

Batley Grammar School as a Free School – formal consultation information

Contextual information

What we want to do:

We wish to convert to a Free School and, as an existing Independent school, are aiming to **return** to the maintained sector as an all-through inclusive school to offer equality of opportunity, and contribute to community cohesion by bringing together children and families from a wide range of different cultures.

Who we are now:

We are currently a 3-18 HMC multicultural, co-educational independent school with pupils both of wide academic ability and from diverse social backgrounds. Evidence from our ISC Catchment Area Analysis indicated that the demographic makeup of our intake is atypical for an independent school with one third of households coming from the MOSAIC group D. In fact one third of our Sixth Form receive the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

Why we want to do this:

We have a long (400 year) history of being a school at the heart of the community; an educational flagship, educating a wide spectrum of pupils in a deprived area and being a mechanism for aspiration and social mobility. This is in line with our Founder's aims when Batley Grammar School was established, that the '*school would provide a broad education for all boys (at that time) within the old parish of Batley (which extended to Birkenshaw, Gomersal, Morley and Ossett) who wished to enter higher education or the professions*'.

In modern terms the school was established for public benefit and has developed to become an all-age, fully co-educational school. Many of the current pupils do still come from within the 'old parish' boundary. Increasingly we are unable to meet the demand for means tested bursaries and consequently have to deny as many pupils as we accept each year the quality of educational provision.

The Free School policy is a way to re-enter the maintained sector as a maintained community school so we do not have to charge school fees in an area where a significant number of families are clearly unable to afford independent education.

We want to continue to provide local 6th form provision for girls and boys in Batley where, currently, there is no such provision for boys.

We believe that we could provide the necessary stability for the continuing uncertainty in relation to the future educational landscape in North Kirklees. We would raise aspirations and improve educational standards in the local area and beyond and the following table provides some comparative data.

1. Current School – Educational attainment of Batley Grammar School pupils as compared with pupils both nationally and in the Local Authority from 2005 – 2009.										
	GCSE 5+ A* -C					GCSE 5+ A* -C inc English and maths				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
National Average	56.3	58.5	60.8	64.8	70	44.3	45.3	46.0	47.3	49.8
LA Average	50.9	52.8	55.4	61.2	65	39.1	40.7	42.8	45.4	45.4
Batley Grammar School	91	89	94	93	100	80	83	94	78	94
CVA Scores										
	2005		2006		2007		2008		2009	
LA Average	981.3		988.9		992.5		994.3		956.76	
Batley Grammar School	VA 1041.4		Once VA became contextual, figures for an Independent school were not issued. Until then Batley Grammar School regularly had the highest VA scores of any school in Kirklees.							

Vision

Batley Grammar School proposes to become an all-through inclusive Free School catering for pupils from Reception to 18.

A Free School providing all-through education is a fundamental element of the current school's pedagogical approach based on an all-through inclusive school with a common philosophy, aims and objectives. It allows continuity of learning across all key stages with a consistent pedagogy, facilitates vertical learning routes, continuity of care and serves families and the Local Authority well by reducing the number of parent journeys and contributing to the LAs Transport Action Planning.

Our all-through Free school model would allow for consistency in pastoral care across the whole of a pupil's educational life, encourage two-way interaction between older and younger pupils, with older ones acting as positive role models. It would also maximise the opportunity for the development of social responsibility, for example, older pupils being expected to look out for the younger pupils and be conscious of their needs.

Such a model serves to develop a sense of community throughout the school, particularly with a vertical house system, celebrating events such as Founder's Day, taking part in productions, concerts and contributing towards collective fund raising and enterprise activities. It further allows for appreciation of the work of other classes, irrespective of age, through events such as school assemblies and facilitates cross key stage and cross phase continuity of learning with a consistent pedagogy and the integration of complementary teaching and learning methods.

An all-through school provides continuity for positive parental involvement and the strong ethos of belonging is not disrupted. These elements of the current school contribute towards the strong whole school ethos and we would look to continue and place great emphasis upon such an approach. A child would be able to remain with the same group of children for the whole of

their school life. This allows for close observation of strengths and weaknesses in different aspects of each child's development, enabling intervention where necessary. It also allows for observation of the progress of a child's learning development over a long period of time, ensuring that for example, late learners are not incorrectly classified as slow learners.

Resources will also be shared across the age range allowing older juniors to receive teaching and support from subject specialists and to share some of the secondary phase facilities.

Ethos

The existing 400 year old school has a traditional culture and ethos and although called a 'Grammar' school this is in name only. Our ability profile is much broader than is typical in the selective independent sector.

Strong academic tradition is complemented by a highly supportive and effective pastoral ethos, evidenced by the recent ISI report (Feb 2010):

“Relationships within this multi-cultural school are very good, the friendliness and respect with which pupils treat each other being very noticeable.”

Such an ethos with its inherent discipline and strong moral code appeals widely across all communities.

The Free School, which will evolve from the current school returning to the maintained sector, would be willing to play a major role in developing the academic future in North Kirklees.

The Free School will be committed to its ethos in its teaching and its human relationships. It will give a high priority to the spiritual and moral development of its pupils and it will continue to stress the worth of every human being. In essence it will continue to be a first rate educational environment in which *‘Every Child Really Matters’*.

School Philosophy

We aspire to be a 'school of choice' by being a caring and supportive school where we identify, encourage and develop the talents and qualities of each pupil from Reception to 18. We are committed to enabling pupils to thrive and pursue excellence in all areas and, in so doing, helping them to prepare for adult life as confident, independent and respectful members of a caring society.

Educational aims

- A. To encourage the highest achievement levels of which pupils are capable and, in so doing, to promote a love of learning.
- B. To promote and develop the physical, spiritual, moral and social well being of all pupils.
- C. To create a caring environment with well-mannered, respectful, hard working and happy pupils showing consideration for others.
- D. To develop self-respect, self-esteem, self-confidence and self-discipline.
- E. To promote teamwork between pupils, parents and staff.
- F. To develop responsible and enthusiastic individuals with a growing ability to work as

- independent learners.
- G. To equip pupils to understand the world beyond school and to make an effective contribution to it.

As a Free School the Trustees would further aim

- H. To be a flagship school and a “centre of excellence” to encourage the sharing of expertise and the raising of aspiration throughout the area.

Promoting the ethos and culture will be essential to achieving success, attaining each pupil’s personal best and addressing underperformance. The Trustees are committed to offer a distinctive educational experience to all pupils within a broad, inclusive curriculum and a culture of high expectation.

Parental Demand

The school roll (currently just under 370) is limited by parents’ ability to pay fees. There are many more prospective parents to whom we are unable to offer sufficient financial assistance, despite the grants and bursaries awarded each year.

The increasing number of bursary applications which the school is unable to support, reflects the increasing demand for the current school as a Free School.

Since announcing our intentions, enquiries and registrations have increased dramatically. In the first two months after our announcement of intention we received as many of these as we would normally receive annually.

Our recent survey of both current and prospective families concurs with our anecdotal evidence. Because this was done over a relatively short timescale these already large figures will more than likely be an underestimate and indeed are increasing steadily with time.

<u>Current parents- Survey of intention</u> (all replies are stored in school either in paper format or electronically)	
Parents were asked to indicate if they intended to keep their child/children in the school when it became a ‘Free School’	
Number of replies from 248 families covering 335 pupils	328
% replies	97.9
Yes response:	322
No response: (2 of these leaving at end of KS4)	5
Undecided response:	1
Those wanting siblings to attend (for entry between 2011 and 2016)	86
Total demand for places amongst current parents:	408
<u>Prospective parents – Registration of interest in attending Batley Grammar School as a ‘Free School’</u> (all replies are stored in school either in paper format or electronically)	
This group were asked to submit a registration of interest, in Batley Grammar School as a Free School, for 2011 and beyond	
Number of families	746
Number of children for 746 those families	924
Number of families/children already registered for entry in Sept 2011	89

in addition to current parents and those registering an expression of interest above	
TOTAL INTEREST TO DATE (without any official announcement of a start date)	1,421 pupils

To date we have registrations of interest from **1,421** potential pupils to attend Batley Grammar School as a Free School.

Site and Buildings Proposals

The proposed Free School would occupy the site of the current school, Batley Grammar School, at OS grid reference: SE 238251.

The site is 6 hectares in total which includes 4 hectares of playing fields which are rented from the Local Authority on long term lease.

The buildings are in a good state of repair and recent developments on site, namely a sixth form centre with additional classroom and a music suite have allowed the sympathetic blend of modern building with the historic architecture.

The current school has not only the organisational and financial capability but also the physical capacity to open as an all-through inclusive Free School in the existing buildings in September 2011.

The existing buildings could accommodate up to 672 on roll from Reception to 6th form. Our square metre floor area for classrooms and teaching areas is approx. 2232m² which would accommodate our all through 'proposed 2011' capacity of 672.

Access and Local Transport Issues

Access to the school by existing pupils and their parents includes a variety of methods:

Walking

Public transport

School bus and minibuses

Private car

The Free School would serve families and the Local Authority well by reducing the number of parent journeys and contributing to the LAs Transport Action Planning. We would actively encourage pupils and their parents to plan their journeys to and from school in an environmentally friendly and responsible manner.

The school is on a bus route which would provides access for some pupils and we envisage that the school transport provided for existing pupils via minibuses and coach would serve a greater number of pupils.

Impact on the local community

The school has informally consulted on admissions with the Local Authority and an adjacent school and has been mindful when developing the oversubscription criteria, particularly in the secondary phase, to minimise any effects this may have on neighbouring schools.

As an existing school we have always had an extremely good relationship with our immediate neighbours and worked cooperatively and see no reason for this to alter in the future with them.

Admissions

We anticipate that our published years of entry into the Free School will be into reception, Year 7 and Year 12. Depending upon the agreed number numbers of pupils in each year group applications may be accepted for interim year groups.

We fully intend to follow the admissions code and we will not select on ability. Banding will be applied to the Year 7 applications to ensure a comprehensive intake.

Our over subscription criteria (which are still subject to agreement and are in draft form) will be on the basis of:

1	Pupils with statements of special needs where the Free School is named on the statement
2	Children who are looked after by a local authority in accordance with Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 at the date of the relevant applications for admission is made
3	Pupils who, on the date of admission, will have an older sibling on the roll of the Free School
4	Any remaining places will be offered to remaining applicants by random allocation in the secondary phase and by distance from the school in the primary phase

To ensure that we are reaching out to more deprived pupils and families in our area we have already informed them of our attention via the following methods:

- information sent home via the local junior schools
- contact with local religious and community organisations e.g. mosque Imams
- via the local papers

In due course we would be listed in the Local Authority's Common Application Form and would wish to raise awareness through Local Authority support networks e.g. Kirklees Parent Partnership to ensure that we reached all sectors of the community.

However, in the first year we will run our admissions process alongside that of the Local Authority and offers of places will be made by the 1st March 2011.

December 2010