

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of School Admissions Forum held at 1.30 pm on Friday,
11 October 2013

Present:

Members: Councillor D Kershaw (Chair)
 Councillor J Blundell

Other Members: Rev T Colling
 C Firth
 I Rose
 M Simpson
 R Williamson

Employees (by Directorate): S Heawood
 G Paddan
 J Applegarth

Apologies: P Burns
 K Edwards
 D Morrison
 H Quinn

Public Business

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2013 were agreed as a true record.

2. **Matters arising**

- a) It was noted that Heads had discussed the level of movement between schools at their Steering Groups and there were no changes to processes at present to be reported.

- b) Sue Heawood updated the Forum on the objection received by the Schools Adjudicator in respect of Blue Coat School's policy changes and the decision issued in August which upheld the objection. Details are published at www.education.gov.uk/schoolsadjudicator/decisions Concern was expressed at the need for clarity for parents applying in the current admissions round for places under the disputed policy. The Chair of the governing body confirmed they are working on amendments and making a plan for compliance with the decision but this will need to be reviewed by the full governing body in November.

RESOLVED that assistance is sought from Linda Wainscott at the Church of England diocese in ensuring that Blue Coat School to expedite their policy changes.

3. Admissions for September 2013

The Forum considered the maps in respect of Reception classes for September 2013. It was noted that 88.8% children obtained their first choice; unfortunately there were no national statistics for comparison purposes for primary schools.

The Admissions Team were commended on their work, as following further school expansions it was good to see what had been achieved with the figures for school places within the City. It was noted that most local authorities were in difficult positions in terms of providing school places with primary classes in September 2013.

The table illustrating the Secondary School allocations for 01/03/2013 was reviewed and the figures were explained. It was noted that numbers admitted over the admission limit were due to pupils being admitted via appeals processes. Concern was expressed that where schools were not providing strong cases against additional admission it could be seen as an injustice, as it was not always those parents with the strongest cases who were then gaining entry via the appeal process.

RESOLVED that the reports be noted.

4. In Year Admissions 2012/13

Sue Heawood reported on the primary and infant school In-Year Admissions and Transfers for the years listed within the tables. The table showed the movement and the columns were explained.

RESOLVED that the reports be noted.

5. In Year Fair Access Protocol 2012/13

Members received a report from Marian Simpson on the In-year Fair Access Protocol. Discussion ensued on the permanent exclusion/managed transfer figures presented within the table and the drop in Key Stage 2. The figures for the last five years in respect of Hard to Place pupils were reviewed. The appendices provided the data in greater detail. The formula (to determine the number of pupils in these categories, which takes into account the circumstances) used for the figures was explained and it was noted that two schools would not have to admit any hard to place pupils into Key Stage 4 in the year ahead.

The Appendix 4 provided an overview of all pupils admitted to Coventry Schools in 2012/13 through both the partnership and City wide arrangements.

Marian was thanked for the comprehensive report.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

6. **New Schools for 2014**

The Forum received a report on the proposed two new Free Schools and the University Technology College proposed for Coventry. These schools will be independent of the Local Authority and funded directly by the Department for Education. It was noted that the schools have not been built but parents were currently able to apply for places.

- a) Seva School – This free school will be an all-through school for children aged 4 – 16 based on the Sikh faith. Seva School is not part of the Local Authority co-ordinated scheme in its opening year. Parents have to apply to the school directly and the closing date is 3 January 2014. They plan to admit pupils into Reception, Year 1, Year 2 (100 places per year group) and Year 7 (150 places).

Concern was expressed in terms of children holding two places in September; no site for the school building had been agreed and this will cause difficulties for parents in making a decision about applying and for the City Council in terms of future place planning.

More information about Seva School is available via www.sevaschool.com

- b) Coventry Leadership Academy for Girls – This is an 11-18 school for girls, conducted as a Muslim Faith School. The admission number for the Year 7 intake in 2014 will be 100.

The free school will be part of the Local Authority co-ordinated scheme and parents will apply for places for the school as part of the normal process by 31st October 2013.

The School will also be admitting 50 pupils in to year 8. This will be a separate application process and forms will be available from the Admissions and Benefits Team.

Councillor Kershaw will be meeting with the school sponsors who have opened free schools in other areas and will seek assurances about the school being a positive and inclusive addition to Coventry.

- c) Warwick Manufacturing Group Academy for Young Engineers (WMG) – This is a non-selective University Technical College for 14-19 year old students with a focus on engineering, mathematics and science. It has been developed as a partnership with Warwick University and is due to be built on land next to Westwood Academy near to the University.

It will provide places for students from Warwickshire and Solihull. The distance based criteria for the school has been structured to aim to take up to 40% of applicants from up to 5 miles from the school, 40% living 5-10 miles away and 20% living over 10 miles away. The admission number for Year 10 is 160 (80 females and 80 males).

It was noted that applications were being accepted for Year 10 in September 2013 and offers would be made on 3 March 2014.

Information on WMG Academy was available at www.wmgacademy.org.uk

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

7. Expanding Schools for 2014 and 2015

A report was received from Judith Applegarth on the expansion in primary school admissions 2014 and beyond. The primary school cohorts had seen tremendous growth. In 2005 reception aged pupils numbered just over 3,300, as illustrated in the table.

It was noted that the Council had maintained a surplus of accommodation of approximately 5% across the City to allow for flexibility and parental choice for in year admissions.

The Forum was advised that new extensions to schools had been built; in some circumstances whole schools have been rebuilt to provide the extra places. Also there was interest being expressed in setting up free schools with the potential to accommodate 160 reception pupils by 2015.

Following last year's consultation the decision to expand a further 8 schools was deferred, pending future demographic information. Further analysis was required before deciding which schools would be chosen to proceed to statutory notices for further expansion in 2015.

With regards to Edgewick Primary School – as part of the Education Funding Agency bidding process for additional places, the Council had submitted a bid to rebuild this school and increase its size from a one form entry to two form entry. The scheme was successful in terms of attracting £1.694 million government grant.

Work was taking place to analyse and plan for future expansion across the 19 secondary schools within the City.

Judith was thanked for her report.

RESOLVED that a report be presented at the next meeting on secondary school expansion.

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 7 February 2014.

(Meeting closed at 3.05 pm)