

**Consultation on our Proposal to
Extend the Age Range of
Pinchmill Lower School
to a Single Phase Primary
age 4 to 11 Provision for
2017-2018**



CONSULTATION ON OUR PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THE AGE RANGE OF PINCHMILL LOWER SCHOOL, THE OLD ROAD, FELMERSHAM, BEDFORD, MK43 7JD, TO A SINGLE PHASE PRIMARY PROVISION FOR 2017/2018

The Purpose of the Consultation Document

The purpose of this document is to provide information on a proposal to extend the upper age range of Pinchmill Lower School from 9 years to 11 years, to create a full primary provision. This will mean that the school will take children from age 4 (Year R) to age 11 (Year 6)

1. Background

Over the past ten years, there have been several attempts to implement a two-tier system of education into Bedfordshire as a whole and, most recently, into Bedford Borough. These have not been successful for various financial and political reasons. During that time, some parts of the Local Authority have moved to a full two-tier system of education, most notably those schools that are south of the river and feed into Bedford Academy. In other parts of the Borough, some previously designated Lower Schools now operate as Primary Schools retaining pupils into Years 5 and 6 (e.g. Livingstone Primary), whilst a number of Upper Schools now have some form of intake into Year 7 e.g. Biddenham Upper. The freedom of Academies to determine their own structure means that there is a patchwork of provision within the Borough that can be quite confusing to parents. The Borough Council, as part of its commitment to drive up educational standards, wishes to see a far more coherent system of education that provides, where possible, a single point of transfer at the end of Year 6.

There are parts of the Borough that need to retain a three-tier system for the time being because some of the feeder Lower/Middle schools are in Central Bedfordshire, which is not proposing to change its system. This will be the case for the Wootton pyramid of schools and provision also needs to be made in Great Barford for children who enter Alban Academy from Central Bedfordshire Lower Schools.

To enable this change to take place, the Borough Council has secured sufficient capital resources to provide additional teaching accommodation so that all Lower Schools can retain pupils into Years 5 and 6, to facilitate current Middle Schools either becoming primary or secondary education providers, and to enable Upper Schools to introduce, or increase, provision for pupils in Years 7 & 8. The aim is that, by September 2019, the vast majority of schools in the Borough will be operating a traditional, two-tier system of education.

2. Why the need to change?

Across Bedford Borough there is a multiplicity of arrangements which raise means that we have a system that:

- Can create confusion for parents
- With a dwindling number of middle schools nationally it has means it is difficult to recruit because of limited career options
- Teachers are no longer trained for the middle years
- With transfer at 11, the same school will be able to deliver the whole of KS2 and be accountable for progress from KS1 to KS2
- Transition points will match the end of national curriculum key stages and be in line with 95% of the country

3. It has already been noted that current educational provision in the Borough is something of a patchwork. The following examples illustrate that notion:

- All lower schools south of the river that feed into Bedford Academy are now operating as full primary schools.
- Mark Rutherford Upper School operates a dual admission policy into both Years 7 and 9 in order to accommodate pupils from Putnoe Primary School and the current feeder Middle Schools.
- The St Francis of Assisi Academy Trust (Federation of Bedford Catholic Schools) provides all-through catholic education in its four schools.
- Biddenham Upper School started accepting students into Year 7, from Great Denham Primary School, from September 2015.
- Queens Park Academy is now designated as a Primary School as is the former Livingstone Lower School.

- Goldington Academy, Goldington Green Academy and The Hills Academy have already begun a process of consultation with a view to providing primary/secondary education in that area.

Whilst the three-tier system of education has served the pupils and families of Bedfordshire very well for the past 40 years, changes at local and national level mean that this system is now an exception, rather than a rule. At its height of popularity in the 1980s, there were over 1400 Middle Schools in England. As of September 2015, there are just 147 left in 17 out of 150 Local Authorities, the largest number being found in the combined totals of Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. At least 95% of children nationally are being educated in a two-tier system and teacher training colleges no longer provide courses for middle years teachers. All teachers are now trained as either Primary or Secondary specialists.

When the National Curriculum was introduced in the late 1980s, and Key Stages were subsequently implemented, the intention was that Key Stages 1 & 2 would be delivered up to the age of 11 and Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 were taught in secondary schools. The three-tier system of education has generally meant that there was a split between Lower, Middle and Upper schools as to where Key Stages 2 and 3 were taught, with no single entity having complete responsibility for delivery.

The final element to consider is that, under the DfE's School Organisation guidance, introduced in 2014, it is now possible for individual governing bodies to consult on extending the age-range of the school by up to two years (apart from adding a 6th form) without the need to follow a statutory process, providing they have the necessary accommodation and consents to do this. Given the support of the Borough Council to meet those accommodation needs, it is felt appropriate for each school governing body to carry out its own consultation on the proposed change so that parents and the wider community can comment on their own situation. At the same time, it is important to note that Bedford Borough Council is key to the success of this initiative through its overall strategic plan, commitment to raising educational standards and securing the necessary capital resources.

4. Proposal

We believe that our children would benefit from a full Primary School setting that is designed to meet the learning needs of a child at both Key Stages 1 and 2 and lead them, seamlessly, into the subsequent three Key Stages.

To summarise, we believe the benefits of this proposal will be:

- the continuation of the curriculum, whereby we can ensure continuity within Key Stage 2 fully without having to consider the interruption of transition at Year 4;
- we will be accountable for attainment at Key stage 1 and 2
- within the national curriculum we can ensure that there are no gaps in what the children are taught;
- whole school planning which can map the progress of curriculum subjects all the way to Year 6 ensuring the foundations built lower down the school are carried through allowing all

children to continue working in an environment that completes their entire Primary education in one setting;

- sustain high standards of education and maintain the nurturing and well-being of children by;
- providing a values-based, Primary-focused, learning environment until the end of Year 6;
- nurturing our children and helping them work together towards their aspirations in an environment they are used to;
- offering children in Years R - 6 an exciting and innovative curriculum provision that meets their needs and supports them to achieve their full potential;
- increasing parental choice with regard to the variety of primary options and opportunities that are being offered; and,
- avoiding two transitions at the end of years 4 and 8; ensuring that the provision at the school links seamlessly with other local providers.
- driving up standards in Bedford Borough and meet the local area vision for development including the progress of vulnerable groups.
- aiding teacher recruitment and retention as fewer and fewer local authorities have three tier and teachers are trained for the two tier system.

You are invited to meetings as part of this consultation – please see the attached schedule.

5. When will these changes come into effect?

If the Governing Body decides to change the age-range, and this is endorsed by any bodies that need to ratify the proposal, the following will apply:

From	Action
September 2017	Year 4 pupils remain at the school and move into Year 5
September 2018	Year 5 pupils remain at the school and move into Year 6
September 2019	Parents of Year 6 pupils express a preference to join a secondary school in Year 7

6. Numbers on Roll – changes from September 2017 onwards

Date	Year R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	TOTAL
Sep 2015	9	11	12	13	14			60

Sep 2016	15	15	15	15	15			75
Sep 2017	15	15	15	15	15	15		90
Sep 2018	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	105
Sep 2019	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	105

7. Accommodation

We intend to build a further 2 classrooms. This will ensure that the school has adequate classrooms with suitable furniture and resources to meet the needs of the 9 to 11 age range.

8. Curriculum

The National Curriculum will be delivered across the full primary age range. All staff are already fully trained in teaching the primary years. CPD will be offered to staff who do not have experience of teaching years 5 and 6. We will also be working closely with middle school colleagues to share good practice and ensure a smooth transition for pupils.

Where additional staff are required, the Council will be working with schools to maximize opportunities for middle school staff wishing to continue to teach in the primary phase.

In line with primary schools across the country we will deliver this broad and balanced National Curriculum without the need for specialist facilities but continuing as a school to deliver high quality teaching using specialist teachers for areas including PE, Music and Languages.

Although the use of specialist facilities is not necessary in order to deliver the full National Curriculum across the primary years, we will work with secondary schools in order to access any specialist facilities as deemed appropriate.

We will continue to liaise with next phase schools and local cluster schools to ensure a progressive learning journey for our children.

9. How will school admissions be managed?

Currently, our admissions are managed by the Local Authority (Bedford Borough). Places are allocated based on the admissions criteria, which take into account various factors such as catchment area, whether there are siblings at the school or whether the child is 'looked after'.

There are no proposals to change the admissions criteria for the school, which are currently:

1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
2.	Pupils living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
3.	Other pupils living in the catchment area
5.	Other siblings
6.	Any other children

We will be including the following statement in our admission arrangements for 2017, in line with the Admissions Code of practice

Admission Outside Normal Age Group

In exceptional circumstances the Admissions Authority will consider agreeing to the admission of a child to a year group other than is applicable to their chronological age. This may be appropriate, for example, where premature birth has led to children falling into a year group other than would have been the case had they been carried to full term. Similarly, where decisions to allow out of age group education have been taken by previous schools it will normally be appropriate for children to remain with their established year group. Other circumstances will be considered on their merits and in all cases decisions will be taken in the best interests of the child.

All such requests should be made directly to the admissions authority at the time of application including any supporting evidence. If they are made as part of the coordinated admissions process the application form should also be completed and submitted to the local authority. If the request is approved the application will be processed in the normal way. Applications outside that process will be considered as casual admissions.

If a request is denied a place may be offered in the age-appropriate year group.

11. What are the arrangements for the consultation process?

The purpose of the consultation is to seek views of pupils, parents and the wider community about the proposals being put forward. This will allow the School Governors to make a fully informed decision as to whether to make a recommendation to the Secretary of State to go ahead with the proposals outlined in this document. It also provides a time where you can ask questions about the proposals or make alternative suggestions.

You can take part and have your say in the following ways

- By completing the attached response form
- By phone – 01234 781371

- By email – enquiries@pinchmill.beds.sch.uk
- By letter - Pinchmill Lower School, The Old Road, Felmersham, Beds, MK43 7JD
- By attendance at meeting 2:30pm 17th November

The consultation will run from 9 November 2015 until 12 noon on 18 December 2015. We are specifically consulting the following groups, and would encourage anyone interested to read through this proposal document and give us your views:

- Bedford Borough Council
- Parents of every registered pupil at the school
- Parents of potential pupils in our catchment area and in Early Years provision
- Staff who work at the school
- Our local communities and our current site users
- All other schools within Bedford Borough
- The Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses
- Anyone else who has an interest in the proposal

Once the consultation process is completed at the end of this term, the Governing Body of the school will meet in early January to consider the responses and to answer queries that have been raised about particular issues. It will then publish a Consultation Report on the school's website.

The Governing Body will then decide whether or not it proceeds with the proposal of raising the upper age-limit of the school from 9 years to 11 years, thus creating an all-through primary provision. This will mean that the school will take children from age 4 (Year R) to age 11 (Year 6).

Other schools in Bedford Borough are conducting similar consultations. For information about other schools please visit the Council's website.

Event	Timescale
Consultation process	9 November 2015 – noon 18 December 2015
Consultation Events:	17 November 2015: School Hall 1430-1530 (parents and wider community)
Analysis of responses and preparation of Consultation Report	18 December 2015 – 11 January 2016
If the Governing Body decide to proceed, the decision, and the reasons for it, will be communicated within one week to those listed opposite and the decision and Consultation Report will be posted	January 2016 The Local Authority The Diocese of St Albans (CofE) (where applicable) The parents of every registered pupil Anyone else who we deem appropriate

on the school's website	
Implementation	The Governing Body will inform the Secretary of State of the decision by ensuring the DfE's Register of Educational Establishments (EduBase) is updated
Final Implementation of Proposals	1 September 2017

**CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THE AGE RANGE TO A SINGLE PHASE PRIMARY PROVISION
2017-2018**

Please take the time to read our Consultation document and complete this questionnaire. Your feedback is important to us. Please email completed questionnaires to enquiries@pinchmill.beds.sch.uk, hand in at the school office or send by post to:

Andy Evans
Chair of Governors
Pinchmill Lower School
The Old Road
Felmersham
Bedford
MK43 7JD.

All responses must be received by noon on 18 December 2015 please.

PROPOSAL

From September 2017, should Year 5 pupils remain at Pinchmill Lower School and move into Year 6 from 2018?

Yes	Don't know	No

Comment (Please give any comments or suggestions you may have including any alternative proposals you wish to put forward here:)

1. Please tell us who you are.

We intend to analyse responses according to stakeholder group.

Please tick all the boxes that apply in the list below.

- ☐ Parent of a student(s) currently attending the school
- ☐ Member of the Governing Body at the school
- ☐ Member of staff who works at the school
- ☐ Parent of a child in local Early Years provision
- ☐ Governor, including Headteacher, at a neighbouring schools
- ☐ Member of the local community
- ☐ Representative of the Local Authority
- ☐ Representative of a Diocese
- ☐ Other (please specify)

2. We will respect any desire to remain anonymous (no one will be publicly identified in the report on the consultation) but if you are content for us to know your name (or names if this is a joint response), please enter it/them here:

3. If you would like us to send you a copy of the final consultation report, please provide an email address here: