

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2013 FROM 7.00PM TO 8:50PM**

*Present:-*

**Local Education Authority Representatives:**

Beth Rowland (part of meeting)

**Diocesan Representatives**

David Babb (Chairman)

**Parent Representatives:**

Phiala Mehring

**Representatives from the Local Community**

Captain Rob Gisby– *Arborfield Garrison*

**Schools Representatives**

Elaine Stewart – *Aldryngton Primary School*

Hilary Winter – *The Piggott CE Aided Secondary School* (Vice Chairman)

*Also present:-*

*David Armstrong, Policy and Schools Access Officer*

*Piers Brunning, Service Manager Children's Services Infrastructure Development*

*Sue Riddick, School Admissions Lead Officer*

*Anju Sharma, Project Officer, School Organisation*

*Tricia Harcourt, Senior Democratic Services Officer*

**11. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 11 December 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**12. APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was submitted from Jean Bateman, Headteacher, Grazeley CE Aided Primary School.

**13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Hilary Winter, Head teacher of The Piggott School declared an interest in Item 17, Proposed Scheme to Co-ordinate Applications for Admission to New Primary Schools, on the grounds that The Piggott School is the sponsor of one of the proposed new schools.

**14. UPDATE ON CONSULTATION IN 2014/15 ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS, AND PRIMARY AND SECONDARY COORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEMES**

Sue Riddick circulated a draft document giving an analysis of the responses to the questions asked in the consultation on the admission arrangements that had been received so far. A table setting out in full the additional comments made was also circulated. The consultation closes on 28 February 2013.

## 15. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION SURVEY ON IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

The Forum received and considered the responses to a survey on In-year Admissions commissioned by the Local Government Association, as there is concern that in-year admissions are growing and affecting the education of vulnerable children in particular. The survey was set out on Agenda pages 7 to 14

Sue Riddick went through the survey and gave an indication of the responses she was proposing to make on behalf of the Local Authority (LA). The Forum suggested some additional responses;

- Question 5 the current role of admissions forum is under review
- Question 6 LA/admissions forum influence over admissions policies is strong
- Question 7 in year admissions are coordinated
- Question 8 administratively in-year admissions are more complicated
- Question 10 the number of in-year admissions is: 2009/10 – 1295; 2010/11 -1615; 2011/12 - 1629
- Question 11 of the in-year admissions, 68% were primary; 32% secondary
- Question 12 there is an increase in in-year admissions from: local parents transferring between schools; parents moving into the area; parents returning to the area from abroad; 25% of the secondary applications were for Years 10 and 11
- Question 14 the challenges in managing in-year admissions are the pressure on school places and the difficulty in keeping siblings together
- Question 16 the challenges in relation to key stakeholders are lack of communication about SEN allocations, and own admission authority schools
- Question 17 comments on the transfer of in-year admission responsibilities to individual admission authorities – strongly disagreed that: it will make it easier for in-year admissions to be managed fairly; vulnerable children will spend less time waiting to find a school; placements for other children will also speed up. In answer to the question about feeling positive about the change, the Forum agreed the answer was ‘don’t know’
- Question 18 highlight other anticipated effects – lack of co-ordination would lead to vulnerable children not having places;
- Question 20 examples of poor practice – comment on the issues that occurred before the coordination of primary in-year admissions
- Question 21 very concerned overall about the end of the statutory role of admissions forums
- Question 22 to address this we would like to see the role of the forum expanded to look at school place planning
- Questions 23/24 there would be no concerns about the growth of own admission authority schools if in-year admissions were co-ordinated
- Questions 25/26 very concerned about the number of in-year admissions, which could be addressed by the provision of more school places, and the Local Authority being allowed to open new schools

**RESOLVED:** That the responses to Local Government Association survey as set out above, be agreed.

## **16. PROPOSED SCHEME TO COORDINATE APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION TO NEW PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

The Forum received and considered a report set out on Agenda page 15 on the proposal to ask the providers of the proposed new primary schools to permit the Local Authority to co-ordinate admissions to the schools in their first year.

Sue Riddick indicated that although providers setting up new schools are allowed to deal with their own admissions outside the co-ordinated arrangements for the first year, in view of the confusion that resulted last year when Oakbank School started, it is proposed that admissions be co-ordinated from the start.

It is proposed to run a separate mini applications round for each school, starting in late April. Initially provisional offers will be made, as final offers will not be confirmed until the funding agreements for the schools have been finalised with the DfE. The offers from the main admissions round for primary schools in the Borough will be made on 16 April, so it may be that some people could hold 2 offers.

**RESOLVED:** That the proposal to ask providers of the new primary schools to permit the Local Authority to co-ordinate admissions for September 2013 be agreed.

## **17. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES 2014/15**

The Forum received and considered a report setting out the Local Authority's comments on the admission arrangements submitted by voluntary aided schools and academies, as set out on Agenda pages 16 to 20.

Copies of the admission arrangements for the following schools were included at Agenda pages 21 to 54:

- Finchampstead CE Aided Primary
- Grazeley Parochial CE Aided Primary – a revised copy was circulated at the meeting
- St Sebastian's CE Aided Primary
- St Teresa's Catholic Primary

Sue Riddick went through the comments on these arrangements and those which had been circulated at the last meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the comments made by the Local Authority on the admission arrangements submitted by voluntary aided schools and academies be noted.

## **18. FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL - PROPOSED REVISIONS**

The Forum received and considered a report giving details of proposed revisions to the Fair Access Protocol, set out on Agenda pages 55 to 105. The report included copies of recent advice on Fair Access Protocols and case studies from the Department for Education (DfE); and copies of the current Fair Access Protocols.

Sue Riddick explained that all parts of the Fair Access Protocol were being reviewed and updated in light of the School Admission Code and the DfE Guidance. All schools have to take part in the operation of the Protocol.

A draft of the revised Managed Transfers and Reintegration of Pupils to Secondary Schools protocol, as set out on Agenda pages 57 to 60, had been prepared in consultation with Secondary schools. Primary schools will be consulted on the revision of the Managed

Transfers and Reintegration of Pupils to Primary Schools protocol. Work will be done with all schools on the revision of the Placement of Vulnerable Pupils protocol during the summer term.

It was suggested that the involvement of the primary schools could be done initially through the Wokingham Primary Heads group. Comment was made that in some cases of managed transfer providing appropriate support without any funding initially would be difficult, particularly for small schools.

The revised protocols would be brought to the Forum in November.

**RESOLVED:** That the proposals for the revision of the Fair Access Protocols be noted.

**19. UPDATE ON APPLICATIONS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL ADMISSION FOR SEPTEMBER 2013**

Sue Riddick reported that the number of applications for first entry to primary schools was already higher than last year; with the expectation that more applications will be received after the closing date. Efforts had been made to remind those parents who had not applied a week before the closing date, either through their Early Years setting, or with reminder letters sent to those who do not attend Wokingham Borough Early Years settings and who were known to have children requiring places in September 2013.

**20. UPDATE ON APPLICATIONS FOR PRIMARY TO SECONDARY TRANSFERS FOR SEPTEMBER 2013**

Sue Riddick reported that there had been a lower number of applications for transfer to secondary schools in September 2013 than last year. This was a smaller cohort than previous years, but the numbers will rise steadily over the next few years. The national offer day is 1 March.

**21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 13 March.

Items for discussion will be: the results of the Admission Arrangements consultation; and an update on primary and secondary admissions.

*These are the Minutes of a meeting of the School Admissions Forum*

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