

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: ALL
REPORT TITLE: 2025 School Place Planning Report	
REPORT OF: Director of Education Commissioning and Inclusion	
FOR SUBMISSION TO: Children Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee	DATE: 10 November 2025
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT: <p>The Council, as the statutory commissioner of school places, has a legal duty to ensure there is sufficient, high-quality and inclusive education provision in the borough for every child who needs a place. This includes ensuring both the sufficiency and quality of provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The Council must also manage the overall balance of school places to prevent surplus capacity that could undermine the viability of schools now or in the future, and it is considered best practice to target between 5-10% surplus places. In fulfilling these duties, the Council must also promote high standards of education and fair access to opportunity for all children and young people in Camden.</p> <p>This annual report provides an update on the latest demographic trends in the borough and outlines the programme of work underway to maintain the sufficiency, quality and viability of Camden's family of schools and provision for pupils with SEND.</p> <p>Ensuring Camden has the right number of school places is both the Council's statutory responsibility and aligns with our We Make Camden principles. It is also fundamental to the implementation of the Council's and Camden Learning's joint Education Strategy, 'Building Back Stronger'. Preventing schools from becoming financially vulnerable, and thus subject to unplanned change, helps maintain strong, safe and open communities. Good and outstanding schools also promote independent, healthy lives and support robust growth and jobs.</p> <p>Our updated forecast data continues to show suppressed birth rates within London and Camden, alongside the continued effect of reductions in families moving into Camden. Whilst further precipitous reductions in demand are not forecast, we are not anticipating increases in entry numbers. Alongside this, the Council, in common with most authorities, has seen an increase in both the number and the acuity of need for pupils with SEND, putting significant pressure on our High Needs Funding Block and seeing an increase in pupils educated outside Camden in non-maintained independent provision.</p>	

These factors have created a level of anticipated surplus provision and significant pressure on schools' and Council budgets that requires both a strategic and coordinated response to ensure the sustainability of our education offer.

To address this, the Council, in collaboration with Camden Learning and schools, has established a comprehensive School Sufficiency Programme, to secure a balanced, high-quality, and inclusive education system for the future.

The School Sufficiency Programme combines governance, data intelligence, and targeted intervention, with a focus on three key areas – Admissions, School Finance and SEND. The programme launched in July 2025 and since then, all schools have received a finalised scorecard which has been developed to help identify schools most in need of support. This has been used as a starting point for joint work with schools to help them mitigate their respective challenges. The programme will continue throughout the 2025/26 academic year, with a review of progress in the summer term that will also identify any recommendations for further action.

Alongside, and fully integrated with, this work, the Council is developing a SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Commissioning Plan to address the sufficiency and viability of our provision offer to pupils with additional need. This will seek to meet children's needs locally, wherever possible, by expanding provision so more children can access high-quality, specialist support within their local community, reducing the reliance on independent and non-maintained specialist provision and out-of-borough provision.

Through the second half of the autumn term, officers will continue to model options for local SEND provision in conjunction with Camden Learning and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and will engage with schools on these options. The plan includes expanding provision across both the primary and secondary sectors to ensure sufficient places for children and young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

An update on the SEND and AP Commissioning Plan will be provided to the committee in February 2026 as part of the Annual SEND Report. This forms a key part of the SEND strategy alongside continuing to strengthen mainstream inclusion and support children with SEND to thrive in mainstream settings, both key emerging themes from the potential government reforms due to be announced in the new calendar year.

Following the completion of condition surveys across the community school estate, we are developing a forward programme for capital works, which will commence scoping and design stages from the beginning of 2026. This will be prepared and reviewed in conjunction with the school sufficiency programme to ensure strategic alignment. Alongside this, we have also reviewed the status of the school estate to identify opportunities to strengthen access and inclusion. This has resulted in grants totalling £4.7m being awarded to 32 schools to complete capital works that enable their buildings to better meet the needs of children with SEND since 2024.

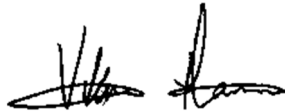
In parallel with our local work, we will continue to collaborate with other London boroughs to share insight and good practice, ensuring our approach remains responsive to changing demographic and economic conditions.

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RECOMMENDATION

The Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee is asked to comment on and note the contents of the report.



Signed:

Vikram Hansrani
Director of Education Commissioning and Inclusion

Date: 29 October 2025

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 Camden's education system is undergoing significant transformation in response to declining pupil numbers, increasing financial pressures, and rising demand for SEND provision. This paper outlines the data trends, strategic actions, and future plans underpinning Camden's School Sufficiency Programme, aimed at ensuring a sustainable, inclusive, and high-quality education system. It uses the most recent Office for National Statistics, Greater London Authority, SEN2 survey¹ and Camden Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for SEND data, but does not include October 2025 school census data as this is not yet available. Members are asked to scrutinise the information contained within the report.

2. Context and the school sufficiency programme

- 2.1 Camden schools are currently navigating a challenging financial and demographic landscape. Since 2011, they have experienced a 25% real-terms reduction in funding, placing considerable strain on school budgets. Between 2019 and 2024, pupil numbers declined by 2,250, resulting in a £4.5 million annual reduction in central government payments. Despite this, Camden remains a net importer of secondary pupils, with 707 more non-resident students attending Camden schools than Camden residents attending schools outside the borough.
- 2.2 At the same time, the need for additional SEND provision has risen sharply. The proportion of pupils with SEND increased from 16% in 2015/16 to 19.5% in 2023/24. The High Needs Block overspend reached £4.9 million in 2024/25 and an £8.1m deficit is forecast for 2025/26 (based on Quarter 2 projections). The increase in spend is primarily driven by increases in the number of children and young people with SEND in mainstream schools. There has also been an increase in spend on independent and non-maintained special schools (INMSS) and home-tuition packages. Despite this, the Council still operates a highly supportive financial model with £16.8 million devolved to mainstream schools – more than double the £7.7 million allocated in 2020/21.
- 2.3 Demographic data and projections from the Greater London Authority (GLA) and census sources show a continued decline in birth rates and pupil enrolment across London, including Camden. Forecasts suggest a surplus of 20% in primary and 15% in secondary school places by 2028.
- 2.4 In the 2024/25 financial year, Camden schools also experienced a notable decline in financial resilience. School reserves were reduced by £5.8 million, reflecting the growing pressure on budgets across the borough. The number of schools operating in deficit rose to 12, up from 8 the previous year, indicating a widening financial vulnerability. Additionally, 41% of schools had to draw on their reserves to support operational costs, a significant increase from 32% in 2022/23. These figures underscore the urgent need for strategic financial planning and support to maintain the sustainability of Camden's education system. To this end the Council has increased its governance of schools' financial arrangements. All schools have received correspondence from the Council in relation to their closing financial position. This has initiated the Licensed Deficit process for those schools with culminative deficit positions,

¹ The SEN2 survey is a statutory data collection that takes place nationally every January.

greater oversight for schools showing an in-year deficit and a continued focus on schools holding reserves greater than 10% of their budget.

- 2.5 The Council has taken demonstrable action in managing school places. Since 2018/19, the borough has closed four primary schools—Carlton, St Michael's, St Dominic's, and St Aloysius—and reduced capacity by 10 Forms of Entry (FE) in primary and 4.5 FE in secondary schools. Additional measures include informal capping and a reduction of 60 places in the Published Admission Number (PAN) for the 2025/26 academic year. Without this strategic intervention, Camden would have faced a 31.2% surplus in reception places (equivalent to 371 vacant places) and a 20.2% surplus in Year 7 places (315 vacant places). It is however recognised that in response to continued declines greater pressure is being faced by our school community.
- 2.6 In response, the Council launched the School Sufficiency Programme in July 2025. The governance of the programme is underpinned by a robust and collaborative framework. At the strategic level, the programme is overseen by the School Sufficiency Programme Board, which is chaired by the Executive Director for Children and Learning and attended by other directors from across the Council. This board provides high-level direction and ensures alignment with borough-wide educational priorities.
- 2.7 Supporting this is the Place Planning Advisory Group, chaired by the Director of Education Commissioning and Inclusion, involving headteachers, chairs of governors and both Church of England and Catholic Diocese representatives. This group plays a critical role in shaping the operational aspects of place planning and sufficiency strategy. Regular engagement with school leaders is maintained through headteacher briefings and the Place Planning Advisory Group, fostering transparency, shared ownership, and collective problem-solving across the education community.

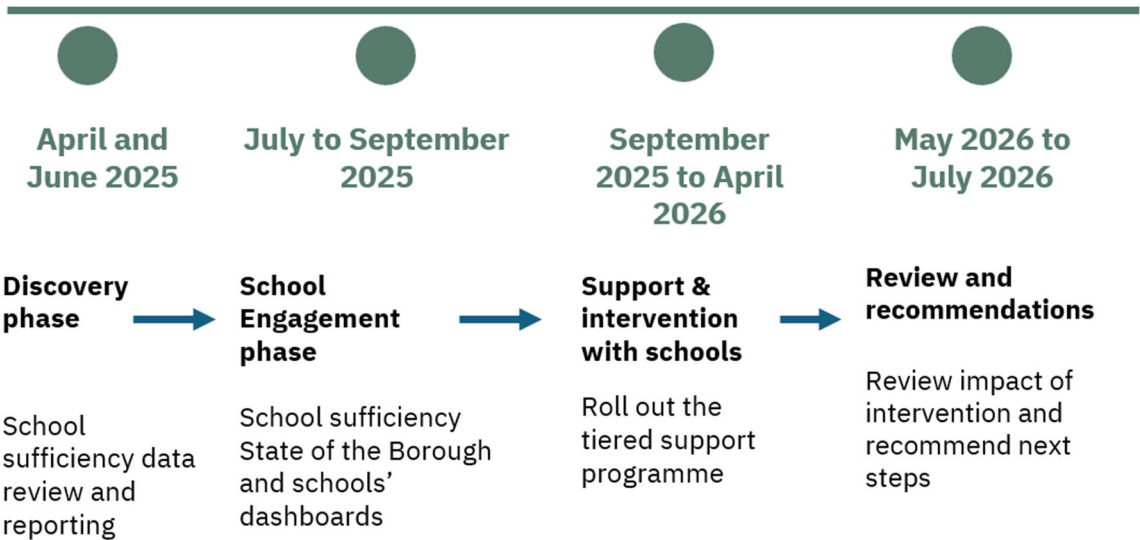
3. Scorecard and Intervention

- 3.1 To support data-driven decision-making and targeted support within this programme, Camden has developed a comprehensive School Sufficiency Scorecard. This tool assesses schools across three key domains: Admissions, SEND, and Finance. Each school is evaluated on a five-point scale ranging from 0 to 4, with scores indicating the level of need and support required in each area. The scorecard will serve as a diagnostic and planning tool, guiding the deployment of interventions and resources to where they are most needed, and ensuring that all schools are supported to remain sustainable, inclusive, and high performing.
- 3.2 Alongside, and fully integrated, with this work the Council is developing a SEND and AP Commissioning Plan to address sufficiency and the viability of our provision offer to pupils with additional need, to ensure that children's needs are met locally wherever possible and reducing the need to place children in independent and non-maintained special schools. This plan will provide a map for future sufficiency of SEND places, alongside a more equitable framework for allocating resources and support across the borough. It will expand provision for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and ASD, where we are seeing growing and evolving needs locally. This expansion aims to ensure that more children can access high-quality, specialist support within their local community. This follows on from the detailed work of

the scrutiny committee in 2024 and will be presented to the committee, together with the annual report, in February 2026. Over the remainder of the autumn term, modelling of options for specialist provision will continue. The proposals for changes will be discussed with affected schools and Camden Learning, before a consultation with settings at the beginning of the spring term.

- 3.3 To further enhance coordination and equity in admissions for pupils with SEND, the borough has established a dedicated SEND and Inclusion Admissions Panel. This panel will play a pivotal role in ensuring fair access to appropriate educational placements and in supporting inclusive practice across all Camden schools.
- 3.4 This work will also be supported by interventions to strengthen inclusion in mainstream schools. Schools identified with the highest levels of SEND needs will be offered bespoke support to help them take a strategic, school-wide approach to meeting needs. This will be closely aligned to the work of the Change Programme, a Department for Education-funded (DfE) programme that tests SEND reforms likely to be part of the Education White Paper, and which has a strong focus on mainstream inclusion.
- 3.5 The Schools Capital Board is overseeing a programme of work to review and make best use of our school estate. Following completion of condition surveys across the community school estate, we are now developing a forward programme for capital works which will commence scoping and design stages from the beginning of 2026. This will be prepared and reviewed in conjunction with the school sufficiency programme, to ensure investment is aligned. The work includes a SEND Capital Programme that identified opportunities to strengthen access and inclusion. This has resulted in grants totalling £4.7m being awarded to 32 schools across both phases of education, to complete capital works that enable buildings to better meet the needs of children with additional needs. These grants were mainly used for sensory rooms and hygiene facilities. All projects have already started delivery and 8 have completed the works and are fully functional.
- 3.6 The School Sufficiency programme was launched on 1 July 2025 and the timeline for the programme is detailed below.

School Sufficiency – Indicative timelines overview



3.7 To deliver the programme, the Council has developed an intervention matrix that presents a structured approach to support schools through a tiered framework of projects and initiatives, scaled by effort and impact. This model enables targeted resource allocation and strategic planning across varying levels of need and complexity.

3.8 These include low-effort, high-impact interventions that can be swiftly implemented to yield immediate improvements. Examples include:

- Finance training to upskill school staff and improve budget management.
- Small-scale restructures to streamline operations.
- PAN reductions or informal caps to manage pupil numbers effectively.
- SEND capital investment to enhance infrastructure for special educational needs.

These actions are designed to deliver rapid benefits with minimal disruption, making them ideal for early-stage or preventative support.

3.9 Also included are high-effort, high-impact initiatives that require significant planning and collaboration:

- This may include the school resource management advisers (SRMA) programme or in-depth finance review by a commissioned finance organisation.
- Commissioned SEND ARPs (Additional Resource Provisions) to expand specialist support capacity as part of the SEND and AP Commissioning Plan.

These projects can be transformative in nature and will span multiple institutions or require cross-agency coordination.

3.10 Alongside moderate interventions with focused objectives:

- Quarterly finance monitoring by schools' finance team to maintain financial health.
- SEND cluster support and training to build capacity within groups of schools.
- Best-practice lead schools to disseminate effective strategies and mentor peers.

These initiatives support continuous improvement and foster collaboration across the system.

3.11 We will also support schools with their own, school-specific actions that address individual needs:

- School-level accountability and action plans to drive improvement.
- Budget submissions may require flagging by the finance team for possible enquiry and support. Schools may simply receive letters requesting more information for offer of support or signposting.
- Specialist SEND staff support to meet unique pupil needs.

These interventions are highly personalised and responsive, ensuring that support is both relevant and impactful.

4. Camden Demography and School Places

Births

- 4.1 Camden actual registered births reached a high in 2012 at 3,084 but have fallen to their latest low in 2023 at 1,976. Whilst falls in births were reported across London and nationwide between 2012 and 2024, Camden, at a 36% reduction, has experienced a greater fall compared to London and England at 17%, although similar to some inner-London authorities such as Westminster. The most recent, GLA 2024 birth forecasts have **not increased** from those received last year but show a stabilisation of current levels rather than further decline.

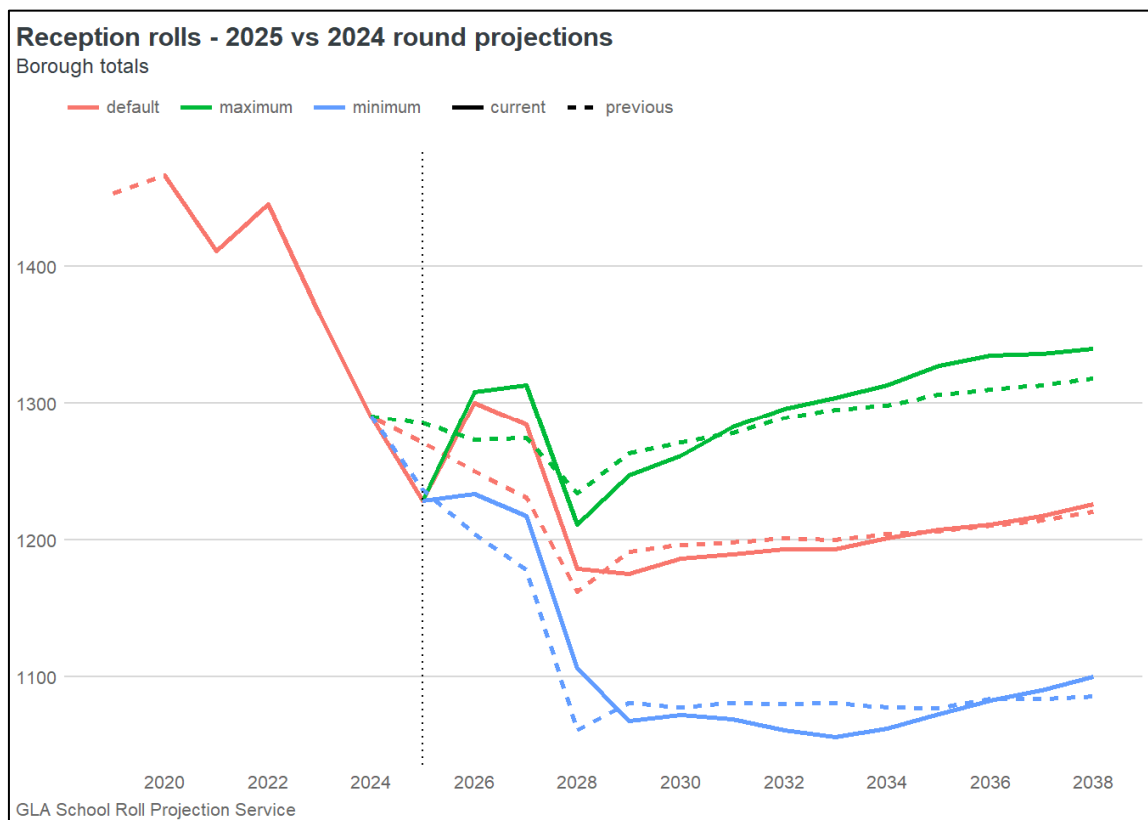
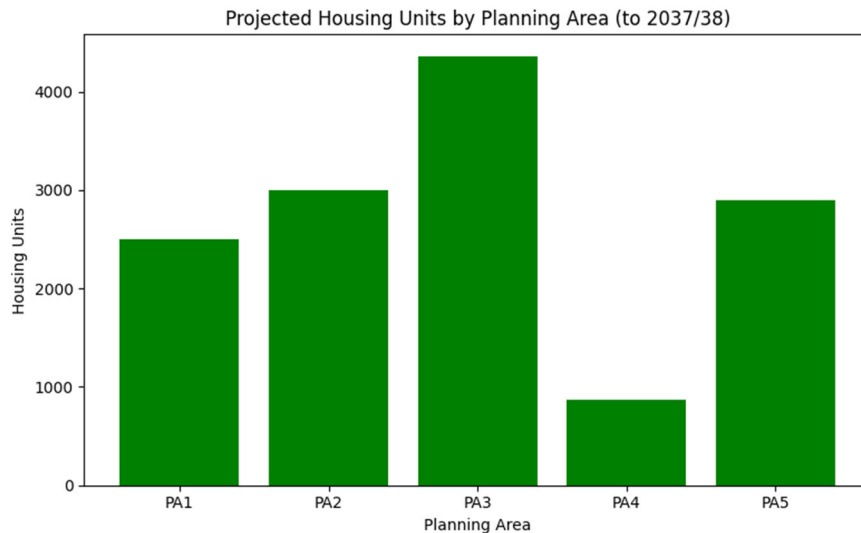


Fig 1: Chart showing reduction in forecast future birth rates

Latest Housing and Estimated Child Yield

- 4.2 New housing has the potential to increase demand for school places as new families move into new homes. Historically we have been conscious that the effect of new build on pupil numbers can be over-estimated. We work closely with our planning teams to assess housing type, mix and affordability and the impact that this has on future anticipated pupil yield. For the purposes of analysis, we arrange schools into five planning areas (PAs) of roughly equal size that reflect local geography. Camden's planning areas and school locations are identified in Appendix D. The greatest additional housing development is anticipated in our central area PA3 (4,364), with the lowest in the central PA4 (874).



School Roll projections Primary and Secondary

- 4.3 The Primary 2025 borough forecast shown continues to report surplus capacity anticipated over the planning period. Previous forecasts indicated demand increasing marginally to 2032/33, whereas the new analysis does not show increased demand but rather a stabilisation of demand at the lower levels. We need to be cautious of interpretation data at the end of the 10-year planning period, for which pupils will not yet have been born, however the anticipated surplus prior to any mitigation or intervention now ranges from 16% to 21%.

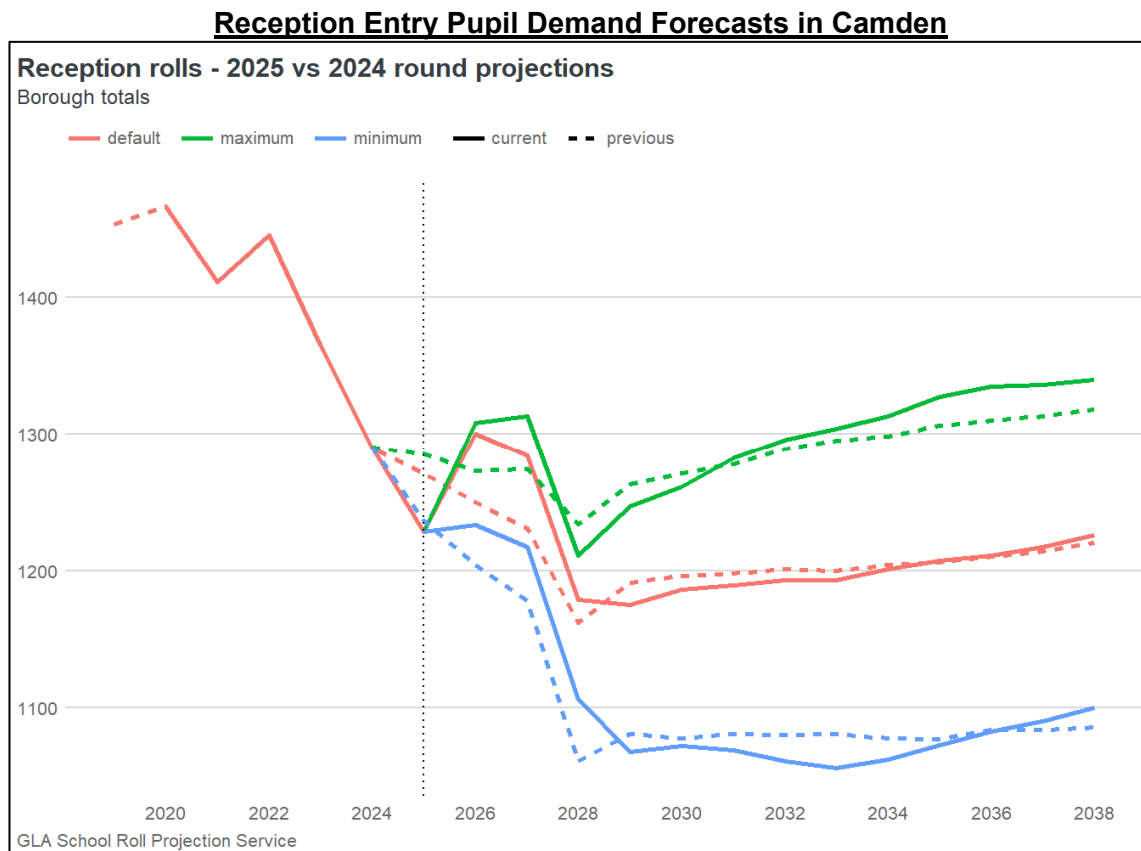


Fig 2: chart showing latest 2025 GLA School Roll Projections

- 4.4 Secondary borough forecasts, shown below, reflect very closely the report from 2025. Surplus capacity is anticipated to increase in the period up to 2033/34

with Year 7 PAN surplus capacity forecast to increase from 15% in 2023/24 to 28% 2033/34, equating to over 10 FE of school places.

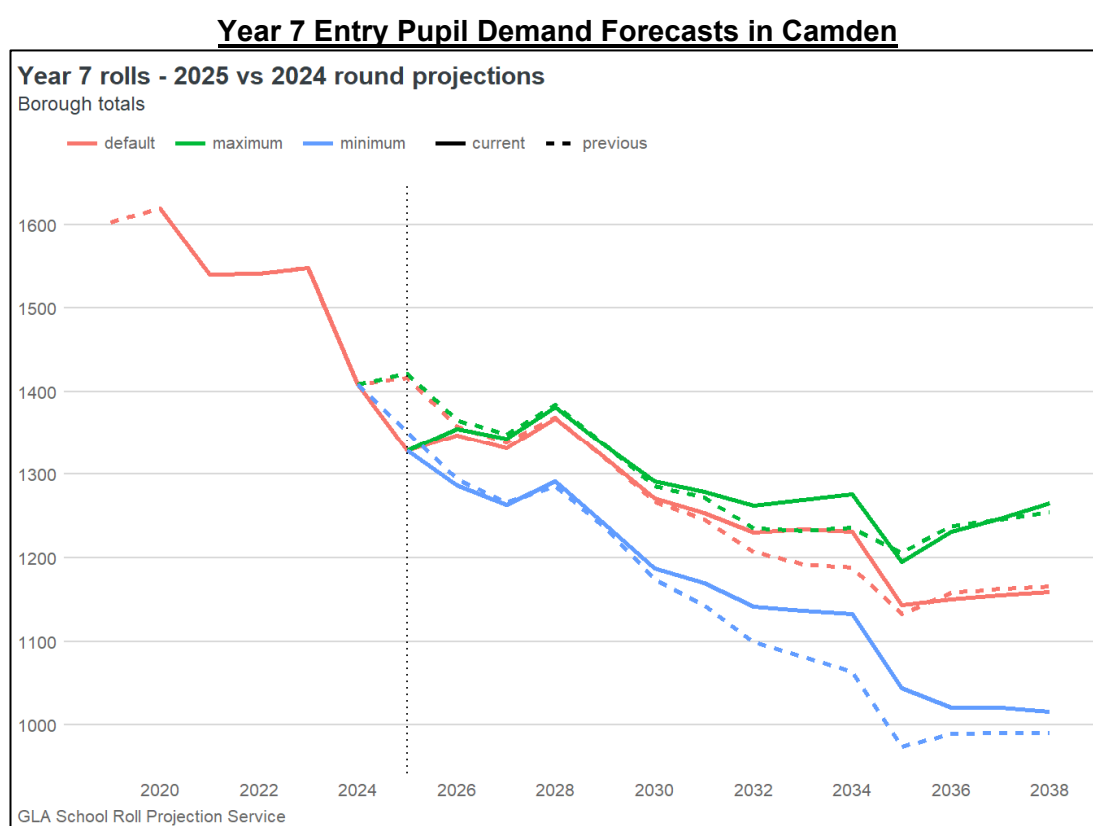
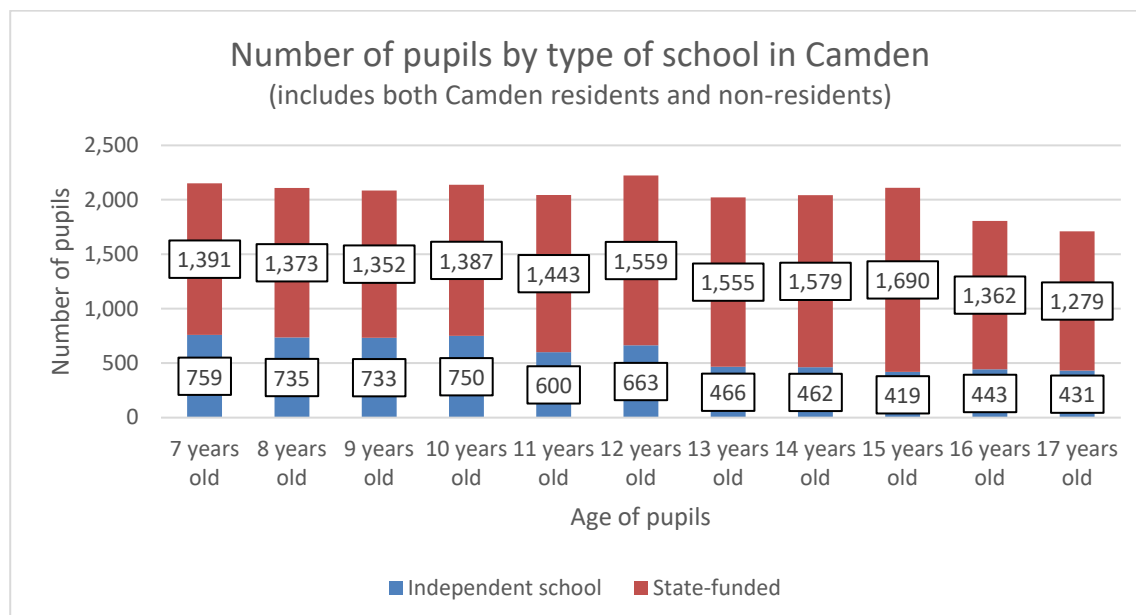


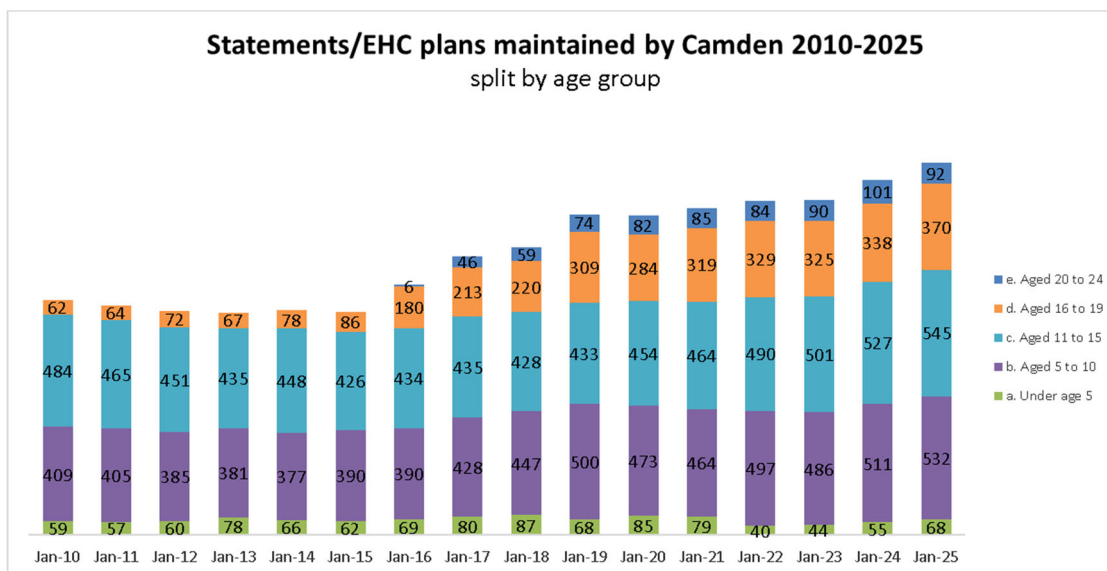
Fig 3: — chart showing latest GLA SRP 2025

- 4.5 Falling school rolls are not unique to Camden and are discussed widely across London due to the sudden and significant falls in actual registered births impacting on most authorities. Together with London Councils, Camden has been active in raising this issue at a local and national level. Specifically, we have been involved in a cross-London programme of identifying the acute level of surplus school provision within the capital and lobbying central government to address contributory concerns including support for falling-roll funding. Camden has developed local funding mechanisms to support schools where there has been a reduction in roll over the last 3 years.
- 4.6 At primary level all local neighbours reported reduced demand for reception offers 2025/26 from an already low base, with most showing high surplus in reception for the current academic year. At secondary, the majority reported reduced demand at year 7 offers for 25/26. A number of Camden's neighbouring authorities and inner London authorities are undertaking widescale reviews of primary provision including Islington, Haringey and Lambeth.
- 4.7 The proportion of Camden pupils attending independent schools has been estimated based on updated underlying data and latest resident forecasts. The Council has undertaken further analysis during this period, included within the graph below. Our time-based indicators show, on average, 30% of Camden's resident population being educated within private provision. Officers have not seen any significant changes relating to the implementation of Value Added Tax (VAT) against school fees from January 2025 to date.



5. SEND

- 5.1 As of January 2025, Camden's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) register included 1,607 children and young people aged 0 to 25, alongside 3,416 pupils identified with SEN Support. 289 children within the SEN Support group are in receipt of an Exceptional Needs Grant.
- 5.2 Between 2019 and 2023, the growth in EHCPs remained modest at 2% or less annually. However, from January 2023 to 2024, there was a notable 6% increase (88 new EHCPs). Although Camden's EHCP growth remains below national rates, declining school rolls mean the proportion of children with SEND is rising more sharply. Between 2018 and 2023, the number of children with SEND grew by 10%, but the proportion increased by 17%.
- 5.3 Most children with SEND are educated in mainstream settings. Among those with EHCPs, 58.3% attend mainstream state-funded schools, while 30.3% are in state-funded special schools.
- 5.4 ASD is the most common primary need in EHCPs, with a 57% increase since 2019. This rise has been accompanied by declines in moderate learning difficulties and speech, language, and communication needs. SEMH needs have also grown steadily, now representing the primary need of new EHCPs in secondary schools.
- 5.5 The prevalence of SEND is highest among children aged 8 to 10, with over 25% of 10-year-olds receiving support. The fastest growth in EHCPs has been among primary-aged children, suggesting that secondary schools may see increasing numbers of pupils with SEND in the coming years.



6 Planning area commentary

6.1 This report has been completed using the latest available data from August 2025 including:

- Latest actuals, including the capacity of schools, surplus places and/or immediate increasing or decreasing pressures, births, school rolls.
- Projected future 'need', including the latest planned housing development trajectory, feeding into: births, population and school-roll projections produced by the GLA.
- Local variances and updated intelligence within the borough.
- Latest school-places planning summaries in neighbouring authorities.

6.2 The analysis of school places is considered for the borough as a whole for both primary and secondary; further analysis at primary level is provided by five smaller, localised borough planning areas (PAs). Planning areas are considered helpful for analytical purposes only, and this analysis model is similar to other local authorities. Planning areas do not provide an indication of catchment areas for admission purposes, and pupils are not constrained by them.

6.3 Forecasts are not actuals but are based on the latest known position in boroughs, updated base data, and latest roll trends within schools. They aim to provide an estimate of future 'need' within the borough for the next ten years. Every year, background consistency checks are completed as part of the school-place planning process, in addition to those already completed by the GLA. The accuracy of GLA forecasts is carefully reviewed against new school rolls, with the aim of continued development, renewal, and improvement.

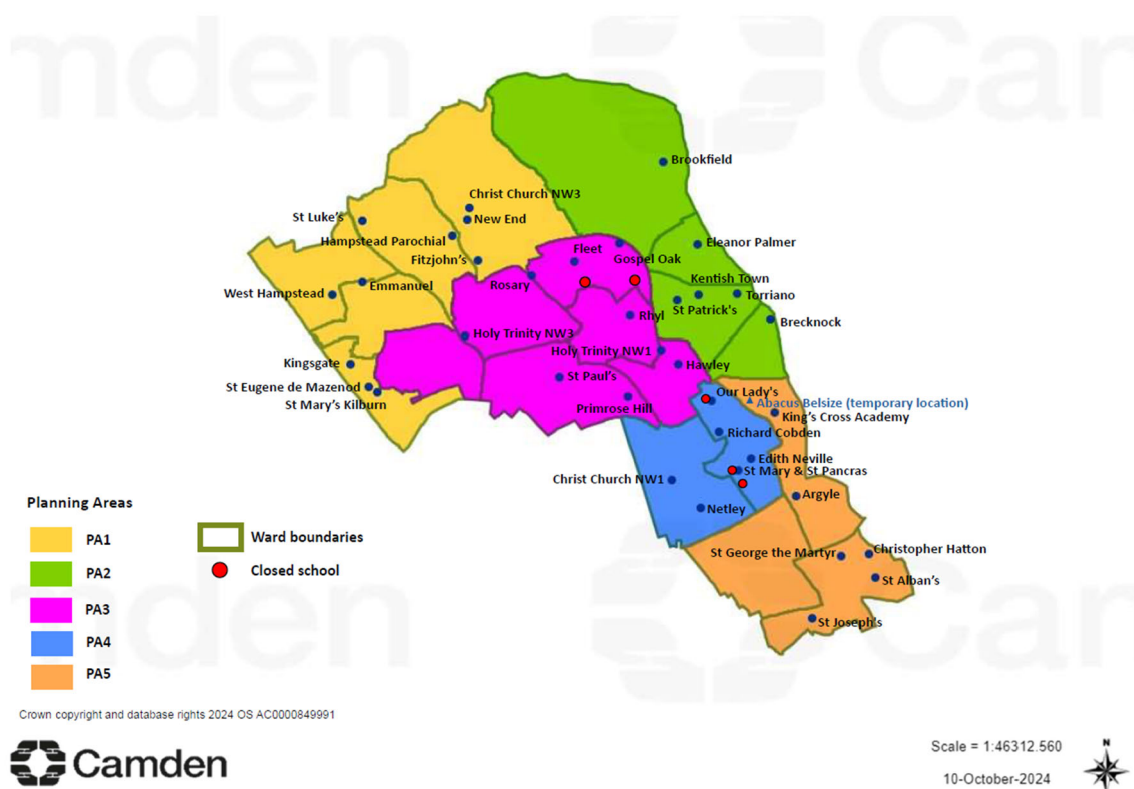
6.4 The GLA school-roll projection model is a simplification of complex real-world processes and, as with any model, there are limitations interpreting output based on a considerable number of changing variables, including:

- changes to future patterns of births or fertility,
- changes in patterns of migration or anticipated development,
- changes to parental preferences for schools,
- capacity constraints of schools, future changes to school provision

- changes to the future character of local areas,
- the impact of welfare and VAT reforms,
- global, national or local events such as the COVID 19 pandemic.

- 6.5 The model calculates the proportion of children attending mainstream state schools by national curriculum year group and gender, based on the GLA population projections and wards of residence. The GLA model explicitly accounts for cross-border mobility using information on pupil home ward from the DfE national pupil database (NPD).
- 6.6 The GLA model continually evolves through discussions with borough subscribers and other key stakeholders to identify future enhancements. For the 2025 projection round our forecasts are based on the 3/4 model configuration and 10-year migration/central-fertility population projection as a default starting point. The 2025 round of school-roll projections are underpinned by the GLA's 2023-based population projections. Three variants of the population projections have been used in preparation of the roll projections. These variants have been chosen with the aim of providing users with a plausible range of outcomes that can serve as a useful basis for planning. Enhancing accuracy and robustness of forecasts continues, as new sources of information become available.

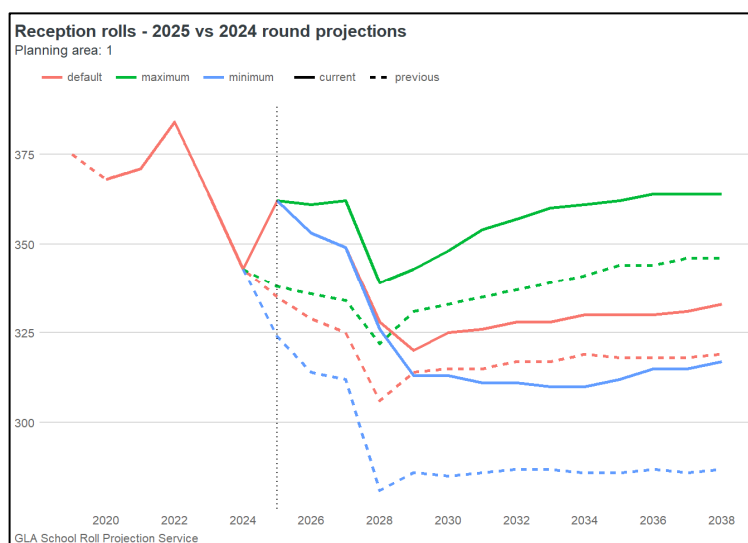
Primary Planning Area Commentary



• Planning Area 1, North West Camden

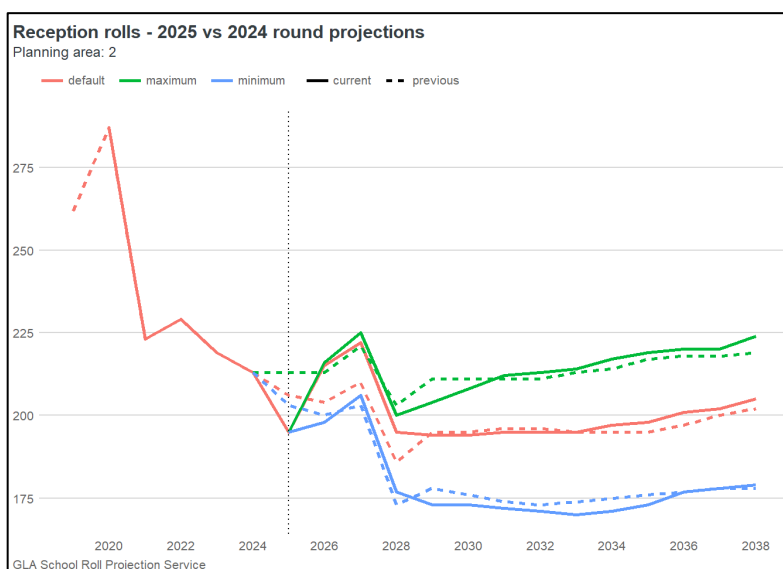
Situated in the north-west part of the Borough, this planning area saw sustained rising pressure for a number of years, with school rolls remaining at higher levels to 2015/16, before falling. Historically this greater demand for school places in PA1 was also affected by rising demand in the immediate area, the western PA3 Swiss Cottage ward. PA1 continued with the lowest levels of reception surplus of any Camden planning area and saw an increase

in reception pupils in 2025. First preference applications have increased year on year from 2023 and are above the current capacity levels of existing provision. PAN capacity has been reduced by 1FE, although PAN surplus is estimated to increase marginally by the end of the planning period (to **18%** by 2033/34) equivalent to 2FE.



- Planning Area 2, North East Camden**

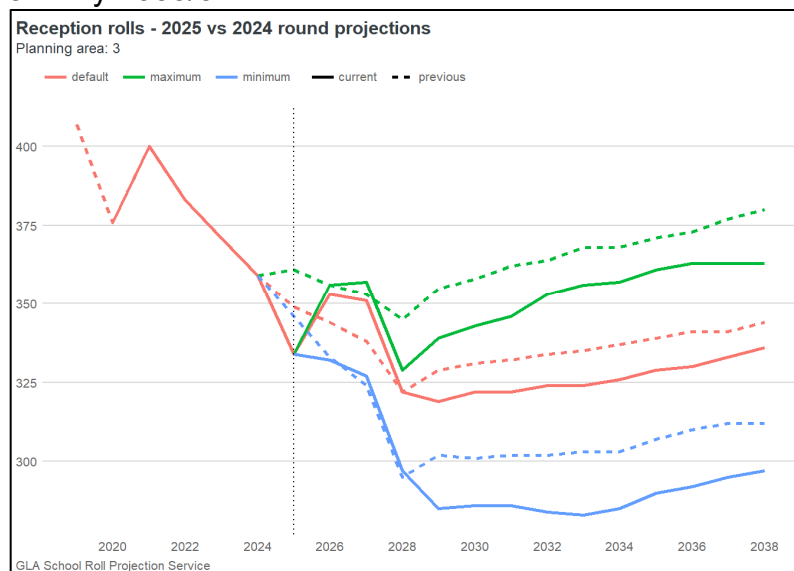
Situated in the north-east area of Camden. PA2 reception school rolls have fallen from the last relative high in 2015/16, with surplus the highest of any other planning area. In 2022, new boundary areas and changes to the planning area composition altered the forecast position making year-to-year comparisons problematic. However, actual reception school rolls fell by just under 2.5FE from 2015/16. The Council, after significant consultation, took the difficult decision to close Carlton primary school (2FE) in July 2021. The latest forecast indicates a reduction in demand for Reception school places, with surplus levels increasing to **33%** by 2033/34 equivalent to 3FE. For 2025, first preference was above trend, increasing by 23 (10%).



- Planning Area 3, Central Camden**

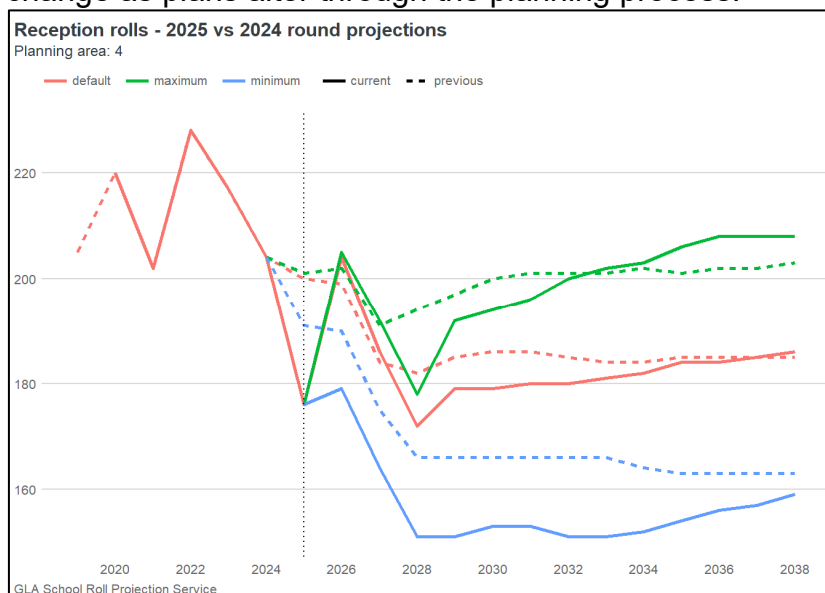
Planning Area 3 comprises of the main east-to-west central belt of Camden. Demand was historically higher in the western Swiss Cottage ward bordering PA1. Reception school rolls have fallen from the last relative high in 2015/16,

and the number of surplus places has increased consequently. In 2022, new boundary areas and changes to the planning area composition altered the forecast position making year-to-year comparisons problematic. Following detailed consultation, Camden, in cooperation with the Westminster Diocese, approved the closure of St Dominic's Catholic Primary School from 2023. Inclusive of this decision, the latest forecasts indicate a slight decrease in demand for Reception school places with surplus levels increasing to **23%** or just below 3FE by 2033/34.



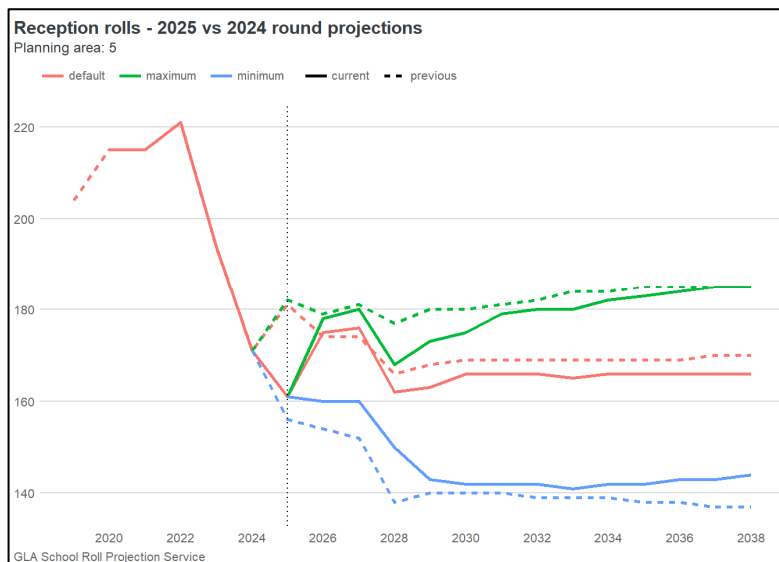
- Planning Area 4, South**

Situated in the south of the borough between central and far southern areas, including Somers Town, King's Cross and St Pancras areas. This area is of highest anticipated development growth in Camden over the next ten years and beyond, developments are included in all GLA forecasts. In 2022, new boundary areas and changes to the planning area composition have altered the forecast position making year-to-year comparisons problematic. Reception school rolls did however fall sharply from the last high in 2015/16 by over 3FE. The current forecasts, however, indicate a stabilisation in demand for reception pupils. Reception PAN surplus is anticipated to increase to **33%** or just below 3FE throughout the planning period. Caution should be exercised when interpreting PA4 forecasts considering the high level of anticipated new development, as developments or phasing can change as plans alter through the planning process.



- **Planning Area 5, South of the Euston Road**

Situated in the far south of the borough, and south of the Euston Road, PA5 has the lowest population of any other Camden planning area. Reception population has fallen significantly over the last 5 years. Total reception surplus is, however, forecast to remain stable at approximately **38% 3FE** throughout the planning period.



Secondary Commentary

- 6.7 The acute fall in Primary Numbers is now being experienced within the secondary sector. Whilst the Council, with the support of schools, has enabled the reduction of PAN by 4.5 forms of entry, a number of secondary schools within Camden remain very vulnerable to falling rolls and the implications that this has on financial sustainability.
- 6.8 Current surplus places in year 7 are anticipated to rise to **20%** for entry in 2025. This is a significant increase on 2024 and ahead of existing forecasts. Whilst Camden schools often increase numbers after offer day, this current position does act as an impetus for change.
- 6.9 Secondary schools are not divided into planning areas. Additionally, with fewer schools at a greater size, there is more scope for changes within schools' admission numbers. However, the impact of changes implicitly affects a greater number of pupils.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The conclusions from this report and analysis are based on the latest known position to **August 2025**, fully reflective of newly revised underlying data, derived trends, and information since December 2021.
- 7.2 In 2025, Camden recorded its lowest number of births in three decades, representing a 36% decline since 2012. This compares with a 14% decrease across London and 17% nationally over the same period. The sustained low birth rate presents a continuing challenge for school planning, particularly when considered alongside the financial pressures associated with rising demand for support for pupils with additional needs.

- 7.3 The monitoring of school place demand will continue within the borough, linking closely with schools and other colleagues across Camden and other London boroughs to share and integrate relevant data. In addition, there is a continued commitment to the aims of Building Back Stronger and the delivery of the School Sufficiency Programme, to provide targeted support and mitigation to those institutions most at need from these demographic changes.

8 LEGAL COMMENTS

- 8.1 By virtue of sections 13 and 14 of the Education Act 1996, as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places available for the children in the borough. In addition, the Council must increase parental choice. The Council needs to undertake a school-roll projection to ensure that there are sufficient school places to meet the need.
- 8.2 The Council must take into account its equality duties when exercising its functions, namely to have 'due regard' to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not (which involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding). Under the Duty the relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation. In respect of the first aim only i.e. reducing discrimination etc, the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership is also relevant. It appears from the report that the Council in undertaking its statutory duty for school planning, acts in accord with its equalities duties.
- 8.3 The updated 2021 Admissions Code, the first major revision since 2014, contains an expanded definition of previously looked after children to include children who were in state care outside of the UK but were subsequently adopted. And the Fair Access Protocol now encompass more children including the unplaced, the vulnerable and those who are unable to secure a school place in-year.
- 8.4 Although there has been no statutory requirement to publish a School Organisation Plan since 2004, it is considered good practice to produce a plan related to pupil place planning. This will show local communities the present and predicted future pupil numbers on roll, together with information about birth rates, school capacity, and new housing. In addition, the plan sets out the statutory framework for making changes such as opening, closing, or enlarging schools in the Borough.

9 FINANCE COMMENTS

- 9.1 The revenue costs of a school (staffing, running costs) are funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), which is distributed on a formula basis. DSG allocations are mainly on a per-pupil basis so the funding received by a school will rise and fall in line with increases or decreases in pupil numbers.

- 9.2 Nationally, DSG funding allocations have not kept pace with costs, which creates a financial pressure for schools. The over-supply of school places exacerbates the financial pressures in the school system as no funding is received for vacant places, causing more schools to be at risk of going into deficit.

10 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no decisions that result from this report. Ensuring that our school estate best meets the demographic pressures of the area means that our resources are efficiently used. In addition, having school buildings that are embedded in their local area and providing high-quality educational outcomes ensures that residents are attracted to local provision, avoiding unnecessary journeys.

11 APPENDICES

Appendix A: General Data
Appendix B: Primary Forecasts
Appendix C: Secondary Forecasts
Appendix D: Borough Map
Appendix E: Special School Commissioned places
Appendix F: SEND Capital Developments

REPORT ENDS