



Report of the Director of Children's Services

Executive Board

Date: 12th March 2008

Subject: Prescribed Alteration and change of lower Age Range of Hollybush Primary School

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

Executive Summary

1. The Early Years Service delivers children's centres on the site of 15 primary schools. Eight of those schools have already altered the lower age limit by statutory notice as primary schools for children aged 4 to 11 years with an attached children's centre for children aged 0 to 4. An additional primary school is now seeking to transfer full management of the children's centre and service provision for pre fives to the Early Years Service. The school concerned will now provide education for children aged 4 to 11 years and the attached children's centre will provide fully integrated and inclusive early education services for children aged 3 to 4.
2. Schools choosing to transfer the management of early education to the children's centre need to formally seek an alteration to the lower age limit to a primary school for children aged 4 to 11. The Secretary of State requires the publication of a Statutory Notice.
3. This report seeks approval to publish a Statutory Notice for a prescribed alteration and change to the lower age range in Hollybush Primary School and to note the establishment of a school based children's centre.

1 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 The Early Years Service and Education Leeds seek the approval of Executive Board to publish a statutory notice to formally alter the lower age limit for which education services are provided in Hollybush Primary School in order to facilitate the delivery of children's centre and extended school services on these sites.

2 Background Information

- 2.1 The Early Years Service has managed the early education provision as an integral part of a children's centre on eight primary school sites since 2000. These eight schools have altered the lower age limit of the school from 3 to 11 years to 4 to 11 years. A fully integrated children's centre on the school site, or adjacent to it, provides early education services for children aged 0 to 4. The nursery classes in these schools have been integrated into the children's centre and represent no loss of service on the school site. The children's centres can offer a wider range of more flexible services throughout the year, including family support, health and social care. They are a key element in the schools extended service provision. Governance arrangements are mutually beneficial and the schools and children's centres concerned are considered models of best practice.
- 2.2 The Governing Body of Hollybush Primary School is now seeking to transfer the management of early education to the Early Years Service as part of the phase 1 children's centre programme. The Early Years service will deliver fully integrated and inclusive services for children aged 3 to 4 years of age on behalf of Hollybush Primary School. Provision for children for children aged 0 to 3 will be made in partnership with a voluntary sector provider in the adjacent Neighbourhood Nursery, Copperbeech.
- 2.3 The Governing Body of Hollybush Primary School is requesting an alteration to the lower age limit of pupils they provide services for. Currently the school delivers services for children aged 3 to 11. This will change to 4 to 11 years of age with a children's centre for children aged 0 to 4.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The Secretary of State in the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations Act 2007 sets out the arrangements for making prescribed alterations to lower age limits in schools. Executive Board approval is required to issue a statutory notice, consider all issues raised in the period of notice and determine whether to confirm the request for alteration of the lower age limit made jointly by Education Leeds and the Early Years Service on behalf of the primary school.

4 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1 When the lower age limit of a school is altered to children aged 4 to 11 years the Governing Body is no longer responsible for the delivery of early education to children aged 3 and 4. The responsibility is passed to the children's centre which must undertake to meet regulations laid down by the DCSF and OfSTED on issues of curriculum and staffing. The Early Years Service will meet all regulations regarding the provision of early education for children aged 3 and 4.
- 4.2 There is no change to the nature or quality of the service provided. The children's centres employ qualified teachers, nursery nurses and ancillary staff. The staff – child ratio in children's centres is set higher than for schools. The children's centre can offer wider and more flexible services that support schools with their extended services aspirations. Whilst responsibility has transferred the headteacher and Governing Body retain an influence on the management of the children's centre. The school and the children's centre are jointly inspected by OfSTED.
- 4.3 The location of children's centres and the management and governance of centres on school sites is the subject of full and lengthy consultation. Full implications are considered and appropriate arrangements put in place for day to day site management, governance and mutual support and partnership. Schools and children's centre have trial periods for arrangements before any statutory changes are sought or community facilities powers invoked. Hollybush Children's Centre has been successfully managed under partnership arrangements for a year and a half prior to the decision made by the school Governing Body to seek an alteration to the lower age limit. An Advisory Board, linked directly to the School Governing Body will secure

continuity of policy and practice across the children's centre and primary school, particularly with regard to transition to the reception class.

5 Legal And Resource Implications

- 5.1 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) Regulations 2007 establishes the legal basis for alteration to the lower age limit by a year or more in a school. Guidance is also issued by the Secretary of State relating to children's centre governance and delivery of services by children's centres .
- 5.2 The establishment of a children's centre places no pressure on a school budget and in most cases relieves pressures on staffing and other budgets in schools where there are surplus nursery class places. Where centres are managed fully by the Early Years Service on behalf of the school the pupil funding for children aged 3 and 4 transfers to the children's centre with all of the subsequent staffing and resource costs of providing the education service. The staff employed by the school transfer to the Early Years Service on their current terms and conditions. The children's centre will have a service level agreement with the school, negotiated annually, to cover all soft facilities management and ensure the centre presents no pressure to the school budget.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 An alteration to the lower age limit of Hollybush Primary School from a 3 to 11 primary school to a school providing education for children aged 4 to 11 is the chosen option of the Governing Body of the school and children's centre and is the option recommended by Education Leeds and the Early Years Service.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1 Executive Board is asked to approve the publication of statutory notices to alter the lower age limit for Hollybush Primary School from 3 to 11 years of age to 4 to 11 years of age and note the provision on site by Early Years of a children's centre for children aged 0 to 4.