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Consultation on the
Proposal to lower the
admission age of Milborne
St Andrew First School in
order to create an
integrated Early Years
Foundation Stage Unit
with effect from
September 2017

Headteacher: Sharon Hunt

Milborne St Andrew First School | Hopsfield | Milborne St Andrew | DT11 0LG

Tel: (01258) 837362 | Fax: (01258) 837170

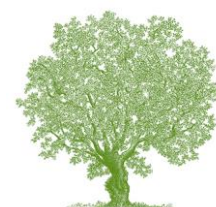
office@milborne.dorset.sch.uk | www.milborne.dorset.sch.uk

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide information on the proposed changes to the provision at Milborne St Andrew First School for pre-school aged children, which requires a lowering of the school's admission age. The Local Governing Body (LGB) of the Multi-Academy Trust has made the decision to consult on the proposed changes and wishes to receive the views and comments of all stakeholders in the Academy. We want to take the opportunity to clearly communicate the benefits of a Foundation Stage Unit at Milborne St Andrew First School.

The consultation period will run for 6 school weeks from Monday 6th June to Monday 18th July 2016.

The LGB will consider all comments received during the consultation period.



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Event	Timescales
Consultation Pack available	Monday 6 th June 2016
Consultation Events	Friday 17 th June - 6pm and/or
Milborne St Andrew School Hall	Wednesday 22 nd June – 9.15am
Any questions and feedback to be returned to school office	Monday 18 th July 2016
LGB & Trustees agree report	September 2016
Final outcome summary on website	October 2016

FAQ- Questions and Answers regarding a Foundation Unit



What is a Foundation Stage Unit?

- A Foundation Stage Unit is formed when a nursery class (3-4 year olds) and reception class (4-5 year olds) in schools, collaborate, share, communicate and integrate to provide high quality, effective provision across the Foundation Stage, meeting the needs and interests of all children. We will be a fully integrated FSU which means F1 (Nursery) and F2 (Reception) share the same internal and external space

Why develop a Foundation Stage Unit?

- There has been nationwide research done about Education 2016 which reports that many children are not ready for school when they start. We have seen an increase in the number of children not school ready year on year and believe that it is time to do something. Mrs Hunt has also been involved in Local School Readiness Group with a range of professionals
- To improve the quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Children receive continuity of educational experience throughout their time in the Foundation Stage – from age three to the end of the Reception Year
- Children are taught in a specialist unit staffed by trained Early Years team
- To help to sustain our school for future years, by attracting children to our village and school offering choice and extended days



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What are the benefits of a foundation Unit?

- There is evidence (Teaching and Play in the early years- a balancing act? July 2015) that where children who are a range of ages play and learn together ALL children do better. It means that children can access school resources and highly qualified staff.
- There are schools in Devon and Dorset who have been doing this or something similar and they have seen the positive impact and absolutely recommend it.

What will the impact be on Reception age children?

- Children can join the Foundation Stage in the Reception year. All children wishing to attend the school from Reception age up will be required to apply for a school place through Dorset County Council who administer the schools admissions process. Details can be found at www.dorsetforyou.com/school-admissions/apply-for-a-school-place. Attendance at the Foundation Stage (F1) will not guarantee a child a place at Milborne St Andrew First School.
- The children in Reception would possibly have up to seven preschool aged children working in the setting, in any session. This is regardless of Reception class size.
- Settings where this is already in place, talk about the benefits for the Reception children generally, and in terms of increased confidence and speech and language skills, in particular. We believe that the Reception children's experience will be enhanced by learning together with children of different ages

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What would it look like in our school?

- Our Foundation Stage Unit would cater for children who would traditionally be in 'nursery', 'preschool' and 'Reception' years. Our approach would recognise the very best practice in Early Years education, ensuring a safe, happy and secure environment for children to develop and grow. Our curriculum will be planned completely through play. Continuity and progression are ensured. Groupings are more flexible to benefit the children and staff can provide opportunities that are challenging and meet individual needs. We would work within the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework
- Our Foundation Stage Unit will be headed up by Miss Jenna Wittman, Class Teacher, and fully supported by Teaching Assistants. Our Early Years team would support and work with the children throughout the whole period of time in the Foundation Stage
- Pre-school & Reception children each have a 'home base' for times when it would be appropriate to separate the children, e.g. phonics
- Children will enjoy a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities and will have opportunities to learn as a whole group, in small groups and individually
- The setting has areas of learning organised for children to access independently, with children allowed to flow between classroom and outdoor area. They will have access to sand and water play, imaginative role play and small world toys, painting, drawing, playdough, cutting and sticking, puzzles, construction, writing and number activity areas, book corners, computers and interactive whiteboard, bikes and scooters, climbing, throwing and catching..... just to name a few of the activities that are always available
- Adults will assess children's needs, abilities and interests through observing them in their play and from these observations, will plan 'next steps' for the children
- Our 'wrap-around' care means we are open from 7:45am to 5:30pm, but our regular Foundation Stage sessions would run from 9.00-12.00am in the mornings, and 12.30pm-3.00pm in the afternoons, five days a week. Children also have the option to stay or join the lunchtime session between 12.00pm and 12.30pm and can choose to bring a packed lunch, or have one of our delicious school meals

How will the process for children joining the unit be managed?

- For the children in Preschool (F1) they would make a very smooth transition to Reception (F2). Initially they would have had their own transition to the unit. Children coming from other settings would have a similar transition programme to the existing model
- A Unit would benefit children as they are in the same part of the school for a longer period of time. This makes the first few years of education a time of emotional security which builds confidence and reduces the disruption which may be caused by transition. Children have familiar routines and work with the same team of familiar adults. Staff will know children and families very well, making it easier to cater for their needs.

What is the impact on curriculum and development?

- All Children in Early Years follow the same curriculum (EYFS). This gives children two years to explore and learn in a play environment which challenges children's thinking and promotes learning characteristics



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- Children will learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside
- All children in the FSU will be following the EYFS curriculum at a stage appropriate for their age and development. The EYFS Framework exists to support all professionals working in the EYFS to help your child and was developed with a number of Early Years experts and parents
- Your child will be learning skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating his/her understanding through seven areas of learning and development



What provision can the school offer?

- The school can offer a range of sessions
- The school hours of operation are suitable for families where parents are working
- Familiarity of surroundings and staff means easier transitions for children
- Single setting for parents with children of different ages
- Range of educational and environmental resources e.g. wild area, pond, field, outdoor play area, hall and PE equipment, Laptops and iPads
- A secure classroom and setting
- Consistent school teaching approaches
- Staff trained in particular areas of expertise e.g. SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator)



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What are the implications for local preschools?

- The Foundation Unit will only be able to cater for a small number of children, so children will need to access other provision
- Preschools usually cater for children who are two years plus and these children also need provision in the village
- The school would continue to work together with all local preschools to ensure transitions are effective and smooth for the children

What are the implications on the local community?

- There is extra provision for preschools so there is more choice within the community
- Offering an extended day within school setting may attract children to our village and school -thus building on our entry numbers and sustaining our village school for future years
- There is a demand for this provision within school and for parents to be able to choose their provider or use more than one