

Ref PHD 051-09

SUBJECT: **Determination of the Statutory Proposals to clarify the age range of Priestmead Primary School and Nursery**

Responsible Officer: Heather Clements, Director of Schools and Children's Development

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Anjana Patel, Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development

Key Decision: Yes

Urgent/Non Urgent: Non Urgent

Power to be exercised: Executive Procedural Rule 11 (Procedure for Decision Making by the Executive) Para 11.2, Part 4D of the Constitution

Exempt: No

Decision subject to Call-in: Yes

Enclosures: Annex A - Decision Makers Guidance

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

Statutory Proposals were published in January 2010 that if approved would establish the age range of Priestmead Primary School and Nursery to be 4-11 years plus nursery from 1 September 2010 with a planned admission number of 90. No objections have been received during the representation period. The Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development is requested to approve the statutory proposals under individual delegation from Cabinet on 17 September 2009 to determine this key decision.

Recommendations:

The Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development is requested to approve the statutory proposals to establish the age range of Priestmead Primary School and Nursery to be 4-11 years plus nursery from 1 September 2010 with a planned admission number of 90.

Reason: (For recommendation)

Changing the age range of Priestmead Primary School and Nursery would bring the school into line with the school reorganisation arrangements at all other schools in Harrow, as no other primary sector school in Harrow will have Year 7 classes. This change would ensure the pupils receive a consistent education that is aligned with the National Curriculum Key Stages.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

1. Harrow's vision is to provide high achieving schools at the centre of community services, and to continue improvement in schools to make education in Harrow even better. In order to further this vision, in October 2007 Cabinet agreed its strategic approach to school organisation.

Options considered

2. Harrow Council has a duty to implement two different sets of statutory proposals in relation to Priestmead Middle School, namely:
 - The change of age range to 4–12 years on 1 January 2010 (to achieve the amalgamation of the two schools)
 - The change of age range to 7–11 years on 1 September 2010 (published in February 2009 as part of the borough-wide school reorganisation proposals, and agreed by Cabinet in April 2009)
3. Priestmead First School and Priestmead Middle School combined on 1 January 2010 and became Priestmead Primary School and Nursery for pupils aged 4 to 12 years with an attached nursery class.
4. From September 2010, the school reorganisation proposals will be implemented and all schools in Harrow will be aligned with the National Curriculum Key Stages. Primary schools will have pupils from age 4 to 11 years, in Reception to

Year 6 classes. This change will not affect nursery classes. All pupils will attend secondary school in Year 7.

5. The Priestmead Primary School and Nursery age range will need to be brought into line with these arrangements, as no other primary sector schools in Harrow will have Year 7 classes.
6. At its meeting on 17 September 2009, Harrow Cabinet decided statutory notices be published in respect of the combined Priestmead School early in 2010 to clarify the school reorganisation position in September 2010, and the Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development be authorised to determine the additional statutory proposals.

Consultation

7. A statutory consultation was held from Thursday 19 November 2009 until Friday 11 December 2009. The consultation paper was sent to all parents, members of staff and governors of both schools on 19 November 2009. Parents, staff and governors of the Priestmead schools were invited to send their comments to the school offices, and all responses were passed on to Harrow Council for consideration.
8. On 19 November 2009, Harrow Council sent the consultation paper to interested parties in accordance with the Department for Children, Schools and Families School Organisation and Competitions Unit guidance, including neighbouring local authorities, diocesan authorities, local MPs and elected members, voluntary and community organisations, and Harrow Youth Council. The consultation paper was also made available on the Harrow Council website.
9. The responses to the consultation from parents, staff and governors of both schools showed 77% of the responses from parents and staff of both schools were in support of the proposals, 3.5% were opposed, and 19.5% were not sure. Two comments were recorded on the return slips: one in support stating this is the best thing ever, and also it should have been done many, many years ago; and another stating not sure because of concerns about some children's ability to cope with high school environment at the age they are.
10. Harrow Association of Disabled People responded that it is happy with the proposal. It commented that it is not clear whether it will make a difference to disabled children though if anything it will give a stronger likelihood of continuity in education for them, which is generally positive.
11. The London Diocesan Board for Schools responded that it is pleased to support the proposal.
12. The Priestmead Schools Federated Governing Body met on 3 December 2009 to consider its response to the consultation. The Governing Body voted unanimously in favour for the proposed new age range of the school from September 2010. The Governing Body has representation across both schools, which ensures that the interests of stakeholders across both schools are properly considered.
13. On 17 December 2009, the Director of Schools and Children's Development considered the outcome of the statutory consultation and the recommendation

from the Priestmead Schools Federated Governing Body, and agreed to publish statutory proposals that if approved would establish the age range of Priestmead School to be 4-11 years plus nursery from 1 September 2010 with a planned admission number of 90.

Statutory Notices

14. Statutory proposals were published on 11 January 2010 with a statutory representation period of 6 weeks until 22 February 2010. The local authority received no representations during the representation period.
15. The determination of these statutory proposals was delegated by Cabinet to the Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development to ensure that the issue of two statutory proposals running concurrently in conflict is resolved within the shortest timeframe and to avoid any protracted uncertainty for the school community who expressed their strong support for the amalgamation.

Determination of statutory proposals

16. The Director of Schools and Children's Development recommends that the Portfolio Holder agree the statutory proposals to establish the age range of Priestmead Primary School and Nursery to be 4-11 years plus nursery from 1 September 2010 with a planned admission number of 90.
17. In her role as the Decision Maker, the Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development must have regard to the statutory and non-statutory guidance, provided by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, when determining statutory proposals. The guidance has been provided to the Portfolio Holder, and is available as background papers. Annex A provides the Portfolio Holder with commentary on the salient points contained in the Decision Makers' Guidance.
18. The Local Authority has a statutory entitlement under ss.15 and 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, to issue statutory proposals in respect of school reorganisation. The statutory proposals were published following the decision made by Cabinet on 17 September 2009. The proposals must be determined within two months of the representation period, which ended on 22 February 2010, or the matter is referred to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for determination. The Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development must have regard to the Secretary of State's guidance when reaching her decision, and should consider the representations received during the course of the publication period when making her decision.

Financial Implications

19. There are no further financial implications that would arise from the proposal. Decisions have already been made to amalgamate the two Priestmead schools from 1 January 2010, and to change the ages of transfer across Harrow schools from 1 September 2010. Amalgamating schools has a positive albeit small revenue effect, and in previous cases this has resulted in improved efficiencies of approximately £40k. The principal efficiencies result from having one headteacher instead of two. Schools would also benefit from having fewer Service Level Agreement (SLA) charges for some services, for instance, at present first and middle schools are charged separately for the Schools Finance SLA. This would change to only one charge after amalgamation.

Performance Issues

20. Whilst Harrow's performance is currently above national and statistical neighbours' averages at all Key Stages, Harrow's targets, which are set annually for the DCSF, are highly challenging. The table below presents Harrow's performance against its targets and the national averages.

Harrow's 2008 – 09 Results

EYFSP	Actual	Target	National
% children achieving 78 points or more AND at least 6 points in Social & Emotional & Communication, Language and Literacy areas of learning	50%	49.1%	52%
Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the EYFSP and the rest of the Local Authority Area	38.1%	33.96%	33.9%
KS1	Actual	Target	National
Reading L2+	86%	Not set	84%
Writing L2+	83%	Not set	81%
Maths L2+	91%	Not set	89%
Science L2+	88%	Not set	89%
KS2	Actual	Target	National
English L4+	82%	Not set	80%
Maths L4+	81%	Not set	79%
Science L4+	88%	Not set	88%
English & Maths	75%	79%	72%
GCSE	Actual	Target	National
% 5+ A*-C	74.8%	Not set	70.0%
% 5+ A*-C inc English & Maths	60.8%	64%	49.8%

21. There is no anticipated negative Corporate Area Assessment impact.

Environmental Impact

22. There is no significant environmental impact arising from these proposals, which are about clarifying the age range of an existing school.

Risk Implications

23. If the age range of Priestmead School is not brought into line with the school reorganisation arrangements at all other schools in Harrow, there is a potential risk that at some point parent(s) of a Year 7 pupil may seek to admit or retain the child at Priestmead School and that this may be enforceable because the age range of the school permits this to occur. The implications of this may have adverse impacts on the education of that child and of other children.

Equalities Implications

24. These proposals do not make changes to equal access to school provision.

Corporate Priorities

25. The proposals support the corporate priority to build stronger communities. The proposals are in line with the school reorganisation changes in the ages of transfer. These changes support the aim to promote schools at the heart of their communities through opportunities to increase the facilities available to the community or the co-location of services on school sites for the local community.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Emma Stabler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 25 February 2010		
Name: George Curran	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
Date: 24 February 2010		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: David Harrington	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director Partnership, Development and Performance
Date: 25 February 2010		

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Andrew Baker



on behalf of the
Divisional Director
(Environmental
Services)

Date: 25 February 2010

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Chris Melly, Senior Professional, Transforming Learning Team
020 8420 9270 chris.melly@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Papers of Cabinet 17 September 2009 - Future Organisation of Priestmead First School and Priestmead Middle School

DCSF School Organisation Unit guidance for decision makers
www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolorg

Signature:

Position Director of Schools and Children's Development

Name (print) Heather Clements

Date: 25 February 2010

For Portfolio Holder/Leader

* I do agree to the decision proposed

* I do not agree to the decision proposed

* Please delete as appropriate

Notification of personal interests (if any):

(Note: if you have a prejudicial interest you should not take this decision)

Additional comments made by and/or options considered by the Portfolio Holder

Signature:

Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development

Date:

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NO