

Harper Bell Seventh-Day Adventist School

Parents Consultation Meeting - 19th September* 2016 at 3.45pm (*originally stated October in error in original record)

In attendance:

Nigel Oram, Headteacher (Chair)

Professor Tucker, Member of Interim Executive Board (IEB)

Val Robinson, Early Years team at Birmingham City Council (BCC)

Lucy Dumbleton, School Organisation team at Birmingham City Council (BCC, Note taker)

1 member staff

26 parents (approx.)

20 pupils (approx.)

Proposal:

Closure of Harper Bell Nursery with effect from 1st Jan 2017 (by way of changing the age range from 3-11 to a 4-11 school).

Reasons for proposal:

- Viability - nursery has been operating under capacity for some time. Nursery is not a separate entity to the school and attempts to find an alternative provider to run it have been unsuccessful
- Ofsted judgement of Requires Improvement - the need to focus on teaching standards across the primary

Points raised during discussion:

- The proposal is a joint decision between Headteacher, IEB and BCC.
- If the nursery was able to recruit numbers would they still close? Parents should undertake a mission to promote the school nursery however it would be remiss of the school to offer the nursery place if there is the possibility of closure.
- The current 2 staff members in the nursery are agency workers and so contracts would be simpler to terminate than those of permanent staff.
- It would be a tragedy to lose the nursery as the school offers a particular ethos and philosophy and parents made their choice on this basis.
- It is disheartening and disappointing that the proposal is for closure mid-year. Parents may have made alternative placements if they had known and the places should not have been offered for Sept.
- Unfair on youngest child that will be impacted by this especially as their siblings have been able to go through the provision from nursery.
- One parent advised that they had already moved their child from a private institution to go to Harper Bell.
- Expense of uniforms that parents have had to buy for only one term potentially.

- The late timing of the consultation does not give parents the opportunity to find alternative places of choice as they will already be taken. Timing of the consultation is not ideal and should have been undertaken earlier.
- Parents will need information on the vacancies available locally in Nursery and other year groups as siblings need to be considered. It was confirmed that there are vacancies in the locality in Local Authority nursery provision and PVI settings that are deemed good and outstanding by Ofsted.
- Families may need to move all of their children out of the provision if the nursery closes as they may be unable to travel to multiple schools. Would the school be considerate for parents who may arrive late in the morning due to multiple drop-offs?
- School is operating under roll across the year groups and it is the responsibility of the IEB to make the school financially viable. School is welcoming Adventist and non-Adventist pupils.
- More needs to be done to advertise vacant places. School has no natural feeder. HT has attended local churches and constantly in collaboration with BCC to ask for more pupils.
- There was a strong feeling by some parents that a decision has already been made and this consultation was pointless. Parents need to submit their comments to influence the decision.
- Can a new provision be opened up locally to offer a similar nursery provision? This option is was not viable.
- Can the nursery remain open until July 2017? Possibility that other children will be lost across the year groups if the nursery closes mid-year.
- Parents need to consider that the nursery provision is not currently up to standard.
- Some parents have not paid their top-up fees timely which is exacerbating the financial viability, particularly as a 1FE school.
- Need for parents to be engaged and make their voices heard online or via post.
- If nursery is able to open until July 2017 will the IEB allow other pupils to be admitted?
- Can further work be done to find a private partner? This has its own problems as a separate financial entity and safeguarding implications etc.

[Proposal document](#) shared with details of how to respond.

Comments will be accepted online/by post until 14th October 2016 inclusive. Responses will be considered thereafter by the Local Authority and Interim Executive Board. Following this a decision will be sought from Cabinet Member for Children, Schools & Families jointly with the Strategic Director for People.