

Introduction

The governors at Stroud High School have undertaken a formal consultation process to determine the admissions arrangements for entry to Stroud High School from September 2019. The major change within the admissions policy was the proposal to admit boys into the Stroud High Sixth Form, and there were other minor changes to the admissions criteria.

The Process

All academies are their own admissions authorities. When changes are proposed to admissions arrangements, the admissions authority must complete a formal consultation process. The formal consultation period lasted for 6 weeks from Friday 13 December 2017 until 31 January 2018. The formal consultation included members of the Stroud High School community and interested stakeholders.

In recognition of the wide geographical make-up of students at the school the consultation extended to educational institutions across and beyond the county. Views were sought from all primary and secondary schools in Gloucestershire, primary schools that students have come from that are outside of Gloucestershire, Stroud District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Council, Cainscross Parish Council, Stroud Town Council, Stroud and Rodborough Educational Charity and local MPs David Drew and Geoffrey Clifton-Brown.

The Responses to the Consultation

There were a total of 31 consultation responses. The vast majority of responses were supportive of a co-educational Sixth Form environment and were focused on the current collaborative teaching arrangement between Stroud High School and Marling School; however the decision to end the collaborative teaching arrangement is not part of the consultation on the admissions policy.

Number of Respondents	Respondent information
1	Marling parent with signatures from other interested parties
10	Parents of students at Stroud High School and Marling School
11	Stroud High School parents
5	Marling School parents
4	Students at Stroud High School
1	Member of Parliament for Stroud

A central concern for many respondents was the need for a clearer understanding of the reasons for the change. The school considered this carefully and as a result of the responses published to all parents a document entitled *"Understanding the Rationale for Change"* this document covers many questions that were raised in consultation responses and it is available on the [school website](#). The school also held a meeting for parents on Monday 26 February in order to outline the rationale for change, as well as give parents the opportunity to raise their concerns. These views were communicated to governors and were further considered at the subsequent governors' meeting on Tuesday 27 February.

Concerns over the co-education balance of the Stroud High School Sixth Form

The largest number of responses about the organisation of the Sixth Form from 2019 raised concerns about the viability of a separate co-educational environment.

Stroud High School retains approximately 80% of Year 11 students. This means for the next two years there is the capacity for approximately 50 new students. Research amongst other similar local schools would indicate that the school could expect 15-18% boys to join us as we begin this transition to a more co-educational structure. Of course, the boys in the Sixth Form will make a difference to the experience of the whole school. They will be in tutor groups, co-curricular provision, assemblies and House Families. They will have an impact upon students from Years 7-11 in a way that they do not at the moment. Stroud High School will continue to work with Marling School to establish the best use of the shared Sixth Form building and consider the opportunities for shared social and study spaces to maximise the capacity for co-educational integration.

Will the curriculum be impacted by this change?

Respondents raised concerns over the impact of change upon small subjects and subjects currently delivered solely by one school eg Politics and Government is delivered to both boys and girls by Stroud High School staff exclusively, and Computing is delivered to both boys and girls by Marling School staff exclusively.

At Stroud High School we have already recruited an Economics and Business Studies teacher, and we will be recruiting a Stroud High School Psychology teacher to deliver the subject from September 2019. We will also, continue to work with Marling School to ensure that small subjects still have the capacity to run, for example Music and German are already subjects being discussed by the two schools as subjects that are most likely to be delivered in collaboration, as they are now.

Where will the Sixth Form be based?

The current Sixth Form building will retain its current usage over the next 3 years as the transition to the new arrangement is made. Both schools are discussing the prospect of a shared social and study space to support the productive organisation of the new Sixth Forms. By Easter 2018 we hope to have full plans for the long term transition to further dedicated study and social spaces for the new Sixth Form.

Is this move financially driven?

As a result of the proposed new funding formula and the way the school has managed the challenges of austerity, the school has the financial capacity to make this transition. The decision will not result in financial gain.

The consultation process was not effective

Some respondents felt the process for consultation did not adequately enable them to consider the reasons for change and the potential impact upon the Sixth Form.

The school completed its statutory obligations for a consultation on the Admissions Policy for September 2019. The decision to amend the collaborative teaching arrangement with Marling School is a proposal that each school agreed to pursue in December. The consultation process revealed that parents and carers required further understanding about this change and for this reason further documentation was provided and opportunities for parents and students to engage with the school and governors has been extended to ensure the pace of change is appropriate. This process of engagement and reflection is independent from the statutory consultation the school has concluded on the changes to the Admissions Policy for 2019 ie to admit boys into Stroud High School Sixth Form from September 2019.

Conclusion

The full Governing Board of Stroud High School would like to thank all those who contributed to the consultation. Having now carefully considered all of the responses received they have voted to implement the policy that went to consultation.

Jacqui Phillips
Chair of Governors

Chris Ryland
Vice Chair of Governors