

Offerton Hall Nursery and Dial Park Primary Schools' Consultation

1. CONSULTATION OVERVIEW	1
2. RESPONSE SUMMARY	1
3. GOVERNING BODY CONSULTATIONS	2
4. STAFF CONSULTATION	2
5. PARENT/CARER CONSULTATION AND DROP-IN SESSIONS	3
6. INTERESTED MEMBER OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY	3
7. I DO NOT LIVE IN THE AREA BUT HAVE RELATIVES/FRIENDS AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL	4
8. OTHER.....	4

1. CONSULTATION OVERVIEW

- 1.1 Consultation on the proposals to discontinue Offerton Hall Nursery School and reduce the age limit of Dial Park Primary School took place between 18th September 2017 and 3rd November 2017, following meetings with the Governing Bodies of both Schools.
- 1.2 Letters, including the consultation document and response form, were sent to all parents/carers, staff and governors of Offerton Hall Nursery School and Dial Park Primary School, neighbouring schools, providers/contractors, all early years providers within a 1-mile radius of the schools, neighbouring residents, local Councillors, the local Member of Parliament and trade unions.
- 1.3 Consultation sessions were hosted for parents/carers, staff and interested members of the local community. A staff meeting was also hosted. The consultation document and response form were posted on the Council's website.

2. RESPONSE SUMMARY

- 2.1 In total thirty responses were received: twenty nine written responses and one from a drop-in session. As not all respondents have identified the capacity in which they have responded, it is not clear where some responses may be duplicated.
- 2.2 Responses indicate that there are divided views about the proposals, however, the majority of respondents support the proposals.
- 2.3 Ten respondents indicate they are opposed to the proposal. Comments raised in objection are around staff and staffing arrangements and finance, citing that the Nursery School has not had the opportunity to see how the introduction of the 30-hours offer will impact on sustainability and there is some preference for dedicated nursery school education.
- 2.4 Seventeen respondents indicated support for the proposal. Comments indicate a wider integration due to changes in finance and inspection frameworks for nursery provision.

- 2.5 Three respondents responded 'Don't Know 'and did not submit any comment.
- 2.6 Sixteen of the respondents made no comment of which eleven were in agreement with the proposal and five in opposition.

3. GOVERNING BODY CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 Consultation meetings were held with the Governing Body of Offerton Hall Nursery School and Dial Park Primary School. The meetings enabled questions to be put directly to Council Officers and allowed for comments, objections and suggestions to be put forward. The questions, comments and concerns are summarised below:
- 3.2 Clarification of the process and proposed date of closure were sought.
- 3.3 Reassurances were sought concerning the continuation of provision for children at the Nursery School and how best to ensure a smooth transition should the proposals come into practice.
- 3.4 The Governing Body wanted to know what would happen to the budget balances in the event that the proposals went ahead.
- 3.5 Clarification was sought on the potential impact on staff if the proposed closure went ahead and the likelihood of redundancies. Further questions were raised about redundancy packages.
- 3.6 Questions were raised concerning the possibility of ring-fencing staff from the Nursery School, rates of pay for nursery class staff and the interview process for recruitment.
- 3.7 During the consultation period two governors responded in support to the consultation.

4. STAFF CONSULTATION

- 4.1 A consultation meeting was held with the staff of Offerton Hall Nursery School. The meeting enabled questions to be put directly to Council Officers and allowed for comments, objections and suggestions to be put forward. The questions, comments and concerns are summarised below:
- 4.2 Reassurances were sought concerning the continuation of provision, specifically for 2 year olds, at the Nursery School.
- 4.3 Queries were raised regarding the potential impact on staff if the proposed closure went ahead and the likelihood of redundancies.
- 4.4 Nursery School staff were offered the opportunity to contact HR should they have any queries about the process.
- 4.5 Two staff made written responses. Both strongly agreed with the proposal and made no comment, however, it is not clear if the staff members were Nursery or Primary School staff.

5. PARENT/CARER CONSULTATION AND DROP-IN SESSIONS

- 5.1 Three drop-in sessions were held at Offerton Hall Nursery School and two at Dial Park Primary School to give not only parents and carers, but also members of staff, other childcare providers, contractors and interested parties an opportunity to put queries and concerns directly to Council Officers.
- 5.2 One parent who had one child in nursery and one in primary school attended the drop-in sessions. Comments and suggestions received are included below.
- 5.3 Seven parent/carers responded in writing with two parents making comments.
- 5.4 Three parent/carers responded 'Don't know' and made no comments.
- 5.5 No parents/carers who responded were opposed to the proposal.

5.6 Parent/Carer Comments

- 5.7 At the drop-in session the parent who attended was interested in how the two sites would be managed. A view was expressed that the "Great outdoor at the nursery school is better for reception children", changing the nursery school uniform could impact on the children and confuse them and although not part of the consultation interest was expressed for wraparound care on site.
- 5.8 The parent also thought reception staff may need professional development as they may have not worked with two year olds or nursery aged children for some time.
- 5.9 In the written comment received it was cited that the proposal would be beneficial for the children, staff and parents. The respondent thought the proposal was "a great idea" and continued to state "completely agree with all the reasons" and "surprised no changes this big haven't already been thought of with action taken before".

6. INTERESTED MEMBER OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

- 6.1 Eight responses were submitted under this response type.
- 6.2 Five respondents were in support of the proposal and two made comments.
- 6.3 Responses in support are summarised below:
- 6.4 One responded "keep everything the same except managed by the school".
- 6.5 Another respondent was confident that under the management of the Primary School the Nursery School would continue to meet the needs of its community and the proposal was "better use of public money".
- 6.6 Three respondents were opposed to the proposal and two made comments.
- 6.7 Opposed responses are summarised below;

- 6.8 One respondent, a previous employee, referred to parents in the past choosing to send their children to the Nursery School as opposed to Dial Park nursery class, lack of choice for Early Years provision in the future and the Nursery School benefits from having its own Headteacher who cares solely about the nursery.
- 6.9 The other respondent commented on the excellent results achieved by the Nursery School and stated “merging the nursery will ruin its identity and we should be celebrating this nursery for all it does rather than merging into a good school that will dilute and reduce all it’s about”.

7. I DO NOT LIVE IN THE AREA BUT HAVE RELATIVES/FRIENDS AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL

- 7.1 Four respondents selected this response type. All agreed with the proposal, three strongly agreed and one tended to agree.
- 7.2 No comments were made.

8. OTHER

- 8.1 Seven respondents selected this response type.
- 8.2 One respondent supported the proposal commenting there are sufficient places for two year olds in the area.
- 8.3 Six respondents opposed the proposal. Their questions and comments are summarised below:
- 8.4 Primary school Headteachers are very different to a nursery headteacher and so the quality of education would suffer.
- 8.5 Merging an outstanding nursery with a good primary school would mean the nursery is going to “come down” to the level of the school.
- 8.6 Primary schools and nursery schools have different priorities.
- 8.7 Nursery school provision provides high quality education for nursery pupils providing qualified nursery teachers are employed.
- 8.8 Schools prioritise year 6 when considering money, allocating resources and placing their best teachers.
- 8.9 Three responses were received from Headteachers of other Nursery Schools in the Borough who all opposed the closure. Their questions and comments are summarised below:
- 8.10 An assumption has been made about the outcome of the proposal as the Headteacher of Dial Park has been appointed Acting Head of Offerton Hall Nursery School.

- 8.11 With regard to staffing and provision one Headteacher stated “This is not simply about a change in management of the Nursery School as the funding per child received will be less so inevitably the quality of provision will reduce as the expertise of staff will be lost”. This view was also reflected by the other two Nursery headteachers.
- 8.12 It was queried how a good school could lead to the improvement of provision of an outstanding school. In addition, the evidence quoted in the consultation was challenged by the headteachers stating that the evidence states “how 2 year olds benefit from being with their older early years peers. This is not the same as it being a benefit to be in 2-11 provision”.
- 8.13 It was felt Offerton Hall Nursery School had not been given the chance to see how the introduction of the 30 hours offer could improve their sustainability.
- 8.14 As the DfE have not yet announced their plans for the future of Nursery Schools it was premature to suggest that Nursery Schools are not sustainable.
- 8.15 It was felt that the real aim of the proposal was to “save money”.