

Proposal:

To extend the age range of the school to accommodate children at Year 5 and Year 6.

Further detail:

Cherry Orchard is currently a first school, taking children from Reception class through to the end of Year 4 (half way through Key Stage 2). Most of our children then progress to Abbey Park Federation, with typically 2 or 3 alternatively choosing either a private school or another local Middle School (St Barnabas CE Middle School or Pinvin Federation).

It is well evidenced that there is a dip in pupil attainment following transition to another Key Stage or to another school. Recent analysis suggests that 60% of children educated in a primary school reach nationally expected levels in reading, writing and numeracy at the end of Key Stage 2 whilst only 55% of those educated in First and then Middle schools do so. By continuing to Year 6 we would limit the number of transitions from first school to the secondary phase to just one, therefore potentially enabling pupils to make better progress to the end of Key Stage 2 and prepare them for the start of Key Stage 3.

Very often we see Year 4 children who are comfortable and confident in the school, and who are progressing extremely well, become unsettled when they have to cope with a new school and new teachers. We have good transition processes but no matter how good those are, and how good their next school is, coping with these changes will undoubtedly unsettle children more, and for longer, than simply getting used to a new classroom and a new teacher, as they would if they remained at Cherry Orchard for Year 5 and Year 6.

If the proposed Change of Age Range were to be progressed, we would expect children to leave Cherry Orchard at the end of Year 6 and transition straight to High School. Pershore High School, which is the catchment High School for Cherry Orchard, is therefore also proposing to extend their age range to include Year 7. This “two tier” model is by far the most common structure throughout the UK education system and is aligned with the format of the Key Stage system which dictates assessment points and benchmarks.

We believe that if the children complete Key Stage 2 at Cherry Orchard, and then move onto the next school at the beginning of Key Stage 3, we will be able to ensure that they

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- will be well prepared for that transition, especially since as partners within Avonreach MAT we already have very strong links with Pershore High School.
- will be well settled into their new school by the time they start their GCSE exam courses, which many schools are now commencing in Year 9 due to the increased content in the new national curriculum.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. When could this be implemented?

If the decision is taken to proceed, the earliest we could implement a Year 5 at Cherry Orchard is from September 2019 with our first Year 6 following in September 2020. This allows sufficient time for the Local Authority to coordinate the Admissions Procedures. Pershore High School would then take their first Year 7 intake in September 2021.

2. What would the Middle School do?

This is a question for the Middle School to answer. The population of Pershore is growing with the building of new housing estates which will result in a greater demand for school places. If the Age Range were to change at Cherry Orchard, the Middle School would need to decide what the best structure is for them going forward. If there is sufficient demand from parents (from their own First Schools, other feeder First Schools and indeed Cherry Orchard parents who prefer to) they may continue to operate a Middle school giving the option for children to be educated in the current 3 tier system.

3. Will the change be disruptive?

We are confident the change will not be disruptive for the pupils. Implementing the change from the First schools upwards would flow the change through the system in a phased manner. As a result of the timeframes proposed, we will have at least 18 months to prepare for our first Year 5 class. Pershore High School will have an additional two years to prepare for these children as Year 7s.

4. Can Cherry Orchard offer Year 5 and 6 the same quality of education as at a Middle School?

Yes we believe we can. Teachers are trained according to primary and secondary phases and as such we already have suitably qualified teachers. Whilst we would need to recruit new teachers, we are fortunate to be in the position that we could choose to recruit teachers experienced with Years 5 and 6, or alternatively could choose to redeploy existing staff to these year groups and recruit to fill posts in the earlier year groups. If the proposal were to go forward, we would examine the curriculum for Years 5 and 6 with regard particularly to subjects such as science where additional resources over and above what we have currently at Cherry Orchard may be required.

5. Will the children have the same opportunities (eg school trips etc)?

Yes. Cherry Orchard will endeavour to provide the same opportunities as the children currently get in a Middle School setting, both in terms of curricular and extra-curricular activities. Additionally we will be working with the other schools within Avonreach MAT to collaborate on such activities and to ensure resources are available to enrich the curriculum and opportunities for the children in these year groups.



6. How would it affect the size and character of the school?

We would continue to work very hard to maintain the close knit, family feel and supportive culture that we currently have. We would obviously have a higher proportion of older, and bigger, children in the school which will be a little unusual but these can provide excellent role models and we can give these older children more responsibilities than is possible with Year 4 children to help foster the caring ethos that the school has.

7. How will Cherry Orchard physically accommodate the extra year groups?

The school has already extended sufficiently to accommodate the extra year groups with the conversion of the staff room back into a classroom. Further improvements to the school accommodation and facilities, such as improvements to the current Cherry Orchard School entrance, office and the provision of additional resources, are also being evaluated.

8. How will the school manage the extra traffic created by the school expansion?

Cherry Orchard will continue to encourage parents and carers to walk where possible and the school is currently investigating parking options to begin walking buses.