

## **Broom Valley Infant and Junior Schools – proposed ‘amalgamation’**

### **Joint meeting with governors of Broom Valley Infant and Junior Schools held on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2008.**

**Present: David Hill, Graham Sinclair, David Light and Ann Hercocck of the LA together with approximately 19 governors.**

Staff from the LA introduced themselves. David Hill welcomed everyone to the meeting before explaining the background and purpose to the proposed ‘amalgamation’.

This would be achieved by closing the Infant School and expanding and changing the age range of the Junior School from 7-11 to 3-11 years.

He then spoke about existing and future pupil numbers, the financial implications and the advantages and possible disadvantages that could be brought about by any ‘amalgamation’ of separate Junior and Infant Schools.

A summary of this information had already been circulated to all and it included the timetable which would be followed if it was agreed to publish statutory proposals. If the ‘amalgamation’ was finally approved, the implementation date would be 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2008.

Questions and comments were then invited. These were as follows:

#### **You have talked about financial implications – what support is available over 4 years?**

There is a 4 year protection period to support two Deputy Heads following an amalgamation. In previous amalgamations it has often been the case that by the end of that period one Deputy Head has secured a headship in another school.

If this does not happen it would be up to the school to decide whether or not to support two Deputy Heads.

#### **Would there be any additional funding provided as there would be 3 distinct sites making up the amalgamated school.**

This would be worked through by the Head Teacher and Governors. There would not be any loss of funding.

#### **Would there be any financial help over the transitional period, for example extra staff might be needed for a short time.**

An additional amount would arise from Hazel James leaving. 7/12 of her salary would remain with the school for one year from 1<sup>st</sup> September.

#### **Could Devolved Capital monies be used for any building work?**

The amalgamated school would need:

- A large enough staffroom to accommodate all staff
- Office accommodation (possible internal building work)

- A new, more central main entrance
- Improvements to IT

The LA could provide support for the work.

**If the Infant School did close would teaching staff have to apply for jobs?**

No, they would simply transfer to the new school. Broom Valley Infant and Junior are popular schools with consistent numbers so all staff would be needed.

**How do you know what the numbers will be. Do you just estimate?**

The school is consistently up to full capacity. We also look at birth rates and project forward.

**What is the position with migrant workers?**

There has been a large influx of EU migrant workers. Last year there were 400 and 250 children had places approved in schools. The migrant workers tend to live around Eastwood and Thornhill. Central schools are becoming over-subscribed and pupils are starting to move further out of the centre. They tend to be a mobile group and move in and out of the area.

**Will there be funding for them?**

No, unless the Authority hits trigger points. It is possible to track numbers of white Europeans. If numbers reach a certain point it can trigger funding. Support usually comes from the Welcome Centre. Graham Sinclair explained the work done there. The Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant also provides support. Also, if pupils are on a PLASC return in January the school is funded for a full year.

**What if they arrive at school after January?**

This can happen with any pupil but usually this is balanced by pupils leaving the school. One advantage is that classes are quite large so this supports more funding.

**David Light explained that an amalgamation provides opportunities for a child. Both schools are already successful and they are already developing a vision for what can be achieved. It could become a school with considerable influence. He also explained that through primaries achieve well at Y2/Y3 compared with single schools.**

**One Governor said that having served on both governing bodies it was obvious that both sets of staff were of a high quality and should be made to feel a vital part of the process. They need assurance that their jobs are secure.**

The Junior Head explained that both sets of staff were keen on the proposal and do work together. There was to be an away-day in June at Carlton Park Hotel to discuss the vision and aims. A speaker from an amalgamated school would be in attendance.

**Looking at the timetable for the process how will we be informed that you can go forward from the pre-statutory consultation period?**

You will be informed by telephone. The Public Notice will have already been sent for publication with instructions to withdraw it if the decision was not to proceed with the statutory consultation process.

**The timetable is very tight. How will it be possible to put plans into place from 24<sup>th</sup> June in time for September?**

Planning can be done before 24<sup>th</sup> June. You can essentially work as one governing body. A working group could be set up to look at planning issues.

**How often has a proposal to amalgamate not been approved?**

It has not happened.

**Objections have been purely based on funding but the governors who have raised these issues were not able to attend this meeting.**

There is a meeting arranged with parents on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March. Any governors not able to attend tonight would be welcome.

If the Cabinet Member did not agree to the proposal the Infant School would have to have a temporary Head Teacher until a permanent appointment was made.

**At the moment there are two separate budgets. What will happen to the Infant budget when the Infant School is closed?**

The budget will go straight to the amalgamated primary school.

There were no further questions and the meeting was closed.