



## Consultation on the proposed merge of

### Alderholt Sunbeams and Supertots

with

### St James' CE First School, a part of Heath Academy Trust

Improving outcomes for all



**Consultation start date:** 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019

**Consultation close date:** 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019

## **Formal Proposal consultation document for the merging of Sunbeams Pre-School & Day Nursery with St. James' CE First School**

**This will formally be a merger of the charity Alderholt Sunbeams and Supertots with St. James' CE First School, managed by Heath Academy Trust.**

For the purposes of this document

Alderholt Sunbeams and Supertots management committee will be known as the Trustees

Alderholt Sunbeams Pre-school and Day Nursery will be known as Sunbeams

St. James' First School governors will be known as – the governors

Heath Academy Trust will be known as HAT

### **What is this consultation proposing?**

Alderholt Sunbeams and Supertots Trustees propose that the Sunbeams Pre-school and Day Nursery merges with St James' First School into a single setting under one head teacher and with one governing body. This would therefore result in St James' First School lowering its age range to 2 years and having to register the nursery to take children 0-2 years to continue to provide a village day nursery.

### **Why are the Pre-School & Day Nursery Trustees and HAT proposing this?**

Sunbeams becoming a member of the Heath Academy Trust will enable it to be led by the primary school's headteacher and HAT directors. The burden of finding separate governors and trustees will be removed as there will no longer be the need for two groups as the HAT manages both the primary school and the day nursery. A HAT led day nursery benefits in terms of experience, consistency and by the removal of duplicated efforts. The Trust board within the HAT are a well-established body who work strategically to continually improve the provision of all its schools and are in agreement that one body overseeing an outstanding educational experience from 0 to 9 years is more strategic than two.

A single management structure will enable the leadership team to focus more fully on children's learning experiences, transition through the early years setting and onto the National Curriculum hence enabling the best achievement for all children. The accountability for the whole age range and all facilities on site would rest with the leadership team and governance of the combined school, enabling greater coherence and less bureaucracy. The focus will be on ensuring consistency in the education of all pupils across the whole age range, based on a shared understanding of each child's strengths and needs. Merging Sunbeams and St James' First School will also allow more efficient ways of working, enabling the leadership to remain focused on the quality of the learning experience and the relationship with families established in the early years.

Sunbeams is financially self-sufficient and has seen an increase of children attending over the last few years therefore the sustainability of the day nursery is secure thus not impacting on the first school budget.

Purchasing equipment, services and health and safety contracts as one body will make Sunbeams even more cost effective.

The Sunbeams Trustees, St. James' Leadership and the Heath Academy Trust believe that the merger will minimise uncertainty to staff, as well as being the simplest option procedurally, and involving least disruption to financial and curriculum planning. The legal process we plan to follow, if the proposal to merge the schools is agreed, will be TUPE which will protect our employees recognising their continuous services. The pre-school children within Sunbeams will have continuity of relationships already built with Sunbeams staff team.

The training and career progression offered by the Holt Heath Academy will provide continual professional development for Sunbeams employees.

Following this consultation, if we decide to go ahead with the proposal, we plan to open the merged school/day nursery from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2019.

## Objectives of the proposal

- To significantly improve the learning journey for pupils from 0 years to 9 years by ensuring the continuity of provision in Alderholt.
- To improve the academic performance of all pupils into Key Stage 2 by being wholly responsible and accountable for the learning, social, emotional and behavioural development.
- To provide a unique and innovative learning journey that will combine the best of nursery and First School models for learning.
- To sustain high standards of education and maintain children's wellbeing by offering secure transition from nursery to primary all on one site.
- To enable more collaborative and positive partnerships ensuring high quality, localised educational provision.
- For parents to be able to be involved with the already set up PTA, so they can have their say.
- There will be the benefit of no top up fee for the 15/30 hours which is free through the government.
- To offer all pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 an exciting, innovative and progressive curriculum provision that meets their developmental and academic needs.
- To provide affordable, quality childcare for local families all year.

## What will the benefits be?

The Sunbeams Trustees, St. James' Leadership and the HAT believe that merging could bring many benefits to the local community including:

- Help to raise standards further.
- Ensure that we provide specialist attention and expertise to groups of children who are talented, able and gifted or who have special educational needs, are vulnerable, or are in some way under performing at the time that they most need it.
- Provide stability, consistency and continuity for children in their early educational years, through our ethos, curriculum, teaching and learning organisation.
- There will be a smoother transition from nursery to school as staff will work within both settings when needed. This will support the child when they are entering reception class.
- Maintaining a placement for the needs of parents in the area to enable them to work both before school, after and during school holidays if required.
- Provide equal access for all pupils to the highest quality nursery and school education regardless of faith, creed or culture.

## How this proposal will affect the children in the primary school, Pre-school & Nursery

The first important point to note is that during the merger process the children will have no obvious change to their daily care, structure and routines. Great care will be taken to ensure continuity of care throughout. The changes we are proposing to the two settings are intended to build on the firm relationships and make an already existing working relationships firmer. Thus enabling the school and day nursery to use their resources and staffing more flexibly, help them to improve curriculum planning/ assessment and ensure continuity across the whole age phase. There will be a continuing commitment to the principles and good practice within the Early Years Foundation Stage and meeting the needs of youngest children. Children and families' entitlement to early year's provision and children's centre services will not be reduced or negatively affected by the changes.

## Special Educational Needs

Merging will have a positive impact for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and for vulnerable learners, which will build on the current good practice already established in both settings. This is because:

- Within the widened staff circle we will have the expertise in early intervention, resources and teaching pedagogy to support children who find learning difficult within both of the settings.
- We believe this can help support a child who may require extra support in any part of their educational journey. The school would be able to come over to the pre-school and work with the child and there

is a longer time frame to support the child's needs.

- We believe that our exceptionally effective and positive transition programme for children will benefit transition to reception class for pre-school children with special needs. Making this a less stressful time for the children as staff from the day nursery and the school can more freely support transition and support in the reception class.
- We believe that our widened professional knowledge of how children learn will enable us to provide most effective support.

### **Extended services**

The proposal will give the opportunity for joint extended school provision reflecting the needs of the community and the aspirations of school leaders, including:

- Transition support for pupils, schools and families.
- Shared knowledge by experienced staff.
- Shared training for parents and staff.
- A commitment to wrap around care with breakfast club and after school club that fits the needs and aspirations of busy, working parents.
- Provide all year childcare to support working families.
- Support for vulnerable families and pupils.
- Access to primary school facilities
- Joint partnership and collaborative working to ensure outstanding provision

### **What will be the impact on admissions?**

Admission to any nursery provision is independent of the Admissions Code but should be fair and transparent. The governing body will be responsible for setting any published criteria and ensuring the system is operated responsibly. All children attending nursery provision at a school still have to apply through the normal admissions process to gain a reception place at that school.

### **Who sets the funding rate for governor-run exempt provision in maintained schools?**

Funding rates for all types of early year's providers are set locally by LAs in conjunction with the Schools Forum, who may apply different funding criteria to different types of provider to reflect unavoidable costs.

### **Registration of a governor run early years (EY) provision such as Pre-schools and Day Nursery.**

The government introduced legislation that means schools can extend the age range to which they provide education and care to two years old without additional registration. Sunbeam provides care for 0 – 8 year olds so it will be necessary for the governors to register with Ofsted Early Years to care for children under two years of age.

When Ofsted inspect the school they will inspect the age range 2-9 year at the same time and will include a separate judgement for the effectiveness of the early year's provision. The separate registration for the under twos will require a separate inspection from the Early Years Ofsted Team.

### **What are the plans for Supertots?**

The trustees and St. James' school will work together to find the best solution to enable Supertots, the popular village toddler group to remain open.

## ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Remain a Trustee run Day Nursery and/or complete the Charitable Incorporate Organisation registration.

The demands being made on voluntary Trustees continues to increase. As an unincorporated charity Alderholt Sunbeams and Supertots trustees are responsible for any financial liabilities if Sunbeams was to fail financially. They are also responsible for the employees as employers and for health and safety. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find volunteers to take on this responsibility.

In the present financial environment with the government freezing the funding for 3 and 4 year olds it is becoming increasingly difficult for charity groups to make ends meet and merging would help spread the costs of such things as utilities, resourcing and health and safety packages get a more competitive price by bulk purchasing.

After careful consideration by both the existing Alderholt Sunbeams and Supertots trustees, St James' First School Leadership and the Heath Academy Trust it is felt that the experience and knowledge of the combined bodies would provide the necessary cohesive and stable structure for the Day Nursery and school and the very best early educational experience for our children.

### The process

#### 1) Proposal sent out to:

- Sunbeams and St James' parents
- Local Toddler Groups
- Members of staff at Sunbeams and St James'
- The Heath Academy Trust staff
- Local Residents
- Parish magazine
- Local Schools
- Local Shops
- Parish council
- Dorset Early Years Advisor team

### How can I find out more?

Sunbeams Pre-school / Day Nursery and St James' have arranged a drop in session for parents and the community so they can find out more and give their views. The session will take place at:

7:30pm pm Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019 at St James' CE First School

### Procedure for responses: support; objections and comments

The formal proposal document can be found on the school website [www.alderholtsunbeams.co.uk](http://www.alderholtsunbeams.co.uk) & <http://alderholt.dorset.sch.uk>.

If you wish to make any comments please do so via [alderholtsunbeams@gmail.com](mailto:alderholtsunbeams@gmail.com) or [office@alderholt.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@alderholt.dorset.sch.uk) or in written format addressed to the Governing Body before the end of the consultation period, Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at midday.

What are the key dates?

23 <sup>rd</sup> Jan 19:	Formal proposal submitted
28 <sup>th</sup> Feb 19:	End of consultation period (midday)
From 1 <sup>st</sup> Mar 19:	Governing Body and Pre-School / Day Nursery Trustees consider responses and decide how to proceed.

We appreciate your time on this matter, should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Angela Hibberd, Nursery Manager of Sunbeams Pre-school & Day Nursery on 01425 656382 or via [alderholtsunbeams@gmail.com](mailto:alderholtsunbeams@gmail.com). Or Jo Hudson, Headteacher of St James' CE First School, 01425 653063.



## Consultation response form

Please tell us what your views are. If you prefer not to use this form, you can also put your views in a letter.

Letters and completed forms should be returned to Sunbeams Pre-school/ Day Nursery or St James' CE First School.

Alternatively, responses can be sent by email to: [alderholtsunbeams@gmail.com](mailto:alderholtsunbeams@gmail.com) and [office@alderholt.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@alderholt.dorset.sch.uk)

To be considered, all responses must be received by **midday on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019**. We encourage you to share your views and opinions either way to ensure we get a good picture of our community's thoughts and needs.

Do you agree with the proposal to merge Sunbeams Pre-school / Day Nursery & St James' First School?

YES		NO	
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Please note any further comments in the box below.