



The Firs

Lower School



Consultation on proposed change of age range for The Firs Lower School, to incorporate, the opening of the new Firs Saplings Preschool in September 2017

Change of The Firs Lower School Age Range and Admissions Criteria

Currently children join our school in the September following their 4th birthday. From September 2017 we are proposing lowering our schools age range by 2 years, this will make the schools age range 2-9 years, rather than the current 4-9 years. This will enhance the physical Pre-School provision in Ampthill. Please note that although we are consulting to change our age range. The school's determined admission arrangements for school entry in September 2017 and September 2018 would remain unchanged.

Our determined admission arrangements for school entry in September 2019 would be altered to reflect the addition of the new pre-school as follows:

1. All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
2. Pupils attending The Firs Saplings Pre-School
3. Pupils living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4. Other pupils living in the catchment area
5. Other siblings
6. Pupils of members of staff
7. Any other children determined by straight line distance to the school site from the pupil's home address.

Proposed Admissions Criteria for The Firs Saplings Pre-School

From September 2017 when the new pre-school would open (on the existing Jack and Jill site) we propose to implement admissions criteria as follows

We will arrange our waiting list in birth date order.

If there are two or more children with the same date of birth, the following criteria will be used to allocate the available places:

- all looked after children or children previously 'looked after'
- siblings already attending the pre-school.
- pupils of members of staff.
- any other children, determined by straight line distance to the pre-school site, from the child's home address

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How can you ask questions, get more information & comment on the proposal?

Please see the attached Information sheet which outlines the reasons for this proposal. If you have any questions, please contact the school on the number above or by email to firs@cbc.beds.sch.uk

If you wish to make a response to this consultation, please email the school firs@cbc.beds.sch.uk or alternatively write to the address provided above for the attention of Mr Adam JG Campbell (Headteacher) and Dr R A'Court (Chair of Governors). We will be allowing 6 weeks for receiving responses, all responses must therefore be received by 3.30 pm on Friday 31st March 2017, to be considered by the Governing Body when making its decision.

Reasons for the proposal

This report aims to provide you with information on the reasons behind the proposal and what this change will mean in practice for Jack and Jill Ampthill Preschool and The Firs Lower School

Background:

Jack and Jill Ampthill Preschool is a charity providing Early Years Education run by a parent committee who are trustees of the charity. Jack and Jill Ampthill Preschool is having difficulty with succession planning i.e. finding a suitable parent to take on the role of Chair and finding further members to take on the positions which make up the committee. It has been recognised that the strict guidelines set by the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage makes the role of the registered provider a huge responsibility for a Parent/Carer to take on.

The Firs Lower is a popular school with 285 children on roll, currently taking children in to Reception (Pine) Class from the age of 4 up to the age of 9 years. We have a skilled and very dedicated staff, supportive parents, including an active PTA and happy children, who enjoy coming to school. Our Governing body is both knowledgeable and forward thinking in its approach and works hard to help the school to improve, building on the very high standards already established.

The Trustees of Jack and Jill Preschool have agreed at their AGM on 28th September 2016 to dissolve and wind-up the current charity and to transfer its operations and undertakings to The Firs Lower School Parent Teacher Association.

Key reasons:

The Firs Lower School propose to take over the management of Jack and Jill Preschool. The Governors believe by taking this step the school will be giving children a head start in their educational journey. Together, we believe that the children will benefit from continued high quality Early Years Education from an earlier age, ensuring all children get the best start in life and go on to succeed at school.

It is also recognised that with more Parents/Carers working and requiring more full time childcare, the new provision at the school will be in a better position to provide wrap around childcare

With increased housing being built in Ampthill there will be the potential to meet the increasing demand for high quality pre-school places and this will give long term security for the preschool and lower school.

There is space at the Firs Lower School to build a new pre-school building.

Potential implications of the proposal

- The School will need to lower the age range of the school by 2 years. The school will be following the required procedures laid down by the DFE
- The Firs Lower School will take over the provision of early years education at the present site as from 1st September 2017. We are proposing the new pre-school be named The Firs Saplings Pre School.
- The Firs Saplings Pre-school will be able to extend its hours to provide wrap around childcare.
- For the employees the take-over will involve consulting with and transferring the employees of the pre-school to the school in line with the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE).
- Central Bedfordshire Council is in the process of securing funds to build a purpose built pre-school on the school site so that the present site can be redeveloped.