

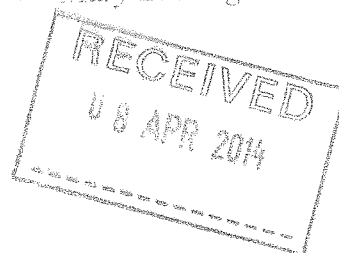
# Association of Dunstable Charities

- Ashton Almshouse Charity
- Ashton Schools Foundation
- Blandina Marshe Charity
- Chew's Foundation
- Dunstable Poor's Land Charity
- Mary Lockington Charity

## ASHTON SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

Charity Reg. No. 307526

The Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children's Services,  
Central Bedfordshire Council,  
Priory House,  
Chicksands,  
Shefford,  
Beds, SG17 5TQ



3rd April 2014

Dear Ms Grant,

### **ASHTON MIDDLE SCHOOL:**

**School Proposal to extend the age range to a single phase secondary provision and**

**CBC Consultation on the Potential Closure of Ashton Middle School**

The Trustees of the Ashton Schools Foundation, being the Trustees of Ashton Middle School, have considered the school's proposal to change the age range of the school to a Single Phase Secondary provision, alongside the consultation by Central Bedfordshire Council on potential closure of the school.

The Trustees wish to point out that the views which they submitted to the school at the initial consultation stage of the school's proposal to vary its age range have been misrepresented in Appendix B of the school's complete proposal document. In Appendix B, the response of the Foundation has been listed among those which 'agree' with the proposal. A copy of the Foundation's response is appended to this letter, where it can quite clearly be seen that the Trustees advised the school about what it would need to do to put together a viable proposal and this advice can best be described as 'neither agree nor disagree'.

The views expressed in that advice remain the views of the Trustees. The Foundation has not seen the school's business plan, which the Trustees note will be submitted to the Local Authority by 7<sup>th</sup> April. However, given the projected size of the school even on the most optimistic forecast of numbers on roll, the Trustees have reservations about whether the school will have the financial capability to provide the specialist staffing and facilities to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum across the full ability range. There is a reason why most secondary schools are the size they are. The school must demonstrate in its business plan how such a small school will have the necessary resources to enable all students to access a sufficiently broad and appropriate choice of courses leading to GCSE and other more practical and vocational qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4.

Yours sincerely,

*Yvonne Beaumont*

Mrs Y E Beaumont  
Clerk to the Trustees

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Mr Roger Fox  
Chairperson of Ashton C of E Middle School  
High Street North  
Dunstable, Bedfordshire.  
LU6 1NH

27<sup>th</sup> February 2014

Dear Mr Fox,

### Consultation on proposal to extend the age range to a single phase secondary provision 2014 – 2015

At a meeting of the Foundation on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February the Trustees considered very carefully and with great interest the School's Consultation Document on the proposal to change the age range of the school to a Single Phase Secondary provision. The Trustees also discussed alongside this the decision by the Executive of Central Bedfordshire Council to begin a consultation process on closure of Ashton and two other Middle Schools in the town, recognising that the School's own proposal is now, in effect, being presented to the Local Authority as an alternative to closure.

The Trustees noted the difference between the School's projected numbers on roll in Year 5 in September 2014 and the numbers projected by the Local Authority and, on the advice of the chairman, understood that this was the result of the School expecting to pick up a number of pupils for whom Ashton was the 'second preference'. The Trustees also noted that the School anticipates retaining more Year 6 pupils into Year 7 than the Local Authority is projecting. Clearly, numbers on roll are a crucial factor in determining the viability of the School.

The Trustees observed that, even on the School's projected figures from 2014 to 2019, Ashton would be, by secondary standards, a very small school. The School has stated in its consultation with stakeholders that pupils will be taught through to GCSE by specialist teachers while the consultation document emphasises the aspiration to provide a broad, balanced and cohesive curriculum that meets the needs of all. The Trustees believe that it will be difficult to deliver both these objectives together on such a small pupil number base.

Hence, the advice of the Trustees is that the School will need to demonstrate to the Local Authority in its business plan clear evidence not only that the school will have appropriate facilities but, in particular, that the size of the teaching staff reflecting the number of pupils on roll will be able to offer genuine specialist teaching across the full ability range leading to a sufficiently comprehensive choice of academic and more practical or vocational courses.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Y E Beaumont  
Clerk to the Trustees