



Statutory notices

Amalgamation of St Michael's C of E Infant School & Newdigate C of E Infant School



April 2026



School Organisation Statutory Notice

Notice is given in accordance with section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, as amended by the Education Act 2011, that Surrey County Council is proposing to amalgamate St Michael's CofE Infant School & Newdigate CofE Infant School.

In proposing a closure of a rural primary school, Section 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.

Local authority details

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

School details

Name of School	St Michael's C of E Aided Infant School
Category of School	Infant
Type of School	Voluntary Aided
URN	125170
Address	School Lane, Mickleham, Dorking
Postcode	RH5 6EW

Name of School	Newdigate C of E Endowed Aided Infant School
Category of School	Infant
Type of School	Voluntary Aided
URN	125192
Address	Village Street, Newdigate, Dorking
Postcode	RH5 5DJ

Introduction

This paper outlines a proposal to amalgamate St Michael's C of E Infant School (St Michael's CE) and Newdigate C of E Infant School (Newdigate CE). If the proposal were agreed it would mean that St Michael's CE would close on 31 August 2026 and its pupils would automatically transfer to Newdigate CE, which would remain on its current site. St Michael's CE already works with Newdigate CE in a Federation partnership with a shared ethos and shared resources.

The statutory process and timescales for the proposal are detailed below.

Proposal

Surrey County Council are proposing to amalgamate St Michael's CE and Newdigate CE by closing St Michael's CE on 31 August 2026 and transferring its pupils to Newdigate CE from September 2026.

Proposed timeline

The proposed amalgamation would come into effect from 31 August 2026, and pupils would start at Newdigate CE from September 2026.

Phase	Date
Statutory notices	20/04/26 – 18/05/26
Leader of the Council Decision	June 2026
Implementation	September 2026

Making Representations, Objections and Comments

1. This is a four-week representation period which starts on Monday 20 April 2026 and concludes on Monday 18 May 2026.
2. Any person can make comments, agree, or object to the proposal by sending representations to the Local Authority through the following channels:

Website	Surrey Says
Email	schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk
Post	St Michael's and Newdigate amalgamation Education Place Planning Surrey County Council Woodhatch Place 11 Cockshot Hill Reigate Surrey RH2 8EF

Background

3. St Michael's CE is a Voluntary Aided school. The school is situated in Mickleham, within the district of Mole Valley. It is recognised by the Department of Education as a "rural primary school". The school was rated as "Good" by Ofsted in its last full inspection in April 2022.
4. St Michael's CE is a one-form entry infant school for pupils aged 4-7 years, it has a published admissions number (PAN) of 28 and an overall capacity of 84 places.
5. Despite the schools "Good" Ofsted rating, it has been affected by falling rolls over recent years. In October 2021, the school had 66 pupils on roll and by October 2025 that had fallen to 21 – a decrease of 68%. As a result, the

number of unfilled places has risen from 18 places in October 2021 to 63 places in October 2025.

6. At the end of the Spring Term in March 2026, the school had a total of 14 pupils on roll and 70 unfilled places. Furthermore, for Reception entry in September 2026, the school is only expecting a maximum of 3 pupils. Pupil projections for the area suggest that, based on current trends, this level of surplus places will remain throughout the next decade, which is unsustainable.
7. In 2022, St Michael's CE created a Federation with Newdigate CE. This arrangement allows the schools to operate under one governing body, share leadership and provides the economies of scale of sharing both business and teaching resources. School leaders have combined age groups and explored alternative curriculum offers to ensure that both schools remain viable and thriving. However, the reality is that the Federation can no longer sustain two schools while there are such low numbers on roll at St Michael's CE.
8. It is anticipated that in September 2026, there would be a maximum of two children attending the school who live in Mickleham village. The number of children living in the immediate vicinity of the school is no longer able to fill or sustain the rolls of the school.
9. The Council is proposing to close St Michael's CE and amalgamate it with Newdigate CE because of the low number of children on roll at St Michael's CE. The Council and the Diocese of Guildford agree that the number of children on roll will be so low that the school cannot continue without putting the quality of education at risk.

Rationale

10. In recent years, the majority of 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 11% - equivalent to 47 fewer classes. The reasons behind this are thought to include the lower birth rate and families leaving Surrey as a result of the pandemic, Brexit and the cost-of-living crisis.
11. 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.

12. 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. The Council has a responsibility to protect the high-quality education that Surrey is known for and to ensure it is financially sustainable.
13. We know that our schools have close ties to the local area and communities, sometimes over many generations. This makes proposals of this nature very difficult, and not something we would choose if we felt there was a better option.

Why was Newdigate CE chosen for amalgamation?

14. the forefront of decision-making was ensuring continuity and certainty for pupils and their families, allowing them the opportunity to remain together as a cohort of peers and maintain friendship groups.
15. Newdigate CE are already in a federation with St Michael's CE, sharing the same religious character and ethos, and they also already share resources, staff and curriculum approaches. A proposal to amalgamate the schools into one school would provide continuity for the children and stability for the school's future.
16. It is anticipated that there would be sufficient vacancies at Newdigate CE to enable the newly amalgamated school to accommodate all children on roll at St Michael's CE without there being more than 30 children in any one class.

Admissions

17. All children on roll at St Michael's CE, or those who have been offered a place at St Michael's CE to start Reception in September 2026, would automatically be given a place at Newdigate CE. This means that children would be removed from the roll at St Michael's CE and transferred to the roll of Newdigate CE for September 2026.
18. Should any parent wish to apply for a place for their child at another school, they are able submit an in-year application listing that school as a preference. If a place is available, it will be offered or the child can be placed on a waiting list if the year group is currently full.

Staffing and HR

19. The closure of St Michael's CE would affect all staff who are employed at the school.
20. Our priority would be to ensure that staff at risk of redundancy are supported fully throughout this transition, just as we would be supporting our children

and families. Staff will be consulted with separately and offered support in the form of Employee Assistance (if available in this school), and redeployment support with priority access to Surrey County Council vacancies.

Capital planning and buildings

21. The St Michael's building and site are not owned by the Council. The trustees, the Guildford Diocesan Board for Education (DBE) would work with the Department for Education and the Charity Commission to decide what happens to the building and site in the future.
22. The site is a charitable asset, and any income from the school site must be used for the purposes of Church of England education
23. There are no changes required to the building at Newdigate CE as the school has enough spare capacity to accommodate all of the St Michael's CE pupils.

Equality Impact Assessment

24. An Equality Impact Assessment is being completed throughout the consultation process and will be published as part of the Leader Decision meetings.

Consultations, approvals, and overall timescales

25. It is proposed that the changes commence from September 2026. The proposed changes required an initial period of consultation and the agreement of a Surrey County Council Cabinet Member to proceed to the publication of Statutory Notices.
26. The first stage of consultation was open from Monday 2nd February 2026 and concluded on Friday 6th March 2026. During this period, Surrey County Council shared its proposal with the school communities, other local schools including headteachers and chairs of governors, the local communities of Mickleham and Newdigate, unions, partner agencies and with the staff of the schools. The associated documentation was published on Surrey County Council's 'Surrey Says' website and circulated to local stakeholders. Interested parties were invited to return responses to the consultation via an online form or alternatively by email or post.
27. The consultation analysis is published on [Surrey Says](#).
28. The Cabinet Member approved the decision to proceed to statutory notices on the 18 March 2026.
29. The final decision on the proposals will be made by the Leader of the Council in June 2026.

Key points from the consultation responses:

- There were **188** responses to the consultation
 - In response to the question 'Do you support the proposal to amalgamate St Michael's CofE Aided Infant School and Newdigate CofE Endowed Aided Infant School?' **89%** do not support the proposal.
 - **36%** of online respondents indicated they are a resident living close/adjacent to St Michael's CE Infant School.
30. The representation period, in which statutory notices are published, is now open for a four-week period from Monday 20 April 2026 to Monday 18 May 2026. The publication of notices is when the local authority formally states its proposals. This will be the final opportunity for consultees to make their views known before a decision is taken on the proposal.

What happens next?

31. You can make representations, objections and comments using the online form on [Surrey Says](#). Alternatively, you can respond by email or post at the addresses given in the section 'Making Representations, Objections and Comments'.