

## SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS

### SEPTEMBER 2023

#### Caludon Castle School Governing Body's case for refusing further admissions

#### 1. Background

- i. For September 2023, the Academy's capacity for year 7 has been artificially increased to 243, which is 3 over our published admission number (PAN). As set out by the local authority planning and capacity documentation, the increased numbers are to ensure all year 7 students in the city are allocated a school place.
- ii. **In 2019/20**, for one academic year only, 270 students were admitted into year 7 as directed by the local authority to increase the intake number as part of a planned need for additional places across the city. The school has managed the local authority's direction through the use of a temporary classroom and a temporary canopy to facilitate eating arrangements. Clearly, any further admissions to this year group above 270 for 2023/2024 will greatly compromise the quality of provision for students at the school.
- iii. **The published admission number (PAN) for Caludon Castle School for years 8 to 10 is 240 for 2023/24** and, combined with the year 7 and year 11 numbers, represents the absolute maximum number of students the school can accommodate in total across the school.
- iv. The sixth form does not officially have a PAN, with maximum numbers being dictated by class sizes.
- v. **Current student numbers:** The numbers on roll in current year groups as of 20 July 2023: -

	Total
Year 7	240
Year 8	242
Year 9	242 (241 not counting dual reg subsidiary)
Year 10	269
Year 11	242 (241 not counting dual reg subsidiary)
Year 12	182
Year 13	145
Year 14	19

\*We have 252 students being enrolled into Y7 in September 2023 (our PAN is 243 so we are already 9 over)

- vi. **Current total for 1 September 2023 is 1581 (1579), 136 (134) students higher than the 1445 net capacity calculation.**
- vii. Our numbers, however, can increase during the academic year as a result of:
  - successful appeals to an Independent Appeals Panel.
  - managed moves from other schools.
  - Local Authority "Hard-to-Place" panel referrals which is part of the Coventry Fair Access Protocol detailed below and managed moves from the Student Referral Unit.
  - Coventry East Partnership Placement Panel referrals.

- viii. **The Coventry Fair Access Protocol** covers the arrangements for the integration or reintegration to schools of students who are requesting a school transfer and are considered hard-to-place. All secondary schools in Coventry are included in this partnership. The agreement requires each school to accept a quota of students who are hard-to-place.

Caludon Castle School has an agreement to admit 5 students each academic year under the hard-to-place protocol, although we currently have 8 (+ 3 pending). We also have taken 4 successful supported transfers

- ix. As with all schools, the **behaviour and mental health** of students has deteriorated. This has led to increased numbers of **placements** since September 2022 as follows:

Placement type	Number	Year Group
Six week in	2	7
	2	8
	2	9
	1	10
	1	11
Six week out	5	8
	2	9
	1	10
	1	11
Twelve week in	1	8
	4	9
	1	10
Twelve week out	1	7
	3	8
	3	9
	1	10

Placement students require significant additional support from the pastoral team. This number of placements is unheard of, meaning the amount of support available is stretched. We have the following behaviour statistics:

Behaviour intervention	Number
Part time timetable	X
Pastoral report	X
Leadership report	X

Both figures are uncharacteristically high and take disproportionately more time of pastoral and leadership staff. students on this review are met by members of staff at least twice per day every day.

## 2. Accommodation

- The total accommodation at Caludon Castle School is slightly below the minimum total size recommended in DfES Building Bulletin 98 published in 2006. The general teaching accommodation is slightly above the recommended size. However, 35 out of 41 general teaching rooms are below the recommended size of 56m<sup>2</sup> with 9 of these 35 rooms below 50m<sup>2</sup>. There is a limit on the subjects which can be taught in these rooms and also adjustments to classrooms for wheelchair use impacts on the numbers of students who can be accommodated in each room.
- Specialist accommodation** in Science, Technology, Art, Music, halls and withdrawal areas are all below the Building Bulletin 98 guidelines. This means that in these classrooms, class sizes are limited to 24. To admit further students in excess of the admission number would prejudice the provision of efficient education and the efficient use of resources. It is not possible to state categorically at what stage the educational experience of children suffers, but there is clearly a grave danger in exceeding the admission number for a school that the education of all students will suffer, because class size will need to increase and the school

will be occupied by more students than its design capacity. Teaching spaces for Sport, Science, Technology, Art, Drama, Media/Photography, Computing, and Music are full throughout the week.

- iii. **The dining room** is inadequate to meet the lunchtime needs of all our students in one sitting. The school has staggered starts to lunchtimes for different year groups but still space is restricted. Additional students will put pressure on the queues and the length of time taken to be served, as well as being able to sit at tables.
- iv. There are 30 **classrooms** on each of the first and second floors and 5 changeover times during the day which mostly involves at least 500 students moving along the corridors. Corridors are crowded during these times and need to be supervised by staff. Additional students will put additional pressure on the flow in these corridors. There are a number of students at the school who are wheelchair users or who have physical disabilities requiring the use of walking aids, and there are always students who are temporarily using crutches; overcrowding in the circulation areas of the school presents a heightened health and safety risk to these already vulnerable students. For two thirds of the academic year all our playing fields are waterlogged, hence students are restricted to a narrow strip of hard play area. Overcrowding at lunchtime leads to higher incidents of antisocial behaviour, as shown by our internal behaviour logs.
- v. As the school has **no designated exam venue**, every time there is a set of examinations we lose the sports hall, school hall, Phoenix suite and several classrooms to accommodate the number of children and the exam regulated distances they must be apart. This impacts the drama, sport and SEND departments significantly, and make specialist teaching and learning possibilities limited at key pinch points. This will be exacerbated this year by the 269 year 11 students who we cannot fit into our sports hall for exams so every core exam will need two large spaces.

### 3. Special Education Needs

- i. There are currently 254 students on roll who are on the SEND Register: 224 students on 'SEN Support' and 31 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This breaks down as follows:

		7	8	9	10	11	12	14
<b>No of SEND</b>	254	46	49	58	43	38	12	8
<b>% SEND</b>	16.3	19.2	20.2	24.3	16.0	15.8	7.0	5.2
<b>No of EHCP</b>	31	10	7	5	2	6	0	1

Students with special educational needs and disabilities often require additional support and withdrawal facilities, so that their needs can be met effectively. In years 7 to 13 children at Caludon Castle School are educated with their peers for the majority of the time with some withdrawal for 1:1 and small group support, as necessary.

- ii. The cohort who joined Caludon Castle School in September 2022 had more students joining with SEN and EHCPs than is typical. This means that the SEN resources are stretched as it is, and that we will be unable to accommodate any additional children.
- iii. **Accessibility:** Since the opening of the new school there has been an increased number of students admitted with physical disabilities and ASD. Appropriate accommodation for students in wheelchairs and those needing room for physiotherapy and small group activities has been provided. Bambach chairs and other exercise equipment are accommodated throughout the school to enable an inclusive environment. Such arrangements make considerable additional demands on the accommodation of the school and have significant impact on class organisation which has to be planned in advance; any further admissions would put increased pressure on the accommodation available and will have a serious impact on the ability of the school to meet these students' needs. At present, space and resources are very tight as a result of appeals which impacts on the learning of those classes.

- iv. The majority of students admitted in-year have specific learning or behavioural needs and require targeted support from **additional adults** (EWO, School Nurse, Inclusion Manager, CAMHS, EP, Year Leaders). This dilutes additional adults' ability to support. In-year admissions represent a high proportion of behaviour-linked incidents. Increasing admission numbers restricts the capacity to target appropriate support. Classroom support by Student Support Mentors (TAs) is becoming a challenge to provide because of funding cuts and the recruitment crisis, but, where it is possible, it further reduces the space available in classrooms for additional students.
- v. Over recent years the school has experienced additional pressure on the use of the lift due to the number of children requiring access within similar timeframes. This impacts on punctuality to lessons and, despite our best efforts, maintenance of the lift has been high due to frequent use.

#### 4. Educational Factors

- i. Students are taught mainly in tutor groups in Years 7, 8 and 9 with smaller groups for practical subjects due to size of rooms and based on health and safety requirements. Additional students above the PAN has increased the size of several classes in KS3 and KS4 which is not desirable as this impacts on the school's ability to ensure all students are suitably supported and receive their entitlement. This means that a teacher's time with individuals in a class is lessened. In KS4, due to option subject capacity limits, in-year admissions have less choice. Our ability to allocate students to appropriate sets/groups is restricted due to class sizes.
- ii. Different schools use different exam boards, even for the same subjects. Also, different schools might well teach the same subject, with same exam board, but teach the topics in different order. Where that is the case any new admission can require additional staff input with the student to set additional/different work and homework and marking which impacts on teachers' preparation time and time for other student.
- iii. Strategic planning takes place prior to the commencement of any academic year and is reflected in the subsequent timetable and teaching group allocations. Admitting a student who exceeds the set number for any year group is therefore incompatible with the efficient education of other children. **Staffing requirements** have been calculated for 2023/24. Additional groups are now not an option because there is insufficient space to timetable for this, and staffing has been committed. All teaching assistants are fully committed to meet the needs of existing students.
- iv. As budgets are delegated annually to schools at the start of the school year, schools are required to meet the needs of admitted students from within their own budgets. The impact of having considerable increases in students (with significant needs including complex physical needs requiring 1:1 support) admitted into year 7, for 5 consecutive years, has placed substantial additional demand on the school budget. All our additional adults are timetabled to meet existing needs. There is no spare capacity. Recruiting further adult support will require the diversion of school resources away from subject resources such as computing and tech equipment, books, computer software etc. Where the appeals panel admits further students in excess of the admissions number, the school's inclusion development plan and the provision delivered to existing students will be compromised owing to further diversion of support and finance.

**In summary**, to accommodate a larger intake than published, in any of the year groups, would affect the quality and consistency of education to which existing students are entitled and would place additional demands on limited school resources. Accountability for meeting health and safety requirements rests with the Headteacher and the governors of the school and they are obliged to request that any Appeals Panel does not exceed the Published Admission Number (PAN) in any year group. To add additional students to any year group would prejudice the education of the other students already allocated to that year group.

There is no alternative but to refuse any further admissions into the school.

This address has been discussed with the School Governors and is presented with their full support.

**Sarah Kenrick, Headteacher**

**Represented by Andrew Morgan, Assistant Headteacher**