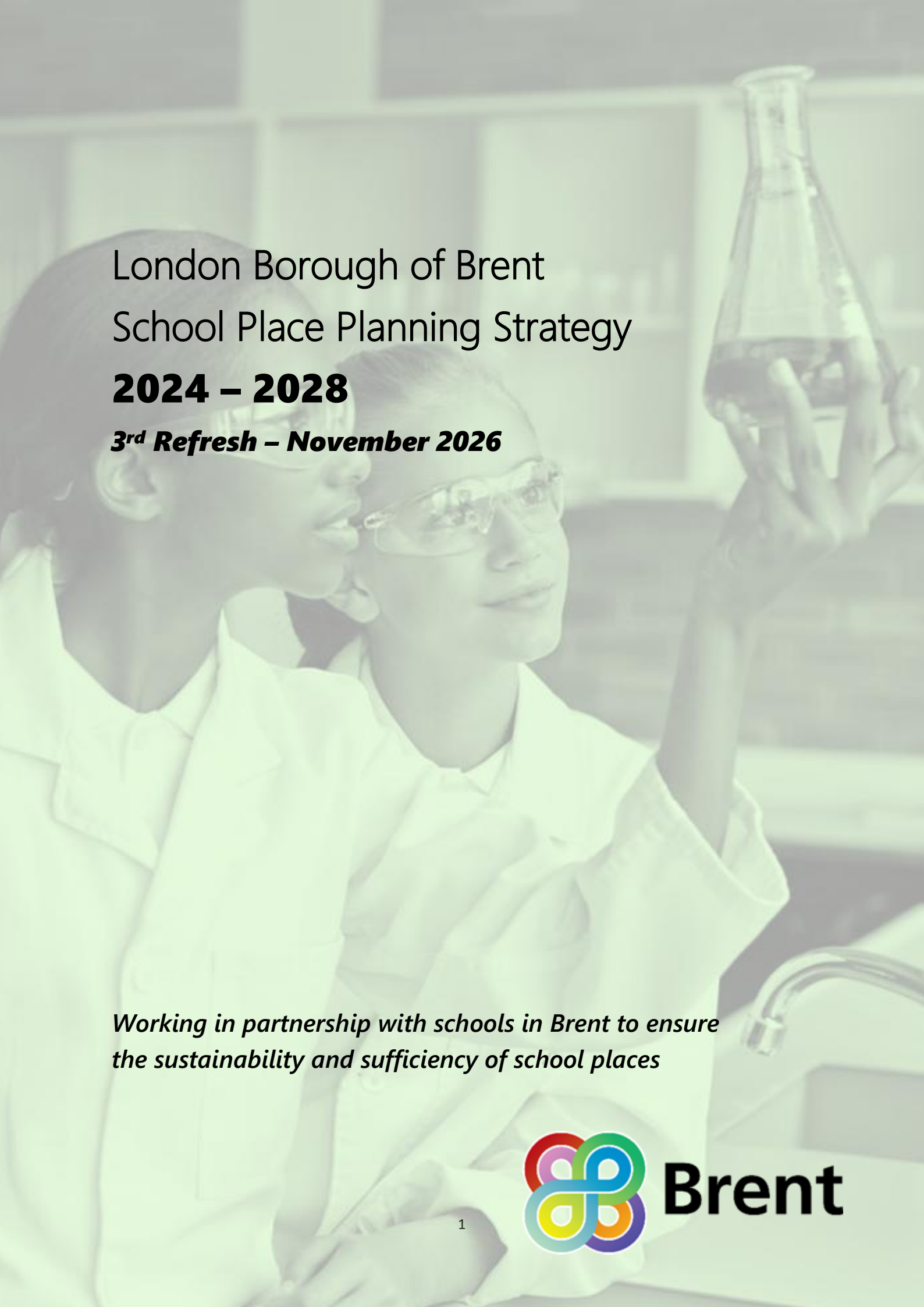

London Borough of Brent
School Place Planning Strategy
2024 – 2028

3rd Refresh – November 2026

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

Brent

London Borough of Brent
School Place Planning Strategy 2024 – 2028
3rd Refresh

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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 current 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 November 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 third refresh, and it highlights recent changes in school capacity and demand, and a continued need to address the sufficiency of local places for Brent children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in both primary and secondary age ranges.

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 compulsory school in Brent age are: Indian (18.7%), White British (9.2%), White Eastern European (6.1%), Black Somali (5.9%), Black Caribbean (3.8%), Pakistani (3.5%) and Afghan (2.8%). Undefined ethnic groups include Other ethnic group (3.8%), Arab other (3.3%), White Other (3.0%) and Other Asian (3.0%) *(Source: January 2026 School Census)*.

In addition to new arrivals, the socio-economic pressures placed on many of Brent's families from both Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic, together with increasing housing costs, a shortage of affordable housing and rising levels of homelessness 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 27.8% (2025/26), slightly above the national figure of 27.7% but below the London average of 31.3% (based on deprivation pupil premium

allocations). A cross-Council working group oversees the auto enrolment of primary and secondary aged Brent resident pupils attending Brent schools who are eligible for Free School Meals but are not accessing this support. Together with the expanded criteria of eligibility for FSM arrangements (which offers FSM to children from all families in receipt of Universal Credit regardless of income), this has helped maximise access to support for eligible families and contributed to an increase in FSM registration across Brent schools.

1.2 School Effectiveness

Over the last seven 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 88 state schools in Brent. This includes 4 Nursery Schools, 2 all-through schools, 59 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, as demonstrated by both the proportion of schools judged as either good or outstanding by Ofsted under the previous Ofsted framework (96.5% at the end of 2025/26 where the single word judgement still applied) and those judged as meeting the required standards under the current Ofsted framework.

In September 2026, Brent's Strategic School Effectiveness Partnership Board approved a revised 'Strategic Framework for School Effectiveness in Brent 2026-2030'. The Framework sets the following priorities which will be supported by the delivery of this Place Planning Strategy:

- Improving education provision so that Ofsted evaluations meet or exceed expected standards across all areas.
- Raising the attainment and achievement of vulnerable children and priority groups to reduce disparities in educational outcomes.
- Strengthening inclusive practice and improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND and other additional needs.
- Promoting pupil wellbeing, attendance and mental health as key enablers of educational success.
- Strengthening school governance so that governing boards provide effective support, challenge and strategic oversight.
- Building leadership capacity across the borough, including the development and succession of current and future leaders.
- Embedding anti-racist and equitable practice throughout Brent's education system.
- Developing a collaborative, self-improving school system through partnership and shared expertise

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 5 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.

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 for children 9+ months in working families, two-year-olds in low/no-income households or who are vulnerable and 30 hours for 3 and 4-year-olds from working families.

In March 2023 the previous 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.

The Council's early years team administers 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 providing a comprehensive picture of demand and availability of places for the new entitlements and identifies where demand may outstrip supply. This exercise informs sufficiency activity to target issues and gaps in provision.

The early education and childcare sector within the borough is diverse, operating in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sectors, as well as through maintained providers. 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), can be offered by childminders, voluntary or private groups and schools. In Brent, this mixed economy of 0-5 childcare provision currently sees 57% of 3- and 4-year-old free entitlement places delivered by the PVI sector and 43% 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. Numbers on roll have continued to decrease to 24,434 in January 2026 (a reduction of 529 children since January 2025) and are forecast to continue falling over the next five years to around 23,000 by 2030/31. The latest Greater London Authority (GLA) projections indicate demand will fall by 2031/32 to a level last seen in 2010/11. As a projection, these forecasts are subject to change, but they are based on existing and historical attendance and migration patterns in the borough. 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 2030/31. 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, the Covid-19 pandemic and more recently the cost-of-living crisis where families are finding they are unable to afford to move into or remain living in the borough. This has all led to some migration away from both Brent and London respectively.

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 17%), 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 since 2013 in response to increased cohorts moving through the primary phase and into the secondary phase. In response to forecast growth, the 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 as smaller cohorts progress through primary provision into Year 7.

Secondary demand is also affected by both inward and outward migration to and from the borough, population mobility levels and parental choice, all 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 schools in other boroughs. Brent engages with neighbouring boroughs to understand their planning assumptions about cross-border movement, which can impact on demand for places in Brent. When 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.

Figures in the January 2025 school census showed an unexpected increase in the number of pupils on roll in Year 7 (3,446 compared to a projected figure of 3,134, an increase of 312 pupils). The subsequent January 2026 census also showed an increase in the number of pupils on roll in Year 7 (3,352 compared to a projected figure of 3193, an increase of 159 pupils. These increases materialised through a higher number of offers on National Offer Day and in subsequent co-ordinated and in-year offers. Numbers on roll in years 8 – 11 in the January 2026 census were comparable to the 2024 and 2025 projection figures. The higher number of pupils in Year 7 has informed subsequent sets of projections. This in turn has resulted in the overall secondary projections suggesting a lower surplus of capacity than previously forecast, with the potential for spare capacity to fall below 5% in some year groups from 2027/28. If measures are needed to increase capacity, this will involve the use of bulge classes rather than permanent expansions.

In 2026, 798 out-of-borough offers were made to Brent residents, whereas 686 offers at Brent schools were made to out-of-borough residents (net -112). While Brent remains a net-exporter of secondary pupils, the percentage of offers made to out-of-borough schools remains below 25% for the third consecutive year and is the smallest net difference recorded over the past fourteen 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 2026.

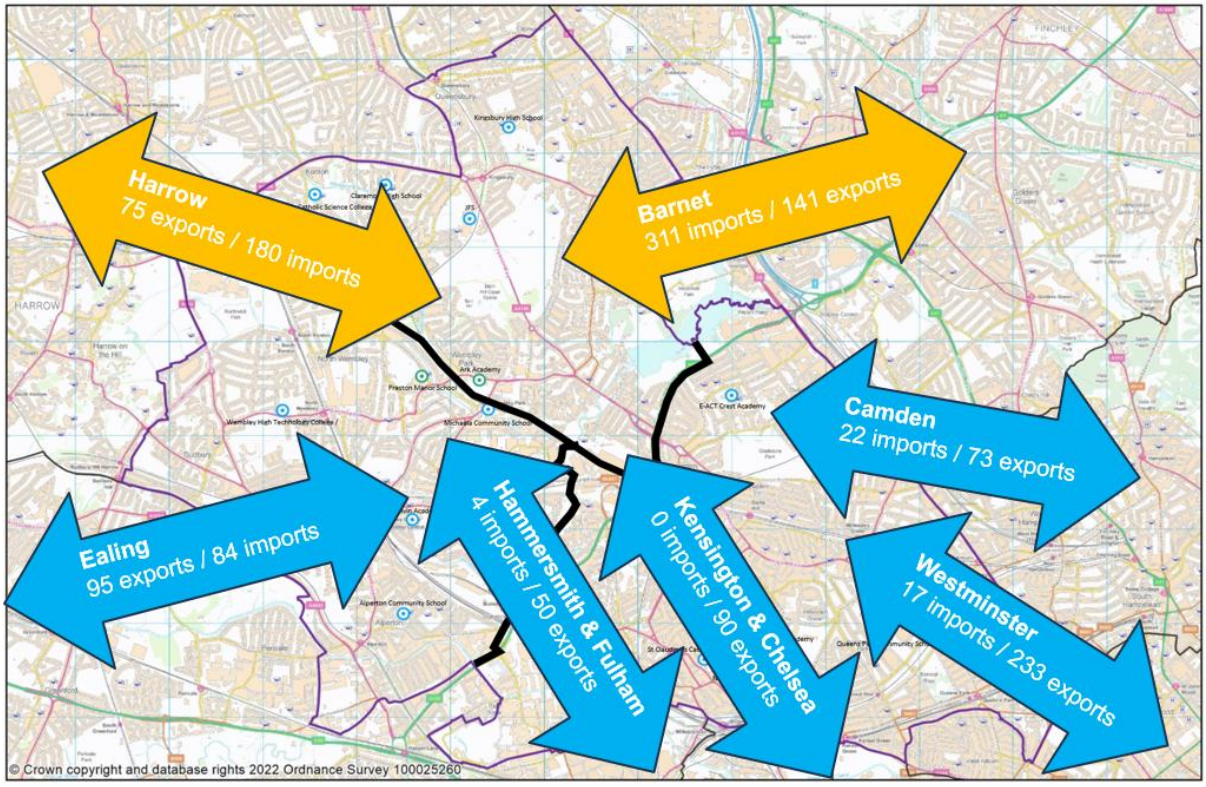
Table 1: Secondary offers by secondary planning area for Brent residents (Sept 2026)

LA of offered school 2026	**Brent resident planning area**			
	PA North	**PA West**	**PA South**	**Total**
Brent	566	990	899	**2455**
Brent %	**80.4%**	**92.0%**	**61.1%**	**75.5%**
Barnet	63	7	71	**141**
Buckinghamshire	3			**3**
Camden	1	1	71	**73**
Ealing	1	32	62	**95**
Hammersmith and Fulham	1	4	45	**50**
Harrow	53	16	6	**75**
Hertfordshire	6	2	6	**14**
Hillingdon			1	**1**
Hounslow		2		**2**
Kensington and Chelsea		7	83	**90**
Leeds			1	**1**
Leicestershire			1	**1**
Slough	2	8	1	**11**
Southend-on-Sea	1			**1**
Surrey			1	**1**
Sutton		2		**2**
Wandsworth			1	**1**
Westminster	7	5	221	**233**
Windsor and Maidenhead			1	**1**
Non-Brent Total	138	86	572	796
Non-Brent %	**19.6%**	**8.0%**	**38.9%**	**24.5%**
Grand Total	**704**	**1076**	**1471**	**3251**

Figure 1 shows cross-border flows for Year 7 place allocations with directly neighbouring authorities (based on national offer day data 2026). Blue is where more children leave Brent to

be educated in another Local Authority, whereas amber means more children come into Brent from outside the borough to be educated in a Brent school. The most substantial change from the last refresh of this strategy relates to Ealing, where the number of Brent children attending Ealing schools has increased from 75 to 95.

Figure 1: Secondary children being educated across border for Year 7 in 2026/27



**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

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 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 2026) stated an annual growth rate in the number of maintained EHCP Plans of 10.1% between 2025 and 2026, up from 8% in 2024 - 2025. As of August 2026, there are 4408 children and young people living in Brent aged 0-25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), up from 4025 in August 2025. Of these, 2908 are statutory school age (age 5-16), up from 2414 in August 2025, which equates to 6.1% of the school population (similar to national levels, which currently sit at 6%). 13.3% 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 14.8% nationally).

Over the last year, EHCP numbers increased across all age groups, although growth was uneven. The largest increases were in the 20-25 (22.2%) and 16-19 (15.3%) age groups, compared with the previous refresh, when the highest growth was in the 5-10 (8.2%) and 16-19 (7.4%) age groups. 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 and 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 Wembley Manor, a new secondary special school that occupied new premises in September 2025, and a Post-16 Skills Resource Centre for young people with SEND projected to open in September 2027. In line with these commitments, Brent has delivered a 12% increase in special school places in the 2025/26 academic year.

Despite these delivered increases and the planned capital investment, continually increasing demand means that more local specialist places are still needed, especially for primary aged pupils with SEND. To this end, the Council has developed a 'Phase 2' capital investment programme for specialist provision (approved by Cabinet in January 2026). Phase 2 includes a new specialist primary school site, alongside significant expansion of existing specialist settings and the creation of new ARPs. A proposed 'Phase 3' capital investment programme for specialist provision is in development and will be shaped by expectations of the new Government SEND Reforms. As the messaging from central Government around SEND has focused on the development of a more inclusive mainstream system, Phase 3 will likely include an increased emphasis on the creation of ARPs, inclusion bases and special schools that function as both 'schools' and providers of training and support to the local area.

2.5 Post-16 Provision

The Education and Skills Act 2008 require 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, including the College of North West London, 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

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 during the lifespan of the previous strategy, (which was also refreshed annually), as updated forecasts indicated insufficient demand. In response to lower pupil projections, the Local Authority 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 in areas where the population is falling, and the sufficiency of school places when there is growth, working in partnership with Brent schools to achieve this. Longer term general population forecasts suggest that the total population of Brent could rise by between 17% and 27% between 2023 and 2041, and the child population aged under 16 could rise by up to 12% over the same period. Projected changes in the child age group should, however, be treated with some caution as they are very sensitive to assumptions about future migration and birth patterns.

Brent aims to have a minimum of 5% spare places in all year groups to both 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 17% spare primary places at borough level over the next few years. Secondary capacity is forecast to have around a 5% surplus capacity in the short term, but this may fall over the next 7 years in some year groups (the timeline covered in this Strategy).

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.
- takes 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 education 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, historically, 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 growth 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 may also need to access these facilities during building processes which makes expansion more challenging and can impact on cost. Similarly, providing additional specialist places for children and young people with SEND requires delivery of a range of specific facilities.

here 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 delivering a high-quality education by Ofsted gives the Council greater confidence that additional provision will be good and 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 places.
- New schools offer a chance to provide new learning environments through new facilities. However, identifying sites for new schools is difficult because of space constraints and lack of suitable available options within the borough.

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 managing staffing requirements and school budgets. Where this occurs, the Council analyses a range of local data, including but not limited to recent intakes and vacancies, parental preferences, availability of places within the local planning area, school standards and pupil outcomes, and the status of school finances, before recommending strategies to support the sustainability of school provision in a given planning area.

A range of options may be employed to support schools or groups of schools with falling demand and these are 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 cost of developing a new schools in London has significantly increased over the course of the current strategy, any significant changes in capacity need to be carefully considered taking into account the local context and local future forecasts.

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 is only agreed when it is in line with local demand. PAN reductions are subject to formal consultation and therefore can take up to two years to implement which means they are not a quick solution, and local demand can change within that timeframe. Reducing PAN can help undersubscribed schools manage their budgets more efficiently, but it is not a panacea to falling rolls. Furthermore, PAN reductions cannot be employed for every undersubscribed school as the Local Authority may need 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 capacity. This provides 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 Published Admission Numbers. 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 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. However, implementing informal caps is not a long-term sustainable solution, nor does it allow for good school organisation planning. Any informal CAPs in place in Brent schools are kept under regular review.

3.3.3 Utilising spare capacity for specialist education provision for children SEND and Alternative Provision

Spare capacity that is unlikely to be required in the longer-term can sometimes be repurposed for alternative use, such as Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) for children with SEND. Any long-term alternative use of spare capacity within existing school buildings 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 specialist educational provision is explored through reviews of primary planning areas and analysis of SEND demand to inform the SEND phased capital programme.

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. However it does not directly address the issue of reduced demand.

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 on one school site. However, an amalgamation can also be used to join two schools together in the same area where the existing schools are undersubscribed through one set of admissions arrangements and occupancy of one site, which offer economies of scale.

3.3.6 Removing capacity from the School Estate

Brent works collaboratively with schools in identifying solutions for a local planning area where a school reorganisation action is considered the most advantageous way to ensure the sustainability of local educational provision. Legislation provides the Council with the authority to close community schools, Voluntary Controlled. Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools or to require them to amalgamate. It does not have the same authority over academies as this sits with the schools Trust and/or 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 by Brent Cabinet in line with the relevant statutory DfE guidance.

4. School Place Planning Strategy Priorities and Principles

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

- 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 the 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 specialist educational 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 2026-2030 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 Including proposing or supporting the development of new schools, where identified as necessary.

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, delivery and strategic fit with wider capital investment programmes.

12: Federations between schools and the amalgamation of infant and junior schools will be judged on their ability to support the quality of education and efficient use of school budgets.

5. School Place Planning Strategy Measures of Success

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

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

This was 95.3% at the end of the 2023/2024 academic year, 96.5% at the end of 2024/2025 academic year and 96.5% at the end of 2024/2025 academic year. In 2025/26 Ofsted changed its inspection framework and moved away from single-word judgements. The new measure to be used is the percentage of schools rated as at the Expected Standard or higher in all Ofsted judgements.

5.2 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 outcome measure was met in November 2023 and has remained unchanged in all subsequent strategy refreshes.

5.3 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 commencing of the new strategy. This figure was 24.3% in 2024, 23.8% in 2025 and 24.5% in 2026, meaning the target continues to be met. Additionally, the net difference between Brent pupils being offered out of borough schools and out of borough pupils being offered Brent schools is the lowest since recording began at –112. Brent remains a net exporter, but more places are now being offered to children from other local authorities.

5.4 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 schools (INMSS) (Lower is better) was 17.8% at the end of the 2025/2-26 financial year which is slightly lower than 18.8% at the end of the 2024/2025 financial year.

5.4 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.

	2-year entitlement	3 and 4 years
January 2023 (baseline)	65.4%	79.3%
January 2024	59.6%	84.8%
January 2025	53.4%	80.4%
January 2026	59.3%	77.5%

The latest figures are below the target and below the London average. Brent remains ambitious in increasing the uptake of early years entitlements and this strategy outlines steps to achieve this (Section 6).

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.

As of August 2026, there were 272 providers including private, voluntary and independent nurseries (PVIs), childminders, nursery classes in schools and maintained nursery schools in Brent with 251 registered to deliver funded early education places. Places for children aged two and under are largely delivered by the PVI sector and childminders.

The decrease in number of childminder providers in the borough has continued with some moving out of the borough and others resigning as registered childminders. This change continues to be 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 as closured reasons. 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 2026

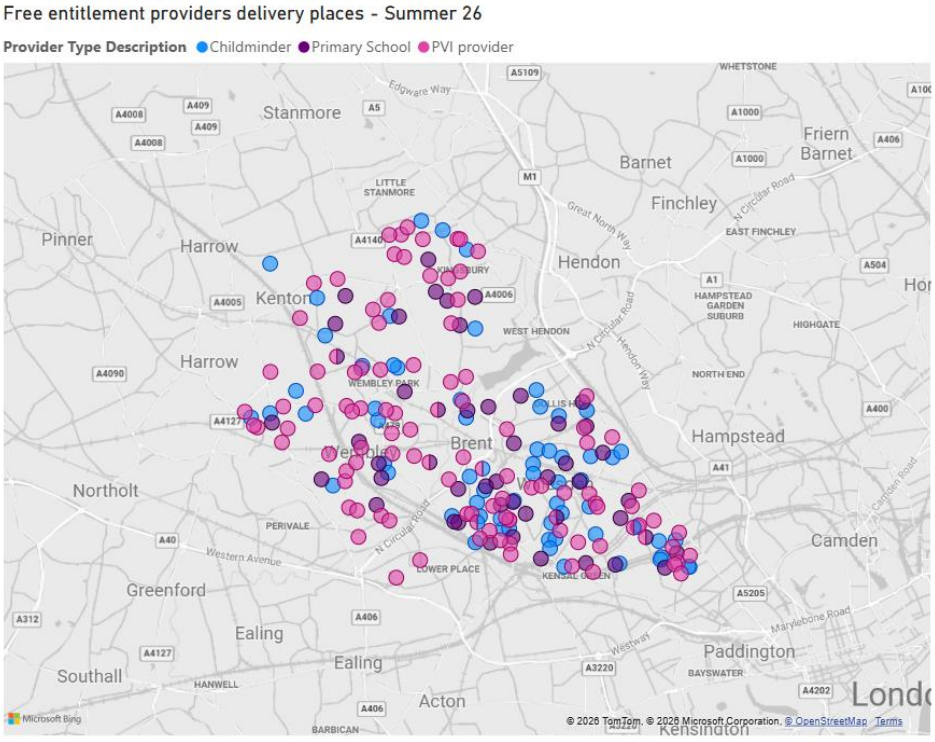
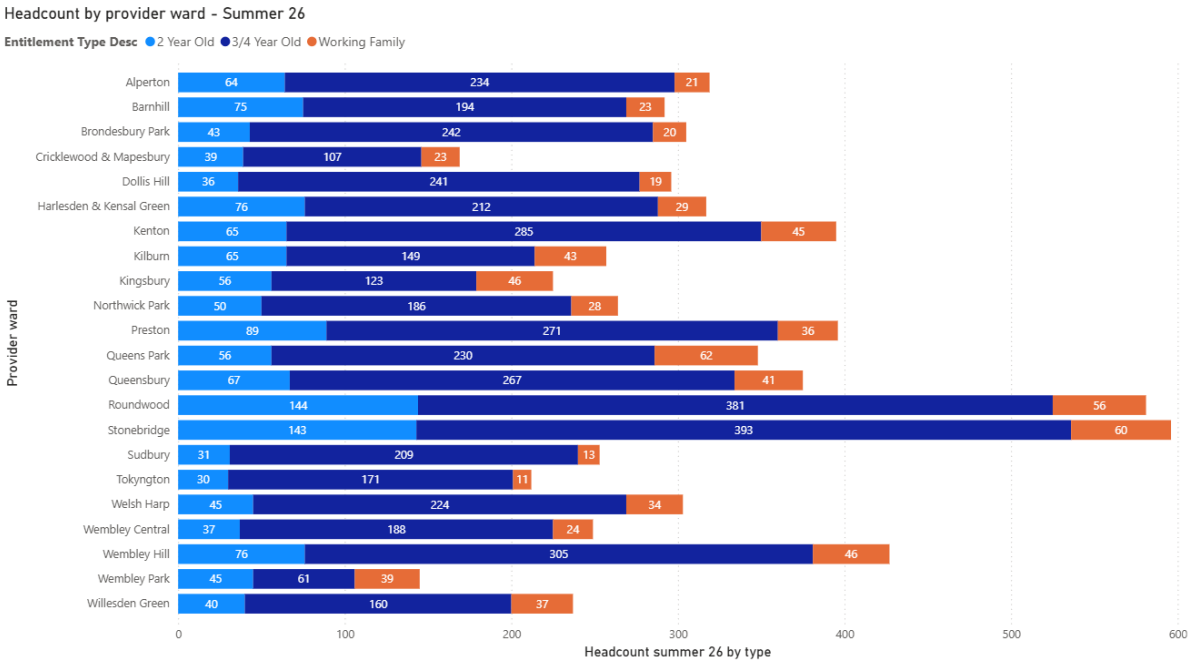


Figure 3: Headcount numbers by entitlement type – Provider ward Summer 26



6.2 Take up of Early Years Entitlements

The percentage take-up of the early learning for two-year-olds entitlement for low/no income families increased by 5.9% to 59.3% as at January 2026. Despite this increase, Brent take up is below the London average of 66.8% which has also increased by 5.7% this year.

The number of families eligible for early learning for two-year-olds continues to reduce year on year. For example, in summer 2025, information from the Department of Work and Pensions indicated 947 Brent families were eligible, and this has reduced to 752 in 2026. This is attributed to unchanged income thresholds for the eligibility criteria, whilst average incomes have risen in recent years.

As at Summer 2026 headcount, there were 756, 9-23 months and 876, 2-year-olds in working families accessing funded places and there were 481 children taking up early learning for two-year-olds.

Alongside this, falling birth rate in recent years has reduced the numbers of children eligible for all entitlements. Furthermore, as there are a small number of low-income families who are eligible for both early learning for two-year-olds and the working family entitlement for two-year-olds, it is likely that we will see further shifts in take-up of the early learning for two-year-olds entitlement in coming years, as some of these families choose to apply through the working family route in order to access 30 hours rather than 15 hours. In future headcounts providers will be required to complete additional check to ensure that families eligible for early learning for two-year-olds claim this entitlement for the first 15 hours of provision accessed. This reduces the risk that children will become ineligible for any entitlement for a family's circumstances change.

6.3 Sufficiency of Early Years Entitlements

Detailed sufficiency mapping takes place each term, monitoring take-up both borough-wide and at individual ward level. This tracks demand for, and availability of, places for the new entitlements and identifies where demand may outstrip supply and gaps in provision in the borough.

Brent's promotional campaign to increase the take-up of the free entitlements to early education and childcare focuses on increasing awareness and take-up by helping families understand what support is available, the benefits for children's development and school readiness, and how childcare can support parents to access employment, training and education opportunities. This promotion focuses on ongoing marketing and promotion to families and raising awareness of entitlements with partner agencies, alongside highlighting the benefits for both the child and for the parent who can use the time for training or employment opportunities.

With the national focus on the importance of the earliest years in shaping future life chances, through programmes such as Best Start in Life, there is a clear emphasis on the early years as a key priority for the government. All London boroughs have been set a target for 76% Early Years children to achieve GLD (an increase of 9%) by 2028 and Brent has made a positive start to achieving this target based on unvalidated GLD data

For Brent, this focus builds on the strong foundations laid through the multi-agency Family Hubs and Best Start In Life programme, enabling coordination of services and the development of a universal and targeted framework of support from pre-birth to aged five, working towards reducing inequalities and improving the outcomes of all children and families in Brent.

To develop the council's overarching ambition for our youngest children in Brent, underpinned by desired outcomes for children across health, school readiness, safeguarding and inclusion, an Early Years Strategy was launched in March 2026. The Brent Early Years Strategy sets out a clear vision for improving outcomes for young children and families through six strategic priorities: a joint commitment to system-wide change; a seamless and integrated experience for families that is jointly owned and delivered across partners; data and intelligence that work effectively for both families and professionals; a welcoming and inclusive start for every child and family, with a strong focus on early years inclusion; a clear Best Start pathway for every Brent baby and family; and high-quality, sustainable early education and childcare that enables all children to thrive.

These priorities align with and support the ambitions of the Best Start in Life programme, which focuses on strengthening support for families through Family Hubs, improving access to high-quality early education and childcare, raising quality across early years and reception provision, enhancing support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and developing a resilient workforce and system. The strategy provides an important foundation for ensuring children are school-ready, reducing inequalities at the earliest

opportunity, and supporting the long-term sustainability of education and childcare provision across Brent.

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.

Graph 1: Primary numbers on roll and projections as of January each year up to 2031

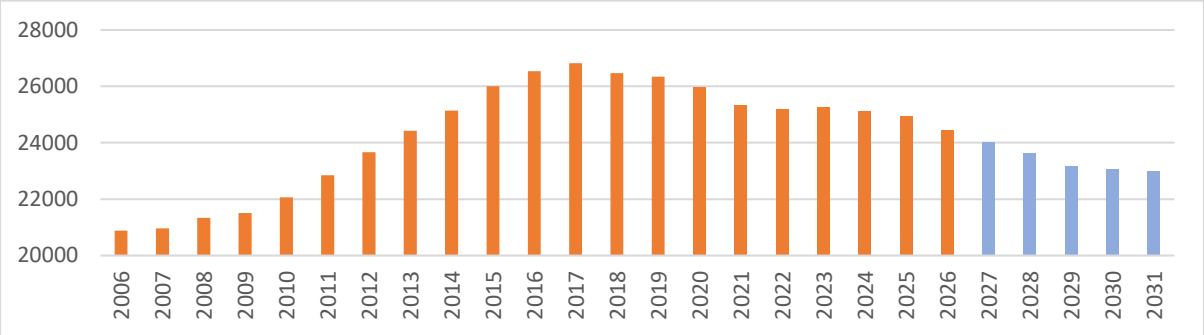


Table 2 shows that borough-wide there is sufficient capacity to meet anticipated demand across all primary year groups up to 2030/31 and to manage in-year pupil mobility.

Table 2: Primary forecasts 2026 (Green highlight = +5% capacity, red text = +15% capacity)

Whole borough	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2026/2027	Capacity	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187
	Projection	3248	3262	3433	3496	3510	3578	3515
	Surplus	939	925	754	691	677	609	672
	Surplus Percentage	**22%**	**22%**	**18%**	**17%**	**16%**	**15%**	**16%**
2027/2028	Capacity	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127
	Projection	3219	3217	3222	3435	3473	3494	3577
	Surplus	908	910	905	692	654	633	550
	Surplus Percentage	**22%**	**22%**	**22%**	**17%**	**16%**	**15%**	13%
2028/2029	Capacity	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127
	Projection	3237	3190	3191	3209	3418	3455	3492
	Surplus	890	937	936	918	709	672	635
	Surplus Percentage	**22%**	**23%**	**23%**	**22%**	**17%**	**16%**	**15%**
2029/2030	Capacity	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127
	Projection	3362	3223	3173	3206	3212	3416	3466
	Surplus	765	904	954	921	915	711	661
	Surplus Percentage	**19%**	**22%**	**23%**	**22%**	**22%**	**17%**	**16%**
2030/2031	Capacity	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127
	Projection	3391	3349	3210	3191	3222	3222	3420
	Surplus	736	778	917	936	905	905	707
	Surplus Percentage	**18%**	**19%**	**22%**	**23%**	**22%**	**22%**	**17%**

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

Longer term projections, although less reliable for primary forecasts, indicate reception demand will rise from 2032/2033 linked to a rise in the birth rate from 2024/25. Table 3 shows forecast Reception intakes against capacity. This suggests over the next five years that Reception cohorts will begin to rise again. This is consistent with the projected rising birth rates as seen in Table 4. This projected rise in demand is not evenly distributed across the borough, with some primary planning areas showing pressure on school places and others showing an increasing level of surplus places (see details of each primary planning area).

Table 3: Reception forecasts against capacity

Year	Reception projected intake	Reception capacity	Spare places	% spare places	Spare places as forms of entry
2026/27	3248	4187	939	22.4%	31
2027/28	3219	4127	908	22.0%	30
2028/29	3237	4127	890	21.6%	29
2029/30	3362	4127	765	18.5%	25
2030/31	3391	4127	736	17.8%	24

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	4823	2023/24
2019/20	4800	2024/25
2020/21	4436	2025/26
2021/22	4474	2026/27
2022/23	4382	2027/28
2023/24	4363	2028/29
2024/25	4499	2029/30
2025/26	*4488*	*2030/31*
2026/27	*4503*	*2031/32*
2027/28	*4522*	*2032/33*
2028/29	*4585*	*2033/34*
2029/30	*4665*	*2034/35*
2030/31	*4754*	*2035/36*

The number of on-time applications for Reception in 2026 fell for the second time in two years after two consecutive years of increased on-time application numbers (a drop of 264 applications or 7.8% from 2024). 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.

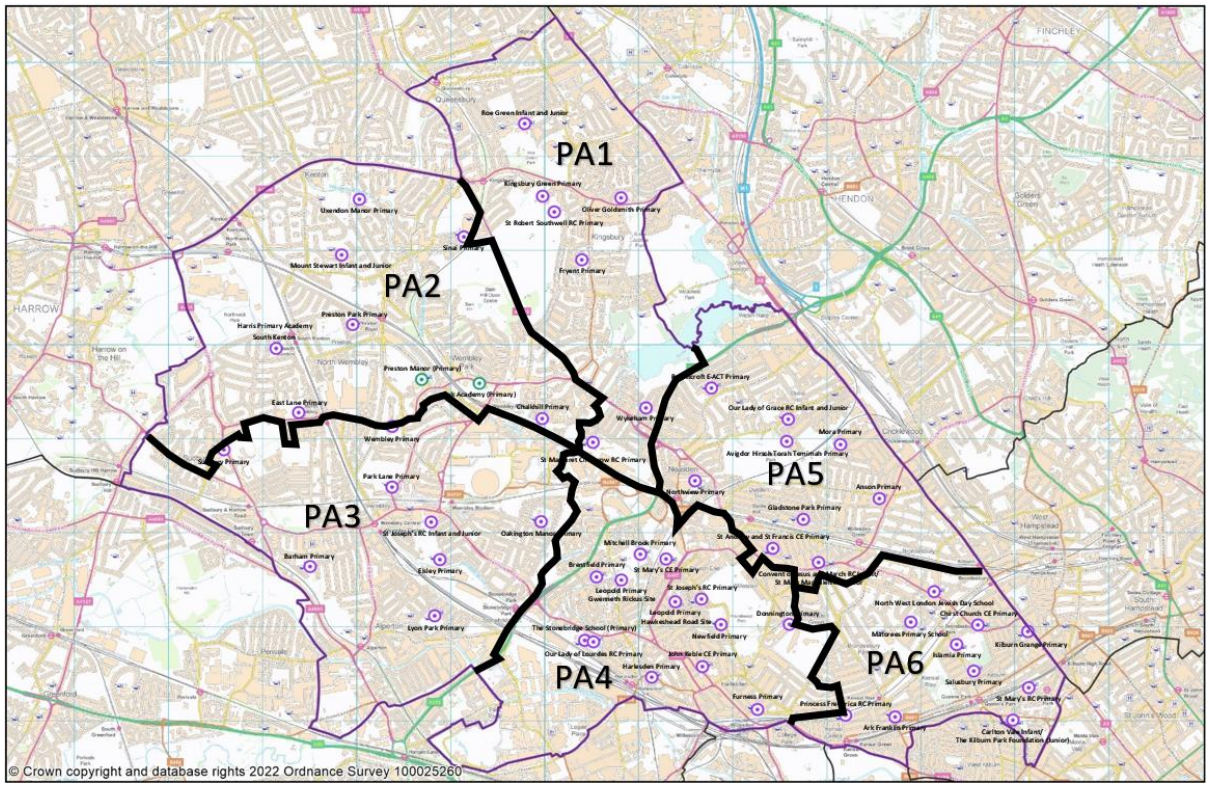
The large number of surplus places at Reception means that outcomes for late applicants are better than in previous years with more unfilled places. In 2026 at total of 34 schools had vacancies after national offer day, including eight schools that had previously been oversubscribed on National Offer Day 2025.

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 another planning area.

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. 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.

More than 5% capacity (**Bold text** = 15%+ spare capacity)	5% spare capacity	Less than 5% spare capacity	Shortfall of places

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 2026 projections indicate that demand in Planning Area 1 will fall slightly and that demand will not recover to the same level as five years ago, as indicated by the 2025 projections. It is projected that after two years, all year groups will operate with a surplus above the 5% margin the LA aims to maintain. In the meantime, it is anticipated that places in neighbouring planning areas will accommodate any pressures in year groups up to 2028. Some mainstream capacity in the planning area is being used to provide ARP places. Longer term projections, which are less reliable, do not indicate that demand will rise and exceed capacity.

Planned action: The PAN at Fryent Primary School was reduced from 120 to 90 places in September 2025 to recognise that capacity is already being used for ARP provision. This has not had an impact on the overall availability of places in the area. The planning area will remain under review to determine if any longer-term actions are required to address spare capacity.

Table 5: Planning Area 1 2026 projections and capacity

PA 1	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2026/2027	Capacity	510	510	510	510	510	510	510
	Projection	456	467	492	472	490	508	478
	Surplus	54	43	18	38	20	2	32
	Surplus Percentage	11%	8%	4%	7%	4%	0%	6%
2027/2028	Capacity	510	510	510	510	510	510	510
	Projection	421	451	462	472	465	483	499
	Surplus	89	59	48	38	45	27	11
	Surplus Percentage	**17%**	12%	9%	7%	9%	5%	2%
2028/2029	Capacity	510	510	510	510	510	510	510
	Projection	438	420	452	437	468	463	479
	Surplus	72	90	58	73	42	47	31
	Surplus Percentage	14%	**18%**	11%	14%	8%	9%	6%
2029/2030	Capacity	510	510	510	510	510	510	510
	Projection	449	430	423	433	433	463	454
	Surplus	61	80	87	77	77	47	56
	Surplus Percentage	12%	**16%**	**17%**	**15%**	**15%**	9%	11%
2030/2031	Capacity	510	510	510	510	510	510	510
	Projection	448	444	433	404	433	429	450
	Surplus	62	66	77	106	77	81	60
	Surplus Percentage	12%	13%	**15%**	**21%**	**15%**	**16%**	12%

Key: Green=5%+ spare capacity (bold text=15%+); yellow=5% spare capacity; amber=less than 5% spare capacity and 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 2026 projections indicate that demand in Planning Area 2 will increase slightly over the next five years, although capacity will remain above demand. Projected surplus places are above the 5% margin across all year groups. Parents in this planning area have increased choice of provision. Longer term projections, which are less reliable, indicate that demand will plateau from the early to mid-2030s.

Planned action: Planning Area 2 includes schools operating with PANs below their built capacity to support school leaders in effective school and budget management. It may be necessary to review whether there is a requirement to increase PANs in this area as there are projected pressures on demand in the adjacent planning area 3 from 2028. This will be kept under review and discussions held with schools in relation to appropriate action as required.

Table 6: Planning Area 2 2026 projections and capacity

PA 2	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2026/2027	Capacity	870	870	870	870	870	870	870
	Projection	659	636	657	695	710	690	708
	Surplus	211	234	213	175	160	180	162
	Surplus Percentage	**24%**	**27%**	**24%**	**20%**	**18%**	**21%**	**19%**
2027/2028	Capacity	870	870	870	870	870	870	870
	Projection	631	657	634	652	701	682	700
	Surplus	239	213	236	218	169	188	170
	Surplus Percentage	**27%**	**24%**	**27%**	**25%**	**19%**	**22%**	**20%**
2028/2029	Capacity	870	870	870	870	870	870	870
	Projection	647	632	657	627	666	671	691
	Surplus	223	238	213	243	204	199	179
	Surplus Percentage	**26%**	**27%**	**24%**	**28%**	**23%**	**23%**	**21%**
2029/2030	Capacity	870	870	870	870	870	870	870
	Projection	683	652	638	653	641	639	681
	Surplus	187	218	232	217	229	231	189
	Surplus Percentage	**21%**	**25%**	**27%**	**25%**	**26%**	**27%**	**22%**
2030/2031	Capacity	870	870	870	870	870	870	870
	Projection	690	687	654	632	666	618	651
	Surplus	180	183	216	238	204	252	219
	Surplus Percentage	**21%**	**21%**	**25%**	**27%**	**23%**	**29%**	**25%**

Key: Green=5%+ spare capacity (bold text=15%+); yellow=5% spare capacity; amber=less than 5% spare capacity and 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: The latest projections for Planning Area 3 show a broadly similar increase in demand to previous projections, although the point at which demand outstrips supply is now projected to start to take place from 2028 instead of 2026. Projections suggest over the next 5 years, most year groups will be below a 5% surplus margin, with lower year groups operating with no surplus capacity from 2029/30. Longer term projections, which are less reliable, indicate that demand will continue to rise which could lead to a significant shortage of capacity in the 2030s if not addressed.

Planned action: Planning Area 3 includes two major growth areas in Wembley Central and Alperton. Projections for this planning area have consistently suggested demand will outstrip capacity in the future, although the position has been revised every year based on the latest trends. The latest position, based partly on a lower-than-expected demand in 2025/26, is that spare capacity in neighbouring planning areas (Planning Areas 2 and 4) will help to accommodate excess demand in the short term. The longer-term forecasts project a much lower peak demand in 10 years' time than previous forecasts, although these come with considerable uncertainty. The planning area remains under close review to determine whether any longer-term actions are required to increase capacity.

Table 7: Planning Area 3 2026 projections and capacity

PA 3	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2026/2027	Capacity	820	820	820	820	820	820	820
	Projection	775	757	776	781	784	814	812
	Surplus	45	63	44	39	36	6	8
	Surplus Percentage	5%	8%	5%	5%	4%	1%	1%
2027/2028	Capacity	820	820	820	820	820	820	820
	Projection	786	789	730	778	771	811	821
	Surplus	34	31	90	42	49	9	-1
	Surplus Percentage	4%	4%	11%	5%	6%	1%	0%
2028/2029	Capacity	820	820	820	820	820	820	820
	Projection	805	797	756	724	768	799	816
	Surplus	15	23	64	96	52	21	4
	Surplus Percentage	2%	3%	8%	12%	6%	3%	0%
2029/2030	Capacity	820	820	820	820	820	820	820
	Projection	862	823	769	762	724	802	807
	Surplus	-42	-3	51	58	96	18	13
	Surplus Percentage	-5%	0%	6%	7%	12%	2%	2%
2030/2031	Capacity	820	820	820	820	820	820	820
	Projection	882	879	790	774	760	755	811
	Surplus	-62	-59	30	46	60	65	9
	Surplus Percentage	-8%	-7%	4%	6%	7%	8%	1%

Key: Green=5%+ spare capacity (bold text=15%+); yellow=5% spare capacity; amber=less than 5% spare capacity and 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, Islamia 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. *Islamia Primary School is relocating from Primary Planning Area 6 from September 2027

Demand: Planning Area 4 has very high levels of surplus places and the latest projections indicate that there will be only a very small increase in demand over the next 5 years. Longer term forecasts suggest that demand will remain relatively stable despite the area being close to new housing being built as part of the Old Oak and Park Royal redevelopment scheme beyond 2030.

Planned action: A PAN reduction has been put in place at Mitchell Brook Primary School for the 2025/26 Reception cohort. Capacity is being removed from Leopold Primary School with the closure of the Gwenneth Rickus Site (2FE) in July 2027. The Local Authority has approved the relocation of Islamia Primary Schools (2FE) to the same site in September 2027 as the school has been evicted from its current premises by the school's Foundation Trust, increasing the diversity of provision in the area. It is expected that some capacity in this area may be taken up by children who live adjacent to Planning Area 3 where increased demand is forecast. However, a review will be undertaken as, given level of spare places in Planning Area 4, further action will be required to support a sustainable quality of education. This could include utilising spare capacity to increase specialist education provision in Brent.

Table 8: Planning Area 4 2026 projections and capacity

PA 4	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2026/2027	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	493	481	551	556	555	605	576
	Surplus	362	374	304	299	300	250	279
	Surplus Percentage	**42%**	**44%**	**36%**	**35%**	**35%**	**29%**	**33%**
2027/2028	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	497	478	480	550	544	566	612
	Surplus	358	377	375	305	311	289	243
	Surplus Percentage	**42%**	**44%**	**44%**	**36%**	**36%**	**34%**	**28%**
2028/2029	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	487	482	482	480	535	554	573
	Surplus	368	373	373	375	320	301	282
	Surplus Percentage	**43%**	**44%**	**44%**	**44%**	**37%**	**35%**	**33%**
2029/2030	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	500	479	488	487	472	549	569
	Surplus	355	376	367	368	383	306	286
	Surplus Percentage	**42%**	**44%**	**43%**	**43%**	**45%**	**36%**	**33%**
2030/2031	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	502	492	491	495	483	492	561
	Surplus	353	363	364	360	372	363	294
	Surplus Percentage	**41%**	**42%**	**43%**	**42%**	**44%**	**42%**	**34%**

Key: Green=5%+ spare capacity (bold text=15%+); yellow=5% spare capacity; amber=less than 5% spare capacity and 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 for Planning Area 5 show that there will be a small drop in demand over the next five years, but surplus capacity is comfortable for place planning purposes. Longer term projections, which are less reliable, indicate that demand will rise steadily, but demand is not expected to exceed supply at any time over the next 15 years.

Planned action: Anson Primary School has increased capacity in 2025 from 52 places per year to 56 places per year following a request from the Governing Board. There are no other current or planned actions in this planning area, although demand will be kept under review.

Table 9: Planning Area 5 2026 projections and capacity

PA 5	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2026/2027	Capacity	557	557	557	557	557	557	557
	Projection	466	477	512	504	519	490	517
	Surplus	91	80	45	53	38	67	40
	Surplus Percentage	**16%**	14%	8%	10%	7%	12%	7%
2027/2028	Capacity	557	557	557	557	557	557	557
	Projection	481	449	477	500	511	503	499
	Surplus	76	108	80	57	46	54	58
	Surplus Percentage	14%	**19%**	14%	10%	8%	10%	10%
2028/2029	Capacity	557	557	557	557	557	557	557
	Projection	467	463	455	465	506	495	511
	Surplus	90	94	102	92	51	62	46
	Surplus Percentage	**16%**	**17%**	**18%**	**17%**	9%	11%	8%
2029/2030	Capacity	557	557	557	557	557	557	557
	Projection	472	453	464	446	474	493	505
	Surplus	85	104	93	111	83	64	52
	Surplus Percentage	**15%**	**19%**	**17%**	**20%**	**15%**	11%	9%
2030/2031	Capacity	557	557	557	557	557	557	557
	Projection	472	459	459	458	458	460	501
	Surplus	85	98	98	99	99	97	56
	Surplus Percentage	**15%**	**18%**	**18%**	**18%**	**18%**	**17%**	10%

Key: Green=5%+ spare capacity (bold text=15%+); yellow=5% spare capacity; amber=less than 5% spare capacity and 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 Primary 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 *Islamia Primary School is relocating to Primary Planning Area 4 from September 2027

Demand: Projections for Planning Area 6 show a slight decline in demand over the next year with demand then remaining stable for the following four years and in the future according to less reliable longer-term forecasts. There are some future developments which may affect the demand and supply in the area in the future. Islamia Primary School will relocate to a site in Planning Area 4 in September 2027 and this will remove 2FE of capacity from the area. As part of the South Kilburn regeneration programme, Carlton Vale Infant School and The Kilburn Park School Foundation are due to move into a new school building as a primary school (subject to formal consultation and Cabinet approval), which may attract additional demand. The building is planned to accommodate 1FE, although it is being designed so that it can be expanded to 2FE in the future if required. The number of schools in the planning area has reduced by one following the amalgamation of Malorees Infant and Junior Schools in April 2026 to become Malorees Primary School.

Planned action: This planning area will be kept under review to understand patterns of supply and demand, particularly in response to the two changes identified above.

Table 10: Planning Area 6 2026 projections and capacity

PA 6	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2026/2027	Capacity	575	575	575	575	575	575	575
	Projection	399	444	445	488	452	471	424
	Surplus	176	131	130	87	123	104	151
	Surplus Percentage	**31%**	**23%**	**23%**	**15%**	**21%**	**18%**	**26%**
2027/2028	Capacity	515	515	515	515	515	515	515
	Projection	403	393	439	483	481	449	446
	Surplus	112	122	76	32	34	66	69
	Surplus Percentage	**22%**	**24%**	**15%**	6%	7%	13%	13%
2028/2029	Capacity	515	515	515	515	515	515	515
	Projection	393	396	389	476	475	473	422
	Surplus	122	119	126	39	40	42	93
	Surplus Percentage	**24%**	**23%**	**24%**	8%	8%	8%	**18%**
2029/2030	Capacity	515	515	515	515	515	515	515
	Projection	396	386	391	425	468	470	450
	Surplus	119	129	124	90	47	45	65
	Surplus Percentage	**23%**	**25%**	**24%**	**17%**	9%	9%	13%
2030/2031	Capacity	515	515	515	515	515	515	515
	Projection	397	388	383	428	422	468	446
	Surplus	118	127	132	87	93	47	69
	Surplus Percentage	**23%**	**25%**	**26%**	**17%**	**18%**	9%	13%

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

8. Secondary school place planning -

Year 7 demand over the next seven years is expected to reduce compared to the current levels as the lower number of primary aged pupils transfer to the secondary school phase. Demand is projected to be below the level of available capacity indicating sufficient capacity to meet Year 7 demand. T there remains, however, pressure on some higher year groups. There are two year groups (Yr 10 and 11) in two specific academic years where surplus capacity is projected to be below our standard 5% operating margin, but demand is likely to continue to fall from 2030.

Brent has traditionally been a net exporter of secondary pupils, but has seen a recent increase in parental preference for Brent secondary schools due to the sustained quality of Brent schools. The percentage of Brent pupils offered an out-borough school on National Offer Day fell from a high of 28.3% in 2017 to 23.8% in 2025 and remained below 25% in 2026. 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
2026/27	3229	3688	302	8.92%
2027/28	3272	3688	245	7.12%
2028/29	3238	3688	169	4.80%
2029/30	3188	3688	255	7.43%
2030/31	3130	3688	310	9.18%
2031/32	3092	3688	314	9.31%
2032/33	2961	3688	256	7.46%

Table 12 shows borough wide forecasts for all year groups and indicates that capacity is likely to fall below the operating margin of 5% in some year groups from 2027/28.

Table 12: Secondary projections 2026 and capacity

Whole borough	Dataset	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
2026/2027	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,745
	Projection	3229	3351	3492	3348	3417
	Surplus	459	337	196	340	328
	Surplus Percentage	14%	10%	6%	10%	10%
2027/2028	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688
	Projection	3272	3231	3395	3533	3364
	Surplus	416	457	293	155	324
	Surplus Percentage	13%	14%	9%	4%	10%
2028/2029	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688
	Projection	3238	3272	3284	3443	3568
	Surplus	450	416	404	245	120
	Surplus Percentage	14%	13%	12%	7%	3%
2029/2030	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688
	Projection	3188	3246	3331	3335	3486
	Surplus	500	442	357	353	202
	Surplus Percentage	**16%**	14%	11%	11%	6%
2030/2031	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688
	Projection	3130	3197	3308	3384	3382
	Surplus	558	491	380	304	306
	Surplus Percentage	**18%**	**15%**	11%	9%	9%
2031/2032	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688
	Projection	3092	3135	3255	3350	3426
	Surplus	596	553	433	338	262
	Surplus Percentage	**19%**	**18%**	13%	10%	8%
2032/2033	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688
	Projection	2961	3087	3184	3293	3386
	Surplus	727	601	504	395	302
	Surplus Percentage	**25%**	**19%**	**16%**	12%	9%

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

8.1 Actions to respond to changes in demand

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

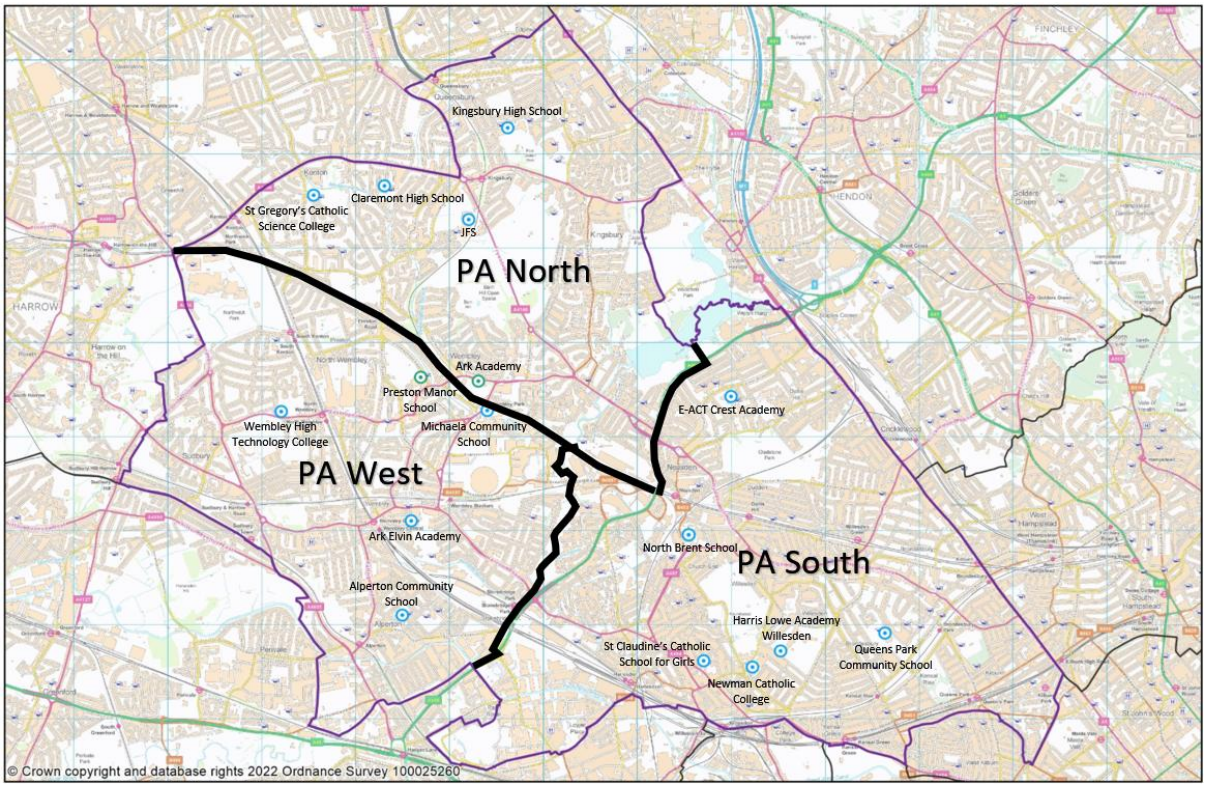
Some Brent secondary schools have previously expressed an interest in expanding should additional places be required to meet demand. It is unlikely this will be required during the life of this current strategy for Year 7 but is not something which has been formally ruled out and may need to be revisited for higher year groups. The Local Authority employs the strategy of working with schools with existing spare built capacity to open up that capacity where needed to ensure a sufficiency of places to meet in-year demand. This will be fully explored before any consideration is given to build new provision.

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). As with primary planning areas, all secondary planning areas are aligned with the 2022 ward boundaries. This provides a clear picture of demand as GLA projections are also based on these wards.

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 within the borough. 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 traditionally oversubscribed. However, the latest projections indicate demand is starting to fall in the area. Many year groups will continue to operate at capacity until the early 2030s with demand still exceeding supply, but we will start to see spare capacity entering the system from Year 7 in 2026/27. Planning Area North includes the Burnt Oak Colindale and Northwick Park growth areas.

Planned action: There are no planned actions in this area and demand will be kept under review. 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.

Table 13: Secondary Planning Area North 2026 projections and capacity

PA 7 - North	Dataset	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
2026/2027	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1252	1327	1352	1298	1279
	Surplus	26	-49	-74	-20	-1
	Surplus Percentage	2%	-4%	-6%	-2%	0%
2027/2028	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1260	1264	1339	1370	1311
	Surplus	18	14	-61	-92	-33
	Surplus Percentage	1%	1%	-5%	-7%	-3%
2028/2029	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1261	1273	1280	1354	1392
	Surplus	17	5	-2	-76	-114
	Surplus Percentage	1%	0%	0%	-6%	-9%
2029/2030	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1226	1273	1290	1298	1374
	Surplus	52	5	-12	-20	-96
	Surplus Percentage	4%	0%	-1%	-2%	-8%
2030/2031	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1200	1240	1288	1304	1320
	Surplus	78	38	-10	-26	-42
	Surplus Percentage	6%	3%	-1%	-2%	-3%
2031/2032	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1186	1212	1255	1298	1327
	Surplus	92	66	23	-20	-49
	Surplus Percentage	7%	5%	2%	-2%	-4%
2032/2033	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1132	1191	1222	1265	1318
	Surplus	146	87	56	13	-40
	Surplus Percentage	11%	7%	4%	1%	-3%

Key: Green=5%+ spare capacity (bold text=15%+); yellow=5% spare capacity; amber=less than 5% spare capacity and 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: Projections indicate limited spare capacity in the short term in Planning Area West. Longer term forecasts indicate demand in all year groups will remain slightly below capacity, although many year groups will be operating at capacity. Some schools in the area are operating a lower PAN than their build capacity will allow, leading to an operational short-fall of places to meet in-year demand.

Planned action: The area includes two major growth areas in Wembley Central and Alperton. The planning area will remain under review to determine whether any actions are required to increase capacity. Spare places in Planning Area South can accommodate pressures in the short to medium term. 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 2026 projections and capacity

PA 8 - West	Dataset	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
2026/2027	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,233
	Projection	1104	1121	1168	1156	1196
	Surplus	72	55	8	20	37
	Surplus Percentage	6%	5%	1%	2%	3%
2027/2028	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,233
	Projection	1146	1098	1155	1186	1168
	Surplus	30	78	21	-10	65
	Surplus Percentage	3%	7%	2%	-1%	5%
2028/2029	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176
	Projection	1129	1139	1139	1181	1204
	Surplus	47	37	37	-5	-28
	Surplus Percentage	4%	3%	3%	0%	-2%
2029/2030	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176
	Projection	1124	1128	1181	1165	1204
	Surplus	52	48	-5	11	-28
	Surplus Percentage	4%	4%	0%	1%	-2%
2030/2031	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176
	Projection	1107	1120	1173	1210	1188
	Surplus	69	56	3	-34	-12
	Surplus Percentage	6%	5%	0%	-3%	-1%
2031/2032	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176
	Projection	1101	1101	1162	1196	1228
	Surplus	75	75	14	-20	-52
	Surplus Percentage	6%	6%	1%	-2%	-4%
2032/2033	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176
	Projection	1057	1091	1139	1181	1212
	Surplus	119	85	37	-5	-36
	Surplus Percentage	10%	7%	3%	0%	-3%

Key: Green=5%+ spare capacity (bold text=15%+); yellow=5% spare capacity; amber=less than 5% spare capacity and 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	E-ACT Crest Academy, Harris Lowe Academy Willesden, Newman Catholic College, North Brent School, Queens Park Community School, St Claudine's Catholic School for Girls

Demand: Projections for Planning Area South show 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 in their own planning areas, may be offered schools in the South, particularly if the applications are made in-year. The widespread nature of transport links in Brent means it is possible for pupils to easily travel between planning areas to attend schools further away but remain within recommended journey times.

Planned action: The LA will continue to hold discussions with schools operating below their built capacity with a view to making additional places available as necessary to respond to in-year demand. The Planning Area will remain under review to determine if any longer-term changes are required.

Table 15: Secondary Planning Area South 2026 projections and capacity

PA 9 - South	Dataset	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
2026/2027	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	873	903	972	894	942
	Surplus	361	331	262	340	292
	Surplus Percentage	**29%**	**27%**	**21%**	**28%**	**24%**
2027/2028	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	866	869	901	977	885
	Surplus	368	365	333	257	349
	Surplus Percentage	**30%**	**30%**	**27%**	**21%**	**28%**
2028/2029	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	848	860	865	908	972
	Surplus	386	374	369	326	262
	Surplus Percentage	**31%**	**30%**	**30%**	**26%**	**21%**
2029/2030	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	838	845	860	872	908
	Surplus	396	389	374	362	326
	Surplus Percentage	**32%**	**32%**	**30%**	**29%**	**26%**
2030/2031	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	823	837	847	870	874
	Surplus	411	397	387	364	360
	Surplus Percentage	**33%**	**32%**	**31%**	**29%**	**29%**
2031/2032	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	805	822	838	856	871
	Surplus	429	412	396	378	363
	Surplus Percentage	**35%**	**33%**	**32%**	**31%**	**29%**
2032/2033	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	772	805	823	847	856
	Surplus	462	429	411	387	378
	Surplus Percentage	**37%**	**35%**	**33%**	**31%**	**31%**

Key: Green=5%+ spare capacity (bold text=15%+); yellow=5% spare capacity; amber=less than 5% spare capacity and 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). This was recognised by Ofsted during Brent's SEND Area Inspection in January 2025: "Leaders across the partnership understand very well the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families. They have high ambitions and a relentless focus to continue to improve services for children and young people who have SEND". Services, schools and settings are needs-led and follow the ethos of early identification and early intervention. Brent and local 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. Additional Resourced Provision Places (ARPs) are for children who can access, and will benefit from, significant engagement with a mainstream school offer. 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. 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: The 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 4 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.

Table 17: Special School PANs 2026/27

School	Type of Provision	Type of School	Special Need	Specialist places 2026/27
*The Manor School	Special	Primary	Communication and Interaction	264 (274 from January 2027)
*The Avenue	Special	All-through	Communication and Interaction	132
Phoenix Arch School	Special	Primary	Communication and Interaction	55
+The Village School	Special	All-through	Communication and Interaction and additional learning difficulty	315
*Wembley Manor	Special	Secondary	Communication and Interaction and additional learning difficulty	135
+Woodfield School	Special	Secondary	Communication and Interaction	200
			Total	**1101 (1111 from January 2027)**

*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 2026/27

School	Type of Provision	Type of School	Special Need	Places 2026/27
Kingsbury Green Primary	ARP	Primary	Hearing Impairment	32
Oakington Manor Primary School	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	25
Fryent Primary School	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	50
Preston Manor High School	ARP	Secondary	Communication and Interaction	12
Preston Manor High School	ARP	Secondary	Communication and Interaction	12
Carlton Vale Infant School	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	10
Kilburn Park Junior School	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	16
Newfield Primary School	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	15
St Margaret Clitherow	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	16
Newman Catholic College	ARP	Secondary	Communication and Interaction	12
Preston Park	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	21
Ark Elvin	ARP	Secondary	Moderate Learning Difficulty	12 (25 from January 2027)
Elsley	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	10
			Total	**243 (256 from January 2027)**

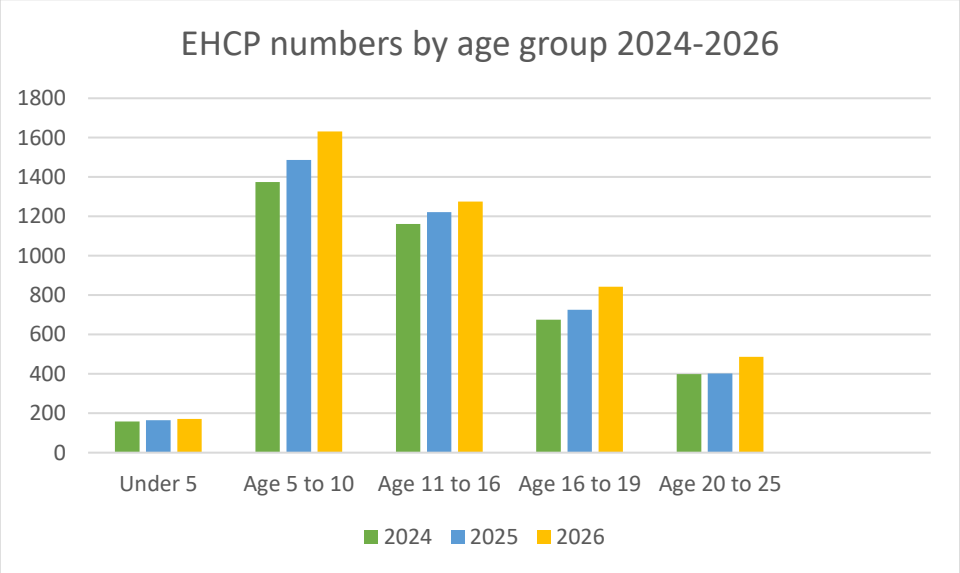
From September 2026 there were 1101 places in Brent special schools and 243 ARP places (48 in secondary, 195 in primary). These represent an increase of 13% for special school places but a reduction of 2.8% for ARP places since the 2025/26 academic year. The reduction in ARP places has resulted from one school opting to close their ARP (loss of two places), and one ARP reducing their place number as they have struggled to fill places (loss of 13 places). To balance this, one school has expanded their ARP by 8 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 15% of Brent's total capacity. As a result, it can be assumed that if this rate remains the same, Brent will have access to 936 local special school places and 207 of the 243 ARP places in Brent schools from September 2026.

As of August 2026, there are 4408 children and young people living in Brent aged 0-25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Of these, 2908 are statutory school age, or 6.1% of the school population (similar to national levels, which currently sit at 6%). 13.3% 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 14.8% nationally).

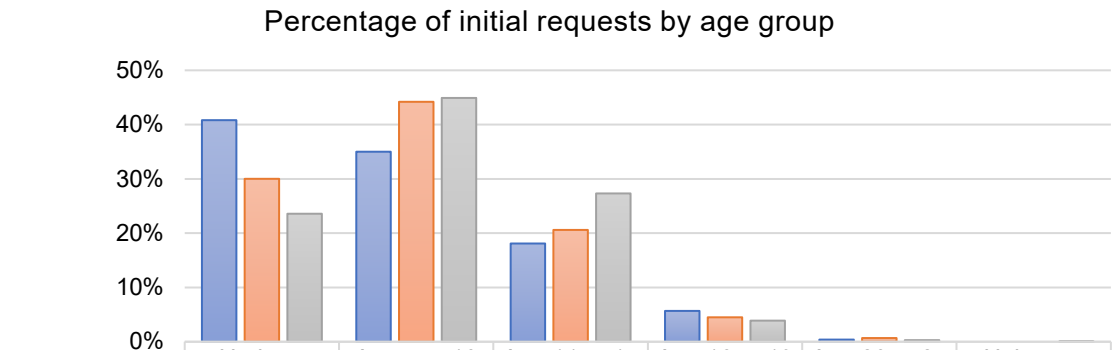
In the last year, the number of EHCPs has increased across all age groups, but not consistently. The age groups with the highest increases in EHCP numbers were the 20-25 and 16-19 age groups, which saw increases of 22.2% and 15.3% respectively. The breakdown of EHCPs by age group is shown in Figure 6, below.

Figure 6: EHCP numbers by age group for the years 2024, 2025 and 2026



In terms of education and health care needs assessments (EHCNAs), Figure 7, below, provides a breakdown by age group of EHCNAs in Brent as compared with our Statistical Neighbours and England average. As can be seen, Brent's rate of EHCNAs for the under 5s remains significantly higher than either our Statistical Neighbours (SN) or England average, placing pressure on specialist provision in the early years and of significance when it comes to forecasting future need for specialist provision.

Figure 7 EHCNA requests by age group for Brent, Brent's statistical neighbours (SN) and England for the 2025 calendar year (most recent SEN2 reporting period)



	Under 5	Age 5 to 10	Age 11 to 15	Age 16 to 19	Age 20 to 25	Unknown
2025 Brent	40.8%	35.0%	18.1%	5.7%	0.4%	0.0%
2025 SN	30.0%	44.2%	20.6%	4.5%	0.7%	0.0%
2025 England	23.6%	44.9%	27.3%	3.9%	0.3%	0.0%

When compared with 2025 data, the needs profile of Brent's children with an EHCP has remained relatively stable. Needs associated with communication and interaction (CI), which includes children with autism spectrum condition (ASC) and speech, language and communications needs (SLCN), predominate with 59% of the cohort having CI as their primary area of need. This is an increase of 1% in this category within the last calendar year. 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. This is a national trend and is not unique to Brent. After C&I, the next most commonly occurring primary needs is cognition and learning (C&L) at 23% followed by social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) at 11%, and sensory and other (including physical) needs at 7%.

9.2 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 and ARPs in the borough, additional special school places are required. Key numbers are as follows:

- 48% of all children with an EHCP in Brent attend a mainstream school provision. This is the same percentage as in 2025.
- However, in terms of age-groups, 39% of primary aged children and 43% of secondary aged children with an EHCP require a special school place. Numerically this is expressed as 741 and 543 children respectively.
- Communication and Interaction is the area of need most strongly correlated with placement in special for both primary and secondary aged children with an EHCP in Brent, followed by Cognition and Learning for both age groups.

Brent currently has 225 children in mainstream schools awaiting a place in special (an increase of 49% since this time last year).[1] Of these 225, 198 are primary age and 27 are secondary age. Additionally, Brent currently has 22 children unplaced and receiving home tuition whilst a placement is sought (a 32% increase since this time last year). Of these 22, 14 are primary aged and 8 are secondary aged. The primary need of the majority of these children is communication and interaction, accompanied by cognition and learning needs. However, in the last year there has been a slight increase in children with significant physical needs accessing their education via home tuition. As part of Brent's response to this increase, consideration is being given to development of 'assessment' places at one of our Brent special schools to ensure that all children are supported to access appropriate education.

198 Brent pupils with EHCPs attend out-of-borough maintained special schools (a decrease of 0.5% since this time last year). This represents 7% of Brent's school age children with an EHCP. Additionally, 214 children attend independent schools (an increase of 9% since last year), at a cost of £13.7m per annum (a 15% increase on equivalent spend from last financial year). This represents 7% of Brent's school age children with an EHCP. The use of independent places has increased along with the cost of each place meaning that cost pressures associated with independent places have increased disproportionately to the percentage increase in places used. The transport costs for Brent children with an EHCP attending out of borough and independent provisions is circa. £6m per annum.

Given the above, if all Brent children were to access a place at a maintained, in-borough special school, Brent would require a total of 1284 places (741 primary and 543 secondary), with the majority of these places being for children who have either communication and interaction or cognition and learning as their primary area of need. Brent currently has 505 places in primary age special school classes and 596 places in secondary age special school places. Of these places, 15% are occupied by children from other boroughs, leaving 429 primary places available and 507 secondary places available. Given this, Brent has a current shortfall of 312 primary places in special and 36 secondary places in special. As outlined above, to prevent Brent children with EHCP being unplaced, the independent sector, home tuition, out of borough schools and the mainstream sector are all currently being utilised.

The current number of special school places required for primary school aged children is greater than that forecast in August 2025 by 56 places/8%, pointing to rising needs in this cohort. Conversely, the number of special school places required for secondary school aged children is less than that forecast in August 2025 by 109/15%. This is likely to be a result of improved inclusive practice in secondary schools and an increase in the number of ARP places at secondary, increasing confidence across the system in the ability of mainstream secondary schools to meet a wider range of needs.

There has been significant growth in secondary special school places in Brent over the last year, meaning that Brent's current availability of secondary special school places exceeds what was forecast in August 2025 by 43 places. However, the same cannot be said of primary school

[1] This increase is attributable in large part to greatly improved data accuracy in this area.

places. Brent's current availability of primary special school places has not achieved what was forecast in August 2025, being 127 places fewer. This is due to delays in creating additional school places at both the Strathcona and Manor sites.

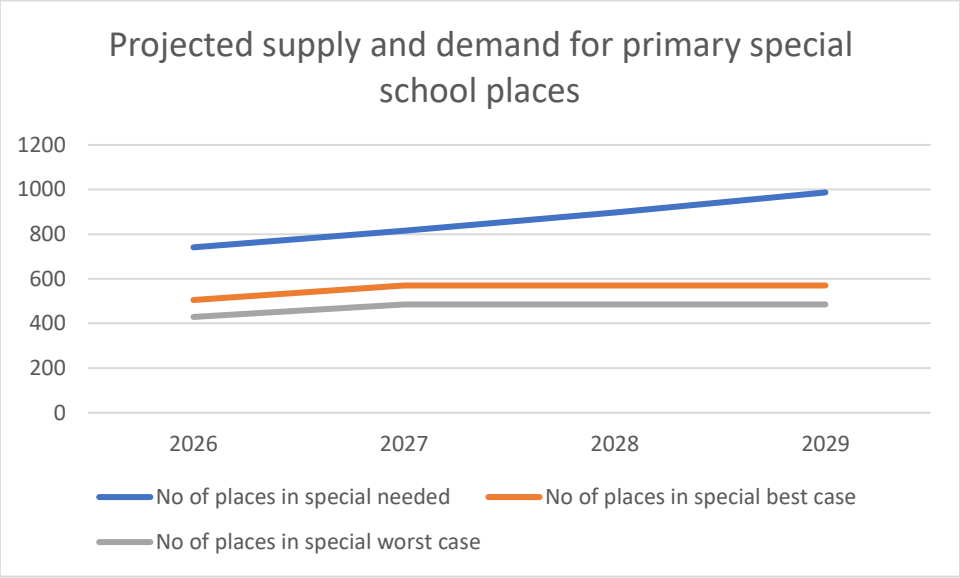
Table 19 and Figure 8 below, depict the current and projected need for primary special school places (all areas of need) within Brent over the time period of 2026-2029. In terms of demand, Table 20 and Figure 8 assume 10% annual growth in EHCP numbers (based on current annual growth trends and agreed mitigations) and 39% of primary aged children with an EHCP requiring a place in special.

In terms of supply, Table 19 and Figure 8 model a best-case scenario (whereby all of Brent special school places are available to Brent children) and a worst-case scenario (whereby 85% 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

	2026	2027	2028	2029
No of places in special needed	741	815	897	987
No of places in special best case	505	570	570	570
No of places in special worst case	429	485	485	485
Shortfall best case	236	245	327	417
Shortfall worst case	312	330	412	502

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

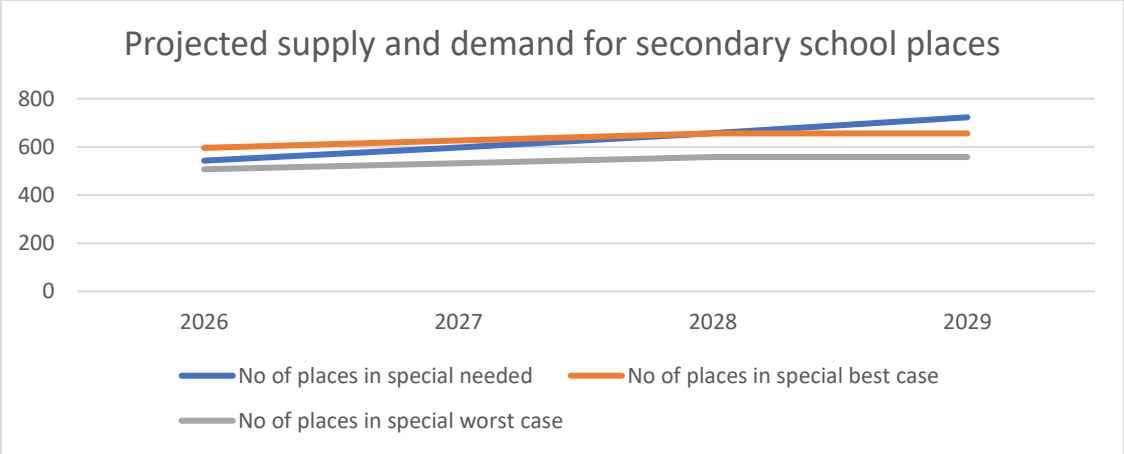


Current and projected (until 2029) need for special school places at secondary are shown in Table 20 and Figure 9 below. The same assumptions are made for this data set as for the primary age data set (with the exception that an assumption of 43% of total secondary aged EHCP cohort requiring special is made).

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

	2026	2027	2028	2029
No of places in special needed	543	597	657	723
No of places in special best case	596	626	656	656
No of places in special worst case	507	532	558	558
Shortfall best case	n/a	n/a	1	67
Shortfall worst case	36	65	99	165

Figure 9: Current and projected demand and supply of secondary school special places in Brent



9.3 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. In January 2026, Cabinet approved a further £9m capital spend to deliver an additional 212 special school places. The key projects within this strategy are identified in Table 22, below. This table details the planned expansion of special school places in Brent 2025-2027, subject to relevant consultations. Academy expansions will be subject to school consultation with the DfE Regional Director. Brent Cabinet have approved the expansion of Phoenix Arch school on the Strathcona site, which will be delivered in 2027/28. (note: places that will be available in the 25/26 academic year are already captured in Table 17, above, and so are not also stated in Table 22 to prevent duplication).

Table 21: Additional special school provision for Brent 2025-2027

School	Places	Phase	Delivery time scale
Woodfield school*	40	Secondary	January 2027
The Avenue	34	All-through	September 2027
Strathcona site	50	Primary	September 2027
The Manor School	88	Primary	September 2026
The Village School	80 (but net gain of 40)	All-through (but places are for secondary)	TBC (modelled for delivery 2028)
Total	**212 (138 primary, 74 secondary)**		

**Woodfield places are being delivered during the Phase 2 Capital works programme but were agreed as part of Phase 1. Therefore, these 40 places do not count towards the Phase 2 total.*

9.4 Summary of need

As can be seen from Tables 20, 21 and 22 and Figures 8 and 9, the planned expansion of specialist school places in Brent, even if delivered on time, do not meet Brent's current or projected need for places in primary. For secondary cohorts, Brent is closer to sufficiency until 2028 (depending on occupancy levels by out of borough students, which varies between schools and year groups). The modelling indicates that Brent has an immediate need to plan for further special school places (at least 348 across primary and secondary) to reduce further spend on out-of-borough placements, and officers will continue to work to develop further options to expand. A 'Phase 3' capital plan is currently in development, with a clear focus on delivering additional primary special school places at pace. It proposes a significant expansion of 100-120 places in ARPs, alongside the development of an 80-100 place special school that could also act as a centre of excellence for training and staff development to support inclusive practice in Brent's mainstream schools.

It should be noted that Brent, like all LAs, is currently in the midst of significant SEND reforms in response to the Government's 2026 white paper 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving'. This paper proposes significant changes to the SEND system, many of which will take effect from September 2026 onwards and will influence the future demand for school places and associated actions to meet them.

9.5 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 and 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.

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 provision that 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 7 spaces intended for short-term respite, but which are currently occupied by primary aged children with an EHCP and who have significant SEMH needs.

The overall exclusion figures for all Brent pupils for the academic year 2025/26 remains low with 23 students permanently excluded. This figure is consistent with the 2024/25 academic year figure (22 permanent exclusions) and highlights the strong and positive impact of Brent's inclusion support team. 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 to be taught within their home. This need will be considered as part of wider school place planning considerations.

9.6 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 is currently developing a specialist post-16 SEND provision to meet this demand for places for young people with SEND. A new Post-16 Skills Resource Centre, the 'Welsh Harp Environmental Education 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 SEND. The Welsh Harp facility is projected to open in September 2027 and will offer dedicated land-based skills training in response to requests from both students and their families for this type of offer, and skills deficits such as arboriculture. 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 2025/26 academic year, 18 Brent students enrolled on the supported internship scheme, across 9 different placements. Plans are being developed as part of the SEND strategy re-fresh to further increase the breadth of placement opportunities available to Brent students, including at the new Welsh Harp centre in due course.

In terms of wider post-16 provision, the Local Authority works in partnership with schools and the College of North West London to ensure that there is a wide range of courses to meet local demand including for SEND pupils. The College of North West London is currently developing a new site in Wembley Park that will focus on courses related to the built environment and courses that meet the emerging skills needs across the borough, with provision for young people with SEND.

10. Conclusion

This third refresh confirms that Brent has sufficient mainstream school capacity overall, but that demand is unevenly distributed and continues to change across the borough. Primary pupil numbers are forecast to fall over the next five years, creating significant surplus capacity in some planning areas, while growth and localised pressures may require additional capacity

elsewhere. Secondary demand is expected to reduce overall, although some planning areas and year groups will continue to experience pressures.

Increasing local specialist provision remains a significant priority. Despite substantial investment and planned expansion, current and projected demand for special school places, particularly for primary-aged pupils, exceeds available local capacity. Further action through the SEND capital programme will be required to increase specialist provision, reduce reliance on out-of-borough and independent placements and enable more children and young people with SEND to access suitable education closer to home and their support networks.

The Council will continue to work closely with schools, trusts, dioceses and other partners to manage these changes. This will include supporting the sustainability of schools experiencing falling demand, retaining sufficient flexibility to respond to housing growth and pupil mobility, and considering proportionate changes to capacity where necessary, whilst ensuring the Brent school estate can support current and future educational use.

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