

## **Crowthorne consultation on admission arrangements summary**

Below is a summary of the responses to the consultation proposing a change the designated area of Crowthorne CofE Primary School for the 2027-28 academic year

A consultation was held from 12 November 2025 to 7 January 2026 in line with The School Admissions Code 2021.

The consultation was published on the Bracknell Forest website and sent to all schools, neighbouring local authorities and admission authorities within the local authority's relevant area. Schools were asked to share the consultation with all parents through their parent communication processes.

As the school is designated with a religious character the relevant denominational body was also consulted in line with the School Admissions Code 2021.

In addition to this, physical leaflets were distributed to all individual properties within both the existing and proposed designated area, and the surrounding areas.

Posters were sent to schools, nurseries, preschools, Drs surgeries, community centres and sport centres in the area as well as the Wokingham Without Parish Council and Wellington College.

### **Responses**

A total of 77 responses were received

44 (57%) responses supported the change

33 (43%) responses were opposed to the change

Of the 44 respondents that were **in support** of the change:

27 stated that they were parents with a child already attending Crowthorne CE Primary School with:

- 15 living outside of the current or proposed designated areas
- 10 living within the proposed designated area
- 2 did not share their location

3 of these parents, living outside of the current or proposed designated areas, also have younger children wishing to obtain places in the future.

The other 17 responses were received from other interested parties with:

- 12 living outside of the current or proposed designated areas
- 2 living within the proposed designated
- 1 living within Bucklers Park
- 2 did not share their location

Of the 33 respondents that **opposed** the change:

12 stated that they were parents with a child already attending Crowthorne CE Primary School with:

- All 12 living within Bucklers Park

19 responses were received from other interested parties with:

- 10 living within Bucklers Park
- 1 living within the proposed designated
- 2 living outside of the current or proposed designated areas

- 6 did not share their location

2 responses were received from Crowthorne CofE primary school representatives.

## Feedback summary

Those who supported the proposed change agreed with the proposals as presented, noting that families living closer to Crowthorne CofE Primary School would benefit from improved access.

Additional advantages were highlighted, such as reduced traffic around the school and positive environmental impacts if priority were given to those living closer.

Some feedback suggested that the proposals could go further to ensure fairness for families with children already attending the school, such as considering a higher priority for siblings within the oversubscription criteria.

Within the responses agreeing to the proposed change, concerns were also raised about the potential disadvantage to Bucklers Park residents, with suggestions that reshaping the designated area, rather than reverting to a previously used one, might offer a fairer solution.

Those opposing the change raised the following concerns:

- **Reduced School Choice:** Removing Bucklers Park from the designated area would substantially limit school options for families living in the development, creating uncertainty and potential disadvantage compared to other local communities. Wokingham Borough Council has recently conducted their own consultation on a proposal to remove designated areas completely from all maintained primary schools in their area. If academy schools in the Wokingham area adopt a similar approach, there is a potential risk that Bucklers Park could be left without any designated area schools. This scenario would lead to uncertainty for families regarding school admissions and could impact community expectations further around local school access.
- **Impact on Homebuyers' Expectations:** Many families expressed that they purchased properties in Bucklers Park with the clear understanding that the development fell within the designated area for Crowthorne CofE Primary School and that changing this now undermines those expectations.
- **Community Cohesion:** Respondents expressed strong concerns that excluding Bucklers Park from the designated area would weaken its connection to the Crowthorne community, leaving residents feeling disregarded and excluded from the local identity they were promised and have been a part of.
- **Fairness and Inclusivity:** Respondents felt strongly that proceeding with the proposals as currently drafted risks creating a new form of unfairness. The changes do not reflect true inclusivity within the local area. A more balanced approach, such as reshaping the designated area rather than reverting to an outdated boundary, was widely suggested as a fairer solution.
- **School Sustainability:** School representatives of Crowthorne CofE Primary School highlighted that housing affordability within Crowthorne itself limits young families' ability to buy locally. Excluding Bucklers Park could accelerate declining pupil

numbers, threatening the school's long-term viability and its ability to serve the wider community.

- **Securing places for siblings:** Concerns were raised over the ability for siblings within Bucklers Park to secure places at Crowthorne CofE primary school after being removed from the designated area and expressed concerns that although the 'Protected Sibling Status' offers some reassurance, respondents felt it only provides a short-term safeguard and does not address the long-term implications for growing families within the development.

## School Place Planning and Capacity

Numerous respondents, both supporting and opposing the change, raised concerns about school place planning and capacity.

Given the number of references to school place planning / sufficiency the following section is in response to these comments.

- Birth Rate – Birth rate in Bracknell Forest Council remains stable

Data Sources: ONS – National Figures, Bracknell Forest - NHS Trust

Year	National – total live births	Bracknell Forest – total live births
2020	613936	1366
2021	624828	1458
2022	605479	1309
2023	591072	1222
2024	594677	1369

- Overall volume of new school places. There are currently 131 free primary school places available within 2 miles of the centre of the development, several of which have reduced their pupil admission number in recent years, allowing for capacity to be reviewed if the need arises. Within the planning area (Crowthorne and Sandhurst) there is an overall surplus of 13.7% (July 2025). Monitoring of surplus capacity continues in the area to react to demographic changes.
- New Primary School. The new school on the Bucklers Park estate was re-designated to SEND in ([September 2023](#)). No primary school is planned in the development as it is unlikely to be a sustainable ongoing concern (see overall volume of school places). Nearby schools collectively have sufficient capacity, current and projected pupil numbers do not justify opening a new mainstream school, and doing so could risk viability across the area.
- Uncertainty on the SEND School. Currently awaiting DfE funding clarification and legislative certainty if the proposed school proceeds.
- Pupil Yield for new housing developments: Bracknell Forest Council applies forecast methodology to monitor the demographic changes as a result of new housing developments as per DfE guidelines available at [Estimating pupil yield from housing development](#) which is updated annually according to a five year forecast.

- General concerns around school place sufficiency in Bracknell Forest were expressed. Bracknell Forest Council recognised the need to update the School Place Plan and capacity strategy 2023-2028 early to reflect changes in local need. [School Places Plan and Capacity Strategy 2023 to 2028](#). A full public consultation is planned to start on a revised strategy in Spring 2026 which has been developed in conjunction with local stakeholders. We encourage as many community members as possible to contribute to this vital piece of work.
- Designated area appropriateness overall. Both supporting comments and objections recognise that the designated areas for the schools, and possibly planning areas overall are potentially outdated and a more holistic view would be of benefit to ensure fairness. It would be appropriate to consider exploring this in greater depth.

## Outcome

Although a higher proportion of responses indicated support for the proposals, the decision cannot be based solely on the numerical balance of support versus opposition. Equal weight must be given to all arguments presented.

Given the feedback highlighting concerns around fairness in the proposed designated area, together with the uncertainty surrounding the outcome of Wokingham Borough Council's consultation on removing designated areas, which could further impact the same area already affected by the proposed change to Crowthorne CofE Primary School, it is clear that proceeding with the proposals in their current form would not be fair or equitable to all parties. We therefore believe it would not be appropriate to move forward at this time and that further consideration of alternative options is required.

Not proceeding with the change at this time will provide an opportunity for further consideration and allow time for:

- The outcome of the consultation conducted by Wokingham Borough Council to remove designated areas from all its maintained primary schools to conclude.
- Further information to be obtained on the likelihood of local Wokingham academy schools adopting the same approach as Wokingham Borough Council regarding removing designated areas for their maintained primary schools.
- Further consideration to be given to the shape of the proposed designated area for Crowthorne CofE Primary School to ensure fairness for all residents.
- Consider if there is value in a wider review of all designated areas as opposed to just that of Crowthorne CofE Primary School.
- Allow time for the new School Place Plan and Capacity Strategy to be consulted on and finalised which focuses on adaptability of the school estate to deliver high quality education for all children within the borough.
- Ensure any future proposal is fair and equitable to all those in the community.

Any future adjustments should be informed by these reviews to ensure a fair, inclusive, and sustainable solution for all communities.

We thank all those that responded to the consultation and appreciate the time taken to share your views.