

¹ Questions and Answers

on the proposed extension of age range
of St Giles C of E (Aided) Infant School

25th June 2026



St.Giles' C of E (Aided)
Infant School



Overview

The following document records questions and answers from public meetings about the proposal to extend the age range of St Giles C of E (Aided) Infant School to form a single C of E primary school called St Giles C of E Primary School from September 2027.

Two public meetings were held on 25th June 2026: 09:00 at St Giles C of E School (to allow parents to attend after school drop off time) and 19:00 at St Giles C of E Infant School (to accommodate those unable to attend in working hours).

Across the two meetings, approximately 26 people attended. Of those who signed in, 18 were parents/carers at St Giles CE Infant School and 9 were local residents. School governors were also in attendance, with one attending both meetings.

Panel

Sarah Jeffery – Service Manager – Education Place Planning, SCC

Nicki Atkinson – Education Place Planning Manager - Education Place Planning, SCC

Alex Tear – Director of Education – Diocese of Guildford

Mercy Atkins –Executive Headteacher – St Giles C of E Infant School

Daniel Beck – Associate Governor – St Giles C of E Infant School

Summary of presentations at the meetings

Sarah Jeffery welcomed everyone to the public meetings. She advised that the meetings were being held to consider the proposed extension of age range of St Giles CE Infant school to become St Giles CE Primary School and that it was important that all parties had all the information that they needed to consider the proposal. Attendees were reassured that the council wants to hear everyone's comments, feedback and suggestions.

Nicki Atkinson outlined the rationale behind the proposal. It was stated that, in recent years, Surrey has been experiencing a significant fall in pupil numbers: the height of Surrey's pupil population in primary schools was in 2016 and since that time, the number of pupils starting school in Reception classes has fallen by more than 11%. This is the equivalent to their being 47 fewer classes in Reception across Surrey in September 2025 than there were in September 2016.

Furthermore, despite a slight increase nationally in 2024, the birth rate is continuing to drop in Surrey and 2024 was the lowest number of births since the 1980s.

This all means that there are simply less children in Surrey, and so, a lot of primary phase schools are now operating with classes that are not full. Schools receive money from central government based on the number of pupils they have on their roll and so schools with a high number of vacant or unfilled places have less funding.

In Surrey, our goal is to ensure that no one is left behind - that every child can access a high quality of education and can experience a wide range of learning opportunities. This is only achievable when schools can admit as many children within their Published Admission Number (PAN) as possible to 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 pupils numbers, as families can prefer an all through primary model.

Extending the age range at St Giles CF school would help to stabilise pupil numbers and support the continued delivery of high-quality education by consolidating funding.

Nicki Atkinson gave an overview of how this would work and explained that the Published Admissions Number for the school would need to be reduced to 15 per year group. Pupils would be taught in 4 classes with mixed year groups with the usual arrangement being: Reception, year 1 and 2, year 3 and 4 and year 5 and 6 being mixed highlighting there may need to be some flexibility to this as the school grows, depending on the number of classrooms and teachers.

Daniel Beck then provided an overview of the school's perspective, setting out the context in which St Giles operates. He shared relevant background information, outlining both the school's development and its current position. He also explained the basis for his support for the school's purpose and future direction. He reflected a clear commitment and a strong interest in securing positive outcomes for the school community.

Alex Tear clarified that Church of England schools are not exclusive 'faith' schools; rather, they aim to serve the whole local community, welcoming children of all faiths and none. He added Religious Education would continue to be taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus for community schools, which already meets the Diocese's expectations.

Sarah Jeffery also explained what this proposal would mean for the children. If the proposal is approved, all children on roll at St Giles CE Infant school as of 31 August 2027 would automatically transfer to St Giles C E Primary School from 1 September 2027.

Children in Year 2 at St Giles CE Infant School at the end of the summer term in 2027 would automatically progress to Year 3 at St Giles CE Primary School. Parents would not need to submit a separate application for a junior school place.

Families wishing to apply for a Reception place at St Giles CE Primary School for September 2027 would do so through Surrey County Council's standard admissions process.

While children already in Year 2 would not need to apply for a junior place, families would still have the option to submit a junior application if they wished their child to attend a different school.

Lastly, the next steps in the process were outlined. Sarah Jeffery explained that the proposal is currently in the consultation phase, during which feedback is being sought from anyone who wishes to respond. Once this stage of the process concludes, all responses will be reviewed and analysed.

If the decision is made to proceed, a further representation period will follow. During this stage, statutory notices would be issued, these are legal notices we must serve in order to implement the proposal. This stage gives everyone another opportunity to provide feedback. After this period closes, any additional responses will be analysed, and then a cabinet decision will be made in October 2026.

Questions and answers

Following the presentations, those in attendance had the opportunity to ask questions. For ease of review, we have grouped these questions thematically. If any questions were repeated, we have strived to provide one definitive answer.

Curriculum and Educational Delivery

	Questions	Answer
1.	What extra-curricular activities will be available for Key Stage 2 pupils?	A broader range of extra-curricular activities will be developed for Key Stage 2 pupils, including music opportunities, enrichment activities and partnerships with local schools such as swimming. This will be planned and included in our school improvement plan moving forward.
2.	What evidence is available to support mixed year teaching?	Mixed-age teaching is widely used nationally, particularly in smaller primary schools. Whilst it used to be commonplace in Surrey, it has fallen out of practise in recent times although continues to be used in neighbouring counties, such as Hampshire and Kent. It is now resurfacing in Surrey, with more schools choosing to teach in this way in response to falling pupil numbers. Evidence shows it can support peer learning, independence and strong social development when delivered effectively with well-planned, differentiated teaching
3.	What evidence is there that this model works?	This model is well established in small primary schools across Surrey and nationally. Where teaching and leadership are strong, mixed-age classes are effective and often recognised for fostering independence and collaboration.
4.	How will mixed year group teaching work with a wider age range in one class?	Teachers will plan lessons carefully to ensure that each year group's curriculum is fully covered. Teaching will include differentiated activities, and pupils may be grouped by ability or age depending on the subject to ensure appropriate challenge and support.
5.	How will statutory assessments (SATs in Year 6 and Phonics in Year 2) work with the mixed year teaching?	Statutory assessments will continue in line with national requirements. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 will be appropriately prepared and assessed, regardless of mixed-age class structures.

School Structure and Organisation

	Question	Answer
1.	Please explain the mixed year groups.	The proposed pupil admission number (PAN) is 15 per year group (currently under consideration by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator). Classes would be organised as follows: • Reception • Year 1 and Year 2 • Year 3 and Year 4 • Year 5 and Year 6
2.	Will the current Year 1 students be the first cohort to move into Year 3?	Yes. If the proposal is agreed, the extension of the age range will begin in September 2027, with the Year 2 cohort from 2026/27 moving into Year 3. They will then progress through the school to Year 6.

Admissions and Pupil Numbers

	Question	Answer
1.	Will the admissions criteria for the school change?	No. It is anticipated that the admissions criteria will remain the same. However, a request will be submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator to reduce the school's Published Admissions Number.
2.	Has the timeline for applications for Year 3 been considered within this proposal?	Yes. Admission arrangements will align with the Local Authority's coordinated admissions process. Further details will be confirmed in the next phase and in time for applications to be submitted.
3.	Will the school be able to increase its pupil admission number (PAN)?	The current proposal is to reduce the PAN to 15 per year group to support the mixed-age model and to reflect the current demand. Due to confines of the school site, it would not be possible to increase the PAN of the school as a primary school because the site cannot provide the number of classrooms required for a 1FE primary. However, we do acknowledge that the mixed aged teaching could provide some flexibility to in-year year groups depending on pupil numbers and whether there is exceptional demand in one year group over another. It should be noted that class sizes at Key Stage 1 would not be able to exceed the ratio of 30 children to one teacher, otherwise known as Infant Class Size legislation.

4.	My child's year group currently has more than 15 pupils – will they have to leave?	No. All current pupils will remain at the school and continue their education there. There will be some flexibility as the school grows if the proposal goes ahead. We are also aware that there may be some families where circumstances (for example, siblings already attending other schools) may mean that they do not wish to continue to attend St Giles' for Year 3.

Facilities and Resources

	Question	Answer
1.	What will change outside to accommodate the Key Stage 2 PE curriculum?	The school is planning to enhance outdoor provision, including the development of a sports track. In addition, partnerships with local schools and facilities, such as swimming pools, are being explored to support delivery of the PE curriculum
2.	Does the library have the right books to support Key Stage 2?	The current provision is not yet fully suitable for Key Stage 2. The Local Authority will support the school in expanding and updating the library with appropriate resources.
3.	What financial support will the Local Authority provide for this proposal?	The Local Authority recognises that additional facilities and resources will be required, including larger toilet provision and Key Stage 2 learning resources. A detailed assessment of funding requirements will be undertaken at the next stage to confirm the full scope of support.

Wraparound Care

	Question	Answer
1.	What will happen to the wraparound care ('Red Banana')?	The wraparound care provision will continue but will potentially need to be relocated within the school site to facilitate the use of its current room as a classroom. This classroom won't be needed however, until the first primary cohort reach Year 5 in September 2029.

Transition and Pupil Experience

	Question	Answer
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1.	What support will there be for transition from a small primary school into a large secondary school?	The school will work closely with local secondary schools to ensure a structured transition programme, including visits, induction sessions and pastoral support. This is a well-established process, and many pupils successfully transition from small primary schools each year.
2.	My child will miss out on extra-curricular opportunities such as music.	The intention is that opportunities will increase rather than reduce. Key Stage 2 pupils enable the development of a broader offer, including music, sports and enrichment activities.