

Requests for 'out of catchment' school places reduces

More children will be attending schools near their homes from this year.

The number of requests for out-of-catchment primary school places in Edinburgh has fallen compared to last year, even though the number of children registering for Primary 1 places has gone up.

In total 807 requests were received by the City of Edinburgh Council this year compared to 1109 last year – a drop of 27 per cent.

The fall in placing requests follows a concerted campaign by the Council to encourage parents to learn more about their catchment school and the benefits of their child attending it.

The increased pressure of rising school rolls meant that 577 requests have been initially refused out of the 807 received. Last year 610 out of 1109 placing requests were refused.

The number of P1 registrations has increased from 4408 last year to 4538 – an increase of three per cent.

The Council has written to all parents who made placing requests outside their local school to inform them of their decision.

Earlier this year the Council told parents that many placing requests would not be met due to the pressure of higher school rolls. The primary school population has increased by three per cent this year and is expected to rise by a further 20 per cent by 2019.

Councillor Paul Godzik, Education Convener, said: "It is

encouraging that the number of requests has fallen because this shows that parents have increased confidence in sending their child to the local catchment school.

“Having met with many parents who failed with placing requests and then sent their children to their local school, I know there are a huge number of positive stories. From children feeling part of their local community or simply the health benefits of walking to school, the feedback has been that the local catchment school has provided very well for their child.

“I know that some parents will be disappointed, however we have sought to be as open as possible throughout this process. We warned parents they may not get the place they were hoping for, and for the first time we published a list of schools where out-of-catchment requests were unlikely to succeed.

“Those families who failed with requests will have their child registered with their local catchment school and will start next August alongside other local children.”

Councillor Godzik also said that because many primary schools were reaching capacity, appeals are unlikely to be successful.