

# **Report of the Interim Strategic Director of Children's Services to the meeting of Executive Committee to be held on 8th January 2019**

---

**Subject:**

**AN**

**PROPOSED CHANGES TO NURSERY PROVISION AT LOW ASH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Summary statement:**

**This report asks the Executive to:**

Approve changes to the Nursery provision at Low Ash Primary School from 1 September 2019

---

Gladys Rhodes White  
Interim Strategic Director- Children's Services

Report Contact: Marium Haque  
Phone: (01274) 431078  
E-mail: [Marium.Haque@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:Marium.Haque@bradford.gov.uk)

**Portfolio:**

**Education, Employment and Skills**

**Overview & Scrutiny Area:**

**Children's Services**

## **1. SUMMARY**

This report asks the Executive to:

Approve changes to the Nursery provision at Low Ash Primary School from 1 September 2019

## **2. BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Proposal to change Low Ash Primary School Nursery:**

- 2.1.1 The School and Governing Body of Low Ash Primary School asked that consultation be undertaken by the Local Authority on the possible closure of the school's nursery class.
- 2.1.2 Concerns were raised by the School that the nursery class had not completely filled over the last few years.
- 2.1.3 A promotional drive had been carried out by the school to advertise and generate more interest to try and fill their nursery.
- 2.1.4 Surveys of two cohorts of parents were carried out by the school to explore the reasons they chose not to send their children to the school nursery. The main reasons given were that the child was already settled in another nursery setting, or that additional hours or days were needed.
- 2.1.5 The equivalent of 59 children was expected to join the nursery class in academic year 2018/19.
- 2.1.6 Low Ash Primary School is due to increase its PAN from 60 to 90 from September 2019 with ongoing expansion works as agreed by the Executive Committee in March 2018.
- 2.1.7 The expansion and increase in published admission numbers is due to the growing demand for places in this and the surrounding area mainly due to a number of significant housing developments that have been approved.

## **3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Consultation**

#### **3.1 Low Ash Primary School**

- 3.1.1 Consultation on the proposal to make changes to the Nursery Provision at Low Ash Primary School was carried out by the Local Authority between 7 September 2018 and 19 October 2018. The consultation set out various options which were:
  - Full closure of the nursery class
  - Reduce the number of children attending from a 30 place nursery with a staffing ratio equivalent of 3, to a 26 place nursery with 2 members of staff
  - Change the opening hours of the nursery to mornings or afternoons only
  - Change the nursery to only open for 2 or 3 days a week
  - Retain the nursery as it is
- 3.1.2 The list of those consulted is shown in Appendix B. Details of the consultation was placed on the Council's website, Bradford Schools Online, Facebook and Twitter.
- 3.1.3 A total of 68 responses were received, see summary Appendix C and all comments in Appendix D.
- 3.1.4 The majority of respondents did not support closure of the nursery class but supported the nursery class staying open either in full or with a reduction in places

## **3.2 School Comments**

### **3.2.1 Headteacher's comments regarding the proposed changes to Nursery provision at Low Ash Primary School**

The Headteacher of Low Ash Primary School, has reported that the school's preference for changes to Nursery provision from September 2019 would be to:

**Reduce the number of children attending from a 30 place nursery with a staffing ratio of 3 needed, to a 26 place nursery which would require a staffing ratio of 2 members of staff.**

The Head stated that they have found it difficult to fill the Nursery due to parental preferences for alternative provision and hours, they still understand the importance of having a Nursery in the immediate locality of Wrose for the community.

The financial implications of unfilled places in Nursery is still a concern, but by reducing numbers to a 26 place Nursery the school could make budget savings as the staffing ratio is 1:13 for this age range.

With the addition of another Reception Class in September due to the expansion of the school, the current nursery staff member not required for Nursery in September 2019 would be relocated to the new Reception class.

### **3.2.2 Chair of Governor's comments regarding the proposed changes to Nursery provision at Low Ash Primary School**

The Chair of Governor's stated that the primary driver for considering closure of the nursery provision at Low Ash was the fact that they have been unable to fill places, which has a direct impact on the budget in school. The governing body recognise the fiscal responsibilities to ensure that money available to each child in school is being appropriately spent to ensure that children receive a good education.

The timing to make the proposed changes worked well because as employers we are additionally responsible for ensuring that all steps are taken to avoid redundancies of staff as a result of any proposed changes. By making the changes in September 2019 the school could ensure that any changes to staffing can be absorbed by the expansion and the creation of a new Reception class.

The reduction of places from 30 to 26 will result in lower staffing requirements, which as detailed above can be absorbed by the new Reception class. There are still some worries that the 26 places may not all fill but accept that keeping a nursery provision at Low Ash is a positive step for the community in Wrose.

## **4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

4.1 Bradford's Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) allocates funding to schools for 3 and 4 year olds attending nursery classes.

4.2 Low Ash Primary School could make budget savings by changing the maximum number of nursery pupils at any one time from 30 to 26 as the staffing ratio is 1:13 for this age range. There are currently 3 staff members in the nursery but this proposal would mean only 2 are needed. A nursery staff member could be relocated elsewhere in school as the remainder of the school is expanding and will require more staff for reception in September 2019.

## **5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

None

## **6. LEGAL APPRAISAL**

- 6.1 Under section 14 of the Education Act 1996, local authorities have a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places for all pupils in its area.
- 6.2 There is no statutory pre-publication period for significant changes. However, statutory DfE guidance states that there is a strong expectation on schools and local authorities that they consult interested parties in developing their proposals prior to publication as part of their duty to act rationally and to take into account all relevant considerations. All responses received to such consultation must be considered in deciding whether to publish the necessary statutory proposals on the basis proposed.
- 6.3 Local authorities must follow a statutory process where they propose a change of age range of 1 year or more for community schools including the proposed removal of nursery provision

## **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

EIA form completed: see Appendix E

### **7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

None

### **7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS**

The proposals would not impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

### **7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

None

### **7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

There are no direct Human Rights implications arising from this report although there may be implications for staff if the nursery closed. However, as the school is expanding there may be opportunities for staff to be moved into other areas of the school.

### **7.6 TRADE UNION**

Trade Unions have been informed of the proposals. Comments have not been received regarding either consultation

### **7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

Ward Councillors have been consulted about the proposed changes to the schools in their wards.

## **7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

N/A

## **7.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING**

There are no proposed changes to the admission arrangements for the school and therefore no implications arising from the proposed changes for the provision of places for Looked After Children.

## **7.10 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT**

General Data Protection Regulation principles relating to individuals' data and rights under the Data protection Act 2018 will be respected. Privacy implications arising from this proposal has been addressed by anonymising consultees' personal information together with any information which may enable them to be identified from their responses and the summary of their responses.

## **8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

None

## **9. OPTIONS**

Considering the results of the consultations, the Executive can decide to:

### **9.1 Low Ash Primary School Nursery**

- a) Approve the publication of Statutory Proposals to close Low Ash Primary School Nursery class and change the age range of the School from 3 to 11 years (inclusive) to 4 to 11 years (inclusive) from 1 September 2019.
- b) Approve a reduction in nursery places from 30 to 26 children at any one time at Low Ash Primary School Nursery from 1 September 2019
- c) Approve a reduction in the opening hours of Low Ash Primary School Nursery to either mornings or afternoons only from 1 September 2019.
- d) Approve a reduction in the opening hours of Low Ash Primary School Nursery from 5 days a week to for 2 or 3 days a week from 1 September 2019.
- e) Retain Low Ash Nursery School Nursery class as it is.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 That taking into account that the majority of responses received reject the proposal to close the nursery (82%) and of those the majority suggested a 26 place nursery the Executive approves a reduction in nursery places from 30 to 26 children at any one time at Low Ash Primary School Nursery from 1 September 2019. This will also help to address some of the financial concerns of the school.
- 10.2 That if approved, Bradford Council's Childcare Sufficiency Officers will work with the school to ensure the offer is in line with community needs.

## **11. APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Sample consultation letter for Low Ash Primary School Nursery

Appendix B: List of Consultees

Appendix C: Summary of responses received for Low Ash consultation

Appendix D: All responses received for Low Ash Consultation

Appendix E: Equality Impact Assessment Form

## **12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None