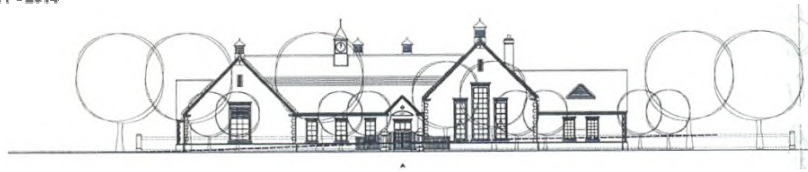




Fairfield Park Lower School
Dickens Boulevard, Stotfold, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 4FD



Head teacher: Mrs J Stone
Email: Fairfield@cbc.beds.sch.uk
Website: <http://www.fairfield.beds.sch.uk/>

Telephone: 01462 830000
Fax: 01462 830009

Wednesday 10 February 2016

Dear parents, carers and other stakeholders

Proposed Permanent Expansion of Fairfield Park Lower School

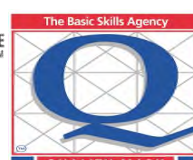
As you may be aware, Central Bedfordshire Council has given planning permission for a development of approximately 130 dwellings on the site of the former pig testing unit on Hitchin Road, within the Parish of Fairfield, along with outline planning permission for a new school site on land adjacent to the development.

This new school would serve the same area as Fairfield Park Lower and therefore, with the support of Central Bedfordshire Council's Executive, the governing body propose to expand Fairfield Park Lower via a second campus onto the new site. This would double the size of the school, increasing it from two form of entry to four form of entry, and from 300 places to 600 places.

It is proposed that building works on the new campus would be due for completion to allow the first extra class to be available from September 2017. In preparation for this, the Governing Body would be willing to admit additional children into a third reception class on the current school site in September 2016. This would help to meet the Council's forecast need for additional school places at that time and it is proposed that those additional pupils would be moved on to the new campus from September 2017.

For a proposed permanent school expansion the Department for Education requires the school's governing body to consult with all interested parties and provide sufficient opportunity for them to give their views. The attached consultation document details the proposal and gives you the opportunity to respond. It also lists some 'frequently asked questions' which we hope will answer many of the concerns that you may have regarding the proposal.

Please respond to this consultation using the response form provided and return this to the school **by 3.00 pm on 9 March 2016**. All of the responses received by the close of the consultation will be considered by the Governing Body when deciding whether to pursue the proposed expansion.





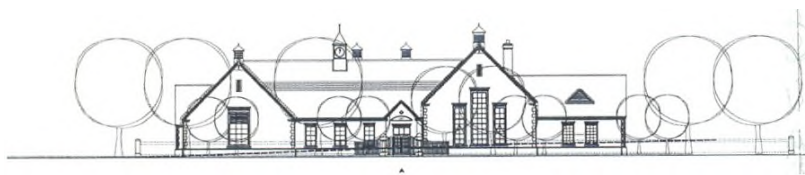
If you have any queries regarding the proposed expansion please contact us via the School Office or the school email: Fairfield@cbc.beds.sch.uk

Yours sincerely

Jenny Stone
Head Teacher

Sue Howley MBE
Chair of Governors





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Purpose of this consultation document

The purpose of this document is to provide information relating to the Governing Body's proposal to expand Fairfield Park Lower School from a 2 form of entry (300 place) for children aged 3 – 9, to a 4 form of entry (600 place) for children aged 3 – 9 via a new campus on the Lower Wilbury Farm site, with a phased intake from September 2017.

This would eventually increase the school's published admission number from 60 to 120.

The proposal also includes an additional 30 full time equivalent (FTE) nursery provision on the new campus.

Background

Fairfield Park Lower School was opened in 2007 in order to serve the new Fairfield Park community, which was being established on the former site of the Three Counties Psychiatric and Fairfield Hospitals that closed in 1999. Following an Ofsted inspection in May 2012 the school was judged to be 'outstanding' and as such is a popular school, attracting pupils from beyond the Fairfield Park development.

The school's Headteacher is a National Leader of Education (NLE), designated by the National College for Teaching and Leadership and Department for Education (DfE). NLEs are high performing school leaders who use their success and professionalism, along with the staff in their school which is designated a National Support School to increase the leadership capacity of other schools and help raise standards.

The school's Chair of Governors is a National Leader of Governance (NLG), also designated by the National College for Teaching and Leadership and Department for Education. NLGs are experienced governors with track records of success in school improvement who use their experience to support excellence in governance and leadership in schools that are in need of support.

Both roles are part of the Council's and of the government's plan to ensure schools have a central role in developing a self-improving and sustainable school led system. The school has recent significant experience of managing growth successfully with the support of the Council through the expansion of the school on its current site which was completed in 2014 and doubled the school's capacity in order to meet the growing demand for places

Other Stotfold lower schools have also been expanded, via Central Bedfordshire Council's New School Places Programme: St Marys Church of England Academy reopened in September 2015 with a new two-storey building in order to accommodate an additional 75 pupils, taking its capacity to 300 places and Roecroft Lower School has expanded from 300 to 450 places with a new extension to the school. The Council has also commissioned 420 extra places at Etonbury Academy, which are due for completion later this year, again to cater for the growth in local population.

The demand for lower school places is forecast to exceed the number of school places available locally and, if the proposal to expand Fairfield Park Lower School is approved by Central Bedfordshire Council, the Governing Body has indicated its willingness to accommodate a new reception class from September 2016, utilising a temporary building that is located on the existing school site, ahead of the availability of the new school buildings in September 2017, to which the additional reception class would then transfer as Year 1.

Proposal

A planning application has been approved for 131 dwellings on the site of the former pig testing unit on Hitchin Road, Stotfold which includes approved outline planning permission for the provision of a new school site on Lower Wilbury Farm to accommodate the children from the development. The land that is required for the new school is owned by Central Bedfordshire Council and is immediately adjacent to the existing Fairfield Park estate.

Following discussions with Central Bedfordshire Council, the Governing Body of Fairfield Park Lower School has agreed to consult on a proposed expansion of the school by the provision of an additional 300 lower school places from September 2017, phased over a five year period. The Lower Wilbury Farm school site would become a second campus to Fairfield Park Lower School.

This proposal would retain the school's existing site and capacity ensuring that the needs of the existing local community would continue to be met on that site, but would also ensure that more local provision is made to meet the needs of the growing Fairfield Park community on the Lower Wilbury Farm development, on the other side of the Stotfold/Hitchin Road.

It is planned that the new permanent school accommodation at the Lower Wilbury Farm site should be ready for occupation for the 2017/18 school year.

School capacity

The current capacity of Fairfield Park Lower School is 300 children from Reception Year to Year 4.

The proposed second campus would provide additional accommodation for up to 300 pupils aged 3- 9 and the relevant space required for a 30 FTE nursery provision.

The proposed total capacity for Fairfield Park Lower School, across both campuses, is 600 children from Year Reception to Year 4, with 60 FTE nursery places

Objectives of proposal

- To meet local demographic demand for school places in the future
- To meet parental demand for Fairfield Park Lower School, evident in sustained levels of over subscription
- To expand an already highly regarded, Ofsted 'outstanding' school

Timeline

Following approval by Central Bedfordshire Council's Executive Committee on 9 February 2016 for the Governing Body's consultation on the proposed expansion to commence, the timetable for the consultation process is as follows-

Action	Date –
Consultation starts	10 February 2016
Consultation ends	9 March 2016
Outcome of consultation considered by the Governing Body and decision regarding whether to proceed advised to Council	By 16 March 2016
Council Executive consider consultation outcome and determine funding for proposed expansion	5 April 2016
Proposed implementation	1 September 2017

Attached to this proposal is a Consultation Response Form (pages 7 to 10). Please complete the form and return it to the address provided. Alternatively, responses to the consultation can be made by e-mail to Fairfield@cbc.beds.sch.uk:

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Below is a list of 'Frequently Asked Questions' which may help to address some immediate concerns that you have.

Frequently asked questions –

Q – What are you proposing to build at the new Lower Wilbury Farm site and what facilities would be available?

A – Although the proposal is to expand Fairfield Park Lower School, the new site would be a fully functioning and completely self sufficient physical campus in terms of the facilities that would be available. Proposals are being developed which would provide for up to 300 pupils (aged 3 - 9), including nursery provision, to the recognised standards for this size and type of school.

There will be a town planning application process for the new school site and therefore there will be a separate opportunity to comment on the plans as part of that process.

Q – How would the new site be used, e.g. what age groups/pupils would it serve?

A – The use of the new site would mirror that of the current Fairfield Park Lower School site. It would serve the same age group (3-9 yrs) although it is anticipated that when the new site opens it would only initially be fully operational across Key Stage 1. There would be smaller numbers in the older Key Stage 2 age groups allowing mostly for siblings of younger pupils plus providing some capacity for some other and potentially new local pupils. The school leadership team would work closely with the Council to plan for the growth of the school in more detail as and when admission numbers and parental preferences are known.

Q – When would the new school site open?

A - Subject to obtaining all the necessary consents it is likely that the new school site would be operational from September 2017. The school would open with 1 form of entry, 30 places per year group, and expand to accommodate 2 forms of entry, 60 places per year group, as further dwellings are occupied on the Lower Wilbury Farm development and the demand for school places increases.

Q – Does the Council have the land and the funds to provide this new school site?

A – Yes, the land is owned by the council. The costs for building the school and fitting it out would be paid for by developer's contributions and the Department for Education's basic need grant via the Council's New School Places Programme.

Q - Would Fairfield Park Lower School be able to provide a full and varied curriculum on the new site?

A – The curriculum of Fairfield Park Lower School is well designed and matched to the needs, abilities, interests and aspirations of all children. Staff regularly review the current curriculum and would plan the curriculum for the new school site to meet the requirements of the national curriculum and the needs of the community. The school would also work with the local community to develop relevant extra curricular and extended school activities.

Q – How would admissions to the new school site be managed? Would there be an intake from across the age range?

A –. The admissions arrangements would remain as they are for the existing Fairfield Park Lower School site, with the same admissions criteria in place for the two sites. The catchment area for the dual-site school would remain unchanged and a total of 120 places would eventually be available per year group across the two sites. The admission to each school site would be based on distance; therefore children from the new development would get priority for admission to the new school site, whilst children from the existing development would get priority for admission to the existing school site. Depending on subscription, the admission to each school site in future years is likely to be variable.

The Council and Fairfield Park Lower School would work very closely together to plan for specific numbers and year groups in more detail as parental preferences are known and admission numbers are confirmed.

Q – What provision would be made for early years and 'wrap around' care?

A – The current consultation is specifically related to provision for statutory aged pupils. The provision of extended school activities would be the subject of further discussions between the school and community to establish the type of provision and/or activities which are to be sought or needed and could be provided within the available accommodation. In terms of pre school provision, this is not currently part of the consultation and is not subject to the same legal process, however nursery provision is proposed on the new site.

Q – What governance, leadership and management arrangements would be put in place to oversee the new site (e.g. would the new site be governed by the same governing body and the same school leadership team?)

A – The new site would be governed by the Governing Body and leadership team of Fairfield Park Lower School, both of which would be expanded. It is anticipated that there would be a Deputy Head Teacher / Head of School based at each site with the Head Teacher operating across the two sites.

Q – Would this expansion impact upon the existing staff at the school and would staff be employed on contracts to work on both sites?

A – The school would need to recruit new teaching and support staff to enable the larger school to operate effectively across both sites in the long term. Current Fairfield Park Lower School staff may be redeployed but a number of new staff would also need to be recruited. The exact deployment and mix of new and existing staff across the sites would be decided by the Governing body and would be subject to the actual numbers of pupils on roll at each site and across the two sites as a whole.

Q – How would the children on the new site be made to feel part of the expanded school?

A – The children at the new school site would follow the same curriculum and have access to the same level of facilities as those at the current school site. They would also wear the same uniform as their fellow pupils. The Head teacher would divide her time between the two sites along with other members of staff.

Q – How would whole school activities be managed? How would facilities across the two sites be used?

A – Pupils of Fairfield Park Lower School would be based at one of the two sites and may not be expected to need to move between the two sites to receive their education. Separate arrangements would be put in place for children to move from one site to the other to enable them to take part in extra events such as sporting fixtures and musical activities or whole school events. Once the new housing development is completed, there would also be a short walking route between the two sites.

Q – Are there any interim proposals in advance of the new accommodation being ready?

A - The Executive of Central Bedfordshire Council will consider the proposal to expand Fairfield Park Lower School at their meeting on 5 April 2016. If the Executive give their approval for the proposal, the Governing Body has indicated its willingness to accommodate a new reception class from September 2016, on the existing school site, ahead of the availability of the new school buildings in September 2017.

Q – My child currently attends Fairfield Park Lower School, how can I be assured that standards and provision would be maintained if resources are to be shared?

A – The Governors and staff of Fairfield Park Lower School are proud of their ‘outstanding’ Ofsted rating and are committed to continuing to provide a curriculum that is well designed and matched to the needs, abilities, interests and aspirations of all of their children, on whichever school site they are based.

Q – If I move onto the Lower Wilbury Farm development and have 1 child already at Fairfield Park Lower School at the current site and a younger child due to start school in September 2017, would I be able to move my older child to join their sibling at the new site?

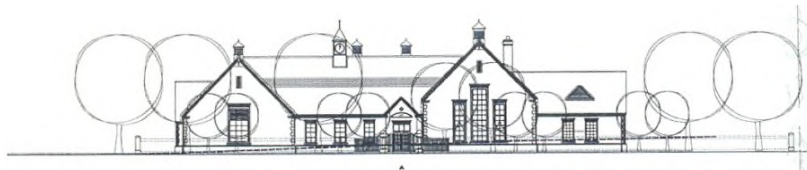
A – Yes, as long as there are sufficient children to enable a class to be created for a particular age group, or possibly a mixed age class. If there are insufficient children, siblings would be expected to remain at the original school site until the numbers increase sufficiently.

Q – Have any alternative solutions been considered, other than the expansion of Fairfield Park Lower School?

A – Yes. A number of options were considered by the Council including the possible creation of a completely new school. However, by asking Fairfield Park Lower School to expand, the Council is following its Policy Principles for Pupil Place Planning, which underpin all council decisions regarding new school places. These policy principles include -

1. the need to provide local schools for local children, ensuring a sense of community belonging and also promoting sustainable modes of travel
2. the need to create schools that are of sufficient size to be financially and educationally viable
3. the ability to support the expansion of local popular and successful schools or to link expanding schools with popular and successful schools
4. the potential to further promote and support robust partnerships and learning communities

The proposed expansion also offers a shorter time-scale for implementation and the ability for the Council to work with the school to provide an interim solution ahead of full implementation in recognition of the significant shortage of lower school places across the area.



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Fairfield Park Lower School - Consultation Response Form

Please read the consultation document and tell us what your views are.

If you prefer not to use this form, you can put your views in a letter or email.

Letters or completed forms should be returned to -

Fairfield Park Lower School, Dickens Boulevard, Stotfold, Herts SG5 4FD

or responses can be sent by e-mail to Fairfield@cbc.beds.sch.uk

All responses must be received by 3.30 pm on Wednesday 9th March 2016

How much do you agree with the following statement? Please tick as appropriate.

- I support the proposed expansion of Fairfield Park Lower School.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know

Do you have any comments/concerns regarding the proposed expansion? If so, please list them here -

Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

	Please tick
Individual	
Organisation – please specify	

Optional information -

Name	
Address	
Postcode	

If you are responding as an individual, please tell us a little bit about yourself.

The following information will help us when considering your opinions and to make sure that we are getting views from all sections of the community. All the questions are optional, and you can give as little or as much information as you wish.

Please tell us if you fall into any of the following categories (please select all that apply)

Please tick all categories that apply	√	Additional information
Pupil - please state which school and which year group		
Parent/ carer of child / children - please state which school/s		
Parent/ carer of preschool child / children		
School Governor - please state which school		
School Staff - please state which school		
Other please specify		

Gender

Male	Female	Transgender	Prefer not to say

Age

Under 18	18 - 24	25- 34	35- 44	45- 54	55- 64	65 and over

	Yes	No
Do you consider yourself a disabled person		

Ethnic Group	Please tick as appropriate
White British	
White Irish	
White other – please specify	
Black or Black British Caribbean	
Black or Black British African	
Black or Black British other – please specify	
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	
Mixed White and Black African	
Mixed White and Asian	
Mixed other – please specify	
Asian Indian	
Asian Pakistani	
Asian Bangladeshi	
Asian other – please specify	
Chinese	
Other – please specify	

Data Protection Act 1998 - please note that your personal details supplied on this form will be held and/or computerised by Fairfield Park Lower School for the purpose of the consultation. Summarised information from the forms will be shared with Central Bedfordshire Council and 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.