

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN**

**MAINSTREAM SCHOOL ADMISSIONS**

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**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides a brief outline of Mainstream Admissions during the most recently completed 2017-2018 admission year and an update on upcoming changes to selective testing.

**2.0 Mainstream Admissions**

2.1 Statutory roles of the Mainstream Admissions team include the administration and allocation of places in all primary and secondary schools, and representing the Council in school place appeals.

For entry to primary/secondary school in September 2018 there were over 3,800 applications for primary school (Foundation 2) and 3,700 for secondary schools (Year 7). The team co-ordinates admission to school with all own admission authority schools within Wirral and other admission authorities in England.

2.2 The team produces appeal statements and presents appeals on behalf of all community and voluntary controlled (VC) schools as a statutory function. For information, the outcomes for the community and VC school appeals handled by the team are shown below.

	Withdrawn (%)	Resolved (%)	Refused (%)	Agreed (%)	Total
2015-2016	97 (26%)	82 (22%)	173 (47%)	20 (5%)	372
2016-2017	48 (25%)	43 (23%)	92 (48%)	7 (4%)	190
2017-2018	38 (28%)	25 (18%)	69 (50%)	5 (4%)	137

Outcome of appeals lodged for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools by academic year.

The outcome of appeals was proportionately similar to previous years.

2.3 The team administers the grammar school selection tests on behalf of the four non-Catholic grammar schools. Around 1,800 children are tested each year. The team also administers the Independent Assessment Board, and is responsible for disseminating the outcome of the selective tests to parents.

2.4 As well as admissions to Foundation 2 and Year 7, the team also processes around 2,000 in-year transfers between and into/out of Wirral schools.

2.5 The Council's Fair Access Protocol applies to "hard to place" young people, for example with a history of poor attendance or significant behavioural issues. 37 young people were placed at Wirral secondary schools through the Fair Access Protocol in 2017-2018, compared to 26 in the previous year. This excludes placements into Alternative Provision, placements into mainstream schools from EMA or the Progress School, or Managed Move decisions.

2.6 The Wirral Fair Access Protocol arrangements were re-evaluated in 2017-2018 in order to provide a clear consistent process leading to the most appropriate outcome for young people.

2.7 The role of the Fair Access Panel, with a wider membership including officers with responsibility for alternative provision special educational needs and educational psychology, exclusions etc. has expanded to also include decisions on applications

from schools for young people to be placed on the Alternative Provision Census, decisions on Managed Move destinations, and re-integration decisions for young people with a single permanent exclusion.

### **3.0 Update on changes to selective testing**

3.1 The non-Catholic grammar schools comprise the Wirral Consortium of schools for testing purposes. The test provider is The University of Durham (CEM). A one year contract has been signed for the 2019-2020 testing period.

#### **Testing in primary schools**

3.2 September 2019 will be the first year in which all pupils registered for the non-Catholic selective tests will attend a grammar or other test centre.

3.3 The new test arrangements will include assigning pupils to a test centre, and to either a morning or afternoon session. All children whose additional needs require them to be tested in a room separate from the main group will attend one of the four grammar test centres.

3.4 Primary and junior schools should be aware that this change will mean that all pupils registered to take the non-Catholic selective test will need to provide photographic proof of identity using an official form in order to sit the test. Verification of the ID forms will be the responsibility of primary schools.

3.5 Primary and Junior schools should note that the IAB (Independent Assessment Board) will no longer operate. This means that parents are not required to submit mitigating circumstances via the school, and that primary schools will not be asked to submit "borderline" referrals to the IAB. Parents of children who do not reach the standard retain a right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel after 1<sup>st</sup> March in the year of allocation.

### **4.0 Finance**

4.1 The overall budget for School Admissions in 2019-2020 is £372,200. The costs include:

Staffing (8.6 FTE)	£262,600
Software and implementation	£64,800
Selective tests	£40,000
Overheads	£43,300
Income/recharges	(£38,500)
Total	£372,200

The budget has been reduced by £30,000 compared to spend levels in 2011-2012. There is potential for a further reduction in one-off costs in future years.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **That the Forum notes the report.**

**Paul Boyce**  
**Corporate Director for Children**