

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Roger Gough,
Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform

DECISION NO:

14/00038

For publication

Subject: Amalgamation of Madginford Park Infant School and Madginford Park Junior School, Maidstone by discontinuing the Junior School and enlarging and changing the age range of the Infant School to cater for the whole primary age range.

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform I agree to:

(i) Issue a public notice to; discontinue Madginford Park Junior School; and enlarge and change the age range of Madginford Park Infant School, to become a through primary school.

And, subject to no objections being received to the public notice

(ii) Make recommendation to the Schools Adjudicator for determination for implementation by September 2014.

Should objections, not already considered by the cabinet member when taking this decision, be received during the notice period a separate decision will be required in order to continue the proposal and amalgamate the schools to allow for proper consideration of the points raised.

Reason(s) for decision:

- 1.1 Madginford Park Infant School and Madginford Park Junior School are two separate community schools serving the Bearsted Ward of Maidstone. Madginford Park Infant School is currently judged by Ofsted as Outstanding.
- 1.2 On 24 September the Headteacher of Madginford Park Junior School tendered his resignation. The Junior School was subsequently inspected by Ofsted on 11 October 2013 and was found to require Special Measures.
- 1.3 Madginford Park Junior School held an Extra-Ordinary Full Governing Body Meeting on 22 October 2013 and a new Chair of Governors was elected.
- 1.4 The Governing Bodies of the Infant and Junior Schools supported the decision to appoint the Headteacher of Madginford Park Infant School as Interim Executive Headteacher of Madginford Park Junior School which took effect from 4 November 2013.
- 1.5 The Governing Bodies of Madginford Park Infant and Madginford Park Junior independently recommended to the Local Authority that the most appropriate solution to securing and maintaining outstanding education provision for both infant and junior age ranges at Madginford is to have a single all-through primary school.
- 1.6 The Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2013-18 states: *“when the opportunity arises the local authority will consider the possibility of either amalgamation of separate infant and junior schools into a single primary school or federation of the schools.”*

1.7 Following receipt of letters of support from the Governing Bodies of both schools, the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform agreed to proceed to public consultation on these proposals.

Financial Implications:

Capital

The amalgamation can be implemented without the need for significant capital expenditure, as the expanded Madginford Park Infant School would operate as an all-through school on the existing Infant and Junior School sites.

Revenue

As a result of an amalgamation, the two predecessor schools would become one school and consequently this would result in the removal of one of the lump sum funding allocations (£120,000). The amalgamated school would continue to be funded at 100% of the two lump sums for the remainder of the 2014/15 financial year from September 2014 to March 2015. The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013 provide funding protection for amalgamating schools for the first academic year. Therefore, it is proposed that protection will be provided on the lump sums at 85% from April 2015 to March 2016. ($2 \times £120,000 \times 85\% = £204,000$). From April 2016 the amalgamated primary school would receive one lump sum, currently £120,000.

Human

It is proposed that all teachers and support staff employed at Madginford Park Infant School (at the time of the proposed amalgamation) will automatically continue their employment in the primary school.

Pupil forecasts indicate that the primary school will require as many class bases as there are currently in the Infant and Junior schools combined. It is proposed that all teachers and support staff employed at Madinford Park Junior School (at the time of the proposed amalgamation) will transfer to the primary school.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

14 March 2014

The Cabinet Committee considered the proposed decision and discussed the concerns raised. All Members of the Committee voted in favour of the proposal and resolved to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform he agree to recommendations below to:

- (ii) Issue a public notice to; discontinue Madginford Park Junior School; and enlarge and change the age range of Madginford Park Infant School, to become a through primary school.

And, subject to no objections being received to the public notice

- (iii) Make recommendation to the Schools Adjudicator for determination for implementation by September 2014.

The Local Member:

Paul Carter, the Local Member for Maidstone Rural North has commented as follows:

"When the opportunity to link an infant and junior school has arisen, I have always supported the direction of travel towards amalgamation. The Infant School has a very positive track record and its knowledge and expertise could support improvement at the Junior School. Amalgamation therefore looks like it could be a good solution."

Any alternatives considered:

The Governing Bodies of Madginford Park Infant and Madginford Park Junior independently recommended to the Local Authority that the most appropriate solution to securing and maintaining outstanding education provision for both infant and junior age ranges at Madginford is to have a single all-through primary school.

The Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2013-18 states: "*when the opportunity arises the local authority will consider the possibility of either amalgamation of separate infant and junior schools into a single primary school or federation of the schools.*"

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

Signed

Date

1 April 2014