

# Impact & Equalities Assessment

**Whittingham New School Proposal in Goosnargh**  
**September 2024**

### **Question 1 - What is the nature of and are the key components of the proposal being considered?**

This should include the name and a brief summary of the proposal being considered.

The proposed establishment of a new up to 2 form entry primary school for Goosnargh, Grimsargh and Longridge primary planning areas is eventually expected to provide an additional 420 primary school places from September 2026.

The Cabinet is the decision maker in respect of the proposal made by Lancashire County Council to establish this new primary school on the Whittingham Hospital site with effect from September 2026. Where a Local Authority thinks a new school needs to be established in their area, section 6A of Education and Inspections Act 2006 places the Local Authority under a duty to seek proposals to establish an academy/free school, also known as the 'presumption' route. The type of new school to be delivered would be determined in consultation with Education and Children's Services, as part of the development of the specification for the new school. Potential academy trust sponsors would need to evidence that they meet the school specification via their application to operate the new school which would provide part of the information against which the proposals would be judged.

The Local Authority conducted a full informal consultation and statutory representation prior to taking a final decision. The proposal to establish a new primary school was made due to the rising birth rate in the local area, coupled with the effect of significant housing development. The number of school places currently available will not be enough to meet increased demand as the children reach school age.

### **Question 2 – Scope of the Proposal**

Is the proposal likely to affect people across the county in a similar way or are specific areas likely to be affected – e.g., are a set number of branches/sites to be affected? If so, you will need to consider whether there are equality related issues associated with the locations selected – e.g., greater percentage of ethnic minority residents in a particular area where a closure is proposed as opposed to an area where a facility is remaining open.

The proposal, if approved, will directly affect children moving into new houses in the Goosnargh, Grimsargh and Longridge primary planning areas and current pupils on roll at local primary schools.

The proposal, if approved, could also impact on those who wish to send their children to a local primary school within the Goosnargh & Grimsargh primary planning area in the future. The proposed new primary school will enable future pupils to gain places in the local area where they live. It will increase the likelihood of pupils gaining admission at the same school as their siblings.

If not approved the detrimental impact on children would be longer distances to travel, there isn't enough space in the local schools and any availability would be outside of the pupil planning area potentially in Preston West.

### **Question 3 – Protected Characteristics Potentially Affected.**

Could the proposal have a particular impact on any group of individuals sharing protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, namely:

- Age
- Disability including Deaf people.
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race/ethnicity/nationality
- Religion or belief
- Sex/gender
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage or Civil Partnership Status

And include, where possible, what information is available about these groups in the county's population or as service users/customers.

In considering this question you should identify and record any particular impact on people in a sub-group of any of the above – e.g., people with a particular disability or from a particular religious or ethnic group – or people/groups with several protected characteristics (intersectionality) – e.g., Asian women with disabilities.

It is particularly important to consider whether the proposal is likely to impact adversely on any group of people sharing protected characteristics to a disproportionate extent. Any such disproportionate impact will need to be objectively justified.

On 6th October 2022, Cabinet approved the proposed establishment of a new 1 form entry primary school in Goosnargh & Grimsargh with effect from September 2025. As a result of the rising birth rate in the local area, coupled with the effect of significant housing development, the number of school places currently available will not be enough to meet the increased demand as the children reach school age over the next few years.

On 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023, Cabinet agreed to future proof the proposed school up to 2 forms of entry after data evidence showed more primary places were required.

The school will provide for mixed gender pupils aged 4 to 11 and will provide more school places to both genders if the proposal is approved. The school will be a Community School.

Projections for 2025/26 indicate a shortfall of 31 places at Reception. However, housing pressure is expected to materialise in all year groups.

When the 2025/26 cohort reaches Year 6 there is projected to be a shortfall of 53 places.

Demand by Year Group for Goosnargh & Grimsargh school planning area:

| Intake year | Combined PAN | Intake cohort | +1 year | +2 years | +3 years | +4 years | +5 years | +6 years |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 2025/26     | 90           | 128           | 136     | 140      | 143      | 150      | 153      | 152      |
|             |              | -38           | -46     | -50      | -53      | -60      | -63      | -62      |
| 2026/27     | 90           | 114           | 121     | 124      | 128      | 133      | 136      | 136      |
|             |              | -24           | -31     | -34      | -38      | -43      | -46      | -46      |
| 2027/28     | 90           | 114           | 121     | 124      | 127      | 132      | 135      | 135      |
|             |              | -24           | -21     | -24      | -27      | -42      | -45      | -45      |
| 2028/29     | 90           | 114           | 121     | 124      | 127      | 132      | 135      | 135      |
|             |              | -24           | -21     | -24      | -27      | -42      | -45      | -45      |

The above information demonstrates that once the impact from housing has been taken into account there is projected to be a shortfall of as below:

2026/27 – Maximum projected shortfall Year 6 – 24 places

2027/28 – Maximum projected shortfall Year 6 – 24 places

2028/29 – Maximum projected shortfall Year 6 – 24 places

The proposal will have most effect on children and young people (and their families) specifically of primary school age in the area and is therefore of most impact on the age protected characteristics group. The impact should be positive if the proposal is approved.

### **Community Cohesion:**

The School Census January 2024 shows 95.25% of the pupils at the schools within Goosnargh & Grimsargh are of White British heritage. This is higher than the national average for primary school pupils which is 62.6%. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is 4.75% which is lower than the national average (37.4%). Of these the highest number within the ethnic groups is 'mixed background ethnic origin' with 97 pupils.

The 2021 Population Census, however, indicated that 33.9% of Preston residents were from ethnic minority groups so there is an indication that the school's percentage for ethnic minority pupils is lower than the representation in the district community.

Goosnargh & Grimsargh is a rural community on the outskirts of Preston District and does not reflect the diversity of the district as a whole. However, when looking at the ethnicity of the wards contained within the planning area (Preston Rural East and

Preston Rural North), only 10.7% of the population are from ethnic minority groups. The school population accurately reflects the rural community it serves.

All members of the community have been consulted on the new school proposal.

### **Travel and Accessibility:**

The 2024 January School Census shows 8.57% of the school population are either receiving Sen Support or have an EHCP. This is below average compared to the national average for primary schools which is 16.1%. Although not all pupils with Special Educational Needs would meet the Equality Act's definition of disability, it is likely that many would meet the definition for the disability protected characteristics group.

The proposed new school will provide additional places in a densely populated residential area with good transport and road infrastructure.

For a proposed new school, the school transport policy will apply. Pupils receiving home to school transport assistance prior to the new school will have their situation reviewed to establish the policy still applies following the opening. In this proposal, the new school would take place on the new site on the "Old Whittingham Hospital". Details of Lancashire County Council's Home to Mainstream School Transport Policy can be found on the Pupil Access Team's web pages on the link below:

<http://new.lancashire.gov.uk/council/strategies-policies-plans/children,-education-and-families/school-transport.aspx>

The proposal provides more opportunity to all the local community served by the school. If the proposal did not go ahead, it would adversely affect future primary pupils having a school place in their local area.

## **Question 4 – Engagement/Consultation**

How have you tried to involve people/groups that are potentially affected by your proposal? Please describe what engagement has taken place, with whom and when.

(Please ensure that you retain evidence of the consultation in case of any further enquiries. This includes the results of consultation or data gathering at any stage of the process)

### Consultation 12<sup>th</sup> June – 9<sup>th</sup> July 2023

- A poster was displayed in Preston, Longridge and Ribble Valley Town Councils and Longridge, Fulwood and Ribbleton Libraries.
- The laminated public notice was displayed around the proposed school site.
- A notice was placed in local newspapers (Lancashire Evening Post, Lancashire Telegraph, Longridge News and Garstang Courier).
- A Public Engagement Event was held at Longridge Library on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023 between 4 – 6pm.
- Consultation information to statutory stakeholders, including elected members was emailed.
- The LCC website containing consultation docs and feedback form was published and information was added to the Have Your Say webpage.

Full consultation ran over a four-week period 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023 – July 9<sup>th</sup> 2023 and took into account information within DfE guidance 'The free school presumption – Guidance for local authorities and new school proposers' published in January 2023.

The results of the consultation were reported to Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

The outcome of the consultation was that 59% of respondents agreed that the new school would provide additional places in the Goosnargh and Grimsargh area and 45% agreed that opening a new school would give more choice to parents. 32% agreed with the proposal to bring forward a new school, 14% neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal and 54% disagreed with the proposal. For those that disagreed, the respondents were associated (through being a staff member, governor, parent of a child attending or Diocese representative) with Goosnargh Oliverson's Primary School and Goosnargh Whitechapel Primary School, which are located in Goosnargh. The key themes emerging from these responses were around destabilisation of the existing schools, should the new school at Whittingham be built and the impact of additional traffic. The Blackburn Diocese Board of Education (BDBE) had offered an alternative to a new school being built at the Whittingham site, offering an expansion on the Goosnargh Oliverson's School site. Prior to pursuing a new school project BDBE were approached, however could not commit to a project at the time due to land release arrangements causing risk to delivery timescales.

The School Provision & Sufficiency Team will continue to work with the neighbouring schools and the Diocese to ensure communications and perceived issues can be addressed.

The responses have been placed on Councillor-First and are included as background papers to this report and are available for public inspection through Lancashire County Council School Planning Team (Telephone 01772 531957).

Following consideration of all the concerns raised, it is felt that the need to have sufficient school places in the right area, at the right time, outweighs the concerns that were recorded through the informal consultation process.

## **Question 5 – Analysing Impact**

Could your proposal potentially disadvantage particular groups sharing any of the protected characteristics and if so which groups and in what way?

It is particularly important in considering this question to get to grips with the actual practical impact on those affected. The decision-makers need to know in clear and specific terms what the impact may be and how serious, or perhaps minor, it may be – will people need to walk a few metres further to catch a bus, or to attend school or a few miles? Will they be cut off altogether from vital services? The answers to such questions must be fully and frankly documented, for better or for worse, so that they can be properly evaluated when the decision is made.

Could your proposal potentially impact on individuals sharing the protected characteristics in any of the following ways:

- Could it discriminate unlawfully against individuals sharing any of the protected characteristics, whether directly or indirectly; if so, it must be amended. Bear in

mind that this may involve taking steps to meet the specific needs of disabled people arising from their disabilities.

- Could it advance equality of opportunity for those who share a particular protected characteristic? If not, could it be developed or modified in order to do so?
- Does it encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low? If not, could it be developed or modified in order to do so?
- Will the proposal contribute to fostering good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, for example by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding? If not, could it be developed or modified in order to do so? Please identify any findings and how they might be addressed.

The proposed new primary school will enable future pupils to gain places in the local area where they live. It will increase the likelihood of pupils gaining admission at the same school as their siblings.

Any proposed new primary school will be required to comply with building regulations and the school design guidance, therefore, making it accessible.

Within the Goosnargh & Grimsargh school planning area there are 4 primary schools. There is 1 community school and 3 faith schools (2 Church of England and 1 Roman Catholic). None of these schools have the site size available under Section 77 to undertake expansion. In the consultation the Blackburn Diocese Board of Education had expressed an interest in expanding their school site, however concern was raised regarding timescales of delivery.

This proposal will minimise pupils in the local area from having extended journey times to attend schools outside the planning area due to insufficient school places.

### **Question 6 –Combined/Cumulative Effect**

Could the effects of the proposal combine with other factors or decisions taken at local or national level to exacerbate the impact on any groups?

For example - if the proposal is to impose charges for adult social care, its impact on disabled people might be increased by other decisions within the County Council (e.g., increases in the fares charged for Community Transport and reductions in respite care) and national decisions (e.g., the availability of some benefits). Whilst LCC cannot control some of these decisions, they could increase the adverse effect of the proposal. LCC has a legal duty to consider this aspect, and to evaluate the proposal, including mitigation, accordingly.

If Yes – please identify these.

None anticipated.

### **Question 7 – Identifying Initial Results of Your Analysis**

As a result of the analysis has the original proposal been changed/amended?

If so, please identify/describe how –

For example:

Adjusted the original proposal – briefly outline the adjustments.

Continuing with the Original Proposal – briefly explain why.

Stopped the Proposal and Revised it - briefly explain.

No – the original proposal will be continued in the interests of securing additional quality school places for all future pupils in the area.

### **Question 8 - Mitigation**

Will any steps be taken to mitigate/reduce any potential adverse effects of the proposal?

Please set out any steps you will take to mitigate/reduce any potential adverse effects of the proposal on those sharing any particular protected characteristics. It is important here to do a genuine and realistic evaluation of the effectiveness of the mitigation contemplated. Over-optimistic and over-generalised assessments are likely to fall short of the “due regard” requirement.

Also consider if any mitigation might adversely affect any other groups and how this might be managed.

N/A

### **Question 9 – Balancing the Proposal/Countervailing Factors**

At this point you need to weigh up the reasons for the proposal – e.g., need for budget savings; damaging effects of not taking forward the proposal at this time – against the findings of your analysis. Please describe this assessment fully and fairly. It is important here to ensure that the assessment of any negative effects upon those sharing protected characteristics is full and frank. The full extent of actual adverse impacts must be acknowledged and taken into account, or the assessment will be inadequate. What is required is an honest evaluation, and not a marketing exercise. Conversely, while adverse effects should be frankly acknowledged, they should not be overstated or exaggerated. Where effects are not serious, this too should be made clear.

The proposal has been made in accordance with section 6A of Education and Inspections Act 2006 places the Local Authority under a duty to seek proposals to establish an academy/free school, also known as the 'presumption' route.

The Cabinet reports dated 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023 provide full reasons for the proposal and details of the local authority's powers and

responsibilities around school place commissioning and the provision of high-quality school provision for pupils.

Local authorities have a duty to ensure the sufficiency of school places. Without the establishment of this new primary school, there would be insufficient school places in the local area. Parents of prospective pupils would, therefore, have to send their children outside of the area where they live.

The proposal meets education provision for young people both now and in the future.

Following consideration of concerns raised, it is felt that the need to have sufficient school places in the right area outweighs the concerns that were recorded through the informal/formal consultation process.

### **Question 10 – Final Proposal**

In summary, what is your final proposal and which groups may be affected and how?

The proposed establishment of a new 2 form entry primary school in Goosnargh is expected to provide up to an additional 420 primary school places from September 2026. The main groups affected are potential future pupils.

No adverse impact on people/pupils from characteristic groups is anticipated. The main protected characteristics group affected will be the age (children and young people) group although the proposal is could also affect those in the sex/gender, ethnicity and disability protected characteristics groups who required primary school places in the area and their families. Should the proposal be approved, the impact is expected to be positive.

### **Question 11 – Review and Monitoring Arrangements**

Describe what arrangements will be put in place to review and monitor the effects of this proposal?

Once a decision has been taken to establish the new primary school the authority is legally obliged to implement the proposal.

### **Signing Off**

**This should be done by the person completing the Equality Analysis and on occasions may also include the member of the Equality and Cohesion Team if they have had a significant input into the Analysis.**

**It should be endorsed by a relevant Line Manager or Service Head.**

**Cabinet Member decisions should also be signed off by the responsible Cabinet Member or Director at the end of the process.**

Equality Analysis Prepared By Martyn Ball

Position/Role Lancaster and East Lancashire Area Lead – School Place Planning

Equality Analysis Endorsed by Line Manager and/or Service Head - Paula Durrant

*A Hardy*

Decision Signed Off By

*Paul Turner*

Cabinet Member or Director

**Please remember to ensure the Equality Decision Making Analysis is submitted with the decision-making report and a copy is retained with other papers relating to the decision.**

For further information please contact

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