# Proposed expansion of Whaddon CE School from a First School (Ages 4-8) to a Combined Primary School (Ages 4-11)

**Questions and Answers Document**

**Q. What evidence is there to suggest that there is a need to expand provision at Whaddon CE School on a permanent basis?**

**A.** There has long been a desire from parents who would like the opportunity for their children to stay on into Key stage 2 (Year 3-Year 6) and finish their primary education at Whaddon Church of England School.

The proposal would make the school more sustainable both financially and educationally in the longer term as small infant/first schools are coming under increasing pressure and are unlikely to be able to continue to operate with small and/or fluctuating class sizes due to budget pressures. This is exacerbated by children leaving before the end of Key Stage 1 due to concerns about the availability of places at their preferred feeder schools. Expanding the school would provide greater opportunities for staff development and recruitment and retention. It would also provide pupils with a larger peer group with which to socialise and learn as well as improved facilities and greater flexibility and efficiency in the use of staff and other resources.

# Q. When would the expansion take place and how many classes would there be?

1. The plan is to have a phased expansion beginning with a Year 3 class from September 2020. The intake number for each year group will be reduced from 20 to 10 to ensure continued small class sizes are possible. The first Year 3 class would be our current Year 2 cohort. The conversion process would be gradual, taking four years to reach full capacity. We envisage that when at full capacity there would be four classes:
   * an EYFS and Year 1 class
   * a Year 2 and Year 3 class
   * a Year 4 and Year 5 class
   * a Year 6 class

# Q. How would the expansion to the school take place?

**A.** The school currently has classroom space for 90 children. When the school sought planning permission for 2 new classes, permission was granted subject to the condition that the number of pupils be restricted to 80. If year groups are restricted to 10 pupils each, this will not total more than 70. Therefore, the school is currently able to accommodate the proposed 70 pupils.

# Q. What are the requirements for the proposed building works and what is the planning process?

**A.** The school does intend to complete the already begun building project by adding the final classroom we have planning permission for. This will be built on the side of the existing classroom. This will ensure a high quality learning environment for all.

# Q. How would this proposal affect other schools in the area?

**A.** We believe that this expansion would have no effect on local schools. Our maximum number of children on roll is currently 80. We would actually be decreasing the maximum number on roll by 10 to 70. The expansion would remove the need for our feeder school, Great Horwood Primary, to keep open places in Year 3 for children. Therefore if this proposal was approved there would be no automatic link to the junior feeder school at Year 3 from September 2020.

# Q. Would the catchment area change as a result of the expansion?

**A.** We do not anticipate any changes to our current catchment area.

# Q. Who would fund the building works?

**A.** The school would need to fund the building works.

**Q. How would the proposal affect staff at Whaddon Church of England School?** The school already has a committed and capable team of staff who are positive about the future and are passionate about providing a high-quality full primary education at Whaddon CE School. The Governing Board, Head teacher and staff unanimously support the proposal as they believe it would benefit current and future pupils and the local community and help to keep the school at the heart of village life.

# Q. How would the proposal affect pupils at Whaddon Church of England School?

**A.** The expansion would ensure that pupils living in the local area have access to a village Church of England school with provision from Reception to Year 6 giving them an uninterrupted primary education. Siblings would be able to travel to and from school together and attend the same school. The larger peer groups would give pupils increased opportunities to socialise and learn from each other. There would be improved educational facilities, ICT and resources for all children in the school.

# Q. Why are we proposing a half form option?

**A.** The half form entry route would provide much greater stability against fluctuations in

pupil numbers whilst retaining the small community feel and ethos of our school and

meeting parental demand for the school to provide all through education up to the age

of 11.

# Q. Will there be extra traffic and if so, how will we reduce the impact?

**A.** The proposal will decrease the maximum number of children on roll allowed by 10. The requirements set by County Planning, stipulate a maximum of 80 pupils to ensure traffic is not unduly increased. We only propose to have 70 children on roll, therefore, traffic will be within the acceptable amount. The vast majority of our children would be local and we believe that many pupils will already have siblings in the school so would travel together. Our aim is to provide a local C of E primary school for local children. The school has adequate parking for increased staffing. The school would continue to promote sustainable methods of travelling to school [walking, cycling] as part of our School Travel Plan. Removing the need for parents to move their children to another school at the end of Key Stage 1 would not only improve social cohesion, but would reduce awkward drop off issues for parents.

# Q. What is the statutory consultation process for proposals to expand the school?

# A. A summary of the statutory stages is provided below:

# Stage 1: Consultation

It is best practice for the Local Authority to first consult all interested parties on proposals. There will be a period of six weeks for consultation on this proposal. The consultation period will commence on 2nd September 2019 and end at 5pm on 14th October 2019.

# Stage 2: Publication of Proposal

Buckinghamshire County Council and the Whaddon Governing Board will then consider the views expressed during the consultation period before reaching any final decision on whether to publish proposals in the form of a statutory notice. This would be published in a local newspaper and also posted at the entrance to the school.

# Stage 3: Representations

Once proposals are published there is a four-week statutory period during which representations (e.g. support for, objections or comments) can be made. These must be sent to the Local Authority.

# Stage 4: Decision

The decisions on the proposal would be taken by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.

# Q. How will we be kept informed?

**A.** The Governing board will correspond with parents to ensure they receive up-to-date information at each stage. This will also be published on the school website.