

**Proposal to extend the age range of Thomas Whitehead Voluntary Aided Church of England Lower School from 3 to 9 years to 3 - 11 years to create a primary school.**

Notice is given in accordance with section 19(3) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that The Governing Body of Thomas Whitehead Voluntary Aided Church of England Lower School intends to make a prescribed alteration to Thomas Whitehead Voluntary Aided Church of England Lower School, Angels Lane, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5HH from 1 September 2013.

The proposal is to change the age range of Thomas Whitehead Voluntary Aided Church of England Lower School by extending it from a 3 - 9 years lower school to a 3 - 11 years primary school.

This is to be implemented in two stages:

September 2013 - Year 4 children will be retained at the school and become a new year 5.

September 2014 - Year 5 children will be retained at the school and become a new year 6.

The current capacity of the school is 220 with 44 part time nursery places and when the proposals are implemented the proposed capacity will be 308 with 44 part time nursery places.

The current admission number for the school is 44 for each year group with 44 part time nursery places. The proposed admission number will remain the same. Total capacity for September 2013 is expected to be 264 with 44 part time places. Total capacity for 2014 is expected to be 308 with 44 part time nursery places.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: The Information Manager, Central Bedfordshire Council, Room DC2, Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable, Beds, LU6 1LF. It can also be viewed on the Council's website at <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations>

Within six weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services, Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire, SG17 5TQ.

Signed: Mr David Clark  
Chairman of the Governors  
Thomas Whitehead Voluntary Aided Church of England Lower School

Publication Date: 20<sup>th</sup> February 2012

**Explanatory notes**

It is proposed that extending the age range of Thomas Whitehead VA Church of England Lower School from 3 to 9 years to 3 - 11 years to create a primary school will provide improved standards in years 5 and 6 and at the end of Key Stage 2. National data shows that changing school may impact negatively on pupils' progress and results in a lack of curriculum understanding, continuity and assessment agreement. This proposal will remove the transition at the end of year 4.

The school can accommodate the additional year groups in 2013, without the need for additional accommodation. However, there will be a need for additional classroom space in 2014, for which governors will make application for capital funding.

# PROPOSALS FOR PRESCRIBED ALTERATIONS OTHER THAN FOUNDATION PROPOSALS: Information to be included in a complete proposal

## Extract of Part 1 of Schedule 3 and Part 1 of Schedule 5 to The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 (as amended):

### In respect of a Governing Body Proposal: School and governing body's details

1. The name, address and category of the school for which the governing body are publishing the proposals.

Thomas Whitehead Voluntary Aided Church of England School, Angels Lane, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire LU5 5HH

### In respect of an LEA Proposal: School and local education authority details

1. The name, address and category of the school .

N/A

### Implementation and any proposed stages for implementation

2. The date on which the proposals are planned to be implemented, and if they are to be implemented in stages, a description of what is planned for each stage, and the number of stages intended and the dates of each stage.

- Implementation to take place in September 2013
- Two stages of implementation
- September 2013 – Year 4 children to remain in current setting and move in to Year 5
- September 2014 – Year 5 children to remain in current setting and move in to Year 6

We have no plans to reintegrate pupils who are already at other local middle schools but will take children who have moved to the area from another school or who do not have a school provision, providing we do not exceed our admission number.

### Objections and comments

3. A statement explaining the procedure for making representations, including —
  - (a) the date prescribed in accordance with paragraph 29 of Schedule 3 (GB proposals)/Schedule 5 (LA proposals) of The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended), by which objections or comments should be sent to the local education authority; and
  - (b) the address of the authority to which objections or comments should be sent.

The Governing Body, Thomas Whitehead Voluntary Aided Church of England Lower

School, Angels Lane, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire LU5 5HH

### Alteration description

4. A description of the proposed alteration and in the case of special school proposals, a description of the current special needs provision.

The age range would be extended to age 11 – Year 6  
Lower schools would become primary schools 3- 11 years

### School capacity

5.—(1) Where the alteration is an alteration falling within any of paragraphs 1 to 4, 8, 9 and 12-14 of Schedule 2 (GB proposals)/paragraphs 1-4, 7, 8, 18, 19 and 21 of Schedule 4 (LA proposals) to The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended), the proposals must also include —

(a) details of the current capacity of the school and, where the proposals will alter the capacity of the school, the proposed capacity of the school after the alteration;

- The current capacity of the school is 44 per year group, the capacity number on roll is 264 including nursery, 220 excluding nursery.
- The proposed capacity after the alteration will remain at 44 per year group but there will be 8 year groups including nursery making our roll number 352, and 308 excluding nursery.

(b) details of the current number of pupils admitted to the school in each relevant age group, and where this number is to change, the proposed number of pupils to be admitted in each relevant age group in the first school year in which the proposals will have been implemented;

- The current capacity of the school to remain at 44 per year group.

(c) where it is intended that proposals should be implemented in stages, the number of pupils to be admitted to the school in the first school year in which each stage will have been implemented;

- The first stage of the proposal will mean we will have 264 on roll excluding nursery (308 including nursery). We will then have N-Yr 5, 3yrs to 10 yrs.
- The second stage of the proposal will mean that the number on roll will be 308 excluding nursery (352 including nursery). We will then have n-Yr6, 3yrs to 11yrs.

In the first year of the alteration we will not need a new class as the school will be able to accommodate this year group. However, two new classes would need to be acquired and

further expenditure will need to be made. The approximate cost (and this is approximate) would be around £300,000. I will be sending a copy of this proposal to the Diocese to see if we are able to gain any support from them if there were monies available.

- (d) where the number of pupils in any relevant age group is lower than the indicated admission number for that relevant age group a statement to this effect and details of the indicated admission number in question.

Maximum projected number on roll

	Sept 2013	Sept 2014	Sept 2015	Sept 2016	Sept 2017*	Sept 2018*	Sept 2019*
N	44	44	44	44	44	44	44
YR	44	44	44	44	44	44	44
Y1	41	44	44	44	44	44	44
Y2	44	41	44	44	44	44	44
Y3	36	44	41	44	44	44	44
Y4	44	36	44	41	44	44	44
Y5	34	44	36	44	41	44	44
Y6	40	34	44	36	44	41	44
Total - N	327	331	341	341	349	349	352

(2) Where the alteration is an alteration falling within any of paragraphs 1, 2, 9, 12 and 13 of Schedule 2 (GB proposals) / paragraphs 1, 2, 8, 18 and 19 of Schedule 4 (LA proposals) to The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended), a statement of the number of pupils at the school at the time of the publication of the proposals.

There are currently 236 pupils plus 42 nursery pupils at the school at the time of the publication of the proposal.

## Implementation

6. Where the proposals relate to a foundation or voluntary controlled school a statement as to whether the proposals are to be implemented by the local education authority or by the governing body, and, if the proposals are to be implemented by both, a statement as to the extent to which they are to be implemented by each body.

The proposal is to be implemented by the Governing Body. The Governing Body's resolution to serve Statutory Notice has been agreed and minuted on Wednesday 8 February.

**Additional Site**

7.—(1) A statement as to whether any new or additional site will be required if proposals are implemented and if so the location of the site if the school is to occupy a split site.

N/A

(2) Where proposals relate to a foundation or voluntary school a statement as to who will provide any additional site required, together with details of the tenure (freehold or leasehold) on which the site of the school will be held, and if the site is to be held on a lease, details of the proposed lease.

N/A

**Changes in boarding arrangements**

8.—(1) Where the proposals are for the introduction or removal of boarding provision, or the alteration of existing boarding provision such as is mentioned in paragraph 8 or 21 of Schedule 2 (GB proposals)/7 or 14 of Schedule 4 to The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) —

- (a) the number of pupils for whom it is intended that boarding provision will be made if the proposals are approved;

N/A

- (b) the arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of children at the school;

N/A

- (c) the current number of pupils for whom boarding provision can be made and a description of the boarding provision; and

N/A

- (d) except where the proposals are to introduce boarding provision, a description of the existing boarding provision.

N/A

(2) Where the proposals are for the removal of boarding provisions or an alteration to reduce boarding provision such as is mentioned in paragraph 8 or 21 of Schedule 2 (GB proposals)/7 or 14 of Schedule 4 (LA proposals) to The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) —

(a) the number of pupils for whom boarding provision will be removed if the proposals are approved; and

N/A

(b) a statement as to the use to which the former boarding accommodation will be put if the proposals are approved.

N/a

**Transfer to new site**

9. Where the proposals are to transfer a school to a new site the following information—

(a) the location of the proposed site (including details of whether the school is to occupy a single or split site), and including where appropriate the postal address;

N/A

(b) the distance between the proposed and current site;

N/A

(c) the reason for the choice of proposed site;

N/A

(d) the accessibility of the proposed site or sites;

N/A

(e) the proposed arrangements for transport of pupils to the school on its new site; and

N/A

(f) a statement about other sustainable transport alternatives where pupils are not using transport provided, and how car use in the school area will be discouraged.

N/A

## Objectives

### 10. The objectives of the proposals.

As a group of school leaders we have a shared ambitious vision for our schools and the community that has driven this proposal forward.

#### **Principles**

*The need to raise standards and improve outcomes for young people*

- Local data shows that children achieve well in lower schools from a starting point which is well below national levels
- Local data indicates that standards achieved and progress made at the end of year 4 are good but this progress has been impeded due to transition, this is reflected in standards at the end of Key Stage 2 (refer to LA and National data)
- At 16 and 18 pupils are not achieving as well as they should when compared Nationally. While attainment improves by Yr 8, progress is again disrupted by transition in the middle of the Key Stage. This is reflected in depressed outcomes achieved by young people at 16 and beyond. (National data reflects this)
- The demography of Houghton Regis is deteriorating and more children and families are falling into the Acorn category of 'Hard Pressed' which means that increasingly parents and children require more support and nurture.
- As a result of being "Hard Pressed" more children are behind in their PSE development at age 9. This is evidenced by the very low PSED scores recorded on entry to the Foundation Stage. They remain immature and emotionally behind and for a large majority, the transition at age 9 is too challenging. They are ill-equipped to move to a larger setting based on a secondary model of teaching and learning.
- Increasingly, as professionals, we believe our children would benefit from the stability of a primary school environment, its organisation and its ethos.
- We believe that primary schools will also improve behaviour, supporting pupils for whom coping in years 5 and 6 with the changes associated with transition, may put them at risk of exclusion.

*To ensure there is continuity of provision across the 0-19 age range so there is a 'one phase' approach to learning*

- The need for transition between each tier, particularly in the middle of Key Stages, often results in lack of curriculum understanding, continuity, assessment agreement and ownership of key stages

- Continuity of provision will ensure opportunities to share expertise such as ICT, PE etc and to share practice
- Continuity of provision will provide curriculum continuity avoiding repetition and curriculum conflict
- Primary/secondary provision will reduce the number of times a child needs to move schools, it also makes transition and curriculum continuity easier because it sits at the end of a key stage, the natural transition for the vast majority of schools in the country
- A transfer at age 11 allows better for curriculum continuity and for the sharing and cross phase curriculum that builds on the successes of the earlier years.

*Schools should be based around communities and their needs*

- By maintaining and extending lower school provision to 11 and developing partnerships to good secondary education to 19, schools will be better served to meet this principle:
- by maintaining the current excellent relationships between our schools and their families
- by providing appropriately for the needs of the primary child through a primary organisation and curriculum delivery, through an familiar environment that knows them and their families well and then continuing this into the secondary phase as a community of schools.
- by better meeting the needs of parents and families in Year 5 and 6 through the close working relationships that have been nurtured over the years.

*That as far as possible services should be delivered locally*

- Establish a shared vision for schools in Houghton Regis with the focus being to achieve the very best outcomes for our children and their families
- Meet the distinctive needs of the community in Houghton Regis by schools already known and trusted to do so.
- Secure shared resources such as; PSA's, education psychologists, speech & language support, neighbourhood services etc.
- Provide a range of collaborative opportunities that will ensure continuity of provision for the whole child and for their families



*New models of leadership and governance for schools should be considered*

- Work collectively in partnership between primary and secondary phases, enabling staffing flexibility across schools
- Address shortages of governors and to explore better sharing of expertise and resources in this field
- Secure 'Best Value' by sharing suppliers, engaging in joint training and identifying shared priorities for school improvement.

*That vision should reflect recent current reform*

- the curriculum is based on a primary/secondary model in line with the rest of the country
- current primary and secondary curriculum and assessment initiatives can be addressed effectively

**Objectives**

1. To raise standards and improve outcomes for young people particularly at age 11, 16 and 18; Y6 data has been below 'floor targets' for three consecutive years.
2. To ensure that particular attention is paid to groups of children who are underperforming and exceeding in years 5 and 6.
3. To address the issues of surplus places in Houghton Regis
4. To provide stability, consistency and continuity for children in their primary years, through our ethos, curriculum, teaching and learning organisation
5. To provide shared services between schools and to ensure continuity of learning and teaching on transfer at age 11 across Houghton Regis and All Saints Academy in Dunstable
6. To provide equal access for all pupils to primary school education regardless of faith
7. To provide a seamless faith based provision from 3-18 mirroring the catholic model.
8. To ensure our schools are based around communities and their needs
9. To provide specialist primary education for children in years 5 and 6
10. To improve transition for children on transfer,

To address issues of recruitment and retention of good quality staff

## **Effect on school standards and school improvement**

### **Leadership and Management**

All schools within this partnership have strong and confident leadership and the professional capacity and skills to drive forward the proposed changes through:

- Shared governor meetings that focus more strongly on strategic direction and to set high expectations for our schools
- Exploring more flexible approaches to school governance through sharing expertise
- Shared senior leadership that allows us to work together to agree a vision for our area, raise standards and share targets for school and community improvement
- Collaborative work on curriculum initiatives for upper KS2, building on the good practice that already exists in years 3 and 4
- Sharing the expertise and experience of upper key stage 2 that all ready exists within our lower schools,
- Working in partnership with St Vincent's, who have already extended their age range to 11.
- Sharing a range of bought in services, we already share a SIP and together have formulated a SEF to be used from 2012
- Continuing to lead and manage a range of shared extended services ( see section 9)

We also believe that a through primary school provides greater career development opportunities for new and existing staff than lower schools, and may be more attractive to new applicants for new posts.

### **Curriculum**

We believe that curriculum delivery is paramount to enable all pupils to have opportunities to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. This will be achieved through an engaging, challenging and purposeful primary curriculum that better meets the learning styles and needs of our pupils. and we will address this in the following ways:

We acknowledge there will be a significant impact on our schools in the delivery, resourcing and teaching of some specialist subject areas, and we appreciate that the curriculum for Years 5 and 6 will need careful planning. We will do this by:

- Following the national curriculum that sets out clearly the core knowledge and understanding that all children should be expected to acquire in their primary years

- Visits to other good/outstanding primary provision regionally and nationally to see good practice, planning, teaching & learning and pastoral care
- Joint training and curriculum planning for Key Stage 2
- Working with St Vincent's Primary School
- Curriculum leaders working together
- Sharing good practice, resources, facilities and expertise with partnership feeder schools

Teaching styles within upper Key Stage 2 will promote opportunities to further develop learning & thinking skills and independence through an enquiry based and reflective teaching style which will meet the needs of a range of learners. As a network of schools we aim to lead on curriculum innovation in years 5 and 6. CPD will focus on innovative teaching & learning and in giving teachers the confidence to support all children to progress.

We will continue to update our own knowledge and understanding of assessment in line with new government legislation. We already benefit from the expertise of two established Key Stage 2 supervising markers who have up to date experience and their knowledge of expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and Maths and this is shared across the schools. (Head teachers of Hawthorn Park Lower and Tithe Farm Lower)

Target setting and monitoring will remain and continue as a whole school approach as this has already proved successful. We will continue our joint moderations and would moderate with other providers of Year 5 and 6. We will continue to build upon high standards of APP and AfL to assess learning and meet individual needs through successful interventions. Pupils will be involved in their own self assessment of progress and setting learning goals for the future.

All our schools have a strong commitment to PSHCE and keeping children safe. We recognise the different challenges faced by upper KS 2 pupils and have strong links to local initiatives which will support their PSHE development e.g. SRE, Mental health.

### **Parents and community**

Ensuring that this school system works for our families by promoting the confidence of our parents and fully engaging with them and the community through:

- Ensuring that this school system works for our families
- Making ourselves accountable to our stakeholders
- Knowledge of families and the community mean our schools are well placed to address parental concerns
- Continuing to seek views and acting on this feedback at a wider community level
- Bringing together all the services for children in our local area so that all benefit  
Ensuring fair access to all schools for every child
- Continuing the current very good practice that already exists within our school  
e.g. Parent/carer workshops on curriculum matters, Open door policy which encourages good communication and supporting children at home

Our initial research shows that parents are in favour of primary schooling this clearly supports a school system shaped by parents enabling our Houghton Regis Schools to deliver excellence and equity.

Provide increased confidence within the local community that the education system is geared to local need and reflects parental wishes.

### **Behaviour**

Evidence from Ofsted reports, SIP reports and LA exclusion data show that behaviour is very well managed in our schools. This is due to established behaviour management strategies that are successful for the following reasons:

- we have in depth knowledge of our children and families
- we make it a priority to build excellent relationships especially with our more vulnerable families;
- we use a wide range of support mechanisms (PSAs, external agencies, play therapy, small group work)
- we have a consistent approach to behaviour management that is known and understood by all

1. Positive effects on groups that tend to under perform; vulnerable learners, low achievers etc. because the school knows these children well, increasingly children are not ready for transfer at age 9 because their emotional and maturity needs are not well

developed

2. Smaller environment and favourable staffing ratio means that the school can continue to meet the needs of children, able to address behaviour management
3. The primary approach of mixed ability classes supports children of this age; they benefit from the stimulus and support of others, and have opportunities to excel in other areas thus boosting their self –esteem
4. Increasingly more vulnerable children find it difficult to adapt to the disruption of a larger school, different organisation and different approaches to teaching and learning
5. Hawthorn Park currently manages the Jigsaw Extended School Provision for excluded pupils Y1-6. So sharing of expertise and resources will be enabled within the local community.

### **Transition**

Transition is a major key to successful lifelong learning. In order to achieve successful transition for all there needs to be an open, honest 2 way partnership that is fostered by mutual respect and professionalism.

Good transition is fundamental to the success of this proposal; all schools are fully committed to work with all future providers having agreed processes for transfer at age 11 so that the school journey becomes seamless. In order to achieve this seamless transition we will ensure that there is :

1. a shared curriculum, teaching and delivery across all phases
2. shared support & expertise across phases
3. the sharing of information as a 2 way process
4. the sharing of data, target setting and assessments where there is a mutual trust of judgements and information
5. a commitment to joint working over transition period including post transition
6. leadership of transition that is positively led by senior leaders from all schools
7. pupil involvement in their planned transition

### **Special Educational Needs**

We feel that changing age range will have a positive impact for pupils with SEND and for vulnerable learners e.g. LAC, building on from the current good practice already established in our schools.

- We have the expertise in early intervention, resources and teaching methodologies to support children who find learning hard.
- We believe that our professional knowledge of how children learn will enable us to provide effective intervention from those practitioners who do this best.
- We will continue with the good and supportive SEND provision already in place and pupils will benefit from this for a further two years.
- Excellent work with families is already established to support all vulnerable children, SEND, LAC,
- Over the years, we have established excellent relationships with other professionals in order to support pupils with SEND and their families and will continue this for upper Key Stage 2 pupils, e.g. local specialist provision
- Children with SEND receive very effective support and as a result make good and outstanding progress in our schools
- We aim to maintain and share specialist staff already employed by our schools to support SEND
- We aim to support Gifted & Talented pupils within our schools and to consider the role played by feeder schools
- All schools benefit from highly skilled, experienced SENCOs.
- The two way sharing of information at transition will support more positive outcomes for pupils with SEND and vulnerable learners.
- Additional expertise within the Jigsaw centre will support pupils with SEND

#### Extended Services

Current extended school provision is run on an individual school basis. Shared services include Parent Support Assistants who are jointly funded by all our schools and shared wrap around care between Houghton Regis Lower and Thomas Whitehead Voluntary Aided Church of England Lower School.

This proposal will give the opportunity for joint extended school provision reflecting the needs of the community and the aspirations of school leaders.

Schools will work in partnership to provide a range of extended services

- Parent Support Assistants - their work has been invaluable in supporting our community
- Parenting support offer courses involving parenting e.g. PPP, Strengthening Families
- Transition support for pupils, schools and families
- Shared training for parents and staff

- Use of combined clubs and a range of After School activities
- Promotion of inter school sport and other activities for the community
- Commitment to wrap around care
- Holiday activities
- Workshops to support adult learning and encourage family learning
- Support for vulnerable families and pupils e.g. Siblings group and Young Carers
- Support for families in areas such as relationships, health and safety
- Shared usage of extended outside services
- Future aspiration for more hands on input into Neighbourhood Centres

## Consultation

**11.** Evidence of the consultation before the proposals were published including—

- (a) a list of persons who were consulted;
- (b) minutes of all public consultation meetings;
- (c) the views of the persons consulted;
- (d) a statement to the effect that all applicable statutory requirements in relation to the proposals to consult were complied with; and
- (e) copies of all consultation documents and a statement on how these documents were made available.

Please see Appendix A, B and C

## Project costs

**12.** A statement of the estimated total capital cost of the proposals and the breakdown of the costs that are to be met by the governing body, the local education authority, and any other party.

- We have spoken to the Diocese who visited the school in the summer term. To build two brick built classrooms a rough figure was mentioned as £300,000 to £350,000. This is not a builder's estimate.
- The school would need financial support and we will be sending a copy of this proposal to the Diocese but are unsure if they can give their support at this stage due to them not knowing what their budget will be for 2013/2014..
- We would not need new classes in the first year of the change but for 2014 we would need future expenditure.

**13.** A copy of confirmation from the Secretary of State, local education authority and the Learning and Skills Council for England (as the case may be) that funds will be made available (including costs to cover any necessary site purchase).

N/A

### Age range

14. Where the proposals relate to a change in age range, the current age range for the school.

3 years to 9 years

### Early years provision

15. Where the proposals are to alter the lower age limit of a mainstream school so that it provides for pupils aged between 2 and 5—

- (a) details of the early years provision, including the number of full-time and part-time pupils, the number and length of sessions in each week, and the services for disabled children that will be offered;

N/A

- (b) how the school will integrate the early years provision with childcare services and how the proposals are consistent with the integration of early years provision for childcare;

N/A

- (c) evidence of parental demand for additional provision of early years provision;

N/A

- (d) assessment of capacity, quality and sustainability of provision in schools and in establishments other than schools who deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage within 3 miles of the school; and

N/A

- (e) reasons why such schools and establishments who have spare capacity cannot make provision for any forecast increase in the number of such provision.

N/A

### Changes to sixth form provision

16. (a) Where the proposals are to alter the upper age limit of the school so that the school provides sixth form education or additional sixth form education, a statement of how the proposals will—

- (i) improve the educational or training achievements;



- (ii) increase participation in education or training; and
- (iii) expand the range of educational or training opportunities for 16-19 year olds in the area;

N/A

- (b) A statement as to how the new places will fit within the 16-19 organisation in an area;

N/A

- (c) Evidence —

- (i) of the local collaboration in drawing up the proposals; and
- (ii) that the proposals are likely to lead to higher standards and better progression at the school;

N/A

- (d) The proposed number of sixth form places to be provided.

N/A

**17.** Where the proposals are to alter the upper age limit of the school so that the school ceases to provide sixth form education, a statement of the effect on the supply of 16-19 places in the area.

N/A

### Special educational needs

**18.** Where the proposals are to establish or change provision for special educational needs—

- (a) a description of the proposed types of learning difficulties in respect of which education will be provided and, where provision for special educational needs already exists, the current type of provision;

N/A

- (b) any additional specialist features will be provided;

N/A

(c) the proposed numbers of pupils for which the provision is to be made;

N/A

(d) details of how the provision will be funded;

N/A

(e) a statement as to whether the education will be provided for children with special educational needs who are not registered pupils at the school to which the proposals relate;

N/A

(f) a statement as to whether the expenses of the provision will be met from the school's delegated budget;

N/A

(g) the location of the provision if it is not to be established on the existing site of the school;

N/A

(h) where the provision will replace existing educational provision for children with special educational needs, a statement as to how the local education authority believes that the new provision is likely to lead to improvement in the standard, quality and range of the educational provision for such children; and

N/A

(i) the number of places reserved for children with special educational needs, and where this number is to change, the proposed number of such places.

N/A

**19.** Where the proposals are to discontinue provision for special educational needs—

(a) details of alternative provision for pupils for whom the provision is currently made;

N/A

- (b) details of the number of pupils for whom provision is made that is recognised by the local education authority as reserved for children with special educational needs during each of the 4 school years preceding the current school year;

N/A

- (c) details of provision made outside the area of the local education authority for pupils whose needs will not be able to be met in the area of the authority as a result of the discontinuance of the provision; and

N/A

- (d) a statement as to how the proposer believes that the proposals are likely to lead to improvement in the standard, quality and range of the educational provision for such children.

N/A

**20.** Where the proposals will lead to alternative provision for children with special educational needs, as a result of the establishment, alteration or discontinuance of existing provision, the specific educational benefits that will flow from the proposals in terms of—

- (a) improved access to education and associated services including the curriculum, wider school activities, facilities and equipment with reference to the local education authority's Accessibility Strategy;
- (b) improved access to specialist staff, both educational and other professionals, including any external support and outreach services;
- (c) improved access to suitable accommodation; and
- (d) improved supply of suitable places.

N/A

### **Sex of pupils**

**21.** Where the proposals are to make an alteration to provide that a school which was an establishment which admitted pupils of one sex only becomes an establishment which admits pupils of both sexes—

- (a) details of the likely effect which the alteration will have on the balance of the provision of single sex-education in the area;

N/A

- (b) evidence of local demand for single-sex education; and

N/A

- (c) details of any transitional period which the body making the proposals wishes specified in a transitional exemption order (within the meaning of section 27 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975).

N/A

**22.** Where the proposals are to make an alteration to a school to provide that a school which was an establishment which admitted pupils of both sexes becomes an establishment which admits pupils of one sex only—

- (a) details of the likely effect which the alteration will have on the balance of the provision of single-sex education in the area; and

N/A

- (b) evidence of local demand for single-sex education.

N/A

### **Extended services**

**23.** If the proposed alterations affect the provision of the school's extended services, details of the current extended services the school is offering and details of any proposed change as a result of the alterations.

N/A

### **Need or demand for additional places**

**24.** If the proposals involve adding places—

- (a) a statement and supporting evidence of the need or demand for the particular places in the area;

Please see Consultation Document Appendix A and B

- (b) where the school has a religious character, a statement and supporting evidence of the demand in the area for education in accordance with the tenets of the religion or religious denomination;

The Governing Body of Thomas Whitehead felt it was important to realise our vision of a seamless transition where children progress in their learning within a Christian environment. We believe that children in Houghton Regis should have the same choice as Roman Catholic families who can already choose to send their children to a primary school until the age of 11. Thomas Whitehead Voluntary Aided Church of England Lower School

should become a full primary school, shaped by Christian principles, to ensure each child is provided with a continuous and holistic faith based education structured around stability, consistency and continuity of learning. The impact of Christian values on pupils and the school community is a strength and this would continue to be a strength if Thomas Whitehead was to increase its age range. 'There is a great sense of excitement at the opportunities for development of this school, where values impact on the personal and academic progress of pupils.' (SIAS Inspection Report 2011)

Parents have said that we should have the same choice as the catholic families and have a Church of England Primary School that mirrors that catholic model.

The Resolution at the meeting of the Parochial Church Council of Houghton Regis of 31 January 2012 was that the PCC were fully supporting of the proposal for Thomas Whitehead School becoming a 'through primary' and look forward to the opportunities this may further for the Church's school and worshipping community working together.' This was carried unanimously.

- (c) where the school adheres to a particular philosophy, evidence of the demand for education in accordance with the philosophy in question and any associated change to the admission arrangements for the school.

Please see the Objectives of our proposal and Appendix A for evidence.

**25. If the proposals involve removing places—**

- (a) a statement and supporting evidence of the reasons for the removal, including an assessment of the impact on parental choice; and

N/A

- (b) a statement on the local capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

N/A

**Expansion of successful and popular schools**

**25A.** (1) Proposals must include a statement of whether the proposer considers that the presumption for the expansion of successful and popular schools should apply, and where the governing body consider the presumption applies, evidence to support this.

(2) Sub-paragraph (1) applies to expansion proposals in respect of primary and secondary schools, (except for grammar schools), i.e. falling within:

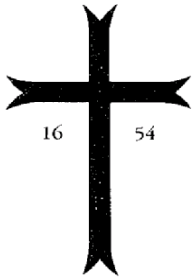
- (a) (for proposals published by the governing body) paragraph 1 of Part 1 to Schedule 2 or paragraph 12 of Part 2 to Schedule 2;

(b) (for proposals published by the LA) paragraph 1 of Part 1 to Schedule 4 or 18 of Part 4 to Schedule 4 of the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

N/A

## Appendix A

Angels Lane, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire LU5 5HH Tel: 01582 865466 Fax: 01582 861958  
Email: [thomaswhitehead@cbc.beds.sch.uk](mailto:thomaswhitehead@cbc.beds.sch.uk) Website: [www.thomaswhitehead.co.uk](http://www.thomaswhitehead.co.uk)



# **THOMAS WHITEHEAD C OF E LOWER SCHOOL**

**Head teacher:** Mrs Elaine Fairclough  
**Deputy Head teacher:** Mrs Stephanie Jones

## **REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION CONDUCTED WITH REGARD TO A PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THE UPPER AGE RANGE OF THOMAS WHITEHEAD VOLUNTARY AIDED CHURCH OF ENGLAND LOWER SCHOOL, ANGELS LANE, HOUGHTON REGIS, BEDFORDSHIRE, LU5 5HH FROM 3 – 9 YEARS TO 3 – 11 YEARS**

In June 2010 following many numerous discussions local Head teachers representing all the schools in Houghton Regis met together to discuss the future of education for our children and the impact a two tier model would have on the community. We proposed an agreed education vision for Houghton Regis in which we would provide primary and secondary education for all children within the Houghton Regis Area.

The Governing Body of Thomas Whitehead felt it was important to realise our vision of a seamless transition where children progress in their learning within a Christian environment. We believe that children in Houghton Regis should have the same choice as Roman Catholic families who can already choose to send their children to a primary school until the age of 11.

The importance of providing stability for our children in our area was paramount to our discussions.

During the consultation period the Governors and School management have received a wide and encouraging range of predominantly positive comments.

### **PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

The purpose of this document is to provide information and report on the informal and formal consultation relating to the proposal to extend the upper age range of Thomas Whitehead C of E Lower School from 3 – 9 years to 3 – 11 years to create a full primary school.

### **OBJECTIVES OF PROPOSAL**

- To raise standards and improve outcomes for young people particularly at age 11, 16 and 18; Y6 data has been below 'floor targets' for three consecutive years.

- To ensure that particular attention is paid to groups of children who are underperforming and exceeding in years 5 and 6.
- To address the issues of surplus places in Houghton Regis.
- To provide stability, consistency and continuity for children in their primary years, through our ethos, curriculum, teaching and learning organisation.
- To provide shared services between schools and to ensure continuity of learning and teaching on transfer at age 11 across Houghton Regis and All Saints Academy, (also in the church parish of Houghton Regis).
- To provide equal access for all pupils to primary school education regardless of faith
- To provide a seamless faith based provision from 3-18 mirroring the Roman Catholic model.
- To ensure that Thomas Whitehead will continue to provide a good education for all children who attend, open to children from all faiths and none, shaped by Christian principles.
- To ensure our schools are based around communities and their needs
- To provide a continuous and holistically-planned primary education experience from Foundation, Key Stage One and the whole of Key Stage 2, i.e. not the break in the Key Stage that the Middle School creates.
- To improve transition for children on transfer,
- To address issues of recruitment and retention of good quality staff

## **PROCESS OF CONSULTATION**

Our Consultation has been extensive and has consisted of a small scale questionnaire in the summer term of 2011, a parents' evening poll in the autumn term 2011, an Open Meeting in January 2012 and in conjunction with the other Houghton Regis Lower Schools our Consultation Document. This outlined our joint proposal to extend the upper age range to create a primary school. Once agreed by the Head teachers and Governing bodies distributed to all our stakeholders in December 2011.

These stakeholders were:

Parents/guardians of children currently attending Thomas Whitehead C of E Lower School

The Diocese of St Albans

The Vicar for Houghton Regis (also ex officio Governor of Thomas Whitehead C of E Lower School)

The Chair of Governors of all schools in Central Bedfordshire (including academies)

The Head teacher of all schools in Central Bedfordshire (including academies)

The principal of Central Bedfordshire College

All members of Houghton Regis Town Council

All members of Dunstable Town Council

All Central Bedfordshire County Councillors

Members of Parliament for Central Bedfordshire and Luton

Pre-school provision in Houghton Regis,

Pre-school provision in Dunstable

Luton Borough Council

All relevant Trade Unions for both Teaching and Support staff



Copies also available in Houghton Regis Library and Doctors' Surgery

The consultation document was also available on the Central Bedfordshire Learning Portal and publicised in Central Essentials.

The consultation document contained a questionnaire which would provide us with stakeholder views on the proposal in particular about

- The proposed changes to the age range i.e. from 3 to 9 to 3 to 11.
- The timescale plan of the age change, i.e. from September 2013.

On 6 December the consultation document was distributed to the community with a closing date of 4 February. Questionnaires were collated and analysed by members of the Governing Body and the Head teacher.

Within the consultation process Open Meetings were held in each school with Thomas Whitehead holding two meetings on Monday 23 January. One meeting was for staff and union representatives between 4pm to 5pm followed by a public meeting at 6pm. The Chair of Governors opened the 6 pm meeting explaining the Governing Body's proposal to change the age range of Thomas Whitehead C of E Lower School. Each lower school Head teacher attended and supported each school's proposal. All Saints Academy was represented at each meeting by a group of staff including the Head teacher. Amongst the attendees were parents, staff, Town Councillors, Director for Education from the Diocese and the Schools Building Officer also from the Diocese, a representative from the Local Authority and governors from other schools covering all phases.

## **RESPONSES TO INFORMAL CONSULTATION**

**Please see Appendix 1 – Raw Data Collected From the Consultation Document.**

Of the 284 copies of the consultation document sent out we received 77 responses which is a 27% response rate. Over 92% of respondents were in agreement with the proposal and 87% were in agreement with the timescales. 5% of respondents disagreed with the proposal on a variety of grounds, One of these responses came from a Middle School Head teacher, (although the Governing Body of the same school were in agreement), one from a parent, one from grandparents and one from a local councillor. Of the four respondents who were in disagreement with the proposed timescales, two of them stated that they would have preferred an earlier date of 2012 which reflects a positive response. A full set of responses is available in the school office.

### **What some parents said.....**

- As the parent of a child in year 4, I feel it a shame that this could not have been done sooner. I am concerned about how my son will cope with the move to Middle School just a few weeks after his 9<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- I believe the further two years in primary school will ensure good educational, social and emotional stability for the children.
- Children learn better in known surroundings, moving too much causes emotional stress which causes low self esteem and in most cases a drastic change of character. My husband and I who have a year 2 child and a nursery child are in full support of the proposed changes.

- The timescale is perfect for me as my daughter will be going from Year 4 to Year 5 in 2013 and I would love for her to stay at Thomas Whitehead until she is 11.
- I am all for the changes. I have a child in Year 7 and saw the transition in Year 4/5 did disrupt her learning. I also have a child in Year 3 and really hope it all goes through so he can remain at Thomas Whitehead
- Very good and common sense proposal!!! The Catholic model is a good one to follow.
- I think that this is a great idea. Thomas Whitehead is a great school and this can only benefit the pupils
- Would love our daughter to be in one school longer (especially TW). More time to grow up and understand what's happening next.
- Personally I have considered moving out of the area next year to somewhere that has primary schools for all 3 of my children. I myself went to a primary school until I was 11 (I am from a different county) and changing schools at 11 was nerve racking. To do it at 9 must be tough.

Thomas Whitehead C of E School was represented at all Open Meetings, i.e. Hawthorn Park Lower, Tithe Farm Lower and Thornhill Lower as well as the one held at All Saints Academy. The Heads of all these schools work closely together and this was reflected at the meetings. The response to the consultation at these meetings was unanimously in favour of the Lower Schools progressing to two tier and the support of All Saints Academy was evident at all meetings. Parents and Councillors were vocal in their support for the change and the Representative from the Diocese noted 'the overwhelming support amongst parents and other stakeholders for the change'. (Letter of support from the Diocese dated 2 February 2012).

## **RESPONSES TO POINTS RAISED THROUGHOUT THE CONSULTATION**

All the points raised at the open meeting were positive. Parents raised the concern that the school would not be able to progress with the Proposal sooner in order to accommodate the current Year 4. It was explained at the meeting by the local authority that there was a process we had to go through with a set time line in accordance with the DfE Decision Makers Guidance for making alterations to the upper and lower age limit to a voluntary aided school. This point was also raised from two stakeholders in the comments on the questionnaire.

**A question was raised about supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) adequately. We are confident that the changing of the age range will have a positive impact for pupils with SEND for the reasons outlined below:**

- We have the expertise in early intervention, resources and teaching methodologies to support children who find learning hard.
- We believe that our professional knowledge of how children learn will enable us to provide effective intervention from those practitioners who do this best.
- We will continue with the good and supportive SEND provision already in place and pupils will benefit from this for a further two years.
- Children with SEND receive very effective support and as a result make good and outstanding progress in our schools
- We aim to support Gifted & Talented pupils within our schools and to consider the role played by feeder schools

- All schools benefit from highly skilled, experienced Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator.
- Additional expertise from the Jigsaw Centre, based at Hawthorn Park, will support pupils with SEND

**The same stakeholder commented that the school would not have the capacity for extra children.**

The current capacity of Thomas Whitehead Lower School is 264 children from Year R – Year 4 and 44 part time nursery places. The proposed capacity is 308 children from Year R – Year 6 and 44 part time nursery places and 44 Year R places.

The school currently has enough available classrooms to cater for the first stage of the proposed extended upper age range. From September 2014 the school would need two new classrooms in that year. However, we would like this consultation to progress using existing physical accommodation in the first instance. We have discussed our future needs with the Diocese who will review them annually on a priority basis against the funding available for VA schools.

Any buildings required for these changes would be subject to the normal planning permission process, which would include consulting local residents, the Highways Agency and other interested parties. We would only consider this if Government Capital Rules Permit.

**The same stakeholder asked ‘ will children with disabilities be segregated as per government ruling by bussing them to Hawthorn Park? Picking them out making them different from their peers.**

As a lower school we do not exclude children with SEND. Children are not segregated and as a values school we certainly to not ‘pick them out making them different from their peers.’ Every child is treated and supported in the best way possible. We are able to access expertise from the Jigsaw Centre based at Hawthorn Park. As a primary school we would continue to meet the needs of our children in the best possible way and we will act within the law and Code of Practice at all times.

**We received a response from the Senior Leadership (SLT) Team at King’s Houghton Middle School who strongly disagreed with the proposal**

This was in direct contrast to the response received from the Governing Body of Kings Houghton Middle School which was in support of the proposal.

We do not see this as a response to the consultation proposal but rather as a look at present issues that our consultation addresses. Particularly the SLT challenged the methodologies used in the lower schools to assess and monitor children’s progress. As lower schools we use a wide range of assessments that includes formal QCA tests, APP and in school and cross school moderation to ensure accuracy of assessment and future target setting. These assessments have been validated by Local Authority through moderation at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2) and the end of Year 4 and the data is passed to King’s Houghton. Therefore the assumption that pupils from lower schools have never completed formal tests before attending King’s Houghton is factually untrue. Our proposal is to improve outcomes for pupils in Houghton Regis at Year 6 and our assessment methodology would be tailored to those needs. We are using appropriate and well understood techniques

**The SLT refers to the “huge leap middle schools need to make with years 5 and 6”**

As a primary school there should not need to be a huge leap in Years 5 and 6 as pupil progress will be more even across the whole school from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6 due to consistency of teaching and learning and assessment. We know the children well and will have already been putting in any intervention that would be needed. The children will progress through Key Stage 2 without any disruption to their learning.

As a result of Kings Houghton Middle School's recent OFSTED inspection they made an early enquiry about the resources and scheme we used in maths this was at a time when we had just had our OFSTED inspection and were focusing on development areas for our school. However the Deputy Heads did meet and discussion took place about arranging visits to each other's schools to see teaching styles. We thought this was a good idea and are expecting it to happen.

I was not aware that Kings Houghton requested APP documents in 2011 but I believe the other lower schools may have provided these. These are primary documents and not secondary documents as used by Kings Houghton.

The education provision in Houghton Regis is undergoing change in line with the rest of the country with the setting up of academies free schools and alternative provisions. This is highlighted by the fact that Kings Houghton themselves are being academised by Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust. The SLY in a newsletter to parents commented, "The conversion to Academy status will be as a middle school but the Academy will adapt in the future to suit the needs of the community."

**The SLT commented that "All families have the choice to send their child to a primary school by crossing Poynters Road – the Barnfield Academy is closer than the All Saints Academy. If parents want to they can access the other system."**

This is factually incorrect as Barnfield Academy is a secondary school not a Primary school and All Saints Academy is closer to Thomas Whitehead. However, parents would have that choice for Year 7 to move their children to Barnfield Academy as a preferred Secondary School.

**The SLT says that All Saints Academy 'has not managed to get permission to become a secondary school.'**

We believe that All Saints are awaiting a decision on their proposal . This decision has not yet been made and this statement is therefore factually incorrect. The SLT expressed their wish to become a secondary provision and indeed made an application to CBC but this was, at the time, turned down.

**The SLT feels the status quo could be maintained through strong partnership working.**

As lower schools we do not feel the status quo is good enough for our children which is emphasised by the below the floor key stage 2 results for the last 3 years.

There are fundamental differences between the SLT and the lower schools in the understanding of what constitutes good transition; we believe transition should focus on continuing the learning journey for our pupils through a shared curriculum, assessment and teaching methodology. If the children were to complete Key Stage 2 in a primary school they would have the continuity and skills for progression developed in a continuous way in an environment that they know taught by primary school teachers.

## **REVISIT AND REVIEW OF ORIGINAL PROPOSAL IN THE LIGHT OF THE CONSULTATION**

In light of the information received from the Consultation we believe that progressing with our proposal to extend the age range at Thomas Whitehead Lower to become a primary school is the way forward for our families. The vast majority of parents are clearly in favour of the change and believe that their children will continue to make good progress if they remained at Thomas Whitehead School to complete Key Stage 2. Parents also feel that by completing their primary education at one school their children will benefit both emotionally and academically. The transition to secondary school therefore should be smoother and their learning less likely to suffer from interruption.

The Proposal clearly outlines how the change of age range will be managed and strongly promotes the benefits for our children and community of Thomas Whitehead C of E School becoming a primary school. The school has the capacity to enable this to happen. The strategies we use to support children with special educational needs and disabilities are effective as we have the expertise and knowledge to support these children because of our primary based training and our drive to ensure that every child reaches his/her full potential. Our transition work will continue to ensure that there is a support network for children moving on to their next school. We will work closely with the receiving school regardless of whether it is a middle or secondary school. Working together with other schools is vital in order to embrace new ideas, practices and partnerships and this is an exciting time for lower schools in Houghton Regis. Schools should be based around communities and their needs and comments at the Open Meeting indicate clearly that parents need this kind of support beyond the time their children finish in Year 4. We work very closely with our neighbouring schools and Parent Support workers in continuing to nurture close working relationships with our parents and families.

Our vision for Houghton Regis is based on a primary/secondary model in line with the rest of the country. In achieving our vision we will see standards raised and improved outcomes for young people at the age of 11, 16 and 18.

### **GOVERNING BODY STATEMENT**

We (the Governing Body of Thomas Whitehead C of E Lower School) propose to extend the upper age range from 3 – 9 years to 3 – 11 years, to create a full primary school, shaped by Christian principles, to ensure each child is provided with a continuous and holistic faith based education structured around stability, consistency and continuity of learning. The impact of Christian values on pupils and the school community is a strength and this would continue to be a strength if Thomas Whitehead was to increase its age range. 'There is a great sense of excitement at the opportunities for development of this school, where values impact on the personal and academic progress of pupils.' (SIAS Inspection Report 2011)

The Governing Body has confidence in the Head teacher and themselves to drive forward the proposed changes. The leadership and management of Thomas Whitehead and other schools in the area have worked together to agree a vision for our area, raise standards and share targets for school and community improvement. We know that good practice already exists in the lower schools in the area and we are very optimistic about the impact this practice will have on the upper Key Stage 2 teaching and learning.

We fully understand the premises implications and the need to plan and manage the current accommodation alongside preparing proposals for the future building requirement of the developing school.

We feel strongly that children up to the end of Year 6 should have a Primary education and not be subjected to a secondary model at such a young age. The management and delivery of the curriculum in a primary school, by highly qualified and skilled primary teachers, will meet the needs of all children. Vulnerable children will cope far better remaining in a primary school for two more years and will be more able to adjust at the age of 11 than at the age of 9 to the change to secondary school. This is what our parents want and we are committed to ensure that this happens for 2013.

## Appendix B

# **THOMAS WHITEHEAD C OF E SCHOOL**

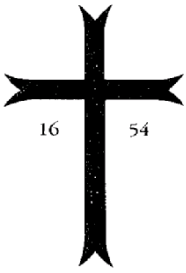
Head teacher: Mrs Elaine Fairclough

Angels Lane, Houghton Regis

Bedfordshire LU5 5HH Tel: 01582 865466 Fax: 01582 861958

Email: [thomaswhitehead@cbc.beds.sch.uk](mailto:thomaswhitehead@cbc.beds.sch.uk)

Website: [www.thomaswhitehead.co.uk](http://www.thomaswhitehead.co.uk)



## **CONSULTATION DOCUMENT ON A PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THE UPPER AGE RANGE OF THOMAS WHITEHEAD VOLUNTARY AIDED CHURCH OF ENGLAND LOWER SCHOOL, ANGELS LANE, HOUGHTON REGIS, BEDFORDSHIRE, LU5 5HH FROM 3 – 9 YEARS TO 3 – 11 YEARS**

### **PURPOSE OF THIS CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

The purpose of this document is to provide information relating to the proposal to extend the upper age range of Thomas Whitehead C of E VA Lower School from 3 – 9 years to 3 – 11 years to create a primary school.

### **BACKGROUND**

Houghton Regis Lower schools provide well for their pupils. Local data shows that children achieve well in our schools and that standards achieved at the end of both KS1 and Year 4 are good. However, standards in Year 6 at the end of Key Stage 2 are below where they should be indicating that pupils' progress is affected in Years 5 and 6 in middle school. National data shows that changing school impacts negatively on pupils' progress. The transition of our pupils at age 9 in the middle of their Key Stage 2 primary schooling results in a lack of curriculum understanding, continuity, and assessment agreement.

We believe that our children would benefit from the stability of a primary school setting that is organised to meet the specific learning needs of the upper Key Stage 2 child. National research and data supports this view and consequently Local Authorities have converted to a primary/ secondary model.

We also believe that all children and families in Houghton Regis should have the same choice as Catholic families who can already choose to send their children to a primary school until the age of 11.

Those parents who wish to have an Anglican education will be able to send their children to Thomas Whitehead and then onto All Saints Academy.

Hawthorn Park Lower, Tithe Farm Lower and Thornhill Lower are consulting at the same time to change their upper age range to 11. An application has also been submitted to the YPLA, which maintains academies, for All Saints Academy to become a secondary academy for 11 to 18 year olds.

The Governing Body has requested Central Bedfordshire Council to consider its request to change the age range of the school to enable it to provide primary schooling to pupils up to age 11.

## **PROPOSAL**

The Governing Body has applied to change the age range of Thomas Whitehead C of E Lower School by extending it from a 3 – 9 years lower school to a 3 – 11 years primary school.

It is proposed that there would be two stages of implementation starting in September 2013:

- September 2013 – Year 4 children to remain in current setting and move in to Year 5
- September 2014 – Year 5 children to remain in current setting and move in to Year 6

We have no plans to reintegrate pupils who are already in middle schools but will take children who have moved to the area from another school or who do not have a school provision, providing we do not exceed our admission number.

Hawthorn Park Lower, Tithe Farm Lower School and Thornhill Lower have also applied to change their upper age range. This would bring us in line with St Vincent's Primary School.

## **OBJECTIVES OF PROPOSAL**

- To raise standards and improve outcomes for young people particularly at age 11, 16 and 18; Y6 data has been below 'floor targets' for three consecutive years.
- To ensure that particular attention is paid to groups of children who are underperforming and exceeding in years 5 and 6.
- To address the issues of surplus places in Houghton Regis.
- To provide stability, consistency and continuity for children in their primary years, through our ethos, curriculum, teaching and learning organisation.
- To provide shared services between schools and to ensure continuity of learning and teaching on transfer at age 11 across Houghton Regis and All Saints Academy, Dunstable
- To provide equal access for all pupils to primary school education regardless of faith
- To provide a seamless faith based provision from 3-18 mirroring the Catholic model.
- To ensure that Thomas Whitehead will continue to provide a good education for all children who attend, open to children from all faiths and none, shaped by Christian principles.
- To ensure our schools are based around communities and their needs
- To provide a continuous and holistically-planned primary education experience from Foundation, Key Stage One and the whole of Key Stage 2, i.e. not the break in the Key Stage that the Middle School creates.
- To improve transition for children on transfer,
- To address issues of recruitment and retention of good quality staff



## **SCHOOL CAPACITY**

The current capacity of Thomas Whitehead Lower School is 264 children from Year R – Year 4 and 44 part time nursery places. The proposed capacity is 308 children from Year R – Year 6 and 44 part time nursery places.

The school currently has enough available classrooms to cater for the first stage of the extended upper age range. From September 2014 the school would need two new classrooms in that year. However, we would like this consultation to progress using existing physical accommodation in the first instance.

Any buildings required for these changes would be subject to the normal planning permission process, which would include consulting local residents, the Highways Agency and other interested parties. We would only consider this if Government Capital Rules Permit.

## **SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities):**

Changing age range will have a positive impact for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and for vulnerable learners which will build on from the current good practice already established in our schools.

- We have the expertise in early intervention, resources and teaching methodologies to support children who find learning hard.
- We believe that our professional knowledge of how children learn will enable us to provide effective intervention from those practitioners who do this best.
- We will continue with the good and supportive SEN provision already in place and pupils will benefit from this for a further two years.
- Children with SEND receive very effective support and as a result make good and outstanding progress in our schools
- We aim to support Gifted & Talented pupils within our schools and to consider the role played by feeder schools
- All schools benefit from highly skilled, experienced Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.
- Additional expertise within the Jigsaw Centre, based at Hawthorn Park, will support pupils with SEND

## **TRANSITION**

In implementing this proposal we would support transition from Thomas Whitehead to any school place a parent chooses at any time. To clarify, If they chose to stay with us for all their years of primary education, we would support the transition at age 11 to the school of the parents' choice. If they chose to go to a middle school we would support this transition. If parents chose to go out of the authority, we would support that transition as well. This is all about our ambition to uphold the Council's aim of raising standards.

## WORKING TOGETHER WITH OTHER SCHOOLS

Thomas Whitehead C of E Lower School is fully committed to working together with Thornhill, Hawthorn Park, and Tithe Farm to deliver the changes outlined in our proposal. All of the schools who are currently seeking to change their upper age range are also fully committed to working together with Houghton Regis Lower School and St Vincent's VA RC Primary School to establish a shared vision based on providing the very best outcomes for our children and their families. We aim to provide a range of collaborative opportunities that will ensure continuity of provision for the whole child and for their families. We will work collectively in partnership to secure 'Best Value' by sharing suppliers, engaging in joint training and identifying shared priorities for school improvement.

## EXTENDED SERVICES

This proposal will give the opportunity for joint extended school provision reflecting the needs of the community and the aspirations of school leaders.

Schools will work in partnership to provide a range of extended services

- Parent Support Assistants - their work has been invaluable in supporting our community
- Transition support for pupils, schools and families
- Shared training for parents and staff
- Use of combined clubs and a range of After School activities
- Promotion of inter-school sport and other activities for the community
- Commitment to wrap around care
- Holiday activities
- Workshops to support adult learning and encourage family learning
- Support for vulnerable families and pupils eg Siblings group and Young Carers

## ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

If we are unsuccessful with this proposal the school will continue to operate as a Lower school for pupils aged a 3 – 9 years.

## TIMELINE

The alteration of a schools age range must follow a prescribed democratic decision making process. The following table outlines the indicative timeline to change the age range of Thomas Whitehead C of E Lower School.

Action	Start Date	Completion date
Informal consultation	6 <sup>th</sup> December 2011	4 <sup>th</sup> February 2012

Report on outcome of consultation produced by Thomas Whitehead Governing Body. Copy passed to Local Authority and other local schools.	4 <sup>th</sup> February 2012	11 <sup>th</sup> February 2012
Thomas Whitehead Governing Body's decision to progress to statutory notice	11 <sup>th</sup> February 2012	18 <sup>th</sup> February 2012
Statutory Notices served	20 <sup>th</sup> February 2012	30 <sup>th</sup> March 2012
Report to Executive Member for Children's Services drafted by Local authority	2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2012	13 <sup>th</sup> April 2012
Implementation decision made	WC 16 <sup>th</sup> April 2012	
<b>Proposed implementation</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> September 2013</b>	

Attached to this proposal is a Consultation Response form.

### **Consultation Response Form**

Please read the consultation document and tell us what your views are. The questions on this form are provided to help you do so, but you do not have to respond to all of them. If you prefer not to use this form, you can also put your views in a letter.

Letters and forms should be sent to the address at the bottom of this form, or responses can be sent by e-mail to: [thomaswhitehead@cbc.beds.sch.org](mailto:thomaswhitehead@cbc.beds.sch.org)

All responses must be received by **Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2012**.

**Questions relating to the proposal**

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

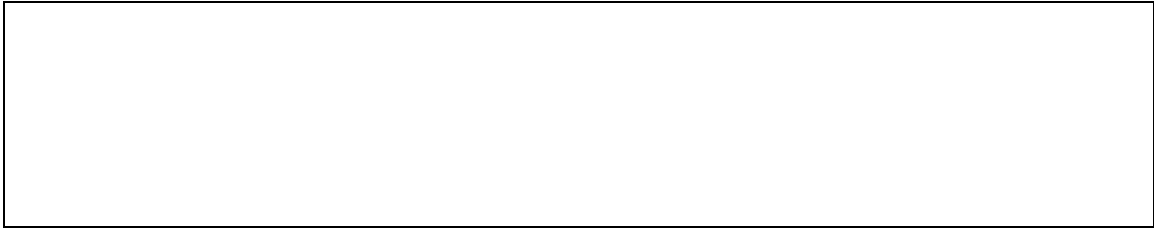
1a) I support the proposed changes to the age range at Thomas Whitehead C of E Lower School.

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>

1b) I support the timescale plan of the age change at Thomas Whitehead C of E Lower School

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>

Further comments:



**Please return this form to:**

**Mrs Elaine Fairclough  
Head teacher  
Thomas Whitehead C of E School  
Angels Lane  
Houghton Regis  
LU5 5HH**

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

Individual  Organisation (Please tell us which organisation).....

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Postcode: .....

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

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

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

Pupil (Please state at which school and in which Year Group) .....

Parent/carer of child/children (Please state which school/s).....

Parent/carer of pre-school child/children

School Governor (Please state which school/s) .....

School Staff (Please state which school/s) .....

Other (Please specify) .....

**Gender**

Male  Female  Transgender  Prefer not to say

**Age**

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

**Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?**  Yes  No

**Ethnic Group**

- WHITE British
- WHITE Irish
- WHITE Other (Please write in).....
- BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH Caribbean
- BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH African
- BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH Other (Please write in).....
- MIXED White & Black Caribbean
- MIXED White & Black African
- MIXED White & Asian
- MIXED Other (Please write in).....
- ASIAN Indian
- ASIAN Pakistani
- ASIAN Bangladeshi
- ASIAN Other (please write in).....
- CHINESE
- OTHER (Please write in).....

Data Protection Act 1998 Please note that your personal details supplied on this form will be held and/or computerised by Thomas Whitehead Voluntary Aided Church of England Lower School and/or Central Bedfordshire Council for the purpose of the consultation. The information collected may be disclosed to school staff and officers and members of the Council and its partners involved in this consultation. Summarised information from the forms may be published, but no individual details will be disclosed under these circumstances. Your personal details will be safeguarded and will not be divulged to any other individuals or organisations for any other purposes.

## ***THOMAS WHITEHEAD C OF E SCHOOL***

Angels Lane, Houghton Regis  
Bedfordshire LU5 5HH Tel: 01582 865466 Fax: 01582 861958  
E-mail: : [thomaswhitehead@cbc.beds.sch.uk](mailto:thomaswhitehead@cbc.beds.sch.uk)

### **Brief notes on the Consultation meeting for the Two Tier proposal held at 6pm on Monday 23rd January 2012**

**Governors Present:** Mrs E Fairclough (Headteacher)  
Mr D Clark (Chair)  
Mrs N Murray (Vice Chair)  
Mrs T Plunkett  
Mrs K Ambrose  
Mr T Preston  
Mrs S Smith

The Chair of Governors opened the meeting, explaining that the meeting was to give more details on the Consultation Document on a proposal to extend the Upper Age Range of Thomas Whitehead C of E Lower School, Angels Lane, Houghton Regis, Beds, LU5 5HH from 3-9years to 3-11years. He asked everyone present to introduce themselves.

In addition to the governors listed above, amongst the attendees were 3 Town Councillors, Director of Education from the Diocese of St Albans, Governors from other schools from all phases, a member of the local authority, Thornhill Lower Head teacher, All Saints Academy head teacher, members of staff at Thomas Whitehead and parents of the pupils currently at the school.

The head teacher explained the many reasons why the school want to extend the age range

- To raise standards and improve the outcome for children.
  - To take ownership and responsibility for the outcome of Key Stage 2.
  - Progress dips due to the transition
- Improve the continuity and consistency of good primary teaching and learning
- To improve transition
  - Age 9 is too young for a child to transfer
- Primary schools have good relationships with families
  - Parents say the Primary route is what they want
  - Thomas Whitehead has an open door policy

As of today, 47 questionnaires have been returned, 2 were against, 1 was unsure and 44 were in agreement with the proposal. Many parents comments were 'I wish you could do it this year'.

The head teacher explained how the implementation would take place. The school would change to provide an education to the age of 11, Year 6.

The 1st stage will accommodate year 5, in September 2013, total of 264 pupils.

The 2nd stage will then extend to year 6, in September 2014, total of 308 pupils.

The school will continue to have an intake of 44 pupils per year group.

The current capacity of the school is 264.

The head teacher stated she was positive the school would remain a good school.

The closing date for the consultation period is 4th February.

A decision will be made by the Local Authority in week commencing 16th April.

The implementation date if successful will be 1st September 2013.

Statutory notices stating the schools decision will need to be displayed around the school grounds for 6 weeks after the 20th February.

If the Local Authority reject the proposal, the Diocese can appeal to the Secretary of State.

The headteacher finished with a slide of some of the comments parents made in their responses.

Many parents have asked why it can't happen sooner than 2013, the response given was due to lots of regulations and legislation. It was stated only 3 counties have the 3 tier system and none of the 2 tier schools apply to change.

The response from everyone present was a positive one.

The meeting came to an end at 18:55.

**Note:** another meeting was held also on the 23rd January at 4pm for Staff members of Thomas Whitehead. Governors present at this meeting were Mrs N Murray (Vice Chair), Miss J Waldock and Mrs L Gambier (both staff governors) and Fr B Wheelhouse