

Report Title: **Proposal to amalgamate Campsbourne Infant and Junior Schools**

Forward Plan reference number (if applicable): **[add reference]**

Report of: **The Director of the Children's Service**

Wards(s) affected: **Hornsey**

Report for: **Key Decision**

1. Purpose

1.1 To propose the amalgamation of Campsbourne Infant and Junior Schools into a single all-through primary school.

2. Introduction by Executive Member

2.1 The policy in favour of all-through schools is well-established in Haringey and has been successfully implemented on a number of occasions in recent years. It is clear that there are good educational reasons for us to favour all-through schools and it is also clear that all-through primary school headship posts attract stronger candidates.

2.2 I note the support of the governing bodies of the two schools for consulting on this proposal. The Junior school in particular has been through a difficult period with the departure of the previous head teacher and recently with an Ofsted inspection and the governors and headteachers should be commended for the way in which they have explored this issue.

2.3 I commend the recommendations in this report to the Executive.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That **Executive propose to amalgamate** Campsbourne Infant and Junior Schools into an all-through primary school for September 2006, subject to statutory consultation in accordance with the requirements of the School Standards and Frameworks Act (1998).

Report Authorised by:

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4. Executive Summary

- 4.1 Current council policy (last revised in July 2003) supports all-through primary schools rather than separate Infant and Junior schools.
- 4.2 The departure of the Junior school headteacher has triggered the review of whether to amalgamate Campsbourne Infant and Junior schools. A recent inspection of the Junior school has resulted in a Notice to Improve, which would also trigger a review.
- 4.3 This report recommends that amalgamation could take place for September 2006, subject to statutory consultation.

5. Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)

- 5.1 Not applicable

6. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 6.1 The following were used in the writing of this report.
- Report to Education Management Board and Executive - Amalgamation of Junior and Infant schools – July 2003.
 - School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and statutory and non-statutory guidance at www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolorg

7. Background

- 7.1 Current council policy (last revised in July 2003) supports all-through primary schools rather than separate Infant and Junior schools. All-through primary schools are generally accepted to have the following advantages:

- a single learning ethos throughout the school that promotes progress;
- more effective curriculum planning across all age groups;
- improvements in continuity and progression in terms of whole school planning, pupil tracking, record keeping and assessment;
- easier transition for children from Infants to Juniors. Children will not have to learn new routines and rules as these would be the same throughout the child's primary education;
- a greater breadth of staff experience which will help in the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum;
- improved recruitment as greater numbers of teachers and headteachers choose posts in primary schools;
- increased opportunities for staff development;
- greater flexibility from having a single budget.

- 7.2 Under the policy agreed in July 2003, a review of specific sets of schools is 'triggered' whenever the following circumstances occur:

- (a) where there is a downward trend in performance of pupils at either the Infant or Junior school;
- (b) publication of an OFSTED report which judges a school to require special measures, to have serious weaknesses or is identified by the Children's Service as causing concern or where transition arrangements between the schools are an issue;
- (c) where a deficit exists in the budget of either school, in the order of 5%, or more, which will have a significant effect on the ability of a small school to sustain its standards;
- (d) when the headteacher of either school leaves or retires;
- (e) where capital bids are made in respect of either school (which are examined in comparison with a bid for an all-through primary on the site).

7.3 The review leading to this report was initiated because of trigger (d): the junior headteacher left in April 2005. Subsequently, the Junior school has received a Notice to Improve, following a November 2005 Ofsted inspection, which is broadly equivalent to 'serious weaknesses' in the 2003 policy on amalgamations, so trigger (b) has also occurred. It should be noted that Ofsted also commented that the school has been improving well in recent months.

7.4 The headteacher's departure and events leading up to that caused difficulties for the junior school and in the immediate wake of these we were not able to engage in fruitful discussions with the two governing bodies. In September 2005, however, there was a large turnover of governors and an experienced headteacher, John Hill, formerly at Coleraine Primary School, took on interim leadership of the Junior school.

7.5 During the Autumn Term amalgamation has been discussed in detail with the interim head teacher of the junior school, the headteacher of the infant school and the two governing bodies. The Infant governing body had previously supported the creation of an all-through primary school. Following discussions, both governing bodies have now expressed their support for consultation.

7.6 These changes and high staff turnover in the junior school have contributed to instability in roll numbers and reception applications have declined. This proposal will provide an opportunity to re-launch the school to its local community as a new school with a single Headteacher and governing body.

8. Consultation

8.1 The involvement of the schools and headteachers is described above. If the recommendations in this report are accepted, a full statutory consultation process will be required. Details are set out in appendix 1.

9. Summary and Conclusions

9.1 Amalgamation of the Campsbourne schools should be proposed and consulted upon in line with the Schools Standards and Frameworks Act (1998). The new school would initially operate at two forms of entry.

10. Recommendation

- 10.1 That Executive propose the amalgamation of Campsbourne Infant and Junior Schools into an all-through primary school, subject to statutory consultation in accordance with the requirements of the School Standards and Frameworks Act (1998).

11. Comments of the Director of Finance

- 11.1 The Director of Finance has been consulted in the preparation of this report and comments that amalgamated schools can be expected to realise economies of scale in administration and PPA cover. The financial implications of amalgamation will be contained within the Dedicated Schools Budget.

12. Comments of the Head of Legal Services

- 12.1 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted on the content of this report. Section 13A of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on local education authorities to promote high standards of education. Section 14 of the 1996 Act requires the authority to secure that sufficient schools are available in its area to provide primary education. Sections 28 and 29 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 set out the statutory framework for the establishment, closure or alteration of a community school. The authority is required to consult such persons as appear to it to be appropriate before the publication of specific formal proposals regarding a school. Following such initial consultation the Education (School Organisation Proposals) (England) Regulations 1999 (as amended) set out the specific statutory requirements concerning the detail and timetable for publication of the proposals.

13. Equalities Implications

- 13.1 Although the Campsbourne Schools are located in Hornsey ward their entitlement to free school meals (thirty eight percent of the infant pupils and thirty six percent of the junior pupils) and percentage with English as an additional language (44% for both schools) is more typical of more deprived parts of the borough. A secure and successful all through primary school will continue to offer all children a strong and inclusive educational environment.

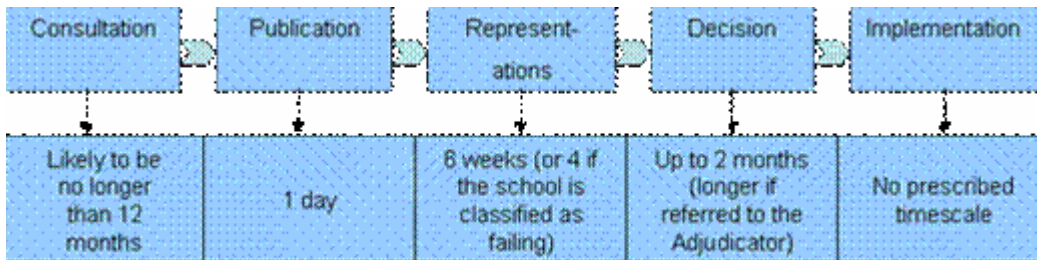
14. Use of Appendices / Tables / Photographs

- 14.1 Appendix 1: Process of statutory consultation

Appendix 1: Process of statutory consultation

The stages of the consultation

Consultation on school organisation changes is carried out in accordance with the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the guidance set out in the “Proposers Guidance for Local Authorities and Governing Bodies: Statutory Proposals for Changes to Mainstream Schools” published by the DfES. The statutory consultation process involves the following steps:



The first of these stages, commonly known as consultation, is the most important. The DfES *School Organisation Public Guide* (<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolorg/public-Guidance.cfm>) summarises the requirements as follows:

Consultation should provide sufficient information and allow enough time for people to understand and form a view of the proposed changes. It should also provide an opportunity for people to comment. This is an opportunity for you to express your views as those publishing statutory proposals must be able to show how they took into account peoples' views.

There is no time limit specified in law for consultation, however, a consultation exercise should allow sufficient time for people to consider the proposals and respond. It is also vital that adequate time is set aside to consider the responses to the consultation. If a new option emerges during consultation which the proposers wish to pursue, they should consult on the new option so that people can comment before proposals are published.

At the end of this consultation phase, the authority will review all the feedback received before deciding whether to move forward to the next phase, referred to as “statutory representation”. This is when statutory notices, explaining the intent to close both Bounds Green Infant and Junior schools and open a new all-through 2 form entry primary school will be published. The statutory representation period will last for six weeks.

After the end of the statutory phase, if there are no objections, the proposals will go ahead. However, if there is even one objection, then the School Organisation Committee (SOC) has to decide on the proposal. The SOC is set up by law and is independent of the council. It is made up of five groups who represent a number of different interested parties. These include representatives from Haringey Council, Haringey school governors, the church Diocesan Boards and the Learning Skills Council. If the SOC is not able to produce a unanimous decision, then it is the school adjudicator who will decide. The role of the Adjudicator is set out in law and is

completely independent of the SOC, and the Council. The Adjudicator's decision is final.

How the organisational change would take place

To create the new all-through 2fe primary school, two different sets of statutory notices will be published at the same time. One notice will state the intent to close both schools by August 2006. The second will state the intent to open one new school for September 2006.