

Mulbarton (Community) Junior School Statutory Proposal to close the school

1. LA details

Norfolk County Council
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich
Norfolk
NR1 2DL

2. School details

Mulbarton Junior School
The Common
Mulbarton
Norwich
Norfolk
NR14 8JG

3. Description of alteration and evidence of demand

Since September 2013, Mulbarton Infant and Mulbarton Junior School have been in a successful partnership. The governing bodies of both schools now wish to take the next step and legally combine into one single school.

The proposal is to amalgamate the existing two schools of Mulbarton Infant and Mulbarton Junior School to form Mulbarton Primary School. In order to do this, it is necessary to close Mulbarton Junior School and expand and change the age range of Mulbarton Infant School.

This proposal is related to one to expand and change the age range of Mulbarton Infant School in order to move from an infant/junior model of primary education to an all-through single tier primary model.

The Governors of Mulbarton Infant and Mulbarton Junior Schools with the support of Norfolk County Council conducted a consultation on this proposal from 4 October 2016 to 22 November 2016, which demonstrated that the principle of all-through primary education was seen as a positive. Respondents clearly saw the advantages for the continuity of their children's learning, and appreciated the idea of having to build a relationship with a single school throughout the primary years. They were also attracted by the practical advantages of having to take their primary age children to one part of the site.

4. Objectives and reasons

These proposals are part of a set of proposals which have two main objectives:

- To ensure a sufficient supply of school places in response to housing growth and other demographic changes.
- To create a system which is sustainable in the long term and is consistent with the County Council's view that all-through primary education is in the best interests of the children

There are many strong educational reasons for this preference:

- Stronger relationships are established with parents through consistent communication and reporting

- Children can benefit from a wider range of teacher expertise across key stages and a broader curriculum, and have greater continuity in their learning.
- It is easier to track children's progress and attainment in one school
- It is less likely that there will be a dip in children's performance at school because they do not have to move from one school to another when they are seven
- The curriculum can be planned coherently to support pupils' learning as they move through the school
- Over seven years, staff get to know children and their families very well, and can plan coherently to support the needs of individual children as they move through the school

In our experience, parents like the security of knowing that once their child has been admitted to Reception in a particular school, he/she is assured of that place until the time comes to move to the High School and parents who have a number of children in the primary phase would only have to build a relationship with one school.

5. The effect on other schools, academies and educational institutions within the area

This proposal for Mulbarton Junior School is related to a proposal to expand and change the age range of Mulbarton Infant School. Other primary phase schools in the Hethersett cluster group (with the exception of Hethersett itself) are already all-through primaries, and as such are not in the scope of this review.

6. Project costs and an indication of how these will be met

There are no project costs associated to this proposal however, both schools have benefited from a NCC basic need project. This involved the demolition of four undersized classrooms dating from the 1970's replacing them with an extension of four new primary school classrooms and staffroom. The £1.66m project, funded by Norfolk County Council, also included improvements to the infant school entrance and new toilets for the Reception classroom. An old mobile block was removed as part of the scheme.

7. Implementation date and proposed stages

Mulbarton Junior School will close on 31 August 2017. Mulbarton Infant School will become an all-through primary school on 1 September 2017.

8. Consultation

The proposal for Mulbarton Infant School formed part of an extensive consultation held between 4 October and 22 November 2016. As part of that consultation, two public meetings were held at the schools Tuesday 11 October and Thursday 13 October 2016. The consultation document is attached. Over 400 copies of the consultation document were distributed and 80 responses

were received. Of those, 87.5% (70 responses) agreed with the proposal and 12.5% (10 responses) disagreed.

9. Related proposals

This proposal is directly related to the proposal published for Mulbarton Infant School.

10. Procedure for making representations

Any person may object to, express support for, or make comments on the proposals by emailing us at schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk, or by writing to us at:

Mulbarton Schools Consultation, FREEPOST, 1H2076, Floor 8, Bay 29, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2BR. You don't need a stamp.