



The Grove School, Totnes

Consultation on a proposal to extend the age range from 4-11 to 3-11 years of age

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Proposal

The Grove School's Governing Body is consulting on a proposal to extend the age range of The Grove School from 4-11 to 3-11 years of age from September 2025.

The school has been working in partnership with Devon County Council (DCC) to bring this proposal forward and DCC is supportive of the proposed change to the age range through the establishment of Nursery provision for 3- and 4- year olds.

Background

It is proposed to extend the age range of the school so that Nursery provision can be established for 3- and 4-year olds. It is planned to offer 11 full time equivalent, term time only places, for 3- and 4-year olds.

There is demand in the area for additional provision for 3- and 4-year olds and in light of the increases to early years entitlements and associated funding, there is a projected increase in the demand for baby and two year-old places. The following changes to childcare funding for working parents are some of the key drivers for change:

- From April 2024, most working parents of 2-year-olds have been able to access 15 hours per week entitlement; this is in addition to the more disadvantaged families that will continue to get 15 hours a week of funded provision.
- From September 2024, most working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3-years-old can access 15 hours per week.
- From September 2025, most working parents of children aged 9 months up to when the child starts at school can access 30 hours funded childcare per week for 38 weeks of the year.

The places being created for 3 and 4 year olds are expected to take the pressure off other local providers by freeing up space for babies and two year olds to attend. The school will work closely with these providers to ensure a smooth transition for children whether that is into the Reception Class or the Nursery.

We envisage that this increase in provision will provide valuable support to the community and ensure children have a wonderful start to their school journey.

Benefits of the proposal

Through offering nursery provision for 3- and 4-year olds, the school would be able to establish the strongest links possible with families, working to support them from a younger age. The school will offer high quality, flexible provision and a wider choice of provision types for parents. Children will be supported from 3 years old to develop the skills ready to start in the reception class. Being able to offer places from 3-years-old will provide greater consistency and continuity for children before starting at school and enable staff to make a more significant impact through earlier identification of their needs.

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

Process and Decision-making

The Government has recently simplified the process for a maintained school to extend the age range to create school-based nursery provision. The Government has made this change to support their commitment to create or expand school based nurseries in light of the increased entitlements to early years.

The Grove School is a Local Authority maintained 'Community' school.

The process to establish a school based nursery through the extension of the school age range includes a period of consultation followed by a decision at a Full Governing Body meeting.

The consultation period will run from 12 May to 9 June 2025. Following the end of the consultation period, the full Governing Body will meet to consider all the responses to the consultation and make a decision as to whether or not establish nursery provision for 3-and 4-year olds through the extension of the age range from 4-11 to 3-11 years of age.

Indicative Timescale

Assuming there is agreement to each stage of the consultative process, an indicative timeline is detailed below.

1. Consultation from 12 May to 9 June 2025.
2. Meeting of the Full Governing Body to consider the consultation responses and make a decision on whether or not to approve the proposal.
3. Proposed implementation, if proposal is approved: September 2025.

Capital and planning

Some minor capital funding will be required to make small improvements. No planning consent is required to implement this proposal.

This proposal will not affect the Published Admission Number (PAN) for the school, nor the capacity for school aged children.

The school has a PAN 45. It is proposed that classes would be organised so that there is one Reception class for 30 children and one Foundation Stage Unit for 15 Reception aged children and places for up to 11 3- and 4-year olds. The Foundation Stage Unit will be staffed with a qualified teacher and a member of staff with a full and relevant Level 3 qualification.

It is proposed that the old school hall be converted into a classroom, which will release an existing classroom suitable for the Foundation Stage Unit. The school has a main school hall in addition to the old school hall, so this proposal does not put pressure on classroom space for statutory school-aged children.

Admission to the Nursery

If the proposal is approved, admission to the nursery provision will be managed by the Governing Body and the school is required to follow the Devon County Council Nursery Admissions Policy.

Responding to the consultation

Please reply by 9 June 2025 to either:

Email: admin@the-grove-primary.devon.sch.uk

Or by writing to: Hilary Priest, Headteacher, The Grove School, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5ED.

All responses to the consultation will be fully considered by the school's leadership team and governors of The Grove School but we will not send individual responses to any specific points made.

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