

INTRODUCTION

Jointly with the schools' governors, Hertfordshire County Council is consulting parents, staff and the local community on the future of Flamstead End Infant and Flamstead End Junior Schools.

There are two possibilities for the future of the two schools:

- The two schools remaining as separate Infant and Junior Schools;
- The two schools amalgamating to create a single Primary School.

The purpose of this consultation is to consider:

- € the amalgamation of Flamstead End Infant and Flamstead End Junior Schools to form a new two Forms of Entry Primary School with nursery class and speech and language unit.

This document:

- € explains why the possible change is being proposed;
- € covers in detail the implications for the two schools;
- € includes a response form for your comments.

It should be stressed that no decisions have yet been taken and this document is being issued in order to start a consultation process. All views are welcome and will be taken into account when the Governors and County Council consider the outcome of this consultation process.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL

Flamstead End Infant and Flamstead End Junior Schools are located in West Cheshunt and have adjoining buildings. The Infant School has a nursery class as well as a Speech and Language Unit.

The Governing Bodies of Flamstead End Infant and Flamstead End Junior School have asked Hertfordshire County Council to undertake consultation on the possible future amalgamation of the two schools. The Governors have considered the advantages and disadvantages of amalgamation and have concluded that staff, parents and the wider community should be asked for their views about the proposal. The Governors are aware that a number of infant and junior schools locally and elsewhere in Hertfordshire have already amalgamated to create successful primary schools.

The Governors view amalgamation as an opportunity to strengthen the already strong performance of the two schools. The schools perform well, are popular and oversubscribed. As a result of the new housing built locally, pupil numbers are forecast to remain high. This proposal is not therefore suggesting a change to the size of the proposed amalgamated school.

CURRENT PUPIL NUMBERS

The current numbers, by year group, in the two schools are shown in the following chart.

	Nursery	Year Group	Numbers on roll - Autumn 2002
Flamstead End Infant		Reception	60
		1	60
		2	60
Flamstead End Junior		3	59
		4	61
		5	63
		6	63

The next two sections outline some of the potential advantages and disadvantages of an amalgamation.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF AMALGAMATION

§ **Easier transition for children from the Infant School to the Junior School**

Children accepted into the reception class would progressively complete their primary education at Flamstead End School. The children would not have to learn different routines or behaviour policies, as these would be common throughout a child's primary education. They would already know key staff and their expectations.

§ **Easier and more effective opportunities for curriculum planning across all 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 reading, mathematics, science and other areas of the curriculum from reception age to eleven years old. This approach would offer greater potential for improving the level of achievement of all pupils.

§ **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 developed and used.

§ **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 throughout the school.

§ **Increased opportunities for staff development**

A wide range of teaching, learning and management 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 and possible promotion prospects of existing colleagues.

§ **Budget and staffing flexibility**

The Headteacher and the 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 could 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.

POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES OF AMALGAMATION

Although a number of benefits from amalgamation can be identified, there are possible disadvantages that need to be considered.

§ **Appropriate education of pupils of different ages**

It is essential that differentiated educational provision for Infant and Junior pupils is guaranteed. Strategies would need to be in place to ensure that the special qualities of education for younger and older children are preserved.

§ **Disruption to pupils' education during the transition**

A new set of 'whole school' policies and practices would be developed as part of planning the way the new school will work. The governors and staff would need to ensure that there is continuity for children throughout the transition.

§ **Suitability of buildings**

We envisage that the infant and junior classes would mainly take place in their current locations, but some adjustments to office, staff accommodation and other ancillary spaces may be necessary.

§ **Budget implications**

In the longer term the budget for the new primary will be smaller than the total amount currently available to both primary schools but savings will also be made from running one school instead of two and from economies of scale. This will offset this slight reduction in the budget and so the overall effect on the new school is expected to be broadly neutral.

The LEA and Governors' view is that the final decision on whether to amalgamate or not must be made on the basis of giving the children the best chance of a good quality education.

HOW WOULD THE AMALGAMATION TAKE PLACE?

The amalgamation of the two schools would create a new primary school. The new school would take over all the pupils and everything to do with the existing two schools including, for example, the books, furniture and equipment and buildings.

Legally, on one day Flamstead End Infant and Flamstead End Junior Schools would close, and a new primary school would open the next day. The school name, logo and uniform would remain unchanged.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

The consultation period about the proposal to amalgamate Flamstead End Infant and Flamstead End Junior Schools ends on Monday, 6th January, 2003.

The County Council and governors will then need to consider the outcome of the consultation exercise and decide whether or not to proceed with the proposed amalgamation.

The County Council could decide not to proceed, in which case both schools would continue as at present as separate Infant and Junior Schools.

If the outcome of this process leads the County Council to decide to amalgamate the two schools then it has to publish a legal notice called a 'Statutory Notice'. This notice, which would need to be published in February and March, 2003, would formally state that the County Council intends to close Flamstead End Infant and Flamstead End Junior Schools and open a new two Forms of Entry Primary School. The notice would explain how and when it would do this and would also give people the opportunity to lodge a formal objection to the proposals. Any objection would need to be made within two months of the publication of the Statutory Notice.

If there are no objections, a final decision would then be taken by Hertfordshire County Council to proceed with the amalgamation of the two schools.

If any objections are received, the Hertfordshire School Organisation Committee will then be asked to consider the proposal. If this were necessary it would take place during April or May, 2003.

If it is decided to amalgamate the schools, then the Governing Bodies think that this should take place quickly so that everyone can start to work together. A decision in April or May should mean that the schools would amalgamate on 1st September, 2003.

FINANCE, THE GOVERNING BODY AND STAFFING

FINANCE

LEA Budget Share

Under the LEA budget share arrangements for funding amalgamated schools, the new school would receive additional funding to ease the transition from two schools to one. The new school would, therefore, be funded as the equivalent of two schools for the first two years from the date of the amalgamation. In the third year, it would receive amalgamation funding of 50% of the difference between the funding of one and two schools. In the fourth and subsequent years after the date of amalgamation there would be no additional funding and the school would be funded as one school.

The balances, both surpluses and deficits, of the existing schools would transfer to the new primary school on amalgamation.

The combined budget share of both schools is currently £971,159 (this excludes adjustments made to the budget due to changes in pupil numbers in the previous year.) The budget of any school is worked out on the basis of a School Funding Formula that takes into account the size of the

school and the number of children on roll. This means that the budget can fluctuate from year to year as the numbers of children go up or down.

The table below gives the LEA budget share available to the new school following amalgamation. The figures assume that there will be no change to the School Funding Formula, and are based on current (2002/03) pupil numbers and other funding data for the schools.

Financial Year	Base Budget	Amalgamation Funding	Total Budget Share
	£	£	£
1st year: year of amalgamation 2003/04	938,800	32,358	971,159
2nd year: following amalgamation 2004/05	915,687	55,472	971,159
3rd year: following amalgamation 2005/06	915,687	39,292	954,980
4th year: following amalgamation 2006/07	915,687	11,557	927,244
5th year: following amalgamation 2007/08	915,687	0	915,687

Other Grants

Currently there are a number of additional DfES grants which come to the school. These include the School Standards Grant and resources from the Standards Fund (which includes some capital funding devolved to schools). Elements of these grants are distributed on a "per school" basis. Where this is the case, following amalgamation, the new school would qualify for one per school allocation rather than two. Based on the current pattern of these grants the reduction in the school's allocation resulting from amalgamation would be approximately £33,000 per year.

THE GOVERNING BODY

Before the new primary school can open, the law requires that a Temporary Governing Body be appointed in order to set up the new school. Members of the Temporary Governing Body are drawn as far as possible from the Governing Bodies of the current schools.

The current Governing Bodies for Flamstead End Infant and Flamstead End Junior Schools would continue to look after the two schools until the end of August, 2003. During this period the Temporary Governing Body would appoint the Headteacher and take other steps to set up the new primary school. The appointments and elections process to create the permanent Governing Body for the new primary school would begin in the early Summer of 2003.

The Temporary Governing Body will be able to choose one of two models for the composition of the permanent Governing Body that would then take over from them. These models and the existing Governing Body compositions are given in the table below:

	Existing composition of Governing Bodies		Options for new Governing body	
	Flamstead End Infant & Nursery	Flamstead End JM	A	B
Foundation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Parents	4	4	4	5
Teachers	1	1	1	2
Staff	1	1	1	1
LEA	3	3	3	4
Minor Authority				
Co-options	4 of which 1 Minor Authority	4 of which 1 Minor Authority	4 of which 1 Minor Authority	5 of which 1 Minor Authority
Headteachers	1	1	1	1

STAFFING

One of the jobs of the Temporary Governing Body will be to appoint the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher(s) and other staff to the new primary school. Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher posts must be advertised nationally. The existing Governing Bodies hope that all staff (teaching and support staff) would be able to transfer to the new school, although that will depend on the staffing structure and future pupil numbers.

The number of staff currently employed at each school is as follows:

	Teaching*	Non-teaching
Flamstead End Infant	9	22
Flamstead End Junior	9.5	21

*including Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher.

HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONSULTATION

You can let us know your views by:

↓ **Coming to meet us** to discuss the proposal, on:

**Monday 25th November, 2002
at 7.30pm at Flamstead End Junior School**

We will explain the background to the proposal and answer your questions. A County Councillor will chair the meeting and other County Councillors will be there to listen to your views. We will take notes and record the meeting as well.

↓ **Sending in the form**, attached to this document.

↓ **Writing to us (freepost)**, if you do not want to use the form, to:

Sarah Nicholls
Business Reply Service HJ71
CSF Planning Division
Hertfordshire County Council
County Hall
SG13 8YD

↓ **e-mailing** us at sarah.nicholls@hertscc.gov.uk

If you have other suggestions or opinions, please make sure you do so in your response.

**Your letters and forms need to be with us
by 6th January, 2003**

This document is being distributed to parents and other people in the area. If you would like more copies please telephone Sarah Nicholls on 01992 556722.