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STATUTORY PROPOSAL FOR PRESCRIBED ALTERATION TO A MAINSTREAM SCHOOL

Schools: **South Ascot Village Primary School**
All Soul's Road, Ascot, SL5 9EA

Local Authority: **The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead**

Proposals: **To change the age range of the school from 3-11 to 4-11.** This will close the school's nursery class.

Date of publication: Friday 28th January 2022

1. Purpose of document

- 1.1 Where a local authority is proposing to make a change to a local school, it must publish a 'statutory proposal' outlining details of the planned change. This is in accordance with The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.
- 1.2 This document must include enough information to allow interested parties to make a decision on whether to support the proposed change, including a description of the alteration, evidence of demand, objectives, project costs and implementation dates.

2. School and Local Authority Details

The school

- 2.1 [South Ascot Village Primary School](#) is a community school, located at All Soul's Road, Ascot, SL5 9EA. It currently serves children aged 3 to 11 years old (Nursery to Year 6). The school does not have a religious character.

The local authority

- 2.2 The local authority is The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, whose address is Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, SL6 1RF.

3. Description of the proposal and evidence of demand

Description of the proposal

- 3.1 The proposal is to change the age range of the school so that it serves children aged 4 to 11 years old (Reception to Year 6). This means that the school's own nursery class would close. It is proposed that the change would come into effect on 1st September 2022.
- 3.2 If, following this consultation, the proposal is not approved then the nursery class will remain open.
- 3.3 Children born between 1st September 2017 and 31st August 2018, who might currently be on roll at the nursery class, will be starting Reception on 1st September 2022. Parents and carers with younger children, born on or after 1st September 2018, will

need to make new arrangements for their early years education if the proposal is approved.

- 3.4 There are a number of Ofsted registered early years providers in the local area, and their details are given at the end of this section. You may find it helpful to print out this page. You can also find out more about early years by visiting our website [here](#).
- 3.5 The proposed change will not affect existing entitlements to funded childcare provision, as set out by the government [here](#).

Evidence of demand

- 3.6 The number of children attending the nursery class has fallen sharply over the past few years. The school had 64 nursery children in Spring 2012, but just 9 in Spring 2021. The numbers are falling mainly because South Ascot Village Primary School's nursery class (like other school nursery classes) only offers places during school term time.
- 3.7 The demand for school places generally in the Ascot area is set to remain relatively low, as the number of births locally remains at around 100 to 120. This compares with an average of around 160 births annually a decade ago.
- 3.8 It is not thought likely, therefore, that there will be any significant increase in demand for places at South Ascot Village Primary School's current nursery provision for the foreseeable future.
- 3.9 Schools receive funding for nursery classes based on the number of children attending. With low numbers, that funding is not sufficiently covering the cost of providing the nursery class and so the main school budget is covering the shortfall. This is reducing the funding for teaching and learning in other year groups. The headteacher and governors believe that this situation is not sustainable in the long term.
- 3.10 The headteacher and governing body have considered whether the nursery class could increase its numbers by taking younger children, but they would still not be able to offer the wraparound care that parents are looking for. Also, the staffing ratios are higher for two-year olds, which mean that there would be additional costs, offsetting any gain from having more children.

4. Objectives of the proposal

- 4.1 The objective of the proposal is to close an increasingly unviable nursery class.
- 4.2 There are a number of Ofsted registered early years providers in the local area which have spaces. Their details have been provided to parents and carers as part of the public consultation on the proposal.

5. Effect on other educational institutions in the area

- 5.1 There are not expected to be any negative implications for other schools in the local authority area.

6. Project costs and long-term value for money

Capital costs

- 6.1 There are no capital costs arising from this proposal.

Revenue funding

6.2 If the proposal is approved, South Ascot Village Primary School will no longer need to support an unviable nursery class with its revenue budget.

Impact on the local authority's revenue funding

6.3 There will be minimal impact on the local authority's revenue budget for schools.

7. Implementation plan

7.1 Government statutory guidance¹ on making prescribed changes to mainstream schools such as the one proposed here sets out four stages for implementation:

- **Stage 1.** Publication of the proposal.
- **Stage 2.** 4 week representation period, also known as 'formal consultation' period.
- **Stage 3.** Decision (to be within two months of the end of Stage 2).
- **Stage 4.** Implementation.

7.2 The guidance also strongly recommends that there is public consultation prior to Stage 1 (often called 'informal' consultation).

7.3 Informal public consultation with parents and carers, staff, governors and local residents began on Monday 11th October 2021, with a deadline of Friday 19th November 2021 for responses.

7.4 11 responses were received, and there was only limited support for the proposal, as set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of responses

Response	No.	%
Yes, the proposed changes to the nursery provision at South Ascot Village Primary School should go ahead.	3	27%
No, the proposed changes to the nursery provision at South Ascot Village Primary School should not go ahead.	8	72%
I don't know whether the proposed changes to the nursery provision at South Ascot Village Primary School should go ahead.	0	0%
I have no view on whether the proposed changes to the nursery provision at South Ascot Village Primary School should go ahead.	0	0%
Total	11	100%

7.5 In summary:

- The number of responses overall was very low (3.3%) and only just at the 3% target.
- The number of responses from parents was low (9), and of these, only two (22%) were in favour.
- The parents responding included three who planned to send their children to the nursery class in the future, and none of these were in favour.

¹ Page 26, [Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools](#). DfE, October 2018.

- There were no responses from staff or governors at the school.
- The two remaining responses, from a local early years provider and from a local resident were split equally between supporting and opposing the proposal.

7.6 Appendix A provides a summary of the issues raised, and the borough's comments on them.

8. Procedure for responses

8.1 Responses to this consultation must be made within four weeks of the publication date of this proposal on Friday 28th January 2022. This means that all responses must arrive by midday on **Friday 25th February 2022**.

8.2 You can respond by:

- Using the online response form [here](#).
- Emailing us at schoolplaces@achievingforchildren.org.uk
- Writing to us at **South Ascot Primary School Consultation, School Places and Capital Team, Zone D, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, SL6 1RF.**

8.3 After the end of the representation period on 25th February 2022, the local authority will have up to two months to make a decision. If no decision is taken in that period, the proposal will need to be referred to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

8.4 The Royal Borough will, however, aim to make the decision as soon as possible after the end of the consultation period. In considering the proposal, the borough will be able to:

- reject the proposal.
- approve the proposal without modification.
- approve the proposal, but with modifications, having consulted with the governing body.
- approve the proposal (with or without modification) subject to certain conditions being met.

8.5 Government guidance, which you can find online [here](#) (see pages 29 to 32), sets out the factors that the Royal Borough will need to take into account when considering the proposal.

8.6 Within a week of the decision being made, the Royal Borough will publish the decision and reasons for the decision on our website [here](#).

8.7 Following that, there is then a four week period in which the following parties can appeal against the decision:

- The Oxford (Church of England) Diocese.
- The Portsmouth (Catholic) Diocese.

8.8 If an appeal is received then it must be referred to the Schools Adjudicator for consideration. There is no right of appeal against the School Adjudicator decision.