

20th February 2025

RE: Consultation on a proposal to extend the age range

Cornerstone Academy Trust is consulting on a proposal to change the age range of Marpool Primary School from 3-11 to 2-11 years of age with effect from September 2025.

Background

Marpool Primary School has an integrated Foundation Stage Unit where the nursery children, aged 3 and 4 years of age, learn and play alongside the Reception Class. The proposal being consulted upon is to also take 2 year olds.

Benefits of the proposal

In light of the Spring 2023 Budget announcement on increases to early years entitlements and associated funding, Devon County Council is projecting an increase in the demand for 2 year old places.

By enabling children to start in the nursery at two-years-old will remove a transition point for some children. Those more disadvantaged children who are eligible for 2-year-old funding may currently go to different providers. They may then come back to the school at age 3 into the nursery or at 4 into the reception class.

Being able to offer places from 2-years-old will provide greater consistency and continuity for children before starting at school and enable staff to make a more significant impact and identify children's needs well before they start in the reception class.

Parents will still need to make a separate application to Devon County Council for a place in the reception class.

Capital and planning

A small amount of capital is required to improve toilet facilities. The Trust has submitted an application to Devon County Council for capital funding for this purpose from the Childcare Expansion Capital Grant. This Grant has been allocated to Local Authorities to support the expansion of childcare places as a result of the Government's Spring Budget 2023 announcement to introduce increased early years entitlements to families.

However, this proposal to change the age range from 3-11 to 2-11 is not subject to or dependent upon the approval of this capital grant.

This proposal will not affect the Published Admission Number (PAN) for the school, nor the capacity, and will not put pressure on classroom space for school aged children.

Consultation and decision-making process

This consultation will run from 24th February to 31st March 2025.

Following the end of the consultation period, the Trustees of Cornerstone Academy Trust will meet to consider the consultation responses and decide whether or not to make an application to the Department for Education's (DfE) South West Region's Group.

The application (a Tier 1 Significant Change application) to the DfE will include all the feedback received to the consultation. It is the DfE's Regions Group who will consider the application, and outcome of the consultation, and decide whether or not to approve the change to the age range.

Responding to the consultation

The Trust welcome responses on this proposal by the closing date of 31st March 2025 either by:

Emailing: admin@tcat.education – please title the email 'Nursery Consultation'

Or by writing to: Cornerstone Academy Trust, Nursery Consultation, Broadclyst Community Primary School, School Lane, Broadclyst, Devon, EX5 3JG.

All responses to the consultation will be considered and will be shared with the school's leadership team, Board of Directors and Trustees. Responses will also be shared with the DfE's South West Regions Group as the decision-maker, but we will not send individual responses to any specific points made.

Yours sincerely,



Jonathan Bishop
Executive Headteacher

