

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Education
Date of Decision:	18 March 2016
Decision Title:	Amalgamation of Brockhurst Infant and Brockhurst Junior Schools
Decision Reference:	7298
Report From:	Interim Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Chris Holt – Programme Manager, Children's Services

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. On 20 January 2016 the Executive Member for Education decided to publish a statutory notice (attached at Appendix A) in accordance with sections 15 and 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, setting out the County Council's intention to amalgamate Brockhurst Infant and Junior Schools to form a primary school. This to be achieved through the closure of the junior school, the expansion of the Infant school, through the utilisation of the junior school's site and buildings, and extension of the infant school's age range to form a 420 place primary school for ages 4-11. The report sets out the context leading to that decision and reports back on the representations received to the statutory notice.
- 1.2. The report sets out and comments upon the statutory guidance for decision makers on factors that need to be considered when deciding on proposals to form a primary school through the closure of a junior school and extension of the age range and enlargement of an infant school.
- 1.3. The report recommends that Brockhurst Junior School be closed with effect from 31 August 2016 and that a split site, two-form entry primary school to cater for 420 pupils aged 4-11 be established on the present schools' sites with effect from 1 September 2016.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. Brockhurst Junior School was inspected by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) in January 2013 and was judged good in terms of the behaviour and safety of pupils and leadership and management, but to require improvement in the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching. The latest Ofsted inspection of Brockhurst Junior School in January 2015

judged the quality of teaching, leadership and management and the attainment of pupils to be inadequate and the behaviour and safety of pupils to require improvement. The most recent monitoring visit by Ofsted in November 2015 concluded that the school was still not improving rapidly enough

- 2.2. Brockhurst Infant School is located some 100 yards away from Brockhurst Junior School on the opposite side of the road. The infant school's latest Ofsted report was published in January 2015 and found the school to be good in all aspects, endorsing the good Ofsted judgement from the infant school's previous Ofsted inspection in March 2011.
- 2.3. Given the proximity of Brockhurst Infant School to Brockhurst Junior School, and the infant school's good track record with regard to educational performance, the decision was taken to consult the schools' community and other interested parties on whether a change in structure, through the creation of a single primary school across the two school sites, might best address the inadequacies in the junior school as identified by Ofsted. The list of consultees is attached at Appendix B.
- 2.4. The headteacher of Brockhurst Junior School resigned at the end of the autumn term 2015. Pending the outcome on the proposal to amalgamate the infant and junior schools, and with effect from 4 January 2016, the headteacher of Brockhurst Infant School became the interim headteacher of Brockhurst Junior School and is now working across both sites driving the strategic priorities of both schools.
- 2.5. The outcome of the consultation demonstrated overwhelming support from the schools' community, both schools' governing bodies and both schools' staff teams for the infant and junior schools to amalgamate to form a primary school.

3. Representations received to the Public Notice

- 3.1. There were no representations.

4. Statutory guidance for decision makers regarding school closure and the alteration of a school's upper age limit

- 4.1. The Department for Education has issued statutory guidance for decision makers on factors that need to be considered when deciding on proposals to amalgamate schools. There are four key questions that must be answered before considering the relevant factors and merits of statutory proposals, viz:
 - do the published notices comply with statutory requirements?
 - has the statutory consultation been carried out prior to the publication of the notice?
 - are the proposals related to other published proposals?

- is the decision maker satisfied that they have all the information needed to make a decision?

- 4.2 Before publication the Public Notice was checked against the Department for Education guidance to confirm that it did comply with statutory guidance.
- 4.3 A full consultation exercise was undertaken in line with statutory guidance.
- 4.4. The proposal to amalgamate Brockhurst Infant and Junior schools is not related to any other published proposals.
- 4.5. The relevant factors (as identified in the statutory guidance) to be considered in this case are:

Education standards and diversity of provision

- 4.7. Any proposal relating to a school closure should be based upon the fact that the closure will contribute to raising local standards of education provision and will lead to improved attainment for pupils. Brockhurst Junior School has been judged to be inadequate and failing to provide an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. Brockhurst Infant School is judged by Ofsted to be good in all aspects with a headteacher and deputy headteacher who provide strong leadership. The closure of Brockhurst Junior School and the establishment of a primary school will bring with it a number of advantages designed to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress in their learning such as greater continuity in planning the curriculum across the stages of education, a consistent approach to the ways in which pupils are taught and the removal of the potential disruption to children's education when transferring from infant to junior school.
- 4.8. The establishment of a primary school across the Brockhurst schools' sites will enhance the diversity of education provision in the local area which is predominantly served by separate infant and junior schools.

Schools causing concern

- 4.9. As a school judged by Ofsted to be inadequate Brockhurst Junior School falls under the definition of a "school causing concern". For a closure proposal involving a school causing concern guidance requires a copy of the monitoring letter for the school to be made available to the decision maker. A copy of the monitoring letter for Brockhurst Junior School is attached at Appendix C. There is a presumption that proposals pertaining to "schools causing concern" should be approved subject only to checking that there are sufficient accessible places available to accommodate displaced pupils and to meet future demand. The amalgamation of Brockhurst Infant and Junior schools will not result in any displaced pupils.

Community cohesion

- 4.10. The establishment of a primary school with a single ethos, vision and set of values will enhance community cohesion as endorsed by a number of respondents to the consultation.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The Local Authority has met the statutory guidance to enable a decision to be made regarding the amalgamation of Brockhurst Infant and Junior Schools.
- 5.2. The Public Notice has resulted in no representations.
- 5.3. Both Brockhurst Infant and Brockhurst Junior schools' governing bodies want the schools to amalgamate to form an all through primary school.
- 5.4. There is overwhelming support from the schools' community for the amalgamation.
- 5.5. Both schools' staff teams are in support of the amalgamation proposal.
- 5.6. The amalgamation of Brockhurst Infant and Junior schools and the establishment of an all through primary school is the option most likely to be successful in effectively bringing about rapid improvement in the quality of provision for Key Stage 2 pupils.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1. It is recommended that approval be given to the proposal published by the Local Authority, in accordance with sections 15 and 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to:
 - (a) Discontinue Brockhurst Junior School with effect from 31 August 2016**
 - (b) Establish a community primary school for up to 420 pupils by enlarging Brockhurst Infant School, through the utilisation of Brockhurst Junior School's site and buildings and extension of Brockhurst Infant School's age range to form a primary school for ages 4-11, with effect from 1 September 2016.**

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Corporate Strategy

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	No
Corporate Business plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	Yes
Corporate Business plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	No

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u> Amalgamation of Brockhurst Infant and Junior Schools	<u>Reference</u> 7119	<u>Date</u> 20/1/2016
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u> Education and Inspections Act 2006		<u>Date</u> 8/11/2006

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.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
School Organisation-Maintained Schools Guidance for proposers and decision makers	Department for Education website

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

Equalities have been considered and no adverse impact identified

- **Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

The recommendations will have no impact on crime and disorder

- **Climate Change:**

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

No impact has been identified

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

No specific measures have been identified

Appendix A



Amalgamation of Brockhurst Infant and Brockhurst Junior Schools, Gosport.

Notice is given in accordance with section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Hampshire County Council, The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UG intends to discontinue Brockhurst Junior School, Avery Lane, Gosport, Hampshire PO12 4SL on 31 August 2016.

Places will be available for pupils affected by the closure of this school (including those with special educational needs) at the community primary school proposed to be established in September 2016 in accordance with the related proposal set out below. There will be no alteration to transport arrangements for pupils currently attending the schools.

Notice is also given that Hampshire County Council intends to establish a community primary school by enlarging Brockhurst Infant School under section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 through the utilisation of Brockhurst Junior School's site and buildings and extension of Brockhurst Infant School's age range to form a primary school for ages 4-11 across the two sites. It is proposed that the primary school will open on 1 September 2016.

The primary school will cater for pupils between the ages of 4 and 11 and ultimately provide places for 420 boys and girls. The school will admit up to 60 pupils at the age of 4+ for the 2016/17 school year. Pupils will be admitted to the school in accordance with the local authority's admissions policy, published each year before the date on which applications must be submitted; this includes details of the criteria to be applied in the event of over-subscription. Transport will be provided for any pupils who qualify under the local authority's published policy.

All applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to these proposals have been complied with.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposals. Copies of the complete proposals can be obtained from Chris Holt, Programme Manager, Children's Services Department, The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UG (e-mail: chris.holt@hants.gov.uk).

Within four weeks from the date of publication of these proposals, any person may object to or make comments on the proposals by sending them to Chris Holt, Programme Manager, Children's Services Department, The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UG (email: chris.holt@hants.gov.uk).

John Coughlan, Chief Executive, Hampshire County Council

Publication date: 29 January 2016

Appendix B

Brockhurst consultees

Alverstoke Infant & Junior Schools
Bay House Secondary School
NUT representative
MP for Gosport
AEP representative
Cllr for Hardway, Gosport
CYWU representative
UNISON representatives
Chief Executive Gosport BC
Haselworth Primary School
Bedenham Primary School
Bridgemary Secondary School
Interim Director of Schools,
Portsmouth Catholic Diocese
St. John's Primary School
Brune Park Secondary School
Elson Infant & Junior Schools
UNITE representative
Headteacher Holbrook Primary
Leesland Infant & Junior Schools
Headteacher Newtown Primary
Rowner Infant & Junior Schools
Siskin Infant & Junior Schools
GMB representative
St Mary's Primary School
ASCL representative
Gomer Infant & Junior Schools
VOICE representative
Grange Infant & Junior Schools
NUT representative
Peel Common Infant & Junior
Schools
RCN representative
ATL representative
PROSPECT representative
Director of Education, Portsmouth
& Winchester Diocese
Parents, staff & governors
Brockhurst Infant & Junior Schools

Appendix C

Ofsted
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18 November 2015

Mrs Paula Taylor-Williams
Brockhurst Junior School
Avery Lane
Gosport
Hants
PO12 4SL

Dear Mrs Taylor-Williams

Special measures monitoring inspection of Brockhurst Junior School

Following my visit with Brian Macdonald, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 4 and 5 November 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in January 2015. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.



This letter and the monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Gard
Her Majesty's Inspector