

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO SCHOOLS’ FORUM

1.	Meeting:	Rotherham Schools’ Forum
2.	Date:	20th January 2012
3.	Title:	Shortfall funding to support the expansion of Thornhill Primary School
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People’s Services

5. Summary

Thornhill Primary School has pressure on the school’s accommodation from increasing pupil numbers from within the school’s catchment area. Preferences for the school now regularly exceed the number of places (30) available in each statutory year group. There is also pressure on neighbouring schools and some families are in the position of having older brothers and sisters split from their younger siblings and who have to attend alternative neighbouring schools. The CYPS Cabinet Member and Advisers received reports on the 7th September 2011 and 9th November 2011 at the pre-statutory and statutory consultation stages. No objections have been received. It is expected that the Cabinet Member will give final approval, at the meeting on 17th January 2012, to increase the Published Admission Number (PAN) to 45 per statutory year group and 26 full time equivalent F1 places with effect from September 2012.

The additional pupils will not be on roll for the 2012 January School Census return and, therefore, the 2012/2013 individual school budget allocation will be insufficient to fund the additional teaching and support staff required from September 2012.

6. Recommendation:

It is recommended that Schools’ Forum approve funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant to enable additional teaching and support staff to be deployed from September 2012 to March 2013.

7. Proposals and Details

Thornhill Primary School will be expanded in order to accommodate 45 children per statutory year group (45 x 7 = 315 places) rather than its current capacity (30 x 7 = 210 places). The school would have an amended published admission number (PAN) of 45 per year group. The non-statutory nursery (F1) year group published admission number will also be increased to a published admission number of 26 full time equivalent places.

The number of preferences for entry to Foundation 1 in the last 3 years has been as follows:

09/10 entry = 44

10/11 entry = 43

11/12 entry = 42

The potential advantages are that more parents will be able to access their first preference school and will gain a place without having to go through the Appeals process. The admission number of 30 and class size legislation currently restricts the number of pupils entering the school and some families are in the position of having older brothers and sisters split from their younger siblings and who have to attend alternative neighbouring schools. Currently appeals are being held for the school but parents are still unsuccessful due to the restrictions imposed by the class size legislation

The expansion from 30 to 45 places per year is seen as the best way forward in that it will provide the best scenario for Thornhill school, a better scenario for local parents whilst creating a minimal threat to the viability of other local schools.

Three separate meetings were held on the 4th October, 2011 for the Thornhill Governors; and 11th October for Thornhill Staff and Union representatives; and 11th October and 23rd November 2011 for parents of pupils at Thornhill School. Three meetings were held on the 11th and 12th October 2011 with the Governing Bodies of Ferham, Kimberworth and Meadow View Primary School. A report was shared which set out the proposal, details on births, numbers on roll and admissions preferences. As the number of children attending Thornhill Primary would increase by 50%, it is a statutory requirement for notices on the increase in numbers to be published in the local press and on the school gates, and for any opposition to the expansion declared in writing to the LA. The closing date was 16th December 2011 and no objections were received.

Preferences for placement for entry into the Reception (FS2) year in September 2012 will be confirmed following the closing date in January 2012. After January 2012 the primary offer day is 15th April 2012 and projections will be continually monitored, updated and shared with Thornhill.

8. Finance

The capital cost of the building project which is currently under way is £0.9M. This building programme will provide two new classrooms and two classrooms in a second Foundation Stage Unit. In addition parts of the existing school will be refurbished to provide an SEN and Multi Use area, additional dining facility and cloakrooms and toilets. The capital cost will include the provision of a specified and agreed number of new classroom and dining tables and chairs and fixed ICT equipment. Funding for the project is from the Basic Need funding allocated by the DfE for the provision of sufficient school places.

There will be a transitional period from September 2012 – March 2013 (7/12^{ths}). The additional pupils will not be on roll for the 2012 January School Census return and, therefore, the 2012/2013 individual school budget allocation is insufficient to fund additional teaching and support staff required from September 2012. An initial report submitted to the Cabinet member set out a shortfall of £158,121. This has subsequently been revised to £151, 079.

From the 2013/14 financial year, funding for teaching and support staff will be generated through the AWPU as part of the individual school's budget.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There are always risks and uncertainties when school place provision is considered since future pupil numbers and consequently, individual school budget funding, are based on estimated projections at a point in time. Local Authorities have a duty, however, to provide sufficient places, promote diversity and increase parental choice.

The neighbouring schools: Ferham, Kimberworth and Meadowview, are supportive of the expansion at Thornhill Primary School particularly in terms of the positive impact for families in improving attendance, punctuality and outcomes for children.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The major theme supported by the proposal is 'to ensure that everyone has access to skills, knowledge and information to enable them to play their part in society'. It is likely that the expansion would enable more parents to access their catchment area and first preference school for their child and, therefore, increase that performance indicator.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Report to Cabinet Member and Advisers on the 7th September 2011 and 9th November 2011 and 17th January 2012; publication of statutory notice 18th November 2011 and report to Schools Forum 20th January 2012.

12. Contact Name

Helen Barre, Manager, School Admissions, Organisation & SEN Assessment Service, Ext 22656, Helen.barre@rotherham.gov.uk