

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 DECEMBER 2012

OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION FOR THE PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF SWINGATE INFANT SCHOOL WITH SPINNENS ACRE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Report from: Barbara Peacock, Director of Children and Adults

Author: Paul Clarke, School Organisation Officer

Summary

This report outlines the outcomes of the initial consultation period on the council's proposals to amalgamate Swingate Infant School with Spinnens Acre Junior School by way of prescribed alterations.

1. Budget and policy framework

- 1.1 The proposals to make prescribed alterations to Swingate Infant School and Spinnens Acre Junior School are consistent with the provisions of the School Organisation Plan 2011-16, which flows from the Children and Young People's Plan (policy framework) and is within budget, therefore this is a matter for Cabinet.

2. Background

- 2.1 In 2008 Medway's School Organisation Plan Principles, which were established following extensive consultation, contained a set of guidelines to be used when considering school organisational issues, thereby ensuring that decision-making is clear and consistent, enabling the council to comply with its statutory duty to provide sufficient good school places. The core of these principles ensures that any changes to schools are based upon improving schools and raising standards.
- 2.2 Within the primary phase Medway's School Organisation Plan Principles are:
- To review the future of schools with low standards;
 - All infant and junior schools should be amalgamated over time;
 - To review the future of schools that are at risk of becoming unviable;
 - To enable popular and successful schools to expand.

- 2.3 The main reason for moving to all through primary schools is to provide smoother transitions between the primary phases of education. An amalgamated school provides for:
- A fully integrated curriculum;
 - Fully integrated arrangements for assessment for learning, including recording of progress and planning future provision;
 - A smooth transition for pupils transferring from infant to junior departments;
 - A robust senior leadership team drawing on experience from early years and foundation stage, key stages one and two.
- 2.4 The amalgamation of schools is proving to be a successful aspect of our School Organisation Plan Principles.
- 2.5 Currently, Swingate Infants and Spinnens Acre Junior Schools are federated with a single governing body and operate under the leadership of an Executive Head teacher, who previously was the head teacher at Swingate Infant School. The schools, both 3 Form Entry, are adjoining, on a good size site, serve the community at the southern end of Lordswood close to Medway's boundary with Kent, and sit within the Walderslade planning area for pupil place planning purposes.
- 2.6 Having federated on 1 September 2012 the natural step forward is to formalise the ongoing joint arrangements between the schools by amalgamation.

3. The Proposals

- 3.1 Local authorities can amalgamate schools in two ways;
- 1) By closing both schools and opening a new school in their place. Under current government legislation, any new school would need to be an Academy or Free School.
 - 2) By closing one school and expanding the age range and enlarging the premises at the other following the statutory procedures as set out in 'The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007', and in 'The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2007'.
- 3.2 In this case, it is recommended that the proposals follow the second option above, with the closure of the junior school from 31 August 2013, in tandem with the expansion of the age range and the premises at the infant school. This will create an all through primary school with an age range of 3-11 from 1 September 2013 by way of statutory prescribed alterations.
- 3.3 The term 'enlarging the premises' does not mean that new buildings will be provided at the infant school, rather it is a technical term within the statutory prescribed alterations, which means that the buildings currently occupied by the junior school will transfer to the infant school to ensure sufficient accommodation is available for the single school.

- 3.4 It will be for the governing body to decide on a name for the new school, which will need to be confirmed in writing the local authority in advance of the amalgamation, and approved by the Director of Children and Adults Services.

4. Analysis

- 4.1 Amalgamation will formalise the partnerships already in place between the schools, and under the single governing body the aim will be to ensure positive outcomes for all children who attend the current schools.
- 4.2 Amalgamation will enable the school to operate under a single staffing structure which will allow for the sharing of resources, expertise, knowledge and support across the phases; creating a robust structure at the school and ensuring its viability.
- 4.3 Recent Ofsted ratings show that Swingate is an outstanding school, having achieved that rating in March 2008. This was confirmed as being maintained at an interim assessment in 2011. Spinnens Acre however was placed in special measures in September 2010; under the leadership of the Executive Head Teacher, good progress has been made which was confirmed following a recent monitoring inspection when the school was taken out of special measures.
- 4.4 Results for Swingate Infant School are above average when the children reach the end of Key Stage 1. At Spinnens Acre however, results at the end of Key Stage 2 showed that attainment was broadly in line with the national average at 75% in 2011, but progress in both English and mathematics was below the national average. It is expected that amalgamation will strengthen the management leadership and governance arrangements, and support continued improvement in the outcomes for all the children who attend the single school.
- 4.5 Analysis of the number of pupils in recent years shows that over 98% of the pupils on roll at Swingate Infant School transfer to Spinnens Acre Junior School, and so amalgamation will further strengthen the transition between key stages 1 and 2.
- 4.6 Pupil numbers at the schools are expected to continue to increase as they have done over recent years. Swingate Infant School has now been full (90 children) in reception for the past 2 years, and is full for September 2012. As these pupils progress through the school, the surplus places that have been a feature of Spinnens Acre Junior School over recent years will see a forecast reduction from the current level of 29.4% to 7.2% in 2016.
- 4.7 The governors have appointed the current executive head teacher of the federated schools as the head teacher of the single amalgamated school.

5. Results of the Consultation

- 5.1 There is a requirement to conduct an informal consultation where the views of all interested parties can be expressed and taken into consideration.
- 5.2 The period of informal public consultation, where proposals were published and made available to interested parties, ran for six weeks from 10 September 2012 to 21 October 2012. The process included;
- public consultation documents circulated to the stakeholders and organisations listed in Appendix 1;
 - publication of the consultation document (Appendix 2) on Medway Council's website, and on the schools forum;
 - a press notice placed in a local newspaper to notify the public of the consultation period and the public meeting;
 - a public meeting held at the school on 11 October 2012.
- 5.3 In response to comments raised during the course of the consultation period and at the public meeting, a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document has been prepared to give response and further explanation to the concerns raised. This is published on the council's website in conjunction with the consultation document. The FAQ's have also been circulated to all parents, staff and governors at the school, and will accompany the full proposals sent to interested stakeholders should The Cabinet decide to progress to a period of Statutory Representation, the next step in the statutory process.
- 5.4 The public consultation document (attached as Appendix 2) asked for a ticked response to one or other of the following statements:
- “ I approve of the proposal to amalgamate Swingate Infant School with Spinnens Acre Junior School” or*
“ I object to the proposal to amalgamate Swingate Infant School with Spinnens Acre Junior School”
- 5.5 During the consultation period, 46 responses were received to this proposal, of which 45 were supportive and one objected.
- 5.6 Of the responses in support of the proposal, 41 were from parents, two from governors of other local schools, one was from a member of staff and there was a response from the Catholic Diocese.
- 5.7 The single objection came from a parent.
- 5.8 The response form also provided space for further comment. The comments have been summarised against a series of categories matching the comments and concerns of the respondents in the tables below. *Some respondents offered more than one comment, and some reasons were included in more than one response, which results in the total number of reasons in the table below not matching exactly with the number of response sheets received.*

Reasons for approval:

23	No reason given
5	Benefit to the children
8	Single leadership team and staffing structure will aid pupil progress, shared resources
3	Schools on same site and considered as one anyway.
9	Ease of transition
6	No need to apply for a place in year 3
3	A good/great idea
2	Help the key stage 2 performance
3	Consistency across the schools e.g. policies and standards

Note: Some of the respondents, whilst in favour of the amalgamation for the benefits it offered to the children, did highlight concerns about the potential loss of funding for the single school, and how this may then negatively affect the school. This issue is addressed in sections 11.1 to 11.5.

Reasons for objection:

1	Amalgamation would cause distress to children
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- 5.9 The single objection received felt that the move would cause undue stress for the children. However, it is expected that the head teacher and senior leadership team will manage the transition to a single school effectively to minimise any disruption to pupils and staff, and longer term the amalgamation will lead to less disruption for children as the transition from key stages 1 to 2 will become seamless.
- 5.10 The public meeting held on 11 October 2012 was attended by six people; of which one was a parent, two members of staff, and one governor and a local resident. The meeting was recorded and a number of questions raised.
- 5.11 The meeting was chaired by Councillor Wicks, with an officer panel made up of; Sally Morris (Assistant Director Commissioning and Strategy) and Chris McKenzie (Head of School Organisation and Student Services).
- 5.12 An observer panel was in place and comprised of members from the four political groups represented on the Council. These were Councillors Smith, Cooper, Griffin and Price. The role of the observer panel was to ensure that all the points and concerns raised at the meeting, and the responses given, are accurately reflected in this and the subsequent Cabinet reports.

- 5.13 A drop-in open session was held on Wednesday 31 October 2012 at Gun Wharf, whereby Members were invited to review the written responses to the consultation and the Frequently Asked Questions document. Councillors Royle, Cooper, Wildey and Smith attended the session.
- 5.14 Members of the observer panel were invited to review this report for accuracy in relation to the public meeting. Councillor Cooper raised one concern relating to future years funding, but recognised that until the council are aware of the future funding formulae from central government, it is difficult to give any assurances as to how the schools may be affected.
- 5.15 The remainder of this section highlights concerns and questions raised at the public meeting, and the meetings with staff and governors, together with the answers given. The financial information given was based upon the situation at the time. Some of this has since changed following amendments to the funding formula prescribed by central government, and the current status is explained in section 10. Also included are some generic questions relating to amalgamations asked at other similar meetings.
- 5.16 **Is the decision already made, and is the council just going through the motions with the consultation?**
No decision has been made in relation to the amalgamation of Swingate Infant and Spinnens Acre Junior Schools. At the moment these are just proposals, and can be progressed, amended or withdrawn. This consultation is just the first stage in the democratic and statutory process, and all opinions will be carefully considered at each stage before a decision is taken to progress to the next.
- 5.17 **What are the next stages in the process?**
Following the completion of the consultation period (21 October 2012) reports will be presented to the council's Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee (11 December 2012) who will look at all the responses to the consultation and give their views, and then to Cabinet on 15 January 2013 where the outcome of the consultation will highlight the responses received to the proposals.
- 5.18 Should the Cabinet agree to move to the next stage in the process after considering the responses, then a further period of consultation known as statutory representation will take place. This will last for six weeks; notices and full proposals will be published giving interested parties the opportunity to formally comment and object to the proposals.
- 5.19 There will then be another report presented to Medway Council's Cabinet during the spring of 2013 highlighting the responses and comments. The proposals can be approved, modified or withdrawn in the light of feedback received. Should the proposals be approved they will take effect from 1 September 2013.

5.18 Will parents have to apply for a place at the amalgamated school?

No, all children currently attending both schools will automatically transfer to the new school. The only application for places will be for incoming reception classes as is the norm.

5.19 Will parents still have to apply for a place in year 3 when their child is already attending year 2?

No, as the school will be one unit, there will be no need for parents to apply as they do now at the point of transfer from key stage 1 to key stage 2.

5.20 What are the benefits of amalgamation?

The two schools have already come together as a federation under a single governing body. By formalising this arrangement the benefits are: -

- Having a larger staff organisation provides better opportunities to share resources, best practice, experience and expertise across the whole of the school, ultimately for the benefit of the outcome for the children;
- As the school would be consistently managed, it would ensure a smooth transition from key stage 1 to key stage 2. Amalgamation reduces the impact of the transition between key stages 1 and 2, which creates a potential for a disruption to learning and progress. Where pupils remain within the same overall school structure, there is better chance to minimise any disruption during the transition. Teachers are also better able to discuss and plan for the change and develop a better understanding of the needs of pupils in a different key stage;
- As a single primary school, it would be stronger and less vulnerable to any impact from a future drop in roll numbers in any one year group;
- A fully integrated curriculum with consistently managed arrangements for assessment for learning, including recording of progress and planning future provision;
- A robust senior leadership team drawing on experience from early years and foundation stage, key stages one and two, who will strive to raise standards, improve performance and give all the children who attend the school the best possible start to their education.

5.21 How will the staff be structured at the amalgamated school?

The governing body of the federated schools are already working on a single staffing structure, which will be implemented even if the amalgamation does not go ahead. The process will include formal consultation with staff from both schools. The local authority will continue to be the employer and all terms and conditions of length of service will remain. The governing body will keep staffing under review as circumstances change, and will make any appropriate decisions regarding staffing.

5.22 How will the amalgamation affect the workload of the head teacher?

The amalgamated school will have a single head teacher who will therefore have a wider remit than is the case for the existing schools. However there will be a larger senior leadership team to support the head teacher, and the staffing structure across the whole school will be organised accordingly to ensure the most effective delivery of the best education possible for all the children who attend the single school.

5.23 Significant differences exist between the teaching skills required for key stage 1 and 2; how will this fit with the new structure?

Although there are important differences between the teaching of key stages 1 and 2, teachers benefit significantly from having the opportunity to mix with and discuss teaching issues with teachers from other key stages. Working within a single team facilitates this interaction, and gives the opportunity to share best practice.

5.24 Will staff have to reapply for their posts?

Whilst there may be some changes to some posts it would be expected that the posts will be ring fenced to existing staff and the majority of staff will be assimilated into posts in the new school. Given that there is no proposed reduction in the number of children attending the school, it is likely that the same number of classes will be needed as now. Salary safeguarding will be available for all staff who, as a result of the amalgamation, are deployed to a post at a lower salary. For teachers this will be for a three-year period in accordance with the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document and for support staff on a three-year sliding scale in accordance with Medway Council Policy.

5.25 Will the size of the school be too big?

The admission number will remain at 90 for the amalgamated school; whilst this is a large school there will be governance, leadership team and staffing levels appropriate for the size of the school, which will ensure that children feel welcome and can learn in a safe supportive environment.

5.26 Will the younger children mix with the older pupils.

Concerns about the impact on younger children are noted and are addressed within primary schools by careful leadership and effective management of the school; this will enable younger pupils to be supported appropriately as they start their school career, including having the opportunity to mix with, and learn from older pupils in a managed way.

5.27 Is this just a money saving exercise?

Not at all, the proposals are driven foremost by the desire to raise standards at the school and to produce the best possible outcomes for all of the children who attend the single school. Any financial savings that are realised by the amalgamation of the schools will be re-invested back into Medway schools as part of the ring fenced Dedicated Schools Grant.

5.28 What will the school be called?

It will be for the federated governing body to decide upon the name they would like for the amalgamated school; this can be the name of one of the current schools; a fusion of the two, or something completely different. The proposed name will need to be approved by the Director of Children and Adult Services at Medway Council.

5.29 How will the new national funding formula affect the school budgets, once the schools are amalgamated?

The consultation document explained that the amalgamated school would lose funding currently received by the infant and junior schools on account of their small size. For Swingate and Spinnens Acre, the document estimated this to be £44,242 per annum from combined budgets of £1,979,707 (a reduction of approximately 2%).

Central Government has introduced some changes to the way in which schools are funded, which means that rather than receiving additional funding to compensate for the size of the school, all schools will receive the same lump sum payment of £108,430. This means that when schools amalgamate, they will lose £108,430 of funding as a result of changing from two separate schools to a single school.

The government's Minimum Funding Guarantee ensures that the reduction in funding will take place gradually. The budget will be reduced by around £26,000 in the first year following amalgamation and by a further £26,000 in the second year. The government has not announced the protection arrangements that will apply in the third year so it is possible that the balance of the £108,430 will be deducted from the school's funding in the third year following amalgamation.

5.30 When will the amalgamated schools start to receive a single budget?

Under the previous financial regulations, the council would have been able to set a separate budget for each separate school for the financial year in which they amalgamate. This would mean that in the 2013/14 financial year during which the schools amalgamate, there would be no reduction in the funds available.

We are currently assessing the implications of the new national funding arrangements, and cannot say for certain whether this will still be the case. The council's finance team will work with the schools and the governing body in advance of amalgamation to ensure that any financial implications are clearly understood and planned for.

6. Diversity Impact Assessment

- 6.1 A Diversity Impact Assessment screening form is attached as Appendix 3. The DIA looks at how the proposed changes could impact upon various groups. The report shows that there could potentially be some impact upon certain groups, however it shows that any impacts are expected to be positive ones.

7. Impact of the proposal on arrangements for looked after children

7.1 Looked after children receive the highest priority for admission to all Medway schools. If necessary, the Admissions Code allows the council to place looked after children in schools that would otherwise be deemed to be full. This ensures that the council can secure appropriate provision for children that are looked after by the local authority. This strategy covers both mainstream and special schools and as such includes Swingate Infant School and Spinnens Acre Junior School.

8. Publication of a Statutory Notice

8.1 If Cabinet decides to progress the proposals further, it would be necessary to publish a Statutory Notice and formal proposals of the proposed changes to Swingate Infant and Spinnens Acre Junior School, by way of prescribed alterations, to provide an opportunity for formal objection. This would run for a six-week period from 11 February 2013 through to 24 March 2013. The process would follow the guidelines set out in "Making changes to a Maintained Mainstream School (A guide for Local Authorities and Governing Bodies)", and "The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007".

8.2 Cabinet will be requested to approve that should no objections be raised during the statutory period, the determination on the proposals be delegated to the Director of Children and Adults in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services. However if any formal objections are received during that time then the decision will revert to Cabinet.

9 Risk management

9.1 The following risks arise if the proposals as stated in this report are not implemented. These are:

- The council has both a moral and statutory duty to promote high standards and to ensure the sustained viability of its schools;
- A risk that it could undermine the council's need to ensure the most effective use of resources, and in turn raise standards across all schools;
- By not approving consultation, the Cabinet would not be acting in accordance with the School Organisation Plan and Principles, which Cabinet approved under decision 142/2011;
- Because the governing body are fully supportive of the amalgamation, it could lead to a strain in the relationship between the council and the school if the proposals are not implemented.

9.2 The following risks could arise if the proposals are implemented:

- There is a risk that some division among the staff could arise and lead to some negativity towards changes made at the school and lead to negative outcomes for some or all of the children who attend the single school. To mitigate this risk the head teacher, along with the governors and senior leadership team, will work to

create a positive attitude amongst the staff ensuring that they work as a team for the benefit of the pupils who attend the school.

10. Financial and Legal implications

- 10.1 Funding for Medway's maintained schools comes from central Government via the local authority in the form of the dedicated schools grant, which is a ring-fenced sum of money for the provision of education across all of our schools. This money can only be used for schools (and certain specified services to schools), and cannot be used to fund other council services.
- 10.2 The consultation document explained that the amalgamated school would lose funding currently received by the infant and junior schools on account of their small size. For Swingate and Spinnens Acre the document estimated this to be £44,242 per annum from combined budgets of £1,979,707 (a reduction of approximately 2%).
- 10.3 Central Government has introduced some changes to the way in which schools are funded, which means that rather than receiving additional funding to compensate for the size of the school, all schools will receive the same lump sum payment of £108,430. This means that when schools amalgamate, they will lose £108,430 of funding as a result of changing from two separate schools to a single school.
- 10.4 The government's Minimum Funding Guarantee ensures that the reduction in funding will take place gradually. The budget will be reduced by around £26,000 in the first year following amalgamation and by a further £26,000 in the second year. The government has not announced the protection arrangements that will apply in the third year so it is possible that the balance of the £108,430 will be deducted from the school's funding in the third year following amalgamation.
- 10.5 Some of the funding losses could be offset by the expected increase in pupil numbers over the foreseeable future and by potential savings from economies of scale.
- 10.6 The council has the power under sections 18 and 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to make "prescribed alterations" to a maintained school. The procedure for making prescribed alterations is set out in the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007. Before publishing a statutory notice relating to proposals to make prescribed alterations to a school, the council must undertake the consultation required by Schedule 5 of these regulations.
- 10.7 The council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient good quality school places.

11 Recommendations

- 11.1 The committee is asked to consider the responses to the consultation together with the advice and analysis from officers and to forward comments for consideration by the Cabinet.

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Background papers:

Making changes to a Maintained Mainstream School (A guide for Local Authorities and Governing Bodies).

The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007.

Closing a Maintained Mainstream School (A guide for Local authorities and Governing Bodies)

Appendices:

List of consultees

Consultation document

Diversity Impact Assessment screening form

Appendix 1

Consultation list for Swingate Infant and Spinnens Acre Junior Schools amalgamation
All Councillors which include the Leader, Portfolio Holders, Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Members
All Local MPs
Managing Director of Children, Families & Education Directorate at Kent County Council
Rochester Diocese
Southwark Diocese
Medway Youth Parliament
Chief Executive of Medway Council
Directors of Medway Council
Senior Management Team of Medway Council
All Governors, Staff & Parents of Swingate Infant and Spinnens Acre Junior Schools
All Chairs of Governors at Medway Schools
All Headteachers at Medway Schools
All Medway Schools- Infant, Junior, Primary, Secondary & Special
Medway Early Years Providers including All Preschools, Nurseries & Playgroups,
All Medway Minority Ethnic Groups
All Medway Libraries, Leisure Centres & Contact Points
Medway Council Press Office
Director of Primary Care- Medway Primary Care Trust
Unions representing the staff and teachers at Medway Schools
Chief Executive of Medway NHS Foundation Trust

On;
Schools Forum
Medway Website
In;
Local press
School Information Bulletin
On show at;
Local libraries, leisure centres, contact points

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The amalgamation of Swingate Infant School with Spinnens Acre Junior School



*Raising achievement through quality
learning environments*

September 2012

www.medway.gov.uk

This document is designed to:

- **Notify you of Medway Council's proposals to amalgamate Swingate Infant School with Spinnens Acre Junior School with effect from 1 September 2013. The amalgamation will follow the statutory process by way of prescribed alterations, which will result in:**
 - 1) **The alteration to the upper age limit at Swingate Infant School from 7 to 11, to incorporate the children attending Spinnens Acre Junior School.**
 - 2) **The enlargement of the premises at Swingate Infant School to incorporate the buildings currently associated with Spinnens Acre Junior School**
 - 3) **The closure of Spinnens Acre Junior School;**
- **Explain why these changes are being proposed**
- **Invite your comments on these proposals**
- **Advise you of a public meeting to be held in Swingate Infant School Hall, Sultan Road, Lordswood, ME5 8TJ on Thursday 11 October 2012 at 6.30pm.**

Why is the amalgamation of Swingate Infant and Spinnens Acre Junior Schools being proposed?

From 1 September 2012, following consultation with interested stakeholders, Swingate Infants and Spinnens Acre Junior Schools have been federated with a single governing body and under the leadership of an Executive head teacher, who previously was the head teacher at Swingate Infant School. The schools, both with a published admission number (PAN) of 90, with 3 forms of entry, are adjoining, on a good size site, serve the community at the southern end of Lordswood close to Medway's boundary with Kent.

Recent Ofsted ratings show that Swingate is an outstanding school, having achieved that rating in March 2008. This was confirmed as being maintained at an interim assessment in 2011. Spinnens Acre however was placed in special measures in September 2010; since then good progress has been made which was confirmed following a recent monitoring inspection when the school was taken out of special measures.

Results for Swingate Infant School are above average when the children reach the end of Key Stage 1. At Spinnens Acre however, results at the end of Key Stage 2 showed that attainment was broadly in line with the national average at 75% in 2011, but progress in both English and mathematics was below the national average.

The proposals for amalgamation support Medway's School Organisation Principles, which state that "all Infant and Junior Schools should be amalgamated over time", and are driven foremost by the desire to raise standards at the school. The proposals have the full support of the federated governing body.

An amalgamated school provides the following benefits:

- A fully integrated curriculum with arrangements for assessment for learning, including recording of progress and planning future provision;
- A smooth transition for pupils transferring from infant to junior departments; amalgamation reduces the impact of the transition from key stage 1 to key stage 2, which creates a potential disruption to learning and progress. Where pupils remain within the same overall school structure, there is a better chance to minimise any disruption. Teachers are also better placed to discuss and plan for the change and develop a better understanding of the needs of the pupils in a different key stage;
- A robust senior leadership team drawing on experience from early years and foundation stage, key stages one and two
- A single staffing structure, which will allow for the sharing of resources, expertise, knowledge and support across the phases;
- There is no need for parents to apply for a place at the junior school when their child transfers from year 2 to year 3.

Those children already attending Swingate Infant and Spinnens Acre Junior Schools will continue to attend the amalgamated school and parents will not need to reapply for a place.

The admission number for the school will remain at 90. Pupil numbers at the schools are expected to continue to increase as they have done over recent years. Swingate has now been full (90 children) in the Reception year group for the past 2 years, and is full for September 2012. As these pupils progress through the school, the surplus places that have been a feature of Spinnens Acre over recent years will see a forecast reduction from the current level of 29.4% to 7.2% in 2016. The amalgamated school will have governance, leadership and staffing levels appropriate for the size of the school, which will ensure that children feel welcome and can learn in a safe supportive environment.

Careful leadership and effective management will enable younger pupils to be supported appropriately as they start their school career, and they will have the opportunity to mix with and learn from the older pupils in a managed way.

When the schools amalgamate they will continue to receive funding on a per-pupil basis at the same rate, however they will lose £44,242 of funding that they currently receive to compensate for the relatively small size of the schools and this money will be released for re-investment in other Medway schools. However, as a single school they will be able to make better use of their shared resources, and may gain some additional funding from the increase in pupils over time.

Due to government cut backs, there is no longer any capital funding available for significant building projects to support amalgamation, unlike some others that have happened in the past. There may however be some funding available to support development of appropriate ICT infrastructure if required.

Staffing

The governing body of the federated schools are already working on a single staffing structure, which will be implemented, subject to separate formal consultation with staff from both schools, even if the amalgamation does not go ahead. The local authority will continue to be the employer and all terms and conditions of length of service will remain. The governing body will keep staffing under review as circumstances change, and will make any appropriate decisions regarding staffing.

The amalgamated school will have one head teacher who will therefore have a wide remit in overseeing the single school. There will be a larger senior leadership team to support the head teacher, and the staffing structure across the whole school will be organised accordingly to ensure the most effective delivery of the best education possible for all the children who attend the single school.

Although there are important differences between the teaching of key stages 1 and 2, teachers benefit significantly from having the opportunity to mix with and discuss teaching issues with teachers from other key stages. Working within a single team will help this to happen, and gives the opportunity to share best practice.

Whilst there may be some changes to some posts it would be expected that the posts will be ring fenced to existing staff and the majority of staff will be assimilated into posts in the new school. Given that there is no proposed reduction in the number of children attending the school, it is likely that the same number of classes will be needed as now. Salary safeguarding will be available for all staff who, as a result of the amalgamation, are deployed to a post at a lower salary. For teachers this will be for a three year period in accordance with the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document and for support staff on a three year sliding scale in accordance with Medway Council Policy.

The next stages

No decision has been made in relation to the amalgamation of Swingate Infant and Spinnens Acre Junior Schools. At the moment these are just proposals, and can be progressed, amended or withdrawn at each stage of the process. This consultation is just the first stage in the democratic and statutory process, and all opinions will be carefully considered at each stage before a decision is taken to progress to the next.

During the consultation period there will be a public meeting held at the infant school, at which interested stakeholders will be able to ask questions about the proposals. There will be an observer panel in attendance to ensure clarity and accuracy in the reports that follow. This panel will be made up of councillors from each of the political groups within the council.

Following the completion of the consultation period (21 October 2012) reports will be presented to the council's Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee (11 December 2012) who will look at all the responses to the consultation and give their views; and then to Cabinet on 15 January 2013 where the outcome of the consultation will highlight the responses received to the proposals.

Should the Cabinet agree to move to the next stage in the process after considering the responses, then a further period of consultation known as Statutory Representation will take place. This will last for six weeks; public notices and full proposals will be published giving interested parties the opportunity to formally comment and object to the proposals.

There will then be another report presented to Medway Council's Cabinet in the spring of 2013 highlighting the responses and comments. The proposals will then be approved, modified or withdrawn in the light of feedback received. Should the proposals be approved they will take effect from 1 September 2013. No decisions will be made until the consultation has been completed and local views have been carefully.

Public Consultation period	10 September to 21 October 2012
Public Consultation meeting in Swingate Infant School hall	11 October 2012 at 6.30pm
Report to Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Outcomes of Consultation	11 December 2012
Report on Outcome of Consultation to Cabinet	15 January 2013
Statutory Notice period	Early February to Mid-March 2013
Implementation of alterations	1 September 2013

How to make comments

We would like to hear your views on these proposals. Please let us know by:

- Completing the reply slips at the end of this leaflet or by writing a letter to:

**School Organisation and Student Services
 Medway Council
 FREEPOST RRUJ-ZBTJ-CZZC
 Level 4, Gun Wharf
 Dock Road
 CHATHAM ME4 4TR**

Alternatively hand the form or letter in at the School Offices at either Swingate Infant or Spinnens Acre Junior Schools, who will forward it on your behalf.


Letters and slips must be received by **Sunday, 21 October 2012**.


Unfortunately it will not be possible to acknowledge receipt.



Who to contact

 School Organisation and Student Services, Medway Council, Level 4, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR

 Email: prim.reorg@medway.gov.uk Website: www.medway.gov.uk/educationlearning

 Minicom: 01634 333111

This information can be made available in other formats from **01634 333333**

If you have any questions about this leaflet and you want to speak to someone in your own language please ring **01634 335577**

বাংলা	331780	हिंदी	331783	کوردی	331841	فارسی	331840
中文	331781	ਪੰਜਾਬੀ	331784	ଏଓହ୍‌ଶାଫବ	331786	Русский	332374
ગુજરાતી	331782	Polski	332373	اردو	331785	Lietuviškai	332372

Amalgamation of Swingate Infant School with Spinnens Acre Junior School

REPLY SLIP

Please complete this form, and add any comments you wish below.
Forms and letters should reach us by **Sunday, 21 October 2012**.

Please return to:

School Organisation and Student Services

Medway Council

FREEPOST RRUY-ZBTJ-CZZC

Level 4, Gun Wharf

Dock Road

CHATHAM ME4 4TR

Alternatively hand the form or letter in at the School Offices at Swingate Infant or Spinnens Acre Junior Schools who will forward it on your behalf.

The Proposal to amalgamate Swingate Infant School with Spinnens Acre Junior School

Please tick one box

I approve of the proposal to amalgamate Swingate Infant School with Spinnens Acre Junior School

I object to the proposal to amalgamate Swingate Infant School with Spinnens Acre Junior School

Please give your reasons as fully as possible. This will help careful consideration to be given to the arguments in favour and against the proposal.
It would be helpful to have the following information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

I am (please tick)

Parent / Guardian

Governor

Member of Staff

Local Resident

None of the above (please specify) _____

Comments

Please use this space to add any further comments (you may use additional paper if required)

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Diversity Impact Assessment: Screening Form

Directorate	Name of Function or Policy or Major Service Change		
Children and Adults Services.	Amalgamation of Swingate Infant and Spinnens Acre Junior Schools		
Officer responsible for assessment	Date of assessment	New or existing?	
Paul Clarke	5 November 2012	New	
Defining what is being assessed			
1. Briefly describe the purpose and objectives	<p>The proposals are to amalgamate Swingate Infant and Spinnens Acre Junior Schools into a single primary school. The proposals are in line with Medway's School Organisation Plan Principles as set out in The School Organisation Plan 2011-16 which flows from the Medway Children and Young People's Plan. The benefits are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fully integrated curriculum; • Fully integrated arrangements for assessment for learning, including recording of progress and planning future provision; • A smooth transition for pupils transferring from infant junior departments; • A robust senior leadership team drawing on experience from early years and foundation stage, key stages one and two. 		
2. Who is intended to benefit, and in what way?	As a consequence of the proposals it is expected that the outcomes for the children who attend the school, will be positive.		
3. What outcomes are wanted?	It is expected that the amalgamation of the schools will provide a seamless journey through the primary phase of education for the children who attend the school, coupled with fully integrated policies at the school which will provide a good standard of education for those children who attend the school giving them the best possible start to their education career.		
4. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?	<p>Contribute</p> <p>Strong leadership at the school to minimise disruption during the transition and to bring the two teams of staff into one</p>	<p>Detract</p> <p>Resistance from some staff to embrace the amalgamation positively.</p>	

Appendix 3

5. Who are the main stakeholders?	The pupils, parents, governors and staff of Swingate Infant and Spinnens Acre Junior Schools and the local community.
6. Who implements this and who is responsible?	Barbara Peacock - Director of Children and Adults Services

Assessing impact		
7. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>racial groups</i>?		Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	<p>No pupils are intended to be displaced as a result of these proposals, as all pupils currently on roll at both schools will remain in place at the single school. A public consultation has been carried out over a 6-week period when views were expressed and any concerns regarding this issue could have been raised. Of a number of concerns raised and comments made, none related to the potential for any differential impact due to racial groups. Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality and all schools in Medway are responsible for ensuring equality in their schools and for promoting community cohesion.</p>	
8. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>disability</i>?		Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	<p>None of the current pupils are intended to be displaced and there will be no reduction to teaching staff numbers made as part of this proposal. The single school will standardise all policies including their SEN policy and as such no differential impact towards children or staff with disabilities is expected. A public consultation has been carried out over a 6-week period when views were expressed and concerns regarding this issue raised. No concerns were raised during this time relating to the differential impact due to disability. Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality and all schools in Medway are responsible for ensuring equality in their schools and for promoting community cohesion.</p>	
9. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential		Brief statement of main issue

Appendix 3

<p>impact due to <i>gender</i>?</p>	<p>NO</p>	
<p>What evidence exists for this?</p>	<p>None of the current pupils are intended to be displaced as part of this proposal. Pupils will attend the school on the basis of need irrespective of their gender. A public consultation was carried out over a 6-week period when views were expressed and any concerns regarding this issue raised. There were no concerns highlighted where there could be a differential impact due to gender. Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality and all schools in Medway are responsible for ensuring equality in their schools and for promoting community cohesion.</p>	
<p>10. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>sexual orientation</i>?</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Brief statement of main issue</p>
<p>What evidence exists for this?</p>	<p>None of the current pupils are intended to be displaced as part of this proposal. Pupils will attend the school on the basis of need irrespective of their sexual orientation. A public consultation was carried out over a 6-week period when views were expressed and any concerns regarding this issue raised. During the consultation no concerns were raised regarding the impact there could due to sexual orientation. Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality and all schools in Medway are responsible for ensuring equality in their schools and for promoting community cohesion.</p>	
<p>11. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a have a differential impact due to <i>religion or belief</i>?</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Brief statement of main issue</p>
<p>What evidence exists for this?</p>	<p>None of the current pupils are intended to be displaced as part of this proposal. Pupils will attend the school on the basis of need irrespective of their religion or belief. A public consultation was carried out over a 6-week period when views were expressed and any concerns regarding this issue raised. No concerns were indicated during the consultation that there could be a differential impact due to religion and belief. Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality and all schools in Medway are responsible for ensuring equality in their schools and for promoting community cohesion.</p>	
<p>12. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to people's <i>age</i>?</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Brief statement of main issue</p>
<p>What evidence exists for this?</p>	<p>None of the current pupils are intended to be displaced. A public consultation was carried out over a 6-week period when views were expressed and no concerns regarding this issue were raised. Local</p>	

Appendix 3

		authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality and all schools in Medway are responsible for ensuring equality in their schools and for promoting community cohesion.
13. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>being transgendered or transsexual</i> ?		Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?		None of the current pupils are intended to be displaced. Pupils will attend the school on the basis of need irrespective of any transgender or transsexual issues. A public consultation was carried out over a 6-week period when views were expressed and any concerns regarding this issue raised. No concerns were highlighted during the consultation that there could be any differential impact due to people being transgendered or transsexual. Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality and all schools in Medway are responsible for ensuring equality in their schools and for promoting community cohesion.
14. Are there any <i>other</i> groups that would find it difficult to access/make use of the function (e.g. young parents, commuters, people with caring responsibilities or dependants, young carers, or people living in rural areas)?		If yes, which group(s)?
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?		N/A
15. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> have a differential impact due to <i>multiple discriminations</i> (e.g. disability <u>and</u> age)?		Brief statement of main issue
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?		N/A.

Conclusions & recommendation

16. Could the differential impacts identified in questions 7-15 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact?		Whilst some concerns were raised about the amalgamation itself, none of these related to any of the impacts identified in sections 7-15.
	NO	
17. Can the adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or another reason?		N/A
	NO	

Recommendation to proceed to a full impact assessment?		
NO	This function/ policy/ service change complies with the requirements of the legislation and there is evidence to show this is the case.	
NO	What is required to ensure this complies with the requirements of the legislation? (see DIA Guidance Notes)?)
N/A	Give details of key person responsible and target date for carrying out full impact assessment (see DIA Guidance Notes)	

Action plan to make Minor modifications		
Outcome	Actions (with date of completion)	Officer responsible

Planning ahead: Reminders for the next review		
Date of next review		
Areas to check at next review (e.g. new census information, new legislation due)		
Is there <i>another</i> group (e.g. new communities) that is relevant and ought to be considered next time?		
Signed (completing officer/service manager)	Date	
Signed (service manager/Assistant Director)	Date	