

## Summary of responses to pre-statutory consultation

There were some consistent responses across the ten schools, these included:

- Support for the concept of primary education.
- Is this proposal a cost saving exercise?
- Who will be the governing body of the new primary school?
- Can one headteacher operate across two separate buildings/sites?
- Who appoints the headteacher to the new primary school?
- Will there be a new uniform and will parents be charged?
- Why not open a new school?
- Will there be funding to link school buildings – capital investment?
- Will schools receive support from the Local Authority?

The Local Authority's response to these are:

- The motivation for the merger is not cost saving. The only difference in school funding will be that the primary would receive one lump sum payment instead of two lump sums, as is currently the case. Education funding is ring fenced for schools and has to be spent across the school estate.
- The governing body of the primary school has to be the governing body of the school which is expanding. The Local Authority has requested / strongly advised that the governing body invites representatives from the closing schools governing body to join.
- There is an evidence base in the city of one headteacher operating effectively over more than one school building /site.
- The headteacher of the primary school would be the headteacher of the school being expanded. Any headteacher appointments are the responsibility of the governing body and not the cabinet.
- There are no Local Authority plans to change the uniform, although this would be a decision for the primary governing body. The Local Authority would discourage actions that place a financial burden on any parents.
- A new school would mean closing both school's (thus losing the existing leadership / governance structures), it would be an academy/free school (taking it outside Local Authority control), would require a competition process (which is lengthy) and / or would require a decision from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (taking the decision making process away from local decision makers).
- There is no dedicated capital to link the buildings, however schools forum have been asked to commit a resource to the primary development programme, which could be used for very small capital works.
- The Local Authority has set up a primary development support programme to ensure headteachers and governing bodies are supported in all aspects of the process. The Local Authority is committed to ensuring that all merged schools become Outstanding as soon as possible.

Consultation responses from Bitterne Park Infant and Junior. 59 written responses were received and 70 parents/carers attended the parent consultation events. The main issues / questions specific to the schools were:

- Generally there was little opposition to creating a primary from the two schools or for the junior headteacher becoming the primary Headteacher
- There was some support for the proposal to develop a primary, but opposition towards closing the infant and expanding the junior. Many parents would prefer an

infant expansion and junior closure to maintain the ethos of the infant school.

- The main objection to this proposal is that some parents are opposed to having a headteacher that works across three schools (which would be the case if this were taken forward).

Local Authority response:

- In line with the Local Authority's policy and for consistency's sake, it is proposed that the school with the headteacher vacancy be discontinued. However, while the term discontinue is used the proposal is to bring both schools together.
- The junior headteacher has a track record of improving standards at school in the city and the Local Authority are confident that she and the senior leadership team could suitably run the proposed primary.

Oakwood Infant and Junior – 19 written responses were received and 13 parents/carers attended the parent consultation event. The main issues / questions specific to the schools were :

- Bringing the schools together is a positive move with support for the junior headteacher to become the primary headteacher.
- Loss of infant school environment, ethos and strengths if it is discontinued and the focus will shift from early years to keys stage 2.
- Will the size of the school increase?
- Why weren't other options e.g. federation or executive headteacher put forward?
- What will admissions arrangements be?

Local Authority response:

- As there is a Headteacher in post they must be offered the position as the primary Headteacher. The Local Authority is confident that the Junior Headteacher and leadership team have the skills to lead a successful primary school.
- The Local Authority have set up a support programme to support the schools.
- The school will continue to have up to 60 pupils in each year group.
- Only the governing bodies could put forward a proposal to federate the schools
- Admission arrangements will be unchanged for September 2013 entry. For September 2014 parents will not need to apply for a year 3 place at Oakwood.

Tanners Brook Infant and Junior – 38 written responses were received and 8 parents/carers attended the parent consultation event. The main issues / questions specific to the schools were:

- There is support for the merger
- Will the resource base for deaf children be affected?
- The school will be very large – is 4FE primary standard size?
- Can the junior advertise for a headteacher and what would happen if the junior had a headteacher in post?
- Is infant headteacher qualified to run a primary?

Local Authority response:

- There are no plans to alter the level of resource in the service provided for deaf children at either school at part of this proposal.
- If the proposal were approved it will be a large primary school (along with the Valentine and Heathfield merger). Pupil number will be monitored closely to ensure that the capacity of the school matches pupil demand.
- It would be difficult for the junior school to recruit a headteacher in the midst of a merge consultation.

- The Local Authority are confident that the headteacher and leadership team can lead a primary school.

Valentine Infant and Heathfield Junior – 28 written responses were received and 2 parents/carers attended the parent consultation event. The main issues / questions specific to the schools were :

- There was support for the merger but some concerns about the infant School taking the leading role at the primary.
- That the merger is being considered due to reputation and Ofsted rating if Heathfield Junior.
- Will it be one big school?
- Will class sizes get bigger?
- What will the Ofsted rating be?
- Will there be disruption?
- Would there be an increase in bullying?

Local Authority response:

- The merger is being put forward in order to improve standards across both schools, especially in junior year groups.
- The primary will be the same size as the combined infant and junior schools the primary will occupy the current buildings. Infant classes cannot be bigger than 30 pupils per class, although this does not apply to junior classes. There is no intention to increase class sizes.
- The Ofsted rating for the primary would be the same as it is for the expanding school – i.e. 'Good'.
- The Local Authority will work with the leadership team to limit disruption.
- There is no reason/evidence to believe that this proposal would increase incidences of bullying.

St Monica Infant and Junior – 63 written responses were received and 14 parents/carers attended the parent consultation events. The main issues / questions specific to the schools were :

The following issues were raised:

- The size of the school and one headteacher managing both sites.
- How much involvement will the junior governing body will have in the process?
- Staffing structures – deputy headteacher at both sites?
- Will teachers work across all year groups?

Local Authority response:

- One Headteacher can manage a split site school and we have an example of this across the city; Highfield Primary School.
- The governing body of the junior will be heavily involved in discussing exploring the merger option. A monthly steering group has been set up across the pairing of schools to ensure full engagement.
- The Local Authority are confident that the governing body and leadership, Headteacher will develop a leadership structure appropriate to a split site school.
- The current approach to deployment of teaching staff will continue within the primary school for instance teachers agree with the leadership team what there work plan will be for the next year.