

Minutes of the Admission Forum, Ceredigion held in Ystafell Teifi, Penmorfa, Ceredigion on Thursday, 7th March, 2019.

PRESENT: Councillor Catrin Miles (Chair), Philippa Davies (Parent-Governor, Ysgol y Dderi), Peter Leggett (Headteacher, Ysgol Gynradd Rhydypennau), Enid Brophy (Headteacher, Ysgol Padarn Sant).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Meinir Ebbsworth (Corporate Lead Officer: Schools/Chief Education Officer); Cheryl Evans (School Admission Officer) and Kay Davies (Democratic Services Officer)

(14:00 – 14:55)

1. Apologies

Councillor Odwyn Davies (Chair of the Learning Communities' Overview and Scrutiny Committee), Councillor Endaf Edwards (Vice-Chair of the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee), Carol Davies (Head Teacher Ysgol Dyffryn Cledlyn), Jane Wyn (Headteacher Ysgol Bro Pedr) and Lodwick Lloyd (School Governor) apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

2. Procedure

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

3. Disclosure of Personal Interests

There were no disclosures of personal interests.

4. Minutes of Meeting held on 26th September, 2018

It was resolved to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 26th September, 2018 as a correct record.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th September, 2018

2. It was noted that according to the Group's constitution, there is no requirement for the Chief Executive to be a member of the School Admissions Forum and that Mr Barry Rees, Corporate Director would attend meetings should the Corporate Lead Officer for Schools be unavailable to do so.

6.i. It was noted that the Information for Parents Document had been sent to Members electronically¹.

6.ii. The School Admission Officer reported that it was not possible to adjust the on-line system for transferring pupils from one school to another. The school, from which the pupil is to be transferred from, is not notified of the parents' intention. Some members of the Forum were concerned that schools, therefore, had little opportunity to address the issue with those involved in the transfer. It was agreed to monitor the situation.

11. It was confirmed that Forum meetings would continue to be held during the day.

¹ <http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/media/3061/information-for-parents.pdf>

6. Information for Parents Document

The School Admission Officer reported that the updated Information for Parents Document had been circulated. Data is now being collected in relation to the number of visits to the web page. This will provide a basis to monitor data as time progresses

It was noted that the 'Cashless' system is currently not included in the document as not all schools operate the system. It is envisaged that it may be included in the next version of the document. It was reported that online payments is to be explored along with cashless systems throughout all schools. It was noted that the system is costly to set up. However, as all school financial transactions would be cashless there would be no longer a need to handle money for lunch, school trips etc. Cashless systems have reduced queues in school canteens and are popular although many are of the view that some pupils may not learn how to manage their finances as well as those who have had to use cash in the past. This is to be discussed within a different setting.

It was AGREED to note the information provided.

7. Admissions Policy 2020-2021

It was noted that no responses had been received to the consultation on the Admissions Policy for 2020-2021. There has been little change to the policy and will be presented to Cabinet shortly.

It was noted that contact with those families who have chosen to home educate their children and are known to the Authority has been tightened recently. The Forum was informed that families have no legal obligation to register with the Authority but that it is deemed good practice to do so. Currently there are 170 children / young people who are known to the Authority. However, 20 have returned to schools during the last school term. In some home educated cases, standards were not being maintained therefore the Authority was able to challenge parents / guardians which resulted in them deciding to send their children/young people to school.

When families leave the area for an extended period of time, reasons for their de-registration from schools are now recorded.

It was agreed to note the information provided.

8. Year 7 numbers for Secondary Schools – September 2019.

The list of school year 7 numbers for September 2019 had been circulated. The School Admissions Officer stated that the list was not complete as another 15 pupils have yet to apply. Checks are to be made as to their reasons for their delay and help will be offered if required. It was noted that Ysgol Bro Teifi has reached its capacity for the year while Penglais and Penweddig schools year 7 numbers are down for September 2019 and September 2020 but are due to increase the following year.

It was noted that significant funding had been received from the Welsh Government towards Ysgol Henry Richard which suggests that the Welsh Government is supportive of maintaining secondary schools in rural areas. The admission figures for Ysgol Henry Richard appear low for September, however there is a significant number of children in the nursery class which will impact year 7 figures in a few years.

It was AGREED to note the information provided.

9. Mid-year Admission Appeals 2018-19

The Forum was informed that recently 2 appeals have been held, one at Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi and one at Ysgol T Llew Jones, which were both upheld. It was noted an independent panel arrive at decisions at appeals and not the Local Authority.

10. Any other business

- i. It was noted that Ysgol Padarn Sant has its own admissions system. The policy is currently being updated and would be sent to the School Admissions Officer to check before submission to the diocese in September 2019
- ii. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on 13 June 2019. The meeting will take place at the Ystwyth room at 2pm.