

**LEEDS ADMISSION FORUM**

**23<sup>RD</sup> NOVEMBER 2006**

**PRESENT:-** Councillor Gruen in the Chair  
Councillors Coulson

Mrs. P Hill – Community Health Representative  
Mr R Finnigan - RC Diocese  
Mr. B. Stott - High School Representative  
Mr J Shipley – Community School Representative  
Mrs D Wood – Controlled School Representative  
Mr P Forbes – David Young Community Academy  
Mr T Griffin – Social Services Representative

**IN ATTENDANCE** Mr K Burton – Chief Learning Officer (Commissioning)  
Mrs R Vahey – Deputy Chief Executive (Education Leeds)  
Mr G Turnbull – Education Leeds  
Mrs. A Jahdi – Education Leeds  
Mrs. V. Buckland – Education Leeds  
Mrs. D. Leonard – Legal Services  
Mr J Grieve – Governance Services Unit

**25 Chair's Opening Remarks**

The Chair welcomed Deborah Wood, Headteacher of Middleton St Mary's C of E Primary School to her first meeting of the Leeds Admissions Forum. Mrs Wood represents the Controlled Schools category.

The Chair also welcomed representatives from Harehills and Bankside Primary who were in attendance to participate in the debate concerning the potential increase in the admission numbers for their schools

**26 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Harker  
Mrs Beevers, Mrs Knights, Mrs West and Mr Woods

**27 Appointment to the Forum**

**RESOLVED** – To note the appointment onto the Forum, under the officer delegation scheme, of Mrs Deborah Wood, Head teacher at Middleton St Mary's C of E Primary School representing the Controlled Schools

**28 Minutes of the Previous Meetings**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2006 were approved as a true and correct record.

**29 Matters Arising**

There were no issues raised under this item

**30 Potential Increase in Primary Provision at Harehills and Bankside Schools**

With reference to Minute No 18 of the previous meeting when Members requested a further report be presented to Members explaining how the current position had been reached, exploring the alternatives including the use of neighbouring schools and addressing the short/long term solutions.

The Chief Executive Education Leeds submitted a report offering justification to the increase in provision in the area and the need to increase the size of the two schools. The report explained that an increase in the admission limit at both schools would be a temporary measure until there was a greater degree of certainty about the plans to provide additional permanent accommodation on the two sites.

Officers reported that due to the longer term uncertainty in the area, the situation was continually being monitored and the data used for projection purposes was updated on a regular basis. Admissions into Reception over the next four years were projected to be at the level of, or higher than current admission limits. Therefore to avoid increased problems in the future, additional accommodation in the area was needed.

This is a unique set of circumstances said Mr Turnbull and should not be seen as setting a precedent. There are surplus places in other areas of the City, this is a demographic problem in Harehills and the proposed increased admission limit reflects the change to meet demand

At this point the Chair invited representation from the Harehills/ Bankside delegation.

Points were raised regarding the existing operational size of the school (3 form entry), the small sized site, the poor design of the existing building and the extent of temporary accommodation on the site. In terms of academic achievement there were no concerns, the standards were very good.

It was the opinion of the delegation that a new school was required.

The difficulty that local parent had in getting their children into their local school was also stressed.

In providing a response Mr Turnbull said that there were no suitable sites within the area where another school could be built.

In passing comment the Chair said he sympathised with the parents and the Head teachers but recognised that the only place where additional accommodation could be located was on the existing site. Assuming approval was given to increase the size of the two schools, said the Chair, how long it would be before demand for places again exceeded supply .

In response Mr Turnbull said the proposals address the current situation but it was difficult to predict birth rate and inward migration.

In offering comment the Chief Learning Officer said that Education Leeds, on behalf of the admissions authority tries to match supply and demand, recent OfSTED reports indicate Education Leeds do this well.

The provision of a new school requires a statutory proposal through the School Organisation Committee, said the Chair, but the issue of demographics is one which could be considered at the next meeting of the SOC

**RESOLVED –**

- (i) To note the report and the temporary increase in the admission numbers for September 2007 and 2008 from 60 to 90 at Harehills Primary School
- (ii) To note the report and the temporary increase in the admission numbers for September 2007 and 2008 from 70 to 90 at Bankside Primary School.
- (iii) That the issue of demographics be raised at the next meeting of the Schools Organisation Committee

**31 Nursery Admissions At Harehills and Bankside Primary Schools**

With reference to Minute No 23 of the previous meeting when Members requested information on the Nursery Admissions at Harehills and Bankside Primary Schools. The Chief Learning Officer (Commissioning) submitted a report providing information on the up take of places at Harehills and Bankside Primary Schools

**RESOLVED –** That the contents of the report be noted

**32 Attendance and Exclusions Annual Report 2005/2006**

The Chief Executive Education Leeds submitted a report providing information on attendance and exclusions intended to supply a summary of authorised absences, permanent and fixed term exclusions

Addressing the report Carol Jordan said that permanent exclusions had continued to fall by a further 29% bringing the total reduction over the last two years to 49% a total of 81 pupils. The measures to avoid permanent exclusion were explained and the work of the Pupil Planning Team

In offering comment Bob Stott reported that the North East and the North area wedge Head teachers do meet on a monthly basis which has proved very useful in getting children back into schools

Mr Griffin, making reference to page 61 of the report said it was important that officers from various departments/ agencies act together to get the best solution for the child

In providing a response Carol Jordan said that further work on Corporate Parenting was required and officers were currently in the process of drawing up an action plan

(A number of Members indicated that they had found it difficult to read some of the pages of the report because they had not been reproduced satisfactorily – The Chair asked if the report could be re-circulated electronically)

**RESOLVED –**

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted and welcomed
- (ii) That the report be re-circulated to Members via the email system

**33 Briefing Paper on Children in Transfer Taking Longer Than Four Weeks**

The Chief Executive Education Leeds submitted a report providing an explanation as to why children in transfer (out of education provision) are taking longer than the recommended 20 day period.

Carol Jordan said that any one time approximately 70 to 80 children are in the transfer process. Difficulties arise when children seek to transfers from other local authorities and no paperwork is provided, a multi agency steering group does help in keeping a track on the children.

Mr Forbes asked if funding through Connexions had been sought

In responding Carol Jordan said Connexions funding had been provided but Connexions had provided assistance through personnel

**RESOLVED –** That the contents of the report be noted

**34 Summary of Information Presented At Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) 12<sup>th</sup> October 2006**

The Chief Executive Education Leeds submitted a report providing a summary of the information presented at Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2006 which highlighted the recent work undertaken by the Leeds Admission Forum

**RESOLVED –** That the contents of the report be noted

**35 New Draft Code of Practice on Schools Admissions**

The Chief Executive Education Leeds submitted a report offering comment on the New Draft Code of Practice on School Admissions currently out for Consultation

Speaking on the report the Chief Learning Officer (Commissioning) offered the following observations:

1. Clearer wording and clarifications which would make the work of the Admissions Forum easier in judging fairness, equity and choice of admissions policies.

In the following areas:-

Completion of application forms  
Photographs with forms

The term "must not be required" is used. It would be more straightforward if this was changed to "must not be requested".

With regard to the use of **supplementary forms** instead of listing information that cannot be sought on a supplementary form it would be more straight forward simply to prohibit the use of supplementary forms and to have a section in the common application form for use in the case of expressing an expression of preference for a faith school (which makes clear this section should only be completed in those circumstances).

2. Improving equity

**Banding:** It's likely that in the future schools will more and more work in collaboration. Banding is a valuable means of achieving a balanced intake across a group of schools to which families have ready access.

To be fully effective however, the arrangements need to be consistent across all those schools. It would be preferable if the code made clear that where banding is proposed it should be in the context of a secure local agreement with the power to refer the matter to the adjudicator where this is not successful.

### **Hard to place children**

The requirement on all admission authorities, Governing Bodies and Admission Forums to agree protocols for and participate in arrangements for the admission of children who are hard to place should be welcomed. The inclusion of a sentence "this includes admitting children to schools that are already full" as is the case with looked after children would be useful.

- 3 Areas requiring strengthening and further guidance

**Power of Admission Forums** - annual report - A strengthening of the guidance so that there is a duty on Admissions Forums to produce an annual report and a duty for Local Authorities to consider that report and for it to be sent to governing bodies is supported. In this way this Admission Forum could be certain that each year the key aspects on which it has chosen to make observations or comments are brought to the attention of all Admission Authorities.

**Sibling criteria** - this is used widely but we are wary of a challenge that using a sibling priority clashes with the wider requirement of the code that all Admission policies "are procedurally fair and are also equitable for all groups of children". What

is the position if an only child claims that a sibling policy discriminates against those without siblings.

**Attendance at nursery or co-located Children's Centres** - the code would be stronger if, instead of referring to attendance at a nursery or co- located Children's Centre not guaranteeing a place at the associated primary school it read "attendance at the nursery of co-located children's centre does not confer any priority for admission to the associated primary school".

4. Membership – Within the Code all schools become school members, which is a new category of membership. However, there appears to be no guidance on voting rights.

The draft Code states that local authorities must invite a representative from the services to join the Forum. This is a mandatory requirement but as Leeds and many areas of the country do not have any services bases in their area the Forum would query why this is a mandatory requirement

In the discussion that followed Members were supportive of the observations made by the Chief Learning Officer (Commissioning)

**RESOLVED –**

- (i) That the observations made by Chief Learning Officer (Commissioning) be accepted as the Forum's formal response to the consultation exercise and the DfES be informed accordingly
- (ii) That further clarification on the use of banding is required and that a report be brought back to the Forum in due course

**36 Any Other Business**

- (i) Colton Primary School PTA – The Chair reported the receipt of a letter from Colton Primary School PTA (copy circulated to Members) requesting that the Leeds Admissions Forum carry's out an investigation into the difficulties that occur annually when children from Colton Primary School apply for places at Garforth Community College and Temple Moor High Schools.

**RESOLVED** - That officers from Education Leeds be instructed to investigate the PTA's concerns and prepare a report for submission to the next meeting of the Forum

- (ii) Challenging and Vulnerable Children's Sub Committee – The Minutes of the Challenging and Vulnerable Children's Sub Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2006 were circulated for Member consideration

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes be received and noted

**37 Date and Time of Next Two Meetings**

**RESOLVED** – That future meetings of the Leeds Admissions Forum be scheduled as follows:

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2007 at 4.00pm

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2007 at 4.00pm

All meetings to be held in the Civic Hall, Leeds