

13<sup>th</sup> June 2016



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Headmaster **S A Corns** MA (Cantab) FRSA

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We have been in talks with the Local Education Authority (LA) until recently about updating our admissions policy. The rules are complicated and we have not yet finished the process but will be contacting you in October to elicit your views when the formal consultation occurs.

In the meantime, as some of you will have seen, we have altered one aspect of the admissions policy with effect from September 2017, reflecting our intention to admit larger class sizes in Reception (28, up from 20) and Year 7 (28, up from 25 in due course). This has been done partly to meet the need for places (you will remember the article in *The Times* identifying us as the most oversubscribed primary school in the country) and partly, as has proved necessary in many schools, to secure our financial position against the pressures of limited Government funding.

It was not our plan to do this originally but times change and I am quite certain this is the right thing to do. 28 is not, by national standards, a large number and while parents always like classes to be as small as possible, the proposed size will not impede teaching and learning or lower the standards you have come to expect at the school. Research shows that by far the most important matter in terms of pupil progress is not class size but quality of teaching, on which we will continue to have a sharp focus.

Increasing the so-called PAN (published admissions number) does not require consultation and indeed if one were able to offer any choice in the matter, given the convenience of smaller classes, we would not be suggesting an increase anyway. That said, I am sorry that some parents have learnt of these proposals via the new admissions policy rather than from a letter of this sort explaining the situation fully.

The only immediate change to class sizes will be from September 2017 which will see Reception classes increase to 28. This will then progress gradually through the Infant and Junior Schools as this larger group progresses. The long-term intention is that the standard class size will be 28 in the Senior School as well; this may mean a little in-filling here and there but obviously the numbers are not dramatic when we move from 25 to 28. There will be sets, of course, further up the school that are smaller than this as now.

Governors were very mindful when we made this decision that they wished to preserve the ethos of the school, which is why they have chosen a figure that is the minimum that is compatible with financial viability but does meet clear need for places. Investments will be made as required over time to ensure rooms are appropriately furnished and equipped to deal with the increased numbers.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S A Corns', written over a light blue horizontal line.

**HEADMASTER**