

Report for: ACTION



Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No – Part I
Title	Annual Consultation on School Admission Arrangements
Responsible Officer(s)	Alison Alexander, Managing Director and Strategic Director Children's Services
Contact officer, job title and phone no.	David Scott, Head of Education
Member reporting	Cllr Phillip Bicknell, Lead Member for Education
For Consideration By	Cabinet
Date to be Considered	26 November 2015
Implementation Date if Not Called In	8 December 2015
Affected Wards	All wards
Keywords/Index	Schools, admissions, consultation, primary, middle, upper, secondary, criteria, oversubscription

REPORT SUMMARY

1. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is the admissions authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools in the borough, and sets the admissions criteria for those schools. The borough has a duty to determine those admissions arrangements by 28th February 2017, and if significant changes to those criteria are proposed, the admissions authority must consult on the changes.
2. Voluntary Aided, Academy and Free schools are their own admissions authorities and are responsible themselves for consulting on any proposed changes to their criteria. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to co-ordinate applications for Phase Transfers (e.g. from Primary to Secondary school), and some schools buy into the Admissions Service for additional support.
3. This report recommends two changes to the admissions arrangements:
 - a. Following the recent expansion of All Saints Junior school from 67 places to 90 in order to accommodate pupils from Burchetts Green School, it is proposed that the designated areas (DA) be adjusted to match the number of places available.
 - All Saints Junior School DA to be extended to include Burchetts Green Infant School
 - Courthouse Junior School DA to be reduced so that it no longer includes Burchetts Green Infant School.
 - Burchetts Green to be identified as a feeder school for All Saints instead of Courthouse.
 - b. The removal of the single-sex / co-educational admissions rule, as there is no

longer any RBWM admitting authority school for which it can apply.

4. This report seeks approval to consult on the proposed revised Admission Arrangements (Appendix 1.) including these proposed changes. Following the consultation, it seeks delegation to the Lead Member and Director of Children's Services to approve the revised arrangements having taken into account consultee views.
5. This report also comments on the recent government statement about the school starting age of summer born children.

If recommendations are adopted, how will residents benefit?

Benefits to residents and reasons why they will benefit

Dates by which they can expect to notice difference

Residents whose children attend Burchetts Green Infant school will have access to sufficient Junior school places.

September 2017

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS: That Cabinet:

- i) **Approves public consultation on the Admissions Arrangements set out at Appendix 1.**
- ii) **Delegates authority to the Lead Member for Education and the Managing Director / Strategic Director for Children's Services to approve and thereby determine the revised admissions arrangements by the February 2016 deadline, having first considered any further amendments needed following public consultation.**

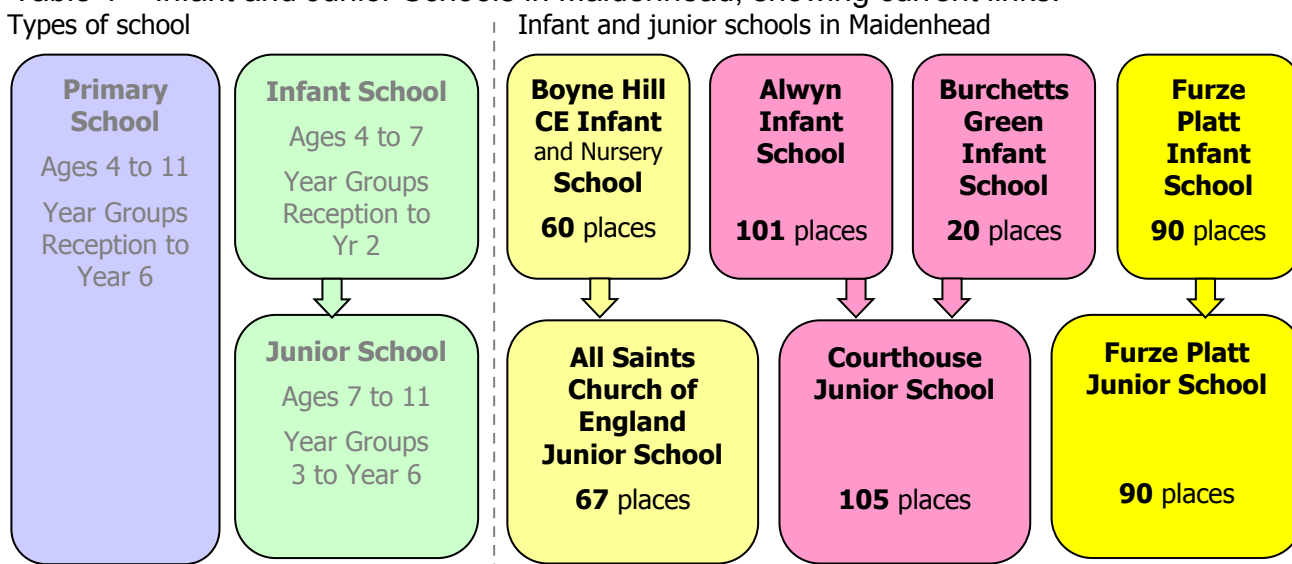
2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Many schools have more children wanting to attend than there are places available. It is necessary, therefore, to have oversubscription criteria for choosing which children will be offered places.
- 2.2 The body with the responsibility for setting out those criteria (the 'Admissions Authority') differs according to the type of school:
 - Academies and free schools: the relevant academy or free school trust.
 - Community and Voluntary Controlled schools: the local authority.
 - Voluntary Aided Schools: the governing body.
- 2.3 In each case the admissions authority must follow the government's School Admissions Code, last published in December 2014. The code sets out what oversubscription criteria can be used, and the process for changing them.
- 2.4 The Royal Borough is proposing to make two changes to its current oversubscription criteria, and must, therefore, carry out public consultation on the admissions arrangements. (See Section 15 for consultation details.)

Changes to the designated areas of junior schools in Maidenhead

2.5 There are three infant schools, and four junior schools in Maidenhead, as set out in Table 1.

Table 1 – Infant and Junior Schools in Maidenhead, showing current links.



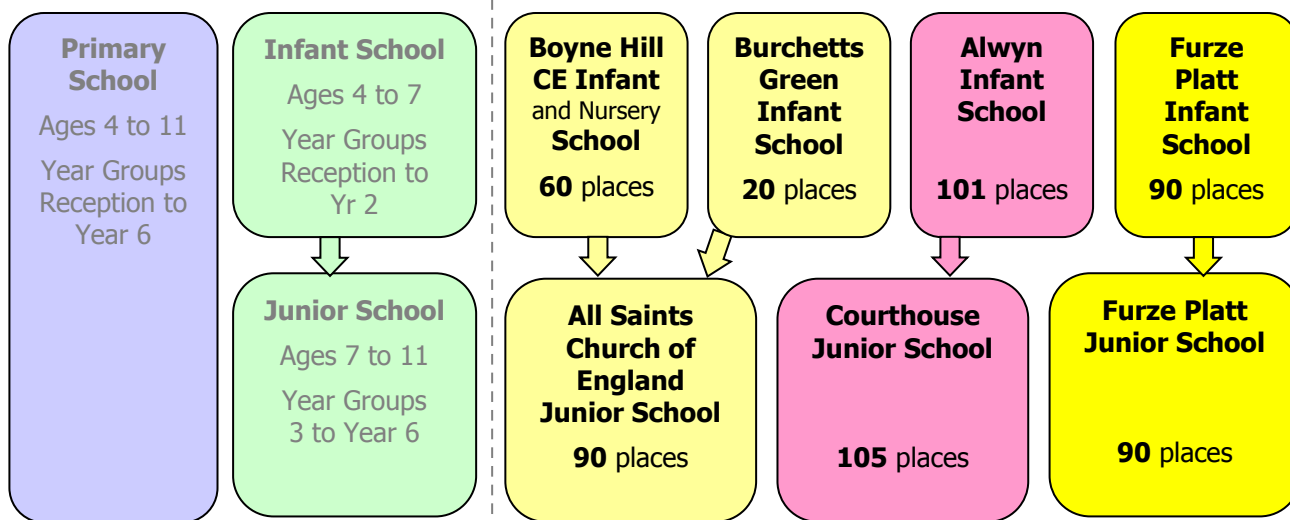
- 2.6 In response to rising demand in Maidenhead, All Saints Church of England Junior School has been expanded from 67 to 90 places per year group. This means that it now has enough places to take all of the children transferring from its current feeder school, Boyne Hill CE Infant and Nursery School, and from Burchetts Green Infant School.
- 2.7 Courthouse Junior School, however, does not have sufficient places to take all of the children from its two current feeder schools, Alwyn Infant School and Burchetts Green Infant School. In the past this has not been an issue because neither feeder school has been full.
- 2.8 All Saints was chosen for expansion following public consultation in Autumn 2014 and now attracts an increasing proportion of Burchetts Green applicants. It is proposed that this arrangement is now formalised, so that residents in the Burchetts Green area, and pupils at the school, get priority for places at All Saints Junior School rather than Courthouse Junior School. Of the 20 children transferring to junior schools from Burchetts Green Infant School in September 2015, 12 put All Saints as their highest preference. The other children's highest preferences were Courthouse (four), Furze Platt Infants (two), out-borough schools (two).
- 2.9 To achieve this, it is proposed that:
- All Saints' designated area is extended to include the Burchetts Green designated area. Those living in the expanded designated area will have priority for places at All Saints.
 - Courthouse's designated area is reduced so that it no longer covers the Burchetts Green area.
 - Burchetts Green is named as a feeder school for All Saints, rather than for Courthouse.

- 2.10 These changes are highlighted in the proposed admissions arrangements oversubscription criteria in Appendix 1, paragraph 1.5, criterion 6.

Table 2 – Infant and Junior Schools in Maidenhead, showing proposed links.

Types of school

Infant and junior schools in Maidenhead



- 2.11 There may be families with older children at Courthouse Junior, who live in the Burchetts Green area and who have younger siblings who may wish to attend Courthouse school in the future. To ensure that these families are not disadvantaged by the change it is proposed that interim arrangements are put in place so that these families continue to be considered as designated area children for as long as they have older siblings in attendance at Courthouse Junior School at the time the younger sibling(s) will start. The proposed change is in paragraph 1.5 of the new admissions criteria (Appendix 1).

- 2.12 No changes are proposed to the designated area of the other infant or junior schools.

Preference for co-educational or single-sex education

- 2.13 Within the current oversubscription criteria is a priority for applicants who have expressed a preference for single-sex or co-educational settings. This priority is ranked just above the final criterion of 'all other applicants'.
- 2.13 It is proposed that this admissions criterion should be removed, as it no longer applies. The only two RBWM admitting authority secondary schools are co-educational middle schools – Trevelyan and Dedworth, so it is not possible for anyone to select a school on the basis of single sex. All the other middle and secondary schools are either Voluntary Aided, Academy or Free schools, who set their own admissions criteria. Charters school have already been advised by the Schools Adjudicator to remove this criterion from their list.

Summer born children

- 2.14 In September 2015 the Schools Minister, Nick Gibb MP, wrote to admissions authorities nationally re-iterating the rights of parents of summer born children to seek admission outside of the normal age group. The Minister expressed disappointment that for some parents the current arrangements are not working. The DfE will, therefore, be consulting on allowing parents of summer born children to defer their intake so that they can start in Reception as a five year old, in September, without needing the approval of the admissions authority or school. It is possible that this consultation may be carried out during the next few months, with Parliamentary

approval following next year. The Royal Borough will need, therefore, to monitor this and make any necessary changes to its admissions arrangements in due course.

- 2.15 Currently, the decision to admit outside the normal age group is one that takes account of any extenuating circumstances and is taken in the child's best interests. This decision is made by the admissions authority, in consultation with the parents, the admitting school and any relevant medical professional.
- 2.16 The Statutory age for starting school is the term after a child's fifth birthday although they are able to start full-time at Primary school in September following their fourth birthday. Parents do have the right, however, to defer their child's start date until compulsory school age, provided that this is not later than the start of the summer term in that same academic year. Table 3 sets out when Autumn, Spring and Summer born children can start school, using the 2017/18 Reception intake as an example.

Table 3 – Details of first admission to school for four year olds for 2017/18 intake

Child's birthday term	Child's birthday month	Compulsory school age	Normal start date of child			Deferred start date
			Date	Year Group	Age at start date	
Autumn	Sept Oct Nov Dec	31 st Dec 2017	1 st Sept. 2017	Reception	Older four year olds, approaching fifth birthday	1 st Jan. 2018
Spring	Jan Feb Mar	31 st Mar 2018	1 st Sept. 2017	Reception	Around four and a half years old.	1 st Apr. 2018
Summer	Apr May June July Aug	31 st Aug 2018	1 st Sept. 2017	Reception	Younger four year olds; some will only just be four.	1 st Apr. 2018

- 2.17 Summer born children, who are the youngest children in any Reception year group, can normally defer their start only until April. This is because a deferral until September (2018 in this example) would mean that these children would have no Reception education, and would start straight into Year 1.
- 2.18 The borough's existing and proposed arrangements do comply with the Admissions Code, but the text in the borough's primary school admission booklet for the September 2016 intake has now been amended slightly to make the position even clearer, following the letter from the Schools Minister.
- 2.19 The number of parents applying for the admission of summer born children outside of their normal year group has been very small in the Royal Borough. In each case the process has been correctly applied.

Next steps

- 2.20 If Cabinet approves the recommendations, the Royal Borough must consult on the proposals for a minimum of 6 weeks. That consultation must be completed by 31st January 2016, and the arrangements must be 'determined' by 28th February 2016. The final agreed arrangements must then be published by 1st March 2016.

3. OPTIONS

Options	Note
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Recommendation 1 – approves permission to consult with residents on the Admissions Arrangements set out at Appendix 1.	Recommended.
Reject recommendation	Not recommended. The borough will not be able to make any changes to its published admissions arrangements.
Recommendation 2 - delegates authority to the Lead Member for Education and the Director for Children’s Services to approve and thereby determine by 28 February 2016 the revised Admissions Arrangements in the light of consultation responses.	Recommended.
Reject recommendation	Not recommended. Consultation and approval need to be complete by 28 th February in order to determine and publish by 1 st March.

4. KEY IMPLICATIONS

Defined Outcomes	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date they should be delivered by
The Royal Borough’s admissions arrangements are determined on time.	Not determined by 28 th February 2016	Determined by 28 th February 2016.	N/A	N/A	28 th February 2016.

5. FINANCIAL DETAILS

Capital

5.1 There are no capital implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Revenue

5.2 There are no significant home to school transport implications arising from the change of designated areas for All Saints and Courthouse Junior Schools.

6. LEGAL

6.1 The School Admissions Code is issued under Section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The latest version of the Code came into effect on 19th December 2014 with immediate effect. The purpose of the code is to ensure that all school places for maintained schools (excluding maintained special schools) and academies are allocated and offered in an open and fair way.

7. VALUE FOR MONEY

7.1 There are no 'value for money' implications arising from this report.

8. SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT APPRAISAL

8.1 There are no sustainability impacts arising from the recommendations in this report..

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risks	Uncontrolled Risk	Controls	Controlled Risk
That pupils from Burchetts Green School do not get a place at All Saints Junior School	Medium	Change the Designated Area to include Burchetts Green School	Low
That parents of 4 year old believe they cannot defer their child's place	Low	Further clarify the text in the admissions arrangements.	Low

10. LINKS TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Supporting Children and Young People
- Residents First
- Equipping Ourselves for the Future

11. EQUALITIES, HUMAN RIGHTS AND COMMUNITY COHESION (EQIA)

11.1 There are no EQIA impacts arising from the recommendations in this report.

12. STAFFING/WORKFORCE AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no staffing/workforce or accommodation implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

13. PROPERTY AND ASSETS

13.1 There are no property and assets implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

14. ANY OTHER IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are no other implications.

15. CONSULTATION

15.1 The borough is required to consult for a minimum 6 week period between 1st October 2015 and 31st January 2016 on any proposed changes to its admissions arrangements for the 2017 intake. It is proposed that our consultation runs from early December 2015 to mid January 2016.

15.2 The School Admissions Code sets out that consultation must include:

- Parents of children between two and eighteen.
- Other persons who, in the opinion of the borough, have an interest in the proposals.
- All other admissions authorities in the borough
- Adjoining local authorities

15.3 The borough must also publish a copy of the proposed admissions arrangements on the website, together with details of who comments can be sent to, and areas of the admissions arrangements upon which comments are not sought.

16. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

16.1 If approved following consultation, the new admissions arrangements will apply for the intake into schools in September 2017. The determined arrangements must be published on the RBWM website by 15th March 2016.

17. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – RBWM Admissions Arrangements

18. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Legislation and Guidance

School Admissions Code, DfE, December 2014

School Standards and Framework Act 1998

19. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

Name of consultee	Post held and Department	Date sent	Date received	See comments in paragraph:
Internal				
Cllr Burbage	Leader of the Council	30 10 15	2/11/15	
Michaela Rizou	Cabinet Policy Assistant	22 10 15	29 10 15	
Cllr Bicknell	Lead Member for Children's Services	23 10 15	26 10 15	
Shared Legal Services	Head of Legal Services/SLS	22 10 15		
Alison Alexander	Director of Children's Services	28 10 15	29 10 15	
Edmund Bradley	Finance partner	22 10 15	29 10 15	
External				

Report History

Decision type:	Urgency item?
Key decision	No

Full name of report author	Job title	Full contact no:
Shazia Umer	Admissions Team Leader	