

Frequently Asked Questions

Firstly, thank you to all those parents who have forwarded comments and questions related to the consultation. Please be assured that your comments will be thoroughly discussed by governors and where possible, answered as soon as possible. It is imperative that your opinions are heard as we seek to move forward together.

There were a number of questions that have been asked (for example about routines and particular curriculum arrangements) that will be answered as soon as we have met with the LA and agreed what the final proposal might look like. The following comments are a response to groups of similar questions in order to give further clarity where possible.

QUESTION/COMMENTS:

Some parents want to be reassured that the class sizes will not be too big or are concerned about the impact of mixed 2/3 class. There are also questions about the number of teacher who may oversee the proposed EYFS/Yr1 unit on Long Lane.

RESPONSE:

Many schools across the country are seeing class sizes increase. We all agree that smaller class sizes at Charlesworth School ensure that relationships are strong and that every child is treated as an individual. The governors are unanimous in wanting to see this continue. This will take investment for the future and ongoing dialogue with the local authority. The current consultation is part of that process.

Charlesworth School has for many years organised children into mixed age classes whether within the same key stage (e.g., Year 5/6) or across key stages (e.g., Reception/Year 1). This has been successfully managed from point of curriculum and pastoral needs to ensure children thrive and achieve. No-one would want to see this change and therefore ensuring that a Year 2/3 mixed age class provides the same opportunities for our pupils will be a priority.

The statutory ratios that are required to operate the proposed EYFS/Year 1 unit will include two fully qualified teachers and an additional three full time teaching assistants.

QUESTION/COMMENTS:

Is there enough capacity in the area for another pre-school in the locality?

RESPONSE

The governors have been meeting with the local authority to discuss this proposal. The LA is aware of the closing of Dinting Pre-School but are still supportive of this proposed change at Charlesworth. We are a distinctive school of choice with about half of our pupils coming from other areas and we believe that there a small pre-school provision is a viable option and will give parents a wider choice of the provision for their children.

QUESTION/COMMENTS:

How will the school afford the potential new investment in terms of building work in order to take in more children?

RESPONSE

Part of the discussion with the LA is to explore how there will be sufficient building capacity to manage this change. We are exploring joint funding avenues as well as other possible sources. The governors were told that they needed to proceed with the consultation stage while discussing the final proposal with the LA. Many schools across the country are struggling to meet future building needs. Charlesworth School is looking at models that will ensure a thriving school for the future and this is seen as part of that plan. Any budget will of course have to be agreed with the local authority who work under tight financial regulations.

QUESTION/COMMENTS:

Concerns were voice about the transition of between Y1/Y2.

RESPONSE:

The proposal would involve the cohort of Y1/Y2 children (many of who are already in the same class) moving up to the Long Lane Site together and staying as one class. Moving both year groups will support the transition process in terms of maintaining existing relationships. It is also intended that the same teacher (and teaching assistant) move up with the group who will know the children well and be best placed to manage their transition (both pastorally and academically). We would of course ensure that there a very strong focus on the transition of children who are currently in Class One (but share playtime and lunchtime with the other class) to ensure they are emotionally supported both during the transition and whilst on the Town Lane site.

QUESTION CLASS

Questions related to the process, timescales and feeling that this is rushed.

RESPONSE

The consultation stage is the start of a process required by LA guidelines for any change in age range within a school. This needs to happen before final decisions are made. The governors appreciate that it would be better to plan this change over a longer period and are currently discussing this possibility with the local authority. It would of course be preferable to have a fully informed outline of the changes to present to current and prospective parents before we proceeded, and this is what the governors are working hard to achieve.

QUESTION/COMMENTS

Concerns over safeguarding issues with regard to toileting, arrival/leaving routines and general safety.

RESPONSE

The LA have been fully involved in assessing the site with regard to safeguarding arrangements including adult to pupil ratios, security and hygiene. We are currently in discussion about additional funding to improve in areas where issues have been identified and this will happen before any changes are implemented. Safeguarding your children is our primary responsibility and therefore any proposed change will be thoroughly discussed, and risk assessed by the staff and governors. This includes the drop off and pick up times that enable parents with siblings on each site to manage this routine (it is likely that the site routines for this will remain the same).