

REPORT FOR: HARROW ADMISSIONS FORUM

Date of Meeting:	10 th February 2010
Subject:	Voluntary Aided Schools – Consultation with Harrow Admissions Forum on Admission Arrangements for 2011-2012
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Heather Clements, Director Schools and Children’s Development
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Anjana Patel, Schools and Children’s Development
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix A: Letter to VA Schools about requirement to consult Appendix B: Schools who have already submitted proposed admission arrangements for 2011 for consultation

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

Recommendations:

To review the admission arrangements for voluntary aided schools to ensure they meet statutory requirements.

For the Chair of the Forum to write to those voluntary aided schools where the report indicates an issue with the admission arrangements asking them to make the necessary amendment to ensure they are compliant with the Code of Practice.

Reason: (For recommendation)

To meet the requirements of the School Admissions Code of Practice.

Section 2 – Report

By 1 March, Admissions Forum must be consulted about admission arrangements, including any supplementary forms, by every admission authority in the area. It is crucial that the Forum scrutinises and challenges unfair and unlawful arrangements. Letters were sent to all Harrow voluntary aided schools on 5th November 2009 reminding them of the requirement to consult, as follows:

All admission authorities must:

- Consult with their local authority, all other admission authorities within the relevant area, the Admission Forum, admission authorities in neighbouring local authority areas, the relevant religious authority (in the case of the admission authorities of faith schools) and, relevant parents and other groups with an interest in the local area (for example, community groups)
- Consult for a minimum of 8 weeks; and
- Complete the consultation by 1 March 2010.

Members of the Admissions Forum are requested to scrutinise the admission arrangements for their own admission authority schools to ensure they meet statutory requirements.

Appendix B shows how each of the VA schools meets the requirements of the Code of Practice both in relation to admission arrangements and supplementary information forms (SIFS).

Copies of the admission arrangements for Harrow's VA schools are available from the Place Planning and Admissions Service.

In the main, all voluntary aided schools meet the requirements of the Code of Practice. The exceptions are:

Moriah Jewish Day School

Does not define how they will deal with applicants who live equi-distant from the school, nor do they clarify how in-year applications will be dealt with, including through the Fair Access process.

Krishna Avanti School

In January 2007, the School Organisation Committee (SOC) agreed the proposal for a new Hindu school. The proposal was approved unanimously, subject to the following modifications:

- “(i) The priorities list for admissions be amended to take into consideration new guidance from the DfES.
- (ii) A temporary time limit of three years be put on the five places reserved for applications supported by the Faith Partner (page 14 of the supplemental agenda).”

The time limit of three years covered the 2008, 2009 and 2010 academic years. However, for the 2011 admission round the school has the following as part of its proposed admissions criteria:

Five children nominated via ISKCON Bhaktivedanta Manor (Hilfield Lane, WD25 8EZ) from practising Hindu families where places will be allocated using the following criteria in order of priority:

- 1 Families who have taken initiation (diksha) within ISKCON for over five years and have been regularly attending Sangas (registered congregation programmes) for over five years
- 2 Families who have been regularly attending Sanga programmes for over five years
- 3 Families who have taken initiation within ISKCON for over two years OR who have graduated from an ISKCON gurukula
4. Families who are officially aspiring to take initiation within ISKCON
5. Families who have been worshipping at least weekly at an ISKCON temple for over five years”.

Following consultation with the local authority, the Director of Schools and Children’s Development has requested a meeting with the governors to discuss the continuation of nominations from The Manor as one of the over-subscription criteria.

The guidance in the School Admissions Code of Practice is that the Admissions Forum has a key role in considering how well existing and proposed admission arrangements serve the interests of children and parents within the area of the local authority. The Bhaktivedanta Manor is based in Watford and does not therefore meet the needs of children from the Harrow area.

The following comments have been received from our Legal department:

There are potential breaches of the Code of Practice on School Admissions at pghs 1.3, 2.48 and pgh 6 of Appendix E. The process for the nomination of 5 children is insufficiently clear, fair or objective and places a limitation on parental choice by removing 5 places from the Planned Admission Number. Any such breach may enable the Admissions Forum to contact the school to alert them, to contact the Local Authority and/or to make a referral to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for determination. The Admissions Forum is also entitled to prepare a report to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator. The Office of the Schools Adjudicator reports to the Secretary of State for Education."

Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Schools

The Westminster Diocese has provided advice to RC schools on setting their admission arrangements, which includes the following advice:

- Admission arrangements need to specify if governors wish to give priority for In Year Admissions to children who are out of school at the time of application (i.e. without the offer of a school place) even if this means exceeding the planned admission number
- To await the new Code of Practice before making any changes regarding twins and multiple-birth children.

St George’s RC

St George’s oversubscription criteria do not include:

An explanation covering the admission of children with a statement of SEN.

A definition of how applications from parents with shared responsibility will be dealt with.

Clarification about the admission of twins / multiple-birth siblings.

St Teresa's RC

The criteria do not explain how applications from parents with shared responsibility will be dealt with or when children live equi-distant from the school.

Sacred Heart

The arrangements do not confirm how children will be placed through the Fair Access protocol.

Options considered

See above

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? N/a

Separate risk register in place? N/A

Corporate Priorities

This report supports the Corporate Priority to improve support for vulnerable people. Monitoring the admission arrangements for voluntary aided schools ensures there is consistency and reliability in the approach to school admissions which supports the vulnerable and hard to reach in the community.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: ...Emma Stabler.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: ...2.2.10.....		
Name:Linda Cohen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
Date: ...2.2.10.....		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

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

Background Papers: N/A

Appendix A

Paul Clark
Corporate Director
Children's Services

Date: 05 November 2009

To Chairs of Governors and Headteachers
of Harrow's Voluntary Aided Schools

Dear Colleagues,

Re: Consultation on admission arrangements 2011/2012

The new Admissions Code came into force in February this year and I would like to confirm the requirement for all admissions authorities to consult on their admission arrangements for entry in 2011-12 and subsequent years.

All Authorities are required to:

- Consult every three years, unless changes have been made to the arrangements since the previous consultation.
- Consult with their local authority, all other admission authorities within the relevant area, the Admission Forum, admission authorities in neighbouring local authority areas, the relevant religious authority and, relevant parents and other groups with an interest in the local area (for example, community groups)
- They will also be required to consult for a minimum of 8 weeks to ensure that all consultees have enough time to respond
- Consultation must be between 1 December 2009 and 1 March 2010 if arrangements have changed from the previous year
- Admission authorities must determine their admission arrangements by 15 April in the determination year.

In additional, we strongly recommend you consider including the following information in your consultation:

- **Co-ordination of In-Year Applications**
Applications made during the academic year and for admissions to age groups other than the normal year of entry.

From September 2010, Harrow Council is required to co-ordinate in-year applications for all its maintained schools (refer to Harrow's Scheme of Co-ordination)

- **Additional Requirement: Twins and other multiple-birth children**

A recent report from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator has recommended that:
"...all admissions authorities should be required to consult on, and publish arrangements for the admission of twins and children from multiple births. This should include a specific mention within the oversubscription criteria for primary schools".

The Code of Practice includes guidelines on setting fair oversubscription criteria including on the admission of siblings. The emphasis is on keeping siblings together if this is what parents want, particularly in primary schools. Paragraph 2.2 of the Code says:
"The admission authorities for primary schools should ensure in their oversubscription criteria that siblings (including twins, triplets or children from multiple births) can attend the same primary school".

The proviso on this is that this complies with the infant class regulations.

To meet the Code's advice, the Chief Schools Adjudicator is recommending that the list of 'excepted pupil's in the class size regulations should be extended to include twins and children from multiple births.

If you would like to be included in the Local Authorities consultation, you will need to send us your draft Admissions Arrangements by 23 November 2009 at the latest.

To meet the agenda for the meeting of the Harrow Admissions Forum in February 2010 we need to have details of your school's draft admission arrangements, including a copy of your SIF (supplementary information form) by 29 January 2010.

Full details (including the regulations) can be viewed at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/sacode/

I look forward to receiving your proposed admission arrangements for the 2011/2012 academic year in due course but please contact me if you need any more information.

Yours sincerely,

Noreen Severyn
Deputy Manager
Place Planning & School Admissions
Harrow Council
External tel: 020 8424 1025
Internal ext. 2025

PROPOSED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2011-2012

SCHOOL	LAC – Admission authorities are required to give highest priority to LAC of their faith	SEN – All governing bodies are required to admit a child with a statement of SEN that names the school	MEDICAL/ EXCEPTIONAL	LAC not of the faith	ALL OTHER APPLICANTS If a school is undersubscribed then all applications must be accepted	SHARED RESPONSIBILITY	DISTANCE	EQUIDISTANCE	SIBLINGS (ie brother / sister still attending)	MULTIPLE BIRTHS	FAIR ACCESS	IN-YEAR
Moriah Jewish Day	E	E	X	E	E	E	E	X	E	E	X	X
Krishna—Avanti	E	E	X	E	E	E	E	X	E	X	X	E
St Anselm's RC	E	Explanation	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
St Bernadette's RC	E	Explanation	E (+support by Soc.Worker)	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
St George's RC	E	X	Compassionate Need of child	E	E	X	E	E	E	X	E	E
St John Fisher RC	E	Explanation	Compassionate Need of child	E	E	E	E	E	E Practising Catholics only	E	E	
St Joseph's RC	E	Explanation	E (+pastoral/social)	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
St Teresa's RC	E	Explanation	E (+pastoral/social- normally require written evidence)	E	E	X	E	X	E	E	E	E
St John's CofE	E	Explanation	E (supported by hospital consultant)	E	E 10 community places	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Sacred Heart	E	Advises separate applications for SEN	Evidence of very "exceptional need of the child"	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	X	E
Salvatorian	E	Advises separate applications for SEN	Clear and substantial evidence required	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FORM

SCHOOL	SIF SUBMITTED	PERSONAL DETAILS (eg Martial, occupational or financial status)	PARENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS	CHILD'S DISABILITIES SEN OR MEDICAL NEEDS	PARENTS'/ CHILD'S INTERESTS
Moriah	YES	NO Sibling details requested	NO	NO	NO
Krishna—Avanti	YES	NO Sibling details requested*	NO	NO	NO
St Anselm's	YES	NO Sibling details requested	NO	NO	NO
St Bernadette's	YES	NO Sibling details requested*	NO	NO	NO
St George's	COPY REQUESTED				
St John Fisher	COPY REQUESTED				
St Joseph's	COPY REQUESTED				
St Teresa's	YES	NO Sibling details requested*	NO	NO	NO
St John's CofE	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
The Sacred Heart Language College	N/A Does not use SIF – only Priest's Reference Form	--	--	--	--
Salvatorian College	YES	NO Sibling details requested*	NO	NO	NO

Schools included with Harrow Community Schools Consultation – 30th November – 29th January: Salvatorian, St Anselm's, St Bernadette's, St Teresa's, Moriah, St John Fisher and St John's

The Sacred Heart, St Joseph's, St George's and Krishna Avanti consulted separately.

* The Westminster Diocese have confirmed that sibling details should not be requested on the SIF. Details of siblings will be sent to the school from the Admissions Authority as part of the application data transfer process.