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Consultation on the proposed extension of the age range at Ewhurst C of E Infant School

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Local authority details

Local Authority	Surrey County Council
Address	Woodhatch Place 11 Cockshot Hill Reigate Surrey RH2 8EF

School details

Name of School	Ewhurst C of E Infant School
Category of School	Infant
Type of School	Voluntary Aided
URN	125181
Address	The Street, Ewhurst, Surrey
Postcode	GU6 7PX

Consultation on the proposed extension of the age range at Ewhurst C of E Infant School

We are consulting you about a proposal to extend the age range of Ewhurst C of E Infant School from September 2026.

If the proposal was agreed it would mean that the school would extend its age range to become Ewhurst C of E Primary School from 1 September 2026. The school would grow incrementally so that by September 2029 it would have pupils in all year groups from Reception to Year 6.

Background context

In recent years, the majority of local authorities across England, including Surrey, have been experiencing a significant fall in pupil numbers. At the height of Surrey's pupil population in October 2016, there were 13,374 children who had just started in Reception classes at Surrey primary phase schools. By October 2024, this number had fallen to 11,687 children, which is a decrease of 1687 or 12.5% - equivalent to 56 fewer classes. The reasons behind this are thought to include the lower birth rate and families leaving Surrey as a result of the pandemic, Brexit and the cost of living crisis.

While Surrey schools are recognised for their high performance and excellent results, the fall in the number of children has meant a higher number of surplus primary school places and the subsequent reduced funding from central government has meant that our schools are facing difficult challenges. The Council has a responsibility to protect the high-quality education that Surrey is known for and to ensure it is financially sustainable.

Why are we consulting you?

In Surrey, our goal is to ensure that no one is left behind and that every child has access to enriched educational opportunities. This is only achievable when schools can admit as many children within their Planned Admission Number (PAN) as possible and maximise the funding they receive. However, for some Surrey schools, especially those serving small rural communities, the number of children attending remains low. It has therefore been necessary to explore a range of school organisation options with school leaders and stakeholders to promote sustainability and where viable, try to secure the future of our small schools.

We now want to hear your comments on the proposal to extend the age range at Ewhurst C of E Infant School. Your input and feedback are important in helping us to further understand what the school means to the children, parents/carers, staff and local community.

Ewhurst C of E Infant School

Ewhurst C of E Infant School is a one form entry infant school, with a PAN of 30 and an overall capacity of 90 places. It is recognised by the Department for Education as a "Rural Primary School". The school has been affected by falling rolls over recent years because there is no clear pathway for its pupils into Key Stage 2 education. The absence of a linked junior school has meant that families are understandably trying to secure a place at an all through primary provision to ensure a continuity of education for their child after Year 2.

At the height of the pupil population in October 2016, Ewhurst CE Infant had 81 children on its roll. In October 2024, this had reduced to 41 children, with the majority of the vacancies year on year being in the Year 2 cohort.

The decrease in pupil numbers also mirrors a decline in the number of children in the local area overall. Based on population estimates and GP registration data, pupil projections are estimating that, in the long term, there will be, on average, around 14 children of Reception age residing in the Ewhurst and Ellens Green ward.

Academic year	Number of children
2026-27	17
2027-28	15
2028-29	15
2029-30	14
2030-31	14
2031-32	14
2032-33	13
2033-34	13

Majority of pupils living in the Ewhurst and Ellens Green ward attend Ewhurst C of E Infant School, and then move, either in-year or at junior transfer to another school in Cranleigh. The school's numbers have historically been bolstered by pupils joining who live outside of the Ewhurst and Ellens Green ward, but this number is reducing given the level of vacancies in other schools due to the declining pupil population.

How would this proposal work?

Extending the age range of Ewhurst C of E Infant School will mean that the school would become a primary school, offering an education to children from Year Reception through to Year 6.

The school would grow incrementally, year on year, rather than admitting additional cohorts of children immediately. If the proposal is agreed, it is anticipated that the first cohort of pupils would transition from Year 2 into Year 3 at the school in September 2026. This would mean that Year 2 pupils would no longer need to secure a place at an alternative school for their junior education, but could remain at Ewhurst CE Infant if they wished.

To accommodate all pupils, the school would increase its capacity by 15 places from 90 to 105. This increase is not subject to a statutory process as laid out by the Department for Education, as it is fewer than 30 pupils and less than 25% of the overall original capacity of the school.

To facilitate this transition to a primary school, the governing body of the school would also need to reduce the Published Admissions Number of the school from 30 to 15. The process to do this is separate to this consultation, and is twofold. Firstly, it will involve the governing body applying to the Office of the School Adjudicator for a PAN reduction for both 2025 and 2026, and then secondly, launching a separate consultation in the autumn of 2025 to reduce the PAN to 15 from September 2027 onwards.

If these applications are successful and the governing body subsequently determine a PAN of 15 from September 2027 onwards, this would mean that the school are able to offer 15 places per year group, with a total of 4 classes overall.

Classes would be taught in vertical groups, meaning that some year groups would be taught together in one class. The usual organisation of this teaching model would be as follows:

Year Reception
Year 1 and Year 2
Year 3 and Year 4
Year 5 and Year 6

This would ensure that the school do not breach infant class size legislation which limits class sizes at Key Stage 1 (Years Reception, 1 and 2) to no more than 30 in a class.

The council, the Diocese of Guildford and the governing body of the school are in agreement that this proposal will help with the retention of pupils because it allows for continuity of education for all pupils. This will, in turn, help to ensure the future sustainability of the school.

What would this proposal mean for the children?

All children on roll at Ewhurst C of E Infant School in Year 2 in July 2026 would automatically have a place at the school in Year 3 for September 2026, just as they would in any other primary school. There would be no need to submit a separate junior application for a Year 3 place at the school.

However, should any parent wish to apply for a Year 3 place for their child at another school other than Ewhurst CE Infant, they are able submit a junior application in the normal admissions round by 15th January 2026 or an in-year application listing another school as a preference. If a place is available, it would be offered, or your child can be placed on a waiting list if the year group is currently full.

What would it mean for the staff?

As the school grows year on year, there would be a need for the school to employ a fourth teacher and additional teaching assistants and/or support staff. These opportunities would be advertised and filled in accordance with the school's usual recruitment practises.

There will also be development opportunities available to staff to share best practises and support them in teaching mixed aged classes.

Would there be any changes to the school buildings?

The school buildings and site are owned by the Diocese of Guildford. The school already has a fourth classroom, which is currently used for its wraparound care provision. It is anticipated that, with some minor internal refurbishment, this could, in due course, become the Year 5/6 classroom. Years Reception to Year 4 would be taught in the existing classrooms. It has been identified that there would be some remodelling of toilet facilities required, subject to the relevant planning permissions.

What happens next?

This paper is part of a public consultation on the proposal to extend the age range of Ewhurst C of E Infant School.

The consultation begins on Tuesday 1st July and will end on Friday 26th September.

There are a number of ways you can respond to the consultation, and these are set out below. We will also hold two public meeting for families, local communities and any other interested parties to discuss the proposals and get your input and feedback. Anyone who wishes is welcome to come to either meeting and you do not have to have a child at either school to attend.

These meetings will take place on:

Tuesday 9th September, with a 2pm meeting and a 7pm meeting

The Council will consider all the views put forward during this consultation period before publishing specific proposals, or 'Statutory Notices', that are required by law. This is a further period for comments or representations, which lasts for 4 term-time weeks and a final decision would then be taken by Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning. The timeline for this proposal is shown in the table below (dates may be subject to change).

Timeline

Date	Event
1 July – 26 September 2025	Consultation on proposal
9 September 2025 at 2pm and 7pm	Public meetings held at the school
1 October – 5 November 2025	A statutory notice is published for a 4 week term-time representation period
25 November 2025	Responses to the consultation and Statutory Notices are considered by the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning and a final decision on the proposal is made
1 September 2026	Ewhurst C of E Infant School would become Ewhurst C of E Primary School.

How do I respond to this consultation?

You can respond:

- online at **www.surreysays.co.uk** and by searching for the school's consultation (school name or post code)

or

- by completing the consultation response form that is available alongside this document. You can either:
 - email the form to schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk
 - print it, complete it and send it back to:

Ewhurst CE Infant Proposal
Education Place Planning
Woodhatch Place
11 Cockshot Hill
Reigate
RH2 8EF

All responses must be received by 5pm on 26 September 2025

If you have any questions about this proposal, please email schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk.