

Being the best we can be

The Gold Rose MAT
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We would like to invite you to take part in formal consultation on the proposed merger of Cippenham Infant and Cippenham Primary Schools

The Gold Rose MAT is a charitable education trust responsible for the two schools located in Dennis Way and Elmshott Lane in Cippenham, Slough. Cippenham Infant School has a roll of 270 pupils from 5 to 7 years (reception to year 2). Cippenham Primary School has a roll of 840 pupils from 5 to 11 years (reception to year 6).

Our aim

Through this consultation we want to work with you to ensure the schools are able to continue providing the best education possible.

We aspire to excellence and aim to ensure every pupil is able to demonstrate achievements which are personally exceptional. This aspiration will continue to guide us in our decision making.

Trustees have reflected long and hard over several years on the challenges facing the two schools — these deliberations have led us to conclude that merging the two schools is the best option.

The Proposal

Trustees of The Gold Rose MAT are proposing to merge Cippenham Infant School and Cippenham Primary School into one primary school, to be called Cippenham Academy.

The newly merged school will have the same number of pupils on roll, organised into five forms of entry from reception to year 6. There will be one formal admission point in reception year, aged 5, which means that parents with children at the infant school will no longer be required to apply for a place at the primary school in year 3.



Cippenham
INFANT SCHOOL
Excite • Inspire • Care

We hope you will take the time to share your views with us. Anyone associated with the schools can take part, we want to know what you think about our proposed plans.

Why are we proposing this?

There are two major reasons behind the proposal:

The first is educational – running two separate key stage 1 settings means pupils have to adjust to new ways of working in year 3. This can be unsettling and data shows that it can negatively impact pupil progress in juniors.

Merging the two schools renders an extended transition period unnecessary and enables the best practice from both schools to be blended into one outstanding setting. Working alongside colleagues from early years to year 6, enables staff to move more easily between key stages and sharing a larger pool of expertise and guidance will enhance the quality and impact of the education we provide.

The second is financial – because of changes to national funding both schools run extremely tight budgets, and while the trust currently holds reserves, these will be depleted by 2021.

Merging the two schools would give us the opportunity to rationalise expenditure without compromising the quality of education. This would ensure viability in an increasingly difficult financial time.

How will the school be organised?

In order to integrate the two schools and maximise the excellent facilities in each, reception classes will be based in a dedicated and self contained early years area in the primary school. Years 1 and 2 will be located in the current infant school.

The proposal is for the two schools to begin operating as one, newly merged school in September 2020.

How will this impact my child?

The proposal will not affect the current year 1 or year 2 who will move to year 3 in 2019 and 2020 as planned.

Those children joining reception in 2019 will come together in the infant school in September 2020 for year 1.

Parents applying for a reception place to start in September 2020 would apply as normal via Slough Borough Council.

It is anticipated that by the application date for September 2020 admission to junior school (year 3), parents with children already in year 2 at either school will no longer need to apply for a place.

The Consultation Process

We are offering a number of opportunities to meet with us so that we can take the time to talk you through our proposals and answer any questions you may have.

Thursday 14 March 2019
6:00pm – 7:00 pm
Cippenham Infant School Hall

Wednesday 20 March 2019
4:00pm – 5:00pm
Cippenham Primary School Hall

Tuesday 26 March 2019
7:00pm – 8:00pm
Cippenham Primary School Hall

Please feel free to attend any meeting, regardless of location.

How to take part

Option 1

Complete the paper response form and return it to the office at either school site before

Friday 19 April 2019 or by post to:

Company Secretary
Cippenham Infant School
Dennis Way
Slough
SL1 5JP

Option 2

Complete the online response form:

<https://goo.gl/forms/VZHFeFPDGEB51ef13>

before Friday 19 April 2019

Timescales

Friday 8 March 2019

Consultation opens

Friday 19 April 2019

Consultation period closes

Mid May 2019

Post consultation report
published to include
response to consultation
and final proposal

All consultation responses will be received and considered by the trustees of the Gold Rose MAT who will lead the project and respond formally once the consultation process is complete.

Any feedback received after Friday 19 April will not be considered. Trustees will be unable to respond to feedback on an individual basis, however further information and guidance will be shared transparently.

Please note that under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, responses to the consultation may be published on our website. No names or other personal data will be attributed to these responses.



FAQ's

As further questions are raised through the consultation process, the consultation information will be updated to answer these questions

What difference will this make to me and my child?

We think this will make life easier. Prospective parents are often confused about which school to apply for and those who select the infant school have to then make a further application to year 3, with no guarantee of a place. Belonging to one school will enable all children to become familiar with all the facilities and also with all the staff. Processes and policies can be further streamlined, eliminating confusion and duplication.

We are also keen to make sure we don't lose aspects of both schools which are highly valued by parents. Access to teachers, for example, at classroom doors will continue to be an important part of our communication with you.

What impact will this have on staff?

A separate consultation with staff will take place with HR support. We value all our staff and our aim will be to keep such talent within our trust. There will be the same number of classes and children in the newly merged school with enhanced opportunities so we are not anticipating a significant shift in staffing. Much of the rationalisation we need to achieve will come naturally over the coming eighteen months.

Who will lead the new school?

We have asked Mrs Willis to lead the newly merged school. She is currently Executive Principal at the trust so oversees both schools and has the experience and skills we need to blend the two schools together. She will revert to Principal in September 2020 with a leadership team which will be confirmed after the staff consultation. All three current principals are in support of this decision.

Where will the entrance be?

The main formal entrance is likely to be in Elmshott Lane with the Dennis Way entrance for pedestrians, deliveries and staff cars only. Parents will still be able to walk between Elmshott Lane, Dennis Way and St Andrews Way for drop off and pick up.

How will you prevent it still feeling like two schools?

One of the reasons for the proposal is to eliminate the need for an extended and unsettling transition period between year 2 and year 3. We will be very keen to work with all involved in the schools to ensure we have a single approach to the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment. Some practice has already been aligned and staff will now be able to take this work forward as one team. A single leadership team will be in a strong position to ensure smoother transition between all year groups.

We will also be looking carefully at the school grounds to see how we can safely reconfigure current boundaries and create a unified flow to the site.

What happens if the schools don't merge?

We have looked carefully at budget scenarios and our modelling indicates that over a five year period a single school can become financially sustainable in ways that the current schools cannot. Without this change significant cuts to staffing would need to be made in the next 2-3 years. Merging the two schools helps us achieve greater efficiencies and a leaner leadership structure gives us more flexibility in budget to invest in the quality of education.

We are also confident that the merger will be good for standards, helping pupils to aim high and demonstrate achievements that are personally exceptional. Without a sustainable budget and high outcomes, the Regional Schools Commissioner has already indicated that we are vulnerable to a take over by a bigger MAT, thereby losing our strong community ethos, which we all cherish.