

Consultation on a proposed reduction in age range for St Michael with St John CE Primary School with effect from September 2022



Why are we consulting?

The 'Making Significant Changes ('prescribed alterations') to Maintained Schools 2018' informs that Blackburn with Darwen as the Admission Authority for St Michael with St John CE Primary School are not required to undertake statutory consultation to make a change to the age range of the school. However in the interests of good practice the local authority is keen to hear parents, carers and other interested stakeholders views on the proposal.

Requirements for notification and publication

The 'Making Significant Changes ('prescribed alterations') to Maintained Schools 2018' can be found at: [Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/614242/making-significant-changes-to-maintained-schools-2018.pdf)

Background

The current age range for St Michael with St John CE Primary School is 3 to 11 years old. This means that the school admits children from nursery until they reach secondary school age.

Blackburn with Darwen has always had a healthy supply of nursery age provision across private, voluntary, independent and maintained sectors giving parents plentiful choice of provision to meet demand.

Over the last five years, there has been a decrease in the number of families choosing to send their children to nursery alongside a decline in births means that the borough as a whole is overly-saturated with nursery age places creating financial instability for many nursery providers.

In September 2015, St Michael with St John CE Primary School reduced the nursery provision to morning only delivery due to a significant reduction in the number of families applying for a nursery age place. This reduction in demand has continued and reduced to a level that means the school budget is being negatively impacted on and the nursery on its own without being subsidised from the main school budget is financially unviable.

The school also in September 2019, reduced the number of school age places due to a fall in demand and to enable them to manage with a balanced budget.

Demographic information

Housing – Within the Blackburn East area there are plans to build 410 new homes over the next 5 years. It is not anticipated that the new housing developments will significantly increase the number of nursery age pupils within the area.

Population – Demographic data for children aged birth to 3 years in the St Michael with St John CE Primary School catchment area indicates that the intake for the school over the next 3 years will continue to reduce.

Specific proposal

The Local Authority, as the Admissions Authority for St Michael with St John CE Primary School, proposes to reduce age range of the school from 3-11 to 4-11 with effect from September 2022.

This means that St Michael with St John CE Primary School will not enrol any children to its nursery class provision that are not already on the school roll or have already secured a place. Places for nursery age children

that are already on roll at the school or those children that are of nursery age and have secured a place at St Michael with St John CE Primary School will be honoured.

This proposal will not negatively affect staff currently employed to work at St Michael with St John CE Primary School.

The Local Authority, as the Admissions Authority, will consider any views from the consultation exercise before making any decision on the proposal.

Who are we consulting with?

During this consultation period we want to seek views from:

- Parents and carers of children already attending the school;
- Parents and carers of children that have been offered a school place commencing Sept 2022;
- School staff;
- Trade Unions;
- School Governors;
- Primary, Infant and Junior Schools (including any associated Academy Trust) in Blackburn with Darwen;
- Blackburn & Salford Diocese;
- Early Years Providers in Blackburn with Darwen;
- Councillors and MP's;
- Relevant Local Authority Departments

Timetable for the consultation period

13 th June 2022	Start of consultation
1 st July 2022	End of consultation period/Deadline for submitting views to the Local Authority
4 th July 2022	Analysis of consultation views and preparation of information to be considered by the LA
15 th July 2022	Executive Member Decision meeting to consider views and agree future arrangements
26 th July 2022	Headteacher to present the consultation outcomes and the LA's decision to St Michael with St John CE Primary School Governing Body.

When would any changes come into effect?

If a decision to reduce the age range for St Michael with St John CE Primary School is agreed and approved, the arrangements would be introduced from September 2022 onwards.

How to Respond

This consultation will run from 13th June 2022 to 1st July 2022 (a period of 3 school weeks). You are invited to submit views in writing about the proposal above to the Local Authority. You can share your views via this online form <https://forms.office.com/r/LmR3cpTAmQ>, or send by post to the **Early Years Development and Childcare Team, Ground Floor, 10 Duke Street, Blackburn, BB2 1DH.**

All views must be received by 3pm on Friday 1st July 2022. Views received after this specified time and date will not be considered.

For further information please contact the Early Years Development and Childcare Team at earlyyears.funding@blackburn.gov.uk.