THE HARVEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL
Cheriton Road Folkestone
Kent CT19 5JY

Founded 1674

Headteacher: **Mr S Norman, BA (Hons), NPQH**

Admission Defence Statement
Admission Appeals for Year 7 in September 2024

The Harvey Grammar School is a popular and oversubscribed school. Admission to the school is by passing either the Kent PESE tests or Shepway Test. The Kent Test is standardised across the county, in order effectively to determine children suitable for selective education. The Shepway Test is similarly designed to identify children of selective ability.

The published admissions number for The Harvey is 150. As of today, 150 places have been offered and accepted for entry into Year 7 in September 2024. These pupils will be arranged in to five classes of 30 for the majority of their learning.

In September 2022 and 2023, the school had the teaching and room capacity to accommodate an additional class in Year 7, arranging them in to six classes of up to 30 for the majority of their teaching. The Harvey is not in a position, with appropriate specialist teaching, rooms or resources, to do likewise in this or subsequent years; our published admissions number remains at 150.

There is very little movement in and out of year groups as students move up the school.

The school feels very strongly, for the extensive reasons set out below, that it is unable to admit any more pupils into the cohort, because to do so would prejudice the efficient education and use of resources at the school.

Problems with increasing class sizes.

Increasing group sizes severely hampers students' learning by reducing the time teachers are able to spend with each individual. The school aims for high 'value-added' scores from KS2 to KS4 for all pupils, but this is difficult to attain and sustain without the close attention of teachers to individual pupil needs. Mentoring support would be reduced and group sizes at Key Stage 3 and GCSE would become so large as to preclude students having a full choice when selecting their options.

Because of the age and nature of the older parts of the school, a significant number of classrooms are small; The DfE Briefing Framework for Secondary School Projects BB103 (Figure 11) recommends a standard classroom size for 30 pupils of 55 m^2, 62m^2 for ICT rooms and 83m^2 for Science Laboratories. None of the 20 teaching spaces in our Main Building meet these recommendations. 12 of the 15 general classrooms in the Building fall below 50m^2 with an average area of just 43.25m^2. With space already at such a premium, it places constraints on the amount of 'free' space available in the classroom, the types of work attempted and the ability of teachers and classroom assistants to engage and supervise effectively. To exceed a class size of 30 would further limit the school's organisation of teaching and learning activities in these rooms and further prejudice the education of pupils in the school.

The corridors in our Main Building are narrow, making movement between lessons in this area of the school particularly crowded. Originally, classrooms housed groups of 25 pupils or fewer. Many of our practical rooms, such as Science and Design Technology, are used for almost 100% of the timetable. The size of groups is limited in these practical subject rooms in line with Health & Safety recommendations from ASE (Association of Science Education) and CLEAPSS (Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of

Science Services). Groups should not be larger than 30 pupils (or lower in Design Technology) for the reasons listed in this defence statement.

Our Science laboratories for Chemistry are below the DfE recommendations for size due to the age and nature of our Main Building in which they are housed. They can accommodate a maximum of 30 pupils but each pupil has significantly less than the recommended $0.3m^2$ of desk space in a practical science classroom. This already has a direct impact on the opportunities for practical work in Chemistry for Key Stage 3 groups. Where classes are over 30 in size they can be accommodated in our newer and slightly larger Biology and Physics laboratories but as with our Chemistry laboratories desk space is limited and circulation space compromised.

We cannot increase class numbers in these rooms due to the bench space that each pupil must have for practical work. We cannot increase the number of benches as these rooms already have the maximum number for the room size. To increase the group size in these rooms would seriously hinder the quality of teaching and learning that goes on, as well as pose significant health and safety risks. Modern methods of teaching science rely heavily on an experimental approach. It would be difficult to realise this with greater numbers in the class. That is, teachers are likely to reduce practical opportunities under such circumstances; perhaps relying more on demonstration work. Professional associations and health and safety organisations do not support classes of more than 30 in a specialist room such as a laboratory and (Key Stage 3) classes of just 22 in Design Technology rooms. Where students in the class require additional educational support, those recommended numbers decrease further.

We have only two Design Technology workshops which all year groups across the school use. Design Technology is taught at Key Stage 3, GCSE and A level. At GCSE, pupils have to use both workshops simultaneously because of the variety of tasks and the machines needed to fulfil them. In KS3, pupils experience a range of material areas throughout the year, resulting in the workshops being used simultaneously. Schools were advised that from September 2009 classes should be limited to a maximum of 22 for health and safety reasons.

It is not a case of simply increasing class sizes to 31 or 32. As already pointed out, a significant proportion of our general teaching rooms are below the recommended floor space for classes of more than 25 pupils. Having 30 in these rooms is already a tight fit. To increase group sizes further would prejudice the needs and experiences of existing pupils. Due to the shape and size of these general teaching rooms, we often have to organise our desks into rows. This makes group work and active, collaborative learning more difficult. To 'squeeze' in one or two more desks is not only be impossible in some rooms, it would rule out much collaborative and group work.

It would also mean that once pupils were in the room and seated, there would not be enough space for the teacher or support staff to walk around the room to support pupils during the lesson. Methods of active engagement and teaching strategies such as group work and role-play would be more difficult and less effective. Any questions or support asked of the teacher would be public. This neither fosters nor secures the interests of pupils who may be reluctant to ask for help and would undermine the ethos of our inclusive, personalised agenda. In short, admitting additional students to any class already at capacity will severely prejudice our existing students' educational experience.

With narrow corridors and stairwells in our main building, safe evacuation from the building in the event of a fire would be jeopardised with increased pupil numbers. Travel to and from the school already places considerable strain on the popular bus routes, including mini-link stagecoach buses in to Folkestone and the 971 & 973 routes. The safety of pupils outside the school gates, accessing buses on narrow pavements, adjacent to a busy and congested main road, may also be compromised with an increase in pupil numbers.

For the reasons outlined, we ask the Panel to consider carefully the prejudice to the needs of our existing pupils, as well as staff, when making its decisions.

Mr S Norman
Headteacher