Consultation Document

The proposed amalgamation of St Mary’s and St Peter’s schools, Marlborough
1. Background & Proposal

St Mary’s Infant School and St Peter’s Junior School are two vibrant schools with enthusiastic children and dedicated staff teams. The two schools operate on separate sites in Marlborough and both Governing Bodies recommend opening an amalgamated school in a new building on the site adjacent to the existing St Mary’s school building off George Lane, Marlborough.

There is strong evidence that continuity of learning culture has the most significant effect on a pupil’s progress. Research shows that the fewer moves children have during their school career the better they perform. This reduction in the number of school moves is important, particularly for children with special needs. EMIE* state that “Where primary education is provided in separate key stages, there is generally very little effective curriculum continuity and progression. In such situations the scope for discontinuity of learning is increased, together with attendant, wasteful, repetitive teaching of subject content and learning experiences in the receiving key stage”.

This view is shared by the Head Teachers and Governing Bodies of both schools who support the amalgamation as they believe that it is in the best long term interest of Marlborough children. It is also worth noting that most primary aged children in Wiltshire are educated in all-through primary schools. Out of 189 schools in Wiltshire serving the primary age range, only 8 are infant and 8 are junior schools.

Wiltshire Council, on behalf of the Diocese of Salisbury, the Head Teachers and Governors of St Peter’s and St Mary’s have applied for, and been successful in, an application for funding from Department for Education (DfE) for a new school building to accommodate two existing classes at each level from Reception to Year 6. It is also the intention to include a Complex Needs Resource Base (CNRB).

Discussions with the representatives of the DfE’s Education Funding Agency commenced in August 2014 and the new school has a target for completion of September 2016. It is presumed that both of the existing buildings in the Parade and George Lane will be vacated. The newly amalgamated school would be a Church of England Voluntary Controlled school, the same as the existing schools. The two schools would continue to run individually until the move into a new building.

Amalgamation assumes a single site and is conditional on the letting of a contract to provide a new school building.

2. The Consultation

Before any major decision can be made about the future of a maintained school there must be consultation with those potentially affected by the change. The purpose of this document is to consult with parents, teachers and other stakeholders with an interest in the future provision of education for children in the Marlborough area. This document gives background information and asks for your views.

It is necessary to begin consultation now so that there is clarity about future structure of the schools now discussions have commenced with the DfE. A list of those who are included in the consultation is shown in Appendix A. Further copies of this Consultation Document are available at Marlborough Library, St. Mary’s & St. Peter’s Schools and can also be downloaded from Wiltshire Council’s School Consultations page at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/consultations.htm

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* EMIE, originally an acronym for Education Management Information Exchange, was established in 1981 to facilitate the exchange of information between local authorities on educational issues and to encourage the sharing of expertise and effective practice.
3. Key dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultation starts</td>
<td>05 September 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultation finishes</td>
<td>17 October 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governing Boards decide on amalgamation proposal</td>
<td>21 October 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notices published (IF decided by the Governing Boards)</td>
<td>24 October 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>End of Notice Period</td>
<td>21 November 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decision deadline for Wiltshire Council Member for Education</td>
<td>21 January 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementation of the schools’ amalgamation</td>
<td>01 September 2016</td>
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<td>(dependent on completion of new build)</td>
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4. Consultation process

You are invited to make your views known by either:
- Filling in and returning the response form which is provided in Appendix B by 17 October 2014.
- Coming to a meeting where you can ask questions and express your views:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Venue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Governing Bodies</td>
<td>04 September 2014</td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>St. Mary’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School staff</td>
<td>10 September 2014</td>
<td>3:30pm</td>
<td>St. Peter’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School parents</td>
<td>10 September 2014</td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>St. Peter’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>School staff</td>
<td>15 September 2014</td>
<td>3:30pm</td>
<td>St. Mary’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School parents</td>
<td>15 September 2014</td>
<td>7:00pm</td>
<td>St. Mary’s</td>
</tr>
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Current and prospective parents are free to join either parents’ meeting. School staff are free to join either staff meeting, both of which will also be attended by a Wiltshire Council HR officer. Recognised Trade Union representatives will be invited to attend the consultation meetings with staff.

The two meetings for parents will be chaired by Councilor Richard Gamble. Representatives of the two Governing Bodies will also attend. Notes will be taken at the meetings so that the views expressed are recorded for consideration by the Governing Bodies.

5. Conclusion of the consultation

All responses and views expressed will be collated, analysed and made available to the Governing Bodies of both schools during the week beginning 20 October 2014. The information provided to the Governing Bodies will also be available as a public document. The Governing Bodies will consider the consultation outcomes and decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal.

If the Governing Bodies decide to proceed they will then start the formal, legal process to implement the proposed changes. This includes the publication of a Statutory Proposal which then gives a further four week period for anyone to make representations prior to the decision of Wiltshire Council Cabinet Member for Education. Cabinet Member decisions are based on public documents available before the decision date. A decision would be expected within a month of the end of the statutory notice period and in any case within two months.
6. Wiltshire Council

Wiltshire Council does not “run” local schools – that is the responsibility of local school Governing Bodies or academy trusts. The Council’s role is to collaborate with the DfE and others to secure the investment in the new buildings and to facilitate this consultation process so that the way forward can be secured with certainty. The Council wants to see a solution which:

• Puts the interests of the children as the highest priority
• Secures the delivery of the new buildings
• Secures excellent standards of primary age education in Marlborough
• Makes the process of change as smooth as possible
• Continues to build on the collaboration between schools in the area in a way that supports continued school improvement

7. Potential Advantages of Amalgamation

An amalgamated school would provide the best opportunity for continuity and coherence in children’s educational experience. A single school at the heart of the local community would offer a consistent vision and ethos to the benefit of pupils, staff, parents and carers.

For pupils’ education

• Eliminates the transition between St. Mary’s and St. Peter’s schools
• Provides consistency in curriculum for pupils throughout their time at school
• Ensures continuity and consistency of teaching and learning together with an increased ability to track long term achievement
• Increases stability, security and confidence more easily as the children are all in the same school
• Provides even greater continuity for the most vulnerable children and those with special educational needs (including gifted and talented pupils)
• Opens opportunities for a richer social development and interaction with a wider range of age groups for children, including older pupils having some appropriate pastoral responsibility for younger children
• Provides the potential for higher levels of attainment at the end of KS2

For school families

• Gives the ability to foster longer-term family relationships within one school
• Simplifies communication between school and parents, especially for parents with children in both schools, removes duplication and ensures a joined up approach for events, training and other matters
• Avoids parents having to apply for their children to secure a place for Year 3

For leadership and governance

• Promotes continuity and progression of learning between ages 4 and 11 via a single leadership and vision
• Ensures continuity and consistency of policy and planning across key stages
• Supports the recruitment and retention of a strong governing body
• Further enhances consistency of approaches to inclusion and well-being
• Improves coordination and flexibility in the CNRB
For staff
• Gives opportunities for career development through the sharing of a wider range of expertise and possibilities for working between KS1 and KS2.
• Utilises staff knowledge, skills and specific expertise more fully across the amalgamated school.
• Allows continuous assessment, tracking and target-setting procedures for the entire primary phase of education

For the use of resources
• Gives scope for greater flexibility in use of money and economies of scale advantages — a larger school would provide more options in premises, finances and staffing which would help the school maintain greater flexibility to ensure the best provision possible for our children

8. Revenue budget
Funding for running schools (e.g. salaries, energy costs) is allocated by a formula set by central government, with the majority of any school’s funding being based on the number of pupils. The most recent information available for the school year 2014/15 indicates 145 on the roll at St. Mary’s and 177 at St. Peter’s to give a combined total of 322. The latest data provided by the Wiltshire Council School Census and Forecast Officer suggests that this number is likely to remain reasonably constant until at least 2018.

9. Admissions
As both St. Mary’s and St. Peter’s are voluntary controlled schools and follow the same Wiltshire Council policy on admissions there would be no change in policy. As the potential new school will be capable of educating more than the 322 pupils currently anticipated there is scope for increasing the numbers of pupils. The new school will have a PAN (Planned Admissions Number) as a 420 Primary School.

10. School Governing Body
A new Governing Body would be appointed / elected in accordance with Wiltshire Council requirements. During the period of transition, a Governing Committee made up of equal representation of Governors from both schools will oversee the amalgamation and decision making process.

11. School Staff
A new Governing Body would be appointed / elected in accordance with Wiltshire Council requirements. This new Governing Body will develop an appropriate staff structure for the proposed Primary School following a separate, formal collective and individual consultation process with the staff of both schools and the recognised Trade Union/Professional Associations as advised by Wiltshire Council Schools’ Human Resources team. St Mary’s Infants School and St Peter’s Junior School are both VC schools. The Local Authority will continue to be the employer and all terms and conditions of length of service will remain. Staff from both schools will have equal opportunities for employment in the new school. The Governing Body will keep staffing under review as circumstances change, and will make any appropriate decisions regarding staffing.
12. Salisbury Diocese Board of Education

The Diocese of Salisbury has been involved in discussions about the proposed changes and fully supports the creation of a new Marlborough Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School. The Diocesan Board of Education will continue to work with staff of the amalgamated school to support raising the quality of education provision and to ensure the Church distinctiveness of the new School in future.

This Consultation Document is issued on behalf of:

- Carolyn Godfrey, Director of Children’s Services, Wiltshire Council
- Simon Taylor, Chair of Governors, St Mary’s CE Infants school
- Amanda Carver, Chair of Governors, St Peter’s CE Junior school
- Joy Tubbs, Acting Director, Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education
APPENDIX A
Stakeholders who have been sent this document and are being consulted

• Parents of current pupils at both schools
• Parents of children attending pre-schools within the designated area
• Governors of both schools
• Staff of both schools
• Marlborough Children’s Centre
• Other Wiltshire Council staff working with children in the Marlborough area
• Marlborough Town Council
• Local councillors
• The local MP
• The County Secretaries of the relevant unions and professional bodies
• The Primary Heads Forum
• Marlborough Area Educational Partnership
• Heads and Chairs of Governors of schools of the Marlborough Cluster
• Salisbury Diocese Board of Education
• Resource Bases in Wiltshire
• St. Mary’s Under Fives Pre-School
• Feeder nurseries
APPENDIX B
Consultation on the proposed amalgamation of St Mary’s & St Peter’s schools

We are keen to hear your views on the proposed amalgamation. Please provide details of your interest / connection to the school together with your views on the proposal (please tick all that apply):

School parent
• Prospective (admission in September 2015 or later)
• St Mary’s
• St Peter’s

Member of staff

Other (please identify your interest in the consultation)

Your comments (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary):

Please return this form by post directly to either school or to one of the dedicated returns boxes located at both schools and Marlborough Library by 17 October 2014.