



Proposal to change the Age-Range at Rainford Brook Lodge Primary School from 30th September 2023

This proposal provides relevant information in accordance with the *School Organisation (Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools Statutory guidance 2023*.¹

School Details:

Rainford Brook Lodge Primary School
Rufford Rd
Rainford
St Helens
WA11 8JX

Local Authority Details:

St Helens Council
People Services
Education & Learning
School Place Planning
PO Box 512
WA10 9JX

Description of the proposal:

To meet the demand for school places, St Helens Council may need to make changes to existing schools. Proposals are subject to a range of statutory processes and consultations, for prescribed alterations to maintained schools, opening and closure of schools, and school admission arrangements.

This prescribed alteration proposal is to permanently change the lower age-range of the School from age 4-years to age 3-years. The primary reason for this is to ensure the School's seamless transition and conversion to Academy status. The conversion is intended to take place on 1st October 2023, when the School will join the Everyone Matters Schools Trust; a multi academy trust which already operates academies in the local area. The prescribed alteration will also safeguard the correct amount of good quality Early Years places for the families in the Rainford area.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>



Currently, the early years provision ‘Tadpoles’, which provides pre-school provision for children aged 3–4, is provided by the Governors of the School by way of their community powers set out under s.27 of the Education Act 2002. As academy trusts operate as a distinct and separate legal entity, by a legal technicality, they are not able to operate early years provision on the same basis. This would mean that, without this consultation and the change to the School’s age-range, upon conversion to academy status, the School would not be able to continue to operate the nursery provision. This would lead to a lack of early years places in the Rainford area which is required by local families.

For the School to comply with the law and provide early years places the school must incorporate the nursery provision into its single age-range to meet the requirements of the supplemental funding agreement upon transition to academy status.

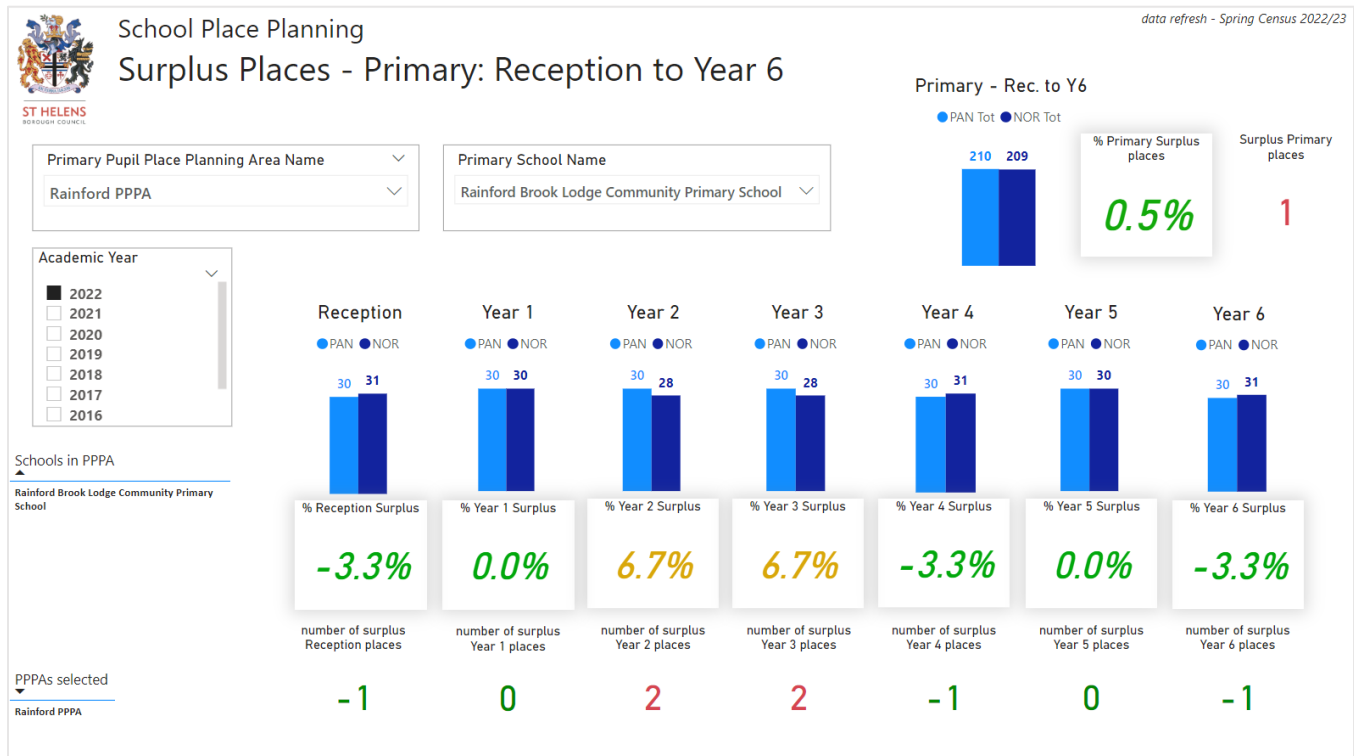
St Helens Council, the Headteacher and governing body of the school, the Academy Trust (the Everyone Matters Schools Trust) and DfE advisors, have been cooperating throughout the academy conversion process, and have agreed that the best way to incorporate the nursery age-range and ensure early years places is to follow the ‘prescribed alterations to maintained schools’ procedure before the point of conversion and to undertake the statutory consultation process.

The purpose of this proposal is to seek Cabinet approval to change the age-range of Rainford Brook Lodge Primary School from 4-11 to 3-11 from 30th September 2023, or from the date of the outcome and decision made at the end of this consultation process, if after 30th September 2023.



Rainford Brook Lodge Primary School

The School provides primary education for pupils between the ages of 4 and 11 years. The school currently has places for a total of 210 pupils. The school was rated “Good” by Ofsted in its last inspection. As set out in the graph below, the School is well subscribed and consistently near full capacity in all year groups. The proposal will not have any impact on the availability of places at the School as those in the nursery will not be given a preference for admission to Reception in the School’s oversubscription criteria.



It is proposed to lower the age-range of the school from age 4-years to age 3-years from 30th September 2023, or upon the final decision made at the end of the statutory consultation process which will move the provision of 23 full time equivalent nursery places into the school’s age range.

The proposal will have no implications for parents or children as the same staff which children are familiar with will continue to work in the nursery and operate within the EYFS framework.



Effect on other schools in the area:

The change will not jeopardise the viability of any other mainstream school.

Site Arrangements:

The nursery will continue to operate from within the School's site.

Projects Costs and Funding:

No costs are directly linked to the proposal; however, a maintained nursery would require qualified Teacher level pay grade, the cost of which will be met in the first instance by the School and then the Everyone Matters Schools Trust upon the point of conversion.

Implementation:

The proposal would be implemented from 30th September 2023, or from the date of the outcome and decision made at the end of this consultation process, if after 30th September 2023.

Details of how to respond to the proposal:

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal (by 4th August 2023) any person wishing to submit any comments either in support of, or objecting to, the proposal may do so by sending them to:

Roger Litherland
St Helens Council
People Services
Education & Learning
School Place Planning
PO Box 512
WA10 9JX

Email : rogerlitherland@sthelens.gov.uk

All comments will receive an acknowledgement and will be incorporated into the final summary report on this decision. If you would like a copy of this proposal, please notify the Officer above.

Responses required by Friday 4th August 2023