

Minutes of the meeting of the Ceredigion Schools Admissions Forum, held in Ystafell Ystwyth, Penmorfa, Ceredigion on Tuesday, 15th October, 2019.

PRESENT: Meinir Ebbsworth, Corporate Lead Officer: Schools/Chief Education Officer; Councillor Catrin Miles, Cabinet Member; Councillor Endaf Edwards, Chair, Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee; Carol Davies, Headteacher Ysgol Dyffryn Cledlyn; Gareth Evans, Deputy Headteacher Ysgol Bro Teifi; Mandy Rowe, Deputy Headteacher St Padarns RC Primary School; Peter Leggett, Headteacher Rhydypennau Primary School; Philippa Davies, Parent-Governor, Ysgol y Dderi.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Gwion Dafydd, Corporate Manager: Accountability and Progress; Cheryl Evans, School Admission Officer and Kay Davies, Democratic Services Officer.

(14:00 – 14.50)

1. Apologies

Councillor Wyn Thomas Vice Chair of the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Jayne Wyn, Head Teacher Ysgol Bro Pedr apologised for being unable to attend the meeting.

2. Procedure

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and introductions were made.

3. Disclosure of Personal Interests

There were no disclosures of personal interests.

4. Minutes of Meeting held on 13th June, 2019.

It was resolved to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 13th June, 2019 as a correct record.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th June, 2019

5.6 - Cashless systems in schools – it was noted that further work had been undertaken. Current contracts have different end dates but plans are afoot for all schools to procure a new contract at the same time. The Welsh language will be part of the procurement process. The IT service is to explore a bilingual service in the system itself. Cashless systems in schools would eventually be used for all cash transactions in schools and will avoid unnecessary risks of keeping large amounts of money on school premises. Discussions to this effect are due to be held with Primary Schools.

6 – Information for Parents document – it was noted that this had been updated and is an item on this agenda.

6. Information for Parents Document

The School Admission Officer reported that the document is nearing completion along with the addition of new headteachers at: Aberporth, Comins Coch, Rhos Helyg, T Llew Jones, Talgarreg, Llanilar (after half term), Penparc and Plascrug

(after Christmas) and the new arrangements in Cenarth Primary School from January onwards.

It was noted that the document highlights that there is a new curriculum beginning in September 2022.

It was agreed to note the information provided.

7. Admissions Policy 2020-2021

The School Admission Officer presented the latest draft. It was noted that apart from there being three less primary schools in the county, there is very little change to the previous policy. The policy is to be presented for consultation to the School Governors meetings after half term. Responses will need to be received by 2nd March 2020.

A strategy document in relation to retaining pupils, 'Teaching pupils out of their chronological age group' is to be included with the policy. It is hoped that the document will be useful to parents.

It was noted that schools may request their schools to be re-measured in relation to admission number.

It was agreed to approve the new document and note the information provided.

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

It was noted that the numbers are as expected for admission to secondary schools in September 2019.

Emails sent to parents / guardians of current year 6 pupils are to be amended to highlight that the LEA pay for transport to the nearest suitable school only. Concerns were raised in relation to possible repercussions to schools providing their own buses to transport pupils from other catchment areas.

It was agreed to note the information provided.

9. Reception Year Numbers September 2019

It was noted that the numbers for admission to the reception year of primary schools in September 2019 had increased by 20 pupils since the last meeting.

It was reported that units for children with additional learning needs in the county have increased numbers. Several families have moved into the area who have children with significant needs therefore capacity will need to be increased in order to accommodate the need.

It was agreed to note the information.

10. Mid-year Admission Appeals 2018-19

Information in relation to the Mid-year Admission Appeals 2018 – 19 was noted. It was noted that were seven appeals for primary schools – the LEA won four and lost three. In the secondary sector, one appeal was won and two were lost. There

are another three appeals to be heard – one for secondary and two for primary schools.

It was agreed to note the information.

11. Any other business

- a. The School Admission Officer informed the meeting that the school admission application on-line form is due to be discussed at a meeting with the four counties who share the on-line form and developers. The Forum requested that the form should include information on the full background of a child's educational history (i.e. previous schools). An optional box requesting the child's medical history could be included. Requesting information relating to the learning needs of children aged 4 and under children from Mudiad Meithrin may be explored in future. All were requested to study the document and feedback to the School Admission Officer.
- b. The Corporate Lead Officer: Schools/Chief Education Officer informed the Forum of the Welsh Government consultation on Home education: statutory guidance for local authorities and handbook for home educators. A response to the consultation is to be sent stating that the consultation does not go far enough and specifies that the law needs to reflect the expectations on the Local Authority to ensure that all children that are electively home educated are registered.
Figures for home-educated children for Ceredigion appear to be high but this may be because they are known to the Authority while other authorities in Wales may not be as aware of those who are home-educated in their county. The Corporate Lead Officer: Schools/Chief Education Officer noted that local knowledge is invaluable and requested that if anyone is aware of children who may be home-educated to inform Catrin Petcher, Manager of Inclusion Team in order that home visits can be arranged.

12. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is to be circulated as soon as possible.