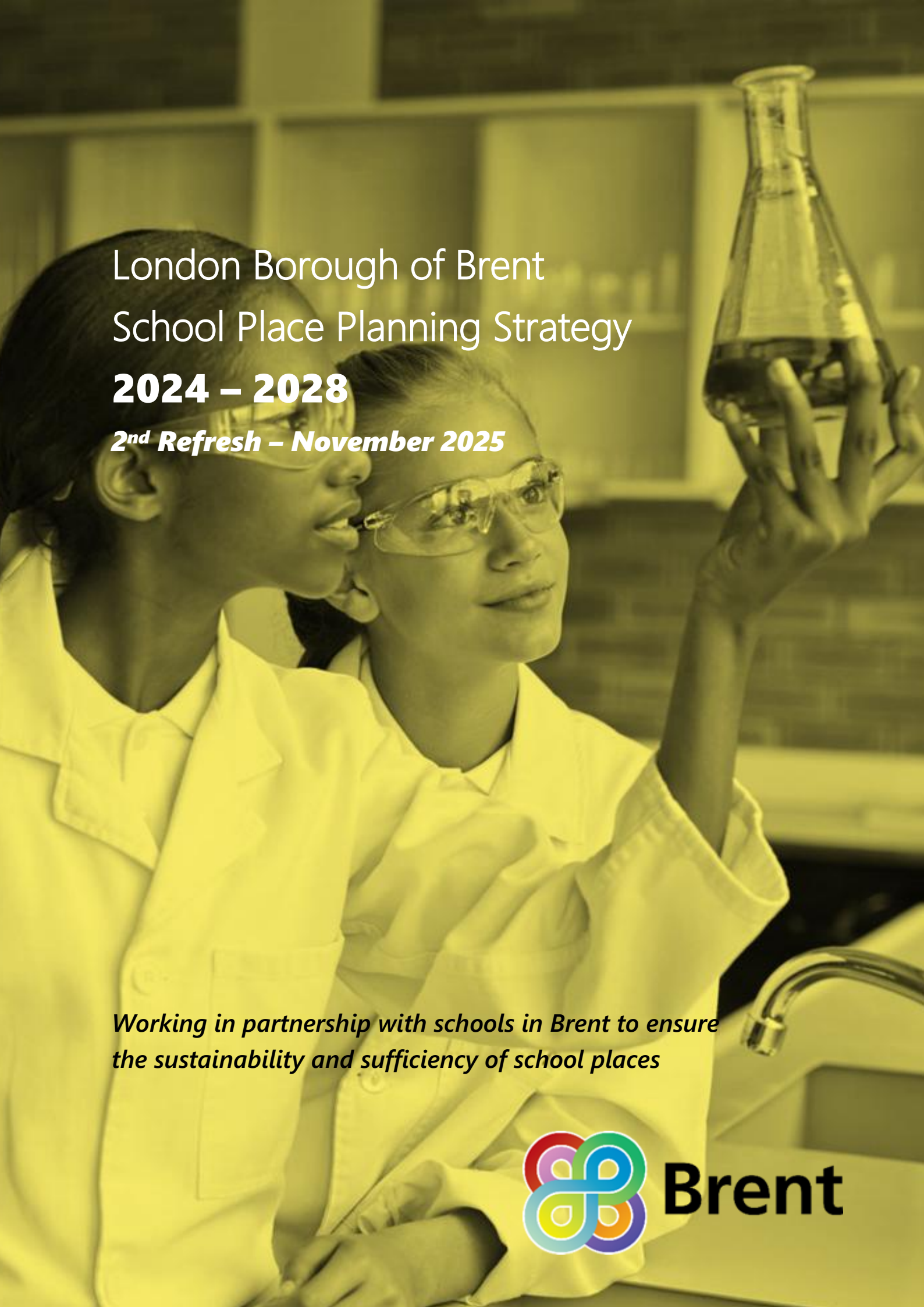


A photograph of two young people, a Black woman and a white woman, in a laboratory setting. They are both wearing white lab coats and clear safety goggles. The woman on the right is holding a large Erlenmeyer flask filled with a dark liquid, looking at it intently. The woman on the left is looking at the flask with interest. The background shows laboratory shelves with various bottles. The entire image has a yellowish tint.

London Borough of Brent School Place Planning Strategy

2024 – 2028

2nd Refresh – November 2025

*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
2nd 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 priority to support young people to achieve the best start in life and receive the support they need when they need it. Working with schools and partners we will make sure access to education is fair and equal, and our children and young people receive a quality education which develops their skills and enables them to realise their aspirations.

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

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

The strategy was first published in October 2023 and will receive an annual refresh update each autumn term until the end of 2026. 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 second refresh, dated November 2025, 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: Asian Indian (19.1%), White British (8.8%), White Eastern European (6.6%), Black Somali (5.8%), Black Caribbean (4.5%), Asian Pakistani (3.4%) and Afghan (2.9%). Undefined ethnic groups include Other – Any Other (4.5%), Arab other (3.6%), Asian – Other Asian (3.3%) and White – White Other (3.2%) (Source: January 2025 School Census).

In addition to new arrivals, socio-economic pressures placed on many of Brent's families combined with a housing stock which relies heavily on privately rented accommodation and increasing 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 24.3% (2024/25), below the national figure of 25.7% and the London average

of 27.9% (based on pupil premium allocations). A cross-Council working group has established and embedded the auto enrolment of primary and secondary aged Brent residents attending Brent schools who are eligible for Free School Meals but are not accessing this support. This project generated a 1.6% rise in the number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals in the last financial year.

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

The quality of education provision in the borough is high. At the end of the 2024-25 academic year, Ofsted had judged the overall effectiveness of 96.5% of Brent schools as good or outstanding and 97.5% of pupils continue to attend a Good or Outstanding school in Brent (both based on where current Ofsted single word judgements still apply).

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

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

2. Background Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.1 Childcare and Early Years Provision

Alongside the statutory duty to provide school places, Brent Council has a duty to secure sufficient childcare and early education. Existing entitlements for parents and carers include 15 hours of free early education 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.

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

The childcare sector is diverse within the borough, operating in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sectors, as well as through maintained provision. Provision for children before they reach statutory school age can include self-employed childminders operating from home, preschool play groups (often run by voluntary management committees), day nurseries (mainly privately run) and school-based provision. Childcare which supports school-age children (often known as 'out of school' or 'wraparound' childcare), can be offered by childminders, voluntary or private groups, and schools. In Brent, this mixed economy of 0-5 childcare provision currently sees 58% of free entitlement places delivered by the PVI sector and 42% by the maintained sector.

2.2 Demand for Primary Places

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

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

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 16%), distribution of demand is not equal across the 6 primary school planning areas. Some areas of the borough may still see demand

exceeding availability of places, whilst others have low demand at the same time. The local authority will continue to support individual schools and groups of schools in managing the impacts of reduced pupil numbers.

2.3 Demand for Secondary Places

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

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

Figures in the January 2025 school census showed an unexpected increase in the number of pupils on roll in Year 7 to 3,446 compared to a projected figure of 3,134 (increase of 312 pupils). This increase was an even distribution of higher offer numbers on National Offer Day 2024 and subsequent co-ordinated and in-year offers. Numbers on roll in years 8 – 11 were comparable to the 2024 projection figures. This higher number of pupils in Year 7 has informed our latest set of projections. This in turn has resulted in the overall secondary projections suggesting a lower surplus of capacity than previously forecast and as a result capacity may start to fall below 5% from 2028/29. This may mean measures could need to be taken to increase capacity. However, it is likely this would be managed with the use of bulge classes rather than permanent expansions.

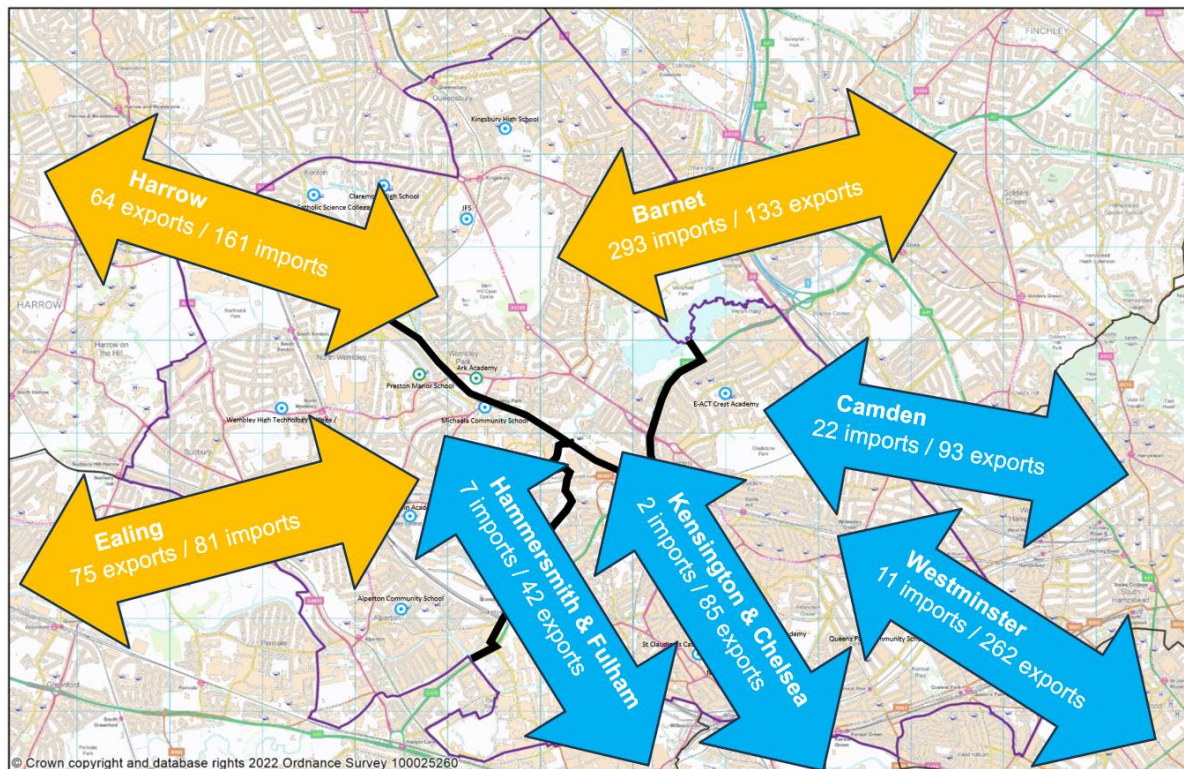
In 2025 798 out-of-borough offers were made to Brent residents, whereas 657 offers at Brent schools were made to out-of-borough residents (net -141). While Brent remains a net-exporter of secondary pupils, this is the smallest percentage of offers made to out-of-borough schools (23.8%) and the second smallest net difference recorded over the past thirteen 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 2025.

Table 1: Secondary offers by secondary planning area for Brent residents (Sept 2025)

LA of offered school 2025	Brent resident planning area			
	PA North	PA West	PA South	Total
Brent	592	995	965	2552
Brent %	84.2%	91.0%	62.1%	76.2%
Barnet	57	13	63	133
Bromley			1	1
Camden	4	2	87	93
Devon			1	1
Ealing		30	45	75
Enfield			1	1
Essex	1	1		2
Hammersmith and Fulham		2	40	42
Haringey			1	1
Harrow	37	22	5	64
Hertfordshire	2	3	4	9
Hillingdon		3		3
Hounslow		2	5	7
Kensington and Chelsea	3	4	78	85
Richmond Upon Thames			1	1
Slough	2	7		9
Southwark			1	1
Sutton	1	3	3	7
Tower Hamlets			1	1
Westminster	4	6	251	261
Non-Brent Total	111	98	588	797
Non-Brent %	15.8%	9.0%	37.9%	23.8%
Grand Total	703	1093	1553	3349

Figure 1 shows Year 7 allocation cross-border flows with directly neighbouring authorities (based on national offer day data 2025). Blue is where more children leave Brent to be educated in another local authority, whereby amber means more children come into Brent from outside the borough to be educated in a Brent school.

Figure 1: Secondary children being educated across border for Year 7 in 2025/26



*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 2025) stated an annual growth rate in the number of maintained EHCP Plans of 8% between 2024 and 2025. This number has been approximately 10% over the last three years. As of August 2025, there are 4025 children and young people living in Brent aged 0-25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Of these, 2414 are statutory school age equating to 5.5% of the school population (similar to national levels, which currently sit at 5.3%). 12% 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 14.2% 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 5-10 and 16-19 age groups, which saw increases of 8.2% and 7.4% respectively. 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 a new secondary special school that occupied brand new premises in September 2025 and a Post-16 Skills Resource Centre for young people with SEND projected to open in early 2027. In line with these commitments, Brent delivered a 1.5% increase in special school places and a 28% increase in additionally resourced provision (ARP) places in the 2024/25 academic year.

Despite these delivered increases and the planned capital investment, continually increasing demand means that more local specialist places are needed, especially for primary aged pupils with SEND. To this end, the Council is now developing a 'Phase 2' capital investment programme for specialist provision, to include a new specialist primary school site, alongside significant expansion of existing specialist settings.

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 to ensure young people aged 16-18 (and up to the age of 25 for those who have an Education, Health and Care Plan) have access to a range of opportunities to continue their education or training at a wide range of post-16 providers or through apprenticeships. This supports young people with their preparation for adulthood.

3. The Strategic Approach to Place Planning

Between 2005 and 2017, demand for school places in Brent rose dramatically. This led to a widespread expansion programme which saw the creation of nearly 8000 additional permanent primary school places. In January 2006, there were 20,882 children attending a Brent primary school, which rose to a peak of 26,823 in January 2017. Since then, the number on roll has continued to decrease to 24,963 in January 2025 (a reduction of 179 children since January 2024) and is forecast to continue falling over the next five years to around 24,000 by 2029/30 (200 lower than predicted in the first refresh of this strategy). As a projection, these forecasts are subject to change but are based on existing and historical attendance and migration patterns in the borough.

The rise in demand for primary school places has followed through into the secondary phase, where a number of school expansions have taken place to ensure a sufficient provision of places. The new North Brent School opened in 2020 and started to operate to its full capacity as a six-form entry school from September 2024 on its permanent new site on Neasden Lane, Neasden.

Demand for school places is cyclical and therefore it is expected that after a period of sustained growth there will be a period of falling demand. London is experiencing a declining birth rate and this, in combination with migration 'shocks' brought about by Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic and the number of Brent residents who find them homeless or at a risk of being homeless, is contributing to the current trend of falling demand across most of London and within Brent.

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

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

Brent aims to have a minimum of 5% spare places to manage in-year migration and to ensure the authority can respond to any sudden increase in demand. This avoids the need to open temporary provision or bulge classes, which is neither educationally desirable nor cost

effective. Based on current forecasts, there will be around 16% 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, although this begins to fall towards 1-2% surplus capacity in seven years.

3.1. Place Planning Projections

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

- calculate the number of children resident in each ward who are expected to attend each school by each national curriculum year from Reception to Year 11. The number of children projected for each new intake is calculated as an average of the proportion of children in those wards that attended the school in the previous 3 years multiplied by the ward level age population data. This helps to smooth out any unusual variations that are unlikely to reoccur each year. For other year groups the model calculates the current proportion of children in the ward attending the school and applies this to the ward level population data. School level projections are then aggregated to planning area projections and Borough totals.
- take account of the percentage of children who historically move into the following academic year in an area. This is particularly important in Brent where there is a high level of pupil mobility and migration to schools in other boroughs.

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

- Underlying data, such as birth rates and migration patterns and the impact of local regeneration projects can change significantly in a short period of time.
- Secondary projections are more secure as they largely take account of children already in the 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 post Brexit implications and the COVID-19 pandemic that can impact on school place demand by changing migration patterns. It is difficult to predict the impact of these factors on demand for school places and in particular demand from families of Eastern European origin. Demand at schools that serve these communities are closely monitored.

3.2 Ensuring sufficiency of places during periods of growth in demand

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

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

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

- Expanding existing schools that are judged to be delivering a high quality education by Ofsted gives the Council greater confidence that additional provision will be good and it will be popular. It also helps to maintain stability in the existing school system. School expansion projects need to be well managed to avoid impacting on standards and on any particular groups of children and young people who are under-achieving. Expansions of existing provisions are funded by the Council from Basic Need grant funding or the Special Provision Capital Fund for Additionally Resourced Provision and SEND units for pupils with EHCPs.
- New schools offer a chance to provide new learning environments. However, identifying sites for new schools is difficult because of space constraints and lack of suitable available options.

3.3 Supporting schools and planning areas with falling demand.

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

A range of options may be employed to support schools or groups of schools with falling demand as set out below. Any decision to reduce capacity has to be carefully considered in the context of the medium and long-term need for school places for all children, including those with SEND. The current cost of developing a new, medium sized primary school in

London ranges from £10 - £20 million and is dependent on the site and existing facilities. Brent Council has already invested significant money into developing new and expanded primary and secondary school provision across the borough in response to the most recent episode of rising demand, which needs to be protected for when demand increases in the future.

3.3.1 Reductions to Published Admission Numbers (PAN)

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

There are currently a number of primary and secondary schools in Brent with Published Admission Numbers below their built or net capacity. This means that we currently have the option to negotiate with schools to increase PANs if there is sustained rising demand in a planning area.

3.3.2 Informal capping arrangements

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

3.3.3 Utilising spare capacity for SEND and Alternative Provision

Spare classrooms that are unlikely to be required in the longer-term can be used for alternative use, such as Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) for children with SEND or primary special satellite provision. Any long-term alternative use of spare capacity must be agreed by the local authority, to ensure the places are not likely to be required to support either local demand or demand in neighbouring planning areas. The use of spare capacity in the mainstream school estate for additional SEND places has been explored through the SEND capital programme. This involves repurposing spare capacity within existing school buildings in agreement with school leadership teams to meet increased SEND place demand.

3.3.4 Hard Federation

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

3.3.5 Amalgamation

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

3.3.6 Removing capacity from the Primary Estate

Brent works collaboratively with schools in identifying solutions for a local area where a school reorganisation is considered to be the best way to ensure the sustainability of local provision. Legislation provides the Council with the authority to close community schools or to require them to amalgamate (and to instruct community schools to expand). It does not have the same authority over academies, Foundation or Voluntary Aided schools, as this sits with the DfE's Regional Director. The School Place Planning Working Group has supported with decision making when the removal of capacity is required by conducting reviews of individual place planning areas to inform proposals. Following Cabinet approval. The local authority undertakes informal consultation with stakeholders on proposals to cease provision to ensure their views are considered before any decision to proceed to formal consultation is taken in line with the relevant statutory guidance.

4. School Place Planning Strategy Priorities and Principles

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

- To continue to monitor and support those planning areas experiencing or anticipated to experience growth and high demand to ensure the sufficiency of local places is maintained.
- To support 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 SEND provision within the borough to meet children's needs.

4.1. Brent's operating principles for school organisation

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

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

5. School Place Planning Strategy Measures of Success

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

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

This was 98.8% at the end of the 2022/23 academic year, 95.3% at the end of the 2023/2024 academic year and 96.5% of Brent schools at the end of the 2024/2025 academic year (based on where current Ofsted single word judgements still apply). This success measure will be updated as appropriate to match reporting on the new framework for Ofsted inspections which replaced 'single word' judgements.

- 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 remains unchanged in both November 2024 and November 2025

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

The baseline was 25.8% for the 2023 Year 7 intake and 25.1% for the 2024 Year 7 intake. The figure for the 2025 intake is 23.8%, showing an improving position.

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

The percentage of placement spend on the independent, non-maintained special schools (INMSS) (Lower is better) was 18.8% at the end of the 2024/2025 financial year which is consistent with 18.5% at the end of the 2023/2024 financial year.

- 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%

6. Childcare and Early Years Provision

6.1 Early Years Provision

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

The Brent Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) 2021-2023 showed an overall increase in the number of PVI providers in the borough and a reduction in places in maintained and childminder provision. As of August 2025, there were 284 providers including private, voluntary and independent nurseries (PVI), childminders, nursery classes in schools and maintained nursery schools in Brent. Places for children aged two and under are largely delivered by the PVI sector and childminders.

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

Figure 2: 0-5 childcare providers in Brent as of August 2025

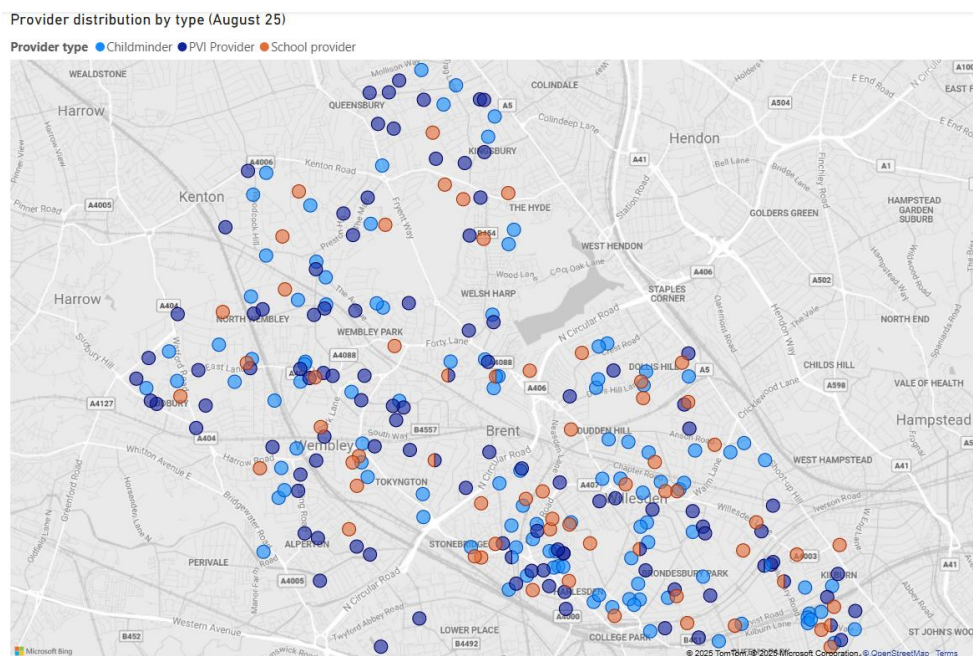
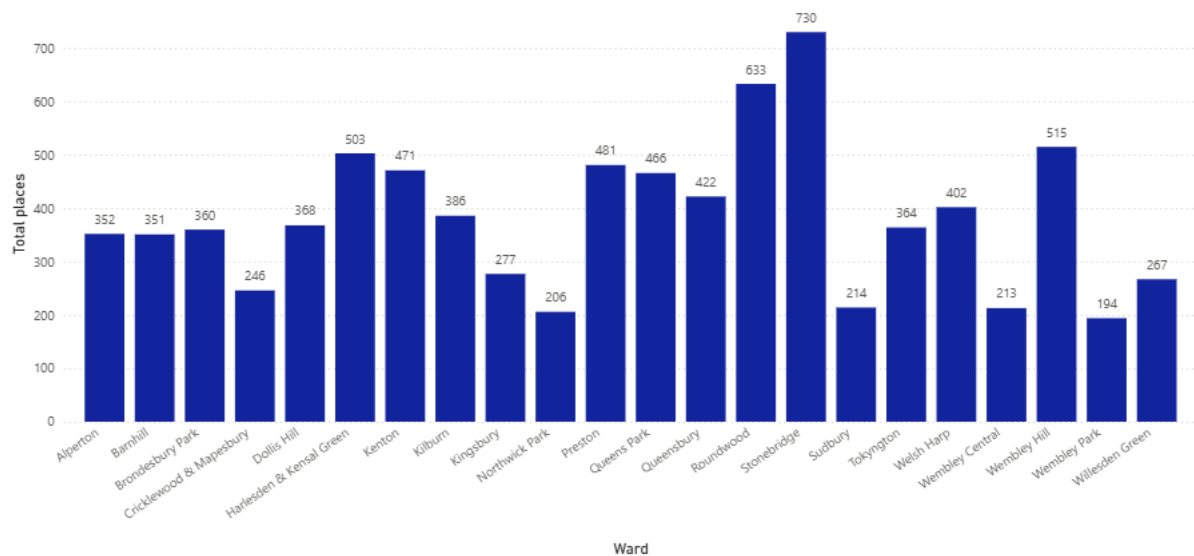


Figure 3: Distribution of childcare places in Brent

0-5 registered places (August 2025)



6.2 Take up of Early Years Entitlements

Promotion to increase the take-up of the free entitlements to childcare for 3 and 4-year-olds focuses on ongoing marketing and promotion. This includes raising awareness of entitlements with partners and highlighting the benefits for both the child and for the parent who can use the time for training or employment opportunities.

Figures on take-up are provided by the Department for Education on an annual basis in the summer of each year based on January census returns. The latest figures from June 2025 indicated take-up in Brent as of January 2025 was 80.4% for 3 and 4-year-olds. This is a decrease of 4.4% on the previous year (84.8%) and is approximately 5% lower than the London average. The percentage take-up of the two-year entitlement for low/no income families lowered further to 53.4%. This reflects a decrease of 6.2% on the take up in 2024 and is below the London average of 61.1% which has also reduced by almost 6% this year.

The decrease in take-up since 2024 of the two-year entitlement for families in receipt of additional support (FRAS), is attributed to two main factors in Brent which also mirror national trends: i) the transition to universal credit from legacy benefits, and ii) income thresholds for the eligibility criteria remaining unchanged whilst average incomes have risen in recent years.

Alongside this, falling birth rate in recent years has reduced the numbers of children eligible for all entitlements nationally. Furthermore, as there are a small number of low-income families who are eligible for both the FRAS and the working family entitlement for two year olds, it is likely that we will see further shifts in take-up of the FRAS 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.

6.3 Expansion of Early Years Entitlements

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

Brent Council has been in ongoing contact with early years providers to identify their intentions regarding their offer in the context of the new entitlements. As at Summer 2025 headcount, there were 682 9-23 months and 774 in working families accessing funded places. The Children and Families Information service did not receive any reports of families unable to take up their entitlement, however, some families who have accessed an eligibility code have subsequently chosen not to use it.

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

The impact of the introduction of these additional entitlements will continue to be monitored, especially the possible impact on the availability of places for the two-year entitlement (15 hours) for disadvantaged children in low/no-income families. There are concerns that providers may prioritise working families eligible for 30 hours, and that SEND provision may become more limited.

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

With the national focus on the importance of the earliest years in shaping future life chances, through programmes such as Family Hubs & Start for life, the wider childcare expansion and now 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 a GLD (an increase of 9%) by 2028.

For Brent, this focus builds on the strong foundations laid through the multi-agency Family Hubs and Start for 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, work has begun on drafting an Early Years Strategy. The initial launch took place in October, which was well attended by both external and internal partners, with the final draft of the strategy expected to be completed by March 2026.

7. Primary School Place Planning

A borough-wide fall in demand for places is projected to continue over the next five years as shown in Graph 1. Longer term projections, although less reliable for primary forecasts, indicate reception demand will rise after 2029/2030 (linked to a rise in the birth rate from 2023/24 and as seen in table 4).

Graph 1: Primary numbers on roll and projections as of January each year up to 2030

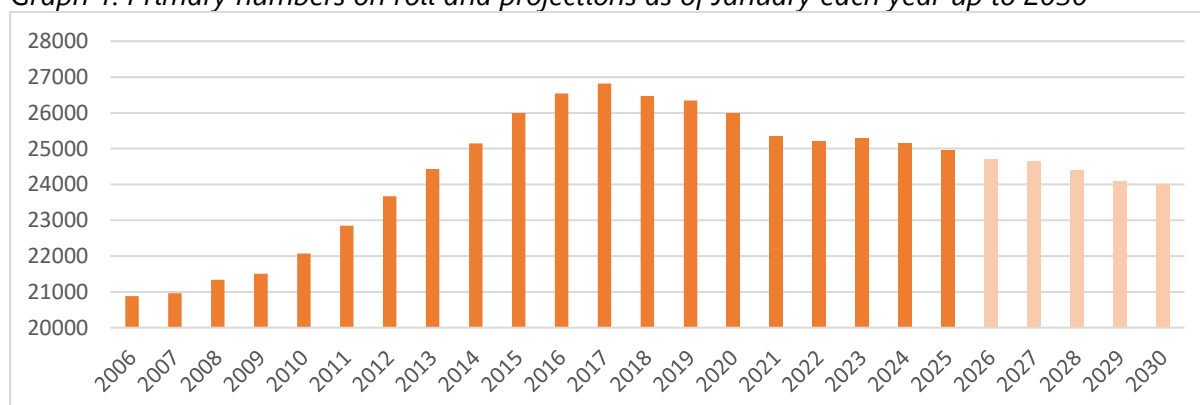


Table 2 shows that borough-wide there is sufficient capacity to meet anticipated demand across all primary year groups up to 2029/30 and to manage in-year pupil mobility.

Table 2: Primary forecasts 2025 (Green means more than 5% capacity)

Whole borough	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2025/2026	Capacity	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187
	Projection	3395	3444	3538	3565	3613	3576	3564
	Surplus	792	743	649	622	574	611	623
	Surplus Percentage	19%	18%	16%	15%	14%	15%	15%
2026/2027	Capacity	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187	4,187
	Projection	3569	3369	3413	3522	3567	3617	3585
	Surplus	618	818	774	665	620	570	602
	Surplus Percentage	15%	20%	18%	16%	15%	14%	14%
2027/2028	Capacity	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127
	Projection	3423	3521	3341	3402	3518	3566	3618
	Surplus	704	606	786	725	609	561	509
	Surplus Percentage	17%	15%	19%	18%	15%	14%	12%
2028/2029	Capacity	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127
	Projection	3416	3388	3491	3307	3390	3522	3579
	Surplus	711	739	636	820	737	605	548
	Surplus Percentage	17%	18%	15%	20%	18%	15%	13%
2029/2030	Capacity	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127	4,127
	Projection	3489	3399	3376	3464	3322	3406	3538
	Surplus	638	728	751	663	805	721	589
	Surplus Percentage	15%	18%	18%	16%	20%	17%	14%

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

Table 3 shows forecast Reception intakes against capacity. This suggests over the next five years that Reception cohorts will remain stable (with intermittent fluctuations) at a lower demand level than has been seen in recent years. This is consistent with the falling birth rates levelling off as seen in Table 4. The indicated level of spare capacity across the system will place budgetary strain on some schools. Section 3 of this strategy outlines the options available to schools and the borough to promote the sustainability of schools under budgetary pressures due to falling demand.

Table 3: Reception forecasts against capacity

Year	Reception projected intake	Reception capacity	Spare places	% spare places	Spare places as forms of entry
2025/26	3395	4187	792	18.9%	26
2026/27	3569	4187	618	14.8%	20
2027/28	3423	4127	704	17.1%	23
2028/29	3416	4127	711	17.2%	23
2029/30	3489	4127	638	15.5%	21

Table 4: Births in Brent (by academic year)

Academic Year	Number of births in Brent (Source ONS mid-year estimates/GLA Projections)	Reception entry (September following 4th birthday)
2018/19	4814	2023/24
2019/20	4794	2024/25
2020/21	4437	2025/26
2021/22	4476	2026/27
2022/23	4387	2027/28
2023/24	4406	2028/29
2024/25	4513	2029/30
2025/26	4586	2030/31
2026/27	4661	2031/32
2027/28	4718	2032/33
2028/29	4795	2033/34
2029/30	4913	2034/35

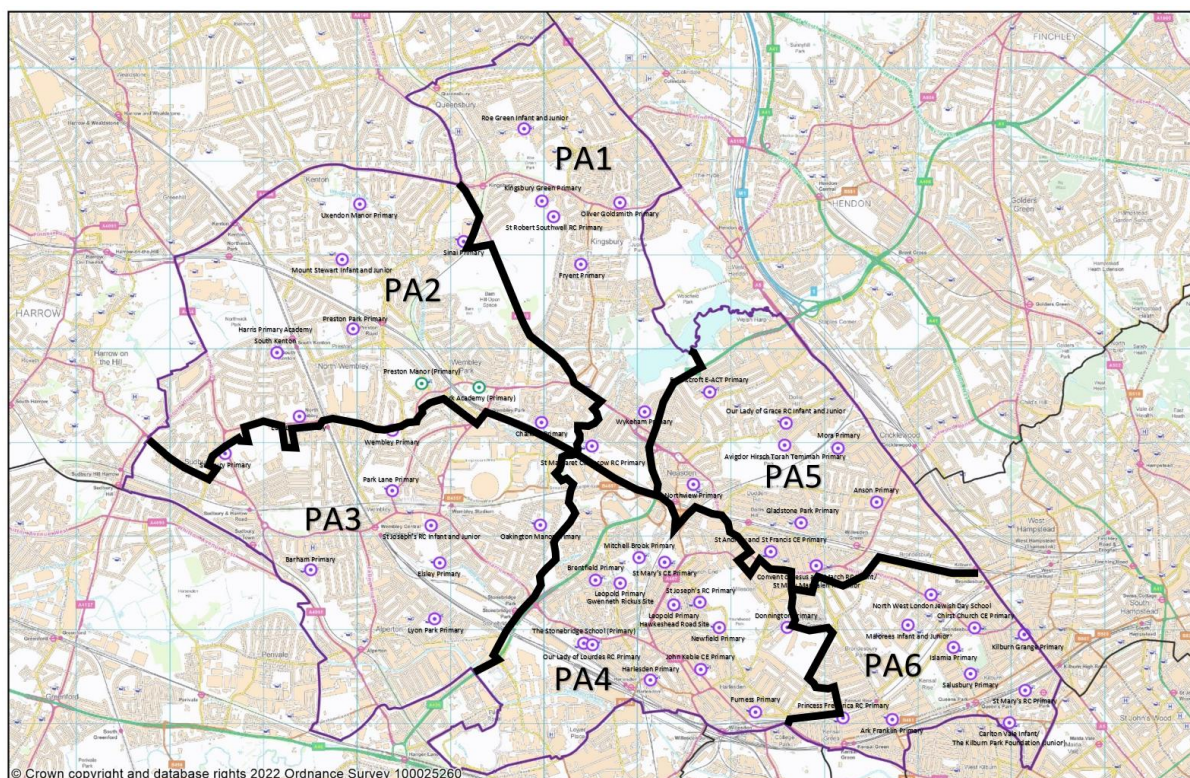
The number of on-time applications for Reception in 2025 fell for the first time after two consecutive years of increased on-time application numbers, which had been counter to the trend of reduced timely applications across London. On time applications are important for all normal points of entry as they provide the greatest opportunity for parents to receive an offer for a preference school and schools are better placed to manage forms of entry, classroom and staff numbers.

7.1 Primary Planning Areas

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

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

Figure 4: Brent Primary Planning Areas



Key to Planning Area tables

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

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

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

Demand: The January 2025 projections indicate Reception demand in Planning Area 1 will fall slightly over the next 5 years. It is projected that some year groups will continue to see the number of spare places fall below the 5% margin the LA aims to maintain, resulting in a small deficit in some year groups. It is anticipated places in the neighbouring planning areas (2, 4 and 5) will accommodate these pressures. Some mainstream capacity in the planning area is being used to provide SEN Alternative Resource Provision (ARP) places.

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

Table 5: Planning Area 1 2025 projections and capacity

PA 1	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2025/2026	Capacity	510	510	510	510	510	510	510
	Projection	471	499	485	497	512	507	466
	Surplus	39	11	25	13	-2	3	44
	Surplus Percentage	8%	2%	5%	3%	0%	1%	9%
2026/2027	Capacity	510	510	510	510	510	510	510
	Projection	497	471	492	475	499	511	497
	Surplus	13	39	18	35	11	-1	13
	Surplus Percentage	3%	8%	4%	7%	2%	0%	3%
2027/2028	Capacity	510	510	510	510	510	510	510
	Projection	453	495	464	479	475	496	498
	Surplus	57	15	46	31	35	14	12
	Surplus Percentage	11%	3%	9%	6%	7%	3%	2%
2028/2029	Capacity	510	510	510	510	510	510	510
	Projection	461	456	488	456	478	476	485
	Surplus	49	54	22	54	32	34	25
	Surplus Percentage	10%	11%	4%	11%	6%	7%	5%
2029/2030	Capacity	510	510	510	510	510	510	510
	Projection	464	461	451	481	457	478	463
	Surplus	46	49	59	29	53	32	47
	Surplus Percentage	9%	10%	12%	6%	10%	6%	9%

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

Primary Planning Area 2

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

Demand: The January 2025 projections indicate demand in the planning area will remain relatively stable over the next four years. Projected surplus places are well above the 5% margin across all year groups and parents in this planning area have increased choice of provision. Planning Area 2 includes the Northwick Park growth area, and this may generate additional demand at some point in the future.

Planned action: There is no current requirement to make any changes to the provision in this planning area and in the short term, surplus places could be managed with the use of strategies to manage surplus capacity, for example agreeing informal capping arrangements with individual schools, as well as supporting any pressures in planning areas 1 and 3. The Planning Area will remain under review to determine if any longer-term changes are required.

Table 6: Planning Area 2 2025 projections and capacity

PA 2	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2025/2026	Capacity	870	870	870	870	870	870	870
	Projection	659	645	718	705	717	715	700
	Surplus	211	225	152	165	153	155	170
	Surplus Percentage	24%	26%	17%	19%	18%	18%	20%
2026/2027	Capacity	870	870	870	870	870	870	870
	Projection	711	666	640	716	705	716	715
	Surplus	159	204	230	154	165	154	155
	Surplus Percentage	18%	23%	26%	18%	19%	18%	18%
2027/2028	Capacity	870	870	870	870	870	870	870
	Projection	685	715	668	651	712	697	711
	Surplus	185	155	202	219	158	173	159
	Surplus Percentage	21%	18%	23%	25%	18%	20%	18%
2028/2029	Capacity	870	870	870	870	870	870	870
	Projection	684	692	711	668	648	709	700
	Surplus	186	178	159	202	222	161	170
	Surplus Percentage	21%	20%	18%	23%	26%	19%	20%
2029/2030	Capacity	870	870	870	870	870	870	870
	Projection	702	694	689	714	672	643	711
	Surplus	168	176	181	156	198	227	159
	Surplus Percentage	19%	20%	21%	18%	23%	26%	18%

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

Primary Planning Area 3

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

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

Planned action: Short term forecasts now indicate there may be a continued increase in demand in this planning area, which would be consistent with pre-pandemic projections. The planning area will be reviewed to identify if strategies to ensure sufficient places are needed, beyond using spare capacity in adjacent Planning Areas 2 and 4. Surplus capacity in other planning areas would be used first to accommodate excess demand before any consideration to expand provision in Planning Area 3.

Table 7: Planning Area 3 2025 projections and capacity

PA 3	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2025/2026	Capacity	820	820	820	820	820	820	820
	Projection	770	817	797	803	805	827	829
	Surplus	50	3	23	17	15	-7	-9
	Surplus Percentage	6%	0%	3%	2%	2%	-1%	-1%
2026/2027	Capacity	820	820	820	820	820	820	820
	Projection	832	782	810	798	809	820	837
	Surplus	-12	38	10	22	11	0	-17
	Surplus Percentage	-1%	5%	1%	3%	1%	0%	-2%
2027/2028	Capacity	820	820	820	820	820	820	820
	Projection	822	847	777	817	803	827	832
	Surplus	-2	-27	43	3	17	-7	-12
	Surplus Percentage	0%	-3%	5%	0%	2%	-1%	-1%
2028/2029	Capacity	820	820	820	820	820	820	820
	Projection	835	834	839	783	821	816	836
	Surplus	-15	-14	-19	37	-1	4	-16
	Surplus Percentage	-2%	-2%	-2%	5%	0%	0%	-2%
2029/2030	Capacity	820	820	820	820	820	820	820
	Projection	869	853	831	846	797	836	829
	Surplus	-49	-33	-11	-26	23	-16	-9
	Surplus Percentage	-6%	-4%	-1%	-3%	3%	-2%	-1%

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

Primary Planning Area 4

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

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

Planned action: Brent has started to address excess capacity in the area to mitigate impacts on schools with reduced pupil numbers. Measures include the reduction of the PAN at Mitchell Brook Primary School from September 2025 and the phased closure of the Gwenneth Rickus site of Leopold Primary School in July 2027. The Gwenneth Rickus site will be used to relocate Islamia Primary School from Primary Planning Area 6 in September 2027, and it is anticipated the majority of children already attending Islamia Primary school will transfer to the new site.

Further action is being considered which may include utilising spare capacity for the creation of Primary SEND places as part of the SEND capital programme. As there is a projection of higher demand in the adjacent Planning Area 3, it is also expected some capacity may be taken up by children from this planning area.

Table 8: Planning Area 4 2025 projections and capacity

PA 4	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2025/2026	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	527	526	575	576	601	570	621
	Surplus	328	329	280	279	254	285	234
	Surplus Percentage	38%	38%	33%	33%	30%	33%	27%
2026/2027	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	540	508	518	576	579	598	582
	Surplus	315	347	337	279	276	257	273
	Surplus Percentage	37%	41%	39%	33%	32%	30%	32%
2027/2028	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	522	512	501	516	577	577	615
	Surplus	333	343	354	339	278	278	240
	Surplus Percentage	39%	40%	41%	40%	33%	33%	28%
2028/2029	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	510	496	509	497	515	580	598
	Surplus	345	359	346	358	340	275	257
	Surplus Percentage	40%	42%	40%	42%	40%	32%	30%
2029/2030	Capacity	855	855	855	855	855	855	855
	Projection	517	493	501	509	503	520	603
	Surplus	338	362	354	346	352	335	252
	Surplus Percentage	40%	42%	41%	40%	41%	39%	29%

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

Primary Planning Area 5

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

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

Planned action: There are no current or planned actions in Planning Area 5. The planning area will remain under review to determine if any longer-term changes are required.

Table 9: Planning Area 5 2025 projections and capacity

PA 5	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2025/2026	Capacity	557	557	557	557	557	557	557
	Projection	511	515	505	520	505	510	507
	Surplus	46	42	52	37	52	47	50
	Surplus Percentage	8%	8%	9%	7%	9%	8%	9%
2026/2027	Capacity	557	557	557	557	557	557	557
	Projection	524	507	514	509	519	502	510
	Surplus	33	50	43	48	38	55	47
	Surplus Percentage	6%	9%	8%	9%	7%	10%	8%
2027/2028	Capacity	557	557	557	557	557	557	557
	Projection	502	515	503	511	508	515	503
	Surplus	55	42	54	46	49	42	54
	Surplus Percentage	10%	8%	10%	8%	9%	8%	10%
2028/2029	Capacity	557	557	557	557	557	557	557
	Projection	491	496	511	489	509	502	514
	Surplus	66	61	46	68	48	55	43
	Surplus Percentage	12%	11%	8%	12%	9%	10%	8%
2029/2030	Capacity	557	557	557	557	557	557	557
	Projection	496	484	492	498	486	506	500
	Surplus	61	73	65	59	71	51	57
	Surplus Percentage	11%	13%	12%	11%	13%	9%	10%

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

Primary Planning Area 6

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

Demand: Projections for Planning Area 6 show a slight decline in demand over the next four years. In the longer term, housing developments are expected to impact on demand in this area.

Planned action: Carlton Vale Infant School and Kilburn Park Junior School have formed a Hard Federation as a first step towards becoming a single primary school on one site as part of the South Kilburn Regeneration Programme. The size of the school will conform to the principles of sustainability and sufficiency of school place planning. The relocation of Islamia Primary School to Primary Planning Area 4 in September 2027 is likely to see an increase in demand for other local schools in the area. There will be enough local capacity for local children who might have attended Islamia Primary School to access spare places in other schools. As part of the South Kilburn regeneration programme, school places in the Planning Area will remain under review.

Table 10: Planning Area 6 2025 projections and capacity

PA 6	Dataset	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2025/2026	Capacity	575	575	575	575	575	575	575
	Projection	457	442	458	464	473	447	441
	Surplus	118	133	117	111	102	128	134
	Surplus Percentage	21%	23%	20%	19%	18%	22%	23%
2026/2027	Capacity	575	575	575	575	575	575	575
	Projection	465	435	439	448	456	470	444
	Surplus	110	140	136	127	119	105	131
	Surplus Percentage	19%	24%	24%	22%	21%	18%	23%
2027/2028	Capacity	515	515	515	515	515	515	515
	Projection	439	437	428	428	443	454	459
	Surplus	76	78	87	87	72	61	56
	Surplus Percentage	15%	15%	17%	17%	14%	12%	11%
2028/2029	Capacity	515	515	515	515	515	515	515
	Projection	435	414	433	414	419	439	446
	Surplus	80	101	82	101	96	76	69
	Surplus Percentage	16%	20%	16%	20%	19%	15%	13%
2029/2030	Capacity	515	515	515	515	515	515	515
	Projection	441	414	412	416	407	423	432
	Surplus	74	101	103	99	108	92	83
	Surplus Percentage	14%	20%	20%	19%	21%	18%	16%

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

8. Secondary school place planning

Year 7 demand over the next seven years is expected to remain steady with the latest forecasts projecting slight fluctuations each year. Demand is projected to be below the level of available capacity with only 2027/28 showing a surplus of under 5%, indicating sufficient capacity to meet Year 7 demand.

Brent has traditionally been a net exporter of secondary pupils, but the borough has seen a recent increase in parental preference for Brent secondary schools due to the sustained quality of Brent schools. The percentage of Brent pupils offered an out-borough school on National Offer Day has fallen from a high of 28.3% in 2017 to 23.8% in 2025. 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
2025/26	3386	3688	302	8.92%
2026/27	3443	3688	245	7.12%
2027/28	3519	3688	169	4.80%
2028/29	3433	3688	255	7.43%
2029/30	3378	3688	310	9.18%
2030/31	3374	3688	314	9.31%
2031/32	3432	3688	256	7.46%

Table 12 shows borough wide forecasts for all year groups and indicates a comfortable operating margin of at least 5% spare places in all year groups up to 2027/2028, then capacity reducing below 5%.

Table 12: Secondary projections 2025 and capacity

Whole borough	Dataset	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
2025/2026	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,745	3,766	3,779
	Projection	3446	3330	3366	3356	3373
	Surplus	242	358	379	410	406
	Surplus Percentage	7%	11%	11%	12%	12%
2026/2027	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,745	3,766
	Projection	3386	3470	3360	3417	3419
	Surplus	302	218	328	328	347
	Surplus Percentage	9%	6%	10%	10%	10%
2027/2028	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,745
	Projection	3443	3414	3506	3411	3491
	Surplus	245	274	182	277	254
	Surplus Percentage	7%	8%	5%	8%	7%
2028/2029	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688
	Projection	3519	3466	3448	3559	3478
	Surplus	169	222	240	129	210

	Surplus Percentage	5%	6%	7%	4%	6%
2029/2030	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688
	Projection	3433	3536	3497	3501	3632
	Surplus	255	152	191	187	56
	Surplus Percentage	7%	4%	5%	5%	2%
2030/2031	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688
	Projection	3378	3463	3575	3554	3585
	Surplus	310	225	113	134	103
	Surplus Percentage	9%	6%	3%	4%	3%
2031/2032	Capacity	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688	3,688
	Projection	3374	3417	3511	3642	3658
	Surplus	314	271	177	46	30
	Surplus Percentage	9%	8%	5%	1%	1%

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

8.1 Actions to respond to changes in demand

The North Brent School, 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.

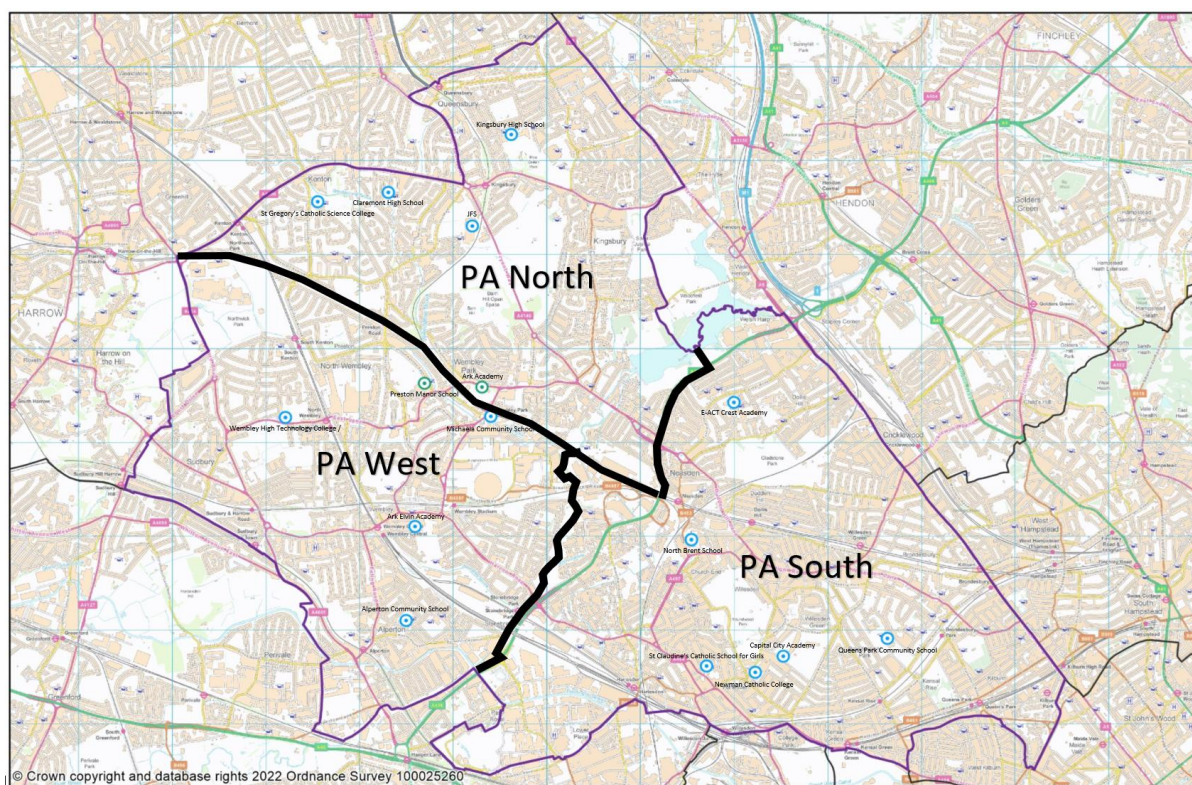
Some Brent secondary schools have previously expressed an interest in expanding should additional places be required to meet demand. It is unlikely this will be required during the life of this current strategy for Year 7 but is not something which has been formally ruled out and may need to be revisited 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, and 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 clearer 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. However, secondary planning areas allow localised pressures for schools to be taken into account and where additional places would help more children attend a school near to where they live.

Figure 5: Secondary Planning Areas



Secondary Planning Area North

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

Demand: Schools in Planning Area North are usually oversubscribed. The latest projections indicate a deficit in almost every year group over the next seven years. This is a different position to the previous forecast, which indicated a small surplus in some year groups. The revised projections are based on a higher than expected number of children attending Year 7 in January 2025, as explained in section 2.3. Planning Area North includes the Burnt Oak Colindale and Northwick Park growth areas.

Planned action: There are no planned actions 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 2025 projections and capacity

PA 7 - North	Dataset	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
2025/2026	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1335	1360	1298	1279	1263
	Surplus	-57	-82	-20	-1	15
	Surplus Percentage	-4%	-6%	-2%	0%	1%
2026/2027	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1347	1346	1367	1317	1306
	Surplus	-69	-68	-89	-39	-28
	Surplus Percentage	-5%	-5%	-7%	-3%	-2%
2027/2028	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1379	1356	1352	1387	1338
	Surplus	-101	-78	-74	-109	-60
	Surplus Percentage	-8%	-6%	-6%	-9%	-5%
2028/2029	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1357	1385	1363	1373	1411
	Surplus	-79	-107	-85	-95	-133
	Surplus Percentage	-6%	-8%	-7%	-7%	-10%
2029/2030	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1325	1363	1391	1382	1398
	Surplus	-47	-85	-113	-104	-120
	Surplus Percentage	-4%	-7%	-9%	-8%	-9%
2030/2031	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1321	1333	1374	1411	1414
	Surplus	-43	-55	-96	-133	-136
	Surplus Percentage	-3%	-4%	-8%	-10%	-11%
2031/2032	Capacity	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278	1,278
	Projection	1336	1330	1343	1392	1442
	Surplus	-58	-52	-65	-114	-164
	Surplus Percentage	-5%	-4%	-5%	-9%	-13%

Secondary Planning Area West

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

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

Planned action: Longer term forecasts indicate there may be increasing demand in Planning Area West, which will remain under review to determine whether any longer-term interventions are required to increase capacity. This may include putting into use all available existing built capacity or additional bulge classes. Spare places in Planning Area South can accommodate pressures in demand across the borough 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 2025 projections and capacity

PA 8 - West	Dataset	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
2025/2026	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,233	1,254
	Projection	1116	1157	1154	1212	1202
	Surplus	60	19	22	21	52
	Surplus Percentage	5%	2%	2%	2%	4%
2026/2027	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,233
	Projection	1141	1134	1185	1188	1253
	Surplus	35	42	-9	-12	-20
	Surplus Percentage	3%	4%	-1%	-1%	-2%
2027/2028	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176
	Projection	1184	1157	1162	1219	1231
	Surplus	-8	19	14	-43	-55
	Surplus Percentage	-1%	2%	1%	-4%	-5%
2028/2029	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176
	Projection	1152	1201	1185	1194	1262
	Surplus	24	-25	-9	-18	-86
	Surplus Percentage	2%	-2%	-1%	-2%	-7%
2029/2030	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176
	Projection	1149	1175	1231	1219	1244
	Surplus	27	1	-55	-43	-68
	Surplus Percentage	2%	0%	-5%	-4%	-6%
2030/2031	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176
	Projection	1153	1173	1207	1269	1278

20301/2032	Surplus	23	3	-31	-93	-102
	Surplus Percentage	2%	0%	-3%	-8%	-9%
	Capacity	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176	1,176
	Projection	1187	1177	1203	1243	1319
	Surplus	-11	-1	-27	-67	-143
	Surplus Percentage	-1%	0%	-2%	-6%	-12%

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

Secondary Planning Area South

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

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

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

Table 15: Secondary Planning Area South 2025 projections and capacity

PA 9 - South	Dataset	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
2025/2026	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	935	953	908	926	954
	Surplus	299	281	326	308	280
	Surplus Percentage	24%	23%	26%	25%	23%
2026/2027	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	955	934	954	906	932
	Surplus	279	300	280	328	302
	Surplus Percentage	23%	24%	23%	27%	24%
2027/2028	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	956	953	934	953	909
	Surplus	278	281	300	281	325
	Surplus Percentage	23%	23%	24%	23%	26%
2028/2029	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	924	950	949	934	959
	Surplus	310	284	285	300	275
	Surplus Percentage	25%	23%	23%	24%	22%
2029/2030	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	904	925	953	953	943
	Surplus	330	309	281	281	291
	Surplus Percentage	27%	25%	23%	23%	24%
2030/2031	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	900	911	930	962	966
	Surplus	334	323	304	272	268
	Surplus Percentage	27%	26%	25%	22%	22%
2031/2032	Capacity	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
	Projection	909	908	920	943	978
	Surplus	325	326	314	291	256
	Surplus Percentage	26%	26%	25%	24%	21%

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

9. SEND and Alternative Provision place planning

9.1 Brent SEND Overview

Brent is a borough that has high aspirations for all children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). This was recognised by Ofsted during Brent's SEND Area Inspection in January 2025 who wrote "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. A child with 'special' listed as Type in Section I of their EHCP is entitled to a place at a special school whilst ARPs have a mainstream designation. Therefore, children with 'special' named as type in Section I should not be placed in an ARP unless parental preference is for mainstream. ARP places are for children who can access, and will benefit from, significant engagement with a mainstream school offer. The majority of pupils' additional needs can be met within one of the following contexts listed in Table 16 with only those not able to access their education in a mainstream school being met through a special school.

Table 16: 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 3 enhanced pre-school providers, 1 primary special maintained school, 1 primary special academy school, 2 special all through academy schools and 2 secondary special school academies, and a number of Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARP) in both primary and secondary mainstream schools.

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

Table 17: Special School PANs 2025/26

School	Type of Provision	Type of School	Special Need	Specialist places 2025/26
*The Manor School	Special	Primary	Communication and Interaction	212 (220 from January 2026)
*The Avenue	Special	All-through	Communication and Interaction	116
Phoenix Arch School	Special	Primary	Communication and Interaction	55
+The Village School and Hope Centre	Special	All-through	Communication and Interaction and additional learning difficulty	310
*Wembley Manor (satellite provision in 2024/25)	Special	Secondary	Communication and Interaction and additional learning difficulty	84 (94 from January 2026, then 150 from September 2027)
+Woodfield School	Special	Secondary	Communication and Interaction	200
			Total	977 (995 from January 2026)

*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 2025/26

School	Type of Provision	Type of School	Special Need	Places 2024/25
Kingsbury Green Primary	ARP	Primary	Hearing Impairment	30
Oakington Manor Primary School	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	25
Fryent Primary School	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	42
Preston Manor High School	ARP	Secondary	Communication and Interaction	12
Preston Manor High School	ARP	Secondary	Communication and Interaction	12
Kingsbury High School	ARP	Secondary	Hearing Impairment	2
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 (opening January 2026)
Newman Catholic College	ARP	Secondary	Communication and Interaction	25
Preston Park	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	21
Ark Elvin	ARP	Secondary	Moderate Learning Difficulty	10 (25 from September 2026)
Elsley	ARP	Primary	Communication and Interaction	10
			Total	246

There are 977 places currently in Brent special schools and 246 ARP places (61 in secondary, 185 in primary). These represent increases of 1.5% and 28% respectively since the 2024/2025

academic year. 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 12% of Brent's total capacity (an increase of 1% since this time last year). As a result, Brent currently only has access to 860 of the 977 local special school places and 216 of the 246 ARP places in Brent schools.

9.2 Demand for special provision

As of August 2025, there are 4025 children and young people living in Brent aged 0-25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Of these, 2414 are statutory school age, or 5.5% of the school population (similar to national levels, which currently sit at 5.3%). 12% 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 14.2% nationally).

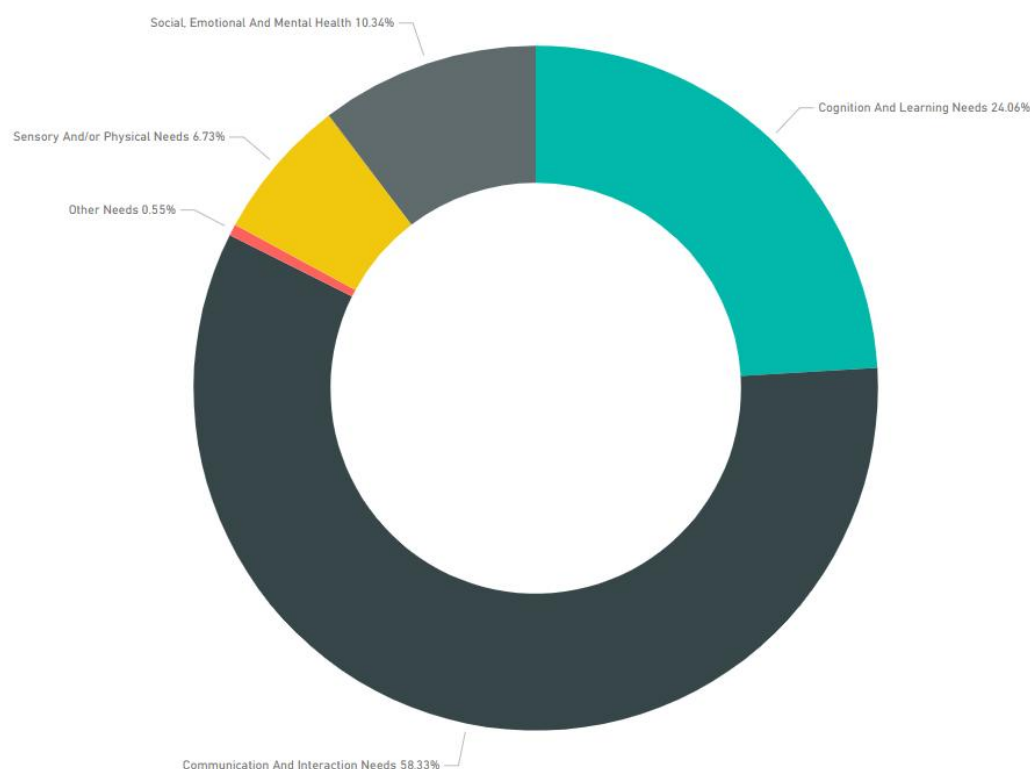
In the last year, the number of EHCPs has increased across all age groups, but not consistently. The age groups with the highest increases in EHCP numbers were the 5-10 and 16-19 age groups, which saw increases of 8.2% and 7.4% respectively. Table 19, below, gives the EHCP % increases between 2024 and 2025 broken down by age group. It should be noted, though, that in 2024, EHCNAs for children aged 0-5 accounted for 41.3% of all new requests to assess, children aged 5-10 accounted for 39% of new requests and children/young people aged 11-25 accounted for the remaining 19.7%.

Table 19: % increases of EHCPs for Brent residents by age group

Age Group	2024	2025	Increase %
Under 5	159	164	3.1
Age 5 to 10	1374	1486	8.2
Age 11 to 16	1161	1222	5.3
Age 16 to 19	676	726	7.4
Age 20 to 25	399	402	0.8

The breakdown by area of needs for Brent's current 0-25 cohort of CYP with an EHCP is shown in Figure 6. Needs associated with communication and interaction (CI), which includes children with autism spectrum condition (ASC), predominate with 58% of the cohort having CI as their primary area of need. This is an increase of 2% 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.

Figure 6: A breakdown of the percentage of CYP with an EHCP for each primary area of need in Brent, August 2025



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

Ongoing targeted work to support schools and settings to better meet the needs of children with SEND has seen an increase in the number of children remaining within mainstream education in Brent. However, despite increasing confidence in the mainstream sector to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, and significant investment by Brent to increase the capacity within special educational settings 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 an increase of 1% since this time last year.
- However, in terms of age-groups, 37% of primary aged children and 49% of secondary aged children with an EHCP require a special school place. Numerically this is expressed as 634 and 587 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 136 children in mainstream schools awaiting a place in special (an increase of 16% since this time last year). Of these 136, 128 are primary age and 8 are secondary age. Additionally, Brent currently has 16 children unplaced and receiving home tuition whilst a

placement is sought (a 6% decrease since this time last year). Of these 16, 8 are primary aged and 8 are secondary aged. The primary need of the majority of these children is communication and interaction (most commonly ASC), accompanied by cognition and learning needs.

199 Brent pupils with EHCPs attend out-of-borough maintained special schools (an increase of 2% since this time last year), at a cost of £5.6m per annum. This represents 8% of Brent's school age children with an EHCP. Additionally, 197 children attend independent schools (an increase of 1.5% since last year), at a cost of £11.9m per annum. This also represents 8% 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 1221 places (634 primary and 587 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 480 places in primary age special school classes and 497 places in secondary age special school places. Of these places, 12% are occupied by children from other boroughs, leaving 422 primary places available and 437 secondary places available. Given this, Brent has a current shortfall of 212 primary places in special and 150 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 number of forecast primary special places required is similar to last year's predictions. The latest forecasts for secondary special places are, however, higher than last year's predictions by 50 places. This means that additional secondary places may be required sooner than previously anticipated due to increased demand:

- In August 2024, 42% of secondary age pupils were described as requiring a place in a special school. In August 2025, that percentage has risen 7% to 49%, representing a difference of circa. 41 children.
- The increase in secondary aged children requiring a place in special is attributed to rising levels of need in Brent's younger children as they reach secondary age.
- Permanent exclusions in the last academic have had a disproportionate impact on children with SEND, reflecting pressures in capacity and mainstream schools' ability to meet pupil's needs.
- In the 2024 School Place Planning Strategy it was predicted that Wembley Manor school would open with 150 places in September 2025. Instead, Wembley Manor has opened with 84 places in September 2025, increasing to 94 in January 2026 but not reaching 150 until September 2026. This is a difference of circa. 60 places in the 25/26 academic year as compared to modelling in 2024.

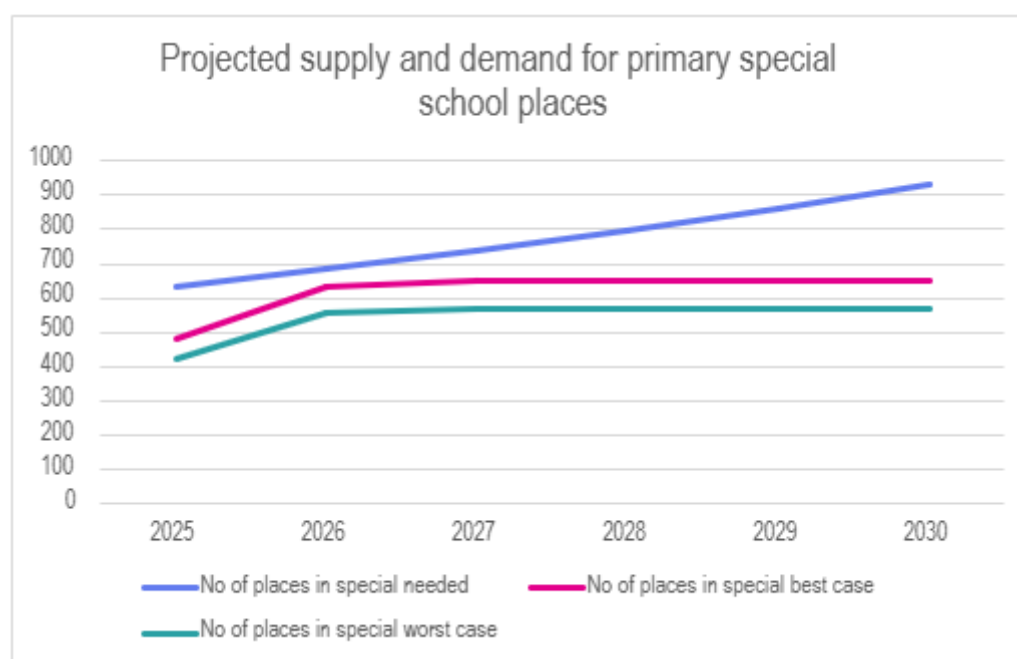
Table 20 and Figure 7 below, depict the current and projected need for primary special school places (all areas of need) within Brent over the time period of 2025-2030. In terms of demand, Table 20 and Figure 7 assume 8% annual growth in EHCP numbers (based on current annual growth trends and agreed mitigations) and 37% of primary aged children with an EHCP requiring a place in special.

In terms of supply, Table 20 and Figure 7 model a best-case scenario (whereby all of Brent special school places are available to Brent children) and a worst-case scenario (whereby 88% 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 20: Current and projected demand and supply of primary school special places in Brent

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
No of places in special needed	634	685	740	799	863	932
No of places in special best case	480	632	649	649	649	649
No of places in special worst case	422	556	571	571	571	571
Shortfall best case	154	53	91	150	214	283
Shortfall worst case	212	129	169	228	292	361

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

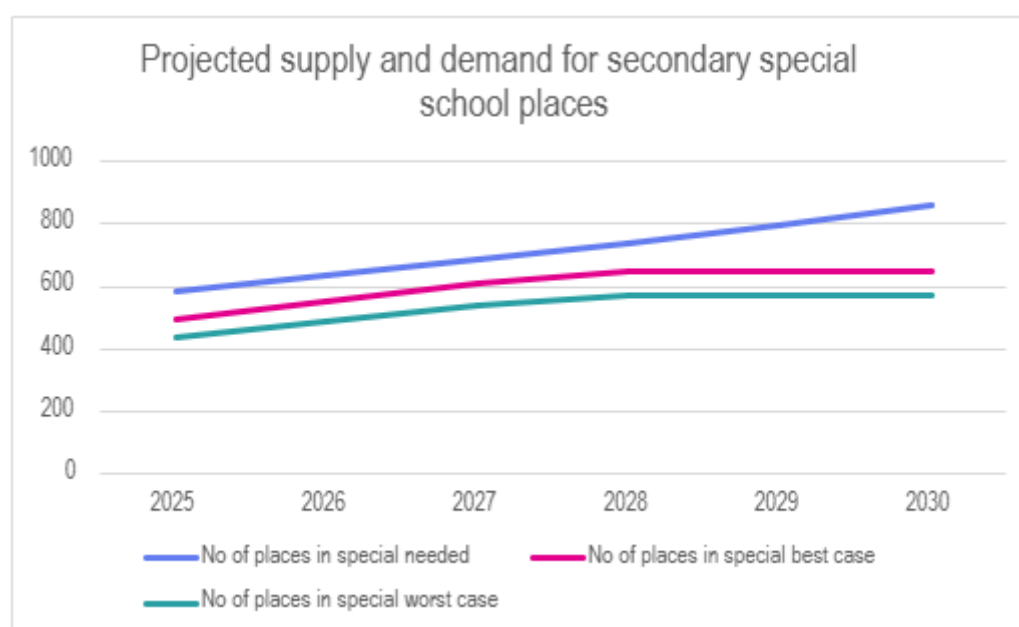


Current and projected (until 2030) need for special school places at secondary are shown in Table 21 and Figure 8 below. The same assumptions are made for this data set as for the primary age data set (with the exception that an assumption of 49% of total secondary aged EHCP cohort requiring special is made).

Table 21: Current and projected demand and supply of secondary school special places in Brent

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
No of places in special needed	587	634	685	740	799	863
No of places in special best case	497	553	610	650	650	650
No of places in special worst case	437	487	537	572	572	572
Shortfall best case	90	81	75	90	149	213
Shortfall worst case	150	147	148	168	227	291

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



9.4 Planned action

In January 2022 Cabinet approved £44m of capital investment for additional specialist places in a new secondary special school, expansions of existing special schools and new ARPs in mainstream schools. As many of these projects have either been delivered, are close to delivery or have been reconsidered, a new 'phase 2' SEND Capital strategy is currently under development. 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. Development of the Strathcona site will be subject to local consultation. (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 22: 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 2026
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.

9.5. Summary of need

As can be seen from Tables 20, 21 and 22 and Figures 7 and 8, 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 special for either primary or secondary cohorts, and so will not keep pace with levels of demand anticipated by 2026/2027 (as modelled in Tables 21 and 22). The modelling indicates that Brent has a need to plan for further special school places (over 300 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.

9.6 Alternative provision

The Council has a statutory duty to arrange suitable full-time education for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils who because of illness or other reasons would not receive suitable education without such provision. In Brent there are two pupil referral units (PRUs) that are maintained by the local authority to provide sufficiency 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 provider who adds to the sufficiency of alternative provision in the borough. Brent River College is heavily over-subscribed at primary level (Key Stages 1 and 2) offering 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. At the end of the 2024 – 2025 academic year, there were 4 young people on the waiting list for an additional support placement at BRC.

The overall exclusion figures for all Brent pupils for the academic year 2024/25 remains low with 26 students permanently excluded. This is a decrease of 13% since the 2023/24 academic year and highlights the strong positive impact of Brent's inclusion support teams. 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.

9.7 Post-16 Provision

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

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

A partnership wide Supported Employment Forum has been established to ensure that the offer developed for young people is meaningful and sustainable. The Council, working with anchor organisations, has expanded the offer of supported internships. In the 2024/25 academic year, 22 Brent students enrolled on the supported internship scheme, across 9 different placements. Plans are being developed as part of the SEND strategy re-refresh to further increase the breadth of placement opportunities available to Brent students.

10. Conclusion

This strategy has set out the responsibilities the Council holds with regards to school place planning for early years, mainstream and special provision. The second refresh maintains the focus on the sustainability of provision that can adjust to both increases and decreases in demand for mainstream and specialist places.

The first-year refresh included a deeper dive into Special Education Needs and Alternative Provision place planning which concluded additional provision is required to secure sufficient local places for children with SEND and children who need alternative provision. This more detailed focus on sufficiency of specialist school places continues.

The second-year refresh of the strategy considers the actions that may be required to cope with an increased demand for mainstream school places in some areas, following eight years of consistently falling pupil numbers.

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

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