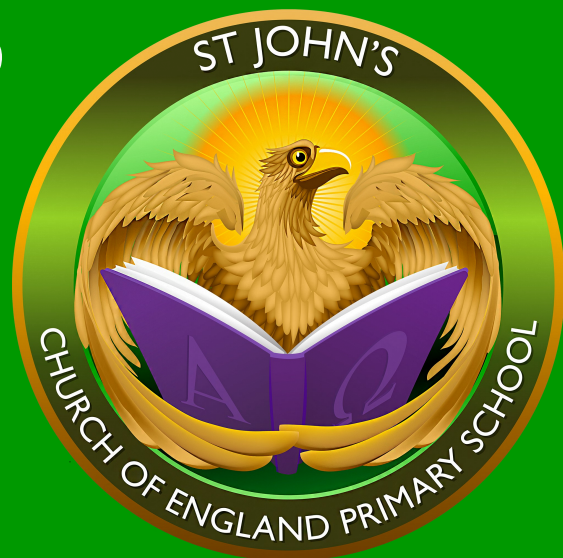


ST JOHN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

- * Educational Excellence
- * Development of the Whole Child
- * Christian Ethos
- * Community Spirit



A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR CENTRAL WATFORD

CONSULTATION REPORT



"I would like to thank everyone who took the time to respond to our consultation. We have always known that there was a need for our new primary school based in central Watford and that we have the support of the community. It is good that, overall, the responses reflect this.

Where concerns have been stated, these have been noted and we will reflect on them and act appropriately."

Mrs Helen Langeveld, Headteacher

Key Points

The S10 Consultation took place over a five week period from 2nd February to 7th March 2016. Prior to this, informal consultation had been in place since March 2014 before to our application to the Department for Education.

- 44 responses were received
- There was overwhelming support for our school, with 37 out of 38 respondents agreeing that the trust should enter into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State. Some respondents did not provide a response to this question.
- Views on the temporary site were mainly positive.
- Views on the permanent site (yet to be announced) were positive, with respondents stating it was important that it was in central Watford.
- There were concerns about the access to external space, and we look forward to sharing our plans for outdoor learning with you when we have completed the design phases.
- Although the majority of respondents thought that our Travel Plan was good and supported the ideology that children should walk, scoot or ride to school, there were concerns over the impact on traffic and parking in the local area. This is an area that will remain as a high priority as we move forwards.

Our Vision

Educational Excellence

Developing the Whole
Child

Christian Ethos

Community Spirit

Our Core Christian Values

Loving your neighbour

Respecting each other

Valuing diversity



The Vision for St John's Church of England Primary School

St John's C of E Primary School is a Free School working in partnership with the Diocese of St Albans. The rationale for the school is to help meet the growing need for more school places, as well as providing the choice of an inclusive church school.

St John's is at the heart of a richly diverse community. The education and services it provides serves the whole community, valuing and making the most of its dynamic blend of ethnicities, languages, cultures and religions. Its extended school learning will widen horizons for both children and adults alike. It will be a social hub for families and carers so that they can see it as a centre of support, care, community and education in its widest sense.

We welcome children from all families - Christian, from other faiths and from no faith backgrounds.

The school and church work together – serving our children and serving our community, to enhance life chances for all. The Christian ethos of St John's will be based on our core Christian values of:

Loving your neighbour, respecting each other and valuing diversity.

Love, Respect and Value are the golden threads weaving throughout the school.

These underpin all elements of school life, and enable every child to develop as a moral, social and spiritual human being. Every child, whatever their background, is valued as a unique child of God, and enabled to grow in confidence and self-belief through their experience of school life at St John's.

St John's provides a stimulating and engaging learning environment where every child, whatever their needs, their language or their background are challenged to succeed. We are a unique educational experience for children in Watford through our Anglican ethos, understanding the needs of the community and the profile of pupils. We are totally committed to high quality education and the improvement of life chances for all.

The vision for the school has four key areas:

- *Educational excellence*
- *Developing the whole child*
- *Christian ethos*
- *Community Spirit*

School place planning projections for Watford Town show that there is a deficit of primary school places, and local planners have stated that central Watford is an area which is least well equipped to deal with the increased need for education. There are numerous new developments in the area that are likely to lead to an increase of families needing primary school places in the near and distant future.

The Proposers

The initial proposal was put forward by St John's incumbent, Fr David Stevenson, in response to his conversations with local families concerned about the lack of spaces and choice in relation to local primary school places. This project has the support of the St Albans Diocese, so St John's will be joining a wider family of church schools (over 100). The Watford St John's Church of England Primary School Trust is a single-academy trust, focusing on the single school of St John's. The members of our Steering Group, who are leading on opening the school, have a strong combination of skills from finance, commerce, community, education and the Diocese. This skill set is also reflected in The Trust itself.

This report will provide information on:

- The informal consultation
- The Formal S10 Consultation:
 - ◊ How we consulted
 - ◊ The Key Findings and the Trust's responses

Appendices

- ◊ List of Key Stakeholders
- ◊ Consultation Booklet
- ◊ The full S10 consultation results

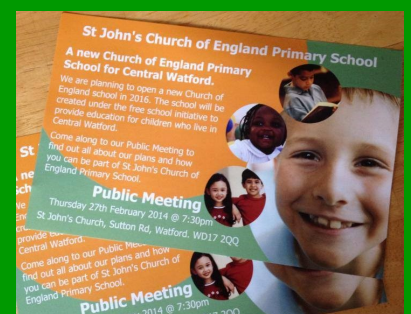
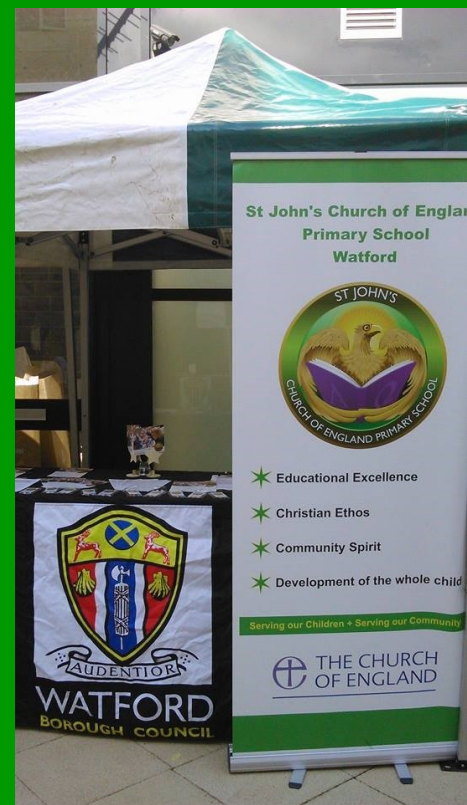
The Informal Consultation

From the very start of this journey, St John's C of E Primary School has engaged with the local community. St John's C of E Primary School has developed an effective working relationship with Hertfordshire County Council, who have been supportive throughout the process.

Prior to applying to the Department for Education, between March and July 2014, support was gained from local parents and 135 families completed our sign up sheet stating that they would like their children to attend St John's in 2015 and beyond (our application to the DfE had a proposed opening of September 2015).

Specifically, the following activities were undertaken to inform parents and community members about the project between March and September 2014

- Volunteer community champions speaking about the project at local playgroups in Watford
- Meetings with the local MP, Richard Harrington, the Mayor, Dorothy Thornhill and Central Ward Councillors.
- An open event for parents and community took place on 27th February 2014.
- Creation of a dedicated website
- Twitter account created
- Facebook awareness through dedicated Facebook page and posts to local parent pages and groups



The Informal Consultation (continued)

Pre-opening (September 2014 to Summer 2015)

- Creation of a specific newsletter
- Continued engagement with key stakeholders and local community through meeting and playgroup visits.

Summer 2015 to January 2016—Campaign to secure applications

- Two bus campaigns – initially in September 2015 with a mixed campaign of bus sides and rears, and then in January 2016 just prior to applications closing, a further campaign ran focusing on the bus rears as our prior research showed that they had the most impact.
- Outdoor static marketing in the Town Centre and close to Watford Junction, a mixture of 6-sheets and bus stops.
- A 4 week period of advertising on petrol pumps at the nearest and largest petrol station (Tesco's).
- Leaflet drop to a wide area where we expected the majority of our applications to come from (including the area where the demand was predicted to be highest for 2016, but was still within walking distance of the school).
- Letters to local churches, community groups and childrens' centres asking them to display leaflets.
- Four Open events for prospective parents (with a drop in session once a week during the application period).
- Articles and advertisements in local magazines targeting families.
- Regular advertising at events held at St John's church.



The Formal S10 Consultation

There is a requirement for all Free Schools to enter into formal consultation prior to entering into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State. Our formal consultation started on 2nd February and ran for a period of 5 weeks. This included one weeks extension due to the letterbox drop taking longer than anticipated.

How we consulted

- The School's website detailed the consultation. This was predominantly signposted on the main landing page with a countdown to the end of consultation clock to indicate the time remaining to respond by.
- Newsletter to those on our mailing list and our applicant families.
- Regular reminders on social media (Facebook and Twitter) signposting to the online consultation survey/school website, which was also posted into local Facebook groups and on community pages targeted at local families.
- Leaflets delivered to every accessible household in Central Ward (which contains both the church and the temporary site) – approx. 1800 in total.
- Consultation booklets and paper response forms were available from the school office and at the church (where our temporary school office is located).



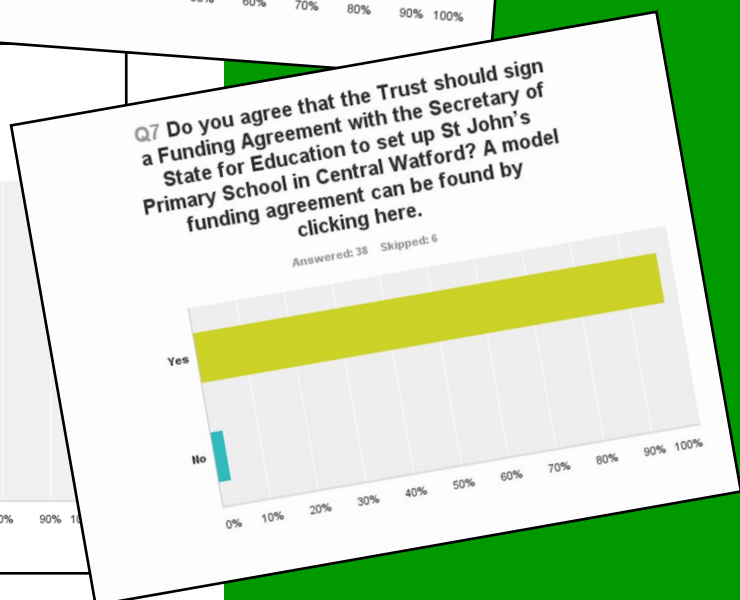
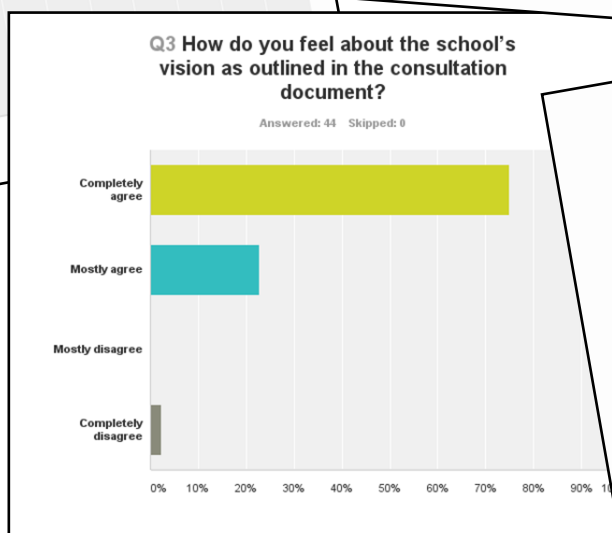
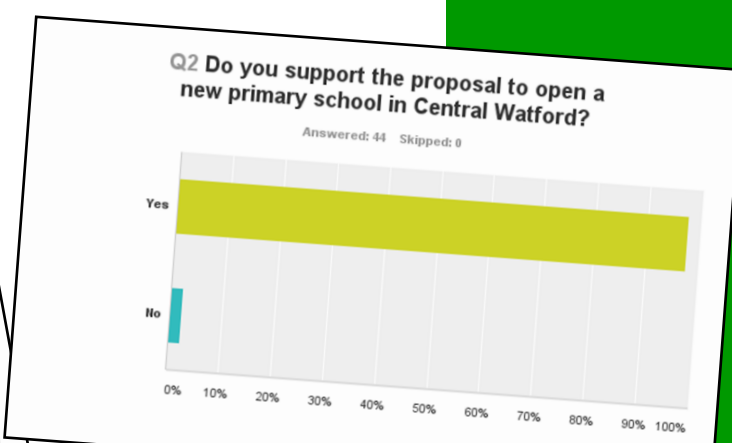
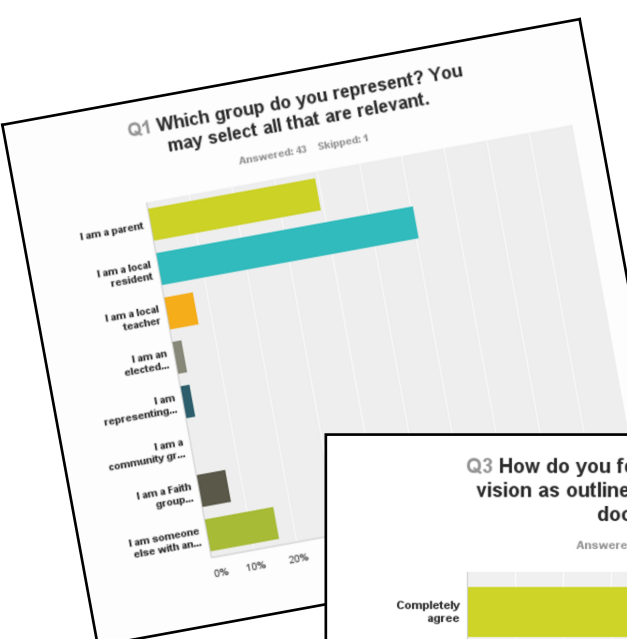
- Consultation booklets and response forms were sent either electronically or via post to key stakeholders (See appendices).

We aimed for a variety of methods of consultation, although our preferred method was electronic communication for ease of access and to provide value in both terms of timescales and money. This was also based upon research into other school's S10 consultations, where it was noted that the majority of responses were via electronic and not physical means. A paper version of the response document was made available at St John's church where the temporary school office is located, or where anyone requested one (there was one such request).

The Key Findings and the Trust's responses

44 responses in total were received from nearly 2,000 invitations to interview, sent to key stakeholders and delivered to local homes, in addition to an unknown reach from visits to the school's website, Facebook and Twitter pages.

Respondents were predominantly parents and local residents. The majority of respondents support the opening of St John's Church of England Primary School, and either mostly or completely agreed with the School's vision. Views in the temporary site were mainly positive although there were concerns which are detailed in the highlighted areas for consideration. Of the 38 respondents who answered Q7 relating to entering into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State, 37 stated that we should enter into such an agreement.



After analysis of all the responses, the following areas have been highlighted for a response. Each of these have been considered by the St John's Project Steering Group.

These areas for consideration are ordered by the consultation booklet questions that they were highlighted in. We have responded to areas of concern, whether they came from single or multiple respondents.

A1: Impact on other local schools with Central Primary being specifically mentioned.

Response: Both the school and the DfE monitor the demand predictions. There is a predicted deficit in September 2016 for primary school places and Central Primary is oversubscribed, all of which the opening of St John's will help to alleviate. There is the necessary demand for an additional primary school in this area, especially given the geographical distribution of primary schools. The St John's team have been meeting with Central Primary (as well as other supportive local schools) and our Headteacher, Mrs Langeveld is looking forward to building on those good relationships.

A2: Concern that a Church of England school with a Christian Ethos cannot be inclusive and will lead to segregation.

Response: The Church of England has a great tradition of educating the children in this country. Traditionally, the Church of England set up schools to educate those who could not afford a private education and not to indoctrinate children into the Church of England. We are proud to carry on that tradition. We are an inclusive school, welcoming to all, and in practice, Church of England schools are inclusive. Equally, from our work in the community and reviewing the applications that we have already received, we are attracting applications and interest from families of other faiths and of no faith.

Our ethos demonstrates the school's commitment to inclusion, education for all and the celebration of all faiths.

A3: Opening the school in temporary accommodation

Response: St John's is opening in response to the demand for primary school places in the area. In order to meet that demand as soon as possible, we will be opening in temporary accommodation. One of the advantages of our temporary accommodation is that our first children will be starting school in a building suited to smaller numbers while the school grows, without overwhelming them.

A4: Impact on the children transitioning from the temporary to permanent sites.

Response: In relation to the transition from temporary site to permanent site and the impact on the children, children are actually very resilient in relation to this. Our pupils may have already have gone from a preschool to a nursery. Equally, if they attend an Infant School, they would have to move to a Junior School. In our case, we would have consistency of staff and resources also transitioning.

St John's will have a plan in place for that transition based upon the needs of the specific children attending our school at that time, and we anticipate that the temporary site will be close to the permanent site so our children will be able to see their school develop.

A5: Access to outdoor space

Response: We have secured temporary accommodation with outdoor space which is sufficient for playtimes at the school. When we require additional space, we are looking to other options within the community, both indoor and outdoor.

We are an urban school, and as such, we are formulating plans to maximise the outdoor learning spaces at both the temporary and permanent site, to make them engaging spaces. In the temporary site we are focusing on a very child-led outdoor learning environment using moveable parts, so that we can change the use of the outdoor space, to make for exciting outdoor learning. This also has the advantage that we can take those familiar objects with us to the permanent site.

At the plan and design stage of the permanent site, we will research best creative use of the available space. Our curriculum will embrace outdoor learning and as well as bringing nature indoors, we will make use of local spaces for outdoor learning.

A6: Travel

There were consistent concerns about impact on local road traffic, parking and the impact on the safety of the children, at both the temporary and permanent sites.

Response: We are an urban school, located in an area where there is demand for primary school places. From talking to our local families, who live in Central Watford, they are expecting to walk their child(ren) to school.

We have known from the start of this project we were going to encourage all children to undertake a healthy journey to school and that, given our location, we expected the majority of our families not to use cars. We have consistently told our prospective parents that this will be a "walk to school" school.

There will be no drop-off at the temporary site (and nor will one be planned at the permanent site) as to drop off in front of either site would lead to dangerous parking and put the children at risk. Safeguarding of our children is always a priority. Should a child have to travel by car, there is a public car park at the end of the road of the temporary site. Provision for children with disabilities will be made. The school will formulate a plan of how to deal with parents who do not abide by this.

One of the respondents summed this up perfectly:

"Car parking and drop of children need to be taken into account. We desperately need more school places in Watford so the issue of cars needs to be overcome."

A7: Air Pollution

Response: Watford Borough Council periodically reviews and assesses air quality in the borough against a range of National Health objectives. This can be viewed on the council's website www.watford.gov.uk . You can also find information on the Beds and Herts Air Quality Monitoring Network www.hertsbedsair.net

A8: Nursery

Support for St John's to have a nursery provision

Response: At present, we are focusing on creating an exceptional educational experience for our first pupils. Once we are established in our permanent site, we can review the possibility of extending to a nursery provision.

A9: Free Schools

Comments were received in support and against the Free Schools Programme.

Response: There is a need for an additional primary school in Watford. Under current legislation, the only way in which a new school can be created is through the Free School programme. We are proud to be able to create a school in central Watford where it is needed.

We believe that being a single school trust, working with the Diocese of St Albans and other local schools, gives us the opportunity to concentrate on the educational needs of our children. The Trust has gone through robust procedures where educational excellence, in all its meanings, has sat at the heart of all decisions.

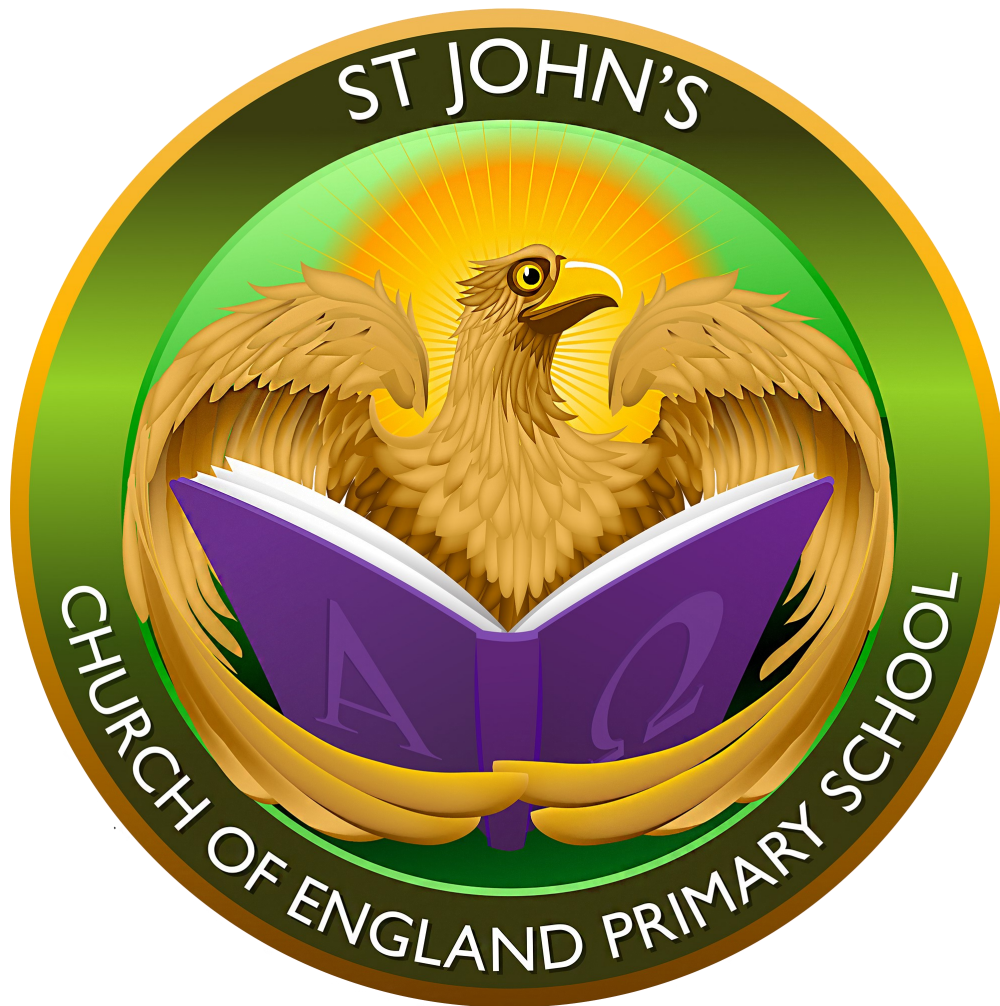
A10: Governance/PTA

Are you forming a PTA? Are you having parent governors? Are you having any Governors from the PCC? (Parochial Parish Council—the governing body of the church).

Response: We will be encouraging our parents/carers to form a fundraising association to support the school. We also plan to have two parent governors elected to the school's Governing Body. With regards to PCC representation on the Governing Body, the vicar of St John's (the incumbent) is a Governor and also a member of the Trust. There is no specific PCC governor proposed on the Governing Body.

Appendices

- ◇ List of Key Stakeholders
- ◇ Consultation Booklet
- ◇ The full S10 consultation results



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