

RICHMOND UPON THAMES ADMISSIONS FORUM

10 June 2009, 6pm-7pm, Teddington Room,

Curriculum and Training Centre, Clifden Road, Twickenham

Chair of meeting: Cllr Stephen Knight

Present: Christine Brett, Richard Burke, Andrew Cole, Prehlad Dhall, Janet Foster (for Ian Dickinson), Janet Hilton, Charles Hoseason, Sabi Hothi, Carol Jerwood, Lesley Kirby, Cllr Stephen Knight, Cllr Brian Miller and Cllr Suzette Nicholson (for Cllr Bob King).

Officers: Matthew Paul (Secretary to the Forum).

Apologies received from: Hatija Bhatia, Melissa Cliff, Ian Dickinson, Sara Freeman, Cllr Bob King and Cllr David Marlow.

	Minutes	Action
1.	<p>Minutes of previous meeting.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2009 were agreed as a correct record.</p> <p>Item 6: the Secretary apologised for not drafting and circulating a response to the proposed Children and Young People's Plan.</p>	
2.	<p>Update on admissions for 2009/2010.</p> <p>The Forum noted that demand for Reception class places had been unprecedentedly high and that, although the forecasts (made before the recession) had predicted a shortfall of two classes, the Authority had arranged for five 'bulge' classes to be provided (at Chase Bridge, Holy Trinity, Orleans infant, St Elizabeth's, and St Mary's and St Peter's), and 10 and 7 extra places provided at two other schools (Lowther and Darell). As there were still a number of children unplaced, it was likely that further bulge classes would be needed if the waiting lists did not move sufficiently quickly. This demand was largely attributed to there being much less than usual 'drop-off' to the private sector and much less mobility out of the area. It was anticipated that if the recession continued, the next few years would see even higher demand, as the underlying number of births had increased considerably, which would mean a need for even more permanent and temporary expansions. Some forum members voiced concerns that as there were still vacancies in KS2 in many schools, the Authority ought perhaps to consider just opening new infant schools. Various sites were being considered in the borough, and an update to the Primary Expansions Strategy would be circulated to schools for consultation in due course. It was noted that Hounslow had experienced similar growth in demand this year.</p> <p>By contrast, admissions to year 7 had gone smoothly, with sufficient spare capacity to accommodate late applications.</p>	

3.	<p>Update on proposed academies.</p> <p>The Forum noted that the proposed academies at Hampton and Whitton were well into the Feasibility stage of their development and that, consequently, Kunskapsskolan (the main sponsor) and Appleyard's (the DCSF-appointed project managers) were working with the senior leadership teams and other staff to see how the Kunskapsskolan personalised learning and stepped curriculum model could be meshed with the school's current arrangements and the requirements of the National Curriculum. It was anticipated that a brochure giving details of the proposals would be published for each proposed academy in early September, with public meetings being held to explain the proposals. Simultaneously, the Authority would conduct the statutory consultation on proposals to close the existing schools. A Forum member enquired as to whether Cabinet's eventual decisions would be based on the number of responses for and against the proposals, but it was felt that the strength and quality of the arguments put forward would be more important than their volume.</p> <p>Following the Authority's decision to discontinue Edutrust's sponsorship of the proposed academy at Shene, discussions were ongoing with a range of possible sponsors and academic partners. The Director of Children's Services was due to hold meetings with local primary school headteachers and parent-governors to ascertain their views of what parents would like to see from an academy.</p> <p>The opening-date for all three proposed academies was still planned for September 2010.</p>	
4	<p>Draft Local Authority report to the Schools Adjudicator.</p> <p>The Forum noted the draft and discussed several points contained within it, including: the effects of class-size legislation, and the Government appearing to want to reduce classes further still to a maximum of 25 children; random allocation, which had been used for one primary school in Hounslow but had never been implemented in Richmond; and the workings of the borough's Fair Access Protocol.</p> <p>A Forum member queried whether the Forum's membership was compliant with the new regulations. The Secretary said he would investigate and report back to the Forum's next meeting.</p>	
5.	<p>Any other business.</p> <p>It was reported that the Secretary had convened a working-party to come up with a workable scheme for the administration of coordinated in-year admissions from September 2010 onwards. It was hoped that progress would be made before the end of the summer term, with a view to proposals being fully consulted upon with schools and the Forum in the autumn term.</p>	
6.	<p>Date, time and venue of next meeting.</p> <p>Wednesday 16 September 2009, at 5.45pm for 6pm start, in the Teddington Room, First Floor, Curriculum & Training Centre, Clifden Road, Twickenham.</p>	