Pupil Forecasting

Do local authorities need to re-think their methodologies?

Agenda

- The current situation
- National Population Projections
- Regional variations
- Changing educational landscape
- Our current methodology
- Shortcomings of methodology
- Discussion

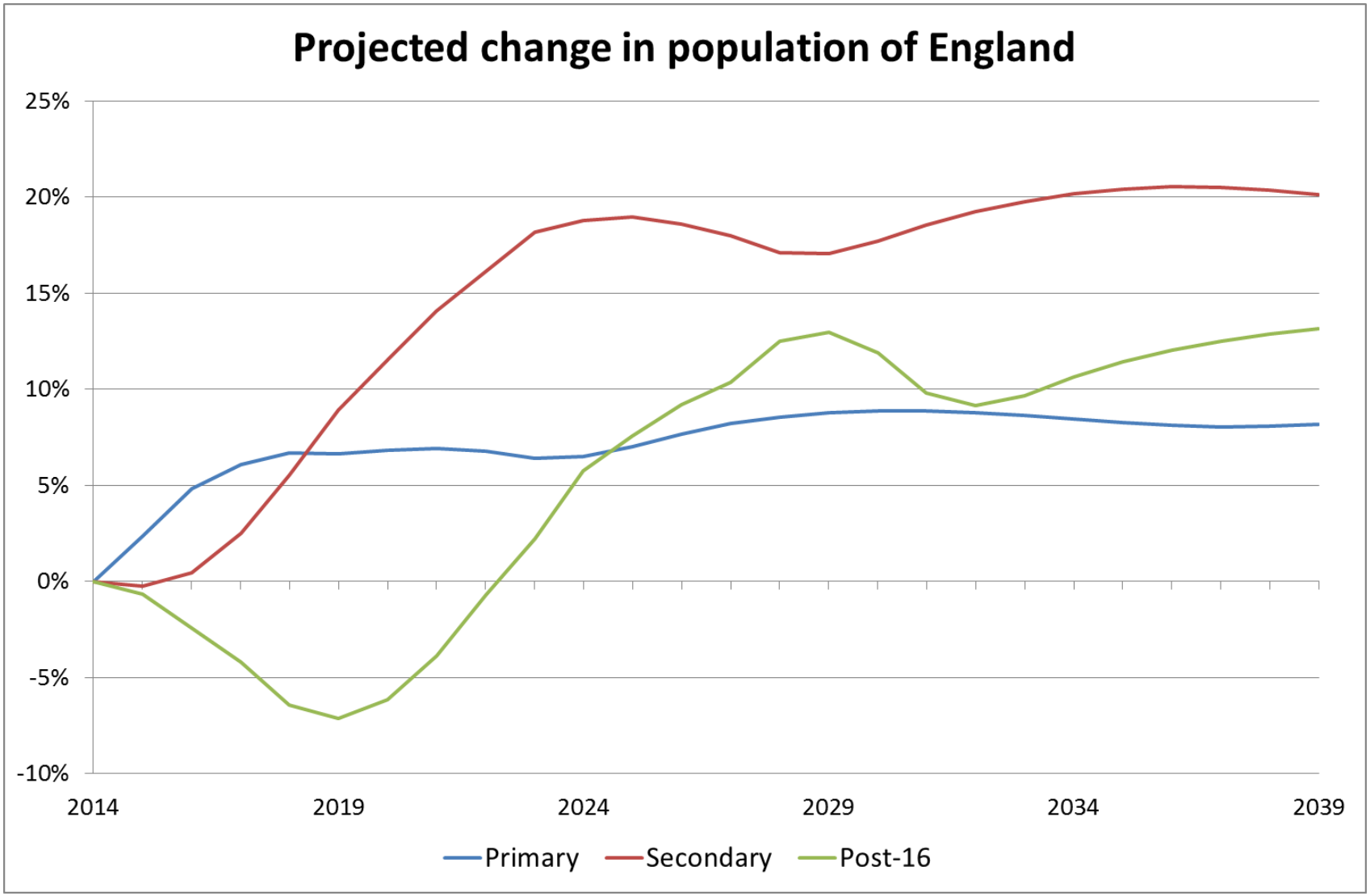
The current situation

- Recent years have seen a well reported increase in primary numbers
- Secondary numbers are starting to grow
- Number of births peaked in 2012 and dropped nearly 5% by 2014
- The UK population is projected to grow by almost 10 million over the next 25 years
- Increasing academisation and free schools are reducing local authorities' control over school places

National Population Projections

"*The number of children (those aged 0 to 15) is projected to grow by 8.8% between 2014 and 2039. Whilst the number of children aged under 5 is not projected to change much over the period, the number of primary school age (ages 5 to 11) children is projected to increase by 9.2% to reach 5.8 million by mid-2039, while the number of children aged 12 to 15 is projected to rise by 17.8% to 3.4 million. These rises reflect lower numbers of births in the first decade of this century, leading to a smaller population in that age group being used as the base for the comparison.*" (National Population Projections: 2014-based Statistical Bulletin, ONS, 29 October 2015)

National Population Projections



National Population Projections

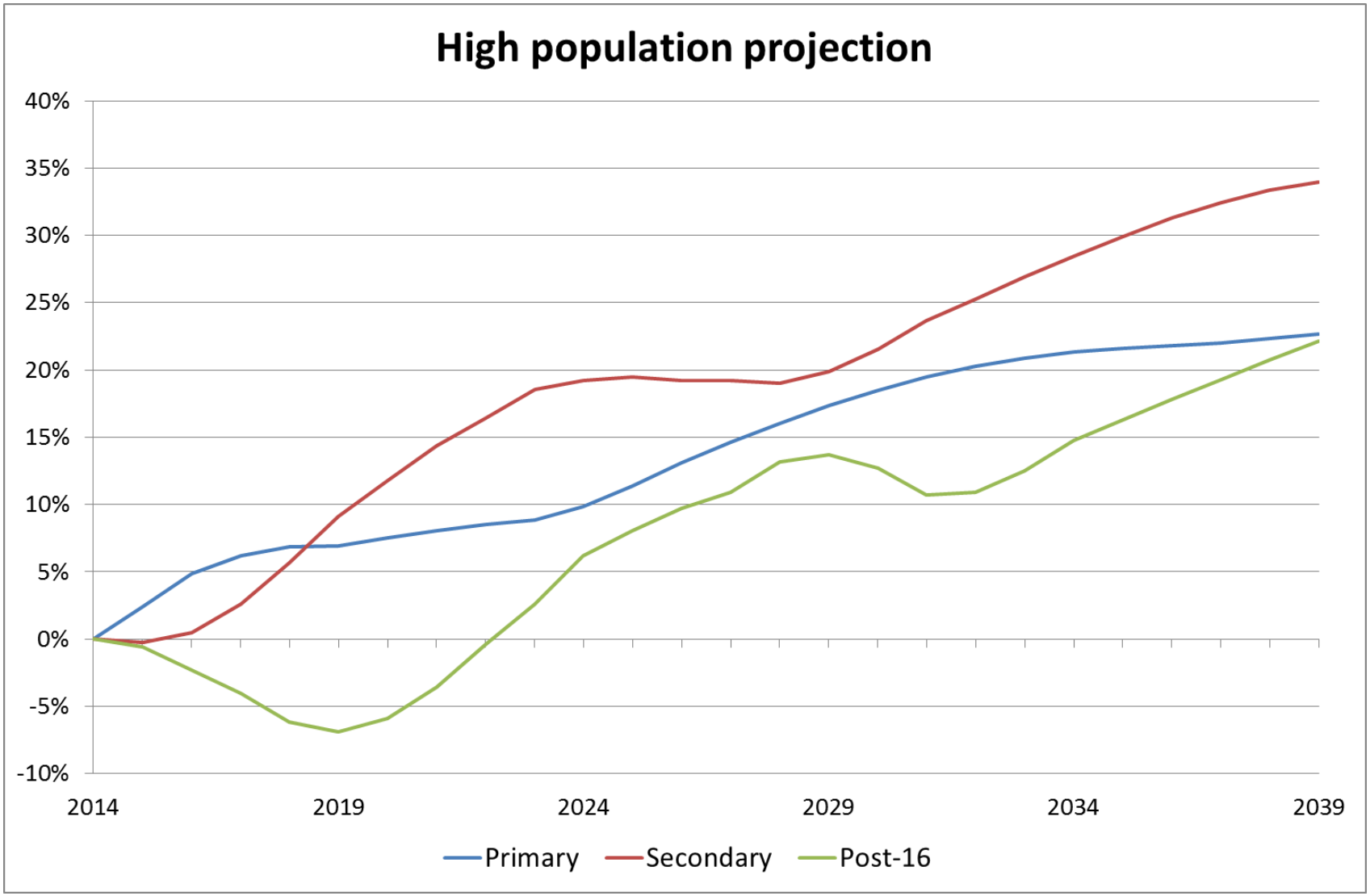
The projections show what we expected over the short term:

- Birth rates have slowed, and the current peak Reception intake is likely to be 2016 (subject to local variation)
- Secondary intakes should increase significantly for the next 7 years
- Post-16 populations will decline until around 2019 before increasing over 10 years, but this may not correspond with a reduction in pupil numbers due to RPA

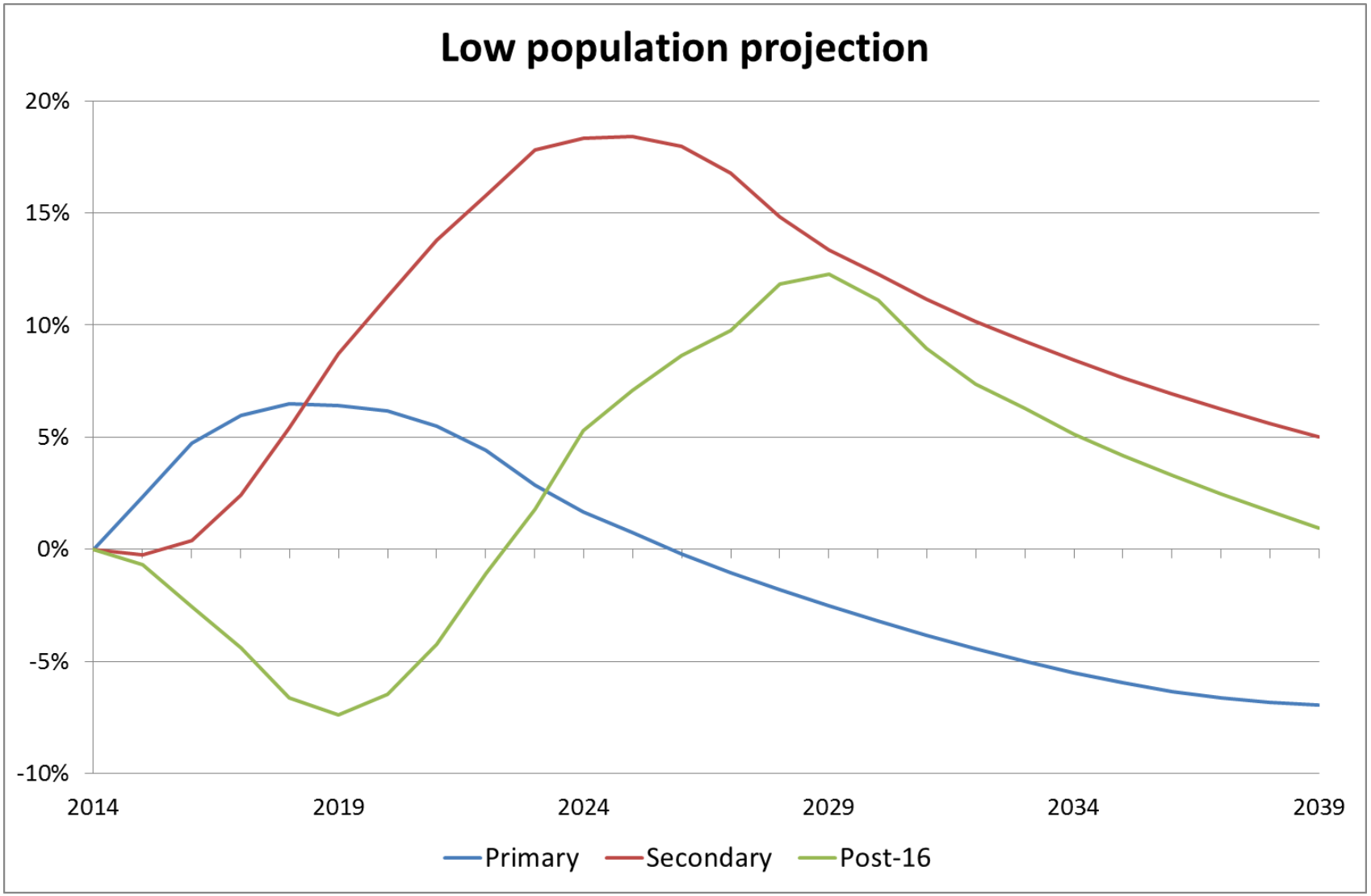
National Population Projections

- Principal projection assumes steady birth rate and migration
- Migration has limited direct impact on numbers of younger children
- Longer term impact of migration is due to increased number of births
- ONS produce several variants
  High population assumes high fertility and net migration
  Low population assumes low fertility and net migration

National Population Projections



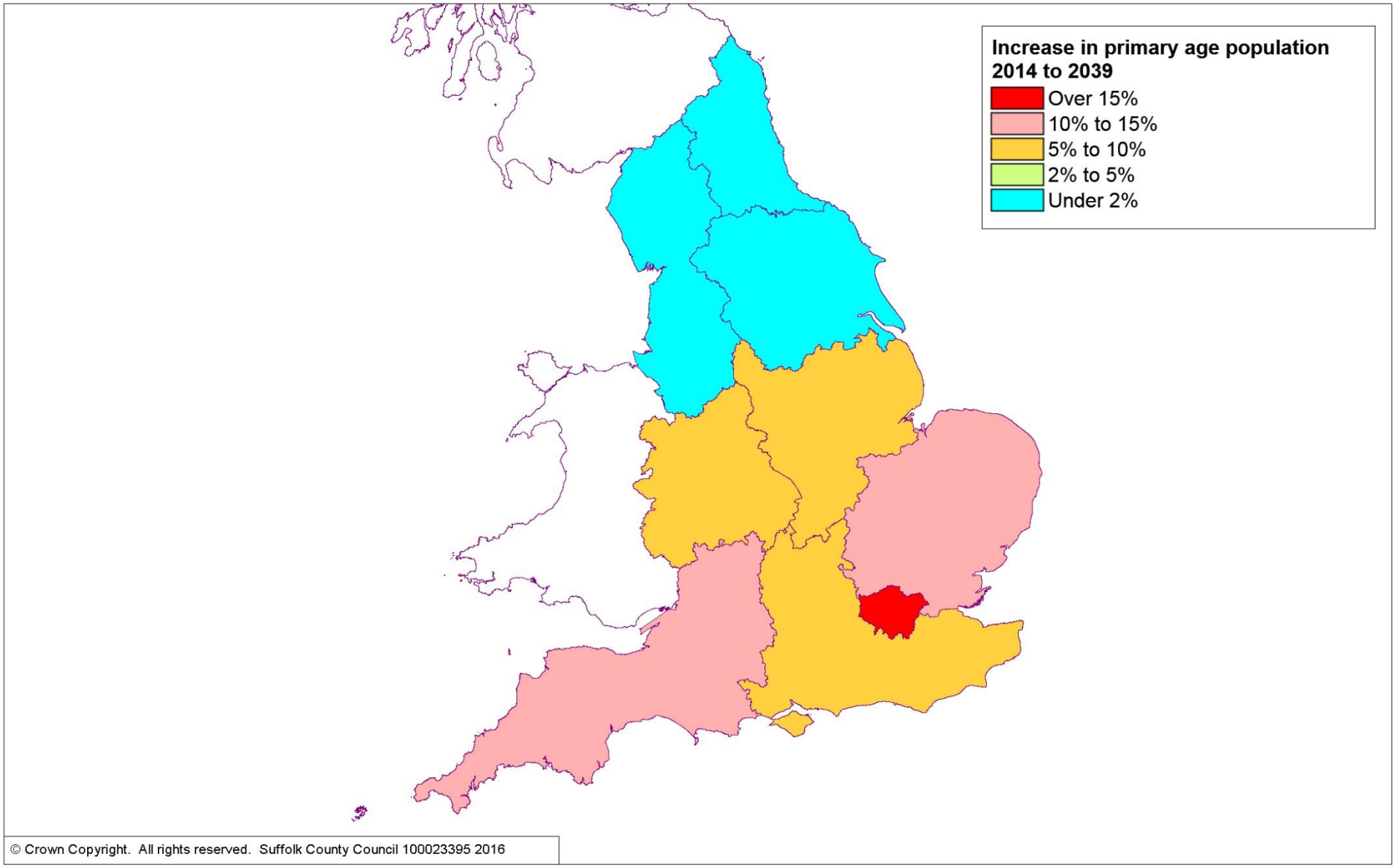
National Population Projections



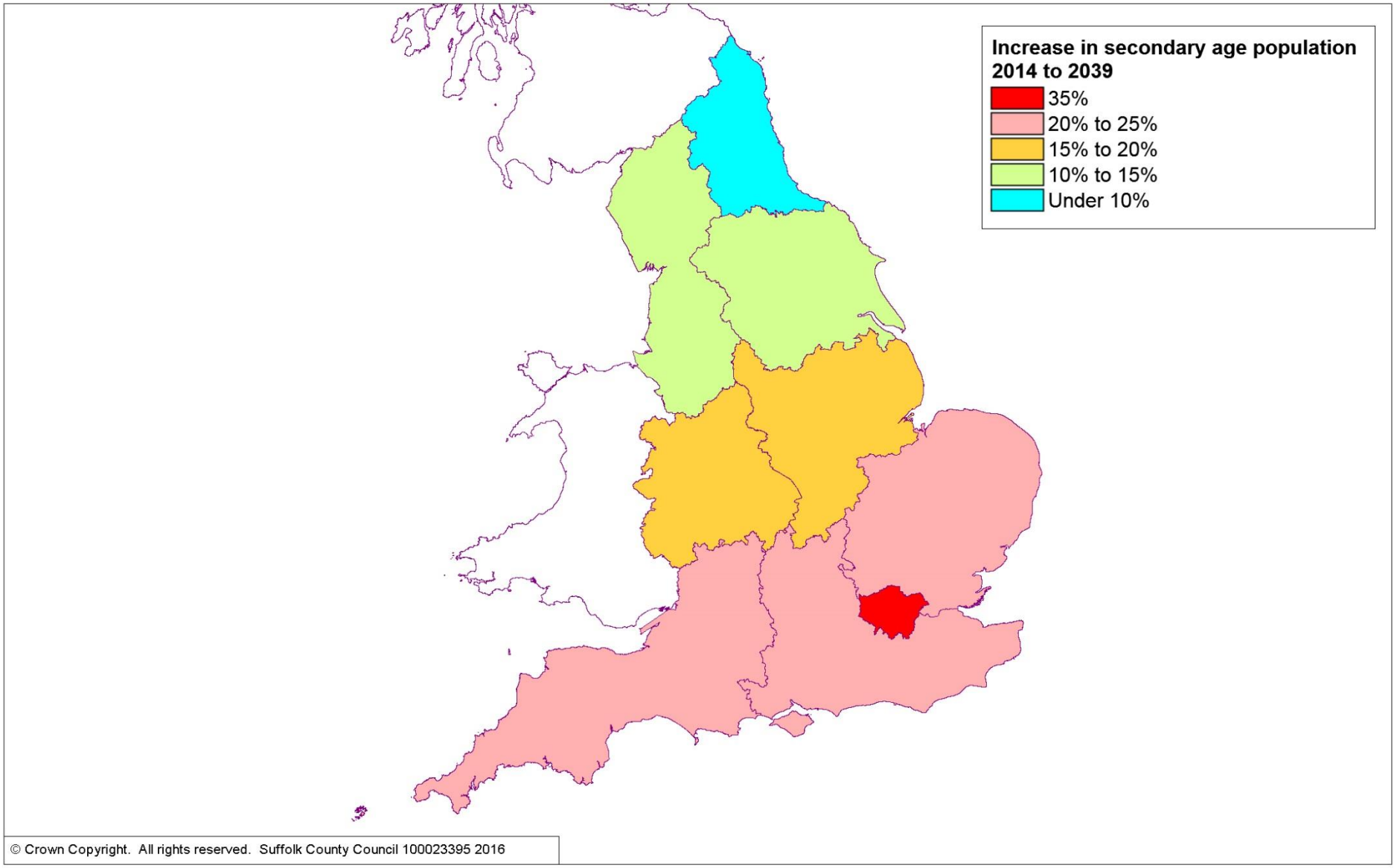
Regional variations

- The picture varies between the regions
- London has projected increases of 17% in primary numbers and 34.9% in secondary between 2014 and 2039
- The North East has projected increases of 0.1% in primary and 9.6% in secondary
- There are further variations within regions and counties

Primary age increases by region



Secondary age increases by region



Changing educational landscape

- As of 1 June 2016 19% of primary schools and 65% of secondary schools are academies or free schools
- Additionally, 23% of primary and 16% of secondary are VA/foundation schools
- This leaves 58% of primary and only 19% of secondary that are under local authority control

Changing educational landscape

- Increasingly academies are not using catchment areas in their admissions oversubscription criteria
- Secondary academies are working with different primaries to their traditional feeders, changing the areas pupils come from
- Some academies are taking over PAN with little warning which has an impact on neighbouring schools
- Free schools may open where there is a forecast need for places, but also where there are already surplus places
- More schools are running their own transport, potentially changing the patterns of parental preference from when only LA transport available
- New and converting schools may attract pupils from more than one planning area, or even authority

Our current methodology

- Pre-school data from the Health Authority – all children registered with a GP
- In most cases this source will highlight changing birth rates giving advance warning of increasing numbers heading to Reception
- Numbers of primary age children from school census used for secondary forecasts
- Expected pupil yield from housing developments
- Year-on-year changes are based on recent trends

Our current methodology

- For most schools we use population based forecasting
- Each school is forecast separately
- Area forecasts are used to validate the individual school figures
- Area forecasts help to ensure there are sufficient places
- School level forecasts are used in discussions with schools
- In recent years this method has produced accurate forecasts

Shortcomings of current methodology

- LAs no longer have control over the numbers many own admission authority schools admit
- If additional places are needed we are likely to be relying on the cooperation of others
- Recent trends may no longer be an indicator of future patterns
- Reception and transfer intakes should continue to be known, but in-year admissions due to migration and housing developments can cause pressure in some areas
- An ageing population may move demand for school places

Discussion

- Should we just forecast for areas and ensure there are sufficient places across the schools?
- Do planning areas need to be flexible to adapt to changing patterns of preference?
- Are other authorities experiencing difficulties dealing with academies and free schools?
- Are any authorities using different methodologies?
- Do urban authorities have any different challenges?