

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND EARLY HELP SERVICES

TO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 OCTOBER 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	14
TITLE:	SCHOOL ADMISSIONS PROCESS AND DATA ON EXCLUSIONS		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR TONY JONES	PORTFOLIO:	EDUCATION
SERVICE:	DCEEHS	WARDS:	ALL
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to detail the process for admissions across Reading Borough Council, the current position of admissions for Reading schools and the information on school exclusions.
- 1.2 The council fully adopts the mandatory requirements following the schools admissions code.
- 1.3 This report provides information on how admissions procedures function and sets out the timetable for primary and secondary phases of education.
- 1.4 Reading Borough Council undertakes its responsibilities fully.
- 1.5 Committee will note the most recent information in the Local Authority cross border movement table indicating the findings in the January School Census.
- 1.6 The council continues to work closely and support schools and students to reduce exclusions. There have been reductions for certain groups of pupils.
- 1.7 One appendix - School exclusion information.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 To accept the processes of the schools admissions.
- 2.2 To note the levels of and the data related to exclusions.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The strategy on school admissions needs to be adopted because local authority is the admissions authority for Reading.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Current Position:

The School Admissions Process - The School Admissions Code

This Code imposes mandatory requirements and includes guidelines setting out aims, objectives and other matters in relation to the discharge of functions relating to admissions by the bodies listed below:

- Admission authorities of maintained schools as defined in
- Section 88(1) (a) and (b) of the SSFA 19982
- Governing bodies and local authorities (when not admission authorities)
- Schools Adjudicators
- Admission Appeal Panels.

These bodies have a statutory duty to act in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Code.

Academies (including those that are Free Schools), University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools, are state-funded, non-fee-paying independent schools set up under a Funding Agreement between the Secretary of State and the proprietor of an Academy (most commonly referred to as an Academy Trust). Academies are required by their funding agreements to comply with the Code and the law relating to admissions, although the Secretary of State has the power to vary this requirement where there is demonstrable need.

How Admissions work:

- All schools must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than places at the school. Admission arrangements are determined by admission authorities.
- Admission authorities must set ('determine') admission arrangements annually: this includes the Published Admission Number; oversubscription criteria. Where changes are proposed to admission arrangements, the admission authority must first publicly consult on those arrangements. If no changes are made to admission arrangements, they must be consulted on at least once every 7 years. Consultation must be for a minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1 October and 31 January of the school year before those arrangements are to apply. For example: for arrangements which are to apply to applications in 2016 (entry in September 2017), consultation must be completed by 31 January 2016. This consultation period allows parents, other schools, religious authorities and the local

community to raise any concerns about proposed admission arrangements.

- Once all arrangements have been determined, arrangements can be objected to and referred to the Schools Adjudicator. Objections must be referred to the Adjudicator by 15 May in the determination year. Any decision of the Adjudicator must be acted on by the admission authority and admission arrangements amended accordingly. The local authority will collate and publish all the admission arrangements in the area in a single composite prospectus.
- In the normal admissions round parents apply to the local authority in which they live for places at their preferred schools. Reading parents are able to express a preference for at four schools. The application can include schools outside the local authority where the child lives: a parent can apply for a place for their child at any state-funded school in any area. If a school is undersubscribed, any parent that applies must be offered a place. When oversubscribed, a school's admission authority must rank applications in order against its published oversubscription criteria and send that list back to the local authority. Published admission arrangements must make clear to parents that a separate application must be made for any transfer from nursery to primary school and from infant to junior school.
- All preferences are collated and parents then receive an offer from the local authority at the highest preference school at which a place is available. For secondary schools, the offer is made on or about 1st March (known as National Offer Day) in the year in which the child will be admitted. For primary schools, the offer is made on or about 16th April, in the year in which the child will be admitted.
- Parents, and in some circumstances children, have the right to appeal against an admission authority's decision to refuse admission. The admission authority must set out the reasons for the decision, that there is a right of appeal and the process for hearing such appeals. The admission authority must establish an independent appeals panel to hear the appeal. The panel will decide whether to uphold or dismiss the appeal. Where a panel upholds the appeal the school is required to admit the child.

Local Authority responsibilities:

- Local authorities must publish online (with hard copies available for those who do not have access to the internet) a composite prospectus for parents by 12th September in the offer year, which contains the admissions arrangements and any supplementary information forms for each of the state-funded schools in the local authority area to which parents can apply (i.e. all schools including Academies). They must ensure that this information is kept up to date throughout the period in which it is possible for parents to apply for a place for their child, and that it is written in a way that makes it clear and accessible to all parents

- For applications in the normal admissions round, local authorities must provide a common application form (CAF) that enables parents to express their preference for a place at any state funded school, with a minimum of 3 preferences in rank order, allowing them to give reasons for their preferences. While parents may express a preference for any state funded school - regardless of whether it is in the local authority area in which they live - admission authorities must not give any guarantees that a preference will be met
- Each year all local authorities must formulate and publish on their website a scheme by 1 January in the relevant determination year to co-ordinate admission arrangements for all publicly funded schools within their area. Where the scheme is substantially different from the scheme adopted for the previous academic year, the local authority must consult the other admission authorities in the area and any other local authorities it determines, if not consultation must take place at least once every seven years, even if there have been no changes during that period. The LA must ensure co-ordination so that the admission of pupils in different local authorities is, as far as reasonably practicable, compatible with each other; the local authority must determine the qualifying scheme and must take all reasonable steps to secure its adoption. A local authority must inform the Secretary of State whether they have secured the adoption of a qualifying scheme by 28 February in the determination year. All admission authorities must participate in co-ordination and provide the local authority with the information it needs to co-ordinate admissions by the dates agreed within the scheme. Local authorities must make application forms available to parents who wish to apply to a school in a neighbouring area which operates a different age of transfer (e.g. middle schools), and process these as it would in its normal admissions round.
- There is no requirement for local authorities to co-ordinate in-year applications but they must provide information in the composite prospectus on how in-year applications can be made and will be dealt with. Local authorities must, on request, provide information to a parent about the places still available in all schools within its area, and a suitable form for parents to complete when applying for a place for their child at any school for which they are not the admission authority. Any parent can apply for a place for their child at any time to any school outside the normal admissions round. They can do this by applying directly to admission authorities, except where other arrangements are in place locally (e.g. the local authority coordinates all in-year admissions).

Allocating places

- Admission authorities must allocate places on the basis of their determined admission arrangements only, and a decision to offer or refuse admission must not be made by one individual in an admission authority. Where the school is its own admission authority the whole governing body, or an admissions committee established by the governing body, must make such decisions.

- With the exception of designated grammar schools, all maintained schools, including schools designated with a religious character, that have enough places available must offer a place to every child who has applied for one, without condition or the use of any oversubscription criteria.
- Each admission authority must maintain a clear, fair and objective waiting list until at least 31 December of each school year of admission, stating in their arrangements that each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria. Looked after children, previously looked after children, and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with a Fair Access Protocol, must take precedence over those on a waiting list.
- Infant classes (those where the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6 or 7 during the school year) must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single school teacher. Additional children may be admitted under limited exceptional circumstances.

Set out below is the population from the statistical first release which illustrates;

- There has been an increase in primary and secondary pupil population in Reading putting a demand on school places.
- The £61m school expansion programme, due to be completed autumn 2016, is creating 2,520 primary school places; the opening of The WREN and Maiden Erlegh Secondary schools will create 1,880 new places over the coming years
- School Admissions work with School Place Planning to ensure place sufficiency but it is to be noted that there are currently 101 new to the country in-year applications (62 primary: 39 secondary) and 25 new to area in-year applications (8 primary: 17 secondary) which will further increase pressure on school places
- The service managers for Admissions and Place Planning will meet with the Head of Education

Local Authority Cross border movement			No. of pupils residing in LA	No. of pupils attending schools maintained by the LA	No. of pupils in residence and attending schools maintained by the LA	Pupils residing and attending schools in LA as a % of resident population	% point change since 2002
Jan 2016 School Census	Primary	England	4,270,806	4,271,555	4,115,083	96	-0.6
		South East	682,146	682,002	664,264	97	-0.2
		Reading	13,923	12,551	12,166	87	2.1
	Secondary	England	2,739,732	2,741,022	2,487,375	91	-1.3
		South East	424,987	426,881	396,424	93	-0.4
		Reading	7,341	5,603	4,608	63	4.2
	Special	England	101,189	101,230	92,809	91.7	0.5

	Schools	South East	17,514	17,632	16,166	92.3	-0.5
		Reading	376	241	173	46.0	2.0
<i>Jan 2015 School Census</i>	Primary	England South East	4,190,423	4,191,128	4,039,301	96	-0.5
			669,387	669,617	652,111	97	-0.1
		Reading	13,543	12,045	11,711	87	1.2
	Secondary	England South East	2,730,367	2,731,589	2,483,675	91	-1.1
			423,966	425,705	395,674	93	-0.3
		Reading	7,295	5,461	4,484	62	2.9
	Special Schools	England South East	97,547	97,592	89,512	91.8	0.6
		17,018	17,150	15,708	92.3	-0.5	
		Reading	366	225	171	46.7	2.7

Reading LA update

- Throughout the year there are a number of complaints related to school admissions. These have been dealt with in accordance with the complaints process. We received 10 complaints in total. Two were resolved informally and eight responded to at stage 1 of which 1 progressed to stage 2.

Since 1st July to 18th September 241 applications have been entered on the admissions system: approximately 40% have been allocated a school place but 90% are showing as unplaced partly because schools have not yet updated their systems

- There are an additional 122 (93 primary and 29 secondary) applications which are yet to be entered on to the system and will need allocation: of the primary applications 32 are new to country and 20 new to the Reading area; of the secondary applications 10 are new to the country and 5 new to the area
- The vast majority of these are in-year applications (not routine year R/1 or year 7) however all routine applications are treated as in-year applications after 31st August.

Actions

- The School Place Planning Team and School Admissions Team are meeting regularly to identify in-year vacancies and pressure points within local schools.

4.2 Options Proposed

- That the policy above be continued and the timetable below followed.

Secondary Timetable for applications for admission to Secondary School in September 2017

- By 12 September 2016 - application packs sent to schools
- 12 September 2016 - online application system opens
- 31 October 2016 - closing date for applications
- 1 March 2017 - national offer day for on-time applications
- 15 March 2017 - deadline to accept offered place

- 16 March 2017 - late applications processed
- 14 April 2017 - deadline for appeals to be lodged
- 31 August 2017 - admissions round ends

Primary Timetable for applications for admission to Primary School in September 2017

- By 11 November 2016 - application packs sent to primary schools
- 11 November 2016 - online application system opens
- 15 January 2017 - closing date for applications
- 17 April 2017 - national offer day for on-time applications
- 2 May 2017 - deadline to accept offered place
- 2 May 2017 - late applications processed
- 16 May 2017 - deadline for appeals to be lodged
- June/July 2017 - appeals heard
- 31 August 2017 - admissions round ends

Some schools have their own forms which need to be complete as well as the application form. These forms are sent directly to the schools.

Exclusion information

The information in appendix 1 sets out the fixed term and permanent exclusions for the period from September 2015 to July 2016. This information has been collated from school returns to the Local Authority to the officer responsible for Children Missing out on Education, (CME). The table specifies which group the child/young person is from. This includes Looked After Children (LAC), Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), Free School Meals pupils (FSM), Underperforming Ethnic Groups (UPEG) and Black Minority Ethnic group (BME).

To note:

- There were 23 schools that reported no exclusions
- The percentage of all pupils excluded with SEN has decreased by 20%. However, 54% of all pupils excluded are either statemented, have an EHCP or on school support
- Percentage of statemented or EHCP pupils excluded has reduced to 11%
- Main reasons for exclusions in primary schools was persistent and disruptive behaviour 42%, physical assault against an adult 22% and physical assault towards a child 12%
- Main reasons in secondary school - Physical assault to child 13%, Verbal abuse to adult 13%. Persistent and disruptive behaviour 12%. There is a high proportion of reasons being reported as 'other' 48%
- In primary there was a reduction in BLB students being excluded - 20 exclusions down to 2 and pupils from mixed other group has decreased from 18 to 5.
- Of all exclusions in primary schools the White British group at 67.4% and in secondary 54.8% is the group that has the highest exclusion rate

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The purpose of this section is to ensure that proposals contained in reports are in line with the overall direction of the Council by meeting at least one of the Corporate Plan priorities:

1. Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable;
2. Providing the best start in life through education, early help and healthy living;

5.2 This decision contributes to the strategic aims below by ensuring that children and young people have fair access to schools and educational settings.

- To establish Reading as a learning City and a stimulating and rewarding place to live and visit
- To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 Information is shared with schools and parents at various events and through a range of strategies.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 No assessment made.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 For admissions School Standards and Framework Act (SSFA) 1998. The rules governing exclusions from Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England are contained in the s52 of the Education Act 2002.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no financial implications

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 For admissions School Standards and Framework Act (SSFA) 1998 (http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/pdfs/ukpga_19980031_en.pdf) . The rules governing exclusions from Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England are contained in the s52 of the Education Act 2002 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>).

Appendix 1

Reading LA		RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: Gill Dunlop													
Exclusions															
Fixed Term															
		LY	Sep-15	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	YTD	YTD Variation
Total No. of FTEs	Days Lost	1117	51.5	110	153.5	90.5	173	151.5	133	105.5	159.5	198	148	1474	-32.0%
	Incidents	558	25	59	75	52	85	76	84	55	89	139	102	841	-50.7%
Primary	Days Lost	470	9	56	60.5	53.5	59	31.0	42	47.5	43	42	41	484.5	-3.1%
	Incidents	266	8	29	36	31	33	20	32	26	38	23	23	299	-12.4%
Secondary	Days Lost	647	42.5	54	93	37	114	120.5	91	58	116.5	156	107	990	-52.9%
	Incidents	292	17	30	39	21	52	56	52	29	51	116	79	542	-85.6%
LAC	InBorough	6	2	1	0	0	2	2	0	4	1	4	0	16	-166.7%
	OutBorough	25	3	1	6	5	5	2	5	5	5	5	4	46	-84.0%
SEN	Days Lost	160.5	13.5	27	43.5	25.5	23.5	29	16	14	22	22.5	6	242.5	-51.1%
Statement	Incidents	79	5	13	15	8	8	12	10	6	8	9	3	97	-22.8%
SEN Support	Days Lost	695.5	25	59.5	50	52.5	86.5	71	62	56.5	64.5	56	47.5	631.0	9.3%
	Incidents	333	15	33	33	37	47	35	40	33	42	37	24	376	-12.9%
SEN (No. of Pupils with at least one FTE) Cumulative over year	SEN Support	162	14	37	53	71	87	97	109	117	125	134	138	-	14.8%
	Statement	30	5	15	24	27	27	32	37	40	41	45	48	-	-60.0%
FSM	Days Lost	436	13	46.5	57.5	47.5	87	108	80	55.5	83	101.0	70.0	749.0	
	Incidents	224	7	25	31	26	49	49	45	29	45	69	50	425	
%UPEG Cumulative over year	InBorough	27.1	16	19	19.5	20.8	22.3	23.1	23.7	22.9	22.3	22.8	24.2	-	10.7%
	OutBorough	20.7	6.5	13.1	13.6	15.9	15.0	16.4	17.5	19.0	19.5	19.8	19.6	-	5.2%
% BME Cumulative over year	InBorough	46.7	43.2	39.7	39.6	41.3	40.2	40.7	41.1	39.2	38.4	38.6	40.0	-	14.3%
	OutBorough	32.3	10.0	17.3	20.9	25.3	24	26.3	27.4	28.6	28.6	30.1	30.5	-	5.6%
BME InBorough	Days Lost	523.0	18.5	51.5	66	37.5	57	70	68.5	36	47	86	72.0	610	-16.6%
	Incidents	255	8	25	28	23	30	32	34	13	29	54	50	326	-27.8%
BME OutBorough	Days Lost	306	4	24.5	19	41	13	38	30	20.5	30.5	33	31.5	285.0	6.7%
	Incidents	135	3	10	13	16	6	13	13	13	12	16	11	126	6.7%
Permanent Exclusions															
		LY	Sep-15	Oct-15	Nov-15	Dec-15	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	YTD	
Primary	In Borough	6	1	0	1	3	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	10	-66.7%
	OutBorough	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	50.0%
Secondary	In Borough	16	1	2	4	0	2	1	1	1	0	3	0	15	6.3%
	OutBorough	17	1	0	4	1	2	3	1	0	2	0	0	14	17.6%
LAC	InBorough	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	OutBorough	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
SEN	InBorough	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	-200.0%
Statement	OutBorough	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	50.0%
FSM	InBorough	6	0	0	4	1	1	1	0	1	2	2	0	12	
%UPEG Cumulative over year	InBorough	22.7%	0%	25%	25%	16.6%	26.6%	25.0%	22.2%	22.2%	22.7%	24.0%	24.0%	-	-5.7%
	OutBorough	25%	0%	0%	0.0%	14.3%	11.1%	9.1%	7.7%	7.7%	13.3%	13.3%	13.3%	-	46.8%
% BME Cumulative over year	InBorough	59.0%	0%	25.0%	25%	25%	33.3%	31.2%	27.7%	27.7%	31.8%	36.0%	36.0%	-	39.0%
	OutBorough	35.0%	0%	0%	0.0%	14.3%	11.1%	9.1%	7.7%	7.7%	13.3%	13.3%	13.3%	-	62.0%