



## Consultation report on proposed Admissions Policy for 2019 entry

### Background

Bede Academy is a single all through Academy, from Nursery to Sixth Form. The Academy opened in September 2009 and is located over 2 sites within Blyth, Northumberland. On 17 February 2017 Bede Academy joined the Emmanuel Schools Foundation Multi Academy Trust.

Bede Academy is heavily oversubscribed and within the catchment area there is significant housing development proposed. It is clear there is a need for Bede Academy to expand given this over subscription and growth of housing in our immediate area. Bede Academy proposed to increase the Published Admissions Number into Year 7 by 29 students from the current 195 up to 224.

Bede Academy also proposed to prioritise children of staff where the member of staff is filling a post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage. The shortage of good quality teacher is a continuing challenge for the education sector in England. This proposed change would offer experienced teachers an opportunity to have a more manageable relocation for themselves and their families in posts that are more challenging to fill.

### Statutory Framework

The School Admissions Code states:

*1.42 When changes are proposed to admission arrangements, all admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements (including any supplementary information form) that will apply for admission applications the following school year. Where the admission arrangements have not changed from the previous year there is no requirement to consult, subject to the requirement that admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements at least once every 7 years, even if there have been no changes during that period.*

*1.43 For admission arrangements determined in 2015 for entry in September 2016, consultation must be for a minimum of 8 weeks and must be completed by 1 March 2015. For all subsequent years, consultation must last for a minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year.*

*1.44 Admission authorities must consult with:*

- a) parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen;*
- b) other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed admissions;*
- c) all other admission authorities within the relevant area (except that primary schools need not consult secondary schools);*
- d) whichever of the governing body and the local authority who are not the admission authority;*
- e) any adjoining neighbouring local authorities where the admission authority is the local authority;*
- and*
- f) in the case of schools designated with a religious character, the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination.*

*1.45 For the duration of the consultation period, the admission authority must publish a copy of their full proposed admission arrangements (including the proposed PAN) on their website together with details of the person within the admission authority to whom comments may be sent and the areas on which comments are not sought. Admission authorities must also send upon request a copy of the proposed admission arrangements to any of the persons or bodies listed above inviting comment. Failure to consult effectively may be grounds for subsequent complaints and appeals.*

## The Consultation

The consultation ran from Monday 9 October 2017 to Monday 20 November 2017, a period of 6 weeks.

A consultation paper was prepared which set out:

- Information about the detail of the proposed admissions policy and how it would differ from the current policy
- The rationale for the proposed changes
- Information about how to take part in the consultation including contact and email address

The consultation paper is provided in the Appendix to this report

Throughout the consultation period the school website had a copy of the proposed admissions policy available for download.

The consultation paper and proposed admissions policy were also sent out by letter and/or email to individuals, groups and organisations so as to meet the requirements of the Schools Admissions Code as follows:

*a) parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen;*

Bede Academy consulted with:

- All of the families of children currently on roll
- All schools in Blyth and Seaton Sluice
- Early Steps Pre School and Princess Louise Pre-School Nursery

This was done by contacting on roll families directly; an email to other schools/pre-schools inviting consultation responses from parents of children not on roll; and placing details of the consultation on the school website

*b) other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admission authority have an interest in the proposed admissions;*

Bede Academy consulted with:

- All Bede Academy staff
- All Emmanuel Support Services staff

This was done via email

*c) all other admission authorities within the relevant area (except that primary schools need not consult secondary schools);*

Bede Academy consulted with the Northumberland County Council by email to the appropriate officers/managers.

*d) whichever of the governing body and the local authority who are not the admission authority;*

Bede Academy consulted with Northumberland County Council as above

*e) any adjoining neighbouring local authorities where the admission authority is the local authority; and*

Bede Academy consulted with Northumberland County Council as above

*f) in the case of schools designated with a religious character, the body or person representing the religion or religious denomination.*

This is not applicable as Bede Academy is not a faith school.

## **Responses**

Bede Academy received eight responses to the consultation. There were a further three queries which related to whether the proposed changes would affect their children moving from year 6 to year 7 and from year 11 to sixth form.

### **Increase in Published Admissions Number for Year 7**

Two respondents were positive about the increase in capacity but had concerns about the management of resources in the school which will come with a larger year group. One respondent wrote:

*“Are you planning to redevelop/extend the school to cope with this significant increase in capacity? If so, how?” and “My long term concern would be a reduction in quality due to the significant increase in quantity.”*

Two respondents were concerned about the increase in student numbers in year 7. One respondent wrote:

*“Should you take an extra 29 children each year into the secondary school, within 3 years that is 87 children from out of the primary catchment area whose siblings will be prioritised over those who live next to the school. Every day I can see the traffic congestion caused by families driving from out of the area to bring their children to Bede Primary in the centre of a housing estate.”*

Another wrote:

*“I object to the proposal to increase the PAN at the Secondary School as it will further impact the places available to children residing in the catchment that do not currently have a sibling attending either school”*

### **Prioritising children of staff where the member of staff is filling a post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.**

Three respondents were concerned about prioritising children of staff where the member of staff is filling a post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage. One respondent wrote:

*“I wish to object to the proposed changes to the PAN at the Secondary school and also to the prioritising of the children of staff above children who live in the catchment area, as I am deeply concerned about the effect these proposals will have on the number of places available to first born/only children residing in the Primary catchment area.”*

Another wrote:

*“On the understanding the proposed new teacher didn't live or wasn't going to live within the catchment/local community, I don't think it is right that a teacher's child/children can be given priority over the children of a family who live within catchment and are part of the local community.”*

## **Sibling link**

Four respondents were expressed concerns about the sibling link criterion. One respondent wrote:

*“The ranking of the criteria gives siblings of children attending the entire Academy priority over children residing within the Primary catchment area. The catchment area for the Secondary school covers a much larger area of Blyth than that of the Primary and approximately 2000 children currently attend the Bede schools, offering a great number of siblings (who do not reside in the Primary catchment) the priority for a place at Bede; children who already have priority in their own catchment areas. The ‘siblings rule’ not only confers a massive advantage to children in other parts of Blyth over children in the primary catchment, but also to children who have moved out of the area and have siblings that still attend the Bede schools.”*

Another wrote:

*“I feel that for any proposed change to work and be fair, the change to the sibling link criteria would need to offer places **ONLY** to those with siblings **within** the Bede Primary catchment area.”*

Another wrote:

*“Given that the Secondary catchment area is very much larger than the Primary catchment, this must significantly increase the number of potential applicants to the Primary school. These potential applicants are then prioritised over children in the Primary catchment area with no siblings in the Academy. This seems to me to be unfair competition for places, with families in South Shore and South Beach (including my own) at a disadvantage to those elsewhere.”* And *“It seems logical to me that the siblings rule should only apply for children who will be educated at the same site, at the same time.”*

Another wrote:

*“Whilst I do agree that priority should be given to siblings I do not think that the link should extend to siblings who attend Bede secondary and are consequently out of the catchment area.”*

## **Children of Armed Forces Personnel**

One respondent suggested that Bede Academy give recognition to the children of Armed Forces personnel in their Admissions criteria. They wrote:

*“When my family settled in the North East four years ago, we had a great deal of difficulty in attaining places at the local school for my children due to unavailability, compounded by the Local Authority's prevalent practice of building houses without the infrastructure to support the families who live in them. It is an extremely upsetting experience, especially given the fact that children of Forces Families have all endured a huge amount of emotional turmoil and geographical instability throughout their young lives.”*

## **Prioritising children attending Bede Academy Nursery for entry into Reception**

One respondent asked to consider including children who attend Bede Academy Nursery as a priority for Reception. They wrote:

*“I would also like to highlight that as my daughter did attend Bede Nursery and as an Early Years teacher myself I can say with confidence that your Early Years staff are **Outstanding**. Therefore it does not make sense for the staff to invest so much in the children, not to see them progress through the Bede schools. The Early Years are the most important years as they form the foundations for the*

*success a child will have in their future education. I feel that to not consider Bede nursery children as a priority, devalues the work of your outstanding staff.”*

### **Outcome**

Full copies of all responses were given to the ESF MAT Governing body and Bede Academy Governors. The Governors would like to thank all those who responded to the consultation for the positive and helpful comments received. The consultation was run in accordance with the Schools Admissions Code as set out above, and the Governors are satisfied that the appropriate stakeholders were informed and engaged in the consultation.

The Governors met on Wednesday 24 January 2018 where they discussed the consultation responses and have approved the following admission policies for 2019-2020:

Admissions Policy 2019 Year Reception –Year 6

Admissions Policy 2019 Year 7 –Year 11

Admissions Policy 2019 Year 12