



Consultation on Proposed Reduction of Published Admission Number (PAN)

School: **Oak Tree Primary School**

Admission Authority: **Durrington Multi Academy Trust (DMAT)**

Current PAN: **90**

Proposed PAN: **60**

Implementation Date: **Admissions for September 2028**

Consultation Opens: **Monday 19th October 2026**

Consultation Closes: **Monday 30th November 2026**

1. Introduction

Durrington Multi Academy Trust (DMAT), as the admission authority for Oak Tree Primary School, is consulting on a proposal to reduce the school's **Published Admission Number (PAN)** from 90 places to 60 places for Reception admissions from **September 2028**.

The PAN is the number of children the school admits into Reception each year.

The proposal has been developed following a review of:

- Current pupil numbers
- Local birth-rate and demographic trends
- Forecasted demand for school places
- The school's financial sustainability
- Local authority place-planning data.

The purpose of this consultation is to seek the views of parents, carers, staff, local schools, the local authorities and other interested parties before a final decision is made.

No changes are proposed for pupils currently attending the school.

2. Why is this Change Being Proposed?

This change is being proposed due to:

- Falling numbers of reception applications
- Significant surplus capacity across the school
- Lower pupil numbers in the area than the current PAN was designed to accommodate.
- Increasing and significant financial pressures associated with maintaining staffing and resources for a larger admission capacity

The current PAN no longer reflects the level of local parental demand for places at the school.

A reduction would allow the school to align its admission arrangements with expected demand while continuing to provide high-quality educational provision.

The school currently has a total capacity of 630 pupils. There is therefore a substantial surplus of over 200 places, as shown below:

Recent pupil numbers:

Date	Number on Roll
January 2025	430
July 2026	405
October 2026	400

3. Financial Sustainability

As schools are funded largely on a per-pupil basis, therefore maintaining a PAN significantly above actual demand creates financial challenges. A PAN of 90 requires the school to plan and staff for three forms of entry, even when demand is more consistent with two forms of entry.

In Reception and Key Stage 1, infant class size legislation means that an intake slightly above 60 pupils can trigger the requirement for an additional class and teacher. The financial consequences are therefore completely disproportionate. Funding generated by one or two additional pupils does not go anywhere towards meeting the cost of employing an additional teacher or providing associated classroom support and resources. The result is an unfunded staffing commitment that must be absorbed by the school's budget. Funding also lags and any funding does not appear until the following year.

4. Future Local Capacity

The wider Burgess Hill planning area also contains surplus capacity. In 2024 there were 390 Reception places available compared with 345 pupils entering Reception, leaving 45 places unfilled. January 2025 data showed 2,748 primary places across the planning area with 2,483 pupils on roll, representing approximately 90% occupancy.

Significant additional primary capacity is also planned through the Brookleigh (formerly Northern Arc) housing development, including:

- An all-through school with a primary phase providing 420 places and a long-term PAN of 60.
- A second primary school providing a further 420 places with a PAN of 60.

Current timescales indicate the first school could open from 2028 onwards, with the second following from 2035 onwards, subject to housing delivery.

These developments will significantly increase available primary school places in the Burgess Hill area over time.

5. Impact of the Proposal

DMAT believes that reducing the PAN from 90 to 60:

- Better reflects current and projected demand for school places.
- Supports the long-term financial sustainability of the school.
- Allows resources to be focused on improving educational outcomes.
- Maintains substantial capacity within the school.
- Does not affect pupils already attending Oak Tree Primary School.
- Can be reversed in the future if there is sustained growth in demand

The proposal would not lead to a reduction in the school's existing accommodation and facilities. The school will continue to serve its local community and maintain sufficient capacity to meet anticipated demand.

6. Educational Improvement

Since joining DMAT, Oak Tree Primary School has benefited from significant investment and support.

Leadership capacity has been strengthened through the appointment of substantive senior leaders and ongoing Trust support. Pupil outcomes, curriculum provision and the school environment continue to improve. The Trust wishes to ensure that the school's admission arrangements support its continued improvement and long-term sustainability.

7. How to Respond to This Consultation

We welcome comments and feedback on this proposal.

Respondents are invited to comment on the following:

1. Do you support the proposed reduction in PAN from 90 to 60?
2. What impact do you believe the proposal may have on children, families or the community?
3. Are there any alternative approaches that should be considered?
4. Do you have any other comments regarding the proposal?

Responses can be submitted by email or by post:

Email: **admin@dmat.education**

Post: **PAN Consultation
Oak Tree Primary School
Junction Road
Burgess Hill
West Sussex
RH15 0PZ**

All responses received by the closing date will be considered before a final decision is made by the DMAT Board of Trustees.

8. Who will be consulted

The consultation proposal will be shared with:

- Parents and carers
- School staff
- West Sussex County Council
- East Sussex County Council
- Local schools, academies and trusts
- Local parish, town and community representatives
- Any other individuals or organisations with an interest in local school admissions

9. Next Steps Following the consultation

1. All responses will be reviewed

2. A report will be presented to the Board of Trustees
3. Trustees will decide whether to proceed with the proposed PAN reduction
4. If approved, the revised admission arrangements will be determined and published in accordance with the School Admissions Code for entry to Reception year at the school from September 2028 onwards.