

# Consultation Document

*Proposal to Discontinue Colmers Farm Junior School  
Proposal to make a Prescribed Alteration to Colmers  
Farm Infant School by Alteration to the Upper Age limit*

*These proposals will enable the amalgamation of  
Colmers Farm Infant and Junior schools to become one  
all-through primary school*

**Colmers Farm Infant School and Colmers Farm  
Junior School**

## **Introduction**

At the request of both the Infant and the Junior school governing bodies, Birmingham City Council, as the Local Authority for Birmingham, is consulting on a proposal to amalgamate Colmers Farm Infant and Colmers Farm Junior School to create one all through primary school with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016.

In order to do this it is necessary to

- Discontinue Colmers Farm Junior School
- Alter the Upper Age range of Colmers Farm Infant School

These changes are explained in the sections below.

## **School Information**

- Colmers Farm Infant and Colmers Farm Junior are community schools located in the Longbridge ward of the city. The two schools are paired and pupils almost always transfer from the infant to junior school at age seven. Colmers Farm Infant and Junior schools share the same site and the same building.
- Colmers Farm Infant School has the capacity to accommodate 180 pupils and in May 2015, there were 179 pupils on roll. Colmers Farm Junior School has the capacity to accommodate 240 pupils and in May 2015 there were 232 pupils on roll.

## **What changes are proposed?**

The amalgamation of Colmers Farm Infant and Colmers Farm Junior schools to become one all-through Primary school. In order to do this it is necessary to issue the following proposals:

- A. Discontinuation of Colmers Farm Junior School
- B. Alteration to the upper age limit of Colmers Farm Infant School from 4 – 7 years to 4 – 11 years to accommodate pupils of junior school age.

This will result in the amalgamation of both schools to form an all-through primary school. All pupils and staff from the junior school would have the right to transfer to the primary school unless they wanted to seek other arrangements.

Colmers Farm Infant School will be proposing to change its name to reflect the change to the age range and the amalgamation.

## **Why do we want to do this?**

Birmingham City Council's current policy on amalgamation of separate infant and junior schools (approved October 2004) states that the only triggers for amalgamation are;

- (i) Falling rolls
- (ii) A request from both governing bodies of a pair of schools

A statutory consultation can only be undertaken when the proposal is supported by the governing body, parents and staff at both schools. At the request of the governing bodies the Local Authority is now consulting on the proposal to amalgamate the two schools.

**Context:**

- Following discussion during the summer term of 2014/15, the governing bodies of Colmers Farm Infant and Colmers Farm Junior schools have agreed to consult on the proposed amalgamation of the school.
- Currently the Headteacher of the Infant School is also carrying out the role of Acting Headteacher over the Junior School due to the departure of their Headteacher.
- The recent Ofsted judgement of the Junior School was Special Measures (March 2015).
- The two schools will join to make one school of primary phase ages 4 to 11, enabling a secure pathway for children throughout their primary phase.
- The Infant School is currently rated Good, June 2014. If the proposals are approved the DFE number and Ofsted judgement relating to the Infant School will be carried forward.
- The governing bodies of both schools have recently consulted on a proposal to federate but stronger links are considered necessary in order to support the Junior School with its improvement journey.
- There will no longer be a Year 3 admissions round with the pupils on roll in Year 2 having automatic right of entry into Year 3.
- LA officers are supportive of the proposal to enable an improved school outcome.

**What are the benefits of an all through primary school?**

There are a number of benefits to an all-through primary school compared to separate infant and junior schools. Firstly, with separate schools, there is a certain amount of duplication: the most obvious example of this is the Headteacher. Separate infant and junior schools must each have a Headteacher, whereas a combined primary school only needs one: the savings made on the additional salary can be used on other areas of the school.

A combined primary school provides greater consistency for pupils with one set of policies and procedures. The National Curriculum seeks to structure the seamless development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across all subjects from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. This is more difficult when a child has to change schools at the end of Key Stage 1 and a combined primary school is in a better position to provide continuity because of the structure and management it can put in place. It is also easier for a primary school that teaches children from age 4 until age 11 to monitor pupil attainment and ensure this progresses through the Key Stages.

Having a greater continuity across Key Stage 1 and 2 could also benefit the members of staff at each school. Staff would have greater opportunities for professional development and would be able to work in or gain greater understanding of the full range of the primary school year groups.

There are also benefits in terms of the children's personal and social development, which can be supported throughout the primary school years without a change of school at age seven. In a combined primary school, older pupils can provide models of work and behaviour e.g. peer tutoring, paired and shared reading and many opportunities exist for older pupils to take social responsibility for younger pupils in a variety of social and learning contexts. In addition, there is a greater likelihood of siblings being educated at the same school creating good opportunities to support sibling relationships and engender sibling responsibility.

### **How will this affect pupils at the school?**

It is unlikely the pupils will notice much change. All junior school pupils will have the right to automatically transfer to the primary school when it opens. The school will remain in the existing building and the members of staff they come into contact with are likely to be the same as before. Parents will still have the right to move their children to another school if they wish to.

### **How will this affect staff?**

The current Junior school would close but staff would be guaranteed to continue in their job as the school becomes an all-through primary school. The proposed changes may present opportunities for staff who wish to teach across Key Stage and this will be for the school to decide upon. The Local Authority will still be the employer and the change to become one primary school will not constitute a break in service or affect staff terms and conditions in any way.

### **Will this definitely happen?**

No. There is a statutory process we must follow to make these sorts of changes to schools. At the moment we are entering the six week consultation stage during which we want to hear your views on the proposal. If, after considering your views, the schools and the Local Authority still think it is a good idea, we will publish full proposals and allow four weeks for people to formally comment on them. Within two months of the end of the representation period a cabinet report will be produced with all of the information and this will be passed to Cabinet for a decision to be made. Should Cabinet members not come to a unanimous decision the proposal will be passed to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for a final decision. It is only at that point that we will be able to say with certainty that the two schools will be amalgamated.

### **What will happen if this proposal is rejected?**

If a decision is taken that the two schools should not be amalgamated, then the existing Infant and Junior schools will continue. The Infant school would remain as it is now. The Junior school is likely to become an academy in line with the Secretary of State expectations for schools in special measures. Such future academisation would need to be implemented in conjunction with the Infant school to ensure that the

good practice of transition across the phases and joint working can be maintained across both schools.

### How can I make my views known?

This first consultation period will run for six weeks. During this consultation period, you have the opportunity to let us know what you think about the proposed amalgamation of Colmers Farm Infant School and Colmers Farm Junior School. The consultation process is managed by the Local Authority and you can make your views known by visiting [www.birmingham.gov.uk/schools/colmersfarm](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/schools/colmersfarm) (live from 14th September 2015) or by completing the form at the end of this document and sending to:

School Organisation Team  
Education and Skills Infrastructure  
PO Box 15843  
Birmingham  
B2 2RT

Email: [lucy.dumbleton@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.dumbleton@birmingham.gov.uk)  
[mary.lowe@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:mary.lowe@birmingham.gov.uk)

Tel: 0121 303 8847

Please note the closing date for comments is **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015**. All comments raised during this six week consultation period will be considered by the two governing bodies and the Local Authority before any decision is taken to move on to the next stage of publishing the notice. Publishing the notice will initiate the formal representation period before a final decision is made by Birmingham City Council Cabinet in January 2016. How to make comments during the representation period will be advised nearer the time.

### What happens next?

The following timescale for the proposal to be implemented is for guidance only. At any point during the process, the proposal might be withdrawn or rejected by the City Council. The dates set out below meet the government requirements for us to consult fully with the people affected by the proposal and every effort will be made to keep to them.

#### **Possible Timeline for Discontinuation of Colmers Farm Junior School and Alteration to the Age Range of Colmers Farm Infant School**

Action	Date
Governing body and staff meeting – information sharing	7 <sup>th</sup> September 2015
6 week Consultation begins – consultation document shared	14 <sup>th</sup> September 2015
Professional Associations (PA) and Trade Unions (TU) meeting	w/c 21 <sup>st</sup> Sept 2015
PATU and staff meeting	5 <sup>th</sup> October 2015
Parents meeting	14 <sup>th</sup> October 2015
End of 6 week consultation period	23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2015

Action	Date
Consideration of consultation feedback by Governing Body and Local Authority	w/c 2 <sup>nd</sup> November
Governing Body meeting to discuss whether to proceed	5 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
Statutory notice published	12 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
Beginning of 4 week Representation period	12 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
End of 4 week representation period	10 <sup>th</sup> December 2015
Final decision made (Cabinet)	25 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
Proposal implemented, effective from	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2016

### Consultation Feedback

To enable the amalgamation of Colmers Farm Infant School and Colmers Farm Junior School we are consulting on the following proposals with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016:

1. **Proposal to discontinue Colmers Farm Junior School**
2. **Proposal to make a Prescribed Alteration to Colmers Farm Infant School by Alteration to the Upper Age limit**

Please visit [www.birmingham.gov.uk/schools/colmersfarm](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/schools/colmersfarm) to send us your thoughts by **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015** or alternatively complete and return the form below. Thank you for taking the time to send us your thoughts on these proposals.

### Consultation Response Form

Please help us analyse these responses by indicating your interest in the proposals:

Parent / carer of a pupil

Governor

Member of staff

Other

If other, please specify interest

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Please provide any comments or suggestions you might have on the proposals.

Please return this form by **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015** to the following address: School Organisation Team, Education and Skills Infrastructure, PO Box 15843, Birmingham, B2 2RT.

Additional comments: