



# LEO Academy Trust Consultation on the proposed extension of the age range at Polesden Lacey Infant Academy



# Consultation on the proposed extension of the age range at Polesden Lacey Infant Academy from 2 - 11 to 7 - 11 Years

## Introduction

Polesden Lacey Academy Committee Members and LEO Academy Trust seek your views on a proposal to extend the school's age range from 2–7 years to 2–11 years, effective September 2027. If approved, the school will transition to become Polesden Lacey Primary Academy

## Background Context and Rationale

Local authorities across England, including Surrey, are experiencing a significant fall in pupil numbers. Surrey's Reception intake fell by 11% (1,424 children) between October 2016 and October 2025. This decline, attributed to lower birth rates and families leaving the area, has reduced funding for Surrey schools due to surplus places

Polesden Lacey Infant Academy faces similar challenges with fluctuating birth rates. The current structure forces a "cliff-edge" transition after Year 2, where pupils must leave for Junior school. This proposal ensures the school's long-term financial sustainability and provides continuous, high-quality primary education

By reducing the Published Admission Number (PAN) to 15, the school can remain small and nurturing while ensuring classes are full and financially viable. This creates a sustainable "village-feel" primary option, meeting community demand for a close-knit learning environment. The Trust seeks to protect the school's high-quality education and unique Forest School ethos

## Why are we consulting you?

The low number of children attending this small rural school makes exploring organisation options necessary to promote sustainability and secure the school's future. Your comments on this proposal are vital to the decision-making process.

## Polesden Lacey Infant Academy

Polesden Lacey Infant Academy is a one-form entry school (PAN 30, capacity 90). The onsite playschool extended the age range to 2–7 years in November 2025. Falling rolls (from 84 in Oct 2016 to 63 in Oct 2025) are largely due to the lack of a clear Key Stage 2 pathway, leading families to seek all-through primary provision.

Recent changes and proposed changes to admissions policies at local schools have further reduced parental choice for Year 3, impacting Reception applications.

## How would this proposal work?

If approved, the school will become a primary school, offering education from Reception through Year 6.

**Incremental Growth:** The school will grow year-on-year, starting with the current Year 2 cohort transitioning to Year 3 in September 2027. Pupils will no longer need to apply for a separate junior school place.

**Admission Number (PAN) Reduction:** The Published Admission Number (PAN) for new Reception intakes will be reduced from 30 to 15, effective September 2027.

**Capacity:** Overall capacity will increase from 90 to 105 places. This increase does not require a statutory process.

To facilitate the transition to a primary school, the Trust will submit a significant change request to the DfE to reduce the Published Admissions Number (PAN) from 30 to 15, effective September 2027. Furthermore, to successfully implement the transfer to a full primary school structure, the Trust may need to temporarily cap pupil numbers in Reception, Year 1, and Year 2, depending on current enrollment.

The school would move to a **four-class model** to maximize resources and teaching expertise:

- **Class 1:** Nursery & Reception (Early Years Foundation Stage)
- **Class 2:** Year 1 & Year 2 (Key Stage 1)
- **Class 3:** Year 3 & Year 4 (Lower Key Stage 2)
- **Class 4:** Year 5 & Year 6 (Upper Key Stage 2)

Nursery provision for pupils from 2 years old will continue.

## What would this proposal mean for the children?

The school will grow incrementally to Year 6. The Year 2 cohort (July 2027) will be the first to transition to Year 3 automatically in September 2027. Parents will not need to submit a junior application. Parents who wish to apply to an alternative Year 3 school may still submit a junior application by 15th January 2027 or an in-year application

The move to a mixed-age model is a proven and successful approach for small schools. Benefits include:

**Flexible Grouping:** Teachers group children by ability and developmental stage, not just age.

**Peer Mentoring:** Older children support younger peers, and younger children are inspired by older role models.

**Stable Relationships:** Children stay with the same teacher for two years, ensuring a deeper understanding of individual needs.

**Educational Continuity:** Children complete their entire primary journey within the LEO Academy Trust, supported by shared resources, expert subject leads, and innovative technology.

### **What would it mean for the staff?**

The school will require a fourth teacher and additional support staff as it grows. These roles will be filled via usual recruitment practices. Staff will also receive development opportunities to support them in teaching mixed-age classes

### **Would there be any changes to the school buildings?**

The current high-quality facilities are suitable for the four-class primary model. Minor internal reconfigurations may occur to meet Key Stage 2 curriculum requirements (e.g., specific science or art resources).

### **Consultation Period**

The consultation will run for 4 weeks from 1st May 2026 to 29th May 2026.

**How do I respond to this consultation?** We welcome the views of parents, staff, local residents, and the wider community. Your feedback is vital to the decision-making process. You can respond by:

**Completing the Online Survey** via: [Google Form](#)

**Attending the Public Meeting** to be held at the School Hall 12th May 2026 between 10am - 11am.

Attending and online consultation public meeting [link](#) on 14th May at 6.30 pm.

**Making a Written Submission** to:

- The School Office Polesden Lacey Infants Academy 2 Oakdene Cl, Great Bookham, Leatherhead KT23 4PT

Email via: [PLConsultation@leoacademytrust.co.uk](mailto:PLConsultation@leoacademytrust.co.uk)

**The LEO Academy Trust**

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