

# REPORT FOR: **CABINET**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	14 September 2010
<b>Subject:</b>	Future Organisation of Elmgrove Infant School and Elmgrove Junior School
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Heather Clements, Director Schools, Quality Assurance and Commissioning
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Brian Gate, Portfolio Holder for Schools and Colleges
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Decision subject to Call-in:</b>	Yes
<b>Enclosures:</b>	Annexe 1 – Joint letter from the Chairs of the schools' Governing Bodies

## **Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report sets out the outcome of the statutory consultation about the future organisation of Elmgrove Infant School and Elmgrove Junior School, and the recommendations of the governing bodies that the two schools amalgamate in September 2011.

From September 2010, Harrow's school reorganisation proposals are implemented. Elmgrove First School has become Elmgrove Infant School and Nursery (Reception to Year 2), and Elmgrove Middle School has become Elmgrove Junior School (Year 3 to Year 6).

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Consider the outcome of the statutory consultation and the recommendation from the governing bodies, and;
2. Approve the publication of statutory notices to combine Elmgrove Infant School and Nursery and Elmgrove Junior School.

**Reason: (For recommendation)**

Combining the two schools would give the opportunity to further improve educational standards by enabling planning as a coherent whole across the primary phase of the national curriculum and providing greater flexibility across and between key stages. Access to the whole primary curriculum supports and informs whole school planning, assessment, pastoral systems, etc, and provides opportunities for wider staff development and experience across the full primary phase.

## **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. The headteachers of both schools have resigned and left their posts. During the Spring Term 2010, the governing bodies commenced the process to amalgamate the two schools in accordance with the Council's October 2007 amalgamation policy. The October 2007 amalgamation policy requires separate first and middle schools to amalgamate when one or more of the triggering circumstances arise unless there are compelling and over-riding reasons not to, and a headteacher vacancy in either or both schools is one of the triggering circumstances. This report sets out the outcome of the statutory consultation.

### **Consultation**

3. Consultation activity by the governing bodies commenced in the Spring Term 2010. At a joint meeting of the governing bodies on 16 March 2010 the governors created a steering group to plan the consultation process with a view to combining the two schools in September 2011, and informal soundings were taken to inform the work. The steering group began meeting in April 2010 and prepared a consultation paper, a cover letter for responses and a proposal evaluation document.

4. The statutory consultation was held from Monday 7 June 2010 until Monday 12 July 2010. The consultation paper was sent to all parents, members of staff and governors on 7 June 2010. Two formal parents consultation meetings for parents of both schools were held on 15 June 2010 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.
5. On 7 June 2010, Harrow Council sent the consultation paper to interested parties in accordance with the Department for Education 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. Information about the amalgamation policy, the consultation paper and proposal evaluation were also made available on the Harrow Council website.
6. The two schools distributed the consultation paper and response form to around 800 parents and staff. The schools received 128 written responses to the consultation from parents and staff:
  - the overall response was that 48.4% of respondents were in favour of amalgamation;
  - taking parents as a group, 62% were in favour and 23% against;
  - the overall figure is heavily influenced by the staff response given that 53 staff replied and only 74 parents (one respondent did not declare their interest clearly).The comments from parents and staff included in the consultation responses have been collated and made available to the governing bodies so that the comments and issues can be considered in subsequent future planning.
7. The two governing bodies met on 14 July 2010 to decide their recommendations, and a joint letter from the Chairs of the two Governing Bodies is attached at Annexe 1. The Governing Bodies recommend that the schools amalgamate from September 2011. The Governing Bodies' view, supported by the consultation outcome, is that an amalgamated school can provide better for the needs of the children and families of Elmgrove and also offer opportunities to staff that cannot be matched by keeping the schools separate.
8. Harrow Council received one response to the consultation. Harrow Association of Disabled People responded that it seems fine to amalgamate as long as the needs of all disabled children are individually taken into account and the Equality Impact Assessment takes consideration of the needs of disabled children and staff.

### **Other considerations**

9. A combined school would retain the existing pupils. A new staffing structure reflecting the needs of the school would be developed. The structure would be subject to consultation with all staff and their professional associations / unions and appointments would be made to the new staffing structure over time. No redundancies have arisen in the schools amalgamated to date and there is no reason for the situation to be different in this instance.
10. If Cabinet decides to publish statutory notices, it is proposed that these will be published in October 2010. Cabinet would need to determine the proposals within two months from the end of the representation period, and it is proposed that Cabinet determine the proposals at its meeting in December 2010.

11. If Cabinet decides to approve the publication of statutory notices to combine the two schools, it is proposed that the statutory proposals would be to extend the age range and capacity of the infant school and to discontinue the junior school. In consultation with the local authority the governors have recommended that the junior school is the school that is legally closed because there is no substantive senior leader in the junior school following the resignations of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. This proposed approach was stated in the consultation paper.

## **Recommendation**

12. The Director of Schools, Quality Assurance and Commissioning recommends that Cabinet publish statutory proposals that if approved would combine the two schools in September 2011. Combining the two schools would give the opportunity to further improve educational standards by enabling planning as a coherent whole across the primary phase of the national curriculum and providing greater flexibility across and between key stages. Access to the whole primary curriculum supports and informs whole school planning, assessment, pastoral systems, etc, and provides opportunities for wider staff development and experience across the full primary phase.

13. The statutory proposals would be:

- A prescribed alteration to extend the age range of Elmgrove Infant School and Nursery to establish a primary school with an age range of 4 years (Reception) to 11 years (Year 6) with attached nursery class from 1 September 2011;
- A prescribed alteration to expand the capacity of Elmgrove Infant School and Nursery from 1 September 2011;
- A notice to discontinue Elmgrove Junior School on 31 August 2011.

## **Legal comments**

14. Cabinet is the decision-maker on proposals to make changes to schools and to close schools. If Cabinet decides to publish statutory notices, the decision must be made with regard to the representations and feedback provided by stakeholders. Cabinet must have regard for the Secretary of State's guidance in their decision making.

15. If Cabinet decides to publish statutory proposals, there would be a 6 week statutory period during which representations could be made. Cabinet would need to determine the proposals within two months from the end of the representation period, giving due regard to the representations received during the representation period. Cabinet's decision is subject to appeal to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator and / or judicial review. In the event Cabinet does not make a decision within two months of this period, the decision must be referred to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator, whose decision is also subject to judicial review.

## **Financial Implications**

16. Previous experience suggests that amalgamating schools usually leads to a small reduction in revenue spend of approximately £40k for the combined school. This is a result of having one headteacher instead of two and rationalising administrative functions. Schools 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 changes to only one charge after amalgamation.

17. Currently it is not anticipated that any capital works will be required as a necessity to enable the amalgamation to proceed. However there may be changes to the premises that would enhance the workings of the school as a combined school. There is currently no funding in capital programme for such works and they would have to be considered as part of agreeing the future capital programme.

### **Performance Issues**

18. Delivering School Reorganisation so that Harrow's schools are in line with the national agenda is Council Improvement Plan project IP7D and contributes to a range of performance indicators, in particular the following from the new National Indicator Set. NI 72 – 107 'Enjoy and Achieve' indicators covering Key Stage achievement and progression, narrowing the gap for lower performing and vulnerable groups, attendance, behaviour, special educational needs. These are all areas of priority for Harrow as is reflected in Harrow's results, which are broadly inline with the national picture.

<b>Primary National Indicators 2008-09</b>	<b>Harrow</b>	<b>National</b>
Ni 102- achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving level 4 and above in both English and maths at KS2	34.4%	22.3%
Ni 104- The Special Educational Needs (SEN)/non-SEN gap achieving Key Stage 2 English and Maths	45.1%	N/a
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>White British</b>	77.2%	73.2%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>White Irish</b>	87.5%	79.6%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>White Other</b>	74.2%	69.5%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Mixed White Black Caribbean</b>	75.0%	69.5%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Mixed White &amp; Asian</b>	91.9%	79.1%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Mixed Other</b>	72.5%	74.7%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Indian</b>	89.2%	80.6%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Pakistani</b>	65.5%	64.5%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Asian Other</b>	79.2%	75.3%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Black Caribbean</b>	54.1%	63.0%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Black African &amp; White and Black African</b>	59.7%	66.1%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Black Other</b>	57.1%	62.7%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>Any Other Ethnic Group</b>	66.2%	66.8%
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – <b>All pupils</b>	76.6%	73.0%

19. 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 Department for Education, are highly challenging. The table below presents Harrow's performance against its targets and the national averages.

### Harrow's 2008 – 09 Results

<b>EYFSP</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>National</b>
NI 72 - % 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%
NI 92 - 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%
<b>KS1</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>National</b>
Reading L2+	86%	Not set	84%
Writing L2+	83%	Not set	81%
Maths L2+	91%	Not set	89%
Science L2+	88%	Not set	89%
<b>KS2</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>National</b>
English L4+	82%	Not set	80%
Maths L4+	81%	Not set	79%
Science L4+	88%	Not set	88%
English & Maths	75%	79%	72%
<b>GCSE</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>National</b>
% 5+ A*-C	74.8%	Not set	70.0%
% 5+ A*-C inc English & Maths	60.8%	64%	49.8%

### **Environmental Impact**

20. There is no significant environmental impact arising from these proposals.

### **Risk Management Implications**

21. A summary of high level risks is provided.

<b>High Level Risks</b>	<b>Consequences</b>	<b>Mitigating/Control Actions</b>
Challenge to Cabinet decision making.	Delay.	Cabinet must have due regard to the Secretary of State's guidance for decision makers in reaching its decisions on school reorganisation proposals.
School reorganisation changes.	Confusion for stakeholders.	The consultation paper included information about the school reorganisation changes in September 2010.
Clarification of the Council's Amalgamation Policy.	Confusion for stakeholders.	In response to issues raised by the DCSF in regard to the amalgamation policy, and a corporate complaint investigation relating to a school involved in a school reorganisation process, Cabinet agreed a clarified policy at its October 2008 meeting. This clarification does not change the policy requirements.

## Equalities implications

22. 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.

## Corporate Priorities

23. The proposed amalgamation of the two Elmgrove schools will support corporate priorities by providing opportunities to enhance educational standards and to further promote the Every Child Matters outcomes by ensuring the most effective and coordinated extended services support to families and children, and the use of school facilities.

## Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name:	Emma Stabler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date:	18 August 2010		
Name:	George Curran	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date:	27 July 2010		

## Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name:	David Harrington	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director Partnership, Development and Performance
Date:	26 July 2010		

## Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name:	Andrew Baker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director (Environmental Services)
Date:	26 July 2010		



## **Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Chris Melly, Senior Professional, Transforming Learning Team  
020 8420 9270 [chris.melly@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:chris.melly@harrow.gov.uk)

### **Background Papers:**

Consultation paper on the Future Organisation of Elmgrove First School and Elmgrove Middle School.

Equality Impact Assessment.

Department for Education School Organisation and Competitions Unit guidance for decision makers [www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolorg](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolorg)

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

**NOT APPLICABLE**