

Admissions to Secondary Schools Academic Year 2024-25
Appeal Case for
Goresbrook School: Secondary

Admissions criteria

The admissions criteria for Goresbrook School is:

- Priority 1 Children who are or were in the care of a Local Authority or state care with an overseas care agency**
- Priority 2 Children who have a sibling (brother or sister) at the school**
- Priority 3 Children who live closest to the school, measured in kilometres in a straight line (as the crow flies)**

We published important points relating to the admission criteria:

1. Children with an EHCP are dealt with under the terms of the Education Act 1996 and are not referred to in the criteria above. Children with an EHCP will go to the school that is named in their plan.
2. A looked-after child is a child who is or was:
 - in the care of a local authority; or
 - being provided with accommodation by a local authority under their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989). For admission purposes, we consider a 'looked-after child' to be a child currently in care or a child who was in care but became subject to an adoption, residence or special guardianship order immediately after leaving care.
 - children who were in state care with an overseas care agency and were immediately adopted.
3. 'Sibling' means:
 - a full brother or sister,
 - a half-brother or half-sister,
 - a stepbrother or stepsister, and
 - an adopted or long term fostered brother or sister; living at the same address and going to the named school (not including the school's nursery). Please make sure you name all siblings on your application form. If they are not listed on your form, we cannot take them into account.

4. The child's home must be the permanent address where they live with their legal guardian. This should be the address on the parent's or carer's council tax bill and where child benefit is addressed.
5. All distances are measured using Synergy's geographical information system, from the center of the child's home to the school's main gate. Some addresses have different entry points and the co-ordinates provided from Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) will be used. For children who live outside the area, the same system is used to work out distances.
6. The distance from home to school for pupils who have equal claim for a place will be used. Those children living nearest to the school will be given priority when deciding on places. When measurements are the same (for example, a block of flats), the LA's database will automatically use a lottery system (random allocation) to offer places to children.
7. Other circumstances not listed in the criteria cannot be used. It is essential that places are allocated consistently and only the criteria that have been agreed are used.
8. If a school has a split site, the distance from the child's home to the school will be measured to the main site. The main site is the entrance through the main door at the site where the head teacher's office is and registered with the Department of Education. This measurement affects Barking Abbey and Robert Clack schools. Barking Abbey School is measured to the site at Sandringham Road and Robert Clack School is measured to the site at Gosfield Road. Each school will decide which of their school sites the child goes to.
9. If it is discovered that a place has been given to a child at a school based on false or misleading information, the place will be withdrawn and legal action may be taken.

GORESBROOK SCHOOL: SECONDARY

The school's circumstances

Goresbrook School is part of United Learning. United Learning is a group of schools which aims to provide excellent education to children and young people across the country. As a single organisation, we seek to bring together the best of independent and state sectors, respecting both traditions and learning from each. We believe that each of our schools is and should be distinctive – each is committed to developing its own distinctive strengths and identity while sharing our core values as institutions which promote service, compassion and generosity. This ethos is our expression of our Christian roots, in schools which are fully inclusive and both welcome and respect students and staff of all faiths and none.

The biggest challenge in school is space. Despite a four-form building being commissioned, for some unknown reason only a three-form building was built. This means the building falls short of the DFE's space requirements for a four-form entry school. The school has adapted the building to generate space and there are ongoing



discussions with the DFE around increasing space but admitting more students to Goresbrook School over the published admission number, will put even greater pressure on classroom, corridor, and dining spaces.

The school opened to secondary pupils for the first time in September 2016. The school continues to expand and next year we are hoping to admit a further ninety students into our Sixth Form. There have been building alterations to accommodate this growth with a specially designed Sixth Form Building opening September 2021. The school is situated on a newly built campus on Cook Road, Dagenham. In September 2022 the school will have an intake of 720 pupils, 120 pupils in all Years 7-11 and 90 pupils in Years 12 and 13. All year groups are organized into four form entry.

The school has appointed two newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in the secondary phase to meet the needs of increased pupil numbers alongside two trainee teachers (UTs). In addition to this the school has four Early Career Teachers. These NQTs, UTs and ECTs will need additional support in their first year/s of teaching to reach their maximum potential and are also entitled to additional release time above their normal planning and preparation time. This means that each NQT/UT will be released from class for approximately one day per week for the whole of the academic year 2023-24. Having NQTs/UTs at the school places additional pressures on Senior Management and other team members to provide additional training and support as well as cover additional release time. Any additional child will add to the responsibility and workload of each newly qualified teacher. It is also worth noting that we have not yet finished our recruitment as we have a number of vacancies so the number of NQTs/UTs/ECTs could further increase.

The school may also be required to admit additional pupils during the year under the borough's agreed Fair Access Protocol, but this is and will continue to be very difficult as the pupils' numbers move through to every year group.

Educational Concerns

The pupils in each year group are organised into four classes. This is because it is educationally desirable to have the children taught in groups which are as small as possible to allow the maximum amount of individual attention and delivery of tuition specific to each child's level of understanding.

Goresbrook School's priority is the development of every child's academic potential to the fullest, therefore it is the policy of the school to set children into ability groups, and the governors deliberately target the school's finances to provide four classes sub-divided into three ability bands.

Pupils in the highest band and middle band are taught in three classes of 32 pupils to fast track the very able pupils so that they can be fully challenged, maintaining their motivation and enabling them to achieve early examination success. This is the largest class size considered by the Principal, her staff and the Governors of the School to be acceptable on educational and health and safety grounds and it is also the expectation of this Authority that classes should not exceed this figure unless required to do so under the Fair Access Protocol.

Pupils in the lowest attaining band are taught in a class of 24, allowing those pupils



making less progress more opportunity to discuss the work that they are undertaking with their teachers, both to develop their speaking skills and to allow their progress and understanding to be assessed. This also allows more time for discussions with each pupil about their individual targets and achievements. Our most vulnerable students are in our lowest attaining band and have significant learning and behavioral needs. Being in a smaller group allows these pupils more opportunity to gain 1-1 support from an adult. Adding an additional pupil to the class with the most vulnerable students in our lowest attaining band would jeopardise the quality of the students' learning and would not be in anyone's interest.

Investigative and practical work is more difficult to organise safely and effectively in larger classes. For these reasons, the school is organising the pupils in such a way that teaching groups need not exceed 32 for the most able and are kept smaller for most the time for the less able pupils needing intervention and additional adult support with their learning.

The admission of more pupils to Year 7 at Goresbrook would be incompatible with and negate the ethos of these arrangements. The school deliberately organises and targets finances to be able to provide a challenging environment for the more able and gifted pupils, a stimulating environment for pupils of average ability and a lower pupil/ teacher ratio for the less able and needy pupils.

The school's approach to teaching in Key Stage 3 is towards interactive, whole-class teaching which places emphasis upon developing oral work and extended dialogue both between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves. Within this framework it is important for pupils to be given many opportunities to discuss their work with their teachers, both to develop their speaking skills and to allow the teachers to assess their progress and understanding of the work that they are undertaking.

A large class size compromises this approach and reduces both the amount of time available for interaction and the quality of discussion and dialogue. Timescales per pupil diminish in proportion to the number of pupils involved; the larger the class the less time there is for individual discussion. This is vital so that any difficulties or problems are identified early and can be addressed as soon as possible and to ensure work is set that is appropriate for each child's ability and learning style.

Clearly, the larger the class, the less time there is for individual discussion and for these reasons classes of more than 32 in Fast Track, Upper Band and Middle Band, and 24 in the Lower Band, are undesirable.

Each additional pupil brings extra managerial responsibilities for staff, and every additional child that is admitted brings extra work in terms of marking, preparation, assessments, reports and parents' meetings. Every pupil is tested and his or her progress assessed and recorded, forming the basis of each individual pupil's target that is later discussed with the child and their parents. Every extra child assessed reduces the time and detail able to be given for each assessment which means each child has less time allocated to them. This would inevitably impact on the achievement of the existing pupils and can only be prejudicial to the delivery of efficient education at Goresbrook.



Health and Safety concerns

The National Curriculum has placed an increased emphasis on a broad and balanced curriculum with a range of subjects being taught. Practical subjects bring with them increased risk and larger classes make it harder to organize effectively to ensure safe working.

The school's classrooms are built to accommodate 30 students per class. In some bands, larger groups of 32 have been accommodated. Adding another pupil to these classes will overcrowd the classroom. The size of the classrooms will not allow for another table to be added meaning that the admission of another student to these classes will result in three students sharing a table for two. This overcrowding is not conducive to pupil learning and behaviour and is likely to have a detrimental impact on pupil progress.

Any attempt to move to a five-form entry would cause significant problems for organisational reasons. The timetable for Year 7 is based on four classes in each year, sub-divided into two groups to facilitate reducing class sizes in practical subjects for health and safety reasons.

Children need to be able to use dangerous equipment safely. At Goresbrook technology subjects are taught in groups of no more than 25, although we aim to have groups of 20 which is the maximum size that is considered desirable on grounds of health and safety. The governors are concerned that the size of these groups should not increase further because these groups will contain pupils who need extra support and supervision when using dangerous equipment because of either their learning difficulties or behavioural challenges.

Extra students would make the room unmanageable and may lead to not all students being able to take part in practical activities at the same time. The subject teacher must consider the health and safety of the children and with extra students this will be compromised because the rooms are already at maximum capacity for group sizes. Below is a quote from DATA on class size:

"BS 4163:2007 Health and safety for design and technology in schools and similar establishments – Code of practice states that: 'In England and Wales the recommended maximum number of students in any one work area is 20 students with one competent, qualified teacher. In Scotland and Northern Ireland there are legal requirements for all classes in practical subjects to be restricted to a maximum of 20 pupils.'
http://www.data.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=877&Itemid=696#class –
accessed 01/02/10)

Effective teaching requires teachers to attend training courses offsite, carry out detailed lesson planning and preparation to meet each pupil's ability and individual learning styles and spend time marking and evaluating the work that has been done for each student. The Association of Teachers and Lecturers has expressed concerns regarding teacher's workloads. Every additional pupil brings additional work for their teacher adding to the pressure and increasing stress levels of the staff.

There are no spare classrooms that are ready for use and specialised teaching areas are very limited; these include the science laboratories that can seat a maximum of 32



students, a library that has the capacity for 40 students and some outdoor space that is minimal. Overcrowding compromises children's education, health, safety and wellbeing. An increase in numbers would put undue pressure on everyone's ability to teach and learn in overcrowded classes.

The new premises places significant challenges in terms of monitoring students effectively to ensure their safe adjustment to a new setting and admitting children above the agreed PAN would raise serious health and safety concerns. The corridors are narrow and the dining space is small, allowing for 240 pupils at any one time. The safe movement and smooth changeover of pupils from lesson to lesson is paramount, as is the safety of students at break times. To ensure smooth, safe passage of children through corridors and during break times the school employs several vigilant support staff. Additional children would add significantly to teachers' workload and the monitoring of them places additional work load on both teaching and support staff.

The school was built in 2015 and 2016 prior to opening. It was commissioned as a four form entry school but built to accommodate a three form entry school. It falls short of the space requirement for a four form entry school. Several efforts have been made to utilize existing space in order to accommodate student numbers e.g. converting three offices into a classroom but space is extremely limited. Some converted classrooms can accommodate a maximum of thirty students. Placing more students at Goresbrook School will further exacerbate the pressures on existing spaces and could make it untenable to teach certain classes in some classrooms (if class sizes go above 30).

Resource implications

If any additional pupils were admitted to year 7 either classes would become larger than desirable on educational grounds, or the school would have to open another class and employ an additional member of staff. The cost of this additional member of staff would be approximately £50,000 (including on costs). Each pupil brings approximately £5,025 funding into the school so there would be a considerable shortfall to be made up from other areas of the school budget, depriving existing pupils of resources. Since the current rooms are at 95% or 100% occupancy already and there is no spare accommodation, this would require additional accommodation to be made immediately available.

It would have implications for the number of teaching staff required to teach an additional class and the need to recruit new teachers possibly on a part time basis to ensure coverage of the core subjects and those option groups that would be affected. The effects would include a minimum of 28 additional teaching periods that would need to be covered for any new class.

The School Workforce Census for last year shows that recruiting and retaining a top-quality workforce, particularly in specialist subjects, remains a major challenge. There is now a significant body of research that indicates that many teachers are leaving the profession because of workload and/or frustration. The Association of Teachers and Lecturers has expressed concerns regarding teacher's workloads.

Effective teaching requires teachers to attend training courses offsite, carry out detailed lesson planning and preparation to meet each individual pupil's ability and learning styles. They must spend time marking and evaluating the work that has been done by

each student. Every additional pupil brings extra work for their teacher, adding to the stress of staff.

At the same time as the sector struggles to attract and retain teachers, the demand for teachers is growing because of increasing pupil numbers. The school's reliance on temporary agency staff can only be prejudicial to pupils as any continuity in lessons is lost. It also increases the burden on schools through direct costs (e.g. agency fees and salaries) and indirect costs (e.g. effort and time).

CURRENT SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

Year Group	No. of pupils with EHCP	EHCP pending/to be applied for	Total number of pupils requiring school support	total SEND	EAL
7	6	3	11	20	77
8	2	1	17	20	63
9	2	1	9	12	59
10	0	1	12	13	63
11	2	0	9	11	65

This figure does not reflect the number of students requiring pastoral support from the school.

Staffing

Year Group	Total number of teaching Staff	Number of ECTs	Number of Supply Staff	Total number of Teaching Assistants/Learning Support Assistants
Year 7 - 11	49	3	0	6

Summary

The Local Authority has applied lawful admission arrangements to this application on behalf of United Learning, the Admission Authority for Goresbrook School, and has considered it correctly.

The Principal, Headteacher and governors are unwilling to compromise the quality of the education offered to the students at the school. 32 for all groups except our lowest attaining group, which has 24 students, is the maximum ratio of pupils per teacher to whom the school considers it can deliver an effective education and would not wish to see this number exceeded. The school's resources would be jeopardised if another class had to be created and further teaching staff employed.

For the above reasons, it is our view that the admission of an additional students above the planned admission number would lead to lowered standards of achievement and would prejudice the provision of efficient education, and the efficient way the available resources are used and targeted. This would have counterproductive consequences for the amount and quality of the resources that are currently enjoyed by all the pupils attending the school.