

Report

Cabinet Member for Education & Young People

Part 1

Date: 26 April 2016

Item No: 2

Subject Milton Infant and Milton Junior Schools – reorganisation proposal

Purpose To move to formal consultation on the reorganisation 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”.

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Ward Ringland

Summary This report sets out the policy to amalgamate all separate Infant and Junior schools in Newport as and when the circumstances arise and also describes the process for this school reorganisation proposal with approximate timelines.

This report recommends extending the age range of the Infant school from 3 – 7 to 3 – 11 and closing the Junior school and thereby establishing one new all-through Primary School for ages 3 – 11. There is now a requirement to move to the formal consultation stage of the statutory consultation process.

Proposal To move to formal consultation on the reorganisation proposal to amalgamate Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School into a new all-through primary school for ages 3 – 11 on the same site with effect from April 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Action by Chief Education Officer

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Strategic Director - People
- Deputy Chief Education Officer
- Senior HR Business Partner
- Senior Finance Business Partner
- Schools Resources Manager
- Service Development Manager
- Headteacher, Milton Infant School
- Chair, Milton Infant School
- Acting Headteacher, Milton Junior School
- Chair, Milton Junior School

Signed

Background

It is the policy of this authority to amalgamate all separate Infant and Junior schools into all-through primary schools for ages 3 – 11 as and when the circumstances arise. Those circumstances have now arisen as the Headteacher of the Milton Junior School took retirement in December 2015.

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 report recommends extending the age range of the Infant school from 3 – 7 to 3 – 11 and closing the Junior school and thereby establishing one new all-through Primary School for ages 3 – 11. That recommendation is being made on the basis of capacity for leadership and standards within the current Infant School which has a Green categorisation. The Junior School has a Yellow categorisation.

There is now a requirement to move to the formal consultation stage of the statutory consultation process.

The following sections describe the Human Resources issues leading into the Quality and Learning aspects of reorganisation, including the benefits of amalgamation. The school organisation section references the current premises and school arrangements with a view on the current and proposed new Published Admission Number.

Human Resources Issues

Milton Junior School: The substantive Headteacher of Milton Junior School retired on the 31st December 2015.

Milton Infant School: The substantive Headteacher of Milton Infant School is now Acting Headteacher of the Junior School.

Quality & Learning

Standards:

Growing national evidence shows that all-through primary schools create more consistency between year groups and key stages in 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.

"Where primary education is provided in separate key stages, there is generally very little effective curriculum continuity and progression. In such situations the scope for discontinuity of learning is increased, together with the attendant, wasteful, repetitive teaching of subject content and learning experiences in the receiving key stage."

(Sourced from Educational Management Information Exchange)

Benefits of amalgamation: The proposed amalgamation of Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School into a single phase primary school would offer the following benefits to the diversity and quality of education:

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 and reception age to eleven years old. This approach would offer greater potential for improving the level of achievement of all pupils.

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.

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 and particularly those with special educational needs. The children would be monitored and supported throughout their time at primary school by teachers who know 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.

Increased opportunities 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. This would also support the recruitment and induction of new staff and the retention of existing colleagues.

Budget and staffing flexibility: The Headteacher and Governors of the school would gain more flexibility in responding to the needs of the school through having a single budget and combined teaching and non-teaching staff. This would help to reduce the impact of fluctuations in pupil numbers across the whole age-range.

Management and support structure: Provide a simplified school management and support structure covering the whole age-range.

Better parental engagement: A single community / parent group should lead to greater engagement with the community as individuals and business would not need to choose which school to support when time and resources are limited. Closer contact with parents over a longer period of time is beneficial for all. There are also practical advantages for parent's e.g. same staff development days, the same school policies relating to home links, uniform and expectations of behavior.

National Categorisation: The aim of amalgamation is fundamentally based around improving standards of education to benefit pupils. When two schools are brought together with different national categorisation support categories (red, amber, yellow or green), 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 primary school would have a strong upward trajectory and would require less support because of its strong teaching and learning and leadership and management capacity.

School Organisation

The two schools operate in separate school buildings on the same site. Whilst each school has its own dedicated hall, a single kitchen is shared to serve the pupils on both schools. The grounds around the schools are used for hard play and as a sports area.

There are already significant links between the two schools and indeed the Headteacher of the Infant School is currently 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 therefore currently operates on a three-form entry basis and the Junior school on a 2.5 form entry basis. This variance has been manageable due to the pupil demographics in the area and the associated demand for places.

Currently whilst the Published Admission Number of the Infant School is 88 the school is not full to capacity but the city has a burgeoning population and primary school places are required in the area, the Published Admission Number of the Junior School is 65, albeit that it is being incrementally increased to 75 to support numbers coming through in transition. The published admission number of 90 (3.0 FE) is proposed to be applied to all year groups within the all-through primary school at the time of the proposed establishment that is to say by April 2017, this will build capacity for primary school places in the cluster to support inward migration, housing developments and increasing numbers coming through the system.

The current and forecast pupil numbers will be demonstrated within the Formal Consultation pack, along with the current and forecast capacity needs of the proposed all-through primary school creating a new Published Admission Number for the all-through primary school of 90 (3.0 FE). This will enable the school to meet demand for parental preference.

School Reorganisation Process & Timelines

All reorganisation proposals are taken forward through a statutory consultation process, which entails the following stages with their approximate timelines:

- Cabinet Member decision to move to Formal Consultation – April / May 2016
- Formal Consultation period for 42 days – May / June 2016
- Cabinet Member decision to move to Statutory Notice – June / July 2016
- Statutory Notice published for 28 days – 1st September – 28th September 2016
- Final decision will be taken before October half term

Governance Issues

The South East Wales Education Achievement Service – Governor Support team will provide advice and guidance to all schools named within the proposal group, referencing any changes that are necessary to the Instrument of Governance to manage the process.

Financial Summary

In the event that the amalgamation of the Infant and Junior school takes place, this will generate savings of employee related costs as a result of leadership and administration as a lump sum payable. Based on the current LMS formula an amalgamated school will generate the same amount of Age Weighted Pupil Unit funding. There will however be a reduction relating to the formula lump sum paid reflecting an overall saving to the authority of £47,262 per annum. This will be available in the financial year following formal amalgamation.

Under the authority's formula distribution, a lump sum payment (currently £35,000) is made available to all new and amalgamating schools in the first financial year of opening. Any costs of redundancies as a result of the process would be met by the authority.

If the amalgamation process is taken forward by closing all schools within the proposal group, then on amalgamation, balances (surplus or deficit) are retained by the authority and not allocated to the amalgamated primary school budget.

If on the other hand, the amalgamation process is taken forward by extending the age range of one school to become the new all-through primary and closing all other schools within the proposal group, then the following actions take place. On amalgamation, the balance of the school to be extended will be retained by the new all-through primary and all other balances (surplus or deficit) are retained by the authority and not allocated against the amalgamated primary school budget. The budget of the new school will have financial adjustments to fall in line with typical budgets for that size school. This is the scenario which will be applied for the Milton Schools in the event that amalgamation takes place.

Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
Failure to move to formal consultation	H	L	The Council has a policy to amalgamate schools as and when circumstances arise	Chief Education Officer

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
Council Improvement Plan
21CS Strategy
Education Service Plan

Options Available

Option 1: to proceed to formal consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Milton Infant School and Milton Junior School into an all-through primary school, by closing Milton Junior School and extending the age range of Milton Infant School from 3-7 to 3-11 thereby establishing an all-through primary school.

Option 2: this option is not to proceed to consult on the proposal to amalgamate by extending the age range of the Milton Infant School, but to amend the proposal to amalgamate by closing both schools in the proposal group and establishing one new all-through primary.

Option 3: this option is not to proceed at all to consult on any amalgamation, but to retain separate Infant and Junior Schools.

Preferred Option and Why

Option 1: This is the preferred option, for the reason that there is a substantive Headteacher in place at the Infant School, that there is capacity for leadership and standards in the Infant School, which is of a Green categorisation and for the other reasons set out above under the section Benefits of amalgamation.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are associated financial consequences associated with any re-organisation proposal. These have been set out within the report.

In essence the new school will only receive one lump sum payment from the formula funding for schools allocation, however it will receive a start-up allocation of £35,000, as any accumulated surpluses/deficits automatically defer back to the local authority under the scheme of financing.

The effect on the current Council overall schools budget has already been planned for within the current medium term revenue plan, as has other current planned re-organisation plans where known.

With regard to any redundancy costs that may arise from any school staff restructuring that takes place as a result of the amalgamation, then these costs would fall directly to the local authority as the amalgamation has taken place as a local authority initiative. The local authority currently holds a budget to cater for any costs arising from such re-organisation proposals

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The proposed action is in accordance with the statutory school reorganisation procedures set out in the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code. The proposal to amalgamate the junior and infants schools to establish an all-through Primary School with an extended age range is a regulated alteration under the Code. Therefore, the proposed amalgamation needs to be formally published and subjected to formal consultation in accordance with the statutory procedure. In accordance with the statutory procedures, a detailed consultation document needs to be prepared, setting out the reasons for the proposals, and there has to be meaningful consultation with key stakeholders, including children and young people. A consultation period of at least 42 days has to be allowed (of which at least 20 should be school days). At the end of the statutory consultation period, a report will be prepared setting out the responses received and the Cabinet Member will be required to consider these representations before deciding whether or not to proceed with the necessary statutory notices. Although the proposed amalgamation, if implemented in due course, will have staffing and human resource implications, these are not relevant considerations in terms of the decision to reorganise these schools, which must be based on educational reasons and the efficient use of resources.

Staffing Implications: Comments of Head of People and Business Change

A decision to proceed to formal consultation on the amalgamation of Milton Infant and Junior Schools will have staffing implications should the proposal be taken forward to statutory notice and implementation. Whilst at leadership level there are no staffing implications because the post of Head teacher in Milton Junior School is vacant, the closure of the Junior School will result in all staff being declared at risk of redundancy until the Governing Body of the newly formed Primary school determines its staffing structure. As with all other amalgamations in Newport, the Council will ask the Governing Body to agree to ring-fence all posts required for the implementation of the Primary school to the existing staff of the Junior school. Any displacement as a result will be managed through the Council's Job Security Policy.

Ward Member Comments

Seeking response from ward members.

Scrutiny Committees

None.

Equalities Impact Assessment

A Fairness & Equality Impact Assessment (FEIA) has been developed to support the decision making of this stage of the proposal. If the proposal is taken forward the FEIA will be updated at each decision stage and published on the web site.

Children and Families (Wales) Measure

Children and Young People are consulted as part of the statutory consultation process.

Consultation

Background Papers

None

Dated: 26 April 2016

Fairness and Equalities Impact Assessments F&EIAs (2015)

This form presents evidence that equalities, Welsh language and fairness have been considered when taking policy and service delivery decisions in Newport City Council.

Our Equalities focus is taken from the Equalities Act 2010: we consider the nine protected equalities characteristics- age, gender reassignment, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Under the General Equality Duty we have a duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity and
 - Foster good relations
- across the nine protected characteristics.

Under the Welsh Language Measure 2011 the Welsh language cannot be treated any less favourably than the English language

In Newport we focus on Fairness through the following themes: Health, Poverty, Skills and Work, Domestic Abuse and Tackling Area Based Deprivation.

Service Area	Head of Service	Person responsible for the Assessment:	Date of Assessment
Education	James Harris	Amanda B Davies	1 st March 2016

1. What is the policy/ service being assessed?

To formally consult on the proposal to amalgamate Milton Infant School with Milton Junior School by extending the age range of the Infant school from 3 – 7 to 3 – 11 and closing the Junior School and to establish a new all-through primary school for ages 3 – 11, on the same site, with effect from April 2017, or as soon as possible thereafter.

2. What is the purpose of the policy/ service change?

To provide education within a seamless transition from 3 – 11 for pupils currently attending the two schools.

3. Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	Who are the customers/service users/ potential service users?	If we take this decision what is the potential impact? The impact may be either positive or negative Explain how people may be affected and give the evidence for this	Action Plan to address issues raised What changes or practical measures would reduce adverse impact on particular groups. What changes would increase positive impacts e.g. improve access or opportunity May be revisited post consultation	Who is responsible?	Timeframe to review
Age	Pre-school and school aged children Parents / Carers	The expected impact of the proposal is to provide education within a seamless transition for primary school at this location.			
Gender reassignment					
Disability					
Marriage/Civil Partnership					
Pregnancy and Maternity	Prospective parents	The availability of places at this all-through primary school will be positive for prospective parents.			
Race					
Religion/belief					

(or the absence of)					
Sex					
Sexual Orientation					
Welsh language	No – the proposal concerns English language provision	The decision will not affect Welsh-medium education provision; the Welsh language elements of the curriculum will apply to the new primary school for pupils in line with provision across the city		Chief Education Officer	

4. Who has the service consulted regarding the proposed change? When should new consultation take place?

NB: It is essential that service users and other interested parties are involved in the planning process at the earliest opportunity. Consultation at an initial stage should be along broad themes. It is appropriate to ask what services are valued, how services could be changed and or what could be done differently. This feedback should then inform your business case proposals and the F&EIA. When specific proposals have been drawn up, they too will need to be consulted upon. All stakeholders and their views need to be represented.

Formal statutory Consultation with identified stakeholders including local and regional providers, pupils, parents, carers and staff in respect of the Special sector of education, Community councils, neighbouring Local Authorities, education professionals, Welsh Ministers.

5. What evidence/ data has been used to complete this F&EIA (This will include local and national guidance)

Formal Consultation will be conducted in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, and the Statutory Code, 2013.

6. How will the relevant groups be advised of the changes and the F&EIA?

Formal statutory consultation process and publication of statutory notices on the internet and at school gates.

7 How will the policy/ practice make Newport more or less fair in relation to:

- Health Inequalities
- Child Poverty
- Skills and Work
- Tackling Domestic Violence
- Alcohol and Substance misuse
- Homelessness
- Armed Forces Veterans

Improved equality of access – seamless transition through the school for ages 3 – 11

8. How will the service / policy affect local areas of the city?

Will it have a positive or negative impact in terms of fairness and addressing local area deprivation (you will need to use spatial data available through the Newport Profile and specific Ward Profiles to address this question)?

As an authority we aspire to delivering education for all Newport pupils within a single education journey from 3 – 11

9. In summary, how does the changed service /policy promote good community relations (cohesion)?

The proposal will support access to a seamless education journey. This will help to build positive relationships in and around the school.

10. In summary, how does the changed service /policy promote equality?

The proposal will support delivery of a 3 – 11 school for pupils. Families will be able to access a seamless transition. The School Admission Policy will apply to this school and parental preference also applies.

11. In summary, how does the changed service /policy eliminate discrimination?

The proposal will provide equality of access to pupils to enjoy the same seamless transition for education services as other all-through community maintained schools in Newport.

Completed by: Amanda B Davies: Assistant Head of Education (Resources & Planning)

Date: March 2016



Signed off by: James Harris: Chief Education Officer

Date: March 2016

