

From: Matt Dunkley, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education

To: Richard Long TD, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

Subject: Proposed change to Greenfield Community School

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Paul Cooper – Maidstone South

Summary:

This report sets out a proposal to alter the age range of Greenfields Community Primary School, Oxford Road, Maidstone ME15 8DF.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education is requested to consider and endorse the decision to:

- (i) alter the age range of Greenfields Community School from 3-11 years to 2-11 years from September 2020.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In the school's local area there is a limited offer for 2 year old nursery places. Kent County Council (KCC), with support from the school, successfully applied for funding from Government to enable the expansion of the school's nursery provision from the School Nurseries Capital Fund (SNCF). The SNCF is a Department of Education scheme that aims to create more school-based nursery places for disadvantaged children.
- 1.2 Securing this funding will allow the existing school nursery to offer places to local children from 2 years of age, a year earlier than it currently is able to.
- 1.3 The SNCF funding will be utilised to construct a new modular building for the nursery within the school site. The proposed building would comprise 2 classrooms, lobby areas, kitchen, toilets, baby change facilities and a small office. The proposed scheme would also include an external soft play area and canopy.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed to alter the age range of Greenfields Community School from 3-11 years to 2-11 years from September 2020; this will enable the school nursery to extend its offer to provide places for 2 year olds for local disadvantaged families.

- 2.2 The nursery currently has a capacity for 52 places split between morning and afternoon sessions (maximum of 26 children at either session), catering for children 3 to 4 years in age. The nursery is seeking to provide an additional 32 places for two-year olds split between morning and afternoon sessions (maximum of 16 children at each session).
- 2.3 Legislation requires the LA to undertake a statutory process, including consultation, for the alteration of upper or lower age ranges by 1 year or more (for community schools including the adding or removal of sixth form or nursery provision).
- 2.4 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the consultation. To date no comments have been received and no changes are required to the Equality Impact Assessment.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 **Capital** – The building works for the proposed scheme will be funded by the SNCF capital grant of up to £369,300.
- 3.2 **Revenue** – The school will also receive revenue funding through KCC based on the number of children in the setting and hours that they attend, through the Early Years Funding Formula which includes Free for 2 funding for eligible children.
- 3.3 **Human** - The school will appoint additional nursery staff as and when appropriate.

4. Raising Standards

- 4.1 In May 2019 Greenfields was given an overall judgement of 'Good' by Ofsted, with outstanding features that included their Early Years provision. Inspectors noted that 'the early years curriculum and practice is of the highest quality. It is enriching and exceptionally engaging in both the inside and outside areas. Children are enthusiastic and excited to learn.'

5. Policy Framework

- 5.1 This proposal will help to secure our ambition "to ensure that Kent's young people have access to the education, work and skills opportunities necessary to support Kent business to grow and be increasingly competitive in the national and international economy" as set out in 'Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement (2015-2020)'
- 5.2 The proposal reflects KCC's aspirations to provide sufficient school places across the County, as set out in the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2020-24.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 A public consultation was carried out by KCC, with support from the Governing Body, from 03 March 2020 to 31 March 2019 (midday). A consultation document was produced together with an Equality Impact Assessment which can be obtained from KCC's website.
<https://kccconsultations.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/Greenfields/consultationHome>
- 6.2 The consultation document was distributed via the school to parents/carers, members of staff and governors. The consultation was available on the school and KCC websites and was emailed to all key stakeholders. An opportunity to send in written responses using the response form in paper format and online was provided. A planned 'drop-in' information session to be held at the school was cancelled as a coronavirus precaution.
- 6.3 There were no responses to the consultation.

7. Equalities Implications

- 7.1 There is no evidence that the change will impact negatively on pupils from Protected Groups or lead to them being treated less favourably. The school and nursery would remain co-educational and continue to welcome pupils regardless of gender identity, race, ethnicity or religion beliefs.

8. Views

- 8.1 The View of the Local Members
The KCC Member for Maidstone South, Paul Cooper, has been consulted and is supportive of the proposal.
- 8.2 The View of the Governing Body
The Governing Body are fully supportive of the proposed change.
- 8.3 The View of the Headteacher
The school Head Teacher, Daniel Andrews, expressed his full support for the proposal.
- 8.4 The View of the Area Education Officer
The Area Education Officer supports this proposal and feels that the offer of nursery places from 2 years old at Greenfields will have a beneficial impact on the education of children from disadvantaged families in the surrounding areas.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 This report sets out the proposal to alter the lower age range of Greenfields Community School. The change of age range will enable the use of SNCF funding to build additional accommodation in which the school nursery will be able to offer places to children from 2 years of age. This scheme is intended to provide support for the most disadvantaged children within the local area.

10. Recommendation(s)

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education is requested to consider and endorse the decision to:

- (ii) alter the age range of Greenfields Community School from 3-11 years to 2-11 years from September 2020.

11. Background Documents

- 11.1 Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement 2015-2020 <http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/increasing-opportunities-improving-outcomes>
- 11.2 Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2020-2024 https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s88604/KCP%202019%20-%202023%20_Cabinet%20Committee%20-%20FINAL%20PW.pdf

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