

CASTLE LOWER SCHOOL: FULL 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.

Castle (Foundation) Lower School, Goldington Road, Bedford, MK40 3EP

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.

It is proposed that Castle Lower School will become a primary school catering for children aged 4 to 11 from 1 September 2015. From 1 September 2014 the new Year 5 pupils will remain in the school rather than transferring to middle school. In September 2015 the new Year 5 and 6 pupils will remain in the school.

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.

a) The publication date of the Statutory Notice is 14 January 2010. Comments and objections on the proposals to extend the upper age limit and enlarge the physical capacity are to be sent to the Local Authority by 25 February 2010 (6 weeks from publication). The notice was placed in the Bedfordshire Times and Citizen on 14 January 2010, and was posted at the main entrance of the school and other conspicuous places in the local area.

b) Objections or comments should be sent to Michael Gough, Assistant Chief Executive, Governance, Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP.

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.

At present the Bedford Borough Council's mainstream schooling is organised across three tiers:

Lower Schools - for pupils aged 4 to 9 years (Reception to Year 4)

Middle Schools - for pupils aged 9 to 13 years (Reception 5 to Year 8)

Upper Schools - for pupils aged 13 to 18 years (Year 9 to Year 13)

On 16 November 2009 the Council agreed a proposal for lower schools to become primary schools for pupils aged 4 to 11 (Reception to Year 6), for upper schools to become secondary schools for pupils aged 11 to 18 (Year 7 to Year 13) and for middle schools to close.

Statutory notices have now been published which invite comments and objections on the proposals for individual schools before any final decisions are taken about individual schools.

The Governing Body proposes to extend the upper age limit of the school and enlarge the physical capacity to establish a primary school with an age range from 4 years (Reception) to 11 years (Year 6).

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 Castle Lower School is 300 places. From 1 September 2014 the capacity will be increased to 360 and from 1 September 2015 to 420 places to accommodate the full primary age range.

- (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;

60 pupils are currently and will continue to be admitted in each relevant age 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;

See 2 and 5(b) above

- (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.

Not applicable

(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.

The number of pupils at the school at the time of publication of the proposals is 318.

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 Local Education Authority on behalf of the governing body.

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.

It is planned to relocate the off site playing field to utilise part of the site currently occupied by Newnham Middle School, Polhill Avenue, Bedford MK41 9QT

(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.

The site is currently owned by the North East Bedford Learning Trust and would continue to be so.

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;

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

Not applicable

(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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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;

The offsite playing field would be relocated to the Newnham Middle school site in Polhill Avenue, Bedford, MK41 7DT.

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

Less than 100 yards from the existing off site playing field (the sites are adjacent).

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

The proximity to the existing playing field.

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

The site will be fully accessible.

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

Not applicable

- (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.

Not applicable

Objectives

10. The objectives of the proposals.

The Council's aim is to raise the standards of educational attainment and opportunity in the Borough. To that end it proposes to change 4 – 9 lower schools to primary schools covering the 4 – 11 age range and to change 13 – 18 upper schools to secondary (11 – 18) schools. The proposals are designed to allow the Council to provide all young people in the Borough with a first class learning experience and opportunity for life-long learning.

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.

On 27 April 2009 the Mayor of Bedford Borough Council determined that the Council should consult widely on a proposal for lower and upper schools in the Borough to become primary or secondary schools respectively covering the 4-11 and 11-18 age ranges. Consultation commenced on 20 May and closed on 24 July. A copy of the School Organisation Review public consultation is included at Appendix 1. 1947 paper and electronic responses to the consultation were received from parents, school pupils, staff and governors, as well as from other interested parties, together with four petitions. Details of the process, minutes of all public consultation meetings and an analysis of the responses were included in a report to the Borough's Executive on 11 November 2009. This information is included at Appendix 2.

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.

The estimated overall costs of the Local Authority's proposals for converting all lower schools including Castle Lower School to primary schools in Bedford Borough is £27.2 million. The whole of this cost will be met by the Local Authority and none of this cost will be payable by any other party including the school governing body of Castle Lower School.

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).

The Bedford Borough Council confirms that it will make funds available from its capital programme, including Primary Capital Programme funding and Section 106 allocations, to undertake the necessary alterations and extensions to create primary schools for pupils aged 4 – 11 including Castle Lower School.

Age range

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

4 to 9

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;

Not applicable

- (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;

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

(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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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;

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

(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;

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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.

Not applicable

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;

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

- (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;

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

- (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

Not applicable

- (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.

Not applicable

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;

Not applicable

- (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;

Not applicable

- (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

Not applicable

- (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.

Not applicable

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.

Not applicable

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;

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

- (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).

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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.

No changes to the current offer are proposed.

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;

It is anticipated that the demand for places will remain as it is now. Additional places will be added to the school because it is proposed to add two year groups to the school.

- (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;

Not applicable

- (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.

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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).

Not applicable
