

**Early Years Commissioning**

Quadrant Court
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18/12/2024

RESPONSE TO BEACON HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL PROPOSAL TO CREATE SCHOOL BASED NURSERY PROVISION

We are writing in response to the proposed plan to create a school-based nursery provision at Beacon Hill Primary School, and a proposed application for the DfE School Based Nurseries Capital Grant 2024.

Beacon Hill Primary School plan to expand their current school to incorporate a school run Nursery. To do this they have drawn up plans to re-purpose the ground floor of a building currently used for a reception class. The school is on a large site, split by a private road. It is surrounded by woods which form part of the site for the Nursery (Browns). The school currently has an additional classroom within the Browns site which would house the displaced reception class. The school has additional space which could be used for bulge classes in the future.

Beacon Hill Primary School are planning to open a 26 place nursery provision, initially for 3 & 4 year olds and will then expand to include 2 year olds once established.

This letter provides information for Beacon Hill Primary School Primary School to consider, when making their decision.

To support the application process for the school based nursery capital grant, the DfE has produced non-statutory guidance on [Establishing school-based nursery provision](#).

Schools and responsible bodies that are interested but not currently ready to apply or do not meet the [current eligibility criteria](#) will be able to register an interest for potential future phases of the program.

Beacon Hill Primary School do not currently have a Nursery. We have advised that the school consider the following before opening their own Nursery provision.

- Building requirements depending on the nursery offer and ages of children, such as, room size, how many toilets are required, dedicated space for personal care (nappy changing facilities), kitchen to prepare food/milk, access to secure and dedicated outdoor nursery space.
- Staffing the Nursery and adhering to ratio requirements depending on qualifications of staff and ages of children.

- Any structural works will need to be discussed with SCC Estates and Property and will require a licence for alterations.
- The school will need to lower the school age to include nursery age children
- The school will need to ensure that should a bulge class be required in the future, that there is sufficient space to accommodate this. According to the latest projections from the Surrey Education Place Planning team, current latent capacity may be utilised for a nursery. However, these projections are based on current birth rate trends in the area, and this situation may change in the medium to long term. Should the local population demographic shift and start to increase so that additional school places are required, the early years classrooms will need to revert to their intended use as school classrooms. This contingency should be explicitly addressed in any lease agreements, ensuring the early years provider is aware that they may need to vacate the premises if the need for school places arises.

Sufficiency data for the area suggests that there are very few early years provisions within a 3 mile radius and those that are nearby are reporting to be full in all age groups. Hindhead & Beacon Hill are recognised by the DfE as having a shortfall of places which aligns with our own sufficiency data.

There are very few childcare providers in the local area with parents having to travel considerable distance. Providers within a 3 mile radius all have reported being busy with occupancy levels of between 80-100% which suggests there is demand for this type of provision in the area.

It is important that Beacon Hill Primary School supports the government's policy on providing 15 and 30 hours Funded Early Education for 9 months+ 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds. The Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on Local Authorities (LAs) to secure sufficient, high-quality childcare for parents eligible for funded early education. This includes 15 hours of provision for disadvantaged 2-year-olds, 15 hours of provision for all 3- and 4-year-olds, and 15 to 30 hours of provision for children with working parents. Surrey County Council (SCC) therefore, holds a responsibility for ensuring that parents can access the early years funded entitlement for 9 months+ 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds, particularly with regard to identifying any gaps in childcare provision.

Whilst we appreciate that the school's initial proposal does not include 2 year olds we would request that the school consider developing a small number of funded places for children at risk of disadvantage who are eligible for Funded Early Education for Two Year Olds (FEET).

Beacon Hill Primary School have consulted with parents regarding the development of a Nursery provision at the school however we would advise further market research with current parents/carers and the wider community including potential early years families to ensure that any early years offer meets the needs of the local community.

In taking a decision we advise that Beacon Hill Primary School consider:

- The views of current parents and local community, including on proposed operational model and opening hours
- Local sufficiency
- Timescales and actions needed before implementation
- Timescales and feasibility for refurbishment, adaptations and adjustment needed to ensure appropriate accommodation
- Impact on the reputation of the school
- If the grant application is not successful, how the school plans to implement early years provision whilst maintaining high standards and meeting the requirements of the EYFS.

- Financial stability

Based on the school meeting all of the above, we would support the development of a Nursery provision at Beacon Hill Primary School.

Yours Sincerely,

Early Years Commissioning Team