



Department  
for Education

**Regional Schools Commissioner's Office  
North West London and South Central  
Floor 3  
34 Clarendon Road  
Watford  
WD17 1JJ**

14 August 2019

Dear Mr Thompson,

Thank you for your letter of 22nd July, regarding the provision of primary school places in your area. I am aware of the concerns around the future of the 'bulge' provision at the Bowes Southgate Green site and my team have been supporting Enfield local authority and Enfield Learning Trust in their work to explore the available options.

I understand that this work is ongoing following a constructive meeting with the local community on 18 July, also including representatives from Broomfield school which owns the Southgate Green site. Following the meeting, as you note, Enfield local authority are reviewing the latest available data on pupil numbers to inform next steps. As I am sure you know, responsibility for balancing the supply and demand of school places locally rests with the local authority and we look to them to ensure there are sufficient places for children in their area, and that schools serve the needs of their local communities.

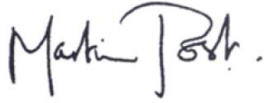
In your letter, you specifically asked for further information on the Groveland's Park site. As you will be aware, the site has a series of challenges due to its historic nature and protected open space designation. Any changes or potential developments to its use would require thorough evidence which demonstrates that there are exceptional circumstances for this, and there is a high risk of failure to achieving planning consent to build on sites such as these. One of the requirements is that it would require a very strong basic need justification. Currently, there is insufficient evidence of this and the department has therefore put further investigation of the site on hold, although the basic need situation is reviewed regularly with the local authority.

If the DfE were ever to investigate further the Groveland's Park site, it would have to be for a new primary free school that has been approved through the free schools application process. Local authorities are, however, able to establish new schools through the 'presumption' route where they have clearly identified the need for a new school in their area. Under this route, the local authority is responsible for providing the site for the new school and meeting the costs of building the school.

Finally, in terms of the current basic need picture, the London Borough of Enfield (LBE) has confirmed that there are sufficient primary places across the borough (currently 6% over demand rising to 10% in 2022/23). Published School Capacity and Planning data (SCAP18) supports this and indicates there are surplus places at the borough level at present and for the next few years. Although there is a projected shortfall of 38 places from 2022/23, the local authority's current view is that this will be managed through bulge classes in local provision if necessary.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to write to me. I hope this response helps to clarify the position.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Post". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'P'.

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**Martin Post**  
**Regional Schools Commissioner, North West London and South Central**