



have
your
say...

...on the proposed amalgamation of Arlesey Nursery School & Childcare Centre with Gothic Mede Academy

7 September 2015 – 5 October 2015

Find Central Bedfordshire Council online at



www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations

**Central
Bedfordshire**

1. Introduction

Central Bedfordshire Council and the respective Governing Bodies are proposing to amalgamate Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre, High Street, Arlesey, Bedfordshire, SG15 6SN with Gothic Mede Academy, High Street, Arlesey, Bedfordshire, SG15 6SL.

Under Education Law the amalgamation would be implemented via the closure of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre and the expansion of Gothic Mede Academy.

This document explains the reasons for the proposed amalgamation and how you can have your say.

2. Background

Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre is an established early years setting which operates out of premises in High Street, Arlesey. The nursery premises are adjacent to those of Gothic Mede Academy.

The latest Ofsted inspection in December 2013 judged the nursery school to be 'Good'.

As a result of changes by Central Government to the funding methodology for local authority maintained nursery schools, plus changes to the admission arrangements for children into mainstream schools, the Governing Body has sought to ensure the financial viability of the Nursery. This would help to secure the provision for three year olds in the community and expand the childcare provision in terms of year-long wrap around care (including holiday clubs), two year old places and baby care for the local community.

Having carefully considered a range of options, the Governing Body of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre, supported by Central Bedfordshire Council, is proposing an amalgamation with Gothic Mede Academy.

The Governing Body of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre have been supported by the head teacher and other staff of Gothic Mede Academy since the head teacher of the nursery retired in July 2013. This followed a request by the Governing Body of the Nursery and an offer of support by the Academy.

In addition to avoiding the duplicate legal processes required of providing separate education and childcare settings, the merger would bring significant educational and financial benefits.

It would maintain and enhance the professional development of teachers and Early Years practitioners at both settings. It would also provide training opportunities for the other settings in Arlesey e.g. colleagues in Arlesey Pre-School and in Acrewood Day Nursery (a private nursery provider in Arlesey) whose children generally move to Gothic Mede Academy when they reach school age.

There would be improved transition arrangements for the Nursery cohort, e.g. the Early Years teachers (Reception and Nursery) would rotate, enabling teachers to make the transition with the children of school age.

In addition to the emotional benefits, the improved transition would offer a higher educational entry level to Reception at Gothic Mede Academy than has traditionally been the case, thus supporting better long term progress and attainment.

Gothic Mede Academy is a member of the Bedfordshire East Multi Academy Trust (BEMAT), which is committed to collegiate educational provision across the community. The Trust already takes collective responsibility for the success of all children through the delivery of a commonly

designed curriculum from 2+ to 19. Gravenhurst Academy, Etonbury Academy, Robert Bloomfield Academy and Samuel Whitbread Academy are fellow members of the Trust.

3. Our proposal

It is proposed to amalgamate Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre with Gothic Mede Academy.

In order to do this the Council is required, by Education Law, to first close Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre.

In conjunction with this process, Gothic Mede Academy is required by the Department for Education to change its age range in order to accommodate the children from Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre with Gothic Mede Academy.

We recognise that this proposal to close Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre may be unsettling for pupils, staff, parents and carers and we are keen to hear from all those people who want to have their say on the proposals during the consultation.

You will find a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) starting on page 5 of this document which may help to address some immediate concerns that you have. You are also welcome to raise queries at the public meeting that is to be held at Gothic Mede Academy on Tuesday 15 September (see page 4 for details).

4. The consultation process

The two consultations are being undertaken concurrently and therefore this is a combined consultation document.

For the proposed closure of a school the Council is required to follow a five stage process. These are listed in the consultation timetable on page 4

For stage one the Council is required to consult with a range of people and organisations including:

- Parents and carers of the pupils at both the Nursery and the Academy
- The governing bodies of both the Nursery and the Academy
- The teachers and other staff of both the Nursery and the Academy
- The pupils at both the Nursery and the Academy
- The Directors of the Bedfordshire East Multi Academy Trust
- The governing bodies, teachers and staff of other schools and early years settings that may be affected
- Parents and carers of children at other schools and early years settings that may be affected e.g. at feeder schools
- The local diocese and other faith groups
- The local Town or Parish Council
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Any trade unions who represent staff at the Nursery and the Academy; and representatives of any trade union of staff at other schools/early years settings who may be affected by the proposal;
- Members of Parliament whose constituencies include the Nursery and the Academy that are the subject of the proposal or whose constituents are likely to be affected by the proposal

- Any other interested body or person that the proposers think is appropriate.

You can have your say online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations or you can complete pages 7 and 8 of this document and return them to the FREEPOST address provided at the end of the form.

All responses should be returned by **5.00 pm on Monday 5 October 2015**

We will hold a public meeting at Gothic Mede Academy on **Tuesday 15 September 2015 at 7.00 pm** which is open to all interested parties.

We are also meeting with the staff, union representatives and governors of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre, Gothic Mede Academy and the Bedfordshire East Multi Academy Trust.

Consultation Timetable – from September 2015 to January 2016

Stage	Action	Timescale/Deadline
1	Initial four week joint consultation period begins	Monday 7 September 2015
1	Staff, Governors and trade union meeting	Tuesday 15 September 2015 at 6.00 pm at Gothic Mede Academy
1	Public meeting	Tuesday 15 September 2015 at 7.00 pm at Gothic Mede Academy
1	End of four week joint consultation period	Monday 5 October 2015
2	Statutory Notice published by CBC	Wednesday 14 October 2015
3	Representation period	= 4 weeks
3	End of representation period	Wednesday 11 November 2015
4	Final decision regarding the proposal to close Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre to be made by the Council's Executive Committee	Tuesday 1 December 2015
5	Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre would close	Thursday 31 December 2015
5	Gothic Mede Academy would open with nursery provision	Friday 1 January 2016

5. Frequently asked questions (FAQ's)

Q – Does this consultation mean that the Council has already decided that Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre will amalgamate with Gothic Mede Academy?

A – No. The Council's Executive committee has approved the start of a two part consultation on the proposed amalgamation. You can read the report that was considered by the Executive Committee on 7 July 2015 on the Council's website at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/executive

The final decision will be made by the Council's Executive on Tuesday 1 December 2015.

Q – Why has Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre been subject to budget cuts?

A – From April 2011 funding from Central Government for Early Years providers has been calculated using the Early Years Single Funding Formula which is driven mainly by the number of hours attended by each child. This is a change from how providers were previously funded which was on a per place basis, regardless of the number of hours attended. Schools are protected for the change but on a reducing balance year on year.

Q – Has the Council considered any alternative solutions other than the proposed amalgamation?

A – Yes. A report was commissioned in 2013 by the Governing Body of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre, with support from Central Bedfordshire Council, regarding possible alternative solutions to ensure the school's viability. Of these, the option to amalgamate with Gothic Mede Academy provided the Governing Body with the greatest certainty that the Nursery School would be sustained and educational benefits delivered.

Q - Where would the nursery children be accommodated following the amalgamation?

A – The nursery children would continue to be accommodated within the premises that are currently occupied by Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre.

Q – How would Gothic Mede Academy provide care for very young children?

A – As a partner school within Bedfordshire East Multi Academy Trust (BEMAT), Gothic Mede Academy supports the vision of 0-19 education. This is central to Gothic Mede Academy's aim to amalgamate the Nursery and School provision. As with any new venture, Gothic Mede Academy has sought to include best practice from a range of providers and partners.

The Bedfordshire East School Trust (BEST) Nursery, part of the BEMAT organisation and based in Clifton, is recognised as an 'Outstanding' provider in childcare for under-fives. Gothic Mede Academy would take responsibility for funded three year old education, led by teachers, with an emphasis on developing school readiness while BEST Nurseries would assume responsibility for childcare for 2-3 year olds in the first instance. It is hoped that this provision would expand to include 0-2 care from April 2016.

The Manager of BEST Nurseries and the Principal of the Academy would work closely with support from a management committee to ensure a seamless transition for the children of Arlesey. BEST Nurseries would also provide before and after school care and has committed to establishing holiday clubs from October half term onwards

Q – Are the school staff of both Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre and Gothic Mede Academy being consulted as part of the consultation process?

A – Yes – Nursery and Academy staff and trade union representatives are being consulted throughout this consultation process. Should a decision be made to issue statutory notices to close Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre, staff and trade unions would be further consulted. The Council and the Nursery School's Human Resources provider will work with the governing body, the staff group and trade unions to ensure all staff have access to appropriate advice and support and will ensure that the relevant policies and procedures of the Council are followed.

Q - Why were parents not forewarned of this proposal?

A – The Governing Body of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre have been considering the future of the nursery for the past two years and, with the support of the head teacher and staff of Gothic Mede Academy, have already made difficult decisions, including staffing restructures, to sustain the future of the school. The proposal is being made to provide a long term solution for the provision and to embed the educational benefits that have been realised in working on a temporary basis to date with Gothic Mede Academy. The proposal is now being put to you as a stakeholder and the Council and Academy invite your response.

Q – When will the final decision be taken regarding whether or not to close Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre?

A –The Council's Executive will consider all of the responses received during the consultation process and will determine whether or not to close the nursery school at their meeting on 1 December 2015. The Academy will also be submitting an application to the Department for Education for approval to change its age range.

If the proposals are duly approved by the Council's Executive and the Department for Education, the amalgamation would be implemented via the closure of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre on 31 December 2015 and the reopening of the nursery and childcare centre by Gothic Mede Academy on 1 January 2016.

**Sue Harrison,
Director of Children's Services
Central Bedfordshire Council,
Priory House,
Monks Walk,
Chicksands,
Shefford
SG17 5TQ**

For more information about this proposal please contact Sue Barrow
by telephone on 0300 300 5700
or by email sue.barrow@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



Consultation on the proposed amalgamation of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre with Gothic Mede Academy



Central Bedfordshire Council is consulting on the proposed amalgamation of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre with Gothic Mede Academy. We want to hear your views.

Feedback must be received by 5pm on Monday 5th October 2015.

1. Are you a: (Please tick one)

- ☐ Parent of a child/children at Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre
- ☐ Parent of a child/children at Gothic Mede Academy
- ☐ Parent of a child/children at another school in the area
- ☐ School employee of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre
- ☐ School employee of Gothic Mede Academy
- ☐ School employee of another school in the area
- ☐ School Governor of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre
- ☐ School Governor of Gothic Mede Academy
- ☐ School Governor of another school in the area
- ☐ Local resident
- ☐ Other

If other, please specify:

2. If you are the parent of a child/children currently at another school, or the employee or governor of another school, please tell us which school. (Please write name of school)

3. Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to amalgamate Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre with Gothic Mede Academy? (Please select one)

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|

4. Are there any comments you would like to make about this proposal?

About You

This section of the survey is about you. The following information will help us when considering your opinions and to make sure that we're getting the views of all members of the community. The answers will not be used to identify any individual.

5. **Are you** (Please select one)

☐ Male

☐ Female

6. **What is your age?** (Please select one)

☐ Under 16 years

☐ 20-29 years

☐ 45-59 years

☐ 65-74 years

☐ 16-19 years

☐ 30-44 years

☐ 60-64 years

☐ 75 years +

7. **Do you consider yourself to be disabled?** (Please select one)

Under the Equality Act 2010 a person is considered to have a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a sustained and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. **To which of these groups do you consider you belong?** (Please select one)

☐ Asian or Asian British

☐ Chinese

☐ White British

☐ Black or Black British

☐ Mixed

☐ Other Ethnic group

If other, please

specify:

9. **What is your postcode?** This information will only be used for classification purposes.

Please return your completed form to the FREEPOST address below (you do not need to use a stamp) by 5pm on Monday 5 October 2015:

FREEPOST RSJS GBBZ SRZT
Arlesey Nursery and Gothic Mede amalgamation consultation,
Central Bedfordshire Council,
Priory House, Monks Walk
Chicksands, Shefford,
SG17 5TQ

Data Protection Act 1998

Please note that your personal details supplied on this form will be held and/or computerised by Central Bedfordshire Council for the purpose analysing feedback to the consultation on the proposed amalgamation of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre with Gothic Mede Academy. The information collected may be disclosed to officers and members of the Council and its' partners involved in this consultation. Summarised information from the forms may be published, but no individual details will be disclosed under these circumstances. Your personal details will be safeguarded and will not be divulged to any other individuals or organisations for any other purposes.

Information classification: Protected when complete

Consultation on the proposed amalgamation of Arlesey Nursery School & Childcare Centre and Gothic Mede Academy



Queries / comments raised at meeting with parents and other stakeholders – held at Gothic Mede Academy on Tuesday 15 September 2015 at 7.00 pm

Meeting led by –

Rob Parsons – Head of School Organisation, Admissions & Capital Planning
David Waller – HR Policy & Implementation Manager
Derek Archer – Principal, Gothic Mede Academy

Note taker - Sue Barrow – Information Manager

Rob Parsons welcomed all to the meeting and introduced colleagues to the group.

Rob Parsons gave a presentation regarding the proposal, during which David Waller spoke about TUPE and staff transfers

Query / comment	Answer / response
Who is to be responsible for the delivery of the various elements within the nursery?	Gothic Mede Academy (GMA) will be responsible for the nursery cohort. The 2 year olds and the wrap-around care will come under the Bedfordshire East Schools Trust (BEST) who have much experience in nursery provision, with an Ofsted Outstanding nursery on the site of Samuel Whitbread Academy. A management committee will be put in place to regulate
Is the proposed amalgamation a 'done deal'?	No, the proposal will require support of both the Councils Executive, who will make their decision on 1 December, and of the Department for Education.
With the anticipated increased volume of children, will there be a time when the volume impacts upon the academy?	The academy's intake was originally 1.5 FE and we are now at 2 FE. When the current year 3 move out we will have a spare classroom and we will work with BEMAT and the local authority to look at numbers and options to expand. We do have the potential to increase our teaching space.
Will the nursery be classed as a feeder nursery for GMA? Will the admissions	No, the separate admission processes will remain. The Schools Adjudicator has declared that the inclusion of a feeder nursery within a

process change? Will a place in the nursery guarantee a place within the academy?	school's admission criteria is unlawful and must be removed.
Would the demand for 30 hours for 3 yr olds, lead to reduced nursery places?	It is the local authority's responsibility to provide sufficient places. To do this we may need to expand here or expand elsewhere. The Arlesey, Stotfold and Fairfield areas are expanding and are producing increased demand, coupled with the national birth rate rise.
Will the new school that is planned for Arlesey be a separate school or a second site for GMA?	This is not yet decided but GMA is an Ofsted Good school and a second site would be an option.
As the swimming pool is to be closed would you consider opening a new classroom for 3 yr olds in this space?	There are a couple of areas within the school grounds that we could develop. The space that we have available in the nursery however has been measured and it was found that we could admit more children
Everyone becomes more concerned when numbers increase, will the standard of the nursery be maintained with more children?	Ye, we will work hard to ensure that the high standard is maintained.
There is a concern that the younger children will be treated like the older children and vice versa.	There are huge benefits for younger children to flow through the nursery; they benefit from joining together. We have created bases for the different age groups and will retain the element of 'caring ness'
The consultation document talks about rotating teachers, how will this work?	This is something we will consider long term after the secondment of nursery teachers to GMA to ease transition proved beneficial.

Derek Archer repeated that he will be seeking parents to join the Management Committee and encouraged all present to either do so or to forward their ideas to him

Rob Parsons encouraged everybody to respond to the consultation.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm

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Consultation on the proposed amalgamation of Arlesey Nursery School & Childcare Centre and Gothic Mede Academy

Queries / comments raised at meeting with staff and governors – held at Gothic Mede Academy on Tuesday 15 September 2015 at 6.00 pm

**Central
Bedfordshire**

Meeting led by –

Rob Parsons – Head of School Organisation, Admissions & Capital Planning
David Waller – HR Policy & Implementation Manager
Derek Archer – Principal, Gothic Mede Academy

Note taker - Sue Barrow – Information Manager

Rob Parsons welcomed all to the meeting and introduced colleagues to the group.

Rob Parsons gave a presentation regarding the proposal, during which David Waller spoke about TUPE and staff transfers

Query / comment	Answer / response
Ofsted work differently with schools than they do with nurseries, how will the amalgamation affect this?	The Ofsted framework has just changed to a common framework for all settings. Training for this will be delivered by Gothic Mede Academy (GMA)
Will staff be employed by GMA or by the Bedfordshire East Schools Trust (BEST)	BEST and BEMAT (Bedfordshire East Multi Academy Trust) are linked and are members of each other. BEST looks after early years at Samuel Whitbread Academy. Some staff will be TUPE'd to BEST and some to BEMAT, depending upon the age range that they work with. Future meetings with staff regarding the TUPE process will clarify this.
Some staff are 1-1 support for children; what will happen as these children move up to the each year group?	Staff will remain employed by one employer and the change would require a paper exercise only.
Would pensions remain with CBC?	This will be covered via the TUPE process. The new employer has to provide a pension that is comparable to your current scheme.

Staff were advised by the NASUWT representative that the three consultations that had joined together was unusual but that they were not to worry about the minutiae. We will ensure that you get the best deal.

Rob Parsons encouraged all staff and governors to raise any concerns that they might have and to respond to the consultation, either as groups and or as individuals.

The meeting closed at 6.50 pm

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Comments received to initial consultation

Although in principle I can see that from the business and cost saving opportunity I am very concerned about the standard and quality of care that I have seen in the past week in Arlesey Nursery Centre. I appreciate that everyone is still finding their feet, but the reduction in communications (or rather lack of communication) has gone from outstanding to poor since BEST have taken over. Therefore although this is just communication I don't believe it bodes well for 'teacher parent' partnership and nor does it support the theory that this partnership is actually going to benefit the children and raise standards. I also would have grave concerns about allowing my younger child to attend little stars. I appreciate that it could be argued that other childcare settings have free flow but there is a great difference between the play styles of a young 2 year old and an old 4 year old, and the system with having free play intermixed outside feels very unsafe. I have also noticed that simple things like having a name on a peg (which my daughter has had since little starts) have all disappeared. In helping to encourage them to recognise their name, and look after their own property I believe this is an important aspect of this. So, in terms of raising standards, short-term this is not being achieved. I again appreciate that Arlesey Nursery is considered a large space. However, the number of children in it in the summer term felt very cramped. Therefore I have concerns about how these increased numbers will impact on this.

As long as it secures the structure and teaching element within the nursery I am happy.

Having attended the evening event in September I can understand the business case behind this. I also understand the aim to improve standards. The way this was positioned is presented as unchangeable and to an extent a fait accompli. However, in your communications you have not made it clear what GMA will be delivering and what BEST will be delivering and where the overlap will be. This is concerning. I also have some genuine practical concerns that do not relate to the business case no one seems able to answer: - I accept that a 2 year old having access to free play with a 3-4 year old is replicated in other childcare settings. But how would a 2 year old in wraparound care be accommodated when there are 9 year olds in the building with ASC / BSC. How will the ratios be managed in this situation? At Pippin / Roecroft in Stotfold I believe 2 year old children to those of reception age (inclusive) are separated from the other children at this age group at ASC club (although reception children are with the older children in the morning). Are there plans to replicate this or separate ages in Arlesey? How will this be managed? - Secondly, how will you deliver the care aspects you would expect a daycare setting to provide a 2 year old specifically with regard to sleep. It is not uncommon for a child to take a daytime nap until 3. Having spoken with staff there does not seem adequate provision or set routine to accommodate this. I don't believe just being able to crash if that child needs it is suitable for a young 2 year old. Other measures and solutions should be available in the interest of the child. I appreciate the argument that children do better with older peers around. However, I believe the care needs of a 2 year old starting potty training is somewhat different from a 9 year old waiting

for mum to come home. It just seems to be too diverse. I am most interested because I would be a prime candidate to use your revised service. However, even though this could offer my family a significant financial saving, and having both children in one setting would create beneficial logistical improvements for my family, I genuinely feel at this stage that you could not offer the quality of care or environment that I would expect a 2 year old to have in a wraparound / extended daycare environment. I have previously had my elder child in both a daycare setting, lucky stars and now Gothic Mede - so I do have some insight into what I consider to be suitable provision and childcare for younger children from a parent's perspective. There does not seem to be enough detail or people willing to talk to parents to address these specific concerns.

Hoping if there are other school options in the area, that parents will be able to take those options if they require. Parents will be watching Ofsted reports and if Gothic Mede doesn't do as well as it has done in the past, I'd like to know I can choose a different school. Not sure how it all works though because this is my first/eldest child.

I have only just moved to the area so do not feel I have sufficient information to comment either way

I strongly agree with obtaining more support for the nursery and the possibility with lowering the age range and creating a more wrap around care package will suit working mothers better.

I think the amalgamation would be a positive thing. I believe that being led by one Principle, Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body would make sense. It could hopefully lead to a smoother transition for the children from Nursery to School. Shared budgets, spending and also use of staff and resources would also be positive. I would wholeheartedly support this. I believe that the current reputation of Gothic Mede Academy is strong and this could be beneficial to the Nursery.

I understand that this is going to be run by the BEMAT trust. Having read the Biggleswade Chronicle I think the trust are doing this to make a profit out of parents and the price will go up.

It will enable the nursery to continue and also offer better wrap around care and holiday cover

It would be good for the community to have a feeder Nursery school.

My child attends the afterschool club & Gothic Mede

My son is due to transfer to lower school in September 2015 and as a working parent I desperately need wraparound care. At the moment this isn't available in Arlesey and will make the difference as to whether Gothic Mede is an option or not. What are the future plans?

Over due

Think the community will appreciate the amalgamation and it would help the children become part of the gothic Mede Acadmey

This is what's missing wrap around care for our area

Response from Gothic Mede Academy

All the same systems for communication at Arlesey Nursery School are still in place as have always been, however, some parents email addresses had 'disappeared' from the Clerical Assistant's parent email system. This has been remedied.

Play for the two year olds is differentiated from the older children with planning undertaken for the specific area and needs of the children. Activities that are not suitable for the younger children are provided in Acorn class for the older children. Activities available in the freeflow areas are suitable for all ages. The outdoor area is suitable for two year olds with staff supervision ensuring safety at all times.

Staff report that the two year olds are accessing the outdoor area extremely successfully. However future plans, if the project progresses, include a revamp of the outdoor area as a priority with particular attention to safety surface replacing any concrete areas as the outdoor area is looking rather tired and in need of updating.

All staff report that photos have always been on coat pegs and not names. While BEST cannot comment on arrangements of the nursery during the summer term of this year we can reassure parents that Little Stars now have even more space for the same number of registered children. Space requirements as set by Ofsted are at the very least adhered to at all times and mostly exceeded by BEST.

The Nursery '15 hour entitlement' is funded through the Government and neither Gothic Mede nor BEMAT make a profit from this funding. As with many other settings, it is in fact that case that Government funding does not cover costs. BEST Nurseries, a partner of BEMAT, offers extra hours for which parents/carers are charged. The rates changed recently following several years of minimal or no change. This was a decision of the Governing Body.

There are no plans currently to increase the cost of wraparound care. BEMAT Ltd, BEST Ltd and BEST Nurseries are 'not for profit organisations' and Directors are unpaid. Any surplus in BEST accounts is used to support the care and education of the children in our settings. An excellent example of this is the collaboration to refurbish and redecorate Arlesey Nursery.

Two year olds in wraparound care will be provided for in their own base. Ratios are managed strictly in accordance with Ofsted regulations with an adult: child ratio of 1 adult to every 4 children although BEST standards require a minimum of two present for each age range (even if only 4 children present two staff would be present. The two year olds have a completely separate area for potties and changing.

Part of the old Little Stars room is to be used as a sleep area for the younger children.

Parents and families have been invited in person and via the nursery newsletter to speak to BEST Nursery Management about the provision now and as it moves forward.



BUSINESS CASE - PROPOSAL FOR CLOSURE

of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre

In parallel with the proposed change of age range and expansion for Gothic Mead Academy

1 - Name of Proposer

Central Bedfordshire Council

Contact: Sue Barrow, Information Manager, Central Bedfordshire Council,
Room DC2, Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable, Beds LU6 1LF
sue.barrow@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

2 - School Name

Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre
(Local authority maintained nursery school)

3 - School Address

High Street
Arlesey
Bedfordshire
SG15 6SN

4 – Implementation – proposed closure date

31 December 2015

5 – Objections and reason for closure

The proposed closure of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre is as a result of the financial viability of the nursery and changes to both the funding methodology for local authority maintained nursery schools and to the admission arrangements for children into mainstream schools.

The report to the Council's Executive, which gives greater detail regarding the proposed closure and subsequent amalgamation with Gothic Mede Academy is available on the Councils Website here – www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/executive within the report dated 7 July 2015.

6 – Pupil numbers and admissions

Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre currently has 91 children.

7 – Displaced pupils

In conjunction with the proposed closure of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre, Gothic Mede Academy (High Street, Arlesey, Bedfordshire, SG15 6SL) is to apply to the Department for Education for permission to both expand and to lower the age range of the academy. If the Department for Education approves the changes, Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre will amalgamate with Gothic Mede Academy.

8 – Impact on the community

The current nursery and childcare provision provided by Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre would continue within the same facility but as a part of Gothic Mede Academy. There would therefore be no impact upon the local community.

9 – Maintained nursery schools

Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre was judged 'Good' at its last Ofsted inspection in December 2013.

Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre has been supported by the head teacher and staff of Gothic Mede Academy since the retirement of the nursery's head teacher in July 2013.

The proposal to amalgamate Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre with Gothic Mede Academy, via the closure of the nursery and both the expansion and the lowering of the age range of the academy, is to ensure the continuation of the quality and quantity of nursery and childcare facilities within Arlesey.

10 - Consultation

A consultation regarding the proposed amalgamation between Arlesey Nursery and Childcare Centre and Gothic Mede Academy was carried out between 7 September and 5 October 2015. Stakeholders consulted included -

- Staff and governors of both Arlesey Nursery and Childcare Centre and Gothic Mede Academy
- Parents/carers of both Arlesey Nursery and Childcare Centre and Gothic Mede Academy
- Local Roman catholic and Church Of England Diocese
- Ward Members of Central Bedfordshire Council
- Other schools and academies within Central Bedfordshire
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Relevant Trade Unions
- Local MP
- Arlesey Town Council
- Local residents

Stakeholders were able to submit responses to the consultation either on-line or via a paper response form.

Two meetings were held on 15 September 2015 at Gothic Mede Academy regarding the proposal; one for staff and governors and one for parents/carers and other stakeholders.

The 40 responses received to the consultation were collated and the results shared with the nursery and the academy. 80% of respondents were in favour of the amalgamation.



Proposal to close Arlesey Nursery School & Childcare Centre

Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Central Bedfordshire Council intends to close Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre, High Street, Arlesey, Bedfordshire, SG15 6SN, on 31 December 2015.

The proposed closure of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre is as a result of the financial viability of the nursery and changes to both the funding methodology for local authority maintained nursery schools and to the admission arrangements for children into mainstream schools.

This notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: The Information Manager, Central Bedfordshire Council, Room DC2, Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable, Beds, LU6 1LF, telephone 0300 300 5700. It can also be viewed on the Council's website at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, by 11 November 2015, any person may support, object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services, Central Bedfordshire Council via the on-line facility on the Council's website at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices or by post to Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services, Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Beds, SG17 5TQ.

Signed: Sue Harrison

Director of Children's Services

14 October 2015

Explanatory notes

In conjunction with the proposed closure of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre, Gothic Mede Academy, High Street, Arlesey, Bedfordshire, SG15 6SL is to apply to the Department for Education for permission to both expand and to lower the age range of the academy. If the Department for Education approves the changes, Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre will amalgamate with Gothic Mede Academy. The current nursery and childcare provision provided by Arlesey Nursery and Childcare Centre would therefore continue within the same facility but as a part of Gothic Mede Academy.

FAO

Robert Parsons Head of School Organisation Admissions and Capital Planning
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands
Shefford
Bedfordshire
SG17 5QT

6th November 2015

Dear Robert,

I am writing to confirm Bedfordshire East Multi Academy Trust Ltd approval of the proposal to extend the age range at its Gothic Mede Academy Campus from [4 to 9] to [2 to 9] and to merge with Arlesey Nursery and Childcare Centre to provide early years and foundation education, subject to the approval of the Education Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely



Peter Little

Chairman Bedfordshire East Multi Academy Trust Ltd

BEMAT | BEST House | Shefford Road | Clifton | Shefford | Bedfordshire | SG17 5QS | 01462 811519

Bedfordshire East Multi-Academy Trust BEMAT Registered Company Number: 07546141



Etonbury
Academy



Robert Bloomfield
Academy



Samuel Whitbread
Academy



Gravenhurst
Academy



Gothic Mede
Academy



Langford Village
Academy