



# **Proposal to Extend the Age Range of Valentine Primary School**

**June 2025**

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## 1. Local Authority Details

Southampton City Council, Civic Centre, Southampton, SO14 7LY

## 2. School Details

Name: [Valentine Primary School](#)  
Type: Maintained, community school  
URN: 132025  
Address: Valentine Avenue, Sholing, Southampton, SO19 0EQ  
Age range: 4 – 11  
Capacity: 570  
Ofsted: [Good in all areas – 13 May 2025](#)

Mr Daniel Constable-Phelps	Executive Headteacher
Mrs Amanda Humby	Chair of Governors

## 3. What changes are proposed

Valentine Primary School wishes to: extend the age range of the school from 4 - 11 years to 0 - 11 years by opening a school-based nursery operating from the school site.

Valentine Primary School currently caters for children aged 4 to 11 years and operates as a mixed-two, three and four-form entry primary school. Valentine School had a new build on the existing site in 2020 and has space to operate as a four-form entry primary school – therefore the proposal seeks to make use of the current empty space.

Valentine Primary School proposes to extend its age range to include children from birth to 4 years, creating an integrated nursery provision within the school site. The new nursery will offer places for babies and children up to Reception age, with access to both 15- and 30-hour funded placements, as well as wraparound care.

Provision will be located within existing school buildings and adapted spaces, including an identified room with secure access to a dedicated outdoor area.

This change aligns with the Department for Education's national *School's Based Nursery Initiative* (2024-25) to expand nursery provision in primary schools. Valentine School was selected by the Department for Education from nearly 700 national applications to participate in this programme. This reflects the strength of their bid and their proven track record of delivering high-quality early years education across the school's partnership. In particular, their Early Years Foundation Stage nursery provision at St Mary's Church of England Primary School, who were judged [Outstanding in all areas](#) at their most recent graded Ofsted Inspection.

## 4. Local Context and Need

There has been careful consideration to the current early years landscape in the local area. Engagement with the local authority and other providers has confirmed that due to the government's further expansion of childcare places for children aged from nine months from September 2025, there is an unmet need for high-quality nursery places, particularly for working families requiring flexible and extended hours.

Nearby settings are operating close to capacity, and local pre-schools do not offer the breadth of provision that Valentine are proposing - from birth to Reception. There have been some settings that have closed within the last 18 months, further reducing the local offer for local parents and the wider community. The proposed model will meet a clear and growing need for continuous, high-quality early years provision embedded in a primary school setting.

## **5. Benefits of the Change**

This proposal will provide significant educational and community benefits:

- Improved quality and continuity of education across the full Early Years Foundation Stage, from birth through to Reception.
- Longer-term relationships between children, families, and staff, resulting in stronger emotional security and improved outcomes.
- Smooth transitions and greater continuity in learning, as most nursery children are expected to move into our reception class.
- Provision delivered by early years specialists, trained to nurture children from birth through to age 5.
- Greater time for staff to understand each child's individual needs, ensuring more responsive and targeted support from the earliest stages.
- Alignment with national policy to expand school-based nursery provision and offer more places to working families.
- Established expertise within our leadership team, based on the outstanding EYFS provision at St Mary's, ensuring rapid implementation of best practice.

## **6. Space and Adaptation**

The nursery will be housed in an existing area within the school that will be redesigned to meet the needs of young children and babies. The space will include:

- Age-appropriate learning zones and sleep areas.
- Direct access to a secure, stimulating outdoor play area.
- Facilities and resources that fully meet the requirements of the EYFS statutory framework.

## **7. Governance Approval**

The Valentine Primary School governing body formally approved this proposal at its meeting on 13 December 2024 – ahead of the application deadline for the school-based-nursery formal entry to the Department for Education. Governors strongly support the move, recognising its potential to transform outcomes for children and enhance the school's long-term sustainability.

## **8. Admissions and Inclusion Information**

### **Admissions Authority and Policy Review**

Valentine Primary School is a community school, and the admissions authority is the local authority (Southampton City Council) for statutory-aged children. Admissions policies, including those for the proposed nursery provision, are reviewed annually in line with the

school's Instrument of Government and local authority guidance. This review ensures alignment with any legislative updates, local needs, and equity of access.

The nursery admissions policy will be developed to reflect the principles of fairness and inclusivity and will mirror the priority groups set out in the school's main admissions policy—such as looked after children, siblings of current pupils, and proximity to the school, while also considering the flexibility required to meet parental needs for early years provision.

### **Transition from Nursery to Reception**

Transitions from nursery to Reception will be carefully managed to ensure continuity and emotional security for all children. Families whose children attend the Valentine nursery won't automatically have priority for Reception places but would be able to apply for reception places in line with the schools published admission criteria.

The transition model will align with that of established school-based nurseries. This includes:

- Shared learning journeys and assessments between nursery and Reception teams.
- Gradual transition visits.
- Consistent routines and shared learning environments.
- Joint family engagement opportunities prior to the start of the reception year.

For children moving to Reception in other schools, transition information and support will be shared in line with GDPR requirements and professional courtesy, ensuring every child begins their school journey well-prepared.

### **Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Early Identification**

Valentine Primary School is committed to early identification and intervention for children with special educational needs. By offering provision from birth, the school can begin observations, support and planning at the earliest stages, improving long-term outcomes for children with additional needs.

This approach aligns with the [SEND Code of Practice](#) (2015), which emphasises the importance of identifying needs early and acting promptly to avoid later difficulties. Earlier engagement enables timely assessments, targeted support, and clear communication with families.

The school's approach is informed by its membership in a strong network of partner schools. Across the partnership—including the outstanding EYFS provision at St Mary's—there is shared expertise in inclusive practice, speech and language support, early years interventions, and EHCP processes.

Valentine's SEND provision will be underpinned by Southampton's Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) framework. This ensures that all learners—regardless of starting point—can thrive in an environment where inclusive practices are embedded in daily routines and teaching strategies.

## **9. SWOT Analysis**

### **Strengths**

- **Qualified Teacher Oversight:** Provision will be led by a qualified teacher with EYFS experience, ensuring curriculum coherence and high standards.

- **Expertise Across Partnership:** Staff expertise is pooled from across the group, including from our outstanding EYFS provision at St Mary's, ensuring continuity and excellence in practice.
- **Strong Collaboration Within EYFS:** Reception and nursery teams will work as a unified Early Years department, sharing pedagogy, assessment, and curriculum planning.
- **Parental Demand:** Parent surveys and informal engagement as part of the DfE application show strong interest in on-site nursery provision, particularly with extended hours and wraparound care.
- **Identified Local Need:** Data from Southampton City Council and local sufficiency assessments show an increase in demand for high-quality nursery places in the area.
- **Support from Governance and DfE:** The proposal has full backing from the governing body and has been endorsed by the Department for Education, who selected Valentine from nearly 700 applicants.
- **Space Availability:** Existing internal space will be adapted to create a safe and engaging EYFS environment, with direct access to outdoor learning.

### **Weaknesses**

- **Space Adaptations Required:** Initial capital spend will be necessary to fully adapt existing rooms to meet EYFS and Ofsted standards, particularly for babies and toddlers. *(However, this will be met with the capital funding awarded to the school from the DfE to prepare the nursery in readiness for a September 2025 opening)*
- **Complex Financial Planning:** Nursery finances differ from school funding formulas and require careful cash flow and occupancy projections to remain sustainable.
- **Increased Administrative Load:** Managing bookings, wraparound provision, staffing and early years funding will create new administrative demands.
- **Admissions Expectations:** Some parents may assume automatic entry into Reception; the school must be clear about admissions criteria and Local Authority oversight.
- **Uncertainty Around Demand:** Intake projections, particularly for under-2s, can be challenging and subject to fluctuations in local demographics.
- **Some limitation of staff experience with Under-3s:** While the school has strong EYFS practice, some staff may require further CPD for working with babies and toddlers. We currently have some TAs qualified from previous roles in settings, we will need to accelerate learning in Summer 2 to enable these staff members to be ready.

### **Opportunities**

- **Integrated High-Quality EYFS Offer:** Children will benefit from a continuous learning experience across nursery and Reception, with shared values and consistent practice.
- **Professional Development Across the Trust:** Staff can access high-quality CPD, peer support and joint planning with colleagues across our schools, all of which have nurseries.
- **Improved School Readiness:** Earlier intervention for speech, language and communication needs, will boost starting points in Reception and improve long-term outcomes.
- **Wraparound and Holiday Care:** By offering extended hours and school holiday provision, the school will better support working families, particularly those in full-time employment.

- **Flexible Staffing Model:** A larger team across the partnership will enable shared contracts and recruitment, providing greater job security and flexibility for staff, and scalability for the nursery.

### **Threats**

- **Volatile Funding Landscape:** Early Years funding remains uncertain and may not rise in line with inflation, impacting sustainability.
- **Southampton Demographic Shifts:** A forecast decrease in primary-aged children may reduce future school intake numbers.
- **Term-Time Only Funding Model:** Holding spaces for later intake (e.g. spring starters) can lead to underfunding in autumn term.
- **Competition from PVLs:** Existing private, voluntary and independent nurseries may respond competitively.
- **Admissions & Waitlist Complexity:** Managing rolling admissions for under-5s, balancing demand with staffing and ensuring transparency in offer processes will be a logistical challenge.
- **Contractual Implications:** Offering extended hours and holiday cover may require changes to staff contracts, rotas and union consultations.

## **10. Nursery Organisation**

### **Integration Within the School**

The proposed nursery will be fully integrated into Valentine Primary School as a school-run nursery class, rather than a stand-alone or separate entity.

It will be included in all whole-school planning, safeguarding protocols, SEND systems, and administrative processes. Nursery children and staff will participate in school-wide events and initiatives, ensuring they feel a sense of belonging from day one. This approach supports smoother transitions into Reception and reinforces our “one community” ethos.

### **Safeguarding, SEND and Administrative Oversight**

- **DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead):** Nursery staff will be trained in safeguarding, and concerns will be overseen by the school's DSL team, as part of the schools existing safeguarding infrastructure.
- **SENDCo:** The school SENDCo will oversee the nursery's provision for children with additional needs. Early identification and intervention will be a priority, in line with the SEND Code of Practice and Southampton's *Ordinarily Available Provision*. The schools currently employ 1 FTE SENCo and 2 Assistant SENCo's (both of whom are Level 3 EYFS qualified).
- **Administrative Support:** Admissions, registers, funding submissions and parent communications will be managed by the school's administrative team. Nursery processes will be embedded within whole-school systems to ensure efficiency and consistency.

### **Space and Facilities**

The nursery will be based within an existing, underutilised area of the school with direct access to a secure, well-developed outdoor learning space. This space will be refurbished to meet the requirements of the EYFS statutory framework, including:

- Separate areas for babies, toddlers, and older nursery children.
- Quiet and rest areas.
- Nappy changing facilities and accessible toilets.
- Indoor and outdoor continuous provision spaces.

The school has also factored in future expansion potential as demand grows, including repurposing nearby storage or administrative space if required.

## Capacity and EYFS Framework

Initial capacity estimates, based on the designated space and adult-to-child ratios, suggest that the nursery will be able to accommodate approximately:

- **6 babies (under 2s)** (1:3 ratio)
- **12 toddlers (2-3 years)** (1:4 ratio)
- **24 preschoolers (3-4 years)** (1:8 ratio or 1:13 with a QTS/EYTS)

This allows for up to **42 children at any one time**, depending on age mix and sessional timing.

## Staffing Structure and Ratios

A carefully structured staffing model will ensure compliance with EYFS ratios at all times:

- A qualified teacher will oversee the nursery and lead planning across the provision.
- Room leads will hold at least a Level 3 qualification.
- Staffing will be flexible and drawn from a wider trust-wide bank of practitioners, allowing us to scale the offer or backfill staff absence.
- Deployment will be monitored weekly to ensure safe ratios, with robust contingency plans.

## Admissions and Funding

The nursery will admit children from birth to 4 years, accepting:

- **<2-year-old funded places** (for eligible families)
- **Universal 15-hour offer** (for all 3- and 4-year-olds)
- **30-hour extended entitlement** (subject to eligibility)

The school will also offer additional hours to meet working family needs. These will be charged at a competitive hourly rate, benchmarked against local providers, ensuring both affordability for families and sustainability for the school.

We will closely monitor occupancy and income, with a prudent financial model designed to mitigate risk when uptake is low. Wraparound and holiday care will help smooth income across the year.

## Waiting List and Allocation Criteria

A waiting list will be maintained and updated regularly. Places will be allocated using the following fair criteria:

1. Age of child – prioritising older children for readiness before Reception.
2. Length of time on waiting list.
3. Sibling link to the school.



4. Parental working status/eligibility for funding (to maximise funded place utilisation).
5. Vulnerable pupils (SEND, LAC, referrals).

Families will be kept informed about availability and admission timelines throughout the year.

## **Opening Hours and Meals**

The nursery will operate **year-round** with flexible session times to support working families:

- Term-time core hours: 8:30am – 3:30pm
- Extended day offer: 7:30am – 6:00pm\*\*
- Holiday provision: Available for 48 weeks of the year (closed two weeks at Christmas and two weeks in summer)

Nursery pupils will have access to the school catering offer and will be supported during mealtimes to promote social skills, independence, and healthy eating.

\*\*This will be dependent on parental demand.

## **11. Consultation**

### **School Staff**

Staff at Valentine Primary School have responded with enthusiasm to the proposal to expand provision to include nursery-aged children. Many team members have expressed a strong desire to deliver earlier support to families, recognising the benefits of early identification and continuous education through to Year 6. Staff are also reassured by the positive implications this expansion has for long-term school sustainability.

Historically, the school has been overstaffed, and a previous restructure did not achieve the desired cost efficiencies. This new direction creates opportunities to realign staffing with a growing provision and secure employment across the team.

### **Parents of Pupils at the School**

There has been sustained parental interest in Valentine offering day nursery provision. Parents have often asked for an on-site nursery to improve continuity and offer wraparound that supports working families. In preparation for the DfE application, the school met with a steering group of parents who were overwhelmingly supportive. They valued the opportunity for earlier engagement with the school and welcomed the idea of additional high-quality local provision.

### **Parents and Staff at Local Schools**

Informal feedback has been sought from partner schools and families within the cluster, with responses noting a clear need for more flexible and quality-assured provision in the area. The reputation of Valentine and the trust-wide model (with St Mary's as an example of excellence) has encouraged confidence in our capacity to deliver a strong nursery offer.

### **Local Authority Officers**

The school has actively consulted with officers from Southampton City Council throughout this process. This includes:

- The Early Years and Childcare Service, who have provided input at the DfE application stage and offered endorsement of the proposal.
- School Improvement Team, who recognised the strategic value of the expansion.
- Finance and Admissions Teams, who advised on operational feasibility and compliance.

The Local Authority has consistently supported the school's ambitions, viewing this as a key step in addressing early years sufficiency and improving school readiness outcomes in the city.

## **12. Governance and Management**

There will be no changes to governance as part of the proposal to extend the school's age range to include nursery provision. The existing Governing Body will continue to provide strategic leadership and accountability, maintaining its three statutory functions:

- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and ensuring money is well spent;
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction.

The Nursery Class will be fully integrated into the school structure and fall under the direct leadership and responsibility of the Headteacher. The provision will reflect and reinforce the values and vision of Valentine Primary School, maintaining a unified ethos from birth to Year 6.

To ensure coherence and consistency across the expanded age range, existing school policies and procedures will be reviewed and amended where appropriate to incorporate the nursery. This includes safeguarding, curriculum planning, behaviour, SEND, and data protection, ensuring the nursery is embedded within the school's systems and culture.

The school-based model will promote continuity, shared values, and inclusive practices, creating a seamless educational journey for every child.

## **13. Staffing Structure**

Initial capacity estimates, based on the designated space and adult-to-child ratios, suggest that the nursery will be able to accommodate approximately:

- **6 babies (under 2s)** (1:3 ratio)
- **12 toddlers (2-3 years)** (1:4 ratio)
- **24 preschoolers (3-4 years)** (1:8 ratio or 1:13 with a QTS/EYTS)

## **14. Premises**

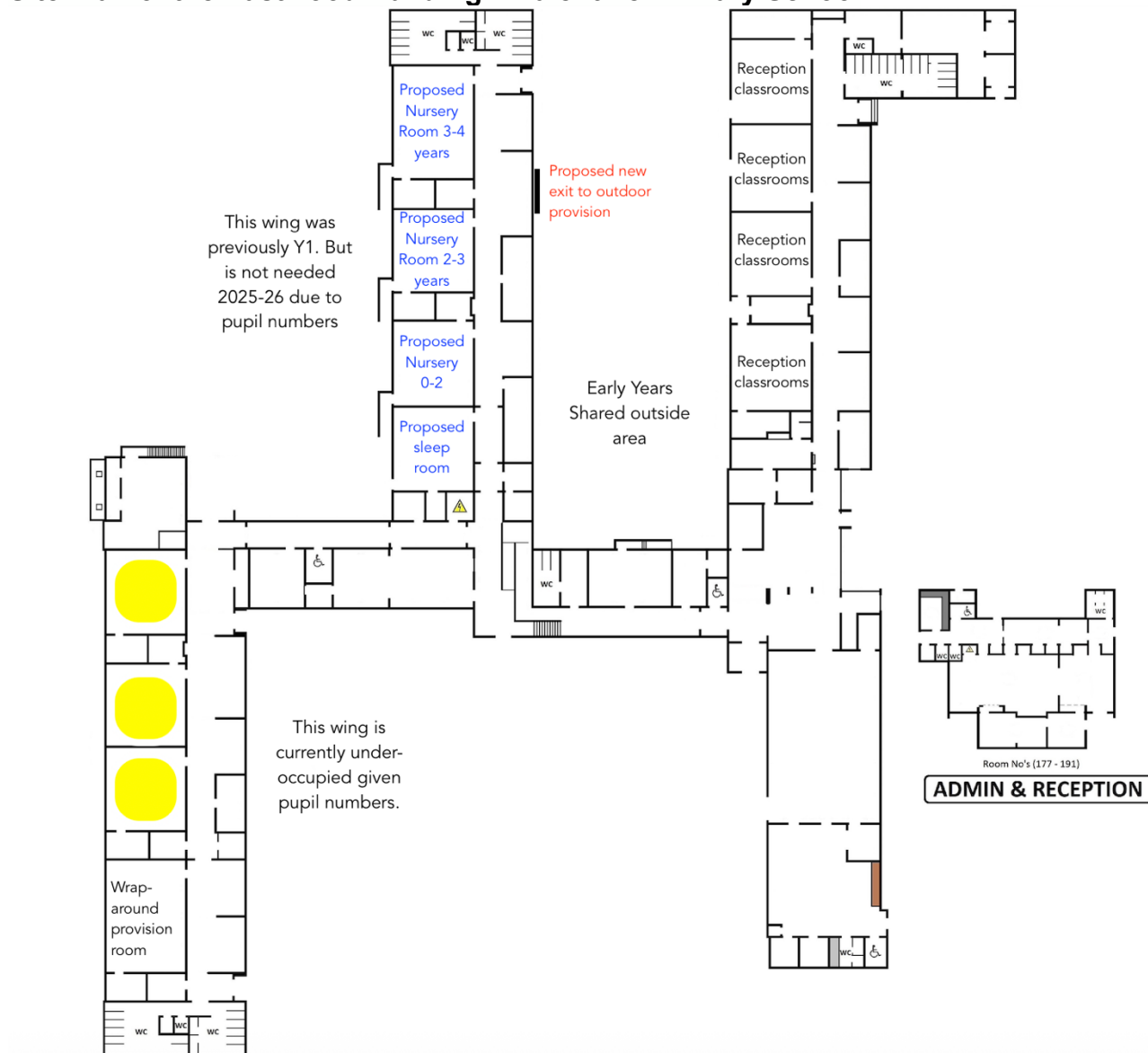
As stated, the premises is under-occupied due to a fall in birth rate locally.

The Nursery intends to use previously occupied KS1 classrooms (therefore big enough to accommodate the children and the need for continuous provision) whilst providing access to the shared area. Toilets are already installed and will need some upgrade work. There

are offices adjacent for staff, planning and parent-meetings. And outdoor links, existing, to enable parents to collect/drop off.

Premises alterations and adaptations are to be met within the Department for Education's capital grant funding awarded to the school following their successful programme application.

### Site Plan of the Eastwood Building – Valentine Primary School



## 15. Quality

Valentine Primary School was recently inspected in 2025 and judged to be “good” in all areas for the first time in the school’s history. During the inspection process, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was recognised as a strength of the school, with inspectors noting the quality of teaching, strong routines, and a nurturing environment where children make good progress from their starting points.

Ofsted 2025:

*Teaching pupils to read is an absolute priority. Pupils read a range of high-quality literature that broadens their vocabulary and enables them to understand how language works. Children learn phonics right from the start of Reception using a well-structured programme. Expertly trained staff deliver this programme with complete consistency. Pupils who need additional help to learn to read benefit from high-quality and carefully targeted support. This helps them to catch up quickly with their peers.*

*The school has transformed pupils' behaviour. Children in the early years learn how to follow simple routines and to sustain concentration when learning independently. Across the school, pupils respond sensibly to the school's high expectations. Staff tenaciously reinforce these expectations with pupils.*

Our **school aims** prioritise:

- Providing a safe and inclusive environment for all learners,
- Raising aspirations through an engaging, ambitious curriculum,
- Building confident, independent learners who are well-prepared for their next stage.

The addition of a nursery class is seen as an opportunity to enhance rather than dilute quality, by creating a more joined-up experience across the EYFS phase. Children will benefit from longer time within a familiar environment, giving staff more opportunity to understand and meet their individual needs.

## 16. Finance

The finances are based on 8.5 FTE equivalent staff, with the model for pupil numbers as set out on page 7.

6 month to 23 months ratio 1:3									
pupils	staff	cost	tot cost	rate	weeks	tot income (30 hours)	profit		
3	TA*1	27500	27500	11.95	39	£41,945	£14,445		
6	TA*2	27500	55000	11.95	39	£83,889	£28,889		
2	TA*1	27500	27500	11.95	39	£27,963	£463	BREAK EVEN	
2 year old ratio 1:4									
pupils	staff	cost	tot cost	rate	weeks	tot income (30 hours)	profit		
12	Lead*1 TA*2	86500	86500	8.95	39	£125,658	£39,158		
8	Lead*1 TA*1	59000	59000	8.95	39	£83,772	£24,772		
6	Lead*1 TA*1	59000	59000	8.95	39	£62,829	£3,829	BREAK EVEN	
3 to 4 year old ratio 1:8 or 1:13 with QTS									
pupils	staff	cost	tot cost	rate	weeks	tot income (30 hours)	profit		
24	QTS *0.5 TA*3	112500	112500	5.95	39	£167,076	£54,576		
16	QTS *0.5 TA*2	85000	85000	5.95	39	£111,384	£26,384		
13	QTS *0.5 TA*2	85000	85000	5.95	39	£90,500	£5,500	BREAK EVEN	

These projections take into account proximal pupil numbers and periods of the year where the numbers may not be so high – i.e. typically the Autumn Term for Nurseries.

## 17. Ofsted Implications

The school was inspected in 2025. It was judged good in all categories – including Early Years.

The school's movement from three-times 'requires improvement' to 'good' in all areas, demonstrates leaders' capacity for continued improvement as well as strengths in the Early Years to ensure this is the foundational learning stage for children at the school.

As part of the legislative framework under the Childcare Act 2006, the school will register with Ofsted for children aged under 2 years of age.