

BRILLEY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

CABINET

12TH APRIL, 2007

Wards Affected

Castle Ward

Purpose

To advise Cabinet of the decision by the Governors and Parents of Brilley C E Primary School to request transfer of pupils to Almeley Primary School, and consider the future of the school.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

That

- (a) the transfer of pupils to Almeley Primary School be confirmed; and
- (b) notices be issued to cease to maintain Brilley CE Primary School as from 31st August, 2007.

Reasons

- Governors and Parents have reluctantly come to the view that it is in the best interests of their children if they are transferred to a larger school.
- The number of children under the age of 5 living in the area served by Brilley Primary School is low, and do not provide the basis for a sustainable school.

Considerations

1. Given the falling numbers of children in the County, a review of school provision was instigated on an area by area basis in the summer of 2006. Following initial consultations, a proposals paper for the Kington, Weobley and Wigmore areas was issued at the end of January 2007.
2. The section on Brilley reads as follows;

'Capacity: 56 Published Admission Number: 8 Number On Roll: 19 (provisional January 2007 data) Number of Children <5 living in the catchment area 17

In January 2007 there were only 19 children on roll, 58% of which come from out of

catchment. The age groups were

<i>Year</i>	
<i>R</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>4</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>5</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>6</i>	<i>0</i>

The number of children under the age of 5 living in the area is very low, and no applications have been received as yet from in-area children for admission to the school in September 2007. 3 applications have been made, all from families living out of area.

The school is subject to an Ofsted Notice to Improve (January 2006). It is believed that the necessary remedial action has been taken and the school has recently gained the Silver Eco Award and Healthy Schools Status.

Despite this, it is very difficult to provide a broad social and academic education in a setting, which is and is likely to remain so small.

This is not due to lack of funding. The school receives one of the highest per capita funding above that which the authority receives from the DfES'.

3. Since this proposal paper was written, one child in reception has now left. Ofsted have revisited the school and have been satisfied with the action taken and have classed the school as being satisfactory with some good features. Three applications have been received for admission to Year R for September 07. Only one of these is from within the Brilley area.
4. Meetings were held at the school on 7th February, 19th February and 15th March.
5. In the first meeting, governors and parents rejected the idea of federation, believing the logistics of carrying both pupils and teachers between schools undermined any advantage that teaching within larger groups might bring. The local authority was asked to explore the possibility of extending the catchment area and/or arranging transport for non-entitled pupils.
6. A meeting with the wider community was held on 19th February at which the wider support for the school and its important role within the village was emphasized. It was noted that the school was 199 years old.
7. The meeting on 15th March was with Parents and Governors. At this the local authority reported that a northward extension of the catchment area would not necessarily bring many more children to the school as there were few children living in that area, and there was no evidence to suggest parents would change their allegiance from the currently provided school of Kington to Brilley. It was also reported that without a change to catchment area free transport for non-entitled riders would not be provided as it would create an unsustainable precedent. Given this information and the feeling by parents that children currently at the school were

missing a broader experience, Governors and Parents voted by a majority of 20 to 1 to request a managed transfer to Almeley Primary School. In the absence of a move in total, a number of parents sought individual transfer to that school, which the local authority could not reject.

8. The Governors of Almeley Primary School have been approached and have agreed to having the additional children in their school for the start of the summer term 2007.
9. The parents at Brilley Primary School were responding to the local authority suggestion that the status quo is not an option, and given it is not a situation of their making, free transport has been offered to them from Brilley to Almeley.
10. Given that there is likely to be no pupils on roll at Brilley in the summer term, formal procedures to close the school should be started. This involves the issue of a public notice, and further consultation before a final decision is made by either the Council (if that part of the 2006 Act is enacted or by the School Organisation Committee if not). The alternative school for the future is proposed to be Eardisley, as that school serves the area adjoining Brilley, is within the same high school pyramid, and is a Church of England Aided School.
11. It is not envisaged that any additional accommodation would be required at Eardisley Primary School.
12. The additional transport costs for both interim arrangements for Almeley and for the long term will be offset by not maintaining Brilley Primary School @ £110,000p.a.

Risk Management

A 'managed' transfer to Almeley Primary School is seen as the best way to minimise disruption to pupils.

Alternative Options

- Federation with Eardisley Primary School was proposed, but this has been rejected by both Governors of Brilley and Eardisley Primary Schools as creating more problems than it would solve.
- The maintenance of the status quo with such low number is unacceptable as it does not provide children with the broad experience that should be expected in primary schools.

Consultees

- Governors, Parents and community of Brilley in meetings on 7th February, 19th February, and 15th March
- Governors of Eardisley and Almeley
- Diocese of Hereford

Background Papers

- Review of School Provision: Kington, Weobley & Wigmore Areas