

Public consultation: 07.03.23 – 04.04.23

Proposed Change of Age Range at The Littletons CE First School

The four-week representation period commences on 7th March 2023 and closes on 4th April 2023.

It is very important that all those wishing to respond to this proposal do so within this timeframe to allow their comments to be considered by the decisionmaker.

Responses can be made on-line via the following link:
<https://forms.office.com/e/5wJLJT9jLp>

Should you require a paper copy of this survey, please contact:

office@thelittletons.dowmat.education

Introduction

The Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust (DOWMAT) in agreement with the Local Academy Board of the school is proposing to change the age range of The Littletons CE First School from 2-10 to 3-10.

The proposal has met the criteria for a significant change and therefore public notice of this proposed change must be issued. This document helps to explain the background to the proposal and the final steps of this process.

- What is proposed
- Why it is being proposed
- Details of how the decision will be made
- How to submit a response

School details

Address	Farm Lane South Littleton Evesham WR11 8TL
Status	Academy
Ofsted Rating	Good
Current Age Range	2-10
Proposed age range	3-10

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.

Academy schools can operate nursery provision through two primary routes:

- The first is as a school nursery class, incorporating early years provision and the pupils into the age range of the school. In this case, the children are classed as ‘pupils’ of the school and included on the school census.

- The second is as a Governor led provision where the setting is kept separate from the provision of the school. 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 are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the children and EYFS Framework and that the nursery provision is inspected as part of the main school inspection.

The Littletons CE First School currently offers early education places for two- to four-year olds under the first scenario, a school nursery class.

The Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust (DOWMAT), in agreement with the Local Academy Board of the school is proposing to make a significant change to The Littletons CE First School, following the Making Significant Changes to an Open Academy Guidance (January 2022) issued by the Department for Education. This statutory proposal document contains all the relevant information to allow interested parties to decide whether to support the proposed change. The Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust (DOWMAT) must follow a statutory process for making prescribed alterations to schools. The publication of this statutory proposal and notices forms part of that process.

What is proposed

The Local Academy Board and school leaders feel it would be beneficial for the school to move to a pre-school class catering solely for three- and four-year olds. This will enable the school to provide the dedicated teaching and care appropriate for this age group, ensuring all children are fully prepared for their transition to the Reception class. It is intended that pupils will be able to start on the date they become three- years old.

Why it is being proposed

Currently the school offers pre-school places for children as young as two, however this can cause pressure on the school in regard to maintaining the statutory ratios of adult:child. For two- year old children, the statutory staffing ratio is 1:4 (adult:child), whereas for three- and four- year old children the ratio is 1:8.

The current budget is overstretched to maintain the ratios when the school does have two-year olds. Moving to three and four-year-old provision will ensure funding is better directed to improve learning experiences for the children. This will ensure that provision continues to be of a high standard, matched to the needs of each child. The numbers of two-year-old place requests is low, which makes it very difficult financially to sustain the provision.

The school now runs an Early Year Unit, with the Nursery and Reception classes mixing regularly. Having the age range as three to five-year olds is more appropriate for this way of working, to ensure that the spread of the ages and needs of the children are more consistently matched.

How the decision will be made

The four-week representation period commences on 7th March 2023 and closes at noon on 4th April 2023. A Public Notice has been issued on the school website, around the school and in the local area. The following stakeholders will also be directly notified:

- Parents and carers of pupils attending the school
- Staff and Governors of the school
- Neighbouring schools
- Local, District and County Councillors
- Local Member of Parliament
- Cabinet Member Responsible for Children and Families
- Any other known local stakeholders

At the conclusion of this consultation period the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) will decide (on behalf of the Secretary of State) whether proposals are in line with the needs of the local area. Any objections to the proposal will be considered before a final decision is made as to whether to proceed with the proposal.

How to submit a response

Responses can be made on-line via the following link and must be received by noon on 4th April 2023.

<https://forms.office.com/e/5wJLT9jLp>

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