

Consultation on a proposal to reduce the Pupil Admission Number (PAN) at Westgate Hill Primary Academy w.e.f. September 2022.

Westgate Hill Primary Academy is one of seven academies in the Laidlaw Schools Trust. The Trust is the Admissions Authority for the Academy and wishes to consult on a proposal to reduce the PAN to support the leadership team in managing numbers of pupils around the school in the spaces available and to provide a financial model that is affordable and does not impact adversely on staffing.

Proposal

- The Trustees propose to reduce the PAN from 120 to 90 with effect from September 2022.
- For children already in the school, there will be no change and year groups of above 90 children will be managed appropriately as they progress through the school to Year 6.
- Nursery admissions for 2020 are 22 lower than in 2019. This will inevitably have an effect on the number of children in Reception in 2021.
- The 2020 intake of Reception children was 95 children and the Trustees are confident that going forward parents of the local children will be able to choose Westgate Hill as their school of choice.
- Laidlaw Schools Trust is also consulting in the Sunderland area to reduce the PAN at Academy 360 and South Hylton Primary Academy. Sunderland City Council is carrying out the consultation on our behalf.
- The LST Board will continue to review its PANs on an annual basis and will be flexible to react to demographic trends.

Rationale

- The Academy is not full and has 145 surplus places. Even with this number of surplus places the management of large numbers of pupils is extremely difficult, particularly in the open spaces of the Foster building where there is potential to have 120 very young pupils occupying the same space. In addition, an open area on the middle floor of the Victoria building (originally designed as a school hall) houses two classes of Year 4

pupils – this is a space that cannot be altered to provide two classrooms due to the building’s Grade II listing.

- Moving from a four-form entry to three would alleviate the issues of overcrowding and provide a more conducive environment in which to learn. The Victoria building was not originally designed to accommodate so many children, especially for KS2 children whose physique is naturally larger.
- Additionally, and very importantly, the last two intakes of Reception children of just over 90 children have provided the financial challenge of having four classes going through to Year 2. If the PAN was reduced to 90 then the number of classes can be reduced from 4 to 3. This provides the optimum solution in terms of delivering the curriculum and the cost-effective deployment of school resources. Failure to deal with this issue now would certainly provide financial challenges in due course.

Consultation Response

- The consultation period will commence on Monday 23rd October and run through to Friday 15th January 2021.
- Comments are invited and can be submitted via email at consultation@laidlaw-school-trust.com
- On completion of the consultation period the Trust Board will consider all responses received and decide how it will proceed.
- Admission arrangements for the 2022/23 academic year will be determined by 28th February 2021. Any objections after that date will need go to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by 15th May 2021.

Peter Snowdon

Chief Operating Officer