



School Admissions Forum

Time and Date

1.30 pm on Friday, 29th January, 2016

Place

Diamond Room 1 - Council House

1. **Introduction and Apologies**
2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2015** (Pages 3 - 6)
3. **Matters Arising**
Free school meals
4. **Behaviour Pathways**
Report from Jeannette Essex
5. **Online Service Development** (Pages 7 - 8)
Report from Sue Heawood
6. **2017 Admission Consultation** (Pages 9 - 10)
Report from Sue Heawood
7. **Changes for Community School Admissions Policies**
Report from Sue Heawood
8. **Any Other Business**
9. **Date of Next Meeting**
The next meeting will be held on Friday 4 November 2016

Chris West, Executive Director, Resources, Council House Coventry

Tuesday, 19 January 2016

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Gurdip Paddan Tel: 024 7683 3075 email: gurdip.paddan@coventry.gov.uk

Membership: Councillors J Blundell and D Kershaw

Please note: a hearing loop is available in the committee rooms

If you require a British Sign Language interpreter for this meeting
OR if you would like this information in another format or
language please contact us.

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Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of School Admissions Forum held at 1.30 pm on Friday, 6
November 2015

Present:

Members: Councillor D Kershaw (Chair)

Other Members: S Bagri
H Quinn
I Rose
R Tonks
R Williamson

Employees (by
Directorate):

People: S Cassidy, S Heawood
Resources: G Paddan
Apologies: Councillor J Blundell
P Burns
Reverend T Colling
N Wicks

The Chair, Councillor Kershaw welcomed everyone to the meeting and Members introduced themselves.

Public Business

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2015 were agreed as a true record.

2. Matters Arising

- a) Minute 12 - It was reported that Eden Girls School had withdrawn their consultation for 2016 and are now consulting for their 2017 policy instead.
- b) Templars School request to increase their admissions number was agreed by the Schools Adjudicator. The Chair expressed concern that the views of the Forum had not been listened to.
- c) Minute 15 - A meeting was being held next week with Secondary School Heads on strategy and setting in place the processes and protocols for delivering expansion of places across the City.
- d) Minute 17 – Free school meal application figures had improved slightly but a programme had been put in place to integrate the work into Revenues and Benefits. The transition work was being completed between software systems and should be in place by the end of the calendar year to help to

improve take up and entitlement to pupil premium funding in time for the January 2016 census.

- e) Finham Park 2 – The site for the school had been identified as the old land registry building on Torrington Avenue and would be opening September 2016.

3. **Admissions for September 2015**

The Secondary School allocation figures were considered. For its first year of opening applications were made separately for Finham Park 2 which meant that that some families had applied for this school and had also applied for other schools in the City. Therefore there were a range of changes for some students following the double offers in March as families chose which school to accept. This had a particular impact on schools in the south west of the City.

Also Coundon Court increased their admission number by 15 and this was not taken into account until after initial offers were made. Other schools admitted pupils over their admission number due to the decision of appeal panels.

It was noted that WMG Academy admits pupils into Year 10 (not Year 7) and the figure on the offer date in March was 49 pupils but had significantly increased to 96. A general discussion ensued on the number of students that delay their decision on moving to WMG and the impact on other schools. It was suggested that the Chair bring this issue to the attention of Kirston Nelson, Director of Education.

For primary admissions into reception maps were circulated which highlighted the spaces available. Compared to last year there were a wider set of schools with spaces available across the City. This had eased pressure with 90% of pupils securing their first choice this year. It was noted that 60 spaces were available at Sidney Stringer Primary which had also opened this year and made offers outside the co-ordinated arrangements as Finham Park 2. Again this caused some movement but did not have an adverse effect on most neighbouring schools as the impact was spread in a ripple effect. Overall there are currently 6% spaces available across the City.

4. **In-Year admission 2014/15**

A copy of the In-year admissions reports was circulated and reviewed. It was requested that it would have been useful to have sight of school admission numbers within report tables in future.

The Forum felt that the picture reflected higher levels of movement in areas of greater deprivation. There was concern expressed regarding the financial pressures and impact on schools in managing high levels of in-year admissions.

The greater levels of movement in primary schools were often linked to house moves when parents would prefer a move to a very local school, whereas this could be less of an issue at secondary level. Limited placements for sibling groups

moving in-year in primary schools could mean that children moved school more than once before being able to be accommodated in the same school as siblings.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

5. In-Year air access protocol 2014/15

A report on the implementation of the In-year Fair Access Protocol 2014/15 was circulated. All Schools and Academies are required to participate in their local authority area's protocol in order to ensure that unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible.

Details and statistics were provided on the arrangements for hard to place pupils, those at risk of permanent exclusion and those who had been permanently excluded.

The report noted that East and West partnership arrangements that had operated across the City in 2014/15 to arrange placements for fixed term exclusions over 5 days, 6 week preventative places and managed transfers were due to change for 2015/16. A series of new Behaviour Pathway arrangements were being set up with headteachers. This was expected to impact on the current fair access protocol arrangements

RESOLVED that the report be noted and Jeannette Essex be invited to the next meeting to share details of Behaviour Pathways work.

6. 2017 Admission Schemes and Consultation

The Forum received the Coventry Primary, Infant and Junior School Co-ordinated Admissions scheme: 2017/18 and the Coventry Secondary School Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme: 2017/18. The documents explained the arrangements for dealing with admissions to schools in 2017 which remained broadly the same as for 2016 with some minimal changes on dates. Also, where faith schools and academies require parents to complete a supplementary form it must now be sent directly to the school. This is in line with the individual school policies.

Questions were raised regarding how Catholic baptismal certificates are passed to all requested schools. Catholic heads group would be advised on the need to share information effectively and Admissions staff would clarify the cross referencing arrangements which take place for the annual process.

There were no planned changes to the admission numbers or oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled primary schools. Details will be circulated to these schools consulting on proposed admissions numbers and confirmation of other details remaining the same.

Twelve schools who are their own admissions authority have gone out to consultation where they have converted to academy status recently, where they have not consulted for 7 years or where they wish to make significant changes such as Eden school. There has been previous contact from some schools such

as Blue Coat and Sidney Stringer multi academy trust that they are planning to make some changes so we expect further schools to consult. Schools have until 20 December to start their consultation to meet the new timescales. Where changes are significant these will be highlighted when information is circulated about the consultation arrangements.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

7. **Any Other Business**

There were no other items of business.

8. **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 29 January 2016 at 1.30pm.

(Meeting closed at 3.20pm)

Online service development

Following discussion at the Schools Admissions Forum in October 2014 it was agreed that we would move from a mix of print and online versions of the parents' information booklet to an online only version for 2016. Given that 67% of parents who applied for places in 2015 applied online it made great sense to ensure that the booklet was linked and available to parents on our website.

The communications team developed a more interactive version of the booklet with links and changes to layout to make it a more online document rather than simply an electronic version of a print document. We have directed schools and parents to the booklet online and have printed out less than 20 hard copies on request. This has created a cost saving of £5000.

We will review levels of online annual applications after offers of school places are made this year, and develop further strategies to encourage online take up for the next annual process which will start in September.

In line with all council customer services we are looking at ways of ensuring that parents are supported to apply online, and the new customer services centre at Broadgate House is providing access for online applications. This means that we have also introduced online applications for in year admissions, late applications for entry in September 2016 and school transport.

As information technology develops we will need to keep pace with change and ensure we develop our services to make application processes as simple as possible for parents and to improve the access and connectivity for schools too. We will have an upgraded online admissions portal in place this year for applications for entry in September 2017 which will include improvements such as access via smartphones, and give parents the ability to reset their own passwords. We will also investigate options for creating more web based information on school transport applications to help parents to measure distances to school and understand when they will be entitled to support.

It is important that schools also maintain their websites ensuring that full and correct information regarding school admissions is easy to find. We will be working with schools to make sure that this is the case.

Sue Heawood

Admissions and Benefits

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Admissions consultation for 2017 by Coventry schools

Please see below summary details of the schools which have been consulting on their admissions policies for 2017.

Primary schools

Christ the King, Corpus Christi, Holy Family, Our Lady of the Assumption, Sacred Heart, St Elizabeths, St Gregorys, St Osburgs, St Patricks, Sts Peter & Paul, St Thomas More Catholic primary schools.

The 11 Catholic primary schools listed have consulted on making changes to their admissions policies. The majority had made changes in line with their status changes from voluntary aided schools to academies. Others had been required to consult as they had not consulted on any changes for 7 years. In all cases there were no significant changes to the main oversubscription criteria that would have an impact for parents.

Secondary schools

Grace Academy, Westwood Academy, Foxford, Lyng Hall, Stoke Park schools had been required to consult as they had not consulted on any changes for 7 years. In all cases there were no significant changes to the main oversubscription criteria that would have an impact for parents apart from Stoke Park school who added a criterion to give priority to children of staff.

Blue Coat school consulted on reducing their admission number from 270 to 240, and changed the definition of the weekly participation in their faith criteria from 45 weeks to 35 weeks.

Eden school have made significant changes to their policy as detailed at previous Admissions Forum meetings. The key changes are to integrate the policy for all children rather than differentiating between Muslim and non-Muslim applicants. They have then added new geographical criteria which have been challenged by the local authority as creating unnecessary complexity.

All Through schools

Seva school with entry for both primary and secondary age children consulted on changes to their policy. They have 2 priority groups for Sikh and non-Sikh children. They have added a criterion giving sibling priority for both priority groups.

Sue Heawood
Admissions and Benefits Manager

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