

STOCKSBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL



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— This is Just the Start —

Admissions to Stocksbridge High School Y7 Appeal Statement – October 2020

Responsibility	Naomi Layland
Last review date	October 2020
Next review date	September 2021
Approved by	Andy Ireland
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Introduction

The governors of Stocksbridge High School have a responsibility, in law, to cater for parental choice up to the physical capacity of the school. Equally, they have a duty to ensure that the education of all pupils in the school takes place as safely and effectively as possible in circumstances that are conducive to success.

With a desire to support the local authority with pressures on places in September 2019 Stocksbridge High School agreed to go above PAN for the transitioning students. These students are now in year 8 and we already have 2 students above PAN taking us from 180 to 182. In addition, we are in the process of admitting a looked after child into the year.

The school history

Stocksbridge High School is a community school located in the heart of Stocksbridge approximately 10 miles north of Sheffield. It serves a predominantly economically active white British community. The number of students entitled to free school meals continues to rise from 16% in 2019 to 20% in 2020. 6 families became entitled to free school meals between the enforced lockdown and the start of the new academic year and we envisage this number rising.

In December 2017 Stocksbridge High School became part of the Minerva Learning Trust. The Multi Academy Trust works with three other secondary schools across the City; Handsworth Grange Community Sports College, Ecclesfield and High Storrs. In addition, more recently, Chapel Town Academy become part of the trust.

The majority of our students transitioning from one of our two main feeder schools; Stocksbridge Junior school and Deepcar St Johns. It has a stable and supportive parent, student and governing body. The summer outcomes for Y11 students in July 2020 saw an improvement on previous years with results successfully above national. We are delighted with the year on year improvement in outcomes yet we still have a way to go to ensure students across all year groups make rapid and sustained progress.

The school is on an exciting yet challenging journey of change. In September 2016 it was judged by OFSTED as requires improvement. The report signalled that the school is improving and it recognised the school has a climate of respect and that relationships between pupils and adults is good. It is important to recognise that this is the school's second requires improvement judgement and as such the school has to work hard to drive the rapid improvements needed to ensure our students continue to make (at least) the national level of progress. This is particularly challenging when our budgetary constraints have resulted in our school going through a significant round of redundancies along with cuts to resources in recent years.

The Current School Context

The school has seen an increase in the number of students joining Stocksbridge who are eligible for free school meals and the school has also had to manage increasing numbers of pupils with learning, social, emotional and mental health difficulties. As each year group moves through school there is increasing pressure to continue to close the gap in learning and to fully prepare students for the next stage of their learning.

Context of School (current MIS data October 2020)

- Number on roll: 800
- 100% Staying in employment and education
- 51.3% Male
- 20% Free school meal
- 28% Pupil premium
- 17% SEND status
- 4 Looked after Children

Standard Number and Admissions Limit

In 2019-20 we agreed to increase our PAN. With the additional students we are operating a **6-form entry model** with **class sizes of 31** students. To continue to further increase this number negatively impacts our ability to provide the inclusive, high quality and nurturing environment that our learners are entitled to and deserve.

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	All
No on Roll (PAN 180)	155	182	158	150	155	800
Pupil premium	30%	29%	35%	23%	25%	28%
Looked after		4			3	
SEND Need	30%	24%	40%	31%	18%	29%
SEND status	31%	19%	13%	13%	7%	17%
EHCP	2	4	1	2	0	9

Over the last few years the school has seen an increase in the numbers of SEND students and / or students with complex need.

Our year 8 cohort are already the largest and most complex of the year groups in school. There are **44 students** with an **identified SEND** need. Meaning we have a community with **almost 1/3 of students having a SEND need**. This includes **4 students with an EHCP** which is more than in any of our other year groups. Finally, within year 8 there are **4 looked after children**. As stated earlier we are currently in the process of admitting another looked after student in to year 8. This means that we will have 5 LAC students and we will be above PAN at 183.

We have a duty of care to ensure that we can effectively meet all students' needs through targeted intervention and quality first teaching and this becomes more challenging as needs and class sizes increase and budget cuts continue.

By working with the Trust we are managing cuts to minimise the impact on the pupils. However as a school we have limited resources and, like many other schools across the country, we have gone through a series of redundancies. We have **reduced the number of assistant head teachers from 5 to 3** and there have been cuts to several departments in school along with **cuts to our pastoral team**.

The timetable and staffing allocation reflects the number of children in each year group. We are under allocation in current Y7,9,10 and Y11 consequently we have reduced the number of teaching staff. We do not have the additional staffing needed to enable more students to join us in year 8.

We have already maximised staffing capacity resulting in some teachers teaching across and out of specialisms.

We had to *reduce our teaching assistants (TAs) from seven to three; one of whom is part time*. The TAs manage our "safe" space for those needing sensory breaks or time out and deliver targeted interventions such as SALT and literacy/numeracy catch up interventions. With limited TAs we struggle to meet the statutory requirements detailed in the EHCPs and rely on teachers and the school SENDCO to ensure their provision is met. This means that we are already limited in supporting departments both in terms of personal strategies, CPD and in class support.

The 4 Y8 students with EHCPs/ MyPlans have significantly more complex needs comparative to those in other year groups. We are yet to fully understand the complexity of need of our new incoming LAC student. Providing every allocated child with the best education and support possible is our priority and this is an even greater challenge due to the imposed restrictions created as a result of the Covid19 pandemic.

Accommodation and curriculum constraints

Covid19 pandemic has significantly impacted on our ability to effectively timetable and deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. With students being taught in zones and seated a safe distance apart room allocation and class sizes have been tightly managed. Increasing student numbers in any of the year groups at this time could add additional risk to our community.

Due to zoning all our year groups we have lost the use of many of the specialist teaching rooms. Breakout spaces that were designed for independent study and bookable spaces for computing are now needed for timetabled lessons. There are no longer enough specialist classrooms to cover some of our core and technology subjects which is obviously challenging for both staff and students. It also has a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning experiences that our students receive.

Prior to the *Covid19 school reopening government guidance* our non-specialist classrooms were designed for a maximum of 30 students and our DT classrooms for a maximum of 24 students. By ensuring staff are 2 metres apart and students sat in forward facing rows we have lost the flexibility in most classrooms.

In an increasing number of subject we teach in ability groups (sets). This means that for our less able learners and / or for students who have additional and often complex need we try to reduce the class size and limit the teacher student ratio. This enables the students to get the increased level of support that they need and deserve from the teacher. By increasing the number of students in year 8 we will negate the impact that we are trying to have and restrict our ability to create an effective teaching environment.

As the school site is very small, during change over and social times, SLT and support staff have always been deployed to staff corridors, social spaces and the main stairway. This is to help ensure that students and staff can move safely around school. Due to the covid19 restrictions in place we have now introduced staggered starts and ends to the day along with staggered lesson change over and social times. The demand on all staff to manage and coordinate this process is significant and could become unsafe if student numbers increase.

In order to enable all year groups to access their own zoned space for lunch and break we now serve food in the sports hall. This again impacts on the number of staff needed to supervise the spaces and the ability for the PE department to effectively plan and deliver its curriculum.

Summary

We welcome and are encouraged by the increasing number of parents and students choosing Stocksbridge High School as their preferred school. It reflects community demand and an understanding of the effective changes taking place to become an outstanding school. Yet, we are living through unprecedented times and still adapting to new ways of working in order to best serve our community. Increasing student numbers is detrimental to staff and student wellbeing and could add increased risk. We owe it to our existing learning community not to increase our numbers and not to negatively impact on their safety, achievements and learning potential.

Naomi Layland
Deputy Headteacher