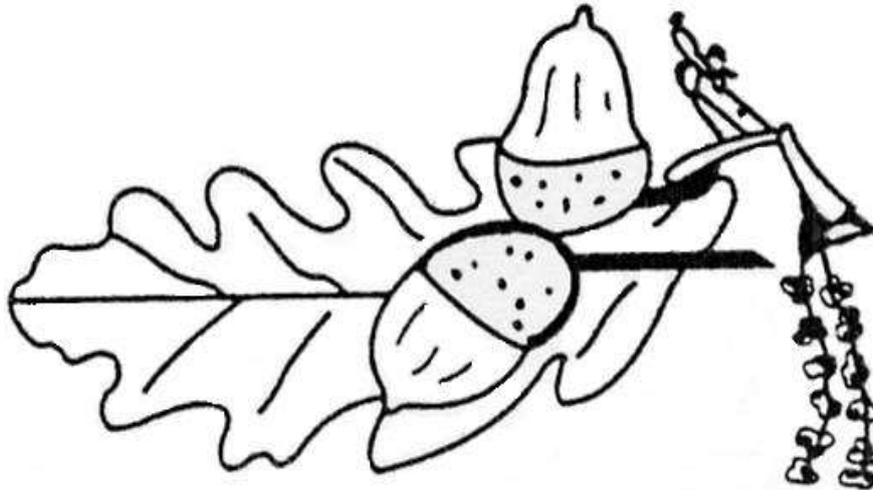


# The Report on Cople Lower School consultation on changing the school age range from 2017 onwards



January 2016

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## Section 1

The Governing Body of Cople Lower School is now in a position to report on the outcome of consultation regarding:

### **Cople Lower School's consultation on changing the school age range from 2017 onwards.**

Cople Lower School is situated in the village of Cople: MK44 3TH



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**The URN is 109442**

**The DfE number for Cople Lower School is 822/2035**

### **Brief history**

The school originally opened in 1869 to serve the children of the village with an age range of 3 to 12. The school became a Junior Mixed School (Primary 5-11) in 1930 and a Lower School (4 - 9) in 1976. The number on roll has fluctuated over the years from a high of 100 to a low of 25.

### **Alteration proposal to the age range**

It is proposed that Cople Lower School will extend its age range from a 4 to 9 years Lower School to a 4 to 11 years Primary School.

### **Implementation and stages of implementation**

The proposal will be implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017.

- In September 2017 – Year 4 children will have the option to remain at the school and become a new Year 5
- In September 2018 – Year 5 children will remain at the school and become a new Year 6
- The consultation has also included a proposal to federate with Willington Lower School. The two schools are looking at working closely together to ensure high quality primary education continues in both villages. Willington Lower School is also consulting on extending its age range to become a primary school. In responding to the consultation, people were asked to comment separately on extending the age range of the school and whether

the school should federate with Willington Lower school. There will be a separate report on the response to the federation proposal.

## **Capacity**

The current capacity of the school is 75 pupil places and the school currently has 72 on roll.

Following implementation, the proposed number on roll will eventually increase to a maximum of 105.

In September 2017 a new Year 5 will be created and in September 2018 a new Year 6 will be created to enable pupils, who would have had to leave the school at the end of Year 4, the opportunity to remain at Cople Lower School.

## **Objectives of our proposal for primary provision in the villages of Cople and Willington are:**

The Governing Bodies of Cople and Willington Lower schools want to ensure that both villages have a high-quality, sustainable primary school that provides our children with an excellent education and puts them in the best position to transfer successfully onto the next stage of their schooling. The Governing bodies of both schools believe that the best way to transition to a two-tier system is with a single federated governing body as this will ensure that the primary education provision in both villages develops in a coordinated and sustainable way. Both governing bodies, having discussed a wide range of matters with each other and the Local Authority, feel this likely to be best achieved by the schools becoming one school, on two sites. The decision to merge the schools will only be made after a further period of consultation with stakeholders from both villages. The date for this has not yet been defined, but is likely to occur early in 2017.

## **The particular objectives of primary provision are:**

- Providing children up to 11 a learning environment, which is geared solely towards Primary education in line with schools nationally.
- Delivering the whole of the Key Stage 2 curriculum in the same school, giving continuity and consistency for uninterrupted progress.
- Providing local village schooling for children up to 11 years old
- Having specialist Primary trained teachers delivery Primary education

## **Consultation**

An informal consultation process was carried out between 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and

18<sup>th</sup> December 2015; the outcome of this is outlined elsewhere in this report. A copy of the consultation document is available from the school.

### **Whom did we inform?**

We informed and invited comments from a wide range of stakeholders and the wider community through a number of approaches. The major consultees were:

- Bedford Borough Council
- Parents of every registered pupil at the school
- Parents of potential pupils in our catchment area and in Early Years provision
- Staff who work at the school
- Our local communities
- All other schools within Bedford Borough
- Anyone else who has an interest in the proposal

A public meeting was held for parents and stakeholders:

#### **17 November 2015**

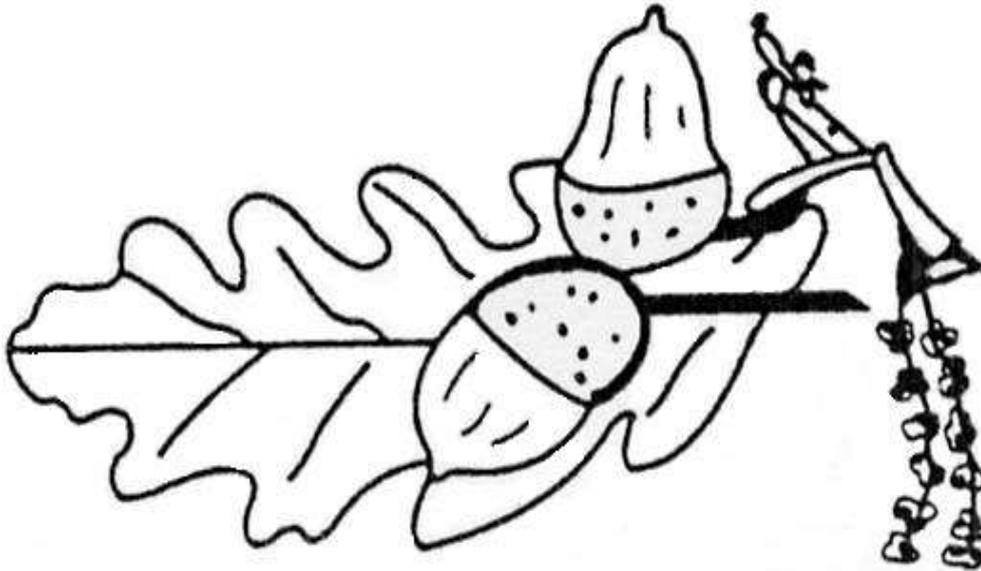
A staff meeting was also held at school with teachers, teaching assistants, office staff, site agent and governors invited.

#### **1 December 2015**

An electronic version of the consultation was placed for all stakeholders and interested parties on the school website and on the village website.

### **Implementation**

The context of the implementation is part of the wider plan by Bedford Borough Council, the Local Authority, that is currently consulting on facilitating a two-tier system of education in the Borough, commencing in September 2017. The Borough already has a number of primary and secondary schools currently operating.



**Cople Lower School's consultation on changing the school age range from 2017 onwards.**

**January 2016**

The purpose of this section of the proposal is to:

- Provide detailed information about the responses to the consultation process;
- Respond, in particular, to the areas of concern that have been raised as part of that process;
- Identify how the Governing Body will meet the objectives for changing the age-range, as set out in the consultation process.

The consultation with stakeholders covered two proposals the first of which was:

**From September 2017, should Year 5 pupils remain at Cople Lower School, Willington Road, Cople and move into Year 6 from 2018?**

The Governing Body invited, through the consultation, responses to the following specific proposals:

- From September 2017 – Year 4 pupils should remain at Cople Lower School and move into a year 5 class and then into year 6 in 2018. Cople Lower School's age range should change from 4 to 9 years to 4 to 11 years
- That the School should federate with Willington Lower School

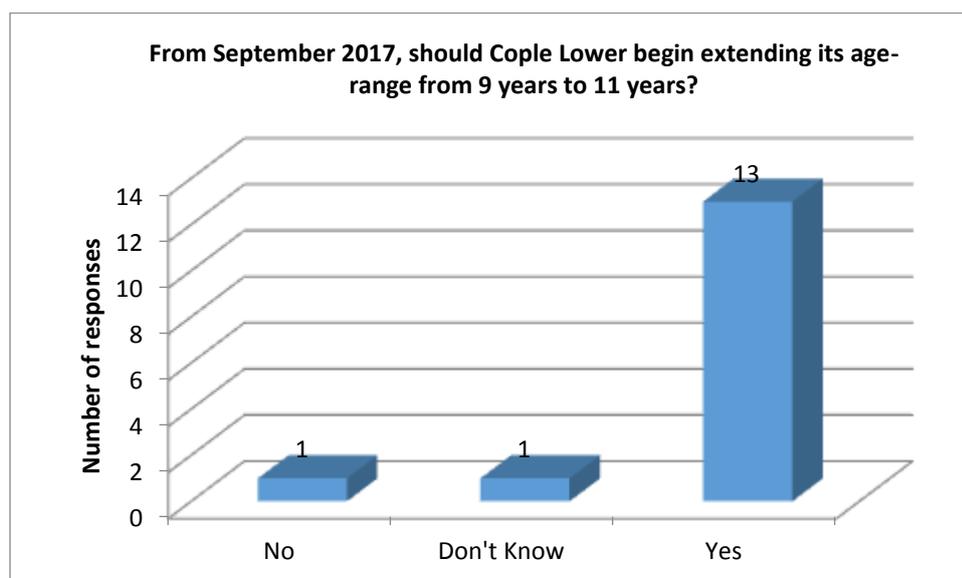
## Summary of responses

A total of 15 written responses were received in relation to the proposal plus some verbal questions and responses that arose from people who attended the consultation events. In terms of this report, there will be an indication of the responses received in graphical form and a commentary derived from the specific feelings that respondents made.

The report will then detail:

- Areas of concern
- The school Governing Body's responses to comments raised through the consultation process

## Proposal



Of the 15 people who expressed a firm opinion in this way, 13 were in favour of the proposal. There were some observations/concerns about certain elements. These are detailed below, together with the governors' response to those concerns:

## Areas of Concern

Responses were positive about the work by the two schools in looking at ways forward. FAQs were prepared and added to following the consultation evening. These are available from the school.

## Written responses:

The following are verbatim observations/concerns made or raised in relation to the proposal. The key issue of each concern is highlighted in bold print. Where this general concern is repeated by another respondent, the number of times is shown in brackets (e.g x1):

- The response not in favour of the extension in age range mentions the **design and impact of extensions to the school, disturbance from the playground and traffic issues**. Extracts are as follows: “Over the period of 25 years it has changed from a small rural school serving the local community to one that continuously outgrew its physical boundaries. Attracting children from far and wide who seemingly have to travel by car. The extra buildings and extensions ....have not always been sited in the most sensitive of positions regarding residential considerations. The new wooden classroom ...**resonates loudly** when the children move around....The children are allowed to scream and shout to an unacceptable level ... with equipment coming out of the school into the road on a regular basis. However the main objection is the **traffic situation** in and around Burrsholt.....this causes severe congestion on the junction with the inevitable dangers associated with it to both motorists and pedestrian alike....I have been both threatened verbally and physically when all I wanted to do was drive out safely.” The response does however go on to say “ I wholeheartedly support the school in every other respect...the thought of the increase in the school size fills me with dread. If the above issues can be satisfactorily addressed I would have no further objections.”

### Response from the Governing Body:

- The school has grown in response to the needs of the community. There have been many fluctuations in the number on roll over the years. The school has historically accepted children from outside of the village and this has at times been essential to the viability of the school. The attraction of the school for out of catchment families reflects the good reputation of the school.
- Managing traffic is not within the school’s powers. The school is aware of the issues and will continue to advise parents regarding safe and considerate parking and look at alternative options and would welcome support from the Parish Council on traffic solutions.
- The school will request assistance from Bedford Borough Council to investigate the sound from the hall building. However, the community is reminded that they can exercise their right to complain to the council if they feel that noise levels exceed statutory limits.

- The school considers that the activity and noise levels at playtimes is normal, reflecting the age and needs of the children. With an expansion in numbers, split playtimes may be considered to limit the impact to the local community while ensuring that the children are able to play and exercise safely.
- Concerns were raised regarding **space** required by older children both in the classrooms and on the playground.
  - If the age range change does go forward, the size of the **additional classrooms** would have to be considered as Year 5 and 6 classes would require greater **space** than the younger year groups
  - With an expansion in numbers, split playtimes may be considered as one means of ensuring that the children are able to play and exercise safely.