

November 2025



## **Consultation: Change of Age Range Consultation for West Park Academy**

We are proposing a change to the age range of the school from 3 – 11 years to 2 – 11 years. As part of the process, we seek your comments.

Currently children join West Park Academy at the age of 3 years. Under the new proposals, children aged 2 upwards, would formally become part of the same structure as the school.

### **Proposal**

We propose to lower the age range of West Park Academy from 3 - 11 years to 2 - 11 years ideally from September 2026. This proposal will allow us to meet the needs of the community we serve and will ensure a consistent setting and approach to learning for our youngest children.

### **Why are we proposing to lower the entry age of the children joining our school?**

We want to support the government's policy, 'Best Start in Life' by providing early years education for children in our local community through a secure, stimulating and high-quality early years nursery setting. This will complement our existing provision.

Our aim is that children in our community will access excellent nursery education from the age of 2 years old. They will be an integral part of the school and well placed to successfully transition into Reception.

### **Will the proposal have any impact on the school's admission arrangements?**

Currently, we offer 60 reception places, each year, for our children, and 50 full time places or equivalent for 3-year-olds in nursery. It is proposed that we would eventually offer up to 20 full-time places for 2-year-olds in the nursery. The number of allowed children has been predetermined by the Trust in consultation with the Local Authority.

Please note there is no automatic right for nursery aged children to gain a reception place at the school. In accordance with the national admissions code, parents of nursery aged children would need to apply in the normal admission round if seeking to secure a place in the reception class the following year.



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**Principal: Mrs S Hirst**

**West Park Academy**, Alderman Leach Drive, Darlington, Co Durham DL2 2GF Tel: 01325 380792 Email: [admin@westpark.lingfieldtrust.org.uk](mailto:admin@westpark.lingfieldtrust.org.uk)

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### **Do the staff support the proposal?**

Staff support the proposal, as they believe our school community and future pupils would benefit from the lowering of our school age to allow for younger pupils to access our nursery provision.

### **Will there be extra traffic and how will you reduce the impact of this?**

There may be a small increase in traffic. However, initial enquiries indicate that the nursery would be mainly filled by siblings of those children already coming to West Park Academy or families living within walking distance of the school.

### **What are the next stages in the process?**

Responses will be received throughout the consultation period, which begins on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2025 and ends Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025 at 5:00pm.

### **How can I respond to this consultation?**

Your views are important to us.

Please contact the school via [admin@westpark.lingfieldtrust.org.uk](mailto:admin@westpark.lingfieldtrust.org.uk) to respond to this consultation any time until Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025 at 5:00pm.

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