



# Statutory Proposal / Public Consultation 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024 to 29<sup>th</sup> September 2024

## **Proposed change of Age Range and enlargement of premises of Fladbury CofE First School**

### **Introduction**

This document helps to explain the proposals and the steps of this process, including:

- the background to proposals;
- who can propose and decide on changes;
- what is being proposed;
- why it is being proposed;
- the impact of the proposals;
- how and when the proposals if agreed would be implemented;
- who is being consulted;
- how to submit a consultation response; and
- what happens at the end of the consultation period.

If you require any additional information not included in this document to enable you to make a response, please contact [PershoreReview@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:PershoreReview@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) or the school:

<b>Address</b>	Church Street Fladbury Pershore Worcestershire WR10 2QB
<b>Email</b>	office@fladbury.worcs.sch.uk
<b>Phone number</b>	01386 860301

## Have your say...

It is very important that all those involved or have an interest have a say, we welcome your views.

An online survey can be accessed from the school website or Worcestershire County Council [Persore Review webpage](#). If you are unable to access the online response form, please email the school office.

Paper responses must be submitted to the school office.

The four-week consultation period commences on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September and closes at noon on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2024. It is very important that all those wishing to respond to these proposals do so within this timeframe.

We are holding a consultation event to allow our stakeholders to learn more about our proposals and give the opportunity to provide feedback.

Date & Time	Location & address	Delivery
11 September 2024 at 19:30	At Fladbury School Hall	Face-to-face and live stream available if requested

Yours sincerely,



Julie Wilson  
Headteacher



Jenny Robson  
Chair of Governors

**Responses required by noon on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

## **School Details**

Name and Address:	Fladbury CofE First School		
Status:	Voluntary		
Ofsted Rating / Date:	Good, 21 March 2023		
Current age range:	4 to 9	Proposed age range:	3 to 11
Total pupil capacity as at 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2024	100	Proposed total pupil capacity:	105 plus 15 preschool session spaces
Published admission number (PAN) as at 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2024:	20	Proposed PAN:	15
Currently pupils transition to:	Middle School at Year 5	Proposed for pupils to transition to:	High School at Year 7

## **Background information**

The Pershore Education Planning Area is made up of 15 Schools serving the town of Pershore and surrounding rural area. From September 2019 several schools had proposals agreed to change age ranges to create an option for a two-tier (Primary and Secondary school) system of education for families. A total of 6 schools in the Pershore area currently operate as Primary and Secondary schools.

Fladbury CofE First School is a Voluntary Aided First School serving the villages of Fladbury, Wyre Piddle and Upper and Lower Moor. Fladbury School is, with the church St John the Baptist, at the very heart of an active village. The school draws from 3 villages serving those communities well with Christian worship and Christian values embedded in school life. The school is an important and highly respected integral part of the church's presence and teaching in these villages. We need our school to thrive to continue in these villages and with consideration to parents' responses, the Governing Body's view is that this can be best achieved by increasing our age range to become a primary school and amending our Published Admission Number (PAN).

## **What is proposed**

### **First school transitioning to a Primary school**

It is proposed to alter the age range of Fladbury First School from 5 to 9 to a 3 to 11 Primary School. This would change the school from a first school to a primary school and incorporate the pre-school age children into the maintained offer of the school.

Children in year 4 at the school would remain at the school for year 5 and 6. Children in Year 6 would then transition to a Secondary School for Year 7 onwards.

Lowering the age range of the school and operating three-year-old provision as part of the maintained school will have several benefits. Children attending the three-year old provision can be integrated fully into the school community. Parents and carers will benefit from the opportunity to pay for services using online methods. Registration of all children will be consistent, as will tracking of attendance and attainment.

Historic and Forecast number on roll at Fladbury First School:

	<b>Reception</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Year 6</b>	<b>Total</b>
Oct 2022	9	17	14	22	13			<b>75</b>
Oct 2023	10	7	17	14	20			<b>68</b>
Oct 2024	14	10	7	17	14			<b>62</b>
Oct 2025	13	12	10	6	17	13		<b>71</b>
Oct 2026	12	13	12	10	6	17	13	<b>83</b>
Oct 2027	11	11	12	12	10	6	17	<b>79</b>

Based on 5-year average transfer rates and anticipated stay on rates to year 5 based on similar school conversions. Includes expected additional children from housing developments.

The school is currently built to support 100 pupils, with 67 pupils currently on roll. To strengthen curriculum delivery the existing year groups are now aligned in mixed classes to the relevant Key Stages. An historic Published Admission Number (PAN) of 20 creates difficulty with grouping especially across the Key Stage, and has historically resulted in year-on-year changes to the curriculum offer which could have impacted learning. A PAN of 15 enables consistent and appropriate grouping, without a requirement to change curriculum offer. Therefore to ensure these mixed classes remain consistent and of circa 30 children, an application to vary PAN from 20 to 15 for September 2025 has already been made and, subject to approval from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator, no further change to PAN will be required if we become a Primary School.

Fladbury Pre-School class has had stable numbers over the last few years. The following table details the number of pre-school children over the last 4 years:

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Funded 3 &amp; 4-year-olds on roll</b>
2020/21	20
2021/22	15
2022/23	17
2023/24	13

The pre-school age children would share the space with the Reception class.

### **Why is it being proposed?**

Changes to schools in the Pershore education planning area over several years has led to uncertainty and sustainability concerns across the education planning area. At present, one school exists outside of the Pershore tier structure in the two-tier Catholic pyramid; six schools have changed or have approved changes to two-tier; and two further schools have already consulted on change of age range proposals.

The creation of additional places in years 5, 6 and 7 because of the approved changes has resulted in an unsustainable level of surplus/excess places in these year groups. The creation of additional places in years 5, 6 and 7 because of the approved changes has resulted in a forecast level of surplus in these year groups of 40% in September 2024, which is projected to rise. This creates significant difficulty to provide key stage 3 (Year 7, ages 10 to 11) curriculum.

Over the last two years when a choice has been available, we have seen parents in the area choosing a Primary and Secondary (two-tier system) education in their school admissions applications, with an increasing percentage choosing to remain at already converted primary schools and a number choosing to transfer from first to primary schools during key stage 1 and 2.

This creates a risk to ensuring clear and high-quality education journeys for pupils.

Fladbury CofE First School is a rural school with a 'Good' Ofsted judgement and the latest SIAMs report judges that Fladbury is living up to our foundation as a church school. For the last 7 years the school has had a stable number on roll, which demonstrates the success and popularity of the school. This proposal for conversion would enable Fladbury to continue to remain financially stable and provide more school places for local children. Building on the recently refreshed 'Fladbury' curriculum, conversion would ensure a clear and high-quality educational journey, for pupils.

### **Related proposals**

Pershore High School are consulting on increasing their physical capacity to take more Year 7 pupils. Pershore High School are also consulting on including a feeder link to Fladbury for Year 7 pupils.

### **Who can propose and decide the changes?**

All schools in the Pershore pyramid have agreed to consult on the proposal for an area-wide transition to a two-tier system of education, however, there is no single decision-making body that can legally agree such a change for all schools. The Local Authority in their capacity as Education Authority have agreed to coordinate this consultation but are not able to solely determine these changes. For details on the types of changes and the decision-making powers for each school, please see below:

### **For Local Authority Maintained (Voluntary and Foundation) schools:**

#### ***Expansion & Change of Age Range***

Governing Bodies of foundation and voluntary schools can propose an age range change of 3 year groups or more, however, only the Local Authority is the decision maker such a proposal.

The Local Authority can propose to permanently enlarge premises at foundation and voluntary schools to increase the capacity of a school by more than 30 pupils and 25%. The Local Authority is the decision maker for such a proposal.

## **Changes to Admissions Policies**

### ***Published Admissions Number (PAN) where an enlargement of premises has not taken place.***

Changes to admissions policies include alterations to the Published Admissions Number (PAN) of schools, as well as changes to feeder school links and other changes affected admission to a school. Admission authorities must set a PAN for each 'relevant age group' when determining their admission arrangements. If an admission authority of a mainstream school wishes to increase or decrease PAN, without increasing the overall capacity of the buildings, this would be classed as an admission change, not a prescribed alteration. The statutory process described in this guidance would not need to be followed (please see the [School Admissions Code](#) for further details of the processes admission authorities must follow).

A variation has been submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator, and the decision is awaited.

## **The Impact of the Proposal**

Worcestershire County Council is committed to supporting schools, these proposals are expected to provide the following benefits to Pershore schools and local families:

- every child has a clear and transparent education journey;
- schools are supported to deliver good education outcomes in a stable and known education system; and
- schools can deliver a full curriculum and remain sustainable and financially viable.

## **Quality of provision and breadth of curriculum**

The consultation with parents and stakeholders held in 2021 on converting to a Primary was overwhelmingly positive with regard to the impact on the quality of education for children being:

- The continuity of education through the primary years would be enhanced if children were to continue their primary education in one setting.
- There will be staff experience in teaching children through key stage two.
- The educational outcomes for all pupils could be improved as staff would know and understand the needs of each individual child for an additional 2 years
- Provide more opportunity for siblings to attend the same school
- Provide contact with parents' and carers over a longer period, providing a continuous relationship which would work to the benefit of all children particularly those with special educational needs.
- Align the school with other schools within the area
- Enable the school to grow its staff team resulting in a broader skill set and the capacity to deliver an excellent bespoke curriculum which sustains school improvements.
- Reduce the number of transitions needed and therefore be less disruptive for all pupils, but especially vulnerable learners

## **Accommodation Required**

Additional accommodation is required to convert to a Primary School. The school in Fladbury is situated at the centre of the village, on a site adjacent to the village hall and Parish Church.

The site can be extended with additional accommodation provided and the PAN reduction to 15. Thereby serving 105 pupils with an additional 15 session spaces in the Pre School and four correctly sized classrooms.

After completing due diligence and consulting with architects and the Diocese, the Governing Body have identified how suitable accommodation could be achieved. The build will include enlarging two undersized classrooms and construct one new classroom, for the Early Years provision. Additionally, the two remaining undersized classrooms will be remodelled to form one correctly sized room and a smaller teaching space to provide flexibility in the curriculum, e.g. a place to undertake Creative Arts.

The school will move towards managing classes by making use of space within the school building during construction work.

The new accommodation will meet school standard BB103 and be delivered by experienced property surveyors under a Diocese-led project. Consideration will be given to mitigate any environmental impacts both during construction and during operation of the building.

### **School Transport**

Changes to schools can have an impact on transport for individual pupils. However, the current Transport policy is designed to support schools and pupils in a settled education planning area, therefore the policy is currently out of line for all options during transition phase but would be suitable once a single pathway is in place.

To manage this, for those pupils already attending a school at the time of the change ordinarily eligible for transport support, existing transport arrangements will continue during the transition phase. Once the changes have been implemented, any new pupils joining the school will be subject to the normal application of the transport policy.

### **School staff**

The impact of conversion would require an additional teacher, to deliver the Upper Key Stage 2 curriculum.

### **Vulnerable pupils**

It is envisaged that the change to a single tier system will make education transitions clearer and more straightforward and support in particular pupils from vulnerable backgrounds.

There is a strong Gypsy, Roma, Traveller community within the wider Pershore area and a specific assessment will be undertaken to ensure pupils from this community are supported during this change.

## **Financial – Capital**

These proposals will have capital and revenue implications for Fladbury CofE First School. A detailed feasibility study has been completed for the school to understand full capital and revenue costs and accommodation implications.

The additional accommodation will require a capital allocation from Worcestershire County Council. An initial detailed feasibility report is complete, and the project is expected to cost around £694,000. Cabinet and Council have approved a capital allocation for Fladbury school, subject to the outcome of the coordinated consultations and other decision makers.

## **Financial – Revenue**

Revenue implications for schools are yet to be fully determined – whilst middle schools may be at increased risk from financial deficits during the change period as pupil numbers decrease, Primary and Secondary schools will have an increase in numbers and pupil-led funding, however it is likely to take time before revenue costs for primary schools are directly aligned with pupils in the classroom. The revenue implications will need to be reviewed and carefully managed on a school-by-school basis.

The school will work with Worcestershire County Council to determine the implications of any outcome of this consultation and funding implications.

## **Funding considerations for decision makers**

When determining these proposals, the decision-maker in each case should be satisfied that any necessary funding required to implement the proposal will be available and that all relevant local parties (e.g. trustees of the school, diocese or relevant diocesan board) have given their agreement. A proposal cannot be approved conditionally upon funding being made available.

## **Other education areas**

Some schools in Pershore education planning area attract pupils from outside of the Pershore area, for example from Evesham, Droitwich and Worcester. These proposals could impact the number of pupils able to transition into the Pershore schools because of the proposed feeder school changes and the proposed changes of age range will alter the intake points.

## **How and when if approved would the proposals be implemented?**

As part of this consultation stakeholders are being asked to consider, if approved, when they would like the changes to take effect from. We have created a [Persnore Education Journey Tracker](#) for pupils, parents and professionals to see in detail how the proposals would change the journey for pupils in the Pershore education planning area should the proposals be approved, and the year groups available at each school.



## **School changes**

- Change of age range at first schools from September 2025 when these schools officially convert to primary schools. These schools will retain Year 5 pupils in 2025/26 and Year 6 pupils in 2026/27
- First and middle schools will officially convert to primary schools from September 2025 but will retain their Year 7 pupils during 2025/26 and 2026/27
- Removal of Year 5 intake at middle schools from September 2025
- Increase of PAN and change of feeder links at Pershore High, to admit all pupils in Year 7 in pyramid from September 2027

## **Impact**

- Final Year 5 intake into Middle Schools (Abbey Park, Pinvin and St. Barnabas) will be in September 2024 and Abbey Park Middle School will close on 31st August 2025 (it then amalgamates with the first school to become a primary from 1st September 2025)

## **Who is being consulted?**

The consultation will be made available to:

- Parents and carers of pupils attending / known to the school
- Staff, Governors, Board Members of school and other local schools
- Local Parish, District and County Councillors
- Immediate neighbours of individual schools
- Local Member of Parliament
- Cabinet Member Responsible for Children and Families
- Cabinet Member Responsible for Education
- Unions
- Any other local stakeholder

## **How to respond to the consultation (representation stage)?**

### **Consultation Phase – Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September to Sunday 29<sup>h</sup> September 2024**

During the consultation (representation) phase anyone with an interest can express their views on the options expressed in this document and the individual school consultations.

It is very important that all those involved or have an interest have a say, we welcome your views.

All of the information available is accessible from the [Worcestershire County Council Pershore Review webpage](#) or the school website.

The four-week consultation (representation) period commences on Monday 2nd September and closes at noon on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2024. It is very important that all those wishing to respond to these proposals do so within this timeframe.

We are holding consultation event(s) to allow our stakeholders to learn more about our proposals and give the opportunity to provide feedback. A summary of events can be found in on page 2 of this document.

## **What happens next?**

### **How the decision will be made**

At the conclusion of this statutory consultation period the Governing Body with the Local Authority will consider all responses to this statutory proposal and public notice, before deciding whether to agree the proposed changes.

The Governing Body and Local Authority will consider evidence from various sources to reach a considered view on the merits of the proposal. The following factors:

- the response to the public consultation;
- the quality of education provision at the schools;
- demand for places at the school and in the local area;
- funding to cover the capital costs of the proposed change has been secured, and that there are no issues with the school's current budget and/or finances. In the case of expansions, academies must show they have sufficient funding for additional pupils, until lagged funding is received.

### **Local Authority Decisions**

The local authority is the decision maker in all cases except where a proposal is 'related' to another proposal, that must be decided by the Schools Adjudicator.

Decision makers will need to be satisfied that the appropriate fair and open representation period has been carried out. Decision makers should give greatest weight to responses from those stakeholders likely to be most affected by the proposal, especially parents of children at the affected school(s). Decisions should be made within a period of 2 months of the end of the representation period.

Before making any changes, decision makers should ensure that:

- they have consulted with the LA to ensure the proposal is aligned with local place planning arrangements;
- they have secured any necessary funding;
- they have identified suitable accommodation and sites;
- they have secured planning permission and/or agreement on the transfer of land where necessary. The proposal can be approved subject to planning permission being granted;
- they have the consent of the site trustees or other landowner where the land is not owned by the GB;
- where a school is designated as having a religious character, they have the consent of the trustees of the school, the diocese or relevant diocesan board, or any other relevant faith body, where appropriate; and
- the admissions authority is content for the published admissions number (PAN) to be changed where this forms part of expansion plans, in accordance with the School Admissions Code.

At the conclusion of this consultation period the Local Authority will consider all responses to this Statutory Proposal and Public Notice. Any objections to the proposal will be considered by the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education before a final decision is made as to

whether to proceed with the proposal. If no objections are received, the final decision will be made by the Director of Children's Services. The indicative timescale for the final decision will be end of November 2024.

## **Related proposals**

Where proposals are related to other proposals, the decision-makers must consider the related proposals together. A proposal should be regarded as related if its implementation (or non-implementation) would prevent or undermine the effective implementation of another proposal.

The Local Authority will, as far as possible, seek to coordinate all proposals.

**It is especially important that all those involved have a say. Please submit your comments by noon on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2024 by completing the online response form available on the [school website](#) and [WCC website](#). If you are unable to access the online response form you can obtain a paper copy from the school office.**

## **Relevant documents:**

Head Teacher Board record of decision Avonreach Multi-Academy Trust Change of Age ranges for The Orchard, Inkberrow, Norton-Juxta-Kempsey and Pershore High Dec 2018 [\[ARCHIVED CONTENT\] \(nationalarchives.gov.uk\)](#)

Cabinet Report: Responding to Change of Age Range requests from Maintained Community Schools or Change of Age Range Consultations form other types of Schools Jan 2020: [Cabinet Report: Responding to Change of Age Range requests](#)

School Sufficiency and Organisation for the Pershore Area September 2021: [School Sufficiency and Organisation for the Pershore Area](#)

Pershore Area Review Consultation Findings and Recommendations [Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 21st April, 2022, 10.00 am - Worcestershire County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

Pershore Education Planning Area Review Consultation Responses [Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 27th October, 2022, 10.00 am - Worcestershire County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

Pershore Area Review Consultation update [Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 27th June, 2024, 10.00 am - Worcestershire County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)