

To:

Parents/carers, Staff, Governors, Trade Unions, Southampton City Council Councillors (Ward Members), Local Diocesan Authorities, Cabinet Member for Children's Services & Learning

Proposal to merge Weston Park Infant and Weston Park Junior Schools to form Weston Park Primary School

The Governing Bodies of Weston Park Infant and Weston Park Junior Schools have voted to consult on a plan to create an all through primary school from the two existing schools.

The proposal is being put forward by the schools, in partnership with the Local Authority, for the following reasons:

- The infant school is currently graded as Outstanding by Ofsted, while the junior school has been satisfactory for a number of years. An all through primary school could provide the opportunity to raise standards and achievement across all year groups
- There is currently one headteacher working across both schools, who would become the Headteacher for the new primary school. This would provide staff and pupils with more stability.

The Process

To allow this to happen it is proposed that the junior school will close and the age range of the infant school will expand from 4-7 year olds to 4-11 year olds, to create all through primary school on the same site. While the term closure is used, the only significant change to current arrangements is that the Governing Body of the junior school will cease to exist from the implementation date. The existing Governing Body of the infant school would become the Governing Body for the new primary.

The Executive Headteacher of the infant and junior schools would become the headteacher for the new primary school.

Why not close the infant school instead or close both schools to create a brand new primary school?

The aim of this proposal is to use the excellent standards and structures in place at the infant school to raise levels of achievement across all primary age year groups. The closure of the junior and expansion of the infant allows the latter to maintain its Outstanding Ofsted rating and positively affect standards and achievement throughout year groups 3 to 6.

If both schools were closed, a brand new school would be opened and run by an external provider which would lead to the infant school losing its current outstanding status.

The option that is being consulted on would be the best to maintain and improve on standards in both schools.

What will it mean for pupils at the school?

The main benefit for children at Weston Park Infant would be that they would not have to apply for a place at the junior school if they wanted one, they would simply progress from Year 2 to Year 3 at the end/beginning of the academic year.

Weston Park Junior School currently takes the majority of its pupils from Weston Park Infant and Weston Shore Infant. In order to ensure that Weston Shore Infant pupils still have access to local junior school places, the new primary school would admit up to 90 children to year R and an additional 30 places would be made available at Year 3 with priority given to children from Weston Shore Infant. These children would still need to apply for a Year 3 place, in the same way that they currently do.

The primary school would continue to operate on the same site and in the same buildings as the existing infant and junior schools.

What will happen to staff at the schools?

Both schools are foundation schools, which means the Governing Body (rather than the Local Authority) is the employer of school staff. Infant school staff will continue to be employed by the primary school Governing Body (which is the current infant Governing Body) and staff at the junior school will transfer so that they are employed by the Primary School Governing Body. This will be done by way of TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations) transfer.

The size of the newly expanded school will be broadly the same as the combined size of the current infant and junior schools. The staffing requirements will be similar, but a restructuring exercise will take place to ensure the maximum efficiency of staffing levels. All relevant parties, including trade unions, will be consulted on any staffing changes.

Timescales

Pre-Statutory Consultation: 17 April 2012 – 29 May 2012

This first stage of consultation will give staff, pupils, parents and members of the community an opportunity to find out further information and comment on the proposals.

Statutory Consultation: 11 June 2012 – 23 July 2012

If the Governing Bodies (after reviewing any responses to the first stage of consultation) decide to proceed with the proposal, a formal notice will be published at the schools and in the local newspaper and there will be another 6 week period for people to comment.

Final Decision: 3 September 2012

The final decision will be made by the Local Authority in September 2012.

Implementation: September 2012 – January 2013

This period will be used to put arrangements in place and finalise staffing structures ahead of the formal opening of the new primary school in January 2013.

How can I get more information on the proposals?

We are very interested in your views and would welcome any comments that you have on this proposal. You can respond to the consultation by completing and returning the response form on the final page of this document. You can send any comments to: Weston Park Infant School, Newtown Lane, SO19 9HX or Weston Park Junior School, Weston Lane, SO19 9HL. Or you can email: Info@westonpark-inf.southampton.sch.uk or Info@westonpark-jun.southampton.sch.uk.

A consultation drop in session will be held in the junior school hall on Tuesday 8 May 2012 between 3.30pm and 4.30pm. Representatives from both schools and the Local Authority will be in attendance so please feel free to come along if you would like to ask question or find out any further information.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM: PROPOSED MERGER OF WESTON PARK INFANT AND WESTON PARK JUNIOR SCHOOLS TO FORM AN ALL THROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Your views on the proposal are important to us. Please let us know what you think by completing the form below:

I am a (please tick the relevant box):

Parent/carer of an Infant school child	
Parent/carer of a Junior school child	
Parent/carer of a pre-school child	
Governor - Infant	
Governor - Junior	
Member of staff - Infant	
Member of staff - Junior	
Local Resident	
Local Councillor	
Other (please specify)	

I support the proposed merger of Weston Park Infant and Weston Park Junior Schools to form an all through Primary school:

I do not support the proposed merger of Weston Park Infant and Weston Park Junior Schools to form an all through Primary school:

If you would like to make any additional comments, please do so in the box below (continue on a separate sheet if required):

Date:

Please return this form to either: Weston Park Infant School, Newtown Road, SO19 9HX or Weston Park Junior School, Weston Lane, SO19 9HL. You can also email your comments to Info@westonpark-jun.southampton.sch.uk or Info@westonpark-inf.southampton.sch.uk.

Any responses must be submitted by **Tuesday 29 May 2012**.

Relationship to school	Support or do not support proposal	Comment	Date received
Member of Staff – Infant	Support	Hope infant school maintains the high level of learning/standards	
Parent/carer - Infant	Support		17.04.12
Parent/carer – Junior	Do not support		18.04.12
Parent/carer - Infant	Do not support		17.04.12
	Do not support	Think it a crazy idea. Juniors need to sort out bullying problems before taking on more	
Governor – Infant	Do not support		
Parent/carer – Junior	Support		18.04.12
Parent/carer – Junior	Support		17.04.12
Parent/carer – Junior	Support		18.04.12
Parent/carer – Junior	Support	Brilliant. Go for it	18.04.12
Parent/carer – Infant	Support	Very good idea	18.04.12
Parent/carer – Junior & Member of staff - Junior	Support		24.04.12
Member of staff - Junior	Support	I think changing the school into a primary during this period of economic restraint is sensible. I also think both schools could benefit and therefore improve progress. I am however concerned about the image of the junior school. I feel the consultation documents are putting the school in a negative light. If I had a child at this school I would be very concerned. Will any governors be transferred from the junior governing body to the new school governing body? (e.g. staff governors) I would worry that if this didn't happen the governors would mainly be interested in an infant department focus.	
Parent/carer – Junior	Support	Will make both schools excellent with ofsted.	18.04.12
Member of staff – Junior	Support		26.04.12
Member of staff – Junior	Support		
Parent/carer – Infant & Junior	Support		23.04.12
Parent/carer – Junior	Support	This is a positive move for this school.	18.04.12
Member of staff – Junior	Support		18.04.12
Member of staff – Junior	Support		
Member of staff – Junior	Support		19.04.12
Member of staff – Junior	Support		18.04.12
Parent/carer – Infant & Junior	Support		17.04.12
Parent/carer – Infant & Junior	Support		17.04.12
Parent/carer – Infant & Junior	Support		
Member of staff – Junior	Support		17.04.12
Parent/carer – Junior	Support		
Parent/carer – Infant	Support		23.04.12
Parent/carer – Infant & Junior & Local Resident	Support		19.04.12
Parent/carer – Junior & Local Resident	Support		18.04.12

Parent/carer – Junior	Support		
Parent/carer – Infant	Support		17.04.12
Parent/carer – Infant	Support		18.04.12
Parent/carer – Infant	Support		18.04.12
Parent/carer – Infant	Support	My 2 older boys went to an all through primary school (4-11) and it worked well and reduced the stress of worrying if your child will get a placement at their chosen junior schools	17.04.12
Parent/carer – Infant	Support		19.04.12
Parent/carer – Infant & Junior	Support		
Parent/carer – Infant	Support		19.04.12
Parent/carer – Infant	Support	Great idea and it does not mean to change schools. Excellent!!!	
Parent/carer – Infant & Junior	Support	Although I support the merger I must say that it is solely for the purpose of raising the Junior schools profile on the OFSTED ratings report. I am sceptical that any standards of achievement will be raised in the Junior school, but instead that it will have a detrimental effect on the grading that the Infant school achieves in the future.	20.04.12
Parent/carer – Infant	Support	Anything to improve the school is a great idea.	18.04.12
Parent/carer – Infant & Junior	Support	Excellent idea	
Parent/carer – Infant	Support		18.04.12
Parent/carer – Infant	Support	Am please the school will keep outstanding status. also please I won't have to apply for a junior school. I have two children go through a primary school and felt their education flowed better.	18.04.12
Parent/carer – Infant	Support		17.04.12
Parent/carer – Infant	Support		29.05.12

RE : Proposal to merge Weston Park Infant and Weston Park Junior Schools to form Weston Park Primary

Response from the Chair of Governors at Weston Shore Infant School on behalf of the Governors

As Governors at Weston Shore Infant School, we want to see our children and all children in Weston being given the very best opportunities to achieve the very best they can throughout their learning journeys, building on the excellent start they receive in both of Weston's outstanding Infant schools. Whilst we can see some merit in the proposal, for the potential to improve the standards and achievement of Junior age children, we would like to make the following comments:

- Has there been any consideration given to consulting with Weston Shore Infant School parents and the community, whether they would like Weston Shore Infant School to become a primary? If not, why not?
- How will parents from Weston Shore Infant School be reassured and guaranteed that they will not feel disenfranchised and that their children will not be disadvantaged by the transition and induction arrangements for their children in Year 3, compared to those already in the Primary, and that it will not be perceived that children from Weston Shore are 'second class citizens'.
- Can parents and governors be reassured that there is no cause for concern over the future of Weston Shore Infant School due to this proposal; that the future of Weston Shore Infant School is not in jeopardy?
- Can parents and governors be reassured that there are no plans to increase the capacity of the Primary from Reception to Year 2 to the Year 3 – 6 capacity, in the near future or further down the line, say if eg

numbers did drop a bit at Weston Shore due to some parents choosing an all through primary for their children for convenience or other reasons?

If the capacity was increased, this could seriously threaten the viability of Weston Shore Infant School, particularly if it was the Local Authority's view that they had put a significant investment into a new Primary School and that it would appear easy and cost effective for all primary aged children in Weston to be educated at one school.

The above question and comments need to be addressed in the context of the vital role that Weston Shore Infant School plays for the children and families in Weston, and in particular to the most vulnerable and deprived families, whom often live in the Tower Blocks and low rise blocks close to the school. The school is outstanding and highly valued in the community; it's importance, and with SureStart on the same site supporting these children and families, cannot be underestimated. It is worth noting that despite the very high levels of deprivation etc at Weston Shore, the levels of attendance are broadly in line with national average and are well above the other two schools. The proximity of the school, the size of the school and the subsequent very strong sense of family and community contributes hugely to this, which in turn contributes to high levels of achievement and life chances for children (many of whom are very vulnerable and highly disadvantaged).

- Can parents and governors be reassured that future communications will be carefully assessed to explicitly address the parents of Weston Shore Infant School, as well as those at the 'merging' schools, showing the positives and allaying concerns?
- Can we presume that governors and parents at Weston Shore Infant School will be kept fully informed and fully consulted throughout this process and whatever the outcome?
- What arrangements, if any, will be put in place to allow Weston Shore Infant School (also with an outstanding rating and feeding our children in to the school), to positively affect standards and achievement, as our children and all those in Weston, progress through their learning journey in year groups 3 to 6 ?