

Cambridgeshire County Council Responses to the Consultation at Eastfield & Westfield Junior Schools

Consultation Overview

The consultation period lasted from 19 April 2018 to 18 May 2018.

The responses have been recorded in three groups, as shown in the table below, with overall totals and percentages.

The comments are then listed in three further tables.

Response Group	Responses	1	2	3	4	5	Written statements only
Sent to Local Authority	34	15	15		1	3	
Staff comments, collected at the schools	2	2					
Governor comments, collected at schools	1	1					
Parent & Pupil comments, collected at the schools	2		2				
Totals	39	18	17		1	3	
Percentage		46%	44%		2%	8%	

Key:

1 – strongly agreed with the proposed change

2 – agreed with the proposed change

3 – no strong views on the proposed change

4 – did not agree with the proposed change

5 – strongly disagreed with the proposed change

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No	Name	Contact	Comments sent to the Local Authority
1	Parent	Email 13/05/18	<p>I am in favour of amalgamating Eastfield and Westfield schools but I have a number of questions that I would like to be considered should the amalgamation go ahead.</p> <p>1. Outside space is very important for children. I would like the plots that Eastfield and Westfield occupy to remain intact and none to be sold off.</p> <p>2. One of the reasons I was attracted to Eastfield school was the outside play areas for the nursery and reception children. Both of my children loved the outside space in the nursery and the planting means that there is lots of natural shade in their outside play area as well as lots of areas for them to explore. As the children continued their Early Years education, there was also a focus on outside play in Reception which was also loved by my children. This space is also used at break and lunchtimes so the smaller Reception children are in their own space away from the much bigger year 2 children. This is a really wonderful feature of the school - for those children who are finding the transition to school more difficult, having a quieter space to play at the start of the school year is a real bonus.</p> <p>3. My daughter will be in year 6 and my son in year 4 when the planned building work commences. Although I believe that every effort will be made by staff to reduce disruption for the children in the school during this year. How can the county council support the school so that the site has adequate access for all the personnel and materials required for such a huge build and reserve outside space for the children of both schools at break times and also for PE?</p>
2	Parent	Email 18/05/18	<p>1. Achieving Potential</p> <p>Statistics provided to me by the Department for Education show child attainment is better nationally in separate Infant and Junior schools than it is in through Primaries. The consultation document focuses on better progression but this is all down to how the data is collated and results are interpreted by the schools and is not as fundamentally important as children's overall attainment by the end of Year 6. I want my children to be able to achieve their full potential so they</p>

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			<p>are in the best position they can be when they move up to Senior School.</p> <p>2. Budget By amalgamating the two schools the Primary's total annual budget (after the initial two years grace) will be less than it is now because of the loss of one annual lump sum payment, so any savings on electricity and heating, staff etc that is highlighted in the Consultation paper won't result in more money for learning resources as is implied by the document and what many parents will assume from reading it. Any savings made on staffing and running two sites will essentially be going back to the LA to be redistributed across the county, so no benefit to the children at this school. I can see the many financial benefits to the LA, but I am struggling to see the benefits for the children. It also seems to me that the LA are struggling with this too as the Consultation document only lists two points that loosely benefit the children yet five for staff; as a parent, the focus seems to be in the wrong place.</p> <p>3. Age Range I do not agree that having children aged from 4-11 years on the same site is beneficial to the children's learning. Assemblies cannot be pitched to fully engage children across this range therefore you will always have a cohort of children that are bored or not benefitting. If the plan is to have separate halls and separate assemblies as well as separate lunches and separate play areas then what is the point of amalgamating, what benefit does it have for the children? Shared resources has been listed as a benefit of the proposed amalgamation but again this surely means more staff available to cover but not necessarily in their area of expertise, again not a great benefit to the children.</p> <p>4. Choice We moved to this end of town for these schools after going through an emotional and distressing appeals process and failing. We wanted our children to attend separate Infant and Junior schools as we believe it sets them up better for the challenges ahead. I feel our freedom of choice is being taken away from us, we can no longer choose the type of school that best suits our individual children.</p>
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			<p>During our appeal for a school place at Eastfield we were told by the LA (in our minuted appeals meeting) that moving our four year old Son from the school he knew and all his friends that would be attending that school would have no detrimental effect on him as children are very resilient and cope well with change. Even as an extremely shy, anxious child we were told he would be fine. I therefore find it hard to believe that the same LA are now concerned about the effect a small transition to a neighbouring school with their friends will have on the children.</p> <p>5. Recent Amalgamations Thorndown has been built as a flagship through Primary and is referred to in every meeting or document we have received to do with this project. Yes it looks impressive and has some amazing features, like the breakout hubs that really impress visitors, but some of the basic fundamental aspects of a school are not fit for purpose, this is the same for a number of new through Primaries. I have been told by parents that Thorndown's hall is not big enough to comfortably accommodate all the children for assemblies and when the Parent's come in too it is an uncomfortable squeeze. Teachers at other new schools have told of issues with lunchtimes when the hall is not big enough to get all the children through in one hour so children are being told to eat in their coats to get them in and out faster. This is not acceptable. Classrooms are too small, being built to minimum standards and not taking into consideration the space taken up for sinks or cloakrooms. Separate play areas mean less overall space for each key stage and less sense of belonging to the school as a whole.</p> <p>6. Transitions The Consultation paper states that an inadequate learning environment can have detrimental effects on concentration, mood, well-being, attendance and attainment. However there is no information given to back up the suggestion that this is the case at either Eastfield or Westfield. My children love Westfield, they enjoy going to school and come out happy and buzzing every single day. My Son in Year 5 has had only one day off since he started! Having the separate schools has given them a sense of pride about their school, they feel they have earned their place at Westfield and as such when they made the transition they grew up a bit too.</p>
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		<p>They felt they needed to be more grown up and independent, taking responsibility for their own homework because they were at “big school” and because they had that physical transition it helped them with their mental and emotional transition of stepping up into that next age bracket. Having experienced a change of school at this age will mean they are more equipped to deal with the transition to Senior School.</p> <p>There is a warm, happy atmosphere when you enter the grounds of Westfield that you don’t feel in other schools. The children care about their school, they respect it and having access to the whole site contributes to that feeling of belonging.</p> <p>That feeling as you walk in the school gates cannot be replicated. You lose these close knit smaller schools, you lose that atmosphere and that will have the most detrimental effect on the children’s learning.</p> <p>It is a shame that in our time of having to cut as many costs as possible even what is best for the children comes to be neglected.</p> <p>I believe the LA should be offering us the opportunity to choose between a through Primary or new separate Infant and Junior Schools that would be built to the same spec. so we have a fair choice, based on what staff and parents feel is best for the children, rather than feeling pushed into accepting the decision they have made because of the fear of the funding being taken away completely and being left with nothing.</p> <p>As a parent to be continually told that school budgets are so tight they struggle to afford resources or fund visits and then be told the LA suddenly have £15m they can spend on a new school (as long as it’s the one they want to build) it makes me think that if they really wanted to they could find some more to build the school(s) we wanted, if it suited their agenda I am certain they would find it.</p> <p>As with anything to do with the LA, I am sure the decision has already been made but I do feel strongly that the transition from an Infant to Junior school is a really important step for children and should not be dismissed so lightly because of potential financial savings. Moving from Key Stage 1 to 2 in a through Primary is not the same as making that physical transition of schools, it doesn’t give them the same change of mindset. I think it is a real shame to lose it.</p>
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3	Parent	Smart Survey	I think once done it will be better facilities than currently exists. I hope that a high level of importance is given to making sure all children have access to good outdoor space for sport and recreation in the interim. I have a strong preference for both schools management be led by the current Westfield head teacher. Having children at both schools I strongly feel that this would be a much more cohesive and enabling decision.
4	Parent	Smart Survey	I'm a little unclear about which buildings are proposed to be demolished and where the new building would be built. Where the entrance would be etc. The general proposal to amalgamate very much makes sense especially in the current economic climate. It does make the school seem very large.
5	Parent	Smart Survey	I agree with the proposal as long as teachers, Governors, parents and the community are given genuine opportunities to shape the design of the school such that the small school nature of the separate infants and juniors is preserved.
6	Staff	Smart Survey	No Comments
7	Community member	Email	Well overdue, should of happened years ago.
8	Community member	Email	<p>I currently hire Eastfield School hall on Thursday evenings for 2.5 hours from 18.15pm from September to July (every week that the school is open). This arrangement has been in place with my predecessor and myself for around ten years. I teach two full Pilates classes which have taken time to build.</p> <p>Whilst I am in favour of the amalgamation from the perspective of having one of my children in the school whilst the prospective change takes place, this decision has the potential to harm my business and severely reduce my weekly income. My concern is that the hall at Westfield is used by another group on Thursday evenings between September and April.</p> <p>I would not be in a position to switch evenings as I teach on other evenings elsewhere and in the majority of cases my clients are busy on other evenings and Pilates on a Thursday evening is a fixed part of their routine that many would find difficult to rearrange. I also have an arrangement for childcare that currently works well for Thursday evenings.</p>

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			<p>The consultation document states that one of the advantages of the scheme will be “large hall spaces” suggesting that there may be more than one hall within the plans for the new school, or potentially one large space which can be divided as necessary. This may offer a solution, but Pilates does need to be taught in a quiet space as it offers an hour of welcome relaxation for my clients.</p> <p>I am aware that this is a very small aspect of the entire consultation - but the implications are huge for me. I would appreciate the potential for future lettings to be considered as part of the consultation process and if it goes ahead, the design of the building to ensure that the space can be used effectively and generate revenue for the new school after school hours.</p>
9	Parent of Child attending St Ivo		No comments
10	Parent of Child at Eastfield Infants	Scanned consultation response	The school(s) are ‘tired’ and clearly in need of modernisation. Thorndown (up the road) has been a success and I see no reason why Eastfield / Westfield can be too.
11	Other member of St Ives community	Smart Survey	No comments
12	Parent	Smart Survey	No Comments
13	Unknown	Smart Survey	I would like to ask if the site for the new school will remain the same size as the current Eastfield/Westfield sites? Are there any plans to reduce the size of the site for the new school?
14	Parent	Smart Survey	No Comments
15	Member of Staff	Smart Survey	No Comments
16	Parent	Smart	I can see the benefits of a new school, however I am concerned about the disruption to current

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		Survey	students especially those with SEN needs. Also worried how the youngest ones will cope in a playground with twice as many children and much older ones. My son has had issues with older kids in the playground even as the schools are now, let alone putting hundreds more out at lunchtime together. How will teachers be able to supervise that many sufficiently?
17	Staff member	Smart Survey	It is CRUCIAL that education professionals are involved in the design and fitting out of the building. Too many new schools overlook putting place structural and organisational features that would make a huge difference to learning.
18	Parent	Smart Survey	What a fantastic opportunity for the whole school community. I have long wanted this proposal to be agreed. The icing on the cake is a brand new purpose built school building. The benefits for both children and staff seem obvious. A wonderfully exciting and positive plan which I wholeheartedly support.
19	Other member of St Ives community	Smart Survey	Continuity of provision across KS 1 and KS 2 within one cohesive building is a hugely positive benefit to children both in educational and social terms and will provide greater opportunity for staff understanding and development. A new modern building will also be more suited to the needs of pupils and their learning.
20	Parent	Smart Survey	No Comments
21	Staff Member	Smart Survey	I believe that this change would be strongly beneficial for the pupils of both schools. They would be provided with a much more suitable learning environment, which is both safer and better equipped for their learning. At present, Westfield is not adequate for all the requirements of the children - lack of learning space being a particular problem. The chance to have a new school, hopefully carefully designed to accommodate this, would be brilliant.
22	Staff Member	Smart Survey	No Comments
23	Staff Member/ Parent at the school / Parent at another school	Smart Survey	No Comments

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24	Staff Member	Smart Survey	No comments
25	Parent	Smart Survey	<p>I agree with the advantages an amalgamated school will bring to both the pupils and the teachers.</p> <p>I understand there will still be separation and differentiation in the spaces used by the various Key stages, as I believe this is important in such a large school.</p>
26	Parent	Smart Survey	<p>As outlined the proposed new development will no doubt benefit those attending the new school.</p> <p>With such a short time frame for design and construction i urge the LA to thoroughly review resent such projects so as many lessons as possible can be learned, ensuring the right design decisions are made.</p> <p>I would also encourage the teaching staff at both current schools to use the construction of the new school, should it go ahead, as a fantastic opportunity on which to base the curriculum during the works. It would be a great a firsthand insight into many different jobs and careers.</p>
27	Other member of St Ives community Repeat of No.8	Smart Survey	<p>I currently hire Eastfield School hall on Thursday evenings for 2.5 hours from 18.15 from September to July (every week that the school is open). This arrangement has been in place with my predecessor and myself for around ten years. I teach two full Pilates classes which have taken time to build.</p> <p>Whilst I am in favour of the amalgamation from the perspective of having one of my children in the school whilst the prospective change takes place, this decision has the potential to harm my business and severely reduce my weekly income. My concern is that the hall at Westfield is used by another group on Thursday evenings between September and April.</p> <p>I would not be in a position to switch evenings as I teach on other evenings elsewhere and in the majority of cases my clients are busy on other evenings and Pilates on a Thursday evening is a fixed part of their routine that many would find difficult to rearrange. I also have an arrangement for childcare that currently works well for Thursday evenings.</p> <p>The consultation document states that one of the advantages of the scheme will be “large hall</p>

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28	Parent	Smart Survey	<p>As a member of the PTA for the last 5 years at Eastfield, we have invested in over £30K of outside equipment in Nursery, Reception and the main playground. I would like this to be considered within the plans. Westfield had always had a swimming pool - this was decommissioned this year as it was too expensive to repair, it would be good to have this also replaced. In my daughters reception year over 50% of the children had never been in a swimming pool. The Westfield pool provided a small quite space for this difficult first experience. As with most parents the safety of my children is paramount, I also do not want there education to suffer during the building works from noise or lack of space to play.</p>
29	Other member of St Ives community	Smart Survey	No Comments
30	Staff Member	Smart Survey	No Comments
31	Other member of St Ives community	Smart Survey	<p>I think that Eastfield and Westfield are better off being kept as separate buildings. I understand that they may need expansion or refurbishment to meet their current needs, but has the option been explored of just providing an extension to each school. As a former pupil of both schools, when I look back at my time there, I think we were very lucky to have all the land and play areas that come with the schools as it gave us the freedom to play and exercise and be in touch with nature in a safe environment. I always felt safe there. With childhood obesity on the rise, I think it is very important that whatever you do with the schools that the playing fields are kept for the next generations of children to enjoy. There have been rumours going round St Ives that the playing</p>

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			fields will be sold off for housing, which would be a big mistake in a town where every little piece of green land available is being built on. When I attended, I also liked that the schools were separate, as when you are starting school at four years old, being put in with taller eleven year olds can be quite daunting, especially when you are starting school for the first time. Children of different ages play and learn differently as well.
32	Staff Member	Smart Survey	<p>The current provision doesn't meet the community's needs. There is insufficient space, both for general teaching and running the out of school provision. The current buildings also lack modern facilities for teaching support groups and specialist subjects.</p> <p>My only concern is that the design of the new school maintains the nurturing environment for the youngest children and the full opportunities for the oldest pupils to develop and mature.</p> <p>The sooner we start the better!</p>
33	Other member of St Ives community	Smart Survey	I believe that the schools should remain as separate units. These are relatively modern buildings in good condition, indeed work to provide a new library at Eastfield has been completed in the last 20 years. They have a good reputation, so why wreck something which works perfectly well. Unless of course there is a hidden agenda to sell part of the site off for housing.
34	Staff Member	Smart Survey	No Comments

No	Name	Staff comments collected at the Schools
1	Staff member at Westfield	I agree it's a good way forward for both schools & community.
2	Staff Member at Westfield & Nursery School	No Comments

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No	Name	Governor comments collected at the Schools
1	Governor of Westfield	St Ives will continue to expand over the coming years and we need schools that are fit for purpose both now and in the future. Structurally, both Eastfield and Westfield have outgrown their buildings and it cannot be acceptable for large number of our pupils to be educated in mobile accommodation that is long past its sell by date. Our staff should be entitled to work in appropriate accommodation that allows them to deliver learning effectively. In addition, I firmly believe it is in children's best interests to be educated in through primary schools, avoiding the need for an extra, and in my view, unhelpful transition from KS1 to KS2.

No	Name	Parent & Pupil comments collected at the Schools
1	Parent	No comments
2	Parent	I support the plans as long as the lessons from other new schools built in the County are learned from: classroom sizes that appear to be over the minimum square metrage but are not in practical terms; high atriums that look good but which echo rendering learning spaces redundant; locks on doors and gates all requiring different keys making daily movement round the school impractical; good security systems and ways of keeping pupils, staff and visitors safe etc. The community will need reassurances that the building / demolishen works will be done safely and that there will be no adverse impact on the children's education.

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No	Name	Comments Received via Facebook
1		About time too! I went to both these schools and even at a young age, I couldn't understand why there was a fence between the two schools! This is well overdue and should go through as soon as possible.
2		Who are they going to see the spare land to?
3		Why build a whole new school when you have 2 there already. Surely just link them some how.
4		Federated, rather than spending on new build?
5		Just take the fence down between the two - £100 job done
6		Wots that ole saying, "if it ain't broke don't fix it" two lovely schools just leave well alone!
7		Lots of spare green area to flog off now. Such a shame.
8		Thorndown new school is amazing. Need to look into this but it seems to be an enterprising move to me.
9		The walk across the field to the big school was the best bit!
10		I thought they were staying on the same site, hence no spare land, just merging as one School and expanding

During the consultation period there were three consultation meetings held regarding the potential amalgamation. There was a staffing meeting, and two meetings for parents/community, all of which took place on 2 May 2018. A list of the questions raised at the consultation meetings (and the corresponding answers) are recorded in a separate log.