

By: Director - Operations

To: School Organisation Advisory Board – 14 November 2007

Subject: ETHELBERT ROAD (COMMUNITY) INFANT SCHOOL PROPOSED CHANGE TO AN ALL-THROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL – OUTCOME OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: This report sets out the results of the public consultation on the proposal to change Ethelbert Road Infant School to an all-through primary school. It seeks the views of the School Organisation Advisory Board on the issuing of a public notice to change the age range of Ethelbert Road Infant School.

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## **Introduction**

1. (1) Ethelbert Road Infant School is located within urban Faversham and has occupied its site for 100 years. The school draws the vast majority of its pupils from within a 1-mile radius. 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 encourages parents in Year 2 to leave early as spaces in primary schools become available.

(2) At its meeting on 11 July 2007 the School Organisation Advisory Board supported the proposal to consult on changing Ethelbert Road from an infant to an all-through primary school (see report attached as Appendix 1). This report sets out the results of the public consultation which was undertaken in September and October 2007.

(3) A consultation document, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 2 was distributed in accordance with County policy. This document contains background information and roll data to inform the consultation process.

## **Background**

2. (1) Ethelbert Road Infant School has a published admission number of 37 and a net capacity of 111. There are currently 88 pupils on roll giving a surplus capacity of 20%. There is a pre-school provision on site run by a private provider. This is the lead pre-school for the Rural Swale Cluster.

(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.

## **The Proposal**

3. (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).

## **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, which included a form for written responses.

(3) A public meeting was held at Ethelbert Road Infant School on 25 September 2007. Mr Robert Burgess, member of SOAB, chaired the meeting. In attendance were Dr Ian Craig, Director – Operations, Alison Osborne, Area Education Officer and other KCC officers. 152 people attended.

## **Responses to the Public Consultation**

### *Written Responses*

5. (1) A total of 156 written responses were received of which 153 were in favour and 3 opposed.

(2) A summary of written responses is attached as Appendix 3.

### *Public Meeting Responses*

(3) Summaries of points, questions and comments made at the public consultation meeting are attached as Appendix 4.

### **Views of the Local Member**

6. The local member is Mr T Gates who spoke at the public meeting in support of the proposal. He welcomed the idea of an all-through primary school as it would solve the on-going problem of transfer to another school at the end of Year 2 and congratulated the school on the quality of education it has provided for many years.

### **Views of the Local Member of Parliament**

7. Mr Hugh Robertson, the local Member of Parliament is aware of the popularity of the school and their desire to become an all-through primary school. He is fully supportive of the proposal and can report that he has received no adverse letters from constituents in relation to the proposed change.

### **Views of Swale Borough Council**

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

### **Views of the Governing Body**

9. The governing body believes that the proposal is in the best interests of all. Children could remain in the school for the duration of their primary education. This would benefit parents, staff, local residents and the children themselves. The governing body is of the view that the proposal complies with the Primary Strategy and is also the best proposal for the Cluster.

### **Views of Pupils**

10. The school consulted the children on the proposal and through the school council the children themselves spoke to their peers. The results were shown at the public consultation meeting through a school made video presentation, with the majority of pupils supporting change.

### **Views of the Rural Swale Cluster Board**

11. The Rural Swale Cluster Board, in consultation with the Cluster Headteachers, supports the proposal. A significant majority of local headteachers view the proposed change positively.

### **Views of the Area Education Officer**

12. (1) This proposal has significant support from the education community, parents, governors, staff and pupils.

(2) The retention of the school as a primary school will serve the needs of the local community.

(3) Reduction to an intake of 15 is necessary because the site cannot accommodate any larger primary school.

(4) Other local schools together with Ethelbert Road provide sufficient local school places.

### **Transport and Environmental Impact including Community Implications**

13. (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.

### **Resource Implications**

14. In the SOAB paper of 11 July it was reported that toilets would need to be upgraded and that a feasibility study was being undertaken. This has now been completed and it is estimated that the required work would cost £75k including fees. This cost is included in the Capital Programme.

### **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	3 January 2008
End of representation period	15 February 2008
Decision by Kent County Council	March 2008
Implementation	1 September 2008

16. The views of the School Organisation Advisory Board are sought on:
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- (a) changing Ethelbert Road Infant School to an all-through primary school.
- (b) if agreed, the issuing of a public notice to change the age range of Ethelbert Road Infant School; and
- (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 Tom Gates

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*Background Documents:*

None

*Previous Committee Reports:*

Report to School Organisation Advisory Board 11 July 2007

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

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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.

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## **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

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*Background Documents:*

None

**PROPOSED CHANGE OF ETHELBERG ROAD INFANT SCHOOL TO AN ALL-THROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Summary of written responses**

Consultation documents distributed: 400

Responses received: 156

	Support	Against	Undecided	Total
Parents/Carers of pupils at Ethelbert Road School	64	0	0	64
Members of staff at Ethelbert Road School	7	0	0	7
Governors of Ethelbert Road	7	0	0	7
Members of staff at other schools	17	1	0	18
Interested party	58	2	0	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>156</b>

In support of the proposal

- Children would benefit by staying in one school rather than moving to an unfamiliar school
- Children need stability
- Children will receive a good education at Ethelbert Road where the staff value every child including those with additional needs. This is an opportunity to build on the exemplary work undertaken at the school
- The school as it is provides a welcoming and happy environment. The children enjoy their education and it would be advantageous for them to continue their education at the school
- Small schools should be preserved particularly in an urban environment. The proposal will also remove the difficulty the school has throughout Year 2 when parents start looking for an alternative school
- The proposal makes complete sense for the school, pupils and the local area.
- This proposal would benefit the local community as it would reduce vehicle usage transporting children to different schools
- The benefits of no disruption to children's primary education would be an advantage to Ethelbert Road pupils
- It would be ideal if the excellent foundation the children of Ethelbert Road receive could be built on with no break at the age of seven. This proposal would ensure valuable continuity
- The current arrangements result in children losing friendships and transfers to other schools where peer groups had already formed make it difficult for Ethelbert Road pupils to join without some feelings of insecurity
- This is an excellent opportunity for this thriving school to build on their established reputation

Against the proposal

- Concern about older children having enough recreational facilities for football, netball etc.
- This proposal will create an elite village type school for those people living closest to the school

- Current arrangements ensure that schools outside Faversham receive extra pupils at the start of Year 3, who attract extra funds for the receiving school

**PROPOSED CHANGE OF ETHELBERT ROAD INFANT SCHOOL TO AN ALL-THROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Summary of the Public Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2007 at Ethelbert Road Infant School**

- Alison Osborne, Area Education Officer for Canterbury and Swale explained the current arrangement. Ethelbert Road is the only Infant school in the area and all the other schools are primaries. This leads to difficulties at the end of Year 2 when parents have to transfer their children as casual admissions to other schools. Friendship groups are broken, parents do not always get a place in the school of their choice and there is disruption to the education of the children.
- Headteacher Samantha Fenn welcomed the proposal and outlined the reasons why the school supported the proposed change and the opportunities that becoming a primary school would offer the children and local community. The current arrangements were described and in particular the difficulties that Year 2 children had in securing Year 3 places at schools of their choice. The establishment of Ethelbert Road as an all through primary would enable the school to provide continuity and progression in the children's education. To achieve the aim of creating an all-through primary would necessitate the reduction of the PAN to 15. All children currently in the school would be guaranteed a place following the change. It would still be possible for parents to transfer children as before if they so wished. The staff are passionate about being a primary school, not because it is an easy option but because it is the right option. In summary she said that the proposal was better for the children, better for the environment and better for the local community.
- Headteacher of a local school: Most local heads have voiced support for the proposal and highlighted the different strengths a small school such as Ethelbert Road can have.
- Parent: Ethelbert Road School is a unique choice and is very much like being part of a family.
- Parent: She nearly did not choose the school because of the compulsory transfer at the end of Year 2. From her point of view the school is wonderful.
- Parent: As a parent of many children she would welcome the opportunity to walk them to the same school for the next 9 years.
- Headteacher of another school: Something has to change and the proposal makes sense.
- Parent: A choice of different schools is important and Faversham town centre will have a small primary school if the proposal is adopted which would be welcomed.
- Parent: Personalised approach of the school is a success.
- Parent: Many children leave Year 2 early. Diversity and choice are important.
- Governor: The proposal was discussed and debated following which it received the full support of governors.
- Member of staff: Speaking on behalf of the staff who are fully behind the proposal. They welcome the opportunity to finish the job they currently start. Early years education is important in developing happy confident children.
- Teacher at another school: Ethelbert Road is held in high esteem and ex pupils speak well of their experience at the school.
- Governor: The proposal is the best proposal; it best meets the Primary strategy, best proposal for the cluster, best for the residents, best for the parents and above all best for the children.

- Teacher at another school: The proposal would mean that only 15 children would join the school in Year R in future years whereas 30 join now.
- Dr Ian Craig – Director Operations: The overall size of the school would remain the same. Expansion is not possible due to site constraints and with 7 year groups the intake number would have to reduce to 15.
- Governor: Confident that the transition will be seamless.
- Parent: The school really works. Speculated that transfer from a small primary to a large secondary might be difficult for children.
- Vivienne Barrett Chair of Governors: Thanked everyone for the phenomenal turnout and the excellent support. She believes the proposal to be in the best interests of all and encouraged people to submit written responses to the consultation.