

OUTWOOD ACADEMY BISHOPSGARTH EXPANSION AND INCREASED ADMISSION PROJECT

Consultation process from 5 October 2022 - 23 November 2022

This is the formal consultation document for the proposed physical expansion of Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth creating an increased admission number for Year 7 from 120 to 180 in September 2024

Overview

Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth has been asked by Stockton-on-Tees Local Authority to increase its Published Admission Number (PAN) from 120 to 180, commencing in 2024 and starting with Year 7.

Because this is considered to be a “significant expansion” we must consult in line with guidance from the Department for Education. This is the consultation document. It is also consulting on the proposed increase of the PAN.

In order to accommodate an increase in numbers, we must also build additional capacity. We must also consult over this through a separate Building Application process, details of which are included in this consultation document.

An introduction from Associate Executive Principal, Mrs Sabiha Laher and Head of School, Mr Jason Rhodes.

Exciting plans are being developed to invest significant capital money to support the expansion of Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth so that it can meet the anticipated increase in the number of students in the town. Following careful scrutiny and planning, the Local Authority identified the need to increase the number of secondary places following an increase in population and the significant level of new housing developments in the area. They approached Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth and Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT) and we were keen to support this initiative. We consider this a fantastic opportunity for the school as it also allows us to provide a solution to the growing pressure on school places

However, we also want to make sure that as part of any expansion we keep all our stakeholders fully informed, giving them the appropriate opportunities to consult and feedback their views.

For the sake of clarity, this consultation document addresses the physical increase in the school, allowing an increased admission from 120 to 180 starting with Year 7 in September 2024. The consultation over the Building Application is a separate process.

In the light of the proposed increase to our numbers, we must, as an academy, follow the guidance published by The Department for Education in “Making significant changes to an open academy and closure by mutual agreement. Departmental guidance for all types of academy trust. Published January 2022.” A copy of this can be found [here](#).

The most relevant section relates to any proposed changes detailed in “Expansion of physical capacity” where it says:

“A ‘significant expansion’ is defined as an enlargement that increases the overall physical capacity of an academy (as recorded in its funding agreement) so that it can increase its overall teaching space enabling the school to provide places for more than 30 additional pupils. Permanently changing the internal configuration of a school building to

accommodate more than 30 additional pupils would also be classed as an 'increase in capacity' and requires the significant change process to be followed."

To comply with the significant change process, we must "demonstrate that a fair and open local consultation has been undertaken with all those who could be affected by the proposed change, and that the academy trust has considered all responses received. Comments or objections can be made on any grounds and opportunities for feedback should be given at all public and stakeholder meetings. The LA will hold important contextual information on the requirement for places locally and must be consulted in all cases."

Details of how you can feedback comments or objections are contained later in this document.

The position of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

In order for the Local Authority to meet its statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places available for the local high school population, Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth has been identified as being geographically best placed to cater for this area of growth in the town and surrounding villages.

The Local Authority will be liaising closely with Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth as it develops the site and expands the school roll to ensure as smooth a transition as possible. Over time we expect to see the PAN for each year grow from 120 to 180. The increase will be calibrated in line with additional demand for school places and we do not consider that there will be any change to the current catchment area.

The school's context

Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth is a small, 11-16 co-educational, secondary school. The School converted to an academy in November 2016 and is part of Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT) which comprises forty one schools across the North of England and the East Midlands. Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth would usually admit 120 pupils into the Year 7 cohort each year. Due to significant housing developments and an increasing population of school aged children creating the need for additional places, as well as the current basic need for more pupil places within the local authority, the proposal is to permanently expand the school's Pupil Admission Number (PAN) from 120 to 180. This would start in September 2024 with initial growth in Year 7 only.

Why there is a need for more places in the Stockton area

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to meet the current and future demand for pupil places.

Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth's Published Admission Number (PAN) is 120. Demand for places at the school has exceeded available places consistently over recent years.

For example, in September 2022 applicant numbers were as follows:
No. of 1st preferences received – 89

No. of 2nd preferences received – 17
No. of 3rd & 4th preferences received - 23
Total number received - 129

The year 7 intake for September 2022 has been 127.

Similar to many other areas in the Tees Valley, Stockton-on-Tees has been facing a growth in the demand for school places. Housing developments in the town will yield in excess of 10,000 new dwellings with the majority designated for family occupation. As the local community and population expand there is likely to be an increase in the demand for pupil places at Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth.

Why Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth is best placed to meet this need

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council has assessed and analysed a complex range of data before coming to the decision to expand Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth including all of the following:

- Pupil numbers and planning forecasts for the short and medium term
- Capacity at neighbouring schools
- Location and size of the school site
- Ability to expand the school
- Catchment area and proximity of housing developments/increasing demand
- School performance (Attainment, Progress, OFSTED rating, etc.)
- Parental preference and applicant numbers

The expansion proposal

If the proposal goes ahead, 60 additional places will be offered to children applying for Year 7 places from September 2024. This means that construction will have to take place to enlarge the school ready for September 2024 if not before. This construction will create more teaching space and enhance facilities in the school. We will eventually receive additional funding for the increase in pupils to allow for extra teachers and the resources and equipment needed to accommodate this increase.

In considering this proposal a feasibility study has been commissioned to explore different options for the sites and the possibilities for construction including all associated costs. The details of these options will be negotiated with the Trust's representatives and their architects in partnership with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to ensure minimum disruption to existing pupils in the creation of high-quality learning spaces and facilities to meet the needs of the local school community.

Once these have been finalised they will form the basis of a planning application that will need to follow the normal planning application process with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.

The broad educational implications

The first thing to acknowledge is that ultimately the number of students in each year group will increase by 60. Therefore, we will increase the number of classes proportionately. Currently across KS3, classes are taught in 4 classes in each year group. This will increase to 6 classes. Within the Core at Key Stage 4, classes are currently taught in 5 classes in each year group, this will increase to 7 classes.

How will you manage the increase in numbers?

The average state funded secondary school in England has 986 students (2019 data).
Source: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-theircharacteristics>

As a small school, we have already experienced a gradual increase in the numbers of students. In addition, the site itself has plenty of capacity to expand. As a Trust we also run a number of schools with an admission of 180 and more, so have experience of timetabling this number of students.

As the number of students increases so will our revenue. We will therefore ensure that this increased revenue is spent proportionately and in line with national benchmarks.

Will the increase in numbers affect the level of pastoral care available?

We are confident that we will retain the high quality of pastoral care we currently have. We will retain the band system and its associated pastoral support structures. We will also look to increase the level of pastoral support proportionately as the number on roll grows.

Will the increase in numbers affect the level of support for students with SEND?

We see no reason why any increase in numbers should impact upon the provision for students with SEND. As the school grows in all aspects there will be a proportionate increase in terms of the funding we receive and therefore where we spend it. We will therefore grow any additional support in line with our current provision whilst ensuring it is appropriately benchmarked against national guidance.

Will you be changing the admission criteria when you expand?

There are no plans to change our current admissions criteria. However, because we will be expanding our PAN from 2024 this consultation will take feedback on changes to the PAN as well as the expansion of the building. The LA have requested we make this increase to meet their pupil place need and support the change.

The guidance for Making a Significant Change states;
Schools can increase their PAN without consultation (providing doing so does not disrupt the co-ordination of admissions by their LA, they publish it on their website and inform their LA). Schools do not need to seek approval from the Secretary of State or RSC to increase PAN or to change their admission arrangements in the cycle set out at 1.45 - 1.52 of the

Admissions Code, unless they have a FA signed before 2011 which requires the Secretary of State to approve any admission changes. Very few mainstream academies have such requirements.

Managing the expansion project

OGAT Trustees have ultimate oversight of this expansion project in conjunction with Stockton-on-Tees Local Authority. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) will also monitor the progress of any expansion.

Will there be any change to Governance and Administration?

We believe that the capacity of the Local Governing Body and that of OGAT Trustees is sufficient to provide on-going and appropriate scrutiny and support for this development. Therefore, we are not envisaging any changes.

In terms of administration, as numbers grow the administrative infrastructure will need to expand proportionately and this will be carried out in context of national benchmarks.

Who is paying for the expansion project?

The Local Authority has been able to access central government funding to meet its statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places available for the local high school population.

Will students and staff be involved in the process?

Yes. There are many opportunities to involve students in all aspects of the building and design process. We will have an “educational programme” that will sit alongside the building project involving students in as many aspects of the new build as we can. Students and staff will also be involved in some of the design decisions we will be taking.

Will there be an impact on the learning of other students?

Any impact will be kept to a minimum with as much work as possible being completed over holiday periods. However, we will be assigning a senior colleague to oversee this process to ensure that learning is not interrupted even if there have to be, at times, room changes to facilitate building works.

An overview of the Building plans

This building project looks to replace a small, disused building with a new, larger block which will enhance the existing provision and provide high quality classrooms to accommodate the increased Pupil Admission Number. The building will also accommodate the Academy’s dining facilities.

[Ground Floor and First Floor Plan](#)

On the ground floor this block will contain the dining hall, kitchens, toilet facilities, including accessible facilities, cleaners store, office and plant/ store rooms.

On the first floor there will be 8 new 'general purpose' classrooms and 2 fully equipped ICT rooms. Staircases, meeting fire safety regulations, on both sides of the building.

The following shows an architect's impression of the [external view](#) at the front of the school with the new block:

This picture shows an architect's impression of an [aerial view](#) of the new block and this one the north, south, east and west [elevation](#).

Feeding back your views

Your views can be registered through our online consultation form [here](#).

We will regularly monitor this and provide interim feedback where appropriate.

If you prefer to write directly to the school please direct any questions or queries to Sabiha Laher, Associate Executive Principal Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth, Harrowgate Lane, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 8TF by the closing date of 23 November 2022. Please mark any correspondence with the heading Bishopsgarth Expansion Project. Likewise, if you prefer to email the school, please do so to the following address: enquiries@bishopsgarth.outwood.com with the title EXPANSION CONSULTATION.

Concluding the consultation

When the consultation is concluded, the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) will reach a conclusion as long as we demonstrate that:

- a fair and open consultation has taken place.
- the proposed changes are aligned with local pupil place plans
- any change is unlikely to have a negative impact on educational standards at the academy or at other local schools or colleges
- appropriate planning permissions and other consents required have been secured
- the proposal does not displace existing pupils

The RSC will then consider a range of factors and make a balanced judgement when deciding whether to approve or reject a proposal. They may also decide to refer that matter to the Secretary of State for a decision.