

Dear parents, carers, staff members and other interested persons

## **Consultation on the proposal to Amalgamate Wimborne Infant School and Wimborne Junior School**

In December 2018 the Governing Boards of Wimborne Infant and Junior Schools consulted on a proposal to federate the two schools as an initial step towards the amalgamation of the two schools from September 2020. On 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019 the two schools formally federated. The Wimborne School's Federation is now governed by a single Governing Board and led by an Executive Headteacher.

Portsmouth City Council is now consulting on a proposal to amalgamate the two schools currently within the Wimborne School's Federation to form a 'new' all through Primary School for the area.

### **Why amalgamate the Wimborne Schools?**

There are a wide range of benefits when an infant and junior school converge towards a single provision to the community. Many of these benefits have been realised by the previous Federation of the two schools.

**The key benefits of federation can be summarised as follows:**

#### **1. Recruitment and retention of staff**

- Federation is likely to lead to a more effective policy of recruitment and retention of staff. Nationally, there are significantly more primary schools than infant and junior schools, and teaching staff and non-teaching staff find that posts in Primary Schools are more attractive than posts in infant and junior schools as they offer better career development opportunities.
- A larger school, covering the full primary age range, offers improved opportunities to develop staff which in turn aids the retention of staff.
- Expertise is targeted across the primary age range enabling senior leaders to more effectively deploy staff

#### **2. Transition and supporting pupils' progress**

- A Federated school allows for high levels of consistency to be achieved throughout a pupil's time at the school and provides better capacity for sustained improvement
- Removal of the need to change school at the transition point between Key Stages 1 and 2 eliminates the achievement 'dip' that can often be experienced at this time and any anxiety felt by pupils.
- Tracking of pupil progress and early intervention is significantly enhanced for those pupils moving between Key Stages 1 and 2
- Expectations for behaviour and learning are more consistent than if the schools were operating in two separate ways

- Pupils have greater opportunities to access aspects of the curriculum which might otherwise be denied to them because of the phase in which they are working. Some pupils in Key Stage 1 might be ready to access aspects of the curriculum and staff in Key Stage 2 but this is difficult to achieve outside of an all through primary school

### 3. **Sharing of resources / expertise and efficiency gains**

- A better opportunity to build on the sharing of resources and expertise across Key Stages 1 and 2 which in turn will support an enriched curriculum.
- Enable the single Governing Board to make efficiencies in the running of the amalgamated school (particularly in respect of finance, administration and caretaking but also in other areas such as pastoral care, IT, etc), releasing more resources for where they are most needed
- Improved efficiencies in the financial management of the school due to the fact there will be one budget instead of two and one financial audit instead of two.

### 4. **Leadership and vision**

- Parents and carers of children who attend the primary school benefit from knowing one school and one staff. They know and understand how the school works and do not have to adjust to the demands of a different school as their child progresses through the federation.

### 5. **Role models / social development of pupils**

- Opportunities for children to work across Key Stages 1 and 2 and support each other. 4 year olds are not educated alongside 11 year olds, but pupils have the opportunity to interact with different aged children. This can include older pupils having some appropriate pastoral responsibilities for younger children

Amalgamation confers the following **additional** benefits:

#### 1. **Admissions**

- All through primary schools support parents and carers by automatically allowing their children to continue through their primary education to the end of Key Stage 2 **without the need for making an application during Year 2 for a place in a Junior School.**
- The security of a **guaranteed place in Year 3** would be attractive for parents and carers if the two schools were to amalgamate. Portsmouth has a growing school population and there are fewer spare school places in the City and less options for parents and carers, particularly in the primary phase. An amalgamated school would therefore be of significant benefit to parents and carers of pupils attending the schools providing them with the certainty of a place at the school for their child throughout the primary phase.

#### 2. **Ofsted / financial audit**

- An amalgamation will mean just one financial audit and one Ofsted inspection.

The council and the Governing Board of Wimborne Federation believe therefore that there are significant additional benefits that this amalgamation proposal will bring to the whole school community.

## **The Proposal**

The 'new' school will provide a minimum of 570 places for 4-11 year olds, i.e. 70 pupils in each year groups in Key Stage 1 (Years R, 1 and 2) and 90 pupils in each of the year groups in Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6). The proposed 'new' all through Primary School would therefore be the same size as the combined Federated Infant and Junior Schools, and will continue to have one Governing Board and one Headteacher. All the pupils attending the two existing schools will automatically transfer to the roll of the 'new' Primary School, which would operate on the current site of the existing schools and in the same buildings.

This means that the two existing schools would close on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020, and the 'new' Primary School would open on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020.

## **What happens next?**

No decision, other than to consult, has been made at this stage.

Portsmouth City Council is consulting widely from 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020 to 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and is interested to hear and collect your views. These will be reported to the Cabinet Member for Education, who will carefully review and consider the responses to the consultation and a number of other factors, and decide at a Council Committee (which is open to the public) whether to proceed to the next stage of consultation – this is the 'statutory' consultation and would involve the publication of a 'statutory' notice.

This notice will then be followed by a four week period to allow comments or objections to be sent to Portsmouth City Council.

At the end of this period, Portsmouth City Council will report back to the Schools Adjudicator who will make the final decision.

If the proposals are approved, the council will prepare for the closure of the Infant and Junior Schools to make way for the 'new' Primary School to open on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020.

## Target timeline: expected key dates in the decision making process

14 <sup>th</sup> February 2020	Start of consultation period
26 <sup>th</sup> February 2020	Public consultation meeting to be held at the Wimborne Schools' main hall – junior site.
9 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	This phase of the consultation (pre-statutory) concludes
18 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	Report sent to Portsmouth City Council Cabinet Member for Education on the outcome of the consultation and the decision of the Governing Body. The Cabinet Member will carefully consider and review the responses to the consultation before deciding if the proposal should proceed to the next stage and the publication of a statutory notice

If the proposal proceeds:

20 <sup>th</sup> March 2020	If agreed, statutory notices are published
20 <sup>th</sup> March 2020 to 17 <sup>th</sup> April 2020	Statutory consultation period (four weeks)
June or July 2020	School Adjudicator to make final decision
1 <sup>st</sup> September 2020	If agreed, new Primary School opens

## How can you have your say?

We will be holding public drop in sessions where anyone who would like to discuss these proposals would be welcome to attend.

Everyone is welcome to attend at the times set out below. Please come along and ask us any questions you may have about what this means for the schools and the community.

You can also fill in the attached questionnaire, and return it to Portsmouth City Council at the address below, or return completed questionnaires to the school offices at either the Infant or Junior Schools.

If you prefer, you can ring Portsmouth City Council on 023 9284 1226, and they will note your comments, or email the information to [eandsc@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:eandsc@portsmouthcc.gov.uk) (please title your email: Wimborne Schools Proposal)

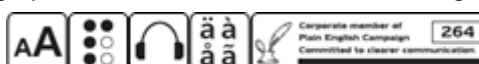
Meetings will be held as follows:

### Public drop in meetings:

To be held at Wimborne Schools' main hall (junior site) Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February 7-7:30pm.

Thank you

You can get this Portsmouth City Council information in large print, Braille, audio or in another language by calling 9284 1717.



## **Frequently Asked Questions**

*Q. If the proposal goes ahead, when will the 'new' Primary School open?*

A. It is proposed that the 'new' Primary School would operate from September 2020 on the same site and in the same buildings as the existing Infant and Junior Schools.

*Q. Will parents/carers need to apply for a place at the 'new' Primary School if the proposal goes ahead?*

A. No, all children on roll at both the Infant and Junior Schools at the time of the amalgamation will automatically transfer to the roll of the 'new' Primary School.

*Q. Who decides if the proposal goes ahead?*

A. The timeline above sets out the various stages of the decision making process. The views expressed by parents/carers, staff, Governors and all other interested parties during the pre-statutory consultation period will be reported to Portsmouth City Council for a Cabinet Member decision on whether to proceed to the statutory process.

At the end of the statutory process, the final decision rests with the Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

*Q. What would happen to staff working at the Infant and Junior Schools if the proposal goes ahead?*

A. A new staffing structure will be created for the federated schools. If this requires a restructure of staff, trade union representatives and staff will be invited to participate in the consultation and will be fully informed throughout the process. It is expected that the amalgamated school will adopt this new staffing structure and that all posts will transfer to the 'new' primary school.

# Response Form

## Pre-Statutory Consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Wimborne Infant and Wimborne Junior Schools

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

### Please tick:

Parent  Governor  Staff  Other (please state)  \_\_\_\_\_

### Please state which school:

Infant  Junior  Not attached to a particular school

### Do you support the proposal to amalgamate Wimborne Infant and Junior Schools?

YES  NO

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

It is important that you sign and date this form.

**Responses must be received by 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020.**

### Please return response forms either to the School Office, or by post to:

Janet Andrews, Education, Portsmouth City Council, Floor 2, Core 5/6, Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth PO1 2EA. Tel No: 023 9284 1226, **or by email to [eandsc@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:eandsc@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)** (please title your email: Wimborne Schools Proposal)

The information you provide will be used for the analysis of responses received as part of the Pre-Statutory Consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Wimborne Infant and Wimborne Junior Federated Schools for the purpose of compiling recommendations for Portsmouth City Council. Personal information will not be shared with any other sections of the Council.

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