

Southover CE Primary School

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Headteacher: *Noel Fadden*

FAO: Fiona Wright
Assistant Director of Education & ISEND

14th January 2020

Dear Fiona,

Due to the falling numbers of children in the Lewes area confirmed by our meetings with Gary Langford and Jo Miles, we are applying to reduce our PAN from September 2021 at Southover CE Primary School. We intend to reduce the PAN for Southover from 60 to 30.

The number of pupils in the Lewes area is significantly below the Lewes schools' published capacity of 230 places (including Iford and Kingston which is a school in the Lewes town area). It is to the benefit of all schools in the area to have full classes (especially in the current funding climate) and so this reduction would enable all schools to offer the best provision possible. Schools who are unsure whether they will have one or two classes starting in reception are prevented from forward planning effectively and thus this inhibits efficiency and affects staff stability.

As you are aware, we have budget concerns for the coming years and in order to avoid a deficit budget we are needing to look at restructuring and possible redundancies. These issues are primarily brought on by the move to two-form entry at the behest of the LA and the subsequent spaces this has led to. We cannot afford to carry the shortfall in pupils for the Lewes area within our budget if we are to maintain the standard of education we are renowned for.

Yours sincerely,

Noel Fadden
Head Teacher
Southover School



20th December 2019

Dear Fiona

I'm writing to you on behalf of the Lewes schools in connection with the ongoing issue of the PAN across Lewes town, and including Iford and Kingston CE Primary School, and the shortfall of pupils available currently and in the foreseeable future to fill those places.

A number of the Headteachers and chairs of governors from the Lewes primary schools met on Friday 13th December to discuss the issue. As you're aware, the difference between PAN and predicted numbers for the next few years is in excess of 60 – two full classes of children. The forecasts provided by Gary Langford suggest that South Malling and Western Road will be full for the next few years, St Pancras and Iford and Kingston will be a few pupils short of PAN (which does, of course, have a significant cumulative effect on overall pupil numbers) and that Wallands and Southover will be just below or just above 30 – half of their PAN.

Due to the different circumstances of the individual schools there was no consensus as to how best to proceed to ensure each school has a PAN which will avoid a potential deficit budget. Wallands and Southover would both like to reduce their PAN to 30 as this would avoid the need for the school to employ an additional teacher should the class number exceed 30. The current forecast suggests that the number of pupils predicted for the next few years could still be accommodated across the town if this were to happen. However, we understand from your previous letter that this would leave the authority in the position of having insufficient capacity to accommodate incoming families. This view is also supported by some of the Lewes schools.

Neither Wallands or Southover are in favour of the option suggested by you that they both reduce PAN to 45 as this would involve a significant reorganisation of class structures, staffing and curriculum. The conclusion of the Lewes heads and chairs was that we seem therefore, to be left with the option of reducing PAN across the town by 30 and with this reduction being achieved by either Wallands or Southover reducing their individual PAN to 30.

Both schools feel very strongly that to remain at a PAN of 60 would leave them in the vulnerable position of having just over 30 pupils allocated to them, forcing them to provide two YR classes with all the staffing costs that proceeds from that, with per pupil funding that fails to cover the costs of that provision. Neither school has the financial resources to absorb the very significant costs that such a situation would inevitably produce.

In their discussions, the Lewes schools felt strongly that they had been placed in this position as a result of the miscalculation by the LA in terms of pupil numbers across the town, whilst recognising the difficulty of predicting numbers of likely pupils of this age. We would therefore, like to ask the LA to accept the following proposals:

- The LA makes a decision as to which of the Lewes schools – Wallands or Southover – is allowed to reduce their PAN to 30. We feel that the LA, rather than the schools, has the best information about where in the town the likely pupils will be based and which school is best placed to

accommodate them;

- The LA absorbs the financial costs that will affect the school selected to retain a PAN of 60 if that school finds itself in a position of having to provide two classes of YR with an intake in the low 30s.

We would also like more information about the process involved around applying for a reduction in PAN and the criteria that the LA applies in deciding on whether to accept such an application.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Andrew Dobell".

Andrew Dobell (on behalf of Iford and Kingston CE Primary School, Wallands Primary School, Southover CE Primary School, St Pancras Catholic Primary School, Western Road Primary School and South Malling CE Primary School).



13.1.2020

Dear Fiona

I am writing to follow up the recent letter sent by the Lewes Heads and governors about Reception numbers in the Lewes town and the shortfall of pupils available currently and in the foreseeable future to fill those places.

I wanted to reiterate our concern about our current PAN for Reception, which is 60 children. This year we have only had one Reception class with 24 children and our predicted numbers for September 2020 are 27 according to East Sussex, however as of today we have 19 first choice places. Predicted numbers for September 2021 are similar at 32.

If we were to remain at a PAN of 60 and have just over 30 pupils allocated, we would be forced to provide two Reception classes with all the associated staffing costs, with per pupil funding that fails to cover the costs of that provision. Our numbers throughout the rest of the school are currently low, we currently have 307 children on role, with a possible capacity of 420 places.

With our current PAN of 60 in Reception it is very challenging to plan staffing appropriately and if we were to have to have two very small Reception classes our budget would not support this. We undertook a significant restructure nearly two years ago and are about to embark on a second restructure, and this will have to take place for the next few years, with mixed classes being put into place, due to predicted numbers across Lewes town.

As you will be aware Wallands is currently judged to be requires improvement and our focus needs to remain on ensuring the school gets to good. We know that we might have lost some children higher in the school due to this judgment, but also that it will undoubtedly affect our Reception intake.

I feel strongly that if one school in Lewes were to go to one form entry it should be Wallands and once numbers in Lewes start to rise again we would then be pleased to return to an intake of 60 children.

Thanks for your consideration in this matter, we would like to request a meeting with you to discuss this in more detail and would be grateful if you could suggest a suitable date as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

 and 

Debbie Collis and Tony Smith

Headteacher and Executive Headteacher
Wallands Community Primary School

Headteacher: Mrs Debbie Collis

Deputy Headteacher: Mrs Fiona Large

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