



Public consultation

on plans to manage primary school places
in the Yeadon and Guiseley areas of Leeds

Consultation runs:

26th September 2022

to

23rd October 2022

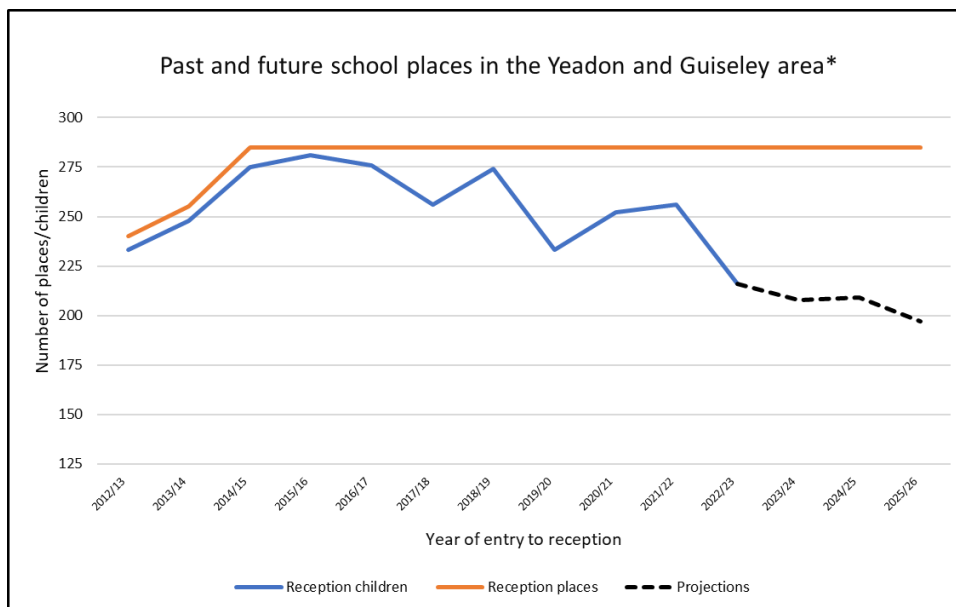


Background

Over several years the Yeadon and Guiseley areas of Leeds, like many others, saw a significant increase in the birth rate. This along with additional demand for places from new housing developments meant that there were not sufficient places in the area for local children. From 2013 several primary schools were temporarily and/or permanently expanded to accommodate the additional children being born who would then go on to apply for school places. If the additional places had not been made available in local schools, a considerable number of children and families would have faced travelling over 2 miles to school each day.

Following the expansion of some schools, and whilst the birth rate remained high, schools were able to meet the demand for reception places and surplus places in schools were minimal. However, over the last few years, the birth rate has been falling both nationally, and within Leeds. In the Yeadon and Guiseley areas there has been less new housing built compared with previous years and the numbers of children from birth to when they reach school age has not grown as it did in the past.

The graph and data table below show the numbers of available places in Yeadon and Guiseley primary schools compared with the total numbers of children on roll in reception each year, and what those numbers are projected to be in the future.



*Graph data represents the total combined number of children on roll in Reception class between academic years 2012/13 and 2022/23 at Guiseley Primary School, Queensway Primary School, Rufford Park Primary School, Yeadon Westfield Infant School, St Oswald's C of E Primary School, and Saint's Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School. It also shows future projected numbers on roll in Reception class between 2023/24 and 2025/26 for the same group of schools.

| Past and future school places in the Yeadon and Guiseley area* | | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Year of entry into Reception | Total number of Reception places available | Number on Roll in Reception | Projected Number on Roll in Reception |
| 2012/13 | 240 | 233 | |
| 2013/14 | 255 | 248 | |
| 2014/15 | 285 | 275 | |
| 2015/16 | 285 | 281 | |
| 2016/17 | 285 | 276 | |
| 2017/18 | 285 | 256 | |
| 2018/19 | 285 | 274 | |
| 2019/20 | 285 | 233 | |
| 2020/21 | 285 | 252 | |
| 2021/22 | 285 | 256 | |
| 2022/23 | 285 | 216 | |
| 2023/24 | 285 | | 208 |
| 2024/25 | 285 | | 209 |
| 2025/26 | 285 | | 197 |

*Chart data represents the total combined number of children on roll in Reception class between academic years 2012/13 and 2022/23 at Guiseley Primary School, Queensway Primary School, Rufford Park Primary School, Yeadon Westfield Infant School, St Oswald's C of E Primary School, and Saint's Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School. It also shows future projected numbers on roll in Reception class between 2023/24 and 2025/26 for the same group of schools.

What issues are schools facing?

Leeds City Council has a responsibility to manage the numbers of places across schools. We are committed to working in close partnership with schools, Governing Bodies, Trusts, and other key partners to respond to any changes to the birth rates and the numbers of school aged children, both when numbers are increasing and when they start to fall. There is a 'cyclical' nature to the birth rate going up and down, and although in the future it is likely that the birth rate will start to increase again, it is not known when that might happen or if numbers will ever reach previous levels.

Currently there are several schools across the area with surplus places available. Having surplus places impacts directly on school budgets and can affect schools' ability to deliver the scope of the National Curriculum in its broadest and fullest sense, ensuring that all children have rich opportunities and experiences across all ages and stages of their schooling. Where schools have deficit budgets, this can lead to limited resourcing and challenges around staffing – both in recruiting and retaining staff. It can also result in reduced opportunities for high-quality professional development which can and does impact on the outcomes of all children, including those who are deemed vulnerable.

It is important that when planning places, we work to ensure some surplus places for families moving into the area and so there is a balance to be had between having sufficient places available, having too many or having too few. If the number of available places across schools in this area were to remain the same, the number of surplus places will increase in the future. School budgets can be planned more effectively when there is less uncertainty around likely future numbers, so reducing potential surplus across the area should offer increased financial stability for all schools.

Based on the data we hold, which includes birth data, parental preferences, and allocations trends, it is our view that the number of places across schools in this area will need to reduce by a minimum of 45 per year group by 2024 for schools to be viable and continue to meet the needs of their learners. This consultation proposal would form part of a wider plan to address the reduction we believe is needed and in addition to the proposed school closure, we would work towards at least one other school reducing its published admission number (PAN) by 2024. Current data suggests that further PAN reductions may also be needed from 2025 and we are currently discussing this with the local schools as we continue to monitor the data we hold.

What are we proposing?

Leeds City Council is consulting on a proposal to close Queensway Primary School (PS) when term ends in July 2023. It is important to us that you know that no decisions have yet been made and that the consultation is an opportunity for us to listen and consider the many different perspectives that parents, staff, Governors, residents and anyone else with an interest in the school will want to share with us.

The consultation will start on 26 September running for four weeks, during which time you will be able to attend public consultation sessions to find out more, ask questions and share your views with us, including any suggestions or alternative plans you would like us to consider. Your views will help us shape the next important steps and so we encourage you to talk to us during the consultation.

Why are we proposing these changes?

Over the last few years, Queensway PS has seen a decline in families preferencing the school and has not filled its reception places, despite having healthy numbers of children living nearest the school in its catchment area. Due to its location, families are close to several other local schools and

many families choose to preference other schools instead of Queensway PS. As of September 2022, the school has 12 children on roll in reception with 18 surplus places in that year group. In the past, new families who moved into the area after offer day and during the school year did not result in the school filling and there is no indication that this would change in the future. The school has set a deficit budget for 2022/23 and in future years.

In reaching a decision to consult on a proposal to close Queensway PS, other options were also considered by the local authority.

The first was to do nothing and to continue to monitor the birth rate. Indications for this area are that the birth rate has fallen again for 2026 school entry and it could be several years before any increases start to favourably impact on school rolls. As we are certain that schools are now facing several years of lower demand for places, accompanied with significant budget challenges doing nothing is not a favourable option.

We also considered whether reducing the number of available places across several other schools could work, as an alternative to proposing closure. However, most schools in this area are part of a Foundation Trust and set their own school admissions arrangements and for some schools, a PAN reduction would not be viable. There are complex issues for Governing Bodies to consider including managing budgets which would be likely to include staffing reductions.

On balance we believe that asking the community about these plans is the best way for us to listen, seek views and consider a wide range of perspectives, as well as understanding if there are any alternative proposals that stakeholders feel we could consider.

What would happen to existing children at the school if the proposal went ahead?

It is expected that if the proposals were to progress to the next stage, a final decision would be reached by March next year. If at that point there was a decision to close the school, we would work with the school admissions team, the Aireborough Learning Partnership Trust and the local schools to support families to secure alternative places for September 2023.

If your child is in receipt of additional funding to meet identified needs, any funding awarded would automatically transfer to the new setting identified for your child. For children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), the Special Educational Needs Statutory Assessment Process (SENSAP)

team would support families to secure an alternative school setting that would meet the child's needs.

What might happen to the Children's Centre Services and the Early Years childcare provided at the school?

The Children's Centre is run as a satellite of Aireborough Children's Centre offering services such as child minders groups, baby weigh and read and explore. The Early Years provision at the school is delivered by Kangaroo Kids and includes before and after school care as well as childcare for 2, 3 and 4 year old children. We are currently exploring potential future uses of the school site including the option for the Children's Centre Services and Early Years provision to remain on the site.

What are the implications for school staff?

Should the school close, the Governing Body will be responsible for supporting staff through the school's agreed staffing reductions procedure. Staff have been provided with details of the Employee Assistance Programme and Trade Union colleagues have been made aware of the proposals.

What is the distance to other local schools from Queensway Primary School?

| School Name | Approximate Walking Distance in miles from Queensway PS |
|--|--|
| Guiseley Primary School | 1 |
| St Oswald's Church of England Primary School | 0.9 |
| Rufford Park Primary School | 0.9 |
| Yeadon Westfield Infant School | 1.1 |
| Yeadon Westfield Junior School | 0.9 |
| Hawksworth Church of England (VA) Primary School | 2.6 |
| Tranmere Park Primary School | 1.8 |
| SS Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School | 1 |
| Rawdon Littlemoor Primary School | 1.6 |
| Rawdon St Peter's Church of England Primary School | 2.2 |

What is the decision-making process and when would a decision be made?

The anticipated decision-making timeframe is set out as key events within the table below. All dates are subject to ongoing approval being granted by Leeds City Council's main decision-making board, Executive Board, at key points in the decision-making process.

| Key Event | Date |
|--|---|
| Consultation opens | 26 September 2022 |
| Public drop-in sessions | Session 1: 5 October 5-7pm Session 2: 12 October 6-8pm Both drop-in sessions will take place at Queensway PS in the school hall |
| Consultation closes | 23 October 2022 |
| Report detailing consultation responses is submitted to Executive Board for consideration and decision on whether the proposal can proceed to the next stage of consultation (representation period) | 23 November 2022 |
| Statutory Notice published and the start of a 4-week period during which representations can be made | 6 January until 3 February 2023 |
| Report detailing any representations made is submitted to Executive Board for consideration and a final decision on whether the proposal can go ahead is made | 15 March 2023 |
| Date of closure | End of school term, July 2023 |

How can I get involved in the consultation?

During the consultation period there will be two public information sessions at which council officers will be available to listen to your views, answer questions and discuss any thoughts you might have about the proposal. Both sessions will be held at Queensway Primary School.

| Date | Attend any time between |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Wednesday 5 th October 2022 | 5pm – 7pm |
| Wednesday 12 th October 2022 | 6pm – 8pm |

Online survey

You can share your views by completing our online survey at www.leeds.gov.uk/schools-and-education/planning-school-places before 4pm on Sunday 23 October 2022.

Other ways to respond

You can also write or email your comments using the contacts below. As long as responses are received by 4pm on 23 October 2022 they will be counted.

Email:

educ.school.organisation@leeds.gov.uk

Post:

PO Box 837

Sufficiency and Participation Team

Leeds City Council

Leeds

LS1 9PZ

If you have any questions or would like a large print or braille copy of this document, please contact us and we'll do our best to help.

If you do not speak English and need help understanding this document, you or a friend can telephone 0113 378 5945. We'll then contact an interpreter. There is no charge to you for this service.