

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

CONVERSION PLANS PROGRESSING ACROSS CLUSTERS

Since our last newsletter in November 2022, plenty of activity has been taking place across BEST on two-tier developments that we would like to update you on.

Lots of work is happening behind the scenes to ensure our schools will be ready for the transition.

In the Shefford and Stotfold cluster, seven BEST schools are still waiting to convert as part of the second phase, which is expected to take place in September 2025.

Feasibility and viability studies have been progressing well, and school/BEST leaders have met regularly with CBC representatives to develop plans (see page two for a full school-by-school progress update, plus both panels on the right).

As stated in our last issue, we had hoped all capital funding would be approved and site plans finalised by summer 2023.

While we are doing all we can to get our schools ready, BEST is ultimately not the decision-maker for the Schools for the Future programme and we currently await confirmation from CBC that everything is in place for the cluster.

Meanwhile, in the Biggleswade cluster, plans are moving at pace ahead of the planned transition for schools in the town in September 2024.

The exciting developments for Lawnside Academy are almost ready to be unveiled (see panel, right) and we are looking forward to sharing them with our community.

Dr Alan Lee, CEO, Bedfordshire Schools Trust

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

Campton's move to new location suffers setback



The relocation of Campton Academy to a new site on the edge of Shefford has been delayed.

It had been hoped the school would move to a new purpose-built home on Hitchin Road, next to Shefford Sports Club, *pictured*, in September 2024 – ahead of its expected conversion from lower to primary in 2025.

However, CBC has informed parents at the school the timeline is no longer possible.

“We realise that this may be disappointing news, but the process of transferring the land has taken longer than anticipated,” CBC’s letter to parents stated. “We apologise for any disruption this may cause.”

DfE gives approval to Lawnside age change

The Secretary of State for Education has approved the change of age range at Lawnside Academy.

The signing of the Deed of Variation to the Funding Agreement means the school can now legally convert to a primary school, as part of the Biggleswade cluster conversion which is due to take place in September 2024.

With capital funding for the cluster approved by CBC’s Executive earlier this year, the project is currently out to tender and we await to hear which contractor will be appointed.

Work at Lawnside is expected to start this autumn or winter, and will include the construction of a new six classroom block, a MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) as well as other facilities.

THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AT YOUR SCHOOL

CAMPTON ACADEMY

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



CBC Executive approved capital build costs in October 2022 for a new site in Shefford. This was expected to open as a lower school in 2024 before converting to primary in 2025.

See panel on front page for more details.

ETONBURY ACADEMY

Converting to a 6FE secondary school in September 2025*



No capital works are required for secondary conversion, although there will be an accommodation review. Outside of Schools for the Future, the school/BEST are delivering a 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 still awaiting updates on the proposed new build, but CBC has confirmed this will not be ready for 2025. Therefore, plans have been developed to enable a 2FE primary offer on the existing school site.

GRAVENHURST ACADEMY

Converting to a 0.5FE primary school in September 2025*



Plans have been developed and signed off with CBC to convert Gravenhurst to a 0.5FE primary school. Some building works for new primary facilities will be required.

**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*

LANGFORD VILLAGE ACADEMY

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



Having already converted to primary in 2021, a review of pupil numbers led to an agreement to revert to a PAN of 45 on a permanent basis. This will require additional building works.

LAWNSIDE ACADEMY

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



CBC Executive approved capital funding for the Biggleswade cluster in February 2023. Lawnside will benefit from additional capacity, including a six classroom block and a MUGA.

See panel on front page for more details.

PIX BROOK ACADEMY

Converting to a 6FE secondary school in September 2025*



No capital works are required for secondary conversion at Pix Brook, although there will be an accommodation review.

ROBERT BLOOMFIELD ACADEMY

Converting to a 5FE secondary school in September 2025*



There have been a series of meetings between CBC and RBA/BEST to develop plans to convert the school to a 5FE secondary. These plans are for internal works only, but these will deliver an exciting secondary offer with lots of additional facilities.

SAMUEL WHITBREAD ACADEMY

Converting to a 7FE secondary school in September 2025*



We have had many meetings with CBC to develop plans for secondary conversion. No external building work will be required.