

Central Bedfordshire
Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands,
Shefford SG17 5TQ

**This meeting
may be filmed.***



**Central
Bedfordshire**

please ask for Rebecca Preen
direct line 0300 300 4193
date 05 January 2017

NOTICE OF MEETING

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date & Time

Tuesday, 17 January 2017 10.00 a.m.

Venue at

Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford

Richard Carr
Chief Executive

To: The Chairman and Members of the CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

Cllrs M A G Versallion (Chairman), Mrs D B Gurney (Vice-Chairman), J Chatterley, P A Duckett, Mrs J Freeman, P Hollick, A Ryan, B Saunders, D Shelvey and B Walker

[Named Substitutes:

R D Berry, D Bowater, K Janes, Mrs J G Lawrence, P Smith and T Swain]

Co-optees: Mrs Deans (Parent Governor), Mr Court (Parent Governor), Mrs Rowlands (Parent Governor), Mrs Main (Roman Catholic Diocese), and Mr Morton (Church of England Diocese)

All other Members of the Council - on request

**MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THIS
MEETING**

***This meeting may be filmed by the Council for live and/or subsequent broadcast online at**

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/modgov/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=576>.

At the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting will be filmed by the Council. The footage will be on the Council's website for six months. A copy of it will also be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy. The images and sound recording may be used for training purposes within the Council.

By entering the Chamber you are deemed to have consented to being filmed by the Council, including during any representation you might make, and to the possible use of the images and sound recordings made by the Council for webcasting and/or training purposes.

Phones and other equipment may also be used to film, audio record, tweet or blog from this meeting by an individual Council member or a member of the public. No part of the meeting room is exempt from public filming unless the meeting resolves to go into exempt session. The use of images or recordings arising from this is not under the Council's control.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence and notification of substitute members.

2. **Minutes**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 November 2016 and to note actions taken since that meeting.

3. **Members' Interests**

To receive from Members any declarations of interest and of any political whip in relation to any agenda item.

4. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

To receive any announcements from the Chairman and any matters of communication.

5. **Petitions**

To receive petitions from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 2 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

6. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

To receive any questions, statements or deputations from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of part A4 of the Constitution.

7. **Call-In**

To consider any decision of the Executive referred to this Committee for review in accordance with Procedure Rule 10.10 of Part D2.

8. **Requested Items**

To consider any items referred to the Committee at the request of a Member under Procedure Rule 3.1 of Part D2 of the Constitution.

9. Executive Members' Updates

To receive a brief verbal update from the Executive Members for:-

- Social Care and Housing
- Education and Skills and
- Health

Education & Skills

Item	Subject	Page Nos.
10	Key Stage 5 Verbal Update To explore issues around Key Stage 5 in light of a recent peer review.	* Verbal
11	Proposal to Change of Age Range for Shillington Lower School This report seeks support for the proposed commencement of the statutory consultation required to change the age range of Shillington Lower School from 4–9 years to 2-9 years by integrating a pre school provision from September 2017 The school referred to within the report serves the Wards of Silsoe and Shillington.	* 11 - 22
12	Proposal to Change the Age Range at Robert Peel, St Swithuns VC and John Donne CofE Lower Schools This report seeks support for the proposed commencement of the statutory consultation required for the proposed prescribed alterations for Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, Sandy, St Swithuns VC Lower School, Sandy and John Donne C of E Lower School, Blunham. The schools referred to within the report serve the Ward of Sandy.	* 23 - 90
13	Refresh of the Partnership Vision for Education The report sets out the work undertaken to refresh the Partnership Vision for Education, the development of the school clusters and the long, medium and short term priorities that have emerged from the schools clusters. It provides an opportunity to feedback on the refreshed Partnership Vision For Education which has been co-constructed with schools.	* 91 - 122

Promoting Children's Health

On this occasion no items have been identified for this area

Protecting Vulnerable Children

On this occasion no items have been identified for this area

Other or Cross-Cutting

Item	Subject	Page Nos.
14	Annual Customer Service Feedback To consider and comment on the annual customer service feedback report, specific to the Children's Service Directorate.	* 123 - 150
15	Draft Budget & Medium Term Financial plan 2017/18 – 2020/21 To consider the relevant aspects of the draft Budget and updated Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) pertaining to remit of this Committee only. Information relating to those aspects of the budget outside of the Committee's remit will be considered by the other relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Members are requested to review the report and provide their comments, observations and recommendations in respect of the Executive's proposals with particular reference to those aspects within the remit of the Committee, to the meeting of the Executive. To reduce printing papers copies of the Executive report on the draft Budget and updated MTFP the reports are available online at the following address:- http://centralbeds.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=577&MId=5232&Ver=4 Hard copies of these papers will only be provided on request in advance of the meeting.	* Link
16	Draft Capital Programme 2017/18 – 2020/21 To consider the relevant aspects of the Draft Capital Programme pertaining to remit of this Committee only. Information relating to those aspects outside of the Committee's remit will be considered by the other relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Members are requested to review the report and provide their comments, observations and recommendations in respect of the Executive's proposals with particular reference to those	* Link

aspects within the remit of the Committee, to the meeting of the Executive.

To reduce printing paper copies of the Executive report on the Draft Capital Programme, the reports are available online at the following address:-

<http://centralbeds.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=577&MId=5232&Ver=4>

Hard copies of these papers will only be provided on request in advance of the meeting.

- | | | |
|----|---|-------------|
| 17 | Period 6 (Quarter 2) – 2016/17 Revenue Budget Monitoring | * Link |
| | To receive the relevant quarterly budget monitoring information. | |
| | To reduce printing paper copies of the Executive report on the quarterly budget monitoring information, the reports are available online at the following address:- | |
| | http://centralbeds.moderngov.co.uk/mgChooseDocPack.aspx?ID=5159 | |
| | Hard copies of these papers will only be provided on request in advance of the meeting. | |
| 18 | Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring Report | * 151 - 156 |
| | To consider the relevant quarterly performance monitoring information. | |
| 19 | Work Programme 2016/17 & Executive Forward Plan | * 157 - 162 |
| | The report provides Members with details of the currently drafted Committee work programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan. | |

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 22 November 2016

PRESENT

Cllr M A G Versallion (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs D B Gurney (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:	J Chatterley P Hollick	Councillors:	B Saunders D Shelvey
Parental Co-optees:	Mr S Court Mrs G Deans Mrs E Rowlands		
Church of England Co-optee:	Mr D Morton		
Roman Catholic Co-optee:			
Apologies for Absence:	Cllrs	P A Duckett Mrs J Freeman A Ryan B Walker	
Substitutes:	Cllrs	R D Berry D Bowater	
Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	Cllr S Dixon C C Gomm Cllr Mrs C Hegley M R Jones	Executive Member for Education and Skills Executive Member for Social Care and Housing Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Health
Officers in Attendance:	Mrs S Harrison		Director of Children's Services
	Mr M Post Mrs R Preen Mr V Wan Ms H Worf		Regional Schools Commissioner Scrutiny Policy Adviser Senior Education Officer (Planning) Department for Education
Public:	0		

CS/16/43. **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 October 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:-

That Cllrs Berry and Bowater were recorded as in attendance at the last meeting.

That an item on the Bedfordshire Police Effectiveness 2015, vulnerability revisit report for autumn 2016, be included in the forward plan at the appropriate time.

CS/16/44. **Members' Interests**

None.

CS/16/45. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

None.

CS/16/46. **Petitions**

None.

CS/16/47. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

None.

CS/16/48. **Call-In**

None.

CS/16/49. **Requested Items**

None.

CS/16/50. **Executive Members' Updates**

The Executive Member for Social Care and Housing updated the Committee regarding the calendar of award and volunteering events which had recently been held across the region. Members were informed that there would be a briefing in relation to the Children's Services Transformation Programme with a particular focus on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, with a briefing on the budget on 6 January 2017.

The Executive Member for Education and Skills informed the Committee that the partnership vision for education was underway following recent locality workshops and would be submitted to the Committee in the near future. Local MP's had been contacted with regards to the position in relation to grammar schools and parents would be supported in their understanding of recent changes to exam structures.

The Executive Member for Health highlighted that Sustainability and Transformation Plans had recently been announced by the NHS which were designed to fix gaps within the health system and all partners were working closely to progress this initiative.

CS/16/51. **Regional Schools Commissioner**

The Chairman welcomed the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) and colleagues from the Department of Education, who then delivered a presentation which highlighted the role of the RSC and regions of jurisdiction that explained that areas of focus were intervention and improving educational standards.

In light of the presentation Members discussed the following:-

- Clarity regards DfE classification of the three tier education system for which it was confirmed that middle schools were deemed secondary schools.
- Figures that the RSC agreed to provide regarding academy schools by sector.
- There were no imminent changes proposed to the national curriculum.
- The importance of ensuring a broad curriculum for all students, with a strong focus on apprenticeships and skills.
- The importance of accountability in relation to the role of the RSC, a close working relationship with all partners and clarity around the complaints process for parents.
- A report that would be published by the National Schools Commissioner in January 2017, which would detail the effectiveness of the RSC and recent outcomes.
- The need to better anticipate when a school may be failing and the ability to hold the school and Trusts to account and encourage outstanding schools to support improvement locally.
- Clarity regarding the definition of 'coasting schools' and the importance of external challenge and effective change at an early stage.
- The importance of parent's knowledge and expectations regards the role and performance of schools.
- The role of Faith Schools within Multi Academy Trusts.

RECOMMENDED that the Executive Member engage with the Secretary of State for Education in order to strengthen school's accountability within the Academy model, ensuring active engagement with parents.

CS/16/52. **Commissioning of New School Places in Barton-Le-Clay and Marston Moretaine for September 2018**

The Executive Member for Education and Skills introduced a report which highlighted proposals in relation to the requirement of additional school places.

In light of the report Members discussed the following:-

- Funding had been ring fenced for this initiative and was included within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

- Temporary accommodation could be provided for pupils if there was an identified need.
- The need to secure Section 106 contributions to offset possible parking problems around schools, which could be exacerbated by further expansion and whether there was a need to amend current policy to allow greater control over this element.
- An indication that the number of pupils per housing allocation was increasing, creating additional pressure.

RECOMMENDED:-

1. **That the Committee support the 3 recommendations as set out within the Executive report.**
2. **That the Committee recognises the occasions when school expansions may lead to problems relating to parking outside of schools**
3. **That the Committee support, where appropriate and in line with current policy, the requirement to work closely with developers and planning to secure Section 106 contributions, enabling a broad range of mitigations to be introduced with regard (2) above.**
4. **That the Executive recognise the increasing pupil yield from new housing developments and additional levels of young families settling in Central Bedfordshire was creating a pressure on existing school places.**

Councillor Berry abstained from recommendation 2 and 3 in light of his Membership on the Development Management Committee.

CS/16/53. **Work Programme 2014/15 & Executive Forward Plan**

That the Children’s Services Work Programme be agreed subject to the following amendments:-

- **Partnership Vision for Education – Date TBC**
- **The 9 Principles of Pupils Places Planning – Date TBC**
- **To identify coasting schools’ attainment – March 2017.**
- **To clarify whether Retaining Key Workers be delivered to CS OSC or SC OSC and include within the relevant work programme.**

•

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.40 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated

Central Bedfordshire Council

**Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
17 January 2017**

Proposed change of age range for Shillington Lower School from 4-9 to 2-9 years of age

Report of Cllr Steve Dixon, Executive Member for Education and Skills
(steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers: Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services
(sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Helen Redding, Assistant Director, School Improvement, Children's Services
(helen.redding@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a non Key Decision

Purpose of this report

This report seeks support for the proposed commencement of the statutory consultation required to change the age range of Shillington Lower School from 4–9 years to 2-9 years by integrating a pre school provision from September 2017

The school referred to within the report serves the Wards of Silsoe and Shillington.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to:

- 1. Consider the Executive report attached as Appendix 1 and support the recommendation set out within it.**

Council Priorities

The proposal supports Central Bedfordshire's 5 Year Plan 2015 – 2020 and the specific priority of Improving Education and Skills

Legal Implications

As set out in the Legal Implications section of the report attached as Appendix 1.

Financial and Risk Implications

As set out in the Financial Implications section of the report attached as Appendix 1.

Equalities Implications

As set out in the Equalities Implications section of the report attached as Appendix 1.

Risk Management

As set out in the Risk Management section of the report attached as Appendix 1.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Executive Report (and Appendix A to the report) to Executive 7 February 2017 - Proposal to change the age range for Shillington Lower School from 4-9 to 2-9 years of age

Appendix 1

Central Bedfordshire Council

EXECUTIVE

7 February 2017

Proposed change of age range for Shillington Lower School from 4-9 to 2-9 years of age

Report of Cllr Steve Dixon, Executive Member for Education and Skills
(steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers: Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services
(sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Helen Redding, Assistant Director, School Improvement, Children's Services
(helen.redding@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a non Key Decision

Purpose of this report

1. To seek Executive approval to commence a statutory consultation required for the proposal to change the age range of Shillington Lower School to integrate a pre school provision.
2. If approved the proposal would be implemented from September 2017.
3. The school referred to within the report serves the Wards of Silsoe and Shillington.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Approve the statutory process for the proposal to change the age range of Shillington Lower School from 4–9 years to 2-9 years by integrating a pre school provision from September 2017, namely:**
 - i. **Approve publication of the statutory notice**
 - ii. **Commence formal consultation of at least four weeks**
 - iii. **Determine the proposal following the representation period of the statutory notice at Executive on the 4 April 2017.**

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny

1. This report was presented to Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 17 January 2017 and the Committee was asked to indicate its support for the recommendations set out within the report. The views of the Committee will be reported to Executive at its meeting.

Background

2. The pre school previously provided by 'Shillington under Fives' on the same site as the school closed on the last day of the autumn school term 2016. (Appendix A shows the location of the pre school)
3. The Council was first approached by Shillington Lower School (SLS) on 21 April 2016, following a meeting of the Governing Body at which the proposal was discussed. The proposal is for the school to incorporate the running and management of the nursery provision by the school itself, whilst continuing to fulfil the statutory education obligations of both nursery and lower phases.
4. Prior to April 2016 governing bodies were able to propose, consult upon and then determine a change of age range for their school without the local authority's approval. A number of Central Bedfordshire schools took the opportunity to change their age range via this means (prior to the 8 April). However the SLS proposal is subject to the revised guidance.
5. The DfE published revised guidance on 8 April 2016 which removed the ability for governing bodies of maintained community schools to propose, consult and determine a change of age range for their school without the local authority's approval.
6. The revised guidance requires the Council to undertake a statutory process for a proposed change of age range for a community school, with the following pre-requirement – ... *there is no longer a statutory 'pre-publication' consultation period for prescribed alteration changes, there is a strong expectation that schools and LAs will consult interested parties, in developing their proposal prior to publication, as part of their duty under public law to act rationally and take into account all relevant considerations.* The Council therefore advises all schools to carry out a preliminary consultation in order to gauge the level of support for their proposal before submitting it for consideration.

Preliminary consultation responses

7. SLS submitted a draft proposal for the initial preliminary consultation to the Council on 16 May 2016 for comments. Suggested amendments to the proposal were supplied to SLS by return.
8. SLS launched the preliminary consultation on 19 May 2016. The Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Ward Member, CBC officers and all CBC schools were advised of the consultation and invited to respond. The preliminary consultation ran for 5 weeks (including half term) until 23 June 2016.
9. The consultation document included the following reasons for the change of age range –
 - A secure and sustainable future for quality pre-school provision in Shillington
 - Continuation of full day, and half day, session provision
 - 1 team of qualified staff working closely together across the age range throughout the school day
 - Continuation of the appropriate age-range Early Years curriculum
 - Repair and refurbishment of existing building to provide Early Years accommodation and a separate room for use of the school (including the nursery provision) and as a base for the before and after school club –funded partly from Under Fives and partly from the school budget
 - Fully integrated provision with opportunities for nursery children to utilise school facilities e.g., field, hall, group room
 - Reduction of transition points from school to school in children’s learning journey in line with Central Bedfordshire Council’s ambition “to achieve a single phase of education 0-19 and reduce school transfer points” (but please note officer comments at paragraph 13)
 - A greater number of pupils on the school roll resulting in a stronger financial base
 - Before/after school care provided by an outside company on the school site
10. A total of 52 responses to the preliminary consultation were received by SLS. All the responses were in favour of the proposed change of age range. The following is a summary of the responses supplied by SLS:-

Proposed change of age range	Yes	No
Parent with child(ren) at the school	27	0

Parent with child(ren) at Shillington under Fives	5	0
Member of staff	18	0
Other (mainly parents of children under 2 and childminders)	12	0
Total	52	0

[Some responders were in more than 1 category]

Reasons for decision

11. The Council's Early Years Team confirms that Shillington continues to need its own pre-school provision and being part of the school would make it sustainable for the future. There is no other formal provision in the village, other than local childminders who have little capacity to take on extra children.
12. Without the school taking on the pre school, the village will be without an early years facility. There would potentially be a sufficiency issue, especially with the new 30 hours programme due to roll out in Sept 17.
13. The proposal does not remove the requirement for parents to apply for a Reception place and as such, it does not remove the transition point of nursery to lower. However, for those children who apply and are successful in achieving a Reception place at Shillington, it improves the child's learning journey, in line with Central Bedfordshire Council's ambition to "reduce school transfer points". This should have a positive impact on educational standards and allow a more seamless transition from the nursery unit to school.
14. The next nearest pre-school is in Gravenhurst and is currently almost at capacity and with the potential increase in funded hours for working parents (the 30 hour offer). There is likely to be an increased demand for pre-school hours in the area.
15. Shillington under Fives closed at the end of the autumn term 2016 leaving the village and parents without a local formal provision. Subject to a favourable response to the statutory consultation SLS propose to launch the pre school provision in September 2017.

Council Priorities

16. The proposal supports the following Council priority:
 - Improving Education and Skills

Legal Implications

17. The Childcare Act 2006 places duties on English local authorities, as far as reasonably practical, to secure sufficient childcare for working parents (Section 6) and early years provision (Section 7, a substituted by section 1 of the Education Act 2011).
18. The main legislation governing school organisation is found in sections 6A-32 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.
19. Department for Education Guidance for proposers and decision makers regarding school organisation in maintained schools was published in January 2014 to support the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.
20. This guidance can be viewed at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>
21. The DfE revised guidance published on 8 April 2016 removes the ability for governing bodies of Community schools to propose, consult and determine a change of age range for their school without the local authority's approval.

Financial Implications

22. There are no capital implications for the Council arising as a result of the proposal set out in the report.
23. The day to day running costs of early years and childcare provision is met through revenue funding which is made available to each setting as part of the Dedicated Schools Grant and Central Bedfordshire's Nursery Education funding.
24. The accommodation previously used by Shillington under Fives was funded through Sure Start. The Councils Early Years team will seek the accommodation to be transferred to the school. The governing body of SLS propose to ring fence residual funds for the nursery unit. The governing body plan to invest to improve the condition of the building from the schools current surplus funds.
25. The governing body of the school have forecast that once the numbers of pre school children have built up, a small operating profit from the nursery unit is anticipated. SLS have been cautious with the projections and the school will promote the nursery unit to strive to bring the break-even point forward.

26. The school will use school funds to refurbish the pre-school building (and to create a group room in the pre-school building, which will also be used by the school). The anticipated increase in the number of local pupils coming through nursery unit in future will result in a stronger financial base for the school. The project will also deliver a secure and sustainable future for pre-school provision in Shillington.
27. The Council has received a revised budget for the proposal which shows an improved financial position for the school going forward and is satisfied that the proposed age range change appears to be financially viable.
28. There are no financial implications arising out of a decision to support the commencement of consultations as outlined in this report. If the responses to the consultation are favourable and the Councils Executive determines the proposal to a change of age range at the school there will be financial implications for the school and the governing body.

Equalities Implications

29. The consultation and decision making process set out in regulation for proposals to expand Academies and Council maintained schools requires an evaluation on a project by project basis of any equalities and human rights issues that might arise.
30. Public authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to foster good relations in respect of the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
31. This statutory duty includes requirements to:
 - i. Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - ii. Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
 - iii. Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
32. As commissioner of pre school and nursery provision that will be provided through the proposals set out in this report the Council has considered that there are no specific discrimination issues that arise from the change being proposed.

Risk Management

33. The proposal to change the age range of Shillington Lower school set out in this report mitigates the risk on the Council of failing in its statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents and early years provision.
34. Key risks include:
 - Failure to discharge legal and statutory duties/guidance.
 - Failure to deliver the Council's strategic priorities
 - Reputational risks associated with the non delivery of required childcare and early years places.

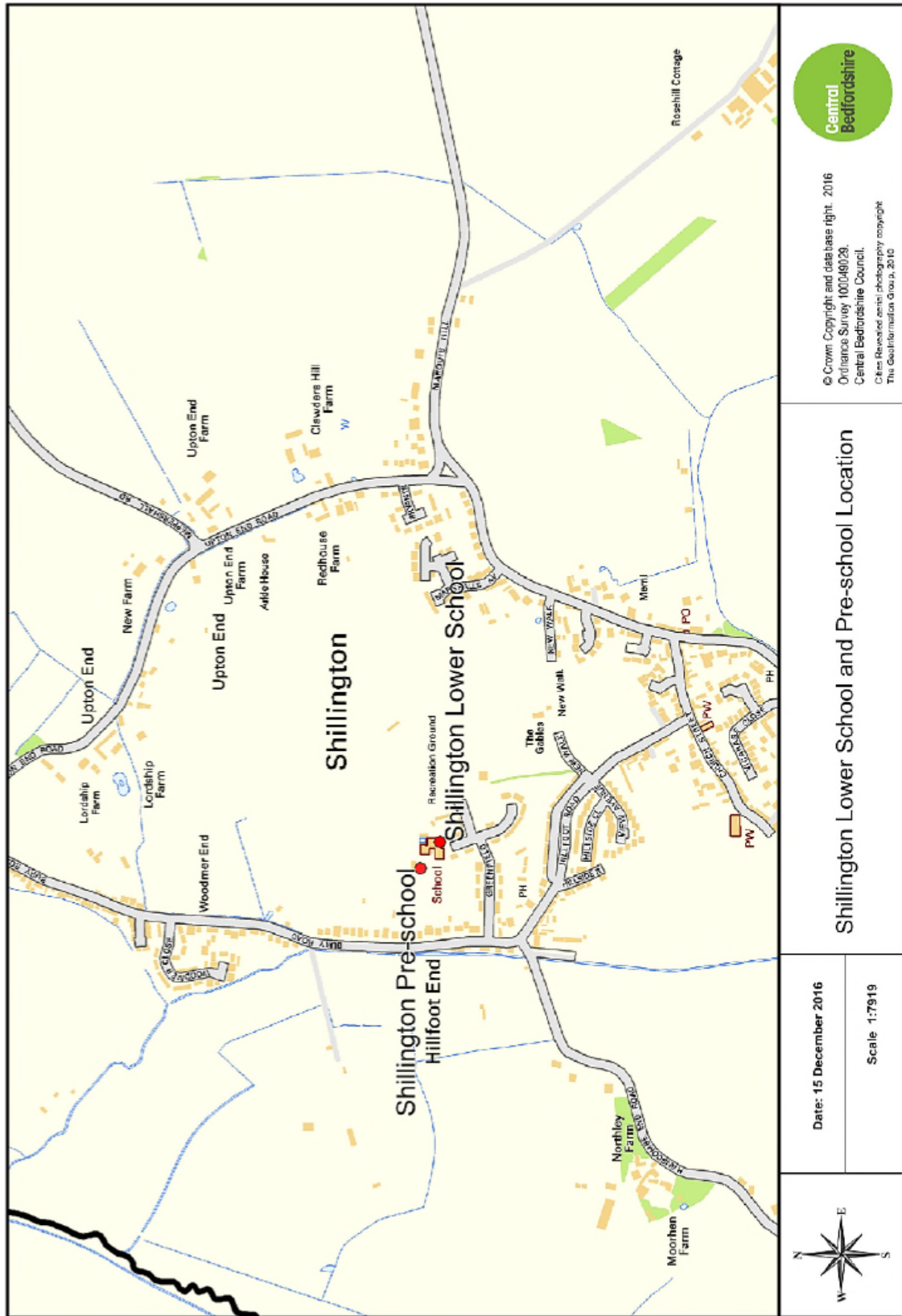
Appendices

The following appendices are attached:

Appendix 1 – Map showing the location of Shillington Lower School and pre school

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix A: Location of Shillington Lower school and pre school



This page is intentionally left blank

Central Bedfordshire Council

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17 January 2017

Proposal to make a prescribed alteration to Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, Sandy, St Swithuns VC Lower School, Sandy and John Donne C of E Lower School, Blunham

Report of Cllr Steve Dixon, Executive Member for Education and Skills
(steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers: Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services
(sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Helen Redding, Assistant Director, School Improvement, Children's Services
(helen.redding@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a non Key Decision

Purpose of this report

This report seeks support for the proposed commencement of the statutory consultation required for the proposed prescribed alterations for Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, Sandy, St Swithuns VC Lower School, Sandy and John Donne C of E Lower School, Blunham.

The schools referred to within the report serve the Ward of Sandy.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to:

- 1. Consider the Executive report attached as Appendix 1 and support the recommendation set out within it.**

Council Priorities

The proposal supports Central Bedfordshire's 5 Year Plan 2015 – 2020 and the specific priority of Improving Education and Skills

Legal Implications

As set out in the Legal Implications section of the report attached as Appendix 1.

Public Health

Extended Services around School and Early Years settings will be further developed as a result of growing school populations. The range of extended services that may be provided in schools includes:

- Parenting and family support officers.
- Transition support for pupils, schools and families.
- Combined clubs and after school activities.
- Holiday activities.
- Support for vulnerable pupils and families i.e. siblings group and young carers.

Financial and Risk Implications

As set out in the Financial Implications section of the report attached as Appendix 1.

Equalities Implications

As set out in the Equalities Implications section of the report attached as Appendix 1.

Risk Management

As set out in the Risk Management section of the report attached as Appendix 1.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Executive Report to Executive 7 February 2017 - Proposal to make a prescribed alteration to Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, Sandy, St Swithuns VC Lower School, Sandy and John Donne C of E Lower School, Blunham.

Appendix 1

Central Bedfordshire Council

Executive

7 February 2017

Proposal to make a prescribed alteration to Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, Sandy, St Swithuns VC Lower School, Sandy and John Donne C of E Lower School, Blunham

Report of Cllr Steve Dixon, Executive Member for Education and Skills
(steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers: Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services
(sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Helen Redding, Assistant Director, School Improvement, Children's Services
(helen.redding@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a non Key Decision

Purpose of this report

1. To seek Executive approval to commence the statutory consultation required for the proposed prescribed alterations for Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, St Swithuns VC Lower School and John Donne C of E Lower School.
2. The schools referred to within the report serve the Ward of Sandy.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive is asked to:

1. **approve the commencement of the statutory consultation process for the proposed prescribed alterations for Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, Sandy, St Swithuns VC Lower**

**School, Sandy and John Donne C of E Lower School,
Blunham.**

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

3. This report was presented to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 17 January 2017 and the Committee was asked to indicate its support for the recommendation set out within the report. The Committees recommendations will be reported at the Executive meeting.

Background

4. Executive considered a report on the 11 October 2016 for the proposed change of age range at Everton Lower School in the ward of Potton. In the report the Executive were also informed that Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, St Swithuns VC Lower School and John Donne C of E Lower School which are in the same school planning area, were also considering a change to their age range. These 3 schools have consulted on their proposal and are now required to make a prescribed alteration by following a statutory consultation. Appendix A shows the location of the 3 schools in relation to Sandy Upper School.
5. The report to the Executive on the 11 October 2016 also highlighted that Moggerhanger Lower School and Sandy Upper School were considering a change of age range but with no significant additional accommodation required on the school site. These 2 schools are therefore not required to proceed with a statutory consultation process for a prescribed alteration.
6. Prior to April 2016 as a consequence of changes introduced by the 2013 Regulations and Statutory Guidance, Governing Bodies were able to propose a range of changes to their schools without following a formal statutory process.
7. Governing Bodies were given the powers to propose and determine a proposed change but had to adhere to the usual principles of public law: they must act rationally, they must take into account all relevant considerations, and they must follow a fair procedure.

8. In April 2016, the Department of Education (DfE) revised the guidance. This can be viewed at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisationmaintained-schools
9. The new guidance states that governing bodies of foundation and voluntary schools can still propose, consult upon and determine a change of age range of up to 2 years (except for adding or removing a sixth-form) by following the non-statutory process. A change in age range of 1 year or more for a community school would require a statutory process.
10. In light of the revised guidance, the governing bodies of Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, St Swithuns VC Lower School and John Donne C of E Lower School consulted on a proposed change of age range for each school from 3-9 years to 3-11 years, to be implemented from September 2017.
11. The 3 schools proposed and determined their own consultations which ran from October 2016 to November 2016 and included meetings for parents and stakeholders. The consultation responses are in Appendix B.
12. The majority of the responses received in relation to the 3 consultations were in favour of the proposals. The governing bodies of Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, St Swithuns VC Lower School and John Donne C of E Lower School determined to proceed with the change of age range for their school. The details for the determination of the proposal are in Appendix B.
13. As a result of this determination, Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, St Swithuns VC Lower School and John Donne C of E Lower School will become primary schools with effect from September 2017, enabling their current Year 4 children to remain at the school if parents wish it and move into Year 5 if parents wish it, and the following year to Year 6.

Proposal

14. All 3 schools will be able to accommodate the additional children that choose to stay on to Year 5 from September 2017. However, the schools will not have the required long term accommodation for the children who stay on to Year 6. Additional accommodation will be required to provide for Year 6 children from September 2018.

15. The revised guidance published by the DfE in April 2016 requires the local authority to carry out a statutory consultation for those schools that are required to physically enlarge their premises due to an increase in capacity beyond a threshold as determined by the DfE.
16. The governing bodies of Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, St Swithuns VC Lower School and John Donne C of E Lower propose to enlarge their school premises in order to accommodate Year 6 children from September 2018. This will hit the DfE's threshold which will require the local authority to carry out a statutory consultation for the 'prescribed alteration to the school premises'.
17. Moggerhanger Lower School and Sandy Upper School who also consulted on a proposed change of age range during the same period have determined to proceed but will not require additional accommodation. These schools will not be required to carry out a statutory consultation for the 'prescribed alteration to the school premises'.
18. Sandy Upper School and Moggerhanger Lower school do not require a statutory consultation for a prescribed alteration though the schools will also become a secondary and primary school respectively in 2018.
19. On the 6 December 2016 the Council's Executive approved the launch of stage 2 of the statutory consultation regarding a proposed change of age range, from 3-9 years to 3-11 years, for Everton Lower School. This is a community school and the DfE requires the local authority to propose any change of age range. If the school is given approval to change its age range the additional children can be accommodated without the need for additional accommodation.
20. The statutory consultations are planned to be launched for the prescribed enlargements of Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, St Swithuns VC Lower School and John Donne C of E Lower on 9 February 2017 and will run until 16 March.
21. The responses received during the statutory consultation will be reported back to the Executive at their meeting on 4 April 2017 and members will be asked to determine the proposals.
22. If the determination is to approve the enlargement of each school, the governing bodies will manage the building project and be required to apply for planning permission for their proposed development, where

necessary and also consider whether DfE approval is required for the change of use for school land. The 3 schools will manage the building programme and all related risks.

Reasons for decision

23. Under the School Organisation (Prescribed alternations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 it is a requirement of the local authority to act in accordance with the relevant legislations. The prescribed enlargements of Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, St Swithuns VC Lower School and John Donne C of E Lower meet the DfE thresholds and require a statutory consultation.
24. The governing bodies of Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, St Swithuns VC Lower School and John Donne C of E Lower have determined to change their age range, from lower to primary, from September 2017. The prescribed enlargements are required to accommodate Year 6 children from September 2018. Without the additional accommodation the schools would not be able to adequately house the additional cohorts.
25. The 3 schools have consulted on the change of age range and provided evidence (Appendix B) of the support for the proposal. The requirement to consult interested parties ahead of the publication of the statutory consultation for the prescribed alteration of each school has therefore been met.
26. The statutory consultations will ensure the Council is able to meet all of the legal requirements placed on the Council by the Education and Inspection Act 2006

Council Priorities

27. The proposal supports the following Council priority:
 - Improving Education and Skills

Legal Implications

28. The main legislation governing school organisation is found in sections 7 -32 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Mainstream Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.

29. DfE regulations and guidance outline the requirements and process for proposals to enlarge premises which meet the DfE threshold at Council maintained schools and these include full public consultation, the publication of statutory proposals and the decision making process. The Council is the decision maker for proposals relating to maintained schools, which are set out in this report.
30. As decision maker the Council must be satisfied that the proposals have followed due process and must also have regards to statutory guidance. Members must determine whether to:-
- Reject the proposal
 - Approve the proposal
 - Approve the proposal with a modification (e.g. the implementation date)
 - Approve the proposal subject to them meeting a certain condition.
31. In any case the proposal must be determined within 2 months of the close of the determination period, otherwise the proposal will be referred to the schools adjudicator.

Financial and Risk Implications

32. There are no capital implications for the Council arising as a result of the proposals set out in this report. Each school has undertaken to fund the additional accommodation required from their own school budget. This is a significant financial risk for the schools which they will have to manage.
33. The day to day running costs of the school are met through revenue funding which is made available to each school as part of the dedicated schools grant, calculated on a per pupil basis. Nationally, school and academy revenue budgets are set in line with the School and Early Years Finance Regulations 2013 which uses October school census data of pupil numbers accommodated at that moment in time to calculate the budget for the following financial year, for Council maintained schools, and the following academic year for Academies.
34. Following determination by the governing bodies to change the age range of the schools, additional teaching staff will be required. The schools will recruit and advertise for new class teachers.
35. There will be a lag in funding provision to the schools for September 2017. This funding 'lag' can have a significant impact on those schools

and academies that are implementing changes in age range and retaining or admitting pupils into new year groups in the following September without the corresponding revenue funding that should ordinarily follow the child which only begins to flow into the schools budget in the following April.

36. Additional funding will not be due to the schools until 2018/19 and will result in an inevitable shortfall in revenue during the transition period which the schools will have to manage.

Equalities Implications

37. The consultation and decision making process set out in regulation for proposals to maintained schools requires an evaluation on a project by project basis of any equalities and human rights issues that might arise.

38. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

39. This statutory duty includes requirements to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

40. The proposed prescribed enlargements of the three schools are not envisaged to have an adverse impact on any of the listed groups below:-

a) Sex	N/A
b) Gender Reassignment	N/A
c) Age	Primary aged pupils will have access to sufficient school places
d) Disability	N/A
e) Race & Ethnicity	N/A

f) Sexual Orientation	N/A
Religion or Belief (or No Belief)	N/A
h) Pregnancy & Maternity	N/A
i) Human Rights	(Please see articles in toolkit)
j) Other Groups	(Rural isolation - John Donne is a rural designated school which provides school places in a village.

Risk Management

41. The proposal set out in this report has been developed and evaluated against the key criteria for decision makers that are outlined in guidance. Likewise the proposal has followed the procedures set out in regulation. This mitigates the risk on the Council of failing to comply with the relevant statutory requirements.

42. The key risks mitigated by the process that has been followed include:

- Failure to discharge legal and statutory duties/guidance.
- Failure to deliver the Council's strategic priorities.
- Reputational risks associated with the non delivery of required school places.
- Financial risks, no capital investment from the council and all consequential additional running costs will be borne by the school.

Conclusion and Next Steps

43. The recommendation is for the Executive to approve the launch of the statutory consultation for the proposal to enlarge the premises of Robert Peel Foundation Lower School, St Swithuns VC Lower School and John Donne C of E Lower School.

44. Maximum stakeholder feedback will be encouraged during the representation period to enable an informed decision to be made by the Executive to approve or not the proposal to enlarge the premises.

45. The responses received during the statutory consultation will be reported back to the Executive at their meeting on 4 April 2017 and members will be asked to determine the proposals.

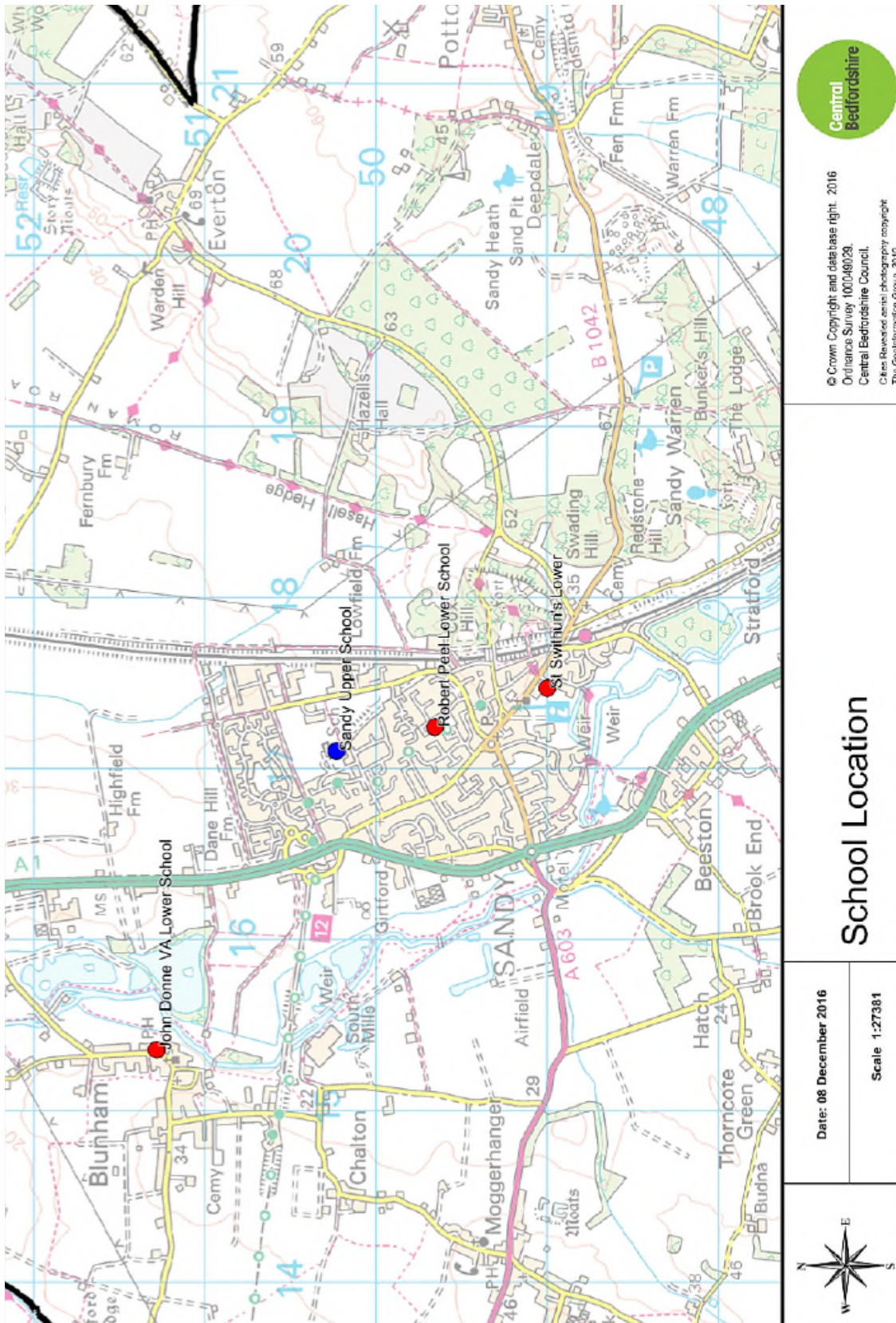
Appendices

The following appendices are attached:-

Appendix A: Map of the 3 schools

Appendix B: Responses to the 3 school consultations on the change of age range and note of the determination to proceed with a change of age range for the 3 schools

Appendix A: Map of the three schools



This page is intentionally left blank



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
Dapifer Drive
Sandy
SG19 1QJ
01767 681185
Email: admin@robertpeel.beds.sch.uk
Website: <http://www.robertpeellower.co.uk/>
Headteacher: Miss Liesl Ganney
Chair of Governors: Mr Stuart Grayson

Contents of Document

Section 1

- Brief History
- Alteration proposal
- Implementation
- Capacity
- Objectives
- Consultation
- Implementation
- Procedures for making representation regarding proposal

Section 2

- Consultation Report

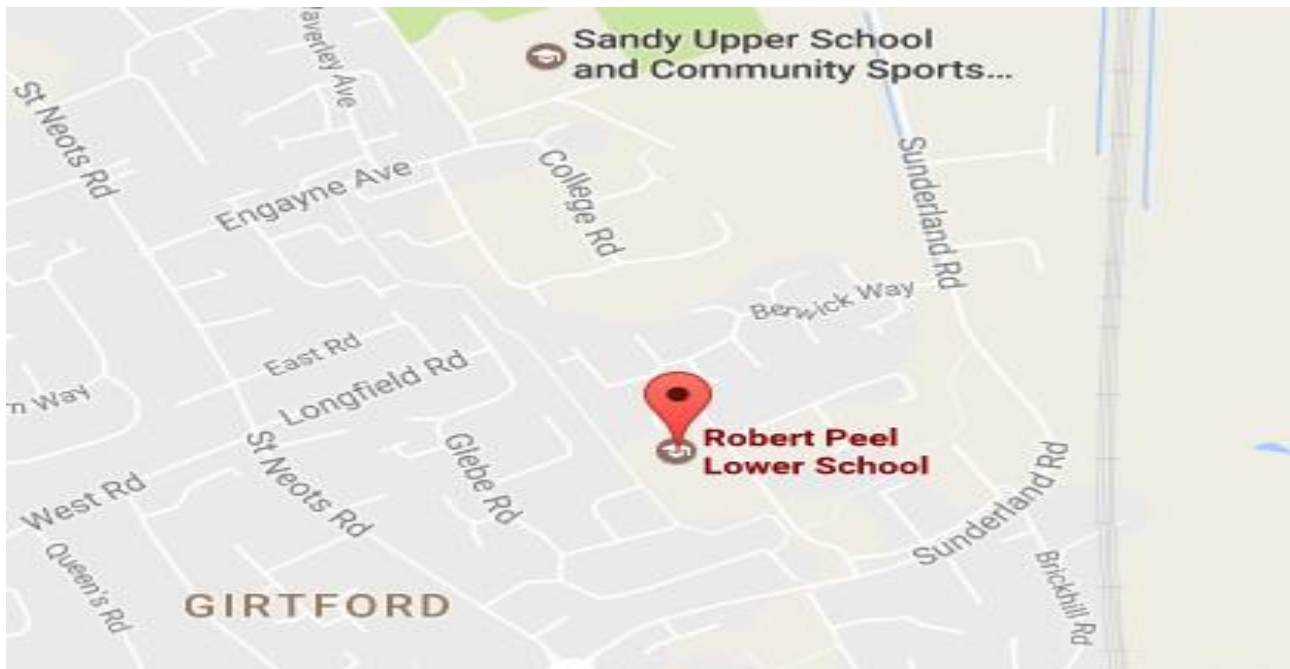
Section 1

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.

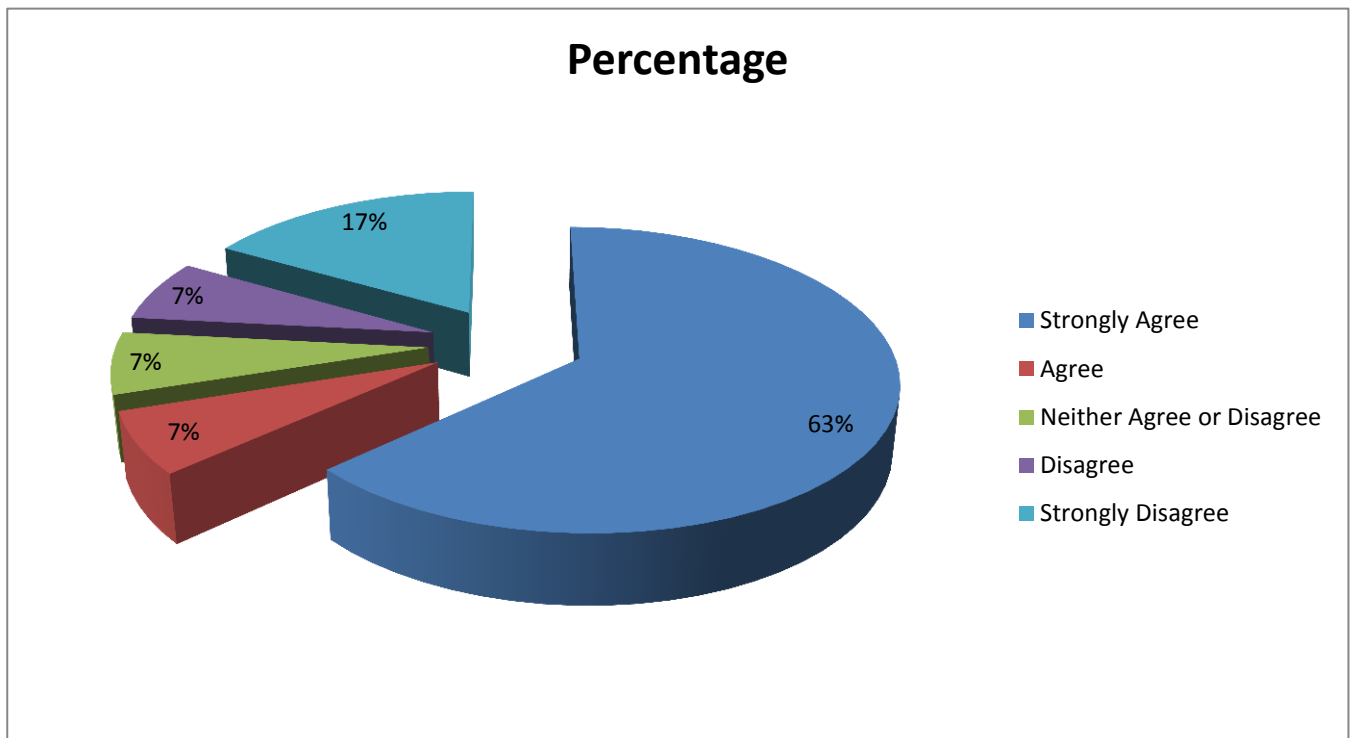
Prior to the publication of the consultation, Robert Peel Lower School met with all the Pinnacle Trust Headteachers and Chairs of Governors, as well as the Local Authority, to discuss and advise them of the content of the consultation proposal. Arrangements were made with the other schools that were 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?

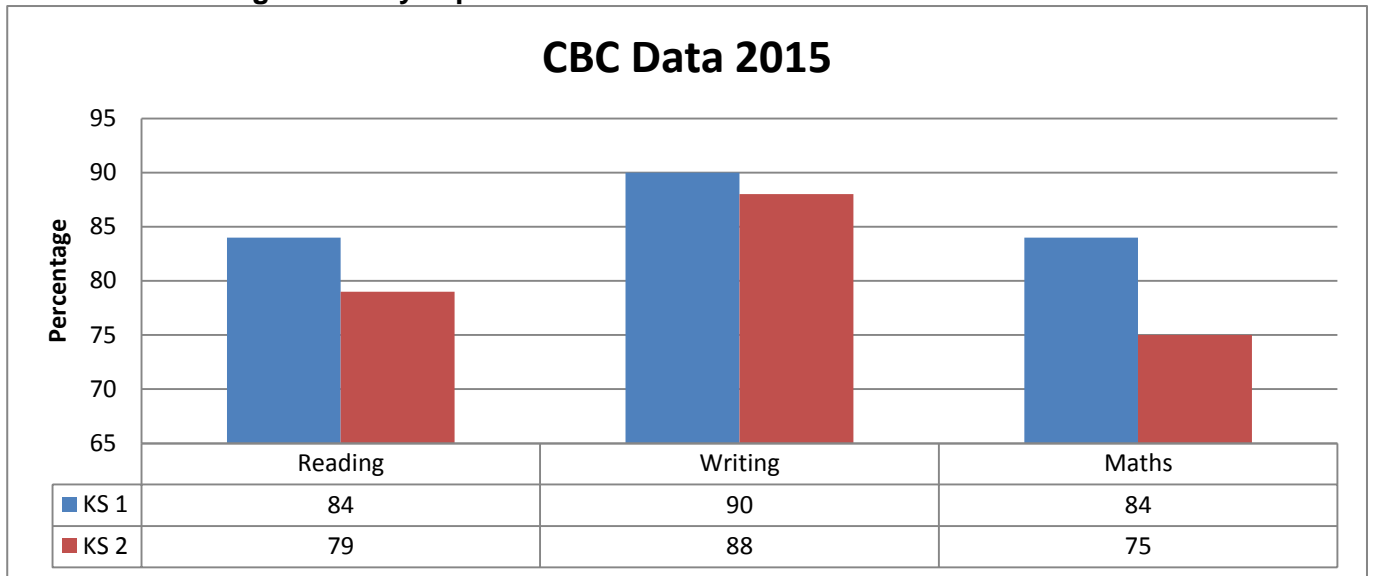
We are sorry if the meeting was not convenient for all parents. We have tried to provide different avenues and mechanisms for parents and members of the community to provide their views and feedback on the consultation. Meetings were held in conjunction with the other schools with a Community Meeting 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?

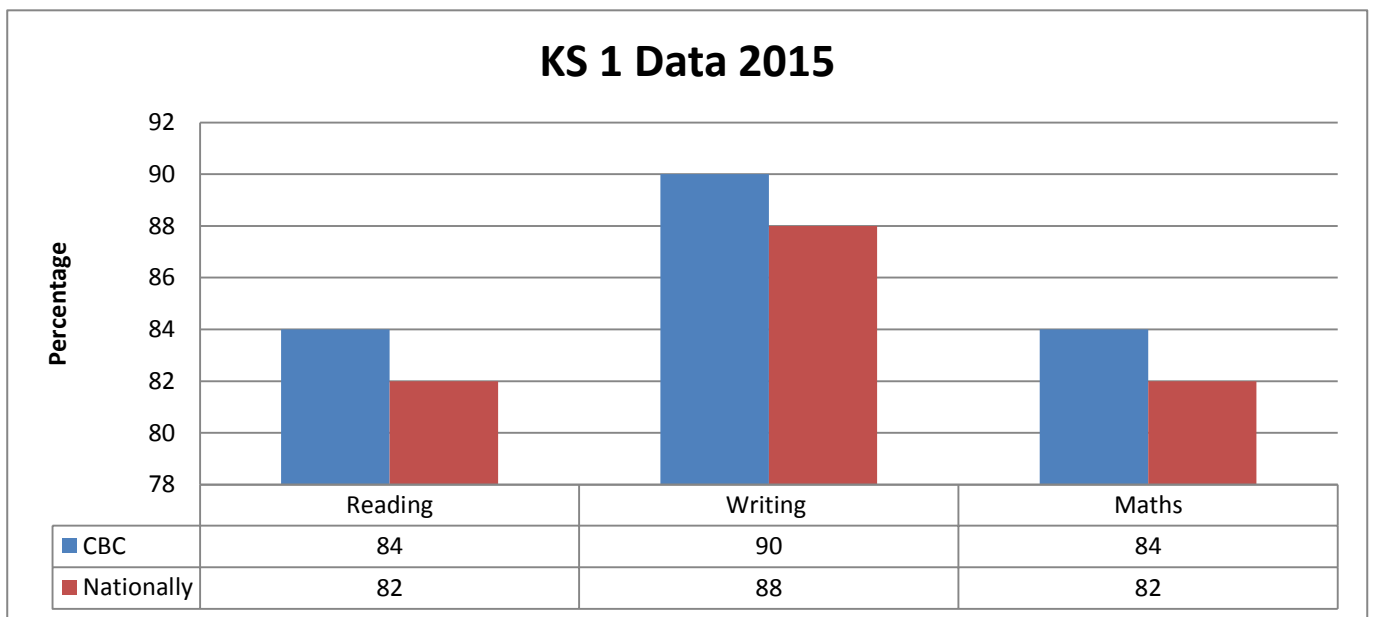
Central Bedfordshire data compared to other statistical neighbours and nationally indicates that outcomes at KS 1 are higher than those gained at KS 2 in the Local Authority. KS 1 outcomes are higher than national averages and the outcomes are ranked higher at KS 1 than at KS 2 compared both with statistical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

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

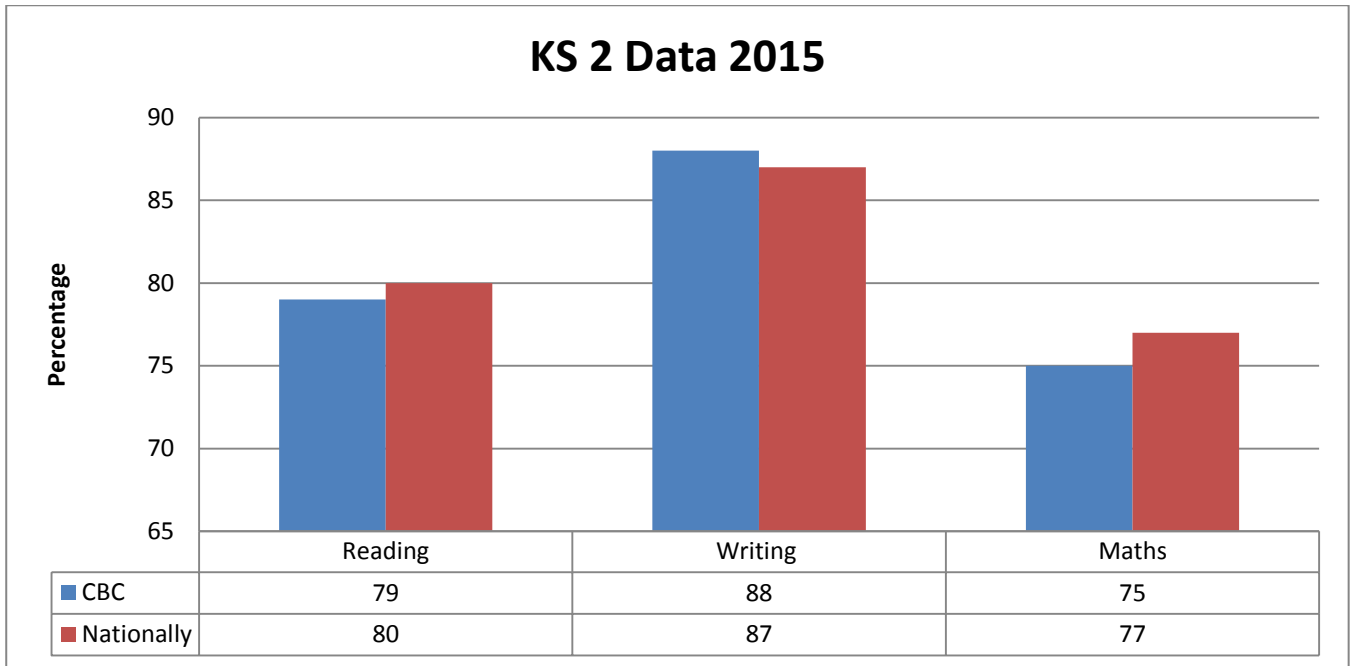
Children achieving nationally expected outcomes.



- 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

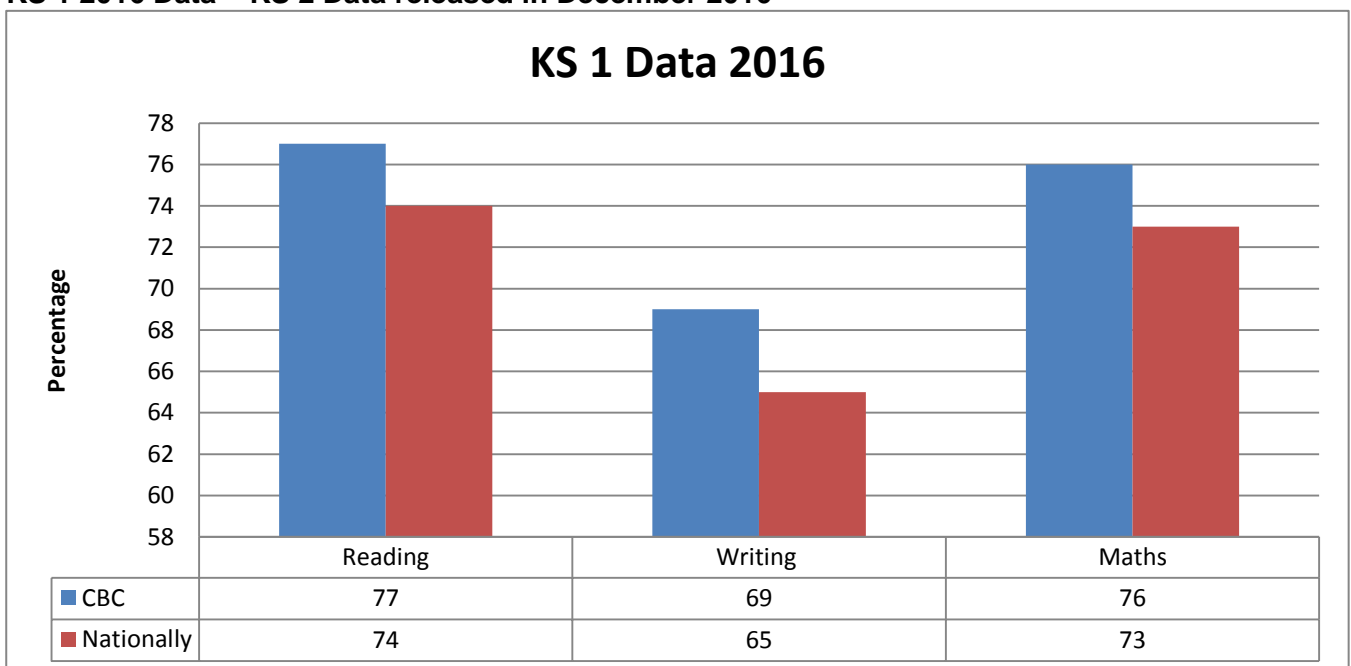


- In Reading & Maths KS 2 outcomes are lower than national averages.
- Statistical Neighbour Rankings
 - Reading 11th out of 11
 - Writing 4th out of 11
 - Maths 9th out of 11

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



- 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 considered 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



Section 1

- Brief History
- Alteration proposal
- Implementation
- Capacity
- Objectives
- Consultations
- Procedures for making representation regarding proposal

Section 2

- Consultation Report

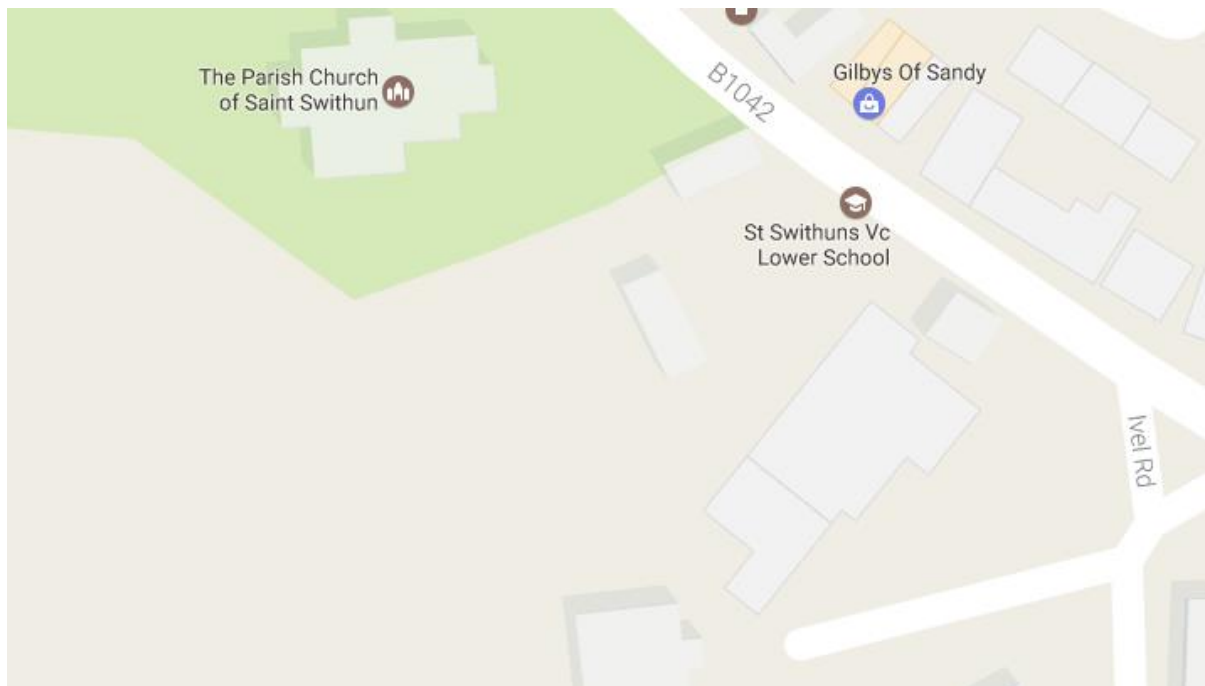
Section 1

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?

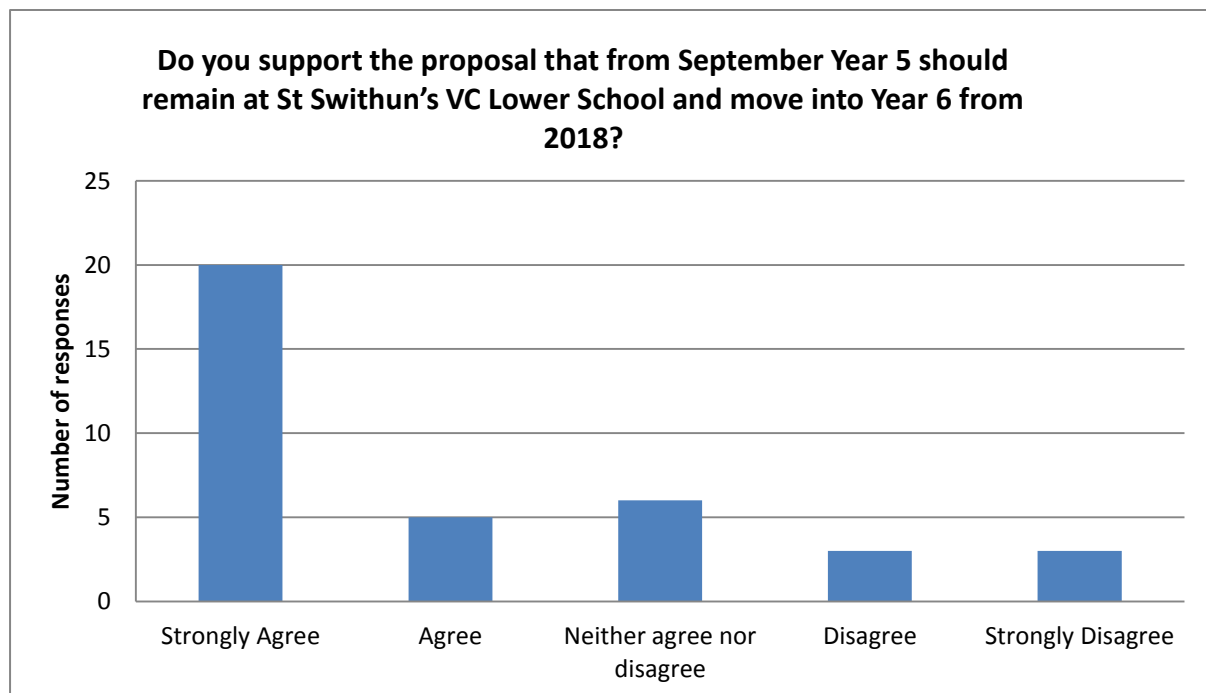
The formal consultation document (attached as an appendix), formed the basis of the consultation. All parents/guardians were notified at the start of the consultation by email. All staff were invited to a meeting about the consultation to notify them of the process. All

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, residential 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.

Appendix 1



**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:

.....

.....

.....



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

December 2016

Section 1

- Brief History
- Alteration proposal
- Implementation
- Capacity
- Objectives
- Consultation
- Implementation
- Procedures for making representation regarding proposal

Section 2

- Consultation Report



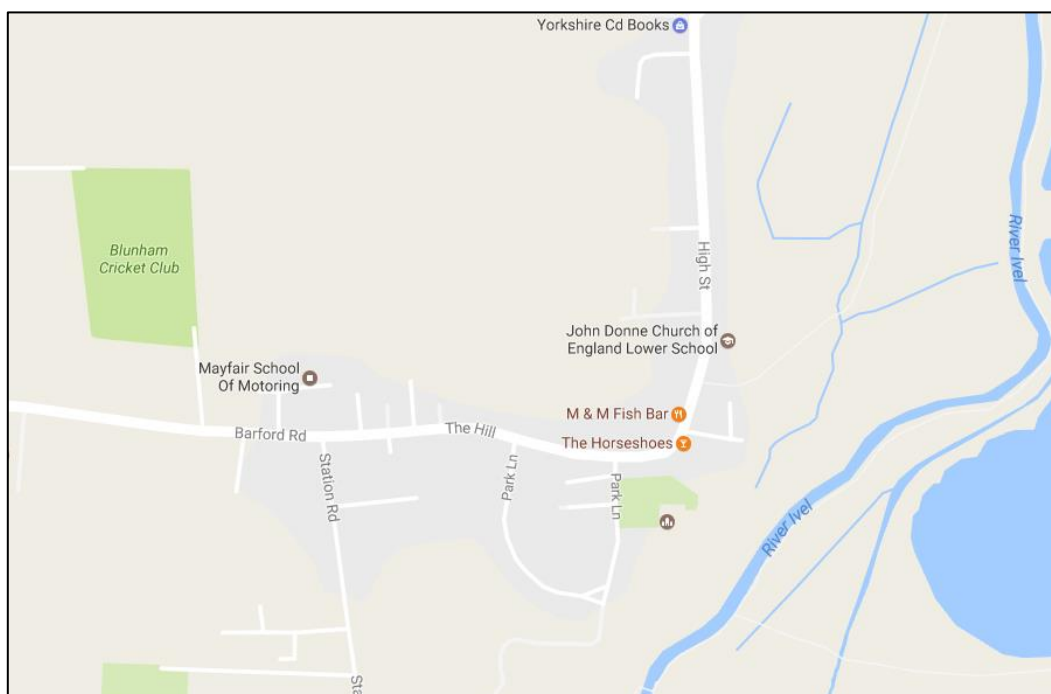
Section 1

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.

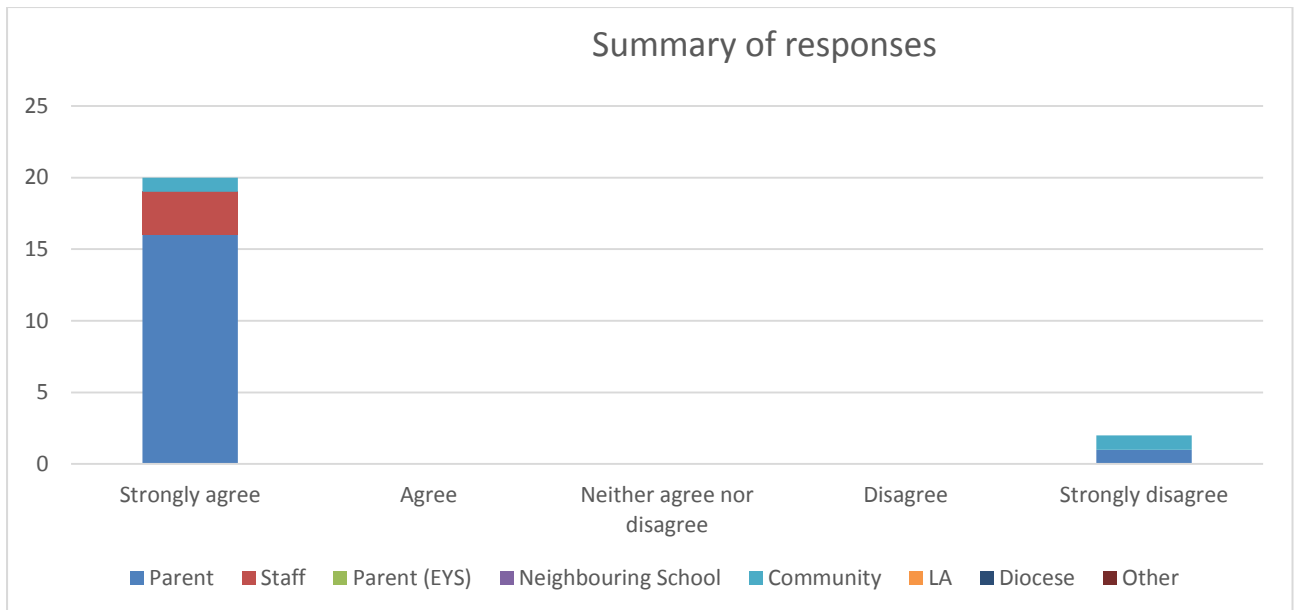
Although under DfE guidance the final decision to make a change of age range rests with the Governors, in our case, as a CE school we require support and permission from the Diocese. As such, part of our consultation process required that we raise this with the Diocesan Board of Education on the 9th 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.

Central Bedfordshire Council

CHILDRENS SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 17 January 2017

Refresh of the Partnership Vision for Education

Report of Cllr Steve Dixon Executive Member for Education and Skills,
(steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers: Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services,
(sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) and Helen Redding, Assistant
Director Education and School Improvement,
helen.redding@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 300 6057

Purpose of this report

1. The report sets out the work undertaken to refresh the Partnership Vision for Education, the development of the school clusters and the long, medium and short term priorities that have emerged from the schools clusters. It provides an opportunity to feed back on the refreshed Partnership Vision For Education which has been co-constructed with schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

1. Consider the work completed to refresh the Partnership Vision For Education with schools and support the refreshed Vision and the actions identified for its delivery.

Background

1. Central Bedfordshire Council's Executive approved the Partnership Vision for Education on 4 August 2015 and it was launched with schools in September 2015. The Vision was co-constructed with schools and partners and took account of feedback received.
2. The Vision consisted of 6 key elements which set out key actions for the Council and partners. These were progressed through workstreams which reported on a half termly basis to the Partnership Vision For Education Board.
 - School Leadership.

- Achieving results in the top quartile in key stage tests, including GCSEs and A Levels.
 - School readiness.
 - Improving health outcomes to support improving education outcomes.
 - Young people have the skills to be work ready.
 - Commission new school places from good or outstanding providers to serve growing communities.
3. School were asked to sign a Pledge committing to delivering the Vision. 76 schools/partners responded, although a significant number of schools who had not signed the Pledge were very engaged in delivering the Vision.

Peer Review

4. Central Bedfordshire commissioned a Peer Review of Arrangements for School Improvement on 7/8March 2016 which was carried out by colleagues from school improvement services in the Eastern Region.
5. The peer review team were asked to look into how engaged schools were in the 5 Year Vision, and how well they understood their joint roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.
6. The strengths identified by the Peer Review were:
- a. Heads value their ongoing relationship with the Local Authority
 - b. Heads value Central Essentials and Governors Essentials
 - c. The initial development of the Teaching Schools has been closely supported by the LA to good effect
 - d. There are some good examples of QA arrangements for all commissioned work
 - e. All schools have access to and are engaged with the Teaching Schools in some form
 - f. Schools understand the LA categorisation system for school support
 - g. Governance Reviews and governor monitoring are used proactively to support improved leadership
 - h. There are some good examples emerging of schools working collaboratively
7. In response to the recommendations actions have been taken to:
- a. Refresh the Partnership Vision ensuring work reflects key priorities for improvement in pupil achievement, with clear focus and urgency around improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and across Key Stage 2.
 - b. Co-construct a document that sets out Central Bedfordshire's school led school improvement strategy that defines all partners' roles. This has been approved by the Partnership Vision For Education Board and circulated to schools via Central Essentials.

- c. Review and amend the performance reports for schools and school clusters. These were amended for September 2016 and are being further amended following feedback at the cluster meetings.
 - d. Continue to challenge all schools to improve outcomes. This has been and will continue to be done through the cluster meetings. A one day scoping audit has also been developed to support the local authority and schools to explore performance in more detail and identify strengths and areas for improvement that may not generally be uncovered through data monitoring processes.
 - e. Develop a plan in partnership with schools to accelerate improvement at Key Stage 2, drawing on best practice in primary, middle and lower schools. A secondary readiness leaflet similar to the one produced for school readiness has been co-produced with schools setting out what pupils will need to be able to do to be secondary ready and examples of things they can do to help with this. There is a conference on 1 December focussing on raising attainment at key Stage 2 which has been co developed with key schools and which will share best practice.
 - f. Commission and train additional moderators and develop a more systematic model of cross phase moderation across the LA. This has been completed and is being implemented this year.
8. At the Partnership Vision For Education Board Meeting on 9 May 2016 the Board considered the Peer Review report and made the following recommendations regarding the refresh of the Partnership Vision For Education
- i. Remove the elements that are 'Business as usual' and make it slimmer and sharper.
 - j. Focus on the key priorities around actions that will lead to improving outcomes, including focus on recruitment and retention.
 - k. Some working groups are proving effective and need to continue, but not necessarily as a workstream of the delivery plan of the Vision. These groups could provide updates to the Board and to schools.

Heads and Governors Meetings

- 9. A meeting was held with Heads and Governors on 13 June 2016 with a key agenda item being the refresh of the Partnership Vision for Education.
- 10. At the meeting the changing national and local context was clarified, including demographic growth in Central Bedfordshire, the status of the Education Bill, school funding, including Education Services Grant and the consultation process on the Dedicated Schools Grant, and

the potential impact of this. The threats and opportunities were set out and schools were asked to engage with us and each other to take the opportunity to develop a collaborative local system that supported our collective ambition to secure the best outcomes for children.

11. We set out our ambition to develop the conversations between the Local Authority, headteachers, Chairs of Governors and Academy sponsors within the context of building on the success to date of school to school support and an understanding that schools are at the heart of the community.
12. The Peer Review findings were shared with schools. Some schools felt that the report reflected the views of a few schools, but not of all schools.
13. Schools were asked to consider the following questions in refreshing the Partnership Vision for Education:
 - What are the 3 key actions that will drive achieving the vision?
 - What data reports would schools find useful in supporting conversations in schools and across schools to improve outcomes?
 - What are you currently doing that is having an impact on improving outcomes for children and young people in your locality?
14. Key actions that were identified included:
 - Reviewing provision for disadvantaged pupils and the impact of this, including engagement of appropriate professionals to support children and at Early Help and Team Around Child meetings.
 - Broader awareness of the successes of disadvantaged pupils in other subject areas and how that could be used to support further improvement in outcomes.
 - Identifying best practice that has real impact on pupil outcomes.
 - More joined up approaches/collaboration/joint accountability (in systems, curriculum, pedagogy and moderation to ensure assessment data is robust and accurate across phases and key stages regardless of site). Build and sustain an atmosphere of trust between schools.
 - Invest more resources by sharing best teachers in schools with weaker staffing.
 - More honest discussions between schools focussed on pupil outcomes.
 - Sharing best practice between schools and the learning from collaboration projects.
 - Addressing emotional wellbeing issues in children so they are 'ready' to learn.
 - Involve all stakeholders, including parents and staff.
 - Review of support services for children.

- Look at best practice outside Central Bedfordshire and coordinate action based research nationally through Teaching Schools.
 - Recruitment and retention.
15. Additional data suggested by schools was:
- Provide KS2 outcomes to lower schools of their children's performance at end of Key Stage assessment.
 - Provide KS4 outcomes to middle and primary schools for their pupils.
 - Provide data that enable comparisons between outcomes of schools with a similar demographic.
 - Provide tracking data for every year group – possibly termly tracking data submitted by schools.
 - Further develop locality reports based on pyramids/catchments.
 - School readiness check at pre-school.
 - Consider how matched and unmatched data could be reported/captured.
 - Consider data on more able pupils who are also represented in other groups, e.g. disadvantage.
16. A number of examples of effective practice were shared.

Partnership Vision for Education Board – 4 July 2016 and 19 September 2016

17. At the Board meeting on 4 July 2016 Board members reflected on the feedback from the Heads and Governors and came to the following conclusions.
- Recruitment & retention reportedly remains an issue.
 - There is a culture across some schools of apportioning blame for poor outcomes and a positive culture needs to be encouraged.
 - Recent political events could result in changes to White Paper proposals, so it is important to keep the focus on improving outcomes for children regardless of political change.
 - Guidance differs on transitions which should be considered in the autumn term locality meetings.
 - It would be helpful to collate information on services available to schools.
 - Capacity needs to be developed across schools to support delivery of school to school support. Schools that do not normally put themselves forward need to be encouraged to do so.
 - Lots of positive feedback was received relating to collaborative working, and this success needs to be captured and built on.
18. The Board was asked to think about further mechanisms to identify and share best practice.

19. At the Board meeting on 19 September 2016 the Board reflected on the workshops held over the summer and the planned agendas for the cluster meetings.
20. The Board agreed that networking is very important for head teachers, especially those new to post. The Board thought cluster meetings should help heads feel less isolated and could provide an infrastructure for collaboration leading to improved outcomes. Schools need to be actively involved in the process of collaboration.
21. The Board agreed that the timing of cluster meetings needed to be considered alongside the Director's meetings with heads and governors. It was agreed that given the cluster meetings were looking at data and identifying local priorities, a separate meeting was not necessary in the autumn term. Agendas for meetings in the spring and summer term would be agreed by the Board. It was agreed that a summer meeting could bring together the outcomes of the work of the clusters and help redefine priorities for the following year.
22. A schedule of all cluster meetings, head and governor meetings across the year would be provided in Central Essentials once dates were agreed and provided by cluster leads.
23. A discussion was held on the recruitment data census returns which do not support feedback that recruitment is a big issue. It was agreed that further guidance would be sent to schools to complete the national census as it was not clear that schools filled it in accurately.
24. It was felt that the main issue regarding recruitment was not inability to recruit, but that shortages of teachers meant that there was less competition for posts which was impacting on the quality of teachers filling vacancies.
25. Some schools shared that they were succession planning through for example supporting teacher training for Higher Level Teaching Assistants.
26. It was agreed that recruitment challenges would be tested at the cluster meetings, and that a short survey would then be developed to identify what schools were doing to recruit and retain good staff, and what and where the specific issues were. The survey was agreed at the 14 November Partnership Vision for Education Board.

Planning workshops for the cluster meetings

27. During August and September meetings were held with a group of volunteer heads facilitated by iMPower to plan the cluster meetings, drawing on the work already completed.

28. The workshops helped to co-design the cluster meeting agendas, what should be in the cluster presentation pack for these meetings, and some draft terms of reference for clusters to consider.
29. The workshops sought to establish what they as representative heads believed made effective collaboration, what the barriers to collaboration were and what the 'hooks' might be to encourage heads and governors to become involved.
30. The group agreed the rationale for locality clusters that should be discussed with clusters.
 - All schools and the local authority stand to gain from working collaboratively in locality clusters.
 - We want to build on the successful collaboration that has already been established and do not wish to duplicate what is working well.
 - Clusters would be led by schools but the council could support schools to develop, agree and deliver on their agreed priorities.
 - The Local Authority's role is to champion children and to ensure that children and young people are achieving great outcomes.
 - Through collaboration we can deliver improved outcomes for children and young people in Central Bedfordshire and deliver our Partnership Vision for Education.
31. The workshops developed a summary of the purpose of cluster working to be discussed, amended and agreed at the cluster meetings.

A great 0-19 learning journey for every child

 - Enabling and ensuring great teaching for all of our children.
 - Raising the aspirations of the whole education community
 - Creating and supporting a culture of success across the whole education community.
 - Improving the attainment and progression of all of our children.
 - Facilitating the social mobility of vulnerable children.
32. Potential benefits for discussion at the cluster meetings were agreed.
 - A forum for developing, agreeing and delivering shared priorities across the 0-19 journey of the child within geographical areas.
 - A forum for open challenge and support.
 - A place to share and develop innovative and creative ideas which improve outcomes for children and young people.
 - A mechanism through which to develop leaders at all levels, share skills, resources and purchasing power.
 - An effective support network for new headteachers.
 - A forum for understanding locality data.

33. Worskshop attendees were keen that as a result of cluster meetings, talking led to action and tangible impact.

Interviews and surveys

34. Telephone interviews were carried out iMPOWER with 14 heads from across Central Bedfordshire and representing different schools phases.
35. 100% of heads interviewed agreed or strongly agreed that all schools have something to gain from collaborating with other schools and 100% agreed or strongly agreed that all schools have something to contribute towards collaboration.
36. 91% of heads interviewed agreed or strongly agreed that sharing resources can help schools to improve and address challenges.
37. 100% of heads interviewed agreed or strongly agreed that it is important even for the most high-achieving schools to keep looking at ways they could improve and learn from others.
38. When asked about the impact of collaboration on improving outcomes, heads interviewed had differing n experiences with 66% saying that collaboration happened a bit or not at all.
39. When faced with challenges, the majority of heads will look for support from other schools, while some would approach system leaders.
40. Only 50 % of heads interviewed indicated that current collaboration is effective.
41. Interviewed heads reported key reasons for high and effective collaboration as:
- Established structures and leadership.
 - Established regular meetings.
 - Opportunity to share experience and moderate.
 - Mutually supportive.
 - Useful to check in and share practice.
 - Wide engagement.
42. Interviewed heads reported key reasons for no or low collaboration or ineffective collaboration as:
- Lack of structure, drive, purpose or requirement to collaborate.
 - Too busy/not enough capacity.
 - Feeling of isolation or not being actively involved.

- Lack of leadership and central coordination.
 - Differences in practice and ethos.
 - Lack of practical impact and improvement.
 - Lack of strategic coherence.
 - Need to improve practice more.
 - Need to involve more people.
 - Not regular or structured enough.
43. The majority of heads interviewed indicated that meetings should be half termly and should have a clear agenda, should not be exclusive or competitive, and had representation from a decent number of schools.
44. Interviewed heads were asked what should their cluster do or discuss that would make engagement worthwhile, and what would be the benefits. Consistent responses were:
- Improve standards at Key Stage 2.
 - Raising aspirations.
 - Providing moderation.
 - Be honest and open
 - Time will be freed up.
 - Schools will work together and not in isolation.
45. The views of Governors and Trustees were sought via a survey. 409 responses were received.
46. 97% of governors/trustees who responded agreed or strongly agreed that sharing skills and resources can help schools to improve and address challenges.
47. 94% of governors/trustees who responded agreed or strongly agreed that all schools have something to contribute towards collaboration, and 97 % thought that all schools have something gain from collaboration.
48. 67% of governors/trustees who responded agreed or strongly agreed that schools could collaborate more across Central Bedfordshire, and 69% agreed or strongly agreed that schools could collaborate more with local schools in their area.
49. 72% of governors/trustees who responded felt they already collaborated well with local schools in their area.
50. Top 5 areas that could be positively impacted by cluster working identified by governors/trustees are:
- Continuing professional development (CPD) and general staff training and support.

- Attainment.
 - Attainment of vulnerable children.
 - SEND
 - Staff recruitment and retention.
51. The views of parents and carers were sought via a survey. 1,309 responses were received.
 52. 94% of parents and carers who responded agreed or strongly agreed that good and outstanding schools can still learn from other schools.
 53. 92% of parents and carers who responded agreed or strongly agreed that good and outstanding schools should work with other schools to share their skills and knowledge.
 54. 97% of parents and carers who responded agreed or strongly agreed that schools should work together to learn from each other.
 55. 91% of parents and carers who responded agreed or strongly agreed that all schools should make sure that children are prepared for the knowledge and skills that they will need before they transition between schools.
 56. 95% of parents and carers who responded agreed or strongly agreed that schools should work together to help children and they move between schools.
 57. 72% of parents and carers who responded agreed or strongly agreed that their child's teachers brought out the best in them, and 73% agreed or strongly agreed that their child's school supported them to aim high, which would suggest that around 25% are not yet confident in this .
 58. 90% of parents and carers who responded agreed or strongly agreed that the education their child receives offers them a great opportunity to get on in life.

Cluster meetings

59. Meetings were held in 7 localities serving the agreed cluster groups of schools. These were:
 - a. Harlington Area Schools Trust – 20 September 2016
 - b. Leighton Buzzard, Linslade and Woburn Sands – 28 September 2016.
 - c. Houghton Regis – 3 October 2016.
 - d. Sandy, Biggleswade – 4 October 2016.
 - e. Stotfold, Shefford and Arlesey – 11 October 2016.
 - f. Dunstable – 12 October 2016.
 - g. Ampthill, Flitwick and Cranfield – 20 October 2016

60. Representatives from 101 schools attended and many schools had more than one representative. Some special schools attended more than one cluster meeting as they admit children from a broader area.
61. The HAST meeting was attended by representatives from all schools.
62. 18 out of 28 schools in the Leighton Buzzard/Linslade/Woburn Sands cluster were represented.
63. 10 out of 14 schools in the Houghton Regis cluster were represented, although 2 schools identified for this cluster attended the Dunstable cluster as they felt that this was more appropriate for them.
64. 14 out of 22 schools in the Stotfold/Shefford cluster were represented.
65. 16 out of 21 school in the Dunstable cluster were represented, with apologies received from one who was unable to attend
66. 22 out of 24 schools in the Sandy/Biggleswade cluster were represented, although 1 head retires this term and the other head is supportive of the work but could not attend.
67. 12 out of 14 schools in the Ampthill/Flitwick cluster were represented, with apologies received from 1 school.
68. A letter has been written to all of those schools who did not sign in / attend to identify their reasons for not attending and encourage future engagement.
69. At each cluster meeting attendees were asked whether the outputs from the workshops and the interviews and surveys resonated with them. There was broad agreement to the purpose and rationale for cluster working, and the need for tangible impact.
70. The 3 consistent long term priorities (5 – 10 years) that came through all of the cluster meetings and which are consistent with those that came from the heads and governors meeting in June 2016 are:
 - Improving attainment with each cluster aiming to improve outcomes for their children year on year.
 - Improving children's resilience.
 - Improving transitions through all stages (into school, within school, between schools and into further learning and the workplace)
71. The short to medium term priorities (6 – 12 months) which were consistent across the clusters are:
 - Share best practice within and across clusters.
 - Raise aspirations and share successes.

- Strengthen leadership.
- Improve progress and outcomes.
- Improve outcomes for vulnerable groups.
- Improve child and family resilience.
- Improve the quality and consistency of assessments and moderation.
- Develop a strategy to support staff recruitment and retention of quality teachers and leaders.
- Identify children's needs early and improve early help and intervention.
- Improve working with local partners.
- Develop a directory of quality assured best practice, building on the Open Schools East network.

72. These have been captured in a refreshed Partnership Vision for Education which is attached at Appendix 1.

Council Priorities

73. This work supports the following Council priorities

- Improving education and skills
- Creating stronger communities

Corporate Implications

74. All partners that impact on education outcomes for children are needed to support delivery of the vision.

Legal Implications

75. None

Financial and Risk Implications

76. There is a risk of loss of Education Services Grant (due to go in September 2017) reducing capacity in the Local Authority to support the cluster work.

77. A Strategic School Improvement Fund was announced by the Government on 1 December 2016 as new money to build school-led capacity. It will be available to academies and maintained schools most in need of support. Schools will be able to apply to the fund either alone, or as a group of schools, with the support of a Teaching School a National Leader of Education (NLE), The LA or the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), to receive additional funding to support school improvement provision. RSCs, Teaching Schools and LAs will be involved in encouraging and

supporting bids. This could provide an opportunity for our school clusters to apply for additional resource to deliver their plans.

78. There may be some resource implications for the Council and schools arising from the outcomes of the survey on teacher recruitment to support delivery of a strategy to recruit the best teachers and leaders to Central Bedfordshire. The outcome of the survey will be reported to a future meeting.

Equalities Implications

79. Public Authorities must ensure that decisions are made in a way which minimises unfairness, and without a disproportionately negative effect on people from different ethnic groups, disabled people, women and men. It is important that Councillors are aware of this duty before they take a decision.
80. When decisions are made, decision makers must have the relevant data, including the results of equality impact assessment, and of consultation and involvement, to ensure they reach an informed decision.
81. The refreshed Partnership Vision For Education supports the work to narrow the gap between disadvantage pupils and their peers and improve outcomes for all pupils.

Implications for Work Programming

82. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider future reports on the individual cluster action plans and progress being made against the actions.

Conclusion and next Steps

83. The cluster meetings and the workshops, surveys and interviews have all demonstrated the strong support from for working collaboratively within a framework that ensures impact on children's outcomes.
84. There is strong support for working in school clusters to support each other in ensuring that children have a great education journey from 0-19.
85. Dates for future cluster meetings have been or are being set and these will be shared with all clusters.
86. All clusters have agreed to meet to pursue the goals as agreed in the meetings, although the mechanics of meetings will differ across localities.

87. It was proposed that Biggleswade and Sandy would continue to meet as separate clusters once a term, but to then come together for the second meeting each term.
88. It was proposed that Cranfield and Marston would continue to meet as a small cluster as the majority of their pupils crossed the border into Bedford Borough schools. They have identified a head to attend the Partnership Vision for Education Board.
89. The Local Authority will be a member of each cluster group and a senior school improvement officer from the Council will attend each cluster meeting to work with the cluster.
90. The Terms of Reference for the Partnership Vision for Education board will be reviewed to reflect the refreshed Partnership Vision for Education. Board membership has been revised, and there is now a representative from each cluster on the Board, enabling stronger partnership between the Board and clusters.
91. Following the cluster meetings it has been agreed to use the 1 March 2017 heads and Chairs meeting to update on the Children's Services Transformation programme and engage schools in discussions on the development of locality teams/services and how this can integrate with their cluster priorities and the delivery of the Partnership Vision for Education.
92. There will be a conference on 13 June 2017 to report back on the work of the clusters and the impact on improving outcomes, where best practice will be shared and celebrated.

Appendices

Appendix 1a and 1b: Refreshed Partnership Vision for Education.

Background Papers

93. None.

Central Bedfordshire Council

EXECUTIVE

Tuesday, 7 February 2017

Refresh of the Partnership Vision for Education

Report of Cllr Steve Dixon Executive Member for Education and Skills,
(steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers: Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services,
(sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk and Helen Redding, Assistant
Director Education and School Improvement,
helen.redding@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 300 6057

This report does not relate to a Key Issue

Purpose of this report

1. The report sets out the work undertaken to refresh the Partnership Vision for Education and the long, medium and short term priorities that have emerged from the schools clusters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to:

1. Approve the refreshed version of the Partnership Vision For Education

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. This report was presented to Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 17 January 2017 and the Committee was asked to indicate its support for the refreshed Partnership Vision for Education. The views of the Committee will be reported to Executive at its meeting.

Background

1. Central Bedfordshire Council's Executive approved the Partnership Vision for Education on 4 August 2015 and it was launched with schools in September 2015. The Vision was co-constructed with schools and partners and took account of feedback received.

2. The Vision consisted of 6 key elements which set out key actions for the Council and partners. These were progressed through workstreams which reported on a half termly basis to the Partnership Vision For Education Board.
 - School Leadership.
 - Achieving results in the top quartile in key stage tests, including GCSEs and A Levels.
 - School readiness.
 - Improving health outcomes to support improving education outcomes.
 - Young people have the skills to be work ready.
 - Commission new school places from good or outstanding providers to serve growing communities.
3. School were asked to sign a Pledge committing to delivering the Vision. 76 schools/partners responded, although a significant number of schools who had not signed the Pledge were very engaged in delivering the Vision.

Peer Review

4. Central Bedfordshire commissioned a Peer Review of Arrangements for School Improvement on 7/8 March 2016 which was carried out by colleagues from school improvement services in the Eastern Region.
5. The peer review team were asked to look into how engaged schools were in the 5 Year Vision, and how well they understood their joint roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.
6. The strengths identified by the Peer Review were:
 - a. Heads value their ongoing relationship with the Local Authority
 - b. Heads value Central Essentials and Governors Essentials
 - c. The initial development of the Teaching Schools has been closely supported by the LA to good effect
 - d. There are some good examples of QA arrangements for all commissioned work
 - e. All schools have access to and are engaged with the Teaching Schools in some form
 - f. Schools understand the LA categorisation system for school support
 - g. Governance Reviews and governor monitoring are used proactively to support improved leadership
 - h. There are some good examples emerging of schools working collaboratively
7. In response to the recommendations actions have been taken to:
 - a. Refresh the Partnership Vision ensuring work reflects key priorities for improvement in pupil achievement, with clear focus and urgency around improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and across Key Stage 2.

- b. Co-construct a document that sets out Central Bedfordshire's school led school improvement strategy that defines all partners' roles. This has been approved by the Partnership Vision For Education Board and circulated to schools via Central Essentials.
 - c. Review and amend the performance reports for schools and school clusters. These were amended for September 2016 and are being further amended following feedback at the cluster meetings.
 - d. Continue to challenge all schools to improve outcomes. This has been and will continue to be done through the cluster meetings. A one day scoping audit has also been developed to support the local authority and schools to explore performance in more detail and identify strengths and areas for improvement that may not generally be uncovered through data monitoring processes.
 - e. Develop a plan in partnership with schools to accelerate improvement at Key Stage 2, drawing on best practice in primary, middle and lower schools. A secondary readiness leaflet similar to the one produced for school readiness has been co-produced with schools setting out what pupils will need to be able to do to be secondary ready and examples of things they can do to help with this. There is a conference on 1 December focussing on raising attainment at key Stage 2 which has been co developed with key schools and which will share best practice.
 - f. Commission and train additional moderators and develop a more systematic model of cross phase moderation across the LA. This has been completed and is being implemented this year.
8. At the Partnership Vision For Education Board Meeting on 9 May 2016 the Board considered the Peer Review report and made the following recommendations regarding the refresh of the Partnership Vision For Education
- i. Remove the elements that are 'Business as usual' and make it slimmer and sharper.
 - j. Focus on the key priorities around actions that will lead to improving outcomes, including focus on recruitment and retention.
 - k. Some working groups are proving effective and need to continue, but not necessarily as a workstream of the delivery plan of the Vision. These groups could provide updates to the Board and to schools.

Heads and Governors Meetings

9. A meeting was held with Heads and Governors on 13 June 2016 with a key agenda item being the refresh of the Partnership Vision for Education.

10. At the meeting the changing national and local context was clarified, including demographic growth in Central Bedfordshire, the status of the Education Bill, school funding, including Education Services Grant and the consultation process on the Dedicated Schools Grant, and the potential impact of this. The threats and opportunities were set out and schools were asked to engage with us and each other to take the opportunity to develop a collaborative local system that supported our collective ambition to secure the best outcomes for children.
11. We set out our ambition to develop the conversations between the Local Authority, headteachers, Chairs of Governors and Academy sponsors within the context of building on the success to date of school to school support and an understanding that schools are at the heart of the community.
12. The Peer Review findings were shared with schools. Some schools felt that the report reflected the views of a few schools, but not of all schools.
13. Schools were asked to consider the following questions in refreshing the Partnership Vision for Education:
 - What are the 3 key actions that will drive achieving the vision?
 - What data reports would schools find useful in supporting conversations in schools and across schools to improve outcomes?
 - What are you currently doing that is having an impact on improving outcomes for children and young people in your locality?
14. Key actions that were identified included:
 - Reviewing provision for disadvantaged pupils and the impact of this, including engagement of appropriate professionals to support children and at Early Help and Team Around Child meetings.
 - Broader awareness of the successes of disadvantaged pupils in other subject areas and how that could be used to support further improvement in outcomes.
 - Identifying best practice that has real impact on pupil outcomes.
 - More joined up approaches/collaboration/joint accountability (in systems, curriculum, pedagogy and moderation to ensure assessment data is robust and accurate across phases and key stages regardless of site). Build and sustain an atmosphere of trust between schools.
 - Invest more resources by sharing best teachers in schools with weaker staffing.
 - More honest discussions between schools focussed on pupil outcomes.

- Sharing best practice between schools and the learning from collaboration projects.
 - Addressing emotional wellbeing issues in children so they are 'ready' to learn.
 - Involve all stakeholders, including parents and staff.
 - Review of support services for children.
 - Look at best practice outside Central Bedfordshire and coordinate action based research nationally through Teaching Schools.
 - Recruitment and retention.
15. Additional data suggested by schools was:
- Provide KS2 outcomes to lower schools of their children's performance at end of Key Stage assessment.
 - Provide KS4 outcomes to middle and primary schools for their pupils.
 - Provide data that enable comparisons between outcomes of schools with a similar demographic.
 - Provide tracking data for every year group – possibly termly tracking data submitted by schools.
 - Further develop locality reports based on pyramids/catchments.
 - School readiness check at pre-school.
 - Consider how matched and unmatched data could be reported/captured.
 - Consider data on more able pupils who are also represented in other groups, e.g. disadvantage.
16. A number of examples of effective practice were shared.

Partnership Vision for Education Board – 4 July 2016 and 19 September 2016

17. At the Board meeting on 4 July 2016 Board members reflected on the feedback from the Heads and Governors and came to the following conclusions.
- Recruitment & retention reportedly remains an issue.
 - There is a culture across some schools of apportioning blame for poor outcomes and a positive culture needs to be encouraged.
 - Recent political events could result in changes to White Paper proposals, so it is important to keep the focus on improving outcomes for children regardless of political change.
 - Guidance differs on transitions which should be considered in the autumn term locality meetings.
 - It would be helpful to collate information on services available to schools.
 - Capacity needs to be developed across schools to support delivery of school to school support. Schools that do not normally put themselves forward need to be encouraged to do so.

- Lots of positive feedback was received relating to collaborative working, and this success needs to be captured and built on.
18. The Board was asked to think about further mechanisms to identify and share best practice.
 19. At the Board meeting on 19 September 2016 the Board reflected on the workshops held over the summer and the planned agendas for the cluster meetings.
 20. The Board agreed that networking is very important for head teachers, especially those new to post. The Board thought cluster meetings should help heads feel less isolated and could provide an infrastructure for collaboration leading to improved outcomes. Schools need to be actively involved in the process of collaboration.
 21. The Board agreed that the timing of cluster meetings needed to be considered alongside the Director's meetings with heads and governors. It was agreed that given the cluster meetings were looking at data and identifying local priorities, a separate meeting was not necessary in the autumn term. Agendas for meetings in the spring and summer term would be agreed by the Board. It was agreed that a summer meeting could bring together the outcomes of the work of the clusters and help redefine priorities for the following year.
 22. A schedule of all cluster meetings, head and governor meetings across the year would be provided in Central Essentials once dates were agreed and provided by cluster leads.
 23. A discussion was held on the recruitment data census returns which do not support feedback that recruitment is a big issue. It was agreed that further guidance would be sent to schools to complete the national census as it was not clear that schools filled it in accurately.
 24. It was felt that the main issue regarding recruitment was not inability to recruit, but that shortages of teachers meant that there was less competition for posts which was impacting on the quality of teachers filling vacancies.
 25. Some schools shared that they were succession planning through for example supporting teacher training for Higher Level Teaching Assistants.
 26. It was agreed that recruitment challenges would be tested at the cluster meetings, and that a short survey would then be developed to identify what schools were doing to recruit and retain good staff, and what and where the specific issues were. The survey was agreed at the 14 November Partnership Vision for Education Board.

Planning workshops for the cluster meetings

27. During August and September meetings were held with a group of volunteer heads facilitated by iMPOWER to plan the cluster meetings, drawing on the work already completed.
28. The workshops helped to co-design the cluster meeting agendas, what should be in the cluster presentation pack for these meetings, and some draft terms of reference for clusters to consider.
29. The workshops sought to establish what they as representative heads believed made effective collaboration, what the barriers to collaboration were and what the 'hooks' might be to encourage heads and governors to become involved.
30. The group agreed the rationale for locality clusters that should be discussed with clusters.
 - All schools and the local authority stand to gain from working collaboratively in locality clusters.
 - We want to build on the successful collaboration that has already been established and do not wish to duplicate what is working well.
 - Clusters would be led by schools but the council could support schools to develop, agree and deliver on their agreed priorities.
 - The Local Authority's role is to champion children and to ensure that children and young people are achieving great outcomes.
 - Through collaboration we can deliver improved outcomes for children and young people in Central Bedfordshire and deliver our Partnership Vision for Education.
31. The workshops developed a summary of the purpose of cluster working to be discussed, amended and agreed at the cluster meetings.

A great 0-19 learning journey for every child

 - Enabling and ensuring great teaching for all of our children.
 - Raising the aspirations of the whole education community
 - Creating and supporting a culture of success across the whole education community.
 - Improving the attainment and progression of all of our children.
 - Facilitating the social mobility of vulnerable children.
32. Potential benefits for discussion at the cluster meetings were agreed.
 - A forum for developing, agreeing and delivering shared priorities across the 0-19 journey of the child within geographical areas.
 - A forum for open challenge and support.

- A place to share and develop innovative and creative ideas which improve outcomes for children and young people.
 - A mechanism through which to develop leaders at all levels, share skills, resources and purchasing power.
 - An effective support network for new headteachers.
 - A forum for understanding locality data.
33. Worskshop attendees were keen that as a result of cluster meetings, talking led to action and tangible impact.

Interviews and surveys

34. Telephone interviews were carried out iMPower with 14 heads from across Central Bedfordshire and representing different schools phases.
35. 100% of heads interviewed agreed or strongly agreed that all schools have something to gain from collaborating with other schools and 100% agreed or strongly agreed that all schools have something to contribute towards collaboration.
36. 91% of heads interviewed agreed or strongly agreed that sharing resources can help schools to improve and address challenges.
37. 100% of heads interviewed agreed or strongly agreed that it is important even for the most high-achieving schools to keep looking at ways they could improve and learn from others.
38. When asked about the impact of collaboration on improving outcomes, heads interviewed had differing experiences with 66% saying that collaboration happened a bit or not at all.
39. When faced with challenges, the majority of heads will look for support from other schools, while some would approach system leaders.
40. Only 50 % of heads interviewed indicated that current collaboration is effective.
41. Interviewed heads reported key reasons for high and effective collaboration as:
- Established structures and leadership.
 - Established regular meetings.
 - Opportunity to share experience and moderate.
 - Mutually supportive.
 - Useful to check in and share practice.
 - Wide engagement.

42. Interviewed heads reported key reasons for no or low collaboration or ineffective collaboration as:
- Lack of structure, drive, purpose or requirement to collaborate.
 - Too busy/not enough capacity.
 - Feeling of isolation or not being actively involved.
 - Lack of leadership and central coordination.
 - Differences in practice and ethos.
 - Lack of practical impact and improvement.
 - Lack of strategic coherence.
 - Need to improve practice more.
 - Need to involve more people.
 - Not regular or structured enough.
43. The majority of heads interviewed indicated that meetings should be half termly and should have a clear agenda, should not be exclusive or competitive, and had representation from a decent number of schools.
44. Interviewed heads were asked what should their cluster do or discuss that would make engagement worthwhile, and what would be the benefits. Consistent responses were:
- Improve standards at Key Stage 2.
 - Raising aspirations.
 - Providing moderation.
 - Be honest and open
 - Time will be freed up.
 - Schools will work together and not in isolation.
45. The views of Governors and Trustees were sought via a survey. 409 responses were received.
46. 97% of governors/trustees who responded agreed or strongly agreed that sharing skills and resources can help schools to improve and address challenges.
47. 94% of governors/trustees who responded agreed or strongly agreed that all schools have something to contribute towards collaboration, and 97 % thought that all schools have something gain from collaboration.
48. 67% of governors/trustees who responded agreed or strongly agreed that schools could collaborate more across Central Bedfordshire, and 69% agreed or strongly agreed that schools could collaborate more with local schools in their area.
49. 72% of governors/trustees who responded felt they already collaborated well with local schools in their area.

50. Top 5 areas that could be positively impacted by cluster working identified by governors/trustees are:
- Continuing professional development (CPD) and general staff training and support.
 - Attainment.
 - Attainment of vulnerable children.
 - SEND
 - Staff recruitment and retention.
51. The views of parents and carers were sought via a survey. 1,309 responses were received.
52. 94% of parents and carers who responded agreed or strongly agreed that good and outstanding schools can still learn from other schools.
53. 92% of parents and carers who responded agreed or strongly agreed that good and outstanding schools should work with other schools to share their skills and knowledge.
54. 97% of parents and carers who responded agreed or strongly agreed that schools should work together to learn from each other.
55. 91% of parents and carers who responded agreed or strongly agreed that all schools should make sure that children are prepared for the knowledge and skills that they will need before they transition between schools.
56. 95% of parents and carers who responded agreed or strongly agreed that schools should work together to help children and they move between schools.
57. 72% of parents and carers who responded agreed or strongly agreed that their child's teachers brought out the best in them, and 73% agreed or strongly agreed that their child's school supported them to aim high, which would suggest that around 25% are not yet confident in this .
58. 90% of parents and carers who responded agreed or strongly agreed that the education their child receives offers them a great opportunity to get on in life.

Cluster meetings

59. Meetings were held in 7 localities serving the agreed cluster groups of schools. These were:
- a. Harlington Area Schools Trust – 20 September 2016

- b. Leighton Buzzard, Linslade and Woburn Sands – 28 September 2016.
 - c. Houghton Regis – 3 October 2016.
 - d. Sandy, Biggleswade – 4 October 2016.
 - e. Stotfold, Shefford and Arlesey – 11 October 2016.
 - f. Dunstable – 12 October 2016.
 - g. Ampthill, Flitwick and Cranfield – 20 October 2016
60. Representatives from 101 schools attended and many schools had more than one representative. Some special schools attended more than one cluster meeting as they admit children from a broader area.
 61. The HAST meeting was attended by representatives from all schools.
 62. 18 out of 28 schools in the Leighton Buzzard/Linslade/Woburn Sands cluster were represented.
 63. 10 out of 14 schools in the Houghton Regis cluster were represented, although 2 schools identified for this cluster attended the Dunstable cluster as they felt that this was more appropriate for them.
 64. 14 out of 22 schools in the Stotfold/Shefford cluster were represented.
 65. 16 out of 21 school in the Dunstable cluster were represented, with apologies received from one who was unable to attend
 66. 22 out of 24 schools in the Sandy/Biggleswade cluster were represented, although 1 head retires this term and the other head is supportive of the work but could not attend.
 67. 12 out of 14 schools in the Ampthill/Flitwick cluster were represented, with apologies received from 1 school.
 68. A letter has been written to all of those schools who did not sign in / attend to identify their reasons for not attending and encourage future engagement.
 69. At each cluster meeting attendees were asked whether the outputs from the workshops and the interviews and surveys resonated with them. There was broad agreement to the purpose and rationale for cluster working, and the need for tangible impact.
 70. The 3 consistent long term priorities (5 – 10 years) that came through all of the cluster meetings and which are consistent with those that came from the heads and governors meeting in June 2016 are:
 - Improving attainment with each cluster aiming to improve outcomes for their children year on year.
 - Improving children's resilience.

- Improving transitions through all stages (into school, within school, between schools and into further learning and the workplace)

71. The short to medium term priorities (6 – 12 months) which were consistent across the clusters are:
- Share best practice within and across clusters.
 - Raise aspirations and share successes.
 - Strengthen leadership.
 - Improve progress and outcomes.
 - Improve outcomes for vulnerable groups.
 - Improve child and family resilience.
 - Improve the quality and consistency of assessments and moderation.
 - Develop a strategy to support staff recruitment and retention of quality teachers and leaders.
 - Identify children's needs early and improve early help and intervention.
 - Improve working with local partners.
 - Develop a directory of quality assured best practice, building on the Open Schools East network.
72. These have been captured in a refreshed Partnership Vision for Education which is attached at Appendix 1.

Council Priorities

73. This work supports the following Council priorities
- Improving education and skills
 - Creating stronger communities

Corporate Implications

74. All partners that impact on education outcomes for children are needed to support delivery of the vision.

Legal Implications

75. None

Financial and Risk Implications

76. There is a risk of loss of Education Services Grant (due to go in September 2017) reducing capacity in the Local Authority to support the cluster work.

77. A Strategic School Improvement Fund was announced by the Government on 1 December 2016 as new money to build school-led capacity. It will be available to academies and maintained schools most in need of support. Schools will be able to apply to the fund either alone, or as a group of schools, with the support of a Teaching School a National Leader of Education (NLE), The LA or the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), to receive additional funding to support school improvement provision. RSCs, Teaching Schools and LAs will be involved in encouraging and supporting bids. This could provide an opportunity for our school clusters to apply for additional resource to deliver their plans.
78. There may be some resource implications for the Council and schools arising from the outcomes of the survey on teacher recruitment to support delivery of a strategy to recruit the best teachers and leaders to Central Bedfordshire. The outcome of the survey will be considered by the Partnership Vision for Education Board with resource implications identified if required.

Equalities Implications

79. Public Authorities must ensure that decisions are made in a way which minimises unfairness, and without a disproportionately negative effect on people from different ethnic groups, disabled people, women and men. It is important that Councillors are aware of this duty before they take a decision.
80. When decisions are made, decision makers must have the relevant data, including the results of equality impact assessment, and of consultation and involvement, to ensure they reach an informed decision.
81. The refreshed Partnership Vision For Education supports the work to narrow the gap between disadvantage pupils and their peers and improve outcomes for all pupils.

Implications for Work Programming

82. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider future reports on the individual cluster action plans and progress being made against the actions.

Conclusion and next Steps

83. The cluster meetings and the workshops, surveys and interviews have all demonstrated the strong support from for working collaboratively within a framework that ensures impact on children's outcomes.
84. There is strong support for working in school clusters to support each other in ensuring that children have a great education journey from 0-19.

85. Dates for future cluster meetings have been or are being set and these will be shared with all clusters.
86. All clusters have agreed to meet to pursue the goals as agreed in the meetings, although the mechanics of meetings will differ across localities.
87. It was proposed that Biggleswade and Sandy would continue to meet as separate clusters once a term, but to then come together for the second meeting each term.
88. It was proposed that Cranfield and Marston would continue to meet as a small cluster as the majority of their pupils crossed the border into Bedford Borough schools. They have identified a head to attend the Partnership Vision for Education Board.
89. The Local Authority will be a member of each cluster group and a senior school improvement officer from the Council will attend each cluster meeting to work with the cluster.
90. The Terms of Reference for the Partnership Vision for Education board will be reviewed to reflect the refreshed Partnership Vision for Education. Board membership has been revised, and there is now a representative from each cluster on the Board, enabling stronger partnership between the Board and clusters.
91. Following the cluster meetings it has been agreed to use the 1 March 2017 heads and Chairs meeting to update on the Children's Services Transformation programme and engage schools in discussions on the development of locality teams/services and how this can integrate with their cluster priorities and the delivery of the partnership Vision for Education.
92. There will be a conference on 13 June 2017 to report back on the work of the clusters and the impact on improving outcomes, where best practice will be shared and celebrated.

Appendices

Appendix 1a and 1b: Refreshed Partnership Vision for Education.

Background Papers

93. None.

Refresh of the Partnership Vision For Education 2016

A great 0 -19 learning journey for every child

“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 healthy, happy, contributing and confident citizens.”

(Children and Young People’s Plan)

We will achieve delivery of our vision by supporting collaboration in school clusters, working together to identify issues and actions in each cluster, including support from other partners and Council services, and sharing best practice to improve outcomes.

Overarching Principles

- Children who are happy, healthy and safe will achieve better outcomes.
- Enabling and ensuring great teaching for all of our children.
- Raising the aspirations of the whole education community.
- Creating and supporting a culture of success across the whole education community.
- Improving the attainment and progression of all of our children.
- Facilitating the social mobility of vulnerable children.

Rationale for collaboration within and across cluster

- Together we can deliver improved outcomes for children and young people in Central Bedfordshire and deliver our Partnership Vision for Education.
- All schools and the local authority stand to gain from working collaboratively in locality clusters.
- We will build on the successful collaboration that has already been established.
- Clusters will be led by schools and supported by the Council to develop, agree and deliver on their agreed priorities.
- The Local Authority will champion children and support school clusters to enable children and young people to achieve great outcomes.

The cluster meetings will provide:

- A forum for developing, agreeing and delivering shared priorities across the 0-19 journey of the child within geographical areas.
- A place to share and develop innovative and creative ideas which improve outcomes for children and young people.
- A forum for understanding and acting on locality data.
- A forum for open challenge and support.
- A mechanism through which to develop leaders at all levels, share skills, resources and purchasing power.
- An effective support network for new headteachers.
- A conduit between all school clusters and the Partnership Vision For Education board.
- Opportunity for all clusters to be more outward looking, drawing on best practice across and beyond Central Bedfordshire.

This page is intentionally left blank

Partnership Vision For Education 2016

"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 healthy, happy, contributing and confident citizens." (Children and Young People's Plan)

A great 0-19 learning journey for every child

Overarching Principles

- Children who are happy, healthy and safe will achieve better outcomes.
- Enabling and ensuring great teaching for all of our children.
- Raising the aspirations of the whole education community.
- Creating and supporting a culture of success across the whole education community.
- Improving the attainment and progression of all of our children.
- Facilitating the social mobility of vulnerable children.

Governance.

Schools and the Local Authority will work in partnership to:

- Support effective collaboration that raises aspirations and leads to improved outcomes for all children and young people.
- Agree and share Terms of Reference for each Cluster.
- Redefine the Terms of Reference for the Partnership Vision for Education Board that reflect the redefined cluster structures and priorities.
- Develop a clear and agreed remit for all cluster chairs that supports them in acting as the key conduit between the Partnership Vision for Education Board and the locality clusters.
- Support half termly cluster meetings that develop and implement actions against cluster priorities and have tangible outcomes.
- Ensure strong communication between clusters and the Partnership Vision for Education Board, and between clusters, collecting and sharing examples of best practice that impacts on outcomes.
- Further develop school to school support and a school led school improvement model.
- Further develop the directory of quality assured best practice that is impacting on improving outcomes.

Improve attainment and progress in every cluster to support improving outcomes across Central Bedfordshire

Each cluster will:

- Identify the key actions for their cluster that will support improving outcomes at every Key Stage in their cluster.
- Utilise cluster data to support identification of cluster issues and measure progress.

The Local Authority will:

- Work with cluster chairs to agree data sets that schools will find useful and add these to the cluster data reports.
- Work with clusters to analyse the data and support actions against emerging priorities.
- Work with cluster chairs to share best practice in data analysis that is leading to improved outcomes.
- Work with cluster chairs to identify best practice that is impacting on improved outcomes for all groups of children and young people and ensure that this is shared across all clusters.
- Work with the Teaching Schools to facilitate and broker school to school support and CPD against identified short and medium term priorities.
- Further develop framework for cross school and cross cluster moderation, skilling up an increased numbers of moderators.

- Outcomes at each key stage improve in each cluster year on year.
- Best practice is shared and implemented across Central Bedfordshire schools.
- There will be broader consistency in assessment processes and judgements across schools.
- Schools will have confidence in outcome data.

Improve children and family resilience

School clusters and the Local Authority will work together to:

- Develop the Children's Services Transformation and development of broader locality based services across education, health and care services.
- Identify children's needs early and ensure right support at the right time.
- Identify and share best practice in early intervention and prevention activities.
- Develop and share roles of all services, and clear pathways for accessing more specialist services.
- Strengthen engagement in locality meetings with specialist services.
- Identify non threatening engagement opportunities for parents.
- Identify and share actions that have led to improved attendance of all pupils.

- Updated Wellbeing Survey data demonstrate that children and young people have improved self esteem and resilience.
- Attendance improves for all children particularly for vulnerable groups of children.
- Days lost to fixed term exclusion reduce..
- Children and young people have high aspirations.
- Increase in young people in employment, education or training (EET)

Improve transition across every stage

- Cluster chairs will work with the Local Authority to
- Identify best practice in transition.
- Identify school representatives to co-develop steps to success guidance in line with School Readiness Guidance and Leaving Key Stage 2 Passport to Success Guidance for:
 - Transition Year 4 – Year 5
 - Transition Key Stage 1 – Key Stage 2 (Year 2 to Year 3)
 - Transition Year 8 – Year 9
 - Transition to Post 16 (A levels, work place, college and university)
- Provide accessible versions of all of the above in animations and/or You Tube clips.

- Schools, governors and parents report improved practices in transition.
- Best practice in transition is common across all transition points.
- Children and young people and their parents report that they are more confident to transition to the next stage of their education/life.

Recruitment and Retention of the best school leaders and teachers

We will:

- Seek further information from schools through a survey regarding the specific issues regarding recruitment and retention.
- Review the outcome of the survey and develop a recruitment and retention strategy which will support schools in delivering a great education.
- Work with the Teaching Schools to ensure delivery of a leadership training programme that leads to career progression in Central Bedfordshire schools.

- Central Bedfordshire schools will recruit and retain the best teachers and leaders.
- Great teachers will develop into great leaders for Central Bedfordshire schools.

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting: Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date: 17 January 2017
Subject: Customer Feedback – Complaints, Compliments Annual Report
Report of: Councillor Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care and Housing
carole.hegley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Summary: This report fulfills the statutory duty to produce an annual report for Children's Social Care (Appendix A). The report provides statistics on the number of complaints received; complaint outcomes (upheld/not upheld); performance; issues complained about; and learning and improvements resulting from complaints for 2015/16.

Advising Officer: Paula Terry – Customer Relations Manager
Contact Officer: Paula Terry – Customer Relations Manager
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The annual report for noting links to the priorities

- Great Resident Services
- Protecting the Vulnerable; Improving Wellbeing
- A More Efficient and Responsive Council

Financial:

1. Effective management of complaint issues focuses resource on resolution and reduces the risks of financial remedies being paid. The complaints procedure provides for conciliation meetings which are used as an effective alternative to costly independent investigations

Legal:

2. The production of an annual report is a statutory requirement and should be made available to anyone on request. The report will be posted on the council's web site.

Risk Management:

3. Complaints are assessed at the point of receipt to ensure risks are managed for example; child protection issues, risks to reputation, exclusions. Effective complaints management ensures service failings are identified and remedied, thereby reducing the risk of public reports from the Local Government Ombudsman. There were no public reports about children's social care complaints.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

4. There are no staffing issues arising from the report

Equalities/Human Rights:

The report contains statistical analysis of monitoring information where information has been recorded.

Community Safety:

5. To support children and families to feel safe it is important that they know how to complain about services they receive; feel heard when they raise complaints; and that action is taken. The report evidences that service users have been able to complain, where complaints have been upheld failings are identified and improvements put in place.

Sustainability:

There are no sustainability issues arising from the report

RECOMMENDATION:

- **That the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee note and comment on the content of the report.**

Introduction

6. The Council's Customer Relations Team, based in the Social Care, Health and Housing directorate, manages the Council's customer feedback procedures. There are three procedures. Two of the procedures are statutory and are governed by Regulations relating to Adult Social Care Services and Children's Services respectively. The third procedure covers all other Council services.
7. The feedback procedures are the means by which customer compliments, comments and complaints are handled. Customer Relations provides a point of contact for customers wishing to complain via email, telephone or in writing. This provides confidence to those customers who may have lost faith in the services to respond to their issue.
8. The Council is required to monitor the effectiveness of statutory complaints procedures and prepare an annual report. The Children's Social Care complaints report must be made available to any person on request.

Purpose of this report

9. This report provides an overview of the key issues in complaint handling and the effectiveness of the complaints procedure for Children's Social Care for the period 2015/16.

Children's Social Care customer feedback report

10. The Regulations require that the annual report should include; the number of complaints at each stage including those considered by the Local Government Ombudsman; the type, timescales and outcomes of complaints, which customer groups made complaints; learning and service improvements and summary equality monitoring data.
11. The annual report addresses the requirements above and covers:
- The Council's procedure for handling children's social care complaints.
 - Equality and Diversity Monitoring.
 - Summary Statistics including; number of complaints received; number referred to the Local Government Ombudsman; services most complained about; number well founded.
 - Performance.
 - Service improvements resulting from complaints.
12. To address the need to make the annual report available to anyone requesting it the report will be posted on the 'Feedback' pages of the Council's website. The feedback pages contain information on how to provide compliments, comments and complaints.

Complaints handling practice in 2015/16

13. There was a decrease in the number of complaints recorded compared to last year, from 92 to 84. The number of complaints suggests effective recognition and recording of complaints by service teams.
14. Complaints were seen as important customer feedback and a means of identifying how practices may be changed for the better. Services were receptive to customers' views and complaints, with 55% of complaints either upheld fully or in part.
15. As well as the statutory annual report, weekly and quarterly reports on customer feedback have been provided to assist the Director's senior management team (SMT) to monitor customer feedback, performance and outcomes.
16. The good practice of using alternative dispute resolution to resolve ongoing dissatisfaction continued this year. The approach focusses on resolution of complaints through Head of Service Reviews, assessments by Customer Relations and face to face meetings which were successful in remedying 10 cases without the need for lengthy formal investigations.

Key themes from complaints

17. The services for Looked After Children & Care Leavers were the areas most complained about however, it saw the most significant drop in complaints compared to last year. The service received 25 new complaints compared to 35 recorded the previous year. The three top reasons for complaint were; poor communication; staff conduct; and incorrect action taken.

18. Whilst the majority of complaints were resolved through an apology and providing individual case remedies, Section 5 and Section 6 of the Annual Report, details actions to improve the wider service.

Financial remedies are sometimes paid where a mistake has directly led to some injustice and there is no other remedy available. The Local Government Ombudsman's (LGO) guidance says that injustice regarding distress generally cannot be remedied by way of a payment, so payment amounts are symbolic to acknowledge the impact. In the period the LGO recommended a financial remedy in one case for £900 to recognise avoidable distress. Whilst benchmarking data is not available for all similar sized authorities the decision notices available on the LGO website indicate that in the same period financial remedies for Councils ranged up to £8798.

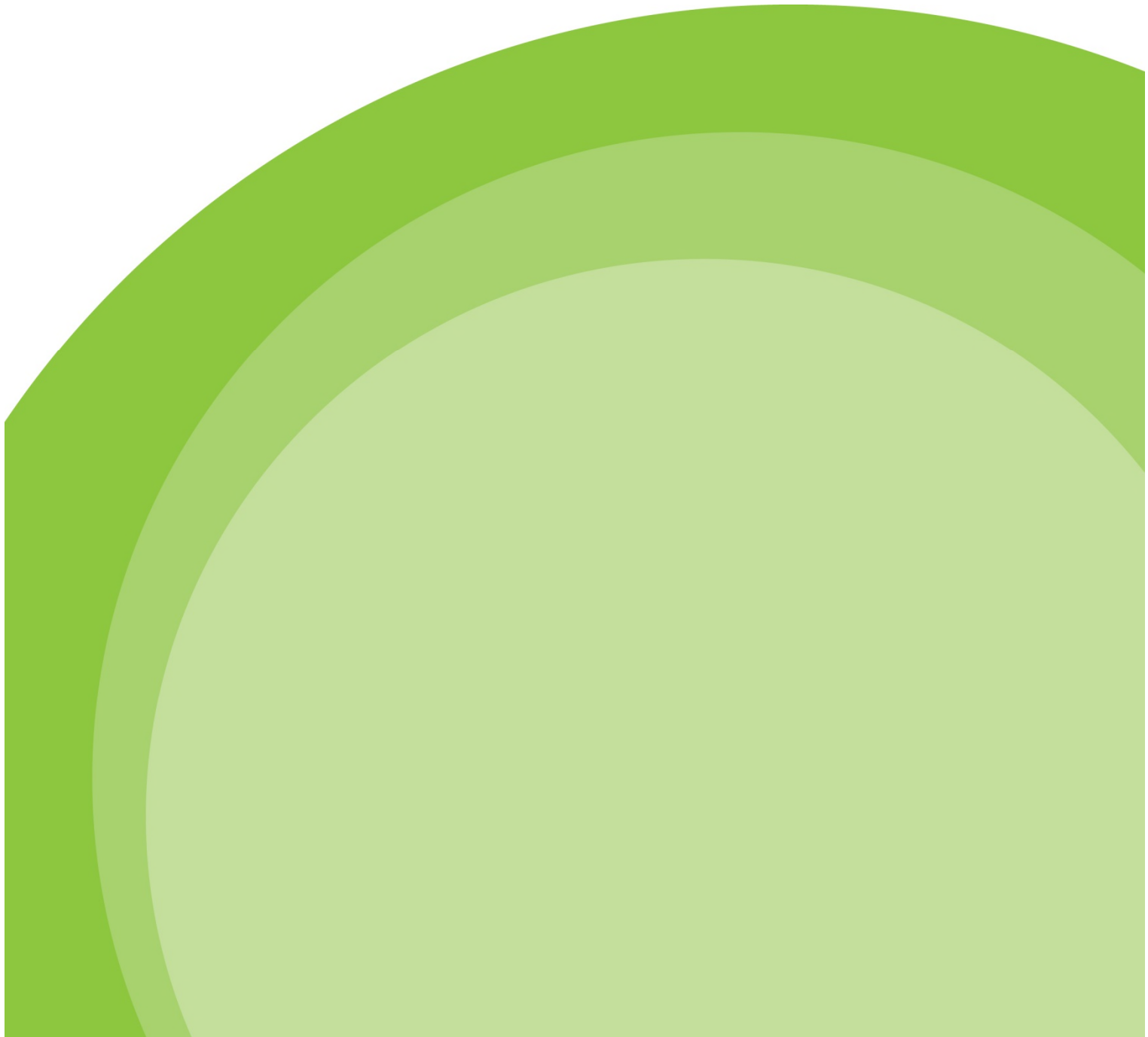
Appendices:

Appendix A - Annual Report 2015/16.

Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands

Children's Social Care Services

Customer Feedback – Compliments/Complaints
Annual Report (1st April 2015 – 31 March 2016)
Not Protected



Contents

Chapter	Page
Introduction	3
Executive Summary	4
Representations Made to Central Bedfordshire Council (Compliments and Complaints)	5
Complaints Received Analysis by Stage	7
Outcomes from Concluded Complaints	11
Performance in Complaint Handling	12
Learning and Service Improvements from Complaints	13
Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) Complaints	15
Equality and Diversity Monitoring	17
Monitoring and Quality Assurance	20
Customer Relations Team – Supporting Children’s Social Care	22

If you have any comments on this report, please contact Paula Terry, Acting Customer Relations Manager on 0300 300 6077 or Paula.Terry@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Introduction

This report fulfils the Council's statutory duty to monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure and produce an annual report for Children's Services social care complaints.

This report provides statistics for 2015/16 on the number of compliments and complaints received; a summary of complaint causes; the number of complaints that were well founded (upheld fully or in part); performance; the actions taken to improve services as a consequence of complaints; complaints considered by the Local Government Ombudsman and the effectiveness of the complaints procedure.

The report will be presented to the relevant local authority committee and will be made available on the Council's website.

The Complaints Procedure

The Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 (as amended by the NHS & Community Care Act 1990) requires us to establish a procedure for considering complaints in relation to the discharge of, or failure to discharge, any social services functions in respect of a qualifying individual. The Children Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 provides the legal framework for the procedures in relation to social care functions.

The regulations require the local authority to attempt to resolve complaints as soon as reasonably practicable and within specific timescales. The procedure has three stages, which are set out below, however where appropriate and with the agreement of the complainant the local authority may arrange for conciliation, mediation or other alternative dispute resolution to help resolve matters.

- Stage 1 (Local resolution by manager) – 10 working days or up to 20 working days for complex cases
- Stage 2 (Investigation by someone outside of the service area complained about) - 25 working days with maximum extension to 65 working days
- Stage 3 (Independent Review) – 30 working days to convene and hold a review panel; then 5 working days for the panel to issue its findings; and a further 15 working days for the local authority to respond to those findings

All complaints are triaged to ensure they are suitable for the process. This ensures matters are managed through the correct procedures, should an alternative process be in place. Any matters which are not suitable for the complaints process are filtered out and passed to the appropriate channel.

If customers remain dissatisfied with the Council's handling of the complaint they can refer to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). The LGO is an independent body that can consider complaints about the Council.

Executive Summary

Children's Social Care

26 compliments were received in 2015/16 for Children's Social Care services with instances of customers telling us that services were getting it right and having a positive impact on their lives.

There were 84 new complaints received, 65 of which were managed through the complaints procedure (14 directly from children and young people). The remaining issues related to child protection, legal process, internal management processes, were the responsibility of another body, were out of time, or were deemed as vexatious. These cases were filtered out and passed to the appropriate channel where necessary.

62 stage 1 complaints were concluded. There was no stage 2 or stage 3 complaints.

Complaints were seen as important feedback for services and a means of considering how to improve. Managers listened to customers' views with 55% of stage 1 complaints either upheld fully or in part. The main reason for complaints this year related to customer care and communication issues.

Performance in complaints handling has improved from last year in that 84% (compared to 78%) of complaints received a stage 1 response within 20 working days or less. Not all cases were resolved following the stage 1 response and 10 complainants took up the offer of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). This led to the cases being actioned without escalation to the next stage. The types of ADR offered ranged from conciliation meetings, Head of Service Review and additional responses to challenges and queries. The use of ADR helped the complainants to feel heard and helped to rebuild confidence and improve communications between the complainant and the service.

Individual cases had specific remedies put in place and the majority of wider service improvements resulted in reviews of some of the current processes in place within Children's Social Care. For wider service improvements see Section 5.

The LGO considered seven complaints about Central Bedfordshire Council's Children's Social Care Services during the period. The LGO decided not to investigate in four of those cases as it was satisfied that the local authority had addressed those complaints appropriately. The remaining three cases progressed to investigation by the Ombudsman. In one case the Ombudsman found no fault with the actions of the local authority and the remaining two cases were pending a decision at the end of the period. One LGO case reported in the previous year (2014/15) received a decision notice in this period. The LGO agreed with the Council's finding of fault and a financial remedy of £900 was agreed to settle the complaint.

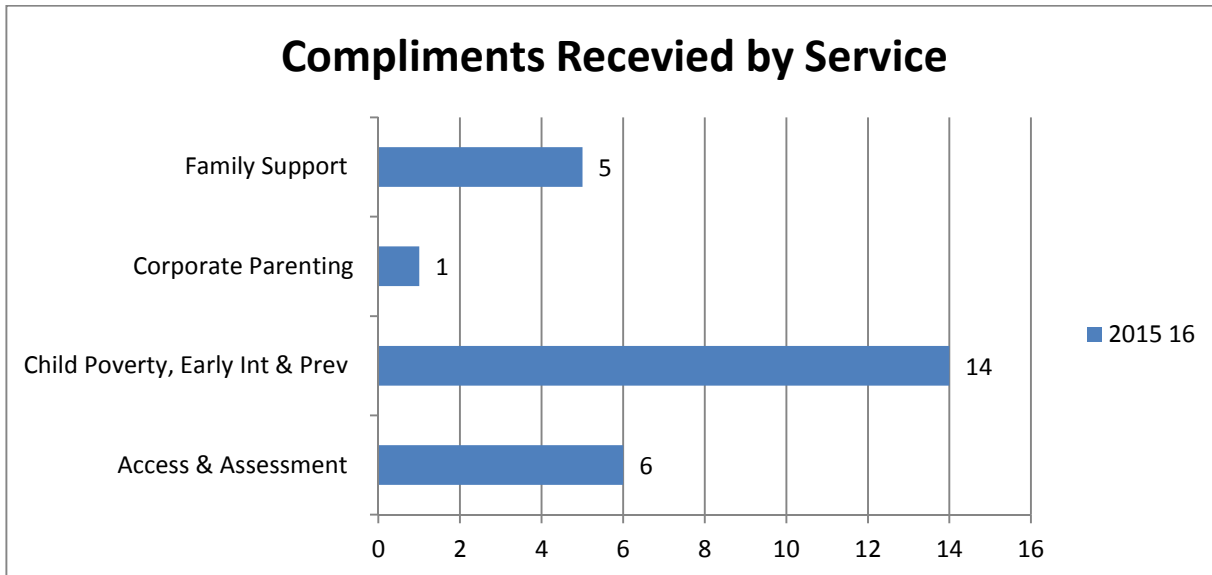
Effectiveness

The activity for this reporting period shows the complaints procedure has been effective at resolving customer complaints at a local level. Learning from the customer experience through complaints has led to improvements to practices however there is some room for improvement in managing complaints to timescales and to establish the root-cause of complaints to identify further learning for services.

1. Representations Made to Central Bedfordshire Council

1.1 Compliments Received

26 compliments were recorded across Children’s Social Care Services relating to good customer care and the quality of support to children and their families. The below chart shows the number of compliments received by service area in 2015/16:



The breakdown of compliments received by service is detailed below:

Child Poverty, Early Intervention and Prevention

Positive feedback from young people who enjoyed the Protective Behaviours training sessions (6); thanks for positive impact and support during steps to withdraw services; thanks from young person given help with friendships; praise for parental support (5); thanks to worker who made family feel at ease and has not been judgemental.

Access & Assessment

Thanks to social worker who has worked wonders with teen aggression; sensitive, honest and professional approach from social worker; thanks to social worker who has provided support in a professional way whilst remaining encouraging and friendly; factual and empowering advice provided to protect children; positive feedback from a young person on their first meeting with their social worker; social worker listening to needs and thoughts of family.

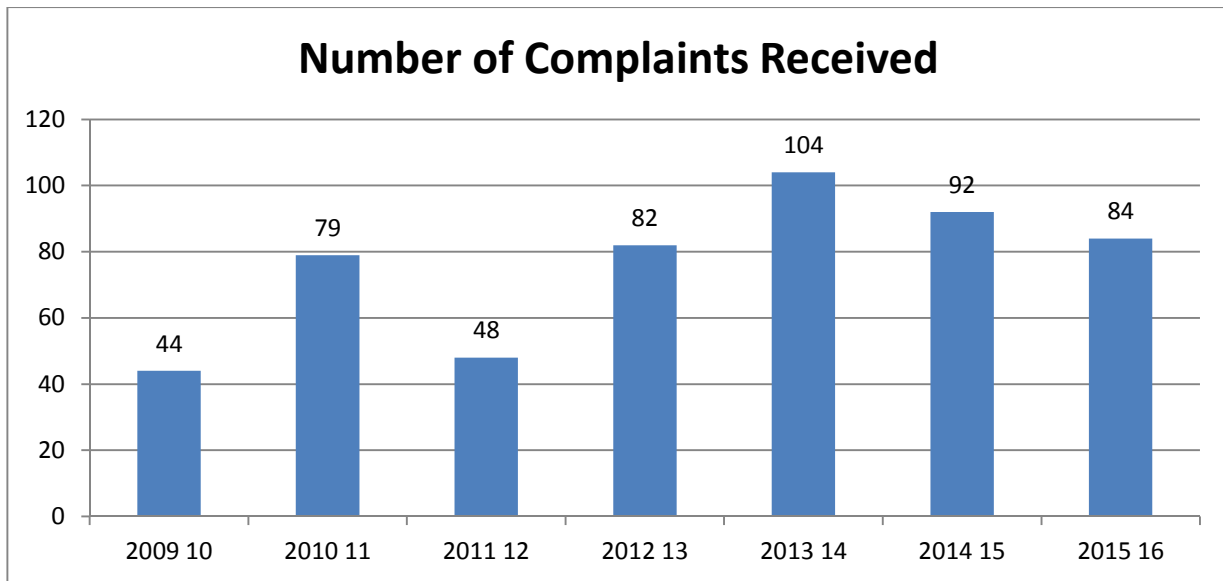
Family Support

Thanks from a member of the Children’s Society for the opportunity to shadow a social worker; thanks from a Judge to social workers in relation to cases before the court (3); praise for social worker from CafCass in relation to child focused case management.

Corporate Parenting

Praise for the standard of support provided by the social worker.

1.2 Complaints Received



In 2015/16 there were 3388 child records loaded by Children's Social Care Services.

84 new complaints were received in 2015/16. The number of new complaints received in 2015/16 reduced slightly from the previous year (by 9%).

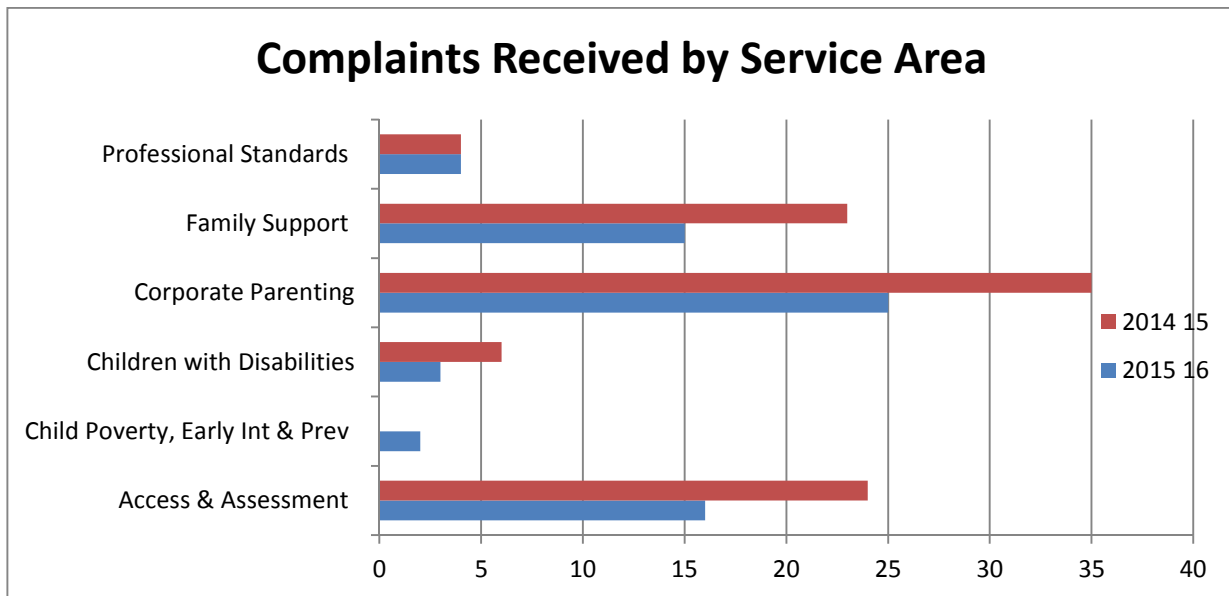
Of the 84 new complaints received, 65 were managed through the complaints procedure at stage 1. The remaining issues related to child protection, legal process, internal management processes, were the responsibility of another body, were out of time, or were deemed as vexatious. These cases were filtered out and passed to the appropriate channel where necessary.

Of the 65 new complaints managed through the complaints procedure at stage 1, 14 were directly from children and young people. The number of new complaints directly from children and young people has increased from the previous year (by 9%).

2. Complaints Received Analysis by Stage

2.1 Stage 1 Complaints by Service Area

The below chart shows complaints received by each service area within Children’s Social Care, managed at stage 1.



Over the year the majority of the complaints were received by Corporate Parenting (26). This was also the service receiving the majority of complaints last year. The teams which form this part of the service are responsible for the care of looked after children and young people, including those in residential care and foster care. The nature of this team’s work is therefore considered likely to give rise to more complaints.

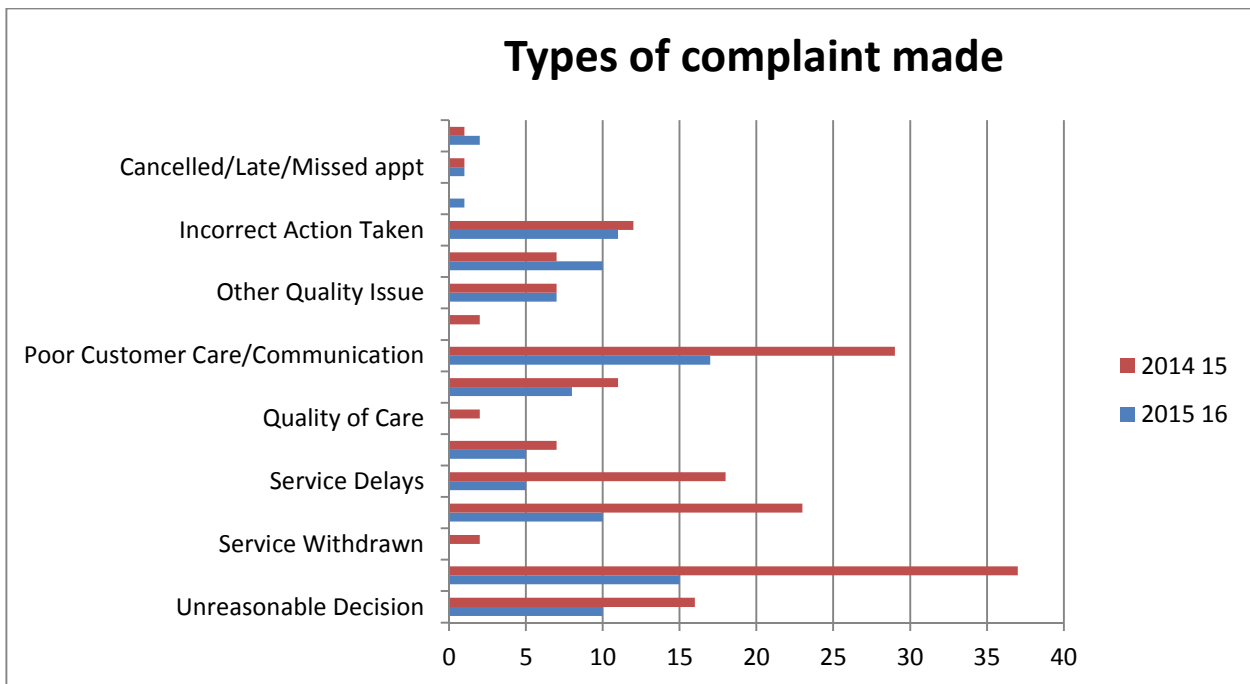
Of the 14 complaints received directly from children and young people, 12 were for the Corporate Parenting Service and 2 were for the Professional Standards Service.

2.2 Stage 1 - Types of Complaints Made

The below chart indicates the types of complaints received over the year at stage 1 in comparison to complaints received in the previous year. Each complaint received can have a number of aspects, so one complaint may cover a number of the complaint causes set out in the chart below.

The main cause for complaint in 2015/16 has been in relation to poor customer care and communication.

Of the 14 complaints received directly from children and young people, 4 were about not being listened too; 4 were in relation to services not being provided; 2 were around allegations of historical abuse; 2 were about poor communication and 1 was in relation to ‘other quality’



The breakdown of complaints received by service is detailed further below:

Corporate Parenting

Court Work (14): Poor communication or unhappy with contact arrangements; not being kept informed about child in foster care; feeling intimidated and put down by workers; requested to complete unachievable tasks in order to have children returned; delay in making CAMH referral and name change; IRO directions at Review not actioned; lack of duty and care towards child in placement; not informed of placement moves; quality of social work practice; lack of support with housing issues to allow adoption; attitude of social worker; lack of information about a child provided to prospective adopters, derogatory and unprofessional comments/conduct; delays in providing reports and information; social worker unwilling to work with prospective adopters social worker; video of prospective child left with adopters; agreed actions and recommendations not completed; carers not informed about information shared with child; untimely and poor response from manager.

13+ Transition & Asylum (8): Not keeping appointments; not returning calls; lack of help to find accommodation; placement too far away; failure to complete a viability assessment for family of young person's choice; financial allowances not provided; failure to involve young person in decisions around placement; insufficient support given to care leaver; lack of action from staff to reported concerns about placement; lack of basic living comforts provided for independent living; not provided with public funds due to not being English; refusal to provide food.

Adoption (4): Poor communication about adoption panel eligibility; allowing adoptive parents to amend letterbox contact; mistakes and inaccurate information provided to adoption panel; lack of support/information about child's medical history; assessment for adoption not completed;

Assessment

Child & Family Assessment was bias/findings and outcomes not discussed/poor quality/blaming/factually incorrect; not listened to/contains lies/was rushed/; tone of social

worker; poor/contradicting advice/explanation given; poor quality of investigation into abuse allegation; appointment cancelled and not rearranged; Child in Need meeting arranged at short notice/not focused on concerns/was rehearsed/minutes were not accurate/views were ignored/GP not invited; lack of support; lack of financial support provided to sister looking after sibling; unclear decision about why child was open to Children's Services; home visit undertaken following family bereavement; declined request for case to be reallocated to another social worker; not contacted in a timely manner after a police referral; complaints and evidence ignored; prejudice; poor response to calls/requests

Access Hub (3): Name incorrectly given as a referrer; lack of information provided to a school about a pupil; denied meeting to discuss referral letter content; false allegations included in referral letter.

Family Intervention Service (1): Inappropriate attitude/commend from staff member.

Family Support

Family Support East (10): Quality of parenting assessment/dismissive of children's feelings; attempts to restrict contact with child; parent not told child was being taken into care under section 20; false information shared with the community; lack of participation in Child in Need Meeting; hostile attitude of social worker; passing on concerns about one parent to another; delay in actioning remedy following a decision by the Local Government Ombudsman; not listened too; meeting minutes not provided; badly managed child minding agreement; phone calls terminated; unprofessional; lack of understanding; case information shared with relative; disclosure of work email address to ex partner; failure to keep children safe in care of father; misleading information presented; poor handling of allegations of abuse

Family Support South (5): social worker making threats; social worker only communicating with one parent; social worker refused to leave family home; poor communication; quality of assessment; quality of social worker's case handling; lack of support to looked after children without placement; residence of child;

Children with Disabilities

Social Work Team (3): bias towards mother; no risk assessment in making decisions at JAP; confirmation provided that family are living in the area;

Professional Standards

Conference & Review (4): Failure to place child in safe environment; conduct and actions of Fostering Review Officer; incorrect information used; excluded from meeting without good cause;

Child Poverty/Early Childhood Intervention & Prevention

Early Help, Access & Assessment Team (1): unprofessional/blaming/dismissive/judgemental staff; inappropriate sharing of information;

2.3 Complaint Escalations (Stages 2 & 3)

Where a complaint is not resolved locally at stage 1, the complainant has the right to request consideration of the complaint at stage 2. Consideration of complaints at stage 2

is normally achieved through an investigation conducted by an externally commissioned investigating officer and an independent person. Where stage 2 has been concluded and the complainant is still dissatisfied, the complainant can request further consideration of the complaint by a review panel at stage 3.

Whilst there are three stages to the complaints procedure nothing should preclude either the complainant or the local authority from suggesting Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). There are significant cost savings by remedying cases without the need for externally commissioned investigators and the local authority should therefore explore this option if it is agreed by both the complainant and the Customer Relations Manager. However entering into ADR should not restrict the complainant's right to escalate their complaint.

On conclusion of the local authority complaints process the complainant should be advised of their right to refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman.

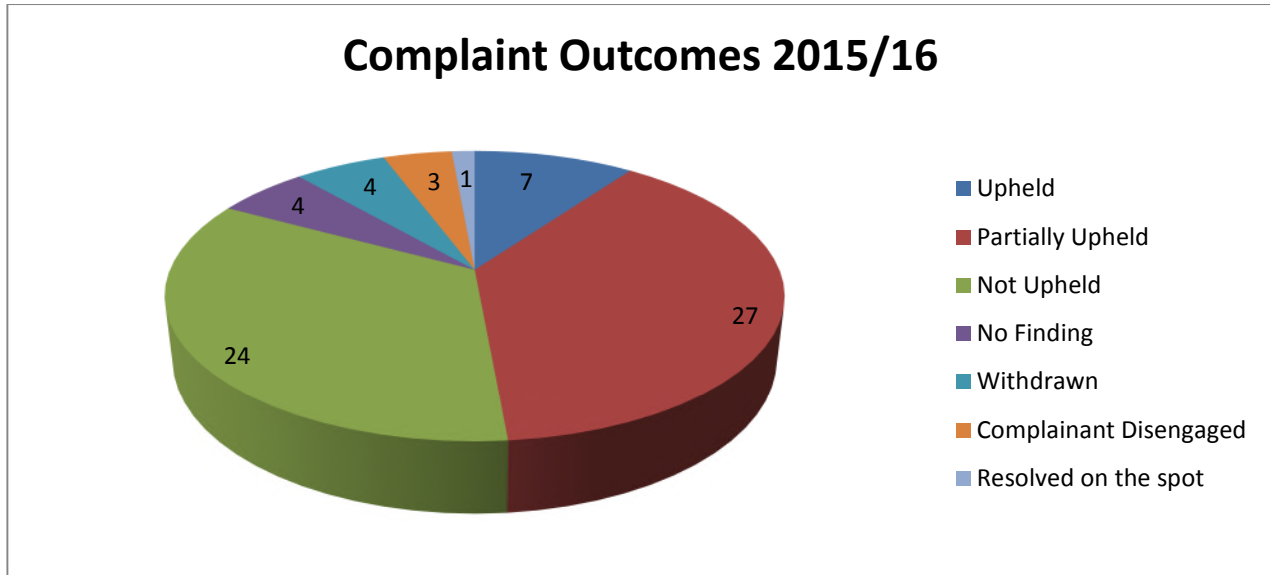
Of the 65 new complaints received in 2015/16, 10 complainants took up the offer of ADR which led to the cases being actioned without escalation to the next stage. The types of ADR offered ranged from conciliation meetings, Head of Service Review and additional responses to challenges and queries. The use of ADR helped the complainants to feel heard and helped to rebuild confidence and improve communications between the complainant and the service.

There was no stage 2 or stage 3 complaints in 2015/16.

3. Outcomes from Concluded Complaints

There were 70 complaints concluded in the period. Four cases were withdrawn; the complainant disengaged with the process in three cases and one case was resolved on the spot. The remaining 62 cases were concluded at stage 1.

The below chart indicates the outcomes from complaints at stage 1 in 2015/16:



The above chart shows that 55% of complaints were upheld either fully or partly at stage 1.

The below table indicates that the upheld rates were impacted predominantly by customer care/communication issues and unreasonable decisions:

Types of Complaint	% of Upheld or Partially Upheld
Poor Customer Care/Communication	16%
Unreasonable Decision	16%
Staff Conduct/Attitude	12%
Poor Quality Information	9%
Incorrect Action Taken	9%
Not Listened Too	9%
Service Delays	7%
Service Not Provided	7%
Report/File/-Accuracy/Integrity	7%
Other Quality Issue	5%
Quality of Care	2%

Complaints were seen by services as an important means of identifying areas for improvement. Remedies were put in place for individual complainants. Section 5 sets out wider actions and improvements resulting from complaints.

4. Performance in Complaint Handling

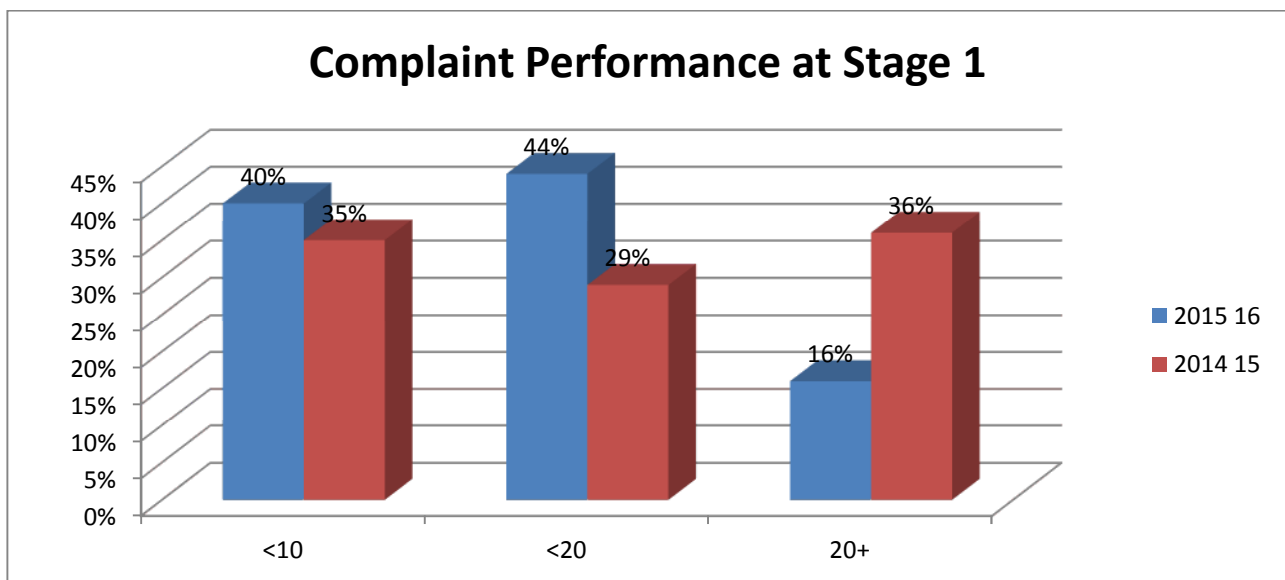
62 complaints were concluded at stage 1 in 2015/16; there were no escalated complaints at stage 2 or stage 3.

The complaints procedure allows for 10 working days for completion of a stage 1 complaint with a further 10 working days for more complex complaints or additional time if an advocate is required.

Of those 62 complaints concluded at stage 1:

- 25 were completed within 10 working days
- 27 were completed within 20 working days
- 10 exceeded 20 working days.

The below chart indicates the performance in handling complaints at stage 1 received over the year in comparison to complaints received in the previous year.



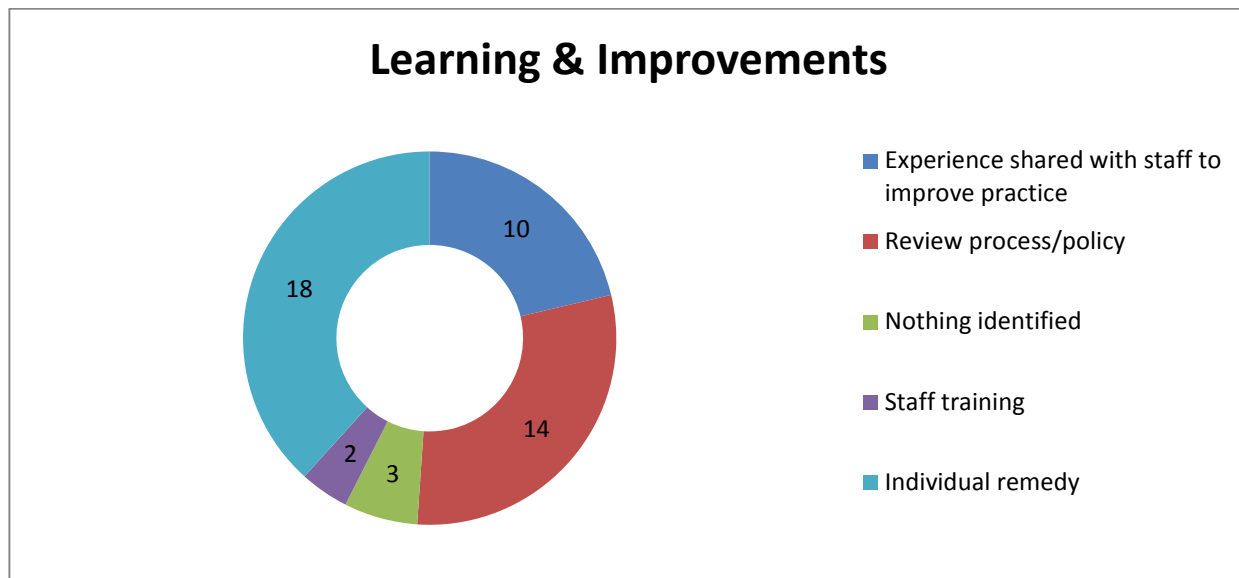
The below table indicates the reasons why complaints took more than the standard 10 working days to conclude:

Performance Delay Reasons	<20	20+
Service Delay	16	1
Extension agreed	10	2
Detailed or Historical	1	3
Eligibility Query		2
Availability of Key Personnel		1
Complainant's Delay		1

5. Learning and Improvements from Complaints

Where complaints are upheld either fully or partly complainants will receive an apology. However service areas are also expected to put in place a remedy which may be for the individual complainant or undertake wider learning across the service to ensure mistakes are not repeated.

The below chart shows the types of learning identified from complaints in 2015/16, in addition to an apology.



The above chart shows that the majority of improvements identified resulted in individual remedies for complainants. This was followed closely by reviews of current processes.

Key improvements to Council services included:

- Reasons why a case cannot be allocated to another social worker are to be confirmed in writing to ensure clarity.
- The Customer Relations Team has briefed staff on the principles of the persistent communicators' guidance in order to improve the handling of difficult communications, prevent escalation of behaviours and to support effective communications.
- A reconfiguration of FAST has been undertaken. Roles and responsibilities of FAST workers have been set out and a new manager put in place to ensure implementation. Agreement is for staff to ensure they record actions and decisions and to adhere to FAST plans in relation to intervention.
- An enhanced auditing of recording and evaluation in relation to Child in Need Plans has been undertaken.
- Recording Policy has been revised and improved to ensure more consistency.
- Foster Carer Reviews are dip sampled to review the quality of minutes.
- A tracking form has been developed to establish when review are completed and minutes are distributed to ensure standards are being met.

- Any agreed plans for payment arrangements and any changes are to be out in writing.
- A review of how post adoption contact and support is managed due to the loss of a Post Adoption Contact Co-ordinator.
- Joint Allocation Panel processes reviewed with health partners.
- Support offered to families is to be clearly written in terms of what services are being provided, by who, when, how and who is the point of contact if there are any concerns.
- A review with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) has been undertaken in relation to the inconsistency of information on the internet setting out the LSCB complaints procedure and local practice not referring customers to the process. Working Together 2015 removed the requirement for the complaints process about child protection conferences however the web still referred to the process which is still being utilised.
- Head of Service for Access and Assessment introduced an expectation for meeting minutes to be sent out within a week where possible but making 2 weeks the maximum timescale.
- Head of Service for Access and Assessment met with Legal colleagues to discuss a policy for voice recordings during meetings.

6. Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) Complaints

6.1 Complaints Received and Decision Notices

The LGO annual statistics show that they received 19,702 complaints and enquiries about local authorities in 2015/16. In comparison the LGO considered seven complaints about Central Bedfordshire Council's Children's Social Care Services during this period.

The table below sets out the complaints received and any Ombudsman decisions reached:

Complaint	Ombudsman Decision
The complainant says he was excluded from attending two core group meetings regarding his children; was not told in advance that he has to have separate core group meetings from his ex-partner; is not satisfied with the response provided by the Council	The Ombudsman will not investigate this complaint about the complainant's attendance at core group meetings for his children. This is because she could not add anything of significant to the Council's investigation or achieve any further worthwhile outcome.
The complainant says the Council place her with a foster carer whom it know had abused other and that she suffered abuse at his hands	The Council's decision to place the complainant in foster care in 2000 when she was a child is outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction because a court decided where she should live. There is no evidence on the files from the period 2000 to 2004 when she was in foster care that suggests the Council failed to consider safeguarding risks.
The complainant says the Council has failed to follow a Court judgement to take steps to reunite his family and to provide him with therapy. He also says the Council failed to support the family and should not have issued Court proceedings	The Ombudsman will not investigate this complaint about the Council's Children Services Tam failing to work with his family. It is unlikely she would find fault in the Council's approach as the children and mother live abroad.
Complaint about the Council's involvement with the complainant's two children who live with his former partner. The complainant says the Council has not investigated complaints he has made about his former partner but the Council has accepted complaints she has made about him.	<i>Pending Ombudsman Decision at 31.03.16</i>
Injustice caused by the Council's accepted errors in providing suitable services to the complainant and her child.	<i>Pending Ombudsman Decision at 31.03.16</i>
The complainant says that Children's Services has failed to provide services to her as a childminder and to a young person. She says this has caused her to loose money.	The Ombudsman will not investigate the complaint because it is unlikely she would find the complainant has any outstanding significant injustice caused directly because of the Council's faults and it is unlikely she could add to the Council's response
The complainant is unhappy with the way	The Ombudsman will not investigate the

the Council's Children's Services Team has dealt with him. He says he was asked to leave a child protection conference and he did not like the way the Chair treated him. He says it is not fair that his grandchildren cannot have contact with him at his home.

complaint as it is unlikely she could add to the Council's reply. She could not alter the contact arrangements and is unlikely to criticise the Chair's decision not to allow him to attend the child protection conference.

One LGO case reported in the previous year (2014/15) received a decision notice in this period.

- The complaint related to poor communication regarding social work interventions and failing to clarify the complaints procedure. The Council, based on findings and recommendations of an independent investigation, identified the fault involved in this complaint and for the most part appropriately remedied the fault. To fully remedy the fault the Ombudsman recommended the Council pay the complainant £900 for avoidable distress.

6.2 Improvements from LGO Complaints

Key improvements for services following the complaint upheld by the LGO are as follows:

- If a meeting has to be cancelled social workers need to inform parents and/or professionals as a matter of priority, by phone. A letter should also be sent apologising for the cancellations, outline the reasons for this and confirm an alternative date to meet.
- Where a joint piece of work is being undertaken parents should be advised of the role of each professional. A letter confirming the purpose of the work, how it is to be undertaken and the roles of each professional involved should be sent to the parents and recorded in the case file.
- When cases are temporarily transferred to alternative social workers the line manager should ensure the newly allocated social worker reads the case file to understand the child's background and current issues. The manager should inform the child and/or the parents of the change of social worker, the reason for the change and the timescale.

7. Equality and Diversity Monitoring

The purpose of capturing equalities data is to monitor access to the complaints procedure; to ensure services are appropriate for all service user groups; and to check whether any issues relating to discrimination have been raised. Data relates to the service user affected by the complaint or a person who has been affected by the actions taken by the service. Generally we record the child as the service user however where a complaint is made by an adult (usually a parent/carer) about their own experience of intervention the adult's data is captured as the service user.

Whilst information is not always provided by a complainant the system used for complaints has the facility to capture the service user's gender, ethnicity, age group and whether the service user describes themselves as having a disability or not. Further work is required to ensure the system is meeting the current needs of equality and diversity monitoring and linking in with information that may already be held in this respect about our service users. If we are able to improve this area it will enable us to undertake further analysis in relation to complaint trends and accessibility.

7.1 Accessibility to Complaints

By having a range of contact options for complainants to make their complaints the Council aims to meet the needs of its service users in accessing the complaints procedure. People can make complaints in person; face to face; or via telephone (including a direct line to Customer Relations); in writing; via email; letter; or complaint form (a complaint form specifically designed for young people is available). Complaints can be made by a representative of the service user or an advocate.

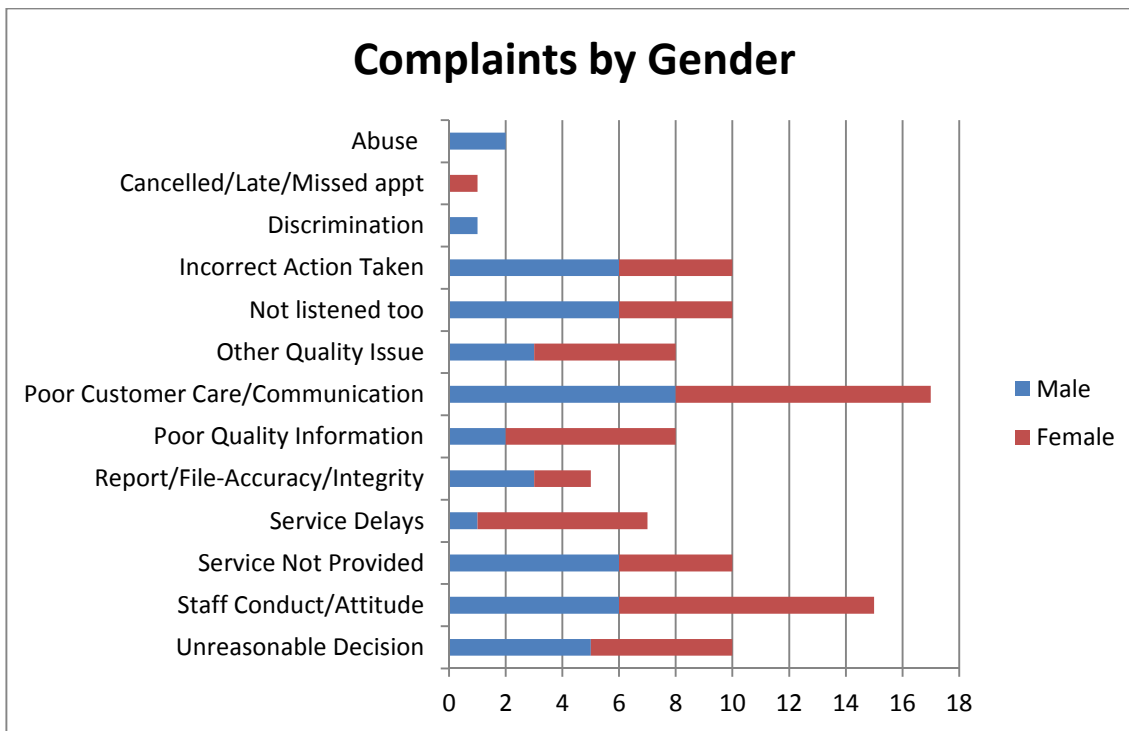
The 65 new complaints received in 2015/16 were by the following methods:

Email	Telephone	Letter	Complaint form
41 (63%)	13 (20%)	7 (11%)	4 (6%)

7.2 Social Care Complaints – Gender

In 2015/16 there were 3388 child records loaded by Children's Social Care Services. Of those records 51% were male, 47% were female and 2% were unborn/unknown. There were 65 new complaints received in 2015 16. 51% of complaints recorded the service user as male and 49% recorded the service user as female.

The below chart shows that the top area of complaint for both gender groups was poor customer care/communication and staff conduct/attitude. For female service users the other main areas for complaint were around quality of information. For male service users it was services not being provided; not being listened too and incorrect action being taken.



7.3 Social Care Complaints – Ethnicity

The last census on population by ethnic origin (2011) showed that 89.7% of the population in Central Bedfordshire were 'White British' and 10.3% were classified as 'Other'.

Of the 3388 child records loaded by Children's Social Care Services in 2015/16, 80% of service users were described as being of white ethnicity.

In 40% of new complaints received in 2015 16 the ethnicity of the service user was recorded as unknown. Where information was recorded 49% of service users were recorded as 'White British'. The remaining 11% were recorded as representing those service users with 'Black Ethnicity', 'Asian Ethnicity', 'Mixed Ethnicity' and 'Other'.

The issues affecting service users with a minority ethnic background were wide ranging and were also raised by those with a 'White British' background with no difference in themes.

7.4 Social Care Complaints – Disability

Of the 3388 child records loaded by Children's Social Care Services in 2015/16, 9% of service users were described as having one or more disability.

A significant proportion of complaints (97%) were recorded as 'unknown' or 'no' in relation to disability of the service user. Where data was captured 1.5% of service users were described as having a physical disability and 1.5% was described as having a learning disability.

There were three complaints related to the Children with Disabilities service. Two of those complaints had similarities to complaints where they were not related to children who had a disability. Similarities were social worker approach to separated parents (bias) and

incorrectly sharing information. The remaining complaint was specific to the Children with Disabilities Service and related to resource decision making.

7.5 Social Care Complaints – Age

Of the 65 new complaints received in 2015 16;

- 42 affected people under the age of 18
- 16 affected people 19-64
- 7 cases age was unknown

The majority of complaints affecting children and young people were made by adults however 14 young people pursued their own complaints.

During the course of a child or young person making a complaint, the local authority should support them by actively providing information and advice. The child or young person is entitled to advocacy support that is independent and confidential. Children's Social Care Services have a Service Level Agreement in place with the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) who provide advocacy support for Central Bedfordshire Council.

Of the 14 complaints made directly by children and young people, 12 chose to be supported by the advocacy service provided by NYAS.

8. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

8.1 Effectiveness of Complaints Handling

Service users, their representatives and people affected by the actions of Children's Social Care services can access the Council's complaints procedure and the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Customer Relations Team monitors the operation and effectiveness of the complaints procedure as well as how information about complaints is being used to improve services and delivery.

Stage 1 of the complaints procedure has generally been an effective means of dealing with complaints during 2015/16 with there being no escalations to stage 2 or stage 3.

Seven complaints were under consideration by the Local Government Ombudsman this year. The Ombudsman decided not to investigate in four of those cases as it was satisfied that the local authority had addressed those complaints appropriately. The remaining three cases progressed to investigation by the Ombudsman. In one case the Ombudsman found no fault with the actions of the local authority and the remaining two cases were pending a decision at the end of the period.

Complaints were seen as important feedback and a means of identifying how practices may be changed for the better. The customer experience in complaints has led to some improvements to practice. Last year we reported that there was room for improvement in understanding the root cause for complaints at a local level to fully identify learning opportunities. Customer Relations continues to support services to improve in this area.

8.2 Financial Implications

There are a number of ways in which the local authority can incur costs as part of the statutory complaints process for Children's Social Care Services.

Stage 2 is normally achieved through an investigation conducted by an investigating officer and an independent person. The investigating officer may be employed by the local authority or be externally commissioned. The investigating officer however cannot be in direct line management of the service complained about. Due to the nature of the complaints that tend to escalate to stage 2 the usual practice is to externally commission an investigating officer specifically for that piece of work. The independent person however must not be an employee of the local authority and is therefore externally commissioned.

Stage 3 requires the local authority to arrange a panel hearing which must consist of three independent people, which means they cannot be employees of the local authority. This requires the panel members to be externally commissioned.

In addition there may be rare occasions where financial redress is offered through the complaints procedure. This can be through local settlement following investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman but can also be recommended during the local authority three stage process.

Any financial costs incurred are the responsibility of Children’s Social Care Services. In order to assist in minimising the risk of costs the Customer Relations Team is actively involved in quality assuring stage 1 responses to reduce escalation, proactive in offering alternative dispute resolution where appropriate and consistent in assessing whether complainants are eligible to use the statutory complaints procedure.

The below table details the total costs incurred during 2015 16:

Reasons for Cost	2015 16 Spend
Stage 2	£0.00
Stage 3	£0.00
Financial Redress	£900 (LGO recommendation)

9. Customer Relations Team – Supporting Children’s Social Care

The Customer Relations Team supports Children’s Social Care Services by:

- ✓ Providing guidance, advice and support to staff on the management of complaints
- ✓ Supporting staff involved in all stages of the complaints procedure
- ✓ Quality assurance of complaint responses
- ✓ Managing challenges to complaint handling and responses
- ✓ Liaison with the Local Government Ombudsman
- ✓ Overseeing the arrangements for communicating and publicising the complaints procedure
- ✓ Evaluating and reporting on the numbers, types, outcomes and trends of complaints to inform practice, development and service planning
- ✓ Providing a means to capture the learning from complaints to contribute to practice development, commissioning and service planning

During 2016/17 the Customer Relations Team will focus on a number of initiatives:

- Continue to ensure the complaints procedure is accessible, particularly to young people
- Promote the Customer Relations root-cause analysis tool to help managers with identifying systemic improvements
- Promote the Customer Relations toolkit for handling persistent customers consistently and fairly
- Continue to ensure complaints are handled responsively promoting alternative dispute resolution where appropriate
- Work collaboratively with colleagues to achieve a reduction in levels of complaints upheld
- Maintain the low levels of complaint investigations by the Local Government Ombudsman and where the LGO finds fault
- Improve capture of equality and diversity information



A great place to live and work

Contact us...

by telephone: 0300 300 4995

by email: Customer.Relations@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

on the web: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Write to Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House,
Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

This page is intentionally left blank

Central Bedfordshire Council

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny 17 January 2017

Quarter 2 (July – September) 2016 / 17 Performance Report

Report of Councillor Carole Hegley Lead Member for Children's Services

Advising Officers:

Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services
sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Karen Oellermann, Assistant Director, Commissioning and Partnerships
karen.oellermann@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Purpose of this report: The report highlights Quarter Two 2016/17 performance for the Children's Services Directorate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

1. Consider and comment on Quarter Two performance.

1. In 2015, the Council updated its plans for delivering its ambitions. This culminated in the new Five Year Plan 2015-20 being adopted by Council in November 2015 based on 6 key priorities:
 - Enhancing Central Bedfordshire
 - Delivering great resident services
 - Improving education and skills
 - Protecting the vulnerable: improving well-being
 - A more efficient and responsive Council
 - Creating stronger communities.
2. This report represents the second view of Children's Services performance indicators which support delivery of two of these priorities: 'Improving education and skills' and 'protecting the vulnerable: improving well-being'. As this is a new set of measures, over time comparator data will be made available in order that Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee can monitor progress.
3. The Committee may already be familiar with some of the data (e.g. attainment results) given the timing of publications.

Quarter 2 Performance Summary

Improving Education and Skills				
Indicator	Frequency /Date	Latest Data	Direction of travel	Current Status
School readiness: % of children achieving a good level of development at the Early Years Foundation Stage	Annual 2016	68%	↑	▲
Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths - ranking	Annual 2015	57 / 151 local authorities	↑	▲
% of schools rated good or outstanding	Quarterly (Q2)	89%	↑	●
% of young people aged 16-18 in education, employment or training (EET)	Annual 2015/16	90.4%	↑	N/A

4. The 2016 results for Central Bedfordshire show that 68% of children were classed as having a 'Good Level of Development'. This is a 5% improvement from 2015 but Central Bedfordshire remains below the National (69%) and Statistical Neighbour (72%) averages. Positive action is being taken to ensure that children in Central Bedfordshire are school ready.
5. The provisional 2016 results show that 57.3% of Central Bedfordshire young people achieved 5 or more A* - C grades or equivalent including English and Maths. This is a 1% reduction from 2015. Central Bedfordshire remains 1.7% below the statistical neighbour average (59%) but above the national average (52.8%). The Council is 69/150 local authority areas nationally compared to a ranking of 57/151 last year. The Council remains in the 2nd quartile nationally. The above table references the final 2015 results (Central Bedfordshire's ranking against other local authorities). Final 2016 results are not yet published. Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a detailed report and analysis of school results in March 2017 for review.
6. 89% of schools are good or outstanding which is good performance. This is an increase from 85% in Quarter 1 2016/17 but it should be

noted that 4 schools have closed during the Quarter which has had an impact on the Quarter 2 figure.

7. The percentage of young people aged 16-18 who are in education or employment or training (EET) in 2015/16 in Central Bedfordshire improved to 90.4%, from 88.5% in 2014/15. This has previously been reported.

Protecting the vulnerable: Improving well-being				
Indicator	Frequency / Date	Latest Data	Direction of Travel	Current Status
Children's Safeguarding – Referrals as a percentage of the child population	Quarterly (Q2)	1.6%	↑	N/A
Percentage of referrals leading to the provision of a social care service	Quarterly (Q2)	90.2%	↓	★
Looked After Children School Attendance (when entering care and registered at school)	Annual Jul 16	92.7%	N/A	N/A
Percentage of care leavers age 17-21 engaged in education, training or employment	Quarterly (Q2)	70.7%	↑	★

8. The referrals as a % of the child population and % of referrals leading to the provision of a social care service are in line with expectations based on previous activity. These measures give the Council an indication of the volume of referrals to social services that come from partners and the public.
9. Looked After Children (LAC) school attendance is 92.7% as at the end of July 2016. A new methodology has been developed to provide this information therefore any comparisons to historic measures would not be accurate.
10. Attendance in 2015/16 from Reception to Year 9 (age 5-14) is as good and in some year groups better than children who are not looked after. The area for improvement remains with children in Years 10 and 11.
11. Attendance can be low where pupils have moved placement or have spent some time waiting for a school place in other authorities, or where they have had periods on part-time timetables. All pupils where attendance has been identified as a concern are being closely

monitored by both the Council's Virtual School and Social Care staff. The Council's Virtual School is working with young people to re-engage them in learning.

12. The % of care leavers engaged in Education, Employment or Training has continued to improve (from 50% in June 2015) to 70.7% in September 2016. This performance remains in the top quartile nationally. This shows that the Council is supporting vulnerable young people to continue to gain new skills and qualifications and long term employment as they become young adults.

Council Priorities

13. The quarterly performance report ensures that progress on the delivery of the relevant Council's priorities is monitored.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

14. This report considers a number of performance indicators against those of previous years as such there are no specific legal implications in respect of this report.

Financial Implications

15. There are a number of performance indicators within the full corporate suite that have a financial link.
16. It will be important to consider any financial implications in addressing ongoing areas of under performance.

Risk Management

17. Areas of ongoing under performance are a risk to both service delivery and the reputation of the Council. Regular quarterly monitoring of performance supports effective risk management.

Staffing (including Trades Unions)

18. Not applicable.

Equalities Implications

19. This report highlights performance against a range of indicators which seek to measure how services impact across all communities in Central Bedfordshire, so that specific areas of underperformance can be highlighted for further analysis.
20. As such it does not include detailed performance information relating to the Council's stated intention to tackle inequalities and deliver services so that people whose circumstances make them vulnerable are not disadvantaged. The interrogation of performance data across vulnerable groups is a legal requirement and is an integral part of the Council's equalities and performance culture which seeks to ensure that, through a programme of ongoing impact assessments, underlying patterns and trends for different sections of the community identify areas where further action is required to improve outcomes for vulnerable groups.
21. The Performance Team within Children's Services carries out analysis to support the Council and its partners in understanding need and improving educational and social care outcomes for vulnerable children.

Public Health

22. The report includes performance against measures which contribute to Council priorities including the following:
 - Protecting the vulnerable: improving well-being.

Community Safety

23. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that across all of its functions it does all that it reasonably can to reduce crime and disorder. The use of this performance data by Children's Services enables the monitoring of indicators that may indicate community safety concerns for children and young people that the Council needs to address.

Sustainability

24. Not applicable.

Procurement

25. Not applicable.

Appendices

26. None.

This page is intentionally left blank

Central Bedfordshire Council

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 January 2017

Work Programme & Executive Forward Plan

Advising Officer: Rebecca Preen, Scrutiny Policy Adviser
rebecca.preen@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Purpose of this report

The report provides Members with details of the currently drafted Committee work programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

1. Consider and approve the work programme attached, subject to any further amendments it may wish to make; and
2. Consider the Executive Forward Plan; and
3. Consider whether it wishes to suggest any further items for the work programme and/or establish any enquiries to assist it in reviewing specific items.

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

1. Throughout June and July 2016 residents were encouraged to propose items to be considered by the Council's overview and scrutiny committees.
2. In addition a workshop took place in June 2016 at which Members and partners were invited to propose additional items and to indicate the priorities that they would like to consider throughout 2016/17.
3. Throughout this process Members have been encouraged to adopt several key principles relating to ways of working that were previously agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Panel, namely:-
 - Minimising duplication
 - Focusing on requested items
 - Focusing on outcomes and the 5-year plan
4. A long-list of items was presented to the OSC at their previous meeting where Members agreed those items they would like to be added to

further meetings and in some cases the issues that they would like to consider under each item (detailed in the Minutes of previous meeting). Several items will be the subject of briefing sessions for Members but others will be for the Committee to determine which they like to receive as a priority.

5. This work programme aims to provide a balance of those items on which the Executive would be grateful for a steer in addition to those items that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) has proactively requested to receive.
6. The Committee is requested to consider the work programme and the indicated outcomes at **appendix A** and to amend or add to it as necessary.

Overview and Scrutiny Task Forces

7. In addition to consideration of the work programme, Members may also wish to consider how each item will be reviewed, i.e. by the Committee itself (over one or a number of Committee meetings) or by establishing a Member Task Force to review an item in greater depth and report back its findings.

Executive Forward Plan

8. Listed below are those items relating specifically to this Committee's terms of reference contained in the latest version of the Executive Forward Plan that are not presently included in the Committee's work programme. The full Executive Forward Plan can be viewed on the Council's website at the link at the end of this report:-

Item	Indicative Exec Meeting date
Refresh of the Partnership Vision for Education	7 February 2017
Proposal to Change of Age Range for Shillington Lower School	7 February 2017
Prescribed Alteration to Robert Peel, St Swithuns VC and John Donne CofE Lower Schools	7 February 2017
Determination of the Council's Admission Arrangements for the Academic Year 2018/19	7 February 2017
Contract Standing Order - Waiver for Children's & Young People's Drug and Alcohol Contract	7 February 2017
Proposal to Change the Age Range of Everton Lower School	21 March 2017
Proposal to Change the Age Range of Everton Lower School	4 April 2017
Commissioning of New School Places in Barton-le-Clay and Marston Moretaine for September 2018 (Outcome of Consultation)	4 April 2017

Prescribed Alteration to Robert Peel, St Swithuns VC and John Donne CofE Lower Schools	4 April 2017
Proposed Change of Age Range for Shillington Lower School	4 April 2017
Commissioning of New School Places in Cranfield for September 2018 -	4 April 2017
Children's Services Transformation Programme	4 April 2017
Commissioning of New Middle School Places in Cranfield by September 2018	6 June 2017
Non Key Decisions	Indicative Exec Meeting date

Corporate Implications

9. The work programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will contribute indirectly to all 5 Council priorities. Whilst there are no direct implications arising from this report the implications of proposals will be details in full in each report submitted to the Committee.

Conclusion and next Steps

10. Members are requested to consider and agree the attached work programme, subject to any further amendment/additions they may wish to make and highlight those items within it where they may wish to establish a Task Force to assist the Committee in its work. This will allow officers to plan accordingly but will not preclude further items being added during the course of the year if Members so wish and capacity exists.

Appendices

Appendix A: OSC work programme

Background Papers

Executive Forward Plan (can be viewed at any time on the Council's website) at the following link:-

<http://centralbeds.moderngov.co.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=577&RD=0>

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 1

Children's Services OSC Work Programme (2016/17)

Meeting date	Report Title	Outcomes we are seeking to achieve
14 March 2017	Validated exam result	To receive information relating to validated exam results including maintained schools and academies.
14 March 2017	Progress and Attainment 8	To understand how the Council assesses school performance including how to translate changes to the exam structure, comparing the old system to the new method.
14 March 2017	Children's services transformation programme	To assess the direction of travel of the Children's Services Transformation Programme as requested at a previous meeting, providing comments for the Executive.
14 March 2017	Review of Children's Disability Provision	To review the proposals outlined in the Children's Disability Service Provision and provide recommendation to the Executive.
14 March 2017	National Working Group Child Sexual Exploitation Health Check Review	To receive information relating to the National Working Group CSE Health Check Review.
23 May 2017	Performance and Budget reports	To receive a presentation on the relevant quarterly performance and budget information.
23 May 2017	ELFT and improved mental health services for children	Progress on performance and consistent referral experience.
23 May 2017	Community, speech and language and education psychology provision	To receive a report on the direction of travel for these provisions.
23 May 2017	Information, advice and guidance (careers service)	To assess service delivery and the impact of the careers service for young people.
July 2017	Homes for Key workers (teachers)	To assess how amending Council policies and priorities in relation to homes for key workers affects children and young people.

This page is intentionally left blank