



Minutes of meeting on 28th April 2011 at Castlewood, Clevedon

Present

Justin Templer	Diocese of Clifton
Caroline Hostein	VA Catholic Primary Schools
Sally Varley	Local Authority (Planning and Access)
Jack Dagnall	Governor (Secondary)
Bill McEntee	NSC Admissions Policy Officer (Secretary)
Gary Lewis	Foundation Schools
Theresa Gale	Bath and Wells Diocese (Chair)
Julie Fox	Community Primary Schools
Luci Amos	VC Primary Schools
Councillor Anne Kemp	Local Authority Councillor
Geoff Flynn	NSC Assistant Locality Leader
Chris Hustwick	NSC School Admissions and Transport
Terri Knowlton	NSC Governor Services

1. Apologies

Lynne Packer, Cate Hill, David Gradwell, Peter Binding, Eufron Parry

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2011 were reviewed. A minor amendment was made to Item 4 paragraph 4, and Item 5 the 3rd paragraph was deleted as this was not reported at the meeting.

Otherwise the minutes of the 17 March 2011 meeting, with the amendments above, were agreed as an accurate record and will be circulated and signed by the Chair at the next Admissions Forum.

3. Actions and Matters arising from the minutes

Review of action points from previous meeting:

- Bill confirmed that he had provided the number of pupils offered St Bedes.

With regard to item 4, Sally Varley mentioned the Sebastian James Review of Education Capital and that the recommendations have still to be consulted upon and implemented which will take time.

A hearing loop system was discussed, and whether Gordano School had one, or if the mobile system will need to be brought along. Gary Lewis confirmed that the hall had a hearing loop system.

Jack Dagnall had a letter published in the North Somerset Times which gave him the title of secondary representative of the North Somerset Admissions Forum. It was discussed that any comment made by the Forum has to go through the Chair and agreed by the Forum.

Jack apologised as it was intended as a personal statement, but the paper reported he was a representative of the Forum, and it also gave inaccuracies too.

Clarification was sought about the confidentiality of the Admissions Forum. Sally Varley confirmed that all information can be shared, unless you are advised in advance that it is confidential. It will be made very clear if it is. There is a link on the North Somerset website for Admission Forum papers, once the minutes are agreed, and this is available to anyone who accesses the website.

4. Figures for placements under In Year Fair Access protocols and figures of Permanent Exclusions.

Geoff Flynn reported that most figures are similar to last year, except negotiated transfers are slightly up. Permanent exclusions have increased dramatically to 21, but the independent appeal panel overturned two of these, so there are now 19. This is the highest figure for seven years, the previous highest being 16.

There are difficulties getting pupils who are permanently excluded into other mainstream schools as some are full. There are then transport issues, such as timings, and cost of providing transport for some of them. There are also other issues such as parental preference. There has to be provision put in place on the 6th day of a pupil being permanently excluded, and if a place hasn't been found it is generally in one of the pupil referral units (PRUs) and the young people like this type of provision. So this also adds to the difficulty of getting them back into mainstream schools. It has meant that the average time out of school following a permanent exclusion is around 30 days.

Collaborative working between schools and the local authority concerning pupils being excluded or for negotiated transfers were discussed

With negotiated transfers, 23 are listed in the report and 19 have outcomes, with 12 going on roll of the other school. There has been more success this year.

Gary Lewis mentioned the White Paper and the changes in responsibility for financing alternatives to school.

Caroline Hostein mentioned the difficulties of taking pupils at Year 6 if they have been permanently excluded, and that schools are wary of taking pupils with extreme behaviour. Geoff said that primary exclusions are rare, but this year there were four primary permanent exclusions. There were discussions on why they are up; is it not being able to access audit funding quickly, or newer head teachers not being fully aware of all that could be available to support these pupils? (such as rapid response meetings, negotiated transfers)

There was a general discussion about multi agency working and locality teams, but the budget cuts will lead to a reduction in parental support and early intervention work with families of greater needs. Could this affect the number of fixed-term exclusions, and then it become more expensive to meet their needs?

The desire was expressed that schools who become academies should continue to work with protocols such as negotiated transfers. Gary Lewis said it would be good for schools to work in clusters, looking at the needs within that area and make decisions.

Tess Gale asked whether actions from the Forum could be to raise this at Scrutiny Panels.

Geoff explained the pupil referral unit type provision in the area currently provided by the Education Other Than at School service (EOTAS):

- The Larch Centre, Weston-super-Mare – Years 5 to 9
- Oak Hill, Nailsea – Years 5 to 9
- Fairways, Weston-super-Mare – Years 10 and 11
- SAIL (School for Alternative & Inclusive Learning), Weston-super-Mare - Year 11
- EOTAS Vocational Centre, Weston-super-Mare – Years 10 and 11

5. Update on Fair Access protocol review

Terri reported that the protocol had been amended, with more specific flow charts and she was looking at a checklist for the Fair Access form that schools complete, to ensure all information is received.

There were discussions around schools attending SCIP (Statutory & Complex Issues) to put their case on Fair Access issues, but as this Panel is used for a range of items, it could delay the process of getting a child into school.

The new Admissions Code has not yet been issued for consultation, but this could potentially affect the contents of the protocol, and the confusion of issuing a new version which then may have to be amended fairly promptly.

It was agreed that the paperwork should be circulated by the end of May to the Forum TK to action for Sept 2011.

6. Report on Reception intake and Junior transfer allocations for 2011-12

The September 2011 allocations met 88% of first preferences and 95% of all three preferences. Enclosures 3A and 3B gave an overview of the process. There were discussions around the Portishead and Worle areas and availability of school places, together with the rise in birth rate which affects this year's allocations. Justin Templer is concerned about the numbers in the Portishead area. All families who lived in the Portishead area and wanted their child to attend a school in the town did receive a local school reception place this year.

The extra demand this year was mainly in the Worle area, and Terri reported that there had been a range of responses to St Martin's being offered as a placement.

Julie Fox said that if she had known about the St Martin's School arrangements for reception places on offer day, she could have been more informed when talking to parents who were affected, and also informed nursery staff.

Caroline Hostein mentioned the later reception offer day this year and the difficulties in arranging the new children's induction. Terri explained that reception appeals were also scheduled right up until August due to the later offer day, and the issues with school applying for any audit funding and time to appoint staff.

Geoff Flynn stated that they pick up around 100 reception children who are CME (child missing education) and have not started at their allocated school yet or who have not applied for a school.

7. Review of set Coordinated Admissions schemes for 2012-13

Bill McEntee said there has not been any major change since consultation. But with regard to which parent should apply for the school place and who receives child benefit, unless they can't agree and we will draw lots.

Jack Dagnall asked about the new academies. It was confirmed that their schemes and arrangements had already been set so they would have to follow them until the new ones are set. But they still have to be fair and have regard to the Admissions Code. With regard to appeals, there is common text in the schemes so don't have to put in the policies too. Some schools are specifically putting in about appeals and some are not. Bill confirmed that for September 2013, schemes will need to review wording especially as there are a number of changes.

8. Review of set admission arrangements for 2012-13

1 – Admissions policies and admission numbers for Community and VC schools for 2012-13

2 – Foundation/Trust Schools

3 – VA Church of England Schools

4 – VA Catholic Schools

Bill confirmed:

1) Community and VC schools

Appendix 1 – secondary school criteria has been change to give priority for twins etc only when they are within the first geographical area (FGA) not when it is the nearest school, and other Admission Au

Appendix 5 – Admission numbers – Bill has now included St Martin's, Hillside, Mendip Green as potential primary status, and academies and the possibility of them happening.

Appendix 6 – 6th form, again about twins etc as in Appendix 1

Appendix 8 parts 1 and 2 – no changes but clarification within wording for the first geographical areas.

2) Foundation and Trusts school have tried to co-operate fully with any changes

3) VA Church of England schools – St John the Evangelist have included a SIF in their final policy which was not included in their proposed policy, so Bill will contact them as it cannot be added now. Wraxall Primary SIF is not clear and needs amending and Bill will contact them.

4) VA Catholic schools – most requested changes have been made but some changes are still required. Bill to contact the schools concerned.

9. Any Other Business

Bill raised Castlewood and the hearing loop, but it had also been discussed earlier and there is a system at Gordano School.

Jack asked about academy status and enhanced funding. Tess said there were a few incentives, with a “per pupil” additional funding, but it will be reduced on 1st September. Also an academy will get all the funding, and nothing will go to the local authority, as well as £25000 towards legal work to move towards academy status which may reduce later. There could also be some collaborative funding. Jack commented that there would be a reduction in LA resources, and useful experience and advice.

Next Meetings

7 July 2011 1.00 – 4.00 Gordano School, Portishead