

MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 15 PROPOSALS TO DISCONTINUE A SCHOOL

Insert the information asked for in the expandable box below each section.

Contact details

1. The name of the local education authority or governing body publishing the proposals, and a contact address, and the name of the school it is proposed that should be discontinued.

CHESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, COUNTY HALL, CHESTER, CH1 1SQ
Transforming Learning Communities Team, Cheshire County Council,
Children's Services, Room 417, County Hall, Chester, CH1 1SQ.
Church Lawton Primary School, Cherry Tree Avenue, Church Lawton, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 3EL (875/2346).

Implementation

2. The date when it is planned that the proposals will be implemented, or where the proposals are to be implemented in stages, information about each stage and the date on which each stage is planned to be implemented.

31 August 2009.

Consultation

3. A statement to the effect that all applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposals were complied with.

Public consultations were held from 1 December 2008 until 23 January 2009, and formal statutory consultation meetings were held with staff, governors, parents and interested members of the community on 9 December 2008, and with other statutory consultees, in accordance with the relevant DCSF guidance and statutory requirements.

4. Evidence of the consultation before the proposals were published including—

- (a) a list of persons and/or parties who were consulted;

- (b) minutes of all public consultation meetings;
- (c) the views of the persons consulted; and
- (d) copies of all consultation documents and a statement of how these were made available.

An initial period for informal consultations ran from 25 June to 5 August 2008. Public meetings were held at Alsager Civic Centre on 30 June; Sandbach Town Hall on 1 July; and at Congleton Town Hall on 2 July 2008. Members of the community were given the opportunity to drop in and meet officers from the County Council to discuss the options which had been announced on 25 June 2008.

Subsequently a period of formal consultations ran between 1 December 2008 until 23 January 2009, with formal consultation meetings with the staff and with the governors of Church Lawton Primary School and drop-in sessions for parents of pupils attending the school and the public held on 9 December 2008.

Briefing documents for both periods of consultations were distributed to staff, governors and parents, as well as being placed on the County Council's website. Key documents relating to the formal consultation period are included as part of **Annex A**, and the resolution of the County Council's Children Services Executive on 17 February 2009 is included at **Annex B**.

A schedule giving details of those consulted is attached at **Annex C**

Objectives

5. The objectives of the proposal.

To remove surplus places through the closure of Church Lawton Primary School, which is a small school with a high level of surplus places and a low take-up of places by the local community.

To ensure that pupils currently attending Church Lawton Primary School, continue to receive education of a sustainable high quality. Children at the school are currently taught in three classes, due to low numbers, with one class spanning four year groups. Numbers of pupils at the school are set to continue to fall if it remains open, to the point where its sustainability would be put in question.

To make more effective use of resources within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) by reducing the additional allowances paid to schools to support the curriculum outside the allocation produced by Age Weighted Pupil Units (AWPUs).

Standards and Diversity

6. A statement and supporting evidence indicating how the proposals will impact on the standards, diversity and quality of education in the area.

Of the Cheshire schools within two miles of Church Lawton and likely to receive pupils if it closes, four are considered 'outstanding' by Ofsted (Grade 1) in their most recent inspection, one 'good with outstanding features' (Grade 2), and one is newly amalgamated and is yet to be inspected. Church Lawton was judged 'satisfactory' (Grade 3) in its most recent inspection.

These schools are:

Rode Heath Primary School
Scholar Green Primary School
Alsager Highfields Community Primary School
Excalibur Primary School
Pikemere School
Cranberry Primary School

Between them, these schools provide about 1300 places to pupils of primary age, and 52 nursery places (Cranberry Primary School). Faith-based education is provided at Woodcocks' Well CE Primary School (Church of England) and is also available in the area at St Gabriel's Catholic Primary School (Catholic).

All the schools mentioned above, including Church Lawton Primary School, have Contextual Value Added scores (KS1-2) of above the Local Authority average (2007) and this looks set to continue for 2008 (2008 provisional CVA scores).

There is no doubt that the proposal to close Church Lawton Primary School will have very little impact on standards, diversity and quality of educational provision in the local area.

Provision for 16 -19 year olds

7. Where the school proposed to be discontinued provides sixth form education, how the proposals will impact on—

- (a) the educational or training achievements;
- (b) participation in education or training; and
- (c) the range of educational or training opportunities,

for 16-19 year olds in the area.

Not applicable

Need for places

8. A statement and supporting evidence about the need for places in the area including whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

Parents of pupils attending Church Lawton Primary School at the time of closure will be offered places at other local schools, in accordance with parents' preferences, subject to the availability of places and with a right of appeal should it not be possible to meet any parent's preference(s). The Governors of Cranberry Primary School, Cranberry Lane, Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 2LE have expressed a willingness to offer a place to all of the current Year 5 children at Church Lawton Primary School and to enable appropriate specific teaching arrangements should enough of the group transfer.

The schools within a two-mile radius of Church Lawton Primary School are listed in **Annex D**.

In January 2009 there were 234 spare places at these schools (see **Annex E**). Agreed changes in the capacity of Alsager Highfields Community Primary School, Scholar Green Primary School and Cranberry Primary School mean that by January 2013, there are anticipated to be 169 spare places in this group of schools.

9. Where the school has a religious character, a statement about the impact of the proposed closure on the balance of denominational provision in the area and the impact on parental choice.

Not applicable

Current School Information

10. Information as to the numbers, age range, sex and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is made at the school.

Church Lawton Primary School is a mixed gender community primary school which provides places for 105 pupils aged 4 – 11. Actual and forecast pupil numbers are as follows:

Actual	Actual	Actual	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
Jan 2007	Sept 2008	Jan 2009	Jan 2010	Jan 2011	Jan 2012	Jan 2011
67	68	46	66*	63*	59*	58*

* Forecast based on January 2008 actual numbers. Forecast figures for January 2009 were then 62. The loss of pupils from the school in the last 12

months means that these current forecasts are likely to be correspondingly too high.

In January 2009 there were 11 nursery pupils at the school's 52 place nursery unit. There are sufficient pre-school places in the area to provide places for parents seeking admission to nursery or other pre-school provision in September 2009.

In January 2009 there was one pupil at the school with a Statement of Special Educational Needs, and one pupil receiving Individual Pupil Funding. This individual support will continue at receiving schools through Local Authority delegated funding.

Displaced Pupils

11. Details of the schools or further education colleges which pupils at the school for whom provision is to be discontinued will be offered places, including—

- (a) any interim arrangements;
- (b) where the school included provision that is recognised by the local education authority as reserved for children with special educational needs, the alternative provision to be made for pupils in the school's reserved provision; and
- (c) in the case of special schools, alternative provision made by local education authorities other than the authority which maintains the school.

Please refer to response to Question 8.

Details of current and forecast pupil numbers, capacities, admission numbers and number of year groups at all other primary schools within a radius of two miles are attached at **Annex D**.

Parents will be asked to express their preferences for places at alternative schools, and any parents whose preferences cannot be met will be able to appeal.

12. Details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school or further education college places available in consequence of the proposed discontinuance.

Please refer to response to Question 8.

Impact on the Community

13. A statement and supporting evidence about the impact on the community and any measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impact.

No permanent arrangements for community use in the form of leases to outside agencies are in existence. However the school is used for a range of activities such as the meeting place for senior citizens, for the village fete committee and for 5 a-side football competitions. One other venue for public use – Lawton Memorial Hall – exists in Church Lawton, but is considered significantly inferior to the school.

14. Details of extended services the school offered and what it is proposed for these services once the school has discontinued.

The school has also developed a range of extended services and it is considered highly likely that these would be available on a comparable basis at alternative schools.

Travel

15. Details of length and journeys to alternative provision.

It is anticipated that the great majority of pupils displaced as a result of the closure of Church Lawton Primary School will live within statutory walking distance of their new school(s). However, applications for school transport to alternative schools will be considered on the basis of the Local Authority's published School Transport Policy. For those parents of Year 5 children taking up the offer of a places at Cranberry Primary School, the distance between Cranberry Primary School and Church Lawton Primary School is 1.96 miles.

16. The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools including how they will help to work against increased car use.

See response to question 15

Related Proposals.

17. A statement as to whether in the opinion of the local education authority or governing body, the proposals are related to any other proposals which may have been, are, or are about to be published.

The proposals are not related to any other proposals which have been, or are about to be published.

Rural Primary Schools

18. Where proposals relate to a rural primary school designated as such by an order made for the purposes of section 15 of the EIA 2006, a statement that the local education authority or the governing body (as the case may be) considered—

- (a) the likely effect of discontinuance of the school on the local community;
- (b) the availability, and likely cost to the local education authority, of transport to other schools;
- (c) any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the discontinuance of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; and
- (d) any alternatives to the discontinuance of the school,

as required by section 15(4) of the EIA 2006.

Not applicable

Maintained nursery schools

19. Where proposals relate to the discontinuance of a maintained nursery school, a statement setting out—

- (a) the consideration that has been given to developing the school into a children's centre and the grounds for not doing so;
- (b) the body's assessment of the quality and quantity of the alternative provision compared to the school proposed to be discontinued and the proposed arrangements to ensure the expertise and specialism continues to be available; and
- (c) the accessibility and convenience of replacement provision for local parents.

Not applicable

Special educational provision

20. Where existing provision for pupils with special educational needs is being discontinued, a statement as to how the local education authority or the governing body believes the proposal is likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the educational provision for these children.

Of the Cheshire schools within two miles of Church Lawton and likely to receive pupils if it closes, four are considered 'outstanding' by Ofsted (Grade 1) in their most recent inspection, one 'good with outstanding features' (Grade 2), and one is newly amalgamated and is yet to be inspected. Church Lawton was judged 'satisfactory' (Grade 3) in its most recent inspection.

Progress made by children with learning difficulties and disabilities is considered superior to that at Church Lawton at the five schools from within this group for which a current Ofsted inspection report is available.

Both the general provision of education and the progress that can be expected for children with special needs will be improved.