

## **Consultation outcomes on the proposal to amalgamate St Nicholas and Starhurst schools**

A total of 13 responses were received during the consultation period which closed at midday on Tuesday 8 March 2016. During the consultation period three public meetings were held, at St Nicholas on 22 February and at Starhurst on 26 February and 1 March 2016. Altogether there were over 80 attendees across the three meetings and the audiences consisted of parents, staff and local residents.

Of the responses to the consultation received 54% agreed, 38% disagreed and 8% didn't know if they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to amalgamate the schools. A large number of responses provided written comments which can be broadly grouped into the following themes:

Concerns relating to pupils

Concerns relating to staff

Future pupil numbers

Concerns relating to buildings and moving

Please see overleaf for further comments to questions raised during the consultation meetings, which also provide responses on the written comments outlined above.

## **Questions and answers following consultation meetings**

### **1) There were questions posed on **Pupil impact, numbers and class sizes:****

- If the proposal goes ahead there will be pupils from two different schools – what will be done about getting them together?
- Pupils with SEMH find change difficult, what proposals are in place to help them?
- What will be the impact of a rebuild on the pupils at Starhurst?
- When the rebuild is happening what will happen to the pupils? Is there the possibility of pupils going to the St Nicholas site until the new build is complete? Previous build had demountables and this was problematic.
- Why larger classes and not smaller? Surely the cost of one additional teacher would benefit the pupils?
- Class sizes with 7 pupils, all could be in individual programmes – how will this be managed?
- Exciting that there is investment, SEND population growing, what about creating additional places?
- What about the impact on pupils of greater travelling time?
- Is there the possibility of creating Post 16 places?

### **Answers:**

Work has already started on getting pupils together at sporting events. If the proposal goes ahead then there will be further opportunities to bring the boys together from both schools which will be carefully managed. This will be part of a detailed piece of work to carefully consider how best to manage any anxieties experienced by pupils and ensure that future changes resulting from the amalgamation are well prepared for in advance of any changes.

Project Managers are experienced in working on school developments and when building works are being prepared very careful consideration is given to the proposals for phasing the work to minimise any impact on pupils. Proposals and a timeline will be devised with the involvement of the Headteacher and governors who will be able to ensure that whilst the work is ongoing the needs of the pupils will be prioritised. There may need to be demountable buildings used during the works and any specific arrangements around pupil and staff needs will be fully considered at that time.

The Headteacher, governors and LA believe that creating additional places at the amalgamated school would not be beneficial. The proposed numbers are thought to be the optimal number for a SEMH special school to make the appropriate arrangements for this cohort of pupils. The proposed number offers a level of financial stability without being too large to manage the needs of individual pupils. The numbers in pupil groups have been carefully considered to ensure that the individual educational potential of each pupil is met, alongside the opportunities that alternative courses allow. The amalgamated school will not offer post 16 places. There is an expectation that pupils will link with local colleges in preparation for adulthood. The school will support their transition during Key Stage 4.

Travel analysis is taking place and the impact on pupils is being considered. Travel times for pupils will be within the guidelines outlined in the Surrey criteria for Home to School transport.

### **2) A number of questions were asked relating to **Staff changes:****

- What reassurances about jobs can be given to teaching and support staff?
- What about staff that cannot travel to one site or the other?

- What about re-deployment/slotting/replication of posts?
- Will TAs be moved around?
- What will be the impact on staff that live on site?

Answers: The Executive Headteacher and Governors are working on a proposed structure for the combined schools for both the short term 2 site school and then the longer term (likely to be 18 months at least) 1 site school. Whilst there will be some duplication of roles where restructuring will need to be looked at, the vast majority of classroom roles will likely be retained. Until a staff structure is available and surplus roles identified it is difficult to answer generally. The EHT and governors will want those best suited in terms of skills and experience to be slotted in to all the newly created roles. When restructuring is taking place the school can either choose to slot individuals into roles or ask them to apply through a selection process. This is yet to be decided.

Of course for any roles ultimately identified as redundant there will be redeployment support provided by Babcock 4S on behalf of SCC. There is no expectation that staff will have to travel between sites although there will be opportunities for staff to do so if they wish. Once the schools are combined on the present Starhurst site accommodation available will be allotted on a priority basis based on the need to be on site for the better performance of the role. This would likely mean that staff working in the residential unit or those with an expectation of being on call would be given the highest priority.

**3) Due to the possible changes to Buildings and facilities there were a number of questions asked:**

- Why move sites?
- Are you saying that the new secondary school is not the driver on the amalgamation?
- What facilities will the new school have?
- Agree with the ethos and idea of amalgamating, if not on the Starhurst site can we 'step back' or if no agreement given can the process stop?
- What if the Starhurst building is not adapted or rebuilt?
- When will a move actually take place if Starhurst plans go ahead?
- Talked about the classrooms & school, what about the residential offer, which is excellent at the current St Nicholas site. Will this be considered?
- Why have local residents not been consulted?
- What will the site look like?
- What about increased traffic, junction at the top of Chart Lane?
- Will there be a new name for the amalgamated school?

**Answers:** The intention underpinning the proposed amalgamation of the schools on a single site is that this should serve to better facilitate and accelerate the sharing of good practice between the previously distinct institutions. In addition, physical amalgamation would create an institution and facility that is more cost-effective to run and thereby more financially sustainable in the longer term. The Starhurst site was selected as being the preferred option in this respect, owing to the fact that it is optimally sized to house this provision, as measured in accordance with national guidelines. This process is entirely distinct from any proposals in relation to the potential future use(s) of the existing St. Nicholas School site, which (when formulated) would be the subject of a separate consultation process, incorporating active engagement with local residents.

At present, it is too early to be definitive in relation to the specific facilities that any amalgamated school would incorporate (and what this might look like), although stakeholders can be assured that the residential offer is included in the proposal that is being brought forward. The school and Council are currently working in partnership to develop a proposal, through a series of design workshops. The Feasibility Stage of this work should be complete by mid-March. This will provide a high-level proposal, incorporating a schedule of accommodation (i.e. a detailed list of the room requirements, in tabulated form); the proposed balance between refurbishment and new build; and an idea of where any new build may be located on site. If the Council decides to proceed to taking the amalgamation proposal to a formal statutory consultation process, the design output will be made available to stakeholders within this. If it is ultimately decided to proceed with the amalgamation, the designs will then be developed in full, in order that they can form the basis of a planning application, which will itself be the subject of a distinct consultation process with the school community, local residents and other interested stakeholders. Any such planning application will incorporate a Transport Assessment, which will assess the impact of increased traffic and how this might be mitigated. The final decision as to whether physical traffic measures should be introduced would for the relevant Planning Panel to determine, on the basis of this assessment and any consultation feedback received. If the decision were taken to proceed with the physical amalgamation of the two schools, the intention is that this would be implemented at some point between September 2017 and September 2018, depending on the scheme that is finally developed and the build time thereby entailed.

On the basis of extensive consultation undertaken with the school community, it has been decided that the amalgamated school would be called Chart Wood School.