



23rd January 2023

Dear colleagues,

Now that the formal consultation period has closed, I am writing to you to respond to the consultation process regarding the recent proposals to change the Admissions Policy for Haberdashers' Adams to include girls to be admitted into Year 7 from September 2024.

In total there were 12 respondents to the public consultation. Of the 12, four were very supportive of the proposal, 3 had questions relating to the Admissions Policy generally and once answered, were then in support. We had 5 objections, including one member of staff. One local school made some observations but there were no objections from any school in the borough, either primary or secondary, nor the Local Authority.

Almost all of the objections focused on either the concern that our proposal would reduce the opportunities for local boys, or questions around infrastructure and future provision.

Opportunities for boys

There will not be a reduction in opportunities for boys in the local area, as priority (because of our list of schools in the attendance area) would still go to those local children first. We consider 'local' as Telford and Newport, and believe our focus/loyalty in the first instance is to our local children. It is almost impossible to consider that we will ever be in a situation where we get 150 pupils each year from just Telford, so we will in effect simply be prioritising boys **and** girls, at no disadvantage to local boys, so no local boys will be marginalised or 'pushed out' as they already have priority anyway.

This aspect of catering for local children is actually at the heart of what we want to do, as having more local children allows them to take part in after-school events, fixtures, and so on. Currently a significant number of our pupils have challenges in taking part in this very important part of school life as they live so far away and they have to get buses, taxis, etc. (We will also of course always continue to have a considerable number of places available to pupils from further afield). So, we think that rather than disadvantaging local boys, we are not only keeping them as a priority, but adding local girls too, and therefore increasing the opportunities for more children across the local borough.

We must also not forget that neighbouring boroughs in Shropshire, Staffordshire and Wolverhampton/Walsall all have grammar and/or independent provision of their own.

Infrastructure and future provision

We have naturally looked at provision for things like toilets, changing rooms etc. as this would have to be considered by the Governors and Trustees before any plans were even discussed. Of course, Adams already has girls in Years 12 and 13 so we are familiar with needs that have

to be addressed. This also relates to the (minimal) increase to staffing. As the overall pupil admission number will not change then staffing increases are at a minimum (and will in fact only centre around PE and Games). We are already planning a new games area and toilet/changing block.

At Easter we will be appointing our Head of Sixth Form, Mrs. Charlotte Harman, as the Deputy Head in charge of Girls, and it will be her role to focus not just on the logistical side of all the necessary preparations, but also on the social and emotional aspects of provision for this change to the school. As such, we are very confident that with a year and a half before girls actually arrive we are well-placed to be able to prepare for this.

Conclusion

Having reviewed the results of the consultation at the Board meeting on Thursday 19th January 2023 it is the view of the school, the Governors, and the Trustees of Haberdashers' Adams that we should therefore adopt the changes to admissions to include girls in Year 7 from September 2024, and so admit girls to the Entrance Test in September 2023.

Moving forward, over time and at the appropriate stages in the process, the school will publicise all the relevant plans. The school will also be holding a public information evening next month (details will be advertised soon), as well as including other relevant information in the upcoming Open Days.

Outside of the formal consultation there has been a very positive response from both local residents and those from further afield, as well as many positive comments from alumni and staff. The continued media/social media coverage we have received over the proposed changes indicates the strength of positive feeling in the community that surrounds this issue, and we are very grateful for the continued support.

We very much believe this is an auspicious time for Haberdashers' Adams; our ethos '*Traditional values, modern approach*' has never been more relevant and appropriate, and we are looking forward to some very exciting times ahead.

Yours sincerely,

James Penney
Chair of Governors