

Full statutory proposal information for prescribed alterations to Queen's Park Primary School

In accordance with the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 Brighton & Hove City Council proposes to make prescribed alterations to Queen's Park Primary School with effect from 1st September 2017.

Local authority details:

Brighton & Hove City Council
Hove Town Hall
Norton Road
Hove
BN3 3BQ

School details:

Queen's Park Primary School
Park Street
Brighton
BN2 0BN

Queen's Park Primary School is a community primary school for children aged three to 11. There are currently 423 pupils on roll. The school includes a nursery class offering 50 part time places¹.

Description of the proposed alteration

To raise the age range of pupils for whom the school is registered from three to 11 to four to 11 years of age, and to close the school's nursery class.

Implementation date

It is proposed to raise the age range of pupils for whom the school is registered from three to 11 to four to 11 years of age, and to close the school's nursery class with effect from 1st September 2017.

Reason for the proposed change

Queen's Park Primary School currently has a nursery class which offers 50 part time places for early years free entitlement (EYFE) for three and four year old children from the term after their third birthday, in accordance with children's statutory entitlement.

In recent years the nursery class has had a low number of children on roll which has meant that staff costs have not been covered by the funding received from the local authority for the EYFE.

¹ Statutory staff ratios allow for up to 52 children

Of the 50 part-time places occupancy for EYFE sessions has been as follows:

Term	Number of children on roll for EYFE sessions ²
Autumn 2013	22
Spring 2014	30
Summer 2014	36
Autumn 2014	23
Spring 2015	30
Summer 2015	36
Autumn 2015	24
Spring 2016	27
Summer 2016	30
Autumn 2016	12
Spring 2017	19

In addition the school has sold empty places to parents resulting in the following income amounts:

2016/17 £7,900
2015/16 £7,070
2015/14 £8,060

In financial year 2016/17 the total staff costs for the nursery were £86,929 with equipment, furniture and administration totalling £3,000, making a total expenditure of £89,929. Income from EYFE was £50,484, with additional income from sessions sold to parents of £7,900 making a total income of £58,384, resulting in an overall shortfall of £31,545.

This means that the rest of the school is subsidising the cost of the nursery and there is already other pressure on the school's budget.

Initial consultation process

At the Children, Young People and Skills Committee on 6th March 2017 it was agreed to start the process to close the school's nursery class and raise the lower age range from three to four. The committee paper is attached as Appendix 1.

A consultation document was published on the local authority's consultation portal and distributed to parents of children attending the schools. A public meeting was also held on 22nd March 2017. The consultation document is attached as Appendix 2.

The consultation was publicised at a range of local venues; the poster is attached as Appendix 3.

Response to initial consultation

A report of the initial consultation is attached as Appendix 4.

² Based on the school's headcount returns to the local authority

c 50 people attended the consultation meetings
114 people responded on the council's consultation portal
Seven people sent emails
0 people left telephone messages
0 people submitted written questionnaires

Overwhelmingly people were not in favour of raising the school's lower age range to four and closing the nursery class for the following reasons:

- The high quality of nursery education at Queen's Park Primary School, particularly for those children with special and additional needs
- The importance of the nursery class to developing an inclusive local community
- The nursery class had not been publicised enough; parents had not known about it and that was the reason for the low number of children on roll
- Lack of suitable alternative provision, including not enough spaces in the local maintained nursery schools (Royal Spa and Tarnerland), and dissatisfaction with alternative private, voluntary and independent provision
- The ease of and importance of the child's transition to school from the nursery class
- The convenience of having the youngest child at the same school as older siblings
- The disruption to the child or family at having to find alternative nursery provision where a child would be continuing in the nursery in September 2017
- Lack of exploration of other options by the school; the possibility that there will be increased demand for places from September 2017 when working parents become entitled to 30 hours free childcare

The local authority values the quality of the nursery education provided by Queen's Park Primary School and acknowledges the value that the nursery adds to the school and community as a whole.

All children with special educational needs and disabilities attending early years provision receive the support that they are assessed to need through the Brighton & Hove Integrated Support Service. The particular attention given to children at Queen's Park may have been a result of low numbers attending the nursery and consequent high staff:child ratios.

The school has publicised the nursery class, including the fact that the school has a nursery in its name, but this has not produced an increase in the number of applicants. There are currently only four children with their names on a waiting list to start in September in addition to the 10 children already in the nursery who will stay on next year.

Parents living in Queen's Park ward have a variety of different childcare options open to them, including two maintained nursery schools, full day care and sessional care. Queen's Park ward has the highest amount of maintained nursery provision of any ward in the city with 198 nursery places for three and four year olds (not including places at Queen's Park Primary School nursery class).

All early years providers who receive funding for EYFE follow the early years foundation stage. Quality of childcare provision in the city is high; according to Ofsted in Brighton & Hove 96% of early years childcare providers were rated as outstanding or good, compared with 93% in England as a whole³.

The transition of children from the nursery to the main school is also important where a child gets a place in the main school, although there are separate admissions criteria for the nursery and the school and so it is not guaranteed that a child attending the nursery class will also attend the main school.

Families whose children are already at the nursery class and will still be of nursery age in September 2017 will be supported to find alternative early years provision by the Family Information Service.

An estimated 46% of parents of three and four year olds across the city will be entitled to the extended entitlement of 30 hours free childcare from September 2017. However, working parents tend to choose full day care rather than the sessional care that is offered by Queen's Park Primary School nursery class. The school offers wraparound care for children from Reception year upwards in dedicated space, but this is full and the provision is not suitable for nursery age children. The nursery class itself does not have the facilities needed for wraparound care and its position at the entrance to the school would pose a health and safety risk. The higher ratios needed for nursery children in wraparound care would also not make it cost-effective.

Where and when the statutory notice and full proposal information will be available

Brighton & Hove City Council will publish the statutory notice for this proposal on Friday 28th April 2017. The notice will remain in force for a period of four weeks i.e. until Friday 26th May 2017. Copies of the notice will be placed:

- at the entrance to the school
- in other places in the community; including Jubilee Library, Tarnerland Nursery School, Tarner Children's Centre and Royal Spa Nursery School

It will also be published in the Brighton & Hove Independent newspaper.

A copy of the statutory notice is attached as Appendix 5 to this document.

On Friday 28th April 2017 the full proposal information (this document plus appendices) will be sent to the following:

- the governing body of Queen's Park Primary School
- the School Organisation Unit of the Department for Education

It will also be published on the council's website at the following address www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/school-statutory-notice.

³ At 31 December 2016

Any person may request a copy of the full proposal information either by writing to Tracy Goddard at Early Years and Childcare, Brighton & Hove City Council, Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Hove, BN3 3BQ or by contacting her on 01273 295382 or via email at eyc@brighton-hove.gov.uk

How to make representations or comment on the proposal

Any person may object or make a representation or comment on the proposal. This can be done by writing to Vicky Jenkins, Childcare Strategy Manager – Free Entitlement, Early Years and Childcare, Brighton & Hove City Council, Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Hove, BN3 3BQ before the closing date of 26th May 2017 or via email to her at vicky.jenkins@brighton-hove.gcsx.gov.uk

Following the closing date for representations, comments and objections, a report will be prepared for the Children, Young People and Skills Committee to decide the proposal. This report will be considered at their meeting on 12th June 2017.

