

# MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN PROPOSALS TO DISCONTINUE A SCHOOL

The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools)(England) Regulations 2013, Regulation 11, part 4 and schedule 2:

## **In respect of an LA Proposal: School and local authority details**

1. The name, address and category of the school and a contact address for the local authority who are publishing the proposals.

The proposal to close Deepdale Junior School, St Stephen's Rd, Preston PR1 6TD is published by Lancashire County Council, the relevant local authority. Deepdale Junior School is a community primary school. The authority can be contacted at the following address: Directorate for Children and Young People, Provision Planning Team, Room B34, PO Box 61, County Hall, Preston, Lancashire PR1 8RJ.

## **2. Implementation and any proposed stages for implementation**

- (a) The date on which the proposals are planned to be implemented, and if they are to be implemented in stages, a description of what is planned for each stage, and the number of stages intended and the dates of each stage.
- (b) Where the proposals relate to a foundation or voluntary controlled school a statement as to whether the proposals are to be implemented by the local authority or by the governing body, and, if the proposals are to be implemented by both, a statement as to the extent to which they are to be implemented by each body

The closure of the school will be implemented on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014

## **Objectives**

3. The objectives of the proposals.

There are a number of concerns in relation to Deepdale Junior School that now require the local authority to consider its future. Lancashire County Council's 'Strategy for School Places and School's Capital Investment 2014/15 to 2016/17' identifies concerns around educational and financial viability as being reasons for making a closure proposal and the school's most recent Ofsted inspection places some urgency around the consideration of the school's future.

Recently Deepdale Junior School has been experiencing difficulties in terms of its educational performance.

Deepdale Junior School currently has a published admission number of 90. The capacity of the school is 347 and there are currently 338 pupils on roll.

The proposal is linked to the proposal to expand Deepdale Infant School by extending the age range of Deepdale Infant School from 3 – 7 years to 3 – 11 years and to expand the capacity of the school from 270 pupils to 630 pupils, by utilising the current junior school building, with effect from 1 January 2015. The proposal is being made in conjunction with the proposal made by the Governing Body of Deepdale Junior School, in order to provide alternative local provision, should the proposal to close Deepdale Junior School be

approved. This is a school led proposal and the proposal has the full support of the head teacher and Governing Body.

It is felt that closing the junior school and expanding the infant school will raise standards and ensure continuity of education.

### **Consultation**

4. Evidence of the consultation before the proposals were published including—
  - (a) a list of persons who were consulted;
  - (b) minutes of all public consultation meetings;
  - (c) the views of the persons consulted;
  - (d) a statement to the effect that all applicable statutory requirements in relation to the proposals to consult were complied with; and
  - (e) copies of all consultation documents and a statement on how these documents were made available.

The consultation document was widely circulated to staff, governors, parents/guardians and pupils of the school subject to the proposals. Head teachers and governors of other local schools in Lancashire were all consulted as were members of the local city council. A full list of consultees is detailed on page 8 of the consultation document which forms an integral element to these complete proposals.

An appointment led event, rather than a public meeting, was held between 3pm and 7.30pm on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May at Deepdale Junior School. This format of meeting is preferred as it allows the authority to manage the process effectively, minimise waiting times and ensure that appropriate officers are available to offer any interested parties, either individually or in small groups, advice and guidance to enable them to gain a better understanding on all of the aspects of the proposals.

A children's consultation was also distributed via the school in which pupils of the school were asked to express their opinion on the proposals.

Concerns about the newly structured school led to the Head Teacher of the infant school offering one to one appointments to discuss plans and specific issues around leadership and management.

The views from the meetings and the written responses to the consultations are detailed and analysed in the report to the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools that was considered on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014 and forms an integral element to these complete proposals.

Consultation documents were widely circulated in hard copy and were made available on the following website: [www.lancashire.gov.uk/schoolorganisationreviews](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/schoolorganisationreviews)

This website has been updated and now allows access to the public notice and complete proposal documentation for these proposals.

This is a linked proposal to that of expanding the infant school by extending the age range and it is felt that this will allow leadership and management to be improved across all age groups, therefore ensuring continuity.

The local authority ensured that all applicable statutory requirements in relation to the proposals to consult were complied with.

### **Standards and diversity**

**5.** A statement and supporting evidence indicating how the proposals will impact on the standards, diversity and quality of education in the area.

The county council is committed to improving the quality of educational provision to help raise standards for all learners so that every child has the opportunity to receive an excellent education whatever their background and wherever they live. The authority wants to provide excellence for all children in Lancashire.

Deepdale Infant School and Deepdale Junior School are separate establishments with separate governing bodies and separate budgets. The two schools are on adjoining sites and both have a published admission number of 90. Traditionally, the vast majority of pupils on roll at the infant school go on to attend the junior school.

In September 2013, Deepdale Junior School was inspected and was graded 4 -

'inadequate'. At that time, Deepdale Infant School had an Ofsted grade of 2 – 'good' and this was confirmed at a full Ofsted inspection in November 2013.

The local authority is under a statutory duty to secure high quality education provision in its area. Since September, local authority officers have been in discussion with the governing bodies of both schools as to a sustainable means of improving standards at the junior school. The discussions focussed on 'merging' the two schools to become a primary school, thus securing continuity of education and raising standards. In a legal sense, there are two ways of achieving this:

- To close both schools and establish a new primary school; or
- To close one school and enlarge the other school by expanding the age range.

As Deepdale Infant School is performing well, the recommendation from officers was to follow the latter process – to close Deepdale Junior School and enlarge Deepdale Infant School by expanding the age range. The local authority has since received resolutions from both Governing Bodies that they wish to pursue such proposals.

The legal process involves the consultation on, and publication of, two separate but linked notices. This effectively means that the enlargement/expansion of the age range of the infant school should not be approved unless the closure of the junior school is also approved, and vice versa.

#### The Proposed Closure of Deepdale Junior School

At an Ofsted Inspection visit in September 2013 Deepdale Junior School received an overall effectiveness rating of 'inadequate'. There were a number of issues that led to this rating. The school was rated as 'inadequate' in terms of achievements of the pupils; quality of teaching; and leadership and management. In terms of behaviour and safety of pupils the school was considered to 'require improvement'. The inspection report stated that "Frequent staff and leadership changes have resulted in a considerable decline in the quality of education provided by the school" and the inspection report also stated that "Leaders including governors are unable to bring about the necessary improvements to teaching and achievement. They are too heavily dependent on external support".

Following the 'inadequate' Ofsted rating, in December 2013 a special measures monitoring inspection was conducted. Although it was observed that "Since the inspection the acting head teacher and her deputy have been highly effective in stabilising the school and providing the leadership the school needed", the monitoring report went on to observe that a lack of stability in the teaching staff and leadership was a significant barrier to the school's progress.

### **Need for places**

6. A statement and supporting evidence about the need for places in the area including whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

This proposal will not create additional places. The pupils displaced from Deepdale Junior School will be guaranteed a place at the newly phased primary school.

7. Where the school has a religious character, a statement about the impact of the proposed closure on the balance of denominational provision in the area and the impact on parental choice.

N/A

### **Current school information**

8. Information as to the numbers, age range, sex and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is made at the school.

The junior school currently has a number on roll of 339 pupils, of these 8 pupils have special education needs. The pupils displaced from Deepdale Junior School will be guaranteed a place at the newly phased primary school.

### **Displaced pupils**

9. Details of the schools or FE colleges which pupils at the school for whom provision is to be discontinued will be offered places, including:

- a) any interim arrangements;
- b) where the school included provision that is recognised by the LA as reserved for children with special educational needs, the alternative provision to be made for pupils in the school's reserved provision; and
- c) in the case of special schools, alternative provision made by LAs other than the authority which maintains the school.

It is intended that Deepdale Infant School will extend the age range of the school from 3 – 7 years to 3 – 11 years and to expand the capacity of the school from 270 pupils to 630 pupils, by utilising the current junior school building, with effect from 1 January 2015. The proposal is being made in conjunction with the proposal made by the Governing Body of Deepdale Junior School, in order to provide alternative local provision, should the proposal to close Deepdale Junior School be approved.

The pupils displaced from Deepdale Junior School will be guaranteed a place at the newly phased primary school.

10. Details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school or FE college places available in consequence of the proposed discontinuance.

The proposals are intrinsically linked and the pupils from the closed Deepdale Junior School will be guaranteed a place at the newly phased primary school.

### **Impact on the community**

11. A statement and supporting evidence about the impact on the community and any measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impact.

The local authority recognises that the closure of a school can impact on the wider community. However, the local authority is required to focus its consideration on its statutory responsibilities of securing high quality education provision.

There will be no change to the number of school places available in the area and pupils attending Deepdale Junior School will be guaranteed a place at the newly phased primary school. The impact of the closure will therefore be minimised.

The consultation demonstrated a strong commitment to community, with the infant and junior school seen as being integral to the community. The view of the vast majority of respondents was that this common resource must be saved and improved for all age ranges.

## **Travel**

### **12. Details of the length and journeys to alternative provision.**

The newly phased primary school will utilise the existing junior school building.

### **13. The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools including how they will help to work against increased car use.**

The newly phased primary school will utilise the existing junior school building.

## **Related proposals**

### **14. A statement as to whether in the opinion of the LA or governing body, the proposals are related to any other proposals which may have been, are, or are about to be published.**

In the opinion of the local authority, the proposal is not related to other proposals which have been, are, or are about to be, published. The proposals to close Deepdale Junior School and extend the age range of Deepdale Infant School is intrinsically linked.