

Report to: Children and Young People's Panel
Cabinet

Date: 17 July 2008
24 July 2008

Subject: Proposal to amalgamate St Peter's C E Infant School
and Nursery Unit and St Peter's C E Junior School,
Leigh

Report of: Director of Children and Young People's Services

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Purpose / summary: The purpose of the report is to:

- inform members of the consultation on the above proposal; and
- obtain members' response to the proposal.

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: Contained within the report

Recommendation / decision: It is recommended that members:

- respond in favour of the proposal; and
- request that the Director of Children and Young People's Services inform the governing bodies of St Peter's C E Infant School and Nursery Unit and St Peter's C E Junior School, Leigh and Manchester C E Diocese of this response.

Key Decision: This report does not involve a key decision. The decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed, i.e. before 5 August 2008

Risks / Implications:

Financial and staffing	Should the proposal progress beyond the statutory notice stage there will be financial and staffing implications associated with the amalgamation. These will be reported in full at the decision making stage.
Policy:	Wigan’s Strategy for School Places and Buildings
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	No
Wards affected:	Leigh West

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

Should the proposal progress beyond the statutory notice stage there may be property implications associated with the amalgamation These will be reported in full at the decision making stage.

If yes, have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property Officer?

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution? **Yes**

Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget? **Yes / No ***

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **No**

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:	
Discussion leading to a decision	x

Discussion	

Monitoring	
Sharing for corporate understanding	

Decision	
Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
17 July 2008		24 July 2008	

List of Background Papers in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Title of document	Which meeting did it go to?	Date of meeting	Copy available from?
Wigan's Strategy for School Places and Buildings			Children and Young People's Services, Progress House, Westwood Park Drive, Wigan, WN3 4HH

Proper Officer



Date

3rd July 2008

1 Background

- 1.1 In March 2007 Panel and Cabinet considered a report requesting that the Director of Children and Young People's Services, in liaison with Manchester C E Diocese, commence an informal consultation exercise on options to merge St Peter's C E Infant School and Nursery Unit and Leigh St Peter's C E Junior School and form a primary school on the current sites. Cabinet authorised the informal consultation.
- 1.2 In May 2008 Cabinet also agreed the Primary Strategy for Change which includes the aim to combine all infant and junior schools into primary schools over the lifetime of the programme as part of Wigan Council's long term strategic vision.
- 1.3 The process to merge two schools involves the closure of the existing schools and the establishment of a new school. Following a series of informal discussions with Manchester C E Diocese, the governing bodies of the infant and junior schools decided they should propose the closure rather than the local authority.
- 1.4 A governing body cannot propose the establishment of a new school so Manchester C E Diocese sought permission from the Secretary of State to propose a new school with nursery without the need to hold a competition. This was granted because of the nature of the proposal.

2 Consultation

- 2.1 The governing bodies and Manchester C E Diocese are conducting Stage 1 of the statutory consultation process (formerly called the informal consultation stage) in accordance with the Education Act 2006 and the most recent school organisation guidelines.
- 2.2 A consultation document has been produced (appendix1) and circulated to all statutory consultees, which include the local authority.
- 2.3 Full details of the proposals and consultation process are included in the document.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that members:
 - respond in favour of the proposal; and
 - request that the Director of Children and Young People's Services inform the governing bodies and Diocese of this response.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 If, following this consultation, the governing bodies and Manchester C E Diocese decide to proceed to Stage 2 of the statutory process (publication of notices), the final decision on the proposal will be made by Cabinet.



Proposal to amalgamate St Peter's C E Infant School and Nursery Unit and St Peter's C E Junior School, Leigh and establish a new through age (4-11) primary school with nursery

This booklet contains:

- reasons why the governing bodies of the schools and Manchester C E Diocese are proposing to amalgamate the two schools;
- dates and times of meetings for parents, the public, schools' staff and governors; and
- information on how you can make your views known.

June 2008

Introduction

This booklet gives you information on:

- the proposal to amalgamate St Peter's CE Infant School and Nursery Unit and Leigh St Peter's CE Junior School and open a new through age primary school and nursery;
- why the governing bodies, Manchester Diocesan Board of Education and the Local Authority (LA) support the proposal;
- how the proposal will affect pupils;
- the benefits of amalgamating infant and junior schools;
- how you can get more information and make your views known; and
- the proposed timetable for the amalgamation.

The Proposal

The proposal is to amalgamate St Peter's C E Infant School and Nursery Unit and Leigh St Peter's C E Junior School and to establish a through age (4-11) primary school with nursery.

This means we must:

- close St Peter's C E Infant School and Nursery Unit and Leigh St Peter's C E Junior School; and
- establish (open) a new Church of England voluntary aided primary school (age 4-11) with nursery

The new school and nursery will continue to operate on the existing sites at first and will have:

- places for 420 pupils (60 in each year group)
- 30 full-time equivalent nursery places

After the new school has been established, one of the existing St Peter's sites will be remodelled and extended to provide one building for the whole school.

Why do Manchester C E Diocese and the Local Authority support the proposal?

- The governing bodies of both schools have agreed that this proposal should go to consultation.
- Manchester Diocesan Board of Education has an agreed policy that the Board will promote the amalgamation of infant and junior schools where there is an opportunity to do so because it feels this improves the consistency and quality of education for the children.
- Wigan Local Authority also has a policy to amalgamate infant and junior schools when possible because of the advantages for the pupils' education.

How will the proposal affect the children at the Infant and Junior Schools?

The proposed new school has the same number of places as St Peter's C E Infant School and Nursery Unit and Leigh St Peter's C E Junior School together (420 places in school and 30 full-time equivalent nursery places) so there will be enough places for all the children who attend the Infant and Junior Schools.

Children already attending the Infant and Junior Schools are guaranteed a place at the new school if their parents want it.

How will the proposed change benefit the children?

The proposed change will:

- ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning;
- improve the tracking of how well children make progress from year to year;
- improve the planning of the curriculum across all classes;
- reduce the number of times that children have to change school; and
- mean that pupils from the Infant School will not need to apply for places at the Junior School for year 3.

How can I make my views known?

Meetings will be held for those who are affected by the proposal. This will give you an opportunity to talk to people from the Diocese of Manchester and the local authority and ask any questions you have. Views given at the meetings will also be taken into account as part of the consultation.

Meeting	Date, time and venue	Who should attend
Drop-in event	Date: Monday 14 July 2008 Time: 3.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. Venue: St Peter's C E Infant School and Nursery Unit Firs Lane Leigh WN7 4SB	This is open to everyone, but especially parents of children currently attending St Peter's C E Infant School and Nursery Unit and Leigh St Peter's C E Junior School and parents considering applying for a Reception or year 3 place at the schools in future.
Meeting for staff	Date: Tuesday 15 July 2008 Time: 3.45 p.m. Venue: St Peter's C E Junior School	All staff at St Peter's C E Infant School and Nursery Unit and Leigh St Peter's C E Junior School
Meeting for governors	Date: Tuesday 15 July 2008 Time: 5.00 p.m. Venue: St Peter's C E Junior School	All governors of St Peter's C E Infant School and Nursery Unit and Leigh St Peter's C E Junior School

You can also make your views known by writing or emailing them or by completing and returning the form at the end of this booklet.

Next Steps

Strict legal procedures have to be followed to open and close schools.

We have given a timetable of events which includes periods of consultation and dates when decisions are expected to be taken on the next page. If you want to make your views known, it is important that you do so within the consultation dates given below and in the ways described. If you make your views known outside of these periods, or in any other way than described, they cannot be taken into account.

Proposed Timetable

Event	Dates
<p>Consultation – during this time you can make your views known by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attending the drop-in event (notes will be taken) • writing to or emailing the local authority or • completing the response form at the end of this booklet. <p>The address to write to is given on the next page.</p>	Monday 9 June 2008 to Friday 1 August 2008
Results of the consultation will go to the governing bodies of both schools and the Diocesan Board of Education. They will decide whether or not to carry on with the proposals.	September 2008
<p>Representation period - if it is decided to carry on with the proposals, we must publish statutory notices. These are public notices that appear in a local newspaper, at the entrances to the schools and in another public place in the area, such as a community centre or library. You can make your views known at this stage by writing to the local authority at the address at the end of this booklet. This address and the date by which written comments must be received will also be given in the public notice.</p>	October to November 2008
The local authority makes the final decision on the proposal.	Within 2 months of the end of the representation period.
The new through age (4-11) primary school with nursery will open (on the existing sites initially)	September 2010
Remodelled and extended school building ready to accommodate all the pupils	September 2012

The following can appeal against the Local Authority's decision:

- local Church of England diocese
- Bishop of the local Roman Catholic diocese
- governing body of a school proposed for closure

Any such appeals must be received within 4 weeks of the local authority's decision.

Please note that this timetable may alter. The Local Authority or the staff and governors of St Peter's C E Infant School and Nursery Unit and Leigh St Peter's C E Junior School will be able to tell you if this happens and let you know any new dates that we are working towards.

Address for correspondence

School Places Team
Wigan Council
Children and Young People's Services
Progress House
Westwood Park Drive
Wigan
WN3 4HH

Email: schoolprovision@wigan.gov.uk

Phone: 01942 486028 or 01942 486029

Response form

Please **read the booklet carefully** before making your response below. Please place an **X** in the box that most closely describes your views

1. Do you think that the booklet clearly explains why we are proposing to amalgamate St Peter's C E Infant School and Nursery Unit and St Peter's C E Junior School, Leigh?

Yes No Don't know

2. Do you understand how and when to make your views on the proposal known?

Yes No

3. Do you think that the schools should be amalgamated?

Yes No Don't know

4. If you think that Leigh St Peter's CE Infant School and Nursery Unit and St Peter's CE Junior School should **not** be amalgamated, please tell us why you think this

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6. Have you any other comments to make?

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7. Are you

A **parent or guardian** of a school age child at St Peter's C E Infant School and Nursery Unit or St Peter's C E Junior School

Please say which school.....

A **parent or guardian** of a nursery child at St Peter's C E Infant School and Nursery Unit

A **member of staff** at St Peter's C E Infant School and Nursery Unit or St Peter's C E Junior School

Please say which school.....

A **governor** of St Peter's C E Infant School and Nursery Unit or St Peter's C E Junior School

Please say which school.....

Other member of the community

Please return your completed form by **Friday 1 August 2008** to

School Places Team
Wigan Council
Children and Young People's Services
Progress House
Westwood Park Drive
Wigan
WN3 4HH