



Business Case for making significant changes to the operation of Ocean Academy Poole

Report completed by Aspirations Academies Trust

Proposal to convert Ocean Academy Poole from a 3 form entry junior school to a 2 form entry primary school (age 4 to 11) from September 2022.

Proposal summary:

Ocean Academy Poole is a junior school with a PAN of 90 which opened in September 2015 to meet the basic need created by significant population growth in Poole. The academy is 3FE and is currently almost full in all year groups with 360 pupils (Yr 3 89, Yr 4 90, Yr 5 89, Yr 6 88).

Although the school is almost full in all year groups, in recent years the birth rate has dropped significantly in Poole and the demand for junior school places has reduced, although there are plans for more house building in and around Poole. (See table later) . For September 2020 Ocean Academy Poole has 65 pupils joining the school and this is not a trend that can be sustained.

Poole has a complex system of primary education with some infant schools and some primary schools. All of the infant schools in Poole are now part of a trust with transition linked to a junior school in the same trust. If a falling population continues, this puts the future of Ocean Academy at risk as it does not have an immediate feeder school or trust feeder school. The schools operating very close to Ocean Academy are also at risk as all will have a low junior intake at year 3.

Our proposal is to change both the age range and the PAN of Ocean Academy Poole to a 2 form entry (PAN 60) primary school, adding Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. This will change the total population of the school from 360 to 420 and will require the building of two more classrooms. The Aspirations Trust is prepared to fund this new build and there is adequate land on the site, which is not designated as playing fields. This proposal is designed to create sustainability for Ocean Academy and the surrounding junior schools who would then be the sole feeder for their trust schools. This plan also offers the children of this area a consistent education in one school rather than having to change schools in Year 3 which disrupts their learning and the sense of belonging gained from a primary environment.

A significant belief of the Aspirations Academies Trust is the value and importance of the continuity of education from the age of 2 through to 18. The aim would be to make the proposed change for September 2022. There is sufficient space and capacity to make the transition effective and gradual. The following table shows how the Academy would gradually adjust its pupil numbers reaching a steady state in September 2025. The first Reception intake in 2022 would be 30 pupils in order to manage the size of the school over the transition period. We would admit 60 pupils into Year 3 from 2022 onwards:

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2021				90	90	90	90	360

2022	30			60	90	90	90	360
2023	60	30		60	60	90	90	390
2024	60	60	30	60	60	60	90	420
2025	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	420

The local context:

There are significant local population changes taking place in Poole at the moment. Several years ago the birth rate was booming hence the need to open Ocean Academy Poole to meet the demand. However, over recent years the birth rate has declined:

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
BCP Birth Rate	11.9%	11.3%	11.1%	10.8%	10.7%	10.4%	9.8%

Birth rate is only one measure of population and there are plans to build more than 1,800 more homes in the local Poole area over the coming years and local schools often have a surplus of reception children applying to their schools - especially with the BCP merger. People moving into the area is also a key indicator of need.

The table below highlights the current organization of primary education in Poole with infant, junior and primary schools all operating. All the infant schools belong to a trust where continuity to a junior school in the same trust is provided:

School	Age Range	MAT	NOR (2018/19)	PAN	Population when full
Baden-Powell Junior	7-11	Coastal Learning Partnership (as of March 2020)	730	180	720
Courthill Infant	4-7	Coastal Learning Partnership (as of March 2020)	348	120	360

Lilliput Infant	4-7	Coastal Learning Partnership (as of March 2020)	355	120	360
Livingstone Road Infant	4-7	HAMWIC	266	90	270
Livingstone Road Junior	7-11	HAMWIC	242	90	270
Longfleet Primary	4-11	Coastal Learning Partnership (as of March 2020)	632	90	630
Oakdale Juniors	7-11	Coastal Learning Partnership (as of March 2020)	477	180	720
Old Town Infant	4-7	Coastal Learning Partnership (as of March 2020)	192	60	180
St Mary's Catholic Primary	4-11	Plymouth CAST	401	60	420
Stanley Green Infants	4-7	Single academy	284	120	360

The population changes and demand for school places is outlined in the BCP (Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole) CHILDREN'S SERVICES CAPITAL STRATEGY 2019/20 to 2021/22 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- In September 2017, Reception pupil numbers dropped by 9%. This was driven largely by the fall in the number of births in 2012/13.
- **This lower number of pupils will flow through the year groups, with Junior school entry in Year 3 experiencing a similar fall in the number of pupils in September 2020.**
- However, the total number of Reception places available across Poole is likely to reduce, as schools anticipate the reduced number of pupils. Old Town Infant School and Nursery has indicated its intention to reduce its Published Admission Number (PAN) from 90 to 60 for 2019/20. Livingstone Road Infant School has indicated its intention to reduce its PAN from 120 to 90 for 2019/20. This leaves little room for any growth in birth rate or increased housing in the area.

- Surplus places are also needed to ensure that there are school places for people moving into and within Poole and the local area. The accommodation of parental preference also requires surplus capacity.
- In addition, Livingstone Road Junior School has indicated its intention to reduce its Y3 PAN from 150 to 120 for 2020/21. This reduction was planned to follow the reduction of PAN at Livingstone Road Infant School from 150 to 120 for 2017/18. Allowing Ocean Academy to become a primary school will encourage Livingstone Road Infant School children to continue to Livingstone Road Junior School.

The benefits of the proposed change:

The benefits to the local community are significant and for the long-term:

- Continuity of education from the age of 4 to 11.
- Greater pupil and parent engagement as it is one school and one set of relationships.
- Providing parents with a stress free, primary education provision.
- Parents of Ocean Academy Poole pupils are virtually guaranteed a place at the local secondary Aspirations Academy, Magna Academy Poole, reducing the worry and stress of applying for a place in a junior and later a secondary school.
- Equality of opportunity and experiences throughout the EYFS and primary phase. A consistent education throughout Ocean Academy rather than pupils starting at different points in year 3 through transferring to Ocean Academy from up to 8 feeder schools.
- Seamless transition between phases with no loss of learning time, information transfer etc.
- Guaranteed high quality education for the children of Poole from the age of 4 to 18. Magna Academy Poole, a secondary school, is outstanding, Ocean Academy Poole is currently considered to be a good school.
- The Aspirations philosophy embedded in the education process from an early age building the Self-worth, Engagement and Purpose of children, helping prepare them for success in the world when they leave school at the age of 18 or 19 through the development of high level qualifications and significantly developed 21st century skills.
- All trusts in the immediate area would be able to offer a more realistic option for their pupils to carry on through their trust system.
- The future of Ocean Academy Poole would be secured, as would those schools immediately surrounding it..
- Better probability of secure employment due to having consistent numbers throughout the academy.
- Security for parents knowing that their child has a place in school throughout the primary phase and do not have to seek a new school place for year 3.
- The move towards an all through primary school would improve the quality of education delivered for its pupils from the age of 4 and offer them equality of opportunity and emotional and social resilience.

The Trust and our South Coast based Principals all strongly believe that this change to a primary school for Ocean Academy Poole is essential if we are to improve the life chances of young people in the town.

Current issues also include:

- The present arrangement creates a real issue for children of Year 3 age as the transition from up to 8 feeder infant schools results in significant time and energy spent on the equalisation of learning experience for our pupils and social and emotional security.
- Building up a sense of belonging takes time and readiness to learn becomes secondary to emotional and social growth and security. Having a primary school gives this sense of belonging from age 4.
- Parents also find this change of school for their child at the age of 7 extremely stressful and this is something we want to alleviate.
- Parents can often struggle to take their children to 2 different schools and so having a primary setting would support parents and help increase attendance and avoid lateness.
- Parents have often requested this change and the consultation will be opened up to current parents and parents in the local area.
- Changing schools at 7 years old can be very daunting for a child and becoming a primary school will ensure young children do not have to have this anxiety.

Consultation and timescale:

If the Aspirations South Coast Regional Board and the Trust Board agree to this proposal, the consultation will begin on Monday 1st June and will last for almost six weeks ending on Friday 6th July 2020.

We will consult with the following groups:

- Parents and carers in the area
- The wider community including town and district councils
- The education local authority
- Schools in the area

These groups will be consulted in the following ways:

- Statutory notice placed in the local paper.
- Ocean and the two other Aspirations academies in the BCP area will have a link to the consultation documents on their websites for 6 weeks, inviting comments.
- Individual letters will be written to all primary, infant and junior school head teachers within the immediate area, with an offer to discuss the provision and potential impact made.
- A public meeting would normally take place, however due to COVID 19, this may not be possible.
- The Local Authority will be informed of the consultation and a copy of the business case will be forwarded.

Responses to the consultation:

Responses to the consultation can be made by emailing oceanconsultation@ocean-aspirations.org

Responses will be considered by Aspirations Academies Trust and the business case amended if necessary.

The outcome following the consultation:

After taking into account all the consultation responses the Aspirations Academies Trust will consider whether to continue with the application for significant change. If this decision is positive the following actions will take place:

- June 2020: Apply for planning permission to create two extra classrooms on the Ocean site
- Publish and consult on the admissions policy for the changes at Ocean. This will need to be done for 6 weeks between 1/10/2020 and 31/1/2021 with a view for admissions to change in September 2022.
- At the same time as the admissions policy consultation we need to submit our full business case for the significant change to the South West Regional Schools Commissioner.
- If approved the changes would take place from September 2022.

