Lark Rise Academy Trust

Consultation on our Proposal to Extend the Age Range of Lark Rise Academy to a Single Phase Primary Provision for 2014-2015
CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THE AGE RANGE OF LARK RISE ACADEMY, CARTMEL DRIVE, DUNSTABLE, BEDFORDSHIRE, LU6 3PT TO A SINGLE PHASE PRIMARY PROVISION FOR 2014/2015

The Purpose of the Consultation Document

The purpose of this document is to provide information on a proposal to extend the upper age range of Lark Rise Academy from 3 – 9 years to 3 – 11 years, to create full primary provision.

1. Background

Lark Rise Lower School successfully converted to Lark Rise Academy on 1st October 2010, following successive ‘outstanding’ OFSTED reports and led the way in what has since become the norm for schools to convert to academy status.

Our vision is to extend the outstanding performance of Lark Rise Academy for a further two years, thus enabling us to build on our identified strengths and caring ethos for the benefit of all our pupils and the wider community.

The cohorts of children at Lark Rise Academy perform significantly higher than the national average.

Children currently transfer from Lark Rise Academy at the end of Year 4. This is in the middle of Key Stage 2 and presents challenges with regards to regression in learning and accountability of schools.

2. Contextual position

There is much change within the area of Houghton Regis and Dunstable, with a significant number of schools now being Academies and a general move towards what appears to be a two-tier system of education. The following points demonstrate these particular trends:

- All of the lower schools in Houghton Regis have been granted permission to change their age range from 4-9 to 4-11 from September 2013.

- St. Mary’s Catholic Lower School has also received confirmation that they are able to raise their age range to 11 from September 2013.

- Hadrian Academy and St Christopher’s Academy, from where children eventually tend to feed into Queensbury Academy, have been granted primary status from October 2012 and will each start retaining children in Year 5 from September 2013.

- Barnfield Vale Academy (formerly Mill Vale Middle School) will admit children into Years R to 5 from September 2013.

- All Saints Academy, a 13-18 Upper School, has been granted permission by the Secretary of State to extend its age-range from 11-18 and will admit the first cohort of students into Year 7 in September 2013.

- The sponsors of Houghton Regis Academy have made clear their intention to become an 11-18 secondary school with an expected initial implementation date of September 2014.
The sponsors of Queensbury Academy, a 13-18 Upper School, have declared their intention to consult on changing its age range to become an 11-18 secondary school, admitting its first cohort of students into Year 7 in September 2014.

With these changes in mind, Lark Rise will continue to seek partnerships with other local schools and beyond in order to raise outcomes for pupils still further.

3. Proposal

The Academy Trust is respectfully asking for your comments on the following proposal; these can be recorded on the form attached and returned to the school by post or by email to the Chair of Governors (chairofgovernors@larkrise.com).

We believe that our children would benefit from a primary school setting that is designed to meet the desired learning needs of the upper Key Stage 2 child.

The change proposed would provide stability and a continuity of learning and would also support the changing face of schooling in the immediate locality as well as further afield in Dunstable and Houghton Regis.

However, if we were to implement this proposal we would support parents/carers who are choosing to do either one of the following:

- Keep their child(ren) at Lark Rise Academy until the end of Year 6
- Transfer their child(ren) to middle school at the end of Year 4

To summarise, our objectives are:

- To provide for continuation of the curriculum, whereby each phase of education (primary and secondary) teaches two full key stages and each is mutually able to support progress by reducing the number of transition points.

- To engage in greater collaborative working between phases with a view to enhancing the sharing of specialist provision.

- To sustain high standards of education and maintain the nurturing and well-being of children by offering them only one change of school, thereby ensuring sustained progress in all areas.

- To ensure that all of the schools involved in the proposal work positively as partners to ensure a high quality and localised educational provision, with full agreement of each school’s Governing Body.

- To ensure that all of the schools involved in the proposal offer children and young people a broad, balanced and cohesive curriculum that meets the needs of all.

- To offer all children and young people an exciting and innovative curriculum provision that meets their needs and supports them to achieve their full potential.

- To offer children in Years 5 and 6 a specialised primary curriculum through the sharing of resources.

- To improve parental choice with regards to the variety of options and opportunities which are being offered.
4. **Details of the Proposed Arrangements for 2014-2015**

The Lark Rise Academy Trust Governing Body will apply to the Secretary of State for Education, subject to the outcome of the consultation process, to change the age range of pupils from the current arrangement from 3+ years to 9 years to 3+ years to 11 years.

**Implementing age phase changes 2014-15 onwards**

We are seeking to offer continuity of learning throughout the primary stage of schooling and in particular to maintain our outstanding levels of provision through the entire National Curriculum phase known as Key Stage 2. The stage encompasses years 3, 4, 5 & 6.

Currently pupils in this locality have to change school midway through this vital key stage. Our proposal to keep pupils at Lark Rise Academy until aged 11, would bring us in line with the national norm and reflect what many of the local lower schools are currently proposing.

Parental choice will shape the future of all schools across Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Luton and the surrounding area and these proposed changes will not prevent parents/carers from selecting the next phase of their child’s schooling according to their own personal choice.

**Proposal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2014</td>
<td>Year 4 pupils can remain at Lark Rise Academy and move into Year 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2015</td>
<td>Year 5 pupils remain at Lark Rise Academy and move into Year 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Numbers on Roll – changes from September 2014 onwards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>September 2012</th>
<th>September 2013</th>
<th>September 2014</th>
<th>September 2015</th>
<th>September 2016</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>45</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
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<td>Year 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Accommodation**

Lark Rise Academy is a well-resourced school with accommodation that meets the needs of its children. The building currently offers a dedicated Early Years Foundation Stage unit, computer suite, library and outdoor garden areas. Our facilities are suitable and well used for physical activity and in order to deliver our creative curriculum.
In order to accommodate Years 5 and 6, there will be extensive refurbishment and changes to the existing building in order that the needs of all children can be met successfully.

This would enable Lark Rise Academy to maintain an entry of 45 pupils each year whilst accommodating three further classes in Key Stage 2. The number of pupil places would rise to 360 in September 2014.

Admissions

As an academy we have established clear, fair, inclusive and understandable admissions criteria (details of which can be requested by contacting the school). If Lark Rise Academy’s proposal were to be approved, there would be no change to its admissions criteria or catchment area at that time.

5. Process of Consultation

In order to engage in meaningful and informed consultation, we will be holding a number of consultation events to engage with all stakeholders, as well as providing the opportunity for individuals and institutions to make written submissions about the proposals. All of this evidence will be collated into a consultation report that the governors will consider prior to deciding whether to make a submission to the Secretary of State. What follows is the full timetable, but processes after February 2013 will only be actioned if the governors decide to proceed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 December 2012</td>
<td>Statutory Consultation begins</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 14 January 2013 4.00pm | Meeting with Lark Rise Academy Staff  
(venue: Lark Rise Academy) |
| 14 January 2013 6.30pm | Joint meeting * with community stakeholders  
(venue: Ardley Hill Academy) |
| 15 January 2013 2.30pm and 7.00pm | Meeting with Lark Rise Academy Parents  
(venue: Lark Rise Academy) |
| 18 January 2013 4.30pm | Joint meeting * with Headteachers and Governors from other schools/educational establishments in the area  
(venue: Queensbury Academy) |
| 13 February 2013   | Statutory Consultation ends                                            |
| March 2013         | Lark Rise Academy Governors send report on Consultation to Education Funding Agency (EFA) and Local Authority  
Lark Rise academy Governors Publish Statutory Notice to change age range  
Representation Period begins |
| March 2013         | Representation Period ends                                             |
| No prescribed timescale | Decision by Schools Adjudicator                                      |

*Whilst this is a consultation solely about Lark Rise Academy, two other schools – Ardley Hill Academy and Queensbury Academy – will be running parallel consultations to become 4-11 and 11-18 respectively. Each will hold their own staff and parental consultation evenings (Ardley Hill 16th January and Queensbury 17th January), but since they serve the same broad geographic area, it was felt appropriate to hold combined meetings for community stakeholder groups and one for other local schools that might be affected by these changes.
19th December 2012

Dear Parent/Carers/Staff/Members of the local community,

Lark Rise Academy – Meetings for parents, staff, members of the community and neighbouring schools

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The Governing Body of Lark Rise Academy has decided that it should further investigate and consult on the proposal to extend the age range to a single phase primary provision for 2014-15. You are invited to attend a meeting as detailed above.

If you have any questions or would like to express your views I would be grateful if you could submit these in writing, by post or via email to the Chair of Governors (chairofgovernors@larkrise.com), by 11 January 2013 so that they can be addressed at the meeting.

The final decision on any proposed changes will be made by the Secretary of State.

Yours sincerely

Mrs C Emburey
Chairperson of the Governing Body
Lark Rise Academy
CONsULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THE AGE RANGE TO A SINGLE PHASE PRIMARY PROVISION 2014-2015

Please take the time to read our consultation outline and complete this questionnaire. Your feedback is important to us. Please send completed questionnaires by email (chairofgovernors@larkrise.com) or by post to:

Mrs C Emburey, Chairperson of Lark Rise Academy Trust, Lark Rise Academy, Cartmel Drive, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, LU6 3PT

All responses must be received by 3.30pm 11 February 2013.

Proposal

It is proposed that, from September 2014, the Year 4 pupils at Lark Rise will be given the opportunity to remain at the Academy and move into a year 5 class; then into year 6 in 2015. Lark Rise Academy’s age range would change from 3+ to 9 years to 3+ to 11 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comment

For the purpose of analysis, please detail which group you represent (e.g. parent, carer, local resident, church official, etc.)