

**Executive summary and background**

Trustees have previously approved key strategies to manage the challenge of falling pupil numbers across CLP. Recently, we have turned specifically to this issue in the Purbeck area where the challenge is acute and becoming time-critical. Actions considered include reducing PAN at Lulworth & Winfrith and Wareham St. Mary, implementing shared leadership at L&W/Wool and exploring income-generation from spare premises, such as through further special school satellite partnerships. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] These changes together aim to increase viability and reduce the risk of quality of education deteriorating with diminishing resources.

Further background / context from the following two previous papers:

- July 2024 [here](#): summarising the various concurrent strategies required to meet this challenge

**Progress update**

Strategy 1: PAN reductions.

Following trustees' approval (for consultation) of the 2026/27 draft admissions policy, consultation will commence from 6<sup>th</sup> December. This includes the PAN reduction at Lulworth & Winfrith (L&W) from 20 to 15, aligning with forecast pupil numbers and facilitating the new shared leadership arrangement with Wool.

Strategy 2: Reducing leadership costs where natural opportunities present themselves.

Work continues towards implementing a shared leadership structure across L&W and Wool following the resignation of the substantive postholder at L&W. We have now confirmed that Ellie Griffiths will take up her new post from January 2025; we did not consider that a delay or interim arrangement would be in either school's best interests. The leadership structure will see a part-time Deputy Headteacher (also the SENDCo but with no class teacher responsibility) working across both sites; a restructure process has seen the current SENDCo at Wool 'slotted in' to this post. There will be a designated Assistant Headteacher at each site (each with a substantial teaching commitment) to provide increased 'leadership presence' at each site; these post holders will also have a school improvement responsibility which operates across both schools and all sites. Work is underway to appoint these postholders. This the financial impact of this leadership change will be a saving of £50K – £60K per year. We know that both LGB Chairs are keen to amalgamate to form a single LGB, mirroring the leadership arrangement. Salisbury Diocese has a view of this and I will explore that with them shortly but my ambition is to have this arrangement in place for Sept 2025, subject to trustees' support.

**[Confidential update]** We have received a resignation from Rebecca Martin, Headteacher at St. Mark's CE Primary. Rebecca will be leaving at the end of this academic year. [REDACTED]

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Strategy 3: Create opportunities to generate income from under-utilised premises.

We have furthered our discussions with [Delta Academies Trust](#) who run [Harbour School](#) in the Purbeck area (a special school for pupils with Autism Spectrum Condition and Social, Emotional and Mental Health challenges). Through those discussions, I have sensed some strong synergy between Delta and CLP and I think that we could be really secure partners. Delta does not currently operate any satellite provisions but are excited about the possibility of doing so at CLP.

Rather, their vision is more akin our arrangement at Old Town Infant with Winchelsea; the satellite operates separately but there is meaningful interaction between the special and mainstream pupils.

Strategy 4: Reduce the number of CLP Purbeck schools from eight to seven.

This strategy draws on the fact that we anticipate the combined intake at St. George's and St. Mark's to settle at 15 pupils. As two separate primary schools, this is unviable and would lead to a sub-optimal quality of education in each school (each with two mixed age classes only, across the full key stages). However, as a merged school, we anticipate that it would be full at 105 and adopt a structure like that at Wool. The updates provided in (2) and (3) above offer a possible alternative: the merged school operates across two sites, or a designated as infant and junior schools. We remain open-minded on such details but, either way, a single leadership structure will draw the two schools/sites together and each aligned with a satellite of the Harbour School.

This future vision will better meet the changing needs of the community.

#### Action for trustees:

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- Approve the appointment of a single Headteacher across St. Mark's and St. George's from September 2025, noting that:
  - The pay committee will then use its delegated authority to determine salary for that post;
  - The Headteacher will then be supported to determine the shared leadership arrangement more broadly.

#### Next steps:

- Continue discussions with Delta towards a practical plan for sharing with Dorset Council;
- On the basis of the above conversations, formulate a practical plan and timeline, to include community consultation. Engage with Salisbury Diocese and Dorset Council throughout.