

Minutes

Newport Admissions Forum

Date: 27 June 2017

Present: Roman Catholic Diocese (in the Chair)
Service Manager
School Admissions & Appeals Manager
Service Development Manager
VA Schools Representative
VA Schools Representative

Clerk to the Forum

Apologies: Cabinet Member for Education & Young People
Chief Education Officer
Anglican Diocese Monmouth
VA Schools Representative
Local Community Representative – Early Years
Local Community Representative (SEN)
Parent Governor Representative
Looked After Children in Education

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence are as noted above.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 22 March 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2017 were confirmed as a true record.

Checked for accuracy- no objections or points raised.

3. Matters arising

JL updated the panel on the position of Vice Chair and DW confirmed that she would take up the position.

JL – places available report – JL to present places available report at next meeting.

4. Review of membership

CR, VA rep has been appointed St Mary's in Cardiff
JM is standing in for CR (VA Schools Representative)

Parent vacancies

Jon Watts appointed Parent Governor, Bassaleg and Pentrepoeth

Other parent nomination has resigned as she has other commitments.
Need to assign another Parent Governor (email to be sent for nominations).

5. Phase admission update

Secondary:

JL reports to the Forum re the 2017 secondary admission round the highlights are as follows;

- Completed 5 May 2017
- The council met all published deadlines
- The secondary allocations are currently in the second late round
- No in-catchment preferences were refused in the on-time round, although there were eight in the first late round
- Bassaleg, Caerleon, Newport High, St Julian's, St Joseph's RC High School are full
- There are 229 English-medium places available across the city, with 40 available at Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed
- Currently eight admission appeals have been heard, one was successful

PB adds they have heard six appeals for St Joseph's, none have been upheld.

Reception:

JL informs the Forum re the reception admission; the highlights are as follows;

- The council have completed the first late round for reception admissions
- No in-catchment preferences were refused in the on-time round, although there have been 23 refused in the first late round
- 23/32 English-medium community schools, 1 Welsh-medium, 4 RC and both Church in Wales schools are full
- There are currently 25 Newport pupils without an offer, as criteria changed to not offering alternative school place as places were being held. They will be offered the catchment school if places are available. All families have been given a list of schools with spaces and invited to make additional offers
- 82 English-medium community places are still available
- The Rogerstone area continues to be a demanding area, however as long as parents apply on time for their catchment school they are successful
- 48 admission appeals were heard, five successful, four of which are for Jubilee Park

LJ stated that we have issues around parents filling in the form – people making poor decisions in the application process, not selecting the catchment school.

JL informed the forum that the appeals for Jubilee Park were upheld in favour of the parents at stage one, as the panel felt that as the school were mixing nursery and reception and as there were places available in the nursery which is not statutory education reception children should not be refused.

Furthermore, as nursery is not statutory education infant class size did not apply. However, admissions still need to admit to the PAN of 15 in all year groups so the class could potentially have 34 pupils in for September 2017.

Nursery:

JL informed the Forum that nursery allocations were issued 5 May, only eight of the 32 English-medium community nurseries are full.

Admissions are about to start the next stage for September 2018. At this point the authority will be able to allocate some Rising Three places.

MD enters at 2.30pm with apologies.

AR asks about the common offer date and how we ensure that all parents are informed on this date 16 April.

JL informs the Forum that those who apply online can see their offer online.

Everyone else has to wait for their letter in the post.

WG have issued that the common offer date is the date that parents get their offer not the letter date is sent in the post.

This is unclear in the Code.

Admissions have consulted with Legal and the Post Office website. Second class post is likely to take two days and there is a chance that letters may get lost in the post.

Therefore there is no way to guarantee that they will receive their letter on time and that there can only be a guarantee that it will be posted before the common offer date to arrive in line with PO recommendations.

JL states that the authority will post decisions on this date, but will make it clear to parents that if they want a guarantee to know on this date they should apply on line.

PB states he will work in-line with Newport.

6. In-year admissions update

JL informed the Forum of the position with regards to the number of in-year transfer applications received during the spring term 2017.

Noting the following highlights:

- The team continue to receive a high number of applications, 353, averaging about 25 per week
- This is slightly up on last year's figure of 325
- The number of applications received from families moving into the city continues to represent the majority of applications that are received with a total of 54% in 2016/17
- There were a low number of preferences met for in-year transfers as space is restricted

MD states that the Home Office is moving children for housing. GEMS have expressed their concerns about moving mid-term as children cannot settle into local schools.

PB states we don't have the complete picture as to why there is a high rate of change, leaving and starting. The question is asked on the application form but is not always completed by the parents.

JL adds that it is difficult to collate the information as tight deadlines make it difficult. PB and JL will discuss how to get the data from PB and GEMs to get a better overall picture.

LJ adds that it would be really useful information to assess what's happening across the city.

LJ asked further about the reasons parents put on their application forms.

JL confirmed that upon making an application parents are able to give reasons for their preferences but generally don't and an application cannot be held up in order to obtain the reasoning.

MD noted that they had 31 referred by the Roman Catholic School in 2016, mostly St Mary's, most were nursery and reception, not many mid phase, mostly for the Polish community.

7. Availability of school places.

JL discussed the availability of school places across the city. Primary places continue to be an issue in many areas.

Highlights are as follows;

- Schools to the west of the city have fewer places available
- There is a low number of places available in the Foundation Phase
- There is a total surplus of 7% in the primary sector
- Total at secondary level is 10%
- WG's target is 10%

JL states there are pockets of development where we are expecting new pressures, new developments, furthermore schools budgets are being reduced which increases pressure on schools.

DW informs the Forum re the capacity assessment. This has shown that by and large that Newport schools are being used to full capacity. Some school capacity has been increased slightly but nothing significant.

8. AOB

None

9. Future meeting dates

21 November 2017

Proposed - 20 March 2018

19 June 2018, tbc at next meeting