

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

**Proposal for a new Sikh Voluntary Aided School,
Slough.**

7th March 2003

Consultation Statement

Purpose of this paper

- 1) The purpose of this consultation paper is to provide the local community with details of a proposed new Sikh Voluntary Aided primary school in Slough, and to invite opinions and comment. Please reply using the form at the end of this leaflet. Your views will be summarised and presented initially to the Cabinet Committee of Slough Borough Council as part of the planning process. Your completed form should be returned by 18th April 2003.

To assist in the understanding of the educational terms used in this document, footnotes have been provided at the end.

- 2 An open meeting for the purpose of this consultation has been arranged for the 25th March 2003 at 7pm in the Ramgharia Sikh Educational and Community Centre, Woodland Ave, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 3BU

Introduction

Provision for a Sikh V.A. Primary School in Slough

- 3) Faith schools have a good record of delivering a high quality of education to pupils and many parents have welcomed the clear ethos of these schools. The government recognises this and therefore welcomes more faith schools , where there is clear local demand from parents and the community.
- 4) For the first time, Muslim, Sikh and Greek Orthodox schools have been brought inside the state system and are being funded on the same basis as, for example, Church of England and Catholic schools have been for some time. Last year the following faith schools were given provisional funding by the government:
 - 42 Roman Catholic/Church of England
 - 1 Muslim
 - 1 Sikh
- 5) Based on these government policies, the Slough Sikh Community has taken steps to establish a brand new Sikh faith school in Slough. The government has ear marked £6.2 Million towards the building costs.

The Proposal

- 6) The Slough Sikh Educational Gurmat Trust proposes to open a new Primary School with a standard number of 60, with a nursery unit for 26 full time equivalent pupil places, from September 2005 The proposed site is off Wexham Road, adjacent to St. Ethelbert's Roman Catholic Primary School.

The Aims of the School

- 7) It is extremely important for any educational establishment to have a mission. The success of the Sikh School is based on the following aims:-
- To build a strong community basis on the Sikh ethos of equality, honour, social responsibility and righteousness.
 - To enable all pupils to achieve their potential through the highest standard of learning, whilst developing self-esteem, self-confidence and consideration for others.
 - To strengthen the bonds between home, community and school, this will provide each pupil with the support necessary to participate in the wider society.
 - To provide an environment for pupils where they can feel comfortable within their own identity and culture building individuals with strong self awareness and citizenship, with mutual understanding of others regardless of colour, class, gender or religion.
 - To make provision for life long learning and personal development.

Sikh Ethos

- 8) The fundamental belief of Sikhism is that all of humanity is equal, regardless of gender, faith, creed and caste, and the respect for one another's values and customs are the right of every individual without oppression or segregation from society.
- 9) On the religious principles of Sikhism, it teaches that there is only 'one' supreme lord who has many names, and some call this supreme lord Waheguru, Allah, God, Shiva, Ram, Buddha, Jehovah, etc., and that every one individual has their own unique path in getting to the supreme lord. For this reason Sikhism teaches not to discriminate against any faith as all faiths have their own just paths to the one supreme lord.
- 10) Sikhism had its origins in a multicultural and multi-faith society in India. Sikhs have always lived amongst a variety of people, be it in India, America, Canada, East Africa, Singapore, Australia or Great Britain. They believe in respecting others and getting respected. Sikhism is inclusive. It is not an exclusive faith.

Admissions Policy

11) Whilst priority will be given to children of the Sikh faith, we intend that the school should have an inclusive admission policy and we will designate a proportion of open places for local children. We envisage that the following proportions and pupil numbers will be designated for the admission year group:

- 80 % Sikh Pupils = 48
- 20% Non-Sikh Pupils = 12

School Places in Slough

12) Slough has a multicultural community and this is represented within its schools. .

Table 1 – Slough Pupils according to Faith Group

	Other Christian	Muslim	Roman Catholic	Sikh	Hindu	Other	Unclassified	Total
Primary Schools	3048	2432	1477	930	418	722	1309	10336
As %	29%	24%	14%	9%	4%	7%	13%	
Secondary Schools	1920	1780	1356	918	433	516	1057	7979
As %	24%	22%	17%	12%	5%	6%	13%	
Total	4968	4212	2833	1848	851	1237	2366	18315
As %	27%	23%	15%	10%	5%	7%	13%	

Source: Slough Borough Council

13) Within Slough there are currently a range of established schools represented.

Table 2 – Types of Denominational School in Slough

	Non denominational		Church of England	Roman Catholic
	Community	Foundation	Voluntary Controlled	Voluntary Aided
Primary				
Number of Schools	21	6	2	5
Percentage of Pupils	52.1%	27.4%	4.7%	15.8%
Secondary				
Number of Schools	4	4	1	2
Percentage of Pupils	32.0%	42.6%	7.0%	18.4%

Source: Slough School Organisation Plan 2002 - 2007

14) The number of primary pupils is not expected to change significantly over the next five years. About 10% of surplus places is expected to exist in Slough according to the Slough school organisation plan. The addition of a two form entry school in the context of a stable population could potentially increase the level of surplus places to about 14%. However, the new school is likely to attract some pupils from outside of Slough, and it will provide places for Sikh pupils from Slough who would otherwise seek places outside the Borough. In monitoring the level of surplus places the LEA will seek to review the impact of the new school.

Table 3 -Number of primary pupils expected in future years

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Number of Pupils	10336	10336	10275	10295	10217	10103
Capacity of Schools	11344	11344	11344	11344	11344	11344
Occupancy	91%	91%	91%	91%	90%	89%

Situation in Neighbouring Boroughs

- 15) The only other Sikh faith school within a neighbouring borough is the Guru Nanak Primary and Secondary Sikh School in Hayes. Currently, this school is heavily oversubscribed and it is estimated that approximately 80 pupils from the Slough borough attend this school at a primary level.
- 16) The Hillingdon School Organisation Plan from 2002/2003 shows that the nearest primary school planning areas to the Slough Borough - Hillingdon, Uxbridge, Hayes Cranford and Harmondsworth - have need for expanding their pupil places.

The National Curriculum

- 17) The basic curriculum of the Sikh school will be based on the National Curriculum that all government funded schools in England teach. The curriculum aims to be broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of those living in contemporary society. Teacher selection will be based on teaching abilities and merits.
- 18) In addition to the National Curriculum the school will take advantage of teaching principles based on the Sikh ethos, religion and customs. This will include personal and social disciplines, traditional south Asian music (Rabab, Tubala etc.) and Sikh history. The school intends to educate its students in a range of other faiths, so that they are able to have a fair and balanced understanding of all other societies.
- 19) Provision will also be made in the time table for non-national curriculum activities. Non-Sikh pupils will be welcome to join in if their parents wish them to do so. These activities will be held outside the core school day, in the morning or in the evening. Supervision and care will be provided for pupils staying on.
- 20) Religious education will continue to be part of the curriculum. The governing body in the Sikh voluntary aided school will determine the religious education and it will be based on guidelines set by both the Sikh School Committee and the local education authority. Arrangements for worship will also meet the requirements of the Sikh School Committee and Slough Borough Council. In this way the Sikh school will continue to involve representatives from other local faiths and religions in school assemblies in order to reflect the needs of a multi-denominational school.

Staffing

- 21) Teaching and non-teaching staff will comprise Sikhs, and non-Sikhs who support the Sikh ethos, who are in a position to be models to their pupils both in word and deed. Staff of high academic, moral and religious character will be selected. The quality of teaching staff will be a major factor in the school's success. The arrangements for the employment of teaching and support staff will be substantially the same as in foundation and voluntary aided schools.

Governing Body

- 22) The School will be run by a Governing Body made up of Parents, Teachers/staff Local Education and lay Governors, in a similar way as any other school in the Borough.
- 23) Governing bodies of voluntary aided schools have similar responsibilities and independence to foundation schools. As well as responsibility for the direction of the curriculum, for managing the budget, for reporting to parents and for raising levels of achievement - which all governing bodies have - voluntary aided school governors have responsibilities for admissions, for the employment of teaching and support staff and for the building.
- 24) The majority of the members of a voluntary aided school governing body are appointed by the school's promoters, in this case it will be the Sikh School Committee. By law some foundation governors must be parents of pupils attending the school. Generally voluntary aided foundation governors bring wide and valuable experience to the role.

Support

- 25) Slough Sikh Primary School will work in close collaboration with Guru Nanak Sikh Primary and Secondary Schools in Hayes for mutual help. It will also work closely with all schools in Slough, and the Local Education Authority, to promote community cohesion and to ensure that children from different cultural backgrounds have an opportunity to meet and better understand each other.

Buildings and grounds

- 26) Governors, supported by the Sikh School Committee, will be responsible for the external maintenance and the provision of new buildings. They will have to meet 10% of the capital costs of the initial build and any subsequent

improvement, enlargement or major maintenance projects. The remaining 90% of the cost of approved projects would be funded by central government.

- 27) Though the Sikh community in Slough and the UK, and the parents of pupils, will be involved in fund-raising, as they are in most schools, they will not be asked to make regular contributions to the costs of building improvements and maintenance.

The consultation process

28) A summary of this document has been distributed to:

- Parents of children who may wish their children to attend the Sikh School in Slough
- Slough residents (via libraries, community centres)
- Slough schools
- Other local community, foundation and church schools
- Other interested parties.

The document will also be made available on the web at the following address:

<http://www.sloughsikhschool.org>; <http://www.slough.gov.uk>

29) Local Authority Planning Approval

The proposal will be subject to the local authority planning approval which will include a separate consultation process at a later date.

30) A public consultation meeting has been arranged as stated in the beginning of this document. At the meeting there will be a short presentation on the proposals, an opportunity to ask questions and the chance to express opinions. Views will be recorded and taken into account in deciding whether to proceed.

31) In addition to the form provided written views are also welcome. They should be sent to:

The General Secretary
Slough Sikh Educational Gurmat Trust
PO Box 2050
Slough PDO, Berkshire, SL1 3FS

31) All comments should be returned by 18th April 2003 at the latest.

Consultation Reply

Please return this reply sheet by 18th April 2003 to:

The General Secretary
Slough Sikh Educational Gurmat Trust
PO Box 2050
Slough PDO, Berkshire, SL1 3FS

1) Please indicate, by ticking the appropriate box, whether or not you support the proposal set out below to:

- Open a new Sikh Primary School with a standard number of 360 full time equivalent pupils from September 2005.

Please tick one of the following box:

I/we support the proposal

I/we do not support the proposal

1) Please answer the following questions about yourself:

Your Name:

Your School(s)/Organisation:
(if you are associated with one or more)

Your residential post code:

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Your faith/Belief:
(Please tick one only)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Sikh
<input type="checkbox"/>	Protestant
<input type="checkbox"/>	Catholic
<input type="checkbox"/>	Muslim
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jewish
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hindu
<input type="checkbox"/>	Buddhist
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jehovah Witness
<input type="checkbox"/>	Atheist
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please Specify below)

Please also help us to collate peoples views by stating if you are one or more of the following:

