

## **Alwoodley Area Consultation Document**

### **Primary reorganisation in Leeds**

- 1 All Local Education Authorities have a statutory responsibility to ensure that schools in their area are sufficient in number, character and resources to provide all pupils with access to a high standard of education. Education Leeds on behalf of Leeds City Council is undertaking a review of primary age provision to ensure that all primary phase schools are able to provide high quality education in stimulating learning environments.
- 2 As part of this review, we have looked at the current pattern of provision in the Alwoodley area and as a result are proposing some changes to provision. It is important that the people with an interest in the area's educational provision are consulted on these changes and that their views are listened to. This consultation document sets out the proposal in detail and explains why we think this will improve provision in this area. The aim is to provide you with information so that you can let us know what you think. As yet no final or binding decisions have been made. Your views count and will be listened to.
- 3 A proposal was made in 2005 to close Fir Tree Community Primary School, and a consultation was held. However, the Executive Board of Leeds City Council decided that more work needed to be done to explore and develop other options for the area. This new proposal is the outcome of the further work requested by the Executive Board.

Amongst the issues arising in 2005 were the lack of continuity for pupils who were already attending Fir Tree Community Primary School, and the very high proportion of places in the area that would have had a faith element in their admissions policy. This new proposal addresses both of these issues.

### **Why is there a need to reorganise primary places?**

- 4 Reorganisations are normally brought forward because there are concerns about the suitability and sufficiency of school places. In the primary sector, we currently have around 6,300 unfilled places in Leeds primary schools due to the falling number of children of primary age. Each surplus place in a school represents funding which could be redirected into resources which more directly benefit children – teachers, support staff and other educational resources. The removal of surplus places is NOT about saving money. It is about targeting resources more efficiently.
- 5 Schools are funded through a formula which is largely determined by how many children attend each school. This means that schools with low enrolments and falling pupil numbers do not necessarily have smaller classes, but tend to have less and less money, resulting in fewer staff and fewer resources for the children. This can lead to concerns about their viability, their ability to deliver a full curriculum and/or the value for money

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they provide. Because larger schools receive a higher budget, they are often able to offer pupils the opportunities of a wider curriculum and the benefits of the expertise of a broad base of colleagues. They are also more sustainable for the longer term, as they are in a stronger position to withstand fluctuations in pupil numbers.

- 6 The review of primary provision aims to remove surplus places and address concerns associated with vulnerable schools. Recent years have seen the closure of 39 primary phase schools and the opening of 16 new ones. Many of these have seen infant and junior schools coming together to form new primary schools. In all of this, the funding for primary schools has increased overall and money saved from reorganisation has been kept within the overall schools budget.

### **What is the proposal for Alwoodley?**

- 7 The Alwoodley planning area covers the communities served by Alwoodley Primary, Fir Tree Community Primary, Archbishop Cranmer Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary, Brodetsky Primary and St Paul's Catholic Primary schools. The proposal for Alwoodley is to close Fir Tree Community Primary School and Archbishop Cranmer CE Aided Primary, and to establish a 1.5 Form of Entry primary school on the Archbishop Cranmer site in September 2007. The initial view of Education Leeds is that the Archbishop Cranmer site, which is both spacious and centrally located in relation to the community a new school would serve, appears to be better positioned. Further work will now begin to properly evaluate and appraise both sites and buildings. This along with consideration of consultation responses will be used to inform a decision on the preferred site for the new school. The new school will also include a Children's Centre for the area. Archbishop Cranmer is a voluntary aided school where the Anglican Diocese appoint foundation governors. The admissions policy is decided by the governing body. Fir Tree Community Primary School is a community school, where the governing Body is established by the Local Authority who also decide the admissions policy. This admission policy is the same for all community schools and voluntary controlled schools. The new amalgamated school would be a Voluntary Controlled Church of England School, with a governing body established by the Local Authority and an admissions policy that would be the same as all other Local Authority controlled schools.
- 8 The aim of this proposal is to secure the size of primary schools in Alwoodley in the context of falling primary school demand to ensure that schools have the resources, flexibility and staffing capacity to provide pupils with a high quality of education.

### **What evidence is there that reorganisation is necessary?**

- 9 Leeds City Council and Education Leeds recognise that structural changes to school provision should only be undertaken where there is very strong evidence that the educational opportunities for children would be improved and that provision would be sustainable over the longer term. There are currently about 222 (16%) surplus places in schools in Alwoodley and this is expected to increase to as much as 332 (24%) in the next few years, unless some action is taken.
- 10 Table 1 in the Appendix to this document provides some comparative information about schools in the area, including current numbers at the schools. Most schools in the area

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have some surplus capacity, with intakes lower than their respective admission numbers. This is most marked at Fir Tree Community Primary and Archbishop Cranmer Primary – only 16 pupils were admitted to Fir Tree Reception in September 2006 for 30 places available, while 8 were admitted to Archbishop Cranmer for the 45 places available. Fir Tree Community Primary School has suffered falling rolls over several years, and currently has only 102 pupils on roll. Archbishop Cranmer Primary School also has suffered falling rolls and currently has 151 on roll, although it is in a building that could accommodate up to 315 pupils.

- 11 Fir Tree Community Primary School provides pupils with a good education and has developed expertise in supporting refugee and asylum seeker children. However, like many other small schools due to economies of scale and other elements such as small school protection funding, Fir Tree Community Primary School costs more per pupil than larger schools. In the 2006/7 budget, Fir Tree Community Primary School costs £4,454 per pupil, compared with the Leeds average of £3,316. Archbishop Cranmer primary school costs £3,697 per pupil. The value for money that small schools provide has to be questioned in the context of the resources available for all Leeds schools.
- 12 Current intakes into the five schools and future projections suggest that 180 places per year across the schools would be more than sufficient to meet demand, whereas the current combined admission limit is 210. In September 2006 there were 140 pupils in Reception in the five schools, compared to 197 in January 2000. Table 2 presents Reception projections for the five schools for the next four years. These support the need to consolidate provision into fewer, more sustainable schools. The amalgamation of Fir Tree and Archbishop Cranmer primary schools would reduce the combined admission limit by 30, improving the match between the supply and demand of primary places.
- 13 There is more denominational provision in Alwoodley than most other planning areas, with a Catholic primary school, a Voluntary Aided Church of England primary school and a Jewish primary school. An important consideration is to ensure that sufficient community places are available for families living in the area that would want their children to attend a community school, rather than denominational provision. Alwoodley Primary School offers 60 reception places and this is considered to be sufficient to meet projected demand within the local area for a community school.

### **What options have been considered?**

- 14 A proposal was made in 2005 to close Fir Tree Community Primary School, and a consultation was held. However, the Executive Board of Leeds City Council decided that more work needed to be done to look into other options for the area, and the proposal was suspended. In 2005 the Church of England Diocese had indicated that it would support an amalgamation only if the status of the new school was that of a Voluntary Aided Primary School, as Archbishop Cranmer Primary is the only Church of England school in the area. Since that time they have modified their view to include the possibility of an amalgamation as a voluntary controlled school.
- 15 Consideration was also given to retaining all schools, but downsizing the provision available. The admission number of Archbishop Cranmer could be reduced from 45 to

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30, but this action would be unlikely to have any beneficial effect on the number on roll at Fir Tree Community Primary School, as intakes at Archbishop Cranmer tend to be less than 30. There is very little scope to downsize other schools - Alwoodley Primary is a popular school with demand close to its admission limit, Brodetsky Primary School reduced its admission number of 60 to 45 in 2003 and St Paul's only admits 30 pupils per year.

- 16 It is our view that the proposal to amalgamate Fir Tree and Archbishop Cranmer primary schools outlined above is the best proposal to bring forward for wider discussion. It would achieve a reduction in provision in line with projected demand and provide a good geographic distribution of schools in relation to where pupils live. In addition, pupils currently at Fir Tree and Archbishop Cranmer primary schools would benefit from attending a larger school that has the resources to offer more opportunities and is in a better position to offer single-aged classes.

### **What happens if the proposal proceeds?**

#### **Where will the children be offered places?**

- 17 Parents and carers will be able to consider a place at any school. They may express a preference for any school, and parental preference will be met as far as possible by application of the published admission criteria for Leeds.
- 18 All of the children on the roll of Fir Tree and of Archbishop Cranmer primary schools, should they close in August 2007, will be offered a place in the newly established school in September 2007.

#### **How will the transition arrangements be managed?**

- 19 The transition period will be carefully managed and supported to make sure that the schools continue to provide a quality education for pupils, building upon existing provision and achievements. The process will be led and managed by the existing headteachers and governing bodies, with the support of Education Leeds. A Project Co-ordinator will work closely with the schools in the area to ensure that the transition process is linked with the school improvement strategy and co-ordinated with the services provided by Education Leeds and from others.

Throughout the transition process there will be a programme and process to encourage and support all staff to continue the development of their career within existing schools and to support the process of change.

A Temporary Governing Body will be established, drawing from existing governors of the closing schools. This Temporary Governing Body will then be responsible, with advice from the Personnel Team, for appointing a headteacher to the new primary school. Once a headteacher is in place they can then work together with the Temporary Governing Body to establish a staffing structure for the new school.

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### 20 What about the staff?

- 21 It is intended that all posts at the new primary school will be ring-fenced, in the first instance, to existing members of staff at the closing schools. The Education Leeds Personnel Team will work with any members of staff unable to obtain employment in the new school, to seek redeployment elsewhere.

### When is the proposed date for the closure?

- 22 The proposed date for closure is 31 August 2007. This recognises the need for time to complete the statutory processes required when schools are closed.

## Consultation Process

### What happens next?

- 23 We are consulting parents, governors, staff and the community between September and November 2006. At the end of this period the Executive Board of the City Council will receive a report summarising the views expressed during the consultation (January 2007). The Board will be asked to consider whether, in the light of these views it still wishes to proceed with these or amended proposals. If the Board does wish to proceed then statutory notices will be published. Anyone who disagrees with the proposal can formally object at this stage. At the end of the statutory notice period, a further report is submitted to the Executive Board summarising the representations received (March 2007) and all the documentation is submitted to the School Organisation Committee, an independent body, who must decide whether or not to finally approve the proposal.

If no objections are received then the proposal does not proceed to SOC and a final decision will be made by Executive Board.

### When would these proposals take effect?

- 24 Set out below is the timetable of key dates currently envisaged, although this may be subject to change.

September 2006	Leeds City Council Executive Board grant permission for public Consultation on the preferred option
29 Sept – 10 Nov 06	Public consultation (6 weeks)
Jan 2007	Executive Board approval to publish statutory notices
Jan 07 – Feb 07	Publish statutory notices giving 6 weeks for representations to be made
Feb 07	Notice expires
Mar 07	Submit documentation to Leeds School Organisation Committee (SOC), or Executive Board paper if no representations
May 2007	Deadline for SOC decision
Sept 2007	Implementation

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## What are your views?

- 25 Whether you agree or disagree with the proposal or aspects of it, whether you have concerns that you feel have not been addressed or factors that you think we have not taken into account, please let us know. We would like to hear your views.
- 26 You are invited to a public meeting at 7pm on 16 October 2006 at Allerton High School, where your views will be noted. You may also wish to put your views in writing – either by letter or by completing the attached proforma – to arrive no later than 10 November 2006.

Send all correspondence to

The Chief Executive  
Education Leeds  
FAO School Organisation Team  
Selectapost 17  
Merrion House  
110 Merrion Centre  
LEEDS LS2 8DT

You can also reply by email to: [educ.school.organisation@educationleeds.co.uk](mailto:educ.school.organisation@educationleeds.co.uk) or via the website at: [www.educationleeds.co.uk](http://www.educationleeds.co.uk)

## Timetable of Consultation Meetings

Date	Time	
4 October 2006	3.30 pm	Meeting with staff of Arch. Cranmer C of E Primary School
4 October 2006	7.00 pm	Meeting with Governing Body of Arch. Cranmer C of E Primary School
12 October 2006	3.30 pm	Meeting with staff of Fir Tree Community Primary School
12 October 2006	7.00 pm	Meeting with Governing Body of Fir Tree Community Primary School
16 October 2006	4.00 pm	Meeting with Inner NE Area Management Committee
16 October 2006	7.00 pm	Public Meeting
23 October 2006	7.00 pm	Meeting with Outer NE Area Committee

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## Appendix

**Table 1: Current position**

	Type of School	Nursery Roll Jan 2006	Ad. Limit	Reception (Sept 2006)	Number on Roll (Sept 2006)	NET Capacity	Surplus Places Sept 2006 (%)
Alwoodley	3 -11 primary	76	60	61	419	420	1 (0%)
Archbishop Cranmer (VA)	5 – 11 primary	0	45	8	151	236	85 (36%)
Brodetsky (VA)	3 – 11 primary	31	45	26	255	315	60 (19%)
Fir Tree	5 – 11 Primary	0	30	16	102	156	54 (35%)
St Paul's	5 – 11 Primary	0	30	29	184	209	25 (12%)
<b>Totals</b>		<b>107</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>1111</b>	<b>1336</b>	<b>225 (17%)</b>

**Table 2: Reception Projections September entry**

School	2006 (Actual)	2007	2008	2009	Admission limit
Alwoodley	61	55	60	62	<b>60</b>
Archbishop Cranmer CE	8	13	13	12	<b>45</b>
Brodetsky	26	33	35	31	<b>45</b>
Fir Tree	16	14	17	16	<b>30</b>
St Paul's RC	29	25	26	25	<b>30</b>
<b>Area totals</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>210</b>

**Table 3: Area Projections**

	REC	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5	YR 6	TOTAL	AD LT	CAPACITY	SURPLUS	%
2001\2	170	197	189	187	186	201	206	<b>1336</b>	255	1641	<b>305</b>	19%
2002\3	162	175	187	181	180	192	205	<b>1282</b>	235	1437	<b>155</b>	11%
2003\4	150	166	169	186	171	177	187	<b>1206</b>	220	1359	<b>153</b>	11%
2004\5	146	162	162	167	190	172	180	<b>1179</b>	210	1359	<b>180</b>	13%
2005\6	147	151	156	159	163	191	171	<b>1137</b>	210	1359	<b>222</b>	16%
2006\7	143	152	146	154	155	163	189	<b>1102</b>	210	1359	<b>257</b>	19%
2007\8	140	148	147	144	151	155	161	<b>1046</b>	210	1359	<b>313</b>	23%
2008\9	150	146	143	144	141	150	154	<b>1027</b>	210	1359	<b>332</b>	24%
2009\10	147	158	150	138	166	149	167	<b>1075</b>	210	1336	<b>261</b>	20%