

# **Tower Hamlets LA Report on the Latest School Roll Projections**

**November 2023**

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## 1. Executive Summary

This latest Tower Hamlets report on school roll projections highlights further growth in the surplus of primary school places across the borough, with five out of the six planning areas now projected to see a decline in pupil numbers over the next five years and some with capacity in excess of 20%. This continuing decline in the pupil population will inevitably present a challenge for school sustainability in the primary sector over the next planning period.

Current projections suggest that the demand for secondary places will peak in 2023/24 before experiencing a slight decline over the subsequent years, resulting in surplus capacity above 10% by 2027/28. The main reason for the fall in secondary numbers is the smaller primary cohorts that will transition into the secondary phase over the next decade.

This latest report is based on the 2023 round of Greater London Authority (GLA) pupil projections for Tower Hamlets. It shows that the overall borough primary and secondary school roll projections continue to be very accurate. The borough pupil projections, both for 2021/22 and 2022/23, were very close to actual numbers, at 99.7% and 99.5% accuracy respectively. However, variances do appear at the individual primary planning area level.

In 2021 we saw a significant increase in the borough's birth rate for the first time since 2014. However, this has not been sustained and they have now fallen back in line with the previous long-term trend of decreasing live births. GLA data indicates that birth rates in Tower Hamlets and across London are projected to continue to fall, mirroring the national trend. It is also evident that, despite the significant housing growth in the various parts of the borough, these new dwellings are not yet yielding the volume of children seen in the previous two decades.

In recent years there was a marked difference between the projected numbers in the primary planning areas west of the borough, which experienced larger surpluses, compared to the planning areas in the east. This distinction between the east and west of the borough is no longer evident, as falling reception year numbers are now affecting most of the primary planning areas. The exception being the Isle of Dogs, which is forecasted to have negligible growth over the next five years.

As the LA and schools seek to reduce surplus capacity in the primary sector, the council will review the number of future new school development sites as well as consider adjusting the capacity of existing schools to mitigate the impact of falling rolls. These form part of several actions the LA will be taking as it works with the borough's school leadership in implementing the contingency measures set out in the Tower Hamlets School Organisation and Capital Investment Strategy.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this report on school roll projections is to provide the latest position on the supply of school places in Tower Hamlets, by looking at recent pupil population trends, as well as projected future demand. It is the LA's responsibility to ensure that there are sufficient and sustainable school places for all borough resident children of statutory school age.

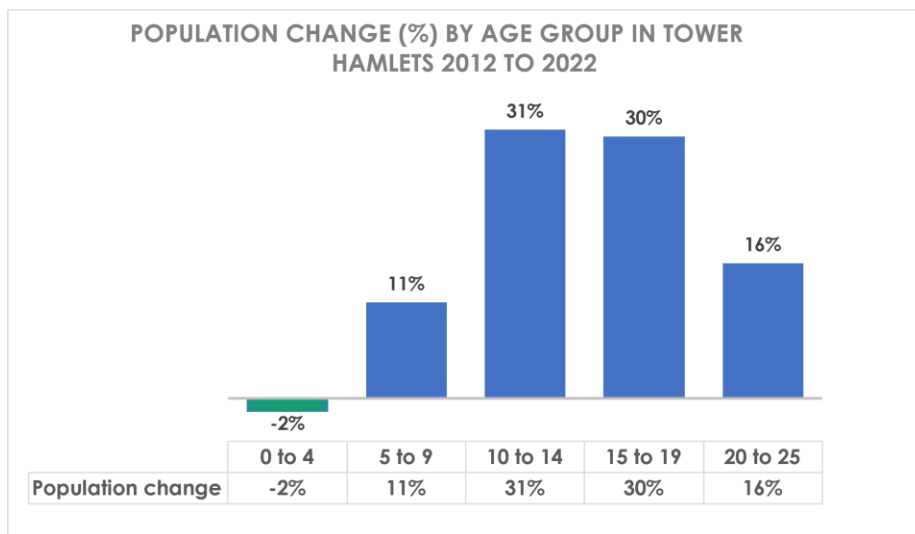
In order to inform the LA's school place planning annual assessment, the continuous monitoring and analysis of pupil population data and trends is required. This report therefore investigates issues and identifies current and future challenges.

The report has been prepared by the Tower Hamlets' Education Service using projections data provided by the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Office of National Statistics (ONS). The anticipated numbers covered in this report are projections – they are the numbers mathematically calculated based on clearly stated theories. This is different from forecasts, where outcomes are based on what you assume will actually happen in the future, given certain conditions, local knowledge, plans and intentions.

## 3. Background

The demand for school places is driven by birth rates, pupil population growth, migration levels and housing development. Tower Hamlets saw the biggest general population increase in England between 2012 and 2022, where its population grew by approximately 25%, compared to 6.4% for England as a whole over the same period. However, for the 0-4 age group, there has been a 2% decrease, as can be seen from Figure 1 below, so despite the substantial rise in the general population, the growth has not occurred in the pre-school population.

**Fig. 1. Population change by age group, Tower Hamlets, 2012 – 2022 (ONS)**



The primary pupil numbers in Tower Hamlets have been on the decline since 2019, and this downward trajectory is anticipated to continue, mirroring the ONS projection of a 11.6 % decline in the total UK primary school population by 2028. In 2022/23, the total number of primary school children in Tower Hamlets dipped below 23,000 for the first time since 2009/10.

The decline in primary pupil numbers can be attributed to diminishing birth rates, coupled with the net outflow of primary-aged pupils from the borough. Further causes are related to Brexit and other migration factors, smaller pupil yields from the new housing within Tower Hamlets, the Covid pandemic, and the displacement of some sections of the local population through the impact of the welfare reforms.

Tower Hamlets has experienced an 8.8% increase in its secondary school population over the past seven years, rising from 13,820 in 2016/17 to 15,038 in 2022/23. However the year on year increases to the Year 7 cohort size is projected to peak in 2023/24 at 3,059, before the reduced primary numbers start to transition into the secondary phase. Secondary numbers are therefore likely to reduce in the future, despite the positive net migration in the borough's 10-15 year old age range.

#### 4. Projection Methodology and Planning Areas

Tower Hamlets commissions school roll projections from the Greater London Authority (GLA), along with most London boroughs. The GLA has access to data on all pupils in London (via the National Pupil Database), which enables it to model movements across borough boundaries in a way that would be difficult for an individual local authority. Projections are run each year by the GLA, using information based on demographic trends (e.g. births, migration); the borough's housing development trajectory; school census data; and the flow of pupils from their ward of residence (including those out of borough) to each school.

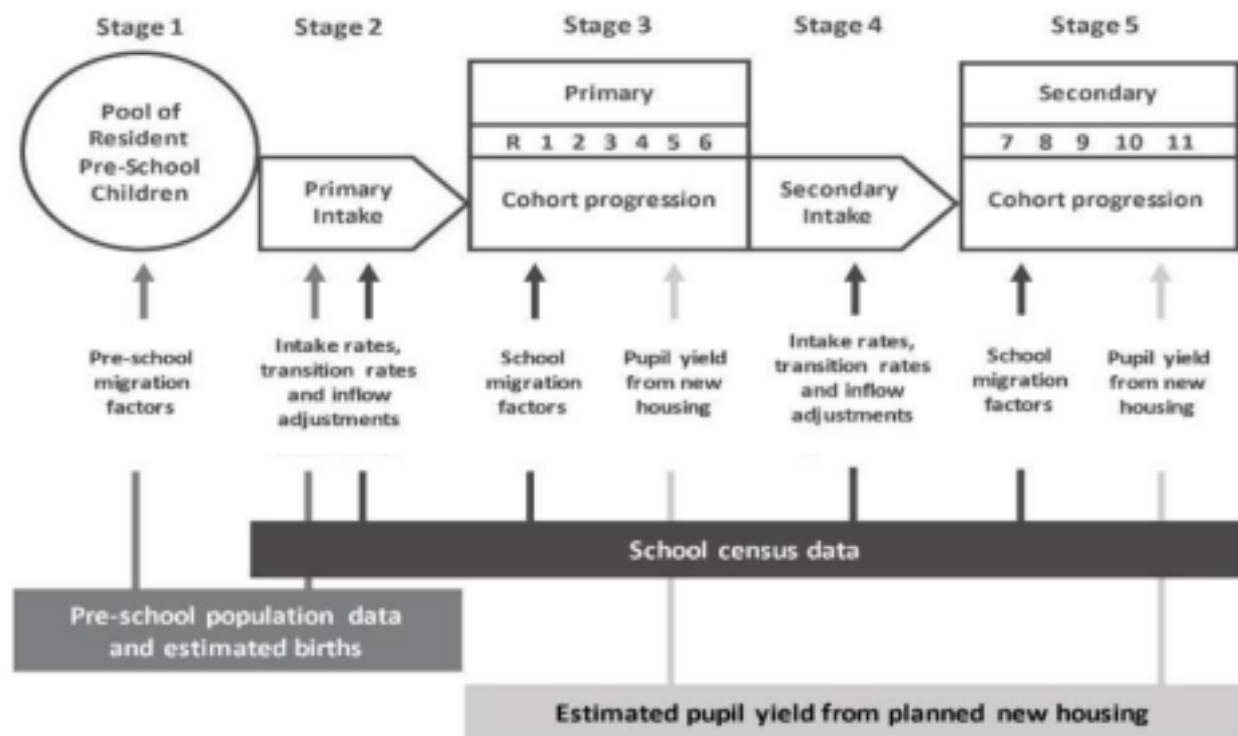
The GLA's population projections now estimate the number of pupils in each borough ward by taking the average of the previous years' patterns. This change to the methodology explains the variances at individual Planning Area level.

The proportion of the children attending each mainstream state school is calculated, using the National Curriculum year (R to year 11), and sex, per ward of residence in London. These proportions are carried forward as the pupils age through the school in the years being projected.

For new pupils entering a school in future years, for example at reception year, proportions are calculated as averages over the latest years of actuals, with 4 being the standard number of years used (2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023). The same approach is used at years 7 and 12, even if the school is an all through school as it is assumed that there will be significant changes in the cohort at this point.

The rolled forward and calculated new intake proportions for future years are applied to the population projections to give projections of the number of children on roll by school by age and sex. Due to lower retention rates, 6th Form projections are calculated using a survival ratio as the cohort ages through 6<sup>th</sup> Form. School level projections are then aggregated to planning areas and borough totals.

**Fig. 2. The flow of the Tower Hamlets Projections Model**



#### 4.1. Primary Planning Areas

Tower Hamlets is divided into six planning areas for primary schools. A map showing the planning areas and the list of schools in each is provided as Appendix 1.

**Table 1. Primary school roll projections are split into the six Planning (catchment) Areas**

Primary School Planning (Catchment) Areas					
PA1	PA2	PA3	PA4	PA5	PA6
Stepney	Bow	Poplar	Isle of Dogs	Wapping	Bethnal Green

**NB.** Both Bonner Primary Schools are in PA1 for planning purposes.

#### 4.2. Secondary Planning Areas

Secondary school roll projections are calculated on a borough-wide basis as the intakes for individual schools often extend beyond a planning area, with pupils travelling to schools across and outside the borough. A map showing the location of all the borough's secondary schools is provided as Appendix 2.

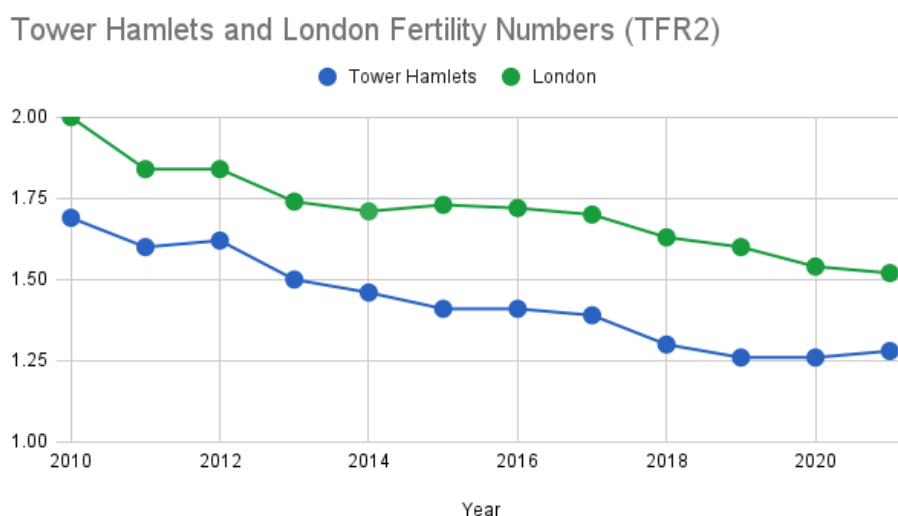
## 5. Fertility, Birth Rates and Reception Take Up

The starting point for the pupil projection model is capturing the number of births, and the cohort 'survival rate' for children starting in the reception year four years later.

### 5.1. Fertility and Birth Rates

The fertility rate for Tower Hamlets and across London saw a steady decline between 2010 - 2020.

**Fig. 3. Historical Fertility Rates (GLA)**



The number of live births in Tower Hamlets has fallen by 481 (10%) in the ten year period from 2013 (**Error! Reference source not found.** below). London birth rates fell at a similar rate over the same period. Despite a brief revival in 2021, Tower Hamlets births rates fell again, substantially, in 2022.

**Table 2. LBTH Births Actual Births 2013 to 2022 (ONS)**

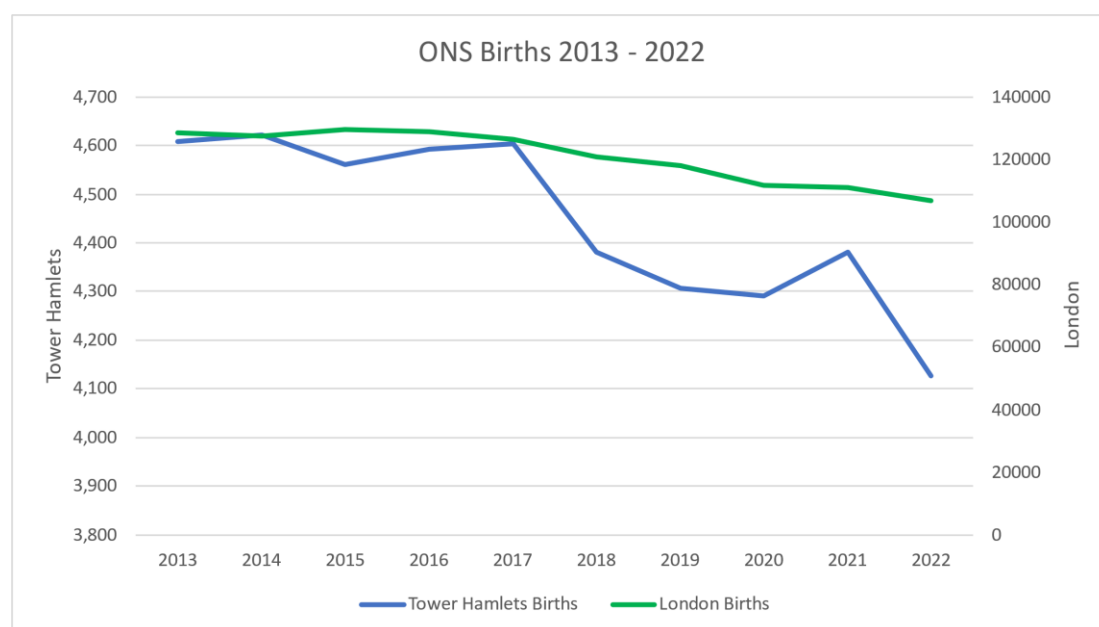
Area	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 <sup>1</sup>
LBTH	4,608	4,622	4,560	4,592	4,604	4,381	4,307	4,291	4,381	<b>4,127</b>
London	128,332	127,399	129,615	128,803	126,308	120,673	117,897	111,688	110,961	<b>106,696</b>

1

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths/datasets/birthsummarytables/2022/birthsummary2022workbook.xlsx>



**Fig. 4. Actual Births (ONS)**



The GLA previously projected 4,115 Tower Hamlets births in 2022, which is not far off the actual number of 4,127. The GLA projects that the Tower Hamlets birth rate will fall below 4100 and remain at around this level over the next five-year period (2023-2027), following a similar pattern to the rest of London. Tower Hamlets and London births are then projected to steadily increase from 2028 onwards.

**Table 3. Projected Births 2023 – 2032 (GLA)<sup>2</sup>**

Area	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
LBTH	4,043	4,065	4,075	4,080	4,094	4,120	4,158	4,209	4,256	4,303
London	107,646	107,822	107,810	107,723	107,839	108,208	108,876	109,851	110,889	112,032

## 5.2. Take Up Rates

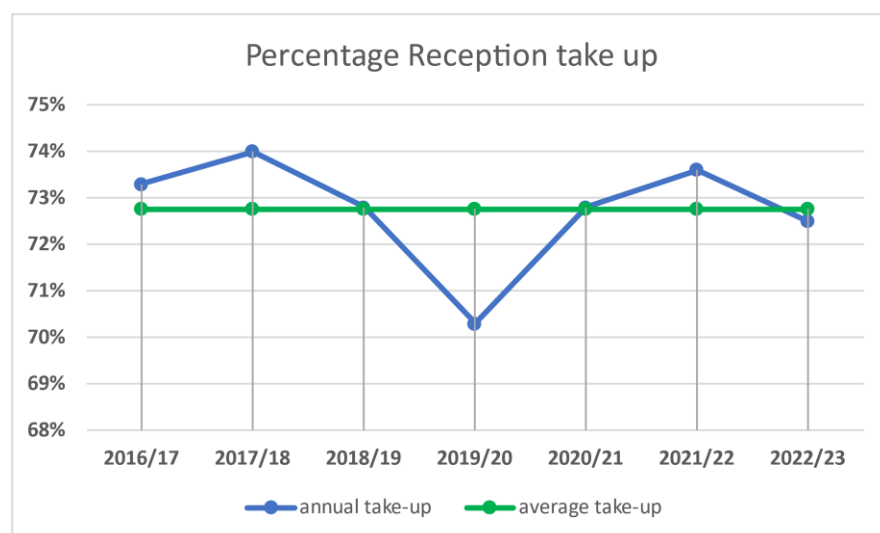
The cohort survival rate/take up rate (the difference between live births and reception year numbers, four years later) is currently at around 73% for Tower Hamlets, up from an all-time low of 70% three years earlier. Hence, the take up rate for the borough as a whole appears healthy, though there are regional differences, which affect reception year school rolls in some parts of the borough. Even if the take up rate remains stable over the next few years, overall reception year numbers will be down, given the current low birth rate.

<sup>2</sup> <https://apps.london.gov.uk/population-projections/>

**Table 4. LBTH Percentage Reception Take up 2016-2023**

LBTH Percentage Reception Take up 2016-2023				
School Year of Birth	Births <sup>3</sup>	Reception Entry	Reception Number	Percentage Take up
2012/13	4,805	2016/17	3,524	73.3%
2013/14	4,520	2017/18	3,347	74.0%
2014/15	4,587	2018/19	3,340	72.8%
2015/16	4,597	2019/20	3,230	70.3%
2016/17	4,600	2020/21	3,349	72.8%
2017/18	4,504	2021/22	3,316	73.6%
2018/19	4,331	2022/23	3,139	72.5%

**Fig. 5. LBTH Percentage Reception Take up 2016-2023**



## 6. Pupil Migration

Tower Hamlets, historically, has higher rates of net migration when compared to most of London this is therefore an important factor in the borough projections.

### 6.1. Pre-School and Primary Age Pupil Net Migration

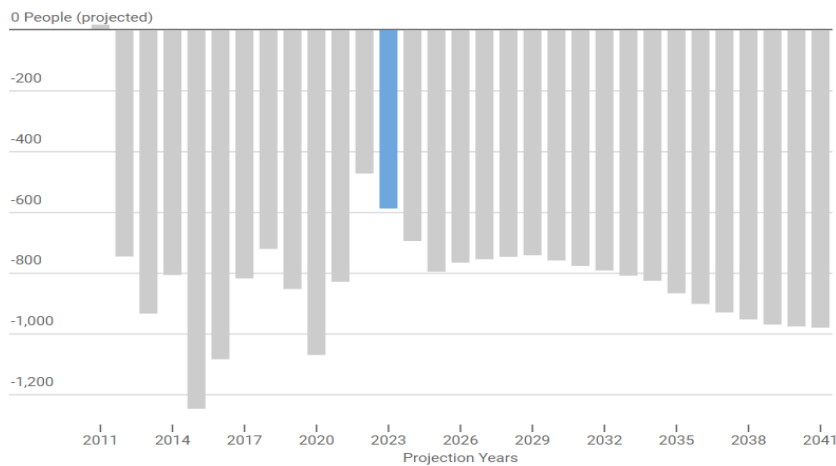
The two charts below show the GLA's most recent data on the borough's previous and projected pupil net migration rate for both the pre-school and primary age range. We can see the negative (outward) net migration rate for this age group, confirming that more pre-school and primary age children are moving out of Tower Hamlets than moving in. This negative net migration trend is projected to continue to impact primary school rolls over the coming years.

<sup>3</sup> Birth numbers provided by the GLA

**Fig. 6. Total Net Migration Projection: Tower Hamlets (age 0-4)**

**Total Net Migration Projection: Tower Hamlets**

Identified Capacity, Borough Total, All Persons, 0 - 4

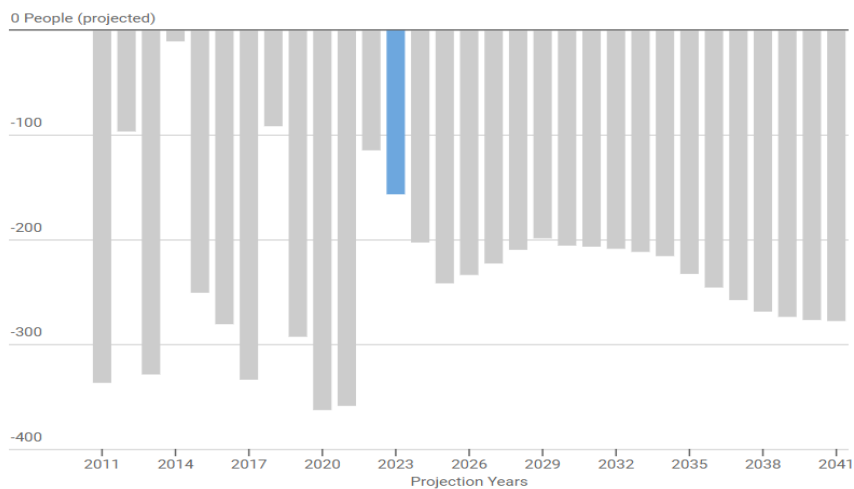


Source: GLA Demography 2020-based Population Projections  
Graphic by GLA City Intelligence

**Fig. 7. Total Net Migration Projection: Tower Hamlets (age 5-10)**

**Total Net Migration Projection: Tower Hamlets**

Identified Capacity, Borough Total, All Persons, 5 - 10



Source: GLA Demography 2020-based Population Projections  
Graphic by GLA City Intelligence

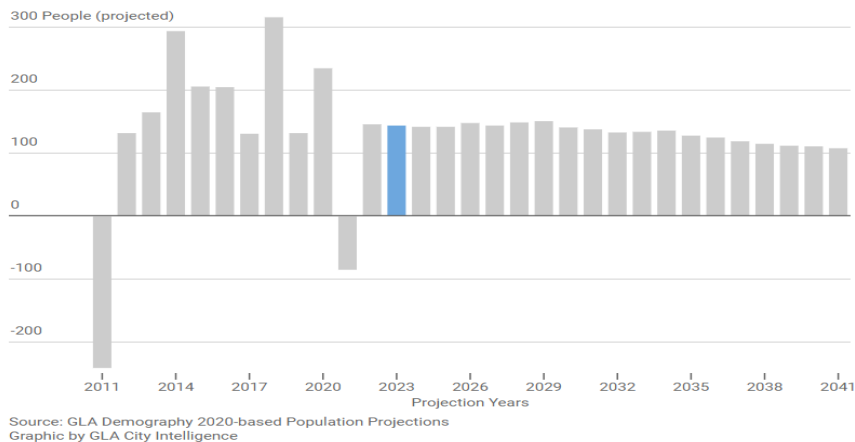
## 6.2. Secondary Age Children Net Migration

In the secondary age range the net migration situation is reversed. With the exception of the 2021 (due to the travel restrictions during the Covid pandemic), we should continue to see a positive net migration, based on the GLA's projections. This means more secondary aged children moving into the borough than out. This could lessen the impact of smaller cohorts moving through from primary system on secondary numbers.

Why more children in this age range are moving into the borough than out, and why the trend is looking so differently than for younger age groups, is not yet clear. The LA is therefore still seeking to understand this anomaly in its migration flows, especially as neighbouring LAs are not displaying the same historical trends.

**Fig. 8. Total Net Migration Projection: Tower Hamlets (age 10-15)**

**Total Net Migration Projection: Tower Hamlets**  
 Identified Capacity, Borough Total, All Persons, 10 - 15



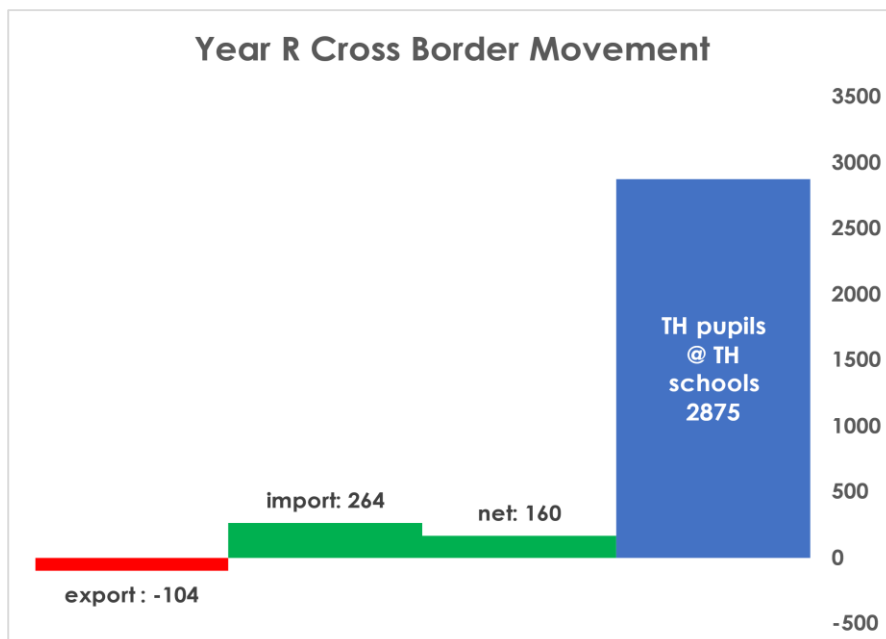
## 7. Cross Border Movement

Migration data covers the movement of children moving in and out of the borough, but there are also Tower Hamlets pupils who cross its borders to attend schools in neighbouring boroughs. Likewise, children living in neighbouring boroughs will cross borders to attend schools in Tower Hamlets.

### 7.1. Primary Cross Border Movement

Tower Hamlets is a net importer of primary pupils. In September 2023, 4% of Tower Hamlets resident pupils started reception year at an out-borough school. In contrast, 8% of the pupils starting reception year in Tower Hamlets were out-borough residents.

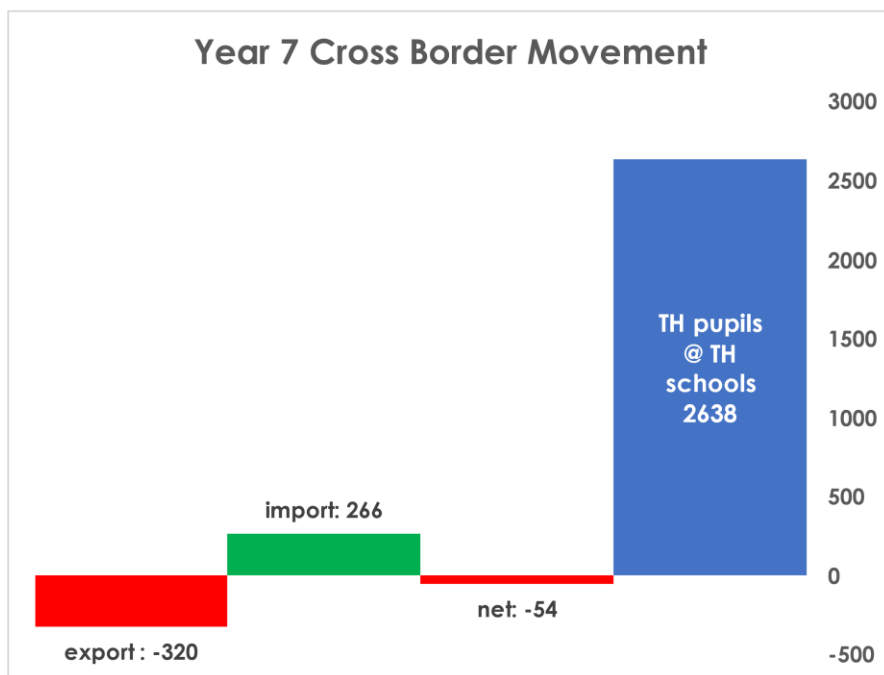
**Fig. 9. Primary Cross Border Movement**



## 7.2. Secondary Cross Border Movement

Tower Hamlets is a net exporter of secondary pupils. In September 2023, 11% of borough resident pupils chose to attend a secondary school outside of the borough. Whereas 9% of the intake to Tower Hamlets secondary schools were out-borough residents.

**Fig. 10. Secondary Cross Border Movement**



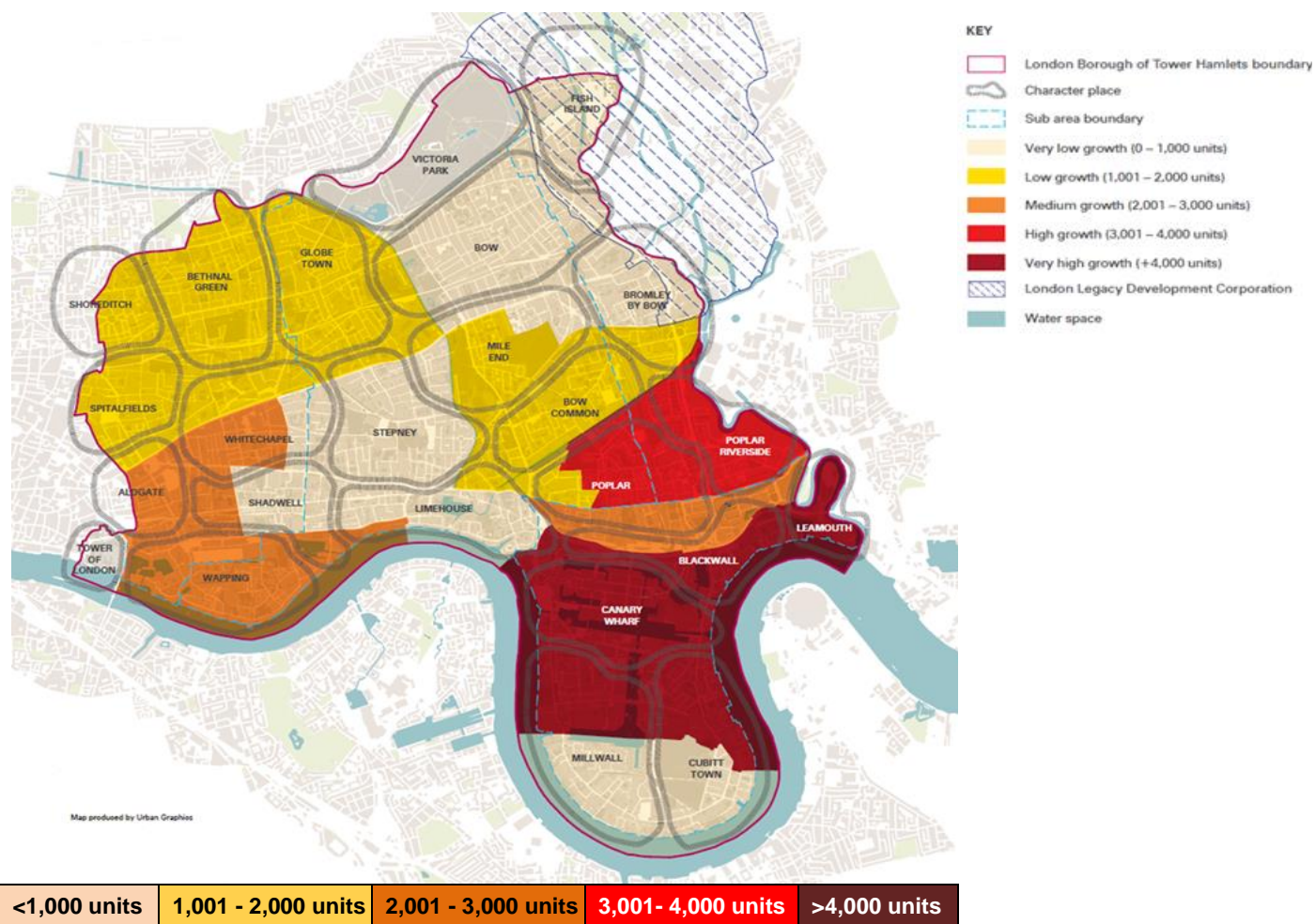
## 8. Housing Development and Pupil Yield Factor

The primary 'pupil yield' factor provides the basis for calculating the average number of primary pupils that a new housing development can be expected to generate. It is based on the Borough's Housing development trajectory, which is then factored into the projection model, alongside school rolls, birth data, migration flows and the cohort survival/take up rates. Tower Hamlets has an indicative net housing target of around 34,700 additional homes to be built in the borough between 2020 – 2029, based on the GLA's 2021 London Plan. The map below shows where these new housing developments are planned, with most major developments concentrated in the Southeast.

Over the ten year period between 2013 and 2022, Tower Hamlets has seen a significant reduction in its primary pupil yield from new developments, from 0.14 per dwelling in 2013 to 0.12 per dwelling in 2022. This has meant that, for every 1500 new homes in the borough, the expected number of primary aged children reduced from 210 to 180. The equivalent of one form of school entry. The reduction in the pupil yield, along with the fall in birth rates and negative net migration, are the main reasons for the decline in primary pupil numbers.

Going forward the borough's ambition to provide more social and affordable housing, may see its pupil yield factor increase back to previous levels.

**Fig. 11. Tower Hamlets Housing Development Plan**



## 9. Previous Year Pupil Projections and their Accuracy

A new set of pupil projections are produced each year. This set is compared to the actual pupil numbers to assess the accuracy of projections as well as identify and correct any issues.

There was a 0.5% variance in the borough's overall school roll projections, where the forecast was 228 more pupils respectively than in the 2023 pupil census (Table 5). The largest variance was at reception year, which projected 158 more pupils than the actual number in the 2023 pupil census. In Year 7 the projected number was 77 pupils more than in the census. This is a fairly accurate standard for the whole borough, but for the individual primary planning areas where there are one or two significant variances. The revised GLA methodology where projections at ward level are calculated, based on previous year patterns, is a contributory factor to the variances within each planning area.

**Table 5. Breakdown of the Previous Year's Pupil Projections**

	Previous Year Projection (2023 census)	Actual No. (2023 census)	Variance (No. of Pupils)	Variance (FE) <sup>4</sup>	Variance (%)
<b>Reception</b>	3,297	3,139	-158	-5.3	-5.0%
<b>Primary</b>	23,220	22,995	-225	-7.5	-1.0%
<b>Year 7</b>	2,981	2,904	-77	-2.6	-2.7%
<b>Secondary</b>	15,041	15,038	-3	-0.1	0%
<b>All Pupils</b>	38,261	38,033	-228	-7.6	-0.5%

The reception year forecasts within the individual primary planning areas shows a significant variation in Bethnal Green and Stepney, with each ending up with 50 fewer reception year pupils than projected. These two planning areas combined, accounted for 100 of the 158 pupil difference in the projected reception year number for the whole borough (Table 6). Only the Isle of Dogs Planning area ended up with more reception year pupils than previously projected.

**Table 6. Reception Year Forecasts vs Actual numbers per Area**

Reception Year Forecasts vs Actual numbers by Planning Area							
LBTH Primary Planning Area	Stepney	Bow	Poplar	Isle of Dogs	Wapping	Bethnal Green	Total
<b>2023 Projection</b>	663	394	865	446	418	511	<b>3,297</b>
<b>2023 Actual</b>	613	376	833	464	392	461	<b>3,139</b>
<b>Variance (pupils)</b>	-50	-18	-32	18	-26	-50	<b>-158</b>
<b>Variance (FE)</b>	-1.7	-0.6	-1.1	0.6	-0.9	-1.7	<b>-5.3</b>
<b>% Variance</b>	-8.1%	-4.8%	-3.8%	3.9%	-6.6%	-10.8%	<b>-5.0%</b>

<sup>4</sup> FE (Forms of Entry) is the ratio between the pupils' variance and 30 (which is a class size)

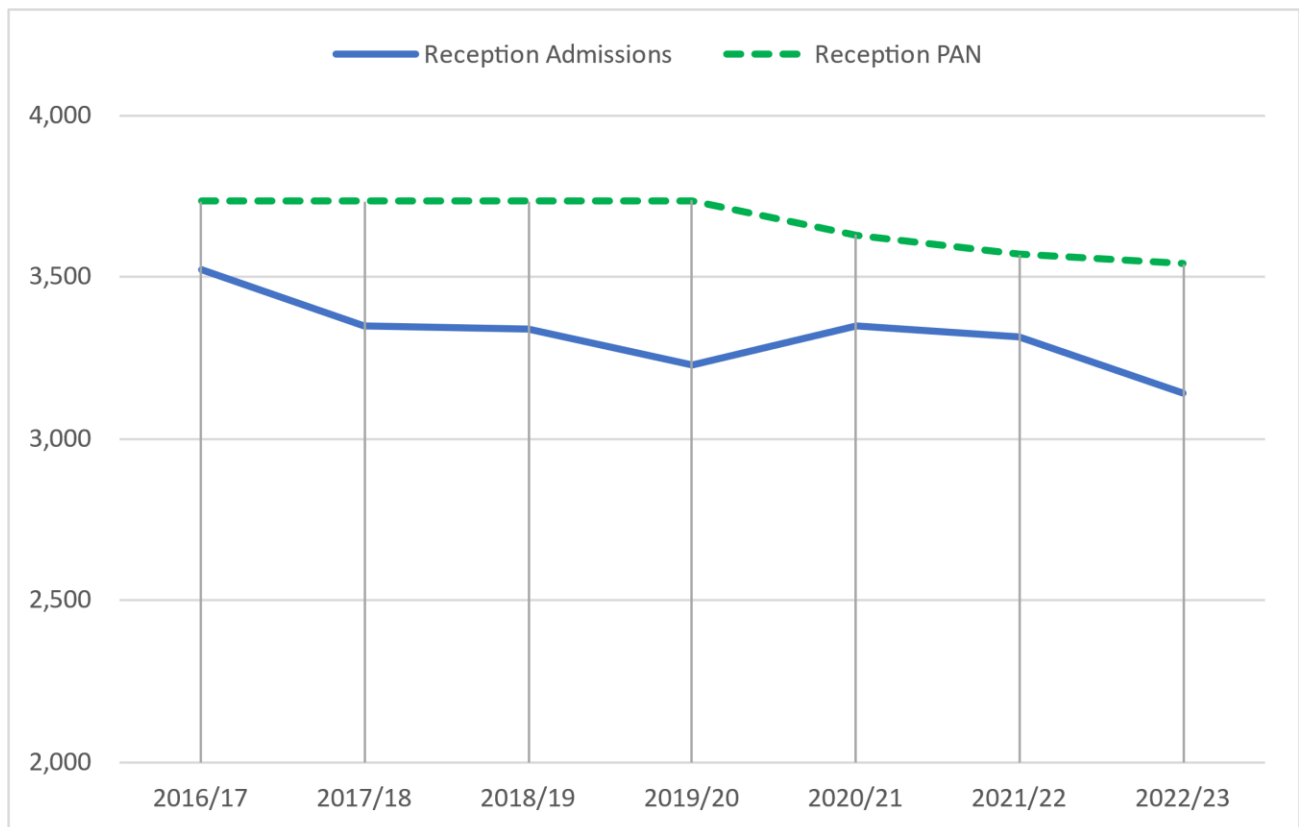
## 10. Reception and Primary School Rolls

As stated previously, the continued growth in the borough's general population is not translating into a need for additional primary school places. Following a significant drop to 3,230 in 2020, reception year rolls recovered to above 3,300 over the next two years. However, there was a further substantial drop of 5.3% in 2023 with 3,139 recorded for the reception year in the January census. This is the lowest reception year roll in the borough for over fifteen years and this trend is projected to continue over the medium term.

**Table 7. Reception Roll Numbers 2016-2023**

Reception Roll Numbers 2016-2023							
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
<b>Reception Rolls (Jan Census)</b>	3,524	3,347	3,340	3,230	3,347	3,316	3,139

**Fig. 12. LBTH Reception Pupil Numbers 2016-2023 and PAN<sup>5</sup>**



<sup>5</sup> Total Planned Admissions Number for the reception year

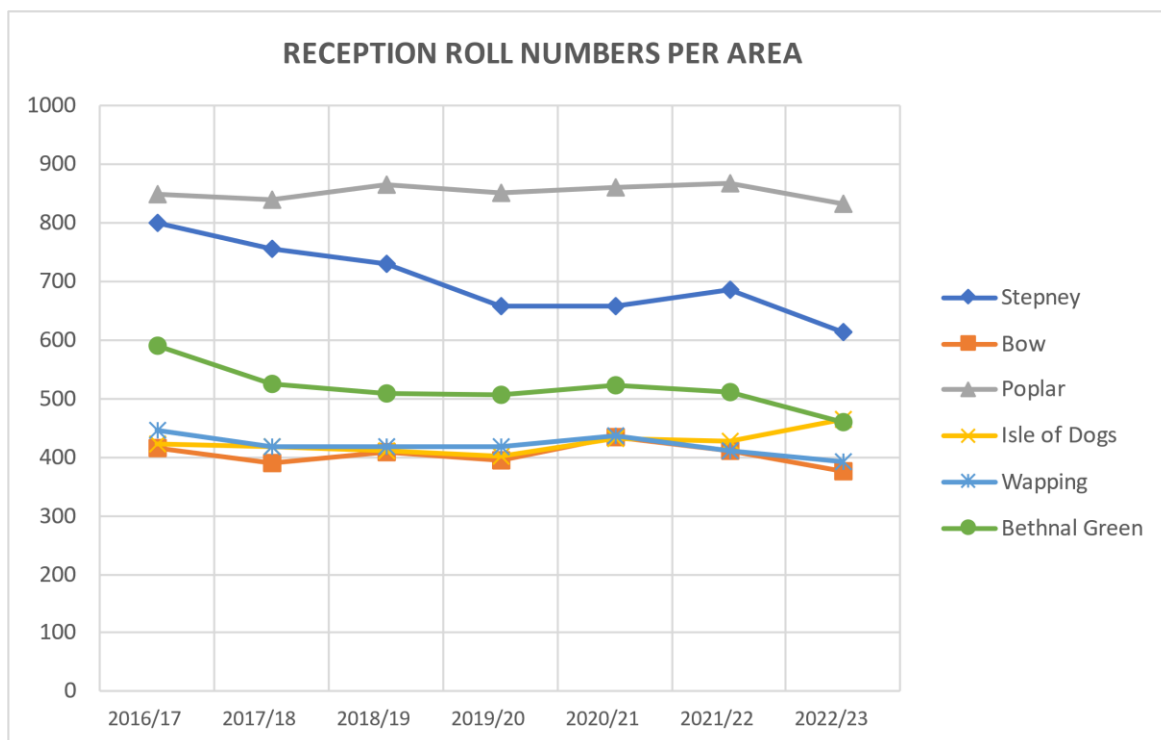


The decline in reception year rolls is no longer just affecting schools in areas west of the borough i.e. Stepney, Bethnal Green and Wapping. There was also a significant drop in the east, with both Poplar and Wapping seeing a fall in numbers equivalent to one form of entry. The following chart with the 2023 reception year rolls for each planning area shows that only the Isle of Dogs area saw an increase in numbers.

**Table 8. Reception Roll Numbers by Planning Area (2016-2023)**

Reception Roll Numbers per Area (2016-2023)							
Year	Stepney	Bow	Poplar	Isle of Dogs	Wapping	Bethnal Green	Total
2016/17	801	415	849	423	446	590	<b>3,524</b>
2017/18	755	389	841	419	417	526	<b>3,347</b>
2018/19	730	408	866	410	418	508	<b>3,340</b>
2019/20	659	394	852	402	417	506	<b>3,230</b>
2020/21	659	435	861	433	437	522	<b>3,347</b>
2021/22	685	410	869	428	412	512	<b>3,316</b>
2022/23	613	376	833	464	392	461	<b>3,139</b>

**Fig. 13. Reception Roll Numbers by Planning Area**



The table below shows the percentage of surplus reception year places by planning area for each of the past five years. Despite the LA and schools

managing to reduce this surplus to a sustainable level over the four year period up until 2022, it is now evident that it is, again, on the rise.

**Table 9. Percentage of Surplus Reception Places by Planning Area**

Percentage of Surplus Reception Places by Planning Area					
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
<b>Stepney</b>	6%	16%	11%	7%	14%
<b>Bow</b>	9%	12%	6%	6%	7%
<b>Poplar</b>	3%	4%	3%	2%	6%
<b>Isle of Dogs</b>	4%	9%	2%	3%	7%
<b>Wapping</b>	13%	9%	6%	5%	10%
<b>Bethnal Green</b>	23%	23%	17%	15%	23%

Looking at primary school rolls through the period from 2016 – 2023, it shows that schools in Stepney, Wapping and Bethnal Green have experienced a significant decline in pupil numbers. The Borough's primary school rolls have now dipped below 23,000 for the first time since 2013/14.

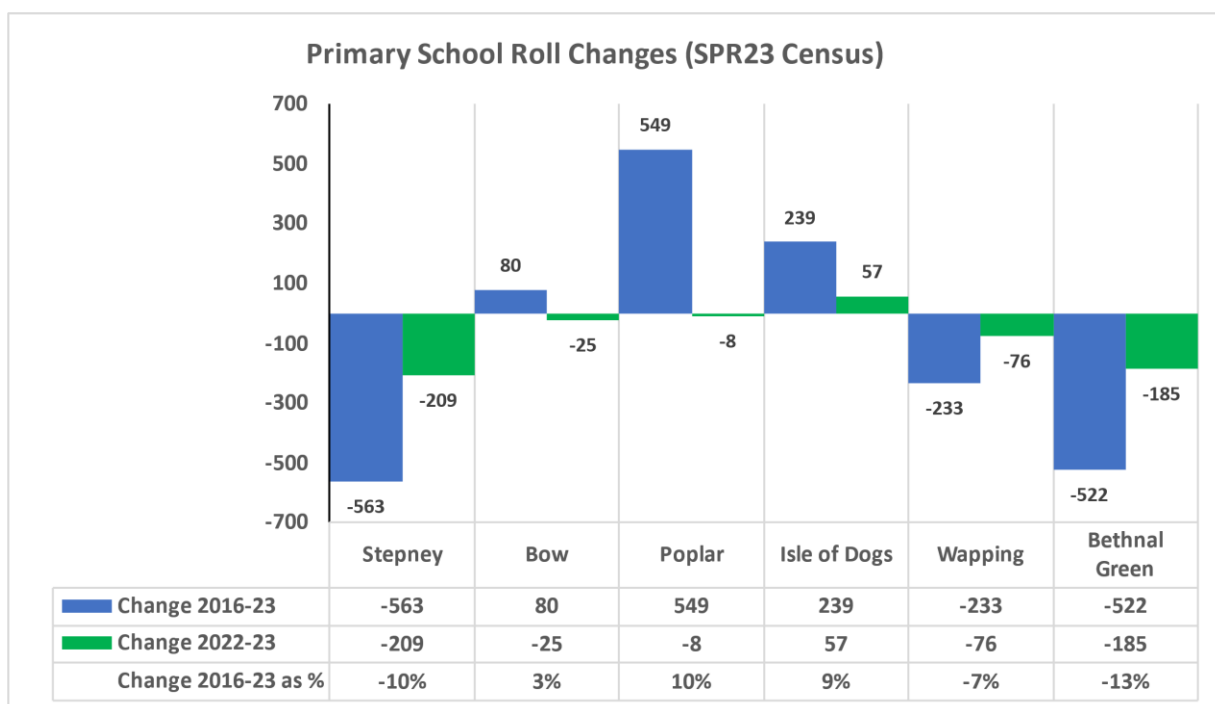
**Table 10. Actual Primary School Rolls by Planning Area 2016 – 2023**

Primary School Rolls by Planning Area 2016 – 2023									
Year	Stepney	Bow	Poplar	Isle of Dogs	Wapping	Bethnal Green	Total	+/-	%
<b>2016/17</b>	5,428	2,690	5,435	2,661	3,114	4,117	<b>23,445</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
<b>2017/18</b>	5,405	2,687	5,582	2,769	3,046	3,983	<b>23,472</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
<b>2018/19</b>	5,417	2,709	5,722	2,787	3,014	3,860	<b>23,509</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
<b>2019/20</b>	5,240	2,732	5,800	2,804	2,952	3,742	<b>23,270</b>	<b>-239</b>	<b>-1.0%</b>
<b>2020/21</b>	5,003	2,745	5,979	2,844	2,970	3,803	<b>23,344</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
<b>2021/22</b>	5,074	2,795	5,992	2,843	2,957	3,780	<b>23,441</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
<b>2022/23</b>	4,865	2,770	5,984	2,900	2,881	3,595	<b>22,995</b>	<b>-446</b>	<b>-1.9%</b>
								<b>-450<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>-1.92%<sup>7</sup></b>

<sup>6</sup> The difference between the total numbers of primary school rolls in 2022/23 and 2016/17

<sup>7</sup> The percentage of difference between the total numbers of primary school rolls in 2022/23 and 2016/17

Fig. 14 Primary School Roll Changes (Spring 2023 Census)



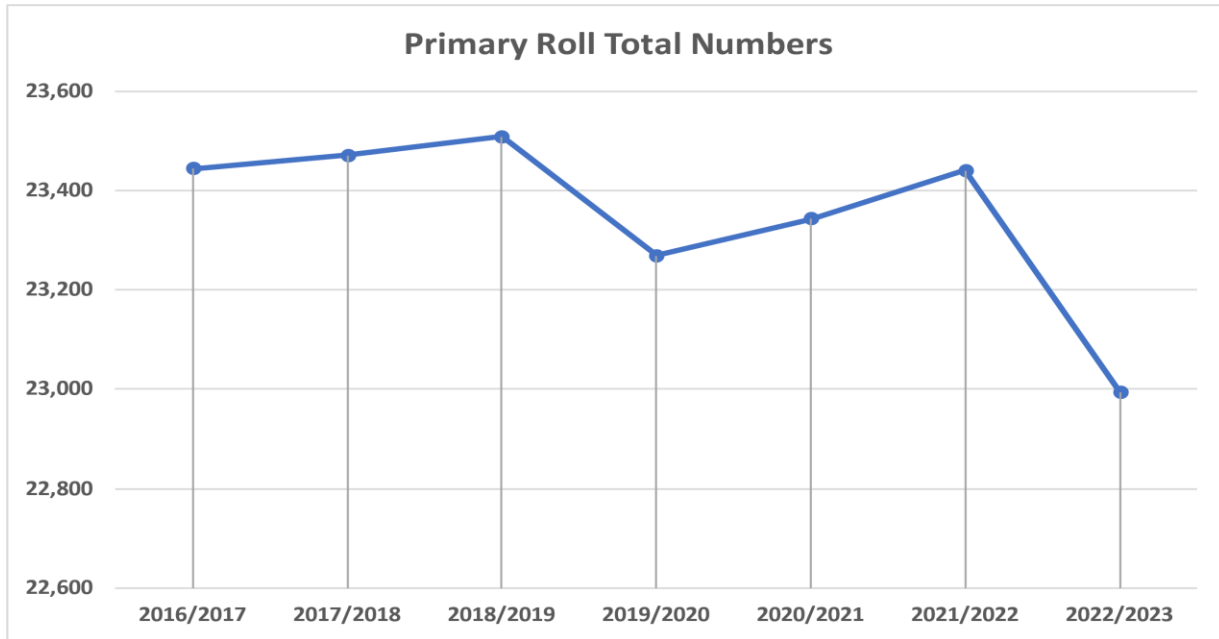
The table below shows the change to primary rolls from reception year to Year 6 over the past seven years.

Table 11. Primary Rolls by Year Group 2016-2023

Primary Rolls (R-Y6) 2016-2023										
Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	+/-	%
2016/2017	3,524	3,409	3,410	3,312	3,361	3,230	3,199	23,445	341	1.48%
2017/2018	3,347	3,522	3,383	3,370	3,293	3,331	3,226	23,472	27	0.12%
2018/2019	3,340	3,339	3,507	3,345	3,346	3,308	3,324	23,509	37	0.16%
2019/2020	3,230	3,342	3,300	3,456	3,309	3,333	3,300	23,270	-239	-1.02%
2020/2021	3,349	3,234	3,335	3,317	3,450	3,321	3,338	23,344	74	0.31%
2021/2022	3,316	3,428	3,228	3,326	3,320	3,483	3,340	23,441	97	0.42%
2022/2023	3,139	3,319	3,399	3,144	3,266	3,290	3,438	22,995	-446	-1.90%
									-450	-1.92%

This is the trajectory of primary rolls over the same period. Up until 2018/19 primary school rolls had been on a consistent upward trend, but this is no longer the case.

**Fig. 15. Primary Rolls (R-Y6) 2016-2023**



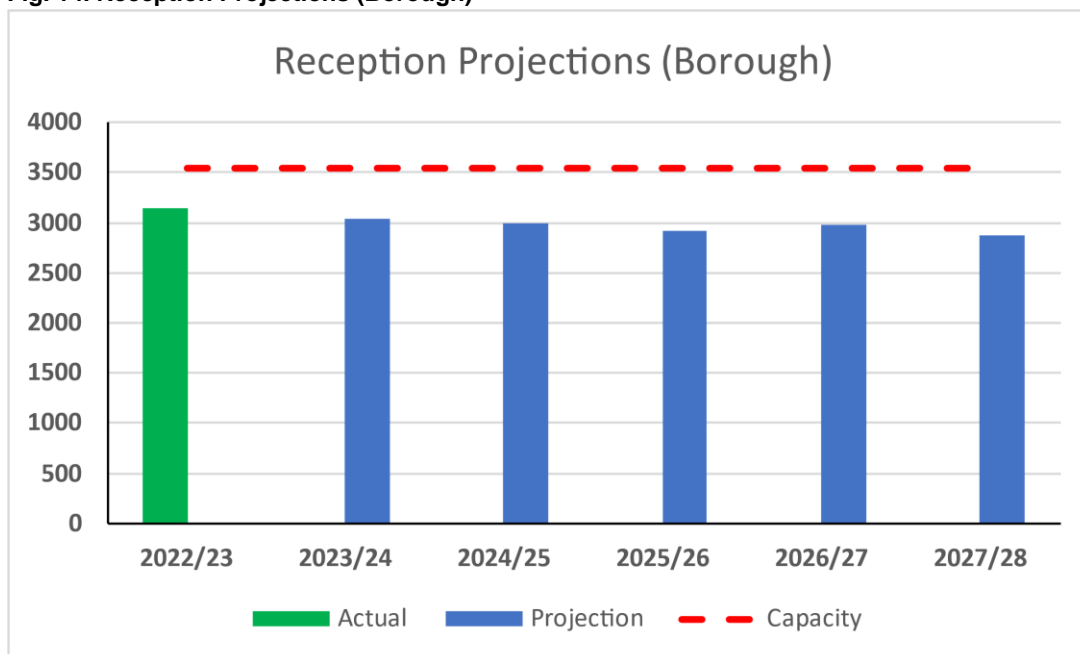
### 10.1. School Roll Projections for the Reception Year

For the school year (2022-2023) there was an overestimate in reception year numbers. The projected numbers for reception year were 3,297 compared to 3,139 (Jan 23 census), meaning that the borough's actual reception year school roll was 5% lower than projected. This caused the borough's overall reception year surplus to almost double, from 6% (Jan 2022 census) to 11% in January 2023.

**Table 10. Reception Projections (Borough)**

Reception Projections (Borough)							
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	
<b>Actual</b>	3,139						
<b>Projection</b>	3,297	3,040	2,999	2,913	2,980	2,876	
<b>Capacity</b>	3,541	3,541	3,541	3,541	3,541	3,541	
<b>Variance</b>	<b>Pupils</b>	402	501	542	628	561	665
	<b>FE</b>	13.4	16.7	18.1	20.9	18.7	22.2
	<b>%</b>	11%	14%	15%	18%	16%	19%

**Fig. 14. Reception Projections (Borough)**



## 11. Reception School Roll Projections by Planning Area

Below is a summary of the position in each of the borough's primary school planning areas.

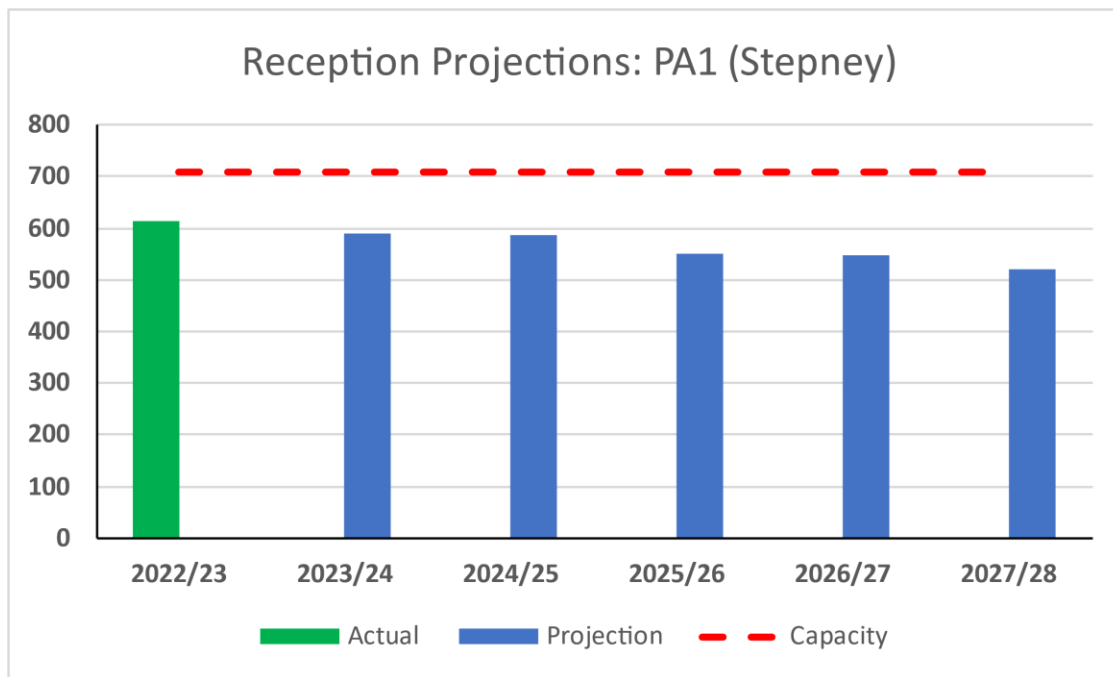
### 11.1. Planning Area 1 (Stepney)

In January 2023 there were 97 unfilled places in Stepney, an increase on the 55 in January 2022. The latest round of pupil projections for Stepney indicates that the surplus will likely continue to increase over the next few years, reaching as high as 26% by January 2028. This situation will require the LA and school leaders to take further measures to reduce the surplus capacity in this Planning Area.

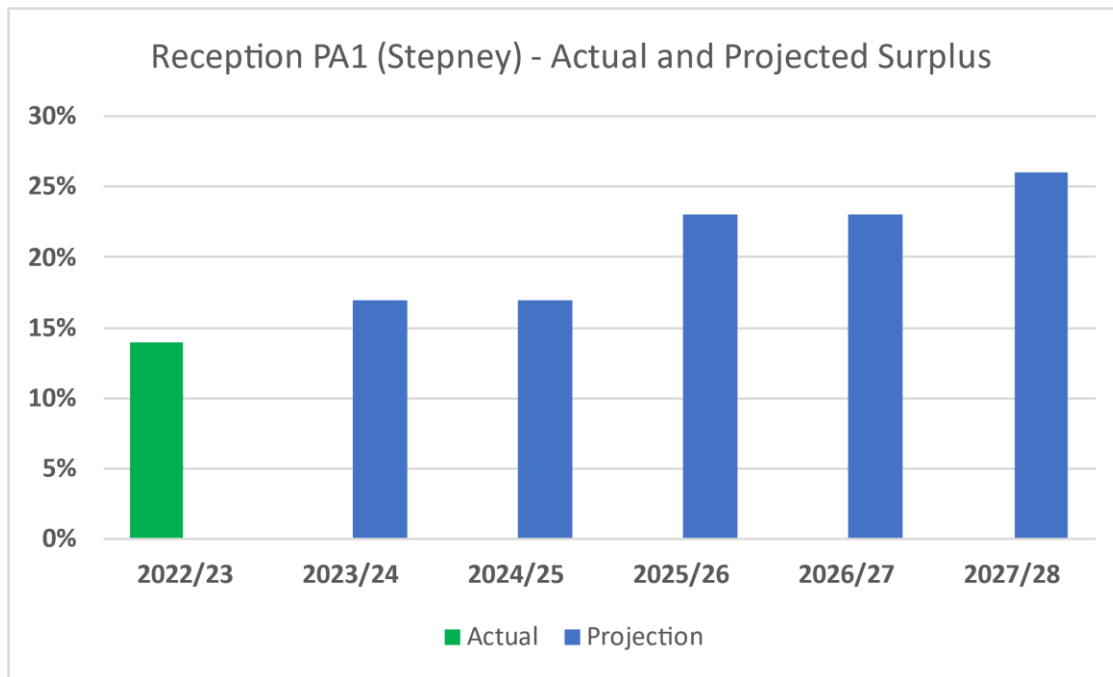
**Table 11. Planning Area 1 – Stepney (INCLUDES BOTH BONNER SCHOOL SITES)**

Planning Area 1 – Stepney (INCLUDES BOTH BONNER SCHOOL SITES)							
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	
<b>Actual</b>	613						
<b>Projection</b>	663	590	586	550	548	522	
<b>Capacity</b>	710	710	710	710	710	710	
<b>Variance</b>	<b>Pupils</b>	97	120	124	160	162	188
	<b>FE</b>	3.2	4.0	4.1	5.3	5.4	6.3
	<b>%</b>	14%	17%	17%	23%	23%	26%

**Fig. 15. Planning Area 1 – Stepney Reception Projections**



**Fig. 16. Planning Area 1 – Stepney Projected Reception Surplus**



### 11.2. Planning Area 2 (Bow)

There were 405 reception year places available in the Bow catchment area for 2022/23 academic year, due to a 1FE PAN reduction from the 435 places in the previous year. In January 2023 there were 29 unfilled reception year places, but with pupil numbers projected to decrease over the next five years the surplus is projected to reach 20% by January 2028. Again, it will be necessary for the LA and school leaders to take measures to reduce the capacity for the schools in this planning area.

Table 12 Planning Area 2 – Bow

Planning Area 2 - Bow							
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	
Actual	376						
Projection	394	348	348	333	342	324	
Capacity	405	405	405	405	405	405	
Variance	Pupils	29	57	57	72	63	81
	FE	0.9	1.9	1.9	2.4	2.1	2.7
	%	7%	14%	14%	18%	16%	20%

Fig. 17. Planning Area 2– Bow Reception Projections

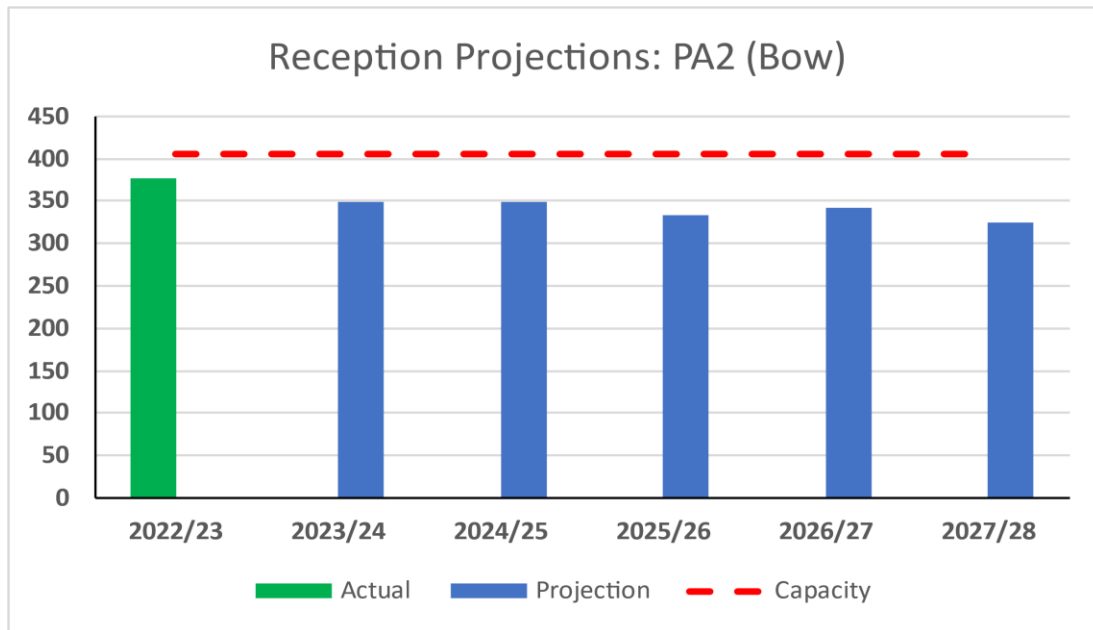
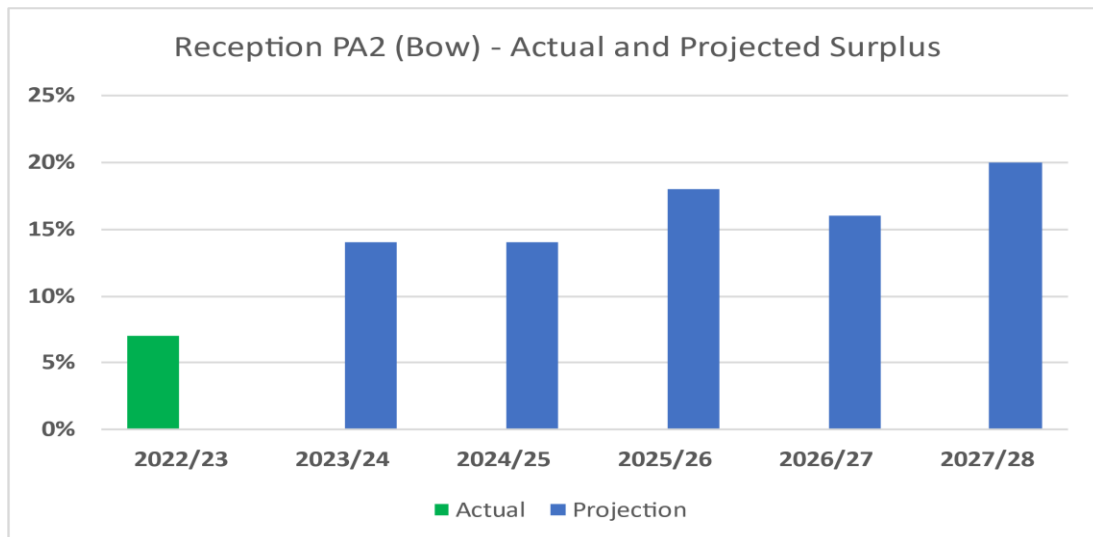


Fig. 18. Planning Area 2 - Bow Projected Reception Surplus



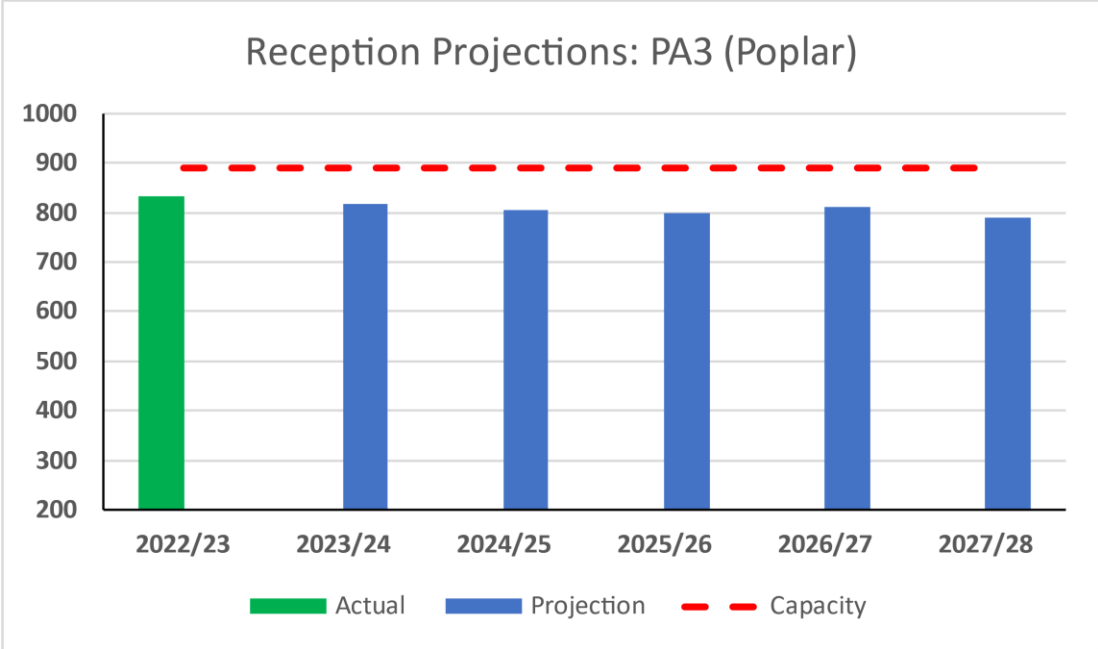
### 11.3. Planning Area 3 (Poplar)

There are currently 890 reception year places in the Poplar area. In January 2023, 57 places were unfilled. Previous projections indicated that numbers would increase to above 900 by January 2024, in line with the large-scale housing development in Poplar. However, both the 2022 and this latest (2023) round of projections show that numbers in Poplar are declining and will continue to do so over the medium term. This has resulted in the LA delaying its plans to increase capacity at one of the primary schools in this area. However, it remains to be seen whether the Council's plans to significantly increase the volume of social and affordable housing in Poplar will halt this projected decline in pupil numbers.

Table 13 Planning Area 3 – Poplar

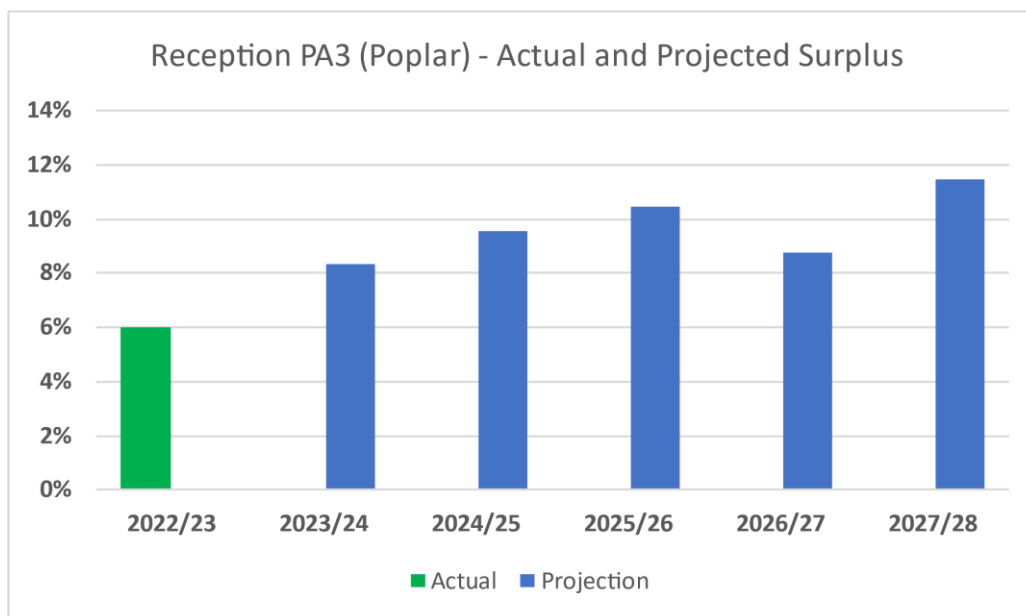
Planning Area 3 – Poplar							
		2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
<b>Actual</b>		833					
<b>Projection</b>		865	816	805	797	812	788
<b>Capacity</b>		890	890	890	890	890	890
<b>Variance</b>	<b>Pupils</b>	57	74	85	93	78	102
	<b>FE</b>	1.9	2.5	2.8	3.1	2.6	3.4
	<b>%</b>	6%	8%	10%	10%	9%	11%

Fig. 19. Planning Area 3 – Poplar Reception Projections





**Fig. 20. Planning Area 3 - Poplar Projected Reception Surpluses**



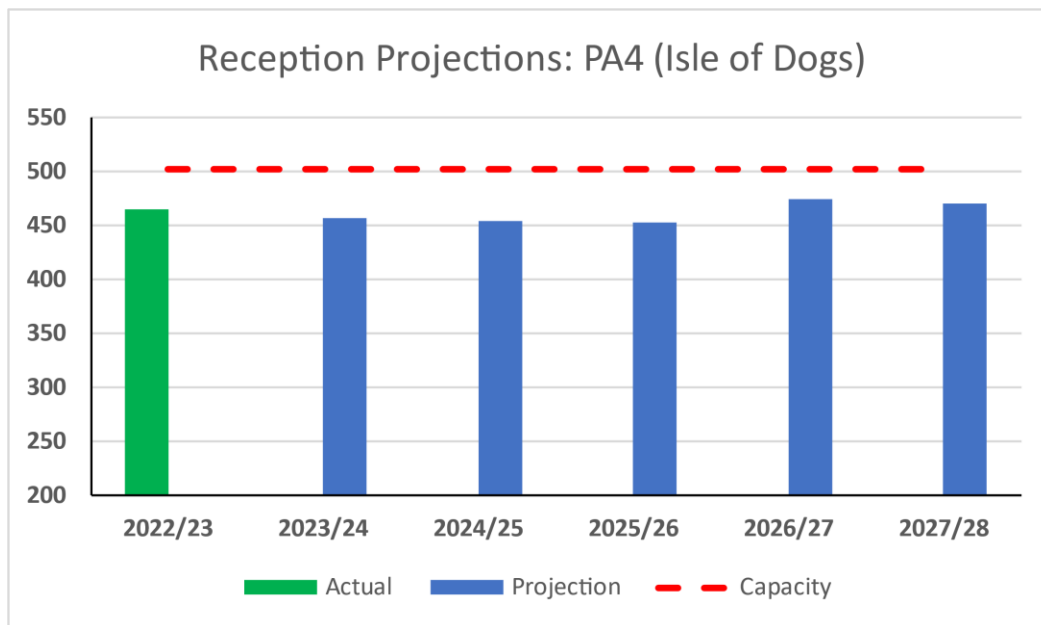
#### 11.4. Planning Area 4 (Isle of Dogs)

Last year saw an increase in the demand for reception year places in the Isle of Dogs with 18 more children than previously projected. This is perhaps an indication that the new housing development in this area is beginning to yield pupils at the rate previously anticipated. As the Isle of Dogs is the planning area with the highest density of new housing development the LA expects to see a growth in pupil numbers over the longer period. At the moment the projections indicate that, in the medium term, demand will remain within the current PAN capacity (501). The number of pupil places in the Isle of Dogs was increased in 2022, following the opening of a new primary school at Wood Wharf. The LA has also earmarked a number of new school developments sites in this planning area, should they be required in future.

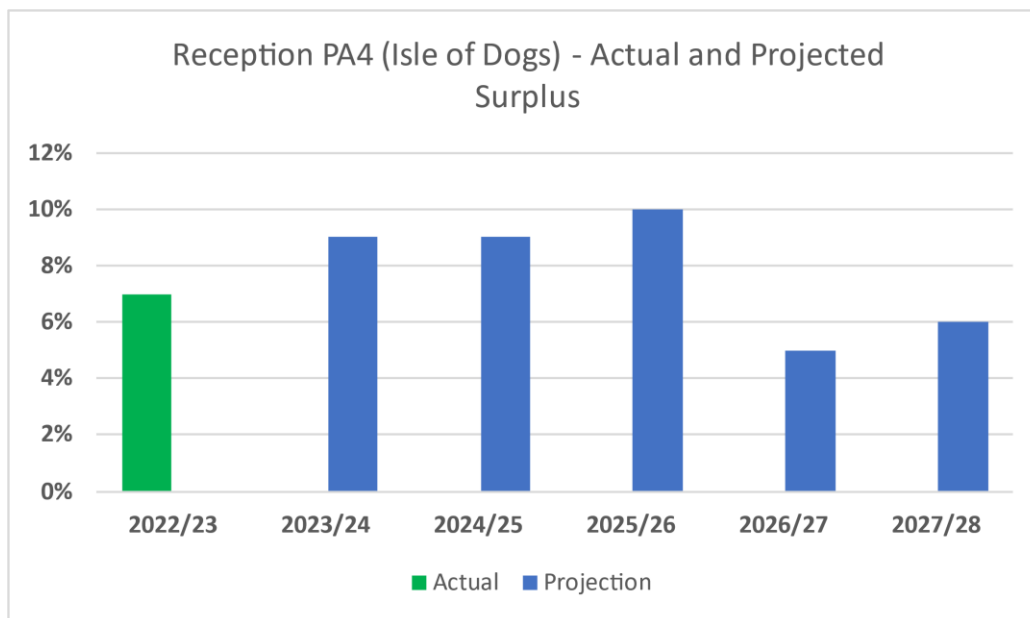
**Table 14 Planning Area 4 - Isle of Dogs**

Planning Area 4 - Isle of Dogs							
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	
<b>Actual</b>	464						
<b>Projection</b>	446	457	454	452	474	470	
<b>Capacity</b>	501	501	501	501	501	501	
<b>Variance</b>	<b>Pupils</b>	37	44	47	49	27	31
	<b>FE</b>	1.2	1.5	1.6	1.6	0.9	1.0
	<b>%</b>	7%	9%	9%	10%	5%	6%

**Fig. 21. Planning Area 4 - Isle of Dogs Reception Projections**



**Fig. 22. Planning Area 4 - Isle of Dogs Projected Reception Surpluses**



### 11.5. Planning Area 5 (Wapping)

There are 435 reception year places available in the Wapping catchment area, with 43 unfilled places in January 2023. The numbers for children in Wapping is currently projected to reduce over time, with the potential for an 18% surplus by January 2028. However, it should be noted that Wapping is an area with high levels of planned new housing development, with a significant number earmarked for social and affordable family housing. The LA will remain cautious to see how the roll out and occupation of this new housing in Wapping will positively impact pupil numbers in this area going forward.

Table 15 Planning Area 5 - Wapping

Planning Area 5 – Wapping		2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Actual		392					
Projection		418	381	379	356	370	355
Capacity		435	435	435	435	435	435
Variance	Pupils	43	54	56	79	65	80
	FE	1.4	1.8	1.9	2.6	2.2	2.7
	%	10%	12%	13%	18%	15%	18%

Fig. 23. Planning Area 5 – Wapping Reception Projections

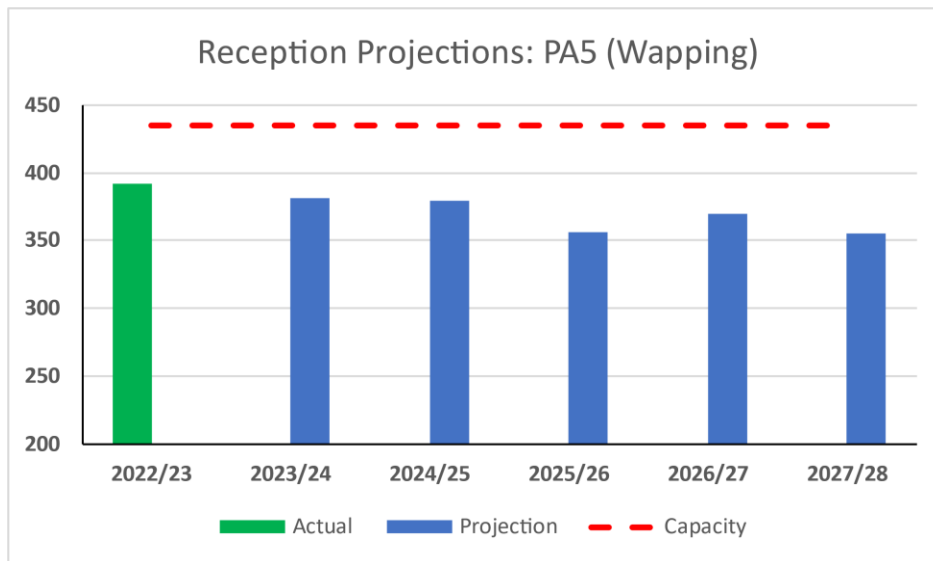
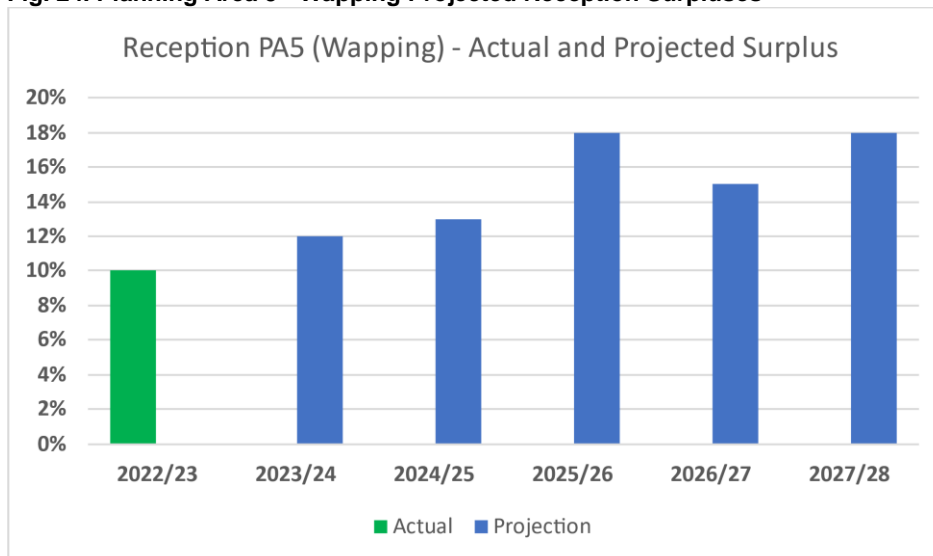


Fig. 24. Planning Area 5 - Wapping Projected Reception Surpluses



## 11.6. Planning Area 6 (Bethnal Green)

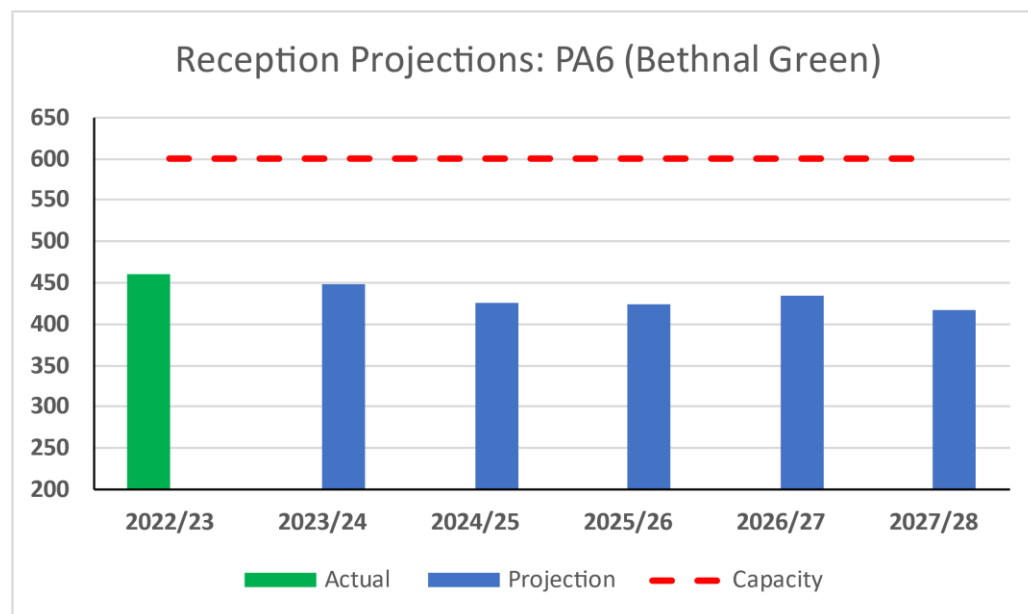
In January 2023 there were 139 unfilled places in Bethnal Green, an increase from the 88 unfilled places in January 2022. The number of reception year pupils in Bethnal Green is projected to further decrease over the next five years, with the surplus capacity exceeding 30% by January 2028. Most of the housing development in this area is already in delivery and any uplift in pupil numbers is unlikely to significantly reduce the surplus going forward.

The LA, school leaders and diocesan board have previously taken extensive measures to reduce surplus capacity in this area. However, it will be necessary to take further measures to reduce this newly emerging surplus as it is very unlikely it can be sustained over the longer term.

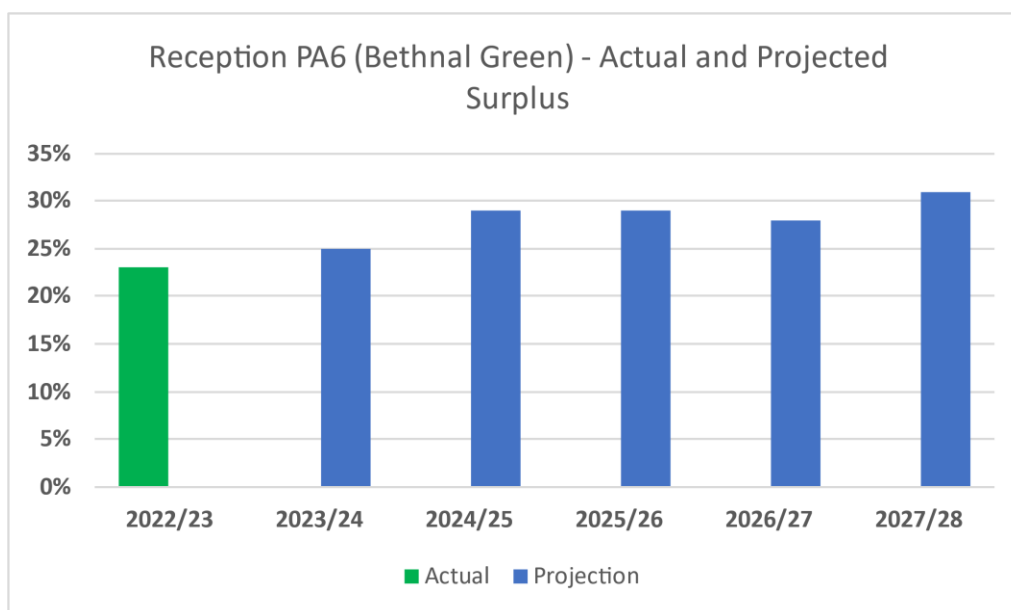
**Table 16 Planning Area 6 – Bethnal Green**

Planning Area 6 – Bethnal Green		2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
<b>Actual</b>		461					
<b>Projection</b>		511	448	426	424	435	417
<b>Capacity</b>		600	600	600	600	600	600
<b>Variance</b>	<b>Pupils</b>	139	152	174	176	165	183
	<b>FE</b>	4.6	5.1	5.8	5.9	5.5	6.1
	<b>%</b>	23%	25%	29%	29%	28%	31%

**Fig. 27. Planning Area 6 – Bethnal Green Reception Projections**



**Fig. 25. Planning Area 6 - Bethnal Green Projected Reception Surpluses**



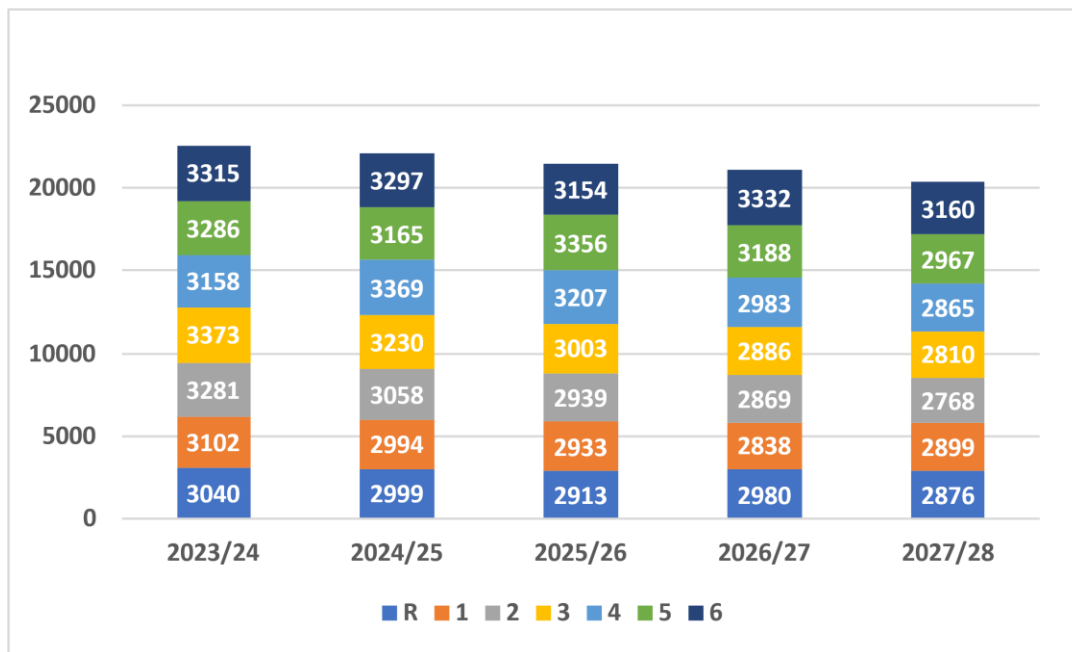
## 12. Total Primary School Roll Projections

The table below with projections for each National Curriculum Year (NCY), show each cohort as it moves through the primary phase. Cohort sizes are projected to get smaller, as the classes enter a new NCY. The total primary number is therefore expected to reduce to 20,345 by January 2028, as we realise the effects of the further decline in the birth rate along with negative net migration and the full impact of the lower pupil yield from new housing development. This will be a significant challenge for the LA and school leaders, given the correlation between pupil numbers, school funding and the ability to sustain high quality of education.

**Table 17. Primary Rolls Projections by NCY**

Primary Rolls (R-Y6) projections 2023-2028								
Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2023/24	3040	3102	3281	3373	3158	3286	3315	22555
2024/25	2999	2994	3058	3230	3369	3165	3297	22112
2025/26	2913	2933	2939	3003	3207	3356	3154	21505
2026/27	2980	2838	2869	2886	2983	3188	3332	21076
2027/28	2876	2899	2768	2810	2865	2967	3160	20345

**Fig. 26. Primary Rolls Projections by NCY**



### 13. Secondary Rolls and Year 7 Projections

The demand for secondary school provision is assessed and planned for on a borough wide basis.

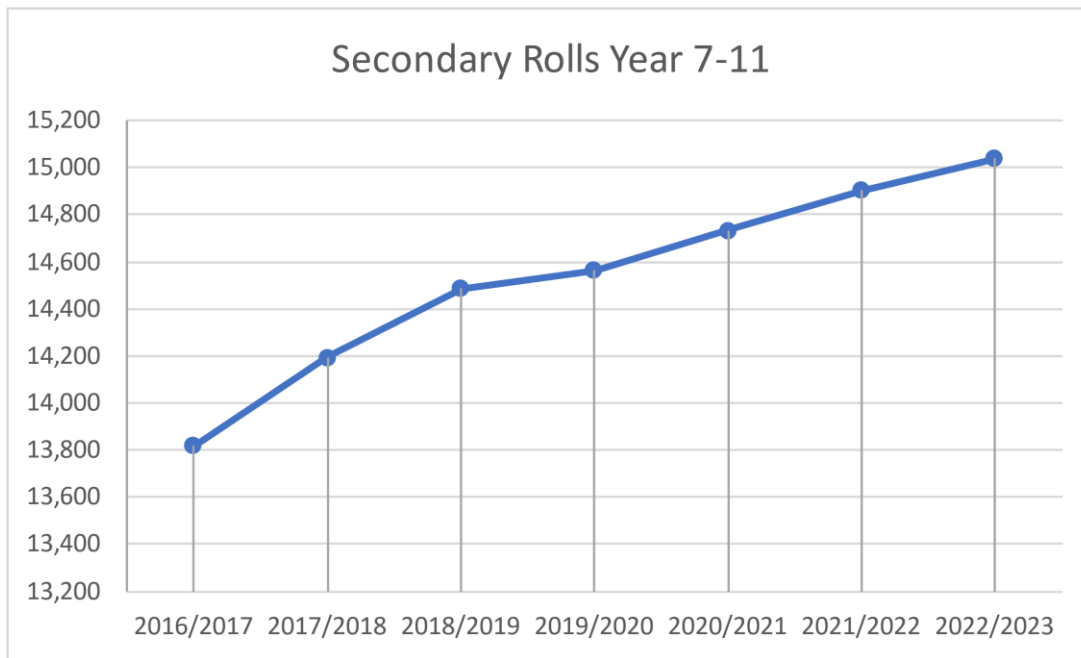
#### 13.1. Historic Secondary School Rolls

Secondary rolls (Y7 -Y11) have increased year on year since 2016/17 with an overall 8.8% growth.

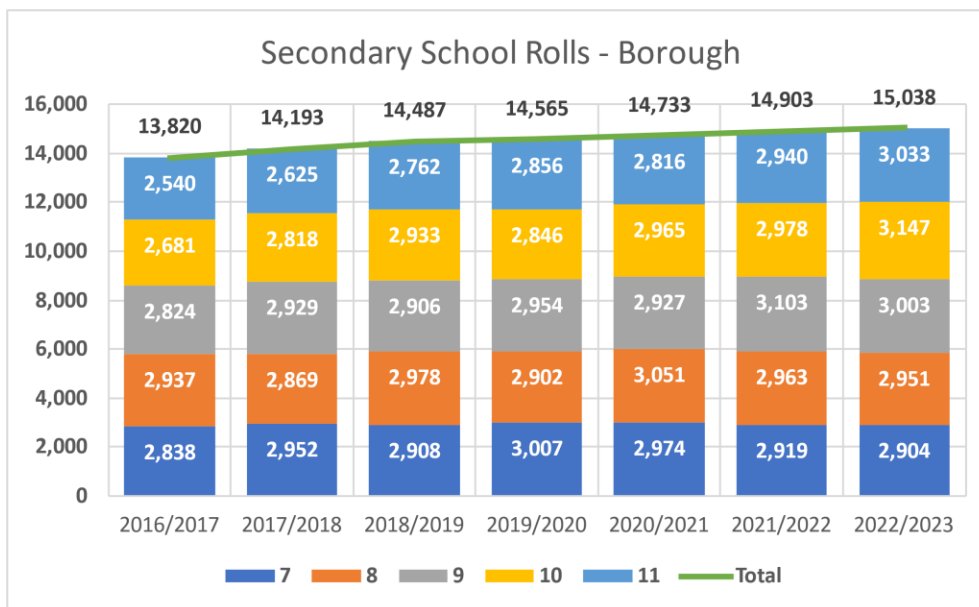
**Table 18. Secondary Rolls (Y7-Y11) 2016-2023**

Secondary Rolls (Y7-Y11) 2016-2023								
Year	7	8	9	10	11	Total	+/-	%
2016/2017	2,838	2,937	2,824	2,681	2,540	13,820	220	1.6%
2017/2018	2,952	2,869	2,929	2,818	2,625	14,193	373	2.7%
2018/2019	2,908	2,978	2,906	2,933	2,762	14,487	294	2.0%
2019/2020	3,007	2,902	2,954	2,846	2,856	14,565	78	0.5%
2020/2021	2,974	3,051	2,927	2,965	2,816	14,733	168	1.1%
2021/2022	2,919	2,963	3,103	2,978	2,940	14,903	144	0.9%
2022/2023	2,904	2,951	3,003	3,147	3,033	15,038	135	0.9%
							<b>1,218</b>	<b>8.8%</b>

**Fig. 32. Growth Trajectory of Secondary School Rolls from 2016 – 2023 by Year Group**



**Fig. 33. Growth Trajectory of Secondary School Rolls from 2016 – 2023 by Year Group**



Secondary growth is projected to peak in 2023/24, before the decline in primary rolls begin to impact on secondary schools with Year 7 rolls expected to level out, despite the continued levels of positive net migration in this phase.

### 13.2. School Roll Projections for Year 7

This report specifically looks at future demand at the point of entry in Year 7. Secondary projections indicate that the current growth trend will end in 2023/24, where Year 7 pupil numbers are projected to reach 3,059 before decreasing over the next four year period.

When assessing the need for school places, there is an expectation that the LA includes a level of planned surplus to enable a reasonable degree of parental preference and to allow for unforeseen rises in the pupil population, mainly due to the continued positive net migration at secondary.

It is also important to consider the inter-year volatility in the popularity of Tower Hamlets secondary schools. This is an important factor that cannot be accurately projected for, given that it rests on parental/child preferences, changes in Ofsted ratings, parental perception and other factors not linked to demography, migration and birth rates.

The latest secondary school 'capacity' figures take account of the confirmed opening of the new school at London Dock in September 2024. The additional places provided by this 6FE school will remove the risk of any shortfall in 2024. The delay with the new school opening in September 2023, resulted in the LA needing to quickly put in place a number of Year 7 'bulge' classes at existing secondary schools, to ensure that there was sufficiency across the borough. These bulge classes will continue through to the end of Year 11 ensuring that there is enough capacity as this cohort moves through.

The LA can also be reasonably confident that the planned capacity for Year 7 entry from September 2024 onwards will provide sufficient secondary school places for children in Tower Hamlets. A further two secondary school sites have previously been earmarked for development in the borough. However, in view of the current capacity and projected numbers there are no current plans to take these sites forward for development.

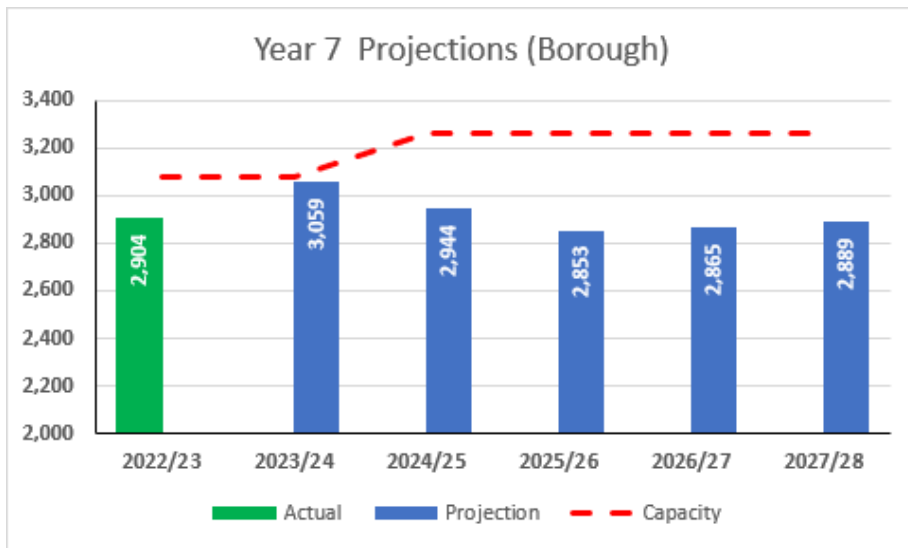
**Table 19. Year 7 Pupil Projections**

<b>Year 7 Pupil Projections</b>							
		<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>
<b>Actual</b>		2,904					
<b>Projection</b>		2,922	3059	2944	2853	2865	2889
<b>Capacity</b>		3,083	3,083	3,263*	3,263	3,263	3,263
<b>Variance</b>	<b>Pupils</b>	179	24	319	410	398	374
	<b>FE</b>	6.0	0.8	10.6	13.7	13.3	12.5
	<b>%</b>	6%	1%	10%	13%	12%	11%

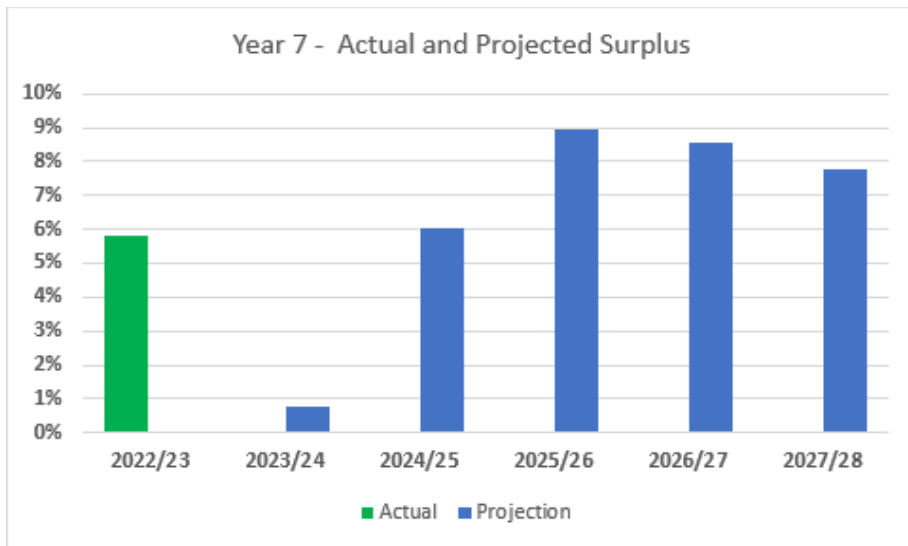
\* The opening of the new 6FE Mulberry Academy London Dock School in September 2024.



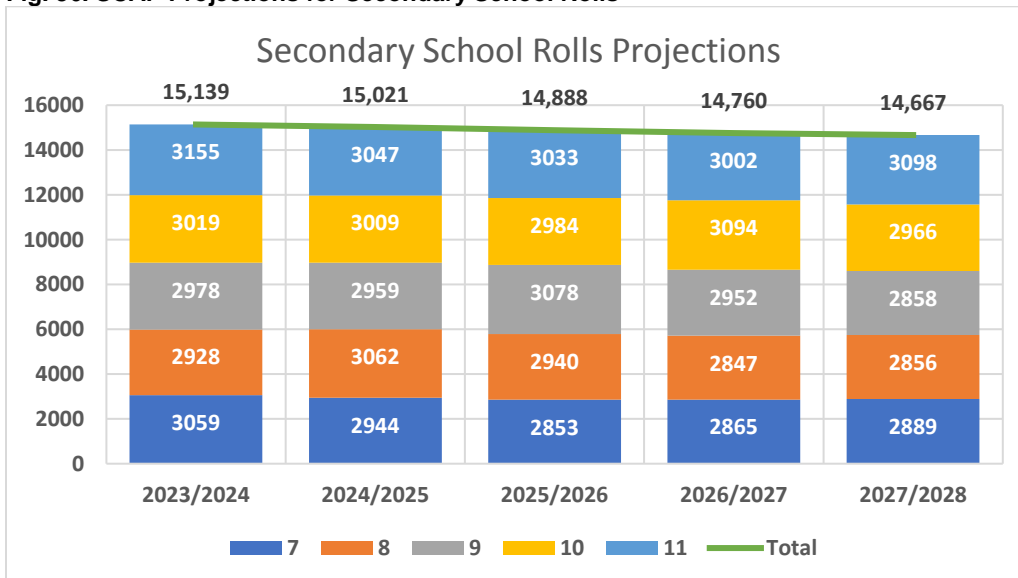
**Fig. 34. Actual and Projected Year 7 Rolls**



**Fig. 35. Year 7 Surpluses**



**Fig. 36. SCAP Projections for Secondary School Rolls**



## 14. Post 16 School Rolls, Capacity and Projections

Following the amalgamation of Bishop Challoner's Girls and Boys Schools there are currently 14 Secondary Schools with 6<sup>th</sup> Forms in Tower Hamlets.

**Table 20. Secondary Schools in Tower Hamlets**

Secondary Schools			
	Secondary (11-16)	Secondary (11-19)	UTC (14-19)
Community/Voluntary Controlled	0	6	0
Voluntary Aided	0	3	0
Academy/Free School	3	4	1
Foundation	0	0	0
Total	3	13	1

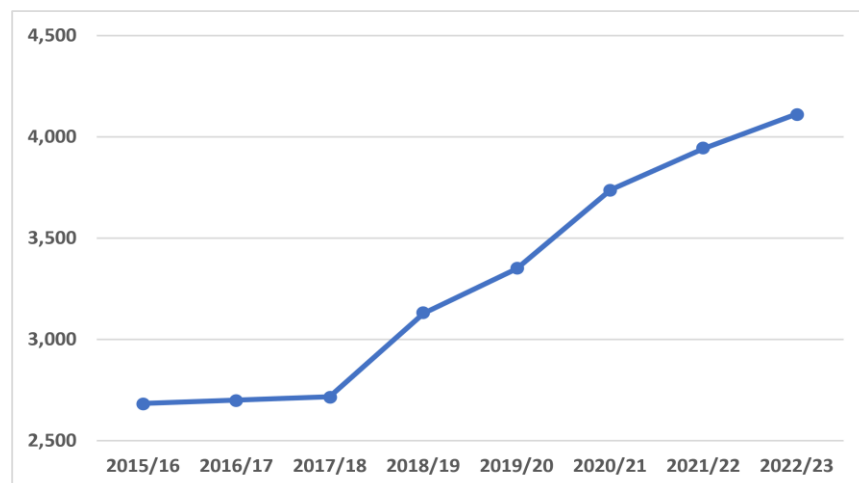
### 14.1. Historic Post 16 School Rolls

In common with the increase in the 11 to 16 pupil population we have seen a significant increase in Post 16 rolls. They increased from 2,682 to 4,110, between January 2016 and January 2023, as individual schools opened new 6<sup>th</sup> Forms or expanded/developed their existing 6<sup>th</sup> Form provision.

**Table 21. Post 16 Roll Numbers LBTH Secondary Schools**

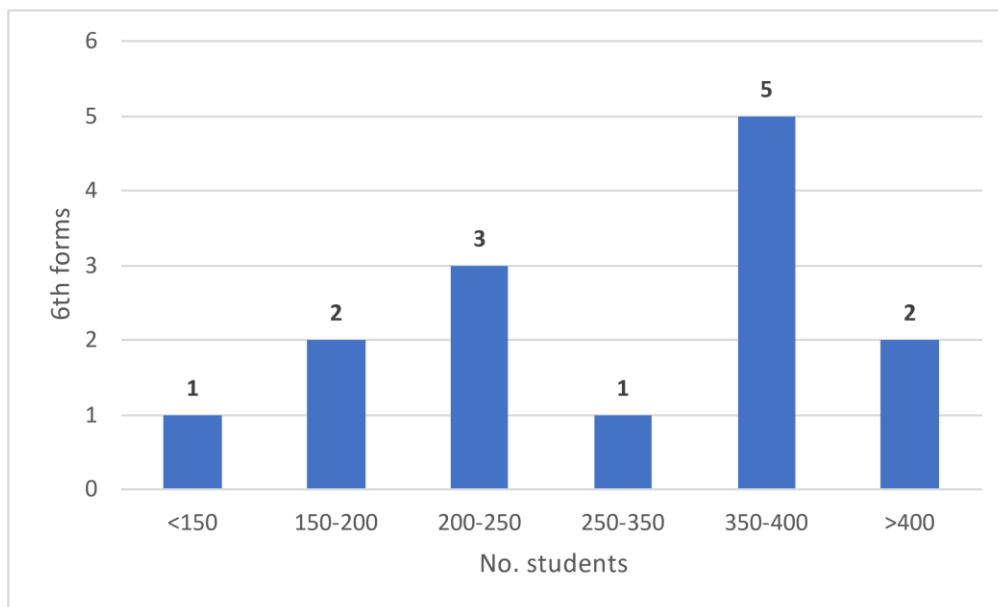
Post 16 Roll Numbers LBTH Secondary Schools								
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Post 16 Roll Numbers (2022 Census)	2,682	2,696	2,715	3,130	3,348	3,737	3,942	4,110

**Fig. 37. Post 16 Rolls Growth 2015 – 2023**



There is significant variance in 6<sup>th</sup> Form size. The chart below shows the number of 6<sup>th</sup> Forms by size. The 6<sup>th</sup> Form size in 11 of the 14 schools is above 200 students. Of the remaining three 6<sup>th</sup> Forms, two have fewer than 200 students, with one with less than 150 students.

**Fig. 38. Tower Hamlets School 6<sup>th</sup> Forms by size**



The DfE recommends for schools to have 6<sup>th</sup> Forms of at least 200 students and, either directly or through partnership, offer a minimum of 15 A level subjects. However, it is recognised that small school 6<sup>th</sup> Forms can still provide access to a broad range of courses to meet students' interests or an identified need.

## 14.2. School Roll Projections for Post 16

They were 4,110 Post 16 students recorded in the January 2023 census an increase of 168 students on the previous year. The latest round of projections estimate that 6<sup>th</sup> Form student numbers will reach 4,270 by January 2028.

The Borough's current 6<sup>th</sup> Form capacity is now at 4,750, but it will be increasing as recently opened 11-19 secondary schools<sup>8</sup> have their first 6<sup>th</sup> Form intakes at relevant points in the future, and existing schools expand their 6<sup>th</sup> Form provision in response to their increasing rolls through Y7 – Y11<sup>9</sup>.

With these increases it is evident there is already sufficient 6<sup>th</sup> Form provision going forward for the borough. Therefore, plans or proposals to add further post-16 provision will only be taken forward if it can be demonstrated that they will address a genuine need to improve the overall quality and diversity of educational provision in the area.

<sup>8</sup> Canary Wharf College (2026/27) and Mulberry London Dock (2029/30)

<sup>9</sup> St Paul's Way Trust (TBD) and Central Foundation Girls (2025/26)

Table 22. Post 16 Pupil Projections: Borough Secondary Schools

Post 16 Pupil Projections: Borough Secondary Schools							
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	
<b>Actual</b>	4,110						
<b>Projection</b>	3,912	4087	4197	4232	4277	4270	
<b>Capacity</b>	4,750	4,750	4,750	4,850	5,150	5,150	
<b>Variance</b>	<b>Pupils</b>	640	663	553	618	873	880
	<b>FE</b>	21.3	22.1	18.4	20.6	29.1	29.3
	<b>%</b>	14%	14%	12%	13%	17%	17%

Fig. 39. Post 16 Projections: Borough Secondary Schools

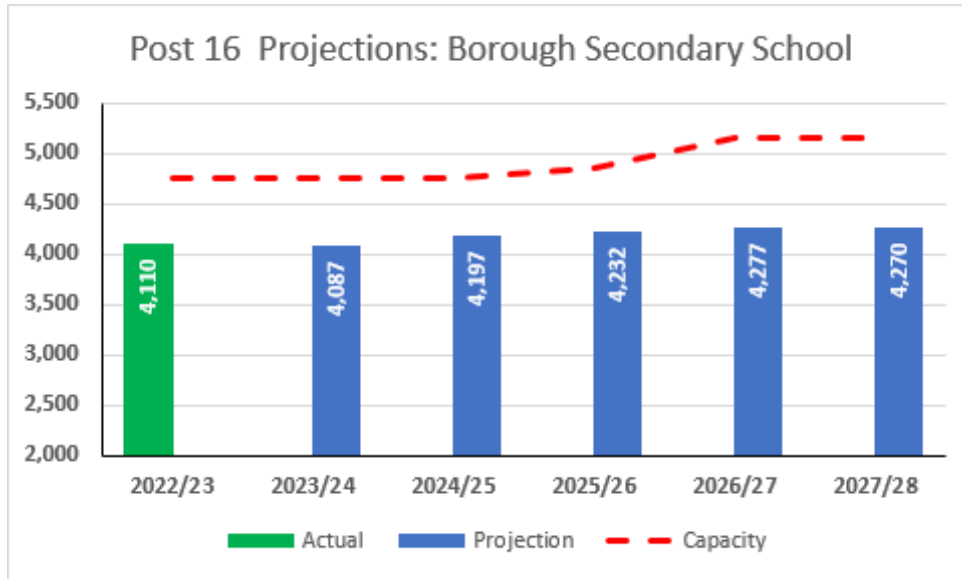
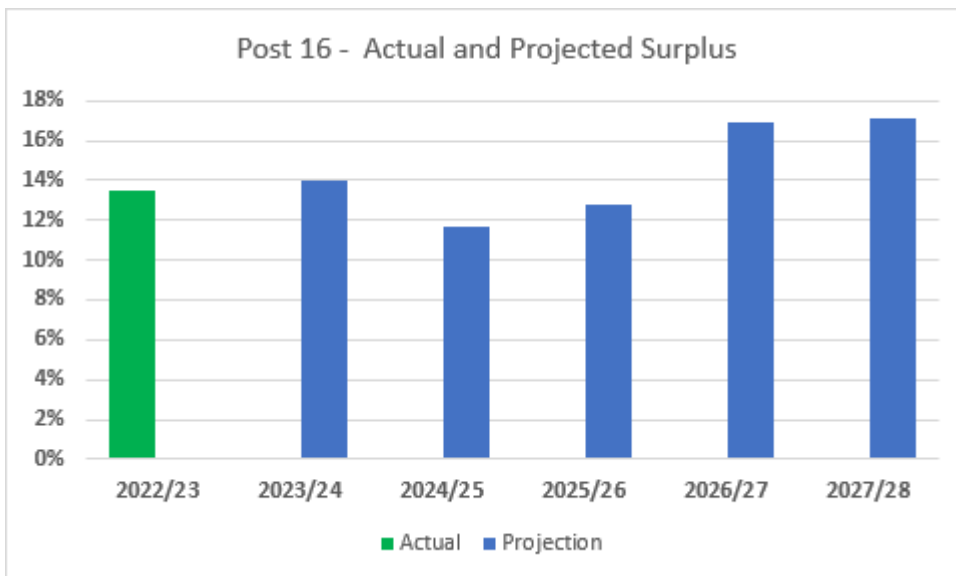


Fig. 40. Post 16 Surpluses



## **15. Pan London Context**

Tower Hamlets is by no means an outlier compared to the rest of London. The initial results from the most recent London Councils 'School Capacity Survey' found that most London boroughs projected a significant decline in reception year pupil numbers. On average, London boroughs are projected to see a 3.9% decrease in reception year numbers by 2027/28 and a 5.9% decrease by 2028/29.

The majority of London Boroughs are also projected to see a decline in Year 7 pupil numbers with a decrease of 5.9% by 2028/29.

London Councils give the reasons behind the downturn in numbers as a decline in birth rates, shifts in the local child population since the right of entry and freedom of movement has been withdrawn from EU nationals, and the continuing fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic with families leaving London.

## **16. Conclusion**

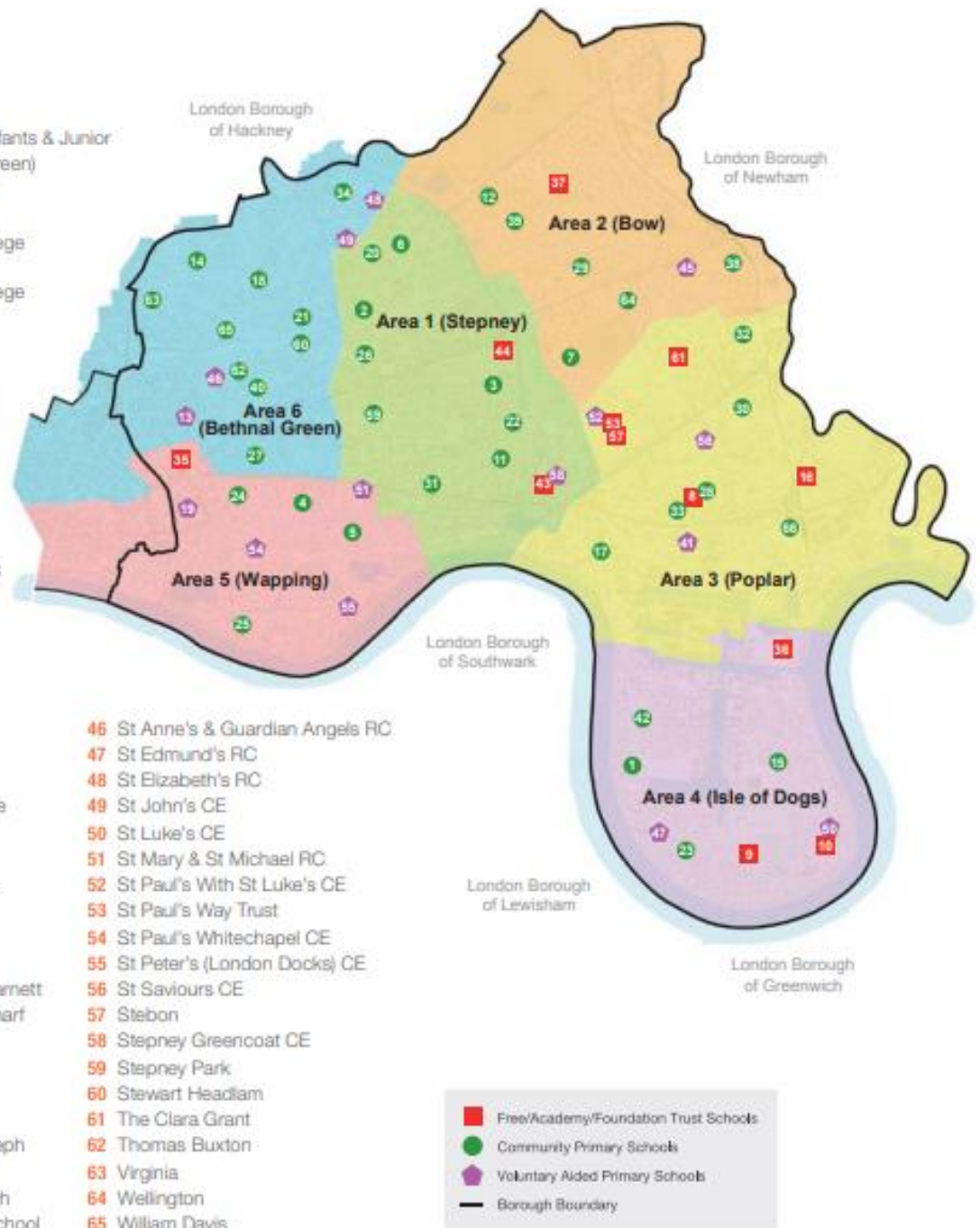
These school roll projections are based on current GLA analysis. It is recognised there is always some level of uncertainty around this type of evaluation, but it is evident from previous iterations that this information has proven a reliable basis to inform school organisation activities and their decision making.

The LA and its school leadership will continue to meet the challenge of falling school rolls, should they continue to materialise, including exploring ways to make surplus places in primary school sustainable. This will be undertaken as part the LA's School Organisation and Capital Investment Strategy. The strategy sets out the key principles and direction that the LA is taking to meet its statutory duty to provide suitable, sufficient and sustainable school places and is overseen by the School Organisation Stakeholders Group (SOSG). This group consists of representatives from all of the key stakeholders, including LA maintained schools, academy trust leaders and the relevant diocesan bodies. It monitors activities across early years, 4 - 16, Post 16 and SEND and reviews the overall strategic development in the context of the LA's statutory duties. The SOSG also advises the LA on options for school organisation, place planning and education capital investment.

# Appendix 1 - LBTH Primary School Planning Areas

- 1 Arnhem Wharf
- 2 Bangabandhu
- 3 Ben Jonson
- 4 Bigland Green
- 5 Blue Gate Fields Infants & Junior
- 6 Bonner (Bethnal Green)
- 7 Bonner (Mile End)
- 8 Bygrove
- 9 Canary Wharf College East Ferry
- 10 Canary Wharf College Glenworth
- 11 Cayley
- 12 Chisenhale
- 13 Christ Church CE
- 14 Columbia
- 15 Cubitt Town
- 16 Culloden
- 17 Cyril Jackson
- 18 Elizabeth Selby & Lawdale Junior
- 19 English Martyrs RC
- 20 Globe
- 21 Hague
- 22 Halley
- 23 Harbinger
- 24 Harry Gosling
- 25 Hermitage
- 26 John Scurr
- 27 Kobi Nazrul
- 28 Lansbury Lawrence
- 29 Malmesbury
- 30 Manorfield
- 31 Marion Richardson
- 32 Marnier
- 33 Mayflower
- 34 Mowlam
- 35 Mulberry Canon Barnett
- 36 Mulberry Wood Wharf
- 37 Old Ford
- 38 Old Palace
- 39 Olga
- 40 Osmani
- 41 Our Lady & St Joseph
- 42 Seven Mills
- 43 Sir William Burrough
- 44 Solebay Primary School
- 45 St Agnes RC

- 46 St Anne's & Guardian Angels RC
- 47 St Edmund's RC
- 48 St Elizabeth's RC
- 49 St John's CE
- 50 St Luke's CE
- 51 St Mary & St Michael RC
- 52 St Paul's With St Luke's CE
- 53 St Paul's Way Trust
- 54 St Paul's Whitechapel CE
- 55 St Peter's (London Docks) CE
- 56 St Saviours CE
- 57 Stebon
- 58 Stepney Greencoat CE
- 59 Stepney Park
- 60 Stewart Headlam
- 61 The Clara Grant
- 62 Thomas Buxton
- 63 Virginia
- 64 Wellington
- 65 William Davis
- 66 Woolmore



# Appendix 2 – Map of Secondary Schools In LBTH



## Secondary schools

- A Bishop Challoner Catholic Federation of Schools
- B Bow School
- C Canary Wharf College Crossharbour
- E George Green's School
- F Langdon Park School
- G London Enterprise Academy
- H Morpeth School
- I Mulberry Academy London Dock
- J Mulberry Academy Shoreditch
- K Mulberry School for Girls
- L Mulberry Stepney Green Maths, Computing and Science College
- M Oaklands School
- N Stepney All Saints CofE Secondary School
- O St Paul's Way Trust School
- P Swanlea School
- Q Wapping High School

## 14-19 provision

- 1 East London Arts & Music
- 2 London East Alternative Provision (LEAP)
- 3 Mulberry University Technical College
- 4 New City College - Tower Hamlets

## Registered independent secondary schools

- R Darul Hadis Latifiah
- S Jamiatul Ummah
- T London East Academy
- U London Islamic School
- V Madani Secondary Girls' School
- W Mahazirul Ulbom London
- X River House Montessori School
- Y The Complete Works Independent School

## Special schools

- S1 Beatrice Tate School
- S2 Ian Mikardo High School
- S3 Phoenix School