

Cheltenham frequently asked questions FAQs

How are pupil forecasts created?

We combine existing pupil numbers with new birth, pre-school data and with future planned housing across the county.

This then gets broken down into school planning areas and forecast into individual school year groups. It also takes into account historical patterns of parental preferences to establish what the level of demand is likely to be at each school.

What are the forecasts telling us about Cheltenham?

Since 2007 there has been an increase in birth rates which has, in part, resulted in the sustained growth in demand for school places.

This has placed high demand for places within primary schools. The council has managed this demand by working collaboratively with schools to provide additional capacity across those areas in Cheltenham where needed. However, this demand will inevitably move through to the secondary sector.

Current forecasts show that, if nothing is done, all secondary schools in Cheltenham would be full in year 7 by 2019/2020, with 154 children without places, equivalent to 6 forms of entry. By 2021/2022 this will have increased to 213 children without places each year, equivalent to 8 forms of entry.

What secondary provision is there currently?

There are five secondary schools in the Cheltenham Education Planning Area:

- All Saints Academy (11-18)
- Balcarras Academy (11-18)
- Cheltenham Bournside Academy (11-18)
- Pittville School (11-16)
- Pates Grammar School (11-18)

Why has demand for school places risen?

There are a few factors which contribute, but put simply, there are more people living in the town and more children being born to local families.

With more housing being built around the town too, this means there is extra need for school places which can't currently be met. This is particularly an issue in the south of Cheltenham.

What has been done so far to increase the number of places available?

To help meet the increased need we've worked with existing schools in Cheltenham to plan for the growing number of children.

By firstly using up surplus capacity and then adding new places to existing local schools we've been able to meet the increased demand to date.

Why can't this gradual expansion continue?

It's just not possible to continue to expand local schools for a number of reasons:

- Site capacity
- Existing size of school
- Popularity of school and parental preference.
- Location in relation to demand
- Impact on school standards

Isn't there already a school being built in the north west of Cheltenham?

There are new primary and secondary schools planned as part of the strategic developments in North West Cheltenham to meet the new local demand from these specific developments.

We've taken this into account when considering the need across Cheltenham.

Isn't it true that pupils travel from across Cheltenham to the primary schools which are under most pressure in the south? So therefore the demand for additional places is not necessarily in the southern part of Cheltenham?

No. The primary schools which are oversubscribed and experiencing the most pressure are situated in the southern area of Cheltenham. 93% of pupils attending these schools live less than 2 miles away.

If primary schools are oversubscribed are there no plans for a new primary school?

There is a need to provide additional primary provision in the central/southern area of Cheltenham. We are currently exploring a number of options as to how we can accommodate this within our existing schools.

Do you have a site for the school already planned?

Working with planners at Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Borough Council, the county council has earmarked land off Kidnappers Lane in Leckhampton as the preferred location for a new school. The land has long been identified by developers for housing.

How will the roads cope with a new school?

Any school development will require planning consent. As part of this process Gloucestershire Highways will be consulted and any appropriate measures will be taken to address traffic issues. Proposals would look at encouraging a range of options to enable pupils to get to school without having to rely on the car.

When will we know more about what the school might look like and where it will be located?

The council, and any potential sponsors, will be actively encouraging the local community to take part in establishing the new school wherever it is located. This will include a series of consultation events to get views on proposals put forward by prospective sponsors.

We will also make sure that interested parties are kept informed of developments through a dedicated webpage, local media and community leaders/elected representatives.

When will we need the additional places?

Additional places are required from 2019 and it is expected that the new school will be fully operational by 2021, with a phased opening.

In the meantime, Gloucestershire County Council is exploring a range of options for providing the additional capacity, including opening the school on a temporary site.

Final decisions with regards to this will be made once a sponsor has been appointed in July/August 2018. Information regarding school place options for September 2019 will be available for parents from September 2018.

Will the new school have a sixth form?

No decision has yet been taken as to whether the new school will have a sixth form; however, the Council remains open to the idea. The Council will be undertaking a review of sixth provision in Cheltenham and will consider the need for additional post 16 provision once an approved Sponsor Trust has been confirmed for the new school.