

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Cabinet Member for Children and Education

Date: 02/08/2022

Subject: Maintained Nursery Funding – Academic Year 2022/23

Report author: Paul Triantis, Programme Lead, Children's Commissioning

Responsible Director: Jacqui McShannon – Director of Children's Services

SUMMARY

This paper seeks approval to release additional funding from the Early Years block to continue to support the enhanced childcare offer for vulnerable children at Randolph Beresford for the 2022/23 academic year. This amounts to £562,000 to be distributed across three terms and is consistent with funding levels historically set for the nursery.

The amount will come out of the Dedicated Schools Grant and is ringfenced for use in Maintained Nursery settings only.

Phase 1 review of the nursery is now complete, with a new referral pathway and tracking mechanism for places recently established, as well as improved oversight of the current offer at Randolph Beresford. Officers will use academic year 2022/23 to progress the Phase 2 review of the funding and how it is used to support vulnerable children within the context of the Early Years system as a whole.

Randolph Beresford has an outstanding Ofsted rating, and by maintaining funding levels next academic year the council will continue to support the provision of affordable and flexible childcare in an area of the borough with high levels of need, while the review takes place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Approve the release of funding from the Early Years block to provide Randolph Beresford with an additional £562,000 from Early Years Dedicated Schools Grant for the 2022/23 academic year. This will fund the enhanced childcare offer currently being delivered at the nursery to the end of the academic year 2022/23.
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Wards Affected: White City

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	Preventative targeting of support in Early Years has been shown to improve life chances of young people and adults later in life, including economic and social wellbeing.
Creating a compassionate council	Preventative targeting of support in Early Years has been shown to improve life chances of young people and adults later in life, including economic and social wellbeing.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	Randolph Beresford will continue to consult with local residents as to how their offer is targeted to suit the needs of the local population in White City.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Budget is in place already for 2021/22 and officers will spend this period reviewing the current offer to ensure it is making best use of the available money.
Taking pride in H&F	Providing a targeted preventative offer in Early Years to those families in need ensures we are fulfilling our value of taking pride in H&F
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	The nursery schools fall within the overall programme of works to reduce the carbon impact of the school estate

Financial Impact

The funding for these proposed payments is from Early Years block DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant).

Recommendation 1: Commissioned Places for Additional and Vulnerable Needs

Schools Forum approved the Early Years budget for financial year 2022/23 in March 2022 which included £562,000 for Vulnerable and Additional Needs children. The Early years entitlements: local authority funding of providers Operational guide 2022 to 2023 Paragraph 6.2 confirms that this funding can only be allocated to Maintained Nursery Schools *'All providers must be paid the same hourly base rate; this also applies to MNS. However, authorities may continue to use 'lump sums' to distribute additional funding to MNS.'*

Randolph Beresford Nursery received £183,333 of this funding for Summer Term 2022 as agreed in the decision report approved in 2021. This leaves a balance of £378,667 to be allocated in the current financial year. This report recommends payment of this whole amount to Randolph Beresford Nursery of £562,000 for the 2022/23 financial year ending March 2023.

This report also requests budget provision of £187,333 for Vulnerable and Additional Needs for Summer Term 2023 for Randolph Beresford Maintained Nursery School. This covers the period April 2023 to July 2023 and to the end of the 2022/23 academic year.

Implications written by Jill Lecznar, Interim Head of Finance Children's Services, 04/05/22

Verified by Andrew Lord, Head of Finance, strategic planning & investment 31/05/22

Legal Implications

The Council has power to make these payments under the Childcare Act 2006 which imposes duties on local authorities to secure that early years provision is made available free of charge. The DfE publishes statutory and operational guidance as to the expenditure of these sums which are being followed by the Council in releasing this funding. The Council will need to continue to have regard to guidance published by the DfE.

Verified by Angela Hogan, Chief Solicitor Contracts and Procurement, 20/04/2022

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Proposals and Analysis of Options

- 1. Approve the release of funding from the Early Years block to provide Randolph Beresford with additional funding of £562,000 for the 2022/23 academic year. (recommended)**
2. This will fund the enhanced childcare offer for vulnerable children currently being delivered at the nursery to the end of the academic year 2022/23.
3. A new referral and monitoring process has been set up to improve quality and number of referrals from Children's Social Care and Early Help services for places. Approving funding for an additional year will allow us to assess the effectiveness of the new referral process and how Randolph Beresford is able to provide extra support to our most vulnerable children and families over and above the funding and support that is available to the Boroughs other maintained nursery settings, and allow for sufficient lead-in time for any recommended changes to the funding arrangements post review.
4. Funding Randolph Beresford to continued historic levels will provide the nursery with stability as officers work with the provider to review how additional Early Years funding is distributed across maintained settings to support vulnerable children.

5. Approval will allow Randolph Beresford to set a balanced budget and advertise their offer ahead of the next academic year enabling the nursery school to continue offering the same level of provision in previous years.
6. **Do not approve additional funding to Randolph Beresford (not recommended)**
7. This option is not recommended as it will provide Randolph Beresford with insufficient time to produce a balanced budget for the next academic year, and will not give a sufficient lead in to review overall use of the vulnerable children fund as per plans under Phase 2.

Reasons for Decision

8. Approving additional funding for Randolph Beresford will allow the nursery to set a balanced budget and advertise their offer ahead of the next academic year. Additionally, funding Randolph Beresford to continued historic levels will provide the nursery with stability as officers work with the provider to review the current offer.
9. In the meantime, the nursery school will continue to offer the same enhanced childcare offer in academic year 22/23 as in previous years.

Equality Implications

10. As there will be no change to service provision, no equality implications apply. An EIA will be required to make any substantive change as part of Phase 2 at a later stage.

Implications verified/completed by: Paul Triantis, Strategic Lead, Children's Services, 20/04/22

Risk Management Implications

11. The report recommends releasing additional funding to ensure the continuation of the same level of high-quality affordable childcare as in previous years, allowing officers time to work with the provider to assess the referral and monitoring processes which have recently been introduced. This is in line with the Council's priorities, particularly to ensure preventative targeting of support in Early Years by providing access to affordable provision to improve the life chances of young people and adults later in life, including economic and social wellbeing.

Implications completed by: David Hughes, Director of Audit, Fraud, Risk and Insurance, 14/04/22

Climate and Ecological Emergency Implications

12. The maintained nurseries are included as part of decarbonisation plans covering the school estate as a whole, the entirety of which is funded in a similar manner via the DSG.
13. Officers are currently working with the GLA Retrofit Accelerator Scheme to identify a cohort of schools that are suitable for more detailed feasibility studies that will identify a range of decarbonisation measures and associated energy cost savings.
14. In addition, 300K is allocated in the proposed 2021-24 school maintenance and capital programme for specific decarbonisation works and officers are incorporating a core response to the climate emergency within the scoping of wider school maintenance and capital works.

Implications verified by: Hinesh Mehta, 19/04/22

Social Value Implications

15. This report is seeking approval to release funds to schools, and it is part of H&F schools funding agreement. As a result, Social Value requirement does not apply.

Implications completed by: Paul Clarke, Economic Development Officer, 19/4/22