



Public consultation – Spring 2021

Proposed Change of Age Range of Offmore Primary School

This document contains information that will help you understand the issues surrounding this proposed change. If you require any additional information not included in this document to enable you to make a response, please contact the school office:

Consultation dates	Monday 22nd February – Friday 2nd April 2021
Address	Offmore Primary School Wordsworth Crescent Kidderminster DY10 3HA
Email	office@offmore.worcs.sch.uk

Dear Parents / Governors / Colleagues

Consultation on proposed change of age range of Offmore Primary School

This document explains:

- Why we feel it is appropriate to consider a change of age range
- The timescale for the consultation
- Who is being consulted
- What happens at the end of the consultation period

Have your say

It is very important that all those involved have a say. A copy of the response form can be downloaded from the school website or at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schoolconsultations. If you are unable to access the online response form, please email the school office.

Responses must be submitted to:

Offmore Primary School
Wordsworth Crescent
Kidderminster
DY10 3HA

Or e-mail to office@offmore.worcs.sch.uk

Responses must be received by noon on Friday 2nd April 2021

Yours sincerely,



Tabitha Smith
Headteacher

Responses required by noon on Friday 2nd April 2021

Background information

Worcestershire County Council, as the Local Authority responsible for education provision, has a statutory responsibility to secure, as far as is reasonably possible, early years education provision that is of good quality, accessible, flexible, inclusive and provided through a range of settings to meet parental demand for childcare for children aged two, three and four.

Since the 2006 Childcare Act, families with three-and four-year-old children in England are entitled to 570 hours of free childcare per year, over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year, beginning in the term after their third birthday and until the child reaches compulsory school age. This universal offer was introduced to support child development and school readiness. In 2013 this offer was extended to eligible families from the term following the child's second birthday. These families are principally from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Maintained Community schools can operate nursery provision for children two to four years of age through two primary routes. The first is as part of the maintained offer. In these cases, the two-year-olds are classed as 'pupils' of the school and included on the school census. The Governing Body also have the power to establish a 'Governor-Led' provision under their community powers (Section 27 of Education Act 2002). In this case, the children are not pupils of the school and are instead included on the Early Years Census. In both cases, schools must ensure the provision and the environment is fit for purpose and meets the needs of the children and EYFS Framework and is inspected as part of the main school inspection.

Offmore Primary School currently offers early education places for three- and four-year olds under the first scenario, as part of their maintained age range, and funded and non-funded places for two-year olds under the second scenario, under the community powers of the Governing Body.

The Proposal

The school leadership feels that the time is right to consider the incorporation of the provision for two-year-olds into the maintained offer of the school alongside provision for three- and four-year olds. In order to do so, the Local Authority must lower the age range of Offmore Primary School by one year; from 3-11 to 2-11 from 1st September 2021.

Changing the age range of the school and operating two-year-old provision as part of the maintained school will have a number of benefits:

Children attending the two-year old provision can be integrated fully into the school community. Parents and carers will benefit from the opportunity to pay for services using online methods. Registration of all children will be consistent, as will tracking of attendance and attainment.

Offmore Primary School have been on a significant track of improvement over the last several years. The school is currently rated as 'Requires Improvement' by Ofsted, meaning a change of this type would not ordinarily be proposed. However, Worcestershire County Council are confident in the quality of education the school is now delivering.

The school offer a fully inclusive environment, linking with Health and Social care professionals, which allows the school to identify early concerns and address barriers which are preventing swift progress whilst developing excellent relationships with families. The introduction of children into this journey from two will further this programme and support the school to continue to improve outcomes for children and support vulnerable families.

In addition, being able to ensuring the staff: pupil ratios reflect children's needs rather than the provision's legal requirements will enable all children to transfer to their Reception Class with a greater understanding of needs, interest, strengths and difficulties which will allow them to flourish.

If approved the increase would take effect from September 2021.

Evidence of Demand

Offmore Primary School is a popular school, with numbers growing in Nursery over the last several years. The following table details the number of pre-school children at Offmore Primary School over the last 4 years:

Academic Year	Funded 2 year olds on role	Funded 3 & 4 year olds on roll
2018/19	0	17
2019/20	4	19
2020/21	7	24

Verbally parents have expressed support for two-year-old children to be included on the school roll as with three- and four-year olds and have acknowledged that this would make processes easier including the ability to pay for services using an online cashless alternative.

Parents and Carers also appreciated the approach to create developmentally appropriate provision which reflects the strengths and needs of all children in the nursery school without division according to age.

Some parents have requested extending the provision to provide full day sessions for two-year olds. The school responded to this and are now offering full day provision including lunch for children in the term they turn three. The school also offer lunch sessions to 2-year-old children eligible for funding and / or Early Years Pupil Premium funding. Developmental needs are always considered when extending session outside the normal 3 hours for such young children. Their needs remain the priority focus throughout.

Accommodation Required

No additional accommodation is required to support this change. The school has created a room solely for two-year olds called 'The Ducklings'. Two-year olds are required to be supported within a 1:4 ratio whereas three and four olds ratios are 1:13. The room identified can support this provision.

How the decision will be made

At the conclusion of this consultation period the Governors will consider any issues that have been raised before deciding whether to make a formal approach to the County Council.

The County Council will consider evidence from various sources in order to reach a considered view on the merits of the proposal. In particular the following factors:

- The response to the public consultation
- The quality of education provision at the school
- The ability of the school to manage the proposed change to support the continued improvements at the school
- Demand for places at the school and in the local area

Who is being consulted?

This document will be made available to:

- Parents and carers of pupils attending the School
- Staff and Governors of other local schools
- Local District and County Councillors
- Immediate neighbours
- Local Member of Parliament
- Cabinet Member Responsible for Children and Families
- Any other local stakeholder

What happens next?

Consultation Phase – Monday 22nd February to Friday 2nd April 2021

During the consultation phase anyone with an interest can express their views on the options expressed in this document. This document, and the meeting detailed on the cover, form part of this consultation.

Submission of formal proposal to Local Authority

The governors will take note of issues raised during the consultation. At the conclusion of the consultation period a decision will be made whether to submit a formal proposal to the County Council, requesting their support.

If a formal proposal is made, officers at the County Council will then prepare a report for the Cabinet Member Responsible detailing the arguments for and against the change. The anonymised responses of the public consultation will be shared with the Cabinet Member Responsible for Education and Skills along with the Governors' comments on the issues raised.

Cabinet Member Responsible Decision

If the Cabinet Member Responsible decides to support the proposal, the County Council will publish formal Public Notice. The public will then have a final opportunity to comment or object within a four-week timescale laid down in law. Notices are published in the local press and displayed outside the School. At the end of the four weeks any objections will be reported to the Cabinet Member Responsible for Children's Services for a final decision.

It is very important that all those involved have a say. Please submit your comments by noon on Friday 2nd April 2021 by completing the online response form available on the school and WCC website at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schoolconsultations. If you are unable to access the online response form you can obtain a paper copy from the school office.