

Report to: Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability

Date of meeting: 6 February 2024

By: Director of Children’s Services

Title: Admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools in East Sussex 2025-26

Purpose: To determine the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled (“VC”) schools in East Sussex for 2025-26 and to agree the co-ordinated schemes for admission for the same year as required by the School Admissions Code 2021

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) determine the admission arrangements for 2025-26 as set out in appendix 1 (unchanged from 2024-25).
 - 2) agree the published admission numbers (“PANs”) for the same year, as set out in appendix 2, including the revised PANs for Chailey School and Mayfield CE Primary School.
 - 3) agree the co-ordinated schemes of admission as set out in appendices 3, 4 and 5.
-

1 Background

1.1 The School Admissions Code 2021 (“the Code”) states that admission authorities must determine (set) their admission arrangements annually. However, provided the relevant admission authority is not proposing any changes to their admission arrangements, there is no requirement to consult annually; where there is no change to arrangements, consultation must take place every seven years.

1.2 For the avoidance of doubt, East Sussex County Council (“the Council”) consults annually, whether there is a change or not.

1.3 The PAN for a school is the number of places available in each ‘relevant age group’ which a school has agreed with the admission authority it can provide. The ‘relevant age group’ is the age group in which pupils are or will normally be admitted to the school.

1.4 Consultation on the proposed admission arrangements (as set out in Appendix 1) was carried out between 13 November 2023 and 15 January 2024 to satisfy the requirement to consult for at least six weeks and to end the consultation period by 31 January 2024 as set out in the Code. Schools were alerted to the consultation and asked to publicise it to parents by circulating the link to the relevant page on the Council’s website.

1.5 15 responses to the consultation were received via the consultation hub during this period. The results and comments are attached as appendix 7.

1.6 The consultation also included Priory School, Lewes, whose trust is responsible for admissions to the school. This is because the trust has requested that the Council consults on their behalf as they propose to use the Council's admission arrangements.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The Lead Member is advised that the admission arrangements set out in appendix 1 are unchanged from 2024-25.

2.2 There were 15 responses to this section of the consultation, of which 9 were in favour and 6 against.

3. Changes to PAN

3.1 The governing bodies of two schools requested PAN changes as set out in Appendix 2:

- Chailey School- increase from 174 to 180
- Mayfield CE Primary School - decrease from 30 to 20

3.2 There were 3 comments on this question in the consultation: one agreed, one was ambiguous and one was against the increase in respect of Chailey.

Chailey School

3.3 The headteacher and governing body of Chailey School have requested a PAN increase from the current figure of 174 to 180, to make the organisational structure more efficient.

3.4 There is no in area demand for this increase and the leadership at the school have been advised that there will be no resources available to support this increase. The school understand that they will have to accommodate the larger numbers within the existing buildings and that there will be no capital funding to provide additional space as pupil numbers grow. However, the leadership have indicated that they still wish to increase their PAN as proposed.

Mayfield CE Primary School

3.5 The headteacher and governing body of Mayfield CE Primary School have requested a reduction in PAN from the current figure of 30 to 20 to reflect the falling numbers of primary school aged children in the local area.

3.6 Forecasts show that a PAN of 20 will be sufficient to meet in area demand for the foreseeable future however, the accommodation at the school will remain sufficient to accommodate a PAN of 30, so the school can return to admitting this number of children without additional accommodation should the demand arise.

School Closures

3.7 Two voluntary aided schools have been removed from the list of PANs in Appendix 2 as they will have closed before the start of the 2025-26 school year: Holy Cross CE Primary School in Uckfield, and St Pancras RC Primary School in Lewes.

4. Co-ordinated schemes for admissions

4.1 The co-ordinated scheme for primary and junior admissions in 2025-26 (Appendix 3) is essentially unchanged from 2024-25 as the changes are only to dates to reflect the new academic year.

4.2 The same applies to the co-ordinated scheme for secondary admissions in 2025-26 (Appendix 4).

4.3 The co-ordinated scheme for in-year admissions to Community and VC schools in East Sussex in 2024-25 (Appendix 5) is likewise essentially unchanged from 2023-24. The East Sussex in-year admission arrangements for 2024-25 are attached as Appendix 6 for reference.

4.4 There were two comments on this section of the consultation - neither raised an objection. There were also a number of comments expressing concern about the clarity of the survey. These have been noted and will be considered when compiling this consultation in future years.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

5.1 The Lead Member is recommended to:

- Determine the attached admission arrangements for 2025-26 as set out in Appendix 1
- Agree the PAN increase for Chailey School and PAN decrease for Mayfield CE Primary School, and the PANs for other schools as set out in Appendix 2
- Agree the adoption of the co-ordinated schemes of admission as set out in Appendices 3, 4 and 5.

5.2 The determined admission arrangements for Community and VC schools in 2025-26 will be published on the Council's website by 15 March 2024 as required under current legislation. Any objection to these arrangements can then be made to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator until 15 May 2024. The final arrangements will be published in the composite prospectus online (and available in hard copy on demand) by 12 September 2024 as required by the Code.

ALISON JEFFERY
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Jo Miles
Tel. No. 07701021572
Email: jo.miles@eastsussex.gov.uk

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None