

COCKBURN SCHOOL

Specialist status in the Performing Arts



Executive Headteacher Mr D Gurney BA (Hons) / NPQH / NLE

Head of School Mr R Dixon BSc (Hons) / NPQH

Statement re additional room requirements from David Gurney

On National Offer Day it was recognised by Leeds City Council that a significant proportion of children, living nearest to Cockburn, had been offered a school placement more than 3 miles from their home address. Cockburn School joined local councillors and the council to work closely together to find ways to address the shortfall of places in the area by offering an extra 60 places. When approached by Leeds City Council, and on hearing the concerns from the local community, Cockburn School moved swiftly to realise a way to ensure that more children in the south could be part of the Cockburn community.

Cockburn School was refurbished and rebuilt in 2010 under the Building Schools for the Future scheme to accommodate 1050 pupils, designed for 210 per year group.

At the request of the local authority, to meet local demand, pupil numbers at the school have increased year on year and are currently approx. 1250. This is 200 more pupils than the school was designed for, with every year group having substantially more than the intended year group size.

To support the council's vision of being a child friendly city we have always been supportive and taken bulge years as detailed below, which resulted in an extra 360 pupils over the years:

2014 – extra 60 pupils
2015 – extra 60 pupils
2016 – extra 30 pupils
2017 – extra 60 pupils
2018 – increased PAN to 240
2020 – extra 60 pupils

360 pupils in total without asking for any investment in teaching spaces

The school had no intention of taking any additional pupils due to the building and site being beyond full capacity. However, the school agreed to an additional bulge for 60 places from September 2020 to help local children and families within our community. We were recognised by Ofsted in 2019 as having strong community links and they stated *"You have a strong, clear vision for the school. You have created a school which is an integrated part of the community it serves and is also a community in its own right."*

The number in Year 7 will increase to 300 for the year group. There are now more pupils across

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all years in the school than the school was built for and this equates to a full additional year group. The need for this expansion has, therefore, not been driven by the school but by a large population bulge, Children's Services and concerned parents/carers whose children had been allocated schools at the other side of the city because of a shortage of places. Cockburn School's efforts to work with the council to secure these places was met with great positivity by the parents/carers of pupils now not having to travel across the city.

Cockburn School was built for 210 pupils per year group. When the PAN increased to 240 this stretched and fully utilised any capacity we had for teaching spaces. Additional numbers now force the need for additional teaching spaces.

Because Cockburn School is a school of choice for the community and hugely popular we have some of the highest number of appeals for Year 7 of any school within Leeds and this year the independent Appeal's Panel agree that the school is at capacity and admitting 1 more pupil would have a detrimental effect and would cause significant prejudice to the efficient education and efficient use of resources in the school, hence the need for additional space to cater for the 60 extra pupils and no appeals were granted.

As described in Cockburn's appeal statement of case, the extra 60 children in Year 7 in September 2020 will cause significant issues for the school both in terms of staffing and accommodation. Although additional accommodation and funding will be provided to the school to support with staffing, this is unlikely to fully address the pressures the school will face.

At Cockburn we offer a broad and balanced curriculum and are wholly inclusive. Many schools only offer 5 lessons a day but Cockburn's timetable is 6 lessons a day, which is integral to our success and does require more accommodation. We carried out detailed analysis on the curriculum we offer and the rooming required to house the pupils throughout their 5 years of schooling.

The required and planned work to meet the needs of the additional pupils and their journey from Year 7 to Year 11 involves the provision of more classrooms and science laboratories to meet the needs of the timetable. This additional accommodation will enable the school to deliver the National Curriculum to the increased number of children on the school roll.

To be clear if the school does not have the additional classrooms we will be unable to deliver the curriculum for September.

EXTERNAL REQUIREMENTS

Due to the constraints of the site area of the school, the amount of land available for outdoor sports and activities fell short of government requirements for a school of this size. The school has found it extremely challenging to deliver the National Curriculum for Physical Education with the facilities available.

There is also a need for additional sports facilities including a pitch to allow the school to deliver the National Curriculum to the increased number of pupils. This would need to be outside of the current school footprint because the existing school site cannot accommodate this. The local authority offered some land that is right next to the school, away from local residents and on the site of the former private south Leeds golf course. After exploring all options, this became the only viable solution.

Middleton Park and woods, together with the south Leeds golf course, comprises hundreds of acres of land for community use. The expansion plans from the local authority for Cockburn involve less than 5% of the total area of what was previously a private fee-paying golf course, and involve improved facilities for the children and community of south Leeds to meet the needs of the school and local community.

Cockburn School has worked hard with the local community to reduce the number of cars parking on Gipsy Lane. An area within the existing site at the rear of the school will be made into a permanent car park that would mean that an additional 47 staff cars would park on the school site rather than on Gipsy Lane. This would have such a positive impact upon reducing the amount of traffic parking on the road and make it safer for residents and pupils from the school. The school intends to use the existing hard-core access road for this car park. The cobbled part of the public footpath will remain for public use and will not form part of the school site. All this can be seen in the plans that were published in a previous South Leeds Life article.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Gurney', with a stylized, cursive script.

David Gurney
Executive Headteacher