

7b. REPORT OF THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Secondary Allocation 2015

The initial offers were sent to parents on 2nd March. It has been a more difficult year in that the overall number of residents in the transfer group has increased by 349 (5813 residents this year compared with 5464 residents last year) – this is over 11 forms of entry.

- 86% (87% in 2014) were offered their highest preference for which they are qualified. However, this is an increase in real terms getting their first preference school.
- 97% (95% in 2014) of grammar qualified Buckinghamshire resident pupils were offered their first preference grammar school.
- 82% (84% in 2014) of upper school qualified pupils were offered their first preference upper school.
- 238 (219 in 2014) children were allocated to a school that was not their preference.
- More parents made timely applications this year.

But despite a larger cohort:

- All the upper schools that use catchments, except Great Marlow School, have offered to all their catchment children with the school as a preference
- All the grammar schools except Dr Challoner's Grammar School have offered all their catchment qualified pupils a place
- Highcrest (All ability school) has exhausted Bands A and B and bands C and D have gone to a further distance than last year

Bulge classes were created in 2 upper schools – Sir William Ramsay and St Michael's in High Wycombe. We continue to monitor the Great Marlow situation. Dr Challoner's High school chose to increase their intake this year by a class. Further allocations will be made in due course as the admissions process continues. Appeals will be held after Easter.

Promoting democracy to young voters

I have made a number of responses and am establishing a Youth Voice steering group to coordinate how the council and its partners involve and consult with children and young people. We have had our first meeting and we will be holding our next meeting to agree a work plan before the end of April. As example of what is happening is Buckinghamshire Member of Youth Parliament Charlotte Tosti and Deputy Member Evie Towersey have been working hard to encourage young people in Buckinghamshire to register to vote. As a part of their campaign they organised a Question Time event for young voters on 6th March at Aylesbury High School, chaired by John Bercow MP Speaker of the House of Commons. The panel had myself and cross party representatives from Labour, UKIP, LibDems as well as an independent expert.

Over 100 young people attended the event and raised questions to the panel ranging from tuition fees, radicalisation of young women, youth unemployment, the pink bus and TV debates. There was also an opportunity to debate why do young people seem less inclined to vote?

The event was promoted live on social media and links were sent out to inform young people about how to register to vote.

Closing the evening, young people were made aware of Buckinghamshire County Council Youth Voice and the many projects that they can get involved in to have their voices heard. This work is supported by the Youth Service and the next Youth Voice event is on 4th June where young people will be debating about Mental Health awareness.

Business Plans

The Business Plan for Children's Social Care (0-25) and Learning has been published and highlights the breadth of work across the Business Unit to keep children safe and support young people to reach their full potential. The key functions of the business plan are: Early Help, Children's Social Care, Early Years, Education and Skills, Youth and Youth Offending.

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