

## **School Admissions for September 2011**

### **Report of the Executive Director Children's Services**

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: Learning City**

**CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT: Delivering Customer Focused Services,  
Efficient and Effective Council**

#### **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 This report is as requested by Committee and sets out the admissions arrangements operated within the City.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Local Authority is required by the Education (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2002 to have a scheme for co-ordinated admissions arrangements. The scheme is also required to comply with the School Admissions Code and, following consultation which includes the Admissions Forum, which the Council is required to establish by law, is approved by Cabinet, the Schools Adjudicator and a copy is forwarded to DfE, as required by law.
- 2.2 The co-ordinated scheme includes maintained schools, for which the Local Authority is the admissions authority, Voluntary Aided and Trust schools and Academies, which are all their own admissions authorities. In addition, the scheme includes applications from parents/carers seeking admissions to Sunderland schools but who live within another Local Authority, the majority of which are from the neighbouring authorities of Durham, Gateshead and South Tyneside. Similarly, other Local Authorities manage applications to them from parents/carers living in Sunderland but seeking places at schools within those Local Authorities, the majority of which again are Durham, Gateshead and South Tyneside. In all cases, where a school is its own admissions authority, or if the school is situated in another Local Authority's area, Sunderland Local Authority's role is restricted to administering the admissions process and it has no decision making powers.
- 2.3 Each admissions authority must set out its own arrangements for admission, including publication of Published Admission Numbers (PAN) and the criteria to be applied in the case of a school being oversubscribed. The admission arrangements, including PANs, for September entry admissions to maintained schools in the City, are agreed annually by Cabinet.

- 2.4 Voluntary Aided and Trust schools and Academies have responsibility for making decisions on all admissions to their schools. However, the Local Authority undertakes the administration of their admissions on behalf of the governing bodies but has no decision making powers in relation to them.
- 2.5 In addition to the Reception, Y2 in junior schools and Year 7 September admissions, the Local Authority has responsibility for in-year admissions i.e. transfers into the City and between schools and academies within the City.
- 2.6 The Local Authority also manages its admissions to nursery scheme, which does not have the same legal status as admissions to main school, but which also sets out a published admission number and criteria to be applied in the case of oversubscription.

### **3. September 2011 Admissions**

- 3.1 Reception numbers across the city increased from 3,220 to 3,299 in September 2011 with a similar increase anticipated in September 2012. The increase was not evenly distributed across the city, with some areas experiencing more intensive pressure on places than others. Projections would indicate that this increase is temporary, falling again in September 2013, but further detailed work is being carried out to establish this. There was significant pressure on reception places in the Washington area for September 2011 which resulted in a shortfall of places. This in turn resulted in the admission numbers at Lambton Primary and Oxclose Primary schools being increased for 2011 from 30 to 51 and 30 to 60 respectively. Projections show a similar increase in the numbers seeking places in Washington for September 2012, as compared to previous years. The numbers are predicted to fall again for September 2013.
- 3.2 A programme of meetings are in place with headteachers and chairs of governors in each area to explore solutions to accommodate projected increases from September 2012. This will include improvements to current data collection on pupil numbers and projections and data relating to new housing. In particular it is felt to be important to fully utilise the local intelligence of schools and nurseries to identify sibling links and emerging patterns of admission and to better use the information from private nurseries and daycare settings. This work is being supported by the Strategy Policy and Performance Team. Ward members, who have valuable knowledge about their local schools and areas are also involved in this planning process which will support the focus on solutions for those communities and schools within Washington where there is pressure on places.
- 3.3 Some schools in the West of the city also experienced pressure on places for September 2011, which resulted in the admission number being increased from 30 to 60 at South Hylton Primary school for September 2011. The position for September 2012 is being considered alongside the

potential impact on admissions to schools in the area of the proposed opening of Grindon Hall Free School.

#### **4. Current Position - September 2011 admissions**

- 4.1 The number of applications received, by preference order, for all September 2011 admissions is:

	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Junior</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Total</b>
1st preference	3235	545	2898	6678
2nd preference	1591	46	1338	2975
3rd preference	944	18	636	1598
<b>Total</b>	<b>5770</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>4872</b>	<b>11251</b>

The percentage of places offered from within each preference category (e.g. of the first preferences expressed for primary places, were offered a place) is:

	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Junior</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
1st preference	90%	99%	94.9%
2nd preference	6.5%	1%	3.5%
3rd preference	2.5%		0.5%

- 4.2 Where a school is oversubscribed and not all applicants can be offered a place, parents/carers have a right to appeal against a decision not to offer a place and the decision may be overturned by an independent appeals panel. The number of appeals heard, and the number upheld, for September 2011 admissions is:

	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Junior</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Total</b>
Appeals heard	184	0	57	241
Appeals upheld	69	0	17	86

#### **5. Current Position - In year admissions**

- 5.1 In addition to the September admissions round, in-year transfers are administered throughout the school year. The number of in-year applications received from September to November 2011 is:

Approximately 380 applications.

#### **6. Recommendation**

- 6.1 Members are recommended to offer views on the Admissions arrangements and their application.

## **7. Background Papers**

7.1 Cabinet March 2011

7.2 Background papers are available from the contact officer below.

---

**Contact Officer:** Val Thompson  
Business Relationships and Governance Manager  
Telephone number: 0191 561 1372  
[Val.thompson@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:Val.thompson@sunderland.gov.uk)