

2008 secondary applications and offers

The Information as to Provision of Education (England) Regulations 2008, which were laid before Parliament on 15 January, committed the Government for the first time to publishing local authority by local authority data on how many families received an offer of a place at one of their preferred schools. On Monday 3 March, which was national offer day, nearly 570,000 families found out where their children will start secondary school this September.

To date, figures for 138 local authorities have been verified, and 11 local authorities have provided early figures, which are unverified at the time of publication. (Some delay has been caused by local authorities experiencing significant software problems).

The headline figures for England, based on the figures published today for all local authorities (which includes some unverified data from 11 local authorities), are as follows:

- **82%** of families received an offer of a place at their highest preference school.
- **94%** of families received an offer of a place at one of their top three preference schools.
- **95.5%** of families received an offer of a place at one of their preferred schools (NB different local authorities offer different numbers of preferences).

Based on the verified figures for 138 local authorities alone:

- **81.6%** of parents received an offer of a place at their highest preference school.
- **93.9%** of parents received an offer of a place at one of their top three preference schools.
- **95.5%** of parents received an offer of a place at one of their preferred schools (NB different local authorities offer different numbers of preferences).

A few points should be borne in mind when looking at the figures for each local authority:

- The figure for 'Home applicants with offers to a school in the area of the local authority' may be greater than that for 'Applications received' as offers have been made by local authorities to parents who didn't complete an application form.
- When the figure for 'Home applicants with an alternative offer' is lower than that for 'Home applicants without an offer corresponding to any preference', this is generally because local authorities have started another preference exercise (based on surplus places) or when offers have been withdrawn and the child did not require another place/offer.

- The vast majority of returns are based on data for pupils moving to year 7, but a small number of local authorities have reported on another year group which is the normal point of entry in their area.

As part of the data collection process, we gave local authorities the option of providing contextual information setting out any factors which might impact on the figures for their area. From the information provided, several common issues emerged. These are:

- The effect of having one or more very popular, heavily oversubscribed schools in the area, which a large number of parents (many more than there are places available) will put as their first preference. Some parents will do this knowing that they have little chance of getting a place at that school, and may still be content to be offered a place at their second or third preference school.
- The effect of having grammar or partially selective schools in the area or neighbouring areas, in part because these are often popular and heavily oversubscribed (see above) but also because some parents will put one of these schools as their first preference then subsequently find out that their child has not passed the entry test, meaning that preference cannot be met.
- The effect of having popular single sex or faith schools in the area, where there is a much higher demand for single sex or particular faith places than can be met by the available supply.
- Falling rolls, leading to a surplus of school places in the area.

Full verified data returns for all local authorities will be published shortly. Regional contextual information will also be published where applicable.