



Public consultation – Summer 2024

Proposed Change of Age Range at Grove Primary School

The four-week representation period commences on Monday 10th June 2024 and closes at **noon on Monday 8th July 2024**. It is very important that all those wishing to respond to this proposal do so within this timeframe to allow their comments to be considered by the decision maker.

Responses can be made on-line via the following link:

[Submit a response](#)

Should you require a paper copy of this survey, please contact the school office or spp@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk

Introduction

Worcestershire County Council in agreement with the Governing Body of the school is proposing to change the age range of Grove Primary School, Malvern from 2-11 to 3-11 in order for the school to move onto a single site and operate an Early Years Foundation Unit. The proposal has met the criteria for a significant change and therefore a full proposal and public notice of this proposed change must be issued. This document helps to explain the background to the proposal and the final steps of this process.

- What is proposed
- Why it is being proposed
- Details of how the decision will be made
- How to submit a response

School details

Address	Grove Primary School, Pickersleigh Grove, Malvern, WR14 2LU
Status	Community School
Ofsted Rating	Inadequate (March 2022)
Current age range	2-11
Proposed age-range	3-11

Background information

Worcestershire County Council, as the Local Authority responsible for education provision, has a statutory responsibility to secure, as far as is reasonably possible, early years education provision that is of good quality, accessible, flexible, inclusive and provided through a range of settings to meet parental demand for childcare for children aged two, three and four.

Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006 sets out the duty of local authorities of securing, as far as is reasonably possible, sufficient places for children aged 2, 3 and 4 to claim their entitlement to funded nursery education. In addition, local authorities should secure sufficient childcare to support parents back to work or to undertake education or training leading to work.

In 2023 the government announced an expansion of the childcare programme to provide access to supported childcare for younger children and babies for working families and extend 2-year-old funded provision. In addition, and by September 2026, all parents and carers of primary school-aged children who need it should be able to access term time childcare in their local area from 8:00am to 6:00pm, so that parents can access employment and improve labour market participation.

Grove Primary School currently offers early education places for two, three- and four-year olds as part of the school maintained offer. Worcestershire County Council in agreement with the Governing Body of the school is proposing to make a significant change to Grove Primary School under the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) regulations 2013. This statutory proposal document contains all the relevant information to allow interested parties to decide whether to support the proposed change. Worcestershire County Council must follow a statutory process for making prescribed alterations to schools. The publication of this statutory proposal and notices forms part of that process.

Grove Primary School is currently a local authority-maintained school, in the Pickersleigh ward of Malvern. Malvern has experienced falling primary pupil numbers since 2021. The Grove Primary School sits on a previous Infant and Junior school site. The Pupil Admission Number (PAN) of the school is currently 30 (1 Form Entry), however the forecast for the school are numbers on roll averaging 15 children per year group for the next four years. Following public consultation, the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education, in February 2024, approved a PAN reduction from 30 to 15, effective for admissions from September 2025 onward. The school currently operates early year's provision for 2 – 4-year-olds within the Infant building.

In March 2022 Ofsted judged Grove Primary School to be Inadequate. The Secretary of State for Education issued an Academy Order for the school to become a sponsored academy.

In April 2024, Mercian Educational Trust were approved by the Department for Education as the Academy Trust to run Grove Primary School. The school and Mercian Educational Trust are keen to continue working with the Local Authority to meet the needs of families within the area and to wider meet the needs for a range of education provision in Worcestershire.

What is proposed

It is proposed to change the age range of the school from 2 – 11 years to 3 – 11 years from September 2024 and move all the primary school functions onto the Junior site. This will enable the school to operate a reduced PAN and an Early Years Foundation Stage Unit (EYFSU) for reception age children and children the year before they start school from the main school Junior site.

If approved, the change would take effect from September 2024.

Mercian Educational Trust are keen to work with the Local Authority to utilise the Infant building and outdoor space to offer early years provision for 2 – 3-year-olds and provide provision to meet the needs of children with special educational needs longer term. The Trust have indicated they are likely to enter into arrangements with a third-party early years provider to deliver the early years and possibly wrap around provision as soon as possible after academy conversion. The earliest the academy conversion could take place is 1st October 2024.

Why is it being proposed

By lowering the Pupil Admission Number to 15, it enables the school to operate an Early Years Foundations Stage Unit for reception age children and pre-school age children in the year before they are due to start school.

Due to staffing, ratios, space available in the Early Years Foundation Unit, it would not be possible to also include 2 year olds into this provision.

The Multi-Academy Trust have agreed to enter into an agreement with a third party private early years provider to deliver early years provision for 2 year olds from the Infant building at the earliest opportunity.

Changing the age range of the school and operating the Early Years Foundation Stage Unit as part of the maintained school will have a number of benefits:

1. The Grove has experienced and suitably qualified early years practitioners within their staff due to currently running the nursery on site. All Staff currently working in the Nursery will be redeployed within the new EYFS.
2. Combining the nursery and Reception provision minimises staff costs, whilst ensuring the provision is under the direct leadership of an experienced early years teacher.
3. Having the 3-5 year olds in the same area will improve educational outcomes for children as staff can be more efficiently deployed to deliver early phonics, as well as identified speech and language interventions.
4. The school will be reducing the revenue expenditure by having one building to maintain, reduced utilities and other services. With the more efficient use of staffing which is the highest amount of expenditure that a school has. Current nursery staff can be redeployed within the new 3-5 provision on site, meaning that other teaching assistants can be used to support high level needs children without the need for further recruitment.

How the decision will be made

The four-week representation period commences on Monday 10th June 2024 and closes at noon on Monday 8th July 2024. A Public Notice has been issued in the local newspaper, as well as around the school and in the local area.

The following stakeholders will also be directly notified:

- Parents and carers of pupils attending the school
- Staff and Governors of the school
- Neighbouring schools
- Local, District and County Councillors
- Immediate neighbours
- Local Member of Parliament
- Cabinet Member Responsible for Education
- Any other known local stakeholders

At the conclusion of this consultation period the Local Authority will consider all responses to this Statutory Proposal and Public Notice. Any objections to the proposal will be considered by the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education before a final decision is made as to whether to proceed with the proposal. If no objections are received, the final decision will be made by the Director of Children's Services. The indicative timescale for the final decision will be end of July 2024.

How to submit a response

Responses can be made on-line via the following link and must be received by **noon on Monday 8th July 2024**.

[Submit a response](#)

Should you require a paper copy of this survey, please contact the school office or spp@worschildrenfirst.org.uk