

Rockland St Mary and Surlingham Primary School Federation

Walnut Hill, Surlingham, Norwich NR14 7DQ
Tel/Fax: 01508 538214
Email: office@surlingham.norfolk.sch.uk
Web: www.surlingham.school.co.uk



School Lane, Rockland St Mary, Norwich, NR14 7EU
Tel/Fax: 01508 538345
Email: office@rockland-st-mary.norfolk.sch.uk
Web: www.rockland-st-mary.norfolk.sch.uk

Consultation on proposed change of age ranges at Rockland St Mary and Surlingham Primary Schools.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline proposed changes to the provision at Rockland St Mary Primary and Surlingham Primary Schools by changing the age ranges at both schools so that:

- **Rockland St Mary Primary** has Early Years and Key Stage One provision for children aged 2 to 7 with pre-school to Year 2.
- **Surlingham Primary** has Key Stage Two provision for children aged 7 to 11 with Year 3 to Year 6.

Admission arrangements for the two schools would change accordingly.

The proposed age range change at Rockland St Mary Primary includes new provision for children who are of pre-school age. This involves working with the existing local provider Sunbeams Pre-School, based in Bramerton, who would become part of the Sapientia Education Trust.

This consultation will run for 6 weeks from **3 June to 14 July**. The Local Governing Body, Sapientia Education Trust and Sunbeams Pre-School will consider all comments received during the consultation period. We are consulting with all relevant stakeholders as required by law when proposing to make changes to school age range arrangements.

2. Why we are proposing this change

Change in age range for the schools:

Governors at Rockland St Mary and Surlingham Primary Schools would like to make our schools the first choice for local families by giving children the best education and opportunities for larger friendship groups. This is the main motivation behind our proposal.

We have seen significant improvements in teaching, leadership and opportunities for children at both schools since joining Sapientia Education Trust in September 2017. But with the schools situated so close together, the number of children in each year remains low, and means that some will go through their primary education with just a handful of friends and peers to work with. It also means that classes have to be mixed age, which creates additional challenges for teaching, particularly in light of the new Ofsted framework.

Rockland St Mary and Surlingham Primary School Federation

Walnut Hill, Surlingham, Norwich NR14 7DQ
Tel/Fax: 01508 538214
Email: office@surlingham.norfolk.sch.uk
Web: www.surlingham.school.co.uk



School Lane, Rockland St Mary, Norwich, NR14 7EU
Tel/Fax: 01508 538345
Email: office@rockland-st-mary.norfolk.sch.uk
Web: www.rockland-st-mary.norfolk.sch.uk

Consultation on proposed change of age ranges at Rockland St Mary and Surlingham Primary Schools.

The two schools have worked closely together for many years, being overseen by the same leadership and governance. This is not the first time we have considered the benefits that changing the age ranges could bring for our children. In the past we have informally moved some pupils after registration to bring year groups together to create more focused teaching (for example for Year 6 children) and increasingly bring children together for trips and learning opportunities outside of school.

We recognise that this proposal comes at a time when some other Norfolk schools are moving away from the Infant and Junior model. However, we firmly believe that it is the right thing for our schools and there is no intention to merge or close one of them either now or in the future.

Introducing pre-school provision at Rockland St Mary Primary:

Many families are now entitled to 30 hours per week of funded early years education. At present it is not possible for Sunbeams Pre-School to provide this due to restrictions on availability of their current premises in Bramerton. This impacts upon usage of Sunbeams and in turn their longer-term viability.

There is known demand in the local area for additional childcare. A survey of parents locally with children below school age undertaken in April 2018 identified high demand for additional provision. 82% of families indicated that they would be interested in pre-school provision that was available all day.

The Sunbeams Committee and Governors of Rockland and Surlingham Primary schools are proposing to relocate this pre-school provision to the Rockland St Mary school site from September 2020. This would mean that Sunbeams closes in its current form and becomes part of Sapientia Education Trust. The move would allow dedicated classroom space for the pre-school and enable hours of operation to be extended.

3. What are the benefits

Sapientia Education Trust, governors at Rockland and Surlingham Primary Schools and the Sunbeams Committee believe this proposal will have the following benefits:

Opportunity for single year classes: Where the number of children in each year group is large enough we will be able to have a dedicated class and teacher for that year. This will dramatically improve the focus of teaching, allowing staff to give more targeted support for those who need it and greater stretch for the more able children. We know that some years

Rockland St Mary and Surlingham Primary School Federation

Walnut Hill, Surlingham, Norwich NR14 7DQ
Tel/Fax: 01508 538214
Email: office@surlingham.norfolk.sch.uk
Web: www.surlingham.school.co.uk



School Lane, Rockland St Mary, Norwich, NR14 7EU
Tel/Fax: 01508 538345
Email: office@rockland-st-mary.norfolk.sch.uk
Web: www.rockland-st-mary.norfolk.sch.uk

Consultation on proposed change of age ranges at Rockland St Mary and Surlingham Primary Schools.

currently will not support this due to low combined numbers. However, we will ensure that these children also see the benefit, for example by creating more informal opportunities for dedicated teaching.

Larger friendship groups: More children in each year will mean children can have larger friendship groups at school and more peers to work with in class.

Before & after school clubs: More children of the same age in each school will enable us to provide an enhanced before and after school club offer.

Pre-school: These changes will allow the opportunity to introduce a pre-school, working with Sunbeams, providing much needed childcare for younger children in our villages. Our Executive Head Teacher, Mrs Humphrey, has recent experience of successfully incorporating a separate nursery into a primary school.

Better learning environments: With fewer year groups in each school we can ensure that learning resources, school facilities and outdoor areas are much more tailored to the age of the children.

Improved staff retention and wellbeing: Both schools have lost good teachers over the last few years and feedback indicates this is partly due to our current mixed age classes model. Should the proposal go ahead teachers will be able to focus on one particular year group and those with similar year groups will be able to work alongside each other in the same school. Initial staff responses to the proposal have been overwhelmingly positive.

Greater sustainability: We know that having mixed aged classes and small year groups puts some parents off sending their children to our schools. This proposal, alongside good teaching and learning opportunities, will attract more children which is essential for the school's longer-term sustainability.

4. What it will mean for the children

The changes would mean that children have the opportunity to be in single year classes with a dedicated teacher and support staff for their age group. There is much research nationally on the pros and cons of mixed age classes. Key benefits of single age classes for the children include:

- Specific focus on the curriculum required for that age, with more targeted teaching and less repetition of material;
-

Rockland St Mary and Surlingham Primary School Federation

Walnut Hill, Surlingham, Norwich NR14 7DQ
Tel/Fax: 01508 538214
Email: office@surlingham.norfolk.sch.uk
Web: www.surlingham.school.co.uk



School Lane, Rockland St Mary, Norwich, NR14 7EU
Tel/Fax: 01508 538345
Email: office@rockland-st-mary.norfolk.sch.uk
Web: www.rockland-st-mary.norfolk.sch.uk

Consultation on proposed change of age ranges at Rockland St Mary and Surlingham Primary Schools.

- More opportunity for staff to tailor support to meet specific needs, or differentiate teaching, due to a narrower range of abilities overall within the class;
- More children undertaking the same task to work with;
- Less opportunity for younger children to be intimidated by older children in the class.

Research suggests that these distinctions are most marked in the early years of schooling. The mixed Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 approach we currently have means that children who have recently turned 4 are currently in the same class as others aged 7. The challenges of teaching this class are increased by the new Ofsted Framework, which focuses more on the quality of education against the curriculum. Whilst this is a positive move, for this Reception, Year 1 and 2 class there are two completely separate curriculums that need teaching.

Children who attend the pre-school will have the opportunity to become familiar with the school environment at an earlier age, making transition into Reception easier for some. Friendships that develop in pre-school can also continue into primary education, creating greater stability for children.

Should this change go ahead all children will transition from Rockland St Mary Primary to Surlingham Primary School when they reach Year 3. As the schools are very closely aligned and managed there will be lots of activities to support children in this and help them to become familiar with the other school and teaching staff prior to making the change.

The school curriculum and initiatives used to teach this will remain the same – with Talk4Writing and Maths Mastery remaining key features alongside outdoor learning opportunities.

5. What will it mean for parents/carers?

It is recognised that some families with more than one child will need, at times, to drop their children at different schools. To ensure this is possible school start and finish times will be staggered. Many children currently walk or bike to school and we know there are concerns from parents and the wider community about the impact the proposal will have on transport and parking. We are looking into a number of options that would support parents and reduce this impact. This includes talking to Norfolk County Council about transport provision and an assessment of the route between the two villages.

Rockland St Mary and Surlingham Primary School Federation

Walnut Hill, Surlingham, Norwich NR14 7DQ
Tel/Fax: 01508 538214
Email: office@surlingham.norfolk.sch.uk
Web: www.surlingham.school.co.uk



School Lane, Rockland St Mary, Norwich, NR14 7EU
Tel/Fax: 01508 538345
Email: office@rockland-st-mary.norfolk.sch.uk
Web: www.rockland-st-mary.norfolk.sch.uk

Consultation on proposed change of age ranges at Rockland St Mary and Surlingham Primary Schools.

There will be enhanced provision of wrap around care with a Breakfast Club and After School Club available every day of the week at both schools. There is a question about the times of operation in the consultation questionnaire.

Moving the pre-school to Rockland St Mary Primary will result in some logistical changes. This includes:

- An enhancement in the number of hours the pre-school is open, likely to coincide with school times, which would allow parents to make full use of the 30 hours of free childcare;
- Specific times for pick up and drop off
- Potential for children to have a hot meal from the school kitchen
- Potential for breakfast and after school club

The pre-school will be managed by Mrs Marsden, the Early Years Lead for Rockland and Surlingham Primary Schools.

The two schools currently have different uniforms. We are seeking feedback as part of the consultation on the approach we should take with uniform should the proposal go ahead. There will be flexibility to support parents in the transition with this.

6. What will it mean for staff at the school or Sunbeams?

All staff at Sunbeams will be offered the opportunity to transfer to Sapientia Education Trust, and would not experience a change in their employment contracts as a result. They would become part of Rockland St Mary Primary, be overseen by the school's leadership and receive access to training and support alongside all other school staff. Inspection of pre-school provision by Ofsted would happen as part of the Primary School's usual Ofsted inspection.

All school staff are contracted to work for Sapientia Education Trust across both schools so no change in contracts are envisaged. Some staff however will have a change in their usual place of work, depending on the year group they teach or support.

School staff will predominantly move to teaching single year groups. Initial feedback from teachers indicates that many are enthusiastic about the opportunity this will provide. There is concern about the additional demands the new Ofsted Framework will place on teaching mixed age classes and the proposal, should it go ahead, will undoubtedly improve staff retention rates.

Rockland St Mary and Surlingham Primary School Federation

Walnut Hill, Surlingham, Norwich NR14 7DQ
Tel/Fax: 01508 538214
Email: office@surlingham.norfolk.sch.uk
Web: www.surlingham.school.co.uk



School Lane, Rockland St Mary, Norwich, NR14 7EU
Tel/Fax: 01508 538345
Email: office@rockland-st-mary.norfolk.sch.uk
Web: www.rockland-st-mary.norfolk.sch.uk

Consultation on proposed change of age ranges at Rockland St Mary and Surlingham Primary Schools.

As mentioned above the focus of the curriculum and initiatives at the schools will not change.

7. How will admission arrangements be affected?

Under this proposal the two primary schools will remain separate with their own unique school number. We are not proposing to move towards one school over two sites. This means that each school will have their own admission requirements and there will be a process for children moving from Rockland St Mary to Surlingham Primary when they reach Year 3.

Rockland St Mary Primary would become like a feeder school for Surlingham Primary. We will structure our Admissions Policy to ensure that children at Rockland are assured a place at Surlingham, and will support parents so that the admissions process is as simple and quick as possible.

8. Key timescales

Ultimately it is the Department for Education (DfE) who will make a decision on changing the age ranges at both schools and there is a formal process around applying for the change. Key timescales for this are below.

3 June – 14 July:	Consultation on changing the age ranges
July/August 2019:	Full consideration of consultation responses
September 2019:	Governor decision on whether to apply to DfE for changes
October 2019:	Governors apply to DfE
December 2019:	Likely decision from the DfE
January 2020:	Changes to admission requirements
September 2020:	Age range changes come into effect at both schools

9. How you can have your say

A survey has been developed to capture people's feedback. The results of this are primarily what Governors will use to take a decision on whether to move ahead with the proposal. We would encourage anyone with an interest in the schools to complete it.

The survey is available online:

Rockland St Mary and Surlingham Primary School Federation

Walnut Hill, Surlingham, Norwich NR14 7DQ
Tel/Fax: 01508 538214
Email: office@surlingham.norfolk.sch.uk
Web: www.surlingham.school.co.uk



School Lane, Rockland St Mary, Norwich, NR14 7EU
Tel/Fax: 01508 538345
Email: office@rockland-st-mary.norfolk.sch.uk
Web: www.rockland-st-mary.norfolk.sch.uk

Consultation on proposed change of age ranges at Rockland St Mary and Surlingham Primary Schools.

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/RSMSPS/>

It is also available at the back of this consultation document, from reception at either school, from Sunbeams staff or it can be printed off the school website (address below). Please leave any completed hardcopies of the survey with Sunbeams staff or in the box in the foyer of either Rockland St Mary or Surlingham Primary school.

Governors will be available to answer questions about the proposal at both school fetes:

- Surlingham Summer Fair Sunday 9 June 12pm-3pm
- Rockland Summer Fete Saturday 22 June 11am-2pm

Drop in events

- Available on the school gate
 - Rockland St Mary - Tuesday 11th and Thursday 13th 8.30-9am
 - Surlingham Primary – Tuesday 18th at 8.45am and 3pm
- Wider community meeting on 17th June at 6pm – venue TBC

It is important that all responses are received by 14 July. All responses will be anonymous and treated confidentially.

10. Further information

This proposal and frequently asked questions will be posted on the school's website
<https://rocklandsurlingham.org.uk>

Survey on Proposed Age Range Changes

Question 1:

To what extent do you support the proposal to change the age ranges at Rockland St Mary Primary and Surlingham Primary Schools so that:

Rockland St Mary Primary has Early Years and Key Stage 1 provision for children aged 2 to 7

Surlingham Primary has Key Stage 2 provision for children aged 7 to 11

- Strongly support the proposal
- Support the proposal
- Not sure
- Against the proposal
- Strongly against the proposal

Question 2:

To what extent do you support the proposal to create a pre-school at Rockland St Mary Primary, working with Sunbeams?

- Strongly support the proposal
- Support the proposal
- Not sure
- Against the proposal
- Strongly against the proposal

Question 3:

Do you agree that the proposal will deliver the following benefits to children at the schools?

	Agree	Disagree
Better education or teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Larger friendship groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better learning environments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved staff retention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Greater sustainability of the schools overall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 4:

What concerns do you have about the proposal?

Survey on Proposed Age Range Changes

Question 5:

As part of the proposal we will improve breakfast and after school club facilities, creating a consistent offer available every day of the week at both schools.

What time best suits your needs for the **Breakfast Club** to start?

- 7:30am
- 7:45am
- 8:00am
- 8:15am
- 8:30am

What time best suits your needs for the **After School Club** to finish?

- 4:00pm
- 4:30pm
- 5:00pm
- 5:30pm
- 6:00pm

Please leave this question blank if it is not applicable or you would not use.

Question 6:

What do you think we should do about school uniform?

- Retain existing uniforms for Rockland and Surlingham
- Have a new uniform that's the same for both schools
- No uniform
- No view
- Other (please specify):

Question 7:

If you are a parent or carer of a child at the school or pre-school and this proposal goes ahead, what activities do you think would help to ensure your child settles well into the new arrangement? Tick all that apply.

- Taster sessions at the new school
- Events for children to meet new classmates
- Opportunity to meet the teacher
- Events for parents
- Video blogs
- Other (please specify):

Survey on Proposed Age Range Changes

Question 8:

Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the proposal?

Question 9:

What is your current relationship to the schools or pre-school?

- Parent/carer of a child at the school or pre-school
- Future parent/carer of a child at the school or pre-school
- I'm a child at the school or pre-school
- Member of staff at the school or pre-school
- School Governor or Committee Member of Sunbeams
- Local Resident
- Local Authority
- Nearby school or pre-school
- Other

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this consultation

Please hand completed hard copies of this survey into Sunbeams Staff or drop it into the box in the foyer of either Rockland St Mary or Surlingham Primary Schools.

You can also complete it online:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/RSMSPS/>