



**Merger of Dunston Park Infant and  
St Mary's Junior Schools**

**Consultation Document**

June 2004

## Appendix 11(C)

To: ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

Dear Colleague

### **CONSULTATION ON THE MERGER OF DUNSTON PARK INFANT AND ST MARY'S JUNIOR SCHOOLS.**

West Berkshire Council wishes to consult on the merger of Dunston Park Infant School and St Mary's Junior School.

There will be a public consultation meeting on:

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2004  
At 7:30pm  
St. Mary's Junior School  
Park Avenue, Thatcham  
Berkshire RG18 4NP

to which you are invited.

This booklet is designed to give you background information on the issues raised and you will be able to seek more information at the meeting. If you are unable to attend the meeting or wish to put your comments in writing to John Powell (full details enclosed) you should do so by **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2004**.

I hope you will be able to attend.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Mollie Lock

**Portfolio Member  
Children and Young People**

Richard Hubbard

**Corporate Director  
Children and Young People**

## **CONSULTATION ON THE MERGER OF DUNSTON PARK INFANT SCHOOL AND ST MARY'S JUNIOR SCHOOL**

West Berkshire Council is consulting on the merger of Dunston Park Infant School and St. Mary's Junior School.

A public meeting to discuss this matter will be held at:

**St Mary's Junior School, Park Avenue, Thatcham  
Berkshire RG14 1LN**

7:30pm  
Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July

Representatives of West Berkshire Council and the CE Diocese of Oxford will be present to hear your views. Written responses can be sent to:

John Powell Service Development Manager  
Education Services  
Avonbank House  
West Street  
Newbury  
Berkshire  
RG14 1BZ

E-Mail: [JRPowell@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:JRPowell@westberks.gov.uk)

### **CURRENT POSITION**

West Berkshire needs to reduce the number of surplus places in the primary sector.

Guidance from the Audit Commission indicates that surplus places of between 5% and 10% is the appropriate level to allow for efficient use of resources, whilst also meeting some level of parental preference. In accordance with this, West Berkshire council was given the brief to look at reducing the number of surplus places in West Berkshire. To do this a list of criteria was drawn up for consideration which included: level of surplus places; unit cost; pupil mobility and turbulence; trend in number on roll; rural deprivation and community impact. Following research into these areas, the option of merging Dunston Park Infant School and St. Mary's C. E. (Controlled) Junior School seemed to satisfy these criteria.

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In analysing this option, West Berkshire Council used information taken from West Berkshire's May 2003 Surplus place return to the DfES. This showed that Dunston Park had 58 surplus places, equivalent to 32.3% of its capacity. This is the third highest level of surplus places within West Berkshire. This is exacerbated by the downward trend in numbers attending the school, a trend that is likely to continue despite the increased levels of housing within Thatcham. St. Mary's School, even following the removal of two classrooms from its capacity, shows 32 surplus places, 14.6% of its capacity. As with Dunston Park, this is exacerbated by the downward trend in pupil numbers. Clearly, given the numbers at the Infant School, this trend is forecast to continue.

Hence it is proposed to merge Dunston Park Infant School and St. Mary's C.E. (Controlled) Junior School into a 1.5fe (form of entry) primary School. There would need to be some capital expenditure on whichever of the two sites any new school was to be based, however, given the urban nature of the two schools and the relative distance between them, it is unlikely that there would be any transport implications associated with this option.

### OPTIONS

The following options are under consideration.

- Option 1:** The status quo should be maintained, including maintaining the surplus places.
- Option 2:** Merge Dunston Park Infant School and St Mary's Controlled Junior School to form a new community primary school of 315 pupils.
- Option 3:** Merge Dunston Park Infant School and St. Mary's Controlled Junior School to form a new Voluntary Aided primary school of 315 pupils.
- Option 4:** Some other course of action that may be proposed during the consultation period.

### In Community Schools

In Community Schools, staff are employed by the LEA. Religious Education follows the locally agreed syllabus. There may or may not be church governors but no single group of governors holds a majority on the governing body. Collective worship reflects the non-denominational character of the school.

In Community Schools, the LEA is the admissions authority. External maintenance is paid out of delegated funds and the LEA pays for any new building work (possibly with a contribution from the school).

### In Voluntary Aided Schools

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In Voluntary Aided Schools, staff are employed by the governing body and religious policy follows the governor's policy (reflecting the religious character of the school). Church appointed governors are in an absolute majority on the governing body. The governing body has the right to appoint a Head and teachers who have an active commitment to the Church. Collective worship reflects the religious character of the school.

In Voluntary Aided Schools, the governing body is the admissions authority. All capital work over £2000 is the responsibility of the governing body with a 90% grant from the DFES. The Diocese may be able to assist with these payments.

### **THE CONSULTATION PROCESS**

No decisions have been made. West Berkshire Council wishes to consult widely, particularly with parents and members of the public who live in the area and local schools. The consultation process will take place as follows:

1. This paper will be circulated widely. All those interested are invited to comment by Wednesday 18 August 2004 by writing to: John Powell, Service Development Manager, Education Services, Avonbank House, West Street, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 1B7 or E-Mail: [JRPowell@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:JRPowell@westberks.gov.uk)
2. A public meeting to discuss the matter and ask further questions will be held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July at St Mary's Junior School, Park Avenue, Thatcham commencing at 7:30pm. All are welcome to attend.
3. West Berkshire Council will consider the feedback received. If it is decided that a change in provision is required, the Council will publish a statutory notice which provides for a six week period during which formal objections/comments may be submitted.
4. If, following the responses to statutory notices, it is agreed to go ahead, the School Organisation Committee has the power to make the final decision about the Council's proposals and they will see all responses received, before making their decision. If there are no objections then the Council itself may determine whether or not to implement the proposals.

The School Organisation Committee is independent of West Berkshire Council and it has different interest groups represented upon it in a structure laid down by statute. In West Berkshire there are five groups which are, Local Education Authority elected members, the Church of England Diocese, the Roman Catholic Diocese, the Learning and Skills Council and the Schools' Group (agreed by the West Berkshire Association of Governors).

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**A summary of consultation process** – assuming agreement to each stage

**Step One:**

Consideration and response to the proposals in this document by attendance at the public meeting on Monday 12 July or by written response up to and including Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2004.

**Step Two:**

Report to Council Executive recommending proceeding with option implementation (9<sup>th</sup> September 2004).

**Step Three:**

Publication of Statutory Notice which provides for an eight week period for objections/comments (mid September 2004).

**Step Four:**

Report to the Independent Schools Organisation Committee to determine proposals (within one month of step three).

**Step Five:**

Proposals to be implemented by West Berkshire Council (during 2005).

### **INDICATIVE PUPIL NUMBERS**

Appendix 1 shows an indication of pupil numbers in the primary schools within a two mile radius of the proposed school until 2009.

### **GOVERNANCE**

It would be necessary to appoint a temporary governing body to lead the development of the new school including decisions regarding the appointment of the Headteacher. Those interested in getting involved in this are asked to inform Rosie Bass West Berkshire Governor Services. Mrs Bass can be contacted at Avonbank House, on 01635 519739 or email [Rbass@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:Rbass@westberks.gov.uk).

The governing body would have a constitution which decides its membership depending on a variety of factors including the size of the proposed school but would include potential parents. Experienced governors would be appointed if at all possible.

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### **ADMISSIONS**

The new school will start with those pupils already on the roll of the existing Infant and Junior Schools, and will be supplemented with a new cohort of Reception pupils. This would be, in effect, no change for the Infant School but would remove the need to go through an admissions process for parents of Infant pupils expecting to move on to the Junior School. The LEA would ensure that proposals are published in the Parents' Guide for Admissions to give parents advance knowledge along with a new Admissions Number calculated for the new school as a whole.

### **TRANSPORT**

Transport to school would be provided in line with normal policy i.e. to pupils living within designated area living beyond 2 miles in the case of pupils aged under 8 and over 3 miles in the case of pupils aged over 8.

### **INCLUSION**

The school will be designed and organised to support inclusion of pupils of all abilities.

### **STAFFING**

The temporary governing body would appoint a Headteacher designate. One of the first tasks of the Headteacher designate would be to agree an appropriate staffing structure with the governors.

The new school would in the first instance look to appoint staff displaced by the re-organisation to the new structure.

### **CAPITAL IMPLICATIONS**

Initially, both sites will continue to operate whilst the Council works with the shadow governing body and Headteacher designate to determine the building requirements of the new school. Focussing the new school on one site will free resources to enable the creation of extended schools at the heart of the community, delivering services and facilities for community use.

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### **REVENUE IMPLICATIONS**

The costs of running the new school would be decided through the funding formula for schools. This is based upon the numbers of pupils, their ages and needs. The budget would be delegated to the governing body.

### **INDICATIVE TIMESCALE**

Circulation of Consultation papers	June 2004
Public Consultation meeting	12 July 2004
Consultation period ends	18 August 2004
Consideration of feedback	August/September 2004
Publication of statutory notices	September 2004
Meeting of School Organisation Committee	December 2004
Implementation of Proposals	September 2005





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### SPURCROFT

	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
2003	27	32	23	30	33	35	35	215
2004	27	33	37	28	34	38	40	235
2005	31	33	37	42	32	39	42	254
2006	29	37	37	42	45	37	43	268
2007	31	35	41	42	45	45	41	278
2008	33	36	38	45	45	45	45	287
2009	32	36	37	39	45	45	45	279

### ST. FINIAN'S

	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
2003	25	30	28	26	23	29	21	182
2004	25	25	30	28	26	22	28	184
2005	25	25	26	30	28	25	21	180
2006	23	25	26	26	30	27	24	181
2007	26	23	26	26	26	29	26	182
2008	26	26	24	26	26	25	28	181
2009	26	26	26	24	26	25	24	177

### WHITELANDS PARK

	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
2003	48	49	47	49	53	41	56	343
2004	41	54	47	45	49	50	42	328
2005	30	54	52	45	45	47	51	324
2006	26	54	52	50	45	43	48	318
2007	35	54	52	50	50	43	44	328
2008	35	54	52	50	50	48	44	333
2009	35	54	52	50	50	48	49	338

### PARSONS DOWN INFANT

	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
2003	46	86	76					208
2004	78	80	86					244
2005	58	80	80					218
2006	55	80	80					215
2007	60	80	80					220
2008	60	80	80					220
2009	60	80	80					220

### PARSONS DOWN JUNIOR

	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
2003				85	84	75	107	351
2004				75	85	84	74	318
2005				86	75	85	83	329
2006				79	86	76	84	325
2007				79	79	86	75	319
2008				79	79	80	85	323
2009				79	79	80	79	317

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### CURRIDGE

	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
2003	11	17	18	20	19	15	17	117
2004	15	13	17	18	20	19	14	116
2005	14	15	13	17	18	20	18	115
2006	11	15	15	15	17	18	19	110
2007	14	13	15	15	15	17	17	106
2008	14	15	13	15	15	15	16	103
2009	14	15	15	15	15	15	14	103

### BUCKLEBURY

	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
2003	14	23	19	16	17	20	18	127
2004	15	18	23	19	16	17	20	128
2005	15	18	18	23	19	16	17	126
2006	15	18	18	18	23	19	16	127
2007	15	18	18	18	18	23	19	129
2008	15	18	18	18	18	18	23	128
2009	15	18	18	18	18	18	18	123

### FIR TREE

	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
2003	31	18	29	21	21	21	30	171
2004	19	31	17	29	21	19	20	156
2005	17	27	30	17	28	19	19	157
2006	15	27	26	30	17	25	19	159
2007	19	27	26	26	29	15	24	166
2008	19	27	26	26	25	26	15	164
2009	19	27	26	26	25	22	25	170

### GREENHAM COURT

	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
2003	28	34	28	29	38	33	39	229
2004	22	46	32	26	27	34	32	219
2005	20	36	43	30	25	24	33	211
2006	19	33	34	40	28	23	23	200
2007	25	31	31	32	37	25	22	203
2008	25	41	29	29	30	33	24	211
2009	25	41	38	27	27	27	32	217

### SHAW- CUM- DONNINGTON

	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
2003	13	15	13	9	9	12	10	81
2004	11	13	15	13	9	10	12	83
2005	12	11	13	15	13	10	10	84
2006	11	12	11	13	15	13	10	85
2007	13	11	12	11	13	15	13	88
2008	13	13	11	12	11	13	15	88
2009	13	13	13	11	12	11	13	86

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### WINCHCOMBE INFANT

	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
2003	16	49	39					104
2004	17	51	46					114
2005	16	54	48					118
2006	15	51	51					117
2007	18	48	48					114
2008	18	57	45					120
2009	18	57	54					129

### WINCHCOMBE JUNIOR

	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
2003				60	47	44	65	216
2004				42	60	47	44	193
2005				42	44	63	47	196
2006				44	44	46	63	197
2007				47	46	46	46	185
2008				44	49	48	46	187
2009				41	46	51	48	186

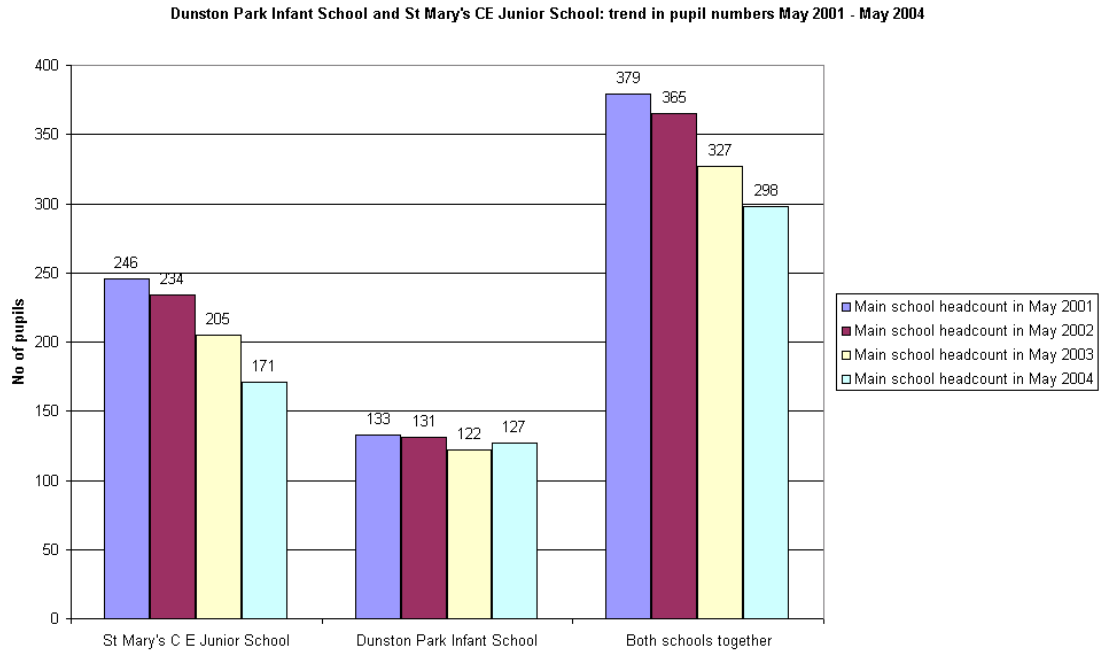
### SPEENHAMLAND

	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
2003	39	42	41	41	37	40	44	284
2004	42	40	42	41	41	38	38	282
2005	33	42	40	42	41	41	37	276
2006	31	40	42	40	42	41	39	275
2007	39	40	40	42	40	42	39	282
2008	39	40	40	40	42	40	40	281
2009	39	40	40	40	40	42	38	279

### ST. NICOLAS JUNIOR

	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
2003				63	54	63	63	243
2004				65	63	53	63	244
2005				67	65	62	54	248
2006				57	67	64	62	250
2007				57	58	66	64	245
2008				57	58	57	66	238
2009				57	58	57	58	230

**APPENDIX 2  
Pupil Numbers Trends**



The capacity of the schools is as follows:

Dunston Park Infant School - 180

St Mary's Junior School - 240