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Strong School Brand - Strong School Enrollments

On its own, oversubscription can be meaningless virility symbol but in truth it is also an indicator of a school's reputation in the local community and the kind of education that parents want for their children.

Falling birth rates and a post-Covid exodus of families from the capital have squeezed budgets in primaries as they struggle to fill reception classrooms.

Read on to learn how your school can be a winner both on curriculum and reputation.

Oversubscribed = Fully Funded

Schools know why it is important to be a school of choice; a school at 100% capacity receives full funding.

However, a school that is undersubscribed has the same building costs, supplier costs and resources costs.



Over 2/3 of primary schools are undersubscribed

So how can you make your school the number 1 choice for parents?

Take Fox Primary School in Kensington and Chelsea. Last year they saw 58 of the 175 parents who picked it as their preferred school offered a place. The school were over 300% oversubscribed. Why? We believe it is because Parents want well rounded education as well as academic opportunities and success. They want school that prepares their child for KS3 and beyond offering an enjoyable school experience as well as academic knowledge.

Spotlight on Fox Primary School

Fox have a full and holistic curriculum which includes - alongside English and Maths - Science, Humanities, Modern Foreign Languages, Computing, Music, Art, Design Technology, PE, RE and PSHE.

In addition to their curriculum they offer:

- ★ Singing assemblies which enrich education with focuses on WW2, Black History Month, different religious celebrations, Online Safety, Inspirational Figures, Kindness and Curiosity and much more.
- ★ A rich extra curricular offer like a lunch time and after school choir for KS1 & 2.
- ★ The Foxtopus cycle ride challenge to raise money for charity and the schools that are part of its federation.
- ★ Performance opportunities within music to perform with other schools.

Tip: whether you are fully funded or not, knowing your school budget and planning its use wisely is key. Use our Budgeting Guide for tips and tricks with setting realistic budgets and securing extra funding



Read our
Budgeting
Guide



First Choice = Best Funding



Here are our tips to becoming first choice for parents

Show

Use open days, summer fairs and performances to attract new families and siblings. One great way to boost open days is with a choir performance that showcases your rich extra curricular offer. Partner with local estate agents, arts programmes and leisure centres to help build word of mouth. Engage in charity events that involve you more with the local community.



Tell



Talk about your strengths and encourage parent engagement. Studies show that parent engagement is linked to higher the academic achievement.¹ A key way to engage parents is to market yourself well; a website doesn't have to be expensive, but it should reflect your school values and celebrate pupil achievement. Think about other opportunities to reach parents like through Facebook, Instagram and/or Twitter.

Help

Clarify the application process and advise parents. Be known as a school that is helpful, organised and communicates well with parents. Give parents tools to understand admission timelines, place allocation, catchments, choice prioritisation, appeals. Many parents that apply to your school will be unfamiliar with the process so it is important to guide them. In 2023, 92.5% of families received an offer from their first choice of primary school and 98.3% received an offer from one of their top three choices so it is really important to be one of those choices.



Analyse



Catchment areas can change from year to year, depending on how many children apply to the school. There are several factors that might cause changes to the catchment: 1. Lots of siblings in a particular year group, 2. Another school opening in the area, 3. Changes to the number of classes in existing schools. Use data from nearby schools and growth figures from sources like ONS to ensure you are targeting everyone in your area this year, not just your area from last year.



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