



## **FULL STATUTORY PROPOSAL**

The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England)  
Regulations 2013

### **Expansion of Woodstock Church of England Primary School**

#### **1. School and LA details**

**School:** Woodstock Church of England Primary School

**Address:** Shipton Rd, Woodstock OX20 1LL

**Local Authority:** Oxfordshire County Council

#### **2. Description of alteration**

Oxfordshire County Council, working with the leadership team of the school, proposes to expand Woodstock Church of England Primary School to 2 forms of entry. This would mean an increase in Woodstock's admission number in September 2023 from 45 to 60 on a permanent basis.

The proposed expansion of the school would mean that each year group that starts at the school from September 2023 onward would consist of up to 60 places, making a maximum total of 420 pupils in Reception to Year 6 across the whole school eventually.

From September 2023, total primary pupil numbers at the school would grow gradually each year as up to 60 children are admitted into the Reception classes, allowing the school to adjust to the larger size. Should there be a demand for places in older year groups as a result of children moving into the town and needing school places, the school will review whether it is able to speed up the expansion of the older year groups.

To accommodate this expansion, in the first phase the county council would provide additional accommodation through a new block containing four Key Stage 2 classrooms and supporting facilities (storage, toilets). Alterations to the existing buildings would provide the additional Key Stage 1 classrooms. Additional staff parking spaces would be created through reconfiguring the area to the front of the school. Additional outdoor play area would be created as a result of Woodstock Under Fives Association moving off the site to new purpose-built accommodation within the East Woodstock development.

The planning application for the new accommodation was consulted on between 20 January and 10 February 2022, and a planning decision is awaited.

In the first phase, the school's nursery accommodation would not be expanded, due to the additional capacity being provided in the new WUFA building. When further early education capacity is required, a second phase of the expansion would add more nursery capacity.

### **3. Evidence of demand**

Woodstock CE Primary School is full in most year groups, and is regularly over-subscribed. For the 2022 intake year, the school has received 50 first preference applications for the 45 available Reception places. Pupil numbers at the school are forecast to rise as a result of local housing developments.

The West Oxfordshire Local Plan identifies Woodstock as an area for strategic housing growth, with 300 homes currently being built to the East of Woodstock (permitted as application 16/01364/OUT), and two further sites allocated at Hill Rise and Banbury Road. Planning applications are under consideration for the allocated sites, with 250 homes proposed at Banbury Road (planning application 21/00217/OUT) and 180 at Hill Rise (application 21/00189/OUT).

The three housing developments in total are estimated to generate a peak of around 230 additional primary pupils, including approximately 92 additional primary school pupils from the East Woodstock development already underway. A few of these children are already at the school, but the majority of the pupil generation is yet to happen.

The school is currently able to admit all applicants living within the school's designated area, and some families living outside the area have been able to secure places at the school in recent years. This means that some of the expected pupil generation from local housing development can be accommodated within the school's current capacity, as they would take priority over future applicants living further away. However, the school would not be able to accommodate the full scale of housing growth in the town without expansion.

To inform this proposal, Oxfordshire County Council ran an initial public consultation between 26 January and 23 February 2022. This consultation received 4 responses. Of these responses, 3 were in support of the expansion and one objected. The grounds for the objection were:

1. Wanting a small school with a personal feel.
  2. A new school is needed to meet the scale of growth in Woodstock.
  3. Parking and traffic.
  4. Disruption from building works.
- Although an expanded Woodstock CE Primary School would be in the top 30% of Oxfordshire schools in terms of size, 2 forms of entry is not unusually large, and expansion would bring additional resources into the school to benefit the education of all its children. There are several small schools in the surrounding villages to provide choice for parents who specifically want a small school.
  - Based on the data available, opening a new school would not be viable in Woodstock, and would result in surplus school places in the area, which would have a detrimental effect on some schools.

- Issues of traffic and parking are always considered in the planning process for any school expansion, and the proposals are being advised by the Highways Authority. As much of the housing development is very local to the school, future residents there are less likely to need to travel to the school by car than the pupils currently attending the school from outside the town.
- While building works inevitably involve some disruption, the construction work would be planned to minimise this impact.

#### **4. Objectives**

The proposed expansion would:

- Ensure the county council meets its statutory duty to secure sufficient school places, in an area where demand is expected to increase rapidly due to the cumulative effect of planned and permitted housing development.
- Be supportive of high educational standards and parental choice. Woodstock CE Primary School is rated Outstanding by Ofsted (last inspected 2013) and its last published performance data (2019) shows the school is performing consistently above the national and local authority level.
- Maintain parental choice for existing families and those moving into the Woodstock area.
- Provide necessary additional infrastructure to support local housing growth.
- Prevent unnecessary increases in travel time and costs for families in the area, who would otherwise have to accept places at schools outside Woodstock.

#### **5. The effect on other schools, academies and educational institutions within the area**

The proposed expansion of Woodstock CE Primary School is on a smaller scale than the expected population growth in the area. The intention of this is to ensure the school is the right size for its catchment area, and reduce the number of pupils drawn from a wider area who could attend other schools. This will help maintain intakes at surrounding schools.

In order to accommodate the expansion of the school, the area currently used by the WUFA Pre-School and After School Club will need to be converted into a new outdoor play area for the primary pupils. To enable this, a new purpose-built Early Years facility will be built on the Woodstock East/Park View Development for WUFA to move into, where they will be able to meet the need of Woodstock's growing population. A planning application for the new Early Years facility is under consideration. WUFA and the primary school will continue to maintain strong links.

#### **6. Project costs and funding**

The capital cost of expanding the school will be met from money secured from housing developers (Section 106 contributions). The current estimated total cost of both phases is £3,974,340.

As the school's pupil numbers increase, the school's revenue budget will increase in line with pupil numbers, as most of a school's budget is based on pupil numbers. This is the funding that schools use for staffing and resources. Based on funding rates for 2022-23, each additional primary pupil would add at least £3,288 to the school's budget.

## **7. Implementation and any proposed stages for implementation**

From 1 September 2023, the school will increase its intake into the Reception class from 45 to 60. It may choose to also admit into older year groups, if local population growth requires this.

This timescale is subject to the planning applications for the school expansion and the new Early Years facility being approved in time to ensure the new school accommodation is completed by August 2023, and may need to be reviewed.

In the first phase of expansion, the size of the school's nursery would not increase. This is because the WUFA Pre-School and After School Club will be moving into larger premises and can expand their provision. In the longer term, as the local population grows, further early years provision is expected to be needed and a second phase of the expansion project would then add an additional nursery class to the school.

## **8. Objections and comments**

Comments or objections must be received by the local authority by **6 April 2022**.

Respond by:

- using the online questionnaire at <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>
- emailing [school.planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:school.planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk) (please quote 'Woodstock Expansion' in the subject line)

## **9. Decision-making**

The decision-maker for this proposed expansion is Oxfordshire County Council. The decision will be made by the Cabinet Member responsible for Education at a meeting which is open to the public, and publicised on the county council's website. The decision must be made within a period of two months of the end of this representation period, and is currently expected on 24 May 2022.