

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
23 FEBRUARY 2010

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS AND THE ECONOMIC RECESSION.

1. Admissions to Oxfordshire primary schools have been on an upward trend for a number of years:

Census point	Number of Reception age children	Increase over previous year
October* 2009	6795	111
January 2009	6684	101
January 2008	6583	587
January 2007	5996	-367
January 2006	6363	

2. The number of places requested for September 2010 currently stands at 7126. We usually receive a number of 'late' applications, particularly in Oxford City, although not all of the places we finally allocate are eventually taken up. However, it looks likely that the growth in pupil numbers, which began before the effects of the recession were first felt, will continue. The single most significant factor in the increase in the number of Reception age children has been the increase in birth rates, a national phenomenon, which is likely to dwarf all other contributory factors.
3. When parents submit applications for school places they are invited to give their reasons for expressing a preference for a particular school but not their overall reasons for seeking a school place. We ask parents who, after having accepted a school place, subsequently decide not to take up the place to let us know. Not all choose to do so and of those who do, a minority volunteer the reason, including where this is because an application for a non-maintained school place has been successful.
4. Conversely, parents who apply for a place outside the 'normal admissions round' may let us know their reasons, but unless these might result in a 'late' application being considered as being 'on time' (e.g. where a major personal trauma meant a parent could not get their application in on time) there is no expectation that reasons should be given. Typically requests for places are as a result of families changing their home addresses.
5. The limited information that we do have is as follows:

There were 1862 requests between 1 August 2008 and 18 May 2009 across all year groups. Of these, 82 (36 primary age and 46 secondary age) requested a school place giving their reason for doing so as "Moving from Independent School". This represents 4.4% of the relocations we have handled.

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There were 2141 requests between 1 August 2007 and 31 July 2008. Of these, 64 (21 primary age and 43 secondary age) requested a relocation giving their reason for doing so as "Moving from Independent School". This represents 2.99% of the relocations we have handled.

6. An increase of 18 requests citing "moving from independent school", just under 1.5 percentage points is unlikely to be statistically significant. In addition it only relates to those children who were already in the independent sector and were withdrawn; it sheds no light on the numbers who would have gone into the independent sector had it not been for the impact of the recession.

* The annual pupil census takes place in January. The 2010 figure is currently being validated.