

# **Oxfordshire County Council**

## **New schools for Bicester**

### **School specification document for a new secondary school in SW Bicester**

#### Summary:

- Location: SW Bicester development (Kingsmere)
- Number of places: 600
- Age range: 11-16
- Opening date: September 2018

#### **1. Background**

- Why new schools are needed in Bicester
- Existing educational provision in this area
- Consultation

#### **2. Details of the new school**

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- Location
- Size and growth of school
- Design of school and capital funding

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- Delivering excellence in education
- Supporting vulnerable learners and those with special educational needs
- Working in partnership
- Building stronger communities

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# 1. Background

## Why new schools are needed in Bicester

Bicester has been identified as a major growth area by Cherwell District Council. The largest housing developments planned or being constructed are:

- Kingsmere in South West Bicester – underway; 2,468 homes being built by 2031.
- The North West Bicester eco-town – 6000 homes in total, with 3,293 completed by 2031.
- Graven Hill – 2,100 homes by 2031.
- Upper Heyford – 2,361 homes by 2031.
- South East Bicester – 1,500 homes by 2031.
- Gavray Drive – 300 homes by 2031.

There are also smaller developments proposed for surrounding villages, which feed into secondary schools in the town.

The number of extra children needing school places will depend on the size, type and timing of the houses, but we estimate that by 2024 there could be 1800 more primary aged children and 1400 more secondary aged children in the town. Pupil numbers will continue to grow beyond this date.

This growing population will need new schools:

- SW Bicester – a new 600-place secondary school is covered by this specification. For primary education, St Edburg's Primary School relocates and expands from 2015/16; a new primary school is included within the Phase 2 site, opening no sooner than 2018, growing to 2 form entry.
- NW Bicester – one secondary school (up to 1500 pupils) and three (possibly four) primary schools will be required. The first primary school will be part of the exemplar site, and is planned to open in 2016, operated by the White Horse Federation. The secondary school is currently expected to open no sooner than 2021, but this, and the timings of other primary schools, will depend on the progress of the housing development.
- Graven Hill will generate up to 2.5 form entry equivalent of pupils at its peak. The new primary school on this site is unlikely to open before 2018.
- The Upper Heyford development has already provided an all-age free school. Following an increase in the planned number of new homes at this site, either the Free School will need to expand, or another new primary school will be needed.
- In addition, a new Studio School is planned for Bicester, co-located with The Bicester School and intended to open in 2016 (subject to final Department for Education approval). This would provide 300 places for 14-19 year olds, and cover a 15 mile radius. It expects to draw approximately 50% of its intake from within 5 miles of Bicester, and therefore potentially offers approximately 150 additional places for the 14-19 age group to Bicester.

### Existing educational provision in this area

The Bicester area currently includes 16 primary schools (9 within the town and 7 in surrounding villages); two secondary schools; an all-through free school; and a special school.

<b>School</b>	<b>Type (June 2015)</b>	<b>Admission number (2015)</b>
The Bicester School	11-18 Academy (as of 1/8/15)	240
The Cooper School	11-18 Academy (Bicester Learning Academy MAT)	220
Heyford Park Free School	All-through free school, opened 2013	60
Brookside Primary School	Community primary	45
Bure Park Primary School	Community primary	70
Charlton-on-Otmoor Primary School	Voluntary Controlled primary	15
Chesterton Primary School	Voluntary Aided primary	20
Finmere Primary School	Voluntary Controlled primary	7
Five Acres Primary School	Community primary	60
Fringford Primary School	Voluntary Controlled primary	15
Fritwell Primary School	Voluntary Controlled primary	30
Glory Farm Primary School	Academy (Bicester Learning Academy MAT)	60
King's Meadow School	Community primary	60
Langford Village Primary School	Community primary	60
Launton CE School	Voluntary Controlled primary	20
Longfields Primary School	Community primary	45 (expanding to 60)
Southwold Primary School	Community primary	60
St Edburg's CE School	Voluntary Aided primary	60 (expanding from 30)
St Mary's Catholic Primary School	Voluntary Aided primary	45
Bardwell School	Special	n/a (52 on roll Jan 2015)

Further detail on the town's schools is available in the Oxfordshire Pupil Place Plan, available from the OCC website ([www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/pupil-place-plan](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/pupil-place-plan)).

Further details on the Studio School opening in 2016 are available at [www.bicestertechstudio.org.uk](http://www.bicestertechstudio.org.uk)

### Consultation

Initial local consultation regarding new schools for Bicester was undertaken by the county council from 18 November 2013 to 17 January 2014:

- To gather local community views to help shape the specification of schools and choice of sponsor.
- To invite organisations and individuals with specialist knowledge to provide evidence on local need.
- To act as pre-notification to potential sponsors of the future bidding rounds.

23 individuals and organisations responded to the consultation.

On the basis of this consultation, the following are features which would be sought for the new school:

- High educational standards.
- Broad curriculum.
- An outward facing ethos so that it is able to become an integral part of the community.
- Collaborative working with other providers and local partners.

The consultation results have informed this specification, which was further consulted on 7 September – 18 October 2015, before being approved by the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families on 9 November 2015.

## **2. Details of the new school covered by this specification**

**This specification is for the new secondary school at SW Bicester only. Future new schools will be the subject of separate specifications and approval processes.**

This secondary school will be constructed on the Kingsmere development in the south west of Bicester. The Kingsmere development will include a new sports village providing significant new facilities for the community, directly adjacent to the school's site. To make the most of this opportunity, a sponsor is sought to operate an Academy with a particular focus on sports, health and well-being.

### Type of school

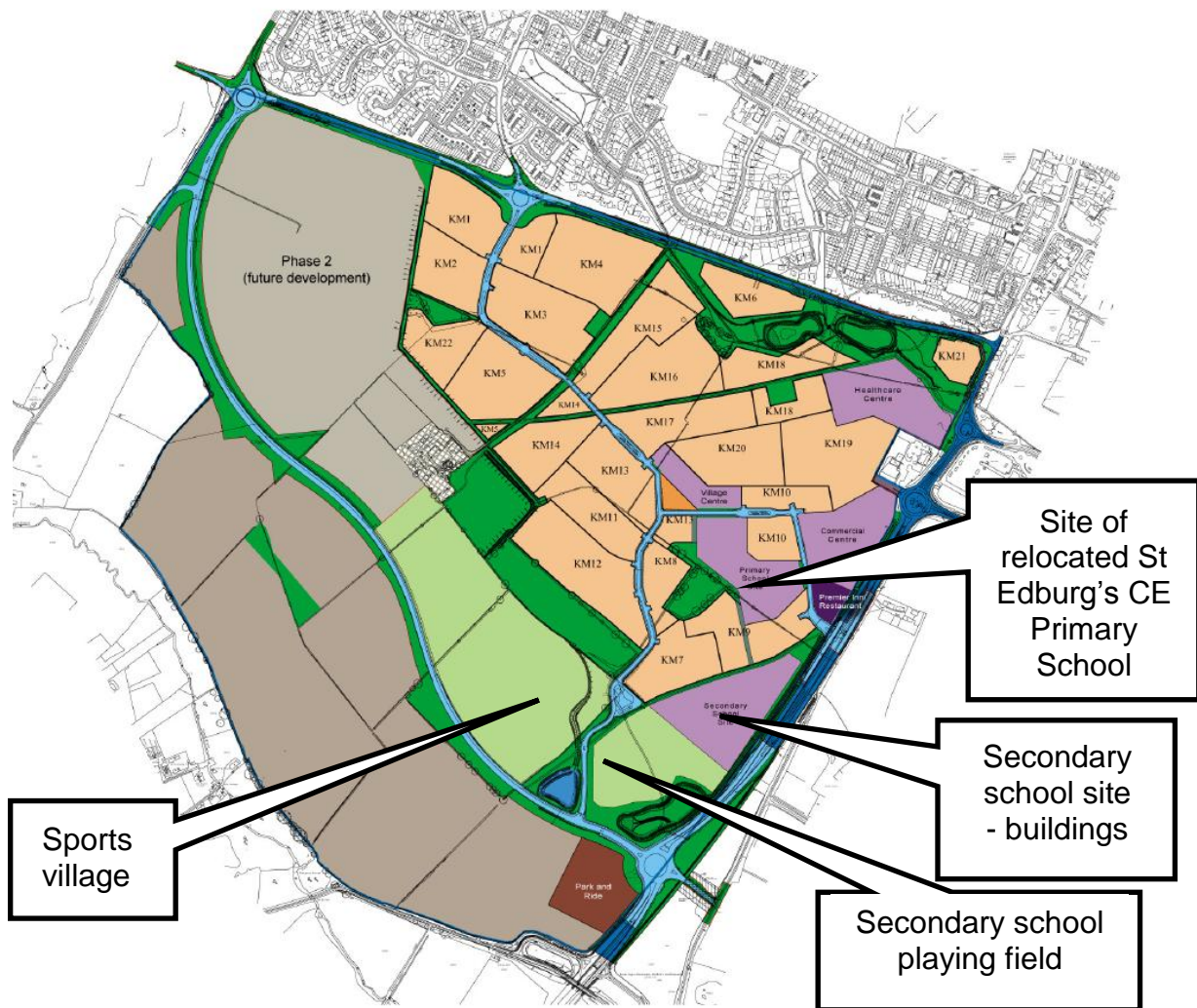
This school will be:

- A 600 place secondary school, although it will take some years to reach full size.
- Age range: 11-16
- Admission number: 120 once the school has grown to full size.

- Inclusive of 8 full-time (or part-time equivalent) places reserved for specialist resourced provision, for vulnerable young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (refer to section below on 'Supporting vulnerable learners and those with special educational needs').

The new school will be located within the housing development in the south west of Bicester, lying within Cherwell District Council. It will contribute towards meeting the need for secondary school places generated by a wider area.

The plan below shows the layout of the main Kingsmere development, with the further Phase 2 development indicated to the north west.



Further information about the Kingsmere development is available at:  
<http://www.kingsmere-bicester.com>

## Size and growth of schools

The school will need to be flexible in how it organises classes to respond to the growth in local school-age population. Proposers will be expected to demonstrate how they will ensure the needs of new residents of the SW Bicester development are met without promoting or encouraging a large scale relocation of existing pupils from other schools. A possible growth schedule is shown below, but this will be subject to discussion between the county council and the successful sponsor.

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Total
2018/19	60					60
2019/20	90	60				150
2020/21	120	90	60			270
2021/22	120	120	90	60		390
2022/23	120	120	120	90	60	510
2023/24	120	120	120	120	90	570
2024/25	120	120	120	120	120	600

While pupil numbers are growing, the school will have surplus accommodation, and it is expected that the academy provider will work constructively with the county and district council, and other groups, to identify ways in which this can be used to support the local community. This may include providing temporary accommodation for other new schools to allow them to open ahead of their permanent accommodation being available.

## Revenue funding

Once open, revenue funding for the school will be provided by the Education Funding Agency based on Oxfordshire's school funding formula. In addition, the county council will make available a pre-opening grant of £125,000, to be drawn down in the year preceding the opening of the school, and a post-opening grant of £375,000 to reflect the diseconomies affecting a school in its first few years. The draw-down pattern of the post-opening grant will be agreed between the county council and the successful sponsor, but it is expected that the grant will be drawn down within the first five years of the school's operation.

## Design of school and capital funding

Under Section 106 of the Town and County Planning Act, 1990, the county council has negotiated a site and capital funding for the school. A £15.9m budget has been secured, including ICT, fixed and loose furniture and equipment.

The school site will be 6.5ha. The site is expected to be made available to the academy on a 125 year lease, with the usual terms pursuant to the 2010 Academies Act.

The site adjoins a new community Sports Village, opening 2016, and there will be opportunities for shared use of facilities, to be negotiated between the chosen academy sponsor and the operator of the Sports Village.

In order to meet the opening dates the design process for the school is already underway. It may be possible for the selected academy provider to have the opportunity to be involved in later stages of the design of the school building.

The new building will be designed in accordance with the county council's approved space standards, DfE Building Bulletin 103 and relevant design guidance for the Kingsmere development.

### **3. Service requirements**

Our vision is for Oxfordshire to be a dynamic and forward looking place for education and learning, providing the best quality experiences for children and young people to grow up, learn, develop and achieve.

An academy sponsor is sought who is committed to this vision, to provide a high quality educational experience, and also to ensure the school plays a key role in building a strong and sustainable community.

In addition, a sponsor is sought who is committed to making the most of the school's location adjacent to the new sports village.

#### Delivering excellence in education

Every child and young person in Oxfordshire should be able to attend a good or outstanding school or setting, access the best teaching, achieve well and as they become an adult, have opportunities for an independent economic and social life. Through providing the best start in life, whatever their background, children should be able to thrive at school. Education and skills provision also needs to be shaped around the needs of the Oxfordshire economy, alongside ensuring that good quality services are available for the vulnerable.

Sponsors will be expected to:

- Provide a sustainably good or outstanding school with an exciting and inspiring broad and balanced curriculum that is effective in equipping young people with the knowledge, skills and personal attributes for life in modern Britain.
- Rigorously focus on educational standards to ensure that every child and young person achieves their potential, and goals and national expectations are met or exceeded, and is prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- Ensure an inclusive learning environment in which all pupils, including those with special or additional educational needs and those with disabilities, are supported and enabled to make appropriate progress. A particular focus on ensuring sports are accessible to all pupils will be expected.
- Ensure that statutory safeguarding requirements are effectively secured.
- Seek out and share best practice within and beyond the school, promoting innovation and creativity in learning and teaching.

- Ensure that thoughtful and wide ranging promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their physical, mental and emotional well-being, is secured for all learners.
- Implement rigorous processes of self-evaluation and continual improvement, including recognising the importance of Pupil Voice in these processes.
- Secure outstanding and dynamic leadership, management and governance.
- Attract, retain and develop the highest quality teachers and support staff to ensure good or better teaching and learning, and effective and motivated workforces.
- Provide evidence of robust and effective financial management.

### Supporting vulnerable learners and those with special educational needs

The needs of vulnerable children and young people should be met locally wherever possible. The new school should promote inclusive opportunities for the most vulnerable children and have a strong focus on equalities, early intervention, and supporting the needs of the local community.

Resourced provision is part of the continuum of support available to children with special educational needs in local areas. Within this school, we seek a resourced provision for vulnerable young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs in key stages 3 and 4 for the local area, providing short-term and/or part-time provision, as well as full-time and/or longer term provision for the equivalent of 8 full-time places.

In accordance with funding arrangements for high needs children, the school will receive an allocation, currently set at £10,000 per place. Specialist expertise will be available from SEN Support Services.

Sponsors will be expected to:

- Provide specialist support to address each learner's specific needs and to improve their progress.
- Provide a learning environment for learners to benefit from specialist small group teaching and interventions as part of a personalised learning programme.
- Embed a focus on all aspects of health and well-being throughout the school to benefit all pupils.
- Ensure suitably qualified and trained staff to advice and support the local workforce to deliver quality teaching and learning experiences for children with special educational needs, and support for their families.
- Provide support, advice and training opportunities to ensure positive outcomes for young people in the local area with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.

### Working in partnership

The school will be part of the Bicester partnership of schools. A key component of selection will be the proposers' willingness to work in collaboration with other providers and local partners to develop services which meet the needs of local children, young people and families in a coordinated way.



Sponsors will be expected to:

- Ensure the school is outward facing, playing a key role within its immediate community and the wider local economy, and building connections with the wider world, for example through drawing on existing town twinning links.
- Be enthusiastic about the potential for shared use of facilities, including community use of the school facilities outside school hours and during school holidays, as well as school use of the adjoining Sports Village.
- Engage parents/carers in supporting and encouraging their children's learning.
- Work in partnership with the county council and other educational providers to contribute towards meeting a collective responsibility to secure the best for all Oxfordshire's learners, including participating in school-to-school support, and cooperating with Fair Access protocols.
- Develop strategic alliances, partnerships and networks to better meet the needs of children and families in Bicester.
- Support the strategic responsibilities of the county council to ensure sufficiency of high quality school places and improved educational outcomes through agreed sharing of data and information.

### Building stronger communities

Under Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006, the county council has a duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents; the involvement of the schools in meeting the childcare needs of the local community would be welcomed.

The county council would also welcome the involvement of the schools in providing community access to appropriate facilities, which may include sports and arts facilities, adult learning and ICT provision.

Sponsors will be expected to:

- Support the county council in delivering effective early intervention services, ensuring school readiness and supporting our most vulnerable learners and families.
- Work in partnership with wider services such as social care services, health and police to keep children safe, support families and build stronger communities.
- Provide children and young people with the skills they will need to play an active part in their local community and economy.

## **4. How to apply**

The county council must receive outline Expressions of Interest by the end of 8 February 2016 and requires one hard copy and one electronic copy of all documentation.

In the first instance, Expressions of Interest should be submitted using the Oxfordshire County Council New School Expressions of Interest Form. The Application Form and this Specification Document are available to download from [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/newschoolproposals](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/newschoolproposals)

Further information is available from, and Expressions of Interest should be sent to:

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Children, Education & Families  
Oxfordshire County Council  
County Hall  
New Road  
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OX1 1ND  
Tel: 01865 816459  
Fax: 01865 783185  
[academies@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:academies@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Expressions of Interest will be assessed against their ability to meet the following broad criteria:

- the quality of the places being added into the system, based on the proposer's vision and educational plan;
- the capability and capacity of the proposer to deliver their proposal to time and on budget, based on their expertise and experience.

The county council will short-list proposers on the basis of the Expressions of Interest received, and by 29 February 2016 will invite the short-listed proposers to submit a more detailed application by 25 April 2016

During the bid-development period there will be an opportunity for applicants to discuss with Cherwell District Council officers options for shared use of sports facilities.

The short-listed proposers will also be invited to deliver a presentation of their proposals – the date for this is to be confirmed, but expected to be in May 2016.

The county council Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families will be asked to identify the preferred proposers at their June 2016 meeting, so that recommendations can be submitted to the DfE for final approval. It is hoped the decision would be available from the DfE by September 2016.