

Kirklees School Organisation Advisory Group - 22 June 2021

1. Introductions, membership, apologies

Present: Cllr Carole Paterson (Chair)
Cllr Viv Kendrick
Cllr Elizabeth Smaje
Cllr Adam Gregg
Cllr Yusra Hussain
Lysa Upham (Head Teacher, East Bierley CE (VC) Primary School and Chair of Kirklees Primary Heads)

LA Officers in Support: Jo-Anne Sanders (Service Director - Learning and Early Support)
Martin Wilby (Head of Education Places and Access)
Jane Lima (School Organisation & Planning Manager)
Shahzia Ashraf (School Place Planning Officer)

Proposer: Aidan Blackburn (Head Teacher of St John's CE (VC) Infant School)
Vicki Nordoff (Chair of Governors at St John's CE (VC) Infant School)
Adrienne Hatfield (Bursar at St John's CE (VC) Infant School)

Apologies: Cllr Kath Pinnock
Richard Noake (Diocesan Director of Education, Church of England Diocese of Leeds)

2. Overview of the meeting:

To review the representations received from the published statutory notice on a statutory proposal made by the Governing Body of St John's CE (VC) Infant School to change the upper age range to become an all through primary school.

- The Governing Body St John's CE (VC) Infant School propose to change the age range from 4-7 years to 4-11 years.

The purpose of SOAG is to review statutory processes, to offer guidance and make recommendations to Kirklees Council Cabinet who are the decision makers.

3. St. John's CE (VC) Infant School (the Proposer).

a. Review of statutory processes using the checklists

1. CONSULTATION

1.3g Evidence that interested parties have been consulted. (any trade unions who represent staff at the schools; and representatives of any trade union of any other staff at schools who may be affected by the proposals;) The LA

asked if Trade Unions were formally consulted. The Proposer said that a copy of the proposal was not sent to Trade Unions. Staff at St John's CE (VC) Infant School were asked individually if they wanted Trade Union representation present at the staff meeting but this was declined by the staff. It was therefore noted that there was gap in terms of consulting with representatives of any trade union of any other staff at schools who may be affected by the proposals.

1.4 Evidence that interested parties have been consulted (Have pupils been formally consulted?) It was acknowledged that this there was wide engagement with pupils of the school.

2. PUBLICATION

2.7 Has the council's legal team advised on the validity of the Statutory Notices? It was acknowledged that legal advice had been taken which confirmed the statutory notice is compliant with the regulation in terms of the prescribed alteration to change the age range of St John's CE (VC) Infant School. However, it was highlighted that, whilst included in the statutory notice, the proposed reduction in Published Admission Number (PAN) is not a prescribed alteration and cannot be changed via this statutory process. If the statutory proposal is approved, a separate process would need to be followed to vary the PAN.

3. REPRESENTATION

It was confirmed the process had been followed correctly.

4. DECISION

The LA is the decision-maker and must make a decision on the proposal within two months of the end of the representation period. SOAG members will determine if there is sufficient information presented by the Proposer for Cabinet to make a decision.

b. Review of representations received

The Proposer gave a detailed breakdown of the number of representations received and details of whether they supported or opposed the proposal.

c. Review of factors from DfE guidance to be considered in making the decisions.

CONSIDERATION OF CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION PERIOD

The gap in engagement with trade unions representing staff at schools who may be affected by the proposals.

More detail was requested as to how the proposals have been revised and developed since the non-statutory consultation, along with the themes from the non-statutory consultation that influenced these changes. The Proposer acknowledged that this is a standalone proposal to increase the upper age range of St John's CE (VC) Infant School and is led by the governing body. The proposals specifically related to St John's CE (VC) Infant School have not changed since the non-statutory consultation.

A member of SOAG noted the strong support for the proposal from parents and carers but queried whether any of them had asked what impact the

reduction in PAN from 60 to 30 might have on younger siblings being admitted to the school. The Proposer said that this had not been raised as a concern by any parents.

RELATED PROPOSALS

These proposals do not relate to other proposals

CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

Conditional approval remains an option available to decision makers

EDUCATION STANDARDS AND DIVERSITY OF PROVISION

Clarification about the following statement that refers to a document which does not contain any reference towards reducing transition points or creating through primary schools.

'At St John's we fully support parents' views and the intentions of Kirklees to reduce transition points for children by creating through primary schools rather than separate infant and junior schools. As an LA, Kirklees' intentions have been stated within School Place Planning, 2020 -2023, securing sufficient, high quality, learning and childcare places.'

The Proposer noted this was a statement made in the Cabinet Report of 14 Jan 2020 on reorganisation in the Dewsbury West school place planning area where it states that the council is supportive of opportunities to explore options for reducing transition points. LA Officers clarified the council does not have a specific policy but is generally supportive of opportunities to explore options for reducing transition points when proposals are self-funded by schools, provide a whole school system solution and a long-term sustainable model for each school.

The Proposer explained that they have a good working relationship with Westmoor Primary school when planning for transition of their pupils, including regular contact with staff at Westmoor Primary School, sharing of data, and additional transition visits for children who need them. The pandemic has made this more difficult this year. The pupils from St John's CE (VC) Infant School are integrated into classes with existing pupils at Westmoor Primary School.

The Proposer suggested that children who leave their school at the end of key stage 1 struggle emotionally and mentally when they transition to a new school where the other pupils have been together during key stage 1. The Proposer cited an article from Fischer Family Trust which said that children who have attended separate infant and junior schools attain two to three grades lower at key stage 4 than children who have attended through primary schools. A SOAG member asked if this was based on outcomes at key stage 1, which can be higher than at through primaries. They noted that there is always a dip in attainment data in year 3, even at through primaries, as children move from key stage 1 to key stage 2. The Proposer said that

parents were commenting from the perspective of children's social and emotional development, rather than their academic attainment.

The Proposer explained that the school have agreed to buy into the Kirklees Learning Partnership package of three visits per year to support staff as the school transitions to retaining pupils in key stage 2.

The Proposer is working on mapping staffing structure and the skills needed to build towards key stage 2 teaching, this includes curriculum planning for years 3 and 4.

SOAG members wanted more details analysis of this and ask the Proposer to submit more information on how the school will plan for key stage 2 and the proposed staffing structure to support these plans.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ISSUES

SOAG members recognised that the school is inclusive and supports a diverse range of families.

A SOAG member queried how much of a priority a faith school is for parents and whether the fact they are moving their children to Westmoor Primary School means they are prioritising reducing transition points. The Proposer noted that in a parent survey 61% of parents said it was essential that their children attend a faith-based school. The Proposer explained that parents move children mid-year so that can they start attending Westmoor Primary School earlier (especially if they already have older siblings attending), or to move their children to another small faith-based provision.

SOAG members wanted more detailed analysis about these in-year moves.

The meeting ended due to time. It was agreed to meet on the 25 June 2021 to continue review the Factors and for SOAG members to make recommendations to Cabinet.

Kirklees School Organisation Advisory Group - 25 June 2021

1. Introductions, membership, apologies

Present:

- Cllr Carole Paterson (Chair)
- Cllr Elizabeth Smaje
- Cllr Adam Gregg
- Cllr Yusra Hussain
- Lysa Upham (Head Teacher, East Bierley CE (VC) Primary School and Chair of Kirklees Primary Heads)

LA Officers in Support: Jo-Anne Sanders (Service Director - Learning and Early Support)
Martin Wilby (Head of Education Places and Access)
Jane Lima (School Organisation & Planning Manager)
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Proposer: Aidan Blackburn (Head Teacher of St John's CE (VC) Infant School)
Vicki Nordoff (Chair of Governors at St John's CE (VC) Infant School)

Apologies: Cllr Viv Kendrick
Adrienne Hatfield (Bursar at St John's CE (VC) Infant School)

Richard Noake (Diocesan Director of Education, Church of England Diocese of Leeds) sent his apologies and a statement:

"The diocese would ideally have wanted to have been in attendance, but a series of challenging matters and previous diary commitments have conspired against us. Our absence should not be seen as a lack of commitment or disinterest. We are supportive of the work of the school in putting forward this proposal."

COMMUNITY COHESION

The Proposer described their local partnership working with the Dewsbury Learning Partnership; the church schools partnership, the Diocese of Leeds and local churches; and the strong relationships between the administration teams at St John's CE(VC) Infant School and Boothroyd Primary Academy. This partnership working is something they want to develop further and which they feel will continue regardless of the outcome of their proposal.

A SOAG member asked what parent 'buy-in' to school is like. The Proposer explained that it takes a long time to build relationships with parents, which are then lost at the end of KS1 when the children move. They feel they would have a stronger PTA if parents had a longer relationship with the school, which could have a positive impact on generating additional funds for the school. The school would like to encourage more parental engagement with school as a lot of local parents' own experiences of school have been negative. The school also wants to continue to further build relationships with parents of children attending St John's Under 5's Pre-school.

SOAG questioned the Proposer about the future working relationships with the local schools in the area should the proposal be approved and be detrimental to another school. The Proposer explained that the school has a good working relationship with the Westmoor Primary School and the two schools would put any difference of opinion behind them and continue to work together for the good of the children.

The Proposer was asked if the school has been in contact with any other infant school that had become an all through primary school to seek guidance about the challenges. The Proposer has been in contact with All Hallows CE (VA) Primary School, which was an infant school and became an all-through primary school.

LA Officers queried how many of the challenges described are really dependent on becoming a through primary school and were there other strategies that could be explored. The Proposer said that they didn't think they were dependent on becoming a through primary, but it was one factor.

TRAVEL AND ACCESSIBILITY

The Proposer explained that if the proposal was implemented there would be a bulge year with 70 additional pupils on site. To reduce the traffic the school would implement a number of different measures, including working with Crow Nest Park to seek access to their car park and renting bikes to children to attend school. The school has learnt during the pandemic how to successfully stagger start and finish times to reduce traffic in the area. Although there will be more children on site, they will be less likely to be travelling between two different schools which will reduce traffic.

SOAG pointed out that Westmoor Primary School is only 0.2 miles away and asked if the Proposer could evidence what they were saying in terms of additional traffic. The Proposer responded that they have nothing on paper – it is based on what parents with siblings at Westmoor Primary School tell them.

A SOAG member suggested that the school look into the Modeshift Stars programme to help school with reducing congestion during school time.

FUNDING

The Proposer accepted the LA Officer comment that reducing the school's PA to 30 would not result in '40 excess applications' for other local schools. They understand there is no basic need demand for additional key stage 2 places in the Dewsbury West planning area, however, they say there is a financial need for St John's CE (VC) Infant School to become a through primary.

The proposer submitted a teaching staff model with estimated costs to add to income models previously supplied. They explained that movement of pupils mid-year is impacting on the school's budget. They have reduced from six classes to five for 2021/22, so have made savings on staffing costs but not on other overheads as they still have a large school building to run. The Proposer outlined that as a small infant school they are disproportionately affected by how SEN funding works. It takes time to identify a child as have SEN and a lot of different strategies and interventions are tried first before reaching the stage where a child is assessed for an EHCP. The school has to fund the first £6,000 of SEN support. Children often don't get EHCPs until they are in Year 2

and, therefore, St John's CE (VC) Infant School never receives any funding for these children because they leave at the end of key stage 1.

SOAG members noted that the financial information provided by the Proposer only included income projections, not expenditure. The Proposer explained that projected staffing costs over the transition period are shown in the document detailing the proposed staffing structure for the transition to becoming a through primary school (reference). They also noted that the figures provided for building work and equipping new classrooms in the table under the 'School Premises and Playing Fields' factor are taken from quotes provided by contractors/suppliers.

A SOAG member noted that the proposal will not change the number of children requiring school places in the local area and that if St John's CE (VC) Infants School's funding increases, it means other schools will lose funding. The Proposer acknowledged this but said that other schools could reduce that loss by increasing their PAN at key stage 1.

An LA Officer confirmed it was the case that if St John's CE (VC) Infant School's income increases (as shown in the proposer's income statements), other schools' income will decrease as a similar number of pupils remain in the system. They also confirmed that the School Finance Team view was that income estimates provided by the Proposer were reasonable.

RIGHTS OF APPEAL AGAINST A DECISION

The Church of England diocese or the school governing body have a right of appeal to the Schools Adjudicator against a decision made by the LA decision makers.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Proposer has provided additional information about the curriculum plan for key stage 2, along with a proposed staffing structure and implementation costs (reference). Further details about implementation are covered under other decision-making factors.

MODIFICATION POST DETERMINATION

This remains an option in the future

REVOCATION OF PROPOSALS

This remains an option in the future

LAND AND BUILDINGS

Not applicable

VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS

Not applicable

SCHOOL PREMISES AND PLAYING FIELDS

The Proposer stated that they have provided realistic, reliable figures for building work based on actual quotes. All children will be able to see a whiteboard irrespective of the classroom layout as they are able to have two linked whiteboards in a classroom. Classrooms in the school are large with the smallest being 65m². The ratio of toilets required is 1:20 and, based on this, the school would need 13 toilets at the peak of transition to becoming a through primary. The school currently has 12 toilets and the proposed building work would increase this to 18.

The Proposer confirmed the Diocese has approved the change of use for the caretaker's house and planning permission was obtained from Kirklees Council in September 2019.

e. Final conclusions and recommendations

SOAG agreed that having considered the statutory proposal by the Governing Body of St John's CE (VC) Infant School the following further information is needed in order for cabinet to be able to make a decision:

- Evidence of engagement with Trade Unions, post the representation period
- Further financial information including income and expenditure and different models/scenarios
- Further clarity on the available evidence which underpins the educational benefits of the proposal
- The Proposer to submit written evidence of planning permission and building related permissions from the Diocese.
- The Proposer to submit written quotes for the proposed building work.
- Work with officers to better demonstrate the likely impact on other schools including evidence of past pupil movement