

Time Commenced: 5.05 pm

Time Finished: 6.15 pm

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM 4 MARCH 2008

Present: David Keys

Brackensdale Junior School
(in the Chair)

Councillor Allen
Councillor Ginns
Councillor Bolton
Dr Keerthi Devendra
Carron Stevenson
Alison Brown
Robin Constable
Cathy Ford
Keith Forrest
Keith Howkins
Roger Shipton
Chris Gregson
Claire Walker
Fiona McLaughlin

Parent Governor
Meadow Farm School
Derby Diocese, Board of Education
Solicitor
Local Authority – CYP Department
Assistant Director Strategic Support
Local Authority – CYP Department
Merrill College
Constitutional Services Officer
Portway Infants
Chellaston Infant School

07/07 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Alison Woodhouse, Stephen Whiteley, Paul Clarke and Councillor Willoughby.

08/07 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

09/07 Declarations of Interest

Name	Type of Interest	Reason
Councillor Allen	Personal	Chair of Governors - Kingsmead School
Councillor Allen	Personal	Governor – St Claire's Special School

10/07 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2007 were confirmed as a correct record with the exception that Alison Brown did not attend the meeting.

11/07 Admissions Forum Annual Report

The Forum considered a report from the Department for Children and Young People advising that from September 2008 all Forums have the power to produce an annual report. This was under the Code of Practice on School Admissions that came into force on 27 February 2007. The report advised that the production of an annual report was discretionary, and that it was up to the Forum to decide if one should be produced.

Resolved:

- 1. to note the report.**
- 2. not to produce an Annual Report at this time.**

12/07 Consultation on Admission Arrangements 2009-10

The Forum considered a report from the Department of Children and Young People. The report informed Members that all schools in the city fully complied with the requirements set out in the Code of Practice that came into force on 27 February 2007.

No comments on the Council's admission arrangements were received from Community and Voluntary controlled schools.

Cathy Ford – Head of Service, Admissions and Awards - advised that West Park had agreed not to reduce their Published Admissions Numbers (PAN) from 260 to 240 all in one year since the publication of the report. She advised that an agreement had not yet been reached with Merrill College regarding their wish to reduce their PAN from 240 and 210. Both Cathy Ford and Roger Shipton – Merrill College – confirmed that negotiations were continuing.

Resolved to note and support the Authority's stance on the admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in Derby City and to note the admission arrangements for Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools in the City.

13/07 Primary Capital Programme

The Forum considered a report from the Corporate Director of Children and Young People regarding funding to be made available by central government to local authorities for the Primary Capital Programme. This was a long-term programme due to run until 2023. The Forum was advised that a Primary Strategy for Change had to be submitted by the Council by 16 June 2008. The Forum was asked to comment on principles relating to admissions which ought to contribute to the Primary Strategy for Change.

The report was presented by Keith Howkins, the Project Manager for the Primary Strategy for Change. Forum members expressed concern that there was not enough capital available to perform the necessary building works. Keith agreed that the funding levels would be challenging, and advised that the submissions received by the DCSF would inform their future discussions with the Treasury.

Roger Shipton – Merrill College – asked how such a long-term strategy could be adequately expressed in a report of 15-20 pages. Keith replied that detail was only expected for the first few years, and that general principles would be laid down for subsequent years. Roger then asked how the report fitted in with admissions policies. Keith replied that initial discussions were to be held in each cluster shortly.

Forum Members enquired about current and projected areas of undercapacity in primary schools. Keith advised that there were clusters where schools were below capacity. Health Authority birth data statistics were used as part of projections for future need. Members also stated that there needed to be flexibility to respond to demographic changes, and that consultation papers should be sent to all Admissions Forum members.

Forum Members asked if City Academies could select feeder primary schools, and favour pupils from those schools in their selection criteria. Cathy Ford advised that the admissions arrangements to the Academy would be separate to that of the primary school. Academies would have the right to prioritise feeder schools, providing that their admissions policy was approved by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families.

Resolved to recommend:

- 1) that there needed to be flexibility in the Primary Strategy for Change to respond to demographic changes.**
- 2) that consultation papers should be sent to all Forum members.**

14/07 In-Year Admissions Process in Derby City

The Forum received a report from the Department of Children and Young People. The report was presented by Keith Forrest - Assistant Director Strategic Support. A letter from Nottingham City Council was distributed at the meeting detailing their in-year admissions process as a comparison.

Fiona McLaughlin – Chellaston Infants School – asked if existing schools could be made aware that a child was leaving their school before a new place was offered. Cathy Ford replied that the Admissions and Awards department took all possible steps to ensure the parents were sure about their decision, but that they were legally required to offer places to children when available. Cathy advised that children moving schools within the city did not start until the beginning of the following half-term, whereas there was a two week turnaround for children moving into the city. Fiona thanked Cathy for the explanation.

The Forum paid tribute to the hard work of the Admissions and Awards Department and to the work of the Fair Access Panels in particular.

Resolved:

- 1. to note the report.**
- 2. to pay tribute to the Admissions and Awards Department and the Fair Access Panels for their hard work.**

MINUTES END