



REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

EXECUTIVE BOARD: 1 April 2009

SUBJECT: Annual Consultation on Admission arrangements for September 2010

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report seeks approval of the proposed admission numbers, the Local Authority admission policy as well as the arrangements for September 2010.

Background Information

- 2 The 1998 School Standards and Framework Act, section 84, and the Admissions Code requires the Local Authority to consult neighbouring Local Authorities and all maintained schools in Leeds on admission arrangements each year. This includes consultation on proposed admission numbers, the admission policy as well as the arrangements.
- 3 A consultation document was sent out on 18 December 2008 with a closing date of 12 February 2009 to all schools in Leeds, all neighbouring Local Authorities, the Church of England and Catholic Diocesan Boards.
- 4 The consultation was placed on the website and parents and community groups were advised by publication of a notice in the Yorkshire Evening Post and local free papers.
- 5 The consultation included the co-ordinated admission scheme which lays down the process and timetable for information sharing with schools who are their own admission authority as well as the other local Authorities. Other than amendments to the timetable there were no changes to the co-ordinated scheme.

Proposals

The consultation covered:

- Giving a higher priority to a child with a high level of need, but for whom a statement has not been sought,
- Prioritising Looked after Children and those recently adopted
- Formalising acceptance of an offered place
- Late applications
- Removing children with a statement of SEN from the oversubscription criteria,

- Waiting lists
- Changes to school admission numbers:

Brownhill Primary	45 to 60
Windmill Primary	45 to 60
Whitkirk Primary	45 to 60
Mill Field Primary	30 to 45
Moor Allerton Hall Primary	45 to 60
Grimes Dyke Primary	30 to 45
Deighton Gates Primary	60 to 30
Calverley C/E Primary	40 to 45
Bruntcliffe High	270 to 240

6 There were 40 responses received. There were no responses from neighbouring Local Authorities or Diocesan Boards. The Admission Forum discussed the proposals for consultation at their meeting in November 2008 and supported the proposals.

Recommendations

7 Executive Board is asked to approve the following proposals for implementation in the 2010 admission round:

- Giving a higher priority to a child with a high level of need, but without a statement,
- Prioritising Looked after Children who have been adopted within the last twelve months
- Formalising acceptance of an offered place
- Late applications.
- Changes to school admission numbers.

Brownhill Primary	45 to 60
Whitkirk Primary	45 to 60
Mill Field Primary	30 to 45
Moor Allerton Hall Primary	45 to 60
Grimes Dyke Primary	30 to 45
Deighton Gates Primary	60 to 30
Calverley C/E Primary	40 to 45
Bruntcliffe High	270 to 240

Agenda Item:

Originator: Barbara
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EXECUTIVE BOARD: 1 April 2009

SUBJECT: Annual Consultation on Admission arrangements for September 2010

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 To seek approval of the proposed school admission numbers, the Local Authority admission policy as well as the arrangements for September 2010

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 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 voluntary-aided schools, foundation schools, the four neighbouring LAs and the David Young Community Academy.

2.2 The 1998 School Standards and Framework Act, section 84, and the Admissions Code requires the Local Authority to consult neighbouring Local Authorities and all maintained schools in Leeds on admission arrangements each year. This includes consultation on proposed admission numbers, the admission policy as well as the arrangements.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 The consultation on the proposed admission arrangements included the co-ordinated admission scheme. The scheme sets out the process and timetable for information sharing between schools, who are their own admission authority, and other local Authorities. Other than minor amendments to the timetable there were no changes to the co-ordinated scheme. A summary of responses is contained at Appendix 1.

3.2 The consultation sought views on:

- Giving a higher priority to a child with a high level of need, but without a statement,
- Prioritising Looked after Children who have been adopted within the last twelve months
- Formalising acceptance of an offered place
- Late applications
- Removing children with a statement of SEN from the oversubscription criteria,
- Waiting lists
- Changes to school admission numbers:

Brownhill Primary	45 to 60
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Bruntcliffe High	270 to 240

3.3 There were 40 responses received from school governing bodies. There were no responses from neighbouring Local Authorities or Diocesan Boards. The Admission Forum discussed the proposed consultation at their meeting in November 2008 and confirmed their support.

4.0 **MAIN ISSUES**

4.1 **Statemented Children and Children with SEN but without a Statement**

4.1.1 In Leeds children with a statement of SEN had been included as the highest priority in the admissions policy to make this clear for parents. However since children with statements are covered by separate legislation they will now be referred to outside of the policy so that we comply with the requirement to have Looked After Children as the highest priority within the policy. It has been the case, and remains so, that children who have a school named in their statement will be entitled to attend that school.

4.1.2 There may be a very occasional need to give a higher priority to a child with a high level of need, but for whom a statement has not been sought. It is proposed that priority 1 (a) of the policy covers Looked After Children and 1 (b) of the policy becomes:

*Pupils with Special Educational Needs, or with exceptional medical or mobility need, that can only be met at a specific school**

*Applications in these categories must be supported by a statement in writing from a doctor or other relevant professional. This is necessary because you will be

asking the Authority to assess your child as having a stronger case than other children. Each case will be considered on its merits in consultation with the school concerned.

4.2 **Looked after Children**

4.2.1 In order to comply with the regulations, Looked After Children must be the first priority in any admission policy. It is proposed that the priority 1 (a) Looked After Children have a note added extending the priority to those who have been adopted within the previous twelve months, since such children frequently require additional support.

4.3 **Formalising Acceptance of an offered place**

4.3.1 When offers were made on 1 March 2008 parents were asked to accept the offer and respond to the school. This allowed the school to contact parents more quickly and prepare for the child's arrival.

4.3.2 For entry in September 2010 we wish to formalise and extend this process. It is proposed that parents will be sent their offer of a school place and be given 14 days in which to respond and accept the offer. The School Admissions Code states that if the parent has not responded to the offer of a place, the admission authority **must** remind parents of the need to respond within a further seven days and point out that the place may be withdrawn if they do not. This will in no way affect the parents right to appeal if they have not been offered their first preference school. They will be able to accept the offer made and if later are successful at appeal or through the waiting list, take up their higher offer.

4.3.3 Parents who refuse the offer will have their place withdrawn to be offered to another child. This may help to reduce the number of appeals required. Parents who refuse the offer made can go onto the waiting list or appeal for any of their original preferences.

4.3.3 The authority will make a further offer to the parents at their request. This will be in line with a new preference, if a place is available and all original preferences have been satisfied, or at the next nearest school with an available place, again where all preferences have been satisfied.

4.3.5 Parents who have declined all offers made to them by 6 July 2009 (when all on time appeals should have been held) will be referred to the Attendance Strategy team. They will arrange to follow up and ensure that the parents are making suitable provision for their child's education in keeping with statutory guidance (Jan 2009).

4.3.6 The procedure has been introduced to allow the authority to work closely with schools during the summer term establishing where families have left the area or opted for other provision as well as to support the reduction of avoidable absence figures on school rolls in September.

4.4 **Waiting Lists**

4.4.1 It was proposed in the consultation that the waiting lists for reception and year 7 be held only until the end of September rather than the current arrangement where they are held until October half term of the academic year of admission.

4.4.2 The new Admissions Code came into force since 10 February 2009 requiring all admissions authorities to maintain a waiting list until at least the end of the Autumn term. Therefore, from September 2009 each admission authority must maintain a waiting list until the end of the autumn term in the academic year of admission for every oversubscribed school. This must now supersede the change previously consulted on.

4.5 **Late Applications**

4.5.1 Since the School Admissions Code was changed in February 2007, parents have been unable to change their preferences after the deadline for applications.

4.5.2 However, coordination with other local authorities is becoming increasingly difficult when late applications are received and information has already been shared with other authorities. Late changes inevitably lead to mistakes and it is not appropriate to take risks that maladministration could occur. The introduction through the new School Admission Code of national closing dates should help to draw parents attention to the need to apply on time.

4.5.3 It is proposed that a second date is set after which late applications will be considered separately.

4.6 **Changes to Admission Numbers**

4.6.1 We received comments about changes to the admission number at Windmill Primary school. It was proposed to raise the number from 45 to 60 to provide sufficient places to accommodate the projected demographic increase. Two of the schools in the area raised concerns that the additional places were not necessary and may have a detrimental effect on demand for their schools.

Education Leeds has received section 106 funding which has been spent on refurbishing or extending the three nearest schools to the proposed new housing estate. However, having looked carefully at the above situation and taken the objections into account we feel that the appropriate course of action is to defer this proposed increase for the time being.

4.6.2 We have received a request to increase the admission number at Calverley Church of England Primary school from 40 to 45. Given the high level of local demand it is appropriate to agree the increase.

4.6.4 Education Leeds has proposed the following changes to the admission numbers for 2010:

Brownhill Primary	45 to 60
Whitkirk Primary	45 to 60
Mill Field Primary	30 to 45
Moor Allerton Hall Primary	45 to 60
Deighton Gates Primary	60 to 30
Calverley C/E Primary	40 to 45
Bruntcliffe High	270 to 240

4.7 **Other Consultation responses**

4.7.1 There were two responses received from parents. The first expressed a view that

there was a lack of consideration given to parental disability within the admissions policy. At present the local authority's transport policy covers parental disability by making facility for supporting the journey to and from school where necessary.

4.7.2 The second referred to the changes effected for entry in September 2009 by which all schools not using faith criteria agreed to honour the nearest criteria. Specifically this was the adoption by the DYCA of this criteria which had the effect of reducing the number of pupils who had Roundhay and Temple Moor as their nearest schools. Many of these children have not been able to access those schools for some years despite having them defined as their nearest school. Entry in September 2009 is the first year when we have seen all nearest children allocated a place in Roundhay when they have requested one, giving the priority true meaning. This approach to adopting the nearest criteria has been supported and promoted by the Leeds Admission Forum in considering the fairness of admission arrangements as a whole.

4.8 Further discussions will be undertaken around changes to the admissions process for school sixth forms for 2010 entry. Governing bodies currently manage admission to school sixth forms on behalf of Education Leeds. It is proposed that a coherent approach to admission to school sixth forms be introduced, co-ordinated using the online Common Application Process. This will enable the Admissions Forum to monitor compliance with the Code and provide information for post 16 planners and commissioners as duties transfer from LSC to the local authority.

5.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE**

5.1 The challenge for all admission authorities is to go further than merely ensuring legal compliance with the Code but to actively promote equity. This process will be facilitated by the powers of the Admission Forum to consider the fairness of arrangements in their local context.

5.2 The Schools Adjudicator has a key role in ensuring a fair admissions system by enforcing statutory requirements including the mandatory provisions of the Code.

The Schools Adjudicator may also consider admission arrangements that he considers to be complex, including those that use complex points systems, and amend or replace them entirely.

6.0 **LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The Code which applies to all schools in Leeds is a statutory Code and must be followed. The local Admissions Policy in Leeds complies with the new Schools Admission Code.

7.0 **CONCLUSIONS**

7.1 The Admission Forum has supported the proposals for change outlined in this report. The consultation exercise has indicated a large degree of support with few schools disagreeing. A summary of the responses is included in Appendix 1.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 Executive Board is asked to approve the following proposals for implementation in the 2010 admission round:

- Giving a higher priority to a child with a high level of need, but for whom a statement has not been sought,
- Prioritising Looked after Children and those recently adopted
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- Changes to school admission numbers:

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Background papers

1998 School Standards and Framework Act, section 84

School Admissions Code 10 February 2010

Education Leeds Consultation on admission arrangements for September 2010

Appendix 1

There were 40 responses and the results of the consultation exercise are given below. There were no responses from other local authorities or Diocesan Boards.

		Agree	Disagree
1	Do you agree with the proposal to give a higher priority to a child with a high level of need, but for whom a statement has not been sought? This at the request of the Office of the Schools Adjudicator	32	2
2	Do you agree with the proposal that the priority 1(a) Looked After Children is extended to include those who have been adopted within the previous twelve months? This is to comply with Part 3 of the Admissions Arrangements Regulations.	34	0
3	Do you agree with the proposal that waiting lists are held until 30 September 2010?	26	6
4	Do you agree with the proposal that waiting lists are held until the end of the autumn term in the academic year of admission? This is a statutory requirement February 2009	20	4
5	Do you agree with the proposal that late applications are considered after on time applications?	34	0
6	Do you agree with the proposal to change school admission numbers?	29	4
7	Do you agree with the proposal for the primary school coordinated admission scheme? We are required to consult on the coordinated scheme every year.	23	0
8	Do you agree with the proposal for the secondary school coordinated admission scheme? We are required to consult on the coordinated scheme every year.	15	1