

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Proposal by the Governing Body of
St Gregory the Great Catholic School, Oxford
to alter its lower age range to create an all-through school
for ages 3–18 plus a private Nursery for 0-2 year-olds

or

to create an all-through school for ages 4-18 plus
a private Nursery for 0-3 year-olds

**Consultation open from
26th October 2012 to 30th November 2012**

To consult on St Gregory the Great extending its offer of education with a Catholic ethos to primary age children in Oxford.

This is related to the concurrent consultation on the conversion of St Gregory the Great and six other Roman Catholic primary schools to form a Multi Academy Company.

**A meeting for parents and other interested parties will be held
on Tuesday 13th November at 6pm at St Gregory the Great School**

<http://myconsultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk>

Background

St Gregory the Great Catholic School is located on Cricket Road, east Oxford. It currently provides education for children aged 11 to 18 and admits 210 pupils into Year 7 every year. The school is part of, and was founded by, the Catholic Church, and its admissions policy places baptised Catholic applicants in a higher criteria than those not of the faith. The school draws many of its pupils from “feeder” Catholic primary schools across Oxford, but there is no restriction on who may apply for a place.

There are 1222 pupils on roll at the school as shown below:

Pupils on roll in each National Curriculum Year Group 25 th October 2012	
Year 7	210
Year 8	209
Year 9	211
Year 10	207
Year 11	193
Year 12	115
Year 13	77

In September 2012, St Gregory’s was fully subscribed, admitting 210 pupils. 199 of these applicants indicated the school as their first preference. The school received 343 applications in total.

There are insufficient places in Oxford city primary schools to meet forecast need. All Roman Catholic primary schools in Oxford city were oversubscribed for September 2012. The latest forecast for **primary** age pupils in Oxford is as follows:

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2011-12	1321	1340	1267	1219	1160	1050	1074	8431
2012-13	1424	1286	1329	1273	1224	1207	1038	8782
2013-14	1459	1412	1269	1324	1271	1273	1204	9213
2014-15	1522	1453	1402	1271	1329	1331	1281	9588
2015-16	1560	1512	1438	1397	1269	1382	1331	9889
2016-17	1581	1548	1495	1433	1394	1324	1380	10154

The latest forecast for **secondary** age pupils in Oxford is as follows:

Year	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total
2011-12	929	989	987	1000	878	635	582	6000
2012-13	969	934	992	969	1003	680	599	6146
2013-14	1014	971	932	983	976	738	564	6178
2014-15	1125	1020	973	927	994	731	608	6378
2015-16	1197	1139	1029	975	944	750	592	6626
2016-17	1244	1206	1144	1027	987	708	602	6918

At its last Ofsted inspection in 2011 the school was rated “Good” and inspectors praised its “outstanding promotion of community cohesion”, and also commented that “Students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding”.

St Gregory the Great would now like to extend the distinctive education it offers to primary aged children.

What is the proposal?

The proposal is for St Gregory the Great to become an all-through school for children aged either 3–18 or 4–18, plus establishment of a private Nursery on site. To do this, the school would need to alter its lower age limit and it would also need additional site and buildings to accommodate its primary phase of education. This could be achieved by admitting children into a currently vacant building on Cricket Road, adjacent to the existing school.

While benefitting from the resources, educational experience and leadership of the current Senior Leadership Team at St Gregory’s, the new primary phase of the school would be managed by its own Executive Headteacher and dedicated staff. It would be a 2 form entry establishment, admitting up to 60 children into its F1 (Reception) each year.

If the age range changes to 3-18 years, 3 year-olds would be admitted into a school Nursery class and a private Nursery on site would offer places for children aged 0-2. If the age range changes to 4-18 years, facilities for children aged 0-3 would be offered by a private Nursery provider.

The governors wish to implement the proposal in September 2013.

How does this fit with the school’s consultation to become an Academy?

The vision of St Gregory the Great School is to offer primary and secondary education within one Academy. This would be part of a Roman Catholic Multi Academy Company, together with Our Lady’s Catholic Primary School (Cowley), Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School (Witney), St John Fisher Primary School (Littlemore), St Joseph’s Primary School (Carterton), St Joseph’s Primary School (Thame) and St Thomas More Primary School (Kidlington).

To achieve this within current Education law, two consultations must be held concurrently. Under the terms of the Academies Act 2011, schools can only convert to Academy status “as is”. In other words, St Gregory the Great School cannot change its age range and become an Academy in one legal process. This must be achieved in two parts. The school proposes to convert to Academy status as above, and then submit a formal case to the Secretary of State for Education for consent to alter the lower age range. This is the quickest way to achieve the two proposed changes and allow the school to offer Reception year places in September 2013.

What are the benefits of the proposal?

- For parents, the proposal increases the choice of primary schools within Oxford offering education with a Catholic ethos.
- A child allocated a place at the new primary phase of St Gregory's would be eligible to remain on the school's roll right through to the end of their secondary education, without the need to re-apply. They would benefit from greater stability and continuity of education.
- Children who attend other primary schools would still be able to apply for secondary phase places in the normal way.
- St Gregory's has a vision for Catholic education that goes beyond individual schools and changes the language from being about 'my school', to 'our schools'.
- The new primary phase would enjoy the established professional experience of the St Gregory's leadership team and potentially its specialist resources, such as science laboratories, sports hall and music areas. St Gregory's has an established relationship in working with St John Fisher Catholic Primary School which has seen that school's pupil outcomes improve over the last two years. St John Fisher Primary School's Ofsted inspection report on October 26th 2012 says that "Teaching across the school is usually good with some outstanding practice, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The school community has strong spiritual values that pervade all its work."
- St Gregory's governors believe they can successfully build a 2 form entry Primary School to the highest of parental expectations.
- The secondary phase of St Gregory's would benefit by consolidating its development of a creative curriculum, expanding the school's resources for present and future students, developing new resources for the school and its community and increasing its letting income.
- The school would benefit from additional facilities already existing in the vacant Cricket Road building, such as catering facilities to offer catering and hospitality courses. The school plans to be an alternative provider of vocational education for 16-18 year olds, enabling them to seek paid part-time employment during the day. The vocational education could make use of business partnerships with local industry and commerce, with employers assisting our teaching and students gaining part time work experience placements.
- The additional accommodation would provide more options for the secondary phase to expand when demand for secondary school places across Oxford is expected to grow in future years.
- The Local Authority is very supportive of the proposal, because it fits with its strategy for increasing the number of primary pupil places in Oxford, due to a rising population. Of the 32 primary schools in /adjoining Oxford city, 16 have started expansion over the last few years, and another 2, on sites too small to expand permanently, have taken "bulge" classes. Further school expansions are being proposed, along with a new "Free School" expected to open in 2013 and a new school as part of the Barton development, the timing of which is dependent on the progress of the housing development.

- The Catholic Archdiocese has been consulted and the Trustees are supportive of the proposal, as it would provide more primary pupil places for Catholic children in Oxford.

What will happen if this proposal does not proceed?

If this proposal does not proceed, it will not affect St Gregory the Great Catholic School as it exists currently, but the school would not be able to implement the changes to their curriculum and expand their offer of vocational courses which the additional space would allow.

It is extremely likely that the owners of the vacant building would dispose of the site, and it could be that an alternative educational provider would seek to open a new Academy or Free School on Cricket Road.

There is a growing population in Oxford, and so a growing Catholic population. If this proposal does not proceed, there is a possibility that in future years some families wanting a place at a Catholic school will be unable to be allocated one as the schools will be full. All Catholic primary schools in Oxford refused places to applicants last year, and some Catholic families who applied late did not get a place at a Catholic school.

As a part of the Authority's overarching strategy for pupil places in Oxford, if this proposal does not succeed, additional places would need to be created elsewhere.

Plans for the new school building

A feasibility study has shown that it is possible to refurbish the vacant buildings to be suitable as school accommodation. Detailed plans are currently being completed. The proposal forms part of the Authority's draft Capital Programme to provide additional pupil places.

What happens next?

If after assessing the responses to this consultation, the Governing Body decides to proceed with the proposal, the next stage is to complete a formal business case for the Secretary of State for Education. This will be formally submitted on the date of conversion to Academy status.

If the proposal to form a Multi Academy Company is delayed or not approved, the Governing Body could still consider altering the school's lower age limit to offer primary education. Full proposals would then be published.

How to respond to this consultation

This consultation is being run by the governors of St Gregory the Great Catholic School and all responses should be directed to them. You may write to them at:

Consultation Responses**St Gregory the Great Catholic School****Cricket Road****Oxford****OX4 3DR**

Or email your response to headteacher.4145@stgregory.oxon.sch.uk

Or complete the response form below, and post it to the address above.

ALL RESPONSES MUST BE RECEIVED BY 30TH November 2012

RESPONSE FORM

My preference is for:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | An age range of 3-18 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | An age range of 4-18 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No change in age range |

I/We have the following comments about the consultation relating to St Gregory the Great Catholic School:

Name:

Date:

Please tick all those that apply to you:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Parent of a child at St Gregory the Great Catholic School |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Parent of a secondary age child at another school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Parent of a primary age child at a Catholic school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Parent of a primary age child at another school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Parent of a child not yet at school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Staff / governor at St Gregory the Great Catholic School |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Local resident |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify) |