

St Andrew's Church of England Academy, Buckland Monochorum

Consultation on a proposal to extend the age range from 4-11 to 2-11

With a growing community and the need for local provision, The Board of Trustees, on the recommendation of the school, needs to consider increasing the age range for children at St Andrew's Church of England Academy. This letter provides more detailed information about this proposal and why we believe it would be beneficial to the community and the school. We would welcome your comments and views on our proposal as part of a consultation process.

If you need this document in a different format or language, please contact Devon County Council's School Consultation Team on 01392 382057 or via email: schoolconsultations@devon.gov.uk

Proposal

The Learning Academy Partnership South West (LAP SW) is proposing to extend the age range of St Andrew's Church of England Academy from 4-11 to 2-11 with effect from September 2025.

Background

The Department for Education (DfE) has recently launched a School-Based Nursery Capital Grant for which primary-phase schools can bid for funding for capital expenditure towards creating school based nursery provision.

The Capital Grant is to support the expansion of childcare places as a result of the Government's increased early years entitlements to families which are, from:

- April 2024:- all working parents of two-year-olds can access 15 hours per week;
- September 2024:- all working parents of children aged 9 months up to three-years-old can access 15 hours per week;
- September 2025:- all working parents of children aged 9 months up to three-years-old can access 30 hours per week.

LAP SW are therefore proposing to establish a Nursery Class at St Andrew's C of E Academy and thereby extend the age range of the school from 4-11 to 2-11 from September 2025.

The mission of the school Trust is 'Flourishing Futures' and the opportunity to offer children and families the access to Nursery provision from age 2 is part of our ongoing mission. Ensuring children have a wonderful start to their school journey. The Board of Trustees would need to apply to extend the school's age range to enable it to offer Nursery provision for 2-year-olds.

Buckland Beehive, the current nursery provision in the village, is scheduled to permanently close on 31st July 2025. Following this, the staff and children will

transition to the school's newly established, school-based nursery provision starting on 1st September 2025. The nursery will be managed by the existing Buckland Beehive manager, who will continue in the role of nursery manager within the school setting.

Benefits of the proposal

In light of the increases to early years entitlements and associated funding, Devon County Council is projecting an increase in the demand for early years places.

By enabling children to start in the nursery at two-years-old will remove a transition point for some children. Those more disadvantaged children who are eligible for 2-year-old funding may currently go to different providers. They may then come back to the school at age 3 into the nursery or at 4 into the reception class.

Being able to offer places from 2-years-old will provide greater consistency and continuity for children before starting at school and enable staff to make a more significant impact and identify children's needs well before they start in the reception class. Therefore, we would be able to establish the strongest links possible with our families from the outset working to support them from a younger age. We would be able to support more parents/carers in finding high quality, flexible provision in the local area and offer a wider parental choice. By providing the opportunities and experiences to nurture children's curiosity and knowledge we will support children from 2 years old to develop the skills they need to move through their education and into the world beyond. We can provide the children with a rich, vibrant curriculum which enables them to gain knowledge and confidence to develop skills but also grow as a learner, preparing them for the next step on their journey.

Parents will still need to make a separate application to Devon County Council for a place in the reception class.

Process and Decision-making

The proposal to extend the age range of the school requires the submission of a Significant Change application to the DfE. The DfE is the decision-maker.

Following the end of this consultation, and consideration of the responses, the Academy Trust is proposing to submit a consolidated application to the DfE. The consolidated application will include a Significant Change application to extend the age range, and the capital funding application.

Capital and planning

The capital funding will support significant enhancements St Andrew's C of E Academy facilities, enabling the development of a more cohesive early years learning environment. These improvements include adapting the current Reception classroom by extending the external decking to facilitate better flow between indoor and outdoor spaces, as well as converting an unused disabled toilet into additional toilet facilities for nursery students. Additionally,

the existing Year 1 classroom will be renovated to establish a seamless connection between the two rooms, thereby creating a tailored early years provision.

The funding will also be allocated to repurpose the underutilised computer suite, transforming it into a classroom to meet the growing space requirements for the nursery. With the recent investment in Chromebooks, the dedicated computer suite is no longer essential and can be optimized to better support teaching needs as an additional classroom.

However, the proposal to change the age range from 4-11 to 2-11 is not subject to or dependent upon the approval of this capital grant.

This proposal will not affect the Published Admission Number (PAN) for the school, nor the capacity for school aged children, and will not put pressure on classroom space for school aged children.

No planning consent is required.

Consultation and decision-making process

This consultation will run from **Monday 18th November 2024 to Monday 9th December 2024.**

Following the end of the consultation period, the Academy Trust will consider the consultation responses and decide whether or not to make an application to the Department for Education for capital funding and a significant change application to extend the age range of the school.

It is the DfE who will consider the application and decide whether or not to approve the change to the age range and the capital funding bid.

Responding to the consultation

The Trust welcome responses on this proposal by the closing date of **9th December 2024** either by:

Emailing: standrews@lapsw.org

Or by writing to: St Andrew's C of E Academy, Nursery Consultation, The Village, Buckland Monachorum, Yelverton, Devon, PL20 7NA

All responses to the consultation will be considered and will be shared with the school's leadership team, Board of Directors and Trustees. Responses will also be shared with the Department for Education as the decision-maker, but we will not send individual responses to any specific points made.

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