

THE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FORUM

KING CHARLES CENTRE
WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH 2009
6.30 pm

1. Present:

Members

Councillor Nick Kilby
Councillor David Ryder-Mills
Carol Jerwood
Keith Burleton
Janice Anastasi (Vice Chair)
Sharon Mehta (Chair)
Michael Reading
Amtul Lally Malik
Sinead Noble
Sarah Khan

Officers

Anne Redparth (Directorate Head of Resources & Commissioning)
Julie Ely (Head of SEN Assessment & Support for Learning)
Hatija Bhatia (Principal Admissions & Governance Officer)

2. Apologies: Robert Fogg, Tom Cahill and Marianne Cohen.

Agenda

3. Declarations of interest: None

4. Minutes of the previous meeting on 15 October 2008 were approved

5. Resignations had been received from Councillor Don Jordan and Kevin Edmonds

6. **Constitution of the Forum(Appendix A)**

The Principal Admissions and Governance Officer introduced the report and highlighted the revised membership requirements as explained under paragraph 6 and 7.

The Chair acknowledged that as a result of the new limit of 2 LA representatives, Councillor Jordan had resigned to accommodate the required change.

Forum members were asked to note and approve the following:

Sinead Noble a parent representative, and Sarah Khan, member of the Kingston Youth Council, both nominees to be appointed as members representing the local community;

- Under the revised regulations, Janice Anastasi (Vice Chair) was eligible for appointment as a Community Schools member. This increases the number of members representing community schools to 4.
- The Chair invited views on local community representation and it was agreed that both Marian Cohen and Amtul Lally Malik would be invited to continue as members representing the local community;
- Tracey Coton, Head teacher of Christ Church C of E Primary School in Surbiton was nominated for appointment to one of the two vacancies for Voluntary- Aided Primary schools;
- Nominees would be sought imminently to fill the remaining vacancies for Community and VA Schools' members;
- All nominees were proposed and seconded and their appointments were agreed by the Forum;
- The Principal Admissions and Governance Officer agreed to act as Secretary to the Forum and was duly appointed.

It was confirmed that the SAF membership could consist of up to 20 members which is the maximum under revised regulations.

RESOLVED: The revised membership was agreed and is attached as Annex 1 of these minutes.

7. Response to consultation on admission arrangements 2010/2011(Appendix B)

The Principal Admissions and Governance Officer outlined the report and pointed out that in accordance with statutory requirements, consultation had been extended to parents and the wider community via a published notice in the press, schools, libraries and Children's centres. 13 responses had been received to the consultation and a summary of responses was contained in the annex to the report. Anonymised hard copies were made available at the meeting. Some responses had focussed on the need for extra primary places and others contained comments outside of the consultation.

Some parents were still limiting their options by making too few preferences in their common application forms. Limiting their choice to only faith schools was cited as an example. The Principal Admissions and Governance Officer confirmed that the Primary Admissions booklet currently advises parents seeking a place at a faith school to also include a community school on their common application forms. The Southwark Diocesan Board is revising its guidance and when it is published, it will remind schools of their dual purpose to serve both the church community and the local community.

There was a discussion about how some parents didn't understand the relevance of the Greenwich Judgement which outlawed taking borough boundary into account for allocation school places. It was agreed that this information should be included in any published information.

Currently the information about the admissions process was disseminated through the admissions booklets and information meetings held for parents. Other options should be considered. Suggestions made included include a DVD and FAQs on the Council's website.

RESOLVED: Members approved the proposed admission arrangements and noted the consultation on the provision of school places which would inform any changes to proposed admission numbers as reported.

8. Response to consultation on the relevant area.(Appendix C)

The Principal Admissions and Governance Officer explained that this consultation is undertaken every two years, and in recent years the outcome has been to maintain the relevant area as the borough boundary of Kingston. It was noted that none of the bordering LA have made changes to their relevant areas. There had been no responses to this proposal in the consultation.

RESOLVED: It was agreed to maintain the existing area with no amendments.

9. Planning for School Places (Appendix D)

The Directorate Head of Resources and Commissioning outlined the detailed information included in Appendix D of the papers.

The main points made included:

- 300 extra places have been added in 10 schools for September 2009 on a temporary basis
- Current projections indicate a permanent need for 13 additional forms of entry classes by 2012. This represents a 25% increase and a very significant logistical challenge
- Many other London local authorities are experiencing similar trends
- A range of options are being developed and a consultation process will start at the end of April
- Many primary schools will be involved as part of an interim or final expansion plan; some schools may need to accommodate temporary classrooms while permanent classrooms are built elsewhere
- There will be an initial consultation indicating options for expansion in each of the four planning areas. Statutory consultation regarding individual expansion proposals for a particular school will follow from September onwards.

Other factors that could impact on pupil numbers for both primary and secondary schools include:

- increased pupil participation through the raising of the school leaving age. The Directorate Head of Resources and Commissioning explained that staying on rates were already high in Kingston, but that the LA would take this issue into account in the pupil projections.
- Building of new homes. The Directorate Head of Resources and Commissioning confirmed that the pupil projections take account of planned new homes. Closer working links with Environmental Services had been put in place to ensure robustness and accuracy in the data.

Clarification was given about numbers of place increases for St Matthews and Knollmead, which are not whole class equivalents and it was explained that the additional places will have the effect of increasing St Matthew's to a total of 90 places for Reception in September 2009, and the numbers of additional places at Knollmead reflecting actual demand for places at the school.

It was noted that some schools had been asked to host an additional temporary class for the second year running and that some parents may be concerned about which schools would be accommodating extra pupils. Officers confirmed that a small number of the parents had contacted the LA to ask how schools had been chosen and the potential impact of a second increase.

When determining how many additional places to add the LA is mindful of the need to have sufficient surplus places in the system to accommodate pupils who may move into the area during the school year, at the same time as balancing the funding implications of surplus places (which is effectively a cost borne by all schools).

Concern was expressed about the addition of 5 primary classes in October followed by a further 5 in February. Officers explained that the increased need for places was due to both an increase in the number of children but also a greater proportion of children born 4 years previously wanting a local state school place. In September 2008 the equivalent of 89% of live births required a school place which is significantly higher than in previous years (79% in 2006 and 84% in 2007). The initial decision to add 5 forms of entry in October was based on forecasts derived from the previous three-year averages (as there was no evidence to indicate the significant increase in the proportion for September 2008 would be sustained). However, in response to the numbers of applications received by the closing date, it was identified that it was necessary to increase the numbers of additional places to a total of 300 to meet demand.

This year the additional classes were announced before the outcomes of primary applications were known. The management of waiting lists

has changed, enabling late applications to community schools to join the waiting lists in criteria order and not based on when names are added to the waiting list. It was acknowledged that the equal preference basis on which applications are considered for schools, and which is set out in the admissions booklet, should be further emphasized and clarified for parents so that they made their preferences based on clear information.

RESOLVED: to note the update on the addition of temporary primary places for September 2009 and the proposed consultation for future permanent expansion of primary places.

10. Revised School Admissions Code 2009 (Appendix E)

The Principal Admissions and Governance Officer highlighted the main changes contained in the new Code and the impact on current admissions arrangements at Kingston schools. It was clarified that RBK schools had been advised to make the necessary changes to reflect the new requirements contained in the Code.

Members were advised that under the new requirements, local authorities must co-ordinate applications made for in-year admissions for September 2010 onwards and that LAs need to have the arrangements in place by January 2010.

Representatives from the Southwark Diocesan Board and the Archdiocese of Southwark had challenged the Code on: 'faith schools must ask their religious authority to confirm whether someone is a member of, or practices the faith ' They were awaiting clarification on this point.

RBK and the Pan London group would be making representations to the common closing date chosen for submission of secondary school applications. Currently the date is just before the start of Autumn half term. This enables schools to chase those families that have not submitted their applications forms. The new date is 31 October would fall during half term break and would make it much harder to ensure that all applications forms have been submitted on time.

Each local authority is required to submit an annual report to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by 30 June. The Chair invited views on whether the SAF should produce a separate report, explaining that the next meeting was not scheduled until July. There was consensus that if possible, the date of the SAF be changed to allow the SAF to review the content of the Annual Report.

11. Consultation on the Children & Young People's Plan (Appendix F)

The Directorate Head of Resources and Commissioning explained that the Plan is currently being refreshed and that there is a statutory duty to consult the School Admissions Forum.

The Chair explained that she would be participating in a consultation event for a wide range of stakeholders at the end of March and the Forum agreed that the Chair would represent the SAF at this event.

RESOLVED: SAF members will be included in the circulation list of the draft CYPP for consultation at the end of April. Any comments from members should be sent to the Chair for a collective response from the Forum.

12. Information Items (Appendix G)

i. Fair Access protocol

It was noted that following the changes in the new School Admissions Code, the draft protocols had to be revised and a Working Group of Headteachers and/or their senior leadership teams and officers had put forward recommendations to Secondary Headteachers for consultation. It was agreed that the agreed draft protocols would be implemented on a trial basis until the end of the Summer term 2009 and the Forum would be advised of any recommended changes at its next meeting when the final draft protocols would be ratified by the Forum.

13. Any Other Business

- i. The Chair asked for a verbal update on the outcomes for secondary admissions.

The Principal Admissions and Governance Officer explained that there had been 1556 RBK resident applicants and 95% had received an offer of one of their preferences. This compared with 94% in the previous year.

46 boys and 36 girls (5%) did not receive a preference offer. 57 pupils were offered places in non-preference schools.. It was not possible to offer 25 girls a place. Parents had until 16 March to accept offers. After this date it was expected that further offers would be made.

- ii. The Chair invited views on the change of venue and the consensus was that the SAF would continue to be held at the new venue of KCC.

Date of next meeting: 7th July 2009, 6.30 pm at The King Charles Centre

ADMISSION FORUM – MEMBERSHIP

GROUP	REPRESENTATIVES
Local Authority	2 members Councillor David Ryder – Mills Councillor Nick Kilby
Schools – Community Latchmere School Lovelace Primary School Malden Manor Primary & Nursery School Secondary School x 1 Vacancy	4 members– 1 from the secondary sector and 3 from the primary sector Sharon Mehta (Governor) (Chair)* Michael Reading (Governor) Janice Anastasi (Governor) (Vice- Chair)
Schools – Foundation The Hollyfield School St Luke’s C of E Primary School	2 members – 1 from the secondary sector and 1 from the primary sector Robert Fogg (Governor) Rev Fr Martin Hislop (Governor)
Schools – Voluntary aided Richard Challoner School Christ Church C of E Primary School (Surbiton) Primary School x 1 Vacancy	3 members– 1 from the secondary sector and 2 from the primary sector Tom Cahill (Head Teacher) Tracy Coton (Head Teacher)
C of E Diocese Southwark Diocese Guildford Diocese	2 members Dr Carol Jerwood Michael Hall
Roman Catholic Archdiocese	1 member Keith Burleton
Representatives of the local community Kingston Youth Council Parent Member Community Member Community Member	Sarah Khan Sinead Noble Marianne Cohen (Jewish Community) Amtul Lally Malik (Muslim Community)