

Mrs V. Jordan
School Admissions
Education Bradford
Future House
Bolling Road
Bradford BD4 7EB

Date:

Dear Mrs Jordan,

LA Admission consultation: Proposals regarding summer born children.

I am writing in response to the consultation on proposals for admission of summer-born children into reception classes from 2011 and would like to raise the following points:

- This proposal does not address the needs of individual children, and conflicts with 'Every Child Matters'
- Children mature at different levels and parents of summer born should be allowed to make a decision, within the law, in the best interests of their child.
- Young children who are forced into formal education too can suffer from lack of confidence and self-esteem and this impacts on their personal well-being as well as progress and attainment.
- For many children the impact of starting school with children almost 1 year older stays with them until GCSE and later life.
- A study published in Feb 2008 highlighted the issue of the admission age in England, and found that English children do not benefit from starting school so young.
- The proposals outlined clearly remove the option of deferred entry from parents, as Year 1 classes are likely to be full.
- To suggest or require that children should be placed directly into Y1 and miss the last year of the foundation stage is contrary to equal opportunities and 'Every Child Matters'. To impose formal schooling on children who have just had their 4th birthday is cruel and inappropriate.
- Secondary schools allow children to sit GSCEs early to cater for able children; children are often allowed to sit more exams one year later or re-sit to improve grades. Summer born children whose parents chose to defer entry are more likely to achieve better grades if they are allowed to progress through school with the children who entered the reception class in the same year.
- This issue is more about GCSE results, league tables and politics than the needs, aspirations and life-chances of summer born children. The council, EB and all those concerned with education in Bradford and nationally need to be challenging the inclusion of 'out of year' children

or sat exams in GCSE results rather than sacrificing the potential of children who, by an accident of birth, stand to be disadvantaged for the rest of their lives, and clearly do not 'matter' as much as league tables.

With regard to the recently published Interim report of the Primary Curriculum by Jim Rose: Aspect 4 pp 48 - 55

Para.

2.63 There is a significant gap in the research evidence which gives no comparison with the attainment of summer born children who have entered reception classes in the term after their fifth birthday and continued through primary and Secondary school to sit GCSE / A level a year later than they would have otherwise been expected to. The evidence is therefore incomplete.

2.64 Children who are almost one year younger than their classmates should not be expected to achieve the same results – this is contrary to the governments 'personalising learning' and Every Child Matters agendas .

2.65 If "The more high-quality pre-schooling (either in nursery or reception classes) they receive the better" Surely allowing summer born children to stay longer in a nursery setting and then allowing them a full year in a reception class is to their advantage.

2.66 I would fully support a single entry point to reception class if parents with summer-born children are allowed to choose autumn term following their child's fifth birthday.

2.68 Curriculum and pedagogy – If evidence suggests that the transition from R - Y1 is problematic for some children and those particularly at risk are summer born, not to mention SEN and Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL), why is Bradford proposing to force parents who choose to exercise their right for their child to start school to admit their child to Y1? I once again refer you to the Every Child Matters Agenda.

I would be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt of this letter and ensure that these comments are passed to the relevant committee and included in the consultation.