

Do the Maths 2020

London's school places challenge



January 2020



Contents

Summary	5
Introduction	6
Pupil Numbers	7
Conclusion	15

Fractional Indices

exercise

evaluate the fo

14/9/12

① $36^{\frac{1}{2}} = 6$

③ $4^{\frac{1}{2}} = 2$

Summary

*Do The Maths 2020*¹ is London Councils' annual report which details the pressures facing the school places planning system in London. This report outlines London Councils' analysis of the current and predicted number of shortfall and surplus places over the next four years.

Demand for school places in London has risen significantly over the past decade, at a faster rate than in any other region of the country. London has experienced high demand in particular for primary school places over this timescale. But now we are seeing this bulge in demand shifting to secondary level. To manage this, boroughs have been working hard to put plans in place to ensure future shortfall is met. Some boroughs are focusing on creating new school provision by working with free schools, while others are working to increase the capacity of existing secondary schools.

At the other end of the school system, the total number of surplus places at primary level across London has been rising in recent years. This growth in primary level surplus could have partly been driven by declining rates in the number of live births across the capital, a decrease of 10 per cent between 2012/13 and 2018/19. To manage increasing surplus places at primary level, boroughs are working hard to implement strategies that will help manage capacity and maintain the financial stability of schools.

There is now considerable variation across London in terms of demand for school places which makes it harder to draw conclusions and an overall picture of demand. While the overriding trend is towards a growing surplus of places, some boroughs are still grappling

with a growing shortfall of places, particularly at secondary level.

London boroughs have plans in place to ensure that schools can cope with forecast shortfalls and surpluses over the next four years. A range of different activity is underway across boroughs, such as redesignating space within or across schools and increasing the capacity of existing schools.

Key Facts

- London has experienced the greatest increase in total pupil numbers compared to any other region over the past decade. Between 2010/11 and 2018/19, total pupil numbers increased by 13.8 per cent across the capital, compared to 8.8 per cent nationally.
- 8,728 new school places are predicted to be needed in 2022/23 to meet demand across London.
- 68 per cent of London's shortfall of places will be in secondary schools
- In 2022/23, there will be 84,384 surplus school places across London, which the London boroughs are working hard with schools to manage.
- 84 per cent of the predicted surplus places in 2022/23 will be in primary schools.
- The number of live births in London has decreased by 10 per cent between 2012/13 and 2018/19.

¹ All data in the report is subject to minor changes as we are waiting for revised data from one borough

Introduction

Each year London Councils produces *Do the Maths*, an analysis of the levels of demand for school places across London. This is because local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places available in the local area for every child that needs one. In order to be able to plan appropriate levels of places the boroughs have to forecast the number of places that they will have available each year. Forecasts are based on a range of different factors including previous years' level of demand for places, live birth rate, population trends and local intelligence, for example from housing developments. London local authorities have worked hard to ensure that all London pupils have had a school place during the increase in demand over the past decade. With rising numbers of surplus places in primary, local authorities are now facing a new challenge; one that they are working hard to manage in order to ensure that schools remain financially stable.

Change in methodology

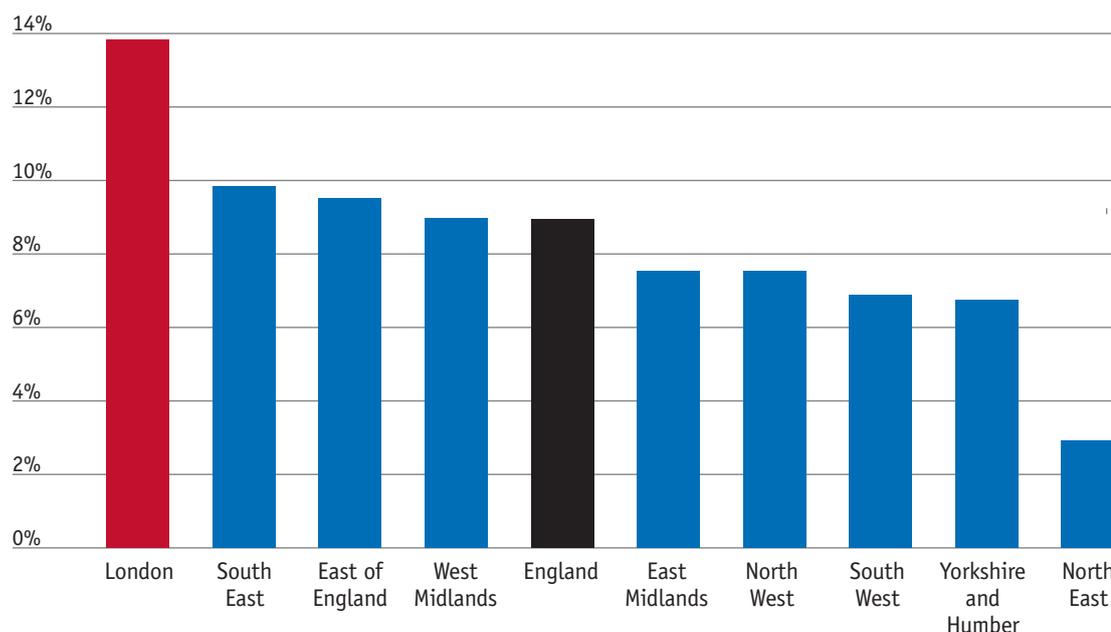
This report includes an estimate for the number of new mainstream school places that are required to meet demand in the capital, based on London boroughs' own latest forecasts of shortfall and surplus places at primary and secondary level for each planning area. Boroughs submitted data to London Councils for Do the Maths 2019 using local capacity calculation methodologies, including Published Admissions Number (PAN) capacity and methodology used in the Schools Capacity (SCAP) returns. Data collected refers to the academic years 2018/19 to 2022/23. The report also uses secondary data, which has been presented in the report as both calendar years and academic years, due to the way data was collected.

This year the methodology we have used to estimate future capacity in London has changed. Instead of looking at shortfall and surplus figures for pupils in reception and year 7, as we have done previously, this report considers shortfall and surplus figures across each year group of the whole school. This provides a more accurate picture of London's demand for school places across the whole school system from reception to year 11 over the next four years. Given the fluctuating nature of demand for school places across different boroughs, it is important to be able to capture as up-to-date a picture as possible in order for the analysis to be helpful to boroughs. However, using this approach means that we are not able to compare this year's analysis with previous years.

As far as possible, figures have been calculated based on capacity in use. Similar to previous years, pupil planning areas (areas within local authorities used for to assess current and future pupil demand for school place provision) recording a shortfall in each borough have been added together to calculate a total shortfall for the borough.

Pupil numbers

Figure 1: Pupil growth by region (2010/11 to 2018/19)



Pupil numbers

Since 2010/11, London has experienced a greater increase in the total number of pupils compared to all other regions across the country. Between 2010/11 and 2018/19, total pupil numbers increased by 13.8 per cent across the capital, compared to 8.8 per cent nationally (see figure 1). This trend aligns with previous years when London had the largest percentage growth in the total number of pupils compared to any other region in England.²

While the total number of pupils has increased across the capital, the total number of pupils at primary level has started to

decline. Since 2016, the number of primary level pupils in London decreased by just 0.1 per cent, yet over the past year, the number has decreased by 0.6 per cent. While this is a relatively small percentage change it amounts to a reduction of 814 school places since 2016. This however is not reflected at a national level, as the rest of England has experienced a growing number of pupils at primary level (see figure 2). One reason for this decline could be the significant drop of 10 per cent in the birth rate in the capital from its peak in 2012/13. In comparison, the rest of England experienced a noticeable drop in its birth rate in 2016/17 much later than London (see figure 4).

² See *Do The Maths 2018*: <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/download/file/fid/24095>

Figure 2: Pupil growth at primary level from 2011 to 2019

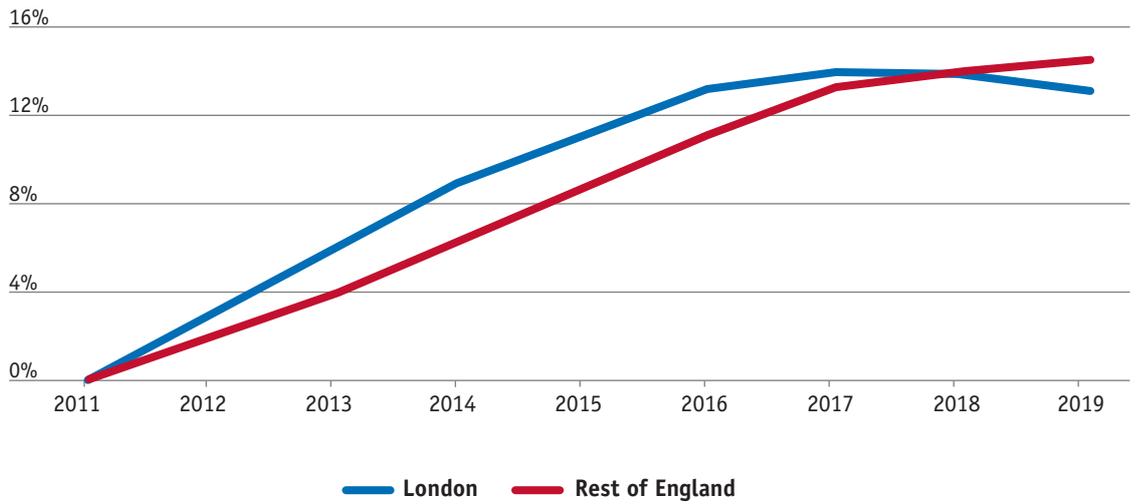


Figure 3: Pupil growth at secondary level from 2011 to 2019

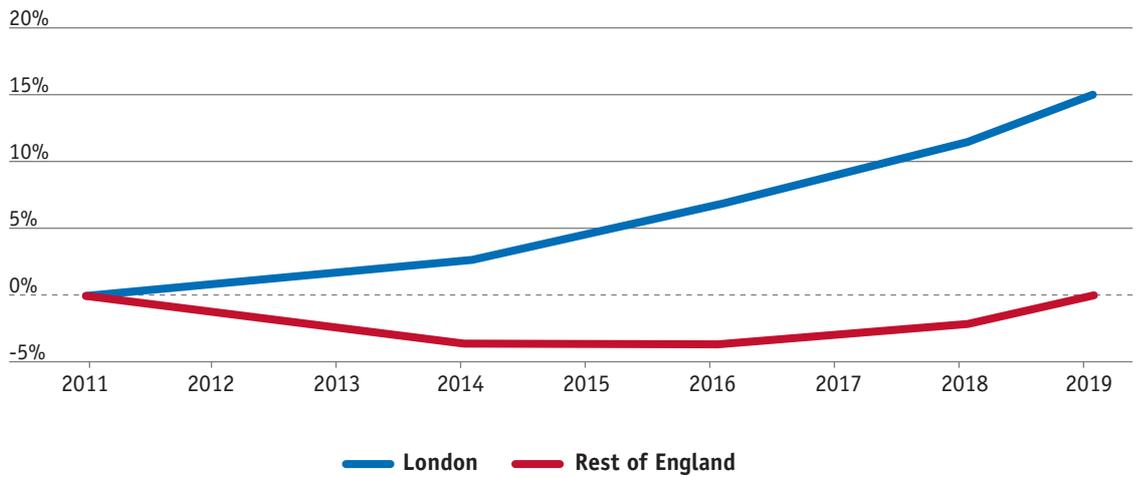
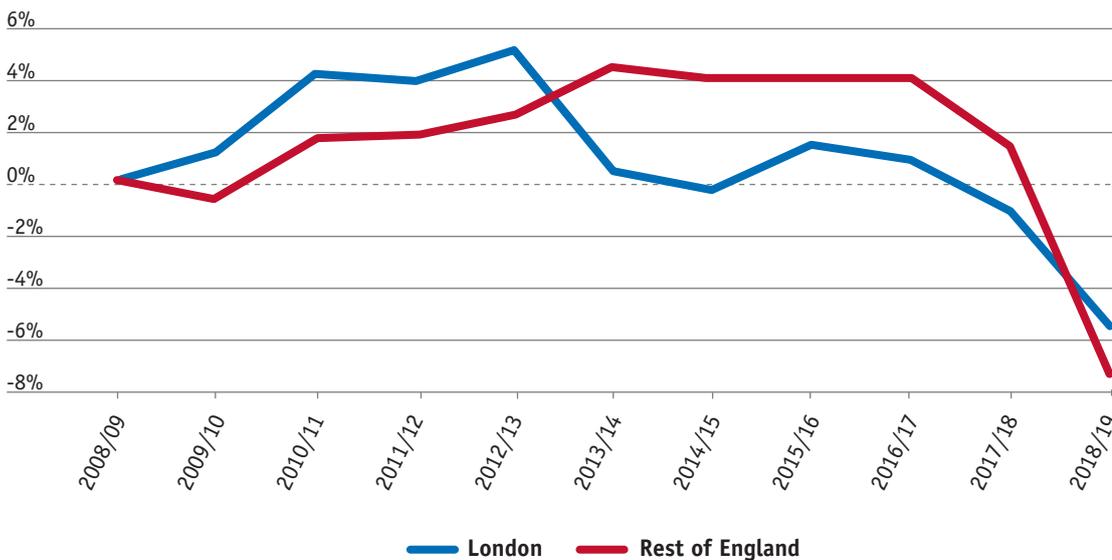


Figure 4: Change in total number of live births from 2008-09 to 2018-19



In comparison, the number of secondary school pupils has grown continuously across the capital since 2014, representing an increase of 11.7 per cent (see figure 3). Over the past year, the number of secondary level pupils increased by 3.0 per cent. This growth has largely been a result of pupils who were born during the increased birth rate of the late 2000s now being eligible for secondary level schooling.

Main shortfall

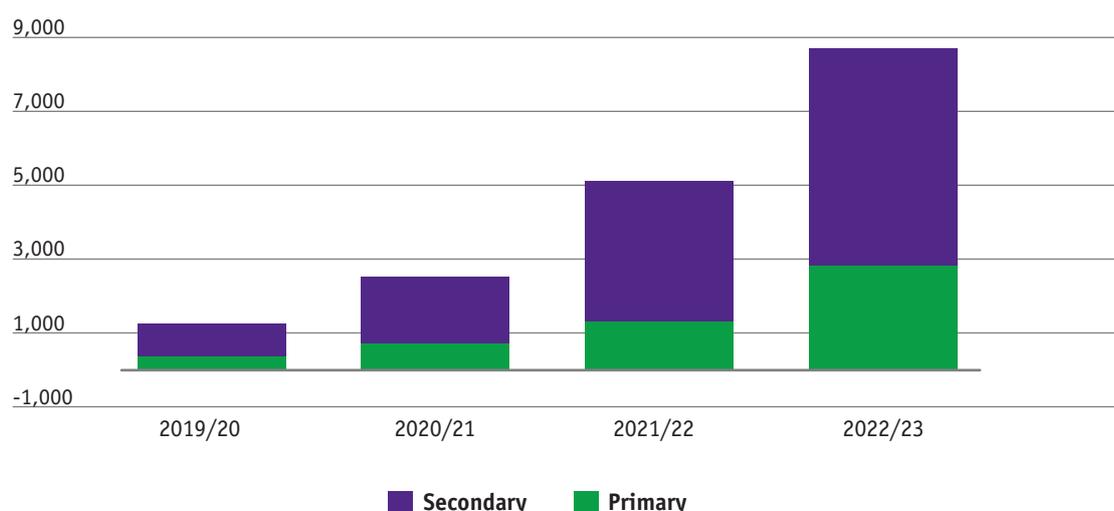
According to borough shortfall estimates, 8,728 new school places will be needed in 2022/23 to meet demand across London. As with previous years, this shortfall is mainly concentrated in the secondary phase of education, with 68 per cent of shortfall located at secondary level compared to 32 per cent at primary level (see table 1 and figure 5).

Table 1: London shortfall by year 2019-20 to 2022-23³

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Primary	308	685	1,284	2,790
Secondary	867	1,827	3,847	5,938
Total	1,175	2,512	5,131	8,728

³ Shortfall figures based on the number of pupils from reception to year 11. Figures in the table are not cumulative.

Figure 5: London school places shortfall by year



While the overall London picture is an increasing shortfall, there is considerable variation across individual boroughs. Some boroughs are facing a declining future shortfall, while others face no future shortfall at all. Of the boroughs that are experiencing rising future shortfall, the pressure for school places may be experienced in a particular area of the borough, rather than borough wide.

Main surplus

According to borough surplus estimates, London will have 84,384 surplus school places in 2022/23, with 84 per cent of surplus places located in London’s primary schools. The boroughs are already taking steps to ensure that schools can cope with this reduction in pupils, for example by merging classes and schools, where appropriate. In recent years,

the total number of surplus places at primary level has been increasing considerably across London and significantly more than in the rest of the country (see figure 8). For example, the School Capacity (SCAP) survey shows that between 2013/14 and 2017/18, the number of surplus places in primary schools across the capital increased by 41.2 per cent, compared to 4.4 per cent nationally⁴. The surplus of primary school places is also expected to continually increase until 2022/23, compared to an ongoing decline in secondary surplus places (see table 2 and figure 10).

4 The Schools Capacity (SCAP) survey is conducted by the Department for Education and is an annual statutory collection of school-level data on school capacity and local authority pupil forecasts. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-capacity-academic-year-2017-to-2018>

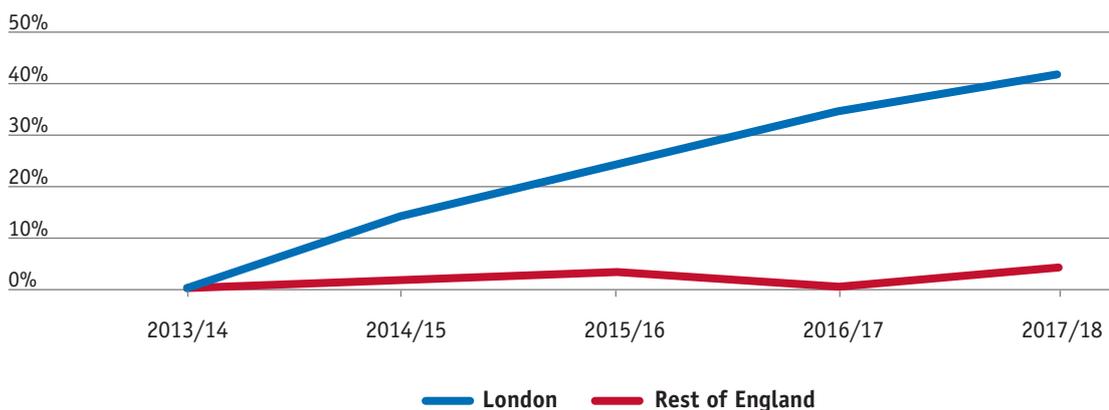
This growth in primary level surplus appears largely to be driven by a decrease in the number of live births across the capital, which decreased by 10 per cent between 2012/13 and 2018/19. Declining birth rates are also expected to drive primary level surplus over the next four years. For example, between

2020 and 2024, the 0-4 population in London is expected to decrease by 1.0 per cent (see figure 11). Individual boroughs have also reported other issues such as welfare reform and the uncertainty around Brexit as having an impact on families moving out of borough.

Table 2: Future primary and secondary surplus by year⁵

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Primary	67,155	67,863	69,314	70,519
Secondary	26,070	21,327	17,264	13,865
Total surplus	93,226	89,190	86,577	84,384

Figure 6: Percentage change in the number of surplus primary school places from 2013/14 to 2017/18



5 Surplus figures based on the number of pupils from reception to year 11. Figures in the table are not cumulative.

Figure 7: Change in the total number of applications for entry into primary and secondary school between 2014 and 2019

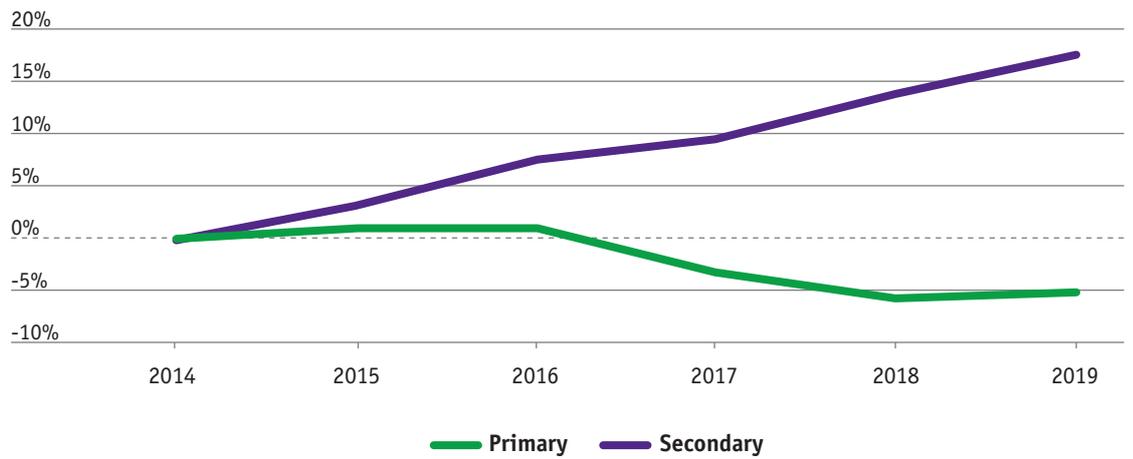


Figure 8: London school places surplus by year

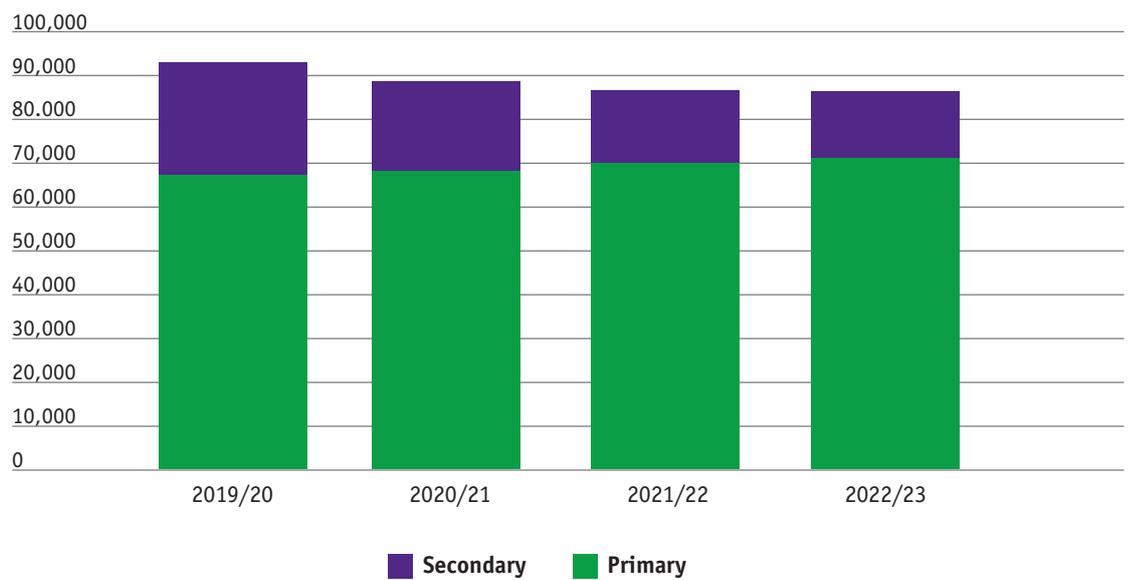
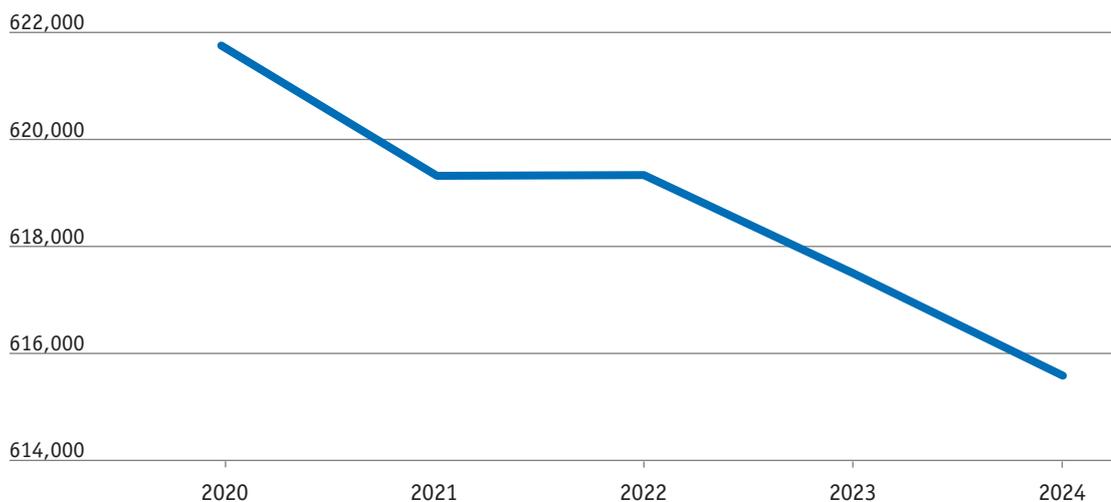


Figure 9: Expected changes in 0-4 population across London 2020 to 2024



Although the total number of surplus places across London has been increasing, this trend varies by borough. Some boroughs face an increasing future surplus, compared to other boroughs who are forecasting no surplus over the next four years.

Overall picture of demand by 2022-23: managing surplus and shortfall

We have considered off-setting surplus and shortfall to come up with an overall picture of demand across London by 2022-23. However, aggregating up places will not give us an accurate picture of demand in London. Many surplus places will not be able to be offset by shortfall in different parts of the same borough or in different year groups. For example, surplus places in year 6 classes cannot easily compensate for a shortfall of reception places. Therefore, in the interests of providing as accurate a snapshot as possible,

we have chosen not to aggregate shortfall and surplus figures.

London boroughs work hard to ensure that as many surplus places as possible can be used to meet demand elsewhere in the system, for example by transforming primary schools into much needed special schools. They all have plans in place to ensure that schools can cope with forecast surpluses and shortfalls. A range of activity is underway across London to help schools manage surplus places effectively, including reducing the Published Admissions Number (PAN) for individual schools, redesignating space within or across schools and working with housing developments to change expectations around new schools. Boroughs liaise closely with head teachers and governors to ensure that schools are supported to be able to manage if their intake is decreasing, for example by

exploring revenue generating activity such as renting out space. This work also includes future proofing schools to ensure that they are able to cope if demand starts to increase again.

Similarly, estimating future shortfall numbers and adjusting capacity in accordance with this is a significant challenge for boroughs. Many children cross borough boundaries to access school provision, particularly at secondary level, which adds to the complexity of managing secondary school places during a period of growth in demand. It can be hard to forecast the levels of cross border pupil mobility as they fluctuate according to the popularity of different

schools, levels of shortfall or surplus in neighbouring schools, current regeneration and housing developments and changing school admissions policies. To manage this, boroughs have been working to put plans in place to ensure future shortfall is met. Some boroughs are working with free school providers to create new schools in areas of need, while others are working to increase the capacity of existing schools. Boroughs also ensure that they maintain regular communication with neighbouring authorities to help inform their plans and avoid any over or under supply of places and ensure every child has a school place.



Conclusion

There is now considerable variation across London in terms of demand for school places which makes it harder to draw conclusions and an overall picture of demand across London. While the overriding trend is towards a growing surplus of places, some boroughs are still grappling with a growing shortfall of places, particularly at secondary level.

London Councils will continue to support boroughs to share expertise and intelligence, both in terms of their planning and the measures they are taking to meet demand forecasts.

London Councils
59½ Southwark Street
London SE1 0AL
www.londoncouncils.gov.uk
020 7934 9813

design: pinsentdesign.com
images: Photofusion/iStock
publication date: January 2020

www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/do-maths-2020