

Statutory Consultation on a proposal to amalgamate Mileham Primary School and Litcham School into a single all-through school for pupils aged 4 – 16 from September 2015

What is the proposal?

In September 2014 when the Headteacher of Mileham Primary School left his post, Mileham and Litcham Schools entered into a temporary partnership for one year, whilst the options for the future of Mileham Primary School were assessed. This partnership has been successful and the Litcham Governors are now wishing to legally combine the two schools into a single organisation, on the current two sites of Litcham School from 1 September 2015.

In order for this to happen, legal steps have to be taken. Norfolk County Council will publish a formal proposal to 'close' Mileham Primary School with effect from 31 August 2015. All the pupils will be offered a place at Litcham School.

Why is Norfolk County Council proposing this amalgamation?

Mileham is a primary school taking pupils from the age of 4 through to 11. It was designated by the Department for Education in October 2013 as a rural primary school serving a village. The school has 7 places available in each year group, but is regularly undersubscribed. In September 2014, there were 27 pupils on roll, of whom only 14 live within the designated catchment area of the school. A further 31 children eligible to attend the school are choosing to go to schools elsewhere (11 of these children are on roll at Litcham School). Taking into account parental preference, pupil numbers are predicted to remain below 25 for the next ten years.

The school has not been able to secure sustainable leadership arrangements which ensure high standards of education for the children. Since the Headteacher left his post last summer, a number of schools have been approached, by the Local Authority and by the school with a view to formal collaboration, but it has not been possible to find a suitable partner.

The new national funding policy for schools is moving towards a national per pupil rate. This limits the way in which funding is allocated to schools through the locally agreed formula. In the past financial year, Mileham School received just over £10,000 per pupil, compared with the Norfolk primary school average of £4,500, but this level of support may not be possible in the future. The continuing decline in pupil numbers and these changes to the way that schools are funded, are making it increasingly difficult to manage the budget, and to justify such inequality of provision across all Norfolk learners.

The Governors at Litcham School agreed to enter into a temporary partnership for one year, whilst the options for the future were assessed. Litcham School also agreed for their primary phase leader to be the acting Headteacher of Mileham School. A recent Local Authority audit has raised concerns about the quality of education provided by the school.

The Litcham governing body was asked to consider the nature of the current arrangement with Mileham and concluded that they did not wish to federate, but would consider amalgamation.

What is Amalgamation?

Amalgamation is the formal name given to a way of bringing two schools together. It means one governing body, with representation from both schools. There will be one Headteacher and staffing structure, one budget and a cohesive approach to the education of children from 4+ through to age 16. All the pupils at Mileham Primary School will move to Litcham School. However, as now, parents will be able to express preferences for alternative schools for their children and the local authority will work with parents to ensure that all children transfer. There are sufficient places in neighbouring schools to accommodate displaced pupils.

What will it mean for the children?

There will be increased opportunity for the children to interact and learn from each other and share ideas through curriculum innovation. The children will benefit from greater continuity and consistency, aiding a smooth transition from the primary school to the high school.

What alternative provision will be available?

Norfolk County Council is committed to ensuring that the needs of all children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) will be met. If the closure of this school is approved, it will be essential to review the provision required for those pupils with a statement of SEN and, following consultation with individual parents, an alternative school where provision would be made available for their child will be named.

What would it mean for staff?

The expectation is that staff to provide for the additional class at Litcham, would be appointed from the present staff of Mileham School. We have an agreed way of working with staff when planning changes to school organisation, which has worked successfully in the past. Our human resources staff and local trade union officers would work with governors to make sure that staff were fully involved and consulted about proposed changes.

Who will be consulted?

Under section 16(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Local Authority as proposer of the closure of a rural primary school must consult:

- Parents of pupils at the school
- The local district or parish council where the school is situated

In addition, this document will be provided to people and organisations that may have an interest in this proposal including:

- The governing body of the school
- Pupils at the school
- All staff at the school
- The governing bodies, teachers and other staff of any other school that might be affected
- Diocesan Boards of Education
- Parents of any pupils at other schools who may be affected by the proposal
- Trades unions who represent staff at the school
- Local County Councillors and MPs

Who will make the final decision and when would the change happen?

After this consultation ends on Friday 13 March 2015, Norfolk County Council will decide whether to proceed with this proposal. If they decide to go ahead, by law we have to publish a statutory notice to close Mileham Primary School.

People would then have four weeks to write to us either supporting or opposing the proposal. The final decision would then be made by Norfolk County Council.

The earliest this change could take place would be 31 August 2015

How can I learn more about the proposal and have my say?

Come and talk to us: There will be two meetings for parents/carers and other interested members of the community:

**2.30pm on Wednesday 4 March 2015 at Mileham Primary School
and
6.00pm on Wednesday 4 March 2015 at Mileham Primary School**

You can tell us your views at <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/milehamprimaryschool> or by using the attached form, or email schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk

We need all responses by Friday 13 March 2015

If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact 01603 223480.

Proposal to amalgamate Mileham Primary School and Litcham School into a single all-through school for pupils aged 4 – 16 from September 2015

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal?

Agree

Disagree

Please give your main reasons for your answer. Are there any other comments or suggestions you would like to make to help us with this decision and in planning for the future provision of the children.

We want to hear from a wide range of people. We will use your answers to help us understand which sections of the community have responded to our consultation. You do not have to answer these questions if you do not want to.

We will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act, which means that we will not give your personal data to any third parties.

Your comments will be anonymous - your name or anything that could identify you will not be included in any report. However, we cannot guarantee that this information will be withheld if it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

Please tell us who you are:

- Pupil
- Parent / Guardian
- Member of the Parent Teacher Association
- Member of staff
- Governor
- Local resident
- Local business
- Local sports group
- Local community group

Other (please specify):

At which school? _____

What is your name?

What is your postcode?

Your views will help us to decide whether or not we make these changes. This consultation ends on **Friday 13 March 2015**.

The Director of Children's Services at Norfolk County Council will make a decision about whether or not to proceed to the next stage. If we decide to go ahead, we would then have to publish a formal public notice. A final decision would then be made in July 2015.

You can tell us your views at <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/milehamprimaryschool> by using the attached form which can be returned via your local school or email schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk or post to: Mileham School Consultation, Children's Services, FREEPOST IH2076, County Hall (Floor 8), Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2BR. You don't need a stamp.

We need all responses by Friday 13 March 2015