School Merger Consultation

A consultation on behalf of the Governing Body of the Federation of Send Church of England Schools on the proposed merger of Send Church of England (Foundation) First School with St Bede’s Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Junior School

CONSULTATION PERIOD
Tuesday 8th December 2015 – Midday Friday 29th January 2016

INTRODUCTION

The governors of the Federation of Send Church of England Schools believe that the best way to provide outstanding education for all our children is by merging the two existing schools - St Bede’s C of E Junior School and Send C of E First School - to become one single primary school catering for all children from ages 4 to 11. The nursery is unaffected in any way by this proposal.

The Governing Body would like to seek your views on:
Merging the two schools to become a single, full primary school with effect from 1st September 2016, setting the name of the new school to be “Send Church of England Primary School”. The schools would retain the “Voluntary Aided” status (VA) maintaining close links with the Diocese of Guildford for the new school.
If the merger were to go ahead, and the proposed rebuild of the St Bede’s building goes ahead with the new building closer to the Send First School building, there would be many new opportunities:

- Joint use of all the new facilities of the junior school such as shared kitchen and dining, music, information technology, food technology, design technology, whole school assemblies and similar events in the school hall
- Access aspects of the curriculum which might otherwise be denied them, through the use of shared resources.
- Join in whole school play and sporting events.
- Work across year groups, and for older children to be role models for younger children.

The outline plan is, if the merger and the new building are both approved, Send C of E Primary School will begin on 1st September 2016 and the junior school children will move into their new building in January 2017. Until that point daily life for both schools will continue exactly as it is now. Once the new junior building is open, daily life will change in some ways but the children and their parents/carers will be fully informed well before.

If the merger were to go ahead, there would be some administrative changes for parents and carers:

- All children on roll at either school on 1st September 2016 will automatically continue to have a place in Send C of E Primary School.
- The existing process of applying to the two schools will remain unchanged for September 2016. All children who are offered and accept a place starting in September 2016 at either school will have a place in the new full primary school, Send C of E Primary School.
- For applications for the academic year starting September 2017 and in all future years, there will only be the need for one admission process for children at Reception year to Send C of E Primary School. There will be no need for a second application for places in Year 3 because children in Year 2 will transfer automatically to Year 3.
- It is anticipated that admissions arrangements for September 2017 will change as follows:
  - The name of the school will become Send C of E Primary School.
  - Previously, priority was given to siblings of pupils in either Send First School or St Bede’s Junior School at the time of the child’s admission. This will change to priority being given to siblings of pupils in Send C of E Primary School at the time of the child’s admission.
  - The Published Admission Number at Reception will increase from 58 to 60 children.
  - The Published Admission Number for Year 3 will be removed.
  - Other admissions criteria are not affected.
- Governors will approve changes to the admissions criteria once the Local Authority has approved the proposed merger. Governors will then apply to the Schools Adjudicator for these changes to be agreed. This will be done by what is known as requesting an “in year variation” to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator.
- For administrative purposes Send First School will close and St Bede’s Junior School will be expanded and renamed as Send C of E Primary School.
- All children will be on roll at the new Send C of E Primary School as at September 2016.
• All Teachers and staff already have Federation contracts of employment and these contracts will be changed to reflect the new school name.
• The Governing Body will be reconstituted to reflect becoming Send C of E Primary School with VA status.
• A new school logo and school uniform colour will be chosen based upon parent and children’s preferences as consulted earlier in 2015. This will be phased in over a two year period as and when parents need to replace uniforms. It is not necessary to buy new uniforms in time for September 2016.
• The special religious character of the school, its ethos, values and links with the church and community will be retained by keeping the Voluntary Aided status for the new school.
• The single school will become the central focus of the community.
• Parents and children will benefit enormously from the continuity and simplicity of dealing with just one school for all primary education.
• Economies of scale and efficiencies from operating one school instead of two will improve our use of resources, allowing us to re-invest more into the education for our children.
• Having one budget will make it easier to allocate resources where needed across the whole school.
• One Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) and SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspection process, reducing considerable workload and disruption to the school.

Have Your Say
This document forms part of a statutory four week consultation process designed to seek the views of everybody with an interest in the future of our schools. We have extended this period because of the Christmas holidays.  The relevant Statutory Notices will also be published alongside this consultation in the local press, on the school website, the school gates and the Surrey Says website.

There is a Consultation Response Form attached. Please return the completed form by midday on **Friday 29th January 2016** at the latest, which is the closing date for the consultation period. There will be a box provided in both school offices to receive your response forms. Alternatively you can send the form back electronically with your comments, preferably typed rather than handwritten, by email to: consult@send.surrey.sch.uk.

Consultation responses can also be given at the Surrey Says consultation website, by searching for the school’s consultation (school name and postcode), or by scrolling through the list of open consultations: www.surreysays.co.uk.

Public Meeting
If you want to talk about this proposal in more detail, please come along to our public meeting where you can talk to Governors, the Headteacher, a representative from the Diocese, and the School Commissioning Officer.

The meeting will be held in the school hall at **Send C of E First School** from 4-5pm on Thursday 7th January 2016.
After the consultation period closes

After the consultation period closes we will publish the results of the consultation, consolidate questions raised and the responses. We will not publish the names of those who have asked questions. The governing body will review the responses and decide whether to continue with the proposal. Any responses to the Statutory Notice received during the formal consultation period will also be reviewed, before the final decision on the proposal is made by the Surrey County Council’s Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement.
Consultation Response Form

Send First C of E First School and St Bede’s C of E Junior School should become a single full Primary School for children age 4 to 11 from September 2016.

Please give us your views. Please tick the box that best shows what you think of the following questions. Also give us any comments you have. You can write on the other side of this sheet if you want more space to write comments.

☐ Agree  ☐ Don’t know  ☐ Disagree

Comments:

Please will you tell us something about yourself? Please tick the boxes that apply to you and please tick the box for the school involved.

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* Please give details