

**CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION
4 FEBRUARY 2013**

APPLICATION TO OPEN A NEW FOUNDATION STAGE UNIT

Report by Director for Children's Services

Introduction

1. Bampton Primary School has completed the first section of the scheme for applying to open a Foundation Stage Unit (new nursery class). In order to proceed to the second stage the application requires the approval of the Cabinet Member for Education.

Background

2. The proposal is to open a Foundation Stage Unit with 30 children aged 3-4. The funding proposals have been based on 15 children attending part time and the school offering paid-for childcare places for the remaining 15 if demand for funded places is low. An existing Pre-School on the site would close and staff would TUPE across to the school. The pre-school and parents support this application to transfer all management, administration and governance to the School. The aim is to improve the management and organisation of the Foundation Stage and to raise the quality of teaching and learning for these youngest children and links to a corporate objective of raising achievement. There may also be a reduction in staff across the FSU, with those not continuing in the nursery being given the opportunity to work elsewhere in the school. However, this is still to be confirmed as the school's discussions with HR progress, and dependent on demand for places.

Financial Report

3. The finance officer has assessed the financial position with the school and governors. The report shows it to be in balance for all three years. This indicates the sustainability of the proposal assuming the number of children planned for will be forthcoming.

Premises Report

4. The premises report indicates that the space is sufficient for the proposed pupil numbers under the Early Years Statutory Framework. There are sufficient toilets and the environment is secure. It has access to an outdoor area and the available space in all areas is maximised for play and active learning. The FSU will be in the temporary classroom which is currently owned by the Pre-School. The Governing Body will be responsible for taking advice on this before any potential merger and will be responsible for any costs involved in the transfer of ownership to the school. The Local Authority

has commissioned a condition survey of the unit to determine the potential lifespan of the unit and possible future maintenance costs. If these are found to be onerous, the Council will need to consider how these are to be met and their liabilities. This will determine whether the project can still be supported. This can take place at a later stage in the process.

Quality Report

5. An early years specialist teacher will be appointed to lead the nursery class and planned staffing is suitable for the expected numbers of children. Facilities are appropriate for the age of children and a wide and varied range of resources are available. There are strong community links and partnerships with parents. The report from the Senior Early Years Team Leader concludes that the application is fully supported in terms of quality and practice, with 'good' ratings for all areas.

Responses from Informal Consultation

6. All the required consultations have been carried out and the responses received are positive.

RECOMMENDATION

7. **The Cabinet Member for Education is RECOMMENDED to agree to the publication of statutory notices to take this proposal forward to the next formal phase.**

JIM LEIVERS

Director for Children, Education & Families

Background papers: Proposal form from school, reports from finance and premises officers and the advisory teacher for the area. These are available from the Contact Officer – or from Janine Foulkes-Williams, Senior Officer (Early Years Organisation) 01865 815181
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