

11 February 2019

Agenda Item: 6

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING & SKILLS

FIRST ADMISSIONS APPLICATIONS TO NOTTINGHAMSHIRE SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES - 2018/19 ACADEMIC YEAR

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with information on first admission applications to Nottinghamshire primary schools and academies for the 2018/19 academic year. The report also gives information on the number of preferences expressed by parents on their application and seeks approval for further advice to be sought about the possibility of making it essential for parents to have preferred more than one school before the application can be processed.

Information

2. First admission applications to primary schools are made for children aged 5 years old in the academic year they are applying for. This report covers those who applied for a school place and are aged 5 between September 2018 and August 2019.
3. Parents made their applications between November 2017 and January 2018 and were informed of their allocated school in April 2018. There are two sets of figures included in this report – data which is based on offers made to Nottinghamshire residents on National Offer Day (16 April 2018) and data based on offers made to Nottinghamshire residents as at 21 December 2018. The later data will include a more up to date picture of applications and offers made which will include late applications and any changes made to offers.
4. The School Admissions Code 2014 states that parents are able to express a preference for at least three schools. Nottinghamshire enables parents to submit four preferences on their application. The Council encourages parents to make four preferences but not all parents do so; in the last four years in excess of 35% of applications only listed a single preference.

As at national offer day

5. There were 8,789 on time applications received from Nottinghamshire residents for the year 2018/19. This is down slightly on the number of applications received the previous year (92 fewer applications than for 2017/18).

6. Just over a third of applications (3,154; 35.9%) made only one preference on their application.
7. 93.2% (8,194) of applications were offered their first preference school which represents a slight increase from 92.2% the previous year. When taking into account offers at any stated preferences this increases to 98.7% (8,679) which again is a slight increase on last year (98.2%). Of the 110 applicants that were not offered a place at any of their stated preferences, most had only made one preference (74; 67.3%). All were then made alternative offers.
8. A total of 764 applications were received from residents outside of Nottinghamshire. The highest proportion of these applications were received from Nottingham City (549; 71.8%) followed by Derbyshire (131; 17.1%), Lincolnshire (30; 0.04%). Leicestershire (25; 0.03%).
9. A total of 155 applications were received from Nottinghamshire residents for schools outside of Nottinghamshire. The highest proportion of these applications were received for Nottingham City schools (85, 54.8%); followed by Derbyshire (35, 22.6%); Lincolnshire (17, 11%); and Rotherham (10, 6.5%).

As at late December

10. The analysis below is based on offers made to Nottinghamshire families (which includes 'accepted by parent', 'allocated', 'provisionally allocated' and 'offer'). Where an application is missing one of these codes the higher application preference school / academy recorded under the 'rejected by parent' code is used. This is where an offer was made but has since been rejected by the parent.
11. There will be instances where an offer of a school place was made at a lower preference but a higher preference was later offered and rejected by the parent. In 2018/19 there were 86 applications where this was the case. For the purpose of this analysis these applications are based on the initial offer.
12. Figures will include pupils who have moved residence into the County since offer day. This will mean incomplete preferences for these families as they will have applied to the admission authority where they initially lived. Nottinghamshire would only be informed where one of its schools / academies was listed as a preference. Whilst it would be possible to remove pupils who are missing a first preference (therefore identifying an incomplete application) it would not be possible to remove pupils who later moved into the County where a county school / academy was listed as first preference. For this reason incomplete applications remain.
13. The data below excludes withdrawn applications and those where no offer was made due to a deferred application:
 - there were 9,224 applications received from Nottinghamshire residents for the year 2018/19 in total (including on time and late)
 - just over a third of these applicants (3,145; 34.1%) made only one preference on their application

- 91.0% (8,374) of applicants were offered their first preference school
- 4,198 applications indicated a sibling at a preference school (45.5% of all applications). Of these 3,913 (93.2% of applications with siblings) were offered the school where parents had indicated a sibling.

Other Options Considered

14. The process for presenting performance information set out in this report is in line with corporate guidance, which has itself been established following an appropriate analysis of alternative options.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

15. The reporting of schools admissions information to Committee is in line with the established processes of reporting and publishing performance information across all of the services within the Children and Families department.
16. Parents are advised to use all four preferences but increasingly parents submit applications with fewer preferences.

Statutory and Policy Implications

17. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

18. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) Committee considers whether there are any actions it requires in relation to the information contained within the report on the outcomes of the Council's admissions services for Nottinghamshire applications to primary schools for the 2018/19 academic year.
- 2) further advice is sought about the possibility of making it essential for parents to have preferred more than one school before the application can be processed.

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Constitutional Comments (SLB 02/01/19)

19. Children and Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report. If Committee resolves that any actions are required it must be satisfied that such actions are within the Committee's terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SAS 02/01/19)

20. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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