

Report to: Children and Young People's Cabinet
Panel

Date: 17 January 2008 24 January 2008

Subject: Proposed admission arrangements 2009-2010:
voluntary aided schools

Report of: Director of Children and Young People's Services

Contact officers: Steve Robertson 01942 486004
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Purpose / summary:

The purpose of this report is to:

- inform members of the proposed admission arrangements for voluntary-aided schools for 2009-2010 and the Admission Forum advice on these; and
- make recommendations for the LA response to the proposals

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended:

The recommended options take into account the Admission Forum's advice and guidance in the School Admissions Code of Practice.

Recommendation / decision:

Subject to the advice received from the Admission Forum, that will be made available at the Panel and Cabinet meeting, it is recommended that members agree the local authority inform the governing bodies of voluntary aided schools of the authority's advice on their proposed admission arrangements.

It is also recommended that members give delegated power to the Director of Children and Young People's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, to object to and refer

to the Schools Adjudicator if necessary any determined admission arrangements for 2009-2010 which:

- do not comply with the Admissions Code or Admission Forum advice, because of the limited timescale for objections.

Key Decision:

This report does not involve a key decision.

This item is included in the Forward Plan.

Risks / Implications:

Financial:	None
Staffing:	None
Policy:	None
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	No
Wards affected:	All

Property Implications– Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No

If yes have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property officer?

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population? No

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure? No

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Has the Director of Legal and Property Services confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution? **Yes ***

Has the Director of Finance and IT confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget? **Yes ***

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **No ***

* delete which

applicable

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:			
Discussion leading to a decision		Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	X
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
17.1.2008		24.1.2008	

There are no Background Papers to this Report within the meaning of Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Proper Officer Nick Hudson

Date 07/01/2008

1. Background

- 1.1 The governing bodies of voluntary-aided schools must consult the local authority and other governing bodies annually on their proposed admission arrangements. The time scale for consultation is statutory.
- 1.2 The consultation period for 2009-2010 ends on 1 March 2008. Governing bodies must then consider any responses to their proposals. The purpose of this report is to give details of the proposals and the Admission Forum advice so that members can agree the local authority response.
- 1.3 All admission authorities must 'determine' (finalise) their admission arrangements by 15 April 2008. If the local authority, Admission Forum or other governing body wants to object to the determined arrangements, they must do so through the Schools Adjudicator within 6 weeks.
- 1.4 Wigan Admission Forum will consider the proposed admission arrangements on 10 January 2008 and their advice will be presented at the Panel and Cabinet meeting.

2. Education and Inspections Act and School Admissions Code of Practice

- 2.1 Following commencement of the relevant provisions of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, local authorities are required to promote fair access to educational opportunity, promote high standards and the fulfilment by every child of his education potential, secure choice and diversity and respond to parental representations. This underpins a modernised role for local authorities as the commissioners of school education, ensuring the quality of provision for all in a system that is responsive to the needs of parents and children.
- 2.2 Local authorities must use their powers to refer objections to the Schools Adjudicator if they consider, or are made aware of, any admission arrangements proposed by any other admission authority that are unlawful, that do not comply with the mandatory requirements or guidelines in the Admissions Code, or that appear to be unfair, unclear, subjective or encouraging social segregation. Local Authorities may be held to account by the Local Government Ombudsman if having been made aware of admission arrangements that are unfair, unlawful or do not comply with the Admissions Code, they do not refer objections to the Schools Adjudicator.

3. Admission numbers

- 3.1 A school must have an admission number for each 'relevant age group'. Admission authorities must set admission numbers with regard to the capacity assessment for the school. In April 2006 council agreed that admission numbers for secondary schools should reflect at least the minimum number generated by the Net Capacity Assessment of the school buildings.

3.2 Admission numbers for voluntary aided (church) schools

- 3.2.1 Appendix 1 shows the proposed admission numbers for secondary voluntary aided (church) schools with details of the minimum and maximum numbers generated by the Net Capacity assessment.
- 3.2.2 The Liverpool Archdiocese is currently investigating the situation and they will inform Admission Forum of their view on 10 January. The view of the Liverpool Archdiocese and the Admission Forum will be made available for Panel and Cabinet at the meeting.
- 3.2.3 Appendix 2 shows the proposed admission numbers for primary voluntary aided schools. The proposed numbers ensure that admission numbers allow schools to comply with infant class size regulations. All but three schools are proposing no change to their admission numbers.
- 3.2.4 The Governors of Leigh St Johns CE Primary school have proposed an increase in their admission number from 40 to 45.
- 3.2.5 The Governors of Golborne All Saints Catholic Primary School have proposed an increase in their admission number from 25 to 30. The Governors have provided information to support their request and is attached at appendix 3.
- 3.2.6 The Governors of St Marie's Catholic Primary School, Standish have proposed a decrease in their admission number from 45 to 30. The Governors have provided information to support their request and is attached at appendix 4.
- 3.2.7 The details of these requests will be considered by the Admission Forum at its meeting on 10 January together with information from the LA which is provided at appendix 5. Admission Forum advice will be made available for Panel and Cabinet at the meeting.

4. Oversubscription criteria

- 4.1 The Admissions Code says that oversubscription criteria must be 'objective, clear, fair, compatible with admissions and equal opportunities legislation and have been decided with regard to any relevant advice from the Admission Forum.
- 4.2 The information prepared for Admission Forum attached at appendix 6 gives a breakdown of the comments from the LA on the proposed admission arrangements for voluntary aided schools.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 We recommend that members agree that the Director of Children and Young People's Services inform the governing bodies of voluntary aided schools of the LA and Admission Forum advice.

5.2.1 We also recommend that members give delegated power to the Director of Children and Young People's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, to object to any further governing body proposals and refer to the Schools Adjudicator if necessary any determined admission arrangements for 2009-2010 which do not comply with the Admissions Code or Forum advice because of the limited timescale for objections.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Members should note the contents of this report and endorse recommendations subject to Admission Forum advice that will be provided at the meeting.

Secondary School Admission Numbers 2009

School	Adm No 2008	Minimum Adm No 2009	Maximum Adm No 2009	Proposed Adm No 2009
Deanery	270	209	233	250
Hesketh Fletcher	200	189	210	200
St Edmund Arrowsmith	240	249	276	240
St John Fisher	200	221	246	200
St Mary's	260	268	297	260
St Peter's	178	193*	214	178

* This will reduce to 184 when mobiles are taken off site at the end of the autumn term.

Appendix 2

DCSF	School name	Determined 2008	Proposed 2009
3300	Wigan St Andrew's C E Primary	30	30
3306	Highfield St Matthew's C E Primary	60	60
3308	St John's C E Primary, Wigan	30	30
3310	St Mark's C E Primary	30	30
3315	Saint Paul's C E Primary	30	30
3326	St Mary and St John Catholic Pri	30	30
3329	St Patrick's Catholic Primary	45	45
3331	Sacred Heart Catholic Pri, Wigan	60	60
3336	St Aidan's Catholic Primary	45	45
3338	St Catharine's C E Primary, Wigan	30	30
3350	St Thomas C E Primary, Ashton	36	36
3357	Standish St Wilfrid's C E Primary	75	No submission
3358	SLG St Anne's C E Primary	20	20
3360	Abram C E Primary	35	35
3361	Bickershaw C E Primary	25	25
3362	Hindley All Saints C E Primary	30	30
3363	Castle Hill St Philip's C E Primary	30	30
3364	Hindley Green St John's C E Pri	30	30
3366	St Peter's C E Primary, Hindley	35	35
3367	Ince C E Primary	75	75
3370	St Michael's C E Pri, Howe Bridge	30	30
3371	St Peter's C E Junior	60	60
3372	St Peter's C E Infants	60	60
3373	Westleigh St Paul's C E Primary	30	30
3374	St Stephen's C E Primary, Astley	30	30
3376	St John's C E Pri, Mosley Common	22	22
3377	St Luke's C E Primary	30	30
3378	Lowton St Mary's C E Primary	30	30
3379	Golborne St Thomas C E Primary	30	30
3382	St Oswald's Catholic Primary	50	50
3383	Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Pri	20	20
3386	Our Lady's Catholic Primary, Aspull	30	30
3387	Holy Family Catholic Pri, Aspull	20	20
3388	St James' Catholic Primary, Orrell	40	40
3389	St Marie's Catholic Primary	45	30
3390	St Benedict's Catholic Primary	30	30
3393	Holy Family Catholic Pri, Platt Br	30	No submission
3394	St William's Catholic Primary	30	No submission

3396	St Richard's Catholic Primary	30	No submission
3397	Sacred Heart Catholic Pri, Hindsford	25	25
			No submission
3400	St Joseph's Catholic Primary	30	30
3403	Sacred Heart Catholic Pri, Leigh	45	45
3405	Twelve Apostles Catholic Primary	30	30
3406	Holy Family Catholic Pr, Boothstown	30	30
3407	All Saints Catholic Primary Golborne	25	30
3411	St Gabriel's Catholic Primary	20	20
3412	St Catherine's Catholic Pri, Lowton	30	30
3413	St Bernadette's Catholic Primary	30	30
3414	St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary	30	30
3415	St Ambrose Barlow Catholic Primary	30	30
3419	Christ Church C E, Pennington	30	30
3423	St Philip's C E Primary, Atherton	35	35
3424	Leigh C E Infants	60	60
3425	St John's C E Infants	40	45
3426	Aspull Church Primary	30	30
3427	St David Haigh and Aspull C E Pri	30	30
3429	Atherton St George's C E Primary	30	30
3431	St Jude's Catholic Primary	30	30
			No submission
3432	Sacred Heart Catholic Pri, Hindley	30	30
3433	St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary	50	50
3434	St George's Central C E Primary	40	40
3435	Canon Sharples C E Primary	50	50

Dear Julie

The Governing body of All Saints RC Primary School wish to increase the number of children eligible to be admitted into the Reception Class in 2009 from 25 to 30.

We propose this for the following reasons:

- In the past applications made to the school have exceeded the number of places available. This has happened on numerous occasions and often appeals are made to the appeals board. This year in particular (2008-2009) it is expected that the school will receive in excess of 31 applications for the 25 places and there is a strong possibility that some children who have siblings in school will not receive a place in Reception.
- In the recently published 'Primary Capital Programme - Strategy for Change' draft consultation document it is stated in section 3.3.4 that the minimum size of Wigan Primary Schools should be at least one form entry (30 children per year group, 210 on roll). This is not currently the case for All Saints RC School.
- The School has recently added a new KS2 classroom to ensure the KS2 children are now taught in single year groups. This was funded from the school's own budget and is testament to the popularity of the school and its growing numbers.
- In a recent consultation on nursery admissions it is expected that by September 2008 the ratio of staff to children in the nursery will increase to 2:26. This will have a direct impact on funding for the school and, combined with a current intake of 25, could have a major negative effect on the schools delegated budget. Thus to ensure the future viability of the school it is in our best interests to increase the school admissions number to 30 offsetting any negative impact on finances.
- Although we are aware that some of the children we admit into school are not baptised Catholics we do believe that as a school we have a clear understanding of the Catholic mission. Last years RE inspection stated that All Saints is 'a very secure and loving community underpinned by a very strong Catholic Ethos.' We also believe many parents choose All Saints because of the strong Catholic Ethos.
- We do not believe that raising our number to a round 30 will have a negative impact on other local schools, most of the children who do not get a place here do not choose to attend the next nearest school, St Thomas'.

We sincerely hope that the above points are carefully considered and will allow us to increase our admissions number to 30.

Yours sincerely

Monica Middlehurst
Lisa Morgan

Headteacher
Headteacher

St. Marie's Catholic Primary School

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Head Teacher: **Mrs. E. J. Somers. B.A. (Hons)**

Wigan
Children and Young People's
Services
5th December 2007
- 5 Dec 2007

Dear Mr Coffey

Re Reduction in Standard Number

I am writing on behalf of the Governors to request that the Standard Number at St Marie's be reduced from 45 to 30 per year group.
This is the result of a fall in numbers over the past two years.

We expect to take in up to 27 in September 2008 and therefore the percentage of surplus places is increasing each year however we intend to let one classroom to a Pre school group from January.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

With best wishes



Elizabeth Somers
Headteacher

Cc School Placements Wigan LA



E-mail: enquiries@admin.saintmaries.wigan.sch.uk
Website: www.saintmaries.wigan.sch.uk

Leigh St John's CE Infants

LA comment

The five classrooms would accommodate an admission number of 45 but the Hall is severely undersized. The recently built room was to enable the school to take the library out of the Hall and thus restore the Hall to its original design size.

The school is popular and oversubscribed and admission appeals are sometimes upheld.

Pupils attending Leigh St John's Infants and Leigh CE Infants both appear in criterion 4 of Leigh CE Junior's admission criteria. An increase in Leigh St John's admission number would need to be reflected in an increase in Leigh CE Junior's number if pupils in this criterion are not to be refused admission. This will result in the potential for classes of 35 children or the need for additional build at the Junior school.

Extra places are predicted to be needed in the Leigh area for 2010, not 2009. An increase in the admission number for 2009 is likely to result in falling rolls at other Leigh schools. A strategic view will need to be taken as to where the additional places for 2010 should be provided.

Standish St Marie's

LA comment

The net capacity of the school is 315 and it is designed as a one and a half form entry school. There are eleven classbases that support class sizes of 30 throughout.

For the past two years the school has admitted below 30 pupils to Reception. Pupil numbers in Standish have fallen and the LA is not expecting that intakes will rise above 30 for the foreseeable future. However, the LA has no knowledge of the numbers of Catholic children in the area.

To reduce the admission number would required the school to publish notices as, even with the change of use of a classroom, the premises are still too large for a one form entry school.

Golborne All Saint's Catholic Primary School

LA comment

The school has seven classbases and could accommodate 30 children per year group. The school had 172 pupils on roll at the September pupil count date.

Although the school considers that it will be oversubscribed for 2008, there are sufficient places available across all Golborne primary schools to provide parents with a reasonable alternative.

Whilst the draft Primary Strategy for Change states that schools should be at least one form entry it is envisaged that this will be achieved by taking a strategic view of provision in the area overall in order to protect the interests of all schools.

The changes to nursery admission numbers will be reflected in changes to age weighted pupil unit funding in order to avoid possible negative impacts on the budget.

1. Oversubscription criteria for voluntary aided (church) schools

The Local Authority has prepared a table attached to identify the category in which some voluntary aided schools:

- Do not comply with the statutory requirements of the code of practice
- Where in the LA's view the admission criteria could be improved

Such schools will be identified in the table by ✓

1.1 Children in public care (looked after children)

- In accordance with the Admissions Code, admission authorities must give highest priority in their oversubscription criteria to children in public care. The practical effect of this is that in a school's published admission arrangements the first and highest oversubscription criterion must be in respect of these children.
- The only exception is for faith schools. The admission authorities for these schools may give first priority to all children in care, whether of the faith or not. If they choose not to do this, they must give first priority to children in care of their faith above other children of their faith and, where they give any element of priority to children not of their faith, must give priority in the oversubscription criteria to looked after children not of their faith above other children not of their faith.

LA view: Schools as indicated as falling into this category should alter their admission criteria to reflect the requirements of the Code. Failure to determine admission arrangements in accordance with the mandatory requirements of the Code would be a breach of their statutory duty and the LA would be required to make a referral to the School Adjudicator.

Schools that have given priority to Children in Public Care equal to children with special or social need etc will be advised to clearly split the categories.

1.2 Tie-breaker

The Code says it is a statutory requirement that admission authorities ensure they have an effective tie-breaker. Failure to determine admission arrangements in accordance with the mandatory requirements of the Code would be a breach of their statutory duty.

LA view: Where schools fail to comply with this requirement the LA would be required to make a referral to the School Adjudicator.

1.3 Late applications

Some voluntary aided (church) schools have, as part of their admission arrangements, details of how they deal with late applications which conflicts with the proposed arrangements in the co-ordinated scheme.

The Code clearly states that admission authorities should include information about how late applications can be made and how they will be handled, as agreed in the co-ordinated scheme.

LA view: Schools must adhere to the arrangements in the co-ordinated scheme and the LA will be required to make a referral to the School Adjudicator when they do not comply.

1.4 Measuring points

Admission authorities should explain clearly how distance from home to school will be measured including the points at the school and the child's home from which distance will be measured.

LA view: Advise schools to amend their admission criteria to clearly state the measuring points.

1.5 No others (any other children or children who express a preference for a place at the school).

Admission Forums must encourage all schools in their area to have arrangements that extend choice to parents whatever their social group.

The table identifies those schools who do not have a category relating to 'Any other children' or 'Those who express a preference for a place at the school.'

By omitting this category admission authorities are in effect not allowing pupils regardless of their social group to apply for places.

LA view: Advise schools to amend their admission criteria to include other children or children who express a preference for a place at the school.

1.6 Complex oversubscription criteria

It is important that parents can easily understand admission arrangements and can assess whether they have a reasonable likelihood of gaining a place at a particular school. The Code says admission authorities should avoid using complex points systems that allocate a number of points to different criteria according to their relative importance. If points systems are used, they must be clear, objective and easily understood.

LA view: Advise schools to revise their admission criteria to meet requirement.

1.7 Sibling definitions

It is good practice to give priority to children with siblings at school, especially for primary age children. Most Wigan community and voluntary aided (church) schools give siblings priority. The Code says that where admission authorities have this as part of their admission criteria they must state what they define as a sibling link. For community and voluntary controlled schools the LA includes full brothers and sisters, half brothers and sisters, step brothers and sisters who live at the same address as part of the same family unit.

LA view: Advise schools to ensure they include a definition of sibling link as part of their admission arrangements.

1.8 Church attendance

In the admission criteria for some voluntary aided (church) schools priority is given to children who are members of, or practise, their faith or denomination. Parents must easily be able to understand how the criteria will be satisfied.

LA view: Advise schools to define more clearly how this criteria will be satisfied.

1.9 Proof of birth certificate

The School Adjudicator has ruled that schools must not request to see a child's birth certificate when a parent makes application for a place at the school. Schools are advised to state in their admission arrangements that once a place has been offered, parents would need to provide birth certificate as proof of date of birth.

LA view: Advise schools to remove references to seeing the birth certificate when parents are applying for a school place.

1.10 Social and medical need

In setting oversubscription criteria admission authorities must not discriminate or disadvantage children with special educational needs or disabilities.

LA view: Advise schools to revise admission criteria to comply with the Admissions Code.

	DCSF No.	School	CIPC	Tie breaker	Late apps.	Measuring points	No others	Complex	Sibling definition	Church attendance	Proof of birth cert.	Social medical
301	3360	Abram CE							√	√		
302	3383	Our Lady Immaculate RC									√	
303	3414	St Wilfreds RC									√	
305	3382	A-in-M St Oswalds RC										
307	3350	A-in-M St Thomas CE				√						
309	3387	Aspull Holy Family RC				√			√			
310	3386	Aspull Our Lady RC							√			
314	3370	Atherton Howe Bridge CE										
316	3397	Atherton Sacred Heart RC			√							
318	3429	Atherton St Georges CE										
319	3423	Atherton St Philips CE	√					√				
320	3396	Atherton St Richards RC*										
321	3361	Bickershaw CE					√					
322	3379	Golborne St Thomas CE				√			√	√		
323	3407	Golborne All Saints RC										
325	3427	Haigh & Aspull St David CE							√			
327	3363	Hindley Castle Hill CE					√		√	√		
328	3362	Hindley All Saints CE				√						
330	3390	Hindley St Benedicts RC										
332	3366	Hindley St Peters CE	√									
333	3364	Hindley Green St Johns CE				√			√			
334	3432	Hindley Green Sacred Heart*										
336	3367	I-in-M CE					√			√		

School No.	DCSF No.	School	CIPC	Tie breaker	Late apps.	Measuring points	No others	Complex	Sibling definition	Church attendance	Proof of birth cert.	Social Medical
337	3393	Platt Bridge Holy Family RC*										
340	3394	I-in-M St Williams RC*										
342	3030	Leigh St Thomas CE	√				√					
343	3424	Leigh CE Infants				√						
344	3419	Leigh Christ Church CE	√		√				√			
346	3403	Leigh Sacred Heart RC			√							
348	3411	Leigh St Gabriels RC										
349	3425	Leigh St Johns CE Infants	√									
351	3400	Leigh St Josephs RC*										
353	3372	Leigh St Peters CE Infants	√						√			
354	3371	Leigh St Peters CE Juniors	√									
355	3405	Leigh Twelve Apostles RC									√	
356	3373	Westleigh St Pauls CE	√			√			√	√		
357	3412	Lowton St Catherines RC				√						
358	3377	Lowton St Lukes CE							√	√		
359	3378	Lowton St Marys CE		√								
360	3388	Orrell St James RC*										
361	3413	St Bernadettes RC									√	
363	3357	Standish St Wifrids CE*										
364	3358	SLG St Annes CE			√							
365	3389	Standish St Maries RC			√							
366	3415	St Ambrose Barlow RC			√							

School No.	DCSF No.	School	CIPC	Tie breaker	Late apps.	Measuring points	No others	Complex	Sibling definition	Church attendance	Proof of birth cert.	Social/ Medical
426	4608	The Deanery CE High*										
431	4609	St John Fisher RC High			√	√						

* The admission arrangements for these schools should be available for Admission Forum meeting on 10 January 2008. Details of which will be provided to Panel and Cabinet.