

Great Sankey High School

Multi-Academy Trust and Admissions Consultation



Great in name, greatest together.

Proposed Conversion from Single Academy Trust to Multi-Academy Trust.

Proposed Changes to Admissions Arrangements:

- It is proposed to increase the Published Admission Number from 315 to 375 from September 2018.
- It is proposed to amend the preference given to students from named primary schools.

Consultation Duration:

7 weeks, from 14 December 2016 to 31 January 2017.

We are very genuine in our commitment to our wider local community and wish to focus on improving the current arrangements where possible.

We are committed, therefore, to listening to all views and where the Proposal may be improved further, to do so through amendment.

Introduction:

We are writing to tell you about our proposal to change to the status and admission arrangements for Great Sankey High School, so that it becomes part of a Multi-Academy Trust, named Omega and admits 375 students each year, instead of the 315 it does now.

The School Admissions Code, December 2014, requires an admissions authority to consult each time it proposes to make significant changes to its status or admission arrangements.

Great Sankey High School is currently a Single Academy Trust and as such is its own admissions authority, though it has continued to apply Warrington Borough Council's admissions policy in the best interests of the wider community. The Trust can change the criteria, provided the new criteria meet the requirements of the Admissions Code. On behalf of the Governing Body of the School or the Trustees of the Academy, we are undertaking this statutory wider consultation with local parents and all local stakeholders of the school. We have already consulted with the School's parents at the end of last year and this is the next stage.

This Consultation Document provides you with the background to these proposed changes, the rationale or reasoning for such a change and how this fits into our wider vision for education locally. It gives clear indication of the proposed admission number, the date for change and the proposed admissions criteria in comparison to the current list. It will then explain the timescale for this consultation and how you can make your views known. Finally, it gives advance notice of the next steps and the date of the intended decision on any proposed changes to arrangements.

Background:

You will be aware of the rapid growth in our town, indeed it is reputedly the fastest growing town outside the capital. West Warrington growth in particular has posed challenges for the Warrington Borough Council (WBC), which has responded extremely well in managing the demand for school places.

WBC has now planned for and implemented a strategy for local primary schools, which has included new buildings to allow the capacity for this growth and increased numbers. This increase feeds into three local high schools in West Warrington: St Gregory's Catholic High School; Penketh High School; and Great Sankey High School. As a consequence of increased demand for pupil places in the area, WBC has identified a requirement to increase secondary schools places. Further, given that Great Sankey High consistently receives applications for more places than are available, is an outstanding school and therefore meets the criteria for expansion, and it is anticipated that other local secondary schools will also be fully subscribed by 2018, the Local Authority has requested that Great Sankey HS consider an increase in admission number from 315 places to 360 places, with effect from September 2018.

Rationale:

The current admissions process is fair and transparent, operated by the WBC, however, for some this has not served all parents as well as it might have. Whilst there is a clear moral argument to allow students in outlying villages to attend their most local high school, that policy has denied access to some, who actually live closer to the high school. This has caused a great deal of complaint in the past and been seen as somewhat of a lottery, as distances fluctuate each year depending on demand.

It is hoped that this Proposal will lead to an improved system that better supports local people in gaining access to their high school.

There is a logic to provide for the people's demand to gain access to a successful and 'Outstanding' high school. For Great Sankey High School to increase in number, however, it must look beyond its current footprint to expand in space to accommodate effectively any larger school. With this in mind the WBC has agreed to lease the old Barrow Hall Community Primary site to us, which will allow us to cater for larger numbers in improved facilities. Improving the site will depend on accessing additional capital funding from the Department for Education, but will improve education for all students in school now as well as those to come in the future.

If we are to be successful in our attempt to keep as many of the local people as happy as possible and secure long-term, high quality education, the site and facilities are a serious consideration.

There is a very changing landscape currently in education with just about every aspect of school life being affected by decisions in government from the curriculum the students learn to the manner in which they are assessed and the grades they are given. Arguably the largest changes have yet to make full impact. These are changes to school status and structures with the advent of free schools, academies and multi-academy trusts (MATs), alongside a changing Local Authority role with a depleted budget for the services they provide to schools.

The current educational strategy aims to have most schools converted to academies, operating within larger groups of schools in MATs. This poses another serious consideration for any increase in school size and how it manages demand from primary schools.

Most schools locally at both primary and secondary phases have discussed and considered how they will place themselves in this new landscape. The Great Sankey perspective is made clear under the Vision statement below, joining with a number of local primary schools as the Omega Multi-Academy Trust.

Vision:

The Governing Body and Trust has been discussing these issues for a long time and quite formally now for over a year. We have attempted to involve all schools locally in discussion since January 2016 and are nearing conversion from the Single Academy Trust of Great Sankey High School to the Multi-Academy Trust named Omega, which will include six local primary schools, as equal founder partners. Whilst this is not yet finalised, this Proposal must recognise the potential of such a new school grouping.

The Omega MAT's vision is a cross-phase community of schools, providing a more holistic education from 4 to 19 years of age; a system that provides for the whole child for the whole 14 years. It will offer its partners continued independence within a protective group of schools to safeguard their future. It will serve its local community through institutional continuity beyond individual personalities to ensure schools can retain their individual character and ethos to support parents and their children. Innovative and successful practice will be achieved through working collaboratively for the best interests of our children. Omega offers the ability to manage change with like-minded people on our terms at our pace.

If the community is to be best served and the child is to be best provided for within this vision, then logic suggests that priority should be given to all primary school students within the MAT group to progress to their local high school. This promotes continuity of education with the same values and vision to maximise their 14 years' education. Clearly, parental preference will still prevail, so that parents may continue to express a preference for the secondary school that they would wish their child to attend. Where parents currently depend on distance lived from the school, admissions will move to a system that supports transition on educational not geographical grounds. There is no intention for any change with regards to selection on academic ability.

All local primaries have been offered the opportunity of becoming part of the MAT group. The current proposed partners in the Omega MAT are:

- Barrow Hall Community Primary School;
- Burtonwood Community Primary School;
- Callands Community Primary School;
- Chapelford community Primary School;
- Park Road Community Primary School;
- Westbrook Old Hall Community Primary School.

All schools are currently consulting on the proposal that each school becomes an academy and joins the OMAT. This Proposal is based on the assumption that this comes to pass.

Our current admissions criteria includes a named primary school, Burtonwood CPS, whose pupils take precedent over the distance lived from the school for others, as GSHS is Burtonwood's nearest secondary school within Warrington.

Current Admissions Oversubscription Criteria for Sept 2017:

N.B. Children who have a statement of Special Educational Needs will be admitted to the school named in the statement over and above the published oversubscription criteria.

1	Children in Care and children formerly in Care (defined as looked after children and previously looked after children who have ceased to be in Care because they have been adopted or became subject to a residence order of special guardianship order).
2	Siblings (pupils with elder brothers and sisters already attending the preferred school and expected to continue at the school in the following school year. This includes full, half or step brothers and sisters and foster brothers or sisters living at the same address as part of the same family unit).
3	Children for whom it is essential to be admitted to GSHS Academy because of special circumstances to do with significant medical needs. The recommendation must be received in writing from a consultant at an NHS hospital or equivalent. This criterion relates to the child's medical needs and does not include any other member of the child's family. The supporting evidence should set out the particular reasons GSHS is the most suitable school and difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school.
4	Pupils attending Burtonwood Community Primary School
5	Pupils living nearest to the school defined as a direct distance from the child's permanent place of residence to the school, measured using a Geographical Information Address Point system based on the Local Land and Property Gazetteer. This measures straight line distances from the address point of the permanent place of residence to the address point of the school (in miles).

Admissions Code:

A full copy of the current Admissions Code is available from the Department for Education: www.education.gov.uk/government/publications

The Admissions Code makes reference to 'feeder schools' under 1.15 stating:

'Admissions authorities may wish to name a primary or middle school as a feeder school. The selection of a feeder school or schools as an oversubscription criterion **must** be transparent and made on reasonable grounds.'

Proposed Admissions Criteria:

N.B. Children who have a statement of Special Educational Needs or Education and Health Care Plan will be admitted to the school named in the statement over and above the published oversubscription criteria.

1	Children in Care and children formerly in Care (defined as looked after children and previously looked after children who have ceased to be in Care because they have been adopted or became subject to a residence order of special guardianship order).
2	Siblings (pupils with elder brothers and sisters already attending the preferred school and expected to continue at the school in the following school year. This includes full, half or step brothers and sisters and foster brothers or sisters living at the same address as part of the same family unit).
3	Children for whom it is essential to be admitted to GSHS Academy because of special circumstances to do with significant medical needs. The recommendation must be received in writing from a consultant at an NHS hospital or equivalent. This criterion relates to the child's medical needs and does not include any other member of the child's family. The supporting evidence should set out the particular reasons GSHS is the most suitable school and difficulties that would be caused if the child had to attend another school.
4	<p>Pupils attending:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Barrow Hall Community Primary School;• Burtonwood Community Primary School;• Callands Community Primary School;• Chapelford community Primary School;• Park Road Community Primary School;• Westbrook Old Hall Community Primary School. <p>(This is not a priority order, all primary schools are equal partners. Should pupil numbers ever exceed the PAN, the 'tie breaker' of Distance, criterion 5 will be applied, after applying a priority for Burtonwood CPS, as now.)</p>
5	Pupils living nearest to the school measured as a direct distance from the child's permanent place of residence to the school measured using a geographical information address point system based on the local land and property gazetteer. This measures straight line (direct) distances from the address point of the permanent place of residence to the address point of the school.

The only proposed change is the list of named partner primary schools under criterion 4.

Current Proposed MAT Primary School Numbers:

The table below offers an overview of the student numbers involved in the proposed six MAT partner schools provided by the schools' headteachers.

School	Rec	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Barrow Hall CPS	90	77	90	72	76	76	76	557
Burtonwood CPS	30	30	27	30	29	30	26	202
Callands CPS	43	32	33	48	54	50	55	315
Chapelford CPS	88	89	89	60	58	65	59	508
Park Road CPS	30	31	30	29	30	30	30	210
Westbrook Old Hall CPS	60	57	62	56	60	59	58	412
Transfer Year	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
Totals	341	316	331	295	307	310	304	2204
GSHS PAN proposed	Further Review in 2019			375	375	375	315	

The highlighted year **in bold** is the potential intake from the six MAT partner schools for the target year, September 2018. Historically, the majority of St Philip's C of E Primary School Y6 students have transferred to the school, alongside approx. a dozen pupils from Great Sankey Community Primary School. Our links with these schools are very important to us.

Even projecting that every students in Y6 were to transfer, there is capacity to accommodate the traditional numbers from these schools, who remain outside of the MAT. In this way to proposed increase in PAN supports the local community.

This is supported by the last three years' figures, as seen below.

Numbers and Origins of Students Currently Attending Great Sankey High School:

	BH	BW	Call	Chap	Park	West	St Phil	GS	Penk	SVSJ
Y7	69	27	26	38	28	24	54	12	9	8
Y8	69	29	31	42	28	14	48	11	10	7
Y9	66	17	40	28	27	9	47	11	7	6

There are a number of other primary schools who are represented in our intake figures, but these are by fewer than 6 students and often by only one single pupil.

In September 2016, pupils came to GSHS from the following schools, other than the six MAT partner schools: St Philip's (54); Great Sankey (12); Penketh (9); Sankey Valley St James (8); St Joseph's (3); Penketh South (2); St Margaret's (2); St Elphin's (2); St Vincent's (2); St Paul (2); Evelyn St (1); Winwick (1); St Monica's (1); St Bartholomew (1).

Please note that parents expressing a preference for GSHS from these schools may be disadvantaged by this Proposal.

How places were allocated over the last two years by WBC:

Admission Criteria	1-Care	2-Siblings	3-Med	4-Burtonw.	5-Distance	Total	Total preference considered
For Sept 2014	8	96	0	27	168	300	310
For Sept 2015	5	131	0	21	155	315	389
For Sept 2016	8	116	0	17	172	315	379

Criterion 5 relates to distance lived to the School, which most recently was in 2015 as 1.338 miles and in 2016, last year, as 1.438 miles.

Figures are taken from the 'Applying for Secondary School Place', WBC document.

The most likely reality is that not all existing students in the six schools will transfer, perhaps 290 of the 310, which would leave 85 places to accommodate other primary school pupils currently outside of the group. This should cater for all wishing a place at Great Sankey HS.

The Omega MAT has offered access to all schools locally and remains open to growth.

Conclusion:

Any new system must be able to accommodate numbers planned for in school growth, for example where a current two-form entry primary school has grown to three-form entry in its Reception class. That said, not all students transfer within the system, some move out of area, some choose alternative schooling, for example in special or private education.

It is important to attempt to consider projected numbers and therefore, the intended outcomes of any change and its impact on the local community.

We do not wish to disadvantage local pupils based on which primary school they attend.

We believe we can accommodate the majority of students from the six MAT primaries, whilst continuing to offer access to others across the community, whether their primary school wishes to join the MAT or not in the future. It is with this in mind that we propose an increase in PAN to 375 not the initially WBC-proposed 360 places.

We propose also to review this situation again in 2019 in advance of the first peak in pupil numbers from the proposed feeder schools.

This Proposal attempts also to protect families who have younger children, as well as older students already attending the School, by keeping the Siblings Criterion at 2 above the named feeder schools.

We are committed to our wider local community and to improving the current arrangements where possible. We are committed, therefore, to listening to all views and where the Proposal may be improved further, to do so through amendment.

Consultation Process:

It is important to remember that this is not a consultation on academisation, but on joining with local partner schools to become the Omega Multi-Academy Trust. Based on closer relations with these partners, this Consultation is also on a change to Admissions Criteria.

This Admissions aspect of this Consultation is focused on two aspects:

- raising the intake number;
- and naming more feeder primary schools in the Admissions Criteria.

The Consultation period is a minimum of six weeks in line with statutory guidance. It will run for 7 weeks from Wednesday 14th December 2016 to Tuesday 31st January 2017.

In conjunction with statutory guidance, the range of this Consultation is:

- Parents of children between the ages of 2 and 18;
- Other persons in the relevant area who, in the School's opinion, have an interest in the proposed arrangements;
- All other admissions authorities in the relevant area;
- The Local Authority;
- Adjoining neighbouring authorities.

Letters alerting all parties to this Proposal and its Consultation have been sent out in the week preceding the start date.

We are sorry that we will not be able to acknowledge every response in writing nor enter in detail into correspondence with interested parties during or after the consultation period. We will bring all views into an overall report of community views, which the governors will then consider.

How to respond:

You can contact us by e-mail or by letter.

Please ensure that you tell us:

- who you are, for example a parent or governor of which school or nursery, or a representative of which community group;
- your name, your organisation (if applicable) and your contact address or number;
- and the nature of your views pertaining to either Multi-Academy Trust and/or Admissions.

E-mail: consultation@greatsankey.org

Write to: Jon Wright, Executive Headteacher, Great Sankey High School, Barrow Hall Lane, Great Sankey, Warrington, WA5 3AA.

We would like to thank you in advance for your contributions.

Next steps:

We have a legal requirement to determine admission arrangements by 28 February 2017.

The Full Governing Body met on 13th December 2016 to confirm this Proposal. It is scheduled to meet again on **7 February 2017** and will consider at that time all responses presented by the Executive Headteacher, through his overall report, to finalise decisions before half term and in advance of the February deadline.

Please be aware that any agreed change will not be implemented until September 2018.

This is a genuine attempt to improve access to our Academy and to improve continuity of quality and range of education for parents and students.

Any decisions confirmed as a result of this Consultation will be reviewed in three years' time in 2019 to allow sufficient time to consider the impact of any outcomes and to make any further alterations before the increase in primary school numbers in 2021.

All of the information and statistics offered in this document are presented in good faith and believed to be true at the time of going to print, following an opportunity for scrutiny by Warrington Borough Council.