

# Questions and Answers

## Consultation timeline and how to respond

### 1. How do I find out more information about the consultation?

Full details about the consultation process including details of how to respond are available in the consultation proposal at <https://www.surreysays.co.uk/csf/christchurchandenglefieldgreen/>

### 2. What is the timeline for the consultation?

The consultation under way at present is an informal consultation in which Surrey County Council are seeking people's views on the proposal. This part of the consultation closes on 26 February. Surrey County Council will then consider responses to the consultation and the Cabinet Member for All Age Learning will make a decision on 10 March 2020 about what to do next. If the proposals are agreed, Surrey County Council and the Diocese of Guildford will issue related statutory notices on 11 March 2020 to close Christ Church C of E Infant and Englefield Green Infant on 31 August 2020 and open a new Church of England infant school on the Englefield Green site on 1 September 2020. A further period of consultation will close on 22 April and the Leader of the Council will make a final decision on 12 May 2020.

Further details about the consultation and the consultation process are available using the above link. The timescales provided within the consultation, albeit tight, are viable to complete the consultation process and to open the new school for September 2020.

You can respond by:

- a) Accessing the consultation online on the 'Surrey Says' website: [www.surreysays.co.uk](http://www.surreysays.co.uk) and searching for the school's consultation (school name or post code), or by scrolling through the list of open consultations.
- b) Completing the consultation response form that is available at the end of the consultation document. You can email the form or print it, complete it and send it back to the address below. Jane Keenan (CCIS and EGIS) Room 326, County Hall, Penrhyn Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey, KT1 2DN or by emailing [schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk) with the subject heading FAO Jane Keenan (CCIS and EGIS)

All responses must be received by noon on 26 February 2020.

In addition, there will be additional meetings at the schools to consult with parents, carers and the community as part of the statutory notice process.

### 3. What efforts have been made to avoid closure?

Both Englefield Green and Christ Church Infant Schools have experienced a decline in admissions numbers over the past few years. In Christ Church CofE Infant School, there are currently 53 pupils in a school with a capacity for 90 children. This has impacted the budgets of both schools and resulted in the governing bodies coming together to produce their initial proposal. Forecasts indicate that there will not be any growth in demand for Reception places in Virginia Water and that surplus places in the area will be running at a level which is not financially sustainable. Despite the best efforts of the school to attract new pupils, there is no realistic prospect that pupil numbers will increase. In the longer term, greater numbers

of pupils will make the new school more sustainable and enable the leadership team to improve the quality of education for all children.

**4. Can the proposal be changed or the process be stopped?**

This is a democratic process and all decisions will be made in a public forum. The Cabinet Member for All Age Learning will make a decision whether to move forward with the process and all responses from stakeholders will be taken into account along with a range of other factors.

## **School admissions and transport**

**5. Applications for reception places in September 2020 closed on 15 January, before the consultation was published. What can I do if I now wish to change my application?**

Although initial applications had to be in by 15 January, the deadline for amending school applications for September 2020 was 10 February and has been extended for those who have applied for a place at either Christ Church CofE Infant or Englefield Green Infant Schools to the 18 February 2020. For any requests to amend an application or for any advice regarding admissions, please contact the school admissions team ([schooladmissions@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:schooladmissions@surreycc.gov.uk)) prior to this date.

**6. If our child is already on roll at Christ Church CofE Infant or Englefield Green Infant, can we apply for another school place?**

Parents can make an in year application to move schools should they wish to. Surrey County Council cannot guarantee that there will be other school places available. If you would like to find out the options available, please contact School Admissions on the details above or read the guidance for in-year applications on the website (<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/admissions/in-year>).

Current parents do not need to apply for a place at the new school because all children currently on roll at either Christ Church CofE Infant School or Englefield Green Infant School and Nurseries will be transferred to be on roll at the new school.

**7. If my child attends the new infant school will they be guaranteed a place at St Jude's Junior School?**

Around half of all pupils on roll at Christ Church CofE Infant School historically move on to St Jude's CofE Junior School in Englefield Green. A large majority of Englefield Green Infant School and Nurseries pupils also move on to St Jude' C of E Junior.

The vision for the future is that the new infant school will work in close partnership with St Jude's C of E Junior. However, parents of Year 2 children at the new school will still apply for Year 3 places in line with Surrey Admissions policies and be able to indicate a preference for St Jude's - or any other school with junior places. Year 2 children at the new school will not transfer automatically to St Jude's. Any changes to St Jude's C of E Junior School's admissions arrangements would need to be consulted on by the school and are not part of this consultation.

**8. Will transport be provided to the new school?**

The provision of home to school transport will be considered in line with the Surrey County Council transport policy and will differ for each child. If Christ Church CofE Infant School was

the nearest school at the time of the original application for a school place **and** they are now having to travel over the statutory walking distance to school at the Englefield Green Infant School site, **transport will be provided**. If you will be impacted by additional travel to the new school then please contact us at [schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk) so that we can consider the impact in individual cases as part of the consultation process

## **The new school**

### **9. Why has the site at Englefield Green been chosen as the site for the new school?**

Surrey County Council need to make provision for up to 180 children in the new school to fulfil their school place planning requirements. Christ Church C of E Infant does not have enough space for 180 children in its current buildings. The site at Englefield Green has space for 180 children without any new buildings. The site is near St Jude's C of E Junior and the two schools plan to work more closely together in the future.

### **10. My child has special educational needs. How can I be confident that the new school will make good provision for him/her?**

High quality provision for pupils with special education needs is currently a priority for both schools.. School leaders and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators will ensure that parents are involved in a careful assessment of the needs of any child with special educational needs who transfers to the new school from either Christ Church C of E Infant or Englefield Green Infant School. This will enable the new school to plan individual provision to meet that child's needs.

### **11. What will happen to the nurseries at Englefield Green Infant School and Nurseries?**

There will be no change to the nurseries and they will continue to be run in the same way as they are now, as part of the new school.

### **12. Will the school name be changed and will this change the uniform?**

The school name and uniform are likely to be changed with the opening of a new school. If you have any suggestions or proposals for the name of the new school then please feedback via the consultation details outlined above. At the end of the consultation, if the decision is made to create a new school, the work around the school name, new uniform and other operational matters will be taken forward by governors and other school leaders along with the parents and the wider community.

### **13. Will staff at both the current schools move to the new school?**

The staff from both schools will be having their own engagement session regarding the consultation. This proposal is not a staff consultation at this time. All staff will TUPE over to the new school.

## **Closing the site of Christ Church CofE Infant, Virginia Water**

### **14. What will happen to the site if the proposal is agreed and the site in Virginia Water is no longer in use?**

The school site is owned by, church trustees and Surrey County Council. The land issues for Christ Church CofE Infant School are complex and any changes to the site will need to be approved by the Secretary of State for Education.

### **15. Does this mean our children will no longer be able to go to a church school in Virginia Water?**

Fewer than 10 of the 42 pupils who are currently in Year R and Year 1 at Christ Church C of E Infant School live in the Virginia Water postcode area. Any child living in Virginia Water who wants a school place in the future will be able to apply for other schools in the area, including the new school on the Englefield Green site, in accordance with Surrey County Council's admissions arrangements.

## **The religious designation of the new school**

### **16. What are the benefits to having a new C of E school?**

The leadership teams of Englefield Green Infant School and Nurseries and Christ Church C of E Infant School are excited by the opportunity to build on the history and heritage of both schools and offer local children a great start to their school lives. They aspire to:

- Build an outstanding school that meets the needs of all learners within the community it serves
- Provide all children with a stable, secure and disciplined environment where they achieve their academic, personal and social potential, in preparation for the next stage of their lives
- Offer a broad and balanced curriculum with a range of activities which stretch beyond the length of the school day, allowing all children the opportunity to excel not just academically but within the wide context of life including sports, music and creative arts
- As a Church of England School, to have a distinctly Christian ethos but be fully inclusive of those of other faiths and those of no faith.

By bringing the two schools together and building on links with St Jude's C of E Junior School, school leaders seek to create integrated and sustainable primary provision on two school sites.

### **17. What are the differences between a community school and a Church of England school?**

Church of England schools are fully part of the maintained state education sector and in many respects are exactly like any other maintained school. Like other maintained schools, church schools:

- Receive revenue funding via the Local Authority who retain the overall responsibility for their standards and performance
- Follow the National Curriculum (although voluntary aided schools follow their diocesan Religious Education curriculum)
- Are subject to OFSTED inspections and covered by the same safeguarding requirements as other maintained schools
- Are subject to the requirements of education legislation in the same way as other schools
- Are overseen by governing bodies with the same core functions as other maintained schools
- Are subject to the local authority's admission procedures and must comply with the DfE's School Admissions Code

The Church of England is clear that its schools are not faith schools for the faithful, but church schools for the community – as part of the Church’s vision to serve its communities by offering excellence in education so that children and young people can fulfil their true potential. Church schools seek to offer an experience of Christian community but do not proselytize and are deeply respectful of those of other faiths or no faith. Church schools offer a vision of human flourishing for all which embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people and promotes their wellbeing in the widest sense.

The key characteristics of a voluntary aided Church of England school are:

- The governing body appoints and employs the school staff
- Foundation governors, who uphold the school’s Christian character, are in the majority on the governing body
- The governing body is responsible for admissions arrangements within the terms of the DfE’s School Admissions Code
- Capital funding for school buildings is received through the diocese and governors must contribute 10% of the capital cost of projects
- The school follows the Religious Education syllabus agreed by the Diocese
- They are inspected under the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) framework focusing on the impact of the Church school’s Christian vision on pupils and adults

### **18. What is the difference between the Religious Education syllabus of a community school and a voluntary aided Church of England school?**

Religious Education (RE) is taught as an academic subject as part of the statutory curriculum in all maintained school. The 1988 Education Act requires that the content of the RE syllabus in each local authority area is determined by the SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) whose membership includes people of different faiths and worldviews. The curriculum taught in Surrey community schools and academies is outlined in the Surrey Agreed Syllabus accessed through this link

<https://www.cofequildford.org.uk/education/standing-advisory-council-on-religious-education/surrey-agreed-syllabus-for-religious-education>

Pupils in Church of England schools are taught RE in line with the National Society’s Statement of Entitlement (2019). The RE curriculum in voluntary aided schools follows the Diocesan RE syllabus. The RE curriculum in voluntary controlled schools follows the Surrey Agreed Syllabus. The Statement of Entitlement and the Diocesan Guidelines primary school RE for VA schools can be accessed through this link:

<https://www.cofequildford.org.uk/education/christian-distinctiveness/religious-education/religious-education-guidelines>

In all schools, teaching of Religious Education encompasses two main aspects:

- Learning about religions and belief
- Learning from religions and belief

Pupils are taught what people of different religions and beliefs believe. In church schools, there is a greater emphasis on the main teachings of Christianity but children are also taught about other faiths. Equally important in RE teaching is what pupils learn from religions and beliefs – how they develop their own views and values on moral and ethical questions from

what they learn about different religions and beliefs. Church schools do not seek to convert children to Christianity. They do seek to provide an environment where pupils can explore 'big issues' safely and respectfully, listening to the views of others, so they can 'explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging'.

**19. What if I want my child to remain in a community school rather than a voluntary aided church school?**

This is a democratic process and all responses and alternative proposals will be considered. In relation to this proposal, we are consulting on the closure of both Christ Church CofE Infant and Englefield Green Infant Schools and opening a new Voluntary Aided School to serve the local community on the current Englefield Green Infant School site. Christ Church C of E Infant School is a voluntary aided Church School. Englefield Green Infant School and Nurseries is currently a community school but is affiliated with the Diocese and has a strong relationship with the local voluntary aided Junior School, St Jude's C of E Junior School. It is felt that the new school becoming a voluntary aided school will help bring a part of Christ Church CofE Infant School into the new school.

Parents have the right to apply for a place at an alternative school if they do not wish to send their child to attend the new school.

## **Education place planning**

**20. When forecasting the need for places in the future, have you taken into account planned housing in the area particularly in Longcross and Chertsey?**

Our projections for school places are based on birth rate, population estimates and effects of pupil movement trends and also factor in the number of pupils expected from planned housing based on housing permissions and trajectories provided by the Runnymede Borough Council. While we are forecasting a rising need for primary school places in the more urban areas of Runnymede the future need for places in Virginia Water is not expected to increase.

**21. I live in Chertsey and already travel to get to my child to school in Virginia Water? The new school will be even further away, what can I do?**

We understand that pupils from Chertsey have been centrally allocated places at Christ Church Virginia Water in the past and already travel over 2 miles to school. Please see the answer to question 8 for information about transport eligibility. Parents also have the right to apply for an alternative school. We are happy to hear from individuals about specific impacts of the move so please include this information in your response to the consultation.

**22. Where will pupils from Chertsey go in the future?**

Our forecasts show an increased need in September 2022 and we will start discussions with schools in the planning areas of Chertsey and Addlestone & Ottershaw about future options for how these places will be provided.