



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Moving towards a new two-tier primary/ secondary school system for Wootton and Stewartby: **Consultation FAQs**

What are two tier and three tier education systems?

A two tier system is how most of England operates, with primary schools for children aged 4-10 (Reception and Years 1-6) and secondary schools for ages 11 and over (Years 7-11).

A three tier system has lower schools for children aged 4-8 (R and Years 1-4), middle schools for those aged 9-13 (Years 5-8) and upper schools for older pupils (Years 9-11, plus sixth form provision). This is the system currently in place in Wootton and Stewartby.

What is the education system in Bedford Borough?

The majority of schools in Bedford Borough are in a two tier school system. Wootton and Stewartby are the only areas where schools are still in a three tier system.

Why is this change being proposed?

The three tier system was introduced in some local authority areas in the post-war period well before the introduction of the national curriculum in the 1980s. The national curriculum has four age related key stages. Key Stage 1 is followed by children from Reception to Year 2. Key Stage 2 is followed by children from Year 3 to Year 6. Together Key Stages 1 and 2 cover the primary age range. Key Stage 3 is followed by children in Year 7 to 9, and Key Stage 4 covers Year 10 and 11. For most children Key Stage 4 leads to GCSEs. The three tier system does not correspond to the national curriculum with children moving to middle school part way through Key Stage 2, then moving to upper school part way through Key Stage 3.

A two tier system better reflects the national curriculum as children transfer between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. This means that it is less disruptive to children's learning. Teacher training and published educational materials are usually based on the two tier model, and pupil progress is formally assessed at the end of Year 6.

Who is proposing these changes?

The changes are being proposed by the two local authorities: Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council, and the academy trusts and governing bodies of the schools affected. The two councils will take the decision in respect of community and voluntary controlled schools, and the Regional Director on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education will take decisions relating to academies.

What is the education system in Central Bedfordshire?

Central Bedfordshire currently has a mix of two and three tiers schools but as part of its Schools for the Future programme Central Bedfordshire Council is consulting on moving to a two tier educational system across the borough. To find out more visit [Schools for the Future](#).

What schools are impacted?

In Bedford Borough the following schools are being consulted on: Broadmead Lower, Wootton Lower, Marston Vale Middle and Wootton Upper.

Central Bedfordshire Council is also consulting on moving from a two to a three tier school system in the Cranfield area, and this includes Holywell Middle School, as well as lower schools.

www.schoolsforthefuture.co.uk/plans/cranfield/overview.

When will the changes be made?

The proposed changes will be introduced over several years. Starting in September 2025. By September 2028 the changes will be complete.

How can I find out more?

Schools will be writing to parents and carers with information about the changes and how you can get involved in the consultation. You can visit the consultation page on [Bedford Borough Council's website](#).

Bedford Borough Council's Executive discussed the proposals for consultation on [Wednesday 19 October 2023](#).

Some children will only have two years in middle school before changing school again to secondary school. How will this affect their education?

Children who transfer to secondary school after two years in middle school will be supported and prepared for the transfer to secondary school from their first year at Middle School. They will then have five to seven years (if staying for sixth form) in their secondary school without the need to change school again, and will have longer to settle in the school before they have to make important decisions about options for GCSE and A level.

Why is Marston Vale Middle not becoming a primary or secondary school in the proposals?

As Broadmead, Wootton and all local Central Bedfordshire Lower Schools become primary schools Wootton Upper School and Holywell Middle School become secondary schools there will not be sufficient pupils at either the primary or secondary ages to make Marston Vale a viable school.

Do I still apply for my child's place at middle / upper school?

There will be no immediate changes to the transfers or admissions. The Council website's admissions pages will be updated accordingly and schools will keep parents and carers up to date when the time comes.

Table 1: Lower Schools turning to Primary Schools (Wootton Lower and Broadmead Lower Schools):

What year group is a child in? (School Year Group as at September 2023)	September 2024	September 2025	September 2026	September 2027	September 2028	September 2029	September 2030
Year R Stay in same school then transfer at the end of Year 6 into secondary school	Year 1 at Lower school	Year 2 at Lower School which converts to Primary	Year 3 at Primary School	Year 4 at Primary School	Year 5 at Primary School	Year 6 at Primary School	Year 7 at Secondary School
Year 1 Stay in same school then transfer at the end of Year 6 into secondary school	Year 2 at Lower School	Year 3 at Lower School which converts to Primary	Year 4 at Primary School	Year 5 at Primary School	Year 6 at Primary School	Year 7 at Secondary School	Year 8 at Secondary School
Year 2 Stay in same school then transfer at the end of Year 6 into secondary school	Year 3 at Lower school	Year 4 at Lower School which converts to Primary	Year 5 at Primary School	Year 6 at Primary School	Year 7 at Secondary School	Year 8 at Secondary School	Year 9 at Secondary School
Year 3 Stay in same school then transfer at the end of Year 6 into secondary school	Year 4 at Lower school	Year 5 at Lower School which converts to Primary	Year 6 at Primary School	Year 7 at Secondary School	Year 8 at Secondary School	Year 9 at Secondary School	Year 10 at Secondary School
Year 4 Transfer into Year 5 at middle schools and then on to Secondary Schools, see table 2 and 3 for more details	Year 5 at Middle school	See Table 2 and 3 for more details on the Marston Vale Middle and Holywell Middle School proposals					

Table 2: Marston Vale Middle School

What year group is a child in? (School Year Group as at September 2023)	September 2024	September 2025	September 2026	September 2027	September 2028	September 2029	September 2030
Year 4 Transfer into Year 5 at middle school. Then transfer at the end of Year 6 into secondary school.	Year 5 at Marston Vale Middle School	Year 6 at Marston Vale Middle School	Offered a guaranteed place in Year 7 at Wootton Academy School	Year 8 at Wootton Academy	Year 9 at Wootton Academy	Year 10 at Wootton Academy	Year 11 at Wootton Academy
Year 5 Stay in middle school until the end of Year 7 then transfer into secondary school	Year 6 at Marston Vale Middle School	Year 7 at Marston Vale Middle School	Offered a guaranteed place in Year 8 at Wootton Academy School	Year 9 at Wootton Academy	Year 10 at Wootton Academy	Year 11 at Wootton Academy	Further Education
Year 6 Stay in middle school until the end of year 8 then transfer into Secondary School	Year 7 at Marston Vale Middle School	Year 8 at Marston Vale Middle School	Transfer to Year 9 at Secondary School	Year 10 at Wootton Academy	Year 11 at Wootton Academy	Further Education	
Year 7 Stay in middle school until the end of year 8 then transfer into Upper school turning Secondary School	Year 8 at Marston Vale Middle School	Transfer to Year 9 at Upper / Secondary	Year 10 at Secondary	Year 11 at Secondary	Further Education		
Year 8 Year 8 transition as normal to an upper school	Year 9 at Upper / Secondary	Year 10 at Upper / Secondary Year 11 at Secondary Further Education					

Table 3: Holywell Middle School

What year group is a child in? (School Year Group as at September 2023)	September 2024	September 2025	September 2026	September 2027	September 2028	September 2029	September 2030
Year 4 Transfer into Year 5 at middle school. Then transfer at the end of Year 6 into secondary school.	Year 5 at Holywell Middle School	Year 6 at Holywell Secondary School	Year 7 at Holywell Secondary School	Year 8 at Holywell Secondary	Year 9 at Holywell Secondary or can transfer to Wootton Academy	Year 10 at Secondary school	Year 11 at Secondary school
Year 5 Stay in middle school turning Secondary with option to transfer at end of Year 8	Year 6 at Holywell Middle School	Year 7 at Holywell Secondary School	Year 8 at Holywell Secondary School	Year 9 at Holywell Secondary or can transfer to Wootton Academy	Year 10 at Secondary school	Year 11 at Secondary school	Further Education
Year 6 Stay in middle school turning Secondary with option to transfer at end of Year 8	Year 7 at Holywell Middle School	Year 8 at Holywell Secondary School	Year 9 at Holywell Secondary or can transfer to Wootton Academy	Year 10 at Secondary school	Year 11 at Secondary school	Further Education	
Year 7 Stay in middle school turning Secondary with option to transfer at end of Year 8	Year 8 at Holywell Middle School	Year 9 at Holywell Secondary or can transfer to Wootton Academy	Year 10 at Secondary	Year 11 at Secondary	Further Education		
Year 8 Year 8 transition as normal to an upper school	Year 9 at Upper / Secondary	Year 10 at Upper / Secondary	Year 11 at Secondary	Further Education			

Does my child have to move from their middle school at Year 9?

From 2026 pupils remaining at Marston Vale (Year 7 and Year 8) would automatically transfer Wootton Upper (Secondary) without needing to apply.

From 2025 parents / carers of pupils at Holywell moving into Year 9 can choose to transfer to Wootton Upper (Secondary) or they can remain at Holywell through to Year 11. Pupils in Holywell from 2028 wanting to move schools would have to follow the 'in year' admissions process.

What will happen to school transport arrangements?

School transport is the responsibility of the Borough you live in. The policy will be reviewed and amended to reflect any relevant changes in school circumstances. You can find out more by visiting [Bedford Borough Council School Transport](#).

If my child continues at Holywell after Year 9 will they still be able to use the school bus service?

Eligibility for home to school transport will continue to be assessed according to the Bedford Borough Transport Policy. The policy will be reviewed and amended to reflect any relevant changes in school circumstances.

Children who are already receiving school transport to Holywell Middle School will continue to receive school transport should they choose to remain at Holywell when it becomes a Secondary School.

It is unlikely that Bedford Borough residents applying to join Holywell Secondary School after September 2025 will be entitled to school transport under the Bedford Borough Transport Policy as there will be closer Secondary Schools within Bedford Borough that they could attend.

Bedford Borough Council will continue to support Bedford Borough residents during these changes. Once complete the Council may not subsidise a school transport for residents out of catchment area or from out of the Borough. Eligibility for home to school transport will continue to be assessed according to the Bedford Borough Transport Policy.

How will my child get from Stewartby to Wootton Secondary?

Provisions are already in place as pupils travel to Wootton for Upper school. This would be extended for Year 7 and Year 8 pupils at the right time.

How many times will my child be moving schools as a result of these changes?

No child would transfer schools more than twice. For those children who would stay in lower school for two more years to the age of eleven, there would normally be only one transfer and that would be at the end of Key Stage 2. They would transfer to a secondary school. We recognise that some parents and carers are concerned about the children who would already be in middle schools when the proposed change took place. However, we have plenty of time to work with Head Teachers to plan the transition. All the necessary accommodation would be in place for them in advance and there would be ample opportunity for pupils to get to know their new school before they transferred. Head Teachers are confident that the transition can be managed without disruption to learning.

Will schools need to build more classrooms if so when will this happen?

Schools have been written to and informed that they will be provided with the classroom space they need in order to become a Primary or Secondary school. Final details around the exact nature of the suitable building works will be given to schools once feasibility and capacity assessments have been undertaken and the Bedford Borough Council Executive Committee have made a decision.

Notes

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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