

Consultation on proposals for significant change to West Rise Community Infant School and West Rise Junior School

Consultation document for pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors and stakeholders

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East Sussex County Council is proposing to amalgamate West Rise Community Infant School and West Rise Junior School on 1 January 2025 and to change the new all-through primary school's age range to 2-11 to take on the management of West Rise Nursery.

Introduction

Primary education in East Sussex is largely arranged in all-through primary schools for children aged 4-11. In Eastbourne there is a mix of primary schools and separate 4-7 infant and 7-11 junior schools. In agreement with the governors of West Rise Community Infant School and West Rise Junior School, East Sussex County Council (the local authority) is consulting on a proposal to amalgamate the two schools to form a new all-through primary school with effect from 1 January 2025.

Linked to this, the local authority is also proposing to change the new school's age range to 2-11 to enable it to take on the management of West Rise Nursery which currently operates as a governor-led nursery under a separate Ofsted registration.

This consultation document is for pupils, parents and carers, staff, trade unions, members of both governing boards, the school community, and stakeholders. We welcome your views on the proposal. The local authority will consider all the views put forward during the consultation period before a decision is taken on whether to proceed with the proposals.

Background to the proposal

West Rise Community Infant School and West Rise Junior School are two separate schools which share the same site. Each school has its own governing board and, until recently, had separate headteachers and worked independently. In July 2023, an Ofsted inspection of the junior school judged the quality of education and leadership and management as requires improvement.

Since January 2024, the schools have been working in partnership with one of the infant co-heads acting as headteacher across the two schools. This has resulted in similar approaches being used across the two schools which will benefit pupil's transition

between the schools. This includes, for example, the same approach to the teaching of phonics and early reading across the schools. The local authority is keen to further support this partnership working through the formal amalgamation of the two schools. Governors of both schools want to sustain the improvements that are being made and ensure a strong future for the school community. It has, therefore, been agreed that a consultation on the proposed amalgamation of the two schools should now take place.

Currently, West Rise Nursery is run by the governors of West Rise Community Infant School under a different Ofsted registration, meaning it is run as a separate legal entity to the school. By changing its age range, the new all-through primary school would be able to formally take on the management of the nursery under the same Ofsted registration as the school.

Benefits of amalgamation

One of the local authority's guiding principles to school organisation is to support the amalgamation of linked infant and junior schools to deliver the benefit of continuous provision from early years to the end of Key Stage 2.

Amalgamation would bring about the following educational benefits:

- There would no longer be a need for families of children in Year 2 to have to apply for a place in the junior school from Year 3, thereby removing any uncertainty about transfer to a 'new' school at the end of Key Stage 1
- A shared vision and ethos across the school
- Continuity of experience for children - in teaching and learning, pupil care and development - under a single headteacher and staff
- Greater ability to track progress between key stages
- A more coherent delivery of the National Curriculum from Foundation Stage through to the end of Key Stage 2
- Easier sharing of good practice across the whole school
- Expertise within the whole school could be better targeted across the full age range
- Professional development opportunities for staff within an all-through primary school environment
- Greater flexibility in organising classes, deploying teaching and support staff, and using curriculum resources more effectively
- Greater opportunities for staff recruitment
- Consistent engagement with families across the school

Impact on staff

Staff would continue in their roles as the two schools become one all-through primary school. The proposed changes may present opportunities for staff who would have more opportunities for professional development and would be able to gain greater understanding and experience of working in a primary school environment. The employer will remain East Sussex County Council, so there will be no need for a transfer of employment to take place under the Transfer of Undertaking and Protection of Employment Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2014) (TUPE).

No existing member of staff would be required to change their contract of employment by working across both schools. The proposed change would not constitute a break in service or affect staff terms and conditions in any way.

The local authority knows the process of bringing two schools together as one can be unsettling for staff. As with any process of change, the interests of staff must be considered carefully, and all staff and their unions would be consulted in accordance with the Council's Managing Change policies. The local authority's Human Resources team would work closely with school staff throughout the transition.

School budget

School budgets are largely based on pupil numbers. However, as well as other factors that make up the funding formula for schools is a lump sum for all primary schools regardless of their size. West Rise Community Infant School and West Rise Junior School currently receive lump sum funding as separate schools. Should the amalgamation proceed the new 'all-through' primary school would eventually receive one lump sum. Funding protection would be applied to enable the school to achieve the economies of scale from being one larger primary school.

Assuming there are no changes to funding arrangements governing amalgamations and the proposal took effect from 1 January 2025, the following funding protection would be applied.

- Following amalgamation, the new school would keep the two lump sums for the remainder of the 2024/25 financial year
- In the 2025/26 financial year the school would receive 85% of the two lump sums.

- In the 2026/27 financial year the school would receive one lump sum.

It is important to balance the financial implications of amalgamation with the practical benefits set out above. The amalgamation of the two schools would lead to one larger budget across a single school and lead to cost savings in certain areas.

Establishing the new school

To establish one 'all-through' primary school with nursery provision, we propose to close West Rise Junior School on 31 December 2024 (this is known as a technical closure) and change the age range at West Rise Community Infant School from 4-7 to 2-11 from 1 January 2025. The new school would continue to operate across the existing site and premises.

School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools)(England) Regulations 2013

In accordance with the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, there is a defined statutory process which local authorities must follow when proposing to make a significant change to a maintained school. Set out below are the five stages the local authority will follow in making this proposal.

Consultation

The publication of this consultation document marks a period of consultation during which the views of interested parties are sought and which will be considered by the local authority.

The local authority is consulting with pupils, parents and carers, staff, trade unions, the governing boards of both schools and local schools. We are also consulting with a wide range of other groups and organisations including local early years providers, Eastbourne Borough Council, the local MP and the Church of England and Catholic dioceses.

The consultation period runs from 15 April to 24 May 2024. Following the consultation period, a report on the outcome of the consultation will be considered by the local authority's Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability at a decision making meeting, probably in July 2024. The Lead Member will

decide whether to proceed with the proposal.

Publication

If approved, the local authority would publish a statutory proposal relating to the proposed changes. This would likely happen in July 2024.

Representation

Publication of a statutory proposal would trigger a period of representation which must last for a period of four weeks. During this period, any person or organisation may object to or comment on the proposal by sending their representations to the local authority.

Decision

The local authority must make a decision on the proposal within two months of the end of the representation period. The Lead Member would consider any responses received during the representation period before determining the proposal at a decision making meeting, likely to be held in October 2024.

Implementation

If the proposal is approved, West Rise Junior School would close on 31 December 2024 and West Rise Community Infant School would change its age range on 1 January 2025 to become an 'all-through' primary school with nursery provision.

How you can give your views

The consultation period runs from 15 April to 24 May 2024.

You can give your views by:

- Completing the online survey on the ESCC [consultation hub](#)
- Emailing the local authority at: school.consultations@eastsussex.gov.uk
- Attending the staff consultation event at the junior school between 3.30 and 4.30pm on 22 April 2024
- Attending the consultation event for parents and carers at the junior school between 6 and 7pm on 22 April 2024

All comments must be received by **24 May 2024**, or they cannot be considered.

If you would like a paper copy of the consultation document, please email:

school.consultations@eastsussex.gov.uk

Please submit only one response per person to this consultation

This consultation forms stage one of the process the local authority is following in making this proposal. The information provided in this document is intended to be sufficient for people to form a view on the proposal. The local authority will consider views and concerns raised during the consultation period before deciding whether to proceed with the proposal.

We will not be able to acknowledge written responses or enter into correspondence with interested parties during or after the consultation period.

Thank you for taking the time to read this consultation document.

Consultation on a proposal to make a significant change to West Rise Community Infant School and West Rise Junior School

Our proposal is to amalgamate West Rise Community Infant School and West Rise Junior School to create one ‘all-through’ primary school with nursery provision from 1 January 2025.

The local authority would welcome your views on the proposal. The consultation period finishes on **24 May 2024**. If you would prefer to complete a paper copy, please print this form, and send it to: School Consultations, Education Division, Children’s Services Department, East Sussex County Council, County Hall, St Anne’s Crescent, Lewes BN7 1UE.

1. Do you support the proposal to amalgamate West Rise Community Infant School and West Rise Junior School with effect from 1 January 2025?

Yes

No

Undecided

2. Do you support the proposal to lower the school's age range to take on the management of West Rise Nursery under one Ofsted registration?

Yes

No

Undecided

3. Please let us know how the proposed changes would directly impact on you and your family.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to provide their answer to the question above. The box is currently blank.

4. Which of the following best describes you?

- Pupil at West Rise Community Infant School
- Pupil at West Rise Junior School
- Parent/carer of a child at West Rise Community Infant School
- Parent/carer of a child at West Rise Junior School
- Member of staff at West Rise Community Infant School
- Member of staff at West Rise Junior School
- Governor at West Rise Community Infant School
- Governor at West Rise Junior School
- Other (please say)

About You: Equalities Monitoring Form

We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally and that no one gets left out. That's why we ask you these questions. Your data is important to us and we won't share the information you provide with anyone else. Your information will only be used and reported anonymously to support the activity you have completed the 'About You' survey for. You do not have to answer these questions but by doing so you are helping to ensure our services effectively meet the needs of all our service users. Full privacy notice:

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/privacy/about-you>

1. How old are you?

..... years

Prefer not to say

2. Are you...?

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

3. Which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong to?

<p>White</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Irish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy / Roma</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Irish Traveller</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any other White background, write in:</p>	<p>Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> White & Black Caribbean</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> White & Black African</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> White & Asian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any other Mixed or Multiple background, write in:</p> <p>Asian or Asian British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any other Asian background, write in:</p>	<p>Black, Black British, Caribbean or African</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> African background, write in</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any other Black, Black British or Caribbean background, write in:</p> <p>Other ethnic group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Arab</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic group, write in:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say</p>
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4. Would you say that you have a disability?

- Yes (please answer part a below)
- No (go to the next question)
- Prefer not to say (go to the next question)

4a. Please tell us what problems you face

- A disability to do with your body (like problems walking, moving, getting around...)
- Problems with hearing or seeing
- Having an illness for a long time (like cancer, epilepsy, heart disease, diabetes, HIV or another illness)
- Mental health problems (this is a problem to do with your mind and the way you feel. For example, if you feel upset, worried or angry a lot)
- Learning difficulties
- Prefer not to say
- Something else, please write in:

5. Do you belong to any particular religion or belief?

<input type="checkbox"/> No religion	<input type="checkbox"/> Any other religion, write in:
<input type="checkbox"/> Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist	<input type="checkbox"/> Philosophical belief, write in
<input type="checkbox"/> Hindu	
<input type="checkbox"/> Jewish	
<input type="checkbox"/> Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/> Sikh	

For over 16s

6. Do you identify as a transgender or trans person?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

7. Are you...?

- Heterosexual/Straight
- Bi/Bisexual
- Gay woman/Lesbian
- Gay man
- Other
- Prefer not to say

8. Are you currently pregnant or have been in the last year?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

9. Please tell us your postcode

.....

Prefer not to say

Thank you for providing this information, your feedback is important to us.