

MAYOR AND CABINET			
Report Title	Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Sixth Form Admissions Arrangements and School Admissions Limits for 2013/14		
Key Decision	Yes		Item No.
Ward	All		
Contributors	Executive Director for Children and Young People		
Class	Part 1	Date: 11 April 2012	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek the Mayor's approval for the authority's admissions arrangements for community schools for the academic year 2013/14. The report also seeks approval for Lewisham's co-ordinated schemes for primary and secondary transfer and in-year (casual) admissions and the admission limits for all maintained mainstream schools for 2013/14.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 The Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the relevant Regulations, requires admission authorities to consult annually on their proposed admissions arrangements. Consultation must be complete by 1 March each year. The Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 1999 states that admission arrangements must be determined by 15th April of the year preceding the year of admission. This means that the admission arrangements for 2013/14 must be determined by 15th April 2012.
- 2.2 The operation of a fair and equitable system for the admission of children into school supports Lewisham's Corporate priority to raise educational attainment, skills levels and employability. The Admissions Forum has a key role in monitoring and ensuring that children, particularly vulnerable groups e.g. Children in Care, have a speedy admission into school.
- 2.3 This report contributes to the delivery of the 2009-12 Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and in particular to the following priorities:
- Raise educational standards for all
 - Close the attainment gap between underachieving groups and their peers
 - Continue to improve school attendance.

- 2.4 The CYPP 2009-12 underpins 'Shaping Our Future – Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020'. The CYPP sets out how partnership agencies working with children, young people and their families support the delivery of the borough's priorities for the wider community which are set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Admissions arrangements

It is recommended that the nursery, primary, secondary and sixth form admission arrangements for Lewisham's community schools as set out in appendices A to F be agreed.

3.2 Admissions Limits

It is recommended that the admission limits for the academic year 2013/14 as detailed in Appendix G be agreed.

It should be noted that the creation of Trinity Primary School, including the admissions limit, was subject to separate consultation. The determined admissions number is included with the determined numbers for clarity.

3.3 The Admissions Schemes

It is recommended that the Pan London Admission Schemes for reception and secondary transfer and the local scheme for in year admissions as detailed in Appendix H be agreed.

4. Background

4.1 Education Act 2002

The Education Act 2002 requires all Local Authorities (LA) to introduce co-ordinated schemes for primary admissions with effect from 2006 and secondary admissions with effect from 2005. These schemes enable parents to express a number of preferences which, although ranked by parents, are treated equally by the schools involved. This widens the scope for parents and pupils and tackles the problem of multiple offers which used to clog the transfer system. Lewisham, like all London authorities, participates in the Pan London Admissions scheme which facilitates cross-border applications and sharing of information. Since September 2010 the Authority has been required to co-ordinate all phases of admission and London boroughs operate a Pan London scheme for both primary (reception) and secondary transfer. This impacts on resources both in terms of staffing and use of the Pan London Register (the computer system used to electronically exchange applicant details and admissions decisions).

A revised School Admissions Code came into force in February 2012. The previous Code required all Local Authorities to co-ordinate admissions centrally to all phases of education including in year (casual) admissions and co-ordinating admissions is no longer required. However the view of the Admissions Forum and the majority of primary and secondary school headteachers is that this function should continue

to be centralised. No objections to this specific proposal have been made.

4.2 As is the usual practice, Lewisham LA consulted governors during the autumn term 2011 and spring term 2012. For this particular round the consultation was published on Lewisham's web site and a public notice placed in a local news paper .

4.3 The consultation included:

- The admissions policies for community schools,
- The admissions policy for community sixth form,
- An admission limit for each maintained school.

5. Responses to the Consultation

5.1 By 1 March when the consultation on Lewisham's admissions arrangements for community schools and the admissions limits for all maintained schools in the borough ended, no written response had been received.

6. Provision of school places

6.1 In response to the increasing demand for primary school places in the borough the Local Authority is reviewing its existing provision.

6.2 The Local Authority is currently managing the increased demand for primary places by; creating permanent increases, bulge classes where capacity allows and new provision. Planning for school places is subject to separate reports.

7 Financial implications

7.1 Co-ordinated Admissions

The requirement to co-ordinate all phases of school admission and the implementation of the pan London reception scheme has increased the workload of the Admissions Team. There is also requirement to pay additional costs for the Pan London Register which enables the electronic exchange of pupil applicant data. These extra resources will be found from within existing budgets.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 These are contained in the body of the report.

9. Equalities implications

9.1 The purpose of the School Admissions Code is to ensure that places in maintained schools and Academies are allocated and offered in an open and fair way. Admission authorities must ensure that criteria are fair, clear and objective. This includes ensuring that parents are easily able to understand how places for a particular school will be allocated.

- 9.2 Admission authorities must act in accordance with the Code, the School Admissions Appeal Code, other laws relating to admissions and relevant human rights and equalities legislation. Authorities must also ensure that their arrangements will not disadvantage, either directly or indirectly, 'a child from a particular social or racial group, or a child with a disability or special educational need' (Code, paragraph 1.8).
- 9.3 Looked After Children are redefined in the Code to include children who were previously looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted, or became subject to residence orders or special guardianship orders.
- 9.4 The Code lists various factors that admission authorities must not take into account when formulating their arrangements. These include the practical or financial support parents may be able to give to a school, or children's past behaviour, attendance, attitude or achievement, or that of any other child in the family.
- 9.5 Lewisham's arrangements comply with these requirements and vigilance is embedded in our processes. The Admissions Forum also serves an important function in monitoring the content of admission policies and their impact. Any instances of poor practice would be challenged and referred to the Schools Adjudicator if necessary.
- 9.6 The adoption of the admissions arrangements including the co-ordinated admissions schemes complies with the Authority's equality assessment duties

10. Environmental implications

- 10.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

11. Background Papers

None

If you have any questions on this paper, please contact Linda Fuller, Team Leader – Admissions & Appeals, 3rd Floor, Laurence House, SE6 4RU (telephone 0208 314 6212 or email linda.fuller@lewisham.gov.uk).