

# Cabinet Meeting

## 26 April 2017

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| <b>Report title</b>                            | Re-organisation of Educational Provision |  |
| <b>Decision designation</b>                    | AMBER                                    |  |
| <b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b> | Councillor C Darke<br>Education          |  |
| <b>Key decision</b>                            | Yes                                      |  |
| <b>In forward plan</b>                         | Yes                                      |  |
| <b>Wards affected</b>                          | All                                      |  |
| <b>Accountable director</b>                    | Linda Sanders, People                    |  |
| <b>Originating service</b>                     | School Planning and Resources            |  |
| <b>Accountable employee(s)</b>                 | Bill Hague                               | Acting Head of School Planning and Resources |
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| <b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>     | Education Leadership Team                | 20 March 2017                                |
|  | Strategic Executive Board                | 28 March 2017                                |

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### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the commencement of Informal Consultation on the proposed merger of Springdale Infant School with Springdale Junior School.
2. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Education, in consultation with the Assistant Director School Standards, to consider the outcome of Informal Consultation on the proposed merger of Springdale Infant School with Springdale Junior School and to determine whether or not to proceed to Formal Consultation.

The Cabinet is asked to note:

1. The position at Christ Church CE Infant and Nursery School and Christ Church CE Junior School.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 To introduce the proposal to merge Springdale Infant School with Springdale Junior School and to seek approval to commence a period of Informal Consultation on the proposal.
- 1.2 To provide an update regarding the current position at Christ Church CE Infant and Nursery School and Christ Church CE Junior School.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Strategic policy regarding the organisation of primary school provision in the City is outlined within the Council's Primary School Organisation Strategy 2016-2018 (PSOS). This Strategy was approved by Cabinet in July 2016 following consultation with key stakeholders.
- 2.2 The PSOS recommends that, "... the Council invites responsible bodies (e.g. Governing Bodies or Trusts) to consider the merger or amalgamation of infant and junior schools whenever the Headship of a school becomes vacant. For mergers to be considered, the leadership of the establishment that is proposed for expansion must be at least 'Good'." (PSOS 2016).
- 2.3 The PSOS outlines a number of advantages of bringing infant and junior schools together, including:
  - "Reducing the number of major transitions that pupils face
  - Reducing the likelihood of lost learning at the beginning of Key Stage 2
  - Increasing the opportunity for specialist teachers to work with a wider range of pupils
  - Providing the opportunity for a consistent approach to the curriculum to be adopted
  - Ensuring the continuity of teaching, learning and achievement
  - Cost savings through economies of scale" (PSOS 2016).
- 2.4 The PSOS explains that, "The 'merger' of infant and junior schools is the process of joining the schools together by discontinuing one establishment and expanding and altering the age range of the other." (PSOS 2016).
- 2.5 The PSOS explains that where intervention is required, "The Council will consider proposing the adoption of structural solutions (including both federation and sponsored academy status) in order to improve standards in underperforming schools" (PSOS 2016).

### **3.0 Springdale Infant School and Springdale Junior School**

- 3.1 Springdale Infant School is a mixed Community school that caters for children aged between 3 and 7 years, co-located with Springdale Junior School in Warstones Drive, Merry Hill Ward. The School currently offers 60 places in Reception and Year 2, operates a bulge class of 75 places in Year 1 and has a 60 place nursery.
- 3.2 Springdale Infant School was inspected by Ofsted in January and February 2017 and was judged to be a school which 'Requires Improvement'. The current school inspection dashboard lists weaknesses in progress and attainment for all children including disadvantaged groups in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

The School was categorised as B1 in September 2016 and moved from B1 to B2 at the end of the Autumn Term 2016. A pre-warning letter and re-categorisation to a C was issued following a Local Authority review of the school in early February 2017.

- 3.3 Springdale Junior School is a mixed Community school that caters for children aged between 7 and 11 years, co-located with Springdale Infant School in Warstones Drive, Merry Hill Ward. The School currently offers 60 places per year group in Years 3 - 6 (240 places in total). The School was judged 'Good' by Ofsted in June 2014 and is an LA Category A school.
- 3.4 Representatives of the Education Department have recently brokered arrangements for the Headteacher of Springdale Junior School to support Springdale Infant School as the Interim Headteacher.
- 3.5 Proposed Merger of Springdale Infant School with Springdale Junior School:
- 3.5.1 Cabinet are recommended to approve the commencement of Informal Consultation on the proposal to merge Springdale Infant School with Springdale Junior School to create a Primary School for children aged 3 to 11 years with effect from 1 January 2018.
- 3.5.2 When proposing to merge schools, Local Authorities must follow statutory processes and timescales as outlined in The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools (England) Regulations 2013 and The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013. To enable the proposed merger;
- Springdale Infant School would be discontinued on 31 December 2017.
  - The age range of Springdale Junior School would be altered from 7 to 11 years to 3 to 11 years with effect from 1 January 2018.
  - The recorded capacity of Springdale Junior School would be expanded to include the physical capacity of Springdale Infant School's buildings with effect from 1 January 2018.
- 3.5.3 The statutory consultation processes and the potential timeline for decision making can be found in Section 4 of this report.

### 3.6 Future Provision:

#### 3.6.1 If the proposal to merge Springdale Infant School with Springdale Junior School is ultimately approved:

- All pupils on roll as at the 31 December 2017 would automatically transfer to the Primary School.
- The Primary School would have 60 places per year group in Reception to Year 6 with the exception of Year 2 (2017/18 academic year) which has 75 places (bulge class feeding through the school).
- Members of staff at Springdale Infant School would transfer to the Primary School (Teaching and Non-Teaching Trade Union Representatives will be fully engaged in the consultation process should Cabinet choose to proceed).
- The Primary School would be located in the existing buildings of Springdale Infant School and Springdale Junior School.

### 3.7 Action to Date:

#### 3.7.1 In light of the position outlined above, representatives of the Education Department have met with Governors of both Springdale Infant School and Springdale Junior School to discuss potential options for closer collaboration and to outline the proposal.

## 4.0 Potential Consultation and Decision Making Timeline

### 4.1 As indicated above, when proposing to merge schools, authorities must follow statutory processes and timescales. Should the proposal proceed the following indicative timeline would apply:

#### **8 May 2017 – 25 June 2017 (Stage 1 – Informal Consultation – 7 weeks)**

Informal Consultation with stakeholders including pupils, parents, staff and Governors.

#### **July 2017**

The Cabinet Member for Education in consultation with the Assistant Director School Standards, considers the outcome of Informal Consultation and determines whether or not to proceed to the next stage of the process.

#### **11 September 2017 (Stage 2 – Publication)**

If the Council decides to continue, a public notice would be published summarising the proposal. A copy of the Full Proposal and the reasoning behind it would also be made available.

#### **11 September 2017 – 8 October 2017 (Stage 3 – Formal Consultation – 4 weeks)**

Formal Consultation period (Representation) – Offers stakeholders the opportunity to make formal comments or objections regarding the proposal.

### **29 November 2017 (Stage 4 – Decision)**

The Cabinet of the Council would consider the outcome of consultation and make a final decision on the proposals. This decision would then be subject to a four week appeals period.

### **1 January 2018 (Stage 5 – Implementation)**

Subject to approval, proposals would be implemented as published.

## **5.0 Christ Church CE Infant and Nursery School and Christ Church CE Junior School**

- 5.1 Christ Church CE Infant and Nursery School is a mixed voluntary controlled school that caters for children aged between 3 and 7 years, located in Shaw Lane, Tettenhall Wightwick Ward. The School offers 60 places per year group in Reception to Year 2 (180 places in total) and has a 72 place nursery. The School was judged 'Good' by Ofsted in March 2017.
- 5.2 The Headteacher of Christ Church CE Infant and Nursery School is due to retire on 31 August 2017.
- 5.3 Christ Church CE Junior School is a mixed voluntary controlled school that caters for children aged between 7 and 11 years, located in Woodcote Road, Tettenhall Wightwick Ward. The School offers 64 places per year group in Years 3 - 6 (256 places in total). The School was judged 'Good' by Ofsted in July 2013.
- 5.4 In line with the Council's strategic policy detailed within the Primary School Organisation Strategy 2016–2018, representatives of the Education Department in partnership with school leaders and Governors have reviewed the potential for future closer collaboration between the two schools. Having considered the arguments presented, Officers do not believe that implementing a structural solution (such as merger or amalgamation) at this time would support the success of the two schools. However, officers are happy to commend a federation between the Governing Bodies of Christ Church CE Infant and Nursery School and Christ Church CE Junior School.

## **6.0 Financial implications**

- 6.1 The proposed merger of the schools would provide opportunities for efficiency savings and maximise the use of school resources. The Local Authority schools funding formula includes a lump sum payment of £125,000 per school so the proposed merger would eventually release £125,000 of the Dedicated Schools Grant which would be available for allocation across the remaining schools in the city. In the year of conversion, the primary school would retain the full allocations originally made to the separate schools. A transitional year then follows, where the primary school would receive a proportion of lump sum that would equate to £87,500, in addition to its own £125,000 lump sum.  
[DB/07042017/D]

## **7.0 Legal implications**

- 7.1 The legal implications arising from this report are stated in the body of the report. In addition, any proposals to alter the structure of school provision in the area would need to comply with the detailed provisions in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to ensure sufficient consultation is undertaken and that relevant stakeholders are notified of the proposal/decisions in a timely manner.  
[RB/13032017/H]

## **8.0 Equalities implications**

- 8.1 This report has equal opportunity implications as the contents have direct reference to educational provision for children and young people in the city.
- 8.2 Consultation would form part of the Equality Impact Assessment. As part of this consultation the views of a range of stakeholders including; pupils, parents/carers, school staff, Headteachers, School Governors, Trade Union Representatives, Local Councillors, Members of Parliament and Diocesan Authorities would be sought.

## **9.0 Environmental implications**

- 9.1 There are no environmental implications to this report.

## **10.0 Human resources implications**

- 10.1 The members of staff of the schools in scope are employed by the Local Authority, there would therefore be no transfer of employment and it is anticipated that terms and conditions of employment would remain unaffected. It may however, be required to review the leadership structures of the schools. The appropriate HR policy and process would be followed ensuring consultation with the affected staff, should the proposal be adopted.

## **11.0 Corporate landlord implications**

- 11.1 Given the nature of the buildings we would not expect to undertake any physical changes to the buildings as part of this proposal. Springdale Infants and Springdale Junior are already physically linked and share a reception point, parking etc. Subject to approval, the asset register would be updated to reflect the establishment change.

## **12.0 Schedule of background papers**

- Christ Church CE Infant and Nursery School Ofsted Inspection Report – 1 March 2017 ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk))
- Christ Church CE Junior School Ofsted Inspection Report – 16 & 17 July 2013 ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk))
- Springdale Infant School Ofsted Inspection Report – 18 January 2017 & 7 February 2017 ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk))

This report is PUBLIC  
[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

- Springdale Junior Ofsted Inspection Report – 17 & 18 June 2014 ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk))
- Cabinet (20 July 2016) School Place Planning (Primary School Organisation Strategy 2016 – 2018)