

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES
15 JULY 2013**

APPLICATION TO OPEN A NEW FOUNDATION STAGE UNIT

Report by Director for Children, Education & Families

Introduction

1. St Peter's CE (A) Primary School has applied to open a Foundation Stage Unit (new nursery class). On 22 April 2013 the Cabinet Member agreed the recommendation at Stage 1 of the proposal for publication of a statutory notice. 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 for 30 children aged 3-4. There is currently a pre-school at the school, housed in it's own temporary classroom. Cassington Pre-school supports the proposal to close and transfer management of places for 3 year olds to the school. The School has successfully bid for a funding allocation from the Local Authorities Voluntary Aided Programme (LCVAP) to create a purpose-built permanent Foundation Stage Unit at the school. The school and pre-school have also fund-raised a considerable sum towards the project. Should the proposal be approved, the building work will start in Summer 2013 and the new unit will open in April 2014.

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 on-going sustainability of the proposal assuming the number of children planned for will be forthcoming. Staff will need to be recruited in advance of the income generated being finalised. This creates a risk that the new offering will not make the surplus that has been modelled. The school is able to afford this provision from its existing reserves whilst actual income is finalised.

Premises Report

4. As the proposal is for a new permanent build, the space has been designed by Diocesan architects to meet all current building standards and comply with welfare requirements under the Early Years Statutory Framework. There will be sufficient

toilets and floor space and the environment will be suitable and appropriately equipped for the age of the children. The school will continue to work with the Local Authority early years advisory teacher to ensure that both internal and outdoor space is maximised for play and active learning.

Quality Report

5. The Senior Early Years Advisory Teacher is fully supportive of the proposal. The primary school received an Ofsted inspection in November 2012 with a 'requires improvement' outcome. The inspectors recognised that there was a need for improvement in the EYFS and the school is now receiving regular support and additional financial resource which will help them forward plan for the new FSU. The planned unit is therefore expected to contribute to improved outcomes for EYFS children and this should then have a positive effect on whole school attainment.
6. The SEYAT also observed that currently Reception children at the school are taught with Year 1. If the proposal for a new FSU goes ahead, this will mean that Reception and nursery children are taught together so this should ensure a better foundation stage approach for learning with opportunities for child initiated activities.

Responses to Statutory Notice and public consultation

7. The Statutory notice was published on 3 May 2013 and the six week consultation period closed on 14 June. No representations were received.

RECOMMENDATIONS

8. **The Cabinet Member for Education is RECOMMENDED to either:**
 - (a) **approve the proposal;**
 - (b) **reject the proposal;**
 - (c) **approve the proposal subject to confirmed availability of the LCVAP funding allocation.**

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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