



North Hinksey CE Primary School

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Consultation Period: 25th November 2024 to 18th December

Proposed Expansion of North Hinksey Church of England Primary School by lowering of the age range to 9 months and to merge with North Hinksey Pre-School.

Governors at North Hinksey Church of England Primary School together with trustees of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust have been considering how best to future proof the school so it best serves the local community now and in the future. Following initial discussion with North Hinksey Pre-School it is proposed that the two settings merge. This letter outlines the proposal and invites you to contribute to the consultation.

Context and Background

North Hinksey Church of England Primary School has been serving the local community since 1857. The school joined the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust in October 2017 and is rated as a good school by Ofsted. The strength of the school includes its Early Years provision. In looking to extend the age range, we are looking to continue to improve the school and serve our local community. Trustees and governors have sought to form a strong partnership with other schools to benefit all the children. There are close links with other ODS schools which includes one which already runs nursery from 9-months of age. We also work closely with North Hinksey Pre-school who share the same site and enjoy good working relationships.

North Hinksey Pre-School's current lease of the building commenced in 2005. Many people often believe it is part of the school due to its location. The school and Pre-School have worked closely, allowing Pre-school to use the school building for the benefit of the children. The Pre-School secured a 'Good' grading in its last OFSTED inspection. There is demand for places in the setting and a waiting list often operates.

However, North Hinksey Pre-School is a small charity, run by a committee of volunteer parents. Looking to the future, the committee want to ensure that high quality provision will remain for years to come in North Hinksey, which is not reliant on gaining parents to be on the committee, as it is becoming increasingly hard to find willing volunteers.

The North Hinksey Pre-School committee believe that joining the ODS Trust and merging with North Hinksey Church of England Primary School will bring long term benefits for parents, staff and children.

North Hinksey Church of England Primary School is inclusive and welcomes children of all faiths and none.

Proposal

We propose that North Hinksey Church of England Primary School lowers its age range to 9-months and children on the North Hinksey Pre-School roll are transferred to North Hinksey Church of England Primary School roll. There will be no change in location of North Hinksey Pre-school provision and all current pupils will be guaranteed a place in the proposed school run provision. Staff from North Hinksey Pre-school will be fully retained and their contracts will transfer to the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust.

In tandem, the North Hinksey Pre-School would close as a charity at the point that all children have moved to North Hinksey Primary School roll. This will involve a dissolution of the charity, and they will need to follow the process set out in their constitution. A vote by the members in favour of closure, and for transfer of any assets will be required.

The Pre-school would become a nursery class within the school and would operate at the same timings. The offer of hours will remain the same and all children currently on Pre-School roll will continue attending the same sessions.

Oxfordshire County Council have confirmed that there is a shortage of places for the 9-months – two year olds in the locality, so we are proposing to lower the age range to 9 months, so that we can expand the current provision in a planned way over the coming years to meet parental demand.

How will this suggested change help?

By merging the two settings we will be able to share knowledge, skills and good practice between school and pre-school staff which will benefit all children.

In addition to this it will provide greater continuity in both care and education as children progress from Early Years into KS1. Knowledge about the children’s progress, development and needs (especially those with medical or additional needs) can be shared and built on at each stage of their education.

A progressive curriculum can be developed starting at an early age which allows children to build on knowledge and skills each year which supports all children to make excellent progress.

Sharing knowledge across Pre-School and Primary School will benefit all children. It will utilise the staff’s wealth of expertise, to benefit as many children as possible. Best practice will be better shared meaning all staff further their expertise. The ODST has a wealth of Early Years experience which will support staff to develop their professional skills and helping them access professional development. This will further develop the provision and allow the children to benefit from new skills and knowledge that the staff develop.

This change will also allow better transition so the children in Pre-School can access the wider school facilities and feel more confident as they make the move to reception and onto Y1. They will have experienced many of the school routines and met staff higher up the school, which will make transition a positive experience.

Timings

This consultation commences on Monday 25th November 2024 and will run until 18th December. During that period, there will be a meeting to share and discuss these plans. Following consultation feedback, a request will be made to the Department for Education to change the age range to 9-months to 11 years old. Following approval, we would arrange to transfer the pre-school children to the school nursery roll. Our proposal is to make this change from 1st September 2025.

What to do next and by when

Have your say by writing to Chair of Governors, North Hinksey Lane, Oxford, OX2 0LZ or by emailing office@nhps.org.uk for the attention of Chair of North Hinksey School Governors by midday on 18th December 2024. All responses to the consultation will be collated and summarised and sent to the Department for Education as part of the case for change. This is a normal part of the process.

Summary

We very much hope that the community support this proposal and the benefits that it will bring and look forward to hearing your views.

Best wishes

Hannah Forder-Ball

Executive Headteacher

Clare Sykes

Chair of Governors

FAITH

HOPE

LOVE

