



Dear parents, carers and other stakeholders

Proposed Permanent Expansion of
St Andrews Church of England Voluntary Controlled Lower School,
Biggleswade – East Site



As you will be aware, St Andrews C of E VC Lower School was expanded onto a second site in Bantock Way, Biggleswade in order to serve the new housing on the King's Reach development, on land east of Biggleswade, and other smaller local developments. The new site opened in September 2015.



In view of the increased number of children that now require school places within the catchment area, the governing body propose to expand the eastern site of St Andrews Church of England Voluntary Controlled Lower School, on Bantock Way, Biggleswade, from two form of entry to three form of entry, from 300 places to 450 places, for Year Reception to Year 4.



It is proposed that building works would be completed to allow the extra facilities to be available 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 by completing the response form on pages 5 - 7 of the consultation document and returning this to the school **by 3.00 pm on 12 May 2016**. All of the responses received by the close of the consultation will be considered by the Governing Body when deciding whether or not to pursue the proposed expansion.



If the School's Governing Body decides to proceed, a summary of the outcome of the consultation will be provided to the Council who would subsequently decide on 2 August 2016 whether to commit the funding required.



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

Yours sincerely



Head Teacher

Chair of Governors

Aspire, Believe, Celebrate



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Consultation on the proposed expansion of

St Andrews Church of England Voluntary Controlled Lower School, East Site, Bantock Way, Biggleswade.



Purpose of this consultation document

The purpose of this document is to provide information relating to the Governing Body's proposal to expand the East site of St Andrews C of E VC (Church of England Voluntary Controlled) Lower School, at Bantock Way, Biggleswade, from a two form of entry (300 place) to a three form of entry (450 place) school for children aged 4 – 9.

This would eventually increase the school's published admission number for the Bantock Way site from 60 to 90.



Background

St Andrews C of E VC Lower School was expanded onto a second site which opened in Bantock Way, Biggleswade in September 2015 in order to serve the new housing on the King's Reach development, on land east of Biggleswade, and other smaller local developments. Up to 2500 new dwellings are being provided within the Kings Reach development and the original plans for the development included the new site for additional lower school provision to serve the area and also provided capital contributions towards the cost of the new provision. The school's expansion onto the second site had the support of the St Alban's Diocese and mirrored federation arrangements elsewhere in Central Bedfordshire where schools are managed in a similar way and governed across two or more sites.

Other Biggleswade schools are also being expanded to meet demographic growth, via Central Bedfordshire Council's New School Places Programme, these include: Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School where 120 additional places are to be provided at by September 2016 and the Academy of Stratton Upper School which is to be expanded from its current capacity of 1250 places to provide 1650 places with a phased implementation date. Work is also underway to plan for further growth and the need for school places in the area.

Proposal

In July 2015 the demographic forecasts for the Council's School Place Planning pyramid area covering Biggleswade and the surrounding rural area were revised with refreshed data as part of the annual review of the Council's School Organisation Plan.

The outcome indicates a further sustained forecast deficit in Lower School provision in the town. This is as a result of additional local housing developments, including the area off Potton Road in Biggleswade, that are now reflected in the Council's current housing trajectory.



An option to purchase an area of land adjacent to the new Lower School site within the Kings Reach development was approved by the Council in December 2015 to enable further expansion and accommodate pupils arising from other developments in the area. The area of this land is sufficient to provide a further 1 form (30 places per year group) of accommodation as an expansion to the existing school.

Following discussions with Central Bedfordshire Council, the Governing Body of St Andrews C of E VC Lower School has agreed to consult on a proposed expansion of the school's Bantock Way site by the provision of an additional 150 lower school places from September 2017, the increase in pupils phased over a five year period.

The Governing Body always understood that there was a possibility that the new East site would need to expand in order to meet the growing demand from not only the Kings Reach development but from other smaller local developments in Biggleswade.

School capacity

The current capacity of St Andrews C of E VC Lower School, across both sites, is 750 children from Year Reception to Year 4. The proposed expansion would provide additional accommodation for up to 150 pupils. The proposed total capacity for St Andrews C of E VC Lower School, across both campuses, is therefore 900 children from Year Reception to Year 4.

Objectives of proposal

- To meet local demographic demand for school places in the future
- To meet parental demand for places at St Andrews C of E VC Lower School
- To expand an already highly regarded, Ofsted 'good' school

Timeline

Following support expressed by Central Bedfordshire Council's Executive Committee on 5 April 2016 for the commencement of the Governing Body's consultation on the proposed expansion, the timetable for the consultation process is as follows-

Action	Date –
Consultation starts	14 April 2016
Informal drop-in event in school – between 3.30 pm and 7.00 pm	<i>To be agreed</i>
Consultation ends	12 May 2016
Outcome of consultation considered by the Governing Body and decision regarding whether to proceed advised to Council	By 27 May 2016
Council Executive consider consultation outcome and determine funding for proposed expansion	2 August 2016
Proposed implementation	1 September 2017

On pages 5 – 7 there is a Consultation Response Form. Please complete this and return it to the address provided. Alternatively, responses to the consultation can be made by e-mail to standrews@cbc.beds.sch.uk



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

Q – My child currently attends St Andrews C of E VC Lower School, how can I be assured that standards and provision would be improved or maintained if the school is expanded?

A – The Governors and staff of St Andrews C of E VC Lower School are proud of their 'good' 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. With the economies of scale of a larger organisation, there would be more resources available for a good standard of teaching and a good quality curriculum. A larger organisation would also be able to spread subject leadership roles which would have a positive impact on future curriculum development.

Q – What are you proposing to provide for the school within the planned expansion?

A – Proposals are being developed for a building that which would provide for up to 150 pupils (aged 4 - 9) There will be a town planning application process for the new building and there will be a separate opportunity to comment on the plans as part of that process. Design proposals for the new buildings are being developed in parallel with this consultation exercise.

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

A – Yes, the land is owned by the council. The costs for the building the school and fitting it out would be funded through the Council's New School Places Programme.

Q – Would changes be made to the admission arrangements for the school?

A – The admissions arrangements would remain as they are for the two school sites, other than an increase in the admission number by the additional 30 places per year group for the East site. The catchment area for each site would remain unchanged and a total of 900 places would eventually be available across the two sites

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. Pre school provision was proposed within the original planning approvals for the development to be provided through the establishment of an external provider in new premises to be constructed by the developer of the Kings Reach site. As this has been delayed, the school has made arrangements with a pre-school to provide early years education, as well as wrap around care and holiday care, for school age children on site.

Q – Would this expansion impact upon the existing staff at the school?

A – The school would need to recruit new teaching and support staff to enable the larger school to operate effectively in the long term.



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 St Andrews C of E VC Lower School at their meeting in August 2016, following the outcome of the Governing Body's consultation. If the Executive give their approval for the proposal, the Governing Body has indicated its willingness, if necessary, to accommodate a new reception class from September 2016, on the existing school site and utilising a spare classroom, ahead of the availability of the new school buildings in September 2017.

Q – Have any alternative solutions been considered, other than the expansion of St Andrews C of E VC Lower School?

A – Yes. A number of options were considered by the Council including the possible creation of a completely new school. A number of alternatives are being taken forward, of which the further expansion of St Andrews is one. However, by asking St Andrews C of E VC Lower School to consider expansion, 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



St Andrews C of E VC 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 also put your views in a letter or email.

Letters and completed forms should be returned to St Andrews C of E VC Lower School, Bantock Way, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, SG18 8UQ or responses can be sent by e-mail to: standrews@cbc.beds.sch.uk

All responses must be received by 3.00 pm on Thursday 12th May 2016

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

I support the proposed expansion of St Andrews C of E VC Lower School.

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

Comments/concerns:



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 St Andrews C of E VC 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.