

## School Admission Admissions 2015/16 - Consultation Survey Response

### 1.0 Introduction

Tower Hamlets Council consulted the public on its school admission arrangements for 2015/16. The aim being to further improve the school admission arrangements for Tower Hamlets schools, so that they are fair and that as many parents as possible gain a place for their child at one of their preferred schools. The consultation covered the following:

- (i) **Proposed Admissions Policies for Tower Hamlets community schools**
- Nursery School/Class Admissions Policy
  - Oversubscription criteria, including the introduction of priority admission (catchment) areas
  - Introduction of a common application form
  - Single 'closing' date and 'offer' date for applications
  - Requirement to provide both part-time and full-time places
  - Primary Schools Admissions Policy
  - Oversubscription criteria, including a change to the priority admission (catchment) areas for community school
  - Secondary Schools Admissions Policy
  - Oversubscription criteria
- (ii) **Proposed planned admission numbers for schools in Tower Hamlets**
- (iii) **Proposed schemes for the co-ordination of admissions for:**
- The reception year of primary school
  - Year 7 of secondary school; and
  - Admissions outside of normal points of entry ('In-Year')

The consultation was launched the 1 November 2013 and ended on 30 December 2013. The consultation lasted for over 8 weeks.

### 2.0 Communication

Below is a list of the communications used to advertise and highlight the consultation survey.

Communication Type	Date
LBTH School Admissions website	01/11/2013
EEL advert	04/11/2013
LBTH Internal Intranet page	04/11/2013
East London Advertiser	05/11/2013
Weekly Bangla Times (ENGLISH AND BENGALI)	08/11/2013
Weekly Sylheter Khabor	08/11/2013
Weekly Janomot	08/11/2013
Weekly Notun Din	08/11/2013
Weekly Bangla Mirror	08/11/2013
Weekly London Bangla (ENGLISH AND BENGALI)	08/11/2013
HTB	13/11/2013
HTB	05/12/2013
Members Bulletin	05/12/2013
Chisenhale School Consultation Meeting	05/12/2013
Admissions Forum	11/12/2013
Media Release	12/12/2013

### **3.0 Results**

To date, we have received 15 responses, all completed online. 11 responses were from parents, 2 were classified as 'other' and one was from a nursery school headteacher. There was one collective response completed by the Admissions Forum. Collective feedback and comments from the Chisenhale primary school consultation meeting and the Admissions Forum have also been included in the comments section.

The following analysis below shows the outcome of the 15 responses:

#### **1a. When do think the borough-wide offer day for nursery schools should take place?**

Of the three options given, 60% of responses (9 people) chose End of May for the Local Authority to notify parents of which nursery school their child has been offered a place at. 20% (3 people) wanted Beginning of June, followed by 20% (3 people) choosing End of June.

#### **1b. Do you think the Common Application Form captures all relevant information?**

The vast majority of the respondents - 87% (13 people) agreed that the Nursery Common Application Form captured all the relevant information. 13% (2 people) disagreed against this question.

#### **1c. Do you agree with Tower Hamlets nursery admissions arrangements including the catchment areas, which has been designed to ensure that children attend their nearest school?**

53% of respondents (8 people) agreed to nursery schools adopting the same admissions arrangements as the primary schools. However, 47% (7 people) were also in disagreement.

#### **1d. Do you agree with the priorities for full-time and part-time places?**

13 of the 14 respondents (93%) agreed with the priorities for full and part-time places. 7% (1 person) disagreed.

The Admissions Forum did not give an answer to this question, their comments are listed below.

#### **2. Do you agree with the proposed oversubscription criteria and tie break criterion for primary school admissions?**

80% (12 people) agreed with proposed oversubscription criteria and using the nearest school tie-break criterion for primary school admissions. 20% (3 people) did not agree to the proposed oversubscription criteria and the use of the nearest school tie-break criterion.

#### **3. Do you agree with the proposed change to the primary school catchment areas which has been designed to take account of the rise in pupil population and planned school developments?**

14 out of 15 (93%) people agreed to the proposed changes to the catchment areas, of removing Area 3, and expanding the existing areas of Area 2 and Area 4. While 7% (1 person) disagreed.

#### **4. Do you agree with the proposed oversubscription criteria and tiebreak criterion for secondary school admissions?**

40% (6 people) agreed to the proposed oversubscription criteria and tie-break criterion for secondary school admissions. However, majority of the respondents, 53% (8 people) did not agree to the oversubscription and tie break criterion.

The Admissions Forum did not give an answer to this question, their comments are listed below.

#### **5a. Do you agree with the Tower Hamlets scheme for co-ordinating both Year 7 and Reception Year admissions for 2015/16?**

93% respondents (14 people) agreed with the scheme for co-ordinating both Year 7 and Reception Year admissions, while 7% (1 person) did not agree.

**5b. Do you agree with the Tower Hamlets scheme for co-ordinating In-Year admissions for 2015/16?**

13 out of the 15 (87%) respondents agreed with the scheme for co-ordinating In-year admissions, while 2 people (13%) did not agree.

**6a. Do you agree with Planned Admission Numbers for Tower Hamlets schools in 2015/16?**

87% respondents (13 people) said they agreed to the planned admissions numbers for schools, whereas 13% (2 people) did not agree.

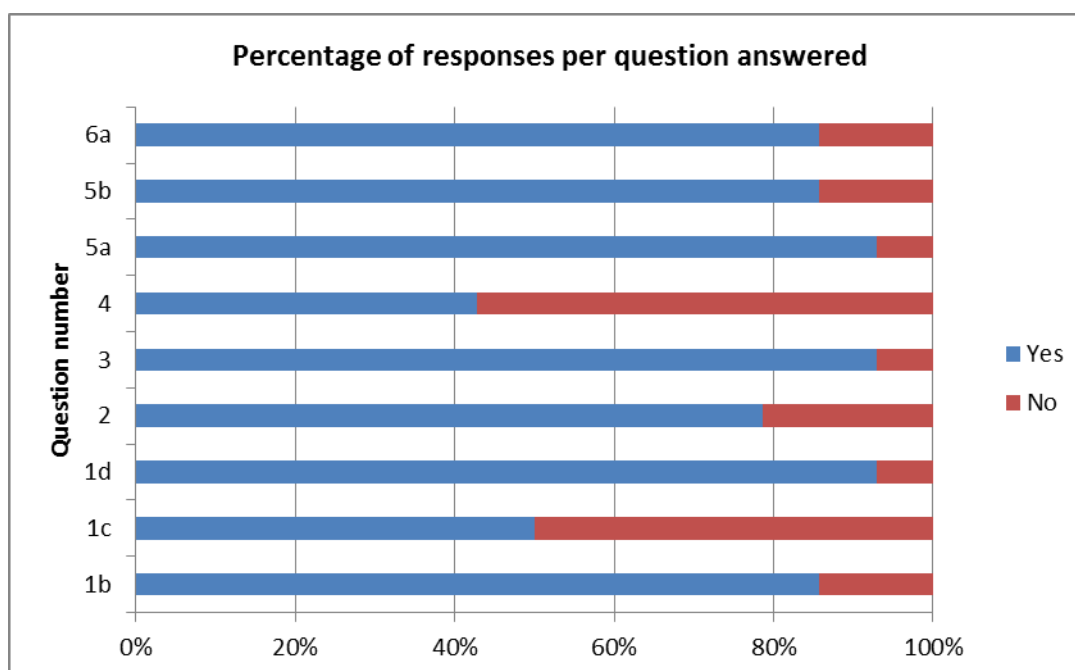
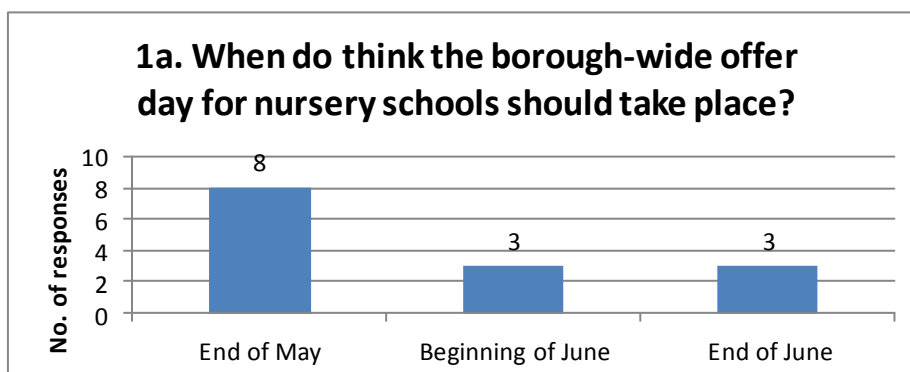
**4.0 Breakdown of survey responses in numbers**

	End of May	Beginning of June	End of June
1a. When do think the borough-wide offer day for nursery schools should take place?	9	3	3
		Yes	No
1b. Do you think the Common Application Form captures all relevant information?		13	2
1c. Do you agree with Tower Hamlets nursery admissions arrangements including the catchment areas, which has been designed to ensure that children attend their nearest school?		8	7
1d. Do you agree with the priorities for full-time and part-time places?		13	1
2. Do you agree with the proposed oversubscription criteria and tie break criterion for primary school admissions?		12	3
3. Do you agree with the proposed change to the primary school catchment areas which has been designed to take account of the rise in pupil population and planned school developments?		14	1
4. Do you agree with the proposed oversubscription criteria and tiebreak criterion for secondary school admissions?		6	8
5a. Do you agree with the Tower Hamlets scheme for co-ordinating both Year 7 and Reception Year admissions for 2015/16?		14	1
5b. Do you agree with the Tower Hamlets scheme for co-ordinating In-Year admissions for 2015/16?		13	2
6a. Do you agree with Planned Admission Numbers for Tower Hamlets schools in 2015/16?		13	2

**Breakdown of responses in percentages**

	End of May	Beginning of June	End of June
1a. When do think the borough-wide offer day for nursery schools should take place?	60%	20%	20%
		Yes	No
1b. Do you think the Common Application Form captures all relevant information?		87%	13%
1c. Do you agree with Tower Hamlets nursery admissions arrangements including the catchment areas, which has been designed to ensure that children attend their nearest school?		53%	47%
1d. Do you agree with the priorities for full-time and part-time places?		87%	7%
2. Do you agree with the proposed oversubscription criteria and tie break criterion for primary school admissions?		80%	20%
3. Do you agree with the proposed change to the primary school catchment areas which has been designed to take account of the rise in pupil population and planned school developments?		93%	7%

	Yes	No
4. Do you agree with the proposed oversubscription criteria and tiebreak criterion for secondary school admissions?	40%	53%
5a. Do you agree with the Tower Hamlets scheme for co-ordinating both Year 7 and Reception Year admissions for 2015/16?	93%	7%
5b. Do you agree with the Tower Hamlets scheme for co-ordinating In-Year admissions for 2015/16?	87%	13%
6a. Do you agree with Planned Admission Numbers for Tower Hamlets schools in 2015/16?	87%	13%



**4.1 Comments from survey**

*Note: Comments were only available to respondents where they answered 'No' in the survey*

Questions	Comments
1b	To offer parents information about how their local Children Centre can support their child in transferring to nursery school we would like a permission box for parents to tick for the CC to contact them
	Fine if you are happy with your nearest school, but restricts choice if that school is not your preference. Would be helpful if it is made clear in advance to parents which their nearest school is.

Questions	Comments
	<p>Academies and free schools are considered equally with community schools. This may actually be reducing choice for some parents. Parents should also be told which is their nearest primary school so that they know which school will be giving them priority.</p> <p>This will benefit parents living close to a primary school that they wish to attend. But if you live close to a primary school but wish to attend another one (a parent raised the issue of not wanting to attend an academy, which was her closest school) you will have little chance of getting a place. Academies and free schools are considered equally with community schools. This may actually be reducing choice for some parents but will be beneficial for parents for which their first preference is also their closest school. All parents should be told which is their nearest primary school so that they know which school will be giving them priority.</p>
1c	<p>The current arrangement means my child doesn't have access to lots of nearby schools</p> <p>I do not agree with the catchment area policy</p> <p>I feel it should be in line with the reception arrangements so as to minimise the disruption to a child's education by having to change schools between nursery and reception</p> <p>This will benefit parents living close to a primary school that they wish to attend. But if you live close to a primary school but wish to attend another one you will have little chance of getting a place. Academies and free schools are considered equally with community schools. This may actually be reducing choice for some parents but will be beneficial for parents for which their first preference is also their closest school. Also parents should be told which is their nearest primary school in advance of the application so that they know which school will be giving them priority.</p>
1d	<p>The priorities need to provide schools with the flexibility of recognising children who may not be socially/emotionally ready for a full time position. Age should be a factor to enable to have a full time place. Lastly; schools have not got the capacity to offer all children a full time place.</p>
2	<p>Only on distance and brother sisters already attending - I do not agree with the catchment area policy</p> <p>See above. align with primary admissions (reception class)</p> <p>Parents need to be clearly informed which is their nearest school. By only having priority to their nearest school parents actually have less choice, particularly if they want their child to attend a community school rather than a free school or academy.</p>
3	<p>Because I think you should be able to apply for any school in tower hamlets and gain access based on siblings and if you live near</p>
4	<p>To be clear I am unaware of secondary school policy</p> <p>Pupils in Bow North (particularly the area bordered by Grove Road, Mile End Road and the A102) where there is only one, girls-only, secondary school have difficulty accessing secondary school places. This situation has now been made worse by the moving of Bow School. This area either needs to be designated a priority geographical area for Morpeth (nearest secondary school) or the 'nearest school' criteria now being applied to primary admissions also needs to be applied to secondary schools admissions. Children in this area rarely get their first preferences for secondary schools as they are always further away than other applicants.</p> <p><i>[This comment was repeated a further 2 times]</i></p> <p>Pupils in Bow North (particularly the area bordered by Grove Road, Mile End Road and the A102) where there is only one, girls-only, secondary school have difficulty accessing secondary school places. This situation has now been made worse by the moving of Bow School out of this catchment area and by the increased building of residential housing in the Hackney Wick area. Bow North either needs to have designated priority for its closest secondary school, i.e.: Morpeth School, a new secondary built in this area to meet the increase in secondary places, or the 'nearest school' criteria now being applied to primary admissions also needs to be applied to secondary school admissions. Children in this area rarely get their first, second or even third preferences for secondary schools as they</p>

Questions	Comments
	are always further away than other applicants.
	The council should consider reviewing the oversubscription criteria, perhaps along the lines proposed for primary schools, to ensure fairness for access to secondary schools. At present, certain areas in the borough such as Bow North are disadvantaged in applications because they are further away from secondaries than others. Applying the same type of 'nearest school' criteria, or the designation of Bow North as a priority geographical area for a particular secondary school would go some way to levelling the playing field as is now proposed for fair access to Primaries.
	I believe that children in North Bow in particular those living within the immediate catchment of Olga and Chisenhale have a disadvantage when applying for secondary school places in relation to distance. This is particularly true now that Bow School has moved to their new site. I feel that pupils from these schools should be given Priority to a designated school (Morpeth) which is closest to this area.
	I do not agree with the proposed arrangements because:  Pupils in Bow North (particularly the area bordered by Grove Road, Mile End Road and the A102) where there is only one, girls-only, secondary school have difficulty accessing secondary school places. This situation has now been made worse by the moving of Bow School. This area either needs to be designated a priority geographical area for Morpeth (nearest secondary school) or the 'nearest school' criteria now being applied to primary admissions also needs to be applied to secondary school admissions. Children in this area rarely get their first preferences for secondary schools as they are always further away than other applicants.
5a	I am unaware of this policy
5b	I am unaware of this policy
	It would be quicker for schools to allocate spare places as children move into their area. and simpler/ user friendly for parents to approach the school
6a	I feel angry as a resident of TH that you have allowed a huge number of new dwelling units to be built and yet have not planned for this expansion in terms of basic school places. As a tax payer I am annoyed that I cannot apply for my nearest school, as I fall at the edge of a new catchment boundary, because you have allowed overdevelopment and not enough places.
	It does not show the current levels of secondary admissions or the current numbers of primary school year 6 places. It is therefore impossible to tell if the places to be provided will be sufficient.

#### **4.2 Feedback from Chisenhale Primary School Consultation meeting**

- Parents generally supported the introduction of a nursery policy in line with the introduction of catchment areas and a policy that mirrors the reception phase. The single CAF and offer day was also popular.
- More information was required in the consultation on the planned expansions and new school proposals for 2015/16 in the consultation to allow an informed view to be made.
- There are not enough school places in the Bow catchment area. There is not enough parental choice, given that the majority of schools in Bow are oversubscribed. Parents want more community schools in the Bow catchment area. parents enquired about why the lack of community school places, in particular in the Fish Island area, was not addressed earlier as the Council was aware of the issues for a number of years.
- Academies and Free schools that choose to adopt the LA admissions policy should not be considered as one of the 'nearest schools' when considering priority to parents

that apply to community schools as parents may be against the principals of the academy/free school programme.

- The Local Authority to be more clear that there is an expectation that parents should apply to their nearest school.
- Parents asked why some primary schools did not offer breakfast/after-school clubs that would enable parents to manage school runs (where their children were attending different schools) and why schools were not sympathetic to their difficulties when they were not on time to pick up their child, especially as the demand for school places was public knowledge.
- Parents were concerned that they had difficulty in children accessing a local secondary school during secondary transfer and suggested that a catchment area system or a priority area should be put in place for Morpeth School, enabling them to access this secondary school.

#### **4.3 Feedback from Admissions Forum**

##### **Question 1d. Do you agree with the priorities for full-time and part-time nursery places?**

Forum members, when reviewing the proposed criteria for determining priority for full and part-time nursery provision, recognised that some children were not emotionally ready for a full-time nursery place. It therefore discussed whether consideration of a child's emotional readiness should also be included as part of the criteria to determine a full or part-time offer. Headteacher members of the forum felt that that this decision could then be made by the school's headteacher, under advice from the local authority. The LA agreed to consider this change, but had some reservation, given that it would be subjective with limited provision to ensure the policy would be applied fairly and consistently.

##### **Question 4. Do you agree with the proposed oversubscription criteria and tiebreak criterion for secondary school admissions?**

Forum members discussed the policy wording that explained the allocation of places for children with statements of special educational need. Some members questioned whether this information should be excluded from the policy, given that the admission of children with statements of SEN was separate to the normal admission procedure. The forum recognised and agreed that the SEN advice could be reworded, but should remain in the policy as it offered clarity for parents to understand how all the school's available places would be filled.