

Consultation for a Nursery Class
for
St. Mary's CE Primary School Dilwyn

Stakeholders

The following stakeholders are invited to respond in four weeks' time from the date of issue of this document:

<p><u>As a body:</u> St. Mary's CE Primary School Governors Members of St Mary's Church of England Primary Academy Dilwyn Dilwyn Playgroup committee Trustees of the St. Mary's school building Dilwyn Cedar Hall Committee Dilwyn Parish Council St. Mary's Parochial Church Council Herefordshire Diocese Board of Education Herefordshire Council (Children's Well-being directorate)</p>	<p><u>As individuals:</u> Dilwyn Playgroup staff St. Mary's CE Primary School, Dilwyn staff Parents of children of the Dilwyn Playgroup Parents of children of St. Mary's CE Primary School, Dilwyn Local M.P. (Bill Wiggin) Ward Councillor (Mark Cooper) Local residents</p>
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Proposal

It is proposed that the existing Dilwyn Playgroup should be integrated with the St. Mary's CE Primary School, Dilwyn (thereafter referred to as the 'School') as a Nursery class.

Rationale

There are considerable educational benefits from shared facilities, teaching resources and teaching skills, from the integration of pre-school children aged 3-4 years old, alongside the Reception class (aged 4 and 5 years) of the school. The class of children aged 3-4 years would be referred to as the "Nursery Class". These children would then be familiar with the school and would pass seamlessly and without upset into the Reception class. The older children in the Nursery class could engage in extended pre-school learning as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Similarly, very young 'summer-born' children, who are still only just 4 years old when they enter the Reception class, could benefit from targeted learning according to their developmental stage. The Nursery class would experience the social skills of participating with older children.

Some activities, resources and teaching could be shared between the Nursery class and the Reception class. It is generally accepted that Nursery classes in Primary schools bring substantial benefits to the children, academically and in social skills and confidence. There is also potential for the provision of an out-of-school hours' club, which would help parents in employment.

Feasibility

Advice has been sought from the New Schools Network and the Department for Education. It has been advised that it is possible to form a nursery class in a Free School. Although some new Free Schools have been formed with a nursery class this form of association with an existing Playgroup has not been done before. It would constitute what is considered to be a "significant change" to the existing school. The official guidance on such a significant change has been consulted and the advice is that there should be a four-week consultation (which is the purpose of this document). A business case needs to be prepared and submitted following this consultation.

A free school can take over a pre-school and run the nursery as part of the school. The school will have to demonstrate that the nursery provision is not dependent on income from the main school to be financially viable. Any transfer of assets would have to be agreed by the independent provider and the school, taking advice from lawyers and the Education Funding Agency. The school would also have to demonstrate how any liabilities for the nursery would be separated from those of the free school.

If the Free school nursery is managed by the school governors, then the school will be exempt from registering the provision on the Early Years register. However, where there is childcare on a free school site, provided by an independent provider e.g. the management of a crèche (see below) and not the free school, or if the childcare is provided by a subsidiary company at arm's length from the free-school, then it is likely that the independent provider will need to register with Ofsted, unless the free school is still in control of the childcare provision.

Dilwyn Playgroup staff

The Playgroup staff would become employees of the school and under TUPE requirements they would retain all salaries, pensions and benefits as they previously had in the Playgroup.

Childcare/playgroup for 2 to 3 year olds

A nursery class would provide for children of 3 and 4 year olds; however, the existing Playgroup provides for younger children and these could not be entered as pupils of the school. However, it would be possible for childcare provision for 2 to 3 year olds to be run as a separate legal entity, either managed by the school or, if desired,

under its own management. In any case provision will be made for these younger children as this is considered to be a valuable social, educational and economic provision.

Dilwyn Playgroup Parents

The 3 and 4 year old children who are in the Playgroup would then automatically enter as pupils of the school and would progress to the Reception class. They would not have to apply for school places. If parents wanted to choose another school they would, of course, be able to do so. This requirement does limit the numbers in each year group, which currently would be 8 although the school may raise year group numbers to 10. The parents of younger children would still be offered the facility of the crèche.

Funding

The assets or liabilities of the Playgroup, excepting those related to the crèche, would be transferred to the school. Funding for nursery provision is not made by the Free School's Educational Funding Agency but would receive nursery education funding from the government under the same arrangements as currently occurs at Dilwyn Playgroup. (Parents use Nursery Education Funding to pay part or all of the fees due, and is administered locally by Herefordshire Council).

Accommodation

A study will be undertaken by the school and the Playgroup to determine the best and most economic means of providing accommodation for the Nursery class. The results of this study will form part of the business plan

Articles of Association

The Free School is a Company Limited by Guarantee and is registered as such at Companies House. The Articles of Association of the company: St. Mary's Church of England Primary Academy would need to be amended if a Nursery class were incorporated and the changes notified to Companies House. This would need to be checked by the school lawyers.

Consultation: what do you think?

Do you agree that St. Mary's CE Primary School, Dilwyn and the Dilwyn Playgroup should take all the necessary steps to join together to form a Nursery class in the school, whilst maintaining a childcare facility in the village for children under the age of three? *(Please tick your response and add any comments you may have)*

YES

NO

COMMENTS:

Please tick what type of stakeholder you are:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| St Mary's school Governing Body | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dilwyn Playgroup staff | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Members of St Mary's Academy
Dilwyn | <input type="checkbox"/> | School staff | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dilwyn Playgroup committee | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parent of child(ren) at Playgroup | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Trustees of the school building | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parents of child(ren) at St. Mary's
school | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dilwyn Cedar Hall Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> | Local M.P. (Bill Wiggin) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dilwyn Parish Council | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ward Councillor (Mark Cooper) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| St. Mary's Parochial Church Council | <input type="checkbox"/> | Local resident (with young children) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Herefordshire Diocese Board of
Education | <input type="checkbox"/> | Local resident (other) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Herefordshire Council (Children's
Well-being directorate) | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Please return your response by 31st March 2016 to St Mary's Primary School, Dilwyn, HR4 8HR or
e-mail: elaine.stilwell@stmarysprimarydilwyn.co.uk