

PROPOSED CLOSURE OF WOOTTON-BY-WOODSTOCK CE PRIMARY FINAL SUMMARY OF LISTENING PERIOD

Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust has completed a listening period regarding the proposed closure of Wootton-by-Woodstock CE Primary School. This document provides a summary of stakeholder views and responses.

For clarity in this document:

- **ODST** refers to **Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust** – the Multi-academy Trust responsible for Wootton-by-Woodstock CE Primary and Tackley CE Primary.
- **OCC** refers to **Oxfordshire County Council** – the Local Authority responsible for education provision in the Woodstock area.

LISTENING PERIOD INFORMATION PROVIDED

The listening period ran for four term-time weeks, from 20 March 2023 – 1 May 2023 (not including school holidays).

Two documents were provided to parents and carers and published on Wootton-by-Woodstock's school website:

- Listening period information, including rationale for closure, plans for the continued education of children at the school, and responses to all questions in Department for Education guidance for academy closures.
- Transport information sheet for parents.

Two meetings were held for parents and carers:

1. Thursday 30th March 2023 (Week 1 of the listening period)
2. Thursday 28th April 2023 (Week 4 of the listening period)

The meetings were attended by the chair and headteacher of the school, chief executive of ODST, deputy director of Oxford Diocesan Board of Education (ODBE), and two representatives from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC).

MEETING OUTCOMES

Outcomes of meeting 1:

1. Attendees were informed that Secretary of State had agreed in principle to the application from ODST to close WBW school and that this meeting and the listening period was an opportunity to factor in any concerns/comments from parents into the next stage of the plan.

2. It was noted that for the next 2 academic years, transport collecting/dropping off at WBW, would be provided for children currently on roll. From September 2023 all wraparound care would take place at TKL. Parents asked for clarification on whether transport would continue after the two-year period stated in the transport information sheet. It was noted that a cast iron guarantee could not be given and parents would need to make a judgement call. ODST confirmed they are keen to manage this as well as possible and some additional funding may be possible (from other charitable funds). ODST and OCC committed to providing further responses for the second meeting.
3. Parents asked whether Tackley would officially be their nearest school and therefore the transport funding would be guaranteed by OCC. OCC committed to undertaking research and reporting back.
4. Parents asked whether from September 2023, the pupils would have to wear Tackley uniform?" It was noted that if the WBW uniform still fitted then pupils could still wear the WBW uniform if they wished. Noted that FOWS would be providing Tackley uniform from their funds if required.
5. Parents asked whether there was a decision yet on what the Year 1 and Year 2 set up will be. Noted that once the numbers of pupils have been agreed for September then the class set ups would be formulated. Parents would then be informed (could be late June).
6. Details were asked about the nature of the community impact assessment. Further details were given including the procedure followed for closing a school.
7. Parents asked about the reasons for closure and for more detail on the educational reasons given. ODST explained that the extremely small year groups do not allow for the breadth of learning needed – particularly independent learning and resilience, which we are not able to demonstrate is achieved with a 1:5 adult to child ratio.
8. Parents fed back that the move to Tackley CE Primary had been beneficial, and they had noticed the enhanced learning opportunities that being with a larger peer group provides.

Outcomes of meeting 2:

1. Response to questions from meeting 1, regarding closest schools and transport guarantee
 - OCC confirmed all addresses in Wootton are closer to Tackley School than Stonesfield. For some, Woodstock might be the nearest school. At the time when OCC confirmed eligibility, all parents with a Wootton address would be eligible for transport to the end of key stage at point of application (Only for people resident in the village).
2. Further clarification around transport provision
 - Current transport arrangements between Wootton and Tackley, funded by ODST, have an adult accompany children on the bus. OCC transport provided from September 2023 will not, as is standard practice. Children with SEND will be Risk Assessed by OCC.
 - Tackley School Admission Policy will be reviewed with regard to future admission of Wootton siblings – they may get a place but not transport. Chair of Parrot & Lee (land trustees) has advised that it might be possible for the Foundation to support the transport of Wootton children who are not eligible for funded transport under OCC criteria.
 - OCC transport pick-up point in the village – normal rules will apply.

3. Parent question – Haven't we already confirmed that we wish our child to remain at Tackley in September?
 - ODST clarified that the expression of intention recently requested by the school was an early indication to allow planning to take place.
 - Formal application will be required via the OCC once formal closure notice has been given.
 - Places at Tackley are guaranteed until the end of KS2, plus the 2-year transport agreement for all children currently on the roll of Wootton School.

4. Overall sentiment was acceptance that the school needed to close, and while the closure is a sad loss, there is positivity around the move to Tackley and an understanding that it is a better education for the children. All acknowledged how positive the transition process has been for the children and staff of Wootton School. There was a wish to mark the history of Wootton by Woodstock school, possibly with a publication and summer event.

Further clarification from ODST following meeting 2:

ODST can confirm that all children currently on roll at Wootton will be accepted at Tackley CE Primary, following the formal application process.

Once formal closure of Wootton is confirmed by the Department for Education, school will notify parents and parents should formally apply for Tackley. Clear instruction will be provided.

Alternatively, parents who wish to make the application in advance of the formal closure notification, can do so now via OCC. [Changing or moving school | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

NEXT STEPS AGREED

- ODST to provide listening period summary to DfE and parents.
- Parrot and Lee trustees are committed to a period of reflection and consultation with the community regarding future use of the school building.
- School will plan an event to commemorate the outstanding contribution the school has made to village life – will involve staff, children, parents, LGB members ex pupils, LGB members, key members of the local community, P&L Trustees etc.

TIMELINE

- ODST will communicate final closure decision from DfE to parents. (Expected June).
- Parents will be asked to make applications for Tackley, via OCC, following the formal closure notification, however this can be done in advance if preferred.
- Formal closure is expected to be 31st August 2023.