

Adults, Children & Education Scrutiny Commission

25 March 2019



Report of: Alan Stubbersfield - Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills

Title: School Places and Admissions

Ward: Citywide

Officer Presenting Report: Alan Stubbersfield

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Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Adults, Children and Families Scrutiny Commission note the information in this report.

The significant issues in the report are:

All pupils requiring a Year 7 place for September 2019 were offered a school place on 1 March 2019. 72% were offered their 1st preference school and 90% were offered one of their 3 preferences.

Rising demand for secondary school places has required the expansion of existing schools and the need to open new schools.

Demand for places at primary schools is now falling. Offers for Reception places at primary schools will be issued on 16 April 2019.



1. Summary

1.1 The city is experiencing a substantial rise in demand for secondary school places. A significant amount of work has already been undertaken to ensure all pupils continue to be offered a school place. Further places are planned through the provision of new free schools.

1.2 Offers of places at secondary schools were made on 1st March. 72% were offered their 1st preference school and 90% were offered one of their 3 preferences. This is very similar to 2018.

1.3 Numbers requiring places at primary schools are now falling and places will need to be managed to avoid large numbers of empty places.

2. Context

2.1 Bristol has previously seen a dramatic rise in primary school pupil numbers. Reception admissions peaked in 2016 and since then numbers have been falling, mainly due to falling birth rates.

2.2 These higher primary school numbers are now impacting on secondary schools. A number of schools have already been expanded and other schools are taking more pupils than their Published Admissions Number (PAN). Taking more pupils than the capacity is not sustainable in the longer term.

2.3 National Offer Day for secondary school places was 1st March 2019. Although all pupils were offered a place, this was only possible as some schools agreed to offer above their PAN. 72% were offered their first preference. 10% were made an offer that was not one of their preferences.

2.4 A total of 4,354 places were offered in Bristol schools, an increase from 4,243 in 2018. Only 199 of these were for pupils living outside Bristol (a reduction from 207 in 2018). After offers were made there were 38 places remaining (compared to 71 in 2018), all of these in south Bristol.

2.5 In addition to expansion of existing schools there is a need to provide additional places through the provision of new schools. The Department for Education (DFE) has approved the establishment of 3 new schools. The first of these, CST Trinity is due to open in Lockleaze in September 2019 and the Funding Agreement for the new academy has now been completed.

2.6 Further new Free Schools are planned to serve the East Central and South areas, with planned opening dates of 2021 and 2022. These schools should ensure there are sufficient secondary places for the short to medium term growth from primary school numbers and the longer term needs created by new housing developments. Officers are working with the Department for Education and Oasis Community Learning on detailed arrangements, including how admissions for these schools will work.

2.7 There will be very few available places in Year 7 in September for pupils moving into the city or requiring a change of school but there is likely to be at least one school in each area with some places.

2.8 Admissions for 2020 are likely to be very difficult as the new Oasis Temple Quarter free school will not have opened and Trinity will not have the full PAN. Projected demand is estimated to be around 4,300 with 4,120 places within PAN. There will be a need therefore to once again ask schools to admit over PAN to ensure every pupil receives an offer.

2.9 With additional places at the planned new schools there will be a total of 4,620 places by 2023. Pupil Projections indicate there will be demand for around 4,700 places by this point. Demand will start to fall after this, in line with primary school numbers and it is unlikely that further additional places will be required in the medium to longer term.

2.10 The significant issue facing primary schools in the short to medium term is over-provision. Changes to school funding have made the issue of surplus places particularly challenging. Officers have been working with schools to reduce the PAN at some schools where there is insufficient demand. This does not remove the place permanently but makes it easier for the schools to plan staffing levels with more certainty.

2.11 Reception admissions peaked in 2016 when 5,581 children started school. It is estimated that the Reception for September 2019 will be around 5,200. There are currently around 5,800 Reception places.

3. Policy

Not applicable

4. Consultation

a) Internal

Not applicable

b) External

Not applicable

5. Public Sector Equality Duties

5a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:

- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
- ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected

characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --

- remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
- tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.

Appendices:

None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None