Consultation on the proposal to alter the upper age range of Marlborough Infant School, Aldershot

Hampshire County Council would like to hear your views about the proposal to change the age range of Marlborough Infant School from an infant school teaching pupils aged 4-7 years old, to a primary school for children aged 4-11 years old.

This consultation will run from Tuesday 17 November to Tuesday 15 December 2026.

No decision has been made on whether to implement the proposal. The consultation responses will inform subsequent recommendations, with any changes subject to completion of the statutory process and the necessary approvals.

What is being proposed?
We are proposing to extend the age range of Marlborough Infant School so that it becomes a primary school from September 2027. The first Year 3 class would be introduced from September 2028, with additional year groups added each year, allowing pupils to continue their education at the school beyond Year 2. As part of the proposal, the school's Published Admission Number (PAN) would reduce from 30 to 15.

The Local Authority (LA) is aware of decreasing pupil forecasts across the wider Aldershot school place planning area. The proposed reduction reflects these forecasts and is intended to help ensure the school's long-term sustainability while maintaining a high standard of education. A smaller PAN will also support effective use of space and resources as the school expands into Key Stage 2.

Alongside the change of age range, an application would be made to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) seeking approval to reduce Marlborough's Year R PAN from 30 to 15 for September 2027 and September 2028, should application data support and this application would include the proposal to create the shared catchment with Talavera Infant School. The PAN would remain at 30 unless and until the variation is approved. Admission arrangements for September 2029 onwards would be progressed through the statutory admissions consultation process.

Whilst Marlborough's current catchment population and Year R intake forecasts exceed the proposed PAN of 15, sufficient places are expected to remain when considered alongside the local schools: Talavera Infant School, Cambridge Primary School and Stanhope Primary School. A shared catchment area with Talavera Infant School is also proposed, giving families within that area catchment priority at both schools to further safeguard families ability to access local schools. Catchment priority would not guarantee a place at either school.

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 are the benefits?

- Retention of school provision in the local area
- Supports the school's longer-term financial sustainability.
- Creates educational continuity for children in the area
- Reduces surplus Year R places in the Aldershot school place planning area, leading to more efficient use of resources
- Helps address the longstanding mismatch between places at Talavera Junior School and its two linked infant schools. Enabling pupils to remain at Marlborough beyond Year 2 is expected to reduce the need for additional classes and accommodation at the junior school.

Why is this change being proposed now?

In May 2026, the school's governing body asked Hampshire County Council to consult on extending the school's age range from 4-7 to 4-11, alongside reducing its admission number from 30 to 15. The County Council has considered pupil forecasts, the school's financial position, available places at neighbouring schools and an initial assessment of the school's accommodation. It has also considered alternative options, as explained later in these FAQs.

Marlborough Infant School is one of several unique schools in Hampshire where it is located next to an Army Barracks and has a long-standing history of providing support to Services families and the wider community. Hampshire County Council are committed to supporting this, but to be able to do so, it is proposing these changes to support the long-term stability of the school. Working closely with the school and its governing body, the LA is proposing to extend the age range of the school to help secure its long-term viability and maintain a local school place offer for children and families in the area. The proposal has been discussed with the Ministry of Defence, which has confirmed that it is comfortable with the proposal and has raised no objection.

Pupil forecasts indicate lower demand for school places across the Aldershot School Place Planning area. Across its 11 schools, there are currently 580 Year R places available each year, with forecast intakes ranging from 459 to 486 pupils between 2026/27 and 2030/31. This represents between 16% and 21% unfilled Year R places. Marlborough Infant School is also situated close to the South Farnborough Primary School Place Planning area, where an average of 19% of school capacity is forecast to remain unfilled over the next five years.

Marlborough Infant School's pupil forecasts also indicate lower future intakes, while the most recent intake shows a reduction in the number of children taking up Year R places. For the September 2026 Year R intake, 19 offers were made on the National Offer Day, 11 under PAN.

A significant proportion of school funding is determined by the number of pupils attending, while many staffing and premises costs cannot be reduced

proportionately. Without changes to the school's organisation, sustained lower pupil numbers would place increasing pressure on its budget and could affect its ability to maintain a sustainable financial position, with implications for its long-term viability.

Hampshire County Council has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places across the local school place planning area. Although Marlborough's forecast Year R intake exceeds the proposed PAN of 15, sufficient places are expected to remain when considered alongside local schools: Talavera Infant School, Cambridge Primary School and Stanhope Primary School. A shared catchment area with Talavera Infant School is also proposed, giving families within that area catchment priority at both schools to further safeguard families ability to access local schools. Early discussions have been undertaken with Talavera Infant School regarding the proposal and associated catchment changes, and no objection was raised at that stage.

What if the forecast increases?
Hampshire County Council's pupil forecasts draw on a range of evidence, including birth and health registration data, demographic trends, migration, school attendance patterns and parental preference. They also take account of housing completions, sites with planning permission, committed developments and relevant allocations in adopted or emerging development plans, where appropriate. Expected housing delivery rates and the number of pupils likely to arise from development are considered when assessing future demand. Forecasts are based on the best evidence available, rather than assuming the delivery or timing of speculative developments.

In Aldershot, school place planning also recognises the movement of Service families associated with Army postings, which can affect pupil numbers at short notice. The MOD's Modernised Accommodation Offer may reduce the need for families to relocate when Service personnel receive a new posting, potentially leading to slightly less movement into and out of local schools.

Although future demand cannot be predicted with complete certainty, current forecasts indicate that sufficient places would remain across local schools following the proposed changes. The County Council would continue to monitor housing growth, pupil numbers and local demographic changes, and respond as necessary to fulfil its statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places.

Will the catchment area change?
Yes. The proposal includes plans to merge the current separate catchment areas of Marlborough Infant School and Talavera Infant School to create one shared catchment area, which will match the catchment area of both schools' linked junior school, Talavera Junior School. Families living within this area would have catchment priority at both Marlborough and Talavera Infant School. Talavera Junior School's catchment area would remain unchanged. The current and proposed catchment map can be seen on the consultation webpage.

The proposed catchment changes would be included in an application to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA), alongside the proposed reduction in Marlborough's Published Admission Number from 30 to 15, should application data

support, for admissions in September 2027 and September 2028. Admission arrangements for September 2029 onwards would be consulted on via the statutory admissions consultation process. All changes would remain subject to the necessary approvals. Until any OSA application has been approved, the Year R PAN will necessarily remain at 30.,

Would my child be eligible for school transport assistance?
Should the proposal proceed, eligibility for school transport assistance would continue to be assessed in accordance with Hampshire County Council's School Transport Policy and relevant statutory requirements. Individual transport assessments would be undertaken, where appropriate, based on a pupil's home address and their allocated school.

The transport policy states that where a student lives within a shared catchment area of more than one school, school transport is normally provided to only the nearest of the catchment schools.

If approved, when would the proposal take effect?
If approved, Marlborough Infant School would become a primary school from 1 September 2027. The first Year 3 class would open in September 2028, with provision extending into successive year groups as that cohort progresses through Key Stage 2. This would allow a gradual transition to the primary school structure.

What does this mean for school staff?
Support will be provided to Marlborough 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.

How will you fit in seven year groups into the school?
The school previously provided education from Year R to Year 3, and its recorded school capacity is 150 pupils. The proposed longer-term primary model would provide 105 places across seven year groups, based on an annual intake of 15 pupils. These would be organised within a proposed four-class structure using mixed-age teaching, rather than a separate class for each year group.

An initial assessment indicates that the existing accommodation could support this model, with only minor adaptations anticipated for the extended age range. A detailed feasibility study would establish what adaptations would be required.
The transition would take place gradually, with the first Year 3 class opening in September 2028. Existing year groups would not be required to reduce to 15 pupils. The headteacher and governing body would determine the detailed class organisation, with accommodation and staffing requirements assessed against the size of each cohort as it progresses through the school.

The table below demonstrates a typical class organisation of other 0.5 FE primary schools in Hampshire with a PAN of 15. They organise with three mixed classes, with either a discrete Year R class (which enables focus on the Early Years

curriculum), or a discrete Year 6 class (to give focus on the SATs exams). It will be the decision of Marlborough Infant School's headteacher and governing body how the school will be structured if this proposal is agreed.

	Foundation	Key Stage 1		Key Stage 2				
Class	**YR**	**Y1**	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4**	**Y5**	**Y6**	**Class Total**
1	15							**15**
2		15	15					**30**
3				15	15			**30**
4						15	15	**30**
Cohort Total	**15**	**15**	**15**	**15**	**15**	**15**	**15**	**105**

Will any building works be taking place?
An initial assessment indicates that the existing accommodation could support the proposed primary school model, with only minor adaptations anticipated for the extended age range. A detailed feasibility study would establish the nature and extent of any works required and their cost.

Subject to approval of the proposal, any necessary works would be programmed for completion before the first Year 3 class opens in September 2028. Alterations to the leased buildings would require Ministry of Defence consent and would be funded through the County Council's Children's Services Capital Programme.

How will the school transition to smaller year groups?
The proposed reduction in the Published Admission Number from 30 to 15 would apply to new Year R admissions from September 2027, subject to an application being successfully made to the OSA. Existing year groups would not be required to reduce to 15 pupils, so the transition to smaller cohorts would happen gradually.

The first Year 3 class would open in September 2028, with provision extending into successive year groups as cohorts progress through Key Stage 2. The headteacher and governing body would review class organisation and staffing year-on-year, taking account of the number of pupils in each year group.

When will Year 3 open?
Subject to consultation and final approval, the first Year 3 class would open in September 2028. Children currently in Year 1 would be the first cohort able to remain at Marlborough Infant School beyond Year 2 (if parents wish), with provision extending into successive year groups as that cohort progresses through Key Stage 2.

Parents would retain the right to apply for a Year 3 place at another school through the normal admissions process.

Will my child be removed from roll should this proposal be agreed?
No child will be removed from Marlborough Infant School's roll unless there is either a written parental request, or they are excluded by the Headteacher under the school's Exclusions Guidance process. From September 2028, if there are more

than 15 children in each year group, all pupils on roll will be accommodated by having slightly larger classes. If this proposal is approved, no child will be removed.

What does this mean for children currently in Year 2?
As there will not be a Year 3 class in September 2027, parents of pupils currently in Year 2 will need to apply for a Year 3 place at a junior school. Information on how to apply can be found on the LA's website:
hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/admissions

The school and the County Council's Admissions Team will ensure all parents are made aware of the requirement to apply for a Year 3 place starting in September 2027. The existing linked-school arrangements with Talavera Junior School would remain in place for children transferring in September 2027, subject to the necessary admission approvals.

In September 2028, when the Year 3 class opens, can my Year 4 child re-join as it will be a mixed class?
No, the school will not have a Year 4 cohort until September 2029.

Does this mean that there will be fewer places at Marlborough Infant School for Year R to start in September 2027?
Yes. Subject to approval of this proposal, it is intended that an application will be submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) to reduce the Published Admission Number (PAN) to 15 for September 2027 and September 2028, should application data support. A PAN reduction for 2029 onwards would then be progressed through the statutory admissions consultation process.

Until any OSA application has been approved, the Year R PAN will remain at 30. Places for September 2027 entry will be offered on 16 April 2027 to all on-time applicants who meet the admissions criteria. Further information about applying for a Year R place is available online at: hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/admissions

Will this have an impact on the linked junior school?
Marlborough Infant School is linked to Talavera Junior School, who have been consulted with regarding this proposal and no objection was raised. Historically, most Year 2 pupils from Marlborough Infant School transfer to Talavera Junior School when there is sufficient capacity to continue their education from Year 3. Talavera Junior School has a PAN of 90 pupils, but the school has regularly offered over this number (to either 120 or 150 pupils) to meet demand from its two linked infant schools. By expanding the age range at Marlborough Infant School, it should no longer be necessary for Talavera Junior School to continue running additional classes to meet linked school demand.

Talavera Junior School's catchment area already covers Marlborough Infant School's catchment and stretches up to the A3011 (Lynchford Road). There would be no change to this. However, Marlborough Infant School would no longer be a linked school for Talavera Junior School.

There would be a change to the catchment areas of Talavera Junior School's current linked infant schools, Marlborough Infant School and Talavera Infant School. Both

schools' catchments would change to become one new shared catchment area, and it will match Talavera Junior School's existing catchment area. There will be no changes to Talavera Junior School's catchment. The proposed catchment maps can be seen on the consultation webpage.

As Marlborough Infant School would no longer be a linked school as part of Talavera Junior School's 2028 admission arrangements, a variation application would need to be made to the OSA to remove the linked school criterion specific to Marlborough from its arrangements.

Will the school receive additional funding?
A significant proportion of school funding is determined by the number and characteristics of pupils on roll, rather than the school's Published Admission Number. Funding would therefore change as pupil numbers change. Any necessary building adaptations would be funded through the County Council's Children's Services Capital Programme, as outlined above.

What about the impact on traffic?
The County Council appreciates that local residents will be concerned about potential traffic implications due to the change to a 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.

Sustainable travel is supported through the production of a Modeshift STARS School Travel Plan, to be submitted as part of the process of changing from an infant school to a primary school. The school will be encouraged to achieve a Good level accreditation. The School Travel Plan will set out a range of tools and measures to enable staff, families, pupils and visitors to make informed decisions about how they travel to and from school. The Travel Planning Team at Hampshire County Council will work with the school to put these measures in place and help minimise any impact on the environment and local community that the school run may cause.

A Modeshift STARS School Travel Plan is a long-term document to look at how children, parents, staff and visitors travel to and from school, and sets out measures to;

1. Encourage and enable pupils, parents/guardians, staff and visitors to walk/wheel, scoot and cycle to school. Where this is not possible, to consider public transport, car sharing or the use of any Park and Stride facilities which may be made available.
2. Encourage and provide educational programmes relating to active, sustainable travel and how this links to the environment, safety and health.
3. Improve safety.

The Modeshift STARS School Travel Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to keep accreditation current and meaningful.

What other options have been considered?
The following options have been considered in response to declining pupil numbers and the school's forecast financial pressures. Marlborough already benefits from shared leadership and support through the Bold Futures Federation. These arrangements would continue, but do not in themselves address the financial challenges associated with maintaining an infant-only school with smaller pupil cohorts.

- **Maintain the current age range and PAN of 30:** This would retain the existing infant school structure and admission arrangements. However, forecast intakes remain below the current PAN, and the lower September 2026 intake indicates that pupil numbers could reduce further. Maintaining the current organisation would leave the underlying budget pressures unresolved and is therefore not recommended as a sustainable longer-term response.
- **Reduce the PAN from 30 to 15 without changing the age range:** Over time, this would provide for 45 pupils across three year groups. Although it would reduce surplus admission places, it would not provide the broader pupil base or organisational structure associated with a primary model and would present significant financial challenges. This option is therefore not recommended.
- **Close Marlborough Infant School:** Closure would remove an established local school serving Service and civilian families in the North Camp area. Pupils would need to attend alternative schools, and the opportunity to retain provision on the site through a revised primary model would be lost. Given the proposal's potential to maintain local provision while addressing the school's sustainability, closure is not the preferred option.

The recommended option being consulted on is to extend the age range to 4-11 and reduce the PAN from 30 to 15. This would retain local provision and support continuity of education, while providing a broader pupil base over which to organise staffing and resources. Considered alongside the proposed shared catchment with Talavera Infant School and available places at neighbouring schools, it is expected to maintain sufficient local provision and is considered the most appropriate option to support the school's longer-term educational and financial sustainability.

When would the changes take effect?
Subject to the necessary approvals, Marlborough would become a primary school and its Year R admission number would reduce to 15 from September 2027. The first Year 3 class would open in September 2028, with further year groups added annually as that cohort progresses.

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 **Tuesday 1 December 2026** from **3.30pm until 6pm** at **Marlborough Infant School, Redvers Buller Road, Aldershot, GU11 2HR**. The session will be an informal drop-in, with no formal presentation or speeches. You are welcome to attend at any point during the advertised times. County Council officers will be available throughout to listen to your views, answer individual questions and discuss the proposal and consultation process.

If you wish to make a comment then please write to Rebecca Prowting, Strategic Development Officer, Children's Services Department, Elizabeth II Court, Winchester, SO23 8UG or by e-mail to: strategicplanningunit@hants.gov.uk **by Tuesday 15 December 2026**.

What happens after this consultation?
This consultation will run from **Tuesday 17 November to Tuesday 15 December 2026**. Following the consultation, responses will be considered and a report presented to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services, recommending the next steps.

If progression to statutory publication is approved, a Public Notice would be published, followed by a four-week period during which comments could be submitted.

A further report would then be presented to the Executive Lead Member to consider the representations and make a final decision. Dates for these stages would be confirmed following the initial consultation.