

**PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES – NORTH WEST ST ALBANS**

*Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families*

Author: Paul Wray

Tel: 01992 555860

Executive Member: Robert Gordon

Local Member(s): Roma Mills

**1. Purpose of report**

This report is to provide the Committee with information about primary school places in St Albans, particularly in the North West of the city. It has been requested by the local member Roma Mills. It relates specifically to the experience of a number of families seeking a reception place for their children for 2003/04.

**2. Summary**

The report considers the reasons for the greater number of reception places being sought compared with the number of places available for the academic year 2003/04. It describes the action taken to resolve the issue.

**3. Conclusion**

- There has been a constant monitoring of the match between supply and demand over the last few years.
- Because there were more applications than available places for reception in 2003/04 a decision was taken to provide an additional 15 places at Garden Fields (i.e. 60 instead of 45).
- Provision had been made within the forward capital programme to provide additional accommodation at Garden Fields when required.
- The school had been fully briefed. They have been hoping for the expansion for some time.

The Committee may wish to comment on the action taken as a result of the actual number of places requested exceeding the forecast figure.

## 4. Background

### 4.1 Current Primary School Numbers

Below is a table showing the current year group sizes in all primary years in St Albans (the schools are shown on the attached spreadsheet Appendix 1). There are 1232 places available each year.

	Y6	Y5	Y4	Y3	Y2	Y1	YR
Capacity 1232	1154	1149	1150	1131	1127	1189	1185
Spare places in each year group	78	83	82	101	105	43	47

## 5. Forecast

### 5.1

Year	April 01	April 02	April 03	April 04	April 05	April 06
Places Available	1232	1232	1232	(1247) 1232	1247	1247
Forecast	1107	1163	1156	1193	*	*
Actual	1127	1189	1185	1247	-	-

\* In the light of the higher than expected number of applications this year we will be revising the forecast for subsequent years.

5.2 The actual demand for reception places in St Albans for 2003/04 has been greater than the forecast figure and also greater than the number of available places. There are 1247 wanting the 1232 places at this stage in the process though it is possible that some will not take up the place they have been offered. The action taken in response is set out in section 6.

5.3 It is very regrettable that the actual demand has exceeded the estimate. Unfortunately there is always the possibility of some error when forecasting pupil numbers. This is because there are some factors which cannot be measured completely accurately such as:

- the margin of error in the General Practitioner (GP) data
- the numbers of children moving in to new housing and whether or not they have moved from within the local area
- the overall result of both inward and outward migration
- the take up rate particularly when it has not been possible to offer a place at the preferred school

## **6. North West St Albans**

- 6.1 The sub planning area which includes Garden Fields and Margaret Wix Primary schools shows some spare capacity but because there is no room for any expansion at schools nearer the centre of the City it had been agreed 2 years ago that when necessary Garden Fields should be expanded from 1½ to 2 FE i.e. from 45 to 60 places per year group.
- 6.2 There was money set aside in the Capital programme to expand Garden Fields and feasibility work was completed some time ago.
- 6.3 The decision has therefore been taken to provide an additional 15 places at Garden Fields school for the 2003/04 intake to provide for the greater demand for places in the City.

## **7. Admissions process for reception places 2003/04**

- 7.1 The process of allocating primary school places is proceeding as this report is being written and letters have been sent to the parents of the children on the continuing interest list. It is anticipated that a number of parents will be satisfied with the place which has now been offered.
- 7.2 The situation is likely to change over the next few weeks as some parents decide to opt for the private sector particularly if it has not been possible to offer them their first preference school. This will create some spare capacity which will be available for pupils moving into the area during the course of the year. However, it is anticipated that there will continue to be a very close match between supply and demand.

## **8. Future Housing Developments**

- 8.1 Across the City there have been a number of new housing developments in recent years particularly on the former Hill End and Cell Barnes hospital sites. These developments have been completed for four/five years but it is only now that school age children are beginning to emerge. We have been monitoring the situation closely and this is now the first year when all the schools are full in the reception year.
- 8.2 In due course a proposal will be brought forward to use developers money (Section 106 funding) to increase capacity on the eastern side of the City. This will provide some more places for 2004/05 and beyond.

**9. Financial Implications**

- 9.1 The required capital expenditure is within the County Council's approved capital programme.
- 9.2 There are no revenue implications.

Sch No.	School Name	Capacity	Yr 6 age 10+	Yr 5 9+	Yr 4 8+	Yr 3 7+	Yr 2 6+	Yr 1 5+	Yr R
413	St Alban & St Stephen RC	60	49	60	44	50	0	0	0
416	Spencer Junior	60	50	47	49	31	0	0	0
417	Bernard's Heath Infant	0	0	0	0	0	50	58	51
418	Camp Primary and Nursery	30	9	21	21	21	14	22	29
420	Fleetville JM	90	94	87	91	89	0	0	0
421	Fleetville Infant	0	0	0	0	0	74	88	90
422	Garden Fields JMI	45	48	49	44	44	45	45	45
423	Aboyne Lodge	30	30	31	31	30	30	30	30
424	Park Street C of E VA	30	29	27	34	33	19	30	30
425	St Michael's C of E VA	22	20	23	20	17	22	22	22
426	St Peter's	30	29	28	33	29	29	30	30
427	Abbey C of E VA	30	33	32	33	34	34	30	30
428	St Alban & St Stephen RC Inf	0	0	0	0	0	61	58	60
429	Mandeville Primary	30	16	20	15	26	16	33	20
431	Margaret Wix Primary	34	31	21	27	27	27	17	34
433	St Adrian's RC Primary	30	32	24	32	26	29	30	31
434	Oakwood Primary	38	38	38	36	40	39	39	38
435	Windermere JMI	30	24	18	22	17	29	29	30
436	Cunningham Hill JM	60	65	59	52	56	0	0	0
437	Cunningham Hill Infant	0	0	0	0	0	56	60	60
438	Maple	30	31	31	29	31	30	30	30
440	Prae Wood Primary	30	30	23	28	29	26	30	30
452	London Colney JMI	30	24	26	23	22	22	20	17
453	Bowmansgreen Primary	52	46	49	60	55	60	49	42
454	Colney Heath JMI	30	28	30	30	26	28	30	30
457	Mount Pleasant Lane JMI	45	43	49	47	40	47	45	44
458	Sandridge	21	14	13	15	19	18	23	17
460	Killigrew Junior	60	66	60	65	64	0	0	0
461	Killigrew Infant & Nursery	0	0	0	0	0	62	58	60
462	Skyswood Primary	30	31	31	30	29	28	30	30
463	Wheatfields JM	90	99	98	87	88	0	0	0
464	Wheatfields Infants'	0	0	0	0	1	89	90	91
465	St John Fisher RC JMI	30	30	30	28	31	28	30	29
466	How Wood Primary	30	26	30	22	28	25	27	30
467	St Bernadette RC Primary	30	30	30	30	29	29	30	30
606	Clore Shalom	30	18	25	29	28	28	30	30
611	Shenley	45	41	39	43	41	33	46	45
	<b>St Albans TOTAL</b>	<b>1232</b>	<b>1154</b>	<b>1149</b>	<b>1150</b>	<b>1131</b>	<b>1127</b>	<b>1189</b>	<b>1185</b>