

Pan-London Admissions Scheme 2023 - briefing

17 April 2023

Embargoed until 17:00 Monday 17 April 2023

For the thirteenth year running, London's admissions system has enabled more parents and children to be allocated a primary school of their preference by a fairer distribution of available offers.

This year, 87,277 pupils applied for primary school places through the Pan-London Admissions Scheme, an almost three (2.67) per cent decrease compared to last year.

Nearly eighty nine (88.57) per cent of pupils in London received an offer from their first preference school, equivalent to 77,260 children. Over ninety seven (97.13) per cent of children got a place at one of their three highest preference schools, equivalent to 84,723 pupils.

Overall, ninety eight (98.2) per cent were allocated a school of their preference. This means 85,655 applicants got a place at a school of their preference this year.

Why was the scheme introduced?

Primary school places in London have been co-ordinated through the Pan-London Admissions scheme since 2011. The aims of the scheme are to simplify the application process for primary school admissions and ensure a fair distribution of places available across London.

How have pupils benefitted from the scheme?

Previously, parents had to fill out separate application forms for each local authority which handled admissions for their preferred schools. Neither the offers, nor the dates on which the offers were made, were co-ordinated between authorities.

It meant some parents held on to more than one offer for weeks or months until they had heard back from all the authorities they had applied to before deciding which offer to accept.

This resulted in a delay in allocating the places that were not accepted to other children.

Co-ordinating admissions in London has meant a fairer distribution of available offers and resulted in more parents getting an offer from one of their preferred schools earlier. It has substantially reduced the number of pupils who receive multiple offers or no offer at all.

How does the scheme work?

Parents fill in a single application form even if they are applying to schools in more than one borough. They enter up to six schools in order of preference and submit the form to the borough where they live. All state-maintained schools and academies in London and surrounding counties are included in the scheme.

The application is then considered under the equal preference system. This means that all preferences are considered without reference to the order listed by the parents. Each child is considered separately for each school using the published admission criteria to decide whether or not a place can be offered.

If more than one school can offer a place, the local authority will allocate the highest (most preferred) of these listed in the application.

Every time a multiple offer is eliminated an offer can be made to another pupil who would otherwise have received a less satisfactory offer or no offer at all.

Offers are sent out by email during the evening of Monday 17 April 2023.

Why do some boroughs offer more pupils a place at their first preference school than other boroughs?

London is unique in that nowhere else in the country has such a large volume of applications to so many schools. The capital's dense population means there is always a lot of movement across local authority boundaries. This is reflected in the statistics. While some boroughs might not be offering as many first preferences to their residents as other authorities do, they may well be meeting a high proportion of first preferences for pupils from neighbouring boroughs.

For example, a school located near the border of two boroughs, which uses geographical distance from home to school as one of the criteria for its admissions policy, may take more pupils from a neighbouring borough than from its own borough. Boroughs within travelling distance of a number of very popular selective schools or denominational schools will have a lower percentage of resident pupils receiving their first preference because of the higher level of competition for places at those schools.

What factors impact on the statistics?

Regarding preference rates, it is important to note that there are enough primary school places to meet overall demand across London and that schools across the capital offer high standards of education.

Despite this, some schools remain more popular than others with parents. This can be for a variety of reasons, including academic performance, religious ethos, proximity to the parents' home or work, whether the child already has siblings attending or because the school offers a specialism which would benefit the child. The heavy demand for certain schools inevitably means that some parents will be disappointed.

Some parents decide to put a single school on the form. Other parents, who are aware that all their preferences will be considered equally, may select a school which their child is unlikely to be admitted to as their first preference. Therefore, it is important to consider how well second and third preferences have been met, as these are likely to have been more than satisfactory to many parents.

The quality of public transport in London (and the fact that it's free for children) encourages parents to apply for schools some distance away, whereas in reality they may have little chance of success as distance from home to school is commonly used as a tie breaker in oversubscription criteria.

Applicants for denominational schools may be confident that they will meet criteria based on the degree of church attendance or commitment, but the offer of a place will depend on the number of other applicants who do so and other criteria which are used as a tie-breaker (such as distance from the school).

What happens next?

Parents whose child has not been allocated a place at one of their preferred schools have been offered an alternative school.

If children are offered a school which is not their first preference, they will automatically go onto the waiting list for the schools which were a higher preference than the one they were offered. Places will be filled in the order of the school's oversubscription criteria from the list as vacancies arise over the coming weeks.

Parents who are dissatisfied with their child's offer may appeal to an independent panel - these arrangements are set out in law and parents will find more details on their council's admissions page.

What's the situation nationally – can you tell me who I should be speaking to?

The DfE normally publish the figures of all local authorities several weeks after National Offer Day. In London, the Pan-London Admissions Scheme co-ordinates the allocation of primary school places, but enquiries on individual local authority allocations should be made to individual boroughs. For results outside of London, journalists will have to contact the relevant local authority.

Borough-by-borough breakdown of figures

A table listing a full breakdown of London borough admissions data is below.

LA	% First preference offers	% Second preference offers	% Third preference offers	% Fourth preference offers	% Fifth preference offers	% Sixth preference offers
Barking & Dagenham	95.52%	3.04%	0.49%	0.03%	0.00%	0.00%
Barnet	85.44%	8.02%	2.58%	0.79%	0.28%	0.13%
Bexley	89.23%	6.96%	1.82%	0.24%	0.17%	0.10%
Brent	87.68%	7.36%	2.13%	0.60%	0.12%	0.03%
Bromley	87.90%	6.74%	2.45%	1.07%	0.49%	0.23%
Camden	81.30%	8.26%	3.50%	1.89%	0.77%	0.21%
City of London	95.83%	4.17%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Croydon	88.50%	7.21%	2.13%	0.53%	0.37%	0.05%
Ealing	88.53%	6.19%	2.13%	0.93%	0.30%	0.16%
Enfield	92.47%	4.58%	1.16%	0.37%	0.20%	0.11%
Greenwich	91.09%	5.69%	1.50%	0.62%	0.10%	0.00%
Hackney	88.41%	6.72%	2.01%	0.70%	0.35%	0.10%
Hammersmith and Fulham	82.22%	8.55%	3.25%	1.62%	0.43%	0.34%
Haringey	89.05%	7.09%	1.66%	0.70%	0.33%	0.08%
Harrow	87.73%	6.78%	2.20%	0.58%	0.36%	0.14%
Havering	88.87%	5.97%	1.57%	0.83%	0.25%	0.18%
Hillingdon	94.93%	3.70%	0.73%	0.12%	0.00%	0.03%
Hounslow	85.36%	9.78%	2.23%	0.66%	0.22%	0.00%
Islington	83.58%	8.18%	3.42%	1.51%	0.58%	0.35%

Kensington and Chelsea	70.53%	9.41%	4.37%	2.73%	1.36%	0.82%
Kingston upon Thames	87.97%	8.12%	1.42%	0.95%	0.18%	0.00%
Lambeth	87.77%	7.85%	2.10%	0.64%	0.23%	0.05%
Lewisham	85.46%	7.86%	3.15%	0.76%	0.64%	0.19%
Merton	85.21%	6.03%	2.77%	1.43%	0.49%	0.40%
Newham	93.66%	3.89%	0.96%	0.17%	0.07%	0.02%
Redbridge	86.91%	7.82%	1.79%	0.93%	0.34%	0.03%
Richmond upon Thames	90.30%	5.87%	2.15%	0.42%	0.16%	0.00%
Southwark	87.91%	8.33%	1.67%	0.42%	0.19%	0.00%
Sutton	91.62%	5.74%	1.47%	0.29%	0.17%	0.00%
Tower Hamlets	91.67%	4.77%	1.28%	0.26%	0.07%	0.07%
Waltham Forest	90.33%	6.11%	1.61%	0.28%	0.19%	0.09%
Wandsworth	83.01%	7.34%	4.52%	1.20%	0.69%	0.31%
Westminster	85.84%	6.73%	2.77%	0.79%	0.69%	0.50%
Total	88.57%	6.56%	2.00%	0.67%	0.29%	0.11%