

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

THE EXECUTIVE

11 January 2022

LOWERING THE AGE RANGE OF GOATHLAND COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report by the Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To report the outcome of informal consultation carried out by the Governors of Goathland Community Primary School.
- 1.2 To provide the Executive with information upon which to recommend to the Chief Executive Officer that he use his emergency delegated powers to approve the publication of proposals and statutory notices to lower the age range of Goathland Community Primary School, and to schedule taking a final decision on the proposal on 22 March 2022.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Following on from the expiry of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (“the 2020 Regulations”), which allowed for committee meetings to be held remotely, the County Council resolved at its meeting on 5 May 2021 that, for the present time, Committee business should be continued via the Chief Executive Officer making urgent decisions that would previously have been made by the Council’s committees, under his emergency decision making powers in the Officers’ Delegation Scheme, in consultation with other Officers and Members as appropriate. The Committee’s views and recommendations will be reported to the Chief Executive Officer for him to take into account when taking the formal decisions.
- 2.2 The Governing Body of Goathland CP School has asked the Local Authority to propose lowering of the age range of their school from 4-11 to 3-11 in order to offer education for 3 year old children.
- 2.3 This report is supported by a number of appendices as listed below:

- Appendix 1: Consultation document
- Appendix 2: Consultation Responses
- Appendix 3: Statutory Proposal
- Appendix 4: Draft Statutory Notice
- Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 All three and four year old children are entitled to 15 hours of government funding (known as Universal Funding) per week for 38 weeks per year to access Early Years Foundation Stage education and childcare. This will be from the beginning of the school term following their third birthday until compulsory school age or until they take up a place in a Reception class. From September 2017, eligible working families have been able to access up to an additional 15 hours of government funding known as Extended Entitlement to access the equivalent of 30 hours of government-funded childcare per week for 38 weeks per year. A government-funded place can be taken in a maintained school nursery and Foundation

Stage class and/or in an Ofsted registered private or voluntary sector provision. It is parental choice as to which type of provision is most appropriate for their child and most convenient for individual circumstances.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Goathland Primary School is proposing to provide places for 3 and 4 year olds by creating a new Nursery class. Early Years staff would work together to provide an excellent environment for a young child's development in Base 1. The Nursery class will be led by a qualified Early Years teacher, and a suitably qualified and experienced teaching assistant to support the learning and development of the 3 and 4 year olds

4.2 It would be similar to what is currently available in the existing reception class in school. There will be high quality play-based provision including role play, sand, water, construction, reading, mark making, and outside play. The learning environment will be equipped with suitable furniture, equipment and resources for 3 and 4 year olds. There will be free flow between the indoor and outdoor areas offering children the choice of activities and allowing them to engage in learning which is relevant and appropriate to their age and stage of development. They will be supported by knowledgeable and appropriately trained adults who are in tune with each child's individual needs.

4.3 Goathland School is proposing that the new 'early years' class will provide up to 12 places each morning initially, but the school will consider extending this across the full day subject to demand for the service.

4.4 Priority for admission of nursery-aged children will be determined by the County Council's Admissions Policy for Nurseries. This is separate from admissions to the school, which are determined by the County Council's policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools. Attendance in Nursery does not provide priority for admission to the Reception year.

4.5 The Local Authority School Improvement advisers have confirmed that as part of the regular categorisation exercise that the school has been allocated 8.5 days of Senior Education Adviser (SEA) monitoring, challenge and support time. The school's self-evaluation form (SEF) recognises areas of sustained good practice in the period since the most recent Ofsted inspection. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is accommodated in a spacious area that could be easily adapted to include additional, younger, pupils without adversely impacting on the quality of provision and class sizes.

5.0 ISSUES TO CONSIDER

5.1 The effect the proposals would have on existing providers must be considered. Local pre-school providers within a 5 mile radius have been consulted and given the opportunity to make their views known on the proposal.

6.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

6.1 From Monday 1 November to Friday 3 December the Governing Body of Goathland Community Primary School consulted the local community on their proposal. The consultation document, which is appended to this report (as Appendix 1), was sent out to parents, local stakeholders, and other Early Years providers.

6.2 Ten responses to the consultation have been received and are available to read in full as Appendix 2.

- 6.3 Nine of the responses supported the proposal and one opposed it. These were made up of six responses from parents of pupils, three from parents of prospective pupils and one from the local Parish Council.
- 6.4 The majority of responses were in support of the proposal. Positive responses referred to benefits such as creating a seamless transition between Nursery and Reception early years education, convenience for parents and opportunity to promote learning at a younger age. Several responses also thought that the proposal would benefit the school by increasing the number on roll.
- 6.5 The one objection to the proposal stated that the school should not proceed with the proposal but should focus on their existing age range and that the proposal could negatively affect existing childcare providers. No existing local providers, however, responded to the consultation, despite been consulted.
- 6.6 Some of the respondents, although supporting the proposal, did raise some concerns around the effect of the proposal on some of the older children within the class. There were also some comments around making sure that the provision was appropriately set up to adequately meet the needs of the full range of pupils within the class.
- 6.7 The Leadership of Goathland School have confirmed that to support the class teacher, a teaching assistant will enhance provision in Base 1. Careful planning by the class teacher will ensure that all children receive high quality teaching, with the suitably qualified teaching assistant deployed to focus specifically on the day to day needs of the nursery children. Whilst the Base environment already incorporates provision areas to support early learning, these will be enhanced with the addition of specific resources to meet the needs of younger children. Drawing on the support of local partners, this new provision will be carefully monitored to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- 6.8 In response to the comment that the school should not proceed with the proposal but should instead focus on statutory school age provision the leadership of Goathland School explained that they are working closely with the support of the Local Authority and have a rigorous school improvement plan. Progress towards identified priorities continues to be carefully monitored by the headteacher, governors, the Local Authority and external partners. The additional of nursery age children will be carefully organised to ensure there is no detriment to the existing pupils. The additional opportunities for social interaction will be an advantage to the existing children, especially in Base 1, where current pupil numbers are very low. All staff continue to access CPD and local networks to ensure their practice is of the highest standard.
- 6.9 Goathland Governing Board met (virtually) on 7 December, reviewed the consultation responses (Appendix 2) and confirmed that they wish to ask the LA to continue with the statutory proposal.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 School revenue funding

The school is currently forecasting an overall revenue budget surplus of £50.6k at the end of the 2021/22 financial year, with the budget surplus forecast to reduce to £46.2k at the end of the 2023/24 financial year. The forecast in-year revenue budget position for the school is as follows: 2021/22 £4.6k deficit, 2022/23 £3.0k surplus, 2023/24 £7.4k deficit. The Governing Body and Headteacher have modelled the potential income and costs of running nursery-aged provision and feel it is financially viable. The provision would utilise the existing staffing complement plus an additional three hours GTA and would therefore have minimal impact on expenditure.

7.2 Capital Implications

The school will utilise the classroom which already accommodates the youngest pupils within the school and is therefore already appropriate for an early year's classroom. Therefore, there will not be any capital implications.

7.3 Transport costs

There are no transport costs related to this proposal.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 set out the manner in which prescribed alterations could be made to maintained schools. The statutory guidance 'Making Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools' was updated in October 2018¹. Careful attention has been paid to this guidance throughout the process.

9.0 HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no Human Rights issues in relation to this decision.

10.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken in respect of this change and is attached at Appendix 5. The County Council's Officers feel that this decision is in the best interests of children and families served by the school to ensure quality early years education is provided in the area.

11.0 CONCLUSION

11.1 The consultation process has revealed broad support for the proposal alongside one objection to the proposal. Some respondents who supported the proposal did raise some concerns around the implementation, the responses to which are included in section 6. The Governing Body considered the consultation responses on 7 December and voted in favour of proceeding to seek the approval of the Executive to publish statutory notices.

12.0 NEXT STEPS

12.1 It is proposed to publish statutory proposals and notices on 21 January. The proposals would be published on the County Council's website and the statutory notice would be published in a local newspaper and displayed at the main entrance to the school. This would provide four weeks for any further representations to be made to the Local Authority by 18 February.

12.2 The Executive agreed a model for decision making on school organisation proposals on 25 September 2007. If approval is given to publish statutory proposals and notices, it is proposed that a final decision is taken by the Executive on 22 March 2022 (or by the Executive Member for Education and Skills if there are no objections during the representation period).

12.3 The key dates are shown below:

¹ DfE, School Organisation (Making Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) Regulations 2013 and Department for Education statutory guidance for proposers and decision makers, Making Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools, October 2018.

Consultation	1 November to 3 December 2021
Governing Body consider consultation responses and vote to proceed	7 December
County Council's Executive decision to publish statutory notices	11 January 2022
Statutory notices published	21 January 2022
Representation period (4 weeks)	21 January 2022 – 18 February 2022
Final decision by County Council's Executive (or by the Executive Member for Education and Skills if there are no objections during the representation period)	22 March 2022
Implementation	25 April 2022

13.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 13.1 Executive Members are asked to recommend to the Chief Executive Officer that using his emergency delegated powers, he approve the publication of the proposals and statutory notices on 21 January to lower the school age range of Goathland Community Primary School from 25 April 2022, and that a final decision on these proposals be scheduled for 22 March 2022 Executive.

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Report prepared by Matt George – Strategic Planning Officer

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Consultation document
- Appendix 2 – Consultation responses
- Appendix 3 – Statutory proposal
- Appendix 4 – Statutory notice
- Appendix 5 – Equality Impact Assessment