



WILLOW GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Proposed Free School opening September 2024

Report on Section 10 Consultation



Willow Grove Primary School
Fisherswood Road
Wixams
Bedford
MK45 3TE

Willow Grove Section 10 consultation – summary report by the Kingsbridge Educational Trust

This document is intended to report on the following:

1. Raising awareness
2. The range of stakeholders consulted
3. Information provided to stakeholders
4. Methods of consultation, events and activities
5. Results of the formal consultation
6. Conclusions

1. Raising awareness

The Kingsbridge Educational Trust (KET) based in Milton Keynes, submitted a bid to run this new provision and received the approval of the Department for Education in September 2023.

The following activities were undertaken to raise awareness amongst prospective parents and the wider community during October/November 2023:

- The consultation exercise sought to raise the profile within the local community (please see point 2)
- Facebook campaign
- KET Board briefing
- Drop in sessions

2. The range of stakeholders consulted

A wide range of stakeholders were consulted, these are detailed below:

- Prospective parents
- Local residents
- Members of the public in Bedford Borough (BBC) and Central Beds (CBC)
- Local schools in Bedford Borough and Central Beds
- Neighbouring local authorities
- The Local Authorities of Bedford Borough and Central Beds
- Local libraries
- Parents of children under 5
- Local politicians
- Local Councillors
- Local Parish Councils
- Social Media

The objective of the consultation was to provide stakeholders with accurate and appropriate information.

3. Information provided to stakeholders

Information provided to stakeholders took the following forms:

1. Consultation Information booklet (see appendix 1)

The booklet gave details of the vision, mission, values and ethos of the school; information on site and location; information on admissions criteria for 2024/25 and 2025/26; number of places; information on school policies; curriculum; recruitment; key milestones. The publication included a link to the online feedback form and encouraged completion and submission.

Details of the consultation drop-in session were included in the booklet.

2. Willow Grove Primary School website

The consultation document was placed on the website and reference to the questionnaire was highlighted with a link to the online form.

3. Adverts/Social media campaign (appendix 2)

The consultation event was advertised on social media. An analysis of the campaign is set out in appendix 3. As can be seen from the analysis, the social media awareness campaign for Willow Grove School's opening was a resounding success, demonstrating significant reach and engagement while maintaining cost-efficiency. This positions Willow Grove School positively in the community.

4. Consultation flyer (appendix 4)

A flyer was created and sent to the local libraries, local nurseries and local Parish Councils requesting they be displayed in situ or online, as appropriate.

5. Drop in session

A drop-in session was held at Lakeview Village Hall for any interested parties to attend. Attendees had the opportunity to see images of the school buildings, school plans and speak to KET members of staff on such matters as recruitment and admissions. Attendees were given a copy of the consultation information booklet and encouraged to complete and return the survey, either online or paper based.

4. Methods of consultation

The formal consultation was undertaken in a six-week period between 4th October and 21st November 2023 inclusive. Multiple methods of consultation were undertaken and a wide range of stakeholders were consulted. A detailed summary is provided below:

Audience	Date	Communication method	Message	Feedback option
All	04/10/2023	Willow Grove Primary School and Kingsbridge Educational Trust website	Consultation Information booklet which includes proposed	Dedicated online feedback form to be submitted via specific email

		Facebook campaign	admission arrangements for 2024/25 and 2025/26	address or via post. Drop in session highlighted.
Parish Councillors for whom the defined area(s) are included in their Ward	04/10/2023	Email	Information booklet, with Drop in session highlighted	Dedicated online feedback form to be submitted via specific email address or via post. Drop in session highlighted.
Parish Clerks of Parish Councils for which the defined area(s) are included in their Parish	04/10/2023	Email	Information booklet, with Drop in session highlighted	Dedicated online feedback form to be submitted via specific email address or via post. Drop in session highlighted.
Local nurseries	04/10/2023	Email	Information booklet provided. Website link provided plus request to refer to the consultation to parent/carers of children attending the nursery	Dedicated online feedback form to be submitted via specific email address or via post. Drop in session highlighted.
Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire local authorities	04/10/2023	Email	Information booklet, with Drop in session highlighted	Dedicated online feedback form to be submitted via specific email address or via post. Drop in session highlighted.
Local politicians	04/10/2023	Email	Information booklet, with Drop in session highlighted	Dedicated online feedback form to be submitted via specific email address or via post. Drop in session highlighted.
Mayor of Bedford	04/10/2023	Email	Information booklet, with	Dedicated online feedback form to

			Drop in session highlighted	be submitted via specific email address or via post. Drop in session highlighted.
All Schools Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire	04/10/2023	Email	Information booklet, with Drop in session highlighted	Dedicated online feedback form to be submitted via specific email address or via post. Drop in session highlighted.
Local libraries	04/10/2023	Email	Information booklet notice	Notice to be displayed on community noticeboards
Local community centre and local newsletters	04/10/2023	Email	Information booklet notice	Notice to be displayed on community noticeboards and social media, where applicable
Prospective Parent/Carers	06/10/2023	Facebook campaign	Information booklet notice	Via link to online consultation information.

5. Results of the formal consultation

A drop-in session was held on 19th October and 9th November 2023. The CEO of the Kingsbridge Educational Trust and other KET staff were in attendance to provide information and answer any queries/questions that arose.

The main question that arose in discussion related to the opening of additional year groups. The Trust received a letter from Bedford Borough Council requesting that after reviewing pupil place planning data and analysing growth within Wixams, the school should open in September 2024 with one class of 25 in Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2.

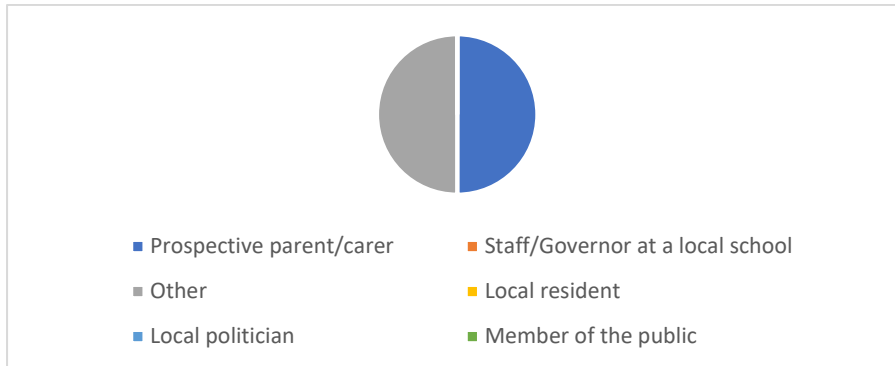
Circa 15 people attended across both events, held from 1pm to 2.30pm.

The Kingsbridge Educational Trust representatives believe the event generated very positive feedback. At all events, stakeholders were encouraged to complete and return a questionnaire and also to keep checking the Willow Grove Primary School website for further information as it becomes available. Where stakeholders emailed in with specific enquiries about the school provision, these were responded to separately.

Four responses to the formal consultation were received and a further four emails were received where they provided comment.

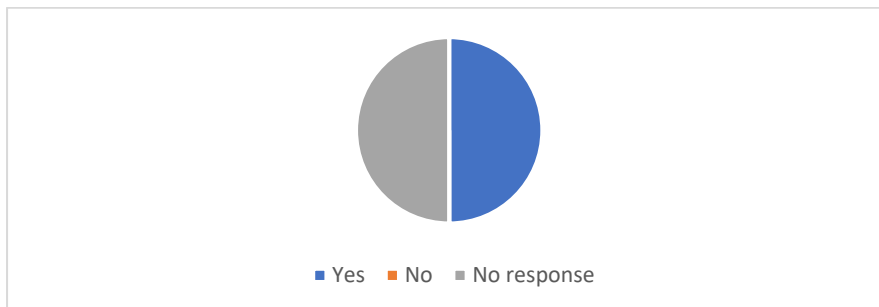
Survey Results

1. What connection would you have with Willow Grove Primary School?



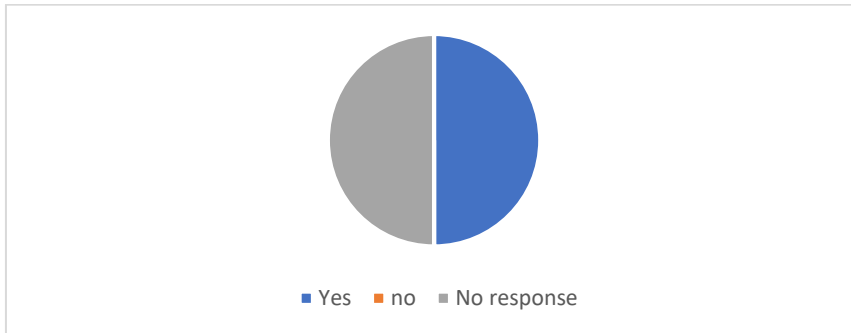
Prospective parent/carer		2
Staff/Governor at a local school		
Other		2
Local resident		
Local politician		
Member of the public		

2. If you are a prospective parent/carer, are you considering Willow Grove Primary School for your child/children?



Yes		2
No		
No response		2

3. Do you think we should enter into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education to open Willow Grove Primary School?



Yes		2
No		
No response		2

Additional comment to question 3

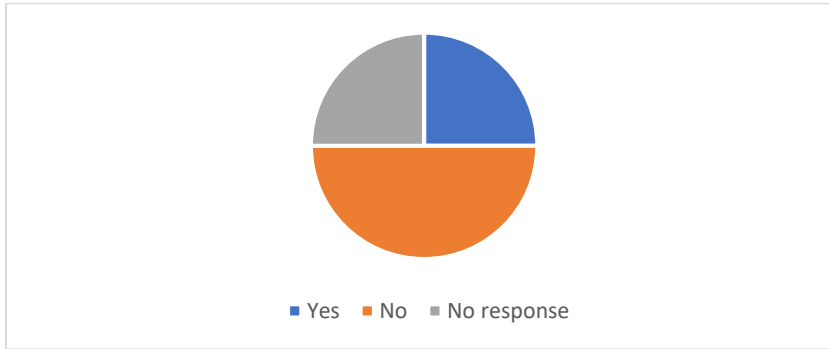
The area is growing rapidly with many families due to move in over the next 3 years and the two Wixams schools are full, as are many local schools (Houghton Conquest, Elstow, Ampthill etc). Children on our estate are having to travel some distance to attend other schools, preventing these families from fully integrating into Wixams and at detriment to these children who do not make as many local friendships and cannot walk / cycle to school. Many children of infant school age are travelling 10-30 minutes in the car to attend school which extends their day significantly. Some children are unable to participate in after school activities as they are brought home by bus or by a parent collecting multiple children. Another local school offering high quality education would permit all children on the estate to be educated local to home, to walk / cycle to school and to build meaningful relationships in their community.

Noted by the Board of Directors.

4. Willow Grove Primary School will have strong links with the wider community and will offer activities and its facilities to the local community. Which of the following activities would you be interested in?

a.	Internet facilities	
b.	School Hall/Meeting room hire	1
c.	Education (evening classes/adult education)	1
d.	Breakfast Clubs	2
e.	Music and Dance Activities	2
f.	Half term and holiday activities	2
g.	After School Clubs	2
h.	Sports facilities	2

5. Would you be interested in serving on the school’s Local Governing Body (LGB)?



Yes		1
No		2
No response		1

6. The proposed 2024 admission arrangements for the school are set out in Annex 1 and form part of the consultation. Do you have any comments or feedback you wish to share?

Yes		3
No		1

The following comments were received:

	Comment	Board response
a.	<i>This school is well over due. Families moving into the estate have been unable to secure local school places for some time. A resolution for children in all year primary groups is needed to reduce the number already attending schools in surrounding areas. This would reduce the cars on the local roads each day and relieve pressure on families who commute their children each day. In my opinion there is evidence that there is local demand for places in all primary year groups currently and this will only increase as more houses are built. In particular priority should be given to all infant school aged children when the school opens, the school should open to at least Reception, Year one and year 2 as was originally discussed and more if able. This will reduce the long-term impact of children from Wixams taking places in other local schools (Often once children are settled in school parents are reluctant to move them) so a year 2 child moving to Wixams this year and not being offered a place in a Wixams school now could affect local places in</i>	<p>The Board noted that the opening of the primary year groups is designed to meet the needs of the local community in line with the Local Authority’s growth strategy. The Local Authority’s forecast now suggests that it would be beneficial to open with a class Reception Year, a class in Year 1 and also a Class in Year 2 (see later comment). Moving forward the Local Authority will commission places from the Kingsbridge Educational Trust for Willow Grove Primary School in line with the projected housing growth.</p> <p>The Board noted that whilst the admission policies for 2024 and 2025 give priority to children living in Wixams, it cannot hold places back when applications for</p>

	<p><i>other schools for a further 5 years until that child applies for a school place at Senior School. I agree that places at the school should only be offered to children from Wixams postcodes to ensure that places remain available for children moving into the area throughout the coming years.</i></p>	<p>admission are received from further afield and the school has not reached its published admission number. This would be in breach of the guidance set out in the government's School Admissions Code.</p>
b.	<p><i>We agree with the admission order (prioritising local children ahead of those who are not local but have siblings in the school) as this should avoid the issue other local schools have of non-local children being prioritised as they have siblings in the school.</i></p> <p><i>We are however concerned that opening up 25 spaces in initial year groups could lead to a number of spaces being filled by out of area children by default. Is there a way to safeguard the majority of spaces (15-20) for children within catchment area to ensure the initial year groups have a majority of local children? Although this could mean very small classes initially, these initial year groups will quickly fill up in the coming years as a result of the extensive house building in the catchment area.</i></p>	<p>The Board noted the support for prioritising local children when allocating places.</p> <p>The Board referred to their response to the preceding comment regarding compliance with the School Admissions Code and the allocation of places. The Board also noted at this point that the distance between the applicant's home address and the school has now been clarified to a particular point at the school address.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Board noted that the school will eventually become a 4-form entry school, in line with planned growth, which should mean that there will be opportunity for children to attend their local school as new houses are built.</p>
c.	<p><i>Houghton Conquest Parish Council asks you to consider initially opening up the school to more year groups so that more local children can attend.</i></p>	<p>The Local Authority's forecast now suggests that it would be beneficial to open with a class in Reception Year, a class in Year 1 and also a Class in Year 2 (see comment h). Moving forward the Local Authority will commission places from the Kingsbridge Educational Trust for Willow Grove Primary School in line with the projected housing growth.</p>

7. The proposed 2025 admission arrangements for the school are set out in Annex 2 and form part of the consultation. Do you have any comments or feedback you wish to share?

Yes		2
No		1
No response		1

The following comments were received:

	Comment	Board response
d.	<i>The policy states that from 2025 children will only be admitted into Reception. This should be reviewed. With so many families moving to the area the school should be flexible to increase the available places in Reception and all other year groups currently operated to ensure provision meets local need. I.e. If there is demand then the ability to open to 60 (2 forms) per year group should be considered from 2025.</i>	<p>The Board noted that the admission arrangements for 2025 include Reception and, separately, at sections 31-36, in-year applications which is any application made for Reception Year on or after the first day of term in September, or for any other year group at any time. In-Year admissions will allow families moving into the area to make an application to the school.</p> <p>The number of places available will be subject to planned growth – see response to comment a.</p>
e.	<i>We agree with the admission order (prioritising local children ahead of those who are not local but have siblings in the school) as this should avoid the issue other local schools have of non-local children being prioritised as they have siblings in the school. We are however concerned that opening up 25 spaces in initial year groups could lead to a number of spaces being filled by out of area children by default. Is there a way to safeguard the majority of spaces (15-20) for children within catchment area to ensure the initial year groups have a majority of local children? Although this could mean very small classes initially, these initial year groups will quickly fill up in the coming years as a result of the extensive house building in the catchment area.</i>	See response to comment b.

8. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

	Comment	Board response
f.	<p><i>The school should consider opening a nursery as there is significant need for this locally, Cygnets at Lakeview and Dawn to Dusk Pre School can take a maximum of 60? children, a disparity between available places in Reception already.</i></p> <p><i>The school should provide breakfast and after school care between 07:30-18:00 from September 2024. This is offered and well utilised by parents at the two existing schools by the same provider and could be provided in empty classrooms / halls until the school is full.</i></p>	<p>The Board noted the request. However, the school has not been built to accommodate nursery provision.</p> <p>The Board confirmed it is their wish to provide breakfast and after school provision. Discussions are currently underway with prospective service providers.</p>
g.	<p><i>We live very close to Willow Grove Primary and will apply for a reception space, however we can only accept an offer if there is a wraparound care provision in place, by which I mean before and after school clubs covering 8am -6pm.</i></p> <p><i>This is essential to us working parents, and appears to be an essential feature for many parents as all other schools we've looked at have wraparound care in place, including Wixams Tree, Lakeview, Houghton Conquest, The Firs and Russell Lower.</i></p> <p><i>Also important to us in choosing a new school will be an opportunity to meet the appointed headteacher in order to get a better sense of the school values and culture.</i></p>	<p>See response to comment f.</p> <p>The recruitment of a Headteacher is currently underway.</p>
h.	<p><i>As per our discussions with you regarding the opening of Willow Grove Primary School in September 2024, we have reviewed the pupil place planning data and analysed the growth within Wixams. This analysis has led us to the conclusion that Willow Grove Primary School should open with a Year R, 1 and a Year 2 in September 2024. The school has agreed to set a PAN of 25 in each year with the capacity to expand to 30 of / when children move into the local area in-year. I trust that this letter is sufficient to act as confirmation of this agreement, however please do not hesitate to come back to me if further evidence is required.</i></p> <p>Chris Morris <i>Chief Officer for Education, SEND and Schools Infrastructure</i></p>	<p>The Board noted the request from the Chief Officer for Education, SEND and Schools Infrastructure to open a Year 2 class and agreed to the request as it is in line with the pupil place planning and growth in the Wixams area.</p> <p>The Board agreed to continue with a PAN of 25 with the capacity to expand to 30 in line with phased growth.</p>

i.	<p><i>Thanks for the information.</i></p> <p><i>Why is it called Willow Grove in Village 3, when Willow Grove is an established area of over 2 years in Village 2?</i></p>	<p>The Board noted that the name of the school was chosen to ensure there was no confusion with other primary schools in the local area.</p>
j.	<p><i>Thank you for your email. My daughter is in Year 2 and when we moved here we understood the school plan for this site was to take R, Yr1 and Yr2. All year 2 classes are full to capacity locally and children are going some distance from Wixams for infant education. The development is also due to expand in size considerably in the next 12 months. I will respond via the consultation but think this must be considered.</i></p> <p><i>The trust looks like it will be great addition leadership wise for our new school.</i></p>	<p>See response to comment h.</p> <p>The Board wished to thank the respondent for their positive feedback.</p>
k.	<p><i>Congratulations on being the preferred Trust to take forward Willow Grove Primary School.</i></p> <p><i>Thank you for the opportunity to engage with you on the proposed admissions arrangements for the school.</i></p> <p><i>We are very keen to be involved in your admission arrangements, as you may be aware the school straddles both Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council.</i></p> <p><i>As joint funders for the school can you provide the exact details of the 'catchment' being proposed (we are aware of the map, but please provide details), what the arrangements will be for engaging Central Bedfordshire families and what year groups will be opening up by year?</i></p> <p>Response from the Trust: <i>Thank you for your email.</i></p> <p><i>The Trust are delighted to be working alongside Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire as the sponsor for the new primary school in Wixams.</i></p> <p><i>The proposed admission arrangements state that the catchment area for Willow Grove Primary School will be Wixams. An address is deemed to be in the</i></p>	<p>The Board noted the response already sent to Central Bedfordshire Council and had no further points to add.</p>

	<p><i>catchment area if 'Wixams' is included in the formal postal address for the property.</i></p> <p><i>A full consultation has been launched across Bedford Borough and Central Beds. This includes all schools (secondary and primary), nurseries and playgroups, local councillors, MP's, Parish council's, libraries and neighbouring local authorities. A Facebook campaign has also been launched to seek views and feedback of all parties who may an interest in this new school provision.</i></p> <p><i>It is proposed that the school will open with classes in Reception Year, Year 1, and possibly Year 2. The PAN is 25. This is to allow for growth and give families moving into Wixams, after national offer day, an opportunity to attend a local school. As the demand for places increase over the coming years, the school will grow in order to meet the need for additional school places.</i></p> <p><i>If you require any further information, please let me know.</i></p>	
<p>i.</p>	<p><i>Thank you for sending the council a copy of the consultation proposal. I can confirm that Milton Keynes City Council has no objections to this proposal as long as it is not to the detriment of any Milton Keynes schools within the Trust.</i></p>	<p>The Board noted the response and are satisfied that the expansion of the Trust to include Willow Grove Primary School will not be to the detriment of any Milton Keynes schools within the Trust.</p>

Conclusion

The Board of Directors concluded that the responses to the consultation were extremely positive, in line with the interest shown at the consultation event and wider circulation, and reflects the interest in, and need for, this new provision.

Furthermore, in relation to the proposed admission arrangements, the Board agreed to the following amendments post consultation:

Determination of 2024 and 2025 admission arrangements

The Board agree to open a Year 2 class with a published admission number of 25 in September 2024. This is in addition to opening a Year Reception class and a Year 1 class. The admission arrangements for 2024 and 2025 should be updated to reflect this.

The Board noted the end point for measuring distance to the school has now been confirmed and the admissions arrangements should be updated to reflect this.

For clarification, the Board agreed that the definition of the the defined area should be updated to remove the postal address reference and is deemed to be in catchment if Wixams is included in the address for the property. For the avoidance of doubt, the policy should also make clear the location/county the school is in.

Subject to the above updates, the Board of Directors determined the admission arrangements for 2024 and 2025.

6. Summary

Following the statutory consultation process, and having considered the responses received, the Board unanimously agreed that they still wished to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Department for Education in preparation for the opening of Willow Grove Primary School in September 2024.

Board of Directors
Kingsbridge Educational Trust
December 2023

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Consultation Information booklet
- Appendix 2 – Adverts for the drop-in session
- Appendix 3 – Social media campaign analysis
- Appendix 4 – Consultation notice
- Appendix 5 – Determined admission arrangements for 2024
- Appendix 6 – Determined admission arrangements for 2025