



EQUA Mead
Learning Trust

Public
Consultation – Monday 21st September –
Monday 26th October 2026

Proposed Change of Age Range of Urchfont CE School

Introduction

This brief document helps to explain the proposals and the steps of this process, including:

- the background to proposals;
- who can propose and decide on changes;
- what is being proposed;
- why it is being proposed;
- the impact of the proposals;
- how and when the proposals if agreed would be implemented;
- how to submit a consultation response; and
- what happens at the end of the consultation period.

If you require any additional information not included in this document to enable you to make a response, please contact schooloffice@urchfont.equamead.org
or pskippp@equamead.org

Address	Urchfont CE Primary School Cuckoo Corner Urchfont Devizes SN10 4 RA
Email	schooloffice@urchfont.equamead.org
Phone number	01380 840793

Have your say...

It is very important that all those involved or have an interest have a say. We welcome your views.

If you have any questions or would like to comment on the proposal, please contact the school office via their email address: schooloffice@urchfont.equamead.org

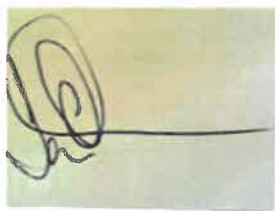
If you would prefer to represent your view on paper, we would ask that you drop it into the school or post your response.

The four week consultation period commences on Monday 21st September and closes at noon on Monday 26th October 2026 . It is very important that all those wishing to respond to these proposals do so within this timeframe.

Yours sincerely,



Catherine Groves
Headteacher



Ian Walker
Chair of Local
Governing Body



Paul Skipp
EQUA Mead CEO

School Details

Name and Address:	Urchfont CE Primary School Cuckoo Corner Urchfont Devizes SN10 4 RA		
Status:	Academy		
Ofsted Rating / Date:	Good		
Current age range:	4 to 11	Proposed age range:	2 to 11
Total pupil capacity as of 1 st September 2026:	112	Proposed total pupil capacity	132
Number of new places requested	20		

Proposal

EQUA Mead Learning Trust is seeking approval to merge Urchfont Pre-School with Urchfont CE Primary School, extending the school's age range from 4-11 to 2-11.

This proposed change reflects our commitment to providing high-quality education and care, supporting families, and ensuring that every child has the best possible start in life. By bringing the pre-school and primary school together, we aim to provide a consistent and nurturing environment that supports children's development from the earliest stages through to Year 6. With both settings already sharing a site and benefiting from a strong, working relationship, this merger represents a natural and positive progression. It would strengthen the continuity of education and care, reduce transitions for children and families, and enable a more cohesive curriculum approach. Furthermore, the integration would allow for shared resources and expertise, fostering professional collaboration among staff while enhancing the sense of community and belonging for families. Ultimately, this merger would create even greater opportunities for children to thrive and succeed.

Rationale for the Change

- Enhanced Early Years Provision:** Extending the age range to include 2 and 3-year-olds allows us to provide consistent and high-quality Early Years education. Research consistently shows that high-quality early childhood education has a significant positive impact on children's social, emotional, and cognitive development. This early foundation contributes to improved academic outcomes and personal growth throughout a child's schooling journey.
- Strengthening the School's Role in the Community:** By incorporating younger children, Urchfont CE Primary School can become a central hub for families, fostering stronger relationships between the school and the wider community. Parents will benefit from having a single, trusted institution to support their child's development from an earlier age.
- Improved Transition to Primary Education:** Offering education for 2- to 4-year-olds will create a seamless transition into Reception, reducing anxiety for both children and parents. Children who start their educational journey at Urchfont CE Primary School from the age of 2 will already be familiar with the school environment, staff and routines, fostering a sense of security and readiness to learn.
- Meeting Local Demand:** There is a growing demand for accessible, high-quality early years education in the local area. Expanding our provision would address this need, ensuring that local families have access to excellent care and education without needing to seek alternative providers.

5. **Enhancing the School's Sustainability:** Broadening the age range can contribute to the school's long-term sustainability. Increased enrolment from younger age groups can bolster the school's roll numbers and ensure that more families remain with the school for the entirety of their children's primary education.

Changing the age range of Urchfont CE Primary School to 2-11 represents an exciting opportunity to enrich the lives of children and families in our community. It reflects the school's commitment to aspirational learning, and an inclusive and nurturing ethos, where every learner is celebrated as an individual. By investing in Early Years provision, we can create a stronger, more cohesive educational journey for our learners and ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive from the earliest possible stage.

Quality of Provision and Breadth of Curriculum

Both Urchfont Pre-School and Urchfont Primary CE Primary School are proud to have been graded as 'Good' in their most recent Ofsted inspections, reflecting the high standards of education and care provided at both settings. This shared commitment to excellence ensures that children receive a strong foundation for learning and development. The Pre-School offers a nurturing environment where children thrive in their early years, while the primary school builds on this with high-quality teaching and a broad, engaging curriculum. Together, these institutions are well-placed to provide a cohesive and supportive educational journey from age 2 to 11.

The staff in both institutions have a range of expertise which covers the full primary curriculum. In addition, this change will allow the Pre-school staff the opportunity to work closely with other EQUA Mead schools to share best practice and ensure their provision and the quality of education is up to date and of high quality.

The proposed changes will have no detrimental impact on the quality of education for any of its pupils. In addition, despite the changes, the school will benefit from further specialist facilities.

Who can propose and decide the changes?

Expansion & Change of Age Range

Academy schools may propose to expand their physical capacity and/or change the age range of their school (including adding or removing a nursery provision or sixth form provision) by submitting a Tier 1 application to the Department for Education.

The DfE Regions Group will review the application and either approve, or if risks or concerns are identified, escalate to Tier 2 or Tier 3. Tier 3 applications can be determined by the Regional Director who may seek the assistance of their Advisory Board. Where the change is contentious or particularly complex, applications may be escalated to the relevant minister or Secretary of State for a decision.

The Impact of the Proposal

EQUA Mead Learning Trust is committed to supporting schools. These proposals are expected to provide the following benefits to the community of Urchfont Primary CE Primary School:

- every child has a clear and transparent education journey;
- the school is supported to deliver good education outcomes in a stable and known education system; and
- the school to deliver a full curriculum and remain sustainable and financially viable.

Accommodation Required

No additional accommodation is required to support this change, as the Pre-School is already on the existing site.

How and when, if approved, would the proposals be implemented?

If approved by the Department for Education, we aim to implement this change at an appropriate point during the next academic year, providing an even broader foundation of support and education for children in our community.

What happens next?

How the Decision will be Made

At the end of the consultation period, EQUA Mead Learning Trust will consider any issues that have been raised before deciding whether to publish or submit statutory proposals to make changes.

The Trust, in partnership with Urchfont CE Primary School, will consider evidence from various sources to reach a considered view on the merits of the proposal. The following factors will be considered:

- Response to the public consultation;
- Quality of education provision at the schools;
- Ability of the school to manage the proposed change to support the continued improvements at the school;
- Demand for places at the school and in the local area; and
- Funding to cover the capital costs of the proposed change has been secured, and that there are no issues with the school's current budget and/or finances. In the case of expansions, academies must show they have sufficient funding for additional pupils, until lagged funding is received.

Submission of Formal Proposals

EQUA Mead will take note of issues raised during the consultation. At the conclusion of the consultation period, a decision will be made whether to submit a formal proposal to the decision makers, requesting their support.

Regional Schools Commissioner Decisions

For Academy schools, the Academy Trust Board will then submit a Tier 1 application to the DfE Regions Group alongside any requests to vary school admission arrangements.

The DfE will consider a range of factors and make a balanced judgement when deciding whether to approve or reject a proposal. The DfE may also defer the approval pending further evidence. Where proposed changes are particularly controversial and could attract adverse public or press attention; the DfE may choose to escalate such proposed changes to the Secretary of State for a decision.

Finally

It is important that we hear the views of our stakeholders, therefore, please take time to contact us.

