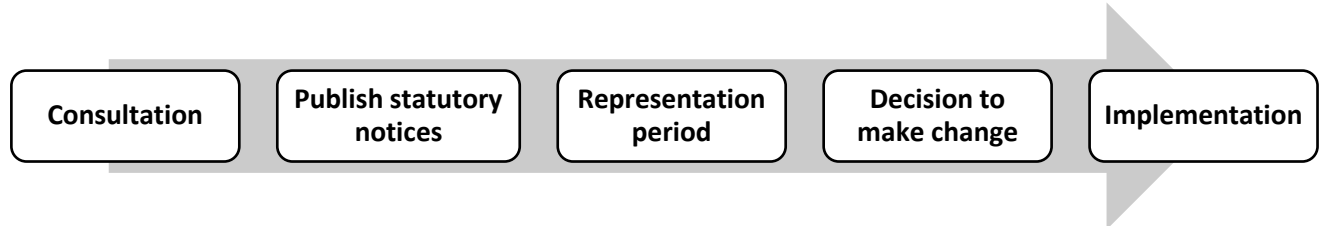


Consultation

A proposal to merge St Andrew's CE Infant School with Great Linford Primary School

This eight week consultation seeks to gather opinions on a proposal for St Andrew's CE Infant School to merge with Great Linford Primary School. This is the first stage in a five stage process:



What is the current position?

St Andrew's CE Infant School

St Andrew's CE Infant School is an infant school (Year R to Year 2) situated in the village of Great Linford in the north of Milton Keynes. It is a small Church of England school which falls in the 'voluntary controlled' category of maintained schools. Great Linford village was in existence prior to the beginning of the Milton Keynes Development Corporation but has since been surrounded by the development of the city. Great Linford Primary School (Year R to Year 6) was opened as the community developed around the original village, so there are two schools serving the same area. Children leaving St Andrew's would typically transition to Great Linford Primary at an entry point in Year 3.

In 2017 the school became part of the "Village Schools Federation" – a group of six schools as a way to support its sustainability. The other five schools are located in the rural villages of Stoke Goldington, Newton Blossomville, Sherington, North Crawley, and Castlethorpe. This means that one governing board is accountable for all six schools and share one Headteacher. St Andrew's has a common feature with four of these schools in that they are voluntary controlled Church of England schools, although it is also quite different because:

1. The other five have their own catchment area, with no other schools in the immediate vicinity, whereas St Andrew's has another school nearby, Great Linford Primary School, with an identical catchment area. Children living within the catchment area are therefore given high priority for admission within both schools' oversubscription criteria.
2. Unlike the other five schools in the federation St Andrew's does not qualify for "sparsity" funding support which is in place through the National Funding Formula due to its non-rural location.
3. Unlike the other five schools St Andrew's is not protected by [the 'presumption against the closure of rural schools' \(Opening and closing schools statutory guidance for decision makers, October 2024\)](#).

St Andrew's last inspection by Ofsted was in May 2024 when it was determined to be "good" and there are no concerns about the quality of provision.

However, the school has experienced a fall in demand over a number of years and currently has 21 pupils on roll. A falling roll is a significant challenge for schools given that schools receive funding based on the number of students enrolled. Fewer students mean less funding causing significant operational challenges. The Published Admission Number (PAN) was previously 20 per year group, but this was reduced to 10 with effect from September 2024 as a way to mitigate the operational and financial challenges associated with a reduced roll. 17 applications were made for a Year R place at the school for September 2025; seven applicants put the school as their first preference; four of whom live within the catchment area of the school. Nine places were allocated at the school on National Offer Day (16 April 2025).

Despite efforts made over the years to support the school's sustainability, as a result of a continued fall in the number of pupils on roll, the school has an annually increasing deficit budget position and is no longer financially viable as a standalone school even when contained within a wider federation.

Great Linford Primary School

Great Linford Primary School is a maintained primary school that admits pupils from Year R to Year 6 and is situated in Great Linford. The school also has an entry point at Year 3, primarily for children transitioning from St Andrew's at the end of Year 2. The catchment area is identical to that of St Andrew's. The school has been judged by Ofsted as good at its last inspection in 2019 and there are no concerns about the quality of provision.

The number of children on roll at the two schools and future school level projections indicate that there is not a need for both schools to meet catchment demand.

What is the opportunity?

Milton Keynes City Council, in conjunction with the governing bodies of both schools is considering a merger of St Andrew's CE Infant School with Great Linford Primary School, to create one school located on the Great Linford Primary School site serving this community. The only legal way of achieving this is a technical closure St Andrew's with the pupils and staff accommodated at Great Linford Primary School as appropriate.

Great Linford Primary School has a published admission number (PAN) of 45 for entry into Year R and a PAN of 60 for Year 3 to Year 6. The building can therefore easily accommodate at least 375 pupils, whereas the site at St Andrew's is too small with no playing field facilities and is not suitable for pupils in Year 3 to Year 6. There is sufficient accommodation at the Great Linford Primary School site to accommodate all the children from both schools. This would also mean that children attending St Andrew's would no longer have to apply for a junior school place when they are in Year 2. As this Year 3 entry point serves to specifically accommodate the children transitioning from St Andrew's, if progressed, this transition point would no longer be required. Following the merger the PAN of Great Linford Primary School will be 60 to represent the combination of existing numbers at Great Linford Primary School and S. Andrew's, which will include the 2026 intake.

If the proposal proceeds then the ambition is that the St Andrew's site would continue to be used for educational purposes, for example additional SEND provision.

What are the potential benefits of merging the two schools onto one site?

- Offers a strengthened, sustainable, consolidated single local solution for high quality education provision to meet the needs of the area building on the existing close working relationship between the two schools
- One larger organisation improves the longer term financial stability of the school/s
- The existing building of St Andrew's could be used to set up a unit for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) that could be accessed by pupils in the local area
- Minimal disruption for existing pupils and parents
- Parents of pupils attending St Andrew's will no longer need to apply for a Year 3 place at Great Linford Primary School
- The local community will retain the ability to influence the future direction of their local school
- Minimal disruption for existing teachers and support staff
- Opportunities for staff, making it more likely that existing high quality staff would be retained
- Opportunities for staff to share planning, resources, skills and expertise

What are the next steps?

This consultation seeks views from those directly involved with St Andrew's CE Infant School and Great Linford Primary School to determine whether the relevant statutory notices should be published to progress the merger of the two schools.

Feedback from this consultation will be considered by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People in July 2025. If the decision is taken to proceed with the proposed merger, the relevant statutory notices would be published in September 2025 and would provide a four week period for anyone to make representations, as is prescribed by law.

Subject to these statutory processes, the final decision could take place in December 2025, with implementation coming after this point.

If progressed, pupils already on roll at St Andrew's will automatically transfer across to Great Linford Primary School, or alternatively these pupils can make an in year application as per the normal process to any other school in Milton Keynes- this would include any of the other Village School Federation schools.

How can I find out more and contribute to the process?

We are keen to hear as many views as possible about this proposal. Please go online and complete the response form at <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/consultations> to tell us what you think. This consultation will end on **25 June 2025**.

You can also find out more information at the following events:

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| For parents: | St Andrew's CE Infant School- Tuesday 6 May, 9am to 10am and 5pm to 6pm
Great Linford Primary School- Tuesday 6 May, 9am to 10am and 5pm to 6pm
Great Linford Primary School (joint for both schools)- Monday 16 June, 5pm to 6pm |
| For staff: | St Andrew's CE Infant School- Tuesday 6 May, 4pm- 5pm
Great Linford Primary School- Tuesday 6 May, 4pm- 5pm
Great Linford Primary School (joint for both schools)- Monday 16 June, 4pm- 5pm |