



Date: Friday 7th November 2025

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s),

Consultation on Lowering the Age Range for Witheridge C of E Primary Academy

Introduction

The UK government's education strategy, *Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life*, seeks to transform early years support across England. From September 2025, eligible working parents in England will be able to access 30 hours of free childcare per week for children aged 9 months to school age.

The Department for Education encourages schools to establish childcare provision on their sites to support working parents and provide a strong foundation for children's development.

Across our trust, we have already seen the benefits of nursery provision for 2, 3 and 4 year olds and we now wish to expand the offer to include babies from 9 months. In line with this, we would like to consult with you on extending the early years provision at Witheridge.

Background

At Witheridge, our Early Years Foundation Stage (nursery and Reception) have their own dedicated provision within the school site. The space has been thoughtfully developed and has a high take up of children attending all from the local area where demand is significant for quality early years provision.

Recent feedback from parents has highlighted a clear need for more local childcare options to support working families with younger children which is an area Witheridge School are keen to deliver to ensure the best possible start to school life for all children.

Proposals

We are consulting on the following changes from **September 2026**:

- Extending the existing Foundation Stage Unit to create separate spaces for babies and under two's.
- Employing an additional member of staff to lead our new dedicated baby room.
- Registering the provision with Ofsted in line with current legislation.



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Pilton Bluecoat Academy | Pilton Infants' Academy | Umberleigh Academy

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Miss L Ratcliffe – Head of School



Perceived Benefits

- Providing much-needed childcare for local working families.
- Supporting families to ensure all children receive the best possible start in their school life.

How to Respond

We would very much value your views. Please send comments or objections by **Friday 19th December** to: consultation@team-mat.org.uk or in writing to: Lucy Ratcliffe, Head of School, Witheridge C of E Primary Academy.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Thomas'.

Ian Thomas
Chief Executive Officer
TEAM Multi Academy Trust



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