



KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD

AGENDA

**Friday, 10 December 2010, at 2.00 pm
in the Council Chamber, Sessions
House, County Hall, Maidstone**

Ask for: **Geoff Mills/Karen Mannering**
Telephone: **(01622) 694289/694367**

Membership (8)

Conservative (7): Mrs V J Dagger (Chairman), Mr D L Brazier, Mr C J Capon,
Miss S J Carey, Mr M C Dance, Mr M J Northey and Mr K Smith

Liberal Democrat (1): Mr M J Vye

Webcasting Notice

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site – at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

By entering the meeting room you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If you do not wish to have your image captured then you should make the Clerk of the meeting aware.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

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

1. Introduction/Webcasting
2. Substitutes
3. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.
4. Minutes - 9 November 2010 (Pages 1 - 2)
5. Proposed Change of Age Range for Newington Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School, Sittingbourne (from 3 - 11 years to 4 - 11 years) by the Closure of the Maintained Nursery Unit (and its replacement by a Voluntary Pre-School Provision) (Pages 3 - 20)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership

Thursday, 2 December 2010

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.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SCHOOL ORGANISATION ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the School Organisation Advisory Board held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 9 November 2010.

PRESENT: Mrs V J Dagger (Chairman), Mr D L Brazier, Mr R Brookbank (Substitute for Mr K Smith), Mr C J Capon, Miss S J Carey, Mr A R Chell (Substitute for Mr M J Northey), Mr M C Dance and Mr M J Vye

ALSO PRESENT: Mr G Cooke and The Reverend N Genders

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Doole (Area Education Officer Thanet & Dover) and Mr G Mills (Democratic Services Manager (Executive))

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Minutes - 10 September 2010

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2010 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record

2. Proposal to Amalgamate Kingsmead (Community) Primary School and Diocesan & Payne Smith CE (Voluntary Aided) Primary School by closing both schools and establishing a new 2 FE Primary School, with maintained Nursery Unit, on the current Kingsmead site, as a Voluntary Controlled Church of England School

(Item 5 - report by Managing Director for Children, Families and Education) (Mr Vye made a declaration of interest in his capacity as Chairman of Governors of Kingsmead Primary School. He therefore spoke on this matter in his capacity as a local member and not as a member of the Advisory Board. Mr Gibbens was present and spoke as the Local Member)

(1) This report sought the views of the Advisory Board on the proposal to undertake a joint public consultation with the Diocese of Canterbury on the amalgamation of Kingsmead (Community) Primary School and Diocesan and Payne Smith Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School conditional upon the establishment of a new Voluntary Controlled school on the current Kingsmead Primary School site, to replace both schools.

(2) Mr Doole reported on the detail of this proposal and the associated resource issues. He said that at this stage the proposal was being reported to the Advisory Board so it could express a view as to whether the merits of the proposed amalgamation were such that a formal consultation should be undertaken following which a further report on the outcome would be submitted to a future meeting.

(3) Mr Gibbens said it was important to look at how the learning opportunities for the pupils at both these schools could be improved, and to also take measures to

improve the quality of the school buildings. This proposal would achieve those objectives but Mr Gibbens wanted to ensure the status of the new school would be Voluntary Controlled and open to children of all faiths. Therefore if taken forward on that basis he supported the proposal and looked forward to seeing the outcome of the formal consultation.

(4) My Vye said that there was already a good degree of cooperation and joint working between the two schools. However progress was being hampered by a lack of finance and the poor quality of the buildings and this in turn was affecting pupil numbers at both the existing schools. The proposed amalgamation therefore held out the prospect of being able to provide better educational facilities along with greater flexibility in the use of the available resources. Mr Vye said going out to consultation on the basis of the new school being Voluntary Controlled was something he supported but it had to be recognised that the Governing Body of Kingsmead Primary School had not yet reached a formal view.

(5) On behalf of the Canterbury Diocesan Board of Education, the Rev.Genders spoke in support of the proposal and the benefits amalgamation would bring to both schools. He said it was appreciated that the new school would be required to serve the needs of the whole community, which fitted in well with the Local Authority's admissions policy."

(6) The Advisory Board then discussed the proposal following which members expressed the view that the proposal should go forward to formal consultation.

(7) Resolved that endorsement be given to the proposal to undertake a joint public consultation with the Diocese of Canterbury on the amalgamation of Kingsmead Primary School and Diocesan and Payne CE Primary School conditional upon the establishment of a new Voluntary Controlled school in refurbished accommodation on the Kingsmead Primary School site.

By: Rosalind Turner, Managing Director, Children, Families and Education

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 10 December 2010

Subject: PROPOSED CHANGE OF AGE RANGE FOR NEWINGTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED) PRIMARY SCHOOL, SITTINGBOURNE (FROM 3 - 11 YEARS TO 4 - 11 YEARS) BY THE CLOSURE OF THE MAINTAINED NURSERY UNIT (AND ITS REPLACEMENT BY A VOLUNTARY PRE-SCHOOL PROVISION)

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out the results of the public consultation on the proposal to close the maintained nursery unit at Newington Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School and to change the age range from 3-11 years to 4-11 years with effect from 26 April 2011. It seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on the issuing of a public notice.

This paper should be read in conjunction with the report to School Organisation Advisory Board of 14 July 2010

Introduction

1. (1) Newington is a one form entry Voluntary Controlled Church of England primary school with a maintained nursery unit. It serves the rural community of Newington village.

(2) The maintained nursery unit opened in September 2006 when KCC expanded the number of units to serve areas with the highest social need or low pre-school provision. However, the maintained nursery unit is unable to offer the flexible childcare that many families are looking for and therefore the numbers of children have not come forward. The school is finding the nursery unit a financial burden. This has resulted in resources that should be available for the children in Years R to 6 in the school having to be diverted to support the running of the nursery unit.

(3) Newington has one other pre-school provision other than the maintained nursery unit. The Cherries Pre-school is a charity-based organisation run by a partnership of qualified staff and a parent Management Committee. The Cherries has 26 registered places for children aged from two years until they reach school age. The Cherries operates from the Village Hall where it has been located for 40 years. The Village Hall was rebuilt in 1991 and although it offers good accommodation there are the inevitable drawbacks, especially the location of the toilets and outdoor play area, and having to share the accommodation with other users.

The Proposal

2. (1) The proposal is to close the maintained nursery unit. This would be achieved by changing the age-range of Newington CE Primary School from 3-11 years to 4-11 years.

(2) The school would cease to offer nursery classes from April 2011. The Cherries Pre-school would move into the maintained nursery unit accommodation in April 2011. Children entitled to receive the Early Years Foundation Stage Entitlement for 15 hours a term after their 3rd birthday would be able to do so at The Cherries Pre-school, so provision in the locality would be maintained in a flexible offer which parents prefer. If this proposal goes ahead, any children attending the maintained nursery unit at the time of its closure would be guaranteed a place at The Cherries Pre-School.

(3) If The Cherries relocated to the maintained nursery unit accommodation from the village hall, they would be able to consult the community about their childcare needs, and increase the offer available to include breakfast clubs, lunch clubs, afterschool clubs, afternoon and all day sessions.

The Consultation

3. (1) The consultation document was distributed to parents/carers, school staff, nursery staff, governors and County Councillors, Member of Parliament, the Diocesan Authorities, local library, the Borough and Parish Councils, and others, in accordance with the agreed County policy. The document was also posted on the KCC website and the link to the website widely circulated via email.

(2) Approximately 300 copies of the public consultation document were circulated, which included a form for written responses. A copy of the public consultation document is attached as Appendix 1.

Responses to the Public Consultation

Written Responses

4. (1) 48 responses have been received, of which 47 are in favour, and 1 is undecided. A written response was also received from the Governing Body which is included below.

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

Public Meeting Responses

(3) A summary of the points, questions and comments made at the public consultation meeting is attached as Appendix 3.

Views of Local Member

5. The Local Member is Mr Keith Ferrin who said "I have no comments to make on this proposal".

Views of Local Member of Parliament

6. The following response has been received via email from Mr Henderson's constituency office:

"So long as a pre-school nursery provision is available to the residents of Newington within easy access of the villages Mr Henderson would have no objection to changes which will provide a better service to them".

Views of Swale Borough Council

7. The views of the Leader and Chief Executive were sought but neither wished to comment.

Views of the Diocesan Authorities

8. The Diocese supports the proposal as it will enable the school to concentrate on raising standards within the 4-11 age range.

Views of the Governing Body

9. A written response was received from the Chairman of the Governing Body on behalf of the governors and reads as follows:

"The Board of Governors would have very much liked to have kept the Nursery running along the original lines, clearly, the necessary numbers of children to make it viable are not going to be forthcoming.

In the circumstances, we believe that the proposed solution is the best for the school and for the village and we unanimously endorse it.

In addition, we have taken account of parents' concerns that there should be a smooth transition for the children currently attending and, following discussions with The Cherries and the relevant parents, a plan acceptable to all parties has been agreed.

We would therefore now urge that the proposal is approved."

Views of the Pupils

10. The views of the pupils were sought and the following has been provided by the School Council.

"The School Council discussed the Nursery proposal at their meeting on 13 October. They raised some points – one of these was a concern of the size of the Reception class; another was that they thought it would be a good idea as The Cherries has only a very small outside space at its present site, as opposed to the Nursery building at the school. They all liked the idea of possible after-school clubs and holiday clubs in the future. Following their discussion they agreed unanimously that they supported it."

Views of the Local Trust Board

11. Chris White the chairman of the Local Trust Board has given the following response on behalf of the Board. "I agree with this proposal as I feel it will benefit the children in Newington by giving them the opportunity of the wider range of childcare provision that The Cherries could offer."

Views of the Area Education Officer

12. (1) This proposal will provide a good solution for the school and for the Newington Community.

(2) It will ensure that high quality nursery space continues to be used, and will give the flexible preschool provision sought by parents.

[3] It will also offer scope for improved community use of the facilities in the current nursery.

Resource Issues

Capital & Revenue

13. (1) Since the opening of the maintained nursery unit in 2006 it has operated at an annual deficit and the current year end will also show a deficit. If this proposal goes ahead the school will no longer have to bear this loss from the school budget.

(2) If this proposal goes ahead, The Cherries Pre-school will move into the maintained nursery unit accommodation and a lease issued by Kent County Council with an estimated rent of £8,000 per annum. The Cherries Pre-school has produced a Business Plan outlining the future financial sustainability of the pre-school should the proposal go ahead.

Human

(3) The part-time nursery teacher and the part-time nursery assistant would be redeployed within the school.

Proposed Timetable

14.

Cabinet Member decision (to issue a public notice)	December 2010
Public Notice period	13 January to 24 February 2011
Decision by Local Authority and appeal period	March 2011
Implementation	April 2011

Recommendation

15. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on:
- (a) the closure of the maintained nursery unit at Newington CE Primary School and change of age-range from 3-11 years to 4-11 years, and
 - (b) if agreed, the issuing of a public notice.

Alison Osborne
Area Education Officer
(01227) 284461
alison.osborne@kent.gov.uk

The Local Member is Mr Keith Ferrin

Background Documents:

None

Previous Committee Reports:

School Organisation Advisory Board – 14 July 2010

This page is intentionally left blank

Public Consultation Document
NEWINGTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL
NURSERY UNIT



Kent County Council would like to hear your views on a proposal to change the age range of Newington Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School (from 3-11 years to 4-11 years) by the closure of the maintained nursery unit and its replacement by a voluntary pre-school provision.

Date of Public Meeting: Thursday 30 September at 7.00 pm
Venue: Newington CE Primary School, School Lane,
Newington, Sittingbourne, ME9 7LB

1. INTRODUCTION

Kent County Council would like to consult the families and wider community in the Newington locality on a need to consider a proposal to close the maintained nursery unit at Newington CE Primary School, which would also require making a change to the age range of the school (from 3-11 years to 4-11 years).

The nursery is not attracting sufficient 3 year olds and is therefore not financially viable. The governing body has asked the Local Authority to bring forward a proposal that would enable the local pre-school provider, The Cherries Pre-School, to move into the maintained nursery unit accommodation, replacing the existing nursery.

2. BACKGROUND

Newington CE Primary School has a 52 place (26 full time equivalent) maintained nursery unit which opened in September 2006. When Kent County Council committed (in 2004) to expand the number of maintained nursery units in Kent, it was decided that units would be established in areas of the highest social need or low pre-school provision. Newington fitted both these categories but especially the low number of pre-school places available in the locality. However, children have not come forward to fill the available places.

The table below shows the number of pre-school children currently living in the Newington locality.

Age 0+	Age 1+	Age 2+	Age 3+	Age 4+ (current Year R)
Awaiting 2010 data	33	32	23	13

The beneficial impact of good quality pre-school provision on children's learning and social behaviour is recognised by Kent County Council. However, the maintained nursery unit is unable to offer the flexible childcare that many families are looking for. The maintained nursery unit has therefore been undersubscribed since it opened.

There will only be 9 children entering the nursery at the start of the new academic year, September 2010. The maintained nursery unit will operate in the mornings only.

Newington has one pre-school provision other than the maintained nursery unit. The Cherries Pre-school Playgroup is a charity-based organisation run by a partnership of qualified staff and a parent Management Committee. The Cherries operates from the Village Hall and provides term time sessional childcare five days per week for children aged from two years until they reach school age. The Cherries has 26 registered places and usually 18 to 20 places are filled each year.



3. THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is to close the maintained nursery unit and replace it with the local voluntary pre-school provision currently operating in the Village Hall. The Cherries Pre-School Playgroup would move into the maintained nursery unit accommodation from April 2011. Children entitled to receive the Early Years Foundation Stage Entitlement for 15 hours a week attendance a term after their 3rd birthday would be able to do so at The Cherries, so provision in the locality would be sustained. If this proposal goes ahead, any child attending the maintained nursery unit at the time of its closure would be guaranteed a place at The Cherries.

The Cherries would be renting the accommodation which comprises a teaching and care area and a safe covered external area. It has its own entrance, kitchen, office and toilet provision. The Cherries are currently restricted in what they can offer parents because they have to share the Village Hall with other users and do not have adequate toilets and outdoor play facilities. Moving into the accommodation would mean that The Cherries would be able to increase the offer available, to include breakfast, lunch and after-school clubs, afternoon and all day sessions in a flexible way which parents prefer.

The Cherries has produced a Business Plan outlining the future sustainability of the pre-school should the proposal go ahead. The Cherries has a good reputation in the village and in June 2009 the overall quality of the provision was judged by Ofsted as good. The pre-school employs four members of staff all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. In addition there are two voluntary members of staff.

The Cherries already has close links with Newington CE Primary School and being sited with the school would provide the opportunity for additional partnership working and build on the good transitional arrangements already in place.



4. HOW TO GIVE YOUR VIEWS

Complete and return the response form to:

Alison Osborne, Area Education Officer
Clover House, John Wilson Business Park, Thanet Way,
Whitstable, Kent CT5 3QZ. (Fax: 01227 772290)

(Your comments must reach us by 25 October 2010)

Come to a public meeting on:

Thursday 30 September 2010 at 7.00 pm

At Newington CE Primary School
School Lane, Newington, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 7LB

An elected member of Kent County Council will chair this meeting, at which all interested parties will have an opportunity to put forward their views. Officers from the Local Authority will also be present to clarify points of detail.

Email your comments to:

school.consultations@kent.gov.uk

(We will note all you say, but will not be able to respond individually to response forms, letters or emails)

5. CONSULTATION & DECISION MAKING TIMETABLE

Public Consultation Period	13 September to 25 October 2010
Public Meeting to be held at the school	Thursday 30 September at 7 pm
Report Back to the Kent County Council School Organisation Advisory Board *	10 December 2010
Public Notice Issued (subject to Cabinet Member decision)	13 January 2011
Public Notice Expires	24 February 2011
Cabinet Member decision and appeal period	March 2011
Implementation	26 April 2011

* The School Organisation Advisory Board meeting is held at County Hall,
Maidstone and the webcast can be watched via the kent.gov.uk website.
The meeting is open to the public

6. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Following this consultation, all views received, either in writing, by email or at the Public Meeting, will be reported to the School Organisation Advisory Board of Kent County Council.

A Cabinet Member decision will be made on whether to take the proposal forward. If so, a Public Notice will be published in a local newspaper, at the school and in public places like the library. The Public Notice will run for six weeks. Representations about the proposal can be made.

A determination will then be reached on whether the proposal is to be implemented. In certain circumstances this could include referral to the statutory Schools Adjudicator. All views will be considered before a decision is made.

Public Consultation Response Form

The proposed change of age range for Newington CE Primary School by the closure of the maintained nursery unit and its replacement by a voluntary pre-school provision

PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN 25 October 2010

To: **Alison Osborne, Area Education Officer**
Clover House, John Wilson Business Park, Thanet Way,
Whitstable, Kent CT5 3QZ
Fax: 01227 772290

You can also email your views to: school.consultations@kent.gov.uk

Do you agree with the proposal?

Yes

No

I am: (please tick as appropriate)

The parent/carer of a pupil at
Newington CE Primary School

The parent/carer of a child at
the maintained nursery unit

A member of staff at
Newington CE Primary School

The parent/carer of a child
at The Cherries

A governor of Newington CE
Primary School

A member of staff at The
Cherries

Other interested party

A member of The Cherries
Management Committee

Name of other school or interested party

Name:

Address:

Kent County Council is a data controller under the Data Protection Act 1998 and will comply with the requirements of the Act at all times. We will ensure that your personal information is processed fairly and lawfully and in this instance used only for the purpose of validation, which will enable a fair and just consultation.

PLEASE WRITE YOUR COMMENTS OVERLEAF

My comments are as follows:

This document is available on:
<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-learning/about-education-service/consultations/>
Responses can be emailed to: school.consultations@kent.gov.uk

If you have difficulty reading this document and require it in another format please contact your school.

PROPOSED CHANGE OF AGE RANGE OF NEWINGTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND THE CLOSURE OF THE MAINTAINED NURSERY UNIT

Summary of written responses

Consultation documents distributed: 300

Responses received: 48

	Support	Against	Undecided	Total
Parents/Carers of pupils at Newington CE Primary School	18	0	0	18
Parents/Carers of children attending the Maintained Nursery Unit	3	0	0	3
Parents/Carers of pupils attending The Cherries Pre-School	8	0	1	9
Members of staff at Newington CE Primary School including the MNU	12	0	0	12
Members of staff at The Cherries Pre-School	5	0	0	5
A member of The Cherries Management Committee	3	0	0	3
Governors at Newington CE Primary School	3	0	0	3
Interested party – including local residents, the community warden, KCC Early Years advisor and those involved with other local schools.	9	0	0	8
Total responses received *	47	0	1	48

* Please note: The totals on the bottom line refer to the number of individual responses received. Some of these responses fitted into more than one category and are counted in each category but only once in the total.

A summary of the comments on the proposal:

- I think in the long term the proposal is in the best interests of the children and the community.
- Good idea for Cherries Playgroup to move from the village hall to Newington CE Primary School nursery unit – better facilities and improved opportunities for all children in the community.
- I propose that the nursery is taken over by Cherries from September 2011. This would allow for the current Newington Nursery children to make a smooth transition into the Reception class in September 2011.
- I agree strongly with the proposal, as I feel the Nursery has been a financial drain on the school since it opened. I look forward to seeing a great facility being used to its full potential and not at the expense of children.
- Flexible childcare is hard to find in a village and the proposed sessions that Cherries could offer would really help the needs of working parents.
- As a parent governor this proposal will allow the school to focus its resources at infant and junior level rather than at pre-school provision and this can only help in raising standards.

- My concerns are for those children currently in the nursery, due to start school in September.

PROPOSED CHANGE OF AGE RANGE OF NEWINGTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND THE CLOSURE OF THE MAINTAINED NURSERY UNIT

Summary of the Public Meetings held on 30 September 2010

The meeting was chaired by Mrs Valerie Dagger.

The key issues raised are summarised below.

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

- **Alison Osborne**, Area Education Officer outlined the background to the proposal explaining why it was being brought forward. Unfortunately not enough children are coming forward for the nursery to make it viable. There are currently only 9 pre-school children in the maintained nursery this year and therefore KCC has to seek other ways of offering this provision. The maintained nursery unit is a financial drain on the school and it is therefore proposed that it will close at the end of Term 4. The Cherries can move straight into the nursery building at the beginning of Term 5. The children in the maintained nursery at the moment will have a place with the Cherries. KCC will be urging the Cherries and the school to maintain the link/relationship that exists at present.
- **Jacky Darling** the headteacher of Newington CE Primary School gave her support to the proposal saying that everyone wanted the best for the children. The Cherries would be able to offer full day-care to the families that needed it, but the maintained nursery unit cannot offer this. April 2011 would be the best time for this proposal to go ahead. There had been concerns raised over the transition from the nursery to The Cherries Pre-school for those children currently attending the maintained nursery unit and she wanted to reassure everyone that this would be managed in partnership with The Cherries for a smooth transition.
- **Esther Beswick**, the chairperson for The Cherries Management Committee outlined the operational details of the playgroup which is a charity-based organisation run by a partnership of qualified and dedicated staff with a strong, supportive parent Management Committee. The Cherries would have the freedom and flexibility to provide a much more extensive range of provisions if they moved into the maintained nursery unit accommodation. They would look to continue the school breakfast club from the outset and also introduce lunch clubs, after school clubs, afternoon and all day sessions. They could also consider providing holiday clubs in the future. The Cherries would continue to take two year olds. The Cherries would keep the strong links with the school and invite the headteacher to join their Management Committee. Esther offered a visit to The Cherries for any parent with concerns or questions.
- **Tony Parry**, Chair of governors explained that the school could not continue with the maintained nursery due to financial constraints and was very much in favour of the proposal. The governors agreed that the best solution was for The Cherries to take over the excellent maintained nursery unit provision.

The following points were made at the meeting

- Parking could be an issue.

- The flexibility of accessing the free entitlement was queried and answered by the Head of Early Years.
- It was considered that this proposal would provide flexibility for working mothers.
- Parents whose children currently attend The Cherries spoke of their support for the proposal.
- Parents whose children currently attend the maintained nursery unit spoke of their concerns about the transition. The headteacher agreed to work on a transition plan to ensure that parental concerns were met.