



Responses to Consultation: Proposal to Change the age range for Cudham Church of England Primary School (the School) from 2 – 11 years to 4 – 11 years from September 2022.

The Aquinas CE Education Trust (the Trust) commenced a consultation from Tuesday 7th June 2022 to Monday 4th July 2022 with all stakeholders and the wider community to gather views on a change in the age range at the School to 4 – 11 years from September 2022 thereby closure of the pre-school at the School due to reasons associated with its financial viability as detailed in the consultation letter dated 7th June 2022.

The consultation closed on 4th July 2022. The Trust received 9 responses to the consultation including the local authority. All responses raised the following issues:

1. The pre-school offers local children a wonderful provision and transition into full time primary school.
2. The pre-school would be financially viable and offer a competitive option to working parents in the area if it was open Monday to Fridays for a minimum of 6 hours to include school hours. This would be similar to other settings in the area, thereby enabling it to compete.
3. The pre-school would offer the School a source of future students. The pre-school is an important element for the future success of the School.
4. The pre-school should invest in better marketing to the wider community in Biggin Hill.
5. Due to the closure of other early years childcare in the area, the closure of the pre-school will result in there being only 2 providers by September 2022.

The Diocese of Rochester appreciated that the pre-school was not sustainable for the reasons detailed in the consultation.

In response to these comments:

1. The pre-school in terms of staffing and facilities is not in a position to provide a provision of at least 30 hours a week.
2. The Trust's expertise does not lie with early years child care, which is a very specialist area in order to ensure the very best provision can be given, to be in a position to be able to put such a provision in place.
3. However, the Trust acknowledges the importance of having such a provision in the locality and its impact on pupil number at the School. Consequently, the Trust is in discussion with a specialist provider with a view to opening a provision of at least 30 hours of childcare a week. The potential new provision will enhance the existing facilities, provide trained staff, expert leaders and will have as its focus a forest school curriculum.
4. The new provider's unique curriculum focus and marketing platform will hopefully improve numbers and provide future pupils for the School.