

Consultation to Lower the Age of Intake at King's Ford Infant School & Nursery

(Gloucester Avenue, Shrub End, Colchester, CO2 9AZ)

Dear Parents/Carers & Interested Parties

Essex County Council are undertaking a consultation on proposed changes to the admission arrangements for the Nursery at Kings Ford Infant School.

From September 2025, the school proposes to offer Funded Early Education Entitlement Nursery places to 2-year-olds as well as their current offer to 3-4-year-olds.

Due to falling pupil numbers, the school has reduced its Published Admission Number (PAN) for the main school from 60 to 30 from September 2025. Current sufficiency data from Essex County Council, outlines that there is a need for Nursery places in the area. As the School will have surplus classroom space, they have applied for grants from the Department of Education (DfE) and Essex County Council to fund building alterations to the current Nursery classroom and a spare classroom. If the grants are awarded, they will be able to increase their Nursery admission numbers and propose to lower their age range from 3 years to 2 years from September 2025.

From September 2025, the proposal is to extend the Nursery offer from:

3-4-year-olds	15 hours for all 3-4-year-olds (universal entitlement)
3-4-year-olds	30 hours for eligible working parents

to include:

2-year-olds	15 or 30 hours for eligible working parents and families receiving additional support
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The proposed changes will only go ahead if adequate funding is granted from the DfE and Essex County Council.

The school have run a consultation with families and local stakeholders, this closed on Friday 31st January 2025. All parents received a letter, and notices were published on the school website, notice boards and school gates. Interested parties were invited to express their views and any concerns about the proposed changes to the Nursery admission arrangements.

In accordance with statutory DfE guidance, the consultation ran for 4 weeks. On Friday 17th January 2025, consultation drop-in sessions were held at 8:35am - 9:35am and 3-4pm. A representative from the Essex Early Years & Childcare Team attended to answer any questions. A reminder regarding the drop-in sessions was emailed to parents on Thursday 16th January 2025. No parents attended the sessions. Parents and stakeholders were also given an email address where questions could be submitted.

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The following comments were received:

My daughter is currently in Reception at King's Ford. She is thoroughly enjoying her time and truly thriving. I would love to be able to send her sister into the nursery at 2 years old. This would be perfect for us and make life much easier. Please keep me updated on this.

I sincerely hope this is a possibility. It would be lovely to have more places available. If the permission is granted, will the nursery be operating mirror hours of other providers from 8am until 6pm?

This statutory notice gives the opportunity for wider stakeholders to submit views and comments which will be considered before this proposal is approved by Essex County Council. If you would like to contribute any comments, please email diane.macefield@essex.gov.uk before 5pm on Tuesday 4th March.