

# **Consultation on the proposed amalgamation of Fairfield Infant and Fairfield Junior Schools, Cockermouth**



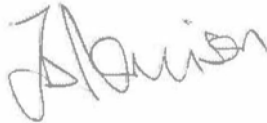
We hope that you take time to read this consultation document carefully. We both feel it is really important to hear from parents, governors, pupils, and other local people about the proposals we are making before deciding whether to make a change.

We look forward to hearing your views on our proposals

Yours sincerely



Duncan Fairbairn  
Cabinet Member  
Children's Services



Julia Morrison  
Corporate Director  
Children's Services

## What this consultation is about

This consultation document is about the possible establishment of an all-through primary school to replace the existing Fairfield Infant and Fairfield Junior Schools.

In reality, children, parents and staff would see very little difference between how the two schools currently work and how a single school would work in the future. We are not proposing to build a new school; instead the two existing buildings would continue to be used, only with a single Headteacher and single governing body rather than two.

The main difference for parents if a single school were established would be to remove the need for them to apply for places in the Junior School at the end of Year 2. Instead, once children are admitted to the school, they would be guaranteed a place there until they go to secondary school.

There would also be very little difference for children already attending the two schools. They would all be guaranteed a place in the replacement primary school, and there should be no disruption to their education.

## We are considering the following proposal:

Creating a primary school would require the closure of one of the existing schools, whilst extending the age-range of the other to provide an all-through primary school for children aged 3-11, and expanding its capacity to ensure there is sufficient space for the children currently attending both schools.

The school would provide 60 places per year group, which is the same number of places provided at each of the two existing schools. The primary school would, therefore, be no larger or smaller than the two existing schools in terms of the number of places available for children.

The proposal is to close Fairfield Junior School and extend the age-range of Fairfield Infant School. We are suggesting this because it would have less of an impact on staffing.

This would mean the Junior School closing on 31 August 2013, with the Infant School becoming a 3-11 primary school on 1 September 2013. All existing children on either school roll (with the exception of children leaving at the end of Year 6) would simply transfer onto the roll of the primary school on 1 September.

Both existing schools' governing bodies have discussed the idea of creating an all-through primary school and voted unanimously to ask the county council to undertake this consultation with a view to bringing about the change. The governing bodies also sought the views of parents and staff.

The county council cannot simply decide to make changes to schools without first seeking the views of parents and others. There is a legal process which must be followed before any changes can be made, and it is important that the county council hears your views before deciding whether to proceed.

## Who this consultation is for

This document is aimed at parents, staff, governors and everyone else with an interest or stake in primary education in the area.

## How you can respond to this consultation

Use the form on the back page of this document to let us know what you think or you can attend the consultation event on 20 November at Fairfield Junior School to talk to us face to face.

If you would like any further information in the meantime, please contact the School Organisation Team on:  
**T: 01228 226013 E: [school.organisation@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:school.organisation@cumbria.gov.uk)**

## More Information

### Fairfield Infant School

Fairfield Infant School is currently graded as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. The school caters for pupils aged between 3 and 7 and has a capacity of 180 pupils, although there are currently 147 on roll. The table below shows the current school pupil numbers;

School	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	TOTAL
Fairfield Infant	46	49	52	147

Fairfield Infant School currently operates a nursery for children who become 4 during the school year. The children may attend the nursery for five 3 hour morning sessions, 9.00am to 12.00pm and 12.30pm to 3.00pm. They have places for 30 children. The nursery would not be affected by the change to an all-through primary school.

## Fairfield Junior School

Fairfield Junior School is currently rated by Ofsted as a 'Good school with many outstanding features'. The school caters for pupils aged between 7+ and 11 and has a capacity of 240 pupils although there are currently 225 pupils on roll. The table below shows the current school pupil numbers;

School	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	TOTAL
Fairfield Junior	54	60	50	61	225

## Proposal: Why amalgamation of Fairfield Infant and Fairfield Junior Schools is an option

Fairfield Infant and Fairfield Junior Schools share the same site. Currently, there can be no guarantee that a pupil enrolled at Fairfield Infant School will automatically transfer and have a place at Fairfield Junior School. This may go against parents' expectations. A solution could be to amalgamate Fairfield Infant and Fairfield Junior Schools to form a primary school. This would give a 3-11 school where a child would be guaranteed a place at the same school throughout their full primary education.

If the schools are amalgamated this could provide the following educational benefits;

- Continuity of experience for children, with no need to transfer to a 'new' school at the end of Key Stage 1
- Shared consistent vision and values across the school
- Consistent engagement with parents across the primary phase, with no need to transfer information at the end of a Key Stage
- Expertise within the whole school can be better targeted across the full age range
- Combination of roles and services allowing more resources to be spent directly on teaching and learning
- Professional development opportunities for staff within an all-through environment

## Staffing

We know that the process of bringing two schools together into one can be unsettling for the school community. Council officers work closely with staff through the transition, and a staffing handbook is available on the school portal and the school organisation website

[www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation) to help guide the process.

## Buildings

There are no plans to change the existing school buildings following the proposed amalgamation. As part of the proposal to create an all-through primary school, however, the county council would also have to propose to enlarge the premises of the Infant School to make sure all existing and future pupils could be accommodated. This is, however, a legal technicality. In practice, the expansion of the Infant School would be achieved by transferring to it the current Junior School buildings.

## Finance

School budgets are largely based on pupil numbers. The amalgamation of the two schools would mean the duplication of some roles could be avoided allowing for a greater proportion of available funding to be spent directly on teaching and learning. There would, for example, only be one Headteacher rather than two.

## School Transport

There should be no impact on school transport. There is no proposal to change the current catchment area boundaries, and the county council's school transport policy will continue to operate in the same way it does currently.

## Next steps

Regulations mean that, if the county council proposes to close a school, change an age range or increase the capacity above a certain point, their proposal must be published in a statutory notice.

There are five stages to the statutory process which must be followed:

### Consultation

The issue of this document marks the beginning of a period of consultation during which the views of any interested parties are sought. These views will be considered before any move to the next stage of the process happens.

### Publication

Dependent upon the outcome of this consultation, a decision on whether to publish a statutory notice must be made by Cumbria County Council's Cabinet.

### Representation

Following publication of statutory notices 'representations' can be made on the proposals – this is another opportunity for anyone with an interest to submit their views before a final decision is made. In this instance representation would be for a six week period.

### Decision

Within two months after the representation period ends, the county council must make a final decision on the proposal.

### Implementation

If the proposal is approved then changes would be implemented from September 2013.

## Timetable

Consultation	5 November - 14 December 2012
Decision: Cumbria County Council considers the results of the consultation and decides whether to publish Statutory Notice	7 February 2013
Publication of the Statutory Notice	1 March 2013
Closing date for responses to the Statutory Notice	12 April 2013
Final decision by Cumbria County Council	30 May 2013
Possible implementation of any changes	Closure of one school – 31 August 2013 Opening of new school - 1 September 2013

## Have your say

The council's proposals will be the basis of a period of public consultation for six weeks from 5 November to 14 December.

You are invited to a consultation event so that you can find out more about the proposed amalgamation. The event will be held at:

### Fairfield Junior School 20 November at 4pm-7pm

A meeting for **staff and governors** will be held from **4.00pm**.

From 6.00pm there will be opportunity for **parents and members of the public** to attend a presentation from county council officers and an opportunity for questions.

The consultation runs until **14 December 2012** and you can respond by completing the questionnaire in this document or writing separately to:

Cumbria County Council  
School Organisation  
Parkhouse Building  
Kingmoor Business Park  
Carlisle  
Cumbria CA6 4SJ

By Email to:  
[school.organisation@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:school.organisation@cumbria.gov.uk)

You can complete the questionnaire on-line at:  
[www.opinionsuite.com/cumbria-county-council](http://www.opinionsuite.com/cumbria-county-council)

Please note that it is not possible to enter into individual correspondence.

Thank you.

## Fairfield Infant and Fairfield Junior Schools

Reply slip – please send by 14 December to Cumbria County Council, School Organisation, Parkhouse Building, Kingmoor Business Park, Carlisle CA6 4SJ.

1. We need to know some basic information so that we can accurately report back to the council's Cabinet. Please tick those boxes that apply.

Are you a              Fairfield Infant School              Fairfield Junior School

Parent/carer              ☐              ☐

Member of Staff              ☐              ☐

Governor              ☐              ☐

Other              ☐              ☐

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Given the information contained in this document, do you agree or disagree with the following proposal:

Close Fairfield Junior School and extend the age-range of Fairfield Infant School to provide an all-through, 3-11 primary school. The school would provide 60 places per year group.

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

Supporting and additional comments can be entered overleaf if required.

Name..... Date .....  
(Please print)

Address .....

.....

..... Postcode.....

**Please provide any supporting / additional comments below:**