



Final Minutes of meeting on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2011 at  
Castlewood, Clevedon

Present

|                  |                                           |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Peter Binding    | Foundation Trust Schools                  |
| Justin Templer   | Diocese of Clifton                        |
| Caroline Hostein | VA Catholic Primary Schools               |
| Sally Varley     | Local Authority (Planning and Access)     |
| David Gradwell   | Community SEN                             |
| Jack Dagnall     | Governor (Secondary)                      |
| Bill McEntee     | NSC Admissions Policy Officer (Secretary) |
| Ann-Marie Heath  | NSC Choice Advice                         |
| Gary Lewis       | Foundation Schools                        |
| Eurfron Parry    | Methodist Church                          |
| Cate Hill        | Special Schools                           |
| Theresa Gale     | Bath and Wells Diocese (Chair)            |
| Luci Amos        | VC Primary Schools                        |
| Tony Pearle*     | NSC School Organisation Manager           |
| Sarah Edwards    | NSC for minutes                           |

\*guest to present agenda item 9.

1. Apologies

Tim Pollock, Lynne Packer, Julie Fox, Geoff Flynn, Cllr Anne Kemp, Chris Hustwick

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2011 were reviewed.

Review of action points from previous meeting:

- Bill confirmed the requested amendment to Item 9 of the 24 November minutes had been actioned and an updated copy circulated to the Forum. Minutes were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.
- Bill confirmed that the review/consultation with Secondary schools for the Yr 6 transfer letters due to go out to parents in September will be undertaken with schools around June.
- Sally attended the Weston Heads meeting.
- The New School System, page 11 of the White Paper page is on the agenda for this meeting.
- The Code is under ministerial embargo; it should be available by the end of March.
- Forum Working Party on allocations and ethnicity is on the agenda for this meeting.
- Review of Forum members is on the agenda for this meeting.

Minutes of the 20 January 2011 meeting agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3. Actions and Matters arising from the minutes  
No actions/matters arising.

4. Further discussion on the White Paper on "The Importance of Teaching" now incorporated in the Education Bill.

Jack Dagnall summarised his concerns to the Forum regarding The New School System, Page 11 of the White Paper. Raising issues such as the Academy/Free Schools assumptions; privatisation of schools; concerns about prejudices; limiting parental choice; two-tier system of education with most deprived schools having the most deprived situation; lower attaining schools converting to Academies; reference was made to the Swedish Academy model and a quotation citing that it would not work in the UK unless it is profit motivated.

Discussion followed on some of the points raised - shared concerns for divisiveness; role of the Forum is to ensure fair access for all; some proposals in the White Paper could significantly reduce the current level of protection for vulnerable pupils; potential for some schools to be more selective and therefore need to look at what mechanism we have locally to support fair access; further discussions needed on supporting vulnerable people; discussed the removal of the statutory requirement for Forums, that they will be voluntary in future and how to address issues raised.

Discussed Bristol situation regarding St Ursula's School, secondary schools in Bristol being 20% under subscribed and the potential impact from Bristol on Gordano/St Katherine's; discussed Backwell converting to Academy status; discussed White Paper assumptions that the majority of schools will be Academies within the next 2 years; schools will be able to move to Academy status without outside sponsors – move with same Governing Body, rebadged not privatised with focus on more collaboration between schools; there is no need for schools to specialise, they can become an Academy and then fulfill the requirements, schools can become an Academy without consultation, they can decide who they consult.

Sally Varley gave an overview of the differences between converting Academies, those that decide to form and those that are set-up as new schools due to extra demand for school places. North Somerset schools converting to Academy status will be mostly within a partnership with other schools.

The discussion was concluded as a situation to watch closely and more information/discussion will need to follow.

5. Review of the Fair Access protocol

Justin Templer raised his concerns that no progress has been made on this item and that there are no minutes of the meeting at St Katherine's.

Terri was unable to attend the Forum meeting but sent an update to members via Sally Varley: Paperwork has been amended following a working group meeting held in February

at St Katherine's. Terri is awaiting the new Code of Practice as this may change the protocol. Terri will issue the protocol in the next few weeks with additional comments.

## 6. Review of Forum Membership

There are 20 core positions on the Forum and there is a requirement for 1 position to be reallocated to create an opening for an Academy member.

Sally clarified the current breakdown of representation on the Forum and indicated that there are 3 long standing vacancies that have not been filled - Governor rep(Primary), Community Schools rep, VA/CofE rep. Currently the Forum has 2 Governor representative positions (Secondary and Primary), there has never been a Primary representative in attendance, only Jack Dagnall as Secondary Governor rep.

North Somerset schools changing to Academy status are currently Backwell from 1<sup>st</sup> April, Hans Price from 1<sup>st</sup> May and other schools are consulting on Academy status. In accordance with the code an Academy representative must have a place on the Forum. The LA determines membership of the Forum. Several Academy representatives can attend a Forum meeting but only 1 person representing all Academies will have voting rights as a core member. Ideally an Academy representative to attend the next Forum meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April.

The Forum agreed to take a temporary measure of condensing Governor representation from Secondary and Primary to just 1 position fulfilled by Jack Dagnall and thus creating a vacancy for an Academy representative.

## 7. Secondary transfer allocations for 2011-12

Bill updated the forum on allocations for Secondary offers, referring to the spreadsheet handouts and providing an explanation of the figures.

The reduction in Gordano applications was raised; Gary explained the low birth rate year in Portishead, there has been a higher number of Bristol residents obtaining places this year due to fewer in area applications, concerns over numbers for future years given the demand on school places in Portishead for Primary year groups.

Justin queried how many North Somerset pupils were offered places at St Bede's. Bill didn't have the information to hand but will follow up with providing this data. **Action BM**

## 8. Responses to consultation on proposed admission arrangements for 2012-13

1- Coordinated Schemes and Community/VC Schools policies

2 – Foundation/Trust Schools

3 – VA Church of England Schools

4 – VA Catholic Schools

Bill updated the Forum on the 3 sets of responses received to the consultation on proposed admission arrangements.

1). A parents comment on the over subscription criteria – that the LA should use the shortest route rather than direct line measurement. The Forum discussed the implications

for this and it was felt that if the shortest route measurement was used there could be disputes over the route taken - direct line determines who gets the place not how they get there.

2). Annabelle Teal (Independent Parental for Special Education Advice) – commented that admission policies should clarify how we process admission arrangements for SEN children, also she included other points in relation to Foundation and VA policies, which Bill has sent on to the relevant schools.

Justin requested clarification on the SEN admission policy; Sally clarified that SEN assess the most appropriate school to meet the child's educational needs and the child is admitted under the SEN code – parents do have the right to apply for a school of their choice mainstream/special. Peter gave an example of the problems experienced by schools where a parent determines their child attends a mainstream school.

Gary requested clarification on the wording for SEN criteria. Bill confirmed current wording and the additional wording requested by Annabelle, which included "In certain circumstances the Admission Number/Level will be exceeded". Concerns were raised over this wording, as the Forum felt it would unduly raise parent's expectations of obtaining a place. The Forum agreed that Bill would write to schools to ask them not to include the line "In certain circumstances the Admission Number/Level will be exceeded" from the text concerning Statemented children, within their policies.

Jack requested clarification on the funding of SEN pupils; explanation was given on the audit funding route, that the statement clarifies the child's needs but does not come with funding the school has to apply for audit funding. Sally added clarification that there is some money within the formula as a provision for SEN.

3). Responses from Yatton residents regarding Federation of Yatton Infants and Juniors and that the over subscription criteria should be amended so that children attending Infants automatically get a Junior school place.

It was confirmed to the Forum that Yatton Infants and Juniors have the same intake number. Sally provided an overview of the Federation arrangements; they are separate schools even though they are federated; pupils cannot be automatically allocated a place.

## 9. Possible changes of provision at Hillside First, Mendip Green First and St Martin's C of E Junior Schools

The Forum was provided with a copy of the report proposing possible changes of provision at Hillside First, Mendip Green First and St Martin's Junior Schools.

TP gave an overview of the report and proposals: St Martins, Hillside and Mendip Green to work more closely together; Hard Federation is not required; schools to achieve Primary status via Collaboration arrangement, which is a less formal arrangement; all-through Primary is the aspirations of School Organisation; concerns have been expressed about the size of 630-place Primary schools – effective management and structure of the school is key not size; desire of all 3 schools is to embark on the Collaboration process as soon as possible; schools benefitting from 'Future Schools' group – remit of the group is to help schools work together under collaborative arrangement; aim is to commence the consultation process before the end of Term 6; Forum, CYPS Policy & Scrutiny and Executive member to authorise process.

Discussed school place numbers and organisation – spreadsheet available if Forum members require a copy. David Gradwell requested a copy – **Action TP to send.**

Discussed communication process; schools to share information with Governing Body and Staff; communication of information/changes to parents; changes need to be carefully managed; discussed possible dual registration/movement of children between the schools; working with Early Years team to set up foundation unit.

David Gradwell requested clarification on the physical locations of the 3 schools, clarification on the transition arrangements and how many years it will be before normality resumes.

Sally confirmed the locations of the schools; pupils attending the schools currently will transfer to St Martins; could take up to 6-7 years to move through but will achieve sooner if possible; focus on schools expertise - First schools expertise in early years and Junior expertise in Key Stage 2 - collaboration between the schools will mean that they can share expertise/staffing across the 3 schools. Schools may design amongst themselves the movement of children to fully utilise assets of the 3 sites.

No other questions raised.

The Forum took a vote on whether to accept the next step to support the recommendation. David Gradwell proposed the vote and the result was unanimous in favour of supporting the recommendation. As the author of the proposed changes Sally Varley did not vote.

## 10. Forum Working Party on allocations and ethnicity

Handouts were given to the Forum.

Bill provided a summary of the 2011-12 data, which indicates that children of other ethnic origins are not getting the same outcome as those that are white/British.

Eurfron queried whether the figures include all applications including out of area - Bristol has greater ethnic diversity which could offer an explanation to the data. Bill confirmed that Bristol applications are included in the data so one theory which is being looked into is the greater ethnic diversity also the distance Bristol residents are from North Somerset schools so based on distance they may not get their 1<sup>st</sup> preference.

Discussed Reception applications; percentage outcomes are similar between ethnic groups; smaller number of Bristol applications for Primary applications.

David Gradwell queried what the data indicates if OOA applications are excluded, also whether applicants indicate their ethnic origin on the application form. Bill confirmed further investigation of data is required and ethnic origin is not requested on application forms - for Secondary school applications, ethnic origin information is held by schools – for Primary schools information is known within pre-school databases.

Bill confirmed further analysis will be undertaken and reported back to the Forum at a future date. **Action BM.**

## 11. Any Other Business

David Gradwell raised concerns that, due to the noise from the air conditioning system, hearing conversations across the room was made very difficult – Justin Templar and Jack Dagnall confirmed. A hearing loop was in operation but did not appear to work effectively – Bill proposed to bring the mobile system from the Town Hall for the next meeting and to ask if anything can be done to reduce the background noise. **Action BM.**

### Next Meetings

|               |             |                            |
|---------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| 28 April 2011 | 1.00 – 4.00 | Castlewood, Clevedon       |
| 7 July 2011   | 1.00 – 4.00 | Gordano School, Portishead |