

## Equality Impact Report – Consultation on proposed change to co-educational status for The Forest School, Horsham and St Andrews CE High School, Worthing

Title of report	<b>Equality Impact Report</b>
Date of implementation	<b>July 2020</b>

EIR completed by	<b>Graham Olway</b> <b>03302223029</b>
Name	
Telephone	

### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Forest School, Horsham and St Andrew's CE High School, Worthing are both single-sex boys' schools in West Sussex. They are complementary to single-sex girls' schools at Millais School, Horsham and Davison CE High School, Worthing. Demand for single-sex boys education has been much less than that for single-sex girls schools and the governing bodies of both boys schools are consulting on proposals to convert them both to co-educational schools with effect from September 2021. Both girls' schools will remain single-sex provision as both are popular and there has been no wish to look at changes to that provision.
- 1.2 Research shows that nationally it is very often single-sex boys schools that are converting to co-educational status as there seems to be much less demand for single-sex boys education than there was 30+ years ago.
- 1.3 The proposed conversion of both single-sex boys schools to co-educational schools comes with the support of both governing bodies and the Church of England Diocese of Chichester in respect of St Andrews CE High School. The public consultation will allow the Cabinet Member to take a view on the issues raised about the popularity of single sex boys' schools and whether there is a strong argument that converting to co-educational status will both benefit a greater number of boys by way of improved academic performance but also offer more places to girls who want places at co-educational schools.

These factors provide an educational context to the public sector equality duty related to the proposals.

#### **Public Sector Equality Duty**

The Equality Act (2010) mandates a duty for public bodies to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

To meet this duty authorities are required to analyse the impact of proposed policies, strategies and action plans which may have implications for those within the protected groups.

In this Equality Impact Assessment, we evaluate the impact on both single sex boys schools to anticipate and address the requirements of the duty. The protected groups are defined by reference to:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including, ethnic origin, nationality)
- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex/Gender
- Sexual orientation

Relevant to the public sector equality duty is an awareness of the numbers of pupils with particular health and educational needs.

**‘Race and ethnicity’ related issues**

The largest ethnic group in West Sussex is White British (88.9%) and the largest minority ethnic group is White other (2.9%) followed by Asian/Asian British (1.7%). Minority groups are largely concentrated in Crawley and in coastal towns such as Bognor Regis, Littlehampton and Worthing and not in the rural areas where the majority of small schools are located.

Ethnic group by geography, census 2011, count (percentage of total pop)

Ethnic Group	West Sussex	Adur	Arun	Chichester	Crawley	Horsham	Mid Sussex	Worthing
<b>Total Population</b>	806,892	61,182	149,518	113,794	106,597	131,301	139,860	104,640
<b>White British</b>	717,551 (88.9%)	56,843 (92.9%)	137,024 (91.6%)	105,841 (93%)	76,888 (72.1%)	121,020 (92.1%)	126,341 (90.3%)	93,594 (89.4%)
<b>White other (inc. Irish)</b>	38,948 (4.8%)	1,820 (2.9%)	8,094 (5.4%)	4,481 (3.9%)	8,292 (7.7%)	5,042 (3.8%)	6,677 (4.7%)	4,542 (4.3%)
<b>Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups</b>	12,155 (1.5%)	886 (1.4%)	1,502 (1%)	1,092 (0.9%)	3,098 (2.9%)	1,774 (1.3%)	1,967 (1.4%)	1,836 (1.7%)
<b>Asian/ Asian British</b>	28,334 (3.5%)	1,058 (1.7%)	2,116 (1.4%)	1,617 (1.4%)	13,825 (12.9%)	2,585 (1.9%)	3,761 (2.6%)	3,372 (3.2%)
<b>Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British</b>	7,146 (0.8%)	313 (0.5%)	538 (0.3%)	518 (0.4%)	3,469 (3.2%)	651 (0.4%)	788 (0.5%)	869 (0.8%)
<b>Other ethnic group</b>	2,758 (0.3%)	262 (0.4%)	244 (0.1%)	245 (0.2%)	1,025 (0.9%)	229 (0.1%)	326 (0.2%)	427 (0.4%)

Source: ONS, 2011

Ethnic disproportionality, if not addressed through appropriate provision can result in unequal future outcomes, and this issue is increasingly salient as the BAME population in England continues to grow. A key recommendation of this report is that LAs, multi-academy trusts and schools must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty requirements and should monitor ethnic disproportionality and achievement.

There has not been any particular expected impact or outcome from the current proposals for this aspect of the duty. The consultation has not altered this assessment. The proposals would not require further attention to this area of possible impact.

**2. Describe any negative impact for customers or residents.**

For the majority of the protected characteristics no identifiable impact has been identified. The proposals may only have a specific impact on a small number of families that seek a place for a boy at one of the two single sex boys' schools. Otherwise, it will not affect the number of places that will still be offered at both schools – but not in a way any other school based policy or decision would do. It is inevitable that any decision about school planning will affect a defined age group. It is not concluded that these proposals require different approaches as a result. The specific element of the proposals which have required particular focus for the equality duty has been the implications for children with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and those with defined Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND).

All of the planning has taken into account the pupils falling into these groups so as to understand

- their current and future needs
- the decisions that have led to attendance at the current school
- the implications for disruption to current provision
- the need to seek and plan alternative provision
- the impact upon the physical and emotional wellbeing of the pupils
- The ability of alternative provision to meet their needs
- The action required to ensure safe and effective transition.
- The need to avoid or mitigate any identified adverse impact on these pupils both as a group and as individuals.

These factors have informed the appraisal of the proposals as the specific individuals are known in their schools and their individual needs understood. Their parents and carers and the other groups representing their interests have been able to engage in the consultation and have been able to set out fully any concerns which have particular impact upon these factors. Those have helped inform the final proposals.

It is recognised that COVID 19 may have exacerbated the negative impacts identified. A number of positive steps have been taken to mitigate these impacts in the planning for implementation of the final proposals. These are set out in (3) below.

**3. Describe any positive effects which may offset any negative impact.**

The proposals for both schools have been informed by and plans adjusted to take account of the needs of individuals within the defined group (primarily those with EHCP or SEND), the current COVID 19 situation and the views of both governing bodies that a change to co-educational status will provide a wide ranging benefit in excess of that to the limited number of families that specifically want single sex boys schools.

It is also recognised that boys in both schools who may be exploring gender reassignment will have increased opportunities to engage in a mixed environment and this is seen as positive support.

More generally the proposals support the County Council's aspirations to be placed in the top quarter of performing Councils within three years, in terms of children's attainment. Great strides are being made towards this by working in partnership with schools and parents and these proposals are integral to helping achieve high performing and financially sustainable schools for everyone in West Sussex that benefit the children and communities for years to come. Accordingly, the needs of future generations of pupils as well as those immediately affected for a short period have informed the decisions. Both schools have commented that the single sex nature of their schools limits their ability to attract pupils and become both financially more viable but also help improve academic performance through opportunities in different curriculum subject areas that a boys' school might not currently promote.

**4. Describe whether and how the proposal helps to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.**

No specific concerns for adverse impact in terms of harassment or victimisation is indicated. The need to avoid specific discrimination of groups specifically affected has informed the plans for individuals and the schools they currently attend. The proposals are integral to helping achieve high performing and financially sustainable schools for everyone in West Sussex.

**5. Describe whether and how the proposal helps to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

It is considered that the overall aims of the proposals against the objectives set out in the background above and within the context of creating greater access to co-educational provision for both boys and girls across both Horsham and Worthing, together with surrounding areas, will achieve significant benefits for advancing equality of opportunity.

**6. Describe whether and how the proposal helps to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

As in 5 above. The proposals are aimed at removing the limitations on both boys and girls seeking co-educational provision. Whilst there will be a removal of access to single sex boys schools in West Sussex it should be noted the areas of Horsham and Worthing are the only two areas still to have single sex provision in West Sussex. Some years ago the two single-sex schools in Chichester amalgamated and became one co-educational school, partly based on similar challenges over fewer pupils seeking a boys' school education. Admission numbers at both girls' schools remain high and are not expected to reduce whereas applications to the two single sex boys schools have not been as high and demand for single sex boys schools is much lower.

**7. What changes were made to the proposal as a result? If none, explain why.**


In so far as required during the process any changes have been incorporated into the developing and the final proposals.

**8. Explain how the impact will be monitored to make sure it continues to meet the equality duty owed to customers and say who will be responsible for this.**

### Appendix 3

This impact Assessment and the consultation process on change to co-educational status has provided a reference point to ensure that careful attention is made to the impact on pupils in protected groups - especially those referred to in this document and ensure that their interests are kept in mind as proposals are implemented.

To be signed by a Director or Director to confirm that they have read and approved the content.

<b>Name</b>	 Paul Wagstaff	<b>Date</b>	16.07.20
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<b>Your position</b>	Director of Education and Skills
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