

Impact Assessment: Draft

Assessment of: Proposal to change the age range of The Topsham School, Exeter

Service: School Place Planning/School Organisation (CCET) and Early Years & Childcare Service

Head of Service for School Place Planning, CCET: Jamie Hulland

Version / date of sign off by Head of Service: Draft. This Impact Assessment will be updated during the statutory process with the results of the consultation and formal representation.

Assessment carried out by (job title):

Shona Meek, Senior School Organisation Officer

1. Description of project / service / activity / policy under review

The proposal is to change the age range of Topsham School, Exeter from 3-11 to 4-11 years of age from September 2024.

2. Reason for change / review

Topsham School currently has a Nursery Class, Little Acorns, for children aged 3 and 4 years of age, run as a Foundation Stage Unit (Nursery and Reception Class integrated). Children in the Nursery Class are on the roll of Topsham School.

The school would like to change the Nursery Class provision to a Governor-run Pre-School for 3 and 4 year olds. A Governor run Pre-School operates as an extended service. Children attending a Governor run Pre -School are not on the roll of the school.

The Governing Body of Topsham School sees the need to change the status of the Nursery provision to a Governor run pre-school to allow for savings to be made through the restructuring of staff. There must be a teacher with Qualified Teacher Status leading a Nursery Class in a maintained school. This is not a requirement in a Governor-run pre-school. The financial savings which are necessary will be made through employing Early Years practitioners to run the pre-school provision on a daily basis, rather than employing a Qualified Teacher to lead the Nursery Class.

3. Aims / objectives, limitations and options going forwards (summary)

The Nursery Class at Topsham School is not financially viable. Changing to a Governor run Pre School will mean there is not the requirement for the early years provision to be led by a Qualified Teacher and will mean savings can be made.

4. People affected and analysis of needs

Pupils and their families at the school, particularly children on roll in the Nursery Class.

Local families seeking early years provision.

Staff in the Foundation Stage Unit.

Wider school staff, governors and community.

5. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

Pupils, parents and carers of children on roll. Children on roll in the Nursery Class will be directly impacted.

Local families who are seeking early years provision

Local EY Provider/s

Other stakeholders

Transition to a Governor run Pre-School would be smooth and would ensure that the provision for 3 and 4 year olds is monitored and supported by school staff. Its current location, timetable and daily systems for the children would not be affected by the change proposed.

The proposal will not affect the school's net capacity or published admission number and will not put pressure on existing classroom space for statutory school aged children.

This proposal will have no impact on the permanent staffing. Terms and conditions will remain the same as they are now. There will be no redundancies.

6. Additional research used to inform this assessment

Department for Education: Making Significant Changes (Prescribed Alterations) to Maintained Schools

Department for Education: Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage

Cabinet Office guidance on Consultation Principles

The Childcare Act 2006

7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

Devon County Council has received Cabinet Member approval to consult on the proposal to change the age range at Topsham School prior to undertaking a pre-publication consultation.

Under Department for Education School Organisation guidance there is no longer a statutory 'pre-publication' consultation period for prescribed alteration changes such as changing the age range, however, there is a strong expectation that governing bodies and local authorities will consult interested parties in developing their proposal prior to publication to take into account all relevant considerations. In light of this, DCC is holding a pre-publication consultation period for four weeks. The pre-publication consultation is taking place from 23 April 2024 to 21 May 2024 during term time. The consultation is being carried out in line with the government's Cabinet Office guidance on consultation principles. The pre-publication consultation is taking place to ensure any responses to the consultation are taken into account when developing and taking the proposal forward. The pre-publication consultation is taking place during the formative stage of the plans.

Following on from the pre-publication consultation period a formal consultation - representation period will take place should it be agreed to continue with the statutory process.

The representation (formal consultation) period must last for four weeks. During this period any person or organisation can submit comments on the proposal to the Local Authority to be taken into account by the decision-maker. Responses will also be shared with the school as this is considered good practice to ensure the proposer is aware of local opinion.

The Local Authority is the decision-maker. The decision-maker may reject the proposal, approve the proposal with or without modifications.

8. Equality analysis

Giving Due Regard to Equality and Human Rights

The local authority must consider how people will be affected by the service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Where relevant, we must take into account the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. This means considering how people with different needs get the different services they require and are not disadvantaged, and facilities are available to them on an equal basis in order to meet their needs; advancing equality of opportunity by recognising the disadvantages to which protected groups are subject and considering how they can be overcome.

We also need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).
- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).
- The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are:
 - Informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations.
 - Proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision)
 - Fair
 - Necessary
 - Reasonable, and
 - Those affected have been adequately consulted.

<p>Characteristics</p>	<p>Potential or actual issues for this group.</p> <p>[Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]</p>	<p>How will the project / service / policy / activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'). • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
<p>All residents (include generic equality provisions)</p>		<p>It is likely that parents and children currently attending the Nursery Class will see little difference in the practical arrangements.</p> <p>Being Governor-run the provision will still be supported by the school. The teachers within the school who currently support the Nursery will continue their support of the Pre- school provision. Provision will continue to run in the same room and will continue to be run as a Foundation Stage Unit.</p> <p>There will be no change to the number of places. The Pre-School will continue to offer 16 places for 3 and 4 year olds so there is no impact on Devon County Council's duty to ensure sufficient early years places.</p>
<p>Age</p>	<p>Ages 3 and 4 directly affected.</p>	<p>See above.</p>

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Disability (incl. sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people		<p>No impact is anticipated. All Early Years settings have a responsibility to provide an inclusive service for all children and their families including those with special educational needs and disabilities.</p> <p>The consultation document is available in a different format or language upon request.</p>
Culture and ethnicity: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin/race, skin colour, religion and belief		<p>Places would be available for all children regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or belief.</p> <p>The consultation document is available in a different format or language upon request.</p>
Sex, gender and gender identity (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)		<p>The decision will support quality provision for children of all genders.</p>

<p>Characteristics</p>	<p>Potential or actual issues for this group.</p> <p>[Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]</p>	<p>How will the project / service / policy / activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'). • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
<p>Sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Other relevant socio-economic factors such as family size/single people/lone parents, income/deprivation, housing, education and skills, literacy, sub-cultures, 'digital exclusion', access to transport options, rural/urban</p>		<p>It is envisaged that this proposal will be cost neutral as the Early Years funding will be received where children are eligible and by parental subscription where they are not.</p> <p>Without this provision, some parents/carers may need to drive to alternative provision which may prohibit some families from being able to access early years education. Environmentally it should reduce traffic into more urban areas where parents may otherwise need to access childcare to enable them to work.</p> <p>The socio-economic benefits are great. Childcare enables people to work, it improves life chances for children and reduces social isolation.</p>

9. Human rights considerations:

Under section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006, the Local Authority must ensure there is sufficient childcare within the local area, sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in the area who require childcare in order to enable them to take up, or remain in, work or undertake education or training. If the proposal is approved, the Pre-School will continue to offer 16 places for 3 and 4 year olds so there is no impact on Devon County Council's duty to ensure sufficient early years places.

10. Supporting independence, wellbeing and resilience. Give consideration to the groups listed above and how they may have different needs:

All children in the Early Years provision are and will be taught according to their age related expectations and have access to suitable learning provision.

A financial early years plan for Topsham School, based on running a Governor run provision as an extended service, has been approved by Devon County Council's School Finance Consultant prior to proceeding to a pre-publication consultation on this proposal.

11. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 4c, otherwise complete the environmental analysis table):

Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process	
Planning Permission	
Environmental Impact Assessment	
Strategic Environmental Assessment	

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost:	n/a	n/a
Conserve and enhance wildlife:	n/a	n/a
Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape:	n/a	n/a
Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage:	n/a	n/a
Minimise greenhouse gas emissions:	n/a	n/a
Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise):		Without this provision, some parents/carers may need to drive to alternative provision which may prohibit some families from being able to access early years education.
Contribute to reducing water consumption:	n/a	n/a
Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level):	n/a	n/a
Other (please state below):	n/a	n/a

12. Economic analysis

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Impact on knowledge and skills:		<p>The qualification requirements of staff will meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.</p> <p>The provision of childcare enables parent to attend training. There is financial support for some students to help make childcare affordable.</p>
Impact on employment levels:		
Impact on local business:		

13. Describe and linkages or conflicts between social, environmental and economic impacts (Combined Impacts):

The socio-economic benefits are great. Childcare enables people to work, it improves life chances for children and reduces social isolation.

14. How will the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area be improved through what is being proposed? And how, in conducting the process of procurement, might that improvement be secured?

As above.

15. How will impacts and actions be monitored?

The school and the federation will monitor standards and ensure that the quality of provision provided by the Pre-school maintains that previously provided through the Nursery.

Monitoring will also be carried out through DCC's Early Years and Childcare Service and through Ofsted inspections.