

SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

YEAR 7 ADMISSIONS

Report of the Director of Education

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1. Purpose of the Report

To respond to a request by the Chairman of the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee to report on Year 7 children who are out of school by District Council area and to provide information on Year 7 admissions to enable the select committee to consider areas for possible scrutiny.

2. Summary

Each year a number of Year 7 children do not arrive at the secondary school where they have been offered a place. Area admission teams investigate each case and prosecute parents if they are refusing to send their child to school.

This was an area of the Department's work inspected by Ofsted and they found it to be satisfactory.

3. Conclusion

The Education Department tracks Year 7 children, follows up those who are not attending school and takes appropriate action.

1. Information

- 1.1 At the start of the Autumn Term every school in Hertfordshire will have a list of the Year 7 children who the Education Department expect to start at that school. Every child in Hertfordshire whose parents have not indicated that they will be sending their child to a non-state school will be on the list of one of the maintained schools.
- 1.2 On the first day of term a number of children do not arrive at the school to which they have been allocated a place. If illness is disregarded there will be three main reasons for this:
 - a) The parents have decided to send their child to another school, probably in the private sector, and have not informed the admissions team or the school. Occasionally the other school might be a foundation or voluntary aided school and the admissions team has not been informed.
 - b) The parents have decided that they will not send their child to the school where they have been offered a place because the parents have not been offered the school they want. The Education Department, in order to meet its legal obligations, must ensure that a school place is available for their child.
 - c) The parents have decided to educate their children otherwise than at school i.e. through home education.
- 1.3 Schools report to the admission teams by the middle of September the names of those children who have not started school. The admission teams then start a process of investigation into why children have not started at the school where they were offered a place. The challenges usually fall into the following categories:
 - a) Some cases are dealt with easily as parents explain that their child is attending another school.
 - b) Parents can sometimes be difficult to contact, causing delay.
 - c) Some parents see no reason to collaborate, causing delay.
 - d) Some parents are not prepared to send their child to the named school or want to educate their child at home.
- 1.4 The admission teams follow every case to ensure that the LEA is fulfilling its duty to ensure that all children of statutory school age are in education. At the start of term the number of cases will be about 150-200 children. This number reduces during the early part of the Autumn, however there will be a small number of cases where the LEA must prosecute for non-attendance.

- 1.5 The situation in respect of Year 7 children who have not started school as at the end of this September is set out below. The figures relate to Year 7 children living in the relevant area.

South Area	131
Watford	87
Three Rivers	34
Hertsmere	10
East Area	26
East Herts	4
Broxbourne	12
Welwyn & Hatfield	10
West Area	17
St Albans	11
Dacorum	6
North Area	12
Stevenage	7
North Herts	5

- 1.6 The situation in 1999 was as follows

Quadrant	South	East	West	North
September situation	75	20	22	22
December/January situation	3	3	2	3
Prosecution for non-attenders	2	3	2	0

- 1.7 As agreed at the Education Committee of 12 July, a new policy with regard to parents informing us that they will take up a school place will be implemented for secondary admissions in September 2002. It is anticipated that this will reduce the figures for next year.