

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Education
Date:	22 September 2016
Title:	Amalgamation of Weyford Infant School and Nursery and Weyford Junior School
Reference:	7742
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This paper reports on the outcome of the public consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Weyford Infant and Nursery School and Weyford Junior School to form an all-through primary school, through the closure of the infant school and extending the junior school's age range to form a primary school for ages 2 – 11. The nursery provision remains unaffected by this proposal.
- 1.2. The proposal came about following a request from both schools' governing bodies to consult with the schools' community and other interested parties on the creation of a primary school from the existing infant and junior schools.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) currently judges both schools to provide a 'good' quality of provision as indicated by the published reports in November 2011 for the infant and nursery school and in May 2014 for the junior school.
- 2.2. Both schools share a desire to significantly raise pupil outcomes by the time children leave their primary years. Having carefully considered all options both governing bodies believe that amalgamation of the two schools offers the best structure for realising that ambition. There are many advantages to all through models of primary education some of which are listed below:
 - greater continuity in planning the curriculum across the stages of education so that pupils make the best possible progress in learning.
 - creates a shared vision and consistent approach to the ways in which children are taught.

- enhance teachers' professional development through increased opportunities to teach across a wider age range within the same school.
- removes the need for separate admission and transfer at the end of key stage 1 providing continuity for children from 2 years of age through to 11 years of age.
- parents are able to develop a longer term relationship with the school.
- gives children the opportunity to work with or alongside younger or older pupils allowing them to put their own learning in context and develop important social skills.
- removes potential disruption to children's education when transferring from infant to junior school.
- strengthens the governance by drawing one governing body from the area.
- provides an alternative structure to the town's other schools in close proximity which are separate infant and junior schools.

2.3. The governing bodies of Weyford Infant and Junior Schools requested that Hampshire County Council consult with the schools' community and other interested parties on the closure of the infant school and converting the junior school to become a primary school (2-11) within the existing schools' buildings.

2.4. The nursery provision would continue unchanged within the primary school.

3. Consultation

3.1. Formal consultation took place from Monday 6 June to Monday 18 July 2016 with drop-in sessions held at Weyford Infant school.

3.2. Letters (Appendix A) detailing the proposal were sent to:

- Parents of children attending Weyford Infant School and Nursery and Weyford Junior School
- Headteacher, school staff and Governing Body of Weyford Infant School and Nursery and Weyford Junior School
- Governing bodies at neighbouring schools
- East Hampshire District Council – Chief Executive
- Trade Union representatives
- Local Dioceses
- MP – Right Honourable Damian Hinds
- HCC Elected Member – Councillor Adam Carew
- Tracey Messer – Service Manager Childcare Development, Services for Young Children

- Chase Childrens Centre

- 3.3. Details of the proposal and consultation were put on the Hampshire County Council consultation webpages together with details on how to respond and circulated to all stakeholders.
- 3.4. The drop-in sessions were attended by three parents. Questions raised at the drop-in sessions (Q) and responses given (R) are set out in section 4.
- 3.5. No online responses were received.
- 3.6. No objections to the proposal were received.

4. Queries raised at Weyford Infant and Junior schools' drop-in sessions (Q) and responses given (R).

- 4.1. (Q) There is currently a kitchen at each school, will these both remain?
(R) Detailed discussions have yet to take about the future of the kitchens but one kitchen may close.
- 4.2. (Q) Will the name of the schools change?
(R) This will be for the governing body to determine should the amalgamation process go ahead.
- 4.3. (Q) Will the uniform change?
(R) This will be for the governing body to determine should the amalgamation process go ahead.

5. Finance

- 5.1. The revenue implications affect both schools budget shares. The two schools will receive a pro-rata budget share for the period 1 April to 31 August 2017. From 1 September 2017, Weyford Junior will be issued with a revised budget share that incorporates the infant children, under the name of Weyford Primary School.
- 5.2. The following information is based on minimal changes to the current funding arrangements. However, it is anticipated that there will be reforms to school funding from 2017/18 with consultations being announced by the DfE in the autumn of 2016. As such the detail regarding any reform is not yet known.
- 5.3. The largest impact will be the loss of the infant school lump sum, which is currently £175,000 per school. However, as a protection for amalgamating schools and to acknowledge the loss of one of the lump sums, Weyford Primary will receive additional funding for one year in 2018/19 that is equivalent to 85% of the two combined lump sums.
- 5.4. Additional items incurred by the re-organisation (e.g. new school signage) will be funded via the re-organisation fund from within the growth fund, as detailed within the Hampshire School Funding Policy Pack.
- 5.5. As at April 2016, both schools held a surplus balance; the infant's at £101,000 and the junior's at £111,000. Any surplus of a closing school will follow the

pupils and therefore the infant's surplus balance will be transferred to the primary school.

6. Admissions

- 6.1. If approved, the County Council will need to request a variation to the junior school's determined admission arrangements for 2017/18 to reflect its new primary status.
- 6.2. The primary school's admission policy would consist of Weyford Infant's existing policy with some minor adaptations. Children on roll at Weyford Infant School who are due to transfer to the junior school in September 2017 would automatically join Year 3 of Weyford Primary without the need to apply.
- 6.3. The option will remain of applying to other junior schools in the main admission round if they wish.

7. Personnel issues

- 7.1. A decision to amalgamate will lead to a review of the staffing structure of the new school and HR support for implementation of the new structure. This has the potential for staff reductions as the structure is matched to both budget and pupil need to ensure maximisation of both pupil outcomes and efficiency. The input of LA support services will be required to enable the new school to develop and implement a structure that is fit for purpose.
- 7.2. A standard HR process is in place to support the closure of one school and expansion of another. This process does require elements of localisation and there is sufficient time available to ensure the nuances of this restructure are considered to allow the exact processes to be followed. The exact procedure and the proposed restructure will require consultation with recognised trade unions and staff concerned.

8. Views of the local County Councillor

- 8.1. Views of the local County Councillor are awaited.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. The governing bodies of the two schools have carefully considered the benefits of amalgamating the two schools to form a primary school in order to secure better outcomes for the pupils and requested Hampshire County Council consult on the proposal of amalgamation.
- 9.2. No consultee has raised an objection to the proposal to amalgamate the schools.
- 9.3. Pupils can achieve well in both infant and junior schools and primary schools. However there are many advantages to all through models of primary education such as:

- a consistent approach to the ways in which children are taught.
- removal of the need for parents to apply for a place at the junior school.
- greater continuity in planning the curriculum across the stages of education so that pupils make the best possible progress in learning.
- removal of the potential disruption to children's education when transferring from infant to junior.
- enhancement of teachers' professional development through increased opportunities to teach across a wider age range within the same school.
- parents are able to develop a longer term relationship with the school.
- gives children the opportunity to work with or alongside younger or older pupils allowing them to put their own learning in context and develop important social skills.

9.4. The amalgamation of Weyford Infant School and Nursery and Weyford Junior School and the creation of a primary school is the option most likely to be successful in effectively raising pupil outcomes to be in line with or above national averages.

10. Recommendation(s)

10.1. It is recommended that:

A Public Notice be published in accordance with Sections 15 and 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to:

- a) Discontinue Weyford Infant School and Nursery with effect from 31 August 2017.
- b) Establish a community primary school for up to 630 pupils by enlarging Weyford Junior School through the utilisation of Weyford Infant School and Nursery site and buildings, and extension of Weyford Junior School's age range to form a primary school for ages 2-11, with effect from 1 September 2017.

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

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes/no
Maximising well-being:	yes/no
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes/no
OR	
This proposal does not link to the Corporate Strategy but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:	

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.)

Document

Location

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

1.1. Equalities have been considered and no adverse impact identified

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. The recommendations will have no impact on crime and disorder

3. Climate Change:

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

No impact has been identified

b) 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