

CONSULTATION PAPER
ON THE
AMALGAMATION OF
CHEYNES INFANT SCHOOL
AND
SUNDON PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL



21 January 2019 – 1 March 2019

FOREWORD

This consultation paper has been produced to seek the views of parents, staff and other stakeholders on the proposed amalgamation of Cheynes Infant School and Sundon Park Junior School. The proposed amalgamation will create a single primary school for children aged 4-11 from 1 September 2019.

To find out further information parents/carers of children attending Cheynes Infant School and Sundon Park Junior School, prospective parents and other members of the local community can attend a drop in session at:

- Cheynes Infant School - Monday 28 January from 2pm.
- Sundon Park Junior School - Tuesday 29 January from 6pm

Each school will hold a staff meeting; both meetings will be dedicated to discussing the proposed amalgamation. These meetings will take place on:

- Meeting for staff at Cheynes Infant School will take place on Thursday 31 January
- Meeting for staff at Sundon Park Junior School will take place on Friday 25 January.

Parents, staff and other stakeholders are asked to complete the attached consultation response form and return it to:

David Singh
Education Provision and Planning Manager
Education, Support, Challenge and Intervention
People Department
Luton Borough Council
Town Hall
Luton LU1 2BQ or email your comments to david.singh@luton.gov.uk

or

Cheynes Infant School or Sundon Park Junior School Offices

The proposed amalgamation of Cheynes Infant School and Sundon Park Junior School is an important issue. It is hoped that you can find time to read the remainder of this document and let us know what you think.

Mark Jesson, Chair of Governors – Cheynes Infant School
Polly Fryer-Saxby, Chair of Governors – Sundon Park Junior School

INTRODUCTION

1. Following the announcement of Mrs Walsh's (Headteacher at Cheynes Infant School) intention to retire at the end of the current academic year both Governing Bodies responded to the request of the Local Authority to consider amalgamation of the two schools to become a primary school. A Joint Governors' Working Group was established to consider amalgamating both schools to form a single primary school covering Foundation Stage to Year 6. Following a detailed examination of all relevant aspects, both Governing Bodies have voted to consult with stakeholders on this proposal.

2. In recent years most of our infant and junior schools have amalgamated, including three in Luton. Since 1999, 18 primary schools have been created in Luton following the amalgamation of infant and junior schools. The advantages of primary schools include:
 - A cohesive pastoral and educational provision for children in their primary years.
 - Improved continuity of learning and development aided by pupils not having to change school at the end of Year 2. A single teaching and learning policy supported by a common approach to assessment and the tracking of pupil progress will result in more consistent expectations.
 - The dip in progress, often evident, between the end of Year 2 and Year 3 is less pronounced in primary schools than in separate infant and junior schools.
 - Creating a new primary school also offers better continuity to pupils in terms of curriculum and the school ethos.
 - There is an increased opportunity to share resources and expertise across Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 (infant) and Key Stage 2 (junior).
 - The development of a primary school will assist with the recruitment and retention of staff. Nationally, the majority of schools cover the whole primary phase and generally teachers find posts in primary schools more attractive as they offer better career development opportunities. A larger school, covering the full primary age range, offers an improved chance to retain staff as there are greater opportunities to development within the school.
 - The new primary school would standardise the best policies and practices of both schools.

3. It is proposed that the amalgamation would be achieved by undertaking a prescribed alteration to the Infant School, by extending its age range to encompass pupils aged 8-11. In theory this means that the Junior School would effectively be closed. The Infant School would change to become a Primary School. Closure of one school and a prescribed alteration to the other school is the legal methodology used to create a primary school.

4. In order to progress matters further, a wider consultation is now being undertaken with all governors, staff, parents and the wider community to determine the level of support, or otherwise, for such a course of action.

PUPILS NUMBERS, SCHOOL CAPACITIES AND ADMISSIONS

5. The capacity of the Infant School is 270 places and the capacity of the Junior School is 360 places. The schools are located on different sites.
6. A review of the existing capacities of the two schools has been undertaken. Whilst there has been a decline in pupil numbers in recent years, pupil projections indicate that there is a need to continue to provide 630 places (i.e. 270+360) across both sites.
7. The development of a primary school would allow children in Year 2 to automatically transfer into Year 3. Under the present arrangements, parents of pupils attending the infant school have to apply for a place at the junior school.

STAFFING

8. The main implications of an amalgamation would be that the senior leadership teams would report to a single headteacher, sharing a common vision.
9. There will be the same number of pupils under this proposal and there are no planned reductions to the numbers of staff as part of the proposed amalgamation.
10. If the establishment of a primary school is approved relevant staff will be consulted on reshaping job descriptions where any duplication exists.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

11. Schools are given their own budget and have to manage within the money that is available. Budgets are allocated to all schools on the basis of a formula which gives the bulk of the money according to the number of pupils on roll. Thus, the fewer pupils a school has, the less money it has to spend and, conversely, the more pupils a school has, the more money it has to spend.
12. Both schools will face further budget challenges due to national changes to school funding; this is further exacerbated by the reduction in the number pupils attending both schools in recent years. A single primary school provides an opportunity to achieve economies of scale in terms of the procurement of goods and services.

13. A single primary school would lose some money in that it would receive only one lump sum (funding which contributes towards the fixed costs of running a school). Some of this loss would be offset by the need for only one headteacher. However, there is a transitional period where the single primary will retain 85% of the total lump sums of the Infant and Junior schools in the year after the amalgamation (or in the same year if they amalgamate on 1st April) instead of going down to one lump sum immediately. As the primary school would be split across two sites, it would be eligible to receive split site funding.

SITE CONSIDERATIONS

14. The amalgamated school would continue to make use of the existing accommodation at both sites. At least for the first year, The Cheynes Infant School site would continue to cater for Years R-2 and the Sundon Park Junior School site would continue to cater for Years 3-6.
15. A small amount of capital funding is available from the Council to facilitate the amalgamation.

OTHER PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PARENTS

16. The following questions and answers are provided to address other practical issues often raised by parents during amalgamation processes:

Q: Will the timing of the School day change?

A: There are currently no plans to make any changes to the timing of the school day. However the timing of the school day will be considered by the newly appointed Headteacher.

Q: Will I have to buy a new school uniform from 1 September 2019?

A: No, existing uniform can be worn. However a common uniform will be considered and may be introduced. When parents need to purchase new uniform this will be available with the new primary school logo.

Q: Will my Reception/Key Stage 1 child be mixing in the playground with older children?

A: At least for the first year, Key Stage 1 children will continue to receive their education on the Cheynes Infant School site; Key Stage 2 pupils will continue to receive their education on Sundon Park Junior School site. Opportunities to bring children of different key stages together for activities/assemblies will be carefully managed by staff.

Q: What will happen to the governing body of each school if the amalgamation goes ahead?

A: There will be a single governing body using the expertise and talents from within the current governing bodies.

CONSULTATIONS

17. It is important that all interested individuals and groups have the opportunity to comment on the proposed amalgamation of the two schools.
18. Parents, prospective parents and other members of the community are invited to a drop-in session detailed below: You are welcome to attend either meeting irrespective of which school your child attends.
 - Cheynes Infant School – Monday 28 January from 2pm.
 - Sundon Park Junior School – Tuesday 29 January from 6pm
19. Representatives from the Governors, Senior Leadership Teams and the Local Authority will be available to give further information and answer questions.
20. Each school will hold a staff meeting; both meetings will be dedicated to discussing the amalgamation proposal. The dates and times of the meetings are set out below:
 - Meeting for staff at Cheynes Infant School will take place on Thursday 31 January
 - Meeting for staff at Sundon Park Junior School will take place on Friday 25 January.
21. Written comments on the above proposal are invited and a consultation response form has been prepared to assist with this process.

DISTRIBUTION OF CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT

22. In order to ensure that this consultation document should be read as widely as possible, it is being distributed as follows:
 - Governors of both schools.
 - Staff at both Cheynes Infant School and Sundon Park Junior School.
 - Parents/carers of children attending Cheynes Infant School or Sundon Park Junior School.
 - Prospective parents.
 - Trade Union representatives.
 - Luton MPs and Ward Councillors.
 - Local pre-schools and nurseries.
 - Governing bodies of neighbouring schools.

Further copies are available on request at Cheynes Infant School and Sundon Park Junior School or by emailing david.singh@luton.gov.uk

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM ON THE PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF CHEYNES INFANT SCHOOL & SUNDON PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL

You are invited to complete this consultation response form so that your valuable comments about the proposed amalgamation of the two schools can be considered carefully.

1. ARE YOU IN FAVOUR OF A SINGLE 4-11 PRIMARY SCHOOL?

YES

NO

(please tick as appropriate)

2. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Please set out any additional comments you may wish to make. These could include specific comments related to your circumstances or general comments.

3. **I AM INTERESTED IN THIS ISSUE BECAUSE**

(please tick the appropriate box)

- I am parent/carer of a child attending Cheynes Infant School.
- I am a parent/carer of a child attending Sundon Park Junior School.
- I am a parent/carer of a child who could attend one of the two schools in the future.

- I am a member of staff at Cheynes Infant School.
- I am a member of staff at Sundon Park Junior School
- I am a resident in the area who is not likely to have children attending one of the two schools in the future.

- Other (please specify)

Completed forms should be returned to:

David Singh
Education Provision and Planning Manager
Education, Support, Challenge and Intervention
People Department
Luton Borough Council
Town Hall
Luton LU1 2BQ or email your comments to david.singh@luton.gov.uk

Or

Cheynes Infant School or Sundon Park Junior School Offices

All completed forms should be submitted by 1 March 2019.