



AGENDA

SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD

Wednesday, 11th July, 2007, at 10.30 am

Ask for: **Geoff Mills/Karen
Manning**

**Council Chamber, Sessions House, County
Hall, Maidstone**

Telephone **(01622)
694289/694367**

Tea/Coffee will be available from 10.00am outside the meeting room

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

1. Substitutes
2. Declarations of Interests
3. Election of Vice Chairman
4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 June 2007 (Pages 1 - 6)
5. Proposed Amalgamation of Boughton-Under-Blean Methodist (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School and Dunkirk Village Primary School - Outcome of Public Consultation (Pages 7 - 24)
6. Ethelbert Road Infant School - Proposed Change to an All - Through Primary School (Pages 25 - 30)

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership
(01622) 694002

Tuesday, 3 July 2007

Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report.

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the School Organisation Advisory Board held on Thursday, 14 June 2007 at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone.

PRESENT: Mrs V Dagger (Chairman), Mr W Hayton (Vice-Chairman), Mrs C Angell, Miss S J Carey, Mr A R Poole, Mr R Burgess, Mr M Northey

OFFICERS: Dr I Craig (Director – Operations), Mr M Doole – Area Education Officer Dover and Thanet, Miss C Lay, Area Education Officer, (Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells), Miss Charlotte Ricci (Democratic Services).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mr J D Simmonds, Mr L B Ridings, Mrs E Green, (local member) and Canon J L Smith (Rochester Diocesan Board of Education)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2007

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2007 were agreed as a true record.

**2. St John's Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary school, Tunbridge wells – proposed change of status.
(Item 1 Report by Director (Operations))**

(1) This report sought the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on the Governing Body's proposal to seek Foundation status. Members' views would advise the Cabinet Member for Education and School Improvement when he formally responded, on behalf of the County Council, to the school's consultation process.

(2) Ms Lay gave a short presentation to the Board regarding the proposal, stating that the main issues surrounding the proposal related to admissions, school premises and personnel at the school. Ms Lay highlighted how the Board were being asked to formulate a view that the Cabinet Member should take in response to the consultation on the proposal that the school move from a Voluntary Controlled status to Foundation status.

(3) Mr Burgess asked what the reservations of the Cluster Board were as outlined in the report, and Ms Lay answered the question stating that their concern had been related to the fact that when admission patterns are changed, as with this proposal, it can have a domino effect upon surrounding schools, and affect their admissions policies.

(4) In response to a question raised by Mr Burgess regarding admissions criteria, Dr Craig stated that the 'ease of access' criterion had been removed after an observation made by the Ombudsman had suggested this may prove confusing to parents. The County admissions system now in place was that of a clear proximity

rule. Dr Craig went on to explain that St John's previous 'figure of eight' catchment area did create some admissions issues, and KCC representatives had discussed this with the Governing Body of St. Johns' School. The result of the discussion had been that the local authority had proposed that instead of the school being the 'node' point for a catchment area as would usually happen, it had been suggested that a 'node' point exists between the two sites in order to incorporate a wider and fairer catchment area that would not exclude pupils who had attended the infants school site. Dr Craig stated that this was a compromise on the school's current proposal and would remain the local authority's preferred option regardless of the outcome of the consultation, and it would be for the school to decide as to whether or not they would adopt it.

(5) Mrs Angell asked what was happening with the 'old' infant school buildings. Ms Lay stated that these school buildings are now housing a privately run nursery school. Secondly, Mrs Angell asked what effect this proposal will have on surrounding schools' admission numbers, to which Ms Lay responded stating that St. Lukes Primary School in the surrounding area is closing in August 2007, and that the Headteacher of St. John's is currently managing this closure. St. Augustines and St. Matthews Primary Schools are full for this September so the effect on surrounding schools should be minimal. Mrs Angell asked if the school had a transport plan, to which Dr. Craig responded that he was certain one was in place, and that this proposal would have a minimal effect on transport related issues.

(6) Mr Hayton asked if children attending the school from outside a 2-mile radius would receive travel assistance? Ms Lay answered Mr Hayton's question, stating that so many children lived within walking distance of the school that there was no real cost implication here. Mr Hayton also had a question answered by Ms Lay regarding the expected rise in pupil numbers at reception age. Ms Lay confirmed that it was possible to accommodate all children in the area for at least the next two years.

(7). Mr Northey stated that he felt the critical point of this discussion was not as to whether the school should achieve the foundation status it desires, but that it implements and adheres to a robust and fair admissions policy. Mr Northey asked what opinions Mr Bullock, the local member had expressed regarding the proposal, but Ms Lay stated that she would not wish to comment in Mr Bullocks' absence, for fear she may misrepresent his views.

(8). Canon Smith explained that having studied the map showing the distribution of students attending the school, it is the case that few students currently live outside the area. Canon Smith felt that the proposed moving of the 'nodal point' for admissions was a good idea as this would meet all of the needs of St. Johns' Primary School, and does not exclude the children wanting to attend from the area surrounding the old infants school buildings.

(9). Mr Hayton supported the view expressed by Canon Smith, stating that the new 'figure of eight' catchment area proposal was a good idea, ensuring that no child who would have been in the catchment area for the old infants school site would be excluded from the new admissions policy. Mr Hayton supported the school's proposal to move to foundation status.

(10) Following debate, The School Organisation Advisory Board agreed on a vote of 3 for, 1 against and 3 abstentions that the Cabinet Member for Education and School

Improvement should on behalf of the County Council express support for the proposed change to Foundation Status.

3. Proposed Amalgamation of Ellington School for Girls and the Hereson School, Ramsgate.

(Item 2 Report by Director (Operations))

(1) This report sought the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on whether to go to public consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Ellington School for Girls and The Hereson School, Ramsgate with effect from 1 September 2008.

(2) Mr Doole introduced the proposal outlined in the report, highlighting how it aimed to maintain good schools in Ramsgate against the pressures of falling school rolls in the catchment area, with surplus places at the two schools due to increase. Mr Doole stated that the proposal aimed to keep the strengths of both schools, raising standards and maintaining them. He also stated how the new school site for Ellington Girls School at Pysons Road in the town was a dramatic improvement on their old site.

(3) Mr Doole continued, stating that the proposed amalgamation would be a phased transition over a two year period, with those studying for their GCSEs at the Hereson School at the time of amalgamation remaining at the Hereson site to minimise disruption to their studies. He understood that the proposal was a sensitive one as people felt strongly about maintaining the single sex provision available currently. Mr Doole stated that the schools would be able to decide for themselves the organisation of the new school should the proposal go ahead, so would not necessarily mean the end of single sex provision.

(4) Mrs Green, local member stated that this proposal represented a loss of diversity of education and choice in Thanet. The new Ellington School site at Pysons Road had initially been proposed as a new site for Clarendon Girls Grammar School and Ellington School for Girls. This amended proposal has left many parents of girls at the Ellington School feeling bemused and unhappy. Mrs Green felt that this proposal had been designed to fail, as with the new Marlowe Academy very close by, this will be seen as a school of last choice, should the proposal go ahead. She added that the overall picture of secondary schools in Ramsgate needed to be looked at in detail, and therefore this proposal was far too premature.

(5) Mrs Green asked what provisions would be made were the boys from the Hereson School to move onto the new Ellington site to accompany the girls, and also asked what would happen to the Heads of the two schools, as with her understanding it was the case that the amalgamated school would only need one Head. Mr Doole answered the questions Mrs Green had posed; firstly stating that he was aware that both Heads were in support of the proposal, but that the Amalgamated school would indeed only need one headteacher. The physical provision for boys on the new site would take one year to be provided and works completed.

(6) Mr Doole agreed that the overall picture of secondary schooling in Ramsgate did need looking at, especially at why pupils migrate to schools in Broadstairs. He

added that school provision would be looked at in a wider context, looking at how schools could work together for the benefit of pupils across Thanet.

(7) Mr Hayton stated that he was a member of the Governing Body of the Hereson School, but had not made any comment or taken part in discussions at meetings of the Governing Body regarding this proposal, and this had been duly minuted at those meetings. Mr Hayton stated that he had been directly involved in securing the new site, at great expense, for the Hereson School for Boys which had been greatly needed as the old site had been the second worst provision in the County, so he greatly supported the move to the new site. Mr Hayton understood that a new school would attract new clientele as the Marlowe Academy had, but the loss of single sex provision would most likely counteract the pull of new buildings, as the single sex provision was what made both schools so special. He added that at least 90% of parents were against a proposed amalgamation. Mr Hayton felt that it was right to go out to consult on this proposal, but was opposed to the proposal outlined in the report, and did not believe that these schools should be amalgamated.

(8) Mr Poole, as a local member for the area and also a member of the Board, outlined how neither Mr Hayton (the other local member for the Ward) nor himself had been consulted on the proposal, to which Mr Doole responded stating that all local members and other interested parties would be consulted in full were the Cabinet Member to make the decision to do so. Mr Poole was discontented at the possible loss of single sex provision, and suggested that a “federation” of the two schools sharing one site was investigated further, in order to maintain the provision. Mr Poole stated that he would rather not see the schools amalgamated at this time.

(9) Mrs Angell asked for some clarification on some points in the report which Mr Doole gave. She asked how if Thanet was high up the list for the Building Schools for the Future Programme (BSF), if falling student rolls would be addressed within this programme? Dr Craig responded stating that waiting for the BSF programme to be rolled out in Thanet was not an option, as student numbers were already critically low, and surplus capacity was going to increase in the next few years, so action was needed to prevent both schools from ceasing to be viable. Throughout the course of discussion, Mrs Angell asked questions such as what the ‘modest cost’ of adaptations to the site in order to make it viable to accommodate the boys would be. Dr Craig stated that at this time, precise figures were unknown, but it would become clear were the consultation to go ahead, and more work surrounding the proposal would be undertaken. Dr Craig also answered a question Mrs Angell asked regarding the Travel implications for students attending the new amalgamated school. He stated that as both schools serve the same catchment area, transport implications should prove minimal.

(10) Mr Burgess stated that throughout the course of discussion it had become apparent that the main issue here was one surrounding single sex education provision in Thanet. Mr Burgess felt it was important to maintain parental choice, but having just completed the Primary strategy, noted that a healthy sized 4 form of entry school should be welcomed as the increase in surplus capacity in the area, could eventually threaten both schools. Mr Burgess was in favour of a consultation being undertaken, subject to the clarification of timescales should the amalgamation go ahead.

(11) Miss Carey stated that she supported action being taken now, because of falling school rolls and the fact that for the forthcoming year there have been only 32

first choices for the Ellington School for Girls and 38 for Hereson School, so closure is a reality if no action were to be taken.

Miss Carey felt that it was a necessity to go out to consult on this proposal, and from this point these schools can find a way forward to secure their future.

(12) Mr Hayton stated that the Hereson School had once been a two form of entry school, and had managed to provide a reasonable standard of education. Mr Hayton stated that there was currently little spare capacity at the Marlowe Academy, and 1,102 new homes were planned in the Westwood area, so he asked how many more places would be needed to accommodate more children on this basis. Dr Craig stated that this many new homes currently produces a 'pupil product' of approximately 200 secondary aged children. Mr Hayton made the point that should this proposal go ahead, there would be nowhere to accommodate this many children, if the surplus capacity of both the Ellington and Hereson schools removed.

(13) Mr Northey stated that he had held back in order to listen to the local members who have a keen interest and level of expertise in this particular proposal. He added that if this proposal can save both schools in some form, it should be supported; however there were obvious issues that would need resolution before a way forward was found. Mr Northey supported the proposal to go out to consultation on this issue.

(14) The School Organisation Advisory Board were agreed to the proposal to move to public consultation on the proposed amalgamation of Ellington School for Girls and the Hereson School in accordance with the proposal and timescale set out in the report.

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By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 11 July 2007

Subject: PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF BOUGHTON-UNDER-BLEAN METHODIST (VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED) PRIMARY SCHOOL AND DUNKIRK VILLAGE (COMMUNITY) PRIMARY SCHOOL – OUTCOME OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out the results of the public consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Boughton-under-Blean Methodist Primary School and Dunkirk Village School. It seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on the issuing of a public notice for the closure of Dunkirk Village School.

Introduction

1. (1) Dunkirk Village School is a small rural community school and is federated with Boughton-under-Blean Methodist (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School situated 1.2 miles away. Both schools draw their pupils from the communities of Boughton and Dunkirk and from further afield.

(2) At its meeting on 18 April 2007 the School Organisation Advisory Board supported the proposal to consult on amalgamation of the two schools into a 1 FE primary school on the site of Boughton School (see Appendix 4 for the full report discussed at this meeting). This report sets out the results of the public consultation which was undertaken in May 2007.

(3) A consultation document, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 1 was distributed in accordance with County policy. This document contains background information and roll data to inform the consultation process.

Background

2. (1) Dunkirk Village School has a published admission number of 15 and a net capacity of 105. There are currently 59 pupils on roll giving a surplus capacity of 44%. There is a pre-school provision on site run by a private provider and there is a possibility that this may be resited at Selling CE Primary School.

(2) Boughton-under-Blean has a published admission number of 30 and a net capacity of 207. There are currently 203 pupils on roll which gives a surplus capacity of 1.93%. The school buildings are currently being upgraded and this will significantly improve the facilities. There is a pre-school provision on site run by a private provider.

(3) Amalgamation would remove 105 surplus places from the locality.

(4) Amalgamation would improve the educational experience of the pupils attending Dunkirk Village School.

The Proposal

3. (1) The proposal is to locate pupils from both schools on the Boughton School site from April 2008, and in future to provide a 1 form entry school to serve the local community of Boughton and Dunkirk.

(2) Current pupils attending both schools will be guaranteed a place at the Boughton School site.

Consultation Process

4. (1) The consultation document was distributed to staff, governors and parents at the schools, County Councillors, Member of Parliament, Parish Councils, the Diocesan Authorities, local libraries, the Borough Council and others in accordance with the agreed County policy. The document was also posted on the KCC website.

(2) Approximately 400 copies of the document were circulated, and a separate form was included for written responses.

(3) A public meeting was held at Boughton-under-Blean Methodist Primary School on 22 May 2007. Miss Susan Carey, member of SOAB, chaired the meeting. In attendance were Alison Osborne, Area Education Officer and other KCC officers. 40 people attended.

Responses to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

5. (1) A total of 12 written responses were received of which 9 were in favour and 3 opposed.

(2) A summary of written responses is attached as Appendix 2.

Public Meeting Responses

(3) Summaries of points, questions and comments made at the public consultation meeting are attached as Appendix 3.

Views of the Local Members

6. The local member is Mr Andrew Bowles who supports the proposal.

Views of the Parish Councils

7. (1) The Parish Councils understand and support the educational reasons for this proposal.

(2) Dunkirk Parish Council sought assurances at the public meeting that the Parish Council would be informed of any alternative educational use proposed for the Dunkirk site.

Views of the Local Member of Parliament

8. Mr Hugh Robertson, the local Member of Parliament, "*is happy with the proposal*".

Views of Swale Borough Council

9. There has been no response from Swale Borough Council.

Views of the Methodist Visitor

10. Ms Christine Rogers, the Methodist Visitor responded: -

"I write to assure all concerned that the Methodist Church is pleased to give its unconditional support to the proposal to go forward to amalgamation, believing that this will be in the best interests of the pupils of both schools."

Views of the Governing Body

11. The federated governing body unanimously proposed this amalgamation because they feel there is currently an inequality of educational experience for pupils at the two schools.

Views of the Rural Swale Cluster Board

12. The Rural Swale Cluster Board, in consultation with the Cluster Headteachers, fully supports the proposal.

Views of the Area Education Officer

13. (1) There is evidence that the federation has led to important improvements, but it has not had the effect of encouraging more pupils to choose Dunkirk. The intake expected in Year R (1 child) will mean that next September the total roll at Dunkirk will be 47 at most.

(2) The federation with Boughton School has been of considerable benefit in effecting improvements in the quality of education provided for Dunkirk pupils but the impact of the falling roll means that only two classes will run for September 2007, despite considerable marketing. This will place at least three year groups in each class, and will adversely impact on the school's capacity to continue to improve its standards.

(3) The federation formed between Dunkirk and Boughton had the main aim of raising the quality of education provided for the children at both schools. Although progress has been made there are ongoing concerns about the long-term viability of Dunkirk. In particular, recruitment and retention of high quality staff remains an issue. The reduction to two classes will also hinder progress.

Transport and Environmental Impact including Community

Implications

14. (1) The earlier paper to SOAB, attached as Appendix 4, gave details of impact and implications.

(2) Highways comment that:

(a) Boughton Travel Plan was approved in 2005 and will be updated to encompass Dunkirk pupils

(b) the school could consider possible use of parking at the village hall.

Proposed Timetable

15. If it is decided that a public notice should be issued in respect of the proposal, the following timetable could apply:

Issue public notice	6 September 2007
End of representation period	18 October 2007
Decision by Kent County Council	November 2007
Implementation	April 2008

16. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on:

- (a) the amalgamation of Boughton-under-Blean Methodist Primary School and Dunkirk Village School
- (b) if agreed, the issuing of a public notice for the closure of Dunkirk Village School
- (c) subject to approval of the proposal following the end of the objection period, the resources necessary to implement the scheme being provided on the basis identified in this report.

Alison Osborne
Area Education Officer
(Canterbury & Swale)
Tel: (01227) 284461

The Local Member is Mr Andrew Bowles

Background Documents:

None

Previous Committee Reports:

Report to School Organisation Advisory Board 18 April 2007

PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF BOUGHTON-UNDER-BLEAN (VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED) PRIMARY SCHOOL AND DUNKIRK VILLAGE SCHOOL

Summary of written responses

Consultation documents distributed: 400

Responses received:

	Support	Against	Undecided	Total
Parents/Carers of pupils at Dunkirk School	1	2	0	3
Parents/Carers of pupils at Boughton School	3	1	0	4
Members of staff at Dunkirk School	0	0	0	0
Members of staff at Boughton School	0	0	0	0
Federation governors	5	0	0	5
Interested party	0	0	0	0
Total	9	3	0	12

In support of the proposal

- The proposal will secure a good primary education for the children in the area with up to date accommodation.
- The Boughton site will become a focus for the community.
- The broader social and emotional development of pupils at Dunkirk is at risk because of the small numbers in the cohorts.
- A two class school for children aged 4-11 cannot meet their educational needs and is not conducive to maximising their potential.
- Although the staff at Dunkirk School do a great job our children need consistency and stability and the amalgamation cannot come soon enough.
- This would be the most logical solution.

Against the proposal

- Concern about temporary accommodation for the larger year groups.
- Concern regarding class sizes following amalgamation including reduced recreational facilities and lack of sufficient teaching expertise.
- Concern about pupils with SEN in larger classes and a larger school.
- Concern that the amalgamation will result in parents not having the choice of a small school in the locality.

PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF BOUGHTON-UNDER-BLEAN (VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED) PRIMARY SCHOOL AND DUNKIRK VILLAGE SCHOOL

Summary of the Public Meeting held on 22nd May 2007 at Boughton School

Approximately 40 people attended the public meeting including parents, governors and other interested parties.

Headteacher

- Fully supports the proposal
- Positive development
- Raise standards
- Federation has been very successful and positive
- Class organisation will reduce class sizes
- Exciting building project
- Parish Councils are firmly behind this proposal
- Equality for all
- Will benefit the community as a whole
- Although things have improved at Dunkirk, pupils do get a poorer deal
- Proposal will bring in extra revenue and resources

Chair of the Federation

- All the governors support the proposal
- The large classes will be split
- Governors are very excited about the new build

Questions and comments from parents on class sizes

The addition of the Dunkirk pupils will increase the numbers in some year groups and the class sizes will not match a 1FE school.

If the classes are split to make smaller classes will the school admit further pupils to make these classes larger?

Until the official amalgamation date of April 2008 the intake number would not be 30.

I am concerned that my child in Year 2 will be going into a class of 33 in September 2007.

Transition into Year 3 can be difficult for some pupils.

What will be the cut off point for admitting more pupils?

One of my children will be in a class of 19 and the other in a class of 33 and I am concerned that they will have different standards of education because of this.

- We have carefully considered the number of pupils in this area. In Dunkirk there are very few local children. A significant number of pupils who attend Boughton School do not live locally.
- A maximum of 30 pupils is the national legal requirement for an infant class.
- There is no intention to increase the roll in any class.
- If Dunkirk children join Boughton it will mean going over PAN but that does not mean that other parents can get places for their children at this school.
- Children will be taught in smaller classes during the transition to a 1 FE school which will take 7 years to complete.

- There is no correlation between the number of pupils in a class and the quality of learning.
- Year 3 may have 33 pupils but the school is still waiting for a clear indication from Dunkirk as to how many pupils will be transferring and so the class may be smaller. If the class size is 33 the school will put in additional adult help but would not admit further pupils.

Questions and comments from parents on process

My concern relates to the timing and process. Following federation my daughter's teacher has spent a significant amount of time at Dunkirk and I am concerned about the hidden unforeseen consequences of this proposal to amalgamate the two schools. I have received a letter today saying that from September all children in the Federation will be taught on the Boughton site.

What are we being asked to choose between or is this going to happen anyway?

- The federation could continue as it is now with Dunkirk School only having 2 classes. It is the view of the staff, governors and Local Authority that this would not be a good educational experience for the children of Dunkirk.
- The governors feel it is an unequal experience for children in the Federation and have brought forward this proposal to stop further decline.
- It was an operational decision to relocate the Dunkirk pupils on to the Boughton site from September for strong educational reasons.
- Amalgamation could not occur in law until April 08.
- The other possibility could have been a proposal to close Dunkirk school. The pupils at Dunkirk would have had to transfer to schools with available places, and not necessarily in their local community.

Questions and comments from Dunkirk Parish Council about the Dunkirk site

People in Dunkirk have an attachment to the school and it provides an amenity for local people.

What will happen to the site, because there are covenants on parts of the building?

Do you have any proposals for educational use?

We do not want a derelict site.

Will you consult the local community before deciding what use will be made of the buildings?

- Kent County Council will look at educational proposals that could be brought forward.
- It would not be appropriate to bring forward a proposal at this stage before any decision is made on the proposal to amalgamate Dunkirk and Boughton schools.
- It is not proposed to sell the site for residential development.
- The parents of Dunkirk will become part of Boughton School community and links will continue.
- The Parish Council will be informed of any decision on alternative educational use.

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By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 18 April 2007

Subject: BOUGHTON-UNDER-BLEAN METHODIST (VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED) PRIMARY SCHOOL AND DUNKIRK VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL - PROPOSED AMALGAMATION

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on the proposal to undertake a public consultation on the amalgamation of Dunkirk Village Primary School with Boughton-under-Blean Methodist (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School.

Introduction

1. (1) Dunkirk Village School is a small rural community school designated under Section 70 of the Education Act 2005 as a 'rural primary school'. The school is situated 4.4 miles outside Faversham, and is federated with Boughton-under-Blean Methodist (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School 1.2 miles away. Attached as Appendices 1 & 2 are maps showing the home locations of the pupils attending the schools in September 2006. Dunkirk has a published admission number of 15 and a net capacity of 105 while Boughton has a published admission number of 30 and a net capacity of 207.

(2) The schools draw their pupils from the communities of Boughton and Dunkirk and from further afield. Currently only 17% (21) of the pupils living locally choose to attend Dunkirk school. Boughton school attracts a higher percentage of local pupils, but still admits from Faversham and the surrounding villages. Both schools have pupils from a range of social backgrounds. Free school meals are claimed by 11.3% of pupils at Dunkirk and by 4.3% at Boughton. There are 59 pupils on roll at Dunkirk (January 2007) and therefore 44% surplus capacity. At Boughton there are 203 pupils on roll and therefore a surplus capacity of 1.93%. The September 2007 intake of Year R pupils is expected to be 22 at Boughton and only 1 at Dunkirk. There is early years provision on the site of each school. Two private providers run daily provision for 2-4 year olds at Boughton and at Dunkirk.

(3) The school is situated in Boughton and Courtenay Ward (the 3rd largest geographically in Kent). The ward has 293 0-4 year olds giving it the 24th lowest density of 0-4 year olds in the 283 wards in Kent. This is the most easterly ward in Swale and forms the entire boundary with the Canterbury District.

(4) In 2006 the two schools were federated led by one headteacher in the expectation that this would bring benefits to both schools and in particular support the smaller school (Dunkirk). There is evidence that the federation has led to important improvements, but it has not had the effect of encouraging more pupils to choose Dunkirk. The intake expected in Year R (1 child) will mean that next September the total roll at Dunkirk will be 47 at most.

(5) The schools are situated 1.2 miles apart and the nearest surrounding schools are also village schools (Graveney Primary School, Selling CE (VC) Primary School and Hernhill CE (VC) Primary School). Table 1 shows the distances from Dunkirk Village School to the other local schools.

Table 1: Distance from Dunkirk Village School to other local schools

Distance as the crow flies	School	Distance by road
Within 1 mile	None	
Within 2 miles	Boughton-under Blean Methodist (VC) Hernhill CE (VC) Primary School	1.2 miles 2.6 miles
Within 3 miles	Graveney Primary School Selling CE (VC) Primary School	4.3 miles 3.6 miles

(6) Table 2 shows the historic roll data for Dunkirk and Boughton schools over the last 6 years.

Table 2: Historic roll data (January count)

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Dunkirk	71	70	58	62	54	59
Boughton	195	202	201	190	192	203

(7) Table 3 shows the pupil numbers by Year group in Dunkirk and Boughton schools. In January 2007 Dunkirk had 59 pupils on roll (therefore 43.8% surplus capacity), and Boughton had 203 (1.93% surplus)

Table 3: Numbers in Dunkirk and Boughton schools as at January 2007

Year group	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Dunkirk	9	6	5	9	11	6	13	59
Boughton	30	24	30	31	28	31	29	203

(8) Appendix 3 lists primary schools located within 3 miles of Dunkirk, and shows actual rolls as of January 2007 and forecast rolls until January 2011. It should be noted that many of these children live closer to Canterbury than to Dunkirk, and parents choose to send their children to schools in Canterbury.

Background Information

2. (1) Dunkirk School has a capacity for 105 pupils but has had a low roll over recent years, and its standards have been a source of considerable concern to the Local Authority. The school was placed in the serious weaknesses category by Ofsted in May 2005. Both the leadership of the school and the quality of teaching have improved during the past two years. Pupil attainment on entry to the school is well below average and standards throughout the school have been low. Current staff continue to deal with the residual problems following the past inadequate teaching and poor leadership which led the school into serious weaknesses. Pupils are therefore still catching up with aspects of their learning. The federation with Boughton School has been of considerable benefit in effecting improvements in the quality of education provided for Dunkirk pupils but the impact of the falling roll means that only two classes will run for September 2007, despite considerable marketing. This will place at least three year groups in each class, and will adversely impact on the school's capacity to continue to improve its standards.

(2) Boughton School has capacity for 207 pupils and is a popular school, usually filling to capacity. As a voluntary controlled school it works within a Christian ethos with a Methodist presence on the governing body. The school has made substantial improvements in its standards and in pupil achievement. The leadership and management, including governance is strong. The headteacher is also headteacher of Dunkirk, since federation. Parents have confidence in the school and positive views about it. The school currently has a large building project which will remove mobile accommodation in favour of new permanent buildings. This work is due for completion in February 2008. The falling primary intakes in the area are likely to impact on Boughton, and the Year R numbers are set to drop in September 2007.

(3) The federation formed between Dunkirk and Boughton had the main aim of raising the quality of education provided for the children at both schools. Although progress has been made there are ongoing concerns about the long-term viability of Dunkirk. In particular, recruitment and retention of high quality staff remains an issue. The reduction to two classes will also hinder progress.

(4) The federated governing body has unanimously agreed to ask the Local Authority to consult on amalgamation of the two schools on the Boughton site. Boughton School is undergoing a modernisation programme to remove 5 mobile classrooms and replace them with permanent build. Governors wish to launch the updated and modernised buildings by offering the facilities to all children in the federation from April 2008. Governors recognise the strengths of both schools in the federation but believe the children attending Dunkirk School do not receive the same quality of educational experience as the children at Boughton because:

(a) the continued fall in pupil numbers means that Dunkirk can only support two classes from September 2007. Children will therefore be taught in mixed age classes covering at least three year groups, and across Key Stages.

(b) the accommodation although improved cannot compare with the facilities at Boughton.

(c) Dunkirk Village School continues to find it very difficult to recruit and retain staff with the necessary skills and expertise to work in a mixed age environment.

(d) many children at Dunkirk need additional support which requires the regular movement of staff and pupils from one site to the other.

(5) Governors are anxious to provide equality of treatment for all pupils within the federation and believe that this will only be possible by locating everyone at Boughton.

(6) A meeting has been held with parents from both schools in the federation to discuss the plans for renovation at Boughton and to put forward the governors' ideas for the future. Governors wish to launch the updated and modernised Boughton School and offer the facilities to all children in the federation from April 2008. Parents welcomed the opportunity to discuss the governors' wish to amalgamate and there was broad agreement with the idea.

School Buildings

Dunkirk School

3. (1) The school occupies a largely Victorian building with some small extensions dating from the 1960s. There are two mobile classrooms in good condition. The former School House has been occupied by the school to provide additional storage and office accommodation. The overall condition of the school is fair but parts lack heating and suffer damp problems. The slate roof was renewed in 2003. There has been internal and some external decoration. Landlord expenditure has also recently been incurred on external repairs, damp-proofing and a fire exit. This has addressed the most serious health and safety problems but more expenditure would be required to bring the premises up to a good standard.

(2) The accommodation does not meet the demands of a primary setting. For example, the former School House is wired for domestic use and parts are unheated. Generally heating is poor and a complete central heating system is required throughout the school. There are ongoing damp problems and these can only be completely resolved with improved heating. The hall is two former classrooms and is unsuitable for delivering the PE curriculum. The general classroom in the main building is undersized and the only good sized rooms are the two mobile classrooms. All of the administrative accommodation is undersized and unsuitable. The school is not Disability Discrimination Act compliant and would be difficult to adapt, especially the former School House. Probably the only way of way tackling all of the problems would be to convert the School House for storage, adapt most of the current school for administration and extend with permanent classrooms.

(3) The site is owned by KCC and is a good size for a small school (0.8ha) and includes an adequate playing field (0.5ha). Access from the main road (former A2) is restricted and there is little parking on site. No discussions with planners have taken place but it is considered likely that consent for residential conversion of the old premises would be possible and a capital receipt in the region of £500k could be achieved. There might also be scope for residential redevelopment of the tarpaved area, so a larger receipt might be possible. The title has been investigated and there appears to be a reverter on part of the site. The original vendors have not been traced but there is a covenant on some of the land that it should be used for a school for the poor of Dunkirk. This needs further investigation to see if proceeds of the sale could be used for other educational provision in the area. There are also ongoing discussions about possible alternative educational use of the site.

Boughton

(4) Currently the school occupies an Edwardian main building with classroom extensions dating from the 1960's. There are 5 temporary hutted and mobile classrooms. With the planned modernisation programme the accommodation will be significantly improved. Appendix 4 (a-c) shows the projected improvements.

(5) The refurbishment of two Key Stage 1 classrooms and the replacement of temporary accommodation by a new build extension will provide four additional Key Stage 2 classrooms and a reception classroom with a covered play area. Each classroom will be equipped with interactive whiteboards, storage, wet area, reading area and a shared external teaching space.

(6) The proposed reorganisation of the administration area within the Edwardian building will include a formal reception area for greeting parents and visitors on entry, a headteacher's office, a group meeting area, resource and stationery storage and staff and disabled washrooms. Additionally there will be a care suite which will make the school fully Disability Discrimination Act compliant.

The Proposal

4. (1) The proposal is to locate pupils from both schools on the Boughton site, and in future to provide a 1 form entry school to serve the local community of Boughton and Dunkirk. In 2007-08 the year groups will be of different sizes to accommodate both school rolls as follows:

Year R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
23	39	30	35	40	39	37

These year groups will be organised to ensure that no Key Stage 1 pupils are taught in a class of more than 30, and that where possible smaller classes are created. This will call for some temporary accommodation during this phase, but from September 2008 the intake will be at 30 pupils. This will remove 105 places from the locality in line with the Primary Strategy recommendation number 27.

(2) The decision of the governors to request amalgamation of the two schools has been taken in the light of the falling roll and at Dunkirk the realisation that the school cannot sustain or improve the necessary quality of education for its pupils. The Local Authority staff all of whom have worked closely with the school, support this conclusion. Amalgamation on the Boughton site will mean closure of Dunkirk School and temporary accommodation at Boughton during the passage of current pupils through the school. The plans will ensure that class sizes are appropriate.

(3) There is a presumption against closure of any rural school, unless it can be demonstrated, amongst other things, that the school does not provide a good education for its pupils and that its community does not support it. In the case of Dunkirk Primary the governors have concluded that despite all the efforts made, they cannot ensure that the school will be able to offer an appropriate experience for its children. The school has not yet been removed from the serious weaknesses category.

(4) There has been a school in the village for many years, but there are no longer local children to sustain the roll. The total number (from ages 4-11 years) likely to attend in September is 47, of which a substantial number live nearer Boughton than Dunkirk. If the school were to remain open it could not sustain more than two classes.

(5) There are no extended school facilities at Dunkirk. All attempts to establish these have failed because of low numbers. Amalgamation would mean that Dunkirk families could access provision at the new school.

(6) The proposal to amalgamate the schools is in line with Kent's Primary Strategy. If it continues Dunkirk School will be financially unviable and the quality of education it can offer will be unacceptable.

Views of the Governing Body

5. The governors have all accepted that Dunkirk school cannot offer its pupils an appropriate education. They propose amalgamation because they believe that to continue with two separate schools would not be in the best interests of the children, and have reached this decision after very careful and thorough consideration of all the issues. They are especially concerned about the disparity of provision across the two schools in the federation.

Views of the Local Member

6. Mr A Bowles, the local Member, is aware of the issues and although he always regrets the possibility of a school closure, feels it is important to focus on the best interests of those pupils currently in Dunkirk as well as those in the local area as a whole.

Views of the Parish Councils

7. The headteacher has had initial discussions with the chair of Dunkirk Parish Council and with the whole of Boughton Parish Council. Both meetings were positive and the parish councils will be formally consulted as part of the process.

Views of the Cluster Board

8. The Rural Swale Cluster Board is fully supportive of the proposal to amalgamate Boughton-under-Blean Primary with Dunkirk Village School. Amalgamation will ensure parity of education provision and long term security of school places for children of both local communities.

Views of the Methodist visitor

9. The Methodist regional representative is initially positive and will meet with national representatives to discuss the proposal.

Resource Implications

Capital

10. (1) The sale of the Dunkirk site could realise a capital receipt of £500k. See section 3 (3).

Revenue

(2) The average annual cost of funding a pupil at Dunkirk Primary School is £3,885 against a Kent average of £2,819 (2006/7).

(3) The average annual cost of funding a pupil at Boughton-under-Blean Primary School is £2,550 against a Kent average of £2,819 (2006/7).

(4) The proposed amalgamation would be eligible for support from the re-organisation fund. This is one off funding made up of the following:

- Protection of Caretaking time 2 X £5,554 = £11,108
- Curriculum protection (£2,514 + £44,712) X 2 = £94,452
- One off lump sum £6,700.
- Plus £2,700 per planned class in each curriculum year group.

The purpose of the grant is to help manage the transition of the schools.

(5) By amalgamating the two schools the budget would be reduced by £70,000 per annum. This will need to be offset against a reduction in revenue costs generated from efficiency savings and a reduction in maintenance costs.

Human

(6) At Boughton there are 10.7 full time equivalent teaching staff, including the executive headteacher, 230 hours of Learning Support Assistant time and the equivalent of 3 clerical and cleaning staff. At Dunkirk there are 3.6 full time equivalent teaching staff, 53 hours of Learning Support Assistant time and the equivalent of 1 clerical and cleaning staff. Both schools share a Family Liaison Officer. The amalgamation would involve the assimilation of Dunkirk staff on the Boughton site. If any staff are unable to move the Local Authority will be responsible for redundancy costs.

Equality issues

11. (1) Of the 59 pupils at Dunkirk 29% are on the Special Needs Register (with 1.6% statemented). At Boughton 23.3% are registered as having Special Educational Needs with 0.6% statemented.

(2) The facilities at Boughton will be much better than those at Dunkirk, and there is therefore disparity of education provision across the federation. This would be remedied by location of all pupils at Boughton.

(3) If Dunkirk was to remain open, there will need to be a reduction to two classes in September 07. Learning in a mixed age class with at least 3 year groups will place Dunkirk pupils at a disadvantage against pupils at Boughton. Again, integrating all children on the Boughton site will remove this unequal opportunity.

(4) The additional needs of many pupils at Dunkirk can be better met through high quality support located at Boughton. Currently both pupils and staff need to move between the sites to access this specialist support.

Transport and Environmental Impact including Community Implications

12. (1) Boughton School has negotiated with the Parish Council extension of parental parking facilities using the village hall car park. As part of the modernisation project for the school, additional parking provision is being made available. This will reduce street congestion.

(2) The school has an existing Travel Plan which includes proposals for a walking bus. The amalgamation will require revision of this Plan to take account of the needs of Dunkirk pupils.

(3) Dunkirk has poor parking provision and the road on which the school is situated is kerbed only on one side. Access to the school is potentially hazardous because the school is sited on the crest of a hill. There are no traffic calming measures in place.

(4) Children driven to Dunkirk will be better served by the facilities at Boughton with safe drop-off and collection points. There are few Dunkirk children who walk to school, and for these pupils the new school will put measures in place through the revised Travel Plan to ensure safe access to the school. The road is kerbed and the journey involves one potential road crossing. The road crossing patrol available at Dunkirk can be re-sited at the bottom of the hill. There is also a road crossing patrol at Boughton School. In addition pupils and parents can access a regular timetabled bus service which stops outside Dunkirk School.

(5) A proportion (60%) of Dunkirk pupils attend the school from more distant home locations. There are school places available in these localities should parents prefer not to continue to travel.

(6) The community use of the two schools is as follows:

- (a) At Boughton there is a thriving extended school facility including breakfast and after school care. The school is also used for a range of community activities.
- (b) At Dunkirk there is no regular community use of the school.
- (c) Because there is little community use of the school the impact of closure on the local community will not be severe, although of course both parents and governors regret that the school has declined to its current situation.

School Improvement Implications

13. (1) The federation has led to improvements in leadership, management and standards at Dunkirk School, though the school is still in the 'Serious Weaknesses' category. There are ongoing concerns about the capacity of the school to deliver and sustain the necessary improvement in standards.

(2) Amalgamation on the Boughton site will improve the education experience of Dunkirk pupils and enable the provision of a high quality learning environment for the children of both communities. If Dunkirk School were to remain open the school will continue to be vulnerable because of the declining roll, the staffing recruitment and retention difficulties and the inadequate physical provision relative to Boughton School.

Links to the Primary Strategy

14. The Local Authority is required to ensure that schools are financially viable and delivering a good standard of education. Kent County Council recognises that small rural schools can have a significant role in their communities. Closure of such a school through amalgamation would only be proposed if the school could not fulfil its function. The level of surplus capacity in primary schools in the area makes it very unlikely that Dunkirk School can attract sufficient pupils in the future to make it sustainable. For the current cohort of pupils, the school cannot provide an acceptable standard of education. This proposal is in line with the Kent Primary Strategy recommendations 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, and 29.

Proposed Timetable

15. Should public consultation be agreed, the proposed timetable is as follows:

Publication of consultation document	7 May 2007
Public meeting	W/c 21 May 2007
Last date for responses	11 June 2007
Report to School Organisation Advisory Board	11 July 2007
Cabinet Member decision	July 2007
Issue public notice	6 September 2007
End of period for statutory objections	18 October 2007
Decision by Kent County Council	November 2007
Adjudication (if required)	December 2007
Amalgamation with effect from	April 2008

16. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on the proposal to undertake a public consultation on the amalgamation of Dunkirk Primary School with Boughton-under-Blean Primary School with effect from April 2008.

Alison Osborne
Area Education Officer
(Canterbury & Swale)
Tel: (01227) 772992

The Local Member is Mr A Bowles.

Background Documents:

None

Other Sources of Information:

Kent Primary Strategy 2006

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By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 11 July 2007

Subject: ETHELBERT ROAD INFANT SCHOOL - PROPOSED CHANGE TO AN ALL-THROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on the proposal to undertake a public consultation on changing Ethelbert Road Infant School to an all-through Primary school.

Introduction

1. (1) Ethelbert Road Infant School is located within urban Faversham and has occupied its site for 100 years. The school is popular and successful as an infant school although there is no junior school in Faversham to which pupils can automatically transfer. Pupils moving on to Key Stage 2 must therefore find places in primary schools as “casual admissions”. This can be problematic and can break friendship groups. The concern about which primary school their children will transfer to often encourages parents in Year 2 to leave early as spaces in primary schools become available.

(2) Attached as Appendix 1 is a map showing the home locations of the pupils attending the school in September 2006. Ethelbert Road Infant has a published admission number of 37 and a net capacity of 111.

(3) The school draws the vast majority of its pupils from within a 1-mile radius of the school. There were 85 pupils on roll at Ethelbert Road Infant (January 2007) and therefore 23% surplus capacity. The September 2007 intake of Year R pupils is expected to be 30.

(4) Table 1 shows the distances from Ethelbert Road Infant School to the other local schools.

Table 1: Distance from Ethelbert Road Infant School to other local schools

Distance as the crow flies	School	Distance by road
Within 1 mile	Ospringe CE Primary School	0.7 mile
	St Mary of Charity CE Primary School	0.7 mile
Within 2 miles	Bysing Wood Primary School	1.1 miles
	Davington Primary School	1.0 mile
Within 3 miles	Luddenham School	2.1 miles

(5) Table 2 shows the historic roll data for Ethelbert Road Infant School over the last 6 years.

Table 2: Historic roll data (January count)

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Ethelbert Road	100	91	91	79	87	85

(6) Table 3 shows the pupil numbers by Year group in Ethelbert Road Infant School. In January 2007 there were 85 pupils on roll (therefore 23.42% surplus capacity). The current roll has fallen to 81 (June 2007).

Table 3: Numbers in Ethelbert Road Infant School as at January 2007

Year group	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
	30	30	25	-	-	-	-	85

(7) Table 4 lists primary schools located within 3 miles of Ethelbert Road Infant School, and shows actual rolls as of January 2007. Schools are not recruiting to capacity and the current surplus is 265 places (18.28%). This will diminish as Childrens Centres are completed at Bysing Wood and St Mary of Charity CE.

Table 4: Numbers in schools within 3 miles of Ethelbert Road as at January 2007

School	PAN*	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Net Capacity
Bysing Wood	30	12	6	6	10	15	19	20	92	171
Davington	60	52	56	60	60	67	62	61	418	420
Luddenham	30	30	30	30	32	31	31	32	216	198
Ospringe CE	30	22	22	30	29	32	45	18	198	241
St Mary of Charity CE	60	28	27	31	43	44	36	52	261	420

*Published Admission Number

(8) Table 5 gives current and future PAN information for the locality in and around Faversham town.

Table 5: Changing PANs in the Faversham area

Year	2007	2008	2010
PAN	396	354	317

(9) There are 320 Year R pupils on roll in the locality which includes a considerable number from the Whitstable area who send their children to Swale schools. In future it is expected that this trend will diminish. Ethelbert Road School is required as a primary to serve local need. The latest forecasts indicate that in 2010 there will be 320 Year R children living in the locality.

Background Information

2. (1) Ethelbert Road Infant School has a capacity for 111 pupils and a published admission number of 37.

(2) The school was last inspected in 2003 and was judged to be a good school with some very good features. It was noted that the school provided a safe and friendly environment that strongly supported learning and was totally inclusive so that all pupils were treated as individuals.

(3) In 2003 a disabled care suite, which also comprises additional teaching facilities, was established.

(4) The creation of an ICT suite in 2006 enhanced the facilities at the school which now also includes interactive whiteboards in each classroom.

(5) The playground has recently been redeveloped and provides a holistic experience for the pupils with designated areas for outside learning.

(6) There is a private pre-school (Berties) on site which is the lead pre-school for the Rural Swale Cluster.

School Buildings

3. (1) Ethelbert Road is a Victorian building with solid brick walls and a Kent peg tile roof. During the last three years, the major maintenance issues of the boiler and tarpaving have been resolved.

(2) The school is well equipped as an infant school. It has a small hall and no playing field. However, the governors are entering into an agreement to use the sports hall and playing fields at the nearby secondary school.

The Proposal

4. (1) The proposal is to extend the age range taught at Ethelbert Road. Currently the school caters for children from Year R to Year 2. It is proposed that the age range be from Year R to Year 6, the school becoming an all-through primary.

(2) Currently the school has a PAN of 37 and a net capacity of 111. It is proposed that the PAN be 15 and the capacity 105.

(3) The proposal if implemented would mean that from September 2008 and in successive years, Year 2 children would stay on at the school instead of having to find alternative places elsewhere.

(4) All children currently attending Ethelbert Road would be guaranteed places from Year 3 through to Year 6.

(5) The new PAN of 15 would apply to entry to Year R from September 2008. Currently approximately 30 children enter at Year R and leave at the end of Year 2. The new arrangement will offer 15 pupils education across all primary key stages (Year R to Year 6).

(6) It is proving increasingly difficult to absorb pupils leaving Ethelbert Road Infant School in local primary schools. Lowering the intake number will mean that in the future families will choose at Year R from a range of provision in Faversham and will be able to complete primary schooling at one establishment.

Views of the Governing Body

5. The governors are in favour of the proposal and see the extending of the age range as a solution to the problem the school has at the end of Year 2, there being no local Junior school to which the children can transfer.

Views of the Local Member

6. Mr T Gates, the local member, is aware of the issues and is in favour of proceeding to public consultation on a proposal to change Ethelbert Road Infant School to an all-through primary.

Views of the Cluster Board

7. The Rural Swale Cluster Board in consultation with the cluster headteachers fully supports the proposal to redesignate Ethelbert Road Infant School as a primary school with effect from September 2008.

Resource Implications

Capital

8. (1) The school is of sufficient size to accommodate a primary school of 105 pupils. Toilets would need to be improved to separate Foundation/Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children; a feasibility study is currently being carried out. It is unlikely that temporary accommodation will be needed to house the larger year groups as they pass through the school.

Revenue

(2) Reorganisation Funding - The reorganisation of Ethelbert Road will attract one off funding of £6,728 for each additional class (2 x £6,728 = £13,456.)

(3) Revenue Funding – The school will also get ongoing revenue funding to reflect the increased numbers of pupils attending the school.

(4) At present, as a 3-class infant school, the annual cost per pupil is £3650 against a Kent average of £2819. Other local all through primary schools with a PAN of 15 operate at about the Kent average

Human

(5) At Ethelbert Road Infant there are 4.6 full time equivalent teaching staff, 6 Learning Support Assistants and the equivalent of 1 clerical and cleaning staff.

(6) The proposal will have no impact on the numbers of teaching and non-teaching staff needed in the school.

(7) As the school starts to teach children in Key Stage 2 staff will need professional development to meet the responsibilities of the wider age range.

Equality issues

9. (1) Of the 85 pupils at Ethelbert Road Infant 34 are on the Special Needs Register (with 3 statemented).

(2) A benefit of a change to an all-through primary is that pupils do not need to transfer at Key Stage 2, which can be a barrier to pupil progress.

(3) 9.4% of pupils at the school receive free school meals; 4.7% do not have English as their first language; 5.9% are ethnic minorities.

(4) There is no specific group within the community which is disproportionately disadvantaged by this proposal.

Transport and Environmental Impact including Community Implications

10. (1) The school will continue to serve the population in its immediate area.

(2) Those children who currently leave at the end of Year 2 and travel to schools elsewhere would be able to continue their education at Ethelbert Road thus reducing the distances children would have to travel to school.

(3) The school is updating its travel plan which also includes the establishment of a walking bus. The plan would need to be adapted to take into consideration the wider age range of the pupils attending the school.

(4) Highways have been consulted and will work with the school to develop a revised travel plan.

School Improvement Implications

11. (1) Results at Key Stage 1 have been consistently good. In 2006 the Average Points Score was 13.6 across all areas, which was lower than the norm for the school. This was due in part because of the large number of children with special needs in the cohort, including 5 with statements.

(2) It is difficult to operate in a context where transfer to the junior stage cannot be organised because pupils must transfer to any school with vacancies. Planning coherent transfer to Key Stage 2 is therefore very difficult.

(3) Table 6 shows the schools to which the current Year 2 children will transfer in September.

Table 6: Destination schools for Year 2 children currently in Ethelbert Road.

Eastling Primary School	4
Luddenham School*	3
Selling CE Primary School*	5
Davington Primary School*	2
Ospringe CE Primary School*	3
St Mary of Charity CE Primary School	2
Graveney Primary School*	2
Lynsted & Norton School*	1
(going to appeal)	3

Note: Those schools marked * are going over their published admission number to accommodate the children.

Links to the Primary Strategy

12. The Local Authority is required to ensure that schools are financially viable and delivering a good standard of education. Kent County Council recognises that small schools can have a significant role in their communities. This proposal does not alter the overall capacity of the school by a significant amount but would eliminate an anomaly where one infant school exists in isolation surrounded by other all-through primary schools, and with no corresponding junior school where children could transfer at the end of the infant phase. This proposal is in line with the Kent Primary Strategy recommendations 14, 17, 22, 23, and 29.

Proposed Timetable

13. Should public consultation be agreed, the proposed timetable is as follows:

Report to School Organisation Advisory Board	11 July 2007
Publication of consultation document	10 September 2007
Public meeting	25 September 2007
Last date for responses	22 October 2007
Report to School Organisation Advisory Board	14 November 2007
Cabinet Member decision	December 2007
Issue public notice	3 January 2008
End of public notice period	15 February 2008
Determination decision	March 2008
Implementation	September 2008

14. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on the proposal to undertake a public consultation on the change to an all-through primary school of Ethelbert Road Infant School with effect from September 2008.

Alison Osborne
Area Education Officer
(Canterbury & Swale)
Tel: (01227) 772992

The Local Member is Mr T. Gates

Background Documents:

None