



# Northumberland County Council

## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

### PROPOSAL FOR BEDLINGTON WEST END SCHOOL, NORTHUMBERLAND

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, that Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF intends to make the following prescribed alteration to the school below:

#### **CHANGE OF AGE RANGE**

- a) **Bedlington West End First School**, Ridge Terrace, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6EB by changing the age range of the school,
- The current age range of Bedlington West End First School is 4 years to 9 years. The proposed age range for the school is 4 years to 11 years to take effect from 1 September 2020.

Bedlington West End First School is a local authority maintained community school.

Copies of the full Statutory Proposal may be obtained from:

School Organisation and Resources Team  
Northumberland County Council  
County Hall  
Morpeth  
Northumberland  
NE61 2EF

or from the Council's website at [www.northumberland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations)

For the purposes of providing further information, the above proposal would be considered by Northumberland County Council in conjunction with a non-statutory proposal by the Council to change the current age range of Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School, Gordon Terrace, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5DE from an age 3 to 9 school to an age 3 to 11 school with effect from 1 September 2020 in relation to the decision on whether or not to approve these linked proposals. Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School is a local authority maintained voluntary aided school. Both first schools above form part of the Bedlington Partnership of schools.

Also for the purposes of providing further information, there would be a temporary increase in pupil numbers during the transition of both Bedlington West End First School and Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School from first schools to primary schools over time, this does not meet the statutory requirements for a permanent enlargement of the school's premises in relation to pupil capacity.

In the interests of providing further information, it is proposed that there would be changes to the capacity and planned admission numbers of these schools as follows:

- **Bedlington West End First School**, Ridge Terrace, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6EB. The number of pupils on roll at the school in January 2019 was 257. The current published capacity of the school is 300. The proposed capacity of the school is to be 210. The current maximum number of pupils admitted at age 4 is 60. The maximum number of pupils to be admitted to the school at age 4 from 1 September 2020 and subsequent years would be 30.
- **Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School**, Gordon Terrace, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5DE. The number of pupils on roll at the school

in January 2019 was 269. The current published capacity of the school is 269. The proposed capacity of the school is to be 210. The current maximum number of pupils admitted at age 4 is 54. The maximum number of pupils to be admitted to the school at age 4 from 1 September 2020 and subsequent years would be 30.

Should the above proposals be subsequently approved for implementation by the Council's Cabinet, a request would be submitted to the School's Adjudicator for permission to reduce the Planned Admission Number into Reception of both Bedlington West End First School and Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School from September 2020, as the admissions arrangements for entry into local authority maintained schools at that date have already been set and approved. Any objection to the reduction in the PAN of Bedlington West End First School should be submitted as part of the response to this statutory proposal.

### **Implementation.**

- Bedlington West End First School is proposed to extend its age range and to reorganise to become a primary school with effect from 1 September 2020 in a phased way. The school would retain Year 5 in September 2020 and would then retain Year 6 in September 2021.
- In the interests of providing further information, the implementation of the linked non-statutory proposal for Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School would take place in the same manner and timeline as that set out for Bedlington West End First School above.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this proposal are to:

- **Extend the age range of:-**
  - **Bedlington West End First School**, Ridge Terrace, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6EB by changing the age range of the school. The current age range of Bedlington West End First School is 4 years to 9 years. The proposed age range for the school is 4 years to 11 years to take effect from 1 September 2020.

The implementation of this proposal would ensure a clear, educational pathway for children attending Bedlington West End Primary School (as it would be) to the next phase of secondary education.

### **Reasons for proposal:**

Informal consultation on a proposal to extend the age range of Bedlington West End First School took place between 23 April and 12 June 2019. In the interests of providing further information, this informal consultation included the non-statutory proposal for the extension of the age range of Bedlington Whitley Memorial First School.

The above consultation was promulgated by the decision of the Governing Body of Meadowdale Academy (currently an age 9 to 13 middle academy) to consult and subsequently seek approval from the Secretary of State on a proposal to become an age 2 to 11 primary school with effect from 1 September 2020. Currently, children leaving Bedlington West End First School (and Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School) transfer into Year 5 at Meadowdale Academy; as the latter proposal has now been approved by the Secretary of State, children leaving West End and Whitley Memorial First Schools at the end of Year 5 will no longer have a clear pathway into to a Year 5 place in another school. All other schools and academies in the Bedlington Partnership are organised within the primary/secondary (2-tier) system, with pupils leaving primary school at the end of Year 6 and transferring into Year 7 at either Bedlington Academy, St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy or another high/secondary according to parental choice. Should Bedlington West End First School (and Bedlington Whitley Memorial First School) remain as first schools, pupils leaving at the end of Year 5 would need to transfer to a middle school outside of their home communities or join an established cohort of Year 5 pupils

in another Bedlington school (subject to places being available in both cases). The lack of a clear, educational pathway would create a great deal of uncertainty for both parents and pupils and is not considered to be in the best educational interests of the pupils.

Bedlington West End First School is graded Good by Ofsted. In the interests of providing further information, Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School is also rated Good by Ofsted. While the need to bring forward this proposal has been promulgated by the change of status of Meadowdale Academy to primary status, it is envisaged that educational standards for pupils would increase as pupils will attending Bedlington West End First School and Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School would complete the whole of Key Stage 2 in their primary school and will have only one transfer to the secondary phase at Year 7.

### **Effect on other schools, academies and educational institutions in the area**

As stated above, the academy into which Bedlington West End First School (and Bedlington Whitley Memorial First School) feed is Meadowdale Academy, which is changing its status from middle phase to primary with effect from 1 September 2020. The latter will therefore not be impacted by the proposal set out here.

Additional pupil places would be required within the remaining secondary phase in the Bedlington Partnership from September 2020 as a result of the removal of Year 7 and 8 provision at Meadowdale Academy. Discussions with Bedlington Academy and St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy are being undertaken by the Council with a view to establishing how arrangements for the accommodation of additional pupils in the secondary phase could be achieved.

### **Project Costs and Proposed Stages for Implementation**

Should this Statutory Proposal be approved for implementation, there would be a need to carry out building works at Bedlington West End First School to facilitate the changes required for the school to become a primary school. The building costs set out below are estimates and should be treated as draft as they are subject to further detailed work.

| <b>School</b>                    | <b>Costs</b>  |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Bedlington West End First School | £1.3m - £1.6m |

The above works at Bedlington West End First School would be funded via the Council's Medium Term Plan and Council grants.

In the interests of providing further information, works would be required at Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School in order to support it to extend its age range. As a voluntary aided school, 90% of the funding for these works (estimated to be circa £103k) would be via LCVAP, while the remaining 10% of the required funding would be provided by Northumberland County Council in line with previous school reorganisations.

Long-term value for money from the investment of funding for the building works to support the extension of the age range of Bedlington West End First School (and the linked non-statutory proposal for Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School) will be achieved by providing a clear, educational pathway for pupils attending these schools and their parents. It will also provide stability across the Bedlington Partnership as it moves from a mixed-economy of 2-tier and 3-tier provision to primary/secondary provision only.

### **Pupil Numbers and Admissions**

#### Bedlington West End First School

There are currently 257 (Jan 2019 census) pupils on roll at Bedlington West End First School. The age range of the school is 4-9 and provides education to both boys and girls. There are currently no pupils with an Education and Health Care Plan enrolled at the school.

### **Timeline for implementation**

In accordance with Section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF intends to make the following prescribed

alteration to the school below:

### **CHANGE OF AGE RANGE**

- **Bedlington West End First School**, Ridge Terrace, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6EB by changing the age range of the school,
  - The current age range of Bedlington West End First School is 4 years to 9 years. The proposed age range for the school is 4 years to 11 years to take effect from 1 September 2020.

To facilitate this, it is proposed that the following model be implemented in accordance with the following arrangements and timeline subject to finalisation of the associated buildings programme:

#### **Bedlington West End First School**

##### **1 September 2020**

- Pupils in Year 4 in the above first school on 31 August 2020 would be retained by the school as the new Year 5 as it becomes a primary school.

##### **1 September 2021**

- Pupils in Year 5 in Bedlington West End Primary School (as it would be) on 31 August 2021 would be retained as the new Year 6.

##### **1 September 2022**

- Pupils in Year 6 in Bedlington West End Primary School on 31 August 2022 would transfer into Year 7 at either Bedlington Academy, St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy or into Year 7 at another high or secondary school according to parental preference.

Note that parents would be able to apply for a place at any other appropriate school according to parental preference, subject to a place being available. In the interests of providing further information, should the Council approve the implementation of the non-statutory proposal to extend the age range of Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School, the implementation of that proposal would follow the same timeline as that for Bedlington West End First School set out above as these are linked proposals.

#### **Impact on the Community**

There would be a no negative impact on the community served by Bedlington West End Primary School as it would be extending its provision and pupils would be retained at the school for an additional two years.

#### **Balance of denominational provision**

There would be no impact on the balance of denominational provision within the Bedlington Partnership as a result of this proposal as Bedlington West End First School does not have a religious character. In the interests of providing further information, in relation to the linked non-statutory proposal for Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School, some parents with children on roll at the school may see it as a benefit that their children are educated within a faith setting for an additional two years.

#### **Rural Primary Schools**

Bedlington West End First School is not classified as a rural school under the DfE's List of Designated Rural Schools 2018 and is not proposed for closure, therefore the legislation relating to the presumption against the closure of rural schools is not applicable and does not need to be considered by the Council's Cabinet with respect to any final decision relating to this proposal. In the interests of providing further information in relation to the linked non-statutory proposal to extend the age range of Bedlington Whitley Memorial First School, the latter is not classified as a rural school under the DfE's List of Designated Rural Schools 2018.

### **Maintained nursery schools**

N/A - It is not proposed that Bedlington West End First School should extend its age range downwards to include a maintained nursery as part of this proposal. It should be noted that nursery provision is provided on site at the school for children aged 3 and 4 in suitable accommodation by the Governing Body under Community Powers.

### **Provision for 16-19 year olds**

N/A - There is no provision for students aged 16 to 19 at Bedlington West End First School.

### **Special educational provision**

Provision for pupils with SEN is already provided at Bedlington West End First School. However, there are currently no children with an Education and Health Care Plan on roll at the school. Continuity for current and future pupils with SEN at the above first schools would be achieved as a result of the implementation of this proposal, as pupils would stay longer in their primary schools and would transfer to the next school phase only once at the end of Year 6, and would stay longer at the secondary academy or school to which they transfer.

In the interests of providing further information, Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School currently has 6 children on roll at the school with an Education and Health Care Plan.

### **Travel**

- Transport for all pupils affected by the proposed reorganisation relating to Bedlington West End First School as set out in this statutory proposals (should it be approved) would be arranged in accordance with the Council's Home to School Transport Policy. In the interests of providing further information, this would also be the case for pupils affected by the linked non-statutory proposal for Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School should it be approved.
- Pupils transferring from Year 4 to Year 5 in September 2020 would remain at Bedlington West End First School at it reorganises to primary status. It is envisaged that some pupils in Years 5 and 6 in Bedlington West End Primary School (as it would be) may have shorter journeys to school in these year groups as a result of this proposal, should their home address be located closer to the school than to Meadowdale Academy (to which they previously would have transferred).
- Some pupils transferring to Bedlington Academy or St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy (or another high or secondary school according to parental preference) at Year 7 may have an extended journey length in Years 7 and 8 compared to the journey they may have had when transferring to Meadowdale Academy, dependent on where they reside. Pupils residing more than 3 miles from their catchment or nearest secondary school, or where there is no safe walking route to that school, or who are from low income backgrounds may be eligible to free Home to School Transport.
- There would be no anticipated significant increase in car use as a result of these proposals.

### **Consultation**

All of the applicable statutory requirements to consult on this proposal in accordance with Section (15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 were complied with during the informal (pre-publication) consultation period that took place between 23 April and 12 June 2019. It should be noted that the non-statutory proposal to extend the age range of Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School was included as part of the informal consultation, as it is also a feeder school to Meadowdale Academy and therefore linked to the statutory proposal to extend the age range of Bedlington West End First School.

Consultees recommended in the relevant statutory guidance were consulted via a Consultation Document that was made widely available on the Council's website. Consultees included parents, staff, pupils, Governors of the two impacted schools, all other schools and academies in

the Bedlington Partnership and St Benet Biscop Catholic High School, local parish councils, the Church of England and Roman Catholic dioceses, early-years providers, the local MP, staff representatives (unions), and neighbouring local authorities. A public consultation event was held at Bedlington West End First School on 9 May 2019 and in the interests of providing further information, a public consultation event was held at Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School on 8 May 2019. Both events were well attended. Individual meetings with staff and the Governing Body of Bedlington West End First School and Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School were also held during the informal consultation period.

The consultation events allowed consultees attending to the opportunity to make known their views on the proposals and to suggest alternatives, which were noted and considered within the analysis of feedback. During the consultation exercises, it was made clear that the outcome of the process would not be determined by the equivalent to a simple referendum but would involve a detailed analysis of evidence put forward. A total of 205 responses were received from consultees during the informal consultation process, including additional information such as alternative proposals.

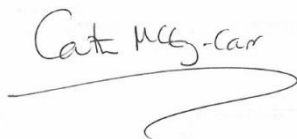
Details of the persons and parties consulted, the notes of the Governing Body and staff consultation meetings, and all views and responses received are summarised in the Executive Director of Children's Services Report to Cabinet 9 July 2019, which is available on the Council's website at <http://committee.northumberland.gov.uk/Meeting.aspx?MeetID=9488>

### **Submission of Objections and Comments on Proposals**

Within four weeks after the date of publication of the above proposals (**i.e. by midnight on Thursday 8 August 2019**), any person may object to, support or make comments on the proposal to extend the age range of Bedlington West End First School by sending their written representations to: the **Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF**, or by email to [Lorraine.Fife@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Lorraine.Fife@northumberland.gov.uk).

Signature

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Cath McEvoy-Carr  
Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services  
Northumberland County Council