



Somerford Primary School

Draper Road, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 3AS
Tel : 01202 485436 Fax : 01202 482359
Email : office@somerset.dorset.sch.uk
Website : www.somerford.dorset.sch.uk
Executive Headteacher : Mrs S Matthews
Head of School : Mrs H Frampton

28th November 2017

Dear Parents

It is with deep sadness that we write to you regarding the future of the school's Nursery provision.

Unfortunately, the number of pupils attending Goslings has dropped considerably and it is no longer financially viable. As a maintained nursery, it has to be staffed by a qualified teacher and therefore the costs are high. With only 14 children currently attending the Nursery, the school is losing approximately £10,000 a term keeping the provision open.

Therefore, the school and Governors have taken the difficult decision to make a proposal to the Local Authority to remove the Nursery provision under the 'Making Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools' statutory guidance.

As a statutory process there are 4 main stages and we will keep you informed throughout.

Stage 1: Publication of statutory notice

Stage 2: Formal consultation (at least 4 weeks)

Stage 3: Decision from the Local Authority (within 2 months)

Stage 4: Implementation

There will also be a 'pre-publication' consultation process and this is the first stage in this process.

We are keen to hear your views on this proposal and would welcome you noting any comments, questions or views on the attached form. We will also be holding a parents' meeting on Thursday 7th December at 3.30pm and look forward to discussing this in more detail at that point.

Please remember this meeting will be part of the pre-publication process and will help shape the formal proposal. We will therefore be gathering views from you as parents rather than being able to answer questions.

We fully understand what a difficult and unsettling time this will be and are keen to continue to work with you to support your child's education which remains our priority.

Enjoy Aspire Achieve

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J Stevens', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Helen Frampton

Head of School

John Stevens

Chair of Governors

Enjoy

Aspire

Achieve



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Executive Headteacher : Mrs S Matthews

Head of School : Mrs H Frampton

16th January 2018

Dear Stakeholder

We write on behalf of the Governing Body of Somerford Primary School to inform you of its proposal to close the maintained nursery provision known as Goslings.

The nursery was not full in the academic year of 2016-17 and was operating at a loss which the school had to top up. In the academic year 2017-18, the numbers of children attending the nursery has reduced further and it is now costing approximately £10,000 a year from the school's budget intended for school aged children to keep the nursery open.

The Governors believe this is an impossible amount of money for the school to subsidise, particularly in a climate of reduced school budgets and increased expectations.

Procedure for responses: support, objections and comments

The formal proposal document can be found at www.somerford.dorset.sch.uk

If you wish to make any comments please do so in writing by sending them to office@somerford.dorset.sch.uk or by post to the address at the top of this letter before the end of the consultation period which is midday on 19th February 2018. Please mark your comments for the attention of the Governing Body.

We are keen to hear from all consultees about this proposal.

To keep you informed the proposed timeline is as follows:

20/9/17 Full Governing Body Meeting – unanimous decision to seek to close the nursery

10/11/17 Meeting between Governors and DCC to explore options

30/11/17 Pre consultation period commenced – letters sent to stakeholders

7/12/17 Stakeholders invited to pre consultation meeting – 6 parents and 2 local nurseries attended

11/1/18 End of pre consultation period

16/1/18 Formal consultation period commenced

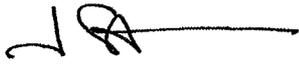
20/2/18 Formal consultation period ends

20/2/18 Governing Body meet to consider responses and how to proceed.

We appreciate your time in this matter. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact the Governing Body or Mrs Frampton on 01202 485436 or via office@somerford.dorset.sch.uk

Enjoy Aspire Achieve

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JA' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

John Stevens

Chair of Governing Body

Helen Frampton

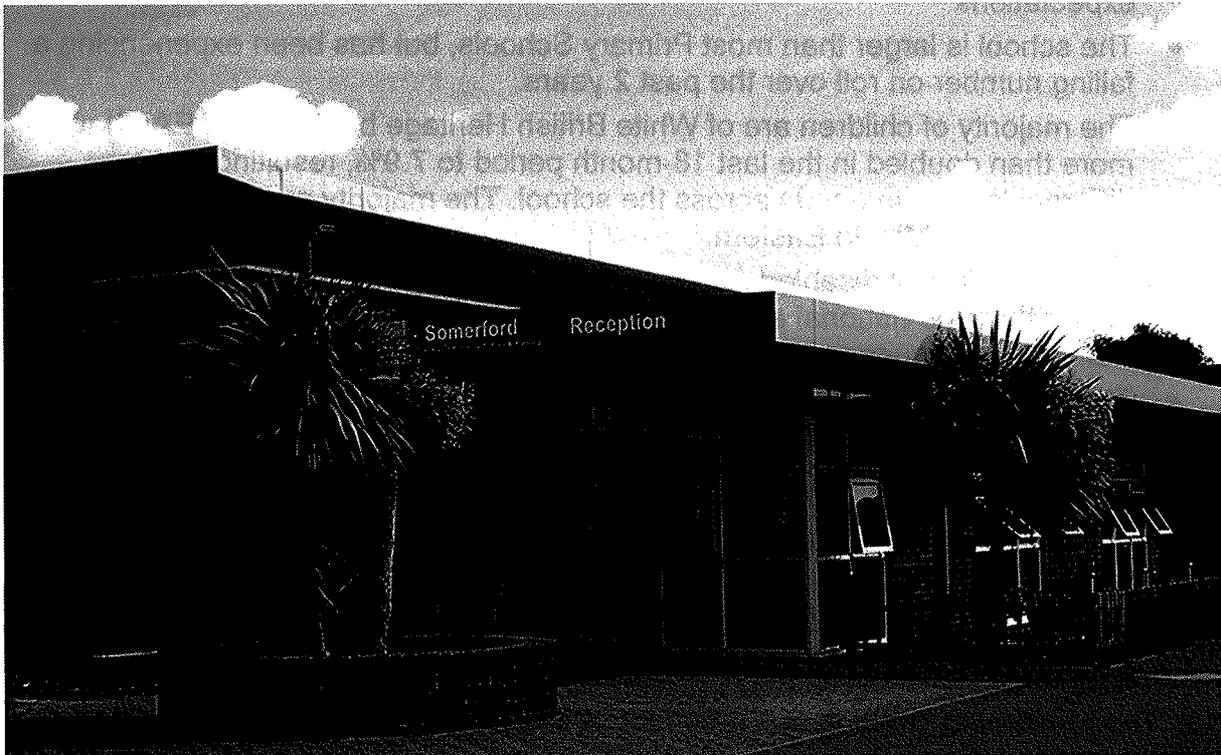
Head of School

Enjoy

Aspire

Achieve

FORMAL PROPOSAL FOR
SOMERFORD PRIMARY
SCHOOL TO CLOSE ITS
NURSERY PROVISION
(GOSLINGS)



16th January 2018

For questions, comments, supporting statements or objections please contact office@somersford.dorset.sch.uk or Somersford Primary School, Draper Road, Christchurch, BH23 3AS.

Formal proposal for Somerford Primary School to close its nursery provision

The Proposal

Somerford Primary School's Governing Body proposes that Somerford Primary School close its nursery provision and becomes a primary school only. (Age Range 4 - 11).

Characteristics of Somerford Primary School

- The school is graded 'Good' by Ofsted and the last inspection was March 2016
- The school has a deprivation index of 0.27 which is the 70th percentile and a significant proportion of children enter Reception significantly below national expectations
- The school is larger than most Primary Schools, but has been experiencing a falling number on roll over the past 2 years.
- The majority of children are of White British Heritage but levels of EAL have more than doubled in the last 18-month period to 7.9%, resulting in 12 different language needs across the school. The majority are East European and a few are Middle Eastern.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with SEN continues to be much higher than the national average at 38%, including 14 children having an EHC Plan and continues to rise.
- There are two Reception classes. The number of children joining the EYFS Nursery has significantly declined.

Further to 'Making Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools

The Governing Body is following the statutory process as outlined in Section 5 and Annex A.

NB: The Governing Body is the proposer and the Local Authority are the decision maker in this process.

Description of alterations and evidence of demand

1. The Governing Body wishes to operate within the principles of 'best value' when managing the school's budget. They have been unable to fully do this due to the low income from children attending the nursery (Goslings).
The income from children attending in 2017 – 2018 is approximately £10,000 a term below the costs of running the nursery.
Numbers in the nursery have been dropping over the last 5 years (see Appendix A) and in 2016 – 2017 the school also lost money by running the nursery.
Costs are higher in Goslings than other local nurseries as the school has to provide a qualified teacher.

2. Somerford Primary School has high levels of deprivation (in the 75% centile) and high levels of Free School Meals (36%) and Special Needs (38%).
The Governing Body wants to use the budget provided for the children in the school to ensure all school aged children reach their full potential. This is made increasingly challenging by losing approximately £30,000 of the budget keeping the nursery open.
3. There is a high number of pre-schools and nurseries in the local area (13 within a 5 mile radius, 11 within a three mile radius and 3 within a 1 mile radius. (See Appendix B). At the time of consultation, 7 reported having available spaces for 3- 4 year olds (4 did not respond and 2 reported having no spaces currently).
4. There is a new housing development being built close to the school and there is a possibility nursery numbers may increase as a result. However, information from the DCC Sustainability Team suggests that with 875 houses being built this would create 15 extra nursery children in the 3 – 4 age range. It would necessitate all of these children attending Goslings to make the provision financially viable. Furthermore, the development is not due to be completed for at least 24 months, therefore not increasing numbers in the short term.
5. 13 of the 19 children in Goslings have siblings in school and to close Goslings will undoubtedly be less convenient for these parents. However, there are 13 nurseries within a 5 mile radius and 3 nurseries within a 1 mile radius so it would be reasonable for parents to access more than one setting. The nursery's IDACI score is very low as a result of the considerable provision in the area (0.24976786).
6. Some parents have expressed a view that they would move their older sibling from the school if Goslings closed. If all parents were to do this, this would be a loss of 13 children to the school and therefore a loss of approximately £54,000. However, Somerford Primary School is currently the only school in Christchurch with spaces in Years 1 and 4 and other year groups are very close to becoming full in other schools. Therefore it is unlikely that all of these children would move immediately.
7. Parents also expressed concern over children not being able to form friendships before starting school if Goslings closes.
Somerford Primary School took children from 8 different nurseries and pre-schools this academic year (Appendix C) and the children all settled and made friendships quickly. Therefore if the children did not attend Goslings and attended a different nursery or pre-school, the evidence would suggest this would not be detrimental to their emotional development.
8. At the two consultation meetings the school held, only 6 parents and 2 local nurseries attended. No responses were received on the consultation forms.

The school has been informed that some parents held their own meeting without school present and 9 written responses were received after this.

The effect on other schools, academies and educational institutions within the area:

Currently there are only 19 children attending Goslings (13 claim 15 hours and 6 claim 30 hours).

7 of the local nurseries and pre-schools state they have available 3-4 year old places (4 did not respond).

Therefore it would not put undue pressure on local institutions. The nurseries who attended the pre-consultation meeting were both keen to support parents in finding spaces for their children in their settings and were supportive of the school's view to close the provision.

One local pre-school is expanding in the next year and a new pre-school is opening very close to the school in the next year. There are 13 pre-schools and nurseries in the local area (5 mile radius).

Objectives

The proposal seeks to improve the educational standards of the children at Somerford Primary School as there would be additional funds available to support them. If the Governing Body continues to subsidise Goslings from the budget for school age pupils, it would have no choice but to consider cuts in staffing and resources in the school and this would clearly have a detrimental impact on the opportunities for school age pupils to achieve.

Project Costs

There are no costs to this proposal. Goslings is currently taught by a qualified teacher from a supply agency so this cost would immediately cease. The experienced Teaching Assistant would be redeployed into a school based role as additional children with SEN are requiring provision. There would therefore be no redundancy costs.

The school is offering 30hrs provision and 6 of the 19 children in Goslings have taken up this offer. The school is currently not able to offer lunch cover as part of the 30hrs resulting in parents having to pick their children up for 30 minutes at midday.

The school recognises this is not an ideal situation. However, to employ further qualified staff to cover this period of time would increase the costs further. Whilst to offer lunch may increase the number on roll, there is no guarantee of this, especially

Appendix AGOSLINGS

Numbers on Roll over 5 year period

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
September	42	37	21	25	14
January (Spring Intake)	42	42	30	27	19
April (Easter Intake)	52	50	39	30	5 have applied (2 will be 30 hours)
Number of pupils who moved up from Nursery to YR	33	34	24	24	

when only 32% of the attendees take up this offer now and a significant proportion of parents in the local area are not employed and therefore would not qualify.

Implementation

To keep you informed the proposed timeline is as follows:

20/9/17 Full Governing Body Meeting – unanimous decision to seek to close the nursery

10/11/17 Meeting between Governors and DCC to explore options

30/11/17 Pre consultation period commenced – letters sent to stakeholders

7/12/17 Stakeholders invited to pre consultation meeting – 6 parents and 2 local nurseries attended

11/1/18 End of pre consultation period

16/1/18 Formal consultation period commenced

20/2/18 Formal consultation period ends

20/2/18 Governing Body meet to consider responses and how to proceed.

Responses

If you wish to make any comments please do so in writing by sending them to office@somerford.dorset.sch.uk or by post to the address at the top of this letter before the end of the consultation period which is midday on 19th February 2018. Please mark your comments for the attention of the Governing Body.

Appendix B

Local Nurseries and Pre Schools to Somerford School

1 mile radius:

Little Explorers – 0.1 miles

Mudeford Preschool – 0.5 miles

Pre-school on the marsh – 0.9 miles .

3 mile radius:

Mudeford Wood – 1.1 miles

Poppets day nursery – 1.6 miles

Tops day nursery – 1.8 miles

Stour Road Day Nursery – 1.9 miles

Burton Day Nursery – 2.4 miles

Three bears Preschool – 2.4 miles

Cranleigh Lodge Day Nursery – 2.7 miles

Christchurch Montessori - 2.8 miles

5 mile radius:

Dell cottage Day nursery – 4 miles

Stepping Stones of Sopley – 5.3 miles

Appendix C

Feeder Nurseries and Preschools to Somerford Primary School
2017-2018

Christchurch Montessori

Burton Day Nursery

Little Explorers

Three Bears

Preschool on the Marsh

Mudeford Wood Playgroup

Poppets Preschool

Iford Bridge Nursery

Appendix D

Parent Meeting

Meeting Minutes by Tracy Blick

Date and time	7.12.17
Present at meeting	Helen Frampton, Head of School Tracy Blick, Vice Chair of Governing Body
Contact number/email	office@somerford.dorset.sch.uk
<p>Minutes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introductions 6 parents and 5 children present 2. Explanation of statutory process of proposal to close including a parent meeting and a meeting for local nurseries Clarified the nursery is not closing at this time. 3. Asked if parents need any clarification from the letter and explained as maintained Nursery we have to have a qualified teacher in the Nursery which increases the cost, plus a level 3 teaching assistant. 4. There has been a continual dip, not increase, in numbers over the last 5 years The school has been offering 30hrs funding but no lunchtime cover offered In 2016 -2017 the Nursery was not financially viable - need to have 30 children on roll (at 15 hours) to make it financially viable Governors and Senior Leadership Team have been discussing for a long time in consultation with Dorset County Council. 5. <i>Parent: Why can't they start until they are three years old?</i> Not able to get 2 year old funding as maintained Nursery 6. <i>I will move my child from the School if the Nursery closes as I need my child in Nursery!</i> School will let you know as soon as possible the final decision from the local authority (not our decision). The process is starting early but the implementation could have a longer timescale. We appreciate it is unsettling and will support families as much as possible during the process. 7. <i>Parent: Preference that we keep open this summer term or Alternative could we not mix Goslings with Year R at lunchtime to utilise teaching staff</i> Academic year will cost £30,000 from the budget for school age children which will have an effect on costs across the school ie teacher or teaching assistants. The school will need to find savings. We cannot mix Nursery with School age children on the playground (Nursery staffing rules still apply). 8. All raised issues will be addressed and included in the consultation document 9. School has spoken to Dorset County Council's sustainability team who are knowledgeable about the Roeshott development. 875 houses being built. They predicted this will equal 15 3-4 year olds. <i>Parent: When will the buildings be finished?</i> 	

- At least 24 months, which therefore does not offer a short-term solution.
10. The school has been researching for over a year as numbers have dropped
No guarantee we will get children for September intake
 11. *Parent Question It can be off putting that there is no lunch*
School to investigate if opening over lunch is viable
 12. *Parent Concern: Getting all children to each school and Nursery if it closes*
School appreciates this will be harder. There are many nurseries/pre-schools in the local area.
 13. Parents reminded to send information in writing to the school. Parents need to send their views in so the school is informed, rather than Echo, Facebook, Petition (not helpful or correctly informed)
 14. Parents requested minutes from this meeting. Agreed they would be included in consultation document. The statutory process was explained again. Local Nurseries invited to meeting, Little Explorers and 12 others – within 5 mile radius. Comment slip sent to them too.
 15. Any other points
It was suggested by a parent to use the current Goslings room for Little Explorers to expand and rent from the school – which would solve Nursery issues. Is this an option?
School agreed to discuss with Dorset County Council.
Parent Question – Has Early Years Support been in?
The Local Authority has been to visit several times and has discussed with the school the options.
Parent Question – is it clear it will close?
No. It's the Local Authority's decision and not Somerford School's

Appendix E

Nursery Meeting

Meeting Minutes by Tracy Blick

Date and time	7.12.17
Present at meeting	Helen Frampton, Head of School Tracy Blick, Vice Chair of Governing Body
Contact number/email	office@somerford.dorset.sch.uk
Minutes	
<p>1. Feedback from local nurseries, only 2 attended of the 13 invited</p> <p>2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reiterated the Nursery is not closing at this point. It is the Local Authority's decision following the consultation * 14 children currently on role. * Maintained nursery so there has to be a teacher, therefore costs are higher. * Have to have 30 children attending to make it financially viable <p>3. Discussion followed about spaces. Many nurseries have spaces including the ones attending</p> <p>4. Following statutory process. There are 4 main stages and we will keep you informed throughout.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage 1: Publication of statutory notice Stage 2: Formal consultation (at least 4 weeks) Stage 3: Decision from the Local Authority (within 2 months) Stage 4: Implementation <p>Everyone will get a copy as stakeholders</p> <p>5. Concern that children need continuous provision through transition. School reassured that they would fully support families in the transition.</p> <p>6. Both attending nurseries were understanding and supportive. Question: Possibility to open part-time to free up a teacher for some days? The school assured them they had considered many different options and were still doing so with Dorset County Council's support.</p>	



Somerford Primary School

**NURSERY CLOSURE MINUTES
7 FEBRUARY 2018 at 9.00am**

Present:

John Stevens (Chair FGB)
Helen Frampton (Head of School)
Brenda Pidgley (Parent)
Candice Vivian (Parent)
Claire Griffiths (Marsh Pre-School)
Debbie Assinder (Minute taker)

JS thanked everyone for attending and explained the current situation with the Nursery which is running at a loss. He explained that the school was following the statutory process and that the final decision will be made by Dorset County Council.

HF informed everyone that the consultation process closes on the 20th February 2018 and that the school has followed all the processes of consultation by informing the press, local schools and playgroups along with letters to parents. Following this the school has only received one response which was from a member of the local community.

The audience were then asked if they would like to ask any questions.

It was asked what the likelihood of the Nursery closing at Easter and JS replied that it was up to Dorset County Council

A parent asked where will the children go and it was highlighted that there are several nurseries in the area with spaces. The issue of some parents having no transport was raised and HF noted that some nurseries with vacancies are within a mile of this school.

It was explained that the local authority have to make a decision within two months following the end of the consultation. The decision has to go to County, the educational committee meeting followed by a period of notice. It is therefore unlikely to close at Easter. The school have never said the closure would be at Easter.

It was explained that as we are a school and we have to have a teacher in place this increases the running cost. One option would be to have a provider in to run the Nursery. DCC may suggest this but unfortunately we do not know yet. The outcome could be that it doesn't shut at all.

The school has met with Dorset County Council but there is no indication what the decision will be. There are only 4 school nurseries in the whole of Dorset.

There were no further questions

It was confirmed that the minutes would be sent to the local authority. It was suggested if the petition in the local shop would go to the Local Authority. It was suggested this was submitted to the school as part of the consultation and it would be sent to the Local Authority.

The three stakeholders were thanked for attending.

Meeting closed at 9.15am

