

Proposal to close Montgomery Infant School and Nursery.

Linked to proposals to enlarge Montgomery Junior School and alter its age range from 7 to 11, to 3 to 11.

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

School Details

Montgomery Infant School and Nursery
(Community)
Baronswood Way
Colchester
Essex
CO2 9QG

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 Montgomery Infant School and Nursery and Montgomery 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 3 to 11 with effect from 1 April 2025.

Miss Bridgeman retired as the Headteacher of Montgomery Infant School in March 2024. Since then, an Interim Headteacher, Mrs Levett, has been working with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure standards of teaching and learning remain high.

Mrs Wright is the Interim Headteacher working across both the Junior and the Infant schools. Mrs Wright is continuing the focus on standards and teaching and learning, and the staff of both schools are working closely together.

Amalgamation is an opportunity for both schools to develop closer professional partnerships. Currently some services are shared, for example catering and energy. The governors see significant advantages in combining the schools into a primary school under the leadership of Mrs Wright to continue to drive up standards and performance. This would involve the formal closure of the infant school on 31 March 2025 and changing the age range of the junior school from 7 to 11 to 3 to 11 to become a primary school from 1 April 2025. Mrs Wright will retain the Executive Headship of the infant school until the schools amalgamate in April 2025.

The infant school was rated as Outstanding by Ofsted and the junior school rated as Good 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 Montgomery Infant School and Nursery alongside the consultation to enlarge Montgomery Junior School from 360 places to 630, plus 40 nursery places and to change the age range of pupils attending of the school from 7 to 11 to 3 to 11 years of age, from 1 April 2025, was held between 29 May and 4 July 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 18 June 2024 in the afternoon and again in the evening. Meetings were also held for staff of both schools on 18 June 2024.

Objectives

The objective of this proposal is to seek the formal closure of Montgomery Infant School and Nursery, which currently provides education for pupils between the ages of 3-7, with effect from 31 March 2025. However, this proposal is related to other proposals that would see Montgomery Junior School alter its lower age limit, to enable it to provide education for pupils between the ages of 3-11 and enlarge the premises of the school to increase its capacity to enable it to become a primary school with effect from 1 April 2025. 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 Montgomery Infant School and Nursery and Montgomery Junior School.

Implementation

The school will close on 31 March 2025.

Details on how to respond to proposals

Within four weeks from the date of publication (5 December 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