

SCHOOLS PLACE STRATEGY

2013 - 2018

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that sufficient school places are available within their area for every child of school age whose parents wish them to have one; to promote diversity, parental choice and high educational standards; to ensure fair access to educational opportunity; and to help fulfil every child's educational potential.

The Schools Place Strategy shows local communities, and those interested in their development, how we expect school provision to change over the next few years.

The Strategy brings together information from a range of sources, sets out the issues the Council will face and clearly outlines the framework for, and approach towards, the provision of places. This will ensure that the Council can meet its statutory duties for providing school places up to 2017/18.

The purpose of this document is to:

- set out the policies and principles of West Berkshire Council to ensure that there is a sufficient and diverse supply of suitable and good school places to meet statutory requirements for primary and secondary age provision;
- provide information on the current organisation of school places, and the existing capacities and number of pupils attending those schools;
- provide information about the capacity of existing school sites and identify opportunities that may exist for further expansion where required to meet housing demands; and
- provide forecasts of future pupil numbers, and how any increases might be accommodated, or how any surpluses could be addressed.

The Strategy includes data about present and predicted future pupil numbers, together with information about population estimates, mobility, school capacity, and changes to existing housing/new housing. It analyses changes in the number of school places and suggests where other changes may be necessary in the future. The Strategy also sets out the statutory framework for making changes such as opening, closing, amalgamating or enlarging schools.

The process of commissioning school places aims to achieve a balance between the number of places available and the number of pupils for whom they are required. In its strategic role, the Council must ensure there is a response to changes in demand over time by securing the increase or removal of capacity, which can be achieved in a number of ways, including:

- working in partnership to engage others in the provision of free schools or academies;
- extending the capacity at existing schools, either by the use of permanent extensions or, in exceptional cases, by modular buildings; or through changing the use of spaces;
- reducing places at existing schools, for example by removing or relocating modular buildings or changing the use of spaces;
- promoting the reorganisation of schools, including amalgamating, relocating or closing schools, changing the age range or range of special needs of the school;
- reviewing and re-aligning catchment areas

Many of these changes take time to achieve, bearing in mind the need to consult the school (governors, staff and parents) and the community, secure relevant approvals, obtain capital

resources, plan, design, seek tenders and carry out building work. There is likely, therefore, to be a significant planning period that has to be included in the forward planning process.

Also, short term solutions are sometimes required.

In making decisions, the Council works closely with other stakeholders to ensure that there is a balance of provision between community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, Free Schools and Academies.

The range of educational provision for children and young people is now both broad and complex in terms of the number of providers involved, and also their roles. Indeed the Council has parallel responsibilities as both direct provider and also as commissioner of other providers.

2 WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL'S VISION

Our vision is to keep West Berkshire a great place in which to live, learn, work and do business.

To achieve this, we want the vulnerable in our communities to be cared for and supported. We want to promote a vibrant district and our economy to prosper. We want our young people to fulfil their potential. We want people to be able to enjoy our towns, villages, green spaces and countryside.

The Schools and Early Years Place Strategy 2013 – 2018 contributes to the West Berkshire Council vision, and to the key priority area in relation to enabling children and young people in West Berkshire to fulfil their potential.

3 CONTEXT

West Berkshire has previously experienced steady pupil numbers with minimal growth, except in specific urban areas such as Newbury and Thatcham. However, the Local Authority (LA) experienced a significant increase in applications for places for September 2012. In common with other LAs across the Country, the numbers applying for places exceeded expected levels and required urgent pro-active measures to ensure that the Council's statutory responsibilities to offer places by the April 2012 deadline could be achieved.

The context for place planning has shifted over the last 12-18 months, due to the complex interaction of a range of factors, including:

- rapid growth in the number of children approaching statutory school age;
- the economic downturn and its effect on child yield from housing;
- children who previously used private education returning to maintained provision;
- returning service families from abroad; and
- impact of sudden growth on neighbouring LAs reducing the success of cross-LA border applications, and resulting in pupil numbers which previously went out of LA remaining within the LA area.

These factors have had a significant impact on school place planning and the existing model was no longer fit for purpose. Following a project to develop a new model and methodology,

the Schools Place Strategy has been developed and provides an essential framework for effective planning within this context, and provides key partners, in particular schools, with trends and data to inform their future decision-making. It is the intention to update the Appendices to the Strategy every year and review the continuing relevance of the over-arching principles.

Judgements about how best to manage school places across West Berkshire are not only concerned with ensuring that there are sufficient places available, but also about enhancing the quality of provision where surplus places are considered for removal and promoting the highest possible standards where additional places are required. **Effective school organisation ensures the right number of good schools, which are educationally and financially viable, of the right size and in the right locations.**

This document is not intended to identify changes that are required in specific schools. However, within the framework provided by it, the Local Authority and other providers can subsequently develop specific proposals to address the priorities that have been identified.

INFORMATION RELEVANT TO THE MANAGING THE SUPPLY OF SCHOOL PLACES

3.1 Population of West Berkshire

The 2011 Census puts the population of West Berkshire at 153,800 people. The previous (2001) census counted the population of West Berkshire to be 144,483. Therefore, the population of West Berkshire has grown by 6% over the last decade (or just over 9,000 people). This is slightly lower than the regional and national rate of growth and broadly similar to the Berkshire average.

Significantly for school and early years planning, the growth includes a rise of just over 1,500 people aged 0-19 between 2001-2011.

% change in population 2001-11			
Age	West Berkshire	Berkshire	South East
0-4	14%	24%	13%
5-11	-3%	1%	-4%
12-16	3%	2%	4%
17-19	4%	7%	15%
20-39	-10%	0%	-1%
40-64	16%	15%	15%
65+	23%	13%	13%
Total	6%	8%	8%

Almost two thirds of the population live in settlements on the western Reading fringe and along the Kennet valley. The largest urban area in the district is Newbury / Thatcham, where a third of West Berkshire residents live. Just under a fifth of people live in the suburban area to the west of Reading borough. Other significant towns in the district are Hungerford and Theale.

3.2 Schools in West Berkshire

There are 82 schools in West Berkshire

Schools	Local Authority	Academy	Free school
Nursery (3-4)	2	0	0
Sub-total	2	0	0
Primary – infant (4-7)	8	0	0
Primary – junior (8-11)	7	0	0
Primary – all through (4-11)	51	0	0
Sub-total	66	0	0
Pupil Referral Unit	2	0	0
Sub-total	2	0	0
Secondary	5	5	0
Sub-total	5	5	0
Special (2-19)	2	0	0
Sub-total	2	0	0
Total	77	5	0

West Berkshire has a diverse range of provision. Of the 82 schools, 34 have a religious character:

Schools	Church of England	Roman Catholic
Voluntary Controlled schools (primary)	20	
Voluntary Aided schools (primary)	11	3
Total	31	3

There is one secondary Voluntary Aided school, without a religious character, and there is also a secondary Foundation school.

All secondary schools have a 6th form.

All secondary schools have a specialism (see table 10)

3.3 Summary of the School Population

The table below shows the number of pupils in the different types of schools (as at 30 July 2012). Appendix D shows the location of maintained schools and academies in West Berkshire.

Type of School	Count	%
Academy	5111	22.89%
Infant	1127	5.05%
Junior	1263	5.66%
Nursery	65	0.29%
Primary	8200	36.72%
Pupil Referral Unit	53	0.24%
Secondary	6221	27.86%
Special	293	1.31%
Total	22333	100.00%

- The number on roll at West Berkshire's primary schools was 22,333, comprising 10,774 pupils at primary school, 9,604 pupils at secondary school, and 1,955 pupils in 6th form (see Table 1 for more detail).
- The largest group is primary school pupils in maintained schools (36.72%). Secondary pupils in maintained secondary schools (27.86%) and in secondary academies (22.89%) make up over half of the pupil population. (see Table 2)
- There is a broadly equal split between girls (49.64%) and boys (50.36%) (See Table 3).
- Appendix A shows the number of pupils by the National Curriculum Year Group and by Gender.
- There are 3,630 children with Special Educational Needs, comprising 1808 pupils at primary schools, 1,662 pupils at secondary schools and 160 pupils in 6th form. (See Table 4)
- Appendix C shows the number of pupils with Special Educational Needs by National Curriculum Year Group.
- There are 60 Looked After Children in the care of the LA (See Table 5)
- There are 2,735 children receiving free school meals (see Table 6)
- There are 224 children from Service Families (See Table 7).
- In terms of ethnicity, 88.95% of pupils are white. The next largest ethnic group is mixed/dual background (4.04%) and Asian/Asian British (2.31%). (See Table 8)
- Appendix B shows the ethnicity of groups of pupils by type of school
- There are 63 pupils with Gypsy, Roma Traveller heritage (See Table 9).
- There are also 13 independent schools in West Berkshire, covering primary, secondary and special education. Their pupil numbers are not reflected in this report.

- There are no single sex maintained schools or academies in West Berkshire. Some independent schools are single sex schools.
- There are no grammar schools in West Berkshire.

4 NATIONAL CONTEXT AND IMPACT OF LEGISLATION

The White Paper *The importance of teaching* states that the Local Authority has a key role to support parents and families through promoting a good supply of strong schools and should focus on supplying enough good spaces rather than reducing surplus places.

4.1 New schools

The Education Act 2011 made changes to the arrangements for the establishment of new schools by introducing a presumption that when local authorities set up new schools they will be Academies or Free schools.

The key points are:

- LAs must continue to plan for and secure sufficient schools for their area in line with their duties under section 14 of the Education Act 1996.
- Where the LA identifies the need to establish a new school, the Education Act 2011 includes a 'presumption' for an academy/Free School, and requires LAs to seek proposals to establish an academy/Free School in the first instance. The LA is also required to notify the DfE at the outset of its intention to seek proposals.
- LAs should assess the proposals they receive against the criteria before forwarding all of the proposals to the Secretary of State, who will take into consideration any preference they indicate. If the LA is unable to identify a suitable Academy provider, the Secretary of State will work with them to find one.
- LAs can no longer hold a school competition without the Secretary of State's consent, nor enter their own community or foundation school proposals into a competition.
- Despite the academy/Free School presumption, in certain exceptional circumstances it is still possible to publish proposals for a new maintained school outside of a competition, under sections 10 or 11 of the EIA 2006.
- The Secretary of State's consent is no longer required to publish certain proposals, including those for the establishment of new voluntary aided schools, primary schools resulting from infant/junior amalgamations, and new schools resulting from the reorganisation of existing faith provision.
- 'Academy' is the legal term which also includes Free Schools of all types, University Technical Colleges (UTCs) and some Studio Schools, including 16 to 19 and alternative provision (PRU) establishments. 'Academy/Free School' is the collective term for these types of schools.
- 'Proposer' refers to the body or group that is proposing the new school.

This legislation will have a significant impact on the role of the LA as the strategic commissioner of school places. Academies are responsible for setting their own admission number, and thus capacity, with the agreement of the Secretary of State. The LA will seek to

work in partnership with existing and new providers to secure a wide range of education options for parents and families, whilst ensuring that there are sufficient good school places.

The legislation will also have significant financial implications, in that the 'presumption' for an academy/Free School also includes an expectation that the LA will provide the site and all of the capital funding needed to establish the school. It is also clear from recent Government reviews and announcements that the overall level of capital funding to support strategic educational and school organisation priorities will be greatly reduced and will need to be focussed on the condition of schools and addressing basic need for places.

The Academies Act 2010 enabled more schools to convert to Academies, without always needing a sponsor. The Education Act 2011 expands the programme to allow the establishment of 16-19 Academies and alternative provision Academies.

Capital funding for the basic need for new pupil places in all government-funded schools, including academies, because of local demographic changes, is allocated to LAs according to the relative need for new places, based on forecast data provided by LAs. In deciding where to use basic need funding to provide additional places, LAs are expected to consider fairly both their maintained schools and local academies, and where the additional places will be of greatest benefit to their children.

West Berkshire has 5 secondary academies (as at September 2012).

5 FACTORS AFFECTING DEMAND FOR SCHOOL PLACES IN WEST BERKSHIRE

5.1 Current School demand and capacity (September 2012 intake)

The primary school applications for September 2012 exceeded not only the projected pupil numbers, but also significantly exceeded the maximum number of places available. 2018 primary school places were allocated, against a previously agreed maximum capacity for West Berkshire of 1876. This represents 142 additional school places above the (previous) West Berkshire maximum capacity, and 320 places above the school place data projections.

To achieve this increase in capacity, a significant number of schools have been allocated additional pupils (but without breaking class sizes legislation), and in a small number of schools, significant numbers have been allocated above the agreed Admissions Number using our exceptional circumstances powers and resulting in a capital financial impact of meeting these basic need requirements.

In secondary schools, 2012 saw a smaller cohort than usual, representing a drop in secondary aged pupils to 1603, compared to 1686 in 2011. Overall, therefore in September 2012, there were 186 surplus secondary spaces in West Berkshire. Early indications (taken from initial applications) are that the 2013 cohort will also be smaller.

The increases at primary level in September 2012, if sustained, would lead to considerable pressure in secondary places in due course. The section on housing developments (6.5) also highlights how housing developments will impact on secondary places.

5.2 Primary School Planning Areas

There are 10 primary school planning areas in West Berkshire (listed in Appendix E). The areas are based on an historical analysis between the geographical area where children live, and the schools they attend. Each planning area is relatively small with between 4 and 8

schools. This allows the LA to closely monitor pupil projections at a local level as well as looking at the overall West Berkshire demographic picture. Data Dashboards are available for each Planning Area. Each data dashboard shows:

- School capacity compared to admissions and projected admissions (with housing and without housing developments) for 2013-2018.
- Capacity versus admissions
- Cross border movement
- Individual school forecasts (with housing)
- Comparison of Number on Roll (NOR) with and without housing.

5.3 Secondary School Place Planning

There are 10 secondary schools in West Berkshire. There is not a direct correlation between the primary school Planning Areas and a secondary school, and pupils from multiple planning areas comprise the cohort for secondary schools. However, there are some strong correlations between an individual primary school and a local secondary school, due to location.

5.4 Housing growth

The Core Strategy sets out a long term vision for West Berkshire to 2026 translated into spatial terms, setting out proposals for where development will go, and how this development will be built. An aim of the Core Strategy is to deliver 10,500 homes across West Berkshire by 2026 in accordance with the South East Plan.

The Education Infrastructure Development Plan considers the educational impact of the potential sites within the Core Strategy and outlines how growth in housing, and the number of children that might come from housing developments (known as child yield) would be educated.

There are issues throughout West Berkshire related to the ability of existing school infrastructure to cope with the proposed increase in population. The provision of appropriate education infrastructure has become a significant issue in determining where new housing development is located. Many primary and secondary schools in West Berkshire are at capacity or nearing capacity and this issue is being carefully considered through the Core Strategy process to ensure additional school capacity to accommodate development

Housing development data is based on planning applications. Developments may have permission but may not be initiated, and sometimes planning permission can be renewed for a number of years before building commences. Sometimes planned developments are never enacted.

Due to the fluidity to any housing development plans, and taking account of the lead-in time required for school place provision, the data dashboards allow a comparison of projections which shows both scenarios – with or without the planned developments. The complexity is in balancing the probability of developments coming online, and the estimates of child yield affecting education provision over the period of the Core Strategy.

Potential development areas	No. of potential dwellings (period to 2026)	Child yield (potential number of pupils to 2026)
Newbury	2100-2400	1020
Thatcham	180-300	133
Eastern Urban areas	500-600	266
Theale	80-120	53
Burghfield Common	140-180	80
Mortimer	140-180	80
Woolhampton	20-40	18
Pangbourne	140-180	80
Lambourn	140-180	80
Hungerford	250-500	222
Chieveley	20-40	18
Cold Ash	20-40	18
Compton	100-150	66
Great Shefford	20-40	18
Hermitage	20-40	18
Kintbury	20-40	18
Total		2188

5.5 Cross Border Movement

Cross border movement refers to the distances and patterns of transportation undertaken by West Berkshire resident children to attend schools on a daily basis.

	Pupils coming in to West Berkshire to attend school	Pupils going to schools outside of West Berkshire
Hampshire	85	189
Oxfordshire	25	67
Reading	777	154
Wokingham	11	32
Total	898	442

West Berkshire has a significant level of inward mobility, notably from Reading and notably in our secondary schools on that border. There is a reliance on this cross-border provision by Reading Council and as the increase in primary numbers in West Berkshire translates to secondary places over time, both Councils need to plan for the potential that the inward mobility patterns may change. This is a serious risk which will be addressed as a priority.

The numbers in relation to outward migration are also significant. For example, if pressure on pupil places meant the West Berkshire resident children could not get their choice of place outside our borders, West Berkshire would still have a statutory responsibility to find a school place. In some areas, such as Hungerford, this would create a significant problem as places may have been planned taking into account the balance in numbers of historical inward and outward mobility.

5.6 Troop movement in and out of West Berkshire

There are plans for troop movement in relation to the cohort residing in Hermitage. This will result in a drop in pupils and, depending on the timing and how that links to the allocation of

budgets under the new Funding regime for schools, this could have a significant effect on the small schools in that area. However, a different cohort of personnel may move into Hermitage within a relatively short time, and assessment is underway to determine whether the likely child yield from a new cohort will result in a change from the existing child yield numbers for that housing development.

5.7 Changes in the pattern of participation in state school education

The Education and Skills Act 2008 increased the minimum age at which young people in England can leave learning, requiring them to continue in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 from 2013 and until their 18th birthday from 2015.

Raising the Participation Age (RPA) does not mean young people must stay in school; they will be able to choose one of the following options:

- full-time education, such as school, college or home education;
- work-based learning, such as an Apprenticeship;
- part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours a week.

It is likely that there will be some increase in young people staying on in secondary schools. When considering how the Council would accommodate the current increase in primary age children into the secondary sector in due course, the potential increase in post-16 pupils and the accommodation requirements associated with their provision also needs to be taken into account.

There is also some evidence that a higher percentage of children are being educated in the state sector rather than independent schools. This appears to be affecting some schools more than others: in particular, some are reporting that previous patterns of children transferring from the state to independent sector at key ages have changed.

5.8 School Size

School size is becoming an increasingly important factor in discussions concerning school effectiveness, particularly those concerning cost-effectiveness. School sizes are often referred to in terms of a number of Forms of Entry (FE). Each Form of Entry is regarded as referring to a group of 30 pupils admitted as a single year group; therefore a 1FE school would admit and contain a maximum of 30 pupils at the normal point of entry and in each year group. Schools, depending on their capacity, may be able to admit multiples of this figure each year, including half forms of entry where appropriate (i.e. 1.5 FE = 45 pupils).

The rural / urban split across the West Berkshire area means that there is not a standard pattern of provision in terms of size of school. This allows for variability and flexibility to match number of school places to local conditions. In recent years, some schools have expanded slightly to accommodate more numbers, within the constraints of the school site, and taking into account the need to maintain the standards and ethos of the school.

The size of a school is aligned to the Pupil Admission Number based on the net capacity of the school. The emphasis is on the provision of schools of sufficient size for financial sustainability, and which deliver the high quality educational provision.

The Council promotes all through primary schools (4-11 years) in order to provide smoother transitions between the primary phases of education. An all through school provides for:

- A fully integrated curriculum;

- Fully integrated arrangements for assessment for learning, including recording of progress and planning future provision;
- A smooth transition for pupils transferring from infant to junior departments;
- A robust senior leadership team drawing on experience from early years and foundation stage, key stages one and two.
- Greater opportunity for staff development

Special schools need to be of a sufficient size to provide the necessary opportunities for the needs of the range of pupils they admit, and to be able to act as resource/outreach centres for other schools and pupils. Their optimum size will depend on the age range of pupils and the types of special educational needs that they cater for. The LA has two special schools which take children with severe/profound/multiple learning difficulties across the age range of 2-19 years. In cases where the type of special educational needs cannot be met within the LA, the appropriate special school or special setting is sourced in other Local Authorities.

6 STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

West Berkshire's strategic principles for place planning and school organisation are:

- To respond to **parental preference** and, where feasible, to enable popular and successful schools to expand
- To respond to predicted numbers and ensure an **appropriate number of places** are available in the **right locations**
- To recognise the rural nature of West Berkshire, and to **maintain small rural schools** where it is educationally and financially viable to do so.
- To **review the future of schools that are at risk** of becoming unviable due to low pupil numbers and the impact on financial sustainability and/or with low standards

6.1 Parental Preference

In 2012, of the West Berkshire resident applicants for primary places were offered, with 84% being offered their first preference (compared to 79% in 2011). This was despite the significant increase in applications for places for September 2012.

Total West Berkshire Applicants	%
Offered 1st Preference	84
Offered 2nd Preference	8
Offered 3rd Preference	3
Offered a Preference	95
Diverted to a non preference school	5

The secondary place figures for September 2012 were:

Total West Berkshire Applicants	%
Offered 1st Preference	90
Offered 2nd Preference	7
Offered 3rd Preference	1
Offered a Preference	98
Diverted to a non preference school	2

Parental preference is very fluid and can be influenced by a range of factors including recent Ofsted Inspection outcomes, change of headteacher or other key staff, or community view about the ethos of the school. Therefore, parental choice trends are difficult to predict.

However, there are some schools which are historically popular, and wherever possible the Council supports popular schools to expand. Decisions about expansion are not solely based on pupil demand, though and also take account of the impact of expansion on the culture and ethos of the school and on the delivery of high quality education.

We will seriously consider and explore the expansion of popular schools with the school's Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body, where it is feasible to do so, and where the expansion relates to basic need provision.

6.2 Appropriate number of places in the right locations

Empty school places are a problem because they can lead to the wasting of scarce resources that could otherwise be invested in teaching and learning facilities. This impacts differentially on schools' viability, so that those that are seen as unpopular, decline in numbers and their budgets reduce accordingly. This in turn, may affect their ability to raise standards and effectively manage resources.

West Berkshire Council aims to minimise the number of surplus or empty places by keeping the level of places as close as possible to the current and forecast number of pupils. Some spare capacity may be retained where we expect to see a rise in pupil numbers in the medium term.

Pupil numbers on roll that exceed capacity by 10% or more can lead to large class sizes, overused specialist spaces and dissatisfied parents. Overcrowding does not tend to arise at Infant or key stage one level because Infant Class Size legislation (Standards and Framework Act 1998) has capped their class sizes at no more than 30 pupils.

The adverse effects of overcrowding will be more acutely felt in schools with undersized classrooms and more challenging pupils. One result of schools filling to or beyond capacity is the pressure this places on the space at the school, which disproportionately impacts on the ability to provide designated quiet zones for children with additional needs. This can sometimes be balanced by greater budget flexibility to meet need.

In April 2012, there were 1,993 applications for places for the primary school intake for September 2012. This number exceeded the existing capacity in West Berkshire schools, and a number of additional measures had to be put in place to accommodate the children applying for a place. This included negotiating with headteachers on intake numbers and using available accommodation across all schools to meet demand. A place for every new pupil was

achieved without breaking the statutory rules on class sizes. However, there were just 25 surplus places remaining at the time of allocation. By September 2012, due to late applications the cohort had risen to 2018 pupils.

To retain an efficient balance between the demand and supply of school places, the Audit Commission's recommends aiming to fill at least 90% of the overall number of places and 90% of places within each planning area. Where there are 25% or more surplus places in any school this problem should be addressed.

We will maintain a sufficient level of surplus places to accommodate minor fluctuations in pupil numbers. This is defined as between 5-10% overall surplus places across West Berkshire maintained schools and academies, and between 5-10% in each planning area for primary provision. This may include changes to the published admission number for annual pupil intake, and the development of new schools to accommodate basic need provision.

6.3 Maintain small rural schools

Due to its rural nature West Berkshire has a significant number of small schools. The Council recognises the value that these schools bring to their local communities and is committed to maintaining these schools, where it is financially viable to do so. Many small schools are working collaboratively to enhance the range of educational opportunities which are available to their pupils.

The Audit Commission defines a small primary school as one with less than 100 pupils and a small secondary school as one with fewer than 600 pupils or fewer than 700 if it has a sixth form. Smaller schools tend to be more expensive to run than larger ones as they generally have higher unit costs. On the basis of the Audit Commission's definition, 20 primary schools (30%) in West Berkshire would be considered small schools. There is only one small secondary school in West Berkshire.

The Council conducted a Small Schools Review in 2010 for primary schools with less than 100 registered pupils. The outcomes of the review were:

- Review of the funding formula and small schools' funding
- Encourage schools to explore the benefits of affiliations, creative partnerships and federations (structural and non-structural) where appropriate.
- Encourage the sharing of capacity and resources e.g. business managers and curriculum expertise
- Establish a broad set of criteria that would trigger a support and viability review to consider the best way forward for a school. These criteria would include pupil numbers and trends, standards, finance and Head teacher/staff recruitment issues.
- Develop an accommodation entitlement schedule, and assess schools against this. Deficiency to be added to capital programme criteria
- Develop a means by which innovative building solutions can be shared and school based projects can be offered project management support
- Review the feasibility of cooking meals on all sites

- Work with schools to promote and share community links

The implications of the Government Funding Review on small schools, which comes into effect in April 2013, will be significant, as some of the protections that were previously in place are no longer allowable,. This makes pupil numbers even more critical as the majority of funding is generated in the formula through pupil numbers, rather than other factors.

We will work in partnership with small schools (and the diocese where appropriate as many are CE schools), in order to determine arrangements which will support the school to remain viable and offer a high quality education to children in rural locations. This may include collaborative working with other schools, such as the use of Executive Headteacher across more than one school, small school federations, or sharing of expertise and resources.

6.4 Review the future of schools that are at risk

Due to the factors outlined in Section 6 and 7, the demand for places in an individual school, or in a place planning area, can fluctuate. This could be purely due to demographics, or affected by parental preferences or other factors such as the outcome of an Ofsted Inspection. Whilst minor fluctuations can often be accommodated, trends which show a falling number or a stagnant low number of pupils on roll, and/or a large number of surplus places can be a cause for concern.

A school could be at risk of becoming unviable due to continuing low pupil numbers which would impact on the financial sustainability of the school. Equally, where a school's standards are low in comparison to West Berkshire and national averages, the Council would provide intensive support to improve the quality of education that is provided.

Where a school is at risk due to low pupil numbers or low standards, the Council will undertake a formal review to determine the most appropriate solution to ensure that pupils in that community receive a high quality education.

7 SCHOOL FORECAST METHODOLOGY

The purpose of forecasting pupil numbers is to satisfy statutory obligations to meet Basic Need (demand for additional school places) and to assess the extent to which a surplus or deficit of places is likely to exist throughout the county in the future. Forecasts for individual schools also enable the headteacher and governors of a school to plan for the future both financially and on a curriculum basis.

Pupil numbers in West Berkshire schools are closely monitored. Schools are required to complete a census return for the Department for Education (DfE) each October, January and April. This provides a description of numbers of pupils on roll and the October census is used to generate school budgets.

Pupil forecasts predict numbers on roll at each school for five years into the future. Forecasts are updated annually through the use of a statistical place planning model, and are based on a range of factors including School Census data, population forecasts (which include

calculations of the number of children which may be generated by planned housing developments), migration and mobility patterns and recent patterns of parental choice. The Council is pursuing access to GP data which has the potential to improve the accuracy of place planning projections.

The Schools Place Strategy 2013-2018 summarises the position to date, and outlines the strategic principles and actions underpinning the planning of school places. The Strategy encompasses all West Berkshire schools and academies, except independent schools, as per the statutory responsibility for the provision of school places in West Berkshire, and addresses the complex balance of creating sufficient places whilst operating within tight capital constraints, without over-provision. Further work is being done to ensure that, by the next refresh in Spring 2014, the Strategy will include Early Years Place Planning.

8 DATA PROJECTION HEADLINES AND KEY ACTIONS

Primary

- Overall – There is capacity when assessed across all year groups between 2012/2013 and 2015/2016, although the capacity is shrinking and there is little tolerance for any differences between projections and actuals.
- Overall - Shortfall of places from September 2016 onwards
- Overall – the shortfall of places increases when housing is taken into account
- Without housing - 6 of the 10 Areas have less than 5% surplus places for the whole planning period.
- With housing – the lack of capacity increases in the same 6 Areas
- There are plans already in place to increase capacity in some of the Areas highlighted, such as Thatcham.
- It is expected that the Sandford development will include two primary schools, and therefore this will increase capacity within the Newbury area, but the expected child yield from the development will use up the capacity that has been generated. Newbury will also be affected by the Racecourse development, and this will remove surplus places.
- The lead-in time for increasing capacity means that action need to be taken urgently to plan to resolve the issues which will surface by the middle of the planning period.
- For 2012 and 2013, there are larger cohorts for September intake than before.
- The total capacity for primary schools for the September intake is 1882, which was not sufficient in 2012 or 2013. However, overall projections for the tail end of the planning period show the numbers reducing to within capacity.
- Within this total capacity there will be Planning Areas which have significant pressure for places, and this may affect the ability of the Council to meet parental preferences. The issue would be that there are enough spaces overall, but they may not be in the right locations, and therefore pupils may have to travel to a school which does have spaces. Not only does this affect parental confidence, but it has the potential to increase home to school transport costs.

- The increase in pupil numbers over the planning period will mean that careful attention is required of the likely primary and secondary pupils from 2018/2019 onwards.

Secondary

- Overall – There is capacity when assessed across all year groups, although numbers do rise over the planning period
- Large numbers of Reading pupils access West Berkshire secondary provision, and more work will be done with Reading Council to assess the likely impact from their place planning projections.
- The number of 6th form pupils continues to rise over the planning period, possibly in response to the Raising the Participation Age agenda,
- As with primary schools, there are popular schools which will have significant pressure for places, and this may affect the ability of the Council to meet parental preferences. The issue would be that there are enough spaces overall, but they may not be in the right locations, and therefore pupils may have to travel to a school which does have spaces. Not only does this affect parental confidence, but it has the potential to increase home to school transport costs.

Once the refresh of the data has been completed, an Action Plan will be put in place to address the confirmed issues arising from the analysis and in line with the strategic principles of this Strategy. Throughout any change process within a Place Planning Areas, schools (including governors) will be fully included in the discussions and be able to comment on and influence proposals at an early stage.

9 REFERENCE

9.1 Table 1 - Number of Pupils on Roll (as at 30 July 2012)

Primary	Number on Roll	%
Foundation	2403	10.76%
Year 1	1780	7.97%
Year 2	1283	5.74%
Year 3	1720	7.70%
Year 4	1703	7.63%
Year 5	1566	7.01%
Year 6	319	1.43%
Sub-total	10774	
Secondary		
Year 7	1954	8.75%
Year 8	1939	8.68%
Year 9	1964	8.79%
Year 10	2017	9.03%
Year 11	1730	7.75%
Sub-total	9604	
6th form		
Year 12	1244	5.57%
Year 13	706	3.16%
Year 14	5	0.02%
Sub-total	1955	
TOTAL	22333	100.00%

9.2 Table 2 - Numbers of Pupils on Roll, by Type of School (as at 30 July 2012)

Type of School	Count	%
Academy	5111	22.89%
Infant	1127	5.05%
Junior	1263	5.66%
Nursery	65	0.29%
Primary	8200	36.72%
Pupil Referral Unit	53	0.24%
Secondary	6221	27.86%
Special	293	1.31%
Total	22333	100.00%

9.3 Table 3 - Number of Pupils on Roll, by Gender (as at 30 July 2012)

Gender	Count	%
Male	11248	50.36%
Female	11085	49.64%
Total	22333	100.00%

9.4 Table 4 - Children with Special Educational Needs (as at 30 July 2012)

Primary	Count	%
Foundation	255	7.02%
Year 1	240	6.61%
Year 2	220	6.06%
Year 3	313	8.62%
Year 4	329	9.06%
Year 5	354	9.75%
Year 6	97	2.67%
Sub-total	1808	49.81%
Secondary		
Year 7	366	10.08%
Year 8	375	10.33%
Year 9	353	9.72%
Year 10	327	9.01%
Year 11	241	6.64%
Sub-total	1662	45.79%
6th form		
Year 12	100	2.75%
Year 13	59	1.63%
Year 14	1	0.03%
Sub-total	160	4.41%
TOTAL	3630	100%

9.5 Table 5 - Looked After Children (as at 30 July 2012)

Primary	Count	%
Foundation	1	1.67%
Year 1	6	10.00%
Year 2	3	5.00%
Year 3	3	5.00%
Year 4	5	8.33%
Year 5	2	3.33%
Year 6	0	0.00%
Sub-total	20	33%
Secondary		
Year 7	4	6.67%
Year 8	8	13.33%
Year 9	9	15.00%
Year 10	5	8.33%
Year 11	11	18.33%
Sub-total	37	62%
6th form		
Year 12	3	5.00%
Year 13	0	0.00%
Sub-total	3	5%
TOTAL	60	100%

9.6 Table 6 - Children receiving Free School Meals, by Type of School (as at 30 July 2012)

Type of School	Count	%
Academies	576	21.06%
Infant	120	4.39%
Junior	182	6.65%
Nursery	16	0.59%
Primary	1056	38.61%
Pupil Referral Unit	16	0.59%
Secondary	666	24.35%
Special	103	3.77%
Total	2735	100.00%

9.7 Table 7 - Children from Service Families (as at 30 July 2012)

Primary	Count	%
Foundation	32	14.29%
Year 1	24	10.71%
Year 2	9	4.02%
Year 3	26	11.61%
Year 4	13	5.80%
Year 5	16	7.14%
Year 6	1	0.45%
Sub-total	121	54.02%
Secondary		
Year 7	22	9.82%
Year 8	21	9.38%
Year 9	24	10.71%
Year 10	15	6.70%
Year 11	13	5.80%
Sub-total	95	42.41%
6th form		
Year 12	7	3.13%
Year 13	1	0.45%
Sub-total	8	3.57%
TOTAL	224	100%

9.8 Table 8 - Pupils on Roll, by Ethnicity and Gender (as at 30 July 2012)

Ethnicity Group	Female	Male	Total
Asian or Asian British	1.11%	1.20%	2.31%
Black or Black British	0.64%	0.60%	1.24%
Chinese	0.17%	0.19%	0.36%
Mixed / Dual Background	2.07%	1.97%	4.04%
Information Not Yet Obtained	1.07%	0.89%	1.96%
Any Other Ethnic Group	0.21%	0.26%	0.46%
Refused	0.35%	0.32%	0.67%
White	44.02%	44.93%	88.95%
Total	49.64%	50.36%	100.00%

9.9 Table 9 - Pupils with Gypsy, Roma, Traveller heritage (as at 30 July 2012)

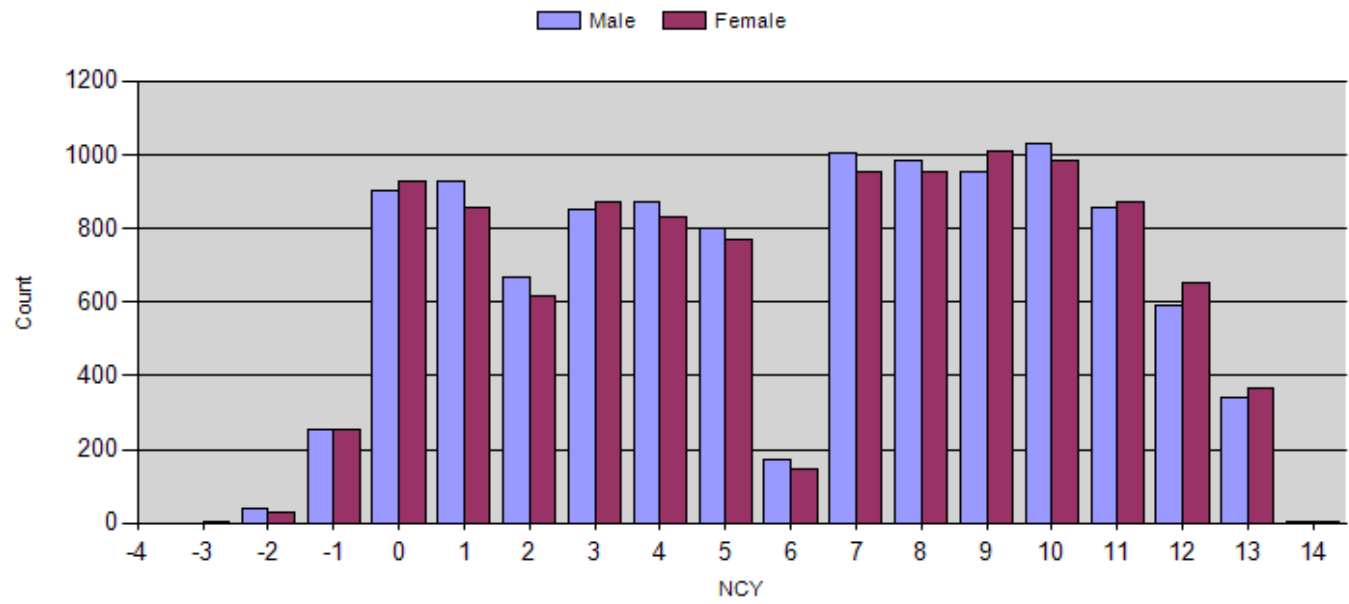
Primary	Count	%
Foundation	16	25.40%
Year 1	6	9.52%
Year 2	2	3.17%
Year 3	4	6.35%
Year 4	8	12.70%
Year 5	7	11.11%
Year 6	2	3.17%
Sub-total	45	71.43%
Secondary		
Year 7	4	6.35%
Year 8	6	9.52%
Year 9	5	7.94%
Year 10	1	1.59%
Year 11	1	1.59%
Sub-total	17	26.98%
6th form		
Year 12	1	1.59%
Year 13	0	0.00%
Sub-total	1	1.59%
TOTAL	63	100%

9.10 Table 10 – Secondary School Specialist Status

School	Specialist Status
Denefield School	Technology and Training
The Downs School	Languages
John O’Gaunt Community Technology College	Technology
Kennet School	Technology, Theatre Arts and Modern Foreign languages
Little Heath School	Science and Maths
Park House School and Sports College	Sports
St Bartholemew’s School	Business and Enterprise
Theale Green Community School	Arts and Science
Trinity School	Performing Arts
The Willink	Languages

10 APPENDIX A – No. of pupils by National Curriculum Year Group and Gender

School Population by Year Group and Gender



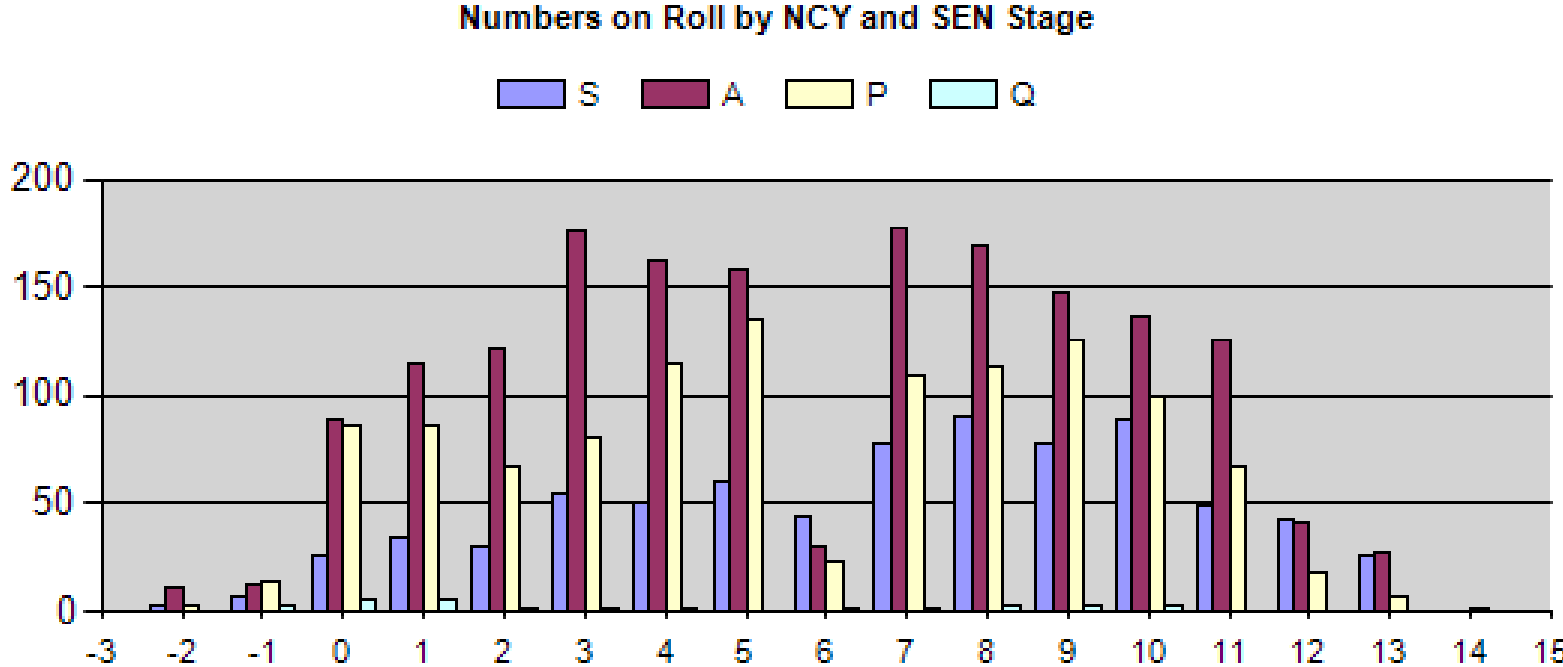
As at 30 July 2012

11 APPENDIX B – Ethnicity Group of Pupils by Type of School

Ethnicity Group	Academy	Infant	Junior	Nursery	Primary	Pupil Referral Unit	Secondary	Special
Asian or Asian British	0.51%	0.10%	0.10%	0.03%	1.00%	0.00%	0.48%	0.09%
Black or Black British	0.36%	0.07%	0.06%	0.00%	0.35%	0.00%	0.37%	0.04%
Chinese	0.12%	0.03%	0.02%	0.00%	0.11%	0.00%	0.08%	0.00%
Mixed / Dual Background	0.72%	0.26%	0.23%	0.00%	1.62%	0.00%	1.15%	0.06%
Information Not Yet Obtained	0.41%	0.13%	0.03%	0.05%	0.67%	0.01%	0.66%	0.00%
Any Other Ethnic Group	0.09%	0.04%	0.03%	0.01%	0.14%	0.00%	0.15%	0.01%
Refused	0.13%	0.04%	0.05%	0.00%	0.21%	0.00%	0.21%	0.03%
White	20.55%	4.39%	5.14%	0.20%	32.62%	0.23%	24.75%	1.08%
Total	22.89%	5.05%	5.66%	0.29%	36.72%	0.24%	27.86%	1.31%

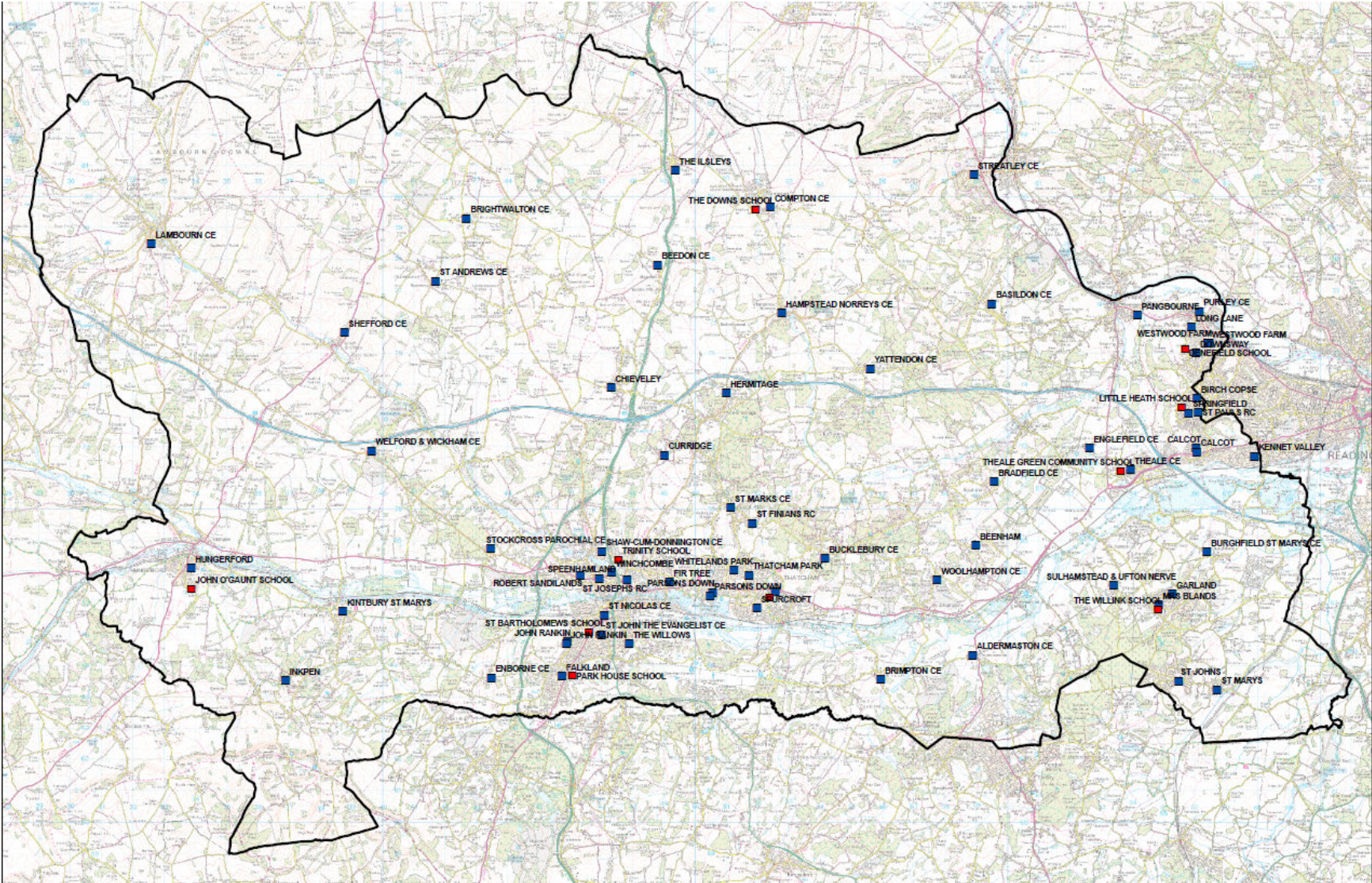
As at 30 July 2012

12 APPENDIX C – No. of pupils with SEN by National Curriculum Year Group



As at 30 July 2012

13 APPENDIX D – Map of location of Maintained schools and academies in West Berkshire



14 APPENDIX E – Planning Areas for Primary Schools

Planning Area No.	No. of schools	School Names
1	4	Hungerford, Inkpen, Kintbury St Mary's, Lambourn
2	7	Brightwalton, Bucklebury. Chaddleworth, Shefford, Stockcross, The Ilsleys, Welford & Wickham
3	7	Enborne, Falkland, John Rankin Infant, John Rankin Junior, St John's, The Willows, St Nicolas
4	8	Cold Ash St Mark's, Francis Baily, Parsons Down Infant, Parson Down Junior, Spurcroft, Thatcham Park, Whitelands Park, St Finians
5	6	Fir Tree, Robert Sandilands, The Winchcombe, Shaw cum Donnington, Speenhamland, St Joseph's
6	8	Beedon, Chieveley, Compton, Curridge, Hampstead Norreys, Hermitage, Streatley, Yattendon
7	6	Burghfield St Mary's, Garland, Mortimer St John's, Mortimer St Mary's, Mrs Bland's, Sulhamstead & Ufton Nervet
8	6	Birch Copse, Calcot Infant, Calcot Junior, Kennet Valley, Springfield, St Paul's
9	6	Downsway, Long Lane, Pangbourne, Purley, Westwood Farm Infant, Westwood Farm Junior
10	8	Aldermaston, Basildon, Beenham, Bradfield, Brimpton, Englefield, Theale, Woolhampton