



Primary School Places

New schools and classrooms

More than 11,000 new primary school classrooms needed by 2024

- **336,000 extra primary school pupils forecast by 2024**
- **London, South of England and Northern Powerhouse cities will see biggest increase**
- **A new school will need to be created every two days to meet the shortfall**

New research from Scape Group reveals that local authorities need to build the equivalent of 11,200 classrooms and as many as 1,600 new primary schools in the next 9 years, to meet the needs of Britain's growing primary population.

With the number of primary school pupils in England expected to rise from **4,376,000 in 2015** to **4,658,000 in 2019**, local authorities face a fierce challenge against a landscape of tight budget constraints.¹ The numbers demonstrate the challenge facing local authorities, who need to make big increases in capacity to house the extra pupils within just four years. By 2024 this will have risen to 4,712,000, a rise of 336,000 (8%) on 2015.

The annual rate of increase in pupil numbers is set to peak in 2016 at 2.6% - meaning commissioners need to act now to meet the rising demand. Pupil numbers are expected to stabilise by 2024, but, as Table 1 shows, the total rise could be as high as 680,000 in 2024 if fertility rates and migration numbers are higher than currently predicted. The government's 2011 forecasts for births and pupil numbers proved to be much lower than the actual birth rate in subsequent years.²

¹ Department of Education, National Pupil Projections, July 2015.

² www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-21785796

Primary School Places

Table 1 - Projected pupil numbers³

Year	2015	2019	2024	2024 (Higher than expected fertility and migration)
Primary school pupils	4,376,000	4,658,000	4,712,000	5,055,976
% increase on 2015	n/a	6%	8%	16% (15.55%)
Extra school places required	n/a	282,000	336,000	680,000

London will see biggest growth (See Table 2)

London's boroughs will see the biggest increases in the primary population, with the number of pupils set to increase by 146,000 between 2015 and 2020⁴ – and accounting for a quarter of extra pupils nationally. London therefore needs to create 78,275 new primary school places before 2020 - the equivalent of 2,600 extra 30-pupil classrooms.

Newham, Harrow, Greenwich, and Barking and Dagenham are all set to see rises of more than 25% between 2014 and 2019. The London Borough of Newham will need the highest number of new classrooms, 285 by 2019, to meet the schools place crisis.

New schools for the Northern Powerhouse (See Table 3)

Other major cities in the north will also see significant growth in primary pupil numbers, with Manchester set to see a 26% rise in its primary population by 2019 – the equivalent of 370 new classrooms or 53 single entry schools. Leeds meanwhile will need to provide an extra 309 classrooms or as many as 44 new schools.

³ Department of Education, National Pupil Projections, July 2015.

⁴ London Councils, 'Do the Maths' report, September 2015.

Primary School Places

South of England (See Table 3)

The South of England will also see big increases in their primary populations, with the City of Bristol likely to need 246 classrooms to provide space for an extra 7,384 pupils.

Outside of the major cities, Bedfordshire and Berkshire will see the biggest growth. In Berkshire, Reading will see the biggest proportionate increase in primary pupils – a 34% rise over five years. Bracknell Forest will see an increase of 23%, which is the equivalent of 74 extra classrooms or 11 extra schools and neighbouring Slough will also see an increase of 18%.

Building new schools and classrooms

With up to 1,600 new buildings and thousands of school extensions required by 2019, both the construction industry and the public sector need to do more to address the growing primary population, and work better together to address the school place challenge. Innovation, collaboration, and new technologies are all required to deliver the extra capacity, at a time of spending restraint across the public sector.

Offsite technology and predesigned buildings are two potential solutions to the growing need for extra classroom space and new schools. Economies of scale and advances in design have made it possible to add high-quality permanent school extensions or create entire new schools in record time, and at a significantly lower cost to that of a bespoke design. 'Sunesis', a joint venture between Scape Group and major UK contractor Willmott Dixon, provides entirely pre-designed and customisable schools, which can house between 200 and 600 primary school pupils.

In their September 2015 report 'Do the Maths', London Council estimated that the cost of building a new primary school in 2017/2018 will be £21,524 per place, while the Department of Education will be providing just £14,954 per place, leaving local councils to fill the gap.⁵

⁵ London Councils, 'Do the Maths' report, September 2015.

Primary School Places

A new Sunesis school, however, would be up to 30% cheaper than a conventional scheme, costing an average of £11,063 per pupil place.

Scape Design's 'Connect' meanwhile provides a mix of solutions ranging from classroom extensions, through to full schools, with costs starting from £1,930 - £4,916 per pupil place.

Both Connect and Sunesis can be completed more rapidly than a traditional build, and commissioners looking to quickly deliver new or extended primary schools are rapidly turning to this technology.



Bedford Borough Council sought the help of the Scape Procure frameworks and Scape Design in 2011, at a time when £326million of 'Building Schools for the Future' funding was withdrawn from the council but the population of Bedford was increasing by approximately 1,000 people per year and anticipated to grow a further 8% by 2021.

Over the last four years 3,000 schools places have been created via the Scape Procure national frameworks, with another 3,000 in the pipeline. The cost to satisfy the demand for new places in Bedford was estimated to be £85million, however the available budget was £51million.

All schemes were delivered on time and to budget, saving Bedford Borough Council £34million.

Primary School Places

Peter Hansford, Government Chief Construction Adviser



“The challenges faced by Bedford Borough Council are by no means unique. With local council budgets under increasing pressure and more cuts on the horizon, approaches to procurement and classroom delivery need to be more creative.”

Scape’s approach with its experienced construction partners and innovative design solutions have secured significant savings, increased the capacity and quality of the teaching environments, but also delivered a range of wider benefits to the surrounding area. Replicating the approach pioneered in Bedford across the UK could be truly beneficial for local communities and enhance the quality of the education we are providing.”

Primary School Places

Simon Reid, Head of Scape Design



“It’s clear from our research that both the public and private sectors have a huge task on their hands.

Some constituencies will see an increase in pupil numbers of up to a third, and others will need to create hundreds of new classrooms in just a few years’ time.

Already parents struggle to get their children into their preferred schools and the crisis in school places will only increase if councils don’t act now to increase capacity. As the extra pupils at primary level move towards secondary school, there will be increasing pressure on local authorities to deliver extra secondary school buildings, which are much larger and require extra facilities.

As an industry we have a responsibility to get better at collaborating and innovating to meet the needs of the public sector and the communities we all live in – delivering extra capacity quickly and cost-effectively. New technologies will be an essential part of that.”

Primary School Places

Table 2 - London school places snapshot

Location	Number of primary school pupils 2013/2014	Number of primary school pupils forecast 2018/2019	% increase	Equivalent number of extra classrooms required	Equivalent number of extra 1 FE primary schools required
Greenwich	21,770	27,970	28%	207	30
Newham	31,944	40,494	27%	285	41
Harrow	19,345	24,540	27%	173	25
Barking and Dagenham	22,443	28,212	26%	192	27
Croydon	30,711	37,731	23%	232	33
Southwark	22,394	27,301	22%	164	23
Hounslow	20,654	25,044	21%	146	21
Redbridge	26,562	31,538	19%	166	24
Brent	25,139	30,004	19%	162	23
Hammersmith and Fulham	9,446	11,231	19%	60	9
Waltham Forest	23,350	27,515	18%	139	20
Barnet	27,566	32,126	17%	152	22
Tower Hamlets	22,434	26,187	17%	125	18
Islington	13,125	15,399	17%	76	11
Sutton	15,240	17,775	17%	85	12
Richmond upon Thames	15,045	17,578	17%	84	12
Enfield	30,124	34,802	16%	156	22
Havering	19,834	22,933	16%	103	15
Merton	15,927	18,530	16%	87	12
Hillingdon	25,478	29,381	15%	130	19
Lewisham	23,768	27,383	15%	121	17

Primary School Places

Table 3 – National school place snapshot

Location	Number of primary school pupils 2013/2014	Number of primary school pupils forecast 2018/2019	% increase	Equivalent number of extra classrooms required	Equivalent number of extra 1 FE primary schools required
Reading	11,475	15,352	34%	129	18
Manchester	42,449	53,556	26%	370	53
Bristol	31,860	39,244	23%	246	35
Bracknell Forest	9,438	11,646	23%	74	11
Central Bedfordshire	21,904	26,679	22%	159	23
Peterborough	18,409	22,544	22%	138	20
Tameside	18,959	22,413	18%	109	16
Slough	14,436	16,999	18%	85	12
Sandwell	29,274	34,133	17%	162	23
Milton Keynes	23,637	27,680	17%	135	19
Nottingham City	23,117	27,025	17%	130	19
Salford	19,046	22,315	17%	109	16
Thurrock	14,923	17,495	17%	86	12
Southampton	17,744	20,501	16%	92	13
Leeds	60,607	69,885	15%	309	44

Primary School Places

About Scape Group

Scape Group is a public sector owned built environment specialist offering a full suite of national frameworks and innovative design solutions. Scape frameworks are available to any public sector body. Currently over 500 organisations have access to these solutions.

Bringing together the strongest teams from the public and private sector, Scape's rapidly deployed, highly measurable and collaborative approach delivers value for money and quality buildings whilst stimulating local growth and community benefits.

Scape has helped deliver over 2,000 public sector projects over the last four years, with another 1,000 currently in progress.

For more information visit: www.scapegroup.co.uk

To review the full Bedford Borough Council report visit: www.scapegroup.co.uk/research