

Judith Kerr Primary School significant change consultation: opening a new Nursery

Introduction

Judith Kerr Primary School (JKPS) is consulting on the opening of new Nursery provision for 3 and 4 year olds, with a proposed start date of September 2021.

Background

JKPS is a free school that opened in 2013, with a vision of 'bilingualism for all'. It is a unique school, providing German teaching across all key stages and thus enabling the school to provide an offer not comparable with other local schools. It currently has 333 children on role from Reception to Year 6. In April 2019 it had a short inspection where it was rated good and is now awaiting a section 8 inspection, to ascertain if it meets the outstanding criteria. JKPS has extensive grounds including a forest area, garden and playing area. The Early Years section has a large playground with ample space to accommodate more children.

Demand

Since opening we have had numerous enquiries about the school having its own Nursery. The school has investigated the current local demand from its existing parental community and local nurseries. As demonstrated by a parental survey in October 2020, demand for places has already been ascertained.

Furthermore, we have investigated present demand within our local area. The four closest nurseries geographically all presently have waiting lists. Therefore, it is fair to assume the need goes beyond the school community.

Finally, in January 2021 we carried out a further consultation of need. This work extended previous consultations and sought to establish the specifics of the offer parents would require such as timings and pricing limits.

The new Nursery provision.

We would like to offer a combination of five full time sessions (9:00-3:00), which would be funded through the 15 or 30 hours of DFE funding. We would have a maximum of 26 children per session and ensure that we meet the required ratios. As a part of our offer the children will learn German through play and immersion. We already have a qualified teacher to lead the Nursery, supported by a German Nursery practitioner and another adult.

Like most primary schools, we would follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. We would focus on the prime areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional

Children presently in the Foundation Stage have access to all areas of the curriculum throughout the day. They learn across the curriculum within the classroom, but we also maximise the learning opportunity of the outdoor areas. We provide a stimulating environment in which they can discover and learn about the world around them via their own exploration. There are also adult-led group activities and whole-class carpet times.

An important part of our approach is the development of reading and writing by a coordinated approach to the teaching of phonics. This approach would be introduced in Nursery and thus enable both continuity as the children moved through to their reception class but also would enhance standards.

Personal, social and emotional developments is a key area of the Foundation Stage curriculum. We aim to ensure that the children feel secure and valued so that they can develop confidence in themselves and form secure, constructive relationships with others. We also encourage the children to make independent informed choices in both their actions and their learning.

The curriculum is further enhanced through visits and workshops. Outdoor Learning at JKPS allows children time and space to explore and develop their learning styles. This enables our children to develop a relationship with the outdoor environment, through frequent, and relevant experiences. Our aim is to encourage independence and raise self-esteem. It offers opportunities to develop thinking, speaking and problem- solving skills.

Location

The proposed Nursery would be located next to the two other Reception classrooms, with an attached child's toilet facility. This space is currently our Reception class and it is proposed that we convert an unused classroom next to the Reception classes into our second Reception class. It has a square footage of roughly 60 square meters. It is envisaged that both Reception and Nursery will run as a Foundation Stage unit with one of the teachers as its lead.

The children will arrive and leave through the same gate. As the Reception playground is large, both groups will be able to use it simultaneously. The Nursery children will also be able to access other parts of the school to support their learning: the hall, forest area and garden area. It is envisaged that the children will receive meals from our kitchen and for those that wish to be able to access our wrap around care. The present toilet area is large enough to install a changing area combined with 8 toilets enabling us to keep within the ration of 1:10 toilets per pupil.

As a part of our provision, wrap around care will be at the heart of what we provide; we will offer Breakfast club and two sessions of after school care. This will be run across our foundation stage using the adults who work in it for consistency reasons.

Admission

Nursery children would be required to apply for a place in the Reception year at JKPS in the same way as all other children, in line with the school's Admission Policy. At this stage we will not need to make any changes to the determined admission arrangements. In due course we aim to amend the School's Admission Policy to give priority to Nursery children in applications for a Reception year place, after children with an EHCP, looked after children and children with a sibling already at the school. We will finalise the details of this arrangement and consult on this change towards the end of this year.

Conclusion

Our research has shown that there is demand in the school for a Nursery that is not currently being delivered by other local schools. The school has space on the site for a Nursery and capital investment required is not large. Our financial modelling shows that the Nursery would be financially sustainable so long as the pupil numbers expected materialise. We now open this consultation to invite feedback and comments from our school community.



Timeline and next steps

Once this consultation has concluded and we have considered all feedback received, the next step is for us to make a formal proposal of change to the Department for Education (DFE). If our proposal is accepted, we hope to open the new Nursery provision in September 2021.

Consultation period

This consultation is for a period of four weeks. It will run from 14/04/2021 until 12/05/2021.

Responses to the consultation should be sent to:

Natasha Amos, Office Manager: namos@judithkerr.anthemtrust.uk

All responses must be sent by the end of the last day of the consultation period stated above.

Any parents/carers wishing to find out more about a potential place for their child/ren at the new Nursery, please contact Jo Ryan, Headteacher: jryan@judithkerr.anthemtrust.uk.