



Folkestone All Age Academy

*The only school
you'll ever need*

Proposed merger of
**Park Farm (Foundation) Primary
School and Folkestone Academy**
to create Kent's first Academy
for 4 – 19 year old students



Public consultation Document

A proposal to create an all age academy for Folkestone

This document explains the proposal to merge **Park Farm Primary School** and **Folkestone Academy** to create an all age academy. Academies are state funded independent schools, which means they are free for pupils to attend and are funded directly by central government. For this merger to happen, two things need to happen - (1) if the proposal is agreed funding would need to be available from a number of sources, including Government, Kent County Council and the sponsor, and (2) Kent County Council would need to agree to "cease to maintain" Park Farm School (a process known as closure). This consultation explains more about the proposal and seeks your views about it. Your views will help the Governing Bodies of Park Farm School and Folkestone Academy, Kent County Council and the Secretary of State to decide if the proposal should go ahead.

Foreword by Roger De Haan CBE, Sponsor of the Folkestone Academy

The Folkestone Academy, an all-ability secondary school for girls and boys, opened in September 2007. It replaced a school that ten years ago struggled near the bottom of academic performance measurement tables. The challenge for the new academy was to help to create a brighter future for its pupils and the broader community, and it has already made impressive progress.

There is a great deal more that can be done, however, to improve access to education in Folkestone, and to raise aspirations for children and young people in the town. Park Farm Primary School has enjoyed considerable success in the recent past, with around 45% of its children gaining access to grammar schools. Nevertheless, the transition to secondary school can be disruptive to children's education and there are strong arguments for examining ways by which children could benefit from improved continuity.

The creation of an inclusive all age academy will considerably enhance the opportunities that can be offered to children and students during the course of their school life. By sharing resources, good teaching practice and above all ethos, we shall be able to offer the highest quality of education to a broad community, and particularly to those who have been denied opportunities in the past.

The new school would further develop the emphasis placed on welfare and pastoral care at the Academy, and would endeavour to strengthen relationships with parents in order that children and students feel both secure and supported. The Academy's innovative approach would also help to create a sense of personal responsibility amongst children that develops as their school career progresses.

An all age academy would be well-placed to support academic progress over a sustained school career, and to guide children towards specific areas of the academic or vocational curriculum, according to each individual's needs, aptitudes and abilities. All these aspects can be much better assessed where an individual's development has been monitored over a longer period of time.

If these proposals succeed, the result will be the creation of a school that will focus on raising aspirations and improving levels of achievement. This will lead in turn to a more confident community, where equality of opportunity and excellence in education will have played a key part.

**Statement from Michael Pearce,
the Chair of Governors of Park Farm School,**

I see the proposal to merge Park Farm Primary School with the Folkestone Academy as a welcome opportunity to take the best practice from each sector and share it with the other, making more efficient and effective use of our joint resources to build on the recent achievements of both schools. An all age academy will give us the chance to raise standards at all levels by working together not only at a strategic level, but also in the classrooms, to give the children in our community the best education and choices available.

**Statement from Dr Ian Craig,
Interim Managing Director, Children Families and Education,
Kent County Council**

Academies are state funded independent schools that are free for pupils to attend. They are not “maintained” by the Local Authority; instead they receive their funding direct from central government.

In order for the merger of Park Farm School and Folkestone Academy to go ahead, KCC will need to agree to “cease to maintain” Park Farm School (a process known as closure), and funding would need to be available from a number of sources, including Government, Kent County Council and the sponsor, for a replacement primary school within Folkestone Academy. Understandably there is a legal process the County Council has to go through before it can close a school, and this includes public consultation.

It is important that you know what the replacement school might be like in order for you to make an informed response. Therefore, the County Council and the Governors of Park Farm School and the Folkestone Academy are jointly consulting you on the proposal to merge the two schools. This document explains the proposal, the reasoning behind it, and how the consultation process will work.

We welcome your thoughts on this ground-breaking proposal and encourage you to respond to this consultation.

No final decision has been made and will not be made until the consultation process is complete and the views of all interested parties have been considered.



The Proposal – an exciting All Age Academy for Folkestone

Working closely with Primary Schools is seen by the Folkestone Academy Trust as a key strategy in its efforts to meet the National Challenge to improve pupil achievement.

Park Farm Primary School is currently located around 300 metres south of the Academy's eastern boundary. Governors of both schools are keen to close the primary school on 31st August 2009 and re-open it on 1st September 2009 as part of the Folkestone Academy. The two schools serve pupils in very much the same catchment area, and it is felt extremely advantageous to work together to help boost standards, particularly in key skills, raise aspirations and improve life chances for young people in East Folkestone.

Parental choice

Around 50% of Park Farm's students move onto the Academy, most of the others gaining grammar school places. Maintaining parental choice at 11+ would remain central to the new arrangements, but underpinning the creation of an all age academy is the desire to share good practice, facilities and staffing across the two sectors.

Governance

The all age academy would be run by the Folkestone Academy Trust and would have a single governing body, that would include representation from both primary and secondary sectors. It would have one Executive Principal who would work closely with the Head of School of the primary school. The Head of School would be responsible for the primary phase of the all age academy.

For this to happen, there would be:

- a formal closure of Park Farm Primary School, Park Farm Road, Folkestone, CT19 5DH on 31st August 2009 and
- the opening of the Folkestone All-Age Academy for pupils age 4 – 19 years with effect from 1st September 2009

Pupil numbers

The two-form entry primary school would have 60 pupils in each year group, achieving a total roll of 420. The secondary school would remain at eight-form entry, with 240 in each of years 7 -11 and 280 sixth formers, giving a total of 1,480 and an overall total of 1,900.

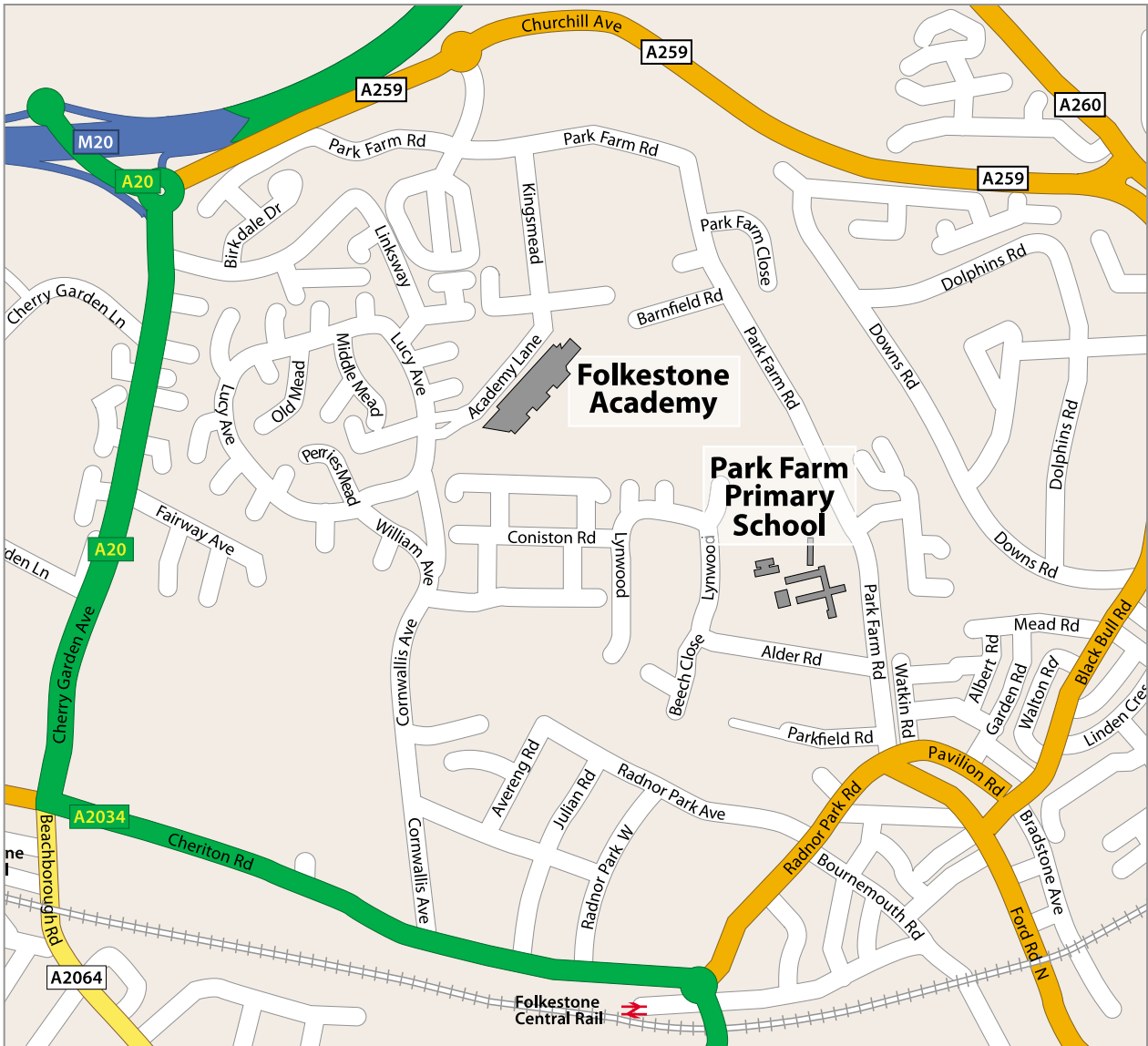
Location

The secondary pupils would continue to occupy their present site on Academy Lane, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5FP. The primary pupils would remain on their current site initially and would be able to use the science laboratories, sports facilities, theatre and studios in the main academy building.

The Academy site is large enough to host new premises to accommodate the primary school, and given the current school building is suffering with subsidence, Trustees would hope to undertake a building programme to construct a new primary building on or very near to the secondary campus by 2011.

Admissions

Park Farm Primary school's admissions are currently organised through a clearly defined catchment area. The catchment area for the Folkestone Academy is of course much larger. We intend to publish an Admissions Policy for September 2010 that affirms the concept of catchment areas within its criteria for admission and identifies the catchment areas applying to both the primary and secondary provision. Priority in the primary phase will be given to siblings of children who attend the primary element of the Academy at the time of admission. We are determined that other local primary schools and their children are not disadvantaged by our proposals and the move onto the Academy site would preserve the current pattern of admissions. We do not want to disadvantage other secondary schools either. Our proposal that children in the primary phase of the all-age academy would be able to move to Year 7 without being subject to other admissions criteria will not impact detrimentally elsewhere as nearly all pupils at Park Farm currently either go on to the Academy or to local grammar schools. We anticipate this pattern continuing.





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PRIMARY



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What are the benefits of an all age academy?

The Folkestone Academy has begun to have a major impact on improving secondary education for children in East Folkestone. In 2008 it was significantly oversubscribed. A very successful open evening at the end of September suggests that the Academy's popularity is set to rise even further.

An all age academy is proposed for a number of reasons:

i. To provide a seamless education for young people from the start of their schooling through to university.

The Folkestone Academy has excellent links with further and higher education institutions in Kent including Canterbury Christ Church and Kent Universities, both of whom are represented at Trustee level. In addition there are good links with Further Education. Park Farm School has a private nursery on site, and if this link continues, the Academy really would be at the heart of life-long learning in its community.

ii. To share ideas, expertise and teaching more between colleagues in the primary and secondary school sectors. Both Park Farm Primary and the Folkestone Academy have already put in place a number of strategies to raise levels of achievement. These include:

- giving executive responsibility to an experienced academy leader until a new Principal is in post - Ian Johnson has significant experience at the Marlowe and Spires Academies
- raising the quality of teaching, and working directly with targeted youngsters to achieve higher end of Key Stage SATs and GCSE grades
- introducing termly Ofsted style lesson observations so that everyone is familiar with good practice and involved in a systematic approach to improving the quality of provision
- improving the support and guidance available to students
- intensive staff training to raise literacy and numeracy standards
- networking with colleagues locally and at both Spires and Marlowe Academies to ensure that the very best practice is disseminated in all three institutions
- and setting challenging targets for the current academic year – early indications are that the Academy can achieve an overall 5A*-C at GCSE above 50%, with between 25 and 30% of students achieving the mark with English and Maths

However, for long term development and sustainability, the Folkestone Academy Trust and Park Farm Governors are convinced that closer working relationships between the primary and secondary sectors are crucial. In the proposed new all age academy:

- some teachers could be teaching across the two phases from September 2010
- literacy and numeracy strategies begun in the primary school would be more easily continued through to Key Stage 3 and beyond
- Sixth Formers would be trained to serve as mentors to the youngest children first learning to read; the benefits to all concerned are just becoming apparent in Ramsgate where the Marlowe Academy has this year begun a pilot reading project with Newington Community Primary School.

iii. To provide primary school children with access to excellent specialist facilities at the Folkestone Academy. Like other secondary schools, the Folkestone Academy can provide the science laboratories, teachers and technicians so often lacking in the primary sector. As a specialist Visual and Performing Arts school, the Academy also has its theatre and specialist studios. It is quite possible for age 14-19 students on vocational courses to coach or mentor younger students as part of their own courses. The same applies to Physical Education where once again the Academy has excellent facilities with its sports hall and playing fields. Careful timetabling could make all of these facilities available for primary school use at various times in the week or year.

iv. To continue to drive forward with the community schools agenda, developing links with parents over a longer period of time. With the development of Children's Trusts in Kent, it makes good sense to link schools together to access specialist support, such as Educational Psychology and Speech & Language, for longer periods of time. Links with other agencies as well as the voluntary sector also become easier to develop. For parents to have a link with their school that lasts from 4 to 19 makes accessing such provision and raising aspirations all the easier.



v. To avoid the dip in performance that can happen as students change schools. Attending an all age academy takes away the hiatus that seems to exist between the end of Year 6 and start of Year 7, a break in continuity that has traditionally led to a dip in performance as well as emotional trauma for many youngsters.

vi. To open up the possibility of creating new purpose-built accommodation Park Farm's building was originally designed to host secondary school students shortly after the end of the Second World War and has presented an increasing number of issues in latter years

A new primary school building is long overdue. Our intention is to open the all age academy using the existing Park Farm buildings in September 2009 and to move to purpose built new accommodation by September 2011

vii. To develop even better links with the community by opening up to: Sports clubs who might use the facilities; theatre groups; adult education; special interest groups; parent support groups across the primary and secondary provision; local residents groups

viii. To share good practice with other primary schools We would expect that the good practice achieved in the primary and secondary schools working together could be extended and shared with other local primary schools.

Frequently asked questions

1. Will my child still be supported for the 11 plus exams?

Yes, pupils whose parents wish them to sit the 11 plus exams will be supported through the process exactly as they are at the moment.

2. The Folkestone Academy day runs from 8.30 am to 5 pm. Will my primary age child be expected to stay at school until 5?

No, although we will be asking for your views on the type of school day we could offer to primary age pupils.

3. The Folkestone Academy serves breakfast to all its students. Will primary age pupils get breakfast too?

Park Farm currently runs a breakfast club and we will be asking you if you would like all the primary pupils to be served breakfast.

4. Will the Park Farm teachers and other staff still be at the new all age academy?

We would envisage that most of the staff would remain in post. There will, however, be a new Head of School.

5. How can I be sure my child will be safe from bullying?

Students will have separate play / recreational facilities. The sports and other facilities used by students of all ages will only be accessed with adult supervision. It is most likely that the link with a secondary school will reduce bullying for younger students through mentoring and coaching activities.

6. Won't there be a lot of traffic, dropping children at one site?

We will work closely with Highways and the planning authorities to ensure traffic congestion is minimised .

7. What about pupils with special educational needs (SEN)?

More than any other students, those with SEN require good transition arrangements and continuity of support. Park Farm already has a good record with supporting SEN pupils but the all-age academy would be able to place additional resources into SEN at the primary level, boosting youngsters' literacy and numeracy skills, address emotional issues at a younger age, and work in partnership with other agencies to support families with several children with a joined up approach. The good practice and expertise already established in the primary phase could also be extended to support colleagues and pupils in the secondary phase.





How to tell us your views

This document sets out the reasons for the proposal and how the consultation period will run. No final decision has yet been made and will not be made until the consultation process is complete and the views of all interested parties have been considered.

Kent County Council, Trustees and Governors would like to hear your views on the proposal. All your comments will be carefully considered and will be used to develop the proposal for the new all age academy.

You can respond to the consultation in one of the following ways:

- By attending a public meeting to discuss this proposal, to which you are invited. The meeting will be held at:
**Folkestone Academy, Academy Lane, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5FP
on Monday, 9th March 2009.**

There will be guided tours of the Academy between **5.45 pm** and **6.45 pm**
The public meeting will start at **7.00 pm**

Representatives of Kent County Council, Park Farm Primary School and the Folkestone Academy Trust will be present to answer your questions and to explain the implications to you.

- By completing and returning the attached response form (see Appendix 2) to: David Adams, Area Children's Services Officer, Mid Kent Education Office, Kroner House, Eurogate Business Park, Ashford, Kent TN24 8XU
- By sending an email to: school.consultations@kent.gov.uk
- By handing in the response form (see Appendix 2) at Park Farm Primary School or the Folkestone Academy

All your comments will be carefully considered and will be used to develop the proposal for the new all-age academy.

Deadline for responses is Friday 3rd April 2009



Appendix 1

About Park Farm Primary School and Folkestone Academy

Park Farm School

Park Farm Primary School is a foundation primary school. There are fourteen classes in the school, two in each Year Group. There are currently 412 pupils on roll.

Park Farm is well regarded locally and it has been oversubscribed in recent years. It works collaboratively with a family of local primary schools to share good practice.

Around 45% of Park Farm pupils progress from the school to grammar schools each year. 50% go to Folkestone Academy. The remaining 5% of the pupils move to other secondary schools in Shepway. The new primary department of the Folkestone All Age Academy would continue to support children whose parents wish them to go to grammar school.

Folkestone Academy

An academy is a new kind of school. It is a publicly funded independent school, accountable directly to central Government. It provides free education to the local community.

The Government intends to open 400 academies. All will have sponsors who bring outstanding drive and innovative ideas to the new schools.

The Folkestone Academy is sponsored by former Saga Chairman, Roger De Haan CBE DL, and by Kings School Canterbury, one of the country's leading independent schools. It is also strongly supported by Kent County Council which is actively involved in the Academies programme. Kent University and Canterbury Christ Church University are represented on the Board of Trustees.

Designed by international award-winning architects Foster and Partners, the Academy buildings are amongst the finest in the country. The design provides a state of the art learning environment at the heart of which are eight house blocks. These are the focus of the very high quality care and support for students to which the sponsors are committed. Folkestone Academy specialises in Art, Media and European Culture. Its facilities include:

- outstanding ICT facilities including laptop computers with internet access in all classrooms
- 9 science laboratories
- 8 specialist rooms for art, textiles and graphics
- dance, drama and recording studios
- large and flexible performance space
- sports hall with viewing gallery and retractable assembly seating for 800 pupils
- vocational training suites



Appendix 2

The Folkestone All Age Academy Consultation Questionnaire

Your details

1. Which group do you represent?

- I am a pupil/student
- I am a parent/carer
- I am a member of staff
- I am a governor of Folkestone Academy or Park Farm School
- I am someone else with an interest in the proposals

2. Which school(s) are you involved with?

- Park Farm Primary School
- Folkestone Academy
- Another Folkestone primary school
- Another Folkestone secondary school
- or
- I am someone with an interest in the proposal

Please state your interest or connection

All respondents:

Your contact details are optional, but if you would like to do so, please provide your name and/or address in the space below:

Name:

Address:

Questionnaire

3. Are you in favour of merging Park Farm School and the Folkestone Academy to form an all-age academy?

Very much To some extent Not very much Not at all Don't know

4. Please use this space, or attach a separate sheet to this questionnaire, to give any further comments you may have on the proposed Folkestone All-Age Academy

Please return your form:

- By post to David Adams, Area Children's Services Officer, Mid Kent Education Office, Kroner House, Eurogate Business Park, Ashford, Kent TN24 8XU
- by email to: school.consultations@kent.gov.uk
- by handing in your response at Park Farm Primary School or the Folkestone Academy

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