

**LOCAL ADMISSIONS FORUM
THURSDAY 18 JUNE 2026**

Present:- Mrs. I. Hartley (in the Chair), Mrs. M. Gambles, Mr. R. Griffiths, Mrs. J. Hudson, Mrs R. Scutt, and Ms. A. Wing.

Also in attendance were:- Mrs. S. Cooper, Ms. S. Gilbert, Ms. M. Jordan, Mr. C. Stones.

Apologies for absence were received from:- Mrs. K. Peart, Mrs. N. Towers, Mrs. S. Sims, Mrs. S. Whitby, and Mrs. J. Unwin

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 12TH FEBRUARY 2026

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 February 2026.

Agreed: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 February 2026 be approved as a correct record.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

With reference to Minute No. 48 (Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes), it was reported that the Clerk had made a further attempt to contact the member but had received no response. In light of the sustained period of non-attendance and lack of communication, the Forum agreed that it would be appropriate to remove Sandra Butterworth from the membership going forward. The Forum also formally recorded its thanks for her previous contributions.

With reference to Minute No. 51 (School Admission Appeal Update), an update was sought regarding school buy-back for the appeals service. It was noted that schools may choose to opt in or out of the service, and that currently only Oakwood High School had opted out of bulk appeals support, although support for in-year appeals continued to be provided.

It was further noted that outcome data from external appeal providers was not routinely received by the Appeals Team; however, the Admissions Team did follow up on outcomes directly with schools. The potential to introduce the tracking of appeal success rates and outcomes for appeals administered by external providers was discussed, and it was agreed that this would be explored further.

3. ADMISSIONS, SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND FAIR ACCESS UPDATE

Consideration was given to the latest update on the Admissions, School Organisation and Fair Access Process provided by the Access to Education Team.

The Forum received an update on outcomes following National Offer Day. It was noted that, for Secondary admissions, 92.4% of pupils received their first preference and 97.7% were allocated one of their three stated preferences. For Primary admissions, 94.4% received their first preference and 98.5% were allocated one of their three preferences. Overall, performance was reported to be strong, with the majority of children securing a place at one of their preferred schools.

It was further highlighted that submitting three preferences increased the likelihood of securing a preferred school, whereas where only one preference was expressed and could not be met, the Local Authority had a duty to allocate the next nearest available school.

The Forum was advised that there had been an improvement in the number of on-time applications this year, supported by targeted follow-up work undertaken by the team, which may have contributed to the reduction in late applications progressing to appeal. It was also noted that communication activity, including the use of social media, may have supported these improved outcomes.

It was noted that, following consultation, RMBC's concerns regarding the proposed reduction in the Published Admission Number (PAN) at Anston Park Junior School had been accepted, and the PAN was to remain at 60 for 2027/28. It was further noted that Swinton Academy had determined a reduced PAN of 180 for 2027/28, from 200.

The Forum was advised that there were currently no planned school expansions, and that the upcoming SCAP 2026 return would be used to update and review local place planning forecasts.

Reference was made to a query regarding discrepancies in the Published Admission Number (PAN) for Wingfield Academy. It was confirmed that the PAN is 200 and that any apparent variances may have related to pupil numbers on roll or to a clerical error. It was noted that any specific concerns could be raised through the Clerk and would be subject to further review.

The Forum received an update on Fair Access and noted that 63 pupils had been placed under the Fair Access Protocol in the Spring Term 2026, representing a reduction from 106 placements in the Autumn Term. The admissions and Fair Access processes were reported to be operating effectively in securing school places for children requiring one.

It was further noted that a higher number of placements had been made through the secondary Fair Access Protocol than the primary, reflecting the greater number of primary school settings.

An update was also provided on appeals, noting that grouped appeals were being undertaken for both primary and secondary schools, with group hearings held in person and individual hearings conducted online, although parents retained the option to request an in-person hearing. It was noted that the final Year 6–7 appeals concluded on 12 June, supporting timely transition arrangements.

The Forum was advised that appeals had been lodged for 15 primary schools in respect of Reception (Foundation Stage 2) admissions, and that arrangements for those appeals were progressing.

A Forum member referred to their recent experience of a grouped appeals process, noting that a significant number of applications included only a single preference. It was suggested that stronger communication be provided to encourage parents to select up to three school preferences, in line with the application process; this was noted for consideration.

Agreed: That the update be received and the content noted.

4. SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS UPDATE

The Forum received an update on appeals from the Education Services Manager. It was noted that an error in the reported figures circulated within the agenda pack had been identified and would be corrected and reissued with the minutes.

It was reported that there had been a focus on progressing grouped appeals, with all secondary Year 6–7 appeals now concluded. Some challenges had arisen in arranging primary appeals due to changes in buy-in arrangements, requiring additional panel capacity to be secured; however, it was anticipated that all appeals would be heard before the summer break.

The Forum noted a recent increase in in-year transfer appeals and that arrangements were being made to hear those appeals as soon as possible.

Thanks were expressed to Panel Members and Clerks for their flexibility and support. Ongoing efforts to recruit additional panel members were also noted.

An update was also provided on Independent Review Panels (IRPs), which are now managed by the Appeals Team, with demand higher than anticipated to date.

Finally, it was reported that the transition to a new case management system was underway, with implementation expected in July, which would improve reporting once fully operational.

Agreed: That the update be received and the content noted.

5. ACADEMIES UPDATE

The Forum received an update on the academisation of schools across Rotherham.

It was noted that all secondary and special schools had converted to academy status, with 16 primary schools remaining maintained. A small number of primary schools were in the process of proposing academisation; however, no definitive timescales were in place.

Agreed: That the academies update be received and the contents noted.