



Brighton & Hove

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

PROPOSED EXPANSION OF BALFOUR JUNIOR SCHOOL TO FOUR FORMS OF ENTRY FROM SEPTEMBER 2010

- inviting you to have your say -

Why are we consulting you?

This document is published by Brighton and Hove City Council and is intended as a basis for consultation with governors, staff, pupils, parents and other interested groups about a proposal to expand Balfour Junior School to four forms of entry.

This document sets out the reasons for the proposal, identifies the issues for consideration and explains the arrangements for consultation. At the end you will find details of a public meeting to which you are invited and a reply slip for you to let us know what you think. There is also some information about what happens after consultation.

Some background facts

Brighton and Hove City Council has a legal requirement to provide sufficient school places for all school age children in the city. School places should be provided in such a way that parents and pupils can access a local school wherever possible.

The current position

At present there are two primary phase schools adjacent to each other – Balfour Infant School and Balfour Junior School. Each school operates as a separate institution with its own headteacher, staff and governing body. Children remain in the Infant school until the age of seven, and then are able to transfer to the Junior School in accordance with the City's admissions criteria. The majority of children wish to transfer from one school to the other in this way. However owing to an historical anomaly while the infant school is a four form entry school, the junior school is only a three form entry school. This means that 25% of pupils at the infant school are unable to transfer to the junior school with their friends and peers.

The Council has a commitment to working with schools to make them centres for community learning, and supporting them in meeting the wider needs of the community by engaging social services, health, the police, and the voluntary sector.

What is proposed?

The proposal is to expand the junior school so that it becomes a four form entry school with a yearly intake of 128 to match the four form nature of the infant school.

To support the expansion of the school there will be an extension of the school premises that will be funded by a combination of the Primary Capital Programme funding, the schools Devolved Formula Capital and other council capital funding. This extension will provide additional classrooms to accommodate the extra pupils. There will also be some internal remodelling and refurbishment to provide accommodation that will better fit the needs of current teaching and learning and the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum.

What might be the advantages of expanding the school to match the size of the infant school?

At present the two schools Balfour Infant School and Balfour Junior School operate as separate institutions, each with its own Headteacher, staff and governing body. Children remain in the Infant school until the age of seven, and then are able to transfer to the Junior School in accordance with the City's admissions criteria.

Unfortunately the difference in the size between the infant school (at four forms of entry) and the junior school (at three forms of entry) means that some children who wish to are unable to transfer to the junior school at the age of 7. Expanding the junior school by one form of entry would mean that a greater number of pupils who wished to transfer to the junior school would be able to do so. This would be an advantage to the children as they would be able to transfer to the junior school with peer groups and friends made in the infant stage.

The proposed change would also assist parents and carers who have children in both the infant and junior stages as it would limit the number of journeys they might have to make to drop children at school in the morning and collect them in the evening.

By increasing the number of places available at the junior school it is likely that more local families would be able to access their local primary school. This will assist the Local Authority ambition that schools become centres of community learning.

What might be the disadvantages of expanding the school to four forms of entry?

A concern sometimes put forward regarding expansion is that larger schools can be more stressful for the pupils and that staff will not be able to get to know every pupil. Some parents may be concerned that the educational outcomes for their children will not be as good in a larger school. Brighton & Hove currently has six primary phase schools that are four form entry schools (the size now proposed for Balfour Junior School). The Ofsted outcomes for 3 of these schools has been a grade of outstanding. This suggests that outcomes for children are not unduly affected by the physical size of the school. Balfour Junior School is currently an outstanding junior school and there is no evidence to suggest that this situation would change as a result of the proposal.

Views of the Governing Bodies

The governing body of the junior school has been consulted as has the governing body of the adjacent infant school. The proposal was considered by the governing body prior to taking the decision to hold a public consultation. The initial view of both governing bodies was that it was a sensible and desirable proposal that would benefit the community served by both schools.

The views of the governing bodies will be finalised in light of the consultation, Governors will hold a special meeting at the end of the consultation period to determine their final views on the proposal.

Consultation arrangements

If, having read this document, you would like to comment on the proposals, there are several opportunities for doing so:

- You should complete and return (either to the school or Kings House) the reply slip included in this document.
- You can send a letter to the Assistant Director School Support and Central Area, Kings House, Grand Avenue, Hove BN23 2SR. *Please mark your letter for the attention of Gil Sweetenham*
- In the interests of economy, letters will not be acknowledged or responded to.
- **Replies must be received by 12 November 2008**
- You are welcome to attend the **Public Meeting** which has been arranged for:

Date: 6 November 2008
Time: 7pm
Venue: Balfour Junior School

- At this meeting parents and others will have the opportunity to put forward their views. Officers from the Children and Young Peoples Trust will be present to clarify points of detail.

The next stage

All of the views put forward during the consultation stage will be reported to the Cabinet Member for the Children and Young Peoples Trust. This will allow an informed decision to be made regarding progression to the next stage in the process.

If it is decided to move ahead with the proposal the next stage is the issuing of a Statutory Notice detailing the proposal. The notice will be in force for a period of six 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 will be incorporated within the Statutory Notice.

The Council is empowered 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 of Children Schools and Families. 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 Cabinet Member for the Children and Young Peoples Trust.

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 and Hove City Council.

The Children and Young Peoples Trust major objective is to ensure the outcome of this consultation has local support and is in the best interests of pupils in Brighton and Hove.

DO PLEASE LET US KNOW YOUR VIEWS

Gil Sweetenham

Assistant Director, Central Area and School Support
Brighton and Hove Council 01273 293433

Table 1 – Current and forecast rolls for Balfour Junior School and surrounding schools including Balfour Infant School

	Capacity Range	Admission Numbers	Spring 08	Forecast Rolls assuming proposal implemented			
				Jan 09	Jan10	Jan 11	Jan 12
Balfour Junior School	324-360	96	390	392	397	427	459
Balfour Infant School	324-360	120	353	358	360	360	360
Downs Junior School	432-	128	505	502	502	502	502

	480						
Downs Infant School	324-360	120	356	353	346	355	355
Hertford Junior School	190-212	60	129	126	137	140	140
Hertford Infant School	151-168	60	145	180	180	180	180

If you require any further copies of this document please request them by ringing 01273 293474 or emailing marie.chesham@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Address for this returning this document:
Marie Chesham Brighton & Hove City Council
Room 320, King's House, Grand Avenue
HOVE, BN3 2ZZ

Please return by **12 November 2008**

All responses will be treated confidentially
Thank you for your assistance in our review

The following timetable is proposed:

Publication of Consultation Document	1 October 2008
Public Consultation Meeting	6 November 2008
Last date for responses	12 November 2008
Report back to Children and Young Peoples Trust Board	1 December 2008
Issue Public Notice	2 December 2008
End of public notice period	13 January 2009
Decision by the Children and Young Peoples Trust Board	2 March 2009
Provisional Opening	1 September 2010

The Councillors for the area are:

Withdean	Ken Norman, Ann Norman and Pat Drake.
Preston Park	Juliet McCaffery, Kevin Allen and Amy Kennedy.
Hollingbury and Stanmer	Jeane Lepper, Pat Hawkes and Christine Simpson.

Please Note: Apart from the public meeting on 6th November 2008, which will be held at the school, all other meetings are held at Hove Town Hall or Brighton Town Hall. For the exact times, please contact Marie Chesham on telephone number:

01273 293474

RESPONSE FORM

*Please return no later than
12th November 2008*

To: Gil Sweetenham
Assistant Director Central Area
And School Support
Kings House

Tel: (01273) 293433

Fax: (01273) 293596

Proposed expansion of Balfour Junior School

Name

Address

(Please tick as appropriate) I am:

The parent of a pupil:

I support the proposal

A member of staff:

A school governor:

I do not support the proposal

(please state which school)

Other interested party:

(please state which)

My comments are as follows: *(please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)*

