

**Record of
Executive
Decisions
published
10/Nov/2022**



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City Hall
Sunderland

10 November 2022

Record of Executive Decisions Published: 10 November 2022

Decision Taker: School Organisation Committee of Cabinet
Appropriate Scrutiny Committee: Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee

Date decision in force: 18 November 2022

Date of decision: 10 November 2022

Title and author(s) of written report:

Proposal to lower the age of admission at Thorney Close Primary School to facilitate the admission of two-year-olds.

Full description of decision:

Note the responses to the statutory and pre-publication consultations and consider the statutory proposal which is to:

Lower the age range of Thorney Close Primary School, Torquay Road, Sunderland, SR3 4BB from 3 – 11 years of age to 2 -11 years of age with effect from 1 January 2023.

Under the provisions of the relevant legislation, the Authority may approve published proposals with or without modification or may reject them.

The Committee approved the proposal as detailed above.

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

Thorney Close Primary School currently offers statutory early years provision for children from the age of three. The school's current offer focuses on the delivery of the statutory 15-hour entitlement. Lowering the age of admission at the school would allow the extension of this provision to include 2-year-old children and would enable the delivery of the free early years entitlement available to disadvantaged families.

Lowering the age of admission would ensure the ongoing sustainability of early years provision for 2-year-olds in the area. It would also enable parents with both 2-year-old and older children who may already attend the school to drop their children at one single setting instead of multiple settings across the area, therefore making 2-year-old provision more convenient and accessible to an increased range of families.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

- Retain the current range at Thorney Close Primary School.

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Is this a key decision:	Yes
Does the Decision contain Confidential/Exempt Information:	No
Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:	None

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Decision Taker: School Organisation Committee of Cabinet
Appropriate Scrutiny Committee: Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee

Date decision in force: 18 November 2022

Date of decision: 10 November 2022

Title and author(s) of written report:

Proposal to increase the capacity of Sunderland's Pupil Referral Unit (The Link School/PRU); to establish satellite delivery sites in the Coalfields, Washington and South Sunderland areas; and to establish a Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) specialist provision at the potential Coalfields satellite provision.

Full description of decision:

Note the responses to the statutory and pre-publication consultations and consider the three related statutory proposals which are to:

- Enlarge and increase the capacity of Sunderland's Pupil Referral Unit from 172 to 220 places with effect from 1 January 2023;
- Establish satellite sites for Sunderland's Pupil Referral Unit in Hetton, Washington and South Sunderland; and
- Establish a resourced Social, Emotional and Mental Health Unit at Sunderland's Pupil Referral Unit.

Under the provisions of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, the Authority may approve published proposals with or without modification or may reject them.

The Committee approved the proposal as detailed above.

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

The proposals had been identified as necessary to ensure that Sunderland City Council continued to effectively meet its statutory duty to ensure that there were enough places to meet demand.

The proposal to provide satellite provision sites for Sunderland PRU ensures that provision could be accessed within localities. This would reduce the need for young pupils, particularly those aged between 5 and 11 years of age, to travel to the city centre to access appropriate provision for their needs.

Assessment centre models within the satellites would increase the potential for a pupil's successful re-integration back into their substantive school place while also facilitating greater cross key stage working with their substantive mainstream setting or, alternatively, lead to a more appropriate special school or provision placement.

The proposal to establish a SEMH provision in the Coalfields would ensure that provision was located and distributed across the city, with the current SEMH provision all based in the city centre. It would also provide much needed additional capacity in Sunderland resulting in fewer out of area or independent school placements.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

- Retain current PRU site locations only – This would not enable pupils to access specialist provision within their home localities leading to extended travel time, high transport costs and greater potential for failed re-integration back into substantive school places following pupils' period in a resourced provision.
- Retain current levels of SEMH provision – As the city's mainstream SEMH provision was currently at capacity this would result in pupils being placed in out of area or independent places, resulting in increased travel time, a need to commission out of area residential places or placement at independent settings which would lead to pressure on the local High Needs Block.

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Is this a key decision: Yes

Does the Decision contain Confidential/Exempt Information: No

Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:

Councillor Williams declared an interest as the Chair of Governors of Oxclose Community Academy and took no part in the decision making for this item.