
**On the British Education System
and
The State Schools in Cambridge (XIV)**

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In the preceding essays (Vol.XI and VIII), I mentioned School Events including “Mary Rose” Trip to Portsmouth, The Performance of the “Happy Prince,” “Discover Industry” Residential Field Trip, etc. In this essay I will tell you about the miscellaneous things in which I was much interested.

1) Transfer to Community College or Secondary School

On 17th December, '86, my younger daughter came home with the headmaster's school letter and a sealed envelope. It was the letter concerning “Transfer to Community College or Secondary School in 1987.” The headmaster said in the school letter, “The time is near for you to make the important decision as to which Community College or Secondary School you would like your child to attend.” and he continued, “Enclosed with the letter you should find a copy of the booklet: ‘A Guide to Secondary Education 1987 / 88 in the Cambridge Area.’ I hope you will find time to read it carefully. Pages 8-11 are particularly important.” Further he went on, “Also enclosed is a Preference Form. Please read it with care and delay filling it in until after you have attended one or more of the Opening Evenings listed on page 20 of the booklet. In this way you will be making a better informed decision and you should find the completion of the important section 7 rather easier. Please do not hesitate to call on me if I can be of assistance. Please return the completed preference form in a sealed envelope between 26TH JANUARY and 6TH FEBRUARY.”

My family and I were going back to Japan at the end of July, '87. So my younger daughter did not attend any community college or secondary school in Cambridge area. However, as I took much interest in the transfer, I will show you the Preference Form and the essence, including the title and contents, and also 8-11 pages of the booklet about which the headmaster told us to be particularly important in the school letter.

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**A Guide to Secondary Education
1987/88
in the
CAMBRIDGE AREA
of the
Cambridgeshire Local Education Authority**

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Cambridge
CB3 0AP

CAMBRIDGESHIRE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

CHOICE OF SCHOOL

I General Information

Parents have the right to express a preference of school. Inevitably there are practical constraints on the degree of preference which can be met. It would clearly be wrong, for example, if the Committee allowed a school to become overcrowded. This is one of the reasons why the Education Act 1980 states that the exercise of parental choice must not "prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources". Moreover, it is recognised that most parents prefer their children to attend the local secondary school and the Authority makes every effort to ensure that this is possible.

To try to maintain a reasonable match between the places available in individual schools and the number of secondary aged children in a locality it has been necessary to establish normal catchment areas for each school. Thus in the rural areas (outside Cambridge City) a particular Village College serves the surrounding residential area (as shown on pages 4-6). Thus a child living in the area normally served by a particular Village College is regarded as having a right to a place at that Village College. Similarly any child living within the City of Cambridge is regarded as having a right to a place at one of the schools in the City which collectively serve the City as a whole.

Schools will be filled in the first instance by children living in the schools' normal area (determined by parents' normal address). Only if spare places exist after children from the normal area have been admitted will these be allocated to other pupils. Parents and Authorities alike must however face the difficulty which is bound to be generated as soon as more parents opt for places at a particular school, or schools, than there are places available. For this reason an Admissions Officer has been appointed (normally one of the Area Education Officers). It is the function of that officer to advise the Area Education Officer on the fairest way of allocating places.

Because the Cambridge City schools collectively serve the City as a whole, while each Village College serves its own area, the approaches to the problem of oversubscription are slightly different in the two situations.

If a particular Village College has a few places remaining after those children living in the area served by that College have been accommodated, then children living in areas served by other Colleges, or in the City, may be offered such places. If the demand for the remaining places exceeds the number of places available, a decision has to be made as to which children have the strongest claims.

Where a Cambridge City school is over-subscribed from City parents, the strongest claims will be determined according to the criteria listed below. Where, however, requests for places at a City school are from parents both from the City and from the Rural area, priority will be given to City children irrespective of whether a first, second or third preference is expressed.

- a) Verified medical need relating to the pupil (the requirements are strict and need certification by an appropriate doctor or psychologist). *Documents relating to medical factors must be submitted with the preference form.*
- b) Attendance of a brother or sister at the school at the time of admission. Children living closest to the school, having regard, in the case of equal merit, to the nearness of other appropriate schools.
- d) Desirability of maintaining personal relationships from primary to secondary school. It should be noted that attendance at a particular primary school is no guarantee of a place at a secondary school, it is merely one criteria used when filling available places.
- e) Family association.

None of these factors alone or in combination can be regarded as a

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"passport" to the school of the parents' choice; so much depends on the number of preferences for the particular school and the case in question. Thus, for example, it may be necessary to place c) higher if no other school is easily accessible. This criterion may become increasingly significant and may override first preferences.

Pupils outside the county may be admitted up to the admission level specified provided the places available at the time are not required by Cambridgeshire pupils. Such arrangements will be subject to the approval of the Senior Area Education Officer to whom requests for consideration should be sent. Similarly, Cambridge Area pupils may apply for places outside the Area. Parents should apply direct to the appropriate officer in the other Area or Authority with a copy to the Senior Area Education Officer in Cambridge.

Please note that if your request for a place in a school other than the school normally serving your area is agreed, the Authority will expect you to pay for any transport costs. (Full details of eligibility for free transport are on page 11.)

II Opportunities to Visit Schools Before Expressing Your Preference

The Heads of most schools and Colleges have organised Open Meetings to take place during the early part of the Spring Term so that parents of prospective pupils may have the opportunity to visit the school, meet the staff, and tour the premises. This will enable parents to gain information at first hand about as many schools as they wish. Dates for these Open Meetings are on page 20 of the booklet. A parent may however always make arrangements with a Headteacher to visit a school at a mutually convenient time.

III Procedure for Expressing Preference

Before making your choice please read carefully the section on transport which follows this section. The procedure for expressing your choice is slightly different according to where you live.

1. If you live in the Parish of Burwell you will receive with this booklet a preference form which you are asked to complete and return to your child's primary school Head by the specified date.

Information about alternative provision or education in Suffolk may be obtained from the Senior Area Education Officer, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds.

2. If you live in the rest of the rural area you will receive a letter from me which informs you that a place has been reserved for your child at the appropriate Village College. You will also receive a booklet and letter from the Head of the local secondary school informing you of the general admissions procedure adopted in anticipation of your child's attendance at that school.

If this is the school you wish your child to attend you should inform the Head of your child's present school.

If however, you wish to express preference for a place at a school other than the Village College serving your area of residence, you will need to obtain a preference form from the Head of your child's present school which must be returned to the school by the date indicated on the form.

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3. If you live within the City of Cambridge you will receive, either with this booklet or early in the Spring Term, a preference form which you are asked to complete and return to the Head of your child's present school by the date indicated on the form.

How to fill in the preference form:

1. Please answer all the questions.
2. Please express 3 preferences. If no second or third preference is stated it does nothing to enhance the first preference, it merely means that in the event of the first school being oversubscribed the Admissions Officer has to select a place at an appropriate school on behalf of the parents.
3. Please write on the form any information that you think will help the Admissions Officer make the correct decision. It is very important that all information (see page 8) in support of your preferences (i.e. medical factors etc.) is brought to the attention of the Officer at this time.

If between completing the form and the start of the Autumn term you no longer require the place you have requested at a Cambridge Area School, please inform the Area Education Office so that the vacancy may be offered to another pupil.

All parents who request as first preference a school other than the local Village College will be notified early in the Summer term of the name of the school at which a place is offered. The Admissions Officer will give individual attention to each request, but because of the size of the exercise I regret that it will be necessary for me to send you this information in a duplicated letter.

It should be stressed that the completion of a preference form does not guarantee your child a place at an alternative school but your request will be considered with all other preferences for the chosen school.

IV Procedure if Preference is not Met

After the initial allocation of places it will be necessary to establish waiting lists for any over-subscribed schools. Parents who wish their child's name to be included on the waiting list should advise the Admissions Officer in writing of this and enlarge upon any factors they may wish to support the case. A meeting with the Admissions Officer is advisable.

Only after such interviews have taken place will a priority order be established. The criteria for establishing such a priority order will be the same as those listed on page 8 (a - e).

In the event that it has not proved possible to allocate a place by the beginning of the Autumn Term, either because the strength of claim is not sufficiently great compared to other claims and/or vacancies have not occurred, parents will be asked to confirm whether they wish their child's name to remain on the waiting list after the beginning of term. Parents should note that it will be necessary from time to time for the Admissions Officer to adjust relative positions on the waiting list, i.e. when children move in and out of the area. It must further be stressed that the Admissions Officer cannot create additional places and can only advise on filling vacancies that occur subsequent to the original allocation.

V Appeals

Notwithstanding the waiting list procedure in Section IV, parents have the right to appeal against the decision. This should be done initially by a letter to the

Senior Area Education Officer whose address is given at the beginning of this booklet (or, in the case of a voluntary aided school, to the Chairman of Governors at the school). This letter should preferably be received within two weeks of the receipt of the notification of the disputed allocation/admission decision. It may be possible to resolve the matter by correspondence and/or interview with an officer of the Authority. Very often it is possible to come to a satisfactory arrangement either because the number of pupils entering the school of the parents' choice fluctuates or because an acceptable alternative school can be offered.

VI Procedure for Transferring Between Schools

Where parents consider there are strong and valid reasons for requesting a transfer to another school (except at the normal point of transfer between primary and secondary education), they should first discuss the matter with the Head of the child's present school. If the situation cannot be resolved satisfactorily it is open to the parent to write to the Area Education Officer outlining the reasons for the request. The Area Education Officer will determine the request on behalf of the Authority, taking also into account the views of the Head and Governors of the alternative school requested.

Parents have the right to appeal against any allocation or decision made by the Authority in respect of their child's attendance at a particular school.

VII Procedure for Admission to Schools of Children from Overseas

Each year a considerable number of overseas families become temporary residents in the City of Cambridge and the surrounding rural area. Where there are children of statutory school age, i.e. between the age of 5 and 16 years, some may be eligible for admission to local maintained schools. Admission is, however, dependent upon the condition under which a family has been granted leave to enter the United Kingdom. Any parents seeking their child's admission to a maintained school must, therefore, first obtain approval from the Area Education Office. Where permission is granted the child will be allocated a place at a school, the choice of which will depend upon availability of a place in the appropriate age group at that time.

ELIGIBILITY FOR FREE TRANSPORT

Generally parents are responsible for their children's journey to and from school. Under existing legislation pupils eligible to be provided with transport between home and school, free of charge, by the Education Authority are:

- a) Children under the age of 8 who live more than two miles from the nearest appropriate school;
- b) Children over the age of 8 who live more than three miles from the nearest appropriate school. The distance is measured door to door by the shortest available walking route.

Free transport may be provided by means of contract buses or, where a suitable public service exists, season tickets are issued. The means of transport from particular areas are set out in information issued by the schools concerned.

THIS FORM SHOULD BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED TO YOUR CHILD'S PRIMARY SCHOOL BETWEEN MONDAY 2nd FEBRUARY AND FRIDAY 6th FEBRUARY 1987



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
ADMISSIONS TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS 1987**

PREFERENCE FORM

This preference form is to be completed by parents of children of age of transfer to secondary education in 1987 i.e. those born 1st September, 1975 to 31st August, 1976, both dates inclusive, who live in the area served by secondary schools named on the back of this form, and who wish their child to transfer to a school maintained by the Education Authority.

Please fill in all sections below, but before filling in section 6 please read the explanatory notes overleaf.

1. Child's Name	Surname (in block capitals)		Christian or Fore names (in full)	Name used at home
2. Date of Birth	Day	Month	Year	For Office Use
3. Present School	MILTON ROAD JUNIOR SCHOOL CAMBRIDGE			
4. Home Address and initial of parent or guardian	Initials Mr./Mrs./Ms.	Address		
5. If you already have an older child attending secondary school in the area please complete this section				
Child's Name		Present School		

6. YOU ARE ASKED TO STATE YOUR PREFERENCE OF SCHOOLS BELOW. BEFORE DOING SO PLEASE READ THE EXPLANATORY NOTES OVERLEAF since they may have an influence on the preference you wish to state. Having read the explanatory notes, please list 3 or more secondary schools in order of preference in the spaces provided.*

- *First preference
- *Second preference
- *Third preference

Please indicate if you wish the Committee to regard any of these as equal preferences.

7. Please state in the space below the reasons for your choice.

Date Signature
of *Father, Mother or Guardian of child
*(Delete as appropriate)

Please note:

1. If you wish to list additional schools, or require more space to state the reasons for your choice please continue overleaf.
2. If you also intend to apply for a place for your child at an independent school there is no need to mention the fact on this form, however, if you accept a place at other than a Cambridgeshire Local Education Authority school please inform the Area Education Office.

SECTION 6 – EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. Before completing this section, you are strongly advised to read the booklet "A Guide to Secondary Education 1987/88".
2. You should also ensure that you have read the information concerning school transport arrangements. Since your choice of school may be influenced by transport arrangements, which would apply if you obtained a place at that school, it is important that you understand the implications of your choice.
3. As explained in the booklet the Committee cannot guarantee to meet parental preference for schools in all cases.

You are strongly advised to list 3 schools in order of preference. In determining the school place which can be allocated to your child, the Committee will give most emphasis to your first preference and more emphasis to your second than to your third, but will assume that you are prepared to accept a place at any of the schools listed. If it is not possible (and this may occur in exceptional circumstances) to offer your child a place at any of the schools you list, the Committee will make a provisional offer of an alternative school, but you may, if you wish, take the opportunity of discussing the position further with the senior members of staff in the Area Education Office.

4. It is important that this form should be returned to your child's primary school Head by **Friday 6th February 1987**. You will be informed during the early part of the summer term of the name of the school at which your child has been allocated a place.

SCHOOLS

Please refer to the booklet "A Guide to Secondary Education 1987/88" for information about the area which each school normally serves and the arrangements for education after the age of sixteen. Parents whose home address is outside the Collegiate Board area should be aware that the acceptance of your child at an 11-16 school within that area does not guarantee a subsequent place within a Collegiate Board Centre.

Bassingbourn Village College
 Bottisham Village College
 Chesterton Community College
 Coleridge Community College
 Comberton Village College
 Cottenham Village College
 City of Ely Community College
 Impington Village College
 Linton Village College

Manor Community College
 Melbourn Village College
 Netherhall School
 Parkside Community College
 St. Bede's R.C. Secondary School
 Sawston Village College
 Soham Village College
 Swavesey Village College
 Witchford Village College

 Continuation

2) The Final School Letters

MILTON ROAD JUNIOR SCHOOLMilton Road
Cambridge

4th June 1987

Dear Parents,

LUNCHTIME SUPERVISION

Many of you will be as relieved as I am that two more parents have joined our team of Lunchtime Supervisors and that it will therefore not be necessary to send children home during the lunch break.

There is still a vacancy, however, and unless that is filled in the near future the same problem will arise again.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARYJune

15-19 Cambridge and West Midlands week during which I shall be teaching.

Sat. 27 PTA Summer Fair

July

Thu 2 Townsend Cycle Rally. 5.30 pm at Grove School
 Mon 6 Governors' First Annual Report to Parents. 8.00 pm.
 Wed 8 Swimming Gala. 6.15 for 6.30 pm at Parkside Pool.
 Tue 14 Sports Day. 1.45 pm on the Gilbert Road Field.
 Wed 15 Performance of "The Park-keeper" (1st and 2nd year children) at 2.00 pm.
 "Mini-Industries" Project. 4th-year children will present their work. 7.00 pm.
 Fri 17 OPEN AFTERNOON. 2.30-3.30 pm. Please come and let your child guide you through his/her work and that of the class.
 Performance of "The Park-keeper" at 7.00 pm.
 Tue 21 Musical Evening. 7.00 pm.

Yours sincerely,

J. R. ELLIS

Headmaster.

Milton Road Junior School
Gilbert Road
Cambridge CB4 1UZ
13th July 1987

4th YEAR NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents,

With the final term rapidly coming to a close there are a number of items to which we would like to draw your attention:

WEDNESDAY 15th JULY

4th Year Open Evening & Exhibition - You are warmly invited to an exhibition and presentation of work.

7.00 - 7.30pm Work on display in the rooms & hall - class work, group work, Industry Topic displays and Mini Industry Enterprise Companies products (on view only);

7.30 - 8.15pm Pupils' presentation of the Field Studies Weeks in Cambridge and the Midlands, including slides and the video made during the FGL Tour.

***Please note that this evening's presentation replaces the Open Afternoon on Friday 19th for the 4th Year classes only.

THURSDAY 16th JULY

5.30 - 7.30pm 4th Year Leavers' Party - Your child is invited to a 4th Year party/disco in th School Hall. The cost for this will be 50p each and we would be grateful if you would return the attached permission slip. Children will need to be collected at the end of the Party.

FRIDAY 17th JULY - Mini Industry sale to the rest of the School during the morning.

From Mr Phipps: This will be my last day at School this term as I shall be going to Devon during the following week to complete a two year part-time course and examination in School Management Studies. I very much regret the need to be absent during the children's final week, but this has been unavoidable. Mr Adey will be taking P4 for the last week.

All 4th Year children will be leaving School on Friday 17th at 3.30 as usual.

We would like to thank you for your support and encouragement of the children during the whole year and hope that you all have a pleasant and happy holiday.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Russon

Ian Phipps

On 4th June, '87, we received a school letter relating the circumstances of "Lunchtime Supervision" at the school and telling us "Dates for Our Diary." I was terribly busy because I was leaving England at the end of June and going to Paris and New York, parting from my family and leaving my wife after adjustment of our life in Cambridge. But I keenly felt that school meals owe a great deal to the parents of the school children, and I wished that my wife could more or less help them if she could speak English fluently and catch their words. At the same time, hoping that my children would finish the academical school year to the last and also enjoying their school life and the final school events, should attend school till the close of a school term, even if I was not in England.

On 31st June, '87, I left England for Paris. After that, on 13th July, my wife received a school letter entitled "4th Year Newsletter" from the two class teachers, Mrs. Russon and Mr. Phipps. The letter says that the final school day will finish 17th July, although I understood it after coming back to Japan.

(Continued)