

Consulting on a greater future for education in Great Yarmouth

Many things have changed in Great Yarmouth over recent years.

We have successfully opened Trafalgar College, proving popular with students and parents and setting the highest academic standards. Great Yarmouth Charter Academy - the old high school - has recently joined the Inspiration Trust under a transformative new headmaster.

Elsewhere in education, Great Yarmouth College and Lowestoft College have merged and Norfolk County Council is consulting on changes to primary schooling in north Yarmouth. The school-age population has grown much less quickly than forecast by the local authority.

The time is now right to reassess secondary provision in the town and the Inspiration Trust is now consulting on a proposal to merge Great Yarmouth Charter Academy and Trafalgar College to form a single enlarged high school for urban Great Yarmouth.

The proposal

We are proposing to merge Great Yarmouth Charter Academy and Trafalgar College. The merged school will eventually operate from the Salisbury Road site under the Great Yarmouth Charter Academy name.

The outcome for pupils will be a single larger and better resourced academy for Great Yarmouth that can offer an even stronger education for the borough's young people.

This will involve new buildings and a redevelopment of the Salisbury Road site to provide classrooms, sports and cultural facilities, and social spaces for up to 1500 students.

Our approved plans for Trafalgar College include a sixth form from September 2021 to match pupils' progression through the school. As the new merged school will have Year 11 students from day one, we are also consulting on whether to apply to bring forward the sixth form start date to 2019.

Why are we proposing these changes?

The opening of Trafalgar College was driven by two main desires: to meet the need for additional high school places in Great Yarmouth; and to drive up educational standards in the borough.

Population growth has been slower than expected, leading to a shortfall against the Norfolk County Council predictions for future pupil numbers. While there is still a need for some additional places we believe this reduced requirement is now better delivered through a single enlarged school, with resources to match.

Trafalgar College has shown that high expectation,

high achievement, teaching is needed in Great Yarmouth and that both pupils and parents want to rise to that challenge. With Great Yarmouth Charter Academy now part of the Inspiration Trust, we believe merging the two schools offers the chance to give that opportunity to more children, more quickly.

Offering a sixth form on site would allow Year 11 students to continue their education in a familiar location, and help increase aspiration within lower years.

When will these changes take place?

Subject to this consultation and agreement by the Government, the changes will be phased in over a two-year period:

- Up until August 2018: Both academies will continue to operate as now, as separate schools. Preparatory and building work will start on the Salisbury Road site for enhanced facilities.
- September 2018: The schools formally merge. Existing Trafalgar College students will remain at Thamesfield Way as Year 8 and Year 9 students. All new Year 7 pupils will attend Great Yarmouth Charter Academy at Salisbury Road.
- August 2019: Building work at Salisbury Road completes.
- September 2019: All students transfer to the Salisbury Road site, with new enhanced facilities, for the new academic year. If approved, sixth form students will be admitted for the first time.

Frequently asked questions

What about Year 7 admissions for September 2018?

Families can apply via Norfolk County Council to either Trafalgar College or Great Yarmouth Charter Academy for Year 7 in September 2018, but all new Year 7 pupils will be enrolled in the merged school and educated at the Salisbury Road site.

In the event that either school is oversubscribed against its planned admission number for 2018, we will consider voluntarily admitting extra pupils to ensure that no one is disadvantaged by the distance criteria of the current academies' admissions policies.

What about admissions in future years?

From September 2019, the new merged school will have a planned admission number of 272 in Year 7 and, assuming the opening of the sixth form is brought forward, 70 in Year 12.

Why not transfer Trafalgar College pupils to Great Yarmouth Charter Academy straight away?

While the Salisbury Road site could theoretically accommodate all pupils, delaying the transfer gives us more flexibility for a safer and quicker building programme. For existing Trafalgar College students, it also gives families longer to consider transport to and from school.

What about uniform?

Each academy will continue with its own uniform for this academic year. We anticipate that from September 2018, students based at Thamesfield Way will be able to wear either the existing Trafalgar College uniform or move to the Great Yarmouth Charter Academy uniform as families replace worn items.

How will staff be affected?

As most staff at the academies are already employed by the Inspiration Trust, the majority will transfer to equivalent roles in the new merged

school. We anticipate overall pupil numbers will be the same or larger than now, so we will need similar staffing. Staff and unions will be consulted on the detailed arrangements nearer the time.

What about the new building and facilities announced for Trafalgar College?

In technical terms, the Salisbury Road site will be the permanent location of Trafalgar College, operating under a new name. The planned free school investment will transfer to the Salisbury Road site, and be used to provide additional and enlarged facilities.

What will happen to the old Trafalgar College site at Thamesfield Way?

The site is owned by the Government and leased to the Inspiration Trust. The Department for Education will consider future uses, in consultation with Great Yarmouth Borough Council, in due course.

What is the consultation timetable?

The consultation began on Monday, September 18, 2017 and will run for four weeks, closing on Sunday, October 15, 2017.

Parent consultation meetings will take places as below:

- Trafalgar College, Thamesfield Way on Thursday, September 28, at 6pm
- Great Yarmouth Charter Academy, Salisbury Road on Thursday, October 12, at 6pm

We anticipate publishing our response and final proposals by Friday, October 20, 2017, so that families can consider them before the close of the secondary school admissions round on October 31, 2017.

The proposals will then be passed to the Department for Education for a final decision.

Certain details are also subject to obtaining planning permission and other consents.

This consultation closes on October 15, 2017. To take part, please email communications@inspirationtrust.org

Alternatively, you can write to Great Yarmouth Consultation, Inspiration Trust, 28 Bethel Street, Norwich, NR2 1NR. This is a summary of the proposals. For details of the technical changes being proposed, please visit www.inspirationtrust.org/gyconsultation