

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM 2010

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This paper presents members with a copy of the Annual Report of the Local Admissions Forum 2010, for their consideration and information.

Summary

2. Each year the Local Authority must prepare a report which outlines some of the Admission to School practices and procedures that the Authority operate throughout the course of the previous academic year and for the forthcoming year.
3. The report is presented to the Local Admissions Forum for their consideration and approval, cleared by the Director of Children's Services and then forwarded to the Office of The Schools Adjudicator (OSA) before the deadline of 30th June each year.
4. This report provides members of Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee with a copy of the report that was approved and submitted for the academic year 2009/10 and the forthcoming year 2010/11. Key areas of particular interest are highlighted within the body of this report.

Recommendation(s)

5. It is recommended that:-
 - (a) Members consider and note for information this report and the attached Annual Report of the Local Admissions Forum 2010.

Murray Rose,
Director of Children's Services

Background Papers

G.McQueen: Extension x2847

S17 Crime and Disorder	This policy has no implications for crime and disorder
Health and Well Being	This policy has no implications for health and well being
Sustainability	This report has no effect on sustainability
Diversity	All groups of school age children are effected
Wards Affected	All wards are affected by the Admission Arrangements
Groups Affected	Pupils, Parents, Schools, Diocese
Budget and Policy Framework	There is no direct impact on the Local Authority budget
Efficiency	The content of this report does not effect efficiency
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report links to Aspiring Darlington as the admission process ensures that every child who applies for a school place is allocated one and gains access to a school education.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

6. In February 2010, The Office of The Schools Adjudicator (OSA) issued all Local Authorities with a template to use for the completion of their annual Local Authority Report to the Schools Adjudicator (attached as Appendix 1). The purpose of such is to give the OSA an outline of some of the practices and procedures that Authorities operate throughout the course of the academic year 2009/10 and for the forthcoming year 2010/11.
7. Headings that the report covers for the 2009/10 academic year are: Fair Access Protocol, Infant Class Sizes and Admission Appeals. The report identifies the number of children placed under the protocol, to which school and the fairness under which it operates. Infant Class Size regulations are complied with by all age appropriate schools in Darlington and the number of appeals submitted, heard and upheld/dismissed, for all schools in Darlington.
8. The report then requests information on the upcoming academic year of 2010/11. It focuses on the admission arrangements for all admission authorities in Darlington. Whether admission arrangements serve the interests of children in care, children with disabilities, children with special educational needs and service children, ahead of other arrangements for mainstream children. It then questions the effectiveness of co-ordination between the Local Authority and other Admission Authorities and lawfulness of the practices and policies that are used.
9. The template finishes with a request for additional information on free school meals and whether they play a part in the request for a school place and on other statutory roles that have a direct impact in the admissions process; Admissions Forum, Choice Advice and Transport.

Key Areas of Interest

10. The report (attached at appendix 2) is quite detailed and provides a good summary of the range of issues which are pertinent to the admissions process in Darlington. However, the following areas may be of particular interest to Members of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee.

Appeals

11. Table 1 provides a comparison of the number of families who have exercised their right to appeal for 2009 and those for 2010 (multiple appeals)

Secondary School	Number of appeals		Number of successful appeals	
	2009	2010	2009	2010
Hurworth	13	26	1	9
Carmel	37	14	12	7
Hummersknott	24	14	10	4
St Aidan's	N/A	10	N/A	10

Primary School	Number of appeals		Number of successful appeals	
	2009	2010	2009	2010
Mowden Infants	3	7	0	0
Heighington Primary	N/A	4	N/A	0
Skerne Park Primary	3	6	0	0
Springfield Primary	N/A	3	N/A	0
Alderman Leach Primary	1	4	0	0
Heathfield Primary	N/A	2	N/A	0
Abbey Infants	8	9	0	0
Hurworth Primary	1	6	0	0
High Coniscliffe Primary	1	9	0	2
St Teresa's Primary	4	5	1	3
St Johns Primary	N/A	3	N/A	0
Cockerton Primary	2	5	0	0
St George's Primary	N/A	3	N/A	0
Holy Family Primary	6	2	0	1
St Bede's Primary	4	1	0	0
St Augustine's Primary	7	1	2	0

12. It should be noted that schools are complying with KS1 legislation but appeal panels have admitted children over and above the admission numbers. Therefore 2 schools have had to employ an additional fully qualified teacher in order to meet the legislative requirements

Provision of School Places

13. For the 2010/11 period, 92% of families were allocated a place at a secondary school of their choice, whilst at primary school entry the figure was 94%.
14. There have been a small number of areas within the Borough where the demand for school places has resulted in families not receiving a school of their choice and the offer of an alternative school place being some 3 miles or more from their parental address. The areas concerned were

Merrybent/Low Coniscliffe
Middleton St George/Low Dinsdale
School Aycliffe

15. The Authority considered solutions where possible at the parents preferred schools but it was felt that any potential solution would have incurred excessive capital expenditure, diverted money from other school projects and would have breached KS1 legislation. In all cases the Authority offered parents the provision of a taxi with a passenger assistant (enhanced CRB approved).
16. The Local Authority will continue to monitor the situation across KS1, as numbers remain tight, with very few surplus places available across the Borough. For the 2010/11 period a review group has been established to monitor and scrutinise data as it becomes available and provide regular reports to the Local Admissions Forum for their consideration and direction.

Fair Access Protocol

17. The Local Authority has and does operate a Fair Access Protocol for all schools within the Borough (including VA, VC, Foundation and Academy). The protocol manages the admission arrangements for Hard to Place children, who are some of our most vulnerable and often most complex children.
18. To be effective, it is important that the procedures are seen to be fair and equitable and the operation of the arrangements must be transparent.
19. At the Behaviour and Attendance conference held on 25 May 2010, the Fair Access Protocol was debated at length by officers, practitioners and senior school staff. An outcome of the conference was for a working group to be established to review the effectiveness of the current protocol and make recommendations for future improvements.
20. The working group will begin meeting in September 2010 and will present its findings to the Local Admissions Forum for their approval before re-launching an updated version of the protocol to all schools.

Outcome of Consultation

21. Darlington's Annual Report of the Local Admissions Forum 2010 was presented to, and approved by, the Local Admissions Forum on 9th June 2010. It was then cleared by the Director of Children's Services and forwarded to the OSA before the deadline of 30th June
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