

Determination of admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools
2023-2024

Forward Plan reference number: FP/216/11/21

Report title: Determination of admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools 2023-2024	
Report to: Cllr Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability	
Report author: Clare Kershaw, Director, Education	
Date: 10 January 2022	For: Decision
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County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Everyone's Essex

- 1.1. The Council, as the admission authority for community and voluntary controlled schools within Essex, is required to consult upon, and determine the admission arrangements for these schools each year. The arrangements for admissions in the 2023-2024 academic year must, by law, be determined by no later than 28 February 2022.
- 1.2. The purpose of this report is to fulfil the statutory requirement for the Council to determine the admission arrangements for all community and voluntary controlled schools in Essex for admissions in the 2023-2024 academic year. The arrangements, by giving priority to children with siblings at a school and those living locally, will help ensure fair access and promote reduced and more sustainable journeys to school.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To agree that the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2023-2024 be determined as detailed in Schedule 1 to this report.

3. Background and proposal

- 3.1. The law requires that the Local Authority (LA), as the admission authority, determines the admission arrangements for all community and voluntary controlled schools in Essex each year. The arrangements for the 2023-2024 academic year must be determined by 28 February 2022.
- 3.2. The admission arrangements apply to community and voluntary controlled schools in all County Divisions.

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- 3.3. Legislation prescribes the persons and groups that must be consulted when a local authority is preparing its proposed admission arrangements.
- 3.4. The Council, as required by the Department for Education (DfE) School Admissions Code, carried out the period of statutory consultation on the proposed admission arrangements for all community and voluntary controlled schools between 19 November 2021 and 7 January 2022. The consultation was shared with the governing bodies of all these schools and all other infant, junior and primary schools in Essex. It was also shared with neighbouring local authorities and the respective Church of England and Roman Catholic diocesan authorities. Parents were also able to view the consultation via the Essex County Council website.
- 3.5. There are no changes to any elements of the oversubscription criteria for any community and voluntary controlled schools proposed, with these recommended to remain the same as those determined for 2022-2023 admissions.
- 3.6. The Council did, however, consult on changes (reductions) to the published admission number (PAN) for four schools, as outlined below.
- 3.7. The Council consulted upon a reduction in the PAN for Gosbecks Primary School in Colchester, from 45 to 30. This is to enable the school to organise into one form of entry. There are sufficient school places available in the overall area to ensure a school place for every child. Gosbecks Primary School is currently undersubscribed.
- 3.8. The Council also consulted on a reduction in the PAN for Stanway Fiveways Primary School in Colchester, from 90 to 60. This is to enable the school to organise into two forms of entry. There are sufficient school places available in the overall area to ensure a school place for every child. Stanway Fiveways Primary is currently undersubscribed.
- 3.9. Similarly, the Council consulted on a reduction in the PAN for St Michael's Primary School in Colchester, from 60 to 30. This is to enable the school to organise into one form of entry. There are sufficient school places available in the overall area to ensure a school place for every child. St Michael's Primary School is currently undersubscribed.
- 3.10. Colchester is one of the fastest growing towns in the country. As such, it has seen significant increases in demand for school places. The Council has responded to this through a range of school expansions and new school building projects in those areas of the town where the demand has presented (for example, opening Camulos Academy in the north of the town and expanding Home Farm Primary in the Lexden area). At this current time, the schools where the PAN reductions are proposed are in areas where the

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demand for school places is now significantly lower than the available capacity. Reducing the PAN will ensure that schools in those areas have more stable pupil numbers and do not have large levels of surplus, which can have a damaging financial impact. The overall capacity of these schools will remain unchanged (even though they will be admitting lower numbers of pupils), and so if the levels of demand grow in the future, the places can be made available again. The Council continues to ensure there are local school places available where required, for example working with the DfE to ensure additional secondary and primary school capacity is delivered through a new free school in the north of the town where pupil numbers are growing.

- 3.11. Finally, in respect of PAN reductions, the Council consulted upon a reduction in the PAN for William Read Primary School on Canvey Island, from 60 to 30. This is to enable the school to organise into one form of entry. There are sufficient school places available in the overall area to ensure a school place for every child. William Read Primary is currently undersubscribed.
- 3.12. In all four cases of proposed PAN reductions, the schools are supportive of the proposed reductions which will enable them to organise, plan and deliver education more efficiently and effectively. The schools also shared details of the consultations locally within their parent community.
- 3.13. No comments or objections to the proposed PAN reductions, or the arrangements as a whole, were received during the consultation period.
- 3.14. The recommendation to the Cabinet Member is therefore to determine the admission arrangements as detailed in the schedule appended to this report.

4. Policy context and Outcomes Framework

- 4.1. The arrangements align with the Essex Organisation Strategy which has a number of aims, one of which is to help keep vulnerable children safer and enable them to fulfil their potential. Fair and lawful admission arrangements will ensure that residents have access to school places and education.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. This decision has no financial or resource implications.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1. The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 require the admission

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authority for each school to determine the admission arrangements which apply to that school.

- 6.2. For admissions in the 2023-2024 academic year, these regulations require that such arrangements be determined by no later than 28 February 2022.
- 6.3. In preparing the attached arrangements, officers have had full regard to the requirements of the School Admissions Code (2021) and other legislation relevant to school admissions.
- 6.4. The arrangements comply with the law and contain no prohibited criteria.

7. Staffing and other resource implications

- 7.1. No additional human resources beyond existing resources will be required as a result of this decision. There are no employment legislation implications.

8. Equality and Diversity implications

- 8.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when ECC makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
 - (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 8.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.
- 8.3 The admission arrangements detailed in the attachments to this report do not unlawfully discriminate against any persons or group. The Council believes the arrangements are fair, clear and easy to understand (as required by the Code) and that they comply with all aspects of school admissions legislation.
- 8.4 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

9. List of Appendices

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9.1 Schedule 1 – Determined admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled infant, junior and primary schools for 2023-2024

9.3 Equality impact assessment

10. List of Background Papers

10.1 The School Admissions Code 2021

I agree the recommendations in this report for the reasons set out in the report.	Date
Cllr Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Education Excellence, Lifelong Learning and Employability	28 January 2022

In consultation with:

Role	Date
Executive Director for Finance and Technology (S151 Officer) Approved by Andrew Page, Head of Finance Nicole Wood	13 January 2022
Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer) Paul Turner	10 January 2022
Director, Education Clare Kershaw	23 January 2022