

Minutes

For: Admissions and Place Planning Forum

Date: 13.11.2023

Time: 15:30-17:30

Location: Video Conference

Attendees:

Acting Chair

Peter Gibb: Head of Service, Education Access and Infrastructure (PG)

Local Authority Officers

Annabel Bates: Director of Education (AB)

Tracy Jones: Group Manager, Pupil Services (TJ)

Ada Egot: Commissioner Education Place Planning (AE)

Clerk

Kiran Parkash Singh: Admissions and Appeals Team Leader (Primary)

Representatives: Maintained primary schools

Diane Barrick: Head Teacher, Carpenters Primary School

Kate McGee: Head Teacher, Stratford Manor Primary School and Nursery

Representatives: Maintained secondary schools

Vacant

Representatives: Academy Primary Schools

Paul Harris: CEO Tapscott Trust

Keri Edge: CEO Agate Momentum Trust

Representatives: Academy secondary schools

Anthony Wilson: CEO Newham Community Learning Trust

Craig Hewitt: Head Teacher, Stratford School Academy

Peter Whittle: Associate Principal, Langdon Academy (Brampton Manor Trust)

Shuabur Rahman: Executive Regional Director, Community Schools Trust

Representative: Voluntary Controlled schools

Vacant

Representative: Infant and junior schools

Sine Brown: Head Teacher, Godwin Junior School

Faith Representative: Church of England schools

Matt Hipperson: Headteacher, St. Luke's Church of England Primary School

Faith Representative: Catholic Schools

Chris McCormack: Head Teacher, St. Bonaventure's

Nuala Cashell: Our Lady of Grace Academy Trust

Apologies:

Councillor Mariam Dawood: Deputy Cabinet Member for Education

Caroline Stone: Head Teacher, New City Primary School

Ekhlas Rahman: Community Schools Trust

Emma Gleeson: Learning in Harmony Trust

Jo Aylett: Head Teacher, Edith Kerrison Nursery School and Children's Centre

John Blaney: Assistant CEO, Royal Docks Academy (Burnt Mills Trust)

Rachel McGowan: Head Teacher, Plashet School

Val Naylor: Executive Head Teacher

Key

Secondary School Rep – SSR

Primary School Rep - PSR

Action Points

1. Forum vacancy: Primary Community School

Head of NAPH to approach primary community school head teachers to fill the current vacant forum position.

2. Spider diagram map of year 7 2024 EHCP admission offers

Local authority to produce a spider diagram map of year 7 September 2024 EHCP offers and include a table detailing number of placements at each school.

3. School inclusion capital funding

Local authority to provide an update on progress of SEND capital investment projects following 2022 Expression of Interest process, as part of any forthcoming new EOI opportunity. Future EOI to detail why previous bids were successful.

4. Capping: Expressions of interest process

Local authority officers to review the current capping expressions of interest process exploring the feasibility of having two windows to submit requests;

- In Year – earlier in the academic year
- Normal admissions – Post national offer day.

5. Out of year group process flow proposals

Local authority officers to circulate process flow proposals for managing out of year group admissions for forum members to comment.

6. Overallocation

Overallocation to be added as an agenda item for the next Admissions and Place Planning Forum – 11.03.2024

Agenda Item 1. Welcome, introductions and membership

1. Acting chair PG opened the first forum of the 2023-2024 academic year by introducing himself and advising that he would be deputising as chair following Councillor Joshua Garfield's resignation from the post of Cabinet Lead for Education. Deputy Cabinet Lead Councillor Mariam Dawood who was away at a conference. A new Cabinet Lead for Education should be in post in time for the Spring Forum.

2. PG introduced Annabel Bates as Director for Education and invited new members of the Forum to introduce themselves. Apologies were forwarded for members who were unable to attend today.

Agenda Item 2. Minutes of last meeting & matters arising:

1. The minutes of the previous forum meeting were reviewed. All present confirmed that it was an accurate recording of the discussions.

2. TJ advised that the Forum still required another primary community school rep. This will be taken forward by the chair of the Newham Association of Primary Head Teachers – NAPH.

Agenda Item 3. Update on actions from last meeting

1. The action points from the previous meeting were included on the forum agenda.

Spider diagram maps of year 7 admission offers

1. Local authority to produce spider diagram maps of year 7 September 2023 offers for the following;

- Parental preference offers
- EHCP offers

2. PG advised that a spider diagram of parental preference offers was not produced as the map would not be readable due to the number of offers (4000+). Forum members agreed that the EHCP map is useful and requested that this be produced for September 2024 admissions.

Admissions Capping

1. This is an agenda item.

SEND Resource Provision placements

1. Data relating to the number of children in resource provisions and special schools in and out borough was circulated with the agenda;

Other LA pupils in Newham RPs: 5 (2 HI, 2 PMLD, 1 ASD)

Newham pupils in other LAs RPs: 4 (4 HI)

Newham pupils in other LAs special schools: 70 (12 HI, 5 VI, 11 PMLD, 4 SEMH, 38 ASD)

Newham pupils in independent or non-maintained special schools: 36 (13 SEMH, 3 PMLD, 20 ASD)

2. PG explained that the data showed that there are more Newham resident pupils in out borough specialist placements than there in Newham settings. This is evidence of the need to increase the level of provision within the borough.

3. Forum members did not have any questions relating to the data.

Composite Prospectus featured schools

1. PG advised that the full versions of this year's prospectuses were available online and abridged printed versions had been circulated to schools.

2. TJ added that the featured schools (Scott Wilkie Primary School and Stratford School Academy) will be sent the full set of images from the photoshoot.

Children Missing Education – Not entitled to education

1. PG advised that web links to information on rights to education in England were circulated with the agenda. There were no questions relating to this.

2. TJ added that the matter of children arriving in England is also being considered as part of the CME Strategic Board

Agenda Item 4. SEND Place Planning

1. PG advised the Forum that the local authority had been using the existing data to understand where the demand for additional SEND provision lay and to project what additional provision will be required over the next five years.

2. AE presented slides outlining the provisional forecasts for SEND place planning. The number of SEND children in the borough has increased over recent years and will continue

to grow. The forecast suggests that the current supply of specialist SEND placements will not meet the demand. These forecasts assumes current year group transition rates and that placements in independent and out borough provision will continue at current rates.

- 75% of primary school pupils with EHCPs are in mainstream provision. Data shows a significant spike in pupils moving from mainstream or RP places to special school in Year 7.
- The number of EHCPs is forecast to increase for all four main broad SEND categories with ASD and PMLD due to see the highest growth over the forecast period.
- The trend for funded pre-16 ASD pupils highlights an increase for up to 1,997 pupils on current numbers by 2027. This suggests both a need to ensure that there is better support in settings and sufficient provision to address this specific need profile.
- John F. Kennedy special school is being expanded following the completion of the 2022 EOI process by 40 places. Phase 1 of the work involved some internal remodelling at the Beckton site which created an additional 20 places. Phase 2 works will focus on a new build to accommodate the additional 20 places for 2024/25.
- 87 pre-16 and 18 Post 16 places will ultimately be available when the Connaught Special free school for children with complex autism reaches full capacity. The initial places available this autumn have been taken up by secondary aged and post 16 pupils.
- The forecast also takes into account data from the early years notification process which includes data of children with formal diagnosis and those with recognised needs without a diagnosis.

3. The updated forecast reflects the increase in demand for specialist placements, particularly for children with SEND. This rise continues through post-16 education.

4. A PSR asked what the forecasts were based on as there is a general perception that there had been a steep increase in the number of children with needs coming from early years settings.

5. AE advised that SEN2 data return from the DfE but also data used to forecast place planning for mainstream placements such as ONS data and population trends. This methodology has been working for mainstream place planning.

6. A SSR asked if children on temporary Outreach are included. AE advised that the fact there are children being educated on Outreach does reflect the need for specialist placement but they will need to be recorded separately in the data.

7. Overall the forecast reflects that by 2027, there will be a shortfall in RP places particularly for autism, across both primary and secondary schools. The new Connaught School is slowly increasing capacity but the forecasts still show a deficit.

8. PG added that currently the local authority is funding expensive out borough placements for Newham children. There was a need to increase provision in borough. The local authority will be sending expressions of interest out to schools interested in opening resource provisions or increasing special school places.

9. A SSR added that they have children joining them in year 7 without an EHCP but it is evident they require an EHCP and primary schools only apply for an EHCP late in KS2.

Does this practice skew the data i.e. there should be more children in KS1 and 2 with an EHCP?

10. PG advised that he would be surprised if this was common practice as based on the funding arrangements the primary school will not receive financial support for the child.

11. A PSR teacher asked about the outcome of the 2022 Expressions of Interest to increase SEND provision in schools and settings.

12. PG clarified that most of the projects (funded under Lot 5 of the EoI) were not designed to increase provision but to make adaptations to make schools and settings more inclusive. The LA was halfway through the two year period for completion of the project, but an update can be provided at the next forum.

4. Admission limit capping – local process review

1. PG introduced the item by advising that admission capping has been used by the local authority to support schools to who have experienced falling rolls in recent years to remain financially viable. For Reception 2023, 40% of places available at PAN were taken out and a number of schools have applied for permanent PAN reduction which be implemented from September 2024.

2. TJ added that the current place planning forecast suggests that the pupil population in the borough will continue to fall. The local authority have an existing process and timetable for schools to express an interest to implement a temporary cap across year groups. There have been suggestions however that the current timetable should be reviewed to support schools with staff and class organisation.

3. The current process involves expressions of interest being sent after primary national offer day with a deadline set for May each year to give schools time to review the data and hold internal discussions before decisions are made.

4. A number of primary head teachers suggested that perhaps there should two separate processes, one for in year admission capping and others for normal admissions capping; and the earlier the requests can be made the better it would be for schools to be able to plan for new academic year.

4. A PSR asked if falling numbers were also being seen in other local authorities. TJ advised that they were. Some LAs have been using capping, others have closed or merged schools.

5. Another PSR asked what would happen if demand increases. PG advised that capping gives LAs and schools flexibility to open up classes at relatively short notice should they be needed.

6. Based on the responses, PG suggested that the timetable for reception capping could be moved forward but it was important that all schools meet the deadlines when the expressions of interest requests are sent so that all requests can be considered at the same time and the decision making process is equitable and transparent. Local authority officers will review the process and will update schools before the next forum.

6. Out of year group admissions

1. TJ advised the forum that whilst summer born deferment was something the DfE introduced relatively recently, parent/carers have always had the right to request their child being admitted into a year group outside of their normal date of birth range. The local

authority has seen a small recent trend in parent/carers requesting their child being admitted into a different year group.

2. A number of PSRs stated that educating children in a lower year group has worked for some children and secondary schools should continue to support these children by agreeing to admit them into their year 7 cohort.

3. TJ advised that the DfE expectation is that schools will agree to the requests but there is nothing in law that gives parent/carers the right to it.

4. TJ added there is a need to consider a bilateral approach about how such requests should be managed. To aid this, local authority officers have produced two possible options that could be adopted. These will be circulated to forum members to comment on with a formal discussion to be held at the next meeting so that agreed process can be published in the 2024 composite prospectuses.

7. Standing items

7.1 New academy conversions and proposed new free schools

1. PG advised that the Connaught special school was now opened with limited capacity under the Learning in Harmony Trust. St Michael's Catholic Primary School is expected to convert in 2024. There are no other conversions planned.

7.2 Proposed consultations for September 2025 entry (Determination February 2024)

1. TJ advised that both St Angela's Ursuline School and St Bonaventure's will be consulting on a change to their admission arrangements.

2. St Angela's Ursuline are proposing to align the admission criteria(s) of the school with changes made to the CES (Catholic Education Service) national model admission policies.

3. St Bonaventure's are proposing to remove the need from parent/carers to provide evidence related to what level of practice of that faith their child/family undertake.

4. The local authority will be undertaking the consultations on behalf of both schools and will be sent out at the start of the consultation process in December.

7.3 Department for Education guidance and reminders

1. PG advised the forum that the DfE has circulated non-statutory [guidance](#) relating to school uniforms with the main headline being that governing bodies should consider a number of different factors relating to school uniform policies such as sustainability, environmental impacts and ensuring they are not discriminatory. The local authority will also be carrying out a survey of uniform costs to help ensure that this guidance alongside the [statutory guidance](#) relating to cost are being followed.

8. Any other business

Overalllocation

1. A SSR requested that over allocation be added as an agenda item at the next forum as the current forecasts suggest that this is not needed.

Meeting Closed 17:30

End.

Dates of 2023/24 meetings:

13 November 2023

11 March 2024

10 June 2024

APPROVED