

Appendix A - Responses to the consultation on lowering the age range at Whiteheath Infant and Nursery School

If you answered 'No' or 'Don't know' to the proposal to lower the age range at Whiteheath Infant and Nursery School, please tell us why

Response 1: I don't believe that putting 2-year-olds and children aged nearly 5 together in the same setting will be a positive experience for either unless the nursery is drastically changed, with more space added for naps, changing rooms, difficult play areas outdoors (separate for young and older) and many more learning activities added that target older children. We specifically moved our child from another nursery to Whiteheath to increase her learning since we felt that the previous one, which did accept 2 year olds, was focused more on care than on learning. To then retrospectively add two year olds to the setting would drastically shift the dynamic. We may look to put her in a preschool should this happen.

Response 2: I am very concerned about the impact of placing children in mainstream schooling during such a sensitive stage of their development. At these early ages, children are still forming socially, emotionally, and cognitively, and the pressure of a mainstream academic environment can be inappropriate and even harmful. It feels unethical to push children into systems that may not meet their developmental needs. Many children in this country are already behind in their development, and this approach risks widening that gap rather than supporting them effectively. I strongly urge the government to consider age-appropriate, nurturing, and flexible educational alternatives that truly prioritise children's well-being and developmental readiness.

Response 3: Children do not need to be in a school environment from 2 years old. How will it help parents as its term time only? If government funded childcare properly, nurseries and preschools wouldn't be closing their doors. My son's preschool closed after 36 years in the community because they could afford to keep it open with the poor funding rate.

Response 4: As a local Early Years provider, I believe that lower the age range in our local schools will affect our business going forward

Response 5: It's too young for children to be in a school
Setting and it's open all year for working parents so has a lot of issue around holiday care

Response 6: 2 year olds need more attention and all nursery like them out of nappies because from my experience they don't even like 3 year old in them.
But on a bigger note you are taking away childminders work who do an amazing job!
We do all the hard work until they go to nursery at 3 years old you will drive childminders away.

Response 7: It will have a negative impact on childminders which means we will end up having to close our businesses

Response 8: It will make private preschools close. The ratio per children we have in private preschools is higher than school nursery's too

Response 9: Two-year-olds are far too young to be in a school environment

Response 10: Children are in school long enough - do they have nappy changing facilities, nap areas as they are still babies.

Response 11: 3 years is ideal age for this school. under three's should be part of PVI's

Response 12: 2-year-olds should not be going to school.
They need more informal setting.

Response 13: I don't think a school environment for children is appropriate for 2-year-olds.

Response 14: This will have a detrimental effect on childminders in the area.

Response 15: 2-year-olds are not ready for a school environment, most 2-year-olds are still in nappies and teachers /TA's Complain now about some 3-year-olds that are still in nappies. Also 2-year-olds are still needing a sleep. How will the "school adapt for on this " , the whole classroom environment will need to be adapted including resources.

Response 16: Now with primary schools taking 2-year-olds it is damaging for local nurseries and child minders. they should increase the capacity to take on more 3-year-olds.

Response 17: I believe it will have a negative impact on Early year settings in the area, many of which are already struggling.

Response 18: I work at a private charity run preschool and it will affect us

Response 19: I don't feel it's a nurturing environment for a two-year-old and it will be disruptive to my child's education.

Response 20: This will affect the PVI sector and many businesses who are already struggling to stay afloat with limited funding.

Response 21: We are concerned that lowering the starting age to 2 years could have a significant impact on local nurseries that provide early years care from birth to foundation stage. Many families rely on these nurseries for children under 3, and a shift towards school provision for 2-year-olds could reduce nursery enrolment and threaten their sustainability.

Furthermore, while some parents may see it as convenient to start their children in school earlier, school admissions are managed by the local authority, and priority is given to children living nearby or with siblings already at the school. Expanding the age range may not necessarily make the process easier for parents but could have unintended consequences for the local childcare ecosystem.

It is important to consider how this change might affect the availability and diversity of early years provision in the community

Response 22: I don't believe schools are the right place for two-year-old children.

Response 23: I have operated a day care nursery in the local area and a large proportion of our children are in the two-year age bracket, as previously, a child would join a school nursery class at around 3 years old. Should Whiteheath drop their entrance age to 2 years old I believe this will impact local businesses (pvi settings) and the likelihood is other schools will follow in order to secure children for their schools.

Response 24: I feel this will impact the private day nurseries in the Ruislip area

Response 25: I feel 2 years olds don't belong in a school environment/classroom. When I have previously seen two-year-olds in school the daily routine has been quite stringent and not always accommodating to individual children. I understand that this may be different in Whitehall

Response 26: Two-year-old can go to day nurseries

If you answered 'Yes' to the question 'Do you think the proposal to lower the age range at Whiteheath Infant and Nursery School disadvantages any residents, please tell us why?'

Response 1: As for reasons above

Response 2: I am deeply concerned that the government's decision already extending the 30-hour childcare funding from 9 months old will disadvantage younger children and put unnecessary pressure on families. This scheme risks encouraging parents to place their babies in formal childcare at an age when they need close, consistent attachment and nurturing at home. Early institutional care can have negative effects on emotional and social development, especially for very young children.

It also feels as though parents are being trapped into this system due to financial pressures, rather than being given genuine choice about what is best for their child. The focus should be on supporting families to care for their children in the way that best suits their individual needs, not on pushing them into schemes that may undermine healthy development.

Response 3: Local childminders as they will end up losing these children to schools.

Response 4: As a long-term owner of a private preschool and a Hillingdon resident my business will have to close.

Response 5: Pressure to potty train children too early and become independent,

Response 6: 3 year and above should be at school nursery any children under 3 should be with PVI's where the ratios are better maintained

Response 7: This will reduce the amount of potential two-year-olds that will use childminders for childcare.

Response 8: Childminders will be affected, by this

Response 9: Disadvantage to local residents that have nursery settings or childminding

Response 10: Same reason above

Response 11: You are profiting and concentrating on making money not educating so all the children are being disadvantaged.

Response 12: The proposed change could disadvantage residents who rely on local nurseries for children under 3. Reducing nursery enrolment options may limit choice, increase pressure on remaining early years providers, and affect families who prefer or need nursery-based care before school age.

Response 13: Because I know the staff and everyone who is working, they will try the best that will very successful.

Response 14: As the schools start to lower the age of intake to 2 years old many nurseries will not be able to function and close, leaving the demand for nursery places (pre 2 years old) outweighing the supply of suitable PVI places.

Response 15: Nursery services are already available in Hillingdon for children aged two

Any other comments on the proposal:

Response 1: Whiteheath infant is a fantastic school I love working there all the staff are very caring so younger children will feel happy and safe at Whiteheath thank you

Response 2: This would be a benefit to the parents in our local community having access to a school nursery from the age of 2 knowing that their children can progress through the same school flowing through to the Infants and Juniors

Response 3: My daughter turns 3 in February 2026, to be able to have her in the nursery before then would be fantastic

Response 4: Beneficial for parents who already have children in school, works in line with school holidays and same schedules

Response 5: This proposal is completely unnecessary and places additional pressure on parents. Extending government-funded childcare in this way could have serious negative impacts on the private childcare sector, which currently provides flexible, high-quality care that meets families' individual needs. The private sector plays a vital role in supporting working families and maintaining high standards of early years care, and government overreach risks destabilising that balance.

Rather than introducing blanket policies that may not suit all families, the government should focus on supporting existing providers and ensuring parents have genuine choice. For many, private childcare arrangements already work well and these should be protected, not undermined.

Response 6: Will the provision be school hours only, term time only? Children needs at 2 differs from the needs of three-year-old? What qualifications will the staff have? Has the council considered the impact it will have on local childminders?

Response 7: Additional two-year-old spaces in Hillingdon will ensure the demand for spaces for two-year-olds accessing additional funding can be met.

Response 8: Fully support this. It will be great of Ruislip.

Response 9: Schools should follow the training and ratios that PVI's follow then they should also be vetted and inspected like PVI's before enrolling children under 3 years of age

Response 10: Pls don't mix two- and three-year-olds. Pls don't send two-year-olds to schools. They need to be in informal setting like nursery or childminder

Response 11: The school would also need to provide more staff to cover ratios and how will the "three-year-olds "learning be considered when they have two-year-olds that will not yet have learnt the same skills as 3 would learnt

Response 12: With lower birth rates for the last few years more settings opening we need to be sustainable for everyone

Response 13: It is important to consider how this change might affect the availability and diversity of early years provision in the community

Response 14: I have a nearly two-year-old and this would benefit us immensely

Response 15: My understanding is that you have a supportive environment for children with SEN and there are very limited options at the two-year-old range in the area, it has been very difficult to find a nursery with adequate knowledge and understanding.

Response 16: I believe this decision would be very positive because it gives children the chance to start learning earlier in a safe and nurturing environment. It also supports working parents, provides continuity from age 2 to 7 within the same school, and helps the community by expanding access to funded childcare and high-quality early education.

Response 17: Nurseries in schools do not get an in-depth Ofsted inspection that private day care providers do.

Response 18: I would personally benefit from this change