



The Report on
Robert Peel Lower School's consultation on
changing the school age to a Single Phase
Primary age
3 to 11 year old Provision
for 2017-18.

December 2016

Robert Peel Lower School
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Section 1

The Governing Body of Robert Peel Lower School are now in a position to report on the outcome of consultation regarding:

Robert Peel Lower School's consultation on changing the school age range for 2017 to a single phase primary age 3 to 11 year old provision.

Robert Peel Lower School is situated in the town of Sandy in Central Bedfordshire.

Address – Robert Peel Lower School, Dapifer Drive, Sandy, SG19 1QJ



Brief History

Robert Peel Lower School was graded 'Good' by Ofsted in February 2016. The inspection stated that the school is 'A vibrant school community, where pupils are happy, attend regularly, enjoy learning and make good progress. The quality of teaching and learning is effective and pupils make good progress as they move through the school.'

During the past few months Governors and the Senior Leadership Team at Robert Peel Lower School have been considering how best to support the children of our community to secure a strong and positive future for our School within the ever changing national, regional and local contexts.

Following debate, research and collaboration with other local schools the Governing Body proposed a significant change to Robert Peel Lower School. This change is fundamental to our educational vision 'To develop confident, resilient and independent learners who are able to communicate effectively with others. Our aim is for the children to be happy in all aspects of school life and for them to aspire to be the best they can be.' This change would be to the benefit of all our children and the wider community enabling us to build on our identified strengths and continue to provide a rich and exciting education for the children of Sandy.

In addition, the change is in line with the Local Authority's Educational Vision of: *We want every child in Central Bedfordshire to enjoy their childhood and have the best possible start in life. We want every child to do well in education, make friends and build strong relationships with their family. As young adults, we want every young person to have the knowledge, skills and qualifications that will give them the best chance of success, so that they are prepared to take their full place in society as a healthy, happy, contributing and confident citizen.*

Alteration Proposal to the Age Range

It is proposed that Robert Peel Lower School will extend its age range from a 3 to 9 years Lower School to a 3 to 11 years Primary School.

Implementation and Stages of Implementation

The proposal will be implemented on 1st September 2017.

In September 2017 – The school will extend its age range by one year to include Year 5 pupils. Year 4 pupils are able to remain at the school and move into Year 5.

In September 2018 - Year 5 pupils remain at the school and move into Year 6. Parents of Year 6 children make a Transfer Application to Secondary School 2019.

In September 2019 - First transition of pupils from Robert Peel Primary to Secondary School.

Capacity

The current capacity of the school (Not including Nursery) is for 300 pupils. The School currently has 237 pupils on roll.

Following implementation, the proposed capacity will potentially increase by 120 pupils to 420 places when there will be pupils in all year groups from Reception to Year 6.

Objectives of our Proposal to Change the Age Range

We believe that our children would benefit from a full Primary School setting that is designed to meet the learning needs of a child at Early Years, Key Stages 1 and 2 and lead them, seamlessly, into subsequent Key Stage 3.

The proposed change would provide stability and a continuity of learning, and more significantly reflect the changing face of schooling in Sandy, the surrounding rural areas and the immediate locality.

To objectives are:

- To provide for continuation of the curriculum, whereby we can ensure continuity within Key Stage 2 fully without having to consider the interruption of transition at the end of Year 4;
- Each phase of education (infant, junior and secondary) is taught fully by a school therefore supporting the level of progress children make by reducing the number of transition points. With the intention of improving children's attainment and progress across all phases;
- To engage in greater collaborative working between and among phases with a view to enhancing the sharing of specialist provision;
- To sustain high standards of education and maintain the nurture and well-being of children by offering them only the minimum change of schools, thereby ensuring sustained progress in all areas;
- To ensure that all of the schools involved in the proposal work positively as partners to ensure a high quality of localised educational provision, with full agreement of each school's Governing Body;
- To ensure that all of the schools involved in the proposal offer children and young people a broad, balanced and cohesive curriculum that meets the needs of all;
- To offer all children and young people an exciting and innovative curriculum provision that meets their needs and supports them in achieving their full potential;
- To ensure there are no gaps in the children's learning by teaching complete Key Stages;
- To allow us to track and monitor pupil progress and attainment throughout Early Years, Key Stage 1 and 2 within the same school, building improved accountability for pupil progress within all areas and bringing the school in line with the prevailing system of education across the majority of the UK;
- To map the progress of curriculum subjects all the way to Year 6 ensuring foundations built lower down in the school are carried through, allowing all children to continue to work in an environment that completes their entire Primary Education in one setting;
- To offer children a further 2 years within a primary model of teaching and learning before moving to a secondary model – meaning fewer daily changes of teacher and environment. This will give pupils time to mature and become 'Secondary Ready' in line with the National Curriculum expectation at the end of Year 6;
- To drive up standards at the end of Key Stage 2;
- To nurture our children and help them work together towards their aspirations in an environment they are familiar with;
- To improve parental choice with regard to the variety of options and opportunities that are being offered within the community;
- To support disadvantaged children in meeting their potential and enhancing their outcomes;
- To drive up standards in Central Bedfordshire and meet the local area vision;
- To aid teacher recruitment and retention as fewer and fewer local authorities have three tiers and teachers are trained for a two tier system.

Consultation

A formal consultation process was carried out between 12th October 2016 and 23rd November 2016: the outcome of this is outlined elsewhere in this report. Attached is a copy of the consultation document.

Who did we Inform?

We informed and invited comments from a wide range of stakeholders and the wider community through a number of approaches. It should be noted that the consultation process was run in conjunction with Sandy Upper School, Moggerhanger Lower School, Everton Lower School, John Donne Church of England Lower School and St Swithun's VC Lower School, which are also consulting on changes to their age ranges. Since the schools serve a common geographic area, it was felt appropriate to work together on informing and consulting with stakeholders.

- Central Bedfordshire Council
- Bedford Borough Council
- Cambridgeshire Council
- Parents/guardians of every registered student at the school
- Parents/guardians of potential students in our catchment area and in Early Years provision
- Staff who work at the School
- Our local communities and our current site users
- All other schools within Central Bedfordshire
- The Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses
- Anyone else who has an interest in the proposal

Public meetings were held for parents/guardians and stakeholders on:

18th October and 20th October 2016

A staff meeting was held at Robert Peel Lower School on 18th October 2016 with Teachers, Support Staff, Office Staff, Site Staff and Midday Supervisors.

We used parentmail, hard copy and the school website to inform parents/guardians, who were given the facility to respond to the consultation by paper or online. The local press also alerted stakeholders that the consultation process was starting and how long it was going to run for.

An electronic version of the consultation was placed, for all stakeholders and interested parties, on the school website.

Implementation

Initially, these changes will be implemented on the 1st September 2017, with the first group of children moving into Year 5. In the first instance our existing buildings and site facilities already have sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed new Year 5 classes. Alterations and further building work would be undertaken to the school's site to accommodate the additional Year 6 classes for September 2018.

Procedures for Making Representation Regarding Proposal

Robert Peel Lower School's consultation on changing the school age range from 2017 onwards.

The purpose of this section of the proposal is to:

- Provide detailed information about the responses to the consultation process;
- Respond, in particular, to the areas of concern that have been raised as part of that process;
- Identify how the Governing Body will meet the objectives for changing the age range, as set out in the consultation process.

The consultation with stakeholders covered a single proposal:

Do you support the proposal that from September 2017, Year 5 pupils should have the opportunity to remain at Robert Peel Lower School and subsequently move into Year 6 in September 2018?

The Governing Body invited, through the consultation, responses to the following specific proposal:

From September 2017 the school is to extend its age range by one year to include Year 5 pupils and in September 2018 to further extend by another year to include Year 6 pupils. Therefore the school would become a full single phase Primary School educating children from age 3 to age 11 from September 2018.

How did we Consult?

The formal consultation document (attached as an appendix), formed the basis of the consultation. All parents/guardians were notified at the start of the consultation by email. All staff were invited to a meeting about the consultation to notify them of the process. All parties received the consultation proposal document by email and were invited to consultation meetings.

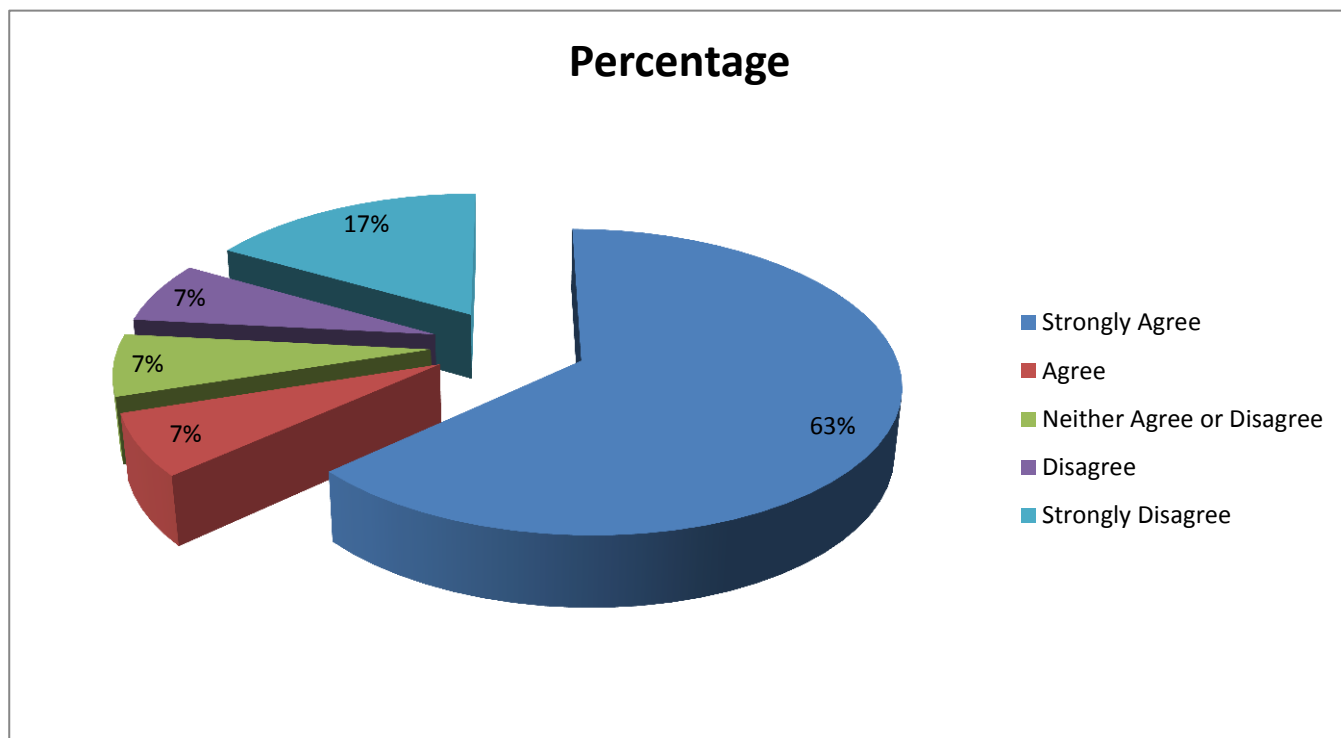
Prior to the publication of the consultation, Robert Peel Lower School met with all the Pinnacle Trust Headteachers and Chairs of Governors, as well as the Local Authority, to discuss and advise them of the content of the consultation proposal. Arrangements were made with the other schools that were also consulting, to share their consultation documents on each other's websites and to distribute all documents together. Paper copies of the consultation have also been made available if requested.

Outcome from the Consultation Process

During the consultation process responses were received which indicated respondent's views on the proposal plus some written and verbal communications which raised questions, observations and concerns. In terms of this report, there will be an indication of the responses received in graphical form and a commentary derived from the specific feelings that respondents made.

Responses in relation to the questions raised are detailed below together with the Governors' responses to those concerns.

A total of 30 respondents indicated their views on the proposed change of age range. These figures show an overwhelming vote in favour to change to a two tier system with nearly four times as many people strongly agreeing and agreeing to the change to those who strongly disagree.



Questions Raised from the Consultation

Parking

What impact will additional numbers have on traffic and car parking for the school?

As a nearby resident have you considered the increase in traffic around the school that will inevitably come with two more year groups and the impact on local residents?

We have carefully considered the impact of traffic around the school and we do not foresee a large increase in traffic as high numbers of children already walk to school and we anticipate Year 5 and 6 to walk/cycle to school independently. Also the school has capacity to increase its carpark for staff if required. We will continue to work with other agencies to reduce the impact the traffic has on local residents at certain times of the day. We are working with Sunstrans Road Safety Team on encouraging children to cycle and walk to school as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Children & Staff

Will there be specialist teachers/facilities to teach the curriculum? Staff at Robert Peel school currently teach all subjects, whilst in the Middle School they have specialist teachers. How is Robert Peel going to address this?

Yes we will continue to use some specialist teachers which is a continuation of our current excellent practise in Year 3 and 4 in Music and Modern Foreign Languages. In terms of the Primary curriculum, no specialist facilities are required however we would use some facilities at certain times of the year at the Secondary School for curriculum enrichments. As one teacher will take responsibility for all areas of the curriculum, this enables links to be made between individual subjects which enhances the educational experience for the children.

Will all teachers get more training on Special Needs?

Yes if it is required, as a school we are constantly reviewing the needs of the children and if additional training is required for staff in any particular area this will continue to be provided.

Do staff at Robert Peel have correct qualifications for teaching Years 5 and 6?

Yes, all teaching staff at Robert Peel are Primary trained teachers and are able to teach these year groups. The Headteacher has been a leader in both Middle and Junior schools for 15 years prior to joining Robert Peel so has a wealth of knowledge of the work and expectations of Upper Key Stage 2 and the transition into Secondary School.

How much will this affect the children and staff?

As little as possible as the children will not have to experience a transition part way through a Key Stage therefore providing them with stability and continuity in their education. They will be in a familiar setting with staff who know them extremely well and who are able to nurture them as they grow up into young adults. Friendship groups can be maintained and children will have more opportunities open to them as the eldest year group in the school. To reflect the children's growing maturity, they would take on more responsibilities across the school and the rest of the school would see the benefit of having older children who would increasingly work on projects that are designed to benefit all of the children in the school.

Will new staff be employed for Yr5/6 not rotation of current staff?

Yes, new teaching staff will be recruited who have experience of teaching Year 5/6.

Will children lose the feeling of growing up they feel when starting Middle School where they are treated as older and become more confident? How would my child benefit from remaining at Robert Peel for another two years? What new opportunities/experiences will they have?

Not at all, these children will be key role models as the eldest children in the school and as such will naturally take on that more mature character as they move through Years 5 and 6. The curriculum and provision which has been planned ensures that the children have greater opportunities to take on leadership roles and responsibilities along with increasing their level of maturity. As part of our Vision, we expect the children to be aspirational in their work and this will continue to be our focus and we will also look for the children to challenge themselves.

Currently Sandye Place Academy have 5 hourly subjects per day, so will Robert Peel extend the school day for Yr 5/6 to fit it in?

No, the recommended teaching time for KS 2 children is 23.5 hours a week. Year 3 and 4 currently have just over 24 hours teaching time a week and therefore the school start and finish times won't be amended. As the children will be mainly with one teacher in a classroom it is important to note that learning time won't be lost through transition from room to room. Lessons can also go over an hour to allow the children to continue to complete their work rather than having to stop and move on to their next lesson at a set time.

If the pupil uptake is not up to the required numbers each year would we have very small classes?

As we get to know the actual cohort size, we are able to easily adapt to different year group sizes to provide the best quality of education for all the children.

If I choose to keep my child at Robert Peel and only a small number of parents choose to do so will the Yr 5 class still go ahead?

Yes absolutely, if the decision is made to extend the age range then Year 5 provision will go ahead.

Will classes be in a split year group for example Yr5 and 6?

No they won't, each year group will be taught individually and not in mixed classes.

Will they be able to access any different extra-curricular activities from what is on offer now?

Yes, we are planning extra-curricular opportunities for the children along with additional leadership roles like Learning Ambassadors. It is expected that Year 5 children will plan and lead sporting events across the school at lunchtimes to enrich the school for everybody.

Will the children need to be accompanied to and from school?

This will not be necessary, the children can walk or cycle to and from school on their own or accompanied by an adult.

You propose to keep Yr 5 and 6 in a Primary Setting with the same teacher and fewer room changes. How will this prepare our children for the huge change they will face at Secondary School?

The children will be well prepared for their transition to Secondary School. Our aim is to ease change for the children as smoothly as possible and our collaborative work with the Secondary School will see the children in Yr 5 and 6 having opportunities to work at our feeder Secondary School along with their students coming to visit and work with Robert Peel children. Through this collaborative approach and robust transition work the children will be prepared for the change and be ready and confident for the move to Secondary school. It is also important to note that the children will also be 2 years older than when they currently transfer, so will be more mature and better equipped to cope with such a transition.

Would Yr 5/6 lessons be in the same classroom with the same teacher, what about ability sets?

The children will be taught predominantly by their Class Teacher and like now specialist teachers will teach some areas such as French, Music and PE. The school hasn't considered ability sets as yet but this is something that could be considered.

What reassurance can you provide and demonstrate to the families of the locality that there will be effective collaboration moving forward?

The effective work which takes place currently between the schools in the town and surrounding area will continue with staff working together to plan teaching, moderate work and organise events. Along with this, the town has for several years planned and run a highly successful Make a Difference Day. The schools will continue to work together whether this is part of a two tier or three tier system as we believe this is beneficial to all schools and the children in an area.

Why Two Tier?

What is the reason that the town schools have been split into two consortiums? What are the educational advantages for a. having a two tier system and b. having two school streams in one town?

Schools have now seen they have a choice and want a provision which is in the best interests of the children and their educational journey. The overriding majority of schools in England are Primary and Secondary and surrounding Local Authorities are changing to this system as data at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 indicates that children perform better in a two tier system (see data below). Each school's Governing Body is responsible for the direction of their school and any changes to their age range. At this time there is only one consultation taking place as the proposal of the SMaRT Multi Academy Trust consultation has been put on hold. As they do now, parents have the choice of the school they send their child to and which one will best support them in their educational journey.

At Robert Peel we want to provide emotional and educational stability for the children and to ensure they achieve the best outcomes in a setting which knows them well and they feel safe and confident in. As set out in the consultation document, there are overriding reasons for a change to a two tier system which is supported by a range of educational research. These are:

- To provide for continuation of the curriculum, whereby we can ensure continuity within Key Stage 2 fully without having to consider the interruption of transition at the end of Year 4;

- Each phase of education (infant, junior and secondary) is taught fully by a school therefore supporting the level of progress children make by reducing the number of transition points. With the intention of improving children's attainment and progress across all phases;
- To engage in greater collaborative working between and among phases with a view to enhancing the sharing of specialist provision;
- To sustain high standards of education and maintain the nurture and well-being of children by offering them only the minimum change of schools, thereby ensuring sustained progress in all areas;
- To ensure that all of the schools involved in the proposal work positively as partners to ensure a high quality of localised educational provision, with full agreement of each school's Governing Body;
- To ensure that all of the schools involved in the proposal offer children and young people a broad, balanced and cohesive curriculum that meets the needs of all;
- To offer all children and young people an exciting and innovative curriculum provision that meets their needs and supports them in achieving their full potential;
- To ensure there are no gaps in the children's learning by teaching complete Key Stages;
- To allow us to track and monitor pupil progress and attainment throughout Early Years, Key Stage 1 and 2 within the same school, building improved accountability for pupil progress within all areas and bringing the school in line with the prevailing system of education across the majority of the UK;
- To map the progress of curriculum subjects all the way to Year 6 ensuring foundations built lower down in the school are carried through, allowing all children to continue to work in an environment that completes their entire Primary Education in one setting;
- To offer children a further 2 years within a primary model of teaching and learning before moving to a secondary model – meaning fewer daily changes of teacher and environment. This will give pupils time to mature and become 'Secondary Ready' in line with the National Curriculum expectation at the end of Year 6;
- To drive up standards at the end of Key Stage 2;
- To nurture our children and help them work together towards their aspirations in an environment they are familiar with;
- To improve parental choice with regard to the variety of options and opportunities that are being offered within the community;
- To support disadvantaged children in meeting their potential and enhancing their outcomes;
- To drive up standards in Central Bedfordshire and meet the local area vision;
- To aid teacher recruitment and retention as fewer and fewer local authorities have three tiers and teachers are trained for a two tier system.

Why was the parents' meeting at Robert Peel at a time that is inaccessible for working parents?

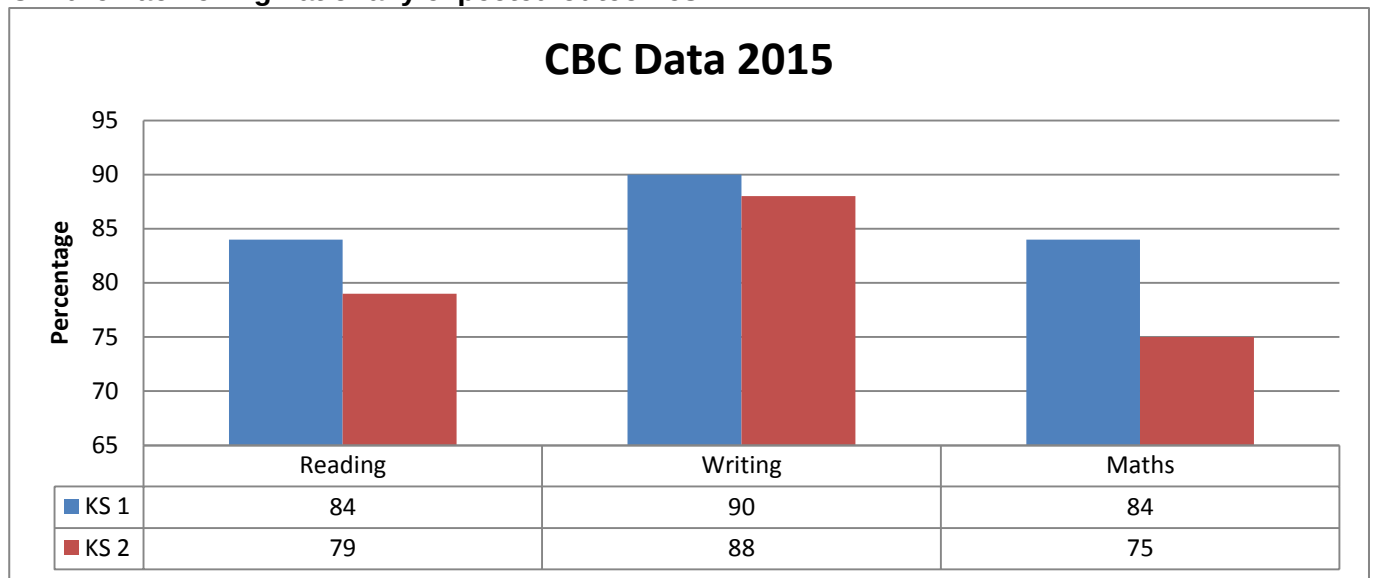
We are sorry if the meeting was not convenient for all parents. We have tried to provide different avenues and mechanisms for parents and members of the community to provide their views and feedback on the consultation. Meetings were held in conjunction with the other schools with a Community Meeting at another later time. In addition, all information was provided about the consultation through the school website and the Head and Deputy Head have been available throughout the consultation process if any parents have wanted to discuss the plan individually.

What is the rise and fall in standards at KS2?

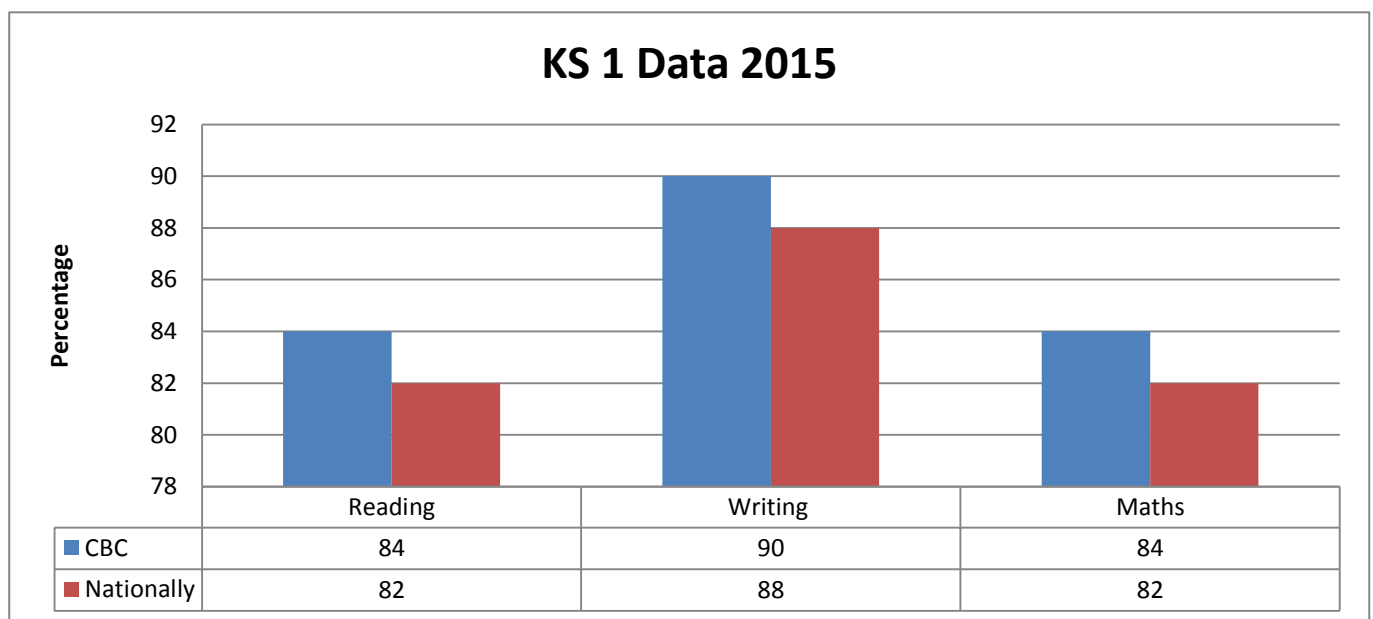
Central Bedfordshire data compared to other statistical neighbours and nationally indicates that outcomes at KS 1 are higher than those gained at KS 2 in the Local Authority. KS 1 outcomes are higher than national averages and the outcomes are ranked higher at KS 1 than at KS 2 compared both with statistical neighbours and nationally.

KS 1 & KS 2 Data for Central Bedfordshire
Data compared to 11 statistical neighbours (SN) and Nationally.

Children achieving nationally expected outcomes.

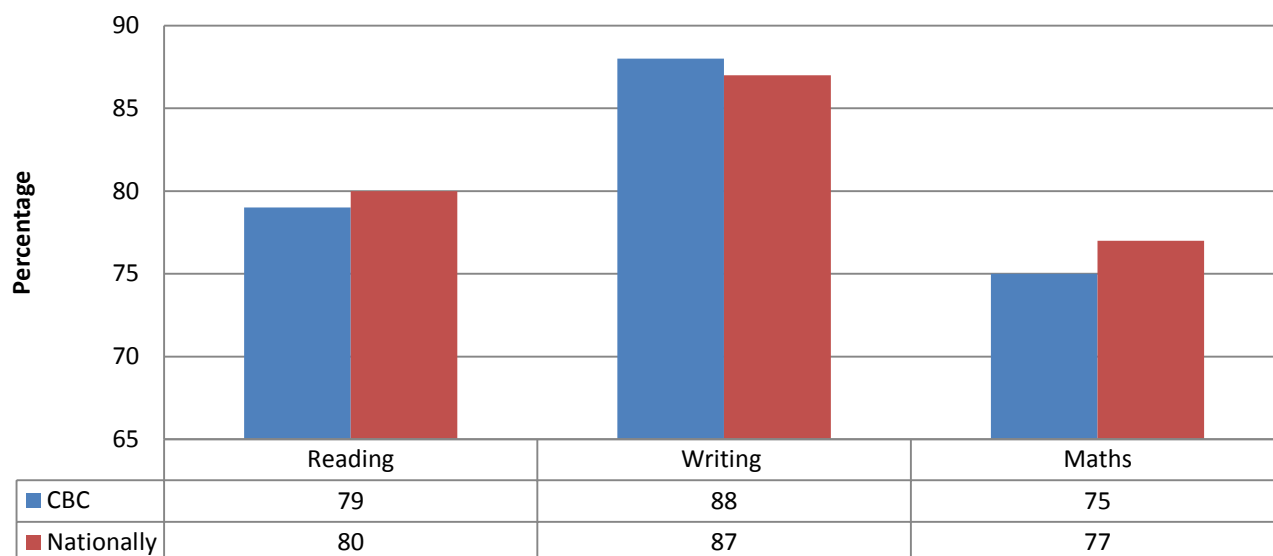


- In all areas KS 1 outcomes are higher than KS 2.



- In all areas KS 1 outcomes are higher than national averages.
- Statistical Neighbour Rankings
 - Reading 4th out of 11
 - Writing 2nd out of 11
 - Maths 3rd out of 11

KS 2 Data 2015



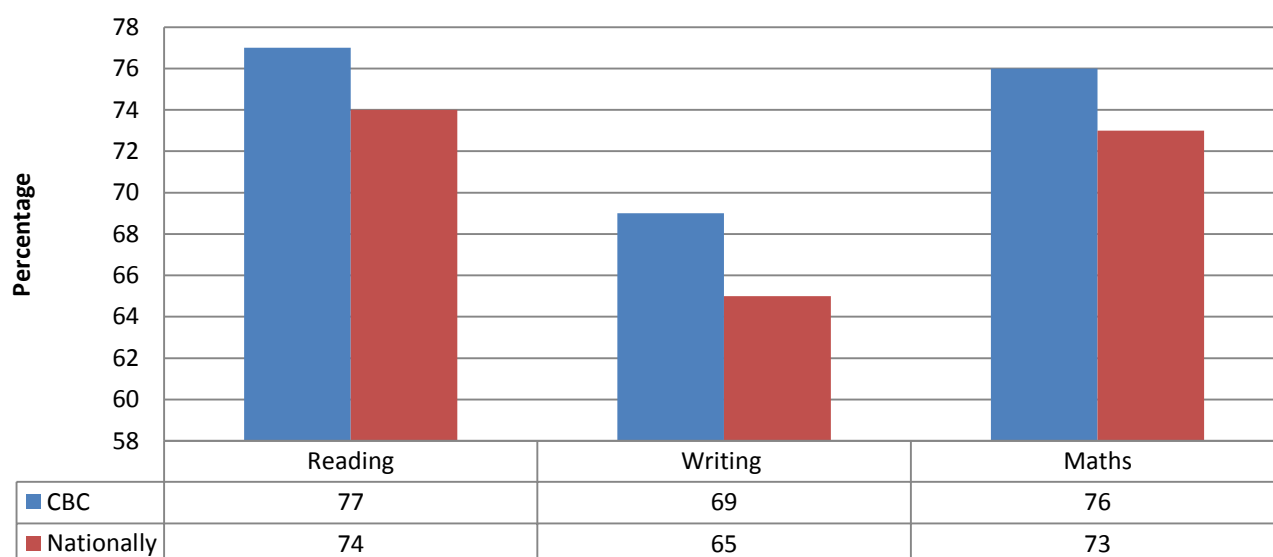
- In Reading & Maths KS 2 outcomes are lower than national averages.
- Statistical Neighbour Rankings
 - Reading 11th out of 11
 - Writing 4th out of 11
 - Maths 9th out of 11

National Rankings

Reading	Writing	Maths
At the end of KS1 Nationally Ranked 27th out of 150	At the end of KS1 Nationally Ranked 9th out of 150	At the end of KS1 Nationally Ranked 21st out of 150
At the end of KS2 Nationally Ranked 114th out of 150	At the end of KS2 Nationally Ranked 66th out of 150	At the end of KS2 Nationally Ranked 123rd out of 150

KS 1 2016 Data – KS 2 Data released in December 2016

KS 1 Data 2016



- In all areas KS 1 outcomes are higher than national averages.
- Statistical Neighbour Rankings
 - Reading 4th out of 11
 - Writing 2nd out of 11
 - Maths 3rd out of 11

Reading	Writing	Maths
At the end of KS1 Nationally Ranked 33rd out of 150	At the end of KS1 Nationally Ranked 41st out of 150	At the end of KS1 Nationally Ranked 39th out of 150

Facilities & Resources

How will the school manage with the increased numbers? Where will the extra classes be built and what existing facilities will be lost to the building work?

With the increase in pupil numbers being a gradual increase over time the school has immediate capacity to accommodate new classes and the current school facilities are able to take increased numbers. The school is in a very fortunate position as it has a lot of unused land and space which can be utilised and therefore over time the school will undertake building/extension work to further increase its capacity to accommodate Year 6 children from September 2018. It is envisaged that this will not impact on current facilities but only improve those which are currently available to the children. The playground will be extended over the coming year as part of the new classroom's project and the hall is large enough for the increased numbers.

How does this affect the money the school receives? Is this a move to increase the revenue of Robert Peel and the other schools?

This move is not financially driven but is about what we believe is best for the children and their education. The Local Authority provides each school with an allocated budget each financial year to teach the children it has on roll. As a school we use carefully considered and robust financial plans to utilise these funds to their full so that the children receive full access to a rich and diverse curriculum and a high standard of teaching.

Would the Upper School cope with additional Year 5/6 children using their facilities?

The Upper/Secondary school have offered the use of their facilities, staff and pupils for enrichment opportunities and as part of the bridging work to be undertaken between Primary and Secondary Schools at part of transition from one phase to another. The use of their facilities would not be weekly timetabled lessons but for focused activities and learning at specific times and therefore the impact on the Secondary School would be minimal.

Your proposal states you will need to build to accommodate extra year groups. As the LA has not imposed this change how confident are you that you will get funding? Could you find yourself in exactly the same position as Alban did?

The Local Authority have been involved from the very early stages of discussions about age range changes and throughout the process of the consultation and have provided guidance from their Department Heads in terms of the process of changing, regulations and finances. The school Governors have worked through budget scenarios and strategic plans for the future and are confident that through this robust strategic work the change can be managed very successfully.

What will this mean for lunchtime arrangements?

Very little will change at lunchtime. The children currently come into the hall for different sittings for lunches and the kitchen has capacity to cook for larger numbers. If required we would consider a slightly staggered lunch break but we believe with the additional outside space being planned this will not be required.

Will funds be available for larger furniture, resources and texts?

Yes absolutely, the school already has equipment, resources and furniture for older children but has a budget plan to purchase the resources required for older children over the coming years.

Are there plans to further invest in ICT and other specific materials for Science etc?

Most definitely, as a school we have a rolling plan to further invest in ICT and other resources as required and this will be undertaken in the same way. The focus will be on developing new technologies related to computing and programming.

After careful consideration of the issues raised the Governing Body of Robert Peel Lower School unanimously agreed to proceed with an Age Range Change to become a Single Phase Primary age 3 to 11 year old Provision for 2017-18. With the first phase being the extension of upper age range by one year to take Year 5 in September 2017 followed by Year 6 in September 2018.

The Report on St Swithun's VC Lower School's consultation on changing the school age range from 2017 onwards.

December 2016



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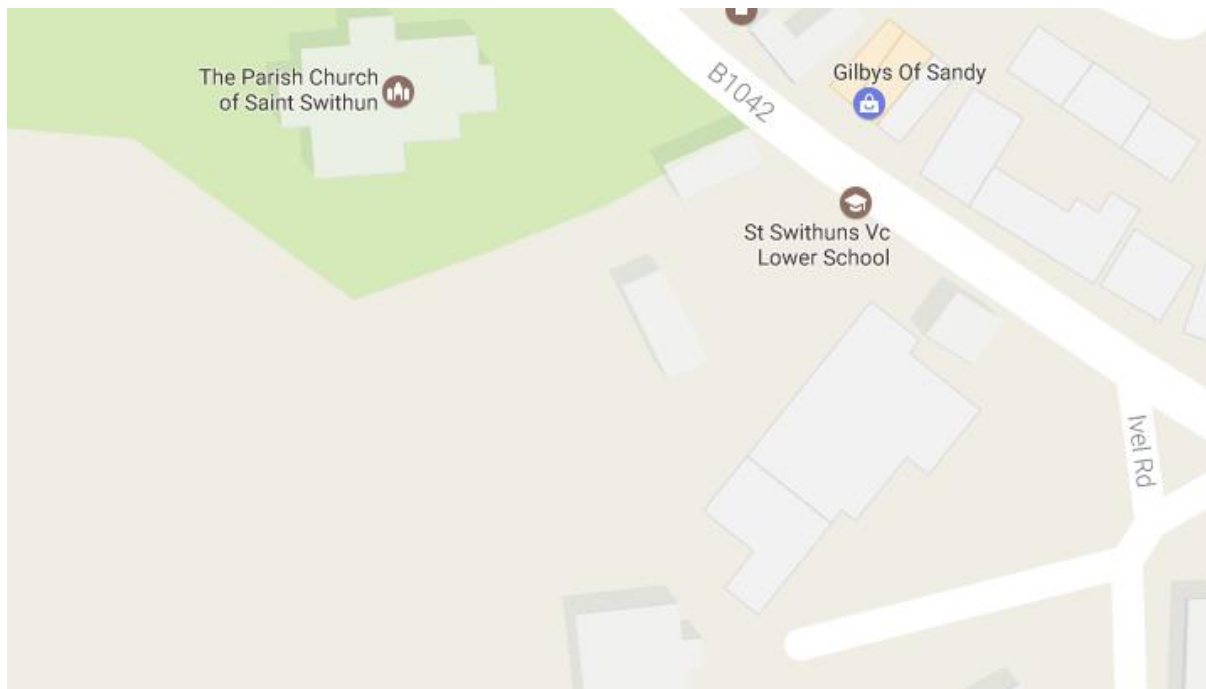
Section 1

The Governing Board of St Swithun's VC Lower School are now in a position to report on the outcome of the consultation regarding:

St Swithun's VC Lower School's consultation on changing the school age range for 2017 onwards.

St Swithun's VC Lower School is situated in the town of Sandy in Central Bedfordshire.

Address – St Swithun's VC Lower School, Ivel Road, Sandy, SG19 1AX.



St Swithun's VC Lower School URN: 109604

DfE number for St Swithun's VC Lower School: 823/3012

Brief History

St Swithun's VC Lower School is a voluntary controlled (VC) Church of England lower school that was judged to be 'good' by Ofsted in April 2012. It was also judged to be 'good' during the section 48 inspection (Church School inspection) in April 2012. The school takes children into Nursery the term after their third birthday and children apply for a Reception place via the Local Authority. The school also has an eight place Local Authority Autism Spectrum Condition provision.

Alteration proposal to the age range

It is proposed that St Swithun's VC Lower will extend its age range from a 3 to 9 years Lower School to a 3 – 11 years Primary School.

Implementation and stages of implementation

The proposal will be implemented on 1st September 2017.

In September 2017 – Year 4 pupils will remain at the school and become the new Year 5s.

In September 2018 – Year 5 pupils will remain at the school and become the new Year 6s.

In September 2019 – First transition of pupils from St Swithun's Primary to secondary school.

Capacity

The current capacity of the school is 210 pupil places (Nursery – Year 4) and the school currently has 168 pupils on roll, including Nursery.

Following implementation, the proposed capacity will potentially increase to 270 places including Nursery by 2018, when there will be pupils in all year groups from Nursery to Year 6.

Objectives of our proposal to change the age range are:

- To provide for continuation of the curriculum, whereby each phase of education (infant, junior and secondary) teaches at least one, if not two, full key stages and are mutually able to support progress by reducing the number of transition points. With the intention of improving student attainment and progress across all phases.
- To engage in greater collaborative working between and among phases with a view to enhancing the sharing of specialist provision.
- To sustain high standards of education and maintain the nurture and well-being of children by offering them only the minimum change of schools, thereby ensuring sustained progress in all areas.

- To ensure that all of the schools involved in the proposal work positively as partners to ensure a high quality and localised educational provision, with full agreement of each school's Governing Body.
- To ensure that all of the schools involved in the proposal offer children and young people a broad, balanced and cohesive curriculum that meets the needs of all.
- To offer all children and young people an exciting and innovative curriculum provision that meets their needs and supports them in achieving their full potential.
- To allow us to track and monitor pupil progress and attainment throughout Key Stage 1 and 2 within the same school, building improved accountability for pupil progress within both Key Stages and bringing the school in line with the prevailing system of education across the majority of the UK.
- To offer children a further 2 years within a primary model of teaching and learning before moving to a secondary model – meaning fewer daily changes of teacher and environment. This will give pupils time to mature and become 'secondary ready' in line with the National Curriculum expectation at the end of Year 6.
- To drive up standards at the end of Key Stage 2.
- To improve parental choice with regard to the variety of options and opportunities that are being offered.
- To preserve choice with respect to a Church School or non-Church School preference.
- To build upon our strong bond with the local Church community.
- To support disadvantaged children in meeting their potential and enhancing their outcomes.

Consultation

An informal consultation process was carried out between 12th October 2016 and 23rd November 2016: the outcome of this is outlined elsewhere in this report. Attached is a copy of the consultation document.

Who did we inform?

We informed and invited comments from a wide range of stakeholders and the wider community through a number of approaches. It should be noted that the consultation process was run in conjunction with Robert Peel Lower School, Moggerhanger Lower School, Everton Lower School, John Donne Church of England Lower School and Sandy Upper School, which are also consulting on changes to their age ranges. Since the schools serve a common geographic area, it was felt appropriate to work together on informing and consulting with stakeholders.

- Central Bedfordshire Council
- Bedford Borough Council
- Cambridgeshire Council
- Parents/guardians of every registered student at the school

- Parents/guardians of potential students in our catchment area and in Early Years provision
- Staff who work at the School
- Our local communities and our current site users
- All other schools within Central Bedfordshire
- The Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses
- Anyone else who has an interest in the proposal

Public meetings were held for parents/guardians and stakeholders on:

19th October and 20th October 2016.

A staff meeting was held at St Swithun's VC Lower School on:

17th October 2016 with teachers, teaching assistants, office staff, site agent and domestic staff invited.

We used parentmail, hard copy and the school website to inform parents/guardians, who were given the facility to respond to the consultation by paper or online. Plus the local press to alert stakeholders that the consultation process was starting and how long it was going to run for.

An electronic version of the consultation was placed, for all stakeholders and interested parties, on the school website.

Implementation

Initially these changes will be implemented on 1st September 2017, with the new intake into Year 5. The school has the current capacity to take Year 5 with no additional building work being required however there will be some reorganisation needed in school to accommodate Year 6. Building work will need to be undertaken.



St Swithun's VC Lower School's consultation on changing the school age range from 2017 onwards.

December 2017

The purpose of this section of the proposal is to:

- Provide detailed information about the responses to the consultation process;
- Respond, in particular, to the areas of concern that have been raised as part of that process;
- Identify how the school will meet the objectives for changing the age-range, as set out in the consultation process.

The consultation with stakeholders covered a single proposal:

Do you support the proposal that from September 2017 Year 5 should remain at St Swithun's VC Lower School and move into Year 6 from 2018?

The Governing Body invited, through consultation, responses to the following specific proposal:

Do you support the proposal that from September 2017, Year 5 pupils should have the opportunity to remain at St Swithun's VC Lower School and subsequently move into Year 6 in September 2018?

How did we consult?

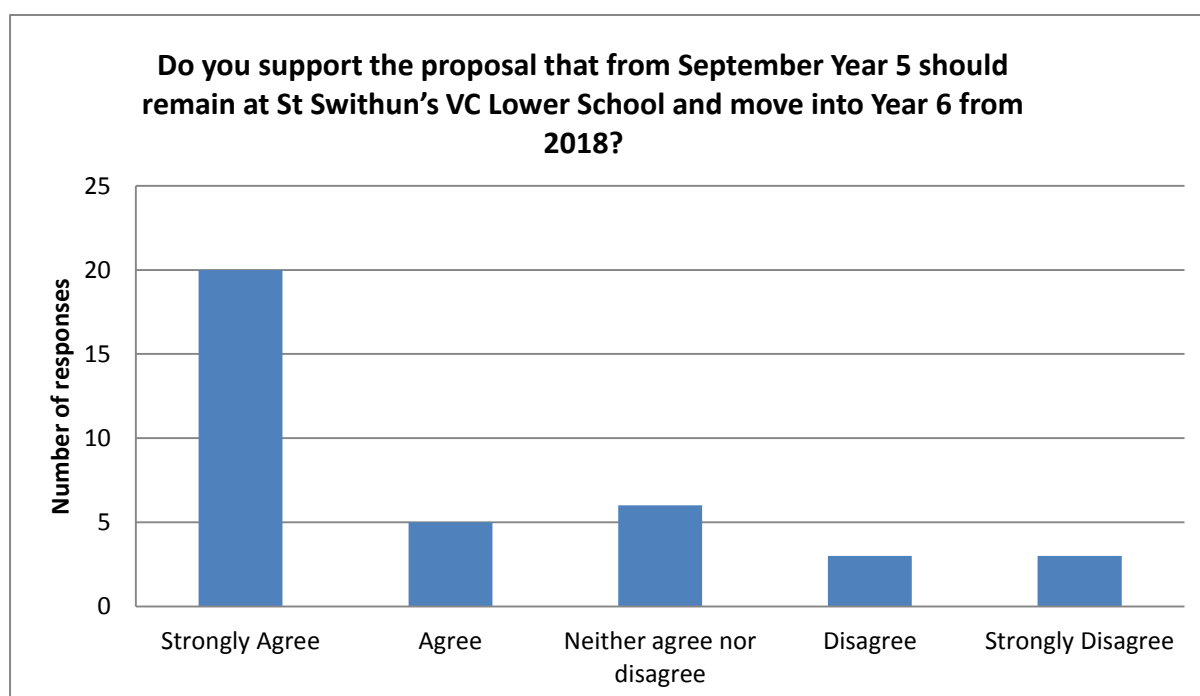
The formal consultation document (attached as an appendix), formed the basis of the consultation. All parents/guardians were notified at the start of the consultation by email. All staff were invited to a meeting about the consultation to notify them of the process. All

parties received the consultation proposal document by email and were invited to consultation meetings.

Prior to the publication of the consultations, St Swithun's VC Lower School met with all Pinnacle Trust Headteachers and Chairs of Governors, as well as the local authority, to discuss and advise them of the content of the consultation proposal. Arrangements were made with the 4 lower schools and 1 upper school, that were also consulting, to share their consultation documents and to distribute all documents all together. Paper copies of the consultation have also been made available if requested.

Summary of Responses

A total of 37 written responses were received for the proposal plus some verbal questions and responses that arose from the people who attended the consultation events. In terms of the report, there will be an indication of the responses received in graphical form and a commentary derived from the specific feelings that the respondents made.



Of the 37 people who expressed a firm opinion in this way, 25 were in favour of the proposal (68%), 6 did not know (16%) and 6 were against (16%). There were some observations/concerns about certain elements. These are detailed below together with the Governors' responses to those concerns.

We are worried you will not be able to give the children the opportunities that Sandy Place can offer.

All teaching staff at St Swithun's are Primary trained teachers. The school also uses the International Primary Curriculum which it will continue to use. The school will purchase any additional resources needed to teach the curriculum through its school budget. Should specialist facilities be needed then we will work with Sandy Upper School to implement this. It is important to remember that we are not trying to be a middle school. We will be providing a Primary education.

As a parent I am very keen to learn more about how St Swithun's will deliver the Year 5 and 6 curriculum and any extracurricular activities that may be provided e.g music.

How can this school offer a better Year 5 and 6 than competing with an established middle school? Some middle schools offer excellent facilities for music, such as Alban Academy, having orchestra and choirs which will inspire a Year 5 junior member, having science labs to do practical tasks unachievable in a classroom, having dedicated sports facilities, having specialised language facilities, having specific arts and DT equipment and dedicated subject staff. How will this school provide a comparable service?

The school will use the International Primary Curriculum to deliver a creative curriculum. English and Maths will be taught using resources appropriate to the age and ability of the child. There will continue to be a range of clubs offered for all children and music specialists will continue to work in school to deliver peripatetic lessons. St Swithun's is able to deliver a full Primary curriculum.

Clarification as to how 60 more pupils will fit i.e classrooms, playground, school hall etc....

What about space on playgrounds for 2 extra classes already. I'm not keen on a year 6 child playing in the same playground as my young child, what provisions will be made?

Will there be separate playgrounds for older and younger children? Where would this be as to split the current playground would make it too small?

Playtimes and lunchtimes will be staggered meaning the younger and older children will be separated to allow for age appropriate games.

Provision for changing facilities for years 5 and 6 separating boys and girls.

Are there/will there be separate changing facilities for PE and what experience will the teaching staff of a Year 5 have in the pastoral needs of this age group?

PE for Years 5 and 6 will take place on the same afternoon. All children will change after lunch with boys and girls separated in different classrooms. There are a number of staff who

have already worked with Years 5 and 6. All children have had training on how to deal with the emotional well-being of children within a Primary School.

Provision for teaching specialist subjects as taught at middle school i.e cooking, science.

How are specialist lessons going to be taught?

What specialist subject knowledge will the teaching staff have and what subject expertise do you think you will have bring in to meet the curriculum requirements (e.g. sports, languages, geography etc) ?

The teaching of the Primary curriculum can be accommodated within the current school's resources. There is no need for specialist provision for Years 5 and 6. Any additional resources will be purchased or borrowed.

Will the pupils/children get the option to stay at St Swithun's or goes to middle school?

This is about parental choice. Pupils will be able to choose to stay at St Swithun's or move onto middle school.

How will the school ensure that children in Year 5 are taught by experienced and qualified teachers?

Which of your current staff have experience in Year 5 or 6 teaching? Will they be assigned to the class? Are they NQT or qualified?

The school already employs staff who have recently taught in bigger Primary schools and have experience in teaching in Years 5 and 6.

My only concern is the lack of space within the school to accommodate 2 extra year groups?

The school already has one spare classroom. The Governing Board is currently looking at ways to enhance the provision of the whole school to accommodate Year 6 in the best way. A build will take place.

How are 2 different systems going to work within Sandy?

I am concerned about 2 different tier systems running in such a small town. How will this work?

As a wider issue across Sandy schooling. What effect will the two differently tiered systems have on integration?

Parents will have the choice on which direction they want their children to follow. All the schools in Sandy will still work together to ensure a smooth transition for all its pupils.

Where would a new classroom go? Where do we put visiting teachers, breakfast club?

How will two extra classes be fitted into St Swithun's?

How would this accommodate extra activities on the site in September 17 as the spare classroom is already well used – readers, breakfast club, PTA, extra lessons? How can these be accommodated?

The Governing Board are looking at how to maximise the facilities within the school setting. Breakfast club is extending its hours, so as that grows it would have to move to another part of the school. Visiting teachers will use the library and hall, as many of them do already.

Would Chestnut also extend their age range?

In consultation with the Local Authority Chestnut class will also extend its age range.

Will you enhance homework provision to give the kids a planner and have more online resources like bug club but for maths?

Homework provision across the school will be looked at to ensure there is progression across the year groups and Key Stages to ensure opportunities for extended home learning.

When will we know whether you are intending to go ahead with primary status? Will other schools' admission policies be 'put on ice' until that is confirmed? (e.g. is there a situation where we could turn down a middle school place on the belief primary status will happen, only for you to u-turn and leave our child out of the admissions system)?

The consultation ended on 23rd November. The Governing Board of each school has met to consider their responses to the consultation and make a decision on the way forward. The Heads and Chairs of all the schools involved have also met to share their decisions.

Has a specific budget and funding been agreed yet between the LA, other funding partners and school for the things that are required to ensure the high standard of education we come to expect from St Swithun's for Year 5 and 6? If not, when would this budget be agreed and what mechanism to the Board of Governors have to challenge that if they feel the funding is inadequate?

St Swithun's manages its own budget. Grants from other partners can be applied for as needed and if the criteria is met. The Local Authority is fully aware of the school's plans. Our school budget is monitored by the Local Authority.

If a substantial number of parents still choose to take their child to a middle school, leaving low class numbers wanting to remain, will you go ahead with the plan? If so, will year groups remain separate and will the same amount of teaching/TA staff remain, or will there be a reduction in teaching staff?

If it is planned to start in September 17 in such a short time frame, how can this school manage with a year or two if Year 5/6 with half class sizes?

The Governing Board are committed to ensuring that all children receive a quality first education. Regardless of how many children stay the school will ensure that Year 5 have

a qualified and experienced teacher. Teaching assistants will continue to be used to support teaching and learning. There will be a teaching assistant in Year 5.

Has a building assessment been undertaken yet on the future work that will be done to build a new building for Year 6? How will this work be undertaken when children are in the school in and around what will be a building site?

The school has already been investigating possible development sites around the school. We would always minimise disruption for our current pupils.

What is the timetable of the building works? What land will be lost by a new building?

There is no need to build anything for September 2017 as the school can already accommodate these children. The Governing Board will look to maximise the facilities on offer to the children when considering any building works.

How does St Swithun's intend to match the diversity of sports and the element of inspirational spaces offered by the current middle schools?

St Swithun's works hard to ensure that the children get to experience a diverse amount of sporting opportunities within school and with other schools within a competitive context. This would be continued with Year 5 and 6 pupils. The school already has an outside classroom, school pond and always considers outside learning when planning a creative curriculum.

Will there be an internal Central Bedfordshire or even an OFSTED inspection of the quality of education being offered to the new Year 5s within the first term of the year, so any recommendations for change can be applied quickly?

Ofsted aim to inspect all 'good' schools within 3 years and this would remain. The school will be scrutinised closely by all stakeholders especially when Year 6 results are published.

How will two more years in a one class setting prepare children better for senior school and many different teachers over middle school as a 'half way' situation with smaller cohort and a gradual progress to more different teachers?

St Swithun's school staff will work hard with any transitional schools to ensure a smooth transition for all its pupils.

Will the library be equipped by September 17 to carry more advanced reference books, allow children freedom to choose books, have a ticketing system or employ a librarian?

The school already has an electronic borrowing system called 'Microlibrarian' which is used to allow the children to borrow and return books. The PTA are already funding £1000 worth of books for the school library. We already have children reading beyond their chronological age so the school already has a good range of fiction and non-fiction texts available for older children.

Will St Swithun's put on more trips and theatre productions?

The school will continue with its wide range of school trips, residentials and in-house activities.

Can all schools co-operate more to decide whether 2 or 3 tier is better in Sandy and offer a more joined up solution?

The school has been working as part of The Pinnacle Trust since November 2011. The members of The Pinnacle Trust know the school's plans to move towards a two tier system with other schools.

It seems that there will be a big over provision in this new system for years 5 and 6. There is also a new lower/primary planned with Sandy's expansion. Is it going to be cost efficient for the State?

Parents will have the choice on where they send their child. The Governing Board are not in a position to comment on the expansion of Sandy and the implications on how this will impact on schools in the future.

After careful consideration of the issues raised the Governing Board of St Swithun's VC Lower School agreed to proceed with an Age Range Change from 3-9 to 3-11 as of September 2017.



**Consultation on our Proposal to
Extend the Age Range of
St Swithun's VC Lower School
to a Single Phase Primary age
3 to 11 Provision
for 2017-18**

CONSULTATION ON OUR PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THE AGE RANGE OF ST SWITHUN'S VC LOWER SCHOOL, IVEL ROAD, SANDY, BEDS, SG19 1AX TO A SINGLE PHASE PRIMARY PROVISION FOR 2017/2018

The Purpose of the Consultation Document

The purpose of this document is to provide information on a proposal to extend the age range of St Swithun's VC Lower School from 3-9 years to 3-11 years, to create a full primary provision. This will mean that the school will take children from age 4 (Year R) to age 11 (Year 6). Nursery will continue in its current form taking children the term after their 3rd birthday.

1. Background

During the past few months, governors and the senior leadership team at St Swithun's VC Lower School have been considering how best to secure a strong and positive future for our School within the ever changing national, regional and Central Bedfordshire contexts.

Following debate, research and collaboration with other local schools the Governing Body would like to propose a significant change to St Swithun's VC Lower School. This change is fundamental to our vision and strategic plan, and this should be to the benefit of all our children and the wider community. This paper aims to provide you with the information you might need to be able to contribute your views on the proposals.

2. Contextual position

There is much change within the area of Bedford Borough, Biggleswade and the surrounding areas with a significant number of schools now being Academies and a general move towards a two-tier system of education. The following points demonstrate these particular trends:

- Some schools in Central Bedfordshire (Dunstable and Houghton Regis) have already moved towards a two tier system.
- Alban Church of England Academy is awaiting approval from the Department for Education following their consultation to change their age-range from 9-13 to 3-13 for September 2017. The lower school next door to Alban Academy, Great Barford Lower School, is also in consultation to change its age-range to become a full primary school increasing to 4 to 11 from 4 to 9, altering a transition which would previously have fed into Alban Academy at Year 5.
- Bedford Borough Council issued documentation in July 2015 inviting groups of schools to bid for the capital funding that would facilitate a move to a two tier system of education in the area by the end of the decade.

- Our bordering county of Cambridgeshire is already two-tier which has a major impact on our children and their choices.

Whilst the three-tier system of education has served the pupils and families of Bedfordshire very well for the past 40 years, changes at local and national level mean that this system is now the exception, rather than a rule. At its height of popularity in the 1980s there were over 1,400 Middle Schools in England. As of September 2015, there are just 147 left in 17 out of 150 Local Authorities. With the largest number being found in the combined totals of Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. At least 95% of children nationally are being educated in a two-tier system and teacher training colleges no longer provide courses for middle years' teachers. All teachers are now trained as either Primary or Secondary specialists.

When the National Curriculum was introduced in the late 1980s, and Key Stages were subsequently implemented, the intention was that Key Stages 1 and 2 would be delivered in primary schools up to the age of 11 and Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 would be taught in secondary schools. The three-tier system of education has generally meant that there was a split between Lower, Middle and Upper schools as to where Key Stages 2 and 3 were taught, with no single entity having complete responsibility for delivery.

The final element to consider is that, under the Department for Education's (DfE) School Organisation guidance, introduced in 2016, it is now possible for individual governing bodies of foundation and voluntary schools to consult on extending the age range of the school by up to two years (apart from adding a 6th form) without the need to follow a statutory process, providing they have the necessary accommodation and consent to do this and follow the expectations of the DfE as listed within the guidance. . Therefore it is now appropriate for the governing body to carry out its own consultation on the proposed change so that parents and the wider community can comment on their own situation.

3. Proposal

We believe that our children would benefit from a full Primary School setting that is designed to meet the learning needs of a child at both Key Stages 1 and 2 and lead them, seamlessly, into subsequent Key Stage 3.

The proposed change would provide stability and a continuity of learning, and more significantly reflect the changing face of schooling in Sandy, the surrounding rural areas and the immediate locality.

Whilst this is a consultation solely about St Swithun's VC Lower School, five other schools – Robert Peel Lower School, Moggerhanger Lower School, Everton Lower School, John Donne C of E Lower School and Sandy Upper School – will be running parallel consultations to St Swithun's about becoming a primary schools from 3 to 11 and a secondary from 11-19. Each will hold their own staff and parental consultation evenings, but since they serve the

same broad geographic area, it was felt appropriate to hold combined meetings for community and other stakeholder groups, that might be affected by these changes.

To summarise, our objectives are:

- To provide for continuation of the curriculum, whereby each phase of education (infant, junior and secondary) teaches at least one, if not two, full key stages and are mutually able to support progress by reducing the number of transition points. With the intention of improving student attainment and progress across all phases.
- To engage in greater collaborative working between and among phases with a view to enhancing the sharing of specialist provision.
- To sustain high standards of education and maintain the nurture and well-being of children by offering them only the minimum change of schools, thereby ensuring sustained progress in all areas.
- To ensure that all of the schools involved in the proposal work positively as partners to ensure a high quality and localised educational provision, with full agreement of each school's Governing Body.
- To ensure that all of the schools involved in the proposal offer children and young people a broad, balanced and cohesive curriculum that meets the needs of all.
- To offer all children and young people an exciting and innovative curriculum provision that meets their needs and supports them in achieving their full potential.
- To allow us to track and monitor pupil progress and attainment throughout Key Stage 1 and 2 within the same school, building improved accountability for pupil progress within both Key Stages and bringing the school in line with the prevailing system of education across the majority of the UK.
- To offer children a further 2 years within a primary model of teaching and learning before moving to a secondary model – meaning fewer daily changes of teacher and environment. This will give pupils time to mature and become 'secondary ready' in line with the National Curriculum expectation at the end of Year 6.
- To drive up standards at the end of Key Stage 2.
- To improve parental choice with regard to the variety of options and opportunities that are being offered.
- To preserve choice with respect to a Church School or non-Church School preference.
- To build upon our strong bond with the local Church community.
- To support disadvantaged children in meeting their potential and enhancing their outcomes.

You are invited to meetings as part of this consultation – please see the schedule on page 10

4. Details of the Proposed Arrangements for 2017-18

As St Swithun's VC Lower School is a foundation school, the Governing Body, with permission from the Diocese, is able to propose, consult and then make the decision to alter the upper or lower age limit by up to two years (except where adding a Sixth Form provision is proposed). The Governing Body is not required to follow a statutory process but is required to follow the DfE's guidance and meet the expectations listed within the guidance when consulting. The DfE also provides guidance for decision makers which the Governing Body is required to follow. Therefore if following consultation, the Governing Body and Diocese decide to go ahead with the proposal of St Swithun's VC Lower becoming a primary school for children from Years R - 6 all relevant parties will be notified of this change and the School will inform the Secretary of State by updating the Register of Education Establishments (Edubase). This change would then come into effect from September 2017.

5. Implementing Age Phase Changes 2017-18 Onwards

We are seeking to offer continuity of learning throughout the primary stage of schooling and in particular to maintain high quality provision through the entire National Curriculum phases known as The Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception), Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) and Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6).

The National Curriculum will be delivered across the full primary age range. St Swithun's staff are already fully trained in teaching the primary years, up to the end of Year 6. Continued Professional Development (CPD) will continue to be offered.

In line with primary schools across the country we will deliver this broad and balanced curriculum without the need for specialist facilities but continuing as a school to deliver high quality teaching with the potential of using specialist teachers for areas such as PE, music and science.

We will continue to liaise with the next phase schools and local cluster schools to ensure a progressive learning journey for our children.

Our existing buildings and site facilities already have sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed new Year 5 class and a further building would be added to the schools site to accommodate the additional Year 6 class

Parental choice will shape the future of all schools across Sandy and the surrounding area and these proposed changes will not prevent parents from selecting a lower or primary school of their choice.

6. Admission of Students

If the proposed change of age range is agreed by the Governing Body, parents will have the option to not accept their Year 5 place as children will be able to continue until the end of Year 6 within the same setting.

St Swithun's VC Lower School is currently a 3 - 9 co-educational Church of England lower school, and is proposing to become a 3 - 11 co-educational Church of England Primary School with one admission point in the Reception Year. Our admissions are managed by the

Local Authority (Central Bedfordshire Council). Places are allocated based on the admissions criteria, which take into account various factors such as catchment area, whether children have siblings in the school or whether the child is 'looked after'.

Children will be admitted in the academic year they turn 5 (Year R) and without reference to ability or aptitude. The Governors will admit 30 children (the admission number) per academic year to Year 5 and then to Year 6.

Priority will be given to children living within the St Swithun's catchment.

There will be no proposals to change the admissions criteria for the school, which are currently:

- 1) All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
- 2) Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
- 3) Children living in the catchment area
- 4) Other children with siblings at the school
- 5) Children who live nearest to the school determined by straight line distance from the school site to the child's home address

If applying these criteria results in there being more children with an equal right to admission to the school than there are available places, then tie break will be the distance the child lives from the School, measured in a straight line, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system. Those living closer to the School will receive the higher priority. The distance will be measured from the address point of the child's home to a central marked point on the School site. Priority will not be given within each criterion to children who meet other criteria. In the event of (a) two or more children living at the same address point (e.g. children resident in a block of flats) or (b) two addresses measuring the same distance from the school, the ultimate tie-breaker will be random selection, using the School Admissions Team database to allocate the place.

Children who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs are required to be admitted to the school which is named on the statement, even if the school is full. Children identified for admission through the Fair Access Protocol will also be admitted even if the school is full. Such children will be fully supported with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.

Parents/guardians who want their child to transfer to the next phase of school outside of their normal age group must make the request in sufficient time for it to be considered before the application deadline. All in year admission applications must be made to the Central Bedfordshire Council.

The School allocates places on an equal preference basis as explained in the Local Authority Academy/School transfer booklet and is a part of the Local Authority co-ordinated admissions process.

Definitions

“Looked after” children

A ‘looked after’ child is a child who is (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

Previously “looked after” children

A previously ‘looked after’ child is one who immediately after being ‘looked after’ became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. An ‘adoption order’ is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A ‘residence order’ is an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a ‘special guardianship order’ as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian (or special guardians).

Home Address

A child’s home address will be regarded as the address of the parents or guardians with parental responsibility with whom the child normally lives. This will not usually include grandparents, aunts or uncles. Where a child spends time with parents/guardians at more than one address, the address used to allocate a school place will be the one at which the student is ordinarily resident and where the child spends the majority of the school week (Mondays to Fridays) including nights. If there is any query on the home address this will be checked against original official documentation e.g. council tax bill, a recent utility bill (gas, electricity or water), a rental agreement, child benefit annual statement or family tax credit information.

Sibling

A sibling refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, step brother or sister, adopted brother or sister or fostered brother or sister where foster care has been arranged by a Local Authority or the child of the parent/guardian’s partner, and in every case, the child should be living at the same address. The sibling must be in the school at the time of application and be likely to remain in the school at the proposed date of admission.

Applications for admission into Reception must be made to the home Local Authority in accordance with procedures explained in their admission literature and website.

Requests for admission into other year groups should be made to the Local Authority on the In-Year application form. The form is available from the school or Local Authority and can also be downloaded from the Local Authority website.

Parents/guardians can apply using the online application system (see details on Central Bedfordshire website) or by contacting Central Bedfordshire Council for a Transfer to Lower/Primary Application Form. When completed, this form must be returned to Central Bedfordshire Council by the deadline on the form. Parents/guardians **must** apply to the Local Authority in which they live.

Proposal for admissions from 2017

From	Action
September 2017	Year 4 pupils are able to remain at the school and move into Year 5
September 2018	Year 5 pupils remain at the school and move into Year 6 Parents of Year 6 children make a Transfer to Secondary School 2019 application
September 2019	First transition of pupils from St Swithun's Primary to secondary school

Numbers on Roll *

	September 2016	September 2017	September 2018	September 2019	September 2020
Year R	22	30	30	30	30
Year 1	30	22	30	30	30
Year 2	31	30	22	30	30
Year 3	30	31	30	22	30
Year 4	31	30	31	30	22
Year 5	0	31	30	31	30
Year 6	0	0	31	30	31
Totals	144	174	204	203	203

Numbers include children attending the schools autism provision which is an 8 place specialist provision. All admissions are completed through the SEND team's admissions panel.

What are the arrangements for the consultation process?

The purpose of the consultation is to seek views of students, parents/guardians and the wider community about the proposals being put forward. This will allow the School Governors to make a fully informed decision as to whether to convert St Swithun's VC Lower School to a full primary school. It also provides a time where you can ask questions about the proposals or make alternative suggestions.

You can take part and have your say in the following ways

By completing the attached response form

By email – schooloffice@stswithuns.cbeds.co.uk

By letter - The Headteacher, St Swithun's VC Lower School, Ivel Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 1AX

Meetings at the School with the Headteacher and Governors are booked for 19th October at 6.30 pm (parents/guardians) and 20th October at 7.00 pm at Sandy Upper School (community).

The consultation will run from 12th October 2016 until 12 noon on 23rd November 2016. We are specifically discussing our proposals with the following groups, and would encourage anyone interested to read through this proposal document and give us your views:

Central Bedfordshire Council
 Bedford Borough Council
 Cambridgeshire County Council
 Parents/carers of every registered student at the school
 Parents/carers of potential children in our catchment area and in Early Years provision
 Staff who work at the school
 Our local communities and our current site users
 All other schools within Central Bedfordshire
 The Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses
 Anyone else who has an interest in the proposal

Once the consultation process is completed, the Governing Body of the School will meet in December to consider the responses and to answer queries that have been raised about particular issues. It will then publish a Consultation Report on the School's website.

The Governing Body will then decide whether or not to ratify their decision to raise the upper age-limit of the School from 9 years to 11 years, thus creating an all-through primary provision. This will mean that the School will take children from age 4 (Year R) to age 11 (Year 6).

Process of Consultation

In order to engage in meaningful and informed consultation, we will be holding a number of consultation events to engage with all stakeholders, as well as providing the opportunity for individuals and institutions to make written submissions about the proposals. All of this evidence will be collated into a Consultation Report that the governors will consider prior to their decision. Below is the full timetable, but processes after December 2016 will only be actioned if the governors decide to proceed.

Date	Action
12 th October 2016	Consultation begins
17 th October 2016	Meeting with St Swithun's School staff
19 th October 2016 6.30 pm	Meeting at St Swithun's with parents/guardians
20 th October 2016 7.00 pm	Meeting with community (at Sandy Upper School)
23 rd November 2016	Consultation ends
Week beginning 12 th December 2016	If the Governing Body decides to proceed, it will publish its decision on the age range consultation and determine its admission arrangements. The Governing Body will then notify the Secretary of State by updating Edubase.
September 2017	Current Year 4 pupils stay at the school forming the first Year 5 group
September 2018	First Year 6 group established

	Parents of Year 6 pupils make application for Transfer to Secondary 2019
September 2019	First transition of pupils from St Swithun's VC Primary School to secondary school

13th October 2016 – Letter to accompany consultation.

Dear Parents/Guardians/Staff/Member of the local community

Consultation to become a Primary School from September 2017 (Year R to 6).

The Governing Body of St Swithun's VC Lower School has decided that it should further investigate and consult on the proposal to extend the age phase to include Years 5 and 6 in a Primary provision for 2017-18, commencing with children in year 4 having the opportunity to move into year 5 in September 2017. You are invited to attend a meeting as detailed below.

We will be considering and inviting comments on the proposed age range changes for St Swithun's VC Lower School 2017/18. If you have any questions or would like to express your views, I would be grateful if you could submit these in writing or by email to schooloffice@stswithuns.cbeds.co.uk by the 17th October by 12 noon, so that they can be addressed at the meeting. The final decision on any proposed changes are made by the Governing Body.

St Swithun's VC Lower School – Meetings for parents/guardians, staff, members of the community and neighboring schools

17 th October 2016 3.45pm	Meeting with St Swithun's School staff
19 th October 2016 6.00 pm	Meeting at St Swithun's with parents/guardians
20 th October 2016 7.00 pm	Meeting with community (at Sandy Upper School)

We look forward to seeing you.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Diane Osborne
Chair of the Governing Body
St Swithun's VC Lower School

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL

PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THE AGE RANGE TO A SINGLE PHASE PRIMARY PROVISION 2017-2018

Please take the time to read our Consultation document and complete this questionnaire. Your feedback is important to us. Please email completed questionnaires to schooloffice@stswithuns.cbeds.co.uk, hand in at the school office or send by post to:

Mrs Diane Osborne, Chair of Governors, St Swithun's VC Lower School, Ivel Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 1AX

All responses must be received by noon on 17th October 2016

The Proposal

Do you support the proposal that from September 2017, Year 5 pupils should have the opportunity to remain at St Swithun's VC Lower School and subsequently move into Year 6 in September 2018?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Comment (Please give any comments or suggestions you may have including any alternative proposals you wish to put forward here:)

Please tell us who you are.

We intend to analyse responses according to stakeholder group. Please tick all the boxes that apply in the list below.

- ☐ Parent of a student(s) currently attending the School
- ☐ Member of staff who works at the School
- ☐ Parent of a child in local Early Years provision
- ☐ Governor, including Head Teacher, at a neighbouring school
- ☐ Member of the local community
- ☐ Representative of the Local Authority
- ☐ Representative of a Diocese
- ☐ Other (please specify)

We will respect any desire to remain anonymous (no one will be publicly identified in the report on the consultation) but if you are content for us to know your name (or names if this is a joint response), please enter it/them here:

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The Report on John Donne CE Lower School's consultation on changing the school age range from 2017 onwards

December 2016

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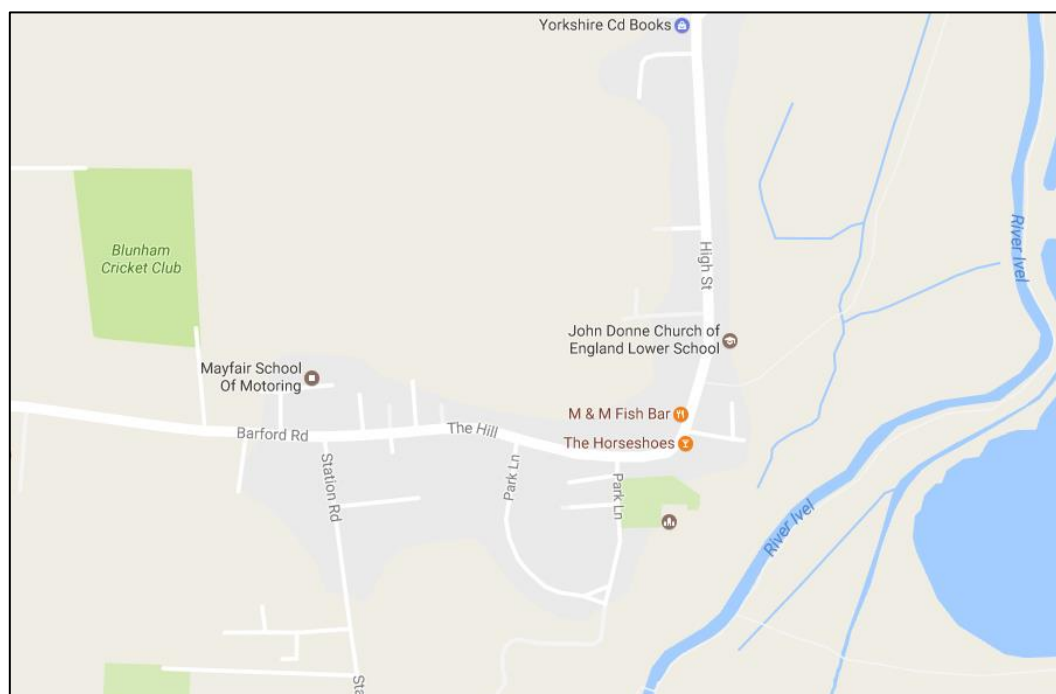
Section 1

The Governing Body of John Donne CE Lower School are now in a position to report on the outcome of consultation regarding:

John Donne CE Lower School's consultation on changing the school age range for 2017 onwards.

John Donne CE Lower School is situated in the Village of Blunham in Central Bedfordshire.

Address – John Donne CE Lower School, Blunham, Bedfordshire, MK44 3NL.



John Donne CE Lower School URN: 109615

The DFE number for John Donne CE Lower School: 8233302

Brief History

During the past few months, the Governing Body and the Head Teacher at John Donne CE Lower School have been considering how best to secure a strong and positive future for our School within the ever changing national, regional and Central Bedfordshire contexts.

There is much change within the area of Bedford Borough and the surrounding areas, with a number of schools now becoming Academies along with a general move towards a two-tier system of education.

We believe that our children would benefit from a full Primary School setting that is designed to meet the learning needs of a child at both Key Stages 1 and 2 and lead them, seamlessly, into subsequent Key Stage 3.

The proposed change would provide stability and a continuity of learning, and more significantly reflect the changing face of schooling in Bedfordshire.

Alteration proposal to the age range

It is proposed that John Donne CE Lower School will extend its age range from a 13 to 9 years Lower School to 3 to 11 years Primary School.

Implementation and stages of implementation

The proposal will be implemented on 1st September 2017.

In September 2017 – Year 4 pupils are able to remain at the school and move into Year 5.

In September 2018 – Year 5 pupils remain at the school and move into Year 6. Parents of Year 6 children make a transfer to secondary school application.

In September 2019 – First transition of pupils from John Donne CE Primary to secondary school.

Capacity

The current capacity of the school is 120 pupil places and the School currently has 64 pupils on roll.

Following implementation, the proposed capacity will potentially increase to 168 places by 2020, when there will be students in all year groups from Year R to Year 6 .

Objectives of our proposal to change the age range are:

- To provide better continuity of the curriculum – where each phase of education (infant, junior and secondary) teaches distinct, complete key stages.
- To engage in greater collaborative working between schools, enhancing the sharing of specialist provision, with the intention of improving student attainment and progress across all phases.
- To sustain high standards of education and maintain the nurture and well-being of children by offering them only the minimum change of schools, thereby ensuring sustained progress in all areas.
- To ensure that all the schools involved in the proposal work positively as partners to ensure a high quality and localised educational provision, with full agreement of each school's Governing Body.
- To ensure that all the schools involved in the proposal offer children and young people a broad, balanced and cohesive, exciting and innovative curriculum that meets their needs and supports them in achieving their full potential.
- To allow us to track and monitor pupil progress and attainment throughout Key Stage 1 and 2 within the same school, building improved accountability for pupil progress within both Key Stages and bringing the school in line with the prevailing system of education across the majority of the UK.
- To offer children a further 2 years within a primary model of teaching and learning before moving to a secondary model – meaning fewer daily changes of teacher and environment. This will give pupils time to mature and become 'secondary ready' in line with the National Curriculum expectation at the end of Year 6.
- To work together to continue to drive up standards at the end of Key Stage 2.

Consultation

An informal consultation process was carried out between 12th October 2016 and 23rd November 2016: the outcome of this is outlined elsewhere in this report. Attached is a copy of the consultation document.

Procedures for making representation regarding proposal

We informed and invited comments from a wide range of stakeholders and the wider community through a number of approaches. It should be noted that the consultation process was run in conjunction with Robert Peel Lower School, Moggerhanger Lower School, Everton Lower School, St Swithun's VC Lower School and Sandy Upper School, which are also consulting on changes to their age ranges.

Since the schools serve a common geographic area, it was felt appropriate to work together on informing and consulting with stakeholders.

- Central Bedfordshire Council
- Bedford Borough Council
- Cambridgeshire Council
- Parents/guardians of every registered student at the school
- Parents/guardians of potential students in our catchment area and in Early Years provision
- Staff who work at the School
- Our local communities and our current site users
- All other schools within Central Bedfordshire
- The Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses
- Anyone else who has an interest in the proposal

Public meetings were held for parents/guardians and stakeholders on:

Wednesday 19th October (at John Donne CE Lower School) and Thursday 20th October 2016 (at Sandy Upper School)

A staff meeting was held at John Donne CE Lower School on:

Tuesday 11th October 2016 with teachers, teaching assistants, office staff, site agent and support staff invited.

We used hard copy and the School website to inform parents/guardians, who were given the facility to respond to the consultation by paper or online. Additionally, the local press to alert stakeholders that the consultation process was starting and how long it was going to run for.

An electronic version of the consultation was placed, for all stakeholders and interested parties, on the School website.

Implementation

Initially, these changes will be implemented on the 1st September 2017, with the new intake into Year 5. Our existing buildings and site facilities already have sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed new Year 5 class (2017) (on the expectation that not all current Year 4 pupils will opt to stay at the School) and eventually the new Year 6 class (2018). We will be exploring with the Diocese of St Albans the funding and provision of a further building to the school site to accommodate the additional pupil numbers from 2018 and have begun consultations with architects. In preparation for this we will be working with the Local Authority, and other schools involved in this consultation on the necessary statutory process relating to physical expansion of building capacity.



Section 2.

John Donne CE Lower School's consultation report on changing the school age range from 2017 onwards

The purpose of this consultation report:

The purpose of this document is to provide summary feedback on the consultation process, including comments from stakeholder groups and, where appropriate, responses from the Governing Body and School Management Team.

The Governing Body invited, through the consultation, responses to the following proposal:

Consultation on our proposal to extend the age range of John Donne CE Lower School, High St, Blunham, Beds, MK44 3NL from 3-9 Years to a 3-11 Years single phase primary provision for September 2017-2018

How did we consult?

The formal consultation document (attached as an appendix), formed the basis of the consultation. All parents/guardians were notified at the start of the consultation. All staff were invited to a meeting about the consultation to notify them of the process. All parties received the consultation proposal document by hardcopy or email and were invited to consultation meetings.

Prior to the publication of the consultation, John Donne Lower CE School met with all the Head teachers and Chairs of Governors involved in this consultation, as well as the local authority, to discuss and advise them of the content of the consultation proposal. Arrangements were made with the 5 other schools, that are also consulting, to share their consultation documents on each other's websites and to distribute all documents together. Paper copies of the consultation have also been made available if requested.

Summary of Responses

1. Meeting with Staff

All staff received the consultation document on Tuesday the 11th of October, ahead of the general dissemination on the 12th of October. The Chair of the Governing Body and the Head Teacher held meetings with the school staff on Tuesday the 11th of October – with the Head writing to any who could not be present, or arranging individual meetings as appropriate.

All staff were made aware of their opportunities to comment, and that this would extend throughout the consultation period. All staff were supportive of, indeed enthusiastic at, the proposed changes to the school.

2. Consultation meeting at school

An open consultation meeting was held at John Donne Lower School on Wednesday the 19th of October at 7:30pm. John Donne's Chair of Governors was present, along with the Head Teacher and Head Teachers of other schools involved in the consultation. The meeting proceeded as follows: *(these notes form the minutes of the meeting taken at that time)*

Dr Lee Larcombe, Chair of Governors, welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Headteachers from Sandy Upper, and the Lower Schools. He explained the role of the consultation and the decision making process. Dr Larcombe handed over to Mrs Judi Johnson-Clarke, Headteacher.

JJ-C showed Powerpoint presentation which had been shown at all the Schools holding consultation meetings this week. JJ-C explained that all around us are moving to two tier, and we needed to have a pathway for our children, which Sandy as a Secondary School would be able to provide. KS1 results in Central Bedfordshire are high but in KS2 are low, which we would be able to address by not having a split key stage 2 across lower and middle schools.

JJ-C offered to hold a meeting for year 4 children parents to go through specific details, as she understood this would be a difficult decision for them. For children in the lower years it would become the normal pathway for them.

JJ-C said it had always been our vision that the school would develop, we had been waiting for the pathway, but we had already developed the school buildings, with the new nursery unit and hall. Our ethos and values would remain the same, we would expand on what we already provide for the older children. All the teachers here are Primary trained.

Karen Hayward, Headteacher of Sandy Upper, has offered their facilities to us. Karen Hayward confirmed we will all work together to share resources and teaching, to build a seamless transition.

It was opened to the floor for questions and comments:

Question: With the intake increasing, the size of school will need to increase is funding in place to physically expand?

Response: *JJ-C – we have a continual cycle of development with the hall already done, we are looking into our options for further development and will apply for the funding required.*

Question: Will the new Year 5 class be taught separately or combined with the Year 3&4 class?

Response: *JJ-C said this is dependent on numbers, we will meet and discuss this with the Year 4 parents. You should still apply for your place in Middle School, then once we have made our decision at the end of the consultation in November, we will meet with you, and you can decide whether you stay or move on. JJ-C said she cannot describe what it will look like yet, we will have a new teacher but not sure yet how this will be organised.*

Dr Larcombe gave his view of how Year 5 might look, if only 5 children stay then we would have to teach all together, a class of 5 would not be beneficial for those children. However if we have 15 then we would split. Our plans are not concrete yet but we are ready to move on either way. It will be clear by 17th January 2017.

JJ-C said we will offer these children something more grown up, teachers are Primary trained with specialisms in different areas, and we can appoint dependent on the areas we are looking to strengthen.

Question: I have a child here and also at Alban, will the expansion include facilities for Science/Design Technology which they can access at Alban?

Response: *JJ-C explained that in KS2 there isn't the requirement to provide specialist equipment, the lower part of middle school is modelled on the Primary provision requirement. We will have the opportunity to use the facilities and resources at Sandy.*

Question: Is Sandy Upper planning to convert regardless or will all schools change on mass?

Response: *Karen Hayward said each Schools's Governing Body will make their decisions, it means we now have the pathway planned, Sandy will take Year 7 and Year 9 until Year 9 intake is no longer needed. The DfE is pushing for two tier system and we have all decided to work together and support each other to achieve this.*

Question: Could John Donne change to Primary but Sandy not change to Secondary?

Response: Karen Hayward said this move is the favoured choice for all schools involved. Our consultations will all finish together, each Governing Body will make their decisions and then all meet to discuss the overall picture.

Question: The move from a Primary School of around 120 pupils to a Secondary School with over 1000 is a very large change and a big difference, and I am concerned about how this large transition would be managed?.

Response: Karen Hayward - The first few weeks in any new school are key, we will have lots of enrichment days, and move up days. There will be plenty of interaction it will not be done in isolation. Sandy has a vertical tutor group system, and 6th form buddies and sports coaches. Everyone is integrated into the whole school community and everyone helped to achieve their potential.

JJ-C – transition is a big step even from Nursery to Reception, we know how to manage this and integrate them, this is just the next step. Pupils will be two years older, there is a big difference in maturity from a Year 4 to Year 6 pupil.

Question: How much of the playground will be left if we expand?

Response: JJ-C – we want to keep the playground but we need to expand in the future. We have engaged architects to look into this, we do not have any definite plans to share yet, but will when known. We can use the village playing fields and Sandy facilities. We will make it work and ensure the best experience possible.

Question: Do the School's catchment areas overlap?

Response: No – but only half of our children come from the village.

Question: If numbers do not increase is the school still viable?

Response: Yes, we believe so.

Question: Can we get a carpark – even if only for staff?

Response: We have looked into options to gain additional parking areas. There had previously been talk of potential development on the field behind school, where we had asked for it to include car parking and a playing field. However this does not appear to currently be moving forward.

Comment: Two tier system works really well across the border in Cambridgeshire, Hinchingsbrooke is 2000+ Secondary School and has small feeder Schools and transition works well.

Response: We believe that we will achieve the same.

Question: Will the name of the School change?

Response: It will, "Primary" will be included but this will be agreed by the Governors at a later date. This will affect the name on the uniform, but any change would be gradual.

Comment: Parent of a current Year 4 asked her child for their opinion and they have said "I am happy and I am learning what more is there"

There were no further questions or comments. Dr Larcombe said this was not the only opportunity to ask questions. Throughout the consultation period, the forms can be returned or questions/ideas raised to the Head teacher, himself or Governors. JJ-C thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.20pm.

3. The Diocese of St Albans

The Education Director of the Diocese (David Morton) was made aware of our intention to undertake this consultation by the Chair of Governors and Head Teacher when they attended a Diocesan locality meeting on Thursday the 15th of September.

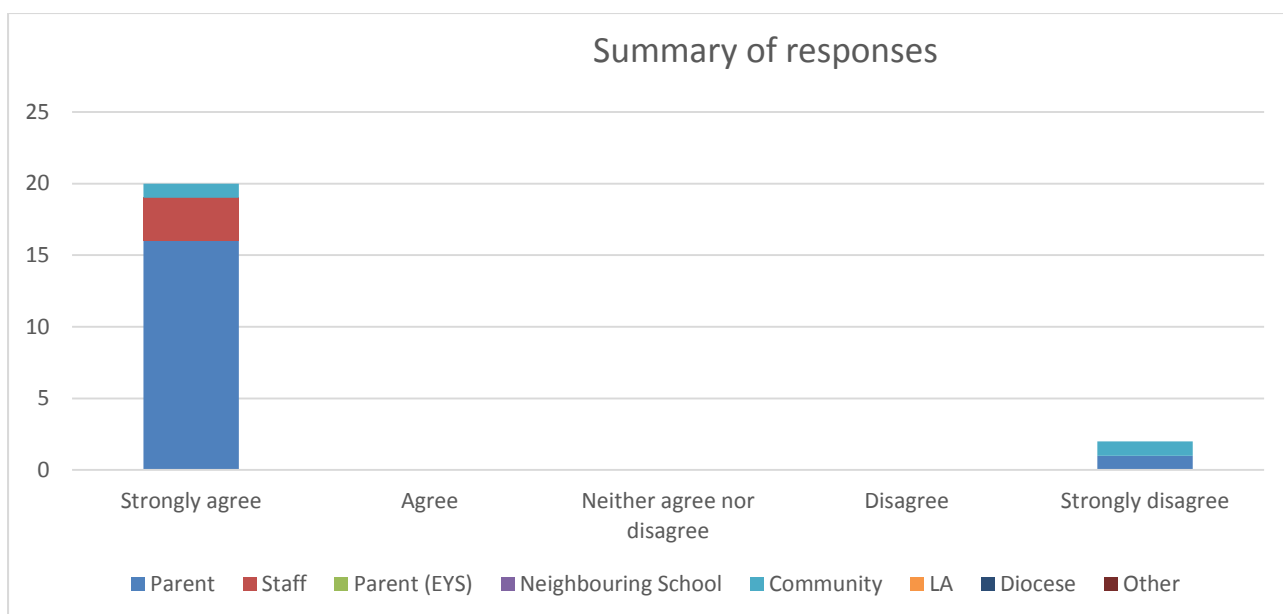
Although under DfE guidance the final decision to make a change of age range rests with the Governors, in our case, as a CE school we require support and permission from the Diocese. As such, part of our consultation process required that we raise this with the Diocesan Board of Education on the 9th of November. Being supportive of our proposal, David Morton presented the consultation document and proposed changes to the Board with the result that we were granted "in principle" consent, pending successful completion of the consultation process.

The letter to John Donne Lower School, from the Diocesan Board of Education can be viewed at the School office upon request.

4. Written responses

As part of the consultation process, feedback was invited from all stakeholders – in particular, from those receiving the formal consultation document which included a form for this purpose.

Individuals were asked to indicate their stakeholder group, and show their scale of agreement/disagreement with the proposed changes. Twenty two (22) responses were received via this form, a summary of which is provided in the graph overleaf:



In addition to the basic data collection, respondents were invited to provide comment in a free text box on the form. Five (5) responders provided comments which are reproduced below. Where questions or issues are raised, a School response is provided in italics as for the face-to-face meeting in section 2.

Parent – Strongly Agree: I feel this is definitely what the school needs to survive. The school is a great asset to the village and would love to see it continue to be a big part of the village/surrounding villages. As long as the appropriate changes to classrooms/teachers are put in place in time so there is as little disruption to the children as possible (this seems to be a big worry to lots of parents)

Response: *Thank you for your positive comments. We understand the concern that such a change could be disruptive to the children, and one of the most important parts of implementing this change, should it go ahead, will be an effort to minimise such disruption for all the children in the school – not just those currently in year 3/4. Parents and children will be fully informed and have opportunities to work with us on the changes – and by September next year all involved will have a good understanding of the changes being made. Once we know the outcome of the consultation process we will immediately begin putting in place the necessary classroom and staffing provision. We feel this is a positive move forward for the school and want to ensure that it provides a positive experience for our children and parents.*

Parent – Strongly Agree: I think the two tier system is better for the children. It cuts down transitions. In the 3 tier system some children can outgrow a school causing behaviour to escalate. In the 2 tier system this could happen however, I believe children are at a better age to be the “new fish in the pond”

Response: *We agree that one of the strong benefits of the two tier system is to reduce the number of school changes which can have a negative effect on learning around the times of those transitions. Whilst “growing out of a school” and any resulting behaviour*

challenges can feature in either the 3 tier or 2 tier system, what we feel is one of the most important parts of this proposal is that we are undertaking this change in partnership with other schools. This means that we can work with the other primary schools to build a sense of a broader “peer group” for children in preparation for their transition to secondary, and that we can all work with the secondary school to prepare the way for our children to move. The “new big school” should feel less “new” and less “big” – and hopefully an exciting move to make.

Parent – Strongly Agree: I feel it would be in my son's best interest to remain at John Donne for a further two years. If the school didn't extend to yr 5 & 6 he would need to move to a new school for just two years. I feel this would be very unsettling and detrimental to my son's education.

Response: *We are pleased that you feel happy that we can support your son for an additional two years. Similar to the previous response, we agree that additional transitions can be unsettling and may have an impact on a pupil's education. Maintaining a continuity of teaching provision and support – including across the transition to secondary education – is an important motivation for this proposal.*

Parent – Strongly Agree: As our children are thriving in your care we see no reason for this to change if they remain at the school for a further two years. Budget constraints aside, it would be nice if the year 5/6 class were separated from the year 3/4 class as this would set them apart and make them feel older, given that this would happen if they moved to middle school. It isn't a deal-breaker for us though.

Response: *Thank you for your positive comment, and we are pleased to hear you say your children are thriving at John Donne Lower. We have a number of plans and options for the classroom provision if this consultation process results in an agreement to make the age range change. We will need to balance the staffing, budget, space and best educational interests of the children. Whilst it remains likely that there will continue to be some shared class provision, we anticipate plenty of opportunities for both key stage-specific and year group-specific teaching and activities using existing aspects of the school environment (such as the hall, library and forest school facilities). In addition to the learning environment, we plan to provide opportunities for the older children to take on responsibilities within the school, such as expanding the role of school council and being activity/subject “champions”. Hopefully this, along with interactions across the partner schools as mentioned above, will give these children a deserved sense of seniority.*

Parent & Member of the Community – Strongly Disagree: As a teacher who is experienced both in 2 and 3 tier systems, it is not beneficial for 11 year olds to attend a school that is so much larger than they are used to. They are not socially ready to be exposed to older teenagers and it is unsafe and irresponsible to do so.

Response: *Thank you for providing your comments – I have broken this into sections to deal with each part in turn.*

As a small village school, our children are always going to be faced with the prospect of moving to a school which is much bigger than which they are used to. What we have the opportunity (and indeed, obligation) to do is to prepare them and support them in their transition. Not all children will find this a challenge, but understandably others will and it is our responsibility, collectively as parents, teachers and carers in their school environment, to consider a child-centred view of each as individuals – rather than focussing on perceived challenges or trends. A small school, in close partnership with other small primary schools and the local secondary, has a far greater opportunity to prepare individual children for this change, supporting them both before and after the transition.

Children of 11 are “exposed” to older teenagers in many areas of their lives – whether that be through long-established youth groups such as Guiding or Scouting, or in the majority of 2 tier secondary schools across the UK. It is certainly neither unsafe or irresponsible to promote social peer-level relationships between these age groups in a structured environment with appropriate oversight and safeguarding practices in place.

Comment Continued: This is simply a money saving idea and not in the best interests of our children. I have moved from a county that adopts this idea to give my child the best education experience available, and am disappointed that he will now potentially be let down.

Response: *We are sorry that you feel this way. In line with the rest of the country, change towards a 2 tier system in regions of Bedfordshire has been in discussion for a number of years. Lying on the interface between slowly changing and differing systems has, at times, made the future of our school and our children uncertain. We believe strongly that now is the right time to make these changes, in partnership with like-minded schools and wholly in the best interests of all of the children at John Donne Lower. Such changes are far from a money-saving exercise. Often where financial savings can be made through changes such as this, the schools involved will be forming an Academy or Multi-Academy Trust. This is not part of our plan.*

Comment Continued: Concerns: Where will the children go? Will this result in more mixed classes? Will new teachers be recruited? Where will parents park?

Response: *We recognise your practical concerns. As previously stated, we have a number of plans and options for the classroom provision if this consultation process results in an agreement to make the age range change. Parking provision is something we are actively discussing across the village with the Parish Council.*

Comment Continued: Information given at the meeting was disingenuous – 2 tier does not promote higher attainment, it is just easier to manipulate data. Facilities do not compare. Timetabling will allow infrequent use of facilities at Sandy. Mixed classes at KS2 is not acceptable. As a C. of E. school we do not need to do this.

Response: *We disagree that the information provided at the meeting was disingenuous. It was not stated that 2 tier promotes higher attainment. It was highlighted that Local*

Authority data shows KS2 performance is below average in the locality, and that John Donne would welcome the chance to take full responsibility across the complete KS2 curriculum in the same way that Sandy Upper, as a proposed secondary, would welcome provision from KS3 towards GCSEs.

Facilities available at John Donne are entirely appropriate for the provision of primary education up to the end of KS2. Indeed, some facilities and experiences provided are greater than those available in other similarly sized schools. KS2 access to facilities at Sandy, or alongside other schools will enhance the learning experience, but is not essential to provide it – and providing access to facilities is part of the value in this schools partnership.

Finally, mixed classes are already in place in John Donne at KS2 and working well. As mentioned as part of previous comments we have plans and ideas in place to ensure a suitable learning and social experience for all children across the range of KS2 abilities.

As well as the form provided as part of the consultation document, stakeholders could provide additional or alternative written responses to the proposals. One such response was provided on behalf of the Unity Multi Academy Trust, Great Barford.

The full response can be viewed at the School office upon request, and addresses the joint consultation by all the partner schools. General comments are made about the mixed provision emerging in Sandy, with some concerns raised about how this might affect parental and staff uncertainty and/or generate financial challenges.

Response: *These points are well noted and all the schools involved in this consultation will work to ensure that our provision is clear and financially viable.*

One observation was specific to John Donne Lower, and so has been reproduced below:

“Robert Peel, St Swithuns and John Donne Lower schools, from the numbers given in the documents all appear to be expanding by 30 pupils and by more than 25% if the change in age range goes through. Whilst some of the governing bodies may be able to approve the age range change, our understanding is that the expansion in pupil numbers will hit the threshold where a statutory proposal is required and that would be determined by the Local Authority”

Response: *This answer relates only to the situation at John Donne Lower. The relevant guidance on this aspect can be found in the DfE document “Making ‘prescribed alterations’ to maintained schools” (April 2016)¹*

A statutory proposal is required where an “enlargement of premises” is needed to accommodate an increase of 30 pupils or 25% of the schools capacity. Increasing the pupil

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/514548/16-04-06_FINAL_SO_Guidance_PA_Regs.pdf

number beyond this threshold does not necessitate a statutory process if there is no corresponding enlargement of premises.

The capacity of existing premises, and therefore the baseline against which we measure the increase of 30 pupils or 25% is a product of our Published Admission Number (PAN) – which for John Donne Lower is 24 pupils. Our maximum capacity therefore, based on Reception intake of 24 pupils each year would total 120 pupils across the school up to year 4.

With the current number of pupils enrolled, the expected impact of the proposed change of age range was presented as:

	September 2016	September 2017	September 2018	September 2019	September 2020
Year R	14	22	22	22	22
Year 1	22	14	22	22	22
Year 2	8	22	14	22	22
Year 3	5	8	22	14	22
Year 4	15	5	8	22	14
Year 5	0	15	5	8	22
Year 6	0	0	15	5	8
Totals	64	86	108	115	132

These figures reflect our current pupil numbers and expected intakes, and represent an increase in pupil numbers of 12, or 9% beyond current capacity by 2020 - Significantly below the threshold for a statutory process. However, if we were to extrapolate our PAN across the two additional year groups and achieve full recruitment, our capacity would technically expand to a level to trigger the requirement for a statutory process (154 pupils – an increase of 34, or 22%.

Our initial plans provide for the accommodation of the initial increase in pupil numbers within the existing buildings of the school. However we anticipate that, as part of the development of the school, we would need to add a new classroom or facilities in the future rather than remodel the current layout of the buildings – providing a more suitable environment for learning.

Given the borderline nature of the capacity levels, and how the guidance document can be interpreted, we could argue that we do not need to engage with a statutory process at this time. However, we have taken the decision to work with the Local Authority, and the other Schools who need to undertake this, and initiate the statutory process now. This does not have any impact on our ability to take a decision on our proposed change of age range.

After careful consideration of the issues raised the Governing Body of John Donne CE Lower School unanimously agreed to proceed with an Age Range change from 3 to 9 to 3 to 11 as of September 2017.