

## **School Admission Statement for Beckfoot Thornton School**

Allocations for Beckfoot Thornton School are made in accordance with the co-ordinated scheme which forms part of the Local Authority's (LA) published admission arrangements. In Bradford, parents may list up to three schools on the In-Year Application Form or up to five preferences when applying for year 7 in the normal admissions round.

Although legislation gives parents a right to express a preference for a particular school, the Beckfoot Trust has to first consider whether there is a place available and then whether your child qualifies for a place using the oversubscription criteria below. If your child could be given a place at more than one of your preferred schools, the LA will offer a place at the highest-ranked preference.

### **Oversubscription criteria**

The over subscription criteria are used when there are more applicants for year 7 than there are places available. If parents request a place at any other time and the particular year group is full, it will not be possible to offer a place.

1. Looked after children or children who were previously looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a residence or special guardianship order.
2. Children whose home address is in the school's priority admission area\* who have an older sister attending from the same address, who are at present in years 7 – 10 and who will still be attending the school at the time of admission (in area siblings).
3. Other children whose home address is in the school's priority admission area\*.
4. Children whose home address is outside the school's priority admission area\* who have an older sister attending from the same address, who are at present in years 7 – 10 and who will still be attending the school at the time of admission (out of area siblings).
5. Other children who live outside the school's priority admission area\*.

\* The school has more than one priority admission area, criteria 2 and 3 above will apply for the whole of the priority area 1 and then for the whole of priority area 2; if there are remaining unallocated places criterion 4 will then be considered before criterion 5.

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Where demand exceeds places in any of the above criteria, the distance between the child's home and school measured by a straight line from the Ordinance Survey address point of the home to the main entrance to the school building, will be used to decide who is given a place; those living nearest being given the available places. Where the offer of places to applicants with equi-distant addresses would lead to oversubscription, the decision of who will be offered the place will be made by random selection.

These criteria may be overridden and a place offered, where the parents' preference is based on:

- Special medical reasons for admission where they are deemed essential by an independent professional recommendation from the child's paediatrician/consultant, or
- Social reasons for admission where they are deemed essential by a professional recommendation from the Director of Social Services, Probation, Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Services (CAFCASS) and the Trust considers that a place should be offered on these grounds.

The admission of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is dealt with by a separate procedure. Such children will be admitted to the school named on the statement without reference to the oversubscription criteria.

Parents do not have a free choice of school as this would lead to schools having to admit pupils above the limits of the building as agreed with the Department for Education.

The Trust has not been able to offer your child a place as the school has reached its published admission number and they believe that to put additional children into the school, above the published admission number, would be prejudicial to the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources. The Trust is able to refuse admission on these grounds because of Section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Trust would not wish to admit more than the published admission number of 260 which takes into account the available accommodation and organisation of the school which has been assessed as having a net capacity of 1580.

The Trust believes that to go above this number would cause a number of concerns which are detailed in the attached statement.

## **Beckfoot Thornton School Admission Appeals**

### **Headteacher's Statement 2015-2016**

Beckfoot Thornton School remains one of the most popular secondary school in Bradford. A number of appeals are heard throughout each academic year. Currently our admissions number is 260 in each year.

#### **Year group organisation:**

##### **Key Stage 3**

Students are organised into 10 teaching groups by ability. The optimum size for high ability is 28 and for lower ability 23 and an SEN group of 13. The school currently has 295 students on the ~SEN register, with 32 students who have EAL.  $6 \times 29 + 3 \times 24 + 1 \times 14 = 260$  agreed admission number, with corresponding arrangements in the larger year. Breaching the limit as we currently do prevents teachers from giving individual students the attention to which they are entitled.

Pupils are organised into 10 mixed ability tutor groups on entry. Pupils remain in these groups for registration and tutorial sessions only. For the curriculum as a whole, pupils are organised into two bands. Within these bands pupils are placed into 5 or 6 teaching groups based on ability and aptitude in each. There are 3 blocks made up of a range of subjects, each block has a lead subject who sets the group by ability these block are led by English, Maths and Technology; PE is in a separate block due to variation in gender groups etc. Pupils are organised into smaller groups for Technology and Art (Health and Safety issues). These groupings are made initially through liaison with primary schools and with reference to Key Stage 2 results. They are modified when students start school and baseline assessment takes place.

##### **Key Stage 4**

Students remain in their tutor groups for registration and tutorial. Core subjects are set this is according to ability for English Maths and Science, in PE the students are set by gender or sport choices. For the remainder of the curriculum

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choice' of GCSE and Vocational options outside the Core, students select from a range of options which are organised into 3 or 4 blocks with the very highest ability able to take extra subjects after school. Some option classes already have in excess of 30 students in them. Many courses requiring smaller groups, e.g. in vocational and practical subjects, should have the more accepted number of 15 but are sometimes in the range of 23+. This makes the maintenance of high standards of both achievement and health and safety very difficult.

Changing schools during these vital two years should only be considered as a last resort. Most students underachieve as a result of many factors which include the trauma of change and in particular inability to gain their original option choices. Differing specifications can also be a major problem. Very few students progress to Post 16 study due to this under achievement.

### Resources and equipment:

Higher and average ability groups in **Key Stage 3** are very large often 30 or above, despite the fact that 28 has been established as a reasonable maximum, and there have been several Health and Safety issues brought to our attention by union representatives, particularly in relation to practical subjects. It is very difficult to provide computers for all pupils in ICT lessons and changing spaces for Physical Education as well as access to equipment in those lessons that require it such as Science and Technology. Groups of this size are necessary, however, to enable our lower ability pupils to be taught effectively. If group sizes for these, our most vulnerable pupils, are increased, this would seriously jeopardise the capacity of the school to deliver the education that these pupils deserve.

At **Key Stage 4** subjects groups are often over 30, partly to accommodate student choice, partly to protect the necessary group sizes for our less able students and partly to ensure that other courses, particularly those of a Vocational, Occupational or practical nature can run with the smaller groups that are essential to their delivery. Our capacity to fulfil our obligations to our students in Key Stage 4 in these respects is already stretched.

### Teaching and non-teaching staff:

Large groups make individualised learning and collaborative work in all classes very difficult in Science, PE, Technology and ICT/ cross –curricular ICT subjects, large numbers make practical work almost impossible. Large groups increase workload and make classroom management more difficult, thus increasing stress levels. The pastoral system is currently at fully capacity and can cope with no more.

### Pupils:

Many pupils are already taught in large classes (very often in rooms designed for smaller numbers), which hinders their learning: any increase in size, and especially for the significant minority of pupils who have English as a second language or who have Special Education Needs, would be extremely detrimental.

### Movement around school:

Main school was built for 600 pupils in 1938. It has very narrow corridors and stairs which clearly are a Health and Safety concern for the school even without additional numbers. No social spaces are available for pupils other than at Post 16.

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**Other Information:**

Our canteen facilities are very small, and require us to operate a split lunch break. A further increase in numbers makes the safe management of students at lunchtimes very difficult.

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We are presently full. We also take pupils on a regular basis who have been permanently excluded from other schools. This unacceptable situation cannot be allowed to continue as it impacts significantly on overall well-being of our school.

Mr J Richardson

Headteacher

April 2017

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