

## **Business Case for proposed school and academy expansions for September 2015 implementation.**

Roecroft Community Lower School, Stotfold

### **Central Bedfordshire Council’s Policy Principles for Pupil Place Planning**

Please provide details of how you believe the proposed expansion of your school will meet each of the 9 principles below.

1	The need to provide local schools for local children, ensuring a sense of community belonging and also promoting sustainable modes of travel.
	<p>The rate of continued housing development within Stotfold, the local impact of the increased birth rate (which is evident also at national level) and the inability of neighbouring authorities to continue to accommodate the preference of some Stotfold parents applying for a school place outside of the area have all contributed to the additional pressure on local school places.</p> <p>The education provided within a local lower school at the beginning of the school career of local children is also very important in helping to foster a sense of community belonging. This is particularly significant within an area of significant new housing such as that surrounding Roecroft Lower School as it can provide a hub for the community. Extending the school which is within the new development will help to further integrate these children and their families within the wider community.</p> <p>Section 38 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on governing bodies of maintained schools in England to promote community cohesion. Providing sufficient accommodation within local schools enables children living in the same local community to attend the same schools fostering a coherent community identity and enabling community ownership to build around a range of extracurricular activities. Close partnership between the school and the community centre which will be built next to the school has the potential to reinforce these benefits.</p> <p>The expansion of Roecroft Lower School supports the Council’s duty under Section 76 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel to meet the school travel needs of their area. The school will continue to work through its travel plan to reduce the need for car journeys.</p>
2	The need to create schools that are of sufficient size to be financially and educationally viable.
	<p>The current school has a capacity for 300 and this proposal will create a lower school which is of the suggested maximum size of 450 places as set out in the Council’s Policy Principles for Pupil Place Planning in Schools. This will require greater capacity of senior management, teaching and non teaching staff at the school to ensure that the head teacher retains the ability to manage and monitor</p>

	<p>a school that is financially and educationally viable and ensure the long term sustainability of high quality education for the youngest children within this community.</p> <p>The Council's Policy Principles for Pupil Place Planning in Schools states that ideally lower schools should have 2 forms of entry (i.e. two classes per year group), and above 3 forms of entry (450 pupils for lowers, 630 pupils for Primary Schools) it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain consistency, coherence and a 'whole school' ethos appropriate to pupils of this school age.</p> <p>The Local Authority consider it preferable to promote the expansion and creation of new lower/primary school provision at or above 3 forms of entry only in exceptional circumstances. With a proposed expansion to 3 form entry, Roecroft will be ideally placed to become financially viable at the largest end of the scale as noted in the policy principles.</p> <p>The larger the school, the more likely it is that the Head teacher and senior staff will spend most of their time managing resources rather than on education. If this time is spent on key issues known to promote school improvement in driving the ethos of the school towards raising attainment by a focus on pupil level data management, engagement with the teaching and learning process etc. their offer outside that of classroom input can accelerate school improvement and outcomes.</p>
3	<p>The ability to support the expansion of local popular and successful schools or to link expanding schools with popular and successful schools.</p>
	<p>In line with the Council's vision of providing a good or outstanding school in every community, Roecroft Community Lower School is fully committed to providing outstanding education for all of its pupils. The vision of the Governing Body and current leadership team is that the expansion of our highly successful school will enable us to provide the highest standard of education to more pupils.</p> <p>Our most recent Ofsted inspection judged the school to provide outstanding education. This is a major reason for the school's popularity and explains why parents have chosen previously to send their children to Roecroft Community Lower School from outside the school's catchment, although in the future with the increased local demographic the school will only be able to accommodate preferences from within its own catchment.</p> <p>Our current school development plan is focused on maintaining outstanding education whilst managing the increase in numbers and the pressure on the current facilities. In future years our priority will be to ensure that our standards will continue to be exceptional. To maintain these standards we will focus on the recruitment of the best possible teachers to join the current highly successful team and will use the opportunity of new well designed facilities to provide the highest quality curriculum. These two factors will enable us to motivate the children and will support us in implementing the increase in the school's capacity.</p>
4	<p>The potential to further promote and support robust partnerships and learning communities</p>
	<p>In recognition of the school's successes over several years, the head teacher has recently been appointed as a Local Leader of Education. This means that she is working to support other schools in challenging circumstances locally, and</p>

	<p>ensures that we are focused on the development of system leadership, succession planning and staff development.</p> <p>We have a very experienced Special Needs coordinator who is fully accredited and qualified. This has enabled us to offer high quality support to families and their children in our local area.</p> <p>We also understand and fully endorse the importance of local partnerships. We work closely with the other schools in the area. We lead transition in our cluster and work closely with other schools to provide excellent opportunities for moderation and assessment.</p> <p>Values education is a fundamental part of our ethos, and we are part of the Bedfordshire group of Values based schools. We were one of the first schools in the County to adopt Values education, and continue to help drive this forward.</p>
5	<p>The ambition to achieve a single phase of education 0 -19 and reduce school transfer points</p>
	<p>There is evidence that learning can be lost at points of transfer between schools and also transition within schools from one phase or key stage to another. As a result Roecroft Community Lower School works closely with Etonbury Academy and Samuel Whitbread to aid seamless transfer.</p> <p>Roecroft Community Lower School also works very closely with the onsite Pippin Pre-School. This partnership is essential again in ensuring seamless transfer into school for all of the local children who attend the Pre-School. At present the pre-school is a registered charity and has leased the building from Central Bedfordshire Council. With the school expansion Pippins will be relocated to a new building on the same school site, and will continue to provide outstanding pre-school care. This will ensure the long term future of Early Years provision for children in this community from the age of two years plus, and maintain continuity of experience we can provide for our youngest children and their families.</p>
6	<p>The need to support the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA).</p>
	<p>Effective lower school education is the first step to delivering the Government policy of ensuring that all young people are in either education, training or work related education / training full time up to the age of 18. Fundamental to ensuring that young people have the skills and desire to tackle further education or training they need to have key skills in reading, writing and mathematics and a desire for lifelong learning.</p> <p>Fundamental to the vision of Roecroft Community Lower School is the desire to inspire all of our pupils to enjoy learning. We are also committed to providing intervention and support to pupils with additional needs to overcome their difficulties and develop a resilient and determined approach to learning.</p> <p>Therefore our simple aim is to ensure our children are 'middle school ready' by the time they leave us and that they already have aspirations, self- belief and a desire to achieve at this stage in their lives.</p>
7	<p>To seek opportunities to create inspirational learning environments for the school</p>

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	and to maximise community use.
	The proposed expansion of the school will be designed to provide an inspirational environment which will promote values based education and will promote sustainability and outdoor learning. The facilities will be designed by the local authority but the school has been fully engaged in contributing towards the design options. The key aim of the design will be to provide premises that are fit for purpose for the increased capacity of the school, aligned with the latest DfE guidance.
8	To promote the diversity of provision offered in Central Bedfordshire to increase opportunities for parental choice
	<p>Roecroft Lower school as a community maintained lower school is part of Central Bedfordshire's comprehensive system of education. It is a co-educational school which provides for children between the ages of 4- 9 years, and has a strong values based ethos.</p> <p>Parents within Stotfold also have the choice of sending their children to St Marys Academy which is a Church of England school.</p>
9	To support vulnerable learners in Area Special Schools and integrate appropriate Special Educational Needs provision within mainstream schools
	<p>Roecroft Community Lower School has a strong and successful record in promoting inclusion.</p> <p>The school has an experienced Special Needs Coordinator who leads a dedicated team of teachers, each providing excellent support for children with special educational needs. The school has grown a strong reputation locally for its achievements in both provision and outcomes. The SEND coordinator has forged strong relationships with outside agencies.</p>