

Proposed change to Hayesbrook Academy's Admission Arrangements Consultation Pack



Shaping Lives, Transforming Communities



1 The proposal

Leigh Academies Trust (LAT) is proposing to vary Hayesbrook Academy's admission arrangements to admit girls and boys from September 2023 into year 7. To reflect its new status as a co-educational academy, the academy will be renamed from the same date as Leigh Academy Tonbridge (LATon).

The sixth form at Hayesbrook is already co-educational so no change is required for post-16 students. Subject to approval, appropriate adaptations will be made to the Hayesbrook estate to make it fit for purpose to admit girls into year 7 from 2023.



2 Background to the proposal

Hayesbrook Academy joined LAT in September 2021. It has a published admission number (PAN) of 151. There are currently 405 pupils on roll in years 7-11 out of a total capacity of 755. Combined with just 67 pupils on roll in the sixth form out of a possible 302, the site is running at under half capacity. In 2021 just 52 parents gave Hayesbrook as their first choice secondary school for their child. This was the third lowest of all secondary schools in Kent and the lowest in the district of Tonbridge and Malling in which Hayesbrook is located.

Hayesbrook is one of only two boys' high schools in Kent, the other being in Northfleet. This educational alternative for parents in the local area has not been popular for some considerable time. Significant under enrollment over recent years has resulted in most year groups being less than half full in a town where there are sufficient pupils for every school to be operating largely at capacity.

Low pupil numbers have led to acute financial difficulties. To remain solvent, Hayesbrook requires significant additional falling rolls funding from Kent County Council. In academic year 2020-21 this amounted to an extra £297,000 being provided on top of normal funding levels to prevent the academy simply falling into deficit. This additional funding is offered on a one-year basis and is not guaranteed for future years. Consequently, Hayesbrook's current financial position is not sustainable. Furthermore, the exceptionally tight budget management required has made it more difficult to offer the same educational experiences to pupils compared to what is possible in a more average sized setting.

In the Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells school place planning area a small surplus of places is forecast to exist in every year up to 2027, averaging 4.5% more places available than are currently expected to be required. However, over half of those surplus places are currently forecast to sit within Hayesbrook, meaning the majority of the available capacity will be inaccessible to girls without alteration to Hayesbrook's admission arrangements. The low enrollment crisis faced by Hayesbrook does not arise mainly from a lack of pupils in the system, but from a preference amongst parents to have their sons educated in co-educational settings.

The upshot of this proposal being successfully approved will be that girls who do not choose or who are not allocated to Hillview School for Girls, plus boys identified as eligible for a high school option in Tonbridge will be more evenly spread amongst LATon and Hugh Christie. Hayesbrook's historic competitive disadvantaged will be removed and still there will be enough pupils overall to ensure that all three non-selective secondary schools in Tonbridge are viable with healthy pupil enrollment figures, leading to sustainable budgets and a positive educational offer for parents.

If approved, some minor capital adaptations will be required to toilets and changing facilities. All of these will be funded by LAT. In addition, a full review of the curriculum and staffing structure will be undertaken to ensure appropriate high quality provision for girls as well as boys. A new girls' school uniform will also be developed for LATon.

Positive steps will be taken from the outset to ensure a harmonious co-educational community of pupils. Additional marketing is planned to explain these changes to parents of girls so that they can confidently put LATon forward as their first choice secondary school. From 2023, boys and girls in year 7 will be taught together but separately from other year groups. They will also enjoy their own discrete break and lunchtimes when they will be together as a single year group. This arrangement will remain in place in future years and extended to include future co-educational year groups until such time that all year groups have been admitted on this basis.

A co-educational academy will provide an even more rounded education to reflect the wider world for year 7 pupils starting in 2023. However, boys currently in the academy, plus those admitted in September 2022, who joined or are joining on the basis of attending a single sex institution, will continue to be educated as they are now in single sex classes until they finish year 11. There will be no adverse impact on the wider community beyond the academy.

3 How to have your say

We are consulting with a range of parties as set out in the relevant DfE guidance. A separate equalities impact assessment is available on request. The consultation starts on **Monday 29th November 2021** and closes on **Monday 24th January 2022**.

You can contribute your views via [this Google Form](#).

Alternatively, you can write to Leigh Academies Trust at:

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