

# PEOPLE (CHILDREN) SCRUTINY PANEL

12<sup>th</sup> September 2013

## SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Report of the Strategic Director for People

STRATEGIC AIM:	<b>Creating a Brighter Future for All</b>
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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To enable Scrutiny to have an overview of the Admission Arrangements for Rutland children of school age including the statutory requirements placed upon the Local Authority, Schools, Governing Bodies and Academy Trusts.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Panel note and discuss the report

### 3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Local Authority, Schools, Governing Bodies and Academy Trusts are required to follow statutory guidance and in particular 'The School Admissions Code' (2012) in relation to admissions. This Code imposes mandatory requirements and includes guidelines setting out aims, objectives and other matters in relation to the discharge of functions relating to admissions. It is the responsibility of admission authorities to ensure that admission arrangements are compliant with this Code. Where a school is the admission authority, this responsibility falls to the governing body or Academy Trust. 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. All local authorities are required to have in place a scheme each year for coordinating admission arrangements for maintained schools within their area.
- 3.2 Coordinated schemes are intended to simplify the admission process for parents whilst reducing the likelihood of any child being left without a school place. Co-ordination establishes a mechanism that ensures that, as far as is reasonably practicable, every parent of a child living in a local authority area who has applied to a maintained school or Academy is sent one offer of a school place by their home local authority (the authority where they live).
- 3.3 The current School Admissions Code ("the Code") has been issued under Section 84 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Code came into force on 1 February 2012 and applies to admissions arrangements determined in 2012 for admissions in school year 2013/14. The code applies to admissions to all maintained schools in England.

### **3.4** Key changes in the new code include:

- a) Giving adopted children who were previously in care the same, highest priorities for places as looked after children.
- b) Greater freedom for schools to increase the number of places they are able to offer.
- c) Allowing schools to prioritise the children of staff employed there for two or more years, or who will meet a skills shortage.
- d) Allowing infant classes to exceed the statutory limit where the 31<sup>st</sup> child is a twin or from multiple births, or of armed forces personnel.
- e) The Code also removes the statutory function of the Local Authority School Admissions Forum.

**3.5** The School Admissions Code requires all admission authorities to publish their admission arrangements each year on their website. These admission arrangements, also known as the admissions policy, must comply with admissions law and adhere to the School Admissions Code. A copy of the School Admissions Code can be viewed on the [Department for Education](#) website.

**3.6** Each local authority is responsible for coordinating the primary school and secondary school admissions process for children resident within their local authority area. This means that parents will submit an application to the local authority where they live even if they wish to apply for a place at a school in another local authority area. For example, if you live in Rutland but would like to apply for a primary school place in another county, you must submit your application to Rutland County Council. If you live in another county but would like to apply for a place at a primary school within Rutland you must submit your application to the council where you live. Parents have a right to express a preference for the school they want for their child.

## **4. PRIMARY ADMISSIONS**

**4.1** The process for first-time admission to primary school in September 2014 will open, in Rutland, in October 2013, when we will have full details on our website.

**4.2** For Rutland residents, there is a common application form, which will be available online or as a paper copy, which will allow applicants to submit up to 3 preferences of primary school, located in any local authority area. There is also a common timetable that includes a Rutland closing date and national offer date. Rutland's closing date for applications will be 15 January 2014. The National Offer day will be 16<sup>th</sup> April 2014.

**4.3** A brochure called 'Starting Primary School in September 2014' will be available online and hard copy in October 2013.

## **5. SECONDARY ADMISSIONS**

**5.1** Admissions to Secondary Schools follow a similar process to that of Primary School except that Rutland's closing date for applications will be 31 October 2013. The national offer date 1<sup>st</sup> March ensures that offers of places are sent out on the same day to all parents throughout the country. It should be noted

that in 2014 the national offer day of 1 March does not fall on a working day and, as a result, offers will be sent on the next working day which is 3 March 2014.

- 5.2** All preferences are processed and parents then receive an offer from the local authority at the highest preference school at which a place is available.
- 5.3** A brochure called 'Starting Secondary School in September 2014' will be available on line and in hard copy in the first week of September 2013.
- 5.4** The process for transferring from primary school to secondary school in September 2014 will start in early September 2013. Rutland County Council targets parents of children who are due to move on to secondary school by using information, held within our pupil database, about children who will be in their final year at primary school (year 6) from September 2013. A letter will be posted out to parents of Rutland resident children in early September advising them of the need to apply for a secondary school place for their child. Details of year 6 children who attend a Rutland primary school but who live in another local authority area will be sent to the relevant local authority so that they can contact the parent direct. In addition, details of year 6 children who attend a school in another local authority area but who live in Rutland will have been forwarded to Rutland County Council by the authority where the child goes to school.

## **6. ADMISSIONS AUTHORITIES**

- 6.1** Both the Local Authority and schools themselves act as Admissions Authorities. The role of an Admissions Authority is to determine its Admission Policy based on a range of factors but to include all the requirements of statutory guidance found in the 'Schools Admission Code 2012'.
- 6.2** The Code can be found using the web link below:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-00013-2012.pdf>

- 6.3** The Admissions Policy is then applied to the applications received to determine which children should be offered places and the policy also details the 'Oversubscription Criteria' which is applied when there are more applications than the number of places available. The Local Authority and Schools also identify a PAN (Planned Admission Number) which sets the number of places available.
- 6.4** Rutland County Council determines the admission arrangements for the following schools as they are community and voluntary controlled primary schools:

Cottesmore Primary School  
Edith Weston Primary School  
Empingham C of E Primary School  
Exton and Greetham C of E Primary School  
Great Casterton C of E Primary School  
Ketton C of E Primary School

Oakham C of E Primary School  
 Ryhall C of E Primary School  
 Uppingham C of E Primary School  
 Whissendine C of E Primary School

See link below:

<http://www.rutland.gov.uk/pdf/RCC%20Admission%20Arrangements%202014%20final.pdf>

**6.5** The following schools determine their own admission as they are voluntary aided and/or academy schools.

**Secondary schools:**

Casterton Business & Enterprise College  
 Catmose College  
 Uppingham Community College

**Primary schools:**

Brooke Hill Academy  
 Catmose Primary School  
 English Martyrs Catholic Primary School  
 Langham C of E Primary School  
 Leighfield Academy  
 St Mary & St John C of E Primary School  
 St Mary & St John C of E  
 St Nicholas C of E Primary School

See link below for the above schools:

[http://www.rutland.gov.uk/education\\_and\\_learning/admissions\\_information/admission\\_arrangements\\_2014.aspx](http://www.rutland.gov.uk/education_and_learning/admissions_information/admission_arrangements_2014.aspx)

Type of School	Who is the admission authority?	Who deals with complaints about arrangements?	Who is responsible for arranging/providing for an appeal against refusal of a place at a school?
Academies	Academy Trust	Schools Adjudicator	Academy Trust
Community Schools	Local Authority	Schools Adjudicator	Local Authority
Foundation Schools	Governing body	Schools Adjudicator	Governing body
Voluntary aided schools	Governing body	Schools Adjudicator	Governing body
Voluntary controlled schools	Local Authority	Schools Adjudicator	Local Authority

**6.6** In year admission to schools are dealt with via specific guidance and there is also a requirement 'Fair Access Protocol' that must be applied.

**6.7 The Right of Appeal**

In the case where an application is declined due to oversubscription, all parents must be informed of their right of an appeal against the decision made. All appeals must be heard by an independent panel, operate within

legislation and conform to the procedures laid down in the School Admission Appeals Code. The panel must also have regard to the implications of other legislation cited in the School Admission Appeals Code. This system is in place to provide an independent, impartial and informal forum for parents and the admission authority concerned to present their respective cases and to be confident that they will be given a fair hearing. The appeal panel weighs up all the evidence presented to them carefully and objectively before reaching a final decision on the appeal. Admission authorities must admit a child whose parents have won an appeal.

**6.8** Objections to the admission arrangements to both maintained schools and academies can be made to the Schools Adjudicator whose decisions are both binding and enforceable.

**6.9** Section 88P of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires Local Authorities to make an annual report to the adjudicator.

**6.10 Local issues**

Rutland County Council's Admissions Service consists of an Admissions Manager post (half a day per month) which is delivered by the Council's Primary Schools Officer as a part of their role, a full time Admissions Officer and some administration support. The service ensures that the Councils delivers all the statutory public information requirements, receives and ranks applications, manages applications across other local authorities and ensures appeals take place to meet statutory requirements.

**6.11** Admissions can be an emotive area with high levels of parental concern. The Admissions Service works closely with parents and schools to ensure that the process is 'open and fair' as required by the Code. The schools environment has become increasingly complex

**6.12** In the last 2 years some schools have begun to exercise their new freedoms in terms of setting their own Admissions Policies and Oversubscription criteria.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

<b>RISK</b>	<b>IMPACT</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Time	Low	
Viability	High	Statutory requirements are regularly reviewed
Finance	Low	The Rutland County Council Admissions Service is funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant and by Academies
Profile	High	Finding the right school place is key priority for Rutland families
Equality and Diversity	High	The Schools Admission Code is specifically designed to ensure that the admissions process is open and fair. It is crucial that the relevant bodies comply with the Code.

**Background Papers**

Hyperlinks are provided within the main report

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**A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.**