

What is happening to schools in Crewkerne and Ilminster?

Proposed Public Consultation
Autumn 2020



We are proposing to change the school system in Ilminster and Crewkerne

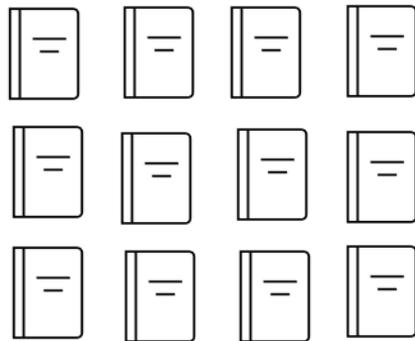
- There was an informal consultation with schools and the community in 2019.
- That consultation included a range of different options.
- We have reviewed the responses we received.
- Based on the feedback, we have developed a new proposal.
- On 21 October we will be asking the leaders of Somerset County Council if we can consult on this with the community.
- If this is agreed, we will be accepting responses from 2 November to 11 December 2020.



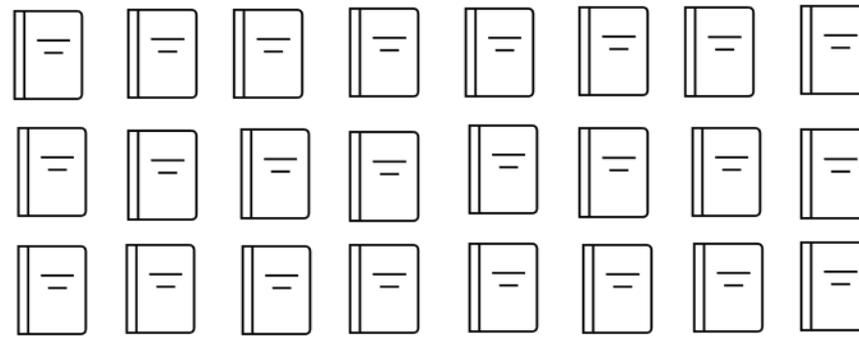


Why are we doing this?

- In secondary schools, pupils are usually offered more subjects to choose from in Year 10 and 11 compared to Years 7, 8 or 9.
- Older year groups receive more funding to pay for this.
- But, this money is only enough if the school has enough pupils in it.
- The upper school in Crewkerne and Ilminster, Wadham, is small compared to many secondary schools and the number of pupils and this number has also been dropping.



Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9



Year 10 and Year 11



Why upper schools start costing too much when pupil numbers drop

- In any school it costs more to have 20 pupils in a class than 30. This is because a teacher's salary still needs to be paid regardless of class size and we receive 50% more funding for a class size of 30 compared to 20.
- In secondary schools, it also costs more if you have fewer classes. That's because most subjects need a different teacher. For example, a teacher of English usually wouldn't be able to teach a lesson on Maths.
- This is a big problem for upper schools like **Wadham**. Secondary schools are able to share subject teachers with Years 7/8/9 to cover more subjects if pupil numbers drop. An upper school can't do this.
- The problem funding small numbers is even worse for Years 12 and 13. That is why around 70 small sixth forms have closed in recent years.



What's the solution?

- One solution would have been to reduce the amount of choice pupils have to study different subjects in Year 10 and 11 at Wadham School. This would reduce the quality of education.
- We therefore propose to change the upper school (Wadham School) to a secondary to maintain a high quality of education with a good range of subject choices.
- Making this change would mean that first and middle schools would have to change to teach the primary age range.
- These changes are about **protecting the quality of education in the long-term** for the area.

What would this look like in Ilminster?

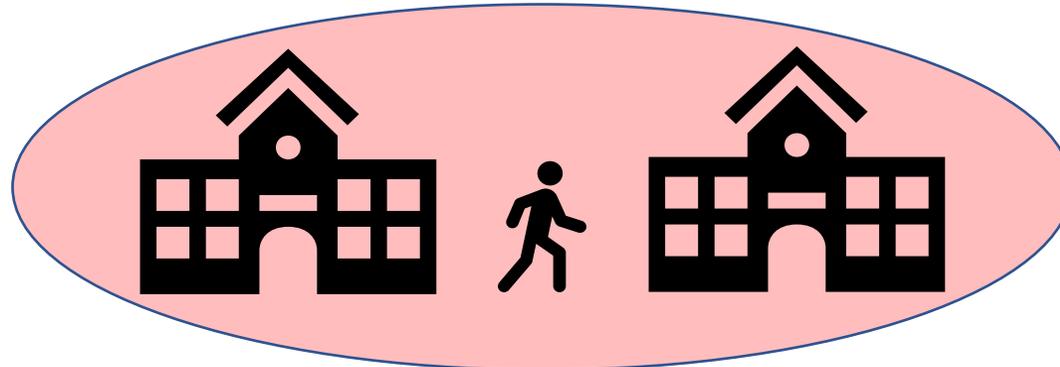
- There would be one primary school in Ilminster.
- This school would have classes across two school buildings:
 1. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 - where Greenfylde First School is now.
 2. Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 - where Swanmead Community School is now.
- These two buildings in Ilminster are geographically close.





How can this work?

- The new school would have one name, one uniform, one staff group and one way of doing things.
- Pupils moving into a different building in Year 3 would not feel like much had changed. Being one school helps children maintain good progress in their learning from Year 2 to Year 3.
- Start and finish times would be staggered, so parents with children at school in both buildings could drop off/pick up at one and still be in time for the other.



What would this look like in Crewkerne?

- Two first schools (Ashlands and St Bartholomew's) and the middle school (Maiden Beech) would become primary schools.
- These schools, together with the village schools nearby, would provide too many spaces for the number of primary aged children in Crewkerne.
- However, we know that houses are being built in the town and nearby. The extra spaces would mean there is enough capacity in the town for new children moving to the area.
- However, even with new developments, there would still be too many places in the area, so we would close Misterton First School. This school is close to St Bartholomew's (1.2 miles) and not all of the children who attend live in the village.





When would this happen?

- Changes would start in September 2022.
- Not everything would change all at once as we want to avoid as much disruption as possible for pupils. The next two years pupil should not see anything change in their school.
- We would work with every pupil and family so that they know their choices and are fully supported with the transition to a new school.
- We would work with each school to plan these changes. The aim would be to ensure their funding reflects these changes and not to have any school too empty or too full.



How would this affect Misterton?

- There would be no change at Misterton for two years until September 2022.
- Misterton would continue to provide excellent education during that period. Pupils would not experience any disruption to their education.
- In preparation for September 2022, we would work with every parent, family and pupil to plan their next steps.
- There would be a full transition programme. We would support parents, pupils and families to make a choice of new school and prepare for that change.



How would this affect staff?

- It is very important that we keep the committed and expert staff that work in schools in the area.
- We will be working alongside every school to plan what staff will be needed in each school in future.
- Any member of staff who may need to move to a comparable role in another local school will be fully supported to do so.
- We will 'ring-fence' jobs in the area so that local staff are always first in line to be appointed.