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Proposed merger of Stoke Primary Academy and Allhallows Primary Academies

We are pleased to inform you of our proposal to further enhance the educational provision for young people on the Hoo peninsula.

In January 2019 both Stoke Primary Academy and Allhallows Primary Academy joined Leigh Academies Trust as part of the merger with the Williamson Academy Trust. We immediately began working with leaders and staff at both academies to significantly develop the educational provision at both academies and this continues today. We have also been reviewing the long term strategy for both academies and have come firmly to the view that merging the two academies would deliver the best long term educational provision for all pupils. The new academy would be based on the current Allhallows Primary Academy site and be called 'Stoke and Allhallows Primary Academy'.

Why do we wish to do this?

Currently both schools are working well below capacity and given the local demographic trend this is likely to continue into the future. As the finances of academies are reliant on pupil numbers it is currently viable only to operate mixed age classes outside of nursery and early years. This has important educational disadvantages. Through this proposal we will ensure that every pupil is taught in single age classes; this will significantly improve their learning experiences.

The building and grounds of Stoke Primary Academy, whilst they have significant heritage, present some significant challenges when trying to provide an improved, modern learning environment. At present there are some significant difficulties around the structure of some classrooms meaning that we have had to relocate the Y1/2 class to Allhallows Primary Academy since Easter. There is also very limited parking space for staff or visitors which causes significant challenges from time to time.

The small nature of each academy has meant that it has been necessary to provide a single leadership team, leading both schools a mile apart. Being on a single site will allow them to work more closely with pupils and staff to enhance the quality of education further, as well as be more readily able to engage with parents/carers

Since the academies joined Leigh Academies Trust, each has received significant support from a range of additional educational experts. This has, in particular, been focussed on working with teachers and support staff to develop further their knowledge, skills and expertise to improve teaching and learning. This has had an important impact but this work can take place much more effectively if delivered on one site where all staff are located.

Being located on one site will allow the academy to make important savings on a range of services. These savings generated from utilities, catering and IT for example can instead be spent more directly on educational resources for the pupils. In addition, current academy resources can be pooled and used more efficiently for the benefit of more pupils.

How will this proposal benefit pupils of the academies?

All pupils will be taught in a single age class with their own dedicated teacher and appropriate teaching assistant support. This will enable the curriculum to be even more closely matched to the age of the pupils, greatly enriching their experience.

Currently there is no nursery provision at Allhallows Primary Academy and there are limitations to the internal nursery space at Stoke Primary Academy. This proposal would develop a new, purpose built nursery within Stoke and Allhallows Primary Academy, that would also benefit from significant, dedicated external learning space.

As previously noted savings made by being on one site rather than two will be used to provide enhanced classroom resources and support for your child.

The very large recreational space at the Allhallows site will allow an increased range of sporting activities for all pupils. Combining the pupils from the two academies will allow team sports to be more readily organised, particularly within specific age groups. On occasions this is not always possible at present with the small number of pupils on each site.

Will this mean fewer places for local children?

The Stoke and Allhallows Primary Academy will offer 30 places in each year group, the same number of pupils as there are in the two current academies combined. Moving onto the much larger Allhallows site would allow consideration of expanding to 60 places each year, if there is sufficient demand, at sometime in the future.

When will Stoke and All Hallows Primary be open?

It is intended that the merger will be in place and everything ready for September 2019.

Will pupils be required to wear different uniform in September?

The uniform will be adapted and the new badge will reflect both of the current academies. We will only be altering the academy tie and jumper, and these will be available for delivery through a dedicated website that already provides items for most of our academies. This year we will be providing a new tie to each pupil free of charge. However the majority of the uniform will remain the same as items such as trousers, skirts and shirts are common across the existing academies. These will remain to be available from a wide range of outlets.

I have a question – who can I ask?

If you have any question, please email office@allhallowsprimaryacademy.org.uk

We would like your views on this proposal

You can have your say by:

- emailing us at office@allhallowsprimaryacademy.org.uk FAO Mrs Wilson;
- writing to The Principal, at Allhallows Primary Academy (You can hand the letter into the Academy); or
- at a parent meeting at Allhallows Primary Academy, on 11th June at 3:30pm.

If you are intending to contact us with your views may we ask that you do this by Noon on 20 June 2019. We will consider all comments and views received carefully, so that a decision on whether to proceed with this proposal can be made.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N. Willis". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Neil Willis
Chief Operating Officer
Leigh Academies Trust