

EXECUTIVE – 7 JULY 2015

Recommendation to Executive from the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 June 2015

CS/15/11. Proposals to amalgamate Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre with Gothic Mede Academy and The Lawns Nursery, Biggleswade with Biggleswade Academy Trust

The Executive Member for Education and Skills introduced a report that detailed the proposed amalgamation of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre with Gothic Mede Academy and the amalgamation of The Lawns Nursery, Biggleswade with Biggleswade Academy Trust.

The Head of School Organisation and Capital Planning advised these plans had taken longer than anticipated to bring to committee due to the election period and the inability to commence a consultation in one administration and to determine the proposals in another. Ward members present were unanimous in their support for the mergers. The date for legal transfer was proposed on 1 January 2016 and this would be stated in the Executive Report. On this occasion the Council would undertake the consultation on behalf of the schools, in parallel with each Academy which would be consulting on expanding to accommodate the nurseries.

In light of the report and clarification sort by Members, issues of concern were sought:-

- What element of risk existed for the Council if the mergers were not successful? The Head of School Organisation and Capital Planning advised all responsibility would transfer to the Academy with the exception of the building which would be leased by the Council and the Academies would be held to account for standards across the early years as part of their Ofsted inspections.
- Whether amalgamations of nurseries and academies had become more common place? The Director of Children's Services advised that amalgamations offered good continuity of education which in turn was good for a child.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That the Committee support the proposals to amalgamation of Arlesey Nursery School and Childcare Centre with Gothic Mede Academy and the amalgamation of The Lawns Nursery, Biggleswade with Biggleswade Academy Trust.**
- 2. That the Committee would look to support any school in Central Bedfordshire that wished to amalgamate year groups and provide continuity in the education of a child.**