

## **Agenda Item: 7**

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**Meeting:** ADMISSIONS FORUM

**Date:** 23 June 2010

**Subject:** Admissions and Appeals September 2010

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children, Families and Learning

**Summary:** The purpose of this report is to provide an update on admissions and appeals in respect of the September 2010 admissions round.

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Contact Officer: Rosa Bonwick

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### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1. To note those schools where the published admission number has been exceeded and the reasons for this**
  - 2. To note the school preference and online application data**
  - 3. To note the appeals information**
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### **Background**

1. Admission Forums have a role in considering how well admission arrangements serve the interests of children and parents within the local authority area. Within that role they should consider how actual admissions relate to the admission numbers published.
2. To enable the Forum to fulfil its role, this report lists those schools where the published admission number was exceeded, at the time of allocation, by 5 pupils or 10%, and the reasons for this. It provides school preference data and information on the number of online applications received as well information relating to admission appeals.

### **Admissions above the published admission number**

3. The School Admissions Code states that once an admission number has been set by the admission authority, schools should not admit above that number unless the school and the local authority agree that admitting above that number will not adversely affect the school in the longer term and will not have a detrimental effect on neighbouring schools. In the case of maintained schools, the local authority, as the strategic commissioner of school places, has the final decision over whether a school can admit above its published admission number. For academies the final

decision rest with the Secretary of State.

4. The admission number at the following schools has been exceeded for the reasons stated.
5. Church End Lower School in Marston Moretaine has a published admission number of 54. There were 66 applications for admission in September 2010, 62 of which were catchment applications. Although the local authority agreed to exceed the published admission number and admit 60 children, it was not possible to offer places to all of the catchment children, as admitting above 60 would have breached infant class size limits. The remaining 2 catchment children have been offered places at Shelton Lower School which is the next nearest school with places available.
6. Fairfield Park Lower School in Stotfold has a published admission number of 30. There were 44 applications for admission in September 2010, 36 of which were catchment applications. The local authority agreed that the school should admit all of the catchment area children. Officers are aware of future accommodation pressures at the school.
7. Mary Bassett Lower School in Leighton Buzzard has a published admission number of 30. There were 40 applications for places at the school, not all of which were catchment applications. Members of the Forum will recall from the meeting on 24 March 2010 that it is proposed to increase the admission number for Mary Bassett Lower School to 60 from September 2011, to support the longer term need for additional lower school places in Leighton Buzzard. The school currently has sufficient accommodation for two forms of entry and in order to support the school's growth from September 2011, it was agreed that all 40 children should be offered places.
8. Thomas Johnson Lower School in Lidlington has a published admission number of 18. There were 24 applications for places at the school, 22 of which were catchment applications. The local authority agreed that the school should admit all of the catchment area children as it will be possible to accommodate those children within the mixed aged teaching groups across Years R, 1 and 2.
9. Raynsford Lower School in Henlow has a published admission number of 30. There were 46 applications for places at the school, 34 of which were catchment applications. The feasibility of admitting above the published admission number to accommodate all of the catchment children was discussed with the headteacher. Unfortunately, there is no flexibility to admit more than 30 without breaching infant class size limits. For that reason 4 of the catchment children were not offered places. Those remaining 4 children have been offered places at Stondon Lower School which is the next nearest school with places available.

### **School preference data**

10. Table 1 shows the number of applications received and the percentage of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> preferences met for each school phase, at the time of allocation.

**Table 1**

Phase	Applicants	1 <sup>st</sup> preferences met	2 <sup>nd</sup> preferences met	3 <sup>rd</sup> preferences met	4 <sup>th</sup> preferences met	Total preferences met
Lower	2858	91.9%	4.2%	0.4%	0.06%	96.56%
Middle	2585	95.6%	1.1%	0.5%	0.00%	97.2%
Upper (home)*	2725	97.6%	2.1%	0.07%	0.00%	99.77%

\* Home = applications from Central Bedfordshire residents only

11. Local authorities are required to submit to the Secretary of State secondary (upper) preference data on National Offer Day. The publication of preference data enables local authorities to compare the percentages of secondary preferences met in their local area against national and regional data. The published data relates to applications made by residents in each local authority area. Table 2 shows that the percentage of Central Bedfordshire parents offered a place for their child at their first preference secondary (upper) school exceeds both national and regional averages, as does the percentage of total preferences met. It should be noted that Central Bedfordshire achieved the highest percentage of first preference and total preferences met in the eastern region.

**Table 2**

	Applicants living in the area	1 <sup>st</sup> preferences met	2 <sup>nd</sup> preferences met	3 <sup>rd</sup> preferences met	1 of 3 preferences met	Total preferences met
National Average	529,645	83.2%	8.6%	3.1%	94.9%	96.6%
Regional Average	56,759	85.4%	7.8%	3.1%	96.3%	97.0%
Central Bedfordshire	2,725	97.6%	2.1%	0.07%	99.77%	99.77%

### Online Applications

12. Table 3 shows the percentage of online applications received for each school phase across Central Bedfordshire.

**Table 3**

Phase	Applicants	Percentage of online applications
Lower	2858	61.1%
Middle	2585	45.3%
Upper (home)*	2,725	32.3%

Home = applications for Central Bedfordshire residents only

13. The secondary preference data submitted to the Secretary of State on National Offer Day includes the percentage of online secondary (upper) applications. Table 4 compares the number of online applications received in Central Bedfordshire with national and regional data. The number of secondary (upper) online applications was below the national and regional level.

**Table 4**

	Applicants living in the area	Percentage of online secondary applications
National Average	529,645	43.6%
Regional Average	56,759	58.8%
Central Bedfordshire	2,725	32.3%

14. The take-up rate for the 2011 admissions round is 50% and officers will be considering ways in which the local authority can increase online applications for middle and upper school phase transfers.

### **Admission Appeals**

15. Table 5 shows, for Central Bedfordshire schools, the number of appeals heard and the number upheld for the period 1 September 2009 to 8 June 2010. It also shows the number of appeals still to be heard. All appeals have been processed within the required timescale. Appeals will continue to be received throughout the remainder of the academic year as late applications and in-year applications are processed.

**Table 5**

Phase	Appeal held	Appeals Upheld	Appeals Pending
Lower	5	4	92
Primary	0	0	5
Middle	3	1	41
Upper	28	8	14
Combined	0	0	0
Total	36	13	152

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