

Name of meeting: Children's Scrutiny Panel
Date: 13th March 2020
Title of report: Almondbury Community School update

Purpose of report: To provide Children's Scrutiny panel with an update on the implementation of the Council's decision to change the age range of Almondbury Community School from the 1st September 2020.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	n/a
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)</u> ?	Key Decision – n/a Private Report/Private Appendix – n/a
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not Applicable
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Jo-Anne Sanders (for Mel Meggs) – 03/03/20
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?	n/a
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	n/a
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Carole Pattison – Learning and Aspiration Cllr Viv Kendrick – Children's Services

Electoral wards affected: Almondbury

Ward councillors consulted: Ward members are receiving regular updates

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? GDPR has been considered. The information in this report does not identify any individuals.

1. Summary

A report was provided to Children's Scrutiny panel on 16th December 2020 outlining the progress made in implementing the decision to remove the secondary phase of Almondbury Community School by 1st September 2020.

This report aims to provide Children's Scrutiny panel with a further update on progress including information previously requested about the Academy Trust sponsoring Newsome High School and Almondbury Community School as a Primary School.

2. Current position

Working in partnership with Almondbury Community School, King James's School, Netherhall High School and Newsome High School

The partnership between Kirklees, Almondbury Community School, King James's School, Netherhall High School and Newsome High School remains positive with all parties committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for all pupils affected by the closure of the secondary phase of ACS.

This has resulted in decisions being made across a number of areas of this programme of work, details of which are included in this report.

Allocation of school places for current pupils at Almondbury Community School (current years 7 to 10) from September 2020

All parents who submitted a preference were offered a place for their child at their preferred school from September 2020.

Where a preference was not submitted extensive support was offered to ensure to parental/carer preference was considered and that the child was offered a school place.

Remaining pupils were auto allocated a place in their PAA school, in all cases this resulted in a place being offered at King James's.

There is currently one child who has yet to be allocated a place for September, but this is due to them currently being involved in another process. Monitoring of this case continues, and support will be provided if required.

All the partner schools have been fully involved in this process and plans for transition are well underway. Communications directly from the chosen schools are expected during March which will include information about parental engagement opportunities.

Uniform support

Parents of children who have moved schools in-year have been contacted regarding provision of a contribution towards the cost of uniforms already purchased and these payments are currently being processed.

The process for providing items of uniform for pupils still to move has been agreed and information about this shared with affected parents. Free uniform vouchers will be issued to parents before the planned transition for their child/ren.

Admissions Arrangements

Following temporary changes to priority admission areas agreed by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for September 2020, steps have been taken to normalise these arrangements for 2021 onwards.

Following the required consultation, the proposal for King James's School change to their catchment area (PAA) to include the primary admission areas of Almondbury Community School and All Hallows' CE(VA) Primary School was agreed in February 2020.

Following the required local authority consultation the proposals to changes the catchment areas of Newsome High School to include Lowerhouses CE(VC) Junior, Infant and Early Years School primary catchment area and Netherhall Learning Campus High School to include parts of Moldgreen Community Primary School primary catchment area were agreed at cabinet on Tuesday 25th February 2020.

Staffing/HR

Briefings have taken place with all Almondbury Community School staff, keeping them updated on the process going forward.

All staff have been aligned to either the primary or secondary phase based on where they carried out the whole or majority of their duties within the school. Staff received individual letters advising them of the phase to which they had been aligned and were given a period of time to consider this and discuss if they had queries. This period has now ended, and subsequently staff are now aligned to either the primary or secondary phase.

Primary phase staff will be engaged in a formal consultation about a new staffing structure to be implemented for September 2020, the consultation will be starting in early March. The proposed structure for the primary phase for September 2020 has been discussed and agreed by the Interim Executive Board and this has been shared with the trade unions and professional associations.

ACS Staff have been informed of a deployment agreement that has been agreed with the three partner schools, and have started to be given early access to vacancies. Vacant posts at King James's School, Netherhall Learning Campus High School and Newsome High School have been shared with secondary phase staff providing them with an opportunity to apply for suitable positions ahead of wider advertising. Further opportunities are expected to follow.

Ofsted monitoring

Following the Ofsted monitoring visit that took place at ACS on the 12th and 13th November 2019 the outcome was published on 19th December 2019 in the form of a letter to the school. The inspector concluded "Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures" and the local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose and that the school's improvement plan is fit for purpose

The full letter is available at the following link:

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/28/107758>

The Academy Trust sponsoring Newsome High School and Almondbury Community School as a Primary School

Scrutiny previously requested information about Impact Multi Academy Trust, the Academy Trust that has been approved as sponsor for both Newsome High School and Almondbury Community School as a Primary school.

Impact currently have the following schools in their Academy Trust;

Calderdale

The Halifax Academy – for 4 to 16 year olds

Ofsted rating: Good September 2017

Founding Academy in Impact Education MAT: September 2016

Warley Road Academy – for 4-11-year olds plus Nursery
Ofsted rating: Good November 2017
Joined Impact Education MAT: March 2019

The Whitley AP Academy – Alternative Provision for 7-16 year olds
Ofsted rating: Good July 2017
Joined Impact Education MAT: August 2019

Kirklees

Castle Hall Academy - for 11 to 16 year olds
Ofsted rating: Not yet inspected (Predecessor Inadequate November 2016)
Joined Impact Education MAT: Sept 2018

Approved sponsor for Newsome High School, Almondbury Community School and Old Bank Junior, Infant and Nursery School.

Impact Multi Academy Trust has the following mission statement and vision;

Mission

Impact Education Multi Academy Trust is on a mission to improve the life chances of children and young people and improve social mobility for the disadvantaged.

Vision

A Trust where hearts and minds connect; values-driven partners who work collaboratively to ensure education impacts positively on students, families, communities and staff.

Impact is a values driven organisation with the belief that collaborative leadership and strong partnership development can lead to significant positive impact on the quality of education. We believe that this can happen without schools losing their own identity.

We are an organisation where Hearts and Minds Connect and have developed a culture and ethos that ensures children and young people achieve the very best outcomes whilst developing a life-long love of learning. We have high expectations academically but we also place a great emphasis on positive attitudes to learning and building effective relationships with others. Our children and young people are encouraged to develop themselves as fully rounded, emotionally intelligent individuals. Our people are highly valued and encouraged to take advantage of the wealth of developmental opportunities across the Trust.

<https://www.i-mat.org.uk/>

Colleagues from Impact have worked closely with officers in the Learning and Early support service since Castle Hall became part of their Trust in 2018. Impact continue to collaborate with officers and with the leaders of the schools that are to be sponsored by the Trust and are fully committed to partnership working to improve outcomes for children and their families.

Further information about the Academy Trust is available at the following link to their website <https://www.i-mat.org.uk/>.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1. Working with People

We are continuing to work with the partnership of local schools to plan smooth transition arrangements for all pupils to ensure that all children and young people enjoy the best possible standards of care and education in a school which is sustainable for the long term.

We continue to meet with a small group of parents, and we are ensuring that parents, staff and other key stakeholders are fully informed of progress through a robust plan of co-ordinated communication across the partnership of schools and continue to offer opportunities for questions to be asked and for any concerns to be raised.

3.2. Working with Partners

Regular meetings continue to be held with the Almondbury Community School Interim Executive Board and with leaders of local secondary schools regarding the future of the secondary school pupils.

Regular meetings are taking place with staff, school leaders and trade unions around ensuring that staff are clear on the process and are aware of opportunities available to them going forward.

We are continuing to build relationships with Impact Multi Academy Trust who are the future sponsor for Almondbury Community School and we are ensuring that they are included in discussions relating to the future of the school to ensure that the school meets the needs of the primary pupils and is sustainable in the long term.

3.3. Place Based Working

Following the recent preferencing exercise, all current Almondbury Community School pupils have been offered a place at their preferred local school.

We continue to work with the local partnership of schools to ensure that all local children have access to high quality educational opportunities.

3.4. Climate Change and Air Quality

The close collaboration between the partnership of schools have enabled parents to access schools local to where they live. This is supportive of enabling sustainable travel to schools.

3.5. Improving outcomes for children

Throughout programme of works involved, improving outcomes for children is at the heart of everything. In addition to ensuring that there are sufficient secondary places in the local area we continue to aim to maximise opportunities to:

- Offer high quality and inclusive education and diversity of provision to all
- Provide a breadth of curriculum offer that enables young people to have access to the widest opportunities to fulfil their aspirations and ambitions
- Be financially viable and therefore have future security
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Strengthen community cohesion
- Use sustainable travel and transport for school

3.6. Other (e.g. Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

Plans are in place for a cabinet process for consideration and approval of financial commitments relating to capital works in schools.

Work as outlined above relating to staffing and HR is underway and clear processes and timelines are being developed in line with agreed policy. Communications and engagement with staff is a priority and we are working with all affected staff to keep them fully informed, to ensure that they are aware of opportunities available and that that they are supported throughout the process where possible to reach an outcome that is right for them.

4. Consultees and their opinions

Communication with all stakeholders and keeping them up to date with progress and key milestones remains a priority.

A co-ordinated plan of communications to coincide with secondary school national offer day was devised in order to share key messages around plans for all King James's school year groups from September 2020.

Briefings and individual meetings have been held with staff at ACS and Trade Union colleagues are being kept fully involved in the HR process as it progresses.

Engagement opportunities are being planned for parents of pupils in each year group to give them the opportunity to ask further questions and raise any concerns they may have about the planned changes.

5. Next steps and timelines

- Continue to work with local schools on high quality transition arrangements for all ACS pupils
- Continue with the review of the primary phase staffing structure to ensure that it is fit for purpose for September 2020
- Continue to support staff aligned to the secondary phase with opportunities
- Issue school uniform payments as soon as possible and vouchers in advance of planned transitions
- Begin cabinet process to discuss and agree capital projects in partner schools going forward

6. Contact officer

Jo-Anne Sanders – Service Director Learning and Early Support
Jo-anne.sanders@kirklees.gov.uk

Martin Wilby – Senior Strategic Manager – Learning Places and Access
Martin.wilby@kirklees.gov.uk

7. Background Papers and History of Decisions

[Future Options for ACS - Cabinet Report - 19 March 2019 \(agenda item no 20\)](#)
(Background and seeking permission to consult)

[Future Options for ACS - Outcome Report for Cabinet 29 May 2019 \(agenda item no 9\)](#)
(Outcomes of the consultation and next steps including publication of statutory notices)

[Future Options for ACS - Final Decision report for Cabinet - 16 July 2019 \(agenda item no 8\)](#)
(Final decision)

[Call-in of Cabinet decision in relation to Almondbury Community School](#)
(Call-in in relation to the decision taken by Cabinet)

8. Service Director responsible

Jo-Anne Sanders – Service Director Learning and Early Support
Jo-anne.sanders@kirklees.gov.uk