

This is the second in a regular series of BEST newsletters to keep our parents, staff and the community informed on two-tier education conversion in the Shefford and Stotfold cluster.



## CONVERSION PLANS ARE GATHERING PACE

There's been lots of work happening behind the scenes on two-tier reorganisation since our first newsletter, which we issued just before Christmas.

We're delighted to share the latest developments affecting every BEST school in the cluster, which you can find in the gold panel on the right and overleaf.

In the past few months, we have been working closely with Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) as its internal processes move towards their next critical phases.

The entire two-tier project is wholly underpinned by public funding, and the local authority's plans for the cluster look set to be determined by executive members this June.

While agreement by councillors would be a landmark moment, it would be just one step further along the path to reorganisation. CBC's plans would still need to go to our Board of Trustees, before being submitted for approval from the Regional Schools Commissioner.

BEST Trustees will assess the plans against our five pledges – established after the public consultation we carried out in 2020 – which our support for two-tier is conditional upon.

Understandably at this stage, before anything concrete has been signed off by our political representatives, our updates have been mostly about the physical environment – plans for new sites, new buildings and such like. >>

## THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AT YOUR SCHOOL

### LANGFORD VILLAGE ACADEMY

*Converting to a 1FE\* primary school in September 2021*



**Latest progress:** Final plans for the physical changes needed to the site are nearly agreed with CBC – we have all worked hard to ensure the school will have what it needs in place as it welcomes its first Year 5 group this September. CBC is managing the building work and will ensure it is ready in time.

In other news, the new nursery build is now complete, *left*, and has been handed over – ready to open its doors straight after Easter!

### CAMPTON ACADEMY

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



**Latest progress:** Initial plans for the new build have been further developed by CBC with the school and BEST involved all the way through the process. The new build will have an intake of 60 and also offer 60 nursery places to the local community. Further developments have taken place in terms of preparing the site, so the plans for the school are progressing well.

### ETONBURY ACADEMY

*Converting to a 7FE\* secondary school in September 2023*



**Latest progress:** Further meetings have taken place to develop the plans for the site. Initial architect designs have been shared with the school and BEST. These plans include a new sixth form block – for which funding still needs to be agreed – but the school is very keen to see this developed for 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*

But the real challenge for us is to make sure we continue to provide a high quality educational experience for all pupils at every single BEST school.

Our core value at BEST is to always put children first, and you can rest assured that remains at the forefront of our minds as we look towards teaching in a primary-secondary model.

We have started to work on key operational issues and recognise we need clear plans for pupil admission numbers, the curriculum, staffing structures etc. We will now be undertaking more detailed work on all of these issues.

## OUR 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

The move to two-tier is an exciting time for us all. However, we appreciate that many families may feel apprehensive about such a major transformation to education provision.

There are issues parents will want to know about now – admissions arrangements, transport, uniform etc – that we do not have the answers to at this moment. These details can only be worked on once CBC'S plans have been finalised.

But we do pledge to provide you with all the information we are able to, as timely as possible.

## YOU ASKED, WE ANSWERED...

**Q:** We have concerns about practical issues such as uniform. To invest in uniform for two schools in a two-year period is a heavy investment. What plans do you have to minimise the financial impact on families?

**A:** Whilst we do not have the final detail at this stage, we will ensure parents are not expected to fund additional uniforms due to the organisational changes.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to email us after our first newsletter. Your questions, like this one above, and your views really do matter to us.

Got a query about what's happening? You can find a list of FAQs at [www.bestacademies.org.uk/twotier](http://www.bestacademies.org.uk/twotier)

Email [schoolsforthefuture@bestacademies.org.uk](mailto:schoolsforthefuture@bestacademies.org.uk) if you don't find the answers you're looking for.

### GOTHIC MEDE ACADEMY

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



**Latest progress:** We are awaiting updates from CBC on whether its plans for the new site will be for 2023 or a later date. If the latter, we will work closely with CBC to ensure the current site continues to offer a great learning environment as the school becomes a primary in 2023.

### GRAVENHURST ACADEMY

*Converting to a 1FE\* primary school in September 2023*



**Latest progress:** Further designs have been shared, with the school and BEST providing feedback on these plans to ensure the school is appropriately equipped to become a primary from 2023. We expect more updates to follow.

### PIX BROOK ACADEMY

*Converting to a 7FE\* secondary school in September 2023*



**Latest progress:** With minimal work needed to prepare the new build for conversion, we are working to prepare the site ready for 2023. The school was built to accommodate 1,260 pupils so there is sufficient space for secondary plans for Pix Brook.

### ROBERT BLOOMFIELD & SAMUEL WHITBREAD ACADEMIES

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



**Latest progress:** We have worked very closely with CBC to ensure the BEST vision for the new 0-18 school is incorporated into the design and build stages. We are clear that the best of both schools coming together impacts across all aspects of the work including the physical environment – we hope to be able to finalise agreement with CBC shortly and then share more widely soon.