

Secondary School Review - West Gateshead

Hookergate and Ryton Schools Consultation Document

*"Best for
the West"*



We want YOUR views to help us plan the best possible secondary education system for West Gateshead.

If you require a copy of this document in large print, Braille, audio tape or another language, please contact 0191 433 2775 or 0191 433 2757, alternatively you can email schoolorganisation@gateshead.gov.uk

Introduction

Gateshead Council has an excellent track record in delivering high quality education services, with pupil attainment levels among the best in the country. We strive with our parents, carers and partner agencies to realise our vision for children and young people in Gateshead, which is for them to be *“empowered and supported to develop to their full potential and have the life skills and opportunities to play an active part in society”*. That means providing opportunities for all, with targeted services for those who might otherwise miss those opportunities.

This document sets out the following proposals that have been compiled by the two Schools and the Council working in partnership:

Summary of the Proposal

- That there should be a single secondary community school that offers the highest quality educational opportunities for 11-19 year olds in the West area.
- The school will retain and build on the strengths of Ryton Comprehensive School and further develop its offer to the whole community by incorporating the best features and many strengths of Hookergate School.
- A new building is to be built on a new site that will be designed to the highest standards of environmental sustainability, reflecting the strong rural character of the area. We expect the new building to be completed by September 2013.

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- As part of a transition plan, Hookergate will close as a separate school on 31st August 2011 but some year groups will remain there for 2011/12 as part of a two site 'Ryton' School. By September 2012 all students will have transferred to the current Ryton site. On 1st September 2013 all students will move into the new building. Full details are on page 5.
- The catchment areas for all the primary schools currently linked to Hookergate will be included in the catchment area of the new school, together with all of Ryton's existing linked primary school catchment areas.

These proposals are described in more detail in the following pages along with details of how you can respond to the consultation by letting us have your views. This consultation document and an online response form is also available on the Council's website at www.gateshead.gov.uk/secondaryreview

Why is any change necessary?

The Council has a duty to review the number and size of schools in its area to ensure we have the right number of school places. Numbers of students have been falling for several years and we have too much spare capacity in our schools, particularly in the West.

In January 2010, for years 7 - 11, there were **408** pupils on roll at Hookergate School. The projected number on roll for September 2010 is **375**. The number of places in each year group is **160** but the number of pupils admitted to year 7 has declined over the past 5 years. There have been **56** places offered to pupils for the new intake of year 7 due to start school in September 2010. As a result of the fall in admissions, **58%** of the places at the school are empty/surplus.

Why not retain Hookergate as a smaller school?

It is more difficult for secondary schools to cope with falling student numbers because they work in a different way to primary schools. Most secondary school teachers are subject specialists and students will typically learn with several different teachers per week, often moving around the school for lessons in specialist rooms. Every school's budget is based on the number of pupils on roll. A secondary school needs to be able to employ enough specialist teachers to offer a full range of curriculum options. If student numbers fall significantly the governors find it extremely difficult to carry out their statutory duty to deliver all the subjects of the national curriculum, and maintain high standards.

The education budget is a fixed amount based on the number of pupils in our schools. It will be the same amount whether Hookergate and Ryton are one school or two. The education budget is shared among schools according to a formula that has been agreed with schools. In the longer term there would be some savings from the single site, which would then stay in the education budget and would be shared so that all our schools would benefit.

What has happened so far?

Last year we informally consulted on a review and reorganisation of secondary provision in the West of the Borough in order to produce a robust plan for addressing population trends and parental preferences and removing surplus places.

A consultation document was widely distributed containing background information and three options for discussion. Eighteen meetings were held involving students, parents, governors, staff, trade unions, councillors and Area Forum. Several thousand written responses were received and it was clear there was no option around which there was a general consensus.

At the Cabinet meeting on 15th September 2009 it was proposed that the Council's preferred option would be based on developing a positive and inclusive vision of secondary education for the west area that meets the needs of the whole community. This vision would be based on having a single community school that offers the highest quality educational opportunities in state of the art buildings accessible by everyone.

It was further proposed that the vision can best be achieved by retaining and building on the strengths of Ryton Comprehensive School, and further developing its offer to the whole community by incorporating the best features and many strengths of Hookergate School. A new building is proposed on a new site designed to the highest standards of environmental sustainability. We are calling this project 'Best for the West'.

A Steering Group comprising the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors of each school, together with Council officers, has been working to deliver a shared vision for the west. There is also a Joint Governors Partnership Group set up between the two schools to ensure that students, parents, staff and governors are engaged equally with the project.

In April 2010 Gateshead Council was advised that it had been successful in its bid to accelerate Building Schools for the Future funding which would address the remainder of their secondary school estate. This funding will enable the new school to be built.

On 8th June 2010, Cabinet approved a report to cover the statutory proposal to close Hookergate School which included the plan for transition towards a single school.

On 22nd June 2010, Cabinet agreed a preferred site for the new school and negotiations are now in progress to purchase it.

Where will the new school building be?

The preferred site for the replacement school is land identified north of the Ryton/Crawcrook bypass (A695) at its junction with Woodside Lane. An image is available on the Council Website at www.gateshead.gov.uk/secondaryreview

How will this affect students at the two schools?

Transition planning is a major focus of the 'Best for the West' Steering Group. We have developed a proposal which we believe will best protect the educational offer for students during the transition.

| Academic Year (Sep to Aug) | Transition Plan |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 2010-11 | There will be no Year 12 provision at Hookergate. All other year groups will continue as now. |
| 2011-12 | Hookergate School closes & Ryton School operates on two sites. A new identity is being considered by Ryton Governors. All new year 7 pupils based at Ryton site. Hookergate Year 10 transfer to Ryton site to ensure full curriculum opportunities Years 8, 9 and 11 ONLY will remain on Hookergate site. |
| 2012-13 | All students move to the existing Ryton site, Hookergate site closed. |
| 2013-14 | School moves into new building. |

What will be the catchment area of the new school?

The following primary schools are currently part of the Hookergate catchment area; Chopwell, High Spen, Highfield, Rowlands Gill, Parkhead, Winlaton West Lane.

It is proposed, subject to consultation, that the catchment areas for all these schools be included in the catchment area of the new school, together with all of Ryton's existing linked primary school catchment areas.

How will students travel from the Hookergate catchment area to Ryton and then the new school building?

A sustainable transport strategy is to be developed to ensure students from across the West area are able to access the school.

We have already engaged with Nexus to ensure that the transport arrangements across the new enlarged catchments are improved throughout and beyond the school day.

Pupils attending the replacement school, who live more than 3 miles away, will be entitled to free travel passes.

If Hookergate closes, what will happen to the staff?

The Council and the two schools are working on a staffing protocol to ensure that staff in both schools will be given the opportunities and security they are looking for as we bring the two schools together. The two schools are collaborating well in filling teaching and leadership posts. Three senior positions at Ryton have already been filled by existing Hookergate staff including a Deputy Head vacancy using this 'ring fencing' process which will be a crucial element in drawing the two schools closer together.

What will the replacement school be called?

The Governing Body of Ryton Comprehensive School is committed to developing a new identity for the School. They are in favour of developing a new name and new uniform for the School from September 2011 and will consult widely on this change.

Will all pupils in the new catchment area be provided with a place in the new building?

There will be enough places in the new building to accommodate all existing Ryton and Hookergate pupils as the transition plan takes effect. There is a clear commitment to ensure that children living within the new catchment area will be accommodated in the school and we are confident that our planning processes will deliver this commitment.

If Hookergate closes, what will happen to the pupils with special educational needs?

We will be developing alternative, suitable provision in order to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties currently placed in Hookergate Mainstream Support Base (MSB). We propose through the SEN Review to develop Secondary Additionally Resourced Mainstream Schools (ARMS). Discussions have begun with Ryton School who have expressed an interest in this development. This would provide the opportunity to enhance provision for this group of pupils. Specifically, we anticipate that the new provision would offer improved accommodation and allow increased inclusion and greater flexibility in the curriculum because of the larger pupil numbers. It is anticipated that secondary ARMS will be operational from September 2011. As required, we will demonstrate the improvements by applying the SEN improvement Test.

What will the impact on the surrounding community be if Hookergate School no longer exists?

Hookergate School sits within the Hookergate Extended Services Cluster, with their linked primary schools, who currently provide full access to the extended schools core offer. Hookergate School, in particular, provides a community venue for local sports clubs.

If Hookergate were to close however there are other services, activities and facilities available that can be booked by community groups within the West Area e.g. Ryton Comprehensive School, Chopwell Pioneer Centre, the new leisure centre in Blaydon which is due to open in Autumn 2010. The Hookergate Cluster therefore would still be providing 100% core offer.

Is funding from the Building Schools for the Future programme guaranteed?

The previous government confirmed that Gateshead was included in the Building Schools for the Future programme - estimated funding of £80m. The Government is committed to a spending review and ministers will shortly be considering their spending priorities, which will take into account all areas of spending including schools capital. In the meantime the Council have been instructed by Partnerships for Schools to proceed with developing our plans.

How can you make your views known?

The proposed closure of Hookergate is subject to a formal consultation but we want to do more than what is required by law. Anyone affected by these proposals will have a chance to have their say and make their views known. We want to talk about transport and site issues. We also want your views about the new school building and how it can be used by the community across the West.

What happens next?

Your views will help Gateshead Council Cabinet to make a decision about the future of Hookergate School. There are a number of legal stages we have to go through and this first stage of the process will end on 30th July 2010. The results of this consultation will be discussed and reported to Cabinet in September 2010. It will decide whether to go to the next stage when you will again be able to make further representations over a further six week period before a final decision is made before the end of the year by the Council.

Have your say

Secondary School Review - West Area Consultation

Complete a Questionnaire

Please complete the questionnaire at the back of this booklet and return it to **Margaret Whellans, Group Director, Learning and Children, FREEPOST NEA 338, Gateshead Council, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE8 1BR** by **Friday 30th July 2010** at 4pm at the very latest. You can also complete an on-line version at www.gateshead.gov.uk/secondaryreview

Come to a consultation meeting

Parents of children currently in or offered places from September 2010, members of staff and governors of Hookergate or Ryton schools can find out more and share their views by attending a consultation meeting. Each meeting will be attended by the Headteachers of both Ryton and Hookergate schools and should last between 60-90 minutes.

| | Meeting Type | Date | Time |
|------------|--------------|------------------------|--------|
| Hookergate | Staff | Tuesday 6th July 2010 | 3.15pm |
| | Governors | Tuesday 6th July 2010 | 5.00pm |
| | Parent/Carer | Tuesday 6th July 2010 | 6.30pm |
| Ryton | Staff | Tuesday 13th July 2010 | 3.15pm |
| | Governors | Tuesday 13th July 2010 | 5.00pm |
| | Parent/Carer | Tuesday 13th July 2010 | 6.30pm |

Come to a drop in session

We will be hosting separate public sessions for the parents from the linked primary schools and the wider community on the following dates. This will provide opportunities to seek views on the proposed closure and for you to hear more about the proposals for the new build and let you know how your ideas can influence preparations for the replacement school.

| Venue | Date | Time |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Hookergate School | Wednesday 7th July 2010 | 2.00pm - 6.30pm |
| Ryton Comprehensive School | Wednesday 14th July 2010 | 3.00pm - 6.30pm |
| Chopwell Primary | Tuesday 20th July 2010 | 3.00pm - 5.30pm |
| Winlaton/Blaydon Surestart | Wednesday 21st July 2010 | 2.00pm - 6.30pm |

Thank you for taking the time to read this consultation document

Consultation on the “Best for the West” proposal

**(Consultation period will last
until 30th July 2010)**

Please complete the tear-off form opposite
and return to:

**Margaret Whellans,
Group Director,
Learning and Children,
FREEPOST NEA 338,
Gateshead Council,
Gateshead,
Tyne and Wear
NE8 1BR**

You can also complete an on-line version at
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by **Friday 30th July 2010,**
4pm at the very latest

Thank you.

Consultation on the "Best for the West" proposal

Please return this form by **Friday 30th July 2010, 4pm** at the very latest to **Margaret Whellans, Group Director, Learning and Children, FREEPOST NEA 338, Gateshead Council, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE8 1BR. Fax: 0191 477 5148** or complete the online version at **www.gateshead.gov.uk/secondaryreview**

Please tell us who you are:

Your name Your postcode

Are you: *Please Tick*

Parent/carer Staff member
Governor Student Other

If 'Other', please state connections/interest (e.g. grandparent, local resident).

Linked with one (or more) of:

Hookergate Ryton Other secondary school Primary school
Nursery/other

Do you agree with our Vision for a single school to provide the Best for the West?

I agree I disagree

Please give your main reasons for your answer to this proposal.

Do you support the proposed closure of Hookergate and the transition arrangements for 2011-2013?

I agree I disagree

Please give your main reasons for your answer to this proposal.

Please tear or cut off the form here



Do you agree with the proposed site for the new build?

I agree I disagree

Please give your main reasons for your answer to this proposal.

Do you agree with the proposal to join all the existing Hookergate linked primary schools to Ryton and therefore to the new school?

I agree I disagree

Please give your main reasons for your answer to this proposal.

Are there any other comments or suggestions you would like to make to help us with this decision and in planning for the future of secondary education in the West of the Borough?

Are there other implications for the community the Council should consider if it decides to close Hookergate School?

Comments - please continue on additional paper if necessary.

THANK YOU FOR GIVING YOUR VIEWS

For further information please contact
0191 433 2775 or 0191 433 2757

