

Report of: Director of Children's Services

Report to: Executive Board

Date: 19 October 2016

Subject: Outcome of school admissions arrangements 2016



Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number:		
Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

- This report informs Executive Board of the statistical information on this year's admissions round, i.e. for entry to reception and Year 7 in September 2016.
- There are national closing dates to submit applications and for making offers. Secondary applications must be submitted by 31 October and offers are made on 1 March. In Leeds 82.4% of parents were offered their first preference school (83% last year) and 95% were offered one of their top three (95% last year). There were 8341 places allocated, compared to 7962 last year.
- Primary applications must be submitted by 15 January each year and offers are made on 16 April. In Leeds 87% (85% last year) were offered their first preference with 96% (93% last year) offered one of their top three preferences. There were 10051 places allocated, compared to 9854 last year.

Recommendations

That Executive Board note:

- Numbers of applications for both phases of education, the percentage of successful first preferences for secondary admissions was 82.4% and for Reception admissions was 87%.
- The percentage of parents receiving one of their top three preferences was 95% for secondary and 96% for primary.
- The officer responsible for this work is the Admissions and Family Information Service lead.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides statistical information on the annual admissions round for entry to Reception and year 7 for September 2016. The rising birth rate has been impacting on entry to Reception particularly since 2009 and on entry to year 7 in some areas of the City.

2 Background information

- 2.2 The local authority is required to coordinate all applications for schools and academies in the normal admission round, which refers mainly to applications for entry into Reception and year 7, but also includes year 3 where we have junior schools, and may effect year 10 for future UTCs. This year 8341 secondary places and 10051 primary places were offered.
- 2.3 These applications are in the context of a rapidly rising birth rate over the last decade which has become more volatile and is now affecting entry to both Reception and year 7. The birth cohort that entered primary this year was the largest seen in Leeds with 10,350 children born. That number had increased to 10411 in the cohort in the more recent Area Health Authority data. An additional 465 reception places were made available in the City to meet the rising demand.
- 2.4 The number of children due to start year 7 this year has risen again with 379 more places allocated than in 2015. Consultations have been taking place for permanent expansions to deal with the year on year increases that will follow. The first UTC in the city opens in September 2016 and is well subscribed with young people from across the city.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Local authorities are required to make offers on 1st March each year to children starting secondary school in year 7, and on 16th April to children starting primary school in reception. Offers are coordinated by each local authority, so that only one offer is received. This year 8341 offers were made for secondary places in Leeds schools on offer. Of these 82.4% were given their first preference, 95% one of their first 3 preferences. For primary, 10051 offers were made, with 87% getting their first preference, 96% getting one of their first three preferences.
- 3.2 Leeds continues to have a high proportion, both regionally and nationally, of children at both phases that are allocated a preferred school within the local authority. This is a reflection of the number of schools rated good or outstanding in Leeds. Leeds is the second largest city after Birmingham and successful first preferences for secondary was 14.7% higher in Leeds, and 2% higher for primary.
- 3.3 In anticipation of the largest cohort to enter Reception in Leeds, 465 additional reception places were created throughout the city. These comprised 90 permanent places and 425 bulge places that were available on offer day and a further 20 that were brought forward during the waiting list stage. This planned response has led to an increase in successful first preferences and a significant

fall in the number of children not able to be allocated any of their preferences. Although 10051 places were allocated to Leeds children on offer day 10103 places were allocated in Leeds schools. This reflects movement both into and out of the city, with Leeds a slight net importer of children at Reception age. Parents have continued to apply throughout the summer and as of 31 August we had allocated 10267 places.

- 3.4 We continue to support families to apply on time, and encourage online applications which have the benefit of speed and certainty of receipt for parents. We use email reminders to support parents who have not completed the application process online but have created accounts and added preferences, and we chase non-applicants through primary schools (for secondary applications) and early years settings (for primary applications). Appropriate council Twitter accounts are being used to remind parents of the approaching deadlines and media releases raise further awareness. It is however impossible for the admissions service to know the whereabouts or plans of all families, and it does remain the responsibility of parents to apply on time. Late applications will result in one of the remaining places being offered after all other preferences have been considered.
- 3.5 Secondary schools are, at times, able to be more flexible about class sizes than primary schools, where the infant class size legislation applies. As a result they do choose to admit above their admission limit in some years, when they have available resources to enable this to happen. Two schools had undertaken the appropriate consultation to reduce their admission number for 2016, Boston Spa and Bruntcliffe, however there has been no detrimental impact on parents.
- 3.6 Although the Temple Learning Academy opened on time for their Reception intake we were notified that the Education Funding Agency (EFA) were unable to complete the secondary accommodation project on time, so the 120 places that should have been available in year 7 for 2016 could not be allocated. Notification of the delay was provided in sufficient time to ensure that any parents who had asked for a place there were able to express an alternative preference and no prejudice was caused to them. Ruth Gorse Academy moved into its new city centre south accommodation in September 2016 and has filled to its higher, permanent, admission number of 252. The Leeds Jewish Free School is also oversubscribed this year with 27 children.
- 3.7 The first University Technical College (UTC) in West Yorkshire also opened in Leeds in September 2016, taking students in at Year 10 and Year 12. UTC Leeds is for 14-19 year olds and specialises in Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering. It offers a core GCSE/A-Level curriculum for students alongside immersion into the Manufacturing and Engineering sector through BTEC qualification and close engagement with businesses and university in the sector, delivered through a longer working day. The College was over-subscribed on its PAN of 105 students for Year 10 and close to its PAN of 120 for Year 12.
- 3.8 Despite the increasing number of children requiring reception places the number of appeals for a Reception place has fallen again this year. The following table shows data for the last three years of Reception appeals. As they are governed by the Infant Class Size legislation, to successfully appeal parents must meet

certain criteria set out in the School Admissions Appeal Code. We updated our appeal form this year to reflect this, making it easier for parents to understand their likelihood of success and this may have been a factor in the reducing number of appeals. There were also significantly fewer parents who did not receive any of their preference this year which will also have affected their wish to go on to appeal. Although fewer appeals were submitted a similar number went onto be heard. There were significantly fewer that were successful reflecting the achievements of the sufficiency team in creating additional places in local schools where they would be required.

Appeals

Primary

16 th April – 1 st September	Rec 2014/15	Rec 2015/16	Rec 2016/17
Appeals lodged with LCC*	1095	730	479
Appeals heard *	569 (52% of those lodged)	352 (48% of those lodged)	301 (62.8% of those lodged)
Appeals granted*	38 (6.6% of those heard)	40 (11% of those heard)	18 (6% of those heard)
Appeals not granted*	531 (93% of those heard)	312 (88.6% of those heard)	283 (94% of those heard)
Number of offers made	9774	9854	10,193
1st Preferences met	8270 (85%)	8383 (85%)	8,789 (87%)
Placements (no pref met)	468 (5%)	550 (5.5%)	301 (3%)

- 3.9 For secondary the number of appeals logged has remained at a similar level to last year for Year 7. Substantially more went on to be heard suggesting that there may have been relatively little movement in the waiting lists where places are often resolved before the appeals are heard, however this is also to do with the recording of the appeals taking place. Some Academies do arrange for their own appeals, and we do not have the results of those, however a significant number choose to purchase the service offered by the local authority so the recording can reflect changes in those schools we hold information for. A relatively low level of appeals being granted, at either primary or secondary, is one indicator that the policy is fair and reasonable, and appeals are the most appropriate way for exceptional circumstances to be considered. We are grateful to the appeal panel members for the significant amount of time and effort they give to the process as volunteers.

Secondary

1 st March – 1 st September	High 2014/15	High 2015/16	High 2016/17
Appeals lodged with LCC*	427	443	438
Appeals heard *	215 (50% of those lodged)	208 (46% of those lodged)	314 (71.7% of those lodged)

Appeals granted*	54 (25% of those heard)	29 (14% of those heard)	41 (13.1% of those heard)
Appeals not granted*	161 (75% of those heard)	179 (86% of those heard)	273 (86.9% of those heard)

3.10 The City has continued to grow with many families moving into and around Leeds. Parents apply directly to schools in the first instance for in-year transfers and schools notify the local authority of the application and the outcome. Parents can still contact the local authority for support and advice with their application, and to find out which schools have vacancies in their area. In the period from September 2015 to June 2016 there were 4895 children who were allocated a place as a result of a transfer request, compared to 4102 in the same period the year before.

3.11 The online service for applications for Reception and year 7 places continues to prove popular with 78% of parents choosing the option. Other local authorities have successfully moved to 100% online applications over the last few years. The focus for the 2016/2017 admissions round is to promote online applications with the aim of as many parents as possible being able to make their application using the online system and significantly raise the percentage of parents applying online. Drop in sessions are being held across the city to enable families who may require additional help with their online application with support from staff in one stop centres and libraries and the contact centre.

3.12 The wards with the lowest levels of online uptake continue to be City and Hunslet, and Gipton and Harehills. This is consistent for both primary and secondary applications. Both Hyde Park and Woodhouse, and Burmantofts and Richmond Hill are at a similar level for primary applications although have a slightly higher take up for secondary applications. As the service moves further with web based content there will be a particular focus in these lower take up areas to ensure that parents are able to engage well with the process. For the 2016/17 admissions round the Admissions team are working with schools and nurseries in these areas to provide additional drop in sessions and training for the staff in settings to support accessibility to the online system. Individual help is available from admissions staff for families who require the highest levels of support.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 Consultation is undertaken on any changes to the local admission policies, and where additional school places are being provided through permanent expansion. Consultation on admissions arrangements takes place late in the autumn term.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 This report is for information only and therefore does not have any implications for equality.

4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan

- 4.3.2 The admissions policy and arrangements continues to ensure children receive fair and consistent treatment, and have reasonable access to local schools. In doing so it supports the council's obsession with improving attendance, contributing to good educational outcomes for children. These are important factors in the drive to become a child friendly city.
- 4.3.3 A key objective within the Best Council Plan 2015-2020 is to build a child friendly city. The delivery of pupil places through the Admissions Arrangements is one of the most baseline entitlements of a Child Friendly City. A good quality school place contributes to the achievement of targets within the Childrens and young People's Plan such as our obsession to 'improve school attendance'.
- 4.3.4 The admission arrangements contribute to the 2016/17 Best Council Plan outcomes for everyone in Leeds to 'Do well at all levels of learning and have the skills they need for life'; 'Be safe and feel safe' and 'Enjoy happy, health and active lives'. It also supports the vision of the Children and Young People's Plan 2015 – 2019 to build a child friendly city with a focus on ensuring all children and young people are safe from harm, do well at all levels of learning and have the skills for life.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 Whilst the published guide for parents applying for the normal admission round remains a statutory document and must be printed, maximum use of the website is used to provide a wider range of information for parents to support their application for school. Higher uptake of online application reduces the administrative costs associated with manually inputting written requests.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 Executive Board determined the admission policy in operation for entry in September 2016 at their meeting in March 2015. Admission arrangements at that time must be determined by 15 April each year in accordance with School Admissions Arrangements Regulations (amended in 2012).
- 4.5.2 This report provides information on the outcome of the admission arrangements in place. All requirements for the coordination of the admission process have been carried out in line with all relevant legislation and the criteria of the policy for community and voluntary controlled schools. The local authority received copies of all admission arrangements from own admitting authority schools and academies which were checked and found to be compliant with the regulations.
- 4.5.3 The report is subject to call in.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 This paper is for information only and there is no risk management requirement. The risk around managing sufficiency of school places is managed through the city's corporate risk register.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The number of applications for school places is rising however the percentage of successful first preferences is remaining stable. The volume of appeals, particularly for Reception has reduced and all statutory deadlines were able to be met.

6 Recommendations

That Executive Board note:

- Numbers of applications for both phases of education, the percentage of successful first preferences for secondary admissions was 82.4% and for Reception admissions was 87%.
- The percentage of parents receiving one of their top three preferences was 95% for secondary and 96% for primary.
- The officer responsible for this work is the Admissions and Family Information Service lead.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.