

Agenda Item: 6

Meeting: ADMISSIONS FORUM

Date: 24 March 2010

Subject: Admissions to Lower Schools – September 2011

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children’s Services

Summary: The purpose of this report is to inform the Forum of the changes required to lower school admission arrangements.

Contact Officer: Rosa Bonwick

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. To note the changes required to lower school admission arrangements for September 2011 and subsequent years.**

Background

1. The Rose Primary Curriculum Review in England found evidence to show that summer born children are at greater risk of poor outcomes than children born earlier in the school year. One of the recommendations of the review was that:

“The preferred pattern of entry to reception classes should be the September immediately following a child’s fourth birthday. However, this should be subject to well informed discussions with parents, taking into account their views of a child’s maturity and readiness to enter reception class. Arrangements should be such as to make entry to reception class an exciting and enjoyable experience for all children, with opportunities for flexible arrangements such as a period of part-time attendance if judged appropriate.”
2. The Secretary of State has accepted this recommendation and the School Admissions Code has been amended so that for admission to the 2011-2012 school year, and subsequent years, admission authorities for primary schools must provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. The place should be full-time if that is the wish of the parent, but must include the option of part-time provision.

How this will effect schools

3. For admissions in September 2011 and subsequent years, all schools will be required to have a single point of entry in September (4 plus once a year admission) and must be able to offer full-time provision from the start of the academic year, with the option of part-time provision. Schools with nursery units or those schools admitting children to a nursery class in the term following their fourth birthday may continue to admit the younger 4 year olds, but from September 2011 all reception aged children must be admitted to school from the September following their fourth birthday.
4. Parents can request that their child attends school part-time until their child reaches compulsory school age and admission authorities must accommodate these requests where it appears to be in the best interests of the child. In addition, admissions authorities must continue to allow parents of children who are admitted to school before compulsory school age to defer their child's entry until later in the school year. Where entry is deferred the place must be held for that child and not offered to another child. The parents would not, however, be able to defer entry beyond compulsory school age nor beyond the academic year for which the original place was offered.
5. Although the benefits of children starting school together at the start of the academic are recognised, some parents may feel that their child is not ready to start school. Where parents have a strong preference for their child's early years experience to take place outside a school setting, they will be able to access full-time early years provision in other settings from the September after their child's fourth birthday.

The next steps

6. In order to be able to assess the impact of the changes on schools and other early years settings, information has been collected from schools about the existing admission arrangements. That information will be shared with officers from the Early Years Team and the School Improvement Team. Discussions will take place with those schools that do not currently operate a single point of entry and advice will be given on implementing the new requirements of the School Admissions Code.
7. A report outlining the changes required will be made to a future meeting of the Forum.