



**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE  
COMMITTEE  
ADDENDUM**

**4.00PM, MONDAY, 9 MARCH 2015**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**



# ADDENDUM

ITEM		Page
85	PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF DAVIGDOR INFANT AND SOMERHILL JUNIOR SCHOOLS FROM SEPTEMBER 2015: OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION, CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE: 09/03/15	1 - 30



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Amalgamation of Davigdor Infant and Somerhill Junior Schools in Hove to become an all through primary school from September 2015</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>09 March 2015</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director of Children's Services</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Michael Nix</b>	<b>Tel: 290732</b>
	<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:Michael.nix@brighton-hove.gov.uk"><u>Michael.nix@brighton-hove.gov.uk</u></a>	
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>Goldsmid ward</b>		

## **FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 3, Access to Information Procedure Rule 5 and Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that the consultation period ended on 27 February 2015 and governing body responses were decided at meetings on 2 and 3 March 2015 taking into account a summary of responses to the consultation.

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 It is proposed that Davigdor Infant and Somerhill Junior Schools in Hove amalgamate to become an all through primary school with effect from 1 September 2015.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to report on the outcome of consultation on this proposal and to seek approval to proceed to the next stage of the statutory process, which is the publication of Statutory Notices.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 To note the responses to the consultation undertaken regarding the proposal in 1.1 above.
- 2.1 To agree to the publication of the required Statutory Notices to progress this proposal.
- 2.2 That following the statutory notice period the matter is reported further to the meeting of the Children and Young People Committee on 1 June 2015 for a final decision.

### **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Brighton & Hove City Council has had a policy, as set out in its Protocol for the Creation of an All-through Primary School, of supporting the amalgamation of infant and junior schools where appropriate since 2000. This policy was

reaffirmed in the new School Organisation Plan 2013 – 2017 adopted by the Council at its meeting on 27 March 2014. The Protocol states that the Council will consider merging linked infant and junior schools when the Head Teacher of one of the schools leaves. Each case for possible amalgamation is considered on its merits and any proposals for change are subject to public consultation. The consultation paper (Appendix 1) sets out the main reasons for this policy.

- 3.2 This proposal has come forward now because the Head Teacher of Davigdor Infant School is retiring and therefore leaving the school. At present Davigdor Infant and Somerhill Junior Schools operate as separate institutions on the same site, each with its own Head Teacher, staff and governing body. The majority of children transfer from the Infant School to the Junior School at age 7+.
- 3.3 Both schools have positive Ofsted judgements. Somerhill Junior School was graded 'good' with 'outstanding' leadership and management and 'outstanding' behaviour and safety of pupils in December 2014. Davigdor Infant School was graded 'outstanding' in July 2008 and as a result of desk top monitoring Ofsted has not found it necessary to re-inspect the school since that time.
- 3.4 In accordance with the Council's Protocol, in the Autumn Term 2014 officers discussed the future arrangement for Davigdor Infant and Somerhill Junior Schools with the two governing bodies, separately and then in a joint meeting. The two schools already work very well together. At the end of this process both governing bodies confirmed their support for consultation on a proposal to amalgamate the two schools.
- 3.5 The proposal is to create a four form entry community primary school for pupils aged 4–11 years by closing Davigdor Infant School and extending the age range of Somerhill Junior School. This should in no way be seen as a 'takeover' of one school by the other. It is the legal means by which a single primary school would be achieved and both schools would work together as equal partners in bringing it about. The Head Teacher of the Junior School would continue as the Head Teacher of the primary school. All pupils offered a place at Davigdor Infants for Sept 2015 will automatically start at the newly amalgamated school from that date.
- 3.6 A draft Statutory Notice can be found at Appendix 5. If the recommendation of this report is approved, it is proposed to publish the Notice on 11 March 2015.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The alternative option would be for the two schools to continue to operate as separate infant and junior schools. The Council's policy is based on sound educational and organisational reasons and the rationale for the amalgamation has been strongly supported through the consultation.

#### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The consultation document (Appendix 1) was issued on Monday 12 January. It was published online and was circulated to the parents, staff and governors of Davigdor Infant and Somerhill Junior Schools, to nearby pre-school settings and

via the Schools Bulletin to the Heads of all schools in the city. It was also circulated to local Councillors.

- 5.2 As part of the public consultation process two public meetings were held at Somerhill Junior School on Monday 19 January 2015 and at Davigdor Infant School on Wednesday 21st January 2015. The meetings were noted and a copy of the notes is included as Appendix 2 to this report.
- 5.3 This initial stage of the consultation ended on 27 February 2015. The responses to this consultation exercise have been collated and analysed and a summary is included at Appendix 3 to this report. Copies of all responses are available for inspection by members of the Committee in Members Rooms or from Roz Scott (email [roz.scott@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:roz.scott@brighton-hove.gov.uk)).
- 5.4 In summary 74 responses were received in support of the proposal and 26 were against the proposal by the end of the consultation period. Two further responses in favour of the proposal were received by post shortly after the deadline.
- 5.5 Those in support of the proposal were keen to benefit from a simpler, single admissions process and a smooth transition. Respondents were keen to see the school retain its nurturing environment under the leadership of a strong Head. Some felt that an all through school would create a more nurturing environment and some siblings preferred to be in the same school. Some made the point that there should be no further bulge years.
- 5.6 Those opposed to the proposal raised concerns about the school becoming too big, unwieldy and staff workloads being overstretched. They feared that the Head would not know all the children and would be distracted from consolidating improvements. Nine respondents were concerned that the school would lose money. Some felt the infant school was safe because it is separate, that transition between the two schools was not a problem and that it was good for children to have a fresh start at 7+. Some argued that the infant school needed a new dedicated Head Teacher to run separate school with close ties to the junior school. Several respondents felt that resources should be put into undersubscribed schools instead of admitting pupils based on distance alone, resulting in bulge years to schools that are already big. Some were concerned that the merger may result in the loss of senior managers and administrative staff.
- 5.7 The two governing bodies were provided with a summary of the responses to the consultation and considered their own response at meetings on 2 March (Davigdor) and 3 March (Somerhill). Both governing bodies decided unanimously to support the publication of a statutory notice of the proposal to amalgamate the two schools and their formal responses are attached as Appendix 4.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 Public consultation about the amalgamation of Davigdor Infant and Somerhill Junior Schools has shown that there is a high level of support from parents, staff and governors for the proposal to amalgamate the two schools. Both governing

bodies have confirmed their unanimous support for the proposal. The proposal is in accordance with the Council's policy, most recently affirmed in the School Organisation Plan 2013 – 2017. It is therefore recommended that the Committee approves the publication of a statutory notice in respect of this proposal

## **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct implications as a result of the recommendation for publication of the statutory notice. Only if a decision is agreed to close one of the schools and extend the age range of the other will there be any financial implications

*Finance Officer Consulted: Andy Moore*

*Date: 17/02/15*

### Legal Implications:

- 7.2 In order to achieve the proposed amalgamation it will be necessary to close Davigdor Infant School and extend the age range of Somerhill Junior School to cater for pupils aged from 4 to 11. Statutory notices will need to be published in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 as amended, and associated Regulations. Following publication there will be a period of four weeks during which any person or organisation can submit comments on the proposal to the Council. At the end of the representation period a decision must be made on the proposal within two months.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Serena Kynaston*

*Date: 18/02/2015*

### Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 There are no equalities implications arising from this proposal. The City Council as admissions authority must treat all applications openly and fairly in accordance with the statutory School Admissions Code.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 There are no sustainability implications arising from this proposal.

### Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.5 None

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Consultation document



2. Notes from the public meetings held on 19 January and 21 January 2015
3. Analysis of responses to the consultation document
4. Responses from the governing bodies of Davigdor Infant School and Somerhill Junior School
5. Draft Notice

#### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. Individual responses to the consultation can be viewed by members of the Committee in Room 312, Kings House – please contact Roz Scott, [roz.scott@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:roz.scott@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or 01273 290736.

#### **Background Documents**

1. None





## Brighton & Hove

### CONSULTATION PAPER

# PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE DAVIGDOR INFANT SCHOOL AND SOMERHILL JUNIOR SCHOOL IN HOVE TO BECOME AN ALL THROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM SEPTEMBER 2015

- Inviting you to have your say -

#### **Why are we consulting you?**

The council wishes to consult on a proposal that an all through primary school is created to replace Davigdor Infant School and Somerhill Junior School from 1 September 2015. This consultation paper is published by Brighton & Hove City Council and explains the reasons for this proposal and the arrangements for consultation. At the end you will find a reply slip for you to let us know what you think. There is also some information about what happens after the consultation. The paper is being distributed to the schools' staff, pupils, governors and parents and other groups who may be interested in the proposal. It is also available on the Council's website under the consultation portal.

This consultation is being conducted in accordance with the [School Organisation: statutory guidance](#) published by the Department for Education in January 2014.

#### **Some background facts**

Brighton & Hove City Council has had a policy of supporting the amalgamation of infant and junior schools where appropriate since 2000. This policy was reaffirmed in the new School Organisation Plan 2013 – 2017 adopted by the Council at its meeting on 27 March 2014. Each case for possible amalgamation is considered on its merits and any proposals for change are subject to public consultation.

The Council has a statutory duty to secure a maintained school place for any child that wants one. We are committed to working with schools to make them centres for community learning, and supporting them in meeting the wider needs of the community. Our aim is to ensure as far as possible that children can access a primary school that is local to their home.

## **The proposal**

Davigdor Infant School and Somerhill Junior School are separate schools with their own governing bodies and leadership teams, but they occupy a single site and share some facilities including the playing field and the school kitchen, which links the two sets of buildings. They are 'linked' schools under the council's admissions policy, which means that Davigdor children have priority in the allocation of places at Somerhill. The great majority of Davigdor children do transfer to Somerhill.

Davigdor was judged to be an outstanding school by Ofsted at its last inspection in July 2008. Somerhill was judged by Ofsted in December 2014 to be a good school with outstanding leadership and management. Davigdor's head teacher, Ged Cotton, has announced that he is to retire at the end of this school year in July.

In accordance with the council's policy, council officers have met with the two governing bodies, separately and at a joint meeting of the two governing bodies, to discuss whether the time is now right to form a single school from Davigdor and Somerhill. These discussions have focussed throughout on the best interests of current and future children at the schools. The governing bodies also discussed with the head of an amalgamated infant and junior school his experience of the process.

The discussions considered factors relating to both all through primary schools and separate infant and junior schools. The council's policy is to encourage the development of all through primary schools where this is supported locally because we see a range of potential benefits. These include:

- Greater continuity in teaching, pupil care and development
- Greater continuity in planning the curriculum across the stages of education so that pupils make the best possible progress in learning
- Greater flexibility that a 4-11 school has in organising classes, deploying teachers and support staff and using resources, including buildings, more effectively
- Closer contact with parents over a longer period of time and covering the full span of the children's primary education
- Practical advantages for parents e.g. same staff development days, the same school policies relating to home links, uniform, codes of conduct
- Social interaction between younger and older pupils
- Separate admissions applications at age seven will not be necessary and any uncertainty about transfer between the schools would be removed

We also recognise that there are benefits in having separate infant and junior schools. Teachers and support staff are able to develop strong specialist expertise in relation to the particular age range. They are able to focus on creating a particular environment which meets the needs of either infant or junior age children. Specialist leadership can be developed which focusses on bringing out the best characteristics of infant and junior schools. For some children, a new start at 7+ may be beneficial.

Having discussed factors such as these, the two governing bodies have concluded that they support consultation on a proposal to form a single all through community primary school for children aged 4 to 11 years. Their views will be finalised in light of the consultation outcomes.

If approved, the school would be four forms of entry (i.e. an intake of 120 pupils each year, and up to 128 each year in Years 3 – 6).

### **The amalgamation process**

The legal process for achieving a single primary school in this situation is that one school is formally closed and the age range of the other school is extended. In this case, as Davigdor's head teacher is leaving, Davigdor would close and Somerhill would become a 4 – 11 community primary school. However, this should in no way be seen as a 'takeover' of one school by the other. It is the technical means by which a single primary school would be achieved and both schools would work together as equal partners in bringing it about.

The Davigdor governing body would cease to exist on the day the school closed. Legally the Somerhill governing body would continue, but both governing bodies would commit to working together to create a new governing body for the school which included representation from both Davigdor and Somerhill.

As with any process of change, the interests of staff must also be considered carefully, and all staff and their unions will be consulted as part of this consultation. We would expect that all permanent full and part-time staff from the closing school would be assimilated to posts in the approved structure for the primary school and that applications from temporary staff would be considered when all the permanent staff had been offered posts.

## Consultation arrangements

We have arranged two public meetings to give parents, carers and other local people the opportunity to hear more about the proposal and to ask questions. These meetings will be held at Somerhill Junior School (Somerhill Road, Hove, BN3 1RP) on **Monday 19 January 2015 at 7:00 p.m.** and at Davigdor Infant School, (Somerhill Road, Hove, BN3 1RG) on **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015 at 7:00 p.m.** Anyone with an interest in the proposal is welcome to attend either of these meetings – you don't have to attend the meeting at your child's school. The meeting will be attended by council officers and members of the schools' senior leadership teams and governing bodies.

At this stage, this is a proposal for consultation and no decision has been made. Your views are important. If, having read this document, you would like to comment on the proposal, there are several ways you may do so:

- You can complete and return (either to your child's school or Kings House) the reply slip included in this document
- You can send a letter to Michael Nix, Head of Education Planning and Contracts, Grand Avenue, Hove BN23 2LS. *Please mark your letter for the attention of Michael Nix*
- You can complete a form online on the consultation portal of the Council's website at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/DavigdorandSomerhill](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/DavigdorandSomerhill)
- You can email your response: please address your email to [educationandinclusion@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:educationandinclusion@brighton-hove.gov.uk).

## **Replies must be received by Friday, 27 February 2015**

In the interests of economy, letters and emails will not be acknowledged or responded to.

## **The next stage**

All the views put forward during the consultation stage will be reported to the Children & Young People Committee at a meeting on 9 March 2015. The views of the governing body of both schools will be made clear in the report. The Committee will decide whether to progress to the next stage in the process.

If it is decided to move to the next stage the council publishes a Statutory Notice which describes the proposal. The notice remains open for a period of four weeks during which time objections to and comments on the proposal may be made by any person or group. Details of how to make an objection or comment are explained in the Statutory Notice.

The council has the authority to make the decision on whether to implement the proposal contained in the Statutory Notice but in doing so has to take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education. Any comments or objections have to be considered as part of the decision making process. The final decision regarding this proposed change will be made by the Children & Young People Committee at its meeting in June 2015, taking into account the responses to the Statutory Notice and the views expressed by the governors of both schools.

The proposals set out in this document are put forward as a basis for consultation only. It is stressed that *no decisions have yet been made* and that none will be made until consultations have been completed and all views carefully considered by Brighton & Hove City Council and the governors of both schools. The consultation is however not a referendum and in reaching a decision at each stage of the process the Children & Young People Committee will need to take all factors into account, including the responses to consultation.

The table below sets out the timetable for this process.

Publication of Consultation Document	Monday 12 January 2015
Last date for responses	Friday 27 February 2015
Children & Young People Committee decides whether to proceed to Statutory Notice	Monday 9 March 2015
Issue Statutory Notice	Wednesday 11 March 2015
End of Statutory Notice period	Wednesday 8 April 2015
Decision by Children & Young People Committee	June 2015

The Children & Young People Committee's major objective is to ensure the outcome of this consultation has local support and is in the best interests of children in Brighton and Hove.

The two schools are located in Goldsmid Ward, although they draw some of their children from other wards. The Councillors for Goldsmid ward are:

Councillor Ruth Buckley

Councillor Rob Jarrett

Councillor Alex Phillips



# RESPONSE FORM

*Please return no later than  
27 February 2015*

To: Michael Nix  
Head of Education Planning and Contracts  
Kings House  
Grand Avenue  
Hove  
BN3 2LS

Tel: (01273) 290732

**Proposed Creation of an all through primary school to replace Davigdor Infant and Somerhill Junior Schools from September 2015**

<b>Name and Address</b>	
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Are you a: parent or carer / member of staff / governor / pupil / other? (Please indicate)

I support the proposal to create an all through primary school to replace Davigdor Infant and Somerhill Junior Schools from September 2015

I do not support the proposal to create an all through primary school to replace Davigdor Infant and Somerhill Junior Schools from 1 September 2015

*Please add any comments here and on the reverse of this slip if needed:*

Signature and date:



**Davigdor Infant School: Public Consultation Meeting on proposed amalgamation with Somerhill Junior School, 7.00pm to 8.30pm, 21st January 2015 at Davigdor Infant School**

Attendees: Ged Cotton – Headteacher of Davigdor (GC),  
Di Gare - Chair of Governors, Davigdor Infants  
Shaun Collins - Headteacher of Somerhill Juniors (SC),  
Claire Roberts – Chair of Governors – Somerhill Juniors (CR)  
Michael Nix – Head of Education Planning and Contracts, Brighton and Hove City Council (MN),  
Gillian Churchill – Head of Capital Strategic and Development Planning, Brighton and Hove City Council (GCh),  
Approximately 15 members of public

Di Gare gave introductions and stated that the governors recognise the need for change in light of the resignation of their head teacher. However they want to be sure that the ethos and education offered by the school is not lost. The Governors will finalise their views at the end of the consultation period.

MN gave a short presentation outlining the process and why the LA was making the proposal. He also stated that this is a genuine consultation, no decision has yet been made and that the final decision will be made by elected members, not by officers. All responses to the consultation will be seen by members before the decision is made.

The floor was then opened to questions

**1. What is the compelling reason for change? Especially in light of recent disruption caused by the provision of bulge classes at the school?**

The proposal to amalgamate will afford greater continuity for children from 4 – 11. It also removes uncertainty of transaction from infant to junior and provides developmental opportunity for staff. The Local Authority believes that there are good reasons to promote all through primary schools and these are shown in the consultation document. The disruption experienced by children will be minimal given that the two schools already operate from one site and currently work closely together. The resignation of the head teacher was the trigger for consideration of merging the two schools.

**2. Why were the two schools separate in the first place?**

It is believed that it is because the two schools were not opened at the same time. Somerhill Junior School was opened in the mid 1970's and Davigdor Infant relocated to this site sometime in the 1980's when the previous building needed to be rebuilt.

**3. Is the head strong enough to manage the larger school?**

SC said that it is a very daunting proposition but that he is excited by the challenge. The most recent Ofsted inspection at Somerhill showed outstanding leadership and management and therefore there is no reason to assume that this would change.

**4. Will education levels drop as a result of this merger?**

The teachers at both schools know their jobs and since there is no intention to change the teachers as part of this proposal there is no reason to think that education levels will drop as

a result of this proposal. There has been a considerable amount of joint working between the schools to ensure continuity of approach. The proposed merger will enhance and strengthen this.

**5. How will children and staff be supported through this time of change?**

Staff will have regular meetings and events to support them through the change. Once the decision has been made and if the decision is to amalgamate, there will be considerable joint working.

**6. What are the views of the staff?**

Several options were put to the staff and the majority response to options was for an element of change, although there was also a significant group of staff who would prefer no change. This represented the fact that there are some 'threats' associated with change but some considerable opportunities too. More detailed consultation is being undertaken with the staff and unions.

**7. Concern about the loss of a key person. How will this be addressed?**

SC advised he will look to schools who have gone through this process to see how best to structure the school's senior leadership team. A larger school may also attract new staff who are looking for new opportunities.

**8. Concern about the size of the school and the fact that Reception age pupils will be mixing with year 6 pupils – loss of separate space for younger children.**

There will continue to be a safe environment for all children. In addition there will be the opportunity for mentoring by older children which provides benefits for both age groups.

**9. Will the children remain in current parts of school?**

Initially yes because the physical environment suggests this is sensible (size of toilets etc.).

**10. Proposal says 4FE school. What about the bulge classes?**

The bulge classes will move through the school(s) regardless of the decision on this proposal.

**11. How involved will current infant head teacher be involved in the amalgamation?**

The level of his involvement will be a decision for any joint governing body that is created. It is expected that his expertise will be made good use of.

**12. Is this a cost cutting exercise?**

Any saving made from this exercise would be from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Therefore if there are any savings made (from the lump sum) this remains within DSG and has to be spent on schools. Funding for schools includes a lump sum per school of £150K. If the schools merge this will reduce the budget by one lump sum after a transition period. It is not anticipated that this will cause future budget problems for the school – it has not presented problems where schools have merged elsewhere in the city.

**13. Will the friends of Davigdor cease to exist upon merger?**

The group already undertakes joint projects to fundraise and there is no reason why this should change as a result of this proposal.

**14. What happens to Ofsted rating?**

At the present time it will be the Ofsted rating for Somerhill which would be the determining factor – although obviously government policy can change.

**15. Doesn't the timeframe leave very little time to recruit a new head to Davigdor if the proposal was not to proceed?**

It is something that has been considered and if this was the case interim arrangements would be made.

**16. Who makes the decision?**

The final decision will be made by the Children and Young People Committee. The decision to proceed with the consultation has been made by the Executive Director of Childr3en's Services having consulted with the Chair of the Children & Young People Committee and the lead Children's Services Members for the other two party groups.

**17. What about name, uniform etc.?**

This is something that will be decided following consultation with parents, pupils and staff.

**Meeting ended 8.15pm.**



**Somerhill/Davigdor Proposed Merger Public Meeting  
19<sup>th</sup> January 2015  
Somerhill Junior School  
7.00pm to 8.30pm**

Attendees: Shaun Collins - Headteacher of Somerhill Juniors (SC)  
Euan Hanington – Deputy of Somerhill Juniors (EH)  
Claire Roberts – Chair of Governor – Somerhill Juniors (CR)  
Ged Cotton – Headteacher of Davigdor (GC)  
Michael Nix – Head of Education Planning and Contracts, Brighton and Hove City Council (MN),  
Gillian Churchill – Head of Capital Strategic and Development Planning, Brighton and Hove City Council (GCh),  
5 governors of Somerhill Juniors  
3 Governors of Davigdor Infants  
Approximately 17 members of public

Claire Roberts gave introductions and stated that the governors recognise the need for change and are keen to explore the options that a merger would provide. The Governors will finalise their views at the end of the consultation period.

MN gave a short presentation outlining the process and why the LA was making the proposal. He also stated that this is a genuine consultation, no decision has yet been made and that the final decision will be made by elected members, not by officers. All responses to the consultation will be seen by members before the decision is made.

The floor was then opened to questions

**1. Will the bulge classes continue for Somerhill regardless of whether this proposal progresses or not?**

Yes.

**2. If the schools amalgamate what are the indicators for a positive outcome? What are the staff feeling? Where amalgamations have not gone ahead, why not? What are the views of GC and SC?**

SC said that change is very daunting particularly a change of this magnitude. He knows that the previous time a merger of the two schools was proposed it did not progress. He believes that it didn't happen five years ago as the schools were not ready. In other cases where mergers of this nature have not progressed it is because there are logistical difficulties such as the two schools being on separate sites. SC stated that he believes primary model is the best for educational outcomes.

**3. What about loss of expertise that currently exists? Will the same level of support be available from the LA?**

SC said he cannot comment specifically on how this will be addressed but leadership structures will be examined in similar sized schools and all evidence available will be assembled and interrogated. He said that he currently runs an appraisal process which allows him to appraise key SMT members with other members of staff being appraised by them. It is not felt that the proposed merger will result in any loss of expertise (other than that of the retiring head teacher which would have happened in any case).

GC and SC also both mentioned the shortage of school leaders which has left some schools with an uncertainty over leadership. CR would look to at least maintain the current level of leadership.

The level of support from the LA would not alter as a result of this proposal. In addition to this there are strong school partnerships – schools supporting schools - which will also remain.

**4. Will the finance levels of the merged school change? Will there be significant changes to staff?**

Any saving made from this exercise would be from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Therefore if there are any savings made (from the lump sum) this remains within DSG and has to be spent on schools. Funding for schools includes a lump sum per school of £150K. If the schools merge this will reduce the budget by one lump sum after a transition period. It is not anticipated that this will cause future budget problems for the school.

Staffing levels would be looked at and unions are being consulted. It is anticipated that majority of staff would retain their jobs (assuming they wanted this). In terms of redundancy there are no obvious immediate redundancies.

**5. Continuity of two schools and policies – currently differences between cultures and ethos in two schools – how has this been managed in other schools?**

CR said that this would be a main focus of the new governing body. They would look at how previous mergers were handled such as St Luke's and make use of the best practice. This would include how they involved the pupils and parents in the process. It will also be important to use the expertise that already exists in both Somerhill and Davigdor schools.

**6. Would the school be renamed?**

CR advised that this is something to consider and that the school community would be involved in any proposed changes.

**7. Is it possible to create a school within a school – children like the small school feeling.**

CR advised joint working between the schools already exists. Whole range of structures will be explored to ensure appropriate collegiate structures are put in place. There will always be key stage 1 and 2 which naturally have their differences but they will be linked by golden threads between the two schools. Each individual child's experience will be expanded as and when they are ready.

**8. Overall a good idea but feel there is more detail needed to enable a decision to be made.**

**9. Is the £150K lump sum referred to earlier the extent of loss of funding?**

Yes this lump sum is provided to ensure sufficient sum available to meet management costs. Remainder of funding calculated based on number and nature of pupils. This proposal is not being made for cost saving reasons, it is about school re-organisation. There will be no savings to LA as a result of proposal.

**10. If there are two good schools why change it?**

The opportunity to merge has arisen as a result of the resignation of the head teacher at Davigdor. This has meant that there will have to be change of some sort, even if it is only a new head at Davigdor. CR said that she feels that if merged the schools have the opportunity to build from strength.



**11. Could process undermine success of schools, would staff have to reapply for their own post etc.?**

It is considered unlikely that the process to merge would undermine the success of the two schools. It is not thought that there would be any reason for staff to re-apply for their own jobs.

**12. Will schools give their thoughts on process and whether they support proposals in a less formal environment?**

EH said that staff believe that this proposal represents a good opportunity for the school, its staff and pupils.

**Meeting ended 8.30pm.**



**Consultation Responses on the proposed amalgamation of Davigdor Infants and Somerhill Junior Schools to become an all through primary school from September 2015**

**The Proposal:** to merge Davigdor Infant and Somerhill Junior Schools from September 2015

**Type of respondent (not all responders replied to this question):**

Parent or carer: 60 staff: 7 governor: 3 pupil: 1 [1pupil+parent]

**In support:** response form: 56 e-mails: 0 online portal: 18

**Total in support: 74** [Parents: 47 staff: 6 governor: 3 pupil: 1; 17 did not identify]

**Opposed:** E-mail: 0, online portal: 3, paper response form: 23

**Total opposed: 26** [18 parents opposed 7 members of staff; 1 did not identify]

**Positive consultation responses:**

- No further bulge years please (2)
- There will be no need to apply to admissions for a place in Year 3 which removes the uncertainty. Simpler process (6)
- Smooth transition needed and the school must retain its nurturing environment and all the current after school activities (3)
- Strange that the schools are not already one school (1)
- Significant benefit in amalgamating the schools with one strong head teacher to manage both schools and further improve standards (3)
- Will create a better, more consistent environment for pupils (2)
- If staff support, the parent will support the proposal (1)
- Positive and exciting proposal (2)
- It is simpler to drop children off at one main reception (1)
- Siblings prefer to be in the same school (1)

**Negative consultation responses:**

- The school has already become impersonal and unwieldy. Senior Management will not know all of the children and their workloads would be further stretched. Additional duties will distract the Head from consolidating improvements. The school will lose money (11)
- Davigdor Infant School has remained a safe environment for young children because it is separate. There is a marked difference between a reception and Y6 pupil: the benefits of them mixing are not clear (3)
- The proposals are about saving money and are not in the best interests of the children. Put the children first (6)
- The needs of infant and junior school children are different and a different environment is needed with distinct specialist knowledge. The

## Appendix Three

new start aged 7 is beneficial and the pupils feel like they are growing up. Transition from Davigdor Infant School to Somerhill is not a problem. Children need to learn to cope well with change (11)

- The school will become too big if it is merged (14)
- The infant school needs a new, dedicated head teacher. The schools can then remain essentially independent but friendly and supportive (2)
- The Year 5 and Y6 pupils are more independent as they prepare for secondary school (1)
- Will the council honour its pledge to limit admissions to 120 children in Reception to Y2 and 128 pupils in Years 3-6? (6)
- Parents are prepared to travel to take their children to school. Resources should be put into weaker, less well-attended schools instead of overloading high-performing schools. Proximity of homes to schools should not be the deciding factor (2)
- Job losses are a concern (for example in the school office and those in leadership roles) (4)
- Staff may be forced to teach a key stage of which they have no knowledge or experience. (3)
- The building does not allow children to mix and play together. (4)
- Insufficient information given about the amalgamation of the two schools. Will teething problems affect pupils in Years 5 & Y6? (1)
- There is no clear plan of how the schools will amalgamate and the timescale of September 2015 is unrealistic (1)

# Davigdor Infants' School

Headteacher: Mr. Ged Cotton

Telephone: 01273 731397

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E-mail: [office@davigdor.brighton-hove.sch.uk](mailto:office@davigdor.brighton-hove.sch.uk)

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3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015

Dr Jo Lyons  
Assistant Director of Children's Services (Education & Inclusion)  
King's House  
Grand Avenue  
Hove  
East Sussex  
BN3 2SU

Children & Young People Committee, 9 March 2015

Item 85: Proposed Amalgamation of Davigdor Infant School and Somerhill Junior School

Appendix 4a: Response from the governing body of Davigdor Infant School

Dear Jo

## **Proposed amalgamation of Davigdor Infant School and Somerhill Junior School**

The governors of Davigdor met last night to discuss the final figures and comments resulting from the consultation process which ended on 27<sup>th</sup> February. The vote which followed this discussion was in favour (8:0) of asking the Local Authority to progress to the next stage in the amalgamation process i.e. the publishing of statutory notices.

Thus, on behalf of the Governing Body of Davigdor Infant School, I ask that we progress to the next stage in the amalgamation process.

The consultation process was made more difficult at Davigdor than we feel it needed to have been. In the Autumn term the governors inadvertently misled the staff by assuring them that, if an amalgamation went ahead, there would be no reduction in the overall budget. We gave this assurance because on three occasions we were told this by you and your staff. However, once the consultation process began, we learnt otherwise.

For the development of trust and better communication in the partnership between Davigdor and the Local Authority, the budget reduction should have been made clear from the very beginning of our joint discussions. This would have avoided some of the comments and questions the Governing Body is now having to re-address.

Yours sincerely,

Di Gare.  
Chair of Governors.





**Children and Young People Committee, 9 March 2015**

**Item 85: Proposed Amalgamation of Davigdor Infant School and Somerhill Junior School**

Response from the Governing Body at Somerhill Junior School to the amalgamation consultation

Meeting: 3/3/15, 5pm

8/10 governors present

Response:

The governing body reviewed the consultation outcomes and responses. We discussed the comments made by stakeholders.

Any newly amalgamated school would retain the age phase specialisms that our children need, from foundation stage to Year 6. This would require the specialist teachers to continue to lead and teach in their areas of expertise. Any moves for staff across the phases would be by mutual agreement.

We would work with Davigdor governors to develop a leadership structure that is fit for purpose for the size of the school and is able to identify the needs of each child to ensure they exceed their potential.

We fully understand the concerns about budgetary implications over the next few years and will continue to plan for effective use of budget and resources to fully meet the needs of our children.

Stakeholders have recognised the benefits around transition and this has been one of the key reasons for supporting the amalgamation – the continuity of provision for children from 4 to 11.

The Somerhill headteacher is committed to the whole community of Davigdor and Somerhill and has demonstrated significant experience of managing change and improving outcomes. Ofsted (December 2014) recognised his outstanding leadership and how he has implemented schools values as curriculum drivers to promote the positive learning ethos.

Somerhill governors remain committed to the amalgamation and fully support the proposal.





## Appendix 5

### Brighton & Hove City Council

#### **Statutory Notice: Changes to Davigdor Community Infant and Somerhill Community Junior Schools, Hove**

Notice is given in accordance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the Act), as amended, that Brighton & Hove City Council, Kings House, Grand Avenue, Hove, BN3 2LS intends to make the following changes;

#### **Part 1: Discontinuation of Davigdor Community Infant School so that an all through primary school can be established**

In accordance with section 15(1) of the Act to discontinue Davigdor Community Infant School of Somerhill Road Hove BN3 1RG from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015.

The proposal is linked to the prescribed alteration set out in Part 2, to create an all through primary school with an extended age range of 4 to 11 (see part 2 of this notice). Pupils attending Davigdor Infant School at the time of closure will be offered places at Somerhill Junior School, which, subject to Part 2, will change its age range and enlarge its capacity, becoming an all through primary school from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015.

#### **Part 2 : Prescribed changes to Somerhill Community Junior School so that it becomes an all through primary school**

In accordance with section 19(1) of the Act to make a prescribed alteration to Somerhill Junior School, Somerhill Road Hove BN3 1RP from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 by

- 1) changing the age range of the school by a year or more and,
- 2) enlarging the premises of the school

The current age range of the school is 7 to 11. The Local Authority proposes to extend the age range of the school to create an all through primary school that will cater for pupils from age 4 to age 11. The current capacity of the school is 512. The proposed capacity of the primary school will be 872. It is proposed that the admission number for the school will be 120. It is proposed that the increase in capacity will be achieved by utilising the premises of the former infant school that is located on the same site as the current junior school.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: Michael Nix, Head of Education Planning and Contracts, Brighton & Hove City Council, Kings House, Grand Avenue, Hove, BN3 2LS or by contacting Gillian Churchill on 01273 293515 or via email at [gillian.churchill@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:gillian.churchill@brighton-hove.gov.uk). The full proposal is also on the council's website and can be found at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/school-statutory-notices](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/school-statutory-notices)

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal (i.e. by 8<sup>th</sup> April 2015), any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to Michael Nix, Head of Education Planning and Contracts, Brighton & Hove City Council, Kings House, Grand Avenue, Hove, BN3 2SR.

Signed: Pinaki Ghoshal

Publication Date: 11<sup>th</sup> March 2015

**Explanatory Notes: Part 1 & 2 are interdependent**



