

September 2018

Dear Stakeholder

Consultation on the proposed closure of the nursery provision; Little Laurels.

What are we consulting on?

Laurels Primary School is a Primary Academy that forms part of the Durrington Multi Academy Trust (DMAT). The Primary School currently offers nursery places for children aged 2-4 at the Little Laurels. The majority of these places are for children who are entitled to the Early Years Free Entitlement, for 15 hours per week per child. A few children take additional hours on top of their funded entitlement.

The nursery has places for up to 32 children. 8 two year olds and 24 three to four year olds for morning or afternoon sessions between the hours of 9am – 3pm, term time only; this equates to up to 64 potential places.

This consultation is to consider the proposal to close the Little Laurels Nursery with effect from 19th October 2018 and, as a result, to change the academy's age range from two to four years old; becoming four to eleven.

Why are we doing this?

The Headteacher and Chair of Governors of the Laurels and DMAT leaders have engaged with the Board of Trustees to consider the future of the Little Laurels Nursery, including the possibility of its closure. The Laurels Primary school (and thus the Little Laurels nursery) joined DMAT on 01/01/2018 from another Multi Academy trust. Since its transfer date it has become apparent that the Little Laurels nursery is operating at a loss, with staff wages exceeding nursery income and no running costs historically being attributed to the nursery for the services it uses.

The losses that are currently incurred, and are predicted to be incurred, by the nursery are being covered using funding provided by the Education Services Funding Agency (ESFA) for our primary aged children (year R – Year 6). This has a detrimental effect on the resources we can offer across the School.

The nursery is located within the school grounds in a modular unit that has 2 rooms plus a room for an office, a kitchen and toilets. The modular unit is over 25 years old and almost at the end of its useful life. The maximum occupancy of the unit is set at 32 children per morning or afternoon session. The take up of the nursery places is very low, with only 33 children on roll, up to 64 places are available. This may rise slightly in January and again in April but with historical data we have been able to find and the known demographics of the area that it serves, this is unlikely

As with all nursery provision, Laurels Primary School receives Government Early Years funding based on the number of children who turn 3 each term. This means that the numbers for September are at their lowest and increase slightly at Christmas and Easter. There is no funding available for empty places that are kept open to accommodate the children who become eligible in January and April.

Currently there is very little demand for fee paying places for children due to the availability of full day, all year round provision locally. Fee income accounts for approximately 20% of the current income. In order to expand this type of income the nursery would need to operate 51 weeks of the year from 8am to 6pm which would require significant further investment in the premises, resources

and staffing with no guarantee of take up. The area is currently well served for full day care provision with 31 settings offering pre-school places within a 3-mile radius.

Financial Information

Year	Income	Expenditure	Deficit/Projected deficit
2017-2018	112,000.00	125,884.00	13,884.00
2018-2019	87,766.00	131,159.00	43,393.00
2019-2020	87,766.00	134,118.00	46,352.00

To ensure our future provision is fit for purpose the following investment is required.

£20,000.00 – new resources and a better play surface immediately.

£100,000 (likely to exceed this value) – existing modular building is reaching the end of its useful life and will need to be replaced within the next 2-5 years.

What impact will the proposed changes have?

The proposed change will close the Little Laurels Nursery on October 19th 2018. This means that children who will be attending at that time will need to find alternative early years provision from October 22nd 2018. This will also affect children who are currently booked for January and April 2019. There is currently only one child on the waiting list as of September 2018.

Alternative provision

We believe that the area surrounding the school and nursery is currently well served for provision. According to the West Sussex Family Information Service there are 10 nurseries within a mile of the nursery that accept the Early Years entitlement

<http://familyinfoservice.westsussex.gov.uk>

In the sufficiency assessment, ‘Securing sufficient Childcare in West Sussex’ (www.westsussex.gov.uk/childcaresufficiency), published in Autumn 2017 it states that

‘Data currently shows that across the district, there is currently sufficient childcare to meet the needs of the families needing or wanting it, including those eligible for 30 hours from September 2017. ‘

We believe that there will be enough space available for the children.

Can I still book a place for my child?

At this stage we are only consulting with stakeholders and no decision has been made. You can still apply for a place at Little Laurels Nursery, however if the proposal were to be approved the nursery will close on 19th October 2018 and we would therefore encourage you to consider alternative provision in conjunction with the Little Laurels.

What alternatives has the school considered?

The Board of Trustees has considered a number of options

Offer more hours to fee-paying families

We could take more children at the nursery if these children paid fees for their additional hours. This could increase our income. The operating hours (9-3, term time only) do not suit working families and to move to a full day care model would further increase staff costs without the guarantee of the families joining the nursery.

Mornings only

We could limit the flexibility we currently offer and children could only attend for 5 mornings a week. Unfortunately, this model would not work financially as we would still need to assign a Manager and there is no guarantee that 5 morning sessions would suit the families. Our modelling shows this would not be viable.

Increase the capacity

The original business case in 2016 assumed a move within the school premises and a capacity of 64 children. Unfortunately, there is no space available in the school to increase the capacity or capital investment funding even if there was space.

What are the risks with this proposal?

Some of the current cohort have siblings in the school and to close the Little Laurels may inconvenience these families. However there are other local pre-schools with spaces so it would be reasonable to still access Early Years provision with siblings attending the school.

There is a risk that parents may feel that their children will not be able to make friends easily when they enter reception. Children from a range of settings attend the reception class at Laurels and so the children would inevitably be making new friendships anyway regardless of their nursery provision.

There is a significant risk that the quality of the provision at the primary school is impacted as resources are used in subsidising the nursery. This is not fair or appropriate.

What is the process for the consultation and the change?

The timeline for these proposals is outlined below:

Start of consultation:	7th September 2018
Communication to parents:	7th September 2018
Individual consultation meetings:	10th September 2018
Presentation to RSC:	13th September 2018
End of consultation:	8th October 2018
Analysis of responses:	8th – 11th October 2018
RSC decision :	by 11th October 2018
DMAT Board decision :	by 11th October 2018
Decision communicated:	11th October 2018
Notice of redundancy issued:	19th October 2018 (if proposals go ahead)
Little Laurels to close on:	19th October 2018
Appeals lodged by:	26th October 2018
Redundancies to take effect on:	20th October 2018

What will happen after the consultation?

We will consider all the views and make a decision whether to proceed with the closure, if the decision is made to proceed, a report outlining the results of the consultation will be included in an

application to the Department for Education (Dfe) and the office of the regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) who will make the final decision.

Appendix 1

Pre-schools/Nurseries within 3 mile radius of Little Laurels (information from Google Maps)	
Nursery/Pre-school Name	Mileage
Little Owls Nursery - Hawthorns	0.30
Early Explorers Childcare - Northbrook	0.70
Field Place Infant School Nursery Class	0.80
St Richard's Pre-school (Worthing)	0.80
Marriotts Nursery School	1.20
Goring Methodist Pre-school	1.30
Bright Kiddies	1.30
Kamelia Kids	1.50
Goring Little Fishes	1.50
Durrington Nursery	1.60
Ladybird Pre-school (Worthing)	1.70
Lindens Pre-school Group	1.80
Ferring Funtime Community Pre-school	1.90
Young Explorers - Goring	2.00
Busy Bees Pre-school (tarring)	2.00
Laugh and Learn Tarring	2.00
Elm Grove Childcare Club (Little Elms)	2.10
Nook Nursery	2.10
St John's Pre-school (Worthing)	2.10
Bright Little Buttons Montessori Nursery School	2.40
Offington Park Pre-school	2.50
Findon Valley Free Church Pre-school	2.60
Children First Nursery And Forest School	2.70
New Montessori Pre-school	2.70
Home From Home Nursery Worthing	2.70
All Saints Pre-school	2.80
Little Rascals Preschool	2.90
St Matthew's Church Pre-school	2.90
Kingfisher Pre-School (Queen Street)	2.90
Sunshine Nursery (Worthing)	2.90
Chappell Croft Nursery	3.00
Total Number of Pre-schools/Nurseries	31

Having your say?

We welcome feedback from everyone and this can be given in any of the following ways

Completing the attached questionnaire and returning it to the Laurels Primary School office or the by posting it to Mrs Kentfield, Durrington Multi Academy Trust, The Boulevard, Worthing BN13 1JX or emailing to jkentfield@durring.com

Consultation Questionnaire on the Proposed Closure of the Little Laurels Nursery

Please tell us in what capacity you are responding by ticking just one box:

	Please tick
Parent of a child currently attending Little Laurels Nursery	
Parent of a child/children attending Laurels primary School (YR – Y6)	
Staff member at Little Laurels	
Staff member at Laurels Primary School	
Parent of a child intending to join Little Laurels	
Other (Please state)	

Taking all the information into account outlined in this consultation do you agree with the proposal to close Little Laurels Nursery?

	Please tick
Strongly Agree	
Tend to agree	
Neither agree or disagree	
Tend to disagree	
Strongly disagree	
Don't know	

Do you have any further comments regarding this proposal?

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