

Consultation regarding a change to the Pupil Admission Number (PAN) of Nelson Primary School for entry in September 2024

1. Background

1.1 The current Published Admission Number (PAN) for Nelson Primary School is 60. This means that the number of pupils admitted into the school in Reception is limited to 60. In September 2021, 33 children were admitted and in September 2022, 47 children were admitted, meaning the school has run two partially filled classes in each of these year groups.

1.2 Reducing the PAN will assist Latchmere Academy Trust and Nelson Primary School's Governing Body in providing stability to their long-term planning while continuing to provide an appropriate number of places for future pupils living in the surrounding area and wishing to attend a local primary school.

Applications for places in Heathfield and Whitton for 2021 and 2022 entry:

2022 entry			2021 entry			
School	PAN	1st prefs	School	PAN	1st prefs	Rec. no.
Area 4: Heathfield / Whitton			Area 4: Heathfield / Whitton			Oct. 2021
Bishop Perrin	30	34	Bishop Perrin	30	43	29
Chase Bridge	90	93	Chase Bridge	90	91	90
Heathfield Infants'	120	72	Heathfield Infants'	120	72	88
Nelson	60	47	Nelson	60	27	33
St Edmund's	60	57	St Edmund's	60	60	60
Total	360	303	Total	360	293	300

Within Heathfield and Whitton there were 60 available reception places in October 2021 and 57 available reception places in October 2022.

1.3 Although the Regulations and Code of Practice relating to school admissions no longer require an admissions authority to consult when maintaining or increasing a school's PAN, there remains a requirement to consult when the proposal is to reduce a PAN.

1.4 The impact of another partially filled year group on an already stretched budget has led to the school exploring the option of reducing the PAN and consulting with parents. To ensure future budgets are sustainable Latchmere Academy Trust completed a staffing restructure in 2022. It is important classes are full and therefore the school are consulting to reduce the PAN from 60 to 30 in the September 2024 arrangements.

1.5 Nelson Primary School is part of Latchmere Academy Trust and the Trust, as the admission authority, is seeking comments on the proposed change along with school's Local Governing Body.

2. Specific Proposal

2.1 Latchmere Academy Trust and Nelson Primary School's Governing Body propose to reduce the PAN from 60 to 30 with effect from September 2024.

2.2 This means that the number of places available for children in Reception in 2024 – and all subsequent Reception cohorts – will be 30. For children who already have a place at the school in other year groups there will be no change. This is the only proposed change to the admission arrangements; all other provisions, including the oversubscription criteria, will remain the same.

2.3 Factors that have been considered by Latchmere Academy Trust and Nelson Primary School's Governing Body in making this application to vary the arrangements include:

- The continued ability of the school to provide sufficient places for local children
- The provision of the most appropriate learning environment for all pupils thus facilitating continuing school improvement
- Future resource planning and management
- The capacity of the school resources management will be more effective

2.4 Nelson Primary School is committed to reviewing the PAN if the local demographic and context dictates a need for this in the future.

3. Who is being consulted?

3.1 This consultation is for the specific attention of:

- Parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen
- Other persons in the area who have an interest in the proposed admissions
- All other primary admission authorities within the local area
- The local authority

4. How to respond

4.1 This consultation will run until Wednesday 25th January 2023. You are invited to submit comments in writing about the proposal above to Nelson School via platform@nelsonschool.org or by post to Mrs Anna Steels (Executive Headteacher) c/o Nelson Primary School, Nelson Road, Twickenham, TW2 7BU. Any queries or comments about the proposal can also be submitted to the school and will be answered via the FAQs available on the school website.

4.2 Following the consultation period Latchmere Academy Trust and Nelson Primary School's Governing Body will consider any comments received and whether to proceed with the proposed change to the PAN

FAQs

What is the issue?

The number of children joining Nelson Primary School in Reception in September 2022 continues to be below the PAN of 60. In September 2021, 33 children were admitted and in September 2022, 47 children were admitted. These allocations have been spread across 2

classes in each year group meaning there were 27 available places in 2021 and 13 available spaces in 2022.

Why is a low admission number a problem?

The fall in admissions has a significant impact on the sustainability of the school. Since schools are funded on the basis of pupil numbers, classes significantly smaller than 30 are not financially sustainable.

Why are there so few admissions?

The primary reason for this is that there are fewer children of Reception age in the area. This is mainly the consequence of falling birth rate, but families moving away from the region is also a contributing factor.

With fewer children for the same total number of school places, parents have a broader choice of schools to send their children to. Consequently, some schools in our area have seen a significant drop in numbers.

Will the trend reverse?

Nelson Primary School strives to attract as many prospective pupils as possible. The re-introduction of in-person tours and a collective promotion strategy allows parents to see the amazing school we have to offer. However, with falling birth rates, pupil admissions remains a highly 'competitive market', so we think it is unlikely that we will see a return to previously high numbers of applications.

What is being proposed?

Latchmere Academy Trust and the Governing Body of Nelson Primary School has decided to consult on a reduction in PAN from 60 to 30 for entry to the school in September 2024.

What are the benefits of reducing the PAN?

By controlling the admission number, provision can be shaped to ensure the sustainability of the school. As there will be one class in each year group Nelson will not need to employ an additional teacher to cover the unfilled class.

What if the school does nothing?

If this situation is not proactively managed and future class sizes are significantly below capacity, then Nelson Primary School will not be financially sustainable in the longer term.

What is the likely timeline for this?

The consultation begins on Wednesday 7th December and will be completed by Wednesday 25th January 2023. This will allow for the Christmas Bank Holidays during the timeframe.

Following the consultation period Latchmere Academy Trust and Nelson Primary School's Governing Body will consider any comments received and whether to proceed with the proposed change to the PAN. The admission arrangements for September 2024 will be determined before 28 February 2023.

Who are the stakeholders?

Staff, parents, local nurseries and schools, the local authority and the local community.

Is this a done deal?

No. Depending on the outcome of the consultation the proposal may be withdrawn.

What will happen if pupil numbers increase?

We continue to welcome as many pupils as possible, and it is the aim to proactively maximise admissions. Should expectations be exceeded and we return to more normal admission numbers, then the school is able to admit above PAN and indeed to increase the PAN at a later stage.

Does this affect any children who currently attend the school?

No. The proposal to reduce the PAN will only affect families applying for Reception places from September 2024 onwards. All children who currently attend Nelson Primary School will continue to do so. Siblings will continue to have priority when applying for admission, so unless there are more than 30 siblings applying for Reception places, they are sure to be offered places.

Does this affect applications to other year groups?

The change in PAN would affect the Reception intake in 2024 and each subsequent Reception year. Year groups that currently have a capacity of 60 children will be unaffected.

We hope that this makes things clear. If there are any further questions please do contact the school and we will update these FAQs.