

Free Schools - Proposal Form

The Proposal Form asks you for details on the educational rationale, aims and objectives, parental demand and premises of the proposed Free School. It also asks questions about the suitability of the provider(s) involved. All new Free Schools will be opened with the same legal status as Academies, in a binding agreement with the Secretary of State.

Please note, all information provided in this form will be published on the Department for Education website.

INITIAL DETAILS

Name (Please specify if you are the nominated representative of an organisation that wishes to set up a Free School)

██████████

Name of your organisation

Moorlands School/Filmer Trust

Address (of organisation or individual)

██████████ Luton, Bedfordshire, ██████████

Email Contact ██████████

Telephone Number

██████████

Are you an existing independent school wanting to convert to a Free School?

Yes

If yes, please provide your 6-digit school unique reference number (URN)

109726

If no, please confirm the nature of your organisation (educational group / charity / business / parent group etc)

Please confirm whether your organisation is incorporated i.e. set up as a Company which is registered at Companies House. If so, please provide the Company Registration Number, Company Address and details of the Directors and Secretary. If not, please indicate the approximate date by which it will be incorporated.

Yes, our organisation is incorporated

Company Registration Number:

Company Address:

Details of Directors and Secretary:

No, our organisation is not yet incorporated

Approximate date by which it will be incorporated: Currently registered charity; could seek company incorporation within 10 working days

What is the proposed age range of the Free School? Please include details of planned pupil numbers in each year group.

4+ (Reception) to 11 (Year 6), with a view to the possibility of raising the age range to 13 (Year 8) in due course

When do you hope the Free School will start operating (for your first set of pupils)?

September 2011

In which Local Authority area will the school be based? If you are near to a LA boundary, please include name of neighbouring LA(s)

Local Authority Luton

Neighbouring LAs Central Bedfordshire

Is your Local Authority aware of your intention to set up a Free School?

Yes

(If Y please give details of your discussions with them so far)

We have discussed our intention to seek Free School Status with [REDACTED], [REDACTED]. She has confirmed that the Borough has a shortage of school places for the primary age range and will need to provide a number of new schools in the near future in order to provide for this demand. We are told the LEA presently has an open mind regarding Free Schools.

Have you discussed your proposal form with the New Schools Network?

Yes

(If Y please give details of your discussions with them so far)

We submitted draft details to the New Schools Network on 16th August, which were then ammended on 7th September 2010 and 17th September 2010 as a result of their feedback. We have provided additional information in light of their observations.

SUITABILITY OF PROVIDER

The Secretary of State will consider each proposal on its merits, and take into account all matters relevant to that proposal. Generally, he would expect that all proposals will comply with all aspects of the rigorous suitability and vetting tests throughout the application process, including due diligence and CRB checks and will reject any proposers who advocate violence, intolerance, hatred or whose ideology runs counter to the UK's democratic values.

Do any of the following apply to the organisation (or any consortium member), or to (any of) its director(s)/partners/proprietor(s) or individual applicants (select Y/N):	
Is in a state of bankruptcy, insolvency, compulsory winding up, receivership, composition with creditors (including any Individual Voluntary Arrangement), or subject to an Administration Order or any legal proceedings concerning their solvency?	No
Has been convicted of a criminal offence?	No
Is involved in any illegal activities?	No
Has not fulfilled obligations related to payment of taxes?	No
Is guilty of serious misrepresentation in supplying information?	No
Is not in possession of relevant licences or membership of an appropriate organisation where required by law?	No
Is barred from certain work with children as a result of being:	
[a] included in the list of those barred from Regulated Activity with children, kept by the Independent Safeguarding Authority? Or	No
[b] included in the list kept under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1999(4) (list of those considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children)? Or	No
[c] subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 (5) (or any other disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction)? Or	No

<p>[d] disqualified from working with children under sections 28, 29 or 29A of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000(6)?</p> <p>For further information on [a], [b], [c] and [d], please contact the CRB www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Is disqualified from registration under Part 10A of the Children Act 1989(7) for child minding or providing day care?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Is disqualified from registration under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006(8)?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Is a member, or has been a member in the past, of a proscribed organisation?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>If the answer to any of these questions is “Yes” please give details below:</p>	

EDUCATIONAL RATIONALE, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Briefly outline your reasons for wanting to set up a Free School. Max 200 words.

Moorlands School has long endeavoured to be an inclusive and accessible school committed to extending opportunity. Free School Status would enable the school to widen its inclusivity and to make available its unique brand of prep school education to pupils irrespective of background. Moorlands is already the most diverse school in Luton and has over the past two decades sought to enable pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds attend the school. At present approximately a third of our pupils are not full-fee paying.

Local standards:

A report published by the Childrens Society on 18th September 2010 describes Luton's education gap as 'unacceptable', with only 57% of the poorest children achieving 5 good GCSE passes compared to 72% of their better off classmates.

Curriculum - as outlined in the next section of this form, we can offer an approach and curriculum that otherwise is not offered in the area. Given our experience of providing education we believe we could help raise local standards and combat such under-achievement.

Shortage of Primary school places in Luton:

According to a Luton Borough Council report by the Corporate Director for Children & Learning (Strategy for Expanding Primary School Places 26/8/08) the town has a rising pupil population that is projected to grow by 19% by September 2012. Demand for Reception places will increase by 24% by 2012. A similar report in January 2010 states that "The shortage of school places is expected to get significantly worse."

Moorlands believes that its distinctive prep school philosophy, with its emphasis on small class sizes, nurtured education, specialised teaching (in areas such as foreign languages), and strong discipline allows pupils to flourish and achieve their full potential irrespective of barriers presented by social background, gender or ethnicity. We believe that providing access to such a brand of education will drive up standards, opportunities and social mobility.

Please set out the Free School's aims and objectives. You should also describe:

- the teaching methods that will be used and whether the Free School will follow a particular philosophy (eg Montessori);
- the outline of the Free School's proposed curriculum, including any religious ethos;
- how the Free School will improve pupil learning and ensure strong discipline;

Max 2000 words.

Our Aims and Objectives are described under the following 6 headings:

Curriculum:

The school teaches a core curriculum as a foundation; in addition a host of languages including French, Russian, Chinese, Japanese and German as well as Classics are offered. 'Life-skills' subjects are also provided, which include Financial Awareness, Etiquette and Housekeeping, Expressive Arts and Problem Solving. The school has a strong moral code and seeks to develop spiritual awareness. The core curriculum is as follows:

Reception:

Communication, Language & Literacy
Problem Solving, Reasoning & Literacy
Physical Development
Creative Development
Knowledge & Understanding of the World
Personal, Social & Emotional Development
French

Year 1 & 2

Maths
English
French
Music
Science
PE
History
Geography
ICT
Citizenship
RE
Art
Lifeskills

Years 3-6:

As Year 1 & 2 with addition of;
Verbal Reasoning
Classics
Swimming
PSHE/Citizenship
Foundation Japanese/Chinese/Russian/German

SEN:

The school has an SEN policy which aims to create an environment that meets the special educational needs of each child through individual education plans and which was viewed as effective by the recent inspection of the school by ISI (June 2010).

Assessment:

The school participated in SATS testing from 1993 to 2009, when a new

system of regular assessments including verbal reasoning was introduced to determine needs and to measure progress. As the recent inspection report notes; "This embryonic system is already beginning to give a much clearer indication of each pupil's progress and attainment.

Admissions:

The school is non-selective. At present, pupils who apply for a place are invited to spend a morning at the school and places are offered on the basis of availability and in order of application. Moorlands seeks to attract pupils from all backgrounds and already has a wide database of parents of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds who are interested in the school. This has primarily been compiled from direct approaches to the school and via feedback to our newsletter which is hand delivered throughout all sections of the town. As a Free School we would utilise this database and newsletter distribution system in order to encourage Free School applications and awareness from disadvantaged areas of the town. With regard to the anticipated oversubscription for places, the school would favour either a Lottery system or a "fair banding" system as currently used in over a quarter of council areas. We believe that either of these two methods would be effective in ensuring a true mix of pupil abilities and backgrounds gaining places. We further recognise that while our present pupil base is already one of the most ethnically and socially diverse in the town, our intake as a Free School may well become more diverse given that we will no longer be charging fees or reduced fees. We believe that the key to adapting to such a potential change is the refinement of the individual tutorial/tailored education model set out in the following Ethos section:

Ethos:

The school aims to help all pupils develop lively, enquiring minds, an ability to question and argue rationally and thus successfully apply themselves to tasks, physical skills, literacy and numeracy goals. The school places great importance on courtesy and respect for others within and outside the school community, encouraging respect for religious and moral values. Its teaching methods are based on the premise that the student is an individual whose learning needs should be addressed through an intimate, small scale and tailored approach. Each child is part of a House (encouraging team work and collective competition, both academic and via competitive sports) and in turn a class of approximately 18 and a smaller tutorial group. They are assigned a personal tutor in a similar structure to the traditional university system. This system has also been constructed with the objective of increasing the average pupil to teacher time and thus enhance the amount of class and smaller group teaching. This, coupled with a belief in smart, functional school uniform blurs the lines of social and ethnic background and forges a strong sense of unity and common purpose as a platform for achievement. Pupils also contribute their views on overall school matters via an elected School Council.

The school was last inspected by ISI in May/June this year. The report noted, with regards to the above aims and objectives:

*Positive attitudes to learning and a determination to succeed, combined with good teaching enable pupils to reach high levels of achievement and then

go on to the schools of their choice.

*The personal development of the pupils is given the utmost importance, enabling them to develop into well-rounded and confident citizens.

*Standards are good, in accordance with the school's aim to foster individual academic excellence by encouraging educational development in a happy disciplined atmosphere.

*Results in national tests for pupils aged eleven over the past three years have been excellent compared with the national average for maintained primary schools.

What are your organisation's core areas of work / aims? Max 500 words.

The school and the Filmer Trust are concerned solely with Moorlands and have no other areas of interest or concern. The organisation's primary focus is on the school's students and believes they should be provided with opportunities to reach their full potential in every aspect of their development. The aims are to help them to become well motivated, enthusiastic pupils with a positive attitude towards learning, fostering individual academic excellence via a strong work and moral ethic. A personalised, customised learning system takes into account the fact that everyone learns differently.

The Filmer Trust is a registered charity (# 1042857) and currently has 4 objectives, which are in summary:

- 1) to advance the education of boys and girls at the school by provision of facilities at the school.
- 2) to provide financial assistance for children resident in Bedfordshire to enable them to study at the school.
- 3) to provide bursaries to assist parents of pupils currently studying at the school who are in financial difficulty
- 4) to assist in the provision and maintenance of a school building

What capacity and capability do you have (or have access to) in order to deliver the educational vision set out above? Please indicate the resources, experience and expertise (educational and legal) that you have or have access to. Max 500 words.

We believe that the most valuable commodities in a school are the teachers delivering as much quality time with pupils as possible. We have 17 qualified teachers with over 200 years of teaching experience between them, and a range of support staff. We are fortunate that many of them have valuable skills and experience outside of the teaching profession that adds value to the educational experience they are able to offer students. We have staff who were previously in professions such as finance, banking, the armed forces, retail management, airline management, professional sport, acting, television, writing and musical performance. Our key education team comprises:

[REDACTED]

Our key administration team comprises:

It is anticipated that both members of the education and administration teams would be Governors. All would have a full time commitment apart from

* It is recognised that the administration of the school under Free School status would require the experience of at least one senior management team member with a familiarity of the maintained sector.

We have asked the school's chartered accountants to consider issues concerning possible Free School Status. They have pointed out to us that over the past decade our operating budget and fee income has grown each financial year supported by stable pupil numbers. They further conclude that our current operating budget is £1,031,535. When this is divided by 285 pupils we have a per pupil figure of £3,569. We understand that the approximate per pupil sum we would receive as a Free School would be in the region of £3,800. We therefore conclude that we would be able to work successfully within the Free School financial model.

Do you have plans to work with a 3rd party organisation? If so, please include their details below and set out the intended nature of that relationship (for example, a contract, co-sponsorship arrangement, informal partnership).

The school has worked closely with the Trustees of the Filmer Trust since 1994. The Trust has made an invaluable contribution to the work of the school and we would envisage it taking the lead in bringing about a Free School and effectively taking over the ownership and management of the school.

The school also benefits from a 50 year + relationship with the near-by CofE St Luke's Parish Church, Leagrave. While the school is a multi-faith organisation, parents of all faiths have welcomed the association and involvement of the church. End of term services are held at the church.

The school has recently established a local link with a nearby secondary school academy which has enabled two of our 9 and 10 year old pupils who achieved a GCSE A* Maths pass last year to continue and extend their studies.

Department for
Education

Free School (if available). Please also indicate whether trustees have been chosen and their roles confirmed. Please provide details of employment of these individuals and any conflicts of interest you believe might arise.

Should the school be granted Free School Status, the Filmer Trust's Board of Trustees will be reconstituted and will comprise of the following 7 members:

[REDACTED]

*

All non-lay members will and are full time. We are unaware of any conflicts of interest

EVIDENCE OF DEMAND

What evidence of local parental demand do you have? For example, a petition or a declaration from interested parents or pupil number projections for the area. Max 200 words.

Moorlands maintains a data base of parents who are ideally seeking a place at the school but are unable to afford fees or full fees. At the present time this comprises over 750 names, 551 of whom have indicated that they would apply if Moorlands were a Free School. This database is comprised only of those who have themselves contacted the school of their own volition.

78% of our current parents are equally in support of Free school status and consultations further indicate that the majority would support a move to raise our age limit from 11 to 13 if that were permissible.

Our pupil numbers have grown during the past decade and growth is currently constrained by the fact that we have 14 classrooms all of which are fully utilised. However, we believe that internal conversion could provide 8 more classrooms and thus provide accommodation for a further 144 pupils.

What is the proposed capacity (number of pupils)? Max 200 words.

Subject to our ability to bring on stream 8 additional classrooms, we could accommodate 360 pupils (Reception - Year 8). This could comprise of 9 years groups, each comprising two classes of 20 pupils.

PREMISES

What steps have you taken to identify a potential site? Please include details of the geographical area the school seeks to serve; a list of any sites you have considered; and any discussions you have had to identify a suitable site. If known, please include the proposed location, premises and postcode of the Free School.

Our current site at [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Luton [REDACTED] is ideally situated within the Borough of Luton, being within 10 minutes travel distance of Junction 11 of the M1, Leagrave railway station, the A6 and the A5. As a Free School we would wish to continue to offer places to all who live within the Borough of Luton.

Further information

Please note, all information provided on this form will be published on the Department for Education website. Information that you supply on this form may be shared with (a) the New Schools Network and (b) the Local Authority in which you wish to set up the Free School. Information about the New Schools Network can be found at <http://www.newschoolsnetwork.org>.

Submission of this form will be treated as consent, from both you and anyone else whose personal data is contained on this form, to the sharing of this information as set out above.

In addition, information that you provide on this form, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

Next Steps

Please email completed Proposal Form to
reeschools.registration@education.gsi.gov.uk

You will hear back from a named official at the Department for Education, who will offer you advice on how best to progress your application. The Secretary of State will make a judgement on the potential of the project based on criteria relating to educational aims and objectives, evidence of demand, potential premises, suitability of provider and any other relevant considerations to decide whether the proposed Free School project should move into stage 3, namely that of drawing up a business case and plan.