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Shefford Road, Clifton, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5QS



24 October 2025

Re: Formal Consultation on the Proposal to Become an All-Through School and Changes to Admission Arrangements – Castle Newnham

Dear Parents/Carers, Staff and Members of the School Community

I am writing to update you on plans for Castle Newnham to officially become an all-through school from September 2026.

Our Vision: Becoming an All-Through School

The Trust Board and Local Committee of the Board (LCB) will submit an application to the Department for Education (DfE) to formally transition Castle Newnham into an all-through school, serving pupils from Reception through to Year 11. This would take effect from September 2026.

The schools already operate as an all-through provision. This structure aims to create a seamless and coherent 4–18 educational journey for all our pupils. It fosters greater consistency in teaching and learning, enables deeper cross-phase collaboration among our staff, and, most importantly, provides a guaranteed, stress-free transition for our current primary-age students into Year 7. We believe this continuity significantly benefits the academic achievement and pastoral well-being of every child.

The primary and secondary phase of Castle Newnham have worked together as an all-through school for some time, although they are legally two separate schools. To formalise this change, we will, on paper, have to close one school and extend the age range of the other. This is the technical process that the DfE require schools to go through in these circumstances. On a day-to-day basis, parents/carers and students will see little or no change, for example, both sites will still operate, uniform will not change etc.

There is not any anticipated change to staffing as all staff are employed by Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST). This plan also aligns with the recent announcement to appoint one Principal across both phases of the school.

To formalise this change, we will need to open a statutory consultation, which I detail further below.

Dr Alan Lee
CEO & National Leader of Education



Campton Academy, Castle Newnham, Etonbury Academy, Gothic Mede Academy, Gravenhurst Academy, Langford Village Academy, Lawnside Academy, Pix Brook Academy, Robert Bloomfield Academy, Samuel Whitbread Academy, St Christophers Academy, BEST Nurseries

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Proposed Changes to Admission Arrangements (Effective September 2027)

A necessary consequence of moving to an all-through model is a change to our Year 7 admissions policy, which will come into effect for the September 2027 intake.

We are proposing the following key changes to our admission procedures for Year 7:

1. **Automatic Progression:** The standard external Year 7 application process will be removed for our internal primary pupils, as they will be guaranteed a place and automatically progress to the secondary phase.
2. **External Entry:** To maintain access for pupils currently attending other primary schools, we propose to admit a further 60 children in Year 7, contributing to a total PAN of 150 students (the same size as present – no reduction is proposed). This cohort size will consist of:
 - 90 students progressing automatically from our own primary phase
 - 60 places offered for external applications, allowing pupils from other schools to join our community at Year 7

In addition, we propose an adjustment to the oversubscription criteria for Year 7. We intend to:

1. Remove current criteria no. 2 ‘Pupils who attend Castle Newnham (Primary) and Hazeldene School’ – *change proposed to accommodate the new all-through structure*
2. Add new criteria no. 4 ‘Children who attend Hazeldene School, The Hills Academy, Goldington Green Academy, Putnoe Primary School, Brickhill Primary School and Renhold Primary School – *addition proposed to recognise local cluster of schools*

See attached proposed admission arrangements for full list of oversubscription criteria.

This adjustment ensures that while our current primary pupils benefit from continuity, we still welcome a substantial number of pupils from the wider community, bringing our Year 7 intake up to a total capacity of 150.

The Consultation Process

This letter formally opens a public consultation period on both the structural proposal to become an all-through school (from September 2026) and the consequential changes to the admission arrangements (for September 2027).

We warmly invite all stakeholders—including parents, staff, prospective parents, other local schools, and community representatives—to share their views.

Consultation Period

Opens	9am on Friday 24 October 2025
Closes	5pm on Friday 5 December 2025

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How to Submit Your Views:

Your feedback is vital to our decision-making process. All comments and submissions will be considered by the Trust Board and LCB before any final application is made to the DfE.

Please submit your views by completing the google form linked [here](#). If you do not have access to facilities to complete this, you may submit your comments in writing to the following. However, please note that this must have been received by 5pm on Friday 5 December 2025.

Compliance Manager
Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST)
Shefford Road
Clifton
Bedfordshire
SG17 5QS

We will also be hosting a drop-in session to discuss the proposals and answer any questions on Wednesday 12 November 2025 between 3.30pm to 6pm in the Hall of the North Site (Polhill Avenue).

We look forward to receiving your valuable input as we plan this exciting chapter for Castle Newnham.

Yours faithfully



Dr Alan Lee
Chief Executive Officer

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CEO & National Leader of Education.



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