

# Schools Organisation, Capital and Admissions Group: Notes of meeting on Tuesday 27 September 2022

## Key Issues for DEF to Note:

### Admissions:

- Percentage of parents offered a place at one of their preferred schools in the 2022 admissions round has been comparable to previous years (97.6%).
- School governing bodies are encouraged to strategically consider PAN levels for future years in the light of demographic cohorts reducing by approximately 10%.
- Schools reminded of requirement to ensure admission arrangements policies are clearly accessible on School and Trust websites. Compliant wording template available for all schools.
- Primary and Secondary schools are asked to ensure timely discussions take place about the transition of children who may be educated outside of their chronological age group.
- School catchment area boundaries to be reviewed to ensure these follow recognisable features such as roads to ensure clarity for families. Schools will be invited to respond to any suggested changes.

### School Organisation:

- Draft term dates for 2024-25 and 2025-26 to be consulted on shortly.
- Free school bidding process currently open including AP and Special Schools. DCC looking at potential bid for new special school in East Devon area.

### Capital Programme:

- Challenges around completion of maintenance work scheduled during summer break; 90% of 22-23 programme expected to be completed, with thanks to school leaders who have facilitated changes to scheduling of work.

### Ukrainian Pupils

- Over 300 Ukrainian pupils currently on roll of Devon schools.
- Resources available to schools to support these learners and their families both locally and on a community basis.

## Attendance

### DCC

Neil Pateman (chair)

Shona Meek

Andrew Brent

Fran Butler (apologies)

Heidi Watson-Jones (notes)

Built Environments Capital Programme Manager

Senior School Organisation Officer

Senior Policy Officer

Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency Lead

Service Support Officer (Education & Learning)

### Devon Schools Leadership Services

#### Primary

Colin Butler

Penny Hammett

#### Secondary

Phil Randall

Graham Hill

Otter Valley Federation

FORT Federation

St Peters C of E VA School

Pilton Community College

### Special School Heads

Stuart Allman

Pathfield School

### DAG

Ian Rogers

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## Diocesan Representatives

Vacancy

Christina Mabin - *part*

Richard Power - *part*

Diocese of Plymouth

Exeter Anglican Diocese (Admissions)

Exeter Anglican Diocese (Capital)

## Union Representative

Nigel Williams

Corporate Forum (Education) NASUWT

## In Attendance

Nick Cook - *part*

Simon Niles

Martha Keats (observing)

South West Norse

Strategy, Schools Planning and Admissions

PA to Heads of Education

## 1. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 7 June 2022

### Outstanding actions:

- **PH** to follow up with DSLS Exec at meeting on 29/9 on any interest in a training/ briefing session for Heads re. admission and determination process and timeframes.
- **PH / PR** to suggest School Organisation / Planning colleagues invited to update at a future DSLS Exec.
- Minutes agreed as an accurate record.

## 2. Admissions: Admissions round 2022

- Percentage of parents offered a place at a preferred school comparable to previous years. Noted families are encouraged to prioritise the most favoured school and to state the catchment school as a second preference if applicable.
- Noted the number of places taken out of county (e.g. to take up places at Grammar Schools in neighbouring authorities) has increased significantly on 2021.
- Number of children seeking reception places has fallen.
- The group considered the trend in vacancy rates which have seen the impact of an approximate 10% decrease in cohorts due to demographics, slowing of house building etc. Expecting an increase in surplus places in future years which primary schools in particular should need to consider in setting PANs for future years in good time.
- Data suggesting that births are starting to increase but are unlikely to reach peak levels previously experienced and surplus capacity will need to be more strategically managed in terms of usage and quality of accommodation.
- School governing bodies are encouraged to strategically consider future PAN levels and to contact [andrew.brent@devon.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.brent@devon.gov.uk) if any potential changes to PAN are being proposed for 2024-25.
- SOCA considered the impact on parental preference being achieved and the potential impact on school improvement where schools are holding a significant level of vacancies.

### ACTION:

- **AB** to identify any families providing 3 school preferences and not receiving a place at any of those schools.

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### 3. Admissions: Admissions Webpages

- Schools have requested admissions guidance content for websites.
- Admissions Adjudicator checks school websites to ensure statutory admission arrangements information is clearly available online, is accurate and up to date.
- Current determined policies (2022-23 and 2023-24) must be posted along with a proposed 2024-25 policy. Final 2024-25 policy must be available online when determined along with date of determination by the governing body and trust (Late Jan / early Feb).
- This must be published by 15<sup>th</sup> March on school and Trust websites.
- Schools are also reminded to ensure that the LA (and the Diocese where appropriate) receives a copy of the determined arrangements following consultation.
- Template text provided in report for schools to adapt for their own webpage style.
- Schools reminded that any changes following determination of the admission arrangements must be clearly highlighted on the school website.
- Discussed holding webinar guidance sessions around admission arrangement for school heads, CoGs and business managers. Noted that the Diocese have these in place annually for CofE schools, supported by the LA

#### **ACTION:**

- **PH** to suggest DSLS host Admission Arrangements webinars being arranged for schools

### 4. Admissions: Transition for children who are offset

- Schools reminded of need to plan ahead for transitions at year 6 and year 7 for children who are being educated out of their chronological year group.
- Noted the LA encourages all children to be in school full time within their chronological age group, and supports heads where such requests are turned down on a case by case basis.
- Noted implication for potential restriction of post 16 opportunities, where children's education is delayed, as young people's education is only fully funded until age 19, and there could be ongoing implications for participation in age-related sports programmes.
- Suggested that schools are drawing that information to parents' attention at the earliest opportunity to ensure they are fully informed when requesting delayed admission.
- Considered the role of Primary Heads in engaging with secondary schools likely to receive the children, and the parents, to navigate an appropriate planning of transition to secondary which may involve acceleration to the chronological year group, and the admission application process.

#### **ACTION:**

- **AB** to ensure that relevant primary schools are reminded to engage with secondaries to plan transition or acceleration of children being educated out of chronological age group.
- **COMPLETE – An email has been sent to every school with identified pupils offset in years 4, 5 and 6.**

### 5. Admissions: Composite Prospectus Admissions round 2022

- Schools reminded to check records on schools information database to ensure all details, contacts and policies are accurate.
- Schools have individual log in details to amend.

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- Queries to [andrew.brent@devon.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.brent@devon.gov.uk)

### 6. Admissions: LA Annual Report

- Any additional information school representatives wish to have included in the annual report to be notified to [andrew.brent@devon.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.brent@devon.gov.uk)

### 7. Admissions: Review of Catchment Areas 2024-25

- Boundaries of a number of school catchment areas were amended for 2023 to follow the line of recognisable features (e.g. roads / field boundaries) and to avoid home falling between 2 catchments.
- This exercise is now being completed for the remainder of the county.
- Schools are asked to visit the any suggested changes proposed and to contact the local authority with any queries or concerns.

#### **ACTION:**

- **DSLS** asked to reiterate importance of schools reviewing the proposals.

### 8. School Organisation update

- Noted current school consultations including: expansion of Marland School onto a satellite site, proposal to lower age range at Ashwater primary, proposal to change category of Stokeinteignhead Primary.
- Regional Schools Commissioner has approved a significant change for Redhills Primary to become a Church of England School. Redhills is now called St Gabriel's CofE Primary.
- Term dates for 23-24 have been published online.
- Drafts term dates for 24-25 and 25-26 prepared - noted feedback received requesting October and February half terms to be pushed back by 1 week. These will be formally consulted on.
- Noted that timeframes for District Local Plan updates appear to be coming together; this will result in a significant pressure on the school place planning team.
- Academisation proposals: Berry Pomeroy (to join ACE MAT), Newtown, St Sidwells, Wynstream
- Chittlehampton CofE primary closed at end of summer term. Noted Swimbridge primary has temporarily relocated to the Chittlehampton site while essential building work is completed.
- Free School bidding process currently open including AP and Special Schools. Looking at potential bid for special school in Cranbrook (Cobdens) which could strategically serve East Devon to support learners with a specific area of strategically identified need.

### 10. SW Norse Update

- Devon Maintenance Partnership membership remaining steady, and DAMA has experience some academies leaving and joining.
- Noted that service term contractor compliance visits have fallen significantly following the summer break. Performance of contractors will be reviewed to ascertain how the compliance position will be recovered in a timely way.
- Considered response to supporting schools to manage the increases in energy costs. Report to be provided outlining feedback on investigation on how schools can look to reduce energy consumption.

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### **10. Capital Programme Update**

- Summer maintenance work has been challenging to deliver due to lack of contractor resource and availability impacting number and quality of tender responses.
- Thanks to school leaders who have facilitated changes to preferred programmes of work to enable them to be delivered.
- Expecting that 90% of programme will be delivered during 2022-23.
- HSE planning to visit schools from this term in relation to asbestos management.
- Awaiting confirmation of capital maintenance funding allocation for 23-24, mindful that this will be adjusted according to rates of academisations

### **11. AOB**

#### **Ukrainian Pupils**

- 330 responses from schools indicating that Ukrainian children have been accepted on roll.
- 500 applications for school places received.
- Government funding £587k (March-May) and expecting further £1.6m for those learners, with further quarterly funding according to submitted data.
- £1k being directed to schools to provide immediate support as needed locally.
- DfE have outlined that schools should be consulted on use of funds – noted that support already in place over the summer holidays and to increase capacity in admissions team. Further proposals include increasing capacity in EMTAS team and securing Ukrainian teachers to work in schools and with families. SFG have received an update.
- Mindful of ongoing need to support schools and ensure tie-in with local communities.

#### **Future meeting dates:**

- **Tuesday 6 December 2022** (11.15 – 13.00)
- **Tuesday 7 March 2023** (9.30 – 11.30)
- **Tuesday 21 June 2023** (9.30 – 11.30)
- **Tuesday 26 September 2023** (9.30 – 11.30)
- **Tuesday 5 December 2023** (9.30 – 11.30)
- **Tuesday 5 March 2024** (9.30 – 11.30)