

LEWISHAM SCHOOLS FORUM			
REPORT TITLE	Deferred Admissions		
DECISION	Yes	Item No.	8
CLASS	Part 1	Date	30 June 2016

1. Purpose of the report

The Forum agreed in October 2015 that the Contingency be used to fund schools for the small number of pupils who miss the October Census and the January Census by reason of having deferred admission. At the time the Forum wished to review the decision after a year and this report looks at the position over the last year and re-considers the original decision.

2. Recommendation

That the Forum agree to discontinue the funding support from the contingency for pupils who miss the October Census and the January Census by reason of having deferred admission until later in the school year.

3. Background

- 3.1 The School Admissions Code allows for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday, but children do not reach compulsory school age until after their fifth birthday. There is currently flexibility for parents who do not feel their child is ready to start school before compulsory school age to delay the child's admission until the term they become statutory school age and for those 'summer born children' to request that their child's admission is delayed until the following academic year.

The admission of summer born children has been strongly supported by the Department for Education (DfE) with a commitment from them to incorporate the right to delay a summer born child's admission in a revision of the School Admissions Code and was featured in the recent White Paper. In effect, parents may delay the date their child is admitted to school until later in the school year following their fourth birthday, providing they do not defer beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, or beyond the start of the final term of that school year. Summer born children whose parent wishes for them to delay their admission must withdraw from the admissions round and reapply during the following admissions round.

- 3.2 Alternatively, a child may attend school part-time during the reception year until they reach compulsory school age. This leads to the consequence for the school that a place is 'held' throughout the whole year but yet the pupil misses the October Census and appears during the year. The right to request a delayed entry – that is entry a full academic year late and out of cohort does not lead to the same financial consequence for schools and so is not an issue for Schools Forum in the same way.
- 3.3 While the local authority has every confidence that primary schools cater well for summer born pupils through differentiated teaching and strategies to support transition from EYFS to KS1, there is a strong national lobby (supported by the government) concerned that children should not attend school until they are 'ready'. This is also promoted by some early year's providers.

4 Financial Impact

- 4.1 The schools budget is predominately based on the number of pupils on the October Census prior to the start of the financial year. The funding the school receives starts in the April following the census. There is no funding received by the school between the October census and the next March.
- 4.2 There is provision within our own local funding scheme that if the January census is higher than the October census then the extra pupils will be funded. This is known as the January Uplift. This is the only adjustment allowed to the October census data under the national funding regulations. There is one slight proviso, in that the funding for the January Uplift is not paid until the following year. This is a result of the January actual numbers not being available by the time the school budgets are calculated and notified to schools.
- 4.3 The above adjustment is made on total numbers and there is no differential made between leavers, late joiners and deferred admissions. The net total is taken.
- 4.4 Financially a school would only be at a disadvantage if the pupil deferred admission is after the January count. This would not be the case if the pupil remains in a nursery attached to the school. Nursery funding is counted on a termly basis.
- 4.5 There is no difference for part time children as these are always counted as one.
- 4.6 The difference between a pupil who is on the census count and for those pupils whose admission is deferred will be that a school will not receive any funding in the following year providing the deferral is after the January count. They will not receive a full year's funding for the following financial year.

4.7 The basic entitlement for a reception class pupil is £3,700, plus the relevant proportion of deprivation. This on average equates to 25% of the basic entitlement.

4.8 The funding position is shown in the table below

	Pupil on October Count 2015	Pupil on January Count 2016	Funding			Total £
			2015/16 £	2016/7 £	2017/8 £	
Normal Admission	Yes	Yes	0	3,700	3,700	7,400
Deferred Admission but pupils joins school before January 2016 count	No	Yes	0	0	7,400	7,400
Deferred Admission but pupils joins school after January 2016 count	No	No	0	0	3,700	3,700

5. Previous decision

When the Forum made their decision in October 2015 it was believed that there was likely to be 10 pupils who had their admissions deferred and this would lead to a shortfall in funding for schools of £48k, if no support was offered. There was a number of options considered by the Forum at the meeting in October 2015. These were based around three options

- To provide no funding
- Provide a school with funding for a year
- Provide a loan

The Forum agreed to provide funding out of the contingency but to review the position after the year when the number deferred pupils were known and the financial consequences for individual schools assessed.

6 Position in the last year

In the past academic year there were no claims on the funding for deferred admission.

7 National Funding Formula

7.1 The Department for Education (DFE) wish to see a national funding formula for schools introduced from April 2017. The DFE have issued one consultation on a national funding formula which considered the principles behind a national formula. A second consultation is expected

on the technical aspects of the formula. This has not been received at the time of writing this report.

- 7.2 It is highly unlikely that a national funding formula will provide for deferred admissions. The contingency is controlled by the Schools Fund as a mutual fund. This fund is created through a mechanism known as de-delegation whereby the Forum agree to provide the funds for the contingency by withdrawing the funds from schools budget for all maintained schools but not academies. Under the new funding formula this will not be possible, it is likely that the Forum can operate a contingency but each individual school will freedom to choose whether they contribute to the contingency.

8 Conclusion

Given that no claims on the funding were received and that the changes proposed to the schools funding system will result in at best a contingency that covers only a proportion of schools, it is recommended to Forum that the funding support to schools with deferred admissions is discontinued.

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