

REPORT FOR: **CABINET**

Date of Meeting:	7 April 2011
Subject:	Future Organisation of Grange Nursery and Infant School and Grange Junior School
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Catherine Doran, Corporate Director Children's Services
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Brian Gate, Portfolio Holder for Schools and Colleges
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Enclosures:	Appendix A – Decision Makers Guidance

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

Statutory Proposals were published in February 2011 that could effect the amalgamation of Grange Nursery and Infant School and Grange Junior School. No objections have been received during the representation period prior to the publication of this report. Cabinet approval is sought to enable the two schools to combine in September 2011.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to determine the statutory proposals in relation to Grange Nursery and Infant School and Grange Junior School to enable the amalgamation of the two schools in September 2011, namely to:

- Extend the age range of Grange Junior School 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;
- Expand the capacity of Grange Junior School from 1 September 2011;
- Discontinue Grange Nursery and Infant School on 31 August 2011.

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.

Harrow Council is under a statutory duty to determine the proposals within two months from the end of the representation period on 4 April 2011, or the matter is referred to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for determination.

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, which included an amended amalgamation policy.

Options considered

2. Cabinet have the following options when considering these proposals:
 - a. Reject the proposals;
 - b. Approve the proposals;
 - c. Approve the proposals with modification e.g. in relation to the implementation date;
 - d. Approve the proposals subject to meeting a separate condition.
3. There are separate proposals for the two schools, however these are linked and the proposals should be considered together.

Background

4. The Headteacher of Grange Nursery and Infant School retired in December 2010, and in February 2011 the Headteacher of Grange Junior School resigned and will leave in July 2011. During the Autumn 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 infant and junior schools to amalgamate when one or more of the triggering circumstances arise unless there are compelling and overriding reasons not to, and a headteacher vacancy in either or both schools is one of the triggering circumstances.
5. At a joint meeting of the governing bodies on 14 December 2010 the governors created a joint steering group to plan the consultation process with the school

communities and prepare consultation papers to send to all stakeholders. The statutory consultation was held from Monday 10 January 2011 until Monday 31 January 2011. This consultation met the requirements of the Department for Education School Organisation and Competitions Unit guidance on closing, expanding and making changes to schools.

6. The decision whether to publish statutory proposals was scheduled for Cabinet to decide at its meeting on 17 March 2011 in accordance with the Council's Amalgamation Policy. However, the resignation of the Headteacher of Grange Junior School in February 2011 meant that there will be no substantive headteacher at either school and there would be open recruitment of a headteacher for a combined school if this were approved in due course. It was considered important to implement a timeline to decide about the proposals that would enable the recruitment of a new headteacher for the start of the academic year 2011-2012. Accordingly, an urgent Portfolio Holder Decision Meeting was held on 16 February 2011 at which the Portfolio Holder for Schools and Colleges noted the outcome of the statutory consultation and the recommendations from the governing bodies, and approved the publication of statutory notices to extend the age range and capacity of Grange Junior School and discontinue Grange Nursery and Infant School.

Statutory proposals

7. Linked statutory proposals were published on 21 February 2011 with a statutory representation period of 6 weeks that if approved would effect the amalgamation of Grange Nursery and Infant School and Grange Junior School to provide an all through primary school:
 - A prescribed alteration to extend the age range of Grange Junior School 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 Grange Junior School from 1 September 2011;
 - A notice to discontinue Grange Nursery and Infant School on 31 August 2011.
8. The local authority received no representations or comments during the representation period prior to the publication of this report. Any representations received up to 4 April 2011 when the representation period ends will be reported to Cabinet verbally.

Determination of statutory proposals

9. In its role as the Decision Maker, Cabinet must have regard to the statutory and non-statutory guidance, provided by the Department for Education, when determining statutory proposals. The guidance on expanding a maintained school by enlargement, making changes to a maintained mainstream school, closing a maintained mainstream school and giving children and young people a say have been provided to all Cabinet Members, and are available as background papers. Appendix A provides Cabinet with commentary on the salient points contained in the Decision Makers' Guidance.

Recommendation

10. The Head of the Achievement and Inclusion Service recommends that Cabinet agree the statutory proposals to effect the amalgamation of the two schools with effect from 1 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.

Legal comments

11. 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 on 21 February 2011 following the decision made by the Portfolio Holder for Schools and Colleges on 16 February 2011. Cabinet must determine the proposals within two months of the representation period, which ended on 4 April 2011, or the matter is referred to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for determination. Cabinet must have regard to the Secretary of State's guidance when reaching its decision, and should consider the representations received during the course of the publication period when making its decision.
12. The Decision Makers Guidance states that whilst each case should be considered on its merits, there is a presumption in favour of approval for infant/junior school amalgamations.

Financial Implications

13. Previous experience suggests that amalgamating schools can generate savings in revenue spend of approximately £40k for the combined school. This is a result of having one headteacher instead of two and efficiency savings from sharing back office functions and Service Level Agreement (SLA) charges.
14. To facilitate a successful amalgamation and to enhance the workings of the school as a combined school some capital works would be planned at the school. A provision of £750k has been made in the 2011/12 Children's Services capital programme with the final budget being confirmed following development of the scheme.

Performance Issues

15. 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 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. Harrow's overall results are above the national average, however the national results by ethnicity are not yet published.

PROVISIONAL Primary National Indicators 2009-10	Harrow	National
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	24%	N/A
Ni 104- The Special Educational Needs (SEN)/non-SEN gap achieving Key Stage 2 English and Maths	50%	N/A
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – White British	80%	N/A
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – White Irish	85%	N/A
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – White Other	70%	N/A
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – Mixed White Black Caribbean	52%	N/A
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – Mixed White & Asian	77%	N/A
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – Mixed Other	74%	N/A
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – Indian	90%	N/A
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – Pakistani	74%	N/A
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – Asian Other	76%	N/A
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – Black Caribbean	65%	N/A
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – Black African	66%	N/A
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – Black Other	52%	N/A
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – Any Other Ethnic Group	62%	N/A
Ni 107- % pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for Black and minority ethnic groups – All pupils	77%	73%

16. Whilst Harrow's performance is currently above national and statistical neighbours' averages at all Key Stages, Harrow's targets, which have been 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 2009-10 Results

EYFSP	Actual	Target	National
NI 72 - % children achieving 78 points or more AND at least 6 points in Social & Emotional & Communication, Language and Literacy areas of learning	53%	49.2%	56%
NI 92 - Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the EYFSP and the rest of the Local Authority Area	37.7%	33.37%	32.7%
KS1	Actual	Target	National
Reading L2+	86%	Not set	85%
Writing L2+	84%	Not set	81%
Maths L2+	90%	Not set	89%
Science L2+	89%	Not set	89%
KS2	Actual	Target	National
English L4+	85%	Not set	80%
Maths L4+	82%	Not set	79%
English & Maths L4+	77%	80%	73%
Progression by 2 levels in English between KS1 & KS2	89%	90%	84%
Progression by 2 levels in Maths between KS1 & KS2	85%	87%	83%
GCSE	Actual	Target	National
% 5+ A*-C inc English & Maths	60.7%	65%	53.4%
% English Baccalaureate	22.6%	Not set	15.6%
% 5+ A*-C	78.1%	Not set	75.4%

Environmental Impact

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

Risk Management Implications

18. A summary of high level risks is provided in the table below.

High Level Risks	Consequences	Mitigating/Control Actions
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.
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

19. 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

20. The proposed amalgamation of the two Grange schools will support corporate priorities by providing opportunities to enhance educational standards and to further promote positive community 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: 11 March 2011		
Name: Sarah Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 4 March 2011		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: David Harrington	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director Partnership, Development and Performance
Date: 3 March 2011		

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Andrew Baker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director (Environmental Services)
Date: 3 March 2011		

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Chris Melly, Senior Professional, Schools, Quality Assurance and Commissioning. 020 8420 9270 chris.melly@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Papers of the Portfolio Holder Decision Meeting on 16 February 2011 - Future Organisation of Grange Nursery and Infant School and Grange Junior School

Department for Education School Organisation and Competitions Unit guidance for decision makers www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolorg

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

NOT APPLICABLE

[Call-In applies]