



Dear Blatch families,

As Headteacher and Co-Chairs of Governors, we wanted to jointly update you on some key information about Blatch:

- School Performance Tables
- Update to policies
- Consultation on school catchment areas and school preferences

School Performance Tables

Following the publication of the school performance tables last week we are delighted to now be able to share with you all that our school's Progress 8 grading has improved significantly to 'Above Average', with a score of 0.3. This means that, on average, our students are achieving more than a quarter of a grade per subject in their GCSEs (across 8 subjects) above what they were expected to achieve (this is based nationally on KS2 SATs results). We are exceptionally proud of all our last year's Year 11s who achieved these results. They are testament to our students' hard work, effort and commitment to their learning, as well as to the substantial efforts of our staff who taught and supported them through their time at Blatch. This is the highest Progress 8 score Blatch has achieved since the measure was introduced in 2016. You can access all the details here: [School Performance Tables - Blatchington Mill](#).

Update to policies

Linked closely to our work as a school to improve outcomes for all our students has been our work to improve our students' learning experience, which has included the restructure of our school day and curriculum model and improving punctuality to school and lessons. As we have shared before, these changes are making a significant difference to how effectively all our students are learning every day. As with any large scale changes we make we are continuing to review our practice and to listen and to engage with our students and families as they are embedded. As part of this work we have now updated our behaviour and attendance policies which can be found on our website here: [Attendance and Punctuality policy](#) and [Behaviour policy](#). We will continue to communicate with families about the impact of these changes and will be inviting families to come and see our school in action again in the new year.

Consultation on school catchment areas and school preferences

You may be aware that Brighton and Hove City Council, as the local authority for education in the city, has announced a formal consultation process in respect of changes to catchment areas and school preference criteria: [Consultation documentation](#). This is in response to their recent initial engagement exercise. The Council have also proposed reductions in Published Admission Numbers (PAN) for certain schools - including Blatchington Mill School.

The formal consultation has already started and will take place from 6 December 2024 to 31 January 2025. Following the consultation, a further report is expected to be presented to the Council's Cabinet on 13 February 2025 detailing the response to the consultation and making recommendations about the admission arrangements for 2026-27. The Council must determine its admission arrangements by 28 February 2025 to conform to the requirements of the School Admissions Code.

The proposed reduction in PAN (if approved) will see the Year 7 intake at Blatchington Mill for 2026-27 reduce from 330 to 300. With each reduced Year 7 intake over five years, our school's overall PAN will fall from 1650 to 1500 (a reduction of 150 students). The Full Governing Board in partnership with the Headteacher and School Leadership team are reviewing the consequences of these proposals. As a school, we are funded by pupil numbers, and a reduction in our PAN will have implications for our income and financial modelling. Our focus over the next few weeks is to understand how this, along with the other proposals, may impact our offering, experience and outcomes for all students at Blatch.

We are mindful of the need to consider different lived experiences, perspectives, and voices. We support a culture of school collaboration, effectively supporting educationally disadvantaged children, and the council's vision for a better future for all children and young people. We recognise the challenging environment for all schools, and the concerns, issues and potential opportunities these proposals present. We are conscious that beyond PAN, the proposals include a change in the application criteria for secondary schools, including for students with Free School Meals. Together the proposals have a potential effect on families with children at our school and those who have children who are not yet part of the Blatch Family.

It is important that as many parents and carers in the west of the city, and in our current catchment area, can meaningfully engage with the consultation process. To support this, we are currently planning with the council to host an in-person consultation session at the school in early January. We will let you know the details as soon as we can. In the meantime, we encourage you to review and consider the proposals and ask questions at the in-person and online consultation sessions which have been scheduled. We would also encourage you to discuss this with other families, especially those with children in primary schools who may have an interest in the proposals, and to take part in the consultation process.

As a school, we will take some time to understand, reflect and determine our response. We expect to provide you with more details around our own thinking and possible response to the Council in early to mid-January. This may or may not be relevant to your own views and responses. In any event, we encourage everyone to submit their responses to the Council by the consultation deadline of 31 January 2025. We are exceptionally proud of our school, our students, staff, families and community, and are committed to ensuring that Blatchington Mill School is a school of choice for those who want to come here.

Best wishes,

Ms Claydon, Mr Henderson and Mr Tulley.