



Directorate of Children's Services

**Investing in the Future -
Primary School Review**

**Consultation on proposals for
Halesowen (Church of England)
Primary School**

Consultation Document
***'Putting Children and Young People First for
Dudley'***

5 September 2006

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Directorate of Children's Services Consultation Document

- Consultation on: **Investing in the Future – Primary School Review
Proposals for Halesowen C of E Primary School.**
- Summary: This document is intended to support further consultation on proposals to close Halesowen C of E Primary School.
- Deadline: All responses must be received by **5.00 p.m. on Friday 20 October 2006**
- Consultees:
- Dudley Schools
 - Chairs of Governing Bodies
 - Headteachers
 - Local Councillors (Halesowen Area Committee)
 - Members of the Select Committee on Children's Services
 - Member of Parliament for Halesowen and Rowley Regis
 - The Black Country Learning and Skills Council
 - Dudley Lifelong Learning Partnership
 - Halesowen College
 - Directorate staff
 - Unions and Professional Associations
 - Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
 - Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
 - Dudley MBC - Corporate Board
 - Dudley South Primary Care Trust
 - West Midlands Police
 - Worcester Diocesan Education Committee
 - Roman Catholic Diocesan Schools Commission
 - Dudley Association of Governing Bodies
 - Neighbouring LEA Directors
 - Dudley Racial Equality Council
 - Community Forums
 - Chamber of Trade
 - Community Learning Networks
 - Churches together in Halesowen
 - Dudley Free Church Liaison Council
 - Dudley Parent Partnership

The Kashmiri Pakistani Professionals Forum
Dudley Community Partnership
Dudley Muslim Association
Black Country Chamber of Commerce
Dudley Education Business Group
Community Representatives Panel
Sure Start local programmes
Children's Fund
Children and Young People's Partnership

Public Access

Dudley MBC Public Libraries
Dudley Website www.dudley.gov.uk
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Responses to:

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All responses may be published. **A large print version** and versions in other languages are available on request to the above address.

Bengali

"আপনি যদি বাংলায় আলোচনা করতে চান তবে দয়া করে ভিকি কুক কে 01384 813726 নাম্বারে টেলিফোন করুন।"

Chinese

當向你徵詢意見時候 你想用的語言是中文 請致電01384 813726與Vicky Cook 聯絡。

Gujarati

જો તમે ગુજરાતીમાં સલાહ વાતચીત કરવા ઈચ્છતાં હો, તો કૃપા કરીને વિકિ કૂકનો 01384 813726 પર સંપર્ક કરો.

Hindi

यदि आप चाहते हैं कि आपके साथ हिन्दी में सलाह की जाये तो कृपया विककी कुक को टैलीफोन नंबर 01384 813726 पर फोन करें

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਲਾਹ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਵਿੱਕੀ ਕੁੱਕ ਨੂੰ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਨੰਬਰ 01384 813726 ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਲਤਾ ਕਰਨੀ।

Urdu

اگر آپ کو اردو میں مشورہ درکار ہو تو براہ مہربانی وکی کک سے ٹیلیفون نمبر 01384 813726 پر رابطہ کیجئے

Arabic

لو انك تحب ان يتم استشارتك باللغة العربية فمن فضلك اتصل بفيكي كوك على
01384 813726 تليفون



John Freeman
Director of Children's Services
5 September 2006

Investing in the Future - Primary School Review

Consultation on proposals to close Halesowen C of E Primary School

1. Context

Dudley has managed numerous changes to the pattern of schooling at several critical points over the last 60 years. Political, educational and demographic changes have led to the building of new schools, changing their sizes and closing schools. Dudley is now facing again the need to change and, with the benefit of much better information, can respond with a degree of certainty to meet the needs of children for the next 20 – 30 years.

The annual birth rates (using academic year September – August) in Dudley have reduced from 4,116 in 1990 to 3,344 in 2003, a drop of almost 20%. There was a slight increase to 3,514 in 2004 but long-term projections indicate annual births of around 3,300. This is a major problem for all Dudley schools because the amount of money Dudley receives through the Council's revenue grant from government is based on the number of pupils attending schools. As the pupil numbers fall the level of government grant falls and school budgets have less money to meet the costs of providing education.

Based on records of children already born, the number of primary pupils in Dudley is projected to fall by a further 2,358 by 2010. There were approximately 600 fewer children attending Dudley schools in January 2006 compared with January 2005 which means that school budgets this year are over £2 million lower than last year. As the numbers attending primary schools will continue to fall over the next few years, by 2010, using the current unit per pupil funding of £3,329, primary schools will receive £7.8 million less than in 2005/06, a reduction of 9%. Halesowen C of E will receive a smaller budget because there is less money overall to distribute to all schools and because its own numbers are falling. The school is no longer viable because it will not be able to afford the costs of staffing, accommodation and supplies and services.

It has now become imperative to take action to ensure that all schools have sufficient resources to continue improving the quality of education and the standards achieved by children and young people. The pattern of primary school provision must be cost effective which means that all schools should attract sufficient pupils to cover the costs of education and that there should be a minimum of surplus places to allow some parental preference and cope with any short term increase in demand. These proposals to close Halesowen C of E combined with other school closures and reductions in surplus capacity across the

Borough will result in benefits for every pupil by ensuring that money is spent directly on education and not wasted on maintaining uneconomic schools and excessive surplus places.

Over a period of several years discussions have centred on the future of Church of England primary education in Halesowen. There have been several proposals intended to lead to a single Voluntary Aided (VA) C of E primary school with 420 places for boys and girls aged 5 – 11. These proposals have included the development of new sites and rebuilding on an existing site. The proposals were to be funded by a combination of proceeds from the sale of existing sites, further investment by both the Diocese of Worcester and the Council and by a successful application for DfES capital funding.

Halesowen C of E Voluntary Aided (VA) Primary School was unsustainably small and unlikely to grow significantly (see section 2). Hasbury C of E Voluntary Controlled (VC) Primary School is located in unlinked buildings on a site split by a public right of way. Following extensive searches no new site could be identified. Limitations on funding, e.g. two unsuccessful bids for DfES Targeted Capital Funding, prevented the building of an entirely new school on the Hasbury site. Accordingly, a refurbishment and redevelopment programme for a single VA school on the Hasbury site was considered. It has not been possible to secure the required funding within the Council or from the Diocese of Worcester or from Government. Although substantial effort and goodwill has been invested by Halesowen C of E, Hasbury C of E, the Council and the Diocese of Worcester, progress on the options requiring substantial capital funding has not been possible.

More recently, it has become apparent that the future demand for places will not sustain a 420 place school. This change combined with the time elapsed since the previous consultation in 2003-4 requires a new consultation on the proposals set out in this document.

The proposal is to close Halesowen C of E on 31 August 2007. Parents will be guaranteed a place for their children at Hasbury C of E and also where places are available at other Dudley primary schools. (See Table 6 for information on the nearest local primary schools). Early Years provision will be available at the Children's Centre due to open at Tenterfields Primary in 2007 and other local primary schools.

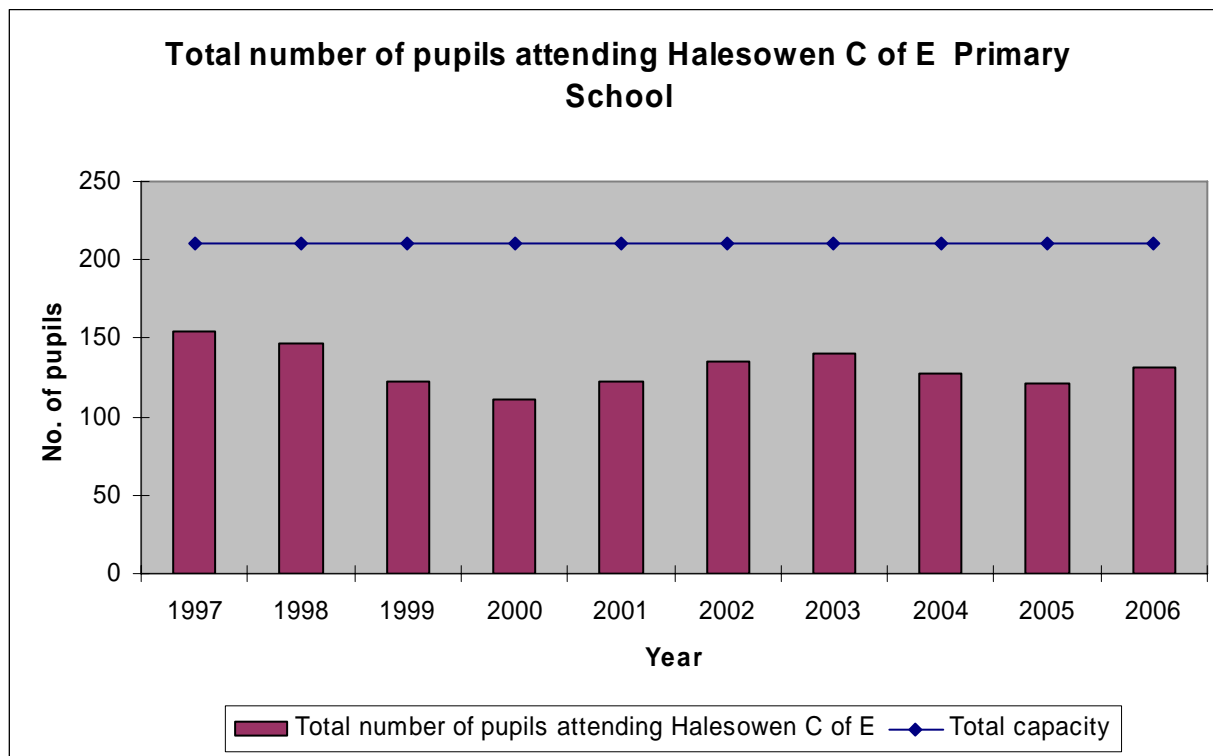
2. Halesowen C of E Primary School

2.1 Numbers on roll at Halesowen C of E Primary School

Halesowen C of E is a small school with 210 places for boys and girls aged 5 – 11 (Reception to Year 6). Additional places for nursery children are also offered but these have been excluded from the data for comparative purposes. The numbers on roll at

Halesowen C of E has fallen from 154 (Reception to Year 6) in January 1997 to 131 in January 2006. Table 1 below shows how the total number of pupils on the school roll has fallen since 1997. Surplus places have also grown from 56 (26.6%) in 1997 to 79 (37.6%) in January 2006. All figures were recorded in January of each year unless stated.

Table 1 – Number of pupils on roll at Halesowen C of E Primary School 1997 – 2006



Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total number of pupils attending Halesowen C of E	154	147	123	111	122	135	140	127	121	131
*Reception to Year 6 figures										

Table 2 shows January 2006 and estimated September 2006 Halesowen C of E numbers by year group based on the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) 2006 figures and admissions for September.

Table 2 – January and September figures for Halesowen C of E Primary School

	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Jan 06 (Sep 06)	21 (17)	17 (21)	17 (17)	22 (17)	19 (22)	21 (19)	14 (21)	131 (134)

Although the figures show an increase of 3 pupils in September there is no evidence of a significant increase in demand or a change in the overall downward trend. There are fewer pupils overall requiring places at primary schools due to the fall in the annual birth rate and there are too few housing developments to increase the demand for places. There are 17 pupils on roll for admission to reception in September 2006. Table 3 shows the estimated impact on numbers on roll if admissions continued at this very low level of 17. There is a very high risk that admissions could be below 17.

Table 3 – Estimated numbers based on continued admissions to reception of 17

	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Sep 06	17	21	17	17	22	19	21	134
Sep 07	17	17	221	17	17	22	19	130
Sep 08	17	17	17	21	17	17	22	128
Sep 09	17	17	17	17	21	17	17	123

“Around half of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds including those of Arabic, Asian and Black African Heritage. Some of these pupils are from families who are seeking asylum or refugee status.” (Inspection Report, February 2006). Provision for these pupils requires a higher proportion of resources and as pupil numbers fall, it is likely that the pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds would become the majority and further challenge Halesowen C of E’s capacity to meet their needs.

2.2 Pupils in the local area

England is divided into theoretical planning areas referred to as Super Output Areas with similar size populations. The three nearest Super Output Areas (SOAs) in which Halesowen C of E is located has 397 children aged 5 – 11 of which only 97 (24.4%) attend Halesowen C of E. The remainder attend other primary schools. Of the next 6 nearest SOAs only 36 (4.6%) attend Halesowen C of E. Halesowen C of E does not attract enough pupils from the local area or from elsewhere.

Table 4 – Number of children attending Halesowen C of E Primary School from the closest Super Output Areas

SOA	Children attending Halesowen C of E	Children aged 5 – 11 living in SOA	% of children from SOA attending Halesowen C of E
SOA733	71	151	47.0%
SOA739	14	139	10.1%
SOA734	12	107	11.2%
Total	97	397	24.4%

All of the Dudley resident pupils that currently attend Halesowen C of E live within 0.5 miles of at least one alternative school. The very small number of pupils resident in Sandwell and Birmingham live closer to alternative Dudley schools than Halesowen C of E. Every effort will be made to ensure that children can transfer to their nearest alternative school.

Table 5 – Number of current Halesowen C of E pupils that live within 0.5 miles of alternative local schools

Alternative School	*Number of current Halesowen C of E pupils that live within 0.5 miles.
Cradley C of E	2
Hasbury C of E	60
Huntingtree	32
Lutley	0
Newfield Park	36
Tenterfields	60
Our Lady & St Kenelm	96
No. of pupils that do not live within 0.5 miles of a Dudley school.	25
* Note that pupils may be included in more than one school count if they live within 0.5 miles of more than one alternative school.	

Analysis of the distance travelled by pupils attending Halesowen C of E indicates that on the whole there is little negative impact on these pupils travelling to the alternative schools proposed. These proposals are consistent with the principles and statements of intent set out in the Primary Review Refresh 2004 Consultation and can be found on the Primary Review section of www.dudley.gov.uk. It is recognised that a few parents may face additional difficulties in getting to an alternative school and support may be provided where appropriate.

2.3 Housing Developments

Planning applications have been approved for housing developments at Walton Campus, Huntingdon Gardens and other sites in the local area and there are a number of planning applications that have not yet been considered. The total number of approved and potential housing units will not produce any significant growth in demand for primary school places.

2.4 Places in Halesowen C of E and other local primary schools.

It is expected that 134 pupils will be on roll at Halesowen C of E in September 2006. If the proposals to close Halesowen C of E by 31 August 2007 are approved alternative places would be required for 113 children for September 2007. The 21 pupils in Year 6 would transfer to secondary schools as normal.

There is sufficient space to accommodate all of the 113 pupils at Hasbury C of E by using the existing accommodation differently or adding extra accommodation to create the extra places. Alternatively, some parents may wish to transfer to other Dudley primary schools and Table 6 shows the number of available places in the nearest primary schools to Halesowen C of E. Every effort would be made to enable parental preferences for an alternative place at one of these schools or any other Dudley school. Discussions will be arranged with parents as early as possible regarding alternative places.

Table 6 – Surplus capacity in local schools.

School name	No. of pupils Jan 2005	No. of pupils Jan 2006	Net Capacity	Net Capacity (planned)	Surplus Capacity Jan 2006
Halesowen C of E	121	131	210	0	79
Cradley C of E	202	201	210	210	9
Hasbury C of E	260	242	315	315	73
Huntingtree	346	339	420	420	81
Lutley	589	575	595	595	20
Newfield Park	363	347	420	420	73
Tenterfields	268	253	315	315	62
Our Lady & St Kenelm	207	201	210	210	9
Totals	2356	2289	2695	2485	406

All of these figures exclude nursery age and younger children.

All pupils, either current or potential can be accommodated in alternative provision as there are sufficient places in the seven nearest primary schools.

The Primary Review Refresh 2004 Consultation confirmed that the proportion of faith places should remain broadly the same after the primary review. If the proposals to close Halesowen C of E Primary are implemented the percentage of C of E places in Dudley will remain at around 14%.

3. Accommodation

The original school building of Halesowen C of E was erected in 1837 with subsequent extensions. Local Authorities are required to survey and report to the DfES on the standard of accommodation available in schools. The surveys concentrate on the main areas of sufficiency, suitability and condition, each of which is reported separately but they all contribute to the assessment of the standard of accommodation.

Sufficiency

This is an assessment of whether there is sufficient accommodation for the number of pupils. Halesowen C of E has been calculated as having sufficient space for 210 pupil places. However there are significant deficiencies in some areas which are detailed under suitability. For example, there are too few toilets for the number of pupils in school and inadequate provision for changing and cloakroom facilities. Some teaching areas have roof lights that cause problems for learning and the school does not have its own playing field. Car parking facilities are very limited and access into school is difficult.

Suitability

Suitability is an assessment of the accommodation against fitness for purpose. In other words, how well does accommodation support the needs of teaching, learning and personal development? The suitability survey grades rooms / areas according to the detrimental effect they have on education in the premises in the following ways:

- Category A - Unable to teach curriculum
- Category B - Teaching methods inhibited
- Category C - Management or organisation of school affected adversely
- Category D - Pupil or staff morale or pupil behaviour affected adversely

The November 2004 survey of Halesowen C of E assessed a number of areas in category B, C and D:

No school Playing Fields	B
Roof lights to two classrooms	C
Too few toilets	D
Poor lighting to Parents/Community Room	D
Inadequate lighting to Library	D
No fixed seating for Infant Changing areas	D
Inadequate fixed cloaks storage	D
Small areas for toilet facilities and no drinking fountain	D
Poor ventilation to toilets	D

Condition

Condition surveys are carried out every five years and Halesowen C of E is scheduled for survey again in 2007. The condition survey of the building, carried out during February 2002, listed necessary repairs amounting to approximately £103,000 with £84,240 considered to be Priority 2 (to be carried out within two years).

The financial information in Tables 7 and 8 show that Halesowen C of E cannot secure and maintain the level of funding necessary to meet the shortfalls identified in the sufficiency, suitability and condition surveys and maintain the high level of spending on staffing. As the pupil numbers and budgets fall the challenge for governors of securing the necessary funding will increase year on year.

Outstanding repairs listed;

TOTAL Priority 2	£84,260.00
<u>TOTAL Priority 3</u>	<u>£18,760.00</u>
TOTAL	£103,020.00

Even if all of the repairs identified were carried out, a significant number of areas of the building would remain unsuitable for the purpose as defined using DfES suitability criteria.

4. Budget, resourcing and standards

Table 7 – Impact of loss of pupils on costs

Figures include all pupils attending including nursery (part time pupils count as 0.5).

Budget Year	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08 (est)
No. pupils (Jan)	161.5	168.5	150	149	152	159
S52 Budget	378,319	438,195	433,520	485,606	552,237	598,446
Unit cost per pupil	2,343	2,601	2,890	3,259	3,633	3,764
Dudley Average (primary)	1,978	2,211	2,364	2,572	2,864	3,038
Variance above average unit cost	18%	18%	22%	27%	27%	24%
Reserves 31 March	17,711	45,558	50,940	24,707	Not available	Not available
Total Funding	434,300	461,800	523,700	595,400	639,300	669,700

Table 7 shows that the number of pupils attending Halesowen C of E from 2002/3 has remained well below capacity. Although the total funding increased from £434,300 to £639,300, a rise of £205,000, this was required to meet increases in the cost of staffing (£167,500) and the remainder was allocated to premises (£11,500) and supplies and services (£26,000). The unit cost per pupil at Halesowen C of E has risen from £2,343 (18% above the average unit cost for Dudley primary schools) to £2,864 (27% above the Dudley primary school average). The Halesowen C of E budget will be adversely affected through two clear pressures. Firstly, the number of pupils attending Halesowen C of E will continue to fall as they have since 1997 which means that their share of the total available budget for Dudley will decrease. Secondly, the total budget available to Dudley will decrease as the impact of falling birth rates continues to reduce the number of pupils attending Dudley schools. Consequently, there will be less money for Dudley to distribute to schools and Halesowen C of E will receive a smaller share.

Table 8 shows the main areas of expenditure. The above average staffing costs ranging from 84% to 86% of the budget reduces the amount of funding available to spend on supplies and services which includes materials for teaching and learning.

Table 8 – main areas of expenditure

Year	Staffing		Premises		Supplies and Services		Total Funding (£)
	Costs (£)	% of budget	Costs (£)	% of budget	Costs (£)	% of budget	
2002/03	371,900	86%	22,400	5%	40,000	9%	434,300
2002/04	391,400	85%	13,100	3%	57,300	12%	461,800
2004/05	449,600	86%	16,300	3%	57,800	11%	523,700
2005/06	504,400	85%	16,900	3%	74,100	12%	595,400
2006/07	539,400	84%	33,900	5%	66,000	10%	639,300
2007/08 est	566,300	85%	35,800	5%	67,600	10%	669,700

Most schools spend around 80% of the total budget on staffing with the remainder on premises, supplies and services. As the impact of falling numbers affects every school budget Halesowen C of E will not be able to afford the education currently offered. There will be increasing pressure to reduce expenditure on staffing, premises, or supplies and services or all three. This will inevitably impact on the standards achieved by children and the workload of staff.

In January 2006 there were nine full time equivalent teaching staff at Halesowen for 131 pupils. This represents a ratio of 1 teacher to 16.9 pupils which is very favourable compared to the Dudley primary school average of 21.4. In effect, larger schools are

subsidising Halesowen C of E and in the context of falling budgets overall, the position is not sustainable.

Any reduction in teaching staff is likely to result in

- Lower standards achieved by children
- Increased class sizes and some mixed age teaching.
- Fewer staff to provide leadership, management and other required roles
- Fewer opportunities for extended provision
- More limited opportunities for professional and career development
- Increased workload for staff.

5. Standards

Halesowen C of E Primary was inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 in February 2006. The key inspection judgements are graded as follows

- Grade 1 – Exceptionally and consistently high
- Grade 2 – Generally above average with none significantly below average
- Grade 3 – Broadly Average
- Grade 4 – Exceptionally low

Inspectors (Ofsted) reported that Halesowen C of E provides a satisfactory standard of education, satisfactory value for money and has the capacity to improve. Most key judgements were graded 3.

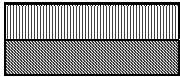
The impact of falling pupil numbers on the school's budget will make it more difficult to improve or maintain this level of performance. Halesowen C of E will be required to reduce expenditure on staffing, premises and supplies and services which will inevitably impact on the standard of education offered, the standards achieved by children, value for money and the capacity to improve.

It is imperative that action is taken now to ensure that all pupils have access to the sustainable quality of education that they are entitled to.

The alternative schools available all provide a quality of education that is at least as good as Halesowen C of E Primary. Hasbury C of E, Cradley C of E and Our Lady & St Kenelm (RC) also provide denominational education. Dudley knows its schools well through a range of ways including school self-evaluations of how well they provide for children. Schools are also assessed externally against an inspection framework operated by Ofsted. The full Ofsted inspection reports for all schools can be viewed on www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports.

Table 9 - KS2 Results for Halesowen C of E and other local schools 2001 – 2005.

Year	School	English		Maths		Science		APS
		%L4+	%L5+	%L4+	%L5+	%L4+	%L5+	
2001	Halesowen C of E	72		72		83		26.2
	Hasbury C of E	78		73		80		26.8
	Huntingtree	81		91		95		29.2
	Lutley	91		83		98		29.5
	Newfield Park	90		78		97		28.7
	Tenterfields	89		75		93		28
	Cradley C of E	76		79		93		28.2
	Our Lady & St Kenelm	97		100		100		30.4
2002	Halesowen C of E	46		58		75		24.8
	Hasbury C of E	72		61		74		25.9
	Huntingtree	78		84		98		29.1
	Lutley	91		83		95		29.4
	Newfield Park	85		77		97		28.3
	Tenterfields	78		83		94		28.7
	Cradley C of E	81		84		97		28.4
	Our Lady & St Kenelm	94		92		100		29.9
2003	Halesowen C of E	44	6	50	11	44	22	23.6
	Hasbury C of E	79	23	75	25	89	30	27.3
	Huntingtree	76	38	85	40	98	62	29
	Lutley	95	45	93	45	99	77	30
	Newfield Park	84	32	82	35	95	44	28.5
	Tenterfields	86	27	86	37	96	57	28.7
	Cradley C of E	84	39	77	29	87	48	28.3
	Our Lady & St Kenelm	91	44	94	50	88	59	29.5
2004	Halesowen C of E	53	7	60	13	73	27	25
	Hasbury C of E	77	37	67	23	83	23	26.9
	Huntingtree	86	27	93	34	98	55	28.8
	Lutley	86	26	88	42	94	68	28.9
	Newfield Park	87	22	78	41	86	44	28.2
	Tenterfields	90	38	71	26	95	38	28.1
	Cradley C of E	93	30	93	30	100	33	28.7
	Our Lady & St Kenelm	87	48	94	48	97	58	29.6
2005	Halesowen C of E	67	17	92	8	75	25	26
	Hasbury C of E	74	29	66	23	77	37	26.7
	Huntingtree	82	32	82	27	96	66	28.6
	Lutley	88	25	94	47	99	72	29.4
	Newfield Park	84	44	85	38	93	60	28.9
	Tenterfields	91	34	82	27	93	55	28.7
	Cradley C of E	90	43	97	43	90	43	29.1
	Our Lady & St Kenelm	97	66	88	56	94	41	29.6
2006 (Provisional data)	Halesowen C of E	71	21	57	21	100	29	
	Hasbury C of E	68	18	75	40	83	53	
	Huntingtree	76	33	80	37	93	54	
	Lutley	95	49	92	37	94	64	
	Newfield Park	85	48	74	38	95	54	
	Tenterfields	89	30	87	32	97	54	
	Cradley C of E	72	24	83	38	86	35	
Our Lady & St Kenelm	94	81	97	58	94	68		



Not Published Nationally by DFES. Figures Based on LEA Data from 2001 and 2002.
Average Point Score (APS) not yet available. Provisional data only.

6. Support for the local community

It is not in the interests of an already deprived community for it to be served by a school that is not financially viable. Specialist support for individual pupils will continue in their new schools. Overall standards of provision for children will be improved through the proposed closure, resources will be focussed on schools that are of a sustainable size.

7. Early Years provision

The Council is fully committed to the provision of services to support children aged 0 - 5 and their families. It is proposed to establish a Children's Centre at Tenterfields Primary School from 1 September 2007 which will provide a range of integrated services for the immediate and surrounding areas. Halesowen C of E has a small maintained nursery with six enhanced places for children with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. This provision would transfer to the new Children's Centre at Tenterfields with stronger links with the relevant support services. The funding for the Children's Centre has been identified within the government allocation to Dudley.

Early Years provision will continue to be available at Hasbury C of E and other local primary schools. Details of all mainstream, private and voluntary providers are available from Children's Information Services on 01384 814398 or alternatively via the website at www.dudley.gov.uk/education-and-learning/pre-schools/early-years-development-and-childcare.

Outreach sessions can also be set up to help and advise parents and to deal with individual needs.

8. Alternative options considered

Five options were considered during consultation in early 2004. These included

Option A – Closure of Halesowen C of E VA and Hasbury C of E VC Primary schools and the opening of a new 450 place primary school in all new buildings on the current Hasbury site. (Preferred Council Option if DfES funding were available).

Option B – Closure of Halesowen C of E VA and Hasbury C of E VC Primary schools and the opening of a new 450 place primary school in improved and remodelled buildings on the current Hasbury site.

Option C – Closure of Halesowen C of E VA and Hasbury C of E VC Primary schools and the opening of a new 450 place primary school in all new buildings on an alternative site.

Option D – Closure of Halesowen C of E VA Primary School.

Option E – No change to the current situation.

It was not possible to identify and secure an alternative site which meant that Option C proved to be unachievable. Two unsuccessful bids have been made to the DfES for capital funding to build a new school which also means that Option A was not possible. Further review of the position in early 2006 showed that future demand would only sustain a case for a 315 place school which already exists at Hasbury C of E.

Federation, or maintaining two separate schools on two sites with one governing body or one management structure would not provide significant economic or educational benefits. The falling numbers of pupils across the area would lead to reduced income overall yet the costs of staffing, supplies and services and accommodation would continue to rise. Potential savings e.g. one Headteacher post through a federation or similar arrangement, would not be sufficient to meet the overall costs of provision. Additional reductions to staffing would increase class sizes and require mixed age and possibly mixed key stage teaching. The money available for supplies and services and accommodation would also be reduced to balance the budget with additional impact on the quality of provision. Federation would not achieve significant reductions in revenue costs at Halesowen C of E.

If the capacity were reduced at other schools to match the demand for places the financial pressures will still exist. The budget is calculated on the number of pupils attending and this will continue to fall. The money available for staffing, supplies and services and accommodation will reduce with the inevitable impact on quality of provision, class sizes and staff workloads. It is possible to use spare accommodation for other purposes to offset the overall costs of maintaining the site. However, the opportunities for joint use of the site are limited by the capacity of the local area to meet the market costs of accommodation. There is little evidence of significant potential for additional income beyond that already received by Halesowen C of E. There are also limitations regarding the nature of additional uses due to the likelihood of close contact with children and their families. Vehicle access and parking are also limited. There is no realistic possibility of reducing the capacity and securing sufficient income to cover the total costs of providing the quality of education to which children are entitled.

The nearest schools were also considered for closure, capacity reduction and amalgamation. All of the nearby primary schools have more pupils than Halesowen and most have at least twice as many pupils. Some local schools will see their admission numbers reduced in line with demand which in time will see a reduction in overall capacity.

Any other proposals across the area would have a greater affect on a larger number of pupils and their families in terms of disruption and preference for places. There is also no guarantee that parents would send their children to Halesowen C of E. Closure of alternative schools in the area could create a shortage of places, more travel for more families and additional costs.

The proposal to close Halesowen C of E will enable all of the pupils in the local area to attend a larger school with more staff, a wider range of opportunities, more peer group support and better facilities.

No alternative options are included in these proposals as the only viable option identified that will enable all children to have continued access to the quality of education required is to close Halesowen C of E and transfer children to alternative schools.

The proposal is to close Halesowen C of E Primary School with effect from 31 August 2007. Pupils would transfer to Hasbury C of E or alternative schools from 1 September 2007.

9. How it will work for pupils, parents, staff and community?

Hasbury C of E will be able to accommodate all pupils from Halesowen C of E if parents wish to choose this school. Additional information and support will be provided for parents, pupils, staff, governors and community users over the next few months. Admissions staff will meet with parents to provide individual support where appropriate. This will include information about alternative places in other schools and support for the transfer process. This will include

- Support for all parents
- Specific support for pupils with special educational needs
- Specific support for pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds
- Contribution to the costs of uniform for alternative primary school
- Support with transport if required.

Further information about these arrangements will be circulated to parents.

Staff will receive individual support where appropriate to secure alternative posts. It is not anticipated that there will be any requirement for staff redundancies.

A Council officer will be identified to work with the Governing Body and Headteacher to co-ordinate the range of actions required to ensure a smooth transition. This will include liaison with community groups where appropriate.

10. Timetable

Event	Date
Start of consultation	Tuesday 5 September 2006
Consultation meetings	Monday 11 September 2006
Consultation ends	Friday 20 October 2006
Further consultation meetings may be arranged if required	

11. Additional Information

There is a substantial amount of information provided on the following websites that parents, carers, the community and committees may wish to consult.

www.dudley.gov.uk

www.dfes.gov.uk

www.statistics.gov.uk

Questions posed at meetings or in correspondence will be included along with responses in the Frequently Asked Questions section of the Dudley website.

12. How do I respond?

The Council would like to hear your comments on the proposals in this consultation document. Views can be submitted in a variety of forms. Views expressed at meetings, letters, e-mails and telephone comments will be recorded. All responses will be retained and be available as a public record.

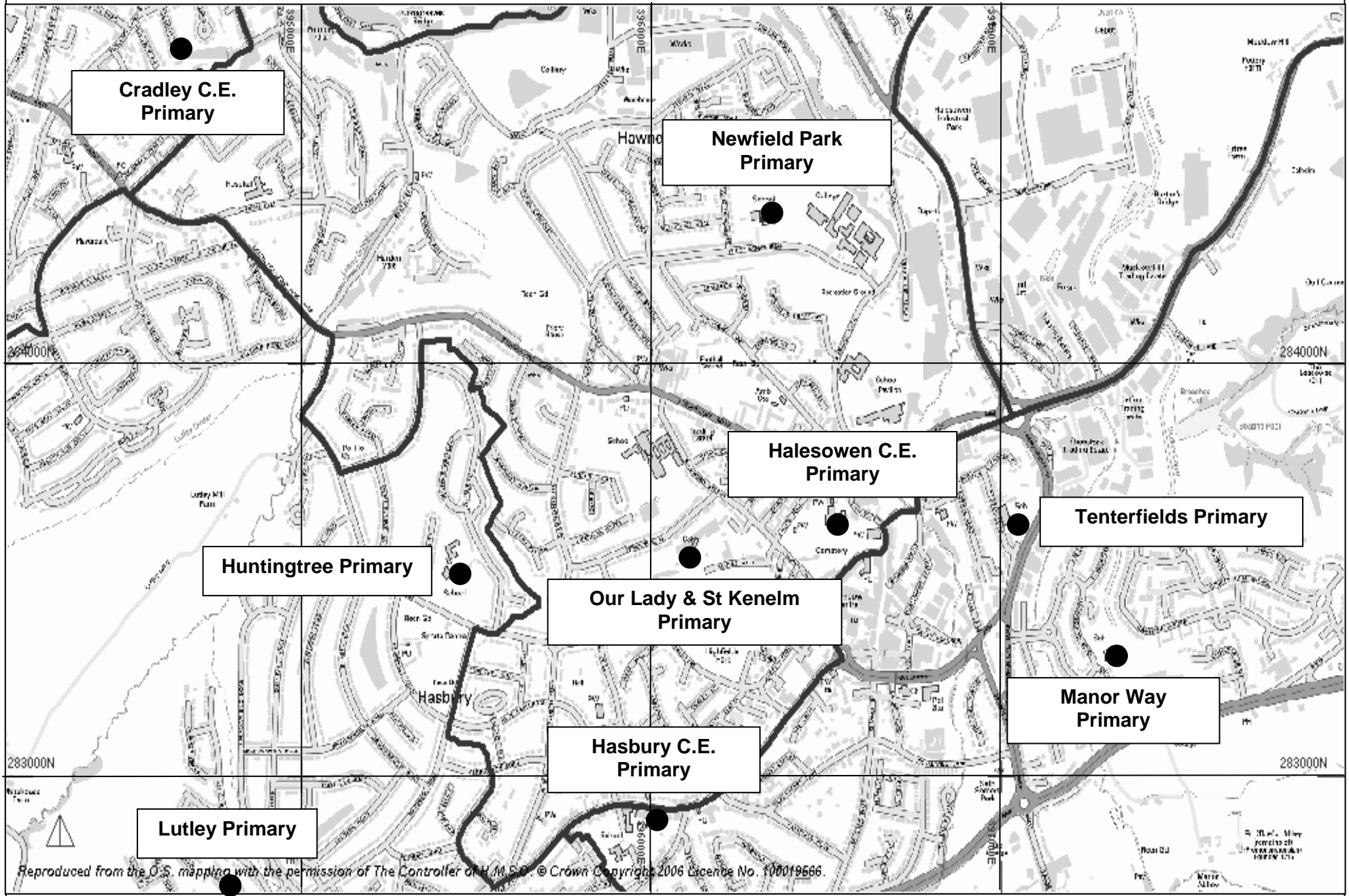
All views expressed will be carefully considered and reported to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services prior to any further action. The report on the consultation responses will be published as soon as practicable following the end of the consultation period.

All responses need to reach the Council by **5.00pm on Friday 20 October 2006**.

Please send responses to:

Vicky Cook vicky.cook@dudley.gov.uk
Executive Support Team
Directorate of Children's Services
Westox House
Trinity Road
Dudley
DY1 1JQ

Halesowen C of E Primary School and surrounding Primary Schools



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1 kilometre =