

**Record of
Executive
Decisions
published
19/07/2019**



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Sunderland

19 July 2019

Record of Executive Decisions Published: 19 July 2019

Decision Taker:

School Organisation Committee of Cabinet

Appropriate Scrutiny Committee:

Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee

Date decision in force:

29 July 2019

Date of decision:

17 July 2019

Title and author(s) of written report:

Proposed Closure of Millfield Community Nursery School – Executive Director of Neighbourhoods

Full description of decision:

To approve the proposal to discontinue (close) Millfield Community Nursery School, Bell Street, Sunderland, SR4 6JR with effect from 31 August 2019.

Reasons for decision:

The nursery school has become financially vulnerable in recent years and has an operational budget deficit which has increased year on year since 2015. In that time the nursery has restructured the staffing base on three occasions, however neither staffing restructure nor attempts to increase pupil recruitment have been sufficient to resolve the budget deficit. The deficit was projected to increase further in future years, impacting further on the nursery's ability to offer a good provision in a safe and secure environment and remain operational.

The nursery has a capacity of 120 nursery aged pupils. As of the January 2019 Census, there were 55 pupils on roll with 54% of the available places at the nursery being unfilled. Millfield Community Nursery has projected that 24 places will be required for the Autumn 2019 cohort. This equates to 20% of the nursery's capacity.

Despite increased demand for nursery places in the Millfield Ward the number of families seeking places at Millfield Community Nursery School has fallen in recent years. Between Spring 2017 and Spring 2019 there was an 8% increase in demand for nursery places in the Millfield ward. However, over the same period demand for places at Millfield Community Nursery school had fallen by 15%.

Data had demonstrated an increasing preference within the local community for nursery places within a school setting as opposed to attendance at a maintained nursery school. In the Millfield Ward in Spring 2017, 38% of local children were attending Millfield Community Nursery School in comparison to 62% attending a nursery setting within one of the two local primary schools. In Spring 2019 the proportion of children attending Millfield Nursery had fallen to 30% with 70% attending a nursery within a primary school.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

- Retain Millfield Community Nursery School.
- Restructure Existing Staffing Base

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Is this a key decision:

Yes

Does the Decision contain Confidential/Exempt Information:

No

Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:

None