

Response to Consultation

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

99 questionnaire responses along with two letters and a petition were received in response to the consultation. A breakdown of the responses is as follows:

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

Infant School	50	Junior School	65	Neither	8
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2. Do you support the proposal to amalgamate the two schools into one new combined school?

Yes	87	No	12
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The two letters received oppose the amalgamation and the petition, which contains 85 signatures, simply reads “proposed amalgamation of Kings Wood Infant and Junior Schools – against”.

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

The comments received on the proposal were as follows:

- ◆ The timing of this proposal is detrimental to the education of the children at the Infant School. It comes at a time when the school is in special measures and has been making good progress on the action plan despite staffing difficulties arising from special measures. Amalgamation/closure has tied the management’s hands more regarding recruitment and retention. The staff are not reassured by the LEA that teachers will still be needed as one of the Unions said, “if the Governing Body is perverse, then staff will not be reemployed”.

The timing and manner by which these proposals have been presented suggest agendas other than the good of the children. The quality of education is dependent on quality of teachers, their motivation and commitment. There are currently excellent teachers at the Infant School despite the label of special measures – see OFSTED reports and HMI reports (verbal to staff). This is not recognised and rewarded.

The Governing Body – a takeover by David Sparks is how it has been presented, rightly or wrongly. This is very threatening and not conducive towards amalgamation.

The proposal of amalgamation should be deferred until the Infant School is out of special measures and there is a chance of a Chair in the Infant School Governing Body. Neither Chairs should be on a Governing Body of an amalgamated school in principle.

Only quality of education should be the deciding factor, not any other problems that the LEA may have.

- ◆ The concern we have is that the school classes will have more pupils in them and less staff to teach them.
- ◆ I am most concerned about the inevitable upheaval during building work at the chosen site should it go ahead.

Having had my child at both schools, it is good to have a choice of schools in the area and to choose to send one's child to a smaller school.

What about number projections beyond 2005?

How long would it be before the decision to combine the school results in cost savings?

- ◆ Under no circumstances do I want my children's education disrupted in anyway.
- ◆ I prefer the small school approach for younger children. Small is beautiful, although no longer deemed cost effective I suspect!
- ◆ I am extremely concerned that the Language Department still exists. Will this remain? Will it be extended to the upper age unit Combined School? My daughter's education has improved 100% benefiting from this Department. Who has the final say? If expanded – to what age range?
- ◆ I would like to see some sort of plans to visually depict how you would fit either school onto the other one's site. I fail to see that there will be enough room on either site to accommodate the extra children. Also it was indicated at the last meeting that if they rebuild, the kitchens would be lost. How is that improving schools? It is taking away jobs and a much needed facility at the school. How many teachers actually retain their jobs at the school in Downley that has recently combined? How many would in this proposal? Does the special measures in the Infant School get carried across to the Combined School? If so will the infant side just be in special measures or will it be classes as the whole school?
- ◆ If you amalgamate, we, as parents, will not have a choice. There will only be combined school. Please don't do it.
- ◆ I think that it is a very good idea. I hope it works.
- ◆ It should be done with as little disruption as possible.
- ◆ I feel it would be more viable to maintain one school rather than struggling to finance two schools. The money could be put to much better use.
- ◆ Consideration should be made for using the junior school site as they have three advantages over the first school site:

The junior school is 20 years newer

They can provide hot lunches for children – especially important for working mums

The swimming pool is an excellent facility. Perhaps you could use some of the proposed funds to erect a roof for all round use during the year.

- ◆ Amalgamation is the best to be carried out. It will also be convenient for the parents to park cars inside the school's car park. The nursery, infant and junior children will all be together. They can learn so many things from each other.
- ◆ I think they should be on the Hollis Road site. Retaining and enhancing the extra amenities like the kitchen and especially the swimming pool.
- ◆ I think it is a very good idea for the parents who have children in both schools.
- ◆ The Junior School site would be the most suitable.
- ◆ Good proposal.
- ◆ A good idea would be to have a proper sports facilities i.e. Gym and indoor five-a-side football pitch and swimming pool, and open to the public at weekends would generate income for the School – also a good kitchen!!
- ◆ The sooner the better.