

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

Date: **13 September 2021**

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

Title of report: **Change of age range at Cradle Hill Community Primary School**

Purpose of report: **To seek Lead Member approval to publish a statutory notice in respect of a proposal to lower the age range at Cradle Hill Community Primary School from 4-11 to 2-11.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) authorise the publication of a statutory notice in respect of a proposal to lower the age range at Cradle Hill Community Primary School from 4-11 to 2-11. The proposal is to take effect from 1 April 2022: and;**
 - 2) delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to amend the proposal prior to its publication, if required.**
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1 Background

1.1 On 7 October 2019 a decision was taken by the Lead Member for Children and Families to de-designate 14 Children's Centres as part of the Revised Children's Services Early Help Strategy in East Sussex. One of the 14 de-designated Children's Centre buildings is located on the Cradle Hill Community Primary School (Cradle Hill) site (Seaford). A private nursery previously operated from the building, providing early years and childcare for families in the area, however, the provider gave notice to cease trading in early 2020.

1.2 The Cradle Hill governing board wishes to lower the school's age range from 4-11 to 2-11 with effect from 1 April 2022 to re-establish nursery provision on the site and provide for families who wish to access funded early years provision in the area. By providing a nursery on site, the former Children's Centre building would continue to offer services for 0–5-year-olds, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the original Department for Education (DfE) grant funding used to construct the building.

1.3 The governing board's vision is to integrate, fully, nursery provision into the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) within the school. The governing board wishes to offer high quality early education to families in the local area, delivered by experienced and well-trained staff across the EYFS. The aim is to build on the work already done by the school to secure good outcomes for all children in the future.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The governing board undertook a period of consultation between 10 May and 14 June 2021 on a proposal to lower the school's age range. The governing board consulted with staff, families of children at the school, the local community, and other interested parties.

2.2 By the close of the consultation period 14 responses had been received, all of which were positive and in support of the proposal.

- Two mentioned that it would benefit the local community, especially working parents.
- Four mentioned it would be easy to have one pick up and drop off for all children.
- One mentioned that it would benefit the children and speed along social skills.
- Three mentioned that it would help transition from nursery to school “familiar with school environment”.
- One mentioned the strong foundation for early learning and transition

2.3 A complete list of responses to the consultation is available for Members consideration in the Cabinet and Members Room’s at County Hall.

2.4 In developing its proposal, the school also undertook a local needs survey. From the 74 responses received, 84% said they would consider using a nursery on the Cradle Hill site, 12% said they were unsure and 4% said they wouldn’t.

2.5 At the time the consultation was undertaken it was intended to implement the proposal from 1 January 2022. However, and subject to the outcome of the consultation the local authority has since agreed with the school that the proposal should be implemented on 1 April 2022 to benefit from the nursery opening at the start of the new financial year and to provide more time for the recruitment of staff. The first children to join the nursery would do so in Terms 5 and 6.

3. Statutory process

3.1 Proposed changes to the organisation of maintained schools must follow a prescribed process established by the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013. To change the age range of a community school like Cradle Hill, the local authority must first publish a statutory notice in accordance with the regulations, providing interested parties with a further opportunity to comment on/object to the proposal.

3.2 It is intended that the statutory notice would be published on the local authority’s website in October 2021. The notice would also be published in the local newspaper and posted on the entrances to the school. Publication of the notice would trigger a four-week period of representation during which interested parties could comment further on the proposal.

3.3 The local authority has a duty to determine each proposal within two months of the end of the representation period. We anticipate a final decision on the proposal would be taken at the Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability meeting in December 2021.

4. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

4.1 The proposal to lower the age range at Cradle Hill Community Primary School from 4-11 to 2-11 would enable nursery provision to be re-established on the school site. It would support the governing board’s vision to integrate, fully, nursery provision into the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to offer high quality early education to families in the local area.

4.2 Feedback from the initial consultation was positive, with all respondents supportive of the proposal. A local needs survey also indicated local support for nursery provision on the school site.

4.3 For these reasons the Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) authorise the publication of a statutory notice in respect of a proposal to lower the age range at Cradle Hill Community Primary School from 4-11 to 2-11. The proposal is to take effect from 1 April 2022; and

- 2) delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to amend the proposal prior to its publication, if required.

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