

Menorah Girls School – Application to establish a Voluntary aided school.

The Schools Forum approved a framework for local authority decision making in relation to independent schools seeking to move to the maintained sector which was subsequently endorsed by the Council's Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee.

Over the last few months, council officers have been working with Menorah Girls school as it prepares an application for the council to consider approving a move into the maintained sector. This report provides information on the school and indicates the likely impact on Barnet's school funding allocation.

Menorah High School for Girls opened in 2001 and offers secondary education for 250 Orthodox Jewish girls aged between 11 and 18. All of its current pupils are Barnet residents although the school is located in Brent (105 Brook Road, Dollis Hill, London NW2 7BZ). The school advises that it is located in Brent because of the inability to find a site in Barnet.

For 2014 examinations, for A level exams taken, 95% of the students were graded A* – C (Year 13), and of GCSE results, 97% were A* - C (Years 10 and 11).

Barnet's framework requires evidence to satisfy a range of criteria – (e.g. need, standards, financial health, curriculum, suitability, value for money, equalities and premises) set out at a high level in Department for Education guidance. Officers are currently supporting the school and its advisors to demonstrate how the criteria are satisfied. The small size of the school is unique in Barnet and therefore there are no comparator Barnet schools against which to compare its proposed financial, curriculum and staffing arrangements. In order to fully understand the proposal, the Council has also engaged a serving Haringey headteacher to visit the school and talk through the proposal with the school's leadership team and governing body.

Once the school is confident of being able to satisfy the criteria set out in the council's framework, it will proceed to the next stage of consultation (as set out in DfE guidance). At the end of the consultation period, the council is required to reach a decision. The decision will be made by the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee. The school is keen for the Committee to consider its application as soon as possible with the aim of becoming state maintained on the 1st January 2016 or the 1st April 2016.

Financial implications to Barnet Dedicated Schools Grant

We are seeking final confirmation from the Education Funding Agency that the school will be funded on its entry into the state maintained sector on the same basis as other Barnet secondary schools. Under our local funding formula, all secondary school pupils incur a small cost to the DSG as the amount per pupil paid to schools under our formula is more than the amount paid by the Education Funding Agency. This would apply equally to this school. (For primary schools, the reverse is true). Therefore, it is anticipated that the school will be fully funded by the EFA but there will be a small impact on the DSG through the design of our local formula.

Action: Any view of the Schools Forum will be reported to the Council's Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee to help inform decision making.