

Dear Parents,

4th October 2007

The governing bodies of Yateley Infant School and St Peter's CE Junior School have been monitoring the number of pupils on roll over the last few years. You may be aware that numbers have been declining as a result of fewer primary aged children living in the schools' catchment areas. Governors at St Peter's Junior are now seriously concerned that the school could become unviable if numbers continue to decline.

At the request of the governing body of St Peter's, a joint meeting was set up between the two governing bodies to discuss what options might be available. To ensure that governors had access to all possible information, representatives of Hampshire County Council and the Winchester and Portsmouth Diocese were also invited to the meeting. After much discussion it was the view of the governing bodies that the local community would be better served by amalgamating the two schools to form an all through primary school.

Your views on this proposal are vitally important to us and the governing bodies would not want to embark on such a major project without the support of the local community. Hampshire County Council is in the process of arranging a meeting and drop-in sessions at the schools for parents which will take place in early November. The County Council will be writing to you before October half-term with more details of how and when you can hear more about the proposal and make your views known.

Our most important priority is to secure high quality education for the children in our catchment. We believe that amalgamation has many potential benefits such as:

1. Progress in learning could be accelerated for children when they start junior school in Year 3. A single curriculum would be created so that there is a seamless transition from infant to junior education.
2. Teaching methods would be increasingly aligned so that the learning experienced by the children is more consistent.
3. The creation of a single school would bring with it finances to further improve the buildings so that the children and staff had access to state of the art facilities for the whole primary age group.
4. As the numbers of children are reducing, so are the number of staff each school employs. A through primary would bring together a larger single staff team so that there would be a wide range of expertise available. This expertise will be drawn upon to create a broad range of rich and diverse learning experiences.

5. The creation of one school would give many opportunities to harmonise the ways the two schools are currently run. Parents and children would only be faced with one set of rules and one way of doing things.
6. There would be a single school in the community for parents, the wider community and governors to focus on.
7. All the above is likely to be a positive aid for recruitment and retention of high quality staff.

Whilst, clearly there can be no predetermination of any outcome of the consultation, if everything proceeds as hoped, the new school could be operational in late 2009 or early 2010.

For your further information, we attach a copy of the press release that has been issued today from Hampshire County Council's Children's Department.

We look forward to meeting with you, along with county council and diocesan officers, so that we can explore this idea further with you.

Yours sincerely

Eddie Archer
Chair of Governors
Yateley Infant School

John Divall
Chair of Governors
St Peter's CE Junior School