

Formal Consultation to amalgamate Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School

**5 September –
16 October 2016**

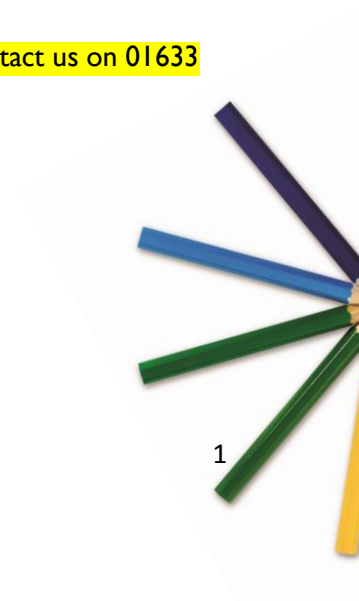




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Information can also be arranged in other community languages if needed. Please contact us on 01633 656656 to arrange.





Introduction

The purpose of the consultation is to seek views on the following proposal:

“To amalgamate Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School into an all-through 3-11 primary school with effect from April 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.”

This is your chance to ask questions and make comments that will be considered when the council decides how to proceed.

This formal consultation period:

- **Begins on Monday 5 September 2016**
- **Ends at midnight on Sunday 16 October 2016**

This proposal supports the council’s vision for a seamless pathway throughout the education of a child. It is the council’s policy to amalgamate all separate infant and junior schools in Newport as and when the circumstances arise. Those circumstances have now arisen as the acting head teacher of the junior school resigned from her post with effect from 31 December 2015. The head teacher post is currently vacant therefore, and since 1 January 2016, the head teacher of the infant school has also been the acting head teacher of the junior school.

The way that schools are amalgamated can either be taken forward by closing all schools named in the proposal and opening one new primary school, or by extending the age range of one school and closing all others named in the proposal. This consultation proposes extending the age range of Milton Infant School from 3-7 to 3-11, and closing Milton Junior School, thereby establishing one single new all-through Primary School for children aged between 3 and 11 years.

It is considered that this will benefit the local community as the capacity of the new primary school will be increased when compared with the current Infant and Junior schools. The new school will have capacity for 630 pupils of statutory school age, plus 128 nursery age pupils (64 full-time equivalent) taught over the morning and afternoon sessions.

The consultation process

The consultation process represents an opportunity for people to learn about the proposal, ask questions and make comments that will be recorded and summarised in a consultation report. This report will be published on the council’s website and will be considered when the council decides on the way forward.

The consultation will involve two drop-in sessions with those most directly affected by the proposal, where council officers will be on hand to explain the proposals in more details and answer any questions.





Location	Date & Time	Session
Milton Junior School, Hendre Farm Drive, NP19 9HB	Monday 26 September 2016 3pm – 5pm	Drop-in event
Milton Infants School, Hendre Farm Drive, NP19 9HB	Wednesday 28 September 2016 9am – 11am	Drop-in event

Comments and questions can be submitted using the enclosed response pro-forma. This pro-forma will also be available at the drop-in sessions or can be downloaded from www.newport.gov.uk/schoolreorg. These responses should be returned to the Education Service Development Manager, Room 425w, Newport City Council, Civic Centre, Newport NP20 4UR. Alternatively comments and completed pro-forma can be returned by email to school.reorg@newport.gov.uk

Social media facilities such as Twitter and Facebook will also be available.

Please note that responses made to this consultation will not be counted as objections to the proposal, they will be counted as adverse comments. Objections to a proposal can only be registered following the publication of a statutory notice.

The deadline for all responses is midnight on Sunday 16 October 2016.

Following consultation, Newport City Council's Cabinet Member for Education & Young People will consider the views expressed and then decide whether to proceed with the proposal. If the decision is taken to proceed, a statutory notice will be published in the local press and at the school. The statutory notice period will last for 28 days from the date of publication and enables people to express their views in the form of supporting or objecting to the proposals.

If no objections are received following the publication of the statutory notice, Newport City Council's Cabinet Member for Education & Young People will make the final decision as to whether to proceed.

Arrangements for the participation of children and young people

A Children and Young People's Everyday Summary Version of this consultation has been produced and is available from either Milton Infant School, Milton Junior School or from Newport City Council. The council will consult with pupils at Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School through the School Council. Copies of this consultation document and the Children and Young People's Everyday Summary Version of the consultation can be requested by emailing school.reorg@newport.gov.uk or by telephoning 01633 656656.

Who will we consult with?

- Teachers, staff and the governing body of Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School;
- Parents, carers and guardians of pupils attending Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School;
- Pupils at Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School;
- The Church in Wales, Diocese of Monmouth;
- Roman Catholic Archdiocese;
- The Headteachers and Governing Bodies of all local schools and those within the cluster; i.e., Llanwern High School, Alway Primary School, Eveswell Primary School, Langstone Primary School, Llanmartin Primary School, Ringland Primary School, St Gabriel's RC Primary School;
- All Newport City Council elected members;





- The Welsh Ministers;
- Assembly Members (AMs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) representing the area served by the schools subject to the proposals;
- Estyn;
- The South East Wales Education Achievement Service;
- The regional Transport Consortium;
- Teaching and staff trade unions representing teachers and staff at Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School;
- The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent;
- The local Communities First partnership (or equivalent).

What do you have to consider?

The remainder of this document sets out the rationale for the proposal. We would like you to consider the information contained within the document and to hear your views as to whether or not you support the proposal.

The proposal

This is a proposal concerning the provision of English-medium community-maintained education at Milton Infant School, Hendre Farm Drive, Newport, NP19 9HB and Milton Junior School, Hendre Farm Drive, Newport, NP19 9HB.

The proposal is to extend the age range of Milton Infants School from 3-7 to 3-11, and to close Milton Junior School, thereby establishing a new single all-through Primary School to accommodate children aged between 3 and 11 years.

Growing national evidence shows that all-through primary schools create more consistency between year groups and key stages in teaching, learning, planning and assessment. There is improved use of teachers' skills, specialist teaching and improved pastoral arrangements, as well as benefits for finance, management and leadership.

Statutory primary education - provision

Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School were both opened in 1960, operating in separate school buildings on the same site. Each school has its own dedicated hall, but a single kitchen is shared to serve pupils on both sites. The grounds around the school are used for hard play and as a sports area. A Flying Start provision also operates from a separate dedicated area on the site. There are already significant links between the two schools, and currently the headteacher of the infant school is also the acting headteacher of the junior school.

The use of any investment from Section 106 Housing Contributions that may emerge in the area will be used to support both premises, as there is insufficient capital financing in place to support the provision of a new school.

The infant school presently operates on a 3-form entry basis and has capacity for 264 pupils of statutory school age, with a published admission number of 88, plus a 64 place nursery class which is able to accommodate a total of 128 children over the morning and afternoon sessions. The junior school operates on a 2.5 form entry basis, with a published admission number that is being incrementally increased to 75, and has capacity for 300 pupils.





The variance in the published admission number across the two schools has been manageable to date due to the pupil demographics in the area, and the associated demand for school places. There are however sufficient classrooms in both schools to accommodate a 3-form entry arrangement. This will build capacity for primary school places in the cluster to support inward migration, housing developments and the increasing pupil numbers predicted for the city.

Building condition

The buildings at Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School were inspected as part of the 21st Century Schools surveys in 2010. Both schools were judged to be in condition C overall on a scale of A (excellent) to D (poor).

Past and projected numbers

Milton Infant School currently provides education for 198 children of statutory school age between 4 and 7 years old in 8 classes (as per the January 2016 Pupil Led Annual School Census (PLASC) submission). Six of these classes are taught as straight-age arrangements with the remaining two being mixed-age classes. There is also a nursery class containing 46.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) children.

Milton Junior School also currently has 198 pupils on roll (as per the January 2016 PLASC submission). These pupils are aged between 7 and 11 years old and are taught in 9 classes including a nurture group arrangement. The remaining classes are a mix of four straight-age and four mixed-age groups.

The tables on the following pages detail the past and projected pupil numbers for Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School and their nearest primary school neighbours, Alway Primary School, Langstone Primary School, Llanmartin Primary School, Ringland Primary School and St Gabriel's RC Primary School.





Primary School pupil numbers 2012-2016 Reception to Year 6 (excluding nursery)

School	Capacity	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	Surplus places 2016
Milton Infants	264	164	166	201	199	198	66
Milton Junior	300	229	213	207	207	198	102
Alway Primary	343	299	328	327	336	353	-10
Langstone Primary	315	295	285	296	301	302	13
Llanmartin Primary	210	174	172	178	174	161	49
Ringland Primary	252	198	206	206	218	215	37
St Gabriel's RC Primary	182	127	136	140	142	151	31

Pupil numbers are January PLASC submission for Reception to Year 6

Nursery pupil numbers 2012-2016

School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Milton Infants	69	78	83	76	75
Milton Junior	-	-	-	-	-
Alway Primary	56	63	62	72	60
Langstone Primary	-	-	-	-	-
Llanmartin Primary	32	27	12	24	23
Ringland Primary	33	31	34	16	36
St Gabriel's RC Primary	-	-	-	-	-

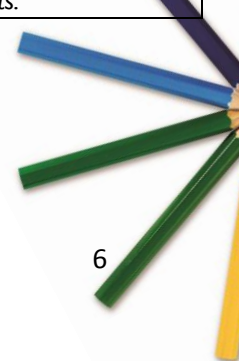
Pupil numbers are January PLASC submission

NB. A nursery class is due to open at Langstone Primary School from September 2017.

Primary School pupil projections 2017-2021 Reception – Year 6 (excluding nursery)

School	Capacity	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	Surplus places 2021
Milton Primary	630	434	461	452	452	452	178
Alway Primary	343	351	355	370	377	382	-39
Langstone Primary	315	297	309	319	319	320	-5
Llanmartin Primary	210	170	166	168	165	169	41
Ringland Primary	252	229	240	244	246	242	10
St Gabriel's RC Primary	182	149	150	153	156	156	26

*These projections are based on birth rates and do **not** include the anticipated impact of new housing developments.*





Statutory primary education - standards

Quality and standards in schools in Newport are monitored by Estyn and the local authority (LA). Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales. It is a Crown body, established under the Education Act 1992. Estyn is independent of the National Assembly for Wales but receives its funding from the Welsh Government under Section 104 of the Government of Wales Act 1998. Estyn inspects quality and standards in education and training providers in Wales. The outcomes of the most recent Estyn inspections of Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School are shown below:

School	Inspection Date	Outcomes	Provision	Leadership & Management	Overall Summary	
					Performance	Prospects for improvement
Milton Infants	November 2013	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Milton Junior	November 2010	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

Milton Infants School was in quarter 2 for the pupils achieving the Foundation Phase Indicator and mathematical development at the expected level in 2015, but in quarter 1 for language, literacy and communication and personal and social development at the expected level in 2015. Performance at the expected level plus one has declined since 2013, and performance is in quarter three for language, literacy and communication and personal and social development, and quarter 4 for mathematical development in 2015. Attendance at the school is 92.8% and is below the LA and family average. In the most recent ratings for primary schools across Wales, Welsh Government has placed the school in the "Green" colour coded support category (*in the range Green, Yellow, Amber, Red*).

At the expected level and expected level plus one, performance has remained good at Milton Junior School. In 2015, the school was in quarter 1 for the Core Subject Indicator and English at the expected level, and quarter one at the expected level plus one for all core subjects. The school was in quarter 2 for mathematics and science at the expected level in 2015. Attendance at the school is 94.3%, slightly above the family average, but below the LA average. In the most recent ratings for primary schools across Wales, Welsh Government has placed the school in the "Yellow" colour coded support category (*in the range Green, Yellow, Amber, Red*).

The council believes that the proposal will have a positive impact on the quality of educational outcomes and provision in the area. Reducing the number of changes for children in a school system strengthens continuity and progression for children and families, both in terms of the curriculum and pastoral experience. Research shows that the fewer moves children have during their school career the better they perform. Amalgamation will also improve learner transition through effective curriculum continuity from the Foundation Phase and into Key Stage 2. There will be increased interaction between year groups, and greater opportunities are created for older children to take responsibility and to mix appropriately with younger children. The presence of older children can also provide aspirational role models, mentoring and support. An amalgamated school will also retain expectations around good attendance and prevent dips in pupil absence as staff and families are known and understood by a single school.

Small schools based around one phase of education have reduced opportunities for developing leadership as the focus of the age range is narrow. There are also limited opportunities for promotional advances within one Key Stage of education. Amalgamated schools allow more capacity for staff to be released, a greater range of professional experiences across age ranges and





school improvement themes, unified Continued Professional Development ensuring consistency of approach and a development of mutual understanding, increased delegation of tasks to support staff wellbeing and workload and improved resilience, contingency and succession planning due to the larger number of staff linked to a primary school. This supports a schools stability and upward trajectory.

The new all-through primary school will be equipped to deliver a full curriculum across both the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2.

Benefits of amalgamation

An amalgamated single phase primary school would offer the following benefits:

- Easier and more effective opportunities for curriculum planning across all the primary age groups – There would be more opportunities for long term planning to improve the educational experience of children across the infant and junior stages of primary education. Whole school policies could be developed for all areas of the curriculum from Nursery to Year 6 offering greater potential for improving levels of achievement;
- Effective use of resources – amalgamation will bring benefits to children in terms of a more effective approach to resource management. Resources that currently exist in each school may be shared and used more regularly in an amalgamated school. This has particular benefits for specialist resources such as ICT equipment etc.;
- Easier transition for children from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2 – children would not have to learn different routines or behavioural policies, as these would be common throughout a child's primary education;
- More opportunities for interaction between staff and children of all ages – this would help children, in particular those with special educational needs. The children would be monitored and supported throughout their time at primary school by staff familiar to them. Common methods of monitoring progress would be available;
- Greater breadth of staff experience – recent curriculum developments have led to an increase in the number and range of specialist tasks to be done in schools. The sharing of these tasks and the availability of a wider range of experience would help to enhance the education of the children;
- An increased opportunity for staff development – a wide range of teaching and learning expertise is needed in a primary school. The skills and knowledge of teaching staff would be extended. This would benefit the children and would also support the recruitment and induction of new staff and the retention of experienced colleagues;
- Budget and staffing flexibility – The head teacher and governing body of the school would gain more flexibility in responding to the needs of the school through having a single budget and combined teaching and support staff. This would help to reduce the impact of fluctuations in pupil numbers across the whole age-range;
- Management and support structure – There would be a simplified school management and support structure covering the whole 3-11 age range;
- Better parental engagement – a single community or parent group should lead to greater engagement with the community as individuals, and local business would not have to make a choice over which school to support at a time of limited resources. Closer contact with parents over a longer period of time is beneficial for all. There are also practical advantages for parents, for example, aligned training days and school uniform and the same policies in relation to home links and behaviour;





- National Categorisation – the aim of amalgamation is fundamentally based around improving standards of education to benefit pupils. When two schools are brought together but have different national categorisation support ratings, it is possible that the newly amalgamated school will require a higher level of support in the first instance. However after one academic year, it would be expected that the new primary school would have a strong upward trajectory and would require less support due to good teaching and learning, and leadership and management capacity.

What will the proposal provide?

The proposal is to create an all-through 3-11 primary school in place of the separate infant and junior schools that currently exist. The published admission number of the amalgamated primary school will be 90, therefore increasing the overall school capacity to a three-form entry arrangement. This will increase the number of primary school places available in that area of the city. No capital works are planned for the site as a result of this proposal.

Special educational needs provision

Pupils with special educational needs are currently supported in accessing mainstream education at both Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School, and appropriate arrangements are put in place following an assessment of the individual child. This proposal will not have any adverse effect on these arrangements.

When will this be effective?

It is proposed that the new amalgamated primary school will open in April 2017, or as soon as possible thereafter. Until this time, the existing management arrangements in place at Milton Junior School will continue.

Cost

There is no capital funding associated with this proposal, although under the council's existing formula funding arrangements, a one-off single payment of £35,000 is made available to all new and amalgamating schools in the first year of opening from the revenue budget. At the point of amalgamation, the financial balance of the Infant School will be retained by the new primary school. The balance of the junior school will however be retained by the local authority.

Longer term, there will however be revenue savings to the council in terms of the lump sum payment that is made to each school within the annual formula funding arrangements. Whilst the amalgamated primary school would continue to receive this amount, this would no longer need to be paid to the infant school and the junior school. These savings will equate to approximately £47,000 per annum and will be retained within the overall Individual Schools Budget (ISB). In the first instance these savings will be used to fund the start-up lump sum payment of £35,000 on the opening of the newly amalgamated school, and thereafter will be used to offset cost pressures or inflationary growth approved for the overall ISB.





Alternative options considered

Option 1

Retain the two separate Milton Infant and Milton Junior schools. This does not however support the council's vision for a seamless learning pathway.

Option 2

Amalgamate the infant and junior schools into a single all-through 3-11 primary school by closing Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School. This was discounted due to the fact that the substantive infant head teacher is currently also the acting head teacher of the junior school, and the leadership and management arrangements are secure.

Option 3

Amalgamate the infant and junior schools into a single all-through 3-11 primary school by extending the age range of Milton Infant School from 3-7 to 3-11, and subsequently closing Milton Junior School. This is the preferred option.

Option 4

Amalgamate the infant and junior schools into a single all-through 3-11 primary school by extending the age range of Milton Junior School from 7-11 to 4-11, and subsequently closing Milton Infant School. This was discounted as there is currently no substantive head teacher at the junior school.

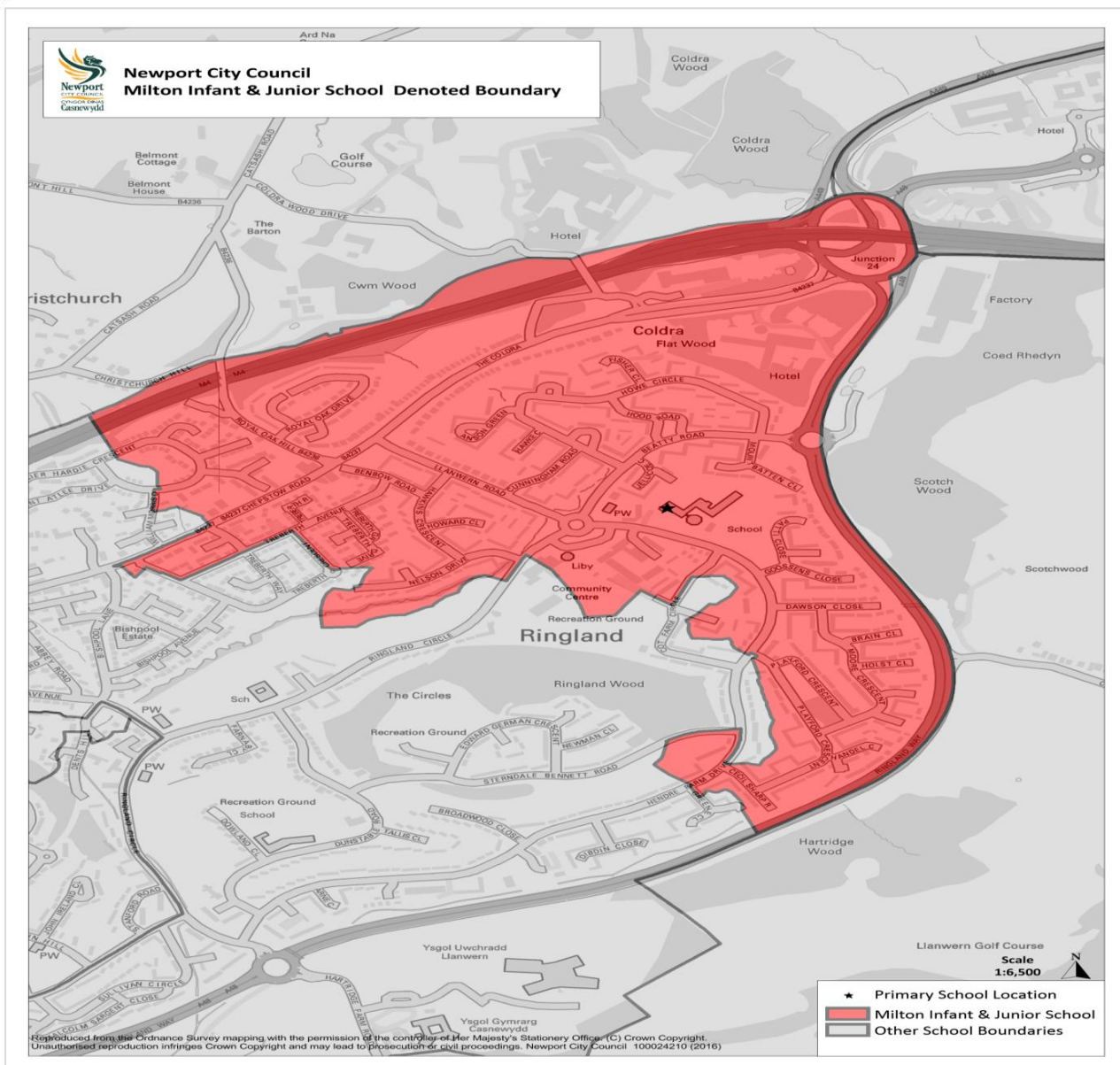
What will the preferred proposal achieve?

The preferred proposal will provide an all-through primary school able to deliver 3-11 education. This supports the council's vision for a seamless transition pathway throughout the education of a child.

Catchment area

The current catchment area for Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School is shown below. There is no intention to change this catchment area.





School organisation arrangements

Admissions

Newport City Council will be the admissions authority for the new primary school. Whilst a separate application process will continue to be necessary for admission to the nursery class, there would be no requirement for parents to apply for admission to the junior department at the end of Year Two as at present. Children on roll at the school will simply move from Year Two to Year Three with their peer group at the relevant time. Information on the school admissions process can be found on the council website at www.newport.gov.uk/schooladmissions.

Transport

Under the council's policy, free home to school transport is provided to all primary aged pupils who live 2 miles or more from their catchment school, or alternatively the nearest available school. This proposal will not impact on this arrangement, and the availability of home to school walking routes will remain unchanged.





Governance

Under this proposal, the Governing Body of the infant school will be extended to provide governance to the new primary school. The Governing Body of the junior school will be disbanded on the closure of the school.

Staffing

There would be staffing implications for Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School for both teaching and support staff. Whilst at a leadership level there will be no implications due to the fact that the substantive post of headteacher of the junior school is vacant, the closure of this school will result in all staff being declared at risk of redundancy.

The extended governing body will be required to approve a staffing structure for the new primary school. It is anticipated however that the governing body would agree to ring-fence recruitment for the primary school to the staff currently employed at the junior school.

If there are any potential staffing reductions as a result of the proposal, these will be dealt with in accordance with the council’s Job Security Policy. The council will work with governing bodies to redeploy any unplaced staff to other vacancies across the city, either in schools or elsewhere in the council. The council will ensure that the schools and staff receive appropriate advice and support during the amalgamation process. Any costs of redundancies as a result of the amalgamation process will be met by the authority.

Advantages and disadvantages

The advantages of this proposal are:

- Easier transition arrangements between Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2;
- More effective curriculum planning
- Better use of resources
- Increased opportunities for staff development
- Improved parental and community engagement
- Improved standards and outcomes.

The disadvantages of this proposal are:

- There may be some adjustment to the staffing complement required by a single school as opposed to two separate schools.

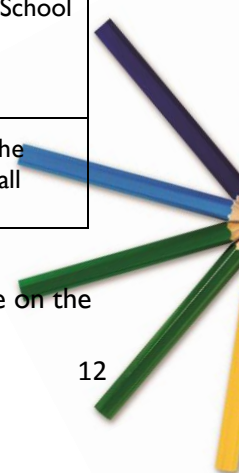
Risks

The risks associated with this proposal, and mitigating factors are listed below:

Risk	Mitigating factor
The staff at the junior school may feel vulnerable due to the closure of this school, and this could lead to some disruption.	The HR Business Partner allocated to Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School will work closely with the governing body to identify and resolve issues at the earliest possible opportunity.
There may be a need to delay the establishment of the new school until September 2017.	This will be closely monitored in conjunction with the governing body, and stakeholders kept informed at all stages.

Impact assessments

A fairness and equalities impact assessment has been conducted for this proposal and is available on the council website.





Consultation response pro-forma

Amalgamation of Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School

Your views matter. Please tell us what you think about the proposal by completing this questionnaire and returning it to:

Education Service Development Manager
Newport City Council
Room 425W
Civic Centre
Newport. NP20 4UR

Alternatively you can email your response to school.reorg@newport.gov.uk

The closing date for the submission of responses to this consultation is midnight on 16 October 2016.

Please note that negative responses made to this consultation will not be counted as objections to the proposal, they will be recorded as adverse comments. Objections can only be registered following the publication of a statutory notice.

Do you support the proposal to amalgamate Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School into a single all-through primary school for children aged between 3 and 11 years?

Yes

No

Please use the box below to give any reasons or comments (including alternative options).

Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent/carer of a child attending a local nursery)

If you wish to be notified of the publication of the consultation report, please supply your contact details:

E-mail: _____

Postal address: _____

