

Decision maker: Cabinet Member for Education

Subject: Closure of Brambles Nursery School and replacement full day care provision at Goldsmith Infant School

Date: 21 July 2016

Report from: Alison Jeffery, Director of Children's Services

Report by: Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director for Children's Services - Education

Wards affected: Central Southsea

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report sets out the outcome of the pre-statutory consultation undertaken between 6 June 2016 and 1 July 2016 on a proposal to close the Brambles Nursery and for Goldsmith Infant School to operate full day care provision comprising a 0 - 4 provision alongside the infant school.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Education:

- (i) Consider the responses set out in this report to the consultation undertaken**
- (ii) Authorise the Deputy Director of Children's Services - Education, to proceed to the representation stage, by publishing statutory proposals to close the Brambles Nursery School and for Goldsmith Infant School to operate full day care provision comprising 0-4 provision alongside the infant school**
- (iii) Support the renaming of the school to Bramble Infant School and Nursery.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Since September 2012, the Brambles Nursery School and Goldsmith Infant School have formally operated as a hard federation under one single governing body and one senior leadership team but with separate budgets and legal identities.

- 3.2 The schools share one site and on completion of the building work that is currently in progress, will also share one building.
- 3.3 The school's Governing Body wish to further develop the relationship and benefits that have already been seen through the federation arrangements. These include:
- The benefits of cross phased leadership which have contributed to an upward trend in pupil attainment and progress
 - The sharing of staff expertise
 - The development of a rich curriculum that supports all children throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - Sharing one agreed vision and set of values to continue to drive up standards and promote continuity and progression of practice
 - Continuing to build upon the access that pupils and their families have to both family learning and developing a range of inclusive services.
- 3.4 The proposal is to close The Brambles Nursery School (Maintained) and for Goldsmith Infant School to operate full day care comprising a 0 - 4 provision alongside the infant school from 1st April 2017. The proposed provision would therefore be the same size as the current organisation, maintaining one Governing Body and one Headteacher. All of the pupils attending the The Brambles Nursery School will automatically transfer to the roll of the Infant school and Nursery.
- 3.5 The Governing Body has also agreed that the school should have a new name to reflect the joining together and are intending to rename the school to Bramble Infant School and Nursery. There is a historic precedent as well as geographic reason for choosing this name as until 1966 Goldsmith Infant School was called Bramble Road Infant School and the school is geographically located on Bramble Road.

4. The consultation

- 4.1 Council officers consulted widely from 6th June to 1st July 2016. The consultation document attached at [Appendix 1](#) was distributed to all consultees as part of the pre-statutory consultation process and in line with guidance published in the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance) (England) Regulations 2013 that came into force in April 2016.
- 4.2 Two open public consultation meetings were held at the school on 15th and 16th June 2016. Neither meeting was well attended with 1 and 0

parents attending the meetings respectively. The 1 person that attended was in support of the proposal.

- 4.3 The table below shows a summary of responses received during the consultation period. Only one responded was not in support of the proposals.

Total responses received	29
Number in support of the proposals	27
Number not in support of the proposals (reason unknown)	1
Number undecided/unknown	1

5. Reasons for the recommendation

- 5.1 With the coming together of the two buildings in Autumn 2016, this will provide a completely joined up provision, better supporting the developing offer to families with improved classroom space, improved circulation around the school site and shared facilities allowing for more teaching and resources to be shared across the school.
- 5.2 The day to day operation of managing one budget instead of three will improve financial and administrative duties leading to reduced bureaucracy.
- 5.3 There would be reduced inspection regimes with two Ofsted inspections instead of the current three and one financial audit instead of two.
- 5.4 There are currently 60% of pupils within the Nursery School that apply for a school place at the Infant School. Whilst parents will still have to follow Local Authority admission procedures for the Infant School, there will continue to be seamless provision on one site from 0 - 7 years old.
- 5.5 The responses to the consultation as shown in 4.3 above shows that the majority of responses support the proposals.

6. Equality impact assessment

- 6.1 A preliminary Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed. A full EIA is not required as the proposals do not have any impact upon a particular equalities group because there will be no change to the admissions arrangements for the school.

7. Legal Services' comments

- 7.1 A local authority has a duty contained in s.6 of the Childcare Act 2006 to secure sufficient childcare places for working parents for children aged 0 - 14 years.

- 7.2 The statutory process for the closing of a maintained nursery is set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013. In accordance with these statutory provisions, the Local Authority is expected to consult in advance of making any decisions to publish statutory proposals to close a maintained nursery school. The process of consultation is a matter for the local authority but it must be fair and open and the local authority must have regard to the Secretary of State's statutory guidance on school closure consultations - '*Guidance for decision-makers*' and '*Opening and closing maintained schools - statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers*' April 2016. A minimum 6 week consultation period is recommended.
- 7.3 In considering this report and the recommendations, the decision maker must be satisfied that adequate pre-statutory consultation has been carried out. The Cabinet Member must consider the views of those affected by the proposal or who have an interest in it. Decision makers should not simply take account of the numbers of persons expressing a view but should consider giving the greatest weight to those stakeholders who are likely to be most directly affected by the proposals - especially parents of children at the affected school. The Cabinet Member should review the feedback from the consultation, and decide whether any significant issues are raised which have not previously been considered or addressed and whether any give good cause not to proceed.
- 7.4 Furthermore, the decision maker is reminded of the need for public authorities, as part of the decision making process, to think about the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.
- 7.5 If the local authority then decides to proceed with the proposal, it must publish statutory proposals under section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the prescribed information set out in the 2013 Regulations. This will allow 4 weeks for representations to be made by interested persons. The final decision will then be made by the local authority.

8. Finance comments

- 8.1 The funding for nursery schools and statutory free childcare provision of up to 15 hours per week for eligible 2, 3 and 4 year olds is provided through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and governed by the

Schools and Early Years Finance (England) regulations.

- 8.2 The closure of the The Brambles Nursery School will release funding to be used to support the 15 hours free childcare for 2, 3 and 4 year olds at the new childcare provision at Goldsmith Infant school. The final closing balance of the The Brambles Nursery School will be taken back centrally into the DSG.

Signed by: Alison Jeffery, Director of Children's Services

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Consultation document

Appendix 2 - Preliminary Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

.....
Signed by: