

PROPOSED CHANGE OF AGE RANGE OF NEWINGTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND THE CLOSURE OF THE MAINTAINED NURSERY UNIT

Summary of the Public Meetings held on 30 September 2010

The meeting was chaired by Mrs Valerie Dagger.

The key issues raised are summarised below.

Approximately 40 people attended the public meeting including parents, staff, governors, and other interested parties.

- **Alison Osborne**, Area Education Officer outlined the background to the proposal explaining why it was being brought forward. Unfortunately not enough children are coming forward for the nursery to make it viable. There are currently only 9 pre-school children in the maintained nursery this year and therefore KCC has to seek other ways of offering this provision. The maintained nursery unit is a financial drain on the school and it is therefore proposed that it will close at the end of Term 4. The Cherries can move straight into the nursery building at the beginning of Term 5. The children in the maintained nursery at the moment will have a place with the Cherries. KCC will be urging the Cherries and the school to maintain the link/relationship that exists at present.
- **Jacky Darling** the headteacher of Newington CE Primary School gave her support to the proposal saying that everyone wanted the best for the children. The Cherries would be able to offer full day-care to the families that needed it, but the maintained nursery unit cannot offer this. April 2011 would be the best time for this proposal to go ahead. There had been concerns raised over the transition from the nursery to The Cherries Pre-school for those children currently attending the maintained nursery unit and she wanted to reassure everyone that this would be managed in partnership with The Cherries for a smooth transition.
- **Esther Beswick**, the chairperson for The Cherries Management Committee outlined the operational details of the playgroup which is a charity-based organisation run by a partnership of qualified and dedicated staff with a strong, supportive parent Management Committee. The Cherries would have the freedom and flexibility to provide a much more extensive range of provisions if they moved into the maintained nursery unit accommodation. They would look to continue the school breakfast club from the outset and also introduce lunch clubs, after school clubs, afternoon and all day sessions. They could also consider providing holiday clubs in the future. The Cherries would continue to take two year olds. The Cherries would keep the strong links with the school and invite the headteacher to join their Management Committee. Esther offered a visit to The Cherries for any parent with concerns or questions.
- **Tony Parry**, Chair of governors explained that the school could not continue with the maintained nursery due to financial constraints and was very much in favour of the proposal. The governors agreed that the best solution was for The Cherries to take over the excellent maintained nursery unit provision.

The following points were made at the meeting

- Parking could be an issue.

- The flexibility of accessing the free entitlement was queried and answered by the Head of Early Years.
- It was considered that this proposal would provide flexibility for working mothers.
- Parents whose children currently attend The Cherries spoke of their support for the proposal.
- Parents whose children currently attend the maintained nursery unit spoke of their concerns about the transition. The headteacher agreed to work on a transition plan to ensure that parental concerns were met.