

**DEMOGRAPHIC PRESSURES ON PRIMARY PROVISION IN CAMBRIDGE CITY**

*To:* Cabinet

*Date:* 23rd February 2010

*From:* Executive Director: Children and Young People's Services (CYPS)

*Electoral division(s):* Abbey; Cherry Hinton; Petersfield; Queen Edith's

*Forward Plan ref:* 2010 / 05 *Key Decision:* Yes

*Purpose:*

- To advise Cabinet of the outcome of the consultation on the proposals for meeting the identified demographic pressures in Cambridge.
- To seek approval to the recommended ways forward, as a result of that consultation.

*Recommendations:* That:

- i) Abbey Meadows Community Primary School should be extended, on its existing site, from 2 forms of entry (FE) to 3FE, from September 2010;
- ii) Cherry Hinton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School should be extended on its existing site, and its intake and age range changed from a 2FE Infant School to a 1FE all-through primary school, from September 2011;
- iii) Cherry Hinton Community Junior School should be extended on its existing site, and its age range changed from a 2FE Junior School to a 2FE all-through primary school, from September 2011;
- iv) Colville Community Primary School should be extended on its existing site from 1FE to 2FE, from September 2010;
- v) Queen Edith Community Primary School should be extended on its existing site from 2FE to 3FE, on a temporary basis for one year only, from September 2010, and that further discussions should take place with the governing body in relation to future years;
- vi) A new primary school should be established in 2011, by competition, on the current Netherhall Lower School site, in line with the requirements of the Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- vii) The specification for the new primary school should be agreed (the draft specification will be made available before the Cabinet meeting);
- viii) The Cabinet Member for Learning should be asked to review the position at the third-month checkpoint of the four-month bid period, and advise the Executive Director:

**CYPS whether or not a County Council-sponsored bid for the new school should be submitted.**

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## **1 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide a school place for every child living in its area of responsibility who is of school age and whose parents want their child educated in the maintained sector. Cambridgeshire's policy is to admit children into Reception in the September following their fourth birthday; children become of school age once they reach the age of five.
- 1.2 A series of reports have been produced for the Children and Young People's Policy Development Group (CYP PDG), between 13 November 2008 and 19 January 2010, which have provided detailed information about the projected increased demand for primary school places across Cambridgeshire due to rising birth rates and increased fertility rates. This information was based on National Health Service (NHS) data, the most up-to-date version of which has made it possible to identify pressures at individual school and local area level up to and including the 2013/14 academic year.
- 1.3 This data enabled the areas with the greatest predicted pressure to be identified, namely, Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire (Ely and Soham) and Huntingdon, and the PDG reports outlined the actions that were being taken to respond to the forecast increased demand for primary school places across the County. Officers have been working with key stakeholders since the demographic trends were identified, in order to ensure that the Council's good record in meeting the demand for school places and, wherever possible, parental preferences is maintained.
- 1.4 The most significant level of growth has been experienced in Cambridge, particularly in the south. A breakdown of the most up-to-date birth data for the City, compared with each school's Published Admission Number (PAN), is attached as **Appendix 1**. This includes the 100% figures and the established five-year average of 83% of the children born in Cambridge being educated in one of the Authority's maintained schools. A map showing the catchment areas for the City's schools is attached as **Appendix 2**.
- 1.5 In November 2009, the CYP PDG received detailed and updated information about the increase in demand for primary school places in Cambridge, and the outline options for meeting the identified demographic pressures in the south of the City. In addition to proposals to expand a number of primary schools, it was also proposed to expand and change the age range of Cherry Hinton Infant and Junior Schools to all-through primary schools, in line with the County Council's long-held policy preference for all-through primary schools.
- 1.6 In January 2010, the PDG considered the outcome of the consultations held in December 2009 on the proposals. The background to and the outcome of those

consultations is set out below, in order to enable Cabinet to determine the resulting recommendations.

## **2.0 CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS RELATING TO THE SOUTH OF CAMBRIDGE**

2.1. A document was produced as the basis for the consultation that took place during December 2009 in the south of Cambridge. This set out the overall background to the demographic pressures, including the updated NHS birth data for each school catchment area in the City, and the proposals being put forward to provide places to meet the increase in demand (see source documents at the end of this report.) It also included information about the educational reasons for the local authority's policy preference for all-through primary schools. This is attached as **Appendix 3**.

2.2 The consultation document was circulated to the parents, staff and governors of all of the schools that were the subject of the consultation process, namely:

- Abbey Meadows Community Primary School
- Cherry Hinton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School
- Cherry Hinton Community Junior School
- Colville Community Primary School
- Queen Edith Community Primary School
- Spinney Community Primary School.

The relevant local County and City Councillors and the Church of England Diocese also received copies of the document.

2.3 A comment sheet was included with the consultation document, which respondents were asked to return by 18 December 2009.

2.4 Following discussions with the relevant headteachers about the nature of the consultation that should take place in relation to their schools, the following meetings were also held between 2 and 9 December 2009:

- Abbey Meadows: two drop-in sessions for parents;
- Cherry Hinton Infant: two sessions for parents, and meetings with staff and governors;
- Cherry Hinton Junior: three sessions for parents, and meetings with staff and governors;
- Queen Edith: one long drop-in session for parents, and meetings with staff and governors.

2.5 Councillor Harty attended meetings at Cherry Hinton Infant and Junior Schools, and the relevant local County and City Councillors were provided with details of all of the meetings.

## **3.0 OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATIONS**

3.1 A written synopsis of the comments received was provided to the 19 January 2010 CYP PDG (see source documents at the end of this report). A general summary is set out below.

### 3.1.1 **Abbey Meadows Community Primary School**

**Proposal:** That Abbey Meadows Community Primary School should be extended, on its existing site, from 2 forms of entry (FE) to 3FE, from September 2010. (This would be an increase of 30 Reception places, enabling the school to provide 630 places overall, as opposed to the current 420.)

The headteacher and governors are generally supportive of the proposal.

One parent attended the drop-in sessions. She was supportive of the proposal to expand the school to meet the need in the catchment area. No written comments were received from Abbey Meadows' parents, staff or governors.

A meeting was also held with the Abbey Meadows' governing body on 18 January 2010, when the detailed plans for expanding the school accommodation were discussed.

### 3.1.2 **Cherry Hinton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School**

**Proposal:** That Cherry Hinton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School should be extended on its existing site, and its intake and age range changed from a 2FE Infant School to a 1FE all-through primary school, from September 2011.

(This proposal, when combined with the proposal relating to the Junior School (see 3.1.3 below) would result in an increase of 30 Reception places, enabling the two schools to provide 630 places overall, as opposed to the current 420.)

A great deal of concern at this proposal was expressed at the meetings with parents and with the governing body. In summary, it was felt that:

- a convincing case had not been made for the County Council's policy preference for all-through primary schools, as opposed to separate Infant and Junior schools;
- additional places could equally be provided by expanding the separate Infant and Junior schools;
- the establishment of two all-through primary schools would reduce the choice of the type of schools available for parents in Cherry Hinton;
- the safer and more nurturing nature of an Infant School would be lost;
- if the predicted numbers of children did not appear, the smaller school was likely to be the one that would close.

The governing body expressed particular concern about the proposed transition arrangements, fearing that the changes could lead to staff redundancies. It was, therefore, agreed that more information on this subject should be provided to them before the end of term. It was also agreed that an outline plan for the proposed extension of the school accommodation should be made available by that time.

This information was provided, and the governing body subsequently sent in its written response, which was also provided to the CYP PDG (see source documents).

### 3.1.3 **Cherry Hinton Community Junior School**

**Proposal:** That Cherry Hinton Community Junior School should be extended on its existing site, and its age range changed from a 2FE Junior School to a 2FE all-through primary school, from September 2011.

(This proposal, when combined with the proposal relating to the Infant School (see 3.1.2 above) would result in an increase of 30 Reception places, enabling the two schools to provide 630 places overall, as opposed to the current 420.)

Governors, staff and parents are generally very supportive of this proposal, although they, too, have a number of specific queries about the transition arrangements. These are being addressed.

### 3.1.4 **Colville Community Primary School**

**Proposal:** That Colville Community Primary School should be extended on its existing site from 1FE to 2FE, from September 2010.

(This would be an increase of 30 Reception places, enabling the school to provide 420 places, as opposed to the current 210.)

The headteacher and governors are generally supportive of this proposal.

No written comments were received from Colville parents, staff or governors.

Specific meetings will be held with the governing body and staff when detailed plans for expanding the school accommodation have been completed, during the Spring term.

### 3.1.5 **Early Years Provision in Cherry Hinton/Spinney Community Primary School**

A number of comments were received on the provision of early years education and childcare. These comments are informing the continuing work with the Early Years and Childcare Development Team and the Education Capital Team. This is focused on the level of demand and how best to meet this in Cherry Hinton in particular, and in Cambridge as a whole, and whether this should be done via the private, voluntary and independent sector or maintained schools, or a mixture of both.

### 3.1.6 **Queen Edith Community Primary School**

Two of the proposals are of relevance to Queen Edith School:

- the expansion of Queen Edith from 2FE to 3FE from September 2010; and
- the retention of the Netherhall Lower School site and the proposed establishment of a new primary school on that site, from 2011. (See section 3.1.7 below for more detail.)

The consultation document made the link between the two, because the site for the proposed new school is within the existing Queen Edith catchment area. It indicated that the catchment area would need to be examined, alongside the overall capacity required to meet both the existing demand and that expected from the Bell School development, which is also in the catchment area. Most written comments received in relation to Queen Edith, therefore, referred to both of these

proposals.

The Queen Edith governing body has agreed to the expansion of the school from 2FE to 3FE, on a temporary basis for the 2010/11 academic year only, and has asked for a more detailed discussion about the proposed arrangements from 2011 onwards, linked to the new school proposal.

### **3.1.7 Establishment of a New Primary School on the Netherhall Lower School Site**

The consultation document outlined the proposal to establish a new school on the current Netherhall Lower School site, in order to meet the increased demand in the south of the City. It indicated that this new school would be established by means of a competition process, with the aim of making the provision available from 2011, and that this process would be the subject of separate consultation arrangements during the Spring and Summer terms 2010. This would include the need to examine how the catchment area for this school would relate to other neighbouring schools, including Queen Edith.

Most of the comments made on the new-school proposal, either at the various meetings which took place or in writing, were from parents, staff and governors linked to Queen Edith School. These either focused on the likely effect of the proposal on that school, or on the perceived strength of Queen Edith to manage the new school. It was made clear at all of these discussions that the competition was a separate process, in line with the requirements of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, about which further information would be provided early in the Spring term.

Further information about this process is included in section 6, below.

## **4.0 OTHER RELEVANT PROJECTS IN THE SOUTH OF CAMBRIDGE**

### **4.1 St Matthew's Community Primary School**

In December 2009 and January 2010, a number of meetings were held with the headteacher and governing body of St Matthew's School about the large increase in the projected pupils in the school's catchment area. The requirement for additional primary school places in the catchment area is almost a form of entry (30 places) in 2011, and rises to 40 places in 2013.

The discussions, therefore, explored whether the governors would support the possible expansion of St Matthew's School to 3FE, to enable more children to be admitted in the future; and, if so, how the current development plan for the improvement of the St Matthew's school buildings might be adapted to enable this to be achieved. In order to inform a decision on this matter, it has been agreed that the County Council should produce a detailed feasibility study to explore whether it is possible to expand St. Matthew's to 3FE on the existing site, both in educational and cost terms. This work is being done at present.

## **5.0 RESPONSE TO SIGNIFICANT ISSUES RAISED DURING THE CONSULTATION**

5.1 A number of issues were raised during the consultation period which were explored further and reported to the 19 January 2010 CYP PDG meeting. These are set out below.

### 5.1.1 Possible Over-provision of Places

A number of people were of the view that the proposals over-provided for the number of children forecast to require school places between 2010/11 and 2013/14, and that this would create problems with over-supply in the future.

In view of this, the figures and the proposals were reconsidered in depth, using, in all cases, the five-year average figure for Cambridge of 83% of children born in a catchment area needing a maintained primary school place, and taking into account any surplus capacity at neighbouring schools within the City. A number of place-provision scenarios, linked to the formal proposals and to the possible additional provision at St Matthew's, were then applied to the figures.

The conclusion drawn from this work was that the additional estimated capacity outlined in the proposals would be required to enable the Authority to meet its statutory responsibilities in the years for which we have information from the NHS (up to and including 2013/14). This additional capacity will be needed for these children for the whole of their primary school education. However, it cannot be guaranteed that it will not be necessary to reduce provision in the future, if the birth rate falls again. This is the nature of school-place planning.

An additional 3FE is being recommended in the south of the City for September 2010, with 1FE each at Abbey Meadows, Colville and Queen Edith Primary Schools, to meet the projected demand for that year. Detailed work is continuing on the exact configuration of additional places from 2011 onwards.

Some people commented that account should be taken of possible surplus capacity outside the City, particularly in Teversham and Fulbourn. However, the headteacher steering group, with whom officers worked on the development of these proposals, had advised that, wherever possible, it should be the schools in whose catchment areas the growing demand was to be found that should be expanded to meet that need. This advice was provided not only as an important principle, but also on health, environmental and economic grounds; enabling children to walk and cycle to school, wherever possible, improves their health and reduces the need for them to be transported, either by their parents or by the local authority. It is also important for community cohesion. This principle was followed in the development of the proposals contained in this report.

### 5.1.2 Nature of the Buildings

A number of people expressed concern at the fact that the first phase of the proposals involved mobile accommodation, and at the likelihood that the proposed new school would be a modular construction. It was felt that this approach would have a detrimental effect on the educational experience of the children who would be using those buildings.

It was emphasised at the meetings that, where mobile accommodation was being provided to meet the initial need because of the short lead-in time, this was as part of a longer-term plan for each school site that involved its replacement with permanent accommodation. The high standard of modern mobile accommodation was also stressed and the fact that its location on school sites would be agreed with the headteachers concerned.

The CYP PDG considered a separate report on modern methods of construction at its 19 January meeting.

### **5.1.3 Cherry Hinton Infant and Junior Schools**

The response from the two schools to the proposals to change Cherry Hinton Infant and Junior schools to all-through primaries was very different: the Infant School consultees were generally opposed to the proposals, and the Junior School consultees were generally in favour.

Officers are aware, in particular, that they have not convinced some of the Infant School parents and governors of the educational merits of all-through primaries, even though the reasons for the Council's policy preference were included with the consultation paper and were discussed in detail at the meetings. (See Appendix 3.)

However, the CYPS Standards and Effectiveness Team has re-affirmed its previous advice that pursuing the Council's policy preference for all-through primaries is the right way forward, for the future, for both of these schools and for the children concerned.

### **5.1.4 The Link between Queen Edith Primary and the Proposed New School**

Queen Edith governors have agreed to an additional Reception class being established at the school for September 2010, but have asked for further discussion of the issue linked with the proposals for the new primary school.

The detailed work on the place-provision scenarios, referred to in section 5.1.1 above, is informing the development of the draft specification for the proposed new school. This draft specification is currently the subject of public consultation, and Queen Edith is involved in this process, along with other interested parties. Further information about the process is set out in section 6, below.

As the competition process progresses, specific meetings with the Queen Edith governing body to address any unresolved issues for 2011 will be held, as necessary.

### **5.1.5 Catchment Areas**

Some concern was expressed that disruption would be caused by the need to review catchment areas in the south of the City, to take account of the proposals for the new primary school and for changes to the pattern of provision in Cherry Hinton.

In order to enable this work to be undertaken as swiftly and comprehensively as possible, it has been agreed that an officer task group should be established to review catchment areas in the south of the City, in time for the outcome to be included in the September 2011 admissions booklet. This booklet has to be finalised by the end of the summer term 2010. The work will be undertaken in close consultation with the headteachers and governor representatives of all of the schools concerned.

## **6.0 THE COMPETITION PROCESS FOR THE PROPOSED NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL**

- 6.1 The timescale to provide a new school to meet the demand for additional places in 2011, in line with the requirements of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, is very short. A meeting has, therefore, already been held with the consultant who acts on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to provide advice on the competition process for a new school. If the recommended establishment of the new school is approved by Cabinet, this consultant will provide advice to the local authority and to promoters during the process.
- 6.2 An outline timetable for the competition has been agreed as follows:
- consideration of the draft specification by Cabinet – 23 February 2010
  - if agreed by Cabinet, publication of the agreed specification – 26 February
  - seminar for potential promoters – 11 March
  - Cabinet Member for Learning reviews the bids – 26 May
  - bid submission deadline – 28 June
  - publication of submitted bids – 9 July
  - public meeting where promoters will present their bids – 15 July
  - end of six-week consultation period for representations on the bids – 20 August
  - Cabinet decision – 28 September 2010.
- 6.3 A public consultation meeting on the draft specification for the new school was held on 28 January 2010. This was well-attended, and a number of very useful comments were made at the meeting. In addition, officers will be sharing this draft with the headteacher group nominated by Cambridgeshire Primary Heads (CPH) to advise on the educational aspects of the planning and building of new schools. As the next meeting of this group does not take place until 11 February, the recommended specification for the new school will be made available to Cabinet after the main report has been circulated. This is to allow the opportunity for any further comments to be incorporated.
- 6.4 The outline design for the new school building will be developed in consultation with the headteacher group referred to earlier, and the initial work necessary to meet the requirements of the local planning process will take place alongside the early stages of the competition process.

## **7.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 Resources and Performance**

- 7.1.1 The CYPS capital programme was reviewed to take account of the increased need for primary school places resulting from the increase in demographic pressures. This updated programme now forms part of the County Council's decision-making process on the overall capital programme.
- 7.1.2 There are revenue implications arising from the creation of additional classes, in terms of the need to employ teaching and support staff in advance of a school generating Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) funding. Each school is also supported with up to £5,000 to purchase equipment to fit out each new class. The cost of revenue funding will be a call on the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant.

7.1.3 In a town or city environment, the expectation should be that the majority of children should be able to walk or cycle to school. There is clearly the potential for more children to have to be transported to schools other than their catchment schools if the Authority is unable to match supply with demand, thus placing a further pressure on revenue budgets.

7.1.4 Additional staffing capacity will be needed, in order to ensure that the necessary planning processes and applications are dealt with expeditiously.

## 7.2 **Statutory Requirements and Partnership Working**

7.2.1 There are specific statutory procedures which will be followed in each case for the expansion of existing schools or the provision of the new school, including the publication of formal public notices. The broad timetable for formal consultation on the relevant proposals is as follows:

- The expansion of Abbey Meadows and Colville primary schools from September 2010, and the proposals relating to Cherry Hinton Infant and Junior School, from September 2011: publication of notices immediately after the Easter break, six weeks' consultation period, and a report back on the outcome to the 22 June 2010 meeting of Cabinet.
- The competition process for the new school: publication of the agreed specification on 26 February 2010; Cabinet decision at the 28 September 2010 meeting (see full detail in section 6.2 above).

As the proposed expansion of Queen Edith is currently on a temporary basis only, there is no need to follow statutory procedures at this stage.

## 7.3 **Climate Change**

7.3.1 The Council's current policy is for all newly-commissioned Council buildings to meet the BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) 'very good' standard, with an aspiration to achieve 'excellent'. In the Council's Climate Change and Environment Strategy, a public commitment has been made to develop a new minimum standard for all newly-commissioned buildings. This will ensure that the Council is prepared for the implementation of the Government's zero carbon standards for new schools, which come into effect in 2016, and for other buildings, which come into effect in 2018.

## 7.4 **Access and Inclusion**

7.4.1 The County Council is committed to ensuring that children with special educational needs (SEN) are able to attend their local mainstream school where possible, with only those children with the most complex and challenging needs requiring places at specialist provision. The expectation is, therefore, that additional special school capacity will not be required, but there will be continuing close liaison with the relevant specialist colleagues on this issue.

7.4.2 All accommodation, whether it is temporary or permanent, will need to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

## 7.5 Engagement

7.5.1 Meetings are taking place with the relevant planning officers, as appropriate, to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the educational imperative of meeting children's basic need entitlement to school places.

7.5.2 In view of the city-wide nature of the pressure on school places in Cambridge, there is close liaison with Cambridge City Councillors and officers.

## 7.6 Consultation

7.6.1 Consultation in relation to individual developments is being planned into the relevant project timescales (see 7.2.1 above).

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
19 January 2010 CYP PDG report on Demographic Pressures on Primary Provision in Cambridge City, which included as appendices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the paper used as the basis for the December 2009 consultation process;</li><li>• detailed summaries of the comments received during the consultation period.</li></ul>	Sian Phillips Education Officer  Open plan office, Second floor, B wing, Castle Court

## Appendix 1

### NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN IN EACH PRIMARY SCHOOL'S CATCHMENT AREA IN CAMBRIDGE COMPARED WITH PUBLISHED ADMISSION NUMBERS (PANS): JANUARY 2010

**Key**

CP – Community Primary

CE (VA) or (VC) – Church of England, Voluntary Aided or Voluntary Controlled

RC (VA) – Roman Catholic, Voluntary Aided. (These schools have no formal catchment area.)

Child Health Register Data	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	PAN
<b>Schools</b>						
<b>South of City</b>						
Abbey Meadows (CP)	104	108	129	130	126	60
Cherry Hinton Infants CE (VC)	59	58	71	75	74	60
Colville (CP)	40	54	64	50	59	30
Fawcett (CP)	47	45	47	58	39	30
Morley Memorial (CP)	81	85	98	86	73	60
Newnham Croft (CP)	48	57	57	42	71	34
Park Street CE (VA)	15	8	16	18	17	18
Queen Edith (CP)	73	89	90	84	67	60
Ridgefield (Foundation with Trust)	65	63	68	98	88	30
Spinney (CP)	25	37	28	41	38	30
St Alban's RC (VA)						30
St Matthew's (CP)	74	72	101	104	125	60
St Paul's CE (VA)	46	47	55	47	45	30
St Philip's CE (VA)	70	62	76	97	97	45
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>919</b>	<b>577</b>
<b>83% (5-year average)</b>	620	651	747	772	763	
<b>Children/PAN +/-</b>		-74 (3FE)	-170 (6FE)	-195 (7FE)	-186 (6FE)	
<b>North of City</b>						
Arbury (CP)	64	59	73	87	86	60
Grove (CP)	46	56	39	72	71	30
King's Hedges (CP)	81	64	69	71	80	60
Mayfield (CP)	55	34	60	60	50	60
Milton Road (CP)	78	83	92	75	90	60
Orchard Park (CP)	16	20	29	30	21	15
Shirley (CP)	101	91	108	117	138	60
St Laurence's RC (VA)						35
St Luke's CE (VA)	42	49	61	60	68	37
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>417</b>
<b>83% (5-year average)</b>	401	378	441	475	501	
<b>Children/PAN +/-</b>		+39	-24 (1FE)	-58 (2FE)	-84 (3FE)	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1230</b>	<b>1241</b>	<b>1431</b>	<b>1502</b>	<b>1523</b>	<b>994</b>
<b>83% (5-year average)</b>	1020	1030	1187	1246	1264	



**Local Authority Preference for All-through Primary Schools**

- The County Council has a long-held policy of preference for all-through primary schools.
- Members and officers actively support and encourage proposals to amalgamate schools where they are confident that this will lead to improvements in educational provision.

The key aim is to enhance the conditions for further improving standards and quality of educational provision, whilst securing best value for money.

⇒ Education is a continuum from 0 to 19+, made up of key stages:

- Early Years 0 - 5
- Key Stage (KS) 1 5 - 7
- Key Stage 2 7 - 11
- Key Stage 3 11 - 14
- Key Stage 4 and onwards 14+

What happens year-on-year is significantly important for, and has a marked effect on, pupils' learning outcomes in succeeding years. The quality of education received by children has the capacity to influence what they do in future years. The evidence is strong that schools make a significant difference.

All Governing Bodies are required to ensure that all children receive their curriculum entitlement – the National Curriculum is designed to provide continuity of teaching and learning, and in progression for pupils within and between Key Stages. But the NC on its own cannot secure continuity. For that to happen, schools must arrange things so that what is learned one year is built upon successfully in subsequent years, to ensure that children achieve the standards of which they are capable at the ends of each year as well as at the end of each Key Stage.

Continuity of learning depends to a large extent on the quality of the professional links established from one year to the next. Government targets require that 85% of pupils reach Level 4 in English and Mathematics by age 11). This is a high expectation, but gradually we are moving closer to that target.

The expectation is that each school, and each year group, will play a part in meeting these targets. This makes a very strong case for improving the effectiveness of continuity and progression within and between year groups and Key Stages.

Where Primary education is provided in separate phases or Key Stages, effective curriculum continuity and progression is difficult to achieve. There is too much scope for discontinuity of learning, together with the risk of repeated subject content and learning experiences in the receiving Key Stage.

Since the impact of continuity on progression, attainment and achievement is so strong, it is logical to conclude that discontinuity, wherever it exists, is bound to limit pupils' overall progress and ultimately the school's academic performance.

**What are the key improvements we might expect to result from an all through Primary school?**

- Better development of initiatives in literacy, numeracy, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) etc across the whole primary age range.
- Continuity of provision through a single set of policies across the whole age range.
- A coherent assessment framework, with pupil targets based on information gained from the earliest stages of a child's education, enabling pupils "at risk" of underachievement to be tracked and receive targeted input throughout their primary experience.
- Co-ordination of and sharing of resources such as consultant and adviser time, as well as individual members of staff's expertise and thus increase the range of pupils' learning opportunities and develop key teaching skills.

## **Better pupil performance**

The establishment of a whole-school system for monitoring performance will enable:

- Coherent analysis of pupil performance data for targeting resources towards the needs of individuals and groups.
- A systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation of teaching to develop and feed into a single performance management system, and allow for good practice to be identified and disseminated.
- More accurate calculation of added-value and thence the identification of strength and weakness in provision.

## **Special Educational Needs**

The establishment of a single school will enable:

- More flexible use of education psychologist time to support early intervention.
- Continuity of liaison with parents/carers and outside agencies through an integrated approach to Special Needs.
- More flexible and efficient deployment of learning support staff and improved continuity of provision for individual pupils.
- Rationalisation of learning resources and the sharing of specific expertise.

## **School Management**

The educational benefits of all-through primaries include opportunities for:

- A larger staff team that would enable individual members of staff to carry fewer curriculum responsibilities, allowing for a building up of greater expertise in their allocated areas.
- Reduced duplication of effort across the two schools, curriculum planning that ensures that curriculum coverage is continuous throughout the key stages, pupils progress tracked and effective curriculum development plans put in place to raise overall standards.

## **Recruitment**

Staff are often attracted more easily to work in all-through primary schools than in single key stage establishments.

## **Parents and Pupils**

For parents with children in both Key Stages:

One school simplifies home/school liaison links for parents and pupils. Currently parents get to know one school then have to start again to get to know another.

One school simplifies starting and finishing times at the beginning and end of the school day.

One school means the possibility of talking to more than one teacher if needs be.

One school makes getting to know staff so much easier.

One school means one Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to support and one Governing Body.

Staff at both schools can spend considerable amounts of time liaising with parents over educational and social problems. This effort is often duplicated as parents have pupils in both schools. In addition, there would be:

- Opportunities for pupils to meet and form relationships from a more diverse age group
- Smooth and seamless progression from Foundation Stage to KS1 and then to KS2

So our preference is for:

- ⇒ One school
- ⇒ One ethos
- ⇒ Continuing partnership with parents
- ⇒ No new beginnings
- ⇒ Better links between the Key Stages leading to better progress for children