



## St Nicolas and St Mary Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

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5<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

### St Clements CE Primary Academy – Update

You may recall that St Nicolas and St Mary's CE Primary School successfully applied to the DfE in 2016 to set up a new Free School in Shoreham. I am writing to tell you that this project will no longer proceed.

It was 2016 that one local school was forced to take an unforeseen 'bulge' of children. The local authority predicted that this trend would continue and that there would be a shortage of places in the area. This led to the successful submission of a Free School application from St Nic's.

Since then, pupil numbers have not risen as expected and the anticipated 'child product' from the 1000's of homes currently being built in the area remains disputed. The DfE always said that the project was subject to securing a suitable site and sufficient pupil numbers. Last week they confirmed that, on based on current pupil numbers and Local Authority predictions, they are not going to proceed with the project.

I would like to thank parents, carers and the wider community who have supported this project over recent years. I would also like to acknowledge other local schools who attended meetings or took part in surveys and data gathering exercises, as well as Tim Loughton MP, local councillors across the political spectrum, FAST and the local authority who have provided much support and/or information for the project. I would also like to thank St Nic's staff, governors, the St Clement core team, BOAT trustees and the Diocese of Chichester for supporting the project with many hours of unpaid work!

If pupil numbers do rise again and it looks like the Published Admissions Number is likely to be exceeded, then we will go back to the DfE to restart the project. However, we will only do this if there is sufficient evidence that there is going to be a shortage of places in the area.

We know that around 5,000 homes will be built across Adur in the coming years, driven by the Shoreham Harbour regeneration scheme which has double the original expected density. For 2021-2023, 400-500 homes will be completed in Shoreham every year. These homes are currently under construction. An additional 1470 homes are in the pipeline – around half of which already has planning permission and some have enabling works in progress. However, pupil predictions are notoriously difficult and there are many factor to take into account such as occupancy levels, child product, social housing, fertility rates, internal migration (from Brighton and Hove) and more.

We should note that 50 years ago a small band of parishioners and the head of the original St Nic's school spent many years fighting to get a new school here in Eastern Avenue. They didn't give up. We have been successful in doubling the size of the school, but not the number of CofE schools – or at least not yet!

If you have any questions or comments about the St Clement's project, please do not hesitate to be in touch.

Kind regards  
David Etherton  
Executive Headteacher