

A Consultation Document Regarding the Potential Closure of William Brookes School Sixth Form

*We work hard and aim for excellence in all we do,
showing kindness, friendship
and respect to each other.*

Consultation End Date: 11th April 2024

The 3-18 Education Trust Board of Trustees and William Brookes School Local Governing Board are interested in your views on this strategic matter. They have collated information within this document to help all stakeholders make informed comments about the proposed closure of William Brookes School Sixth Form. The proposal is as follows:

- Students currently in Year 12 and Year 13 will remain at William Brookes to complete their studies.
- No new students are enrolled from September 2024.
- The Sixth Form would close with effect from 31st August 2025.

Alongside this consultation regarding closure of the Sixth Form, Trustees and Local Governors also are consulting on a variation to the school’s admission arrangements for 2024/2025.

Trustees and Local Governors would like to thank you in advance of your participation in this process.

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Consultation Process

A consultation period will run from 12pm on Wednesday 28th February 2024 until 12pm on Wednesday 11th April 2024.

During this consultation the 3-18 Education Trust Board of Trustees and William Brookes School Local Governing Board aim to include the following stakeholders:

- Parents of students who attend William Brookes School
- Parents in the surrounding area of William Brookes School
- Students who attend William Brookes School
- Staff who are currently employed at William Brookes School
- Primary, Secondary, Alternative Provision, Special Schools, Sixth Forms and Further Education Colleges in the area
- Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Local Authorities

Printed copies of this consultation document will be available from:

- William Brookes School Reception
- Broseley Library

Public Consultation Evening

The 3-18 Education Trust (Trust) and William Brookes School invite all interested parties to a public consultation evening to be held at William Brookes School on Monday 11th March at 7pm.

Should you wish to attend this meeting we would ask that in order to support our preparations that you inform us either by:

- Completion of this online form; follow this [link](#)
- Contacting William Brookes School reception either via wbs-reception@wbs.318education.co.uk or via 01952 728900.

Written Comments

We invite all stakeholders to make written comments regarding this consultation. This can be via:

- Online by completion of an online form; please follow this [link](https://forms.office.com/e/YfHfc8QijV) <https://forms.office.com/e/YfHfc8QijV>
- Written submissions. These should be addressed as follows: FAO Carole Warner, Governance Professional, The 3-18 Education Trust, William Brookes School, Farley Road, Much Wenlock, TF13 6NB.

If you are submitting your comments in writing then make it clear in your written submission whether you support; object to; or wish to make general comment about the proposal. We also ask that you indicate your position as a stakeholder as either:

- Parent of a student currently at William Brookes Sixth Form.
- Parent of a student potentially joining William Brookes Sixth Form.
- Parent of a William Brookes Student.

- Parent of a former student of William Brookes School.
- Potential parent of a William Brookes Student.
- Student at William Brookes School.
- Member of staff at William Brookes School.
- Member of the Local community.
- Councillor of a Local Authority.
- Officer of a Local Authority.
- Employed in education within the local area.
- Other.

School Vision

William Brookes is a unique school; the only Coubertin School within the UK, a place where Olympian values and themes infuse every aspect of school life. We believe that our all of our students have amazing potential which can be realised through hard work; great learning and through building positive relationships with others. We believe that a great education is not just about the academic mind but is also about being able to make wise choices and nurturing the things which we are passionate about. Our intention is that every child becomes the very best version of themselves that they can be; becoming the best they can be academically; but also, the best person that they can be. Our ethos is driven through our values; We demonstrate **hard work** and aim for **excellence** in all we do, showing **kindness, friendship** and **respect** to each other. In doing so we develop a sense of belonging for our students; a real sense that this is our school.

Through our curriculum our students develop the golden knowledge, the skills and attributes that will enrich their lives, becoming responsible, caring citizens who thrive and who positively contribute.

Our 11-16 provision will continue to provide places for 162 students per year group. This proposal will provide the financial stability to enhance our 11-16 provision; allowing greater personalisation of learning, personal development and support for our young people. Through a rigorous and considered curriculum we will deliver great teaching that allows our students to make excellent progress, providing them with the qualifications to allow them to take full advantages of the wide range of post-16 provision that already exists in the local area.

Proposal

- Students currently in Year 12 and Year 13 remain at William Brookes to complete their studies.
- No new sixth form students will be recruited in September 2024
- The Sixth Form would close with effect from 31st August 2025.

Variation to Admission Arrangements

We are required by the Department of Education to consult on an 'outline of variation to admissions arrangements. Our proposals mean that there would be no change to our Pupil Admission Number (PAN) which will remain at 162. Our current capacity is 932 students; this

includes 122 Sixth Form students. This means that the published capacity of the school would reduce from 932 to 810 students.

Context to Proposed Change

Our Sixth Form students have an excellent 16-18 experience; taught by experienced teachers with excellent subject knowledge in an environment where they are supported with excellent pastoral care and guidance. They have a good breadth of curriculum with 20 subjects being offered. However, despite this in recent years the numbers of students opting to attend William Brookes Sixth Form has significantly fallen. Currently we have 27 students in Year 12 and 47 in Year 13; with average class sizes of 6 students. Applications for 2024 are low; with only 24 students projected to start.

Our Local Context

The majority of students starting at William Brookes Sixth Form have been 'internal;' those who have completed their 11-16 education with us. External applicants have traditionally made up a minority of students starting at William Brookes School.

Year 12	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 (Projected)
External starters	8	8	6	3	5
Internal starters	36	44	44	24	15
Total starters	44	52	50	27	24

William Brookes students and parents typically cite the following reasons to take up post 16 education elsewhere:

- Greater breadth of curriculum offer that allows them to take combinations of subjects not available at William Brookes School.
- A greater range of facilities offered at other larger institutions.
- Cost of transport to William Brookes School being prohibitive compared to cost of transport to other institutions.
- Students welcome the change to a college environment that offers an experience that is a step between school and higher education.
- Students enjoy the location and freedoms offered by other colleges.

Context for Schools with Small Sixth Forms

Schools with small Sixth Forms are finding it increasingly difficult to offer the broad curriculum that is available at other larger establishments. This is being compounded by the introduction of T Levels which has meant the withdrawal of many vocational qualifications such as BTEC. This is because funding is being withdrawn from many BTEC qualifications which are similar in content to T levels. Currently 1/3 of students coming to William Brookes opt to study BTEC and other

vocational qualifications which we will not be able to offer in the future. We do not believe that we have the capacity to offer T Levels.

Finance

All schools are operating in a challenging financial climate; and despite sound budget management and support from the Trust; William Brookes School is no exception to this. However, projections show that over coming years, continuing to offer Sixth Form provision will create significant financial pressures. In the current academic year, due to the lack of Sixth Form student numbers in 2022-23 there is a significant financial shortfall of £140,000 that has come from funding for 11-16 students. With the Sixth Form opening to new students in September 2024; this is projected to grow to £283,000 in 2024-25. These constraints would have a very negative impact on the educational offer for our 11-16 students and not allow us to deliver our vision for these students.

Department of Education Criteria for Viability of a Sixth Form

The Department of Education sets out the following criteria for schools wishing to open Sixth Form provision:

1. **Quality:** The quality of pre-16 education must be good or outstanding (as rated by Ofsted) and the school must have a most recent Progress 8 score of at least the national average
2. **Size:** The proposed Sixth Form will provide places for at least 200 students
3. **Subject Breadth:** The proposed sixth form should either directly or through partnership offer a minimum of 15 A Level (or equivalent) subjects
4. **Demand:** There should be a clear need for additional post-16 places in the local area (including a shortage of post-16 places and a consideration of the quality of Level 3 provision in the area). The proposed Sixth Form should not create excessive surplus places or have a detrimental effect on other high quality post-16 provision in the area.
5. **Financial Visibility:** The proposed Sixth Form should be financially viable (there must be evidence of financial resilience should student numbers fall). The DfE recommend an average class size of 15.

Criterion 1 not met: William Brookes School is judged as 'Good' in its most recent full inspection. The school's most recent Progress 8 score is below the national average

Criterion 2 not met: The Sixth Form currently has 74 students on roll. Projections for a 2024 intake would be 51. The school's published capacity only allows for 122 students in the Sixth Form.

Criterion 3 met: The Sixth Form currently offers over 15 subjects

Criterion 4 not met: The small numbers of students attending William Brookes School Sixth Form do not provide the numbers to suggest a clear need in this locality.

Criterion 5 not met: The Sixth Form is not financially viable. There are insufficient students enrolling. In 2023-24 there is a shortfall in funding for the Sixth Form of £145,000. Continuing to enrol students in 2024 (based on projected numbers) would increase this shortfall to approximately £283,000 for 2024-25 and in 2025-26 to £400,000. These shortfalls would be subsidized by funding intended for the education of students aged 11 to 16. The average class size is currently 6.

Impact on Students

We know that many of our current students and families in the area will be disappointed with this proposal. Through on-going discussions with Shrewsbury Colleges Group, Telford College, Thomas Telford School, Haberdasher's Abraham Darby Academy and Madeley Academy we are satisfied that there is choice and sufficient places in these establishments to support them in their chosen areas of study.

For current Year 12 and Year 13 students, William Brookes School will remain fully committed to providing a high-quality experience until they end their courses in July 2025 and July 2024 respectively.

For current Year 11 Students, those wishing to pursue A level and other Level 3 courses will need to apply for places at other post-16 providers.

Potential Questions

Why is this change being proposed?

Over a number of years, the number of students opting to attend William Brookes Sixth Form has fallen; this has meant that the Sixth Form is no longer financially viable. Based on current projections, continuing with a Sixth form will have a significant impact on the quality of provision offered for the 11-16 students attending the school.

Will students currently studying at William Brookes Sixth Form be supported in continuing their courses to completion? Will the courses that they are studying continue to run?

Yes, students will be fully supported until their courses of study are complete.

Will students wishing to study the subjects offered by William Brookes Sixth Form be able to study these subjects elsewhere?

Yes, all of the subjects will be available at other post-16 providers apart from any qualifications that are to be replaced in the future by T Levels.

What guidance will be offered to current external students who have applied to William Brookes Sixth Form for September 2024?

The Sixth Form team will be offering support and guidance to these students.

What guidance will be offered to current internal students who have applied to William Brookes Sixth Form for September 2024?

All of these students will have access to individualized interviews to support them.