

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE BY
DEPUTY I.J. GORST OF ST. CLEMENT**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 11th MARCH 2008

Question

- “(i) Can the Minister confirm the number of appeals made, both in writing and in person, against the current Nursery Education Placement Policy each year over the last three years, and can he state the grounds on which these appeals were made?
- (ii) Of the appeals made, how many have resulted in a child subsequently being found a place after initially have been unplaced and on what grounds were the appeals upheld?”

Answer

- (i) Over the last three years we have received four formal appeals against the non-allocation of a nursery place. Three of these appeals were made in 2007 and one in 2006.

One appeal was made on the basis of previously undisclosed health issues, two related to financial hardship, and in the remaining case it was claimed that the application had not been handled correctly by the school.

To place this in context, I should advise members that a total of 520 full-time nursery places will be available in September 2008, and approximately 700 applications have been received for these places. 540 of these applications will be granted, and the reason for the apparent disparity in figures is because approximately 40 places have been allocated on a part-time basis.

- (ii) Two of the appeals resulted in the allocation of nursery places, whilst the other two did not.

A range of criteria are taken into account when considering appeals, and these are set out in Section 2.3.3 of the Policy for Nursery Classes in Provided Primary Schools. These criteria include social/educational needs, children with siblings in the school, date of application etc.

The first successful appeal was upheld because the applicant brought forward evidence of previously undisclosed serious health issues, whilst in the second case evidence was provided of extreme financial hardship.