



Consultation on the amalgamation of Merrow C of E Infant School and Merrow Junior School



March 2026



Consultation on the proposed amalgamation of Merrow C of E Controlled Infant School and Merrow Junior School

Local authority details

Local Authority	Surrey County Council
Address	Woodhatch Place 11 Cockshot Hill Reigate Surrey RH2 8EF

School details

Name of School	Merrow CofE Controlled Infant School
Category of School	Infant
Type of School	Voluntary Controlled
URN	125160
Address	Kingfisher Drive, Merrow, Guildford, Surrey
Postcode	GU4 7EA

Name of School	Merrow Junior School
Category of School	Junior
Type of School	Foundation
URN	125009
Address	Sheeplands Avenue, Merrow, Guildford, Surrey
Postcode	GU1 2SG

Consultation on the proposed amalgamation of Merrow C of E Controlled Infant School and Merrow Junior School

We are consulting you about a proposal to amalgamate Merrow C of E Controlled Infant School (Merrow CE Infant) and Merrow Junior School (Merrow Junior) to form a single primary school called Merrow C of E Primary School (Merrow CE Primary) from September 2027.

If the proposal was agreed, Merrow Junior School would close on 31 August 2027 and from 1 September 2027 Merrow CE Infant would extend its age range from 4-7 to 4-11 and be renamed Merrow CE Primary. Pupils would automatically transfer from Merrow Junior to the primary school, which would be relocated on the current site of Merrow Junior.

Background Context

In recent years, most local authorities across England, including Surrey, have been experiencing a significant fall in pupil numbers. At the height of Surrey's pupil population in October 2016, there were 13,374 children who had just started in Reception classes at Surrey primary phase schools. By October 2025, this number had fallen to 11,950 children, which is a decrease of 1,424 or 10.6% - equivalent to 47 fewer Reception classes. The reasons behind this include the lower birth rate and families leaving Surrey because of the pandemic, Brexit and the cost of living.

Schools receive money from central government based on the number of pupils they have on their roll. This means that schools with a high number of vacant places have less money for staff, resources, equipment, extracurricular activities, to pay bills and to carry out maintenance work.

While Surrey schools are recognised for their high performance and excellent results, the fall in the number of children has meant a higher number of surplus primary school places and the subsequent reduced funding from central government has meant that our schools are facing difficult challenges. For some schools, these challenges have now reached a significant level and are beginning to affect their ability to fully support their pupils, especially those with the greatest needs. Surrey County Council (the Council) has a responsibility to protect the high-quality education that Surrey is known for and to ensure it is financially sustainable.

We know that our schools have close ties to the local area and communities, sometimes over many generations, and producing innovative ways to sustain schools who are most vulnerable to the challenges of falling pupil rolls is a priority.

Why are we consulting you?

In Surrey, our goal is to ensure that no one is left behind and that every child has access to enriched educational opportunities. This is only achievable when schools can admit as many children within their Published Admission Number (PAN) as possible and maximise the funding they receive. In some areas of Surrey, the current education model of infant schools and junior schools provides additional challenges to securing pupil numbers, as families can prefer an all through primary model and operating as smaller separate schools on two sites can make it difficult to achieve savings through economies of scale.

Across south-west Surrey, births have fallen by 417 or around 15% between 2016 and 2024. As a result, the number of pupils starting in Reception in Guildford and Waverley schools has also decreased – falling by 12% between 2016 and 2025, which is equivalent to approximately 11 fewer Reception classes. These reductions have placed increasing pressure on school budgets.

We now want to hear your comments on the proposal to amalgamate Merrow CE Infant and Merrow Junior to form a primary school. Your input and feedback are important in helping us to further understand the views of the children, parents/carers, staff and local community.

Merrow C of E Controlled Infant School

Merrow CE Infant School is a one form entry infant school, with a PAN of 30. The overall capacity of the school is 180 with a published admissions number (PAN) of 60, but the school has recently reduced its PAN to 30 because of falling pupil demand. It was judged 'Good' by Ofsted in 2023.

In October 2018, there were 58 pupils on roll in Reception; by October 2025, the number of pupils they admitted into Reception had reduced to 23, this is a 60% decrease in Reception pupils compared to 2018.

For Reception entry in September 2026, the school has received 25 applications naming it as a first preference. Long term pupil projections for the area suggest that, based on current trends, there will consistently be more places available at schools in this area than the number of children requiring a place, which creates a level of surplus places which is unsustainable.

Merrow Junior School

Merrow Junior School is a one form entry junior school, with a PAN of 30. The overall capacity of the school is 240 with a PAN of 60, but the school has recently reduced its PAN to 30 because of decreased pupil demand. It was judged 'Good' by Ofsted in 2022.

Historically, pupil numbers at Merrow Junior School have fluctuated and the number of pupils joining Year 3 at the school changes year on year. Over the past 5 years, the number of pupils joining Year 3 has significantly decreased from 59 in 2021 to 31 in 2025, or around 47%.

For entry to Year 3 in September 2026, the school has received 35 applications naming it as a first preference. However, the number of pupils applying for a place at the junior school is expected to fall year on year, as the smaller cohorts currently entering the infant school move through to the junior school.

What does an amalgamation mean?

An amalgamation is where two or more schools join to form one school. In legal terms, this would mean the closure of one or more of the schools and a change in capacity at the remaining school to accommodate the displaced pupils.

In legal terms in this proposal, Merrow Junior would close on 31 August 2027. On 1 September 2027, Merrow CE Infant would extend its age range to become a primary school. All pupils on roll at Merrow Junior would automatically transfer to the newly amalgamated primary school – Merrow C of E Primary School.

In proposing a closure, even if part of an amalgamation, Sections 15 and 16 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires that the local authority or governing body must consult certain persons, including parents, dioceses and, where the local authority is a county council, any district and parish councils.

Why propose an amalgamation?

The council, the Diocese of Guildford, school leaders and the governing body of the schools have been working together to try and secure the future of both schools, recognising that they are good schools with dedicated staff and committed school communities.

In 2022, the two schools federated to form the Merrow Schools Federation. The Federation enables the schools to operate under a single governing body, share leadership, and benefit from economies of scale through shared business and educational resources. In response to declining pupil numbers, both schools have also reduced their PAN from 60 to 30 to help maintain viability and educational quality. Despite these measures, pupil numbers across the federation remain significantly below capacity, and it is no longer financially sustainable to continue operating two separate 2FE capacity schools with only enough pupils to sustain a single 1FE school.

As the two schools already operate within a Federation, sharing a common ethos and resources, amalgamating into a single school would simply build on this partnership, whilst helping to stabilise pupil numbers, and supporting the continued delivery of high-quality education by consolidating funding. This would result in the dissolution of the existing Federation and the creation of one unified school.

In considering the amalgamation of a community school and a Church of England school, the designation of the new primary school as a Church school is the only option which provides a viable solution for the future of both schools which has the full support of the Local Authority, the Diocesan Board of Education and the governing body. It also provides a lawful route to resolve critical land and trust deed constraints and is therefore, essential for statutory processes. Furthermore, a Church designation preserves denominational balance in the local area, aligns with the existing ethos and expectations of the school community, and reflects the preference of key stakeholders. For these reasons, establishing the new school as a Church of England primary school is the most coherent and sustainable solution.

What would this proposal mean for the children?

Children on roll at Merrow C of E Controlled Infant School

Should this proposal go ahead, all children on roll at Merrow C of E Controlled Infant School on the 31 August 2027 would remain on roll at the newly amalgamated primary school. However, the school would relocate from the current infant site to the current junior site and so the pupils will have a new site to attend.

Amalgamating to become a primary school would also remove the requirement for families to make a separate junior application as children could remain at the school from Reception through to Year 6. This means that any child on roll in Year 2 in July 2027 would automatically transfer to Year 3 in the primary school and families will not need to make a junior application in the usual way, unless they prefer to apply for an alternative school.

Children on roll at Merrow Junior School

Should this proposal go ahead, all children in Years 3, 4 and 5 at Merrow Junior School at the end of the summer term in July 2027 would automatically transfer to the roll of the primary school,

Merrow C of E Primary School. Pupils could then continue to attend the primary school until the end of Year 6 when they would need to apply for secondary provision in the usual way.

The primary school would be formed by the relocation of the infant school onto the Merrow Junior School site, so there would be no change of location for pupils previously on roll at Merrow Junior School.

Should any family wish to apply for a place for their child at a school other than the primary school, they are able to submit an in-year application.

Submitting an in-year application for another school would not prevent your child from automatically gaining a place at the primary school, unless you chose to accept the offer of a place elsewhere. Any child who is removed from the roll of Merrow CE Infant or Merrow Junior before the end of the summer term in July 2027 would not be eligible for an automatic transfer of their place to the primary school for September 2027.

Applicants for Reception Year places in September 2027

The admissions round for Reception places in September 2027 opens in November 2026. It is anticipated that a decision on this proposal would be made before the opening of the admissions application round and therefore, any applications submitted would be able to express a preference for the newly amalgamated primary school.

What would it mean for the staff?

Staff currently employed at Merrow Junior School are employed by the Governing Body of the Federation. Their employment would transfer under TUPE regulations (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006) to the new amalgamated school where they would be employed by the new unitary authority in West Surrey. There would be no change to the location of their employment.

The employment of staff at Merrow CE Infant School will, on 1 April 2027, have transferred under TUPE regulations to the new unitary authority in West Surrey. There will, therefore, be no change of employer. However, their work location will move to the current junior school site. The impact is likely to be minimal as the sites are only 0.4 miles apart.

Would there be any changes to the school buildings?

Adaptations would need to be made to the Merrow Junior School buildings and site to provide accommodation that is suitable for infant pupils, such as infant toilets and outdoor play space for early years and reception pupils. There would not be any requirement to extend the current junior building as there are already an adequate number of classrooms to accommodate a 1FE primary school.

As part of this proposal, the infant school site would be transferred to the Council, and the Council would endeavour to retain an educational use for the site.

What happens next?

This paper is part of a four-week public consultation on the proposal to amalgamate Merrow C of E Controlled Infant School and Merrow Junior School, to create a single primary school by closing Merrow Junior School.

The consultation begins on 2 March 2026 and closes on 27 April 2026.

There are several ways you can respond to the consultation, and these are set out below. We will also hold public meetings for families, local communities and any other interested parties to discuss the proposals and get your input and feedback. This is important in helping us to further understand the views of parents/carers, staff and the local communities. Anyone who wishes to come is welcome at either meeting and you do not have to have a child at either school to attend.

These meetings will take place on:

Thursday 12th March

9am Merrow Junior School

7pm Merrow C of E Controlled Infant School

The council will consider all the views put forward during this consultation period before deciding on whether to publish proposals required by law. These formal proposals may be altered, amended or different from this consultation. If proposals are published there will be a further period for comments, called the representation period in which the council will publish 'Statutory Notices'. This would last for 28 days, and a final decision would then be taken by Surrey County Council's Leader as to whether to amalgamate Merrow C of E Controlled Infant School and Merrow Junior School to create a single primary school by closing Merrow Junior School. The timeline for this proposal is shown in the table below (dates may be subject to change).

Timeline

Date	Event
02 nd March – 27 th April 2026	Consultation
12 th March 2026	Public meetings are held
30 th June 2026	Review of consultation responses and decision whether to proceed to representations by the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning.
July-September 2026	A statutory notice is published for a 4-week representation period
27 th October 2026	The proposal and responses are considered by Leader of the Council and a final decision on the proposal is made
31 st August 2027	Merrow Junior School would close
1 st September 2027	Pupils from both schools would be on roll at the amalgamated Merrow CE Primary School.

How do I respond to this consultation?

You can respond:

- online using the following link: [Amalgamation Consultation](#)

or

- by completing the consultation response form that is available alongside this document.

You can either:

- email the form to schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk
- print it, complete it and send it back to:

Merrow amalgamation - EPP

Woodhatch Place
11 Cockshot Hill
Reigate
RH2 8EF

All responses must be received by 5pm on 27 April 2026.

If you have any questions about this proposal, please email schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk