

This regular newsletter series is designed to keep our parents, staff and the community informed on two-tier education conversion currently taking place in Central Bedfordshire.

TWO-TIER PLANS MOVING ALONG ACROSS CLUSTER

Since Central Bedfordshire Council's revised cluster plan for Shefford and Stotfold was agreed at Easter, there has been lots of activity at school level to develop plans for each BEST academy converting to either primary or secondary.

We are still expecting the second phase to transition in September 2025, subject to CBC being able to complete the necessary work at all schools and secure the funding.

Work so far at school level has been to initially undertake viability studies (a high-level exercise to check the main criteria are met for conversion to a two-tier system).

These then progress to full feasibility studies, where detailed plans are developed in conjunction with each school.

Most BEST schools are currently at this stage and we are awaiting final plans from the architects and designers (see the side panel for a school-by-school update).

After the feasibility studies are completed we expect CBC to confirm capital funding approval before we move into the next stage of design and build, where required. CBC will project manage any building work on behalf of all schools in the cluster.

We are hoping by summer 2023 all capital funding will be in place and site plans finalised, while we will also be working to secure appropriate approvals from the Department for Education. All this should then support the expectation of two-tier conversion for the remainder of the cluster in 2025.

Dr Alan Lee, CEO, Bedfordshire Schools Trust

School relocation approved

CBC has given the go-ahead for a £14.1m expansion and relocation of Campton Academy, which will see the school move to a new site in Shefford.

The oversubscribed school, which currently has a PAN of 26 pupils on its existing site in Rectory Road, Campton, will be able to take in 60 pupils per year group at the new location.

The land for the school's new home is part of the >>

THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AT YOUR SCHOOL

CAMPTON ACADEMY

Expanding to a 2FE* primary on a new site in September 2025



See story bottom left. The project is subject to approval from the Department for Education's Regional Director for the East of England. We will now be submitting a business case for consideration, with capital support from CBC.

ETONBURY ACADEMY

Converting to a 6FE* secondary school in September 2025



A feasibility study is under way for Etonbury and both the school and BEST are working hard to ensure this dovetails with the new sixth form opening in September 2023.

GOTHIC MEDE ACADEMY

Converting to a 3FE* primary in September 2025 and moving to a new purpose-built site



We are working with CBC to ensure the school is ready for conversion to primary – we are still awaiting updates on the proposed new build and when it will be constructed.

GRAVENHURST ACADEMY

Converting to a 0.5FE* primary school in September 2025



A detailed feasibility study is under way with plans developing to ensure the school is ready for primary status.

*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 (PAN) of 210 pupils



Campton Academy's new home will be located on Hitchin Road, Shefford, neighbouring the sports club

approved planning application for Hillfoot Fields, a 150-home site currently being developed next to Shefford Sports Club.

Building work could start next spring and the new school is expected to be ready in September 2024. Campton will initially move as a lower school, before converting to a primary in 2025.

Principal Sarah Fraher said: "Staff are incredibly excited by all the possibilities a purpose-built site will bring.

"We can now start planning for our future and are looking forward to working with BEST, our families and the wider community to ensure current and future pupils continue to access to outstanding teaching and pastoral opportunities."

BEST Chief Executive Officer Dr Alan Lee said: "All at BEST are thrilled that Campton Academy will get the new build they and the community richly deserve.

"Campton is an Outstanding school, with exceptional teaching and learning and pastoral care. These are truly exciting times for Campton, BEST and the wider community."

Lawnside change of age consultation launches

We are currently running a consultation as part of our application to the Department for Education to change the age range at Lawnside Academy.

The application is in line with the Biggleswade cluster plan as set out in the Schools for the Future programme, which will see the area transition to the two-tier model in September 2024.

The consultation will run until Tuesday 29 November, 2022. Visit the BEST website for details on how to respond.



LANGFORD VILLAGE ACADEMY

Converted to a 1FE (under review) primary school in 2021*



Although already converted, a feasibility study is currently taking place to review the PAN size. The school is currently back to a PAN of 45 but is trying to secure a PAN of 60.

PIX BROOK ACADEMY

Converting to a 6FE secondary school in September 2025*



A feasibility study is in progress, although there are not expected to be any major capital developments on site.

ROBERT BLOOMFIELD ACADEMY

Converting to a 5FE secondary school in September 2025*



The feasibility study here is under way with the clear aim of developing a high quality secondary school site – the school is awaiting detailed plans from CBC.

SAMUEL WHITBREAD ACADEMY

Converting to a 7FE secondary school in September 2025*



While there are not expected to be major developments on site, a feasibility study is still in progress to ensure full secondary provision fits the needs of the area.

LAWNSIDE ACADEMY

Converting to a 2FE primary school and remaining on its current site in September 2024*



See story, left. The feasibility work is developing while the school and BEST are undertaking a statutory consultation on the proposed move to primary provision. Our application to the Department for Education's Regional Director is expected to follow in the new year, subject to the outcome of the consultation.