

Overview & Scrutiny Review Report

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

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

May 2008

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Introduction

The Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel have undertaken a review of Primary school provision in the North West 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:

Chew Magna Primary School
Chew Stoke C of E VA Primary School
Pensford Primary School
Whitchurch Primary 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

Appendix I provides the full Terms of Reference for this Review.

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 four primary schools involved in the review in April 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 Wednesday 30th April, 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 – Chew Magna Primary School <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Head Teacher• Parent Governors• Public Speakers
Session 2 – Chew Stoke C of E VA Primary School <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Head Teacher• Parent Governors• Public Speakers
Session 3 – Pensford Primary School <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Head Teacher• Parent Governors• Public Speakers
Session 4 – Whitchurch Primary School <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Head Teacher• Parent Governors• Public Speakers

Notes from this meeting are attached at Appendix 3.

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.

Chew Magna Primary School

Educational Standards

Educational Standards at the school in 2007 were well above the LEA and national averages at KS1 for reading, writing and maths. At KS2 English and science were above the LEA and national averages and maths was below both averages, although it was noted that this was an anomaly in 2007 only.

The most recent OFSTED report concluded that Chew Magna Primary School is a good school (Inspected January 2007).

Resources

Land

The school site is approximately half the recommended minimum size based on the number of pupils at the school. The team games playing fields are half the required size. The school is on a very constrained site and has an on site grass pitch on a sloping site.

Total outstanding planned maintenance required at the school is a little over the average for the area.

Buildings

The school buildings are in line with the recommended size. The school has a double temporary classroom block and all the classrooms in the school are undersized. The library is housed in the hall and small group space is insufficient. The hall is very undersized.

Funding

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

Sufficiency of Places

The school is full at 99% of capacity. Average intake into Reception over the past six years has been 98% of available school capacity and the number on roll has risen over the past few years from 94 in 2002 to 107 in 2006.

The PAN has remained consistent at 15 for the past six years, and the school is meeting demand.

There are currently no known developments of new homes in the immediate area.

The map of pupil locations shows that a significant number of pupils currently attending the school are coming from across the whole of the Chew Valley area and from outside of Bath and North East Somerset in North Somerset and Bristol. Around 12% are coming in from South Bristol.

Recommendation:

- 1) No action is recommended at Chew Magna Primary at the present time.

Chew Stoke C of E Primary School

Educational Standards

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

The most recent OFSTED report concluded that Chew Stoke C of E Primary School is a good school with some outstanding features (Inspected January 2007).

Resources

Land

The school site is 25% smaller than the recommended minimum size for the number of pupils. The school has on site team games playing fields which are less than half the required size.

Buildings

The buildings are a little over the recommended size. The school hall is very undersized and the IT suite is half the size it should be. There are no temporary buildings.

Total outstanding planned maintenance required at the school is very low.

Funding

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

Sufficiency of Places

The school is full at 98%. Average intake into Reception over the past six years has been 89% of available school capacity and the number on roll over the past few years has remained stable.

The PAN was increased from 24 to 25 for admissions in 2007.

There is currently one known development of new homes in Chew Stoke totalling 36 2 bed plus units, which is expected to generate approximately 9-14 primary age pupils. A Section 106 contribution has been sought from the developer. The Panel acknowledged the impact of this new development, and noted the current PAN.

The map of pupil locations shows that a significant number of pupils currently attending the school are coming from across the whole of the Chew Valley area and from outside of Bath and North East Somerset in North Somerset and Bristol.

Recommendations:

- 2) No action is recommended at Chew Stoke C of E Primary at the present time.

Pensford Primary School

Educational Standards

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

The most recent OFSTED report concluded that Pensford Primary School is a satisfactory school (Inspected January 2007).

Resources

Land

The school site is less than half the recommended minimum size for the number of pupils. The school is situated on a very constrained site and does not have on site team games playing fields.

The Panel learnt that there are plans for the development and enhancement of the playground areas, and were reassured by the school that the issue of potential fumes from the road had been considered and monitored and did not represent a risk to pupils.

Buildings

The buildings are a little under the recommended size. The school has more classrooms than required for its NOR although one is very undersized. The school does not have a library and uses a space off the hall and the hall is undersized. There are no temporary buildings.

Total outstanding planned maintenance required at the school is over the average for the area.

Funding

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

Sufficiency of Places

The school is approximately 74% full. Average intake into Reception over the past six years has been 62% of available school capacity and the number on roll has decreased over the past few years from 83 in 2002 to 72 in 2006. The school was listed in the annual Surplus Places Return to the Department

for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) in 2007 as it had more than 30 and 25% surplus places. However the January 2008 pupil count indicates that the school will not be included in the Surplus Places Return in 2008.

The PAN was increased from 14 to 15 for admissions in 2004.

There are currently no known developments of new homes in the immediate area.

The map of pupil locations shows that the majority of pupils attending the school live in the immediate area in Pensford.

Recommendation:

3) No action is recommended at Pensford Primary at the present time.

Whitchurch 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 well above both averages for maths. At KS2 English and maths were above the LEA and national averages and science was well above both averages.

The most recent OFSTED report concluded that Whitchurch Primary School is a good school (Inspected May 2007).

Resources

Land

The school site is a little smaller the recommended minimum size for the number of pupils. The school has on site team games playing fields which are a little larger than the required size. The school is on a constrained site which is on differing levels.

Buildings

The buildings are larger than the recommended size. The school has one more classroom than required for its NOR although six are undersized and the school also has an undersized hall and IT suite. There are no temporary buildings.

Total outstanding planned maintenance required at the school is fairly high but per pupil it is in line with the average for the review area. Roofing work is due to be carried out soon on the site.

Funding

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

Sufficiency of Places

The school is currently 92% full. Average intake into Reception over the past six years has been 86% of available school capacity and the number on roll has decreased over the past few years from 215 in 2002 to 183 in 2006.

The PAN was reduced from 34 to 30 for admissions in 2004.

The Regional Spatial Strategy proposals identify a quota of 6,000 new homes to be built to the South East of Bristol within Bath and North East Somerset by 2026, some of which will be in the Whitchurch area. However there are currently no known developments of new homes in this area.

The map of pupil locations shows that the majority (60%) of pupils currently attending the school live outside of Bath and North East Somerset in Bristol.

Due to the school's position on the boundary of Bath & North East Somerset and Bristol, the panel noted that the school experienced some difficulties with the admission process which led to delays in the school finding out the final number of pupils they could expect to receive. The panel heard that if the same system was in place for primary school admissions as is currently in place for secondary schools, this would greatly alleviate this difficulty. However it was acknowledged that as this is a government system, the Local Authority is not able to change the way in which admissions are dealt with.

Recommendation:

4) No action is recommended at Whitchurch Primary School

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 Panel noted that the review area has more school places than are currently required by the local pupil population.
- The Panel agreed that the conclusions and recommendations of this review should be borne in mind when the Panel undertake their next primary school review which is looking at schools in South West Bath & North East Somerset. That review will include Stanton Drew Primary School which is sited between Pensford and Chew Magna Primary Schools, so the results of this current review will be highly relevant to informing the Panel's thoughts.

NEXT STEPS

This report and recommendations will be brought to the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 21st July 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.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Terms of Reference for the Review
Appendix 2	Discussion Paper
Appendix 3	Notes of the Contributor Session
Appendix 4	Summary table of recommendations