



18th November 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Proposed changes to the published admission number for Oak Farm Primary School for entry in September 2026

The Governing Body of Oak Farm Primary school is seeking to consult local stakeholders regarding Oak Farm's admissions policy, attached to this correspondence, for entry to the school from September 2026 onwards.

The consultation period is between Monday 18th November 2024 and Friday 10th January 2025 inclusive. A copy of the attached proposed admissions policy and letter to parents are both available on the school's website.

The consultation focuses primarily on the following change:

- **A reduction in the published admission number (PAN) from 90 students to 60 students from September 2026 for Reception entry.** If the proposal is agreed, the maximum number of pupils admitted to Reception in 2026, and all subsequent Reception cohorts, would be 60. For children who already have a place at the school in other year groups there will be no change.

The reason for this proposal is that fewer Reception school places are needed in the local area due to reductions in the number of children. Data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) shows that the number of live births in the UK has fallen in six of the previous seven years (to the end of 2022), with the total number of live births in 2022 being the fewest since 2002. Data for Hillingdon confirms a similar local pattern.

Consequently, there has been a significant reduction in the number of Reception places required, which has led to a high level of surplus places in some primary school planning areas. Hillingdon Council does not anticipate that there will be a significant change in this trend in the foreseeable future. Children born in 2021/22, for example, would not join Reception until 2026/27. On the day offers were released to parents of children due to start Reception in 2024 (National Offer Day), 85 children held allocations to Oak Farm Primary School, and we had 73 pupils in Reception at the point of the October school census 2024.

Prior to consulting on this proposal, the Governors have considered that-

- the total number of pupils from Reception to Year 6, as recorded by the school at the October 2024 census, was 544, which is below the current capacity of 630 (i.e. 86 vacancies)
- a large portion of the funding received by schools is directly related to the number of pupils attending the school. Too many vacancies mean that the school does not receive the maximum possible revenue per class. For Oak Farm, not receiving funding for around 86 pupils a year means a loss of approximately £500k of income. Yet teaching in 3 classes means that the school has the same staff costs it would have if there were 90 pupils in each year group. Over the long-term, this is unsustainable.
- forecasts for future Reception intakes suggest the school is likely to have a significant number of vacancies each year if the PAN remains at 90. Reducing the intake to 60 will help Oak Farm operate efficiently and cost-effectively with a sustainable budget.
- due to declining birth rates, the number of Reception places offered by schools in the area is higher than that required by the surrounding population. When there is a high level of surplus places in an area, it is more difficult for all schools to plan for the future since the number of pupils they will admit is unknown. A PAN reduction to 60 at Oak Farm could therefore have a positive, stabilising effect for all local schools.
- the school has a commitment to work with Hillingdon Council, all local schools and multi-academy trusts if there were to be an increase in demand in the future, for example through bulge classes or increasing the PAN again to 90.

The Governors believe that reducing the PAN at Oak Farm Primary School will provide stability for the school's long-term planning and allow it to deliver high quality educational outcomes for the pupils currently on roll. A reduction in PAN would also help ensure that a more appropriate number of places are provided for future pupils, in line with forecasts for the area.

The school's oversubscription admissions criteria

Oversubscription criteria are required when there are more applications for places than the number of places available. It is proposed that the school's oversubscription admissions criteria would be as follows:

1. Looked after and previously looked after children
2. Children who suffer from a long term medical or psychological condition which necessitates their attendance at Oak Farm Primary School rather than an alternative.
3. Children of staff where the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.
4. Children who have a sibling at Oak Farm Primary School at the beginning of the term in which the applicant child is due to start full-time education at the school.
5. All other children, based on the proximity of their home address to Oak Farm Primary School, with priority being given to children living closest to the school. Distance is

measured in a straight line from the child's home address to the school (507730 (Easting), 183934 (Northing) using a GIS system which is based on ordnance survey data.

Additional information, including definitions, is provided in Section 7 of the policy.

This consultation also welcomes feedback on any other aspect of the admissions policy, in line with the statutory Admissions Code 2021 guidance that all admission authorities should consult every seven years.

The consultation is for the attention of:

- parents of children in the locality of Oak Farm Primary School between the ages of two and eighteen;
- other persons in the area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed arrangements;
- all other admission authorities within the local area;
- the local authority;
- any adjoining neighbouring local authorities.

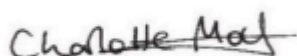
The consultation period commences on **Monday 18th December 2024** and will end on **Friday 10th January 2025 at 3pm.**

Written feedback can be sent in the following ways:

- an email to: office@oakfarmprimary.org.uk referring to admissions consultation in the subject header;
- a written letter addressed: Admissions consultation, sent to the school's postal address.

Following the close of the consultation period, all submitted comments will be considered at a governing body meeting on Thursday 16th January 2025. The final arrangements will be determined by Tuesday 28th January 2025 and published on Oak Farm Primary School's website by the 15th March 2025.

Yours Sincerely,



Charlotte Moore
Chair of Governors