

Early consultation

Increasing early years provision for children in Fishermead, Oldbrook and Springfield

This six week early consultation seeks to gather opinions on potential options for increasing the number of early education places in the Pebbles Children Centre area, which covers Fishermead, Springfield and Oldbrook. This is the first stage in the process:



What is the current position?

All councils are required by law to ensure there are enough free child care education places (for a maximum of 15 hours a week over a minimum of 38 weeks of the year) for eligible two year olds and all three and four year olds. This can be delivered through a variety of different providers including: childminders, day nurseries, nursery units of independent schools, pre-schools, school nursery classes and nursery schools.

The Pebbles Children Centre reach area covers Fishermead, Oldbrook and Springfield. Provision in this area includes (with the latest Ofsted judgements as at 13 October 2014):

- 18 childminders (2 Outstanding, 5 Good, 5 Requires Improvement, 6 no grade as yet)
- 2 day nurseries (1 Good, 1 Requires Improvement)
- 2 pre-school playgroups (1 Good, 1 Requires Improvement)
- 1 school nursery class (from age 3) (Good)

Attending early education provision is not required by law, however the council would like to ensure there are enough places across a range of providers so that at least 90% of eligible two year olds and 98% of three and four year olds are able to attend local provision. These targets are high compared to the rest of the country. This is difficult to plan for as parents choose to access provision in different ways (for example one child may use two different providers or a provider outside their local area). Further, due to the central location of the Pebbles Children Centre reach area, provision is also used by children who live out of the local area, putting pressure on local places.

What is changing?

Our forward planning shows that if participation rates for eligible two year olds reach 90%, as preferred, there would be insufficient sessional care places for two year olds in this area. Sessional care is when parents/carers want to access free early education provision for a few hours each day, often either a morning or afternoon. In addition, our planning figures demonstrate that there is a decreasing surplus of provision for three and four year old provision.

What are the options?

Option 1: The council does nothing.

This would mean that the council would need to rely on the private sector and voluntary organisations to establish new provision, which has already happened in this area; however this is limited by the availability of suitable premises. Further places are still required, meaning there may be children who wish to access provision locally for whom there are no places available.

Option 2: The council works with local schools to open new provision

2a At Oldbrook First School: Ofsted: 'Good' (with 'Outstanding' features) 27 November 2012
Oldbrook First School (which also serves the Moorland Children's Centre reach area) is aware through regular feedback from parents/carers who are local residents that they would like the school to be able to offer sessional care. It is envisaged that the school could offer up to 72 places for two, three and four year olds if a new nursery unit were to be added to the school via a small building programme. This provision could be open during 2016 and would serve the additional demand from Oldbrook area.

2b At Jubilee Wood Primary School: Ofsted: 'Requires Improvement' (with 'Good' features)
9 January 2013

In 2015 the council will be undertaking a significant building programme at Jubilee Wood Primary School. In September 2016 the school will move onto one site and vacate the infant school site (previously known as Penwith School). Jubilee Wood Primary School will continue to run the old infant site. It is envisaged that the old infant school building could become an early year's centre, offering around 100 places for 2, 3, and 4 year olds for local families, as well as being the new location of the current day nursery provision (offering full day care to children for working parents) run by Acorn Childcare at The Willows. A small amount of refurbishment of the old infant school site would be required to ensure that facilities were appropriate for this purpose. This provision could be open from as early as September 2016 and would serve the additional demand from Fishermead and beyond.

2c At The Willows School and Early Years Centre: Ofsted: 'Good' 13 March 2014

The Willows School and Early Years Centre already has a nursery class for children aged three and four. However, the school is aware through regular feedback from parents/carers who are local residents that they would like the school to extend this provision for two year olds, in line with the new entitlement. From September 2016 the school will be expanding the number of places available for children starting school by 15 places. To accommodate this, the current full day care provider (Acorn) will be moving from The Willows School into Jubilee Wood Primary School. This vacated area of The Willows' building will then be used for the sessional care already offered by the school and it is envisaged that the school could also offer up to 8 places for two year olds. This provision could be open from as early as September 2016 and would serve the additional demand from Fishermead, Springfield and beyond.

What happens next?

The council would like to know what you think about these options before deciding whether to develop a firm proposal. In order to provide more information and answer any questions we will be holding public information events as follows:

- **Oldbrook First School:** Monday 20 October 2014 8.30am-10.30am
- **Jubilee Wood Primary School:** Thursday 16 October 2014 5.00pm-7.30pm
- **The Willows School and Early Years Centre:** Tuesday 21 October 2014 2.45pm-5.00pm
- **Orchard Academy:** Wednesday 5 November 2014 8.30am-10.30am
- **Pebbles Children Centre:** Tuesday 4 November 2014 6.00pm-8.00pm

Please attend one of these sessions if possible and then complete the questionnaire online at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/consultation to help us shape the next steps for your community. **This early consultation will end on 23 November 2014.**