

ANNEX 1

Oxfordshire County Council

New school for Witney

School specification document for potential sponsors of a primary school in West Witney, Oxfordshire

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1. Background

Why a new school is needed in Witney

Outline planning permission has been granted by West Oxfordshire District Council for up to 1000 new homes in the area to the west of Witney. As part of the supporting infrastructure, a new 1.5 form entry primary school will be opened to serve the community.

Existing educational provision in this area

The town of Witney has nine existing primary schools; another five primary schools in surrounding villages are also part of the Witney partnership of schools. There are two secondary schools, and a special school which is co-located with one of the secondary schools and one of the primary schools.

Further detail on the town's schools is available in the Oxfordshire Pupil Place Plan, available from the OCC website.

Consultation

Local consultation was undertaken by the county council from 3 March 2014 – 13 April 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.

The consultation resulted in 23 responses.

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

- High educational standards.
- Welcoming to families of all faiths and none – there was no clear preference for a faith or non-faith school.
- A key part of the local community, providing facilities and activities to local residents.
- Learning beyond the classroom, including activities such as Forest Schools.
- Close working relationship with other local schools.
- Provision of nursery places for 2-year-olds as well as 3-year-olds.

The consultation results have informed this specification, which was approved by the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families on 19 May 2014.

2. Details of the new school covered by this specification

Type of school

This school will be:

- A 1.5 form entry school in the first instance, with potential to grow to 2 form entry if required by local population growth.
- Age range: 2-11.
- Admission number: 45
- Total places provided for Reception to Year 6: 315 places.
- Nursery places provided: 39 full-time equivalent places.
- Inclusive of 6 places reserved for specialist resourced provision (refer to section below on 'Supporting vulnerable learners and those with special educational needs').

Location

A site has been secured for the school towards the centre of the new development.

Master plan of the new Witney Development:

Primary school site



Timescale

The new school's buildings are currently planned for completion in 2017. However, in order to support the development of the new community, it may be possible for the school to open in September 2016 through the use of temporary accommodation.

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, including children who move to the development after the normal age of starting school.

Proposers will be expected to demonstrate how they will ensure the needs of new residents of the development are met without promoting or encouraging a large scale relocation of existing pupils from other schools.

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.

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.

The primary school site is 2.2ha (combined school and accessible community land). 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 new building will be designed in accordance with the county council's approved space standards including provision of extended school facilities for community use outside school hours (as set out in the Cabinet report of September 2013, available from www.oxfordshire.gov.uk).

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 providing a high quality educational experience, focusing on the environment as inspiration and context for the whole curriculum, and also to ensure the school plays a key role in building a strong and sustainable community.

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 for the whole age range.
- Rigorously focus on educational standards to ensure that every child achieves their potential, and goals and national expectations are met or exceeded.
- 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.
- Develop a strong moral and caring ethos, ensuring care and support for the whole child.
- Seek out and share best practice within and beyond the school, promoting innovation and creativity in learning and teaching.
- 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. The reserved places for specialist resourced provision will primarily be for children with communication and interaction needs, physical or sensory needs. In accordance with funding arrangements for high needs children, the school will receive an allocation, currently set at £10,000 per place.

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.
- Ensure suitably qualified and trained staff to advise and support the local workforce to deliver quality teaching and learning experiences for children with special educational needs, and support for their families.
- Work with the local authority's Early Years Sufficiency team to help meet the local need for nursery places, including for vulnerable 2-year-olds.

Working in partnership

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, particularly through active facilitation of community use of the school facilities outside school hours.
- 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 Witney
- Support the strategic responsibilities of the county council to ensure sufficiency of high quality school and early education 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.

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.
- Play a key role in the development of the new community, for example through opening up facilities to the community, and participating in community activities.

4. How to apply

The county council must receive outline Expressions of Interest by 30 June 2014, 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

Further information is available from, and Expressions of Interest should be sent to:
Barbara Chillman, Service Manager – Pupil Place Planning
Children, Education & Families
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road
Oxford OX1 1ND
Tel: 01865 816459
academies@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Expressions of Interest will be assessed against the requirements of this specification, and 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 21 July 2014 will invite the short-listed proposers to submit a more detailed application by 8 September 2014.

The short-listed proposers will also be invited to deliver a presentation of their proposals, with a provisional date of 23 September 2014.

Please note: it is essential that by the time of presentation, proposers have achieved DfE approved sponsor status. Without this, their application cannot be considered. Information about this process is available from www.gov.uk/government/collections/academy-sponsorship .

The county council Cabinet will be asked to identify the preferred proposers at their October 2014 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 December 2014.