

School Admissions Forum

Minutes of the Meeting

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Present: Roman Catholic Diocese (in the Chair)  
NCC Service Manager  
NCC School Admissions & Appeals Manager  
NCC Elected Member  
NCC Elected Member  
Secondary Community Schools Representative  
Local Community Representative (GEMS)  
Local Community Representative (EY)  
Advisor for Behaviour & Autism (non-voting)  
Community Schools Representative  
Parent Governor Representative  
Parent Governor Representative  
Parent Governor Representative  
Looked After Children Representative (non - voting)  
Service Children Regional School Liaison Officer

Clerk to the Forum

Apologies: NCC Elected Member  
Community Schools Representative  
VA Schools Representative  
VA Schools Representative

**1. Apologies for Absence**

AR opened the meeting and welcomed those present. Apologies as noted above were given and accepted.

**2. Minutes of meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

The minutes of the meeting were held to be a true and accurate record.

**3. Matters Arising**

AR informed the Forum of a recent reorganisation within the Anglican Diocesan. The position for a Church in Wales Diocesan Representative will therefore be on hold until the vacancy has been filled.

**4. Review of Membership**

Positions for review are as follows:

- Director of Schools and Colleges for the RC Diocesan
- NCC representative
- Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools representative (CVCS)

AR and JL's positions for continuation were approved and LP confirmed that a CVCS Representative is being approved at the next NAPH's (Newport Association for Primary Heads) meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

LP also informed the Forum that the role for Armed Forces Representative is now being undertaken by CW, who was welcomed to the meeting.

## 5. Annual Admission Round

JL took the Forum through the report.

- 5348 applications were received in total in respect of the 2020 Phase admission round;
- An additional 77 year 7 places were negotiated across 2 secondary schools; 60 at Bassaleg and 17 at The John Frost School;
- No in catchment refusals were made during the on time Secondary round;
- Despite additional capacity also being established at Mount Pleasant Primary and Ysgol Gymraeg Ifor Hael, 13 in catchment refusals were made during the on time Reception round – 3 were later given a place through the waiting list process;
- The late figures for 2020 illustrate a significant drop however it is important to note that up until last year, these figures also included changes of preferences, as it was administratively difficult to isolate "true lates". The team have now found a way to identify them and a large proportion represent those that just did not submit on time, despite a number of reminders.
- The number of preferences met has gone down for Reception but up for Secondary. There are no obvious reasons for this and could relate to parental choices;
- The Appeals process was impacted by the pandemic with all appeals being put on hold until revised legislation was received from Welsh Government. All on time appeals however were held by September.

C.AN asked if there was a reason why the Secondary and Nursery cohorts appear to be slightly smaller than the Reception. DW confirmed the Planning of School Places Group monitors demographics and trends however there is nothing we can pin point to specifically monitor that.

- Nursery decisions for September 2021 and January Rising 3's will be issued on 2<sup>nd</sup> December (April Rising 3's are issued in the Spring);
- The Secondary closing date closes shortly and the Admissions team are currently chasing up any outstanding applications;
- The closing date for Reception 2021 is 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and to date, over 1000 applications have already been received.

DW thanked FR for being amenable in establishing an additional class. FR explained it had supported the school and avoided the need for restructure.

## 6. In - Year Admissions/Places Available

JL highlighted the following:

- Pupil population forecasts indicate that by 2025 there will be 13,140 primary school and 12,046 secondary school children in Newport - this represents an additional 1,014 children compared with 2020;
- The total number of applications received did decrease in comparison to previous years which in part can be attributed to the pandemic as the team didn't appear to receive as many applications during the lockdown when schools were closed;

- The volume of applications received due to a move into the city has remained consistent and consequently represents a pressure finding places, specifically for families with siblings;
- The number of applications processed within targets has increased slightly for primary and decreased for secondary, however this will be in part due to the Managed Moves process.

KD explained that the Managed Move Panel meets every Wednesday and enables schools to share powerful information, which benefits the young person. LPi commented it is an essential process for complex cases.

LPi asked if the Admissions Team monitor in-year movement of pupils from September and if so has this decreased due to the pandemic. JL confirmed an analysis will be carried out on the Autumn term in Spring the figures will be brought to the next meeting in March.

JL explained the team have had some difficulties with obtaining the places available figures due to the software, however believe that the trend is still more or less the same.

C.AN asked if 10% is a threshold we have to aim for. DW confirmed that 10% is the optimum level recommended by Welsh Government in terms of value for money relating to operational costs and suitable choice for parents.

JB noted the Welsh medium secondary figure was 26% last year and asked when is that forecasted to come in line with 10%. DW & JL explained this figure takes into consideration the whole school capacity of 150 places per year group, however in the first year of opening the admission number at YGGIC was capped at 90 and then 120 for the following two years. The percentage is therefore expected to come in line 3 years out from that figure.

## **7. Fair Access Policy**

KW recapped on the Fair Access Policy, which was raised at the last meeting and updated the Forum on the current position.

The draft policy has firstly been consulted on with the Senior Management Team and some updates have been made, for example, where a child has been out of education for a significant period of time, this will be defined as 2 months or more. Another category that is being considered is those identified with mental health and wellbeing issues.

The next step is to meet with secondary Head Teachers with a view to put in place by January.

## **8. Consultation**

JL confirmed that the Council are not proposing to make any changes to the admission arrangements for September 2022.

The consultation is due to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 and conclude by 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

## **9. Annual Report**

The annual report was circulated to all Forum members prior to the meeting, containing information similar to that reported in this meeting. JL confirmed that the report must be submitted to Welsh Government by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and therefore any outstanding comments must be emailed through to LP.

## **10. Reorganisation Programme**

DW provided updates on the following 3 projects:

### New Welsh-medium Primary School

The proposal to establish a new Welsh-medium primary school was determined in June 2020 and work is underway to open as planned in September 2021. A temporary governing body has been formed and will work with the Council to organise the arrangements for the new school – including agreeing a name and appointing a Headteacher.

The school will be open to Nursery and Reception pupils only in the first year whilst based at Caerleon. 5 1<sup>st</sup> preferences have been received so far within the on time nursery admission round and the application window for Reception pupils will open in November 2020. The Council are currently agreeing a programme of works to commence on site by the end of February, with an anticipated completion date of 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021.

### Expansion of Bassaleg School

The proposal to expand the capacity of Bassaleg School from 1747 to 2050 pupil places was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020, with formal consultation ending on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020. This will include an investment of £29 million for expansion and improvement works. 180 responses were received in total and a consultation report will be published around Christmas.

C.AN asked if this would include any new buildings. DW confirmed the Griffin block will be demolished and replaced.

### Amalgamation of Standalone Nursery Provision

The proposal to amalgamate Fairoak Nursery School and Kimberley Nursery School into a single school on the Fairoak site was re-launched in June 2020. Formal consultation has concluded and a consultation report has been prepared and published on the Newport City Council website. A decision on moving to the next stage, the publication of a statutory notice, is currently in progress and anticipated to be published around 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

## **11. AOB**

EK updated the Forum on the number of referrals received by GEMS. 148 had been received this time last year, however only 93 have been received so far for the 2020/21 academic year; 12 secondary and 81 primary. This is likely to be due to the pandemic.

## **12. Future Meeting Dates**

The next meeting is due on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and the summer term's meeting was agreed for 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021.