



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

Children and Young People's Department
Middleton House, 27 St Mary's Gate, Derby DE1 3NN

CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE'S
DEPARTMENT

Andrew Flack
Corporate Director

7 September 2009

To: Parents, staff, governors, trade unions, Derby City Councillors, Derby City Diocesan Authorities, Derbyshire County Council, local MPs, community organisations

Dear Consultee

PROPOSAL TO MERGE NIGHTINGALE INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS TO FORM A SINGLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Background

It is generally accepted that all-through primary schools offer certain advantages to pupils when compared with separate infant and junior schools. These include greater financial stability, staffing flexibility and, once admitted, pupils are guaranteed a place at the school for the duration of their primary education.

The head teacher of Nightingale Junior School left in December 2008 and the school has had a vacancy for a head teacher for the past year and a temporary head in post.

Derby City Council are consulting on a proposal to merge the two schools to form a single primary school within the existing school buildings.

We have talked to the governors of both schools and they support the consultation.

What is a Merger?

Merger is the joining of two schools into one, with a single governing body and head teacher. This would be achieved through the closure of the Junior School and the simultaneous expansion of the age range of the Infant School to form a single 3 to 11 primary with 420 places (this figure does not include the number of children in the nursery).

The choice of which school to close and which school to expand is no more than a technical choice and carries no implication that one school is in any way better placed for expansion than the other. Usually it is the school with the head teacher vacancy which is the one proposed for closure.

If the two schools were to merge they will continue to operate within their existing buildings.

What are the benefits?

The main benefits are:

- a single primary school would make the transition of pupils between Years 2 and 3, from Infants to Juniors, smoother and better for pupils and their families with less chance of 'lost learning' at the beginning of Year 3
- A single and continuous approach to the curriculum, such as single policies for handwriting, reading, maths and behaviour
- A single governing body bringing a single culture and ethos across the 3 to 11 age range



- School budgets are based mainly on the number of children in a school. If these go up and down year to year, it causes instability and can lead to shortage of funding, job losses etc. This is often worse for smaller schools. Bigger schools, such as primaries, are more protected and can cope with the fluctuations
- One school uniform, the same policies and procedures, the same dates for staff training days and parents' evenings
- A larger school has more capacity to introduce remodelled posts, such as a site manager or school business manager. This releases the head and senior managers to concentrate more on the business of raising achievement for all children
- More development opportunities for the staff, such as shared training and the chance to work more closely across the curriculum and gain experience and understanding of all key stages
- Better access for pupils and the families to extended services and facilities
- The opportunity for both schools to keep improving and moving forward.

What will it mean for the children?

All of the above should have a positive impact on the quality of education that children receive. There will, inevitably, be a period of adjustment while the new structure settles down. On a day-to-day basis there will be no change in routine or provision in either school. It is anticipated that the children will benefit from the potential of a wider range of resources and improved staff development.

What will it mean in terms of organisation?

- There should be no immediate change in organisation as a direct result of merger. In the longer term any decisions made by the primary school governing body would be taken in order to improve the quality of provision for children
- The new school will receive a single budget based on pupil numbers. Conversion to a primary school gives, in the longer term, the head teacher and governors greater flexibility in using staff and resources
- The primary school would maintain the status of community school and there will be no change to admissions criteria. Children in Year 2 would automatically have a right to transfer to Year 3 without having to re-apply for a place.

What will it mean for the Staff?

Again, very little on a day-to-day basis, but merger will create greater stability and security. Apart from a change of school name to a primary school, staff contracts and conditions of service will not be affected in any way.

What will it mean for parents/carers?

Merger will mean that the two schools will continue to operate as usual and that parents/carers of both schools will continue to receive the same high level of quality provision. Parents/carers will not have to apply for a place in the junior part of the school once their child is on roll in the infant department of the school.

What will it mean for the Governing Body?

On an agreed date the two current Governing Bodies will end, and be replaced with one Governing Body made up of representatives from both schools. Different models are possible.

What happens now?

This document is the start of a six week consultation period on the proposal to merge. This starts on 7 September 2009 and ends on 16 October 2009. All written comments will be considered by the Council when the consultation ends. After this the Council Cabinet will decide at their meeting on 27 October 2009 whether to progress to the next stage of the process.

If so, this begins with the publication of statutory notices on 2 November 2009. There will be a further six week period when any member of the public can make representation to the Council ending on 18 December 2009. A final decision will then be made by the Council Cabinet early in January 2010 on whether to merge the two schools.

If merger does proceed then the "new" school will be in place for the start of term in September 2010.

How can I get more information or give you my views?

We are holding two open meetings to discuss the issues: one during the day and one in the evening. These are being held on:

- Thursday 17 September, 2pm, St Bartholomew's Church Hall (entrance on Addison St just opposite the school) with a crèche at the Infant School
- Thursday 17 September, 6pm, St Bartholomew's Church.

Please come along and ask us any questions about the merger and what it means for the schools and their pupils. Representatives from the Local Authority and the Governing Bodies will be there to outline the proposals and answer your questions. Views expressed at the open meetings will be recorded as part of the consultation.

Let us have your views

Your views are very important. Please do let us know what you think and whether you agree or disagree with the proposal **by 16 October 2009**.

You can make your views known in the following ways:

- at the open meetings on 17 September
- by completing the attached questionnaire and returning it to us either using the freepost address below (no stamp needed) or by returning it to one of the schools
- by completing the questionnaire online from our website at **www.derby.gov.uk/yourcityyoursay**
- by email to **nightingalemerger@derby.gov.uk**
- by writing to:

**Sian Hoyle
Head of Communications and Customer Support
FREEPOST MID18771
DERBY
DE1 9BR**

Yours sincerely



Andrew Flack
Corporate Director for Children and Young People



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

Proposed Merger of Nightingale Infant and Junior Schools

Your views are very important, please do let us know what you think.

Please tick the relevant box. I am a:

Parent of Infants school child
Parent of Juniors school child
Parent of Pre-School
Governor - Infant
Governor - Junior
Member of Staff - Infant
Member of Staff - Junior
Local Resident
Local Councillor
Other: (please state)

I support the merger of Nightingale Infant and Junior Schools to form a primary school

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OR

I do not support the merger of Nightingale Infant and Junior Schools

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Please add your comments below and attach additional sheets if necessary:

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Please return your response form to:

Sian Hoyle, Head of Communications and Customer Support, FREEPOST MID18771, DERBY, DE1 9BR or return to one of the schools

or email: nightingalemerger@derby.gov.uk

or by completing the questionnaire online from our website at www.derby.gov.uk/yourcityyoursay by 16 October 2009.

OPTIONAL

Your name (BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

Date _____

