

General principles of decision making on out of normal age group applications for community and voluntary controlled schools

Placement outside the child's chronological year group should be highly exceptional. It would also need to be in the best interests of the child according to both parents and education professionals.

Evidence should be provided by the parent with the application on reasons why a child should be educated outside their normal age group. Evidence should then be sought from the headteacher of the school where the applicant is seeking admission.

Reference will be made to the checklist in consideration of the above evidence by a senior officer from the Education Service.

Checklist

This checklist is based on a document created by Rebecca Ashton and colleagues in Blackburn. It is recommended that all criteria should be satisfied before considering placing a child outside their chronological year group. However, ticking all the boxes is NOT an indication that a child should be placed out of year. It is merely an indication that such a course should be considered.

School, parents, child and involved professionals all feel that this placement would substantially increase the probability of the child's successful inclusion in mainstream school.

This decision is not being made in order to delay other interventions, such as placement into a different school.

This decision is not being made due to difficulties in making appropriately differentiated provision in the class to which the child should normally transfer.
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Consideration has been given to the long-term emotional and social impact of this placement.
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Consideration has been given to the likely future placements for the child, e.g. returning to their own year group or remaining with the new year group.
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There has been a discussion with parents about likely future issues, e.g. leaving school without completing Key Stage 4, no guarantees that transfer from primary to secondary school out of the normal year will be agreed by secondary schools
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All involved feel that the child will be able to learn more from the children in the proposed year group than by being around children of their own age group.
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The child will have a peer group in their new class, which is likely to continue to be somewhere that the child can 'fit in' as the cohort matures.

The child has previously been educated out of their normal age group and/or they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely.
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