

## Consultation on the amalgamation of Pennington Infant School and Pennington Church of England Junior School

Hampshire County Council, with the full support of the headteachers and their governing bodies, wishes to consult on the amalgamation of Pennington Infant School and Pennington CE Junior School.

**This consultation will run from Friday 18 October to Friday 22 November 2024.**

A drop-in session has been arranged where you will have an opportunity to discuss the proposals with representatives of the governing bodies and Hampshire County Council officers. Please see the table below for details of the drop-in session:

Date	Time	Location
Tuesday 5 November 2024	15:15 – 18:00	Pennington Church of England Junior School

Officers will take into consideration all the consultation responses received before deciding whether the proposal should continue to the formal publication stage.

### Background

The governing bodies of both Pennington Infant School and Pennington CE Junior School have approached Hampshire County Council to discuss opportunities for both schools to work closer together following discussions over recent months regarding low pupil numbers and concerns over the financial positions of both schools.

The pupil forecasts indicate that there is a reduced demand for places in the locality compared with recent years. This has led to budget issues at both schools, creating significant difficulties with budget recovery and on-going financial viability. Since 2022, the published admission number for both schools has been reduced to 30 children in each year group.

In view of this, the governing bodies and Hampshire County Council feel the best way forward is to re-organise the schools into a single primary school with seven year groups, from Year R to Year 6. The proposed amalgamation will form a 30 places per year group primary school, which presents a better opportunity to secure an improved budget position with a more settled pupil intake and organisational structure.

This approach would result in one governing body overseeing the school, rather than separate infant and junior governing bodies as currently exists. There are many advantages to bringing Pennington Infant School and Pennington CE Junior School together, some of which are listed below:

- Greater continuity in planning the curriculum across the key stages of education so that pupils make the best possible progress in learning.
- A consistent approach to the ways in which children are taught.

- Enhance teachers' professional development through increased opportunities to teach across a wider age range within the same school.
- Removes the need for parents to apply for a junior school place and transfer at the end of key stage 1 (infant to junior transfer)
- Parents can develop a longer-term relationship with the school.
- Gives children the opportunity to work with or alongside younger or older pupils allowing them to put their own learning in context and develop important social skills.

A decision will be reached in due course as to which school building is utilised to provide the accommodation for pupils, but it is likely, due to the overall site layout, that the junior building will be used to provide the primary school's facilities, on the account of its relationship to the playing field and hard play area. Building feasibility work will be undertaken once we know the outcome of this consultation. In the interim both buildings will be used. There will be no impact to the Special Educational Needs Resourced Provision for pupils with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) located at Pennington CE Junior School. Pennington Village Pre School will be consulted with as part of this process in order to support the ongoing delivery of preschool provision in the area.

## **The proposal**

In order for both Pennington Infant School and Pennington CE Junior School to work together and operate as one primary school, there is a statutory process which needs to be followed.

Hampshire County Council is proposing to amalgamate Pennington Infant School and Pennington CE Junior School, through the closure of Pennington Infant School and extending the age range of Pennington CE Junior School to become a Church of England controlled primary school. Should the proposal be implemented the school will offer 30 places for Year R (age 4+) and seven year groups will be taught within the school, up to Year 6 (age 11). This will lead to 210 places at the school, 30 in each year group. If approved, this proposed change is expected to take effect no earlier than 1 January 2026.

## **Additional Details**

<Link to Frequently Asked Questions>

<Link to catchment map>

## **Consultation - we want to hear your views**

We would like to hear your views on this proposal. We are therefore consulting with you and other interested parties over the coming weeks.

Officers will take into consideration all the consultation responses received before deciding whether the proposal should continue to the formal publication stage.

If the decision to proceed is made, a report will be taken to a future Executive Lead Member for Children's Services Decision Day seeking approval for a statutory Public

Notice to be published. This will set out Hampshire County Council's intention to close Pennington Infant School and change the age range of Pennington CE Junior School. It is anticipated that the Public Notice will be published between February and March 2025.

After the date of publication, there will be a five-week period in which any representations can be made. After the conclusion of this period, the County Council will decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal. If approved, it would be implemented no earlier than 1 January 2026.

**Further information**

If you are unable to attend the drop-in session detailed above and wish to make a comment, please write to Owain Hale-Heighway, Strategic Development Officer, Children's Services Department, E11 Court, Winchester, SO23 8UG or e-mail [strategicplanningunit@hants.gov.uk](mailto:strategicplanningunit@hants.gov.uk) by **Friday 22 November 2024**.