

**Consultation on removal of the 'linked schools' criterion
for admission to Grey Court, Orleans Park and
Teddington
for 2013/2014 entry**

15 November 2011 to 13 January 2012

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document summarizes the proposal to remove the 'linked school' criterion from the oversubscription criteria for Grey Court, Orleans Park and Teddington for entry in 2013/2014. It is the only change – apart from relevant application and processing dates – that is proposed to the admission arrangements for any of the community schools in the borough.
- 1.2 Between 19 September and 21 October 2011, all three schools consulted with parents and other local people on converting to academy status, most likely in April 2012. The Secretary of State would consider formal applications in the spring of 2012 for the schools to become academies. Although it is possible that all three schools will be academies, and therefore able to set their own admission arrangements, well before September 2013, they will not be able to consult upon and determine their admission arrangements for 2013/2014 within the requisite statutory timescales. As the maintaining admissions authority for the three schools at the time of the publication of this document, the local authority is therefore carrying out the consultation and will be responsible for determining the arrangements.
- 1.3 The full consultation document on the admissions arrangements for all community schools within the borough, and on the proposed admission schemes, is available at: www.richmond.gov.uk/school_admissions.
- 1.4 This consultation lasts from Tuesday 15 November 2011 to Friday 13 January 2012. Responses to the consultation should be made in writing to **Matthew Paul, Head of Schools Commissioning, Education, Children's and Cultural Services, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, Civic Centre, York Street, Twickenham, TW1 3BZ**, or by e-mail to m.paul@richmond.gov.uk.
- 1.5 Richmond upon Thames Admissions Forum will consider the consultation responses at its meeting on 6 February 2012 and seek to achieve consensus for a recommendation to be made to the local authority's Cabinet.
- 1.6 The local authority's Cabinet will consider the consultation responses and any recommendation made by the Admissions Forum, and determine the admission arrangements for 2013/2014, at its meeting on 22 March 2012.

2. What is the 'linked school' criterion?

- 2.1 The 'linked school' criterion is the main method of allocating places at the three mixed community secondary schools – Grey Court, Orleans Park and Teddington – (and for the three mixed secondary academies) in the borough. The whole oversubscription criteria are as follows:
 1. Children in public care;
 2. Children who have an exceptional medical or social need requiring attendance at a particular school rather than any other school. Such needs must be supported, at the time of application, by reports or letters from suitable professionals such as GPs, consultants or social workers. Circumstances cannot be taken into account unless information is provided at the time of application

and failure to provide such information at that stage may therefore affect whether or not the children are allocated places at the preferred schools. All information submitted will be regarded as confidential.

3. Children who have siblings (by which is meant full, step-, half- and adopted siblings living in the same household) at the school at the point of admission;
4. Children who attend a linked primary or junior school (to meet this criterion, the child must be attending the linked primary or junior school at the time that the application is submitted. Once the cohort starts Year 7, attendance at a linked primary or junior school would no longer apply and priority would not be given on that basis on the waiting list). If more children from linked schools apply than there are places available, places within this criterion will be allocated on the basis of proximity, as per Criterion 5.
5. Children living closest to the preferred school, measured by the shortest route by road or maintained footpath, accompanied as necessary, from the middle (the “seed-point”) of their home, out of the front entrance, to the nearest pedestrian school gate used by the relevant year-group. Accessibility of private or public transport will not be considered. All distances will be measured using a computerised Geographical Information System (GIS).

2.2 Links between primary and secondary schools are formed and can be lost on the basis of the number of children who transfer, or if the schools are situated in the same electoral ward. A link is formed when at least 25% of year 6 leavers or 15 pupils transfer to a particular secondary school, and it is lost if the figure or percentage is lower in each of three consecutive years. There are some schools that do not have a link to a particular school because the numbers are too low to establish a link or there is no pattern of transfer.

2.3 The ‘linked school’ criterion has been in place since 1991, when it was introduced as a way of mitigating the effects of the ‘Greenwich Judgement’, which ruled that it was unlawful for a local authority to give priority in a school’s oversubscription criteria solely on the basis of a child’s residence within the authority’s administrative area. In other words, whilst it was – and remains – lawful to use ‘home to school distance’ as a criterion, applicants from outside the authority’s area should otherwise be considered for admission no less favourably than children living within the area. The ‘linked school’ criterion was felt to be a lawful way to encourage a fair degree of stability in the borough’s admission patterns and to ensure that a large number of Year 6 pupils would reap the benefits of educational continuity by transferring with their peers.

2.4 The ‘linked school’ criterion has been oversubscribed with applicants for Teddington since 2004 and for Orleans Park since 2005. In each year of that oversubscription, ‘home to school distance’ has been used as a sub-criterion to determine which linked children should be offered places. As such, the links from some schools – particularly from Stanley and Trafalgar to Teddington – do not ensure the continuity that had been guaranteed in previous years. It should be noted, though, that, by contrast, *all* children, attending linked schools or not, whose parents preferred Grey Court have been admitted in each year since the 1990s.

2.5 The number of children from each linked primary school offered ‘linked school’ (as opposed to ‘special circumstances’ or ‘sibling’) places in 2011 at the initial allocation stage and then from the waiting-list, together with indication of which will still be linked for 2012 entry, are as follows:

Grey Court	Initial allocations 2011 entry	Waiting-list 2011 entry	Still linked for 2012 entry
Darell	10	1	√
Fern Hill, Kingston	37	1	√
Latchmere, Kingston	39	3	√
Meadlands	16	2	√
St Luke's C of E, Kingston	10	1	√
St Richard's C of E	11	0	√
The Russell	15	1	√
Total	138	9	7

Orleans Park	Initial allocations 2011 entry	Waiting-list 2011 entry	Still linked for 2012 entry
Archdeacon Cambridge's C of E	19	2	√
Chase Bridge	16	1	√
Ivybridge, Hounslow	8	1	√
St Mary's	31	0	√
St Stephen's	46	0	√
The Blue C of E, Hounslow	5	0	
Worple Primary, Hounslow	14	0	√
Total	139	4	6

Teddington	Initial allocations 2011 entry	Waiting-list 2011 entry	Still linked for 2012 entry
Collis	54	2	√
Sacred Heart Catholic	7	0	√
St John the Baptist C of E	34	0	√
St Mary's & St Peter's C of E	26	2	√
St Paul's, Kingston	21	4	√
Stanley	18	8	√
Trafalgar	5	7	√
Total	165	23	7

- 2.6** Although a small number of other local authorities – e.g. Brent, Oxfordshire and Worcestershire – give a degree of priority in the oversubscription for some schools to children attending particular ‘partner’ feeder schools, none of the links between the schools are subject to any conditionality in the manner of the links for Grey Court, Orleans Park and Teddington.

3. What is being proposed?

- 3.1** The proposed oversubscription criteria for admission to Grey Court, Orleans Park and Teddington for 2013/2014, i.e. the order in which places will be offered, differ from those adopted for 2012/2013 entry by proposing the removal of the 'linked school' criterion. That means that the main criterion for allocating at the three places would instead be 'home to school distance'. Attendance at a primary school that is currently linked to one of the three secondary schools concerned would therefore no longer automatically confer priority ahead of children attending schools that are not linked.
- 3.2** The proposed oversubscription criteria are therefore as follows:
1. Children in public care;
 2. Children who have an exceptional medical or social need requiring attendance at a particular school rather than any other school. Such needs must be supported, at the time of application, by reports or letters from suitable professionals such as GPs, consultants or social workers. Circumstances cannot be taken into account unless information is provided at the time of application and failure to provide such information at that stage may therefore affect whether or not the children are allocated places at the preferred schools. All information submitted will be regarded as confidential.
 3. Children who have siblings (by which is meant full, step-, half- and adopted siblings living in the same household) at the school at the point of admission;
 4. Children living closest to the preferred school, measured by the shortest route by road or maintained footpath, accompanied as necessary, from the middle (the "seed-point") of their home, out of the front entrance, to the nearest pedestrian school gate used by the relevant year-group. Accessibility of private or public transport will not be considered. All distances will be measured using a computerised Geographical Information System (GIS).

4. Why is the proposal being made?

- 4.1 At its meeting on 9 February 2011, Richmond upon Thames Admissions Forum felt that the circumstances were such that it was time to review the 'linked schools policy' (LSP), having not commissioned such a review since 2006. The Forum is a cross-party and borough-wide body that is designed to consider the fairness and legality of admission arrangements for local schools. It includes representation from both the London Borough of Hounslow and the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.
- 4.2 On 21 September 2011, the Forum considered [a report on the LSP](#) and achieved consensus to recommend to the local authority that it should consult upon removing the 'linked school' criterion for September 2013 entry. In coming to that view, the Forum noted that:
- Using 'home to school distance' as the principal criterion would be more straightforward and easier for parents to understand, in accordance with the underlying principles of the Schools Admissions Code.
 - Basing children's chances of admission on preferences made by the parents of previous Year 6 children is unfair.
 - Although the criterion enables a degree of continuity for cohorts of children transferring from a good number of the linked schools, the original purpose of the LSP – to *guarantee* that children from particular primary schools could obtain places at particular secondary schools – no longer pertains, as not all 'linked school' children are able to obtain places at Orleans Park or Teddington.
 - Regardless of which primary school they attend, children should stand a realistic chance of being admitted to their closest mixed community secondary school.
 - 10 (29%) of the 35 junior and primary schools in the borough do not have a linked secondary school.
 - Modelling of how the 2011 intakes would have looked had the LSP not been in place indicated that a net total of 33 in-borough children – 29 more for Orleans Park, 16 more for Teddington, but 12 fewer for Grey Court – would have obtained places at the three schools; albeit that parents may have made different preferences, or ranked them differently, and that some parents whose children did not attend linked primary schools and who therefore hadn't applied may have done so, had 'distance' been the main criterion.
 - The LSP can make parents whose children attend linked primary schools feel that places at the linked secondary are guaranteed, which can make it difficult for them to accept subsequent refusal and places that are allocated at the academies.
 - All three mixed community schools were consulting on converting to academy status and would, if they became academies, be able to set their own admissions arrangements for 2014/2015 onwards; so this could be the last opportunity for the local authority to propose a coordinated abolition of the LSP – albeit that it was highly probable that the schools would continue to set their admission arrangements in close consultation and cooperation with the local authority.
 - Removing the criterion could lead to a more natural geographical distribution of the borough's children at entry to Year 7.
 - Whether the LSP were to be in place or not, there would be 'winners' and losers' and not all parents could be satisfied until all the secondary schools and academies in the borough were graded by Ofsted, and in parents' eyes, as 'good' or 'outstanding'.
- 4.3 The local authority is unable simply to remove the out-borough linked primary schools and leave only in-borough schools linked, as the Schools Adjudicator has previously ruled (in 2004) against Camden Council making a similar proposal.

5. Impact assessment: how might the allocations of places look without the 'linked school' criterion?

As per 4.2 above, the local authority has modelled how the 2011 intakes to the three schools might have looked without the 'linked school' criterion and the results are below. ('Richmond', 'Kingston' and 'Other LAs' refer to the residence of the children.) However, the application patterns may have been different, to an unknown extent, had the 'linked school' criterion not been used, as more preferences for Orleans Park or Teddington may have been expressed by parents of children at unlinked schools who would otherwise have been deterred from doing so by the fact that both schools have repeatedly been oversubscribed with 'linked school' children in recent years.

Grey Court – 263 offers

Criterion	With links			Without links		
	Richmond	Kingston	Other LAs	Richmond	Kingston	Other LAs
Special circs.	1	1	0	1	1	0
SEN	1	0	0	1	0	0
Siblings	23	35	3	23	35	3
Linked school	52	85	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Distance	47	13	0	85	114	0
Total	122	135	4	110	150	3

Orleans Park – 210 offers

Criterion	With links			Without links		
	Richmond	Hounslow	Other LAs	Richmond	Hounslow	Other LAs
Looked-after	0	1	0	0	1	0
Special circs.	4	2	0	4	2	0
SEN	9	1	0	9	1	0
Sibling	49	5	0	49	5	0
Linked school	109	30	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Distance	0	0	0	138	1	0
Total	171	39	0	200	10	0

Teddington – 244 offers

Criterion	With links			Without links		
	Richmond	Kingston	Other LAs	Richmond	Kingston	Other LAs
Looked-after	0	0	0	0	0	0
Special circs.	6	0	0	6	0	0
SEN	4	0	0	4	0	0
Sibling	59	7	3	59	7	3
Linked school	140	25	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Distance	0	0	0	156	9	0
Total	209	32	3	225	16	3

It is therefore possible that the admission patterns for Orleans Park and Teddington would be substantially different from how they have traditionally been in recent years.

5.2 It is also possible that some anomalous admission patterns would arise, e.g. some children in Ham may be living near enough to Teddington to gain admission there. However, the ‘linked school criterion’ already produces anomalies that are arguably more unfair, for example that:

- some children living in Isleworth but attending linked schools in Hounslow currently take priority for Orleans Park over some children living in east Twickenham who attend unlinked schools, such as The Vineyard;
- some children living on Kingston Hill attending a linked school in Kingston currently take priority for Teddington over some children living in Teddington and Fulwell who attend unlinked schools, such as St James’s , or who are home-educated or attend private schools;
- some primary schools are linked to secondary schools that are not the nearest and in some cases – e.g. Stanley Primary and Trafalgar Junior – are the third or fourth nearest secondary schools.

6. Contact

For further information, please contact: Matthew Paul, Head of School Commissioning; telephone: 020 8891 7588; email: m.paul@richmond.gov.uk.