The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has a pupil projection model that utilises:

- (a) GP Registrations data from the NHS, which provides an annual count of children aged 0-18.
- (b) The borough’s annual pupil census information.
- (c) Information about the demand arising from new housing.
- (d) Cohort survival rates.

Projections for primary and first schools

Using the GP registrations and school annual census data, it is possible to calculate the relationship between the number of children living in each area, and the number of children starting school in each area. This is calculated for all of the potential ‘relationships’ between areas. Ascot, for example, would have a figure for Ascot, Datchet/Wraylsbury, Maidenhead and Windsor.

The relationship is also calculated over time, so that the intake numbers into school are compared with the relevant cohort in the GP registration data. This calculation is made by comparing the school census data in a specific year with the resident cohort data from the GP registration data of the same year. For example, the Maidenhead Reception intake in 2013 is compared with the number of children aged 5 and resident in Maidenhead in the 2013 health authority data. Calculating over time provides an average, which is weighted to more recent years.

As the borough now has five comparable, sequential, GP registration datasets, we are also now able to calculate the migration into the borough for the pre-school cohorts. The change in the size of a cohort aged 0 is tracked as it moves up through subsequent GP registration datasets, providing a rate of average change. This is adjusted to remove the possible impact of new housing built in the period. This rate of average change is applied to the pre-school cohorts in the latest health authority data, to provide four future intake cohorts. In this case, these are for the 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 Reception intakes. This approach means that the 2020 intake, for example, is now based on a cohort size that has been adjusted to take account of likely movement into the area in the intervening period.

This approach was first used in the 2017 projections, and there are some indications it over-estimated the demand. This was partially down to a measurable decrease in inward migration anyway, and moving to a weighted average from the five datasets (last year it was four), should improve the accuracy in the 2018 projections. Nevertheless, this is a new methodology locally, so it will need to be tested again against the 2019 Reception intakes.

The movement in from out-borough is generally assumed to remain at a rate equivalent to the weighted average of the preceding five years, in the absence of more detailed information about population in neighbouring areas.

The intake into the schools in each area is, therefore, the sum of the relevant average applied to the adjusted number of resident children in each area, plus the out-borough calculation. Future new housing is taken into account.
New housing
The borough has recently adopted new pupil yield figures, based on the actual numbers of children resident in any property built in the local authority since 2009 and attending a borough school. As the analysis clearly shows that the age of a new property has an impact on the yield, the new pupil yields are broken down by age. This means that, for example, a two bedroom flat has a yield figure for when it is one year old, two years old, three years old and so on.

The borough’s planning policy has provided a detailed trajectory for the new housing in the borough, by location, timing, size and type of property. Applying the new yields to this trajectory provides a much improved understanding of the future impact of new housing on demand for school places. The resulting housing demand is then added to each area’s projection.

Projections for middle, upper and secondary schools
These are calculated along the same lines as the primary and first school projections, except that the base data is resident pupils, rather than the GP registrations data. ‘Resident pupils’ refers to the pupils on roll in borough schools (including out-borough children).

In essence, this means that the secondary school projections in Maidenhead, for example, are based on the numbers in the borough’s primary schools. The relationship is not calculated on the basis of the numbers transferring to a particular secondary school from X, Y and Z primary schools, but on the basis of where the children in those primary schools live. This avoids distortions arising from changing parental preference at a primary school level.

The normal cohort survival rate calculations are used to capture migration in and out of future transfer cohorts, again adjusted for housing.

Monitoring of pupil projections
The performance of the pupil projections against actual numbers is monitored annually, with targets in place for achieving accuracy of +/-3% (or 10 places) or better.