

Statutory Notices Analysis of responses

**PROPOSAL TO CREATE A NEW SCHOOL AMALGAMATING CHRIST
CHURCH C OF E INFANT SCHOOL AND ENGLEFIELD GREEN INFANT
SCHOOL AND NURSERIES**

Statutory Notices Analysis of Responses - Proposal to Create a New school amalgamating Christ Church C of E infant school and Englefield Green Infant School and Nurseries

Introduction

In partnership Surrey County Council, the Diocese of Guildford and the Governing Bodies of Christ Church C of E Infant School and Englefield Green Infant School and Nurseries, published statutory notices on the proposal to open a new school by amalgamating the two schools into a single institution from September 2021. It is proposed that the new school would be a voluntary aided school and would be situated on the existing site of Englefield Green Infant School and Nurseries.

This paper is an analysis of the responses received during the statutory notices period from 14 September to 12 October. This should be read in conjunction with the analysis of the informal consultation published 22 January to 26 February 2020.

The paper will be submitted with the report for the Leader of the Council meeting on 10 November where the Leader of the Council will consider whether to determine the statutory notices.

Consultation Summary

The statutory notices were published from 14 September to 12 October 2020. The associated documentation was published on the Surrey County Council 'Surrey Says' website and circulated to local stakeholders. Interested parties were invited to return responses to the consultation via a formal consultation response form, included at the end of the consultation document, as well as an online form.

The responses to the consultation will inform the decision taken by the Leader of the Council on 10 November on whether to determine the statutory notices.

An Equality Impact Assessment will also be submitted and responses to the consultation will contribute to this.

Key points from the consultation responses:

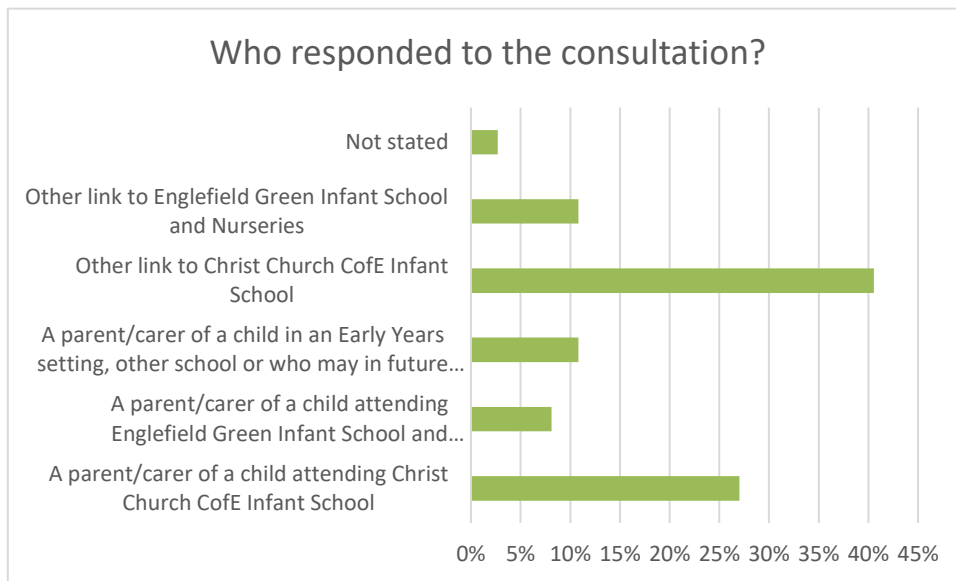
- 37 people submitted responses to the statutory notices. This is a much lower number than submitted responses during the informal consultation (222)
- The majority of respondents (86%) do not agree with the proposal
- Although 8 respondents disagreed with the new school being a Church of England School, none of these identified as parents or potential parents of a child at the schools and only one was an extended family member
- 35% of respondents raised negative impacts for children and young people including traveling further to school and coping in larger classes or a larger school.
- Only 3 parents from **Englefield Green Infant School and Nurseries** responded to the consultation all of whom **agreed** with the proposal
- Only 15 parents from **Christ Church C of E Infant School** responded to the consultation. 90% **disagreed** with the proposal.

Quantitative Analysis

There were 37 responses to the consultation. 14% of respondents agreed with the proposal, 86% of respondents disagreed with the proposal and no respondents selected that they didn't know if they agreed or disagreed.

During the informal consultation there were 222 responses so there are far fewer responses during the statutory notice period.

The chart below shows the distribution of who responded to the consultation. The highest percentage of respondents selected "other link to Christ Church C of E Infant School" (41%). The second largest group selected "a parent/carer of a pupil attending Christ Church C of E Infant School" (16%).



Percentage who agreed/disagreed/didn't know by individual groups

Responses from parent/carer of a pupil attending Christ Church C of Infant School

Out of 10 responses 10% agree, 90% disagree

Responses from parent/carer of a pupil attending Englefield Green Infant Schools and Nurseries

Out of 4 responses 100% agree, 0% disagree

Responses from other links to Christ Church C of E Infant School

Out of 15 responses 7% agree, 93% disagree

Responses from other links to Englefield Green Infant School and Nurseries

Out of 4 responses 0% agreed with the proposal, 100% disagreed with the proposal

Qualitative Analysis

Respondents had the opportunity to add comments at the end of the survey, 35 out of 37 respondents wrote comments in their response. Comments left in reply to free-text questions were tagged drawing on 29 possible tags. Each response could have more than one tag attached. The overall frequency of each of the tags provides an indicator of respondent’s main concerns regarding the proposal.

Sub theme	Tag	Number of responses	Prevalence (% out of total responses)
New School and Implementation	New school barriers	3	8%
	New school enablers	3	8%
	Church of England character - Against	8	22%
	Church of England character - For	2	5%
	Larger size of classes and school	3	8%
Traffic and transport	Traffic and Transport – barriers	6	16%
Admissions and Place Planning	Admissions and Place Planning	3	8%
	Housing developments	2	5%
Loss in closure of Christ Church Infant School	Loss to Christ Church pupils and families	15	41%
	Loss of links to local church CCVW	2	5%
	Loss to community in VW	16	43%
	What will the site be used for?	9	24%
Positive impacts	Positive impacts for children	3	8%
	Positive impacts of partnership	1	3%
	Positive impacts financial	3	8%
Distrust	Distrust in the consultation and implementation	8	22%
Negative Impacts	Negative impacts for children	13	35%
	Negative impacts on CYP with SEND	2	6%

Key themes from the consultation

There were 7 key themes that emerged from the consultation response

New school and Implementation

Respondents mentioned hopes and fears for the new school. Some respondents mentioned the larger size of the school and classes (3%) and were concerned about the impacts on pupils from Christ Church.

“Please also take into consideration that some parents did not want a big school for their children and by putting Englefield Green and Christchurch together you are making a big school.”

Some respondents were concerned about the new school being a church school with some respondents in support of the idea (5%) and some against (22%). It is noted that the 8 respondents who are against the religious designation of the new school live outside of the local area of Virginia Water and Englefield Green and only one stated they are an extended family member of a pupil at the school. There were also 2 (5%) responses tagged as “loss of links to the local church” that were not given the tag of “Church of England character – For” as they do not want the new school to be in Englefield Green.

Traffic and Transport

16% of respondents commented regarding traffic and transport barriers. Some were concerned about the additional traffic in Englefield Green. Some respondents were concerned about additional journey time to the new school, particularly for pupils at Christ Church who already travel from Chertsey to Virginia Water.

“I am against this proposal, there has been no consideration for the parents that live in Chertsey to travel to Virginia Waters.”

“how can you justify making children under the age of 8 travel over 7 miles just to get an education”

Admissions and Place Planning

8% of respondents commented on admissions and place planning. Some respondents mentioned the need for more school places in Chertsey and waiting lists for places at other schools in the area. One respondent mentioned the struggle in having one child at school in Chertsey and one in Virginia Water, with a move to Englefield Green making this journey harder.

“Why is it necessary to now close this school which is used as an overflow from Chertsey where they are 3000 new homes being built?! The waitlist for ALL other schools are ridiculous.”

5% mentioned new housing developments particularly in Longcross and Chertsey. One respondent felt Christ Church C of E Infant School should remain open and then be moved to be nearer to the Longcross development.

Loss in closure of Christ Church C of E Infant School

41% of respondents mentioned loss to Christ Church pupils and families with many parents mentioning positive experiences at the school and expressing worry that this will be lost in a new school.

43% of respondents mentioned loss to the community in Virginia Water, with previous pupils commenting on their positive experience at the school and some respondents hopeful that their children would attend in the future.

“I will never forget my experience at the school, it was the best school experience I have ever had.”

5% commented on the loss of links to the local church, Christ Church Virginia Water.

24% of respondents asked what will happen to the site that Christ Church C of E Infant School is currently on. A number of respondents were concerned that there were already plans to use the site and were suspicious that financial gain from the site will drive the decision. Some respondents stated that they had heard the site would be transferred to Surrey County Council and did not feel this should happen. Some respondents were worried the site would be sold to developers and wanted the site to either remain an infant school or be used for other educational purposes.

"This is clearly a property money making exercise, as the site on Virginia water is worth millions"

Positive Impacts

8% of respondents mentioned positive impacts for children. 8% commented on positive financial impacts mentioning the new school would be a better sustainable offer and 3% mentioned positive impacts of the partnership.

"The leadership at EGIS is exceptional. The Head is driven, passionate and caring and her deputies are just as accomplished. The children are cared for and protected."

"Would be best to have a bigger school with more possibilities and more space for the kids"

Negative Impacts

22% of respondents felt distrust in the reasons behind the proposal. Some respondents felt that they had not been listened to when they had already disagreed with the proposal during the informal consultation. Some respondents felt that there were plans to sell the site of Christ Church C of E Infant School were driving the decision.

"SCC have decided to opt for short-term financial gain"

"This proposal puts financial gain ahead of the interests of the community and long term planning"

13% of respondents felt there were negative impacts for children and young people in amalgamating the two schools particularly for pupils currently at Christ Church who may need support in transitioning to a larger site and will have a longer journey to school. 6% mentioned negative impacts for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

"With all special needs children this is important one big school can be detrimental to their learning and development it can be overwhelming."

Additional analysis of parent/carers responses at both schools

Christ Church C of E Infant School

The majority of parent/carers who responded from Christ Church Infant School disagree with the proposal. There were 15 responses and there are currently 49 pupils in the school, 30 in years R and 1 who will be affected by the consultation.

The comments left by parents who disagreed (90%) with the proposal mention the value of the current teaching at Christ Church, value of the current site and small school, concerns about transition particularly for pupils with special needs

Also concerns about increased distance to travel to the new school and particular concerns from families in Chertsey who currently travel 4 miles to Virginia Water and the journey would increase to 6 or 7 miles.

The comments left by parents who agree (10%) with the proposal mentioned the stability in the new school and improved facilities and funding.

Englefield Green Infant School and Nurseries

There were 3 responses from parents of pupils at Englefield Green Infant School and Nurseries all of whom agree the proposal. There are currently 139 pupils at the school, 101 in years R and 1 who will be affected by the consultation.

The comments left by parent/carers who agree (100%) with the proposal mentioned opportunities for the future building on strengths of both schools, positives of becoming a Church of England school, stronger links with St Jude's Junior School and sustainability for the future. One respondent suggested the new name should be St Jude's Infant School and the uniform could match St Jude's Junior School to reduce pressure on parents to buy a new uniform for year 3.

Additional response with business plan

A parent/carer group at Christ Church C of E Infant School has submitted a business plan to run the school over the next three years within budget. The plan sets out to generate £10,000 a year in order to make up the running costs for the school.

Initially the idea is to reduce staff hours for admin, clerical and cleaning staff to save £10,000 a year and replace these jobs with volunteers.

The group would then consider the following ideas to generate income:

- Onsite Breakfast and After School Club
- Holiday Clubs
- Gardening Club, Allotment and Farm Shop
- Online shopping links such as Amazon who give the school 15% on sales
- Own wine label and landing page with Vinopolis with 10% on sales (we would look to sell this to local restaurants such as The Wine Circle and other independents as well as use them for raffle prizes, wine tasting evenings etc)
- Hire of Hall, Car Park, Trim Trail, Field for sports.
- Host Afternoon Teas in the Hall for local residents and people visiting Virginia Water Lake
- Talks from local Historians, Councillors and other experts

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