



REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

EXECUTIVE BOARD: 17 October 2007

SUBJECT: REPORT ON THE SEPTEMBER 2007 ADMISSION ROUND FOR COMMUNITY AND CONTROLLED SCHOOLS

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Education Leeds is responsible for allocating children to primary, infant, junior and secondary schools and defending admission appeals for community and voluntary controlled schools. The company is also responsible for co-ordinating admissions between the 50 voluntary-aided schools, the four neighbouring LEAs and the David Young Community Academy.
- 1.2 The report gives statistical information on:
- the percentage of first preferences achieved, the headline figure is 90.5%;
 - the percentage of parents who received one of their three preferences, the headline figure is 98.2%;
 - the percentage of first preferences by black and ethnic minority categories;
 - information on school appeals.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 Education Leeds has been reducing the number of school places in line with the fall in the school population as well as making strategic decisions on the closure of schools. This management of the school estate will continue with the investment brought about through BSF and any further need for change.
- 2.2 A significant number of places have been taken out of the secondary sector in the last four years, to address the issue of surplus places and the fall in pupils entering secondary provision over the next few years. This fall in numbers is quite noticeable in some areas of the city where a number of popular and successful schools will not be full this September. However there is still undue pressure in the inner East and inner South of the city. Schools in the South have worked together, and in partnership with Education Leeds, to relieve some of the pressure in their area this year. Demographic projections suggest that this pressure should ease for entry in 2008.

- 2.3 Pressure in the inner East remains high with many children unable to gain a place in their nearest school. School Organisation is exploring potential solutions to this issue. The David Young Community Academy has proved popular in its local area and filled to its admission limit.
- 2.4 The introduction of a Choice Advisor has been very successful. The Choice Adviser is based in the Parent Partnership service to achieve the impartiality and arms length requirement of the role, but works very closely with the Admissions team to target families who require assistance. Of the 300 year 6 families known not to have returned a preference form by the closing date, only six families had still not expressed a preference before the national offer day.
- 2.5 The on-line application process was introduced this year and proved popular with parents. The target was for between 5 and 10% of parent to apply this way during the first year, and 13% of parents actually used the online service. For 2008 we have raised that target to 20% to build on the success.

3 **Recommendations**

- 3.1 To note the statistical content of the report including:
- the percentage of first preferences achieved, where 9 out of 10 parents are offered the school of their first preference and 98 parents out of 100 received one of their preferences;
 - that the percentage of first preferences in secondary school for black and ethnic minority families continues to be below that of the White British category. The issue is being addressed through the raising school achievement agenda, Building Schools for the Future agenda and through the advice given to parents;
 - the decline over three years in the number of appeals heard, and the sharp decline in successful appeals this year.
- 3.2 To note that the appointment of the Choice Adviser has been particularly successful in engaging parents in the process of choosing a school for their child.
- 3.3 To note the successful introduction of the on-line service for parents and the 13% take up rate against the 5 -10% target.
- 3.4 To note that there continue to be pressure points in the City where demand for local schools cannot be satisfied, and the ongoing work with School Organisation Team to seek creative solutions.
- 3.5 To note that the government agenda for further promoting parental choice supported by extended transport provision, may lead to some further reductions in successful first preferences. This is however countered to some extent by local initiatives around raising achievement and we may see a wider spread of first preferences by parents and possibly an improvement in the percentages of successful first preferences.



Agenda Item:

Originator: Viv Buckland

Telephone: 247 4956

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Electoral Wards Affected: ALL

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality & Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call-in

Not Eligible for Call-in
(Details contained in the Report)

1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 Education Leeds is responsible for allocating children to primary, infant, junior and secondary schools and defending admission appeal for community and voluntary controlled schools. The company is also responsible for co-ordinating admissions between the 50 voluntary-aided schools, the four neighbouring LEAs and the David Young Community Academy.

1.2 This report gives statistical information about the process and highlights issues that need to be addressed for the 2008 admission round.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 The Admission and Transport Team manage transfers into Reception and Year 7 for approximately 16,000 families each year and offer each parent the highest preferred school available within the admission policy.

2.2 This year's figures are broadly in line with expectations with nine out of ten parents receiving the school of their first preference. Although we achieved over 90% first

preference the large numbers in the round means that 1947 children were not offered their first preference school.

2.3 **Percentage of first preferences achieved**

	2007	2006	2005	2004
Secondary	86.6	86.9	89.3	91.5
Primary	94.5	93.3	96.4	94.7
Junior	94.6	97.4	99.3	98.3
Total	90.5	90.1	92.5	93.1

Full details are given in appendix 1.

2.4 The admission policy within Leeds allows parents to try for a school out of their local area because they have the safety net of their local school if they are unsuccessful. As an equal preference policy it allows parents to be as aspirational as possible. It allows parents to ask for their favourite school, despite knowing their chances may not be high, without prejudicing their chance at obtaining a place in their nearest school, so long as they put it on the preference form. So another measure is the percentage of parents who received one of their three preferences.

2.5 **Percentage of parents who achieved one of their three preferences**

	2007	2006	2005	2004
Secondary	97.5	96.9	98.1	98.4
Primary	98.8	97.3	99.5	99.
Junior	98.8	99.3	100.0	99.7
Total	98.2	97.2	98.8	98.7

This indicates that very high numbers of parents were given one of their three preferences and an increase on last year.

2.6 It is possible that we will experience a dip in these figures in the 2008 round due to a change in procedures required by the new Schools Admission Code. Parents are no longer permitted to change their preference after the closing date so where they have expressed only one preference, for example, and have been unsuccessful they will not then be able to ask for other schools and appeal for them.

2.7 **Percentage of first preferences by ethnic categories.**

Details are given in appendix 2. These figures indicate that for secondary preferences the percentage of black and ethnic minority parents being offered their first preference school is below the White British category. This is the same result discussed by the Admission Forum and Executive Board in 2005. This was examined in the Review of Admission Policies in 2005 where it was concluded that black and ethnic minority families had the same level of first preferences as other categories of families who lived in inner city wards. Families in these wards tended to preference schools out of their local area and so did not receive any priority through the admission policy. It was also concluded that parents within these wards are less likely to preference their local secondary school. Whilst they sought a place in an outer area school they were unlikely to be successful because they were applying for a school out of their local area. Many black and ethnic minority families preferenced Roundhay High school, which is close to the inner city area but is not classed as the 'nearest' school in terms of the admission policy. The

attraction of Roundhay High School was seen to have a distorting effect on percentages. The majority of categories are very small (less than 100) and it is felt that such small numbers are not representative.

2.8 The recommendation accepted by Executive Board was to continue with the strategy of raising achievement in all schools and to make all our schools good and improving so that parents will not feel the need to seek a school place out of their local area. To address the issue of raising standards Education Leeds is working closely with all schools and colleagues in school improvement to ensure all our schools are good, improving and inclusive.

2.9 **School appeals**

Whenever a parent is refused entry to a school they have a right to appeal against the decision. The appeal is heard by an independent panel which is organised by the Constitution and Corporate Governance Unit as the process needs to be fully independent.

2.10 The figures below are based on the period from National Offer day on March 1st to the end of July but they do not include in-year appeals.

2.11	Granted	Not Granted	Total	% Granted
Secondary	103	436	539	19.0
Primary	10	138	148	6.8
Total	113	574	687	16.4

2.12 Details for secondary school appeals are given in appendix 4. The total number of appeals heard in the same period last year was approximately the same although the number of successful appeals has fallen significantly. Although less than 700 appeals have been heard, twice that number have been requested. The remaining 700 appeals have either been settled through the waiting list prior to the appeal being heard or withdrawn when a higher preference has been allocated.

2.13 We have seen a reduction each year in the number of successful appeals over the last three years. In 2005 there were twice as many successful appeals by parents than we have seen in 2007. 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.

2.14 A small number of appeal panels granted some class size appeals this year which has been a source of some concern. We will explore options to minimise the likelihood of this occurring in future.

3.0 **MAIN ISSUES**

3.1 Education Leeds has been reducing the number of school places in line with the fall in the school population as well as making strategic decisions on the closure of schools. This management of the school estate will continue with the investment brought about through Building Schools for the Future and any further need for change.

3.2 A significant number of places have been taken out of the secondary sector in the

last four years, to address the issue of surplus places and the fall in pupils entering secondary provision over the next few years. This fall in numbers is quite noticeable in some areas of the city where a number of popular and successful schools will not be full this September. However there is still undue pressure in the inner East and inner South of the city. Schools in the South have worked together, and in partnership with Education Leeds, to relieve some of the pressure in their area this year. Demographic projections suggest that this pressure should ease for entry in 2008.

- 3.3 Pressure in the inner East remains high with many children unable to gain a place in their nearest school. School Organisation is exploring potential solutions to this issue. The David Young Community Academy has proved popular in its local area and filled to its admission limit.
- 3.4 The introduction of a Choice Advisor has been very successful. The Choice Advisor is based in the Parent Partnership service to achieve the impartiality and arms length requirement of the role, but works very closely with the Admissions team to target families who require assistance. Of the 300 year 6 families known not to have returned a preference form by the closing date, only six families had still not expressed a preference before the national offer day.
- 3.5 The on-line application process was introduced this year and proved popular with parents. The target was for between 5 and 10% of parent to apply this way during the first year, and 13% of parents actually used the online service. For 2008 we have raised that target to 20% to build on the success.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE**

- 4.1 Last year the admission policy for community and voluntary controlled schools in Leeds was altered with respect to children who live outside of the Leeds boundary. Previously a child from another district was given priority for a Leeds school if it was their nearest Leeds school despite the fact that they may have a nearer school in their own district. The policy was changed to make it fairer for Leeds children. Extra district children who have a nearer school in their own authority now only qualify under the distance criteria in the same way that Leeds children do. The two notable areas where this has made an impact are at Woodkirk where 35 Leeds children were offered places who would not have been offered under the old policy, and at Priesthorpe where 22 extra Leeds children gained places.
- 4.2 Local Authorities were placed under a new duty to promote diversity and increase parental choice in planning and securing the provision of school places in the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This builds on the existing requirement that local authorities seek to maximise parental preference for school places. The government agenda is to actively promote choice for parents, supported by the recent funding released for the introduction of choice advisers, and extended transport arrangements for many families, encouraging parents to be aspirational in their requests. In line with this the government have also sought to encourage schools to exercise more freedom from the Authority particularly in terms of admissions, and to encourage the expansion of popular and successful schools. It should be noted that this may lead to a dip in the percentage of successful first preferences as parents seek schools further afield.

5.0 **LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The local Admissions Policy in Leeds complies with the new Schools Admission Code although it has been necessary to make some changes to our procedures to fully comply. The new Code requires that where distance is used as criteria in the Admissions policy the local authority take account of factors that might unfairly advantage or disadvantage a child. For example schools that are oversubscribed and where property prices nearest the school are high. When considering the Admissions Policy for 2009 this matter will be addressed should any unfair advantage be found.

6.0 **CONCLUSIONS**

6.1 The introduction of the on-line service has proved popular with parents and is a very positive addition to the customer service provided by the team. A great deal of preparatory work was put into providing a good quality product and the target for parents using the service in the first year was exceeded. The Choice Adviser service in Leeds was established in September 07 and has quickly become a model of good practice ensuring that around 300 parents, who would not otherwise have expressed any preferences, were able to engage in the process in time to have their views considered.

6.2 The percentage of first preferences has increased slightly and the breakdown by ethnicity is broadly similar to previous years. The number of appeals heard is similar to last year but the percentage of successful appeals has fallen sharply. Schools have worked in partnership with the Admissions Team during the year to ensure that the process runs as smoothly as possible for parents and children.

6.3 We are still experiencing some pockets of the City where demand for a child's nearest school cannot be met and the School Organisation Team are looking at possible options for the future.

7.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Executive Board is asked to note:

- 7.1 The statistical content of the report including:
- the percentage of first preferences achieved, where 9 out of 10 parents are offered the school of their first preference and 98 parents out of 100 received one of their preferences;
 - that the percentage of first preferences in secondary school for black and ethnic minority families continues to be below that of the White British category. The issue is being addressed through the raising school achievement agenda, Building Schools for the Future agenda and through the advice given to parents;
 - the decline over three years in the number of appeals heard, and the sharp decline in successful appeals this year.
- 7.2 That the appointment of the Choice Adviser has been particularly successful in engaging parents in the process of choosing a school for their child.
- 7.3 The successful introduction of the on-line service for parents and the 13% take up rate against the 5 -10% target.

- 7.4 That there continue to be pressure points in the City where demand for local schools cannot be satisfied, and the ongoing work with School Organisation Team to seek creative solutions.
- 7.5 That the government agenda for further promoting parental choice supported by extended transport provision, may lead to some further reductions in successful first preferences. This is however countered to some extent by local initiatives around raising achievement and we may see a wider spread of first preferences by parents and possibly an improvement in the percentages of successful first preferences.

APPENDIX 1	Admission numbers and percentages for September 2007								
	Total	1ST	%	2ND	%	3RD	%	Placed	%
Secondary	8102	7015	86.9	651	7.7	235	2.2	201	2.7
Primary	7736	7314	93.3	257	3.3	71	0.7	84	2.6
Junior	249	241	97.4	6	1	1	0.3	1	0.7
Total	16087	14570	90.6	914	5.7	307	1.9	286	1.8
Placed is where no preference could be met or the form was not returned. In these cases Education Leeds placed the children into a school against any preference.									

APPENDIX 2

FIRST PREFERENCE BY ETHNICITY (Secondary)

	2006		2007	
	No	%	No	%
White British	5547	89.2	4938	89.8
Unknown	371	79.3	360	73.9
Pakistani	216	80.9	165	80.9
Black African	105	70.5	113	74.8
Indian	113	82.5	103	73.6
Mixed Black Caribbean and White	91	82.0	106	77.9
Black Caribbean	76	71.0	58	73.4
Kashmiri Pakistani	84	82.3	138	84.7
Bangladeshi	71	81.6	55	72.4
Any Other Ethnic Group	56	81.2	45	79.0
Any Other White Background	61	88.4	51	82.3
Any Other Mixed Background	55	83.3	38	73.1
Other Asian	34	77.2	51	76.1
Any Other Black Background	32	74.4	29	59.2
Mixed Asian and White	38	90.5	45	84.9
White Irish	34	91.9	19	95.0
Refused to Answer	31	86.1	623	87.8
Chinese	28	82.4	29	87.9
Mixed Black African and White	11	68.8	16	66.7
Gypsy Roma	13	92.9	13	81.3
Traveller of Irish Heritage	8	88.9	5	71.4
Kashmiri Other	4	80.0	8	88.9
White Western European	n/a	n/a	5	100.0
White Eastern European	n/a	n/a	3	75.0

APPENDIX 3

FIRST PREFERENCE BY ETHNICITY (primary)

	2006		2007	
	No	%	No	%
White British	4305	94.4	4610	96.2
Unknown	1138	91.5	1489	90.6
Pakistani	307	91.9	228	92.7
Black African	89	90.	120	89.6
Indian	106	94.6	115	90.6
Mixed Black Caribbean and White	81	93.1	80	89.9
Black Caribbean	47	87.0	28	90.3
Kashmiri Pakistani	99	93.4	146	96.7
Bangladeshi	87	94.6	87	93.6
Any Other Ethnic Group	52	85.2	55	90.2
Any Other White Background	51	87.9	60	98.4
Any Other Mixed Background	62	92.5	62	91.2
Other Asian	43	89.6	47	95.9
Any Other Black Background	27	81.8	25	100.0
Mixed Asian and White	61	92.4	61	98.4
White Irish	19	100.0	16	94.1
Refused to Answer	22	91.7	246	95.7
Chinese	25	86.2	17	85.0
Mixed Black African and White	29	87.9	24	92.3
Gypsy Roma	8	100.0	7	87.5
Traveller of Irish Heritage	8	88.9	6	100.0
Kashmiri Other	8	100.0	13	100.0
White Western European	n/a	n/a	6	100.0
White Eastern European	n/a	n/a	3	75.0

APPENDIX 4

SECONDARY SCHOOLS APPEAL RESULTS

	Granted		Not Granted		Total	
	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Allerton Grange	0	2	0	3	0	5
Allerton High	5	3	7	30	12	33
Benton Park	0	6	3	17	3	23
Boston Spa	14	0	5	0	19	0
Brigshaw	6	0	6	0	12	0
Bruntcliffe	6	1	4	1	10	2
Cockburn	1	11	26	29	27	40
Crawshaw	5	5	28	24	33	29
Farnley Park	11	5	0	25	11	30
Garforth	13	4	32	7	45	11
Grangefield	9	8	42	59	51	67
Horsforth	3	4	9	7	12	11
Lawnswood	0	0	5	0	5	0
Morley	4	6	16	19	20	25
Otley Prince Henry	0	13	0	0	0	13
Priesthorpe	3	3	18	33	21	36
Primrose	9	7	11	23	20	30
Ralph Thoresby	0	1	0	0	0	1
Rodillian	1	5	0	14	1	19
Roundhay	10	6	95	86	105	92
Royds	0	0	0	13	0	13
South Leeds	3	0	6	0	9	0
Temple Moor	16	4	36	23	52	27
Wetherby	2	0	2	0	4	0
Woodkirk	37	9	1	23	38	32
TOTAL	158	103	352	436	510	539
	31%	19%	69%	81%		
 2005 FIGURES	200		561		761	
	26%		74%			