

St Michael's Church of England, Voluntary Aided, Nursery and Infant School, Aylsham

Statutory Proposal to change the age range

1. LA details

Norfolk County Council
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich
Norfolk
NR1 2DL

2. School details

St Michael's C of E, VA, Nursery and Infant
School
Schoolhouse Lane
Blickling Road
Aylsham
Norfolk
NR11 6EX

3. Description of alteration and evidence of demand

Alteration to the school

Norfolk County Council has a duty to ensure a sufficient supply of school places to respond to housing growth and other demographic changes. NCC responded to the planned building development of 550 dwellings in Aylsham by proposing to add one class base to each of the two infant schools in the town. Governors at St Michael's want to use this opportunity to secure a strong and positive future for this School. It is proposed to change the age-range at St Michael's Nursery and Infant School so that it becomes a full primary school with a nursery. At the moment, Aylsham children start their statutory education in Year R at one of two Infant Schools and have to transfer to the Junior School (Bure Valley School) after three years. We plan to change this pattern and offer parents the opportunity to choose to have their children educated in a through primary school in the town.

The proposal is to extend the school's age range from 4 - 7 to 4 - 11 and to increase the capacity of the school from 108 to 140. The change is to begin in September 2018, extending one year group every year until pupils reach year 6. Nursery provision will not change; we will continue to provide for up to 52 children, equivalent to 26 full time places. The pupil admission number is to change from 36 to 20 in September 2018. This will affect the reception and year 3 intake. Norfolk County Council will also be working to this new pupil admission number.

The school will provide for Key Stage 2 children and the increase in pupil numbers by replacing existing non-classroom facilities with a new building which will house a new nursery classroom, a multi-purpose hall, and a school kitchen, all the facilities the school needs to provide a comfortable and appropriate learning environment for each child who attends this school.

Demand for the change

Over the years parents have frequently expressed their wish for this school to be a primary. The school consulted parents through questionnaires at the beginning of this process and the response was overwhelmingly in favour of the plan. Norfolk County Council's policy on school organisation is to favour all-through primary schools where these are achievable.

The initial consultation ran from 23rd May 2016 to 15th July 2016. Two open meetings were held at the School on 29th June. These were well attended. Notes from those meetings together with written responses from the initial consultation were taken forward to governors. A second consultation paper taking views into account was then published and a fresh consultation period undertaken which ran until 20th October 2016

The following groups were consulted.

- Parents of every child registered at this school
- Parents of potential pupils in our catchment area
- Other local early years providers
- Staff who work at the school and their professional associations
- Our local communities and neighbours
- All other schools in Aylsham cluster
- The Church of England Diocese of Norwich and Parochial Church Council
- Local MP, County Councillor, District Councillors and Town Councillors
- Norfolk County Council, the Local Authority.

Since October 2016 parents, neighbours and others in the local community have been kept fully informed and invited to give their views. The response has been overwhelmingly positive.

4. Objectives (including how the proposal would increase educational standards and parental choice)

The objectives of this proposal are as follows:

- To preserve and increase meaningful parental choice in the primary phase
- To preserve choice with respect to Church school or non-Church school preferences
- To maintain the proud tradition of St Michael's as a Church of England school with a strong and distinctive ethos.
- To provide the very best education we can for the children in our school.
- To build upon our strong bond with the local Church community

We share NCC's view that primary education is in the best interests of children. There are many educational and social reasons, including the following:

- The continuity of provision means that the needs of individual children can be met more efficiently and more effectively in primary schools.
- Standards rise when transition points are reduced and collaborative working extends across a wider age range.
- Stronger relationships are established with parents through consistent communication and reporting.
- Children benefit from a wider range of teacher expertise and a broader curriculum as they move through the school.
- Primary schools provide for greater continuity in support for each child's learning.
- Children benefit socially and emotionally from the stability provided by belonging to the family of an all- through primary.

5. The effect on other schools, academies and educational institutions within the area

This proposal has implications for the other schools in Aylsham. As our pupil admission number reduces that of John of Gaunt School (infant) has to rise and accommodation found for the rise in their numbers. We have discussed the matter with them and plans have already been put in place. There were initial concerns about a drop in pupil numbers at Bure Valley School (junior). As a result and to cope with budgetary pressures we agreed to delay the implementation of this proposal until September 2018. In fact Bure Valley School is currently oversubscribed and this proposal will help ease the pressure on places there and ensure that local children can have places in local schools.

6. Project costs and an indication of how these will be met, including how long term value for money will be achieved

The project will be funded from two sources: Local Authority and developer funding (section 106) plus funds available to Voluntary Aided schools (LCVAP funding) through the Diocese of Norwich.

The building project associated with the change of age range will involve the removal of two very inefficient and outdated buildings and will provide more outside space. It will enhance the environment significantly and provide flexible accommodation. It will also provide the school with the space it needs to be able to extend provision (breakfast club, tea club, for example). There has been a detailed independent cost appraisal undertaken and the estimated cost exclusive of VAT is £1,625,200 inclusive of furniture and playground equipment. Both the Local Authority and Diocese of Norwich feel that the combined solution will make better use of the space available at the school and minimise disruption during the construction phase.

A temporary class base, included in the above estimate, will be installed to ensure that there is provision in place for the year 3 intake in September 2018.

7. Implementation date and proposed stages

The proposal will be implemented on 1st September 2018

8. Related proposals

There are no proposals relating to this one.

9. Procedure for making representations

Any person may object to, express support for or make comments on this proposal by responding to the survey at by emailing us at office@st-michaelsaylsham.norfolk.sch.uk. You can also write to us at the address above.