

**Report to:** Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel  
**Written By:** Sue Barratt, Admissions Officer  
**Date:** 10 June 2011  
**Title:** School Admissions Process and Springfield School Allocation 2011

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Co-ordinated admissions**

Portsmouth City Council is the admissions authority for the City's community and voluntary controlled schools and also responsible for co-ordinating the admission to the City's other maintained schools/academies where the school/academy is its own admissions authority (eg our Catholic voluntary aided schools) and with neighbouring admissions authorities (eg Hampshire County Council).

### **Equal preference scheme**

Local authority school admissions are governed by legislation and the School Admissions Code. We are required to operate an "Equal Preference" scheme which allows applicants to express more than one preference. All the preferences must be considered individually under each school's admissions policy and if more than one place could be offered, the applicant is offered a place at the school which they have ranked higher.

### **Parental preference**

The law also allows parents to express a preference as to the school they wish their child to attend. The Local authority must do everything it can to meet that preference within the limits of "efficient education and the efficient use of resources". However, the right to express a preference is not a right to a place at a particular school.

The LA and schools assist parents deciding on their preferences by publishing information about the schools, producing prospectuses, visiting feeder primary and junior schools and holding open evenings.

Where popular schools are oversubscribed, the Department for Education acknowledges that it is not possible to meet all first preferences. However, Portsmouth has a high level of success in meeting parental preference overall. For 2011 91.8% of applicants achieved their first preference school and 99.3% were allocated one of their 3 preferences

### **Published Admission numbers**

The Local authority is required to set a "Published admission number" (PAN) each year for all of its schools. This is the maximum number of pupils a school can admit. The PAN is decided having regard to the "net capacity calculation" which is a standard measurement devised by the government. This takes into account the physical accommodation in the school, teaching spaces and age range of the school.

The net capacity for Springfield school is 1100 and the PAN for 2011/12 is 220 (which is also the PAN for the other year groups in the school, so total capacity 1100).

**Oversubscription criteria**

When a school is oversubscribed (more applicants than spaces available), we apply the admission policy criteria to all applications (a copy of the policy is attached as Appendix 1). The criteria give priority to applicants eg if they are a looked after child, live in the catchment area of the school (a map showing Springfield’s catchment area is attached as Appendix 2). None of the criteria give a guarantee of a place at a particular school. The criteria are applied in the order they are published and applicants are then ranked and the places allocated. Our policies use distance from home to school as the final criteria this is measured in a straight line (see criteria 7).

**SPRINGFIELD ADMISSIONS 2011**

The following table shows the allocation for Springfield school for September 2011 and the successful criteria.

There were 518 on time applications considered for the school.

SEN (School named on Statement)	3 ( 2 in catchment)
Looked After Children	0
Medical/Physical/Psychological	2 ( both in catchment)
Religious and Philosophical	0
Catchment area	215
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>

The final criteria under which places were offered on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011 (allocation day) were to those who live in the catchment area and who attend a feeder school. As the number of applicants under these criteria exceeded the number of places available, distance from home to school was used to prioritise applications. (Priority was given to those living nearest to the school.) The last applicant to be successful under this criterion lived 0.899 miles away from the school.

There were a high number of unsuccessful applicants for the school of those, 31 lived in the catchment area and had Springfield as their first preference school. 14 of these catchment children also attend feeder primary/junior schools. These children were all allocated a school place, either at one of their other preference schools or at the next nearest school to their home.

## **Waiting List**

Unsuccessful applicants were automatically placed on the waiting list and were asked to confirm if they wished to remain on the list. A child's place on a waiting list can change at any time as the law requires that the lists are maintained in accordance with our admission criteria, so if a child moves into the area and lives nearer to the school, then they may be placed higher on the list to a child who may have been on the list for a longer period.

Since the initial allocation, four of the unsuccessful catchment children have been allocated from the waiting list. If the school falls below its PAN and therefore has vacancies, places will be allocated from the waiting list (this can happen if places are not taken up at the start of term or families moving out of the area).

There are currently 47 children on Springfield's waiting list for Yr 7 2011.

## **Springfield Allocations 2008 – 10**

As background information, in 2008 the school was oversubscribed but all catchment applicants were successful. In 2009, 23 catchment children were unsuccessful on initial allocation, however 10 of those were admitted from the waiting list before the start of the school year. In 2010 the school was again oversubscribed but all catchment applicants were successful in gaining a place.

## **Independent Appeal Process**

A parent also has the right to appeal to an independent appeal panel (IAP) against the refusal of a school place and they are informed of this right. The first batch of 2011 appeals for Springfield school was heard on 4-6<sup>th</sup> April. The admission process is scrutinised by the IAP and they have the power to admit all the appellants if they do not consider that the LA has demonstrated that the process is lawful and been properly implemented. The IAP decided that the admissions for Springfield school for September 2011 were lawful and properly implemented. They can then go on to consider each appellant's case to decide if their individual circumstances are such that they should be admitted over number despite the prejudice to the school. There were four successful appellants, however, the details of their appeals are confidential. There will be further appeals for Springfield relating to September 2011 before the start of term.

The school is required by law to admit the successful appellant over their published admission number.