

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES Cllr Laura Mayes**

**SERVICE AREA CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**OFFICER CONTACT Gary Binstead – Head of Commissioning – Families and Children**  
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**REFERENCE: CES-01-23**

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**Statutory Notice to change the age range of Princecroft Primary School, Princecroft Lane, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 8NT.**

**1. Purpose of Report**

To ask the Cabinet Member to approve the statutory proposal published by Wiltshire Council on 6 January 2023. The notice proposed to change the age range of Princecroft Primary School to provide additional pre-school provision from 1 September 2023. The school will then admit children from the age of 2 years. Pupils will be accommodated in existing buildings on the site formerly the Noah's Ark Nursery which closed last year.

**2. Relevance to the Council's Business Plan**

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure effective school organisation and sufficient school places are provided across the Council area.

**3. Main Considerations for the Council**

Due to the closure of the Noah's Ark Nursery (situated in the grounds of Princecroft School) in July 2022, Wiltshire Council in partnership with Princecroft Primary School would now like to extend the age range of its intake from 3-11 years to 2-11 years to address the predicted shortfall of provision for 2-year-old children in the local area. This will also support the increase in early years children due to housing development in the catchment area. The school will then have 2 buildings on site, the current Hive Nursery and the Noah's Ark building (to be renamed) to extend the early years provision on the school site.

**4. Background**

Princecroft Primary School is currently a primary school for children aged 3-11 years. The capacity of the school for statutory school age pupils is 210 and the current admission number (PAN) for the school is 30. The additional nursery places will offer an additional 24 places for children below statutory school age. The nursery will not affect either the Net Capacity or PAN of the school for statutory school age children.

In creating these new preschool places, there will be no changes to the school's Admission Policy as attendance at the preschool will not offer any additional guarantees of a school place at Princecroft at statutory school age. Places will continue to be allocated on the existing over subscription criteria so equality of opportunity for all will not be compromised.

Princecroft Primary School serves a mixed community in Warminster with many of the children coming from disadvantaged families and was rated 'Good' by Ofsted in March 2018. However, OFSTED noted that many of the children have low starting points especially in terms of language, literacy and communication. The school are keen to address this to ensure children's academic outcomes and life chances are improved and believe that extending provision for 2-year-old children, as well as additional places for 3 and 4-year-old children, at Princecroft Primary School, would help.

In addition, this extra capacity would address the demand for places in the area and enable parents to return to work more easily helping to improve the outcomes for the children in the community by ensuring they are school ready when they start in Reception. The current provision of 30 places for 3- and 4-year-old children, in The Hive Nursery (part of Princecroft Primary School), is currently full and has a waiting list of families wanting their children to attend.

Numbers on roll at the school have increased by 34% since September 2019, and we are predicting further growth until the school reaches capacity in 2024, with all school age classes at the school reaching their PAN of 30.

In order to extend the nursery, the age range of the school needs to be lowered from 3 to 11 years currently, to 2 to 11 years from September 2023. The current and proposed places available are shown below

CURRENT OFFER		PROPOSED OFFER	
	Places		Places
Age 2-4 (Nursery)	30 (ages 3 and 4 only)	Age 2-4 (Nursery)	54
Age 4-5 (Reception)	30	Age 4-5 (Reception)	30
Age 5-6 (Year 1)	30	Age 5-6 (Year 1)	30
Age 6-7 (Year 2)	30	Age 6-7 (Year 2)	30
Age 7-8 (Year 3)	30	Age 7-8 (Year 3)	30
Age 8-9 (Year 4)	30	Age 8-9 (Year 4)	30
Age 9-10 (Year 5)	30	Age 9-10 (Year 5)	30
Age 10-11 (Year 6)	30	Age 10-11 (Year 6)	30

As can be seen in the table above, existing places for 4 to 11 year olds will not change as a result of this proposal to lower the age range.

There would be no displaced pupils as all pupils at the school will continue to be educated at Princecroft Primary School from September 2023.

Extending the nursery at Princecroft School will provide an additional 24 places for 2-4 year olds in the local area which were lost with the closure of Noah's Ark Nursery in July 2022. This area was identified as a sufficiency risk after the closure, and the Early Years Sufficiency team have been working with Providers and the local area to agree a solution.

This will enable more parents and carers to return to work and allow the school to improve the outcomes for the children in the school community by ensuring they are school ready when they start in Reception.

Once the nursery is extended the school anticipates only a positive impact, with parents having access to high quality, wrap-around care; young children experiencing a nurturing and stimulating environment, and the school will be able to impact the school-readiness of these children.

The extended nursery will not impact detrimentally on existing school accommodation because it will be fully contained in the detached former Noah's Ark Nursery building on the school site.

The extended nursery places at Princecroft will offer places for 2-4 year olds. Forecasts predict sufficient numbers for this extended provision (as well as others in the area). Princecroft Primary School aims to have a positive impact on existing neighbouring nursery provision in the future as they hope the nursery will be able to collaborate with other local providers to ensure continuity for children on transition to school, consistency of provision and quality assurance

### Consultation

Wiltshire Council and Princecroft Primary School have widely consulted on the proposal to expand the age range Princecroft Primary School to provide nursery provision. The consultation took place between 18 November 2022 and 16 December 2022 with the following interested parties:

- Parents and carers of children at the school
- Teachers and support staff at the school
- Governors at the school
- Local Councillor Pip Ridout
- Warminster Town Council
- Other schools and pre-schools in Warminster
- Wiltshire Council's Lead Member for Children's Services
- Neighbours adjacent to the school site

A public meeting was also held on 6 December 2022. A summary of the consultation responses are shown below.

Stakeholder	Number of responses	Agree with the proposal	Disagree with the proposal	Percentage in agreement
Parent/Carer	31	31	0	100%
Member of staff	14	14	0	100%
Governor at the school	5	5	0	100%
Local resident	3	3	0	100%
Prospective Parent	0	0	0	100%
Other	0	0	0	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100%</b>

Following this round of consultation, the Council published the statutory proposal on the 6 January 2023. The statutory proposal period ended on 3 February 2023 and there were no objections or comments received.

## **5. Overview & Scrutiny Engagement**

Not applicable

## **6. Safeguarding Implications**

All schools are designed to ensure that schools provide safe and secure places for children and young people in the local community and have a statutory safeguarding responsibility.

## **7. Public Health Implications**

Providing early years places in the community will enable local families to walk to school rather than travelling to settings further away and enable more children to remain close to their homes.

## **8. Procurement Implications**

There are no procurement implications.

## **9. Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

The Local Authority has a duty and responsibility to provide sufficient places to meet demand arising from all areas of the community.

Using the accommodation formerly used by Noah's Ark nursery all reasonable adjustments will be met within the accommodation.

## **10. Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

Having extended early years places available at the school should result in reduced vehicle journeys to other settings further away.

## **11. Risk Assessment**

### **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is not taken**

The Council may not meet its statutory duty to ensure sufficient childcare is available if the proposed decision is not taken.

### **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks**

There are no risks.

## **12. Financial Implications**

None.

## **13. Legal Implications**

There is a prescribed process ([Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60422/making-significant-changes-to-maintained-schools-guidance.pdf)) that must be followed where it is proposed to change the age range or increase the number of pupils at a school. These proposals fall within those requirements and the relevant public notice has been given. The Council has a duty to consider any representations received as a result of that notice, before making a determination to approve or reject the proposal. Any approval may be made conditional on the grant of planning permission or other prescribed matters.

Alterations to Maintained schools, such as Princecroft Primary are governed by The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 ("Prescribed Alterations Regulations"). When exercising functions under these regulations regard must be had to guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), "Making 'prescribed alterations' to maintained schools", which sets out the procedure to be followed. The process as set out in the report follows that guidance.

The Cabinet member, as decision maker must have regard to a list of factors included in further statutory guidance, namely "Guidance for decision-makers", particularly Section 2 and 3.

## **14. Options Considered**

### **i. Do Nothing**

The Council does have the option to do nothing as it has a statutory duty to provide sufficient early years childcare places across the county.

### **ii. Provide alternative funding for a new building**

The Council has no other funding it could use to create these additional places elsewhere.

### **iii. Identify an alternative private provider**

No alternative Provider has been identified to provide additional places

**iv. Increase capacity at Princecroft Nursery utilising the existing building vacated by Noah's Ark Nursery in 2022**

This is the **preferred option** as it will increase early years capacity in the area, and should support the school to improve outcomes for pre-school children who may attend the school at the appropriate time

**15. Reason for Proposal**

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide sufficient places across Wiltshire and projections indicate a need for additional pre-school places in this area due to local demand and additional housing development. Lowering the age range of Princecroft Primary School to create the places needed is the most appropriate solution to providing the required places in a timely and efficient way.

**16. Proposal**

To approve the statutory proposal published by Wiltshire Council on 6 January 2023. The notice proposed to change the age range of Princecroft Primary School to provide additional pre-school provision from 1 September 2023. The school will then admit children from the age of 2 years. Pupils will be accommodated in existing buildings on the site.

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## STATUTORY NOTICE

### **Wiltshire Council Statutory Notice of a proposed Change of Age Range at the Princecroft Primary School, Princecroft Lane, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 8NT.**

Notice is hereby given in accordance with section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (as amended by the Education Act 2011) and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 that Wiltshire Council intends to make a prescribed alteration to Princecroft Primary School, Princecroft Lane, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 8NT.

Wiltshire Council proposes to change the age range of Princecroft Primary School to extend the pre-school provision from 1 September 2023. The school will then admit children from the age of 2 years. Pupils will be accommodated in existing buildings on the site, formerly the Noah's Ark Nursery.

The statutory representation period will begin on 6th January 2023 and will continue until 3rd February 2023.

#### **Access to copies of the full proposals**

This Notice is a brief extract of the full related proposals, which are available to view on the Princecroft Primary School website at [www.princecroft.wilts.sch.uk](http://www.princecroft.wilts.sch.uk) and on the Wiltshire Council Consultation portal <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/council-democracy-consultations>. Paper copies of the full proposals can also be obtained upon request from School Buildings and Places Team (ref: Princecroft Primary School), Wiltshire Council, County Hall, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN.

#### **Comments on, or objections to, the proposals**

Any person or organisation may object to, or comment on, the above related proposals by sending them to School Buildings and Places Team, Wiltshire Council (ref: Princecroft Primary School), County Hall, Trowbridge, BA14 8JN **within 4 weeks** of the date of publication of this Notice, namely **by 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2023**.

All statutory consultation requirements relating to these proposals have been complied with.

**Signed:**

**Michael Dooley**  
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**For Perry Holmes**  
**Solicitor to the Council**

**PUBLICATION DATE: 6<sup>th</sup> January 2023**