

The Report on Camestone Lower School consultation on changing the school age range from 2017 onwards

January 2016



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Section 1

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

Camestone Lower School's consultation on changing the school age range from 2017 onwards.

Camestone Lower School is situated in the town of Kempston: MK42 8NW



The URN is 109462

The DfE number for Camestone Lower School is 822/2062

Brief history

Camestone Lower School was built in 1977 as part of the basic need programme to meet the needs of areas of housing development. Unlike some of its older counterparts in the town, it was constructed as a purpose-built lower school as part of a programme that was almost exclusively restricted to urban areas and commuter villages.

Camestone Lower School is a happy, lively place where everyone is expected to work hard, try their best and achieve their full potential. We believe in a strong relationship between home and school and that working together with families is the best way to ensure success for the children.

Our Ofsted report (July 2013) stated:

- Camestone is a 'Good' school.
- Pupils make good progress during their time at school and attain above-average standards in English and Mathematics.
- Pupils behave well. They feel very safe, are polite, attend regularly and enjoy school.
- There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are providing good leadership which has led to the better rates of pupil progress.

Alteration proposal to the age range

It is proposed that Camestone Lower School will extend its age range from a 5 to 9 years Lower School to a 5 to 11 years Primary School.

Implementation and stages of implementation

The proposal will be implemented on 1st September 2017.

- In September 2017 – Year 4 children will have the option to remain at the school and become a new Year 5
- In September 2018 – Year 5 children will remain at the school and become a new Year 6

Capacity

The current capacity of the school is 300 pupil places and the school currently has 282 pupils on roll.

Following implementation, the proposed capacity will increase to 420 places.

We do not wish to alter the admission number. This is 60 places annually, each September.

However, in September 2017 a new Year 5 will be created and in September 2018 a new Year 6 will be created to enable pupils, who would have had to leave the school at the end of Year 4, the opportunity to remain at Camestone Lower School.

Objectives of our proposal to change the age range are:

- To provide for continuation of the curriculum, whereby we can ensure continuity within Key Stage 2 without having to consider the interruption of transition at the end of Year 4.
- Within the national curriculum (that we chose to follow) we can ensure there are no gaps in what the children are taught
- Whole school planning 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.
- To sustain high standards of education and maintain the nurturing and well-being of children by:
 - nurturing our children and helping them work towards their aspirations in an environment they are used to

- providing a values based, Primary focused learning environment to the end of Year 6
- To offer children in Years R - 6 an exciting and innovative curriculum provision that meets their needs and supports them to achieve their full potential.
- To increase parental choice with regard to the variety of primary options and opportunities that are being offered.
- To avoid two transitions at the end of Years 4 and Year 8; ensuring that the provision at Camestone Lower School links seamlessly with other local providers.
- To help drive up standards in Bedford Borough and meet the local area vision for development including the progress for vulnerable groups.
- To aide teacher recruitment and retention as fewer and fewer authorities have three tier 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
- Our local communities and our current site users
- All other schools within Bedford Borough
- The Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses
- Anyone else who has an interest in the proposal

Public meetings were held for parents and stakeholders:

24th November 2015: School Hall 14.15-15.15 (parents)

24th November 2015: School Hall 18.30- 19.30 (parents, staff and wider community)

A staff meeting was also held at Camestone Lower School on 4th November 2015.

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

A paper copy of the consultation was given to all parents of registered children.

A letter was given to feeder Preschools for distribution to parents of registered children.

We spoke to pupils about the process in Assembly and the School Council held a discussion.

Implementation

The context of the implementation is part of the wider plan by Bedford Borough Council, the Local Authority, that 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.



The Report on Camestone Lower School's consultation on changing the school age range from 2017 onwards.

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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:

From September 2017, should Year 5 pupils remain at Camestone Lower School, Jowitt Avenue, Kempston, Bedford and move into Year 6 from 2018.

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

- From September 2017 – Year 4 pupils should remain at Camestone Lower School and move into a year 5 class and then into year 6 in 2018. Camestone Lower School's age range changes from 5 to 9 years to 5 to 11 years
- The School made it clear that there were no proposals to amend or consult on any changes to the current admissions criteria.

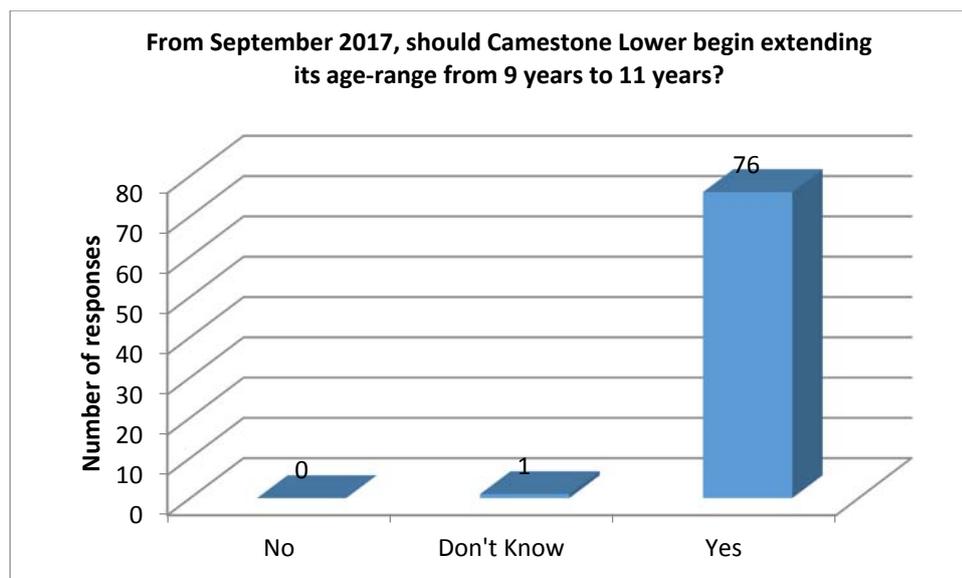
Summary of responses

A total of 77 written responses were received for the proposal plus some verbal questions and responses that arose from the people who attended the consultation events. In terms of this report, there will be an indication of the responses received in graphical form and 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 77 people who expressed a firm opinion in this way, the vast majority were in favour of the proposal (76, 1, 0). There were many positive responses about the standard of education at the school and statements in support of the proposal.

However, some of these people also expressed concern about certain elements. In addition, those stakeholders who attended the Consultation Events also asked questions and raised concerns. All concerns are detailed below, together with the governors' response to those concerns. The key issue of each concern is highlighted in bold print. Where this general concern is repeated by another stakeholder, the number of times is shown in brackets (e.g. x1)

Concerns: Buildings, Funding & Facilities

My only concern is whether any **building work would affect the children** i.e. through excess noise or disruption? Would most of the building work be done in school holidays? (x2)

Our only reservation at this time would be space to **accommodate more classrooms and will outdoor space be retained?** (x3)

Will Governors have input with regards to the site of new buildings?

Will it be a phased building and **what are the timescales?**

Is there **confidence in Bedford Borough** to provide the funding needed for conversion especially considering budget cuts?

When is **funding** expected to be agreed?

Who funds the **resources in the classrooms?**

Would you still be able to provide **science and sport facilities** as the middle schools do?

I feel that we need a **hall large enough** to cope with the demands of Years 5 and 6 as our current hall, nor flooring, is fit for purpose as an **indoor physical activity facility**.

Governing Body Response: Buildings, Funding & Facilities

A feasibility study has been carried out by Borough and they have agreed the need for 4 classrooms, additional parking for staff and hall space.

It is expected that the new buildings will be standalone. Full consideration will be given to the site of the new buildings within the constraints of the budget provided.

Governors are committed to retaining as much green space as possible and the buildings having as little impact as possible on neighbours

The date of building works will be agreed with Borough appointed contractors. Governors are keen to ensure the building is managed to ensure minimal impact on teaching and learning. Communication will be key in terms of noise and other disruption.

Buildings are expected to be modular and therefore contractors' time on site is shorter.

Bedford Borough have committed funding to the process of conversion. They have received proposals and bids from all schools involved and analysed the funding impact. Provisionally classroom funding has been agreed.

Funding for the 'extras' (i.e. Hall space) is being sought from alternative funding sources by the Borough. The outcome of this is expected during spring/summer 2016.

Funds to equip the classrooms and equipment for the year 5 and 6 curriculum will be financed by the schools budget.

All elements of the Primary Curriculum are deliverable to a high standard with the facilities we currently have at Camestone.

The School Field is large enough to have a pitch marked out for hockey, football, rugby etc. and the playground is ideal for netball and other ball games such as tennis.

We will also be looking to further enhance our already very good links with local schools, to provide opportunities to share resources, specialist teaching and create opportunities for competitive games and competitions, similar to the opportunities that Year 5 and 6 currently experience.

The Primary Science curriculum is easily deliverable within the classroom environment, with the level of investigation, experimentation and practical work being appropriate to the demands of the curriculum. Whilst our children have previously been very fortunate to use the Science Labs in Years 5 and 6 at Middle School, this is not a typical experience for Upper Primary age children. The Governing Body are committed to providing our children with the best possible education. To this end we will be investing in more Science equipment, aimed at the upper Primary years to ensure we can offer high quality teaching and learning.

Concerns: Pupil Numbers and Transition

Are there **sufficient children** for all the Lower schools in Kempston to go Primary? If the school is not full presumably this will impact funding? Are there **sufficient children for 2 Secondary schools in Kempston**?

I am concerned that at Year 7 my child will be expected to join a secondary school with the influence of much older age groups and in a larger school.

How will children be **supported through this period of change**?

Governing Body Response: - Pupil Numbers and Transition

Camestone will continue to be a 2 form entry and therefore will not impact on the intake numbers.

Bedford Borough have calculated pupil numbers and accounted for local house building. Kempston is expected to have 2 secondary schools under the proposal. One smaller, (Daubeney) one larger (Hastingsbury/RBMS). Hastingsbury and RBMS have converted to Academy status under Challenger Multi-Academy Trust. Daubeney is in discussion with Challenger Multi-Academy Trust.

There will be various secondary options available. In Kempston, Daubeney and Hastingsbury, locally, Bedford Free School and Bedford Academy. Under the proposals, Daubeney and the Free School are 'small' Secondaries, Hastingsbury and Bedford Academy larger. It will be parental choice.

Camestone will, as a minimum, continue with current transition arrangements by liaising with local schools to ensure smooth transition for the pupils.

Currently the Transition to Year 5 at the end of Year 4 is managed very carefully, providing the children with a well thought out, thorough transition programme. We see no need to alter this style of transition and will continue to work closely with all local schools to prepare our children as well as we can for the transfer to Year 7.

The Governing Body feel that the extra two years at Camestone will allow our pastoral support and social and emotional support to continue, allowing children to naturally mature further before making the change to Secondary School.

Concerns: Staffing

Is there recent **experience of teaching years 5 and 6** in a primary school amongst the teaching staff?

I am concerned that Teaching staff who have worked in Bedford Borough for some time will not have **experience of teaching in a Primary environment**.

Governing Body Response: - Staffing

Camestone have staff who have worked in primary education out of the County within the past 5 years. Our staff are Primary specialists and we would look to recruit 4 new Teachers with the appropriate training, experience and specialisms required to develop the school as a whole. Years 5 and 6 will not be staffed solely by new recruits but it is anticipated there will be a mixture to retain the ethos of the school. Staffing of each year group is reviewed annually.

Concerns: School Life and Community

Will the current hall able to contain the whole Primary school to enable the **whole school community** to get together?

What is proposed for the already problematic **parking** situation? (x2)

Would you consider an **additional access route** to ease morning congestion? (x1)

How do you propose to keep the **family feel** of Camestone?

Are there any plans for **wrap-around provision** as currently offsite external providers are used? (x4)

Governing Body Response - School Life and Community

The whole school to age 11 could fit in the Hall, although not comfortably. For occasional joint celebrations this is possible. Key Stage and Phase assemblies will also continue.

The additional age groups will bring a positive contribution to the school. Currently year 4 act as play-leaders, year 3 are reading buddies with Foundation. This will be extended.

The values education will continue and the ethos of the school will remain.

Parent engagement during the lower years will ensure parents also feel part of the school community in years 5 and 6. Relationships built will enable parental engagement to continue.

Wrap around provision will be considered.

The School Travel Plan will be revised and updated, with surveys undertaken. During this process additional access routes will be considered. We will also liaise with the Highways Agency and continue our work encouraging families to walk to school.

Concerns: Local Authority

Would have been helpful if Central Beds had converted too?

My only concern for this proposal would be **accommodating the pupils who are in 'the middle' and in 'limbo'**. What would the authorities do about this situation?

Governing Body Response: Local Authority

Pupils who move from Year 4 to 5 in 2016 will continue to attend their appointed Middle School as planned. Under the proposals, the Middle School will then convert to Secondary providing education to age 16+ with no further need for transition. (NB. Those feeding into Central Bedfordshire Upper Schools may remain Middle Schools and transition will continue at Year 8. Schools in the Wootton Upper School Cluster are remaining three-tier).

Should parents wish to change school, this is parental choice and dependant on the admission arrangements of the receiving school.

Please refer to the Bedford Borough Consultation Report on the website.