

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



**Statutory Proposal to Change  
Age Range from 4-7 to 4-11**

**Draft Proposal Document**

**Local Authority**  
Norfolk County Council,  
Children's Services,  
County Hall,  
Martineau Lane,  
Norwich NR1 2DL

## **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. We proposed two changes which are fundamental to our vision and strategic plan. The Governing Body consulted on both proposals (details of the consultation are at the end of this document).

One of the proposals, to change the school's status from Voluntary Controlled to Voluntary Aided will proceed straight away, and on 22<sup>nd</sup> September the public notice will be published in the local press.

The second proposal, to change the age range of the school from 4-7 to 4-11, has been substantially altered in the light of responses received during consultation, especially with regard to implementation of the changes. We welcome views on this new document. The final date for responses is 20<sup>th</sup> October. Please address them to Mrs Eleanor Milligan, Chair of Governors, c/o St Michael's School.

## **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.

## **This proposal**

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**

The proposal is to extend the school’s age range from 4 - 7 to 4 - 11 and to increase the capacity of the school. There would be a phased approach beginning in September 2018, extending one year group every year until pupils reach year 6.

The pupil admission number would change from 36 to 20 at this point (it is understood that this change would, in itself, require a consultation). The school would grow to a maximum of 140 over the following 4 years.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
YR	34	20	20	20	20
Y1	33	34	20	20	20
Y2	30	33	34	20	20
Y3		20	20	20	20
Y4			20	20	20
Y5				20	20
Y6					20
Total	97	107	114	120	140

As a result of the growing population of Aylsham a plan already exists to build a further classbase at St Michael’s. This is to be funded either by Norfolk County Council or through Section 106 ‘developer’ funding. The building is likely to be a ‘stand-alone’ unit sited in the area known as the bottom playground. Building plans do not form part of this consultation and would, of course, be subject to planning approval. We believe the addition of this classbase will make it possible to provide a comfortable and appropriate learning environment for all the children in the school.

Governors are also confident that further 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 will need to embark on refurbishment projects within the next 5 years.

## **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

## **Current Structure**

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

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 significant implications for the other schools in Aylsham and have discussed the proposal with them. We have agreed that it would be best to delay the proposed change of age range, from 2017 to 2018. 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**

Costs relating to building to cope with additional children will be met by Norfolk County Council or Section 106 'developer' funding. (see above)

## **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 by one class, research shows that as children grow older they are more able to walk to school and are less reliant on lifts. The need for parents to rush between St Michael's and Bure Valley School at the beginning and end of the school day will also be eliminated. We will institute a travel plan to make sure that local residents and businesses don't suffer further inconvenience.

## **The consultation process**

The initial consultation ran from 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016 to 15<sup>th</sup> July 2016 and a table showing the responses received is attached.

We held two open meetings at the School on 29<sup>th</sup> June which were well attended. Notes from that meeting were taken forward to governors. We have also already consulted 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.

This second consultation period will run until 20<sup>th</sup> October 2016. Please address responses to Mrs Eleanor Milligan, Chair of Governors, c/o St Michael's School.