

Decision Report

School Organisation

Proposals to amalgamate Pinner Park Infant and Nursery School and Pinner Park Junior School

Decision Maker: Interim Corporate Director People Services, Paul Hewitt following consultation with Councillor Christine Robson, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Young People

Date of Decision: 11 December 2018

OFFICER DECISION RECORD FORM

Directorate and reference number

People Services Directorate

Subject matter

School Organisation – proposals to amalgamate Pinner Park Infant and Nursey School and Pinner Park Junior School

Decision taken

To approve decision to implement changes in school organisation that will amalgamate Pinner Park Infant and Nursey School and Pinner Park Junior School, by extending the age range of Pinner Park Infant and Nursey School and closing Pinner Park Junior School.

Date of decision

Tuesday 8 December 2018

Date of relevant Council/Cabinet meeting (where the decision is taken following an express authorisation)

12 July 2018

Terms of any express authorisation

At the meeting in July, cabinet agreed the following recommendations:

1. Delegate authority to Corporate Director People Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Young People and Schools, and consideration of consultation responses, to publish the statutory notices that will affect the amalgamation of two schools in accordance with Harrow Council's Amalgamation Policy.
2. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director People Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Young People and Schools, to determine the notices that will affect the amalgamation of two schools in accordance with Harrow Council's Amalgamation Policy.

Introduction

A consultation was undertaken on proposals to amalgamate Pinner Park Infant and Nursey School and Pinner Park Junior School. The outcome of the consultation supported the proposed amalgamation and the decision to publish necessary notices was made by the Interim Corporate Director People Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder. A copy of the decision report is at Annexe 1.

The Public Notice was placed in the local paper on 1 November, inviting comments, objections and or requests for further information. The Public Notice closed on 29 November 2018 which allowed residents 4 weeks in which to contact us. Information on the full proposal was available on our website. The statutory proposal contained sufficient information for interested parties to make a decision on whether to support or challenge the proposed change.

P. Hewitt Corporate Director 11/12/2018
Christine Robson - P. Forde (holder) 11/12/2018

Responses Received

One comment and one objection were received and an officer response was provided. These are provided below:

- **Comment**

The comment was from a resident who was concerned that the proposal would mean increased traffic in the area.

Resident Comment:

"I have seen the proposal to increase the capacity to accommodate 840 pupils plus nursery.

I would like to know if there have been any plans to manage the increased traffic to the local area. Surrounding streets, such as my own in Pinner Park Avenue frequently become gridlocked during the peak school drop-off and collection times. Cars are parked across drives and churn up grass verges. This is also being exacerbated by the development of the Kodak site. I fully understand the need to provide class places for the local population but I do question whether all pupils are within the catchment area. I also feel phased school morning and afternoon start/finish times would ease the considerable pressures.

Finally I think there should be a major campaign on walking to school, perhaps with groups of children supervised by responsible adults. I invite you to observe the current situation at Pinner Park Avenue, for example, between 8:30am -9:15am and 3:15pm - 3:45pm."

Officer Response:

Thank you for responding to our proposals to amalgamate, Pinner Park Infant and Nursery School with Pinner Park Junior School to establish a primary school. We are not increasing the total number of places at the school. Currently they are two separate schools, and in accordance with legislation we need to close one of the schools (Pinner Park Junior School), and expand the other school (Pinner Park Infant and Nursery School) so that it makes provision for all primary aged pupils. The overall effect will be to create a single primary school for all the pupils who currently attend the separate schools.

We have noted your comments about the increased traffic around the area, however as this proposal does not increase the number of pupils at the schools the impact on current traffic should not be affected. We do however, take on board your comments and will pass these on to School Travel Planning Officers who work with schools on schemes to ease congestion around pick-up and drop-off times.

- **Objection:**

The objection was from a parent who objected to the proposal based on concerns about leadership.

"I object to this because I feel that all children would not be treated fairly and don't see how it is possible for 1 person to run two large schools. Both

schools have done well all these years as two separate entities. Why change it?"

Officer response:

Thank you for your email.

I note your objection to the current proposal for Pinner Park Infant and Nursery School to amalgamate with Pinner Park Junior School and your reason. In response, I would like to reassure you that Governors and the Local Authority prioritise the care, welfare and education of the pupils at all times. There are many 4FE primary schools in England and we have 7 already operating in Harrow. These particular schools in Harrow are successfully led under one Headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders. External validation by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) confirms this and six out the seven schools who operate under this staffing structure are all rated as Good with one rated as Outstanding. The effectiveness of Leadership and Management is scrutinised before such judgements are made.

In this case, this size of the school has been considered as part of the amalgamation process and from our experience 4FE schools do run effectively. The Local Authority will continue to work closely with the school by working with Governors on the amalgamation process; the Local Authority will also make representation as part of the final Headteacher interview panel as well as work with school leaders to ensure the transition is successful.

Reasons for the decision

The decision is required to determine that Pinner Park Junior School is discontinued on 31 March 2019 and to extend the age range and to expand the capacity of Pinner Park Infant and Nursery School from 1 April 2019.

This in line with Harrow Council's amalgamation policy which, has been triggered the resignation of the Headteacher of Pinner Park Junior School. The Policy aims to establish combined primary schools with continuity across the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The policy requires that governing bodies of all separate infant and junior schools are required to amalgamate the two schools when one or more circumstances arise unless there are compelling and over-riding reasons not to.

Alternative options considered/rejected by the officer

The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to provide sufficient school places for its area and to make changes to schools. This decision will change the organisation of the school but will not impact on the number of places available in area.

The only other option is not to amalgamate the two schools and maintain them as two separate schools; however this would not be compliant with Harrow's amalgamation policy. The consultation responses prior to the publication of statutory notices supported the proposed amalgamation. These are included in Appendix 1.

Conflicts of interest

None

Interim Corporate Director People Services Decision Report to amalgamate Pinner Park Infant and Nursey School and Pinner Park Junior School

Introduction

Cabinet received a report at their meeting on 12 July regarding School Organisation matters which included the proposal to amalgamate Pinner Park Infant and Nursey School and Pinner Park Junior School. Cabinet has previously agreed to delegate authority to the Interim Corporate Director People Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder to decide whether to publish statutory notices based on the outcomes of the consultation.

This report presents the consultation outcomes for the Interim Corporate Director and Portfolio Holder to consider, enabling the decision whether to publish statutory notices to be made.

Proposal

1. As the Headteacher of Pinner Park Junior School has resigned and this has triggered the Council's Amalgamation Policy. In this instance, as the resignation is in the Junior School, it is proposed that the combined school will be achieved by extending the age range of the infant school to include the capacity of the junior school on 1 April 2019.

Consultation

2. A consultation was undertaken with parents and stakeholders from Monday 25th June to Monday 23 July 2018.

Consultation Responses

3. 44 responses were received from the consultation from parents and members of staff. The children at the junior school also completed a survey and the children at infant school attended a full school assembly where the amalgamation was discussed and circles times were carried out by each class teachers where children asked questions and the staff answered the questions. The table below presents the views of the parents and members of staff who completed the consultation response form.

Response	Number
I support combining the two schools	35
I want to schools to stay separate	5
I am not sure	4
Total	44

Responses broken down to show who they were completed by:

Response completed by:	I support combining the two schools	I want to schools to stay separate	I am not sure	totals
Infant school parent	13	1	2	16
Junior school parent	1	3	0	4
Parent in both schools	17	0	1	18
Member of staff in Infant school	2	1	1	4
Member of Staff in Junior school	0	0	0	0
Other (did not tick category)	2	0	0	2
Total	35	5	4	44

4. Overall the majority of respondents 35 support the schools combining. 5 respondents do not want the schools to combine and 4 were not sure. Out of the 44 responses 19 comments/questions were received and 10 were from respondents that supported the two schools combining. The comments are questions were in support of Miss Disspain and around how the standards would be maintained after the amalgamation. Two parents asked specific questions around Ofsted and how the amalgamation would affect the rating and if the schools would need to be inspected again. Two parents commented on communication, one stating that they hoped that the amalgamation would result in better communication. A parent raised their concern around funding and resources.
5. All of the 5 respondents who did not want to the schools to combine provided some comments. Four out the five were concerned that the funding to that the schools currently receive would be cut as a result of them combining. One of the parents quoted that they understood £130,000 would be cut form the schools overall budget if they combined. Two out of the five thought the school would be too big and had concerns about staffing and senior leadership having to spread themselves too thinly.
6. All 4 respondents who stated they were not sure provided some comments. Two of the parents wanted more information; one of them had not been able to attend the information meetings and wanted more information/ minutes to make an informed choice. The parent was also was concerned about having one headteacher overseeing the two schools as currently the infant headteacher knew all the children and has a very hands-on approach. One of the comments were about combing the school would make it very big and currently both schools are completely separate, however children having to apply for a place at the junior schools seems wrong, it should be automatic. There was also another concern around funding which would not be in the best interests of the children. A respondent also commented that currently the two schools are running successfully this why they are not sure.
7. 410 pupils at the junior school responded to the survey. 58 per cent of the children at the junior school support the schools combining. 22 per cent want the schools to remain as two separate schools and 20 per cent were unsure. Many of the questions where about the logistics of how the combined school would be

run, for example, will we share the playgrounds, will there be changes that will affect how they are taught, will their uniforms change and what will the school be called. Letters from both Governing Bodies have been received and are both supportive of the proposals. Letters from the Governing bodies are attached at Annexe A.

Officer Comments

8. The local authority welcomes the support from the parents, governing body and headteachers.
9. It should be noted that the Infant School headteacher has submitted her resignation which has been accepted and will resign at the end of December 2018. Interim arrangements are in place and the Deputy headteacher will act up with support.
10. Concerns with regards to funding that have been raised during the consultation have been considered:
11. As part of the amalgamation policy the Council acknowledges that there are some modifications to the building that supports the operation of a single school. The priority areas are usually the entrance, administrative offices and the staff room. The works will be considered once the decision has been made to amalgamate. A scope of works will be developed with the Governing Body and a programme developed. The priority for the Council funded works will be essential works required and it may be over time that other desirable works are planned as funding is available. There is funding within the schools capital programme for works to support amalgamation but other sources will also be considered including devolved formula funding. The Council will not commit any funds prior to a decision and an agreed programme of work being developed.
12. Within the current regulations there is no revenue funding to support the impact of amalgamation on budgets. However the Schools Finance Team will support the school to manage the three year phased removal of the lump sum and the setting of the budget for the combined school.

Next Steps

13. It is proposed that statutory notices are published in accordance with legislative requirements and DfE Guidance on making prescribed changes to schools. The notices will be published for four weeks and there is the opportunity for comments and representations to be submitted.
14. At the end of the statutory notice period, it is proposed that the notices are determined taking into consideration the comments and representations received.
15. Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Interim Corporate Director, People Services in consultation with Portfolio Holder to determine the notices at their meeting on 12 July 2018.



10th October 2018

Cllr. Christine Robson, Harrow Council Young People & Schools Portfolio Holder

Paul Hewitt, Harrow Council Corporate Director (interim)
Dear Paul and Christine

RE: Recommendation to amalgamate Pinner Park Infant and Nursery School and Pinner Park Junior School.

As you know, our governors have attended meetings with children, staff and parents about the proposal and we have also discussed the matter at an extraordinary meeting last term. At our first full Governing Body meeting last month, we were unanimous in recommending amalgamation on the basis of there being no "compelling or over-riding reasons" to prevent amalgamating the two schools. We can see many exciting opportunities for growth and improvement.

I would reiterate the concerns expressed in the letter from the Infant School Governors with regard to capital and resource funding. I would appreciate the Council setting out in writing the financial and administrative support the school will receive over the next few years to ensure your proposal a success.

While excited by the opportunities, the Governing Body shares the concerns expressed through the consultation process of the negative effects of combining the schools on the current cohort of children. It was put very well in Bhavin Savla's letter:

"... amalgamation will take place under a funding landscape that other schools in Harrow did not necessarily face as the majority of those amalgamations took place before school funding was progressively lightened. We would therefore appreciate the financial support of the Council, notwithstanding its own budgetary pressures, in making the amalgamation as successful for the combined school as it has been for other schools in Harrow."

It is the shared ambition of the governing bodies and the Council to ensure that no child's right to a quality education is compromised by, and that all benefit from the opportunities of, the financial effect of amalgamating our schools. I look forward to your response to our jointly expressed concerns and news of the Council's decision.

Yours sincerely

Paul Forrest
Chair of Governors – Pinner Park Junior School

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Acting Headteacher: Mr D English





Pinner Park Infant & Nursery School
Melbourne Avenue, Pinner, Middlesex, HA5

Governing Body recommendation on amalgamation

28 September 2018

Paul Hewitt, Harrow Council Corporate Director (Interim)

Cllr. Christine Robson, Harrow Council Young People & Schools Portfolio Holder

Dear Paul and Christine

I am writing to inform you of the recommendation that the Governing Body is making with regards to the proposed amalgamation of Pinner Park Infant and Nursery School and Pinner Park Junior School.

After some discussion, we recommend amalgamation on the basis of the responses to the consultation and our internal deliberations. Through the consultation process we engaged with parents, staff and pupils via a number of events and have formed a rounded view of the benefits and drawbacks of amalgamation. In our view, after evaluating Harrow Council's policy, there are no compelling or over-riding reasons that would justify not amalgamating the two schools.

There were some concerns expressed through the consultation process and discussed at the GB meeting. I would like to share the main one given this opportunity.

Amalgamation will take place under a funding landscape that other schools in Harrow did not necessarily face as the majority of those amalgamations took place before school funding was progressively tightened. We would therefore appreciate the financial support of the Council, notwithstanding its own budgetary pressures, in making the amalgamation as successful for the combined school as it has been for other schools in Harrow.

We await your decision.

Yours faithfully

Bhavin Savla

Chair of Governors