

INTRODUCTION

Jointly with the schools' governors, Hertfordshire County Council is consulting parents, staff and the local community on the future of St Paul's Infants' and Haslewood Junior Schools in Hoddesdon.

The purpose of this consultation is to consider:

- the amalgamation of St Paul's Infants' and Haslewood Junior Schools to form a new 5-11 age range Church of England primary school.
- reducing the potential new school's "standard number" (on which the numbers of children admitted each year is determined) to 45.

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.

However, 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

St Paul's Infants' and Haslewood Junior Schools are located in the town centre of Hoddesdon. Although they are linked on the same site, St Paul's is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled School and Haslewood a Community School.

The Governing Bodies of St Paul's Infants' and Haslewood Junior Schools 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.

Haslewood Junior School has been identified as requiring 'special measures' by OFSTED. A detailed action plan has been produced and is being implemented currently.

One particular feature is that neither school is currently full. This affects the schools' budgets and staffing. Pupil numbers in the Schools and in the area are discussed in the next two sections.

CURRENT AND FUTURE PUPIL NUMBERS

The current numbers, by year group, in the two schools are shown in the following chart. Both schools are 2 Forms of Entry capacity, with standard numbers of 60.

	Year Group	Numbers on roll - Autumn 2001
St Paul's Infants'	Reception	35 (includes January intake)
	1	31
	2	42
Haslewood Junior	3	46
	4	45
	5	44
	6	30

HODDESDON AREA PUPIL NUMBERS AND FUTURE SCHOOL SIZE

A map of the Hoddesdon primary planning area is on the cover of this document. The forecast pupil numbers for the primary planning area are shown below:

Reception places

Reception Places available	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/5
450	350	368	371	386	381

Places in all years (not nursery)

Capacity	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	Long-term average
3150	2780	2822	2799	2761	2730	2910*

*This figure has been adjusted to allow for housing in the period up to 2011 based on proposed allocations in the Deposit version of the Broxbourne Local Plan Second review.

Because there are surplus places in both schools it is suggested that if they were to amalgamate their new standard number should be 45.

This would enable the Private Nursery to remain on site and allow for more flexible use of the buildings.

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

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF AMALGAMATION

- **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.

- **Easier transition for children from the Infants' to the Juniors**

Children would not have to learn different routines or behavioural policies, as these would be common throughout a child's primary education. They would already know key staff and their expectations.

- **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.

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 particular 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 look.

- **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.

This issue, and details of transitional funding, is addressed more fully in the section title 'Finance, the Governing Body and Staffing'.

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 St Paul's Infants' and Haslewood Junior Schools would close, and a new primary school would open the next day. A new name, logo and uniform would be chosen.

WHY A VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL?

In England there are 4 main types of school:

- Community (like Haslewood)
- Foundation
- Voluntary Aided
- Voluntary Controlled (like St Paul's Infants')

Voluntary Schools are usually (but not always) Church Schools. The difference in status relate to the way schools are governed, the religious education and worship and the ownership of land and buildings.

The LEA has a policy in its School Organisation Plan for Hertfordshire which seeks to preserve a balance of denominational (Church) school places.

Therefore the proposal in this document is not to form a new Community School (like Haslewood Juniors is now) but for a Voluntary Controlled Church of England School (as St Paul's Infants' is now).

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

The consultation period about the proposal to amalgamate St Paul's Infants' and Haslewood Junior Schools ends on 8th March, 2002.

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 March 2002, would formally state that the County Council intends to close St Paul's Infants' and Haslewood Junior Schools and open a new Church of England Voluntary Controlled primary school for 45 children per year. 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 will 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 early June, 2002.

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 by June, 2002 should mean that the schools would amalgamate in January, 2003.

FINANCE, THE GOVERNING BODY AND STAFFING

FINANCE

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 of both schools is currently £578,482 (this excludes [a] any adjustments made to the budget due to changes in pupil numbers; and [b] any protection funding given where a fall in pupil numbers has led to a year on year drop of 3% in the school budget). 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 budget available to the new school following amalgamation. The base budget figure assumes that there will be no change to the School Funding Formula, and is based on the current (2001/02) pupil numbers and other funding data for the schools.

Financial Year		Base budget (£)	Amalgamation funding (£)	Total (£)
2002/03	1 st year amalgamation	562,825	15,657	578,482
2003/04	2 nd year following amalgamation	515,855	62,627	578,482
2004/05	3 rd year following amalgamation	515,855	54,799	570,654
2005/06	4 th year following amalgamation	515,855	23,485	539,340
2006/07	5 th year following amalgamation	515,855	0	515,855

Currently there are a number of additional 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.

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 St Paul's Infants' and Haslewood Junior Schools would continue to look after the two schools until the end of December, 2002. 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 during Autumn 2002.

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	
	St Paul's	Haslewood	A	B
Foundation	3	N/a	4	3
Parents	4	4	5	4
Teachers	1	1	1	1
Staff	1	1	1	1
LEA	3	3	3	3
Minor Authority	1	1	1	1
Co-options	1	3	1	1
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
St Paul's	6.3	20
Haslewood	9 (including 2 supply)	20

*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:

**Tuesday 5th February 2002 at 7.30pm
at St Paul's Infants' School, Haslewood Avenue,
Hoddesdon.**

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 8th March 2002**

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.