

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 9 January 2023	Decision Taker: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education and Refugees
Report title:		Admission arrangements for community primary schools - September 2024	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's and Adults Services	

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education and Refugees agrees the Southwark Community Primary Schools Admission Arrangements ("the Arrangements") for September 2024 onwards as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Southwark Council ("the Council") is the admission authority for community primary schools within Southwark and must determine the admission arrangements for those schools by 28 February each year, for application in the following academic year.
3. The School Admissions Code 2021 ("the Code"), which applies to all maintained schools, academies and free schools came into force on 1 September 2021. When determining admission arrangements, 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 SSFA 1998"), the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ("the Regulations") and the School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012.
5. At the Cabinet meeting on 19 March 2013, the Leader of the Council delegated authority to the cabinet member for children's services to agree the admission arrangements for community primary schools for 2015 admissions and onwards where there were no changes made from the previous year. This report is being brought to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education and Refugees for

determination because there are no changes proposed to the Arrangements for September 2024.

6. The Regulations and paragraph 1.45 of the Code require all admission authorities to consult when proposing to change their admission arrangements. Where admissions arrangements have not changed from the previous year, there is no requirement to consult. A consultation was not carried out this year due to no changes being proposed.
7. All admission authorities must as a minimum consult on their admissions arrangements at least once every seven years, even if there are no changes to their existing arrangements. Consultation on admission arrangements must run for a period of at least six weeks and be completed by 31 January in the year preceding the year the change is to be effected (i.e. 31 January 2023 for September 2024 admissions). The Council has written to all admission authorities in Southwark with a reminder of this for their school.
8. The Arrangements for community primary schools have remained unchanged from the previous year since the Council last consulted on its Arrangements for September 2023. A consultation was not carried out this year. The Arrangements are similar to those of our neighbouring boroughs Lambeth and Lewisham. They have worked well in Southwark to support the admissions process and provide fair access to places for children.
9. The Arrangements for September 2024 admissions, must be determined by 28 February 2023, even though there are no changes proposed and no consultation has taken place. Once the Arrangements are determined, all appropriate bodies are notified of this and a copy of the Arrangements are also published on the Council's website before 15 March 2023.
10. Full details of the Admission Arrangements for 2024, along with those of all other admission authorities in the borough, will be included in the Starting Primary booklet for September 2024. Many families will use this booklet as a main source of information when selecting a primary school and will be able to download the booklet from the school admissions web page or view a hard copy upon request.
11. The full admission arrangements, including supplementary information forms and any proposed changes for all Southwark admission authorities consulting on their 2024/25 arrangements have been checked by officers to ensure compliance with the Code. Formal written comments were provided in respect of any issues of non-compliance or, where a proposed change could adversely impact on the community or be amended to improve clarity. All comments provided must be considered before determination of arrangements. Any serious breach of compliance is able to be referred to the Office of the Schools' Adjudicator by the local authority or other key stakeholders if not remedied through discussion with the admission authority directly.

12. A list of the published admission numbers for all Southwark primary schools for the September 2024 intake is attached at Appendix 2.
13. Should any changes to either 2023 or 2024 determined admission arrangements be required by an admission authority in Southwark, this would now be subject to a request for an in year variation to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

14. Not applicable

Policy framework implications

15. The Council's Delivery Plan 2022-26 presents a set of commitments, which will help the Council work towards a fairer, safer and greener Southwark. It is a requirement that reports to Cabinet explicitly refer to the Delivery Plan and how the report and or the actions outlined will help deliver key aspects of the plan. The school admissions process supports families to secure access to school places, thus enabling children and young people in the borough to thrive. This is in line with theme 7 of the Council's Delivery Plan – 'Supporting families'.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

16. The 2024 Arrangements, together with the Council's participation in the coordinated admissions scheme 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 in Southwark through a central (pan-London) computerised system.
17. Support is provided to families that find it difficult to navigate the admissions system through our school admission officers, school staff and the Southwark Information, Advice and Support (SIAS) Team. This involves a significant amount of training, outreach support and drop in sessions for families throughout the year. SIAS officers also provide support to specific 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. In addition, Southwark residents also have direct access to one to one telephone or video call support from the school admissions team during the application stage of the admissions process – this is on request and through referrals from schools and other agencies.
18. The Public Sector Equality Duty, at section 149 of the Equality Act, requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day

work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It requires public bodies to have due regard when carrying out their activities to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those with none. The Council’s Approach to Equality (“the approach”) commits the Council to ensuring that equality is an integral part of our day to day business.

19. “Protected characteristics” are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful - the characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. In this case, the characteristics covering gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, and sexual orientation are unlikely to be issues for consideration. Managing the capacity of primary provision to meet demand have the potential to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those with none. An EQIA assessment has been carried out, no negative impacts of the new arrangements have been identified, so no mitigating actions are required, and no equality objectives will derive from these specific proposals.
20. We have had due regard in preparing the arrangements and will have due regard when carrying out the proposed activities, for the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those with none. Provision of school places and fair and equitable admissions policies:
 - a) *“advances the cause of the elimination of discrimination” by removing potential discrimination based on the protected characteristics*
 - b) *“advances equality of opportunity” by ensuring that all groups, irrespective of background, have equal access to school places*
 - c) *“fosters good relations” by implementing a demonstrably fair and equitable policy for school admissions across the borough for people with protected characteristics and those without.*

Health impact statement

21. There are no specific identified health impacts resulting from any of the recommendations, so a health impact statement is not necessary for this report.

Climate change implications

22. Following the council assembly meeting on the 14 July 2021, the council has now committed to considering the climate change implications of any decisions made.

23. As the numbers of pupils in the authority area falls, and the numbers of pupils attending particular schools reduce, then it is likely that less pupils will be travelling to schools, thereby potentially reducing travel (and carbon emissions) overall, and, where utilised, car use. There will be a negligible effect on the other categories outlined - enhancing the environment and green space, green jobs and businesses, sustainable energy and reducing waste, as these are not substantively addressed or required in this report.
24. No direct measures have been taken to reduce or enhance the impact on climate change as part of this school admissions report, as no substantive negative effects have been identified. Additionally as no direct measures have been taken to reduce or enhance the impact on climate change as part of this admissions process, no monitoring will be required. As explained above, the falling numbers of pupils is likely, if anything, to have a net positive effect on climate change, as fewer pupils attend school and are therefore transported by car or other forms of transport. Additionally, less pupils in a particular school could potentially use less energy and produce less waste.
25. There are no substantive negative effects anticipated as a result of the recommendations and proposals.

Resource implications

26. None

Legal implications

27. Please see concurrent from the Director of Law and Governance.

Financial implications

28. The responsibilities for funding and the sources for that funding pertinent to this report are clearly set out in the relevant funding and grant regulations. All the funding for schools comes from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and does not impact on the core funding.

Consultation

29. Not applicable

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Governance

30. The Cabinet Member is enabled to agree the recommendation by virtue of the delegation by the Leader of the Council agreed at the Cabinet meeting dated 19 March 2013 as recorded in Part 3D of the Council's constitution.

31. The Cabinet Member is advised that school admissions arrangements are governed by the SSFA 1998, together with the Regulations and Code, as stated within the body of the report. The Cabinet Member is advised that the proposed Arrangements for 2024 comply with the applicable law.
32. The Cabinet Member is asked to note that the Council 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. The most recent consultation was carried out between November 2021 and January 2022 for the 2023 arrangements, and these proposed Arrangements remain unchanged since then. Nonetheless, the Council must determine future admission arrangements on an annual basis, even if there has been no consultation.
33. The Cabinet Member is reminded of the public sector equality duty under section 149 Equality Act 2010 when making this decision. This requires that due regard be given to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those with none. 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. That Statement also makes clear that whilst an equality impact assessment has been carried out in relation to the proposed changes, no negative impacts on people with a particular protected characteristic have been identified.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance [CAS22-24]

34. This report seeks approval from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education and Refugees to the Southwark Community Primary Schools Admission Arrangements for September 2024 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report. Paragraph 28 confirms that the costs associated with the admissions process are met from the Dedicated Schools Grant, and that there is no direct financial implication on the council's revenue budgets. However, the excess capacity within our school system poses financial risk to the council. Therefore, there is a risk if PAN numbers are not reduced in line with the falling pupil numbers then this might restrict the school's ability to take necessary steps to reduce their expenditure to mitigate the effect of falling rolls.

Other officers

35. Not applicable

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
1. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998	Legislation Services Team at The National Archives, Kew, Richmond Surrey TW9 4DU	Neil Gordon-Orr 020 7525 5234
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/contents		
2. The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012	Legislation Services Team at The National Archives, Kew, Richmond Surrey TW9 4DU	Neil Gordon-Orr 020 7525 5234
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/contents		
3. The School Admissions Code 2021	Department for Education	Neil Gordon-Orr 020 7525 5234
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Southwark Community Primary Schools Admission Arrangements - September 2024
Appendix 2	Southwark Primary Schools – Published Admission Number for September 2024 intake
Appendix 3	Southwark Secondary Schools – Published Admission Number for September 2024 intake

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director of Children's and Adults Services	
Report Author	Neil Gordon-Orr, Assistant Director, Education Access and Statutory Services, Children's and Adults' Services	
Version	Final	
Dated	24 November 2022	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Governance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	22 December 2022	