

This is the third in a regular series of BEST newsletters to keep our parents, staff and the community informed on two-tier education conversion in the Central Bedfordshire area.

CONCERN OVER LACK OF PROGRESS SO FAR

As we reach the end of the academic year, I wanted to update you on the Schools for the Future programme.

As you will know, this is Central Bedfordshire Council's plan to convert schools to the primary/secondary model of education – also known as two-tier – to cater for future growth.

This is an exciting time and at BEST we are firmly committed to the transition – although our support is conditional on the five pledges (see below) CBC publicly committed to last year.

We believe a two-tier system will help us provide your children with the best possible learning experience.

THE PLEDGES

- 1** 5FE primary provision as part of the 0-18 all-through school
- 2** Entry to 0-18 all-through secondary for RBA feeder school pupils
- 3** CMA becoming a new build 2FE primary school
- 4** Additional sixth form provision on the SWA and ETA/PBA sites
- 5** Development of a joint solution to PFI-related issues on SWA site

Putting children first and improving their outcomes is a core value for BEST.

However, we must express our growing concern at the speed of progress to date.

The first schools – including Langford Village Academy – convert to two-tier this September. The rest of the Shefford and Stotfold cluster is due to change in 2023.

Please rest assured we are doing all we can to hold CBC to account for the five pledges and urge them to finalise the delivery plans.

We understand such plans are to be presented to the council's Executive in the autumn. At this time, we hope to be in a position to further support CBC in meeting its responsibilities.

We will keep you updated regularly and are happy to respond to any questions you have. Email our Chief Operating Officer Craig Smith at schoolsforthefuture@bestacademies.org.uk – or pass them on to your elected representative at CBC, which holds the funds and is responsible for ensuring pupil places.

Dr Alan Lee, CEO, Bedfordshire Schools Trust

THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AT YOUR SCHOOL

LANGFORD VILLAGE ACADEMY

Converting to a 1FE primary school in September 2021*



Latest progress: See main article overleaf for an update on the readiness of plans for this September and future school capacity.

CAMPTON ACADEMY

Expanding to a 2FE primary on a new site in September 2023*



Latest progress: BEST and the school have agreed to CBC plans for the new build and we look forward to building work starting. There is no set date for this yet, but the new site is still due for completion in 2023.

ETONBURY ACADEMY

Converting to a 7FE secondary school in September 2023*



Latest progress: There is still no agreed funding by CBC for the necessary building work for the new sixth form. This provision is a key part of the agreed five pledges and we continue to explore options with the council.

GOTHIC MEDE ACADEMY

Converting to a 3FE primary in September 2023 and moving to a new purpose-built site*



Latest progress: CBC has confirmed the planned new site will not be ready for 2023. We are in discussions to determine a new timeframe, and how the current site will be able to accept its first Year 5 intake in 2023.

**1FE (and so on) stands for 'one form of entry' and describes how many classes there are per year group. Each 'FE' equates to 30 places, so a 7FE secondary has an intake of 210 pupils a year*

SCHOOL REMODELLING FACING SUMMER DELAY

For both Langford Village Academy and BEST the imminent move to primary status in September this year is very exciting and we very much look forward to welcoming the first ever cohort of Year 5 learners at the school.

However, the school needs additional capacity and some remodelling to enable its buildings to be ready in time.

CBC has recently updated us there are now significant challenges to achieving this in time for September.

We are making every effort to apply pressure to ensure everything remains on track and we are keeping our affected parents fully informed as we move closer to the new academic year.



Concerns have also emerged about future capacity and whether an annual intake of 30 will be adequate – especially with significant house building approved for the area.

We have informed CBC there is a preference for the annual intake to grow to 60 (from its current 30).

Key stakeholders – including BEST, the school, Langford Parish Council and a parent – are working with CBC to review future need, with a clear aim of ensuring sufficient future capacity to serve the village itself as its first priority.

Consultation launches on Biggleswade cluster plans



CBC's Schools for the Future plan has taken another step forward as proposals for the Biggleswade cluster have gone out to public consultation.

BEST is supportive of the plans, which include Lawnside Academy becoming a primary school and moving 0.7 miles into the current Edward Peake CofE VC Middle School site. That school, in turn, is due to relocate to a new secondary location on land east of Biggleswade.

We encourage families to comment on the proposals before the consultation closes on 28 September. The relevant documents can be found [on our website](#).

GRAVENHURST ACADEMY

Converting to a 1FE primary school in September 2023*



Latest progress: The school has given feedback on the latest redevelopment plans to CBC and is waiting to see the revised layout plans and designs. There is increasing concern about the pace of progress and ensuring readiness for primary conversion from 2023.

PIX BROOK ACADEMY

Converting to a 7FE secondary school in September 2023*



Latest progress: The school will not need substantial building work to convert in 2023, as Pix Brook was built with secondary provision in mind. Talks with CBC are expected to start soon.

ROBERT BLOOMFIELD & SAMUEL WHITBREAD ACADEMIES

Becoming a 0-18 all-through school in September 2023



Latest progress: Progress is slow on the ambitious plans to bring the two schools together as one new 0-18 all-through school. BEST and both schools have expressed concerns to CBC about this, and dialogue between us all continues as we seek to have plans finalised.

LAWNSIDE ACADEMY

Converting to a 2+FE primary school and moving site in September 2024*



Latest progress: See story, *left*, for full details about the launch of the Biggleswade cluster public consultation.

For more information on two-tier conversion visit www.bestacademies.org.uk/twotier – or email us at schoolsforthefuture@bestacademies.org.uk