

December 2019

**Report to the Executive Director of Children's Services for
decision on a statutory change of category at
Worstead CofE VC Primary School**

What is the proposal?

The proposal is to change the category of the school, from voluntary controlled to voluntary aided, from 1 January 2020.

Public notice and representation period

Governors undertook an informal consultation between 4 June – 12 July. 89% of respondents were in support of the change (see Appendix B). Governors reviewed the responses and agreed to continue with the school organisation process to change the category of the school.

A statutory public notice was issued by the Governing Body of Worstead CofE VC Primary School and published in the North Norfolk News on 12 September 2019. See Appendix 1 for Public Notice and prescribed information. Copies of the Public Notice were displayed at all the main entrances to Worstead CofE VC Primary School. The four week representation period came to an end on 10 October 2019.

There was 1 response. Diocese of Norwich considered the proposal and wrote to say that they are fully supportive of this process and the reasons set out by the school.

All statutory requirements in relation to the statutory consultation were complied with.

The decision

In coming to a decision, the Decision Maker is obliged to consider the following factors:

Education standards and diversity of provision

Worstead CofE VC Primary School was rated Good by Ofsted in April 2016.

The governing body see the plans to change of category to Voluntary Aided will enable them to build on some of the best aspects of their school and help secure a strong and positive future for the school. The school already has strong links with the local church. A change to Voluntary Aided category is a natural way of strengthening those links within the local church community. This step would strengthen the education offer to Worstead children and will help to further secure the Christian ethos of the school now and in the future.

However, at the end of September 2019, the school was risk rated by Norfolk County Council as a Category 1 school. The reasons for the categorisation were;

- Concerns have been raised about the responses of leadership and management to statutory and Local Authority advice regarding Health and Safety and SEN
- The school will require support with responses to reviews which will be required by the Local Authority.

Equal opportunities issues

The County Council has considered that there are no specific discrimination issues that arise from the school organisation change being proposed.

Community cohesion

The County Council has considered that there are no specific community cohesion issues that arise from the school organisation change being proposed.

Travel and accessibility

It is not anticipated that there will be any increased impact on peak time traffic at the school, as the provision is already accommodated on the school site and not looking to expand the numbers.

Capital funding, school premises and playing fields

There is no capital funding linked to this proposal.

The change in category to a voluntary aided school, means that the governing body will be financially responsible for building work. There is an expectation that governors will meet 10% of its capital expenditure for at least five years from the date of implementation. The governors of Worstead CofE VC Primary School have given evidence which represents an acknowledgement of that responsibility for the school.

Conclusions and recommendation

In considering the proposals, the Decision Maker can decide to:

- Reject the proposal
- Approve the proposal without modification
- Approve the proposal with modifications, having consulted the governing body
- Approve the proposal subject to certain conditions.

There was strong support during the informal consultation period and the Diocese of Norwich, as the only response in the statutory period, confirmed their support for the school organisation change.

However, as Norfolk County Council has risk-rated Worstead Primary School as a Category 1 school, it is **recommended** that the Director of Children's Services, in her role as Decision Maker, should **approve with a condition** this proposal to change the category of the school with effect from 1 September 2020 on the condition that the school is no longer designated a Category 1 school by Norfolk County Council.



Proposed change to Worstead CofE VC Primary School, Worstead

Public Notice is given in accordance with section 19(3) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, that the Governing Body of Worstead Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Worstead intends to make a prescribed alteration to Worstead Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Honing Road, Worstead, North Walsham, NR28 9RQ, from 1 January 2020.

The school will change category from Voluntary Controlled to Voluntary Aided and the governing body will implement the proposal.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: The Chair of Governors, Worstead CE VA Primary School, Honing Road, Worstead, North Walsham, NR28 9RQ.

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to, or make comments on, the proposal by sending them to the School Organisation Team, Children's Services Floor 8 (Bay 34), County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DL or by email to: schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk

Signed: Hayley Smith

Chair of Governors

Publication Date: Thursday 12 September 2019



Statutory Proposal to change of category from Voluntary Controlled (VC) to Voluntary Aided (VA) from 1st January 2020

1. School details

Name	Worstead CofE VA Primary School
Type	Voluntary Controlled School
Address	Honing Road, Worstead, North Walsham, NR28 9RQ
Age Range	4 – 11 years
Capacity	105 pupils; Numbers on roll January 2019 = 108
Ofsted	Last Ofsted; 27 April 2016 Rating; Good

2. Local Authority details

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

3. What changes are proposed?

It is proposed to change the category of the school, from Voluntary Controlled to Voluntary Aided.

4. Why do we want to do this?

The change of category to Voluntary Aided will enable us to build on some of the best aspects of our school and help us secure a strong and positive future for our school, within the ever changing national and local contexts. In particular it will;

- Give us greater control and flexibility over our finances
- Strengthen our Christian school ethos as we will have more control over recruitment
- Enable us to focus our resources on the specific needs and aspirations of our community
- Be able to access funding only available to Voluntary Aided schools to support building and maintenance
- Remain as a state school, funded by the Local Authority, but the governing body will own the land and buildings
- Enable us to have the flexibility to control the admissions policy to meet local needs, when needed.

An initial consultation was held between Tuesday 4 June and Friday 12 July 2019. During that period, two public meetings were held at the school on 12 June and 24 June. 10 parents/carers attended. The consultation document is attached at Appendix A.

Approximately 100 consultation documents were distributed (to all pupils' families and all other stakeholders prescribed by the Diocese and LA) and 17 responses were received. Of those 15 people agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal and 0 people disagreed or strongly

disagreed with the proposal. 2 people neither agreed or disagreed. The analysis of the responses received during the consultation is available at Appendix B.

5. When will the changes happen?

If the proposal is agreed by the local decision maker, the Executive Director of Children's Services, Norfolk County Council, it is intended that the change in category will be implemented on 1 January 2020.

6. Will there be any effect on other schools, academies and educational institutions within the area

We cannot foresee any impact on any other schools, as new places are not being created.

7. Will the proposed change result in additional traffic near the school

There will not be any additional impact on traffic at the school, as this proposal does not increase new places.

8. Will there be any project costs and how will long term value for money be achieved?

There are no project costs associated with this proposal.

If the proposal is agreed, we anticipate making savings as we would no longer need to pay the Government Apprenticeship Levy, saving the school an estimated £1500 per year to re-direct towards the education of our children. Governors understand that if the proposal is agreed, they are responsible for funding 10% of any new build or major refurbishment works. The remaining 90% would be grant aided by the Diocese Board of Education with funds from the Department for Education.

9. Will this definitely happen?

No. There is a statutory process we must follow to make this type of change to schools.

10. Related proposals

There are no related proposals.

11. Implementation plan

If the proposal is agreed, the school governing body will start to prepare for the changes to the School and governing body from 1 January 2020. The new governing body will provide the majority of places to church (foundation) governors who would become the employer of all the staff. These do not necessarily have to be Christian ministers nor Church of England Christians.

12. How can I make my views known?

Any person may object to, express support for, or make comments on the proposals by:

- Send an email to: schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk
- Write to: School Organisation Team, FREEPOST, 1H 2076, Floor 8, Bay 34, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2BR. You don't need a stamp.

13. What happens next?

The following table sets out the key dates for the consultation and decision making. At any point the proposal may be withdrawn. The dates set out below meet the Department for Education requirements for consultation on school organisation proposals.

School organisation process	Date
Public Notice published	12 September 2019
Statutory consultation (representation stage)	12 September – 10 October 2019
Decision required, no later than	10 December 2019
If approved, change of age starts	1 January 2020

Appendix A – consultation proposal to change category



Worstead C of E VC Primary School Proposal to change of category from Voluntary Controlled(VC) to Voluntary Aided (VA) from 1st January 2020

Introduction

During the past months, Governors at Worstead C of E VC Primary School have been looking at how best to secure a strong and positive future for our school, within the ever changing national and local contexts.

We are proposing to change the category of Worstead C of E 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 school already has strong links with the local church. A change to Voluntary Aided category is a natural way of strengthening those links within the local church community.

What changes when a school moves to Voluntary Aided category?

Staffing

The governing board would become the employer of all the staff. The terms, conditions and continuity of the current staff of the school 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 school.

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 school an estimated £1500 per year that we can redirect towards the education of our children.

Governing board

Subject to consultation and agreement we would need to have a new governing board from 1st January 2020, 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 school. 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 school.

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 school and we shall continue to work to the same high standards that we have now.

Collective worship

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

Inclusion

Worstead C of E VC Primary School serves all children in the local community, irrespective of faith or background. The strong Christian ethos of the school will continue as will the core value of inclusivity.

Religious Education

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

Ethos

A change to Voluntary Aided category will help to further secure the Christian ethos of the school 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 school say £20,000, we could apply for funding from the Diocese for £18,000, leaving the school 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 4 June 2019 to 12 July 2019. 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.

Date: 12th June 2019 Time: 6:00-6:30

Date: 24th June 2019 Time: 3:30-4:00

You can tell us your views by completing the questionnaire:

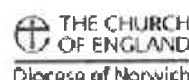
- Complete the online survey - <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/worstead>
- Hand it into your school office
- Posting it to: The Chair of Governors, Worstead CE VA Primary School, Honing Road, Worstead, North Walsham, NR28 9RQ

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 in the Autumn term 2019.

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

Appendix B - analysis of responses received during the consultation.



Of the written responses to the consultation, an overwhelming majority (89%) were in favour of the change, either saying they strongly agreed, or agreed to the change. In most cases they elaborated by saying they felt that the access to enhanced funding was important for the future of the school. A small number of these respondents mentioned that they also supported a closer link to the Church of England.

12% of the written responses (2 people) could neither agree nor disagree as they felt the issue to be in balance – the possibility of closer links to the Church being seen as a foot in the door for curricular or ideological changes that might make the school more religious and less government-controlled, to the eventual exclusion of others, one mechanism being by admitting church-going families.

These themes were reflected in the parental consultations held where questions were raised about similar concerns:

- Governors and school leadership might be benign now, but curricular change or religious intolerance could be wrought sometime in the future.
- Governors might seek to alter the make-up of the staff to exclude non-Christians?
- Practical considerations such as possible changes to uniform, logo, school name, curriculum, policies, holiday dates etc.
- A general misapprehension that VA schools are closer or even the same as academies/free schools rather than LA community or VC schools.
- A concern that RE might be prioritised above the rest of the curriculum or that the RE syllabus would change and become of greater importance.
- The admissions policy would promote church-going families over other groups.

Although these concerns are understandable and were addressed at the time, but they will need clarification for all stakeholders at the next stage. One response (which was 'strongly agree') raised issues about the teaching of sex education in schools and sought to link this to the 'family values' of a C of E school, which is another misapprehension that needs to be cleared up, particularly with the introduction of statutory RSHE by the government in September 2020.

Responses compiled and analysed by Nick Read, Headteacher, 15th July 2019. Originals of all responses, including four received online and passed on by the LA, are kept on file and available for inspection if necessary.