

Annex 4

Comments on proposed admission numbers for 2006/07 and other general comments

Ninfield CE School – The school requests that the published admission number be raised from 20 to 22 on the basis that the year groups generally exceed 20 pupils and a number of 22 would still be within the overall capacity of the school.

Comment – The current admission number of 20 would permit the school to organise KS1 into two classes although in the last few years it has been necessary to exceed the admission number because of the number of children living in the village. There would always be an expectation that the school should admit local children because of the distance to other schools. Raising the admission number could lead to children from outside the area having to be accommodated and would mean the LEA always having to provide the resources for a third teacher in KS1. The school has five classrooms giving a potential roll of 150 (30 x 5) but with two infant classes and three junior classes would give classes of about 26/27 children. For this reason the LEA will recommend to the Cabinet that the admission number remain at 20 (bearing in mind that it is possible to exceed the admission number to meet local need).

Punnetts Town Community Primary School – Whilst the school finds the proposed admission number acceptable, it makes the point that the school organisation would provide some vacant places to enable more children to be admitted. For example in 2005/06 the school could admit about 17 or 18 pupils if necessary because the current reception group is relatively small.

Comment – The views of the school are noted but the LEA would be reluctant to exceed the admission number if vacancies exist elsewhere. However it has to be recognised that to refuse parental preference has to be defensible in relation to being prejudicial to efficient education or the efficient use of resources. Thus the issue would be discussed with the school (as it is always) if the number of preferences exceeds the admission number.

Pevensey and Westham CE School – The school accepts the admission number of 60 but the governing body has grave concerns about casual admissions causing class sizes to grow. For example the current year group already has 70 children, a matter of concern to the governing body. What will be the future admissions policy, particularly in respect of this cohort, bearing in mind the county policy on KS2 class sizes?

Comment – The policy of 30 to a class at KS2 is to be phased in from September 2005. Schools who serve a specific area are always vulnerable to casual admissions if new families move in to the area, given the LEA's duty to provide a place within a reasonable distance. This is also recognised by the government in KS1 class size law since an exception can be made related to a place not being available within a reasonable distance.

Battle and Langton CE School – The school points out that whilst the admission number is acceptable the projected numbers on roll, as usual, are likely to be inaccurate. The school would like to know how a maximum of 30 to a KS2 class will operate at the school particularly as there are two classes of 38 children already. With the excess of 8 from each class there would nearly be enough children for another class (especially if combined with excess from the adjacent year group). Will the school be given funding for extra teachers to create an extra class or will the school just have to continue with 38 in a class?

Comment - The issues are similar to those raised by Pevensey and Westham. The internal organisation is a matter for the school and is funded by formula related to total numbers on

roll. As said above the new policy is to be phased in beginning with the current year 2, year 3 in September but it is recognised there will need to be exceptions to meet local need.

Marshlands School – The school would like to see waiting lists operate with movement of children only taking place at the end of half-term, not after only a few days in one school. Last year a child had three weeks in Marshlands and the parent was advised a place was available at her preferred school and moved the child because she was afraid she would lose the place.

Comment – It is possible to delay admission to the beginning of each term and hold a place until then. However, success in administering such a policy would depend on the school being prepared to delay admission and on parents being prepared to wait to take up a place at their preferred school in the knowledge that the place is available.

Priory School - The school thinks it strange that Chailey has an admission number of 162 when the intake is estimated to be 180 whilst at Ringmer the admission number is 180 and the estimated intake will be 165. Is this the best use of school places?

Comment – Admission numbers must reflect the capacity of the accommodation available and the proposed numbers of 180 at Ringmer and 162 at Chailey do that. The estimates of intakes expected relate to numbers in the school community areas and expected parental preference. At Chailey it is expected that the 162 figure will need to be exceeded to meet local need.

Tollgate School – The school is concerned about the financial impact of a KS2 class size policy of 30 since currently some classes exceed that number of children.

Comment – The new class size policy to be introduced from September was determined last year even though concerns were expressed about the loss of income. At the time it was stated that the possibilities of extra resources would be considered through the normal budget cycle and that consideration would be given to exceptions where a school can demonstrate that the delivery of the curriculum will be better with larger classes. The 2004 statistic from the DfES show that no other LEA has larger KS2 classes than in East Sussex. Some additional resources are expected to be available to support the new class size policy and to support the workforce remodelling.

Little Horsted CE School – The school wishes to admit all reception children on a full time basis from September.

Comment – As an aided school it is for the governors to determine the admission arrangements. Interestingly the school has not included this change in their proposals for 2006/07. It should be pointed out that the early years policy has been developed with the Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership which includes private providers who would undoubtedly see such a move as unfair since they are not in a position to make similar provision. In addition other schools would object that the competition is unfair if the same provision is not available at all schools. It is not proposed to recommend to the Cabinet that a change of policy takes place for 2006/07 but the issue would be worth discussing further with the Partnership.

Frant CE School – The school has written separately about pressures on accommodation and is of the view that it may be necessary to discuss a lower limit for 2005/06 in view of the large intake in 2004/05.

Comment – The admission number for 2005/06 has already been published and if there is sufficient demand for places it will be necessary to allocate up to the limit.

Robsack Wood School – The school would wish the reception part time children all to be full time in January, one term earlier than currently permitted.

Comment – The issues are the same as raised by Little Horsted School (above).

Ocklynge School – The school believes the link between Ocklynge and its main feeders (Motcombe and Pashley Down) should only operate up to the normal maximum intake number (ie 210). After that Ocklynge should not be expected to admit further pupils.

Comment – This issue is discussed in detail in the report on admissions in 2005/06. It is seen as a ‘one off’ which is not expected to be repeated.

Claverham Community College – The school believes the accommodation needs should be addressed to keep pace with increasing pupil numbers and to enable the school to retain flexibility within the system of setting pupils according to ability. The school also believes the parents who live in the area, seek places at other schools but then decide to seek a place at Claverham should be resisted. Pupils moving from another part of the country into the area should still be allocated a place at Claverham (subject to the college being first choice).

Comment – Admissions at Claverham are ongoing caused by the college always being fully subscribed and then more families moving to the area and the children having to be accommodated given that no other school is available within a reasonable distance. It is difficult for the LEA to treat new children to the area differently from those who decide to apply for a place simply because they want to transfer to their local school. It is an issue worthy of further consideration. With regard to accommodation the justification is recognised but there is a resource issue for the County Council. Providing extra accommodation would mean that the admission number would have to go up and casual admission applications from new families to the area would still be an issue.

West Rise Junior School – The school has raised the same issue of loss of funding at KS2 as a result of the new class size policy. The school has also offered to admit more children if necessary and points out that there is space on the site.

Comment – See above the comment about Tollgate in relation to the class size issue. Currently there is no need to provide additional accommodation in the area.

Uplands Community Technology College – The college believes the proposed admission number of 160 is not economic and suggests it be reset in the region of 170, in line with current numbers. The college also suggests the open intake evenings be co-ordinated across local areas especially with Kent – this would allow further choice for parents.

Comment – The intake for the college has usually ended up at 168 (and beyond). When there have been appeals the defence submitted by the LEA is at 168 (6 groups of 28 children) and the LEA would therefore agree to the admission number being raised to 168 from 2006/07. With regard to intake evenings this is left to headteachers to arrange locally. For example heads in Eastbourne co-ordinate their dates as do heads in the east of the county.

Plumpton Primary School – The school is subject to falling rolls. It estimates that for 2006/07 the roll will reduce to about 140 (the current admission number of 30 would give a roll of 210). The school will be organising on five classes for 2005/06. The school therefore proposes the admission number be reduced to 20 and this has been discussed with the LEA.

Comment – The LEA supports the school proposal. The capacity of the accommodation has been reassessed and previous teaching areas have been redesignated for other purposes. The proposed number of 20 is in line with the latest capacity calculation.

Chailey School – The school has noted that the admission number of 162 is expected to be exceeded in 2005/06 and 2006/07 and draws attention to accommodation shortages especially in respect of specialist accommodation which needs to be urgently addressed.

Comment – The additional numbers were anticipated in the School Organisation Plan. The LEA recognises the school will be operating well beyond the capacity calculation, as it is now, and is in active and ongoing discussion with the school over the accommodation needs.

Catsfield CE School – The school wishes to emphasise the desire to accommodate local children and draws attention to two local children having been refused places.

Comment – The LEA supports the need for the school to admit local children and that would be consistent with the normal approach to admissions. The LEA is not aware of local children being refused places and will explore this issue further with the school.

Willington Primary School – The school has pointed out that the estimated roll is likely to be higher at 453 and likely to be achieved given the bulge currently in year 2 in Eastbourne. The school continues to be concerned about plans to reduce KS2 class sizes to 30. Unless this is matched by funding it will create an actual loss which could not be sustained without a cut in teaching staff. This does not equate with improved teaching and learning.

Comment – See comments above under Tollgate School.

Motcombe School – The governors have expressed grave concerns about the planned admission number of 120 for 2006/07 because of the low number of preferences received so far for admission in 2005/06. Their concerns relate to potential budget difficulties and organisational problems. The governors have also raised concerns about admissions to Ocklynge this year. The school believes it imperative that discussions on primary education in Old Town takes place and long term decisions made in consultation with all.

Comment - The County Council is conducting a review of primary education in the county on an area by area basis. A meeting is planned with the Eastbourne and Hailsham headteachers for April to discuss that area and an important part of those discussions will be future numbers.