

Business Case for proposed school and academy expansion for September 2017 implementation.

Biggleswade Academy Trust

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>Biggleswade Academy was opened in 2012 following the closure of its predecessor school, Holmemead Middle School. In July 2013, Southlands Lower School also converted to become part of Biggleswade Academy and on 1st September 2013 the newly merged school (also incorporating the former Brigham pre-school) opened in its current form - providing education and wrap-around care for children aged 2 to 13, 51 weeks of the year, across a single extended campus.</p> <p>In order to help address the demand for lower school places in Biggleswade, St Andrews Church of England Voluntary Controlled Lower School has already been expanded to provide a total of 150 Reception places per year. This expansion was achieved via a new second campus, which opened in September 2015 on Bantock Way. Further expansion of this second campus is also required and is currently subject to consultation by the school's governing body.</p> <p>Despite this expansion, the demand for lower school places is forecast to exceed the number of places available locally and, if the proposal to expand Biggleswade Academy is approved by the Department for Education (who must be consulted for all proposed changes to academies) the Directors of Biggleswade Academy Trust have indicated its willingness to accommodate an additional new class per 'lower school aged' year group.</p> <p>The School has always worked hard to be at the very centre of our community and to provide services that reflect its needs. As Biggleswade becomes increasingly inhabited by commuters we are noticing an increased uptake for our before and after school club 'wrap-around care' services which operate from 7.30am – 6pm 51 weeks of the year, services which all new parents will be able to access.</p> <p>We also have a wealth of clubs that enrich the lives of our pupils from many sporting pursuits, art, cooking, D&T, music, drama, dance, gardening among many more.</p> <p>In addition our facilities are regularly let in the evening and weekends, bringing large numbers of our local community onto our premises.</p> <p>Biggleswade Academy runs annual 'Bikeability' programmes for large numbers of children and has this year added 'Scooterbility' to this well established programme to encourage children and their parents to abandon Motor Transport in favour of other forms of travel.</p> <p>In addition, as part of this project the school has committed to working closely with CBC Highways in order to refresh and renew a number of traffic calming and 'safer routes to school' facilities in order to ensure fewer pupils feel the need to come to school by car, and feel safe to choose alternative methods of transport.</p>
2	<p>The need to create schools that are of sufficient size to be financially and educationally viable.</p>

	<p>Biggleswade Academy has seen significant financial and educational benefits from its formation in its current form from its 3 (now 4 including the Lawns Nursery School) predecessor schools.</p> <p>Even at it's current size of 860 pupils on roll (+ Pre-School age children) it is clear that there are further economies of scale which could be gained through further expansion however.</p> <p>Biggleswade Academy is currently extremely well led and managed, having received 'Outstanding' L&M judgements from it's last full Academy and Academy Pre-School inspections.</p> <p>It has successfully navigated the minefields of Academy conversions and mergers to create an extremely successful and efficient organisation that is well placed to take advantage of further expansion for the benefit of its current and future pupils.</p> <p>As it has grown clear benefits have been seen in terms of recruiting and retaining staff and governors who are attracted by the success, ambition and resolute determination to improve the quality of provision for Children and Young People.</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> <p>In terms of external validation Biggleswade Academy Currently comprises of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lawns Nursery School - Rated <i>Ofsted Outstanding</i> all areas. • Biggleswade Academy Pre-School - Rated <i>Ofsted Outstanding</i> all areas. • Biggleswade Academy (Years N-8) - Rated <i>Ofsted Outstanding</i> for Leadership and Management & Pupil Behaviour and Safety & <i>Good</i> overall. • Biggleswade & District Children's Centre - Rated <i>Ofsted Good</i> <p>In terms of current academic performance the Academy has seen significant improvements since its formation in 2012:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 phonics results improved from 19% in May 2012 (BA became involved in Southlands in January that year) through 57% in 2013 to 90% for the past 2 years. • Key Stage 1 results improved from significantly below National Average (sig-) in Reading, Writing and Mathematics at level 2b, 2a and L3+ in 2011, to significantly above the National Average (sig+) in all areas in 2014 and 2015. • Key Stage 2 English results traditionally moved between the 75-85% L4+ whilst Maths was the school's historic weakness, sitting at 60% just 4 years ago. 2014 results were all within 1% or above of the National averages at L4 and L5+ and 2015s Reading, Writing, Maths and Phonics results all sat comfortably in the 90's. • Y8 results are consistently in line or above National KS3 (Y9) standards, and are set to rise yet further as the 'wave' of higher achievement from our structural reform works its way through our age range. <p>The Academy and its Board of Directors has previously delivered the successful implementation of an new ASD provision within the school and more recently</p>

	<p>successfully delivered a £500k CIF roofing programme at the same time as managing a 3 classroom block being built to accommodate additional pupils from the Town's special school – Ivel Valley. There is therefore a good track record of managing and delivering programmes of this nature and no issues in managing this £1.5m building project alongside usual Academy business would be anticipated.</p>
4	<p>The potential to further promote and support robust partnerships and learning communities</p> <p>Biggleswade Academy is a found member of BCUS (Biggleswade Community Union of Schools) and works collaboratively with all other 13-member schools to deliver a seamless 0-19 curriculum across this organisation.</p> <p>The current Town expansion being experienced by Biggleswade is the largest influx of new pupils in its history and collaborative partnerships are key to our work of ensuring new pupils are fully integrated into all of our schools in as smooth a manner as possible. BA is therefore fully committed to maintaining such partnership work into the future to ensure this remains so.</p> <p>The Academy also has an excellent track record of providing school-to-school support for other schools in the area, and indeed its current 'make-up' comes from having provided such support to the Governing Bodies of Southlands Lower School and The Lawns Nursery School on the retirement of their previous Headteachers.</p> <p>In addition the Academy Directors have recently resolved to move towards a full Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) model and have therefore put a number of measures in place for September 2016 to support this.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- The current role of Principal and CEO has been split, with the current Principal moving into a solely CEO role and a separate Principal being appointed to focus more exclusively on the needs of the school. 2- This move has been accompanied by a change of Trust name (not the school which remains Biggleswade Academy) From Biggleswade Academy Trust to LIFE Academies Trust (<i>Learn, Innovate, Flourish, Excel</i>) in order to be less place specific. 3- Following an approach from the DFE the Directors have also agreed to submit an Academy Sponsor application to allow us to further share our successful practice more widely within this structured framework.
5	<p>The ambition to achieve a single phase of education 0 -19 and reduce school transfer points</p> <p>Biggleswade Academy has worked to this philosophy for many years now and the improvement seen in educational standards since its creation as a 2-13 school is evidence that limiting the number of transition points has significant educational benefits.</p> <p>Expanding the Academy in the manner outlined will allow more pupils to access this high level of education support.</p> <p>Biggleswade Academy has 2 integrated Early Years provisions – The Lawns Nursery School (Outstanding) and Biggleswade Academy Pre-School (Outstanding) both of whom offer high quality 2, 3 & 4 year old provision. We therefore already fully support the Council's aspirations in this area.</p>

6	<p data-bbox="292 73 1118 107">The need to support the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA).</p> <p data-bbox="292 141 1353 174">Biggleswade Academy aims to provide all children with a lifelong love of learning.</p> <p data-bbox="292 208 1342 309">Staff have very high expectations and children are encouraged to achieve their very best. Outcomes are very good across the School at all key points – EY, Y1, Y2, Y4, Y6 and Y8.</p> <p data-bbox="292 342 1310 443">The Academy believes that achieving at a consistently high level will have a positive impact on the aspirations of children and young people for their future learning as they leave aged 13 and beyond.</p> <p data-bbox="292 477 1294 544">An exciting rich curriculum provides many opportunities for this and this is supplemented by a wide range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities.</p> <p data-bbox="292 577 1353 745">The addition of Project such as a 1-1 iPad learning project across Y5-8, the introduction of AQA Accredited Options in Years 7&8 and a number of foreign, team building and sporting residential trips all strive to ensure children and young people have an exceptional experience to take with them to the next stage of their education.</p> <p data-bbox="292 779 1337 913">Biggleswade Academy also work closely with Stratton Upper school whose pupils support learning at BA through attending and delivering learning sessions to pupils in areas such as Sport and Music, thereby offering aspirations to our pupils of staying on in education to attain professional jobs.</p>
7	<p data-bbox="292 952 1353 1019">To seek opportunities to create inspirational learning environments for the school and to maximise community use.</p> <p data-bbox="292 1052 1329 1120">Biggleswade Academy has a wide range of premises within its portfolio and works hard to maximise the benefits of them, irrespective of their age or design.</p> <p data-bbox="292 1153 1326 1288">As a 2-13 school BA have been able to ensure that children as young as 2 can have regular access to specialist facilities (such as Technology and Science rooms) as well as ensuring that IT infrastructure is able to support 21st Century learning aspirations for fixed and handheld technologies.</p> <p data-bbox="292 1321 1342 1489">To ensure maximum value is obtained from this extended suite of buildings BA have recently appointed a dedicated Facilities Manager to take the lead on ensuring a preventative programme of maintenance and development is in place to ensure best value for money from each area of Facilities operations. The impact of this appointment is being seen already.</p> <p data-bbox="292 1523 1342 1624">In addition to internal areas the Academy is fortunate to boast a total site of around 24 Acres with a large portion of playing field, garden, wildlife and outdoor play area.</p> <p data-bbox="292 1657 1353 1825">Many internal and external areas are utilised regularly by class teachers and support staff across our age range as well as by members of our local community outside of school hours. These uses range from 'University of the Third Age' attendees to weekly 'Boot Camp' sessions, 'Ivel Flicks' attendees and wholesale use for the annual Biggleswade Carnival.</p> <p data-bbox="292 1859 1337 1926">The Academy therefore utilises its premises for the benefits of the community at every available point.</p>
8	<p data-bbox="292 1995 1329 2029">To promote the diversity of provision offered in Central Bedfordshire to increase</p>

	opportunities for parental choice
	<p>Biggleswade Academy reflect this system through an intake which is becoming ever more diverse with the growth of the town.</p> <p>Biggleswade Academy has consistently operated within these principles, developing its provision in innovative ways which better meets the needs of our community. The Academy will continue to operate in this way.</p>
9	To support vulnerable learners in Area Special Schools and integrate appropriate Special Educational Needs provision within mainstream schools
	<p>In 2010 Biggleswade Academy added a provision for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders and are in the process of supporting the development of 2 more purpose built SEN classrooms to accommodate Ivel Valley children, allowing them to also follow the 2-13 journey at Biggleswade Academy experienced by their peers.</p> <p>This work builds on the long-standing arrangement between the Academy (previously Holmemead Middle School) and Ivel Valley (previously Sunnyside Special School) for the provision of an integrated satellite class for MLD pupils on the Academy's site.</p>