



## Consultation on the Proposed Expansion of Orchard Nursery to Include Children Under 3 Years of Age

15th September 2025

Dear Stakeholder,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Governing Body of The Coombes CE Primary School regarding a proposal to alter the school's nursery provision. This letter serves as formal notice of a consultation on the proposed expansion of our Orchard Nursery which will include admitting children from two to three years of age. The proposed effective date for this change is January 2026.

### The proposal

Currently, the Orchard Nursery admits children in the academic year prior to their entry into Reception. In response to increased demand for high-quality early years places across the local community and following discussions with Wokingham Borough Council, the school has been offered funding through the Expansion of Childcare Capital Grant. The proposal is to expand the existing Orchard Nursery capacity from 26 places to 39 places. Of the 13 additional spaces created, 5 will be for children aged 2–3 years. This expansion is designed to increase the number of places available for children to access their government-funded entitlement and to support the wider network of early years providers in meeting local demand. The change will also support Wokingham Borough Council in fulfilling its statutory duty to ensure there is sufficient early years childcare for working families.

### Rationale for the proposed change

- Government funded entitlements: As of September 2025, working parents of children under the age of five are entitled to 30 hours of government-funded childcare per week which has created a need for additional places.
- Best start in life: The Department for Education recognises the crucial role of school-based nurseries in giving children the best start in life particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The
- Coombes CE Primary School is in a strong position to extend its good practices and provide more children in the local community with this foundation.

### Benefits of expansion:

- It will enable our Orchard Nursery to admit children under 3, widening access to early childcare for local families.
- It will provide additional places in our popular nursery supporting local families in securing funded childcare at an earlier stage.

- It will strengthen early years provision across Wokingham by contributing to the sufficiency of high-quality places.
- It will enhance the continuity of learning and development for children, potentially leading to a smoother transition into Reception.

### **Statutory information required**

- The Governing Body has consulted with the Department for Education for their advice which is a statutory requirement before publishing these proposals.
- The expansion will require internal re-development of a small area within the existing Nursery premises which involves following the 'prescribed alterations' statutory process, securing necessary capital funding and adhering to all statutory legislation.
- The freeholder of the school site, Keys Academy Trust has been consulted on this proposed alteration.

### **Consultation process and next steps**

In line with the Cabinet Office's Consultation Principles, we are committed to ensuring clarity, inclusivity and accessibility. We therefore invite views from parents, carers, staff, local schools, nurseries and other community stakeholders.

The consultation period will run for two weeks, from *Monday 15th September to Monday 29th September*.

### **We welcome your responses via:**

Email: [office@coombes.wokingham.sch.uk](mailto:office@coombes.wokingham.sch.uk)

Post: The Coombes CE Primary School, School Road, Arborfield Cross, RG2 9NX

Paper copies of this document are available from the school office upon request.

Once the consultation has concluded, the Governing Body and Keys Academy Trust will carefully review all responses in conjunction with the funding opportunity provided by Wokingham Borough Council. A summary of findings and the final decision will be published on the school website and shared with consultees.

We encourage all members of the community to participate in this consultation. Your views are vital in helping us make an informed decision about the future of our Orchard Nursery.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Luke Henderson  
Headteacher  
The Coombes CE Primary School