



School Merger Consultation - 12th September to 21st October 2016 Whitefriars Infant school and Whitefriars Junior School

Proposal to merge Whitefriars Infant School and Whitefriars Junior School to create a single Primary School.

The Proposal

Northamptonshire County Council, in partnership with the governors of Whitefriars Infant School and Whitefriars Junior School, are proposing to merge the two schools to form a 4-11 primary school. This will create a single primary school from the start of the September Term in 2017.

Why are we proposing the change?

In light of the retirement of the junior headteacher and the forthcoming retirement of the infant headteacher, governors have reviewed the current educational arrangements of the children who attend Whitefriars schools to consider whether an alternative option may now be more suitable. In conclusion, governors have decided that now is the right time to look at becoming a through primary school. This would mean that a single headteacher and a single governing body would collectively oversee the running of the school. Children would start in the reception year and continue through to year 6 without having to apply to move up to the junior school. A through primary school would bring both schools together to become a single community, which we believe will be the best for the children.

What are the benefits of becoming a through primary school?

- Creation of a seamless transition from key-stage 1 (infants) to key-stage 2 (juniors).
- Children will benefit from the potential of a wider range of resources and improved staff development.
- Greater opportunity for relationships between pupils, parents and the school to build over a longer period of time, allowing the school to understand better the needs of each pupil.
- Greater capacity to track pupil progress between key stages.
- Continued access for pupils and the families to extended services and facilities. The opportunity for both schools to keep improving and moving forward.
- More development opportunities for the staff, such as shared training and the chance to work more closely across the curriculum and gain experience and understanding of all key stages.
- The strengthening and developing of the Whitefriars community links which already exist.

What will it mean for the children?

The whole purpose of the merger is to create an environment that will have a positive impact on the quality of education that children receive. On a day-to-day basis there will be no change in routine or provision in either school.

What will it mean for my child being part of a larger school?

On a day-to-day basis very little will change. The differing needs of each age group will continue to be met. The care and importance given to each individual child, which is a strength of both schools, will always remain paramount.

What will it mean for parents/carers?

A merger will mean that the schools will continue to operate as usual. Parents/carers will not have to apply for a place for their child's school once their child is on roll in the Infant part of the school.





In the future there would be the same policies and procedures, the same dates for staff training days.

What will it mean for the staff?

Again, very little on a day-to-day basis. Apart from a change of school name to a primary school, staff conditions of service will not be affected. All staff employed at the infant and junior school (at the time of the proposed amalgamation) would automatically continue their employment in the new primary school. Pupil forecasts remain high indicating that the primary school would need as many classes as there are currently in the infant and junior schools.

Would there be any changes to the school building?

In the event of merger, the school would remain largely the same with all the existing premises being used in the most appropriate and effective way. The primary school would continue to admit 60 pupils into the reception class each year, as the infant school does now.

Procedure to achieve the merger

It is proposed that Whitefriars Primary School will open on 1 September 2017 catering for pupils from age 4 to 11. The process to achieve this involves the 'technical closure' of Whitefriars Junior School and the expansion of the age range at the infant school on 31 August 2017. However, it should be noted there will be no actual closure of school buildings. Therefore, once this process has been completed, both buildings will continue to be used in much the same way as they are at present – children will continue to be educated in the 'infant building' and 'junior building', but it will be collectively known as a primary school.

Admissions

If the proposal is agreed a primary school would be created on 1 September 2017 and the following would apply:

- First admissions: Children who have applied for places at Whitefriars Infant School for September 2017 would be offered places through the standard admissions process.
- Infant to Junior transfers: The current year 2 children at Whitefriars Infants need to apply for a place in the junior school in the normal manner. In subsequent years this will not be necessary, if the merger is agreed.

If you have any queries regarding admissions, please contact the admissions team on 0300 126 1000 or email via admissions@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Why are we consulting you?

We want to consult you to gather your views because you are part of the school community. The governing body of the schools and Northamptonshire County Council cannot simply decide to make changes to schools without first seeking the views of parents and others. There is a legal process which must be followed before changes can be made, and it is important that the governing body and the council hear your views before deciding whether to proceed.

What happens next?

The consultation period starts on 12th September and ends on 21st October 2016 – the last page of this document explains how we are consulting. Following the consultation process, the governing body will review your feedback and make a recommendation to the council whether or not to proceed with the school merger proposal. This recommendation, along with consultation feedback





will then be considered by the Children's Services cabinet member. If the cabinet member wishes to proceed with the amalgamation, he will grant permission to publish a public notice. The public notice will specify details of the final proposal and will run for a further four weeks. This is the final opportunity to make any comments on the process. It is then anticipated that a final decision on whether to merge the schools will then be made by the council by the end of term in December 2016.

We will hold two public meetings for parents and any other interested parties to discuss the proposals and to hear the views that people have. The dates and times of the meetings are as follows – you are welcome to attend either session:

Drop-In Sessions

- Are available for parents from both schools
- Meetings are not specific to infant or junior parents

Monday 12th and Wednesday 14th September

2.15-3.15pm

6.00-7.00pm

How can I get more information on the proposal?

We will publish the feedback from the consultation on the council's website during the Autumn Term. If permission is granted to publish a public notice, further details of this proposal will also be available in the Consultation sections of the county council's website:

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Council/consultations/Pages/register.aspx>

or

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Council/consultations/Pages/Schools-Public-Notices-and-Consultations.aspx>

Appointing a new headteacher

If feedback from the consultation is positive, governors will place an advertisement for a new head teacher to run for the new Whitefriars Primary School from September 2017.





Proposal to Create Whitefriars Primary School

Our proposal is to bring Whitefriars Infant School and Whitefriars Junior School together as one all-through primary school from 1st September 2017. We welcome your views on this proposal. Please fill in this response form and return it to the address below **no later than 21st October 2016**. This questionnaire is also available online at:

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Council/consultations/Pages/Schools-Public-Notices-and-Consultations.aspx>

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1) Do you like or dislike the idea to amalgamate?

I like the proposal to merge the schools	I dislike the proposal to merge the schools
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2) Which category/categories best describe you (tick as many boxes as required)

	Whitefriars Infant School	Whitefriars Junior School
I have child/ren attending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a staff member at	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a governor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please describe)		

3) If you dislike the proposal, it would be helpful if you let us know your concerns

Your Name (Optional) _____





Please return this form to the relevant school by 21st October 2016.

Feedback from questions one and two will be summarised numerically. Comments will be typed-up and anonymised. This information will be made available to the public, but all respondents' comments or information will be anonymised.

