

Newport City Council: Education Services

School Admissions Forum

Minutes of the Meeting



Date: 22nd June 2021

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

Clerk to the Forum

Apologies: NCC Elected Member
Parent Governor Representative
Secondary Community Schools Representative
Local Community Representative (EY)

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 16th March 2021

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

3. Matters Arising

JL confirmed the consultation on admission arrangements for 2022 has now concluded and is available on the website. VA schools were provided with the revised distance wording.

4. Review of Membership

The period for expressions of interest / nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair was extended by 2 weeks.

5. Annual Admission Round

JL summarised the report providing an update on the current position:

- All published/statutory offer dates were met, despite the Reception offer date being within the period of lockdown;

- The Team are continuing to process late applications and changes of preference on a monthly basis;
- Additional capacity was created at Bassaleg and The John Frost Schools to accommodate demand from the catchment areas;
- Whilst places are still available at Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed, only 1 out of the 7 English Medium secondary schools now has places remaining – Llanwern High;
- 45 secondary appeals were received in respect of the on-time admission round. 3 of which were upheld on behalf of the parent. Reception appeals are currently ongoing;
- Additional capacity was also created at High Cross Primary to accommodate demand from the Bassaleg cluster, however despite this, 30 children that expressed an ‘on-time’ preference for their catchment school were unsuccessful; 17 at Jubilee Park Primary and 13 at Langstone Primary;
- One pupil was offered a place at Jubilee Park Primary School in error; however, no pupils were displaced as a result;
- 266 English-medium Reception places remain available; 16% of the total number of places in the east of the city and 6% in the west;
- There are limited spaces available at Charles Williams Church in Wales Primary School and at the offer date, a small number remained within the RC primary school cluster;
- More than half of the Council’s nursery settings still have places available for September 2021, including 3 of the 4 Welsh Medium nurseries.

PB confirmed that St Joseph’s RC High School is also full. 36 appeals were received with 3 being upheld in favour of the parent. The policy change for 2021 relating to the catchment area however has had a positive impact.

Forum members agreed to add VA schools as a standard agenda item. JM to collate information on behalf of the VA primary schools.

JB referred to the secondary position and enquired whether there are any plans going forward if this was to continue. DW confirmed the position is being closely monitored with PLASC and strategic planning.

6. In - Year Admissions

JL reported on the Spring Term 2021 position:

- 255 applications were received during the Spring term, however it is believed the pandemic had an impact. An average of 1400 applications are received per year and applications have picked back up again this summer;
- Around half (52%) of applications continue to be made because of a move into the city;
- 71% of first preferences met, which is higher than usual, however remains indicative of the city context;
- 96% of applications processed within WG timescales, with valid reasons recorded for those going over the deadline;
- At 27th April, the Council was holding the following level of surplus places:
 - 9% EM primary school places
 - 13% WM primary school places
 - 9% EM secondary school places
 - 29% WM secondary school places
- Within the Roman Catholic cluster, surplus places are 2% primary school and 1% secondary school.
- The Council have experienced an increase in OCYG (Out of Chronological Year Group) requests due to missed schooling as a result of the pandemic.

JL gave the team’s thanks to school clerks for proving information during this difficult time.

PB confirmed St Joseph's RC High currently have waiting lists for Years 7, 8 and 9.

EK updated the Forum on the Hong Kong National Visa Scheme. Whilst we continue to expect fairly large numbers, to date only 1 family has settled in Newport.

7. Fair Access Policy

A copy of the draft Fair Access Policy was circulated in March and also shared with the Managed Moves Panel. Feedback has been received and actioned regarding wording on vulnerable groups.

The pilot will commence in September for secondary schools and applications will be monitored and reported on once in place.

PB enquired about actions for St Joseph's RC High. JL to arrange separate meeting.

8. Reorganisation Programme

DW provided an update on the current position:

- Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Gwenlli is on track with the refurbished building due to be handed over in July 2021;
- Demand for the new school has been low however promotion is taking place;
- Newport Nursery School will open in September 2021 in place of the amalgamated Fair oak and Kimberley Nursery Schools and a headteacher has also been appointed;
- During the consultation on the expansion of Bassaleg School objections were received and therefore the final decision has been referred to a Local Determination Panel which is due to conclude at the end of this month;
- Formal consultation has commenced on the proposal to expand Ysgol Bryn Derw and will run until 1st August 2021;
- The Council has launched a joint proposal with the governing bodies of Gaer Primary School and Maesglas Primary School to federate the two schools under a single governing body. A period of formal consultation and stakeholder engagement is now underway.

9. AOB

The ADEW Welsh School Admission Officers Group met today confirming, due to Covid – 19, there is no update on the revision of the School Admissions Code as yet.

JL referred to the Monitoring and Evaluation report which was presented at the last Forum meeting and informed members that a survey will be issued over the coming weeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the School Admissions Forum.

EK updated the Forum on the current position with the Afghan Resettlement programme confirming 6 families were expected to arrive imminently. A 2nd programme, the Global Resettlement programme is also ongoing, however it is unknown at this time how many children this may bring.

10. Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting is due on 16th November 2021 and the Spring term's meeting was agreed for 15th March 2022.