

Cabinet - 11 May 2005

Proposed Amalgamation of Edgar Stammers Infants School and Edgar Stammers Junior School

Portfolio	Councillor E F Hughes, Children's Services
Service Area	Education Walsall
Wards	Blakenall
Forward Plan	Yes

Summary of report

The headteacher of the Infant School has been appointed to the headship of another school in the Borough. In such circumstances it is the Council's policy to consider possible amalgamation of paired infant and junior schools.

Recommendations

Approve informal consultation on the proposal to close Edgar Stammers Infants School and Edgar Stammers Junior School from 31 December 2005 and to open a replacement 2 FE primary school with 26 FTE nursery places from 1 January 2006.

Resource and legal considerations

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Edgar Stammers Infant School and Edgar Stammers Junior School are 'paired' schools and share a campus site. At the end of Key Stage 1, almost all pupils on roll at Edgar Stammers Infant School transfer to Edgar Stammers Junior School.
- 1.2 Following initial contact from the schools, discussions with the governing bodies regarding the possible amalgamation of the schools have been held. The Governing Bodies include parent governors but there has been no broad consultation with parents in line with the legal requirements that the Cabinet must give permission to initiate such discussions.
- 1.3 Both schools have over 25% surplus places and it is considered that amalgamation would reduce the overall level across the two schools and that the establishment of the Children's Centre in spring 2006 would serve to attract an increasing number of pupils in the future.

- 1.4 Similar issues are increasingly affecting a number of primary schools and this matter will be considered in a future report on surplus places issues in the primary sector.
- 1.5 Under normal circumstances these proposals would come forward as part of an overarching strategy but, in this case, as the infant school faces a change in personnel at the most senior level in summer 2005, it is timely to consider this matter. It is not envisaged that these proposals would impact on the staffing arrangements other than at headteacher level and one of the headteachers has obtained a headship at another school in the Borough.

2. EDGAR STAMMERS INFANTS AND EDGAR STAMMERS JUNIOR SCHOOL

- 2.1 The number of pupils (excluding nursery pupils) on roll at Edgar Stammers Infant School has declined from 186 in January 1998 to 126 in January 2005. The school's admission number was reduced to 60 when the infant class size limit was introduced by the government. If the school were full it would have 180 pupils on roll.
- 2.2 Edgar Stammers Junior School had an admission number of 70. Unfortunately it had not been possible to reduce this to 60 when the infant school's admission number was reduced. This inevitably means that the junior school has at least 40 surplus places. The number of pupils on roll at the school has fallen from 204 in January 1998 to 183 in January 2005 and is projected to increase slightly in September 2005 and then fall in future years as smaller cohorts transfer from the infants school. If the school were full, it would have 280 pupils on roll (based on an admission number of 70).
- 2.3 Details of the total number of pupils on roll at the schools are provided in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1 Pupil Numbers 1998 – 2006

	1998 (Jan)	1999 (Jan)	2000 (Jan)	2001 (Jan)	2002 (Jan)	2003 (Jan)	2004 (Jan)	2005 (Jan)	2006*
Edgar Stammers Infant School	186	187	161	167	171	166	136	126	116
Edgar Stammers Junior School	204	193	209	201	204	179	188	183	186
Total	390	380	370	368	375	345	324	309	302

* Estimates based on admissions for September 2005

Table 2 Pupil Numbers by Year Group

	Edgar Stammers Infant School					Edgar Stammers Junior School					Grand Total (Exc Nursery)
	N	R	Y1	Y2	Total (Exc N)	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total	
Jan 2005	48	40	39	47	126	45	61	38	39	183	309
Jan 2006*	38	37	40	39	116	42	45	61	38	186	302

*Estimate N: Nursery

- 2.4 In January 2005, Moxley Infant School had 30% surplus places. Surplus places at Edgar Stammers Junior School were 34.6%. Amalgamation of the two

schools would remove 40 surplus places as the primary school would have an admission number of 60 which would apply to all year groups at the school.

- 2.5 This proposal to amalgamate paired infant and junior schools is in line with the Council's policy as set out in the School Organisation Plan.
- 2.6 The two schools occupy a campus site and the infant and junior buildings are close together. Infant pupils dine in the junior school building.
- 2.7 Cabinet is asked to approve informal consultation on the proposal to close Edgar Stammers Infant School and Edgar Stammers Junior School from 31 December 2005 and to open a replacement 2 FE primary school with 26 FTE nursery places from 1 January 2006.
- 2.8 It is proposed to undertake informal consultation in the summer term and bring a report on the outcome to Cabinet in June/July 2005. This would enable statutory proposals to be published in summer 2005 and final decisions to be taken in autumn 2005.

Citizen impact

The proposed amalgamation would provide an opportunity to create a more viable school for the local community in this area.

Community safety

There are no community safety issues.

Environmental impact

There are no environmental implications.

Performance and risk management issues

The proposal would impact on two performance indicators: the rationalisation of school accommodation would reduce the overall percentage of surplus places and reduce the number of schools with more than 25% surplus places.

Equality implications

The proposal gives an opportunity to provide a more efficient provision of school places in the area.

Consultation

There has been some initial discussion with the governing bodies of the schools.

Vision 2008

The proposed consultation would contribute to the delivery of Walsall's vision for 2008 – Section 4 Make Our Schools Great by providing a more viable school for the local community.

Background papers

Letters from governing bodies

Contact officer

Susan Lupton
Strategic Leader: School Organisation, Admissions, Capital and Asset Management
Tel 01922 686231
susan.lupton@we.serco.com

Signed:



Executive Director: David McNulty

Date: 3.5.05

Signed:



Portfolio Holder: Councillor E.F. Hughes

Date: 3.5.05

Signed:



Managing Director, Education Walsall

Date: 3.5.05