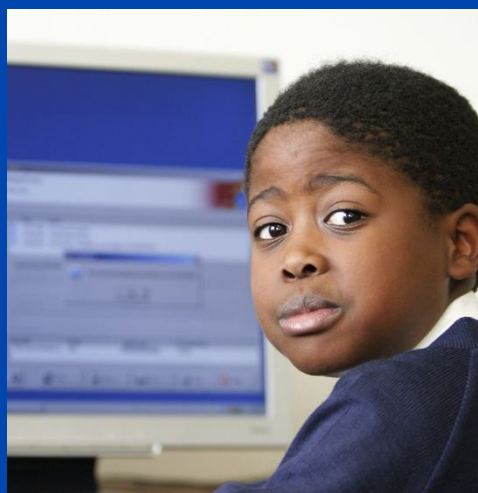


Consultation on St Nicholas CE Infant School becoming a primary school

28 January to 3 March 2019



Raising achievement through quality learning environments

Change to a primary school through enlargement of the premises and extension of the age range at St Nicholas CE Infant School, London Road, Strood, ME2 3HU

This document is designed to:

- Notify you of proposals to make statutory prescribed alterations at St Nicholas CE Infant School with effect from 1 September 2020. These will result in the enlargement of the premises and the extension of the age range at the school to change it into a primary school.
- Explain why these changes are being proposed
- Invite your comments on these proposals
- Inform you of, and invite you to, a drop-in session to be held at St Nicholas Infant School on Tuesday 12 February 2019 from 3:30pm to 6.00pm

The statutory process

The Department for Education (DFE) has set out the requirements and processes for making changes to maintained schools in the guidance 'Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools.'

The purpose of the guidance is to ensure that local authorities do not take decisions that will have a negative impact on other schools in the area, and that changes can be implemented quickly and effectively where there is a strong case for doing so. It is also expected that, where possible, additional new places will only be provided at schools that have an overall Ofsted rating of 'good' or 'outstanding'.

As St Nicholas Infants is a voluntary controlled school, some changes can only be proposed by the school's governing body. Therefore the expansion of the premises is being proposed by Medway Council, and the change of age range is being proposed by the Governing Body of St Nicholas Infants.

Medway Council is confident that the proposals set out within this document to change St Nicholas Infant School into a primary school meet all of these criteria. The guidance also sets out the processes required to implement these proposals, and this consultation period is the first stage in that process.

Why is there a need to change St Nicholas from an infant to a primary school?

St Nicholas Infant School currently provides for up to 120 children aged 4 to 7. At age 7 they transfer to a junior school. Children from St Nicholas generally transfer to Gordon Juniors. However, St Nicholas is a Church of England school, and Gordon Juniors is not a faith school. Some parents would prefer the option of continuing their child's education at a Church of England School. The pupils are only able to choose an alternative junior school if places are available in nearby primary schools.

Children at Gordon Infants also transfer to Gordon Juniors, joining those from St Nicholas Infants. The children from both infant schools have to get used to the combined impact of the transition from infant to junior, and the joining together of children from two different schools. If St Nicholas becomes a primary school, then children will be able to stay at the school for the whole of their primary education. There would be no transition from infant to junior, so there would be less disruption, both for children from St Nicholas Infants and Gordon Infants.

Should the proposals be approved St Nicholas, when full, would cater for 210 children aged 4-11. The school is rated as Outstanding by Ofsted and is popular with parents.

As part of the change to St Nicholas, Gordon Infants would raise their PAN from 60 to 90, and Gordon Juniors would lower theirs from 100 to 90 to match. Combined with the change at St Nicholas, this would add an extra 140

school places in Strood. Children at Gordon Infants would continue to Gordon Juniors, and the two Gordon schools would operate as if they were a primary school. The two Gordon schools are part of the same trust, and share teaching and management styles. Therefore there would be a continuous journey for the children through their primary education.

Why is the enlargement of the premises to St Nicholas Infant School being proposed?

St Nicholas Infants currently has four classrooms, which accommodate four classes of 30 pupils. To become a primary school, they will need seven classrooms. These do not have to be added immediately. The first group of pupils who will stay on at St Nicholas from age 4 to 11 will start in Reception in September 2020. The school has 4 classrooms, so it would not be until the pupils reach Year 4, in September 2024, that the new classrooms would be required. However, some age-appropriate work would be required in the mean time.

Why is the extension of the age range being proposed?

St Nicholas Infants currently take children from age 4 to age 7. To become a primary school, the upper limit of their age range will need to be increased to 11. The older year groups will be phased in, so the first year 4 class will open in 2024. These pupils will have started at St Nicholas in Reception in September 2020.

The next stages

Following the five-week consultation period, Medway Council's Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee may ask to see a report on the responses and comments to this proposal, which would be presented to them at the next available opportunity.

On 11 June 2019 Medway Council's Cabinet will consider the responses to this consultation and the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. They may then decide not to proceed with the proposal, or to authorise a four-week period of statutory representation when formal notices will be published to give interested stakeholders the opportunity to formally object or comment.

If there are no objections in the statutory representation period, Medway Council can decide to go ahead with the proposals. If there are one or more objections Medway Council, as Schools Commissioner under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, will consider the objections before determining the outcome.

Consultation timetable – subject to change as necessary

Consultation period	28 January to 3 March 2019
Public drop-in session in St Nicholas Infant School hall	Tuesday 12 February 2019 3:30 pm - 6.00pm
Report to Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Outcomes of Consultation	6 June 2019 (TBC)
Report Outcome of Consultation to Cabinet	11 June or 9 July 2019
Four week Statutory Notice period	16 September to 13 October 2019
Council decision on proposals	November/December 2019
Formal Implementation of expansion proposals if approved	1 September 2020

No decisions will be made until the consultation has been completed and local views have been carefully considered. Any decision taken on these proposals will be subject to appropriate planning permissions being granted.

How to make comments

We would like to hear your views on these proposals.

Email your comments to prim.reorg@medway.gov.uk

Alternatively you can hand the form below to the school office at St Nicholas Infant School or send it to: **FREEPOST RRUY-ZBTJ-CZZC, School Organisation, Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR**

Unfortunately it will not be possible to acknowledge receipt. A copy of our privacy notice can be found at www.medway.gov.uk/privacynotice

All responses must be received by **Sunday 3 March 2019**.

It would be helpful to have the following information:

Name

Address

I am (please tick)

Parent/ guardian

Member of staff

None of the above (please specify)

Governor

Local Resident

With regard to the proposal to enlarge the premises and extend the age range at St Nicholas Infant School to allow it to become a primary school;

Please tick one box

I **approve** of the proposal to enlarge the premises and extend the age range at St Nicholas Infant School

I **object** to the proposal to enlarge the premises and extend the age range at St Nicholas Infant School

Comments

Please give your reasons as fully as possible to help us build the arguments for and against the proposals.

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This information can be made available in other formats from **01634 333333**

If you have any questions about this leaflet and you want to speak to someone in your own language please ring 01634 335577

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