

Leeds Admissions Forum

Tuesday, 2nd February, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor P Gruen in the Chair

Councillor R Harker
Mrs S Knights – Primary School Parent
Ms P Hill – Leeds Primary Care Trust
Mrs S Duxbury – Prospect
Mr J Daulby – Community High School
Mr I Garforth – Foundation Schools
Mr P Forbes – David Young Community Academy
Mr J Fryett – Fair Access Project Director
Ms A Williamson – Choice Advice Service

In Attendance

Mrs V Buckland – Education Leeds
Mrs D Leonard – Legal Services
Mr J Grieve – Governance Services

27 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed everyone in attendance to this, the February meeting of the Leeds Admission Forum.

28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from: Mrs F Beevers, Mrs H Lewis and Mrs L Bryan

29 UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP - LEEDS ADMISSION FORUM

The Chair sought an update on the Membership of the Forum: appointments, resignations and outstanding vacancies.

In providing a response the Clerk to the Forum reported that two nominations had been received for the Community School (Primary) position and one for the Controlled School position.

There still remained a vacancy within the Local Community Representatives Group and this was being actively pursued.

All nominations will be forwarded onto the Director of Children's Services (Commissioning and Partnership) who had delegated authority to approve appointments to the Forum

RESOLVED – To note that all vacancies were being actively pursued

30 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th November 2009 be accepted as a true and correct record

31 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- (a) Matters Arising (Minute No. 21 refers) – An outstanding response awaited by Forum Member Paul Forbes from the Director of Integrated Children's Services following his enquiry about the status of a number of children that had come to his attention. Mr Forbes reported that a response had been received and a meeting had been set up.
- (b) Proposed Admission Number Changes as part of the Admission Arrangements for the September 2011 Round (Minute No. 22 refers) – The Chair sought an update and asked if the consultation process for the schools who would be physically expanding had ended?

In responding Mrs Buckland, Head of Service, Admissions and Transport said consultation was still ongoing with deadline for comments by 12th February 2010. A number of Governing Bodies/ Schools had responded, raising issues such as increased traffic generation and loss of pupils to neighbouring schools. All responses would be collated and incorporated within a report which would be submitted to the Executive Board in April 2010. It should be noted that this statutory consultation was separate from the annual consultation on admission arrangements for 2011.

32 CHALLENGING AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN'S SUB COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Challenging and Vulnerable Children's Sub Committee held on 12th January 2010 were circulated for Members consideration and approval.

Sue Knight, Chair of the Sub Committee said that due to the adverse weather conditions attendance at the meeting was low, with the meeting being inquorate.

Commenting on the minutes of the meeting Mr Daulby, referring to Minute No. 11 (Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting) said the process for appointing a Project Director for the East Area appeared to be very slow moving.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2010 be accepted as a true and correct record

33 RECORDING OF FAIR ACCESS STATISTICS

The Chief Executive Education Leeds submitted a report setting out details of the implementation of new processes for the recording of Fair Access data on the admission of children through the Fair Access Panels.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted

34 UPDATE ON THE ANNUAL CONSULTATION ON ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2011

The Chief Executive Education Leeds submitted a report which provided an update on the response, so far received, to the consultation on admission arrangements for September 2011.

Addressing the report Mrs Buckland said that 11 responses had been received to date, mainly positive and in agreement with the proposals. The closing date for the consultation is 5th February 2010. Of the responses received one expressed concerns about the in-year coordination scheme. In respect of the concerns raised about the migration of children from the Colton area to Primary Schools within the Garforth Trust, no responses had been received so far.

RESOLVED – That the update on the consultation process be noted.

35 INITIAL PREFERENCE SUMMARY FOR SEPTEMBER 2010

The Chief Executive Education Leeds submitted a report providing an update on the initial preferences and the impact on demand for school places for September 2010

Addressing the report Mrs Buckland said that although there would be a general demographic decline in young people entering secondary school over the next few years there were approximately the same numbers entering in September 2010 as there were in September 2009. Demand overall had therefore remained broadly similar.

The birth rate had been rising for the last couple of years and there was now a small, but increasing number of primary schools who would be unable to accommodate their nearest children. The number of primary schools oversubscribed on first preferences was increasing with 79 schools to date, that said, there are still some surplus places within the primary sector.

Main Issues

Primary Sector

There are slightly more schools this year where nearest children were unlikely to be offered places. However, the Admission Team were still receiving a number of changes including new preferences as well as information on children who have moved out of the area and no longer require places. At present there were 22 schools where it may be difficult to offer all the nearest children places. The situation was being monitored to ensure that children who would be unable to access a school within a reasonable distance were identified.

There were a small number of schools who were experiencing a very high sibling year which does affect the places available for other children. Parents who might otherwise expect to gain places at some schools may face disappointment, but in a number of cases this was a one year problem. 30 community or voluntary controlled schools had first preferences where 50% or more of their admission limit were

siblings, with 33% of preferences across the City being siblings. There continues to be around 1000 more places across the primary sector, spread throughout the City, than there are preferences. Although parental preferences are not met in all cases, there are reasonable alternatives available. There had been an increase of around 370 applications over the same time last year. It was anticipated that there would be a large number of applications which arrive after the offer day, as this typically occurs, and these would be managed accordingly. It is believed that the change in legislation to introduce a national closing date for applications would improve this position in the future if the government take the opportunity for national advertising, as they do with tax returns.

Secondary

Roundhay High School continues to be oversubscribed, although there were a number of the neighbouring schools who were experiencing a decline in preferences and there are sufficient places in the area. Continuing to build on last year's popularity John Smeaton was oversubscribed again on first preferences. There is a significant increase in preferences at Allerton High although there appears to be no issue with children who have the school as their nearest, the additional demand is coming from families further a field.

There are no obvious causes for concern in the secondary sector for this forthcoming September. Although there are changes to patterns of demand, and relative popularity with parents, the oversubscribed schools are under no greater pressure from nearest families and demand is largely from further a field. Some popular schools were less well subscribed this year and this was mostly reflective of local demographic changes, rather than any concerns parents are expressing about the schools.

In conclusion Mrs Buckland said the early indications with Reception preferences is that there were an increasing number of hotspots, however, there continues to be sufficient primary places available within the City. Issues may arise with late preferences after the offer day, and parents at that stage may find that the nearest school offered is some distance away. With secondary applications the hotspots were significantly reducing and whilst demand remains high for some schools the issue of accessing a nearest school was continuing to fall. There were fewer pressure points in terms of nearest children although it should be expected that some popular schools would continue to remain oversubscribed leading to unmet demand. This is a natural consequence of an equal preference system whereby parents are encouraged to be aspirational in expressing their preferences.

Oversubscribed Secondary schools for September 2010

School	Ad limit	1 st pref
Abbey Grange	205	246
Allerton High	180	266
Cardinal Heenan	180	226

Cockburn	210	225
Corpus Christi	184	211
DYCA	180	195
Garforth	300	341
Horsforth	225	266
John Smeaton	180	219
Morley	252	330
Prince Henrys	225	255
Pudsey Grangefield	195	319
Rodillian	210	251
Roundhay	250	399
St Mary Menston	180	196

In passing comment the Chair suggested that it would be an interesting exercise to ascertain the reasons for parent's preferencing a popular school.

In providing a response Officers confirmed that such information could be obtained and be the subject of a report to the Forum at a future date

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted
- (ii) That a report identifying the reasons why parents preference popular schools be brought back to the Forum at a later date

36 ADMISSION FORUM WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2010/11

Members received and considered the Forum's Work Programme for the period 2010/11

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note the scheduled Work Programme for 2010/11
- (ii) To update the Work Programme to reflect the decisions made at today's meeting

37 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Rosebank Primary School - The Chair reported that he had received a letter from the Headteacher of Rosebank Primary School drawing his attention to the following issues raised by the school:

- The lack of consultation to expand schools
- Possible school closures
- Lack of school places at local schools
- The cancellation of school appeals

In responding Mrs Buckland said that this was the first occasion she had been made aware of the school's concerns, had she been contacted previously she would have been able to provide a response.

The Chair said he would provide a copy of the letter to Mrs Buckland in order that a suitable response could be provided

38 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED – To note that future meetings of the Forum will be scheduled as follows:

April 2010 (Date to be finalised)

Tuesday 22nd June 2010

Tuesday 16th November 2010

Meetings to be held in the Civic Hall, Leeds commencing at 4.00pm