



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

**THE FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRIMARY
EDUCATION**

AT

**KINGS WOOD INFANT SCHOOL
KINGS WOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL**

JUNE 2001

Kings Wood – Consultation Paper – May 2001
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A CONSULTATION PAPER

1. Introduction

- 1.0 This document has been produced jointly by the Governing Bodies of Kings Wood Infant and Kings Wood Junior Schools, and Buckinghamshire Local Education Authority.
- 1.1 The Governing Bodies of the two schools and the Buckinghamshire LEA wish to consult staff and local people on the future of the schools.

2. The Proposal

- 2.1 The proposals involve the amalgamation of the Infant and Junior Schools into a combined school with a two form entry of 60 pupils at 5+ and offering 420 places along with appropriate specialist provision and a 60 place nursery/early years facility. A 420 place combined school would be sufficiently large to cater for the projected longer term demand for school places in the area. In effect, the two existing schools would be amalgamated into one new school with a new single Governing Body and a single body of staff.
- 2.2 The new combined school would provide Nursery places for the under-fives - as Kings Wood Infant School does now. School buildings would therefore be modified and expanded to have the facilities needed for the delivery of the full educational curriculum for children aged 4 to 11.
- 2.3 The school building would be designed for the needs of the different groups of children attending it - the nursery, infants, junior children. There would also be a library and dedicated facilities for teaching those parts of the curriculum requiring special equipment such as ICT (Information and Communication Technology – i.e. computers).
- 2.4 The capacity of the new school would be 420, being made up from two forms of entry, each of 30 pupils, from Reception to Year 6. As well as the necessary teaching accommodation, the administrative and communal elements of the design would be appropriate for the full figure of 420
- 2.5 Turning the existing buildings of either of the present schools into such a school would require extensive building work.

3. Why is the proposal being made?

- 3.1 Both Kings Wood and Kings Wood Schools have capacity for more pupils than they currently have on roll or are expected to have on roll in five years time.

| <i>School</i> | <i>Current Capacity</i> | <i>Roll in April 2001</i> | <i>Projected Roll in 2005</i> | <i>Surplus Capacity in 2005</i> |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Kings Wood Infant | 300 | 152 | 170 | 130 |
| Kings Wood Junior | 240 | 220 | 182 | 58 |
| TOTAL | 540 | 372 | 352 | 188 |

Table 1: Current and Projected Rolls of Kings Wood Infant and Junior Schools

- 3.2 The re-organisation of the two schools will give opportunities and a stimulus to the raising of school effectiveness and an improvement in pupil achievement.
- 3.3 The amalgamation into a combined school, is in line with the Authority's policy of combining, wherever possible infant and junior schools into combined schools. Amalgamation would also reduce by 120 the number of unfilled places in the area which accords with the Authority's targets on the removal of surplus places.

4. Why is the proposal being made now?

- 4.1 Following the report of the Wycombe Commission which made the recommendation to:

"Amalgamate Kings Wood Infant and Junior schools to create a two-form entry combined school with nursery provision and community facilities on the junior school site."

The governing bodies of both King's Wood Infant and King's Wood Junior Schools have formally asked the LEA as a matter of some urgency to carry out feasibility studies concerning the possible amalgamation of the two schools into a single combined school on one site.

- 4.3 Uncertainty about the future affects the schools' staff, pupils and pupils' parents, both current and prospective. Uncertainty makes it increasingly difficult for the schools to recruit staff. Uncertainty might lead parents to decide to send their children to other schools until the future is clarified and planned.
- 4.4 Furthermore, recent experience locally and county-wide shows that, since the reduction in the age of transfer from 8 to 7, parents are increasingly opting for combined schools, thereby avoiding the need for change of school at this age. This places the Kings Wood Schools at a disadvantage compared with local combined schools.
- 4.5 The proposal is being made now in order to address the above.

| What are the advantages of the proposal? | What are the disadvantages of the proposal? |
|---|---|
| <p>The major advantages of the proposed amalgamation are in the education provided to the children by a combined school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Children would join the new school at the Nursery stage and continue their education at the same school until they are old enough to go to secondary school. Evidence suggests that moving a child from an Infants School to a Junior School disrupts his or her education. Though the staffs of the two schools work hard to minimize this disruption, a new combined school on a single site would clearly avoid it altogether. ◆ In a combined school, the approach to teaching Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 would be the same due to a common educational ethos and close collaboration between the teachers coordinating subjects across Key Stages. The children would thus benefit from another form of continuity that would help them maintain their progress. ◆ In a combined school a child's achievements can be passed to the next teacher more easily, enabling the new teacher to respond to the child's needs more readily. | <p>The proposed amalgamation would have disadvantages, though we believe that most would be temporary and that, by careful planning, management and good communication, we would be able to minimize them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The building work on the new school could cause some disturbance to the children's education. ◆ The creation of the new school would also inevitably change the communities and cultures of two schools as they now are. We believe that the community emerging around the new school would take the best of those from which it was created. |

| What are the advantages of the proposal? | What are the disadvantages of the proposal? |
|--|---|
| <p>Combined schools offer teaching staff advantages too, and therefore make it easier to retain and attract good staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Having more staff in a school means that individual teachers are more able to specialize in both coordinating subjects and on managerial roles. For example, teachers have special roles of 'subject leader' in addition to their classroom teaching roles. In a combined school subject leaders can lead a subject over a wider range of years than they can in the two separate schools. This would improve the co-ordination of teaching throughout the school. There is the potential to increase expertise, professional stimulation and to improve career prospects. ◆ At the same time there is greater flexibility in the way in which the school can be staffed, and the staff can more readily offer a broad education to the children ◆ The new school would be bigger and would have a larger staff, making organizational overheads relatively smaller. | <p>The dissolution of Kings Wood Infant and Junior Schools would reduce the choice of types of school in this area. Provision of education in the South East Wycombe area for the age group they cover would be solely by combined schools. – particularly when the other recommendations stemming from the work of the Wycombe Commission are followed through.</p> <p>Though the transfer of a child from Infant to Junior school might be regarded as disruptive and hence bad for his or her education, it might have the benefit of preparing the child for the next transfer at age 11. An Infant school also gives children in Year 2 the experience of being the elders, and hence might enhance their sense of responsibility and maturity.</p> <p>The new school would be larger than each of the current schools and it would contain an age range from Nursery to Year 6. As a result some children might find it less friendly than the current smaller schools.</p> |
| <p>There are advantages in a combined school for parents too:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The continuity of education in a combined school enables parents to get to know the school and staff more readily. ◆ Parents of children of Infant and Junior ages would find it easier to get them all to school on time. | |
| <p>As far as governors are concerned, with a single and larger governing body, it is likely that recruitment and retention will be easier particularly for parent governors when their child(ren) will be in the school for seven years rather than three or four years as at present.</p> | |

5. Which site should the new school use?

- 5.1 A thorough appraisal of the potential of the sites and other issues such as access, planning and highways along with the suitability of the grounds for use as playing fields is being undertaken to determine the more suitable site for the new school.

6. What would happen to the other school site?

- 6.1 It would have to be sold to raise the money to pay for the building work required. The site would be sold only once the school had ceased to use it and Buckinghamshire County Council would need to get the best price possible.

7. When would the amalgamation take place?

- 7.1 The detail of the timing remains to be decided. However, the governing bodies are of the view that there are good reasons for bringing the schools together as a single legal entity under a single governing body and with a single senior management team and staff as soon as possible. In practical terms the very earliest that the two schools could amalgamate by January 2002.
- 7.2 By January 2002, there would have been insufficient time for the completion of the building works required on the site chosen for the new school. Accordingly, the new school would be run with appropriate management arrangements on the two existing sites for the period from January 2002 to July 2002.-or to January 2003-depending upon when building works are completed. The new school would then be brought together onto the one site.

8. What building work would be needed?

- 8.1 The details are not yet clear, because detailed plans will not be drawn up until the decision to amalgamate has been made. Designing a new school with 420 places along with a 60 place nursery/early years facility will require a great deal of work. The new school would require not just new classrooms at the combined school but also changes and improvements to current buildings to make them suitable for an all-age primary school of that size.
- 8.2 Typically it has been found that £1.0M to £1.5M will be required in capital works in order to remodel and adapt a separate infant and junior school into a combined school. Any building works will be the first call on the funding released by the capital receipt from the disposal of the infant school site.
- 8.3 As far as forming a new combined school is concerned, a number of new classrooms would need to be built and extensive remodelling to improve specialist provision, the administrative and staff areas significantly. Consideration will also be required of the circulation between buildings and within the building along with an assessment of security and Health and Safety aspects.
- 8.4 The present provision for playing field and hard play on either site is adequate but forming a new combined school would enable improved overall use of the site. This

would include assessment of the access (both vehicular and pedestrian) onto the site and the provision of more satisfactory parking areas.

8.5 The school's specialist areas, in particular IT, music and library areas as well as CDT could be reviewed and an amalgamation would afford the opportunity to undertake remodelling and improve this accommodation as necessary. Similar consideration applies to special needs provision, community facilities and the overall access of the site and the school to the disabled.

9. **Would all those who have a right to go to the Infant and Junior School now, continue to have the right to go to the new combined school?**

9.1 Yes. The "reserved areas" of the schools are the same now; and would remain the same for the new combined school.

10. **What about Pre-School and Community Issues?**

The importance of high quality nursery and other pre school provision is recognised as is the track record in the area of supporting such provision along with related initiatives, for example, Parents as First Teachers. In any re-organisation of school provision, it is accepted that the amount and quality of nursery and pre school provision must not be diminished, and one of the potential outcomes from the amalgamation is an increase, rather than simply a consolidation, of this provision if possible which will provide a solid foundation for schooling through the primary phase.

11. **Have you already decided to amalgamate the two schools?**

11.1 No. The Governing Bodies have not decided to do this; and neither has the LEA.

11.2 In deciding whether or not to go ahead we will weigh the evidence that we have gathered and pay particular attention to the preferences of parents of children at the school.

12. **What will happen now?**

12.1 Through this consultation document we are now asking for your views. Please fill in the *pro forma* at the back of this document and return it to:

EITHER

THE COLLECTION BOX AT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

OR

PETER MOONEY
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR-SCHOOLS (REF. KINGS WOOD CONSULTATION/DA)
COUNTY HALL
AYLESBURY
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HP20 1UZ

by Friday 6 July 2001.

If you do not wish to fill in the *pro forma* and wish instead to write a letter, please return it to either of the destinations above.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

- 12.2 All the views received will be listed. The two governing bodies plan to meet separately in July to consider the views that will have been received arising from the consultation. In the light of these and all other information available, the governing bodies will make their respective decisions. The Governing Bodies will then need to notify the LEA of their decisions.
- 12.3 If the two governing bodies' decisions are to proceed with amalgamation, the LEA will then have to publish "Statutory Notices" (like the public notices that you see around the town when somebody is applying for planning permission). By law these "notices" must remain public for two months. They would be published from September 2001 to November 2001. During this time, any elector is entitled to object to the proposals by writing to the Strategic Director
- 12.4 If there are no objections, the LEA is then able to "determine the notices". This means that the LEA can decide simply to accept the proposals to go ahead with the amalgamation.
- 12.5 If objections have been received, the LEA will need to refer the matter to the independent School Organization Committee. This School Organization Committee would then meet in January or February 2002 and it would have the power to decide whether to accept the proposals or not.
- 12.6 If the School Organization Committee is not able to agree on the proposal one way or the other, then the proposal would have to be referred to the "Adjudicator" - a senior government appointee who decides such matters for a large part of the south-east of England.

Response to Consultation

PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE KINGS WOOD INFANT AND KINGS WOOD JUNIOR SCHOOLS INTO ONE NEW COMBINED SCHOOL

1. Do you have children at Kings Wood Infant, Kings Wood Junior, both or neither?

Infant School Junior School Neither

2. Do you support the proposal to amalgamate the two schools into one new combined school?

Yes No

3. Do you have any other comment to make on the proposal?

**PLEASE RETURN THIS PROFORMA (OR A LETTER IF YOU PREFER) EITHER TO:
YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL
OR
PETER MOONEY STRATEGIC DIRECTOR-SCHOOLS (REF.KINGS WOOD
CONSULTATION/DA), COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, BUCKS HP20 1UZ
BY FRIDAY 6 JULY 2001**

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