

Admissions to Secondary Schools Academic Year 2026-27

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, a group of schools committed to providing an excellent education to children and young people across the country. Goresbrook is a fully inclusive school which is committed to high standards, academic achievement and the individual development of every pupil.

The principal constraint at Goresbrook is space.

The school was commissioned as a four-form-entry secondary school but was constructed as a three-form-entry building. As a result, the school falls below the Department for Education's recommended space requirements for a four-form-entry school. The school has already made significant adaptations to maximise the use of the available accommodation, including converting offices into classrooms. There is no further meaningful capacity available without compromising the effective operation of

the school.

The school's overall footprint is also disproportionately affected by a large double-court sports hall, which formed part of the pre-existing leisure centre and remained when the school was commissioned. This contributes significantly to the total footprint without providing equivalent capacity for classrooms, circulation, dining or specialist teaching accommodation.

The school is therefore already operating with significant pressure on its available classroom, corridor and dining spaces. Admitting pupils above the Published Admission Number (PAN) would further increase this pressure.

The school also has a Sixth Form, with dedicated accommodation, and the school site is now operating at a level significantly beyond the capacity for which the main secondary building was originally designed.

The school may additionally be required to admit pupils under the Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol. As pupil numbers increase across all year groups, the ability to accommodate such admissions becomes progressively more difficult.

Educational Concerns

Goresbrook deliberately organises pupils into teaching groups which reflect their attainment and learning needs. This is an important part of the school's educational model and enables the school to provide appropriate challenges for high-attaining pupils while providing additional support for pupils who require greater intervention.

In Years 7–11, the school operates four-form entry. Within this structure, pupils are taught in ability bands, with the highest and middle bands generally taught in classes of up to 32 pupils and the lowest-attaining band in classes of 24 pupils.

The smaller class size in the lowest band is deliberate. These pupils include some of the school's most vulnerable students and those with significant learning, behavioural and additional needs. The smaller teaching groups allow teachers and support staff to provide greater individual attention, identify difficulties at an early stage, and provide targeted intervention.

Increasing the size of these groups would directly reduce the level of individual attention available to pupils who require it most.

Similarly, classes of 32 represent the maximum size the school considers educationally appropriate for the higher and middle attaining groups. Increasing numbers beyond this point would either require existing classes to become larger or the school to create an additional teaching group. Neither option can be achieved without prejudice to the education of pupils currently attending the school.

Goresbrook places significant emphasis on whole-class teaching, oral work and extended dialogue between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves. These approaches depend on teachers being able to assess pupils' understanding, question them effectively and provide individual feedback. As class size increases, the amount of

time available for meaningful interaction with each pupil necessarily decreases.

Every additional pupil also creates additional assessment, marking, preparation, reporting and pastoral responsibilities. At Goresbrook, pupils' progress is regularly assessed and used to inform individual targets and subsequent teaching. Increasing class sizes reduces the time available for this work and therefore reduces the level of individual attention that can be provided to every pupil.

The impact would be particularly significant in the lower-attaining teaching group, where pupils require greater levels of intervention and adult support.

For these reasons, the school considers 32 pupils to be the maximum appropriate class size in the higher and middle attaining groups and 24 pupils in the lowest-attaining group. Exceeding these numbers would materially compromise the school's ability to deliver the education currently provided.

Health and Safety concerns

The school's classrooms have generally been designed to accommodate approximately 30 pupils. Some teaching groups have already been accommodated at 32 pupils. Increasing these numbers further would result in overcrowding, with insufficient space to provide an additional table and, in some rooms, pupils having to share tables designed for two. This would adversely affect pupils' ability to learn and would create additional challenges in managing movement, behaviour and supervision.

Specialist teaching accommodation is particularly constrained. Science laboratories have a maximum capacity of approximately 32 pupils, while specialist practical subjects require smaller groups because of the nature of the activities and the equipment used.

In Design and Technology, for example, the school operates practical groups at significantly lower numbers than standard classroom teaching because pupils require appropriate space, supervision and access to specialist equipment. Increasing these group sizes would compromise the safe and effective delivery of practical activities. The school is particularly concerned about increasing group sizes where pupils require additional support or supervision because of learning difficulties or behavioural needs.

There are no spare classrooms readily available for an additional Year 7 teaching group. Specialist teaching spaces are also limited and are already heavily utilised. Consequently, the admission of additional pupils cannot simply be addressed by allocating an existing unused classroom.

The school's corridors and communal spaces are also significantly constrained. The corridors are narrow and become particularly congested during lesson changeovers, break and lunchtime. The school deploys support staff throughout these periods to supervise movement and ensure that pupils can move safely and efficiently around the site.

The dining room is also small, with capacity for approximately 240 pupils at any one time. The school has carefully organised the school day and lunchtime arrangements around this capacity. Increasing pupil numbers would place additional pressure on the

dining space and would make the movement of pupils into and out of the dining room more difficult to manage safely and efficiently.

These constraints are particularly significant because the school already operates with a pupil population considerably larger than the main building was originally designed to accommodate. The school has therefore had to develop carefully managed systems for the movement, supervision and dining of pupils. These arrangements rely on the available physical space and sufficient staffing to monitor pupils effectively.

Additional pupils would increase the number of students moving through the same narrow corridors and using the same communal spaces. This would place additional pressure on staff responsible for supervision and increase the likelihood of congestion during lesson changeovers, break and lunchtime. The impact would be felt across the school rather than being confined to the classroom in which an additional pupil was placed.

Fire Safety and Evacuation

The school already accommodates approximately 150 more pupils than the main building was originally designed to accommodate. Emergency evacuation procedures are planned around the existing occupancy levels and the physical limitations of the site.

The school conducts full evacuation drills on a termly basis. These procedures take account of the current pupil numbers, the available exit routes, stairwells and external assembly areas.

The school's constrained corridors, stairwells and communal areas mean that the safe and orderly movement of pupils is an important consideration in any increase in occupancy. Further increasing pupil numbers would place additional pressure on these routes and assembly arrangements and would make the safe evacuation of the school more challenging.

The school therefore considers that admitting pupils above PAN would create additional health and safety concerns in a building which is already operating beyond the capacity for which the main secondary building was originally designed. Guidance in Building Bulletin 100: Fire Safety Design for Schools emphasises the importance of ensuring that evacuation strategies, exit widths and circulation spaces are appropriate for the maximum occupancy of a building.

The school cannot reasonably increase its occupancy indefinitely without considering the implications for evacuation, circulation, supervision and the safe management of the site.

Resource implications

If additional pupils were admitted to Year 7, there are two possible consequences: existing teaching groups would increase beyond the numbers considered educationally appropriate, or the school would need to create an additional teaching group.

Creating an additional class would require additional staffing, accommodation and timetable capacity. The estimated cost of an additional teacher, including on-costs, is approximately £60,000. The funding associated with an additional pupil would not cover

the full cost of creating an additional teaching group, resulting in a financial shortfall which would have to be met from the school's existing resources.

There is also currently no spare classroom accommodation available for an additional class. Creating another teaching group would therefore require the school to identify accommodation elsewhere on the site, reducing flexibility in the use of existing spaces and potentially displacing other educational or support functions.

An additional teaching group would also require a significant increase in timetable allocation, including at least 30 additional teaching periods each week. This would create additional recruitment and staffing pressures, particularly in specialist subjects.

Recruiting and retaining suitably qualified teachers remains challenging, particularly in specialist subjects. Increasing staffing requirements would therefore not simply create a financial cost; it would also create a risk that the school would need to rely on temporary or agency staff, reducing continuity and potentially affecting the quality and consistency of teaching.

The school also has a significant number of Early Career Teachers and trainee teachers. These colleagues require appropriate training, mentoring and release time as part of their professional development. Increasing pupil numbers would add to the workload of teachers and leaders responsible for supporting them.

CURRENT SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

Group	No. of pupils with EHCP	EHCP pending/to be applied for	Total number of pupils requiring school support	total SEND	EAL
7	1	0	12	13	75
8	2	2	12	14	63
9	5	0	10	15	87
10	2	1	8	10	69
11	2	0	8	10	67

These figures do not include the wider number of pupils requiring pastoral support.

The level of additional need within the school is an important consideration when assessing the impact of further admissions. The school's existing staffing and teaching-group structure has been designed to provide appropriate support to pupils with a wide range of educational, behavioural and additional needs.

Increasing pupil numbers without a corresponding increase in staffing and accommodation would reduce the capacity of staff to provide this level of support.

Staffing

Year Group	Total number of teaching Staff	Number of ECT	Number of Supply Staff	Total number of Teaching Assistants/Learning Support Assistants
Year 7 - 11	50	16	0	2

The school is committed to developing and retaining high-quality teachers and recognises the importance of providing appropriate support, training and professional development. Additional pupils would increase workload in planning, assessment, marking, reporting, pastoral support and parental communication.

Summary

The Local Authority has applied the published admission arrangements on behalf of United Learning, the Admission Authority for Goresbrook School.

The school's objection to the admission of an additional pupil is based on the cumulative impact of accommodation, class size, staffing, educational provision and health and safety constraints.

Goresbrook has already maximised the use of its available accommodation and deliberately operates teaching groups at sizes which allow it to provide an appropriate standard of education to pupils with a wide range of needs. The school considers 32 pupils to be the maximum appropriate class size for the higher and middle attaining groups and 24 pupils for the lowest-attaining group.

Admitting an additional pupil would either increase existing teaching groups beyond these levels or require the creation of an additional teaching group for which there is neither sufficient accommodation nor sufficient funding without diverting resources from existing pupils.

In particular, increasing the size of the lower-attaining group would reduce the individual attention and intervention available to some of the school's most vulnerable pupils. Increasing other teaching groups beyond 32 would reduce the quality of interaction, feedback and assessment available to pupils and would place further pressure on already constrained classrooms and specialist spaces.

For these reasons, the school's position is that the admission of an additional pupil above PAN would prejudice the provision of efficient education and the efficient use of the resources available to the school, and would adversely affect the educational experience of pupils already attending Goresbrook School.