

MINUTES of the meeting of Local Admissions Forum held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Tuesday, 27th June, 2006 at 7.00 p.m.

Present:	Local Education Authority	J.P. Thomas (Chairman)
	Church Representative	Paul Shannon (Roman Catholic Church) and Revd. I. Terry (Church of England)
	Headteachers	A Marson (Bishop of Hereford & St Mary's RC Schools) and Julia Powell (Community and VC Primary)
	School Governors	(none)
	Parent Governors	(none)
	Local Community Rep	P. McKinnie (Consortium of Special Educational Needs)

In attendance: Councillor D.W. Rule (Cabinet Member – Children an Young People)

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor J.P. Thomas was nominated and seconded for the Chairmanship.

RESOLVED: THAT Councillor J.P. Thomas be appointed Chairman of the Local Admissions Forum for the ensuing year.

Councillor J.P. Thomas in the Chair

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor J. Stone was nominated and seconded for the Vice-Chairmanship.

RESOLVED: That Councillor J. Stone be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Local Admissions Forum for the ensuing year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Ms. V. Pawsey and Mrs. B. Glasspoole.

4. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

Mr. P. McKinnie substituted for Ms. V. Pawsey.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED: THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2005 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. OUTCOMES OF PARENTAL APPLICATIONS FOR YEAR 6 PUPIL TRANSFERS TO HIGH SCHOOLS, SEPTMEBER 2006

The Forum was informed of the outcomes of the parental applications for Year 6 pupil transfers into High Schools for September 2006, including details of appeals.

The Forum was informed of a factual inaccuracy in the report contained in the Agenda. In paragraph 3 of the report the number of appeals for Whitecross was 12 and not 2. This also meant that the total number of appeals held was 43 instead of 33 and that the overall success rate of appeals was 15% rather than 18%.

The Admissions and Transport Manager reported that the co-ordinated admission arrangements operated in Herefordshire had resulted in 93.6% of parents being offered a place at their first choice school and 99.5% of parents had received a place at one of their three declared preferences.

There had been no parental complaints about how applications had been dealt with administratively this year.

There were currently four schools in the County with waiting lists. Namely, Bishops, Whitecross, St. Mary's and Wigmore. Waiting lists would remain open until the start of the new school year in September.

The following were the principle points arising from the ensuing discussion:

- A Member was pleased to note that all catchment children had been offered places at Wigmore High School this year.
- It was clarified that all catchment children had received places at Whitecross. However, it had not been possible to offer places to six children with sibling connections as the school had received an increased number of applications this year. It was thought that the increase in applications was linked to the schools recent move to a new premises.
- It was queried whether or not the Bishops Palace was a suitably neutral venue to hold appeals for Bishops School.
- It was noted that a number of foreign national children were entering the secondary education system. This was creating some problems with providing the necessary facilities and solving problems principally concerning language.
- It was noted that all guidance booklets for parents were available in other languages.

RESOLVED: THAT the report be noted.

7. AMENDMENTS TO SCHOOL PLANNED ADMISSION NUMBERS

The Forum considered changes to the Planned Admission Numbers (PAN) at Clehonger, Marlbrook and Staunton-On-Wye Primary Schools.

The Forum was informed that the addition of an extra classroom at Clehonger Primary School to avoid an organisational problem had required a new capacity assessment to be conducted. This had resulted in the PAN for the school rising from 25 to 28. This was unlikely to affect neighbouring schools as both Madley and Kingstone and Thruxton Primary Schools both had waiting lists.

At Longtown Primary School it had been agreed to admit 10 first preference catchment children and children with sibling connections even though the school only had a PAN of 8 pupils per year. However, it had been agreed to go slightly over

the PAN due to the school only admitting 3 pupils last year.

Staunton-on-Wye Primary School had admitted 14 children for the next academic year against a PAN of 10 as it was considered that there was the overall capacity in the school to accommodate the additional pupils.

The PAN at Marlbrook Primary School had increased from 50 to 60 following the provision of an extra classroom. Historically, Marlbrook had been a two-form entry school but the provision of a Local Authority Nursery school had seen the school lose a class. Therefore the school had now returned to its original class size. The Head of Commissioning and Improvement accepted that the increased PAN could see additional children attend the school at the expense of another but felt that the new class was justified, even though the overall numbers on the school roll were falling in the wider County, as the numbers of children in the South Wye area was actually increasing.

RESOLVED: THAT the changes to admission numbers both temporary and permanent be noted.

8. AMENDMENTS TO SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREA

The Forum considered a change to the catchment area of Ashperton Primary School.

The Forum was informed that following extensive consultation and a discussion at the School Organisation Committee in December 2005 the provided primary school for the small hamlet of Covender would, from September 2007, be Ashperton Primary School.

RESOLVED: THAT the change of catchment school for the hamlet of Covender be noted.

9. AMENDMENTS TO ADMISSION POLICIES OF VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS

The Forum was advised of changes to the admission policies of St. Mary's RC High, Cradley CE Primary, Fownhope CE Primary, St. James CE Primary, St. Thomas Cantilupe CE Primary, Lea CE Primary, Leintwardine Endowed Primary, Pembridge CE Primary and Pencombe CE Primary.

The Admissions and Transport Manager reported that work had been undertaken to standardise the oversubscription criteria of voluntary aided (VA) schools in the County to bring them in line with the DfES Code of Practice concerning school admissions. The result of this work was that eight of the twenty VA schools in the County had amended their admissions policies.

The Forum was informed that the Bishops of Hereford's Bluecoat School had subsequently made an addition to the notes section of its over subscription criteria giving priority to all children in the looked after system at all levels of its oversubscription criteria.

A Member of the Forum welcomed the changes made by some VA schools to their oversubscription criteria but pointed out that many schools still operated policies was outside the Code, in addition, St. Mary's RC High had amended its current policy but still in breach of the code due to other factors.

The Church of England Representative informed the Forum that when the Education Act came into force it was likely to allow Diocesan Education Boards to establish a

national policy for all Church of England schools. This would allow local breaches to be resolved.

The Roman Catholic Representative undertook to speak to St. Mary's about the concerns of the Forum and seek to address them.

It was proposed and seconded that the Local Authority be asked to refer all VA Schools in breach of the DfES Code of Practice for School Admissions to the Schools Adjudicator. The proposal was approved.

RESOLVED:

THAT (a) it be recommended that the Local Authority refer all voluntary aided schools in Herefordshire who's oversubscription criteria are in breach of the School Admissions Code of Conduct to the Schools Adjudicator;

and;

(b) the changes made to the oversubscription criteria for those schools who have adjusted their criteria be adopted.

10. APPLYING FOR A PLACE AT HIGH SCHOOL AND STARTING SCHOOL

The Forum considered the format of the simple guidance notes in relation to the admission of children into reception class at 4 years of age and the transfer of pupils into high school at age 11.

RESOLVED: THAT the simple guidance notes be approved.

11. STANDARD APPLICATION FORMS FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2006/07

The Forum considered the layout of the common application forms to be used for the co-ordinated secondary transfer arrangements (SA1) for September 2007 and the PA1 form for primary co-ordination to be introduced at the same time.

In addition to a number of editorial changes the Forum made the following principle points regarding the SA1 and PA1 forms:

- Part D on SA1 state that 'it will be necessary to complete [additional application forms for both Bishops and St. Mary's rather than 'it may be necessary'. Similarly in Part D on PA1 with regard to Voluntary Aided Schools.
- Part E parents be asked to print their full name rather than just sign their full name to aid school and admissions staff.

RESOLVED: THAT the PA1 and SA1 forms as amended, be approved.

12. INFORMATION FOR PARENTS BOOKLET

The Forum considered the composite prospectus for the admission/transfer of pupils into primary and high schools.

The Forum noted that the numbers for special schools reported in the booklet were the planned admission numbers rather than the actual numbers in attendance at the school which was significantly higher. Following a request for the true numbers to be reflected in the booklet the Forum agreed to allow the Admissions and Transport Manager to consult the SEN Manager before taking any action.

It was anticipated that the booklet would be reviewed in light of any new guidance issued by the DfES following the awaited Education Act.

RESOLVED: THAT, subject to discussions between the Admissions and Transport Manager and the SEN Manager, the 'Information for Parents' booklet be approved.

The meeting ended at 8.10 p.m.

CHAIRMAN