

The Report on Westfield School consultation on changing the school age range from 2019 onwards

December 2015

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Section 1

The Governing Body of Westfield School is now in a position to report on the outcome of consultation regarding:

Westfield School's consultation on changing the school age range from 2019 onwards.

School is situated in Bedford: MK40 4HW

The URN is 109666

The DfE number for Westfield School is 822/4072

Brief history

Westfield has been open since 1965 and was formerly a secondary school then became a middle school when the LA changed to a 3 tier system of education. Following local changes in other local schools we have our first Reception class in September 2015.

Alteration proposal to the age range

It is proposed that Westfield School will change its age range from a 4 to 13 years school to a 4 to 11 years primary school.

Implementation and stages of implementation

The proposal will be implemented on 1st September 2019. In September 2017 – Reception would be the normal point of entry into the school. Parents can still enter Westfield as an 'in-year' admission to other groups if places are available.

- In September 2019 – Westfield would no longer accommodate Year 7 and 8 pupils. Parents of Year 7 and 8 pupils would express a preference to join a secondary school entering for Years 8 and 9.

Capacity

The current capacity of the school is 430 pupil places and the school currently has 377 pupils on roll.

Following implementation, the proposed number on roll will eventually be 210.

We do not wish to alter our current admission number. From 2017 Reception will be the normal point of entry with 30 places annually, each September.

Objectives of our proposal to change the age range are:

It is believed that children benefit from a full Primary School setting within the strategic plan of Bedford Borough; designed to meet the learning needs of a child at both Key Stages 1 and 2 and lead them, seamlessly, into the subsequent three Key Stages.

Benefits of this proposal will be:

- the continuation of the curriculum, whereby we can ensure continuity within Key Stage 2 fully without having to consider the transition at Year 4
- we will be accountable for attainment at Key stage 1 and 2
- within the national curriculum we can ensure that there are no gaps in what the children are taught
- whole school planning which can map the progress of curriculum subjects all the way to Year 6 ensuring the foundations built lower down the school are carried through allowing all children to continue working in an environment that completes their entire primary education in one setting
- sustaining high standards of education and maintain the nurturing and well-being of children by providing a focused learning environment until the end of Year 6
- nurturing our children and helping them work together towards their aspirations in an environment they are used to
- offering children in Years R - 6 an exciting and innovative curriculum provision that meets their needs and supports them to achieve their full potential
- increasing parental choice with regard to the variety of primary options and opportunities that are being offered
- avoiding two transitions at the end of Years 4 and 8; ensuring that the provision at the school links with other local providers
- continue to drive up standards in Bedford Borough to meet the local area vision for development, including the progress of vulnerable groups
- aiding teacher recruitment and retention as fewer local authorities have a three tier system and teachers are trained for the two tier system

Consultation

An informal consultation process was carried out between 9th November 2015 and 18th December 2015; the outcome of this is outlined elsewhere in this report. Attached is a copy of the consultation document.

Who did we inform?

We informed and invited comments from a wide range of stakeholders and the wider community through a number of approaches. The major consultees were:

- Bedford Borough Council
- Parents of every registered pupil at the school
- Parents of potential pupils in our catchment area and in Early Years provision
- Staff who work at the school
- All other schools within Bedford Borough

A public meeting was held for parents and stakeholders:

23rd and 25th November 2015

A staff meeting was also held at School with teachers, teaching assistants, office staff, site agent and domestic staff invited.

25th November 2015

An electronic version of the consultation was placed for all stakeholders and interested parties on the school website.

We spoke to pupils about the process in Assembly.

Implementation

The context of the implementation is part of the wider plan by Bedford Borough Council, the Local Authority, which is currently consulting on facilitating a two-tier system of education in the Borough, commencing in September 2017. The Borough already has a number of primary and secondary schools currently operating.

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The purpose of this section of the proposal is to:

- Provide detailed information about the responses to the consultation process;
- Respond, in particular, to the areas of concern that have been raised as part of that process;
- Identify how the Governing Body will meet the objectives for changing the age-range, as set out in the consultation process.

The consultation with stakeholders covered a single proposal:

- **to Reduce the Age Range of Westfield School to a Single Phase Primary age 4 to 11 Provision for 2019-2020**

The Governing Body invited, through the consultation, responses to the following specific proposals:

- In September 2017 – Reception would be the normal point of entry into the school. Parents can still enter Westfield as an 'in-year' admission to other groups if places are available.
- In September 2019 – Westfield would no longer accommodate Year 7 and 8 pupils. Parents of Year 7 and 8 pupils express a preference to join a secondary school entering for Years 8 and 9.

- The School made it clear that there were no proposals to amend or consult on any changes to the current admissions criteria.

Summary of responses

A total of 2 written responses (1 in favour and 1 against) were received for the proposal plus some verbal questions and responses that arose from people who attended the consultation events or met with the Headteacher. In terms of this report, there will be a commentary derived from the specific feelings that respondents made.

The report will then detail:

- Areas of concern
- The school Governing Body's responses to comments raised through the consultation process

Proposal

Of the 5 people who expressed an opinion, the majority were in favour of the proposal (3), 1 expressed a view that the change would happen anyway with other changes within the Borough and 1 felt that within our community for KS3 pupils there is a greater need for a smaller middle school and that parent should have this option. Some did express concerns about certain elements of the consultation. These are detailed below, together with the governors' response to those concerns:

Areas of Concern

There were concerns regarding staffing and the restructuring process and how that will be managed.

Written responses:

Of the two written responses, one agreed and one disagreed with the proposal.

1 member of staff expressed the view that for KS3 pupils in our community there is a greater need for nurturing and that a smaller middle school environment rather than a large secondary school should remain an option for parents.

Governing Body response - the governors sympathise with this viewpoint, and the school will continue to work collaboratively with schools who have a KS3 provision with this being a necessary part of successful transition, as well as to ensure staff nurturing skills are effectively deployed.

Verbal responses:

1 parent expressed the view that he felt that the community believed it would happen anyway.

Governing Body response - the Governing Body noted the viewpoint of the parent.

The parents of another child said that they supported a 2 tier system of education and were happy with the accommodation at the school and what the school were doing.

Staff were concerned regarding restructuring due to being a Primary School and not having Secondary age pupils, as well as a reduction in pupil numbers. They were also concerned regarding the process for this.

Governing Body response -

The school will work with the Local Authority to ensure due processes are followed, as well as working with the Local Authority who have stated they will be supporting schools with staff redeployment within the Borough.