



Leedon Lower School

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Headteacher: Mr R Benson

Learning Without Limits

To Central Bedfordshire Council,
FAO MR Rob Parsons, Head of School Organisation, Admissions and Capital Planning, Children's Services

Dear Rob

As requested by Central Bedfordshire Council, the Governing Body of Leedon Lower School was pleased to carry out a consultation on the proposed expansion of Leedon Lower School from 300 to 450 places.

Below is a summary of how the consultation was carried out and the responses that were received.

Attached are copies of the responses received from other lower schools

Please find responses to Leedon Lower Schools consultation. I have bullet pointed an overview of the results. I hope that this satisfies the feedback criteria that you asked for.

- The consultation was carried out between 15th December 2014 and the 23rd January 2015.
- The consultation was delivered to residents on Highfield Road and surrounding streets and also parts of Stanbridge Road. A copy was given to all parents and staff members and posted on the school website. There was also a press release in the Leighton Buzzard Observer and on our school website. We held an open meeting between 3.15pm and 5.30pm on Wednesday 7th January in the school hall, which was very well attended by over 70 parents and residents.
- We have received 34 written responses in total, 2 letters from local schools and a handful of e mails.
- We had 22 written responses from parents, 1 staff/parent, 1 governor, 9 residents, 1 resident/parent/staff.
- In total 22 responses support the expansion of the school with 12 opposing the expansion.
- The tone of the 22 supportive responses is as follows;
 - *As long as the school, head teacher and staff are happy I support them!*
 - *With the increased population of Leighton Buzzard , it is necessary.*
 - *Perhaps parking on one side of the road in the morning and the other in the afternoon, like Leopold Road.*
 - *This will be a great addition to the school.*
 - *We have no problem with the expansion of the school, just the parking.*
 - *I support the expansion as I hope that it will guarantee my child a place.*
 - *It is a lovely school so the more children that can attend the better.*
- The tone of the 12 responses not in support is as follows;

- *The inevitable increase in traffic flow and the additional parking on already busy road around the school, both on Stanbridge Road and Highfield Road.*
- *Also there are concerns around the lack of outdoor space for that number of children in the school (450).*
- *The other concerns centre on the school changing its 'family', 'community' ethos if it gets too big.*
- *Other concerns are around the farm disappearing, no increase in adults in Reception class, no increase in usable outdoor space and no need for the expansion as we only have 42 in Reception this year.*
- *There are also several (10) concerns raised about the already inconsiderate and illegal parking on both Highfield Road and Stanbridge Road as well as on Marley fields.*

The opinion of the governing body is that the expansion can only benefit the school and the children of Leedon as it will result in an improvement on the great facilities that our children already benefit from without removing the ethos of the school. We are as you know a good school and it is our intention to improve on this grading ensuring Leedon aims to becoming an outstanding school. Due to the proximity of the proposed increase in housing development, it makes perfect sense to have Leedon one of the schools identified as being allowed to expand and the children will have a purpose built facility in which to enrich their learning as opposed to a rickety old porta-cabin which required constant maintenance draining the schools funds when they could be spent better elsewhere. These improvements can be made whilst we still maintain our outdoor space including our animals and a forest schools facility.

We do have some concerns, which we believe, if addressed in the earliest instance, will make travelling to school safer and improve public opinion. These issues are of the utmost importance as they relate to our children's safety. The parking on Highfield Road outside the school could become an issue unless the council enforcement team and local neighbourhood policing team could be utilised to ensure there is no inconsiderate parking. The proposed increase in footfall along Stanbridge Road is also a concern and traffic calming measures and a safer route to school needs to be established such as having a crossing guard at the pedestrian crossing by the school alleyway. As you will be aware, there have been some instances over the past couple of years of children being hurt crossing the roads inappropriately and we do not wish to see an increase in these situations. If a plan could be put in place to address these items at the very start of the new school year in September then the safety of the children will have been addressed and any opposition to the proposal will be abated I am sure.

The Governing Body of Leedon Lower School met on 28 January 2015 to consider the results of the consultation. Members were pleased to confirm their support for the proposed expansion.

Yours faithfully

Richard Benson
Head Teacher

John Field
Chair of Governors

Mr. J Field
Leedon Lower School
Highfield Road
Leighton Buzzard
LU7 3LZ

21 January 2015

Dear John

Reference: Lower School Expansions

We are writing regarding the proposed expansion of Leedon and Clipstone Brook Lower schools.

The proposed very significant increase in the size of the two lower schools within close proximity of each other very near to our catchment area cannot help but have a destabilising influence on St. Georges Lower School. We fear it could suffer a reduction in numbers during the next five years while the anticipated growth in pupil numbers synchronises with the faster increased availability of school places driven by these expansions.

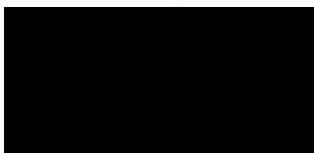
At the present time St Georges Lower School is graded as a "Good" school by Ofsted. The LA has identified it as a very underutilised lower school in the area which could absorb much of the anticipated growth in pupil numbers immediately with minimal investment. We have been proactively making numerous efforts in order to increase our pupil numbers which are slowly increasing. However the proposed expansion for both schools would place our efforts at risk and place further pressure on the school budget.

Consequently we object to the proposed expansion program on the basis that:

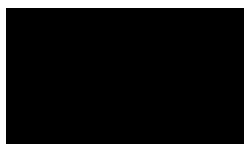
- The planned very significant and costly (£3.7m) expansion of two schools is disproportionate in the light of the LAS's own annual PAN forecasts for the next few years as referred to in the School Numbers on Roll – Summer 2014 (Final) tables
- It is an inefficient use of public funds when St. George's "a Good school" could easily accommodate to a two form entry in time for Sept 2015 at relatively little cost and absorb the forecast additional short term demand; other schools in the area have significant systemic spare capacity too
- The consultation publicity/process has lacked transparency of clear criteria to get the new facilities in place for September 2015

We have had visits from the Council and local politicians who agree that the school has made significant improvements which have been endorsed by Ofsted with a "Good" grading and "Outstanding" for pupil care and safeguarding. The LA has agreed that the school will feature prominently with growth plans and indeed have stated that the school's pupil numbers will increase. This however will be put at risk if the proposed expansion plans go ahead before capacity has been reached within our school.

Yours sincerely



Marea Rawlings
Headteacher



Stephen Titkin
Chair of Governors



22nd January 2015

Mr John Field
Chair of Governors
Leedon Lower School
Highfield Road
Leighton Buzzard
Beds LU7 3LZ

Dear Mr Field

Reference: Lower School Expansions

We write regarding the proposed expansion of Leedon and Clipstone Brook Lower schools.

The proposed very significant increase in the size of the two lower schools within close proximity of each other and very near to our catchment area cannot help but have a destabilising influence on pupil numbers at Beaudesert Lower School. We fear it could suffer a reduction in numbers during the next five years while the anticipated growth in pupil numbers synchronises with the faster increased availability of school places driven by these expansions and the other planned school building projects on the new estates. Beaudesert already has spare capacity available in most year groups. It has invested significant effort into driving up standards as seen in the 2014 KS1 and EYFS results.

The entire basis of the Council's plans are the forecast of required places for entry in September 2015. Now that the initial deadline for applications has passed, it is assumed that the total number of registered applications for the schools in the Leighton Buzzard area can be released (along with the comparable number registered by the deadline date in 2014 for entry in 2014) to substantiate these forecasts. Any shortfall in actual numbers compared to the planned expansions will adversely affect the other schools in the area that already have spare capacity.

Consequently we object to the scale of the proposed expansion program on the basis that

- a) the planned very significant expansion of both these two schools is disproportionate (φ) and
- b) it is an inefficient use of public funds while Beaudesert and other schools in the area have significant systemic spare capacity.

(φ) The catchment area of both schools extends eastwards to include areas such as Cherrycourt Way and Meadow Way which are physically nearer to Beaudesert than either Leedon or Clipstone Brook. There is confusion in the L.A's own planning documents – see below - about the need to meet short term increases in "local" demand and the longer term need driven by housing developments to the east and south of the town. There appears to be acknowledgement that the long term growth will be around the periphery of the town and not within easy walking distance of either Leedon or Clipstone Brook.



Healthy School



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The L.A's own School organisation plan states

*"2015-16 is a very high year in the lower school forecasts for South Leighton with a deficit of places of 2 forms of entry in that year alone, which, although not immediately sustained in 2016/17, is forecast to be required in the long-term as the area continues to see significant housing development. An additional 2 forms of entry will be required, on a permanent basis, from 2015-16 to cater for children living **within the catchment for South Leighton Schools, the exact form and location of this provision is still to be determined.** As demand is being driven by pupil yield from **new housing towards the South East of the town**, the additional places are likely to be provided through expansion of lower schools in this area. The Land East of Leighton housing development will eventually include two 2 form entry lower schools, or a total of 120 places per year group. The timing of the phased introduction of this new provision will be in line with the rate of development on site, but is expected to be required from **September 2017***

If it is accepted that, in any event, the majority of these young, lower school children will have to be driven/bussed to school, attendees at both of the aforementioned schools will inevitably have to navigate through the middle of town which suffers from severe traffic congestion while Beaudesert on Appenine Way with easy access to the A4012 Leighton Road offers far easier access.

Regards



Mrs. E. Cox
Head Teacher



Mr. S.M. Tiktin
Chair of Governors

Business Case for proposed school and academy expansion for September 2015 implementation.

Leedon Community Lower School, Highfield Road, Leighton Buzzard, Beds

1	<p>The need to provide local schools for local children, ensuring a sense of community belonging and also promoting sustainable modes of travel.</p>
	<p>The development of the area to the South East of Leighton Buzzard has led to increased demand on school places from September 2015 and beyond. Currently Leedon Lower is unable to meet demand of new applications for Reception Classes in September 2015. We already have a significant oversubscription of first choice place applications.</p> <p>It is important that all children are able to attend a school that is local to them. The proposed expansion of Leedon Lower means that children will be able to walk to school and therefore there will be no need for funded school transport.</p> <p>Being able to attend a local school means that children can develop a sense of identity and community as they move through the school system. Leedon Lower already caters for children from two years old and fosters the relationship that we have with families over the next seven years, becoming a 'Citizen of Leedon'.</p>
2	<p>The need to create schools that are of sufficient size to be financially and educationally viable.</p>
	<p>Currently the standard intake number is 60 children per year group from Reception onwards. We are already oversubscribed in one year group and would be again in September 2015 if the number remains the same. The current physical size of the school means that we cannot accommodate more than 60 children in any year group and we have no current classroom space to in which to expand.</p> <p>The projected size of the school will be 450 under the current expansion plans accommodating 90 children in each year group and this number falls within the boundaries of a healthy functioning lower school.</p> <p>The increased numbers would allow the school to expand over the course of five years building on the recent progress that the school has made (OFSTED July 2014 – graded 2 overall with outstanding behaviour and safety).</p> <p>The expansion of the school would not lead to a change in the 'family, community ethos' of Leedon Lower School. The increased numbers would give greater opportunities for middle and senior leaders as well as an opportunity to appoint a Deputy Head teacher who would be non-class based.</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>Leedon Lower secured an OFSTED judgement of good in July 2014 after the appointment of a new head teacher in January 2014. OFSTED stated that the school was 'outstanding' in the category of behaviour and safety and complemented the swift progress that the school had made in recent months.</p> <p>Leedon Lower is part of Learning Community 2 (LC2), which fosters strong relationships between schools within the cluster. LC2 provides support, CPD, cross phase and school collaboration and a strong feeling of community and being part of a 'journey', through good schools.</p> <p>Parents want to send their children to Leedon Lower School and we have over 100 applications for September 2015 as well as in year entries (through parental choice) in all year groups.</p>

	<p>Our current school development plan is focused on achieving outstanding education whilst managing the increase in numbers and the pressure on the current site. In future years our priority will be to ensure that our standards will continue to be exceptional.</p> <p>Our results in Early Years saw 45% of children making a good level of development (up from 10% in 2013). Outcomes in Year 2 in 2014 matched national expectations with 2015 results set to exceed these.</p> <p>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 curriculum change.</p>
4	<p>The potential to further promote and support robust partnerships and learning communities</p> <p>Leedon Lower is a strong voice in LC2 taking on a leadership role within both the Lower School and cluster wide workings. Leedon is a focal point for both Nurture Based learning and Wellbeing as well as supporting other school with innovative curriculum design.</p> <p>Leedon promotes learning for the 'whole' child, using Forest Schools and cutting edge lesson feedback tools to extend learning and support staff CPD.</p> <p>Through collaboration at Leedon we are able to offer CPD throughout the year for all members of staff at little or no cost. We are able to easily work with other schools through pre set-up partnerships that are tried and tested.</p> <p>Lower schools meet each half term to discuss curriculum, assessment, pupil numbers, vulnerable children, behaviour partnerships and inclusion and SEND needs within the schools. We have a system of finding 'best value' across the town and support one another with resources when needed.</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 LC2 aims to promote collaboration amongst all the schools, which feed into Cedars and Vandyke Upper Schools. Leedon Lower is one of these schools. LC2 aims to provide for all children in this community continuity of pedagogy and curriculum, and shared expectations of progress, behaviour and ethos.</p> <p>Leedon Lower School also has an onsite pre-school (part of the school), Leedon's Little Learners who work as part of the school to provide continuity of education and progression as the children move into Reception class. All the Early Years staff work very closely together planning joint projects and learning opportunities as well as staff swaps, yearlong transition for all children and financial support for each other.</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 Coalition 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.</p> <p>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 Leedon 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 aim at Leedon is to educate the 'whole' child to prepare them for success and disappointment and how to deal with these things. We do not prepare the children for the next phase of their education; we support them to become independent thinkers and good citizens.</p>
7	<p>To seek opportunities to create inspirational learning environments for the school and to maximise community use.</p>
	<p>The objective of the school is to provide an up to date, inspirational environment for all the learners that attend the school. The Council will adopt a high standard of design and community engagement as part of its evaluation of the proposals for major new and expanding school provision in Central Bedfordshire. The school has been an integral part of the design process and will continue to be, making sure that the environments provided are suited to collaborative, independent working that is at the heart of Leedon's school curriculum.</p> <p>The current outdoor provision will be enhanced providing greater interest on the grounds and a larger hard standing area with better use made of some of the temporary provision on the site.</p> <p>The school is making a financial contribution to the development, focusing on the smoother working of 'day-to-day' school life and providing dual use of some new areas of the school.</p> <p>The school will retain the 'Leedon Farm' and this will be enhanced as the proposed new Key Stage 2 classrooms will be adjacent to the animals, therefore merging the indoors and the outdoors.</p>
8	<p>To promote the diversity of provision offered in Central Bedfordshire to increase opportunities for parental choice</p>
	<p>Leedon Lower School is a co-educational 2-9 years school currently providing places for 350 full and part time children. We are proud of our strong Values based curriculum and our community ethos.</p> <p>Leedon Lower is a strong member school of Learning Community 2, which serves the Leighton Buzzard, Linslade and Woburn areas and has close working relationships with all other schools within the wider cluster.</p>
9	<p>To support vulnerable learners in Area Special Schools and integrate appropriate Special Educational Needs provision within mainstream schools</p>
	<p>Leedon Lower School continues to provide education for children from all backgrounds with a variety of challenges and needs. We provide social and emotional support for all children through our Nurture ethos and specialist provision, which could be adapted for more children if required.</p> <p>We support the transfer of children both into the school and onto middle school, making sure that relationships are maintained and enhanced throughout.</p> <p>LC2 has a Vulnerable Child group that meets regularly offering support and advice to specialist workers across the town. As a learning community we also employ a Parent Support Advisor (PSA) who works with all schools offering family, group and 1 to 1 support after a simple school referral.</p>