



19 October 2021

REPORT TITLE:	OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION ON NURSERY CLASS AT BIDSTON AVENUE
REPORT OF:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR - EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

The report provides an update on the consultation on altering the age range of Bidston Avenue Primary School to incorporate the Governor-Led preschool as a maintained nursery class, and recommends the proposal be approved.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Director of Children, Families and Education be recommended to agree that the age range at Bidston Avenue Primary School be extended by one year group from 4 to 11 to 3 to 11 as a prescribed alteration to a maintained school.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The statutory notices for this prescribed alteration were published in accordance with statutory guidance, including at Bidston Avenue Primary School, on the Council's website and at a local shop in the area. The notices stood for four weeks.
- 1.2 Comments on the proposal were invited by 19th August 2021 during which time no comments or objections were received.

On this basis, it is recommended that the proposal be approved.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The alternative would be to retain BiddyAve Buddies as a governor-led pre-school. There are reasons why it would be beneficial to convert this provision into a school nursery class which are given in 3.4 below.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Bidston Avenue Primary School currently offers 3 year old provision through a Governor-led, non-maintained pre-school, "BiddyAve Buddies". The governing body of the school has considered incorporating the pre-school into the maintained school. There are benefits to operating a nursery class as part of the main school, however there are also additional costs associated with a nursery class that do not apply to a pre-school. The governing body have decided they are able to meet these additional costs within the existing budget.
- 3.2 Bidston Avenue Primary School has undertaken appropriate preliminary consultation with stakeholders in Spring 2021 which received no objections.
- 3.3 A Governor-led pre-school is a setting that is managed directly by the Governing Body. Unlike maintained nursery provision, children are not registered pupils of the school, and the provision is managed separately by the Governing Body.
- 3.4 BiddyAve Buddies has been a popular provision within the local community over several years, showing the demand for nursery places on the school site. Integrating into the school will allow children in attendance to be registered as pupils of the school. This would enable the school to improve communication and administration and adopt a cohesive and consistent approach to learning right through to Year 6.
- 3.5 The proposal is to incorporate an existing pre-school into the maintained school – this rationalisation would not create any additional early years places in the local area. The proposed change would not alter the school's admission number for entry to Foundation 2, or the school's admission arrangements. Attending a particular nursery or pre-school does not give any priority for admission to Bidston Avenue Primary School and this would continue to be the case. Parents of pupils attending the nursery provision would continue to need to apply for places in the usual way, the policy criteria determine which children are offered places.

- 3.6 There should not be any impact on other local educational establishments or on traffic in the area, as no additional places are being introduced.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The school has confirmed it has resources in place to support all foreseeable aspects of the change. The Local Authority would expect the Governors to ensure this is appropriate to meet expected needs. No Local Authority funding is available to support the proposed change.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and section 5(1) of the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools)(England) 2013 apply.
- 5.2 A temporary change of age range (lasting up to two years) does not require a statutory consultation – where this is intended to be a permanent change, the Prescribed Alterations guidance requires a statutory consultation process to be followed. The Decision Maker – in this case the Local Authority, must then determine the outcome of the proposal within 2 months of the end of the consultation period.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Bidston Avenue Primary School will be required to appoint a qualified teacher for a maintained nursery class; pre-schools are not obliged to have staff with teaching qualifications. The school has recognised the impact of this change and has identified sufficient budget to cover the costs of appropriately trained and experienced teacher(s).
- 6.2 The nursery class is expected to occupy the existing accommodation used by BiddyAve Buddies. Should any alterations to accommodation be required as a result of this change, all relevant processes including planning consent will be expected to be followed, and associated costs funded by the school.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Failure to decide the outcome of the proposal within 2 months of the end of the representation period will mean that the final decision is made by the Schools Adjudicator.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The statutory notices for this prescribed alteration were published in accordance with statutory guidance, including at Bidston Avenue Primary School, on the Council's website and at a local shop in the area. The notices stood for four weeks. Comments on the proposal were invited by 19th August 2021 during which time no comments or objections were received.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 An equality impact assessment has been completed and can be found at: <https://wirralcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/governance/SitePages/Equality-Impact-Assessment.aspx>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no impact on emissions of Greenhouse Gases.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Nursery classes have a role in supporting all children, but particularly those from socioeconomically disadvantaged families. High quality early years education aims to reduce gaps in attainment between disadvantaged children and their peers and improve social mobility. Integrating into the school would enable the school to improve communication and administration and adopt a cohesive and consistent approach to learning right through to Year 6.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Sally Gibbs**
Senior Manager School Admissions and Place Planning
telephone: (0151) 666 4487
email: sallygibbs@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Consultation Notice

Section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
Section 5(1) of the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools)(England) 2013

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date