
REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

ADMISSIONS FORUM: 12 May 2009

SUBJECT: Appeals 2007/2008

1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 This report is to inform the Admission Forum of the pattern of parental appeals for the academic year 2007/2008, both for admission in September 07 and also those relating to in year transfers.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Although Forum has already received some information on appeals this has not been broken down by ethnicity or school. Appendices 1 to 7 with this report provide a breakdown of annual cycle and in year appeals by school and ethnicity.

3.0 MAIN ISSUES

Overview

3.1 There is a demographic decline in young people entering secondary school and as a result the demand at a number of schools has fallen.

3.2 There has been an increase, both locally and nationally, in the birth rate over recent years and this has already begun to affect entry into Leeds primary schools and will ultimately filter through to secondary. There were an increasing number of primary schools who were unable to accommodate their nearest children. The number of primary schools oversubscribed on first preference was 51. Education Leeds continues to actively work with partners to resolve the situation.

3.3 There were 1669 appealed lodged during the academic year. Of these 669 were in year transfer appeals, 639 annual cycle appeals for secondary schools and 361 annual cycle appeals for primary schools. There are relatively few successful appeals for Reception because most of the appeals for primary schools are covered by the infant class size legislation and unless a mistake has been made it is very unlikely that an appeal can succeed.

Primary – annual cycle

3.4 Of the 361 primary appeals, 80 were withdrawn or settled prior to the appeal hearing. This typically occurs when a parent has been offered one of their higher preferences through the waiting lists and is happy to accept that offer. Of the

remaining 281 appeals that were heard only 19 were granted, in the main at schools where the class size legislation does not apply. Whilst most primary schools in Leeds have admission numbers to match the legislation there are still a small number with irregular numbers where parents may be successful.

- 3.5 Talbot Primary school had the largest number of appeals heard at 21 and 19% of these were Kashmir Pakistani, 14.9% Indian and 14.9% Pakistani. No appeals were granted for the school.
- 3.6 There were appeals for 68 different primary schools and 53% of these appellants were white/British, however only 5.7% were successful. The other successful appellants were 1 Bangladeshi and 2 Pakistanis. Indian and Pakistani were the two groups with the highest number of appeals after the white/British.

Secondary – annual cycle

- 3.7 There has been a significant reduction in the number of secondary appeals heard since 2006/07. There has also been a reduction in the number of successful appeals. This is a reflection of the amount of work that has been involved working with schools to develop more comprehensive statements of case outlining the issues faced by schools when they have to admit additional pupils. It also indicates that the admissions policy is being applied correctly when places are allocated. The declining birth rate is currently affecting intakes into secondary school.
- 3.8 The majority of secondary schools are reflective of their local community in respect of ethnicity. Allerton Grange and Parklands Girls High both attract a higher proportion of Pakistani and Kashmiri Pakistani pupils than live in their immediate area.
- 3.9 Of the 639 appeals lodged for secondary schools 170 were settled or withdrawn before being heard. 469 appeals were heard with 32% of parents successful. 61% of the appeals heard were from white/British parents and they were successful in 41% of cases. The majority of these appeals were for Roundhay.
- 3.10 It should be borne in mind that the groups are small in statistical terms and the conclusions that we can draw from one year of data are limited. Appeals are based around the personal circumstances of the families concerned and therefore vary greatly.
- 3.11 There were twice as many appeals heard for Roundhay as for any other secondary school. 25% of appellants were white/British with a very wide spread of ethnicities appealing for the school. The white/British families represented 61% of all appeals heard. This was a much higher percentage at schools such as Garforth, Temple Moor, Woodkirk, Pudsey Grangefield and Cockburn, and much lower at school such as Allerton High, Roundhay and Primrose.

In year appeals

- 3.12 Of the 669 appeals lodged 229 were withdrawn or settled prior to being heard. Of the 440 appeals heard 56% were successful. White/British families accounted for 57% of in year appeals and were successful 37% of the time. Families from black/African, mixed black/African and Pakistani backgrounds were relatively much more successful, as were Gypsy Roma families.

Primary

- 3.13 Once again Bankside had the most appeals heard for in year transfers. There

were 11 appeals, 82% from Bangladeshi families, seven were successful. It is not unusual for families to lose their place in the school when taking extended holidays abroad. Of the 108 primary appeals heard they were spread across 38 different schools, once again suggesting that there are relatively few difficulties for parents in obtaining a place in a school they are happy with.

Secondary

- 3.14 There were 332 secondary appeals heard 64% of which were by white/British families. The most appealed for school with in year requests is Primrose, (30) with a wide spread of ethnicities appealing for the school. Similarly Roundhay has the second highest number, again with a broad mix of appellants, only 37% of which were white/British.
- 3.15 In year appeals have the highest success rate for parents and is often due to moving into an area outside of the normal admission round and finding that the local school is already full. In these circumstances, if the Authority is unable to offer an alternative school within a reasonable distance then it presents no surprise that appeal panels will offer places where appropriate. The relatively high success rate of parents at this type of appeal is a reflection of the appropriate use of the appeal process now picked up in the Fair Access Protocol which should reduce the number of appeals.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The data indicates that all ethnic groups are accessing the appeals process and there is no significant evidence of any bias for or against any particular ethnic group. Primary appeals are relatively unsuccessful due to infant class size legislation. Secondary appeals for annual cycle places are successful in around 32% of cases. This appropriately reflects the need for an appeal process to hear the exceptional cases that are unable to be considered adequately within any admissions policy.
- 4.2 The higher success rate of parents submitting in year appeals, around 59%, is reflective of the lack of places that can be available in many of our secondary schools when families move into an area outside of the normal admission round.
- 4.3 There is no evidence to suggest that a family's ethnicity or social background affects their ability to gain admission to any particular school.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That Admissions Forum notes the breakdown of appeals by ethnicity and school.