

Consultation Report for Changes to Evendons Primary School Admissions Policy 2023-24

Background

Evendons Primary School opened in 2014 as a two-form entry school serving the community of Wokingham. In February 2020 it became part of Bellevue Place Education Trust (BPET). BPET is the Admissions Authority for Evendons Primary School.

In accordance with the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements if changes are being proposed to the admission arrangements or if they have not been consulted on within the last 7 years. A consultation must run for a period of six weeks and be completed by 31 January 2022.

As the Admissions Authority, BPET are proposing changes to the Evendons Primary School Admissions Policy for 2023-24 and onwards. The consultation ran from 1 December 2021 – 20 January 2022.

Who was consulted

This consultation was sent to:

- Parents/carers of children currently at the school
- School staff and School Local Advisory Board (LAB)
- Pre-school and primary school providers within 1.5mile radius of Evendons Primary School
- Wokingham Borough Local Authority

What Changes are proposed?

BPET would like to change the Oversubscription Criteria in three ways:

- (1) **Remove the Criteria** “Families who have exceptional medical or social needs as the grounds for their child’s admission to a particular school.” Because it is very rarely used and we do feel a child local school often best meets their medical needs; pupils who apply should be in a catchment of the school and we have no specialist facilities.
- (2) **Amend the notes of the Criteria** “Children whose permanent home address is inside the school’s designated area and who has a sibling at the school at the time of the application; who is expected to be attending the school when the child will enter the school.” To simply “Children with a sibling at the school at the time of admission.”

This change brings Evendons Admission Criteria in line with all other BPET Schools and ensures that sibling families are ensured a place at the same school. This is important for

attendance, punctuality and green/eco transportation to one school destination by the most efficient method.

- (3) **Amend the notes of the Criteria** “Children of staff at the school. Children of staff in either following circumstances: i) where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time the child starts at the school.” Rather than “i) where the member of staff has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time of application.”

This minor change is proposed as the application date can be misconstrued as either submission date or statutory closing date for Reception Applications or further late application dates. We wish to treat staff and pupils fairly and this policy does relate to children starting school in the September of the Academic year. The start of the academic year is also the main intake date of new staff members.

Change in PAN (Published Application Numbers)

Due to demand for school places in the local area, Wokingham Borough Council extended the number of places offered at Evendons Primary School for the Reception intake of September 2021 to 60 (from 54). The PAN is the maximum number of pupils that the admission authority will admit to each year group.

The impact of this for the school was as follows:

- Increase the Published Admission Number (PAN) for Reception to 60 from September 2021.
- Take 2 children from each year group’s waiting list across Years 1-5 to increase the year group to 56 during summer term 2020-21 and provide even class sizes of 28 from September 2021.
- Leave Year 6 September 2021-22 at 54 pupils.

This means that the number of pupils on roll at Evendons from September 2021 is **394** and this will then rise incrementally each year until we reach **420** pupils at September 2027.

Responses:

Responses in writing by post or email were invited until 20 January 2022. As per the consultation log, submitted with this report, three (3) responses were received:

- (1) Questions/Comments from L. Shaw, Chair of Evendons Local Advisory Board (LAB)
- (2) Objection to (2) Amend to Criterion for Siblings from E. Scott, parent of EPS pupil
- (3) Request for clarification of cover letter from W. Wilkinson, parent of EPS pupil

BPET responded to each of the above and subsequently heard no further comment or feedback. The exact correspondence can be found in the Appendix document that accompanies this document.

Conclusion:

The three proposed changes to the Evendons Admissions Policy Criteria bring the school into alignment with the seven other schools in Bellevue Place Education Trust.

There is no statistical evidence to show that changes (1) and (2) would damage the school community make-up, its engagement to work together and ensures that siblings are guaranteed to attend the same school whether family choices regarding secondary education do change their home residence.

Change (3) aligns a benefit of gaining a place in Evendons after two-years employment, alongside other legal benefits which come into force after that time frame. The time period also offers some security to Evendons Primary School as an employer, maintaining core vital staff positions such as Teaching Assistants, Learning Support Assistants and Midday Supervisors.

Therefore, we have requested approval of the BPET Board of the updated Admissions Policy as our ‘Determined Admissions 2023-24’.

Outcome of the BPET Board Meeting – 8 March 2022

The proposed changes to the policy and the appendix of responses were reviewed by the BPET Board on Tuesday 8th March. After some discussion around the changes, it was amendment 2 (two) which created the largest discussion point about protecting the local school community and avoid any disingenuous use of the criteria which would see potential movement out of catchment soon after joining the school. Whilst no statistical evidence for Evendons Primary School at this time, the discussion also looked at several other schools in the Trust who could face similar issues now they are over-subscribed.

Therefore, the board decided not to implement they change but keep the original clause *“Children whose permanent home address is inside the school’s designated area and who has a sibling at the school at the time of the application; who is expected to be attending the school when the child will enter the school.”*

This decision has duly been actioned and shared with the school leadership and community.