

Complete Proposal
to Expand
The Fourfields Church of England School,
Sutterton

MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 19 OF THE EDUCATION AND
INSPECTIONS ACT 2006

PROPOSALS TO MAKE A PRESCRIBED ALTERATION TO A SCHOOL

2 February 2022

Contact details

This proposal has been published by Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YQ regarding the expansion of The Fourfields Church of England School, Park Avenue, Sutterton, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE20 2JN.

Implementation

The proposal is to expand The Fourfields Church of England School with effect from 1 September 2023 to enable the Local Authority (LA) to fulfil its statutory duty of providing school places for all children of statutory school age in Lincolnshire.

Objections and Comments

Any person or organisation may object to or make comments on the proposal by completing and submitting a short online survey at www.letstalk.lincolnshire.gov.uk/sutterton-fourfields or in writing to the School Organisation Planning Team, Children's Services, Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, 51 Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YQ or by emailing schoolorganisation@lincolnshire.gov.uk. All responses must be received by the deadline of 2 March 2022.

Alteration Description

The proposal under consideration is to expand the capacity at The Fourfields Church of England School in Sutterton. This is to ensure that there is the required number of primary school places within the Sutterton area of Lincolnshire to accommodate increasing pupil numbers.

Whilst overall the county and country is mostly experiencing falling birth rates, in some areas there are continued pressures on primary school places, often linked with people moving into the area, new housing developments and birth rates that buck the trend, resulting in increased demand for primary school places. Fourfields School serves a wide rural area and it is vital that families in those local communities are supported to have access to a school within a reasonable distance of where they live. For the foreseeable future there is expected to be a requirement for more school places than are currently available in the Sutterton area if capacity is not increased.

The proposal would expand the school from a current PAN (Published Admission Number) of 20 (places per year group) to a PAN of 30, with a proposed implementation date of 1 September 2023. The Local Authority believes that this proposal is the best available option to address the increasing pressure on primary school places in this area of Lincolnshire.

School Capacity and Site

The proposal would increase the net capacity from 153 to 210, moving the school to a PAN of 30 with up to seven purpose-built classrooms in total instead of five.

Population data (birth data, supported by LA pupil projections) confirms this expected long term requirement for more than 20 places for children of a statutory school age in this area in some future intakes. The school have already over-offered for some

intakes to meet local demand in recent years which has put pressure on the existing accommodation and required temporary arrangements in place. Therefore, a permanent sustainable solution is needed to accommodate these extra children to avoid overcrowding and/or transporting young children to alternative schools outside of their local community. The school already has additional pupils in Y2 and Y3 (taking each year group to the equivalent to one form of entry) utilising all available space.

Following statutory consultation, if approved, it is proposed that building/refurbishment work will begin during 2022 (subject to planning permission being granted) and planned to be completed in advance of the start of term in September 2023. This would be managed to cause minimal disruption to the school during term time making the best use of school holidays where possible. Suitable additional teaching and resource spaces will be considered to ensure sufficient facilities are in place to accommodate up to 210 primary aged children in total. This is proposed to include additional teaching and intervention space. Some of these new facilities will also benefit the children already on roll at the school.

The increased intake of up to 30 would then be phased in with each subsequent Reception intake until the PAN of 30 applies to all year groups. This phased approach will allow the school to effectively manage staffing and teaching structures and help to ensure that pupil numbers at other local schools will be maintained. Should demand across the area result in mid-year pressures requiring additional places in higher year groups this approach also allows the flexibility to add capacity at the appropriate time if needed. This will help to avoid placing and transporting children to schools outside of the local community if they move into the area.

The planning application process required for any building work is dealt with and consulted on separately from this process. It will include the consideration of issues arising out of the physical expansion of the school such as parking and the impact on traffic. There will be an opportunity for those that are interested to respond directly to the planning application at the appropriate time.

Objectives

The proposal detailed in this document is to expand The Fourfields Church of England School, Sutterton with effect from 1 September 2023. The objectives are to; ensure there are sufficient primary school places in the Sutterton area to accommodate increasing pupil numbers in the community; and to enable the LA to fulfil its statutory duty of providing school places for all children of statutory school age in Lincolnshire within a reasonable distance from where they live.

The LA considers the proposal to be the most appropriate available solution to the expected shortage of primary school places in the Sutterton and surrounding area. This proposal has the support of the Headteacher and the Governing Body. The LA is confident that the school has the leadership, management and governance required to drive forward a successful expansion. The proposed expansion will enable the school to move away from mixed year group classes to a more stable single year group classes model and provide the opportunity to improve the learning experience and outcomes for the children to enable them to reach their full potential. The LA believes the proposal to be in the best interests of local children and local parents as well as educational provision in the area and it reinforces the priorities in the Joint

Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS).

To ensure that the provision of school places is planned so as to promote high educational standards, enable fair access to educational opportunity for every child and promote the fulfilment of each child's potential. This proposal will both offer the opportunity to enhance the quality of provision and sustain local provision. It is also an opportunity to address suitability issues (such as a lack of group/intervention space) to benefit not just the additional pupils but the ones that are already on roll.

Other options in the area close to Sutterton have been explored. All primary schools have been considered for potential expansion, but none have been found to be as suitable due to various reasons. These reasons include; geographical location in relation to demographic pressures, undersized sites, distance that pupils would have to travel, parental preference, impact on standards, potential planning challenges and the fact that other schools are of suitable sizes for the areas they serve. This is the most appropriate primary school in the area for expansion.

Having additional classes and more children on roll at the school will also have financial benefits for the school. This may potentially provide the opportunity to enhance teaching provision and career opportunities for staff which in turn will benefit the learning experience of the children.

Consultation

In order for the school to expand the Local Authority must follow the necessary statutory processes in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Education Act 2011 and the guidance "Making ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools. Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers" (October 2018) issued by the DfE.

Under these guidelines the LA must ensure that sufficient time and information are provided for people to understand, form a view on the proposal and make a response. Under the DfE guidelines there is no longer a prescribed consultation period for significant changes to schools (including physical expansions). However there is a *"strong expectation on schools and LAs to consult interested parties in developing their proposal prior to publication"*. To comply with this the Local Authority has conducted a four week period of pre-consultation.

Consultation originally began on 11 November 2021 with a letter, incorporating relevant information and reasons for the proposal sent to a wide range of interested parties, as required by guidelines issued by the DfE. Parents and pupils of the school were also informed of the consultation. In addition interested parties were invited to discuss the proposal with the LA or school by booking an appointment, This opportunity was offered to allow those having an interest in this proposal to be able to gather information, ask questions and get involved in the debate.

All parents/carers and other interested parties were given the opportunity to respond as part of the consultation process by 9 December 2021. A copy of the information from the letter commencing consultation and a simple online survey were also published on the County Council website under the website 'Let's Talk Lincolnshire' www.letstalk.lincolnshire.gov.uk/sutterton-fourfields

All written responses received during consultation have been provided to the Executive Councillor for consideration in the decision making process. To briefly summarise there were 18 valid responses in total with 0 against the proposal, 16 for the proposal and 2 neither for nor against.

Under current legislation the LA is the decision maker for the proposal and is co-ordinating the statutory process before making a final decision in April 2022. The LA, as decision maker, must be able to show that all relevant issues raised are taken into consideration in the decision making process.

Project Costs

Should a decision be made at the end of this process to expand the school the construction costs would be met from Children's Services Capital Programme through Basic Need, with on-going revenue costs being funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant based on the current school funding agreements.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Provision

The expansion of the school is not likely to have any impact on SEND provision other than an opportunity to improve the provision with better access to resources and consistently good quality teaching and learning at the school. Consideration of pupils with SEND will take place and the LA will continue to look to make improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the education provision for children with SEND.

Need for Places

Population data (birth data, supported by LA pupil projections) confirms this expected long term requirement for more than 20 places for children of a statutory school age in this area. Projections predicts that that in the Reception intakes there will be more than 20 pupils requiring a local school place for some future intakes, based on all available data at this time and subject to variations in parental preference.

The expansion is required to meet the projected demand for places in the Sutterton area and to ensure that the LA meets its duty of providing sufficient places for children of statutory school age in the immediate area. The expansion is proposed to meet the need for additional capacity in Sutterton and the surrounding areas it has historically served and not to replace existing capacity in the primary sector, therefore not having a significant negative impact on neighbouring primary schools.

Expansion of Successful and Popular Schools

The Government is committed to ensuring that every parent can choose an excellent school for their child with the wishes of parents being taken into account. There is a strong presumption that proposals to expand popular and successful schools should be approved. DfE guidance states that if possible places should be allocated where parents want them and that successful and popular schools be allowed to grow. This proposal will assist in meeting parental preference to help ensure that pupils do not have to be placed outside of the area against preference.

The school is popular with parents and has been over-subscribed in recent years, and in addition continues to be very popular with 2nd preferences. It is also situated geographically in an ideal location in relation to the demand for places.

Related Proposals

The proposal to expand The Fourfields Church of England School is not related to any other statutory proposal.

What will happen now?

Any person or organisation may object to or make comments on this proposal by completing and submitting a short online survey at www.letstalk.lincolnshire.gov.uk/sutterton-fourfields or in writing to the School Organisation Planning Team, Children's Services, Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, 51 Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YQ or by emailing schoolorganisation@lincolnshire.gov.uk. A consultation response form is available on request from the School Organisation Team or from The Fourfields Church of England School. Paper response forms should be returned by the deadline to either the school office or directly to the School Organisation Team using the contact details provided.

At the close of the 4 week representation period (statutory formal consultation) on 2 March 2022 responses will be collated and analysed and a further report will be presented to the Executive Councillor for a final decision in April 2022 on the expansion of the school. The representation period is the final opportunity for people and organisations to express their views about the proposal and ensure that they will be taken into account by the decision maker.

Copies of documents related to this proposal will be published online at www.letstalk.lincolnshire.gov.uk/sutterton-fourfields.