

By: Grahame Ward, Director – Capital Programme & Infrastructure

To: CFE Resources & Infrastructure Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date: 20 July 2010

Subject: **Admissions**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To provide the Committee with information in respect to the admissions processes.

Introduction

1. (1) KCC co-ordinates the Admissions Process for the year of entry to primary/junior and secondary schools. It runs the co-ordinated admissions scheme to ensure that all applications are considered and to offer the highest available of parents' school preferences. If none of these can be offered, it offers an alternative place, and explains how parents can appeal or put their child's name on a school's waiting list.

(2) From September 2010 a new legal duty on the Local Authority (LA) will mean that it will also be obliged to co-ordinate any request for admission at any age (other than sixth form) to any school at any time. It will be required to co-ordinate these casual admissions outside of the normal round for all Kent pupils liaising directly with maintaining LAs where applications are made for schools outside of the county or indeed where applications come in from other LAs.

(3) The Admissions Team runs a whole-county assessment process for admission to all grammar schools at age 11, from registration in the summer (June/July) to the publication of results in letters to parents in the autumn (October).

(4) It consults on and publishes the co-ordinated admission schemes for primary and secondary schools on the Kent website.

(5) It publishes the core information about school admissions and transport in separate booklets for the primary and secondary phase, sent to parents at least six weeks before they need to make their applications for a place. The information is also published on the website. There is also a separate leaflet about home-to-school transport to help parents making applications.

Admission of Children with SEN

2. (1) The means by which parents of pupils who are the subject of a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) express preferences for educational settings is different, because it is governed by different legislation. This allows the LA, after taking

account of parents' preferences and the views of professionals and schools, to name a school in the Statement, and the parents to object (should they wish to) to an external body against the provision made in the Statement. This admissions process is run by Kent's Special Educational Needs and Resources Team (SEN&R). The Admissions Team reduce the Published Admissions Numbers (PAN) for relevant schools in order to recognise that some places have already been offered. Once a school is named in the Statement, the child is given priority for admission to the named school before the oversubscription criteria are applied to other applications.

(2) If children with SEN (statemented or otherwise) register for testing for grammar school, their current schools may apply for reasonable adjustments to the testing arrangements to accommodate their needs. They are sent a standard form for the purpose in the LA's "Instructions for Procedure for Secondary Education" booklet, issued to all participating Kent schools and many schools outside Kent who regularly enter candidates for 11+ selection. All applications are considered individually, broadly in line with the current Special Access requirements for SATs at KS2.

Grammar Assessment Statistics

3. (1) At the point when assessments were sent to parents, 26.51% of the cohort in Kent "PESE" areas had been assessed suitable for grammar school. (This includes pupils assessed by the local HT panels.)

Summary of PESE 2010:

- Altogether, KCC Admissions tested over 11,200 children
- Over 5,100 were eventually assessed "G"
- We have 4,458 grammar school places
- Fewer than 4,000 of the "G" pupils live in the areas served by grammar and high schools ("PESE areas")
- Just over 400 more live in Kent but outside the PESE areas
- About 1,000 live outside Kent

Admissions Appeals

4. (1) Parents have the right of appeal against any decision not to offer their child a place at a school. Parents are not restricted to single appeal. They are able to appeal for several schools if they have been refused places for their child at these schools. It is the responsibility of the individual admissions authority to arrange for these appeals to be heard by an Independent Panel. The decision of the panel is binding on the school and parent.

(2) Within KCC, appeal panel arrangements are made by Legal & Democratic Services to maintain independence from the admissions authority function held by Children, Families & Education. A number of other admissions authorities in Kent (Aided and Foundation Schools) also request Legal & Democratic Services manage their appeals for them.

(3) Typically, the Admissions & Transport Team and Legal & Democratic Services handle about 1100 admissions appeals annually. In addition they will receive about 75 transport appeals each year.

(4) Appeal panels are expected to have regard to infant class size legislation (no more than 30 infant aged children in a class with a qualified teacher), and the prejudice that the individual pupil's admission would cause, and weigh this against the child's need for a place at the school concerned. By definition, any pupil admitted by an appeal panel will take the school over its published admissions number. In a limited number of cases, appeal panels have not been convinced that the school cannot admit further pupils without prejudice to the efficient provision of education, and therefore have admitted significant numbers of extra pupils. The impact of this on other schools is not something a panel has regard to.

Recommendations

5. Members of the Resources and Infrastructure Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to **NOTE** the report and identify any further information they would like to discuss at future meetings.

GRAHAME WARD

Director – Capital Programme & Infrastructure

Tel: 01622 696551

Grahame.ward@kent.gov.uk

Background Documents: None