

Choice and diversity: putting policy into practice

The Authority's 10-year strategy for providing high quality primary school places



1. Background and analysis

- 1.1 This paper follows from the Richmond upon Thames Primary Strategy for Change¹, which was published in June 2008 agreed by the then Cabinet and the Department for Children, Schools and Families later in that year. It also reflects the Consultation on Primary School Expansions Strategy 2009-2013², which was published in January 2009 and in which more detail can be found.
- 1.2 The strategy for change documents outlined the high levels of demand for reception class places, how that demand was forecast to continue, identified a number of schools as possible expansions to meet that demand and specified the Local Authority's preferred options for expansion, both temporary and permanent.
- 1.3 Since those documents were written, the economic downturn has exacerbated demand for places, to the extent that seven additional Reception classes were required for September 2009 entry and nine (including the permanent expansion at Holy Trinity) for September 2010. For the first time ever, schools in *all* areas of the borough were oversubscribed, including areas such as Ham where there had traditionally been some spare capacity.
- 1.4 Whilst the most difficult factor to gauge remains the degree to which the recession will continue to affect demand, it is likely that the increased take-up rates (i.e. the number of children requiring places as a percentage of the children born in the area four years previously) will be sustained in most, if not all, areas of the borough. Although, the number of children whose families are likely to move out of the area may increase to the pre-2008 rates as and when the housing market picks up, previous experience indicates that once a family has opted for their first-born child to be educated in state-maintained schools, they are likely to do so for their subsequent children having built a relationship with the school.
- 1.5 The Local Authority (LA) currently has: 40 primary phase schools (six infant, six junior and 28 all through primary).
- 1.6 25 of the 40 are community schools, nine are Church of England and six are Catholic. Policy so far has been designed to maintain a balance of church and community provision, at reception, so as to provide the greatest choice for parents.
- 1.7 Of the 33 infant and primary schools (admitting pupils at reception) 17 are on the Middlesex side of the Thames and 16 are on the Surrey side.
- 1.8 The number of 'on-time' applications for reception class places in the borough's primary schools for 2010/2011 entry increased by almost 23% to 2,325 from the 2006/2007 figure of 1,896. Demand has been, and continues to be, highest in three areas: Richmond/East Sheen; St Margarets/Central and East Twickenham; and Teddington. However, demand has increased in all areas of the borough, with the results that the 'cut-off' distances have shrunk considerably for schools which use 'home to school distance' as the main oversubscription criterion, and those what were traditionally less popular schools are now over-subscribed.

¹ See: http://www.richmond.gov.uk/primary_strategy_for_change_june_2008-2.pdf.

² See: http://www.richmond.gov.uk/consultation_on_school_expansions_strategy_2009-2018.pdf.

1.9 The reasons for the increased demand can be attributed to: significantly increased birth rates; more parents than ever before opting for the state sector as the primary schools' levels of achievement are so high; many small housing developments and conversions of large houses into flats: and the economic downturn that has affected admissions patterns since the September 2009 intake. The percentage of children born in the borough who subsequently, by age 4/5, either leave the area or are educated in private schools, has traditionally been 30% (between 650 and 800 children in any given year), but that percentage dropped considerably, to 23% (602 children) for 2009/2010 entry. That percentage has been maintained for 2010/2011 entry.

1.10 The birth rate increases within the borough are outlined in the table below:

Year	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	2006	2007	2008	2009
Births	2,311	2,568	2,565	2,565	2,626	2,767	2,884	2,865	2,859

The increase in births between 2001 and 2007 (25%) was sustained almost at the same level in 2008 and 2009 and looks set to continue. Similar increases have occurred throughout Greater London, particularly in outer London and noticeably in all five of our neighbouring local authorities.

1.11 These figures lead to the following anticipated projections for pupil numbers based upon GLA actual and estimated birth data and a continuation of the most recent take-up rates from birth:

School year	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Reception pupils expected	2,326	2,329	2,376	2,402	2,414	2,414	2,414	2,414	2,414
Permanent capacity	2,053	2,053	2,053	2,053	2,053	2,053	2,053	2,053	2,053
Shortfall of places	273	276	323	349	361	361	361	361	361

It should be noted that the numbers of 'Reception pupils expected' include a percentage – roughly 10% - of out-borough pupils who will live near enough to Richmond Borough schools to gain admission.

1.12 If, however, demand were to be exacerbated by variable factors – e.g. continuing economic difficulties, large 'pupil yields' from housing developments at Twickenham Station, the Royal Mail site, Stag Brewery, etc., and further improvements in standards across the borough's primary and secondary schools – then the projections of pupil numbers could be as high as in the table below:

School year	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Reception pupils expected	2,326	2,359	2,496	2,582	2,594	2,594	2,594	2,594	2,594
Permanent capacity	2,053	2,053	2,053	2,053	2,053	2,053	2,053	2,053	2,053
Shortfall of places	273	306	443	529	541	541	541	541	541

It must, though, be emphasised, though, that it is difficult to forecast with any precision the full impact of further economic difficulties or the 'pupil yield' from housing developments that are still in the early planning stages.

- 1.13 Against this background there is a clear case for increasing the number of places available in our schools. The LA's ability to meet demand for reception class places easily accessible from pupils homes is hindered by several factors: the fact that the River Thames has few crossing points and therefore acts as a natural barrier; the elongated shape of the borough; traffic density, which means that offers of places much more than a mile from home can be difficult, especially for parents who have younger children and who would be reliant on public transport; and the high levels of demand for places in neighbouring local authorities which means that out-borough parents have been applying in greater numbers for Richmond Borough schools.
- 1.14 The LA has preferred, where possible, to expand schools on a permanent basis during recent years, and this has been strongly affirmed by the Administration's manifesto commitment, but this has a financial consideration. In 2005, a bid was made to the Government for 'Basic Safety Valve' funding for primary school expansions, but it was turned down. There were no further opportunities to bid for funding until May 2008, when the Government accepted the LA's case and allocated Basic Need Safety Valve' funding of £8,897,708. In addition, The Department for Children, Skills and Families subsequently allocated £2.4million in 'Targeted Capital Fund' for two school expansions. Those allocations were added to other funding streams, and to £6million of the Council's own money, to create a 'pot' of £32million.
- 1.15 This funding has allowed for the permanent expansions at five schools creating permanent additional forms of entry. These are at Chase Bridge, Holy Trinity, St Mary's and St Peter's, Stanley Primary, and at the St John's Hospital site in the St Margarets / Central & East Twickenham area. The St John's site which has been purchased will allow for the creation of an additional form of primary provision.
- 1.16 In addition, the LA has agreed with several schools a policy of a 'shared form of entry'. This strategy groups three schools to provide the seven extra classrooms needed for a full form of entry between them. The children admitted each year stay in the school for the full seven years of primary provision and do not move, but each year the school admitting the additional class rotates. The concept was

originally suggested by the three Surrey-side Catholic primary schools who wanted to share in the expansion of places in the borough but did not have sites large enough for full expansion. In these schools the strategy has already been implemented for 2009 and 2010. There is a further agreed shared form of entry within the Richmond/Sheen area. Overall this is a very cost effective way of providing school places as it does not require the rebuilding of some of the central infrastructure such as kitchens and school halls. It has proved popular with schools as it allows all schools to have limited expansion with the associated budgetary advantages. It also avoids the problems associated with late planned bulge classes being needed. In the larger schools, grouped in this way, buildings are being planned to allow for permanent expansion if and when money becomes available. An example of this is Sheen Mount Primary.

- 1.17 Although the Quindrats are not being used for admissions work they do align usefully as planning areas to ensure that there is adequate local provision for parents and children. Section 2 of this paper provides an analysis by Quindrat of future additional capacity that needs consideration.
- 1.18 This paper outlines specific plans to deal with demand up to and including 2013/2014, as the actual – as opposed to forecast – birth data extends only as far as children who will be entering Reception class in September 2013. However, in line with the Administration's wish to consult upon a ten-year plan, it also includes options, e.g. to expand Sheen Mount, that may be required in the years leading up to the end of the decade, particularly as several large housing developments may be created during that timeframe.
- 1.19 Pupil forecasts, and the need for places that arises from them, are reviewed, and adjusted as necessary, three times a year, in light of (a) actual birth data from the previous year; (b) the numbers of applications for entry to reception class; and (c) the numbers of children who subsequently take up places. The Primary School Expansions Strategy will be reviewed annually by Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to monitor progress, given that each expansion typically takes around three years from inception to completion.

1.20 The following table shows the breakdown of additional places that, based on the projections in the table in 1.11, are required within each quindrat planning area:

Quindrat	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Kew, Mortlake, Barnes and East Sheen	63	57	51
Ham and Richmond	79	70	77
Heathfield, Whitton and West Twickenham	35	56	47
St Margarets, Twickenham and Teddington	84	65	67
Hampton and Hampton Hill	28	25	34
Total	289	273	276

1.21 The following table shows the permanent expansions, shared forms of entry (SFE) and 'bulge' classes that are already agreed, with numbers of places to be provided in bold:

Quindrat	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Kew, Mortlake, Barnes and East Sheen	Lowther (B) St Osmund's (RC SFE) 60	Lowther (P) St Mary Magdalen's (RC SFE) 60	Lowther (P) Sheen Mount (Richmond/Sheen SFE) 60
Ham and Richmond	Holy Trinity (P) Marshgate (Richmond/Sheen SFE) 60	Holy Trinity (P) The Vineyard (Richmond/Sheen SFE) 60	Holy Trinity (P) St Elizabeth's (RC SFE) 60
Heathfield, Whitton and West Twickenham	Heathfield (B) 30	Chase Bridge (P) Heathfield (B) 60	Chase Bridge (P) Archdeacon (B) 60
St Margarets, Twickenham and Teddington	Collis (B) Orleans Infant (B) Stanley (P) 90	St Mary's & St Peter's (P) Stanley (P) 60	St Mary's & St Peter's (P) Stanley (P) 60
Hampton and Hampton Hill	Buckingham (B) 30	Buckingham (P) 30	Buckingham (P) 30
Total	270 *	270	270

Key: B = Bulge; P = Permanent expansion; SFE = Shared form of entry.

* In addition, places were 'over-offered' places at Darell.

1.22 Summary within Quindrats of probable additional need beyond 2011/2012 not currently agreed

Quindrat	2012-2013	Beyond
Kew, Mortlake, Barnes and East Sheen		Additional 1½ FE or 2 ½ FE, depending upon use / impact of Stag Brewery site
Ham and Richmond		1FE in Ham/Petersham if demand continues at, or above, the 2010 level
Heathfield, Whitton and West Twickenham		Additional 1FE – possibly 2FE in longer term
St Margarets, Twickenham and Teddington	1FE to meet demand across these two quindrats	Additional 1FE – possibly 2 or 3FE depending upon impact of Station, Royal Mail and other housing developments
Hampton and Hampton Hill		Possible additional 1FE in the longer-term

2. Primary school expansion options within quindrats (including recommendations for additions to the agreed programme)

2.1 Kew, Mortlake, Barnes and East Sheen quindrat

- 2.1.1 Up to four forms of entry will be required within this quindrat to meet forecast demand in the foreseeable future.
- 2.1.2 St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary and St Osmund's Catholic Primary are already part of the Surrey-side Catholic schools' shared form of entry referred to in paragraph 2.8.
- 2.1.3 Longer-term, demand for places in Kew is likely to rise, so an extra form of entry may be required there in due course, although the possible mini-expansion of Darell Primary (in North Richmond) to two-form entry (see paragraph 2.2.4) could obviate that need.
- 2.1.4 Increased demand for community school places in this quindrat has been highest in Barnes and in East Sheen/Mortlake.
- 2.1.5 In Barnes, for 2009 entry, Lowther went from being under-subscribed the year before to having a catchment at the initial allocations stage (in March) of just 319 metres. That meant that children in North Barnes, which, due to it being a peninsula extending away from the rest of the borough, would have not been offered maintained school places unless an extra form of entry had been provided at Lowther. That situation would have been repeated in 2010, had an extra form of entry not been provided at Lowther at the initial allocations stage; though there were still 12 unplaced children within the Barnes area at that point.
- 2.1.6 Although Barnes Primary has been more heavily oversubscribed than Lowther in recent years, children just outside its catchment area are less geographically isolated than those in North Barnes and have therefore been accommodated in other schools within a reasonable distance. Furthermore, whilst the Governors of Lowther are keen to see the school expanded and have their own 'masterplan' which could be used to inform the designs for expansion, it would, by contrast, be considerably more difficult, and therefore more expensive, to expand Barnes primary, which consists of two sites.
- 2.1.7 In East Sheen/Mortlake, for 2010 entry, 46 children were unplaced at the initial allocations stage in March. Although all those children were placed in local schools by the end of June, it is clear that more community school places are needed in the area. Particularly significant are the lack of community school provision in Mortlake, which is likely to be exacerbated by the development of the Stag Brewery site, and the amount of places within East Sheen. Both East Sheen Primary and Sheen Mount Primary are popular and successful schools that could conceivably be expanded, but East Sheen is too close to the Wandsworth boundary for its expansion to be of much assistance in solving the school places shortage within the area. We recognise that some East Sheen parents opt for the private sector because they are dissatisfied with the schools that they are offered as allocations

when their preferences cannot be met, and we would like to address this issue. We will look at options for providing sites for a free school in the East Sheen area, in addition to considering the possibility of permanently expanding Sheen Mount. Whether or not the option to expand Sheen Mount permanently is taken forward and funding for it is obtained, in the meantime the school can continue to form part of a shared form of entry with Marshgate and The Vineyard.

2.1.8 The alternative to school expansion in East Sheen/Mortlake would be for a new school to be created should a suitable, affordable location be identified. The Stag Brewery site may be suitable, but if it is primarily developed for housing, it will exacerbate the need for school places in what is already a problematic area in terms of meeting need. If no primary school provision is included on the site, expansion of Kew Riverside, which is a short walk along the towpath, to 2FE may be the best option to meet increased need from the development, albeit that the school is PFI.

2.1.9 **It is therefore recommended that:**

- **Lowther should be expanded to two-form entry, as previously agreed;**
- **the options of expanding Sheen Mount and providing a site for a free school should be further explored; and**
- **the possibility of creating a new school on the Stag Brewery site and/or of expanding Kew Riverside should be further explored (subject to the development of the site).**

2.2 Ham and Richmond quindrat

2.2.1 Up to two and a half forms of entry (including the expansion of Holy Trinity from 2010 onwards) will be required within this quindrat to meet forecast demand in the foreseeable future.

2.2.2 St Elizabeth's is already part of the Surrey-side Catholic schools' shared form of entry, and Marshgate and The Vineyard are part of the shared form of entry with Sheen Mount.

2.2.3 Demand for places in North Richmond and Ham/Petersham has traditionally been less intense than in other parts of the borough, but, for 2010 entry, demand for places at Darell, Meadlands Primary and St Richard's with St Andrew's Church of England Primary has noticeably increased.

2.2.4 Expanding Darell from 43, its current admission number, to 60 would meet demand in both North Richmond and Kew (see paragraph 2.1.3), but would probably not be required until 2014 at the earliest.

2.2.5 If the unforeseen demand experienced in 2010 for places in Ham and Petersham continues, then expanding The Russell Primary, which has an extensive site, would seem to be the most obvious solution. It may be prudent for that expansion to be provided on a temporary expansion, as required, for two or three years, to ensure that the high demand for places in the area experienced in 2010 has become a longer-term trend.

2.2.6 It is therefore recommended that the options of expanding Darell and The Russell should be further explored.

2.3 Heathfield, Whitton and West Twickenham quindrat

- 2.3.1 Up to three forms of entry (including the expansion of Chase Bridge from 2011 onwards) will be required within this quindrat to meet forecast demand in the foreseeable future, although the expansion of the Stanley schools may meet some of that demand. However, longer-term a further form of entry may be needed.
- 2.3.2 The Heathfield schools, may share a form of entry with Nelson Primary and with St Edmund's Catholic Primary or Archdeacon Cambridge's Church of England Primary, although the recent years' surge in demand within this quindrat means that it would be preferable to expand at least one of those schools on a permanent basis. That increased demand has largely been for community, rather than church, school provision, so it would seem that the choice would be to expand either the Heathfield schools or Nelson. Both have relatively large sites, but there is a clear need to remedy the less than ideal condition of the buildings at Heathfield, and that factor would arguably make it the preferred option.
- 2.3.3 Archdeacon Cambridge's Church of England will act as an additional bulge, as and when required.
- 2.3.4 **It is therefore recommended that:**
- **the option of expanding the Heathfield schools should be further explored; and**
 - **an extra classroom should be provided at Archdeacon Cambridge's.**

2.4 St Margarets, Twickenham and Teddington quindrat

- 2.4.1 Up to two forms of entry (in addition to the expansion of the Stanley schools and St Mary's and St Peter's from 2010 and 2011 onwards respectively) will be required within this quindrat to meet forecast demand in the short- to medium-term. Those extra places will specifically be needed in St Margarets and Central and East Twickenham, which remains the most complex and difficult to solve of all the school place planning problems in the borough.
- 2.4.2 The proposed housing developments at Twickenham Station, the Royal Mail site and the site behind the RFU Stadium would exacerbate demand to a point that would require an as yet unknown amount of additional forms of entry.
- 2.4.3 The acquisition of part of the Amyand House (St John's Hospital) site in Strafford Road has widened the range of options in St Margarets and Central and East Twickenham. The Authority has recently (February 2010) consulted with local parents on a set of proposals that would involve either expanding Orleans Infant to four-form entry, relocating the St Mary's junior provision from its current Richmond Road site to the Amyand House site and increasing it to three-form entry (with its infant provision remaining as two-form entry at its Amyand Park Road site), or expanding Orleans Infant to four-form entry and creating a new community school, consisting of one form of infant and two forms of junior provision, at Amyand House. Feedback to that consultation showed that parents' over-riding preference was for all-through education that would obviate the need for the separation at year 3 of year-groups progressing from Orleans Infant. Since that consultation, the Governors of St Mary's and the Diocese of London have expressed a willingness

to expand St Mary's to three-form entry by adding the St John's Hospital site to their existing sites at Amyand Park Road and Richmond Road.

2.4.4 In addition to the possible expansion of St Mary's, the conversion of both Orleans Infant and St Stephen's Church of England Junior into all-through two-form entry primary schools (as was proposed in 2009) would also be a good solution, not only in providing an extra form of entry but by providing two geographical reception entry points, one of which would assist those in North St Margarets who currently find it difficult to gain admission to Orleans Infant. However, the current reluctance, without additional funding, of the Governors of either Orleans Infant or St Stephen's for their schools to be converted into all-through primary schools means that those aspects of our proposals cannot yet be taken forward. This issue could be addressed if extra funding, of c.£5.2million, either from the Department for Education or the Council, were made available.

2.4.5 Any group that wishes to open a free school in the area will be supported with practical assistance, as appropriate.

2.4.6 **It is therefore recommended that:**

- **St Mary's be expanded to three-form entry by occupying the St John's Hospital site;**
- **the LA and Diocese of London seek funding for an extra form of entry to be created by converting both Orleans Infant and St Stephen's Junior into two-form entry all-through primaries; and**
- **consideration should be given at the earliest opportunity as to the effects on school provision of the proposed housing developments at Twickenham Station and the Royal Mail site.**

2.5 Hampton and Hampton Hill quindrat

2.5.1 Up to two forms of entry will be required within this quindrat to meet forecast demand in the foreseeable future, although the expansion of the Stanley schools will meet some of that demand.

2.5.2 As two – Carlisle Infant and Hampton Infant – of the three current Reception-intake schools are linked to corresponding junior schools on separate sites, the least difficult and expensive option in the area is to expand Buckingham. Moreover, expanding Buckingham would help to consolidate its much-increased standards and popularity.

2.5.3 Demand within this quindrat needs to be carefully monitored and contingencies need to be put in place should the birth rate continue to rise.

2.5.4 **It is therefore recommended to proceed with the expansion of Buckingham Primary as previously agreed.**

2.6 Summary of permanent expansions already fully approved

Quindrat	Full expansion	Shared form of entry
Kew, Mortlake, Barnes and East Sheen		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Elizabeth's, St Mary Magdalen's and St Osmund's;
Ham and Richmond	Holy Trinity (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marshgate, Sheen Mount and The Vineyard
Heathfield, Whitton and West Twickenham	Chase Bridge (2011)	
St Margarets, Twickenham and Teddington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stanleys (2010) • St Mary's and St Peter's (2011) 	
Hampton and Hampton Hill		

The year in brackets refers to the anticipated date of implementation.

2.7 Summary of recommendations, prioritised by date required

Quindrat	Short-term Priorities (by September 2011)	Medium-term priorities (by September 2012)	Longer-term priorities (by September 2013)
Kew, Mortlake, Barnes and East Sheen	Lowther – expansion		Kew Riverside / Sheen Mount / Stag Brewery site – explore possibility of expansion / new school, dependent upon development of Stag Brewery
Ham and Richmond		The Russell – explore possibility of expansion	Darell – explore possibility of expansion
Heathfield, Whitton and West Twickenham		Heathfield schools – explore the possibility of expansion	
St Margarets, Twickenham and Teddington		St Mary's – expansion; Orleans Infant and St Stephen's – seek funding for conversion into primary schools	
Hampton and Hampton Hill	Buckingham – expansion		

2.8 Map of Quindrat planning areas



- Kew, Mortlake, Barnes and East Sheen
- Ham and Richmond
- St Margarets, Twickenham and Teddington
- Heathfield, Whitton and West Twickenham
- Hampton and Hampton Hill

2.9 Summary of how additional need could be met within Quindrats beyond 2011/2012

Quindrat	2012-2013	Beyond
Kew, Mortlake, Barnes and East Sheen		Possible 2FE primary on the Stag Brewery site Possible ½FE at Darell
Ham and Richmond		Possible 1FE expansion at The Russell
Heathfield, Whitton and West Twickenham		Possible expansion of the Heathfield schools to 4FE
St Margarets, Twickenham and Teddington	Possible expansion of St Mary's at St John's Hospital site	Possible conversion of Orleans Infant and St Stephen's Junior into all through 2FE primaries
Hampton and Hampton Hill		