



The John Fisher School Admissions Committee Meeting
Held on 10th October 2024 - Part A Minutes

Governors:- Ms Mary Ryan (MR) Ms Shafi Nasser (SN) Mr Robert Teague (RT) Mr Andrew Theobald (AT) Dr Anita McGowan (AMc)	Foundation Governor, Co-Chair Local Authority Governor, Co-Chair Head Teacher Foundation Governor Foundation Governor
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Attendees:

Mrs K Butterworth (KB) – School Admissions Officer
Mrs J Beeson (JB) - CEP Governance Clerk

ITEM	MINUTES	Action
1.	Welcome and Apologies for Absence There were no absences. The meeting was declared quorate	
2.	Declaration of Interest MR declared her interest as the Chair of Governors for Laleham Lea and St. Philomena's. RT declared his interest as the Vice Chair at St Joseph's.	
3.	Minutes of the previous meeting 16.10.23 The minutes were declared to be a true and accurate record of the meeting. Actions :- 1. Completed. 2. Completed. 3. Completed. 4. Completed. 5. Liaise with AS (now MB in role) regarding net capacity assessment (excluding the 6 th form) – Remains outstanding/carried forward – AS has left and Michael Boyle is still new in role. 6. Completed. 7. Table (add as an agenda item) to the template assessment form for Appeals Seeking Entry to Y7 at the November FGB – Remains outstanding/carried forward. 8. Completed. 9. Completed. 10. Completed. 11. Completed. 12. Completed.	
4.	Final Admissions <i>(presented by KB)</i>	
4.1	KB distributed a data breakdown of current admissions and comparative columns for 2021-2023. She outlined that applications numbers were up with 452. This include late applications due to children not passing the selective grammar school examinations, or alternatively because many were not Catholic and did not think they were eligible to apply.	

4.2	The waiting list had 55% of those with the school as first choice. Of those who had accepted 77% had the school as first choice compared with 69% last year.	
4.3	The religious breakdown showed that 100 were Roman Catholic and a further 54 of other Christian denominations, 7 each Muslim and Hindu, 10 had refused to state their religion and 2 left the category blank. Compared with 2021 this was a drop from 91% being Roman Catholic.	
4.4	They had not required a supplementary form for 2025 but were using Google Forms in order that KB is able to track and chase student information throughout the process. 250 had been received and 30 more from the open mornings. A governor asked how this compared with previous years? KB said it was as expected, they were halfway there with about 3 weeks to go. The data goes on the Sutton Admissions site on 4.11.24. with those who just put JF as a choice.	
4.5	They had worked hard on marketing, adopting the strapline of 'A Catholic school for all'. The open evening had been more dynamic with interactive activities, musicians, theatre etc. They had received really good feedback. They were running 3 open mornings. Many families come to both the evening and morning sessions to see the school in action. They marketed the open evening with banners, through communication with primary schools and on social media e.g. Facebook pages like Wallington Mums.	
4.6	A governor asked if there was more interest with pupils from the independent sector turning to grammar schools? Another governor suggested that a Guardian article had indicated this had not in fact materialised and that grammar school admissions were also down when they had expected it to go up as a result.	
4.7	KB said this was a recognised low birth year.	
4.8	A governor said they will not have certainty because there will be a lot of accepting places then rejecting them. A governor agreed that at the Teaching Learning and Standards committee the previous day Danny Jackson, Head of Sixth Form, had said that 160 students had accepted then several had dropped out.	
4.9	A governor asked whether JF should look at introducing a selective exam procedure? Another governor said that they would not get permission from the Local Authority to do this. KB said that a lot of parents ask if their son would have to sit an examination for JF. RT suggested this was because the school used to be a grammar school. Another governor suggested that many independent schools had selective entry exams. Greenshaw have selective exams but this is because they have always had this for 30 places on the basis of their exam.	

4.10	A governor asked about the ranking categorisations. RT said they had followed the diocesan advice to the letter.	
6.	Admissions Policy Review Given the discussion about categories, it was agreed to move the policy review to the next agenda item.	
6.1	<i>The review of Category A 2.4 30 additional Category A places will be awarded to Candidates living in the Sutton Catholic Deanery (see Appendix XI), who meet the criteria in Category A, and who have not already gained places. Candidates will be ranked according to the criteria above and the subsequent notes. Should there be insufficient Candidates to fill these 30 places, the remaining places will be offered to remaining Candidates from outside the Catholic Sutton Deanery.</i> KB said there had been 69 applicants living in the Sutton deanery of which 9 fell into this criterion. The historic reason for this particular category was because of an agreement with Sutton to pay for the David Lane building. Given the time now elapsed since then she felt the school no longer should feel it owed them anything to warrant retaining this factor. A governor commented there had always been the question of how long they would have to keep it in the Admissions Policy. It had been there now for 10 years. RT agreed it was a redundant effect.	
6.2	KB suggested that as long as it went into the consultation, that would allow them to withdraw it legitimately. AT gave the background that because the LA had needed the school's help because of the pressure on the secondary sector at that time, therefore they had agreed to the expansion of secondary schools. The LA opened 18 new forms of entry because of the baby boom. The school should have paid 10% of the cost of the David Laine building but because of this context the LA paid 100% so the school did not have to pay for any capital cost. Just as the rolls then went up and now are falling. He did not want to do anything to upset the LA because of the parlous state of the current finances. If they wanted to make this change, there would have to be a consultation and this would be picked up. He questioned what was the benefit of getting rid of this clause? It is causing no difficulty so why bother. Also he suggested it was sending out the wrong message to primaries in Sutton. When the school becomes part of a MAT it will be part of the one for the diocese of Merton, Lambeth and Sutton. By having that, it will tie the school in to the LA and also says to the Catholic primary schools that they have got an extra in. He gave the example that from St Marys the number of applicants was dire whereas some time ago every Catholic boy came to JF, so they don't want to sent a different message out by taking this clause out. A governor said she was happy to leave as is, unless it had been unlawful as a criterion.	
6.3	KB asked why they did not consider being like St Philomena's and having feeder schools. St. Philomena's offers an extra 30 places to St Mary's and St Elphege's who would not get in on the first criteria.	

6.4	A governor said that JF will become part of a MAT within 2 years because the Archbishop wants it and the DfE want all schools to be in a MAT by 2030. These points will come up again then.	
6.5	DECISION – the governors agreed there would be no change in the Admissions Policy with regard to clause 2.4	
	RT referred to the fact the policy references Appendix 11 and should state Appendix 2 – an action was set to correct this wording – ACTION.	1.
6.6	KB commented that the '30 additional places' in the clause is regularly misinterpreted by parents and they think there are 30 more places for non-Catholics. A governor proposed that the word 'additional' was removed for clarity, this would not require consultation as it was a minor wording change for clarification only not a change in the policy. RT proposed it should read 'a minimum of 30 places will be awarded to Sutton pupils'. He added the clause makes clear that Category A means Catholics. There was discussion around the fact that the Sutton deanery is not the same as the London borough of Sutton and whether this wording should be changed. The school falls into the London borough of Sutton but the Croydon Catholic deanery. It was agreed the wording would remain as 'deanery'.	
6.7	DECISION/ACTION – the wording would be amended to 'A minimum of 30 places will be awarded to those who meet the criteria of Category A living in the Sutton Catholic deanery' A governor added that a copy of the deanery map if such exists should be added as an appendix, because policies have to be worded so that applicants have a realistic chance of understanding terminology used. A governor said this would be on the parish website. KB replied the church details of the Sutton Catholic deanery were on the appendices - 11.	2.
6.8	<u>Staff children</u> – KB asked about this additional criterion being introduced. A governor said she thought this would not be allowed by the DfE Admissions Code. RT said that some schools used it as a recruitment tool and was permissible on these grounds. It would be added to Category 2. A governor said that the Code does allow staff as a criterion, but it would then have to be broken down with baptised children of Catholic staff, non-baptised, other staff etc. It would be dependent on the child's Catholicism not the parent's. RT said where it would make a difference would be B4 category. He commented it was a positive thing for staff to send their children to the school. A governor said that if they were to introduce this it would have to go out to consultation, whereas if they left it until they joined a MAT, it would then be a decision of the Trust.	

Commented [JB1]: When I looked at the Admissions Policy - the deanery details are in fact appendix 11 unless I have misinterpreted it? I am wondering if this action set is in fact needed?

6.9	KB said staff would see it as a good benefit. A governor asked if there were any pupils who had not got in who were in this category? KB said that the religious criteria outweighed everything else. A governor asked what other Catholic schools do? However, she said that they have to be practical and if this has to go out to consultation, is it worth it? A governor reconfirmed that reading from the DfE Code clauses 39-42 it had to be where there was a demonstrable shortage and had been in post for 2 years. DECISION – the governors agreed there would be no change in the Admissions Policy to introduce a staff member's child category.	
5.	Applications out of chronological age. Part B minutes – action included.	3.
7.	AOB The Chair reminded governors of the categorisation morning on 23.11.24. @ 9.30am in the library. ACTION – Invitation to be sent to all governors.	4.
8.	Closure of meeting The meeting closed at 6.55pm	

Outstanding and New Actions

	Action	who	Comments	timeframe	Status
Meeting of 16.10.23					
5.	Liaise with AS (now MB in role) regarding net capacity assessment (excluding the 6 th form)	RT/KB/Sutton LA	Carried forward due to change of Business Manager	ASAP	Open
7.	Table (add as an agenda item) to the template assessment form for Appeals Seeking Entry to Y7 at the November FGB	RT	Remains outstanding	Nov FGB – 27.11.24	Open
Meeting of 10.10.24					
1.	Admissions Policy wording to be corrected from Appendix 11 to 2.	KB		ASAP	Open
2.	Admissions Policy rewording of clause 2.4	KB		ASAP	Open
3.	Part B minutes	RT / KB	See details		Open
4.	Invitation to all governors about categorisation meeting on 23.11.24	JB		ASAP	Open

Commented [JB2]: Might not be needed depending upon answer to question above.