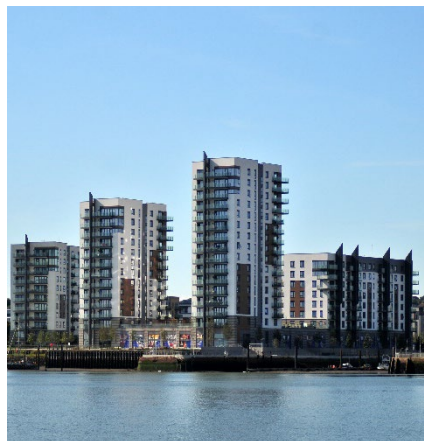


School Place Planning Strategy 2022-27



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Medway Council, as the local authority, has a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places.
- 1.2 This strategy sets out how Medway Council monitors the need for school places and adjusts the number available to ensure that sufficient good quality school places are provided.
- 1.3 There are many stakeholders and organisations involved in managing schools. The Council must work with all of them to meet its statutory duty.

2 The role of the Council

- 2.1 The Council's role is as a strategic planner and coordinator. We will work to manage school places with maintained schools, academies, academy trusts, the Regional Schools Commissioner, and the Department for Education.
- 2.2 The Council is guided by elected members, and so has a democratic mandate for its decision-making process.
- 2.3 The Council may link up actions on school place planning with social care, youth justice, health, family well-being, lifelong learning, economic regeneration, and employment services.
- 2.4 The Council keeps, produces, and updates information on availability and demand for places to inform decisions on school place planning.
- 2.5 Medway Council is also the planning authority and so can coordinate efforts to provide new school places for new developments.
- 2.6 Some academies lease their land and buildings from the Council, on a 125-year lease. Therefore, the Council retains an interest in the development and maintenance of these schools.
- 2.7 Some funding sources are only available to local authorities. The Council will coordinate these with funding schemes available to academy trusts, so that funding is used in the most effective way to ensure a sufficient supply of school places.
- 2.8 The Council has overall statutory responsibility for ensuring sufficient school places, but schools and academies manage places on a day-to-day basis. New places can only be added at schools which have the physical and organisational capacity to take them on, and the willingness to do so.
- 2.9 The Council's actions will be guided by the school organisation plan principles.
- 2.10 The Council has the statutory duty to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and reduce health inequalities. The school environment represents an ideal opportunity to support children's and young people's health and wellbeing.

- 2.11 Through the provision of sufficient high quality school places and learning environments, this strategy aligns with Medway's People Strategy, which sets out an ambition for all those who live, work and learn within its borders and to give Medway's children and young people the best start in life and a solid foundation to live fulfilling lives.
- 2.12 The School Place Planning Strategy supports the Child Friendly Medway agenda, by providing appropriate high quality school places, which enable children and young people to feel safe, valued, learn new skills and make the most of their talents, to aim high and reach their goals.

3 School organisation plan principles

- 3.1 Address issues of underperformance in schools by providing quality and appropriate learning environments by:
- Working with schools when expanding or designing new schools to understand school's requirements and address difficult accommodation arrangements
 - Considering latest government guidance and recommendations when designing new and expanding schools
 - Ensuring schools are accessible to all pupils and staff to enable full access to the curriculum
 - Maintaining schools in a warm, safe, dry, and compliant condition
- 3.2 Ensure, where possible, the viability of all schools by avoiding over supply in local areas by:
- Maintaining robust forecasting to keep an appropriate level of flexibility within the system, but also to flag early warnings to the potential of oversupply
 - Ensuring that too much provision is not in place, which could endanger the viability of the less popular schools
 - Working with the Regional Schools Commissioner to coordinate the timing of demand and responding to changes proposed by academies
 - Reviewing PANs on a regular basis to ensure an appropriate level of provision
- 3.3 Where possible, provide a good choice of provision, support successful schools to expand, and meet parental preference by:
- Prioritising 'Good' and 'Outstanding' schools for expansion
 - Considering recent performance of schools
 - Factoring in parental preferences demonstrated when applying for schools
 - Including schools and academy trusts in discussions when assessing schools for expansion and planning for new provision.
- 3.4 Ensure sufficient places are available to meet demand, and retain some flexibility within the system by operating to 5% surplus places overall by:
- Maintaining robust forecasting to enable forward planning
 - Promoting continued engagement with Academy Trusts on School Organisation matters, ensuring a mixed economy of high-quality providers and sufficient places to meet demand

- Whilst in the previous strategy we aimed to work to an 8% surplus in reception year, with birth numbers now falling we feel it would be sensible to revert to 5%, with this being kept under review annually.

3.5 Where appropriate, support collaboration and partnership working between schools including academisation, federation or amalgamation of infant and junior schools, by:

- Supporting the Council's preference for academisation by coordinating the conversion process with all stakeholders
- Leading on the process of amalgamation between maintained infant and junior schools to create primary schools
- Supporting Governing Bodies as necessary towards federation with an appropriate partner
- Extending co-educational places when new schools are established.

4 Partnership working

4.1 Schools have always been autonomous, but since the introduction of academies the relationship between schools and Council has become more complex. We maintain good relationships with schools, academies and trusts and will continue to do so, as the best outcomes are achieved through collaboration.

4.2 We believe that the most effective way of maintaining a sufficient level of good school places is by working with schools, local communities, and central government.

4.3 Medway has a mixture of schools, operated by academy trusts, dioceses, or local authority maintained. The council is ideally placed to co-ordinate efforts between all schools to provide sufficient good school places for all Medway children.

4.4 The council will monitor the need for places, work with schools to identify the most suitable options to meet the need, and then source funding to put the changes into place.

5 School Effectiveness

5.1 Every child should be able to attend a good quality school place. When more places are needed, they will be added at good or outstanding rated schools. If a school's performance drops, they will be supported by the council to improve.

5.2 Proposals presented to ensure a sufficient supply of good quality school places will include school effectiveness at the heart of considerations when determining the most appropriate school for expansion.

6 Funding

6.1 There are two main sources of funding for providing new school places, the annual basic need grant from central government and developer contributions from section 106 agreements.

- 6.2 The Council submits a school capacity return each year, to show how many pupils it expects in the future, and how much space is available in schools. This is used by the Department for Education to calculate the basic need grant. This funding is used to provide the additional places needed through natural population growth.
- 6.3 Developer contributions are paid to the council by housing developers. New housing attracts new families to the areas, and so this funding is used to create school places for these children. Contributions can be requested for nursery, primary, secondary, and sixth form pupils.
- 6.4 Developer contributions are used to fund expansions at the most appropriate school to address the additional pupils coming from a new development. This can depend on many factors and is not always the closest school. For example, the closest school may not have the capability to expand. Expanding a school further away can free up places at others, and so this indirectly enables pupils to attend the closer school.
- 6.5 A single development will not always provide sufficient funding to carry out an expansion. The need for places is strategically assessed on both an area-by-area and Medway-wide basis, and contributions are pooled together so one expansion can address demand from multiple developments.
- 6.6 Requests for developer contributions must meet three tests. They must be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development, and in proportion to the development.
- 6.7 We only submit requests for developments where there are at least ten dwellings with two or more bedrooms, and where there are not sufficient places in the area.
- 6.8 The size of a contribution is proportional to the number of pupils a development is expected to produce and the number of available places in the area. More pupils come from houses than flats, and so developments of houses result in larger requests than developments of flats.
- 6.9 Contributions will usually be paid at trigger points during the development, these can be at the start, end, or after a certain number of dwellings have been occupied. We will work with our planning department and the developers to determine mutually agreeable trigger points.
- 6.10 In some cases, the demand for school places and other developer funded infrastructure may come earlier in the development, before the developer has sold enough housing to be able to pay their contributions. Medway Council may need to agree a scheme to forward fund the necessary infrastructure by borrowing and then recovering the money from the developer after housing has been sold. This would need to be agreed in advance and risk assessed, to make sure that the housing development will go ahead and ensure the contribution.
- 6.11 The Department for Education sometimes makes funding available through targeted schemes, to either the Council, or to academy trusts. We will make full use of these when they become available, and support academy trusts to do the same.

7 Climate Change

- 7.1 Medway Council declared a climate change emergency in April 2019 and one of Medway's council plan objectives is to reduce Medway's contribution to climate change to net zero by 2050.
- 7.2 Medway's Climate Change Action Plan sets out how the Council intends to respond to the climate emergency. It also highlights the need for combined actions from Medway's residents, businesses, schools, and universities.
- 7.3 One of the priorities within the action plan is to provide improved opportunities to walk, cycle, use public transport and electric vehicles to help reduce emissions. In support of this, the Place Planning Strategy aims to create local provision for children and young people. This should reduce the need to travel across Medway, reduce the number of car journeys, and have a positive impact on air quality.
- 7.4 Pupils are encouraged by schools to walk or cycle to school, and this becomes more achievable if the provision is local.
- 7.5 As part of the schools' maintenance and condition programme, as well as when expanding or building schools, officers look to utilise methods and materials to help reduce the carbon footprint, examples include landscaping that supports and promotes a greener environment, replacing fossil fuelled heating systems with greener alternatives, LED lighting, improving insulation, photovoltaics and providing electric vehicle charging points.

8 Healthy Living

- 8.1 Medway's Council aims to support Medway's people to realise their potential. One of the intended outcomes of this is improving health and reducing inequalities. The council can use its position to influence the development of healthy environments.
- 8.2 The most recently published childhood obesity figures show the high and increasing prevalence of children above a healthy weight. Schools can play an important role in tackling the healthy weight and other lifestyle factors

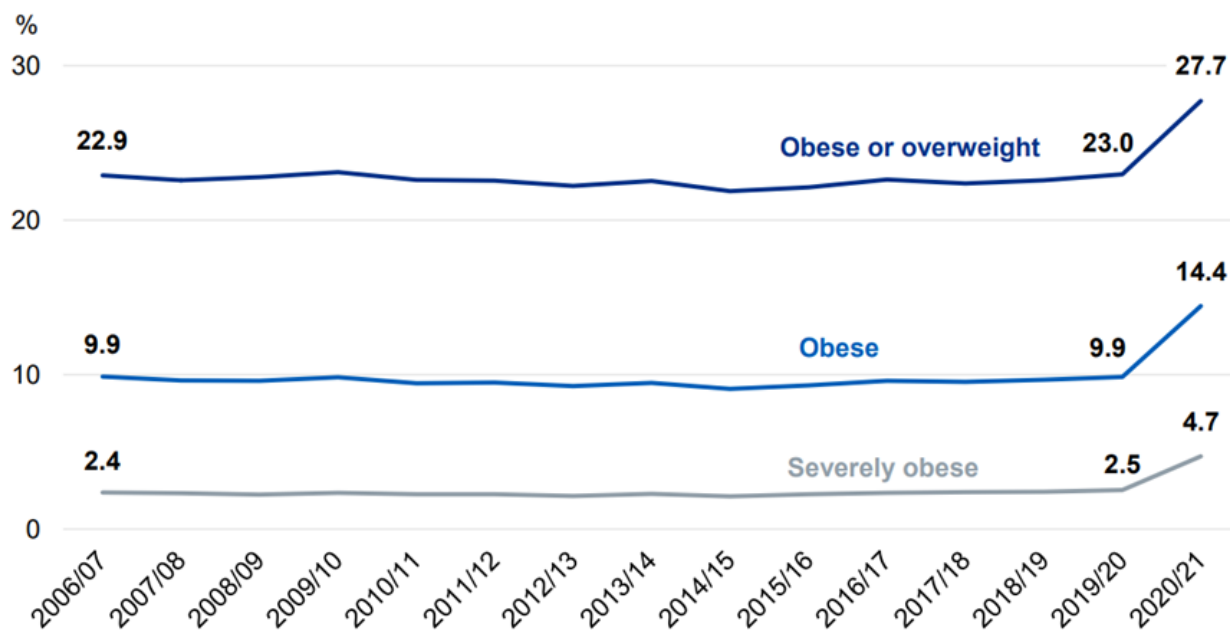


Figure 1 - Reception - trend in prevalence of obesity, severe obesity, and overweight (including obesity) NCMP 2006/07 to 2020/21



*For Year 6 comparisons are not possible with the first years of NCMP (2006/07 to 2008/09) because obesity prevalence was underestimated due to low participation. This, and the impact of other improvements in data quality, should be considered when making comparisons over time.

Figure 2 - Year 6 - trend in prevalence of obesity, severe obesity, and overweight (including obesity) NCMP 2006/07 to 2020/21

- 8.3 When schools are created, expanded, or maintained, the council will identify where the environment can be improved. For example, making best use of outdoor space, improving ventilation and heating, promoting and supporting active travel to and from school. This will include all schools and their surrounding areas to be smoke free sites, have open visible areas to help reduce bullying and install age-appropriate play equipment.
- 8.4 To address the rising obesity rates and promote healthy eating, all schools will be supported to adopt a whole school food approach programme. In addition, this

programme promotes physical activity creating a visual environment to enable all curricular activities to involve movement. Schools will be supported to source local suppliers of foods and the element of food sourcing and production embedded into the curriculum.

- 8.5 Medway Council's public health portfolio of health improvement programmes is to be promoted to all schools, this includes offers such as the "Healthy Workplaces" programme to encourage all school staff to adopt healthy behaviours and gain support in maintaining healthy lifestyles which in turn promotes a positive effect on the children in their care.
- 8.6 Medway public health team will continue to work closely with Medway Council's Active Travel and Climate change teams to promote existing schemes such as "walk to school week" and the "daily school mile". Further information to educate children and parents on the effects of pollution and improving air quality around schools and the long-term effects on health will be developed.
- 8.7 To support the healthy living agenda, we will look to improve environments and active facilities when expanding or creating new schools.

9 Place Planning

- 9.1 There are 77 state funded mainstream primary provisions in Medway which the council consider when planning school places and which form part of the co-ordinated admissions scheme led by the local authority. Each of these plays an important role in providing a mixed arena of education and community provision.
- 9.2 Medway is divided into ten primary pupil place planning areas. Each planning area covers a number of schools. Pupils who live within one of the planning areas would normally go to either a school in the same area or an adjoining one. Using planning areas helps to identify where demand for places is changing rather than just the popularity of individual schools.
- 9.3 When planning additional places, the capacity of adjacent planning areas is considered to ensure the most appropriate and effective solution and to avoid either an under or over provision.

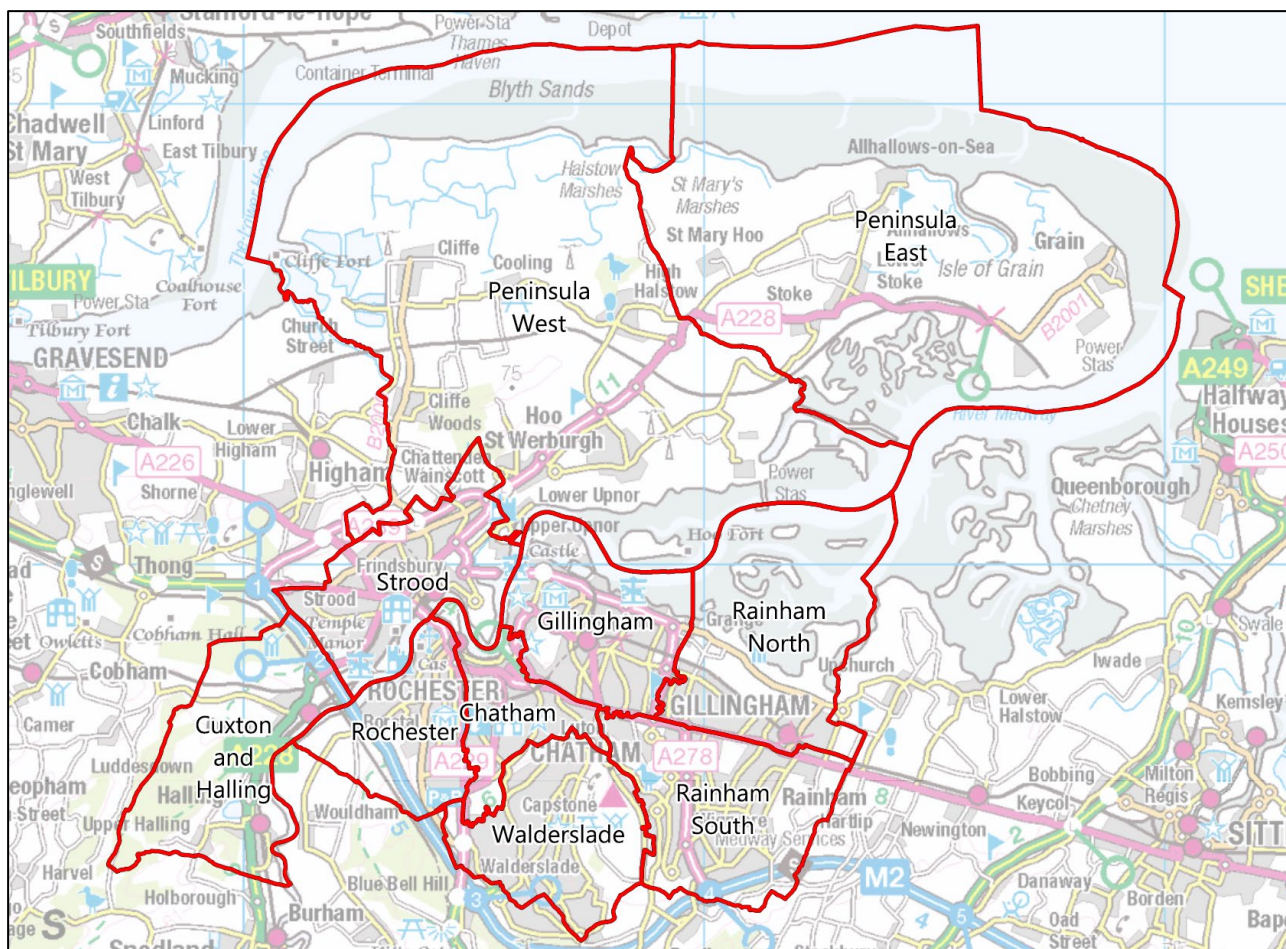


Figure 3 - Primary pupil planning areas

- 9.4 At secondary level there are two planning areas, for selective and non-selective schools. These both cover the whole of Medway, as secondary age pupils can travel much further to go to school. There are 6 selective, and 13 non-selective schools which form part of the co-ordinated admissions scheme in Medway.
- 9.5 For the areas of Kent which surround Medway, the closest secondary schools are often in Medway. Pupils also choose to come from outside Medway to attend a selective school. This makes planning places challenging and must be factored into our consideration. The graph below shows the net gain in pupils between Year 6 and Year 7.
- 9.6 Officers will continue to liaise with Kent County Council colleagues to manage place planning where the boundaries meet to avoid over provision in an area.

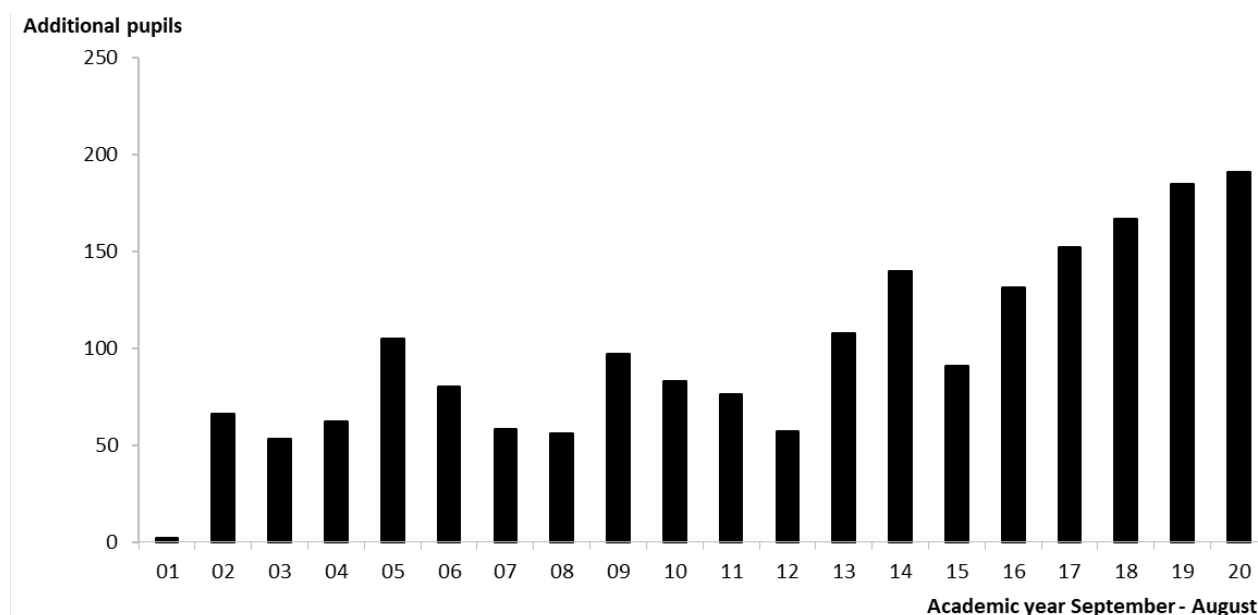


Figure 4 - Increase in pupils between Year 6 and Year 7

10 Changing demand

- 10.1 Two main factors affect the demand for school places, the birth rate, and families and children moving into or out of the area. These factors tend to move in cycles, where demand rises and falls.
- 10.2 We monitor demand using GP registration data to track the number of births and pre-school inward migration, the school census to monitor numbers in school, and planning applications to assess number of people moving into the area.
- 10.3 Our response to changing demand is graduated. We will constantly monitor demand to determine if there are any significant changes, and whether they are short or long term.
- 10.4 There are several steps that we can take if demand for school places is increasing. If the demand is only expected to be short term, and if they have the capacity, one or more schools can take a bulge class. This is when a school takes an extra class of pupils, and then returns to their normal intake the next year.
- 10.5 If schools do not have space for bulge classes, then their capacity can be expanded. This may be temporary or permanent. Different schools will need different types of expansion to take more pupils. For example, some may need more general classrooms, others specialist areas whilst others may need bigger dining facilities to cater for the extra pupils.
- 10.6 If more capacity is needed in an area than can be provided by bulge classes or expansion, then a new school may be required.
- 10.7 If forecasts indicate a continued decrease in demand for school places, we will review the number of places available to avoid long-term over provision. To address this, we can reduce PANs at schools either temporarily or permanently to ensure they continue to be viable. Other options to consider would be for two or more

schools to federate or amalgamate, to look at re-utilising capacity for other purposes such as SEND, and in extreme cases partial or full closure.

- 10.8 Where PANs are reduced, we will work with schools to ensure the capacity is not permanently removed. This will allow rooms to be brought back into use as classrooms and PANs to be increased quickly and cost effectively in the future when demand increases again.

11 Births & population

- 11.1 The main driver of school place demand is the population already living within Medway. Children are born, go to school, grow up, and have children of their own who will then go to school.
- 11.2 Each year the number of births varies, depending on many factors. These can be straightforward. For example, as the adult population grows, the number of people who can have children increases and so the number of births increases. There are also complex factors, such as the state of the economy, which may affect people’s choices on whether to have more, fewer, or no children.
- 11.3 The population can be increased by people moving into the area, who have children already. This can increase the number of children needing a school place each academic year. We monitor the number of births and pre-school age children, and how the size of the cohort changes each year, using GP registration data. This data is used to forecast the numbers of pre-school and Reception age children each year.

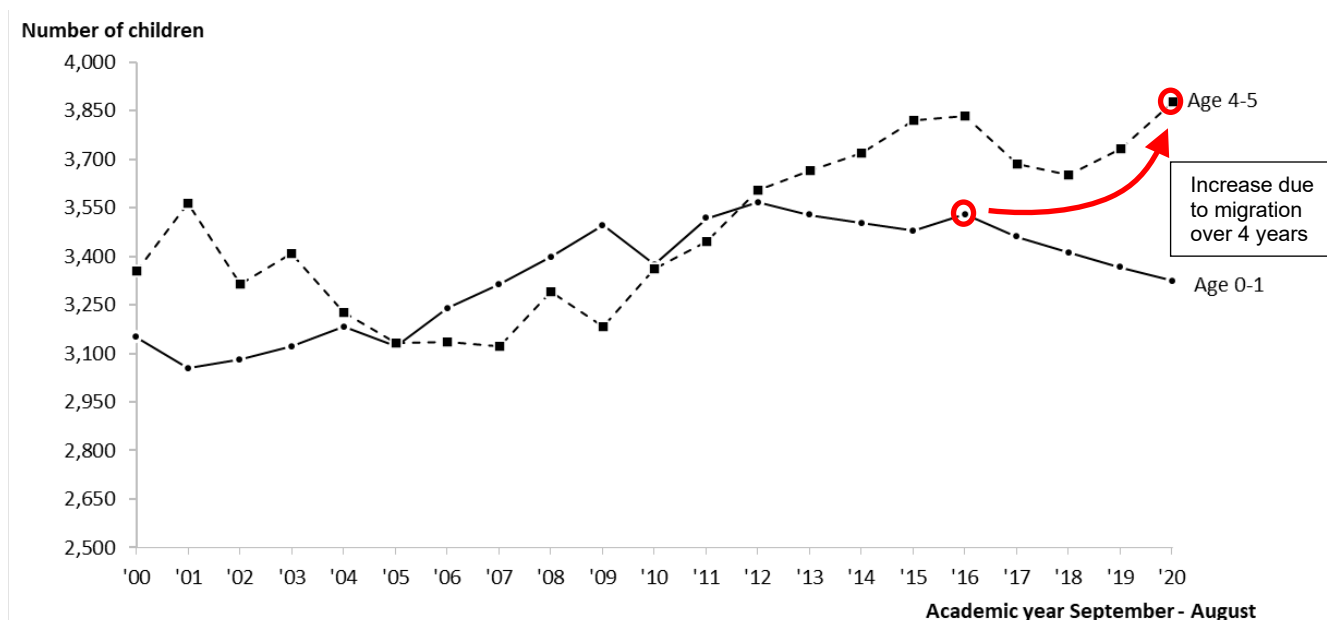


Figure 5 – Increase in children between birth and school age

12 Housing & migration

- 12.1 For people to move in, new houses must be built, or someone else has to move out. The government has set housing targets for all local authorities, and this will increase the amount of housing being built in Medway.

- 12.2 We monitor the number of flats and houses being built using approved planning applications. This information is used to estimate the number of additional pupils produced, which is included in our forecasts.
- 12.3 If a development, or group of developments, is large enough, a new school may be required, funded by developer contributions. All new schools provided to meet housing demand will be free schools. This will follow the Free School Presumption process, whereby the Council produces a specification for the size and type of school required and oversees a bidding process to select an academy trust to operate the school. The decision as to who the winning bidder is falls to the Secretary of State for Education, but with the Council able to state a preferred Trust. Construction of the school may be procured by the council, or in the case of a single large development, by the developer themselves, with oversight from the council.
- 12.4 Places can also be created in a new school directly funded by the Department for Education as part of their free school programme, which is based upon demand outside of new housing. The new secondary academies in Rainham and Strood were sourced through this route.
- 12.5 Figure 6 below, highlights the increase there has been in the number of pupils expected from new housing schemes from 2016. The graph appears to peak in 2023, however the years after that can reasonably be expected to increase as more housing developments are approved through the planning process.

Pupils expected from approved developments

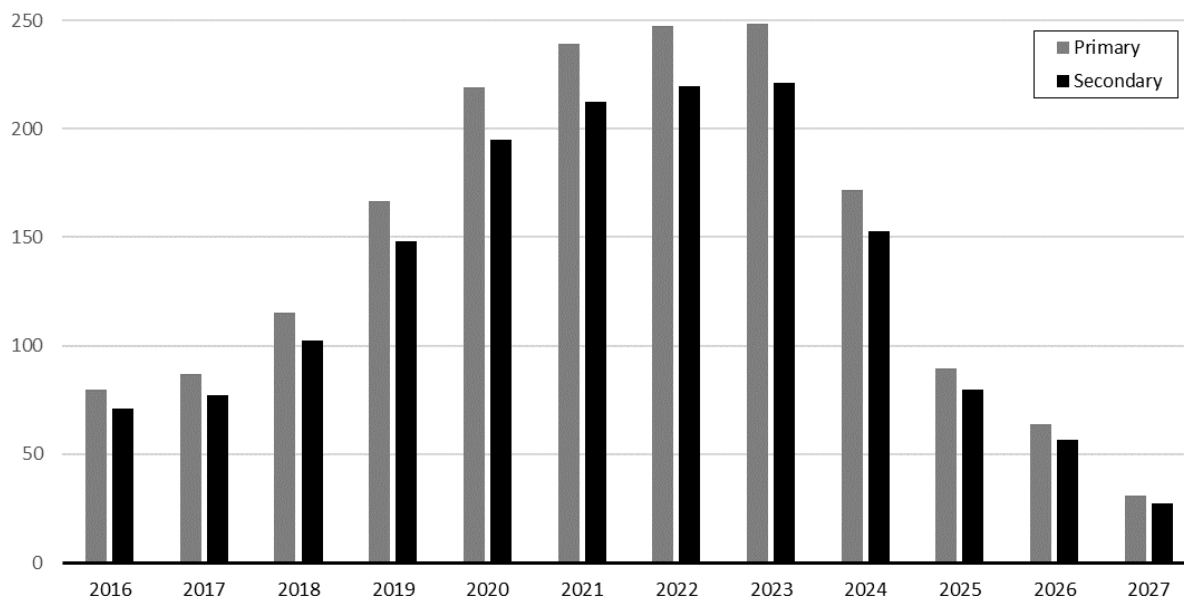


Figure 6 - Number of additional pupils expected from approved housing

- 12.6 All local authorities have been set housing targets by central government. Medway’s local plan aims to co-ordinate house building with the necessary infrastructure to support the increasing population. This includes the expansion of existing schools or the provision of new ones. We will work with Medway’s planning department to ensure that any school organisation changes are co-ordinated with the local plan, to avoid under provision in planned areas of housing growth.

13 School population

- 13.1 Every January and October the school census collects the number of pupils in school. Future numbers can be forecasted by looking at changes between each census, at the numbers of pre-school and school age children, and the number of houses and flats being built.
- 13.2 The school population moves in cycles following increases and decreases in the birth rate and the numbers of people moving into and out of the area. Therefore, the demand for school places can fluctuate as the graph below at figure 7 highlights.

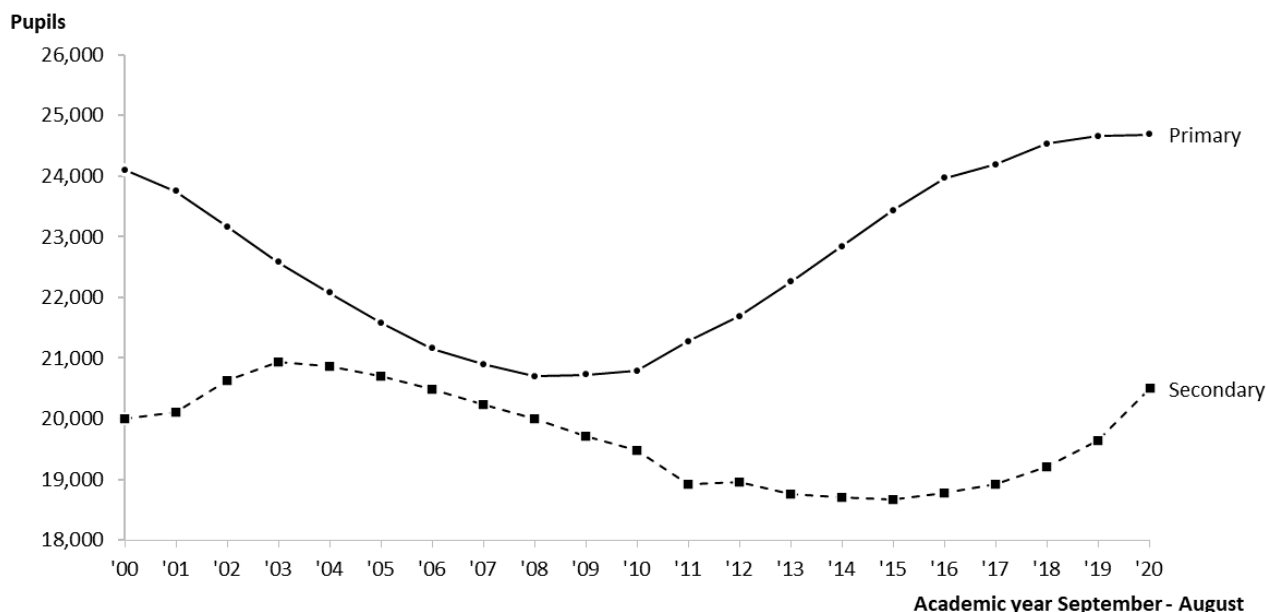


Figure 7 - Changing primary and secondary school populations over time

- 13.3 The school population is an ever-evolving picture. We will forecast the likely situation over the next five to seven years, highlight emerging need and over provision, and report to members in the School Place Planning Strategy annual review.
- 13.4 We discuss decisions on place planning and share forecasting information with academy trusts, governing bodies, and headteachers. This helps to ensure that all parties can work collaboratively to ensure sufficient places and avoid under or over supply.

14 Early Years

- 14.1 Local authorities are required to secure sufficient childcare, where possible, for children aged 0 to 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children), whose parents are working, studying, or training for employment.
- 14.2 This means that parents can work or study because childcare places are available, accessible, affordable, and are delivered flexibly at a range of high-quality settings.
- 14.3 Medway is committed to supporting as many families as possible to take up the offer of free or funded places for an eligible two-year-old.

- 14.4 Medway’s aim is to have a sufficient, sustainable, and high-quality childcare market.
- 14.5 We use data on forecasted numbers of pupils and pre-school age children to ensure that changes in demographics are supported by changes in provision.
- 14.6 Wards with low take-up for funded early years places are monitored so that information can be targeted at eligible families living in these areas, and providers can be directed to areas of need.
- 14.7 We maintain the Family Information Service directory online to provide families with an up-to-date picture of childcare providers, as well as breakfast and after school clubs, to enable them to access provision local to them. This also supports providers to find families in need of childcare.
- 14.8 We monitor the quality of provision for pre-school age children with EHCPs and SEN support to ensure that children are being provided with the best support. Ensure that providers are aware of funding they can potentially access to support and adapt to meet children’s needs.

15 Primary

- 15.1 Every year, on average, 93% of children aged 4-5 will start reception in a mainstream Medway state school. A proportion will be educated at home, go to independent schools, special schools, or schools outside of Medway. The difference between the number of children aged 4-5 and the number of pupils in reception is shown in the graph below.

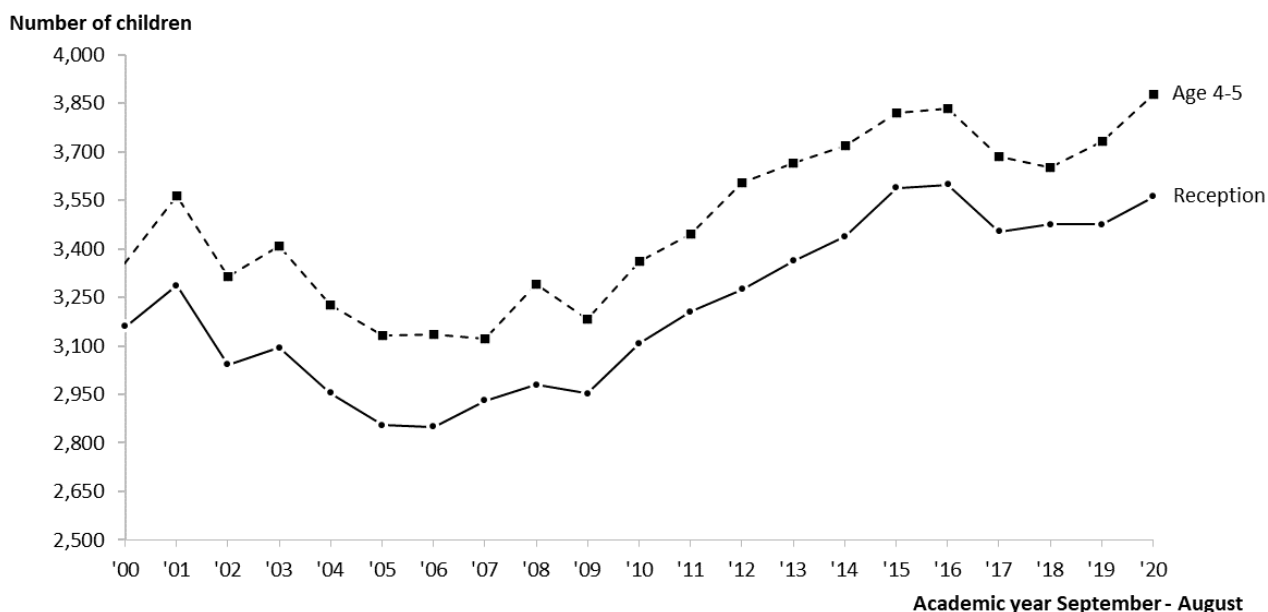


Figure 8 - Relation between school age children and school Reception numbers

- 15.2 The main challenges to providing sufficient primary school places are changing performance and popularity of schools, new housing changing the location of demand, and the numbers of children coming from out of Medway. These elements are all considered in our twice-yearly forecasts. These forecasts have been proven to be accurate on the DfE scorecard, therefore decision makers and residents can

have confidence in the figures to ensure appropriate informed decisions are made when planning or changing pupil places.

16 Secondary

- 16.1 At Secondary level, Medway is split into two planning divisions. These don't cover a geographic area, but one area is for selective schools, and the other for non-selective schools.
- 16.2 Most pupils in a mainstream Medway primary school in Year 6 will go on to a Medway secondary school in Year 7. However, there will be some children that attend private primary schools, or come from outside Medway, particularly those in adjacent areas where Medway secondary schools are the closest, that join a Medway secondary school in Year 7. There is normally an increase in pupil numbers between Year 6 and Year 7 as shown on figure 9 below. This trend is used to inform the forecast for future Year 7 numbers.
- 16.3 We aim to increase the number of co-educational places within Medway, and all new schools will be co-ed. Where there is support from parents, pupils, and academy trusts, we will consider proposals for existing single sex schools to convert to co-educational. This includes both selective and non-selective schools.

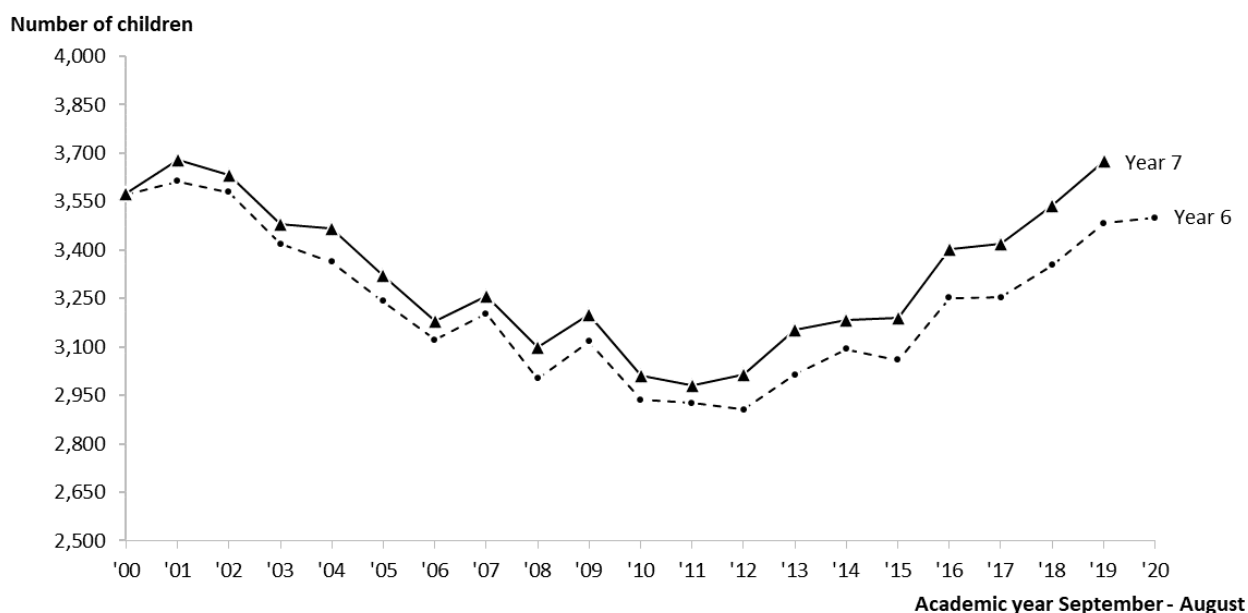


Figure 9 - Difference between Year 6 and Year 7 rolls

- 16.4 We will provide sufficient provision to prioritise local children and young people. This is particularly pertinent in the selective sector, where demand from out of area pupils is significant. To achieve this, we will look to change the way in which the selective admissions process is administered to ensure that sufficient provision is maintained for Medway pupils, whilst allowing for growth in demand as the population increases. Any changes will provide additional opportunities for Medway's pupils and provide more flexibility within the system. To further this aim, the option of a selective annexe on the Hoo Peninsula, to serve that area, is being explored as part of the infrastructure delivery for the proposed local plan.

17 Special educational needs

- 17.1 Some children and young people will have additional needs to be able access education on an equal basis to other children their age. For some the focus of support will be mainly educational. For others, and their families, they will need support from several services. This may continue throughout their childhood and, for some, into adulthood. A child or young person may have special educational needs or a disability or both.
- 17.2 These additional needs can range from requiring small adjustments in their mainstream school, to requiring a place in special provision. Ideally children and young people will remain in their local area, so they can maintain local support and friendship groups.
- 17.3 We aim to provide high quality SEN provision within mainstream schools, to support as many children as possible to remain in a mainstream setting or resourced provision. For those pupils who need the support of a special school, we will seek to provide as many places as are necessary to keep children in local schools close to their home area.
- 17.4 Planning SEN provision is challenging, as it is not possible to forecast with any certainty at local authority level how many children will have which needs in the future. Children may have more than one additional need, and so a place which would be suitable for one need may not be suitable for the other.
- 17.5 The local authority will work closely with special schools and SEND leaders when developing additional specialist provision, based upon the latest data and analysis.
- 17.6 In some cases. the most appropriate provision for a pupil may be outside of Medway, and where that is the case, those pupils will continue to be placed there, with transport made available, so that all pupils can receive the best possible education relevant to their individual needs.

18 Alternative provision

- 18.1 Most pupil behaviours can be managed within mainstream schools. However, some pupils will need the extra support offered by alternative provision. This support can be offered in the form of an outreach service, where the alternative provision works with the pupil and the home school to improve behaviour.
- 18.2 The ideal outcome of this is that early intervention and support will allow the pupil to continue their education without being excluded. However, some pupils at risk of permanent exclusion may need to spend some time away from their school, attending an alternative provision for a period of time, reflecting the expectation for a 'revolving door' approach when pupils are supported to reintegrate into a mainstream school.
- 18.3 Currently, provision for 120 secondary pupils within Medway is commissioned at two state funded schools and one in the independent sector.

- 18.4 There is no indication that additional secondary provision is required. However, should the need arise, then the opportunity to spot purchase those within the independent sector is available.
- 18.5 There is currently no permanent provision for primary children, however a primary behaviour support unit has been established in advance of a more permanent solution, to provide outreach and where necessary 'revolving door' on site provision

19 Looked after children

- 19.1 Looked after children receive the highest priority for admission to all Medway schools. If necessary, the Admissions Code allows the Council to place looked after children in schools that would otherwise be deemed full. This ensures that the Council can secure appropriate provision for children that are looked after by the local authority.

20 Political immigration

- 20.1 International events in recent years have resulted in an increase in people fleeing war and persecution. A number of these arrive in Kent as it is the closest point to Europe. In 2021 the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban resulted in the UK government announcing a resettlement scheme for Afghan refugees. Some of these may be children who will require a school place over the coming years, or families who in time go on to have children. The impact in terms of numbers in Medway is likely to be small, but they may require additional assistance such as learning English as an additional language or dealing with trauma. We will monitor the situation and follow any government guidance and legislation.
- 20.2 In 2021 the UK government made an immigration offer to Hong Kongers who have British Nationals Overseas status and their dependants, in light of the current political and security situation in Hong Kong. This new scheme provides them and their dependants a right to move to the UK and to obtain full citizenship. Children arriving from Hong Kong are entitled to access to state-funded school places, but there is uncertainty as to how many people will take up this offer, and where in the UK they will move to.

21 Statutory processes

- 21.1 Some changes to schools require a statutory process to be carried out. These changes include increasing capacity, changing the age range, and changing land use.
- 21.2 Any new school will be a free school. Free schools are new academies, rather than academies which have converted from an existing school. Therefore, there is a bidding process to select an academy trust to operate the school. This process is run in conjunction with the DfE and the Regional School Commissioner.
- 21.3 We will work collaboratively with schools and academy trusts to ensure that all statutory requirements are undertaken. All processes will involve wide ranging

consultation with residents, and all views will be considered, to ensure any changes will benefit the community.

- 21.4 Academy trusts will be responsible for carrying out statutory processes related to academies, while Medway Council will lead on any related to maintained schools.
- 21.5 These processes will be particularly significant in the coming years, as much new housing is planned for Medway and schools will have to be created and expanded to serve the new demand expected.

22 Annual review

- 22.1 Every year an annual review of this strategy will present the latest data and forecasts, along with analytical commentary. Any proposed changes will make sure there continues to be a sufficient supply of good quality school places, in the right place at the right time.
- 22.2 The annual review will highlight any emerging need or over supply and propose actions to address the situation if necessary.
- 22.3 We will work in partnership and collaboratively with schools and academy trusts when planning, proposing, and implementing any additional school provision.
- 22.4 The annual review will follow the full democratic approval process, including review by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee (if requested) and the final stage which is approval at Cabinet. This will ensure that any proposed actions have been fully considered and are based upon robust evidence and debate.

23 Conclusion

- 23.1 While there is no longer a requirement for local authorities to have a strategy such as this, and its forerunner the School Organisation Plan, Medway Council has agreed that having a strategic plan will provide a clear framework for school organisation decisions to ensure an appropriate supply of good school places, linked to school improvement.
- 23.2 This strategy will form the foundations for the provision of sufficient school places, ensuring the council meets its statutory duty.
- 23.3 We will robustly monitor the forecasts twice yearly to keep up with the movement and trends in pupil numbers to provide the maximum time to deliver solutions to demand.
- 23.4 The annual reviews highlighting progress and actions will provide the council with oversight of the programme, providing solid evidence to enable decision making to ensure the successful work flowing from the previous School Place Planning Strategy and the School Organisation Plan before it, is continued.