

OUTWOOD ACADEMY CITY FIELDS EXPANSION PROJECT

Consultation process from 7 September to 5 October 2021

This is the formal consultation document for the proposed physical expansion of Outwood Academy City Fields from the current capacity of 750 to 1500 in September 2022

Overview

Outwood Academy City Fields has been asked by Wakefield Local Authority to increase its Published Admission Number (PAN) from 150 to 210, commencing in 2022 and starting with Year 7.

In order to accommodate an increase in numbers, we must also build additional capacity. Because this is considered to be a “significant expansion” we must consult in line with guidance from the Department for Education. This is the consultation document.

An introduction from the Principal, Michelle Colledge-Smith

Exciting plans are being developed to invest significant capital money to support the expansion of Outwood Academy City Fields so that it can meet the anticipated increase in the number of students in this area of the town. Following careful scrutiny and planning, the Local Authority identified the need to increase the number of secondary places following the significant level of new housing developments in the area. They approached Outwood Academy City Fields and we were keen to support this initiative. We consider this a fantastic opportunity for the school as it also allows us to:

- Provide brand new teaching and learning facilities on site
- Improve the accessibility and movement around the school
- Provide a solution to the growing pressure on school places

However, we also want to make sure that as part of any expansion we keep all our stakeholders fully informed, giving them the appropriate opportunities to consult and feedback their views.

For the sake of clarity, this consultation document addresses the increase in the Published Admission Number from 150 to 210 starting with Year 7 in 2022. The consultation over the Building Application is a separate process.

In the light of the proposed increase to our numbers, we must, as an academy, follow the guidance published by The Department for Education in “Making significant changes to an open academy and closure by mutual agreement. Departmental guidance for all types of academy trust. Published November 2019.” A copy of this can be found here:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/84745/1/Significant_change_and_academy_closure_151119.pdf

The most relevant section relates to any proposed changes detailed in “Expansion of physical capacity” where it says:

“A ‘significant expansion’ is defined as an enlargement that increases the overall physical capacity of an academy (as recorded in its funding agreement) so that it can increase its overall teaching space enabling the school to provide places for more than 30 additional pupils..... Permanently changing the internal configuration of a school building to accommodate more than 30 additional pupils would also be classed as an ‘increase in capacity’ and requires the significant change process to be followed.”

To comply with the significant change process, we must “demonstrate that a fair and open local consultation has been undertaken with all those who could be affected by the proposed change, and that the academy trust has considered all responses received. Comments or objections can be made on any grounds and opportunities for feedback should be given at all public and stakeholder meetings. The LA will hold important contextual information on the requirement for places locally and must be consulted in all cases.”

Details of how you can feedback comments or objections are contained later in this document.

The Planning Application Consultation process

Whilst this document will give an overview of the proposed changes to the buildings, its main focus is to consult over educational change to the Published Admission Number (PAN).

The Planning application process has required Wakefield Metropolitan District Council’s Planning department to undertake an additional formal period of public consultation. The planning authority has considered representations received during this consultation and approved the proposed scheme.

The majority of all planning application data is now held online to facilitate public engagement. When we have developed our proposals sufficiently to enable an application to be submitted we will publicise the planning portal website via the school website.

The Consultation Process over the physical expansion of Outwood Academy City Fields

This consultation document sets out:

- The position of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
- The school’s context
- Why there is a need for more places in the City Fields area
- Why Outwood Academy City Fields is best placed to meet this need
- The expansion proposal
- The broad educational implications
- Managing the expansion project
- An overview of the Building plans
- Feeding back your views
- Concluding the consultation

The position of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

In order for the local authority to meet its statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places available for the local high school population, Outwood Academy City Fields has been identified as being geographically best placed to cater for this area of growth in the town. The reason for the available investment for the school is that it has been identified as central to several housing developments in the local area and therefore is named as the

school that will benefit from the funding in the S106 housing developer contribution for education places.

The Local Authority will be liaising closely with the school and Outwood Grange Academies Trust as it develops the site and expands the school roll to ensure as smooth a transition as possible. Over time we expect to see the PAN for each year grow from 150 to 210. However, we recognise that this will be phased in line with the completion of the new housing and is unlikely to happen immediately. Furthermore, we wish to avoid creating over-capacity in the area before actual demand materialises. Therefore, whilst there is no doubt that these additional 60 places will be required at some point, any increase in the PAN will not happen before 2023. The subsequent increase will be calibrated in line with additional demand for school places and we do not consider that there will be any change to the current catchment area.

The school's context

Outwood Academy City Fields is a medium sized, 11-16 co-educational, secondary school. The School converted to an academy in January 2011 as part of the Wakefield City Academies Trust (WCAT). In July 2018 the school was re-brokered to Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT) which comprises 37 schools based across the north and east midlands areas of the country. Outwood Academy City would usually admit 150 pupils into the Year 7 cohort each year. Due to significant housing developments creating the need for additional places, as well as the current basic need for more pupil places as evidenced by applications over the past 3 years, the proposal is to expand permanently the school's Pupil Admission Number (PAN) of 150 to 210 and physically expand the school to manage this. This would start in September 2021 with initially growth in Year 7 only.

Why there is a need for more places in the City Fields area

Wakefield Metropolitan District Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to meet the current and future demand for pupil places.

Outwood Academy City Fields' Published Admission Number (PAN) is 150.

Demand for places at Outwood Academy City Fields for the last two years has been:

For September 2020 applicant numbers were:

No. of 1st preferences received – 145

No. of 2nd preferences received – 44

No. of 3rd preferences received - 24

Total number received - 223

For September 2021 applicant numbers were:

No. of 1st preferences received – 137

No. of 2nd preferences received – 60

No. of 3rd preferences received - 34

Total number received - 257

Current and proposed housing developments could yield in excess of 1,000 new dwellings with the majority designated for family occupation. As the local community and population expand there is likely to be an increase in the demand for pupil places at Outwood Academy City Fields.

Why Outwood Academy City Fields is best placed to meet this need

Wakefield Council has assessed and analysed a complex range of data before coming to the decision to expand Outwood Academy City Fields including all of the following:

- Pupil numbers and planning forecasts for the short and medium term
- Capacity at neighbouring schools
- Location and size of the school site
- Ability to expand the school
- Catchment area and proximity of housing developments/increasing demand
- School performance (Attainment, Progress, OFSTED rating, etc.)
- Parental preference and applicant numbers

The expansion proposal

If the proposal goes ahead, 60 additional places will be offered to children applying for Year 7 places from September 2022. This means that construction will have to take place to enlarge the school ready for September 2023 if not before. This construction will create more teaching space and enhance facilities in the school. We will eventually receive additional funding for the increase in pupils to allow for extra teachers and the resources and equipment needed to accommodate this increase.

In considering this proposal a feasibility study was commissioned to explore different options for the sites and the possibilities for construction including all associated costs. The details of these options were negotiated with the Trust's representatives and their architects in partnership with Wakefield Council to ensure minimum disruption to existing pupils in the creation of high-quality learning spaces and facilities to meet the needs of the local school community.

These can be viewed in more detail in the Building Application process, this can be viewed via Wakefield's own website.

<https://planning.wakefield.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=QJDAPYQQ04200&activeTab=summary>

The broad educational implications

The first thing to acknowledge is that ultimately over a 5 year period the number of students in each year group will have increased by 60 as the increased admission of 210 work through school. Therefore, we will increase the number of classes proportionately.

How will you manage the increase in numbers?

The average state funded secondary school in England has 986 students (2019 data).

Source:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>

Across the academy trust we have schools with admission numbers in excess of 300, therefore, we are used to managing large numbers of students. In addition, the site itself has capacity to expand.

As the number of students increases so will our revenue. We will therefore ensure that this increased revenue is spent proportionately and in line with national benchmarks.

Will the increase in numbers affect the level of pastoral care available?

We are confident that we will retain the high quality of pastoral care we currently have. We will also look to increase the level of pastoral support proportionately as the number on roll grows.

Will the increase in numbers affect the level of support for students with SEND?

We see no reason why any increase in numbers should impact upon the provision for students with SEND. As the school grows in all aspects there will be a proportionate increase in terms of the funding we receive and therefore where we spend it. We will therefore grow any additional support in line with our current provision whilst ensuring it is appropriately benchmarked against national guidance.

Will you be changing the admission criteria when you expand?

There are no plans to change our current admissions criteria. However, because we will be formally expanding our PAN from 2023 there is a statutory requirement to consult with stakeholders. This process is a formal Wakefield wide consultation and you will be invited to take part in the process should you wish. Nearer the consultation period we will write to you explaining the process.

Managing the expansion project

OGAT Trustees have ultimate oversight of this expansion project in conjunction with Wakefield Local Authority. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) will also monitor the progress of any expansion.

Will there be any change to Governance and Administration?

We believe that the capacity of the Local Academy Council and that of OGAT Trustees is sufficient to provide on-going and appropriate scrutiny and support for this development. Therefore, we are not envisaging any changes.

In terms of administration, as numbers grow the administrative infrastructure will need to expand proportionately and this will be carried out in context of national benchmarks.

Who is paying for the expansion project?

The Local Authority has been able to access central government funding to meet its statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places available for the local high school population.

Will students and staff be involved in the process?

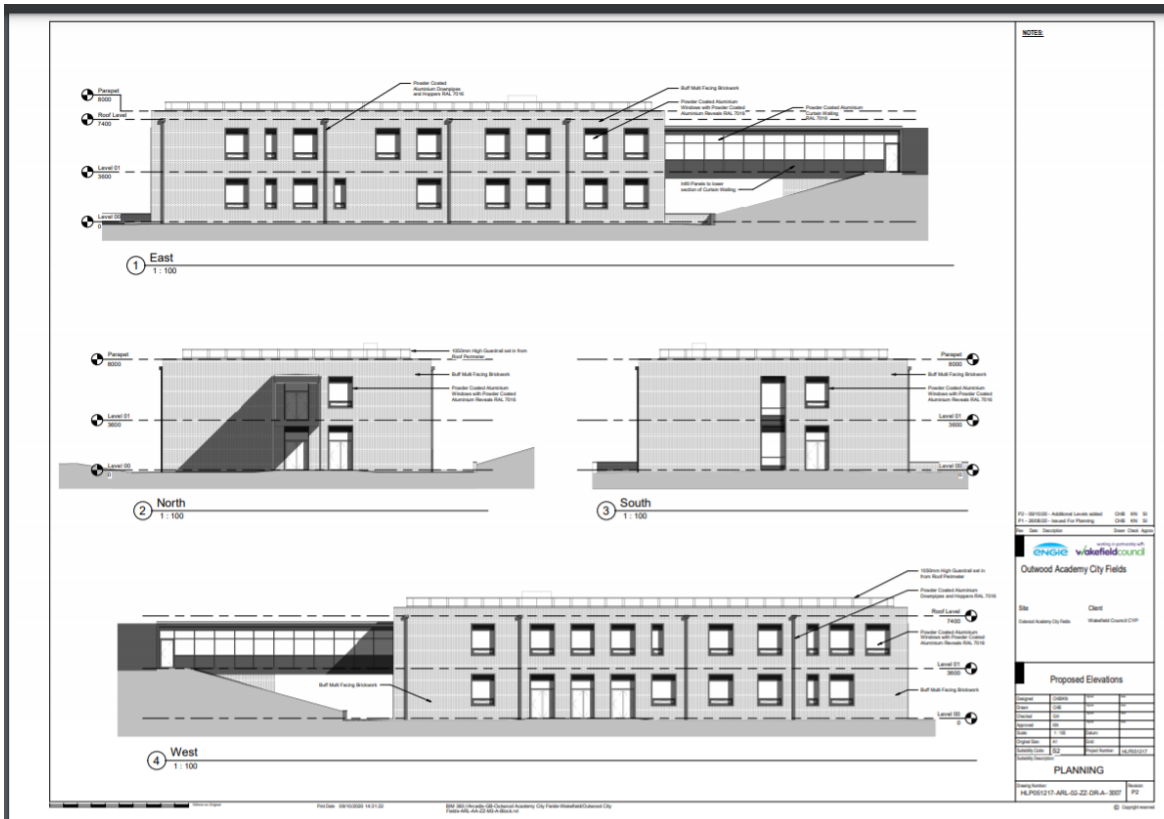
Yes. There are many opportunities to involve students in all aspects of the building and design process. We will have an “educational programme” that will sit alongside the building project involving students in as many aspects of the new build as we can.

Will there be an impact on the learning of other students?

Any impact will be kept to a minimum with as much work as possible being completed over holiday periods. However, we will be assigning a senior colleague to oversee this process to ensure that learning is not interrupted even if there have to be, at times, room changes to facilitate building works. The Local Authority will also be installing temporary classrooms on site during the period of the building works to accommodate the increased intake from 2022 as it is likely that the new building will not be completed by this point.

An overview of the Building plans

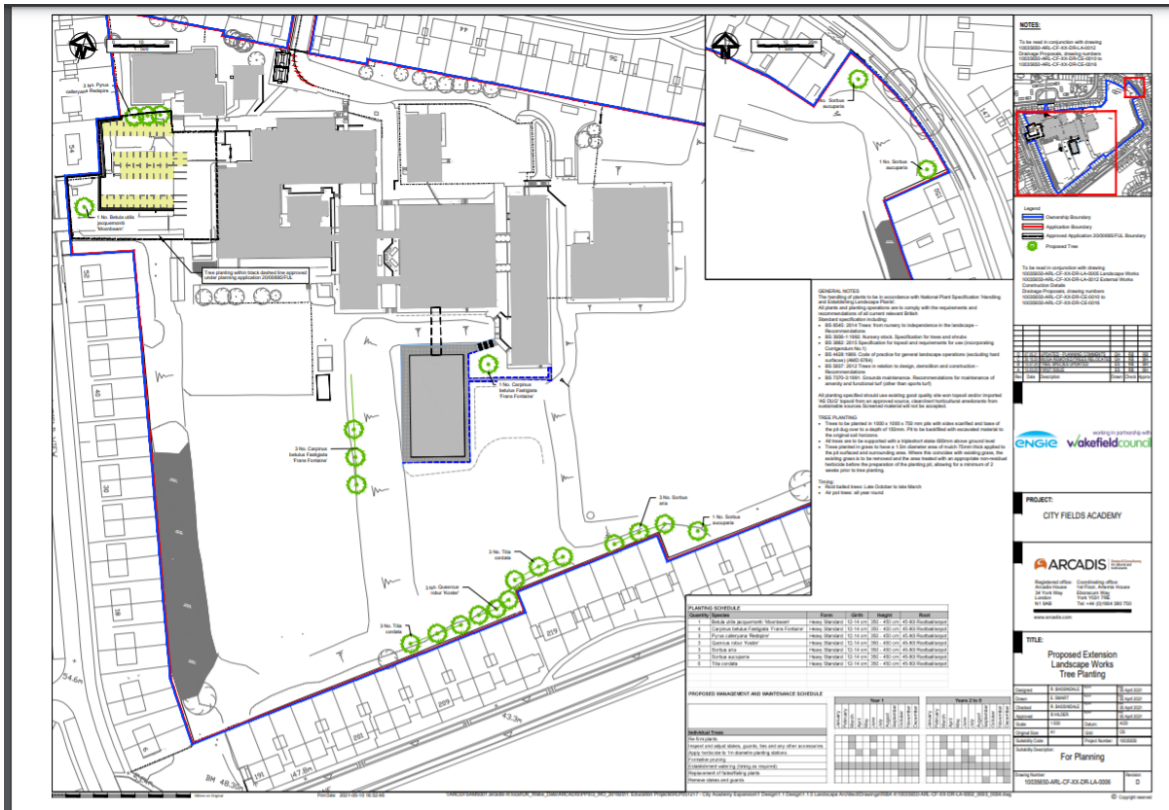
This building project looks to expand existing provision. Additional classes will be built in a new two storey block. There will also be a programme to increase the provision of dining facilities. Here is an architect’s design for the new building, showing the link bridge from the existing school buildings:



On the ground floor this extension will contain five new classrooms, including one Art room and one Music room, with additional music practice rooms. There will also be a new set of student toilet facilities.

On the first floor the new rooms will be two new Science Laboratories, two ICT rooms and a fourth two classrooms.

The drawing below shows the location of the extension on the school site:



Feeding back your views

You can provide feedback via our website by following this link:

[Consultation Feedback Form](#)

We will regularly monitor this and provide interim feedback where appropriate.

If you prefer to email the school, please do so to the following address:

k.bradford@outwood.com

Concluding the consultation

When the consultation is concluded, the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) will reach a conclusion as long as we demonstrate that:

- a fair and open consultation has taken place.
- the proposed changes are aligned with local pupil place plans
- any change is unlikely to have a negative impact on educational standards at the academy or at other local schools or colleges
- appropriate planning permissions and other consents required have been secured
- the proposal does not displace existing pupils

The RSC will then consider a range of factors and make a balanced judgement when deciding whether to approve or reject a proposal. They may also decide to refer that matter to the Secretary of State for a decision.