

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
<b>Date:</b>	6 December 2012
<b>Title:</b>	Froxfield C of E Controlled Infant School, Alteration to the Upper Age Limit of the School
<b>Reference:</b>	4378
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Children's Services

**Contact name:** Martin Shefferd, School Organisation Officer

**Tel:** 01962 845746

**Email:** martin.shefferd@hants.gov.uk

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to seek approval to alter the upper age limit of Froxfield CEC Infant School in order to become a primary school.
- 1.2. The governing body of Froxfield CEC Infant School has been considering altering the upper age limit of the school to allow the school to return to a primary school and accommodate pupils age 4-11.
- 1.3. Following a six (term time) week period of consultation the governing body published a Public Notice on 5 September 2012 outlining the prescribed alteration to the age range and this report sets out the comments received through the consultation and following the publication of the Public Notice. A copy of the Public Notice is attached at Appendix 1 and the full proposals at Appendix 2.
- 1.4. The Local Authority is the final decision maker on the proposal.
- 1.5. This report recommends that Froxfield CEC Infant School should become a primary school with effect from 1 September 2013.

### 2. Contextual information

- 2.1. The governing body of Froxfield CEC Infant School contacted the Local Authority regarding their wish to could consult on the alteration to the upper age range of the school to return to a primary school as was the case prior to 1966. As a controlled school either the Local Authority or the governing body are able to consult on this proposal. In this instance the governing body undertook the consultation process. The school consider that there is sufficient accommodation on the site to allow the school to move from an infant school with a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 15 (with a

capacity of 45 places) to a primary school with a PAN of 12 (with a capacity of 84 places) and this is confirmed by the Net Capacity Assessment for the school. As there is no capital cost associated with the proposal the Local Authority agreed that the consultation could proceed.

- 2.2. The main reasons for the consultation was to give the parents of Froxfield children a choice to send their children to a primary school within the village and to better ensure the viability of the school for the future.
- 2.3. Other comments from the governors expressed concern that a number of friendships were broken as pupils attending Froxfield Infant School were then forced to attend a number of different schools, sometimes as the only pupil to transfer to a particular primary school.
- 2.4. The proposal was underpinned by research which suggests that there is a “drop” in standards following the transfer of pupils into a junior school at Y3 and the governing body is keen that pupils attending Froxfield Infant School do not suffer from this.
- 2.5. Generally the school is able to attract a sufficient number of children into YR which includes out catchment recruitment but owing to not being able to offer Key Stage 2 education parents seek to move their child to one of the primary schools in the area as a place becomes available. Inevitably this leads to the school losing children mid-year and struggling to remain viable as the number of pupils fall. In addition there is a history of children leaving the maintained school system at the end of KS1.
- 2.6. Those pupils remaining at the school until the end of Y2 are now finding it increasingly difficult to secure a Y3 place in the neighbouring primary schools as the primary schools are now admitting pupils in YR up to their PAN. Froxfield CEC Infant School is linked to East Meon CEC Primary School but as this school becomes full at YR (and remains full) they are no longer able to offer places to the Y2 pupils from Froxfield CEC Infant School.
- 2.7. The governing body expects most, if not all, Y2 pupils will wish to remain at the school for their KS2 education. However past history shows that, for the last four years, approximately four of the Y2 cohort at Froxfield has not attended a state maintained junior school for their KS2 education. As a small school Froxfield will need to fully recruit YR numbers and retain this number into KS2. Should this pattern of pupils seeking a place outside the maintained sector continue the number of children moving into the four KS2 year groups will present a considerable challenge to the school.
- 2.8. Whilst there is a dependence on the village schools around the Petersfield area, Froxfield being one, to provide the number of KS1 places required in this planning area, there is a sufficiency of KS2 places albeit not necessarily commensurate with parental preference.

2.9. Table 1 below shows the number of pupils anticipated to be in Y3 in the Petersfield primary schools in the future:

Table 1

School	Published Admission Number	Pupils in Y3 2013/14	Pupils in Y3 2014/15	Pupils in Y3 2015/16	Pupils in Y3 2016/17
East Meon CEC Primary	13	16	17	17	5
West Meon CEC Primary	12	12	14	13	11
Buriton Primary	15	16	15	17	5
Langrish Primary	30	30	30	22	22
The Herne Junior	120	106	116	109	108
Sheet Primary	16	16	16	13	15
Steep Primary	15	18	18	21	12
Total	221	214	226	212	185
Froxfield	12	Y3 numbers assumed to be in the figures of the other schools above			
Total	233	214	226	212	185
Surplus places		19	7	21	48

2.10. This table shows that in the 2014/15 academic year there will be a shortfall of KS2 places in the area if Froxfield were not able to make a KS2 offer. The number of pupils projected to be seeking a place in the 2013/14 and 2014/15 academic year are at very similar levels to the number of pupils already in the school system. If it is assumed that numbers entering at YR will be seeking a Y3 place in the area in the future the number of pupils entering Y3 in the 2015/16 academic year will be at, or close to 230, i.e. the number of YR pupils now in the system. The number of surplus places in Y3 for 2015/16 will, therefore, drop from 21 to 3, assuming Froxfield is able to make a KS2 offer. Projected numbers for YR for September 2013 shows 183 pupils looking for a school place in the area but this number is based upon a participation rate in the area of 83%. This is much lower than the recent participation of 90%. Assuming a continued participation rate of 90% in the area would add 15 more pupils into the system with the number of pupils seeking places at Y3 going up to 200 (from the 185 shown in the table above). For years beyond 2016/17 the number of pupils in the area are projected to rise at YR and, in the longer term, into Y3.

### 3. Finance

3.1. There is no capital cost to the Local Authority associated with the proposal and revenue funding will be available via the formula funding.

### 4. Consultation

4.1. Consultations commenced on 21 May 2012 with a closing date for comments of 6 July 2012.

4.2. A full list of consultees is attached at Appendix 3. Two drop-in sessions were held on 29 May and 22 June 2012 together with a public meeting on 12 June 2012 to allow the governors to explain the proposal in greater detail.

4.3. The attached questionnaire (appendix 4) was widely distributed as part of the consultation process and asked recipients to indicate whether or not they agreed with the proposal for Froxfield CEC Infant School to become a primary school. A breakdown of the questionnaire responses is set out in Table 2 below. Issues raised by consultees and a summary of the comments are shown in 5 below.

Table 2

Number of responses	Agree with proposal to become a primary school	Disagree with proposal to become a primary school	Parent of child at school	Member of teaching staff at school	Member of support staff at school	Parent of pre-school child	Member of local community	Other
110	108	2	18	3	6	22	42	19

4.4 Four letters have also been received disagreeing with the proposal together with 14 letters supporting the proposal. Points raised through the questionnaire responses and in the objection letters are included in 5 below.

### 5. Issues raised by consultees (in the section below the consultees responses are shown as R and the School's and the County Council's comments are shown as C)

5.1. R – Comments were made by two consultees about the effect on the budgets of neighbouring schools and whether there is a sufficient number of pupils for all the schools in the area.

C – Table 1 above shows that in 2014/15 there are insufficient places available at Key Stage 2 for the pupils leaving Froxfield CEC Infant School. Consequently there is a need to create additional KS2 places in the area or transport junior age pupils to other schools.

5.2. R – A number of respondents raised the issue of the shortage of Y3 places in the area and if Froxfield Infant became a primary school there would not be a need to try and find a school place for their child at Y3.

- C – The figures in Table 1 suggests that by allowing Froxfield Infant to become a primary school will alleviate some of the problems parents are facing in trying to place their child at Y3.
- 5.3. R – One respondent was in favour of the proposal but wished to be reassured that the teaching training remains at the same high standard as at present.
- C – The school have stated that the commitment to staff training will continue in the future whether the school becomes a primary school or not.
- 5.4. R – Some consultees explained that they wish to have their younger child at Froxfield but then have to drive to a different school for their older child and would welcome Froxfield becoming a primary school.
- C – There is the potential for a primary school setting to allow parents to make one journey to one school.
- 5.5. R – One consultee stated that some parents choose an infant school because it is an infant school and they see this as the best start for their child.
- C – It is the case that some parents see an infant school as the best start for their child’s schooling.
- 5.6. R – A number of respondents raised the issue of the road network close to the school which would make journeys to school dangerous especially with the anticipated additional cars being used to bring the larger school population to the school.
- C - Most, if not all, roads leading to the school are single track roads with few passing places so for drivers this is a real issue. One consultee suggested that traffic calming be put in place to stop cars driving too fast along the roads leading to the school. Similarly there are very few pavements in the area making walking to school very difficult. The school has confirmed that a review of the school travel plan will take place as required.
- 5.7. R – Some respondents were concerned about the amount of car parking available close to the school.
- C – It is the case that there is no car parking available outside the school but a short distance away is the village hall car park that provides up to 45 spaces if parents park properly. In the mornings a number of spaces are used by the staff of the pre-school which uses the village hall but a large number of spaces are still available for the drop-off. For the afternoon pick-up the pre-school staff have already left leaving those spaces available for use by the parents.
- 5.8. R – Two respondents raised concerns about the possibility of additional accommodation being placed on the site to accommodate the additional pupils.
- C – The governors have stated that they do not intend to erect any new buildings on the site.
- 5.9. R – There are concerns from the adjoining neighbours about the potential for a mezzanine floor to be installed above one of the existing classrooms and the overlooking aspect into their gardens.

C – The school has expressed a wish to expand the school accommodation by the installation of a mezzanine floor but have also stated that there is sufficient capacity within the existing buildings to allow the school to grow to 84 pupils without the need for this work to be undertaken.

- 5.10. R – One consultee was concerned that although the school caters perfectly for children in their first three years at school if older children are present the school would lose it's unique quality.

C – There are many primary schools around the county including small rural schools that cater for all their primary age children and there is no reason to suggest that Froxfield would be any different in this regard.

- 5.11. R – A few respondents were concerned about the number of pupils from outside the catchment area that would be brought to the school and the problem with snow and ice during the winter months.

C – It is the case that there are insufficient numbers of pupils living in catchment to fill the school and there are out catchment pupils attending the school. This only underlines the need for places in the area as pupils would not be able to access YR education if Froxfield was not available to parents. The issue of snow and ice making access to the village difficult is acknowledged but this also works in reverse where parents are seeking to drive their children to schools outside the village to access their Key Stage 2 education.

- 5.12. R – A number of consultees suggested that the village of Privett should be within the catchment area for Froxfield School.

C – There is no intention to change the catchment areas as part of this consultation process.

- 5.13. R – One respondent stated that some of the changes to the school roll is not necessarily to do with parents wishing to secure places at other schools as a place becomes available and some children leave through normal turbulence.

C – It is accepted that there will always be some turbulence in school rolls.

- 5.14.R – There was concern about the infrastructure around the school. In particular it shares an old Victorian drainage system with the adjoining "School House". This system has a very shallow fall and the owners of School House have stated that they have to rod the drains on a regular basis to clear blockages.

C – Investigative work is underway to ensure that this system could cope with the additional numbers of pupils in the school. If the system is deemed to be sufficient to cope with the increase in pupils it is likely that it will require emptying more frequently and the school has indicated that it would be prepared to pay a larger percentage of the emptying costs so no additional costs fell to the owners of School House.

- 5.15.R – A further concern from local residents was the increase in noise that has happened since the school moved the reception area to the front of the

school. There is also an issue of noise transference through the walls of the school into a neighbouring property.

C – The governors are prepared to install sound insulation to the party walls to alleviate the problem of the noise from the school into School House.

5.16. R – Following the recent construction of a covered area to the side of the school a neighbour raised concerns about the noise now being created as the number of pupils being educated outside increases.

C – The neighbour's garden is immediately to the east of the school and the covered area acts as an amphitheatre. The school has agreed to review the outdoor teaching to minimise the disruption to the neighbour.

5.17. A major point raised in support of the proposal is on the continuity of education that could be offered to the pupils should the school become a primary school.

5.18. One respondent suggested that when pupils move to another school the community is weakened as parents would be more likely to support events in the schools their children attend rather than any Froxfield events.

5.19. A number of consultees commented on the nurturing environment of the school and all parents were happy that their children made good educational progress at the school.

5.20. Many letters stated that the move to a different school in the area was a difficult time for the children and the continuity of educational provision at Froxfield as a primary school would be hugely beneficial.

5.21. A number of respondents raised the difficulty of having their children at two different schools and the timing of the school run to ensure both children were at their respective schools on time.

5.22. Other consultees pointed out that some of the traffic generated through the village was due to the need to get their children to other schools outside the village.

5.23. One respondent was keen to point out that any noise from the school is likely to be at break times and people moving into houses close to schools should expect some noise at times.

## **6 View of the Local County Councillor**

6.1 Councillor Vaughan Clarke fully supports the proposal as "...it will allow far more certainty for the children in the Froxfield area..."

## **7 Conclusion**

7.1. Although there are a number of objections to the proposal for Froxfield CEC Infant School to become a primary school there is also considerable support for the proposal (Table 2 refers).

7.2. The projected numbers for Y3 places at schools in the area suggests a need for the additional 12 places at KS2 that would be provided at Froxfield if it were to

become a primary school. Albeit there is some uncertainty about the actual numbers of pupils wishing to secure a Y3 place in the area.

7.3. It is suggested that issues relating to the immediate neighbours of the school are investigated and addressed particularly with regard to the drainage system and the noise issues for neighbouring residents.

7.4. In the same way any future changes to the accommodation should be given careful consideration so as not to have a detrimental effect on immediate neighbours of the school.

## **8 Recommendation(s)**

- a. It is recommended that approval is given for Froxfield CEC Infant School to alter the upper age limit of the school to become a primary school with effect from 1 September 2013.

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Corporate Strategy**

<b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Maximising well-being:</b>	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

DocumentLocation

None

**IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

**1. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

b.

**8 Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

a.

**9 Climate Change:**

i. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

ii. How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?