

Impact Assessment

Updated 17.02.2025

Assessment of: Extending the age range of Honiton Primary School from 3-11 to 2-11

Service: School Organisation & Place Planning/Early Years & Childcare Service

Head of Service: Deputy Director – Planning, CCET

Assessment carried out by: Senior School Organisation Officer and Early Years & Childcare Sufficiency Lead

This Impact Assessment will be updated during the statutory process with feedback and outcomes from the consultation and formal representation period should the proposal proceed.

1. Description of proposal

Proposal to extend the age range of Honiton Primary School from 3-11 to 2-11 with an estimated implementation date of 22 April 2025. Honiton Primary School currently has a Nursery Class for children aged 3 and 4 years of age. The proposal is to extend the provision to also take 2 year olds.

2. Aims and objectives, and reason for change or review

Data suggests that across the Honiton Higher Level Ward, there is a lack of provision for two-year-olds. The following table shows the population of two-year-olds, the estimated demand for places, the supply of provision and the sufficiency of provision.

	Population	Demand (FTE Places)	Supply (FTE Places)	Sufficiency
Autumn 2024	97	84	60.5	-23.5
Spring 2025	89	77	60.5	-16.5
Summer 2025	88	76	60.5	-15.5
Autumn 2025	81	70	60.5	-9.5
Spring 2026	86	75	60.5	-14.5
Summer 2026	85	74	60.5	-13.5

The following changes to childcare funding for working parents are 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.

It is likely that 60% of children in the age groups above will be eligible for the new entitlements. Devon County Council's annual Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Report confirms there is a need for all-year round places for 2-year-olds and under. It is estimated that 91% of working parents will need provision all year round. There continues to be more families that want to access childcare due to the introduction of the increased funded childcare entitlements for working parents.

Children who attend the school's Nursery Class are more likely to apply for a place in the Reception Class. By enabling children to start in the nursery at two-years-old a transition point for some children will be removed. It is commonly accepted that when transitioning learning can be detrimentally impacted. Those more disadvantaged children who are eligible for 2-year-old funding will currently attend different providers, as will parents who need childcare so they can work. They may then come back to the school at age 3 into the nursery or at age 4 into the reception class.

Being able to offer places from 2-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. Interventions can then be put in place well before the child starts in the Reception Class.

With more people working from home there may be families living close to the school who will be able to start working or increase their hours of work because childcare for 2 year olds will be available to them locally without the need to travel longer distances.

The Local Authority has carried out recent research which shows that two year old children that are being funded in a setting do not change provisions to attend a school nursery when they are three. This places school nurseries with a three to eleven age range at risk and could mean that the places for 3 and 4 year olds will no longer be available. By extended the age range to 2 -11 the school will secure the future of the nursery for families within the school's designated area.

3. Risk assessment, limitations and options explored (summary)

All children in the Nursery Class are taught according to their age related expectations and have access to suitable learning provision. This includes access to experienced teachers and qualified early years staff working across the Early Years Foundation Stage. The ratio of adults to children in place allows for work with individual children as well as different groupings. The provision has and will continue to have the appropriate adult to child ratios in accordance with the statutory Early Years and Foundation Stage Framework. The physical indoor and outdoor space is zoned and is suitable to meet the needs of 2 year olds. The physical space/fabric of the Nursery Class does not need to be changed to enable two-year-olds to be accommodated as there is no significant differences in the requirements of a 2 year old from those of a 3 and 4 year old in terms of the physical environment.

Nursery practitioners are allocated key children and carry out planning and assessment along with the class teacher. Nursery practitioners will be supporting the two year olds. There will be planned activities for two year olds that they can access at times when quieter sessions may be needed for the older children. There is outside space and the hall that can be used during these times. Games and toys with small parts and scissors will be distributed safely with areas sectioned off for targeted learning.

4. People affected, diversity profile and analysis of needs

Pupils and their families, particularly children on roll in the Nursery Class.

Local families seeking nursery provision;

Staff in Nursery Class;

Wider school staff and governors;

Other Local Early Years Providers;

There are 404 children on roll of Honiton Primary School (Autumn 2024 census). 376 of which are primary school aged children and 28 Nursery aged children.

Of the 404 children on roll, 147 (36%) children are eligible for free school meals.

From the Autumn 2024 census, 33 (8%) children of the 404 children on roll speak English as an additional language.

Of the 404 children on roll, there are 17 (4%) children with an EHC Plan (Education, Health and Care Plan) and 36 children (9%) identified as requiring SEN support (SEN support without an EHCP).

5. Stakeholders and their interest

Pupils, parents and carers of children on roll of school;
Children on roll in Nursery Class;
Local families who are seeking early years provision;
Local Early Years Providers;
Local employers;
Other stakeholders;

6. Additional relevant research used to inform this assessment

Department for Education: Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage
Cabinet Office guidance on Consultation Principles
The Childcare Act 2006
Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations' to maintained schools') statutory DfE guidance, October 2024
School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013

7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

A non-statutory pre-publication consultation has been held and details published and circulated widely to stakeholders and other interested parties. Three responses were received.

Devon's neighbouring Local Authorities are routinely consulted. One response has been received from Cornwall County Council with no objection given that the school is at considerable distance to the Cornish border and understanding the need for additional 2-year old provision and the role some schools will play in creating some of the required additional provision.

A response was received from Honiton Town Council who considered the proposal at their Full Council meeting and agreed to support the proposal to extend the age range.

A further response was received from a Devon County Councillor in support.

A formal consultation period will now be held from 24 February 2025 to 24 March 2025. This will be carried out in term time and in accordance with the Cabinet Office guidance on consultation principles. The formal statutory consultation, as per the pre-publication consultation, will be widely circulated to include all parents/carers, staff and governors at the school. Consultation will also include County and District Councillors, Union representatives, equality groups, MP, local early years providers, all schools and the Town

Council. The formal consultation will be published on the school's website and on DCC's Have Your Say consultation website. Responses will be carefully considered by Devon County Council and will also be shared with the school as this is considered good practice to ensure the school's senior leadership team and governors are aware of local opinion.

Devon County Council is the decision-maker, following the completion of a statutory process. The decision-maker may reject the proposal or approve the proposal with or without conditions.

Background information

8. Equality analysis

Under the Equality Act 2010, the local authority must consider how people will be affected by a service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (for work), sex, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are: informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations; proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision); fair, necessary, reasonable, and those affected have been adequately consulted.

- a) Is this group negatively or potentially negatively impacted, and in what way?
- b) What could be done or has been done to remove the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage and inequalities?
- c) In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?
- d) What can be done to advance equality further? This could include meeting specific needs, ensuring equality of opportunity and access, encouraging participation, empowering people, making adjustments for disabled people and action to reduce disparities and inequalities.
- e) Is there a need to foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promote understanding) and help people to be safe and protected from harm? What can be done?

All residents by geographic area

There is a potential negative impact on other local early years providers. However, DCC's Early Years and Childcare service have reviewed sufficiency data to ensure proposals will not have a detrimental impact on other providers. Consultations will be sent to early years providers in the locality.

The proposals to develop and grow childcare provision are likely to have a positive impact for families in Devon. Data supports the need for this development in provision. Proposals will increase the number of places for childcare which are available and will provide more hours of funded childcare for families as part of the national increased early years entitlements. This has the potential to positively impact parents and carers, who may be able to either return to work or training and/or increase their working hours as they are able to access more hours and/ or spaces which may become available in local childcare settings. This could help to support families financially at a time when the cost of living is high, positively impacting the health and wellbeing of families. Moreover, an increase in childcare provision will mean more children in Devon are able to access a local setting where they can socialise with other children, make friends, develop language and communication skills and build on their physical, social and emotional development. School based nursery provision can help prepare children for the transition to the Reception Class in primary school. Supporting young children's early learning and development is especially important for disadvantaged 2-year-olds enabling a positive impact at a younger age, investing in early interventions enables saving later on. Proposals will support the Council in meeting their statutory duties for families in supporting childcare sufficiency locally. The provision of early years places within a school can also help to support the sustainability of the school.

Age

The proposal supports the provision of additional nursery places for 2 year olds from their second birthday. Proposals will not affect the net capacity of the school, nor the Published Admission Number (PAN), nor put pressure on classroom space for statutory school aged children. If approved, it will provide improved local choice for families. It is considered that the provision of early years places will be positive as it will provide increased opportunities for children to access early education.

Supporting young children's early learning and development is especially important for disadvantaged 2 year olds enabling a positive impact at a younger age and smoother transition into school.

Disability (includes sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people

No adverse impact is anticipated. Honiton Primary School provides mainstream education and offers appropriate educational provision for all children for whom a mainstream placement is considered appropriate. All Early Years settings have a responsibility to provide an inclusive service for all children and families including those with special educational needs and disabilities. Some children will require reasonable adjustments to be made. Consultation documents will be made available in a different format or language upon request.

Race and culture: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin, skin colour, religion and belief, asylum seeker and refugee status, language needs

Places would be available for all children regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or belief. The setting works with families to promote a safe, welcoming and trusted provision for all families. The school promotes equality, diversity and inclusive practices to make the nursery accessible to all types of families and taking into account the protected characteristics in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Consultation documents will be made available in a different language upon request.

Sex and gender identity and reassignment (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)

Proposals support quality early years provision for children, parents and staff of all genders. Breastfeeding is promoted and accommodated within school.

Sexual orientation, and marriage/civil partnership if work related

Honiton Primary School work with all families to promote a safe, welcoming and trusted environment, respecting and taking account of the protected characteristics such as sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership for families in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Other relevant socio-economic factors and intersectionality

This includes:

- people on low incomes, children in care and care experienced people, armed services veterans, family background (size/single people/lone parents/family carers etc.), sub-cultures, refugee status, asylum seeker no recourse to public funds.
- housing quality and tenure, education and skills, language and literacy skills, health and wellbeing.
- rural isolation, access to services and transport, access to ICT/Broadband, social connectivity.

Also consider intersectionality with other characteristics.

The proposal to develop and grow childcare provision will have a positive impact for families. The proposal will increase the number of places which are available for two year olds and will provide more hours of funded childcare for families as part of the national increased early years entitlements. This has the potential to positively impact parents and carers, who may be able to either return to work or training and/or increase their working hours as they are able to access more hours and/ or spaces which may become available in local childcare settings. This could help to support families financially at a time when the cost of living is high, positively impacting the health and wellbeing of families. Without local provision, some parents/carers may need to drive to alternative provision which may prohibit some families from being able to access early years education. These new places will give parents the option of provision within a school that is not available elsewhere in Honiton.

The socio-economic benefits are great. Childcare enables people to work, increase working hours and or return to work benefiting local businesses and the local economy and improves life chances for children, social mobility and reduces social isolation.

9. Human rights considerations:

We need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection of private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).
- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).

Under section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006, the Local Authority must ensure there is sufficient childcare within the local area so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in the area who require childcare in order to enable them to take up, or remain in, work or undertake education or training.

10. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 11, otherwise complete the environmental analysis information below):

Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process	
Planning Permission	
Environmental Impact Assessment	
Strategic Environmental Assessment	

- a) Description of any actual or potential negative consequences and consider how to mitigate against these.
- b) Description of any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes and consider how to improve as far as possible.

Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost

Non applicable.

Conserve and enhance wildlife

Non applicable.

Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape

Non applicable.

Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage

Non applicable.

Minimise greenhouse gas emissions

Non applicable.

Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)

Proposals will support more children to attend a local early years provider, reducing journey times to provision.

The places can be accommodated within the existing nursery building.

Contribute to reducing water consumption

Not applicable.

Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level)

Not applicable.

Other (please state below)

Not applicable.

11. Economic analysis

- a) Description of any actual or potential negative consequences and consider how to mitigate against these.
- b) Description of any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes and consider how to improve as far as possible.

Impact on knowledge and skills

Being able to offer places from 2-years-old will provide greater consistency and continuity for children before starting at school and enable staff to make a more significant impact on their learning and development as well as enabling earlier identification of children's needs well before they start in the Reception Class. The qualification requirements of staff will meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.

The provision of childcare enables parent to attend training. There is financial support for some students to help make childcare affordable as well as funding to enable parents to work and train.

Impact on employment levels

Proposals have the potential to have a significant positive impact on parents and carers ability to either return to work and/or increase their working hours as they are able to access more hours and/ or spaces which may become available in local childcare settings. This could help to support families financially at a time when cost of living is high, positively impacting the health and wellbeing of families.

In time there may also be a need to employ more staff within the school if numbers of children rise or if children require additional support.

Impact on local business

See above.

Parents may choose to return to work sooner after maternity leave or increase their hours of work.

Having reliable, affordable childcare supports local recruitment and retention and could mean that employees need less time off work to manage childcare responsibilities.