



Archbishop Runcie
Church of England (VA) First School
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Diocese of Newcastle

Headteacher: Canon Julie Robson

1st December 2016

To whom it may concern,

Admissions Policy Consultation (relating to 2018 Admissions)

We are proposing to make some changes to our Admissions Policy and we want to seek the views of all stakeholders. **These changes will affect parents who are applying for a place at our school for the September 2018 intake and beyond.**

These changes will not have an impact on those who are currently applying for a child to start Reception in September 2017. It will apply to all years of entry across the school in 2018/19 if there are more applicants than spaces available.

The consultation will commence on the date of this letter and end on **Tuesday 31st January 2017.**

1. What We Are Consulting On

The proposed changes relate to the criteria by which requests for admission to our School are prioritised. A copy of the current admissions policy is attached showing the changes which are proposed, the additions underlined and deletions are shown in strikethrough.

2. Summary of Key Changes

- 2.1. Priority will no-longer be given to children who have obtained a letter from the Vicar confirming regular worship at either All Saints' or St Nicholas Parish Churches (this is known as a faith based admission criterion).**
- 2.2. Removal of the specific priority given to children who have a specific medical need.**
- 2.3. Provide details of how parents can make a request that their child's entry into Reception be deferred or for their child to attend on a part-time basis in both cases until the term after they turn 5.**
- 2.4. Provide details for parents to make a request for their child to be admitted into a class outside their usual age group where, for example, a child is gifted or talented or has ill health.**
- 2.5. To make provision for a request to be made, by a parent of a Summer born child, (i.e. a child born between 1 April and 31 August) to be admitted out of their chronological age group, to the Reception class in the September following their fifth birthday or to defer entry to start school in Year 1.**



3. Reasons for the Change

We want to ensure that our Admissions Criteria are up to date and includes all relevant information to parents who are considering applying for a place in our school and for the following reasons:-

3.1. Children Who Have A Specific Medical Need

We believe that there is no need to have a separate criterion for children who have a specific medical need as these will now fall within the existing priority which is given to children who have an Education, Health and Care plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs naming the School.

3.2. Summer Born Children

We want to set out what choices are available to parents of summer born children in terms of when their child starts at school and what they need to do if they do not wish their child to start in Reception in the usual way. This was not included in previous admissions policies.

3.3. Admission outside of their usual Age Group

We want to set out the options which are available to some parents where there is a specific reason for a child to be admitted to a class which is not their usual age group. This was not included in previous admissions policies.

3.4. Reasons for Change to Church Attendance Based Criteria

3.4.1. Background & Vision

Our School is the only Church of England School in the north of the city of Newcastle and we are proud to offer our children an outstanding education in a Christian context. We offer an unconditional welcome to all children in our community, whatever their faith or beliefs. As a small school we can only offer a small number of children an education in our school and we have for many years received significantly more applications than places available. There were 133 applications for 30 reception places to start in September 2016 with a majority of places being allocated to 11 siblings followed by 6 utilising the church attendance based criteria and the final 13 places will have been allocated on distance from school. There has been a similar trend for a number of years. **Our vision for the our future would be to be able to offer a place to as many local children who wish to have an outstanding education in a Christian context as possible regardless of their faith and where necessary consider expanding our school creating new and exciting facilities to meet this demand.**

3.4.2. Our Purpose

We are also considering whether the church attendance (at St Nicholas and All Saints' Churches) based criterion contradicts our mission "to serve the local neighbourhood and the wider community through education". We also have in mind that when our school was created in 1861 the vision for our school which was set out in the founding Trust Deed was that it be 'used as and for a school for the education of children and adults or children only of the labouring mining and manufacturing and other poorer classes in the Parish of Gosforth' (which included at that time the Parishes of St Nicholas and All Saints').



3.4.3.Guidance from Newcastle Diocesan Education Board

We are also aware that the strategy of the Newcastle Diocesan Education Board (whose function is to look after the interests of its Church Schools) is that it supports and encourages schools to remove such church attendance criteria, as they believe that education offered by our church school should be made available to children of all faiths, and none.

3.4.4.Future Sustainability of our School

We want to ensure that our school is future proof and continues to provide a Christian faith based education to our local community for many years to come. However, like many schools we have been experiencing reducing funding for a number of years and it is not known whether this will continue or whether our fortunes will change when a new funding system which is currently being proposed is implemented. However, any changes to funding are not due to be in place until April 2018.

Whilst we can continue to make cost savings this is not a strategy which is sustainable without impacting on our children. We are aware that as a first school which has only one class per school year we do not have the flexibility or the economies of scale of larger schools and it may be beneficial to consider expanding our school.

In order to expand our school we would need to secure additional funding from Newcastle City Council. We are aware that both the Newcastle Diocesan Education Board and Newcastle City Council have indicated that it may be helpful if the church attendance based criterion, contained in our current admissions criteria, was removed as it may impact on our ability to secure the funding which would be needed to expand our school. This is because the Council has a statutory duty to ensure that in allocating funding for new school places these are accessible to local children where there is a need for additional school places due to growth in the local population. Our current admissions criteria gives priority to children who have a letter from one of our two Churches and these children may or may not live near to our school.

The Council is not saying that it would refuse funding for expansion with the Church attendance criterion still in place as there are many other considerations which will be relevant when considering the provision of funding but it may be prudent to make the change at this time given that there is a set time each year to make amendments to the admissions criteria and our next opportunity to consider any changes to the admissions criteria would be Autumn 2017.

We must stress that we do not have any plans at present to expand the size of our school we simply wish to review our Admissions Policy as we consider various options for the future. We don't want parents to be concerned about any significant changes to our school as you will be consulted on any such proposals prior to any changes being implemented.

The Newcastle Diocesan Education Board have confirmed that they would support expansion or a new provision without church attendance-based places, in preference to those with church attendance, where such criteria would prevent children from the immediate area from attending their local school.

4. Impact of Removal of Church Attendance Based Criteria

We acknowledge that the change would mean that some parents, who want to educate their children at a Church of England School, would be unlikely to secure a place at our school (unless they live very close to the school) as school places are currently limited to 30 and demand for such places is high.



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It is also acknowledged that links to our two Churches, All Saints' and St Nicholas, may be affected by this change as there may be fewer families who attend these churches securing a place. With admission based on the criterion of geographical distance from the school this is could be particularly the case with All Saints' Parish which lies to the west of the Great North Road and so is further away from the school.

It is hoped that, if the school was expanded and more places became available, an increased number of parents seeking a Church of England education (and parents of children in the wider Gosforth area) would be able to attend our school.

5. How to Submit Your Comments & Deadline

We would welcome your views (both for and against) as well as those of other interested parties. Please complete the attached consultation form, and hand it into the School Office, or submit it to us via email to admin@archbishop.newcastle.sch.uk .

If you have any questions, relating to this process or the proposed changes, please also contact the Chair of Governors at the above email address.

If you believe that someone you know may be affected by any of the changes being proposed please can you let us know and we will send them a copy of this letter and the proposed Admissions Criteria.

All comments must be sent to the Chair of Governors, by 4pm Tuesday 31st January 2017. A decision will then be made by the Governing Body no later than 28th February 2017.

Yours faithfully,

**Sarah Hawkins
Chair of Governors**



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6.

Admissions Policy Consultation (relating to Admissions in Sept 2018) Response Form			
Your Details			
Name:		Address:	
Do you have a child at ARFS?	Y/N		
Are you Considering applying for a place at ARFS in 2018?	Y/N		
In the event of oversubscription would you have used the priority given to children who have obtained a letter from the Vicar confirming regular worship at either All Saints or St Nicholas Parish Churches?	Y/N		
What do you think of this change (please circle one of the following answers)?	Agree	Don't know	Disagree
In the event of oversubscription would you have used the priority given to children who have a specific medical need?	Y/N		
What do you think of this change (please circle one of the following answers)?	Agree	Don't know	Disagree
Will you be considering either deferring admission			



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or requesting a child attend on a part-time basis in both cases until the term after they turn 5?			
What do you think of this change (please circle one of the following answers)?	Agree	Don't know	Disagree
Will you be considering making a request that your child be admitted into a class outside their usual age group where, for example, a child is gifted or talented or has ill health?	Y/N		
What do you think of this change (please circle one of the following answers)?	Agree	Don't know	Disagree
Will you be considering making a request that your child (summer born child i.e. a child born between 1 April and 31 August) be admitted out of their usual age group, to the Reception class in the September following their fifth birthday or to defer entry to start school in Year 1?	Y/N		
What do you think of this change (please circle one of the following answers)?	Agree	Don't know	Disagree
Please use this space to comment on any of the changes which are being proposed.			



Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.



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