

**Brockdish Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Statutory Proposal to cease to maintain the above school**

1. LA details

Norfolk County Council
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich
NR1 2DL

2. School details

Brockdish Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Grove Road
Brockdish
DISS
Norfolk
IP21 4JP

3. Implementation

The proposal is to close Brockdish CE VC Primary School with effect from 31st August 2016.

4. Objectives and reasons

Norfolk has set out clearly in its strategy “A Good School for Every Norfolk Learner”, its plan for ensuring rapid school improvement across the county of Norfolk. In June 2014, our support for school improvement was judged effective by Ofsted, but we know that we still have some way to go to ensure that all learners in Norfolk go to a good or outstanding school. Ofsted told us that we should:

“Work to increase the proportion of good or better schools still further, with a sharper focus on secondary schools and the smallest primary schools.”

Brockdish Church of England Voluntary Controlled is a primary school taking pupils from the age of 4 through to 11. It was designated by the Department for Education in October 2015 as a ‘rural primary school serving a village’. The school has 7 places available in each year group, but is regularly undersubscribed. For the last 10 years, the number of pupils on roll has remained below 35, dipping to 14 in 2007 and rising to 34 in 2012, it has further declined in the last 2 years.

September 2011	26
September 2012	34
September 2013	25
September 2014	21
September 2015	12

In September 2015 there are 12 children on roll of whom 9 live in the catchment area and 3 come to the school from outside the catchment.

The children are taught in 2 classes. The Key Stage 1 class teaching children from 4 – 7 years has 4 children, all girls and the Key Stage 2 class with 8 children has sibling members. This arrangement has implications for socialisation and friendship groups imposing limitations on the development of the children.

There is no substantive leadership of the school. Since September 2015, temporary leadership of the school has been provided through a partnership with Alburgh with Denton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, whose Headteacher spends one day a week at Brockdish. Such leadership arrangements are not sustainable, and governors at Alburgh with Denton do not feel that they have the capacity to pursue a more permanent federation at this time.

Children's Services officers and advisers, in liaison with the Diocese of Norwich have worked extensively with the Governing Body for a two year period to explore all options to partner or federate with other schools. Potential partners have not been convinced that the school is viable in the long term. It has not been possible to broker a sustainable option. The School and Governing Body have explored all options including nursery provision.

Because of the declining roll and the lack of sustainable leadership, Brockdish Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary is a school of concern for the Local Authority. The most recent inspection by Ofsted in February 2016 judged the school to Require Improvement. Whilst standards have improved governors have reluctantly acknowledged that they do not have the capacity to sustain a good enough education for the children of Brockdish. The restrictions to the curriculum imposed by the very small pupil numbers make the school potentially vulnerable in the inspection process.

The consultation document states that the earliest closure could take place would be the end of August 2016. A Public Notice would propose a formal closure date of 31 August 2016.

For the above objectives and reasons, the Local Authority took the decision to consult with parents and other stakeholders on a proposal to cease to maintain the school.

5. Pupil numbers and admissions

In September 2015, there were 12 pupils on roll, of whom 9 live within the designated catchment area of the school. 71% of children eligible to attend the school are choosing to go to schools elsewhere.

6. Displaced pupils

Parents will be able to express preferences for alternative schools for their children and the Local Authority will work with parents to ensure that all children transfer in September 2016 to local schools with available places. The designated catchment school for the majority of children living in the Brockdish catchment area will be Harleston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School.

7. Impact on the community

35 responses were made to the initial consultation. 22 disagreed with the proposal. Reasons cited were:

- The school has been part of the village and community for a significant time
- The impact on community school organised events
- It is an essential part of the community and an attraction of the village to new parents

8. Balance of denominational provision

Brockdish is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled School in the Diocese of Norwich. Alternative Diocesan provision is available within the school cluster and the proposed new catchment school is a Voluntary Aided School.

9. Rural primary schools

The school is a rural primary school designated by the Department for Education as 'a school serving a village'. The Local Authority is aware that, before final determination of the proposal, it needs to give consideration to

- The likely effect of closure of the school on the local community
- The availability and likely cost to the Local Authority of transport to other schools
- Any increase in the use of motor vehicles and the likely effects of any such increase
- Any alternatives to the closure of the school

10. Special educational needs provision

Norfolk County Council is committed to ensuring that the needs of all children and young people with special education needs will be met. If the closure of this school is approved, it will be essential to review the provision required for those pupils with a statement of SEN or Education Care Plan, and following consultation with individual parents, an alternative school where provision would be made available for their child will be named.

11. Travel

As stated above, Harleston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary will be the designated school for pupils living in the Brockdish catchment area. Transport from Brockdish will be provided free of charge.

12. Consultation

A seven week statutory consultation took place which ended on Monday 29th February 2016. All statutory requirements in relation to the statutory consultation, publication and decision-making were complied with. A list of those to whom the consultation document was sent can be found on the website.

https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/brockdish-ce-vc-primary-school/consult_view

Minutes of the public meeting held at the school and a copy of a report which was discussed at the Children's Services Committee meeting on 26 January, can also be viewed on the website.

13. Procedure for making representations

Any person may object to, express support for, or make comments on the proposals by emailing us at schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk or by writing to us at:

Brockdish CE VC Primary Proposal, **FREEPOST 1H2076**, Bay 10, Floor 8, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2BR. You don't need a stamp.

Please ensure that your comments / proposals are received within the four week representation period. That is, no later than 7 April 2016.

Please make sure your correspondence is clearly marked – **BROCKDISH CE VC PRIMARY PROPOSAL**