

Frequently Asked Questions

April 2022

The purpose of this document is to provide answers to the key questions that have been raised by parents following the recent Ofsted ruling. New questions will be added as they are raised, and answers revised as the situation evolves.

The School and Governing Body will aim to keep Parents as updated as possible throughout this process.

Q1. The report is not reflective of our experience of the school. Is there anything parents can do to complain about or challenge the Ofsted ruling?

Ofsted reports can only be challenged for inaccuracies (e.g. incorrect pupil numbers) and both the LA and diocese have advised that there is nothing that can be done about the ruling.

If you go to the Ofsted site and find St Gregory's there is a 'Give us your views' section where you can complete an 'Ofsted Parent view survey'

Q2. Is the school in danger of closing? – how vulnerable is it?

No discussions are underway in relation to closure of the school. The Local Authority (LA) advised parents on Monday that it is very difficult to close a school, as we have seen elsewhere in Bollington. The smallest school in the LA at present is Pott Shrigley with 27 pupils.

Q3. How long is Mrs Walker staying?

Mrs Walker is confirmed to remain at St Gregory's until the end of the school year (August)

Q4. Are we recruiting for a permanent Head Teacher (HT)?

Recruitment of a new HT has been put on hold since the Ofsted ruling. Mrs Walker is developing a new staffing structure which will take into account issues raised in the report as well as projected staff/pupil levels to ensure the optimal structure (including numbers of teachers per class) moving forwards.

The replacement of the Head Teacher is one, but not the only option to secure effective leadership of the school going forward. Other options include academisation.

Q5. Will we bring back a separate reception class?

Whilst this is something we would all welcome, it will depend on intake numbers for September. As you will expect, the picture is constantly changing at present and the Governors will work closely with Mrs Walker and the LA to develop best and worst-case scenarios to ensure we put forward a viable plan for the school.

The School and Governing Body will advise parents of any staffing structure changes as soon as they are confirmed.

Q6. What will the governing board look like in the future?

The Governing Body have submitted a Government Improvement Plan to the LA which includes the recommendation to bring in experienced Governing professionals from the NLG whilst retaining existing Governors with school and local community links. This plan is now under approval by the LA and Director of Education. The LA have the powers to replace the governing body by an Interim Executive Board if they feel this is in the best interests of leadership and governance of the school.

Q7. How is the deficit going to be addressed? Have we considered ways to help increase pupil intake and additional income streams for the school?

The school financial picture has been a key focus of the Governing Body's efforts for the past few years. Many discussions have taken place focusing on increasing pupil intake (and by extension the perception of the school in the community), staff levels and additional revenue streams such as renting out school premises to sports groups and bringing a pre-school onsite. With recent staff departures and the uncertainty of pupil numbers for next year, the Governing Body are working closely with Mrs Walker and the LA to develop a realistic, sustainable and flexible financial strategy for the next 3-5 years.

Q8. Can the Local Authority and the Diocese do more to help Governors and Staff? Including finance?

The LA has released additional resources to support the school following the Ofsted ruling and although additional funds will not be released direct to the school, the Governing Body and Mrs Walker will be working closely with the LA and Diocese to ensure all available support is used effectively.

Q9. Do we have any insight from other schools who have been through the same situation?

The Governing Body are following up with the LA and diocese to confirm if there are any similar case studies we can learn from and factor into our improvement plans.

Mrs Walker has had her own experience of leading a school with an 'requires improvement' OFSTED ruling back to a 'good' ruling. Experience which will be invaluable to the school.

Q10. Can we come back into school for Assembly, Reading mornings and Showcases?

The increase of COVID infections recently had made us cautious to invite parents back into the school. However following your feedback we will review this as a priority and look into alternative formats to bring some of the community/family feeling back into St Gregory's – such as our recent outdoor music concert.

We have also taken note of your feedback in regards to improving communication from the school, Staff manning the front gate, PE lessons, Swimming and the school newsletter (among others) and will address over the next few weeks.

Q11. How can parents help?

As Parent Forum will be established as a priority and we would welcome as many parents as possible to join and share their views and visions for the school. Additionally, you can help in any of the following ways:

- Advocacy of the school in the community and parish
- Fundraising/Engaging with the PTA
- Tidy and enhancement of the outside area for KS1

Please keep in touch! The School and Governing Body need to hear your thoughts and suggestions and want to answer any queries or concerns you may have. It's important for us to keep communication channels open and work together as we address and improve the areas of concern.

You can reach us on any of the following emails:

chair@stgregorys.cheshire.sch.uk; head@stgregorys.cheshire.sch.uk; admin@stgregorys.cheshire.sch.uk;