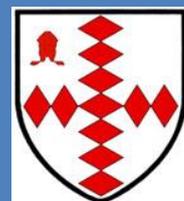




School Organisation Consultation (Representation)

**Proposal to amalgamate Downs
Way School and St. Mary's C of E
Junior School**

**January
2017**



Introduction

1. This document sets out details of a proposal to amalgamate Downs Way School and St. Mary's C of E Junior School. This represents the latter part of a two-stage consultation process, the timescales for which are presented below.

Background

2. At present, the two schools that are the subject of this consultation comprise two distinct institutions, formulated as follows:
 - Downs Way School – a two form entry (2FE) Community Infant School, which accommodates children from Year R to Year 2. The school has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 60 and admits up to this number each year, into its Year R, giving an overall capacity of 180 places for mainstream pupils.
 - St. Mary's C of E Junior School – a three form entry (3FE) Voluntary Aided Junior School, which accommodates children from Year 3 to Year 6. The school has a PAN of 90 and admits up to this number each year, into its Year 3, giving an overall capacity of 360 places for mainstream pupils.
3. Downs Way School was recently expanded from 1.5FE to 2FE, with an additional building being supplied by Surrey County Council to support this. This is reflective of a growth in the school-age population in the area and it is expected that this increased pupil cohort will transition into the Junior phase in due course.
4. From April 2014, the Headteacher of St. Mary's C of E School has been acting as the shared Headteacher across both schools. The success of this arrangement has led to discussions regarding the move to a more formal relationship between the two schools, the outcome of which is the proposal that forms the basis of this consultation.

Proposal

5. Surrey County Council, in partnership with the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education and the Governing Bodies of St. Mary's C of E Junior School and Downs Way School, is proposing to amalgamate the two schools into a single institution, as well as expand Junior provision therein, from September 2018. The schools would remain based over the two neighbouring sites.
6. The nature of the legal framework surrounding school amalgamations allows for two routes to this being achieved. This first is to close both of the extant schools and open a new school in their place. The drawback of this approach is that the default position is that the new institution would be the subject of the *Free School Presumption*, meaning that the operation of any such school would have to be opened up to competition from interested providers. As such, in order to secure continuity of provision and governance, it is proposed to follow the second route to amalgamation. Specifically, it is proposed to:
 - Close Downs Way Infant School, effective from 31 August 2018.
 - Alter the lower age limit of St. Mary's C of E Junior School, in order that the age range broadens from 7-11 to 4-11, effective from 1 September 2018.
 - Rebrand this newly expanded school as a Primary School, effective from 1 September 2018. The name change will be the subject of a separate consultation exercise.

- Enlarge the KS2 provision at this Primary School from 3FE to 4FE, effective from 1 September 2018.

7. The consequence of this proposal would be to create a new, amalgamated Voluntary Aided Primary School from 1 September 2018, accommodating pupils from Year R to Year 6. The school would have a PAN of 60 in KS1 and an *additional* 60 in KS2, giving an overall capacity of 660 places for mainstream pupils, as shown in the below table:

Year	Capacity
YR	60
Y1	60
Y2	60
Y3	120
Y4	120
Y5	120
Y6	120
Total	660

8. The school would expand its KS2 provision incrementally year-on-year, eventually reaching its full capacity in 2021, as detailed in the below table:

Year	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
2018/19	60	60	60	120	90	90	90	570
2019/20	60	60	60	120	120	90	90	600
2020/21	60	60	60	120	120	120	90	630
2021/22	60	60	60	120	120	120	120	660

Rationale

9. The combination of the schools' proximity and the current arrangement of sharing a Headteacher both make this proposal the next logical step in the development of the educational offer at these schools. The closer working brought about by the shared Headteacher function has already had benefits across both schools and it is felt that these will be augmented under the current proposal. In particular, it is expected that the new school will, by virtue of its scale, be significantly more cost-effective to operate than two distinct institutions (e.g. with respect to shared procurement/contracts etc.) and this, in turn, will make the school more sustainable in the long-term. Additionally, it is expected that the education benefits that have already been generated through a broader, shared staff base will continue to be built on and developed.
10. St Mary's has been chosen as the institution to retain for a number of reasons, principal amongst which was the fact that it was felt that it was necessary to retain Diocesan provision in the locality, in order to ensure a diversity of provision, especially at KS2 (Oxted will continue to be well served by the area's other Community Schools). In addition, St. Mary's 'Outstanding' Ofsted judgement will be retained by the new institution, which will add significant value in terms of the future development of the school.
11. The expansion of the school's KS2 provision is underpinned by a steady increase in the demand for schools places in Oxted & Limpsfield. Within this area, there is presently provision for 150 places per year in Year 3, composed of the following:
- Holland Junior School (offering 60 Year 3 places per annum); and

- St. Mary's C of E Junior School (offering 90 Year 3 places per annum).

12. Projections of future demand for school places in this area are presented in the below table:

Year	Jun. PAN	Jun. Projection	Surplus
2016/17	150	137	13
2017/18	150	141	9
2018/19	150	161	- 11
2019/20	150	171	- 21
2020/21	150	163	- 13
2021/22	150	170	- 20
2022/23	150	159	- 9
2023/24	150	157	- 7
2024/25	150	160	- 10
2025/26	150	162	- 12

13. As can be seen from the above, there is a sustained need for additional Junior places in the area. This is also a relatively popular area for admissions applications and, even in years where a projected surplus has existed, placing all children with a preference in the area has proved difficult. The proposed expansion of the new school by a Form of Entry at Year 3 would reduce all of the above projected deficits by 30 places and add surplus in other years, thereby augmenting the scope for parental preference.

Admissions

14. The proposal is to create a single institution with an Admissions Policy that allows for the entry routes provided by its predecessor schools. At this stage, it is not proposed to amend the Admissions Policy for Year 3 entry. It is proposed that admission for Year R would be amended to mirror that for Year 3, with the added stipulation that faith-based admission criteria will only apply to those pupils *for whom the new school is the nearest Church of England school*, as measured from their place of residence, thus ensuring that the new school continues to serve its local community. The school will consider applying for an in year variation to its Admission arrangements, in order to bring this proposed change into effect for September 2018.

Staffing and HR

15. In order to provide stability during the period of change, it is proposed that the current shared Headteacher remains in this post until August 2018 and becomes the Headteacher of the amalgamated school from September 2018.

16. The move to a single institution may have an impact on a number of staff, as staffing structures will likely be reformulated to reflect the new mode of operation. Staff at both schools have been made fully aware of the proposals and are being supported by the senior management team, together with HR and union representatives. Any formal staff consultations cannot take place until a decision has been made to proceed with this proposal.

17. With a larger school there are likely to be more opportunities for internal progression as an enhanced middle leadership level will be developed to support the senior team.

Capital planning and buildings

18. St. Mary's has capacity to expand its KS2 provision in its existing location. A building programme will be required to provide the permanent facilities to allow for this increase. Appropriate capital has been approved to achieve this and a separate planning application (with its own consultation process) will be run subsequent to this education consultation. The planning application process provides an opportunity to raise issues relating to the proposed building and implications including traffic, school facilities, energy and the impact on the local community and access. Responses to the education consultation should focus on the educational implications of the proposed change.
19. The capital project is a major undertaking, which is being led by a Project Manager who will establish a series of design workshops with the school, so as to ensure that the design reflects the aspirations of the school community. In addition to this, a consultation evening will be held at the school in advance of the submission of any planning application, so as to ensure that the wider community's perspective can be fed into the design process.

Consultations, approvals and overall timescales

20. Proposals of this nature require a statutory process to be followed. The current phase of this process is the 'Representation' period. This was preceded by an Informal Consultation period, which ran from 1 November to 13 December 2016. The response to this initial period of consultation was overwhelmingly positive, with 93% of written responses expressing support for the proposed changes. A summary of the views expressed through the consultation exercise can be obtained from: schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk
21. On the basis of the feedback from this initial stage of consultation, together with consideration of the education rationale for the project, a joint panel (comprising representation from SCC, the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education and the Governing Bodies of St. Mary's C of E Junior School and Downs Way School) met on 20 December 2016 and determined that the proposal should proceed to the next stage of the statutory process, which involved the publishing of statutory notices, as well as the initiation of the current 4-week phase of consultation. This decision was ratified by Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement at a meeting on 17 January 2017. Feedback from the first stage of consultation is serving to inform the approach to the proposal. In particular, as a result of several respondents raising concerns related to traffic and parking at peak drop-off and pick-up times, St. Mary's C of E Junior School has worked with a group of parents to develop a walking bus scheme. Should the proposals be implemented, it is anticipated that this work will continue, in tandem with the development of a new School Travel Plan.
22. The current stage of consultation is informal and is proposed to run until 12 noon on **22 February 2017**. During this period, the proposal will be shared with the wider professional network; local schools; unions; and the staff and parents of the two schools concerned.

Have your say

Surrey County Council, the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education and the Governing Bodies of St. Mary's C of E Junior School and Downs Way School would like to know what the community thinks about this proposal. The consultation will open on **25 January 2017**.

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.

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Surrey
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FAO Oliver Gill (Downs Way and St. Mary's Consultation) to:
schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk

All responses must be received by noon on **22 February 2017**.

What happens next?

At the end of the consultation period, the decision on whether to formally approve the proposals will be referred to the Leader of Surrey County Council and the Governing Body of St. Mary's C of E Junior School for a decision in March 2017. Surrey County Council will decide on the proposal to close Downs Way School. The Governing Body of St. Mary's C of E Junior School will decide on the proposals to alter the lower age limit and expand the KS2 provision of that school. The outcome of the consultation process and the decision taken will be published on both the Council website:

<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=182&Year=0>

and the website of St. Mary's C of E Junior School:

<http://www.st-marys-oxted.surrey.sch.uk/>

These decisions will be taken in partnership with one another and one set of proposals would not be implemented without the other also being implemented. The responses received during both the informal consultation and representation period will be collated and fed into both decision making processes. Should it be decided to proceed, the intention would be to implement all of the proposals for September 2018.

Where can I obtain further information?

You can find out more by contacting:

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