

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
10TH JANUARY 2011**

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**ADMISSIONS TO SCHOOLS: SEPTEMBER 2010**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of the report is to inform members of the Scrutiny Committee about the placement of pupils in Reception Classes and Secondary Schools for the 2010-11 school year.

**Summary**

2. Darlington Council is the Admissions Authority for all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in the Borough. The Council also acts as the co-ordinating authority for admissions to Voluntary Aided Schools, Foundation Schools and Academies. Through the co-ordination arrangements, families receive one offer, and one offer only of a school place for their child on national offer day.
3. The numbers of parents receiving a place at one of their named preferences is higher than the national and local averages.

**Recommendations**

4. It is recommended that Members receive the report for information.

**Murray Rose  
Director of People**

**Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.

George McQueen : Extension 2847

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues arising from this report
Health and Well Being	There are no issues arising from this report
Carbon Emissions	The Authority's school place planning seeks to provide sufficient school places in local communities to reduce the need for motorised transport to school.
Diversity	There are no issues arising from this report
Wards Affected	All wards in Darlington
Groups Affected	Pupils of statutory school age and their families are affected by the distribution of places in Reception classes or Year 7 at secondary transfer.
Budget and Policy Framework	There are no issues arising from this report
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Providing sufficient school places of quality is consistent with the Aspiring Darlington theme of the sustainable community strategy.
Efficiency	The supply of school places in Darlington is in line with recommendations from the Audit Commission.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

5. There is a diverse community of schools in Darlington, comprising Community Schools, Voluntary Aided (faith based) schools and an Academy. The Council has a duty to run a co-ordinated admissions system for all schools.
6. Every year, an Information for Parents handbook is produced, separately for primary and secondary schools. The handbooks contain information on all of the available schools in Darlington, their admissions criteria and the number of children admitted to the school in the previous year. The handbook also has details of the Choice Adviser and gives parents the opportunity to seek further guidance before expressing a preference for a school.
7. The scheme of co-ordinated admissions operates across Council boundaries, so parents are also advised of the process to be followed if they wish to apply for a place in a school maintained by a neighbouring Authority.
8. Parents can state a preference for five primary schools. Due to the relatively small number of secondary schools in the Borough, only three preferences are invited for places in Year 7. Preferences are stated in rank order and parents are requested to support their indicated preference with reasons for their choice.
9. The Authority uses a computerised system to match all preferences against the admissions criteria for each school. Parents are offered the highest ranked preference they have recorded, consistent with their child meeting the admissions criteria for the school concerned. If it is not possible to offer parents a place in any of the schools they have recorded as a preference, the Authority makes an offer of the nearest available place to the parents' home address.
10. When it is not possible to offer parents a school of their preference, they are informed of their right of appeal to an independent appeal committee. Appeals in Darlington are administered through the Director of Resources.
11. In the following tables, the published admission numbers (PAN) for each school are shown in the left hand column. These numbers can be contrasted with the actual numbers on roll in Year 7 or Reception Class at the Autumn census point in October 2010. The column titled 'Total Number of Applications' records all the preferences made for a school, whether they were first, second, third, fourth or fifth preferences. The tables also show the number of appeals registered and the number of appeals that were successful.

School	PAN	Total number of applications	Appeals		No. on roll as at 08/10/10
			Submitted	Successful	
Branksome	180	151	0	N/A	112
Carmel	180	343	19	9	184 5 pupils left since the start of term.
Haughton	180	308	0	N/A	178

School	PAN	Total number of applications	Appeals		No. on roll as at 08/10/10
			Submitted	Successful	
Hummersknott	240	506	16	8	244 4 pupils left since the start of term.
Hurworth	127	394	40	7	134
Longfield	180	317	0	N/A	179
St Aidan's	140	194	13	12	152

School	PAN	Total number of applications	Appeals		No. on roll as at 08/10/10
			Submitted	Successful	
Abbey Infant	90	298	10	0	90
Alderman Leach	60	114	5	0	60
Bishopston/Redmarshall	15	16	1	N/A	25 School agreed to exceed PAN
Cockerton	30	126	6	0	30
Corporation Road	45	60	0	N/A	47
Dodmire	75	131	3	N/A	88 School agreed to exceed PAN by up to 15
Firthmoor	45	52	0	N/A	34
Gurney Pease	30	40	0	N/A	24
Harrowgate Hill	90	163	0	N/A	86
Heathfield	60	122	2	0	60
Heighington	40	83	5	0	40
High Coniscliffe	15	88	10	2	16 1 pupil left since start of term
Holy Family	30	118	1	1	31
Hurworth	30	92	7	0	30
Mount Pleasant	30	39	0	N/A	30
Mowden Infant	60	233	7	0	60
Northwood	60	82	0	N/A	60
Red Hall	30	40	0	N/A	30
Reid St	60	118	1	N/A	59
Skerne Park	45	64	5	0	45
Springfield	30	103	3	0	30
St Augustine's	30	108	1	0	30
St Bede's	30	86	2	0	30
St George's	45	64	6	0	45

St John's	30	72	3	0	30
St Teresa's	40	88	6	3	43
Whinfield	90	158	0	N/A	81

12. The analysis from the preferences stated at the time of allocation gave 92% of families a place at one of the secondary schools of their choice, whilst at primary it was 94%. The percentage of children now in a school of their parents' preference will have increased since there were a number of successful appeals.
13. Appeals: There were 88 appeals for a secondary (Y7) place this year. This was an increase on 2009 where there were 74 appeals. This year 36 (41%) were successful whereas last year there were 23 (31%) successful. For a primary (Reception) place this year there were 84 appeals, an increase on last year's 33. This year 6 (7%) were successful whereas last year 3 (9%) were successful.
14. The table below shows the number of 1st preferences for each school in the first column whilst the second column shows the percentage of successful first preferences.

<b>School</b>	<b>No of 1<sup>st</sup> Preferences Expressed</b>	<b>% of 1<sup>st</sup> Preferences Offered</b>
Branksome	94	100
Carmel	204	85
Haughton	148	100
Hummersknott	257	87
Hurworth	173	69
Longfield	160	100
St Aidan's	119	97

<b>School</b>	<b>No of 1<sup>st</sup> Preferences Expressed</b>	<b>% of 1<sup>st</sup> Preferences Offered</b>
Abbey Infant	105	83
Alderman Leach	56	95
Bishopton/Redmarshall	8	100
Cockerton	36	78
Corporation Road	38	100
Dodmire	72	94
Firthmoor	25	100
Gurney Pease	16	100
Harrowgate Hill	87	100
Heathfield	58	91
Heighington	56	71
High Coniscliffe	33	45

<b>School</b>	<b>No of 1<sup>st</sup> Preferences Expressed</b>	<b>% of 1<sup>st</sup> Preferences Offered</b>
Holy Family	30	90
Hurworth	45	64
Mount Pleasant	22	100
Mowden Infant	75	79
Northwood	47	100
Red Hall	30	100
Reid St	53	96
Skerne Park	53	81
Springfield	34	88
St Augustine's	32	91
St Bede's	35	83
St George's	50	88
St John's	33	82
St Teresa's	46	87
Whinfield	69	100

15. The Authority uses statistics to inform pupil place planning. There are currently sufficient secondary places to meet parental demand. The Local Admissions Forum has been keeping a close watch on the demand for primary places, as, following the national trend, the number of requests for places in the Reception class has grown more quickly than projections indicated.
16. The last report written for the Forum gave an indication that the number of places for Reception aged pupils for 2010 would be close to the maximum number of places the Authority had. The total number of preferences made to families totalled 1271, the total number of places the Authority made available was 1275.
17. The total number of primary children on roll as of 8th October stands at 1234. The net difference can be accounted for with 32 children having refused a place at a school in Darlington and having accepted an alternative school place, either in private education (9) or at a school in another LA area (23).
18. There are still 5 children whose parents have chosen to keep their child in nursery until such time as the school they prefer becomes available or they become of compulsory school age.
19. The Local Authority has received a challenge to the admissions criteria from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for the 2011/12 admission arrangements. This was borne out of an unsuccessful application from the 2010 admissions round. The challenge is centred on the unsuccessful applications from parents in rural locations. In addition, a number of parents have also submitted complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman on the same issue.