



## **Business Case for making significant changes to the operation of Ocean Academy Poole and proposed changes to the admission policy for September 2022**

### Proposal summary

#### **1. Proposal to convert Ocean Academy Poole from a 3 form entry junior school to a 1 form entry primary school (age 4 to 11) from September 2022.**

This proposal aims to ensure the survival of Ocean Academy Poole and to retain primary school provision in the immediate local community to Ocean. This proposal to move from a junior school to a primary school is supported by Ocean parents and staff. Of those parents, members of the local community and Ocean Academy staff who replied to the initial consultation to change Ocean from a junior school to a primary, 100% were in agreement for an all through primary school in this area. Most stated that the transfer from nursery to infant and then onto a junior setting is traumatic for parents and pupils. They fully support the benefits academically, socially and emotionally for children to have the same opportunity of experience from the start.

Ocean Academy Poole is a junior school rated by OFSTED as being good with outstanding features. The Academy opened in September 2015 with a PAN of 90 to meet the basic need created by significant population growth in Poole. In the Primary Phase Pupil Place Planning Document presented to the Director's briefing for Headteachers in 2013 when consulting for Ocean Academy to be built it stated that there would be a shortfall of junior places as follows:

Courthill 120

⇒ Baden Powell

Lilliput 120

Old Town 90

⇒ Oakdale Junior

Stanley Green 120

The academy is 3FE and has been growing to full capacity for the first time in September 2018. The academy has been almost full in all year groups in 2018 and 2019 with 360 pupils (2019: Yr 3 89, Yr 4 90, Yr 5 89, Yr 6 88). However, due to a fall in birth rates and school age infant children in the area the intake into Year 3 in 2020 was 51. This trend looks likely to continue, as supported by BCP's population figures and states in the 2019 INSIGHT document that the BCP pupil forecasts suggest no additional school places will be required at Year 3 Junior entry until 2026/27 and in the 2020 document states that, no further junior places would be needed until 2027/28. The proposal for Ocean to move to a one form entry primary would result in reducing the number of Year 3 places from 90 to 30 thus supporting other local schools with the trend noted above.

There is also the added problem of most local infant schools feeding into junior schools in the same Trust. In addition to this the proposal from Coastal Learning Partnership to amend the admissions policy of Old Town, Lilliput and Courthill to be a named feeder for Oakdale further limits the number of possible Year 3 pupils choosing to join Ocean. If these trends continue and the admissions proposal is agreed then Ocean Academy Poole will close due to lack of numbers. The lack of a designated catchment area or Trust wide feeder schools leaves Ocean in a vulnerable position.

Our proposal is to change both the age range and the PAN of Ocean Academy Poole to a 1FE (PAN 30) primary school, adding Reception, Years 1 and 2. This will change the total population of the school from 360 to 210, allowing additional space for any bulge year requirements should the population increase again with regards birth rate, new building initiatives drawing families to the area and changes in the flow of pupils with bordering authority schools (the latter two components are not included in the forecast figures within this document). This proposal is designed to create a level playing field for Ocean Academy Poole and to ensure the academy is able to stay open whilst listening to the needs of the local community.

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. 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 until 2024, in 2025 we would admit 30 pupils into Year 3. From 2026 admissions would only be made into Reception:

Year	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2021				90	51	85	86	312
2022	30	0	0	60	90	51	85	316
2023	30	30	0	60	60	90	51	331
2024	30	30	30	60	60	60	90	360
2025	30	30	30	30	60	60	60	300
2026	30	30	30	30	30	60	60	270
2027	30	30	30	30	30	30	60	240
2028	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	210

### 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%

The table below highlights the confused state of primary education in Poole with infant, junior and primary schools all operating. All but one of the local infant schools belong to a Trust where continuity to a junior school in the same Trust is strongly promoted and continuity to a junior school outside of the same Trust is discouraged.

School	Age -Range	MAT	NOR (2018/19)	PAN	Population when full
Baden-Powell Junior	7-11	Coastal Learning Partnership	730	180	720

Courthill Infants	4-7	Coastal Learning Partnership	348	120	360
Lilliput Infants	4-7	Coastal Learning Partnership	355	120	360
Livingstone Road Infants	4-7	HAMWIC	266	90	270
Livingstone Road Juniors	7-11	HAMWIC	242	90	270
Longfleet Primary	4-11	Coastal Learning Partnership	632	90	630
Oakdale Junior	7-11	Coastal Learning Partnership	477	180	720
Old Town Infant & Nursery	3-7	Coastal Learning Partnership	192	60	180
St Mary's Catholic Primary	4-11	Plymouth CAST	401	60	420
Stanley Green Infant Academy	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:

- 2021/22 current forecasts suggest overall Primary pupil numbers will begin to drop slightly.
- The number of Primary pupils is forecast to fall by around 7% across BCP between 2019/20 and 2023/24. This follows an 18% increase between 2012/13 to 2019/20.
- The demand for junior school places will be limited until 2027/28.
- This lower number of pupils will continue to flow through the year groups, with Junior school entry in Year 3 experiencing a similar fall in the number of pupils as seen in September 2020.
- Schools have anticipated the reduction of pupil numbers, Old Town Infant School and Nursery has reduced its Published Admission Number (PAN) from 90 to 60 and developed a satellite provision. Livingstone Road Infant School has reduced its PAN from 120 to 90 for 2019/20 and is currently consulting to reduce this further to 60 for 22/23. Livingstone Road Junior School has reduced its Y3 PAN from 150 to 120 for 2020/21 and is currently consulting to reduce its PAN to 60 from 22/23. Ocean Academy is proposing a change from a 3FE to 1 FE primary.
- Surplus places are needed to ensure that there are school places for people moving into and within Poole and the local area. As stated in the BCP INSIGHT document *'Therefore, these are school places that may be required in addition to the places (birth rate) forecasted.'* Forecasts are based on past trends, but changes in demographics and parental behaviour that determine how many school places are needed, are often unpredictable, rapid and substantial. This proposal will put in place a contingency should demographics and parental behaviours shift.
- In developing Ocean Academy as a primary provider, there will be an increase of 30 Year R places which will allow for places as indicated above and also support other local schools at junior level as the PAN for Ocean will decrease in all KS2 years. Parents welcome the opportunity to have their child/ren educated within one setting thus removing stressful transition and also allows parental choice.

### 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 at it is one school and one set of relationships. This allows Ocean to build a community, supporting families in all aspects of education and welfare.
- Providing parents with a stress-free education provision from age 4 with parents of Ocean Academy Poole pupils being virtually guaranteed a place at the local secondary Aspirations Academy, Magna Academy Poole or Livingstone Academy Bournemouth, reducing the worry and stress of applying for a place in a junior and later a secondary school.
- Seamless transition between phases with no loss of learning time, information transfer, etc.
- The Aspirations philosophy is 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 through the development of high-level qualifications and significantly developed 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.
- Raised outcomes for our children. In 2018/19, 5/6 junior schools (local to Ocean) scored below average in progress in reading and maths, whereas 6/6 local primary schools scored average or above in progress or reading and maths.
- Equality of opportunity and experience throughout EYFS and the primary phase for all pupils and this alleviates the difficulties encountered by a junior school who currently feed from up to 8 infant schools.
- All Trusts in the immediate area would be able to promote a more realistic and fair offer for the children of Poole.
- The future of Ocean Academy and its staff would be secured, as would that of the schools immediately surrounding it.
- Reduce the traffic congestion in the area as parents will no longer need to travel to a number of schools.
- Existing staff within the academy have a skill set and experience to teach EYFS and KS1 enhancing their professional skills and career development.
- There will not be any need for building on the site as existing classrooms can be adapted for EYFS and KS1.
- There is ample outside space for all pupils at the academy.

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. The present arrangement creates a real issue for children of Year 3 age as the transition across the two current schools is difficult, resulting in significant time and energy spent on catch up. This has a knock-on effect on the progress outcomes of the young people leaving Ocean Academy Poole and moving on to secondary school. The move towards an all through primary school would improve the quality of education delivered for its pupils.

## **2. Proposed change to the Admissions Policy for 2022/23**

To accommodate the proposed significant change detailed in the business case above, we would like to consult on the following changes to the admissions policy for September 2022:

1. Two points of entry, Reception and Yr 3
2. Entry to Reception with a PAN of 30
3. Reduce the PAN for Yr 3 from 90 to 60.

The criteria for priority of offering places at the academy will remain unchanged. We would admit 60 pupils into Year 3 from 2022 until 2024 then we would re-consult, within the appropriate time frame, to admit 30 pupils into Year 3 for 2025. From 2026, admissions would only be made into Reception.

### **Consultations and timescales**

Both consultations will begin on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 and will last for six weeks (excluding the Christmas break) ending on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

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:

1. Statutory Notice placed in the local paper.

2. 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.
3. Individual letters will be written to all primary, infants and junior school head teachers within the area, with an offer to meet and discuss the provision and potential impact.
4. The Local Authority will be informed of the consultation and will be sent a copy of this business case.

### **Responses to the consultation**

Responses will be considered and the business case/admissions policy 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:

- The responses from the consultation for changes to the admissions policy would be submitted along with 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.

### **Have your say**

If you have any questions or views on the proposed changes to the significant change of operation or the proposed admissions policy, please email: [oceanconsultation@ocean-academies.org](mailto:oceanconsultation@ocean-academies.org) by Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020.