

BEECHEN CLIFF SCHOOL

ADMISSION APPEAL HEARING

THE POSITION OF THE SCHOOL 2021-22

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 over the last 10 years, the effect of this 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. In Years 7, 8 and 9 there are 7 teaching groups in most academic subjects. If these year groups contain 162 as set by the PAN there will, on average be 23 pupils per teaching group.

In Year 10 there are 7 teaching groups in core subjects. If these year groups contain 162 as set by the PAN there will, on average be 23 pupils per teaching groups.

In Year 11: there are currently 8 teaching groups in core subjects, though this will return to 7 teaching groups for September due to budgetary requirements. The school was required to take a larger intake some years ago and this cohort completes Year 11 in 2021.

The School net capacity is 1131.

The School is fully staffed with no teaching post unfilled for September 2021.

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 MNSP Trust in February 2021. 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. This process has been formally amended for September 2021 entry only.

5. In addition, as a result of past admissions the number of pupils in other years within the school exceeds the PAN of 162. Figures on the pupils presently on the roll for Year 7 – Year 11 are as follows as of 28th April 2021:

Form Group Size

Year 7	175	29
Year 8	175	29
Year 9	184	31
Year 10	169	28
Year 11	186	27

The boarding provision currently has 11 pupils in the lower school, 17 Sixth Form boarders and with flexi boarding arrangements for pupils associated with Southampton Football Club training programme.

The School also has a large Sixth Form (396) which further stretches resources.

6. While there is often a gradual decrease in numbers 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.

7. The Appeal Panel must appreciate that the School cannot run an extra class group in Years 7 – Year 11, as there are simply not enough classrooms 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 in year transfer 2020-21 and Year 7 admission 2021/2022, 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. One third of our teaching rooms have a capacity of less than 27. Hard play areas are limited in size, and providing adequate space for pupils during break times in wet weather is a particular challenge.

COVID-19

It is recognised that the ongoing pandemic will mean a change to the usual admission appeal arrangements, these being outlined in documentation provided by Gov.uk in its coronavirus advice. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code/changes-to-the-school-admission-appeals-code-regulations-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>