

Consultation on the proposal to close Box Highlands Primary School and amalgamate it with Corsham Primary to form one Primary School on two sites:

Spring 2007

1. Why are the Governors and the Local Authority consulting you?

1.1 The Local Authority and the Governors of both schools are considering closing Box Highlands Primary School on 31 August 2007 and amalgamating it with Corsham Primary to form one School, which would open in September 2007. Both Schools would remain on their same sites. We would like to hear your views on this proposal.

2. Who is being consulted?

2.1 This document has been circulated to:

- Parents of current pupils of both schools
- Parents of children attending pre-schools in the designated area
- Governors
- Staff
- Other Council and partners' staff working locally, such as social care and health professionals
- Corsham Town Council
- North Wiltshire District Council
- The local County Councillor, Mr. Peter Davis
- The local M.P., Mr. James Gray
- The county secretaries of the relevant professional associations (unions)
- Primary Heads Forum
- Heads and Chairs of Governors of nearby primary schools and of Corsham Secondary School

Further copies are available at the schools, the nearest library and on the County Council website.

3. What are the reasons we want to amalgamate the two schools to form one Primary School?

The aims of the merger are:

- 3.1 to help the children of Box Highlands achieve better standards, restore parents' confidence in the quality of educational provision and safeguard the interests of pupils during the transition time.

The Current Position.

- 3.2 Box Highlands Primary School was inspected by Ofsted on 19-20 September 2006 and placed in Special Measures because it was failing to provide an acceptable standard of education and the people responsible for leading, managing and governing the School were not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvements.

- 3.3 Since that time the governors and staff have worked hard to improve matters but they are finding it difficult to improve the quality of education quickly enough. This is mainly because there is a large deficit budget, which means the school is not able to afford to appoint the senior staff required to remove it from Special Measures.

- 3.4 There is still much work to be done following the 3 Key Issues of the Ofsted inspection:

- Improve leadership and management at all levels
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils' learning needs are met accurately, they are suitably motivated and challenged, and their standard of work is improved.
- Improve the quality of curriculum planning in all areas to ensure progression in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding

- 3.5 The numbers of pupils at the School have fallen from 154 in September 2004 to 110 currently. This year's Foundation Stage 2 class/Reception has 19 pupils but only 4 children have so far been registered to join the School in September 2007 at the start of the next academic year. The current buildings have space for 238 children, with a Planned Admission Number of 34 each year.

- 3.6 There are some concerns regarding the levels of attainment at Box Highlands Primary School. Ofsted found performance at Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics to be below average. The school has worked very hard to enable standards to be

average at Key Stage 2 although in mathematics at the higher Level 5, results of national assessments in 2006 found pupils well below the national average achieving 15% against the national figure of 33%.

- 3.7 The level of resources at Box Highlands School is low and parts of the internal building are in need of redecoration and refurbishment. We would seek support from the DfES to help fund this as a Collaborative Fresh Start. National support can be accessed to help remove the barriers to children's education.

4. What is the proposal?

- 4.1 Our proposal is to close Box Highlands Primary School and amalgamate it with Corsham Primary to form one Primary School on two sites from September 2006. No pupils will need to move schools and the current site at Box Highlands will continue to provide places for the full primary age range.
- 4.2 The Local Authority and Governors of both Schools have discussed a way forward. To ensure that the quality of education improves quickly and to the standard required it would be best to bring Box Highlands under the leadership of Corsham Primary School. This leadership, by a popular and successful School, would bring about the necessary improvements and maintain educational provision on the Box Highlands site. The Local Authority is confident that the leadership team at Corsham Primary School has the capacity to manage both sites effectively.
- 4.3 Corsham Primary School is a nationally recognised, National Support School and Fiona Allen, the Headteacher, is a National Leader of Education (NLE). This means that leadership at all levels in the School is excellent and that the School has the capacity to be able to support another school in challenging circumstances, particularly one in Special Measures.

5. Questions you may have:

- 5.1 What about school uniform, lunch arrangements and all those things? Matters like this would be resolved by a combined, Governing Body, in consultation with parents. A new Governing Body would need to be constituted made up proportionately of Governors from both Schools.
- 5.2 Who will be the Executive Headteacher of the new school? Fiona Allen will remain as the Headteacher with an Associate/Deputy Headteacher on both sites.

- 5.3 What about the deficit budget and the Special Measures label? Both are removed when a school is closed. However, there will still be gaps in children's knowledge that will need attention in the future. We are seeking support from the DfES with expenses as this is deemed to be a collaborative Fresh Start.

6. The process of change.

- 6.1 It is important that you understand what will happen as a result of this consultation. There will be a period of up to four weeks (26 February 2007 – 23 March 2007) during which you can express your views, including through a public meeting. The proposal will also be considered by the Cabinet of Wiltshire County Council.
- 6.2 If the Local Authority decides to proceed with the plan to form a single Primary School on two sites, a statutory notice will be published outlining the plan.
- 6.3 This statutory notice will be published for a period of four working weeks during which views on the proposal can be sent in writing to the Governors and the Local Authority.
- 6.4 Finally, the Wiltshire School Organisation Committee will consider the proposal, the outcome of this consultation and the responses to the public notice. The Wiltshire School Organisation Committee is a body independent of the County Council which has the power to make the final decisions on statutory proposals. This Committee is made up of representatives of the County Council, Church of England, Roman Catholic Diocese, Foundation and Community School governors and the Learning and Skills Council. In the event that the Wiltshire School Organisation Committee is unable to come to a unanimous view on the proposal, a final decision will be made by the Schools' Adjudicator, who is appointed by the Secretary of State. It should be noted that with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 there is a proposal to abolish School Organisation Committees from May 2007 giving the responsibility to the Local Authority.

7. What does this mean for the school communities?

Current Corsham Primary

No change to the leadership
 The quality of education is maintained
 An expanded school on 2 sites
 All staff protected in their posts
 Ongoing primary education for all children

Current Box Highlands

New leadership for the site
 Improved quality of education
 An expanded school on 2 sites
 All staff able to apply for jobs in the expanded school
 Ongoing primary education for all children

8. How to express your views

We want to know what you think about this proposal. You can do this by completing the attached reply slip to this consultation document. In addition you can attend a public meeting, to be held at:

- 5.00pm on Tuesday 6 March 2007 at Box Highlands Primary School, or
- 7.00pm on Tuesday 6 March 2007 at Corsham Primary School to make your views known.
- A Governors' Meeting will be held at Box Highlands Primary School at 5.00pm on Monday 5 March 2007 and
- A Governors' Meeting will be held at Corsham Primary at 7.00pm on Monday 5 March 2007.
- A Staff Meeting will be held at Box Highlands Primary School at 3.15pm on Wednesday 7 March 2007 and
- A Staff Meeting will be held at Corsham Primary School at 4.15pm on Wednesday 7 March 2007.

If you want to respond in writing, please do so by no later than: **noon on Friday 23 March 2007** using the attached form.

Valerie Richardson

Valerie Richardson Chair of Governors, Box Highlands School

Elsbeth Griffiths

Elsbeth Griffiths Chair of Governors, Corsham Primary School

Carolyn Godfrey

Carolyn Godfrey, Director,
Department for Children and Education
Wiltshire County Council

Response to the proposal to close Box Highlands Primary School and amalgamate it with Corsham Primary to form one Primary School on two sites.

Please give your name and your interest in the future of the school (e.g. current parent, parent of pre-school child, local resident, member of staff, governor, etc).

1. Do you support the proposal to form a Primary School?

Yes

No

2. If you have any further comments or questions, please write them in this box.

Please return this to:
Director, Department for Children and Education (SND/AMG)
Education Department
County Hall
Trowbridge
BA14 8JB

To arrive no later than noon on Friday 23 March 2007 or email to:
angelagrodzicka@wiltshire.gov.uk

