afford to move into the borough or remain living in the area.

Projections take into account growth in demand as a result of new housing developments in the borough and those just outside the borough border. Brent's housing target as set by the London Plan requires the delivery of 23,250 new homes by 2028/29. This is equivalent to one new home being built for every five that currently exist. Growth areas where new housing is focused are expected to increase demand for local schools.

While projections indicate overall falling primary demand across the borough with a high number of spare places as a result (around 20%), distribution of demand is not equal across the 6 primary school planning areas. Some areas of the borough may still see demand exceeding availability of places, whilst others have low demand at the same time. The local authority will continue to support individual schools and groups of schools in managing the impacts of reduced pupil numbers.

2.3 Demand for Secondary Places

Demand for places in Year 7 has been increasing steadily since 2013. This is in response to increased numbers that have been coming through the primary phase and following through into the secondary phase. The local authority has responded to this growth in demand by overseeing expansions in secondary schools, and the North Brent School has also added new capacity to the secondary estate. It is expected this growth will now stabilise.

Secondary demand is also affected by inward migration to the borough, population mobility levels and parental choice. The latter is supported by the availability of free school transport for secondary aged children in London. Due to Brent's proximity to other boroughs, parents have a choice to send their children to secondary schools in Brent or further away. Brent engages with neighbouring boroughs to understand their planning assumptions about cross-border movement, which will impact on demand for places in Brent. Where and where neighbouring boroughs face increased demand for secondary school places, Brent parents will find it increasingly difficult to access places in out-of-borough secondary schools.

In 2024 825 out-of-borough offers were made to Brent residents, whereas 709 offers at Brent schools were made to out-of-borough residents (net -116). While Brent remains a net-exporter of secondary pupils, this is the smallest percentage of offers made to out-of-borough schools (25.1%) and the smallest net difference recorded over the past twelve years. This indicates more parents are recognising the quality of Brent secondary educational provision. Table 1 shows the number of Year 7 children living in each secondary planning area by the local authority of the school they were offered on national offer day in 2024.

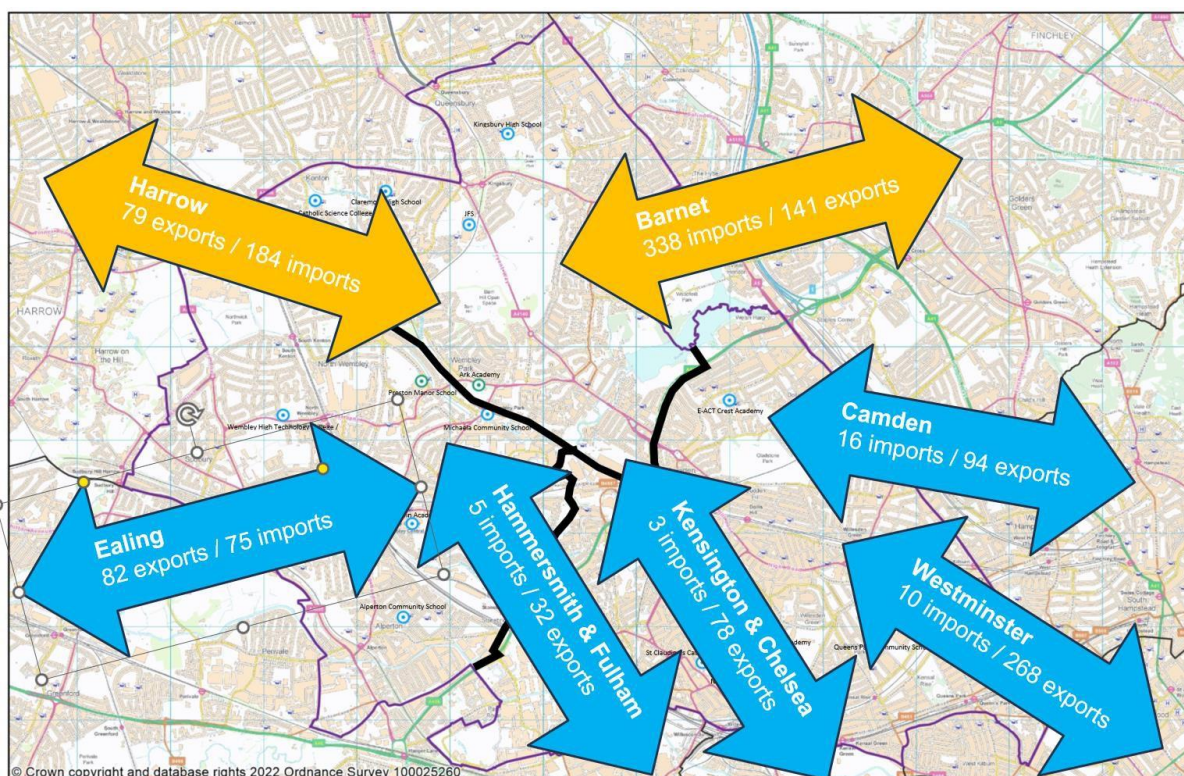
Table 1: Secondary offers by secondary planning area for Brent residents (Sept 2024)

LA of offered school 2024	Brent resident planning area			
	PA North	PA West	PA South	Total
Brent	570	1051	955	2576
Brent %	79.7%	92.4%	61.7%	75.7%
Barnet	67	7	67	141
Bromley	0	1	0	1
Camden	2	1	91	94
Ealing	0	30	52	82
Essex	1	0	0	1
Hackney	0	0	1	1
Hammersmith and Fulham	1	3	28	32
Haringey	0	1	1	2
Harrow	54	18	7	79
Hertfordshire	9	4	4	17
Hillingdon	1	3	1	5
Hounslow	0	1	1	2
Kensington and Chelsea	1	0	77	78
Kent	0	1	0	1
Lancashire	0	1	0	1
Medway	1	0	0	1
Merton	0	0	1	1
Slough	2	8	1	11
Sutton	2	3	1	6
Tower Hamlets	0	1	0	1
Westminster	4	4	260	268
Non-Brent Total	145	87	593	825
Non-Brent %	20.3%	7.6%	38.3%	24.3%
Grand Total	715	1138	1548	3401

Overall, in the borough, there is sufficient built capacity to meet demand in Year 7 over the coming years. However, future projections show a consistent in-year growth which adds pressure to the local authority's ability to make offers at other points of entry to schools. As with primary demand, demand for secondary school places will be higher in some parts of the borough than others, as reflected in the analysis of demand for each of the three secondary school place planning areas in Brent.

Figure 1 shows Year 7 allocation cross-border flows with directly neighbouring authorities (based on national offer day data 2024).

Figure 1: Secondary children being educated across border for Year 7 in 2024/25



*Imports are children who come into Brent to be educated and exports are those who live in Brent and are educated in out of borough schools.

2.4 SEND places and Alternative Provision

Despite lower pupil forecasts for mainstream places, demand for places that meet the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is increasing. This is due to a significant rise in the number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) being issued, which set out the support for children and young people with SEND between the ages of 0 – 25 years of age.

The annual SEN2 analysis (January 2024) stated an annual growth rate in the number of maintained EHCP Plans of 7.7% between 2023 and 2024. This number has been approximately

10% over the last three years. The number of initial requests for assessment in Brent in 2022 was 28.8% higher than the year before.

Between 2023 and 2024 the number of EHC Plans increased across all age groups, with the highest increase in the under 5 age group (an increase of 42% compared to 25% nationally) and the 5 to 10 age group (9.7%, 11% nationally). Those aged 5 to 10 account for 38% of the maintained EHC Plan cohort, aged 11 to 15 accounts for 31% and those aged 16 to 19 account for 17%. 50% of new EHC Plans issued in 2023 were for children aged 5 to 10, 37% for children under 5, and 12% for those aged 11 to 15.

Addressing the sufficiency of local places for Brent children with SEND of both primary and secondary age, and for the 16-25 age group is a Council priority, not only to meet demand but to reduce dependency on out-of-borough independent special schools that are not close to families support networks. Brent Council has committed investment of over £44m to develop additional specialist places across mainstream and specialist provision, including a new secondary special school, that opened in September 2024 and will move into new facilities in September 2025, and a Post-16 Skills Resource Centre for young people with SEND. Despite the planned capital investment, increasing demand means that more local specialist places are needed, especially for primary aged pupils with SEND. This could include additional Additionally Resourced Provision (ARPs) and special school satellite provision (or both).

2.5 Post-16 Provision

The Education and Skills Act 2008 requires all young people in England to continue in education or training until at least their 18th birthday. The Council does not have a duty to manage places in this phase, but nevertheless works in partnership with schools and local colleges to ensure young people aged 16-18 (and up to the age of 25 for those who have an Education, Health and Care Plan) have access to a range of opportunities to continue their education or training at a wide range of post-16 providers or through apprenticeships. This supports young people with their preparation for adulthood.

3. The Strategic Approach to Place Planning

Between 2005 and 2017, demand for school places in Brent rose dramatically. This led to a widespread expansion programme which saw the creation of nearly 8000 additional permanent primary school places. In January 2006, there were 20,882 children attending a Brent primary school, which rose to a peak of 26,823 in January 2017. Since then, the number on roll has fallen to 25,142 in January 2024 and is forecast to continue falling over the next five years to around 24,200 by 2028/29. As a projection, these forecasts are subject to change, but are based on existing and historical attendance and migration patterns in the borough.

The rise in demand for primary school places has followed through into the secondary phase, where a number of school expansions have taken place to ensure a sufficient provision of places. The new North Brent School opened in 2020 and started to operate to its full capacity

as a six-form entry school from September 2024 on its permanent new site on Neasden Lane, Neasden.

Demand for school places is cyclical and therefore it is expected that after a period of sustained growth there will be a period of falling demand. London is experiencing a declining birth rate and this, in combination with migration 'shocks' brought about by Brexit, the Pandemic and now the cost-of-living crisis, is contributing to the current trend of falling demand in London which is being experienced by the borough of Brent.

The focus of the 2019 – 2023 School Place Planning Strategy was to ensure there was sufficient demand to meet supply in the borough. When it was published in November 2018, it referred to the development of two new primary schools, one of which was proposed in response to housing developments in Wembley Park to be delivered when demand indicated it would be required. Neither of these schools were progressed as during the lifespan of the previous strategy, (which was refreshed annually), updated forecasts indicated insufficient demand. In response to lower pupil projections, the local authority has implemented both informal and formal measures to reduce or remove capacity in Brent Primary Schools

The focus of the School Place Planning Strategy 2024 – 2028 is to ensure the sustainability of school places as and when populations fall, and the sufficiency of places when there is growth, working in partnership with Brent schools. Longer term general population forecasts suggest the population of Brent is projected to rise by between 17% and 27% between 2023 and 2041, and the child population aged under 16 is projected to rise by around 12% over the same period. Projected changes in the child age group are more uncertain as they are very sensitive to assumptions about future migration and birth patterns.

Brent aims to have a minimum of 5% spare places to manage in-year migration and to ensure the authority can respond to any sudden increase in demand. This avoids the need to open temporary provision or bulge classes, which is neither educationally desirable nor cost effective. Based on current forecasts, there will be around 20% spare primary places at borough level over the next few years, which could rise as high as 30% by 2027/28 if no action is taken.

3.1. Place Planning Projections

Regularly updated place planning projections underpin the school place planning process. The projections Brent and most other London authorities use to inform place planning are provided by the Greater London Authority (GLA) which are informed both by centrally held demographic data, such as census, fertility rate and birth rate data provided by the Office of National Statistics (ONS), together with locally held information on migration patterns and planned housing growth (ward level housing development data provided by the Borough). The projection methodology and model:

- calculate the number of children resident in each ward who are expected to attend each school by each national curriculum year from Reception to Year 11. The number of children projected for each new intake is calculated as an average of the proportion of children in those wards that attended the school in the previous 3 years multiplied by

the ward level age population data. This helps to smooth out any unusual variations that are unlikely to reoccur each year. For other year groups the model calculates the current proportion of children in the ward attending the school and applies this to the ward level population data. School level projections are then aggregated to planning area projections and Borough totals.

- take account of the percentage of children who historically move into the following academic year in an area. This is particularly important in Brent where there is a high level of pupil mobility and migration to schools in other boroughs.

The GLA projections are a good indicator of place need, but they remain a statistical model which should be seen as a valuable tool rather than a definitive position. There are a number of factors which can lead to the projections being revised up or down:

- Underlying data, such as birth rates and migration patterns and the impact of local regeneration projects can change significantly in a short period of time.
- Secondary projections are more secure as they largely take account of children already in the system. However, the percentage of children who historically move into the following academic year is a particularly important factor in Brent which is currently a net exporter of secondary pupils. This may change if pressures on secondary places in neighbouring boroughs lead to an increase in demand beyond those in the current projections.
- The Local Authority monitors both current and emerging local and national factors, such as post Brexit implications and the COVID-19 pandemic that can impact on school place demand by changing migration patterns. It is difficult to predict the impact of these factors on demand for school places and in particular demand from families of Eastern European origin. Demand at schools that serve these communities are closely monitored.

3.2 Ensuring sufficiency of places during periods of growth in demand

Where an area is projected to experience a sustained growth in demand, generally it is more cost effective to provide permanent places if they are needed for the longer term. However, there are times where site and time constraints mean this is not possible and there are also occasions where the bulge in numbers only applies to one cohort of students. In these circumstances, it is better to provide a temporary bulge class.

Expansion in the secondary phase is more complex than primary, partly because specialist facilities (e.g. sport, science or technology) may need to be provided alongside standard classrooms. Students also need to access these facilities during the building process which makes expansion more challenging and can impact on cost.

Where additional school places are needed, the Council seeks to provide places that provide high quality provision. This could be through expanding existing schools or through new schools. There are benefits to both approaches:

- Expanding existing schools that are judged to be good or better by Ofsted gives the Council greater confidence that additional provision will be good and it will be popular.

It also helps to maintain stability in the existing school system. School expansion projects need to be well managed to avoid impacting on standards and on any particular groups of children and young people who are under-achieving. Expansions of existing provisions are funded by the Council from Basic Need grant funding or the Special Provision Capital Fund for Additionally Resourced Provision and SEND units for pupils with EHCPs.

- New schools offer a chance to provide new learning environments and to attract high quality providers. Current legislation requires new schools to be free schools/academies and the DfE Regional Director, acting on behalf of the Secretary of State, decides if a school should open. In a borough such as Brent there are considerable challenges in finding suitable sites for new schools. New schools are either funded by the Department of Education or by the Council when the new school presumption process is followed.

3.3 Supporting schools and planning areas with falling demand.

When demand for school places falls significantly and the number of spare places increases, this can cause difficulties for individual schools in particular in managing staffing requirements and school budgets. Where this occurs, the Council analyses a range of local data, including but not limited to recent intakes, parental preferences, availability of places within the local area, the communities served by schools, school standards and building condition and recent/required investment, before recommending strategies to support the sustainability of school provision in a given area. A School Place Planning Working Group, comprising officers and headteachers was established in the 2022/23 academic year and leads on both review place planning within individual planning areas and thematic school place planning.

A range of options may be employed to support schools or groups of schools with falling demand as set out below. Any decision to reduce capacity has to be carefully considered in the context of the medium and long-term need for school places for all children, including those with SEND. The current cost of developing a new, medium sized primary school in London ranges from £10 - £20 million and is dependent on the site and existing facilities. Brent Council has already invested significant money into developing new and expanded primary and secondary school provision across the borough in response to the most recent episode of rising demand, which needs to be protected for when demand increases in the future.

3.3.1 Reductions to Published Admission Numbers (PAN)

A reduction to a school's Published Admission Number (PAN) reduces their official intake, normally by one or more forms of entry. This can help undersubscribed schools to manage their budgets more efficiently, with the aim that of the revised PAN being in line with demand. PAN reductions are subject to formal consultation and therefore can take up to two years to implement. They cannot be employed for every undersubscribed school in an area as the local authority needs to maintain some spare capacity for in-year admissions.

There are currently a number of primary and secondary schools in Brent with Published Admission Numbers below their built or net capacity. This means that we currently have the

option to negotiate with schools to increase PANs if there is sustained rising demand in a planning area.

3.3.2 Informal capping arrangements

Informal caps can support schools by limiting their intake in a particular year group where demand is below PAN. However, implementing informal caps is not a long-term sustainable solution nor does it allow for good school organisation planning. Informal caps could be a possible solution in an arrangement where two schools work together to manage admissions. For example, where there is agreement to limit admissions in one school to actively facilitate fuller classes in the other. The advantage of informal capping arrangements is that they can be implemented quickly in response to a current situation and can easily be removed if there is an increase in demand in an area. For example, a three-form entry school that has only made 55 offers for a new Reception cohort may request to operate as a two-form entry for the cohort. This would mean any subsequent in-year offers would stop once the cohort reaches 60 pupils. The informal CAPs in place in Brent will be reviewed in early 2025 to support the utilisation of spare capacity for primary SEND provision.

3.3.3 Utilising spare capacity for SEND and Alternative Provision

Spare classrooms that are unlikely to be required in the longer-term can be used for alternative use, such as Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) for children with SEND or primary special satellite provision. Any long-term alternative use of spare capacity must be agreed by the local authority, to ensure the places are not likely to be required to support either local demand or demand in neighbouring planning areas. The use of spare capacity in the mainstream school estate for additional SEND places is currently being explored. This would deliver value for money by repurposing current buildings to meet identified areas of demand. This could also include consideration of relocating schools to new sites if this offered the potential for expansion to meet increasing demand.

3.3.4 Hard Federation

A Hard Federation is where two schools formally join in partnership under one governing board and one leadership team. This arrangement can provide the opportunity for schools to share best practice and resources and can assist the budgets of small schools. A hard federation does not necessarily address the issue of reduced demand but could be used in conjunction with other strategies to manage the impacts of falling demand on school budgets.

3.3.5 Amalgamation

An Amalgamation is where two schools join together to form one school. Typically, this involves infant and junior schools merging to become one primary school. However, an amalgamation can also be used to join two schools together in the same area where the existing schools are undersubscribed. Amalgamated schools benefit from the same opportunities as federated schools, but also benefit from operating from only one site, which offers additional economies of scale.

3.3.6 Removing capacity from the Primary Estate

Brent works collaboratively with schools in identifying solutions for a local area where a school reorganisation is considered to be the best way to ensure the sustainability of local provision. Legislation provides the Council with the authority to close community schools or to require them to amalgamate (and to instruct community schools to expand). It does not have the same authority over academies, Foundation or Voluntary Aided schools, as this sits with the DfE's Regional Director. The local authority undertakes informal consultation with stakeholders on proposals to cease provision to ensure their views are considered before any decision to proceed to formal consultation is taken in line with the relevant statutory guidance.

4. School Place Planning Strategy Priorities and Principles

Brent's priorities over the course of this strategy years are:

- To continue to monitor and support those planning areas experiencing or anticipated to experience growth and high demand to ensure the sufficiency of local places is maintained.
- To support sustainability of individual schools and planning areas experiencing falling demand.
- To ensure any measures taken that remove capacity from Brent schools do not negatively impact on the need to ensure sufficient places in the future.
- To continue to develop and implement strategies for increasing the level of SEND provision within the borough to meet children's needs.

4.1. Brent's operating principles for school organisation

The following operating principles underpin Brent's approach to school place planning:

- 1: The local authority works in partnership with all schools to meet the sufficiency and sustainability of school places in Brent, putting in place effective strategies to manage changing demand.*
- 2: The needs of all children and young people, including those with SEND and vulnerable groups, underpin all school place planning activity.*
- 3: The delivery of sufficient school places enables the achievement of the aims and objectives of the Brent Strategic Framework for School Effectiveness 2023-2027 and inclusive schools.*
- 4: School leaders are supported to manage the challenges of school reorganisations where there are expansions or reductions to capacity.*
- 5: Inclusive provision will be considered in all school organisation proposals and the local authority will work with neighbouring authorities on the planning of special school places.*
- 6: All school buildings will be of good quality and safe. Any changes to school buildings should meet government guidance on space standards but innovative design solutions will also be considered where it is value for money to do so.*
- 7: Any expansions of school places, including in academies and voluntary aided schools, will only be supported where there is agreed local Brent demand.*

8: *The local authority works to develop local capacity to sponsor new schools, working with academies in all phases.*

9: *How the community can benefit from school facilities will be considered in all school organisation proposals.*

10: *Local communities will be consulted as part of the planning process to minimise/mitigate the impact of school organisation proposals*

11: *After assessing educational suitability, any reorganisation proposals will be judged in terms of value for money, ability to deliver and strategic fit with wider investment programmes.*

5. School Place Planning Strategy Measures of Success

The impact of this strategy will be measured by the following outcomes:

- All Brent schools are good or outstanding (*as per applicable Ofsted gradings at the time*).

This was 98.8% at the end of the 2022/23 academic year and 95.3% at the end of the 2023/2024 academic year. The reduction in performance is the result of one primary school moving into the inadequate category and one primary school judged as requires improvement that awaits a further re-inspection.

- Children are able to access education close to home (under two miles for children under 8 and 3 miles for children up to Year 6; within 75 minutes travel time for secondary aged children).

This was the case in November 2023 and remains the same as of November 2024

- Brent net exportation of secondary school pupils reduces over the duration of this strategy to 25% with a stretch target of below 25%.

The baseline was 25.8% for the 2023 Year 7 intake and for 2024 Year 7 intake is now 25.1%, showing an improving position.

- An increase in local SEND places in the borough will lead to a reduction in the use of out-of-borough placements and placements in independent non-maintained special schools.

The percentage of placement spend on the independent, non-maintained special school (INMSS) (Lower is better) remains consistent at 18.5%.

- The take up rate of free childcare entitlements in the borough increases over the course of the strategy to 70% for two-year-olds and 80% for 3 and 4-year-olds.

The baseline was 65.4% for two-year entitlement and 79.3% for 3 and 4-year-olds in January 2023. In January 2024 take-up of two-year-old free entitlements was 59.2% and for 3 and 4 year-olds it was 84.8% in January 2024. The 9.5% decrease in take-up of the two-year entitlement is reflective of a 7% national decrease in take-up. This is attributed to three main factors in Brent which also mirror national trends: i) falling birth rate in recent years, ii) the transition to universal credit from legacy benefits, and iii) income thresholds for the eligibility criteria remaining unchanged whilst average incomes have risen in recent years.

6. Childcare and Early Years Provision

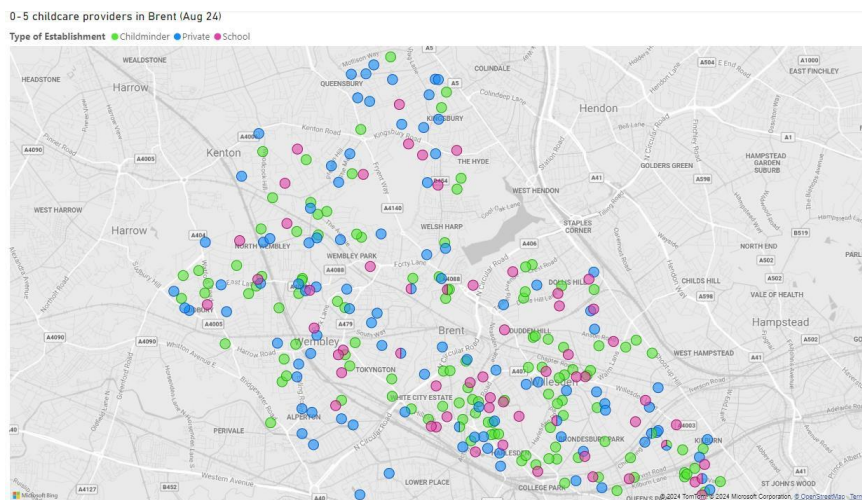
6.1 Early Years Provision

Under the Childcare Act 2006 local authorities have a statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare for the needs of most working parents/carers in their area. Brent has a mixed economy of 0-5 childcare provision in the borough that includes private, voluntary, independent (PVI) and maintained settings.

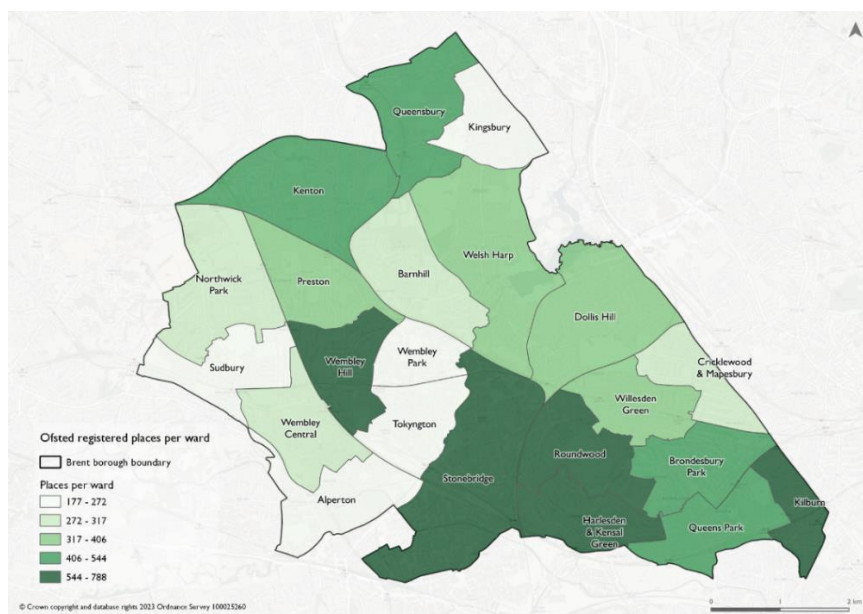
The Brent Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) 2021-2023 showed an overall increase in the number of PVI providers in the borough and a reduction in places in maintained and childminder provision. As of August 2024, there were 290 providers including private, voluntary and independent nurseries (PVI), childminders, nursery classes in schools and maintained nursery schools in Brent. Places for children aged two and under are largely delivered by the PVI sector and childminders.

There has been an overall decrease in the number of childminder providers in the borough since 2015 with some moving out of the borough and others resigning as registered childminders. This decrease in provision is reflective of a nation-wide trend. Closures have also been seen amongst group providers in the last 12 months, some quoting rental increases and reduction in demand. Nonetheless there have been other providers who have moved premises to expand and new providers entering the market, indicating an ongoing demand for places.

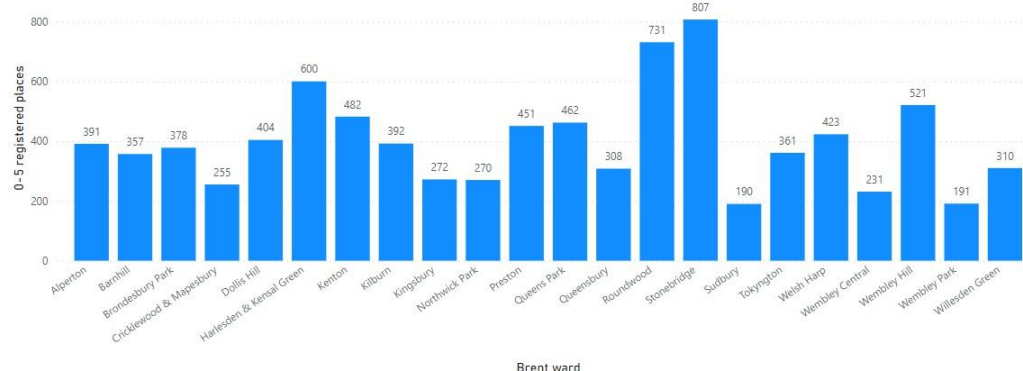
Figure 2: 0-5 childcare providers in Brent as of August 2024



Figures 3 & 3a: Distribution of childcare places in Brent



Registered places 0-5



6.2 Take up of Early Years Entitlements

Take-up of the free entitlements to childcare for 3 and 4-year-olds has improved in Brent as a result of a focus on increasing take-up through ongoing marketing and promotion, raising awareness of entitlements with partners and parents, and the benefits of taking up entitlements for the children and also for parents, to be freed up to take up training or employment. Figures on take-up are provided to local authorities by the Department for Education (DfE) on an annual basis in the summer of each year based on January census returns. The last release of these figures (June 2024) indicated take-up in Brent as of January 2024 was 84.8% for 3 and 4-year-olds. This is an increase of 5.5% on the previous year (79.3%) and brings Brent in line with the London average. The percentage take-up of the two-year entitlement for low/no income families lowered to 59.2%. This reflects a decrease of 6.2% on the take up in 2023 (65.4%) and is below the London average of 66.9%.

6.3 Expansion of Early Years Entitlements

In March 2023, the government announced a significant expansion of early years childcare entitlements to take effect between April 2024 and September 2025. The first phase of implementation began with the introduction of 15 hours for 2 year olds in working families in April 2024 and this will be followed by 15 hours for children 9+ months in working families from September. In September 2025 this will expand further to offer 30 hours of funded childcare for children between nine months and five years in working families.

The council has been in ongoing contact with Brent early years providers to identify their intentions regarding their offer in the context of the new entitlements. As of October 2024 90% of PVI settings and 67% of childminders have confirmed they are offering places for 2 year olds in low/no-income or otherwise vulnerable families. 95% of PVI settings and 67% of childminders are offering places for 2 year olds in working families. 76% of PVIs and 64% of childminders are offering places to children under 2 in working families, which encompasses provision for children 9+ months.

In the first term of the implementation 567 two-year-olds in working families took up a place. The Children and Families Information service did not receive any reports of families unable to take up their entitlement. Some families may have accessed an eligibility code but been unable or chosen not to use it. Detailed sufficiency mapping takes place each term monitoring take up on a borough-wide and ward specific level. This continues to track demand for and availability of places for the new entitlements and identify where demand may outstrip supply and gaps in provision in the borough.

The promotional campaign continues across the borough to ensure parents and carers are aware of the new entitlements, eligibility criteria and process for accessing the entitlements continues. This activity will be part of the on-going drive to increase the take up rate of free childcare entitlements in the borough.

The impact of the introduction of these additional entitlements will continue to be monitored, especially the possible impact on the availability of places for the two-year entitlement (15 hours) for disadvantaged children in low/no-income families. This may occur if providers choose to offer more places for two-year-olds from working families who can get a maximum of 30 free hours. There are also concerns about the sufficiency of places for children with SEND as some parents are already struggling to find places for their children with SEND, and there is a concern that this situation could be exacerbated.

7. Primary School Place Planning

A borough-wide fall in demand for places is projected to continue over the next five years as shown in Graph 1. Longer term projections, although less reliable for primary forecasts, indicate demand will rise after 2028/2029 (led by a rise in the birth rate from 2023/24).

Graph 1: Primary numbers on roll and projections as of January each year up to 2029

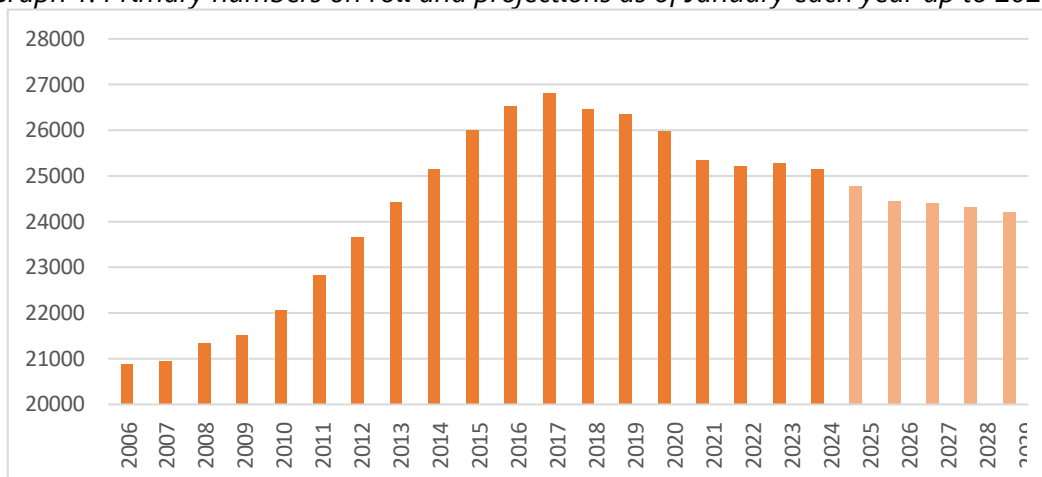


Table 2 shows that borough-wide there is sufficient capacity to meet anticipated demand across all primary year groups up to 2028/29 and to manage in-year pupil mobility.

Table 2: Primary forecasts 2024 (Green means more than 5% capacity)

Whole borough	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2024/2025	Capacity	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187
	Projection	3418	3465	3582	3611	3563	3558	3590
	Surplus	769	722	605	576	624	629	597
	Surplus Percentage	18%	17%	14%	14%	15%	15%	14%
2025/2026	Capacity	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187
	Projection	3269	3397	3454	3557	3617	3573	3574
	Surplus	918	790	733	630	570	614	613
	Surplus Percentage	22%	19%	18%	15%	14%	15%	15%
2026/2027	Capacity	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187
	Projection	3451	3276	3394	3461	3581	3651	3596
	Surplus	736	911	793	726	606	536	591
	Surplus Percentage	18%	22%	19%	17%	14%	13%	14%
2027/2028	Capacity	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127
	Projection	3401	3451	3280	3396	3486	3621	3682
	Surplus	726	676	847	731	641	506	445
	Surplus Percentage	18%	16%	21%	18%	16%	12%	11%
2028/2029	Capacity	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127
	Projection	3527	3395	3440	3281	3411	3517	3646
	Surplus	600	732	687	846	716	610	481
	Surplus Percentage	15%	18%	17%	20%	17%	15%	12%

Key: Green = 5%+ spare capacity (**bold** text = 15%+); yellow = 5% spare capacity; amber = less than 5% spare capacity and red = shortfall

Table 3 shows forecast Reception intakes against capacity. This suggests over the next five years that Reception cohorts will remain stable (with intermittent fluctuations) at a lower demand level than has been seen in recent years. This is consistent with the falling birth rates levelling off as seen in Table 4. The indicated level of spare capacity across the system will place budgetary strain

on some schools. Section 3 of this strategy outlines the options available to schools and the borough to promote the sustainability of schools under budgetary pressures due to falling demand.

Table 3: Reception forecasts against capacity

Year	Reception projected intake	Reception capacity	Spare places	% spare places	Spare places as forms of entry
2024/25	3418	4187	769	18.4%	25
2025/26	3269	4187	918	21.9%	30
2026/27	3451	4187	736	17.6%	24
2027/28	3401	4127	726	17.6%	24
2028/29	3527	4127	600	14.5%	20

Table 4: Births in Brent (by academic year)

Academic Year	Number of births in Brent (Source ONS mid-year estimates/GLA Projections)	Reception entry (September following 4th birthday)
2018/19	4814	2023/24
2019/20	4794	2024/25
2020/21	4441	2025/26
2021/22	4481	2026/27
2022/23	4449	2027/28
2023/24	4577	2028/29
2024/25	4636	2029/30
2025/26	4734	2030/31
2026/27	4864	2031/32
2027/28	4992	2032/33
2028/29	5092	2033/34

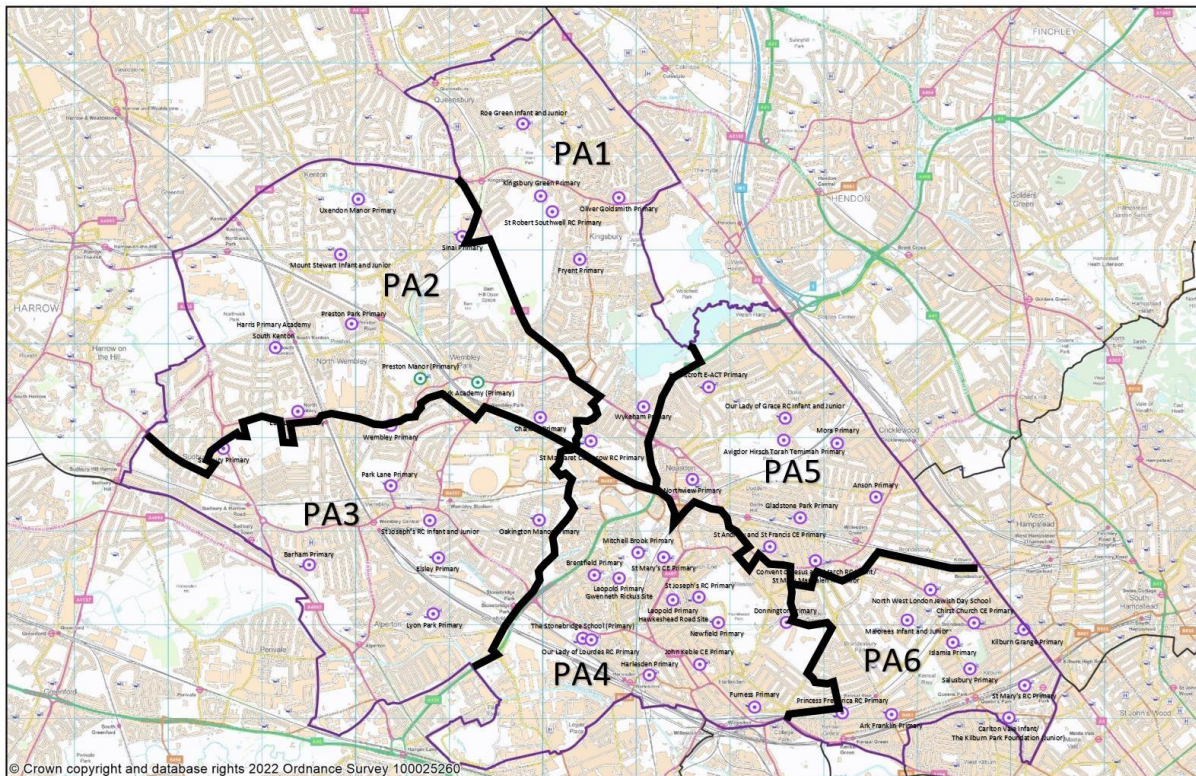
The number of on-time applications for Reception in 2024 rose for the second consecutive year, which was counter to the trend of reduced applications across London. This has been attributed in part to more visible advertising for Reception applications and the development of Admission open events held across the Borough's Family Wellbeing Centres. On time applications are important for all normal points of entry as they provide the greatest opportunity for parents to receive an offer for a preference school and schools are better placed to manage forms of entry, classroom and staff numbers.

7.1 Primary Planning Areas

The local authority uses planning areas to identify local trends in demand which help to inform place planning decisions to ensure children can attend a school within a reasonable distance. (In the primary phase a “reasonable offer” is a school offer that is made within 2 miles of home for children under 8 years old, and 3 miles for older children). The borough is divided into six primary planning areas to help ensure places are provided near to where children live. However, in reality children can travel across planning areas to attend school, particularly when they live close to the borders.

All planning areas are aligned with the 2022 ward boundaries. This provides a clearer picture of demand as GLA projections are also based on these wards.

Figure 4: Brent Primary Planning Areas



Key to Planning Area tables

For each of the primary and secondary projection tables in each of the planning area, the shading relates to the percentage of surplus places available.

More than 5% capacity (Bold text = 15%+ spare capacity)	5% spare capacity	Less than 5% spare capacity	Shortfall of places
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Primary Planning Area 1

Wards	Kingsbury, Queensbury and Welsh Harp
Schools	Fryent Primary School, Kingsbury Green Primary School, Oliver Goldsmith Primary School, Roe Green Infant School, Roe Green Junior School, St Margaret Clitherow RC Primary School, St Robert Southwell RC Primary School, Wykeham Primary School

Demand: The January 2024 projections indicate demand in Planning Area 1 will fall slightly before recovering to current levels over the next 5 years. It is projected that some year groups will see the spare places fall below the 5% margin the LA aims to maintain, resulting in a small deficit in some year groups. It is anticipated places in the neighbouring planning areas (2, 4 and 5) will accommodate these pressures. Some mainstream capacity in the planning area is being used to provide SEN Alternative Resource Provision (ARP) places.

Planned action: Primary Planning Area 1 has been subject to a review in January 2023 by the School Place Planning Steering Group in Brent to identify strategies to ensure sufficient supply of places in some year groups, while identifying strategies to manage excessive surplus capacity in others. No area wide action is considered necessary and individual schools will continue to be supported as need arises. The Planning Area will remain under review to determine if any longer-term changes are required as part of the annual refresh of this strategy.

Table 5: Planning Area 1 2024 projections and capacity

PA 1	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2024/2025	Capacity	510	510	510	510	510	510	510
	Projection	488	498	501	503	508	476	472
	Surplus	22	12	9	7	2	34	38
	Surplus Percentage	4%	2%	2%	1%	0%	7%	7%
2025/2026	Capacity	510	510	510	510	510	510	510
	Projection	452	487	493	498	503	509	467
	Surplus	58	23	17	12	7	1	43
	Surplus Percentage	11%	5%	3%	2%	1%	0%	8%
2026/2027	Capacity	510	510	510	510	510	510	510
	Projection	483	457	485	489	503	507	504
	Surplus	27	53	25	21	7	3	6
	Surplus Percentage	5%	10%	5%	4%	1%	1%	1%
2027/2028	Capacity	510	510	510	510	510	510	510
	Projection	469	486	456	477	492	507	498
	Surplus	41	24	54	33	18	3	12
	Surplus Percentage	8%	5%	11%	6%	4%	1%	2%
2028/2029	Capacity	510	510	510	510	510	510	510
	Projection	482	470	480	449	478	494	498
	Surplus	28	40	30	61	32	16	12
	Surplus Percentage	5%	8%	6%	12%	6%	3%	2%

Key: Green = 5%+ spare capacity; yellow = 5% spare capacity; amber = less than 5% spare capacity; red = shortfall

Primary Planning Area 2

Wards	Barnhill, Kenton, Northwick Park and Preston
Schools	Ark Academy, Chalkhill Primary School, East Lane Primary School, Harris Primary Academy South Kenton, Mount Stewart Infant School, Mount Stewart Junior School, Preston Manor Lower School, Preston Park Primary School, Sinai Jewish Primary School, Uxendon Manor Primary School.

Demand: The January 2024 projections indicate demand in the planning area will remain relatively stable over the next four years before starting to rise beyond that point. Projected surplus places are above the 5% margin across all year groups and parents in this planning area have increased choice of provision. Planning Area 2 includes the Northwick Park growth area and this may generate additional demand at some point in the future.

Planned action: There is no current requirement to make any changes to the provision in this planning area and in the short term, surplus places could be managed with the use of strategies to manage surplus capacity, for example agreeing informal capping arrangements with individual schools, as well as supporting any pressures in planning area 3 detailed below. The Planning Area will remain under review to determine if any longer-term changes are required as part of the annual refresh of this strategy.

Table 6: Planning Area 2 2024 projections and capacity

PA 2	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2024/2025	Capacity	870	870	870	870	870	870	870
	Projection	705	725	736	729	721	698	733
	Surplus	165	145	134	141	149	172	137
	Surplus Percentage	19%	17%	15%	16%	17%	20%	16%
2025/2026	Capacity	870	870	870	870	870	870	870
	Projection	657	715	728	730	733	720	704
	Surplus	213	155	142	140	137	150	166
	Surplus Percentage	24%	18%	16%	16%	16%	17%	19%
2026/2027	Capacity	870	870	870	870	870	870	870
	Projection	706	670	715	724	733	735	723
	Surplus	164	200	155	146	137	135	147
	Surplus Percentage	19%	23%	18%	17%	16%	16%	17%
2027/2028	Capacity	870	870	870	870	870	870	870
	Projection	699	718	673	715	727	735	739
	Surplus	171	152	197	155	143	135	131
	Surplus Percentage	20%	17%	23%	18%	16%	16%	15%
2028/2029	Capacity	870	870	870	870	870	870	870
	Projection	728	710	717	675	717	726	739
	Surplus	142	160	153	195	153	144	131
	Surplus Percentage	16%	18%	18%	22%	18%	17%	15%

Key: Green = 5%+ spare capacity (**bold text** = 15%+); yellow = 5% spare capacity; amber = less than 5% spare capacity; red = shortfall

Primary Planning Area 3

Wards	Alperton, Sudbury, Tokyngton, Wembley Central, Wembley Hill and Wembley Park
Schools	Barham Primary School, Elsley Primary School, Lyon Park Primary School, Oakington Manor Primary School, Park Lane Primary School, St Joseph's RC Infant School, St Joseph's RC Junior School, Sudbury Primary School, Wembley Primary School

Demand: Planning Area 3 includes two major growth areas in Wembley Central and Alperton and the latest projections are similar to previous years, indicating a rising demand. They suggest that over the next 5 years, most year groups will be at or below the 5% surplus margin, with some year groups operating with no surplus capacity, particularly in Key Stage Two.

Planned action: Longer term forecasts indicate there may be a continued increase in demand in this planning area, which would be consistent with pre-pandemic projections. The planning area will remain under review to ensure children can access local places. Planning Area 3 is adjacent to Planning Area 2 and Planning Area 4 which each have surplus capacity. It is anticipated this surplus capacity would be used to accommodate excess demand before any need to consider any expanding provision in Planning Area 3.

Table 7: Planning Area 3 2024 projections and capacity

PA 3	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2024/2025	Capacity	820	820	820	820	820	820	820
	Projection	773	797	806	813	824	837	827
	Surplus	47	23	14	7	-4	-17	-7
	Surplus Percentage	6%	3%	2%	1%	0%	-2%	-1%
2025/2026	Capacity	820	820	820	820	820	820	820
	Projection	744	790	798	816	825	841	852
	Surplus	76	30	22	4	-5	-21	-32
	Surplus Percentage	9%	4%	3%	0%	-1%	-3%	-4%
2026/2027	Capacity	820	820	820	820	820	820	820
	Projection	826	774	795	815	833	855	857
	Surplus	-6	46	25	5	-13	-35	-37
	Surplus Percentage	-1%	6%	3%	1%	-2%	-4%	-5%
2027/2028	Capacity	820	820	820	820	820	820	820
	Projection	839	849	779	813	830	858	872
	Surplus	-19	-29	41	7	-10	-38	-52
	Surplus Percentage	-2%	-4%	5%	1%	-1%	-5%	-6%
2028/2029	Capacity	820	820	820	820	820	820	820
	Projection	878	851	843	791	820	847	868
	Surplus	-58	-31	-23	29	0	-27	-48
	Surplus Percentage	-7%	-4%	-3%	4%	0%	-3%	-6%

Key: Green = 5%+ spare capacity; yellow = 5% spare capacity; amber = less than 5% spare capacity; red = shortfall

Primary Planning Area 4

Wards	Harlesden & Kensal Green, Roundwood and Stonebridge
Schools	Brentfield Primary School, Donnington Primary School, Furness Primary School, Harlesden Primary School, John Keble CE Primary School, Leopold Primary School, Mitchell Brook Primary School, Newfield Primary School, Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School, St Joseph's RC Primary School, St Mary's CE Primary School, The Stonebridge School.

Demand: Planning Area 4 has very high levels of surplus places and the latest projections indicate there will be a further reduction in demand. In the longer term, the area will serve some of the new housing being built as part of the Old Oak and Park Royal redevelopment scheme.

Planned action: Brent Council has started the process to address excess capacity in the area as it is having a detrimental impact on some schools who have reduced pupil numbers and associated budget management pressures. Measures include the reduction of the PAN at Mitchell Brook Primary School from September 2025 and the phased closure of the Gwenneth Rickus site of Leopold Primary School in July 2027. Further action is being considered which may include utilising spare capacity for the creation of Primary SEND places. As there is a projection of higher demand in the adjacent Planning Area 3, it is expected some capacity may be taken up by children from this area.

Table 8: Planning Area 4 2024 projections and capacity

PA 4	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2024/2025	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	520	517	546	585	557	591	564
	Surplus	335	338	309	270	298	264	291
	Surplus Percentage	39%	40%	36%	32%	35%	31%	34%
2025/2026	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	508	504	515	546	587	556	606
	Surplus	347	351	340	309	268	299	249
	Surplus Percentage	41%	41%	40%	36%	31%	35%	29%
2026/2027	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	521	496	504	521	554	589	574
	Surplus	334	359	351	334	301	266	281
	Surplus Percentage	39%	42%	41%	39%	35%	31%	33%
2027/2028	Capacity	795	795	795	795	795	795	795
	Projection	516	514	499	513	533	562	613
	Surplus	279	281	296	282	262	233	182
	Surplus Percentage	35%	35%	37%	35%	33%	29%	23%
2028/2029	Capacity	795	795	795	795	795	795	795
	Projection	537	511	518	510	525	544	588
	Surplus	258	284	277	285	270	251	207
	Surplus Percentage	32%	36%	35%	36%	34%	32%	26%

Key: Green = 5%+ spare capacity (**bold** text = 15%+); yellow = 5% spare capacity; amber = less than 5% spare capacity; red = shortfall

Primary Planning Area 5

Wards	Cricklewood & Mapesbury, Dollis Hill and Willesden Green
PA5 Schools	Anson Primary School, Avigdor Hirsch Torah Temimah Primary School, Braintcroft E-ACT Primary Academy, Convent of Jesus and Mary Infant School, Gladstone Park Primary School, Mora Primary School, Northview Primary School, Our Lady of Grace Infant and Nursery School, Our Lady of Grace RC Junior School, St Andrew & St Francis CE Primary School, St Mary Magdalen's RC Junior School.

Demand: The latest projections show that there will be a small drop in demand over the next five years, but surplus capacity is comfortable for place planning purposes (5%). Longer term projections, which are less reliable, indicate a sustained rise in demand starting from 2028/29.

Planned action: There are no current or planned actions in Planning Area 5. The planning area will remain under review to determine if any longer-term changes are required as part of the annual refresh of this strategy.

Table 9: Planning Area 5 2024 projections and capacity

PA 5	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2024/2025	Capacity	557	557	557	557	557	557	557
	Projection	496	497	523	511	510	510	509
	Surplus	61	60	34	46	47	47	48
	Surplus Percentage	11%	11%	6%	8%	8%	8%	9%
2025/2026	Capacity	557	557	557	557	557	557	557
	Projection	481	488	493	519	509	507	507
	Surplus	76	69	64	38	48	50	50
	Surplus Percentage	14%	12%	11%	7%	9%	9%	9%
2026/2027	Capacity	557	557	557	557	557	557	557
	Projection	488	476	484	496	518	507	506
	Surplus	69	81	73	61	39	50	51
	Surplus Percentage	12%	15%	13%	11%	7%	9%	9%
2027/2028	Capacity	557	557	557	557	557	557	557
	Projection	466	483	473	479	494	517	508
	Surplus	91	74	84	78	63	40	49
	Surplus Percentage	16%	13%	15%	14%	11%	7%	9%
2028/2029	Capacity	557	557	557	557	557	557	557
	Projection	479	463	481	469	479	493	519
	Surplus	78	94	76	88	78	64	38
	Surplus Percentage	14%	17%	14%	16%	14%	11%	7%

Key: Green = 5%+ spare capacity (**bold text** = 15%+); yellow = 5% spare capacity; amber = less than 5% spare capacity; red = shortfall

Primary Planning Area 6

Wards	Brondesbury Park, Kilburn and Queens Park
PA6 Schools	Ark Franklin Academy, Carlton Vale Infant School, Christchurch CE Primary School, Islamia Primary School, Kilburn Grange Primary School, Malorees Infant School, Malorees Junior School, North West London Jewish Day School, Princess Frederica CE Primary School, Salusbury Primary School, St Mary's RC Primary School, The Kilburn Park Foundation School

Demand: Projections for Planning Area 6 show a slight decline in demand over the next four years. In the longer term, housing developments are expected to impact on demand in this area. Islamia Primary School is likely to relocate to another site in Brent, and if this is outside of this planning area, it will remove 2FE of capacity from the area and change local demand patterns.

Planned action: Carlton Vale Infant School and Kilburn Park Junior School have formed a Hard Federation as a first step towards becoming a single primary school on one site as part of the South Kilburn Regeneration Programme. The size of the school will confirm to the principles of sustainability and sufficiency of school place planning. A relocation of Islamia Primary School could see an increase in demand for local places. There would be enough local capacity for local children who might have attended the school to access spare places in other schools. As part of the South Kilburn regeneration programme, school places in the Planning Area will remain under review.

Table 10: Planning Area 6 2024 projections and capacity

PA 6	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2024/2025	Capacity	575	575	575	575	575	575	575
	Projection	438	430	470	470	444	445	483
	Surplus	137	145	105	105	131	130	92
	Surplus Percentage	24%	25%	18%	18%	23%	23%	16%
2025/2026	Capacity	575	575	575	575	575	575	575
	Projection	427	414	426	448	461	441	438
	Surplus	148	161	149	127	114	134	137
	Surplus Percentage	26%	28%	26%	22%	20%	23%	24%
2026/2027	Capacity	575	575	575	575	575	575	575
	Projection	426	402	411	417	441	459	434
	Surplus	149	173	164	158	134	116	141
	Surplus Percentage	26%	30%	29%	27%	23%	20%	25%
2027/2028	Capacity	575	575	575	575	575	575	575
	Projection	410	402	400	398	411	441	450
	Surplus	165	173	175	177	164	134	125
	Surplus Percentage	29%	30%	30%	31%	29%	23%	22%
2028/2029	Capacity	575	575	575	575	575	575	575
	Projection	423	390	401	388	393	413	435
	Surplus	152	185	174	187	182	162	140
	Surplus Percentage	26%	32%	30%	33%	32%	28%	24%

Key: Green = 5%+ spare capacity (**bold** text = 15%+); yellow = 5% spare capacity; amber = less than 5% spare capacity; red = shortfall

8. Secondary school place planning

Year 7 demand over the next seven years is expected to remain steady with the latest forecasts projecting slight fluctuations each year. Demand is projected to be below the level of available capacity and therefore the LA is confident there is sufficient capacity to meet Year 7 demand for the near future.

Brent has traditionally been a net exporter of secondary pupils, but the borough has seen a recent increase in parental preference for Brent secondary schools due to the sustained quality of local schools. The percentage of Brent pupils offered an out-borough school on National Offer Day has fallen from a high of 28.3% in 2017 to 25.1% in 2024. These factors have been taken into consideration in the projection figures for secondary schools and it is possible future demand for individual schools could increase further.

Table 11: Year 7 projections and planned capacity

Year	Year 7 projected intake	Year 7 places available	Surplus	Surplus
2024/25	3134	3688	554	15.02%
2025/26	3084	3688	604	16.38%
2026/27	3147	3688	541	14.67%
2027/28	3246	3688	442	11.98%
2028/29	3179	3688	509	13.80%
2029/30	3134	3688	554	15.02%
2030/31	3118	3688	570	15.46%

Table 12 shows borough wide forecasts for all year groups and indicates a comfortable operating margin of at least 5% spare places in all year groups except Year 11 in the current academic year.

Table 12: Secondary projections 2024 and capacity

Whole borough	Dataset	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
2024/2025	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,745	3,766	3,779
	Projection	3134	3340	3332	3380	3464
	Surplus	554	348	413	386	315
	Surplus Percentage	15%	9%	11%	10%	8%
2025/2026	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,745	3,766
	Projection	3084	3162	3375	3379	3460
	Surplus	604	526	313	366	306
	Surplus Percentage	16%	14%	8%	10%	8%
2026/2027	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,745
	Projection	3147	3126	3213	3440	3487
	Surplus	541	562	475	248	258
	Surplus Percentage	15%	15%	13%	7%	7%
2027/2028	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688
	Projection	3246	3189	3183	3286	3571
	Surplus	442	499	505	402	117
	Surplus Percentage	12%	14%	14%	11%	3%
2028/2029	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688
	Projection	3179	3276	3233	3245	3389
	Surplus	509	412	455	443	299
	Surplus Percentage	14%	11%	12%	12%	8%
2029/2030	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688
	Projection	3134	3210	3314	3291	3339
	Surplus	554	478	374	397	349
	Surplus Percentage	15%	13%	10%	11%	9%
2030/2031	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688
	Projection	3118	3167	3251	3375	3382
	Surplus	570	521	437	313	306
	Surplus Percentage	15%	14%	12%	8%	8%

Key: Green = 5%+ spare capacity (**bold text = 15%+**); yellow = 5% spare capacity; amber = less than 5% spare capacity; red = shortfall

8.1 Actions to respond to changes in demand

The North Brent School, that was approved by DfE in 2016 to provide 180 places per year (6 Form Entry) and officially opened in September 2020 on a temporary site in Wembley, has moved to its permanent site in Neasden operating at full capacity in September 2024.

A number of secondary schools have previously expressed an interest in expanding should additional places be required to meet demand. It is unlikely this will be required during the life of this current strategy for Year 7 but is not something which has been formally ruled out and will be reviewed as part of the annual refresh of this strategy and in particular for higher year groups. The local authority is currently employing a strategy of working with schools with existing spare built capacity (due to the employment of informal capping arrangements), to

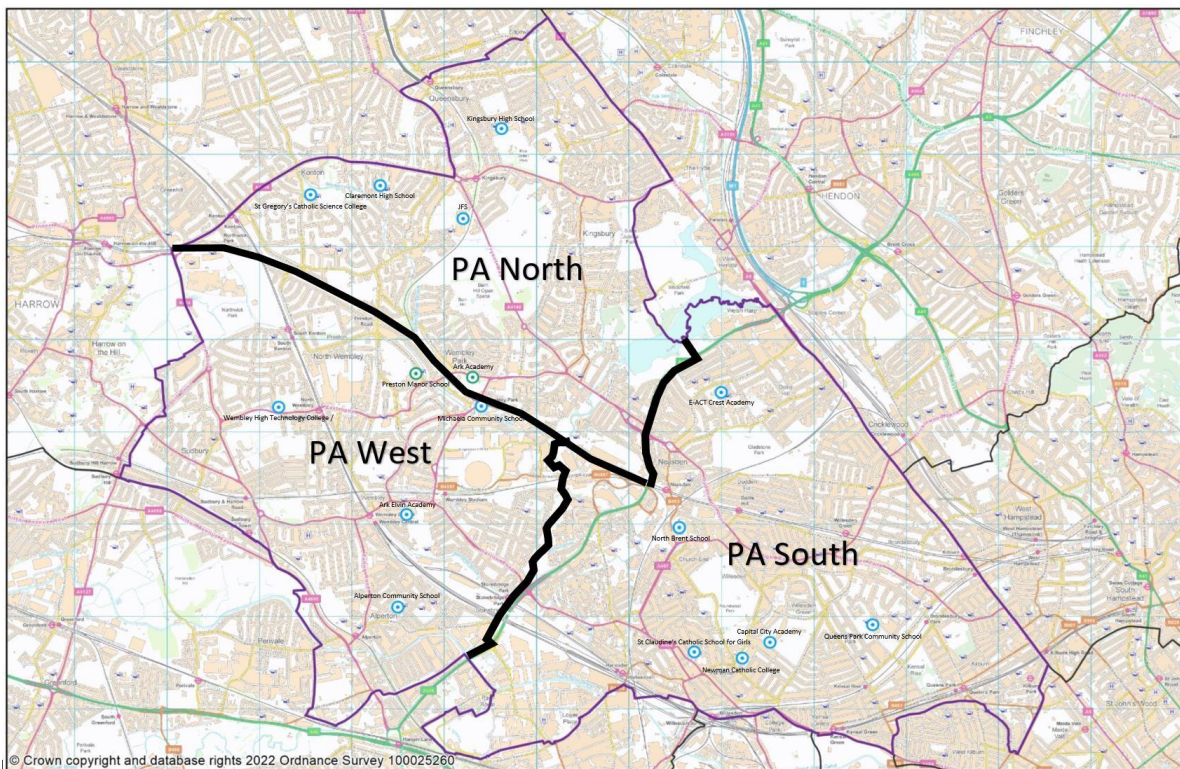
open up that capacity where needed in the higher year groups to ensure a sufficiency of places to meet in-year demand.

8.2 Secondary Planning Areas

Brent divides its secondary schools into 3 planning areas that reflect geographical groupings of schools – Secondary Planning Area North, Secondary Planning Area West and Secondary Planning Area South (Figure 5).

Secondary aged children can be expected to travel longer distances to school. A reasonable offer for a secondary place is one within 3 miles of home, which given the size of Brent and the good transport links mean children can travel to any school. However, secondary planning areas allow localised pressures for schools to be taken into account and where additional places would help more children attend a school near to where they live.

Figure 5: Secondary Planning Areas



Secondary Planning Area North

Wards	Barnhill, Kenton, Kingsbury, Queensbury and Welsh Harp
Schools	Ark Academy, Claremont High School, JFS, Kingsbury High School, St Gregory's

Demand: Schools in Planning Area North are usually oversubscribed. However, the latest projections indicate there may be a small surplus, particularly in the lower year groups, over the next seven years. There is expected to remain, however, a consistent pressure in Year 11. Planning Area North includes the Burnt Oak Colindale and Northwick Park growth areas.

Planned action: There are no planned actions in Planning Area North and demand will be kept under review as part of the annual refresh of this strategy. Spare places in Planning Area South will accommodate pressures in demand in this planning area, and the Fair Access Protocol will be implemented if required to manage demand for in-year places that cannot be fulfilled through normal admissions processes, especially in Years 9 – 11.

Table 13: Secondary Planning Area North 2024 projections and capacity

PA 7 - North	Dataset	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
2024/2025	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1219	1293	1246	1263	1288
	Surplus	59	-15	32	15	-10
	Surplus Percentage	5%	-1%	3%	1%	-1%
2025/2026	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1206	1226	1301	1261	1287
	Surplus	72	52	-23	17	-9
	Surplus Percentage	6%	4%	-2%	1%	-1%
2026/2027	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1218	1216	1239	1321	1293
	Surplus	60	62	39	-43	-15
	Surplus Percentage	5%	5%	3%	-3%	-1%
2027/2028	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1253	1229	1232	1263	1366
	Surplus	25	49	46	15	-88
	Surplus Percentage	2%	4%	4%	1%	-7%
2028/2029	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1237	1260	1240	1251	1297
	Surplus	41	18	38	27	-19
	Surplus Percentage	3%	1%	3%	2%	-1%
2029/2030	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1210	1243	1269	1259	1283
	Surplus	68	35	9	19	-5
	Surplus Percentage	5%	3%	1%	1%	0%
2030/2031	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1200	1215	1251	1287	1288
	Surplus	78	63	27	-9	-10
	Surplus Percentage	6%	5%	2%	-1%	-1%

Key: Green = 5%+ spare capacity; yellow = 5% spare capacity; amber = less than 5% spare capacity; red = shortfall

Secondary Planning Area West

Wards	Alperton, Northwick Park, Preston, Sudbury, Tokyngton, Wembley Central, Wembley Hill and Wembley Park
Schools	Alperton Community School, Ark Elvin Academy, Michaela Community School, Preston Manor School, Wembley High Technology College

Demand: Secondary Planning Area West includes two major growth areas in Wembley Central and Alperton. Despite this, demand for Year 7 places is expected to remain at or around capacity. Some schools in the area operate a lower PAN than their build capacity will allow, which means there is a short-fall of places to meet in-year demand.

Planned action: Longer term forecasts indicate there may be increasing demand in Planning Area West, which will remain under review to determine whether any longer-term interventions are required to increase capacity. This may include putting into use all available existing built capacity. Spare places in Planning Area South can accommodate pressures in demand across the borough. Fair Access Protocols will be implemented if required to manage demand for in-year places that cannot be fulfilled through normal admissions processes.

Table 14: Secondary Planning Area West 2024 projections and capacity

PA 8 - West	Dataset	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
2024/2025	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,233	1,254	1,267
	Projection	1131	1171	1214	1200	1268
	Surplus	45	5	19	54	-1
	Surplus Percentage	4%	0%	2%	4%	0%
2025/2026	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,233	1,254
	Projection	1107	1153	1202	1249	1252
	Surplus	69	23	-26	-16	2
	Surplus Percentage	6%	2%	-2%	-1%	0%
2026/2027	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,233
	Projection	1144	1139	1191	1244	1315
	Surplus	32	37	-15	-68	-82
	Surplus Percentage	3%	3%	-1%	-6%	-7%
2027/2028	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176
	Projection	1202	1174	1179	1235	1322
	Surplus	-26	2	-3	-59	-146
	Surplus Percentage	-2%	0%	0%	-5%	-12%
2028/2029	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176
	Projection	1170	1222	1205	1215	1294
	Surplus	6	-46	-29	-39	-118
	Surplus Percentage	1%	-4%	-2%	-3%	-10%

2029/2030	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176
	Projection	1167	1191	1249	1238	1268
	Surplus	9	-15	-73	-62	-92
	Surplus Percentage	1%	-1%	-6%	-5%	-8%
2030/2031	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176
	Projection	1163	1189	1221	1284	1291
	Surplus	13	-13	-45	-108	-115
	Surplus Percentage	1%	-1%	-4%	-9%	-10%

Key: Green = 5%+ spare capacity (**bold** text = 15%+); yellow = 5% spare capacity; amber = less than 5% spare capacity; red = shortfall

Secondary Planning Area South

Wards	Brondesbury Park, Cricklewood & Mapesbury, Dollis Hill, Harlesden & Kensal Green, Kilburn, Roundwood, Queens Park, Stonebridge and Willesden Green
Schools	Capital City Academy, E-ACT Crest Academy, Newman Catholic College, North Brent School, Queens Park Community School, St Claudine's Catholic School for Girls

Demand: Planning Area South includes the Neasden Station, Staples Corner, Church End and South Kilburn growth areas. Projections for this planning area remain steady for the next 7 years and there is sufficient availability of places to meet demand. The availability of places in this planning area means that children living in the North or West Planning Areas, who may not have been successful in gaining a place at schools closer to home, may be offered schools in the South, particularly if the applications are made in-year.

Planned action: The local authority will continue discussions with schools in the area that have spare built capacity to increase in-year provision given demand across the borough in Years 9-11. Due to the nature of transport links in Brent, it is possible for pupils to easily travel between planning areas to attend school within recommended journey times when there is no local in-year availability. The Planning Area will remain under review to determine if any longer-term changes are required as part of the annual refresh of this strategy.

Table 15: Secondary Planning Area South 2024 projections and capacity

PA 9 - South	Dataset	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
2024/2025	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	785	876	872	917	906
	Surplus	449	358	362	317	328
	Surplus Percentage	36%	29%	29%	26%	27%
2025/2026	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	770	783	872	869	920
	Surplus	464	451	362	365	314
	Surplus Percentage	38%	37%	29%	30%	25%

2026/2027	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	785	772	783	874	879
	Surplus	449	462	451	360	355
	Surplus Percentage	36%	37%	37%	29%	29%
2027/2028	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	791	786	772	789	883
	Surplus	443	448	462	445	351
	Surplus Percentage	36%	36%	37%	36%	28%
2028/2029	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	772	794	787	778	797
	Surplus	462	440	447	456	437
	Surplus Percentage	37%	36%	36%	37%	35%
2029/2030	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	757	776	796	794	787
	Surplus	477	458	438	440	447
	Surplus Percentage	39%	37%	35%	36%	36%
2030/2031	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	755	763	779	804	802
	Surplus	479	471	455	430	432
	Surplus Percentage	39%	38%	37%	35%	35%

Key: Green = 5%+ spare capacity (**bold** text = 15%+); yellow = 5% spare capacity; amber = less than 5% spare capacity; red = shortfall

9. SEND and Alternative Provision place planning

9.1 Brent SEND Overview

Brent is a borough that has high aspirations for all children and young people with special, educational needs or disabilities (SEND). Services, schools and settings are needs-led and follow the ethos of early identification and early intervention. Brent and Brent schools recognise SEND is not a fixed or permanent characteristic. At a specific time, a child might have additional learning needs that require tailored or additional support to fully participate in everything the school has to offer, or they may require more specialist support in school for the whole of their education.

All schools in Brent are inclusive and where possible a child or young person should be educated in their local mainstream school. A child with 'special' listed as Type in Section I of their EHCP is entitled to a place at a special school whilst ARPs have a mainstream designation. Therefore, children with 'special' named as type in Section I should not be placed in an ARP unless parental preference is for mainstream. ARP places are for children who can access, and will benefit from, significant engagement with a mainstream school offer. The majority of pupils' additional needs can be met within one of the following contexts listed in table 16 with only those not able to access their education in a mainstream school being met through a special school.

Table 16 – Full range of provision in Brent

A FULL RANGE OF PROVISION			
Fully inclusive mainstream provision	Mainstream with support	Additionally resourced mainstream provision	Brent special school provision

There is a range of high-quality provision for children with SEND in Brent encompassing 3 enhanced pre-school providers, 1 primary special maintained school, 1 primary special academy school, 2 special all through academy schools and 2 secondary special school academies, and a number of Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARP) in both primary and secondary mainstream schools.

An ARP is designed to provide specialist and targeted support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities who can function well in a mainstream school, and where the school has appropriate teaching and learning strategies and staff with the skills and knowledge in a particular area of SEND. ARPs also provide specialist environments which support the learning needs of each pupil, and many young people with additional learning needs can make better, and more sustained progress when they attend mainstream schools. Table 17 details Brent's special school places and Table 18 details Brent's ARP places.

There are 963 places currently in Brent special schools and 185 ARP places. Other boroughs can apply for places in Brent schools (in the same way that Brent children and young people occupy spaces in special schools in other boroughs). The percentage of out of borough (OOB) children and young people with SEND placed in Brent special schools and ARPs will vary year on year. However, the current figure stands at 11% of Brent's total capacity. As a result, Brent currently only has access to 857 of the 963 local special school place and 165 of the 185 ARP places in Brent schools.

Table 17: Special School PANs 2024/25

School	Type of Provision	Type of School	Special Need	Specialist places 2024/25
*The Manor School	Special	Primary	Communication and Interaction	238
*The Avenue	Special	All-through	Communication and Interaction	100
Phoenix Arch School	Special	Primary	Communication and Interaction	55
+The Village School and Hope Centre	Special	All-through	Communication and Interaction and additional learning difficulty	310
*Wembley Manor (satellite provision in 2024/25)	Special	Secondary	Communication and Interaction and additional learning difficulty	27 (150 by September 2025)
+Woodfield School	Special	Secondary	Communication and Interaction	200
			Total	1053

*The Manor, Wembley Manor and The Avenue schools form the RISE Academy Trust. Children attending satellite provision of

+The Village and Woodfield schools form the Compass Learning Partnership Multi-Academy Trust.

Table 18: Additionally Resourced Provision places 2024/25

School	Type of Provision	Type of School	Special Need	Places 2024/25
Kingsbury Green Primary	ARP	Primary	Hearing Impairment	30
Oakington Manor Primary School	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	25
Fryent Primary School	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	49
Preston Manor High School	ARP	Secondary	Communication and Interaction	12
Preston Manor High School	ARP	Secondary	Communication and Interaction	12
Kingsbury High School	ARP	Secondary	Hearing Impairment	7
Carlton Vale Infant School	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	10
Kilburn Park Junior School	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	14
Newfield Primary School	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	16
Preston Park	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	11
			Total	186

9.2 Demand for special provision

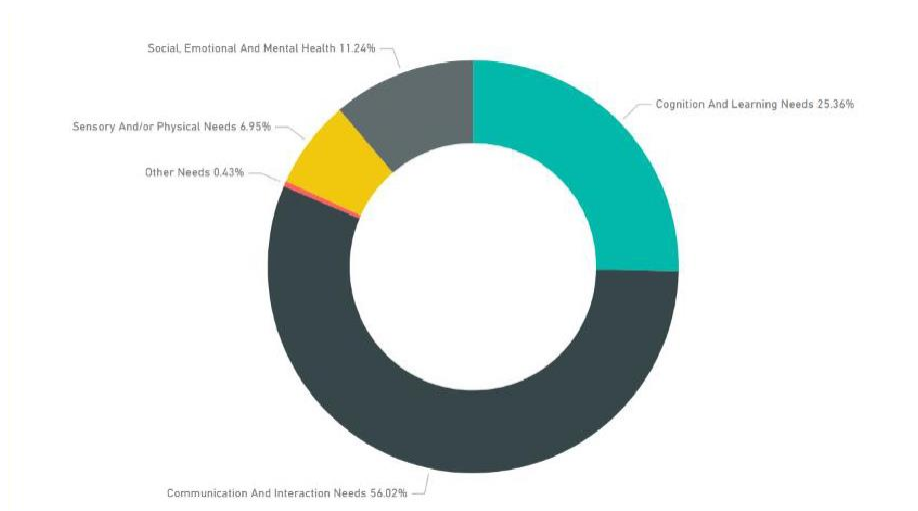
As of 1 September 2024, there are 3782 children and young people aged 0-25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) on roll at Brent schools, which at 4.6% of the school population is similar to national levels. 11.2% of pupils are identified with additional needs that can be met at SEN support where a need is identified but does not meet threshold for an EHCP (compared to 13% nationally).

Between 2023 and 2024 the number of EHCPs increased across all age groups, with the highest increase in the under 5 age group (42% compared to 25% nationally) and the 5 to 10 age group (9.7%, 11% nationally). The average growth in EHCP numbers has been approximately 10% over the last three years, however, 8% growth year on year in EHCP numbers is assumed moving forwards as a result of the expected impact of Delivering Better Value mitigations.

The breakdown by area of needs by Brent's current 0-25 cohort of CYP with an EHCP is shown in Figure 6. Needs associated with communication and interaction (CI), which includes children with autism spectrum condition (ASC), predominate with 56% of the cohort having CI as their primary area of need. The predominance of CI as the most commonly occurring primary need in Brent's EHCP cohort looks set to continue with the Early Years SEND team reporting 75-85% of their referrals over a 12-year period being for concerns regarding CI development.

When broken down by school type, according to the Department for Education 2021/2022 figures (the most recent figures available), the most prevalent needs in primary schools in the borough was speech, language and communication needs (41%) but in secondary schools it was social, emotional and mental health needs (22.6%) and in special schools the most prevalent need was autistic spectrum conditions (56.6%).

Figure 6: A breakdown of the percentage of CYP with an EHCP for each primary area of need in Brent, August 2024



9.3 Where Brent children with special needs and EHC Plans attend school

Ongoing targeted work to support schools and settings to better meet the needs of children with SEND has seen an increase in the number of children remaining within mainstream education in Brent. However, despite increasing confidence in the mainstream sector to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, and significant investment by Brent to increase the capacity within special educational settings in the borough, additional special school places are required to meet the following needs:

- 35% of all children with an EHCP in Brent require a place in a special school. However, in terms of age-groups, 43% of 5–10 year olds and 42% of 11-15 year olds with an EHCP could benefit from a special school place.
- 46% of children and young people aged 5-10 with an EHCP with cognition and learning as their primary area of need require a place in special.
- 31% of children of the same age with communication and interaction as their primary area of need on their EHCP require a special school place.

Brent currently has 117 children in mainstream schools awaiting a place in special and 17 children unplaced and receiving home tuition whilst a placement is sought. The primary need of most of these children is communication and interaction (ASC), accompanied by cognition and learning needs. In addition, 195 Brent pupils with EHC Plans attend out-of-borough maintained special schools, at a cost of £5m/annum (plus transport) and 194 children attend independent schools, at a cost of £11m/annum (plus transport). The use of independent places has increased along with the cost.

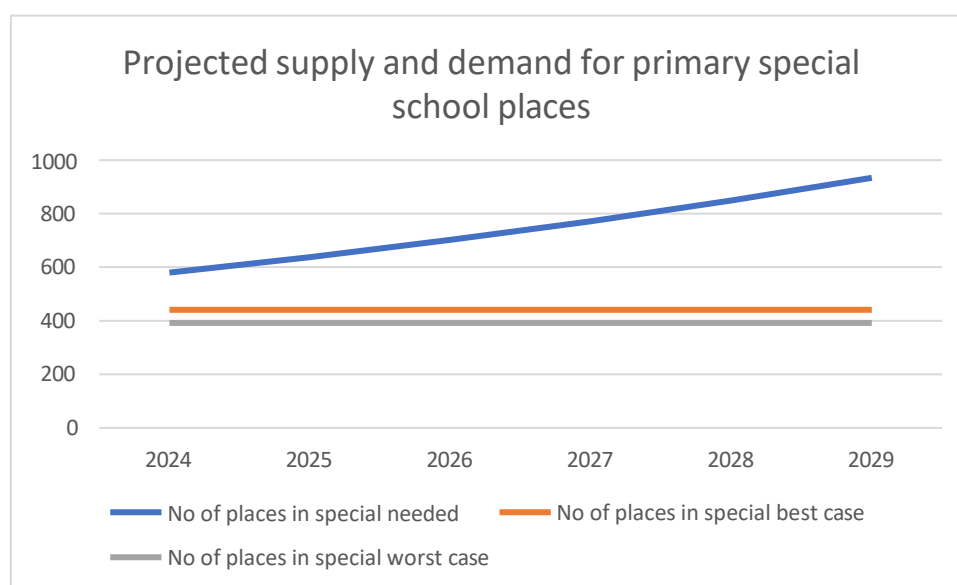
Table 19 and Figure 7 below, depict the current and projected need for primary special school places (all areas of need) within Brent over the time period of 2024-2029. In terms of demand, Table 19 and Figure 7 assume 8% annual growth in EHCP numbers (based on current annual growth trends and Delivering Better Value mitigations) and 43% of 5-10 year old children with an EHCP requiring a place in special (as per the current proportion).

In terms of supply, Table 19 and Figure 7 model a best-case scenario (whereby all of Brent special school places are available to Brent children) and a worst-case scenario (whereby 89% of Brent special school places are available to Brent children). The worst-case scenario is more reflective of current occupancy levels by out of borough children.

Table 19: Current and projected demand and supply of primary school special places in Brent

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
No of places in special needed	580	638	702	772	849	934
No of places in special best case	441	441	441	441	441	441
No of places in special worst case	392	392	392	392	392	392
Shortfall best case	139	197	261	331	408	493
Shortfall worst case	188	246	310	380	457	542

Figure 7: Current and projected demand and supply of primary school special places in Brent

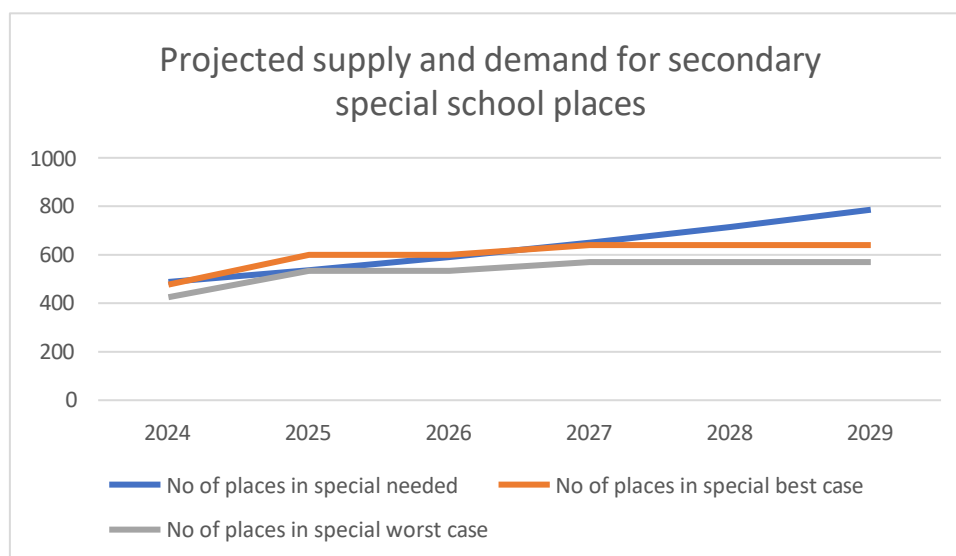


Current and projected (until 2029) need for special school places at secondary are shown in Table 20 and Figure 8 below. The same assumptions are made for this data set as for the primary age data set (with the exception that an assumption of 42% of total 11-15 EHCP cohort requiring special is made). Table 20 and Figure 8 show that Brent is close to sufficiency of secondary special school places (34 places short in the worst-case scenario) and all things being equal will continue to be close to or just above sufficiency until 2026.

Table 20: Current and projected demand and supply of secondary school special places in Brent

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
No of places in special needed	488	537	591	650	715	786
No of places in special best case	477	600	600	640	640	640
No of places in special worst case	425	534	534	570	570	570
Shortfall best case				10	75	146
Shortfall worst case				80	145	216

Figure 8: Current and projected demand and supply of secondary school special places in Brent



9.4 Planned action

In January 2022 Cabinet approved £44m of capital investment for additional specialist places in a new secondary special school, expansions of existing special schools and new ARPs in mainstream schools. The new school, Manor Wembley, has opened and will move to its permanent site in September 2025. New ARPS will see ARP provision increase by 56 places across 3 locations between August 2024 and September 2025. Confirmed special school expansions includes 40 places at Woodfield special school by January 2027 and 20 places at the Village school. The timescale to deliver the extra places at the Village School will be confirmed once feasibility work on options has been completed.

Tables 21 and 22 below detail the planned expansions of both ARP and special school places in Brent between 2024-2026. The planned increase of 40 places in secondary has been factored into Table 20 and Figure 8 above. The planned increase in ARP places is not included in the 'special' place numbers in either Table 19 or 20.

Table 21: Confirmed additional ARP provision for Brent 2024-2026

School	Places	Phase	Delivery time scale
Elsley Primary School	10	Primary	August 2024
Preston Park Primary School	21	Primary	April 2025
Newman Catholic College	25	Secondary	September 2025
Total	56	-	-

Table 22: Confirmed additional special school provision for Brent 2024-2026

School	Places	Phase	Delivery time scale
Woodfield special school	40	Secondary	January 2027
The Village	20	All-through	TBC (so not included in modelling above)

9.5. Summary of need

As can be seen from the tables above, Brent has a current need for an additional 188 primary places and 34 secondary school places in addition to the places being created as part of the current capital expansion programme. This need is expected to increase year on year. The additional places needed will need to include specialist Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) provision and special school provision (with a focus on children with ASC and/or cognition and learning needs).

9.6 Alternative provision

The Council has a statutory duty to arrange suitable full-time education for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils who because of illness or other reasons would not receive suitable education without such provision. In Brent there are two pupil referral units (PRUs) that are maintained by the local authority to provide sufficiency meet statutory duties. These are Brent River College (BRC) for permanently excluded pupils and Ashley College, for pupils who require alternative provision due to medical needs, and both PRUs are at the time of the strategy refresh judged as 'Good or Outstanding' by Ofsted.

For pupils in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 at risk of a permanent exclusion who have complex needs, Brent Council commissions two providers, Brent River College and The Pears Family School for pupils requiring time limited placements. Roundwood School and Community Centre, an alternative provision free school is also another provider who adds to the sufficiency of alternative provision in the borough. Brent River College is heavily over-subscribed at primary level (Key Stages 1 and 2) offering only 7 spaces intended for short-term respite being occupied by primary aged children with an EHCP who have significant SEMH needs. At the end of the 2023 – 2024 academic year, there were 9 young people on the waiting list for an additional support placement at BRC.

The overall exclusion figures for all Brent pupils for the academic year 2023/24 remains low with 36 students permanently excluded. This is due to the focus on early identification and prevention strategies working alongside teams in mainstream school settings. However, the increasing number of children with complex social, emotional and mental health issues (SEMH) and pupils experiencing Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) has highlighted a shortfall in provision for this cohort, especially for primary aged pupils for whom there is no provision,

and the offer is within their home. This need will be considered as part of wider school place planning considerations.

9.7 Post-16 Provision

The government drive for improved engagement post-16 in supported employment and more paid employment opportunities has placed an additional focus on local authorities to drive forward an expansion in supported internships and opportunities for young people to prepare for adulthood through employability skills and work experience. As the number of young people with an EHCP continues to grow, the demand in this area will continue.

There is an expectation in the 2014 SEND Code of Practice that a full range of opportunities must be provided to support young people to become visible, active members of society. The Council has recently committed to developing post-16 SEND provision to meet this demand for places for young people with SEND, in particular young people aged 16-25 with complex learning difficulties. A new Post-16 Skills Resource Centre located at Welsh Harp was agreed by Cabinet in May 2023 and is aimed at addressing the current lack of in-borough provision for young people aged 16-25 with complex learning difficulties. The Welsh Harp facility is on course to open September 2027.

A partnership wide Supported Employment Forum has been established to ensure that the offer developed for young people is meaningful and sustainable. The Council, working with anchor organisations, has expanded the offer of supported internships. In the 2023/24 academic year, 68 students enrolled on the supported internship scheme, with 33 successfully completing the course. Brent is looking to increase the number of placements available to supported interns within the council (where appropriate).

10. Conclusion

This strategy has set out the responsibilities the Council holds with regards to school place planning for early years, mainstream and special provision. It marks a departure from previous strategies which have been focused mainly on sufficiency of provision and moves towards a strategy based on the sustainability of provision that can adjust to both increases and decreases in demand for mainstream and specialist places.

This first-year refresh includes a deeper dive into Special Education Needs and Alternative Provision place planning which concludes additional provision is required to secure sufficient local places for children with SEND and children who need alternative provision.

The Local Authority will continue to work in partnership with schools to develop and implement actions identified as necessary to respond to both identified need and changes in demand to ensure the Brent school estate can support current and future educational use.

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