

Questions & Answers

Public Consultation by Surrey County Council on the amalgamation of Christ Church Virginia Water Church of England (Aided) Infant School and Englefield Green Community Infant School

Surrey County Council and Guildford Diocese have prepared these initial Q&As to explain more about the school reorganisation consultation involving Christ Church C of E Infant School and Englefield Green Infant School. The document will be updated to include new questions raised by parents, carers and the local community including at the consultation meetings to be held at the schools on 30 January and 11 February.

1. I am interested in learning more about the consultation process.

Full details about the consultation process including details of how to respond are available in the consultation proposal through this link

<https://www.surreysays.co.uk/csf/christchurhandenglefieldgreen/>

2. Who is leading the consultation?

The consultation is led by Surrey County Council, in partnership with the Diocese of Guildford and the governing bodies of Christ Church C of E Infant School and Englefield Green Infant School and Nurseries.

3. What does this mean for the existing school in Virginia Water?

If the proposals are agreed, Christ Church C of E Infant in Virginia Water will amalgamate with Englefield Green Infant on the Englefield Green site from 1 September 2020. All the children currently on roll in YR and Y1 at Christ Church C of E Infant would transfer to be on roll at the new school on the Englefield Green site from the beginning of the September term 2020. The Virginia Water site would close on 31 August 2020.

4. What efforts were made to avoid this closure?

As the consultation document makes clear, Christ Church C of E Infant School has experienced a decline in admissions in recent years. There are currently 53 pupils in a school with a capacity for 90 children. This has meant that the school budget has reduced as school budgets are based on the number of pupils in the school. School place planning information for the Virginia Water area shows no significant increase in the number of potential YR pupils for the foreseeable future. Despite the best efforts of the school to attract new pupils, there is no realistic prospect

This document is for preparation only – not to be shared widely

For use with Church community, school community and other interested parties of the Diocese of Guildford

that pupil numbers will increase. From 2020/21 onwards, the projected school budget will not cover the costs of running the school and this will affect the quality of education the school provides.

5. What will this mean for the Virginia Water community?

We acknowledge the sadness of the community if an old established infant school closes on this site. The school celebrated its 175th birthday last year. However, children in Virginia Water will be specifically included in the admissions criteria of the new school and the new school would encourage members of the Virginia Water community, including the Christ Church community, to continue to support the school on its new site.

6. Does this mean our children will no longer be able to go to 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.

7. What is the Diocese's role in the consultation?

Christ Church C of E Infant School is a Church of England school and the Diocese has therefore been working closely with Surrey County Council and the schools to develop the proposal set out in the consultation. As the religious authority for Christ Church C of E Infant, the Diocesan Board of Education has agreed to the launch of the consultation. Under the proposals, the Diocese of Guildford are excited at the possibility of opening a new Church of England infant school on the Englefield Green site by amalgamating the two current schools.

8. Why does the Diocese support the consultation?

The governing bodies of Christ Church C of E Infant, Englefield Green Infant and St Jude's C of E Junior approached Surrey County Council and the Diocese with a proposal to amalgamate Christ Church C of E Infant and Englefield Green Infant and to work more closely in future with St Jude's C of E Junior. The Diocese was pleased to support this proposal because it offered a sustainable future for the schools and the opportunity to develop high quality educational provision for primary aged children in this part of Runnymede.

9. 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.

10. Why can't the schools be amalgamated in Virginia Water?

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.

11. What does this mean for Englefield Green?

Englefield Green Infant School and Nurseries will technically close and a new, Church of England infant school will open on the site. It is expected that staff from both the current schools will TUPE to the new school. All the children currently on roll in YR and Y1 at Englefield Green Infant would transfer to be on roll at the new school on the same site from the beginning of the September term 2020. With the addition of the children who are currently at Christ Church C of E Infant the new school will be nearer its full capacity of 60 pupils per year than the current school is. There is already space on the site for the extra children and the staff who support them as Englefield Green Infant School and Nurseries has been running below capacity in recent years. Inevitably there would be a transition period for children attending the new school. In the longer term, greater numbers of the pupils would make the school more sustainable and enable the leadership team to improve the quality of education for all children.

12. What will happen to the Christ Church site, if the school is closed?

The school site is owned by several different bodies and the land issues are complex. Discussions will begin soon between these bodies to decide what will happen to the site if the school closes.

13. 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.

14. If my child is at the new school will they automatically get a place at St Jude's C of E Junior School?

St Jude's C of E Junior school does not currently have any infant schools as named feeder schools but historically has received pupils from Christ Church C of E Infant School and Englefield Green Infant School and Nurseries. Our vision is for a more formal partnership between the infant and junior school. 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.

15. This is a consultation but what does this mean for our children now?

There will be no change for any child at either school until the end of the summer term. School leaders and staff at both schools will continue to focus on what they do now – offering a great education to their children. If Surrey County Council decide to implement their proposals, there will be very careful planning of the next steps which will include consultation with parents.

16. 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 a priority for both schools. School leaders 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 Christ Church C of E Infant. This will enable the new school to plan individual provision to meet that child's needs.

17. 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.

18. How do I engage with the consultation?

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 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 8 County Hall Penrhyn Road Kingston-upon-Thames Surrey KT1 2DN Email 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 two meetings at the schools to consult with parents, carers and the community.

- 30 January 2020 at 6pm at Englefield Green Infant School and Nurseries
- 11 February 2020 at 2pm at Christ Church C of E Infant School

Both meetings will be the same so please choose the venue and time most suitable for you.

19. Can we stop this?

The proposals issued by Surrey County Council are part of their informal consultation to seek the views of the community. All submissions will be carefully considered. The Cabinet Member for All Age Learning will make a decision on whether to move forward with the proposals based a range of factors including consultation responses.