

Maple Tree
Lower School



Sandye Place Academy
Achievement Through Partnership

Consultation on our options
for education provision
in Sandy by the Governors of
Maple Tree Lower School and
Sandye Place Academy

24th April 2017

CONSULTATION ON OUR PROPOSAL FOR THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION PROVISION IN SANDY

Introduction

Purpose of this consultation document

The purpose of this document is to provide information, and seek your views, on a proposal that has been put forward by the Governors of Sandye Place Academy and Maple Tree Lower School in relation to how education provision is delivered in Sandy from September 2018.

We will first provide a bit of context as to how we have come to this proposal and will then detail the proposal as fully as possible to demonstrate what the proposed changes will mean for pupils, parents, staff and the wider community. We will also give you clear timescales for the process and advise how you can have your say.

Following the consultation a business case will be submitted to the DfE (Department for Education) for consideration at its June meeting.

Context

Background to the current three-tier system

The three-tier system of education (Lower, Middle and Upper schools) has served the pupils and families of Central Bedfordshire well for the past 40 years. However, changes at local and national level mean that this system is now an exception rather than the rule.

At the height of the system's popularity in the 1980s there were over 1,400 middle schools in England. There are now fewer than 150 middle schools remaining in just 17 out of 150 Local Authorities. Over 95% of children nationally are being educated in a two-tier system.

There are parts of the Central Bedfordshire that need to retain a three-tier system for the time being because some of the feeder Lower/Middle schools are not proposing to change their system. This is the case for the Biggleswade pyramid of schools and would have been the case in Sandy for children who enter Sandye Place Academy from Central Bedfordshire lower schools had it not been for additional changes being implemented in the Sandy pyramid of schools from September 2017.

The situation in Sandy

In September 2016 Sandye Place Academy, Maple Tree Lower School and Laburnum Lower School sent out a consultation on a proposal to form a Multi-Academy Trust – the Sandy Multi-Academy Regional Trust (SMaRT).

Whilst this consultation was out for consideration in October 2016, another consultation was sent out from the remaining schools within Sandy on establishing a two-tier system within the town. In light of this consultation, and upon advice from the DfE, the SMaRT consultation was put on hold.

In December 2016 the Governing Bodies of Sandy Upper School, St Swithuns Lower School, Robert Peel Lower School and Moggerhanger Lower School announced the results of their consultation with the decision that they would be going ahead with a two-tier system from September 2017.

The impact for Sandye Place Academy and Maple Tree Lower School

Within the consultation for the multi-academy trust one suggestion that kept arising from parents was for Sandye Place Academy to extend its age range to provide education up to the age of 16.

Given the potential impact of the changes being made by the other schools in the cluster, and the desire to ensure parental choice in education, the Senior Leadership Team and members of the Governing Body at Sandye Place began to investigate the potential for extending its age range to year 11 (as explained in a letter sent to parents in January 2017).

As part of this exploration the leadership team spoke at length to the DfE, Local Authority, Sandy Upper School and other middle schools that had successfully extended their age range to become secondary schools.

During these discussions it became clear that if Sandye Place Academy was to put in an application to extend its age range it would be turned down by the DfE. The other schools that we spoke to were only able to convert because their local upper/secondary school was failing and so they had full support from the Local Authority. Even with this support both have faced significant challenges since increasing their age range.

We have a very successful upper school in Sandy. The leadership team did have positive discussions with the leadership at Sandy Upper to see if there was a complimentary secondary provision that could be offered at the Academy, however we do not believe this would be in the interests of the pupils or the community. After what have been some turbulent years at the upper school, we are now confident that the leadership and the direction of the school is what is right for the town and will continue to provide a positive choice for secondary education in Sandy.

Maple Tree need to actively secure the future of the school by growing and developing with the changing community and educational landscape. Single age classes allow the teachers to follow the national curriculum for each specific age group without the repetition of topics and skills.

Our options

With the option to extend the age range of Sandye Place Academy off the table, the Governors were left with three options for the middle school:

1. Closure – the Local Authority and the DfE have been clear from the start that this is not an option for Sandye Place. The grounds and facilities on offer to pupils are unrivalled and the Academy consistently demonstrates that pupils make excellent progress from entry to exit. Also, with the population of Sandy likely to grow significantly in the not too distant future the Local Authority need to make sure we are prepared for the influx of greater pupil numbers.
2. Convert to a primary school – the current size of Sandy could not support five primary schools so a decision to extend the age range down to become a primary school would more than likely mean the closure of at least one of the lower schools. This was not an acceptable risk for the Governors.
3. Look at a primary plus model, joining with Maple Tree Lower School.

The Proposal

A Primary Plus Model

The proposal on which we are now looking to consult is for Sandye Place Academy and Maple Tree Lower School to merge to form one primary school across two sites.

We are using the term 'Primary Plus' model because at this stage we are proposing that Sandye Place Academy continues to offer provision for years 7 & 8 for pupils not wishing to move onto secondary school at the end of year 6. This offer will remain in place for as long as there is sufficient demand from parents.

We believe that this model will give parents, pupils and the community the best possible outcome because:

- It will build on Maple Tree's strength in KS1 education and allow us to extend our offer downwards to expand our Early Years provision.
- It will negate the potential disruption of transition by working as one single school, just split across two sites.
- It will allow KS2 teachers to work with pupils from the beginning of the key stage right through to their SATs at the end of year 6 to boost attainment.
- It will continue to offer the benefits of the three tier system by giving pupils access to specialist teachers and facilities at an earlier age as well as allowing pupils who may be anxious about moving to secondary school more time in a smaller, more nurturing environment before moving on.
- It will allow us to extend our wrap around care for pupils by offering provision from 7.30am to 6:30pm at both schools from September 2017.
- We will put on chaperoned transportation to, from and between the two schools to ease congestion in the town and support working parents.
- It will allow us to build on our existing strength in supporting pupils with Autism by setting up a specialist unit at Sandye Place.

How will it work?

The changes in structure at each school will happen over time and will continue to evolve and develop as the town grows.

From 2018 there will be two admission points into the school; Reception and Year 5. Pupils on roll at the school would automatically transfer to Year 5 and parents would not be required to make an application. We anticipate additional places of 45 available in Year 5 for external pupils; places would be allocated during the Transfer to Middle admission round which is coordinated by the Local Authority. In-year admissions would continue to be accepted if there is capacity in that year group in the same way that they are currently managed.

Maple Tree currently has a 1.5 form entry of 45 pupils per year group. With the new curriculum it is no longer viable to have mixed classes so from September 2018 we would change to a two form entry (60 places per year group). From 2019 we would aim to open our Autism unit based at Sandye Place which would cater for between 5-10 pupils of any age. The pre-school provision currently available at Maple Tree would be extended from 2020 but at this stage we cannot confirm estimated numbers for this age group. A place at the pre-school does not guarantee a place will be offered at the school (Reception Year) and parents would be required to apply for a statutory school place through the Local Authority. There is no automatic transfer from pre-school to Reception Year.

As the admission arrangements for the 2018/19 academic year have already been determined in line with legislation, if the proposals are implemented the Academy will be required to seek a variation to the 2018 admission policy. Here is a realistic estimate of pupil numbers and the split of pupils across the two schools over the next few years.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Pre-school (0-2)	0	0	0	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc
Pre-school (2-3)	30	30	45	60	60	60
Nursery	45	45	60	60	60	60
Reception	45	60	60	60	60	60
Year 1	45	45	60	60	60	60
Year 2	45	45	45	60	60	60
Year 3	45	45	45	45	60	60
Year 4	45	45	45	45	45	60
Year 5	100	90	90	90	90	90
Year 6	120	100	90	90	90	90
Year 7	120	120	100	90	90	90
Year 8	120	120	120	100	90	90
Autism Unit	0	0	5-10	5-10	5-10	5-10
TOTAL	775	820	785	770	775	790

The capacity at Maple Tree is 250 and at Sandye Place it is 600 giving us a total capacity for 850 pupils. The schools operate best when not at full capacity allowing us to make the best use of the space and facilities we have available, however it shows that we would have the room to grow if required.

With the changes at the other schools within the Sandy cluster we envisage the new structure of education in Sandy to look like this:

		Laburnum	Moggerhanger	Robert Peel	St Swithuns	Maple Tree / Sandye Place	Sandy Upper School
EYFS	Pre-school					From 2 years of age	
Admission point –	Reception						
KS1	Year 1						
	Year 2						
KS2	Year 3						
	Year 4						
Admission point	Year 5						
	Year 6						
	Year 7						
Admission point – Sandy Upper	Year 8						
	Year 9						
KS4	Year 10						
	Year 11						
	Sixth-form						

Leadership and Governance

As the two schools will become one primary plus school, there will be one Governing Body and one Senior Leadership Team.

Unlike a Multi-Academy Trust we will not need to appoint an Executive Headteacher or CEO. Instead there will be a Principal overseeing the school across both sites. The Principal will be supported by two Vice-Principals and a Senior Business Manager on the Senior Leadership Team.

There will also be a single Governing Body bringing together the specialist expertise and significant experience of governors in both schools.

The house system that has recently been introduced at Sandye Place will be extended down into KS1 with pupils joining a house when they join the school staying in that house until they leave.

As the two schools become one, we will look to rename and rebrand the school. This will be done in consultation with pupils, parents, staff and the community so that everyone who wants to can have a say in what our school will be called and how it will look for the future.

The staffing structure of the school will need to be reviewed but this will happen over time and will not begin until 2019.

The Consultation Process

How you can feed into the consultation

The purpose of the consultation is to seek views of parents, staff and the wider community about the proposals being put forward. Whilst we will be asking you whether you support the proposal or not, we do want to make a fully informed decision and so welcome any and all comments. This process also gives you the opportunity to ask questions about the proposal and to find out more from the Senior Leadership Teams and Governing Bodies at both schools.

You can take part and have your say in the following ways:

- By completing the attached response form and returning it to either of the school offices.
- By completing an electronic version of the response form available here:
<https://kwiksurveys.com/s/Qv3JUA1h>
- By email to consultation@spacademy.org.uk
- By letter:
 - o Chair of Governors, Sandye Place Academy, Park Road, Sandy, SG19 1JD
 - o Chair of Governors, Maple Tree Lower School, Hawk Drive, Sandy, SG19 2WA
- Consultation meetings (see timetable below)

Timescales

Event	Date and Location
Consultation Process	Monday, 24 th April – Monday, 5 th June 2017
Staff Consultation	Tuesday, 25 th April 2017
Consultation meeting for parents and the wider community	Tuesday, 2 nd May 2017 7pm to 8pm Sandye Place Academy School Hall
Consultation meeting for parents and the wider community	Thursday, 4 th May 2017 7pm to 8pm Maple Tree Lower School Hall
Analysis of responses and preparation of consultation report	Monday, 5 th June – Monday, 12 th June 2017
Governing Bodies, Trust Board meet to consider consultation outcome, respond to consultation comments and prepare case for DfE	Monday, 12 th – Wednesday, 21 st June 2017
Process for implementing changes begins	Wednesday, 21 st June 2017
Changes begin to be implemented	1 st September 2018

**CONSULTATION BY SANDYE PLACE ACADEMY AND MAPLE TREE LOWER SCHOOL
ON OUR PROPOSAL FOR THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION PROVISION IN SANDY**

Please take the time to read our consultation document and complete this questionnaire.
Your feedback is important to us.

Please return completed questionnaires to the school office at either Sandye Place Academy
or Maple Tree Lower School. All responses must be received by **Monday, 5th June 2017**.

An online version of the questionnaire is also available for you to complete:

<https://kwiksurveys.com/s/Qv3JUA1h>

Proposal

Sandye Place Academy and Maple Tree Lower School should merge to form one school
across two sites, offering education from 0-13 years.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Comments (Please give any comments or suggestions you may have. Please continue overleaf if necessary)

Your responses will remain anonymous unless you choose to leave your name. We would like to analyse responses according to stakeholder group so please tell us a little bit about you.

I am (please tick all that apply)

- Parent of a student(s) currently attending one of the schools
- Member of the Governing Body at one of the schools
- Member of staff who works at one of the schools
- Parent of a child in local Early Years provision (excluding Maple Tree)
- Parent of a student(s) currently attending another school within the local area
- Governor, including Headteacher, at another local school
- Member of staff at another local school
- Member of the local community
- Representative of the Local Authority
- Other (please specify).....