

MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 15 PROPOSALS TO DISCONTINUE A SCHOOL

Insert the information asked for in the expandable box below each section.

Contact details

1. The name of the local education authority or governing body publishing the proposals, and a contact address, and the name of the school it is proposed that should be discontinued.

Wirral Borough Council, Town Hall, Brighton Street, Wallasey, Wirral, CH44 8ED
Poulton Primary School

Implementation

2. The date when it is planned that the proposals will be implemented, or where the proposals are to be implemented in stages, information about each stage and the date on which each stage is planned to be implemented.

It is planned to implement this proposal from 31st August 2008.

Consultation

3. A statement to the effect that all applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposals were complied with.

All statutory consultation requirements relating to this proposal have been complied with. Public consultations were held during January to March 2007, including a consultation meeting at Poulton Primary School on 29th January 2007 and at the neighbouring Park Primary school on 31st January 2007. All statutory consultees were consulted in accordance with the relevant DCSF guidance and statutory requirements.

4. Evidence of the consultation before the proposals were published including—

- (a) a list of persons and/or parties who were consulted;
- (b) minutes of all public consultation meetings;
- (c) the views of the persons consulted; and
- (d) copies of all consultation documents and a statement of how these were made available.

See Appendices A and B.

Objectives

5. The objectives of the proposal.

To discontinue Poulton Primary School, Alderley Road, Wallasey, CH44 4ES.

Standards and Diversity

6. A statement and supporting evidence indicating how the proposals will impact on the standards, diversity and quality of education in the area.

Poulton Primary had 151 pupils on roll in January 2007, less than half of the number on roll 11 years ago (342). This is largely the result of the falling population, although 66% of potential community school parents living in the catchment zone choose to send their children elsewhere, principally to Park Primary School (21%, 65 pupils) and St George's Primary School (18%, 58 pupils). There are a large number of surplus places (27%, 57), and this situation is not predicted to improve over the next five years.

A three year average of the overall value added score (2004 to 2006) shows that Poulton, Park Primary and St George's Primary Schools are making the expected rate of progress (99.0, 100.5 and 99.1 respectively) with no significant difference in performance.

Ofsted reports of the three schools are attached as Appendix D.

Small schools inevitably cost more to maintain than larger schools. Wirral policy says that schools become increasingly more difficult to maintain as they fall below 180 pupils on roll. DCSF guidance says that "Schools with fewer than 150 pupils may be educationally and financially sustainable only through substantial subsidies via their local authorities funding formula".

Financially, the total sum available for spending on all our children does not increase if we choose as an Authority to organise our children in more schools than is necessary for the efficient and effective delivery of education. It follows that the maintenance of small schools, where this is not necessary, comes at the expense of all other children. In 2004-2005, expenditure per pupil at Poulton was £3,486 compared with the Wirral average of £2,984.

Closure of Poulton Primary School saves money for the overall schools budget. The saving is ring-fenced to the Wirral schools budget, which allows more funding to be spent on all Wirral's children and young people in order to raise standards across the borough.

Provision for 16 -19 year olds

7. Where the school proposed to be discontinued provides sixth form education, how the proposals will impact on—

- (a) the educational or training achievements;
- (b) participation in education or training; and
- (c) the range of educational or training opportunities,

for 16-19 year olds in the area.

Not applicable.

Need for places

8. A statement and supporting evidence about the need for places in the area including whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

There are 27 alternative primary schools within a 2 mile radius, at which in January 2007 there were 1373 surplus places, compared to the number on roll of 151 pupils.

At the 6 alternative primary schools in the South Wallasey planning area alone, there were 589 surplus places.

The number on roll at September 2007 at Poulton Primary was 98 pupils; excluding those pupils in Year 6 who will have moved onto secondary school in September 2008, there are expected to be 78 pupils to transfer to an alternative local primary school.

9. Where the school has a religious character, a statement about the impact of the proposed closure on the balance of denominational provision in the area and the impact on parental choice.

Not applicable

Current School Information

10. Information as to the numbers, age range, sex and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is made at the school.

Poulton Primary is a mixed sex community primary school providing 210 places for day pupils aged 4 to 11. In January 2007 there were 151 pupils on roll, falling to 98 pupils in September 2007.

There is a "half" nursery (F1) class with 26 places. In January 2007 there were 16 pupils in the F1 class.

Displaced Pupils

11. Details of the schools or further education colleges which pupils at the school for whom provision is to be discontinued will be offered places, including—

- (a) any interim arrangements;
- (b) where the school included provision that is recognised by the local education authority as reserved for children with special educational needs, the alternative provision to be made for pupils in the school's reserved provision; and
- (c) in the case of special schools, alternative provision made by local education authorities other than the authority which maintains the school.

All current and projected pupils from Poulton Primary could be accommodated at primary schools within a reasonable distance without requiring any new classroom provision. See S.8 above. The catchment area of the school is to be divided between Park Primary School and St George's Primary School. Proposed changes to the catchment areas are attached as Appendix C.

12. Details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school or further education college places available in consequence of the proposed discontinuance.

Dependant on parental preferences, additional places may be required at Park Primary School. The current capacity of the Park building is 280 pupils. If all former Poulton pupils on roll at 31st August 2008 opted to transfer to Park Primary School, it is estimated that two additional classrooms would be required, bringing the capacity

to 340 pupils.

Impact on the Community

13. A statement and supporting evidence about the impact on the community and any measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impact.

Large numbers of parents living within Poulton's zone already choose either Park Primary or St George's Primary, and there are 27 alternative primary schools within a 2 mile radius of the school. The catchment zone of Poulton Primary School following closure would, in the main, be allocated to Park Primary, with the exception of a small area at the "top" of the zone which could be allocated to St George's Primary School. The intention of this division was to better match where parents live and choose to send their children to school. Parents currently in-zone for St George's would continue to be in-zone and would be unaffected by this change. The proposed catchments are attached as Appendix C.

In January 2007, there were 18 part-time pupils in the F1 class (9 FTE) at Poulton Primary School. This proposal is linked to a proposal to establish an F1 class at nearby Park Primary School via a prescribed alteration. Any new F1 provision would meet current DCFS regulations for room size, outdoor facilities and so on, and would be the right size for the number of expected pupils.

14. Details of extended services the school offered and what it is proposed for these services once the school has discontinued.

Adult learning classes are held at the school. The Authority will work together with the governing body of neighbouring schools to ensure that these classes continue, where there is demand.

Travel

15. Details of length and journeys to alternative provision.

All former Poulton Primary pupils on roll at this date who opt to transfer to Park Primary School, regardless of home address, will be guaranteed a place at Park Primary School. Park Primary School is 0.2 miles from Poulton Primary School. An aerial photo showing the relative positions of these two schools is attached as Appendix E.

Of the 78 pupils expected to be on roll at September 2008, three would travel more than 2 miles to either Park Primary or St George's Primary, but already travel more than 2 miles to Poulton Primary, so can be expected to use whichever means of transport they are already utilising. Three of the 78 pupils would be potentially be entitled to an in-zone place at St George's Primary School, should they decide to apply for that school. For all 78 pupils, the distance to Park Primary is similar to that travelled to Poulton Primary School.

Walking distances for current Poulton pupils

Year Group at Sept 08	POULTON	PARK	ST GEORGE'S
1	0.3	0.4	1.4
1	0.3	0.4	1.4
1	0.3	0.5	1.2

1	0.3	0.5	1.2
1	0.8	0.7	0.6
1	0.3	0.5	0.9
1	0.3	0.5	1.2
1	0.5	0.6	1.3
1	0.3	0.5	1.2
1	0.1	0.2	1.2
1	0.3	0.4	1.4
2	0.6	0.8	0.6
2	0.3	0.3	0.9
*2	0.3	0.5	0.9
2	0.1	0.3	1.0
2	0.2	0.1	1.0
2	0.1	0.3	1.1
2	0.6	0.6	1.6
2	0.3	0.5	1.2
2	0.4	0.6	1.3
2	0.5	0.6	1.3
2	0.3	0.4	1.4
3	0.8	0.7	0.6
*3	0.3	0.5	0.9
3	0.2	0.3	1.0
3	0.2	0.3	1.0
3	0.3	0.5	1.2
3	0.3	0.3	1.3
3	0.3	0.3	1.3
3	0.3	0.4	1.4
3	0.3	0.4	1.4
3	0.4	0.4	1.4
3	0.1	0.3	1.2
4	0.6	0.8	0.6
4	0.8	0.7	0.6
4	0.4	0.2	0.7
4	0.1	0.3	1.0
4	0.1	0.3	1.1
4	0.7	0.5	1.1
4	0.3	0.4	1.1
4	0.6	0.6	1.6
4	0.3	0.5	1.2
4	0.3	0.5	1.2
4	0.4	0.6	1.2
*4	0.2	0.4	1.3
4	0.3	0.3	1.3
4	0.5	0.6	1.3
4	0.3	0.3	1.3
4	0.9	0.9	1.7
4	0.8	0.8	1.8
4	1.2	1.2	1.8
4	0.3	0.5	1.1
4	3.8	3.8	4.8
4	0.1	0.2	1.1
5	0.2	0.4	1.0

5	0.2	0.1	1.1
5	1.4	1.4	1.2
5	0.2	0.3	1.3
5	0.3	0.3	1.3
5	0.7	0.7	1.7
5	1.0	1.0	2.0
5	0.3	0.5	1.1
5	3.3	3.4	2.4
5	3.3	3.4	2.4
5	0.3	0.4	1.1
6	0.2	0.4	1.0
6	0.3	0.5	1.1
6	0.3	0.5	1.2
6	0.2	0.2	1.2
6	0.2	0.3	1.2
6	0.4	0.5	1.2
6	0.4	0.5	1.2
6	0.4	0.6	1.3
6	1.5	1.5	1.3
6	0.5	0.5	1.5
6	1.4	1.3	1.8
6	1.2	1.2	1.8
6	0.9	0.9	1.7

under 1 mile	under 1.5 miles	under 2 miles	over 2 miles
--------------	-----------------	---------------	--------------

* indicates current home address would be within St George's zone under new catchment arrangements

16. The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools including how they will help to work against increased car use.

The distance to Park Primary is not significantly longer than the current journey distance to Poulton Primary School and pupils can be expected to continue to travel to school by whichever means they are currently using, with no significant increase in car use. Pupils may transfer to any local primary school, subject to availability of places and the admission arrangements published in the Authority's information booklet for parents. There are a total of 27 alternative primary schools within a 2 mile radius.

Related Proposals.

17. A statement as to whether in the opinion of the local education authority or governing body, the proposals are related to any other proposals which may have been, are, or are about to be published.

This proposal is linked to a prescribed alteration to establish an F1 class at Park Primary School.

Rural Primary Schools

18. Where proposals relate to a rural primary school designated as such by an order made for the purposes of section 15 of the EIA 2006, a statement that the local education authority or the governing body (as the case may be) considered—

- (a) the likely effect of discontinuance of the school on the local community;
- (b) the availability, and likely cost to the local education authority, of transport to other schools;
- (c) any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the discontinuance of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; and
- (d) any alternatives to the discontinuance of the school,

as required by section 15(4) of the EIA 2006.

Not applicable

Maintained nursery schools

19. Where proposals relate to the discontinuance of a maintained nursery school, a statement setting out—

- (a) the consideration that has been given to developing the school into a children's centre and the grounds for not doing so;
- (b) the body's assessment of the quality and quantity of the alternative provision compared to the school proposed to be discontinued and the proposed arrangements to ensure the expertise and specialism continues to be available; and
- (c) the accessibility and convenience of replacement provision for local parents.

Not applicable

Special educational provision

20. Where existing provision for pupils with special educational needs is being discontinued, a statement as to how the local education authority or the governing body believes the proposal is likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the educational provision for these children.

Not applicable