

Report of Director of Children's Services

Report to Executive Board

Date: 11th April 2012

Subject: Annual Consultation on Admission Arrangements for September 2013

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input 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? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. This report seeks approval to the proposed school admission numbers, the Local Authority admissions policy as well as the co-ordinated arrangements for September 2013
2. The 1998 School Standards and Framework Act section 84 and the School Admission Code require the local authority to consult neighbouring local authorities and all maintained schools in Leeds on admission arrangements. This includes consultation on proposed admission numbers and the admissions policy as well as the admissions arrangements.
3. A new Schools Admission Code came into force on 1 February 2012. The new code has implications for the admission round for entry to school in September 2013 and the necessary amendments have been made to the Leeds Admission Policy.
4. The consultation covered a change in the admission number at 2 primary schools. It also referred to a proposal to offer a sibling priority to children entering an infant school where the older sibling would be attending the linked junior school.
5. There is a proposal to increase the number of preferences parents are able to express from 3 up to 5. This is proposed in response to changes made to similar increases in neighbouring authorities to ensure that Leeds parents are not disadvantaged. Of the small number of responses more respondents were in favour than against the proposal.

Recommendations

6. Executive Board is asked to approve the Primary and Secondary Co-ordinated Schemes along with the following changes to school admission numbers:

School	Current Admission Limit	Proposed Admission Limit
Primary		
Bramley St Peters	45	60
Little London	30	60

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To seek approval of the proposed school admission numbers, the Local Authority admissions policy as well as the coordinated arrangements for September 2013

2 Background information

- 2.1 Children's Services is responsible for allocating children to primary, infant, junior and secondary schools and defending admission appeals for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools. There is also a responsibility for co-ordinating admissions between the Voluntary Aided schools, Foundation schools, Academies and other local authorities
- 2.2 The 1998 School Standards and Framework Act, section 84, and the School Admissions Code require the local authority to consult neighbouring local authorities and all maintained schools in Leeds on admission arrangements. This includes consultation on proposed admission numbers and the admissions policy as well as the coordinated admission arrangements.
- 2.3 A new School Admissions Code came into force on 1 February 2012. The new code has implications for the admission round for entry to school in September 2013 and the necessary amendments have been made to the Leeds Admission Policy.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 A consultation document was sent out on 20 December 2011 with a closing date of 28 February 2012 to all schools in Leeds, all neighbouring local authorities, the Church of England and Catholic Diocesan Boards, all councillors and all school governors. It was also placed on the Council website. An e-mail was subsequently issued to all consultees to amend the consultation and include a proposal to allow Leeds parents to preference 5 schools rather than 3. This was in response to changes made by neighbouring authorities to admission arrangements and to ensure that Leeds parents were not disadvantaged.
- 3.2 Consultation must be for a minimum of eight weeks and must take place between 1 November and 1 March of the year before those arrangements are to apply. This consultation period allows parents, other schools, religious authorities and the local community to raise any concerns about the proposed admission arrangements.
- 3.3 The School Admissions Code 2012 was released in draft form in December 2011 and it was made clear to Admitting Authorities that some key changes would apply for entry in September 2013 and this should be reflected in the local consultation process. One mandatory change was that the priority given to Looked After Children will be extended to include those adopted, those with a special guardianship order or those with a residency order immediately following having been looked after from entry in September 2013. Admission Authorities who wish to increase their Published Admission Number, and have sufficient accommodation to do so, are no longer required to consult on such an increase.

The local authority will continue to consult with governing bodies of Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools about their admission number each year. Admission Authorities who wish to decrease their admission number must fully consult.

3.4 The consultation sought views on:

3.4.1 Proposed changes in Admission numbers

3.4.2 Due to the increasing birth rate in Leeds there is a need to expand a number of primary schools in 2013. Some changes will be the subject of statutory proposals that continue to be brought forward in a rolling programme of increases.

School	Current Admission Limit	Proposed Admission Limit
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Secondary

No proposed changes to community school admission numbers

3.4.3 The local authority has been notified by Corpus Christi Primary school that following a decrease from 50 to 45 for September 2012 entry, it wishes to further decrease the intake to 40 for September 2013. As this is a decrease in admission number the school is consulting on this change.

3.4.4 Coordinated scheme – annual cycle

A coordinated scheme has been in place for primary and secondary schools for some time. Each year this is updated to reflect new dates and any changes to legislation. Following recent changes in one of our neighbouring authorities, and in line with others, we have proposed that the number of preferences a parent can express be increased from 3 to 5. This will prevent Leeds parents being placed at a disadvantage where they are close to the Leeds boundary.

3.4.5 Coordinated Scheme – in year

From **September 2010** all in year transfers had to be fully coordinated in line with the published scheme. The new Code removes the requirement to coordinate in year transfers from September 2013 and therefore the current coordinated scheme will remain in force throughout 2012/13 but there is no scheme for September 2013.

3.4.6 Sixth Form admissions

None of the Community Secondary schools set out to admit external pupils in year 12 but most will consider ad-hoc requests for places. There are, therefore, no year 12 admissions numbers for community schools.

3.4.7 Waiting lists

Admission authorities are required to hold a waiting list in the normal year of entry until at least 31st December. Last year Children's Services introduced waiting lists for all year groups that are held throughout the academic year and closed on the

last day of the summer term. The local authority intend to continue with this arrangement.

3.4.8 Sibling link between infant and junior schools

Changes in the new Admissions Code have removed some previous restrictions relating to the sibling link applying to infant and junior schools in the same way as in primary school. At present a higher priority is given to a child attending an infant school when applying for the linked junior school. However where the older child had moved onto the junior school, the sibling link did not apply to the younger child applying to join the infant school. The local authority is now able to change this and proposes to give a sibling priority to children applying to an infant school where their older sibling will be attending the linked junior school.

3.5 Responses

There were 22 responses received compared to 105 last year and 11 the year before that. They are made up of 13 from schools, 4 from local members, 4 from governors and 1 from a Children's Services officer. 17 of the responses were specifically about the issue of increasing the number of parental preferences from 3 up to 5. The other 5 were of a more general nature.

3.6 Of the 17 responses relating to the question of the number parental preferences 10 were in favour and 7 were against increasing to 5. Those in favour didn't want Leeds parents to be disadvantaged when compared with neighbouring authorities and generally approved of greater choice. Those against didn't believe that it would help parents get an offer for their preferred school and it could cause additional work for the authority and schools.

3.7 The 5 other comments covered the following issues:

- the fact that the authority advises parents of the nearest school but this does not include faith schools with their own admissions policy
- the clarity that needs to be given to VA schools, Foundation Schools and Academies being their Own Admitting Authorities
- The importance of timely offers being made to pupils who transfer between schools mid year
- concern that schools that are not full could have an unreasonable number of children with attendance and behaviour issues placed with them
- one wished to make no comment

3.8 All admission authorities must determine admission arrangements by 15 April each year, notify the appropriate bodies and publish a copy of the arrangements on the website for the whole offer year in which offers for places are made. Following determination of arrangements any objections must be made to the Schools Adjudicator by 30 June.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.2 This report is brought forward following extensive consultation as defined in the School Admissions Code the outcome of which is detailed above.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 The challenge for all admission authorities is to go further than ensuring legal compliance with the Code but to actively promote equity. The Leeds Admission Policy is regularly reviewed to ensure that families have equality of opportunity when applying for school places.

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

4.2.3 An equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening has been undertaken and sent to the Equality Team.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 In terms of the Children and Young People's Plan the admission arrangements will contribute towards the outcomes for the three obsessions. Looked After Children are given the highest priority in the Admission policies of all schools and Academies in Leeds. The higher priorities for siblings, so families can be together, and proximity to school both seek to remove any barriers to achieving good attendance.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 There are no immediate resource implications arising from this report and the planning of expansion of school places to meet Basic Need will be the subject of separate reports

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 The Code which applies to all schools in Leeds is statutory and must be followed. The local admissions policy in Leeds complies with the Schools Admission Code. In line with the Code the local authority must determine their admission arrangements no later than 15 April. Following determination it must publish the arrangements on the website.

4.5.2 This report is subject to Call In.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 None identified.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The consultation on the proposed admission arrangements has found general support for the proposals. Only very minor changes had been proposed this year and the admission policy has been brought into line with the recent legislative changes.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Executive Board is asked to approve the Primary and Secondary Co-ordinated Schemes along with the following changes to school admission numbers:

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Bramley St Peters	45	60
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7 Background documentsⁱ

- 7.1 1998 School Standards and Framework Act section 84
- 7.2 School Admissions Code 1 February 2012
- 7.3 Children's Services consultation on admission arrangements for September 2013

ⁱ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.