

# St Luke's Church of England Aided Primary School Governors Appeal Statement 2018 -19

## THE GOVERNORS' STATEMENT

The school exists as a two form entry primary school. The school will admit pupils up to the published admission number (PAN), which is 60 pupils. Section 1 of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998 (as amended by the Education Act 2002) and the Education (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 1998 limit the size of an infant class during an **ordinary teaching session to 30 pupils per school teacher.**

**The teaching and learning spaces at St Luke's were calculated, using Department for Education Guidelines, to accommodate up to 30 pupils in each teaching area.**

Accommodation for Worship	Designated areas are already full to capacity with whole school community worship being an essential factor of the spiritual and community life at St. Luke's.
Dining Room-----	We currently operate a very tight schedule in order to move all pupils through lunch within the designated lunch session. In response to the higher degree of attention and personal support required by pupils in Reception and Year 1, the dinner session - including setting up and clearing away, is already stretched over two hours. The younger children have a time dedicated to themselves, allowing us to provide a higher staff ratio before the older children enter the hall. From September 2014 the space and time has also had to absorb the increase in the infant age children accessing the statutory meal offer. Increasing the number of children would impact on the overall time taken and the level of supervision available. The increase of time taken would impact on the teaching and learning in the school, as it would further restrict the usage of the multi-use hall space for curriculum and extra-curriculum activities.
Supervision of pupils and access to outdoors-----	In order to ensure safeguarding of all, it is essential that all pupils are supervised in the area that they choose to work. The majority of pupil assessment in all Key Stages involves careful observation of pupils and current budget for staffing and pupil numbers allows for this to be carried out with a staff: pupil ratio which we consider acceptable, safe and meaningful. An increase in pupil numbers would restrict this flexibility and would have a detrimental impact on our ability to deliver and assess the progress of pupils in the Curriculum comprehensively.
Playground Area-----	There is a restricted amount of hard standing playground shared by Key Stages 1 and 2 and an increase in the numbers of pupils to our school, over the PAN, would have a net effect of an increase in the number of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 sharing this space. This would have implications for pupil safety and would limit children's space for movement, impacting on their physical and mental well-being.
Class Sizes -----	Staff and parents would undoubtedly be justified in stating that to increase classes beyond our PAN would be prejudicial to the educational opportunities of those students already admitted to the school.

In the light of the above, governors cannot prejudice the entitlement of existing students by exceeding the standard number for admission.

### **Evidence that has been considered**

- The Governors have offered places to the 60 families who, on the evidence presented at the time the application was given consideration, best satisfied the agreed criteria.
- Families are encouraged to submit all relevant documents or information for full consideration by the Governors at the time the application is made. By the time the formal appeals are heard, there could be no substantive reason why any new evidence should come forward at that stage; after all, we cannot withdraw the offer of a place to accommodate an application where further evidence is presented at a very late stage.
- To admit additional students would prejudice the education, welfare and safety of all of them
- We go to considerable lengths to ensure that families genuinely interested in a place obtain **maximum** information about the school from the start - e.g. via an Open Door Policy and open invitation for all interested families to visit the school, the School Brochure, Admissions Criteria published by Local Authority.

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- A member of the senior leadership team or Pupil Officer speaks to parents visiting the school and parents attending Nursery intake meetings about the application procedure, emphasising the need to submit correct documentation on time and correctly completed. It is also stressed that Nursery places are determined by a separate Admissions Policy and do not provide grounds for allocating a school place.

### **The School must be able to exercise a role as a caring Christian school community**

St Luke's is very proud of its high standards coupled with its caring Christian ethos. It is only possible to maintain this because the staff is providing a level of commitment far beyond what could be considered as reasonable. Whilst the high level of over-subscription for places at St Luke's is a very pleasing position to be in the Governors foresee that requests for appeals may be made every year and therefore do not wish to create a precedent by admitting more than the PAN. The school makes good use of the resources available and pupils have a comfortable, safe and successful environment in which to learn. In order to maintain these standards we urge that no appeal is successful.

In conclusion, the Governors take the view that we have done all that we can. Given that we are oversubscribed, no matter how the applications are considered, some families will be disappointed, including many who fulfil the criteria to a reasonable extent. We ask the Appeal Panel to defend the pastoral needs and educational chances of the children already admitted to the school, and reject all appeals.

**Mrs Valerie Davies**

Chair of Governors

On behalf of St Luke's Church of England Aided Primary School Governing Body

### **Appendix**

#### **The Legal Position**

Parents have the right, by law, to express a preference as to the school at which they wish their child to be educated. When that preference is St Luke's Church of England Aided Primary School, the Governing Body of the School is pleased to offer a place provided that:-

- (a) Compliance with the preference would not prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources, or
- (b) Compliance with the preference would be compatible with arrangements made between the Governors and the Local Authority [L.A.] in respect of the admission of students to the School.

#### **The Agreement Between The Governors and the Local Authority**

The admission limit for St Luke's is fixed by agreement between the LA and the School Governors. The limit for new admissions into Year R is 60. This is the agreed number for each year group.

#### **How Students Are Selected In The Case Of Oversubscription**

Whilst the Governors are pleased that so many parents should wish to send their children to the School, sadly there are not enough places available. Having agreed an Admission Limit of 60 places, the Governors do not have the power to exceed this number, unless directed by the Education Appeal Panel to do so.

For children entering Reception in Sept 2018: In December 2017, parents received guidance as to how to access the booklet entitled "Arrangements for Starting School In Wolverhampton September 2018". Under the heading 'Policy to be followed on deciding Admissions' the following criteria for selecting students to be admitted to the School were set out:-

When parents request an admission place for their child at St Luke's they are encouraged to visit to meet the Head teacher/Member of Senior Leadership Team and view the school in action. Parents are encouraged to read the 'LA Starting School in Wolverhampton' booklet which is published in electronic

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format on the City Council website and is available as a hard copy to parents on request without charge. Alternatively parents can access information about admission criteria from the school website.

As an Aided school, the Governors of St Luke's are responsible for the Admission Policy, in line with Diocesan recommendations and in consultation with the LA.

The School's Admission Number to each year group (PAN) is 60. If the number of requests exceeds the school's admission limit, places will be allocated according to the following order of priority:

1. Looked-After Children as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989, and Previously Looked After Children (See Section 1 paragraph 1.7 Schools Admission Code 2012), will be given first priority for places.
2. Children who are siblings of children already attending the school, e.g. a sibling refers to brother or sister, half, adopted or step brother or sister, or the child of the parent/carer where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling.
3. Those children showing strength of support from a faith leader which demonstrates their family commitment to the life, work and witness of their particular faith. This will be measured by;
  - i. Comment/evidence regarding frequency of visits to the place of worship - **must be indicated as additional information on Supplementary Information Form**
  - ii. involvement in the worshipping activities of the place of worship – **must be indicated as additional information on Supplementary Information Form**
  - i. number of years the family has been worshipping at present and previous place of worship - **must be indicated as additional information on Supplementary Information Form**

Information should be supplied on the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FORM FOR APPLICATION FOR A RECEPTION YEAR GROUP AT A CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL IN WOLVERHAMPTON**. In order to be excepted by the Governors all sections of this form should be completed and signed by both parent/carer and Vicar/Minister/Faith Leader. It should be validated with the faith organisations stamp or headed paperwork and returned directly to the Head Teacher.

Supplementary Information Forms will be graded from A to C by a representative group from the Governing Body. Grade A applications will then be ranked above grade B applications; tie breaker criteria will apply **within** each group

- A. Significant strength of support from a faith leader which demonstrates their family commitment to the life, work and witness of their particular faith
- B. Minimal strength of support from a faith leader which demonstrates their family commitment to the life, work and witness of their particular faith
- C. No evidence/incomplete form: these will be ranked within category 4.

4. Any other children not falling into the above categories.

'Tie – Breaker' If there is an insufficient number of places to accommodate all children then ranking will be applied within all categories': Children living closest to the school, measured by the shortest walking distance. This is determined as the shortest distance from their home (or the main entrance to any communal building) to the front door of the school, using a commercial package that supplies National Grid map references to 1 metre or greater claimed accuracy. In the event of applicants living an equal distance or in a block of flats, available places will be offered randomly selected by drawing lots. In addition, if children reside at two addresses during the school week, the address where the child spends most "school nights" will be used when determining proximity to the school. Documentary evidence may be required.

Children with a statement of Special Educational Needs that names the school must be admitted. This will reduce the number of places available to other applicants.

Multiple births/twins will be offered places if all the children can be accommodated in relation to the above criteria. In the event of number of children exceeding number of places available then the School Admissions Code 2012 allows for the remaining child/ren to be admitted and these children will remain an

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'excepted pupil' for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit.

Applications received after the closing date and repeat applications will be processed in accordance with the "The Inter-LA coordination of Primary Admissions at the normal year of entry 2018/2019".

Parents will be notified of the outcome on or as soon as possible after 16 April – National Primary Notification Day, and given the opportunity to have their child's name placed on a waiting list for their preferred Wolverhampton school or schools, which will be held until the end of the Autumn Term.

If a child is refused a place because of over-subscription, parents are informed in writing of how to access the LA and School's procedures in respect of their right of appeal and waiting lists.

### **Nursery Admissions**

The school has a separate policy for Nursery Admissions which is based on older siblings already on full-time role and then birth date order. It should be noted that attending the school Nursery does not give any guarantee or preference for a place in Reception year or give sibling rights to any older child/ren applying for place in the school.