

REPORT TO CABINET

10TH JUNE, 2010

AGENDA ITEM 6

SUPPLY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES ACROSS THE BOROUGH ADDENDUM

HOW PROJECTIONS OF FUTURE PUPIL NUMBERS ARE PRODUCED AND HOW THEY MATCH WITH ACTUAL EXPERIENCE

The Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit (JSU) produces an annual report to accompany the pupil number projections. That report sets out the factors on which the projections are based. This paper is based on the report submitted with the 2009 projections.

How are projections made?

For pupils already in school it is a fairly simple matter to roll forward the current pupil numbers: the Reception Year ("YR") will become Year 1, Y1 will become Year 2, Y2 will become Year 3 and so on. It is more difficult to forecast the number in the reception year. Many of those children will already be attending a nursery unit attached to one of our primary schools (or one in the private and voluntary sectors), but nursery education is not a statutory requirement and some parents decline the offer. Projected reception numbers are therefore derived from the number of births recorded by the Primary Care Trust five years earlier. This table shows the number of births in the borough in each academic year (1 September to 31 August) since 1997/98.

Year of Birth	Year Entering Reception	Births	
1997/98	2002/03	2,076	
1998/99	2003/04	2,112	Present potential primary school population (14,423)
1999/00	2004/05	1,969	
2000/01	2005/06	1,931	
2001/02	2006/07	1,957	
2002/03	2007/08	2,132	
2003/04	2008/09	2,113	
2004/05	2009/10	2,209	
2005/06	2010/11	2,308	
2006/07	2011/12	2,338	
2007/08	2012/13	2,353 (est.)	

The figures in the shaded cells total 14,423 children and represent the likely current primary school population if all those children (and no others) did in fact join a reception class in Stockton-on-Tees. JSU statisticians know from experience that this 14,423 will be close to the actual number of children in our schools, but other factors must be taken into account.

What other factors are considered?

These factors include inward and outward migration, infant mortality, and parents opting for private education. Some of these factors apply to particular schools more than to others. In preparing the projections for individual schools, JSU makes adjustments based on past trends at each school (e.g. pupils leaving or joining mid-year) and on planned housing developments in the immediate area. This introduces further uncertainty because the timing of the start of a housing development and the pace of construction and occupation can vary in response to market conditions.

Long-term projections

The process of annual review allows adjustments to be made to longer-term projections which are of necessity based in part on assumptions about future birth rates. JSU makes use of other administrative data sources such as GP Registrations and Child Benefit Claimants to support estimates of pre-school numbers. Long-term projections are always given "plus or minus X" to reflect the uncertainty over future birth trends.

The table above shows that the number of births since 2005/06 has risen sharply (with even higher percentage increases nationally). What is uncertain is whether that trend will continue into the future. In 2008 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) released new 2006-based population projections for boroughs, which reflect increasing births and fertility rates by projecting increased numbers of children. For Stockton-on-Tees, ONS projected a 15% rise in the 0-4 year population between 2006 and 2016. This implies an increase in births of approximately the same magnitude. JSU has broadly followed the ONS projections and has projected a steady 1.1% increase in births per annum for the borough over the next few years.

How accurate are JSU projections

The JSU projection for spring 2010 made in summer 2009 was 14,670 primary pupils (all age groups from YR to Y6). The actual number of children on roll at our primary schools in January 2010 was 14,583. This number is within 0.6% of the projection.

For reception a comparison between projection and actual numbers is shown below :-

Year	Reception Projection	Reception Actual	Difference
2006	1928	1955	+ 27
2007	2000	1960	- 40
2008	2103	2083	- 20
2009	2107	2097	- 10
2010	2177	2228	+ 51
2011	2303		
2012	2332		
2013	2357		
2014	2440		

It can be seen that the most recent projection underestimated the number that eventually were admitted and future projections predict a steady rise in numbers.