

Summerseat Methodist Primary Academy

Consultation on the proposal to amalgamate the current Summerseat Nursery (run by the Epworth Education Trust Trustees) into Summerseat Methodist Primary school, so the nursery becomes a maintained nursery rather than a privately owned nursery thus changing the lower age limit for the school from age 4 years to 3 years to be able to offer an early years unit.

Context

Summerseat Methodist Primary school started to see its admission numbers decrease significantly particularly after its “Inadequate” Ofsted rating in March 2020.

After converting to an academy (Nov 2020) and joining an academy trust – Epworth Education Trust – the trustees felt admission numbers could increase if the school opened a pre-nursery particularly given the closure of some nurseries within the area.

However, as the school had an “Inadequate” Ofsted rating the nursery could not be established through the DFE significant change process.

After taking OFSTED advice, the Trustees registered and opened a private nursery at the school in July 2022. This has not only resulted in higher admission numbers for Summerseat Methodist school but also higher attainment than previously for when children join the school. However, workload has increased for the Headteacher (the registered owner) due to the duplication of paperwork, policies and curriculum planning as well as the additional ownership of being inspected separately by OFSTED.

In November 2023, Summerseat Methodist Primary school was re-inspected by Ofsted and received the rating of “good” with “outstanding” for personal development.

The Trustees would therefore now like to amalgamate the current Summerseat Nursery (run by the Epworth Education Trust Trustees) into Summerseat Methodist Primary school, so the nursery becomes a maintained nursery rather than a privately owned nursery.

Why are we proposing the change?

We believe this is good for children’s education because it makes the most of the expertise of the staff across the nursery and the school. By bringing the nursery and the school together at the Foundation Stage, children will be given the benefit of outstanding Early Years practice underpinning a world-class primary experience, through further engagement in joint planning with subject experts across school.

What are the benefits of the nursery becoming a maintained nursery under the umbrella of the school?

By joining together, we will create further opportunities to enhance the education offer:

- wider access to resources for all our children
- ensure top quality early years provision is embedded at the heart of children's educational experience.
- greater transition support for all children (especially those who have been identified as having an additional need) across the Early Years phase and into Key Stage 1
- greater opportunity for Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 phases to keep improving and moving forward.
- greater financial stability as well as ease of obtaining EYFS funding to make certain we continue to offer world-class education.
- continued development of our strong community links

What will it mean for the children?

The whole purpose of the amalgamation is to create an environment that will have a positive impact on the quality of education that children receive. In the future, there would be the same policies and procedures, and the same dates for staff training days.

The opening hours and capacity of the nursery will remain unchanged and nursery children will still be able to access the before and after school club.

What will it mean for the staff?

There will be more development opportunities for the staff, such as shared training and the chance to work more closely across the curriculum and gain experience and understanding of all key stages.

Procedure to achieve the merger

It is proposed that the nursery will merge with the school on the 1st April 2024 so the nursery becomes a maintained nursery rather than a privately owned nursery thus changing the lower age limit for the school from age 4 years to 3 years to be able to offer an early years unit as well as having the same OFSTED registration number.

Bury council are aware of the proposed change and will change the way it funds the school and maintained nursery as from 1st April 2024. The privately run nursery will stop trading on 31st March 2024.

Why are we consulting on the above proposal?

We have a responsibility to consult with the wider community on any prescribed alteration or significant change to the organisation and structure of the school. The Department for Education set out how the consultation should run, and we will be following those guidelines.

How can you have your say?

You can have your say by;

Writing your response and handing into the school office; or alternatively you can complete this online form: <https://forms.office.com/e/ctWzJWDMGW>

How long is the consultation period?

The consultation period will be open on 8th January 2024 and it will run until 11.59pm on 14th February 2024.

If you have any further questions regarding the process or proposal, please do not hesitate to contact the Headteacher Julie Whittaker via email Head@summerseat.epworthtrust.org.uk or telephone – 01706 823427