

## **Townhill Infant School**

### **Proposed Extension of Age Range to Accommodate a Pre-School from February 2023**

#### **Proposal**

From February 2023, Townhill Infant School is proposing to change their lower age limit from 4 to 2 enabling the school to provide a pre-school provision following the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. This will enable the school to continue the legacy of the YMCA Townhill Nursery and Pre-School, which currently operates on the school site, and which is proposing to close on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023 following the decision of the YMCA to find an alternative provider for the provision.

#### **History**

Townhill Infant School is a community Infant school built in 1971. The school has 168 children across 6 classes. Townhill Infant school is proud to provide a wide-ranging curriculum, making the most of its outdoor space which offers its own nature zone, play structures and playing fields in the heart of the Townhill Park community.

In December 2013, Townhill Infant School joined Hamwic Education Trust, becoming part of the Edwin Jones Education Partnership, which includes Ludlow Infant, Harefield Primary, Beechwood Junior, Glenfield Infant, Weston Park Primary, Weston Shore Infants and Weston Secondary school.

Hamwic Education Trust was established in 2011 and incorporates 35 schools within the primary, secondary & hospital phases of education.

Townhill Infant School was last inspected by Ofsted on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022 where following a full inspection of the school was carried out. The grade was overall good with outstanding in Leadership and management as well as outstanding in the Early years.

#### **Rationale**

The YMCA Townhill Nursery and Pre-School (URN: EY330639) currently have an effective operating capacity of 30 children and operate from facilities owned by Southampton City Council, which are located on the site of Townhill Infant School. They registered on the Early Years Register in March 2006 and currently have a 'Good' Ofsted rating (19/06/2019). During Autumn 2022, the Fairthorne Group YMCA began the process of seeking alternative providers to take ownership of a number of their provisions, including the YMCA Townhill Nursery and Pre-School. Townhill Infant School expressed their interest in taking ownership of the provision, which obtained the full support of Southampton City Council. It is the intention of Townhill Infant School to take ownership of the YMCA Townhill Nursery and Pre-School to enable the continuation of the provision with existing staff being able to TUPE over to the school.

This proposal will mean that those children and their families who remain non-school aged will be able to continue at their 'current' pre-school with familiar staff and premises. This will also ensure the job security of existing members of pre-school staff. This will also ensure that the community of Townhill Park continues to be able to access pre-school provision which is a vital service within this locality.

The school already has established links with the pre-school as many of the children who attend the YMCA Townhill Nursery and Pre-School come to the Infant school to start in year R (for example in September 2022, 27% of our Year R cohort came from the YMCA pre-school). These relationships have been established and mean that the children within our community have an excellent

transition into school. By accommodating the preschool under the Infants school's umbrella can only further enhance provision, relationships and transition.

The proposal does not have an adverse financial impact on the school's budget, it requires no change in leadership, governance, or site facilities. The school will gain from the wealth of knowledge and experience of the pre-schools existing staff and those staff will be able to take advantage of working collaboratively with staff at the school; having opportunities to develop their own practice in primary education.

### **Aims**

The aim of the school will be to extend its age range to allow for pre-school provision, replicating the provision of care currently offered by the YMCA Townhill Nursery and Pre-School. The school will support those children who are funded by the government (15 hours for some 2 year olds, 15 hours for all 3 and 4 year olds and 30 hours for some 3 and 4 year olds).

The Pre-School will work collaboratively with the school's EYFS team, under the Early Years Foundation stage leader and the schools strategic plan, to ensure best and consistent practice and enabling children attending to begin early preparations for beginning school.

The school will be accredited with the Preschool Learning Alliance (PSLA) and will work with the recommended staff ratios of:

- For children aged two
  - ❖ There must be at least one member of staff for every four children
  - ❖ At least one member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification
  - ❖ At least half of all other staff must hold an approved level 2 qualification
  
- For children aged three and over in registered early years provision where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another suitable level 6 qualification is working directly with the children
  - ❖ there must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children; and
  - ❖ at least one other member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification.

*Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE March 2021.*

Where appropriate the established policies and practices of the school will be adopted by the pre-school (children protection, safeguarding, health and safety etc). Other more specific policies would be reviewed to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Staff would also receive annual training such as safeguarding updates.

In summary the aim of the school is to replicate the current YMCA Townhill Nursery and Pre-School provision, enhancing the provision by ensuring that all of the pre-school and EYFS staff work as a collaborative team, providing children from as young as 2 the preparation and self-development to be successful at school. The ethos being that every child will be the best they can be, whilst also building early relationships with parents/carers that will develop as the children moves through the school to the end of year 2.

## Need

There is an existing need for this provision as there are already children using the current YMCA Townhill Nursery and Pre-School provision on site.

Townhill Infant School is located in the Bitterne Park and Harefield ward/electoral division of Southampton City Council

Within a 1 kilometre radius of Townhill Infant School there are four providers including the YMCA Townhill Nursery and Pre-School. The closest providers are as follows:

Provider	Distance
Squirrels Corner Pre-School	0.06
The Mulberry Bush Day Nursery	0.36
Seedlings Montessori at Moorlands	0.42

There are a total of six childminders in a 1 kilometre radius of Townhill Infant School who offer early years' places.

For further information please see the Southampton City Council's [Childcare sufficiency assessment 2020](#) and their summer term sufficiency feedback 2022 (appendix A).

## Quality

Townhill Infant School's current EYFS provision has gone through recent significant changes in line with national expectations and has implemented the changes in the EYFS curriculum from September 2021.

A vital part of children's initial education is phonics, and our team have in place a government recognised and approved scheme Little Wandle, that all staff trained in. This means that all of our EYFS children receive the best possible chances in their education as soon as they start school.

Our EYFS provision is regularly visited by Hamwic Education Trust. They are so impressed with the outstanding practice that they have asked us to share this with other schools within the Trust by offering coaching support to other EYFS practitioners by both in school visits and the EYFS lead working alongside colleagues in their own school.

Our recent OFSTED report stated; 'In the early years, curriculum plans explicitly outline what children must know, understand and do in each of the seven development areas. Teachers in the early years expertly guide pupils to ensure that they engage with carefully chosen resources. A range of appropriate indoor and outdoor activities help children to practise and develop skills. For example, using water and dice to develop knowledge of counting and measurement. Reading is a priority in the school. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained to deliver the new phonics programme well. Pupils remember sounds they have learned because they practise each day. Teachers help pupils to improve in phonics by skilfully checking what they know and can do. Those who need extra support, including pupils with SEND, are identified quickly, and given additional help

to keep up. Children in the early years choose to practise their phonics knowledge during child-initiated play.'

'Children in the early years work and play exceptionally well together, for example helping each other to create the best superhero outfit.'

This demonstrates that the current provision in place is already meeting and exceeding the EYFS framework and that this practice will be transferred to the practices already in place at the YMCA Townhill Nursery and Pre-School. This will enable the EYFS team to work with the current pre-school staff to continue the practices they have in place and align them with the school strategic plan. Staff can also work together to continue to identify children who may require additional education support from an early stage and work with outside agencies to ensure that all children have a head start in their education and seamlessly transfer to their formal education.

### **Consultation**

This document will be provided to the following stakeholder groups to seek their views from 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022 until Friday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2023

- Parents/carers of the school
- Staff at the school
- Current YMCA Townhill Nursery and Pre-School
- Parents/carers of children that currently attend YMCA Townhill Nursery and Pre-School
- Staff at the YMCA Townhill Nursery and Pre-School
- Other schools in the local area
- Other childcare providers in the local area
- Childminders in the local area
- Southampton City Council
- The Local Governing Body of the school
- Hamwic Education Trust