



Information regarding the proposal to close the Nursery Provision at Ribble Drive with effect from September 2017

Informal Consultation:

This was verbal and took place both prior and following the January intake:

- **Schools:**

As rolls have been steadily decreasing since the onset of 2 year old funding, other local schools were consulted: Whitefield Community Primary, Mersey Drive and All Saints all confirmed that they had surplus places and were not expecting to be at full capacity in September 2017. St Michaels had few surplus places but expected some places in September 2017. Unsworth do not have a school Nursery as they have a Private provider on site, open for much longer periods-as do we.

- **Staff:**

Staff were consulted: they suggested a January intake to try to significantly increase the intake, which was explored.

- **Parents**

From the 23 eligible families approached about the January intake, 10 responded but only 9 took up the offer. 11 families did not intend to use Nursery provision at Ribble Drive or elsewhere

- Families with pre-nursery age children attending the Whitefield Hub were also approached: most of them were not interested/did not see the relevance as their children were still too young; many would prefer to keep their children at home, or those returning to full-time work preferred to use private providers: some expressed an interest, but in St Michaels or St Bernadettes, as they wanted a Catholic placement.
- Families already attending the school were spoken to, informally, both on the playground and in school, to gauge response: again, most with babies didn't see the relevance of the question. Only 2 with 2 year olds felt they would use the Nursery facility.
- **At the Formal stage**, the Head was approached, both on the yard and in school about the proposal: those parents were disappointed but understood the reasons why and were able to see the bigger picture.
- A meeting was held in school with one family. This was attended by the Head, the Chair of Governors and a local Councillor.

- After a turbulent period of staffing which has lasted some years, the school finally has a settled staff with excellent Teaching Assistants and Higher Level Teacher Assistants and Special Support Assistant(1:1 with named children) support throughout. This has led to a marked increase in all outcomes: in KS2 results have improved by up to 28%, Phonics Screening by 20% to 93%. This is due to settled staffing and well planned and carefully targeted interventions delivered by experienced and skilled support staff.
- If this proposal is not approved, the reduced budget will mean that school still has to make redundancies. Due to the criteria for the redundancy of support staff, this is likely to be the same staff, but the process would have to begin again. This is both cruel, and undermines staff morale. It would also mean that following redundancies other support staff would have to be redeployed from the areas in which they are having a marked impact on children's outcomes and life chances.
- It is understood that many of the current F1 children who would use the Nursery Class if the proposal is overturned have obtained places at alternative settings.
- All figures quoted in the previous report were accurate at the time it was written, and we have had no other families contacting school since then to add their children's names or to express an interest. With a 52 place Nursery, we have run well under capacity for a number of years and, particularly in light of the current budget reductions, school can no longer afford to absorb the shortfall.