
Spencer Nursery School

Consultation on proposed changes to the
registration of Spencer Nursery School

The Proposal

1. The London Borough of Sutton is proposing to make changes to the registrations of Spencer Nursery School and Hackbridge Primary School. This proposal consists of two/three related proposals that, if agreed, will be implemented simultaneously as follows:
 - (i) London Borough of Sutton (LBS) close the Maintained Nursery School registration for the childcare for 3&4 year olds at Spencer Nursery School.
 - (ii) Hackbridge Primary School open (as part of the school registration) Nursery provision for 3&4 year olds to be delivered at the existing Spencer Nursery site.
 - iii) Increase the age range of Hackbridge Primary School from 3-11 to 2-11 to expand the early years provision to provide early years education and childcare for 2-5 year olds at the existing Spencer Nursery site.
2. These proposals do not include any substantive changes to the way that child care is delivered to parents and there is no intention to change the existing delivery at Spencer Nursery. Spencer Nursery will continue to deliver flexible childcare for privately funded and free entitlement funded places over 50 weeks of the year between 8am and 6pm daily.

Why is this proposal being made?

3. There are two main reasons why the Local Authority is consulting on these proposals:
4. **Academisation:** Hackbridge Primary School have indicated their desire to become an Academy as part of the Cirrus Trust. Consultation on this proposal took place in January 2018 and an academy order has been issued.
5. As funding from Government for education services has reduced in recent years, so has the level of support that the Local Authority can provide to maintained schools in the Borough. For this reason, the Local Authority generally supports schools becoming Academies and joining Multi Academy Trusts where the Trust has the necessary leadership capacity to support the school.

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6. However, in this circumstance, one of the difficulties of Hackbridge Primary School becoming part of the Cirrus Trust is that they would have to 'de-federate' from Spencer Nursery School in order to do it (legally maintained nurseries are not allowed to become part of a Multi Academy Trust).
 7. Spencer Nursery School federated with Hackbridge Primary School in November 2016. A 'federation' is where a number of maintained schools come together (in this case two) under one governing body and share leadership arrangements as well as a range of other aspects including ethos, pedagogy and teaching and learning approaches.
 8. De-federating Spencer Nursery School from Hackbridge Primary School would have a number of negative consequences:
 - a. With the costs of the above, Spencer Nursery School would become financially unviable for the local authority to maintain.
 - b. It would leave Spencer Nursery School without a Headteacher and a SENCo with the costs of having to recruit new staff.
 - c. A new Governing Body would need to be established at Spencer Nursery School.
 - d. As a relatively small provision, Spencer would become 'isolated' financially as well as educationally.
 9. Equally, keeping the partnership between the two schools will have a number of significant benefits:
 - a. Both settings can continue to work together to provide a sustainable and high quality 0-5 years childcare and education offer for the local area which is currently well utilised by families.
 - b. Children attending Spencer Nursery can continue to benefit from enhanced transition arrangements where parents choose Hackbridge Primary School when their child transitions to Reception, where the leadership is the same.
 - c. Early Years staff across both settings are provided with focused continual professional development and career development opportunities within the age range, ensuring high quality practice across the 0-5 age range.
 - d. The financial cost of the required leadership can be shared across the settings, which is especially beneficial to Spencer Nursery as the smaller of the settings.
 - e. Administration procedures can also be further aligned between the two settings if Spencer Nursery was to become part of Hackbridge Primary School, thereby streamlining additional costs and enabling Spencer Nursery to remain competitive as an affordable childcare provider.
 - f. The strong links between the two schools will enhance the teaching and learning for all early years children that attend and provide opportunities to share expertise and resource.

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- g. Families experience no change to their existing child care arrangements, so that children do not experience any disruption to their care or cause children to be unsettled.
10. **Uncertain financial future for Maintained Nurseries** - since September 2011, Nursery School funding has been subject to reductions in funding from Government. With the introduction of a new National Funding Formula for Early Years provision from April 2017, there are a number of new requirements on how the Local Authority must allocate funding to early years providers in the Borough, including Nursery Schools. One of the new requirements is to implement a local universal base rate for all types of providers by 2019/20 at the latest.
11. A universal base rate, would represent, a significant reduction in the basic 'cost per pupil' Maintained Nursery Schools receive (maintained nursery schools tend to have higher staffing costs related to the regulations they operate under). The Department for Education (DfE) whilst introducing the new funding formula, acknowledged the cost per pupil would result in a reduction in Maintained Nursery Schools budgets, therefore, they made a commitment to provide additional funding for Maintained Nursery Schools for the duration of this parliament (expected to be 2020) however the Government has not committed to funding them beyond this point. It is highly likely that if this funding is not provided the Nursery in its current form would need to close.
12. As a result of this uncertain financial future, the Local Authority is keen to explore ways in which the outstanding provision that Spencer Nursery provides can be maintained for the future. Changing the registration of the school and including this in the registration of Hackbridge Primary as part of a longer term plan to become part of the Cirrus Trust represent a stronger more resilient future for the Nursery than the status quo.
13. Following this announcement there has been increased pressure on government to make a commitment to additional funding for Nursery Schools for the long term. To date there has been no indication from DfE that this will happen. Therefore, local authorities need to start planning now to ensure there is sufficient high quality childcare for Sutton families in the future.

About the schools

14. Spencer Nursery School is a specialist maintained nursery school delivering high quality affordable childcare and education for children under 5. Spencer Nursery School provides 12 full-time places per day for 0-2 year olds, 12 full-time places per day for 2-3 years olds and 24 places a day, including full and some part-time places,

for 3 and 4 year olds for 50 weeks of the year from 8.00am until 6.00pm. In the schools latest inspection report for Early Years Provision it was judged to be 'Good' for education and 'Outstanding' for childcare in September 2017.

15. Spencer Nursery School federated with Hackbridge Primary School in November 2016. A federation is where is where a number of maintained schools come together (in this case two) under one governing body and share leadership arrangements.
16. Hackbridge Primary School is a popular four form entry community school, with attached nursery for 3 and 4 year olds, term time only, located in Hackbridge. Hackbridge is a 'Good' school as judged by Ofsted in July 2018.

Frequently Asked Questions

17. What are the benefits of this proposal?

- The proposals create a sustainable provision to ensure parents have the choice to accessing education for their children in a setting that employ qualified teachers.
- Maintain high standards of Nursery education including the nurturing and wellbeing of all pupils.
- Existing service users experience no change to their existing child care arrangements.

18. How will this affect me and my son/daughter?

As a result of this process there will be no change to the provision children access, existing contracts will be honoured. There is no intention to change the opening times or models of delivery as part of this process.

19. How will this affect staff either in Spencer Nursery or Hackbridge Primary School

Changes have already been made to the Spencer Nursery School staffing structure to ensure it continues to be financially viable.

20. When would the proposal take effect?

Subject to the consultation responses, it is LBS' proposal to change the registration status of Spencer Nursery School which will take effect on 1st April 2019.

21. Who makes the final decision on this proposal and how

The final decision will be made by members at the People Committee on 6 December 2018

22. Will this change the admissions arrangements for (i) Spencer Nursery and (ii) Hackbridge Primary School?

No, there is no intention to change the admission arrangements for either Spencer Nursery or Hackbridge Primary as part of this proposal. Admissions arrangements can be found on either Spencer Nursery School [website](#) or Hackbridge Primary School [website](#)

23. Applying for a place at Spencer Nursery

Parents can continue to apply for place at Spencer Nursery School during the consultation period, details can be found at www.spencernurseryschool.org.uk

When will it happen?

As Spencer is a Maintained Nursery, LBS are required to carry out a statutory process with a fixed timeframe that can be found below.

| Process | Proposed time frame |
|---|--|
| Consultation with stakeholders | 1 October - 2 November 2018 |
| Online public consultation available on Citizen space (INSERT LINK) | 1 October - 2 November |
| Public consultation meeting | 17 October 2018 Venue: Spencer Nursery School Spencer Road Mitcham Junction Hackbridge CR4 4JP Time: 6:00pm - 7:30pm |
| People Committee decision | 6 December 2018 |
| Implementation (subject to decision) | 1st April 2019 |

Have your say

To find out more, you are invited to the upcoming consultation meetings

Public Consultation meetings

Date: 17 October 2017

Venue: Spencer Nursery School

Time: 6:00pm - 7:30pm

You are able to give your feedback via the online consultation survey found [here](#).