



Equality Analysis Toolkit

**The Future of Maintained Nursery
Provision at Edisford Primary School,
Clitheroe**

For Decision Making Items

3 March 2022

Question 1 - What is the nature of and are the key components of the proposal being presented?

The increasing of the school age at Edisford Primary School from 3 to 11 years, to 4 to 11 years with effect from 1 April 2022. .

Question 2 - Scope of the Proposal

Is the proposal likely to affect people across the county in a similar way or are specific areas likely to be affected – e.g. are a set number of branches/sites to be affected?

This relates to the Ribble Valley District, Clitheroe area only.

Question 3 – Protected Characteristics Potentially Affected

Could the proposal have a particular impact on any group of individuals sharing protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, namely:

- Age
- Disability including Deaf people
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race/ethnicity/nationality
- Religion or belief
- Sex/gender
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage or Civil Partnership Status

And what information is available about these groups in the County's population or as service users/customers?

No. The proposal is focused on provision for 3 to 4 year olds.

Prior to seeking a formal decision to close the nursery, the Governors verbally consulted with parents as to how the school could increase the uptake in places. Parents fed back that they felt limited by the 9 am to 3 pm offer, that was only available during term time. For September 2021, the anticipated intake suggested only 3 pupils would enrol.

The existing pupils in the nursery would transfer to an alternative provider.

As the families were already aware of the prospective closure, they have had time to make alternative arrangements.

The nursery was under-subscribed due to the limited hours on offer.

The impact has been mitigated.

Additionally, as evidenced in the annual LCC Childcare Sufficiency Assessment report there is more than sufficient good quality providers in the Clitheroe area. There has been a drop in the live birth rate and there are a significant number of surplus places in this administrative area.

There is a lower than average percentage of BME residents in the Edisford area.

Should the decision be taken to close the nursery, the school will need to make staffing reductions.

Question 4 – Engagement/Consultation

How have people/groups been involved in or engaged with in developing this proposal?

On 4 November 2021, Cabinet gave approval for the local authority to publish a statutory notice to consult on the proposal to permanently raise the school's age range from 3 to 11 years to 4 to 11 years, with effect from 1 April 2022.

The statutory representation period took place from 2 December 2021 to 20 January 2022, which is longer than the minimum four week period suggested within DfE guidance 'School Organisation: Maintained Schools: Guidance for Proposers and Decision Makers', to account for the Christmas holiday period. This consisted of a statutory public notice being issued in the local newspaper and copies of the public notice being displayed at the school and also in local libraries and in the Ribble Valley Borough Council's office.

The public notice and the statutory proposal were sent to a wide range of stakeholders, including County Councillors, parish councils and union representatives. LCC also published the information on the website. In addition to this, the school wrote to all parents and carers to inform them of this process and included all the relevant information on their website.

There were three responses, one from a serving Councillor, the other two from the community.

The three responses supported the closure of the nursery.

No areas of concern were raised.

Question 5 – Analysing Impact

Could this proposal potentially disadvantage particular groups sharing protected characteristics and if so which groups and in what way? This pays particular attention to the general aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation because of protected characteristics;
- To advance equality of opportunity for those who share protected characteristics;
- To encourage people who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life;
- To contribute to fostering good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not/community cohesion;
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If this proposal is approved, the nursery provision at the school will be discontinued, through the permanent raising of the age range from 3 to 11 years old to 4 to 11 years old. This will mean that families wishing to participate in nursery education will need to access an alternative provider.

If the decision is taken to permanently raise the age range of the school from 3 to 11 years to 4 to 11 years, the school will work with all families to provide them with high quality, impartial advice and guidance on the different options available to them via the Family Information Service.

Question 6 –Combined/Cumulative Effect

Could the effects of this proposal combine with other factors or decisions taken at local or national level to exacerbate the impact on any groups?

None anticipated.

Question 7 – Identifying Initial Results of Your Analysis

As a result of the analysis has the original proposal been changed/amended, if so please describe.

No, the original proposal has not been changed or amended.

Question 8 - Mitigation

Will any steps be taken to mitigate/reduce any potential adverse effects of the proposal?

Mitigations against the potential adverse effects of the decision to permanently raise the age range at the school are as follows:

- As evidenced in the annual LCC Childcare Sufficiency Assessment report there is more than sufficient good quality providers in the Clitheroe area. There has been a drop in the live birth rate and there are a significant number of surplus places in this administrative area.
- Prior to seeking a decision to close the nursery, the governors verbally consulted with parents on how the school could increase the uptake in places.
- The school will signpost families to the Family Information System, where necessary.
- Effects upon existing staff within the nursery – The Local Authority has been advised that the nursery teacher is on a temporary contract which will end if the nursery is closed. The 2 Teaching Assistants will be TUPE'd across to the private nursery.

Question 9 – Balancing the Proposal/Countervailing Factors

This weighs up the reasons for the proposal – e.g. need for budget savings; damaging effects of not taking forward the proposal at this time – against the findings of the analysis.

Under sections 15ZA and 18A of the Education Act 1996, local authorities have a statutory duty to secure sufficient and suitable early years provision to meet the needs of children and families in each district by influencing and shaping provision through local partnerships and by identifying gaps, enabling new provision and developing the market.

As evidenced in the annual LCC Childcare Sufficiency Assessment report there is more than sufficient good quality providers in the Clitheroe area. There has been a drop in the live birth rate and there are a significant number of surplus places in this administrative area.

Prior to seeking a decision to close the nursery, the governors verbally consulted with parents on how the school could increase the uptake in places.

Question 10 – Final Proposal

In summary, what is the final proposal and which groups may be affected and how?

The proposal is to permanently raise the school's age range from 3 to 11 years to 4 to 11 years, with effect from 1 April 2022. The particular group affected by this are families who may have wished to access nursery provision at the school in the future.

Question 11 – Review and Monitoring Arrangements

What arrangements will be put in place to review and monitor the effects of this proposal?

Once a decision has been taken to permanently raise the school's age range from 3 to 11 years to 4 to 11 years, with effect from 1 April 2022, the Authority is legally obliged to implement the proposal.

Equality Analysis Prepared By Debbie Ormerod

Position/Role Lead Officer for Access and Entitlement.

Equality Analysis Endorsed by Line Manager and/or Service Head Delyth Mathieson

Decision Signed Off By

Cabinet Member or Director

For further information please contact

Jeanette Binns – Equality & Cohesion Manager

Jeanette.binns@lancashire.gov.uk