

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

Year 7 2025/26 – Phase Transfer Appeals

The Governing Body would like to be able to admit all the students that choose Ickniel 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 around 800 expressed preferences for our 295 places. For the upcoming academic year, the school has been put down 277 times as a first preference and 294 places have been allocated. 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 2025/26:

Year Group	7	8	9	10	11	Total
PAN	295	295	295	295	295	1475
Actual	294	294	289	287	293	1457

Note: If actual numbers temporarily fall below the PAN then the waiting list is activated to restore the numbers. This is an ongoing process.

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 1475 students and approximately 200 adults.

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 2025-2026**

The School has a high number of SEND students:

We currently have 37 children with EHCP, 5 of whom 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 staffing and resources considerably in excess of any other secondary school in Luton.

	EHCP	
	SEND	HID
Year 7	11	0
Year 8	8	0
Year 9	7	1
Year 10	4	1
Year 11	8	3
Total	38	5

Year Group	SEND K
7	32
8	25
9	43
10	28
11	40
Total	168

Compared to other year groups, Year 7 has the highest number of students with an EHCP.

5. **High EAL numbers**

95% of the students at Icknield come from ethnic backgrounds other than White British, with 49 different nationalities represented. Across all year groups 65% of students have English as a second language and a proportion of these students require some form of intervention.

Icknield High School has 945 students who have English as an additional language and a numerous amount require varying levels of intervention and support. Intervention can range from in class support / differentiation of work by the class teacher / use of TA to explain tasks. Students that are new to English (e.g. are from abroad) get support from a dedicated staff member who will teach them basic English. These students are taught elements of the national curriculum as well.

The table below how many EAL students the school has in each year group.

Year Group	EAL No. & %
7	112/294 (38%)
8	123/294 (42%)
9	221/289 (76%)
10	244/287 (85%)
11	245/293 (84%)

6. High Pupil Premium numbers

401 students are eligible for Pupil Premium (PP) and this equates to over a quarter (28%) of our current whole school cohort. This is an increase from last year of 2%. A number of these disadvantaged children can require varying degrees of intervention to support them.

Year Group	PP Numbers	% of School
7	83	6%
8	79	5%
9	88	6%
10	67	5%
11	84	6%
Total	401	28%

6. Looked After Children

There are currently 9 Looked After Children (LACs) and 2 Special Guardianship Orders in place for students at Icknield High School. Each child requires a regularly reviewed Personal Education Plan as well as extensive one to one support for emotional, behavior and trauma based issues. This is on top of supporting, reviewing and providing targeted interventions to help ensure they stand the best chance of making academic progress. Admitting above the PAN will reduce support and resources needed for these vulnerable children. The majority of our LACs are taught in regular classes. Some LAC get additional curriculum support and some get additional English support (as well as following some parts of the National Curriculum) as they are refugee children that cannot read/write/speak English.

The number of LACs usually increases during the course of the year and therefore impact resource and support. To provide an idea of LACs we have had on roll – during the academic year 2023-2024, the school had a total of 22 LACs. Last academic year (2024-2025), we had a total of 13 LACs on roll who were supported and advocated for by a single staff member. Currently we are at 9 LACs; this will very likely increase throughout the current academic year.

For the current academic year, one of our senior leaders has taken on the demanding role of the Designated Teacher (DT) for LACs as well as a range of other high-profile responsibilities. The one designated staff member for LAC will offer admin support to the DT as well as carrying out her other duties of safeguarding support and school transition officer.

As a school, we will take on roll any LAC wishing to join us and we do ultimately expect more LACs to join us during any given academic year. These highly vulnerable students might therefore take us to / over PAN. If we are at PAN, as a result of further LACs joining us, taking on additional students (over PAN) would adversely impact staff workload,

pressures and wellbeing. Moreover, students will also be greatly impacted as they would potentially be getting less teacher classroom support due to the teacher being overstretched with having additional numbers within the classroom.

Year Group	LAC No.
7	1
8	0
9	2
10	1
11	5
Current Total	9

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 (e.g. 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 575 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) Some of 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 Graphics 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.

Indie King-Mand
Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral)

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