

**Case by the Governing Body of Icknield High School against the admission of students in excess of the Published Admission Number for the school:**

Year 7 2021/22 – Phase Transfer Appeals:

The Governing Body would like to be able to admit all the students that choose Icknield High School, however in order to maintain high standards of both education and health and safety we need to maintain a reasonable, feasible and safe intake number

Our justification for this view is as follows: -

1. **The School is full and heavily over-subscribed.** For each of the past five years using Luton's equal preference admissions system, the school has had 881 expressed preferences (with 285 first preferences over this period) for our 295 places. The school has waiting lists in all years from which it fills up places as they become available when students leave. School admissions must be offered fairly, transparently. Every successful appellant adversely affects those on the waiting list significantly increasing their waiting time.
2. **The Published Admission Number (PAN) is 295.** The number is determined after the statutory procedures are issued by the DfE and in consultation with the Luton and neighbouring admissions authorities. Figures for 2021/22:

| Year Group | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | Total |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| PAN        | 295 | 295 | 295 | 295 | 290 | 1470  |
| Actual     | 295 | 295 | 295 | 295 | 290 | 1470  |

Note: If Actual numbers temporarily fall below the PAN then the waiting list is activated to restore the numbers.

The Governing Body recognises the need to keep totals down (in order to maintain effective and efficient provision) and there can be no automatic right of admission once the PAN has been reached in any year. Moving into the catchment area does not guarantee a place at the school; it determines the appellant's place on the waiting list.

3. **The physical condition of the building.** The school was built in 1949 following the second world war as separate Boys and Girls' schools of 450 each: Some extensions were added in the 1960s and a two storey block in the early seventies. Subsequently, further mobile classrooms have been added.

The building has been assessed by the local authority (as part of the 'Building Schools for the Future' programme) as being the secondary school building in Luton in the worst state of repair. The school cannot be refurbished and therefore would have had to undergo an expansion and a total re-build. The end of the BSF programme has left the school with the largest single intake of any secondary School in Luton with a building of a standard below recommendations.

The school is overcrowded – for example corridors designed to take student traffic of 900 are having to take 1470 students and approximately 200 adults.

|         | EHCP |     | Total |
|---------|------|-----|-------|
|         | SEND | HID |       |
|         |      |     |       |
| Year 7  | 4    | 3   | 7     |
| Year 8  | 4    | 3   | 7     |
| Year 9  | 3    | 0   | 3     |
| Year 10 | 6    | 2   | 8     |
| Year 11 | 8    | 2   | 10    |
| Total   | 25   | 10  | 35    |

The school has many changes of level and certain areas of the school cannot be adapted to comply with even basic disability legislation. Health and Safety issues are prevalent throughout a building constructed largely in line with the standards of 1949. Additional students in the school increase the risks for all in an inadequate, ageing building that will have no capital expenditure other than maintenance spent on it in the foreseeable future.

#### 4. **High SEN numbers – September 2021-2022**

The School has a high number of SEND students:

We currently have 35 children with EHCP, 10 attend the Hearing-Impaired Provision.

Icknield has one of the highest number of students with EHCP in Luton. Therefore, Icknield is already experiencing pressure on resources considerably in excess of any other secondary school in Luton.

#### 5. **High EAL numbers**

94% of the students at Icknield (Census 2020) come from ethnic backgrounds other than White British, with 49 different nationalities represented. Across all year groups 75% of students have English as a second language.

#### 6. **Looked After Children**

There are 19 looked after children and 5 Special Guardianship Orders in place for students at Icknield in September 2020. Each child requires a Personal Education Plan. Admitting above the PAN will reduce support and resources needed for these children.

#### 6. **Efficient, effective, safe use of space.** As a school we must use the building as best we can and manage the large year groups within it. The effects of exceeding the school's PAN or capacity are serious and detrimental to students and staff. The fire brigade for example requires the building evacuated in 7 minutes, every additional child inside the building makes this challenging target more difficult.

The major challenges are summarised below:

- i) Lack of specialist rooms; particularly in science, information technology, technology and physical education, and overuse of those rooms available (eg. some specialist lessons already need to be taught in normal classrooms) Laboratories and

workshops for example are difficult to prepare for lessons and maintain as they are in almost constant use). Timetabling and rooming are at the limits within the constraints of the building.

- ii) Lack of expensive specialist equipment, especially in the above curriculum areas. There is not sufficient space for increased number of students and/or machines as class sizes grow.
- iii) Lack of general classrooms. It is only just possible at present to timetable the school, and we have no flexibility in terms of room usage (we have considerable problems in providing rooms for oral examinations, whole school examinations, or if an emergency calls for a room to be taken out of use.)
- iv) Health and Safety concerns- the building dates from 1949, it was built for 900 students, the corridors, and infra-structure has not changed with the addition of mobile classrooms and the Art block, but there are 565 more students.
- v) In addition, many of the students' lockers have to be located in the corridors because there is insufficient space in the classrooms. Despite a 'traffic system' and strict controls around movement and behaviour there is a safety concern at the change of lessons and at lunch time over the movement of students. At times the corridors become jammed and the flow of students comes to a complete halt. Additional students will increase the danger and inefficiency.
- vi) Our toilets and changing facilities are all from the original build, additional students has an impact on these facilities.
- vii) Our students would probably say that the worst feature of the overcrowding is the length of queues for example for lunch or the tuck shops at break. Each additional child puts pressure on facilities over sixty years old that cannot be extended and were designed for 900 children.
- viii) Care, Guidance and Support- our responsibility to promote the safety and well being of students, to ensure their effective care, guidance and support, will be compromised by additional students in the school. Proper care, attention and understanding for each individual is diminished as student numbers rise. Proper monitoring of student progress through the use of data and appointments with students and parents is ever more time consuming with greater numbers in groups.
- ix) Class sizes- ever increasing class sizes adversely affect the quality of teaching and learning. It is self-evident that parents would prefer their children taught in smaller classes of 28 or 29 rather than 30 or 31 which would be the effect of upholding the appeals of even a small number of appellants. Increased class sizes mean more preparation and assessment for teachers. In order for effective assessment of student work to take place, teaching staff must have manageable class sizes. Large class sizes cause particular difficulties in Years 9, 10 and 11, where essential G.C.S.E. practical work becomes unrealistic and where individual assessments place impossible burdens on teaching staff. Increasing the staffing is not an answer because of the lack of teaching spaces detailed above. The school is seriously overcrowded with comparatively poor facilities eg PE, which has to utilise the two school halls and the dining room as indoor spaces are inadequate. (we are the only Luton Secondary school with no Sports Hall), and this is not likely to be remedied in the near future.

- x) Already children joining the school in Year 8, 9 or 10 cannot be offered option choices which are full. Therefore, additional children in Year 7 or 8 will cause future prejudice to the chances of preferred options to children already here particularly in those popular Arts areas such as Digital Imaging or Film which are limited by the amount of specialist equipment we have.
- xi) A split lunchtime is not an option due to the close proximity of classrooms to the dining hall.

## **Summary**

The Governing Body affirms its aim to provide high level of quality education for all its students. This will be placed in ever-increasing jeopardy if the intake rises above the PAN, which itself takes us above the official capacity of the school. We have nothing against any of the appellants as individuals and wish them every success in their quest for quality education but feel strongly that it is our duty to safeguard the standards of education for students already at Icknield High School, and those to follow, by ensuring that we can accommodate and educate them effectively with the capital resources available.

We believe the published admission arrangements comply with the mandatory requirements of the Schools Admission Code and all current legislation and that they have been correctly, fairly and impartially applied.

We believe prejudice would arise both initially and, in the future, if additional students were admitted for the reasons explained in our case in that it would have an adverse impact on resources, staffing, and the quality of the education we could provide to our students.

We believe the School's case is very strong and unique in Luton. We appreciate that parents have the right to express a preference for a particular school but would point out that that is all it is – a right to express a preference. The LA have/will offer the family an alternative school place and therefore we would ask that the appeal be not upheld.