
Director General for Regulation

Joanne Bartley
(By email)

10 July 2017

Dear Joanne,

Thank you for your email on the ad-hoc publication of schools preference analysis. We have looked into the points you raised and have discussed them with the Department for Education (DfE).

You raised concerns that some parents had chosen a selective school as their first preference even though their child had not passed the 11-plus, which meant they were not eligible to attend a selective school. You were concerned that the lack of clarity about this in the publication had led to the demand for selective schools statistics being misleading, in particular that these pupils were included in the first choice count for a school which they were not eligible to attend.

We believe that first preference data is a reasonable proxy measure for demand for selective schools. However, users of statistics should be provided with appropriate information to help them interpret statistics, and in this case further details about the eligibility status of these pupils would help with interpretation. DfE have agreed to amend the ad-hoc publication, and also the main statistical release relating to school preferences, to make clear that a number of applications for selective schools may include pupils who have not passed the 11-plus test.

We have discussed with DfE the value in doing further work to understand the proportion of first choice applicants who have not passed the 11-plus, both to assist user interpretation of these statistics and to support the development of any future selective school policy.

I am copying this letter for Mike Jones, Head of Profession for Statistics at DfE.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation