

Bledlow Ridge School



Summary Analysis of responses received during consultation period

January 2025

Subject: Consultation on a proposal to change the school's age of admission

Purpose of the Consultation

Proposal by the governing board of Bledlow Ridge School: to change the school's admission age to two/three years of age from its present four/five years of age, thus enabling the school to support a small group of younger children on site. The proposed date for this to be effective is September 2026.

Consultation Period

This report covers the consultation which took place for 6 weeks, running from Tuesday 3rd December 2024 until Tuesday 14th January 2025. In establishing the proposal to change the school's admission age to two/three years of age, Bledlow Ridge School has actively engaged with identified key stakeholders in Bledlow Ridge village.

Consultation Methods

A letter was emailed to parents and carers, letters were posted through local residents' doors and a copy of the letter was displayed in the local village shop and social media (see appendix 1).

The letter outlines information about the consultation, including reasons why the school are seeking the views of the community and local residents.

Summary of the Proposal

Key Objectives:

- Support children with a smooth transition from nursery to reception.
- Provide nursery places in an area where there is a need.
- Support parents with preschool aged children and siblings currently attending Bledlow Ridge School.

A total of 20 people responded to the consultation process. The table below shows the analysis of the responses given.

	Number	Percentage
Number of responses	20	
Number of responses from a parent at the school	7	35%
Number of responses from local residents	6	30%
Number of responses from a parent at the school AND a local resident	7	35%
Support the proposal	13	65%
Doesn't have a view either way	3	15%
Not supporting the proposal	4	20%

The majority of responses were positive about the proposal (65%). Main points raised in support of the proposal include the following:

Main points raised in <u>support</u> of the proposal	Percentage of responses including this point
Offer children a smooth transition from nursery to reception. This streamlined approach would promote continuity and social development.	92%
Great use of current unused space	8%

New opportunity/roles for childcare practitioners in the area	23%
Valuable opportunity to the village and the wider and local community	38%
Bledlow Ridge is becoming filled with more young families. Having a nursery in the village will provide local residents a great opportunity if they wanted to sell their property in the future.	16%
There is a need in the area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A nursery has just closed in the village (December 2024) - Many parents of pupils already attending Bledlow Ridge School travel over 6 miles to take another child to nursery 	16%
Reduce emissions - local parents would not need to drive to take their child to nursery	5%

20% of the responses were not in support of the proposal and 15% of the responses did not have a view either way. Main points raised not supporting of the proposal include the following:

Main points raised not supporting of the proposal	Percentage of these responses including this point
Extra staff and children will increase the volume of traffic in the area.	43%
Parking is already a concern. During pick up and drop off, there are too many cars accessing Church Lane already. This would raise concerns around safety.	85%
More traffic outside normal pick up times due to nursery having a morning session and afternoon session is a concern.	28%
Nursery children would not have the space needed (particularly outdoor space) throughout the day.	28%

When asked for any additional comments or questions, answers included:

In support of the proposal

1. I would be keen to have this setting available
2. It would be fantastic for the local community
3. Add huge value to the village
4. Support the local community by enabling parents to send their children to a familiar and trusted institution from an early age
5. Children will make friends at nursery which will support their transition to reception
6. Allow children with additional needs to be spotted earlier
7. Joined up communication between a nursery and school
8. It is great to see the governing board, the school leadership and Early Years team are forward thinking and ensuring that the school offers all it can to the community

Not in support of the proposal or do not have a view either way

1. Will there be an additional staff car park?
2. Drop off and parking could be an issue, however, I assume preference will be given to children in walking distance of the school
3. Space is a concern and the number of pupils at Bledlow Ridge has increased by over 25% over the last decade. Where will the nursery pupil access outdoor space?

4. I am not clear what building in the carpark is referred to, there will need to be some safety consideration before the project goes ahead.
5. Parking will become worse which could lead to safety concerns.
6. As parking is a concern, is there an option of supervised parking?
7. We would like to see a Risk Assessment and solutions to the parking and traffic issues

Whilst the proposal to change the school's admission age to two/three years of age is supported by the majority of the community, some issues have been raised that warrant further consideration including;

- Traffic
- Parking
- Space in school and on the proposed site

Next Steps

Responses, comments and feedback were all gratefully received. As previously communicated, in the consultation letter (appendix A) the DfE has communicated that schools can apply for a School-Based Nursery Capital Grant. Click [here](#) for more information. This is a one-time grant available for eligible state-funded primary-phase schools. Schools can bid for funding to use for capital expenditure to:

- convert spare space within school buildings into a new nursery
- expand an existing nursery

A consultation process needs to have taken place before funding is agreed. We should find out the outcome of the application during the Spring Term/beginning of Summer Term. I will keep you updated on any further developments regarding this proposal and appreciate your continued support.

Kind regards,

Mrs Natasha Harrison

Headteacher

Mrs Zoe Williams

Chair of Governors

Appendix 1

Consultation on a proposal to change the school's age of admission.

I am writing to you to inform you of a proposal by the governing board of Bledlow Ridge School to change the school's admission age to two/three years of age from its present three/four years of age, thus enabling the school to support a small group of younger children on site. The proposed date for this to be effective is September 2026. This letter is formal 6 weeks' notice of the consultation period for this proposal. The consultation will run from Tuesday 3rd December 2024 until Tuesday 14th January 2025.

What would be the benefit of the proposal?

This proposed move will allow some parents of two/three year olds in the local area to access nursery provision at the school, therefore giving these children a strong start to their Early Years provision in school.

What will this mean?

An Early Years Nursery provision established by schools under the Department of Education Section 27 powers will allow us to operate with a ratio of 1:5 for 2-year olds, where at least one member of staff holds the appropriate practitioner qualification. For 3 year olds, where at least one member of staff holds the appropriate practitioner qualification, the ratio would be 1:8 and where there is a qualified teacher working, the ratio would be 1:13. Section 27 of the Education Act 2002 enables maintained schools to set and run community facilities and services whose provision furthers any charitable purpose for the benefit of a) the pupils of the school or their families or b) people who live and work in the area in which the school is situated. This is the power under which the school governor-run community provision is proposed to be set up. This will apply to the community provision and give the flexibility to use the most effective and appropriate staffing model for the children. The governors will ensure that the provision is of a very high quality, properly supervised and run by qualified nursery practitioners. The Early Years Foundation Framework sets out requirements that all Early Years providers, including schools, must follow. General guidance on staffing states that the staff must be available to work directly with the children. The nursery will have a dedicated outdoor space and also share facilities with the school e.g. outdoor areas and the hall.

The building in the carpark will be changed from its current use into a nursery/preschool. The maximum number of children we intend to admit will be 20 children. Depending on need, we will have a maximum of ten 2-year olds attending each morning and/or afternoon session. Additionally, we will provide ten places for 3-year olds. This number may rise overtime to as long as sufficient staffing is in place and the spaces are in compliance with the current regulations.

Do staff and Governors support this proposal?

Yes, the governing board, the school leadership and the Early Years team at Bledlow Ridge School support the proposal as they believe that it would benefit current and future families/pupils and the local community.

Will the proposal disrupt the education of the pupils currently at the school?

No, extra staff will be employed and the space being used for the nursery is available. Required building work will need to take place, subject to the necessary planning permission, however, this will not disrupt the running of the school day.

Why are we consulting now?

We are keen to understand the views of our local community on this proposal and so, as per best practice recommended by the Department of Education, we have incorporated a period of consultation into the decision making process. The consultation will run from Tuesday 3rd December 2024 until Tuesday 14th January 2025.

Additionally, the DfE have communicated that schools can apply for a School-Based Nursery Capital Grant. Click [here](#) for more information

This is a one-time grant available for eligible state-funded primary-phase schools. Schools can bid for funding to use for capital expenditure to:

- **convert spare space within school buildings into a new nursery**
- **expand an existing nursery**

Will there be extra traffic and how will the impact be reduced?

Most of the children attending the nursery will be predominately made up of siblings of current children who already make the journey to school. We will have admissions criteria where siblings and local children in the community will be prioritized, therefore, there is unlikely to be any travelling by car from outside the school's catchment area.

Will the proposal have any impact on admission to the school's reception class?

No, current admissions to the School remain unchanged and will not be affected by the proposal. Please see Buckinghamshire Council's/the school's website for the specific criteria for school admission.

What are the next stages in the process?

Responses will be received throughout the consultation process which ends at 1pm on Tuesday 14th January 2025. These will be analysed and the school will publish the outcomes on its website. If the governing board decide to proceed with the proposal, and funding is granted, the board will plan and publish their final decision. If the proposal goes ahead, we will look to promote the nursery from January 2026, with an opening date of September 2026.

How can I respond to this consultation?

Please complete the attached consultation response form and return it to the school. Alternatively, email the school to share your view or arrange an appointment to discuss in person: office@bledlowridge.bucks.sch.uk

We would really welcome your views on our proposal and look forward to receiving your completed response form. Should you have any additional queries do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards,

Mrs Natasha Harrison

Headteacher

Mrs Zoe Williams

Chair of Governors