

Overview & Scrutiny Review Report

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

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

September 2008

Review Panel Members

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Cllr Andrew Furse
Cllr Marian McNeir
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Introduction

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

Bishop Sutton Primary School
East Harptree C of E Primary School
Stanton Drew Primary School
Ubley C of E 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 September 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 15th September, 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:

	Item / speakers
5.30 pm	Chair's introduction
5.40 pm	Session 1 – Bishop Sutton Primary School <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mrs Lynda Bills, Head Teacher• Parent Governors• Public Speakers
6.10 pm	Session 2 – East Harptree C of E Primary School <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms Carol Wheatley, Head Teacher• Parent Governors• Public Speakers
6.40 pm	Session 3 – Stanton Drew Primary School <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mrs Lynda Bills, Head Teacher• Parent Governors• Public Speakers:
7.10 pm	Session 4 – Ubley C of E Primary School <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mrs Denise Williams, Head Teacher• Parent Governors• Public Speakers
7.40 pm	Final Comments from Panel
8.00 pm	Meeting Close

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

Whilst undertaking this review, and considering all the information put before them regarding the four schools, the Panel were mindful that care must be taken when analysing the educational performance results of small year groups and making comparisons with schools that are significantly different in size. In small schools one pupil can have a very marked effect on the percentage figures. OFSTED makes the following statement:

Care should be taken when analysing the results of small year groups and small schools. The effect of one additional pupil on, for example, a school percentage measure can be considerable, whereas in larger schools the effect will be less marked. This does not mean that analysing the performance of small cohorts is invalid. Rather it means that the findings from such analyses should be interpreted carefully, and may need to be augmented with other information or considered over more than one year.

Two of the schools in this review area have recently federated with each other. A Federation is a group of schools, usually between two and five, that agree to work together (sharing facilities and resources etc. and on the curriculum) for the benefit of all pupils and their school communities, based on the understanding that sharing in this way can help the schools make better provision for pupils. These two schools have a single Governing Body and one Headteacher.

All of the schools included in this review come within the area of prime responsibility (catchment area) for Chew Valley Secondary School.

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

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

Bishop Sutton Primary School

Educational Standards

Educational Standards at the school in 2007 at KS1 were in line with the national average and below the LEA average for reading and maths and

above the LEA and national averages for writing. At KS2 English and science were both above the LEA and national averages and maths was level with the national average and below the LEA average.

The most recent OFSTED report concluded that Bishop Sutton Primary School is a very effective school with many strengths. (Inspected November 2004).

There is no after school provision but this is because there are good facilities at the village hall, and in common with many rural based schools, Bishop Sutton Primary School signposts parents and pupils to activities provided in the local area.

The take up of school meals is 49% of pupils.

The panel were very pleased to see that the Federation between Bishop Sutton and Stanton Drew Primary schools which took place at the end of 2007 appears to be working well, and that parents from both schools are supportive of it and see the schools as equal partners. Both schools clearly felt it was a positive and successful experience and a good example of how federation can work well.

Resources

Land

The school site is a little under the recommended minimum size for the number of pupils. The on site team games playing fields are approximately half the required size.

Buildings

The buildings are a little over the recommended size. The school has sufficient teaching accommodation of generally adequate size but is short of small group space and has undersized administration accommodation. The staff and administration spaces are sufficient but in a cramped circulation space. There are two temporary buildings on site. The school has an on site playing field but is short of hard play.

Outstanding planned maintenance required at the school is low.

The Panel were impressed with the school buildings and the garden.

Access to the site is limited, and the panel learnt that there are plans to have the main entrance to the school from the back of the site, with provision of visitor parking. The panel felt this was an excellent idea.

Funding

Total funding per pupil at the school is below the area average.

Sufficiency of Places

The school is approximately 90% full. Average intake into Reception over the past six years has been 78% of available school capacity and therefore the number on roll over the past few years has remained fairly stable.

The PAN has remained the same at 21 for the past six years.

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

The map of pupil locations shows that the majority of children currently attending the school live in the immediate area in Bishop Sutton.

Recommendation:

- 1) No action is recommended at Bishop Sutton Primary School at the present time.

East Harptree 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, writing and maths. At KS2 English was below the LEA and national average, maths was above both averages and science was in line with the national average and below the LEA average.

The most recent OFSTED report concluded that East Harptree C of E Primary School is a good school that helps pupils achieve well and become confident learners. (Inspected November 2005)

The Panel noted in particular that there are a very high number of children having school meals at East Harptree (81%) and that the take-up is consistently high.

Resources

Land

The school site is approximately one third of the recommended minimum size for the number of pupils. There are no on site team games playing fields, but the school uses a nearby playing field and the village hall for P.E.

The school currently have a goodwill arrangement with the adjacent pub for staff parking in the pub car park. The Panel are aware that the school would be keen to reach a more formal arrangement for this, and the Panel recognise that this might be helpful.

Buildings

The buildings are also significantly smaller than the recommended size. The school has one more classroom space than is required although one is undersized and one is on a mezzanine and not accessible to disabled people. The school does not have a hall, an IT suite or small group spaces and the library is undersized. There are limited hard play and soft play areas. The school is situated on a very constrained site with differing levels. However the Panel noted that good use had been made of the limited space at the school.

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 approximately 74% full. Average intake into Reception over the past six years has been 71% of available school capacity and therefore the number on roll over the past few years has gradually decreased.

The PAN was increased from 13 to 15 in 2004 and has just been reduced to 13 again for admissions in 2009.

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

The map of pupil locations shows that the majority of children currently attending the school live in the immediate area in East Harptree.

Recommendations:

- 2) No action is recommended at East Harptree C of E Primary School at the present time.

Stanton Drew Primary School

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, maths and science were all above the LEA and national averages.

The most recent OFSTED report concluded that Stanton Drew Primary School is a good school where all pupils achieve well. (Inspected May 2007).

Take up of school meals is 41% of pupils.

Resources

Land

The school site is approximately one quarter of the recommended minimum size for the number of pupils and there are no on site team games playing fields. Pupils travel to Bishop Sutton School to use the hall and playing fields there for P.E.

The school is situated on a very constrained site which impedes development.

Buildings

The buildings are a little under the recommended size. The school has one temporary building on site and has sufficient classrooms although all are undersized. There is no hall and pupils go to Bishop Sutton to use the hall and playing field there for PE.

The Panel noted that there was good use of the limited space available.

Outstanding planned maintenance required at the school, both per pupil and as a whole is very low. The Panel felt that the recent refurbishment of the temporary building was particularly impressive.

Funding

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

Sufficiency of Places

The school is approximately 70% full. Average intake into Reception over the past six years has been 68% of available school capacity and therefore the number on roll over the past few years has gradually decreased.

The PAN has remained the same at 10 for the past six years.

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

The map of pupil locations shows that the majority of children currently attending the school live in Stanton Drew and the immediate surrounding area.

Recommendation:

3) It is recommended that the pupil intake and total number on roll at Stanton Drew Primary School should be monitored over the next few years in order to assess the impact on pupil numbers of the recent federation with Bishop Sutton, which took place at the end of 2007.

Ubley 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 below both averages for writing and maths. At KS2 English, maths and science were all above both the LEA and national averages.

The most recent OFSTED report concluded that Ubley C of E Primary School is an effective school with many strengths. (Inspected May 2006).

Take up of school meals is 68% of pupils.

Resources

Land

The school site is just under half the recommended minimum size for the number of pupils.

The school is situated on a constrained site and does not have an on site playing field but leases a playing field which is a few minutes walk away. The school has a hard play area and a garden.

Buildings

The buildings are approximately three quarters of the recommended size. The school has sufficient classrooms. It does not have a dedicated IT suite,

but rather has laptops direct into the classrooms. The administration accommodation is slightly undersized. There are no temporary buildings on site and no hall, however two new classrooms are equipped with a dividing screen which enables them to serve as a whole school assembly space.

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

The Panel noted that the recent building works and outdoor learning environment were particularly impressive, and had been achieved with a lot of community fundraising as well as LEA support.

Funding

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

Sufficiency of Places

The school is approximately 86% full. Average intake into Reception over the past six years has been 74% 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 12 for the past six years.

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

The map of pupil locations shows that the children currently attending the school live in the immediate area of Ubley but also quite a few children come from Compton Martin and the area to the east. The Panel were delighted to learn that the school had encouraged the use of buses to bring in pupils from Compton Martin, rather than parents driving their own cars.

Recommendation:

4) No action is recommended at Ubley C of E 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 were pleased to see that all four schools were very much at the heart of their local communities. There were some excellent examples of fundraising with a great deal of support from local people.
- When the Panel undertook their previous primary review which was the North West Bath & North East Somerset area, they agreed that due to the geographical proximity of the two review areas, and as Stanton Drew Primary school would have been included in the previous review had it not federated with Bishop Sutton primary, the conclusions and recommendations of that review should be borne in mind when undertaking this current review. The Panel noted that quite a few children living in the South West Bath and North East Somerset review area attend schools in the North West Bath and North East Somerset review area.

The Panel therefore ask that as Cllr Chris Watt considers their recommendations, he will also bear in mind the outcomes of the previous review.

NEXT STEPS

This report and recommendations will be brought to the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 24th November 2008. After this, the Panel's recommendations will be incorporated in a report by Children's Service and submitted to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services for a Single Member Decision.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Terms of Reference for the Review
Appendix 2	Discussion Paper
Appendix 3	Notes of the Contributor Session