

Policy Guidelines for late stage transfer and/or requests to repeat a year

Introduction

In view of the reorganisation in the Department with the associated realignment of roles and responsibilities, it is timely to review both the social/educational arguments for late transfer and the procedures for decision-making.

There will be separate guidelines for early stage transfers, under the umbrella of the Gifted and Talented stream.

There are, occasionally, requests for children to repeat a year and subsequently, transfer late, particularly to secondary education.

These requests generally flow from the belief that from the viewpoint of social, educational, developmental or physical/emotional vulnerability, the child will benefit.

However, where this belief is informed by evidence, then there is strong and compelling evidence that retention has poor outcomes.

Research

Research indicates, fairly consistently, that the effects of retention on academic and personal outcomes are systematically negative and that these negative effects increase over time. Full references for the range of research studies reviewed in coming to the sample of conclusions illustrated below, can be found at: -

www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/edu/staff/jhattie/Retention

- “Research conducted in recent years has led educators to make the connection that holding young people back in school, holds them back in life.” National Academy of Education 1991.
- “Synthesis of retention studies confirm the notion that children recommended for retention, but promoted anyway, do at least as well, or better, than similar children who were retained.” Foster 1993.
- “Incredibly, being retained has as much to do with children dropping out, as does their academic achievement. It would be difficult to find another educational practice on which the evidence is so unequivocally negative.” House 1989.
- “Those who continue to retain pupils do so despite cumulative research evidence showing that the potential for negative effects consistently outweighs positive outcomes.” Hattie 1990.

Other issues

Aside from the conceptual considerations there are also a range of administrative/logistic difficulties which, although not insurmountable in all cases, do constrain late transfers for example: - Planning of pupil numbers/level of subscription; Standard Number/Published Admission Number related to age; organisation of key stage assessments.

Recommended guidance

- In view of the very exceptional circumstances in which a child might transfer late, it is a reasonable expectation that the severity of the child's Special Educational Needs would be of the order that would merit a "Statement".
- Working from this premise, the decision for a late transfer should then be made through the Annual Review procedure (see Oxfordshire County Council "Handbook for Schools: Special Educational Needs"). If a recommendation for a late transfer arises from the Annual Review, then the Assistant Education Officer for the school will take this to the Resources Panel, as is the case for all exceptional provision. It should be noted that the Annual Review will need to take place in good time for the subsequent LEA decision to be implemented.
- It should be noted that Headteachers have the leeway to vary groupings within Key Stage and build a strategy, with support colleagues, to return the child to age group prior to stage transfer.

Summary of strategy

- Children being considered for late transfer will almost always have a statement of SEN.
- Headteachers need to make a formal recommendation through an Annual Review prior to Year 5 for a late transfer to secondary school. This should be considered at the Year 4 Annual Review.
- Discussion relating to late transfer should be initiated within an annual review , to which all relevant parties have been invited.
- The Assistant Education Officer (SEN) will coordinate the request.

November 2005