

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

Date: **12 December 2022**

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

Title of report: **School age range change**

Purpose of report: **To seek Lead Member approval to lower the age range at Wivelsfield Primary School to enable the governing board of the school to open nursery provision on site.**

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***RECOMMENDATION: The Lead Member is recommended to:***

**Authorise a change of age range at Wivelsfield Primary School from 4 to 11 to 2 to 11 with effect from 1 September 2023.**

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## **1 Background**

1.1 The village of Wivelsfield lost its only early years provision when the voluntary run pre-school located in the village closed in July 2020. The governing board of Wivelsfield Primary School wishes to lower the school's age range from 4-11 to 2-11 to accommodate families who wish to access funded early years provision in the area. The East Sussex Early Years Forecasting model is showing a need for this early years provision. It is proposed that the nursery offers 24 full-time equivalent places for 2-4-year-olds.

1.2 The aim of the proposal is to fully integrate nursery provision into the Early Years Foundation Stage within the school. The governing board wishes to ensure that the nursery would again support families in the local area and offer high quality early education delivered by experienced and well-trained staff across the Early Years Foundation Stage.

1.3 The nursery would initially be provided in a temporary classroom on the school site. The temporary classroom would be in place for six years. In the longer term, it is intended for the nursery to be accommodated in the main school building, using a classroom currently occupied by an additional reception class which was admitted to the school in September 2022.

1.4 The governing board consulted between 8 November and 5 December 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.

1.5 By the close of the consultation period, 16 responses had been received. All the responses fully supported the school's proposal to lower the age range from 4-11 to 2-11 to provide early years provision for children within the village.

1.6 On 24 May 2022, the Lead Member considered the outcome of the consultation and approved the publication of a statutory notice in relation to the proposal. The Lead Member report can be viewed using this link: [Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability 24 May 2022](#)

## **2 Statutory process**

2.1 Proposed changes to the organisation of maintained schools must be in accordance with Section 19 (1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (as amended) and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 (the Regulations).

2.2 In accordance with these requirements, a statutory notice was initially published on 2 September 2022 stating a proposed implementation date of 1 January 2023. However, it has

been necessary to delay the implementation date of the proposal to ensure the accommodation is ready for the first cohort of young children attending the nursery. Therefore, a revised statutory notice was therefore published on 20 October 2022 stating a new implementation date of 1 September 2023.

2.3 The notice was published in the Mid-Sussex Times and posted on the entrance to the school. The notice and full proposal were also posted on the local authority's website.

2.4 Publication of the notice was followed by a four-week period of representation, when further comments or objections could be made to the local authority. At the end of the representation period on 17 November 2022, no comments or objections had been received.

2.5 The regulations describe several factors to which the Lead Member should have regard before making a final decision on the proposal. These are set out in **Appendix 1** to this report.

### **3. Equality Impacts**

3.1 The Lead Member is required to have due regard to the duties set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty) in determining the proposal. The local authority has completed an initial equality assessment and concluded that a full equality impact assessment is not required. No potential equality impacts or barriers have been identified by officers or stakeholders during either the initial consultation or the subsequent representation period following the publication of the statutory proposal. The local authority believes the proposal will have a positive impact by creating opportunities for children and families to access early years provision within their local area that meets their needs.

### **4. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

4.1 In conclusion, the local authority and governing board of Wivelsfield Primary School have identified a gap in nursery provision in Wivelsfield since the closure of the former voluntary run pre-school in July 2020. The governing board wishes to lower the school's age range from 4-11 to 2-11 to support families in the local area and offer high quality early education delivered by experienced and well-trained staff across the Early Years Foundation Stage.

4.2 For this reason, the Lead Member is recommended to authorise the change of age range at Wivelsfield Primary School from 4-11 to 2-11 with effect from 1 September 2023.

**ALISON JEFFERY**  
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#### LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Matthew Milligan

#### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

#### APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Factors to be considered by the decision maker