

Thomas Whitham Sixth Form

Key Factors for Consideration

This appendix sets out the key factors which have been taken into consideration in relation to this proposal.

Educational Standards

The March 2016 inspection feedback letter stated that 'the school has maintained, and in some cases improved on, previous good outcomes.'

The 2018 performance tables show the following:

- the progress made by students on A level, Academic and Applied General provision is average;
- the average point score (APS) per entry is below average for each type of provision;
- there has been a drop in retention, with A level and Academic retention being notably below average;
- the progress made by students in achieving a level 2 in English and/or maths is positive and is above both the Lancashire and national average; and
- the school's destination measure has dropped to 87%, which is below the national average of 89% and the Lancashire average of 90%.

However, whilst attainment has generally been below national standards over time, this reflects the nature of the intake and progress outcomes have consistently been good, particularly for disadvantaged students and in achieving level 2 passes in English and maths for students entering below this level. Lancashire County Council's School Improvement Service has never raised any substantive concerns over the quality of provision or outcomes, noting the valuable opportunity offered by the school, particularly for students in need of enhanced pastoral support and guidance.

Inspection Outcome

Since it opened, the school has been judged as 'Good' at every OfSTED inspection. The last full inspection of the school took place in July 2011 and was judged as 'Good'. OfSTED undertook a short inspection of the school in March 2016 and determined that the school continues to be judged as 'Good'. The short inspection acknowledged that the school had been through 'a period of considerable uncertainty and turbulence' but that there is a 'positive and exciting vision for the future' and 'the leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school'. Based on the inspection cycle, it is expected that the school will be inspected again during the 2019/20 academic year.

With regard to the inspection outcomes of the two 16-18 Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funded providers in the Burnley and Pendle areas, these are both judged by OfSTED to be 'Outstanding'.

Student Numbers and Population Projections

The school was created in 2006 and was designed for a cohort of 600 students. The school's first funding allocation from the Education Funding Agency, which has since become part of the ESFA, was based on 463 students. This is the highest number of students the school has been allocated over 14 years, showing that it has never reached its capacity of 600 students. Following the second highest student number allocation of 426 in 2012/13, the school has seen a reduction in student numbers each year up to the current figure of 104 in the 2018/19 academic year. Their funding allocation for 2019/20 is based on 139 students, showing that they have had a growth of 35 students during the 2018/19 academic year.

It must be noted that 16-18 provision is funded differently to secondary school places and that it is based on a lagged methodology. This means that the funding allocation for one academic year is based on the number of students recorded in the school's autumn census in the previous academic year. For example, the school's funding allocation for the 2018/19 academic year is based on 104 students, which means that their 2017 autumn census had 104 students recorded as being on roll in the sixth form. Their 2018 autumn census had 139 students recorded as being on roll in the sixth form, therefore their 2019/20 funding allocation is based on 139 students. Where a 16-18 provider enrolls more/fewer students than their allocation, their funding allocation is increased/reduced in the following year, hence being a lagged funding methodology.

Once the student numbers are determined, they are multiplied by a standard national funding rate to create the basis of the school's funding allocation. Additional funding factors are applied to the calculation to reflect the nature of the provision offer at the school, the prior attainment of the students, how well the school retains its students and whether the students are from a disadvantaged area. These are all based on a nationally consistent formula and they reflect the specific nature of the school, the provision it offers and the students it attracts. The number of students in the sixth form have been reducing year on year, meaning that the funding the school receives from the ESFA has also been reducing. More information about the school's funding allocations can be found in the Financial Viability section below.

From reviewing the participation data for the 2017/18 academic year, it can be seen that 97.1% of the students at the school are from Lancashire and this equates to 101 students. Two students (1.9%) are from Calderdale and one student (1.0%) is from Blackburn with Darwen. In terms of a comparison with 2016/17, the number of students from Lancashire accessing provision at the school has reduced by 53.

Of the 101 students from Lancashire at the school in 2017/18, 76.2% (77 students) were from Burnley, 20.8% (21 students) were from Pendle and 3.0% (three students) were from Rossendale. In terms of a comparison with 2016/17, the number of students from Burnley has reduced by 39 and the number from Pendle has reduced by 14.

Of all the young people from the Burnley and Pendle districts accessing school sixth form provision, the school is the 2nd most popular with 23.4% of students. Clitheroe

Royal Grammar School is the most popular school sixth form at 24.1%. With regard to all ESFA 16-18 funded provision, the school is the 5th choice amongst Burnley and Pendle young people. In terms of where young people from Burnley and Pendle are accessing post 16 provision which is funded by the ESFA, the breakdown is as follows: 40.3% chose to go to Nelson and Colne College; 38.0% chose Burnley College; 2.7% chose Craven College; 2.5% chose Clitheroe Royal Grammar School; and 2.4% chose Thomas Whitham Sixth Form. The remaining young people chose to study at 49 other providers.

In terms of future student numbers, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2016-based subnational population projections show that the number of 16-18 year olds in Burnley and Pendle are forecast to grow by 18.85% over the next 10 years to 2029, which equates to 1,125 young people. The more immediate projections show that the number of 16-18 year olds in Burnley and Pendle are forecast to grow by 7.44% over the next three years to 2022, which equates to 444 young people. Based on the school being the 5th most popular provider for young people from these districts, in 2017/18, they enrolled 1.6% of the Burnley and Pendle 16-18 year old population. When this proportion is applied to the population projections up to and including 2029, the highest number of young people is 114 in years 2026, 2027 and 2028, showing that the forecast growth does not equate to a significant increase in the number of students at the school. It must be noted that the population projections do not reflect the housebuilding taking place so the actual number of young people may be higher as a result.

In addition to the future growth in the 16-18 year old population, the number of pupils in secondary education should also be considered as these young people should progress into post 16 provision when they finish school.

Based on the January 2019 school census, there were 4,808 11-16 year old pupils on roll at a mainstream secondary school in Burnley. This is an increase of 11% in the last five years. The proportion of pupils admitted to a Burnley secondary school, as a proportion of pupils leaving Year 6 is 94.3%, which is an increase from 88.9% five years ago. Therefore, there is a larger proportion of pupils from Burnley primary schools progressing into Burnley secondary schools. There has also been an increase in the number of pupils in Burnley primary schools and this increase is moving through the year groups into the secondary schools.

With the current numbers on roll (NOR) at a mainstream secondary school in Burnley at 4,808, the projected numbers over the next five years, including the projected Year 11 pupil numbers, are shown in the table below:

Table 1: Projected Burnley Pupil Numbers

Year	Projected NOR (without housing/ migration)	Projected NOR (with housing/ migration) (NB migration is currently more than offsetting the effect of housing)	Year 11 (without housing/migration)
Current 2018/19	4,808		845
2019/20	5,105	5,101	946
2020/21	5,284	5,258	1,011
2021/22	5,406	5,357	1,017
2022/23	5,488	5,420	1,037
2023/24	5,562	5,478	1,107

As can be seen from the table above, there is a projected increase of 15.7% in the total number of 11-16 year old pupils and a 31% increase in the number of Year 11 pupils over the next five years.

Similarly, in Pendle (where 20% of current pupils come from) pupil numbers are also rising over the foreseeable future, with projected year 11 cohort (without housing or migration) as follows:

Year	Year 11 year group
Current 2018/19	845
2019/20	936
2020/21	1,006
2021/22	1,005
2022/23	1,014
2023/24	1,109

Therefore, projected 11-16 year old pupil numbers shows that there are more pupils in the local education system who may choose to progress to Thomas Whitham Sixth Form when they complete their secondary education.

Financial Viability

The school has been running a large deficit for a number of years. The table below sets out both the cumulative and annual deficit position. It is the conclusion of the School Finance function that this deficit is not recoverable and that the school is no longer financially viable.

Table 2: Financial Position of Thomas Whitham Sixth Form

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
ESFA Student Number Allocation	379	359	244	157	104	139
ESFA Funding Allocation	£1,774,878	£1,698,341	£1,134,632	£719,297	£508,357	£645,439
Annual Deficit Position	-£0.35M	-£0.13M	-£0.26M	-£0.68M	-£0.91M	-£1.03M
Cumulative Outturn Balances	-£1.31M	-£1.44M	-£1.70M	-£2.38M	-£3.29M	-£4.32M*

*forecast

In addition to the table above, based on information supplied by the school, the School Finance function has forecast further annual deficit positions of -£0.96M for 2020/21 and -£1.04M for 2021/22 and cumulative deficit positions of -£5.28M for 2020/21 and -£6.32M for 2021/22.

The school premises, along with three other schools on the same site, were built as part of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) project that was funded via Private Finance Initiative (PFI). This means that there are risks associated with the financing of the current annual PFI contract if the premises do not remain in use. This includes the ongoing PFI financial liability of that part of the site. A suitable alternative educational use will need to be secured to mitigate this liability. Work is on-going to identify the exact potential risk but this could run into several million pounds.