

Report to: Schools Forum

Subject: Closing Balances of Charles Dickens Infant & Primary Schools

Date of meeting: 24th October 2012

Report by: Julian Wooster – Director for Children’s Services

Written by: Richard Webb

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek agreement for the proposed use of the closing balances of Charles Dickens Infant School and Charles Dickens Junior School following the transfer of the pupils to the new Charles Dickens Primary School, upon the completion of the amalgamation process; to best benefit their future needs.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Schools Forum endorse the transfer by Portsmouth City Council of an amount equivalent of the closing balances Charles Dickens Infant School and Charles Dickens Junior School to the Charles Dickens Primary School, once the amalgamation process is complete.

Background

3. At the Cabinet Meeting for Children and Education on the 14 June 2012, a report was presented on the proposed amalgamation of the Charles Dickens Infant & Junior Schools.
4. At the meeting the following recommendations were resolved:
 - (a) To consider the responses set out in this report to the consultation carried out on the proposal to amalgamate Charles Dickens Infant and Junior Schools;
 - (b) To authorise the Director for Children’s Services to proceed to the representation stage by publishing statutory proposals to amalgamate Charles Dickens Infant and Junior Schools by closing both Schools and opening a new all through community Primary school from April 2013 on the same site;
 - (c) To note that, if it is agreed that the statutory proposals are published, the outcome will be submitted to the Schools Adjudicator, who will consider and make the final decision on this proposed reorganisation.

5. At the 31st March 2012, Charles Dickens Infants had revenue balances of £229,994 and capital balances of £7,478. Charles Dickens Junior had revenue balances of £28,855 and capital balances of £62. These monies were clearly intended by the DfE and PCC to benefit the pupils and facilities of these two schools.
6. At this stage in the amalgamation process, it is not possible to confirm what the final closing balances of these schools will be, however it would seem appropriate to use these monies to support former Charles Dickens Infant and Junior School pupils in their continuing education at The Charles Dickens Primary School, once the amalgamation process is complete. This course of action is consistent with the Schools' Forum's previous decision concerning closing balances at Saxon Shore, Westfield, East Shore, Fitcher and Waterside Schools.
7. The Scheme for Financing Schools dictates that all balances of closing schools must be transferred to the Dedicated Schools Grant, however, it also provides for an equal and opposite sum to be transferred to any successor schools.

Conclusion

7. It is proposed therefore that the principle of transferring a sum equal to the final closing balances of Charles Dickens Infant and Junior Schools is agreed in advance of the completion of the amalgamation process of these schools to provide them, with some certainty over their future financial position.