

# Consultation on Surrey's admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools and coordinated schemes for September 2017

## Outcome of consultation

### Response to consultation

- By the closing date, 57 individual responses had been submitted online and a further 31 responses were received by email. A further two responses were received by email after the closing date and these were accepted.
- The 90 responses were from:
 

Admissions forum member	1
Clerk to governing body	1
Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher	41
Parent	16
Parish/Town Council member	1
School governor	4
School staff member	25
Other	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>
- A summary of the responses to questions within the consultation that were received from all sources is set out below in Table A.

**Table A - Summary of responses to admission consultation for September 2017**

Question Number	Proposal	Document	Agree	Disagree
1	Beacon Hill Primary School – admission criteria for Year 3	Enclosure 1	7	3
2	Chennestone Primary School - introduction of feeder link at Year 3 for children at Beauclerc Infant	Enclosure 1	15	1
3	Cranleigh Primary School – admission criteria for Year 3	Enclosure 1	6	1
4	West Ewell Infant School – reduction of PAN from 90 to 60	Enclosure 1 Appendix 1	7	1
5	Start date to the primary admissions round	Enclosure 2	63	14
6	Admission arrangements for which no change was proposed	Enclosure 1 and its appendices	26	9

### Analysis of responses to questions within the 2017 admission consultation

- Beacon Hill Primary School: introduction of admission criteria for Year 3** - Overall, seven respondents agreed with this proposal whilst three were opposed to it.
- Of the seven respondents who agreed with the proposal six were headteachers and one was a parent. None indicated that they would be affected by the proposal.
- Of the three respondents who were opposed to the proposal one was a headteacher, one was a parent and one was a Diocesan member on Surrey's Admissions Forum.

7. The parent who was opposed to this proposal indicated that they would be affected and commented that with the increase in class sizes, 'the quality of teaching will deteriorate and my child's development will suffer'.
8. The Diocesan member on Surrey's Admissions Forum indicated that they felt that the criterion for children 'for whom the school is the nearest to their home address' aligned with the definition on page 10 was discriminatory, at least against Catholic schools. They also indicated that this criterion included a conditional element which would be against the School Admissions Code.
9. **Chennestone Primary School: introduction of a new criterion for Year 3 to give priority for children attending Beauclerc Infant School** – Overall, fifteen respondents agreed with this proposal whilst one was opposed to it.
10. Of the fifteen respondents who agreed with the proposal seven were parents, five were headteachers and three were school staff members. Six of the parents indicated that they would be affected by the proposal. One of the parents declared themselves to be a governor of the school.
11. Reasons given for agreeing with the proposal were as follows:
- The two schools are closely aligned and the same teaching styles and ethos are applied across them both
  - It can be very upsetting and disruptive to friendships and schooling if a child does not gain entry to Chennestone from Beauclerc
  - Demand at Chennestone is high and 'we have been looking to move away from the area due to a lack of other acceptable options'
  - Children are already familiar with Chennestone and have an expectation that they will go there
  - Schools are closely linked and are run by the same headteacher so it seems a natural step
  - Beauclerc and Chennestone are made to feel like one school but there is always a level of uncertainty as to whether they will get a Year 3 place
12. The respondent who was opposed to the proposal was a Diocesan member on Surrey's Admissions Forum. The reason given for not supporting the proposal was that they felt that the criterion for children 'for whom the school is the nearest to their home address' aligned with the definition on page 10 was discriminatory, at least against Catholic schools. They also indicated that this criterion included a conditional element which would be against the School Admissions Code.
13. **Cranleigh Primary School: re-introduction of admission criteria for Year 3** - Overall, six respondents agreed with this proposal and one was opposed to it.
14. Of the six respondents who agreed with the proposal all were headteachers. One of those was a headteacher of an infant school who indicated that they had acted as a feeder school to Cranleigh Primary School and that the reintroduction of criteria for Year 3 would mean that the school would once again be able to accommodate some of their pupils.
15. The respondent who was opposed to the proposal was a Diocesan member on Surrey's Admissions Forum. The reason given for not supporting the proposal was that they felt that the criterion for children 'for whom the school is the nearest to their home address' aligned with the definition on page 10 was discriminatory, at least against Catholic schools. They also indicated that this criterion included a conditional element which would be against the School Admissions Code.
16. **West Ewell Infant School: reduce the Published Admission Number from 90 to 60** - Overall, seven respondents agreed with this proposal whilst one was opposed to it.
17. Of the seven respondents who agreed with the proposal six were headteachers and one was a former governor/chair of governors. One headteacher declared that they would be affected by the proposal.
18. Only one respondent indicated a reason for supporting the proposal and that was to align with the local intake at other schools.

19. The respondent who was opposed to the proposal was a parent who indicated that they did not agree with reducing the intake of schools due to the shortage of schools.
20. **Start date to the primary admissions round** - Overall, 63 respondents agreed with this proposal and 14 were opposed to it.
21. Of the 63 respondents who agreed with the proposal 33 were headteachers, 24 were school staff members and six were parents.
22. Of the 33 headteachers and 24 school staff who supported the proposal, 52 were from a school in the primary sector and three were from a secondary sector. Two respondents did not declare the school they were from.
23. Reasons given for agreeing with the proposal were as follows:
- 11 weeks is ample time for parents to apply
  - It will be better for primary schools to focus on induction of new children during the first half of term
  - This makes sense and works with our current arrangements as parent tours do not start until after half term
  - A shorter application period is a sensible idea
  - Most open evenings are held in mid/late October. Parents may complete forms before attending and then change their minds
  - It gives more time for parents to look round prospective schools and make more informed decisions
  - It will help organisation in primary schools and would free up precious time in September/October for other tasks
  - New parents often find the process confusing
  - Allows Surrey admissions to sort all late and in year admissions before 31 October
  - Falls in line with Hampshire
  - Will ease the workflow at the beginning of term when we receive a lot of requests to visit the school
  - Will take pressure off parents in thinking they have to apply quickly
  - The first half of the Autumn term is very busy. We would be able to focus more on secondary transfers and then Reception in the second half of term
  - We can still spread out our dates over the Autumn term whether the online system is live or not
  - Enable the Admissions team to answer questions more effectively and for parents to be clearer on separate deadlines
  - Where parents have to make both a primary and secondary application it will enable them to focus on each application better
24. Of the 14 respondents who were opposed to the proposal six were headteachers, five were school staff members and three were parents.
25. Of the six headteachers and five school staff members who were opposed to the proposal, 10 were from a school in the primary sector and one did not declare the school they were from.
26. Reasons given for opposing the proposal were as follows:
- Many parents have already decided what school they want to apply to, especially if a sibling and like to complete the process at the start of the school year
  - It may compound requests for school tours in to the second half of the Autumn term which is already a very busy time of year
  - It's positive to allow parents to get their application in early and to allow parents to change preference if required
  - This may be problematic for schools as they will not be able to accommodate tours in December
  - Likely to condense the interest for visits to a very small window after half term
  - It would be stressful for parents who already feel there is a rush to get applications in
  - Parents may forget to apply if the date is changed

- It would make more sense to close the application window earlier and keep existing opening time the same
- It will lead to confusion if other London boroughs still open on 1 September
- If it needs to be implemented parents need to be notified that they can still approach schools for tours in the early autumn term

27. **Admission arrangements for which no change was proposed** - Overall, 26 respondents agreed with the admission arrangements for which no change was proposed and nine were opposed.

28. Of the 26 respondents who agreed with the admission arrangements for which no change was proposed, 18 were headteachers, four were school staff members, two were parents, one was a school governor and one was from a Town Council.

29. Of the nine respondents who were opposed to the admission arrangements for which no change was proposed, four were parents, two were headteachers, one was a Diocesan member on Surrey's Admissions Forum, one was a former governor/chair of governors and one was an existing Chair of Governors. Their comments were as follows:

- **Use of 'nearest school' in admission criteria** - the Diocesan member on Surrey's Admissions Forum indicated that they felt that the criterion for children 'for whom the school is the nearest to their home address' aligned with the definition on page 10 was discriminatory, at least against Catholic schools. They also indicated that this criterion included a conditional element which would be against the School Admissions Code.

A former governor/chair of governors indicated that the nearest school criterion was defective because a child who lived nearer a school would get priority over a child for whom the school was nearest but lived further away, affecting those living in country areas.

One parent indicated that schools which take any number of children on faith grounds should be disregarded from the nearest school assessment on the basis that such an arrangement unfairly prejudices children from other faiths or atheists. They also commented that if 'nearest school' is to be used in admission criteria, all schools included in the list of nearest school should be made to use the same criteria in the same way.

- **Coordinated Admissions scheme** - the Diocesan member on Surrey's Admissions Forum also noted that paragraph 14 of Surrey's primary coordinated scheme and paragraph 15 of Surrey's secondary coordinated scheme indicated that, where no preference school could be offered, Surrey Admissions would offer a place at an alternative community or voluntary controlled school with places or by arrangement with an academy or foundation, trust or voluntary aided school but does not detail how this will be done or what procedure will be followed. They suggested that this needs to be made clear. They also commented that the consultation limited respondents to comment on the specific questions and did not contain a general comment area, lacked comprehensiveness and was not user friendly.
- **Sibling rule** – a headteacher indicated that 'sibling for whom the school is the closest school' should be a criterion for all schools to prevent siblings depriving local children of a place.
- **St Andrew's CofE Infant School, Farnham** – three parents and both the headteacher and Chair of Governors of the school indicated that Surrey's admission arrangements were deficient because there was no Year 3 provision for children leaving Year 2 at St Andrew's CofE Infant School who may not be eligible for a place in Year 3 at South Farnham School.

The Chair of Governors of St Andrew's also indicated that the catchment for the school was no longer fit for purpose and that the PAN should be reviewed.

- **Suggested changes to wording** - A former governor/chair of governors suggested some minor amendments to wording in paragraphs 6 and 8 in Enclosure 1.