

Education Leeds



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**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS
REPORT TO SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)
DATE: 12th October 2006**

SUBJECT: The work of Leeds Admission Forum

Electoral Wards Affected:

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic Minorities

Women

Disabled People

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

**Please indicate that the following have
been addressed within the report:**

Resource Implications:

Finance

Personnel

Accommodation/Buildings

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Policy Implications:

<input type="checkbox"/>

PURPOSE

- To inform Scrutiny Board about the work of Leeds Admissions Forum during the academic year 05/06.

BACKGROUND

- Admissions Forum meet on a termly basis to review Admissions issues in the city. Regular reports are provided to inform Admissions Forum on a range of matters pertinent to their remit. The Forum provide useful support and advice to Education Leeds on potential changes to policy, the effect of re-organisation proposals on admissions, and work with the Voluntary Aided schools.

At the meeting of Scrutiny Board in June 2006 the members requested that a brief report be brought to the next meeting as a starting point for discussion around Admission Forum's views on the current admission and appeal arrangements.

THE REPORT

- Admissions Forum meet termly to discuss issues surrounding admissions as well as regular meetings by the Challenging Children's sub committee who discuss in more detail the progress Education Leeds is making with their Hard to Place protocols. The Forum has recently formed a further sub committee to look at Aided school policies and consider how well the schools represent their local communities.

The Admissions Forum have received a significant number of reports through this latest academic year and put forward their views on a range of issues. Each year the Admissions Forum receive a report on the success of the annual cycle round for entry into Reception and High school. This report outlines the number of successful first preferences, those who obtained one of their preferences and the number of appeals. With this information in mind Forum are then asked to put forward their views on the consultation on the admission arrangements for the forthcoming round, including a report on any proposed changes in admission numbers and changes to policies.

Last year this included the reviewing of the local interpretation of the Greenwich judgement which led to a change in the Leeds Local Authority policy, and the rewording of a particularly ambiguous area around priorities. Education Leeds did propose an alteration to the sibling rule with respect to sixth formers however Admissions Forum requested that this matter be further investigated and a report will be due to go before the next Admissions Forum meeting for their further consideration. These two proposals were both before the Admission Forum in an effort to maximise the ability of parents to obtain their local school of choice.

As part of the work Admissions Forum undertakes, consideration is given to the policies of Aided, including a monitoring of Aided schools who operate first preference first policies to ensure parents are not significantly disadvantaged by the process. Forum also consider other admission policies which led to their support for Education Leeds objection to the David Young Community Academy's change to their admission policy. The views of the Admission Forum were taken forward as part of the objection, reflecting their strong views on the matter.

Admissions Forum have received a report on the localised hotspot in East Leeds last year giving a demographic picture of expected future demand in the area. More recently Forum considered a report on the pressures currently being experienced in south Leeds following recent reviews of provision. With Forum's agreement admission numbers were temporarily raised at two local schools to ease the problem.

Education Leeds have sought to improve the appeals process to provide a faster turn around time for parents. The proposals for alterations to the way in which appeals are scheduled and a report on the possible payment of appeal panels have been brought to the Forum for consideration. These have led to changes being introduced and children receiving the outcome of their appeals in a shorter time. Further reports will be brought to Admissions Forum in the near future to seek their views on other improvements.

Admission Forum have a sub committee which looks in more detail at the progress being made in Leeds on the Hard to Place protocols. This has ensured that there has been oversight of the process and challenge with regard to the progress being made. As these protocols have advanced over recent months the sub committee has requested that the information it receives moves to a slightly different focus in terms of detail to ensure that they continue to appropriately monitor this key area of work.

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The Forum has formed a second sub committee to consider the policies submitted each year by the Aided schools for consultation. All Admission authorities must consult annually on their policies and the new draft Code of Practice for Admissions will require Admissions Forum to have a clear perspective on these policies. This Code of Practice for Admissions places a greater emphasis on the role of Admissions Forum and provides them with additional powers. The local forum in Leeds is already moving ahead with committees such as this one in preparation for their increased role.

RECOMMENDATION

- 4.** That Scrutiny Board note the positive work carried out by the Admission Forum in Leeds.