

Questions and Answers

on the proposal to expand Ash Grange Nursery
and Primary School

July 2026



Overview

The following document records questions and answers from public meetings held about the proposal to expand Ash Grange Nursery and Primary School (Ash Grange) from a 1 form entry (1FE) to a 2 form entry (2FE) school. If the proposal was agreed, the expansion would be phased, with the school growing incrementally from September 2028.

Two public meetings were held at Ash Grange on Thursday 2 July 2026, at 14:00 and 19:00.

Across the two meetings, four people attended. Of those four, one was a parish councillor and three were residents local to Ash Grange.

Panel

Sarah Jeffery – Service Manager – Education Place Planning, SCC

Sarah Riddell – Education Place Planning Manager, SCC

Marie Curtis – Headteacher, Ash Grange Nursery and Primary School

Summary of presentations at the meetings

Sarah Jeffery welcomed those in attendance, introducing the panel and explaining that the purpose of the meetings was to present the educational justification for the proposal and to allow members of the community to express their views on it.

Sarah Riddell then presented the rationale for the proposal, stating that the primary reason for the proposed expansion is the rising demand for school places in Ash & Tongham due to a significant increase in housing, with applications for Reception intake 2026/27 seeing 271 first preference applications for a total of 240 places across the planning area. Along with Surrey County Council's Education Place Planning teams forecasts, this demonstrates that more primary school places are needed locally, and expanding Ash Grange to a 2FE school would support parental preference, reduce travel for families, and ensure school provision keeps pace with sustained growth.

Sarah Riddell explained that Ash Grange had been selected for the proposal because of its large site and central location relative to the bulk of the pupil demand. Furthermore, Ash Grange has previously supported additional pupil places due to the level of demand within the local area by accommodating temporary 'bulge' classes. Additionally, Ash Grange consistently receives more first-preference applications than its published admissions number (PAN) of 30. For Reception intake 2026/27, the school received 65 first-preference applications, which is more than double the number of places available.

Sarah Riddell clarified how the proposal would be implemented if it was agreed, with Reception places increasing from 30 to 60 from September 2028. The proposed expansion would not impact the school's admissions arrangements other than the increase in Reception PAN from 30 to 60. All existing criterion and processes would remain the same. It was highlighted that the school's growth would be gradual and incremental, expanding one year group at a time, not all at once. If the proposal were agreed, the first permanent 60 pupil Reception cohort would start in September 2028, and Ash Grange would reach its new capacity of 420 by September 2032.

Sarah Riddell highlighted that pupils already attending Ash Grange should not be largely impacted by the proposal. The current pupils daily experience would remain similar, with the main changes being the addition of new classrooms and a gradual increase in the number of pupils in the school.

Changes to the school building itself would involve the creation of new classrooms and additional toilets to make the school suitable for additional pupils.

Lastly, next steps were outlined. The closing date for the initial stage of the consultation is 13 July 2026, after which all responses will be collated and analysed before deciding whether to publish statutory notices. Statutory notices would be published for a four-week representation period between September and October 2026. Following this, it is anticipated that the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning would make a final decision regarding the proposal in November 2026.

Questions and answers

Following the presentations, those in attendance had the opportunity to ask questions. Attendees expressed similar concerns to those received during the consultation period. Questions arising from both the in-person meetings and the consultation period are detailed below. For ease of review, we have grouped these questions thematically.

Parking & Traffic

	Question	Answer
1	There are already difficulties with inconsiderate parking at drop-off and pick-up times, what will be done to mitigate this moving forward if the school is to expand?	Concerns were raised at the consultation event and through online responses about existing traffic congestion and inconsiderate parking during school drop off and pick up times, and the potential for these issues to increase if the school expands. The school is exploring a range of measures to help mitigate the impact on local residents. This includes investigating the use of a traffic warden to improve compliance with parking restrictions and support safer traffic management around the school. In addition, the school is proposing to trial a drop-off zone during the autumn term of 2026 to assess whether this could provide a longer-term solution. Ash Grange has three separate entrances, and parents will be encouraged to use all entrances to help distribute pedestrian and vehicle movements more evenly across the surrounding roads. The school has also introduced staggered start times to reduce congestion. Further measures, such as allocating specific entrances to particular year groups, could be considered, although this would need to take account of families with children in multiple year groups. The school also intends to liaise with the local community to discuss concerns and explore potential solutions to traffic and parking issues. Walking to school should be encouraged as many families live in close proximity to the school.

2	Will there be further opportunities for residents to raise their concerns and put forward suggestions to mitigate additional traffic and parking issues?	Yes. Residents will have a further opportunity to raise concerns and provide suggestions. The current consultation, led by Surrey County Council's Education Place Planning team, focuses primarily on the educational need for additional school places and the principal of expanding the school. However, as part of the planning process, Surrey Highways will submit a planning application regarding the proposed expansion and residents will be able to comment on the application and share any concerns regarding traffic, parking, or other local impacts. This is currently anticipated to take place in the autumn, with residents likely being notified in advance. Surrey Highways have mitigations which must be met in order to demonstrate and evidence the safety and feasibility of the expansion.
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Potential impact on other local schools

	Question	Answer
1	Given the falling birth rate, is consideration being given to other local schools who might be challenged by the expansion?	Concerns were raised about potential vacant places at alternative local schools as a result of the expansion. Surrey County Council's Education Place Planning team have carefully assessed whether an expansion is required in the area and how it will affect local schools. The proposed expansion is centred around increased housing in Ash and Tongham and therefore an increased demand for school places, with further developments also proposed to come forward over the next few years. Latest forecasts for the planning area predict a deficit of places between 1-1.5FE (30-45 places) throughout the planning period. The consistency and size of this deficit clearly demonstrates that there is a sustained need for additional school places in the area. It is therefore anticipated that any expansion would not negatively affect other local schools, with a 1FE expansion at Ash Grange mitigating the deficit, without causing a surplus.

Potential impact on children attending Ash Grange

	Question	Answer
1	How will the building works be managed to ensure minimal disruption to those children already attending Ash Grange?	Subject to the outcome of this consultation, work would be required to the existing site to expand it and make it suitable to house additional pupils. This would involve the creation of new classrooms and additional toilets. The construction of the proposed extension would require a new haulage road to be in place for the duration of the construction period as the use of the existing school access is not possible due to site specific restrictions. The proposed extension and formation of the haulage road will require planning permission. Building works will be carefully planned and managed to minimise disruption to pupils, staff and the wider school community. Construction activities will be carried out within a secure, segregated area of the site, with clear safety measures in place to prevent interaction between pupils and the construction workforce. Where possible, the most disruptive activities will be scheduled outside of normal school hours or during school holidays. The contractor will be required to adhere to strict controls relating to noise, dust, traffic management and site access. Regular monitoring will be undertaken throughout the construction period to ensure that the school can continue to operate safely and effectively. The school, contractor and project team will maintain close communication throughout the works, and parents, carers and staff will be kept informed of any activities that may have a temporary impact on the school day.
2.	How will the school ensure they maintain the high standard of education currently available with twice the number of children?	The expansion will provide opportunities to strengthen the curriculum, share expertise across a larger staff team and enhance enrichment opportunities for pupils, ensuring that growth brings benefits while preserving the school's successful approach to teaching and learning. Maintaining the quality of education is a key priority for the school and the expansion has been carefully planned to ensure standards remain high. The increase in pupil numbers will be phased over time, allowing the school to recruit additional high-quality teaching and support staff as each year group expands. The expanded school will benefit from increased resources, enhanced facilities and a larger staff team, while retaining the

		school's established ethos, leadership and commitment to high standards. The governing body and school leadership team will continue to monitor teaching quality, pupil progress and wellbeing closely to ensure that all pupils receive the same high standard of education and support that families currently value.
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