

School proposals under the spotlight

Proposals which could see two Hampshire schools merge and create exciting opportunities to enhance provision for children, families and the wider community are to be considered by Hampshire County Council.

Councillor David Kirk, Hampshire County Council's Executive Member for Education will be asked at his decision day on 11 October to agree to consultations on plans to merge Yateley Infant School and St Peter's CofE Junior School to create a new 210 place one-form entry Primary school with the continuation of early years provision.

The governing bodies of both schools have asked for the merger to address the issue of declining pupil numbers at both schools and to ensure that does not impact adversely on the schools' budgets and long-term viability. At the beginning of this year both schools were showing a combined 43% surplus places.

It is the wish of both governing bodies to create a single robust primary school with high quality teaching and learning facilities and continued early years provision on site. The governors wish to build on established partnership working with pre-school providers and are keen to explore how the merger might enable existing provision for children, families and the wider community to be enhanced further. This could be achieved by providing access to childcare, parenting support, family learning and other activities for children through the Extended Schools programme. The consultation process will be used to help identify local priorities.

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If Councillor Kirk gives the go ahead to consultation then formal meetings will be arranged with governors, staff and parents of children at the two schools. In addition local councillors, local parish councils and the local Hampshire Action Team, Winchester and Portsmouth Diocese, trade unions, and Hart Borough Council will also be consulted along with other interested parties. The results of the consultation will then be brought back before the council in spring 2008.

Councillor David Kirk, Hampshire County Council's Executive Member for Education said: "The County Council has a statutory duty to plan the provision of school places and ensure an appropriate balance between supply and demand. We also have to ensure that extended services are at the heart of planning for school improvement. I am looking forward to hearing more details about these proposals before I make my decision."

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