

ROTHERHAM

LOCAL

ADMISSIONS

FORUM

Annual Report

Autumn 2010

ROTHERHAM ADMISSIONS FORUM ANNUAL REPORT - AUTUMN, 2010

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ANNUAL ADMISSIONS REPORT FOR THE 2009/10 ADMISSION YEAR

1. **Purpose of the Report and Legal Framework**

Section 85A(1A) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as inserted by section 41(3) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) provides admissions forums with the power to produce an annual report on school admissions. Regulation 3(1A) of the Education (Admissions Forums) (England) Regulations 2002 ('the Forum Regulations') prescribes what will be included in such reports.

Local Authorities are required, under section 13A of the Education Act 1996, as substituted by section 1 of the Education Inspections Act 2006, to exercise their functions, so far as possible, with a view to '*ensuring fair access to educational opportunity*'.

Paragraph 1.72 of the 2009 School Admissions Code extends the duty to achieve fair access to all schools:

*'Admission authorities and governing bodies **must** ensure that their admission arrangements and other school policies are fair and do not disadvantage, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group, or a child with a disability or special educational needs'*.

The admission forum report offers the opportunity, therefore, to provide an objective analysis of the degree to which local admission arrangements support fair access.

Although the report should review the year's admission arrangements and processes and should concern itself fundamentally with school admission issues, it should not confine itself solely to these issues, especially where broader school policies might affect parents exercising their choice.

In order to put school admissions into context it is probably prudent to look first of all at the provision of school places within Rotherham, pupil numbers and demographic trends.

2. **Provision of school places**

Local Authorities are under a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in the area. They must also ensure that there are sufficient schools, promote diversity and increase parental choice.

In assessing the above, there is a balance to be made between the provision of places (capacity) and the use of resources for the benefit of all local children.

The Authority produces an annual 'surplus places' return. For 2009/10, this shows the following:-

2.2. Primary Schools

No of school	99	(83 com/controlled and 16 vol. aided)
Total net capacity	22,904	(R-Y6)
Total number of pupils	20,528	(R-Y6)
No of surplus places	2,376	
% surplus	10.37%	
(17 schools were 'full')		

2.3 Secondary Schools/Academies

No of schools	16	(11 com/controlled-2 vol. aided-3 academies)
Total net capacity	20,633	
Total number of pupils	19,493	
No of surplus places	1,140	
% surplus	5.53%	
(6 schools were 'full')		

3. Number of pupils/demographic trends

The number of Primary and Secondary pupils in each year group in 2009/10 was as follows:-

R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	V1th Form
2990	2904	2932	2876	2792	3012	3031	3367	3453	3498	3487	3595	2093

3.1 Primary

Pupil's numbers have been falling for a number of years as smaller cohorts have entered Reception. The smallest cohort is now in Y4 and numbers entering schools have begun to increase since then.

The total number on roll in the Primary sector is likely to be at its low point in 2009/10 and numbers will then steadily increase up to around 2017.

Over the last 7 years the Authority has taken out 1879 primary school places as pupil numbers have fallen.

3.2 Secondary

Pupils' numbers are also now falling. The largest cohort is in Y11.

Total number on roll is likely to reach its low point in 2015/16.

NB. It is generally believed that between 5% and 10% surplus places provides sufficient scope to provide for maximising parental preference whilst making the best use of resources.

4. Admissions

Table 1 in **Appendix 5** sets out the majority of the prescribed data for individual Primary Schools with Table 2 supplying the same information for Secondary Schools. The Primary Schools are grouped into the 12 areas used for school place planning.

4.1 Primary Schools

In the 2010/11 primary allocation round 32 of the Primary Schools were oversubscribed. One primary school was able to offer places to all applicants who applied by the closing date, then reached the admission limit and was not able to offer places to subsequent late applicants.

Comparative data for 2009/10 shows that 22 of the Primary Schools were oversubscribed. A further 5 schools then reached their admission limit and were not able to offer places to subsequent late applicants.

The total percentages for 1st/2nd/3rd preferences for approved places are shown below.

	1 st Pref	2 nd Pref	3 rd Pref	Pref 15	Total
Reception	95.03	3.22	0.79	0.96	100
Y2/Y3	100	0	0	0	100

A very small number 28, (0.96%) of pupils did not gain one of their preferred schools for Reception/Foundation Stage 2 and were allocated a place at the next nearest/appropriate school with places available, in accordance with the co-ordinated admissions scheme. These are shown in the Preference 15 column in the above table.

There was total satisfaction, as in the previous year, with the Infant to Junior School admissions.

Preferences can only be refused where the number of preferences exceeds the number of places available. Places are offered by reference to the admission authority's published admissions criteria.

Appendix 1 shows the position as regards oversubscribed schools.

Secondary Schools

- 4.2 Six of the Secondary Schools were oversubscribed. One secondary school was able to offer places to all children who applied by the closing date, but had then reached the admission limit and was not able to offer places to subsequent late applications.

	1 st Pref	2 nd Pref	3 rd Pref	Pref 15	Total
Secondary	97%	2%	0.6%	0.4%	100%

A smaller number 13, (0.4%) of pupils did not gain access to one of their preferred schools and were allocated a place at the next nearest/appropriate school with places available, in accordance with the co-ordinated admissions scheme. This compares with 20 (0.59%) for 2009/10.

Appendix 2 shows the position as regards oversubscribed schools.

4.3 Primary and Secondary School Appeals

Appendix 3 shows the position regarding primary and secondary school appeals. It takes account of the late appeals.

The statistics relate mostly to the Year 6 to Year 7 admission appeals and the Reception/Foundation Stage 2 admission appeals, with a small number of mid-year transfer appeals also included.

The number of appeals processed is again marginally higher than the previous year, due to a slight increase in the numbers for both of the Church Aided Secondary Schools and generally for Church primary schools. The largest single school increase was for Wath Comprehensive School, with many appeals from Barnsley area residents, citing the merger of the Foulstone School and Wombwell High school as a reason for not wanting their children's education to be disrupted in the next few years. There continues to be a large number of appeals for the ever-popular Wickersley School and Sports College, although a smaller actual number heard than in previous years.

Although the Year 6 to Year 7 admissions process has shown that pupils were being admitted to the preferred secondary school from the distance criteria (usually the process does not reach that priority level in the admission criteria), this factor alone did not appear to result in a reduction in appeals.

In terms of qualifying measures, there were fewer appeals for primary schools, perhaps because several pupils were able to be allocated places before the appeal hearing took place. No individual primary school stood out as having many more appeals than others, although pressure continues to be placed upon primary schools in and around the Rotherham town centre. This year's pressure upon Reception/Foundation Stage 2 school places in the Bramley-Wickersley area was not apparent from the number of admission appeals heard.

The alteration to the school admission criteria (i.e.: placing social and medical reasons higher up the priority order) did not have a significant impact upon the number of appeals received.

There were two cases in which the parents made complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman about their unsuccessful appeals. Both cases were for primary schools and both referred to parents' dissatisfaction with the admission

criteria, which they felt disadvantaged their own particular circumstances. The Ombudsman found that there was no maladministration causing injustice in either case. The Ombudsman also confirmed that the waiting lists for school places must operate separately from the admission appeal system. A third case (secondary school) is still being investigated by the Ombudsman at the time of writing.

4.4 Casual/In Year Transfers

During the academic year 2009/10 there were 2475 casual/in year transfer requests. This figure has increased 5.4% since 2008/9 when there were 2,349 transfer requests.

The figure of 2475 for casual/in year transfers included 465 children who were new arrivals from overseas. The number of new arrivals from overseas has increased by 24% since 2008/9 when there were 375 new arrivals.

2009/10 saw the highest number of new arrivals for the first time from overseas in recent years. Figures are shown below:-

2009/10	465	children.
2008/9	375	children
2007/8	347	children
2006/7	406	children
2005/6	324	children

The figures for this new academic year have not increased since the previous year.

The Pre-Admission Register has been established to assist with the admission of secondary age children to schools. A small number of Year 11 pupils have been admitted to Rotherham College of Arts and Technology.

As in previous years, there is still a large degree of movement with some families. The Admissions Team has noticed that some children from previous years have moved away and then returned to Rotherham again. In 2009/10 the number of children who were returning new arrivals was 79. The Admissions Team continues to liaise closely with the Officer for Children Missing Education based in the Safeguarding Unit and Education Welfare Officers to locate children.

5. **Ethnicity/social mix/looked after children/pupils with SEN**

Tables 1 and 2 which are attached as **Appendix 6** include details for all schools.

It is difficult to draw any specific conclusion from this data.

The admissions policies and criteria for each school all conform with the provisions contained within the School Admissions Code.

- 5.1 Looked After Children have top priority within admissions criteria (in accordance with the Code) and all those pupils with statements of SEN gain a place at the school named via the statementing process.
- 5.2 The admissions criteria for community/controlled schools gives high priority to those living within the catchment area of the school and 100% of secondary and 100% of primary catchment area pupils gain access to their catchment area school where this is their 1st preferred school. Around 82% of secondary children attend their catchment area school. This compares with 85% for the previous year. Around 58% of primary children attend their catchment area school. The relatively low percentage for primary schools reflects the availability of schools within a short distance from their home address including a large number of church schools. Even where primary children attend a school other than their catchment area school, it will in the vast majority of cases be a school close to their home address and therefore, they will be educated within their local community. The ethnic/social mix, therefore, very closely reflects the ethnic/social mix for the area served by each school. Drawn catchment areas are, in the vast majority of cases, long standing and are not drawn up so as to include or exclude any particular groups.

6. Fair access protocol

The Local Admissions Forum agreed the In-year fair access protocol. The protocol applies equally to all Primary and Secondary Schools within Rotherham in respect of preferences made outside of the normal admissions round on behalf of pupils who would otherwise have no place available to them.

The protocol includes children who have been permanently excluded from school. In 2009/10 there were 11 permanent exclusions including; 2 primary, 2 special and 7 secondary school exclusions. This compares with 2 exclusions in total in 2008/9, 4 in 2007/8 and 51 in 2006/7. This shows that the number of permanent exclusions has increased recently in Rotherham.

With regard to in year admissions and transfers of Looked After Children the following information is provided.

For Primary Schools, during the academic year 2009/10 there were 9 approved transfers. There were 12 additional requests from other local authorities when children were placed with carers in Rotherham. The comparative figures for 2008/9 were 8 approved transfers and 3 requests from other local authorities when children were placed with carers in Rotherham.

For Secondary Schools, during the academic year 2009/10 there were 8 approved transfers. There were 5 additional requests from other local authorities when children were placed with carers in Rotherham. The comparative figures for 2008/9 were 4 approved transfers and 5 additional

requests from other local authorities when children were placed with carers in Rotherham.

During 2009/10 there were 24 applications involving 14 children processed within the protocol, where a change of school was linked to domestic violence. This compares to 10 applications in 2008/9 and 16 applications in 2007/8.

For 2009/10 there was 1 application for a first time asylum seeker. This compares with 10 applications approved for first time asylum seekers in 2008/9 and 4 applications for 2007/8.

There were no applications processed using the other categories of the In Year Fair Access Protocol. As with all other applications for a transfer of schools, these applications are normally processed and a decision confirmed in writing within ten working days.

When a large number of families with children move into an area fairly quickly, this may affect the operation of the In Year Fair Access Protocol. Where there is a large influx in a geographical area it could lead to classes of well above 30 pupils per class particularly in Key Stage 2.

7. Infant class sizes

- 7.1 Rotherham had no schools with infant classes in excess of 30 at the time of the annual school census.
- 7.2 Primary schools have been reminded of the duty in respect of infant class sizes and plans are always put into place for the following year where the limit has been exceeded.
- 7.3 Appeals Panel Members continue to receive appropriate training which includes information specifically relating to appeals for cases refused due to the class-size limits.

8. Additional Matters

- 8.1 All admission authorities have given consideration to the revised School Admissions Code and School Admission Appeals Code came into force on 10 February 2009 and apply to all maintained schools and Academies in England.
- 8.2 The Local Authority and the LAF are aware of their responsibilities in respect of compliance with the mandatory provisions.
- 8.3 The Local Authority conducted a survey of schools' uniform policies in 2008. As with many other matters, (eg transport, catchment areas, marketing, trips and extra-curricular activities etc) there was no evidence to suggest that there is any barrier to admission. However since the School Uniform survey the Authority has had a couple of complaints, from parents, and also from a school uniform supplier that schools are restricting the supply of uniform to a single supplier or

making the uniform available only through the school. All schools have now been provided with the guidance from the DCSF on School Uniform and on the requirement that uniform should be available from at least one alternative high street supplier. Trading Standards have investigated a recent case where a local supplier had tried to restrict school uniform and the supplier has now agreed for allow other suppliers to provide the same school uniform,

- 8.4 The Choice Advice Service continues to develop its service, seeking examples of best practice in other Local Authorities and attendance at national/regional events where possible. It is mindful, however of the high 'first choice' satisfaction rates in Rotherham which have led to minimal self-referral rates to the service by parents/carers in recent times. The Choice Advisor has therefore determined that best use of resources for this developing service may be assisting the Admissions Service in targeting late applicants for secondary places, in the assumption that these groups of parent/carers may be finding the application process problematic due to a range of potential reasons e.g. adult literacy, language barriers.

The Choice Advice Service continues to be publicised through, details in the 'Admission to School booklets' and publicity notices. Information about the service is also published on the RMBC website next to the School Admission information. The Choice Advice service also has a dedicated email address and phone line. Future service developments may include targeted support at schools in areas of identified deprivation (if these coincide with low rates of on-time applications for secondary places.)

- 8.5 The LA has a website which gives full information, with relevant links, on admission. In 2010/11 there was, once again, an increase in online applications. There were 1405 on line applications. These included 722 secondary applications, 626 applications for Reception/Foundation Stage 2 and 57 applications for Infant to Junior School admissions.

In 2009/10 there were 993 applications there were 563 secondary applications, 390 applications for Reception/Foundation Stage 2 and 40 applications for Infant to Junior School admissions. (In 2008/9 there were 931 on-line applications in total.)

- 8.6 The Local Authority has conducted a Parental Survey each year on the application process. The most recent survey for 2010/11 showed that 99% of parents/carers with secondary school age children who responded to the survey found the booklet helpful. This compares favourably with 2009/10 when once again the figure was 99%.

The survey for 2010/11 showed that 97% of parents/carers with primary school age children who responded to the survey found the booklet helpful. This rate has improved by 1% from 2009/10 when the figure was 96%.

- 8.7 The details of the Local Admissions Forum are shown in **Appendix 4**

Recommendations (To be finalised at the meeting).

Appendix 1

OVERSUBSCRIBED PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Oversubscribed schools 2010/2011

Due to a significant increase in the number of children residing in the Wickersley and Bramley areas, the Head Teachers of Bramley Sunnyside Infant, Bramley Grange Primary and Flanderwell Primary Schools were asked to exceed their published admission limits exceptionally for the September, 2010 intake to take account of this increase. The decision to exceed the admission number may have no bearing on any future decisions.

The following schools were oversubscribed in 2010/11 at the time of allocation, after priority had been given to children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs and those who fell into categories i) to v) of the admission criteria, the remaining places were allocated to children who had siblings on roll of the school and lived nearest to the school as determined by the admission criteria.

School	Places remaining	No. of applications in categories V and VI	No. of applicants NOT offered this school and placed on the waiting list as per the co-ordinated scheme
Ferham	1	6	5
Thornhill	0	3	3
Rawmarsh Ashwood	1	12	11

The following schools were oversubscribed in 2010/11 at the time of allocation, after priority had been given to children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs and those who were in categories (i) to (vi) of the admission criteria, the remaining places were filled by children who lived nearest to the school as determined by the admissions criteria.

School	Places remaining	No. of applications in category VI	No. of applicants NOT offered this school and placed on the waiting list as per the co-ordinated scheme
Aston Fence	0	17	17
Aston Hall	3	13	10
Bramley Grange	3	19	16

Bramley Sunnyside	17	34	17
Broom Valley	0	1	1
Kimberworth	7	12	5
Laughton	13	15	2
Listerdale	12	17	5
Ravenfield	3	9	6
Swinton Queen	8	12	4
Todwick	5	14	9
Wath Central	5	8	3
Wentworth C. E.	6	19	13
Whiston	12	14	2
Whiston Worrygoose	10	21	11
Wickersley Northfield	16	33	17
Woodsetts	5	10	5

Thrybergh Fullerton C.E. Primary School, although able to offer places to all children who applied by the closing date, then reached their admission limit and were not able to offer places to subsequent late applicants.

Oversubscribed Voluntary Aided Schools

School	No. of applications as at the closing date of 21 st January, 2010.	No. of applicants NOT offered this school and placed on the waiting list as per the co-ordinated scheme
Aston CE Primary	40	10
Brampton, The Ellis C.E. Infant	55	15
St. Alban's C.E. J&I	32	2
St. Mary's Catholic Primary (Herringthorpe)	37	7
Trinity Croft	18	2
Wath C.E.	38	8
Dinnington St. Joseph's	35	5
Rawmarsh St. Joseph's	32	2
St. Bede's	49	9

Appendix 2

OVERSUBSCRIBED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

As at the offer date the following schools were oversubscribed:-

Aston Comprehensive, A Specialist Schools in Maths and Computing

In 2010, at the time of allocation all children who required a place at this school were approved. The school, although able to offer places to all children who had applied by the closing date, had then reached the admission limit and was not able to offer places to subsequent late applications. The total number of applicants which named this school as either 1st, 2nd or 3rd choice was 499.

Oakwood Technology College

This school was oversubscribed in 2010. After preferences were agreed for children who had a Statement of Special Educational Needs, children in Public Care, children who lived in the catchment area with a sibling, children in the catchment area, children with siblings and those in feeder Primary schools there were 25 places available which were allocated to children who lived nearest the school. The total number of applications which named this school as either 1st, 2nd or 3rd choice was 494. Of those who were not offered places 14 were added to the waiting list as they had not been offered a place at a higher ranked school within the area of co-ordination.

Wales High, A Specialist College for Business and Enterprise with Applied Learning

This school was oversubscribed in 2010. After preferences were agreed for children who had a Statement of Special Educational Needs, children who lived in the catchment area with a sibling, children in the catchment area, children with siblings and those in feeder Primary schools there were 18 places available which were allocated to children who lived nearest the school. The total number of applications which named this school as either 1st, 2nd or 3rd choice was 533. Of those who were not offered places 20 were added to the waiting list as they had not been offered a place at a higher ranked school within the area of co-ordination.

Wath Comprehensive, A Language College

This school was oversubscribed in 2010. After preferences were agreed for children who had a Statement of Special Educational Needs, children in Public Care, children who lived in the catchment area with a sibling, children in the catchment area, children with siblings and those in feeder Primary schools there were 45 places available which were allocated to children who lived nearest the school. The total number of applications which named this school as either 1st, 2nd or 3rd choice was 782. Of those who were not offered places 49 were added to the waiting list as they had not been offered a place at a higher ranked school within the area of co-ordination.

Wickersley School and Sports College

This school was oversubscribed in 2010. After preferences were agreed for children who had a Statement of Special Educational Needs, children in Public Care, children who lived in the catchment area with a sibling, children in the catchment area, children with siblings and those in feeder Primary schools there were 9 places available which were allocated to children who lived nearest the school. The total number of applications which named this school as either 1st, 2nd or 3rd choice was

791. Of those who were not offered places 49 were added to the waiting list as they had not been offered a place at a higher ranked school within the area of co-ordination.

St. Bernard's Catholic High School, Specialist School for the Arts and Applied Learning

This school was oversubscribed in 2010. After preferences were agreed for children who had been placed in category 10 or above 5 places remained. These were offered to the five children from category 11 who lived closest to the school. The total number of children who named this school as either 1st, 2nd or 3rd choice was 213. Of those who were not offered places 22 were added to the waiting list as they had not been offered a place at a higher ranked school within the area of co-ordination.

Saint Pius X Catholic High School A Specialist School in Humanities

This school was oversubscribed in 2010. After preferences were agreed for children who had been placed in category 6b or above 1 place remained. This was offered to the one child from category 6c who lived closest to the school. The total number of children who named this school as either 1st, 2nd or 3rd choice was 268. Of those who were not offered places 13 were added to the waiting list as they had not been offered a place at a higher ranked school within the area of co-ordination.

Appendix 4

ROTHERHAM: LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM

The Admissions Forum meets three times per year. Meetings are usually held in March, July and November.

All schools are officially members of the Forum and agenda/minutes are available via an e-mail link.

The membership of the Rotherham Local Admissions Forum is as follows:-

Community Schools : 2 members (1 Primary and 1 Secondary)

Mrs. I. G. Hartley (Wath Comprehensive School and Mr. C. E. Kelsey (Bramley Sunnyside Infant School)

Voluntary Controlled Schools : 1 member (vacant)

Voluntary Aided Schools : 3 members

Mrs G. Atkin (St. Albans Church of England Primary School)

Mrs. H. McLaughlin (St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, Herringthorpe)

Father A. Hayne (St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, Herringthorpe)

Academy : 1 member (vacant)

Church Dioceses : 2 members

Diocese of Hallam : Ms. C. Thorpe

Sheffield Diocese : Mrs. H. Morris

Parent : 1 member (vacant)

Community Representatives (10)

Councillor I. C. Barron

Councillor J. Havenhand

Councillor (vacancy)

Mr. G. Lancashire

Mrs. P. Powell

Mr. P. Robins

Mr. B. Sampson

Mrs C Cockayne

One representative of the Early Years Nursery (voluntary) sector ---- Not yet any named individual

One representative of the Black and Minority Ethnic community - currently Mr M A Khan who doesn't attend - still seeking replacement via REMA