



St Michael's Church of England VC Nursery and Infant School

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Proposal 1: to extend the age range of this school to create a primary school
for pupils aged 4-11 plus nursery from September 2017

Proposal 2: to change category from VC (voluntary controlled) to VA (voluntary
aided) from January 2017

Published by the Governing Body
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**Please note, there are 2 sections to this consultation paper. The first starts
overleaf. The second begins on page 6.**



Introduction

During the past few months governors and the senior leadership team at St Michael's Nursery and Infant School have been considering how best to secure a strong and positive future for our School within the ever changing national, regional and Aylsham contexts.

Following extensive research and debate the governing body would like to propose two significant changes to St Michael's School. These two changes are fundamental to our vision and strategic plan, and this paper aims to provide you with the information you might need to be able to contribute your views on the proposals.

Our objectives

- 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 preserve and increase meaningful parental choice in the primary phase.
- To preserve choice with respect to Church school or non-Church school preferences.
- To build upon our strong bond with the local Church community.

Section 1: The proposal to change to primary

Research shows that primary education is in the best interests of children for many educational and social reasons, including the following:

- The needs of individual children can be met more efficiently and even more effectively within the family of an all through primary school.
- Standards increase 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.
- There would be greater continuity in support for each child's learning.
- The children attending this school will benefit socially and emotionally from the stability provided by belonging to the family of an all- through primary.



Implementation of the proposal to become primary

The proposal is to extend the school's age range from 3 - 7 to 3 - 11 and to increase the capacity of the school. There would be a phased approach beginning in September 2017, extending one year group every year until pupils reach year 6.

All children currently at the school would, of course, be entitled and welcome to stay and move into year 3 when the time came. The responses we have received from early surveys of parents of current children, however, suggest that growth would be more likely to look like this.

Sept	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
YrR	36	36	25	25	25	25	25	25
Yr1	27	36	36	25	25	25	25	25
Yr2	33	27	36	36	25	25	25	25
Yr3		25*	27	36	36	25	25	25
Yr4			25	27	36	36	25	25
Yr5				25	27	36	36	25
Yr6					25	27	36	36
totals	96	124	149	174	199	197	197	186

** Results of an informal survey indicate that no more than 25 are likely to wish to move into year 3 at these points. As part of transition we would expect to run an admission round for pupils in Year2 for junior transfer with 25 places offered and pupils of St Michael's having first priority.*

As a result of the growing population of Aylsham a plan already exists to build a further classbase at St Michael's. This is likely to be a 'stand-alone' unit sited in the area known as the bottom playground and will be dedicated to Early Years provision. This plan is not yet finalised nor approved and does not form part of this consultation.

We know that with internal reorganisation, as many as seven classes plus the facilities older children would require can be accommodated easily within our current buildings. Governors are also confident that suitable space will be available close to the school and a short walk away for sport, play and outside learning.



Governors are keen to improve and enhance the learning facilities enjoyed by our children and conscious that they are likely to need to embark on major capital projects within the next 5 years to cope with demand as well.

Background information

The first Church school in Aylsham was founded by Robert Jannys in 1530. St Michael's Church of England School came into existence in 1848 to provide an education for the children of Aylsham. A hundred years later the Church of England relinquished aspects of the school's administration to the Local Education Authority, making it a Voluntary Controlled school.

Today, the Victorian buildings accommodate up to 108 children, in four airy and well resourced classrooms and a large hall. There is a separate kitchen and dining hall, three outdoor playgrounds and a pond area. Attached to the main school is a purpose-built nursery suite which has its own dedicated outdoor play space. More recently a further extension provided the school with a much needed quiet room and last year saw the completion of a new entrance arrangement and ramp which has transformed the school's outdoor provision. At the same time the Church kindly arranged for light to pour into our Nursery area by removing a row of enormous Leylandii trees.

Currently **staffing** at this school is as follows:

- Headteacher who also teaches one day a week; responsibilities include overall school effectiveness, SENCo, Educational Visits Co-ordinator, Senior Designated Professional for safeguarding, Health and safety
- Office Manager; responsibilities include administration, reception, implementation and maintenance of financial systems, second designated person for safeguarding, communications, website
- Six further members of teaching staff, three of whom work full time
- Higher Level Teaching Assistant; responsibilities include provision of Planning Preparation and Assessment cover for teachers, PE subject leader
- Teaching or classroom assistants
- Caretaker
- Midday Supervisors

The **Senior Leadership Team** is made up of the Headteacher, one member of teaching staff and the office manager.

Structure



The pupil admission number for this school is presently 36 and usually classes are split between year groups. In 2016-2017 the four classes will be arranged as follows: a year 2 class, a split year 2 / year 1 class, a split year 1 / reception class and a straight reception class.

The nursery can accommodate up to 52 children in total, 26 per session.

Considerations

Other schools

We recognise that these plans have implications for the other schools in Aylsham and have already discussed the proposal with them. We would hope to be able to continue to work in close collaboration with all of them as continuing members of the Aylsham Cluster Trust.

Outside provision

As a school which has always valued its Forest School credentials and believes that outdoor learning is vital, an important consideration has been the limitations of our current site. We believe that when it becomes necessary we can continue to make excellent provision by using land currently owned by the Church.

Curriculum

The National Curriculum will continue to be taught (in all subject areas) and we will make sure that all teachers are suitably trained and highly skilled in teaching throughout the primary years. The Senior Leadership Team has already begun visiting other outstanding primary settings to ensure that we are fully prepared as the children move through the school. Through a mix of training, development and recruitment we are confident that we will be able to build upon the existing high levels of staff expertise and dedication to create an excellent primary team.

Pastoral care

At St Michael's we know individual pupils and families and their needs from a very early age. This has always been a strength of this school and is core to our ethos. We look forward to extending these relationships, thus ensuring that children receive the best care and education they can for as long as they remain at St Michael's. There are already close ties to other schools within the Aylsham Cluster and this will stand us in excellent stead when children finally progress to the High School.

Project costs



In the first instance the costs would be met from the overall budget for the provision of places in Aylsham.

By September 2017 this school would need the extra class base already planned, and this would ideally be a stand-alone Nursery unit. Over time it might need further classrooms if population growth put pressure on place provision.

Parking

The construction of our new entrance, steps and ramp have already helped alleviate the strain on the roads around the school site at the beginning and end of the school day. Governors have also actively engaged with the Town Council to help increase road safety on the Blickling Road.

Although the aim is for the school to grow in size eventually, research shows that as children grow older they are more able to walk to school and are less reliant on lifts. We will institute a travel plan to make sure that local residents and businesses don't suffer further inconvenience.

Section 2: The proposal to change to Voluntary Aided

Change of category to Voluntary Aided would enable us to build upon some of the best aspects of our school, namely our ethos, values and strong relationship with our local Church to further enhance our distinctive character as a Christian school.

There are also practical benefits. In particular it will

- Give greater control and flexibility over our finances.
- Strengthen our ethos through enhanced control over recruitment.
- Enable us to focus our resources on the specific needs and aspirations of our community.

Staffing

The governing body would become the employer of all the staff. The terms, conditions and continuity of the current staff of the school would be unaffected. All existing staff are guaranteed job security during the transition and will have the same employee's rights as they have now. In future the governing body would 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 school.

Governing body



Subject to consultation and agreement a new instrument of government would come into force in January 2017, giving a majority of places to Church (Foundation) governors. There would still be elected parent representatives as well as representatives of the staff and the Local Authority (LA, Norfolk County Council). The new governing body would comprise:

The Headteacher – automatically a staff governor

1 staff governor, elected by staff

1 LA governor, appointed by the LA as they are now

2 parent governors

7 Foundation governors. One would be the incumbent, 3 would be appointed by the Diocesan Board of Education and 3 by the recommendation of the Parochial Church Council.

Most current governors would be re-appointed to the new governing body

Collective worship

Our Collective Worship would stay the same; we would continue to develop links with the Church and community through worship, celebration, activity and the services we attend in Church.

Inclusion

St Michael's School is committed to the local community which it serves and there would be no changes in this respect. It would remain a local school for local children and inclusive in nature.

Variety of provision

St Michael's School believes that as a Voluntary Aided school, it can best ensure its contribution long-term to the diversity of primary educational provision in Aylsham and the surrounding area.

The National Curriculum

All the requirements of the National Curriculum still apply in a voluntary aided school, so there will be no change to the curriculum of the school. We shall continue to work to maintain the high standards that we have now.

Religious Education



RE would continue to be taught as now and would become subject to inspection as part of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools.

Admissions

At present Norfolk Children's Services is responsible for admissions at the school. Following the change of category, the governing body would be responsible for admissions and these would still be co-ordinated by the Local Authority.

Buildings maintenance

Currently the school buys into a scheme with the local authority for maintenance and pays for repairs from the school budget. A similar Diocese scheme exists for Voluntary Aided schools.

The consultation process

This consultation will run from 23rd May 2016 to 15th July 2016.

The Governing Body will then be able to make a fully informed decision as to how to proceed through to formal consultation in the autumn if agreed following this consultation. This will be by statutory Public Notice during which people will have four weeks to make their views known to Norfolk County Council. The Decision Maker for both proposals made by the Governing Body will be the Executive Director of Children's Services.

There will be open meetings at the School on 29th June, one at 3.30pm and the second at 6pm, where the proposals will be explained in more detail and people will have the opportunity to ask questions.

We are specifically consulting the following groups:

- 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.



Once you have read the consultation document please complete this questionnaire.
 Please return completed questionnaires to:

Mrs Eleanor Milligan, Chair of Governors, St Michael's C of E, VC, Nursery and Infant School, Schoolhouse Lane, Blickling Road, Aylsham, NR11 6EX.

All responses must be received by noon on 15th July 2016

Proposal 1: to extend the age range of St Michael's School to a primary school for pupils aged 4-11 plus nursery from September 2017

From September 2017, should year 2 children be able to remain at St Michael's School and continue in the school until they are 11?

Yes	Don't know	No

Comment (Please give the reasons for your answers)

Proposal 2: to change the status of St Michael's School from VC to VA.

Are you happy for this change to take place?

Yes	Don't know	No

Comment (Please give the reasons for your answers)