

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

October 11th, 2022

Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education: Councillor Fiona Baker

Report Title	Proposal to extend the age-range at Parklands Maintained Nursery School from 3-4 to 2-4 years of age via the incorporation of Parklands Playgroup
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Appendix A – Parklands MNS Consultation Summary Report

Appendix B – Parklands MNS Equalities Impact Assessment (EgIA)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) proposes a prescribed alteration to lower the admission age of Parklands Maintained Nursery School (MNS), Spinney Hill Road, Northampton, West Northants NN3 6DW by changing the age range from 3 to 4 years to 2 to 4 years. This will enable the Nursery School to offer places to 2-year-old children. The proposed alteration will

make provision for up to 8 full-time equivalent (FTE) 2-year-old children to attend the Nursery School.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The number of places for 2-year-old children in the locality will reduce when the existing on-site Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) provider, Parklands Playgroup, closes. By lowering the admission age of Parklands MNS, the 2-year-old children in the community, particularly the most vulnerable, will be able to access the free place to which they are entitled.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet approve the proposal to lower the admission age range at Parklands MNS from 3 years to 2 years to enable the Nursery School to offer provision to 2-year-old children from 31 October 2022.

4. Reason for Recommendations (NOTE: this section is mandatory and must be completed)

- To ensure compliance with the statutory process for changing the age range by 1 year.
- To ensure the council is able to provide a sufficient number of places for 2-year-olds within the Parklands community in future years. To enable Children to benefit from high quality teaching and learning experiences at a younger age led by a deputy head with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).
- To provide improved transition arrangements for children from 2-year-old provision to 3–4-year-old provision with all children fully integrated into the nursery.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 Parklands MNS (together with Camrose MNS, Highfield MNS and Croyland MNS) forms part of the Foundations for Children Nursery Schools Federation. The federation Governing Board together with the leadership team of Parklands MNS, are seeking to expand the existing nursery provision to provide full time and part time places for 2-year-old children. This proposal will allow them to meet the needs of the local community in relation to Early Years education and will ensure a consistent school approach to learning for the youngest children.
- 5.2 Currently children who join Parklands MNS at the age of 3 come from a variety of settings within the locality, but also from Parklands Playgroup which is situated on the school site. Under the new proposals, children aged 2 years upwards would formally become part of the same structure as the school, within the Nursery School provision and on the Nursery roll.
- 5.3 For changes that are expected to be in place for more than 2 years (as these are considered permanent increases): LAs can propose a change of age range of 1 year or more for community schools (including the adding or removal of nursery provision) by following the statutory process (details are provided in the Section 8 'Background Papers' and on the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk)). For this reason, we are requesting approval from Cabinet, to ensure the statutory process is followed.
- 5.4 Parklands Playgroup currently runs from the Nursery School premises as a separate Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The Playgroup Trustees and Committee members have agreed that the Playgroup will cease its services when the school begin offering provision for 2-year-olds. Within the last

few years the Playgroup and Nursery School have worked in an integrated approach sharing provision and practitioners. This was established after the Covid pandemic to allow for a much broader curriculum and provision for all children.

- 5.5 A statutory proposal to extend the age range of Parklands MNS was published on the Council's website on 24th August and has been the subject of a consultation details of which appear in paragraph 7.4 of this report.
- 5.6 If Cabinet approve this request, the aim for the opening of the new arrangement will be 31st October 2022 and closure of the Playgroup will be 30th October 2022.
- 5.7 Parklands MNS is currently a 39 FTE place Nursery School offering the 15-hour free entitlement and the 30-hour free entitlement. The Nursery School propose to expand on nursery places and provide early years' education for children in the local area through a secure, stimulating and high-quality early years provision. This will complement the existing provision for children in the 3–4-year olds' nursery class.
- 5.8 Additionally, Parklands MNS proposes to offer the following:
- Parents will be able to claim funded places for 2–3-year-olds
 - Nursery places for 2–4-year-olds will be available Monday to Friday
 - Nursery provision for 2–4-year-olds will support the learning and development of the children and prepare them for their next stage of education.

The aim is that local children can start at Parklands MNS at 2 years old. This will enable learning opportunities to be maximised across the early years for children from 2 to 5 years of age.

- 5.9 Benefits for the children and community include:
- For children:
- Access to a wider range of shared resources, facilities, learning opportunities and experiences at the school;
 - Provision led by the Deputy Head with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS);
 - Smoother transition from 2-year-old provision to 3–4-year provision at the school.

For parents:

- Broader provision and opportunities for their children;
- Access to wider expertise to support learning, which is personalised to the needs of their child.

For the school:

- One cohesive team working together for children aged 2-4 years;
- Development of high-quality teaching and learning experiences for children from a younger age;
- Increased flexibility with staffing and provisions when becoming one entity;
- Easier to manage children's transition from 2-year provision to 3–4-year-old provision;
- Deputy Head would oversee the whole provision rather than as two separate entities, so easier to manage administration and finances;
- One Ofsted inspection, framework and registration.

6. Issues and Choices

- 6.1 Do nothing – this would lead to a decrease of places for 2-year-olds within the community due to the closure of Parklands Pre-school
- 6.2 Creation of 8 FTE places at Parklands MNS would ensure sufficiency of places for 2-year-olds in high quality provision led by the Deputy with QTS.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

- 7.1.1 As a maintained nursery school, the majority of Parklands funding comes from the early years block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG). The remainder being from parents and other income such as lettings. The amount of DSG received by the nursery is largely dependent on the hours that children spend in the nursery, for those children whose parents are entitled to the free childcare. The hourly rate received by the nursery depends on the age of the child and other factors such as whether the child is residing in an area of deprivation and whether they have special education needs and/or disabilities.
- 7.1.2 In addition to children’s hourly funding, there is a funding supplement within the DSG specifically for maintained nursery schools to cope with the additional regulatory burdens they face as a school, that PVI providers do not have to fund. For Parklands 2022-23 this is currently £77.7k and is “Universal take up” (i.e., first 15 hours of funded 3- and 4-year-old hours) at the January census dates.
- 7.1.3 Once the maintained nursery school receive their DSG funding, this is similar to an individual schools budget (ISB) in that the management of the finances is the responsibility of the school. The financial relationship between WNC and schools is set out in the Scheme for Financing Schools (which is available from the schools’ finance team on request but largely mirrors the [guidance and template on the gov.uk website](#)).
- 7.1.4 The addition of 2-year-old provision does not significantly change Parklands MNS finances or their use of buildings as the move is largely a swap between the Parklands Playgroup (a charitable organisation) and the new 2-year-old provision. Therefore, there is no capital cost implication. Neither is there expected to be a significant impact on the nursery's own finances if 2-year-old uptake remains at current levels.
- 7.1.5 There is very low risk to WNCs General Fund finances arising from the proposals to change the age range in the Parklands MNS to include 2-year-olds.
- 7.1.6 The school has sufficient and suitable space to accommodate 2-year-old-children. No additional space or buildings are required to implement this proposal.
- 7.1.7 Parklands MNS Governing Board have identified and considered the following potential risks alongside the overall benefits for children and families:
 - Low take up rate of the 8 FTE places within the nursery
 - TUPE of staff from Playgroup – protection of continuous service and conditions
 - Loss of income from supplies and services from Playgroup
 - Income against expenditure costs of staff, supplies and services

7.1.8 To overcome these risks, the Federation has created a Community Engagement Lead role, with a focus on the marketing of the two-year provision alongside grants and funding projects as part of the established CIO. The aim is to continue with extended services such as the established ‘time for us’ community group.

7.1.9 Number of children on roll per term:

Nursery 3-4s	Autumn	Spring	Summer
2016/17	50	59	69
2017/18	50	62	64
2018/19	37	57	60
2019/20	42	51	
2020/21	35	38	58
2021/22	35	42	54

Playgroup 2-3s	Autumn	Spring	Summer
2016/17	24	26	29
2017/18	33	26	34
2018/19	19	26	26
2019/20	18	14	13
2020/21	16	14	14
2021/22	17	16	12

- Trends show September intake numbers are low with a gradual increase from January onwards. With lower numbers of children in September, places in Parklands MNS provision could be offered for two-year old children. This would ensure maximum child: staff ratios and lead to a balanced and more positive financial situation. (1:13 ratio for 3–4-year-olds and 1:4 for 2-year-olds)
- As children turn 3, they would automatically transfer onto 3–4-year school census, leading to an increase to participation funding for the Nursery School.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 The process for extension of the age range of a maintained nursery is set out in The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) Regulations 2013. This proposal is one which is authorised by these regulations. The statutory proposal has been published and the subject of consultation and this report is asking Cabinet to make the final decision as to whether to approve the proposal for implementation.

7.2.2 The process of closure of the existing Pre-School and, effective, transfer of the service to become part of Parklands MNS will result in a redundancy and Transfer of Undertakings situation. This is the subject of consultation with the individuals involved and appropriate statutory processes are being and will be followed.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out on the proposal to change the age range at Parklands Maintained Nursery School. A copy of the EqIA is attached at Appendix B to the report.

7.3.2 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

7.4 Consultation

7.4.1 The council conducted a public consultation from August 24th to September 16th, no responses were received by either by post or via email. The consultation was made available on WNC website. <https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/cet/parklandsnurseryconsultation/>

7.4.2 Parklands MNS conducted a consultation commencing on July 4th and concluding on September 16th, 2022. This was made available to staff, governors and parents of children in the Playgroup and the Nursery School and local primary schools. It was also published on the Nursery School website and a face-to-face event took place. 24 responses were received in total. 22 were in favour and fully supportive of the extension to the age range from 3 to 4 to 2 to 4 years old and 2 were against. Of the two responses which were not supportive, one gave no reason/detail and no contact details and the other concerning mixing of ages from 2-4 years has been answered in the consultation report see Appendix A.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 N/A

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 As the new provision within Parklands MNS will be replacing the existing Playgroup provision there will be no increase in traffic or climate impact.

7.7 Community Impact

7.7.1 The proposal will have a positive impact on the community by ensuring sufficiency of places for 2-year-old children within the local area.

7.8 Communications

7.8.1 All results arising from the consultation will be published on WNC website and the council will communicate the proposed changes to provision and rationale to the public and other relevant stakeholders.

8. Background Papers

8.1 *Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools – Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers – DfE, October 2018. Document available at [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk)*

APPENDIX A

Consultation on a proposal for Parklands Nursery School, Northampton to lower its age range to accept 2-year-olds

Consultation Report – September 2022

The consultation period began on Monday 4th July 2022 and was originally due to end on Tuesday 2nd August but, after advice from West Northamptonshire Council, it was extended to Friday 16th September. Consultation documents and response forms were provided for staff members, parents and governors at Parklands Nursery School. An online response survey was also provided and the consultation document was put on the Federation website.

The consultation document and response form were also sent to local primary schools and various local authority colleagues at West Northamptonshire Council, including the School Improvement Team and Governor Services.

An **Equalities Impact Assessment** was completed for the proposal by the Executive Headteacher – see separate document for full details.

Consultation Event

18th July 2022 – Parent and staff consultation event at Parklands Nursery School

The Executive Headteacher and a governor attended the consultation event, talking face to face with staff and parents.

Parents and staff were happy to discuss the proposal to change the school's age range.

Summary of Responses

A total of 24 hard copy or online survey responses were received during the consultation period, (alongside the parent/staff consultation event and discussions with Parklands Senior Leadership Team). 22 were in favour of the proposal for the age range at Parklands to be extended to include two-year-olds; 2 were against the proposal.

Parklands Consultation - Respondee count - September 2022

Fully support the proposal	Method of response	Total
Parent of child at Parklands	Hard copy response form	6
Parent of child at Parklands / Parent of pre-school aged child	Hard copy response form	4
Parent of child at Parklands	Online survey	8
Parent of pre-school aged child	Online survey	1
Member of staff	Online survey	1
Member of the local community	Online survey	1
Other – Governor	Online survey	1
	TOTAL IN FAVOUR	22

Do not support the proposal	Method of response	Total
Parent of child at Parklands	Hard copy response form	1
Parent of child at Parklands	Online survey	1
TOTAL AGAINST		2

There were no responses from the local primary schools. The Local Authority are due to review the proposal and make their decision on it at a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday 11th October 2022.

Parent & Staff Consultation Event

At the parent and staff consultation event in July, the Executive Headteacher and a governor approached parents at drop off/pick up time and spoke to them individually about the proposal, handing out copies of the response form to either fill in straightaway or take home to complete. The Executive Headteacher and governor also spoke to staff for their feedback on the proposal. Very few questions were raised and most were happy with the proposal, seeing it as a logical step since 2 year olds are already offered provision at the school through the Playgroup. Some parents were still unclear that the Playgroup is currently a separate organisation, due to the current close working relationship and sharing management.

Comments from parents and staff during the event:

- *There would be no difference as the playgroup and nursery already work in an integrated way*
- *Staff felt it would give security to their roles and the 2 year provision*
- *Staff felt it would benefit the children and community due to greater strength of team skills and qualities and wider provision available for all children.*

Questions raised by parents and staff during the event:

(All questions raised were answered by the Executive Headteacher and governor)

1. *Would there be any difference in cost?*
A. *This should make no difference to costs for provision.*
2. *Would the children have the same staff members?*
A. *Yes, plus support from a wider range of staff across the nursery, including the teacher with QTS.*
3. *What does this mean for Playgroup staff? Will there be redundancies? TUPE - terms and conditions of the staff to be transferred over?*
A. *Staff will be transferred to the Nursery payroll.*
4. *Would it impact on their child's current place? Will this affect how many children can attend?*
A. *Not at present as we will keep the same number of places available. However, it will give the nursery more flexibility in the future to respond to the places required locally.*
5. *What changes will this mean on a day-to-day basis? I thought you were all one anyway?*
A. *Very few, as the nursery and Playgroup have been operating very closely since Covid in order to maintain good provision. They are mostly administrative changes from a parent's perspective, but will free up time and resources on the management side, which allows the team to give more time to the children.*
6. *What are the downsides, as it makes sense to me?*
A. *The main downside is that we would not be able to make charitable bids for money in the same way as before, as 2 year olds will sit within the school and not under the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) of the Playgroup. However, the Federation is looking to change the existing Playgroup CIO into a CIO for the Federation, so that we can continue exploring fundraising opportunities for the whole Federation, including Parklands.*
7. *Would Parklands still be able to make applications for charity/community work if no longer a CIO?*
A. *See answer to 6) above.*

Response Forms

In total we received 11 written response forms, all from parents. 10 had ticked the box to say that they fully support the proposal and 1 ticked that they do not support it (see below for detail). Just over half of the parents did not write any comments. There were no questions raised on any of the written response forms.

Concerns raised on hard copy written response forms:

"I think there is a big gap in the age groups which may be daunting for the young ones and be disruptive for the older ones and their development."

NOTE: Parent response - this respondent had indicated that they do not support the proposal.

Since the pandemic, Parklands Playgroup 2 year provision has been working in a much more integrated way with the nursery staff and children, and staff have generally found that mixing age ranges has been beneficial to the children. Younger children have benefited from the example of the older children, and older children have enjoyed helping to nurture the younger children. By working together as a wider team, staff have been able to share their skills set and qualities across all of the children and it has allowed for a much wider, richer provision for all of the children from 2 years and up. Staff are mindful of the difficulties which mixing age groups can bring and are experienced in handling this. They allow time and space for children to settle when they join the nursery, and quieter areas are available if children need time in a smaller, more contained space. Taking the children into school at a younger age also enables them to have a smoother and quicker transition into the 3-4's provision when they reach that age, since they are already familiar with the staff, the surroundings and nursery routines.

"Would like to send child now but too costly and not eligible"

NOTE: Parent response - this respondent indicated that they support the proposal. The parent had not given their name or their child's name on the form, so staff were unable to follow up direct with them to discuss their eligibility for provision.

Positive comments on hard copy written response forms:

"Full support"

"Fully support, helped his development/social skills being with younger children"

"Fully support."

Online Survey

In total we received 13 online survey responses (10 from parents, 1 from a member of staff, 1 from a governor and 1 from a member of the local community).

12 of the 13 online responses expressed full support for the proposal. The remaining 1 online respondent (parent of a child at Parklands) stated that they did not support the proposal, but gave no comment/reasons as to why, did not ask any questions and did not provide their name/contact details, so it was not possible to follow up on this to ascertain the reason.

There were no questions raised about the proposal online.

Comments from online survey responses:

"We love the nursery and they are about to accept my final child at age 2! Couldn't recommend the nursery school and all staff highly enough. Communication is fabulous any concerns they raise promptly and investigate. Which is extremely reassuring to me as a parent. I can entirely trust all the staff to act with my child's best interests first and foremost. So yes if this is what the nursery wants to do I fully support them. I do however expect the funding to reflect the number of children. I also support any payrise for staff taking on extra children to supervise, guide and support. The last point is important. Happy staff make for a happy setting!!!"

"I feel that offering places for 2 year olds in the nursery school provision can only strengthen outcomes for those children, giving them access to a greater range of expertise, resources and support at Parklands and from a younger age. This will allow staff to build stronger relationships with children and their families and make for a smoother transition to the 3-4 year provision for both children and staff."

Senior Leadership Team Feedback

The Chair of Governors also spoke to members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at Parklands, to discuss their thoughts on the proposal.

Benefits/positives to the proposal, as expressed by the SLT:

- Providing 2 year provision allows early identification, interventions and high quality teaching practice to lead to improved outcomes, this is particularly the case for children with SEND.
- Sustaining the nursery school – widening the offer.
- Due to low numbers in the 3-4's, the opportunities and provisions can be limited. With an increase to numbers and staffing we would be able to provide a wider, richer provision both indoors and outdoors, leading to progress and development.
- Sharing expertise between the provisions benefits the children.
- Children joining the school at 2 years means their transition into 3-4's will be much easier.
- More efficient for management/administration of the school – same systems and line management etc. This would free up the teacher to be in the provision more.
- Could also save us money on supply cover as more flexibility with staffing in times of absence.
- Can support development of staff more as all on the same terms / same management.

The SLT did not raise any concerns about the proposal.

Senior Leadership Team comments:

"this would be better for staff and far more efficient, pulling everything together"

"having one universal team would be great"

"I have really enjoyed us mixing the 2 and 3-4 year olds, there are real benefits to this – it brings out the compassion in older children and increases independence/growth in the younger children"

"[this would give] consistent provision for the children, flowing seamlessly"

"Having two separate provisions, two separate Ofsteds means that, although there is a shared vision, they are on two paths. To have one provision means we would have one shared perspective"

APPENDIX B

Consultation to change the age range at Parklands Nursery School (to provide 8 full time equivalent early education places for children aged 2 years)

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

September 2022

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the governing board of Foundations for Children Nursery Schools Federation and Local Authority members with an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) on the proposal for the governing body to lower the age range at Parklands Nursery School to include 2 year olds. The report has been prepared by the Executive Headteacher following an examination of published material, including school policies and discussions with parents and staff members.

The key question to be addressed is, whether or not the change in age range to include 2 year olds will result in quantifiable or different outcomes for different groups, or differential access to the services provided by the school. The impact of the Federation proposal is considered below in relation to the following standard Impact Strands:

- Gender;
- Race;
- Disability;
- Sexual Orientation;
- Religion and Belief;
- Age;
- Social Inclusion; and
- Community Cohesion.

In addition, in a school context, the arrangements for admissions are an important consideration for parents, students and other stakeholders. Accordingly, the position on admissions has also been reviewed. In conducting this study, no evidence has been found to indicate that the proposal to lower the age range to include 2 year olds will have any negative impact in any Equality Strand.

On the contrary; the proposal to lower the age range to include children aged 2 years demonstrates a clear intention by the school to strengthen even further the high quality early education and early support for children and families in the community it serves. The aim to expand the offer to include children aged 2 years shows a desire to further extend the school's capacity to drive equality of opportunity, as well as improving outcomes for learners and providing equality of opportunity for staff.

The consultation to lower the age range is expected to result in an overall positive equalities impact.

Evidence and Analysis

Admissions

The consultation has made it clear that the admissions process will remain the same and will continue to operate the local authority admissions policy in full. In accordance with this policy, places will normally only be offered up to the published admission number on the Government website, which is the number of places available at the school in the year of entry. The admissions policy will include children aged 2 years.

Currently numbers are: 33 children aged 3 years, with the Playgroup having 20 aged 2-3 years on roll. A child cannot be refused admission to the normal year of entry on the grounds of prejudice to the provision of efficient education and efficient use of resources, unless the published admission number has been reached. This means the change in age range will not result in a change to the admissions arrangements for the school and therefore no adverse impact will directly arise for any equality strand in relation to admissions.

Gender

The gender difference in attainment at the beginning of the year is that boys score lower for attainment on entry compared to girls. In the most recent OFSTED inspection of the school, no evidence was found of a wide gender imbalance, which is clear evidence that the school is motivated to support all children, regardless of gender.

Currently there is 1 male staff member, with this expected to increase to 2 from January 2023, so 2 year olds entering the school would have the benefit of support from both male and female staff. The opportunities presented through 'marketing' the school as providing education and care from age 2 would bolster the collaborative work already taking place between the Playgroup team and nursery school staff, and promote equality as an explicit element of our ethos. This is likely to further reinforce the school's position of promoting both genders working in the school and the achievement of all children.

Race

The school is representative of a diverse range of ethnic heritage, as illustrated in the chart below. The school works tirelessly to cater for all ethnic groups, with the aims remaining to support the best possible outcomes for all. The move to extend the age range and places is expected to increase budgetary flexibility to better allow the school to target resources effectively. Furthermore, the ethos for the school and the application of the Values & Principles of the UNICEF Rights of a Child (including equality, equity, and fairness) will provide additional opportunities to embed the significance of equality within the curriculum and in the ethos of the school for children from age 2 years. All members of staff are entitled to appropriate training, in order that they can play their full part in ensuring that the school promotes racial equality. Training is linked to priorities within the Federation Development Plan. The governors will also identify their own training needs in relation to race equality.

Since Parklands became a member of the Foundations for Children Nursery Schools Federation, this has given opportunities to strengthen inclusive practice even further. Two of the four schools in the Federation have a much higher percentage of the cohort as diverse races (*Highfield: 56% Asian, black African and Caribbean; and Camrose: 62% Bangladesh, African, Black Caribbean and Indian*). Our aim will be to ensure good practice in the school and staff team is strengthened even further by sharing best practice with the other three schools in the federation, to the benefit of the local community of Parklands.

"Children learn how to solve problems, such as taking turns so everyone can have a go. They are taught about other cultures and families and the need to respect others. Staff use 'group time' to discuss with children key events in their lives, such as who has had a new baby brother or sister."

Ofsted Nov 2019- Parklands.

Comparison to the other federation nursery schools.

Staff Race

Data shows that White British is the predominant race for staff members across the four schools in the federation, but with 7 other races working across the communities. Our aim will be to continue to strengthen our Early Years educational offer by ensuring a wider and larger diversity of race and ethnicity in our workforce. This will be through our recruitment and marketing strategies for the schools. We will continue to evaluate on our inclusivity through community feedback and questionnaires.

Disability

The proportion of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is high in all of the nursery schools. Current academic year children with a diagnosed disability or special educational need: Parklands 3, Croyland 8, Highfield 2, Camrose 8. On average, Parklands has at least one third of its cohort requiring speech and language therapy or a specific intervention at school level to support their development.

There is an Accessibility Plan in place which would also be effective for the provision of children from the age of 2. The approach is not focused solely on physical buildings issues (though these are addressed), but seeks to embed equality for disabled children and adults into the culture of the school in practical ways. This includes: accessibility, academic support, and social and emotional development strategies for students with disabilities and impairments. The school works closely with Specialist Support Services across the local authority to provide support, both in the home and at nursery. The school also supports children and parents with impaired or disabling mental health through the Deputy Head/SENDCO and/or the Family Support Worker. The change to the age range at Parklands will allow the SENDCO to further link with and liaise with specialist practitioners and professionals to share best practice from an earlier age in the child's life. The two-year progress check carried out by the school and Health Visitors will ensure early identification and support for children with any form of disabilities. Where a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or there is a request for Statutory Assessment, the home local authority will continue to be responsible for funding or the arrangements for this to take place.

The school will continue to work with local authority, NHS agencies and other partners to help ensure good opportunities and outcomes for children with special needs, impairments and disabilities. The school will continue to operate employment policies and practices based on those operated by the local authority.

"Leaders are ambitious for the success of all children, regardless of their needs. They identify quickly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Each day, staff meet the needs of these children by adapting activities, so they will achieve well. They also ensure that they support children who are learning English as an additional language." Ofsted Nov 2019- Parklands

Sexual Orientation

The school aims to demonstrate mutual respect between all members of the school community. The school's Equality Policies recognises the general duty to have due regard for the need to eliminate unlawful sexual discrimination and to eliminate sexual harassment. This approach will extend to provisions for children from aged 2 years.

Religion and Belief

Information about children's religions and beliefs are obtained when a child starts at the school. This is to enable teachers and practitioners to plan the curriculum that celebrates and values the whole community. A parent consultation ensures parents can share the importance of their religion and how they celebrate key events and beliefs. The school then creates a yearly calendar of all special events and festivals to ensure children are educated and learn the values of one another's beliefs, religions and cultures.

Provision is made to cater for the cultural, moral and spiritual needs of all children, through planning of learning experiences and the continuous provision. Children's and parents views are actively encouraged and respected, through the voice of the child documentation and parent consultations.

The aim has been and will continue to be to provide all children with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, teaching and learning processes will ensure equality of access for all pupils, preparing them for life in a diverse society.

The practitioners and teachers at Parklands will role model how we appreciate religious difference and cultural diversity. Practitioners and teachers role model respectful practice of religious events and would challenge prejudice from children or parents where needed.

Children and parents experience a positive and inclusive school community ethos at the school, which is centred on the school's core belief of valuing the unique child and family. It is anticipated that the proposal to extend the age range will further strengthen and embed this positive and inclusive community ethos by bringing children and families into the school community from a younger age. The Federation principles of governance, curriculum and pedagogy across the four schools are ethically based on a tolerant and non-discriminatory ethos which should be acceptable equally to those with a religious faith and those with none.

Age

Parklands Nursery School currently offers provision for children from their third birthday up until 4yrs 11 months. In some cases, school-aged children have remained with us if they have not been provided with a school place, or if there is LA agreement for the child to remain in nursery for their Reception year. The school currently operates term time only.

Parklands Playgroup currently hires the use of the building and services at the nursery school. The Playgroup's current offer is for children aged 2 years, with standard admission into the nursery school from age 3 years. The school is committed to ensuring that all children, at every age and ability level, have an excellent foundation for future success. The school makes clear a consistently high expectation of all children regardless of age. To secure the best possible outcomes, a range of teaching methods are used throughout the school, ensuring that effective learning takes place at all stages for children. The proposal to extend the age range to include 2 year olds would enable the school to provide high quality early education and care from a younger age, where research has shown evidence of improved outcomes later on.

The nursery school currently provides a term time community-based 'stay and play' group for children of all ages. This enables parents with young children to access a play-based provision and seek early support or help prior to the child turning 2 and being eligible for a place.

Existing employment policies relating to age, including retirement age and pensions provision will continue to be aligned to local policies with this proposal. Teachers will continue to have access to the Teachers Pensions Scheme and support staff to the Local Government Pensions Scheme. The move to extend the age range to include 2 year olds will not result in measures to change terms and conditions of employment, nor any changes to pension entitlements as provided for in the Teachers and Local Government Pension Schemes. Current staffing ages range from early twenties through to late 60's across the four federation schools.

Social Inclusion

Parklands Nursery School in Northampton is smaller than the average nursery. It serves the Parklands ward to the north of Northampton but children also attend from across the town and from local villages. The majority of the school population is White British. The trend for the last five years is showing an increase of children from minority ethnic backgrounds and children learning English as an Additional Language. A small proportion of children are disabled or have special educational needs, but with a trend of 10-15% having speech and language delays.

"Leaders are ambitious for the success of all children, regardless of their needs. They identify quickly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Each day, staff meet the needs of these children by adapting activities, so they will achieve well. They also ensure that they support children who are learning English as an additional language. They teach them important new words and phrases. These children learn to communicate well. They are taught about other cultures and families and the need to respect others. Staff use 'group time' to discuss with children key events in their lives."

Ofsted Parklands Nov 19

The four nursery schools in the federation are placed in areas of varied characteristics. Croyland Nursery School, Highfield Nursery School and Camrose Early Years Centre are characterised by very low family income, very low numbers of adult educated to level 3 or above, and high levels of domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse. The ethos of the federation is centred around giving children a secure foundation and the social skills required for personal success in later life.

“The senior leadership team sees that children are given an early understanding of fundamental British values. Consequently, children are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Staff and children celebrate together the diverse ethnic mix of families whose children attend the school, with maps displayed on walls showing the different countries that families come from. Children learn, for example, about the celebration of Eid-al-Fitr and sample food from other lands, as well as learning different dances from around the world. As a result, children are highly respectful towards others.

Camrose OFSTED, May 2017

“This inclusive nursery school is exceptionally well led. Leaders, including governors, work together as a strong team. They are aspirational for children. They lead with the belief that all children can thrive at the nursery. Staff share leaders’ desire for children to become independent, inquisitive learners. Children are very well prepared to start primary schools.”

Ofsted Croyland Jan 2020

“Current records of children’s learning in personal, social and emotional development, physical development, and communication and language show that children, including children with SEND and those who have English as an additional language, make excellent progress from their starting points. Most children leave the school with skills typically expected for their age in these areas of learning.”

Oftsed Highfield Mar 2019

Parental engagement is seen as important across the federation, with regard to aspiring for all children to reach their potential. All four schools work hard to engage with their local communities. Home visits are carried out for every child that starts at the schools and this would also be the case for children aged 2 years at Parklands if the age range is extended. All members of the nursery teams establish relationships with parents from the initial home visit. The four nursery schools offer family support for families who require support with a whole range of factors which could be influencing their outcomes. Family support workers establish respectful relationships with children and parents and offer Early Help and support to access other services and agencies.

The current 2-year provision from Parklands Playgroup offers places for children eligible for 2 year funded provision, so the most disadvantaged children in the local community (which includes low income households, looked after children and children with SEND). Any remaining places are then made available for parents not eligible for 2 year funding, with the cost remaining in line with current offer and reviewed termly through the governing board. Any proposal to increase charge would be scrutinised in line with cost of inflation, and local characteristics. The 2-year offer would remain in line with admissions across the four schools within the Federation, which prioritises eligible 2 year funded children applications.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have any concerns they would like to discuss. There are regular parent consultations and parent events throughout the school year where parents can speak to their child’s teachers and keyworkers. This would all be available for parents of 2 year olds also if the age range of the school is changed.

Community Cohesion

The ambition and belief of the governors is for Parklands to be an excellent local community asset; and a place where all children who attend can reach their potential and achieve the highest standards. A central aim is to ensure fairness and to make sure that all children can succeed, whatever their background.

The governing board and leadership team, supported by the staff, have expressed a determination to work hard for the school and the wider community. The governing board has taken time to consider the options for future provision at Parklands and the best interests of the children and community the school serves. After careful consideration, the governing board concluded that extending the age range to include 2 year olds would support the vision of both the school and the federation as a whole, in strengthening the high quality education, care and early help we can offer children and families within the community of Parklands.

Assessing Disproportionate Impact and Actions:

Based on the current data analysis, the aims of the Federation and the ethos of Parklands Nursery, this proposal will have no disproportionate impact on any of the protected characteristics. The consultation for Parklands to extend its age range to include children from age 2 years and offer 8 full time places in fact shows the potential to have a positive impact on children and families in the Parklands community since it would enable children to access services and support from a younger age. The consultation report should be translated to ensure all community members can be actively involved.

Date of Completion: September 2022

Name of reporter: Lyndsey Barnett, Executive Headteacher

Ratified by Governors: _____