

Public Document Pack

Coventry City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of School Admissions Forum held at 12.00 pm on Thursday, 23 October 2014

Present:

Members: Councillor D Kershaw (Chair)
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor D Chater

Other Members: Rev T Colling
H Quinn
I Rose
R Tonks
R Williamson
M Simpson

Employees (by Directorate):

People: S Heawood,
Resources: G Paddan, J Warren

Apologies: P Burns
N Wicks

Public Business

1. Introduction and Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and this was followed by introduction of the membership of the Forum.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

a) The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2014 were agreed as a true record.

b) Matters Arising:

Blue Coat Policy Changes – Members were advised that the policy had been changed and the new policy was contained within the Secondary Education in Coventry 2015 booklet. There was no longer a complex points system and a much simpler supplementary form.

Secondary School Expansion Planning – Following the last meeting in February where a presentation was received on expanding secondary schools; members were advised of consultants visiting schools and that their findings would be presented in November. It was agreed that a report be brought to the February 2015 meeting explaining the consultants' findings.

Members expressed concern in relation to the number of schools seeking to expand and complexity of future expansion planning matters.

3. Admissions for September 2014

The table illustrating the Secondary School allocations for 3/3/2014 was reviewed and the figures were explained. It was noted that 68% had applied online and there had been an increase; the figures presented included an update of the position at 22/09/2014.

The following points were raised:

- Difficulties caused by parents having the option of keeping two places for new free schools
- Home education and it was noted that approximately 60-80 pupils were currently being educated at home and they were visited annually to ensure that they met learning standards.
- Concerns about the movement between schools and the fact that information and planning for this in the summer term had to change again in many cases by September. This was particularly true this year for late application children moving from Year 9 to WMG Academy, and those taking up places in Year 8 at Eden Girls School.

The Forum reviewed the Reception classes' map for September 2014 and noted the current position as at 23/09/2014. 89.4% had received offers at their first preference school. There were no spaces available at the Catholic schools and the Reception spaces remaining were considered as presented in the table.

4. In Year Admissions 2013/14

The Forum received reports on the primary and infant school In Year Admissions and Transfers for the years listed within the tables. Officers explained the movements and allocation of places. The secondary school two year analyses were also considered.

The following points were considered:

- Concern about the lack of additional funding available to support children coming from abroad with English as a second language
- The Chair requested that it be recorded that he had received a copy of an application which included a hand written note expressing the preferred choice had been inserted by a member of the MGSS Team; was this practice endorsed? It was clarified by officers that on some occasions where staff carried out home visits they insert notes on application forms with the family member present.
- Difficulties in primary schools where siblings are not able to find a place in the same school and the impact on pupil movement within the City when places do become available. Questions were raised about primary academies starting to deal with siblings differently but it was confirmed that schools that had converted to academies had not changed their policies.

RESOLVED that the reports be noted and funding issues raised be considered via Schools Forum.

5. **In Year Fair Access protocol 2013/14**

Members received a report on the In-Year Fair Access Protocol together with the appendices displaying the data in detail for the managed transfers (in and out) and hard to place pupils. It was noted that Social Inclusion meetings were held monthly and the data collected was being shared with Headteachers.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

6. **Information for Parents for 2015**

Members received Primary and Secondary Education booklets for 2015 together with the leaflet on applying online by the appropriate date in 2015. The information is available on the Council's website and it was agreed it would be cost effective to print out booklet information when hard copies are specifically requested rather than have stocks of hard copies printed. The information available on the website is regularly updated e.g. change of closing dates and open days. This would help to eliminate undelivered/unwanted hard copies, which could contain outdated information by the end of the year.

Members requested that the open days listed within the booklets be co-ordinated to avoid clashes and provisional dates be circulated prior to publication in future.

The following points were noted in respect of new school places for 2015:

Eden Girls School – this secondary Muslim faith school changed their name from Coventry Leadership Academy for Girls and the site of the school before opening in September 2014 and are currently located in temporary accommodation. The school is full with 100 places in Year 7 and 50 places in Year 8. Applications for Year 7 in 2015 were being taken as part of the co-ordinated scheme.

Seva School – this school was planning to admit up to 450 pupils into Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 7. Due to difficulties in obtaining a suitable site they opened with 175 places available for primary pupils only. For 2015 they propose to admit an additional 100 pupils in Reception, 150 in Year 7 and 100 in Year 8. This will take place within the co-ordination scheme arrangements for the City.

Members expressed concern in respect of the Seva School not having a site sufficient for the number of pupils for 2015. It was noted that this matter was with the Education Funding Agency at present.

Sidney Stringer Primary Academy – this new primary free school was approved in June 2014 and will be offering 60 places in reception from September 2015. They will not be participating in the co-ordinated scheme which means that applications will have to be made direct to the school until 5 March 2015 and offer sent out on 16 April 2015. Update information for parents had been published on the website.

Finham Park 2 – this free school was approved on 30 September 2014 and will be opening in September 2015 as a secondary school with 120 places in Year 7. No site has yet been confirmed but it is expected to be between Broad Lane and Charter Avenue to the west of A45. Details as they become available will be published on the Council's website.

Sue Heawood was thanked for her report and the circulation of information for parents.

7. Changes to Schools Admissions Code

The Forum received a report on the consultation on changes to the Admissions Code 2012. The Department for Education had consulted on changes and the Local Authority's response was considered. A discussion ensued on free school meals, the link to pupil premium funding and the difficulties in primary schools getting parents to complete applications following the introduction of universal free school meals for infant classes. It was proposed that further talks may be required on this matter outside this Forum, and that information would be brought back to the next meeting.

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 6th February 2015.

(Meeting closed at 1.40pm)