

School Specification

Document

**New Two Form Entry Primary School on the former
Whittingham Hospital site, Goosnargh and
Grimsargh**

Background to Specification

Lancashire County Council is inviting expressions of interest from Academy Trusts interested in sponsoring a new 2 form of entry Primary School, with flexible provision to accommodate SEND, to serve Goosnargh, Grimsargh, with a proposed opening of September 2027. This document provides the background and specification for the new school, how it will be funded, the expected timescales for its development, information regarding how you can express an interest in its operation and how Lancashire County Council will assess your application.

As part of our strategic vision, a need for additional primary school places has been identified to serve the Goosnargh, Grimsargh area.

It is expected that the new school will open in September 2027 and the arrangements for pupil admission will be agreed upon with the successful Academy Trust and will be undertaken in such a way as to have minimal impact on the other primary schools in the area.

The school will be constructed by contractors appointed by Lancashire County Council and, on completion, leased to the successful Academy Trust. The County Council will agree to an allocation for start-up and post-operating revenue costs for the new school with the successful Academy Trust in accordance with our policy on school growth. More information can be found within this document.

This document sets out further details for Academy Trusts and other interested parties; where it will be located, how it is to be funded and the process and timeline that Lancashire County Council intends to follow.

Please take time to read this information carefully and make contact using the details provided should you require any further information or guidance.

The closing date for expressions of interest is **12:00** noon on Wednesday 10th December 2025.



Jacqui Old CBE

Executive Director of Education & Children Services

Section A – Introduction:

Under Section 6A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the ‘free school presumption’), where a local authority identifies the need to establish a new school it must, in the first instance, seek proposals to establish an academy (free school). Lancashire County Council has identified the need to establish a new two form entry Primary School in Goosnargh and Grimsargh proposed to open in September 2027. This will include flexible provision to accommodate SEND.

1,011 dwellings are included in the 5-year forecast position. The area includes the Whittingham Hospital strategic site. A further 753 dwellings are included past the five-year position. Over 725 of these will be on the former Whittingham Hospital development in Goosnargh.

As part of the supporting infrastructure, a site has been secured via a Section 106 agreement and LCC has purchased additional land to provide a new Primary school with up to two forms of entry on the site.

Considering pupil projections, the phasing of new development on the site, and the local area showing a shortfall of places, we will require additional places to be provided from September 2027.

Lancashire County Council has consulted with neighbouring schools and key stakeholders on the proposals to establish a new school. The consultation period ran from 12th June – 9th July 2023.

Having considered feedback through this consultation period, the authority is now seeking proposals from appropriate sponsors to open this new school. The school will be deemed a free school. Trusts should complete the Free School Presumption application form and return it to School Planning Team, Lancashire County Council schoolplanning@lancashire.gov.uk and a hard copy sent to **Paula Durrant, School Place Planning Manager, Room CH 1:57 County Hall, Preston PR1 0LD**.

To be submitted no later than 12:00 Wednesday 10th December 2025.

The Education Act 2006 places a statutory duty on Lancashire County Council to ensure there is a supply of good school places available to meet demand.

The establishment of the new primary school will help deliver the County Council's strategic plans for the provision of school places and ensure there is access to good quality schools within the Goosnargh and Grimsargh area, especially to ensure mitigation to accommodate the pupils yielded by the development underway on the former Whittingham Hospital, Goosnargh.

There are currently 4 primary schools located within the Goosnargh and Grimsargh planning area (all within 2 miles of the site of the proposed new school). These are:

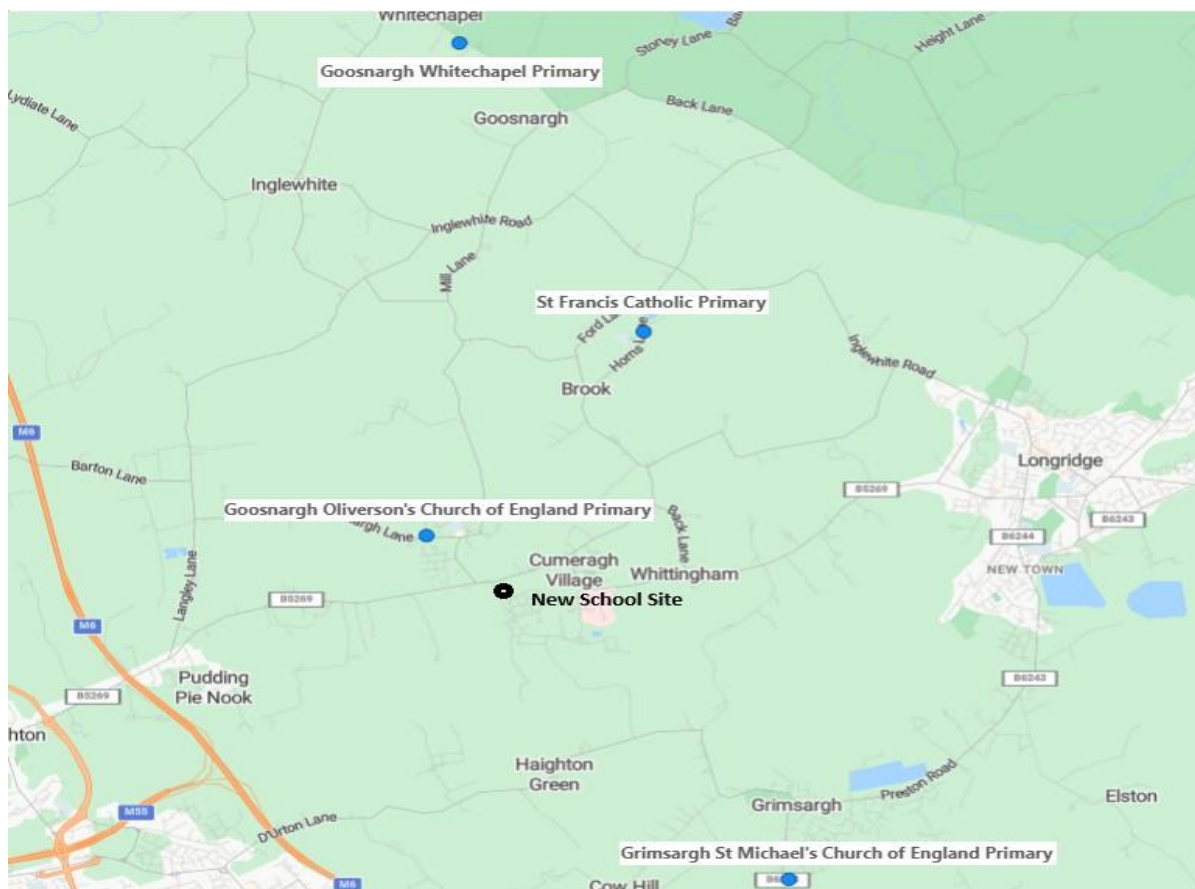


- Goosnargh Oliverson's C of E PS
- St Francis Catholic PS Goosnargh
- Goosnargh Whitechapel PS
- Grimsargh St Michael's C of E PS

Table 1. Current Capacity in Surrounding Schools

School Name	Capacity
Goosnargh Oliverson C of E	30 – 210
St Francis' Catholic	15 – 105
Goosnargh Whitechapel	15 – 105
Grimsargh St Michael's C of E	30 – 210

MAP OF SCHOOLS



As at January 2024 pupil census, the total number of pupils on roll* in years R to Y6 inclusive in these schools was 607, compared with a total capacity of 630 places.

% Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)	8.57%
% Pupils entitled to and receiving Free School Meals (FSM)	6.26%
% Ethnic minority pupils –	4.75% across all four schools GO – 4.0%; St Fr – 6.0%; GW – 3.0%; G St Mi – 6.0% -data from Masterfile
% Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)	1.32%
Key Stage 2 Outcomes These are 20/23 results, advice from Government website - School performance data for the 2022/23 academic year should be used with caution given the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic	Pupils meeting expected standards in reading, writing and maths. GO – 62%; St Fr – 67%; GW – 50%; G St Mi – 67% - Data from Gov website 2022/23

Pupil projections show that, based upon combined growth from births and additional housing, there will be a need for an additional 2 forms of entry for September 2026 admission and beyond.

The following table shows the projected position in the Goosnargh & Grimsargh Primary Planning Area:

Goosnargh & Grimsargh Primary Planning Area	2025 Intake	2026 intake	2027* intake	2028* intake
Birth based intake in area	95	84	84	84
Projected intake including housing/migration	128	114	114	114
PAN	90	90	90	90
Forecast shortfall excl. housing	-5	+6	+6	+6
Forecast shortfall incl. housing & migration	-38	-24	-24	-24

**2028 intake figures are based on the same births for 2026 intake as the latest ONS live birth data is only up to 2023/24*



Therefore, the provision for additional places from September 2026 and beyond will be needed to address this shortfall.

Beyond 2028, additional housing planned for the area could see demand for places increase by 1 form of entry. However, this will depend on the rate of housing development over future years and occupancy.

Lancashire County Council is of the opinion that providing a new Primary School will help to meet the demand for places and provide parents and pupils wider choice of local education provision. The new school will also enable local partnerships to be formed which will allow for collaborative work which could bring new expertise and knowledge to the area.

The development is on an area of land positioned to the Southeast of Goosnargh centre. Under an existing S106 agreement LCC has the ability to take ownership of 1.659 hectares (3.43 acres) of land. This is too small to support a 2 form of entry school and consequently terms have been negotiated to purchase an addition 1.33 hectares (2.75 acres) from Homes England.

As of May 2025 130, homes have been completed. On completion the Whittingham hospital Strategic Site will comprise 725 dwellings. The exact site for the new school is shown on [page 12](#).

Application Process

Applicants who wish to express an interest in the new primary school should do so by completing the application form available via the following link:

[New primary school for Goosnargh and Grimsargh – former Whittingham Hospital - Lancashire County Council](#)

Please ensure that you complete the application form as fully as possible providing an electronic copy and also posting a full hard copy and short executive summary (a minimum two sides A4) to the address provided for submission.

Email to: schoolplanning@lancashire.gov.uk

Hard Copy to: **Paula Durrant, School Place Planning Manager, Room CH1:57, County Hall Preston PR1 0RD**

To be submitted no later than 12:00 Wednesday 10th December 2025.

Your application should be accompanied by the appropriate signed Form of Proposal and declarations detailed on the Application Form.



Having invited expressions of interest from potential sponsors, detailed evaluation will be undertaken in accordance with the assessment criteria provided within this document and the accompanying application form.

A two-stage process will be followed to determine the County Council's preferred sponsor for the new school. This will comprise an assessment of the initial written application, followed by a presentation and interview by shortlisted trusts.

Each stage of the process will be allocated a score and for those applicants shortlisted to the second stage the total scores of each stage will be aggregated to determine an overall evaluation mark to determine a preferred sponsor.

Evaluation will be through a points-based scoring matrix, based upon key criteria in this document. All applicants who are deemed to be appointable, based on the initial submission will be called for interview. This may lead to a re-evaluation of their initial score.

Further details of the scoring methodology to be used to evaluate are provided with the accompanying application form.

This will enable consideration by the County Council of a preferred trust.

Subject to Lancashire County Council's Cabinet's consideration, a submission will be made to the Regional Director (RD) of the Northwest, who is acting on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education, which will include all the proposals received together with the Local Authority's assessment of these to assist the RD in their decision.

The Regional Director will consider the County Council's submission and, assuming they are in agreement, they will then make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Education who will make the final decision.

Once a decision has been made, the Regional Director will inform the Local Authority and the successful proposer of its decision, and the local authority will inform any unsuccessful trusts.

The County Council will then work closely with the chosen provider to conclude the development and operational details of the new school.

Potential Academy Trusts who are not registered with the Department of Education (DfE) and included on their approved register are advised to contact the DfE at the earliest opportunity. This registration will be required prior to submitting a formal expression of interest to the County Council.

Proposed Timeline

The County Council has engaged with the Department for Education on the proposal to establish a new free school and they have confirmed the process and timescales to be followed to ensure that the new school is available from September 2027

The table below sets out the expected timeline for assessment, approval and implementation.

Process Involved	Proposed Timeline
Invitation for Expressions of Interest published	20 th October 2025
Deadline for submitting Expressions of Interest	10 th December 2025
Stage 1: shortlisting applications	W/c 19 th January 2026
Stage 2; detailed assessment (including presentation by and interview of shortlisted trusts)	W/c 9 th February 2026
Final bid evaluation and sign off. The evaluation will be a points-based evaluation taking account of both the written submission and the interview Decision taken by LCC on preferred Academy Trust -	February 2026
Assessment Panel and Decision Making	February 2026
Secretary of State approval – the RD will notify the preferred provider	March/April 2026
LCC will advise the unsuccessful applicants	March/April 2026
Identified Academy Trust to enter into funding agreement with the Secretary of State	March/April 2026



The application form can be downloaded from the website. [New primary school for Goosnargh and Grimsargh – former Whittingham Hospital - Lancashire County Council](#)

If you would like further information or wish to discuss your application, please contact the School Planning Team at

Paula Durrant School Planning Manager: paula.durrant@lancashire.gov.uk

Martyn Ball School Place Planning Area Lead: martyn.ball2@lancashire.gov.uk

Ben Terry School Place Planning Area Lead: ben.terry@lancashire.gov.uk

Please return your completed form to: schoolplanning@lancashire.gov.uk by **12:00 on the 10th December** and a hard copy to: **Paula Durrant, School Place Planning Manager, Room CH1:57, County Hall Preston PR1 0RD**

NB: The Local Authority led free school presumption is a different route to the DfE's free school programme. Further information about how to establish a new school via the DfE's free school programme route can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/opening-a-free-school>



Section B – The School

Opening Date: Proposed September 2027

Site/Location:

The new school will be established in the town of Goosnargh which is located in the District of Preston in Lancashire and is approximately 34 miles Northwest of Manchester.

The Site is 51.6 ha which is the gross site area identified for mixed-use development on the former Whittingham Hospital site located on Whittingham Lane, Goosnargh.

Located to the west of the Hermitage and Guild Lodge, the new primary school site would be easily accessible to the existing residents of Goosnargh and Grimsargh village and the future residents of the development. The site is bounded by Whittingham Lane, Cumeragh Lane and Henry Littler Way and identified as green infrastructure and part is identified as open countryside.

There are four schools across the Goosnargh & Grimsargh area, three of the schools are voluntary aided faith schools and one is a community school.

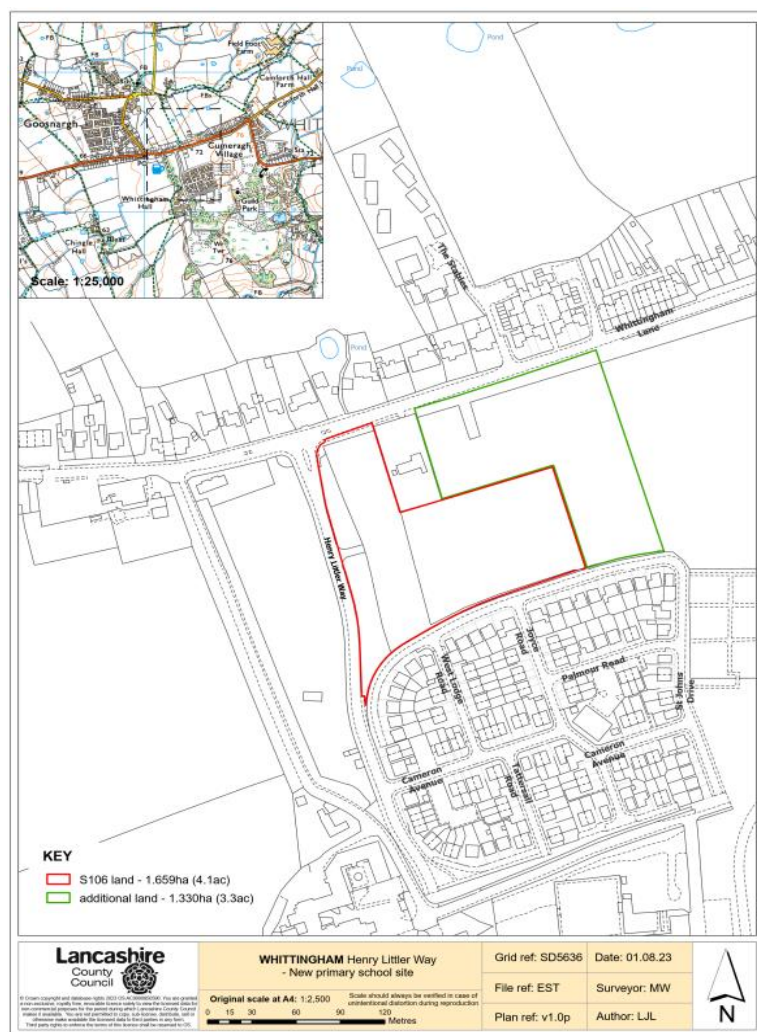
Surrounding planning areas include Preston East to the south, Preston North to the southwest, Preston Rural and Garstang & Surrounding to the west, and Calder Vale & Cloughton to the north.

There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the land allocated for the school site. There are PRoW located adjacent to and opposite the development and school site location.

The site plan below shows the proposed location of the new school. The school design and layout are subject to a discussion between Lancashire County Council and the DfE and a planning application for a 2 FE primary school was submitted July 2025.



Site Map



Pupil Capacity

The school has been designed to 2 form entry (420 pupils)

Lancashire County Council will work with the approved trust to balance the availability of places against local demand and to minimise the impact on neighbouring primary schools.

It is proposed that the school will open with Reception and Year One pupils with flexibility to accommodate other years groups in consultation with the successful sponsor but will be demand led in the first year of opening. There is no proposal to include a nursery with this new provision on opening.

Planned initial Published Admission Number

The initial proposed PAN is 60. It is anticipated that the new school will open initially with 60 places in Reception and 60 places in Year 1 and will grow year on year building up to a capacity of 420 primary places, however with flexibility to accommodate other

years groups in consultation with the successful sponsor but will be demand led in the first year of opening

Proposed admission arrangements

Lancashire County Council requires that Applicants abide by the National and Local School Admissions Code including those relating to Admission appeals and will participate in the County Council's co-ordinated scheme for admissions and Lancashire's Fair Access Protocol.

Lancashire County Council expects the successful sponsor to adopt the same admission criteria used to determine priority for places as in other local schools.

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/schools/apply-for-a-school-place/>

The provider will be expected to have admissions oversubscription criteria that are reasonable, clear, objective, and procedurally fair and which comply with all relevant legislation. The provider will be required to follow the Department for Education Schools Admissions Code and the Schools Admissions Appeal code.

The approved sponsor will become the admission authority for the school.

The admission authority for the new school will need to comply with the School Admission Appeals Code and other guidance and law which affects admissions and appeals in England.

Type of School

Primary Phase

Phase of Education, age range and gender

The school will be co-educational and for children aged 4 to 11 years of age.

Early Years Provision

Nursery provision required – Not on opening.

SEND Provision

A flexible provision to accommodate SEND is included in the building specification. In line with the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice (2014), schools must ensure all children and young people have access to a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum that is inclusive of those with SEND. Additionally, as part of The Equality Act (2010) any reasonable adjustments to support children and young people with disabilities (whether of a physical, educational or mental health nature) to access the same provision as others should be made.



Community Use/Shared facilities

Lancashire County Council will expect the successful sponsor to collaborate and engage with other providers and local partners to develop extended services which meet the needs of the local children and families. Applicants are asked to provide evidence in their application of their commitment towards the development of extended provision at the new school.

Transport Arrangements

Lancashire County Council will expect the successful sponsor to encourage safe and sustainable travel to the new school which could include walking and cycling and to develop a comprehensive travel plan to support this. There is no expectation that the council will provide home to school transport as a matter of course.

Home to school transport will only be provided in line with the Local Authorities Homes to School Transport Policy:

[School transport - Lancashire County Council](#)

Character/Ethos of School

Lancashire County Council expects providers to set out a clear vision for the school. This will include a coherent statement of the underlying principles and ethos the school will adhere to and how these will help deliver the aspirations the council has set out in this document.

Equalities Impact Analysis

As part of the planning process for new schools, local authorities must also undertake an assessment of the impact of the proposal, both on existing educational institutions locally and in terms of impact on particular groups of pupils from an equalities perspective.

As prescribed by section 9 of the Academies Act 2010 and section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Local Authority must assess the potential impact of any new school on existing educational provision in the area. The Local Authority must also consider whether the new school would impact on any groups with the following “protected characteristics”:

- Age
- Gender
- Disability
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity

- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

The Council is seeking a provider that can promote inclusion and support vulnerable learners, including care leavers and children in care. The school should be able to make inclusive arrangements for children with a range of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. The council would wish the provider to be able to demonstrate effective strategies for meeting the needs of children with challenging behaviour, without resorting to permanent exclusion.

Details of the Site/Building

The new school design is based upon the DfE baseline designs and will be constructed by Lancashire County Council. The new school's capital costs are being funded by S106 contributions and the county council's capital programme.

A feasibility study on the identified school site has been commissioned which formed the basis for the school design and location. Planning permission was applied for in Autumn 2025.

Subject to Department for Education consent and the necessary planning approval it is anticipated that construction will commence on site in 2025/2026 academic year with a proposed completion of summer 2027 for the new school.

To meet the proposed opening date of September 2027 the school design process will have been completed by the time the successful sponsor is selected, therefore, they will have minimal opportunity for involvement with the planning and design of the building.

Lease

On the handover date of the new building to the sponsor, and prior to the opening of the new primary school, the site and buildings will be transferred by Lancashire County Council on a 125-year academy lease as approved by the Department of Education.

Section C – The Vision

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in [Annex C](#) of the free school presumption guidance:

As a minimum, please ensure you include the following:

- A strong educational vision and a curriculum delivery based on high standards of attainment for each key stage.
- Plans for appropriate engagement with the local community and parents during the pre-opening period and any on-going engagement.
- Excellent support facilities to meet the needs of all children, including looked after children, those with Special Educational Needs, etc.
- A commitment to excellent outcomes and high quality of teaching and learning

Section D – Education Plan

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in [Annex C](#) of the free school presumption guidance:

As a minimum please ensure you include the following:

- An ambitious, broad and balanced, deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake. This could include a curriculum table and pupil build up chart.
- Strategies for measuring pupil performance effectively and setting challenging targets.
- A staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels; with a focus on outstanding teaching (including strategies for effective performance management). This could also include an organogram and staff build up chart.
- The needs of all children are fully provided for and how the school will be fully inclusive.
- Details of enrichment and extended services, for example, breakfast clubs, sports clubs, homework clubs and music/art clubs
- The school's approach to: PHSE; the Prevent Duty; safeguarding and welfare; and promoting fundamental British values (democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs)

Section E – Capacity and Capability

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in [Annex C](#) of the free school presumption guidance:

As a minimum, please ensure you include the following:

- The resources you would draw on and/or deploy to support the development of the new free school by the opening date.
- Clear evidence that you have the range of skills and abilities necessary to set up and then run a school effectively, including managing school finances; leadership; project management; marketing; human resources; safeguarding; and health and safety.
- How the school would be organised and what the governance arrangements would look like, including a diagram of the proposed structures.
- What measures you would take to secure high quality teaching within the expected income levels and how you would manage underperformance and a commitment to children.
- How the school will respond to the demands of a growing community and especially the likely need to reorganise mid-year to meet demand for places as families move into the development.

Section F – Funding and Costs

The school will be built on a site provided by the developer and secured by a S106 agreement, as well as additional land purchased by LCC using developer contributions. The building and additional land will be provided by Lancashire County Council and will be constructed to national school premises standards (Building Bulletin 103).

Capital costs of the build will be met via a combination of S106 contributions from local developers, Basic Need Grant, Higher Needs Grant and LCC funds. The building will be transferred free hold from the developer to the council, and it will then be transferred leasehold (125 years) by the council to the trust responsible for the school.

Details of council funding for start-up costs (including furniture fittings and equipment from capital budgets and the revenue towards pre-opening costs and diseconomy and new class opening funding while the school numbers build up) can be found at: [School Expansion Policy \(lancashire.gov.uk\)](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/school-expansion-policy)

School Expansion: Policy for Additional Revenue Funding Support for New Schools

New Schools

School Expansion: Policy for Additional Revenue Funding Support for New Schools.

New Schools

Where a new school is needed to meet the expected growth in pupil numbers, funding will be provided as follows;

Pre-opening costs for a primary or secondary school

The Lancashire growth fund policy will provide a one off-lump sum of £65,000, to support pre-opening costs.

Pre-opening costs could include:

- Salary costs for a Headteacher designate.
- Administration and finance support costs.
- Recruitment and interview related costs.
- Marketing and consultation.
- Any other incidental expenses.

It will be up to successful proposer to use these funds how they see fit, but no further one-off funding prior to opening will be payable.

Any unspent funds can be retained by the school.



It should be noted that the DfE may also provide a one-off Project Development Grant (PDG) payment of £25,000 to the successful proposer towards meeting the legal costs associated with establishing the new school.

Post-Opening Diseconomies Funding for Schools

The Lancashire growth fund policy will provide additional funding for the new school once it has opened to support the school with diseconomies of scale in its early years.

Primary School Diseconomies Funding

The growth fund will provide primary schools the revenue funding for a prescribed number of pupils for the first four years of opening, as follows:

Year	Funding for the following pupil numbers
1	30 per form entry
2	60 per form entry
3	90 per form entry
4	120 per form entry

Schools receive the relevant 7/12ths Minimum Pupil Funding (MPF) rate contained in the National Funding Formula (NFF) (Primary £4,955) per pupil from April 2025 and will be topped up and funded up to the numbers stated above if the numbers on roll in the relevant year groups have not materialised via their schools' block funding.

Where places are commissioned by the LA at an academy in Lancashire, a full 12-month support will be provided, rather than applying the 7/12th calculation, in recognition that increased pupil numbers in academies will not feed through into the budget until the following September.

For years 5 to 7 in the primary school opening process, the new school will be supported based on the criteria set out in the earlier '**Policy for Additional Revenue Funding**' section of this policy. [School Expansion Policy \(lancashire.gov.uk\)](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/school-expansion-policy)

If the NOR of the new primary school reaches 60% or more of their full capacity before year 4, it will be deemed that the diseconomies support is no longer required, and the criteria set out in the earlier '**Policy for Additional Revenue Funding**' section of this policy will apply. [School Expansion Policy \(lancashire.gov.uk\)](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/school-expansion-policy)

The school would stop receiving diseconomies funding once they reach year 5 in the opening process, or if their NOR reaches 126 pupils before year 4

earlier '**Policy for Additional Revenue Funding**' section of this policy will apply [School Expansion Policy \(lancashire.gov.uk\)](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/school-expansion-policy). The school would stop receiving diseconomies funding once they reach year 5 in the opening process, or if their NOR reaches 126 pupils before year 4.

Ongoing Revenue Funding

Once the full number of year groups are operating within the school, the funding will be based on pupil numbers on roll as at the previous October school census.

Section G – Impact and Equalities Assessment

As prescribed by section 9 of the Academies Act 2010 and section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Local Authority must assess the potential impact of any new school on existing educational provision in the area. The Local Authority must also consider whether the new school would impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

This assessment can be found: [New primary school for Goosnargh and Grimsargh – former Whittingham Hospital - Lancashire County Council](#)