

Fairness of Admission Policies Sub Committee

Thursday, 16th December, 2010

PRESENT: Mr P Forbes in the Chair

Councillors P Gruen LCC/Admissions Forum Chair

Mrs F Beevers Bradford and Ripon and Leeds
Dioceses (C of E)

Mr R Madeley Voluntary Controlled C of E
Schools

Ms A Williamson Choice Adviser

In Attendance

Mrs V Buckland, Head of Service, Admissions & Transport, Education Leeds

Mrs B Comiskey, Admissions Manager, Education Leeds

Mr S Robinson, Governance Services

1 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the inaugural meeting of the Fairness of Admission Policies Sub Committee held in the Civic Hall, Leeds.

2 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Mr R Raj.

3 Declaration of Interests

The following personal declarations were declared at the meeting:-

- Mr P Forbes in his capacity as Chair of the Garforth Trust (Agenda Item 4) (Minute 5 refers) and also as a Governor on the David Young Community Academy (Agenda Item 5) (Minute 6 refers)
- Councillor P Gruen in his capacity as Vice Chair of the School Governors on the David Young Community Academy (Agenda Item 5) (Minute 6 refers)

4 Terms of Reference and Procedure

A copy of the terms of reference and procedure appertaining to the Fairness of Admission Policies Sub Committee was submitted for the information of the meeting.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the document be noted.

5 Fairness of the Admission Policies of the Voluntary Aided, Foundation Schools and Academies

The Chief Executive Education Leeds submitted a report on the fairness of all school and academy admission policies for the information/comment of the meeting.

The Admissions Manager presented the report and together with the Head of Service responded to questions raised by the Sub Committee.

In summary, specific reference was made to the following issues:-

- the fact that Garforth Academy's admission policy had a significant impact on primary schools within the area and whether or not this system was fair
- reference to a pending report on Primary Places which was due to be presented to the Executive Board which had significant issues in this area
- the need for the Admissions Forum to be directly involved in the arrangements in overseeing the principles behind the fairness of the admission policies of the voluntary aided, foundation Schools and Academies
- the important role of the local authority around consultation taking into account the current budget pressures
- clarification of the status of the Admissions Forum within the White Paper and the timescales
- the need for the Admissions Forum to be open minded on the future consultation proposals with a view to be expressed publicly via Executive Board
- clarification of the parish boundaries identified in section 3.2 of the report
- the need for a Special Admissions Forum to be convened in February 2011 to consider the outcome of the consultation process

RESOLVED-

- a) That the contents of the report be received and noted.
- b) That the above comments be referred to the Admissions Forum as part of the ongoing consultation.

6 Free Schools

A copy of a briefing note on the process for establishing a Free school was submitted for the information/comment of the meeting.

In summary, specific reference was made to the following issues-

- clarification of whether or not the local authority had any formal process around this issue
- clarification as to whether the needs of the school were being met with specific reference to cross phases
- clarification of the jurisdiction of the Admissions Forum around the setting up of Free Schools and the need for advice on accommodation and suitability proposals to be available in the interests of fairness

- the concerns expressed about qualified teacher status being exempt for Free Schools when employing qualified staff and the need to keep a watching brief on this issue

RESOLVED- That the briefing note on the process for establishing of a Free School be received and noted.

7 Annual Consultation on Admission Arrangements for September 2010

A copy of a letter addressed to all Headteachers and Chair of Governors in Leeds; Neighbouring Local Authorities; Diocesan Boards and trade unions from the Admissions Team, Education Leeds dated 1st December 2010 on the annual consultation on Admission Arrangements for September 2012 was submitted for the information/comment of the meeting.

The Admissions Manager presented the item and together with the Head of Service responded to questions raised by the Sub Committee.

In summary, specific reference was made to the following issues:-

- the fairness aspect around in year waiting lists; whether or not schools would have access to their in year waiting lists; and the need for the Admissions Forum to consider their view on this issue
- clarification of the consultation process and timescales
(The Head of Service informed the meeting that the deadline had now been extended until 10th February 2011 following which a report would be prepared for the Admissions Forum and Executive Board)
- the need for the consultation letter to be placed on all Governing Body agendas with a view to encouraging a wider response
(The Admissions Manager agreed to implement this proposal)
- the need for the Admissions Forum to recognise the difficult and challenging process in relation to implementing these proposals
- concerns expressed about the fairness around sibling priority
- the need to recognise that attendance in inner city schools was vitally important
- the positive benefits for reference of the consultation process to be included in schools newsletters at the earliest opportunity
(The Admissions Manager agreed to implement this proposal)

RESOLVED-

- a) That the contents of the document be received and noted.
- b) That this Sub Committee recognises the clear separation issues that currently exist between Secondary and Primary schools on admission arrangements and requests the Admission Forum to consider a fairer and more consistent approach towards in year waiting lists in early 2011.

(Councillor P Gruen left the meeting at 12 noon during discussions of the above item)

8 Any Other Business

No issues were raised under this item.

9 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED - That the next meeting of the Sub Committee be arranged in January 2011 on a date and time to be agreed.

(The meeting concluded at 12.10pm)