

School Organisation Consultation

**Proposed 6th Form closure at The Priory
Church of England (Aided) School, Dorking**

**February
2021**



Introduction

At present, The Priory Church of England (Voluntary Aided) School is formulated as follows:

- The school is six form entry with a published admission number (PAN) of 180 and a capacity of 900 places for pupils aged 11-16 years.
- In addition, the school has a post-16 provision with a capacity of 200 places across National Curriculum Years 12-13 for pupils aged 16-18 years.
- The school is rated as Good by Ofsted (March 2019).

Proposal

The Governing Body of The Priory Church of England (VA) School in Dorking, in partnership with Surrey County Council and the Diocese of Guildford, is proposing to close its sixth form provision from September 2022. The proposal will change the age range in the school from 11-18 years, to 11-16 years.

Rationale

Over the last seven years the school has seen an increasing decline in occupancy for its sixth form provision, placing a considerable financial burden on budgets.

The Department for Education guidance states that any new sixth form should provide at least 200 places and there should be sufficient demand for those places¹. The Priory Church of England (VA) School has a sixth form capacity of 200 places but the table below shows a consistent decrease in occupancy.

In 2016/17 occupancy was only at 56.5% of capacity and since then, demand for places has dropped by a further 34%. Sixth form occupancy in the current 2020/21 academic year is at 22.5%.

Academic Year	Numbers on role	Capacity (200) levels
2016/17	113	56.5%
2017/18	73	36.5%
2018/19	45	22.5%
2019/20	49	24.5%
2020/21	45	22.5%

¹ Department for Education 'Making significant changes (prescribed alterations) to maintained schools (2018)

Funding for sixth form provision is provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency on a formula basis that provides a national funding rate of £4,000 per student. However, delivering a meaningful breadth of provision and providing the range of options required to prepare students for their chosen university and career paths, the school is currently spending approx. £11,000 per student. It therefore continues to be a challenge for the school to offer a wide range of courses that are viable both educationally and economically on such low levels of students.

Benchmark data shows that viable sixth forms should offer approximately 27 subjects to meet student demand. The school currently offers a total of 25 subjects. The current National Curriculum Year 12 were offered 25 subjects and are studying a range of 17. The current National Curriculum Year 13 were offered 25 subjects and are studying a range of 15. As a sixth form running under capacity, this is placing financial burden on the whole school as funding continues to be insufficient to cover the cost of delivery.

Whilst the school has always been proud to offer a small sixth form provision, creating an intimate setting where every student is known and where class sizes are small, to continue with the retention of a small and unviable post-16 provision would create an unsustainable financial burden on the school. The Sixth Form would have to be significantly subsidised by the funding received for younger students which, in turn, would impact on the level of investment into the education of pupils from National Curriculum Years 7-11.

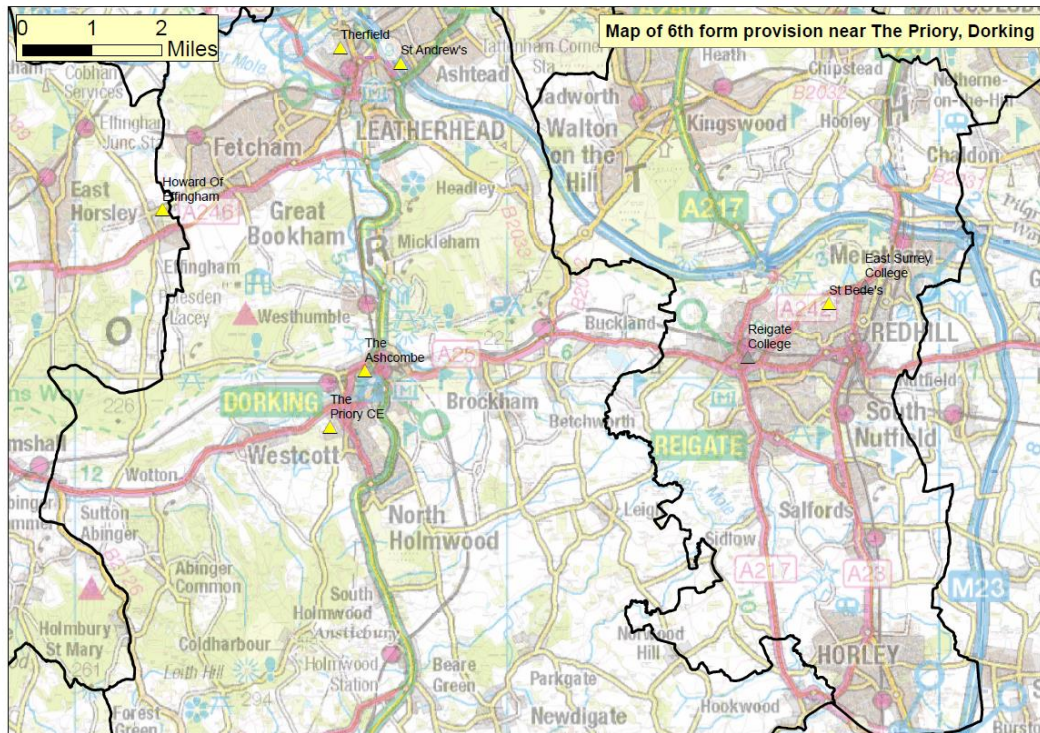
Given all the above factors, it is the considered opinion of the Board of Governors with the support of the Diocese of Guildford and Surrey County Council that the closure of the sixth form provision is now necessary for the continued success of the school.

A Review of Sixth Form Provision in the locality

The Priory Church of England (VA) School already has an established relationship with local feeder colleges including Reigate, East Surrey and The College of Richard Collyer (Collyers) which are a popular choice for National Curriculum Year 11 pupils. There are four other secondary schools with a post-16 provision, one in Dorking, two in Leatherhead and one in Effingham. The table below shows the straight-line distance to the nearest schools and colleges, with the map showing their location.

School	Distance from The Priory CE
The Ashcombe School	0.94 miles

Howard of Effingham School	3.9 miles
St Andrew's Catholic Secondary School	5.2 miles
Therfield School	5.4 miles
Reigate College	6.1 miles
St Bede's School	7.4 miles
East Surrey College	7.9 miles
The College of Richard Collyer (Horsham based, not shown on map below)	11.5 miles



Current Sixth Form Students

The Priory is committed to completing all sixth form courses already started and proposes to continue to provide high quality teaching and support, for all students who have embarked on their two-year A level course. Current National Curriculum Year 12 students would complete their education at The Priory and these students would receive a more personalised educational experience with academic and pastoral mentoring to ensure they achieve the best possible outcomes and secure excellent destination choices at the end of their studies. The proposed closure would have no impact on current National Curriculum Year 13 students.

Current National Curriculum Year 11 Students

As part of the existing careers provision, all National Curriculum Year 11 students are provided with the information and support required to make a positive transition from senior

school to the next stage in their education, whether that is sixth form, vocational training or apprenticeships. Every National Curriculum Year 11 student will continue to be supported in securing the appropriate pathway that is right for them, and which closely matches their ambitions and aspirations.

Consultations, approvals and overall timescales

The proposed changes require a period of consultation, the publication of Statutory Notices and the agreement of Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for All-age Learning if the proposal is to proceed.

The first stage of consultation will be informal and will open on 22nd February 2021. During this period Surrey County Council will share its proposals with schools including head teachers and chairs of governors, with unions, parent representatives, partner agencies, local residents and other Local Authorities (within 3 miles) and with the staff and parents of The Priory Church of England (VA) School. (Further details of stakeholders can be found on a separate document).

Following the informal consultation period, it is proposed to publish a Statutory Notice for a four-week period. The publication of Notices is when the Local Authority formally states the changes that it proposes to make. This will be the final opportunity for consultees to make their views known before a final decision is taken. Following the consultation periods, officers will summarise the feedback and will report to the Cabinet Member for All-age Learning. A decision is due provisionally on 8th June 2021.

Have Your Say

We would like to know what the community think about our proposal. There is a Consultation Response Form on page 8 of this leaflet. We are specifically looking for your views on the educational aspects of this proposal.

The consultation will close on **Monday 19th April 2021**.

What happens next?

There will be an online public meeting for parents and any other interested parties to discuss the proposals and to hear the views that people have. As a public meeting, anyone who wishes to may attend, please email: schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk to register your interest and you will be sent a link to the online event. The online event will be held on **Wednesday 10th March 2021 at 6pm** where there will be a short presentation followed by questions and answers.

Please come and share your views. Everyone is welcome to attend this meeting. You do not have to have a child at the school to come to the meeting. Please note the deadline to register your interest to attend the meeting is 5pm on Tuesday 9th March 2021. An invitation to the meeting will be emailed to you.

At the end of the consultation period, Surrey County Council will review all responses received and share these with the school and publish details on the Surrey Says website.

Subject to the views expressed, if the proposal is to proceed, the next stage would be for Surrey County Council to publish a Statutory Notice. This will be in a local newspaper, available at the school and on the Surrey Says website stating our intention to close the sixth form provision. There will be a four-week statutory consultation period for further representations to be received by the Council.

All representations will be reviewed before a final decision is taken by the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning provisionally on 8th June 2021.

Where can I get more information?

You can find out more by contacting:

Education Place Planning Team
35 Quadrant Court
Guildford Road
Woking
GU22 7QQ

email: schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk

web: www.surreysays.co.uk

Can I write to you with my views?

Surrey County Council would like to know what the community thinks about this proposal. The consultation will open on Monday 22nd February 2021.

You can respond by:

a) Accessing the consultation online on the 'Surrey Says' website: 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 this document. You can email the form or print it, complete it and send it back to the address below.

Education Place Planning Team
35 Quadrant Court
Guildford Road
Woking
GU22 7QQ

Email schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk with the subject heading: FAO The Priory CE School

All responses must be received by Monday 19th April 2021

Consultation Response Form
Proposal to close the sixth form at The Priory Church of England (VA) School

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

1. Do you agree with the proposal to close the sixth form provision from September 2022?		
Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Please tick the boxes that apply to you.

A parent/carer of a child at the school

A parent/carer of a child in an Early Years setting

A parent/carer of a child who may in future attend the school

A parent/carer of a child at another school

Someone who works at the school

A Governor of the school

Some other link to the school

Someone else with an interest – please give details

Please provide your postcode

Please return to:
Education Place Planning Team
35 Quadrant Court
Guildford Road
Woking GU22 7QQ
email: schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk

Please tick if you have written comments on the other side

