



January 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

**Subject: Consultation by Great Bookham School to increase their Public Admissions Number (PAN).**

It is not often we jointly write to you as Headteacher and Chair of Governors and we do so regarding an important topic we are jointly concerned about, this is due to the implication it may have for us as a school, our students and for the wider community.

In the consultation, Great Bookham School wants to increase their admissions number (PAN) in Reception from 30 to 60. In addition to taking an additional 15 children in Year 3. Changes would take effect from the 2025/26 academic year.

One of the great things about this local area is the choice of schools available. Great Bookham School, Eastwick and Polesden Lacey Infant School are the main schools in Bookham and families will often choose between the three schools. One of the reasons many residents choose Polesden Lacey Infant School is that it offers a small nurturing start to their child's education with a strong focus not only on academic progress but also on getting to know every child as an individual. We are an inclusive community where everyone has a big part.

Therefore, if Great Bookham School were to increase their intake to 60 this could potentially mean that Polesden Lacey Infant School and other local schools in Bookham and surrounding catchments of Effingham could become financially unviable, the impact will prevent the local community from having a meaningful choice of schools.

The reason for this is that school budgets are determined by the number of children on roll. If a year group is not full the costs remain the same and compromises are necessary to manage within the available,

Head Teacher: Ms Rebecca Mole



reduced budget. In the worst case, a school might not be financially viable anymore if pupil numbers are significantly below PAN for a number of years.

We are very concerned by this consultation especially, as you may be aware, over the last decade there has been a marked drop in birth rates across the country with 2020 seeing the lowest birth rate since records began in 1938. This trend is particularly evident in Surrey. All schools in Surrey have been made aware for a number of years that there is a falling birth rate and consequently a surplus number of school places. Surrey County Council communicated to schools that in Mole Valley alone in 2024, there will be a surplus of 70 Reception places. They model this projection for an eight year period.

Attached to this email are the consultation papers from Great Bookham School and the response from our Governing Body. We would greatly appreciate you taking time to respond to the consultation, our concern is related to the increase in size (PAN) and know that many students have thrived in both schools.

As a result we want to ensure that Polesden Lacey Infant School continues to thrive and serve the community for generations to come and to ensure a choice of schools continues to be available to parents and children going forward.

Yours Sincerely,

Rebecca Mole (Headteacher) and Mark Rogers (Chair of Governors)

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