

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S
SERVICE

CORPORATE DIRECTOR MEETING WITH EXECUTIVE
MEMBERS

30 May 2023

Proposal to amalgamate Wavell Infant School and Wavell Junior School

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Member approval to consult on a proposal, requested by the Governing Body of the Wavell Community Schools Federation, to amalgamate Catterick Garrison, Wavell Community Infant School and Wavell Community Junior School resulting in the technical closure of Wavell Community Junior School as a separate entity and the enlargement and change of age range of Catterick Garrison, Wavell Community Infant School (to be known as Wavell Community Primary School), with effect from 8 April 2024.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Introduction

- 2.1 The Wavell Community Schools Federation brings together the governance of two schools in Catterick Garrison, Wavell Community Infant and Wavell Community Junior Schools, as a single governing body responsible for both schools. Wavell Infant is an 3-7 school and Wavell Junior is an 7-11 school. An Executive Headteacher works across both schools to help pupils to transition from the infant to the junior schools at age 7.
- 2.2 Wavell Community Infant School was judged to be Good in 2017 and again when recently inspected by Ofsted in July 2022. The inspectors said staff 'have high expectations of what pupils can achieve' and pupils in the Infant School are keen to meet those expectations.
- 2.3 Wavell Community Junior School was judged Requires Improvement (RI) by Ofsted, in 2018 and again following their inspection in 2021. As a consequence of being judged RI on two successive occasions, the Department for Education (DfE) is able to apply new powers to intervene in schools that are deemed as 'not making the necessary improvements'.
- 2.4 Pupils transfer from the infant to the junior school at age 7 and parents are required to express an admissions preference in advance of this transfer. It is recognised that there can be a hiatus in children's progress at times of transition between Key Stages. This is even more marked in infant and junior schools, when the transition between Key Stages 1 and 2 coincides with a transition between two different schools.
- 2.5 It is considered that an amalgamated school would deliver a smoother transition between Key Stages and help to ensure that the good progress made by children at Key Stage 1 is maintained and built upon at Key Stage 2.

Context

- 2.6 The two schools already share several common characteristics.
- 2.7 The Infant and Junior schools share the same catchment area. The area they serve is in the north of Catterick Garrison, around Hipswell.
- 2.8 Both schools are on one site and share a kitchen and reception area. Though two separate institutions, the schools have adjacent buildings, now physically connected by a recently constructed corridor. The Ministry of Defense (MoD) owns the site, and the Council owns the buildings.

3.0 CURRENT CONCERNS

- 3.1 As set out in section 2 there is a contrast between the Ofsted performance of the infant and junior schools.
- 3.2 In order to promote high standards in schools and support the government's levelling up agenda, the Secretary of State introduced a new intervention measure from 1st September 2022. The new measure applies to a school if the school's overall effectiveness at its most recent Ofsted inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 was 'Requires Improvement' (RI), and the school's overall effectiveness was also below Good at the inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 immediately before the most recent inspection. The measure applies to mainstream maintained schools and academies; pupil referral units (PRUs) and AP academies; and maintained special schools and special academies. In any circumstances where a PRU, AP academy, maintained special school or special academy is assessed for suitability for intervention, extra consideration will be given to identifying the most suitable course of action and sponsor in relation to each school's specific context. On 1 March 2023 the DfE's Regional Director for Yorkshire and Humber indicated their intention to issue the Junior school with a Directive Academy Order (DAO).
- 3.3 The Wavell Community Schools Federation governing board met on 20 April 2023 and, after careful consideration, asked the Local Authority to consult on a proposal to amalgamate the two schools. The governing board has made the request because they are satisfied that the amalgamation will benefit pupils by building on the work of the Federation. This would be achieved by the simultaneous process of change of age range of Wavell Community Infant School, and the technical closure of Wavell Community Junior School as a separate school. The governing body would also take the opportunity to rename the school.

Learning and Progress

- 3.4 It is considered that learning and progress can be even better if the two schools come together as a single school. The expertise of staff currently in the schools could be better targeted across the full age range and across all key stages to raise standards, and the single school would have fully integrated arrangements for assessment of learning, including recording of progress.
- 3.5 Currently each school has a separate Ofsted inspection, but the single school would have a single Ofsted inspection which would allow a judgement to be made on the provision for all children through the primary age range.
- 3.6 The career opportunities offered in an 3-11 school would be more attractive to

applicants when staffing vacancies arise in the future and would therefore attract the best applicants.

- 3.7 Parents would be able to see the whole school offer through to age 11 when they are making their decision to express a preference for primary school and so be able to make a more informed decision. Parents could also express a preference for any alternative school.

Transition

- 3.8 Children who transfer between the infant and junior schools and then a secondary school (such as Risedale) experience two transition points. It is recognised that a transition can interrupt and slow down children's progress, and so multiple transfers are not to the advantage of children. Creating an all-through primary school would reduce the number of school transfers.
- 3.9 The schools already work together very closely to minimise the impact on pupils of this transfer between schools but creating an all-through primary school would deliver a smoother transition between Key Stages. Pupils remain within the same overall school structure. Teachers are also better able to plan for the change and develop a better understanding of the needs of pupils in different key stages.

What would the amalgamated school look like?

- 3.10 The single school would continue in the same buildings and in the short term, appear to be much the same for pupils. However, in the future the pupils would come together and operate from a single curriculum.
- 3.11 The amalgamated school would be a community school and would continue to be funded and supported by the local authority with staff employed by the local authority. Admissions to the school would be managed by the local authority in accordance with its admission policy for community schools.
- 3.12 The school's catchment area around Hipswell would remain the same as would eligibility for home to school transport. Most pupils in both schools come from service families and the single primary school would continue to have strong ties to the military community on Catterick Garrison and to serve service families.
- 3.13 It would no longer be necessary re-apply for a place at Wavell Community Junior School as pupils on roll at key stage 1 would automatically transfer to key stage 2. Children currently attending Wavell Junior School would be provided with a place in the amalgamated school.
- 3.14 A re-constituted governing body and a Headteacher would lead the amalgamated school from Easter 2024 onwards. The Wavell Community Schools Federation would be disestablished from 7 April 2024 and a newly constituted governing board would be set up for the single school from 8 April 2024.

4.0 SCHOOL PLACE SUFFICIENCY

- 4.1 Catterick Garrison accommodates most of the housing in the Richmondshire Local Plan. However, the capacity of the amalgamated school will be sufficient to provide pupil places for the foreseeable future, including any pupils generated by Service Families Accommodation or open-market housing. The combined numbers in the two schools have reduced significantly in recent years.

- 4.2 There are currently 105 pupils in the Infant School (excluding nursery pupils) and 165 pupils in the Junior School. The pupil numbers in each year group are set out below:

Year	Wavell Infant	Wavell Junior	Total
Reception	44		
Year 1	22		
Year 2	39		
Year 3		34	
Year 4		46	
Year 5		42	
Year 6		43	
Total	105*	165	270^

* Not including 31 full-time-equivalent nursery pupils.

^ As at May 2023

- 4.3 The net capacity for the 3-11 school is less than the total capacities of the 3-7 and 7-11 schools due to technical aspects of the calculation. Following DfE statutory guidance, the amalgamated 3-11 school would have a net capacity of 420 places and, as such, would have sufficient space to accommodate the combined 3-11 cohort (see Appendix 1, school capacities).
- 4.4 The Published Admission Number (PAN) is the number of places offered in Reception and it is proposed to decrease the PAN of the Infant School from 72 to 60. As the PAN would reduce slightly, there will be a small overall reduction in school places across Catterick Garrison. There are however general surplus places in local schools, and this is largely expected to remain the case given the change of plan (see below) around significantly expanding army personnel in Catterick. Officers consider the proposed reduction in PAN would not be to the detriment of local school place sufficiency. Should consultation be approved, then the consultation documents would include data on local school rolls and projections, and views on the proposed reduction in PAN would be sought as part of the consultation.
- 4.5 Until recently the MoD was firmly planning to increase army personnel by 3,300 in order to base two new brigades in Catterick with rapid or 'strike' deployment capacity.
- 4.6 Following the Government's 'Integrated Review' of security, defence and foreign policy, the army published 'Future Soldier'. Although the detailed personnel moves on the Garrison are yet to be mapped, 'Future Soldier' indicates the reorganisation will result in no significant net gain in personnel at Catterick Garrison.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Capital Position

- 5.1 Capital investment is not needed, since the buildings are already connected for pupils following capital works in 2022 to create a corridor.
- 5.2 Capital has already also been invested in creating a single reception point for parents.

Revenue Position

- 5.3 School budgets are funded largely by pupil numbers so amalgamating the schools would not lead to an increase in revenue funding. The combined revenue funding would be smaller because the lump-sum would cease for the Junior School on amalgamation, although transitional funding will be provided during the initial period

of the amalgamation. Transitional funding protection arrangements allow for both lump-sums to be retained from the point of amalgamation for the remainder of the financial year that amalgamation takes place and provide 85% of the two lump-sums received in the next financial year.

- 5.4 Based on the amalgamation taking effect on 8 April 2024 (Easter 2024), the table below seeks to show, other things being equal, the retention of lump sums for that financial year and the amalgamated school retaining 85% of their lump sums for the financial year 2025/26.

Financial Year	Infant School Lump-sum (£k)	Junior School Lump-sum (£k)	Amalgamated School Lump-sum (£k)^	Total Lump-sum (£k)
2023-24	128	128		
2024-25	128	128	-	256
2025-26			217.6	217.6
2026-27			128	128

Figures may change as a consequence of any changes in DfE's National Funding Formula.

- 5.5 Wavell Federation's combined accounts would need to be split-out so that that the infant school's budget is retained and the junior school's accounts could be closed-down and deficit withdrawn.
- 5.6 Whilst an amalgamated school offers the potential for some savings, through efficiencies, compared to a federated structure, this paper does not include estimates of savings following the Governing Body's decision to address the current negative in-year financial position. Separate to the school organisation proposals, The Wavell Community Schools Federation are working with finance officers to consider options to improve the negative in-year position for the current financial year and beyond.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Legally, two statutory proposals would be required for the amalgamation:

- i) Catterick Garrison, Wavell Community Infant School – enlargement and change of age range, and
- ii) Wavell Community Junior School – technical closure of the school as a separate entity

- 6.2 These proposals, which would be linked, will follow the DfE's statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers.¹

7.0 PROPOSED CONSULTATION PROCESS AND TIMESCALES

- 7.1 A period of six weeks of consultation is proposed. An indicative timetable is set out below.
- 7.2 The final decision on the linked proposals would be taken by the Executive (or by the Executive Member if there are no objections).

¹ DfE, Opening and closing maintained schools. Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers (January 2023) and Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools. Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers (January 2023).

7.3 The two statutory proposals will follow the same timescales, apart from the implementation dates. Suggested key dates are shown below:

Approval to Consult by Executive Member	30 May 2023
Consultation opens (6 weeks)	8 June 2023
Public meeting	Wc 19 June 2023
Consultation closes	20 July 2023
Executive considers response	22 August 2023
Executive decision to publish statutory notices	22 August 2023
Publication of statutory notices	11 September 2023
Representation period starts (4 weeks)	11 September 2023
Representation period ends	9 October 2023
Final decision by the Executive (or Executive Member).	17 October 2023
Proposed date the Junior School would technically close and the amalgamated school would begin to operate	7 April <u>2024</u> & 8 April <u>2024</u>

7.4 A separate staff consultation process, including a meeting for staff and their professional associations and unions, would run in parallel with this consultation.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 The Wavell Community Schools Federation and council officers are in accord that it is desirable for the two schools to become amalgamated into one 3-11 school resulting in the technical closure of the Junior School, and that the views of the school community and key stakeholders should be sought on the school organisation proposals to amalgamate.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills is recommended to give approval to consult on proposals:

- To amalgamate Catterick Garrison, Wavell Community Infant School and Wavell Community Junior School through the technical closure of Wavell Community Junior School as a separate entity and the enlargement and change of age range of Catterick Garrison, Wavell Community Infant School to create a single 3-11 primary school across both school sites, with effect from 8 April 2024.
- To reduce the PAN applicable to the Reception Year of the newly amalgamated school to 60 for the 2024/25 academic year and beyond.

Stuart Carlton
CORPORATE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE.

Report prepared by Mark Ashton, Strategic Planning Officer

Action AgreedExecutive Member
Date: 30 May 2023

Action RequestedCorporate Director
Date: 30 May 2023

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 - School capacities

Background Documents

DfE Schools causing concern guidance October 2022 - [Schools Causing Concern
Guidance Update \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance/20221027-schools-causing-concern-guidance-update)

Assessing the Capacity of Schools

The capacity of a school is the number of pupil places it can accommodate. DfE statutory guidance¹ describes the method of assessing the net capacity of maintained mainstream schools. The net capacity is based on the number, size and type of teaching spaces, and the method also allows some flexibility to suit the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs and admission arrangements.

Published Admissions Number

The published admissions number (PAN) is the number of school places that the admission authority must offer in the age group at which pupils will normally be admitted to the school.

A PAN of 60 is proposed for the amalgamated school to provide reasonable headroom over the anticipate demand for places, and as a multiple of 30 which is commonly applied.

Current PAN and Net Capacities

School	Age Range	PAN	Net Capacity
Wavell Community Junior School	7-11	60	240
Wavell Community Infant School	3-7	72	216

Proposed PAN and Net Capacity

School	Age Range	PAN	Net Capacity ²
Wavell Community Primary School (Amalgamated school across Junior and Infant sites)	3-11	60	420

¹ <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20040118061401/http://www.dfes.gov.uk/netcapacity/>

² The site capacity for the amalgamated school age range 3-11 across the two sites differs from the total of the separate site capacities for 3-7 and 7-11 due to a reduced PAN used in the net capacity calculation following the DfE statutory guidance.