

Goring CE Primary School Proposal: The Education Case

Why is the new school necessary in light of the proposed level of development allocated to Goring?

This statement attempts to explain how the evolving housing situation in Goring will ultimately require a school facility that has scope to expand, and why the current school will not provide in-catchment children with outcomes as good as those provided by a new, fit-for-purpose school.

At the heart of this proposal is the need to take a long-term view, recognising:

- the challenges of the current school site;
- the pressures new development will bring;
- the immediate benefits of a new school for education in the village;
- the sustainability benefits, cost savings and efficiency gains from this investment into the future;
- that this is a key consideration now for the Goring Neighbourhood Plan.

The proposal is for a new 1-form-entry school, with the shell to enable expansion to 1.5-form entry when this is deemed to be required. A PAN of 45 is likely to be needed in the medium term in Goring (as demonstrated in this statement), and therefore this case needs to be seriously considered while this unique opportunity is available.

Introduction

Goring CE Primary provides a very high standard of education, and has an excellent academic record. However, physically, it faces significant challenges in terms of its age, piecemeal layout and constrained site. The current site area is approximately 0.9 hectares which, by government standards,¹ is sufficient for 158–212 pupils (we currently have well over 230 on roll). Moreover, the school faces limitations in terms of its outside space given the lack of all-weather surfaces and variation in levels. Thus, even before any houses are built, the educational provision and learning experience at Goring Primary School face challenging limitations. This is why the school governors and Oxford Diocesan Board of Education are keen to see the proposal on offer be made part of the draft Neighbourhood Plan that is currently being developed, given the benefits to the school and the community at large that it represents.

1. Capacity constraints: housing forecasts and pupil numbers

The Goring Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are currently working on the assumption of around 100 new homes over the next ten years. However, the actual number of new dwellings would be more than that because of existing commitments and future ‘windfall’ housing.

In addition to this, SODC’s strategic planning context for housing has changed since the ‘old’ Core Strategy, which is where the original, lower housing numbers came from. The Neighbourhood Plan

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mainstream-schools-area-guidelines/area-planning-for-maintained-schools>

should take account of SODC's Local Plan, which is currently indicating that Goring, in line with its status as a 'larger village', should seek to allocate around 250 houses (subject to local constraints).

Pupil numbers under different housing scenarios and the impact on school are presented below.

SCENARIO A: New school package + modest additional housing

	Units	Notes
'Package' sites		
GNP5	46	<i>Involves development on about 50% of site</i>
GNP6	56	<i>Plus the school</i>
Existing school site	34	<i>Current draft proposal for elderly persons (principle of allowing downsizing/releasing other properties)</i>
Subtotal	136	
Other NP site allocations (assumed)		
Subtotal	55	
Commitments²		
Subtotal	20	<i>From SODC August 2017 'Housing Monitoring'</i>
Windfall assumption		
Subtotal	80	<i>Assumption of 8 dwellings per year for 10 years</i>
GRAND TOTAL	291	

This scenario involves a total of 291 homes which would be delivered over ten years by 2028, with the majority before 2024. (Oxfordshire County Council has stated that it would anticipate around 300 new houses, depending on type of housing stock, to generate sufficient extra demand for school places to justify an expansion from 1- to 1.5-form entry.³)

Of the 291, 34 would be for the elderly (on the existing school site). For the purposes of calculating pupil generation it has been assumed that only 50% of those units for the elderly may release other housing for families to occupy in the village. Therefore, 17 units have been deducted from the total. No further adjustment has been made for the fact that the primary school pupil generation numbers would actually allow for some elderly occupation that has been specifically excluded, so as not to exaggerate the case for a new school.

² Source: SODC August 2017 'Housing Monitoring' (see Annex B).

³ That said, in the February 2015 Refined Options document relating to Goring, SODC states that 'The County Council as Education Authority anticipate that 105 new homes could provide sufficient increase in local population to justify the school implementing its plan to expand to a 1.5 form entry school.'

[http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/GORING_2015-02-02_SODC%20LP2031%20REFINED%20OPTIONS%20DOCUMENT%20Final%20web%20ready%20\(1\)-5.pdf](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/GORING_2015-02-02_SODC%20LP2031%20REFINED%20OPTIONS%20DOCUMENT%20Final%20web%20ready%20(1)-5.pdf)

This means that under this scenario, for school planning purposes, a total of **274 dwellings by 2028** is assumed. Using current pupil generation rates (from SODC 2016 guidance – see Annex A), 274 dwellings are estimated to generate 94 additional pupils over the next ten years, most by 2024.

In addition, it is relevant to note that Goring C E Primary School generally runs at full capacity (30 pupil intake per year), and regularly turns away in-catchment children across most of the year groups. We acknowledge the temporary dip in the estimated in-catchment reception applications but, beyond this, there is an upward trend and anticipated demand for places (see Annex A).

It can therefore be estimated that, drawing from the school’s existing catchment area, the average intake per school year could be $30 + 14 = 44$, compared with a capacity under 1.5-form entry of 45 per school year, allowing a small amount of spare capacity. It is our understanding that this would be desirable as it provides for children moving into the area and allows children to move between local schools when another school would be a better fit for emerging needs. Being able to fill 44 of 45 spaces means that Goring Primary School is unlikely to negatively impact on local smaller schools, particularly South Stoke.

There would also be additional demand for early years (pre-school) places.

SCENARIO B: Current emerging Neighbourhood Plan

	Units	Notes
NP site allocations (assumed)		
Subtotal	100	
New housing committed by March 2018⁴		
Subtotal	20	<i>From SODC August 2017 ‘Housing Monitoring’</i>
Windfall assumption		
Subtotal	80	<i>Assumption of 8 dwellings PA for 10 years (to March 2028)</i>
GRAND TOTAL	200	

This scenario involves a total of **200 homes delivered over ten years by 2028**, with the majority before 2024. As none of the units is understood to be dedicated for the elderly, the standard pupil generation percentages have been considered on the 200 homes.

Using current pupil generation rates (from SODC 2016 guidance – see Annex A), 200 dwellings are estimated to generate 69 additional pupils over the next ten years, most by 2024. On average, this is ten additional children per year.

Bearing in mind the long-term trend for an increased birth rate (as set out in OCC’s 2016 Pupil Place Plan), and assuming that the current slight decrease is a blip, even just looking at the Neighbourhood Plan’s current expected numbers of homes, the school could be faced with approximately 40 applications per year. This number cannot be accommodated in the current school, so either the

⁴ Source: SODC August 2017 ‘Housing Monitoring’ (see Annex B).

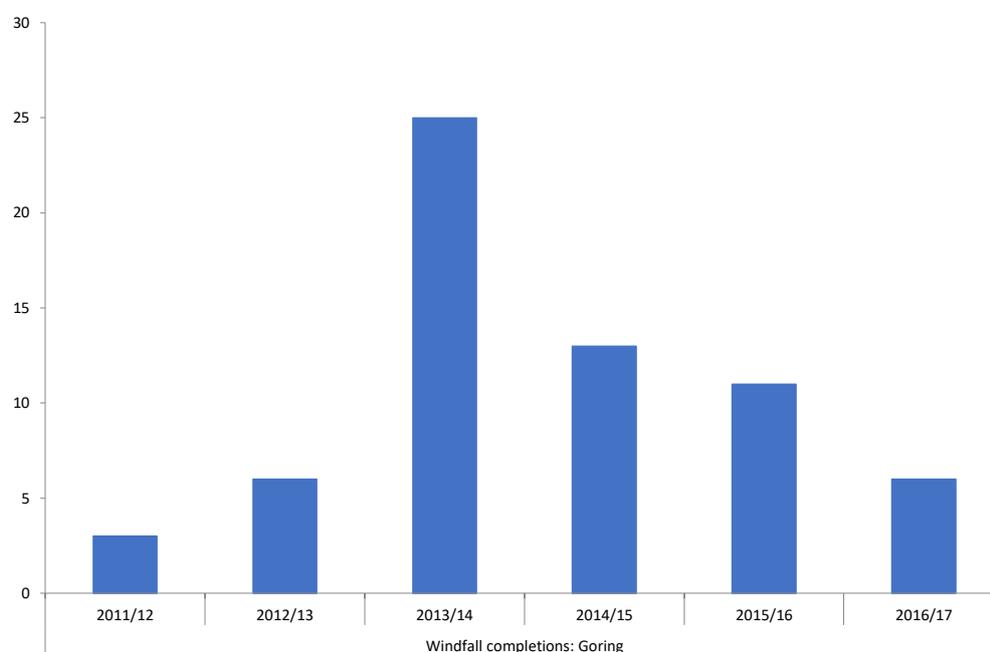
school would need to expand or the children would have to be bused to another village (assuming that there is spare capacity elsewhere).

We believe this realistic scenario from the emerging Neighbourhood Plan will place significant pressure on Goring Primary School. The school occupies a very constrained site that does not meet reasonable standards and no proper evaluation has, to our knowledge, taken place as to how that pressure could be satisfactorily accommodated. This is a serious consideration for this emerging Neighbourhood Plan, not an issue that can be deferred to some later date.

The windfall factor and a snapshot of current developments

As explained above, despite the forecast dip in birth rate, the school is in general terms over-subscribed and routinely turns down in-year applications, due in part to the migration of families into Goring. The governors and Diocese expect this trend to continue as housing developments come on stream and windfall/infill developments continue, with a notable pattern of properties selling parts of their plots for new houses, as well as smaller properties such as bungalows being demolished as they become available for sale and multiple dwellings being built in their place, as well as the redevelopment of out-dated commercial premises. The rate of windfall fluctuates but averages 10.66 dwellings per annum over the six years from 2011/12 to 2016/17.

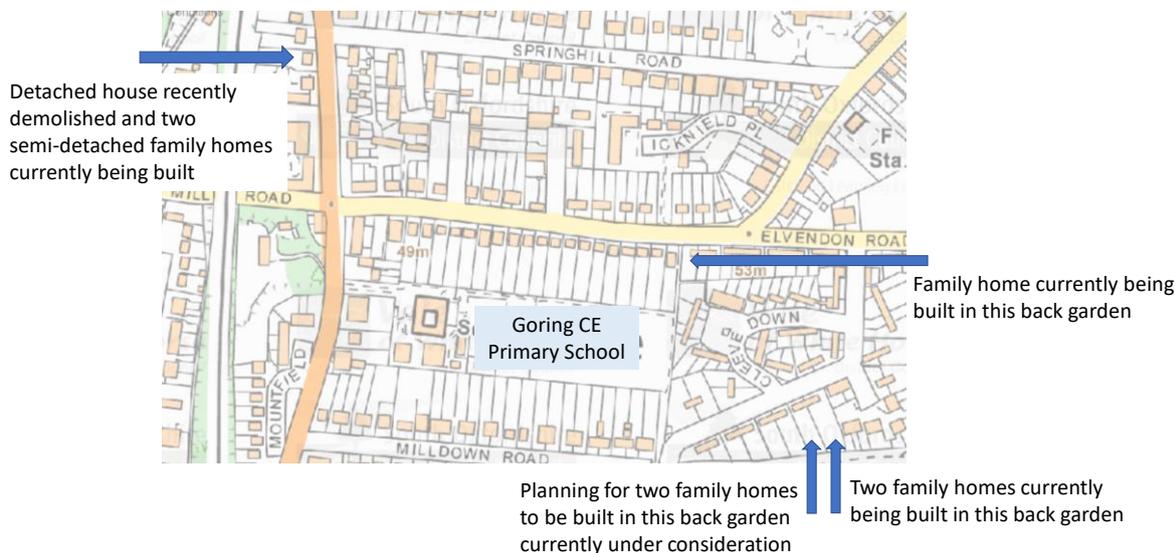
While the average 10.66 dwellings per year may continue, it will be noted that the scenarios presented above suggest a more modest windfall assumption of eight dwellings per annum over the next ten years. The chart below illustrates windfall completions in Goring between 2011/12 and 2016/17.



Source: SODC planning housing monitoring information (see Annex B).

Anticipated completions of dwellings during the current year (2017/18) are also high, with 20 dwellings committed/under construction.

The map below is a snapshot of developments within a few minutes' walk of school that are either in the process of being built or that are currently going through the planning process. Note that this chart represents a net increase of six family homes within a relatively small radius, assuming that planning is granted for the one outstanding application.



2. Infrastructure constraints

'OXFORDSHIRE COUNCILS NEED £9BN FOR INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT GROWTH

An independent report commissioned by Oxfordshire's six councils who make up the Oxfordshire Growth Board sets out the investment in transport, schools, hospitals and other infrastructure needed to support the predicted growth in population, jobs and homes to 2040 and beyond.'

Report to Goring Division Parish Councils August 2017 from Cllr Kevin Bulmer

Physical constraints

In terms of the physical constraints, even assuming a steady-state of pupil numbers (which the school governors do not see as realistic, despite a drop in the birth rate in the very short term), the current infrastructure is inadequate, and in some cases detrimental to outcomes. In addition to the inadequate size of the overall site (see the introduction), there are various other areas that present significant challenges. For example, the car park, kitchen, staff room, and office space all struggle to cope with current numbers on roll. The car park has been reduced in size to create safe pedestrian access, and there is inadequate turning space, meaning that vehicles reverse out onto the main road (a junction with limited visibility), with children crossing here to access the pedestrian path. Parents are not permitted to use the car park due to these space constraints, and there is no 'official' drop-off point, which, despite the school's efforts to discourage such behaviour, inevitably leads to inconsiderate and sometimes dangerous parking immediately by the school gates.

A related issue is the Wallingford Road itself. Traffic density and speeds in this location are such that the governors recently organised a campaign for new traffic-calming signage which will enforce a

20mph limit to coincide with drop-off and pick-up times. Clearly these signs will, to some extent, mitigate the risk once they are installed, but the fact remains that children are accessing school on a busy junction, with inadequate parking and drop-off facilities. (It is also worth noting here that some of the funds raised for the traffic-calming signage came from the PTA in order to make up a shortfall. PTA money should be used to enhance the school provision for the children, not to make the walk to school safer.)

A further example of how the ageing infrastructure is affecting the children's wellbeing relates to the school kitchen. Since early 2017 the school has been due a refurbishment of its kitchen by Carillion, although this has fallen through on at least two occasions, despite the school being informed that the funding was in place. In early July an inspection of the kitchen led to it being 'condemned' due to the emissions from an extractor which is around 50 years old. For the remainder of the summer term there was no hot food available, and despite ongoing efforts on the part of the school to resolve this with the Diocese and the education authority, as of late-August progress has been very slow. Inevitably the kitchen will be out of use when term starts in September. Despite Goring being an affluent village, many of our families rely on the provision of free (hot) school meals, and are therefore being placed at a disadvantage directly because of the condition of the facilities.

Age and condition of school in the context of educational outcomes

While OCC has no responsibility for the upkeep of the building, there is evidence of a close relationship between the physical environment and how well students and teachers perform – and therefore of educational outcomes. There are links with health, as well as financial outcomes – the following is from a government case study of a school which invested in a modern lighting system.

The school also has to consider the impact that old lighting has on the children's learning environment. Dating back to 1958, replacing flickering and broken fluorescent tubes is getting more difficult and requires considerable staff time. Old-fashioned lighting can also negatively impact on children's and staff health. High energy bills ultimately use up finances that could be better spent on ICT equipment or new text books.

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/school-lights-up-efficiency-savings-with-capital-investment>

The educational and welfare benefits of operating in a modern, efficient and attractive school environment have been borne out by Margaret Kunzer, Headteacher of St Edburg's CE Primary School in Bicester, who has stated that: 'the new school has had such a positive impact on the children and staff. The children love being in this environment – it has raised their expectations and their sense of worth.' While the school governors are proud of the academic standards and provision of education at Goring Primary School, we consider this to be an achievement made *in spite of our environment*, not one made as a result of it.

The many infrastructure issues faced by the school – including those highlighted above – will not be addressed by the option of expanding onto the Bourdillon recreation ground (see below).

3. Financial inefficiency

The Department for Education is expecting schools to balance their increasingly constrained budgets through efficiencies. This requires extremely careful allocation of resources and forward-planning. In March 2017 Goring Primary had to undertake emergency remedial work to remove materials containing asbestos in a number of locations around the school. While the bulk of this expense was covered by LCVAP (ultimately from the public purse), the school had to find more than £1,600 for its 10% contribution. Expenses relating specifically to the age of the building arise on a routine basis and, for a school which already receives a low level of per-pupil funding, inevitably have an impact on the level of resources which directly benefit the provision of education. Money spent on asbestos removal is money not spent on learning resources or extra teaching support for our SEN pupils. By being compelled to spend money on the building in this way the governors are not fulfilling their duty to provide value for money and maximise outcomes for children. Moreover, these costs tend to arise in an ad hoc manner and are typically not planned for, which makes long-term, efficient resource allocation particularly difficult.⁵ The table below sets out the costs which have arisen since April 2016 as a result of the constraints/limitations of the site and the condition of the building (note that these costs do not include general maintenance expenditure). Amounting to almost £21,000, expenses such as these do not represent an efficient use of financial resources.

Asbestos removal	£1,653
Swimming pool pump repair	£132
Leaking toilet	£319
Electrical repairs	£1,912
Boiler repairs	£5,115
Drain repair	£150
Upgrade security system	£5,700
Intercom repair	£144
Fire and security alarm repairs	£479
Replace Security Fencing	£5,350

4. Why the Bourdillon option won't work

While no clear proposal has been presented, it has been suggested that the school expand onto the Bourdillon recreation ground to the rear of the site. Notwithstanding the £1 million repairs required to the existing buildings, the level of additional children under the emerging Neighbourhood Plan scenario could not be accommodated satisfactorily on the current site even with the addition of land from the Bourdillon recreation ground. Moreover, given the past cancellation of building projects due to funding issues we would be extremely sceptical of any expansion plan that involved substantial solid building work and would consider it very poor use of money given the fundamental problems of

⁵ It is also worth noting here the National Audit Office's claim that 'repairing all school buildings to a satisfactory standard will cost an estimated £6.7bn' (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-39043733>). Again, while the upkeep of Goring Primary School is the responsibility of the Diocese, rejecting a proposal to build a new school at nil cost to the public purse would seem counterintuitive in this climate.

the site. If OCC's case for accommodating more children depends on temporary classroom expansion at the current site we urge that a survey is arranged as soon as possible to confirm whether this is actually possible. The most accessible space for temporary classrooms has already been used and this severely restricts access to the rest of the site for the potential placing of additional units.

The school currently operates with two temporary classrooms to accommodate the 2012/13 bulge years, and these bring their own challenges:

- The greater the physical distance between classrooms the less sense there is of school community.
- The temporary classrooms are not of the same quality that would be expected of new solid buildings. Windows have already failed, for example.
- In an emergency it takes longer to visit all classrooms to update teachers. This was evidenced in January 2016 when the school had to be evacuated due to a substation fire on the school site (see also point below regarding lock-down situations).
- In the long run the more separate buildings on the site, the greater the maintenance expense and management.
- These are temporary buildings with a limited lifespan, and periodically require planning permission to be granted in order to remain in situ.

Expanding onto the Bourdillon recreation ground has been mooted as an alternative solution to addressing the school's capacity constraints. However, not only has there never been a formal offer of this from the Parish Council, or any discussion of how it would work from a logistical point of view (eg, what happens to neighbouring houses which have direct access onto the field), this option presents several major flaws:

- **The existing infrastructure challenges would only be exacerbated** – the school would continue to operate with its current facilities (dining hall, kitchen, car park, etc.), which are already compromised and in need of investment.
- **Security** – Goring Primary School is already spending significant money on improving its site security, which is compromised by the layout and piecemeal nature of the school. This will again be exacerbated on a larger site which will be a collection of separate buildings and classrooms, the older of which are less secure by virtue of their construction and current condition. The security issue has implications for both the building and resources and – more importantly – safeguarding and child protection. A lock-down system in a modern school which is contained in one building is inevitably more effective than one which must be applied to a disparate collection of buildings.
- **Access** – there is no vehicular access to the Bourdillon field, which has implications for the existing school car park, emergency services, and the practicalities of craning new classrooms in over the top of the existing school buildings (the current temporary classrooms are situated at the sides of site adjacent to the main building and block vehicle access to the rear).
- **Funding** – who would pay for such an expansion? And is putting temporary classrooms alongside an already rundown school an optimal solution from an education point of view?
- **Loss of recreation ground/open space** – reducing available public open space is contrary to good practice, and instead there should be improvement and investment in such open spaces, with the increasing number of houses being built (irrespective of what the Neighbourhood Plan proposes).

A 2017 SODC report on open space identifies Goring as below standard in terms of open space provision, so reducing such facilities would be a negative step.⁶

5. Benefits to OCC of a new school

Local authority support of this school package would bring benefits to OCC, including the following:

- a flagship primary school, potentially creating additional places at no cost to OCC;
- the ability to accommodate bulge years when these occur, without resulting in the overcrowding and other challenges arising from the temporary classroom ‘solution’ currently employed at Goring Primary School;
- the ability to take the step to full 1.5-form entry at such time as this is deemed to be warranted;
- a strong and positive relationship between Goring Primary School and OCC – for example, in discussions about future increases in PAN – and working in partnership to meet the need for pupil places without threatening smaller local schools;
- additional public facilities – the school would be designed so the community could make maximum use of its facilities. In the short term the shell space would be available for community use seven days a week;
- a great example of public/private partnership and a Neighbourhood Plan delivering outstanding public facilities.

Summary and conclusion

Two potential scenarios have been considered alongside the implications of windfall numbers and housing commitments. Both result in more pupils than the school can accommodate in its current buildings and site.

We consider that the severe limitations of the existing school site and pressures resulting from further development (even in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan scenario) are demonstrable. It therefore follows that the Plan should look now at all reasonable solutions, including the option for a new school cross-funded by a necessary, but restricted, amount of new development.

Whichever scenario plays out, significant additional pupil places and classroom accommodation will need to be found. It is our belief that any attempt at expansion on the current site would result in an unsatisfactory arrangement and would represent an inefficient use of public funds and poor value for money.

The new school development package (Scenario A), supported by other information submitted to the Neighbourhood Plan Group and OCC in June 2017, demonstrates that the proposals are well thought through, and that a new school is both needed by the village and warranted by the level of development envisaged.

⁶ ‘Sports Facilities, Local Leisure Facilities and Playing Pitch Study: Final report Part 5: Open Spaces Strategy January 2017’, available at <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/evidence-studies>.

The proposal to construct the school as a 1-form entry, but with a 'shell' capacity to increase to 1.5-form entry when the time is right, is well considered and offers flexibility to respond to changing circumstances. It would be proportionate to the challenges faced by the existing school and the wider village in terms of development.

We believe that there is a very strong education case for a new school, and finding an appropriate long-term solution to the school challenges is directly relevant to this Neighbourhood Plan. If the Neighbourhood Plan embraces the new school proposition the village would have a legacy it can be proud of and Goring would become a more sustainable village, looking to the future.

Annex A: Pupil generation

Primary school pupil generation assessment per annum

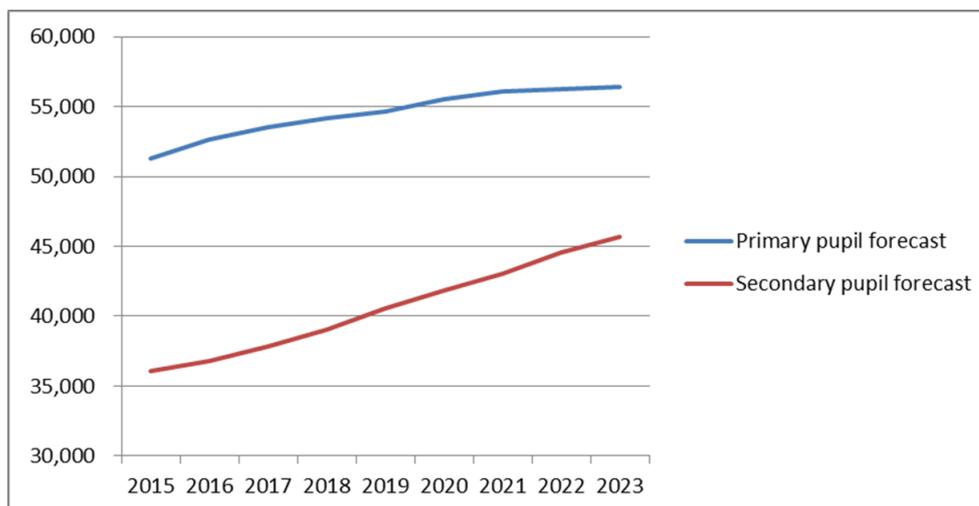
	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4+ Bed	Total
'SHMA' mix %age	6	27	43	24	
Dwellings under Scenario A	16	74	118	66	274
Dwellings under Scenario B	12	54	86	48	200
Primary generation rate	0	0.20	0.39	0.51	
Primary pupils under Scenario A	0	14.8	46.02	33.66	94.48*
Primary pupils under Scenario B		10.8	33.54	24.48	68.82**

* On the basis of 7 school years this represents 13–14 children per school year.

** On the basis of 7 school years this represents 9-10 children per school year.

OCC's 2016 Pupil Place Plan states that:

Our current pupil projections show an 8.6% increase in primary pupil numbers, and for secondary school pupils a 14.6% predicted rise, between 2015/16 and 2020/21. However, there is a significant amount of planned/proposed housing which is not yet included in these forecasts, so actual growth is expected to be higher.



The chart shows how the latest dip in birth rate for the 2018 reception cohort does not represent a long-term trend, and there is therefore a strong argument for looking at the bigger picture when considering this proposal.

Annex B: Housing monitoring information from SODC (provided August 2017)

See separate Excel document