

Catrin Davies
Planning Department
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices,
Bridge St,
Reading RG1 2LU

9th March 2026

Dear Catrin

Re: Park Day Nursery, 8 College Road, Reading, RG6 1QB

I act for the owners of the above property to support an application to Vary Condition 6 of Planning Consent reference 141836 to enable up to 90 children to be accommodated at above named site, in line with the 'Outstanding' Ofsted report which confirms the number of places at Park Day Nursery is 90.

This follows from an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness (ref. PL/25/1743) which sought to demonstrate that the condition had been breached continuously over the past 10 years. However, during the "Covid years" the numbers were not as high as other years and thus the Council could not accept that the full 10 years had been demonstrated. However, your email dated 18th February 2026, recommended varying this condition via a section 73 application, for which this application does. The Certificate of Lawfulness application has since been withdrawn.

Site and surroundings

The site comprises a 4 storey semi-detached building situated on the south side of College Road.

The building has been in use as a day nursery since 1989.

Planning History

On 31st March 2015, planning permission was granted for "Change of Use to day nursery with ancillary residential accommodation" at the Site under reference number 141836. The decision was determined at the Planning Committee on 11th February 2015.

Condition 6 required the number of children accommodated at the nursery should at no time exceed 50 in number. However, since the owners took over operating the building as a day nursery in 2013, the number of children has significantly exceeded 50. Evidence is submitted to support this allegation with evidence provided from November 2015 to 2025.

Other relevant planning history:

- 10-00068-VARIAT (100328). Use of part of house as day nursery school (Continued Use) without complying with Conditions 3 and 5 (to allow increase in children to 36) of planning permission 92/0678/FD (partly retrospective) (Resubmission of 09/01585/VARIAT). Granted 11 March 2010.
- 05-00892-FUL (051343). Retrospective application for the replacement of the flat roof to the rear extension with pitched roof. Granted 14 October 2005.
- 92-00812-FUL (920514). Erection of extra living room to rear of property. Granted 24 November 1992.
- 92-00678-FUL (920633). Use of part of house as day nursery school for 18 children (continued use). Granted 24 September 1992.
- 88-01528-FUL (880295). Change of use of part of house from dwelling to day nursery school. Granted 21 February 1989.

Proposal

The application is to vary the condition to allow the number of children to be accommodated at the premises to be no more than 90. This is in line with how the property has been used for the past 10 years.

The following evidence is provided:

Statutory declarations with supporting documents from Ofsted

- A declaration from the owner, Simon Brown with supporting table setting out the numbers of children over the past 10 years. Simon and his wife bought the building in 2013 and that since 2015 he has accepted 50 or more children at the nursery. This is confirmed in the signed Statutory Declaration.
- A declaration from the owner, Jacqueline Brown with supporting table setting out the numbers of children over the past 10 years. Jackie and her husband bought the building in 2013 and that since 2015 she has accepted 50 or more children at the nursery. This is confirmed in the signed Statutory Declaration.
- A declaration from Crystal Ballingall-Head of Academic and Teaching started working at 8 College Road, Reading in September 2014-current. Crystal oversees the learning and development of the children at the nursery ensuring the highest of standards of teaching are maintained. She is present at Park Day Nursery every day during the week (Monday to Friday) and has been consistently at the premises between 2015 and 2025.
- A declaration from Tarah Springer-Daily Operations Co-Ordinator started working at 8 College Road, Reading on 4th December 2014-December 2025. Tarah's role was to oversee the smooth

running of the nursery and pre-school on a daily basis. She would have had a full understanding of the number of children attending each day as she would have needed to be aware of any staff shortages in relation to ratio needs as well as being aware of catering needs related to the number of children attending.

- A declaration from Rachel Prior who started working at 8 College Road, Reading on 16th February 2015-current. Rachel's current role is as a Deputy Room Leader in one of the toddler age group rooms. She will have covered in all age rooms over the time she has worked for Park Day Nursery (Reading) Limited and would therefore have a reasonable understanding of the numbers of children each room could accommodate. If Rachael was interested, she could therefore add the room numbers together to arrive at a total number of children attending each day.
- Ofsted report from 31st July 2017 confirming the number of places at 8 College Road, Reading is 90 with the number of children on the roll as being 124.
- Ofsted report from 3rd April 2023 confirming the number of places at 8 College Road, Reading is 90 with the number of children on the roll as being 98 and confirms the date of the previous Ofsted inspection was 31st July 2017.
- Table providing all the numbers on a daily basis between November 2015 to November 2025 prepared by the owner Jackie Brown taken from the nursery operating system. It should be noted that every date on submitted table can be validated with the information behind the dates, i.e. the applicants can provide the LPA with an edited list with the children's initials and their dates of birth for any given date. For data protection purposes, the children's names are not able to be provided.
- Letter from the owner's HR provider, Lamont Jones, confirming when the individuals listed above commenced their employment with Park Day Nursery.

Policy considerations

The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application:

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

- Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development
- Chapter 6. Building a strong, competitive economy
- Chapter 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Chapter 9. Promoting sustainable transport

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) policies:

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

- CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
- TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities
- TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
- RL1: Network and Hierarchy of Centres
- RL3: Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres
- OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities

Planning Considerations

The main issues for consideration are the principle of supporting this local business in this central Reading location and the impact of the additional numbers would have upon highways and local residents.

Paragraph 100 of the NPPF states:

“It is important that a sufficient choice of early years...are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education.

They should: a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter early years, schools and post-16 facilities through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and b) work with early years, school and post-16 promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.”

Policy OU1 is compliant with this national policy as it states that “Proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site. Proposals for on-site intensification of important facilities, such as schools and healthcare uses, will be supported, subject to other policies in the plan”. A day nursery is considered to fall under ‘education and training facilities (at all levels)’ as set out within paragraph 4.7.2 of the Local Plan.

In this case, the nursery has been operating since the late 1980s (for almost 40 years) and thus there is no dispute over the use of this large building as a day nursery. Further, it has been established through the submission of the statutory declarations that the property has been used for the vast majority of the time for between 60-75 children but up to 90 children at peak periods. The request for the maximum of 90 children enables the owners to have the flexibility but it can be seen from the submitted information that it is rare that that number of children are at the property.

Attached to this application is the Reading Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022-2023 which clarifies the Council’s requirement to provide adequate number of childcare spaces to ensure the market can respond to the growth in demand. This is confirmed on page 6 which states:

ONS Data collections from summer 2021 to summer term 2022 reveals the following increase in attending numbers:

- 2-year-old funded children - 5.5%
- 3 & 4-year-old Universal funded children - 40 individuals
- 30 hours Extended Entitlement - 2%

Overall, there is an established need for the child-care places, and this is reflected in the numbers of children who have attended the nursery over the past 10 years, well in excess of 50 as per the historic condition.

Central Reading location

Policy RL1 and RL3 seek to ensure appropriate developments occur within centres of the borough. The site is located centrally within Reading (in the Redlands Ward), though is not an 'active frontage' within a centre. The formal expansion of this day nursery within the central location is considered to comply with policies RL1 and RL3. The vision of the Local Plan is that "Children and young people will be supported through education and other assistance" and this proposal complies with this overarching Council objective.

Impact on residential amenity

The reason planning condition 6 was added to the 2015 planning permission for the use of the building as a day nursery was "in order to protect the amenities of adjacent residents" in compliance with policies CS31 (additional and existing community facilities) and DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the previous local plan.

Policy CC8 of the current Local Plan states that development should not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties in terms of noise and disturbance.

As evidenced in this application, this condition has been breached for over 10 years with between 30-40 more children at the nursery than approved in 2015. This is due to the high demand for places in this residential and appealing part of Reading. It is our understanding that there have been no complaints to the Council's planning enforcement and Environmental Health team to warrant any enforcement action. The site is a large building and garden which comfortably accommodates the number of children at the site without harming the amenities of neighbours. The 2015 permission includes a condition which limits the hours of opening from 7.30am and 6pm and these opening hours have been observed. During the main daytime hours when background noises and activity is greater especially on a busy main road and not during unsociable hours. Overall, given the amount of time the higher number of children have been cared for at the property without any undue noise and disturbance to local residents, that there has been no harmful impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents and thus this proposal complies with policy CC8 of the Local Plan.

Highways

Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters states that "the development would not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network, and the proposal would not be detrimental to the safety of users of the transport network, including pedestrians and cyclists".

The site provides spaces for bicycles to be parked at the site, whilst the majority of families walk to the site to drop off children. This is acceptable in this sustainable location in close proximity to a bus stop.

With a nursery there is not a designated timed drop off and collection time for all children (as there is with schools) and there is much longer period for drop off and collection with half days and children coming just for mornings or just afternoons. This reduces the parking demand as it will be more of a steady flow at the peak times rather than a short burst of activity. The regularisation to increase the number of children at the nursery has not had a significant impact on highway safety, capacity or amenity in the immediate vicinity of the site.

Again, over the past 10 years, there have been no known severe impacts on the highway network and thus the proposal has not breached any of the criteria set out in policy TR3 of the RBLP.

Conclusion

Due to extensive length of time the property has been operating with well in excess of 50 children at the property, this application seeks to regularise this and seeks an amendment to the planning condition to enable the day nursery to accommodate up to 90 children. This is in line with the Outstanding Ofsted report which acknowledges that the nursery can operate with 90 children. There have been no complaints over the years in terms of impact on the highway or to neighbour amenity and overall, the proposal is consider to comply with the local policies in the Reading Borough Local Plan.

We trust you can support this local business and grant permission to vary the wording of the condition as requested.

Yours sincerely,

F M Jones

Mrs Fiona Jones BSc (Hons) BTP MRTPI



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