

## **ADDITIONAL SCHOOL PLACES IN WEST CHRISTCHURCH**

This year there has been a very high demand for infant school places in West Christchurch. Although the County Council was able to offer every child a school place within The Borough, it meant that over 20 young children from the West Christchurch area would have to travel long distances across Christchurch to get to school, instead of going to their local school, which is Christchurch Infants. Obviously parents were not happy with this situation and got together as a Group, to discuss the problem with their local Christchurch Councillors, and they then met with the County Council Head of School Organisation.

Dorset County Council was very quick to respond positively, and the result is that due to the high numbers of catchment children being unable to access Christchurch Infants School, The County Council has arranged, with the co-operation of the school, that 30 additional school places will be created in West Christchurch, on the Christchurch Infant School site, as a temporary arrangement for September 2013. This will give time to organise longer term school provision in the area.

It is confirmed that: the Department for Education has agreed to this proposal; the scheme has been fully discussed with the planning authority and a planning consent application submitted; and the availability of these places has been officially published inviting applications. All those who had already applied are being made aware of the additional places, as they are primarily for those in the catchment who did not obtain a place at Christchurch Infants, but any unfilled places will be made available to other applicants in line with admissions criteria.

This is a new temporary arrangement and the class will be set up for a maximum of 2 years, September 2013 to August 2015. Although it will operate out of Christchurch Infants, this group of children will have to transfer to alternative provision in September 2015. The class of children will be fully included within the school, but maintained as a supplement on the school roll, so that those children transferring in September 2015 will be kept together in one class for continuity.

Although it is anticipated there will be additional provision found in the Fairmile/Jumpers/St. Catherine's Hill area in September 2015, if this has not proved

possible, additional places will be made available at other Christchurch schools at that time.

Cllr. Margaret Phipps

Commons (West Christchurch)

Dorset County Council

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