

DEVON LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM

12 July 2005

Present

Devon County Council

Berman, Bray, Pennington, Mrs Foggin (for Mrs Spence) and Yabsley

Devon Schools Group

Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools

Mr Birch

Foundation Schools

Mr Sindall

Church of England Diocesan Board of Education

Mrs C Arnold

Community Representatives

Early Years Childcare Development Partnership

Mrs M Strudwick

Devon Federation of PTAs

Mr Duttson

Neighbouring LEAs

Plymouth Council

Mr Leigh

Cornwall County Council

Mrs J Turner

Somerset County Council

Mr Hone

Apologies Received: Mr R Adcock (Devon Association of Governors), Mrs S Nield (Devon Schools), Mr Shilvock (Devon Schools), Cllr Mrs Spence (Devon County Council) and Mr Walker (Voluntary Aided Schools)

1 Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Councillor Berman was elected Chairman and Mrs Strudwick Vice Chairman for the ensuing year.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 23 February 2005 were signed as a correct record.

3 Admission Code of Practice and Devon Prospectuses

The Secretary reported that these documents were available for new and continuing members on request. They can also be downloaded from www.dfes.gov.uk/sacode ; www.devon.gov.uk/nextstep.pdf; [www.devon.gov.uk/the first step.pdf](http://www.devon.gov.uk/the_first_step.pdf)

4 Review of Admissions for 2005

The Forum considered the report of the Secretary (E0/05/023) on the outcomes of the secondary co-ordinated scheme for admissions for September 2005, the Exeter transition and on the proposed changes for 2006/7.

This year the County Council was able to offer 99% of parents applying for a secondary school place a preference as expressed on the Common Application Form with 93.4% of parents being offered a place at their highest ranked Preference School. A survey indicated that 97% of parents had found the Next Step Booklet to be helpful or very helpful. The dates for allocation of places after the main allocation posed some difficulties. There was the possibility that the County Council could be defending appeals while having vacancies because of 'shake down'. The officers, as a consequence, would review practice for the 2007 scheme. The outcome for the complex position in Exeter was that for year 6/7 students 89% of parents were offered a place at the school ranked as their highest preference; for yr 2 97.6 % were offered a place in their First Preference school; for Yr 3 97.5 % were offered a place; and in Reception 97.8% of Exeter parents received a place in their First Preference primary or infant school.

Proposed operational changes for 2006 included a short guide to admissions as part of the Next Step Booklet and referring parents to relevant sections for more detailed information, raising awareness of the primary co-ordinated admission arrangements and meetings with other LEAs to agree arrangements for exchange of information for the 2006 round of secondary admissions.

In 2007 the proposed arrangements included a review of 'late' consideration dates in the Secondary Co-ordinated scheme for consultation.

Members' discussion points with officers included:

- The new co-ordinated admissions scheme offered a better choice for parents over that of the first preference scheme in that it gave parents the option to apply for the preferred school without jeopardising their prospects of entry into the designated (local) school. This would partially explain the apparent drop from 98% of First preferences place being met to 93.4% of parents being offered a place at their highest Ranked Preferred School. Some members referred to the disadvantage of the current system whereby a parent's highest preference choice could be usurped by another parent where the school was not their highest preference. The new system however did

encourage the attendance at local schools, whereas with the First Preference scheme gave added advantage to those parents who were, for financial and practical reasons, able to transport children further a field to schools other than the designated.

- The need for a review of 'late' consideration dates in the secondary co-ordinated scheme for consultation in 2007. The Cornwall practice was to allocate places on an ongoing basis at oversubscribed schools which prevented the possibility of the LEA defending appeals whilst having vacancies as a result of 'shake down' (identifying and confirmation of offers being accepted and taken)
- The complex arrangements in Exeter with two systems operating; First Preference for Reception/Primary/Middle schools and Equal Ranked Preference for Secondary and with the LEA administering the scheme and notifying parents
- efforts of the LEA in targeting parents of pre school children about the primary admissions process in advance of the 2006 round - completed application forms would be sent to the highest ranked primary schools by parents and then forwarded by the schools to the LEA; this would enable primary schools to estimate anticipated numbers
- promotion of on-line applications as part of the e-government initiative
- a member suggested that the LEA could also state within the Common Application Form that no acknowledgement of the application would be made – this would be considered by the LEA
- following previous suggestions the published information for parents would include a clearer statement that if a non-designated school was preferred by parents the child would not be entitled to free school transport.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the successful outcomes for the 2005 admission round be welcomed;
- (b) that the following operational changes be approved involving:
 - (i) a short guide for parents within the Next Step
 - (ii) improved liaison with primary schools and raising awareness of the new arrangements and their implications; and
 - (iii) meetings with neighbouring LEA officers to agree arrangements for the 2006 round of admissions;
- (c) that a review of 'late' consideration dates in the secondary co-ordinated scheme for consultation in 2007 be approved.

5 Admission Arrangements 2006/7

The Forum noted the report of the Secretary (E0/05/024) on the admission arrangements for 2006/7 including the consultation process. All Admitting Authorities must undertake consultation by 1 March and arrangements must be determined by 15 April taking into account comments received. The report outlined the consultation process for 2006 carried out by the County Council and on behalf of the other admitting authorities. The admission arrangements for community and VC schools had been approved by the Council's Executive on 19 April 2005.

The County Council had lodged formal objections with the adjudicator regarding proposed arrangements for 2006 for 8 VA/Foundation schools. Subsequently local agreement had been reached with one school, and a meeting had been arranged with another. A meeting with the Adjudicator and the County Council, to which all 7 schools where an objection remained would be held on 19 July 2005.

The report also detailed the publicity drive to encourage parents to make on-line admission applications. Only 1.3% of the applications for 2005/6 had been made online and the target for 2006/7 was 5% as set out in the Admissions Service Action Plan.

6 Inclusion: In Year Admissions Protocol

The Forum considered the report of the Secretary (E0/05/025) on the role of the Forum in monitoring the admission of vulnerable pupils in Devon, on how well the In Year Admissions Protocol was working and the report also detailed the updated 'Managed Moves' protocol.

A representative from the Community and VC Schools outlined the disproportionate effect of the In Year Admission Protocol on certain popular schools, notably where two popular schools were in close vicinity. It was suggested that the arrangements could be amended whereby a child could be placed in the 'next next' available school bearing in mind different expectations of reasonable travel distances within the County and/or that a cap could be imposed on the number of casual admissions correlating for example to the number of class groups within a year.

The representative outlined the effect on a school in having to accept excluded and other children and their weak negotiating position. The LEA Group Manager (inclusion) outlined the support packages available for children and schools, the initiatives to promote inclusion and the Secretary also referred to the possible disproportionate effect on under subscribed schools if children were only to be placed where vacancies existed, the need to allocate places within reasonable travelling distances and that schools internal organisation was a matter for the Head and this meant that the number of class groups could differ for schools even with the same or similar PAN level.

These were all points which the Forum agreed could be discussed by a meeting arranged by DASH to which the LEA officers would be invited. Any proposals on the In Year Admission Protocol emanating from the meeting could then be relayed to this LAF for consideration at a future meeting. Any proposed changes made to the policy as a result of the discussions could then be consulted upon for the 2007 round.

In Somerset practice included regular meetings of a Panel involving primary and secondary heads and LEA officers to review data/information relating to excluded and looked after children and this appeared to be working well.

RESOLVED

(a) that the role of the Forum in monitoring the admission of vulnerable pupils in Devon be noted;

(b) that the data relating to admissions made using the policy be continued to be monitored and reported to this LAF;

(c) that any proposals by DASH to amend the current policy following a local meeting(s) be relayed to a future meeting of this LAF;

(d) that the updated 'Managed Moves Protocol' be supported.

7 Admission Appeals

The Forum noted the report of the Secretary (E0/05/026) on provisional statistics relating to the current year on appeals lodged in Devon and previous year's statistics in comparison to similar local authorities. The results from all authorities nationally were also reported. It was noted that for 2003/4 the number of appeals in Devon had been in decline and for the current round the trend appeared to an increasing number of appeals for secondary schools with the new admission arrangements. For primary schools the expectation was also an increasing number of appeals following the introduction of the Primary Co-ordinated Scheme.

8 Dates of Future Meetings

Tuesday, 13 December at 10.30 am

Tuesday, 14 February 2006 at 10.30 am

The meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 12. 20 am

school admissions

The Government's Response to the Education and Skills Committee's Report on Secondary Education: School Admissions [Download the Document in PDF Format](#)



code of practice

The new School Admissions Code of Practice and School Admission Appeals Code of Practice came into force on 31 January 2003, and replace the Code of Practice on School Admissions and Code of Practice on School Admission Appeals.

To order a printed version of either Code of Practice ring

DfES Publications
text **0845 6055560**
phone **0845 6022260**
or email dfes@prolog.uk.com

quoting the relevant reference number.

 252KB PDF	Download School Admissions Code (ref: DfES/0031/2003)
 399KB PDF	Download School Admission Appeals Code (ref: DfES/0030/2003)

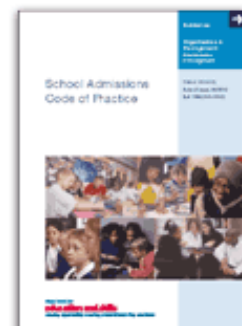
For general enquiries email school.admissions@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

In letter of 18 November to Chief Education Officers, Ministers recommended that Admission Forums should seek schools' agreement to protocols for sharing 'hard to place' pupils more equitably across all schools. They also encouraged groups of schools to work together in foundation partnerships and with their LEAs, to manage pupils at risk of exclusion, and those that are excluded. The letter introduced two guidance notes:

- On admission protocols for hard to place pupils [download in PDF format.](#)
[download in MS Word format.](#)
- On schools working together to manage exclusions

Co-ordinated admissions schemes

The Secretary of State imposed schemes in two counties for the co-ordination of secondary admissions processes for 2004/05. Links to both are below. These may be of interest to local parents (who can obtain more specific information on applying for a



School Admissions Code

school from their local education authority), schools, or to other local education authorities as an aide to formulating their own schemes. Authorities should also have regard to the School Admissions Code of Practice and read appropriate Regulations when formulating their schemes.

Relevant Regulations are:

- Statutory Instrument 2002 No. 2904 - The Education (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements)(Secondary Schools)(England) Regulations 2002;
- Statutory Instrument 2002 No. 2903 - The Education (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements)(Primary Schools)(England) Regulations 2002.
- Statutory Instrument 2002 No. 2751 - The Education (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (Primary Schools)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2003)



School Admission Appeals Code

Co-ordinated Admissions Schemes for Admissions in 2004

Kent

- [Letter from the Secretary of State](#)
- [Co-ordination scheme and timetable](#)

Dorset

- [Qualifying Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for secondary schools in the area of Dorset Local Education Authority \(download word document\)](#)

Co-ordinated Admissions Schemes for Admissions in 2005

Kent

- [Letter from Stephen Twigg](#)
- [Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme 2005](#)

Bromley

- [Letter from Stephen Twigg](#)
- [Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme 2005](#)

[Download advice](#)