

Committee:	Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness
Date:	20 November 2012
Title of Report:	Crowborough Primary School Reorganisation
By:	Director of Children’s Services
Purpose of Report:	To seek Lead Member approval to publish statutory notices in respect of a proposal to discontinue Herne Junior School on 31 August 2013 and alter the age range at Whitehill Infant School from 1 September 2013.

Recommendation:

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1. Authorise the publication of statutory notices in respect of a proposal to discontinue Herne Junior School on 31 August 2013 and alter the age range at Whitehill Infant School from 1 September 2013; and**
 - 2. Delegate authority to the Director of Children’s Services to amend the proposals prior to their publication if required.**
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1. Financial Appraisal

- 1.1 Revenue: these proposals will not affect the schools’ formula, although they will affect the budget position of individual schools, to reflect the changing status and circumstances of the schools.
- 1.2 Capital: capital investment will not be required to implement the proposals, save for new signage at both school sites.

2. Supporting information

- 2.1 On the 19 June 2012 Lead Member approved the commencement of statutory consultation procedures on a proposal to bring Whitehill Infant School and Herne Junior School together as one all-through primary school.
- 2.2 To establish one all-through primary school, the Local Authority proposes to discontinue Herne Junior School on 31 August 2013 and alter the age range at Whitehill Infant School from 4-7 years to 4-11 years on 1 September 2013. The all-through primary school would operate across the existing Whitehill Infant School and Herne Junior School sites.
- 2.3 This report analyses the responses received during the consultation period and seeks approval to move to the next stage of the statutory process.

3. Outcome of the Public Consultation

- 3.1 Proposed changes to the organisation of schools have to follow a prescribed process established by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006), the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended). This process complied with these requirements.
- 3.2 Consultation took place between 7 September and 19 October 2012. One thousand, four hundred (1,400) consultation documents were distributed to interested parties in accordance with the regulations in 3.1 above. The full distribution list can be found as part of **Appendix A**. The consultation document was also made available on the County Council’s website. A number of consultation events were held during the consultation period, including parent drop-in sessions and a public meeting.
- 3.3 By the close of the consultation period, 107 replies had been received. This equates to a

response rate of 8%. Of the responses:

- 100 (93%) supported the proposal
- 2 (2%) neither agreed or disagreed with the proposal
- 5 (5%) did not support the proposal.
- A further 4 responses were received after the closing date that are not otherwise included in this data. All were supportive of the proposal.

3.4 The highest number of responses (76%) came from parents and carers of children at Whitehill Infant School and/or Herne Junior School. Mindful that respondents may tick more than one category 29 respondents identified themselves as members of staff and/or governors, with replies from a further 4 community members totalling 100%.

3.5 It is clear that the vast majority of respondents support the proposal to bring Whitehill Infant School and Herne Junior School together as one all-through primary school. No particular concerns were raised, detailed analysis of the consultation process is in **Appendix A**.

4. Next Steps

4.1 The next stage of the statutory process would be to publish notices. This would trigger a 6 week period of formal consultation, known as the representation period, between January and February 2013.

4.2 Within two months of the end of the representation period, the Lead Member must determine the proposal taking into account the views of all those affected by the proposal or who have an interest in it, including for example: pupils; parents and carers; staff; other schools; local residents; diocesan bodies and other providers. It is expected that a final decision on the proposal would be taken at the Lead Member meeting on 14 March 2013.

5. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations

5.1 In conclusion, the Council believes that bringing Whitehill Infant School and Herne Junior School together as one all-through primary school will build on the excellent progress made by the executive headteacher and her team over the last 3 years and lead to a sustained improvement in educational standards at Key Stage 2. This view appears to be supported by 93% of respondents to the recent consultation.

5.2 For this reason Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) Authorise the publication of statutory notices in respect of a proposal to discontinue Herne Junior School on 31 August 2013 and alter the age range at Whitehill Infant School from 1 September 2013; and
- 2) Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to amend the proposals prior to their publication if required.

MATT DUNKLEY

Director of Children's Services

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Tel: 01273 481231

Local Member(s): Councillor Richard Stogdon and Councillor Sylvia Tidy

Background Documents: None

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

1. Background:

- 1.1 East Sussex County Council undertook a consultation between 7 September and 19 October 2012 on a proposal to bring Whitehill Infant School and Herne Junior School together as one all-through primary school. To achieve this, the Local Authority proposes to discontinue Herne Junior School on 31 August 2013 and alter the age range at Whitehill Infant School from 4-7 years to 4-11 years on 1 September 2013.
- 1.2 The all-through primary school would operate across the existing Whitehill Infant School and Herne Junior School sites.

2. Purpose of report:

- 2.1 This report is in two parts:
- Part 1: the consultation process
 - Part 2: analysis of consultation responses

3. Part 1: the consultation process:

- 3.1 One thousand four hundred (1,400) consultation documents were distributed in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006), the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended).
- 3.2 Consultees included for example: pupils; parents and carers; staff; other schools in the Crowborough area; the local MP; the District Council; diocesan bodies and local early years providers. The full distribution list is provided in Table 1 below. The consultation document was also made available on the County Council's website.

Table 1: Consultation distribution list

Organisation	Number of copies
Whitehill Infant and Herne Junior schools: pupils, parents & carers, staff, governors	550
Jarvis Brook School	30
Sir Henry Fermor CE Primary School	30
St John's CE Primary School	30
St Mary's Catholic Primary School	30
High Hurstwood CE Primary School	30
Rotherfield Primary School	30
St Michael's Primary School	30
Beacon Community College	30
Grove Park School	30
ESCC Councillors and Chief Officers	64
Charles Hendry MP	5
DFE	1
Wealden District Council	60
Crowborough Town Council	20
Diocese of Chichester (Church of England)	5
Diocese of Arundel and Brighton (Catholic)	5
The Beacon Surgery	30
Saxonbury House Practice	30
The Brook Health Centre	30
Sussex Voluntary and Community Learning Consortium	10
Crowborough Library	30

Unions: Association of Teachers & Lecturers / NASUWT / NAHT / NUT / Voice of the Union of Education Professionals / GMB / UNISON	1 each
Crowborough Children's Centre	30
Croft Road Pre-school	30
Cont...	
Luxford Pre-school Nursery	30
The Nursery School	30
St Mary's Nursey School	30
Whitehill Childcare Services	30
Spares for consultation events	103
Total	1,400

3.3 The consultation document explained the proposal and provided a number of ways to respond. These included: by freepost reply, online questionnaire or by emailing East Sussex County Council.

3.4 A range of consultation events were held to provide staff, governors and public with further information and evidence of the benefits of enlargement of the school, and to discuss and answer any questions raised. These included:

- A playground consultation at Whitehill Infant School on 19 September 2012. The session was attended by 2 officers from ESCC. Generally people seemed happy with the proposal and did not raise any particular concerns with us.
- A playground consultation at Herne Junior School on 20 September 2012. The session was attended by 2 officers from ESCC. Like the Whitehill consultation, parents did not feel the need to raise any particular issues with us.
- Public meeting at Herne Junior School on 27 September 2012. The meeting was facilitated by 4 officers from ESCC and the Executive Headteacher and was attended by only 3 adults and 2 children. From the extremely low turnout it could be assumed that the majority of consultees were happy with the proposal and/or did not have any specific questions to ask.

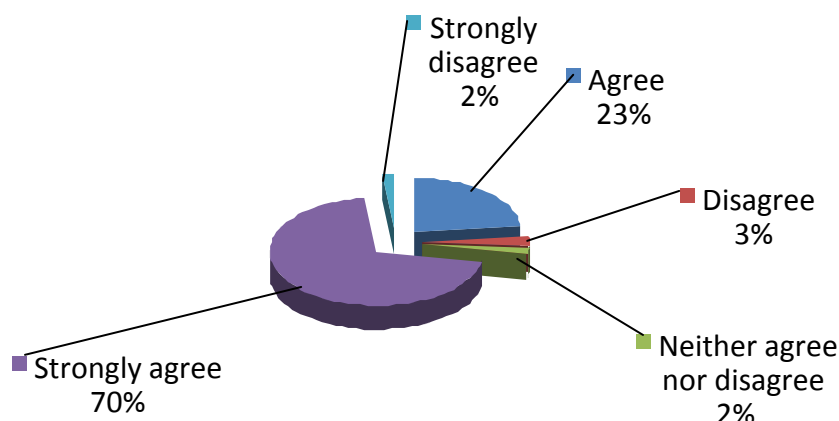
4. Part 2: analysis of consultation responses:

4.1 Question 1 on the questionnaire asked people to indicate whether they agreed with the proposal to discontinue Herne Junior School and alter the age range at Whitehill Infant School to establish an all-through primary school. 107 people responded to this question, of which:

- 100 (93%) supported the proposal
- 2 (2%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal
- 5 (5%) did not support the proposal

4.2 Figure 1 below shows the breakdown of responses as a pie chart.

Figure 1. Combined online and postal responses to Q1: Do you agree with the proposal to discontinue Herne Junior School and alter the age range at Whitehill Infant School to establish an all-through primary school?



- 4.3 Of the 1,400 consultation documents distributed, 102 (7%) responded using the paper questionnaire and 5 (less than 1%) responded online. This equates to an overall response rate of 8% (rounded).
- 4.4 Question 2 asked people to give reasons for their answers to question 1 above. Generally the comments were very positive, with the main areas of comment being: a preference for continuity through primary education, as well as recognition of the good work that has gone into improving the reputation at Herne.
- 4.5 Table 2 below summarises the comments received. A full list of responses is available for inspection.

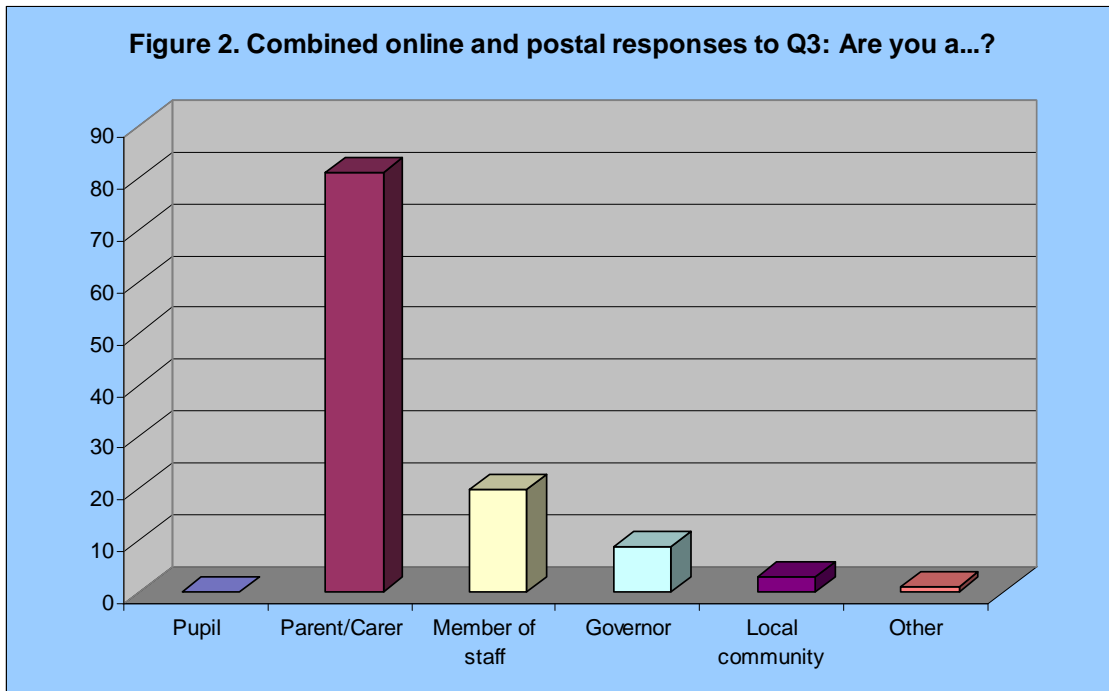
Table 2: Summary of main comments

Comment summary	
1	I have a child already at Herne who underwent the old process and a child at Whitehill who leaves August 2013. There is no other school except Herne. I wish my second child to go with such increasing standards at Herne. The process we went through to get my first child in I felt was pointless as it was already accepted that Herne & Whitehill were a federation and a follow-on school. Unfortunately Herne has had previously a bad name so losing the title will only assist in continuing with improvements that the fantastic Executive Head is bringing about, with the same governing body it can only be beneficial.
2	More stability for children, staff & parents & hopefully results!
3	Gives more consistency and continuity for the pupils.
4	All through Primary Schools must function better under one umbrella and having the name Whitehill will help to dispel the negative attitude that Herne had in the past.
5	A good idea to have a single school, saving costs. However it would be a shame to lose the name 'Herne Junior School'.
6	The federation has started such an improvement at Herne that this is the next logical step to cement that improvement. It will also shake off the 'bad name' that Herne still has.
7	Majority of pupils move on to Herne from Whitehill, therefore it makes sense to create an all-through primary school.
8	I feel the school have benefited hugely from one Headteacher, so putting the schools through as one will only benefit the children and staff more, and help improve Herne especially.
9	I feel my children have benefited from one Headteacher across both schools. The standard at Herne has improved and will continue in a consistent way should the schools be merged as one.
10	My children are currently at Whitehill. Very pleased with schools and Headteacher, staff, governing body. Looking forward to several years of schooling my children at Whitehill. Many

4.6 In answer to question 3, respondents classified themselves as:

- 0 (0%) were pupils at Whitehill Infant School or Herne Junior School
- 81 (76%) were parents/carers of children at Whitehill Infant School and/or Herne Junior School
- 20 (19%) were members of staff at Whitehill Infant School or Herne Junior School
- 9 (8%) were members of the governing body
- 3 (3%) were members of the local community
- 1 (1%) were classified as other

4.7 The responses to question 3 totalled 115. This is because some respondents ticked more than one box, while others chose not to tick a box. Figure 2 below shows the breakdown as a bar chart.



4.8 ‘About you’ questions. We collect this information to ensure that we are seeking the views of everyone in our community and to demonstrate that we are complying with relevant diversity and equalities legislation. The responses to the ‘About you’ questions are available for inspection.

4.9 A copy of the consultation document is provided in **Annex 2** attached.

4.10 At the time of writing, 4 replies had been received after the closing date of the consultation period, all of which were supportive of the proposal. These responses have not been included in the foregoing analysis.



July 2012

Have your say on a proposal to bring Whitehill Infant School and Herne Junior School together to create an all-through primary school

The consultation runs from 7 September to 19 October 2012.



What is the proposal?

The proposal is to create an all-through primary school from 1 September 2013 by bringing together Whitehill Infant School and Herne Junior School. The all-through primary school would admit up to 60 pupils a year and have a capacity of 420 places.

It is important to note that all pupils attending Whitehill Infant School or Herne Junior School at the time of change would automatically become part of the all-through primary school.

The all-through primary school would have a single governing body and a single headteacher who would be responsible for the effective education of all children throughout their time at the school.

This consultation document is for pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors, the local community and other interested parties. East Sussex County Council will consider all views put forward during the consultation before it decides whether to continue with the proposal. We welcome your views on this proposal.

What is the background to this proposal?

Herne Junior School was given a notice to improve by Ofsted in June 2009. As a result, the local authority assisted the school in federating with Whitehill Infant School in September 2009. Through the federation, the two schools share the same executive headteacher and governing body.

In June 2010 Herne Junior School was rated as satisfactory and its capacity for sustained improvement was regarded as good. In their report, Ofsted remarked that:

“...Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The high expectations set by the headteacher, the good support from the governing body, the federation of the two schools and the local authority have enabled this school to improve outcomes for most of its pupils.”

“The school has achieved this through good self-evaluation and consistent monitoring of teaching and learning...which has resulted in higher attainment and better progress of pupils. The school rightly recognises there are some inconsistencies...however, the successes significantly outweigh the weaknesses and this demonstrates the school’s good capacity for further improvement.”

What are the benefits of change?

Our policy for primary school organisation emphasises the benefits realised from all-through primary schools rather than separate infant and junior schools. Recent analysis continues to show that overall Key Stage 2 educational standards are higher in East Sussex for all-through primary schools than in junior schools where children transfer at the start of Year 3.

Under the executive headteacher, the two schools have developed common policies and approaches to teaching and learning and for tracking of pupil progress. These common policies and approaches have helped create a common understanding of levels of attainment and transition processes for children transferring from the infant school to the junior school. In the last two academic years, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above at KS2 in English and Maths has exceeded East Sussex and National averages.

The local authority and the governing body are keen to build on the excellent progress made by the executive headteacher and her team, by formally bringing Whitehill Infant School and Herne Junior School together as one all-through primary school.

How would the all-through primary school be established?

To establish one all-through primary school, we propose to discontinue Herne Junior School on 31 August 2013 and alter the age range at Whitehill Infant School from 4-7 years to 4-11 years from 1 September 2013. The school would continue to operate across the existing infant and junior school sites.

Who makes the final decision and when?

The Council is the decision maker for this proposal. This is not a referendum but all of the views expressed during the consultation period together with other sources of information will be used to inform the decision.

Following consideration of the consultation responses we could choose to:

- stop the process - in this case the separate infant and junior schools would remain as a federation under the executive headteacher;
- change the proposal - in this case the next steps would depend on what the proposed changes are; or
- continue with the proposal - we would publish Statutory Notices for the proposal in the local newspaper, possibly in November 2012, after which a further period of consultation (the representation period) would follow. We have a duty to make a final decision on the proposal within two months of the end of the representation period. In this instance, a decision would probably be taken in February 2013.

Who is being consulted?

We are consulting with pupils, parents and carers, the governing body, staff, other local schools and trade unions. We are also consulting with a wide range of other groups including the District Council, the local MP, the Church of England and Catholic dioceses and the wider local community.

How do I have my say?

This consultation runs until **19 October 2012**.

You can give your views by:

- completing the attached questionnaire and returning it by freepost in the envelope provided
- completing the online questionnaire at: **www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/consultation**
- emailing the County Council at **schoolsamp@eastsussex.gov.uk**
- attending the playground 'drop in' sessions at **Whitehill Infant School** on **Wednesday 19 September 2012** from **3pm** or at **Herne Junior School** on **Thursday 20 September 2012** from **3.15pm**
- attending a public meeting at **Herne Junior School** on **Thursday 27 September 2012** between **6.30** and **8pm**

Consultation – Response Form

Our proposal is to bring Whitehill Infant School and Herne Junior School together as one all-through primary school from 1 September 2013.

We welcome your views on this proposal. Please fill in this response form and return it to the address below no later than 19 October 2012.

Q1. Do you agree with the proposal to discontinue Herne Junior School and alter the age range at Whitehill Infant School to establish an all-through primary school?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q2. If you wish, please give your main reasons for your answer to Q1 above, and/or any other options you think the Council should consider:

Q3. Are you a...?

- Pupil at Whitehill Infant School or Herne Junior School
- Parent/carer of a child at Whitehill Infant School and/or Herne Junior School
- Member of staff at either Whitehill Infant School or Herne Junior School
- Member of the governing body
- Member of the local community
- Other (please say) _____

Once completed, please tear off this page along the perforation, fold and return it in the window envelope provided by **19 October 2012** to the address below.

Please ensure that the address is clearly visible in the window of the envelope.
You don't need a stamp.

**Primary Consultation (Crowborough)
FREEPOST BR157
School Changes Consultation
County Hall
St Anne's Crescent
Lewes BN7 1SG**

About you ...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. We won't share the information you give us with anyone else. We will only use it to help us make decisions and make our services better.

If you would rather not answer any of these questions, you don't have to.

Q4. Are you.....? Male Female Prefer not to say

Q5 Do you identify as a transgender or trans person?
 Yes No Prefer not to say

Q6. How old are you? **Q7. What is your postcode?**

Q8. To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong ? (Source 2011 census)

White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British
<input type="checkbox"/> British	<input type="checkbox"/> White & Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/> Irish	<input type="checkbox"/> White & Black African	<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> African
<input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy/Roma	<input type="checkbox"/> White & Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Other*
<input type="checkbox"/> Irish Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/> Other*	<input type="checkbox"/> Other*	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other*	<input type="checkbox"/> Arab	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

***Other Ethnic Group** If your ethnic group was not specified in the list please describe your ethnic group:

The Equality Act 2010 describes a person disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted or is likely to last at least 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS, for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

Q9. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?

Yes No Prefer not to say

Q9a. If you answered yes to Q9, please tell us the type of impairment that applies to you.

You may have more than one type of impairment, so please select all that apply. If none of these apply to you please select other and write in the type of impairment you have.

- Physical impairment Mental health condition
 Sensory impairment (hearing and sight) Learning disability
 Long standing illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy
 Other, please specify Prefer not to say

Q10. Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion or belief?

Yes No Prefer not to say

Q10a. If you answered yes to Q10, which one?

- Christian Hindu Muslim Any other religion, please specify
 Buddhist Jewish Sikh

Q11. Are you...?

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

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