

Friday 24 January 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Public Consultation on a proposal to discontinue (close) St Mary's Community Nursery School and a related proposal to extend the age range of Overleigh St Mary's CE Primary School to 3-11.

Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council (the Council) has a statutory duty to ensure a sufficiency of high quality early years education.

St Mary's Community Nursery School has provided outstanding early years education since moving to its current site adjacent to Overleigh St Mary's CE Primary School in January 2009. The previously viable nursery school is now facing considerable financial difficulties. The school is unable to set a balanced budget meaning the school is going deeper and deeper into debt. This is due to the combined impact of changes in the early years funding mechanism and fluctuating pupil numbers, a picture reflected nationally for nursery schools across England. Despite exhaustive work by the headteacher and Governors to find a solution the school has become financially non sustainable. Having explored a range of options the Governing Body have concluded with great regret that the way forward is for the school to amalgamate with Overleigh St Mary's CE Primary School. It is proposed this amalgamation will be achieved through the closure of the nursery school while increasing the age range of children educated at Overleigh St Mary's CE Primary School to include nursery aged children. At the date of amalgamation children at St Mary's Community Nursery School will be transferred to the Overleigh St Mary's CoE Primary School register.

The Consultation

Before deciding whether to approve this proposal the Council wishes to seek the views of those parents and children whose education might be affected by this proposal.

A period of consultation will run from Monday 27 January until midnight on Sunday 01 March 2020. You are invited to make your views on the proposal heard through this consultation. Full details of the proposal will go live on the first day of the consultation and will be available online during the consultation period at:

www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/StMarysConsultation

Full details of the proposal can also be obtained by requesting a copy of the consultation document from either school office, or by reading it on either school's website.

Drop in event at school

You are also invited to attend any of the drop-in consultation events which will be held at Overleigh St Mary's CE Primary School on Wednesday 05 February 3-7pm

and at St Mary's Community Nursery School on Wednesday 12 February 11am-12.15pm and 3-7pm. Full copies of the consultation document will be available and you will have the opportunity to discuss the proposal with staff from the Council and the school.

How to give your views

Please note that everybody is welcome to submit comments on this educational proposal in a number of ways:

- completing the online survey at:
www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/StMarysConsultation
- or emailing your comments to:
schoolplanningandpolicy@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
- or providing feedback using a hard copy form either handed into the school office or drop in event at the school or posted to:
School Organisation Team, Cheshire West & Chester Council,
(Floor 3, Nicholas House) , 4 Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BE
- attending any of the consultation event at the schools where Council officers and school representatives will be available to answer questions and to note any comments that you would like to feedback.

Paper copies of all of the associated documentation are available upon request by emailing schoolplanningandpolicy@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

All feedback must be received by the deadline of midnight Sunday 01 March 2020.

What happens next?

The Council's Director of Education and Inclusion will then consider all consultation responses received before deciding whether the proposal should be progressed.

If so, a statutory Public Notice will be published, setting out Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council's intent to amalgamate the schools. After publication there will be a four week period in which any representations can be made to the Council. At the end of this period the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People will decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal. It is anticipated that a decision will be made by July 2020.

Yours sincerely,



Carolyn Davis
Senior Manager Education Infrastructure