

**CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION  
10 SEPTEMBER 2012**

**APPLICATION TO OPEN A NEW FOUNDATION STAGE UNIT**

**Report by Director for Children's Services**

**Introduction**

1. Stanton Harcourt 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 from 3-5. The funding proposals have been based on 15 of these children attending part time in the mornings. An existing Partnership Foundation Stage unit arrangement would end and the pre-school on the site would be merged to create a Foundation Stage Unit. 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. Other implications include that there will no longer be provision for children aged under 3 as the pre-school currently do. Parents have been consulted and there are currently no objections to this. There may also be a reduction in staff across the FSU, although this could be averted as the school plans to look at the feasibility of opening for afternoon sessions to attract more children and to provide more flexibility for working parents.

**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 numbers in the room and that there is spare capacity. 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.

## Quality Report

5. The report concludes that the application can be supported in terms of quality and practice, with some areas for development already identified. There are strong community links and partnerships with parents. There is adequate staffing for the numbers of children with appropriate qualifications for the care of Foundation stage children. They offer an appropriate curriculum and further training in the new Early Years Foundation Stage framework is planned. The Head teacher is committed to improving opportunities for the youngest children and has identified some areas around planning and resourcing which will be addressed should the plans for the FSU go ahead.

## 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's Services

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, Principal Officer (Early Years) 01865 815181  
[Janine.foulkes-williams@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Janine.foulkes-williams@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Contact Officer: Debbie Rouget, Sufficiency and Access Manager, Early Years and Childcare. 01865 810617  
[debbie.rouget@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.rouget@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

August 2012