

Proposal to close Buttsbury Infant School.

Linked to proposals to enlarge Buttsbury Junior School and alter its age range from 7 to 11, to 4 to 11.

This proposal provides relevant information in accordance with the *School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2013*.

School Details

Buttsbury Infant School
(Foundation)
Perry Street
Billericay
Essex
CM12 0NX

Local Authority Details

Essex County Council
School Organisation Team
County Hall
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 1QH

Description

Essex County Council (ECC), together with the governing bodies of Buttsbury Infant School and Buttsbury Junior School are proposing to build on the strengths and good progress in place at the schools by the creation of a single primary school, under the unified leadership of one headteacher and one governing body. ECC, with the support of the governing bodies, is therefore proposing that the infant school closes and the junior school extends its age range to form a single primary school for children aged 4 to 11 with effect from 1 January 2025.

In February 2022, Mrs Ann Robinson started working as Interim Executive Headteacher at Buttsbury Infant School alongside her substantive role as Headteacher of Buttsbury Junior School. Initially, the role was anticipated only to be for a period of about nine months; however, Ms Gould did not return from her maternity leave, so the role was extended until July 2024.

During the two years that Mrs Ann Robinson has been working across both schools, there been huge benefits for children, staff, parents and governors. Consequently, both Governing Bodies formed a Joint Working Party, approximately one year ago, to build on this success and explore the potential opportunities for the future of the schools.

To continue to drive up standards and performance, the Governing Bodies of both schools proposed to amalgamate the two schools into one primary school under the leadership of Mrs Ann Robinson.

This would involve the formal closure of the infant school on 31 December 2024 and changing the age range of the junior school from 7 to 11 to 4 to 11 to become a primary school from 1

January 2025. Mrs Ann Robinson will retain the Executive Headship of the infant school until the schools amalgamate in January 2025.

The junior school has been an academy since May 2011 and the Secretary of State for Education formally decided on the change of age range proposal on 21 June 2024. The infant school is a foundation school and Essex County Council must formally decide on the closure proposal. Therefore, these are two linked proposals which must be taken into consideration together. If the proposal is approved, the infant school will become part of the junior school Academy Trust.

Both the infant and junior schools were rated as Outstanding by Ofsted at their last inspections. The schools have a history of working closely to serve the school community, including outcomes for children. Some services are already shared, for example, catering services, premises management, Parent Teacher Association.

The expanded junior school would operate on its existing site and on the site of the former infant school.

Consultation

A consultation on the proposal to close Buttsbury Infant School alongside the consultation to enlarge Buttsbury Junior School from 496 places to 856 places and to change the age range of pupils attending of the school from 7 to 11 to 4 to 11 years of age, from 1 January 2025, was held between 3 May and 14 June 2024.

A response form was made available online and the consultation document was distributed to parents of children at the infant and junior schools via the schools. Copies of the document were also posted to other interested parties by email. Responses to the consultation could be made through the organised drop-in sessions and/ or via the electronic response form, by letter or email.

Public meetings for parents/ carers and the local community were held on 5 June 2024 in the afternoon and again in the evening. Meetings were also held for staff of the infant school on 5 June 2024 and for staff of the junior school on 6 June 2024.

More details on the consultation can be found at the link below, as part of the decision taken by Essex County Council to publish statutory notices.

https://cmis.essex.gov.uk/essexcmis5/Decisions/tabid/78/ctl/ViewCMIS_DecisionDetails/mid/422/Id/10281/Default.aspx

Objectives

The objective of this proposal is to seek the formal closure of Buttsbury Infant School, which currently provides education for pupils between the ages of 4-7, with effect from 31 December 2024. However, this proposal is related to a decision that was taken by the Regional Director of the Department for Education on 21 June 2024 to extend the age range of Buttsbury Junior School from 7- 11 to 4-11 with effect from 1 January 2025. These are joint proposals, and one cannot happen without the other.

The expanded junior school would operate on its existing site and on the site of the former infant school.

Effect on other schools and educational institutions

The proposed closure of the infant school is related to proposals to enlarge and alter the age range of the junior school and will not change the number of primary school places in the area. Therefore, there is no foreseen effect on other schools in the area.

Funding

There are no capital costs associated with this proposal, over and above those that can be covered by the respective delegated budgets of Buttsbury Infant School and Buttsbury Junior School.

Implementation

The school will close on 31 December 2024.

Details on how to respond to proposals

Within four weeks from the date of publication (26 September 2024) you may make objections or comments in respect of this proposal in the following ways:

By post: Director, Education
 c/o School Organisation
 Essex County Council
 Chelmsford
 Essex
 CM1 1QH

By email: school.organisation@essex.gov.uk