

Proposed PAN reduction of Stanford Infant School

The staff at Stanford Infant School welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Council's Public Consultation on the proposal to reduce the school by one form of entry from September 2022. This means that the maximum number of pupils intended to be admitted in Reception in 2022 will be 60.

In summary, Stanford Infant School is against the proposal to reduce the PAN number of the school from 90 to 60 from September 2022 for the following reasons:

- History of oversubscription therefore reducing the PAN would prevent children of local families attending the nearest school of their choice and harm community cohesion.
- Detrimental to financial viability of the School.
- Existing children and staff would suffer.
- Negative impact on provision the school can offer if smaller school.
- Loss of staff will heavily impact on the provision Stanford Infant gives for outstanding, inclusive education.
- Existing facilities and resources adversely affected thereby influencing school achievements when we pride ourselves in delivering a unique curriculum and our children consistently achieve highly as is evident in our results, which are above national average.
- Building designed for three-form entry, if reduced to two-form will require same amount of maintenance regardless of school admissions therefore overheads could not be met.
- Redundancy of staff would have a negative effect on remaining staff members who would have to take on additional responsibilities to ensure the school maintained its outstanding education.
- Less staff would impact on the quality of provision we could provide and therefore weaken the school's offer.
- For any future staff recruitment, the School would become less attractive for candidates due to limited development potential.
- Concern over strategic oversight as, 7 years ago, there was a consultation to expand the school by one-form of entry.
- If this is considered permanent and the birth rate increases in the future, we note we could be required to revert to our original PAN.
- Any increase in PAN would create huge pressures in terms of workload for the Senior Leadership Team, who would need to recruit and train additional staff, when current staff members have already faced redundancy.
- Historically we have not had fluctuating admission numbers below our PAN from one September to the next.
- We do not believe our school is significantly undersubscribed and the information is inaccurate and misleading.

- Our catchment area has been considered in the same area as Westdene, 2.3 miles away, whereas, over time, most of our pupils come from the Preston and Prestonville area 1-1.8 miles away.
- It is unreasonable to expect children to travel further distances when there is capacity locally and they can walk to school, which is also in line with the Council's aim to become a carbon neutral City.
- It is of paramount importance that our families are able to access Stanford Junior School and they should be consulted at the same time, as it is vital that our provision is continuous.
- The impact of a reduction in our PAN would be far-reaching.

The school has a long history of oversubscription and, whilst this year is an exception, reducing the PAN would prevent children of local families attending the nearest school of their choice. This would have a detrimental effect on community cohesion.

Decreasing the PAN of an Infant School will reduce the amount of revenue funding available to the school and could threaten the financial viability of the school. By their very nature, Infant Schools run on a smaller number of classes and therefore we would encounter greater pressures as a smaller school. We have always achieved a balanced budget even in extremely challenging times and this would negate all our hard work and evidently have a negative impact on the provision we are therefore able to provide to the children that attend the school.

We pride ourselves in providing a nurturing environment that meets the needs of our young learners at the start of their learning journey and planning and delivering a unique curriculum in an atmosphere that is safe, filled with fun and motivation, and develops children's independence skills. Our children consistently achieve highly and this is evident in our results, which are always above national.

A change in PAN will have a negative impact on the existing children, staff and school community. We appreciate that we would have one class per Year Group less, thus fewer members of staff would be required. However, this would require a re-structuring process to ensure that the school is not overstaffed for the number of children on roll. At least two members of staff would face redundancy each year the PAN is reduced, and it would be the responsibility of the school to meet the costs this would create.

We know our biggest asset is our staff team and we have invested heavily in the development of our staff and everyone has a role to play in the continuing success of the school. Redundancy of staff members would affect negatively on the workload of other staff

members, who would need to take on additional responsibilities to ensure the school maintained its outstanding education.

Undoubtedly, less staff will impact on the quality of the provision we are able to provide and therefore weaken our school's offer. Any reduction in PAN would be seen detrimentally and therefore could possibly be less attractive to potential candidates due to limited development opportunities. Surely, the priority of a school leader and the entire staff team, should be the quality of education it provides for the children.

The reduction is likely to adversely affect existing facilities and resources, ultimately hampering what we are trying to achieve as a school in line with our school vision. Our building is designed as a three-form entry school and therefore if we were to reduce to two forms of entry, the size of the building remains, along with the overheads.

It concerns us that there is no strategic oversight as, 7 years ago, there was a consultation to expand the school permanently by one-form of entry. Growth in Brighton and Hove's population over the last decade put pressure on Primary School places, resulting in capacity to meet the growth in demand. We appreciate that there is a decrease in the birth rate, which will lead to a higher than required level of surplus places. When looking at the estate's strategy, it appears that expansion of some of the City's schools have led to the position we are in now. It is also highly probable that the birth rate will increase in the near future.

Our admissions information for the last 5 years captures the number of preferences received by the closing date, as follows:

16/17 – 273

17/18 – 225

18/19 – 209

19/20 – 240

20/21 - 225

The number of siblings we usually take are approx. 30 per academic year, sometimes more. Therefore, by reducing our PAN number could potentially mean we have a whole class of siblings, which could impact negatively on the diversity of our school and make us appear less attractive to new families.

It also concerns us that this is considered permanent; however, we note we could be required to revert to our original PAN should pupil numbers subsequently increase. Historically, we have not had fluctuating admission numbers below our PAN from one September to the next. We do not feel our school is significantly undersubscribed. We believe the information provided is inaccurate and misleading.

Any increase would create huge pressures in terms of workload for the Senior Leadership Team, who would need to recruit and train additional staff, when current staff members have already faced redundancy. Undoubtedly, the mental health and well-being of our staff team would have already been impacted on significantly.

We have been considered in the same catchment as Westdene Primary; however, when looking at pupil distribution over time, most of our pupils come from the Preston and Prestonville area. The nearest other schools are Windelsham and Lancing College Prep (Private) and Cottessmore (Church). Westdene is 2.3 miles away; whereas Downs Infant and St Bartholomew's are 1 mile away, Balfour Primary 1.4 miles away and Brunswick 1.8 miles away.

Using the BN5 postcode is not a true representation of our catchment area. Currently, 33% of our whole school population do not have a BN5 postcode, with a significant proportion being in BN6.

The school has worked tirelessly with the School Travel Team to encourage families to walk to school and our numbers of families walking to school on a daily basis has consistently been in the region of 77% with 79% walking to school in 2020. This aim supports the Council's priority of becoming a carbon neutral city by 2030. It is unreasonable to expect children to travel further distances when there is capacity locally.

We are concerned that full consideration has not been taken with regards to reducing the PAN of Stanford Junior School in 2025, if the reduction of our school goes ahead. It is of paramount importance that our families are able to access Stanford Junior School and therefore by not consulting with the Juniors at the same time could potentially result in further upheaval in the future. Whilst we are separate schools, we are linked, and it is vital that our provision is continuous.

The impact of a reduction in our PAN would be far-reaching and therefore Stanford Infant School fully rejects the proposal to reduce its PAN from 90 to 60 in 2022.

We are, however, in no doubt that, the school, with support of the Governing Body, would ensure that we maintain the highest levels of educational provision for the children, whatever the outcome of the consultation.

Madeleine Denyer, Head Teacher, on behalf of the staff, November 2020.