

## **Consultation on the proposal to increase the age range of Manor Church of England Infant School, Holbury**

Hampshire County Council (HCC) would like to hear your views about the proposal to change the age range of Manor Church of England Infant School from a 4-7 years infant school to a 4-11 years primary school.

**This consultation will run from Friday 6 June to Friday 4 July 2025.**

### ***Why do you need to increase the age range at the Manor Church of England Infant School?***

Manor Church of England Infant School was graded as a 'Good' school by Ofsted in July 2023, and as 'Excellent' in 2019 by The Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS). In recent years, falling birth rates, both locally and nationally have meant that the school is seeing an insufficient number of children from within the catchment area to meet the school's Published Admission Number (PAN) of 30. As such, the headteacher and governing body have raised concerns about the school's viability due to the falling numbers on roll in future years.

In order to ensure the long-term viability of the school, it is proposed to increase the age range of the school, this will allow Manor Church of England Infant School to become a primary school catering for children between the ages of 4 and 11 years.

In order to achieve this, the school will need to apply to vary their PAN from 30 to 15. This will be done via an application to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA), the intention is that the reduced PAN will come into effect from September 2026. The current forecast data, and recent pattern of application to the school indicated that a PAN of 15 would meet local demand. With a revised PAN of 15, the school would have a total capacity of 105 places across four classes and seven year groups (Year R to Year 6). This model is one that is in place across many primary schools in Hampshire, and provides a more financially viable class structure for the school to operate within.

### ***What's happening at Cadland Primary School?***

Manor Church of England Infant School is not linked to a junior school, rather it is linked to the local primary school, Cadland Primary School. The Year R PAN at Cadland Primary School is 50, and the Year 3 PAN is 22. Whilst historically there has been surplus places at both schools, there has always been a risk that Cadland would end up with large classes of 36 in years 3 – 6.

Furthermore, were it to be the case that 50 children transitioned from Year 2 to 3 at Cadland Primary School, and there were 30 children on roll at Manor Church of England Infant School who wished to access Year 3 at Cadland Primary School, at least eight children would be refused a place, and the continuity of their primary education would be disrupted.

During this consultation process ongoing and parallel discussions will be taken forward with Cadland Primary School.

***What are the benefits?***

- Retention of a Church of England school in the area and the extension of its age range to a primary school
- Retention of school provision in the area
- Ensures financial viability of the school
- Creates educational continuity for children in the area
- Reduces surplus places at year R in the local area, leading to more efficient use of resources

***Why is this change being proposed now?***

Hampshire County Council, with support from the school, its governing body and the Diocese are proposing to increase the age range to secure the ongoing financial viability of the school and ensure the provision of a denominational offer in the local area.

The forecast for many schools, including Manor Church of England Infant School indicates a long-term reduction in the predicted number of children on roll. On National Offer Day for admissions for September 2025, 15 offers were made for year R, this is in line with the forecast data collated by HCC.

***What does this mean for school staff?***

Support will be provided to the infant school to assist them in the re-designing of their staffing structure to accommodate the change from an infant school to a primary school. Should the school need to undertake a staffing restructure which results in redundancies, redeployment support would be provided to any staff affected and redundancy payments made if efforts to redeploy were not successful.

***What does this mean for parents?***

For current parents and carers with children in year 2 there will be no change to the current admissions arrangements. The parents and carers of these children will still need to apply for a place at a local school for Year 3.

For parents of children in Years 1, if approved this year group would be the first class that would stay on at the school into Key Stage 2 (years 3 – 6). As the age range increases the school will transition to having 4 classes, in some years this will mean that children are taught in mixed age groups.

There are many schools across the county that offer mixed age classes, it is not unusual for schools with mixed age classes to operate with the following class structure:

- Year R – Foundation Stage
- Mixed Year 1 & 2 – Key Stage 1
- Mixed Year 3 & 4 – Key Stage 2
- Mixed Year 5 & 6 - Key Stage 2

Ultimately the class structure and re-organisation of the school into a primary school would be a decision for the headteacher, school leaders and governing body.

### ***What other options have been considered?***

A range of other options were considered, these included:

- Maintain the status quo – it is felt that this option is not viable as it would lead to financial issues and a growing deficit at the school. Increasingly the impact will be felt at Manor Church of England Infant School, challenges would be faced in sustaining effective provision leading to a risk in terms of the quality of education delivered and reputational risk.
- Close Manor Church of England Infant School – as this is the only denominational offer within the locality closure would be opposed by the Diocese of Winchester. Closure is not considered a viable option.
- Reduce PAN at Manor Church of England Infant School from 30 to 15, without modifying the age range – it is felt that this option would lead to significant financial challenges being faced by the school and may make the school unviable and ultimately could lead to the future closure of the school.

The recommended option that is being consulted on is the proposal to reduce PAN at Manor Church of England Infant School from 30 to 15, and to increase the age range to form a primary school – it is felt that this option ensures the ongoing viability of the school and would secure a local denomination offer in the local area.

### ***How will these proposed changes affect the admissions policy of Manor Church of England Infant School?***

If the proposed changes are implemented an application to vary the admission policy of Manor Church of England Infant School will be made to the Office of the School Adjudicator (OSA). This application will seek to vary the admission policy ahead of September 2026 and extend the age range of the school.

### ***Where and how do I apply for a year 3 place?***

Should these changes be agreed those children on roll at Manor Church of England Infant School will no longer be required to make an application for a year 3 place. Those children in year 2 at the school will simply transition into year 3.

### ***Will the catchment area change?***

The catchment areas of the school will not be adjusted because of this proposed change. There will continue to be a shared catchment area, as there is at present. Please visit the [School Catchment Area Finder](#) for further information on the school catchment areas.

### ***When will this change take place?***

It is anticipated that, should the proposal be approved, the conversion to a primary school would be implemented for 1<sup>st</sup> September 2026, however this change is subject to obtaining the necessary approvals (from the OSA) to modify the current admissions arrangements.

### ***What building works will be taking place?***

No significant building works are required as a result of this proposal to increase the age range of the school. Some minor building works will be

undertaken, for example some changes are needed to ensure that toilet facilities are suitable for the older, Key Stage 2 children. All building works required to support the proposed change would be funded by Hampshire County Council, with no impact to the school budget.

***“What about the impact on traffic?”***

The County Council appreciates that local residents will be concerned about potential traffic implications due to the new primary school. By planning to create school places on an accessible site, as close as possible to where children live, we create the best chance for those children to travel to school in an active, sustainable way, using means of travel other than the car.

By containing primary education on one site, this will enable more families the opportunity to travel actively and sustainably as for those with more than one primary-aged child, they will no longer need to manage multiple drop-offs/pick-ups across two sites.

Since 2018, the County Council's Travel Planning Team has been fully engaged with the school on active and sustainable travel through the national accreditation scheme, Modeshift STARS. The school is currently holding a 'Good Travel Plan' status and has achieved a 30% reduction in the number of families driving to school over the last 7 years from 56% to 26%. In 2022, the school benefited further from new scooter and cycle storage from funding managed by the County Council which has enabled scooting and cycling to collectively increase by 27% since 2018. For those parents that are essential car users, the school has an arrangement in place with St Bernard's Church as a Park and Stride which can support with reducing the congestion and number of cars around the school gate.

***Will the school receive additional funding?***

The funding of schools is based around the number of pupils on roll, so as numbers change so will the funding.

***Will I have the opportunity to discuss the proposal and ask questions?***

Yes. A drop-in session where you will be able to discuss the proposal with County Council officers is planned for **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025 from 15:30 pm until 18:00 pm at Manor Church of England Infant School.**

If you wish to make a comment then please write to Owain Hale-Heighway, Strategic Development Officer, Children's Services Department, Elizabeth II Court, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8UG or by e-mail to: [strategicplanningunit@hants.gov.uk](mailto:strategicplanningunit@hants.gov.uk) by **Friday 4 July 2025.**

***What happens after this consultation?***

This non-statutory consultation will run until **Friday 4 July 2025.** 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 statutory 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 change the age range of Manor Church of England Infant School. It is anticipated that the Public Notice will be published in the Autumn Term.

After the date of publication, there will be a four-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, the changes would be implemented no earlier than 1 September 2026.