

SECTION 15 OF THE EDUCATION AND INSPECTIONS ACT 2006 (AS AMENDED BY THE EDUCATION ACT 2011) and the SCHOOL ORGANISATION (ESTABLISHMENTS AND DISCONTINUANCE OF SCHOOLS) REGULATIONS 2013

Proposal to close Christ Church Church of England (CofE) Primary School on 31st August 2021

1. Contact Details

This information is the Full Proposal published by the Governing Body of Christ Church C of E Primary School, to close Christ Church Church of England Primary School, Old Neighbourhood, Chalford, GL6 8PP.

2. Implementation

The proposal is to discontinue Christ Church C of E Primary School with effect from 31st August 2021. The proposal is not related to any other school organisation proposal.

3. Reason for closure

The Governing Body have been concerned for some time about the low pupil numbers at the school. This is due to demographic trends and the limited accessibility of the school site. In the academic year 2018-2019, only one pupil joined the school in Reception and this was repeated in the following academic year.

Prior to initiating the consultation, the Governors have worked closely with the Diocese and Gloucestershire County Council to carefully consider a number of options to improve the long term viability of the school, none of which have proved viable. Families are choosing alternative schools in the local area and the ongoing low numbers of pupils will result in pupils not receiving a broad, balanced and effective education, with an appropriate peer group. Social development of pupils is a key issue.

The Governing Body has carefully assessed the situation and unanimously agrees that the school is not viable and should close. There is sufficient capacity within the local school system to offer suitable alternative provision now and into the future.

A six week consultation commenced on 28th January and ended on 6th March. On 9th March the Governing Body approved the publication of a Statutory Notice in relation to the proposed closure of the school. The reasons for proposing to close the school were primarily as a result of the increasing number of surplus places.

The report and supporting documents can be viewed at www.christchurch-chal.gloucs.sch.uk.

Following discussions with relevant officers it is considered that educationally and socially the proposal to close the school is in the best interests of children as it will enable pupils to be educated and supported in settings which can provide a broad, balanced and effective education, with appropriate peer groups.

4. Pupil Numbers and Admission

Christ Church School is a Church of England (C of E) Primary Voluntary Aided School for children aged 4 – 11. The School is located in Chalford, just outside Stroud and offers up to 8 reception places each year, with a total capacity for 56 pupils across all year groups.

Numbers of pupils at the school have fluctuated for many years, but for the last 3 years the number of parents expressing a first preference for the school has noticeably declined. At the point of the decision to move to a Statutory Notice of closure, there were 18 pupils on roll, with none of these in Reception or Year 1.

5. Displaced Pupils

Any pupil displaced as a result of a school closure would be given support and assistance by the Council to obtain a suitable place at another school.

6. Impact on the community

During the consultation period, there were concerns about the impact on the community if the school is closed. In particular, respondents highlighted the loss of village history and tradition that the closure would bring. The community, however, still retains its village hall which is a short walk from the school. If the school were to close, the Diocese of Gloucester would engage with the local community to explore options for future use of the site and consider any potential impact on the community. Concerns were also raised that there are a number of small housing developments with planning approval in the area, and that a school would be required in the future. These developments, however, are small and are likely to yield only a very limited number of pupils who can be accommodated at other schools within the local area.

7. Rural Primary Schools

The school is not designated as a rural primary school under the Designation of Rural Primary Schools (England) Order 2016.

8. Special Educational Needs Provision

The school is not recognised by the local authority as reserved for pupils with special educational needs. Should the proposal be implemented, the Council would work with any pupils who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or may have been identified with additional needs to ensure their needs are met in the most appropriate setting.

9. Balance of denominational provision

The proposed closure would not remove the choice of denominational provision from the area. Should a preference be expressed for a school with a denominational character, Bussage C of E Primary School is situated approximately 1.5 miles from Christ Church C of E Primary. The Diocese has been involved in all discussions at each stage of the process and is supportive of the proposal.

10. Maintained Nursery Schools

Not applicable

11. Sixth form provision

Not applicable

12. Travel

Travel support will remain available in line with the LA's Home to School Transport Policy. Details of this can be found by visiting

<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport>

13. Conclusions

Procedure for making representations (objections and comments)

Within five weeks from the date of publication of this proposal (until 5th May 2020), any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to Angela Wilson, Chair of Governors, Christ Church C of E Primary School, Old Neighbourhood, Chalford, Stroud.

Date of publication 31st March 2020