

Leeds Admissions Forum

Tuesday, 22nd June, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor P Gruen in the Chair

Mrs S Knights (Vice Chair) – Primary School Parent Governor
Councillor J Dowson
Mrs L Bryan – High School Parent Governor
Ms P Hill – Leeds Primary Care Trust
Mr R Hamilton – Black Governors Information Network
Mr R Raj – Muslim Community Representative
Mr M Woods – Aided School Representative
Mr R Madeley – Church Controlled Schools Representative
Mr I Garforth – Foundation School Representative
Mrs V Buckland – Education Leeds
Mrs S Duxbury – Education Leeds 14-19 team
Ms A Williamson – LCC Choice Advice Service
Mrs D Leonard – LCC Legal Services
Mrs H Gray – LCC Governance Services

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Mr R Hamilton nominated Councillor P Gruen to continue as Chair of the Forum and this was seconded by Mrs S Knights. No other nominations had been submitted.

Councillor Gruen nominated Mrs S Knights to continue as Vice Chair of the Forum and this was seconded by Mr R Madeley. No other nominations were submitted.

RESOLVED –

- a) That Councillor P Gruen be elected Chair of Leeds Admissions Forum for the 2010/2011 Municipal Year
- b) That Mrs S Knights be elected as Vice Chair of Leeds Admissions Forum for the 2010/2011 Municipal Year

2 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

Councillor Gruen welcomed all present to the meeting and thanked everyone for their support in his nomination as Chair. He extended a particular welcome to the following new members -

- Mr R Raj, Muslim Community Representative for Leeds Educational Trust;
- Councillor J Dowson as a new Lead Member with responsibilities for the Learning Portfolio; and
- Mr R Madeley, Church Controlled Schools Representative.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Daulby; Mr P Forbes, Mrs F Beevers and Mr J Fryett.

4 UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP - LEEDS ADMISSION FORUM

Having welcomed new members to the Forum, the Chair led discussion on whom to approach to fill the remaining local community representative vacancy.

It was also noted that Mr Fryett (Fair Access Project Director) had recently tendered his resignation as he would be moving out of the area. It was agreed a letter should be sent from the Chair on behalf of the Forum to Mr Fryett expressing their thanks and best wishes. There was discussion regarding filling the vacancy left by Mr Fryett.

RESOLVED – To write to the Youth Council to ascertain whether they would be willing to nominate a Local Community Representative as it was felt that the views of young people would benefit the Forum and to contact Ms A Moorhouse, Project Director LCC West Leeds Area Management to see whether she would be interested in joining the Forum in Mr Fryett's place.

5 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held 6th April 2010 be agreed as a correct record

6 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute 41 Membership Update – It was reported that Mr T Walsh, Operations Director at Prospects for Leeds who had been interested in becoming a replacement member for Mrs Duxbury, would not be invited due to the nature of his role at Prospects.

Minute 46 Provision of Girls-Only education – It was noted that former Councillor Harker had been due to take the comments of the Forum regarding their concerns over the phrasing of the Consultation Document to the relevant Executive Board meeting. The Chair confirmed his belief that revised wording had been tabled and requested a post-meeting note be sent to Forum members setting out the wording agreed at Executive Board

(Mr I Garforth withdrew from the meeting at this point)

Minute 48 City of Leeds – Mrs Knights reported she was aware that Mr G Mulholland MP (Leeds NE constituency) had tabled an Early Day Motion regarding City of Leeds School. Councillor Dowson reported that no information had been submitted to LCC

7 CHALLENGING AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN'S SUB COMMITTEE

Mrs P Hill outlined the key themes discussed at the Sub Committee meeting: Admission of Looked After Children – an annual report on trends had been requested by the Sub Committee

Children missing school Update – Mr Hamilton expressed concern over the phrase “cannot be located”. The Forum noted Leeds statistics regarding young people Not in Education or Employment (NEETS) and that the statistics included people of statutory school leaving age who could be accessing employment or training but were not doing so in Leeds, not just those of school age.

Councillor Dowson reported she had received a copy of the Scrutiny Board report “March Statement of Attendance” and it was agreed this should be copied to all Forum members and referred to the Challenging Children Sub Committee

Fair Access Panel Update – Mr Hamilton raised concern over the statement which suggested some pupils who were victims of bullying were moving schools through the managed move process. Forum noted Mr Hamilton’s comment that the bully should be dealt with appropriately rather than the victim move school. It was also noted that if the request to move school was being considered at Fair Access Panel, that request was most likely to have come from the victims’ family. The Forum requested this matter be discussed further at a future Sub Committee meeting.

Mrs Knights welcomed the discussions and indicated more Forum members were welcome to join the Challenging Children Sub Committee membership. Mr R Hamilton accepted a nomination to the Sub Committee.

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the minutes of the Challenging and Vulnerable Children Sub Committee held 25 May 2010
- b) To approve Mr R Hamilton as a new member of the Sub Committee
- c) To note the following matters would be considered by the Sub Committee in the future:
 - a. Annual report on Admission trends for looked after children
 - b. Victims of bullying and the Fair Access Panel
 - c. Scrutiny Board March Statement of Attendance

8 REPORT FROM THE CHALLENGING AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN'S SUB COMMITTEE ON FAIR ACCESS

This matter had been discussed under Minute 7 above

9 ADMISSION POLICIES IN LEEDS

Mrs V Buckland presented the report from Education Leeds providing the Forum with information on consultation undertaken within the voluntary aided schools; foundation schools and academies on their admissions policies prior to their determination on 15th April 2010.

Mrs Buckland reported the Forum Sub Committee established to support the consultation had proved to be very effective. She suggested that now this piece of work was complete the Forum could consider using the sub committee again to consider the emerging policies for the new Academies and Foundation Schools which would be established in time.

The Forum discussed the following issues

- Noted that academies utilised a flexible “memorandum of understanding” and it was important to ensure their admission policies were fair so as not to cause detriment to neighbouring schools
- Supported the proposal to establish a new sub committee ready for when the new Government releases details of its’ plans for education
- Noted the workload involved in assessing emerging admission policies for the Foundation Schools and how best to manage this through officers in the first instance, with the new sub committee then Forum dealing with those Policies which required further consideration.

Mrs Buckland reiterated the power of the Forum with regard to ensuring the new Schools did comply with their advice. The consultation period was reported as being December 2010 – February 2011 and the Chair sought volunteers and nominees to sit on the new Sub Committee

RESOLVED –

- a) To establish a new Admissions Policy Sub Committee to consider admission policies
- b) To agree the membership of the Admission Policy Sub Committee as Councillor Gruen; Mr P Forbes; Mrs F Beevers; Mr R Raj; Mr R Madeley and Ms A Williamson. Members of the Sub Committee were requested to pass their e-mail contact details to Mrs Leonard.
- c) To note the contents of the report and the discussions
- d) To note the excellent response from Voluntary Aided; Foundation and Academy governors and head teachers to meeting the requirements of the School Admissions Code

10 THE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY AND THE TRANSFER OF LEARNERS FROM YEAR 11 INTO SCHOOL SIXTH FORM

Mrs S Duxbury presented a report on a review of the existing arrangements for admission to school 6th Forms. Responsibility for 6th Form admissions had previously been devolved to school governing bodies which had led to the development of different local practices across the city. Processes had been put in place to ensure the Admissions Forum could readily monitor adherence to the School Admissions Code in terms of lawfulness and fairness

The report detailed the usefulness and take-up of Leeds Pathways – the on-line Common Application Process (CAP) – in Leeds and the role of the Connexions Service in providing advice and guidance to students and parents/carers.

Mrs Duxbury reported Pathways had proved a very useful tool for Connexions advisers as it enabled them to track the preferences and progress of young people moving onto post 16 education as well as providing fairness and transparency to the application process.

The Forum discussed the following:

Garforth - Councillor Dowson commented that having received figures for oversubscribed, Garforth Community College appeared to have 250 over, however only 1% of its pupils applied on line. Mrs Duxbury responded that Garforth used its own system, not the Pathways system.

Case Study – Mrs L Bryan expressed concern over the case study which revealed three applicants had been rejected on the grounds of poor behaviour/attendance despite meeting the 6th form entry requirements. Mrs Buckland responded that a Connexions Personal Adviser (PA) had challenged the decision of the school which had then made appropriate offers. She confirmed that PA's challenged and addressed any rejections as they became aware of them through the CAP system

Personal Advisers – The Forum queried whether there were sufficient PA officers, bearing in mind the PA at Garforth had to ask individual students in order to monitor their applications and the number of parents/carers relying on PA's for guidance.

Access – Mr Razak expressed concern over the 80% take-up target as he believed not all elements of the community would have internet access. Mrs Buckland clarified that each Year 11 student was issued with a personal log-in which they could use from a school computer.

It was noted that the system would be improved in the next few months to include a tag to identify looked after children

The Forum indicated they wished to receive an annual report on admissions to 6th form using the CAP system, as well as a report back on the number of rejections and follow-up cases this year

RESOLVED –

- A) To note the benefits of a transparent admissions process to support the monitoring of fairness and equity of progression into Leeds 6th forms
- B) To note the continuing promotion of the Leeds Pathways and the roll-out of the Common Application Process across Leeds schools and Academies
- C) To receive an annual report on the transfer of learners for year 11 to school sixth forms
- D) To receive a report back on the number of rejections and subsequent follow-up cases relating to September 2010 6th form admissions

11 MIGRATION OF CHILDREN FROM THE COLTON AREA TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITHIN THE GARFORTH TRUST

This item appeared on the agenda at the request of the Forum.

Mrs Buckland stated that as Education Leeds did not deal with the Garforth Schools, she could not make comment. No one was available from the Garforth Schools Trust at the meeting. Both Mrs L Bryan and Councillor J Dowson commented that children migrating to Garforth schools had caused a negative impact on two schools they were aware of (Colton Primary and Sherburn in Elmet High respectively).

Members indicated their wish to revisit the matter in the future and to refer it the new Admission Policy Sub Committee for discussion

RESOLVED - To note the comments and to note the intention to raise this as a matter for the new Admission Policy Sub Committee to consider in the future

12 CUSTOMER SERVICES SATISFACTION WITH THE ADMISSION SERVICE

The Chief Executive, Education Leeds, submitted a report on the feedback received from parents to the Admissions guidance and information provided to them.

The report set out the targets set by the DCSF for encouraging parents to make admission application online. 44% of Leeds' parents applied on line in 2010. The target for 2011 was 80%. The report outlined the types of publications despatched to parents and the feedback received.

Mrs Buckland highlighted that 91% of parents who responded to the consultation stated the admissions summary document in particular was excellent and/or useful and that overall parents were known to be happy with the guidance and information issued by the local authority.

RESOLVED – To note the positive feedback received from parents on the information and guidance provided and to express the thanks of the Forum to the Admissions Team for their work.

13 REPORT TO THE OFFICE OF THE SCHOOLS ADJUDICATOR

The Chief Executive, Education Leeds, submitted a report setting out the content of the report to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator. A copy of the report to be submitted to the Adjudicator was included as Appendix A with supporting data at Appendix B.

Mrs V Buckland stated that all parties had complied with all of the legal requirements, guidance and policies covering all aspects of education from admission policies & appeals; to Fair Access Protocols & school meals and sought further comments on the effectiveness of local arrangements. Such comments could be submitted separately to the Adjudicator by the Forum.

Mrs Buckland reported that a number of fraudulently acquired school places had been identified and offers removed during March/April 2010, however she noted that a small number of these had subsequently won the places at their

appeals. She further reported that advice to Appeals Panels would be updated.

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the positive way in which the Local Authority; Diocese; Foundation and Academy schools have worked together to ensure full compliance with the School Admissions Code
- b) To determine an additional report to the Adjudicator from the Forum was not necessary

14 ADMISSION FORUM WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

Members received and considered the Forum's Work Programme for 2010/11 and it was noted this would be amended to include reference to the new Admissions Policy Sub Committee. The Forum discussed the following:

November 2010 - it was agreed Demographic information & future projections report should also present solutions.

Free Schools - Councillor Dowson stated she had heard reports that 3 expressions of interest were likely in Leeds. It was noted the Local Authority was not to be involved in the Free School process. Mrs Buckland discussed the support the local authority could give to parents interested in creating a Free School with Mr Hamilton. It was agreed the Forum should receive regular update reports until Central Government had released the final detail of the Free School process.

February 2011 – it was agreed the item on migration of children from the Colton area should be referred to the February 2011 agenda as it had not been fully addressed at this meeting

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

15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other items of business were raised.

16 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED – To note the date of the next meeting as Tuesday 16th November 2010 at 4.00 pm, in the Civic Hall, Leeds