



**Great Massingham CE VC Primary School  
and Harpley CE VC Primary School  
(forming the Great Massingham & Harpley CE Schools Federation)**

**Proposal to change of category from Voluntary Controlled (VC) to Voluntary Aided (VA) from September 2026**

**Introduction**

During the past months, Governors at Great Massingham & Harpley CE Schools Federation have been looking at how best to secure a strong and positive future for our schools, within the ever changing national and local contexts.

We are proposing to change the category of Great Massingham CE VC Primary School & Harpley CE VC Primary School from what is known as 'Voluntary Controlled' to 'Voluntary Aided'. This will have a number of impacts which we explain in this proposal.

Our schools already have strong links with the local church. A change to the Voluntary Aided category is a natural way of strengthening those links within the local church community.

**What changes when a school moves to the Voluntary Aided category?**

Staffing

The governing board would become the employer of all the staff in both schools. The terms, conditions and continuity of the current staff of the schools would be unaffected. In the future the governing board will be able to use provisions of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to ensure that new teaching staff will be as committed to the support of the ethos of a Church school as those currently employed at the schools.

If the governing board became the employer (rather than Norfolk County Council) we would not need to pay the Government Apprenticeship Levy. This would save the schools an estimated £1500 per year per school that we can redirect towards the education of our children.

Governing boards

Subject to consultation and agreement we would need to have a new governing board from September 2026 which will provide the majority of places to church (foundation) governors. We would expect the board to include similar people to now; a range of local people with an interest in the school; some with direct connections to the Church of England or other Christian denominations, some parents or carers, some local community members or experts in useful areas.

Admissions

At present Norfolk Children's Services is responsible for admissions at the schools. If the change of status proposal was agreed the governing board will be responsible for admissions and these would still be co-ordinated by the local authority. The admissions policy would be approved by the Diocese of Norwich and the local authority. It is likely that we would adopt the NCC admissions policy, but it will allow us to adapt it, if it is felt to be beneficial to the schools.

### The National Curriculum

All the requirements of the National Curriculum still apply in a Voluntary Aided School. There will be no changes in the general curriculum of the schools and we shall continue to work to the same high standards that we have now.

### Collective worship

The collective worship of the schools already reflects the wide range of Anglican resources available for school worship; there will be no changes in content.

### Inclusion

Great Massingham CE VC & Harpley CE VC Primary Schools serve all children in the local community, irrespective of faith or background. The strong Christian ethos of the schools will continue as will the core value of inclusivity.

### Religious Education

Currently the schools uses the Local Authority agreed Religious Education syllabus. Following the change to the voluntary aided category the schools are responsible for setting their own syllabus. However, there would be no change as the schools would continue to follow the Local Authority agreed syllabus.

### Ethos

A change to the Voluntary Aided category will help to further secure the Christian ethos of the schools in the future.

### Capital Expenditure - New Build and Refurbishments

Any new build or major refurbishment works for a Voluntary Aided School are 90% grant aided by the Diocesan Board of Education with funds from the Department for Education and is the responsibility of the governing body. The 10% must be found by other means by the governing body.

What this could mean in practice, is that if we had a capital project that was acceptable to the Diocese that was going to cost the schools say £20,000, we could apply for funding from the Diocese for £18,000, leaving the schools to find the other £2,000 through fund raising or something similar. This compares to the current position where the school is allocated a capital spend budget of about £5,000 per year.

### **How can you have your say?**

This consultation will run from Monday 23rd February 2026 to Friday 17th April 2026. We will be holding 2 consultation events, where our proposal will be explained in more detail and you will have the opportunity to ask questions.

**Dates:** Friday 6th March 2026 3.30-4.30pm at Great Massingham CE Primary School and Friday 20th March 2026 6-6.30pm at Harpley CE Primary School.

You can tell us your views by completing the questionnaire:

- Complete the online survey - <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/greatmassingham-harpley>
- Hand it into your school office
- Posting it to: The Chair of Governors, Great Massingham CE Primary School, Weasenham Road, Great Massingham, PE32 2EY

## **What happens next?**

After the closing date, the governors will look at all the responses gathered during the consultation period and decide whether to proceed to the next stage in the process – statutory public notice. The statutory period runs for 4 weeks. This is expected to occur between Monday 27 April 2026 and run until Friday 22 May 2026.

The decision-maker for this proposal from the governors, is the Executive Director of Children's Services, Norfolk County Council.



**Great Massingham CE VC Primary School & Harpley CE VC Primary School  
(forming the Great Massingham & Harpley CE Schools Federation)**

**Consultation on change of category from Voluntary Controlled to Voluntary Aided,  
by September 2026**

**Let us know what you think of our proposal**

How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal to change the category of Great Massingham CE VC Primary School and Harpley CE VC Primary School to Voluntary Aided schools? Please tick a box.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree or disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

Why do you say this? Please write it the box below.

We would like to hear from many different people, as your views help us to decide whether or not we make these changes. We will also use any personal information to understand how different groups of people feel about our proposal to change the category of school at Great Massingham CE VC Primary School & Harpley CE VC Primary School.

We will process any personal information we receive from you in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (Regulation (EU)) 2016/679) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal information will be used to inform respondents of progress with the proposal. All information given will be held in strictest confidence and maintained in accordance with data protection legislation.

Please tell us who you are. Please tick all boxes that apply.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pupil                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> School governor       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent / Guardian                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Local resident        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member of the Parent Teacher Association | <input type="checkbox"/> Local business        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member of staff                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Local sports group    |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Local community group |

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

At which school? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your postcode? \_\_\_\_\_

Your views will help us decide if this proposal goes ahead. You can tell us your views by returning this completed form to:

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- Hand it into your school office
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**This consultation ends on Friday 17th April**