

Governors' response to consultation on Cleves School's Admissions Policy 2017

Our draft Admissions Policy 2017 and proposal to include Manby Lodge and Oatlands Infant Schools as feeder schools went out to consultation for the recommended four week period, closing on 18/12/15.

The draft Policy was sent to all local schools and nursery providers within a 3 mile radius and resulted in 150 responses in total. 142 respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the draft Policy and 8 disagreed. The main reasons given for supporting the policy were the benefits of continuation of education and closer working links between the three schools and certainty for infant school children.

Governors have noted the 142 responses in support of the proposal and discussed the 8 objections/concerns raised. Our response to each of these objections/concerns is given below

1. Traffic and parking concerns

Governors fully share concerns about pupil and parent safety and are very mindful of the possible impact of additional traffic on local residents. Governors have raised their concerns with Surrey County Council all along and have been successful in ensuring new traffic measures are included in the expansion design. Surrey has proposed (subject to planning permission) creating an additional school entrance on the Oatlands Chase boundary and running a connecting path around the perimeter of the field. In addition they have proposed enforcing parking restrictions along a section of Oatlands Chase, to allow parents to pull up and drop off pupils. We plan to have staff on duty every morning to supervise and support drop off at this new entrance.

This measure would mean that all traffic and pedestrians no longer needed to converge on the entrances on Oatlands Chase.

2. Concerns around the basic school infrastructure:

- **Not large enough grounds and facilities**
- **Child safety in the playground**
- **Dining hall not large enough**

Governors felt confident that all concerns about space, safety and provision are fully provided for in the plans. Our grounds are more than adequate for the proposed additional building work, the dining hall will be enlarged and a second large playground is included within the agreed scheme.

3 Cleves becoming too large and losing the personal touch

Governors noted that Cleves, as a junior school, is already far larger than most primary schools and as such is well placed to handle expansion. We already manage our size through internal management structures. In addition to class teachers we have year leaders who are already responsible for the smooth running of each year, monitoring across the year group, ensuring consistency and high standards; and also two phase leaders, who each look across two years.

The expansion will actually improve our provision and better support our existing structure by providing one building per year group, increasing a sense of community and belonging with peers. Currently year groups are divided and split across different buildings, making team work challenging at times and diluting a sense of belonging to a year group.

4. Personal circumstances, such as families moving into the area close to Cleves being given low priority for a place because their child did not attend one of the two feeder schools.

Governors felt that the needs of occasional individual circumstances were outweighed by the current high demand on local places and uncertainty for children at both Oatlands and Manby Lodge, some of whom have been forced to travel a long way to a junior school in recent years. A significant number of parents each year have no certainty about the next phase of their child's education and governors felt that prioritising named feeder schools would alleviate an on-going wide spread concern.

5. Children at Manby Lodge may live in the Brooklands or Addlestone areas and will be offered Cleves' places before those children who live nearer and want to move from another school.

Governors acknowledged that this was a possibility, although the information provided by Surrey shows pupils attending Manby Lodge and Oatlands are local children with the vast majority less than a mile from school.

Although there may be some local children not attending either of the proposed feeder schools who currently live nearer Cleves and who would like the option to apply, these are children who already hold a junior place.

On balance governors felt that securing places for children who currently have no certainty about their junior school should take priority over pupils in other schools who already have a place.

6. Pupils may get a place at an Infant feeder and then move further afield, assured of a Cleves place through feeder status

Governors acknowledged that this was a possibility, but in reality doubted that many parents would be prepared or able to manage a long-term lengthy daily commute in order to attend Cleves.

Governors will, however, monitor this to see if there is a significant trend in people moving some distance away. The admission policy could be reviewed in the future if necessary.

7. Prioritising siblings of current Cleves children over children from Manby Lodge and Oatlands.

Governors judged this was reasonable for 2017 because there are older pupils at Cleves who have younger siblings in other local schools and parents applied to Cleves in good faith expecting to be able to have both their children at Cleves for convenience.

Governors decided that they would monitor the impact of this criterion and if necessary consult on changing sibling status for later years.

Conclusion

After having weighed the arguments for proposing changes to Cleves' Admissions Policy for some time, and after having considered consultees' views on the draft Admissions Policy for 2017, governors have decided to adopt the draft Admissions Policy 2017.