

Admissions Forum – Meeting held on Wednesday, 24th September, 2008.

Present:-

Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools

Gill Bodman – Western House Primary School
Kate Makinson – Chalvey Early Years Centre

Foundation Schools

Hilda Clarke – Langley Grammar School
Maureen Ball – Baylis Court School

Parent Governor Representatives

Mohammed Din – Ryvers Primary School

Local Education Authority

Councillors Dale-Gough, Pantelic, Shine

Officers Present

Bill Alexander (Assistant Director, Raising Achievement)
Tony Browne (Head of Schools Services)

Apologies for Absence:- Chris Bowler, Councillor Dodds, Bowler, Italo Cafolla and Kevin Marsh

PART 1

10. Minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2008

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2008 were agreed as a correct record subject to the removal of the words “Roman Catholic” which preceded the words “child who has passed the 11+” from minute item no. 5.

11. Grammar Schools Admissions

The Assistant Director of Raising Achievement informed the Forum that a report on all secondary schools, both selective and non-selective had been commissioned. This was currently available in draft form and was due to be discussed at the Slough Education Forum in the same week. It was confirmed that when one or two issues had been finalised the report would be considered by the Admissions Forum. It was noted that this tied in with some of the issues that the Forum had been looking into and these would be included in the report. A Member presented the findings following a question

at the last meeting of the admissions forum regarding pupils in Slough scoring 111 and above who did not receive a place in a Grammar school.

At Herschel Grammar eight children who achieved the required pass mark did not receive a place. At Langley Grammar this figure was 29 children, although at St Bernard's all children who passed were offered a place. Figures were not available for Slough Grammar as this was not part of the consortium. No data on Slough Grammar was held by the local authority as it was a self-controlling foundation school. The results were based on 'SL' postcodes, as that was how the data was recorded by the schools. Therefore it was likely that some pupils recorded, who did not receive the offer of a place, did not live in the borough. In total 37 children scoring 111 did not receive a grammar school place in slough. This represented only about 2% of secondary school entrants in 2008.

The Chair commented that since South Bucks grammar schools used catchment areas it would be appropriate for the Slough grammar schools to do likewise. An officer confirmed that no matter where a child went to school in Slough they were assured of an excellent standard of education as confirmed by excellent OfSTED reports. A member mentioned the skills gap that existed in Slough, it was noted that this was due to not retaining high achieving pupils in the area rather than a lack of provision in Slough schools. Business needed to interact more closely with schools to ensure that pupils were aware of the opportunities available. Workplace diplomas were being introduced which would hopefully improve the current situation but these were at the very early stages.

Members noted that there were no non-selective schools remaining in Langley and it was believed that children living outside of Slough applying to the Langley Academy had received places when Slough children had not.

Resolved – That a report on the Secondary Admissions Survey be brought to the next meeting of the Forum.

12. DCSF Admissions Consultation

Tony Browne, Head of School Services highlighted the key points from the DCSF Admission Consultation Paper. This was addressed to all Schools and local authorities. Some of the members present commented that they had not seen a copy of the document but believed that it had been mentioned to governors. The Forum was asked if it would like to make a separate response or endorse the comments of the local authority's response. Members felt that in theory the proposals for changes to admissions arrangements were something to be supported but whether it would be practical would remain to be seen.

Key options for changes to the role of the Admissions Forum were highlighted. The proposal for additional requirements and guidelines surrounding admission for excluded children was already supported by best practice in Slough. There were proposed changes to the statutory

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arrangements for changes to the PAN. Members also noted the difficulty in implementing the proposals concerning school ethos and the subjectivity of this. It was agreed that the draft response from the local authority would be circulated to all members and any comments would need to be received by 2nd October in order to submit the response. Members may also submit individual responses if they so wished.

13. Dates of Future Meetings

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on Thursday 22nd January 2009.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 4.00 pm and closed at 4.40 pm)