



## Partnership Learning

### **Consultation on Proposals for Partnership Learning to set up a new Free special school provision in Dagenham East – Oxlow Bridge School**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

Following a successful application to the Department for Education to set up a new Free special school in the Dagenham area, Partnership Learning is proposing to open Oxlow Bridge School. Oxlow Bridge School's permanent accommodation will be in a new building currently being constructed on a site on Wantz Rd, Dagenham RM10 8HH.

This document sets out the opportunities for interested parties to give their views on the proposals outlined above.

#### **2.0 Partnership Learning**

Partnership Learning is an established multi-academy trust, which oversees a total of 18 schools across five local authorities, ten of which are in Barking and Dagenham:

The Sydney Russell School - a mainstream 4-18 all-through academy in Dagenham  
Riverside School - a mainstream 11-18 secondary Free school on Barking Riverside  
Riverside Primary School – a mainstream 4 -11 primary Free school on Barking Riverside  
Riverside Bridge School – a 4-18 special Free school on Barking Riverside  
Thames View Junior School – a mainstream 7-11 junior academy in Thames View  
Greatfields School - a mainstream 11-18 secondary Free school in central Barking  
Eastbury Primary School - a mainstream 4 -11 primary academy in Barking  
James Cambell Primary School - a mainstream 4 -11 primary academy in Dagenham  
Brook Sixth Form and Academy – a 14-18 University Technical College in Dagenham East  
Greatfields Primary School – a mainstream 4 -11 primary academy in Barking

In its work in Barking and Dagenham, Partnership Learning is:

- Focused on improving the educational opportunities and life chances of the young people of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
- Committed to working as a full member of Barking and Dagenham's existing family of schools and in partnership with the Local Authority
- Committed to providing a high-quality range of schools to enable families to access mainstream and special education for all ages in their own local community.

### 3.0 Background

In common with many other local authorities, Barking and Dagenham is facing a growing demand for special school places. In Barking and Dagenham's case a particular need has been identified for places serving young people with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD).

Partnership Learning responded to this growing local need by submitting an application to the Department for Education to establish a special Free school – Oxlow Bridge School – to be located in the Dagenham East area, offering families an accessible, high-quality learning pathway for children with special needs, in particular those with PMLD. The application was approved and the Trust has been working with partners to prepare the school for opening.

### 4.0 Our Proposals for Oxlow Bridge School

Oxlow Bridge School will open in September 2025 in purpose-built accommodation in Dagenham East. The school will provide 90 places for young people aged 4-19 with severe and complex learning difficulties and will build to capacity over a period of time, starting with 30 pupils in its first year of operation.



Facilities will include a hydro-therapy pool with moveable floor, large adaptable classrooms, well-designed sensory outdoor areas and state of the art ICT.

Most of the planned intake will fall within the category of having Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD). The Salt review 2010 described Pupils with PMLD as having “Profound and multiple learning difficulties as well as complex learning needs. In addition to very severe learning difficulties, pupils have other significant difficulties, such as physical disabilities, sensory impairment or a severe medical condition. Pupils require a high level of adult support, both for their learning needs and also for their personal care.”

#### 4.1 Curriculum

In designing and shaping the curriculum for pupils at Oxlow Bridge there will be a need to recognise that all its pupils will have unique abilities and ways of learning. There will be no one set curriculum pathway that will work for all, and each student is likely to make differing rates of progress which could sometimes be intermittent or ‘working to maintain’ skills.

The curriculum framework at Oxlow Bridge will therefore need to be completely personalised and focus on the holistic needs of each individual, supporting and developing pupils' strengths and abilities through engagement with the world around them including social interactions and relationships. Communication will underpin the curriculum for all pupils and for most of them their personalised programme will be delivered in a very sensory-based way.

However, there are likely to be a few pupils at Oxlow Bridge who will be able to engage in a more structured approach to learning and for these pupils, the principles of personalised learning will continue to apply but there will be evidence of more formal and some subject-based learning seen within their individual programmes.

The school's governance arrangements will enable fast, flexible decision-making at school level, enabling resources to be used efficiently and effectively to continually raise achievement.

The school will benefit from experienced leadership through being a part of Partnership Learning, in particular through close links with Partnership Learning's existing established special school - Riverside Bridge School.

The Trust has also brokered a close partnership with a nearby Outstanding PMLD Special School – Beacon Hill Academy in Thurrock – which will provide leadership support and share expertise in curriculum planning and delivery.

#### 4.2 Extended Provision: before and after school hours

It is envisaged that some school facilities will be available for wider community use at weekends and during school holidays.

It is intended that the new school will contribute to community cohesion through its work with local schools and community organisations

#### 4.3 Pupil Numbers and Accommodation

It is proposed that Oxlow Bridge School will open on 1st September 2025, in its newly-built accommodation on Wantz Rd, Dagenham RM10 8HH.

In September 2025, places for 30 pupils will be available and the school will then grow year on year until it reaches capacity at 90 places, expected by 2028.

#### 4.4 Admissions

##### *Draft Admission Criteria*

As a special school, Oxlow Bridge does not accept direct applications from parents - all applications must come via the EHC Team of the relevant Local Authority; this ensures that every child has their individual case considered.

The school ensures that children with severe, profound and complex needs are admitted in a systematic, efficient manner and that placement is made with confidence that the school can meet the special educational needs of each child.

A young person is eligible to be offered a place at Oxlow Bridge School if they meet the following criteria:

- They have an Education Health Care Plan or are undergoing a statutory assessment of their needs.
- The needs of the learner could be met within our school's resources without adversely affecting any other learner currently attending.
- There is a consensus among professionals that the young person would benefit from our provision which is discussed by the EHC Team of the relevant local authority.
- The young person referred has severe, profound or complex learning disability and in addition to a learning difficulty they may also have other needs including: sensory impairment, physical disability, autism, complex medical needs and/or communication difficulties.
- The school has a vacancy.

We do not have a waiting list as all cases need to be considered by the EHC Team of the relevant local authority.

## **5.0 The Consultation Process**

### **5.1 Key Dates for the Consultation**

Consultation Period Starts: 12 noon on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Drop-in Consultation Event:

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 at any time between 4.30 – 6.30pm at The Sydney Russell School, Parsloes Avenue, Dagenham RM9 5QT

Consultation Period Ends: 12 noon on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025

### **5.2 Actions following on from the Consultation**

Partnership Learning will read and consider all responses received.

The Trust will produce summaries of the responses to the consultations, which will be published on their website: [www.partnershiplearning.com](http://www.partnershiplearning.com)

The Trust hopes to be able to address comments received and will explain in the summary on their website how they have tried to do this and how they intend to take into account in their plans the comments received.

The summary will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Education in order to inform her decision on whether to enter into a funding agreement with Partnership Learning to set up Oxlow Bridge School in Dagenham East.

## **6.0 How to contact us and find out more**

You may find out more about the proposals of Partnership Learning by visiting their website [www.partnershiplearning.com](http://www.partnershiplearning.com) - or by emailing Partnership Learning, at:

[office@partnershiplearning.com](mailto:office@partnershiplearning.com)

You are also invited to attend an informal drop-in Consultation Event, to give your views or ask questions, at The Sydney Russell School, Parsloes Avenue, Dagenham RM9 5QT on Tuesday 3rd December 2024, at any time between 4.30 – 6.30pm.

## **7.0 Consultation Questions**

The purpose of this consultation, carried out under the requirements of the Academies Act 2010, is to ascertain the views of interested persons on the proposal of Partnership Learning to set up Oxlow Bridge School.

You are therefore invited to give your views on the questions of:

1. Do you think it is a good idea that the proposed School – Oxlow Bridge School - should be set up?
2. What are your views on the proposed location of the school?
3. The Trust that will run Oxlow Bridge School is required to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education, an example of which can be found on the DfE website <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-and-free-school-funding-agreements-multi-academy-trust>

Do you agree that Partnership Learning should sign a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education to set up Oxlow Bridge School in Dagenham East?

4. Do you have any further comments on any of the proposals outlined in this consultation document?

You may send your views and comments at any time during the consultation period to the following email address:

[office@partnershiplearning.com](mailto:office@partnershiplearning.com)

or by post to:

Chief Executive,  
Partnership Learning,  
Parsloes Avenue,  
Dagenham,  
Essex,  
RM9 5QS

You may also give your views in person at a drop-in Consultation Event at The Sydney Russell School, Parsloes Avenue, Dagenham RM9 5QT on Tuesday 3rd December 2024, at any time between 4.30 – 6.30pm.

Alternatively, or in addition, you may wish to respond by answering the questions in the Consultation Questionnaire below and sending your answers by email or post to the addresses above.

**8.0 Consultation Questionnaire**

**1. Do you think it is a good idea that the proposed School – Oxlow Bridge School - should be set up?**

Yes  No

**Further Comments:**

**2. What are your views on the proposed location of the school?**

**Comments:**

**3. Do you agree that Partnership Learning should sign a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education to set up Oxlow Bridge School in Dagenham East?**

Yes  No

Note; The Trust that will run Oxlow Bridge School is required to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education, an example of which can be found on the DfE website <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-and-free-school-funding-agreements-multi-academy-trust>

**Further Comments:**

**4. Do you have any further comments on any of the proposals outlined in this consultation document?**

## Appendix 1 Consultation Summary

*This is a summary - for full consultation document visit: [www.partnershiplearning.com](http://www.partnershiplearning.com)*

### Consultation

A consultation is currently underway regarding proposals to set up a new Free special school in the Dagenham area, following an application to the Department for Education by Partnership Learning, a local multi-academy trust. Partnership Learning is proposing to open Oxlow Bridge School in a newly-constructed building on Wantz Road, Dagenham RM10 8HH. The school will be a co-educational special Free school for 90 young people between the ages of 4 to 19 and will have an initial intake of 30 pupils. The majority of pupils admitted are likely to have Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD).

### Background

Barking and Dagenham is facing a growing demand for special school places, in particular for those serving young people with PMLD. Partnership Learning responded to this growing local need by submitting an application to the Department for Education to establish a special Free school offering families an accessible, high-quality learning pathway for children with special needs, in particular those with PMLD. The application was approved and the Trust has been working with partners to prepare the school for opening.

### The Consultation Process

Starts: 12 noon 25th November 2024

Ends: 12 noon on 12 noon on Monday 6th January

Drop-in Consultation Event to give views in person or ask questions:

Tuesday 3rd December 2024 at any time between 4.30 – 6.30 pm at The Sydney Russell School, Parsloes Avenue, Dagenham RM9 5QT

You may find out more about the proposal of Partnership Learning by visiting their website – [www.partnershiplearning.com](http://www.partnershiplearning.com) - or by emailing Partnership Learning, at: [office@partnershiplearning.com](mailto:office@partnershiplearning.com)

### Consultation Questions

The purpose of this consultation, carried out under the requirements of the Academies Act 2010, is to ascertain the views of interested persons on the proposal of Partnership Learning to set up Oxlow Bridge School.

You are therefore invited to give your views on the questions of:

1. Do you think it is a good idea that the proposed School – Oxlow Bridge School - should be set up?
2. What are your views on the proposed location of the school?
3. The Trust that will run Oxlow Bridge School is required to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education. Do you agree that Partnership Learning should sign a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education to set up Oxlow Bridge School in Dagenham East?
4. Do you have any further comments on any of the proposals outlined in this consultation document?

You may send your views and comments at any time during the consultation period to the following email address: [office@partnershiplearning.com](mailto:office@partnershiplearning.com)

or by post to:

Chief Executive,  
Partnership Learning,  
Parsloes Avenue,  
Dagenham RM9 5QS