

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**ADULT & CHILDREN'S SERVICES CABINET
MEMBER**

**AMALGAMATION OF RIDDINGS INFANT SCHOOL
AND RIDDINGS JUNIOR SCHOOLS**

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Cabinet Member on the outcome of the public consultation regarding the proposal to merge Riddings Infant and Riddings Junior.
- 1.2 In light of the consultation feedback, to seek the Cabinet Member's approval to commence with the amalgamation process.
- 1.3 An urgent decision is required as this will allow the primary school to become established at the earliest opportunity. This is seen as desirable given the level of support for the proposal and the need to confirm arrangements prior to the recruitment of a new headteacher.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 On 24 February 2011 approval was granted for a public consultation to be undertaken regarding the LA's proposal to merge Riddings Infant and Riddings Junior School to create a through-primary school.
- 2.2 The consultation ran from 20 May to 1 July. Feedback from the consultation has now been analysed and the data will be used to help determine the most appropriate option regarding the next stage of the amalgamation process.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 There are three options, which may be considered. These are described below.
- 3.2 **Option 1:** The closure of Riddings Infant School and Riddings Junior School and the opening of a new through-primary school.

- 3.3 **Option 2:** Closure of Riddings Junior School and the expansion of Riddings Infant School age range to encompass Foundation, KS1 and KS 2 pupils.
- 3.4 **Option 3:** To withdraw the proposal, and notify key stakeholders accordingly.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 **Option 1:**

4.2 The main drawbacks with this option are the time taken to conclude the process and lack of control by the LA. If implemented, this option will effectively create a new school, which means the Secretary of State must consider the proposal and decide whether it should be subject to school competition rules. If the Secretary of State allows the proposal to proceed without competition, the final decision (following public notice) would still need to be taken by the Schools Adjudicator. It is estimated that this process could take at least 10 weeks longer than option 2, because the decisions are made by external departments. However, in reality, it could take much longer as there is no prescribed deadline for the School Adjudicator to make his/her decision.

4.3 The time taken to implement this option could detract from the core objective of raising standards and achievement as it delays the opportunity for the new primary school to become established. Equally, from organisational perspective, this option may create uncertainty and instability which may impact on forward planning and staff morale.

4.4 Although this approach was favoured in the original proposal, the consultation shows strong support for implementing school amalgamation without the competition process. Therefore it may be appropriate, at this stage, to consider the alternative amalgamation arrangement identified in option 2.

4.5 **Option 2:** This is a variation on option 1. Using this procedure allows all the decisions to be made locally, which speeds up the process considerably. This means that the primary school could be established in September / October, which will help build capacity at the earliest opportunity to improve standards and attainment. In addition, the new primary school status will create the foundations for a 'new start' which will help bring both schools closer together.

4.6 If this option was selected, confirmation would be given to staff members with permanent and fixed-term contracts that, at minimum, existing staffing arrangements will remain the same until 1 September 2012. This is necessary to ensure stability and a smooth transitional arrangements.

4.3 **Option 3:** The proposal could be withdrawn at this stage. However, as there is a strong desire to amalgamate both schools, this option does not support the views of the consultees.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Finance:

5.1.1 Continuing with the amalgamation process will incur costs associated with administrative tasks such as publishing public notices, photocopying etc.

5.1.2 Within the Schools Funding Formula there is transitional funding available for a year to allow the school time to phase in any changes required.

5.2 Staffing

5.2.1 Paragraph 4.6 provides assurances that staffing arrangements will not be altered for the foreseeable future.

5.3 Property:

5.3.1 If either option 1 or 2 were selected, the infant school site would be vacated.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 Statutory

6.1.1 The process for undertaking school mergers is governed by statutory processes and regulations. The procedures are established by The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) and The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended by The School Organisation and Governance (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2007 which came into force on 21 January 2008 and The School Organisation and Governance (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2009 which came into force on 1 September 2009).

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1.1 The LA undertook a comprehensive consultation from 20 May 2011 to 1 July 2011. This involved:

- Distribution of Questionnaires
- Two informal drop-in meetings
- Public meeting
- Pupil involvement.

There was overwhelming support for the amalgamation. Feedback from this consultation is available as a separate background document. See Appendix 1 for detailed analysis of feedback.

7.1.2 In addition to the above consultation, Riddings Schools' federated governing body and all paid staff members have subsequently been consulted on the possibility of implementing options 2. The majority of governors voted in favour of option 2.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves option 2.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

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Date: 11th July 2011

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

School Organisation Consultation Feedback Summary: Proposal to amalgamate Riddings Infant School and Riddings Junior School to create a through-primary school

North Lincolnshire Children and Young People's Service



Summary School Organisation Consultation Feedback

Proposal to amalgamate Riddings Infant School and Riddings Junior School to create a through-primary school



Section 1: Analysis of Questionnaire Responses:

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to identify the key findings from the questionnaire. In order to achieve this objective, this section is divided into three main parts:

- **Part A:** provides an overview showing how many people responded to the questionnaire and which stakeholder groups were represented.
- **Part B:** Provides an executive overview showing the overall aggregated responses for each particular question.
- **Part c:** Provides a question by question breakdown for each stakeholder group.

Part A: How many people responded to the questionnaire and which stakeholder groups were represented?

The table below shows that 86 questionnaires were returned. However many of the respondents represented a number of key groups. For example a respondent could be a governor and a parent. Therefore, looking at the overall picture, it has been identified that in total, 119 representative views were received.

Who responded to the questionnaire?

	Nursery	Infant	Junior	Cross-School	Total
Parent/Carer	13	34	25		72
Member of staff	0	21	5		26
Pupil	0	0	0		0
Governor				9	9
No Response				3	3
Other				9	9
Total	13	55	30	21	119

62 (72.1%) of responses were submitted using paper questionnaires and 24 (27.9%) of questionnaires were submitted online. Whilst the percentage return rate cannot be calculated with absolute certainty (eg because of multiple responses, anonymous responses etc), the percentages provide some indication.

Part B: *An executive overview showing the overall aggregated responses for each particular question.*

Question 1: Overall analysis: “ Should Riddings Infant and Riddings Junior School become a primary school?”

Questionnaire Response Options	Response	Response %
A) Agree	57	66.3%
B) don't know	8	9.3%
C) Disagree	19	21.1%
D) No response	2	2.3%
Total	86	100%

Alternative analysis, disregarding B & D: Agree = 75% & Disagree = 25%

Question 2: Overall analysis: Should Riddings nursery school should remain on its current site or be relocated:

Question	Response	%
A) Relocated with the infant school onto junior school site (this may reduce the total budget available for the infant school building project)	58	67.4%
B) Remain in its current location (this may increase the budget available for infant school building projects)	15	17.4%
C) No Response	13	15.1%
Total	86	100%

Alternative analysis, disregarding C: Agree =79 % & Disagree = 21%

Question 3: Overall analysis: If you agree with the proposal to amalgamate the infant and junior school, do you agree with the council’s recommendation to request exemption from the competition process?

Question	Response	%
A) I think the proposed primary school should be run as a community school (ie no change in status from the current arrangements.	55	63.9%
B) I think the council should run a competition (eg seek interest from faith groups / community groups to run the school)	4	4.65%
C) I have no strong views either way	14	16.2%
D) No response	13	15.12%
Total	86	100%

Alternative analysis, disregarding C & D: community =93 % & comp. = 7%

Part c: A question by question breakdown for each stakeholder group.

The feedback in this part, is broken-down by the particular stakeholder group that the respondent represented. For example if a respondent was a governor and a parent, then their feedback would appear twice: once as a governor and once as a parent because both of their views needed to be assessed. Unlike Part B, which is raw questionnaire responses (86 people), this section looks at how each representative group (119 representative views) feel about the proposal.

Question 1: Should Riddings Infant and Riddings Junior School become a primary school:

How did the Parents representatives respond?

	Infants		Junior		Nursery		Total		Agree v Disagree	
Agree	23	68%	17	68.0%	11	85%	51	72%	51	76%
Disagree	8	24%	6	24.0%	2	15%	16	22%	16	24%
Don't know	2	6%	2	8.0%	0	0.0%	4	4%		
No Response	1	3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1%		
	34	100%	25	100.0%	13	100.0%	72	100%	63	100%

How did staff representatives respond?

	Infant		Junior		Nursery		Total		Agree v Disagree	
Agree	7	44%	5	100.0%	4	80%	16	62%	16	73%
Disagree	6	38%	0	0.0%	0	0%	6	23%	6	27%
Don't know	3	19%	0	0.0%	1	20%	4	15%		
No Response	0	0%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	0%		
	16	100%	5	100.0%	5	100%	26	100%	22	100%

How did governing body representatives respond?

	Federated Governing Body		Agree v Disagree	
Agree	8	89%	8	100%
Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Don't know	1	11%		
No Response	0	0%		
	9	100%	8	100%

How did 'Other' Representatives Respond?

Other	No Category Defined		Other Category (eg Grandparents)		Total		Agree V Disagree	
Agree	0	0%	8	89%	8	67%	8	66%
Disagree	2	67%	1	11%	3	25%	3	33%
Don't know	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%		
No Response	1	33%	0	0%	1	8%		
	3	100%	9	100%	12	100%	12	

Question 2: Should Riddings Nursery school be:

- a) relocated with the infant school onto the junior school site
- b) Remain in its current location

Parents										
	Infants		Junior		Nursery		Total		Agree v Disagree	
Relocate	19	56%	13	52.0%	6	46%	38	53%	38	64%
Stay on Site	10	29%	7	28.0%	4	31%	21	29%	21	36%
No answer	5	16%	5	20.0%	3	23%	13	18%		
	34	100%	25	100.0%	13	100.0%	72	100%	59	100%

Staff										
	Infant		Junior		Nursery		Total		Agree v Disagree	
Relocate	15	94%	3	60.0%	5	100%	23	72%	23	92%
Stay on Site	0	0%	2	40.0%	0	0%	2	6%	2	8%
No answer	1	6%	0	0.0%	0	0%	7	22%		
	16	100	5	100%	5	100%	26	100%	25	100%

Governors				Agree v Disagree	
Relocate	8	89%	8	100%	
Stay on Site	0	0%	0	0%	
No answer	1	11%			
	9	100%	8	100%	

Other	No Category Defined		Other (eg Grandparents)		Total		Agree v Disagree	
Relocate	1	33%	8	89%	9	75%	9	90%
Stay on Site	0	0%	1	11%	1	8%	1	10%
No answer	2	67%	0	0%	2	17%		
	3	100%	9	100%	12	100%	10	100%

Question 3 Do you think the proposed primary school should be:

a) Stay as a community school (ie no change in status from current arrangements)

b) Hold a competition

Parents										
	Infants		Junior		Nursery		Total		Agree v Disagree	
q) Stay as community	23	68%	21	84%	8	62%	52	72%	52	98%
b) Run Competition	1	3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1%	1	2%
No strong views	7	21%	0	0.0%	2	15%	9	13%		
No response	3	8%	4	16%	3	23%	10	14%		
	34	100%	25	100.0%	13	100.0%	72	100%	53	100%

Staff										
	Infant		Junior		Nursery		Total		Agree v Disagree	
Stay as community	9	56%	2	40.0%	2	40%	13	50%	13	81%
Run Competition	1	6%	1	20.0%	1	20%	3	12%	3	19%
No strong views	1	6%	1	20.0%	2	40%	4	15%		
No response	5	31%	1	20.0%	0	0%	6	23%		
	16	100%	5	100.0%	5	100%	26	100%	16	100%

Governors				
	Agree v Disagree			
Stay as community	4	45%	4	57%
Run Competition	3	33%	3	43%
No strong views	0	0%		
No response	2	22%		
	9	100%	7	100%

Other	No Category Defined		Other (eg Grandparents)		Total		Total		Agree v Disagree	
Stay as community	1	33%	8	89%	9	75%	9	100%	9	100%
Run Competition	0	0%	0	0%	0		0	0%	0	0%
No strong views	1	33%	1	11%	2	17%				
No response	1	33%	0	0%	1	8%				
	3	100%	9	100%	12	100%	9	100%	9	100%

NB: No direct comments were sought regarding school competition

Section 2: Public Meeting

Introduction

A public meeting was held on 13th June 2011. Recognising that the questionnaire would provide mainly qualitative information (ie question, answers and comments), it was felt that a public meeting would provide the opportunity for any key issues and themes to be developed and explored in more detail. The public meeting was well attended (an estimate, based on an audience head count, suggested that between 65 and 70 people were in attendance.

At the public meeting a number of LA officers made presentations regarding the following key themes:

1. The amalgamation proposal
2. The amalgamation process
3. Building issues
4. The benefits of through-primary education

In addition the executive head teacher also provided his opinion and view on the amalgamation

Methodology and Analysis of Public Meeting

Throughout the meeting two clerks took minutes of the discussion and, in particular, the questions and answer sessions. The minutes were subsequently typed-up and then analysed for key issues. These key issues were itemised as follows:

1. Building Issues relating to the Proposed Amalgamation
2. School Organisation Issues relating Proposed Amalgamation
3. Building Issues (Questions about alternatives)
4. Building Issues (Current issues)
5. Staffing
6. Funding & Pupil Numbers
7. Nursery Specific
8. Consultation Process

Section 3: Pupil Consultation

Introduction

The pupils at the Infant and Junior schools were consulted separately.

Riddings Infants School

Comments were sought from pupils in reception to Year 2 however as the answers were anonymous they cannot be subdivided into each class. Pupils were asked the following questions:-

Question 1

Riddings Infant School and Riddings Jnr school should join together to become a Primary school. Extra classes will be added to where the Junior school is now. The infant school will close, (All children from reception to Year 6 will go to the same school.

Yes	Not sure	No
101 (67.8%)	18 (12.1%)	30 (20.1%)

Question 2

Riddings Nursery should be included in the new primary school and added to the Junior school. All children from nursery to Year 6 will go to the same school.

Yes	Not sure	No
115 (77.2%)	16 (10.7%)	18 (12.1%)

Riddings Junior School

Each class was asked the following question:-

Question 1

Are you in favour of becoming a Primary school and joining together on one site?

Class Number	Yes	No
3J	19 (82.6%)	4 (17.4%)
3WP	20 (90.9%)	2 (9.1%)
4R	22 (81.5%)	5 (18.5%)
4/5R	18 (81.8%)	4 (18.2%)
5/6B	7 (31.8%)	15 (68.2%)
6	4 (10.5%)	34 (89.5%)
Total	90 (58.4%)	64 (41.6%)

