

Policy 4: Infant and Junior School Amalgamation

Infant School

An infant school usually comprises of nursery pupils in addition to pupils who start statutory education with the school at the age of four. They remain at the school until the end of Year 2, where they usually transfer to an associated junior school. The years covered by infant schools are known as Key Stage 1; however this is gradually being replaced by the Foundation Phase.

Junior School

A junior school is one where children join at the start of Year 3 and continue through until they move on to secondary school at the end of Year 6. The years covered by junior schools are known as Key Stage 2.

All-through Primary School

An all-through primary school is one where children start statutory education with the school at the age of four and continue through until they move on to secondary school at the end of Year 6. The majority of all-through schools also include nursery classes.

There is a national trend towards amalgamating infant and junior schools into all-through primary schools. All-through primary schools are able to provide children with a continuous stream of education, thus removing the disruption that can be caused by moving schools at an early age.

With the implementation of the Foundation Phase replacing Key Stage 1 in Wales there is now a greater need to minimise disruptive transition to Key Stage 2. The Council accepts that amalgamating infant and junior schools into all-through schools is the best way to achieve a smooth transition.

The Council believes that all-through primary schools provide the following benefits:

- An opportunity for stability, consistency and ease of progression between Key Stages, particularly considering the impact of the Foundation Phase, and the emphasis on learning through play.
- An increased range of staff expertise
- Interaction with a wider range of age groups for children.
- The ability to foster long-term relationships with parents.

Therefore, the Council is committed to amalgamating infant and junior schools. If the Headteacher of an infant or junior school announces his/her decision to leave the post, the authority, following consultation with the appropriate bodies, will consider whether to instigate statutory procedures to amalgamate.

When the decision to amalgamate an infant and junior school is taken, the authority will aim to amalgamate both schools onto one site. Where this is not immediately possible the infant and junior

schools can be amalgamated into a single school based on two sites. The authority will then adopt a clear strategy to move the school onto a single site.

The following issues specific to infant and junior schools amalgamation will be considered before statutory notices are published:

- The transition factor from infant to junior schools, and the impact of the Foundation Phase upon transition
- Any amalgamated school must be able to deliver equal or improved educational standards
- Any amalgamated school must be able to deliver equal or improved community focus
- Consideration regarding the ability to create a combined ethos including the best features from both schools that can be captured and signed up to by all members of the community
- Where amalgamation would create a school larger than a two-form entry primary school, a clear strategy must be adopted to reduce the size of the school
- Potential managerial structures of the amalgamated school, with consideration given to the changing roles of managers

Infant and junior amalgamation may also be considered as an option during an area review.