

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

**Roger Gough,
Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and
Education**

DECISION NO:

19/00015

Unrestricted

Key decision: **YES**

Subject: Proposed amalgamation of St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School and St James' Church of England Junior School

Decision:

The Cabinet member for Children, Young People and Education agrees to:

amalgamate St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School and St James' Church of England Junior School, Sandrock Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 3PR from 1 September 2019.

Reason(s) for decision:

1.1 The Governing Bodies of St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School and St James' Church of England Junior School wish to consolidate their already close links with an amalgamation into one school. The schools have well established existing ties and share the same site, with the schools only 4 metres apart at the closest point. The schools share kitchen facilities and benefit from various cross-schools staff arrangements, including sharing the same Executive Headteacher.

1.2 The Governing Bodies of both schools have met with officers of Kent County Council (KCC) and agreed that amalgamation of the two schools to create an all-through primary school would be the natural progression for the schools, which will secure benefits for staff and pupils.

1.3 The proposal would amalgamate the two schools in order to create one all-through 630 place primary school for children aged 4 to 11 years from 1 September 2019. The process of amalgamation will entail changing the age range of the Infant school to be a primary school and the closure of the Junior school. The all-through school will be in the existing accommodation of both schools.

Equality Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the consultation. To date no comments have been received and no changes are required to the Equality Impact Assessment.

The EqlA can be viewed via this link:

<https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/StJames/consultationHome>

Financial Implications

3.1 **Capital** – There is no capital expenditure associated with this proposal.

3.2 **Revenue** – Included in Kent's funding formula is a lump sum for all Kent schools regardless of their size. St James' Infant and St James' Junior schools each receive lump sum funding as separate schools. Should the amalgamation proceed, the all-through primary school would eventually receive one lump sum. Funding protection will be applied for two years to enable the school to achieve the economies of scale from being one larger primary school. The governing bodies have considered this issue and are confident that the efficiencies generated by being one school mean there will be no detriment to school standards or the opportunities available to pupils.

3.3 **Human** - Staff of the Junior school will transfer under TUPE arrangements from being

employees of the County Council to being employed by the Governing Body of the all-through primary school. There has been a separate consultation process for the staff transferring to the all-through primary school that will run concurrently to the education public consultation. No staffing changes or alterations to terms and conditions are planned as a result of these proposals.

Legal Implications

4.1 In accordance with section 15(2) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 the Governing Body of St James' Church of England Junior School gave notice that it intends to discontinue St James' Church of England Junior School, Sandrock Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 3PR on 31 August 2019. All pupils attending St James' Church of England Junior School at the time of the closure would be transferred to the roll of St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School. The Infants School name will be changed at this time to recognise its expanded age range that covers all primary year groups.

4.2 In accordance with Section 19(3) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 the Governing Body of St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School gave notice that it intends to expand St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School by increasing the upper age range from 7 to 11 years on 1 September 2019.

4.3 It was also noted that the two proposals are related and each will only be implemented if both are approved.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

A public consultation was carried out by the Governing Bodies, with support from KCC, from 4 February 2019 to 4 March 2019. A consultation document was produced together with an Equality Impact Assessment which can be obtained from KCC's website.

The CYPE Cabinet Committee at its meeting on 7 May 2019 considered the proposal and the minute extract is as follows:

109. School Expansions/Alterations (Item 14)

Mr Adams (Area Education Officer - South Kent), Mr Watts (Area Education Officer – North Kent) and Ms White (Area Education Officer – East Kent) were in attendance for this item.

1. The Chairman set out the proposed decisions to expand or alter the following schools: St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School and St James' Church of England Junior School, establishing a new Special Free School on the Isle of Sheppey, Grange Park School, and the new St Andrew's Primary Free School.

109. **19/00015 - Proposed amalgamation of St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School and St James' Church of England Junior School** (Item 14a)

2. RESOLVED that the decision (19/00015) proposed to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education to amalgamate St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School and St James' Church of England Junior School, Sandrock Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 3PR from 1 September 2019, be endorsed.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer: None

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rogers' followed by a long horizontal flourish.

15 May 2019

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signed

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date