



Crowle C of E First School
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Public Consultation – 2nd September 2024 to
29th September 2024

Proposed Change of Age Range and Enlargement of Premises of Crowle 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@worcechildrenfirst.org.uk or the school:

Address	Crowle CofE First School School Lane Crowle Worcester, WR7 4AT
Email	office@crowle.dowmat.education
Phone number	01905 381206

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 Pershore 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 2nd September and closes at noon on Sunday 29th September 2024. It is very important that all those wishing to respond to these proposals do so within this timeframe.

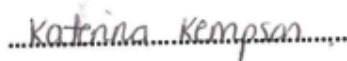
We are holding a consultation event to allow our stakeholders to learn more about our proposals and give the opportunity to provide feedback. Please see table below:

Date & Time	Location & address	Delivery
10 th September 2024 9am	Crowle CofE First School School Lane Crowle Worcester, WR7 4AT	Face to Face

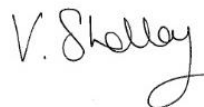
Yours sincerely,



Mrs M Abbott
Headteacher



Mrs Katerina Kempson
Chair of Local Academy Board



Vicki Shelley
DoWMAT CEO

Responses required by noon on Sunday 29th September 2024

School Details

Name and Address:	Crowle CofE First School School Lane Crowle Worcester, WR7 4AT		
Status:	Academy		
Ofsted Rating / Date:	Good 23 October 2019		
Current age range:	4 to 9	Proposed age range:	4 to 11
Current year groups:	Reception to 4	Proposed year groups:	Reception to Year 6
Total pupil capacity as of 1 st September 2023:	75	Proposed total pupil capacity:	98
Published admission number (PAN) as of 1 st September 2023:	15	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.

Crowle C of E First School is a small, rural school which was deemed by Ofsted as 'Good' in October 2019. In September 2022 Crowle C of E First School submitted an application to the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) to convert to a primary school, this proposal was put on hold whilst wider area review conversations took place.

The school serves a community which experiences a range of protocols, year groups and procedures for transition to subsequent schools.

What is being proposed?

First school changing age range to a Primary School

It is proposed to alter the age range of Crowle C of E First School from 4-9 to 4-11. This would change the school from a first school to a primary school.

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

Historic and Forecast number on roll at Crowle C of E School:

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
Oct 2022	9	14	13	10	11			57
Oct 2023	14	9	9	12	9			53
Oct 2024	12	14	8	9	11			54
Oct 2025	14	11	13	8	8	11		65
Oct 2026	8	14	10	13	7	8	11	71
Oct 2027	6	8	13	10	12	7	8	64

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 75 pupils (15 pupils x 5 year groups), with 53 pupils currently on roll.

The Pupil Admission Number (PAN) will remain at 15 pupils. A total of 105 pupils could be on roll.

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.

Crowle C of E First School is a rural school at risk of continuing in the category of a small school as per the Worcestershire Policy on Small Schools. This proposal will allow Crowle C of E First School to make better use of existing accommodation and staffing to remain financially sustainable and continue to provide school places for local children.

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 Academy Schools:

Expansion & Change of Age Range

Academy schools may propose to expand their physical capacity and/or change the age range of their school (including adding or removing a nursery provision or sixth form provision) by submitting a Tier 1 application to the Department for Education.

The DfE Regions Group will review the application and either approve or if risks or concerns are identified escalate to Tier 2 or Tier 3. Tier 3 applications can be determined by the Regional Director who may seek the assistance of their Advisory Board. Where the change is contentious or particularly complex, applications may be escalated to the relevant minister or Secretary of State for a decision.

Changes to Admissions Policies

No change.

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 are able to deliver a full curriculum and remain sustainable and financially viable.

Quality of provision and breadth of curriculum

As a Primary, the school will be able to continue to provide a high quality of provision and breadth of the curriculum for all pupils. Additionally, we will continue to work with the other local schools, some of whom are already converted, within our area to collaborate on such activities and to ensure resources are available to enrich the curriculum. This would lead to improved outcomes at Key Stage 2 by continuing upward trajectory of progress as children transition at logical times through the key stages. All staff currently employed at Crowle are qualified to teach across the whole primary age range and have previous experience of working in schools offering full primary provision.

Prior to the pupils starting in Year 5 in September 2025, Crowle CE First School will work to ensure the Upper Key Stage 2 (UKS2) curriculum is well planned, sequenced and progressive; building on all the good knowledge and skills the pupils have experienced to date.

The school would also ensure that personal development/extra-curricular opportunities would be planned, in order to supplement the existing curriculum and to enable all pupils in the school to continue to flourish.

Accommodation Required

Additional accommodation is required including at least one further teaching space to cater for the additional year groups. Year groups would continue to be mixed with a PAN of 15. The

Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust has committed to building this additional space prior to the start of September 2025.

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

There is no proposal to reduce staffing required at the school. However, in the long term an additional teacher would need to be employed. The existing leadership structure of one Headteacher / Head of School would be retained. Class teachers will lead on specific subject areas and key aspects of provision.

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 Crowle CofE First school. A detailed feasibility study has been completed for the school to understand full capital and revenue costs and accommodation implications. All costs connected with the build and furnishings will be met in full by the Trust.

Financial – Revenue

Revenue implications for schools are yet to be fully determined. However, the uncertainty in the pyramid is causing falling numbers of children to currently choose the school, increasing risk from a financial deficit in the short term. However, long term due to the increase in numbers and pupil-led funding this will mean the school will be financially sustainable. It is likely to take time before revenue costs for the primary school are directly aligned with pupils in the classroom.

As an academy, we will be working with our funding agency, the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) on any potential outcome of the consultation.

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 [Pershore 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(s)
- 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
- The Diocese

How to respond to the consultation

Consultation Phase – Monday 2nd September to Sunday 29th September 2024

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

It is especially 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 period commences on Monday 2nd September and closes at noon on Sunday 29th September 2024. It is especially important that all those wishing to respond to these proposals do so within this timeframe.

We are holding consultation events 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?

At the end of the consultation period the Academy Trust will consider any issues that have been raised before deciding whether to submit a Tier 1 application to the DfE.

The Academy Trust will consider evidence from various sources in order to reach a considered view on the merits of the proposal. In particular the following factors:

- Response to the public consultation;
- Quality of education provision at the school;
- Ability of the school to manage the proposed change to support the continued improvements at the school;
- Demand for places at the school and in the local area; and
- 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.

Submission of formal proposals

The proposers will take note of issues raised during the consultation. At the conclusion of the consultation period a decision will be made whether to submit a formal proposal to the decision makers, requesting their support.

Department for Education Decisions

For Academy schools, the Academy Trust Board will then submit a Tier 1 application to the DfE Regions Group alongside any requests to vary school admission arrangements.

The DfE will consider a range of factors and make a balanced judgement when deciding whether to approve or reject a proposal. The DfE may also defer the approval pending further evidence. Where proposed changes are particularly controversial and could attract adverse public or press attention; the DfE may choose to escalate such proposed changes to the Secretary of State for a decision.

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 29th 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 from 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 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)