

LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 17 OCTOBER 2011

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND CULTURAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES

WARDS: ALL

SUMMARY

1. This report gives updates on progress against the Council's principal educational priorities.

PURPOSE OF REPORT GOING TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2. This report informs members of the committee about the progress that has been made in meeting each of the Council's principal educational priorities since December 2010.

RECOMMENDATION

3. Members of the committee are requested to comment on the issues set out in the report.

DETAILS

4. In December 2010, the Council published its overarching education strategy, *Choice and diversity: a policy paper for Education and Children's Services*. The strategy, which Cabinet approved on 6 December 2010, outlines plans for key educational priorities, progress against each of which is addressed within this report.

4.1. **Priority: Providing sufficient numbers of high-quality primary school places**

The 2011-2012 Reception-entry cohort across the borough was forecast to be large and the provision of 30 extra places was therefore arranged in each of eight schools:

- Buckingham (permanent expansion);
- Chase Bridge (permanent expansion);
- Heathfield Infant ('bulge' class);
- Holy Trinity (bulge class in addition to their permanent expansion)

- to two-form entry in 2010);
- Lowther (permanent expansion);
- St Mary Magdalen's ('shared form of entry' with St Elizabeth's and St Osmund's);
- St Mary's and St Peter's (permanent expansion); and
- The Vineyard ('shared form of entry' with Marshgate and Sheen Mount).

(The 'shared form of entry strategy' groups three schools to provide the seven extra classrooms needed for a full form of entry. The children admitted each year stay in the same school for the full seven years of primary provision, but each year the school admitting the additional class rotates. The concept was originally suggested by the three Surrey-side Catholic primary schools in the borough who wanted to share in the expansion of places but did not have sites large enough for full expansion.)

After the initial allocations, three more classes were provided, at Hampton Wick Infant, Orleans Infant and St Mary's, as the waiting-lists would not otherwise have moved far and fast enough for all in-borough children to have been placed by September 2011.

The need to provide so many additional classes, together with a significant increase in the birth rate between 2000 and 2007¹, has meant that it has been necessary to arrange further school expansions in liaison with the governing bodies of the schools concerned:

2012-2013 entry

- Archdeacon Cambridge's (bulge class)
- Hampton Wick Infant (permanent expansion)
- Nelson (bulge class)
- Orleans Infant (conversion to two-form entry primary)
- St Elizabeth's (shared form of entry)
- St Mary's (permanent expansion)
- St Stephen's (conversion to two-form entry primary)
- Sheen Mount (shared form of entry)

2013-2014 entry

- Heathfield Infant (permanent expansion)
- Heathfield Junior (permanent expansion)
- Marshgate (shared form of entry)
- Nelson (bulge class)
- St Osmund's (shared form of entry)
- New primary school at Clifden Road site (establishment of a

¹ Between 2000 and 2007 the number of live births in the borough rose by 21% from 2,384 to 2,884. By the end of 2010 the number of live births has risen by a further 4.5% to 2,992.

one-form entry primary school)

2014-2015 entry

- St John the Baptist (permanent expansion)

If all these proposals proceed, by 2013 the number of permanent expansions achieved in the borough since 2000 will have reached 20. Each of the permanent expansion proposals (except that of St Mary's which has already been approved) will be subject to the statutory consultation and approval process and to planning permission.

4.2 **Priority: Providing sufficient numbers of high-quality secondary school places**

The academic profile of secondary schools in the borough continues to improve year on year, and parental confidence in the quality of secondary school provision continues to grow; however, there is still considerable spare capacity in secondary schools. There are approximately 200 spare places in the Year 7 cohort that started in the three academies in September 2011. Unlike at primary level, where most state-funded schools in the borough are consistently successful and therefore popular, it may take time for the positive changes at the three academies to translate into oversubscription in secondary schools. For that reason, it is unlikely that the increased demand in the primary sector will lead to additional secondary school places being required until beyond 2016 at the earliest, if at all.

It is also the case that the first groups of families whose children would miss out if the academies became oversubscribed would be those living well outside the borough. There would therefore be some degree of cushioning for in-borough residents. Although the establishment of a Catholic secondary school in 2013 has been in the context of increasing choice and diversity, it would also meet basic need by releasing places at the eight secondary schools. This would be most notable at Christ's School, because it has traditionally admitted a number of Catholic children as part of its 'Foundation' category.

Within this context, the increases in numbers at the three academies could safely be reversed down to 180 places each in order to accommodate sixth form provision. It has also been agreed that, from 2012 entry onwards, the temporary increase in Grey Court's admission number should be reversed down to 200.

Christ's has proposed increasing its intake by an additional form of entry if investment in adequate buildings is available. This would make the school's budgetary position more viable, enabling it to compete more effectively with other schools.

The capacity of the other secondary schools is likely to remain as at

present, i.e. Orleans Park and Waldegrave would admit 200 pupils per year and Teddington would admit 240 pupils per year.

4.3 Priority: Creating sixth form provision on school sites

A Sixth Forms Forum – consisting of the headteachers and principals of the borough's state-maintained secondary schools, academies and further education colleges, plus senior elected members and officers – was established in January 2011, with a view to testing the feasibility of adding sixth forms at all eight secondary schools and academies.

At its meeting in May, the Forum considered a high-level feasibility report. The report included data, case studies of post-16 provision in Camden and Harrow, and the results of an online survey of parents, students and other local residents. 87% of the 1,325 respondents to the survey indicated that they would like to see school sixth forms in the borough, whilst 10% said they would not. The Forum felt that the report showed that there was enough justification for commissioning more detailed feasibility into the development of a viable structure, curriculum model and the accommodation that would be needed on the school sites.

The Forum will meet again on 18 October to consider the detailed feasibility reports, with a view to moving forward with the proposal to establish sixth forms in the eight schools and academies in September 2013.

The Forum will also consider what role the local colleges and, in particular, Richmond upon Thames College could play in delivering sixth form provision or provision which complements sixth forms.

4.4 Priority: Enhancing the freedom of schools through academy status

On 2 March 2011, a briefing on convertor academy status was held for the headteachers and chairs of governors of all non-academy secondary schools within the borough. Since then, the headteachers and chairs of governors of the five non-academy secondary schools have met regularly with a view to all five schools converting to academy status on 1 April 2012.

In July 2011, the governing bodies of Christ's, Grey Court, Teddington and Waldegrave individually voted to apply to the Department for Education to become academies. On 14 September 2011, the governing body of Orleans Park voted in favour of moving to the consultation stage. All five schools will be undertaking statutory consultation with pupils, parents, staff and other stakeholders between 19 September and 21 October 2011.

Due diligence work is being carried out in the autumn term, in parallel

with the requisite legal work, with a view to the schools being in a position to make their final decisions in January 2012. The TUPE consultation with staff members, led by the Council's Human Resources Department, will follow in February and March 2012. The Secretary of State would then make a decision in March 2012 whether or not to approve the applications.

It is anticipated that some primary schools will follow suit in the coming months.

4.5 Priority: Developing community boards within the quadrants

It is envisaged that each of the secondary schools that converts to academy status will help parents to establish a community board, as happened at Richmond Park Academy, where the Parent Promoted Foundation for Barnes, East Sheen and Mortlake has been working closely with the school to establish and develop a board to exchange information and opinion between the local community and the school.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In accordance with the requirement of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, a cash limit will be set for each school place planning project to ensure focussed management of costs. This will include such items as: professional fees; surveys; internal fees; information and communication technology; fixed furniture and equipment, transition costs; external works; building costs and all other expenditure associated with each particular school project.
- 5.2 The costs of schools' due diligence and legal work in preparation for conversion to academy status will be met through Department for Education grants of £25,000 per school, should the Secretary of State approve their applications.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS/CONSIDERATIONS

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

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

EQUALITY IMPACT/CONSIDERATIONS

8. The provision of additional school places will meet the local authority's statutory duty and the wishes of residents who would like their children

to be educated in schools in Richmond upon Thames. An Equalities Impact Needs Assessment (EINA) was undertaken in December 2007 on the local authority's school place planning policy and procedures. This EINA was updated in December 2009.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND LINKS

10.
 - [Education White Paper: Provision of High Quality Places in Education, Report of the Cabinet Member for Schools, 6 December 2010.](#)
 - ['Choice and diversity: a policy paper for Education and Children's Services'.](#)
 - [Richmond Park Academy Community Board](#) – (www.richmondparkacademy.org/community).

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