

Consultation Briefing Paper: Coverack School

Given the ongoing decline in pupil numbers and the future demographics, the school is unable to sustain its current class structures now and into the future. The current pupil numbers would mean teaching the whole school as one class [every afternoon]. This would not provide a satisfactorily high quality education for your children, with reception children taught alongside Year 6 children. Teachers would struggle to ensure that all of the learning needs, the breadth of the curriculum, and the statutory assessments points were catered for effectively.

To this end, Trustees are launching a 4-week consultation in line with DFE requirements for a significant change to the school age range from the current age 4-11 to a new Infant only provision, age 4 -7, for Autumn 2021.

Why an Infant School?

Restricting the age range to 4-7 will enable us to provide a quality education for the children in school.

The youngest children will not have to travel from the village.

Moving to an Infant only school will afford the best opportunity to keep the school in the village. This would provide the council with an opportunity to address housing issues and enable the local population to grow again with the hope that the full school age range could be restored.

Why now?

The whole Lizard area has more school places than pupils. For Coverack, a large Year 6 cohort (11 pupils) is leaving the school and only 1 child is coming into the reception class.

The demographics indicate that this is likely to be the case for the foreseeable future. As school funding is linked to pupil numbers, there is insufficient funding to pay for a two class structure going forward. The school deficit is increasing which further affects the ability to provide appropriate resources for the children. Making this move now will help to make the school sustainable.

Whilst the time frame is short, if the proposal is approved, it is best that children start at their new school as soon as possible in the academic year. If the outcome is delayed or the case turned down, the children will be taught in a whole school class as described above; if numbers continue to decline, it may be necessary to increase the amount of whole class time provision.

Why have we not been made aware before?

We know there has been some speculation circulating about pupil numbers at the school. Once numbers of September were confirmed, we have pulled together the case for change and taken advice as to the next steps. Given the restrictions during Covid we have not been able to bring parents together to begin the consultation.

What happens to the current KS2 children if the proposal goes ahead?

The Council will provide a list of available places in others schools and parents will be able to express their preference. Decisions will be made using the admissions criteria for those schools.

Transport will be provided to the next nearest school if the need falls in line with council transport policy.

What now?

The consultation period begins on Thursday 27th May and will close on Thursday 24th June. If you have any queries you wish to raise to help with your consideration of the proposal, please email kteague@southerlypoint.co with the Subject: Coverack Consultation. Please submit your final responses to the consultation via the Google form link on your child's school account: <https://forms.gle/UeMmiB9ANQo6VWjNA> or by completion / return of the attached form on or before 24th June.

The outcomes of the consultation and case for the suggested change will be considered by the Regional Schools Commissioner's Office at the beginning of July. The outcome will be communicated to you as soon as possible thereafter.