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Ref

REPORT TO LEEDS ADMISSION FORUM

Date 22 June 2010
Venue: Civic Hall
Time: 4.00pm

Subject: Admission Policies in Leeds

1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 This report informs the Admission Forum of the consultation of the voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies on their admission policies determined on 15 April 2010.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 After previous difficulties with other admission authorities consulting appropriately on their admission policies Admission Forum established a sub committee to support the consultation. Having been very effective at encouraging admission authorities in Leeds to consult in a timely manner the sub committee was disbanded last year.

2.2 Governing bodies have provided their Admission Policies to the local authority when required and this report is to advise Admission Forum of the outcomes.

3. MAIN ISSUES

3.1 All the policies and supplementary information forms have been analysed by Education Leeds and Legal Services to ensure that they are fair and comply with the School Admission Code which came into force on 10 February 2009. We have not identified any admission policy in Leeds that we believe should be referred to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator. A number of late amendments have had to be made to all admission policies to take account of an amendment to the Schools Admission Code this year. This requires all admission policies to make it clear that a child must be admitted, if the parents wish it, in the September after they have turned four, can defer entry until the term after their fifth birthday, and may enter Reception part time.

3.2 All the admissions policies give looked after children the highest priority in their oversubscription criteria. The preference form and supplementary information forms ask only for the information required to operate the admission policy.

3.3 The local authority began their consultation on 1 December for eight weeks and a public notice was published as required. All consultation responses were summarised and provided for the Executive Board of the Council at their April meeting when the local authority admission policy was determined. All the determined admission policies

and supplementary information forms were published on the Education Leeds website on 15 April in accordance with the School Admissions Regulations 2008. A further public notice was published advising parents of their right to refer objections to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

- 3.4 There have been two new Academies established since the previous consultation period, and a number of schools have acquired, or are in the process of acquiring foundation status. All schools that have changed their status have adopted Leeds City Council's admission policy, and all non-faith schools and academies support the 'nearest' criteria as Admission Forum requested them to.
- 3.5 The new central government are progressing an Academies Bill through Parliament which may result in significantly more schools acquiring Academy status by September. The stated intention is that all new academies will be required to have an inclusive admission policy that adheres to the Schools Admission Code.
- 3.6 There is an expectation that parents, charities, cooperatives and mutuals may increasingly come forward to open 'free schools' where they are dissatisfied with the choice of schools in their area. Again they will be required to have an admission policy that complies with the Schools Admission Code.

4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 Admissions Forum has a key strategic role to play in ensuring the fairness of admissions arrangements in the City. As more schools become independent of the Local Authority it will become increasingly important that Admission Forum consider how well the admission arrangements of these new institutions serve the children and parents of Leeds. Admission Forum is recommended to consider how best they wish to consider all admission policies during the consultation stage.
- 4.2 Admission Forum is asked to note the excellent response from VA, foundation and academy governors and headteachers in meeting the requirements of the School Admissions Code.