

**CONSULTATION DOCUMENT
ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR HALTON LOCAL AUTHORITY
MAINTAINED COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED NURSERY,
INFANT, JUNIOR, PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS
ACADEMIC YEAR 2009/2010**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This document is intended to fulfil the statutory requirements for annual consultation by the Local Authority (LA) on school admission arrangements. Included in this document are the proposed (statutorily required) Co-ordinated Admissions Schemes for the 2009/10 academic year for primary and secondary schools, together with the LA's proposals for admission to LA maintained nursery schools.
- 1.2** In addition to fulfilling the above statutory requirements, Halton Borough Council's School Admissions Policy complies with the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976, Human Rights Act 1998, Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 & 2005, and does not discriminate on the grounds of sex, race, colour, nationality or national or ethnic origin.
- 1.3** Section 89(2) and (9) of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998, and the associated Regulations require admission authorities (the LA for community and voluntary controlled schools) to undertake consultations by 1 March 2008 before finalising admission arrangements by 15th April 2008 for the school year commencing in September 2009.

The LA must consult the governing bodies of schools for which it is the admissions authority and consult other admission authorities in the "relevant area" (the relevant area is currently the administrative boundary of Halton and views are sought as to whether this should be amended). All neighbouring LAs are also consulted, together with the relevant Diocesan Authorities.

2.0 NURSERY ADMISSIONS

- 2.1** The LA is proposing to revise the admissions criteria for Nursery Schools to reflect the admissions criteria for Primary and Secondary Schools i.e.

- 1) Children in Public Care – children who are subject to a care order, or are accommodated by the Local Authority
- 2) Siblings – pupils with elder brothers or sisters including half brothers and sisters and unrelated children living together as part of the same household, already attending the school and expected to continue in the following year
- 3) Pupils living nearest to the school defined as a straight-line distance measurement from the child’s permanent residence to the school.

3.0 PRIMARY ADMISSIONS

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills has defined compulsory school age under the Education Act 1996 as follows:

| Child’s 5 th birthday | Term of Admission |
|--|-------------------|
| 1 st April to 31 st August | Autumn |
| 1 st September to 31 st December | Spring |
| 1 st January to 31 st March | Summer |

In Halton, however, children will continue to be admitted to school earlier than the required admission date. This reflects the commitment of the LA to secure the best possible start for children within the Borough of Halton.

Children reaching the age of five between 1st September and 31st August may be admitted full time on the first day of the Autumn Term before their fifth birthday. Schools may phase their intake over the first four weeks of the term. As recommended in the Code of Practice the LA will allow parents to defer their child’s entry to school until the child is of compulsory school age, providing the parent applies, is offered, and accepts the place within the normal admissions timetable, and the place is taken up within the same academic year. It should be noted that if a child is presently attending a nursery class they do not have automatic right to transfer to the primary school to which the nursery class is attached. Parents are required to indicate a preference for a primary school along with all other parents. Attached as Appendix A is the proposed co-ordinated admissions scheme for all Halton LA maintained primary schools.

4.0 SECONDARY ADMISSIONS

- 4.1 Children transfer from primary to secondary school in the September following their 11th birthday. Attached as Appendix B is the proposed co-ordinated admissions scheme for all Halton LA maintained secondary schools.

5.0 ON-LINE ADMISSIONS

As part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's E-Government initiative, LAs were required to have on-line admissions in place from September 2006 onwards for parents to apply for a secondary school place for admission in September 2007. The on-line admissions portal available on the Halton Borough Council website – www.halton.gov.uk will continue to operate for admission to primary and secondary schools for the 2009 academic year.

5.0 HALTON ADMISSIONS FORUM

5.1 Any recommendations and responses to this consultation paper will be considered by the Halton Admissions Forum and will be included in the report to Halton Borough Council's Executive Board.

6.0 VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS – CONSULTATION ON ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 Regulations allow governing bodies who are the admission authority for their school not to consult in certain circumstances. To qualify for a suspension of consultation an admission authority must have consulted all appropriate bodies in the previous determination year, and its admission arrangements must not have been the subject of an objection to the Schools Adjudicator in the previous five years. In addition, the admission authority must not be seeking to change their admission arrangements from the previous year. They will, however, still have to consult every alternate year thereafter even if there is no change in their published admission arrangements.

7.0 SCHOOL PLACES RATIONALISATION STRATEGY

7.1 The Local Authority is committed to undertaking a rationalisation of its school premises, the outcome of which is likely to impact upon the current admission numbers.

8.0 SUMMARY

It is recommended that the Governing Body:

- a) receives the report;**
- b) records any response to the proposed admission arrangements, and any proposed amendment to the Published Admission Number**
- c) for Aided Schools only – undertake statutory consultation with the governing bodies of all voluntary aided schools in Halton, Halton LA, and any other LA within 8 kilometres of the school for secondary schools, or 3.2 kilometres for primary schools, and forward to the LA their admissions policy when determined.**