



CLOSURE OF SOMERFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY PROVISION (GOSLINGS)

Formal proposal for Dorset County Council to close the Maintained Nursery provision at Somerford Primary School.

The Proposal

Dorset County Council proposes that Somerford Primary School close its nursery provision on the 31 August 2018 and becomes a primary school only (Age Range 4 - 11) from the 1 September 2018.

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 Local Authority is following the statutory process as outlined in Section 5 and Annex A of the relevant Department of Education Guidance.

Description of alterations and evidence of demand

1. The Local Authority wishes Somerford Primary School to operate within the principles of 'best value' when managing their 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 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

The proposed timeline is as follows:

14/6/18 Formal consultation period commenced through publication of Notice.

11/7/18 Formal consultation period ends

July 2018 – Dorset County Council makes final decision.

1/9/18 Closure of Somerford Primary Nursery Provision

It should be noted that provision of nursery services will effectively cease at the end of the summer term as Gosling's does not routinely provide a service during any holiday period.



Responses

If you wish to make any comments please do so in writing by sending them to schoolorganisation@dorsetcc.gov.uk or by post to Ed Denham, School Organisation, Dorset County Council, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1 XJ by 21 June 2018.



Appendix A

GOSLINGS

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	



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

Mudford Wood Playgroup

Poppets Preschool

Iford Bridge Nursery



Appendix D

Parent Meeting held as part of the pre-consultation

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
<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. <i>Parent Question It can be off putting that there is no lunch</i> School to investigate if opening over lunch is viable 12. <i>Parent Concern: Getting all children to each school and Nursery if it closes</i> 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 as part of the pre-consultation

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
<p>Minutes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feedback from local nurseries, only 2 attended of the 13 invited 2. <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 3. Discussion followed about spaces. Many nurseries have spaces including the ones attending 4. Following statutory process. There are 4 main stages and we will keep you informed throughout. <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> 5. Concern that children need continuous provision through transition. School reassured that they would fully support families in the transition. 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. 	