

## **Current pressure on primary school places - Increasing Class Size**

There is an immediate pressure in most primary year groups due to the number of in-year applications received over the summer and early autumn; these have been far higher than in previous years. The current position is that there is less than one class available in 3 year groups and just over this in the remaining year groups. The exact position changes on a daily basis as new applications are received and pupils leave Slough schools. A margin of 1.2% (30 places) is not sufficient to deal with sudden changes in demand.

If applications continue to be received at the current rate then it is likely that new places will be required in some year groups during 2015-16. As all bulge classes have been explored the only option for creating new places in the time required is to increase class sizes. The current suggested class size is 32<sup>1</sup>.

### **Consultation with schools**

This emerging situation was discussed at SSEF on the 18<sup>th</sup> September and at SOG on the 13<sup>th</sup> October. It was agreed through headteacher representation at SOG that schools should be consulted without delay on 2 options to increase capacity to meet this demand, which were bulge classes and increased class sizes.

The consultation resulted in 2 new bulge classes opening at Marish Primary and additional Year 3 places being provided at St Anthony's. No other bulge classes were put forward; this is not surprising as Slough has approached primary head groups and SOG for new classes on many occasions.

The results were discussed at SOG on 23<sup>rd</sup> November. Due to the continuing need for new places it was agreed to request revenue funding from Schools Forum to support schools that expand classes to 32.

### **Why is revenue required?**

Schools responded with a number of reasons as part of the consultation but these mainly focussed on the additional support that would be required by the new pupils, many of whom will have EAL and be new to the country.

### **How will the funding apply?**

The proposal is that a school will receive Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) funding for the time that the additional places are required. The places are to be agreed in advance with the LA with start dates confirmed in writing. As funding for the +2 places will be provided in advance, a school will need to commit to taking the pupils for one or both of the following periods:

- Start date to Easter
- Easter to July (year end).

If a pupil moves on from a class of 32 then the Authority should be immediately informed in order that a new pupil can be placed if one is waiting, as with any available place. If the additional place is no longer required then the supplementary funding would be discontinued once the funded period expires and not renewed..

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<sup>1</sup> **Admissions Code:** For the KS1 year groups, class size legislation applies. Infant classes must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single teacher, although additional children can be admitted in exceptional circumstances. If admitted the additional children are defined as excepted pupils while they are in the infant class or until the class number falls back to 30. The Admissions Code lists categories of pupils that can be considered as excepted. The list includes children who move into the area outside the normal admissions round, where there are no other available places within a reasonable distance. Many of the children without places fall into this category.