

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 5 March 2014	Decision Taker: Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Report title:		School Admission Arrangements 2015/16	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's and Adults' Services	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Cabinet member agrees the Southwark Community Primary Schools Admission Arrangements for September 2015.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Southwark Council ("the council") is the admission authority for community primary schools within the London Borough of Southwark.
3. The School Admissions Code of Practice (the Code) which applies to all maintained schools and academies came into force on 1 February 2012. Admission authorities are required to act in accordance with all mandatory provisions contained in the Code.
4. Admission arrangements must also adhere to the requirements of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 (the "Regulations") and the School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012.
5. The Cabinet considered a report at its meeting on 19 March 2013, and agreed 2014 admission arrangements. The Leader of the Council also agreed to delegate authority to the cabinet member for children's and adults' services to agree the Southwark Community Primary Schools Admission Arrangements for September 2015 admissions and onwards where there are no changes made from the previous year.
6. Admission authorities are required to consult on their admission arrangements at least once every seven years - September 2013 is the starting point in accordance with the Admissions Code if there are no changes to existing arrangements they may remain in place for seven years. The Council did not consult on its community primary school arrangements for 2013 admissions, there are no changes for September 2015. Documents were circulated to all the required consultees for information as good practice.

Coordinated primary admissions

7. The coordinated primary school admissions process is underway across London for children to be admitted to Reception class in September 2014. Families make a single application to their home borough for up to six schools of their preference through the co-ordinated process. On National Offer day they will receive a single offer of a primary school place.
8. Parents and carers are able to express up to six school preferences on their application forms and will be offered the highest preference possible through the pan London system. Offer letters will be sent to parents and carers on 16 April 2014.
9. A total of 3388 on-time primary school applications have been received. Of this number 3386 applications were received online this year. This increase is due to Southwark's online admissions campaign encouraging families to apply for their child's primary and secondary school place on the internet instead of completing a paper application. This was very successfully achieved by working in collaboration with Southwark schools, libraries and nurseries to arrange a number of 'Apply online' information sessions during the autumn term.
10. In order to ensure that there are sufficient reception places in September 2014, nine primary schools in Southwark will have additional capacity which will supplement existing places across the borough. There will be 30 additional places each at St James CE, Albion, Bessemer Grange, Charles Dickens, Gloucester, Grange, Keyworth, Dulwich Wood (formerly Langbourne) and St Mary Magdalene Schools. The published admission numbers for all Southwark primary schools for the September 2015 intake are attached at Appendix 2.

Community impact statement

11. The co-ordinated process for primary admissions is designed to produce fair and equitable access to school places for all children. Allocation of places is delivered through strict application of admissions and oversubscription criteria of each school across Southwark through a central (pan London) computer.
12. Additional support is provided to families that find it difficult to navigate the admissions system through the School Preference Adviser, Admission Officers and the Parent Partnership service. This involves a significant amount of outreach support and drop in sessions throughout the year at schools and libraries, in order to engage EAL communities with the use of interpreters as well as parents / parents of children, who may have a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. There is also a weekly drop in to provide support on admissions issues at a Southwark one stop shop.

Resource implications

13. All costs associated with the admissions process are chargeable to the Schools Budget and, are, therefore, met from Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Legal Services

14. The Cabinet Member is advised that they are enabled to agree the recommendation by virtue of the delegation by the Leader of the Council agreed at the 18 March 2013 Cabinet meeting.
15. The Cabinet Member is advised that school admissions arrangements are governed by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, together with associated Regulations and the School Admissions Code of Practice 2012, as stated within the body of the document. The Cabinet Member is advised that the consultation carried out and the proposed community primary school admission arrangements for 2015, comply with the requirements set out in the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, the School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Code of Practice.
16. The Cabinet Member is asked to note that the Local Authority is not required to consult on proposed admission arrangements so long as they remain unchanged, for the period of up to 7 years from the last consultation. Nonetheless, the Code of Practice requires that the Local Authority determine future admission arrangements on an annual basis, even if there has been no consultation.
17. In consideration of the recommendation, the Cabinet Member is reminded of the public sector equality duty under s.149 Equality Act 2010. In particular the Cabinet Member will note the adjustments in place to enable full access to support and information for all communities in Southwark, outlined in the Community Impact Statement.

Strategic Director of Finance Corporate Services (FC13/012)

18. The Strategic Director of Finance Corporate Services confirms that all costs will be met from the Dedicated Schools grant. There are no direct financial implications for the council's revenue budgets.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
The School Standards and Framework Act 1998	www.education.gov.uk	Glenn Garcia 020 7525 2717
The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012	www.education.gov.uk	Glenn Garcia 020 7525 2717
The School Admissions Code of Practice 2012	www.education.gov.uk	Glenn Garcia 020 7525 2717

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Southwark Community Primary Schools Admission Arrangements for September 2015
Appendix 2	Southwark Primary Schools – Published Admission number for September 2015 intake

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Romi Bowen, Strategic Director of Children's and Adults Services		
Report Author	Glenn Garcia, Head of Pupil Access		
Version	Final		
Dated	5 March 2014		
Key Decision?	Yes		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
	Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
	Director of Legal Services	Yes	Yes
	Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Yes	Yes
	Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
	Date sent to Constitutional Team		13 March 2014