



Willington Lower School

Statutory proposal for school closure

Full Proposal Document

Name and contact details of the Local Authority or governing body publishing the proposal: Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP.

Name, address and category of the school proposed for closure: Willington Lower School, Church Rd, Willington, Bedford MK44 3QD. This school is a Community school.

Proposed closure date: 31 August 2017.

Objectives, reason for closure and why closure of the school is considered necessary

In July 2015 the Council wrote to all schools regarding the school system in Bedford Borough moving to a primary and secondary system with a single transfer at age 11. This would bring schools in Bedford in line with the vast majority of schools elsewhere in the country. Primary schools and a secondary school already exist in some parts of the Borough and several Upper Schools in the area already admit some pupils at age 11. The Borough consulted on the principle of a two - tier education system in November 2015. The principle received widespread support across the Borough; in January 2016, the Council's Executive agreed that the structure of education in Bedford Borough should change largely to two - tier from September 2017.

Willington and Cople Lower schools have been working closely together since July 2015 to implement the change to primary education in their area. The two schools formed a federation in 2016 and the federation governing body recommended to the Council that there should be a single primary school across the two sites of the existing Cople and Willington Lower Schools. This means that education provision continues in both villages and all the facilities at both schools can be used to provide a primary education for the benefit of the pupils and the wider community. The primary school will have larger year groups, avoiding split age range classes. To achieve this outcome, one of the existing schools must be deemed to be the continuing school. The Borough Council is proposing that this will be Cople Lower school. The age range for this school will be extended and the school will expand onto the Willington Lower School site and accommodation currently used by Willington Lower School thereby retaining the land and buildings to accommodate the new primary school. Willington Lower School will close with effect from 31 August 2017.

The Council believes that in bringing these two schools together their knowledge and expertise combined will provide even better education and will also enable the



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school to educate pupils to the end of the primary phase so bringing the school in line with the majority of other Borough lower schools.

Particular benefits of this proposal will be:

- the continuation of the curriculum, whereby there is continuity within Key Stage 2 fully without having to consider the transition at Year 4
- a single school will be accountable for attainment at Key stage 1 and 2
- a single school will mean a Published Admission Number of 30 with one year group per class
- within the national curriculum a single school 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, is carried through allowing all children to continue working in an environment that completes the entire primary education in a single 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 children and helping them work together towards their aspirations in the same organisation
- 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 transitions at the end of both Year 4 and Year 8; ensuring that the provision at the school links with other local providers
- to 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, with fewer and fewer local authorities having a three tier system, the teacher education institutions no longer deliver middle years education training.
- with transfer at 11, the same school will be able to deliver the whole of KS2 and be accountable for progress from KS1 to KS2
- transition points will match the end of national curriculum key stages and be in line with 95% of the country.

Problems with different arrangements across the borough for schools are that:

- the system is confusing for parents
- low numbers of middle schools nationally mean difficulties in recruitment
- teachers are no longer trained for the middle years.



Pupil numbers and admissions

There are currently 58 pupils on roll at the school.

	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Total
Boys	8	3	5	9	7	32
Girls	4	10	5	3	4	26
Total	12	13	10	12	11	58
SEN	0	0	3	4	2	9

9 pupils are recorded as having special educational needs. The school's age range is 4 - 9 years, and provision is available for boys and girls. There is no boarding provision.

Details of the schools at which displaced pupils will be offered places

School places will continue to be required for this age range in the area. Moving to two tier means that the school places will now be in primary schools and secondary schools instead of being in lower, middle and upper schools. The Council is supporting expansion where this is required.

If the proposal is approved all pupils will have a clear path for their education.

All Pupils will transfer automatically onto the roll of Cople Lower School, the continuing school, for September 2017. No application will be required. No pupil on roll at Willington Lower School will be left without a school place.

Impact on the community

No impact on the community is anticipated.

Balance of denominational provision

Not applicable

Rural primary schools

Willington lower school is a designated rural school. The Council has carefully considered section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Education provision in Willington will continue if the related proposal for Cople Lower School is approved.

Maintained nursery schools

Not applicable

Provision for 16-19 year olds

Not applicable

Special educational needs (SEN) provision

Willington Lower School does not have a provision that is reserved for pupils with special educational needs.



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Travel

There will be travel implications for some pupils as it is currently intended that older pupils will be educated on the Cople site. The Council is looking at this jointly with the federation governing body.

Related proposals

This proposal is related to the proposal to enlarge and alter the upper age limit of Cople Lower School from 1 September 2017.

Statement on procedure for obtaining copies of this proposal.

Any person wanting a copy of this proposal can do so by contacting Fran Cox, SEND Project Officer, Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP or by e-mailing: fran.cox@bedford.gov.uk

Statement on procedure for commenting on the proposal, either to object or support

Any person or organisation may object or make comments on the proposal can do by sending them to: Colin Foster, Assistant Director – Chief Education Officer, Children's and Adults' Services, Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP.

All comments must be received by 5pm on Friday 10th February 2017