



BOTLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Thursday 3rd February 2011

Botley Primary School staff response to the LA proposed merger of Botley Primary

School and Elms Road Nursery School and Children's Centre

We would like to recognise the excellent practice that goes on in all settings on the site. Since the informal consultation last year staff have had the opportunity to explore and develop closer working across BPS and ERNSCC eg federation and having half F1 cohort working within the BPS site due to increased numbers. Despite this, the original difficulties of having F1 staff and children within ERNSCC remain.

We would also like to register that as Botley Primary School staff, we believe the proposed merger represents the best interests of the children, parents, staff and wider community.

However, it is recognised that this merger will still need careful planning and support from the LA in ensuring a successful transition takes place for all.

Below are our thoughts on the benefits of the merger :-

Children:

- The children will feel a stronger sense of belonging to the whole school site.
- F1 are now taught in both BPS and ERNSCC (due to increased numbers) which has added to organisational issues having the same year group in two settings. A rota system has had to be implemented to allow all F1 children to have a similar experience, using both settings to enable the F1s based in BPS access to the purpose built outdoor equipment in ERNSCC. This could be avoided with future increased F1 pupil numbers as they could be accommodated within the purpose built EY setting, the space in the building could be used more flexibly under one headteacher and governors.
- The transition between phases will be smoother as moving from F2 to F1 within the same school will mean no change in daily routines, with familiar staffing and ethos.
- Curriculum provision throughout the 3 -11 age range will be more cohesive with one staff team creating it together with one shared vision.
- F1 children wouldn't repeat activities such as harvest festival or Christmas by doing it as part of the nursery and then primary school, such activities would be able to take place as the whole school.

Parents:

- Any confusion among parents about which setting their children belong to, will no longer be an issue, Even on 18.1.11 Botley Primary School received a letter from an F1 parent outlining the problem of their child being part of two schools “ I think this is confusing for us and the children and we need to be fully part of one school or another”
- The proposed merger would remove the extra layer of complication (as noted by Ofsted June 09), such as letters, INSET days and times at the beginning and end of the school day. (Currently F1 children take home letters etc from both schools, which parents often complain about)

Community:

- We believe that the majority of the wider community currently sees the site as one setting anyway, so the proposed merger will strengthen this impression and avoid confusion.
- We believe that this proposed merger will provide a fresh start and an exciting opportunity to help us in our vision of “creating excellence, embracing all.”
- The Children’s Centre can have full free access to all facilities on site to enhance the all year round provision currently provided within ERNSCC.

Leadership and management:

- Leadership and management of the school will be more effective – better use of the time and resources, focussing on the children’s learning rather than on administration and management of the two sites.
- With one headteacher, there will be clearer leadership for all staff.
- HT, SLT, Governors, bursar and business manager will no longer have numerous meetings with counterparts in ERNSCC about bills (all utilities for both schools are on one set of meters of BPS), facilities, SLAs, maintenance and use of resources that have continued since the joint working began in 2007.
- Performance Management for all staff (especially for F1 staff) will be clearer as all staff will be working and supporting the same objectives for improvement and the same School Development Plan. (currently F1 staff are following the ERNSCC SDP as this is where the children are mostly taught, and lesson observations have different focuses from the SDP of the two different schools.)
- Currently F1 staff have subject responsibility for the nursery only, they do not have subject responsibility in the school that employs them, which puts additional pressure on other BPS staff.
- Strategic planning would be simplified as there would be only one staff team and governors working on site for the future benefit of all stakeholders.
- There are potentially cost savings to be made for the school and LA as one school means one set of SLAs, one school visit needed by one School Improvement Partner, one visit from Mouchel, one visit for Health and Safety etc etc.

Staff:

- All curriculum coordinators will be able to work across phases to develop and share expertise rather than in isolated phases.
- All staff (but in particular F1 staff) will have a sense of belonging and common purpose.
- There will be greater opportunities for flexible working and sharing expertise and best practice.
- Stronger relationships between all staff and families can be built from the start.
- Administrative and site staff will no longer need to negotiate with their counter parts in ERNSCC to maintain the site.
- All staff will have the same INSET days and staff meetings with a common focus. (F1 staff currently attend alternate BPS and ERNSCC meetings which means BPS never has all its full staff together.)

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In summary, Botley Primary School staff are in favour of merger, Botley Primary School merging with Elms Road Nursery School and Children's Centre.

Regards,

Botley Primary School Staff

Simon Jackson (Deputy Headteacher)	Ruth Blampied (Play Leader, TA, teacher)
Jenna Huckerby (Yr 3 / 4 teacher)	Joanne Barrett (School secretary)
Lydia Terry (TA/Play worker)	Steve Davis (Yr 6 teacher)
Claire Barwick (TA)	Gina Davis (TA)
Joy Topping (Yr 1 teacher)	Judith Beal (TA and PPA teacher)
Alison Marsh (Headteacher)	Sam Rahim (EAL TA)
Helen Jennings (Yr 2 teacher)	Patrice Miller (TA),
Lizzy Hegarty (Yr 1 /2 teacher)	Miranda Watson (TA/LTS)
Alex Neil (Yr 5 /6 teacher)	Michelle Guilfooy (TA/LTS/Play worker)
Shelly Rahman (Play Leader/TA)	Louise Dixon (LTS)
Karen Webb (TA/LTS)	Lucasz Staniszc (cleaner)
Dariusz Parczewski (Caretaker)	Holly Turner (F1 teacher)
Karen Jessett (F1 teacher)	Cheryl Wilkins (F1 key person)
Sarah Hazell (SENCo)	Sarah Radford (Yr 3/ 4 teacher)
Fiona Bartlett (PPA teacher)	Dawn Davis (Business Manager)
Janice Spearing (Bursar)	Elly Akter (Play Worker)
Diane Coppick (Play worker)	