

## **Business Case for proposed school expansion for September 2016 implementation.**

### **Leighton Middle School, Church Square, Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 1EX**

1	<p>The need to provide local schools for local children, ensuring a sense of community belonging and also promoting sustainable modes of travel.</p>
	<p>Leighton Middle School is geographically situated in the heart to of Leighton Buzzard. It enjoys a town centre location, whilst still enjoying a spacious park like campus. It is a maintained school that provides a good quality of education for pupils from across Leighton Buzzard, Linslade and the surrounding villages.</p> <p>The January 2015 Census shows that 42% of out our current pupils come to us from our catchment area but a higher proportion of pupils are drawn to the school from other areas of the town. As pupil numbers in Leighton Buzzard and Linslade increase, the number of pupils in our catchment area is increasing and the proportion of pupils coming to the school from our catchment area is also increasing. This means that in the future more pupils who attend the school are likely to live closer to the school.</p> <p>Currently, 64% of our pupils walk or cycle to school with 10% of our pupils using the school bus or other public bus services – 2014 Travel Survey. As pupil numbers in the town grow and the school expands, a more significant proportion of our pupils will come from our more immediate catchment area and so it is anticipated that the need for car journeys will decrease.</p> <p>Central Bedfordshire's School Organisation plan shows that a significant amount of housing development in Leighton Buzzard is creating increased demand for school places across all phases of education in the South Leighton pyramid. From September 2016 additional middle school places will be essential.</p> <p>Section 76 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on the local authority to promote sustainable modes of travel to meet the school travel needs in their area. Leighton Middle School's central location means that walking routes and bus routes make access easy and sustainable.</p> <p>To identify ways in which the school can further improve the use of sustainable transport a Highways Assessment and a new School Travel Plan have been commissioned. The school is committed to encouraging cycling and each year more than half of our Year 6 pupils take Bike Ability courses.</p> <p>Our extended provision of Breakfast Club, Afterschool Club and other school clubs means that travel times are to some extent distributed beyond the normal school day.</p> <p>Section 38 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places the duty on governing bodies of maintained schools to promote community cohesion. By expanding the provision at Leighton Middle School children living in the same local community will be able to be part of the school community.</p> <p>Community ownership of the school is strong and if the school expands it will be developed further, as the expansion will mean improved facilities that will benefit both the school and the local community it serves. Currently, each year the school opens its doors to the wider community through a number of events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evening on the Lawns</li><li>• Annual participation in Town Council Living History Days</li><li>• Town Council events</li><li>• Community Lettings</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bluebell Childcare – After School Club</li> <li>• Commercial lettings</li> <li>• Mencap summer play scheme</li> </ul> <p>We have strong community links with many local churches. The school buildings are used weekly by New Life Community Church; they use a range of our facilities for their weekly services. Our local parish church is also a significant partner for the school – occasional lettings of our School Car Park relate to the Parish Church. Expansion of our car park provision would therefore benefit the local community.</p>
2	<p>The need to create schools that are of sufficient size to be financially and educationally viable.</p> <p>The number of pupils requiring school places in the town will continue to grow as a result of housing development and demographic changes. The infrastructure to support the town growth is an immediate need identified in Central Bedfordshire's Organisation Plan. To accommodate the first phase of required middle school places it is proposed that Leighton Middle School expand from 120 pupils in each year group to 150.</p> <p>The Governors and Senior Staff of the school wish to ensure that as a result of this expansion our school maintains its current distinctive ethos and maintains its high standards. We have considered the implications of this and we believe that this can be achieved. We believe that the expansion has the potential to enhance both educational and financial viability of the school.</p> <p>A 600 pupil school is better placed to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. Increasing teaching staff numbers means there is a greater opportunity to have a better balance of curriculum expertise within the staff group. It is also a more helpful pupil number for ensuring that the primary secondary balance of staff required in a middle school context is achieved.</p> <p>Physically, the expansion will create a purpose built Year 5 provision allowing the school to continue its practice of having a substantial proportion of the Year 5 experience built around primary practice. This enhances transition for pupils and ensures that pupil progress is maximised.</p> <p>Some specialist room provision, increased toilet provision and increased dining space is also envisaged in the expansion.</p> <p>A five form entry school will have economies of scale in terms of key roles – middle leaders will oversee larger teaching teams and year teams – thus providing greater value for money.</p> <p>Expansion will also ensure that there will be sufficient resources to enable the school to attract high calibre experienced staff to leadership roles. It will enable the school to recruit and maintain experienced teachers so that their expertise is not lost and that future performance is not compromised. When the current Head retires, it will make it more likely that the school will be able to attract experienced candidates to the school for the Headship role, which will help to ensure that the school and maintains its current success has a continued focus on improvement.</p> <p>The proposed expansion should increase the value for money that the school offers with, in some cases, existing personnel and resources covering the needs of 600 pupils without additional expenditure.</p> <p>The developments proposed on the site to accommodate the expansion will also upgrade an existing building on the site to current building regulation requirements, which will be a potential cost saving in terms of capital expenditure in the future.</p>
3	<p>The ability to support the expansion of local popular and successful schools or to link expanding schools with popular and successful schools.</p>

**Leighton Middle School is a good school** evidence for this is found in Ofsted 2013 and Challenge Partner Quality Assurance Reviews 2014 and 2015.

Data outcomes also support the fact that Leighton Middle School remains a good school.

#### End of Year Six Data

	2013		2014		2015	
Percentages	Level 4+	Level 5 +	Level 4+	Level 5+	Level 4+	Level 5+
English	Reading 89 Writing 84	Reading 59 Writing 24	Reading 91 Writing 92	Reading 65 Writing 46	Reading 95 Writing 97	Reading 56 Writing 58
Maths	84	39 (11 level 6)	92	49 (14 Level 6)	87	45 ( 15 Level 6)
Science	92	42	97	51	97	67

Percentage	2013	2014	2015
Achieving Level 4+ in Reading, Writing and Maths	72%	86%	85%
Making expected progress in Reading	88%	91%	95%
Making expected progress in Writing	90%	96%	97%
Making expected progress in Maths	85%	91%	86%

#### End of Year Eight Data

	2013		2014		2015	
Percentages	Level 5 +	Level 6+	Level 5+	Level 6+	Level 5+	Level 6+
English	Reading 93 Writing 88	Reading 69 Writing 45	Reading 92 Writing 83	Reading 74 Writing 52	Reading 92 Writing 88	Reading 78 Writing 49
Maths	92	76	91	81	95	79
Science	97	74	97	81	100	80

#### Leighton Middle School Pupils' GCSE performance

See section 6

**Leighton Middle School is an extremely popular school.** Over many years Leighton has been oversubscribed.

	Intake year 2012	Intake year 2013	Intake year 2014	Intake year 2015
PAN	120	120	120	120
First choices	138	142	174	199
Difference	18	22	54	79

**4 The potential to further promote and support robust partnerships and learning communities**

Leighton Middle School is an active member of the effective LC2 learning community. LC2 has a leadership steering committee, strategic plan and paid employees.

The Head Teacher has been an active member of the leadership steering group since it has been established.

The partnership provides:

1. A programme of CPD for the local area including leadership development and NQT training.
2. Regular liaison opportunities for Middle/Upper and Middle /Lower schools to assist with transition and to ensure curriculum progression within the community.
3. Governor liaison and training.
4. Clarity on transition arrangements and programmes for pupils.
5. Opportunities for joint learning events and foci – G and T workshops, Year of Reading, Year of the Arts.
6. Support for SENCOs.
7. An active and effective School Sports Partnership led by Vandyke Upper School
8. Additional welfare support for pupils – counselling and Parent Support Workers
9. The opportunity for joint procurement on services and contracts

Leighton Middle School belongs to the national organisation, Challenge Partners. Challenge Partners is a charity, owned and led by schools, who work together to lead school improvement. Each year as part of Challenge Partners our school has a Quality Assurance Review led by a Lead Inspector and senior leaders from our school take part in QARs in schools in other parts of the country. This enables us to challenge and develop our practice.

Leighton Middle School has a strong and experienced Governing Body who works closely with the school on improvement strategy. The Governing Body is drawn from a broad spectrum of the local community.

We believe that at Leighton Middle School we have strong capacity for self-improvement and supporting the improvement of others.

**5 The ambition to achieve a single phase of education 0 -19 and reduce school transfer points**

Leighton Middle School works closely with partner schools across Leighton Buzzard and Linslade through the LC2 partnership described above. Although this is a soft partnership it is set up with the intention of improving transition and driving forward standards.

**6 The need to support the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA).**

Leighton Middle School pupils are valued by the local upper schools who report that they arrive with high aspirations and embedded behaviour for learning strategies. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their transition to upper school and next stage of their education. In 2014 our two feeder upper schools achieved 58% & 57% A\*-C GCSE grades including English and Maths. 55% was the national average. Pupils from LMS achieved 64% & 68% respectively.

	<p>Leighton Middle School regularly offers work experience placements to upper schools in the town. With increased numbers and improved facilities it will be possible for us to expand our work with the local upper schools, offering more work experience placements for post 16 pupils. Currently, we are working with Cedars to explore more opportunities for their Sixth Form students to be involved in the life of our school.</p> <p>Expansion will also open the possibility of, working with, and training school based apprentices. This year we are seeking to recruit a sports apprentice – with an expanding school we would have more scope to develop our work in this area.</p>
7	<p>To seek opportunities to create inspirational learning environments for the school and to maximise community use.</p>
	<p>Through the expansion proposals the current provision for pupils on site will be greatly enhanced. The following outcomes will be achieved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A purpose built block for Y5 pupils to support transition – our current provision is cramped and undersized.</li> <li>2. An improvement to some substandard teaching accommodation to bring it into line with current recommendations.</li> <li>3. Toilet provision for an existing block of the site where no toilets are currently located.</li> <li>4. Improved size in outdoor hard surface play areas.</li> <li>5. Enhanced dining facility space – that can be used in a multipurpose manner.</li> <li>6. Additional car parking for staff.</li> <li>7. Improved size shape and space for two existing classrooms that will be moved in the development.</li> </ol> <p>Improvement to the physical environment will allow the school to build upon the current learning opportunities and allow the school to further enrich its provision for sports, the Arts and academic life.</p> <p>Leighton Middle School facilities are regularly used by the local community. In developing the existing provision this will benefit community use, particularly:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mencap Summer Play Scheme that operates from our dining room block; this block currently does not have access to toilets.</li> <li>2. Bluebell Child Care after school provision – again currently this provision operates out of the dining room block and so will greatly benefit from improved provision and toilets. This is part of our wrap around provision that greatly benefits the parent group.</li> <li>3. New Life Community Church – Sunday Services</li> <li>4. Other community lettings – Town Art Exhibitions, Musical Theatre High etc.</li> </ol>
8	<p>To promote the diversity of provision offered in Central Bedfordshire to increase opportunities for parental choice</p>
	<p>Parental Choice in the Leighton Buzzard is restricted by school place numbers. Over the past four years significant numbers of parents have not been able to access the school place of their first choice due to limited places at Leighton Middle School. Expanding the number of places at our school will increase parental choice.</p>
9	<p>To support vulnerable learners in Area Special Schools and integrate appropriate Special Educational Needs provision within mainstream schools</p>
	<p>To support our vulnerable learners Leighton Middle School has a strong pastoral and welfare system. We employ a Pastoral and Behaviour Support worker who runs a small team. We support vulnerable pupils and work closely with struggling families in our school community.</p> <p>Our SEN team is also strong – we work closely with a range of agencies to ensure our pupils are well integrated and supported. Within the new development required for expansion we will consider the needs of pupils and the need for quiet, safe places to support wellbeing.</p> <p>Our breakfast, break time and out of hours provision will be expanded and enhanced by the</p>

planned improvement to our dining room capacity and facilities. Many of our vulnerable pupils take advantage of this provision and it supports their social and emotional well-being.

The proposed expansion will make our site and provision more accessible for the needs of those with physical disabilities. Accessible toilet facilities will be part of the planned work as will the consideration of steps and ramp access to areas of the site that are currently inaccessible. The proposed new block will also include a lift.

The needs of the hearing impaired and visually impaired pupils will be considered in the provision of new classroom space, decoration and furnishing.

All of the proposed developments will make our school more accessible to ensure pupils with needs are able to be accommodated in mainstream provision.