

**UPDATE ON PROGRESS CONCERNING LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND
THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

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1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To update the Admissions Forum on the good progress generally made to respond to concerns about aspects of the admission arrangements at a minority of VA and Foundation schools.

2. Background

2.1 The Forum will recall that as determined arrangements were received earlier in the year, the Authority reviewed these to ensure that they offered transparency and clarity, as well as prioritising those groups of children which the Code of Practice on Admissions, published February 2003, and where applicable other legislation, required.

2.2 In considering the determined admission arrangements for schools, it is the view of the LEA that insufficient priority had been given to Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs, and Children in Public Care.

2.3 Officers wrote to the schools concerned and the dioceses, and arranged a series of visits. Eight schools were visited by senior officers and one further visit is being arranged. The Diocese of St Albans was written to regarding 32 schools and the Westminster Diocese regarding 12 schools.

3. Conclusion

3.1 The Admissions Forum will be pleased to note the good progress on this issue. It is planned to report back to the Admissions Forum the proposed arrangements for 2007. As proposed arrangements are received for 2007, officers will check that the advice has been taken on board, and where necessary, will discuss with individual admitting authorities.

4. Looked After Children Statistics

4.1 During discussions officers emphasised that as far as Looked After Children are concerned, the numbers are very small, as shown in the following table. The information spans from Year Group 7 to Year Group 11.

District	Total
Broxbourne	7
East Herts	17
Welwyn Hatfield	27
North Herts	44
Stevenage	14
Hertsmere	17
Three Rivers	9
Watford	16
Dacorum	36
St Albans (<i>5 not stated</i>)	16
Grand Total	208

5. Foundation and non-faith VA Schools

5.1 Schools falling into this category were written to during the summer term, and eight schools have been visited by senior officers. In most cases head teachers agreed, in order to respond to the LEA's concerns, that they would discuss with their governing bodies changes to the 2007 arrangements. It was generally agreed that it would not be possible to seek an in year variation to their 2006 arrangements.

6. Church of England Schools

6.1 Subsequent to a letter from officers dated 13 June to the Diocese of St Albans which outlined the schools where there were varying degrees of non compliance concerning SEN and LAC, a meeting has taken place. From this meeting it was agreed the Diocese would provide guidance to the schools concerned to outline that Looked After Children of the Faith should have first priority. It was noted that the new draft COP further emphasised this. In addition, it was agreed that schools should offer clear and unambiguous notes concerning Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

7. Roman Catholic Schools

7.1 Two meetings have taken place between representatives of the Westminster Diocese Education Service and CSF officers. From the initial meeting there was agreement about some of the concerns and it was agreed that the Diocese would write to schools concerned to outline that top priority should be given to Looked after Children of the faith and that it is essential to offer clear

information in the notes on admission arrangements with regard to the admission of Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs in order to promote inclusion and transparency.

8. Looked After Children Not of the Faith

- 8.1 Officers are continuing to discuss the priority offered to Looked after Children not of the faith with diocesan representatives, although it should be noted that the numbers falling into this category are very small.