



Brighton & Hove

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

**Proposed Creation of an all through Primary School
by changing the age range of Benfield Junior
School**

- Inviting you to have your say -

Why are we consulting you?

This document is published by Brighton & Hove City Council and is intended to support the consultation with governors, staff, pupils, parents and other interested groups about a proposal to create a new all through primary school to replace the existing Benfield Junior School on the present site.

This document sets out the reasons for the proposal, identifies the issues for consideration and explains the arrangements for consultation. It also provides further information about what happens after consultation.

Some background facts

The Council has a statutory duty to provide a school place for any child that wants one. Current and projected pupil numbers for the city as a whole show there is an immediate and ongoing need for additional school places in the city. This need is most acute in south Hove and on the Brighton / Hove border

As part of the Council's future development of Schools within the city it is proposed to create an all through primary school by extending the age range of Benfield Junior School from 7 to 11 as it is at present to 4 to 11 from September 2011.

The current position

Benfield Junior School is currently a three form entry school admitting 96 pupils per year. Consequently this proposal on its own will reduce the

number of junior places available in the city. It is therefore intended that the school will continue to admit pupils in to Year 3 in September 2010, 2011 and 2012.

Pupil numbers across the city are rising generally and the rise in south central Hove is greater than the city generally and already causing a pressure on school places that cannot be met locally. It had been planned with the support of the school to consult on a proposal to turn Benfield into an all-through primary school starting in September 2012.

Following the 2010 admissions round it was necessary to create additional reception places to accommodate pupils in the West Hove area owing to a significant increase in demand for reception year places. This has been achieved by temporarily admitting reception age children to Benfield Junior School. Benfield was chosen for this because it was in the correct location and because it had spare capacity to accommodate the children.

The decision to create two reception classes at Benfield was a difficult one that had to be taken quickly but was made after full consideration of the situation. It was a response to significant pressure on reception places in the west of the city

In light of the increasing birth rates in the city consideration was already being given to the pattern of school places in Portslade and how this might be improved in the future. We believe that this process now needs to commence earlier than we had planned.

The Council has a commitment to working with schools to make them centres for community learning, and supporting them in meeting the wider needs of the community by engaging social services, health, the police, and the voluntary sector.

What is proposed?

It is now proposed that Benfield Junior School is made in to a two form entry all through primary school from September 2011. The new school will have an intake of 60 pupils at 4+. Flexibility would remain for Key Stage 2 to take additional children to a maximum of 32 children per class.

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This proposal is the start of a wider re-organisation of school places within Portslade which, if successful, will result in an additional 2 forms of entry overall for primary phase education for this part of the city. This will be the

subject of a separate report and a wide ranging public consultation exercise.

To support the creation of the all through primary school at Benfield there will be some building adaptations using the Primary Capital Programme funding with the intention of providing accommodation to better fit the needs of Early Years and KS1 teaching and learning. The nature of these adaptations will be discussed and agreed with the governing body and the head teacher of the school.

What might be the educational advantages in the creation of a new all through primary school?

The Council believes the advantages of the creation of all through primary schools are as follows:

- Greater continuity in teaching, pupil wellbeing, care, security and development under a single headteacher and teaching staff. It is very important to ensure continuity in planning the curriculum across the stages of education so that pupils make the best possible progress in learning.
- The school could offer a greater range of teaching skills to oversee the effective teaching of individual subjects across the whole 4–11 age range.
- Greater flexibility that a 4–11 school has in organising classes, deploying teachers and support staff and using resources, including buildings, more effectively.
- Closer contact with parents over a longer period of time and covering the full span of the children's primary education.
- Practical advantages to parents e.g. the same staff development days, the same school policies relating to home links, uniform, codes of conduct etc.
- There will be no need for a separate admission round between years 2 and 3 which will enhance the pupils sense of security and well being.
- A positive feature of 4–11 schools is the social interaction between younger and older pupils

Views of the Governing Body

The proposal to permanently change the age range of Benfield School has been discussed with the governing body of the school prior to this report being prepared. The Governing Body has welcomed the opportunities that this proposal offers and fully supports the proposal.

The views of the governing body will be finalised in light of the consultation.

Consultation arrangements

If, having read this document, you would like to comment on the proposals; there are several opportunities for doing so:

- You should complete and return (either to the school or the Kings House) the tear off portion of the consultation leaflet..
- You can respond online at <http://tiny.cc/wwwte>
- You can send a letter to the Schools Futures Project Director, Children & Young Peoples Trust, Brighton & Hove City Council, King's House, Grand Avenue, Hove, BN3 2SR. *Please mark your letter for the attention of Gil Sweetenham.*
- In the interests of economy, letters will not be acknowledged or responded to.
- **Replies must be received by 1st October 2010**
- There will be a public meeting at the Benfield Junior school on 15th September 2010 at 7pm in the school hall.
- At this meeting parents and others will have the opportunity to put forward their views. Officers from the Children and Young Peoples Trust will be present to clarify points of detail.

The next stage

All of the views put forward by consultees will be reported to Brighton and Hove City Council.

If the Council decides to move ahead with the proposal a Statutory Notice will be published for a period of six weeks. During this period objections to, or comments on the proposals may be made by any person or group.

The Council is empowered to make the decision on these proposals. Any objections or comments received during the six week period will be considered by the Children and Young People Cabinet member before a decision is made.

The proposals set out in this document are put forward as a basis for consultation only. It is stressed that **no decisions have yet been made** and that none will be made until consultations have been completed and all views carefully considered by Brighton and Hove City Council.

The Council's major objective is to ensure the outcome of this consultation has local support and is in the best interests of pupils in Brighton and Hove.

DO PLEASE LET US KNOW YOUR VIEWS

Gil Sweetenham

Schools Futures Project Director
Brighton and Hove Council 21 July 2010

Table 1 – Current and forecast rolls for Benfield Junior School and surrounding schools

	Capacity	Admission Number	Spring 10	Forecast Rolls			
				Jan 11	Jan12	Jan 13	Jan 14
Benfield Junior School	360	90	246	306	-	-	-
Benfield Primary School*	420	60	-	-	366	410	420
Portslade Infant School	353	120	340	345	350	355	360
St. Peters Infant School	90	30	88	90	90	90	90
St Mary's RC Primary School	209	30	219	215	210	210	210
St Nicholas CE Junior School	240	60	243	240	240	240	240
West Hove Infant School	349	120	360	360	360	360	360
West Hove Junior School	480	120	494	494	494	494	494
Goldstone Primary School	415	60	396	420	450	480	510

*Assuming proposal goes ahead

If you require any further copies of the consultation document, please request them by ringing 01273 294224 or emailing alison.price@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Please return by **1st October 2010**
Thank you for your assistance in our consultation

The following timetable is proposed:

Publication of Consultation Document	21 st July 2010
Public Consultation Meeting	15 th September 2010
Last date for responses	1 st October 2010
Report back to Children and Young People	11 th October 2010
Cabinet Member Meeting	
Issue Public Notice	15 th October 2010
End of public notice period	26 th November 2010
Decision by the Children and Young People	10 th December 2010
Cabinet Member	
Provisional Opening	1 st September 2011

The Councillors for the area are:

Councillors Les Hamilton and Steve Harmer-Strange represent South Portslade

Councillors Trevor Alford and Bob Carden represent North Portslade

Please Note: Apart from the public meeting which will be held at the junior school, all other meetings are held at Hove Town Hall. For the exact times, please contact Alison Price on telephone number 01273 294224.