

RICHMOND UPON THAMES ADMISSIONS FORUM

30 June 2010, 6.00pm-6.45pm, Teddington Room,

Curriculum and Training Centre, Clifden Road, Twickenham

Chair of meeting: Cllr David Marlow

Present: Cllr Susan Chappell, Andrew Cole, Ian Dickinson, Cllr Malcolm Eady, Janet Foster, Janet Hilton, Lesley Kirby, and Cllr David Marlow.

Officer: Matthew Paul (Secretary to the Forum).

Apologies received from: Hatija Bhatia, Christine Brett, Richard Burke, Prehlad Dhall, Sabi Hothi, and Carol Jerwood.

	Minutes	Action
1.	<p>Introductions.</p> <p>Three new members – Cllr Susan Chappell (Conservative Group), Cllr Malcolm Eady (Liberal Democrat Group) and Janet Foster (representing the Diocese of London) – were welcomed to the Forum. The Forum noted that Cllr Lisa Blakemore had also agreed to represent the Conservative Group on the Forum)</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of previous meeting.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2010 were agreed as a correct record. There were no matters arising.</p>	
3.	<p>Draft Local Authority report to the Schools Adjudicator.</p> <p>The Forum noted the contents of the report and of the tables showing the numbers of appeals and of pupils entitled to free school meals.</p> <p>The difficulties and opportunities resulting from the Authority's statutory requirement to coordinate in-year admissions from 1st September 2010 were debated. Although it was largely felt that it would make the admissions more equitable, there were concerns that, for some schools, the process could be slower than at present. It was also felt that giving parents three preferences on the application form could lead to some parents expressing preferences that they wouldn't have otherwise made, and could also give parents an appearance of 'choice' that does not fit with the reality that many schools are full in some or all year-groups.</p> <p>The Forum noted that the numbers of secondary school appeals held, and the proportion (roughly a quarter) of those that were upheld, were relatively high. The Forum agreed with a proposal that instead of sending out the appeal forms with outcome letters for parents who had not been offered their first preference school, the letters should enclose the appeal notes and invite parents to request appeal forms if they wanted them. This was felt to be a better way of managing</p>	

	<p>parents' expectations of what their chances of success would be, particularly for reception class appeals. However, the Forum expressed a wish that, if the LA made this change, a supply of appeal forms would be available in schools and children's centres, as appropriate.</p>	
4.	<p>Any other business.</p> <p>The Forum agreed to a suggestion that its membership should be expanded to include a representative of the three academies that would be (or in Richmond Park Academy's case, were due to be) open in the borough from 1 September 2010. Lesley Kirby volunteered to serve the Forum in that capacity, subject to the Secretary of State approving the supplemental funding agreement for Richmond Park Academy, and a new representative of the borough's secondary school headteachers would therefore be sought.</p> <p>A member of the Forum raised the possibility that the Authority's ability to plan school places would be more difficult if more schools became academies and could not be compelled to admit additional classes to meet demand. The Forum requested that clarification on this point be sought from the DfE. It was noted, though, that, as for maintained schools, LAs would coordinate admissions to academies.</p>	
6.	<p>Date, time and venue of next meeting.</p> <p>Wednesday 22 September 2010, at 6pm, in the Teddington Room, First Floor, Curriculum & Training Centre, Clifden Road, Twickenham.</p>	