

Finding new school places

If a decision is made to close Shelton Lower School

The council will guarantee the offer of appropriate school places for all existing pupils, including those with an Education, Health and Care plan (should any such pupils be admitted to the school). Moreover, parents have the right to express a preference for any school at any time.

Process

If the council decide to propose closure, officers will write to parents of all pupils at the school to set out the options available to them to enable them to make an informed decision about the school they would like their child or children to attend. A special school admissions drop-in session will also be held locally to help parents with their options and offer them support with the process, should there be any pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan.

Central Bedfordshire Council is the admissions authority and will meet preferences provided there are places available. In the case of Voluntary Aided schools, the governing body decide the criteria for admissions and admit pupils in criterion order if they are over-subscribed. In exceptional circumstances, council officers might direct a maintained school to admit over its planned admissions number or ask the Secretary of State for Education to do so if the school concerned is an academy.

Should closure be proposed, then the aim of the process would be to make the transfer of pupils as simple as possible and to cause as little disruption to pupils' education, offering parents a place at their preferred school as far as possible.

Capacity

The council's initial analysis shows that the needs of the pupils currently attending Shelton Lower School, if it were to close, could be met by other schools in the area.

There are three lower schools that are approximately 1.5 to 3.5 miles away from the school and would be expected to take majority of the pupils. The closest school, Church End Lower School, is a large school in Marston Moretaine, which could accommodate the majority of Shelton Lower School pupils. There are sufficient places at the Cranfield Academy and Thomas Johnson Lower School to offer parents of pupils currently at Shelton a choice of options. The other lower school in the area, although further away, is Houghton Conquest Lower School. The table below shows the number of pupils the school can take each year (Published Admission Numbers (PAN)) and the current number of pupils attending in each year group.

January 2018 PAN and roll figures of schools in the area

School	PAN	R	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4
Shelton	15	11	10	9	13	8
Church End	120	78	79	86	75	63
Thomas Johnson	18	14	14	13	14	10
Houghton Conquest	20	18	21	19	17	17
Total	173	121	124	127	119	98
Surplus places		52	49	46	54	75

At the time of producing this information Shelton Lower School has 51 pupils. Eight of these are currently in year 4 and will be transferring to middle school at the end of the current school year as normal. The 13 pupils currently in year 3 will transfer to middle school in September 2019. Therefore, were the school to close by September 2019, only the 30 pupils currently in years R, 1 and 2, plus any children admitted to year R in September 2018, would need to change schools earlier than planned.

Population forecasts

The council's pupil planning forecasts show 143 children of year R age in September 2019, rising to 164 in September 2020 and 166 in September 2021.

The population forecast includes the anticipated impact of housing planned within the area. This is focused within Marston Moretaine, within the catchment area for Church End. The expansion of Church End Lower School is in order to accommodate this growth. A small surplus of reception places is expected from September 2019.

The planning applications which are currently reflected within the five-year forecast are:

- 31 new homes in Lidlington – Land North of Marston Road development.
- 502 new homes in Marston Moretaine – within the Moreteyne Farm and Land East of Bedford Road sites.
- 299 new homes towards Houghton Conquest – within the Duck End Close and Chapel End Road sites within Houghton Conquest, and sites towards Stewartby.

The forecast figures are correct as at August 2017 and are updated annually.

Standards

With regard to standards in alternative schools, they are all good, with all (including Shelton) assessed by the council's School Improvement Service to have the potential to be 'outstanding'. The table below shows the current Ofsted rating, foundation stage profile, key stage one assessment outcomes for 2016 and 2017 and pupil characteristics of all the schools in the area.

Ofsted, attainment and pupil data of lower schools in the area

School	Ofsted	2016		2017		English as additional Language	Free school meals	Special Educational Needs
		FS	KS 1 RWM	FS	KS 1 RWM			
Church End	Good	66	78	70	76	11%	7%	17%
Cranfield Academy	Good	72	70	79	68	22%	4%	7%
Houghton Conquest	Good	79	78	78	88	0%	5%	8%
Shelton	Good	70	70	80	66	3%	10%	5%
Thomas Johnson	Good	84	70	79	86	8%	7%	13%

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