

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.

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The Local Member is Mr T. Gates

Background Documents:

None