



BEDFORD  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Proposed Reorganisation of  
Schools in Bedford Borough:  
Broadmead Lower School

# **Statutory Notice Consultation**

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## Statutory Notice Consultation: Full Proposal Broadmead Lower

### Background to the Proposed Changes of Age Range, Expansions and Closure of Schools

Between 2015 and 2019, the majority of Bedford Borough Council's (BBC) schools moved to a two-tier primary/secondary school system, from the previous three-tier lower/middle/upper school system. At that time, the Wootton and Stewartby cluster of BBC schools chose to remain in a three-tier structure because of the cross-border relationship with Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC).

Now that the CBC have confirmed the Cranfield cluster are moving to two-tier, as part of their 'Schools for the Future' Programme, we are progressing the proposals for our Bedford Borough schools, in alignment to the linked consultations taking place in CBC.

Moving to a two-tier model of education will help to give children the best chance of getting the most from their education and mean that we:

- Align with the rest of the country,
- Align with the national curriculum key stages,
- Help improve educational attainment by not requiring children to change school in the middle of a key stage of the curriculum,
- Help attract and retain teachers who are usually trained for either primary or secondary education,
- Provide a clearer pathway for parents with a common age of transfer at 11, and reduce the number of transitions between schools in the course of a child's school life.

In order to transition schools to a two-tier model of schooling the Department for Education requires the Council to publish proposals to change the age range and to make a prescribed alterations as set out in the guidance ([Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools](#)).

In the area of Wootton, a Statutory Notice Consultation took place between the 12 October 2023 and 16 November 2023 to propose the change of age range, to move from a lower school to become a primary school. The proposals were approved at the Council's Executive meeting on 22 November 2023. The formal decision can be found online at <https://councillorsupport.bedford.gov.uk/mgDelegatedDecisions.aspx?bcr=1>.

In the area of Stewartby, the demand for school places means a single primary school is needed. Informal consultations to understand the views of stakeholders took place alongside feasibility studies to consider viability of the necessary building works to school sites to accommodate the change of age range.

The Council, jointly working with Chiltern Learning Trust, has determined the logical approach for Stewartby will be to propose the discontinuance of Broadmead Lower School and for Chiltern Learning Trust to propose the change of age range for Marston Vale Middle school, to become a newly formed primary school.

Bedford Borough Council are not responsible for making initial proposals for changes to academies. Bedford Borough schools that hold an academy status, such as Wootton Academy and Marston Vale Middle School, consult on their own proposals and the outcomes will be considered by the Regional Director.

The consultation on proposals for Marston Vale Middle School is running concurrently with Bedford Borough Council's consultation relating to Broadmead Lower School. Chiltern Learning Trust's consultation for Marston Vale Middle School can be found online: <https://www.chilternlearningtrust.org>.

## Preliminary Consultations and Outcomes

We have undertaken two non-statutory consultations about proposed changes to education in Wootton and Stewartby.

The initial consultation took place in October 2022. The majority of respondents to the consultation support for the move to a two-tier education system. In relation to Stewartby, some respondents felt the Marston Vale site was a better location for the primary school than the existing Broadmead Lower site.

In consideration of Broadmead Lower School designation as a rural school, and following a review of consultation responses in relation to initial proposals for Stewartby, we felt it essential to undertake a further consultation, in May 2023, on specific plans for Broadmead Lower and Marston Vale Middle School.

The consultation again identified a majority support for the move from three-tier to two-tier education and support for the newly formed primary school to be based on the Marston Vale site.

The responses to both of the consultations have determined our approach for the formal statutory consultations.

## Demand for Education Provision

Bedford Borough is a great place to live and work – and recent census results show it to be one of the fastest growing local authority areas in England. That's why we expect the number of residents and homes to grow in the coming years. New homes are being built in many areas and there are good transport links by road and rail for many centres of employment. Most of the growth of Bedford's population is driven by people moving from other English districts to take advantage of the employment and housing opportunities in the area. A large proportion of these new households include young children. Wootton, Stewartby and the surrounding villages are an area of growth, which will mean an increase in demand for new school places, over the next 10 to 15 years.

## The Effect on Other Educational Institutions within the Area

Schools and academies in the Wootton and Stewartby area of Bedford Borough have met regularly, in conjunction with linked Central Bedfordshire Schools, to determine how they can work together to achieve the best education outcomes for children.

Bedford Borough Council have been working with the schools to model future school place requirements in each of these areas, in line with the expected new housing trajectory.

The proposals have been developed collaboratively with the schools and academies in the area. Therefore, whilst some effect on other educational institutions might be unknown at this stage, there has been close partnership working to eliminate any potential negative effect from these proposed changes.

## Summary of Proposed Changes

### Wootton Lower School (Currently Year R [Reception] to Year 4)

#### Change approved 22 November 2023

- Will become a primary school (Year R [Reception] to Year 6) from September 2025 – children will remain at the school until they are ready to transfer to secondary school at age 11 to start Year 7.
- The school's published admission number (PAN) will remain at 120.
- Some building works to take place to accommodate the larger number of year groups.
- The building works will be funded using a combination of basic need funding and S106 funding.
- The proposed first year of change is 2025, when Year 4 students will remain at the school and move into Year 5.

### Wootton Upper School (Currently Year 9 to Year 13)

- Will extend its age range so that it admits children at age 11 (Year 7) rather than at age 13 (Year 9).
- Admissions will continue at Year 9 for a transitional period.
- There will be some transitional changes to the schools PAN (as detailed in the WAT consultation and subsequent statutory notice <https://www.woottonupper.co.uk/admissions>).
- The proposed first year of change is 2026.

### Marston Vale Middle School (Currently Year 5 to Year 8)

- Will commence a phased transition to incorporate pupils from Broadmead Lower School to become a new primary school (Year R [Reception] to Year 6).
- Some building works to take place to accommodate the differing age range of pupils that will be attending.
- In 2025 it is proposed Marston Vale Middle School will continue to have an intake at Year 5.
- In 2026 it is proposed Marston Vale Middle School will have intakes at Years 3, 4 and 5; a PAN of 60 is proposed, only to accommodate pupils leaving Broadmead Lower.
- In 2026, it is proposed that children will transfer to Wootton Secondary School for Year 7, 8 and 9.
- All children attending Broadmead Lower School are proposed to incorporate into the newly established primary school, on the Marston Vale Middle School site, by the 2027/28 academic year.
- In 2027 it is proposed the new primary school will have a PAN of 60 for Reception intake.
- Formal consultations on this proposal will be undertaken by Chiltern Learning Trust in Spring 2024.

### Broadmead Lower School (Currently Year R [Reception] to Year 4)

- Will commence a phased discontinuance, whilst children transition to the newly established primary school that will be based on the Marston Vale Middle School site.
- In 2025 and 2026 it is proposed that Broadmead Lower School will continue to have a PAN of 60 for Reception intake at the existing school site.
- The proposed first year of phased change will be 2026; In 2026 it is proposed that the school will only have Years R to 2.
- It is proposed that all pupils will have transferred to the new Primary School, based on the Marston Vale site by the 2027/28 academic year.
- Formal consultations on this proposal will be undertaken by Bedford Borough Council in Spring 2024.

### Detailed transition proposals, by year, relating to Broadmead Lower School and Marston Vale Middle School

#### September 2024

Broadmead Lower School and Marston Vale Middle School would continue as normal, Broadmead having a Year R intake and Marston Vale having a Year 5 intake. Year 8 children at Marston Vale Middle School will transfer to Upper school via the current process.

Broadmead Lower School					Marston Vale Middle School			
YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

#### September 2025

Broadmead Lower School and Marston Vale Middle School would continue as normal, Broadmead having a Year R intake and Marston Vale having a Year 5 intake but with priority given to Broadmead Lower School children as part of Marston Vale's admissions arrangements. Year 8 children at Marston Vale Middle School will transfer to Upper school via the current process.

Broadmead Lower School					Marston Vale Middle School			
YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
					(*150 PAN)			

\* Priority will be given to Broadmead Lower School children.

## September 2026

Broadmead Lower School's previous Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4 transfer to the Marston Vale Middle School site to go into Years 3, 4 and 5. Year 6 children would continue as normal and this would be the final year group at the school.

Marston Vale Middle School would cease to have a Year 7 and Year 8 group as these children would transfer to Secondary school with Wootton Secondary School being the most likely option for parents due to its locality and their change of age range as part of this process going from an Upper school to a Secondary school.

Wootton Academy Trust have already consulted on a proposed change of age range to convert from an Upper School to a Secondary school.

This consultation ran from 20 September to 22 November 2023 and in their consultation document, Wootton Academy Trust conveyed that Parents of children in Years 6, 7 and 8 in 2025 at Marston Vale Middle School will apply for Year 7, 8 and Year 9 places respectively at Wootton Secondary Academy in 2026. Wootton Academy Trust assured stakeholders that there will be sufficient spaces to accommodate all the Marston Vale Middle pupils.

Broadmead Lower School			Marston Vale Middle School					
YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8
✓	✓	✓	✓ (60 max PAN*)	✓ (60 max PAN*)	✓ (60 max PAN*)	✓ (150 max)	✗	✗

## September 2027

Broadmead Lower School would close at the end of the 2026-2027 academic year and Marston Vale Middle School would complete its change of age range process to become a Primary school and would be renamed as Stewartby Primary School.

All of the children remaining on Broadmead Lower School's roll at the end of July 2027 would transfer to Stewartby Primary School in September 2027 via a simple application process that would ensure a placement at the school and their consent to transfer their child from Broadmead Primary School to the new Stewartby Primary School.

Stewartby Primary School (60 PAN)						
YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Consultation Timeline

The timeline below details the key steps in the consultation process.

- Consultation commences: Wednesday 17 January 2024.
- Staff consultation meeting: Monday 5 February 2024 at 4pm.
- Parents and Pupils consultation meeting: Monday 5 February 2024 at 6pm.
- Consultation ends: Wednesday 14 February 2024.
- Responses collated and considered: from 15 February 2024.
- Consultation report and recommendations submitted to be determined by Executive: Wednesday 6 March 2024.

## Responding to the Consultation

If you wish to respond to this consultation with your views or comments, please complete the online consultation questionnaire via: <https://online1.snapsurveys.com/97w7de>.

If you wish to reply via a hard copy form, please email Francesca Davies, Team Leader School Organisation: [francesca.davies@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:francesca.davies@bedford.gov.uk).

## Would you like to discuss this proposal with us?

If you would like to speak with our Officers and staff from both Broadmead Lower and Marston Vale Middle Schools about the proposals, we are holding an in-person, question-and-answer session at **Marston Vale Middle School** on **Monday 5 February at 6pm**.

## Finding out more

If you would like further copies, a large-print copy or information about us and our services, please telephone or write to us at our address below.

Për Informacion

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