

# STATUTORY PROPOSAL NOTICE FOR PRESCRIBED ALTERATION

TO

## OAK HILL CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

{HYPERLINK "https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/3110/contents/made" \h}

**NOTICE** is given in accordance with section 19(3) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, as amended by the Education Act 2011, that the Governing Board of Oak Hill CE Primary School intends to make a significant change to **Oak Hill CE Primary School**.

1. **Proposer:**

The Governing Board of Oak Hill CE Primary School

2. **Name, address and category of the school:**

Oak Hill CE Primary School – Main Site  
School Road  
Alderton  
Tewkesbury  
Gloucestershire  
GL20 8NP

Oak Hill CE Primary School – Satellite Site  
Main Street  
Dumbleton  
Gloucestershire  
WR11 7TH

Voluntary Controlled School

3. **Description of the prescribed alteration:**

*The Board of Governors propose to permanently unite the whole school community on one site in Alderton by closing the School's satellite site located in Dumbleton and thereby reduce the School's capacity to 80 pupils*

4. **Implementation and any proposed stages for implementation:**

The Board of Governors consulted with the School community's stakeholders in 2022 with a proposal there should be a whole school on one site trial period commencing September 2022. The trial period commenced as proposed and was reviewed by the School's stakeholders in January 2023 who unanimously agreed the School community should remain on one site.

The Board of Governors commenced a statutory process to formalise the arrangement in February 2023 including a full public consultation. An open event public consultation meeting was held at the School on 6 March 2023, attendees included current and prospective parents of

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pupils, local residents, members of the Alderton and Dumbleton parish councils, Governors and a representative from Gloucester Diocese.

29 responses to the consultation were received at the event on 6 March, by online survey and by email. Of these, 93% supported the proposal to close the satellite site at Dumbleton. Comments were informed and detailed, whilst discussions on 6 March allowed attendees to explore the myriad historical reasons leading to the proposal, undertake a full tour of the Alderton site whilst hearing direct feedback from parents and governors on the positive impact of changes implemented in September 2022 with the whole School on one site trial.

At the conclusion of the public consultation period, the Board of Governors, the Diocese and the Local Authority, Gloucestershire County Council, reviewed the progression of the statutory proposal and agreed it should be delayed whilst new information and developments were reviewed and considered in the context of both the School and the wider community.

These developments included the Department for Education (DfE) issuing an Academy Order for the School, formalising discussions between the School, the DfE, the local authority and the Diocese in the preceding months.

All parties named above are legally obliged to work collaboratively to ensure the timely facilitation of the Academy Order. A local multi academy trust ["https://www.primaryquest.co.uk/"](https://www.primaryquest.co.uk/) was identified as a potential sponsor for the School's conversion to an Academy. This sponsorship arrangement builds upon the high quality support and guidance Primary Quest have been providing to the School in conjunction with the DfE since January 2022 as part of the School's improvement and transformation strategy.

Converting any School from a maintained school to an academy requires consideration of myriad issues relating to property both leasehold and freehold, budgets, contracts, service agreements, staffing commitments and much more.

Negotiations following the Academy Order included a reconsideration of the satellite site at Dumbleton, including whether there was the potential for any alternative educational use for the site now and in the longer term.

After lengthy consideration and discussion, the conclusion agreed by all parties was that the costs of improving the site to make it fit for any modern education purposes were unjustified and prohibitive. Improving the Dumbleton site to allow its continued use as an education site would be an unjustified use of public monies, especially given that pupil place planning projections do not justify returning the site to operation now or in the future when the Alderton site's capacity alone is sufficient to meet pupil place needs.

Coupled with the extensive evidence in support of the School being based solely on one site, all parties are agreed maintaining the School across two sites would have a significant negative impact on the quality of education available to pupils now and in the future.

The Board of Governors, the DfE, the local authority, the Diocese and Primary Quest MAT have agreed unanimously that the Dumbleton site should close. With the whole School permanently located at Alderton the School's capacity would therefore reduce to 80 pupils. All parties agree this capacity is sufficient to meet the School's current and projected needs.

**The Board of Governors therefore agreed to recommence the statutory process necessary to formalise this arrangement, hence the issuing of this statutory proposal notice for a prescribed alteration to a maintained school in accordance with all relevant legislation, regulations and statutory guidance.**

The Dumbleton site is subject to a lease Local Authority, Gloucestershire County Council and the Lessor, the Trustees of the Viscount Monsell Will Trust. The Local Authority has no financial

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interest in the land and the disposal of the lease will not generate any financial benefit for the public.

The management of the Dumbleton site will revert to the Local Authority, the Diocesan Authority, namely Gloucester Diocese and the Lessor at the conclusion of this statutory process at which time the School will be released from all of its associated obligations.

The timeline for this statutory process is expected to be completed by the end of the 2023-24 academic year at the latest. This process will run alongside the School's sponsored conversion to an academy which is also expected to be completed by the end of the 2023-24 academic year at the latest.

The Local Authority will be directly and solely responsible for all negotiations with the Diocese and the Lessor of the Dumbleton site before, during and after the statutory process described here.

## **5. Alteration Description:**

The School's pupil numbers have fallen significantly in recent years which reflects challenges experienced by the School, those identified by the Local Authority in their school places strategy and as experienced by other small rural schools across the country.

The School will continue to operate solely from the main site in Alderton whilst this statutory process is undertaken. Upon completion of this statutory process, the satellite site in Dumbleton will formally cease to be a part of the School and the School's capacity will reduce to 80 pupils.

This proposal aims to secure the whole School's future viability and reflects the commitment of the School's Governing Board, the Local Authority, the Diocese and the Department for Education to ensuring sufficient diverse educational provision which raises achievement for all learners, including those located in small rural communities such as those served by Oak Hill CE Primary School.

Parental choice will not be adversely impacted by this proposal and sufficient places for local children will remain available to meet current and projected need.

The developments and improvements to the School afforded by this proposal will instead positively promote parental preference by improving pupil outcomes and support high quality learning and experiences. Consequential impact will be an increase in pupil numbers which is vital to ensuring the School's long term viability as a provider of high quality primary education to the small, rural communities it serves.

The main entrance at the School site located in Alderton is 4.7 miles from the main entrance to the Dumbleton satellite site which this proposal seeks to close.

## **6. School capacity:**

The School's published admission number (PAN) is 105 pupils. This proposal will reduce the school's capacity to 80 pupils.

Currently, the School has 49 pupils across all year groups.

The School is therefore 56 pupils short of its PAN which equates to 53.3% surplus places.

A formal proposal to reduce the School's PAN will be commenced in the academic year 2024-25 and this timeline has been agreed in advance with the local authority who act as the School's

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admissions authority. A formal reduction to the School's PAN cannot be synchronised with this statutory proposal and the academy conversion process due to lack of capacity to effectively and efficiently manage that process. Prioritisation of actions necessary to implement the School's strategic aims and the Academy Order conclude this administrative process can be delayed to the next academic year on the understanding the School's capacity is clear to all stakeholders, both current and future.

Pupils are currently all taught at the Alderton site in three class groups:

- Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are taught together (Rowan Class). This class currently has 19 pupils.
- Year 3 and Year 4 are taught together (Elm Class). This class currently has 17 pupils.
- Year 5 and Year 6 are taught together (Redwood Class). This class currently has 13 pupils.

The Local Authority's school places planning work projects the School's pupil numbers can rise but not to the current PAN of 105 pupils. Reduction in the school's capacity to 80 pupils by consolidating all pupils on one site therefore aligns with pupil place needs in the local community as assessed by the local authority's place planning team.

The Board of Governors, the Local Authority and the Diocese will continue to work in close collaboration together and with other local primary schools to monitor the demand for school places locally.

## **7. Proposal's Objectives:**

By uniting the School community on one site the School can continue to enhance the education and experiences available to every child at the School immediately, and in the longer term.

The School can respond more effectively and efficiently to the needs of its community providing equality and opportunity for all pupils and staff.

The trial period has been running since September 2022 and has shown the strength of both of the above statements in the immediate, comprehensive and continuing improvements seen across the School in terms of quality of education, behaviour, leadership and management and personal development.

These improvements have been overseen and confirmed through monitoring by the Board of Governors and other external education professionals including the Local Authority, the Diocese, Ofsted and by specialist school improvement professionals instructed by the Board and by the Department for Education.

The Local Authority's school place planning strategy confirms the demand for school places is not expected to exceed supply in the School's individual locality, nor in the surrounding schools in the Winchcombe and Bishops Cleeve primary school cluster areas. The proposal seeks to preserve the long term future of the School by reducing the financial obligations associated with running two sites, especially when pupil numbers are not sufficient to generate an income budget to meet the cost of effectively and efficiently running two sites.

## **8. Project costs:**

The cost of improving the Alderton site generally and to facilitate the whole School on one site trial which commenced in September 2022 has already been met by the Local Authority through allocation of £0.098 million of designated funding for education settings. These funds provided:

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- Installation of suitable fencing around the entire School site which is now fully safe and secure
- Improvements to the rear of the School including clearing and repurposing the area which had been neglected and fallen into disrepair
- Installation of large double doors from the larger ground floor classroom to the improved rear of the School to allow for high quality indoor and outdoor continuous provision for Rowan Class
- Installation of new tarmac flooring to the rear of the School
- Installation of an all-weather permanent canopy to the rear of the School to ensure year round use of the continuous provision areas
- Redesign of the first floor computer area including installation of a wall to create separate and distinct spaces for a Key Stage 2 library & work space plus a large multi-use meeting room
- Installation of water supply, sink and storage area in a formally unused classroom area to meet current statutory requirements for classrooms
- Clearance and grounds maintenance work to the external areas of the School including the main playground to improve access, lines of sight and prepare the space for the School's long term investment strategy in its external areas

Additional funding was provided by the School from its limited budget to ensure the School was adapted to meet the needs of its pupils in time for the commencement of the trial period in September 2022.

Significant contributions have also been made by the whole School community, including local residents together with past and future families connected to the School.

These contributions from the School and the wider community including financial contributions from the School budget, financial donations from the PTA (Friends of Oak Hill School – FOOHS) and over 1,500 hours of volunteer time which have all been directed at the following areas:

- Clearance of the Dumbleton site
- Full audit and reorganisation of all School resources
- Full audit and redesign of the School's learning environments to meet the current needs of pupils and staff whilst ensuring equality of access and provision for all
- Redesign and redecoration of the two main classrooms in Alderton
- Adaptations to an unused classroom in Alderton plus full redesign and redecoration to introduce a third high quality classroom
- Full audit, redesign and redecoration of the School library and creation of a second library area and work area on the first floor for Key Stage 2 pupils
- Full redesign and redecoration of the School's communal and non-teaching areas, including a new multi-purpose meeting room on the first floor
- Full redesign and adaptations to the outdoor areas in Alderton
- Resourcing of the indoor and outdoor areas of Rowan Class to provide high quality continuous provision for pupils
- Resourcing and setting up the School's wrap around care provision

These investments both financial and voluntary have been fundamental to the success of the whole School on one site trial since September 2022. Without them, the School would not have been able to secure the improvements it has achieved not only to its site, but most importantly to the quality of education delivered to its pupils.

This programme of works to improve and modernise the School continues both in terms of the Board of Governor's strategic plans and through its engagement with a team of volunteers who continue to support the School's work to improve and enhance the site internally and externally.

These works are a key element of the Board's strategy to transform the School by improving the education environment, the quality of education and experiences offered to pupils, increasing

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pupil numbers and thereby securing the School's long term future as a high quality, effective and trusted provider of education to the surrounding communities.

Current and projected pupil numbers for the School do not meet the threshold necessary to justify the expenditure required to run two sites. Continuing to operate across two sites would leave the School exposed to criticism in relation the quality of education and experiences available to its pupils and to the Board's financial management of the School.

The impact of such criticism which would follow from the Local Authority, the Diocese, the Department of Education and Ofsted would be detrimental to the School's long term viability and would have an adverse impact on pupil numbers, staffing and the overall wellbeing of the whole School community.

Any further costs associated with the closure of the Dumbleton site will be addressed in the negotiations between the Local Authority, the Diocese and the Lessor as described above in section 4 (Implementation).

#### **9. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND):**

This proposal will not negatively impact the arrangements for pupils with Special Education Needs and Disabilities. The whole School on one site trial, including the works described above have already improved the quality of SEND provision across the School.

#### **10. Extended services:**

Since September 2022 the School has been able to offer a full wrap around care programme to all parents and carers. This programme has been highly successful, with sessions running daily in both mornings and afternoons. Engagement levels have been consistent and high since introduction.

This type of programme had been trialled previously but was not sustainable whilst the School operated across two sites. The lack of wrap around care is a key element in understanding the reasons why pupil numbers have declined so rapidly in recent years.

Information from local families has shown that the School was consistently not selected as parents and carer's first choice of primary school, due to factors including the lack of wrap around care. This situation was further aggravated by the absence of any other workable wrap around care provision for pupils from external providers.

In September 2023 ten pupils joined the School's Reception class, a significant increase on the previous year's intake of two pupils. Feedback from prospective families for the academic year 2024-25 during their recent visits to the School have been positive and all continue to identify the wrap around care programme as essential to the needs of local families.

The School can only offer wrap around care provision effectively when the whole School is located on one site. Without such provision, the School would continue to see a negative impact on its incoming pupil numbers which would be catastrophic to the School's future viability.

#### **11. Home to School travel:**

The Local Authority has a statutory requirement to ensure that children aged 4 to 16 are able to access compulsory school age education.

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Transport assistance is defined in Gloucestershire County Council's [HYPERLINK "https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2082383/mainstream-h2s-transport-policy-2022.pdf"](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2082383/mainstream-h2s-transport-policy-2022.pdf) which includes bus passes to entitled children who are able to travel to a maintained school or academy.

The Local Authority is committed to meeting the best practice expectations set out in the Department of Education's [HYPERLINK "https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/575323/Home\\_to\\_school\\_travel\\_and\\_transport\\_guidance.pdf"](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575323/Home_to_school_travel_and_transport_guidance.pdf).

## 12. **The effect on other schools, academies and education establishments in the area:**

The Local Authority undertakes regular and rigorous school places forecasting and analysis as part of its school place planning work which informs and contributes to its current [HYPERLINK "https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2108023/gloucestershire-school-places-strategy-2021-2026-final.pdf"](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2108023/gloucestershire-school-places-strategy-2021-2026-final.pdf).

The Local Authority produces and provides to both primary and secondary schools individual projections of future pupil numbers. This information together with the School Places Strategy document indicate this proposal will not have a negative effect on other local schools, academies and educational establishments. There is currently a surplus of school places in the local area and projections are for this situation to continue.

Changes in distribution of pupils across local schools is dependent upon a variety of factors influencing parental choice including quality of education, transport accessibility, extended services etc.

The School Places Strategy recognises that previous pupil number forecasts and demand for school places generated by new housing in the School's immediate and wider locality have not arisen. Planned expansions at other local primary schools have therefore been put on hold and remain under review whilst the impact of increased housing stock in the local area on parental choice is analysed and strategies to fill current surplus school places are implemented and embedded.

## 13. **Consultation:**

There shall be a public consultation period which begins on publication of this statutory proposal notice on **20 November 2023** and concludes at **midday on 18 December 2023**.

Explanatory documents regarding engagement with stakeholders prior to the issuing of this statutory proposal notice are available via the school's website [HYPERLINK "http://www.oakhill.gloucs.sch.uk"](http://www.oakhill.gloucs.sch.uk) together with a copies of explanatory consultation documentation for this statutory process.

A public meeting will be held in the School hall in Alderton on **Monday 4 December 2023 at 6pm**.

The following stakeholders have been made aware of this proposal:

- Parents and carers of children attending the School
- Prospective parents and carers
- Employees and Governors of the School
- Local residents
- Other local schools in the Winchcombe and Bishops Cleeve areas

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- Gloucestershire County Council
- Gloucester Diocesan Board of Education
- Viscount Monsell Will Trust
- Tewkesbury Borough Council
- Alderton and Dumbleton Parish Councils

#### 14. Publication

Publication of this statutory proposal notice and accompanying documentation will be completed in a variety of ways to ensure it is easily available and accessible by all stakeholders.

Publication will be by the following means:

- On the School's website
- Communication with current parent, carers and staff through letters, emails, newsletters and Class Dojo
- By email to specifically named external stakeholders defined above in paragraph 13
- Displayed on village noticeboards in both Alderton and Dumbleton
- Distribution via village communication groups in Alderton and Dumbleton
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Copies can also be obtained from the School office by calling 01242 620448 during school hours or by emailing <mailto:admin@oakhill.gloucs.sch.uk>. Please ensure the subject box of the email is clearly marked "**Statutory proposal notice and documentation request**".

#### 15. Objections and comments:

Any person may support, object to or make comments on this proposal.

A feedback form is attached to this Notice and is also available separately from the School's website or by contacting the School office to request a copy (see below). An online form is also available (link below.)

You are not obliged to use the provided feedback form for your comments, feedback and representations.

- You can submit a paper copy of your completed feedback and representation form by hand delivering it to the School Office in Alderton
- You can complete and submit your feedback and representation form online. <https://forms.gle/zaCLL4cgnnG7Q5TcA> to access the online form.
- Submissions by post are also accepted and should be clearly marked:

*For the attention of the Chair of Governors  
Response to consultation on prescribed alteration  
Oak Hill CE Primary School  
School Road  
Alderton  
Tewkesbury  
Gloucestershire  
GL20 8NP*

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- Finally, any submissions by email should be clearly marked “Response to consultation on prescribed alteration” in the subject box and sent to:

{HYPERLINK "mailto:chair@oakhill.gloucs.sch.uk" \h}

**All submissions MUST be received by midday on 18 December 2023.**

# STATUTORY PROPOSAL NOTICE FOR PRESCRIBED ALTERATION

TO

## OAK HILL CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Consultation Period:** 20 November 2023 to midday on 18 December 2023

**Proposer:** The Governing Board of Oak Hill CE Primary School, School Road, Alderton, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire GL20 8NP

**Proposed change:** To permanently unite the whole school community on one site in Alderton by closing the School's satellite site located in Dumbleton and thereby reduce the School's capacity to 80 pupils

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Designation:</b> <i>(e.g. parent, staff, governor, other)</i>	
<b>Institution you represent:</b> <i>(if applicable)</i>	

Please tick below to indicate whether you **AGREE** or **DISAGREE** with the proposed alteration to Oak Hill CE Primary School by closing the satellite site at Dumbleton thereby reducing the school's capacity to 80 pupils

<b>AGREE</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>DISAGREE</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
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**General comments on the proposed alteration and/or the School's conversion to an academy, sponsored by Primary Quest multi academy trust:**

*Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.*

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