



Merton School Places Planning Strategy 2022-2027

(subject to annual review)

Updated October 2022

Introduction and summary of position

In Autumn 2021 Merton set out its draft school places strategy as a formal document; this was considered by Merton's Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 29 September, was then subject to consultation with all schools, and formally adopted in December 2021. This is an update of the 2021 plan with updated forecasting information. However, the general position has not changed since last year so this is an update of information rather than any proposed change in strategy.

This revised plan sets out the existing supply and demand for school places, and projections based on the annual review in summer 2022. After a commentary on the basis of projections it has three sections: primary school, secondary school, and specialist provision.

The next formal review will be in summer 2023 as part of the timetable for the council's annual school places ("SCAP") return to the Department for Education.

As summary of the position on supply and demand of school places is as follows:

Primary school places

From the mid-2000s there was a rising demand for primary school places, requiring an extensive expansion programme. However, since around 2016 the position has changed significantly in Merton, in London, and generally throughout the country, in there being a significant fall in demand for primary school places.

Reception year numbers decreased in 2021/22 for the sixth consecutive year and, after a plateau in 2022/23, further falls are expected from 2023/24. The extent of the further fall is dependent on the forecast model used. As the lower numbers flow to all year groups, the total primary school roll by the GLA forecast model is 14,242 in 2026/27, nearly 3,000 less than the 2017/18 peak. Our 'pupil retention' modelling suggests it will be 13,021, so 4,000 less than the 2017/18 peak.

The council has already facilitated the reduction in the published admission number by 13 forms of entry from 2016 to the present 2022/23 reception year entry. However, based on the GLA forecast, if there are no reductions the Year R surplus will be 20% by 2026/27, and 25% based on our pupil retention model.

This document sets out the strategy for managing the surplus places

Secondary school places

The significantly increased pupil numbers reached secondary age through the 2010s and the Year 7 roll has since broadly plateaued following the significant increase up to September 2018, when the council facilitated the opening of the Free School Harris Academy Wimbledon for September 2018 to enable sufficient places.

In 2021/22 we operated below the recommended minimum surplus level of 5% in Year 7 and this is also expected in 2022/23.

However, the lower numbers flowing through primary schools will reach year 7 by next September (2023) and so there is concern there will be surplus places and a need to eventually reduce the capacity of some schools.

The level of demand continues to be dependent on the pupil retention from year 6, as there is extensive cross border movement.

The significantly higher pupil numbers reach 6th form age from next September (2023) and there will be significantly increased demand.

Special School provision

There has been a more than doubling increase in the number of EHCPs over the last 7 years, from 1075 in January 2016 to 2467 in January 2022 (SEN2 count).

The council has been active in implementing special school expansion in recent years. However, this has not been sufficient keep up with the increase in demand and the council still places more children with EHCPs to independent sector provision than most councils. As part of the High Needs 'safety valve' intervention programme agreed with the DfE in early 2022 a series of new expansions are being implemented over the next 5 years, including the proposal for a new Special Free School

Background

In Merton there are the following state funded schools:

- 27 Community primary schools all with a nursery
- 11 Voluntary Aided primary schools, all with a nursery
- 6 Primary school Academies (including a Free School)
- 3 Community/Voluntary Controlled secondary schools, all with sixth forms
- 2 Voluntary Aided secondary schools, both with sixth forms
- 4 Secondary school Academies (including a Free School)
- 3 Special Schools
- 1 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) including specialist medical service

Overall aims

Merton in its role as the Local Authority seeks:

- To provide the highest standards of education and ensure all our schools are good or outstanding;
- Results for attainment and progress which compare with the best in London;
- To ensure that all children and young people enjoy learning opportunities, feel rewarded by their experience and achieve their full potential;
- Provision which contributes to the broader well-being of children and families
- Provision which is a positive choice for families

Providing sufficient, good quality school places is a key part of this role.

Definition of capacity

The DfE prescribe a number of measures for measuring surplus places:

- Net capacity is the physical capacity measure of a school. For maintained schools this is based on a prescribed method for calculating the accommodation available, and so reducing the admission number will not reduce the net capacity unless there is a specific alternative use of spare classrooms e.g. a special needs additional resourced provision. For Academy Schools it will be prescribed in the school funding agreement so it could be that in reality a school has some spare physical space.
- The 'capacity in year group' will reflect admission number changes and will specify the level of surplus that schools are operating to based on their admission numbers.

The first measure is therefore a good means for measuring efficiency of buildings, but the second measure reflects shorter term measures that the council can facilitate to assist the efficient operations of schools and managing the school budget. By concentrating on Reception Year we can see how the trend of higher or lower numbers will flow through the rest of the school.

Level of surplus places

Deciding an appropriate level of surplus places is a balance between choice and efficiency. Surplus places across schools provide more choice of school places, but since schools are largely funded based on numbers on roll, surplus places have a negative impact on the school budget, and therefore potentially teaching and learning. Key Stage 1 primary school classes cannot be in classes of more than 30 pupils yet it is difficult to balance a budget when classes are substantially smaller than 30. With a high number of surplus places primary schools are more likely to have year group numbers that are not possible to manage in a traditional 1-form/2-form/3-form entry classes of 30 structure.

In the late 1990s the Audit Commission recommended that a surplus of 5-10% would enable the appropriate balance of choice and to economically provide sufficient school places, and this is still considered a reasonable estimate of best practice. Since the Merton Council area is a compact area with its schools relatively close together and any surplus can be disproportionately placed in a small number of schools, a surplus of 5% is considered an ideal at reception year, with a tolerance for slightly less at the peak of demand. Since there is a net loss of pupils after reception year the surplus across the year groups would be higher.

Basis of school roll projections

The council use the service of the Greater London Authority (GLA) demography team of pupil projections, based on the Borough Preferred Option population projections

The GLA school roll projection model creates a roll projection for each school based on the GLA population projections of the wards where its pupils live. For each ward of residence in London, National Curriculum (NC) year (R to 11) and sex, the proportion of children of the corresponding age attending each mainstream state school is calculated. These proportions are carried forward as the pupils age through the school in the years being projected.

For new pupils entering a school in future years, for example at reception, proportions are calculated as averages over the latest years of actuals, with 4 being the standard number of years used (2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022). The same approach is used at years 7 and 12, even if the school is an all through school, as it is assumed that there will be significant changes in the cohort at this point.

The rolled forward and calculated new intake proportions for future years are then applied to the population projections to give projections of the number of children on roll by school by age and sex. Due to lower retention rates, sixth form projections are calculated using a survival ratio as the cohort ages through sixth form. School level projections are then aggregated to planning areas (in the case of primary schools) and borough totals.

The Council checks the GLA forecasts against school admissions intelligence for the following academic year, and also against a simple pupil retention model, which calculates retention percentages on the last 3 years based on a 3:2:1 ratio, with published and forecast live births used as the source data to forecast reception year.

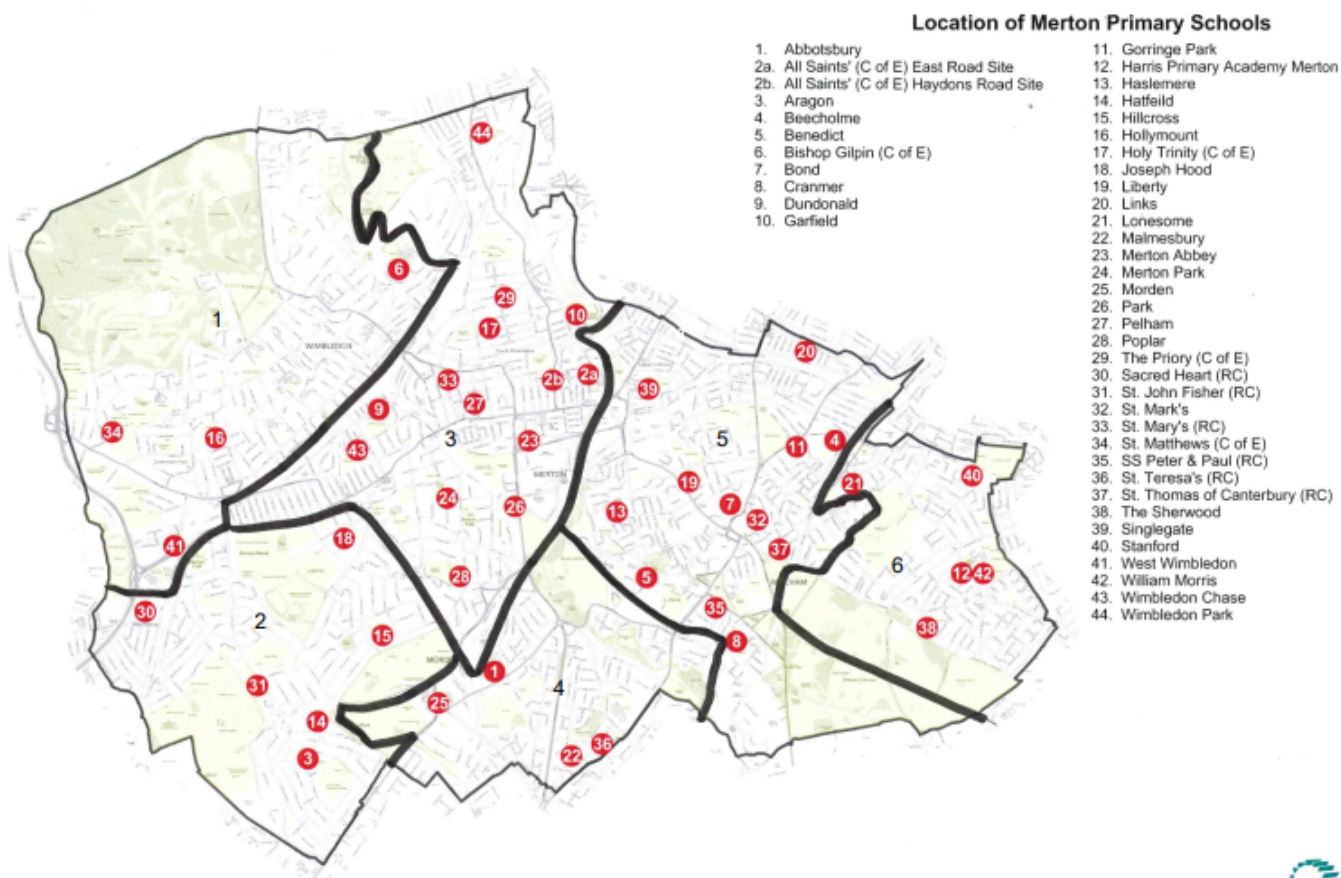
While last year the GLA forecasts did not seem to reflect the full changes in migration patterns there has been an adjustment this year and so the GLA forecasts for primary age are for a greater fall than last year. However, they are still higher than Merton's simple pupil retention model that does not take into account 'child yield' from additional housing.

Primary schools

Place planning areas

For the purposes of school places planning Merton has 6 primary school place planning areas, which are groups of wards. However, there are few natural barriers preventing easy travel across the planning areas so when making decisions on school expansion and reductions it is necessary to look beyond individual planning areas.

MAP OF MERTON PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITH PLANNING AREAS



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Rise and fall in demand

- 1.1 From 2008 to 2015 the council experienced an exceptional increase in demand for primary school places, which required a substantial expansion programme that expanded more than twenty schools. In 2017/18 there were more pupils in Merton primary schools for more than a generation – a rise of 4,367 pupils from 12,683 to 17,050 on roll (35% increase) compared to 11 years previously.
- 1.2 However, in 2016/17 there started to be a drop in demand for reception year places which is flowing through primary schools, and the fall in demand in reception year demand has continued to 2021/22. This fall was not forecast at London or national level prior to 2016, and seems to have been highly influenced by changing migration patterns as a result of the Brexit referendum and then Brexit itself.

1.3 The table below shows this exceptional rise and now fall in the primary school roll by year group.

MERTON PRIMARY SCHOOL ROLL 2006/07 TO 2020/21 (JANUARY CENSUS)

Academic year	2007 /08	2008 /09	2009 /10	2010 /11	2011 /12	2012 /13	2013 /14	2014 /15	2015 /16	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20	2020 /21	2021 /22
Reception	1937	2140	2229	2285	2651	2599	2547	2627	2628	2524	2437	2305	2370	2279	2189
Year 1	1885	1929	2148	2228	2313	2612	2577	2532	2591	2595	2465	2392	2250	2283	2201
Year 2	1816	1885	1921	2115	2227	2284	2557	2554	2509	2535	2529	2420	2322	2204	2231
Year 3	1801	1835	1859	1905	2093	2197	2224	2502	2486	2455	2463	2450	2338	2237	2110
Year 4	1781	1773	1833	1830	1901	2082	2149	2209	2458	2419	2385	2417	2414	2241	2156
Year 5	1789	1778	1742	1832	1817	1888	2028	2109	2156	2407	2393	2339	2374	2311	2185
Year 6	1794	1762	1756	1725	1837	1817	1848	2024	2081	2113	2378	2363	2270	2311	2274
Primary Total	12803	13102	13488	13920	14839	15479	15930	16557	16909	17048	17050	16686	16338	15866	15346

Current position

Current level of surplus places in primary school

The table below provides by school and planning area:

- The total roll (January 2021 school census for the statutory school years R to 6)
- The Net capacity
- The surplus and surplus percentage
- The current reception year admission number (those in red have reduced)
- The reception roll
- The reception year surplus and surplus percentage

This shows that against net capacity there were 19.6% surplus places in spring 2022. However, because admission numbers have been reduced the percentage was only 11.6% for reception year against admission number.

Despite the overall surplus in each planning area there are still some heavily oversubscribed primary schools in Merton, with about six school still offering to less than 600 metres on offer day.

MERTON PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND PLANNING AREA – SURPLUS AGAINST NET CAPACITY AND AGAINST RECEPTION YEAR ADMISSION NUMBER 2021/22

	Total roll (excl. nurs)	Net capacity	Surplus	Surplus %	R admission No.	R roll	Surplus R	Surplus R %
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PA1: Hollymount , West Wimbledon, St Matthew's CofE, Bishop Gilpin CofE.

Total PA1	1309	1490	181	12.1%	180	182	-2	-1.1%
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PA2:Hatfeild, Joseph Hood, Hillcross, Aragon, Sacred Heart RC, St John Fisher RC

Total PA2	2364	2928	564	19.3%	390	361	29	7.4%
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PA3: Dundonald, Garfield, Merton Abbey, Merton Park, Park, Pelham, Poplar, Wimbledon Park, Wimbledon Chase, All Saints' CofE, Holy Trinity CofE, St Mary's RC, The Priory CofE

Total PA3	4666	5648	984	17.4%	765	708	57	7.5%
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PA4: Morden, Abbotsbury, Malmesbury, St Teresa's RC

Total PA4	1369	1431	84	5.9%	210	179	31	14.8%
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PA5: Beecholme, Bond, Benedict, Links, Haslemere, St Mark's Primary, Singlegate, Cranmer, Gorringe Park, Liberty, St. Peter and Paul RC, St Thomas of Canterbury RC

Total PA5	4137	5652	1515	26.8%	660	554	106	16.1%
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PA6: Harris Primary Academy Merton, Stanford, Lonesome, The Sherwood, William Morris

Total PA6	1501	1890	407	21.5%	270	205	65	24.1%
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Total all borough	15346	19039	3735	19.6%	2475	2189	286	11.6%
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Actions to date to reduce surplus places (by planning area)

The recent fall in the primary school roll, especially at a time of financial constraint, has the potential to cause budget issues for a number of primary schools so some schools have reduced their admission numbers, in most cases by a multiple of 30, to ensure that they have largely full classes. Because the increase in demand was catered for by expansion of existing schools, with the exception of one Free School, schools are of a larger size so are more equipped to deal with the reduction in demand than previously.

The following 13 schools have reduced their admission number over the last 6 years (Within the last year two further added plus Priory fully decreasing by a form of entry - FE)

MERTON PRIMARY SCHOOLS THAT HAVE REDUCED THEIR ADMISSION NUMBER SINCE 2015

	2015 PAN*	2022 PAN	
West Wimbledon	60	30	Schools Adjudicator agreed Dec 2020 (ARP in spare space)
Hillcross	90	60	Included in School Admission arrangements from 2020
Merton Abbey	60	30	Included in School Admission arrangements from 2019
Park	60	30	Officially changed for new provider
The Priory C of E	60	30	Schools Adjudicator agreed to 45 in Jan 2021 then to 30 in Jan 2022

Benedict	60	30	Unofficial cap in 2019 and 2020. Officially changed for new provider
Cranmer	90	60	Included in School Admission arrangements from 2022 (ARP in spare space)
Goringe Park	90	60	Included in School Admission arrangements from 2019
Liberty	90	60	Included in School Admission arrangements from 2020
St Thomas of Canterbury	90	60	Included in School Admission arrangements from 2021
Stanford	60	30	Permanent change to school capacity with ARP
Bond	60	30	Schools Adjudicator agreed Jan 2021
SS Peter and Paul	60	30	Schools Adjudicator agreed Jan 2021
Total	930	540	Total reduction of 390 Year R places (13FE)

Note - PAN is "published admission number"

Merton forecasts submitted to DfE in July 2022

Primary school projection figures and projected surplus

The primary school projections provided in the council's SCAP (annual school capacity survey) return to the DfE in July 2022 were as follows:

MERTON PRIMARY SCHOOLS – WHOLE BOROUGH SCAP FORECASTS JULY 2022

Forecasts	Reception	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2021/22 (actual)	2189	2201	2231	2110	2156	2185	2274	15346
2022/23	2201	2139	2168	2189	2067	2112	2154	15030
2023/24	2163	2193	2129	2153	2177	2058	2107	14979
2024/25	2091	2110	2169	2108	2132	2160	2055	14825
2025/26	2013	2035	2075	2138	2086	2114	2151	14613
2026/27	1946	1957	2006	2047	2113	2068	2105	14242

Taking the borough as a whole, the implications of these projections on surplus places in future years is as follows:

MERTON PRIMARY SCHOOLS – FUTURE SURPLUS PLACES BASED ON OFFICIAL SCAP PROJECTIONS AND NO CHANGE

Year actual and forecast	Total roll	Net capacity	Surplus	Surplus %	R admission No.	R roll	Surplus R	Surplus R %
2021/22 (actual)	15346	19039	3735	19.6%	2475	2189	286	11.6%
2022/23	15030	19039	4009	26.7%	2430	2201	229	10.4%
2023/24	14979	19039	4060	27.1%	2430	2163	267	12.3%
2024/25	14825	19039	4214	28.4%	2430	2091	339	16.2%
2025/26	14613	19039	4426	30.3%	2430	2013	417	20.7%
2026/27	14242	19039	4797	33.7%	2430	1946	484	24.9%

Therefore without further action (some of which will be apparent in 2023 with opening of ARPs in spare space and so reducing the official net capacity) there will be 33% surplus of physical space and 25% against Reception year admission number.

However, our pupil retention model based purely on retention from live births up to 2021 and forecast live births thereafter suggests a reception roll of only 1820 by 2026/27, suggesting further action may be required. However it should be recognised that live birth data is only available up to the 2021 calendar year so forecasts in 2025/26 have an element ($\frac{1}{3}$) of forecasts births, and it is entirely based on forecast births from 2026/27.

MERTON PUPIL RETENTION PROJECTIONS OCTOBER 2022

	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2021/22 (actual)	2189	2201	2231	2110	2156	2185	2274	15346
2022/23	2197	2116	2150	2144	2037	2092	2137	14874
2023/24	2111	2122	2068	2064	2066	1976	2049	14456
2024/25	1998	2039	2074	1985	1991	2006	1936	14029
2025/26	1938	1930	1993	1991	1915	1932	1964	13663
2026/27	1855	1872	1886	1913	1920	1858	1892	13197
2027/28	1813	1792	1830	1811	1845	1863	1820	12775

The pupil projections by planning area in the SCAP return are as follows:

MERTON PRIMARY SCHOOLS – FORECASTS BY PLANNING AREA JULY 2022

PLANNING AREA 1

Forecasts	Reception	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2021/22 (actual)	182	181	186	195	188	185	192	1309
2022/23	177	178	181	184	193	186	179	1279
2023/24	164	177	177	181	184	193	184	1261
2024/25	170	162	177	177	181	186	189	1243
2025/26	164	167	162	176	178	183	180	1210
2026/27	158	160	167	163	177	178	177	1180

PLANNING AREA 2

Forecasts	Reception	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2021/22	361	329	356	311	324	333	350	2364
2022/23	348	353	325	349	306	318	326	2325
2023/24	331	348	353	323	349	307	317	2328
2024/25	328	326	349	350	323	348	305	2329
2025/26	315	322	325	345	350	322	344	2324
2026/27	309	309	321	322	344	346	319	2270

PLANNING AREA 3

Forecasts	Reception	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2021/22	708	687	694	646	656	631	644	4666
2022/23	699	692	675	682	632	641	617	4638
2023/24	691	696	688	672	678	629	635	4689
2024/25	672	670	685	680	664	669	621	4663
2025/26	654	648	655	674	669	655	658	4612
2026/27	628	627	634	643	662	659	642	4494

PLANNING AREA 4

Forecasts	Reception	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2021/22	179	199	200	190	194	206	201	1369
2022/23	187	172	197	196	187	191	204	1334
2023/24	178	184	171	195	195	186	192	1301
2024/25	169	172	182	170	194	195	189	1270
2025/26	165	162	171	180	169	195	197	1238
2026/27	160	157	161	170	179	169	200	1195

PLANNING AREA 5

Forecasts	Reception	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2021/22	554	590	575	559	583	617	659	4137
2022/23	580	543	576	562	543	568	612	3984
2023/24	598	578	539	570	555	538	569	3947
2024/25	563	583	567	531	559	548	542	3893
2025/26	529	549	566	556	519	548	552	3819
2026/27	511	519	535	554	543	514	551	3726

PLANNING AREA 6

Forecasts	Reception	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2021/22	205	215	220	209	211	213	228	1501
2022/23	210	202	213	217	206	208	216	1471
2023/24	201	210	201	211	216	205	210	1452
2024/25	190	197	208	200	211	214	209	1428
2025/26	187	188	196	207	201	211	221	1410
2026/27	181	185	188	196	208	203	217	1378

There is therefore a need to manage the falling demand for school places to ensure that schools can continue to improve and manage a balanced budget. The broad strategy, as agreed in autumn 2021, is as follows:

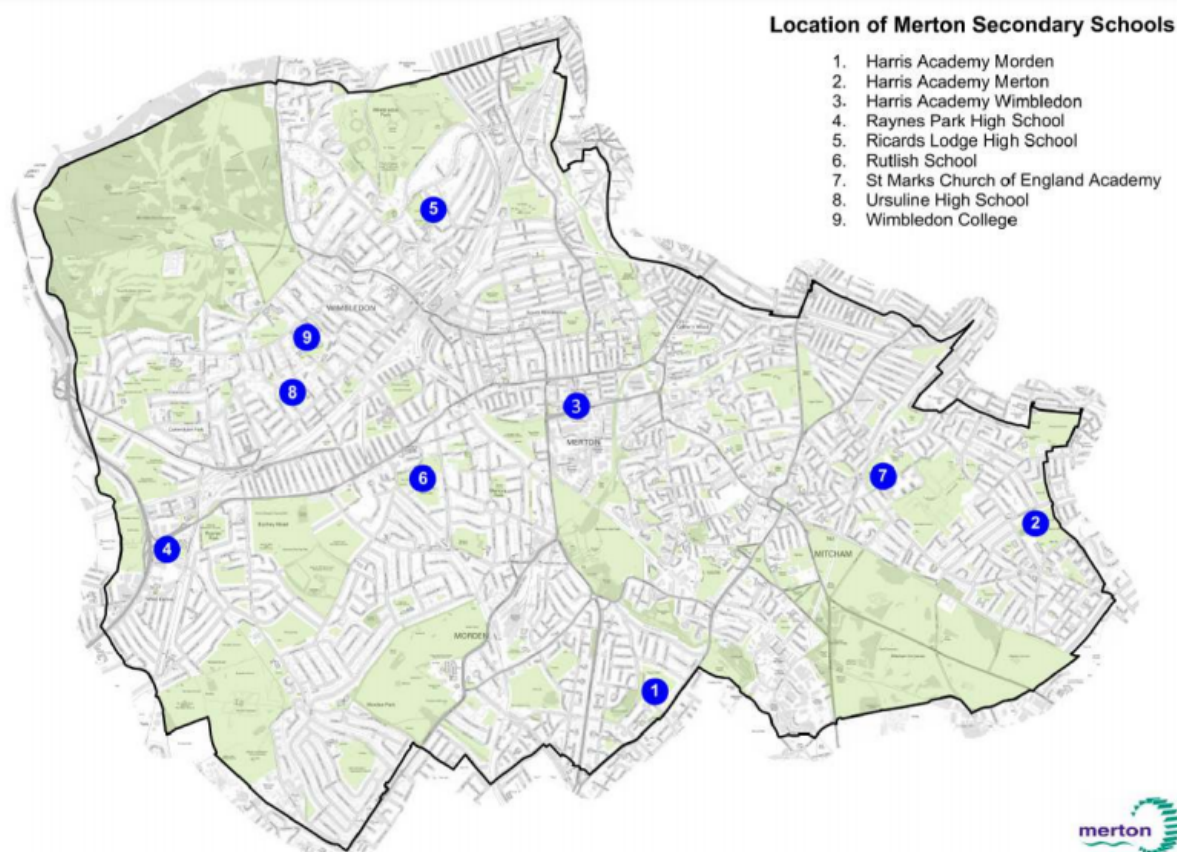
- Continue to encourage schools to reduce admissions numbers to multiples of 30 for education efficiency when practical to do so
- Encourage schools to work in cluster areas with the council to agree reductions in admission numbers at an area level
- Consider use of compatible alternative uses for space where appropriate such as primary age SEND Additional Resourced Provision when it can be agreed with schools
- Where appropriate consider alternative models to operate schools for school improvement and to manage a balanced budget e.g. hard and soft federations
- No plans to close schools unless absolutely necessary, as per the statutory guidance. This would be where standards are poor without a viable strategy for school improvement, the school is not viable financially after all options have been exhausted, and that there are places elsewhere for children that would be displaced, and pupil forecasts do not suggest an increase in demand, The council will also be wary that once land is lost for schools it may not be possible to get it back for any future increase in demand that cannot be foreseen. The council has no statutory power to propose the closure of an Academy school

Secondary schools

Secondary school places planning is undertaken on a borough wide context, but local factors are considered when major school planning decisions are made e.g. the new Harris Academy Wimbledon secondary school was facilitated to be in the South Wimbledon area to meet a gap in school provision in this area.

A map of the mainstream state funded secondary schools in Merton is below:

MAP OF MERTON SECONDARY SCHOOLS



General issues for provision of secondary school places in Merton

The pattern of demand for Merton secondary schools is very different to primary schools, with families willing to travel much greater distances and parental preference patterns being more significant.

For many years Merton more Merton resident children have travelled out of the borough state schools for their secondary schooling than the other way around. Since the movement in the primary sector is relatively minor and more children attend independent schools from year 7, there is a significant net reduction in pupils in Merton state funded schools from Year 6 to year 7.

Standards in Merton secondary schools have risen significantly over the last 10 years, and the DfE figures from 2017 to the last exam based publication in 2019 showed that they were consistently in the top 10 in the country for progress from primary school to the end

of Key Stage 4 (GCSE year). All Merton secondary schools (maintained and academy) are at least 'good' in Ofsted terms, with over judged to be outstanding.

As shown in the table below, the year 6 to year 7 transfer rate fell from circa 88% in the 2000s to 75% in the mid-2010, and the council therefore reduced its previous secondary school expansion plans to only 8 forms of entry (FE – 1 FE is a year group of 30 pupils) – 2FE through the expansion of Harris Academy Merton and 6 FE through Harris Academy Wimbledon.

Over the last 3 years it has recovered and last year it was 80%. Based on draft October 2022 census and admissions allocation information a further moderate rise is expected for 2022/23, to around 81.5%.

YEAR 6 TO YEAR 7 TRANSFER PERCENTAGE ON MERTON SCHOOLS 2008/09 TO 2020/21

2009 /10	2010 /11	2011 /12	2012 /13	2013 /14	2014 /15	2015 /16	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20	2020 /21	2021 /22
87.6 %	85.5 %	84.5 %	79.2 %	80.6 %	80.7 %	78.0 %	74.8 %	74.3 %	74.9 %	79.5 %	79.4 %	80.0 %

Rise in demand

The significant increased pupil numbers has reached secondary age over the last few years and the Year 7 roll has broadly plateaued following the significant increase to September 2018 when the council facilitated the opening of the Free School Harris Academy Wimbledon for September 2018 and which moved to its permanent site in autumn 2020.

However, the lower numbers flowing through primary school will reach year 7 from next September (2023) and so there is concern there will be surplus places and a need to reduce the capacity of some schools

The level of demand continues to be dependent on the pupil retention from year 6.

MERTON SCHOOLS SECONDARY SCHOOL ROLL 2009/10 TO 2021/22

Academic year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Year 7	1544	1502	1457	1454	1465	1492	1578	1556	1569	1782	1878	1803	1848
Year 8	1608	1547	1516	1450	1459	1462	1482	1553	1547	1593	1767	1854	1795
Year 9	1556	1618	1573	1508	1440	1450	1451	1477	1564	1587	1583	1722	1811
Year 10	1573	1551	1630	1571	1503	1446	1454	1419	1460	1573	1534	1557	1713
Year 11	1576	1540	1548	1590	1532	1497	1416	1403	1383	1497	1518	1508	1530
Year 12	412	606	609	699	856	805	754	239	774	716	724	814	849
Year 13	309	298	398	455	499	657	632	585	616	700	643	665	727
Secondary Year 7 - 11	7857	7758	7724	7573	7399	7347	7381	7408	7523	8032	8280	8444	8697
Secondary Year 12+	721	904	1007	1154	1355	1462	1386	824	1390	1416	1367	1479	1576
Secondary Total	8578	8662	8731	8727	8754	8809	8767	8232	8913	9448	9647	9923	10273
Year 6/7 Transfer Rate (%)	87.6 %	85.5 %	84.5 %	79.2 %	80.6 %	80.7 %	78.0 %	74.8 %	74.3 %	74.9 %	79.5 %	79.4 %	80.0 %

Current level of surplus places in secondary school

The table below provides:

- The total roll (January 2022 school census)

- The Net capacity
- The surplus and surplus percentage
- The current Year 7 admission number
- The Year 7 roll
- The Year 7 surplus and surplus percentage

This shows that against net capacity there were 5.7% surplus places in spring 2022, and 3.2% in year 7 against published admission number. Based on draft October 2022 census figures we expect the Year 7 surplus to be less than 3% in 2022/23. These numbers are therefore below the 5% that is considered the ideal level.

MERTON SECONDARY SCHOOLS – SURPLUS AGAINST NET CAPACITY AND AGAINST YEAR 7 ADMISSION NUMBER 2021/22

2021/22	Total roll	Net capacity	Surplu s	Surplu s %	Year 7 admission No.	Year 7 roll	Surplu s Yr 7	Surplu s Yr 7 %
Total all 9 secondary schools*	10273	10918	626	5.7%	1909	1848	61	3.2%

*The 9 secondary schools are Harris Academy Morden, Harris Academy Wimbledon, Ricards Lodge High School, Raynes Park High School, Rutlish School, Wimbledon College, Ursuline High School Wimbledon, Harris Academy Merton, St Mark's Church of England Academy

Secondary school projection figures and projected surplus

The introduction section of this strategy describes the basis of the council using the GLA projections. The GLA projections show that the number of pupils entering year 7 will start to fall from 2023/24 only moderately, by the equivalent of 3-4 forms of entry within the next five years.

MERTON SECONDARY SCHOOLS – OFFICIAL SCAP JULY 2022

Forecasts	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total 7-11	Total 12-13
2021/22	1848	1795	1811	1713	1530	849	727	8697	1576
2022/23	1828	1840	1796	1801	1714	831	609	8979	1440
2023/24	1811	1823	1842	1790	1809	894	707	9075	1601
2024/25	1783	1801	1821	1828	1795	916	764	9028	1680
2025/26	1698	1768	1797	1804	1834	903	782	8901	1685
2026/27	1724	1687	1763	1782	1813	922	769	8769	1691
2027/28	1722	1713	1686	1749	1794	913	787	8664	1700
2028/29	1684	1713	1714	1672	1759	905	778	8542	1683

However, given the much lower numbers flowing through Merton primary schools there is the concern that the GLA model is projecting significantly more pupils than there will be. Merton also runs a simple 'pupil retention model' which projects pupil retention percentage from the previous 3 years on a 3:2:1 ratio, therefore giving more weighting to the most recent year. Based on the year 6 to year 7 transfer being 81%, this projection shows that

year 7 numbers will fall sharply from 2023/24, such that by 2027/28 the fall will be equivalent to 10 forms of entry (FE) less than at present.

A detail not considered in the pupil projections is the increase in migration from Hong Kong. This has been more pronounced in the neighbouring Kingston and Sutton but may continue to increase demand for places in all year groups in Merton.

MERTON PUPIL RETENTION PROJECTIONS OCTOBER 2022

81% Pupil retention projections	7	8	9	10	11	Total 7-11	12	13	Total whole school
2021/22	1848	1795	1811	1713	1530	8697	849	727	10273
2022/23	1858	1848	1795	1811	1713	827	766	9025	10619
2023/24	1726	1858	1848	1795	1811	938	746	9038	10722
2024/25	1658	1726	1858	1848	1795	992	845	8885	10722
2025/26	1568	1658	1726	1858	1848	981	894	8658	10533
2026/27	1590	1568	1658	1726	1858	1011	884	8400	10295
2027/28	1532	1590	1568	1658	1726	1016	911	8074	10002

While the proposed new secondary Free School in Sutton was cancelled in summer 2021, with only the special school element remaining, there remains concern regarding the proposed opening of a new Voluntary Aided school in Kingston (Norbiton area) that is relatively close to the west of Merton. In June 2021 this was approved to open by Kingston Council but a planning application is yet to be submitted and it is not expected to open until at least September 2025.

Based on a fall in demand of 10FE, there would be opportunities for schools to reduce admission numbers, with the possibility of Additionally Resourced Provision (reserved provision for pupils with SEND) provided in the spare space.

Specialist school provision

LB Merton caters for pupils with SEND (Special Educational needs and disabilities) through mainstream schools, specialist provision within mainstream schools (“additional resourced provision”), special schools, and use of independent provision. For children with an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan which replaced SEN statements) there are three maintained special schools; in addition three primary and three secondary schools provide specialist provision for pupils with ASD (autistic spectrum disorders) and SCLN (Speech, language and communication needs. There is also a Pupil Referral Unit (SMART centre) which operates under the same management as Melrose, our special school for pupils with SEMH (Social, emotional and mental health).

When there is not a suitable placement for a child with an EHCP within the state funded sector the council is financially responsible for commissioning suitable specialist placements within the Independent sector.

The growth in demand for SEND placements is a national issue, and the problem is significant in Merton. The growth in EHCPs and the specialist placements by school type over the past 6 years is shown in the table below, with the proportions by percentage shown overleaf .

NUMBER OF MERTON RESIDENT EHCPs JANUARY 2016 TO JANUARY 2022 AND SCHOOL PLACEMENT TYPE (SEN 2 RETURNS)

	Jan 2016 Total Stateme nts and EHCPs	Jan 2017 Total Stateme nts and EHCPs	Jan 2018 Total Stateme nts and EHCPs	Jan 2019 Total Stateme nts and EHCPs	Jan 2020 Total EHCPs	Jan 2021 Total EHCPs	Jan 2022 Total EHCPs
Early Years (inc. Private & Voluntary Settings)	0	1	7	7	7	8	9
Mainstream School (inc. Academies)	422	461	526	584	682	816	832
ARP (Additional Resourced Provision)	110	111	116	125	125	133	160
State Funded Special School	358	388	416	440	474	520	550
Independent/Non-Maintained Provision)	132	153	176	228	305	367	393
Post 16 College and traineeships	25	93	183	212	194	268	340
Post 16 Specialist	10	25	44	37	40	44	46
Alternative Educative	15	10	22	28	44	37	3
No placement (including NEET and hospital schools)	3	0	28	51	57	59	134
Total	1075	1242	1518	1712	1928	2252	2467

Note the recording of NEETs etc. changed in 2018 and 2019

MERTON RESIDENT EHCPs JANUARY 2016 TO JANUARY 2022 – PROPORTIONS (PERCENTAGE) BY SCHOOL PLACEMENT TYPE (SEN 2 RETURNS)

	Jan 2016 Total Statements and EHCPs	Jan 2017 Total Statements and EHCPs	Jan 2018 Total Statements and EHCPs	Jan 2019 Total Statements and EHCPs	Jan 2020 Total EHCPs	Jan 2021 Total EHCPs	Jan 2022 Total EHCPs
Early Years (inc. Private & Voluntary Settings)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mainstream School (inc. Academies)	39%	37%	35%	34%	35%	36%	34%
ARP (Additional Resourced Provision)	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	6%	6%
State Funded Special School	33%	31%	27%	26%	25%	23%	22%
Independent/Non-Maintained Provision)	12%	12%	12%	13%	16%	16%	16%
Post 16 College and traineeships	2%	7%	12%	12%	10%	12%	14%
Post 16 Specialist	1%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Alternative Educative	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	0%
No placement (including NEET and hospital schools)	0%	0%	2%	3%	3%	3%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

There has therefore been more than doubling in the number of EHCPs in the years from 2016 to 2022.

The council has been active in implementing special school expansion in recent years, increasing the number of special school placements from 358 to 520. The number of ARP places capacity in 2016 was 101 and by 2020 it had risen to 150. This has been through a new site for Perseid School in the early 2010s and then over the past five years further expansion of Perseid School, Additional Resourced Provision (ARP) at Hatfeild and Stanford Primary Schools, the expansion of Cricket Green School, the expansion of Melrose School including the provision of a primary department.

However, as shown by the EHCP placement data, this has not been sufficient keep up with the increase in EHCPs and the council still places more children with EHCPs to independent sector provision than most councils. The budget allocation from the DfE has not kept up with the growing expenditure in Merton and so the council has a significant and growing deficit in its Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs block.

In autumn 2021 the DfE invited Merton to participate in the second round of their 'safety valve' intervention programme with the aim of agreeing a package of reform to the high needs system that will bring the DSG deficit under control. As part of this the council has agreed a range of actions and this includes a significant increase in the number of local special school places, with additional capital funding provided. This includes in-principle support for a new special school although a detailed bid is required and was submitted at the end of October 2022.

The table overleaf summarises the expansions completed for September 2022 and planned over the next five years:

School	Additional places	
Melrose School/Whatley Avenue	*110	Project for 80 places completed autumn 2022
West Wimbledon Primary School	24	First phase completed for September 2022, second phase to be completed for September 2023
Hatfeild Primary School	10	Completed for September 2022
Cranmer Primary School	24	First phase completed for September 2022, second phase to be completed for September 2023
TBC	12	On hold pending review of demand
TBC Raynes Park High School	24	On hold pending a review of role of secondary school ARPs
TBC	24	On hold pending a review of role of secondary school ARPs
TBC Ricards Lodge	14	On hold pending a review of role of secondary school ARPs
TBC Rutlish	14	On hold pending a review of role of secondary school ARPs
Perseid School (SLD/PMLD)	28	Design work to progress shortly
New Free School	120	Bid submitted on 31 October 2022
	404	

Notes:

* 80 places delivered initially; expected to increase with possible 6th form

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