

Moat Farm Infant School and Lavender Farm Day Nursery

Sandwell Council is consulting parents / carers, staff and the local community on the change of age range from 2 –7 years to 0–7 years at Moat Farm Infant School.

WHAT IS THE PROPOSAL?

The school's current registered age range is 2 -7 years; including Nursery and Reception for children aged 2-5 years and Key Stage One pupils aged 5–7 years.

The school also operates 'Lavender Farm Day Nursery', Brookfields Road, Oldbury, which provides 150 places for children aged 0–5 years, under the Governing Body's community powers as outlined in the Education Act 2002.

The school is due to convert to academy status in Autumn 2023 and join Stour Vale Academy Trust. The Academy Trust wishes to take over management of Lavender Farm Day Nursery but does not have the same community powers, therefore the current proposal is to extend the age range of the Infant School to include the children attending Lavender Farm Day Nursery.

THE SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND OUTDOOR AREAS

There would be no change to the school buildings or Lavender Farm Day Nursery.

WHY WE ARE PROPOSING A CHANGE

The Department for Education's policy for schools converting to Academy status is to 'convert as is policy'. The Early Years provision should normally be run in the same way post-academy conversion. If a school's governing body is providing Early Years provision under its

“community powers”, changes are required as those powers are not available to academy trusts.

Therefore, any Early Years provision that will be run by the Academy Trust post conversion, will need to be reflected within the Infant School’s age range. Stour Vale Academy Trust would be running Lavender Farm nursery following the school’s conversion to an Academy, the age range of the school must be changed to start from 0 years of age to include this provision, and the age range set out in the Academy’s Funding Agreement with the Department for Education should reflect the age range of all registered pupils at the Academy.

WHY ARE YOU CONSULTING NOW?

The Department for Education regulations: ‘Making significant changes (‘prescribed alterations’) to maintained schools’ requires that when the Local Authority is proposing a significant alteration, i.e., a change to the age range, it must consult upon the proposal and make a formal decision to make the alteration permanent.

The statutory process to change the age range needs to be completed before the school can convert to academy status which is due to take place 1 October 2023.

STANDARDS

Lavender Farm Day Nursery was last inspected by Ofsted in August 2022. Its overall effectiveness was rated as Good.

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/16/EY339394>

Ofsted completed a short inspection of Moat Farm Infant School in February 2019 the school retained its Good rating.

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/21/103949>

EFFECT ON OTHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES IN THE AREA

There is not expected to be any direct impact on any other educational institutes in the area.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL

As a condition of Moat Farm Infant School converting to academy status, Stour Vale Academy Trust will be required to ensure that both the

Nursery and School will continue to provide the same provision to the Oldbury community.

Continued Early Years provision for the local community providing children and families with early access to childcare services and support.

Combined management arrangements as Stour Vale Academy Trust and the new Academy would be responsible for all childcare and education provision at the expanded school for children aged 0-7 years.

WHEN WOULD THE PROPOSAL TAKE PLACE?

The expansion would take place on 1 October 2023. The age range of Moat Farm Infant School would be expanded from 2-7 to 0-7 years but continue as an Infant School.

All children currently on roll at the school and children who have been offered a Reception place for the academic year 2023/24 will continue to attend the expanded Infant School.

FINANCE

Lavender Farm Nursery and Moat Farm Infants School currently control their own finances with the income and expenditure of each accounted for separately to the Governing Body. Post age range change and conversion to an academy there are no plans to change this separation between the two entities and they would continue to report separately to both the Local Governing Body and the Academy Trust Board.

STAFFING

The number of staff currently employed at the Nursery and School is as follows:

	Teaching ¹		Non-teaching	
	Full time	Part time	Full time	Part time
Lavender Farm Day Nursery			18	18
Moat Farm Infant School	14	6	2	28
Total	16	6	20	46

¹ Including Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher

The staffing structure of the expanded Infant School would be the responsibility of the Governing Board to determine. There will be discussions with relevant trades unions about the staffing process.

MOAT FARM INFANT GOVERNING BODY

In all types of schools, governing boards should have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- a) Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction,
- b) Holding the executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, the performance management of staff; and
- c) Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

Moat Farm Infant School's governing body consists of the following;

Type of governor	No.
Local Authority appointed governor	1
Parent governors	2
Head teacher	1
Staff governors	1
Co-opted governors	8

Post conversion a Local Governing Body shall remain. Each member school of Stour Vale has a Local Governing Board or Interim Executive Board in place.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

The consultation period for this proposal ends at 5.00pm on 24 July 2023. The Council will then need to consider the outcome of the consultation exercise and decide whether to proceed with the proposal.

If the outcome of this process leads the Council to decide to go ahead with the proposal, it has to publish a legal notice called a 'Statutory

Proposal'. This notice, which would be published in September 2023 and would formally state that the Council intends to extend the age range of Moat Farm Infant School from 2-7 to 0-7 years and expand the school using the existing Nursery and School sites. The notice would explain how and when it would do this and would also give people the opportunity to make formal representations about the proposals. These representations would need to be made within 4 weeks of the publication of the Statutory Notice.

The Council would consider any formal objections in October 2023. A final decision would then be expected.

The table below shows the likely timeline should approval be given for the proposal to proceed:

DATE	ACTION
Monday 26 June	Initial consultation begins
Monday 24 July	Initial consultation ends
Wednesday 13 September	Cabinet meeting to consider feedback from consultation and whether to publish a Statutory Proposal
Monday 25 th September	Publish statutory notice
Sunday 22 nd October	End of statutory notice and representation period
w/c Monday 23 rd October	Director – Children and Education considers outcome of representation period and makes a final decision on the proposal

We would like to hear your views on the proposal, the next section provides information as to how you can share those views.

HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONSULTATION

You are invited to express your views on the proposal in writing. Please use the form at the end of this booklet, and return it to the school, or the address on the form, by 5.00pm on 24 July 2023. All views and comments must be received by this date in order to be considered by the Council when we decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal.

**CONSULTATION ON CHANGE OF AGE RANGE FROM 2– 7 YEARS
TO 0 – 7 YEARS AT MOAT FARM INFANT SCHOOL**

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM:

Please indicate, are you a:

Please tick

Parent / Carer

Governor

Member of staff

Member of the community

- Do you agree that the school age range should be changed to 0-7years

Yes / No* (*please delete as necessary)

Please add any comments here (and overleaf if necessary)

Signed:

Date:

Please return this form by 5.00pm 24 July 2023 to the school or, if you prefer to: School Organisation, Children and Education, Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, B69 3DE, school_organisationunit@sandwell.gov.uk

The information you provide on this form is subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations. Where applicable information entered will be forwarded to the relevant Education / Council sections for action or for a reply to be given.