

## **Brooke Weston Academy Admissions Policy**

Last year, Brooke Weston Trust announced it would review the admissions policy for Brooke Weston Academy due to the growing local demand for school places in Corby, and concerns raised by some parents who were not able to gain a place at their local school due to current arrangements. We can confirm that we are now consulting on a revised admissions policy for students who will join the academy in September 2023. The earliest academic year for which we can change the policy.

The consultation will run from Monday 8th November to midnight Sunday 19th December with members of the local community and its surrounding areas invited to comment on the proposed plans via the Brooke Weston Academy website.

Parents and members of the community can share their comments on this proposed change by visiting [www.brookewestontrust.org/admissionspolicy23](http://www.brookewestontrust.org/admissionspolicy23).

### **Frequently asked questions**

#### **Q: Why did the school originally have the 50/50 Corby/Kettering split?**

Brooke Weston Academy (BWA) was founded in 1991 to provide more options for parents in Corby and Kettering. To ensure the academy supported the need for pupil places at the time, it was agreed that 50% of its places would be allocated to students from Corby and 50% to students from Kettering.

#### **Q: What's the challenge? Why has Corby changed?**

Over time, and especially in more recent years, Corby has grown dramatically. Existing Corby secondary schools have had to admit more pupils than their published admissions numbers to support this rising demand. The significant housing developments, both planned and underway in the Corby area, mean demand is certain to increase over the next few years.

We recognise that partly due to the historic admissions arrangements for Brooke Weston Academy, some Corby families have been missing out on a local offer with some needing to travel to schools in Uppingham, Oundle and Kettering instead. As a Corby-based Trust, we have tried to help the Local Authority find solutions to the school places challenge, including creating Corby Technical School. We are pleased to note there are plans for a new secondary school in Weldon, which will also help meet the rising demand, but it is right to look to a change at Brooke Weston Academy.

#### **Q: What will the impact be on Kettering? Is there enough capacity in Kettering? Where will these children go?**

In the Kettering area the number of secondary school places is increasing. This includes expansion of Brooke Weston Academy's sister school, Kettering Science Academy, and the opening of a new free school to be run by another Trust in the town.

#### **Q: What happens to siblings?**

Should the revised policy be adopted after consultation, we would like to reassure families from the Kettering area whose children are already or will be attending the Academy by September 2023 that siblings will retain a priority in the new policy. Therefore, their younger brothers and sisters will still have a priority, just as they do now.

**Q: How will the plans for Weldon Village Academy affect admissions?**

Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust is building a new secondary school in Corby, just off Oundle Road. Weldon Village Academy is hoped to open in September 2022 and aims to provide 1,200 places for pupils aged 11 – 16 and 300 sixth form places. Although this will increase the number of places for the current children in Corby, the ongoing Weldon Park housing development anticipates providing up to 1000 homes, meaning the demand in secondary school places in Corby is going to continue to be high.

**Q: What about the fair banding assessments? Will this process remain the same?**

This process will remain the same. If the academy receives more applications for places than the planned admission number, and after the students with an EHC Plan where Brooke Weston Academy is named as the appropriate provision have been admitted, all other applicants will undertake a suitable cognitive ability assessment. This is used to ensure that the academy admits an intake that is representative of the national ability range and is comprehensive in its profile. All applicants will be placed in one of nine bands based on the results of the assessment. Places will be allocated in a proportion that reflects the national ability range.

Students who do not take the ability test will only be considered if there are places remaining once allocations have been made to all those who did.

**Q. What is fair banding?**

To make sure our schools are truly comprehensive and reflect all different abilities, we ask students who apply to our secondary schools (Brooke Weston Academy, Corby Business Academy, Corby Technical School and Kettering Science Academy) to complete a non-verbal reasoning exercise to help us ensure there is 'Fair Banding'. This process allows us to categorise students into 9 ability groups and allocate places to ensure our schools match the national average student profile.

This process is not 'selective' like an 11+ Examination – instead, it ensures we do not disproportionately favour higher ability students and means that our student cohorts reflect the national average of different abilities. It also ensures that all children, regardless of their academic ability or backgrounds, have a fair chance of securing a place at all our schools.

The assessment is usually carried out on a single assessment day in December and involves more than 600 primary school children and their families who attend our school sites on the day.

As was the case last year and due to Covid-19, there will be no requirement to complete the reasoning test this year, to avoid creating an unnecessary risk to public safety through running an event of this scale. Please note that this variation is temporary and should only apply for the September 2021 and 2022 intakes. The process is expected to return to usual for our September 2023 intake. This is explained in the local authority consultation document.