

## Consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Tennyson Road Infant School and Alfred Street Junior School

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### 1. What is this consultation about?

North Northants Council is proposing to amalgamate Tennyson Road Infant School and Alfred Street Junior School to become an all-through primary school with effect from September 2023

The purpose of the consultation is to seek the views of staff, Governors, parents and carers of pupils at Tennyson Road Infant School and Alfred Street Junior School and other interested parties before a decision can be taken on whether or not to amalgamate both schools.

#### 2. What does “amalgamation” mean?

An amalgamation brings together, two (or more) Local Authority maintained schools as one school under single leadership and Governance arrangements. In this case, the amalgamation is the merging of Tennyson Road Infant School and Alfred Street Junior School to create one all-through primary school.

The process would mean that in progressing with the amalgamation, it will be necessary to close one of the schools and expand the age range of the other school. This will create an all-through primary and transfer the pupils to the roll of the amalgamated school.

From a school organisation perspective, it is necessary to decide which school will close. Following discussion with the Alfred Street/Tennyson Road Steering Group it has been agreed that Tennyson Road Infant School will be the school that is closed and the age range of Alfred Street Junior School expanded.

The closure of Tennyson Road Infant School is only a technical decision which will enable the amalgamation to go ahead. This **does not** prejudice that there will be a change of sites. It **does not** prejudice the name or staffing of the all-through primary school.

The proposal will mean closing the Department for Education (DfE) number of Tennyson Road Infant School.

It is important to note that all of the children currently in Tennyson Road Infant and Alfred Street Junior schools will automatically become pupils in the all-through primary school if the two schools amalgamate.

#### 3. Why are we proposing to amalgamate both schools to form an all-through primary school?

The rationale behind this proposal is to ensure the best outcomes for children at Alfred Street Junior School and Tennyson Road Infant School which are located in Rushden and also to address financial and operational challenges. The amalgamation will also provide the children in both schools with a seamless transition through the school for their education from age three (Nursery) through to age eleven (Year 6).

North Northants Council is committed to considering a move to an all-through primary school, from separate infant and junior schools, when an opportunity arises. The Council was approached by the Governing Boards of the Schools to consider an amalgamation.

A Steering Group has been set up in relation to the potential amalgamation of the Schools. The Steering Group is made up of Governors from both schools. The Alfred Street/Tennyson Road Steering Group recommends that the amalgamation of Alfred Street Junior School and Tennyson Road Infant School is progressed. It is the view of the Steering Group that this decision will lead to the development of a stronger, sustainable school that will be best placed to meet the needs of children, parents/carers and the wider community into the future. The Steering Group are in support of this proposal with a strong preference for the infant school to undertake the technical closure.

#### **4. How would this proposal benefit children?**

The amalgamation of both schools will provide clear benefits for pupils' learning as a single all-through primary would have many benefits including the following:

- The newly amalgamated school would only be required to appoint a single Head Teacher with significant saving being made available to the Governors to support teaching and learning, offer better continuity and a smoother transition between Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2);
- Greater opportunities for curriculum development, and staff recruitment and development;
- Builds upon best practice within both the Infant and Junior School, and continue improving standards of pupils achievement and attainment;
- Enables more of the budget to be spent upon front-line teaching and learning allowing the school to be more financially efficient; being able to buy supplies and services as a single school.
- Allows parents to only apply once for the school (before Reception) without having to reapply at the end of KS1;
- The relationship between parents and the school can build over a longer period of time; staff will know children for a longer period of time thus allowing the school to better understand the needs of each pupil.

#### **5. How would this proposal benefit staff?**

A larger school provides the opportunity for a more specialist staffing and management structure, which provides greater opportunity for staff development, and enables greater flexibility in the deployment of staff to support the individual needs of pupils. It will also allow teachers to monitor pupils' progress more consistently.

#### **6. What would be the impact of this amalgamation on education quality and standards?**

The arrangements that amalgamation brings will enable the school to operate under a single staffing structure, a single Governance structure and a single Head Teacher which will allow for the sharing of resources, expertise, knowledge and support across the phases that would improve the quality of education on offer, drive up progress and attainment for all children who attend the current schools.

Overall, it is expected that amalgamation will drive up the standards and the quality of education offered, ensuring continued improvement and positive outcomes for all the children in the single all-through primary school.

**7. What would be the admission arrangements?**

Amalgamation would lead to a single admission with no application required between infants and juniors. This would remove a level of uncertainty for parents. The all-through primary school would continue to admit pupils into Reception each year, as the infant school does now. This does not impact parents right to apply for an alternative school at year 3 or at any other time.

**8. Would there be any changes to the size and accommodation?**

In the event of amalgamation, the all-through primary school, when it is established, will have greater flexibility to use facilities more effectively. In the first instance there will be no change to the operation of either site.

**9. Is this a cost saving exercise and what will be the impact on the schools' budget?**

Savings will be made through efficiencies as resources can be shared across the all-through primary school.

**10. Both schools have a Head Teacher who is accessible to pupils and staff. How will this be managed in a larger primary school?**

The relationship between the staff and the single Head Teacher will build over time. Staff and Head Teacher will know children for a longer period of time thus allowing the school to better understand the needs of each pupil.

**11. Will there be changes to staffing as a result of changes to the Head Teacher and amalgamation?**

In the first instance, the impact on staff is being kept to a minimum. All the teachers and support staff employed at the Infant and Junior School (at the time of the proposed amalgamation) would automatically continue their employment in the all through primary school. There should be no direct impact on teaching, class support and ancillary staff as a result of this proposal. The Governing Body of the all-through primary school will review the leadership structure to ensure that this supports the improvement journey that is required.

**12. If the schools become an all-through primary, will there be the same opening and closing times?**

At this present time there has not been any discussion in relation to changing the school opening and closing time and it is unlikely they would change.

**13. What will be the name of the all-through primary school?**

If the amalgamation is taken forward and agreed, this is a conversation which will need to be held with the Steering Group before taking any decisions on the name of the all-through primary school.

**14. Will there be a new school uniform for the all-through primary school?**

If the amalgamation is taken forward and agreed, this would be a decision for the Governing Body of the all-through primary school. In the first instance, there is no proposed change to the uniform of the existing schools.

**15. If a significant number of stakeholders are opposed to this proposal, how will the Council take their views into account?**

The Council will seek views from all interested parties and will balance this against its responsibility to raise education standards. Before making any final decision, the Council will consider a number of factors including views gathered from this consultation, any effect on school standards Governance arrangement and the current schools' budget and viability.

**16. Will there be changes to the site that the all-through primary school is located on?**

This proposal has no impact on the operation of the all-through primary school across the two existing sites. Any proposals to change how the school operates including changing the use of either site would be subject to appropriate further consultation. There will be no change to current arrangement regarding the provision of SEN places at the schools.

**17. Will there be a change to the Governing Bodies when the all-through primary school is formed?**

A new Governing Body will be established to lead the all-through primary school and this will be representative of both communities.

**18. Will the all-through primary school be an academy?**

No, the all-through primary school will still be a Local Authority Maintained school. It will continue to have community status which means that it will be a community school, which is often referred to as a Local Authority Maintained School. This will not change if amalgamation takes place.

**19. How you can make your views known?**

We would like to hear your views on the proposal to amalgamate Tennyson Road Infant School and Alfred Street Junior School.

You can tell us whether you agree or disagree with the proposal and leave your comments. You have until **2<sup>nd</sup> October 2022** to let us know your views. All responses will be taken into account once the consultation closes, however, we will not be able to acknowledge or respond individually to your comments.

You can give your views by completing the response form online at:

<https://northnorthants.citizenspace.com/schools-and-education/tennyson-alfred-09-22>

Alternatively, you can email or send your comments in by post using the contact details below.

If you have any queries, comments or would like a copy of this questionnaire in another format (including paper, easy read or large print) please contact us.

Email address: [lseadmin.ncc@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:lseadmin.ncc@northnorthants.gov.uk)

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### **18. What happens next?**

At the end of the formal consultation period (4 weeks), the Council will consider the feedback and views expressed by all interested parties during the consultation.

The formal consultation period provides the final opportunity for people and stakeholders to submit their views and comments on the proposal.

Subject to the outcome of the formal consultation period, the Council intends to make a final decision on the proposal by **December 2022**.