



Consultation on the amalgamation of Dorset Road Infant School and Castlecombe Primary School

The Spring Partnership Trust

Putting children's education and safety first

Amalgamation of Dorset Road Infant School and Castlecombe Primary School, Castlecombe Road, Mottingham, SE9 4AT

This document is designed to:

- **Notify you of The Spring Partnership Trust's proposal to amalgamate Dorset Road Infant School and Castlecombe Primary School. This will result in a new single primary school, based at the current Castlecombe Primary School site, for the Mottingham community.**
- **Explain why this change is being proposed.**
- **Invite your comments on this proposal.**

Our proposal

The Spring Partnership Trust is proposing to discontinue Dorset Road Infant School and Castlecombe Primary School and amalgamate them to form a new primary school on the Castlecombe site.

The amalgamation process

Dorset Road Infant School currently takes children from age 4 to age 7, and Castlecombe Primary School from age 4 to 11. Both schools are rated 'Good' by Ofsted. At the point of implementation, a primary school will be created with an age range 4 to 11. All pupils currently at the two schools will be guaranteed a place at the amalgamated school.

If this proposal goes ahead we will be seeking further input from parents/carers, staff and pupils regarding the details of the new school to make sure the school community are involved with any decisions.

Why are we consulting on the amalgamation of Dorset Road Infant School and Castlecombe Primary School?

- It is increasingly difficult to meet pupil's educational needs with a very small staff team.
- The Dorset Road site is significantly below the necessary level of compliance in terms of the government guidelines for school buildings. Furthermore, the Dorset Road School hall needs extensive and costly repairs.

What are the benefits of amalgamation?

The amalgamation will provide: -

- greater opportunities to further enhance educational standards due to a greater range of staff knowledge, skills and experience;
- the ability for all pupils to benefit from more outdoor learning experiences;
- greater capacity for early special educational needs assessments and referrals, and enhanced special educational needs provision;
- access for all parents/carers to the nursery and wrap around care based at CPS.

Families will also benefit from their children attending one site, as well as having access to a thriving breakfast and after school club for their childcare needs.

Impact on stakeholders

Staff - The impact on staff is being kept to a minimum. There should be no direct impact on teaching, class support and ancillary staff as a result of this proposal.

Pupils – the main impact on existing DRIS pupils would be that their school would be located on a different site. Pupils would have continuity with their teachers and support staff. There would be no change of school site when they transferred to junior school in Y3.

Parents/carers – Some parents may have to travel further to get to the site of the new school. However, if parents have siblings at nursery, or in different key stages of the school, they will only have to travel to one site to escort their children to and from school.

Local community –TSPT believes that this amalgamation has the potential of improving community involvement in the schools. A single community / parent group should lead to greater engagement with the community as individuals and businesses would not need to choose which school to support when time and resources are limited. The new school would be bringing together elements of best practice when it comes to community engagement.

An equality impact assessment has been carried out in relation to this proposal.

Admission arrangements

The current round of applications for places for children due to start school in September at both Castlecombe Primary School and Dorset Road Infant School is not affected by this proposal. All applications made to these schools are being considered in the same way as they would be if the site at Dorset Road had not been affected by health and safety concerns, as the school is still in operation - albeit at a different location. Primary school applications to Dorset Road will be awarded based on the criteria as shown in the TSPT admissions policy, with the proximity criteria continuing to be measured from the location of the Dorset Road site, even though it is temporarily closed.

What is the background to this situation?

- 2016 - DRIS and CPS joined The Spring Partnership Trust (TSPT). The TSPT plan was to expand DRIS to 90 places and to expand CPS in KS2 so pupils from DRIS would have a guaranteed place there in the junior part of the school (KS2)
- 2017 - A Staffing restructure took place at CPS and DRIS, resulting in one headteacher shared across both schools and a shared leadership team. Local committees merged in 2017.
- 2017 - DRIS expanded from 75 pupil places to 90 pupil places. 4 new classrooms, a library, an arts studio and a nurture room were built at CPS for DRIS pupils to transfer to in Y3 for KS2.
- 2018/19 - As a consequence of building work to expand the kitchen at DRIS so that 90 pupils could be catered for, significant structural problems were identified in the school hall, estimated to cost circa £500,000 to rectify. Applications for funding from the DfE have been unsuccessful.

What is the guidance from the Department for Education about amalgamating schools?

The Department for Education (DfE) has set out the requirements and processes for amalgamating and making changes to schools in the guidance 'Making Significant Changes to an Academy and Closure by Mutual Agreement' (Nov 2019).

The purpose of the guidance is to ensure that Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) do not make decisions that will have a negative impact on other schools in the area, and that changes can be implemented quickly and effectively where there is a strong case for doing so. It is also expected that, where possible, additional new places will only be provided at schools that have an overall Ofsted rating of 'good' or 'outstanding'.

The guidance also sets out the processes required to implement this proposal, and this consultation period is the first stage in that process.

Who will be consulted?

The Spring Partnership Trust (TSPT) wishes to seek the views of all those with a likely interest in the proposal. It is important that stakeholder views can be taken into account before decisions are made. We are therefore consulting with the community, potential users and other relevant stakeholders.

An online survey will be available on the DRIS and CPS websites, or a response form is provided below. Consultation drop-in sessions will also be run over the next 6 weeks. The dates of these sessions will be emailed in the near future.

Your views will be taken into account by the TSPT Board of Directors and the Regional Schools Commissioners office.

The following parties will be consulted in relation to this proposal:

- Each Local Authority which maintains an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or statement of SEN in respect of a

child attending the schools;

- Parents of children who attend the schools;
- Staff who are currently based at the schools;
- Parents in the area;
- Primary, secondary, alternative provision and special schools in the area.

How to make comments

We would like to hear your views on these proposals. You can let us have your views in the following ways: -

- responding to the online survey that is on the school websites, or
- completing the form below and emailing it to contact@springpartnership.co.uk, or
- completing the form below and posting it to Jo Brinkley, The Spring Partnership Trust, George Lane, Bromley, BR2 7LQ, or
- completing the form below and handing it in to the school office at Castlecombe Primary School.

Unfortunately, it will not be possible to acknowledge receipt.

All responses must be received by midnight on **Sunday 8th March 2020**.

It would be helpful to have the following information:

Name

Postcode

We will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act, which means that we will not give your personal data to any third parties.

Your comments will be anonymous - your name or anything that could identify you will not be included in any report. However, we cannot guarantee that this information will be withheld if it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

I am a: (please tick)

<input type="checkbox"/>

Pupil

Parent/Carer

Member of Parent Teacher Association

Member of staff

Local Committee Member

<input type="checkbox"/>

Local resident

Local business

Local sports group

Local community group

Other

At which school? (please tick)

Dorset Road Infant School (DRIS)

Castlecombe Primary School (CPS)

Do you agree or disagree that Dorset Road Infant School and Castlecombe Primary School should amalgamate to form one new school for the Mottingham community? (please tick one box)

I agree with the proposal

I do not agree with the proposal

Comments - please add any further comments on this proposal in this box (continue overleaf if desired)