

BEECHEN CLIFF SCHOOL

ADMISSION APPEAL HEARING

THE POSITION OF THE SCHOOL

1. Beechen Cliff is a successful and popular school and it is routinely oversubscribed. The Governors would like to accept all pupils whose parents wish to send them to Beechen Cliff School and over recent years have striven to increase numbers admitted. However, there are limitations to how many pupils the school can accommodate.
2. The Department for Education (DfE) provides guidance on how to assess the capacity of a school based on the floor area of the available accommodation. It is on the basis of this guidance that the school has set its Published Admissions Number (PAN) 162, which is the maximum within the DfE guidance. This remains unchanged.

Although much building work has been completed in recent years, the effect of this is was to improve the standard of the facilities and it has not materially changed the capacity of the school, other than to allow a small number of boarders in addition to the normal admission of day pupils. This has not affected the PAN. The intake is effectively a six form intake with an average size of 27.

3. Year 7: are split into seven streams in order to provide a better pupil-teacher ratio for their first year at secondary school. If Year 7 contains 162 as set by the PAN there will, on average, be 23.

Year 8 and Year 9: there are seven streams in core subjects. So for 162 pupils, the average set size would be 23.

In Year 10 and 11: there are seven streams in core subjects. Making an average group size of 23 for core subjects when pupil numbers are at the PAN.

Year 11: In 2014 on a one off basis the school admitted an additional form of 28 pupils. An additional stream was added to the teaching groups making an average group size of 24 in core subjects.

The School net capacity is 1131.

The School is fully staffed with no teaching post unfilled for September 2019

4. Pupils are accepted for admission in accordance with the published School's Admission Policy which was submitted for consultation to the public with no comments and determined by the Full Governing Body in February 2019. Children with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) are dealt with separately by the Local Authority. If the school is named in the statement and the school feels it has the capacity to meet the needs of the pupil, they have to be admitted.

For Year 7 entry only - Sporting Aptitude – This is the group admitted on the basis of performance in objective tests. Pupils are then ranked and admitted according to the number of places available.

5. In addition, as a result of past admissions the number of pupils in other years within the school exceed the PAN of 162. Up to date figures on the pupils presently on the roll for Year 7 – Year 11 are:

		<u>Form Group Size</u>
Year 7	182	30
Year 8	173	29
Year 9	191	32
Year 10	181	30
Year 11	199	28

The boarding provision currently has 24 pupils in the lower school.

The School also has a large Sixth Form which further stretches resources.

6. While there is often a gradual decrease in numbers in as pupils move away, the School's experience is that the numbers on roll are staying steady. Limited resources such as IT and Scientific equipment would be overstretched in those later years. The last three years have not seen the decrease expected and this needs to be taken into account.
7. The Appeal Panel must appreciate that the School cannot run an extra stream in Year 8 – Year 11, as there are simply not enough class rooms to accommodate an extra stream in each year. Thus, unless there is a decrease in numbers on roll, the number of pupils over the PAN (162) will put unacceptable stress on the operation of the school.
8. In assessing the current appeals for 2019/2020, the Governors' request that the Appeal Panel should consider the impact of admitting additional pupils, on the education, safeguarding and the Health and Safety, not only of the pupils, but also the School as a whole.

In addition to the points made above, the Appeal Panel should note that some of the School is still quite dated and the corridors in those buildings are relatively narrow and become congested at change of lessons. Hard play areas are limited in size, and providing adequate space for pupils during break times in wet weather is a particular challenge.