



University of Chester Academies Trust



Consultation on lowering the age range at
University Church Free School





Introduction by the Chair of the Statement of Action Committee (SOAC) and Principal of University Church Free School

The SOAC of the University Church Free School (UCFS) with the support of the Directors of the University of Chester Academies Trust (UCAT) has decided to consult on the proposal to change the age range for admissions. The school proposes to lower the age range by 1 year to accommodate children aged 3 – 4 years. If agreed, the proposal would mean that UCFS would admit children aged 3-4 years into a newly formed nursery within the school.

Changing the age range from 4-11 to 3-11 will allow us to broaden the offer of education we provide to our community.

This six week consultation will run from 12th December 2017 to 26th January 2018 and will give parents, staff and other local stakeholders the opportunity to let us know what they think. We will be holding open surgeries at the School on Wednesday 10th January 2018 9am – 11am and Tuesday 23rd January 2018 4pm – 6pm and representatives from UCAT and the staff of the University Church Free School will be available to answer individual questions on a one to one basis. Your views are important to us, so please either complete and return the attached form by 26th January 2018 or email the school at info@ucfschool.org

In their planning for the future strategic direction of the school, the Governors and the Board of UCAT will consider all responses in their final decision about whether or not to amend the age range for admissions.

Name Hazel Gloster
Chair of SOAC

Name Jonathan Farrington
Principal



**Consultation proposal document to lower the age range at
University Church Free School
From 4-11 to 3-11 by September 2018**

Current Provision

University Church Free School currently provides education for children 4 – 11 years of age. We are a fully inclusive school valuing and respecting everyone equally, underpinning this with our distinct Christian ethos.

“The warm welcome pupils receive when they enter school sets the tone for the day and promotes a strong sense of family, where everyone is accepted.”

Ofsted June 2015

The purpose of this document is to propose changes to the age range at the school. The school proposes to lower the age range by 1 year, this being to accommodate children aged 3– 4 years. The governing body of the school needs to consult on the proposed changes in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance, and wishes to receive the views and comments of all stakeholders involved with our school. The consultation period will run for 6 weeks from:

11th December 2017 to 26th January 2018

The governing body will consider all comments received during the consultation period.

School and Local Authority details

Current:	Proposed:
Age Range: 4 – 11	Age Range: 3 – 11
Provider Type	provider Type
Primary school within a multi academy trust	Primary school within a multi academy trust
Local Authority: Cheshire West and Chester	Local Authority: Cheshire West and Chester

Why is the consultation taking place?

Currently the youngest children that the school can admit are in the Reception class. In order to admit younger children, a process must be followed to ensure that the school are compliant with all of the DfE requirements. The first step in this process is that the local community and stakeholders must be asked for their views.

From the Department of Education Publication:

Early Education and Childcare: Key priorities

- ✓ All 3 and 4 year olds are able to access their entitlement of up to 30 hours of universal funded early year's education in a high quality setting. Evidence shows that children receiving quality early year's education significantly improves developmental outcomes and educational attainment.

Why is the school making this change?

The proposed change is to allow for the provision for 3-4 year olds as part of the whole school structure from September 2018.

A qualified teacher will ensure that children get the best possible start to quality early years education. Accountability for the provision for 3-4 year olds will be overseen by the governors and senior leadership team of the school in the first instance and ultimately the Directors of UCAT. Lowering the age range of the primary school allows, where possible, for siblings of similar ages to be taught in the same setting from the age of 3.

The provision will cater for a maximum of twenty six 3 and 4 year olds (at any one time), allowing for a quality provision that can maximise on the highest possible standards for attainment not only within the Early Years setting but across all Key Stages. We believe that providing care and education at an early opportunity is fundamental to our community and the holistic ethos of our school. It is recognised that the earliest years of a child's life have the most significant impact on his or her long term development, better outcomes and lifestyle choices. These are formative years physiologically, cognitively, socially and emotionally.

Applications for a Reception school place need to be made in the usual way; there is no guarantee of securing a school place as a result of your child attending the Nursery provision at our school.

"Children get off to a flying start in the early years; their time in the Reception class stands them in good stead for future success and they are well prepared to face the demands of the Year 1 curriculum."



The provision will be led by a full time qualified teacher and two teaching assistants at least one of whom will hold a full and relevant Level 3 qualification including a suitable level 2 qualification in English and Maths. At least one person who has a current Paediatric First Aid certificate will be on the premises and available at all times when children are present. This will include accompanying children on outings. The proposed staffing level will ensure that the required ratios for children aged three and over meet statutory requirements.

All safeguarding procedures will be in line with those already in place in the school and will meet the statutory guidance set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015' and to the 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales 2015'.

The school policy for administering medicines will be followed and training will be provided for staff where the administration of medicines requires medical or technical knowledge.

The qualified teachers and highly skilled staff will ensure the delivery of Early Years Foundation Stage education is available across the provision; age appropriate experiential play and EYFS education will be accessible for all children. Dependant on need, some children may also require that the EYFS curriculum offers differentiation to support specific needs.

Staff have an extensive skill-set and knowledge based around age appropriate developmental milestones and characteristics of effective learning for 3- 5 year olds. A clear understanding of Foundation Stage expectations together with tracking and monitoring of attainment for both the 3 and 4 year old children will be in place.

"Good teaching, good provision and warm relationships foster a love of learning and ensure children are happy and safe. Interesting activities capture childrens' enthusiasm and harness their natural curiosity."

Ofsted June 2015

Parents and Carers will be successfully engaged in their children's learning at school in order to develop a productive home/school partnership. A robust transition programme will ensure that Nursery children can move seamlessly into the Reception year.

Where the criteria is met, we wish to provide the opportunity for 3- 4 year old children to access 30 hours per week.

The Department for Education said:

"The evidence shows that starting younger, with high quality teacher led provision, can have a real and lasting impact on children's development and life chances."

The benefits in brief:

- ✓ The new arrangements would allow us to provide individualised support for all the children's social, emotional, spiritual and academic development within a caring nurturing setting led by experienced staff.
- ✓ Home visits will take place meaning that there is the opportunity to build positive relationships that impact on the children learning from an earlier age.
- ✓ The children would benefit from experiencing earlier educational activities to support their learning and development as part of a wider school curriculum and led by qualified teachers.
- ✓ Research has shown that where school provide early years education, children make rapid progress as they move between the early stages of learning. School staff are able to share their expertise between Early Years and Key Stage 1 and this is critical to consistent progress and greater educational gains.
- ✓ Where children go on to attend the school, the transition will be a smooth and effective process allowing the children to settle more quickly. It would provide continuity of education and provision through a single leadership team and governing body.
- ✓ A wider range of resources and expertise could be shared across the age range of the school and this flexibility can be particularly useful with special needs or vulnerabilities. Our Senco will be involved from the beginning to identify concerns and support educational developments from the outset Early intervention involves identifying children and families that may be at risk of running into difficulties and providing timely and effective support.
- ✓ The children will have access to all school facilities including our outside play area, specialist music room, art room, science room, IT suite, hall, library, PE equipment, celebration assemblies, private music tuition and forest schools.
- ✓ We would be able to offer full wrap around care from 8am to 6pm when needed and hours above free entitlement would be an additional low cost.
- ✓ All children would be able to engage in school project and enrichment activities such as story tellers in school, dance coaches, theatre performances in school, visiting music tutors celebration events, art projects and sports days.
- ✓ Nursery aged children would be invited to take part in celebration assemblies, where parents and extended families would be welcomed into school.



Description of Accommodation

The current Early Years classroom will be remodelled to take into account the nursery-aged children. The toilets and hand washing facilities are of an appropriate size for this age range. The Nursery children will enter the school via the Early Years classroom.

What would the Early Years provision look like?

The provision will provide high quality Early Years Foundation Stage play based provision - including role play, sand, water, construction, music time, movement and dance, art and craft, cooking, early literacy, early mathematics, mark making, forest schools (learning and play in the outdoor environment) and outside play including bikes and scooters.

There will be free flow between areas including the outside, offering children a choice of activities and allowing them to engage in learning through play which is relevant and appropriate to their stage of development.

Lunch and snack times will take place at tables and table manners including the appropriate use of cutlery will be taught and encouraged.

Will the proposed change result in any educational impact on the existing primary school provision?

We have conducted an assessment of the resources needed and effects on the existing primary school provision and we do not see that there will be any adverse impact on any existing level of provision. The school will be able to successfully manage this change allowing for 3-4 year old provision. The school Principal, together with the EYFS/KS1 Leader have significant experience of working within the Early Years and this will ensure high quality teaching and learning for the 3 – 4 year olds. The proposal embraces the schools vision to provide a strong foundation from the earliest opportunity.

“All children achieve well so that a higher than average proportion meet the expected goals in all areas of learning by the end of the year. Over one third of children goes further and surpasses national expectations.” Ofsted June 2015

This is a very positive opportunity for the University Church Free School to extend the quality provision already provided.

“The school is a harmonious and welcoming haven of calm in which pupils flourish.”

Ofsted June 2015

Consultation Process timescale.

Process	Date
Publication of consultation	12 th December 2017
Consultation Process	6 weeks
Drop in sessions to discuss proposals open to parents, carers and local community	Wednesday 10 th January 9am – 11am Tuesday 23 rd January 4pm – 6pm
Analysis of responses	By 31 st January 2018
Decision communicated	Spring 2018
Final implementation of proposals Opening	September 2018

How can you ask questions, get more information and comment on the proposal?

The SOAC would welcome your views during the consultation period which runs for six weeks from 12th December 2017 to 26th January 2018

You may respond to the consultation by either completing the Response Form on the next two pages, by letter to the school, or by emailing info@ucfschool.org All responses should be sent, or handed in, to University Church Free School by 26th January 2018



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Response Sheet

Please use this space to tell us your views about the proposed change to the age range for admissions at University Church Free School.



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This section asks you for some information that will help us analyse the results of the responses and to see who has taken part. Your response will be anonymous and you will not be identified by any of the information you provide.

I am a: (Please tick ✓ and complete all those that apply to you)

Parent/carer

Your child's/children's school(s):

.....

Governor

Your school/college:.....

Staff member

Your school/college:

Local Resident

The area in which you live:

.....

Other

Please tell us:

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