

Cabinet: 18 October 2016

Report: The report requests approval to carry out a Statutory consultation on proposals to bring together Honley CE (VC) Infant and Nursery School and Honley CE (VC) Junior School to form a single Church of England voluntary controlled primary school for pupils aged 3 -11 years

Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Yes
Is it in the Council's Forward Plan?	Yes
Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Director</u> & name	Sarah Callaghan 07/10/16
Is it signed off by the Director of Resources?	Debbie Hogg 07/10/16
Is it signed off by the Assistant Director – Legal, Governance and Monitoring?	Julie Muscroft 07/10/16
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Masood Ahmed – Community Cohesion and Schools

Electoral wards affected and ward councillors consulted: Holme Valley North

Public or private: Public

1. Purpose of report

- To present proposals to bring together Honley CE (VC) Infant and Nursery School and Honley CE (VC) Junior School to create an 'all through' primary school for pupils aged 3 - 11 years from 1st May 2017
- To seek Cabinet approval to carry out a statutory consultation in partnership with the Church of England Leeds Diocesan Board of Education within the Diocese of Leeds and with families of pupils, staff, governors and other key stakeholders

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2 Background - The current pattern of primary schools in Honley

- **Honley CE(VC) Infant and Nursery School** provides education for 3 to 7 year olds (including 48 part-time early learning places for nursery children aged 3-4 years) with a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 66 pupils per year group.
- **Honley CE(VC) Junior School** provides education for 7 to 11 year olds with a PAN of 68 pupils per year group.

There are very strong collaborative partnerships between Honley CE(VC) Infant and Nursery School and Honley CE(VC) Junior School, where both are working together to provide the highest standard of learning experience to meet the needs of the pupils and the families of the local communities they serve.

The schools are approximately a 4 minute walk away from one another. Both schools share the same Priority Admission Area (PAA) and serve the same community. The vast majority of pupils usually transfer from the Infant and Nursery School to the Junior school and currently, at the end of Key Stage 1, have to apply for a place for their Key Stage 2 education.



Following a series of collaborative discussions, between the, governing bodies, school leaders', Church of England Diocese of Leeds and the LA, and an exploration in outline of what is technically possible to support the best educational outcomes for children, the proposals below have been shaped.

3. Amalgamating Honley CE (VC) Infant and Nursery School and Honley CE (VC) Junior School

The council has a policy to explore opportunities for reducing transition points and has worked with school leaders, governing bodies and, where applicable, the Church of England Diocese of Leeds to establish all-through primary schools. The establishment of all-through primary schools is intended to improve the educational standards attained by children through better and more flexible management of learning, without a change of

school at age 7 (for further rationale see appendix 1). Single all-through institutions can establish longer term relationships with pupils and families, provide more opportunities for staff development and better manage resources to support learning and smooth transition to each stage of learning.

By bringing the schools together there would be the opportunity to harness the existing strengths of both schools to support the educational outcomes for children.

- The schools currently work together to ensure a smooth transition for pupils from KS1 to KS2. Amalgamating the schools into a single organisation would deepen the quality of transition at each Key Stage and enable increased opportunities for older pupils to support the younger children throughout their time within the primary setting.
- At present the Junior School staff is involved in the assessment of year 2 writing at the end of Key Stage 1. Moderation activities take place across year groups during the course of the year. The SENCOs work together throughout the year within the Honley partnership to assess the needs of SEN children and to share good practice and develop programmes for individual children.
- The schools work in partnership to support vulnerable families through multi agency meetings. Safeguarding leads work closely together on a day-to-day basis to ensure the safety and well-being of all children.
- Shared training for Governors has included training on the new Ofsted Framework (2015) and SIAMS Training. Parents/carers from both schools have worked together to organise joint fundraising events including The Summerfest which is a large community arts event.
- Separate admissions applications at age seven will not be necessary and any uncertainty about transfer between the schools would be removed

Therefore, to formalise, these arrangements it is proposed to amalgamate the two schools by working in collaboration with Church of England Diocese of Leeds who would propose an all-through voluntary controlled primary school with nursery education.

The amalgamated school would continue to be housed in the existing site and buildings that are currently used for Honley CE(VC) Infant and Nursery School and Honley CE(VC) Junior School. Officers would work collaboratively with the schools to support bringing them together as a single all-through school;

- To cater for pupils aged 3 to 11
- With a PAN of 66 for 4-7 year olds and 68 for 7-11 year olds, retaining 470 primary school places.
- Retaining the 48 part-time early learning places for nursery children aged 3-4 years.

4. The legal route for amalgamation

It is possible to amalgamate Honley CE (VC) Infant and Nursery School and Honley CE (VC) Junior School, resulting in a new voluntary controlled Church of England primary school as there is a reorganisation of Church of England voluntary controlled places as well as bringing together separate Junior and Infant and Nursery schools;

Section 11 proposals ¹

Any persons ('proposer') e.g. LA or diocese may publish a proposal, at any time, for a new school outside of the free school presumption and competitions process under section 11 of Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The Secretary of State's consent is not required in the case of proposals for:

- a new community or foundation primary school to replace a maintained infant and a maintained junior school;*
- a new voluntary-aided school in order to meet demand for a specific type of place e.g. places to meet demand from those of a particular faith;*
- a new foundation or voluntary school resulting from the reorganisation of existing faith schools in an area, including an existing faith school losing or changing its religious designation;*
- a new foundation or community school, where there were no suitable free school proposals and a competition has been held but did not identify a suitable provider;*
- a former independent school wishing to join the maintained sector; and*
- a new LA maintained nursery school.*

(Department for Education Guidance: 2016)

Department for Education Guidance explains that there are two ways to 'merge' or 'amalgamate' two or more existing maintained schools:

- The LA or governing body (depending on school category) can publish a proposal to close two (or more) schools and the LA or a proposer other than the LA (e.g. diocese, faith or parent group, Trust) depending on category, can publish a proposal to open a new school. This results in a new school number being issued.*
- The LA and/or governing body (depending on school category) can publish a proposal to close one school (or more) and enlarge/change the age range/transfer site (following a statutory process as/when necessary) of an existing school, to accommodate the displaced pupils. The remaining school would retain its original school number, as it is not a new school, even if its phase has changed.*

(Department for Education Guidance: 2016)

The most equitable way to amalgamate Honley CE (VC) Infant and Nursery School and Honley CE (VC) Junior School would be to establish a new replacement school. Therefore, the linked statutory proposals that would be required to bring the schools together are:

- The Diocesan Board of Education within the Diocese of Leeds would propose a new replacement all-through Church of England primary school. The new school would continue in the existing buildings and on the same sites.*
- The LA would propose the technical 'closure' of Honley CE (VC) Infant and Nursery School and Honley CE (VC) Junior School.*

5. The statutory process

School organisation decisions have to follow a process set out by law. The Council has to have due regard to legislation and follow the statutory processes in respect of these proposals. The relevant legislation is:

¹ Opening and closing maintained schools -statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers

Part 2 and Schedule 2 of the Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006 as amended by the Education Act (EA) 2011 and *The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013*.

The required statutory process has five stages that are summarised below.

- Stage 1 – Statutory Consultation
- Stage 2 – Publication of proposals
- Stage 3 - Representation
- Stage 4 - Decision
- Stage 5 - Implementatio

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010 places the Council under a duty - the Public Sector Equality Duty to have due regard to the need to achieve equality objectives when carrying out its functions. An initial Equalities and Community Cohesion Impact Assessment has been carried out on the proposals. The following is a short initial analysis of the likely changes arising from the revised proposals.

The proposal to amalgamate existing provision is intended, and is very likely to have a positive impact for pupils and their families living in the local area because the aims are to retain and strengthen existing Church of England Voluntary Controlled places where they are needed, in line with the pupil demographic.

The proposal to bring the schools together and create a primary school is intended to have a positive impact for pupils attending the schools because the aims are to provide continuity of education in an all-through primary school up to the end of Key Stage 2 to support an improvement in educational standards.

No adverse impacts are highlighted as part of this proposal.

The initial EIA can be found here

<https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/youkmc/deliveringServices/impactAssessments/impactassessments.asp>

A further EIA will be required following the proposed consultation and will continue to be revised in the light of any decision taken by Cabinet

7. Implications for the Council

7.1 Council priorities

Council policies affected by this proposal include the Children & Young People Plan. The proposals will support the Council priorities which are:

Health and wellbeing in Kirklees: By 2020, no matter where they live, we want people in Kirklees to live their lives confidently, in better health, for longer and experience less inequality.

A strong economy for Kirklees: We want Kirklees to be recognised as the best place to do business in the north of England and as a result, one where people prosper and flourish in all of our communities.

7.2 Human Resources implications

There are likely to be Human Resource implications resulting from these proposals, to support positive arrangements to retain staff as part of amalgamating schools. Kirklees HR officers will provide technical advice and support any processes where required.

7.3 Financial Implications

7.3.1 Revenue

The education budget that the Council receives from government can only be spent on education – so the proposals have no revenue impact for the Council. The budget received by a school is mainly determined by the number of pupils and this is not intended to change as a result of these proposals. Locally, individual schools receive annual lump sum funding of £130,000. When an amalgamation happens the continuing school receives the £130,000 lump sum as normal but also receives reducing transitional funding support linked to the previous number of school lump sums for a maximum of four years following the merger to phase out the previous level of funding. Where there are two schools amalgamating as for this proposal the transitional funding will be for three years.

7.3.2 Capital

There are no capital implications arising from this proposal.

8. Consultees and their opinions

The specific proposals have been shaped by the governing bodies and school leaders in the schools working together with the LA . The Leeds Diocesan Board of Education and its officers have had regular discussions with officers of Kirklees Council about the proposals. The policy of Kirklees Council to explore opportunities for reducing transition points is supported by the Leeds Diocesan Board of Education. Officers have collaborated previously in establishing all through CE VC primary schools and have proven protocols to support the whole school community and local families through the process of change in order to achieve this end for the long term benefit for all pupils

It is intended to carry out a full consultation about the proposals involving all key stakeholders including: parents and carers, Governing Bodies, school staff, schools in the local area, ward members, wider community stakeholders and other interested parties. The responses received as part of this consultation would be reported to members to inform a decision on the next steps.

9. Next steps

Subject to decisions made by Cabinet, the indicative timeline for the next stages of the statutory processes are set out below:

Activity	Date
Cabinet Report seeking permission to begin consultation as part of the statutory processes	October 2016
6 week statutory consultation collaboration with the Diocesan Board of Education within the Diocese of Leeds	October - December 2016
Outcome report to cabinet and approval to next stage* 2	January 2017
Publication of notices and 4 week representation period*	January - February 2017
Final decision by Cabinet*	April 2017
Implementation*	From 1 st May 2017

2 * These dates are subject to Cabinet approval and may change.

10. Officer recommendations and reasons

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1** Acknowledge the strong collaborative approach demonstrated between governing bodies and school leaders, providers and the LA that have enabled the development of proposals for consultation that seek to secure the provision of learning places to meet the needs of families and the community.
- 10.2** Authorise officers to develop plans for consultation about proposals that support a community wide approach to making sure there are enough high quality learning places to serve the families in the area by;
- Amalgamating Honley CE (VC) Infant and Nursery School and Honley CE (VC) Junior School by working in collaboration with the Diocesan Board of Education within the Diocese of Leeds to propose a voluntary controlled all-through primary school with early education and childcare. The amalgamated school would continue to be on the existing sites and in buildings that are currently used for Honley CE (VC) Infant and Nursery School and Honley CE (VC) Junior School;
 - to cater for pupils aged 3 to 11
 - with a PAN of 66 for Key Stage 1 and a PAN of 68 for Key Stage 2,
 - retaining the 48 part-time early learning places for nursery children aged 3-4 years. Opportunities to further develop early learning and childcare services to meet future demand, including that presented by the introduction of 30 hours free childcare, and, two year olds eligible to free early education, are not precluded by these proposals.
- 10.3** Delegate authority to the Director for Children and Young People in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio lead to:-
- Engage and liaise with all stakeholders and where applicable in conjunction with the Diocesan Board of Education within the Diocese of Leeds.
 - Develop consultation materials on the basis of the proposals
 - Organise and carry out statutory consultation and engagement
- 10.4** Require officers to report the outcomes of the consultation to Cabinet for further consideration of the next steps.

11. Cabinet Portfolio Holder Recommendation

As a Council we are committed to improving the quality of education in our primary schools to give every child the best possible start.

We find that children are most likely to learn best when they are comfortable and settled in their schools with the teachers and staff that they know and when their parents have confidence in the school. It is clear that changing schools at age 7, to go from an Infant School to a Junior School is an unnecessary transition for children and families, which can hold up learning and progress until children settle in their new surroundings. While many children do adapt very quickly to these changes some take longer.

In principle, therefore, we are seeking, wherever possible, to change separate infant and junior schools into “all-through” primary schools that cater for children from age 3 up to age 11 as we think that this would give every youngster the best opportunities to achieve their potential. All-through schools can also bring other benefits and opportunities for pupils, families, staff and the community.

We would want to reassure parents that we are proposing to bring together Honley CE (VC) Infant and Nursery School and Honley CE (VC) Junior School into one school so that families would gain the advantages of having a single school which would build on the strengths that currently exist.

For these reasons we support the officer recommendations to carry out statutory consultation about the proposals and look forward to hearing people's view as part of this process.

12. Contact officer

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The Educational Benefits of All-Through Primary Schools

Improved continuity and progress from Early Learning and Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 through smoother transition. For example, a single school would have common approaches to curriculum planning, assessment, record keeping and target setting. Staff have longer to get to know the children. Most importantly, the school would have a shared understanding of standards and expectations.

More flexibility and opportunities to meet individual pupil needs by tailoring learning experiences. For example, Year 3 children who require further experience of the Key Stage 1 curriculum and more able Year 2 children requiring the challenge of the Key Stage 2 programmes can be catered for. It means a wider range of resources can be shared and common themes developed across the school. This curriculum flexibility can be particularly important for children with Special Educational Needs.

More opportunities for social development. For example, older children can have some appropriate pastoral responsibility for younger children, which can impact positively on whole school behaviour and children's self-esteem. Vulnerable children and their parents and carers have greater security from a consistency of staff and provision.

More consistency in terms of policies and practice. The school improvement agenda is led by a single leadership team and governing body.

Closer contact for parents and carers with school staff over a longer period of time. A more continuous relationship between the school, parents, carers and outside agencies can ensure that all pupils, but particularly those with special needs, are supported effectively from the Foundation Stage through to the end of Year 6.

More opportunity for children to attend the same school as older or younger brothers and sisters.

The school could provide a greater range of professional development opportunities for teachers. This could include the appointment of curriculum co-ordinators with the time to oversee the effective development and teaching of individual subjects across the whole 3–11 age range

Greater flexibility that a 3–11 school has in organising classes, deploying teachers and support staff and using resources, including buildings, more effectively

Increased opportunities for staff to work with a larger team, thus supporting professional development and providing further opportunities to take on new responsibilities. Staff to gain experience across all stages (EY, KS 1 & 2) to enhance future progression plans

More effective use of the accommodation, facilities and resources.

Reduced duplication and economies of scale in the management of budgets