

REVIEW OF PRIMARY PROVISION IN THE CENTRAL BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET AREA

A Review By The Children And Young People Overview And Scrutiny Panel

January 2008

Introduction

The Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel have undertaken a review of Primary school provision in the Central Bath & North East Somerset area.

This review is part of a wider review process through which all primary schools in Bath & North East Somerset are to be reviewed over the period September 2003 to May 2009.

Each school is initially to be reviewed alongside its partner schools in a geographical area. The schools being considered in the review are as follows:

Cameley C of E Primary School

Clutton Primary School

Farrington Gurney C of E Primary School

High Littleton C of E Primary School

Paulton Infant School

Paulton Junior School

Purpose

The purpose of this review has been to make recommendations regarding the primary schools in this area in order to:

- Maintain and improve educational standards
- Maximise the use of existing resources (land, buildings and funding)
- Increase access to high quality facilities for children, staff and the community
- Make the choice of a local school the natural and easy choice for parents

Objectives

The aims of this review have been for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to consider the Primary School provision across the area and to decide whether any changes are necessary (school closures, new schools, enlarging schools etc). If this were the case a further consultation process would be initiated focussing on the school(s) affected. It was also noted at the outset of the review that Councillors may simply

acknowledge that the pattern of school provision is working effectively and that no changes are required in the short or medium-term.

The Panel have been considering whether to recommend actions to improve the following areas:

- **Educational Standards**
- **Resources**
 - Land
 - enough suitable land, removal of excess land
 - Buildings
 - condition, suitability and sufficiency of school accommodation
 - Funding
- **Sufficiency of Places**
 - enough places to meet current and forecast demand
 - removal of surplus places

Review Methodology

The Panel have carried out a number of research and evidence gathering activities in order to inform their decisions in this review.

Reports from the Service

Members of the Panel received a copy of a discussion paper produced by Children's Services, which had also been issued to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors of each school covered by the Review, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors of the secondary schools serving the area, senior officers and Advisors of Children's Services, the Bath & Wells Diocesan Board of Education, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Clifton and Councillors representing the wards in which the schools are located. The discussion paper (available at Appendix 2) included information on:

- current numbers on the roll (as at September 2007)
- historical numbers on roll (2002-2006)
- anticipated numbers of children in the area (2008 and beyond)
- levels of recruitment against Standard Number / Planned Admission Number (PAN)
- unit cost per pupil
- outstanding planned maintenance
- school site and building areas

The Panel have been able to discuss these issues with the Service, and the information in the discussion paper has helped to inform their debate and consideration of the key issues.

School Visits

The Panel visited all six primary schools involved in the review in January 2008. They were able to talk to the Headteacher, and see the schools' facilities and layouts.

Contributor Session

A public contributor session was held by the Panel on Monday 21st January 2008, and this marked the end of the evidence gathering stage of this review.

The Panel heard from a number of invited speakers as set out in the outline schedule below:

Session 1 – Cameley C of E Primary School

- Head Teacher
- Parent Governors
- Public Speakers

Session 2 – Clutton Primary School

- Head Teacher
- Parent Governors
- Public Speakers

Session 3 – Farrington Gurney C of E Primary School

- Head Teacher
- Parent Governors

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Public Speakers
<p>Session 4 – High Littleton C of E Primary School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Head Teacher · Parent Governors · Public Speakers
<p>Session 5 – Paulton Infant School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Head Teacher · Parent Governors · Public Speakers
<p>Session 6 – Paulton Junior School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Head Teacher · Parent Governors · Public Speakers

At the Contributor session the Panel were able to ask questions of key stakeholders, and hear their views. It therefore provided the Panel with an excellent opportunity to gather evidence and also to facilitate discussion of the issues.

FINDINGS

The Panel made the following specific recommendations with regard to the individual schools:

None of the recommendations below would be subject to statutory consultation.

Cameley C of E Primary School

Educational Standards

Educational Standards at the school in 2007 were above the LEA and national averages at KS1 for reading and writing and above the national average and level with the LEA average for maths. At KS2 English, maths and science were all above the LEA and national averages.

The most recent OFSTED report concluded that Cameley C of E Primary is an Outstanding school.

Resources

Land

The school site is a little under the recommended minimum size based on the number of pupils at the school. Team games playing fields (hard and grass surfaced) meet the size requirement. The school also make use of the village playing fields which are adjacent to the school.

Buildings

The school buildings as a whole are a little over the recommended size. The school has some undersized accommodation and is short of one classroom. The staff and administration spaces are sufficient but in a cramped circulation space. There are no temporary buildings on site. The Panel noted that the Head Teacher is aware of the shortfalls of the site and is to be commended for his work in addressing the problems.

The school has no outstanding planned maintenance.

Funding

Total funding per pupil at the school is in line with the area average.

Sufficiency of Places

The school is approximately 96% full. Average intake into Reception over the past six years has been 86% of available school capacity and therefore the number on roll over the past few years has remained fairly stable.

The PAN has remained consistent at 17 for the past six years but has been increased to 18 for admissions in September 2008.

Although there are currently no known developments of new homes in the immediate area, the development taking place at Paulton may have an impact on the numbers at the school in the future.

Recommendation:

1) No action is recommended at Cameley C of E Primary at the present time.

Clutton Primary School

Educational Standards

Educational Standards at the school in 2007 were above the LEA and national averages at KS1 for reading and maths and below both averages for writing. At KS2 English was below the LEA average but above the national average and maths and science were both above the LEA and national averages.

The most recent OFSTED report concluded that Clutton Primary is a Good school.

Resources

Land

The school site is a lot smaller than the recommended minimum size for the number of pupils at the school. The team games playing fields are significantly smaller than the required size. There are no on site grass pitches. Pupils can use the Clutton Football Club pitch for matches, but have to be taken by minibus, therefore the pitch is not used as often as if it was on site.

The Panel noted the lack of green spaces on the site.

Buildings

The school has more classroom spaces than required but they are all undersized. There is one temporary building on site.

Outstanding planned maintenance required at the school is high.

The Panel noted that the entrance is in need of improvement.

Funding

Total funding per pupil at the school is lower than the area average.

Sufficiency of Places

The school is approximately 82% full. Average intake into Reception over the past six years has been 73% of available school capacity and the school has experienced steadily decreasing numbers over the past few years.

The PAN has remained consistent at 24 for the past six years.

Although there are currently no known developments of new homes in the immediate area, the development taking place at Paulton may have an impact on numbers at the school in the future.

Recommendations:

- 2) Pupil intake and numbers on roll at Clutton Primary should continue to be monitored.
- 3) In consultation with the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors of Clutton Primary a reduction in the Planned Admission Number (PAN) could be considered. (The school has just agreed to reduce their PAN to 21 for admissions in September 2009).

Farrington Gurney C of E Primary School

Educational Standards

Educational Standards at the school in 2007 were above the LEA and national averages at KS1 for reading, below the LEA average and national average for writing and below the LEA average but level with the national average for maths. At KS2 English, maths and science were all above the LEA and national averages.

The Panel commends Farrington Gurney for its emphasis on creativity in the curriculum.

The most recent OFSTED report concluded that Farrington Gurney C of E Primary is a Good school.

Resources

Land

The school is situated on a very constrained site, and the school site is a lot smaller than the recommended minimum size for the number of pupils. The team games playing fields are significantly smaller than the required size. There are no on site grass pitches but the school uses the large Recreation ground/playing fields opposite as required throughout the school day & for matches/clubs.

The Panel noted that outdoor playing space is very limited and that children have to use it in shifts.

Buildings

The buildings are also under the recommended size. However, the school has more classroom space than required although one has a dual use. The school does not have its own hall and uses the local village hall. There is one temporary building on site.

The school has no outstanding planned maintenance.

Funding

Total funding per pupil at the school is high compared to the area average.

Sufficiency of Places

The school is approximately 68% full. Average intake into Reception over the past six years has been 64% of available school capacity and the school has experienced fluctuating numbers over the past few years.

The PAN has remained consistent at 15 for the past six years.

Although there are currently no known developments of new homes in the immediate area, the development taking place at Paulton may have an impact on the numbers at the school in the future.

Recommendation:

4) Pupil intake and numbers on roll at Farrington Gurney C of E Primary should continue to be monitored.

High Littleton C of E Primary

Educational Standards

Educational Standards at the school in 2007 were above the LEA and national averages at KS1 for reading, writing and maths. At KS2 English was above the LEA and national averages, maths was below the LEA and the national average and science was above both the LEA and national averages.

The most recent OFSTED report concluded that High Littleton C of E Primary is a Good school.

Resources

Land

The school site is a lot smaller than the recommended minimum size for the number of pupils. The team games playing fields are significantly smaller than the required size. The school is situated on a constrained site and there are no on site grass pitches. Pupils have a 10 minute walk to the Recreation Ground along the A39.

Buildings

The buildings as a whole are a little over the recommended size and the school has sufficient classrooms although two are undersized and one is on a circulation route and other accommodation in the school is also undersized. The school does not have its own hall and uses the Church hall. The Panel noted that the hall was in need of repairs, and were pleased to learn during their review that a lease arrangement has now been signed with the Diocese, with work to upgrade the hall due to take place over Easter 2008.

Outstanding planned maintenance per pupil required at the school is very high. This is due to the work needed on the boiler, which will be carried out during the financial year 2008-09.

Funding

Total funding per pupil at the school is slightly lower than the area average.

Sufficiency of Places

The school is approximately 95% full. Average intake into Reception over the past six years has been 73% of available school capacity and the school has experienced more or less stable numbers over the past few years.

The PAN was reduced to 22 in 2004 from its previous level of 23 and then reduced again to 20 in 2006.

There are currently a small number of new homes being built in High Littleton and the housing development taking place at Paulton may have an impact on the numbers at the school in the future.

Recommendation:

5) No action is recommended at High Littleton C of E Primary School

Paulton Infant School

Educational Standards

Educational Standards at the school in 2007 were above the LEA and national averages at KS1 for reading, writing and maths.

The most recent OFSTED report concluded that Paulton Infant is a Good school.

Resources

Land

The school site is a little under the recommended minimum size for the number of pupils at the school. There is no size requirement for team games playing fields for infant schools, although the school does have a hard surfaced team games playing field area of 1,220m² and access to grass pitches.

Buildings

The school buildings as a whole are 24% bigger than the recommended size. The school has sufficient classrooms although four are undersized and other accommodation in the school is also undersized.

Outstanding planned maintenance required at the school, both per pupil and as a whole is low.

Funding

Total funding per pupil at the school is slightly lower than the area average.

Sufficiency of Places

The school is approximately 98% full. Average intake into Reception over the past six years has been 94% of available school capacity and therefore the number on roll over the past few years has remained fairly stable.

The PAN has remained consistent at 60 for the past six years.

There are currently two known developments of new homes going ahead in Paulton, totalling 510 2 bed plus units and generating approximately 52 infant age pupils, which is approximately 17 additional pupils per year group. This increase in pupil numbers is likely to be spread over a number of years as the housing is completed.

The Panel listened carefully to all the views put before them by the Head Teachers, governors, parents and pupils at Paulton Infant school. The Panel are clear that the population of Paulton is set to expand, and that it is a priority that in future all children who live in Paulton, whose parents would like them to, should be able to go to school in Paulton.

Recommendation:

6) The Head Teacher and governing body of Paulton Infant school to work with the Head Teacher and governing body of Paulton Junior school and with officers from the Local Authority to review the site as a whole and produce proposals as to how additional capacity could be added to meet the increased needs of the local population.

The Panel ask that the Cabinet Member works with the school and officers to give an outline of timescales in his response to this report.

Paulton Junior School

Educational Standards

Educational Standards at the school in 2007 were above the LEA and national averages at KS2 for English, maths and science.

The most recent OFSTED report concluded that Paulton Junior is an Outstanding school.

Resources

Land

The school site is larger than the recommended minimum size for the number of pupils. The team games playing fields are slightly larger than the required size and the school has on site grass pitches.

Buildings

The school buildings as a whole are 38% bigger than the recommended size. The school has sufficient classrooms although six are undersized and the school also has an undersized hall.

There is an Extended Services space which has just been completed.

Outstanding planned maintenance required at the school, both per pupil and as a whole is low.

Funding

Total funding per pupil at the school is in line with the area average.

Sufficiency of Places

The school is currently over capacity and is 101% full. Average intake into Reception over the past six years has been 80% of available school capacity and the school has experienced steadily increasing numbers over the past few years.

The PAN was reduced to 62 in 2004 from its previous level of 70, increased again in 2005 to 64 and has been reduced to 60 for admissions in September 2008.

There are currently two known developments of new homes going ahead in Paulton, totalling 510 2 bed plus units and generating approximately 69 junior age pupils, which is approximately 17 additional pupils per year group. This increase in pupil numbers is likely to be spread over a number of years as the housing is completed.

The Panel listened carefully to all the views put before them by the Head Teachers, governors, parents and pupils at Paulton Junior school. The Panel are clear that the population of Paulton is set to expand, and that it is a priority that in future all children who live in Paulton, whose parents would like them to, should be able to go to school in Paulton.

Recommendation:

7) The Head Teacher and governing body of Paulton Junior school to work with the Head Teacher and governing body of Paulton Infant school and with officers from the Authority to review the site as a whole and produce proposals as to how additional capacity could be added to meet the increased needs of the local population.

The Panel ask that the Cabinet Member works with the school and officers to give an outline of timescales in his response to this report.

CONCLUSION

Having duly considered all the evidence placed before them from Officers, Schools, Governors, members of the public, and gathered in the course of their visits and contributor session, the Panel have therefore reached the following conclusions:

- The Schools serve their communities well and provide a focus for their respective villages.
- All of the schools give pupils a good range of experiences to help them as they develop.
- There is sufficient space within the four schools outside Paulton to meet their local needs.
- In order to meet the increased needs of the local population in Paulton, the Panel recommend that the Head Teachers and governing bodies of Paulton Infant and Junior schools should work with officers from the Authority to review the site as a whole and produce proposals as to how additional capacity could be added.

NEXT STEPS

This report and recommendations will be brought to the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 17th March 2008. After this, the Panel's recommendations will be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services. The Cabinet Member will be asked through the existing O&S tracking process to provide a response to the Panel within six weeks.