

MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 15 PROPOSALS TO
DISCONTINUE A SCHOOL – PENSBY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

Pensby Park 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.

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 applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposals were complied with. Public consultations were held during January to March 2007, including a consultation meeting at the school on 14th February 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.

Please see Appendices A and B.

Objectives

5. The objectives of the proposal.

To close Pensby Park Primary School from 31st August 2008.

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.

At 90 pupils on roll in January 2007, Pensby Park Primary had already reached 25% and at least 30 surplus places, the trigger point at which the DCSF requests an explanation of how this situation will be addressed. At the current self-reported September 2007 position of 33 pupils, surplus at the school has reached 72.5%.

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". The pattern of falling rolls at this school has been of a long slow decline – the last year in which there were more than 180 pupils was 1983, when there were 188 on roll. Ten years ago in 1997, there were 123 pupils on roll.

Pensby Park attracts just 38% (55) of non-Catholic choice pupils residing in its zone. The majority of the remaining 62% (87) of potential pupils attend Pensby Infant and Junior (31%, 44 pupils) – almost as many pupils attend Pensby Infant and Junior as attend Pensby Park.

The overall value added score (100.1) for 2006 and contextual value added score (99.7) show that pupils at Pensby Park made the expected rate of progress. There was no significant difference in the progress made by pupils at Pensby Park and at Pensby Junior, or in any of the schools within 2 miles, although in this year pupils at nearby Ladymount Catholic Primary School in Pensby made significantly more than the expected rate of progress. Ofsted reports for Pensby Infant, Pensby Junior and Pensby Park are attached as Appendix D.

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. The expenditure per pupil in 2003-2004 was £3,551 compared with the Wirral average of £2,985.

Closure of Pensby Park 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.

In January 2007 there were 90 pupils on roll at the school. At time of notice publication, due to parental requests for transfers to alternative schools, this had fallen to 33 pupils (reported by school September 2007), of whom 5 were in Key Stage 1. There were no pupils in F2 (Reception).

In January 2007, there were 193 empty places in alternative schools within a 2 mile radius of Pensby Park Primary School. September 2007 numbers on roll provided by schools indicate that despite pupils leaving Pensby Park for alternative local schools, there will remain 199 empty places within 2 miles at January 2008.

In September 2008 when the current Y6 move on to secondary education, there would be 24 pupils on roll at Pensby Park and a projected 209 pupil places at schools within a 2 mile radius.

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.

Pensby Park Primary is a mixed sex community primary school providing 120 places for day pupils aged 4 to 11.

	Jan 07	Jan 08*	Jan 09	Jan 10	Jan 11	Jan 12
Pensby Park	90	33	24	17	12	5

There is no designated SEN class at this school.

* September 2007 numbers given as proxy for Jan 08. Projections assume no further intake into F2.

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.

Parents of pupils on roll at Pensby Park Primary School at 31st August 2008 will be asked to express a preference for one of the alternative local schools. It is proposed to combine the catchment zone of Pensby Park Primary School with the neighbouring catchment zone of Pensby Infant School and Pensby Junior School in order to provide a single community catchment zone for the Pensby area. The proposed catchment zone is attached as Appendix C.

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.

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.

No measures should be required. There are sufficient existing places at neighbouring schools to accommodate all former pupils. (See S.8 above)

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.

The catchment zone of Pensby Park Primary School will be combined with that of Pensby Infant and Pensby Junior to form a single catchment zone for the Pensby area. A third of the remaining pupils on roll are already "in zone" for Pensby Infant/Junior. Only two of the 33 pupils currently attending Pensby Park would not be "in zone" for Pensby Infant/Junior under the proposed combined catchment zone. The proposed catchment zone is attached as Appendix C.

The Pensby area is due to be provided with a Children's Centre. Work will begin shortly to adapt surplus space at the Pensby Park building as a Children's Centre pending decisions about schools in this area.

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

A privately operated pre-school runs from part of the school's building. If closure is approved, the Authority will open discussions with the private provider in order to assist in finding alternative accommodation within the area.

Travel

15. Details of length and journeys to alternative provision.

Of the 24 pupils who would be on roll at the point of closure, 22 live within 1 mile of Pensby Infant or Pensby Junior school's sites, a similar or shorter distance than

travelled currently. Both of the pupils who live further than 2 miles from the Infant/Junior site already travel more than 2 miles to reach Pensby Park and could be expected to continue to use whichever method of transport they already utilise. An aerial photograph showing the relative positions of the schools is attached as Appendix E.

Walking distances for current Pensby Park pupils

Year Group (in Sept 08)	Pensby Park	Pensby Infant	Pensby Junior
2	0.3	0.5	
2	0.3	0.2	
2	0.3	0.3	
3	0.3		0.5
3	6.2		6.2
4	0.2		0.3
4	0.2		0.7
4	0.3		0.6
4	0.3		0.5
4	0.4		0.7
4	0.4		0.3
4	0.5		0.3
5	0.3		0.2
5	0.3		0.7
5	0.4		0.7
5	0.5		0.7
5	0.5		0.4
6	0.3		0.5
6	0.3		0.7
6	0.3		0.7
6	0.4		0.4
6	6.3		6.2
6	0.5		0.3
6	0.6		0.6

Under 1 mile Over 2 miles

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 from Pensby Park Primary School to the new zone schools of Pensby Infant School (0.4 miles) and Pensby Junior School (0.7 miles) is unlikely to mean any significant increase in car use.

Applications for school transport to alternative schools will be considered on the basis of the Authority’s school transport policy published in the Authority’s information booklet for parents.

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.

Not applicable.

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.

