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# THE SWANAGE SCHOOL

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*A human-scale  
11-16 community school  
run by a cooperative trust*  
Headteacher Tristram Hobson

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Dear all,

The school recently consulted on the catchment area and Pupil Admission Number (PAN) for The Swanage School. We had a number of responses, which were all constructive and useful to the subsequent discussion by Governors. We have decided:

1. To not change the PAN at this point
2. To extend the catchment area as proposed in the consultation document, to encompass the parishes of Arne, Chaldon Herring, Church Knowle, Coombe Keynes, Corfe Castle, East Holme, East Lulworth, East Stoke, Kimmeridge, Langton Matravers, Steeple with Tyneham, Studland, Swanage, Wareham, that part of Wareham St Martin to the south west of Morden Heath, West Lulworth, Winfrith Newburgh, Wool (inc. Bovington) and Worth Matravers.

The reasons for these decisions are as follows.

Our PAN is sufficient for the immediate future. The school was set up to provide places for all local children based on Dorset County Council projections. DCC recently observed that the school is not large enough to cover the total PANs of the local primary schools. However, we have sufficient places for the actual school rolls for the time being. A number of housing projects are underway in the area and we will continue to monitor the situation to plan in good time.

As regards our catchment area, currently around 17 per cent of our students are from the wider Purbeck district area beyond our catchment, and next year that figure is projected to increase to around 25 per cent. The Governors feel that, given the numbers, our catchment area should change to reflect the actual situation. It's not our intention to actively seek to increase students from outside the area, merely to reflect a need that already exists.

A number of responses raised the point that Education Swanage championed a local secondary school where children can walk or cycle to school and so cut down on transport use. We still believe this is very important but the Governors set up the school first and foremost to ensure the continued viability of Swanage as a diverse community. A good local secondary school is one of the main drivers for families to an area, and the school has also become one of the largest employers in the town. While over three-quarters of local families do choose the school, there are spaces created by those choosing other options. The environmental impact is exacerbated by DCC providing free transport in one direction but not the other, with empty buses making the journey in one direction twice a day. Instead of enjoying this entitlement, our families rely on an ad hoc arrangement of private cars, taxis and our own minibuses, which are partly subsidised from our school budget.

By changing our catchment area we will better reflect the situation that already exists and expose the need for a joined-up approach from DCC to school transport in the area.

Should you wish to discuss any of the above, the Governors will be pleased to respond.

Tim Marcus

Acting Chair of Governors

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