



Mayor and Cabinet

Report title: Determined Admissions Arrangements for 2024/25.

Date: 1st February 2023

Key decision: Yes

Class: Part 1 .

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Executive Director for Children and Young People

Director of Law, Governance and Elections

Outline and recommendations

This report seeks the Mayor and Cabinet's approval for the local authority's admissions arrangements for the academic year 2024/25 which have not changed from the existing policies. The report's appendices A-I set out the following arrangements:

- The admissions policy for mainstream community nursery, primary, secondary schools and sixth forms for academic year 2024/25 as set out in Appendix A to G ;
- the pan London admissions schemes for the planned reception and secondary transfer rounds for academic year 2024/25 in Appendix I;
- the locally coordinated in year admissions scheme for academic year 2024/2025 in Appendix E
- The Published Admissions Number (PAN) for all community mainstream schools for the academic year 2024/25 in Appendix H.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

In accordance with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code 2021, admission authorities must, if they wish to make any changes to the existing admissions arrangements, consult for a minimum of six weeks.

For the 2024/25 round of admissions the Local Authority has not needed to consult on any changes.

The arrangements for 2024/25 must be determined no later than 28 February 2023.

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Summary

This report's appendices A to I sets out details of the:

- Local authority's admissions policy for community schools for the academic year 2024/25.
- Pan London admissions schemes for the planned reception and secondary transfer rounds for academic year 2024/2025
- The locally coordinated in year admissions scheme for academic year 2024/2025.
- Published Admissions Number (PAN) for all community mainstream schools for the academic year 2024/25.
- There are no proposals to amend the existing admissions policies for community schools. Lewisham's arrangements for 2017/18 were scrutinised by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA). The OSA did not find any fault with the arrangements and officers are confident that Lewisham's admissions arrangements remain fully compliant with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code 2021.

Recommendations

The Mayor and Cabinet is asked to approve:

- 2.1 The admissions arrangements for mainstream community nursery, primary, secondary schools and sixth forms for academic year 2024/25 as set out in Appendix A to G.
- 2.2 The Published Admissions Number (PAN) for each community mainstream school in the borough for academic year 2024/25 as detailed in Appendix H.
- 2.3 The pan London Admissions Schemes for reception and secondary transfer and a local scheme for in year admissions for academic year 2024/2025 as detailed in Appendix I.

Policy Context

- 3.1 The School Admissions Code, revised and published in May 2021, amended the formal consultation and annual determination timetable. In accordance with this time table, admissions authorities are required to determine their arrangements no later than 28 February 2023 for the policy which applies to school admissions for the 2024/25 academic year.
- 3.2 Once determined, the admissions arrangements must be published no later than 15 March 2023. Any objections to the determined arrangements must be made to the Office of the School Adjudicator by 15 May the same year.
- 3.3 Lewisham local authority is the admissions authority for community schools in the area. It also acts as the coordinating authority for its residents applying during the planned admissions rounds for mainstream schools both within the area and outside the area. In relation to in-year applications Lewisham acts as the coordinating authority for applications to most mainstream schools in the area too.
- 3.4 Lewisham's relevant area has been determined as the administrative area for the London Borough of Lewisham.

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- 3.5 The operation of a fair and equitable system for the admission of children to school supports Lewisham's corporate priority to raise educational attainment, skills levels and employability. The admissions arrangements for the planned and in year rounds ensure that children, particularly vulnerable groups and especially Children in Public Care, have a fair, transparent and timely admission into school.
- 3.6 This report contributes to the delivering of Lewisham's Corporate plan for 2022-26 and poverty. Lewisham will continue the fantastic work of the last four years, supporting our schools to improve and increasing the opportunities for young people in Lewisham. We will do this by:
- creating and maintaining schools in Lewisham that are ambitious and achieving, where children are inspired and supported to fulfil their potential,
 - encouraging children and their parents to be empowered, responsible and actively involved in their local school and wider community and
 - Enabling children to go onto further education, take up employment or training at the end of their statutory education.

Background

4.1 Education Act 2002

The Education Act 2002 required all local authorities to introduce coordinated schemes for primary admissions with effect from 2006 and secondary admissions with effect from 2005. These schemes enable parents to express a maximum of six mainstream preferences of a maintained school which, although ranked by parents, are treated equally by the schools involved. This widens the choice for parents and pupils and tackled the problem of multiple offers which previously clogged the transfer system. Lewisham participates in the Pan London Admissions scheme which facilitates cross-border applications and sharing of information amongst all 33 London boroughs and five local authorities bordering the capital; Surrey, Kent, Hertfordshire, Essex and Thurrock. Since September 2010 London boroughs have operated a Pan London scheme for both primary (reception) and secondary transfer and, since 2016 admissions, infant to junior applications too. This impacts on resources both in terms of staffing and demand on the pan London Register (the computer system used to electronically exchange applicant details and admissions decisions).

- 4.2 A revised School Admissions Code (Code) came into force in May 2021. The Code no longer requires a mandatory centrally coordinated in-year admissions scheme. However, Lewisham has maintained the view that this function should continue to be centralised for mainstream schools including own admission authority schools as it ensures:
- a safeguard for all children, especially those who are vulnerable, ensuring that they are placed in school without unreasonable delay; and
 - A strategic overview on the demand for school places so that any pressure can be addressed without delay to children's education.

Published Admissions Number (PAN)

- 5.1 Each mainstream school is required to set a Published Admissions Number (PAN) specifying the number of places available at the normal point of entry that is for

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reception places in primary, infant or junior schools and Year 7 places at secondary school.

- 5.2 There are no proposed reductions to formally reduce the Published Admissions Number (PAN) of any Lewisham maintained school. However, a number of schools will agree to cap numbers on an informal basis if required.
- 5.3 These reductions follow on from the continued review and revision of pupil forecasts, which over the last few years have been revised downwards, resulting in both a current and projected oversupply of places in both primary and secondary schools. As such, the council has been working with schools on a number of ways in which we can help support those that are particularly effected, to certainty of pupils on roll and allow efficient use of resources. This also includes implementing local caps in schools with an excess of places. It should be noted that in all schools have agreed that should the need arise for further places in the future that they will play their part in ensuring sufficient places are available.
- 5.4 Over the past few years we have reduced PANs where needed in primary and secondary schools but we now seem to be in a more stable position. Locally reducing PAN's has worked well to keep sufficient places available but not to have unnecessary excess. We will continue to have ongoing dialogue with those schools with spare places about how best to help them on an individual school by school basis. We are aware that some non-local authority schools are currently consulting on PAN reductions and a further school in Southwark, very close to Lewisham's borders are consulting to close

Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications to this report.

Legal implications

- 7.1 The recommendations in this report, for the Council's admission arrangements for mainstream community nursery, primary, secondary schools and sixth forms to be determined by the required date, are in accordance with the provisions of section 88C of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as amended) (SSFA), the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), School Admissions (Infant Class Size)(England) Regulations 2012 and the School Admission Code (revised in May 2021). This statutory framework governs the Council's statutory duty as an admission authority to make arrangements in relation to the allocation of school places including the overall procedure, practices, criteria, and supplementary information that are used to decide the allocation of school places.
- 7.2 The report and its appendices that detail the Council's admission arrangements comply with the relevant provisions of the School Admissions Code 2021 (The Code) by ensuring that:
- Oversubscription criteria is reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and comply with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation.
 - arrangements will not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group, or a child with a disability or special educational needs.
 - Admission arrangements for entry in September 2024 will be determined by 28 February 2023 and
 - Once admission arrangements have been determined the local authority is required to notify appropriate bodies and publish a copy of their determined

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arrangements on their web site as soon as possible before 15 March 2023 and displaying them for the whole offer year.

- 7.3 The Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which requires them to have 'due regard' to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
 - Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

In making their decision Mayor and Cabinet must understand the impact or likely impact of the decision on those with protected characteristics who are potentially affected by the decision.

Equalities implications

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 Admission authorities must act in accordance with the Code, the School Admissions Appeal Code, and 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)
- 8.3 Lewisham's arrangements comply with these requirements and vigilance is embedded in our processes. Any instances of poor practice may be challenged and referred to the School Adjudicator if necessary.

Climate change and environmental implications

- 9.1 There are no direct climate change or environmental implications arising from this report

Crime and disorder implications

- 10.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 11.1 There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

Environmental implications

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12.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

Background papers

13.1 [School Admissions Code 2021](#)

13.2 [Education Act 2002](#)

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Comments for and on behalf of the Director of Law, Governance and Elections

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