

**THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SUNDERLAND**

**NOTIFICATION OF STATUTORY PROPOSALS TO LOWER THE AGE RANGE OF  
THORNEY CLOSE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Local Authority Proposals**

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 19 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, that it is the intention of Sunderland City Council, City Hall, Plater Way, Sunderland SR1 3AA, to:

- Lower the age range of **Thorney Close Primary School, Torquay Road Sunderland, SR3 4BB** from 3 – 11 years of age to 2 – 11 years of age with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023

Thorney Close Primary School is maintained by Sunderland City Council. The school currently offers a nursery provision for children aged 3 and above. This proposal will result in a nursery provision for 2, 3 and 4-year-old children.

**Reason for the Lowering of the Age Range at Thorney Close Primary School**

Thorney Close Primary School currently offers statutory early years provision for children from the age of three. The school's current offer focuses on the delivery of the statutory 15-hour entitlement. Lowering the age of admission at the school would allow the extension of this provision to include 2-year-old children and would enable the delivery of the free early years entitlement available to disadvantaged families.

Lowering of the age of admission would ensure the ongoing sustainability of early years provision for 2-year-olds in the area. It would also enable parents with both two-year-old children and older children who may already attend the school to drop their children at one single setting instead of multiple settings across the area, therefore making 2-year-old provision more convenient and accessible to an increased range of families.

**Effect on other Schools, Academies and Educational Institutions in the Area**

This proposal is not anticipated to impact on the recruitment of other settings. It is noted that the Thorney Early Education Centre will be closing in January 2023 and the delivery of 2-year-old places will provide parents who would previously have enrolled children at that setting with an alternative local nursery place.

**Project Costs**

There is sufficient surplus physical capacity in the current Thorney Close Primary School buildings to deliver this programme without major capital works. Minor alterations, such as additional toilets and hygiene areas, will be required and a budget of £75k has been allocated to support this work.

### **Pupil Numbers and Admissions**

In the Summer 2022 Census collection there were 27 funded nursery children on roll at Thorney Close Primary School. There were 243 children on roll in years Reception – Year 6.

### **Displaced Pupils**

There will be no pupil displacement linked to this proposal, but the setting will provide a potential education setting for those pupils displaced by the closure of a local day-care.

### **Impact on the Community**

The community will benefit from the availability of increased nursery school places. This will result in more parents and carers within the Sandhill Ward benefiting from the opportunity to access a funded place for 2-year-olds within statutory walking distance of their home address.

Families moving into the area will have a greater opportunity to secure school places for children across multiple year groups at a single school. Parents with a 2-year-old child and 7-year-old child will be able to drop off or collect their child from one location. This will benefit parents who currently do multiple drop-offs for their primary and nursery aged children.

The additional nursery provision will safeguard the long-term provision of nursery places in the Sandhill Ward for the future.

### **Balance of Denominational Provision**

There will be no impact on the balance of denominational provision as the school does not have a religious character.

### **Special Educational Needs Provision (SEND)**

Thorney Close Primary currently specialises in provision for children with hearing impairment. While the 2-year-old provision will not be a specialist SEN offer the expertise across the wider school would be beneficial for any children that attend and who do have additional sensory requirements.

### **Travel**

The Council has considered the impact of travel within this proposal. The provision will be based at the current school site. It will offer a maintained nursery offer within a locality, will offer alternative places in a ward where alternative 2-year-old places are currently at risk and will enable some parents to reduce travel through the delivery of a 2 to 11 year-old offer on one site.

## Consultation

An informal (pre-publication) consultation upon the proposals took place during the following dates:

- 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022 – 18<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Consultees recommended in the relevant statutory guidance were consulted via a Consultation Document that was made widely available on the Council's website and the website of Thorney Close Primary School. Consultees included parents, staff, pupils, the local ward councillors and staff representatives (unions).

The consultation received 1 response. That response supported the proposal.

## Submission of Objections and Comments on Proposal

A copy of this proposal can be viewed on the Sunderland City Council website at

<https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/13038/School-organisation-consultations>

It can also be requested via:

E-mail: [alan.rowan@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:alan.rowan@sunderland.gov.uk)

Telephone: 07917 504203

Post: Retained Education Functions Lead, City Hall, Plater Way, Sunderland, SR3 1AA.

Within four weeks of the Publication Date below, any person may object to or make comments on the proposals by sending their written representations:

By e-mail to :-

[schoolorganisation@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation@sunderland.gov.uk)

Or by post to :-

Alan Rowan  
Retained Education Functions Lead  
City Hall,  
Plater Way,  
Sunderland,  
SR1 3AA

Signed : Patrick Melia,  
Chief Executive,  
Sunderland City Council.

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