

Meeting:	Harrow Admissions Forum
Date:	18 November 2009
Subject:	Feedback from Nursery Admissions Working Group
Responsible Officer:	Heather Clements – Director, Schools and Children’s Development
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Anjana Patel – Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children’s Development
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix A – Report to Nursery Admissions Working Group – Review of nursery admissions Appendix B – Notes of Nursery Admissions Working Group meeting on 09 November 2009. Appendix C – Briefing for the Nursery Admissions Working Group on a complaint about nursery admissions made to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report provides Members of the Admissions Forum with feedback from the Nursery Admissions Working Group looking at the arrangements for admission to Harrow nursery classes.

Recommendations:

The recommendations of the Working Group are as follows:

- 1 In collaboration with officers, that the Foundation Stage Headteachers’ group agree the format for an annual timetable and protocol for sharing offer information for nursery admissions that can be published so parents have clear information in advance of making an application. The timetable to include
 - When parents can apply, i.e. from age two onwards
 - Closing date for applications to be considered in the first round
 - Offer date

That the timetable and protocol to be presented to the Harrow

Admissions Forum for their comments.

- 2 That formal sign-up to the timetable and protocol is obtained from all relevant headteachers.
- 3 To amend the nursery application form so that parents make only one preference.
- 4 To provide clear advice to nursery headteachers that they must inform parents unsuccessful in obtaining a nursery place that their child's name has been added to the waiting list for their school and that they can also go on the waiting list for any other nursery school.
- 5 That nursery headteachers continue to share information about places allocated to ensure no parents receives more than one offer of a nursery class place.
- 6 The Head of the Early Years and Childcare Service to investigate the option of providing vacancy information on the Family Information Service website, so that parents can easily identify which nurseries have places. Also in all information provided for parents, to clarify that the Foundation Stage curriculum is the same across all providers and that early years placements are funded from age three.
- 7 In collaboration with Foundation Stage Headteachers, to review the information accompanying the application form to give clear and unambiguous advice about the process of applying for a nursery class place.
- 8 To place Children Looked After as the highest priority in the oversubscription criteria.
- 9 To expand the information on how places are offered in date of birth order to make it absolutely clear that the oldest children are offered places first.
- 10 To change the tie-breaker to distance measured in a straight line from the home address to the nursery. The Admissions Service will undertake any measurements required.
- 11 To write to the parent who complained to the Ombudsman to draw his attention to the consultation and asking him for comment.

Reason: (For recommendation)

To ensure Harrow's nursery admission arrangements are fair, transparent and co-ordinated and that any changes can be included in the annual consultation on admission arrangements.

Section 2 – Report

INTRODUCTION

In July 2009 the Harrow Admissions Forum established a Working Group to look at the arrangements for admission to nursery classes attached to Harrow schools. A copy of the report to the Working Group (Appendix A) and the minutes of the meeting (Appendix B) are attached. At their meeting the Working Group also received a briefing concerning a complaint about nursery admissions made to the Local Government Ombudsman and his recommendations. A copy of the briefing is attached at Appendix C .

The Working Group requested officers to undertake a survey of nursery headteachers to find out how the process for offering nursery places could be improved. The Working Group considered the issues raised by headteachers and have made a number of recommendations for the Admissions Forum's consideration.

CONSULTATION

It is proposed that consultation on admission arrangements will take place between 30 November 2009 and 29 January 2010 and will involve all statutory consultees, including parents, early years providers and community groups.

Implications of the Recommendation

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Risk Management Implications

N/A

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Emma Stabler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 11 November 2009		
Name: Linda Cohen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
Date: 11 November 2009		

*Delete the words “on behalf of the” if the report is cleared directly by Myfanwy or Hugh.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Madeleine Hitchens, Manager, Place Planning & Admissions
Service 020 8424 1398

Background Papers: N/A