

**CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION  
15 JULY 2013**

**APPLICATION TO OPEN A NEW FOUNDATION STAGE UNIT AT  
HILL VIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL, BANBURY**

**Report by Director for Children, Education & Families**

**Introduction**

1. Hill View Primary School, Banbury has applied to open a Foundation Stage Unit (new nursery class). On 22 April 2013 the Cabinet Member agreed the recommendation at Stage 1 for publication of a statutory notice. This was published on 3 May, and as no objections have been received, at Stage 2 the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Families will determine the proposal as the 'decision maker' under the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This requires consideration of the proposal against the factors that must be considered as laid down in statutory guidance. The report requires the Cabinet Member to reject the proposal or approve it with a modification or subject to meeting a specific condition.

**Background**

2. The proposal is to open a Foundation Stage Unit with places for up to 40 children aged 3-4. Until spring 2013, there was a Pre-school on the school site and the majority of children applying for Hill View reception class previously accessed this setting. This Pre-school has now closed leaving a gap in provision. The school is in an area of high deprivation and the loss of the provision is particularly difficult for those local families who have no easy means of travelling further afield. The school is now applying to create a high quality Foundation Stage class in the vacant self-contained building on their site. The Governing body and current school staff are keen for the new unit to be established as they firmly believe that an earlier connection with the school will benefit local children and the local community. In addition, the school is in an area identified as a high priority for the extension of government-funded places for 2 year olds. While the school does not intend to admit 2 year olds, the provision of these 40 places for 3 year olds will help to relieve pressure on other local settings and contribute towards the Local Authority's targets for this area of need.

**Financial Report**

3. The finance officer has assessed the financial position with the school and governors. The report shows it to have a projected surplus for all three years. This indicates the sustainability of the proposal assuming the number of children planned for will be forthcoming. The school will consider offering wraparound and rising 3s places on a paid for basis if numbers on roll are low.

The unit will initially be managed by the school's existing Foundation Stage Leader whose salary is included in the whole school budget. Admin costs would be covered by the school budget. The staffing situation will be reviewed in March 2015, but there is scope within the school staffing structure for appropriate movement to ensure that redundancy in the future is not a concern.

## **Premises Report**

4. The premises report indicated that floor space and external play area were suitable under the Early Years Statutory Framework for up to 20 children at a time. There are currently insufficient toilets, which the school Headteacher has identified grant funding to rectify, along with other internal refurbishments to improve the layout of the building. There are currently 4 separate rooms for play. One is currently used as a storeroom and this will be cleared and reinstated as play space. This work will be coordinated with other repair and maintenance work which the council is planning to undertake in order to ensure value for money and minimise disruption.
5. There are currently 4 separate rooms for play. The school plans to knock the adjoining walls through to create 2 larger L shaped rooms. This will be easier to supervise and will create a more usable space for children.
6. The building has access to an outdoor area and the available space in all areas will be maximised for play and active learning. Plans include extending the outdoor space to include an area at the front of the bungalow which will be a more natural garden area in contrast to the hard-standing at the back of the current unit.

## **Quality Report**

7. The Local Authority Early Years Advisory teacher is fully supportive of the proposal.
8. An early year's specialist teacher will be appointed to lead the nursery class and planned staffing is suitable for the expected numbers of children. Facilities are to be further developed if the proposal is approved. The current Reception unit within the school has a good range of equipment to support learning across all areas. It is the intention that some resources will be shared with the new nursery on a rotation basis. The school has a large budget in order to purchase necessary resources for the new unit. There is a commitment to using high quality resources.
9. A new specialist EYFS teacher already employed by the school will coordinate the initial set up of the unit and then lead the new team. The support staff will be existing staff from the primary school that are suitably qualified to an NVQ 3 level.
10. The school has developed strong links with parents of older foundation years children. Children and parents have a home visit before they start school.

Parents contribute to their children's learning via home-school diaries, homework, reading diaries, learning journals and by attending stay and play sessions, parents' meetings and parent workshops throughout the year. The key person system will be the foundation of this partnership.

11. These practices will be extended to the parents of younger foundation years children.
12. The teacher who will lead the unit has been observed as good and outstanding by the head teacher, the EYAT and by OFSTED. The supporting practitioners are currently performance managed as part of the school systems. The current EYFS was deemed to be 'good' in March 2011.

### **Responses from Statutory Notice and public consultation**

13. The Statutory notice was published on 10 May 2013 and the six week consultation period closed on 14 June. Two representations were received, both in support of the proposal. One was from a childminder and one from a local pre-school.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

14. **The Cabinet Member for Education is RECOMMENDED to either:**
  - (a) **approve the proposal;**
  - (b) **reject the proposal;**
  - (c) **approve the proposal subject to the following conditions:**
    - **that the proposed internal and external building works to bring the building in line with EYFS standards take place.**
    - **that the school revise their fire management programme to include the FSU in the former caretakers bungalow.**
    - **that all conditions are met before the proposed implementation date.**

### **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. Copy of the statutory notice. These are available from the Contact Officer – or from Janine Foulkes-Williams, Senior Officer (Early Years Organisation) 01865 815181  
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July 2013