

Bristol City Council Overview and Scrutiny – Scrutiny Inquiry Day

School Admission Arrangements in Bristol

Different Admission Systems

Admission Authorities use different systems to allocate school places. These may include:

- Banding - an equal number of places allocated from each band to achieve a balanced comprehensive intake.
- Geographical areas - priority given to children living within a defined geographical area.
- Home to school distance – measured by direct line or walking route.
- Random Allocation – a random draw under an admission criterion.
- Priority to children of staff/founding directors.
- Priority to children with social or medical reasons for attending a school.
- Priority to children with a child protection plan in place.
- Priority to children with an aptitude in a particular area such as music, sport or languages.
- Priority to children with a sibling attending the school.
- Priority to children entitled to Free School Meals or Pupil Premium.

Different Authorities' Approaches

Brighton and Hove

Priority to Children in Care and Children Previously in Care.

- Sibling attending the preferred school.
- A wide geographical area served by several schools – if school is over-subscribed within this criterion places are allocated randomly.
- When random allocation introduced first preferences met reduced from 84% to 78%.

In 2010 a report by the Institute for Education and the Universities of London and Bristol found that lotteries alone did not give poor children a higher chance of securing a place at a top school.

Lancaster University found that Brighton and Hove attempts to address inequalities in education through a school lottery system had been largely unsuccessful.

Hackney

Once Children in Care, Children Previously in Care and siblings are considered, places allocated as follow:

- No geographical areas in place – places allocated by dividing applications into 5 bands. If a band is over-subscribed, home to school distance used as tie-breaker.
- Some schools have an inner band (home address up to 1 km from the school) and an outer band (home address 1 km to 2.2 km from the school).



Hackney primary schools build into the school day sitting the Cognitive Ability Tests (CATS) to enable children to be placed in bands. Children educated out of area sit the test on a set day at a number of secondary schools.

Completing applications is part of the school day with support given by primary school.

For Reception applications, library staff available every Thursday to help parents/carers apply on-line. Bristol could adopt this policy and extend it to Citizen Points.

Oldham, Bradford and Burnley Local Authorities

Bradford – to aid cohesion closed 2 two schools and established a new school taking largely equal number of children from different communities.

Also introduced exchange programmes and joint projects to break down segregation and share good practice. Similar projects in place in Epping Forest and Solihull.

Birmingham

New Academy opened in 2015 sponsored by the local university. Home to school distance measured to 4 'nodal' points to ensure a mixed intake in terms of socio-economic, ethnicity and academic ability.

- 50% of places offered to first point close to the school site.
- Remaining 50% of places offered to children living within 3 other nodal areas.

