

Future Organisation of Cannon Lane First School (4-7 Years) and Cannon Lane Junior School

Decision Makers Guidance

The decision maker for these statutory proposals is the local authority, and this report presents the proposals to Cabinet for determination. If the local authority fails to decide proposals within two months of the end of the representation period the local authority must forward proposals, and any received representations, to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for decision. This two month period will end on 18 June 2013.

Decision Makers are required to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State when they take a decision on proposals. The guidance documents are available on the School Organisation and Competitions Unit website at <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/schoolorganisation> and in Background Papers.

The format of this Appendix follows the framework of the guidance. The text in italics at the start of each section contains extracts from the guidance to assist members to understand the context.

Compliance with statutory requirements

There are 4 key issues which the Decision Maker should consider before judging the respective factors and merits of the statutory proposals:

1. Is any information missing?

If so, the Decision Maker should write immediately to the proposer/promoter specifying a date by which the information should be provided.

In order to make the nature of the proposals explicit and clear for all stakeholders, the notices and the complete proposals stated as full information as possible. It is considered that all necessary information was provided and made available for stakeholders and interested parties to see.

2. Does the published notice comply with statutory requirements?

The Decision Maker should consider whether the notice is valid as soon as a copy is received. Where a published notice does not comply with statutory requirements it may be judged invalid and the Decision Maker should consider whether they can decide the proposals.

Linked statutory proposals were published on 7 March 2013 with a statutory representation period of 6 weeks that if approved would effect the amalgamation of Cannon Lane First School (4-7 Years) and Cannon Lane Junior School to provide an all through primary school:

- a. A prescribed alteration to extend the age range of Cannon Lane First School (4-7 Years) to establish a primary school with an age range of 4 years (Reception) to 11 years (Year 6) from 1 September 2013;
- b. A prescribed alteration to expand the capacity of Cannon Lane First School (4-7 Years) from 1 September 2013;
- c. A notice to discontinue Cannon Lane Junior School on 31 August 2013.

The statutory proposals had the same closing date of 18 April 2013 for the representation periods.

3. Has the statutory consultation been carried out prior to the publication of the notice?

Details of the consultation must be included in the proposals. The Decision Maker should be satisfied that the consultation meets statutory requirements. If some parties submit objections on the basis that consultation was not adequate, the Decision Maker may wish to take legal advice on the points raised. If the requirements have not yet been met, the Decision Maker may judge the proposals to be invalid and needs to consider whether they can decide the proposals. Alternatively the Decision Maker may take into account the sufficiency and quality of the consultation as part of their overall judgement of the proposals as a whole.

A statutory consultation was held from Monday 14 January 2013 until Friday 8 February 2013. All applicable statutory requirements have been complied with in relation to the consultation on the proposals. The local authority has had regard to the Department for Education School Organisation and Competitions Unit guidance and the consultation document was sent to all interested parties in accordance with the guidance.

The consultation responses and outcomes (see 'Other issues' below) were reported to the Portfolio Holder for the decision made on 28 February 2013 to publish statutory proposals.

4. Are the proposals linked or “related” to other published proposals?

Any proposals that are “related” to particular proposals must be considered together. Generally, proposals should be regarded as “related” if they are included on the same notice (unless the notice makes it clear that the proposals are not “related”). Proposals should be regarded as “related” if the notice makes a reference to a link to other proposals (published under School Organisation and Trust regulations). If the statutory notices do not confirm a link, but it is clear that a decision on one of the proposals would be likely to directly affect the outcome or consideration of the other, the proposals should be regarded as “related”. Where proposals are “related”, the decisions should be compatible e.g. if one set of proposals is for the removal of provision, and another is for the establishment or enlargement of provision for displaced pupils, both should be approved or rejected.

Linked statutory proposals were published on 7 March 2013 that could effect the amalgamation of Cannon Lane First School (4-7 Years) and Cannon Lane Junior School to provide an all through primary school (see key issue 2 above).

Factors to be considered by decision makers

The factors contained in the Secretary of State’s guidance should not be taken to be exhaustive. Their importance will vary, depending on the type and circumstances of the proposals. All proposals should be considered on their individual merits.

The sections that follow contain information to assist Cabinet to determine how the proposals meet the factors the decision maker must have regard to in reaching a decision. Not all of the factors contained in the decision makers guidance are relevant to these proposals. For example: the proposals do not make changes to early years provision or nursery schools; there are no issues of poor performance; there are no post-16 implications; there is no change to school category; and there is no special educational needs reorganisation. The effect of the proposals is to establish an all through primary school, by amalgamating the two separate schools on the existing school site, that will be the same overall size and character, offering places to the existing pupils and serving the same area. The following sections, therefore, focus on relevant factors of the guidance.

A system shaped by parents

The Government's aim is to create a schools system shaped by parents which delivers excellence and equity. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 amends the Education Act 1996 to place duties on local authorities to secure diversity in the provision of schools and to increase opportunities for parental choice when planning the provision of schools in their areas. In addition, local authorities are under a specific duty to respond to representations from parents about the provision of schools, including requests to establish new schools or make changes to existing schools. The Government's aim is to secure a more diverse and dynamic schools system which is shaped by parents. The Decision Maker should take into account the extent to which the proposals are consistent with the new duties on local authorities.

Parents have shaped Harrow's schools system, and almost three quarters of the parents that gave written responses to the consultation were in favour of these proposals.

Strategic Approach to School Organisation

In 2002, the council undertook a debate on School Organisation in Harrow, the outcome of which was a consensus from stakeholders on three issues: to increase opportunities for early years; to increase choices and opportunities at post-16 including provision on school sites; and to change the age of transfer. The council has secured the provision for early years and post-16, and implemented changes to the ages of transfer in September 2010.

In October 2007, Cabinet agreed its strategic approach to school organisation and agreed a revised amalgamation policy. The council's amalgamation policy contributes to maintaining and improving the educational performance of Harrow schools and their pupils. In October 2008 Cabinet agreed a clarified amalgamation policy and implementation guidance.

Cannon Lane schools proposals

Parents and stakeholders have had the opportunity to contribute and shape the proposals for the Cannon Lane schools.

The statutory consultation was held from Monday 14 January 2013 until Friday 8 February 2013. The consultation paper was sent to all parents, members of staff and governors on 14 January 2013. Three open consultation meetings for parents, staff and governors of both schools were held, one on 21 January and two on 29 January 2013, to enable discussion. The proposal evaluation document was made available from the school offices and Harrow Council website, and was available at the parents meetings. Information about the responses to this consultation is given under 'Other issues' later in this Appendix.

The local authority received three representations from a parent during the representation period which ended on 18 April 2013. See 'Other issues' below.

Standards

The Government wishes to encourage changes to local school provision where it will boost standards and opportunities for young people, whilst matching school place supply as closely as possible to pupils' and parents' needs and wishes. Decision Makers should be satisfied that proposals for prescribed alterations will contribute to raising local standards of provision, and will lead to improved attainment for children and young people. They should pay particular attention to the effects on groups that tend to under-perform including children from certain ethnic groups, children from deprived backgrounds and children in care, with the aim of narrowing attainment gaps.

The council's amalgamation policy identifies a number of educational benefits arising from the creation of all through primary schools:

- Organisational structure is aligned with the National Curriculum Key Stages. Planning across Foundation, Key Stages 1 and 2 as a coherent whole for the primary phase provides greater flexibility across and between Key Stages.
- Reducing the number of changes for children in a school system strengthens continuity and progression for children and families in the primary phase, both in terms of the curriculum and pastoral experience. This reduction in the number of school moves is important, particularly for children with special educational needs.
- Greater opportunities are created for older children to take on responsibility. For younger children the presence of older children provides aspirational role models and also mentoring support.
- Teachers and classroom staff have access to the whole primary curriculum. This supports and informs whole school planning, assessment, pastoral systems, etc, and provides opportunities for wider staff development and experience across the full primary phase.
- Growing national evidence shows that all-through primary schools create more consistency between year groups and key stages in learning planning and assessment.

“Where primary education is provided in separate key stages, there is generally very little effective curriculum continuity and progression. In such situations the scope for discontinuity of learning is increased, together with the attendant, wasteful, repetitive teaching of subject content and learning experiences in the receiving key stage.” *Educational Management Information Exchange*

Harrow Schools are high performing and overall the local authority is above National Averages and above or in line with statistical neighbours. Harrow strives for continuous improvement and has set challenging targets for achievement. These proposals to create a combined school would contribute to improving standards by building on many aspects of the existing good practice in both schools.

The proposed all through Cannon Lane School would be a combined three-form entry school. All schools have their own distinct ethos and identity and relationship with their local community. These proposals would continue and develop further the existing good practices of these separate schools as a combined school.

Diversity

The Government's aim is to transform our school system so that every child receives an excellent education – whatever their background and wherever they live. A vital part of the Government's vision is to create a more diverse school system offering excellence and choice, where each school has a strong ethos and sense of mission and acts as a centre of excellence or specialist provision. Decision Makers should consider how proposals will contribute to local diversity. They should consider the range of schools in the relevant area of the local authority and whether the alteration to the school will meet the aspirations of parents, help raise local standards and narrow attainment gaps.

Schools in Harrow offer diversity to parents both in terms of ethos and size. Harrow has a Church of England primary school, a Hindu primary school and a Jewish primary school, six Roman Catholic primary schools and two Roman Catholic high schools. There is an all-through Hindu free school located in Harrow on a temporary basis. There are a range of sizes of schools in Harrow including one, two and three forms of entry combined schools, and two and three forms of entry separate infant and junior schools. There will be some four forms of entry separate infant and junior schools from September 2013 expanded as part of the primary school expansion programme. Increased self-governance is promoted within a collaborative whole-borough framework, for example through partnerships and soft and hard federations.

Harrow schools are popular and successful, but the profile of Harrow's population is changing and, to meet challenging targets to continue this status, schools need to evolve and innovate. The local authority is committed to developing a positive and proactive approach to: encourage greater self-governance in order to extend choice, diversity and fair access; raise standards as part of the transformation of education expected from investments; listening to parents and acting to promote diversity of school provision where this is appropriate.

A combined school would contribute to diversity by its model of governance and that its new organisation is aligned with parental aspirations.

Every Child Matters

The Decision Maker should consider how proposals will help every child and young person achieve their potential in accordance with Every Child Matters' principles which are: to be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution to the community and society; and achieve economic well-being. This should include considering how the school will provide a wide range of extended services, opportunities for personal development, access to academic and vocational training, measures to address barriers to participation and support for children and young people with particular needs, e.g. looked after children or children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities.

All schools offer extended services, and wrap around care, support for families and a wide range of opportunities are developed in all schools. These extended services also support the Narrowing the Gap agenda, and these proposals would provide opportunities to support these agendas.

An all through school would ensure the most effective and coordinated extended services support to families and children, and the use of school facilities. As a result of these proposals it is considered that it would be possible to build on the established best practice of both schools to promote access to extended services.

Equal opportunity issues

The Decision Maker should consider whether there are any sex, race or disability discrimination issues that arise from the changes being proposed, for example, that where there is a proposed change to single sex provision in an area, there is equal access to single sex provision for the other sex to meet parental demand. Similarly there needs to be a commitment to provide access to a range of opportunities which reflect the ethnic and cultural mix of the area, while ensuring that such opportunities are open to all.

These proposals do not make changes to equal access to school provision. The equality impact assessment indicates that the equalities impact of Cabinet's decision will be effectively neutral. No children would be displaced if the schools amalgamate or if they stay separate.

Need for places

Where proposals will increase provision, the Decision Maker should consider whether there is a need for the expansion and should consider the evidence presented for the expansion such as planned housing development or demand for provision. The Decision Maker should take into account not only the existence of spare capacity in neighbouring schools, but also the quality and popularity with parents of the schools in which spare capacity exists and evidence of parents' aspirations for places in the school proposed for expansion. The existence of surplus capacity in neighbouring less popular or successful schools should not in itself prevent the addition of new places.

These statutory proposals do not lead to the creation of additional places or to the loss of any places. The overall effect of the linked proposals is to create an all through school with the same number of places as the existing schools. No pupils would be displaced by the proposals.

To inform the management of school places, the local authority commissions pupil population projections for Harrow and monitors the pupil numbers in its schools. For the purposes of school place planning the Borough is divided into Planning Areas. Harrow Council manages the supply of places across the Borough and within Planning Areas, and proposals are brought forward to increase or reduce the supply of places accordingly. Harrow considers a range of options to manage the supply of school places, including temporary expansion, bulge year groups, and permanent expansion. Harrow has a primary school expansion programme and the first phase of primary school expansions from September 2013 has been approved by Cabinet. In November 2012, Cabinet agreed to bring forward statutory processes for a second phase of permanent expansions and work is being progressed to identify the schools that will be proposed for expansion.

The population projections indicate a growth in pupil numbers for Harrow that peaks in the primary sector around 2019. The Cannon Lane schools are located in the North West Primary Planning Area. The range of increased demand above current available permanent places in the North West Primary Planning Area is currently projected to be between an additional 70 and 97 pupils per year. The proposal for this planning area is to increase the permanent provision by 90 places, supplemented by temporary additional Reception classes. The local authority is currently considering how all schools in the area may contribute to meeting this demand.

Travel and Accessibility for All

In considering proposals for the reorganisation of schools, Decision Makers should satisfy themselves that accessibility planning has been properly taken into account. Facilities are to be accessible by those concerned, by being located close to those who will use them, and the proposed changes should not adversely impact on disadvantaged groups. In deciding statutory proposals, the Decision Maker should bear in mind that proposals should not have the effect of unreasonably extending journey times or increasing transport costs, or result in too many children being prevented from travelling sustainably due to unsuitable routes e.g. for walking, cycling etc. Proposals should also be considered on the basis of how they will support and contribute to the local authority's duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport to school.

As there are no proposals to change the overall size of the school or to change the site, these proposals would not affect journey times or lead to increased transport costs.

The combined school would build on the existing community use and extended school activities. Potential use of the school site by the community could be enhanced by the ability to plan for one school rather than two separate schools.

School category changes

No changes to school categories (e.g. no changes to become voluntary aided, foundation body, trust or academy) arise from these proposals.

Funding and land

The Decision Maker should be satisfied that any land, premises or capital required to implement the proposals will be available. Normally, this will be some form of written confirmation from the source of funding on which the promoters rely (e.g. the local authority, or Department for Education). In the case of a local authority, this should be from an authorised person within the local authority, and provide detailed information on the funding, provision of land and premises etc. Proposals should not be approved conditionally upon funding being made available, except for proposals being funded under the Private Finance Initiative or through the Building Schools for the Future programme.

The statutory proposals are not dependent on capital funding being available. If an all through school is established, a long-term strategy for the school site as a combined school would be required. The governing body and leadership team of a combined school would have to plan strategically in a cost effective manner in the best interests of the children in order to achieve positive outcomes for the children in the long term.

The Government has introduced significant changes to school funding and is moving towards a national funding formula. Under the Government's new funding formula the combining of two schools would result in the loss of one element of 'lump sum' funding allocated to schools. In 2013/14 the lump sum amount is £142,230. This money would be retained in that financial year if the schools combine, though current regulations specify that one lump sum would be lost in 2014/15 and for each year going forward if lump sum funding is retained by the Government. There has been a Department for Education (DfE) consultation with regards to the lump sum and school amalgamations and the government is currently reviewing this with regards to any changes for the 2014/15 school funding. The outcome from this consultation will be known later in the year. Current regulations specify that, if the schools were to remain as separate schools, each school would retain its 'lump sum' funding. Though this is a significant issue it may be considered that it would only put the combined school in the same position as existing all-through primary schools. There will be reductions in expenditure through having one headteacher post and the governing body of the combined school could make decisions that would achieve efficiencies. No other elements of the school budgets would change.

There are no capital receipts, new sites or playing fields, or land tenure arrangements arising from these proposals.

Special educational needs (SEN) provision

SEN provision, in the context of School Organisation legislation and the guidance, is provision recognised by the LA as specifically reserved for pupils with special educational needs. When reviewing SEN provision, planning or commissioning alternative types of SEN provision or considering proposals for change local authorities should aim for a flexible range of provision and support that can respond to the special educational needs of individual pupils and parental preferences, rather than necessarily establishing broad categories of provision according to special educational need or disability.

These statutory proposals do not involve a review of special educational needs provision, and the Special Educational Needs Improvement Test does not apply.

The two schools provide support for pupils with special educational needs for whom a mainstream school is appropriate and there are no proposals for this to be changed as a combined school. All pupils attending the schools would transfer to the all through school.

In an all through school, there may be benefits for pupils with special educational needs. There would be continuity in planning and support across all key stages. In addition, there could be greater consistency in the organisation and management of the schools, for example, behaviour policies, school rules, etc.

Other issues

The decision maker should consider the views of all those affected by the proposals or who have an interest in them. This includes statutory objections and comments submitted during the representation period. The decision maker should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view when considering representations made on proposals. Instead the decision maker should give the greatest weight to representations from those stakeholders likely to be most directly affected by the proposals.

The local authority received three representations during the representation period:

- a parent who feels that the two schools should not be combined;
- The Governing Body of Cannon Lane First School who confirm their view that the two schools should combine.
- the Governing Body of Cannon Lane Junior School who consider that combining the schools is not in the best interest of the children at Cannon Lane Junior School.

These representations are appended in full to this report. The reasons set out for these views are summarised below together with officer comment.

1. Parental representation

The parental representation is from an individual who feels that the two schools should not be combined and that it is beneficial for the schools to stay separate. The representation sets out reasons for this view that include: the First School provides an excellent start to the children's education in a safe and caring environment; the Junior School do a brilliant job of building the children's confidence in themselves and giving them more responsibility; both schools have their own identity which should be kept separate; concern that the numbers of children in the schools will increase affecting the school and the surrounding area.

Officer comment. It is considered the reasons stated include positive points about current provision at the school that can be retained and built upon in a combined school and the reasons do not represent compelling and overriding reasons not to combine the two schools. Increased demand for school places across London means that traditional views about the size of schools will be challenged.

2. Governing Body of Cannon Lane First School (4-7 Years)

Cannon Lane First School (4-7 Years) Governing Body considers it is in the best interests of the children that both schools should amalgamate for the following reasons:

- Transition between Years 2/3 (KS1/2) would be less stressful for children as they would no longer have to adapt to a 'different' school, causing less disruption and anxiety.
- Consistency in terms of leadership, expectation, teaching practice and standards would mean children experience the same ethos and programs of study throughout KS1 and 2.
- Staff would be able to transfer and teach across the curriculum stages and this would enhance CPD as well as enabling the sharing of 'best practice' from both schools, (as an example CLFS have just been awarded Flagship status for Inclusion). Also the potential opportunity for succession planning would be improved.

- The evidence from schools in the borough that have previously amalgamated, has on the whole impacted positively on the teaching and learning in those schools, improving outcomes for children.
- We believe that a strong school with excellent strategic leadership is in the best interests of the community it serves and we are committed to meeting the needs of our children and exploiting their full potential.

Officer comment. The reasons given by the Cannon Lane First School (4-7 Years) Governing Body for recommending amalgamation are in line with the educational rationale contained in the Council's Amalgamation Policy and are supported.

3. Governing Body of Cannon Lane Junior School

Cannon Lane Junior School Governing Body recommends that the schools stay separate. The Governing Body sets out its representations under four headings and attaches the detailed response it made to the statutory consultation. Officer comment is made to the representations below using the headings in the representations. The Governing Body's consultation response is then summarised and officer comment is made using the headings in the Governing Body's response letter.

Officer comment to the representations.

Procedure. When applying the Council's Amalgamation Policy the intention is that the processes are transparent and every effort is made to ensure this is so. The full version of the Cannon Lane Junior School Governing Body recommendation and consultation response document was provided to the Portfolio Holder for the decision about whether to publish statutory proposals. The Governing Bodies' recommendations and representations are included in full in this report for the key decision that Cabinet will make and these Cabinet papers are public.

The statutory proposals are completed using the Department for Education templates as set out in regulations and provide information as specified. Practice in Harrow has been to provide information in statutory proposals in the manner completed in the templates for the Cannon Lane schools. The section in the template about evidence of consultation specifies public consultation meetings and views of persons consulted and this is the focus of the information that is provided in the documentation.

Governing Body. The views of governing bodies are requested whenever the Council's Amalgamation Policy is applied. This reflects the importance given to the views of governing bodies and the value given to the contribution governors make to the high standards in Harrow schools.

Impact of children. The implications of the Government's new funding formula, resulting in the loss of a lump sum of £142,230 in financial year 2014/15 and annually thereafter if the position remains unchanged, was fully recognised in the consultation documentation and discussed at open meetings. Further comment is given below under 'Financial implications'.

School Size. The consultation and statutory proposals stated that any additional pupils admitted under the Primary School Expansion Programme would be decided separately from these proposals. Information was provided about the increased demand and the need to increase the permanent provision in the area, supplemented by temporary additional Reception classes. The statutory proposals stated that other schools in the North West and South West Primary Planning Areas are being considered for permanent expansion, and there are no current proposals to expand the Cannon Lane schools.

On 1 March 2013, as the statutory proposals were about to be published, the Government launched the Targeted Basic Need Programme and invited applications from local authorities for this additional funding of nearly £1 billion over the next two years. A letter was sent to all schools in Harrow and this was followed up by letters to specific schools that fit the criteria for the applications which includes the Cannon Lane schools. The Government requires applications to be submitted to a very tight timescale by 30 April 2013. The Government

criteria for this fund includes schools judged as Good or Outstanding, that are oversubscribed and are in areas of high demand. The Cannon Lane schools fit this criteria and, given the increasing local demand for places and the need to secure capital funding to provide the necessary high quality additional school places that will be required, this is considered to be a one-off opportunity that schools and the local authority cannot afford to miss in the interests of the children in the borough. At this stage there is no formal agreement to taking forward permanent expansion, and all due statutory processes of consultation and publication of proposals would be followed before decisions would be made about whether or not expansion should occur.

Cannon Lane Junior School Governing Body response to the statutory consultation

The governing body believes there are compelling and over-riding educational reasons for the schools to remain separate. The reasoning of the governors is set out under 10 headings and details their considerations. Much of their case points out the high quality of the attainments of the children and the provision at the Junior School and their concerns about these being jeopardised in the medium and potentially long-term as a result of amalgamation. Key points of their concerns include:

- The size of a combined school including the impact on personal relationships with the headteacher and loss of 'community feel' of the schools;
- retaining the £142k lump sum means more money is available to meet the needs of the children;
- risk that staff would leave (Junior School staff do not wish the schools to combine);
- turbulence generated by amalgamation could impact upon attainment and achievement at the school in the short / medium / long term;
- the Headteacher would become a more remote leader. No reason to change a very successful leadership structure;
- transition arrangements for pupils are highly successful;
- whole school assemblies are a critical element of the ethos and success of the Junior School;
- no funding allocated for building alterations;
- Junior School pupils wish the schools to remain separate;
- while recognising the Council's amalgamation policy, the changing educational landscape means the GB should be given the opportunity to make the decision about how the school is taken forward.

Officer comment on the Cannon Lane Junior School Governing Body response to the consultation

Officer comment is given below using the headings in the Governing Body response letter. It is judged that the issues raised would be addressed in the implementation action plan if the schools combine.

Size of the school

Combining two existing schools does not change the numbers of pupils and physical size of the school. Age appropriate curriculum and other arrangements would continue. Changes in staffing structures and management arrangements would occur over time and there would be sensitivity about the quality of relationships between the headteacher, staff, pupils and parents.

Financial implications

The implications of the Government's new funding formula, resulting in the loss of a lump sum of £142,230 in financial year 2014/15 and annually thereafter if the position remains unchanged, was fully recognised in the consultation documentation and discussed at open meetings.

Governing bodies are used to planning strategically and cost effectively within funding envelopes and efficiencies may be achieved across a combined school. If the schools amalgamate in September 2013 there would be time to plan and there would be no claw back of any element of the lump sum during this financial year. There has been a Department for Education (DfE) consultation with regards to the lump sum and school amalgamations and the government is currently reviewing this with regards to any changes in the 2014/15 school funding. The outcome from this consultation will be known later in the year.

Staffing

The Junior School Governing Body rightly recognises the commitment and expertise of the current staff and the positive outcomes achieved for the children. Combining two schools does not jeopardise this and a combined school will want to maintain and build on successful outcomes for the children. While it is recognised that change can bring uncertainties for staff and that some staffing restructure is likely for the running of the combined school, there is also the potential for enhanced opportunities for staff experience and development that may assist staff retention and recruitment. Any staff restructuring would be planned across the combined school and would be implemented in accordance with the Council's Protocol for Managing Organisational Change.

Attainment

The Proposal Evaluation document published for the consultation stated that the educational rationale set out in support of the amalgamation policy does not imply any criticism of the current arrangements at the two Cannon Lane schools. The intention would be to build on the many positives already in place at the schools and the organisational arrangements of a combined school would be planned in order to achieve this.

Leadership

It is acknowledged that leadership arrangements would change because there would be one headteacher for the combined school. However, appropriate management and communication structures in a combined school can help to ensure that effective leadership and relationships are in place.

Transition

The Proposal Evaluation document published for the consultation stated that the educational rationale set out in support of the amalgamation policy does not imply any criticism of the current arrangements at the two Cannon Lane schools. However good the transition arrangements between schools, amalgamation removes this issue.

Premises

Harrow Council is committed to supporting schools that amalgamate, as evidenced by capital works where appropriate to facilitate functioning as a combined school. The priority for schools capital spend has to be ensuring there are sufficient places for children in Harrow's schools, though every effort will be made to support essential premises development that may be identified. Cuts in public finances and delays in government announcements of schools capital funding has not been helpful for budget planning.

Opportunities for children

The Proposal Evaluation document published for the consultation stated that the educational rationale set out in support of the amalgamation policy does not imply any criticism of the current arrangements at the two Cannon Lane schools. An amalgamated school offers more opportunities for children across the artificial barrier of two separate schools.

Consultation responses

Summary information about the consultation responses is set out above for Cabinet to consider along with themes identified by Joint Steering Group members.

Current Educational Landscape

The Junior School Governing Body acknowledges that the Council's amalgamation policy has been followed. The Government reforms that are changing the educational landscape are recognised and are being considered by the local authority in discussion with schools. The governing body of a combined school would be able to consider the future direction of the school in the light of these changes more effectively than the governing bodies of two separate schools on the same site.

Summary outcome of the statutory consultation

The statutory consultation was held from Monday 14 January 2013 until Friday 8 February 2013. On 14 January 2013, Harrow Council sent the consultation paper to interested parties in accordance with the Department for Education School Organisation and Competitions Unit guidance. Information about the amalgamation policy, the consultation paper and proposal evaluation were also made available on the Harrow Council website. The two schools distributed the consultation paper and response form to all parents, members of staff and governors. Three open consultation meetings for parents, staff and governors of both schools were held, one on 21 January and two on 29 January 2013, to enable discussion.

Cannon Lane First School (4-7 Years) received 52 written responses to the consultation from parents and staff and other interested stakeholders:

	I support amalgamation	I want the schools to stay separate	I am not sure	Total
First School parent	19	3	1	23
Junior School parent	4	0	0	4
Parent in both schools	17	1	0	18
Member of staff in First School	6	1	0	7
Member of staff in Junior School	0	0	0	0
Other interested stakeholder:	0	0	0	0
Total	46	5	1	52
%	88.5%	9.6%	1.9%	100%

Cannon Lane Junior School received 101 written responses to the consultation from parents and staff:

	I support amalgamation	I want the schools to stay separate	I am not sure	Total
First School parent	3	1	2	6
Junior School parent	31	17	4	52
Parent in both schools	18	4	0	22
Member of staff in First School	2	0	0	2
Member of staff in Junior School	1	15	2	18
Other interested stakeholder:	0	1	0	1
Total	55	38	8	101
%	54.5%	37.6%	7.9%	100%

Cannon Lane Junior School received 335 written responses to the consultation from pupils:

Junior School Pupils	I support amalgamation	I want the schools to stay separate	I am not sure	Total
Total	137	171	27	335
%	40.9%	51.0%	8.1%	100%

All the completed response forms received from adult respondents were considered by Joint Steering Group members, and key themes were identified by the group to assist the Governing Bodies with their considerations. These themes are listed below in relation to the three consultation questions.

I support combining the two schools

- Personalities – confidence in the First School Headteacher to lead a combined school
- Transitions and continuity
- Consistency across one school
- One strategy and communication across the primary phase

I want the schools to stay separate

- Size of the school would be too big
- Impact on staff, including non-teaching staff
- Separate schools work well and provide good services – why change?
- Financial concern at loss of £142k lump sum

I am not sure

- Concern at the size of the school – too big
- Concern about staff structure and Teaching and Learning Responsibility posts
- Concern at the loss of personal touch with the children
- More confused following the open meeting

Comments on the completed responses forms from Junior School pupils were considered by the joint Steering Group but did not lend themselves to being themed. No completed response forms were received from First School pupils.

The comments included in the consultation responses were collated and made available to the governing bodies to consider when making their recommendations. These comments and issues can also be considered by governors, as may be relevant, to inform subsequent future planning.

Cannon Lane First School (4-7 Years) Governing Body met on 13 February 2013, and recommended that both schools should merge.

Cannon Lane Junior School Governing Body met on 14 February 2013 and recommended that the schools stay separate.

Harrow Council received one response to the consultation which was from Harrow Association of Disabled people. The response states that as the schools are on the same site, it seems unlikely that there will be repercussions for disabled children, and the only concern would be if the impact would be negative in any way on this group. However, as it is not suggested that travel and admission arrangements would change, there shouldn't be an issue. Harrow Association of Disabled people would like to think that the effects would be positive if the funding available can be used to increase accessibility in the school.