

Mytham Primary School PAN Reduction – Frequently asked questions

The proposal for consultation

The local authority is proposing to reduce the PAN at Mytham Primary School from 50 places to 30 places with effect from the 2026 reception intake.

Why is this change necessary?

Nationally, there has been a decline in the birth rate, meaning that there are fewer pupils entering reception classes, resulting in vacant places in many schools.

Pupil projections for the schools within the Little Lever area are showing a surplus of places for 2026 of 20%. This above the 5-10% ideal. Projections show that this surplus will increase year on year moving forward to a peak of 36% in 2028-29. Previously projections in this area had shown a small drop in the intake number which then rose again. This has reversed over the last two sets of projections and there is now a forecast continued decline in the intake resulting in significant surplus capacity.

This increasing surplus is mirrored across the wider planning area, with Area 4 South East Bolton (within which Little Lever sits, along with Farnworth and Kearsley) showing a surplus of reception places for 2026 of 21% rising to a peak of 31% in 2028-29.

If the surplus of places is not addressed, schools within this area will be placed at significant financial risk due to reducing rolls. This is further exacerbated by three schools in this area have unusual PANs.

Why change the admission number at Mytham Primary School?

There are 5 schools within the Little Lever sub area. Two schools are one form of entry (30 places) – Masefield and St Matthews CE (Little Lever) Primary Schools. Two schools have a PAN of 20 – St Teresa's RC and Bowness Primary School, and Mytham Primary has a PAN of 50.

Given this, it is most economical to reduce the PAN at Mytham Primary School and rationalise this to a 30-intake school. Removing capacity from other schools in the area

would place those schools in a potentially vulnerable financial position. Mytham struggles with running mixed classes and is currently below capacity in many year groups, placing financial pressure on the school. Therefore, Mytham Primary School is the preferred option to reduce numbers to address surplus places.

What will happen to children who have a preference for Mytham Primary School but can not be offered a place due to the reduced admission number?

This will affect a small number of children. There is sufficient capacity within the other Little Lever schools for any children with a preference for Mytham who cannot be offered one of the 30 places, to be accommodated at another local school. The admission offer process will identify a place at a second/third preference school or, if necessary, an alternative offer at the next nearest school with a place remaining available. The capacity in the area (with 20 places at Mytham removed) is 130 places. In 2024 there were 122 first preferences for schools in Little Lever. This means that there are sufficient places within the Little Lever area to accommodate all children who require one.

Who are we consulting?

Consultees will include:

- Parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen
- Other admission authorities within Bolton including the Academy trusts
- Governing bodies
- Adjoining neighbouring local authorities
- RC and CE Diocesan bodies and the British Council for Mosques
- General public

Consultation will take place between 8 November 2024 and 20 December 2024.