

Portfolio Holder Decision – Change of Age Range at Brownsover Infant, Long Lawford & Nursery Hill Primary Schools

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| Portfolio Holder | Portfolio Holder for Education |
| Date of decision | 12 May 2023 |
| | Signed |

1 Decision taken

That the Portfolio Holder for Education approves the commencement of a public consultation on changing the age range at Brownsover Infant, Nursery Hill Primary and Long Lawford Primary Schools with effect from September 2023.

2 Reasons for decisions

Brownsover Community Infant School:

- 2.1 The school wishes to change its age range from 3-7 to become a 4–7 infant school, with early years provision available at the existing school operated setting only. Currently, the school also operates a nursery class for 3-4 year olds which it proposes closing and amalgamating these spaces into the school operated Pre-School for 2-4 year olds. This change, if agreed, would come into force from September 2023.
- 2.2 The school has recently consulted to transition from a two form entry infant school to a one form entry primary school. As a consequence, approval has already been received to extend the school's current 3-7 age range to 3-11 from September 2026.
- 2.3 Therefore, this proposal is twofold. To change the age range from 3-7 to 4-7 from September 2023, then change the age range from 4-7 to 4-11 in September 2026.

- 2.4 The school nursery class currently has a place allocation of 52 half day places = 26 morning + 26 afternoon places which must be led by a qualified teacher and additional level 3 qualified early years professional. The delivery of this is either morning or afternoon places.
- 2.5 In addition to the nursery class the school operates a governor run nursery (s27 care) which offers places to 2 to 4 year old children. This meets the needs for working parents, providing the additional hours working parents need to access 30 hours places. Funded 2 year old places are also offered to support disadvantaged families that meet the eligibility criteria
- 2.6 The dual offer across the school services creates both administrative and financial pressures that could be avoided by creating one service to meet all service user needs, with greater flexibility for parents, in one setting.
- 2.7 The age range change would see no reduction in places for the community as the offer at the school run nursery would be increased to reflect those places previously offered by the school nursery class. The change would create one service that could be run to meet local need with the ability to flex and change in response to demand whilst being delivered in a more cost and administratively efficient way. The plans propose that the Early Years provision may become teacher directed as opposed to teacher led. This means that the EYFS teacher / lead may work at times collaboratively across the EYFS team to secure and sustain the quality of early years provision at the school. This would ensure there is no intended reduction in the quality of provision because of the proposed change.

Long Lawford Primary School:

- 2.8 The school wishes to change its age range to become a 4 – 11 primary school, with early years provision being delivered via a newly developed school operated setting. Currently, the school has an age range of 3 – 11 and operates a nursery class for 3 and 4 year olds which it proposes closing.
- 2.9 The school nursery class currently has a place allocation of 26 half day places which are mornings only and must be led by a qualified teacher and additional level 3 qualified early years professional. Take up of these places fluctuates leading to increasing financial pressure upon the school in terms of delivery cost of staffing and increased difficulty in meeting the needs for parents and carers. This impact has increased steadily over recent years as demands for more flexible, longer sessions have grown.
- 2.10 The nursery wishes to develop its offer and provide more options for longer sessions. This would see an increase in demand for these places, meeting the need for longer and more flexible sessions by parents, including being able to access funded 30 hours extended entitlement places for working parents.

2.11 The age range change would see no reduction in places for the community. The offer at the school run nursery would reflect those places previously offered by the school nursery class, and provide additional longer sessions, to meet the requested need of parents. The change would create a new service that could be run to meet local need, with the ability to flex and change in response to demand, while being delivered in a more cost-efficient way. The plans propose that the Early Years provision may become teacher directed as opposed to teacher led. This means that the EYFS teacher / lead may work at times collaboratively across the EYFS team to secure and sustain the quality of early years provision at the school. This would help to ensure that there is no reduction in the quality of provision as a result of the proposed change.

Nursery Hill Primary School:

2.12 The school wishes to change its age range to become a 4 – 11 primary school, with early years provision being delivered via a newly developed school operated setting. Currently, the school has an age range of 3 – 11 and operates a nursery class for 3 and 4 year olds which it proposes closing.

2.13 The school nursery class currently has a place allocation of 26 half day places which are mornings only and must be led by a qualified teacher and additional level 3 qualified early years professional. Take up of these places fluctuates leading to increasing financial pressure upon the school in terms of delivery cost of staffing and increased difficulty in meeting the needs for parents and carers. This impact has increased steadily over recent years as demands for more flexible, longer sessions have grown.

2.14 The nursery wishes to develop its offer and provide more options for longer sessions along with creating places for funded 2 year olds. This, if agreed, would see an increase in demand for these places, meeting the need for longer and more flexible sessions by parents, including being able to access funded 30 hours extended entitlement places for working parents.

2.15 If agreed, the age range change would see no reduction in places for the community. The offer at the school run nursery would reflect those places previously offered by the school nursery class, and provide additional longer sessions and additional places for funded 2 year olds. This would meet need of parents locally and moving forwards with the increased funded entitlements due to be launched in 2024. The change would create a new service that could be run to meet local need, with the ability to flex and change in response to demand, while being delivered in a more cost efficient way. The plans propose that the Early Years provision may become teacher directed as opposed to teacher led. This means that the EYFS teacher / lead may work at times collaboratively across the EYFS team to secure and sustain the quality of early years provision at the school. This would ensure there is no intended reduction in the quality of provision because of the proposed change.

3 Background information

- 3.1 Any proposed changes to the age range of a community school must be carried out in accordance with the Statutory Guidance issued by the Department for Education 'Making Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools.' The guidance requires the local authority to undertake a statutory consultation for a period of at least 4 weeks, with the proposals published both online and in a local newspaper, as well as to the governing body, the parents of registered pupils at the school, and anyone else considered appropriate.
- 3.2 The local authority should make its decision within 2 months of the end of the consultation period.
- 3.3 If permission to consult is agreed, consultation would need to take place during June 2023 to ensure any changes are implemented in time for September 2023.
- 3.4 The results of the consultation will be included in a future Cabinet report for approval, followed by implementation (if agreed) from July 2023.

Financial implications

None

Environmental implications

None

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Portfolio Holder for Education

Urgent matter?

No

Confidential or exempt?

No

Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?

No

List of background papers

None

Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Kam Kaur

Corporate Board – Johnny Kyriacou & Matt Biggs

Legal – Guy Darvill – Team Lead & Senior Solicitor (Education)

Finance – Brian Smith - Education, Children and Families Technical Specialist

Equality – Delroy Madden - Senior EDI Practitioner

Democratic Services – Helen Barnsley – Senior Democratic Services Officer

Councillors – Councillor Dahmash, Councillor Roodhouse, Councillor Brown

Local Member(s): Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince, Councillor Heather Timms, Councillor Margaret Bell