

By: Rosalind Turner, Managing Director, Children Families and Education

To: Sarah Hohler, Cabinet Member, Children Families and Education

Subject: THE PROPOSED CHANGE OF AGE RANGE FOR AYLESHAM (COMMUNITY) PRIMARY SCHOOL (FROM 3-11 YEARS TO 4-11 YEARS) AND THE CLOSURE OF THE MAINTAINED NURSERY CLASS

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: The Cabinet member is request to agree to issue a public notice to close the maintained nursery class at Aylesham Primary School and to change the age range from 3-11 years to 4-11 years with effect from 1 September 2010

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## **Introduction**

1. The School Organisation Advisory Board at its meeting on 4 November 2009 agreed a consultation take place to close the maintained nursery class at Aylesham Primary School and to change the age range from 3-11 years to 4-11 years with effect from 1 September 2010

## **The Proposal**

2. (1) The proposal is to merge the school's maintained nursery and the full day-care Neighbourhood Nursery. Both Aylesham Primary School and the Pre-School Learning Alliance support the proposal. This would be achieved by changing the age-range of Aylesham Primary School from 3-11 years to 4-11 years and effectively closing the maintained nursery class.

(2) Technically, the school would cease to offer nursery classes from 1 September 2010. However the actual places would still be available although technically under the aegis of the Pre-School Learning Alliance from that time. The provision would continue to be an integral part of the Aylesham Children's Centre. Funding is therefore available to employ a qualified nursery teacher who would lead on Early Years Foundation Stage practice within the nursery. The employment of a qualified nursery teacher by Kent County Council would ensure that the Sunshine Corner Neighbourhood Nursery, as the designated nursery for the Aylesham Children's Centre, continued to have extensive support from a qualified nursery teacher. Part of the nursery teacher's role would be the development and management of the curriculum within the nursery setting to ensure that all children have access to the curriculum and make progress commensurate with their developing abilities irrespective of their gender, ethnic or social background, disability or other special needs. There would be no loss of childcare places as the school nursery classes are currently accommodated within the existing capacity. This proposal would give more flexibility to tailor services to meet the needs of parents/carers in the Aylesham community.

(3) If the maintained nursery closes, all the Nursery Education Funding payments would be made to the Neighbourhood Nursery and all the finances would be under the control of the Pre-School Learning Alliance. This would have a significant, beneficial impact on the Neighbourhood Nursery's long term sustainability and any additional initiatives, such as increasing the number of places available for children aged 0 to 2 years, would help towards achieving that goal.

(4) This proposal offers seamless continuity of services. The Pre-School Learning Alliance would continue its commitment to work in partnership with the school to help monitor quality and delivery of the Early Years Foundation curriculum. The Neighbourhood Nursery would also continue to be part of the Children's Centre core offer.

## **Responses to the Public Consultation**

### *Written Responses*

4. (1) Twenty six responses have been received. All 26 responses are in favour of the proposal.

## **Views of Local Member**

5. The Local Member is Mr Steve Manion. Mr Manion attended the public meeting and has indicated his support for the proposal.

## **Views of the Parish Council and Dover District Council**

6. Dr Linda Keen and Mr Bob Thompson are both Parish and District Councillors and provided the following response:

*"We have no objections to the proposal on the grounds that it appears to be necessary for financial reasons, and will not result in any increase in costs for the end-users, or diminution of service."*

## **Views of the Governing Body**

7. The governing body unanimously support the proposal.

## **Views of the Local Children's Centre**

8. The local Children's Centre has responded as follows:

"The Children's Centre fully supports the proposal to sustain the designated Children's Centre childcare offer. This will ensure that the Children's Centre will meet its full core offer in a sustainable way. We have a good partnership with both the school and the Pre-School Learning Alliance and believe this is the best way forward to continue the successful provision of full day care in the Aylesham Children's Centre catchment area."

## **Views of the Local Children's Services Partnership Board**

9. The Partnership Board discussed the proposal at its meeting on 14 December and agreed to support the proposed closure of the maintained nursery class for the reasons outlined in the public consultation document.

## **Resource Issues**

### *Capital & Revenue*

10. (1) Both the school and the private nursery are facing financial difficulties with the funding operating as it does currently. KCC awarded the Neighbourhood Nursery a sustainability grant of £70k at the end of 2008/9 to enable it to continue until a long term solution can be found. The long term solution would be to close the maintained nursery class and for the Sunshine Corner Neighbourhood Nursery to receive the full Nursery Education Funding.

### *Human*

(2) The primary school employs a full time nursery teacher who is currently on maternity leave. An agency teacher is employed on a temporary contract to cover the maternity leave. If the maintained nursery class closes, the teacher on return from maternity leave would continue her employment with Aylesham Primary School as a class teacher.

(3) A nursery assistant is currently employed on a temporary term time only contract by the school. If the maintained nursery class closes, the PLA has indicated that it would be in a position to offer her a contract of employment.

## **Views of the School Organisation Advisory Board**

11. The majority of the School Organisation Advisory Board at its meeting on 4 February 2010 supported the proposal to issue a public notice to close the maintained nursery class at Aylesham Primary School and to change the age range from 3-11 years to 4-11 years with effect from 1 September 2010. The report is attached as appendix 1.

## **Recommendation**

12. The Cabinet Member is requested to AGREE TO issue a public notice to close the maintained nursery class at Aylesham Primary School and to change the age range from 3-11 years to 4-11 years with effect from 1 September 2010

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The Local Member is Mr Steve Manion

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*Background Documents:*

None

*Previous Committee Reports:*

School Organisation Advisory Board – 4 November 2009

School Organisation Advisory Board – 4 February 2010