

Children, Young People and Families

All Staff employed at Oldham Secondary
Schools

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Dear Colleague,

Building Schools for the Future

I am writing to you to update you on the proposals as part of Oldham's £200 million Building Schools for the Future plans. These massive changes are aimed at improving secondary school education for every child in the borough.

However, when change on this scale is proposed it is natural that you will have some concerns, so I wanted to let you know what the latest plans are.

Both Partnerships for Schools, the government agency which manages the national BSF programme and Oldham's full council have now approved the BSF proposals these include an agreement over some important issues such as sites for the three new Academies and also who will sponsor each Academy.

The Proposals

The proposals include building three new Academies on new sites:

- One is planned to be built on the former Orb Mill land at Waterhead and would be sponsored by The Oldham College and Oldham 6th Form College as a partner, which is an opportunity for higher and further education to become involved.
- The second would be on the former Oak Colliery site off Hollins Road, Hollinwood, and would be sponsored by The Oasis Trust.
- The third would be on the site of the present Our Lady RC School in Royton and would be sponsored by Edutrust.
- Agreement has now been reached with the Salford RC Diocese that Our Lady's and the St Augustine of Canterbury RC schools should come together, with the preferred site the present Meridian Business Centre site in Oldham town centre.
- Breeze Hill, Counthill, Grange, Kaskenmoor and South Chadderton schools will eventually

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close as the new schools come on board, expected from 2010 onwards.

- Saddleworth School would be rebuilt on a new site, which is yet to be decided.
- New Bridge School will gain on-site accommodation for its 6th Form.
- Royton & Crompton, Hathershaw, North Chadderton, The Blue Coat and Crompton House will all receive substantial refurbishment and investment in areas such as information technology.

You can find out more about the proposed sponsors by visiting their websites: The Oasis Trust: www.oasiscommunitylearning.org Edutrust: www.edutrust.org Oldham College: www.oldham.ac.uk or the 6th Form college: www.osfc.ac.uk
There is also more information on the BSF programme on Oldham Council's website: www.oldham.gov.uk/learning/bsf as well as the Partnerships for Schools website: www.partnershipsforschools.org.uk

Why do we need to change?

Oldham has many excellent schools, teachers, and staff and the schools we are proposing to close are good and are improving. We want to build on our solid foundations to transform secondary education so our schools can provide the modern education, skills and qualifications our youngsters will need to compete for places in higher education and jobs.

Building Schools for the Future is not just about replacing old school buildings with new ones, it gives us the opportunity to transform the way children are taught. New modern schools will be built or, where possible, existing ones modernised so they are equipped with modern classrooms and can teach a wider range of academic and vocational courses. New technology will also enable teachers to deliver an education more tailored to each individual child's needs and Academies will bring in new skills and experiences to help this.

It is also hoped that the new schools will become centres for the whole community with new facilities for learning, health, sports and the arts. The new Academies will also be on sites, which are accessible to all Oldham's diverse communities to encourage better community cohesion.

The transition

A key part of Oldham Council's planning is to make sure that education is not disrupted and that schools and pupils do not suffer in the transition from the present secondary school system to the new one.

The five schools we are proposing to close will remain open until the new schools have opened, from 2010 onwards. We will continue to invest in and support these schools. We are also committed to making sure that we keep our excellent teachers and that existing specialisms are incorporated into the new schools.

How will school staff be affected?

Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) regulations (TUPE) would be applied. This is legislation, which preserves the continuity of employment and terms and conditions of employees who transfer to a new employer when that transfer is covered by the TUPE regulations.

Equality of Opportunity

It has been made clear from all potential sponsors that students and parents, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, marital status, faith or no faith will be welcome and this is fully congruent with existing policies within Oldham Local Authority and we are confident they have an excellent track record of delivery on this.

Admissions

Future oversubscription criteria will be reviewed as part of the normal admissions review cycle with a view to enabling the community cohesion aspirations of the BSF Programme.

It is proposed that admissions to the Academies will be based on the Local Authority's revised admissions policy. Sponsors will work with the Local Authority during the review.

Consultation

Academies

If the Expression of Interest for the three proposed Academies are approved by Ministers formal consultation on these proposals will take place during the feasibility phase.

Other schools

Formal consultation on all statutory school organisation proposals will take place between May and December 2008 when interested parties will be invited to comment.

Where can I find out more?

We are committed to making sure that you are kept informed as the programme develops. We hold regular meetings with head teachers, governors and trade unions representatives and there is also information regularly posted on our website - www.oldham.gov.uk/learning/bsf You will soon be able to sign up to a system of email alerts to let you know when there is new information on the site. You can also email the BSF team at cypf.bsf@oldham.gov.uk.

You can find out more about the proposed sponsors by visiting their websites: The Oasis Trust: www.oasiscommunitylearning.org Edutrust: www.edutrust.org Oldham College: www.oldham.ac.uk or the 6th Form college: www.osfc.ac.uk

If you have any specific questions or issues please do not hesitate to contact your Head teacher or I on: 0161-770-3094 or email: jim.ryan@oldham.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Jim Ryan
Lead HR Consultant BSF