



Q&A consultation with parents regarding the proposal for St. Ives First School to become a Primary School.

Meeting commenced at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 12th November 2014.

Present:	Mrs. L. Crossley	Headteacher St. Ives First School
	Ms. C. Edwards	Headteacher of Ringwood Academy
	Mrs. J. Grove	Local Authority Officer
	Mr. M. Avoth	Parent Governor
	Mrs. A. Bennett	Parent Governor
	Mr. G. Lucas	Parent Governor
	Mrs J. Roper	Community Governor (taking notes)

Mr. Avoth welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced guest speakers and members of St. Ives Governing Body.

Mrs. Crossley first thanked parents for their response to the recent questionnaire which was very encouraging and explained that the meeting was an opportunity for parents to ask questions, voice their concerns and gather information. Mrs. Crossley then went on to explain why the decision to apply for primary status was taken, and shared feedback and evidence to support this proposal. Following this Mrs. Crossley outlined the primary application proposal, gave an update of where we are now and what needs to happen next. Mrs Crossley included the following key points:

Why is SIFS applying to become a primary?

For many years children have been leaving St Ives (SIFS) before the end of Y4 to secure a place in the Hampshire system thinking this will secure them a place at the Secondary school.

Over the last three years, 54 children have left the school to go into Hampshire before the end of Year 4.

98% positive response from parents in favour of the Governing Body proposal. This cannot be ignored, parents want choice and the ability to access their most local secondary school, regardless of boundary.

The GB believe this primary application is in the best interests of the children and the community.

Is it possible for SIFS to achieve primary status in 2015 given the change to its admission policy?

There is no change to the school admission policy because the Governing Body are not lowering the age range of the school therefore the proposal remains the same, the Governing Body wish to seek for SIFS to become a Primary School on 1st September 2015.

How would becoming a primary school affect the local middle schools?

SIFS still very much supports our parents' choice to send their children to middle schools, this is about extending options for our parents, not closing doors.

SIFS will continue to work closely with the middle schools. Over the last three years the transfer of pupils at the end of Y4 has been extremely diverse and includes twelve different schools, Dorset and Hampshire, middle and junior/Primary with an average of 8 children transferring to our feeder school, WMMS. This shows how wide our leavers are scattered and therefore the impact on any one particular school is lessened.

Will becoming a primary put the school at risk of losing its outstanding Ofsted?

No

Ms. Edwards gave a comprehensive report on what being a feeder school means and how St. Ives would fit into the registration process of Ringwood Academy.

Finally Mrs. Groves explained the LA transport policy and the criteria which dictated who was eligible for transport to school. A map and detailed information on this topic would be provided by Mrs. Groves shortly.

There then followed a question and answer session where parents were encouraged to voice any concerns they had at the present time.

1. Parking is currently an issue – how will 2 additional classes exacerbate this situation?

Discussions around parking revealed that most schools experienced a similar problem. Parking would be revisited by the school if congestion became a serious problem and strategies put in place. It was acknowledged that upper KS2 children are expected to be significantly more independent and walking/cycling to school would be encouraged.

2. Did the Headteacher and Governors of St. Ives feel that the future size of the school would become a problem, i.e. would there be a need to build more classrooms etc?

The Headteacher and Governors felt that the current school buildings would be able to cope with the intake for Y5 in September 2015 and referred to the fact that St. Ives had once been a Primary School. Beyond this it was difficult to predict if further building work would be necessary. Space was not an issue.

3. Did the Headteacher anticipate there may come a time when mixed age classes would become necessary?

The Headteacher replied that historically the Headteachers and Governors did everything possible to avoid mixed age classes. At the present time they can see no reason to deviate from this practice.

4. Will there be a teacher?

It is the intention that each class will be managed by one Teacher and one Training Assistant as per the rest of the school.

5. What help and support will there be to help the children during transition from primary to secondary school status?

Transition of our children to other schools has always been important to St. Ives. Transitional process will remain the same, except they will be adapted and amended as appropriate to ensure the procedures taken provide the necessary support the children need at the time of transition.

6. How will children in and out of the catchment area of ST. Ives be treated by the Ringwood registration process and are they guaranteed a place?

Children attending St Ives First School will be able to feed into two schools, WMMS and Ringwood Secondary as their two feeder schools. This automatically places children in the 'feeder' school admission criteria for both school regardless of whether they are out of catchment for St Ives.

7. What are the maximum classroom numbers?

Class sizes are currently set at 34 children per class at KS2.

8. What about transport?

Transport entitlement (free provision) is provided to the end of the respective educational year in the following cases:

- if the child is in Reception Year to Year 4 (aged between 4 & 9) and lives two miles or more from the catchment area or nearest school
- if the child is in Year 5 to Year 11 (aged between 9 & 16) and lives three miles or more from the catchment area or nearest school

Entitled transport is currently provided to the nearest or catchment area school where the child meets the qualifying criteria. Whilst these agreed areas remain unaltered, schools will continue to have entitled transport provided by the LA. However, if any school* (including where this affects a relevant pyramid or network area) chooses to alter their catchment area or admissions policy, they will need to consult on their arrangements with the LA, as the LA is only legally required to provide transport to the nearest appropriate school. If schools change their arrangements, it will be their responsibility to inform parents.

If the catchment and nearest school do not have places available you may be offered transport to the 'nearest suitable school with places available considering efficient use of resources' – this will be decided by identifying the transport options, routes and timings (see section 1.6.6). You will need to contact the admissions team to find out which school in the area would qualify under this category.

Additional criteria apply to children from low income families. If families are in receipt of **Maximum Working Tax Credit**, or the child is entitled to **Free School Meals**, transport entitlement will be provided:

- in the case of children in Year 5 and 6 (aged 9 – 11) – to their catchment area or nearest school where the distance between home and the school is more than two miles

(shortest available walking route),

If a child is attending a school on “parental preference” grounds i.e. the school applied for is not the catchment/nearest school (or one of the three nearest eligible schools in the case of 1.1.4 above) there is no duty for the Local Authority (LA) to provide transport and the families are responsible for their own arrangements.

9. Has the LA seen the response from parents to the proposal relating to Primary school status?

Following the meeting, the information gathered, along with proposal, will be made accessible to parents and governors and a copy will be sent to the LA.

10 What happens if a family lives outside of catchment area, they already have one child attending St. Ives First School and 2 years later the parents wish to register a sibling at the school. Is there a chance the sibling will not automatically be offered a place.

Admission criteria at St. Ives School will then apply, i.e. after catchment the next benchmark is siblings already in school.

11 Will there be a change of name and uniform?

Achieving Primary status will not necessitate changing the name of the school, or uniform immediately. Changing the school logo will be a natural progression with children moving through the school. As and when parents wish to buy new uniform it would have the phase Primary as opposed to First on its logo.

12 Are there plans to extend the kitchen – the current kitchen is just about managing to cope with present numbers – surely it will require additional space to cope with the extra 2 classes?

The headteacher stated that information had been received from the LA which contained details of the availability of funds to assist schools that need additional kitchen space. A bid has already been completed and posted.

13 Will there be any alterations to the changing rooms in the swimming pool, bearing in mind the age of Year 5 and 6 children?

This situation had already been identified and alternatives were being considered. The Headteacher acknowledged that upper KS2 would require a more discrete situation for changing and the school would be mindful of this.

14 How likely is it that this proposal will be accepted?

A very encouraging and positive response has been received from all parties and the school governors feel that the LA should listen to the voice of our parents and community. The LA officer explained that the proposal to go ahead in September 2015 was acceptable due to the school not changing its admission criteria ie lowering its age range, just extending its age range. She advised parents to apply for their middle school/Hampshire place as normal but the place could be withdrawn if St Ives were successful in becoming a primary school.

15 Does the Headteacher feel that St. Ives will be able to provide the necessary resources and equipment (e.g. a science lab and a Gym) to maintain the level of education required by Years 5 and 6?

The headteacher stated that the thing to remember is that we will become a primary school, not a small middle school and the children in Years 5 and 6 will get the best education a Primary school should provide as the rest of the school has now. We are hopeful that links with other schools to use their facilities will continue as they do now.

At the end of this session Mr. Avoth thanked everyone for coming and encouraged parents to talk to Mrs. Crossley or the Governors if they had any other worries or concerns.

The meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.