

Report to: **Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability**

Date: **26 June 2018**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Title of report: **Lowering the age range at Ditchling (St Margaret's) CE Primary School**

Purpose of report: **To seek Lead Member approval to lower the age range at Ditchling (St Margaret's) CE Primary School to enable the governing body to take on management of the Ditchling Pre-School Group, currently run by a Voluntary Management Committee.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member is recommended to approve a change of age range at Ditchling (St Margaret's) CE Primary School from 4 to 11 to 2 to 11 with effect from 1 September 2018.

1 Background

1.1 Ditchling Pre-School Group is currently run by a Voluntary Management Committee for 2 to 4 year olds in the Scout Hut in Ditchling village. The Voluntary Management Committee is no longer able to provide the management structure the pre-school needs to continue to offer education and childcare places and has worked with Ditchling (St Margaret's) CE Primary School to find an alternative solution. The governing body wishes to lower the school's age range from 4 to 11 to 2 to 11 to enable the school to provide nursery provision on site and maintain quality early years provision for children in the community, both now and in the future.

1.2 The aim of the proposal is to integrate, fully, nursery provision into the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) within the school. The governing body wishes to ensure an offer of high quality early education delivered by experienced and well-trained staff across the EYFS. This will build on the work already done by the school to secure good outcomes for all children in the future. The proposal is in line with council strategy for the integration of nursery and school provision.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The governing body consulted between 11 September and the 6 October 2017 on a proposal to lower the school's age range with effect from 1 September 2018. The governing body consulted with staff, families of children at the school and the pre-school, the local community and other interested parties.

2.2 By the close of the consultation period twelve responses had been received supporting the proposal to lower the school age range at Ditchling (St Margaret's) CE Primary School to 2 to 11 to take on the management of the village pre-school. Only one response raised concerns around the loss of internal and external space on the school site if the school was to offer early years provision on site. The governing body has set out how, through remodelling some spare and under-utilised spaces the nursery can be accommodated on site. The governing body will fund all of the capital works required to facilitate the move.

2.4 On 30 April 2018, the Lead Member considered the outcome of the consultation and approved the publication of statutory notices in relation to the proposal. A copy of the Lead Member report can be viewed by following the link below.

<https://democracy.eastsussex.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=3541&x=1>

2.4 The statutory notice was published on 11 May 2018 in the Sussex Express. The notice was also posted at the entrance to the school. The notice and full proposal was available on the Council's website.

2.4 Publication of the notice was followed by a four-week period of representation, when comments or objections could be made to the Council. At the end of the representation period, two comments in support of the proposal had been received.

3. Factors to be considered by the decision maker and types of decision

3.1 Proposed changes to the organisation of maintained schools have to follow a prescribed process established by the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.

3.2 The process set out above complied with these requirements.

3.3 The regulations set out a number of factors to which the Lead Member should have regard before making a final decision on the proposal. These are set out in Appendix A.

4. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

4.1 The proposal, to lower the age range at Ditchling (St Margaret's) CE Primary School will help to build on work already done by the school in conjunction with the Pre-school's Voluntary Management Committee. This will help ensure a fully integrated EYFS to help secure good outcomes for all children in the future. The proposal is in line with council strategy for the integration of nursery and school provision.

4.2 The proposal to lower the school age range from 4 to 11 to 2 to 11 at Ditchling (St Margaret's) CE Primary School to is supported by the Diocese of Chichester.

4.3 For these reasons the Lead Member is recommended to approve a change of age range at Ditchling (St Margaret's) CE Primary School from 4 to 11 to 2 to 11 with effect from 1 September 2018.

STUART GALLIMORE

Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Jane Spice, Early Years Funding Manager

Tel. No. 01323 747425

Email: jane.spice@eastsussex.gov.uk

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Lead Member report and minute from 30th April 2018:

LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Sarah Osborne

APPENDIX A

The Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability should have regard to the following factors before reaching a final decision on the proposed change of age range from 4-11 to 2-11 at Ditchling (St Margaret's) CE Primary School.

1	Did the published notice comply with statutory requirements	The notice complied with statutory requirements as set out in 3.1 of the report.
2	Are the proposals related to other published proposals	The proposal is not related to other published proposals.
3	Was consultation carried out prior to the publication of notices	The governing body undertook a period of consultation between 11 September and 6 October 2017 on a proposal to lower the school's age range from 4-11 to 2-11 to enable them to provide nursery provision on the school site.
4	Have any particular comments or objections been raised during the representation period which could directly affect the proposals	<p>Two responses in support of the proposal were received during the representation period both commenting on the benefits to the community this proposal will bring.</p> <p>Respondent 1: 'I am writing in response to the proposal to lower the age limit at Ditchling St Margaret's Primary school from age 4 to age 2 with effect from September 2018.</p> <p>I am wholly supportive of this proposal and feel that it would be of huge benefit to the school, the children and the local community.</p> <p>I look forward to seeing the changes as they take place'.</p> <p>Respondent 2: 'I just wanted to reiterate everyone's feelings about the proposal for the school.</p> <p>My son currently attends the preschool & has one more year before Reception. The move to the school can only be a positive one for the preschools sustainability, & to improve numbers for the school also.</p> <p>There will be a much better setting environment for the children at the school & an easier transition for starting at school.</p> <p>The potential wrap around care for all ages will benefit the community immensely too.</p> <p>We look forward to the exciting new changes this coming academic year!'</p>
5	The effect on education standards and diversity of provision	The Council does not believe the proposal will have a negative impact on other providers, schools and academies in the surrounding areas. The proposal will help build on the work already done by the school in conjunction with the voluntary management committee of Ditchling Pre-School. This will help ensure a fully integrated Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to help secure good outcomes for all children in the future. The proposal is in line with council strategy for the integration of nursery and school provision.
6	The demand for places	<p>The proposal is not about providing more places – it is about securing the viability of early years provision in the village by fully integrating it in to the school.</p> <p>Based on current eligibility criteria, forecasts of need in Ditchling area indicate there is no requirement to provide more places.</p>
7	The impact on school size, premises and funding	<p>The proposal will have no impact on the size of the school.</p> <p>. The school will undertake some internal remodelling of the premises to implement the proposal. No capital investment is required by the Council</p>

8	The proposed admission arrangements	The proposal will not affect the admission arrangements of the school, which will remain as published.
9	National curriculum	Ditchling (St Margaret's) CE Primary school will deliver the EYFS for children aged 2-5 years.
10	Equal opportunities issues	<p>The Council does not believe there are any sex, race or disability discrimination issues arising from the proposed changes.</p> <p>The proposal will have a positive impact by integrating, fully, nursery provision into the EYFS within the school. The governing body wishes to ensure that the nursery continues to support the local area and to offer high quality early education for all, delivered by experienced and well-trained staff across the EYFS. This will build on the work already done by the school to secure good outcomes for all children in the future.</p>
11	Community cohesion	The Council believes that the proposal will enhance community cohesion by enabling the governing body to provide early years provision on the school site and maintain quality early years provision in the community, both now and in the future
12	Travel and accessibility	The Council does not believe the proposal will have any impact on travel and accessibility. Journey times may actually be reduced for parents who have children of both nursery age and school age.