

- Other Cabinet Members consulted Cllr Izzi Seccombe
- Chief Executive
- Legal Richard Freeth – comments incorporated in the report
- Finance David Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources – “fine”
- Other Strategic Directors
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals All local schools; parents of pupils at Nathaniel Newton Infant School, Michael Drayton Junior School, Galley Common Infant School and Camp Hill Primary School; neighbouring Local Authorities; Diocesan Authorities

FINAL DECISION **NO**

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

The Cabinet – 13th July 2006

Change to the Indicated Admission Number of Nathaniel Newton Infant School

Report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families

Recommendations

- (1) That the feedback from the consultation to reduce the admission number of Nathaniel Newton Infant School be noted.
- (2) That in the light of this feedback, Cabinet:
either agree the reduction in the admission number of Nathaniel Newton Infant School for September 2007 admissions and then undertake a review of priority areas based on this new admission number,
or review the primary school priority areas and then re-consult on a reduction in the admission number of Nathaniel Newton Infant School for September 2008.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In January 2006, Cabinet agreed to consult stakeholders on a proposal to reduce the Indicated admission Number of Nathaniel Newton Infant School from 90 to 60 pupils per year with effect from September 2007 admissions.
- 1.2 Following the decision of Cabinet formal consultations took place between 1st February and 24th April. A consultation paper was sent to all local schools, the parents of pupils at Nathaniel Newton Infant School, Michael Drayton Junior School, Galley Common Infant School and Camp Hill Primary School, neighbouring Local Authorities and the Diocesan Authorities. The purpose of this report is to outline the response to the consultation to enable Cabinet to make a final decision. Given the location of the schools concerned, the matter was also referred to both the meeting of the Nuneaton & Bedworth and North Warwickshire Area Committees.
- 1.3 A copy of the consultation document is attached as **Appendix A** to this report.

2. Background

The Governing Body of Nathaniel Newton Infant School has asked to reduce its admission number from 90 to 60 pupils per year with effect from September 2007 admissions. The school's actual intake of pupils falls well below its published admission number and this together with Infant Class Size Regulations, requiring that no infant class may exceed 30 pupils, is presenting severe organisational and financial problems. Table 1 below sets out the current year group and class organisation at the school:

Table 1
Number of pupils on roll as at April 2006

Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Total
56	75	61	192

Table 2
Class organisation

Rec	Y1	Y1 / Y2	Y2	Total
27	26	27	28	192
29	27		28	

Current Net Capacity	290
Proposed Net Capacity	180
Current Indicated Admission Number	90
Proposed Indicated Admission Number	60

3. The proposal

- 3.1 The current admission number for Nathaniel Newton Infant School of 90 pupils means that if more than 60 pupils apply for admission, it must organise its Reception year group into three classes. School budgets are calculated mainly on pupil numbers. If Nathaniel Newton Infant School were admitting 90 pupils it would have enough funding to provide three classes per year group. However, the school has only been receiving in the region of 56 to 75 applicants and this does not provide enough finance to appoint an additional teacher so that the third class, e.g. in the Reception Year Group, could be created. An alternative to organising an extra class is to create mixed-aged classes. A forecast of future pupil numbers is given in Table 3 below. This forecast suggests that future pupil numbers are unlikely to reach 90 per year. As a result of several years where the school has needed to create an extra class to organise in classes of not more than 30 pupils, it no longer has any financial reserves and the continuation of the current situation would create a significant financial deficit.
- 3.2 An admission number of 60 pupils year would enable the school to plan future intake groups into classes of not more than 30. This greater certainty about

pupil numbers would help with the long-term planning of school finances and resources.

Table 3
Forecast Reception Year pupil numbers

September 2006	September 2007	September 2008	September 2009
59	68	67	65

- 3.3 There is a new housing estate called 'The Shires' comprising 265 housing units which has recently been completed. As the development is completed and occupied, the additional pupils resulting from the estate are already included in the current and projected pupil numbers for the schools. The development is in an area which is not currently designated to a school but it is located between Nathaniel Newton Infant School and Galley Common Infant School. Given the proposal to reduce the admission number of Nathaniel Newton Infant School it was proposed that this estate be designated as part of the priority area of Galley Common Infant School and Michael Drayton Junior School. A map showing the location of schools and their priority areas is included in the consultation document which is given as Appendix A to this report.
- 3.4 As the lower intake numbers pass through Nathaniel Newton Infant School, the classrooms that would no longer be needed for teaching purposes would be available for community use and possible development for 'extended schools' purposes. The proposed use of existing rooms would allow a reduction in the school capacity to be considered under the Net Capacity Regulations. It is proposed that officers enter into formal consultation with local schools concerning this request from the governing body of Nathaniel Newton Infant School.

4. Feedback from the consultation

- 4.1 Despite the wide scope of the consultation the proposal has raised few responses. A summary of the responses received is set out below and a copy of the full papers is available for Members in the respective group rooms.

4.2 Galley Common Infant School

The school has no objections to the proposal.

4.3 Nathaniel Newton Infant School

The school supports the proposal and the analysis of the significant financial and organisational difficulties it will face if its Admission Number is not reduced to 60 pupils per year.

4.4 Letters from the Chair and Headteacher of Michael Drayton Junior School

- 4.4.1 In addition to the comments made by other respondents and covered elsewhere in this summary, Michael Drayton Junior School is concerned that primary priority areas in the locality are not logical and asks that they be re-drawn prior to any decision on the admission Number of Nathaniel Newton. It is also suggested that increasing the priority area of Nathaniel Newton Infant School would lead to an increase in its pupil numbers.

Comment

There is an issue about the clarity and logic of priority areas in this part of Nuneaton. As a result of the consultation and the comments received, both Area Committees recommended a review of the priority areas. However, experience in these matters shows that while reducing a priority area can reduce admissions, increasing the size of the priority area of Nathaniel Newton would not necessarily result in an increase in applications. Nathaniel Newton has surplus places each year under its present admission number and already attracts half of its intake from outside its priority area. Such a review need not delay a decision on the admission number of Nathaniel Newton Infant school as the priority areas should be organised to fit the lower admission number.

- 4.4.2 Secondly, it is suggested that Nathaniel Newton Infant School considers 'alternative management arrangements' to reducing its number which it believes should be a last resort.

Comment

As mentioned above, in order to comply with the infant class size legislation the school has to make difficult choices each year about creating extra classes or forming mixed age classes and, given the fact that there are too few pupils, the school will otherwise incur significant deficits. Also the situation makes it impossible for the school to plan its class organisation ahead. No one knows the school's problems better than the school itself and Nathaniel Newton Infant School feels it has no choice other than reduce its admission number.

- 4.4.3 Michael Drayton Junior School argues that a reduction in pupil intakes to Nathaniel Newton Infant School, one of its key feeder schools, will result in a reduction in pupil numbers being admitted to Michael Drayton School over time and leading to a substantial financial loss, a reduction in the number of classes and 'potentially a loss of employment'. It is suggested that the impact of the proposed change on Michael Drayton Junior School would be greater than the impact would be on Nathaniel Newton Infant School if the status quo continued.

Comment

Both Nathaniel Newton and Galley Common Infant Schools are 'feeder schools' to Michael Drayton Junior School at Key Stage 2. Informal discussions revealed the concern that lower numbers at Nathaniel Newton Infant School could reduce the number of pupils admitted to Michael Drayton Junior School. If those pupils not gaining a place at Nathaniel Newton Infant School were to

attend a 'through' primary school at Key Stage 1 it is possible that they would not transfer to Michael Drayton Junior School at Key Stage 2. A reduction of six or eight pupils per year would have budgetary implications for Michael Drayton Junior School. Michael Drayton Junior School fears that changes in the pattern of admissions caused by the change could increase that figure. This is difficult to substantiate and any change is likely to be mitigated by the popularity of Michael Drayton School. A review of the priority areas may assist in preventing any knock-on effects. It is accepted that there may be a reduction in pupil numbers at the junior school and the greater flexibility junior schools have in organising in larger classes means that more than 30 pupils per class is a cash windfall. Michael Drayton School have not provided any details on the financial impact. Nathaniel Newton Infant School states that for 2007 they could have a budget shortfall of £65,000. It could be argued that the financial impact on one school has to be balanced against budgetary and organisational impact of the other.

- 4.4.4 The school suggests that a reduction from 90 to 60 places per year is a significant change and asks if this will reduce parental choice in the area? It also makes the point that is important to ensure that there remains sufficient pupil places in the area and asks how the accurate forecasts of pupil numbers can be given the confused priority areas.

Comment

While there may be an impact on parental choice, the flow of pupils between schools in this area of Nuneaton is and will continue to be substantial with many children attending schools outside their priority area. Around half of the pupils in Nathaniel Newton Infant School come from outside its area and this will not reduce significantly. Similar situations exist in most of the other schools in the area.

On the basis of current patterns of admissions to primary schools in the area, it is considered that there would be sufficient Infant places in the locality. Both Nathaniel Newton Infant School and Galley Common Infant School are able to meet demand from their own priority areas and have places available for pupils living outside their areas. Of the 55 children Nathaniel Newton Infant school admitted to its Reception Year Group in September 2005, 32 were from outside its priority area. It is considered that a reduction in the pupil intake at Nathaniel Newton Infant School may have a positive effect on pupil numbers at Camp Hill Primary School while if Galley Common Infant School needed to take additional pupils from closer to its school, there would be sufficient places in other local schools.

4.5 Letter from a teacher at Michael Drayton Junior School

This letter picks up many of the issues raised by the Headteacher and Governors and also the issue outlined below re the priority area for The Shires. In addition, it is suggested that the classrooms that would be 'freed up' at Nathaniel Newton could be used for a local authority nursery so that parents do not have to pay.

Comment

The spare accommodation made available could indeed be used for pre-school provision but this would not be a local authority provision because of the availability of good local and established private provision.

4.6 Letter from parent of pupils at Michael Drayton Junior School

The parent states that she lives on The Shires, has two children at Michael Drayton Junior School and another child below school age and that if the estate were to be included in the priority area of Galley Common, she would face the prospect of taking pupils in two different directions.

Comment

The new Shires housing development near Plough Hill Road is not currently part of the priority area of any school. Although the estate is closer to Nathaniel Newton an analysis, only available in the last few days, of schools attended shows that approximately two-thirds of infant aged pupils attend Nathaniel Newton Infant School and approximately one-third Galley Common Infant School. It is suggested that a decision on the priority area designation of The Shires be deferred for inclusion in a broader review of priority areas to be commenced in the Autumn Term.

4.7 Feedback from Area Committees

4.7.1 The Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee considered the matter at its meeting on 24th May. The Area Committee supported the proposal in recognition of the issues faced by Nathaniel Newton Infant School. The Committee also supported a review of the school priority areas to achieve greater clarity for schools and parents and to assist in managing pupil demand at these schools. Members were keen to ensure that there would be sufficient pupil places in the area to meet local demand.

4.7.2 The North Warwickshire Area Committee considered the matter at its meeting on 31st May. The Area Committee did not support the proposal. Although the Area Committee recognised the difficulties schools faced in balancing budgets, it was concerned that when the new Shires housing development was taken into account, there may not be enough pupil places in the area. The Committee recommends a review of the school priority areas and the impact of the new Shires estate prior to any decision to reduce the admission number of Nathaniel Newton Infant school.

Comment

In the light of all of the feedback a review of the school priority areas would be appropriate and it is suggested that proposals should be brought forward in the Autumn 2006. The Shires housing development is already completed and children on the estate are already attending local primary schools and are included in our forecast pupil numbers for the area. There are sufficient infant and junior school places in the area to meet demand and the impact of the

change will be that slightly fewer out-of-area pupils will obtain places at Nathaniel Newton Infant school, Galley Common Infant School and Michael Drayton Junior School (and this will actually improve pupil numbers in primary schools elsewhere in the north and west of Nuneaton). The review of priority areas could as easily take place after the change in the admission number of Nathaniel Newton infant School.

5. Summary

5.1 If the admission number of Nathaniel Newton Infant School were reduced from 90 to 60 pupils per year, it would enable the school to meet pupil demand from within its priority area and more effectively plan its class organisation. There will be an impact on pupil numbers at Michael Drayton Junior School as lower numbers from a feeder school work through. However, the possible effect on Michael Drayton needs to be set in the balance against the problems faced by Nathaniel Newton. Admissions in this respect and more generally in this area could be assisted by a review of local priority school areas but this following does not necessarily mean delaying a decision on Nathaniel Newton's admission number.

5.2 In the light of the feedback on the consultation and particularly the differing views of the two Area Committees, there appear to be to be two options:

Option 1

Agree the reduction in the admission number of Nathaniel Newton Infant School for September 2007 admissions and then undertake a review of priority areas based on this new admission number.

Option 2

Review the primary school priority areas and then re-consult on a reduction in the admission number of Nathaniel Newton Infant school for September 2008.

5.3 *Comments on options*

The advantages of option 1 is that Nathaniel Newton Infant School can be protected earlier from the organisational and financial impact of not being able to control its admission number. This is something the school feels very strongly it cannot delay without running financial risks. It is as easy to review the priority areas around the new admission number as review the priority areas and consider the admission limit for Nathaniel Newton Infant School. This option would also not require a reconsideration of the same issues in a further consultation on the admission number, a consultation which drew only two responses from the general public.

Option 2 appears to be a more cautious approach but it may be considered that there is little more that delaying a decision will offer up in terms of more information. It is clearly understood that changing the admission number of Nathaniel Newton Infant School may well have an impact on pupil numbers at

Michael Drayton Junior School and delaying this for a year may be seen as cushioning that impact. However, any benefits of delay should be set against the impact on Nathaniel Newton Infant School.

MARION DAVIS
Strategic Director for Children,
Young People and Families

22 Northgate Street
Warwick

29th June 2006

Proposal to reduce the Indicated Admission Number of Nathaniel Newton Infant School

Consultation Paper
March 2006



THE PROPOSAL

The Governing Body of Nathaniel Newton Infant School wishes to reduce its Indicated Admission Number from 90 to 60 pupils per year with effect from September 2007 admissions. It is also proposed that, as a consequence of this proposal, the previously undesignated area containing 'The Shires' housing development be included in the priority area for Galley Common Infant School and Michael Drayton Junior School.

BACKGROUND

Nathaniel Newton Infant School currently has an admission number of 90 pupils per year. However the number of pupils in recent years has been well below this number. In September 2005, 55 pupils were admitted to the Reception year group and of these 55 pupils, 28 lived outside the Priority Area of Nathaniel Newton Infant School. All infant classes (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes) are limited in size by law to a maximum of 30 pupils. In simple terms, for Nathaniel Newton Infant School with an admission number of 90 pupils per year, this means that if more than 60 pupils are admitted into the Reception year group the school could have to provide an additional class or an additional teacher (even if there was just one extra child). An alternative to organising an extra class is to create mixed-age classes. Table 1 sets out details of current pupil numbers at the school. Table 2 shows that a mixed-age class of 24 Year 1 and Year 2 pupils has been created to manage the current situation.

Table 1 Number of Pupils on Roll as at September 2005

Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Total
55	71	62	188

Table 2 Class Organisation of Number of Pupils on Roll as at September 2005 (7 classes)

Rec	Y1	Y1 / Y2	Y2	Total
27	25	24	29	188
28	26		29	

Table 3 Net Capacity and Admission Numbers

Current Net Capacity	290
<i>Proposed Net Capacity</i>	<i>180</i>
Current Indicated Admission Number	90
<i>Proposed Indicated Admission Number</i>	<i>60</i>

WHY ARE THESE CHANGES NECESSARY?

The Governing Body of Nathaniel Newton Infant School has asked to reduce its admission number from 90 to 60 pupils per year with effect from September 2007 admissions. The school's actual intake of pupils falls well below its published admission number and this together with Infant Class Size Regulations, requiring that no infant class may exceed 30 pupils, is presenting severe organisational and financial problems.

The current admission number of 90 means that if more than 60 pupils apply for admission, it must organise its Reception year group into three classes. School budgets are based mainly on the number of pupils it has. If Nathaniel Newton Infant School were admitting 90 pupils it would have enough funding to provide three classes in its Reception year group. However, the school has only been receiving in the region of 56 to 68 applicants and this does not provide enough finance to appoint an additional teacher so that a third class could be created. A forecast of future pupil numbers is given in Table 4 below. This forecast suggests that future pupil numbers are unlikely to reach 90 per year. As a result of several years where the school has needed to re-organise its classes and provide an extra class to ensure it has classes of not more than 30 pupils, it has a significant budget deficit and the continuation of this situation would make a long-term resolution of the problem extremely difficult.

An admission number of 60 pupils year would enable the school to plan future intake groups into classes of not more than 30. This greater certainty about pupil numbers would help with the long-term planning of school finances and resources.

Table 4 Forecast Reception Year Pupil Numbers at Nathaniel Newton Infant School up to September 2009

	September			
	2006	2007	2008	2009
Reception	59	68	67	65

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THESE CHANGES?

On the basis of current patterns of admissions to primary schools in the area, it is considered that there would be sufficient infant places in the locality. Both Nathaniel Newton Infant School and Galley Common Infant School are able to meet demand from their own priority areas and have places available for pupils living outside their areas. Of the 55 children Nathaniel Newton Infant School admitted to its Reception year group in September 2005, 28 were from outside its priority area. It is considered that a reduction in the pupil intake at Nathaniel Newton Infant School may have a positive effect on pupil numbers at Camp Hill Primary School while if Galley Common Infant School needed to

take additional pupils from closer to its school, there would be sufficient places in other local schools.

Parents living outside the priority area of Nathaniel Newton Infant School would still be able to apply for places, but under the admissions policy of the County Council would have a lower priority for admission than pupils living in the priority area. Anyone refused a place at a preferred school would have the right of appeal to an independent appeals committee.

Both Nathaniel Newton and Galley Common Infant Schools are 'feeder schools' to Michael Drayton Junior School at Key Stage 2. Lower pupil numbers at Nathaniel Newton Infant School could reduce the number of pupils admitted to Michael Drayton Junior School. If those pupils not gaining a place at Nathaniel Newton Infant School were to attend a 'through' primary school at Key Stage 1 it is possible that they would not transfer to Michael Drayton Junior School at Key Stage 2. A reduction of 6 or 8 pupils per year would have budgetary implications for Michael Drayton Junior School. It could also be argued that this would need to be balanced against budgetary and organisational impact on Nathaniel Newton Infant School of not reducing its admission number.

There is a new housing estate called 'The Shires', comprising 265 housing units, which has recently been completed. As the development is completed and occupied, the additional pupils resulting from the estate are already included in the current and projected pupil numbers for the schools. The development is in an area which is not currently designated to a school but it is located between Nathaniel Newton Infant School and Galley Common Infant School. Given the proposed reduction in the admission number of Nathaniel Newton Infant School, it seems logical that this area be included in the priority area of Galley Common Infant School and at the junior phase, is confirmed as in the area of Michael Drayton Junior School. Maps showing the location of schools, the existing priority areas and the proposed priority areas are included in this document.

As the lower intake numbers pass through Nathaniel Newton Infant School, the classrooms that would no longer be needed for teaching purposes would be available for community and possible development for 'extended schools' purposes. The proposed use of existing rooms would allow a reduction in the school capacity to be considered under the Net Capacity Regulations.

WHEN WOULD THESE CHANGES TAKE EFFECT?

If approved, an admission number of 60 pupils will apply to admissions to Nathaniel Newton Infant School from September 2007 onwards. If approved, the priority area change would also be introduced at that time.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

This consultation paper is being sent to all parents of pupils attending Nathaniel Newton Infant School, Michael Drayton Junior School, Galley Common Infant School and Camp Hill Primary School; the governing bodies of schools in North Warwickshire and Nuneaton; Diocesan Education Authorities; admission authorities; and neighbouring Local Authorities.

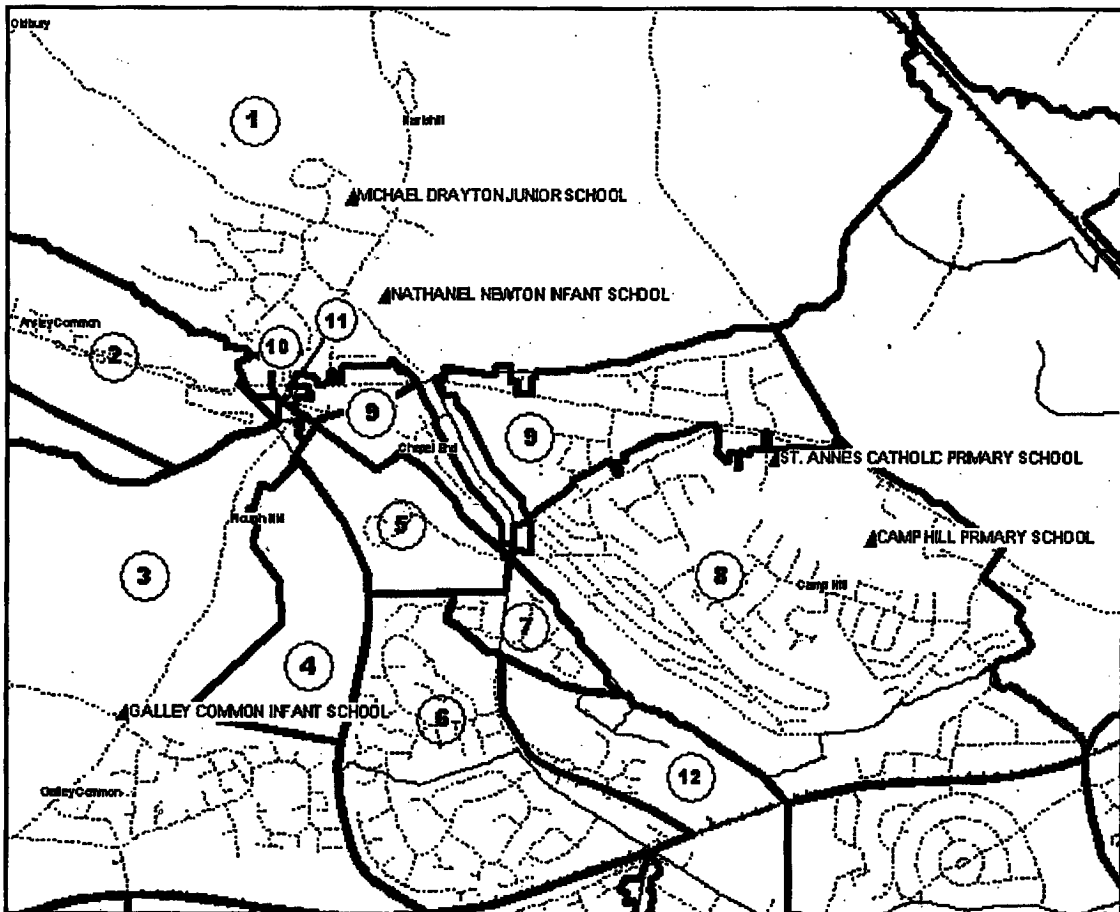
We want to know your views. Please send your comments on the proposals to:

Phil Astle
Education Department
22 Northgate Street
Warwick
CV34 4SP

by Tuesday 11 April 2006.

At the end of the consultation period, it is intended that these proposals and a summary of all the comments received will be considered by the North Warwickshire Area Committee on 31 May 2006; the Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee on 24 May 2006; and subsequently the Cabinet of Warwickshire County Council.

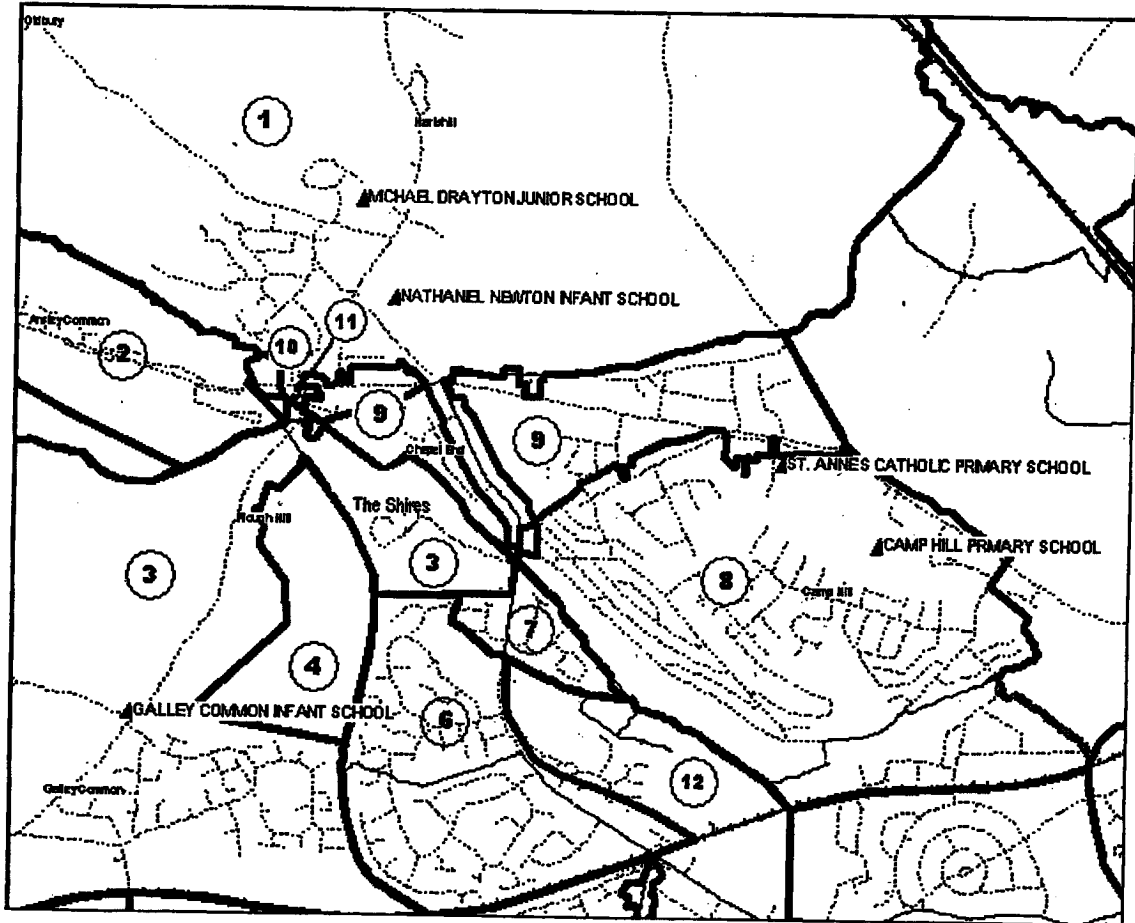
Map 1 Location of Schools and Existing Priority Area Boundaries



Key to School Priority Areas

1	Nathaniel Newton / Michael Drayton
2	Nursery Hill
3	Galley Common / Michael Drayton
4	Michael Drayton / Park Lane
5	Infant area under review / Michael Drayton Junior
6	Shared Stockingford / St. Paul's / Park Lane
7	Nathaniel Newton / Michael Drayton
8	Camp Hill
9	Shared Michael Drayton / Camp Hill
10	Michael Drayton
11	Shared Galley Common / Michael Drayton / Park Lane
12	Stockingford

Map 2 Location of Schools and Priority Area Boundaries Showing Proposed Change



Key to School Priority Areas	
1	Nathaniel Newton / Michael Drayton
2	Nursery Hill
3	Galley Common / Michael Drayton
4	Michael Drayton / Park Lane
6	Shared Stockingford / St. Paul's / Park Lane
7	Nathaniel Newton / Michael Drayton
8	Camp Hill
9	Shared Michael Drayton / Camp Hill
10	Michael Drayton
11	Shared Galley Common / Michael Drayton / Park Lane
12	Stockingford